

7.1 Overview

Municipal planning and development policies and practices may have a greater impact on the heritage character of a District than do explicit heritage policies. It is important to integrate all policies that have a heritage impact in order to maximize the protection of the special character of the District.

7.2 Recognizing the Heritage District Plan

The purpose of the City of Vaughan Official Plan is to set out policies and programs to govern the nature, extent, pattern, and scheduling of development and redevelopment and other matters within a framework of general goals and objectives. One of the overall general goals of the Official Plan is to foster an understanding of and to endeavour to protect the heritage of the Town.

Section 2.2.2.5 of *OPA 210* specifically addresses the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District. *OPA 669* applies to a portion of the District at the south end of Yonge Street.

Policies:

- a) Any Official Plan and OPA references to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan should be amended to refer to the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District Plan 2007.
- b) The City should undertake a comprehensive review of OPA 210 and all other OPAs in the District to ensure that they support the implementation of the guidelines contained in this Plan.

7.3 Land Use in the District

The general use of land in the District is identified in the Official Plan and its amendments, and is further refined in specific zoning by-laws for the area. Prominent land uses in the District include residential, commercial, and open space, and a deviation from these uses is not recommended. However, some of the existing development standards associated with zoning by-laws do not reflect the traditional built form and streetscape character found in the District.

If not altered, this will result in applicants having to make application to the Committee of Adjustment for variances in order to implement the design guidelines presented in the District Plan.

Policy:

- a) Existing District land uses, designated in the Official Plan and the amendments and the prevailing zoning classifications are supported.
- b) Zoning By-law 1-88, as amended, will be reviewed to examine whether it is desirable to develop a zoning overlay for all or part of the District to reflect the existing built form.

7.4 Land Severance and Minor Variances

In addition to the matters to be addressed under the Planning Act, the Committee of Adjustment, in determining whether a consent is to be granted, consults with appropriate City departments and agencies and has regard for adjacent use (i.e., compatibility of the size, shape, and proposed use of the new lot with the adjacent uses), access considerations, and availability of services. Infilling in an existing urban area which economizes the use of urban space without disturbing the pattern of existing development, or perpetuating an undesirable pattern of development or prejudicing the pattern of future development is generally considered acceptable.

However, in commenting to the Committee of Adjustment on applications for severance or minor variance in the District, the City should only support such applications if the proposal is compatible with the objectives and policies of the District Plan.

Policies:

- a) Each land division proposal and variance will be evaluated on its own merits and as to its compatibility with the objectives and policies of the District Plan.
- b) The retention of the variety of different lot sizes in the district is important and is supported, as this is part of the unique character of the heritage district.

7.5 Site Plan Control

All of the land within the boundaries of the City of Vaughan has been designated as a Site Plan Control Area under By-law 228-2005. This designation allows Council to approve plans and drawings as provided for in section 41 of the Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990.

Policies:

- a) Site plan control will apply to all property in the District.
- b) The City should ensure that substantial projects in the District are reviewed, in the Site Plan Control process, by a design professional who is licensed by the Ontario Association of Architects and is a professional member of the Canadian Association of Professional Heritage Consultants, in collaboration with Heritage Vaughan.

7.6 Signage By-law

The City of Vaughan By-Law 203-92 regulates signage in the City. Section 11 of the By-law establishes “Special Sign Districts” in Thornhill, Kleinburg, Woodbridge, and Maple. Thornhill should continue to be designated a Special Sign District.

Policies:

- a. The Thornhill Special Sign District, which includes the entire Heritage Conservation District, should maintain its boundaries.
- b. The Sign By-law should be amended to strengthen its protection of the heritage character in the Heritage District. In particular, internally illuminated signs and awning signs should be prohibited, and awnings should be required to be retractable, in the traditional profile and material.
- c. The Sign By-law should be enforced.

7.7 Demolition Control

Recent amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act* allow Council to prohibit the demolition of a structure designated under the Act. All properties within a heritage conservation district are considered to be designated.

Policy:

- a) Council will prevent the demolition of heritage buildings within the District.

7.8 Heritage Easements

A Heritage Easement agreement requires the owner of a heritage building to secure approvals for any changes or alterations, reasonably maintain the structure to prevent any deterioration, and retain insurance on the building in an amount equal to its replacement.

Policy:

- a) A Heritage Easement Agreement should be considered for major redevelopment projects in the District which involve the incorporation and restoration of a heritage building.

7.9 Financial Incentives

7.9.1 Tax Measures

Recent provincial legislation allows municipalities to enact property tax abatement for properties designated under Part IV and Part V of the *Heritage Act*. The City should evaluate this legislation to determine if it can be usefully applied to the District.

7.9.2 Grants and Loans

Other municipalities have found that modest grants or loans are very effective in encouraging proper repair and restoration of heritage attributes. The variety of programs includes outright grants, simple loans, and loans that are forgivable over time on a pro-rated basis until the sale of the property. Usually these incentives are 50% matching funds up to a fixed level of \$10,000 or \$20,000. The City should evaluate some of the programs in other municipalities to determine if such a program could be usefully applied to the District.

7.0 Municipal Policies

7.10 Community Improvement Area

Once a Community Improvement Plan policy is contained within the City's Official Plan, the City may review heritage conservation districts and other areas to ascertain what improvements may be made to enhance their appearance and implement such improvements as feasible.

Once a Community Improvement Plan Area is approved as part of an Official Plan Amendment, a number of tools to facilitate restoration, including grants and loans, may be utilized.

7.11 Tree Preservation

The preservation of mature vegetation is a major objective of the District Plan.

Policy:

- a) Any project requiring removal of, or injury to, a tree of 200mm diameter or larger on public or private property requires a permit issued in accordance with the Private Property Tree Protection By-law No 185-2007.