

SUPPORTING THE RESIDENTIAL FUNCTION IN COMMERCIAL AREAS OF HISTORIC CENTERS

Financial assistance program for restoration, renovation, construction, and residential recycling in heritage sites - **Québec, Canada**

1. DESCRIPTION

Quebec City has set up a financial assistance program for owners of old buildings located along a major commercial corridor in the old city (St-Jean Street and Côte de la Fabrique). This program encourages the renovation or improvement of vacant or partially vacant commercial buildings in order to convert them into housing, increasing the residential supply in the neighborhood. By encouraging the arrival of new residents, the program helps to enhance the attractiveness and vitality of commercial arteries throughout the year.

2. CONTEXT THAT MOTIVATED THE PRACTICE

For more than 20 years, funds have been allocated to the restoration of heritage buildings. However, this program responds to a specific need: to rehabilitate old buildings located on a major commercial artery in the historic center, Saint-Jean and Côte de la Fabrique streets. This artery is home to a significant number of vacant or poorly maintained heritage buildings. In the long term, these buildings undermine the integrity of the heritage and the vitality of the neighborhood.

3. APPROACH / METHOD

1. The City identifies a sensitive area for priority intervention
2. The selection of owners who have applied for a grant under the program is based on strict "conditions" and obligations, to ensure that the building will be used for residential purposes.
3. The City supervises the work and, once the renovation is compliant, the grant is paid to the owners.
4. The City ensures that the rehabilitation will not lead to real estate speculation by requiring the program beneficiary remain the owner of the building for a period of twelve months, and maintain its residential function for a period determined by the City.
5. The program includes rigorous inspections and careful monitoring to ensure that the dwellings are occupied by permanent residents.



De de la Fabrique Street. Source: © Quebec City.

4. EXPECTED AND IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

- The preservation and maintenance of heritage buildings on a primarily commercial thoroughfare.
- Strengthening of the residential function in the neighborhood.
- Keeping or bringing back residents to the upper floors contributes to the profitability of businesses.

5. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The rehabilitation of heritage buildings directly contributes to the habitability of the historic center by promoting the occupancy of vacant buildings and providing housing adapted to the needs of residents.
- Strengthening a high-quality built environment in a dynamic neighborhood offering local shops is attractive to new residents and improves the quality of life for existing residents.
- Rigorous monitoring—in the medium or long term—of the work and management of the housing is essential to the sustainability of the objectives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/>

