

Staff Report



Development Services Department

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REPORT TO: Heritage Kitchener

DATE OF MEETING: March 4, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Garrett Stevenson, Director of Development and Housing Approvals, 519-783-8922

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WARD(S) INVOLVED: All

DATE OF REPORT: February 12, 2025

REPORT NO.: DSD-2025-072

SUBJECT: Heritage Kitchener Committee 2025 Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Heritage Kitchener (HK) Committee with an overview of the body of work scheduled to be undertaken in 2025 by Heritage Planning staff with consultation and engagement from members of HK. The three (3) key areas of work will include the review and update of heritage policies within Kitchener's Official Plan, further implementation of strategies to conserve Cultural Heritage Landscapes, and the continuation of the Municipal Heritage Register (MHR) Review Project.
- There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- Community engagement included informing residents by posting this report with the agenda in advance of the Heritage Kitchener meeting and consulting with Heritage Kitchener.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

BACKGROUND:

Official Plan Update

Kitchener's Official Plan is the policy framework that guides short- and long-term development within the City. The current Official Plan was adopted in 2014. Kitchener is forecasted to grow from today's estimated population of approximately 300,000 to a population of approximately 450,000 by 2051. Through the launch of Kitchener 2051, the City of Kitchener has begun the process of updating the Official Plan to determine how it

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may grow and evolve. This work will include a comprehensive review of the entirety of the planning document to remove or amend existing policies and/or objectives as well as develop and add new ones.

An ambitious timeline is proposed for Kitchener 2051, one which aims to balance meaningful community and collaborator engagement with a quick delivery of a new Official Plan. Work commenced in 2024 with a focus on the completion of different technical studies, the establishment of a community working group, and broader community engagement on the technical inputs of the Official Plan. This year City staff will begin drafting the new Official Plan using the input received from the 2024 community and collaborator conversations as well as the information provided by the technical studies. There will be continuous engagement throughout the year with the community working group, residents, and other collaborators on the policies which will form the new Official Plan. In early 2026, it is intended that a finalized version of the new Official Plan be presented to Council for a decision.

Cultural Heritage Landscape Study

The Province of Ontario encourages planning authorities to develop and implement proactive strategies for the conservation of Cultural Heritage Landscapes (CHL) and further requires planning authorities to conserve protected heritage property which may contain CHLs. The Province defines CHLs as geographical areas that may have been modified by human activity and are identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Indigenous community. The area may include features such as buildings, structures, spaces, views, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association. In addition, the Regional Official Plan directs the City to designate CHLs in their Official Plans and establish conservation policies.

In 2014, the City initiated the Historic Places Kitchener project with the purpose of inventorying CHLs across the city. The project produced Kitchener's CHL Study, which identified 55 CHL's of value and significance. The study was approved by Council in 2015. As part of broader planning projects, the City has been reviewing individual CHLs in order to designate them in the Official Plan and develop both general and CHL-specific conservation policies. At present, 14 of the 55 CHLs have been added to Map 9 of the Official Plan along with general and specific policies to conserve these CHLs. In 2025, as part of the Official Plan Update, Heritage Planning staff will review the existing CHL policies, revise and/or add general policies that pertain to all CHLs, add the 36 remaining CHLs identified in Kitchener's CHL Study to Map 9 of the Official Plan, and add a maximum of four neighbourhood specific CHL conservation policies.

Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act 2022

The *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, known as Bill 23, came into force and effect on January 1st, 2023. As part of this omnibus Bill a number of changes were implemented to various pieces of legislation, such as the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA). Amendments to the OHA included new limitations regarding the issuance of Notices of Intention to Designate (NOID) for listed properties once certain planning applications are submitted, and the requirement for listed properties to be designated within two years. Bill 200, the *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024*, came into force and effect on June 6, 2024, and it extended the two year timeframe to December 31, 2026.

REPORT:

Official Plan Update - Heritage Policy Review

A heritage policy review is to be undertaken as part of the Official Plan update. The primary objective is to identify gaps and develop contextualized policies which will strengthen Kitchener's ability to protect, conserve, and manage its cultural heritage resources as the city continues to grow and develop. Proposed amendments to existing policies and the development of new policies will be based on best practices in heritage conservation, analysis of other municipal policy frameworks, a review of the current legislative and policy context to ensure compliance, and with consideration to the City's specific development pressures, priorities, and goals.

As a result of the transition of all planning responsibilities from the Region of Waterloo to the City of Kitchener effective January 1, 2024, the City now implements both the Region of Waterloo Official Plan and Kitchener Official Plan. Kitchener 2051 will consolidate and update both documents into one comprehensive new Official Plan. All existing heritage policies in both plans will be reviewed as part of this project.

Cultural Heritage Landscape Implementation

The review of existing CHL policies and the drafting of new CHL policies will be completed as part of the Official Plan Update. This work will be scoped to the existing general CHL policies found in the Official Plan and how these policies may apply to all 55 CHLs identified in Kitchener's CHL Study, the CHLs identified on Map 9 of the Official Plan that extend beyond the Growing Together West project boundaries, and the review of a maximum of four (4) neighbourhood specific CHL conservation policies. The four (4) neighbourhood specific CHLs to be reviewed include: Caryndale Neighbourhood CHL, Pandora Neighbourhood CHL, Queens Boulevard CHL, and Rockway Neighbourhood CHL. These neighbourhood CHLs were selected as they generally represent development eras and architectural styles that are not conserved and protected heritage property elsewhere in the city. The review of these neighbourhood CHLs will follow a similar process to previous CHL implementation projects (e.g., Growing Together, Lower Doon, etc.). Proposed revisions to the existing policy framework along with the drafting of new policies will be based on best practices in CHL conservation, including Provincial, Regional and Municipal standards and guidelines.

Municipal Heritage Register Review

In response to the amendments introduced through Bill 23, the City developed and implemented the Municipal Heritage Register Review Project (MHR Review). This project aimed to evaluate the 231 listed properties on the Municipal Heritage Register and recognize those which meet the criteria for designation. Work on the MHR Review began in February 2023 and is scheduled to continue until December 31st, 2026. As of February 2025, 91 properties have been reviewed. Of that total, 41 have been designated, four have had or will have Notices of Intention to Designate (NOID) issued, one NOID has been withdrawn by Council, 30 are in various stages of review, and 14 have been reviewed and determined to not meet sufficient criteria for designation.

Work on the MHR Review is anticipated to continue throughout 2025 and 2026. A general letter reminding owners of listed properties about this ongoing body of work was mailed in

February 2025 as a follow up to the first general letter that was mailed on May 23, 2023. Heritage Planning staff intend to continue to bring forward updated Statements of Significance following a field evaluation and archival research for Heritage Kitchener's review and direction to proceed, or not proceed, with a NOID.

As heritage planning staff undertake these different projects, staff will be engaging HK for input to these projects wherever necessary. HK's input will help staff in the review of existing gaps in OP policies, developing site-specific policies for CHL implementation, and we continue to designate listed properties on the City's Municipal Heritage Register.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports Building a Connected City Together: Official Plan Comprehensive Update.

One strategic plan action is to undertake a comprehensive review of the City's Official Plan in an integrated way, to update the rules around what can be built in Kitchener's neighbourhoods including a focus on encouraging missing middle housing and adapting to climate change.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – The Heritage Kitchener Committee will be consulted regarding the areas of work proposed scheduled to be undertaken for 2025.

For the MHR Review Project, property owners have been invited a minimum of two times to consult via letters in May 2023 and February 2025. For properties that are actively under review, a minimum of one additional letter will be sent along with two additional registered mail letters if the property proceeds to a NOID and a designating by-law.

COLLABORATE – Heritage Planning staff wish to adopt a collaborative approach to the identified projects. Survey questions have been prepared and provided to Heritage Kitchener to help guide future discussions. In relation to the heritage policy review, the intent is for Heritage Kitchener to actively participate in identifying gaps in the existing framework and establish a shared vision which can be used to improve the policies that allow the City to conserve its cultural heritage resources. In relation to CHL Implementation, the intent is to update Heritage Kitchener on work completed to date and create opportunities for participation in the review of existing CHL policies and the development of new CHL policies. Further public engagement will occur in 2025 as part of the Official Plan Review.

For the Official Plan update, collaboration has included the establishment of a community working group, the Kitchener 2051 Block Party that was hosted on October 5th, 2024, various surveys available on Engage WR, and a series of “Launch On-the-Go Pop-ups”. Further opportunities for public engagement are planned throughout the review process. There will be opportunities for focused heritage engagement along with other planned engagement throughout 2025.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- Building a Connected City Together: New Official Plan Launch (DSD-2024-077)
- City of Kitchener Official Plan, 2014
- Regional Official Plan, 2015
- Kitchener Cultural Heritage Landscape Study (CSD-14-110)
- *Ontario Heritage Act, 2022*
- *Ontario Regulation 9/06 (Amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22)*
- Bill 23 – Municipal Heritage Register Review (DSD-2023-225)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – August 2023 Update (DSD-2023-309)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – January 2024 Update (DSD-2024-022)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – February 2024 Update (DSD-2024-056)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – March 2024 Update (DSD-2024-093)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – April 2024 Update (DSD-2024-131)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – May 2024 Update (DSD-2024-194)
- *Bill 200, Homeowners Protection Act, 2024*
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – June 2024 Update (DSD-2024-250)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – August 2024 Update (DSD-2024-333)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – September 2024 Update (DSD-2024-361)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – October 2024 Update (DSD-2024-413)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – November 2024 Update (DSD-2024-444)
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – March 2025 Update (DSD-2025-031)

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services Department