Sean Adams, April 2022

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY FOR HERITAGE RESOURCE ADAPTATION
A CASE STUDY OF VICTORIA B.C.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change continues to present significant threats to built heritage in coastal communities. Vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surges and increased flooding, coastal communities are among the most impacted by climate change impacts. Of particular concern is how climate change is adversely impacting and damaging the built heritage of coastal communities. Such impacts include flooding, erosion or windstorm damage that can significantly compromise or destroy their character-defining elements. Therefore, there is a strong need for heritage planners to embrace heritage resource adaptation strategies that serve to protect built heritage from climate change impacts.

Building adaptive capacity is critical for bolstering these adaptation efforts and reducing climate change impacts on built heritage. Using an adaptive capacity framework for heritage management, this paper explores adaptive capacity's role in heritage resource adaptation efforts in the coastal city of Victoria, British Columbia. Through extensive planning document review and research, it examines Victoria's adaptive capacity for heritage resource adaptation, while providing insights for strengthening adaptation efforts.

The key determinants of Victoria's adaptive capacity that were considered for this research consisted of resource availability, authority, access to information, learning capacity, cognitive factors and leadership. While the City of Victoria demonstrates strengths within each of these determinants, there are several key areas in which heritage resource adaptation efforts can improve. This research finds that the City should continue to revise and update strategic heritage planning documents to provide specific adaptation directions for vulnerable heritage

resources. Furthermore, the City may further protect built heritage by incentivizing heritage resource adaptation for non-designated heritage property owners.