



WATERLOO BUILT HERITAGE STRATEGY

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WATERLOO BUILT HERITAGE STRATEGY

Waterloo's Built Heritage Strategy is a 10 year plan for the identification, protection, and management of Waterloo's cultural heritage resources. The Strategy will strengthen the City's leadership role in heritage conservation and help it leverage local heritage to support sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities that are the most successful at meeting the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspirations and needs of their residents are those that leverage all of their resources. Capitalizing on Waterloo's unique heritage resources, through appropriate planning, management and investment, has the potential to enhance livability, job creation, and local economic development. As the City grows and intensifies, a balanced and transparent framework for managing these resources has become increasingly important.

A Built Heritage Strategy has been developed to provide a framework for the identification, protection, and management of Waterloo's cultural heritage resources. Building on existing policies, processes and cooperative practices, the Strategy identifies goals and recommended actions to be carried out over the next 10 years to strengthen the City's management of cultural heritage resources and foster community appreciation and stewardship of those resources. The goals and recommendations will assist staff and Council in prioritizing projects and will help to inform operating and capital budgets.



The Strategy identifies six key goals to support, focus and enhance the City's heritage conservation efforts:

1. Build municipal expertise and capacity in heritage planning and decision making
2. Identify properties of cultural heritage value or interest to the community
3. Demonstrate commitment to and leadership in the management, conservation and adaptive reuse of City-owned cultural heritage resources
4. Provide clear policy direction and processes to support heritage conservation
5. Support and encourage investment in and conservation of cultural heritage resources
6. Build capacity and support for heritage conservation through promotion, recognition and partnerships

A total of 24 actions are recommended to achieve the identified goals. The Strategy provides a description of these actions, and outlines how, when and by whom they will be implemented.



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INTRODUCTION

The need for a Strategy

Human activity and settlement spanning from 9000 BC to the present has endowed Waterloo with a unique and rich legacy of cultural heritage resources. Ranging from archaeological evidence of First Nations, to the buildings and landscapes left behind by Mennonite and German settlers and more recent inhabitants, Waterloo’s heritage resources convey information about how the community has evolved over time. These resources enhance local identity and character and enrich cultural life. They also play a role in Waterloo’s economic development by helping to foster cultural tourism and enhancing competitiveness in business recruitment and retention.

Planning for and conserving heritage resources that are valued by a community is widely recognized as an important part of sustainable community planning and placemaking. When considered as part of a broader suite of community values, heritage conservation can yield development outcomes that meet a wide range of economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives. Integrating heritage conservation with land use planning processes provides a means for the City to guide and manage change. As Waterloo grows and intensifies, managing change in a way that recognizes cultural heritage resources as part of the full suite of community values has become increasingly important.

In recognition of the need for a strategic and coordinated approach to heritage conservation and planning, the City has developed this Built Heritage Strategy. The Strategy provides a framework for the identification, protection, and management of Waterloo’s cultural heritage resources. Building on existing policies, processes and cooperative practices, the Strategy identifies goals and recommends actions to be carried out over the next 10 years to strengthen the City’s management of cultural heritage resources and to foster community appreciation and stewardship of those resources. The goals and recommendations will assist staff and Council in prioritizing projects and will help to inform operating and capital budgeting processes.

What are Cultural Heritage Resources?

More than simply buildings from select architectural time periods, cultural heritage resources are increasingly understood as the natural or physical assets associated with a property or collection of properties that are important to a community for their design, associative, or contextual values. Under Ontario’s planning framework, it is this broader definition of cultural heritage resources that the City is obligated to plan for and conserve. In keeping with this definition, the Built Heritage Strategy considers cultural heritage resources that make up the urban and natural environment such as buildings, monuments, structures, cultural heritage landscapes, streetscapes, districts, public and symbolic spaces, cemeteries

The Built Heritage Strategy considers cultural heritage resources that make up the urban and natural environment, such as:

- Buildings and structures
- Monuments
- Cultural heritage landscapes
- Streetscapes
- Districts
- Public and symbolic spaces
- Cemeteries and burial grounds
- Ruins
- Archaeological sites and areas of archeological potential



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and burial grounds, ruins, archaeological sites and areas of archeological potential. Moveable and certain intangible cultural heritage resources, including archival records, artifacts and stories, are examined through a separate but integrated Strategy for the City of Waterloo Museum and Collections.

Strategy Development

Development of the Built Heritage Strategy was informed by an assessment of current conditions, including an inventory of recognized cultural heritage resources, a review of existing management tools and approaches, and the identification of issues that present challenges and opportunities for local heritage conservation. A discussion paper (waterloo.ca/builtheritagestrategy) presented to Council and the community summarized the results of the assessment and described potential actions to strengthen and support the City's heritage planning and conservation efforts. Consultation with stakeholder groups and the broader community helped to underscore key issues of interest and concern while input from internal stakeholders identified technical and management issues and clarified roles and responsibilities. The final recommendations in the Built Heritage Strategy reflect these consultation processes.



Principles

Heritage conservation requires a holistic approach: In its overarching goals and recommendations, the Strategy aligns with internationally recognized principles and best practices for heritage conservation. Following these principles, conservation is understood as a sequence of actions starting with the **identification** of the resource and its features, **protection** of that resource through the adoption of a policy or by-law, and finally **management** of the resource in accordance with that policy or by-law.

All three activities are necessary for effective heritage conservation. Identification and protection through designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, for example, is insufficient to maintain the features or values of a protected resource without a process initiated at the local level for managing and mitigating the impacts of change. Conversely, management processes are insufficient to conserve cultural heritage resources when the heritage resources themselves have not yet been identified or their significant heritage values are not well described. The Strategy sets out priorities to strengthen all three conservation activities through both direct action and capacity building.

Heritage conservation is a shared responsibility: Reflected in the Strategy's goals and recommended actions is the recognition that heritage conservation is a shared responsibility between the City and the community. The City has an obligation under the current Provincial policy framework to conserve significant cultural heritage resources and it does this through the development of appropriate policy, planning and management strategies. Property owners also play a critical role in the conservation of cultural heritage resources through their stewardship and use of those resources. Other community members, including individuals and neighbourhood groups, help to raise awareness about heritage resources that they value while



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the Municipal Heritage Committee provides City Council with information and advice in its role as a Committee of Council.

Heritage conservation must be integrated with other strategies and planning processes: The Built Heritage Strategy supports the City's Strategic Plan goals of *Strong Community* and *Economic Development*, and supports the implementation of Cultural Heritage Policies in the Official Plan. The Strategy partially implements Goal 2.1 of the Culture Plan to “develop a strategy for built heritage, supported by a permanent heritage planner position” and recommends specific actions to address Goal 2.6 to “identify and designate local cultural heritage landscapes as a part of the city’s placemaking approach to city building”. Development of the Strategy coincided with the development of the City of Waterloo Museum and Collections Strategy, and the two strategies integrate in areas of common or overlapping scope, such as awareness building and promotion of local cultural heritage resources. Finally, the Strategy recommends actions to enhance the integration of heritage conservation within the broader policy and development planning framework.

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The Strategy identifies six goals to support, focus and strengthen the City's heritage conservation efforts. To achieve the six identified goals, a total of 24 actions are recommended along with a proposed corporate lead, implementation timeframe and implications for funding and staff resources.

Goals

1. **Build municipal expertise and capacity in heritage planning and decision making**
2. **Identify properties of cultural heritage value or interest to the community**
3. **Demonstrate commitment to and leadership in the management, conservation and adaptive reuse of City-owned cultural heritage resources**
4. **Provide clear policy direction and processes to support heritage conservation**
5. **Support and encourage investment in and conservation of cultural heritage resources**
6. **Build capacity and support for heritage conservation through promotion, recognition and partnerships**



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Recommended Actions

Goal I. Build municipal expertise and capacity in heritage planning and decision making

Under Ontario’s planning policy framework, municipalities hold the primary responsibility for conserving local cultural heritage resources. Sufficient municipal expertise is required to ensure that cultural heritage resources valued by the community are identified in advance of development and public works projects and that impacts on those resources are managed through appropriate development review and heritage permit processes. Enhanced capacity would allow the City to make better use of the available heritage conservation tools through the Heritage Act and Planning Act. Dedicated staff resources would help to improve communication and information sharing with the community regarding local cultural heritage and review processes and improve Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC) training and support to enable effective engagement.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Explore options to fund a full time, permanent heritage planning staff position	City of Waterloo	Short-term (1-3 years)	New operational funding required
Develop information sharing mechanisms and processes to build awareness amongst Council and City staff whose activities directly impact local built heritage resources	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Establish a program for MHC orientation, continuing education and training	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Strengthen efforts to recruit new MHC members and continue work to remove barriers to volunteering for specific groups	Growth Management	Short-term* (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Review and evaluate the existing funding model for heritage staff and MHC activities to ensure sustainable support for the City’s heritage planning and communication functions	Growth Management	Medium-term (4-6 years)	New operational funds required

* Some initiatives under this action have already implemented (e.g. establishment of student resource Committee positions, expansion of recruitment efforts)



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Goal 2. Identify properties of cultural heritage value or interest to the community

Effective heritage conservation requires the evaluation and identification of heritage resources early in the planning process. Strengthening and expediting the current evaluation process would help the City address gaps in the Municipal Heritage Register and in doing so would enable it to plan for growth and intensification while maintaining or enhancing the places the community values most. Identifying concentrations or groupings or heritage resources, such as cultural heritage landscapes and heritage conservation districts, can help the City conserve cultural heritage resources, such as neighbourhoods, streetscapes and landscapes, that have collective value. Collaborative methods for the identification of cultural heritage resources that involve the broader community could help ensure the Municipal Heritage Register reflects the values of an increasingly diverse community.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Identify, evaluate and bring forward to Council properties that warrant consideration for listing or designation	Growth Management with Municipal Heritage Committee	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Initiate a Cultural Heritage Landscape Study to identify, evaluate and prioritize potential cultural heritage landscapes, heritage conservation districts and other resource groupings	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	New capital funds required



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Goal 3. Demonstrate commitment to and leadership in the management, conservation and adaptive reuse of City-owned cultural heritage resources

The City has an opportunity to become a leader in heritage conservation by improving its policies and management practices for cultural heritage resources located on municipally-owned lands. Developing policies that require the City to follow best practices for conserving municipally-owned heritage resources would demonstrate the City’s commitment to heritage conservation and provide a standardized decision making framework for conservation activities. Conservation management plans and sustainable funding for maintenance and restoration activities would help to ensure the long term conservation and best use of the City’s heritage assets.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Consider establishing policies in the Official Plan that require the City to follow best practices for conservation of City-owned heritage resources	Growth Management	Medium-term (as part of upcoming Official Plan review)	Staff resources
Develop individual conservation management plans for the maintenance, restoration and long term use of City-owned, designated heritage resources	Facilities and Fleet	Medium-term (4-6 years)	New capital funds required
Explore options to sustainably fund maintenance and conservation of City-owned heritage buildings, including establishing a reserve fund within the capital budget and incorporating heritage assets into the Corporate Asset Management Plan	Facilities and Fleet	Medium-term (4-6 years)	New capital and operating funds required



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Goal 4. Provide clear policy direction and processes to support heritage conservation

Municipal heritage policies, regulations and processes, when integrated into the development and building approvals processes, are essential tools to manage the impacts of change on cultural heritage resources. As local context, community values, and Provincial and Regional planning frameworks change and evolve, these mechanisms require periodic update to ensure they continue to provide consistent and appropriate guidance for heritage conservation. Opportunities exist to clarify and update policy direction for Heritage Permits, demolition and signage to ensure they provide clear and comprehensive guidance for the conservation of identified cultural heritage resources. New guidelines and processes are needed for the application and content of Conservation Plans as a tool to ensure heritage resources are conserved during redevelopment and public works projects. Processes for considering archaeological resources should be developed and coordinated to complement the Region of Waterloo’s archaeological review processes. Enhancing communication about the Municipal Heritage Register and relevant review processes with external stakeholders and internal City departments would help to build awareness and establish clear expectations.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Develop a terms of reference for Conservation Plans to provide consistency and clarity in the conservation of heritage resources in redevelopment projects	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Review and modify, as required, processes for demolition control and demolition permits to integrate, where appropriate, Heritage Permits and Heritage Impact Assessments	Planning Approvals with Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Enhance communication of the Municipal Heritage Register, heritage policies and procedures to key stakeholders through existing and new media	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Consider updating the sign by-law to include provisions for Part IV designated properties	Planning Approvals with Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Collaborate with the Region to establish protocols and mechanisms to ensure archaeological sites and areas of archeological potential are identified and considered in development, planning and public works review processes	Growth Management	Medium-term (4-6 years)	Staff resources
Provide clearer policy direction for the Heritage Permit application process (particularly for Part IV properties) in the Official Plan	Growth Management	Medium-term (as part of upcoming Official Plan review)(4-6 years)	Staff resources



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Goal 5. Support and encourage investment in and conservation of cultural heritage resources

Incentive programs can support property owners in making choices that conserve the heritage features of their properties. Financial incentives help to offset the costs of maintenance, repair, restoration and adaptive reuse, while non-monetary incentives can create the conditions that make restoration and/or adaptive reuse more financially viable. By leveraging private investment for projects that conserve locally valued heritage resources, incentive programs can have spill-over economic, social, cultural and environmental community benefits. In recognition of these public benefits, the City has adopted a grant program, through an Uptown CIP, to support the maintenance, repair, restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage properties in the Uptown and the MacGregor Albert Heritage Conservation District. Consideration of additional programs to complement the Uptown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and expand the type of support is recommended to ensure equal access to support for all owners of designated properties.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Implement the Uptown CIP to support conservation through maintenance, repair, restoration and adaptive reuse	Economic Development	Complete	Capital funds allocated
Consider establishing a heritage property grant that is complementary to the Uptown CIP façade improvement grant for properties outside of the CIP project area	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	New operating funds required
Identify opportunities to maximize the potential of non-monetary planning incentives (e.g. bonusing, flexibility in zoning, parking, and amenity requirements) as a means to support heritage conservation	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Explore opportunities to establish private and public partnerships to provide non-traditional incentives for conservation	Growth Management	Long-term (7-10 years)	Staff resources



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Goal 6. Build capacity and support for heritage conservation through promotion, recognition and partnerships

Harnessing the potential of Waterloo’s heritage assets to enhance livability, cultural vibrancy and economic growth requires the recognition and promotion of those cultural heritage resources that make Waterloo unique. While a number of initiatives are already underway, significant opportunities exist to expand the City’s communication and awareness building efforts to generate greater understanding and awareness of local cultural heritage. These opportunities include expanding cultural branding and promotion efforts to help the City market its assets, integrating heritage considerations into future Uptown placemaking efforts and neighbourhood strategies, celebrating locally important people and places, and enhancing print and online communication. Improved coordination of promotional activities between City divisions (e.g. Growth Management, City of Waterloo Museum and Economic Development) would help maximize impact by ensuring that new projects build on existing work and are designed to meet multiple City objectives.

Recommended Actions:	Lead	Implementation Timeframe	Resource Implications
Work with the City of Waterloo Museum, Economic Development and other internal stakeholders to identify opportunities to coordinate heritage promotion and awareness activities	Growth Management with Waterloo Museum, Economic Development, Environment and Parks Services	Short-term* (1-3 years)	Staff resources
Enhance print and online communication tools to improve communication of information resources and planning processes involving designated and listed properties	Growth Management	Short-term (1-3 years)	Staff resources; New capital funds required
Explore opportunities to recognize and celebrate people, places and events of local significance in collaboration with existing place-making and cultural tourism strategies of the Culture Plan	Growth Management with Economic Development	Medium-term (4-6 years)	New operating funds required
Consider options for establishing creative partnerships with academic institutions, professional associations, community organizations and business to build support and capacity for heritage conservation initiatives and programs	Growth Management	Long-term (7-10 years)	Staff resources

* Some initiatives under this action have already implemented (e.g. #CreateWaterloo social media initiative)



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IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Conservation of Waterloo's cultural heritage resources is a shared responsibility, or partnership, requiring the involvement of various City departments, property owners, and other stakeholders. Recognizing that the City plays a key role in this partnership, the Built Heritage Strategy emphasizes actions that the City can undertake to strengthen its support of community partners and its leadership role in the collective effort to conserve cultural heritage resources.

The Strategy provides recommendations to achieve goals over a 10-year period. Recommended actions are prioritized by implementation timeframe, with short-term actions to be completed in 1-3 years, medium-term actions completed in 4-6 years and long-term actions to be completed in 7-10 years. The proposed timeframe represents the completion time rather than initiation time. For example, medium and long term actions may be initiated in the short term, but may not be fully implemented until the timeframe indicated.

While timeframes are used as a means to prioritize actions, it is recognized that flexibility is required for successful implementation of the Strategy. New opportunities may arise that allow for recommended actions to be implemented sooner than anticipated. As well, the implementation of actions may reveal new issues or challenges that need to be incorporated into the plan and addressed. Expansions and deviations from the Strategy will be tracked and managed as part of the monitoring phase.

Monitoring of the Strategy is required to account for new opportunities and constraints and to measure if and how well goals are achieved. To this end, Staff will provide two levels of monitoring:

- Ongoing reporting and communication of actions implemented through the existing Built Heritage Strategy webpage
- Implementation review and Council update at the end of each time period (3, 6 and 10 years)