

 COBOURG	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG	
	STAFF REPORT	
TO:	Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee	
FROM: TITLE:	Alison Torrie Lapaire Planner I - Heritage	
DATE OF MEETING:	October 11, 2017	
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Heritage Master Plan: Annual Review and Assessment of Implementation	
REPORT DATE:	September 29, 2017	File #: N/A

1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 2: Supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Town's arts, culture and heritage.

2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Town of Cobourg adopted a Heritage Master Plan in May of 2016. The Cobourg Heritage Master Plan (HMP) and implementing Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plans and associated regulations/guidelines underwent extensive public consultation and engagement prior to their approval.

Phase 1 of the project included the development of a vision and goals for heritage conservation in Cobourg, identified through community consultation and workshops. Phase 2 of the project involved the preparation of the draft Heritage Master Plan, taking into account input received from the community.

The public was actively engaged in contributing feedback throughout the various stages of the project. The final Heritage Master Plan adopted by Council communicates a vision and goals for heritage conservation in Cobourg that have the support of residents, stakeholders, and the community.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the CHC receive this report for information purposes, and that the

report be provided to Council for information.

4.0 ORIGIN

Section 5.5 of the Town of Cobourg's Heritage Master Plan is titled *Annual review and assessment of implementation*. This section recommends that the Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee, as part of their annual report to Council, include a summary of the status of the implementation of the various action items prioritized by the Plan, allowing for a periodic assessment of progress and success.

5.0 BACKGROUND

The Heritage Master Plan is a strategic policy document which provides an overall vision and goals for heritage conservation and management throughout the Town. In addition, the Heritage Master Plan includes Heritage Conservation District Plans that implement the vision of the HMP and provide a comprehensive set of policies and guidelines for managing change in Cobourg's Heritage Conservation Districts.

The Vision Statement helps to guide future decisions by the community as they relate to cultural heritage resources. Cobourg's vision statement for heritage conservation is:

To conserve and enhance cultural heritage resources 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.

Based on the review of background material as well as the community consultation that occurred in the early stages of the project, a number of important Goals were identified for heritage conservation in Cobourg. The Goals support the Vision Statement articulated in the Plan.

The Heritage Master Plan identifies the following Goals:

1. Protect and conserve significant cultural heritage resources over the long term.
2. The small-town character of Cobourg (typified by the commercial core, low rise development, comfortable streetscapes, and a mix of land uses) is important to maintain and enhance.
3. It is important to have the downtown as the economic and cultural hub of the Town to retain the small-town character.
4. The waterfront is a significant defining feature of the community that provides a critical link to the downtown and an important recreational area.
5. Retaining the broader character of the streetscape and neighbourhoods is equally important to conserving individual buildings.
6. Investment and new development that is compatible with the character of the surrounding area should be encouraged and facilitated. The above goals form the basis for the later sections of this Strategic Direction report, and the various implementation recommendations for the consideration of

Cobourg Council and Town staff.

The Vision Statement and Goals set out in the Heritage Master Plan provide the basis for an effective, sustainable and realistic strategy related to heritage resources.

6.0 ANALYSIS

The Heritage Master Plan sets out several Action Items that will support the realization of the Goals. Section 5.0 of the Heritage Master Plan prioritizes these action items and suggests a timeline for their completion, as follows:

- Immediate Action Items are recommended for the Town to pursue within the *first 3 years* of the adoption of the HMP.
- Short-term Action Items are recommended for the Town to pursue within *3 to 5 years* of the adoption of the HMP.
- Medium-Long Term Action Items are recommended for the Town to pursue in *5 to 10 years* of the adoption of the HMP.

This report provides a status update on the progress and success of the pursuit of the Immediate action items prioritized by the HMP. As the HMP was adopted in May 2016, the Immediate action items are prioritized for completion by May 2019.

When reviewing the chart below, please note that the Action Items are enumerated according to the Goal that the action supports. For example, Action Item 1a supports Goal 1 of the HMP.

IMMEDIATE ACTION ITEMS (<3 years)		
✓ Item has been completed or successfully implemented on an ongoing basis. ⊙ Item has not yet been addressed. ★ Item is successfully underway, or actively being pursued.		
Action Item	Status/Comments	
1a: 	That the Town of Cobourg adopt a dedicated heritage conservation district plan to conserve the character of and manage change within each of the Town's Heritage Conservation Districts.	The Town of Cobourg passed the requisite by-laws to adopt four Heritage Conservation District Plans for each of the existing HCDs, respectively, on May 24, 2016. The HCD Plans have been implemented consistently and successfully for over a year.
1c: 	That the Town of Cobourg investigate other areas of the Town for potential study and designation as heritage	A study was initiated by Heritage Planning staff in May 2010 to determine the historical and contextual significance of the Corktown area while documenting and

	<p>conservation districts or cultural heritage landscapes, and put in place appropriate protection measures for identified areas. Work has already been undertaken regarding a preliminary assessment of the Corktown area, so this would be a logical starting point. Other areas identified include the area west of the West District, and the area along Division Street between the George Street District and the East District</p>	<p>evaluating its architectural resources. The objective of the study was to provide background information necessary to determine whether Corktown requires special recognition to provide the framework in which the heritage assets of Corktown can be managed, protected and enhanced.</p> <p>The preliminary analysis provided by this study concludes that Corktown has the potential to meet the requirements for designation as a Heritage Conservation District, and points to opportunities for further research and analysis.</p> <p>It is respectfully recommended and requested that the Town consider this Action Item when contemplating the Municipal Budget for 2018/2019.</p>
<p>1e: </p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg continue to provide information to property owners about the benefits of heritage designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.</p>	<p>The Town of Cobourg's municipal website was overhauled and upgraded in 2016. The Heritage section of the website includes a page titled Benefits of Designation. This communicates to the public the many environmental, social, economic, individual and community benefits of designating heritage resources.</p> <p>The Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee (CHC) has undertaken to host a free special event in November 2017 which will feature a guest speaker and will invite the community to consider why the heritage of our community is important to protect. Following the anticipated success of this event, the CHC intends to plan similar guest speakers and workshops in coming years, with a view to engaging the community in the protection of our Town's built heritage.</p> <p>In August 2017 Heritage Planning staff launched Walk Cobourg Heritage, a</p>

		<p>series of four self-guided walking tours that showcase significant properties in each of Cobourg's four HCDs. The tours highlight the success of designation in these neighbourhoods by showcasing the built heritage resources that have been conserved in our community.</p> <p>Between August 24th and September 12th 2017 the Commercial Core tour was viewed 282 times, averaging 15 views per day. Of these, 88 views were on the day the tours were launched in an event at Victoria Hall. During the same period, the West tour was viewed 112 times (avg. 6 views per day), the East tour was viewed 91 times (avg. 5 views per day) and the George Street tour was viewed 105 times (avg. 6 views per day).</p>
<p>1g: </p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg make archaeological acceptance by the MTCS a condition of draft approval to ensure that appropriate levels of archaeological assessment are conducted prior to any ground disturbance activities and that development activities do not violate the Ontario Heritage Act.</p>	<p>The Official Plan is a general policy document which sets a long range blueprint to guide future land use development and manage growth within the Town. The Town's Official Plan 2010 Five Year Review Consolidation (OP 2010), includes strengthened policy statements regarding the protection of archaeological resources.</p> <p>It was adopted by Cobourg Municipal Council and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This document was under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). In May 2017, the OP was approved by the OMB.</p> <p>The Town of Cobourg OP requires the protection, conservation or mitigation of sites of archaeological value and areas of archaeological potential as provided for under the Planning Act, Ontario Heritage Act, and other Provincial legislation. Where development is proposed in areas of archaeological potential an archaeological assessment will be carried</p>

		<p>out in accordance with the requirements of the pertinent sections of the Official Plan</p> <p>Areas of archaeological potential are determined through the use of provincial screening criteria, or criteria developed based on the known archaeological record within the Town and developed by a licensed archaeologist. Where there may be archaeological remains of prehistoric and historic habitation, or areas containing archaeological potential within a site, an Archaeological Assessment conducted by archaeologists licensed under the Ontario Heritage Act is required. The assessment shall be submitted to the Town for approval, and to the Province for review and compliance with licensing provisions and archaeological assessment standards and guidelines.</p>
<p>1i: </p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg prepare a formal Terms of Reference to guide the completion of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments (CHIAs) for development proposals involving heritage properties.</p>	<p>In late 2016, and in consultation with the CHC, Heritage Planning staff have completed a Terms of Reference for the completion of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments. This document is available to developers through the Planning Department, and is provided to proponents who are pre-consulting on development proposals involving heritage properties.</p>
<p>2a: </p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg continue to implement policies and guidelines, including the Town's urban design guidelines, to support new development that is compatible with the generally low-mid rise scale and small-town character of Cobourg.</p>	<p>The Town of Cobourg continues to review development proposals with a view to implementing the Urban Design Guidelines, the applicable Heritage Conservation District Plan, the provisions of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law, and other relevant guidelines and policies that provide direction for new development and built form. The formal pre-consultation process available through the Planning Department ensures that proponents are aware of the design</p>

		requirements in the early stages of a development proposal.
2c: 	That the Town of Cobourg consider branding and marketing initiatives aimed at celebrating the small-town character of Cobourg. This could be done for the benefit of Town residents but also for tourism related purposes.	Heritage Planning staff will be working with Recreation, Culture and Tourism staff to highlight heritage in the development of a comprehensive tourism strategy in 2018-2019.
2d: 	That the Town of Cobourg continue to provide information to the community with respect to heritage matters, and explore possible partnerships with other like-minded groups within the community.	<p>The Town of Cobourg continues to use the municipal website to highlight and communicate information related to heritage conservation and initiatives. The municipal social media platforms have also been used to communicate with the public.</p> <p>The CHC is organizing an event in November 2017 to engage the community in a discussion about heritage conservation in Cobourg, and plans to undertake further communications and engagement initiatives in the future.</p> <p>The Town of Cobourg welcomes opportunities to collaborate with the many local heritage organizations that are active in the community. The project undertaken by the Cobourg and East Northumberland ACO branch which placed signs on local buildings that were standing in 1867 had financial and by-law support from the Town and was a well-received initiative.</p> <p>Through community grants and Canada 150 special funding, the Town has provided financial support to like-minded heritage groups in Cobourg.</p> <p>Heritage Planning staff are presently pursuing discussions to participate in a province-wide video series to share Cobourg's history within our own</p>

		<p>community and other like-minded communities in Ontario. It is anticipated that our participation in this project will be determined this Fall, with a view to the video series being launched in February 2018 during Heritage Week.</p>
<p>3a: </p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg complete and implement the Downtown Master Plan to further strengthen the Downtown's role.</p>	<p>The Downtown Master Plan (DMP) was completed and adopted by Council in February 2016.</p> <p>The DMP provides detailed and strategic direction for the revitalization of Downtown Cobourg. The DMP contains a downtown strategy, urban design guidelines, and implementation tools to assist the Town in guiding new development, investment and community building initiatives in Downtown Cobourg for the next 10 to 20 years.</p> <p>The DMP responds to the distinctive Downtown Cobourg context and the needs of existing and future citizens. The Plan addresses key challenges and opportunities to ensure that future change can be effectively managed to positively contribute to the health, beauty and vitality of the Downtown.</p> <p>Included in the DMP is a recommendation that plans for the development of a flexible and vibrant civic space in Victoria Square be revisited and completed. An ad hoc Victoria Square Committee formed by the Town included representation from the CHC and worked collaboratively to finalize shovel-ready plans for Victoria Square in 2017.</p> <p>The DMP is a strategic document that is actively being used by the Town, local residents and businesses as a tool to communicate the vision, goals, and direction to the public, external agencies, and investors.</p>

<p>3b:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg consider the reuse of older buildings (especially near downtown) when seeking additional office and institutional space.</p>	<p>The Town of Cobourg owns a significant number of designated heritage properties which are prominently utilized for office and institutional space. Municipal stewardship of these heritage resources exemplifies the excellent standard of leadership in the conservation and celebration of built heritage for which the Town of Cobourg is renowned. Municipal heritage buildings owned by the Municipality include Victoria Hall, the Market Building, the Second Street Fire Hall, Dressler House, and the Cobourg Police Station.</p> <p>Regular restoration and maintenance work undertaken in accordance with heritage policies, guidelines and best practices has benefitted all of these municipal buildings in recent years.</p> <p>One such example from 2017 is the Cobourg Police Station at 107 King St. W. which underwent renovations to create a welcoming and accessible foyer to better serve the community. The Cobourg Police Service undertook consultation with the CHC and Heritage Planning staff to ensure that the changes to the building were appropriate.</p> <p>Also in 2017 there were repairs undertaken to the cedar roof at the Fire Hall Theatre.</p> <p>Notably, when considering the reorganization of municipal staff and the need for office space, the Town of Cobourg chose to utilize the historic Market Building. This heritage building underwent interior renovations and is now a centrally-located municipal office space.</p>
<p>3c:</p>	<p>That the Town of Cobourg encourage businesses and</p>	<p>Through the pre-consultation process undertaken regularly with potential</p>

	<p>government agencies to adopt a 'heritage first' policy when seeking additional office and institutional space within the Town (especially near downtown).</p>	<p>businesses and agencies, staff in the Planning and Economic Development departments regularly collaborate to communicate to potential new tenants the many advantages of located in one of Cobourg's heritage buildings. The Downtown Coalition which oversees initiatives to revitalize Cobourg's historic downtown, actively reaches out to building owners and businesses in Cobourg's Commercial Core HCD. The Downtown Coalition includes representation from the CHC and Heritage Planning Staff.</p>
<p>4a:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg continue to work on implementation of the Parks Master Plan direction related to the waterfront as a way to ensure the importance of the recreational area is maintained.</p>	<p>With a view to engaging the public in the implementation of the Parks Master Plan and, specifically, the waterfront area, the Town of Cobourg has engaged a consultant team to undertake a Waterfront User Needs Assessment. This project is ongoing and has generated a great deal of public input regarding the future stewardship of Cobourg's waterfront.</p>
<p>6a:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg undertake a comprehensive review of existing incentives programs in order to understand where improvements can be made in order to help program up-take.</p>	<p>As staff resources permit in 2018-2019, Heritage Planning staff will undertake a review of existing Heritage incentive programs in Cobourg and other municipalities, and will consider proposing improvements to generate interest and uptake.</p> <p>With the implementation of the Downtown Cobourg Community Improvement Plan in 2016-2017 there has been some interest generated in the Heritage Incentives available, allowing some property owners to access funding for building improvements downtown. Where an applicant to the CIP program may not have been recommended for a Loan under that program, the option for a similar Loan under the Heritage Incentives program was communicated and often pursued.</p>

<p>6b:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg complete the preparation and implementation of the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, including implementation of appropriate incentives.</p>	<p>The Downtown Cobourg Vitalization Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was completed and approved by Council in the Spring of 2016. A total of five projects were approved by Council that year on a case by case basis, with total grants in the amount of \$54,696.13 and total secured repayable loans in the amount of \$51,886.00.</p> <p>After the successful initial implementation of the CIP in 2016, Council approved \$150,000.00 in the 2017 Municipal Budget (via the Holdco Dividend) to continue supporting the financial incentive programs. An intake and evaluation process was formalized for 2017. A total of five projects were approved in the first intake period, with total grants in the amount of \$47,257.00 and total secured repayable loans in the amount of \$12,175.00.</p> <p>A total of six projects were approved in the second intake period with total grants in the amount of \$32,789.00 and total secured repayable loans in the amount of \$19,687.00.</p> <p>A total of \$64,346.73 remains allocated to the CIP as per the 2017 Municipal Budget, and as per Council's direction, is available to support the reconsideration of previously submitted applications on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>6c:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg work with other municipalities and the Province in order to address concerns related to the benefit of reduced property taxes in upper floors of downtown buildings.</p>	<p>Many historic downtowns in Ontario are blighted by the long-term vacancy of commercial buildings. Section 364 of the <i>Municipal Act</i> (2001) and Ontario Regulation 325/01 set out a program to provide tax rebates to the owners of properties in certain industrial and commercial classes that have vacant portions. This was a mandatory program that provided for rebates in the range of</p>

		<p>30%-35%. In addition to costing the municipality a significant amount of revenue, the rebate was seen as a disincentive to finding a tenant. The result is a loss of vitality and economic activity in the historic downtowns of small town Ontario.</p> <p>On May 30, 2017, <i>Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act 2017</i> received royal assent. Bill 68 is comprehensive, and includes the update of several items of legislation—including the return of the authority over municipal tax rebates to municipalities. The legislative change creates the potential to facilitate the renewal of Cobourg's historic downtown, and will empower municipalities in Ontario to incentivize the revitalization of their vacant spaces. Cobourg has played an active role in lobbying the provincial government for change, including a presentation given by the Mayor at AMO in 2016, and through discussions with Northumberland County.</p> <p>Northumberland County is presently undertaking a review of the vacancy rebate program, with consideration possible for phasing it out.</p>
<p>6d:</p> 	<p>That the Town of Cobourg complete the review of areas where there is a discrepancy between the existing zoning and the direction contained within the applicable Heritage Conservation District Plan, and undertake a housekeeping amendment to correct the discrepancy</p>	<p>The Town's Official Plan 2010 Five Year Review Consolidation (OP 2010) was approved by the OMB in May 2017. Subsequently, the Planning Department is pleased to be in a position to move forward with the review and comprehensive update to the Town of Cobourg's Comprehensive Zoning By-law. Included in this exercise is the review of the policies and guidelines set out in the HCD Plans and their relation to the applicable Zoning regulations in place or contemplated for property in the Town of Cobourg. Planning staff are actively working on this exercise and anticipate the update to the Comprehensive Zoning By-law will be achieved in 2018.</p>

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACT

The majority of the short-term Action Items outlined in the Heritage Master Plan do not require significant financial resources beyond staff time. Some initiatives dovetail well with the ongoing and existing work plans of several municipal departments.

The notable exception is Immediate Action Item 1c which recommends the prioritization of the study of certain areas in the Town of Cobourg for possible Heritage Conservation District designation. Generally, a Heritage Conservation District Study requires a budget of approx. \$30,000-\$50,000, depending on the complexity, number of properties in the study area, and the amount of public consultation. The development of a Heritage Conservation District Plan to support the conservation of heritage resources and manage change in a new HCD generally includes a slightly higher cost due to increased opportunity for public consultation.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Heritage Master Plan and associated Action Items has been widely integrated across municipal departments. The majority of the Immediate Action Items (11 of 16) have been successfully implemented or completed since the adoption of the Heritage Master Plan by Council in the Spring of 2016. An additional two Immediate Action Items are substantially underway, and there are three Immediate Action Items that have yet to be addressed. The Immediate Action Items are generally on track for completion or implementation by the Spring of 2019, subject to the availability of resources.

Approved By:
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