



Heritage Conservation Districts, Main Streets and Downtown Revitalization

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Ontario East Municipal Conference
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Heritage and downtown revitalization since the 1970s

- Main Street Canada Program 1979-1990
- Town of Perth was chosen for the pilot project
- Subsequent Main Street projects included Brockville, Campbellford and Lindsay (all 1988)
- Main Street programs continue to exist in the United States, Alberta, Quebec and one was recently resurrected in Saskatchewan
- Downtown Revitalization program established by OMAFRA in 2005 strongly inspired by Main Street program, including its four-point approach



"The most successful Main Street programs I know marry heritage planning to the four point approach."

- Todd Barman, Main Street Program Advisor, US National Trust for Historic Preservation

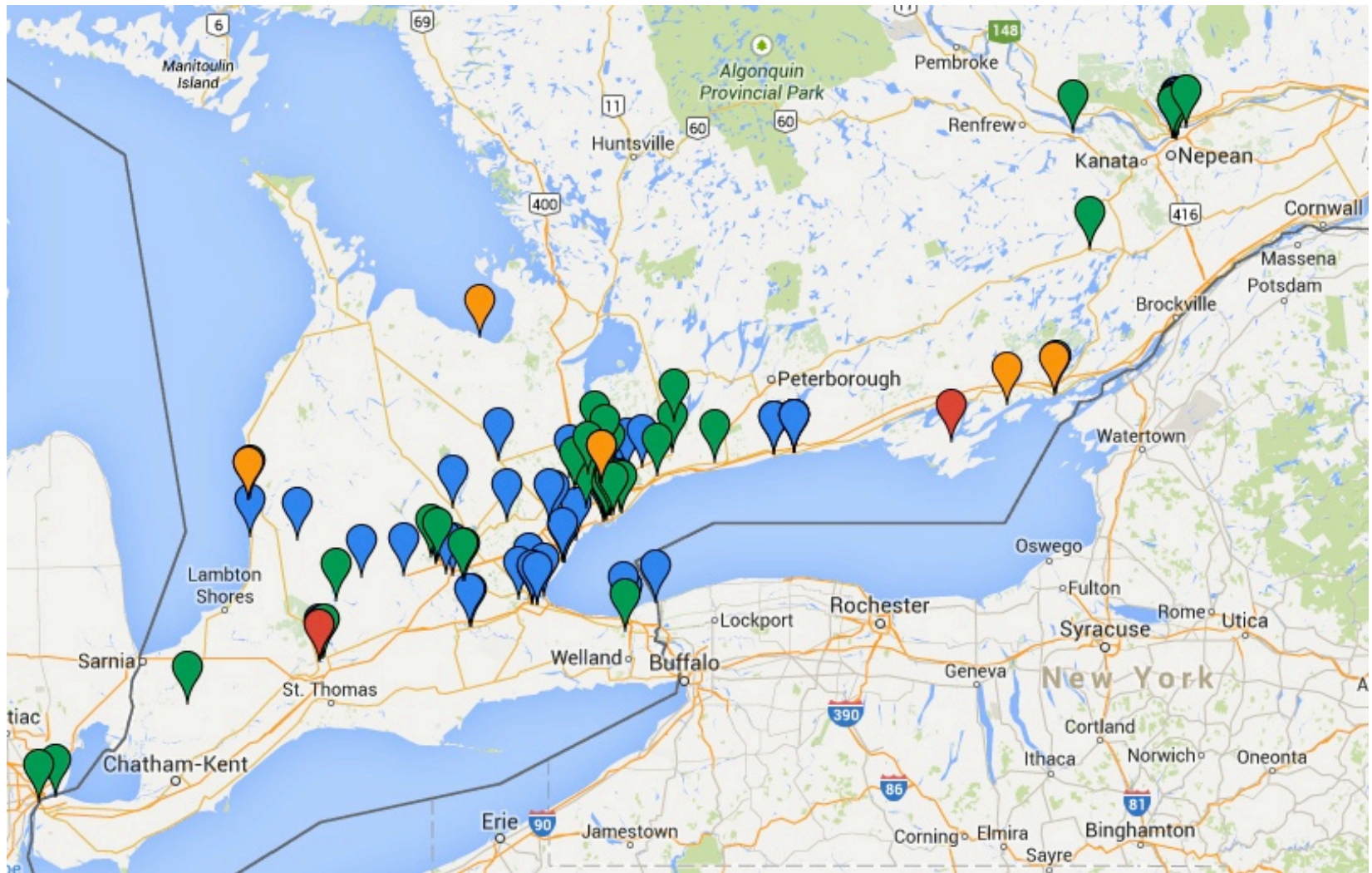
Tools Under the Ontario Heritage Act

- The Ontario Heritage Act enacted 1975, major amendments in 2005
- Primary role under the Act lies with municipalities
- Individual property designation
- Heritage Conservation Districts
- Heritage conservation easements
- Municipal grants and loans for conservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of protected heritage properties

Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario

- 113 Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) as of January 2014
- Thirty-six new HCDs designated since 2005
- About 18,700 properties in Ontario are part of an HCD (compared to 6,600 individually-designated)
- HCDs may be predominantly commercial, residential, institutional or a mix of uses
 - 62 residential
 - 24 commercial
 - 21 mixed-use
 - 6 other (industrial, institutional, rural)
- Thirty-two HCDs are located partly or entirely within a Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Heritage Conservation Districts Mapped



Heritage Conservation Districts Support Strong, Healthy Communities

Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2014, gives policy direction on matters of provincial interest relating to land use planning , including:

- “Compact, mixed-use development that incorporates compatible employment uses to support liveable and resilient communities” – s. 1.3.1 c)
- “Maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets” – s. 1.7.1 c)
- “Encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes” – s. 1.7.1 d)

New Ideas, Old Buildings



Ontario's downtown commercial and traditional Main Street HCDs already meet many PPS planning objectives

Examples of HCDs with Commercial Use

| Municipality | Heritage Conservation District Name | No. of Properties | Year Designated | Population (2011) |
|--------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Ajax | Pickering Village | 58 | 2013 | 109,600 |
| Arnprior | Downtown Arnprior | 49 | 2007 | 8,114 |
| Cambridge | Main Street Galt | 10 | 1985 | 126,748 |
| Cobourg | King Street East | 106 | 1990 | 18,519 |
| Collingwood | Collingwood Downtown | 260 | 2002 | 19,241 |
| Goderich | The Square/West Street | 43 | 1982, 1993 | 7,521 |
| Hamilton | Mill Street, Waterdown | 92 | 1996 | 519,949 |
| Huron East | Main Street Seaforth | 62 | 1984 | 2,627 (9,264) |
| Kingston | Market Square | 18 | 1984 | 123,363 |
| Markham | Markham Village | 616 | 1990 | 301,709 |
| Orangeville | Downtown Orangeville | 68 | 2002 | 27,975 |
| Ottawa | Byward Market | 144 | 1991 | 883,391 |
| Perth | Downtown Perth | 126 | 2012 | 5,840 |
| Port Hope | Walton Street/John-Ontario-Queen Street | 127 | 1997, 2008 | 12,230 (16,214) |
| Scugog | Downtown Port Perry | 60 | 2010 | 8,981 (21,569) |
| Stratford | Downtown Stratford | 190 | 1997 | 3,0886 |
| Toronto | Queen Street West | 254 | 2007 | 2,615,060 |
| Windsor | Sandwich | 261 | 2009 | 210,891 |

Heritage Conservation Districts Do Not Freeze Development, They Manage Change



330 King Street East, Kingston, November 2011



330 King Street East, Kingston, March 2013

Heritage Conservation Districts Support Community Pride And Quality of Life



Heritage Conservation District Promotion: On the Web and On the Road





What Incentives Are Municipalities Able to Provide to Heritage Property Owners?

- Three provincial laws give municipalities the ability to provide financial incentives to heritage property owners
- These incentives are:
 - Grants and loans under sections 39 and 45 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA)
 - Heritage Property Tax Relief (HPTR) under section 365.2 of the *Municipal Act*
 - Community Improvement Plan (CIP) incentives under section 28 of the *Planning Act*

How Many Municipal Heritage Incentive Programs Exist In Ontario Today?

As of September 2014, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is aware of:

- 48 municipal heritage grant or loan programs (provided by 36 different municipalities)
- 26 active municipal HPTR programs (out of 41 municipalities that have passed by-laws enabling it)
- 79 municipalities offering CIP incentive programs that may be used to support heritage conservation work (among other objectives)
- 38 municipalities with multiple incentive programs

Municipal Heritage Grants and Loans Under Sections 39 and 45 of the OHA



- Properties must be individually designated or be part of a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) be eligible for a municipal heritage grant or loan
- Any type of designated property may be eligible for a grant or loan
- Council may prescribe terms and conditions for heritage grants and loans, however no specific conditions are set under the Act



Heritage Grant and Loan Programs around Ontario

- The City of Toronto Heritage Grant Program 2013 budget was \$300,000
 - Toronto approved 24 heritage grants in 2013, ranging from \$2,300 to \$40,000
- The City of Ottawa's 2013 budget for Heritage Grant Program for Building Restoration was \$150,000
 - Ottawa approves about 35 grants per year
- The Town of Port Hope's Heritage Grant Program 2013 budget was \$35,000
 - Port Hope approved three heritage grants in 2013
- The Municipality of Clarington's Heritage Incentive Grant Program 2013 budget was \$5,000
 - Clarington approved five heritage grants in 2013

Heritage Property Tax Relief

- Provided for in the Municipal Act (s. 365.2)
- Municipalities may provide property tax relief of between 10 and 40% to eligible heritage properties
- 40 Ontario municipalities have passed by-laws to provide heritage property tax relief
- The province shares in the cost of the program by funding education portion of the property tax relief
- Over **\$3.3M** in tax relief provided in 2012, of which the province contributed about **\$1.5M**, or 45%
- Between 2002-2012, approximately **\$11.9M** in total heritage property tax relief, with the province again contributing about 45%
- Tax rebates may be offered over multiple years, tied to ongoing improvement/maintenance, encouraging good conservation work





Community Improvement Plans

- Several municipalities have established Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) under the Planning Act that affect the same area as HCDs
- CIPs support many different community revitalization objectives by targeting municipal action (e.g. infrastructure works) and providing incentive programs (e.g. façade grants, fee reduction or relief) for private property owners
- Where a CIP and an HCD overlap, a number of municipalities have taken care to ensure their objectives are complementary and that the planning tools are able to work well together

Things to Consider With a CIP

- CIP incentives may work where no other municipal incentive may be appropriate or effective, including brownfield rehabilitation and affordable housing
- Unlike other municipal incentives for heritage conservation, there is no legislative requirement that a property be protected under the OHA to be eligible
- If a CIP incentive is being specifically intended to achieve heritage objectives, it should include eligibility criteria that ensure heritage value is well-conserved

Historic Main Street Seaforth, Huron East

- Designated a Heritage Conservation District, 1984.
- Winner of 2012 OBIAA “Bricks and Mortar” Award.
- Featured in “Rediscovering Canada Television” program, spring 2013.



Main Street Seaforth Property Owner/Resident Survey, 2009

- Part of study by University of Waterloo Heritage Resources Centre (HRC), Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO)
- 80% response rate (50 of 62 properties)
- 26 respondents were owners, 24 were tenants
- 80% of survey respondents satisfied or very satisfied with owning or renting in the HCD
- 88% of alteration requests approved within two months

(source: University of Waterloo Heritage Resources Centre, Heritage Conservation District Study, Seaforth – Municipality of Huron East, 2009)

Rehabilitation Is Working In Seaforth

- Six rehabilitation projects on buildings in the BIA and Heritage Conservation District in 2011.
- Four properties received heritage property tax relief, totalling \$11,213 (~\$1400-5000 per).
- Total of project costs for these four projects was \$22,433, i.e. 50% private-sector contribution.
- In 2012, only three vacancies in 83 commercial properties in the BIA, less than 3% vacancy rate.

(source: Municipality of Huron East Economic Development Department)



2013 Seaforth Foodland Fire

- On April 27, 2013, fire destroyed the Foodland located in the Seaforth Main Street HCD
- Reconstruction began in August
- The owner, Sobey's, worked with town staff and the heritage committee on the plans for the new building



- On Friday, December 6, 2013, the new 17,731 sq. ft. Foodland reopened on the same site
- The new Foodland has a design and signage that complements the HCD (while clearly being new)
- It also features heritage murals along the side street wall

Downtown Orangeville

- Downtown Orangeville HCD designated in 2002
- Waterloo HRC/ACO survey had 48 responses out of 64 property owner and tenant surveys (22 owners, 26 commercial tenants, 75% response rate) in 2012
- 80% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with owning or renting property in the HCD
- Data from town staff showed most alteration requests were approved within four weeks

(source: University of Waterloo Heritage Resources Centre, Heritage Conservation District Study, Downtown Orangeville Heritage Conservation District, 2012)



160-162 Broadway before rehabilitation



160-162 Broadway after rehabilitation

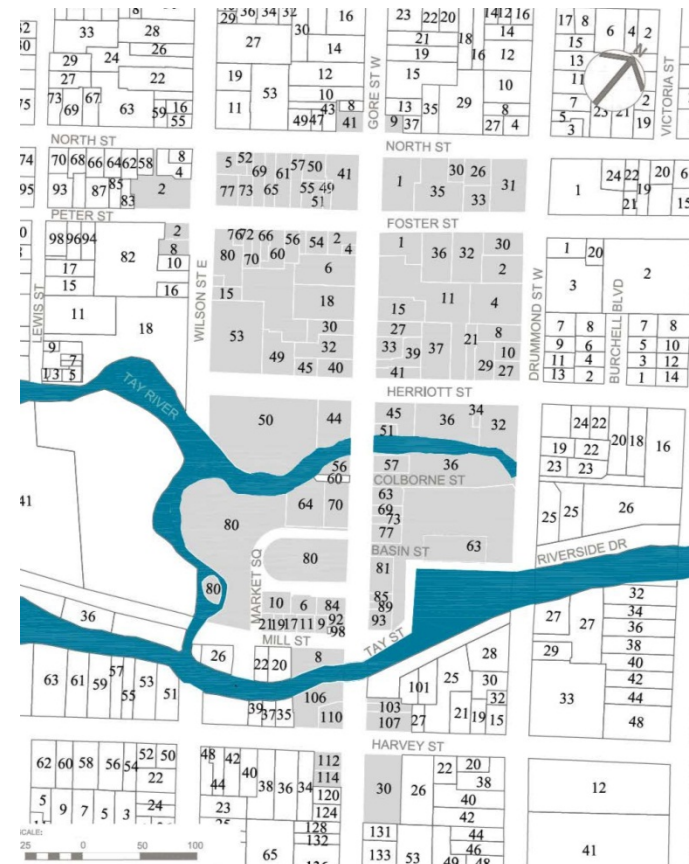
Downtown Perth, an Old Main Street, a New Heritage Conservation District



- 31 years after the Main Street Canada pilot, the town decided to study a possible heritage conservation district
- Study was partly funded through a Creative Communities Prosperity Fund grant from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

From Main Street Canada Pilot Project To Heritage Conservation District

- Downtown Heritage Conservation District designated March 2012, came into effect January 3, 2013
- 126 properties in the district, primarily traditional main street commercial and multi-residential
- There were already thirteen individually-designated heritage properties and three National Historic Sites in study area
- Town and Downtown Heritage Perth BIA are partners in revitalizing the downtown; the district plan is a tool to help accomplish this



Activity Since the Perth HCD Designation

- In the year since designation, Perth has seen considerable renovation and conservation work in the HCD
- 40 heritage permits issued in the HCD in 2013, 14 façade and signage grants under the CIP, 4 heritage grants.
- 4% commercial vacancy rate
- \$10 million CBC miniseries, “The Best Laid Plans,” shot in the HCD, spending at least \$21,000 directly in Perth, not including spending on hotels and restaurants, etc.

(source: Town of Perth, Community Services Department)



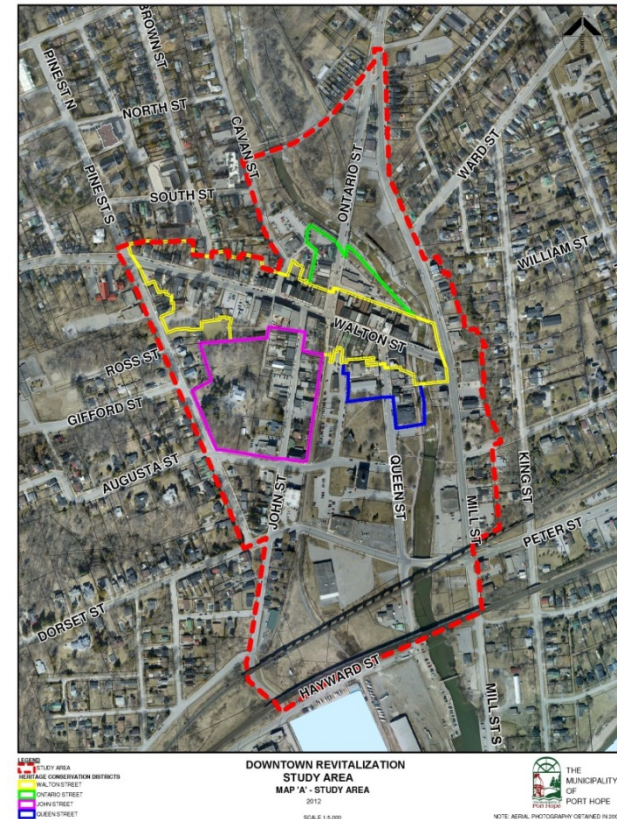
Port Hope, Revitalizing Around Existing Heritage Conservation Districts

- Walton Street designated a Heritage Conservation District in 1997
- In 2008, the Town of Port Hope designated areas surrounding Walton Street as the John, Ontario and Queen Street Heritage Conservation District
- In September 2012, Port Hope began a two-year Downtown Revitalization program
- Cultural heritage—including the Heritage Conservation Districts—has been identified as a key asset in self-assessment survey



Port Hope, Downtown Revitalization Around Heritage Conservation Districts

- 39 properties in Walton Street district
- 65 properties in John, Ontario and Queen Street district
- District plans have done a good job on façade conservation, but a “whole building” approach is now needed
- Rehabilitating upper floor units is a focus for downtown re-intensification
- Town, Port Hope Heritage BIA, Chamber of Commerce and local chapter of Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Government of Ontario all partners in the revitalization project



Financial Incentives At Work in Port Hope

- The Port Hope branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario has provided considerable funding for local heritage work through low-interest loans
- The Town of Port Hope also has a municipal heritage grant program (\$35,000 budget in 2013) and heritage property tax rebate program
- In March 2014, Port Hope received a \$100,000 grant through the Government of Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) Program to facilitate its downtown revitalization project



Goderich: Natural Disaster Strikes!

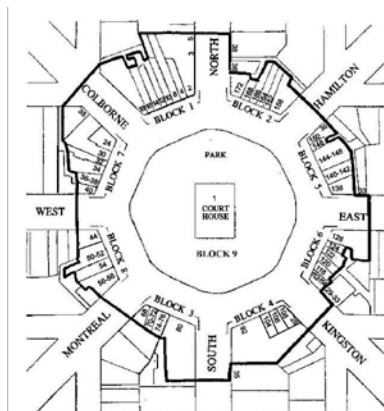


- On August 21, 2011, the Town of Goderich was struck by a tornado, with winds of up to 300 km/h and the loss of one life
- The tornado's track passed through the downtown core, damaging or destroying many buildings in The Square (designated an HCD in 1982)

- 53 downtown buildings were destroyed by the tornado or had to be demolished in its aftermath
- Seven buildings on protected heritage properties were lost
- 1500 trees were also lost



Goderich HCDs Show Their Resilience



Resources

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

www.mtc.gov.on.ca

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Service Ontario Publications

www.publications.serviceontario.ca

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Thank You!

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