

Town of Cobourg
Heritage Master Plan

**Appendix A:
Background Report**

Town of Cobourg Heritage Master Plan **BACKGROUND REPORT**



(FINAL DRAFT)

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Prepared for:

Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Prepared by:

MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited (MHBC)

540 Bingemans Centre Drive, Suite 200

Kitchener ON N2B 3X9

T: 519-576-3650

F: 519-576-0121

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Appendix A: Notes from March 2015 Introductory Meeting and Community Workshop

Appendix B: Notes from May 2015 Community Consultation Meeting

1.0 Introduction

The Town of Cobourg is undertaking the preparation of a Heritage Master Plan, which will provide an overall vision and goals for heritage conservation and management throughout the Town of Cobourg. The Heritage Master Plan will provide a management framework for built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological sites, and development in heritage conservation districts and throughout the Town. The Master Plan will also provide recommendations based on input from the community and project team for implementation, including providing incentives for heritage-related initiatives, relating heritage to economic development and tourism, and integrating other planning policies and guidelines. In addition, the Heritage Master Plan will update the current Heritage Guidelines for Heritage Conservation Districts and provide a comprehensive set of policies and guidelines for managing change in Cobourg's Heritage Conservation Districts for property owners and Town staff. The Town has retained MHBC Planning, in association with Peter Stewart (George Robb Architect), Adria Grant (AECOM), and Wendy Shearer to undertake this exciting project for the community.

This Background Report represents the completion of the first phase of the project, and provides background information about the identified heritage resources within the Town, a review of current management approaches for heritage resources in Northumberland County and the Town of Cobourg, a review of applicable legislation and other policies used to guide the management of heritage resources (including the *Ontario Heritage Act*, *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, and the Ontario Heritage Toolkit), and the results of the community consultation that has occurred to date regarding the project. Analysis of these factors has been undertaken to prepare a preliminary draft vision statement and draft 'themes' that will form the basis of the Heritage Master Plan. These are included in this Background Report for discussion with the community.

2.0 Project background

2.1 Purpose of Heritage Master Plan

A Heritage Master Plan is a tool that will help to manage all heritage resources within the Town, including the properties currently within the Heritage Conservation Districts as well as other existing and potential heritage resources throughout the Town. Cultural heritage resources are defined in the Town of Cobourg Official Plan to include *“buildings, structures, features or areas of architectural, historical or archaeological interest including cemeteries and unmarked burials and urban districts and cultural heritage landscapes”*.

The creation of a Heritage Master Plan is an important and exciting project that will achieve the following:

- Develop a vision for heritage conservation and stewardship within the Town;
- Update the existing Heritage Conservation District Plans to include guidelines that are consistent with current best practices;
- Provide a link between heritage and economic development;
- Provide clear direction for implementation of the Heritage Master Plan.

The Heritage Master Plan will help to guide future decision-making regarding cultural heritage resources within the Town of Cobourg.

2.2 Project scope and work plan

The Heritage Master Plan project is divided into three phases, as outlined below:

Phase 1 includes background research and policy review. As part of this phase, the project team met with Town staff and the Steering Committee in February to review the project scope and overall approach. The project team then held a community consultation meeting and visioning workshop in March in order to obtain input from the community on the direction of the project. A review of background information about heritage conservation and management in Cobourg was also undertaken as part of this phase, in order to understand the approach currently undertaken in the Town. Following consultation with the community, this Background Report has been prepared outlining the findings of Phase 1. This Background Report will provide the foundation for the Heritage Master Plan.

Phase 2 of the project involves the preparation of the draft Heritage Master Plan, taking into account input received from the community. The Heritage Master Plan will provide an overall vision and goals for heritage conservation and management in Cobourg, and provide direction related to policies and approaches for built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological sites, and development in heritage-sensitive areas. The Heritage Master Plan will also include implementation recommendations, such as incentives for heritage-related initiatives, relating heritage to economic development and tourism, and integration with other planning policies and guidelines. An important component of the Heritage Master Plan will be the preparation of a comprehensive set of guidelines to assist in the management of change within the Town’s existing Heritage Conservation Districts.

Phase 3 of the project will involve the refinement and adoption of the Heritage Master Plan by Council.

It is expected that the three phases of the Heritage Master Plan project will be completed by Spring 2016, as outlined below:

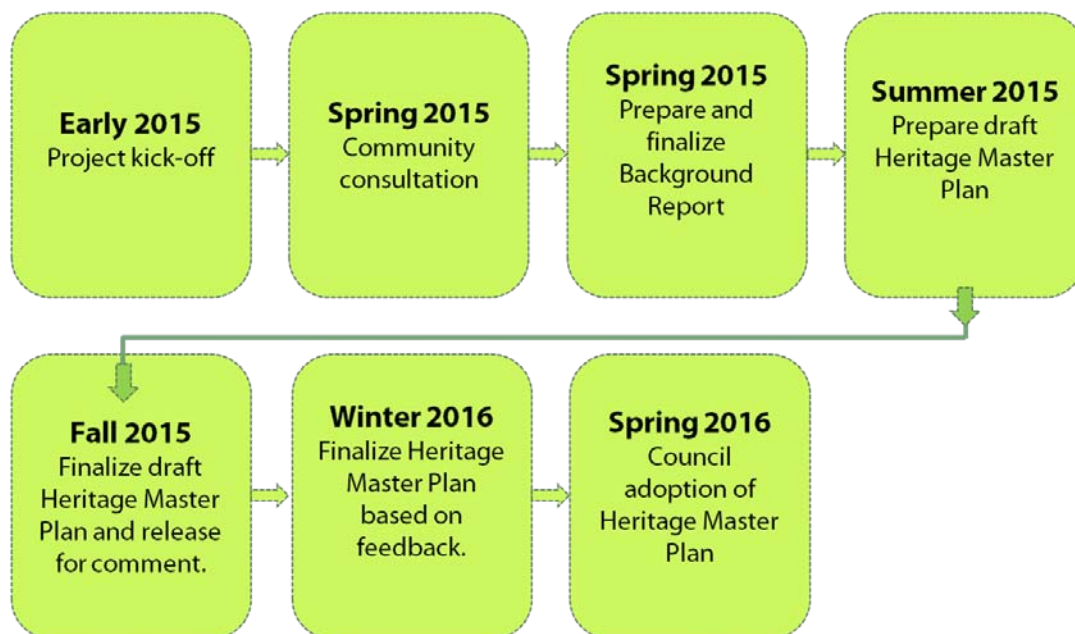


Figure 1: Heritage Master Plan project timeline (source: MHBC).

3.0 Overview of Town history and current heritage management approach

3.1 Introduction

The Town of Cobourg has a wealth of cultural heritage resources that are a result of its rich history, dating from early aboriginal activities, through the late 18th century settlement, to the 20th century. Cobourg is located in the geographic Township of Hamilton, in Northumberland County. The Township was surveyed between 1791 and 1796 (Guillet 7, 1948). Early settlers included Eliud Nickerson, Joseph Ash and Elias Jones (Guillet 7, 1948). Many early settlers in Cobourg, as well as other areas on the northern shore of Lake Ontario were settled by United Empire Loyalists seeking respite from the American Revolution (Cobourg Internet, 2015).

Initially, the settlement was called Hamilton, but it was renamed Cobourg in 1819, in honour of the marriage of Princess Charlotte to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, Germany (Guillet 10, 1948). By the 1820s Cobourg contained approximately 40 houses, two inns, four stores, several distilleries and a grist mill. Cobourg did not yet have a harbour, but plans for it were underway. By the 1830s the population in Cobourg began to expand with the construction of the harbour and the arrival of hundreds of immigrants, including many from Ireland. Not all those who arrived in the Cobourg harbour stayed in the Town – many travelled into the Peterborough region to settle farms (Guillet 14, 1948). Those who stayed found work in the local trades and industries that supported the growing community, which became incorporated as a Town in 1837. The construction of Upper Canada Academy (later called Victoria University and now Victoria College) by the Methodist Church beginning in 1832 also contributed to the prominence and growth of Cobourg in the early 19th century (Cobourg Internet, 2015).

In the 1850s, it was thought that Cobourg would become an influential centre akin to Kingston and Toronto if the bustling harbour could be linked to the agricultural markets in the nearby Peterborough region by railway. The population of Cobourg by this time had reached over 5,000. Victoria Hall was constructed as Cobourg's Town Hall, meant to instill confidence about the Town's potential leading economic role. However by the 1860s, a province-wide economic recession and debts from constructing both the hall and the railway began to stunt Cobourg's ambition to become a rival economic centre to Toronto and Kingston (Cobourg Internet, 2015).

The population of Cobourg remained relatively stable from the 1850s onwards. In the early 1900s, Cobourg became a fashionable summer resort town for wealthy Americans

who travelled by ferry and steamship. The mid 20th century saw the renewed industrial growth in Cobourg's harbour for coal and oil shipments connecting to the railway (Cobourg Internet, 2015).

Cobourg's heritage resources are an integral part of telling the story of the Town's unique historical development, and can be seen in the variety of cultural heritage resources that remain today. These include: impressive educational and civic buildings, such as the former college and Victoria Hall; fine 19th century residences of the Town's elite; vernacular residences of the working class that built the Town and worked its industries; the late 19th and early 20th century summer houses; and the cultural landscapes of the waterfront and rail corridors that spawned the Town's industries.

At present, the Town of Cobourg has in place mechanisms to protect, conserve and manage changes to its cultural heritage resources. These mechanisms are guided by the Official Plans for the Town of Cobourg and Northumberland County. The Town currently has four Heritage Conservation Districts, as well as a Municipal Heritage Register containing the list of properties designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Heritage Conservation District properties), Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (individually designated properties) and non-designated properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. In total, as of 2010, the Municipal Register contained over 760 properties. General policies and guidelines have been prepared to conserve heritage attributes of properties and manage change, including specific guidelines related to colour, and draft guidelines related to signage and windows.

Sources:

Cobourg Internet. "Short History of Cobourg". *Cobourg History*. Accessed online, April 2015: <http://www.cobourghistory.ca/>

Guillet, Edwin C. *Cobourg 1798-1948*. Oshawa: Goodfellow Printing Compant Ltd., 1948.

3.2 Northumberland County Official Plan

Northumberland County has recently completed the preparation of their first Official Plan, with the final version being adopted by County Council in September 2014. The document has since been forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for final approval.

Section D.3 of the Official Plan contains policies related to cultural heritage resources, and includes the following objectives:

- a) *Conserving heritage buildings, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources that are under municipal ownership and/or stewardship;*
- b) *Conserving and mitigating impacts to all significant cultural heritage resources, when undertaking public works;*
- c) *Respecting the heritage resources recognized or designated by federal and provincial agencies; and,*
- d) *Respecting the heritage designations and other heritage conservation efforts by area municipalities.*

The Official Plan goes on to include additional guidance related to individually designated properties, heritage conservation districts, archaeological areas, accessibility, and the Trent-Severn Waterway.

3.3 Town of Cobourg Official Plan

The Town of Cobourg completed a review and comprehensive update to their Official Plan in 2010, and the revised document was adopted by Council in May 2010. The implementing Official Plan Amendment was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and is awaiting finalization.

The introductory section of the Official Plan outlines the basis of the document, and recognizes several features as being integral to the image of Cobourg.

- “a) the historic core area with its abundance of beautiful old buildings;*
- b) key physical features particularly Lake Ontario;*
- c) heritage residential areas; and,*
- d) tree lined streets.”*

It is noted in the Official Plan that the above features should be maintained and enhanced.

Section 2.2 of the Official Plan contains a vision statement, which states (in part):

“COBOURG IS A REGIONAL CENTRE FOR NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY AND ITS POSITION AS A STRONG, LIVEABLE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY PROVIDING A FULL RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND SHOP WITHIN THE TOWN WILL BE REINFORCED THROUGH:

- i) the enhancement and preservation of its historical, natural and rural heritage, including a linked greenlands system, and its vibrant and active downtown heart, waterfront and main streets; ...”*

Section 2 of the Official Plan goes on to review development principles of the community in Section 2.3, and the importance of the Town's image as a small-town urban centre with strong historical, natural environment and rural traditions is noted. Relating specifically to the protection of the heritage of the community, Section 2.3 contains guidance highlighting the importance of the preservation, restoration and enhancement of heritage buildings, streetscapes and natural features, as well as the importance of appropriately designed new development that is respectful of the heritage character of the downtown, residential areas and harbour. The importance of the downtown area of Cobourg is noted in several sub-sections of Section 2.

Section 5.5 of the Official Plan contains policies regarding cultural heritage conservation. The purpose of this section recognizes that the Town has a variety of cultural heritage resources, including *“buildings, structures, features or areas of architectural, historical or archaeological interest including cemeteries and unmarked burials and urban districts and cultural heritage landscapes”*. It is further recognized that the Town will provide for conservation and adaptive reuse of these resources.

Section 5.5 goes on to include policies related to the designation of individual properties, designation of heritage conservation districts, the heritage register, archaeological resources, and various implementation measures. Related to a Heritage Master Plan, it is noted that *“A Heritage Master Plan guides a municipality's plans for finding, assessing, conserving and celebrating cultural heritage resources. It provides priorities and timelines for the Town's actions related to heritage preservation. The Town shall consider the preparation of such a Master Plan.”*

3.4 Town of Cobourg Council Strategic Plan

Near the start of each Council term, Town Council prepares a Strategic Plan to guide Town decisions over the course of the Council term.

The Strategic Plan for the 2011-2014 Council term is dated February 2011, and was reviewed by the study team because it directed Council to commence the Heritage Master Plan project. The overall corporate mission in the strategic plan is:

“The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg will be committed to responsible governance and to the provision of effective, accessible services consistent with best practices.”

In support of this mission, one of the objectives is *“supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Town’s heritage assets”*. The desired outcomes listed under this topic area include:

- *a vibrant, healthy downtown area*
- *recognition and support for the Town’s natural, built and cultural heritage*
- *well maintained heritage district with consistent application of policies*
- *increased investment in our heritage assets*
- *more accessible parking*

The Strategic Plan goes on to list strategic actions to help achieve the above objective and desired outcomes. The strategic actions include:

- *prepare strategies that support the revitalization of the downtown*
- *update heritage district guidelines*
- *examine barriers and opportunities that impact heritage preservation and enhancement*
- *develop a management plan for Victoria Square*
- *develop a long term strategy for parking.*

The Strategic Plan for the 2015-2018 Council term has been released for public comment, and is dated February 18-19, 2015. The document has a similar structure to the previous Strategic Plan, and has an updated community vision, which states:

“Vision

Cobourg...a progressive, vibrant lakeside community, honouring our past and embracing our future.”

The new Strategic Plan also contains a similar objective relating to heritage as the previous version, which states: *“supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Town’s arts, culture and heritage”*. The desired outcomes listed under this objective include:

- *bright, attractive building facades in the downtown*
- *community awareness and support of Cobourg’s history and stories to be told*
- *well maintained heritage district with consistent application of policies*
- *increased investment in our arts, culture and heritage assets*
- *presence of an arts and culture centre in the Town of Cobourg*
- *receive Prince of Wales heritage award*

The strategic actions associated with the above objective and desired outcomes include:

- 2.1 *Complete the buildings component of the downtown vitalization plan, including intensification of upper floors*
- 2.2 *Develop a cultural master plan*
- 2.3 *Complete and implement Cobourg’s heritage master plan*
- 2.4 *Review and update the plan for Victoria Square*
- 2.5 *Develop a policy on the Town’s financial support for arts, culture and heritage.*

3.5 Town of Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Action Plan

The Town of Cobourg prepared a Downtown Vitalization Action Plan in November 2013, which was undertaken as a partnership of the Town of Cobourg, Downtown Cobourg Business Improvement Area (DBIA), Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce, and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The document contains an overall vision statement that was adopted by the Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Task Force:

“Downtown Cobourg is Ontario’s foremost cultural and recreational small town destination forged from a beautifully preserved historic community on the waterfront. As the economic hub of Northumberland County, it will deliver accessible experiences and opportunities generated from local agriculture, environmental consciousness and active, health-centered living.”

The Action Plan proceeded through a comprehensive community consultation process consisting of a number of methods to reach people and gain input about the downtown and factors that need to be addressed. An important aspect of the Action Plan was the need to ensure that heritage buildings are preserved and adaptively reused where appropriate.

One of the central recommendations stemming from the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan is the creation of a Downtown Master Plan. It is noted that the Heritage Master Plan project will be an important component that will feed in to the Downtown Master Plan.

3.6 Town of Cobourg Downtown Master Plan

The Town of Cobourg has recently embarked on a project to prepare a Downtown Master Plan, and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek a consultant to undertake this work. The Downtown Master Plan will *“provide public and private sectors and citizens with a stake in the downtown and a tool that will summarize the downtown vision and provide a predictable framework for future development”*. The Town has selected Dillon Consulting to complete this work, and the project is expected to be complete later in 2015.

Coordination between the Downtown Master Plan and Heritage Master Plan projects is noted, and the study team will work with the successful consultant to ensure that the two projects are coordinated.

3.7 Heritage Conservation Districts

The Town of Cobourg currently has four Heritage Conservation Districts, known as: The Commercial Core District, the East District, the West District and the George Street District. The various Districts are illustrated on the following map:

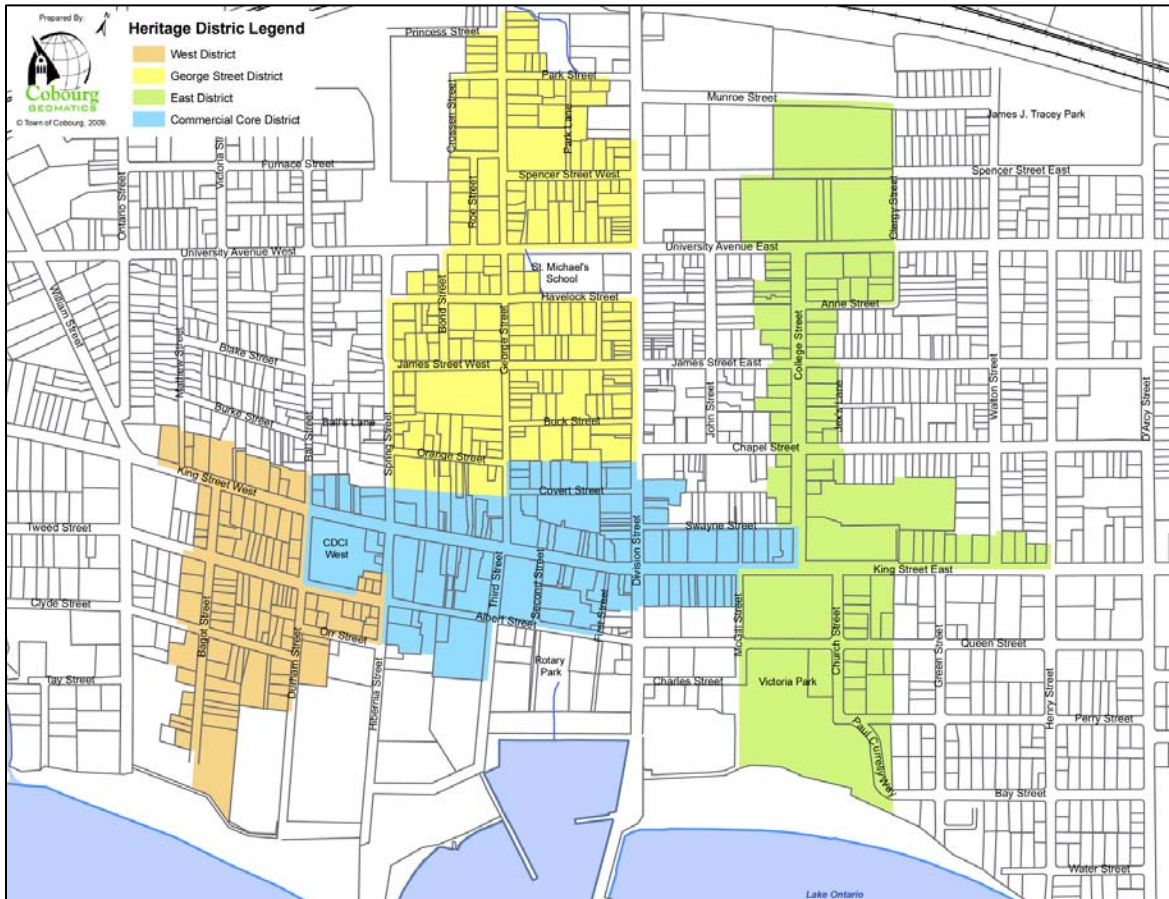


Figure 2: Existing Heritage Conservation Districts in Cobourg (source: Town of Cobourg).

In 1990, The Town of Cobourg adopted Municipal By-Law #27-90 (dated February 19, 1990) which designated the historic commercial core along King Street and residential areas to the east and west of the downtown commercial area. The commercial core area was described as follows:

“Cobourg commercial district grew in the same fashion of other municipalities on the shore of Lake Ontario. Danforth Road and later Kingston Road (now Highway No. 2) was the main thoroughfare between Toronto and Kingston (Cobourg was the half-way point). Naturally, most commercial enterprises located along this corridor. In Cobourg, King Street is the local name for a King’s Highway within the Town. To a great extent King Street establishes the character of Cobourg and its core. The orientation of the Town is reinforced by this linear core and its

continuum of highway and architecture is reassuring for the newcomer passing through town. Fortunately the low-rise character of King Street (for the most part 3 storey) has been maintained and the commercial limits clearly defined. The approaches to the core along King Street both from the east and west are pleasant, green and offer the traveller and citizen views of fine churches and residences.”

The residential areas surrounding the commercial core and the waterfront areas included in the east and west Districts are described as follows:

“Most communities in Ontario developed residential areas adjacent to the commercial core, usually being sited to take advantage of natural features and infilling between existing development and scattered farmhouses. Cobourg’s residential development is similar. It is in close proximity to King Street and it takes advantage of Victoria Park and Lake Ontario, and it provides links between the core and Victoria College.

The waterfront and adjacent open space have played a significant role in the development of Cobourg and continues to be a vital part of the Town. Our survey however indicated that there are few structures of architectural significance in this area; furthermore, a separate study is underway to determine direction for the Harbour and its waterfront. For this reason we have excluded the waterfront from the proposed Heritage Conservation District. It is vitally important that the historic connections of the commercial core to the harbour should be maintained and reinforced. The changing focus of the waterfront to more leisure activities offers opportunities to re-establish these links to the benefit of both the commercial core and the harbour. The harbour also performs a gateway function to the historic commercial core for the many visitors who arrive by boat each summer. The form and character of any development at the harbour should address this function and this should reflect the historic character of the core.”

The three areas were selected as a starting point from which Cobourg could build from by adding other areas as heritage conservation districts in the future. The three areas were selected as heritage conservation districts because they contained a variety of buildings considered to be representative of the social, economic, and political history of the Town. The intent of establishing the districts was to preserve, restore and reinforce the built heritage fabric in Cobourg, and ensure that new development within District boundaries is compatible with the scale, materials and detail of the surrounding context.

An amending by-law to No. 27-90 was adopted on November 25, 1991 (By-Law 118-91). The by-law separated the previously adopted Heritage Conservation District into

three, now known as the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District, the East Heritage Conservation District and the West Heritage Conservation District (see maps below). A detailed Heritage Conservation District study was completed by Robert Mikel, providing historical research, character summaries, analysis of development trends, and inventory of the areas.

The George Street Heritage Conservation District was established in 2003 with the adoption of By-Law 7-2003. The by-law was adopted following a 2002 Study prepared by Paul Dilse.

Since the Districts were designated, a document of general guidelines for the heritage conservation districts was prepared, providing guidance in three main areas:

- the preservation and restoration of existing historic buildings on King Street,
- infill development and alterations to contemporary buildings in the King Street commercial area, and
- residential preservation and residential addition and infill.

These guidelines and the heritage conservation districts themselves were adopted prior to the 2005 changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* that provide specific guidance on what must be contained in Heritage Conservation District Plans. As part of the Heritage Master Plan, the HCD Plans will be updated to bring them into conformity with the current policy framework. Boundaries for the HCDs were identified and supported in previous studies and are not in the scope of this Heritage Master Plan project. Subsequent guidelines for infill development within the Heritage Conservation Districts were drafted in 2013. These will be reviewed and consolidated with the updated HCD Plans.

3.8 Individually designated and listed properties

The Town of Cobourg has 46 properties that are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as individual properties of cultural heritage value or interest outside the four Heritage Conservation Districts. Most of the properties are located within the residential neighbourhoods north and south of King Street while others are properties on King Street (both commercial and residential examples (see map below)). The construction date of the properties ranges from 1850s - 1890s, with a few early 20th century buildings. The properties are designated for their architectural value, historic associations to notable persons, groups or events in Cobourg's history, or their contextual contribution to an area.



Figure 3: Map showing properties designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (source: Town of Cobourg).

The Municipal Heritage Register of non-designated properties of cultural heritage value or interest contains 218 properties dating from the early 1800s to the early 1900s, though several properties do not have identified dates of construction. For many properties, the Register contains a brief description of the resource, such as its building type, size or architectural style. The properties are generally located north and south of King Street (as well as some on King Street itself), between Burnham Street and Brook Road North.

Properties are typically added to the register because Town staff, the Heritage Advisory Committee or members of the public believe they may be of cultural heritage value or interest based on their age and/or appearance. There may also be additional cultural heritage resources not yet identified that are determined to be significant. Typically, further research and evaluation will confirm the cultural heritage value or interest of the property to determine if it should be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

4.0 Recent policy and legislation changes

4.1 Ontario Heritage Act

The *Ontario Heritage Act* originally came into force in 1975, and is the primary piece of legislation that governs the designation, conservation and management of cultural heritage resources in the Province. The *Ontario Heritage Act* has undergone periodic revisions since 1975, with the most recent significant amendments taking place in 2005. Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* contains information related to the designation of individual properties and the creation of a register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest, while Part V of the *Act* contains information related to the designation of heritage conservation districts.

With the amendments undertaken in 2005, the *Ontario Heritage Act* now provides clearer guidance regarding the process to designate a heritage conservation district, as well as the required contents of a heritage conservation district plan. Subsection 41.1 (5) of the *Act* provides that a heritage conservation district plan shall include:

- a) *a statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage conservation district;*
- b) *a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the heritage conservation district;*
- c) *a description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;*
- d) *policy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district; and*
- e) *a description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of property in the heritage conservation district may carry out or permit to be carried out on any part of the property, other than the interior of any structure or building on the property, without obtaining a permit under section 42.2005, c.6,s.31.*

The above guidance was not available when the current Heritage Conservation Districts in Cobourg were approved. The study team will ensure that the work on guidelines completed through the Heritage Master Plan process includes this required information, so that the new guidelines conform with the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Information related to alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and may be carried out without obtaining a heritage permit is an especially important component of this work,

and will be added in consultation with the public to determine the level of oversight desired for the various Heritage Conservation Districts.

4.2 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development, and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The first PPS was released in 1996, with updated versions of the document released in 2005 and April 2014. The PPS is to be read in its entirety and the relevant policies applied to each situation. All municipal decisions must be consistent with the policy direction contained within the PPS.

The PPS contains broad-level policies related to cultural heritage and archaeological resources in Section 2.6. This section directs that significant cultural heritage resources shall be conserved, and that development on adjacent lands will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that heritage attributes will be conserved.

There are a number of other policy areas in the PPS that must be considered in preparing the Heritage Master Plan. This includes direction related to compact communities, complete communities, land use compatibility, employment areas, housing, trails and open space, infrastructure, transportation, economic prosperity, energy conservation, natural heritage, and public health and safety. All these policy areas are interrelated and must factor in to the work conducted as part of the Heritage Master Plan project.

4.3 Other policy changes

There have been other areas of policy development at the Provincial and Federal level since the current Heritage Conservation Districts were approved. The following documents are applicable to work on heritage conservation districts, and will also be taken into account in the preparation of the more general direction within the Heritage Master Plan.

Accessibility

The first relates to accessibility and specifically the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This legislation came into force in 2005, and has the overall intent to make the province accessible by 2025. The issue of compliance for heritage properties, specifically those designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* is yet to be addressed in legislation, but current information from the Ministry suggests that greater accessibility must be met while taking into account the value of heritage building fabric, historical spaces and architectural features.

Green energy

Another area of policy development relates to green energy. The Provincial *Green Energy Act* came into force in 2009, and is focused on promoting green energy projects and approval processes. Proponents of an energy renewal project must satisfy the approval authority that they will have all heritage permits and met any conditions used by a municipality. In addition to the Provincial legislation, there is growing interest for private individuals to install green energy equipment (e.g. solar panels) on their homes. This can often be accommodated on heritage properties provided that adequate care is exercised regarding placement and historic building materials.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

A third area of policy development was the preparation of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* in 2002 (with updates in 2011). This document was produced by Parks Canada and contains applicable guidance related to understanding historic resources and determining types of interventions, as well as best practices related to cultural heritage landscape conservation and building conservation. The *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* has also been referenced by many municipalities as a source of best practices related to heritage conservation.

Ontario Heritage Toolkit

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit is a collection of documents authored by the Province (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport), that provide guidance related to a variety of cultural heritage planning matters. One document relates specifically to heritage conservation districts, and provides information related to the steps to undertake in designating a district. The introduction of the section describing what a heritage conservation district is notes that a heritage district “...enables the council of a municipality to manage and guide future change in the district, through adoption of a district plan with policies and guidelines for conservation, protection and enhancement of the area’s special character.”

5.0 Matters to address through Heritage Master Plan

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Heritage Master Plan and project scope were reviewed in Section 2 of this report. A key component of the work on the Heritage Master Plan is community consultation. To date, the study team has undertaken consultation with the Heritage Master Plan Steering Committee, as well as members of the community. This initial consultation has been very valuable in helping to understand how the community values heritage, and what aspects of heritage conservation the study team should be examining in further detail as part of the work on the Heritage Master Plan project. The results of these initial stages of consultation are outlined in the following sections.

5.2 Matters to address as identified by the Heritage Master Plan Steering Committee

Members of the Project Team met with the Heritage Master Plan Steering Committee in early February 2015 to discuss project start-up and identify what the Steering Committee believed were important matters to address through the preparation of the Heritage Master Plan.

In broad terms, the Committee suggested that the Heritage Master Plan needed to address four major issues:

- Identifying a vision for Cobourg's future as it relates to heritage conservation. Identifying and/or strengthening the policies that will help achieve that vision.
- Ensuring that the proposed policies and guidelines are consistent with the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan.
- Consolidating many existing guiding documents and policies into one, user-friendly Plan.
- Clarifying and, when appropriate, simplifying the intent and/or content of existing policies and guiding documents to make them more accessible.

Within these four broad topics fell a number of issues that the Committee saw as important to address in the Heritage Master Plan. The Committee hoped that the Heritage Master Plan will address methods of identifying and evaluating heritage resources in the future, for example addressing matters of 20th century post-war heritage, 'modern' heritage and cultural heritage landscapes. These areas of heritage conservation are emerging as important topics in many other municipalities and planning frameworks.

Another focus for the Heritage Master Plan is to continue managing change in the Town's Heritage Conservation Districts, with strengthened and improved policies and guidelines for infill development, window restoration/replacement, signage and storefront façade improvements. The Committee emphasized that while conserving Cobourg's heritage is a priority, it is important that heritage districts not become like museums, filled with falsified versions of heritage. It was noted as important to allow new development in these areas where it is appropriate and compatible with the heritage character.

The Committee also agreed that challenges are faced with some of the existing guiding documents and policies, such as those for signage, paint colour selection and window replacements. They felt that the Heritage Master Plan should review these documents and policies, update where appropriate, and consolidate them as much as possible so it is easy for property owners and business owners to make informed decisions about their properties and to work with staff and heritage committee members for approval.

Finally, it was noted that the Heritage Master Plan must address matters such as: heritage and accessibility; adaptive-reuse; tax incentives; grants and other financial incentives; insurance; zoning; parking; and other planning matters. The Committee noted that heritage conservation is not an isolated action, but must be considered in the broader context of planning, economics and everyday life in Cobourg.

5.3 Matters to address as identified through community consultation process

On March 25th, 2015 a community workshop was held to gather information for, and responses to, the Heritage Master Plan process. The meeting began with a brief presentation outlining the project background, and then the meeting attendees split into groups with a facilitator from Town staff or the Project Team to guide participants through answering the following questions:

1. What are the most important aspects of Cobourg's heritage that need to be conserved?

2. What does Cobourg look like in 25 years?
3. What aspects of heritage conservation could be done differently?
4. If you could have Council do two things in Cobourg to conserve heritage, what would they be?

In responding to **Question 1**, many people identified the downtown core, various components of the waterfront, the overall historic ‘feeling’ or character of the Town, mature streetscapes (e.g. heritage trees), natural heritage, residential areas, and parks / open space areas (e.g. Victoria Park) as being the most important features that needed to be conserved.

For **Question 2**, people envisaged Cobourg in 25 years as having a similar scale to the existing downtown and historic residential areas, an improved waterfront, better connectivity and views between downtown and the waterfront and between other historic areas of the Town, fewer vacancies in the downtown commercial area, no ‘big box’ stores in the downtown area, improved pedestrian access and accessibility, pride of ownership and a high level of property maintenance. The overall theme of what Cobourg would look like in 25 years was a more vibrant, connected and accessible version of what exists today, and one that maintains the distinctive local character.

In responding to **Question 3**, people in each of the groups noted that they would like to see increased opportunities for financial incentives for heritage restoration, stronger enforcement of property maintenance standards, a more streamlined process for heritage permits, and better opportunities for public involvement / education / awareness of heritage issues in Cobourg. People wanted to do more to encourage business opportunities downtown and find ways of strengthening the relationship between business owners and the Town in order to work more effectively together in responding to heritage issues.

The responses to **Question 4** generally echoed that of Question 3. People suggested that Council focus on removing the tax rebate for vacant properties, enforcing / strengthening property standards by-laws, communicating more effectively about heritage issues, ‘selling’ the benefits of heritage conservation, revitalizing the incentive program for heritage conservation and showing leadership when it comes to heritage conservation.

Following the completion of the community workshop, opportunity was provided for the public to provide additional comments either by submitting forms available at the meeting, or by sending further correspondence to Town staff. Additional feedback received following the workshop generally echoed the comments received at the workshop, and has been incorporated into the above comments as appropriate.

A more detailed account of the comments provided by the community is also contained within **Appendix A**.

5.4 Follow up from community consultation process

The study team will consider the community feedback to date (and through the remainder of the process) in formulating the components of the Heritage Master Plan. Additional community feedback opportunities are planned through the remainder of the project as well, as the Heritage Master Plan document is developed.

6.0 Preliminary strategic direction for the Heritage Master Plan

6.1 Introduction

The earlier sections of this Background Report reviewed the scope of work to be undertaken as part of the Heritage Master Plan, examined the current management approach to heritage resources, reviewed recent legislation and policy changes, and summarized the results of the community feedback received in the early stages of the project. The study team has taken all the information available to date, and prepared a preliminary vision statement for heritage conservation, as well as draft themes to include in the Heritage Master Plan.

6.2 Draft vision statement for heritage conservation

The community consultation that has occurred to date has been helpful in assisting the study team in developing a vision for heritage conservation in Cobourg. Taking the input thus far, combined with the study team's experience and knowledge of heritage conservation, the draft vision statement for heritage conservation in Cobourg is:

To conserve and enhance cultural heritage resources within the Town of Cobourg, and manage change so that the community can continue to grow in keeping with the heritage character of Cobourg while also preserving the vibrant small-town feel.

The above draft vision statement was presented to the community for comment in May 2015, and will guide preparation of the Heritage Master Plan.

6.3 Themes to include in the Heritage Master Plan

Based on the review of background materials conducted by the study team as well as the community consultation that has occurred in the early stages of the project, the study team has identified the following important aspects to address through the preparation of the Heritage Master Plan:

- 1. Significant cultural heritage resources are to be protected and conserved over the long term.**

- 2. The small-town character of Cobourg (typified by the commercial core, low rise development, comfortable streetscapes, and mix of land uses) is important to maintain and enhance.**
- 3. Having downtown as the economic and cultural hub of the Town of Cobourg is important to the survival of the small-town character.**
- 4. The waterfront is a significant defining feature of the community, a critical link to the downtown, and an important recreational area.**
- 5. While individual buildings and properties are important to be conserved, the broader character of the streetscape and neighbourhoods are equally important to retain.**
- 6. Investment and new development should be encouraged and facilitated where it is compatible with the character of the surrounding area.**

In order to help achieve the above aspects, the following information will be included in the Heritage Master Plan:

- Refinement of the vision for heritage conservation in Cobourg.
- Updated policies and guidelines to manage change within the Town's Heritage Conservation Districts. This may include: conservation of resources, adaptive re-use, infill and new construction, landscape features, demolition, and parking.
- Review other areas of the Town for potential protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act* through listing on the municipal register, or designation under Part IV (individual designation) or V (heritage conservation district) of the *Act*.
- A review of financial incentives and recommendations for action by Council.
- Review existing Town policies and regulations (e.g. Official Plan, Zoning By-law) to ensure consistency with the updated policies and guidelines.
- Review other methods to link heritage conservation and economic development in the Town of Cobourg.
- Create priority action items for Town staff and Council to consider related to implementation of the Heritage Master Plan and conservation of cultural heritage resources within the Town.

The above matters will guide preparation of the Heritage Master Plan, and may continue to be refined as work on the Heritage Master Plan project continues.

7.0 Next steps

The study team obtained input on this document from the community, Heritage Master Plan Steering Committee, and Town staff. Information contained within this report was also presented at a community consultation meeting in May 2015 for input. Following the meeting and period for comments, this Background Report was finalized by the project team.

This final document will be released for information purposes, and will help to guide work being undertaken to prepare the draft Heritage Master Plan. It is anticipated that the draft Heritage Master Plan will be available for public review in the fall of 2015, with the document refined and finalized in consultation with the community through the remainder of 2015 and first part of 2016.

8.0 Closing

This Background Report provides an overview of the work being undertaken as part of the Heritage Master Plan project, a summary of the results of the community consultation process that has occurred to date, and direction to be considered during the preparation of the Heritage Master Plan.

The study team looks forward to continued work with Town staff on this project, as well as additional involvement from the community as this project continues to move forward.

Appendix A Notes from March 2015 Introductory Meeting and Community Workshop

Introduction

Town of Cobourg staff and members of the study team hosted a community consultation meeting on March 25th, 2015 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the Cobourg Public Library (200 Ontario Street, Cobourg). The purpose of the meeting was to provide an introduction to the Heritage Master Plan project, and also obtain input from the community about what areas the Heritage Master Plan should focus on.

The following provides detailed account of the workshop session held as part of the community consultation meeting, and is based on notes taken by the members of the study team and Town staff. The notes have been grouped by topic area for easy reference.

Notes from community workshop

#1 What are the most important aspects of Cobourg's heritage that need to be conserved?

- Downtown, with exception of some areas (e.g. King and Division, post office)
- overall feel of downtown – tie to Victoria Hall
- overall feel of neighborhoods – massing, scale, pedestrian
- Victoria Park / Park Theatre
- current streetscapes, width and character (e.g. Church Street)
- 'beachscape' – availability and accessibility of waterfront for public use
- issue raised: buildings allowed to fall into disrepair / neglected, so result in lost heritage through demolition (e.g. Sidbrook); need a heritage neglect complaint process (similar to property standards) that is enforced by the Town
- more than living in a museum
- buildings and streets important together
- significant trees are important
- get stores to tie in / support downtown – need more than a walking tour, online information, easy to access
- trailer park – keep park safe (difference of opinions if should be kept in use or not)
- no over development
- beach needs to be managed
- disconnect between Town use and shops (need some sort of support for businesses)
- nature in west, beach – importance of natural heritage too
- West High School

- older residential areas should be protected (e.g. could draw a line including Burnham, D'Arcy, rail line and Lake) – broader than current heritage districts
- cemeteries
- railroads and history with Town development and growth

#2 What does Cobourg look like in 25 years?

- scale of downtown should stay the same – height most important
- vibrant, revitalized downtown with more businesses and a good 'personality'
- view up from the waterfront
- Victoria Hall view
- view to Victoria College
- public waterfront – variety of public uses
- larger areas would be protected
- no larger/ keep size and scale
- no big box stores
- no problem with development and growth in Cobourg East
- preserve existing grid pattern and continue with it in new developments – no more suburban pattern – need more walkable areas, improve transit and accessibility
- encourage neighbourhood shopping – more stores downtown, and corner stores
- walkable communities
- keep trucks out of downtown – plan for expanding transportation and construction routes
- same scale (look and feel) – no high rise, same/similar building materials, need to blend together for community feel, modern and up to date adaptations of heritage (e.g. 181 King)
- Designate areas for growth/high rise development, more intensive growth areas outside of the downtown
- mixed use and residential properties – need upscale and low income in same buildings, subsidized housing and affordability important
- incorporate parks and green space into industrial developments, car lots/parking areas, protect streams/creeks and take advantage of new development opportunities to protect or restore environment
- linked natural areas
- move cars away from town, keep parking on the street

#3 What aspects of heritage conservation could be done differently?

- incentive programs – need to leverage property owners to maintain heritage properties and understand what types of incentives have been working
- venture initiative – cost share, not all Town contributions
- stop allowing properties to deteriorate beyond repair
- address vacancies downtown
- combine heritage and common sense
- involve more young people and broader public education – share past/history of Town, entice younger generation to value heritage, get into schools during heritage week
- educate real estate and financial institutions on the values of heritage homes – issues with people difficultly getting mortgages and home insurance for designated properties
- more community engagement and education
- more historical plaques around Town – interpretive signage as well
- more walking tours
- involve theatre groups or other community groups in heritage day events
- need better communication across heritage groups – networking or roundtable updates/meetings, share what all groups are doing, need help with/partners or collaboration, integrate all groups into a network
- CHC – role for committee to help people feel more comfortable going to CHC and heritage permitting process, explain room for negotiations, trying to find solutions, maybe bring back CHC newsletter to heritage communities
- heritage work with business – not cause delays, don't cause obstruction to new growth/developments/changes
- committee/council needs to see/visit the site before they vote on a change
- marketing – value of heritage, working together, improve rather than only conserve
- excite the citizens to help out
- more financial support
- bring in guest speakers/workshop series for business owners (on heritage issues)
- examine zoning to ensure that the regulations make sense (e.g. risk of large lots being subdivided or redeveloped for multi-unit residential)

#4 If you could have Council do two things in Cobourg to conserve heritage resources, what would they be?

- change property standards rules/enforcement – make owners preserve before they fall down (e.g. Sidbrook, Park Theatre)
- pro-active enforcement – hire more by-law enforcement officers
- revitalize incentive program
- marketing – ‘sell’ benefits of heritage, tell good news stories, target young people
- think and listen to people
- better job communicating about heritage issues
- Heritage Conservation Districts – protection is too broad and all encompassing
- remove tax rebate for vacancies (suggestion was made that all municipalities across Ontario work together to accomplish this)
- leadership and consensus on heritage issues
- keep taxes reasonable
- look at other aspects of culture such as art and theatre
- continue on current path to conserve heritage (ongoing support)
- focus on the waterfront

#5 Any other suggestions?

- activate private sector to work towards councils heritage goals, provide better incentives (promote the ones we have), introduce heritage levy
- idea of heritage bonds – funding sources for designated properties, buy into bonds, investments
- seek out Bob Gibbs – heritage consultant with National Trust for Preservation of Small Towns
- small-town vision
- mixed use-attractive downtown (not like meaningless Niagara on the Lake heritage)
- heritage plaques and interpretive signage need to tell Cobourg’s storey
- incentives to develop upstairs – 2nd floors
- Port Hope has a good model – HBIA, PH ACO helps out, communicate and talk together
- more round table discussions
- year round local food and artisans in empty buildings downtown
- hold meetings in Victoria Hall

Appendix B Notes from June 2015 Community Consultation Meeting

Introduction

Town of Cobourg staff and members of the study team hosted a community consultation meeting on June 4th, 2015 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Columbus Community Centre (232 Spencer Street East, Cobourg). The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the Heritage Master Plan project, present the draft Background Report to the community, and also obtain input from the community about the work conducted to date.

The following provides detailed account of the question-and-answer session held as part of the community consultation meeting, and is based on notes taken by the members of the study team and Town staff.

Notes from question-and-answer session

The study team set out the following topic areas to help guide the question-and-answer period:

- *Comments on the draft ‘vision’ and ‘themes’ contained within the Background Report*
- *Is there anything you would like to add to the summary of the discussion at the March 25th community workshop?*
- *Is there anything we have missed in the draft Background Report?*
- *Any other questions / comments / feedback?*

Question / Comment #1: What other projects similar to a Heritage Master Plan has the MHBC team been involved in? MHBC staff replied that the study team had been involved in a number of heritage conservation district projects and cultural heritage landscape master plans, which are similar to a heritage master plan. Dan Currie (MHBC) was also the Director of Planning at the City of Cambridge when they completed their Heritage Master Plan.

Question / Comment #2: How does Cobourg compare to other municipalities in terms of designated properties? Is it the highest? Would more be added through this process? MHBC staff replied that perhaps Cobourg is the highest per-capita, but that other larger municipalities (e.g. City of Toronto) have more properties designated. The Heritage Master Plan is a strategic document that may provide advice for broader focus, but not designate actual properties. Town staff agreed that Cobourg likely had the highest per-capita number of designated properties, and added that the Heritage Master Plan may set up criteria to consider for designation.

Question / Comment #3: In the 1950’s and 1960’s there was a different ethos for local planning, and areas of the town were identified as potential apartment districts (as well as other specific sites). This zoning is inappropriate and should be examined as part of this process. MHBC staff replied that the appropriateness of zoning is an area that can certainly be looked at as the team moves forward with the project, as it is linked to the management of new development at a scale that is compatible with the area.

Question / Comment #4: Can you define what is meant by ‘heritage conservation’? MHBC staff reviewed the various components of the definition of ‘conservation’.

Question / Comment #5: Is there a conflict between heritage and economic development? Recent buildings such as Shopper’s and Mr. Sub were noted. MHBC staff noted that these buildings have a different form than other buildings nearby, and noted that the character and form of the built environment will be one of the focus areas of the heritage conservation district guidelines being undertaken.

Question / Comment #6: In the past Council has not followed the height guidelines in the Official Plan. It is hoped that the Heritage Master Plan addresses what the Town thinks is important and what the Town wants to be in the future. A Municipal Heritage Committee member noted that one of the main reasons for doing this project is because of the policies in the Official Plan.

Question / Comment #7: The Heritage Master Plan project is great, but there needs to be some ‘teeth’ that can be used at the OMB if there are appeals. MHBC staff noted that the Heritage Master Plan is a strategic document, and that the ‘teeth’ come from the Heritage Conservation District Plans, designation of properties, and the Official Plan.

Question / Comment #8: Hear the concerns about ‘big box’ development not fitting with the Downtown, but the impact on economic development needs to be considered. It may not be that the particular business is problematic, but the building form.

Question / Comment #9: Scotiabank is a great infill example within the downtown, and shows that if infill is done properly it can work great. The overall goal is to achieve a great Downtown for Cobourg. MHBC staff noted that the goal is not re-create the past, but that new buildings should fit in with the Town.

Question / Comment #10: There needs to be a strong Council to stand up to businesses that are coming into Town and be clear what is expected (e.g. Mr. Sub, Shoppers). MHBC staff noted that part of a good Heritage Conservation District is strong guidance.

Question / Comment #11: Support the report and everything said so far. ‘Enhance’ is also an important aspect that should be reflected, as we need a Town where people want to build new buildings that fit within the character (examples of new construction in European towns were cited as an example). In addition, people should know there are in a heritage town when they get off Highway 401 – consistent messaging is important. MHBC staff noted that it is important that people see the Town as desirable to be in and invest in. Actual financial incentives are important too. It was noted that when describing the work MHBC is doing in Cobourg to other colleagues, there is a very positive perception of Cobourg, and people are excited that work is being undertaken.

Question / Comment #12: It is important to get people excited about heritage so that they can get behind the idea of a Heritage Master Plan. Will the report include examples to assist in implementation? MHBC staff noted that the Heritage Master Plan will include recommendations and / or direction related to implementation.

Question / Comment #13: Has there been any demographic study of people interested in heritage? It would be interesting to see what the attitudes are of people who have lived here and are in the 40's – 60's, versus those who have moved to Town. MHBC noted that such a study is beyond the scope of the Heritage Master Plan, but that it is hoped a representative cross-section is represented in the feedback on the project.

Question / Comment #14: The banks in Cobourg do not fit with the character. Town staff noted that they all pre-date the Heritage Conservation District, so did not have the benefit of the more detailed guidance. The hope is for strong guidance being implemented through this process. MHBC staff noted that there is not much that can be done if a building is not proposing to change, but when changes are proposed that is when the guidelines come into play.

Question / Comment #15: Buildings constructed now will be the heritage of the future. How can we create policy to achieve a high standard of design, so that in 100 years we have great buildings from 2050? MHBC staff noted that this is mainly achieved through the guidance in the Heritage Conservation District Plans.

Question / Comment #17: Heritage is not always beautiful, and there is lots that is not great. MHBC staff agreed, and noted that there will always be many changes over time.

Question / Comment #18: Have lived in Cobourg for entire life, and didn't realize what we had here until you see elsewhere (e.g. Cobourg Beach was just 'the beach'). There are not a lot of people in the room tonight that were born / raised in Cobourg – often you have to go away to see what you have.

Question / Comment #19: The Heritage Master Plan project is important to be involved in.



MHBC
P L A N N I N G
U R B A N D E S I G N
& L A N D S C A P E
A R C H I T E C T U R E