

## Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Heritage Conservation District?**

Heritage Conservation Districts are neighbourhoods that are protected by a municipal by-law passed under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council. Heritage Conservation Districts are put in place to conserve and enhance the special character of Toronto's historic areas and neighbourhoods.

### **Why and how are Heritage Conservation District Studies initiated?**

Provincial planning policy and the City's Official Plan mandate the City to conserve areas with significant heritage value, wherever they exist. Potential Heritage Conservation Districts can be nominated by community members or can be identified by Staff. Like all planning studies done by the City, Heritage Conservation District studies are conducted by planning professionals, to ensure that the area is worthy of study, evaluate whether it warrants designation, and provide recommendations to the Toronto Preservation Board and City Council.

### **What are the advantages of being part of a Heritage Conservation District?**

Being part of a Heritage Conservation District ensures that changes in your neighbourhood are guided by a clear planning and permit application process, with area specific guidelines. Property owners within Heritage Conservation Districts may also benefit from the Toronto Heritage Grant Program which can assist with the cost of conservation work.

### **How will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my ability to change my property?**

Heritage Conservation Districts support changes that enhance a neighbourhood's unique character. Property owners within a District are required to receive a heritage permit for additions, alterations or demolition on their property. Changes to the interior, changes to the exterior that are not visible from the street, and routine maintenance like painting do not require a heritage permit.

### **Is there a cost for heritage permit applications, and how long is the application process?**

Heritage permits are free, and are integrated with the building permit process; only one application is required, and the average time for review of heritage permit applications is three days.

### **Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect the use of my property?**

No, designation within a Heritage Conservation District does not affect the use of a property. If an owner would like to change the use of a property, an application is required under the Planning Act. If a change of use requires alterations to the building, the alterations may require heritage permit approval under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### **Will I have to change my existing windows and doors if the neighbourhood is designated?**

No, you will not be required to replace your existing windows and doors. If you choose to replace your existing windows and doors that are visible from the sidewalk, you will need a heritage permit to do so. The Toronto Heritage Grant Program may be able to assist in the cost of repair or restoration of original windows and doors.

**Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my property values?**

Property values are determined by many factors. Recent studies indicate that property values are most often similar or higher in Heritage Conservation Districts when compared to similar properties in undesignated areas. For more information, see:

- "Heritage Districts Work! – More Stories of Success", 2012. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Robert Shipley, University of Waterloo
- "The Economic Value of Heritage Districts: How Assessment Growth in Heritage Conservation Districts Compares With Non-designated Areas in Hamilton", 2016. Urban Insights bulletin, CivicPlan.

**Will being part of a Heritage Conservation District affect my insurance premiums?**

The provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Insurance Bureau of Canada have both confirmed that insurance premiums should not go up as result of heritage designation. Heritage property owners are encouraged to shop around to find the right insurance provider, and should contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada if their insurer has questions regarding designation.

**Will residents be polled by City Planning during the Heritage Conservation District Study process?**

No, Policy 16 of the Council-adopted terms of reference for Heritage Conservation Districts states that Heritage Preservation Services will not undertake any polling of residents or owners to determine if designation is appropriate or warranted. The study process includes public engagement and consultation. City staff present professional recommendations to Council regarding the eligibility of the proposed district for designation.

**How can a resident/owner share their opinion on the HCD Study?**

Community consultation meetings are one way for residents to provide input; recommendations can be reviewed online and feedback provided to City Planning. Comments will be included in the summary of community engagement in the appendix of the HCD Study, and a summary of community feedback will be included in the staff report for Toronto Preservation Board. Residents can also write to the Toronto Preservation Board once the agenda and report is posted, or make a deputation at that meeting.

**What happens at the end of Phase I of the HCD Study?**

To clarify, the HCD Study report and recommendation to develop an HCD Plan for Baby Point is the first phase of a multi-phase project; the area will not be designated until an HCD Plan is developed and the item is approved by Community Council and City Council. If the Toronto Preservation Board endorses the recommendation to move forward, we will be undertaking a new round of consultations in 2019 while the HCD Plan is being prepared and prior to designation.