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To: David Gagnon, Clerk of the Standing Committee on Finance ([FINA@parl.gc.ca](mailto:FINA@parl.gc.ca))

From: Prince Albert Historical Society

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the Government provide at least \$200 million in stimulus funding to unlock billions of dollars in capital construction and other investments in shovel-ready heritage building projects across Canada. This funding would target the renewal and retrofitting and adaptive use of revenue-generating space and help non-profits to renew cultural and heritage infrastructure.



Dr. C. H. & Lenore Andrews

Philip E. West



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The Prince Albert Historical Society recommends that the 2021 Federal Budget capitalize on shovel-ready heritage projects across Canada. These projects would create jobs, spur private investment, and contribute to community resiliency in the longer term. Some of these projects, ours included, may also contribute to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Investments in heritage places are an ideal target for economic recovery and community infrastructure programs:

- Shovel-ready projects already exist across Canada in many heritage spaces. The Prince Albert Historical Society, in cooperation with the City of Prince Albert, has deconstructed two log structures, the original Nisbet Church erected in 1872 and a blockhouse used first as a stable and then in the 1885 in the North West Resistance. Plans have been drawn up and a location has been chosen for their relocation and reconstruction. Once additional funding is obtained, the project can proceed.
- Funding will leverage private sector involvement. PAHS has raised some funds already, but needs to secure the remainder.
- This project will reuse building materials from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to create more museum space in our city, at the same time preserving buildings of significant historical interest.
- This project also adds to the existent historical sites of River Street and Central Avenue. River Street began as the cultural, economic, and social center of Prince Albert. This focus shifted to Central Avenue in later decades. Having these buildings situated near the junction of these two streets will help illustrate the story of the beginnings of
- settlement and the early connections between settlers and the Indigenous people of this area.

The mission of our Historical Society is to preserve and promote the heritage of our city and area. We operate three museum sites and four museums within the City of Prince Albert. All our museums are in heritage buildings. The Evolution of Education Museum is an original one-room country school which was moved into the city from its original location in a rural area settled by early 20<sup>th</sup> century immigrants. The Rotary Museum of Police and Corrections is an original guardhouse for the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) built in Prince Albert in 1888. The John and Olive Diefenbaker Museum is in the home where the couple lived in the city, and the Historical Museum was originally a fire hall built in 1912. Within these four buildings, we exhibit artifacts and present programs that focus on our community's history. We welcome both local and international visitors. Our current goal is to add the two oldest buildings in the city to our collection of museums, a project which is shovel-ready and could, with funding from the investment we are recommending, support and contribute to the necessary economic recovery.

Our project will reconstruct the Nisbet Church, built in 1872 by the Rev. James Nisbet who led a Presbyterian Mission to this location in 1866. The Church will be a museum but will also be available as a location for meetings and small ceremonies such as weddings, and would be an ongoing source of revenue for the Historical Society. The Blockhouse will show case the early business history and Prince Albert's role in the North West Resistance.

Both buildings are examples of early log construction and can help the community, particularly students, imagine what life was like in those early days. The river was the main highway: canoes, York boats and later ferries and steamboats landed regularly and River Street, parallel to the North Saskatchewan River, was the original commercial center of the area. This project will create a heritage hub and could stimulate further private investment in the area to renew, adapt and retrofit other existing heritage buildings of which there are many in the immediate area.

Prince Albert is a small city but one of the oldest settlements in Saskatchewan and a gateway to the northern part of the province. With its nearby rich resources and abundant lakes and forests, the city attracts a lot of tourists. Directing federal stimulus to heritage places to such as ours, reaching beyond major Canadian cities, can have measurable impacts on the economies of smaller towns and rural Canada. Funding could flow without delay to large and small projects through existing mechanisms such as Regional Economic Development Agencies, the Cultural Spaces Canada Program and Parks Canada's National Cost-Sharing Program Heritage Places. It can also be used to support participation in national celebrations like Canada Historic Places Day to provide general awareness and encouragement to Canadians to explore special places, both virtually online and to visit in-person places close to home when the doors reopen from the current pandemic. In parallel, there is great potential to leverage corporate philanthropy and crowdfunding and generate public awareness using proven high-profile crowdfunding tools like This Place Matters.

Stimulating the reuse of heritage buildings would also play a key role to play in meeting Canada's 2030 GHG emission reduction targets. Investing in the rehabilitation of heritage buildings is a key component of the low carbon economy.

Should further information be required, we would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss our recommendations with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in more detail.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Payton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fred Payton, President  
Prince Albert Historical Society

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