



Heritage planning, heritage communities: heritage conservation districts in Toronto



City Planning

Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) leads the heritage development review process for City Planning and write reports to City Council with recommendations.

HPS also conducts research, writes policy, administers two incentive programs, reviews building and sign permits, secures and monitors heritage easement agreements, maintains the heritage register and acts as liaison for the Toronto Preservation Board.

Toronto Preservation Board reviews staff reports and provides advice to council.



Provincial Policy

The Planning Act

The Minister...**shall have regard to**, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as, (d) the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural historical, archaeological or scientific interest.

Provincial Policy Statement (sets out provincial interests)

Directs that built, landscape and archaeological cultural heritage resources shall be conserved.

Places to Grow Act

Supports a **Culture of Conservation** and directs that municipalities develop and implement **official plan policies** and other strategies in support of the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources where feasible, as built-up areas are intensified.



Provincial Policy

Ontario Heritage Act (OHA)

Enables municipalities to list or designate properties under Parts IV or V, including provisions for (amongst other matters):

- establishing criteria to evaluate heritage significance
- keeping a register of significant properties
- reviewing alterations to designated properties
- reviewing proposed demolitions of designated properties
- enforcing a waiting period for demolishing listed properties

Heritage Conservation Districts – Part V

HCD plans are adopted by by-law and they supersede all other municipal by-laws.

What is a heritage conservation district?

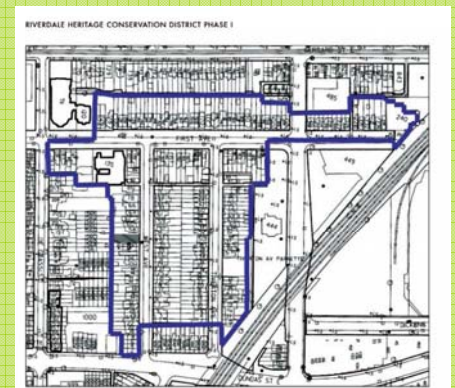
A **Heritage Conservation District (HCD)** is an area of the city that is protected by a municipal by-law, passed under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

HCDs may contain **multiple properties, landowners, resource types** and a variety of cultural heritage values. They can be found in residential neighbourhoods, commercial areas, main streets, institutional and industrial campuses and natural areas.

The organization of **streets, blocks, properties, structures, landscapes, streetscapes, plantings and other features can contribute** to identified cultural heritage values.

An HCD is designated because the **area within a defined boundary is considered to be historically or culturally significant** and requires care and attention in the planning process to ensure that **they are conserved**.

Every HCD requires **unique policies** or guidelines **to manage change**.



Community nominated areas already designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

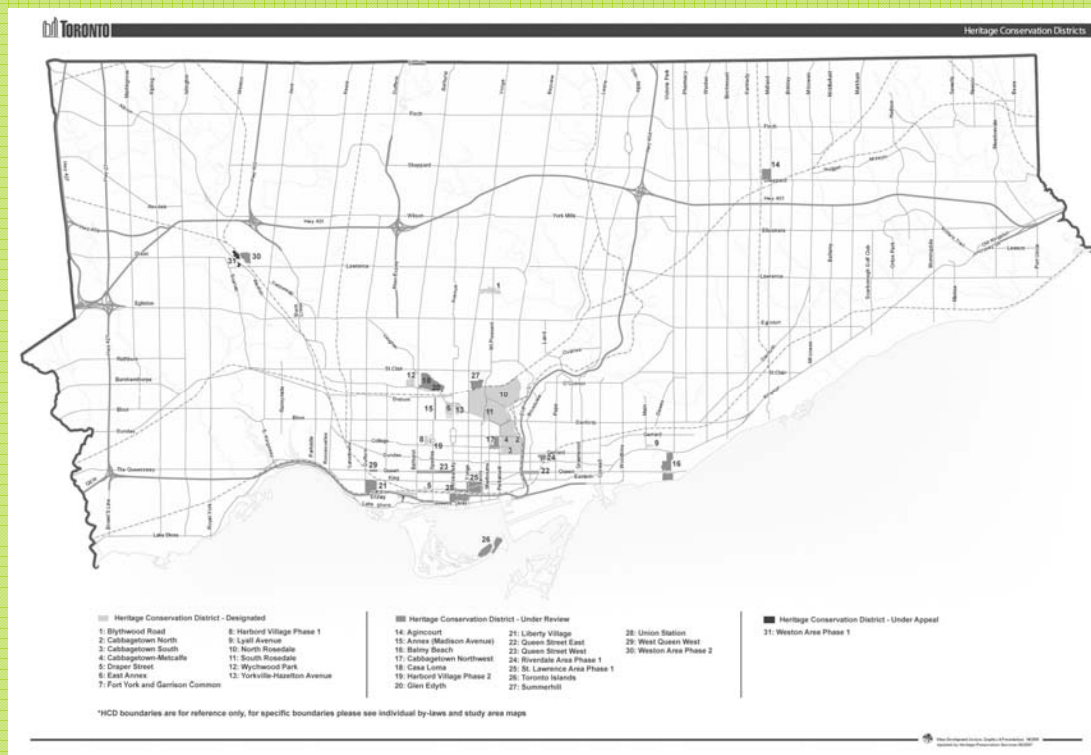
City of Toronto currently has 20 HCDs

17 were community-driven (residential)

Most studies/plans were paid for by local residents

All needed community support to succeed

Various approaches to evaluation and guidelines within each of them



North Rosedale
South Rosedale
Harbord Village Phases I
and II
East Annex
South Riverdale
Yorkville-Hazelton
Weston Phase I
Blythwood Road
Draper Street
Lyall Avenue
Cabbagetown Phases I, II,
III and IV
Kingswood Road South
Wychwood Park

Community nominated areas awaiting study

Identification and designation of HCDs is one of City Planning's top five strategic initiatives in new strategic plan.

12 more community nominated residential areas to undergo reviews:

The Annex
West Toronto Junction
Leaside
Summerhill
The Beaches
Casa Loma (area)
Weston Phase II
Kingsway
Agincourt
Cabbagetown Phase V
Baby Point
Harbord Village Phase III



Community demand created political support which led to
→ dedicated study budget and new staff resources



HCD policies and procedures

New policies and terms of reference for HCDs

Two years ago, after extensive consultation, the city released a policy document to guide the creation of future HCDs.

Consistent policy application ensures clarity of expectations, objectives and outcomes – no more guess work – and creates a clear set of expectations for community members, property owners and consultants.

Level playing field

Transparency

Consistency (expectations, evaluation and guidelines)

Increased feedback and community consultation

Process

Three-part process

Nomination

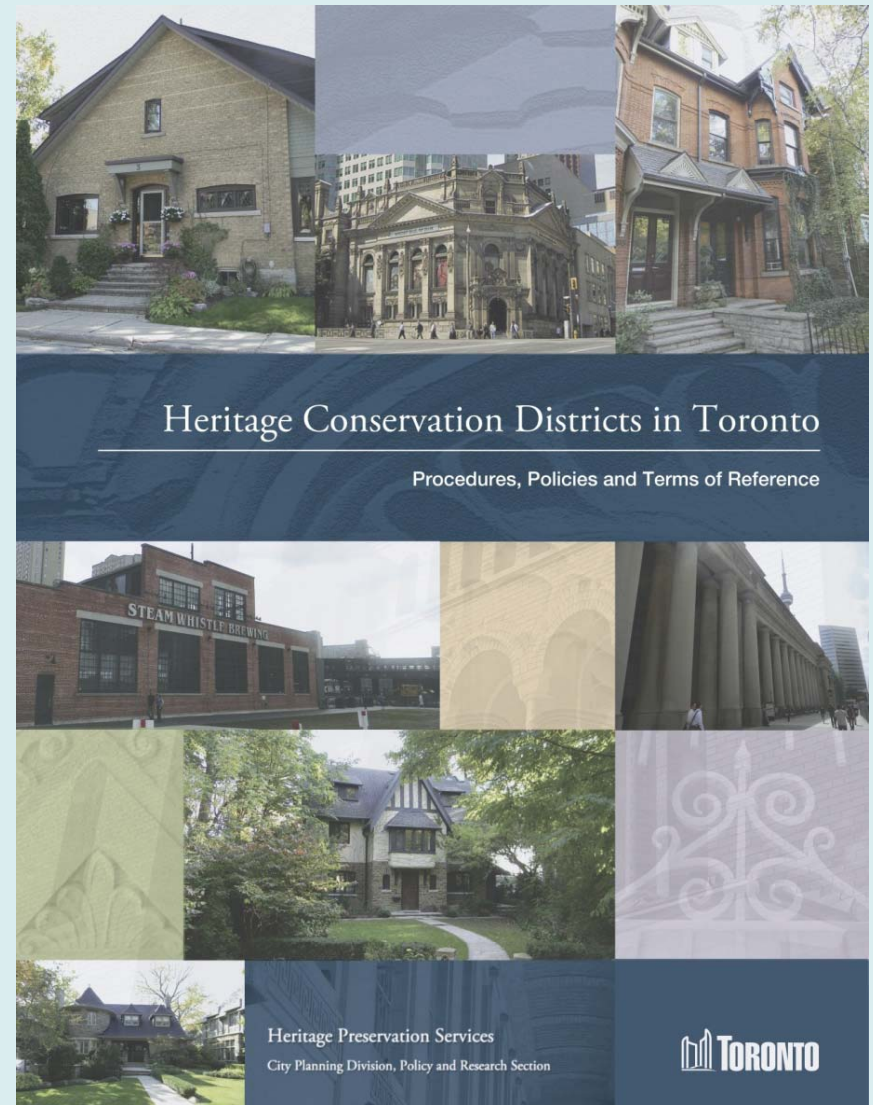
- Resident, organization, staff or council nomination
- Community meeting
- Council provides authority to study

HCD Study

- Determination of heritage values and objectives
- Community meeting
- Direction to move forward an HCD Plan

HCD Plan

- Policies and guidelines drafted
- Community meeting
- Public meeting (TPB)
- Adoption of HCD Plan by-law



Community is key

No matter what the process, community involvement is critical to the success of both planning a district and implementing it.

Communities identify what is of local value and advocate for conservation.

Communities create political will and help to establish support of other community members and associations.

Communities assist in education and implementation after by-law adoption (through neighborhood advisory bodies).

Communities have eyes on the street.

Heritage advocates become HCD ambassadors.



Community nominations

Nominating a potential Heritage Conservation District is the first step to seeking HCD designation for a neighbourhood or area.

HCDs are nominated because the people who live and work in an area believe that its character and historic values are unique or special and should be conserved in the long term. City staff or a local councilor may also propose areas for study and designation.

An organized local effort is the best way to succeed in creating a new district. When a group or individual seeks to nominate an area as a potential HCD, the community should organize ahead of time to gather support, create interest and help property owners to understand what an HCD could mean for the community.

HPS staff help nominators prepare nomination forms.



Community leadership

In addition to preparing nominations, community groups can also lead research, gather information and inform heritage planners about local history and sources. Community members are also encouraged to form an advisory committee for the ongoing management of the district.

Without the vital work of volunteers and the leadership of community representatives, Toronto would have far fewer HCDs and thousands fewer properties protected on its inventory. The work of these volunteers and community members should be celebrated, supported and understood as integral to the HCD planning process.





HCD advisory committees

An HCD advisory committee should be created for every HCD. The committee may be a recognized part of the ratepayers' or residents' association or Business Improvement Association (BIA) or a standalone committee that meets on a regular basis.

The purpose of the HCD advisory committee is to be a conduit for community-based feedback about the consistency of heritage permits with the policies and guidelines of the HCD Plan.

The advisory committee may also help owners to understand how to follow policies and guidelines when planning alterations.

HCD advisory committees should reach out to their community members and other HCD advisory committees to share information, ideas and strategies for managing their districts and improving their plans.

The benefits of membership

An HCD comes with many benefits in addition to a predictable and more refined heritage planning process for the district. These include an attractive and protected stable neighbourhood, access to heritage conservation incentives, City staff assistance for understanding the HCD Plan and the appreciation of the district and its history throughout the community and the city.



Most importantly, an HCD designation protects significant areas and neighborhoods from damage to the integrity of its character and its cultural heritage values. The most successful HCDs also provide ways for older buildings to have a new life.

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

Creating an HCD takes a lot of hard work and commitment from community members, consultants and volunteers as well as City staff, but that hard work is an investment that pays off in the long-term conservation of a neighbourhood or area with significant cultural heritage value.

While City planning staff review and guide the process of nominating, studying and writing an HCD Plan, it is often the leadership of an engaged community that drives the process, helps to define the goals of the HCD, identifies its significance and gathers support.

Continued community engagement maintains HCDs over time.



Thank you