

Staff Report

Presented By: Jay Pausner, Manager, Planning and Development

Meeting Date: January 13, 2025

Subject: Draft Cultural Heritage Master Plan

Attachment(s): Historical Context Overview Report
Draft Cultural Heritage Master Plan January 2025
Presentation January 2025

Recommendation

That Council direct the Cultural Heritage Master Plan be brought back to a future meeting incorporating feedback provided by Council.

Report Summary

The Draft Cultural Heritage Master Plan (CHMP) is presented outlining the key recommended actions to conserve cultural heritage resources in Saugeen Shores.

Background/Analysis

The 2024 Business Plan identified, as a Major Initiative, the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Master Plan.

NPG Planning Solutions was retained to assist in the preparation of the CHMP. Denise Horne, project manager for NPG will present the key findings including the recommended actions contained in the CHMP.

Process to Date

Beginning in early 2024 and using the Engage Saugeen Shores platform, the Town sought input from the community using an online survey. Following the survey, NPG met with representatives of Indigenous Communities and interested groups and hosted a public drop-in session on May 28 to inform and further refine input.

On September 25, 2024, the draft Plan was presented to the Municipal Heritage Committee. Input from the Committee was considered and is included in the draft where appropriate.

Historical Context

A Historical Context Overview Report was prepared as the basis for the Plan and is attached. This report outlines the current legislative framework for cultural heritage conservation, existing identified cultural heritage resources and provides a historical context overview of Saugeen Shores. The context overview outlines the larger historical, economic, social, and cultural processes that have influenced growth and change in Saugeen Shores. It also outlines how consultation was conducted and summarizes the methodology for creating the CHMP.

Draft Cultural Heritage Master Plan

The Draft CHMP contains significant background and legislative context, as well as recommendations for the Town to build a strong, cohesive cultural heritage strategy. It also defines Cultural Heritage Resources, so there is a common understanding of what is intended with this Plan and to form the basis for the proposed actions contained therein.

Cultural Heritage Resources are the built heritage, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources within a community. It is outlined in the Provincial Planning Statement that these resources shall be conserved. This Plan sets a framework for how the Town may identify its cultural heritage resources and conserve them.

Five objectives are outlined. Each objective includes actions which may be taken to achieve the objective as well as a draft action plan for each objective to ensure its effective and coordinated implementation. The Draft CHMP outlines each action in more detail.

Objective I – Maintain Compliance within the Legislative Framework for Cultural Heritage Resources (pages 47-61)

The changing legislative environment has made it difficult for municipalities to prepare and implement heritage policy. Saugeen Shores should align its documents with updates to provincial heritage policy and legal requirements where needed. Key actions addressing Objective I include:

- update Official Plan policies;
- create and adopt templates for evaluating heritage resources;
- identify tools for conservation;
- update designating by-laws for properties already designated; and
- prioritize properties for designation.

Objective II – Improve Process (pages 62-71)

What the Town conserves is only one element of conservation. How the Town conserves is just as important to ensure due process, compliance with legislation and consistent application of identified tools. Objective II examines the key processes which may be enhanced, including:

- Council endorsed heritage processes; and
- Managing cemeteries and burial places.

Objective III – Build Capacity (pages 72-74)

On-going training for staff and the Heritage Committee will strengthen the Town's long-term ability to navigate legislative changes and manage resources. Key actions addressing Objective III include:

- explore opportunities for training;
- consider developing a training manual for conservation; and
- reassess staff capacity.

Objective IV – Expand Lines of Communication (pages 75-79)

Further developing lines of communication leads to stronger collaborative projects and meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Communities, advisory committees to Council and with community groups. Key actions addressing objective 4 include:

- develop an Indigenous engagement Official Plan policy and protocols;
- consider establishing Indigenous community representation on the Heritage Committee; and
- facilitate discussion of heritage goals and objectives.

Objective V – Develop a Saugeen Shores Approach to Conservation (pages 80-84)

Developing a means for residents and community groups to participate and identify cherished places should be built into the strategy. Key actions addressing Objective V include:

- build alliances with heritage advocacy groups and local businesses;
- work with the Business Improvement Areas;
- define, coordinate and promote rural heritage;
- connect with youth; and
- define Community Character.

Conclusion

Given recent changes to heritage legislation and policy, it is timely for the Town to re-evaluate its heritage planning framework to strategically manage, conserve and commemorate its cultural heritage resources. This Plan provides that framework by establishing a strong foundation for cultural heritage planning that is founded on principles that will assist in addressing legal and strategic considerations.

Because the Plan contains a number of operational recommendations, the Town will prepare an implementation plan to assist in pro-active and timely application of the recommendations.

Next Steps

The next steps in the consideration of the CHMP are:

- post the draft Plan to Engage Saugeen Shores for public review and comment;
- circulate the draft Plan to various parties for further comment, including Indigenous Peoples;
- return to Council with a final draft for adoption – estimated by early Q2 2025; and
- return to Council with an implementation schedule and costing.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 4: Fostering a Vibrant Place to Live and Visit
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Major Initiative

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

Costs associated with this project are contained within the existing budget.

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