



Municipal Heritage Committee Report

Report Number: KLMHC2025-015
Meeting Date: February 6, 2025
Title: **Heritage Designation Strategy Brainstorming Review**
Description: Continuation of brainstorming and discussion for a heritage designation strategy
Author and Title: Emily Turner, Economic Development Officer – Heritage Planning

Recommendations:

That Report KLMHC2025-015, **Heritage Designation Strategy Brainstorming Review**, be received; and

That staff bring back a summary of the brainstorming and discussion for next steps at a subsequent meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

In October 2024, the provincial government released the new Provincial Planning Statement which replaces the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019). Section 4.6, Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, is similar to the equivalent section in the 2020 PPS with some specific differences that reflect the broader changes to the Ontario Heritage Act since 2022. Generally, the new PPS policies direct municipalities to be proactive regarding the identification and protection of properties in advance of the submission of development and alteration applications.

One of the new policy directions in the PPS is that municipalities are “encouraged to develop and implement proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.” The direction to develop strategies speaks to the broader need for transparency and consistency in municipal decision making and allows staff, Municipal Heritage Committees and Councils to identify and protect heritage properties in a measured and strategic manner.

At present, the City does not have an overarching strategy for heritage preservation. The 2012 Heritage Master Plan broadly sets direction for heritage preservation in the City but is over a decade old and is neither specific to built heritage preservation nor does it align with the current legislative framework. While this plan served an important purpose in developing the City’s heritage programs, it is out of date and a new strategic document is required to serve as a foundation for heritage protecting in the municipality.

Over the past several years, staff and the Committee have worked to develop a number of strategic documents related to specific areas of heritage preservation in the municipality. These include the Heritage Conservation District Strategy, Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy, and Heritage Inventory Framework which have been adopted by Council and the Archaeological Management Plan which is currently ongoing and anticipated to come forward for Council adoption in early spring 2025. These documents set strategic direction for specific aspects of heritage preservation but do not provide a holistic view of heritage designation or protection in Kawartha Lakes.

In 2023, the changes to the Ontario Heritage Act with regard to listed properties on the Heritage Register required the City to develop a high-level strategy to address how to prioritize and designate listed properties. A strategy for prioritizing properties was

brought forward to Council in March 2023 which prioritized commercial, institutional and landmark listed properties for designation. This strategy has proved largely successful for quickly identifying and designating properties on the register but was never intended to be a long-term strategy and focussed only properties already listed on the City's Heritage Register.

While the review and designation of listed properties is anticipated to continue over the next several years, the City needs to transition to a longer-term strategy that extends beyond properties listed on the Register to ensure that properties that are not listed and may be identified in future as having historic value are protected and preserved. The City needs to be proactive in its approach to protecting heritage properties.

At its meeting of January 9, 2025, the Committee began an initial brainstorming exercise for a new heritage designation strategy. This exercise was intended to be preliminary in nature and identify some key areas of interest and concern for the Committee. After its discussion, the Committee passed the following resolution:

KLMHC2025-009

Moved By I. McKechnie

Seconded By T. Barnett

That Report KLMHC2025-007, **Heritage Designation Strategy Brainstorming**, be received; and

That staff bring back a summary of the brainstorming and discussion for next steps at a subsequent meeting.

Carried

Staff have brought together the Committee's discussion points below so that the Committee can start diving into these high-level topics and thinking in more detail about its goals, actions and outcomes. At the February 6 meeting, staff will help facilitate this discussion to address the targeted topics identified below as well as any other items the Committee identifies as being important.

Rationale:

At its January 9 meeting, the Committee discussed the idea of a new heritage designation strategy at a high level and identified some key areas of interest, concern and action it wanted to pursue as part of a strategic document. These areas have been

grouped and summarized below and staff have developed some questions for the Committee to consider and discuss as it further develops its vision and ideas for this document.

Time Line

The Committee identified the need to have a road map for designation and a timeline associated with it.

Questions for consideration:

- What are realistic goals for the short, medium and long-term (both aspirational and measurable)?
- Where does the Committee want to see the heritage designation program in five years from now? In ten years from now?

Priorities for Designation

The Committee discussed the need to have priorities for designation. There was a general consensus that every historic building does not need to be preserved but that it was important to ensure that buildings associated with important themes are preserved and that the City's slate of designated properties includes examples from different styles, types and time periods.

- Are there specific building types and locations that the Committee wants to prioritize in the short, medium and long-term (i.e. downtown commercial buildings)?
- How will priority buildings for designation be identified?
- How do the Committee's priorities fit within the development application process?

Public Education

The Committee identified public education as a very important part of heritage designation in the community to ensure that the community was aware of the importance of and involved with heritage preservation. A well-informed public is important to supporting and furthering conservation across Kawartha Lakes.

Questions for consideration:

- How are property owners to be involved in the designation process?
- How is the general public to be involved in the designation process?
- What are the specific public education initiatives that the Committee would ideally like to see (i.e. workshops, plaquing, etc.)?

Capacity

The Committee discussed the capacity for undertaking designation and public education which is currently limited to one permanent full-time staff member and a temporary full-time grant funded contract which runs until the end of March 2025. While capacity building with regard to staffing is not within the purview of the Committee, there is room for discussion around the role of the Committee in identifying and protecting heritage properties and how that fits within existing City policy and professional expectations at a provincial level.

Questions for consideration:

- What is the role of the Municipal Heritage Committee and its members in providing support for capacity?

Additional Considerations

In addition to the above noted items discussed at the January 9 meeting, there are some additional items the Committee may want to discuss as it thinks about what a heritage designation strategy might look like. These include:

- What are the City's broad goals for identifying, protecting and designating historic properties, heritage conservation districts and cultural heritage landscapes?
- Are there any challenges that the City currently faces with regard to heritage preservation?
- Are there any specific community needs that the strategy needs to address?

Other Alternatives Considered:

There are no recommended alternatives. The direction for developing a new strategy comes from the new Provincial Planning Statement and is also an important step for proactive heritage planning in the City.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

There are no financial or operational impacts as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Consultations:

N/A

Attachments:

N/A

Department Head email: lbarrie@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Leah Barrie, Director of Development Services