

Heritage Policy Review and Key Directions Report

Submitted to

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Planning and Development Department
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The Heritage Policy Review is being undertaken as part of the Town of Richmond Hill's new Official Plan process which began in 2008.

The Town's recently adopted Strategic Plan consulted the community widely, and through the People Plan consultation process, a number of goals and strategies related to heritage matters have been identified. The Strategic Plan establishes the need to respect the past and the importance of stewardship with regards to the Town's heritage resources. The current Official Plan process builds on the Strategic Plan findings, and the new land use vision for the Town will be guided by the directions and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.

During the Official Plan process, ten Official Plan guiding principles have been established as a result of further public consultation. These guiding principles provide the basis and rationale for developing the town's land use policies, including policies related to the conservation and management of the Town's heritage resources. One of the Official Plan guiding principles will be to recognize and enhance the inherent and unique aspects of Richmond Hill and to create focal points, gateways, experiences and landmarks. Heritage conservation is a key ingredient in maintaining the Town's unique identity.

Developing policies and programs that conserve cultural heritage resources in the Town of Richmond Hill is an important component of the Official Plan process. The primary objective of the Heritage Policy Review is to identify gaps and develop contextualized policies that will strengthen the Town's ability to conserve and manage Richmond Hill's cultural heritage resources as the Town continues to develop and intensify. New policies will be modeled on best practices in the field of heritage conservation and in consideration of the Town's development pressures, priorities and goals.

1.2 Purpose of the Review

The Town of Richmond Hill retained Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI) to complete a heritage policy review as part of the Town's new Official Plan process. In 2008, the Town of Richmond Hill initiated development of a new Official Plan. The new Official Plan will replace the original 1982 Official Plan and will provide a comprehensive land use policy framework. As a background to policy development, the Heritage Policy Review aims to address the following objectives:

- To review the policy and cultural heritage context of the Town as it relates to the conservation and management of cultural heritage resources, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Town's current practices;
- To identify relevant practices and policies adopted by other municipal jurisdictions and non-municipal public agencies (e.g., Ministries of Culture, Environment, Transportation, Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs, Parks Canada etc) that may be relevant to the Town of Richmond Hill; and
- To recommend policy directions to be included into the Town of Richmond Hill's new Official Plan. These policy directions will be guided by the Provincial Policy Statement and amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and will aim to strengthen the Town's current



heritage conservation policies as well as to respond to the challenges that are associated with the anticipated intensification within the Town.

In considering the cultural heritage policies for inclusion into the Town's new Official Plan, three aspects of heritage conservation consideration are used to structure the recommendations:

- Evaluation of cultural heritage resources;
- Protection of cultural heritage resources; and
- Management of cultural heritage resources in a context of change.

The policy directions recommended in this report are guided by various levels of legislative and policy framework; and are based on gap analyses of the Town's current methods for evaluating, protecting, and managing its cultural heritage resources; as well as informed by a review of heritage policies and objectives adopted by other Ontario municipalities. Besides the Town's Official Plan, these directions will also form the basis of a heritage conservation management plan which will identify implementation strategies and programs to achieve the Town's cultural heritage conservation objectives.

1.3 Report Structure

The remainder of Chapter 1.0 describes the physical context of the Town's cultural heritage resources and provides an overview of its current heritage practice. This is followed by an executive summary of key policy directions. Chapter 2.0 describes the legislative framework and policy context for the protection of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It looks at heritage conservation within the context of relevant provincial, regional, and municipal policy frameworks including land use planning approval processes under the *Planning Act*. Chapter 3.0 identifies cultural heritage policy objectives for the Town, and through a review of the Town's current heritage conservation practice, it recommends general policy directions that will strengthen the Town's current conservation approach. Recommended policy directions specifically addressing the Town anticipated intensification are based on best practices research.

The heritage policy review was conducted under the project direction of Dr. Ronald Williamson, partner and Chief Archaeologist at ASI. Rebecca Sciarra, Heritage Planner at ASI, was responsible for collaboration with Town of Richmond Heritage Staff and development of the research work plan and execution of research strategies. Lindsay Popert, Assistant Heritage Planner at ASI, provided primary and secondary data collection services.

1.4 Cultural Heritage Context in the Town of Richmond Hill

1.4.1 Physical Cultural Heritage Context

The Town of Richmond Hill's Euro-Canadian history dates back to over two hundred years ago when Yonge Street was first carved out of the landscape to serve as a military route. Settlement patterns soon emerged, largely concentrated along this well traveled corridor and were initially carried out by British immigrants and United Empire Loyalists. By the early 1800s, lands surrounding the Yonge Street and



Major Mackenzie Drive intersection became a focal point for development and by the 1850s many of the streets that currently surround this intersection were established. In the latter half of the 19th century, the Village of Richmond Hill was firmly established and smaller communities began to emerge, concentrated around major intersections (See Appendix A, Figures 2 - 5).

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Town of Richmond Hill continued to transform itself from a village and disparate hamlets into a thriving town centre. Laying of a radial line and railroad between 1890 and 1910 and the emergence of the automobile resulted in the Town's growing urbanization. By 1910, the first plan of subdivision had been registered in the vicinity of the Town core. In the post-war years, residential subdivision and industrial development continued to dominate land use development themes in the Town. In 1957, official Town status was granted and in the latter half of the 20th century more land was annexed from neighbouring townships to further provide more opportunities for growth and development.

Evidence of this rich and layered development continues to exist in the Town of Richmond Hill, endowing it with a dynamic physical character. For example, vestiges of early settlement patterns associated with the Headford hamlet and mill can be viewed in the vicinity of the Leslie Avenue and Major Mackenzie intersection, while portions of the Gormley hamlet are readily visible in the landscape. Northwest of 16th Avenue and Bayview Avenue, the David Dunlap Observatory, an important site that reflects on the province's early 20th century advances in science technology overlays a 19th century farmscape. Maintaining these built features and dynamic landscapes has been a priority for the Town of Richmond Hill since the late 1970s.

1.4.2 Heritage Conservation Practice

Conservation of cultural heritage resources in the Town of Richmond Hill dates back to the late 1970s when the Town started to officially protect properties through designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and close to 60 properties have been designated. During the 1980s, the Town's heritage conservation efforts were further strengthened by developing an Archaeological Master Plan, which identified areas within the Town with archaeological potential; and by establishing a local heritage committee. In 1985 the Richmond Hill Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) was established to advise Council on heritage matters pertaining to the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The committee, now known as Heritage Richmond Hill, developed an *Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance* which identifies properties within the Town that are of heritage interest. It should be noted that inclusion of a property on the inventory did not ensure protection. Rather, the list of the heritage resources helped the Town identify and monitor its stock of cultural heritage resources.

Heritage Richmond Hill continues to be an advocate for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in the Town. It encourages designation of properties, provides advice to designated property owners regarding appropriate alternations, and helps administer the Heritage Grant program. The grant is accessible to owners of designated properties and can be used for appropriate restoration projects.

The Town's heritage inventory was updated in 1992 and most recently reviewed and digitized in 2008. Hard copy and electronic versions of the inventory are now accessible and provide municipal address information, photographic documentation, and brief descriptions of each inventoried properties' potential cultural heritage value. GIS (Geographic Information System) information for inventoried



properties has also been compiled and the Town is now able to generate the location of identified cultural heritage resources on its base mapping.

The Town's *Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance* was formally approved by Council as the heritage register, and properties listed on it now benefit from temporary demolition controls, as established under Section 27 (3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Heritage staff review development applications and demolition permits as they relate to identified and inventoried cultural heritage resources. Approval and updating of the Town's *Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance* has been an important accomplishment. The *Inventory* lists hundreds of properties, which are subject to development and demolition control review processes.

In 2008, the Town developed the Terms of Reference for Heritage Impact Assessments to be included in the Site Plan review process as part of *Town of Richmond Hill's Consolidated Development Application*. This provision requires applicants to determine if any heritage resources are located on the subject lands in question, and if so, how the heritage resources may be impacted.

The requirement of the impact assessment provides the Town greater control when reviewing the impact of development applications and Demolition Permits on designated and inventoried properties. While the Town has made strides in integrating heritage resources into the land use planning process, via adoption of a heritage inventory, it also continues to pursue protection of significant resources through designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Currently, the Town strives to consider designation of five properties on a yearly basis.

1.5 Executive Summary of Key Heritage Policy Directions

The Heritage Policy Review recommends a number of cultural heritage policy directions to be included in the Town's new Official Plan. These directions, guided by various levels of legislative framework, are based on gap analyses of the Town's current methods for evaluating, protecting, and managing its cultural heritage resources, and are informed by a review of heritage policies and objectives adopted by other Ontario municipalities.

Detailed discussion of these directions is presented in Chapter 3.0. The following tables summarize the various recommended cultural heritage policy directions; and they aim to help evaluate, protect, and manage the Town's cultural heritage resources in a context of change.



Table 1: Key Cultural Heritage Policy Directions

- Conserve the Town of Richmond Hill’s cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.
- Establish a continuing process of evaluation, protection and management of the Town’s cultural heritage resources.
- Promote public awareness of the Town’s heritage resources.
- Foster public - private partnership to support conservation of the Town’s cultural heritage resources.
- Use all relevant provincial legislation, and all related plans and strategies to appropriately evaluate, protect, and manage the Town’s cultural heritage resources.
- Utilize the planning approval process to implement the ongoing management of the Town’s cultural heritage resources, and ensure that all new development and site alterations conserve significant cultural heritage resources.



Table 2: Policy Directions for the Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Resources	
	Identify built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, and Heritage Conservation Districts through a continuing process of inventory, survey, and evaluation as a basis for wise management of these resources.
	Establish identification and evaluation criteria that will help prioritize conservation strategies and efforts.



Table 3: Policy Directions for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Resources
• Designate properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act, and utilize heritage easements where possible.
• Prioritize <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> designations in the context of anticipated intensification areas.
• Encourage the ongoing care, stewardship and maintenance of significant cultural heritage resources by property owners.
• Promote sound conservation practice to property owners and members of the public.
• Establish property standards for designated properties.
• Provide up-to-date information of all designated properties to ensure effective protection.
• Establish security and maintenance guidelines for heritage resources that are undergoing a planning process or otherwise may remain vacant or unused.



Table 4: Policy Directions for the Management of Cultural Heritage Resources
Utilize agreements through the planning approval process to implement the on-going conservation management of the Town’s cultural heritage resources.
Support the retention, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use of cultural heritage resources through the development of incentives and programs.
Encourage the conservation of significant cultural heritage resources in their original setting and consider relocation only when all other conservation options have been exhausted.
Establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with appropriate public agencies for the on-going conservation and management of cultural heritage resources owned by public agencies.
Establish guidelines for the purchase or acceptance of donated heritage properties to the Town.



2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Provincial Policy Context

2.1.1 Ontario Heritage Act

In the Province of Ontario the *Ontario Heritage Act* is the primary legislative authority that provides the basis and tools for protecting and conserving properties of heritage value as well as archaeological resources. The Ministry of Culture (MCL) is charged under Section 2 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* with the responsibility to determine policies, priorities and programs for the conservation, protection and preservation of the heritage of Ontario. Most recently, the ministry has published a guideline to help direct development of municipal heritage planning objectives and tools: *Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process* (2006).

The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to conserve cultural heritage resources within the Province of Ontario. The Act establishes mechanisms and tools for municipalities to evaluate, protect and manage their cultural heritage resources. The following provides a summary of mechanisms enabled through the *Ontario Heritage Act* and which are used by municipalities to evaluate, protect, and manage cultural heritage resources:

- Municipal heritage registers which identify properties of cultural heritage interest or value.
- Regulation 9/06 of the Act which provides municipalities with evaluative criteria for identifying a property's specific cultural heritage value.
- Designation of properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which enables a process for managing changes to or adjacent to designated properties while protecting the resource's heritage attributes.
- Heritage easements between municipal authorities and property owners to protect a property's cultural heritage values and/or heritage attributes.
- Heritage permit applications which enable municipalities to review alterations to designated properties.
- Prescription of minimum standards by municipalities for the maintenance of designated properties.
- Inspections of properties designated or proposed to be designated by municipal authorities.
- Grants and loans established by the municipality for the purposes of undertaking appropriate alterations to designated properties.
- Demolition controls to prevent or delay removal of properties designated under Part IV or Part V of the act or which are listed on an adopted municipal register.

2.1.2 Provincial Policy Statement

While the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides the legal basis for protecting and conserving cultural heritage resources, the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)* and the *Planning Act* provide guidance for the protection of cultural heritage resources within the land use planning and development approval process. The *PPS* which came into effect on March 1, 2005 through Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, provides policy principles and objectives which inform and guide planning and development decisions. The *Planning Act* requires that decisions affecting planning matters “shall be consistent” with the *PPS* and establishes municipal planning mechanisms that may be adopted to implement these principles.

Specific to conservation of cultural heritage resources, the *PPS* recognizes that “Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being depend on protecting... cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits” (Provincial Policy Statement, Section 2.0). It also establishes that “The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of [the] Provincial Policy Statement” (Provincial Policy Statement, Section 4.3).

The *PPS* also presents more detailed cultural heritage resource policies:

- 2.6.1 Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.
- 2.6.3 Development and site alteration may be permitted on adjacent land to protected heritage property where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved. Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches may be required in order to conserve the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property by the adjacent development or site alteration.

2.1.3 Heritage Conservation within the Context of Intensification

The 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement* establishes that intensification is a key principle in the province's growth and development plan. Intensified development is intended to limit urban sprawl and protect valued ecosystems and natural features. This broad policy direction is supported and implemented through the *Places to Grow Act* and Places to Grow Initiative. The *Places to Grow Act* identifies and designates growth areas across the province.

This growth management policy framework presents direct implications for developments in the Town of Richmond Hill. Intensification and notable transit initiatives are anticipated in the Town, particularly concentrated around already built-up areas. In accordance with *Places to Grow* legislation both York Region and the Town of Richmond Hill have identified regional centres, corridors, and areas that will accommodate intensification strategies.

Identifying already built up areas that can accommodate intensification and residential development is an essential component of achieving these growth targets. York Region and the Town of Richmond Hill have identified the following centres, corridors, and areas as targets for growth (York Region 2008, 2003; Town of Richmond Hill 2009) (Figure 1):

- Richmond Hill Regional Centre (Area bounded by Yonge Street on the west, Highway 7 on the south, Bayview Avenue on the east and 16th Avenue on the north);
- Yonge Street Corridor and including specific areas such as Richmond Hill Centre, Bayview Glen, Yonge Street-16th Avenue/Carville Avenue, and Yonge Street between Major Mackenzie Drive and Elgin Mills Road; and
- Highway 7 Corridor.

This projected growth and intensification plan introduces new and increased challenges for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in the Town's historic village core area and in the vicinity of major intersections Appendix A, Figures 6 - 8 illustrate that numerous cultural heritage resource are located within areas expected to accommodate intensification. These areas once anchored 19th and early 20th century settlement centres and hamlets.

Specifically, Yonge Street had historically been the main traveling route in Southern Ontario, and it travels through the Town's historic village core and retains numerous resources that are associated with the Town's 19th century development. As a major traffic corridor today, public transit investments have been planned for this corridor, and will initiate redevelopment and intensification, which will likely impact the heritage resources in the vicinity.

The anticipated growth will present new impacts to cultural heritage resources but also presents an opportunity for the Town of Richmond Hill to establish focused, strategic, and innovative conservation strategies and become a leader in the evaluation, protection, and management of cultural heritage resources.



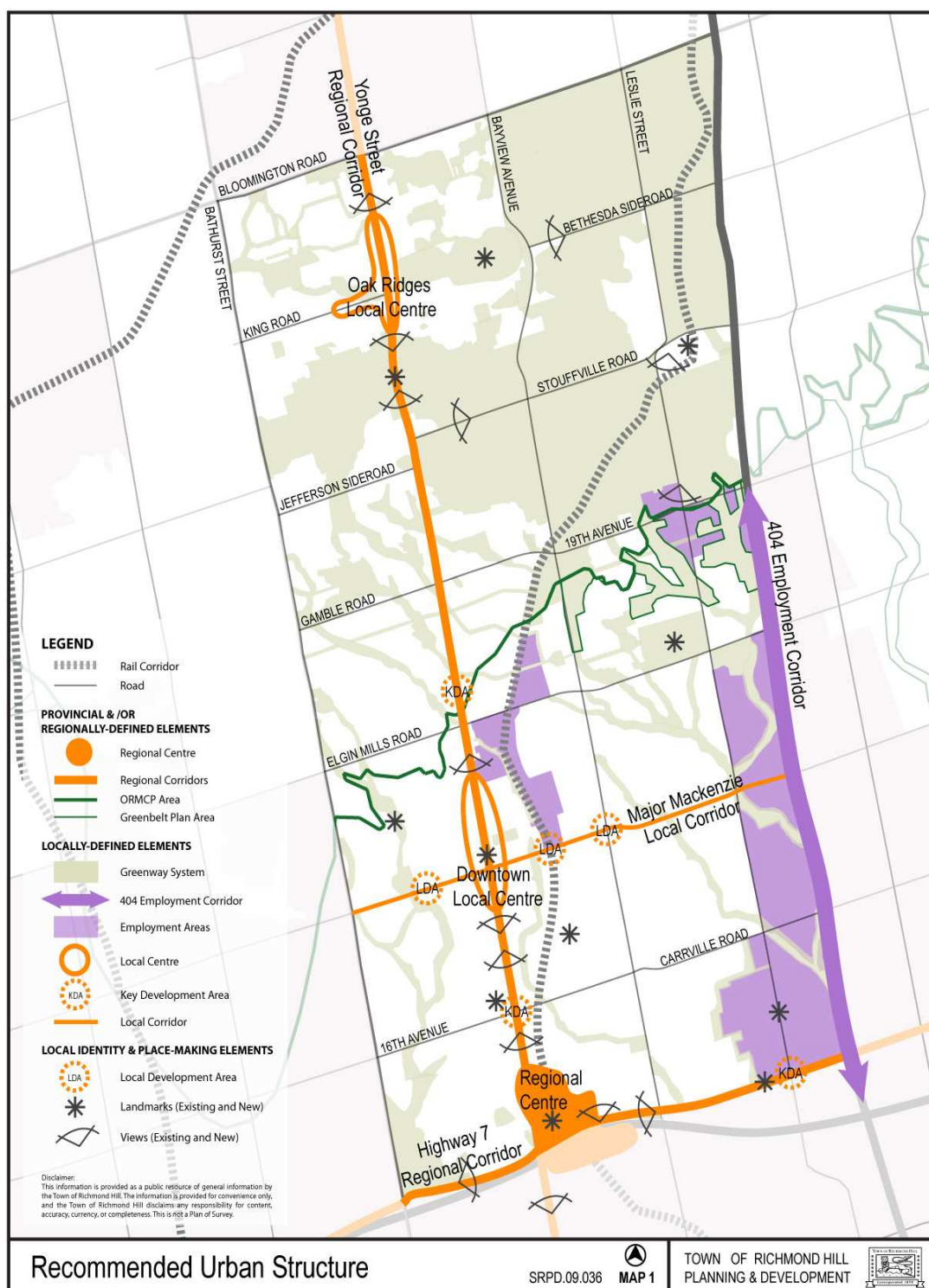


Figure 1: Identified intensification centres, corridors, and areas in the Town of Richmond Hill, as identified by York Region and the Town of Richmond Hill

2.2 Regional Policy Context

York Region's Official Plan (2008) establishes policies to guide economic, environmental and community-building decisions affecting land use in the Region. These policies also provide a framework for more detailed planning to be undertaken at the municipal level. Specific to conservation of cultural heritage resources, York Region's Official Plan establishes that a regional objective is to "recognize, conserve, and promote cultural heritage resources and to perpetuate their value and benefit to the community" (York Region 2008:40).

The Region's Official Plan provides policies which support this objective. These policies provide direction for the conservation of cultural heritage resources owned by the Region and which may be affected by regional projects. The Plan also provides several policies that address municipal effort in the cultural heritage conservation in York Region.

The following Regional policies address conservation of cultural heritage resources:

1. To compile and maintain a list of significant cultural heritage resources in consultation with heritage experts, the area municipalities and their local heritage committees, Ministries of the Province of Ontario and the appropriate Federal agencies so as to prevent loss of such resources.
3. To require area municipalities to adopt official plan policies to conserve significant cultural heritage resources.
4. To encourage area municipalities to document other significant cultural heritage resource and to promote heritage awareness.
6. To encourage any area municipalities undertaking community improvement plans and programs to conserve cultural heritage resources.
7. To ensure on lands that have or may have a cultural heritage resource, that an evaluation of the resource is carried out and that the proponent of the development in cooperation with the area municipality, the Region and the Province prepares a strategy for conserving the cultural heritage resources.
8. To encourage area municipalities to consider design that depicts heritage qualities when approving developments in older neighbourhoods or main street areas, so that development or redevelopment reflects the character and streetscape of the area.

The Region is currently developing a new Official Plan to meet the requirements of the *Places to Grow Act*. The June 2009 draft of the Plan continues the direction outlined above but adds specific considerations for archeological resources.

2.3 Municipal Policy Context

2.3.1 Current Town of Richmond Hill Official Plan

The Town of Richmond Hill's current Official Plan is more than 25 years old and was most recently consolidated in 1998. This Official Plan addresses conservation of cultural heritage resources by providing several policies contained in Section 2.2.2.6 of the current Plan.

Cultural heritage resource policies contained in the Town's current Official Plan provide a starting point for conserving its cultural heritage resources. These policies establish a number of important components towards the heritage conservation management in the municipality. They provide a basis for: establishing a heritage inventory; appointing a municipal heritage committee; designating individual properties and areas; establishing grants or funds to offset appropriate restoration work; and in principle, provided guidance to encourage retention of cultural heritage resources in new developments

However, these policies provide limited direction regarding heritage conservation within a context of change and intensification. These policies require updating to ensure that the full range of provisions contained within the *Ontario Heritage Act* and the most up to date and effective approach for conserving cultural heritage resources at the municipal level are reflected. In addition, a more robust mechanism for heritage conservation must be integrated effectively with the planning approval process in light of this context of anticipated growth.

2.3.2 People Plan

In 2009 the Town developed the Richmond Hill Strategic Plan entitled *A Plan for People, A Plan for Change*. This document establishes a long-term version of what residents would like the Town to become over the next 25 years. The contents of this document reflect the goals and visions of Town residents and are based on the results of community dialogue. It presents four goals and defines the outcomes and strategies associated within achieving them. In part, this document and its identification of Town goals affirms that conservation of cultural heritage resources is an important component of the Town's long term vision over the next 25 years.

Specifically, Goal Three establishes that the development of a cultural heritage resource management strategy is part of the Town's overall vision. Goal Three addresses a "more vibrant Richmond Hill" and notes that "some of the best places to live and do business are dynamic and diverse. They have a unique sense of place and identity. They are vibrant" (Richmond Hill 2009:10). This document clearly recognizes that achievement of this goal is reliant upon "respecting the past" and maintaining "a sense of identity and place" (Richmond Hill 2009:11).

2.3.3 Official Plan Guiding Principles

As part of the Town's new Official Plan process, guiding principles were developed based on several public consultation sessions. These guiding principles serve as a foundation on which to develop more specific planning policies, including policies that address conservation of the Town's cultural heritage resources.

Development of cultural heritage policies for inclusion into the Town's new Official Plan will be guided by the principle of 'place-making'. A commitment to 'place-making' provides a sound basis for the development of cultural heritage policies. This commitment acknowledges that the Town will "recognize and enhance the inherent and unique aspects of Richmond Hill and create focal points, gateways, experiences, and landmarks" (Richmond Hill 2009).



3.0 GAP ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDED POLICY DIRECTIONS

Analysis of the Town's current heritage practice indicates that a cultural heritage conservation framework is in place. However, there are select programming and policy gaps, and in some cases, current policies may require refinement and/or updating to reflect changes in the larger policy and development context. This chapter identifies gaps in the Town's current conservation practice and proposes policy directions to address these gaps at the Official Plan level.

Section 3.1 briefly summarizes the findings of cultural heritage policy objectives based on a review of other municipal official plans. Section 3.2 presents six key cultural heritage policy directions identified for the Town. These key directions provide a basis for developing more specific policy directions presented in Sections 3.3, 3.4., and 3.5, as they relate to the Evaluation, Protection, and Management of heritage resources respectively.

Each of these sections comprises descriptions of a heritage conservation context, the Town's current practice and gaps, and finally proposed policy direction(s) recommended addressing the gaps. These policy directions are consistent with directives and policies put forward by the Ministry of Culture, contained within the Provincial Policy Statement.

3.1 Cultural Heritage Policy Survey

Clearly defined objectives not only provide directions for policy development in the official plan and form the basis of implementation strategies; they also provide a standard against which the soundness of the policy can be measured. A benchmark survey on cultural heritage policies from 12 Ontario municipalities was conducted and it is clear that different heritage policies have been developed to achieve conservation and management objectives that address specific heritage concerns.

These key objectives are summarized as follows:

- Identify the broad and long-term goal towards the conservation of cultural heritage resources;
- Establish and evaluate the range and type of resources that should be conserved;
- Balance cultural heritage conservation objectives with other planning objectives in the Official Plan;
- Situate heritage conservation management within broader planning and development contexts;
- Define the role of the community in the conservation of cultural heritage resources;
- Identify specific conservation treatments and/or approaches that will be promoted, i.e. adaptive re-use, rehabilitation, restoration, relocation etc.
- Provide municipal leadership in the conservation of cultural heritage resources;
- Establish the legislative and policy context to support municipal conservation objectives.

The following table provides a summary of general themes emphasized in other Official Plan's cultural heritage policy objectives.

Table 5: Review of Cultural Heritage Policy Objectives Adopted in Other Municipal Jurisdictions

		Aurora	Newmarket	Ajax	Whitby	Oakville	Burlington	Kingston	Toronto	Brampton	Milton	Hamilton	Caledon
Goals	Scope of resources to be conserved, i.e. types of resources and types of conservation treatments.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Community involvement	X		X	X		X	X		X		X	X
	Long-term value of cultural heritage conservation	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
	Balance conservation with other Official Plan objectives	X			X		X				X		
	Encourage conservation of cultural heritage resources through development of funding initiatives.	X					X			X	X		
	Use all available legislation to conserve cultural heritage resources.	X					X						X
	Conserve significant cultural heritage resources in the development approval process.		X	X	X	X				X		X	
	Conserve cultural heritage resources by developing partnerships between various agencies and organizations.	X					X					X	X
Official Plan Date		2008 Office Consolidation	2006 Official Plan	2008 Office Consolidation	2005 Office Consolidation	Draft Official Plan (as of 2009)	July 2009	Adopted July 2009	2007 Office Consolidation	2006	August 2008 Consolidation	Draft Official Plan (February 2009)	December 2008 Consolidation



3.2 Key Cultural Heritage Policy Directions

In addition to a benchmark survey of other municipalities' policy framework as provided, the Town has received community input regarding heritage matters as part of the People Plan consultation process. The People Plan process not only helped establish strategic goals, it also provides key directions for the development of the Town's new Official Plan regarding heritage conservation.

In May 2009, two Heritage Policy Round Table discussions were held at the Town of Richmond Hill's Official Plan Summit, and the citizens who attended provided constructive comments on key heritage conservation approaches. A heritage policy review discussion paper has also been posted on the Town's Official Plan web site to solicit on-line comment.

Based on the culminated comments provided by the public, strategic directions from the Town's Strategic Plan, the Official Plan guiding principles, as well as the policy benchmark survey, six key cultural heritage policy directions for the Town of Richmond Hill are identified as follows:

• Conserve the Town of Richmond Hill's cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.
• Establish a continuing process of evaluation, protection and management of the Town's cultural heritage resources.
• Promote public awareness of the Town's heritage resources.
• Foster public - private partnership to support conservation of the Town's cultural heritage resources.
• Use all relevant provincial legislation, and all related plans and strategies to appropriately evaluate, protect, and manage the Town's cultural heritage resources.
• Utilize planning approval process to implement the ongoing management of the Town's cultural heritage resources, and ensure that all new development and site alterations conserve significant cultural heritage resources.

3.3 Policy Directions for the Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Resources

Effective conservation of cultural heritage resources requires adoption of identification and evaluation methods. The *Ontario Heritage Act* establishes mechanisms for municipalities to identify and evaluate above ground cultural heritage resources and the Ministry of Culture recommends adoption of master plans to effectively identify potential archaeological resources and to provide conservation policies for significant archaeological resources. In the late 1980s, the Town adopted an Archaeological Master Plan and is currently updating the plan. With respect to above ground cultural heritage resources,



establishment of a municipal heritage register and application of heritage evaluation criteria are the primary policy vehicles for inventorying and evaluating above ground features of cultural heritage value.

The following sections review the Town's current practices in the evaluation of its cultural heritage resources. The Town's heritage evaluation practices and gaps are considered within a larger context of best practices and existing policy frameworks. And finally, specific policy directions addressing these gaps are proposed under each section, and they are recommended to be included in the new Official Plan.

3.3.1 Municipal Heritage Register

General Context

The Ministry of Culture recommends that identification of properties for listing on a municipal heritage register be guided by "some preliminary rationale or criterion" and that the "rationale or selection criteria used to survey the community and compile the register be clearly stated" (Ministry of Culture 2006:12-13). The Ministry of Culture also recommends that identification criteria are compiled by individuals with training or expertise in recognizing cultural heritage properties, so as not to discount buildings that may not appear to be obviously old or unaltered.

Continual updating of a municipal heritage registers provides it with enhanced credibility and application. Additionally, inclusion of diverse resources, such as commercial and institutional structures, as well as cultural heritage landscapes helps to establish a comprehensive inventory of a municipality's cultural heritage resources. Inventories of cultural heritage landscapes (such as parks, main streets, farmsteads, and post-war residential subdivisions etc.) have been established in several municipalities.

Current Practice and Gaps

-  In 1985, Heritage Richmond Hill, developed an Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance for the purposes of identifying properties with potential cultural heritage value. Inclusion of a property on to the inventory did not confer protection. The Town's heritage inventory was updated in 1992 and most recently reviewed and digitized in 2008. Hard copy and electronic versions of the inventory are now accessible and provide municipal address information, photographic documentation, and brief descriptions of each inventoried properties' potential cultural heritage value. GIS information for inventoried properties has also been compiled and the Town is now able to generate the location of identified cultural heritage resources on the Town's base mapping. The Town's heritage inventory has been formally approved by municipal council and therefore properties listed on it now benefit from temporary demolition controls, as established under Section 27 (3) of the Ontario Heritage Act.
-  Identification of properties for inclusion in the Town's heritage register should be guided by application of specific criteria.



- ✚ The Town's heritage register should be systematically reviewed to determine if additional properties warrant inclusion.
- ✚ The Town's heritage register currently concentrates on residential properties. There is a need to pursue identification other types of resources such as: commercial sites, institutional properties, and heritage conservation districts.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Identify built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes through a continuing process of inventory, survey, and evaluation as a basis for wise management of these resources.
- Establish a continuing process of evaluation, protection and management of the Town's cultural heritage resources.

3.3.2 Heritage Evaluation Criteria

General Context

Numerous municipalities, provincial agencies, and federal departments have developed and adopted detailed methods for consistently applying heritage evaluation criteria (HEC) contained within Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Municipalities have also developed and adopted more specific evaluation criteria to thoroughly define the significance of cultural heritage resources. Methods for applying HEC vary amongst jurisdictions; some use quantitative HEC systems while others use qualitative systems. Quantitative HEC systems determine a resource's cultural heritage value by assigning numerical scores. Qualitative HEC systems rely on the use of verbal grades. HEC systems are an integral component of heritage conservation programs, particularly at the municipal level as they are necessary to complete Ontario Heritage Act designations. Outside of the designation process, HEC systems provide a basis for developing appropriate mitigation and conservation measures in keeping with a resource's determined cultural heritage value.

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ Currently, the Town uses heritage evaluation criteria provided in Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to determine a resource's specific cultural heritage significance.
- ✚ The Town's use of Reg. 9/06 requires adoption of additional detailed sub-criteria for the purposes of establishing a level playing field when evaluating cultural heritage resources and recommending appropriate mitigation measures.



Recommended Policy Direction

- Establish identification and evaluation criteria that will help prioritize conservation strategies and efforts.

3.4 Policy Directions for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Resources

The *Ontario Heritage Act* contains provisions for formally recognizing and protecting significant cultural heritage resources. Municipalities may pass bylaws to formally designate significant cultural heritage resources. The designation process serves as a formal commitment to protecting the resource from impacts such as removal, but also ensures that the resource's heritage attributes are appropriately maintained and conserved. Designating a property under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to monitor and approve alterations to such properties and also serves as basis for enforcing property standards relating to general maintenance and security.

The following sections review the Town's current practices protecting its cultural heritage resources. The Town's heritage protection practices and gaps are considered within a larger context of best practices and existing policy frameworks. And finally, specific policy directions addressing these gaps are proposed under each section, and they are recommended to be included in the new Official Plan.

3.4.1 Ontario Heritage Act Designations

General Context

Designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides the most effective mechanism for protecting a significant cultural heritage resource against direct and indirect impacts. However, the designation process is often lengthy and time-consuming. It requires substantial archival research, site analysis, consultation with Heritage Richmond Hill, and preparation of a statement of cultural heritage value. A review of the City of Hamilton's method for prioritizing Ontario Heritage Act designations confirms that a strategic and stream-lined designation process enables a long-term and proactive approach that has the flexibility to respond to properties worthy of designation and which may be considered 'at-risk' (See Appendix B, Section 2.0).

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ Currently, the Town aims to designate five properties per year.
- ✚ The Town's current designation process should be strategically directed to focus on at-risk properties, rather than on a heritage evaluation basis.
- ✚ The Town's designation process should distinguish between properties located in intensification areas, and those that are unexpected to confront significant development-related impacts.



Recommended Policy Directions

- The Town should designate individual and groups of properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act and utilize heritage easements where possible.
- Encourage prioritization of *Ontario Heritage Act* designations in consideration of projected intensification priorities.

3.4.2 Heritage Permit Applications

General Context

Section 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* recognizes that alterations to designated heritage properties should be reviewed to ensure that proposed changes will not affect the property's heritage attributes. To sufficiently monitor changes to designated properties, the Town of Richmond Hill is enabled, through the *Act*, a heritage permit process. A review of heritage permit applications adopted in other jurisdictions demonstrates that the heritage permit application process may be designed to address a particular class of alteration, such as structural additions. This type of approach presents a feasible method for evaluating proposed changes which may affect a property's identified heritage attributes.

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ The Town has enabled a Heritage Permit Application Process.
- ✚ The Town should enable a Heritage Permit Application process for reviewing and commenting upon alterations to designated properties

Recommended Policy Direction

- Encourage the ongoing care, stewardship and maintenance of significant cultural heritage resources by property owners.
- Promote sound conservation practice to property owners and members of the public.
- Support the retention, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use of cultural heritage resources.



3.4.3 Maintenance of Ontario Heritage Act Designation By-Laws

General Context

2005 amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act* included the introduction of heritage evaluation criteria which consider a property's historical, design-based, and/or contextual values. Prior to 2005, the *Ontario Heritage Act* defined cultural heritage value in terms of architectural and/or historical associations. As a result of this change, older designations by-laws often lack comprehensive information necessary to monitor and comment upon changes to designated properties. To facilitate a process for updating designation by-laws in this regard, the Ministry of Culture has established a simplified by-law amendment process. Numerous municipalities in Ontario, such as the City of Mississauga and the City of Kingston have initiated on-going programs to update designation by-laws. Often, municipalities utilize summer students and/or local heritage committee members to address this gap in heritage conservation programming.

Current Practice and Gaps

-  The Town currently prepares detailed designation by-laws for properties recommended for designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
-  A review of the Town's designation by-laws confirmed that several properties require more substantial information with respect to the resource's specific cultural heritage value and identified heritage attributes.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Provide up-to-date information of all designated properties to ensure effective protection.

3.4.4 Property Standards for Designated Properties

General Context

Property Standards by-laws are adopted by municipalities to identify and enforce minimum standards that specify how a property should be maintained. Numerous municipalities in Ontario have amended these by-laws to include heritage-specific property standards and to require that properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are in conformity with general property standards specifications. The purpose of this direction is to prevent heritage structures from falling into serious disrepair and hence enabling "demolition by neglect." The City of Hamilton, City of Mississauga, City of Brampton, and City of Toronto are examples of municipal jurisdictions that utilize property standards provisions to ensure long term maintenance and conservation of designated heritage properties.



Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ The Town has not identified property standards for designated properties.
- ✚ The Town should adopt a property standards by-law for properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*

Recommended Policy Direction

- Encourage the ongoing care, stewardship and maintenance of significant cultural heritage resources by property owners.
- Establish property standards for designated properties.

3.4.5 Maintenance and Security Guidelines for Vacant Properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act

General Context

Integrating significant cultural heritage resources into new development projects, such as new subdivisions, often results in the resource remaining vacant and/or isolated during the planning approval process, as well as during construction. To sufficiently conserve resources in this context, guidelines are required to ensure that land owners implement necessary safety and security mechanisms. The City of Brampton has developed guidelines for securing vacant and/or derelict buildings to prevent deterioration or demolition by neglect. These guidelines can work in conjunction with property standards by-laws and provide a means to ensure that isolated resources do not succumb to vandalism and/or fire hazards. These guidelines could be applicable for resources owned by private developers as well as intergovernmental, regional, and provincial authorities.

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ The Town has not developed security and maintenance guidelines for vacant buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to ensure that such vacant properties remain in good condition and do not succumb to demolition by neglect or fire.
- ✚ The Town should establish security guidelines and standards for vacant properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*

Recommended Policy Direction

- Establish security and maintenance guidelines for heritage resources that are undergoing a planning process or otherwise may remain vacant or unused.



3.5 Policy Directions for Managing Cultural Heritage Resources in a Context of Change

The Provincial Policy Statement, the *Planning Act*, and the *Environmental Assessment Act* require that land use planning decisions and public infrastructure projects be undertaken to conserve significant cultural heritage resources. Municipalities are responsible for managing significant cultural heritage within this context. Effective management requires integrating conservation objectives into the land use planning process and developing review mechanisms that are able to identify and recommend appropriate conservation plans and mitigation measures.

The following sections review the Town's current practices in the management of its cultural heritage resources. The Town's heritage management practices and gaps are considered within a larger context of best practices and existing policy frameworks. And finally, specific policy directions addressing these gaps are proposed under each section, and they are recommended to be included in the new Official Plan.

3.5.1 Heritage Impact Assessments

General Context

To support and implement cultural heritage resource conservation provisions contained within the Provincial Policy Statement, municipalities may require a "heritage impact assessment and/or a conservation plan to guide the approval, modification, or denial of a proposed development or site alteration" (Ministry of Culture 2006:21). A review of policies and processes for conducting these types of studies in other municipalities illustrates that their efficacy is enhanced when: a mandatory pre-consultation process is adopted; letters of credit, bond or certified cheque are required as a condition of approval; and their requirements and implications are clearly documented in publicly available publications and communicated to proponents during the pre-consultation process. Preparation of Heritage Impact Assessment studies in other municipalities also indicates the credibility and objectivity of such assessments may be increased by developing a list of pre-qualified vendors or conducting them internally (See Appendix B, Section 4.0).

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ The Town established a process for requiring Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) in 2008. Requirements for HIAs are determined by Town Heritage Staff and may be requested in relation to the following development applications: Official Plan amendments, Zoning By-Law amendments, and Draft Plans of Subdivision. Terms of Reference (TOR) have been published for these types of studies.
- ✚ Existing TOR for conducting Heritage Impact Assessments should outline potential development application implications of these studies.
- ✚ Existing TOR for conducting Heritage Impact Assessments should identify what types of professionals may conduct these types of studies.



Recommended Policy Direction

- Utilize the planning approval process to implement the ongoing management of the Town's cultural heritage resources, and ensure that all new development and site alterations conserve significant cultural heritage resources.
- Utilize agreements through the planning approval process to implement the on-going conservation management of the Town's cultural heritage resources.

3.5.2 Site Plan Application Approvals

General Context

A review of site plan control by-laws adopted in other jurisdictions confirmed that often, site plan approvals are required to review impacts to cultural heritage resources. Adoption and enforcement of site plan control by-laws allows municipal staff to develop a standard process to review development applications, in order to ensure that Official Plan provisions are met and that appropriate screenings are undertaken. Additionally, the site plan approval process presents a useful tool for ensuring that development projects do not adversely impact identified cultural heritage resources.

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ The Town has adopted a site plan control process. This process ensures that site plan applications may be reviewed to ensure they do not directly or indirectly impact significant cultural heritage resources.
- ✚ Although the Town has adopted a site plan control process, it generally excludes single-family dwellings.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Use all relevant provincial legislation, and all related plans and strategies to appropriately evaluate, protect, and manage the Town's cultural heritage resources.

3.5.3 Retention, Rehabilitation, and Adaptive Re-use of Cultural Heritage Resources

General Context

Zoning incentives and grant programs can encourage enhanced conservation of significant cultural heritage resources. Academic literature examining adaptive re-use potential also indicates that screening criteria may be applied to projects and properties to help determine the



feasibility of adaptive re-use proposals.

Current Practice and Gaps

-  The Town encourages the retention of significant cultural heritage resources in situ where appropriate and where feasible. The Town implements this objective, in the context of development and site plan approval applications, by requiring proponents to complete a Heritage Impact Assessment, which serves to recommend appropriate conservation options. Heritage Impact Assessments may recommend retention in situ, partial retention, relocation, adaptive re-use, and/or documentation and salvage.
-  The Town should develop incentives for encouraging retention, restoration and adaptive re-use cultural heritage resources in the context of development applications and site alterations.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Support the retention, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use of cultural heritage resources through the development of incentives and programs.

3.5.4 Relocating Cultural Heritage Resources

General Context

Mitigating impacts to significant cultural heritage resources through relocation represents a ‘last resort’ approach to heritage conservation. However, several municipalities in Ontario have recognized that in specific instances, relocation represents the only available method for conserving impacted cultural heritage resources. Although only one permanent heritage resource relocation program has been established in Ontario, other municipalities have addressed the appropriateness of this mitigation measure through Official Plan policy statements. Several municipalities acknowledge that relocation may represent a viable conservation option if all other conservation approaches have been fully exhausted. With the exception of the Town of Markham, relocations of cultural heritage resources are generally performed on an ad-hoc basis.

Current Practice and Gaps

-  The Town has not developed a program for relocating cultural heritage resources expected to be fully impacted through removal.
-  The Town may examine the feasibility of establishing a heritage enclave program and identified options for holding vacant lots within proposed subdivisions and/or developments for the purposes of relocating significant cultural heritage resources.



Recommended Policy Direction

- Encourage the conservation of significant cultural heritage resources in their original setting and consider relocation only when all other conservation options have been exhausted.

3.5.5 Donations of Cultural Heritage Resources

General Context

Donating significant cultural heritage resources can result in the ownership and management of important heritage assets. A select review of cultural heritage resource donations in other municipalities indicates that a review process should be established to ensure that donated resources are culturally significant, high priorities for conservation, and have the potential to be restored and/or reused.

Current Practice and Gaps



The Town currently owns properties that contain significant, or potentially significant, cultural heritage resources. Such properties may have been bequeathed to and/or purchased by the Town.



The Town has assumed ownership of a small number of cultural heritage resources through donation. Currently, the Town should adopt a long-term policy or process for reviewing donations and evaluating if it is feasible and appropriate for the town to assume ownership and management of these heritage assets.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Establish guidelines for the purchase or acceptance of donated heritage properties to the Town.

3.5.6 Conservation of Publicly-Owned Cultural Heritage Resources

General Context

Conservation authorities and/or regional and provincial agencies that own property which contains significant cultural heritage resources are required to undertake planning-related decisions in accordance with conservation provisions outlined in the Provincial Policy Statement. A select review of municipal approaches to monitoring publicly-owned resources indicated that such resources should be fully evaluated to determine appropriate conservation treatments and objectives and that if appropriate and feasible, partnerships should be established to help ensure



long-term conservation.

Current Practice and Gaps

- ✚ Within the Town, a small number of significant cultural heritage resources are under the ownership of conservation authorities and/or regional and provincial authorities.
- ✚ The Town should investigate strategies that may be adopted to ensure that publicly-owned resources are appropriately conserved.

Recommended Policy Direction

- Establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with appropriate public agencies for the on-going conservation and management of cultural heritage resources owned by public agencies.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A review of the current legislative and policy context for conserving cultural heritage resources, as well as the policy context for growth management in the Province of Ontario, confirms that the Town of Richmond Hill's Official Plan policies for cultural heritage resources require updating.

To develop general policy directions for inclusion into the Town's new Official Plan, and which will guide development of more specific policies for evaluating, protecting, and managing cultural heritage resources in a context of change, the Town's current heritage practice was first reviewed. Following, strategies outlined in the Town's *People Plan*, new Official Plan guiding principles, and the municipal and regional policy context for conserving cultural heritage resources were then examined. Finally, based on feedback received through public consultations and following a review of general policy directions and programs adopted in other municipalities, six key policy directions were developed for inclusion into the Town's new Official Plan.

These six key policy directions provided a framework for developing general policy directions that focus on the evaluation, protection, and management of cultural heritage resources in a context of change. The general policy directions presented herein will be reviewed by the Official Plan taskforce. These general directions provide a strong basis for developing more specific policies that will enable effective evaluation, protection, and management of the Town's cultural heritage resources in a context of change.

