



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study Prioritization Report

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| Date: | February 3, 2015 |
| To: | Planning and Growth Management Committee Toronto Preservation Board |
| From: | Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division |
| Wards: | All Wards |
| Reference Number: | P:\2015\Cluster B\PLN\PGMC\PG15028 |

SUMMARY

City Council has supported the development of a prioritization process to determine the sequence in which City Planning will conduct Heritage Conservation District (HCD) studies. This process was developed and adopted by Council in 2012. Nominated HCD study areas are assessed for intensity of development activity, existing level of heritage protection, the overall fragility of the area and City planning priorities as key criteria. Prioritization also takes into account the allocation of staff resources, Council direction and other considerations.

Staff have reviewed 16 nominated HCDs. Based on the prioritization analysis, staff have identified three potential HCDs for study in 2015, and five for study in 2016. Staff have also made minor refinements to the methodology for determining priority under each of the criteria, and recommend that potential archaeological resources be added as a fifth criterion.

As a result of the prioritization process it is recommended that West Queen West, Kensington Market and the Distillery District be studied as potential heritage conservation districts in 2015. In addition, five potential HCDs have been recommended for study in 2016: Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, Casa Loma and the Kingsway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division Recommends:

1. City Council adopt the amended Council-approved prioritization system and criteria, as shown in Attachments 1A-16A to the report (February 3, 2015) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division.
2. City Council authorize a revised West Queen West boundary for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District, and identify the revised area shown in Attachment No. 1B to the report (February 3, 2015) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, as the Heritage Conservation District Study Area for the district.
3. City Council authorize the following areas for study as potential Heritage Conservation Districts: Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, the Distillery District, Kensington Market and the Kingsway, and identify the areas shown in Attachment No. 2B-8B to the report (February 3, 2015, 2015) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, as the Heritage Conservation District Study Areas for each authorized district.
4. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to initiate the study of the West Queen West, Distillery District and Kensington Market districts in 2015, as a result of the application of the prioritization criteria.
5. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to initiate the study of Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, Casa Loma and the Kingsway district in 2016, as a result of the application of the prioritization criteria.
6. City Council direct staff to review the nomination process for Heritage Conservation Districts and to develop criteria to evaluate the quality and merit of nominations for Heritage Conservation District studies.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. However, additional staffing will be required yearly in order to uphold development review and heritage permit service standards and address new requests.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council on May 18, 19, and 20, 2004 authorized Weston (Phase II) for study as a potential heritage conservation district.

City Council on December 5, 6 and 7, 2005 authorized Casa Loma for study as a potential heritage conservation district.

City Council on April 23 and 24, 2007, authorized Summerhill for study as a potential heritage conservation district.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-04-23-cc07-dd.pdf>

City Council on May 23, 24 and 25, 2007, authorized West Queen West for study as a potential heritage conservation district, and authorized \$15,000 to be provided to a local community group for the purpose of engaging a professional heritage consultant to assist with the Heritage Conservation District study.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-05-23-cc08-dd.pdf>

City Council on March 5, 6 and 7, 2012, adopted the document titled, "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" (January 2012), and directed staff to develop a prioritization system to determine which potential heritage conservation districts should be undertaken first.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG11.5>

City Council on October 2, 3 and 4, 2012, adopted a prioritization system and criteria for determining which potential heritage conservation district studies should be undertaken first. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG17.12>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

On March 5, 6 and 7, 2012, City Council adopted the document titled "Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference" ("HCDs in Toronto"). "HCDs in Toronto" creates a fair and transparent process for studying and planning Heritage Conservation Districts that result in district plans and designations that are consistent in their conservation expectations and responsive to the unique heritage significance and character of each district. "HCDs in Toronto" was developed in response to significant changes to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) and the Provincial Policy Statement in 2005, as well as the City Council adopted Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. It incorporates comments received during consultations with the public, heritage professionals and city staff.

To facilitate and rationalize the planning process and to set work plan priorities, staff developed a prioritization system to determine which potential heritage conservation district studies should be undertaken first.

Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) staff considered 16 potential HCDs for study.

COMMENTS

Prioritization criteria were applied to all qualifying potential HCD study areas. Staff have made minor adjustments to the criteria to better compare potential HCDs. This process is described below.

Consideration for Prioritization

The following two mandatory criteria must be met before an area will be considered for prioritization:

1. A nomination package has been determined to be complete by City Staff or the area has been authorized for an HCD study by City Council.

Any potential HCD study areas that have not submitted a complete nomination will be excluded from the prioritization process.

2. Sufficient funding is in place for the HCD study phase to be completed. Previously, funding for heritage conservation district studies had to be raised independently of the City budget process. Funding could be identified for use in an HCD study either through community fundraising, though Section 37 allocated funds under the Planning Act or by a combination of both.

In the 2015 City Budget, funding for HCD studies was made available and the current budget allocation for HCD studies and plans for each of 2015 and 2016 is \$1,000,000.

HCD Study Areas that Qualify for Prioritization

Based on the above criteria the following HCD study areas qualify for further consideration and prioritization:

- Agincourt
- Baby Point
- Bloor West Village
- Cabbagetown Southwest
- Casa Loma
- Distillery District
- Harbord Village Phase III
- The Junction
- Kensington Market
- Kingsway
- Leaside
- Liberty Village
- Summerhill
- West Annex
- West Queen West
- Weston Area Phase 2

These potential HCD study areas have been reviewed and prioritized based on the criteria developed by staff, as described below.

HCD Prioritization Criteria

A set of prioritization criteria was applied to all qualifying potential HCD study areas. The prioritization system groups potential HCD study areas as being of high, medium or low priority. The current criteria have been refined to allow for relative comparison of nominated HCD study areas to each other. Data from 2009-2013 was analyzed for these purposes, as this was the most recent full-year data available.

The indication of priority for potential HCD study areas is not a reflection of potential or perceived cultural heritage value or a ranking of significance.

Qualifying potential HCD study areas are prioritized based on four key categories.

These categories are:

1. **Development activity**

This category assesses whether a potential HCD study area is currently undergoing an increased level of development activity and is therefore at a higher immediate risk of the loss of cultural heritage value. Priority is given to areas with higher development or permit activity. Staff analyzed average numbers of planning applications, minor variances, building and demolition permit applications for each nominated district. Planning applications were not included in the assessment of potential districts that are identified as Neighbourhoods in the Official Plan, and that do not contain an Avenue. It was felt that this would unfairly disadvantage residential neighbourhoods that experience little development activity, but which may experience substantial incremental change through building demolition, alterations or additions. Determination of "few", "moderate" and "significant" numbers of applications was based on a relative comparison between potential HCDs.

- High priority is assigned to districts with a significant number of planning, Committee of Adjustment, building or demolition applications.
- Medium priority is assigned to districts with a moderate number of planning, Committee of Adjustment, building or demolition applications.
- Low priority is assigned to districts with a few planning, Committee of Adjustment, building or demolition applications.

2. **Existing level of protection**

This category assesses the degree to which existing heritage protection is already in place, either through properties being listed on the City's Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Areas with less existing heritage protection have been prioritized over areas with more existing heritage protection. Determination of "few", "moderate" and "significant" numbers of properties with heritage protection was based on a relative comparison between potential HCDs.

- High priority is assigned to districts with a significant number of properties without some level of heritage protection.
- Medium priority is assigned to districts with a moderate number of properties without some level of heritage protection.

- Low priority is assigned to districts with few or no properties without some level of heritage protection.

3. **Fragility of area**

This category assesses the degree to which a potential HCD study area has been subject to increased levels of neglect, lack of maintenance or wilful damage. Fragile areas with widespread neglect, wilful damage to heritage buildings and frequent fires are prioritized over less fragile areas. Staff relied on Municipal Licensing and Standards data from 2009-2013 to determine priority, which was based on a relative comparison between potential HCDs.

- High priority is assigned to areas where neglect, lack of maintenance or wilful damage are documented in the area or additional losses in the area may negatively affect the potential HCD designation
- Medium priority is assigned to areas where general neglect of the majority of properties in the area is evident.
- Low priority is assigned to areas where there are some maintenance issues but neglect does not appear to be widespread.

4. **Planning priorities**

This category assesses whether a potential HCD study area is currently part of ongoing planning studies or Official Plan amendments. Prioritization has been given to potential HCD study areas that are currently a part of a planning study or Official Plan Amendment so that heritage review and planning can be fully regarded in, and complement, other planning documents underway.

- High priority is assigned to areas where the area will be, or is part of a planning study or Official Plan Amendment, or an HCD study or plan is likely to support official related Official Plan objectives.
- Medium priority is assigned to areas where the area is identified as a potential HCD in the Official Plan and/or has not been the subject of a recent planning study.
- Low priority is assigned to areas where a planning study has recently been completed, or where a planning study is not anticipated in the coming year.

5. **New criterion: Archaeology**

This category is recommended for inclusion in order to recognize the value of archaeology in nominated districts and to address the current risk to known or potential archaeological sites. Furthermore, HCD designation would allow for better management of archaeological resources by giving the City authority to require archaeological assessments through the heritage permitting system.

Priority is given to areas with known Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (ASAs), as identified in the City's Archaeological Management Plan, and/or areas with higher proportion of archaeological potential. Districts were measured for the percentage of land that contains archaeological potential, as identified in the City's Archaeological Management Plan. Determination of "little", "moderate" and "high" percentage of land area identified as having archaeological potential was based on a relative comparison between potential HCDs.

- High priority is assigned to areas that contain an Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA).
- Medium priority is assigned to areas with no ASA, but which contain a moderate to high percentage of land area identified as having archaeological potential.
- Low priority is assigned to areas with no ASA, but which contain little to no land area identified as having archaeological potential.

Additional considerations: Cultural Heritage Value

In order to gain a refined understanding of relative priority, the Council-approved process allows for additional considerations, as required. Heritage Preservation Services staff explored cultural heritage value as an additional consideration.

The quantitative analysis of the above prioritization criteria assumes that all districts have equal cultural heritage value, and are equally desirable as HCDs. The relative desirability of a potential HCD is difficult to determine prior to the evaluation and analysis provided in an HCD study. However, National Historic Site designation was considered as an objective and useful proxy for broader cultural significance of a district. Two nominated districts contain, and are largely characterized by, National Historic Sites: the Distillery District and Kensington Market.

Prioritization Criteria Results and Analysis

Staff analyzed building and planning data (from 2009-2013), conducted interviews with City planners, completed site visits, and reviewed Heritage Preservation Services' records to assess each potential HCD study area according to the established prioritization system. See Attachments 1-16 for the proposed study area boundary and the prioritization criteria worksheets for each potential HCD study area.

Based on the analysis, the High priority districts comprise: Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, Casa Loma, Distillery District, Kensington Market, the Kingsway and West Queen West.

The remaining eight districts were determined to have Medium priority, and will be reviewed in the next prioritization analysis. They include: Agincourt, Harbord Village

Phase III, the Junction, Leaside, Liberty Village, Summerhill, West Annex and Weston Phase II.

Recommended priority sequence

There are currently seven districts under study, and this report recommends three additional districts for study in 2015, bringing the total to ten, which is the maximum that existing staff allows. As district studies and plans are concluded, five more districts are recommended for study in 2016.

Studies to commence in 2015

West Queen West, Kensington Market, and the Distillery District are recommended for study commencement in 2015.

West Queen West was found to have high priority in 4 of 5 criteria and it is within the West Queen West planning study area that will be starting in 2015. This report recommends extending the nominated district's boundary to align with the planning area boundary. Kensington Market and the Distillery District are also recommended for study in 2015 as they were found to have high priority in key areas and further distinguished by being largely characterized and associated with National Historic Sites. Staff concluded that the National Historic Site designation signals a cultural significance that is both local and national and that this consideration was sufficient to prioritize these areas over the other high priority nominated districts for 2015 commencement. This report recommends extending Kensington Market's boundary on the east side of Bellevue Avenue to Oxford Street, as shown in Attachment 3B.

Studies to commence in 2016

The remaining five of the eight high priority districts, Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, Casa Loma and the Kingsway are recommended for study in 2016. The sequence of roll-out for these district studies will be determined based on planning division priorities, staff capacity and other considerations.

CONCLUSION

After evaluation and prioritization, staff recommend that three areas be prioritized for study in 2015: West Queen West, Kensington Market and the Distillery; in addition, five areas will be prioritized for study starting in 2016, Baby Point, Bloor West Village, Cabbagetown Southwest, Casa Loma, and the Kingsway.

The capacity of HPS to implement and administer these districts once they are designated will need to be addressed yearly with an increase in development review staff.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: West Queen West
Attachment 1B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: West Queen West
Attachment 2A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Distillery District
Attachment 2B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Distillery District
Attachment 3A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Kensington Market
Attachment 3B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Kensington Market
Attachment 4A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Baby Point
Attachment 4B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Baby Point
Attachment 5A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Bloor West Village
Attachment 5B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Bloor West Village
Attachment 6A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Cabbagetown Southwest
Attachment 6B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Cabbagetown Southwest
Attachment 7A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Casa Loma
Attachment 7B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Casa Loma
Attachment 8A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Kingsway
Attachment 8B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Kingsway
Attachment 9A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Agincourt
Attachment 9B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Agincourt
Attachment 10A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Harbord Village Phase III
Attachment 10B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Harbord Village Phase III
Attachment 11A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: The Junction
Attachment 11B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: The Junction
Attachment 12A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Leaside
Attachment 12B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Leaside
Attachment 13A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Liberty Village
Attachment 13B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Liberty Village
Attachment 14A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Summerhill
Attachment 14B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Summerhill

Attachment 15A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: West Annex
Attachment 15B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: West Annex
Attachment 16A – HCD Prioritization Criteria Worksheet: Weston Phase II
Attachment 16B – Map 1 - Study Boundary: Weston Phase II