

7.1 Overview

Municipal planning and development policies 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 City.

Section 8 of Official Plan Amendment 350 specifically addresses the City's heritage conservation policies for the Village of Maple.

Policy:

- a) The Official Plan should be amended to recognize the Village of Maple Heritage Conservation District Plan 2006.

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, institutional 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.

- 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 Heritage Conservation District Plan.

7.0 Municipal Policies

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.

Policy:

- a) Site plan control will apply to all properties in the District.
- b) The City should ensure that substantial projects in the District are reviewed, in the Site Plan Control process, by design professionals with an understanding of heritage work in collaboration with Heritage Vaughan. It may be desirable to obtain outside professional advice to supplement the expertise of City staff.

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.

Policy:

- a. The Maple Special Sign District should be revised to include the entire Heritage Conservation District.
- 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, have a traditional profile and be of a traditional material.
- c. The Sign By-law should be enforced.

7.0 Municipal Policies

7.7 Demolition Control

Recent amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act allow Council to prohibit the demolition of a structure designated under the Act. 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 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.

7.10 Grants and Loans

The City of Vaughan should re-examine its Designated Property Subsidy Grant Program and a Community Heritage Loan Program.

Currently, the grant and loan programs are less active than they were in the past. For example, the 6% interest rate charged in the loan program was attractive when it was enacted, but in the current environment it is no better than an ordinary bank loan.

It would be worthwhile looking at programs in other municipalities. For example, the City of Barrie has a facade improvement loan program, pursuant to Section 28(7) & (8) of the *Planning Act*. Loans of up to \$20,000, covering up to half of an approved improvement, are forgivable at the rate of \$1,000/year. The administration of the program is designed to be straightforward, and user-friendly for both the applicant and the municipality.

The loss of heritage properties due to simple neglect is an avoidable tragedy and small levels of assistance have proven to be very effective in encouraging needed repairs and restoration. When a program designed to encourage conservation stops attracting applicants, it is time to redesign the program.

7.0 Municipal Policies

7.11 Preservation and Protection of Trees

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

Policy:

- a) Prior to the issuance of a Heritage Permit, Building Permit or Site Plan approval a tree preservation plan is required to be submitted and approved by the City.

7.12 Community Improvement Area

According to the Official Plan, one of the actions that the City may undertake to improve the community's visual appearance is to periodically review heritage conservation districts and other areas to ascertain what improvements may be made to enhance their appearance and implement such improvements as feasible.

