

Welcome!

Thank you for attending the first Public Information Centre (PIC) for the Downtown Smiths Falls Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan. The Downtown Smiths Falls HCD Plan was initiated in early 2024 when the Town of Smiths Falls retained Stantec Consulting Ltd. to prepare an HCD Study Report and Plan. This is the first of two public meetings that will be held as part of the Plan Phase. If you have questions or comments, a member of the Project Team or Town Staff will be happy to speak with you.

Open House Format

This open house presents an overview of the HCD process and the requirements of the Plan Phase.

We also want to hear from you and have provided stations and forms for you to provide your insight and feedback.

Stations to Explore

- What is an HCD?
- Why is this area special?
- HCD Plan Content
- Sample Guidelines and Policies
- Your Input
- Next Steps



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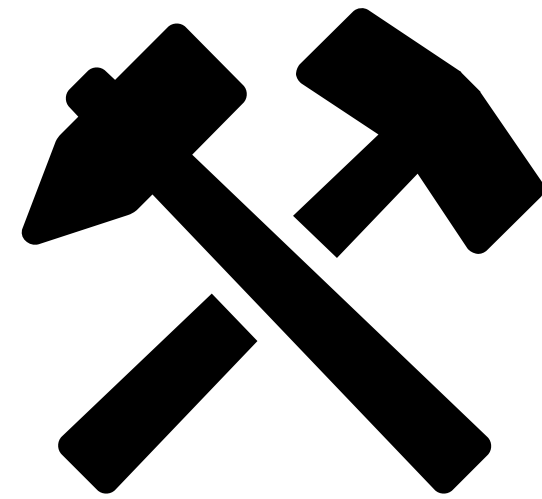


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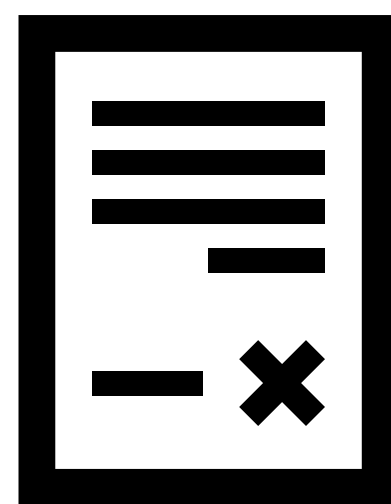
What is a Heritage Conservation District?

What about the process?

HCD plans can be important tools for managing change in areas containing heritage buildings and landscapes

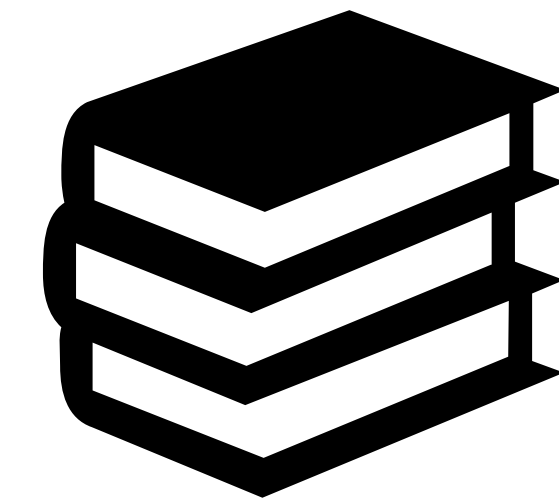


The HCD Study identified the cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of the recommended HCD boundary

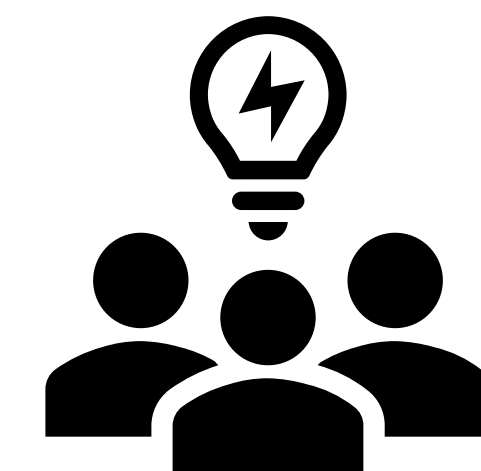


An HCD is a place where history is **embraced**, and **heritage resources** have been **preserved**. Broadly speaking, HCDs allow municipalities to **protect an entire area with heritage character**. They use a **heritage permit** system for certain things like additions, new design, or major alterations to buildings to **manage change** over time. There are currently 146 HCDs in Ontario.

In an HCD, the municipality passes a by-law that protects each property in the recommended boundary under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act



Ultimately, in Ontario, the onus is on the community to decide how to protect and conserve their heritage



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Why Is This Area Special?

The following summary of heritage attributes have been identified as reflective of the CHVI of the proposed Downtown Smiths Falls HCD:

- The concentration of late 19th and early 20th century commercial structures
- The presence of places of worship, civic, and institutional structures along Beckwith Street North and Church Street East and West
- The width of Beckwith Street North and South and of Main Street East and West
- The landmarks in the Study Area, including the former Rideau Theatre, the Rideau Hotel, the Carnegie Library and the Rideau Canal and Rideau River amongst others
- Approaches into the HCD along Beckwith Street

Additional information regarding specific heritage attributes is included in the Heritage Conservation District Study Report.



HCD Plan Content

The *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that HCD Plans contain the following content:

- A statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage conservation district;
- A statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the HCD;
- A description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;
- Policy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district; and
- A description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and **do not** require heritage permits



In the Downtown Smiths Falls HCD Plan, policies and guidelines will be prepared for actions such as:

- Making alterations to a building and putting an addition on a building
- Demolition, landscaping (such as creating or widening driveways and pathways)
- Tree and vegetation management

HCD Policies apply to municipally owned properties too, so there will be policies and guidelines that Council must follow for streetscaping, municipal works and roads, parks and open space areas. Different policies and guidelines are likely to be created for different building types, such as commercial, residential and civic/institutional, to reflect their different characters, contexts and needs. The HCD Plan will be customized based on community feedback.

A Note on Policies and Guidelines

The *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that a district plan include a statement of policies. A statement of policies provides the framework for consistent decision making by Council and the Town. The policy reflects the municipal objectives to maintain or enhance the character of the HCD. Policies clearly explain what changes and alterations are appropriate and likely to be approved in an HCD, and typically has more ‘teeth’ using words like ‘shall’, ‘must’ or ‘will’.

Guidelines may be written and/or graphic descriptions that have less ‘strict’ language and may be used where there are various alternatives that help to support a policy. Guidelines may also be used where the community indicates the priorities are not as strong but still want guidance. For example, some HCD communities look for guidance on historically appropriate paint colours, while others embrace bolder tones with the understanding that paint is a temporary feature of a building. Other communities may seek guidelines on recreating or inspiring historically appropriate landscaping patterns and plant species.

HCD's Do....

- Create a planning process that respects a community's history and identity
- Manage change with a process of heritage alteration permits for certain types of renovation, restoration, and new construction
- Foster an appreciation of a community's heritage resources
- Protect the integrity of buildings, streetscapes, structures, landforms and natural features
- Promote cultural tourism

HCD's Don't....

- Prohibit new construction or redevelopment
- Lower property values
- Cause owners to lose all property rights
- Require all new construction match a specific historical style
- Make owners require a permit for minor alterations

Sample HCD Policies and Guidelines

We have only just begun work on the HCD Plan, so no policies or guidelines have been created or set in stone at this point. We need your guidance for that!

To get the conversation started, we have identified policies and guidelines that are common to many HCD Plans to help get you thinking about the types of policies and guidelines you want to see in your community.

Here are some sample HCD policies and Guidelines from the *Ontario Heritage Toolkit*.

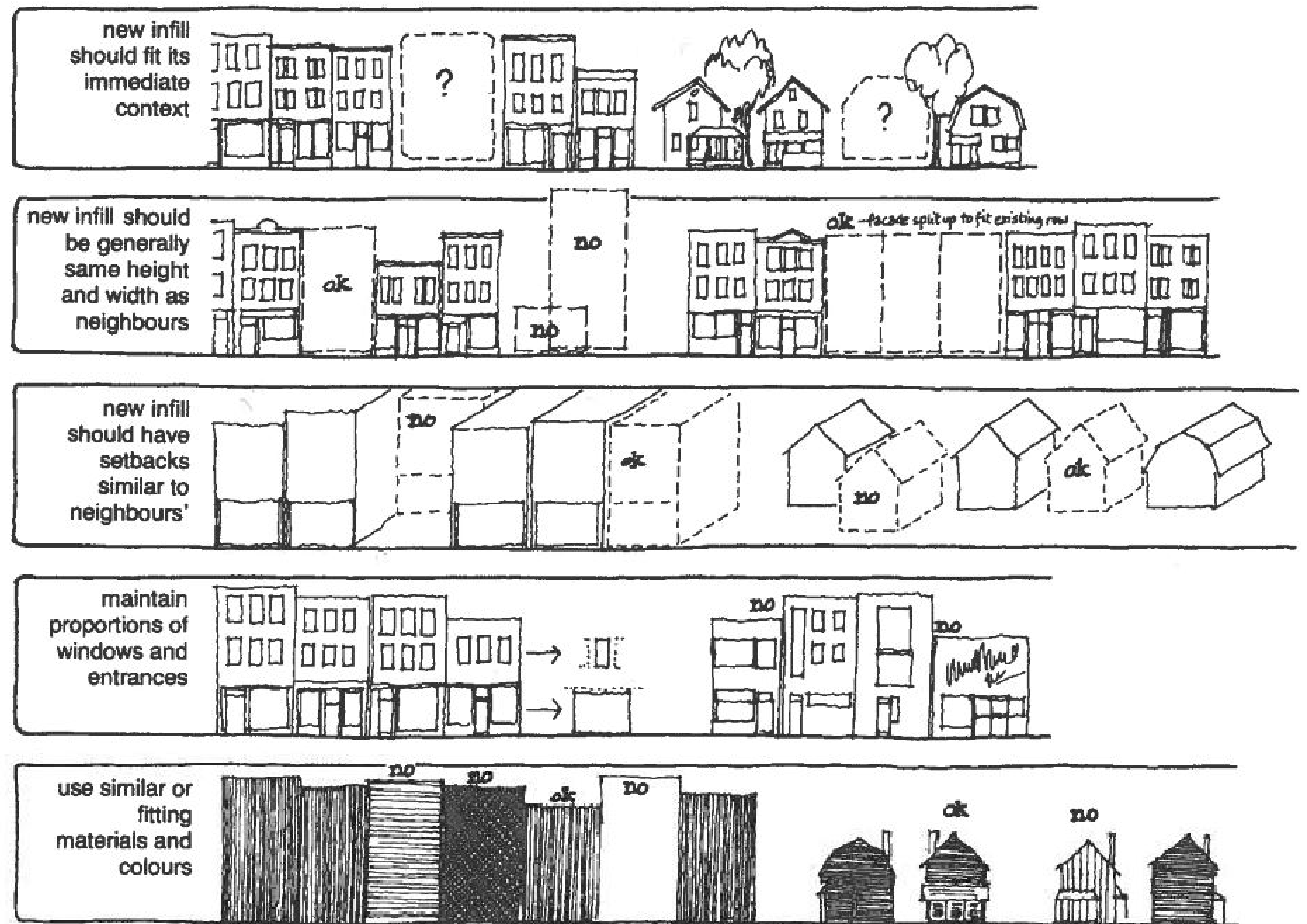


Image source: Ontario Heritage Toolkit



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Sample HCD Policies and Guidelines

Policies and guidelines often require alterations or new development to maintain the historical and traditional patterns of façade composition, such as:

- Windows should be aligned in similar vertical and horizontal patterns
- Buildings should have proportions of glazed (window) areas and wall surface that are appropriate to the building type and historical period
- Entrances, storefront areas, and porches (on residential properties) should be of an appropriate scale and size to the building



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Sample HCD Policies and Guidelines

Policies and guidelines for landscaping, parks, and signage typically focus on the character of a historic streetscape to contribute to the overall HCD 'look and feel'. This may include...

- Selecting traditional location choices for signage, such as above windows or doorways or small signs hanging perpendicular to the building
- Encouraging signage that is conservative in design
- Selecting signs that are externally illuminated, avoiding internally illuminated and neon signs
- Encouraging a mix of vegetation, lighting, pathways, seating and interpretive or public art opportunities within parks and parkettes
- Encouraging a healthy regimen by maintaining healthy and vigorous tree specimens and replacing struggling specimens when budget permits
- Avoiding removing mature trees unless they present a safety hazard or are declining due to age or disease. If a tree is removed, it should be replaced with a new tree of appropriate species and size for the context
- Encouraging consistent street furniture and public realm elements



Plan Process and Next Steps

Work Completed to Date

We have initiated the first steps in the Downtown Smiths Falls HCD Plan, including consulting with stakeholder groups, the municipality and you, the community.



What are the next steps?

Our next steps are to review your input and prepare the draft policies and guidelines of the HCD Plan.

The next **Public Information Centre is scheduled for September 2025**. We will present the draft findings of the Downtown Smiths Falls HCD Plan and hope to get your feedback at that time.

Meeting format details will be released closer to the date.

How to Stay Involved

Give us your feedback!

There are a few ways for you to send us feedback on the Downtown Smiths Falls HCD Plan:

1. Hand in your comment sheet
2. Head to <https://www.smithsfalls.ca/en/town-hall/heritage-conservation-district-project.aspx>
3. Contact:

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400-1305 Riverbend Road
London, ON, N6K 0J5
Phone: **(226) 268-9025**
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Manager of Development Services
Town of Smiths Falls
77 Beckwith St N
Smiths Falls, ON K7A 2B8
Phone: **(613) 283-4124, ext. 1116**
Email: **kgrenke@smithsfalls.ca**

Keep up-to-date with the HCD Plan

Want to stay involved? Provide your contact information at the sign-in table to receive notification of future meetings and reports.

We are accepting feedback from this PIC until March 28, 2025. There will be additional opportunities for input throughout the HCD process.

