



Changing the Narrative

STATE OF HERITAGE REPORT 2019

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Executive Summary

Heritage is for everyone. It should be accessible to everyone.

As one of the world's most diverse cities, Toronto is privileged to contain numerous layers of heritage: the natural heritage of our parks and ravines, the cultural heritage showcased in our communities, the built heritage we experience daily, and the archaeological underpinnings beneath us. We must focus our collective energies on the diverse spaces, stories, and traditions on which Toronto is built to develop a community-based view and interest in heritage.

Heritage creates social cohesion.

Heritage is a positive force for economic development.

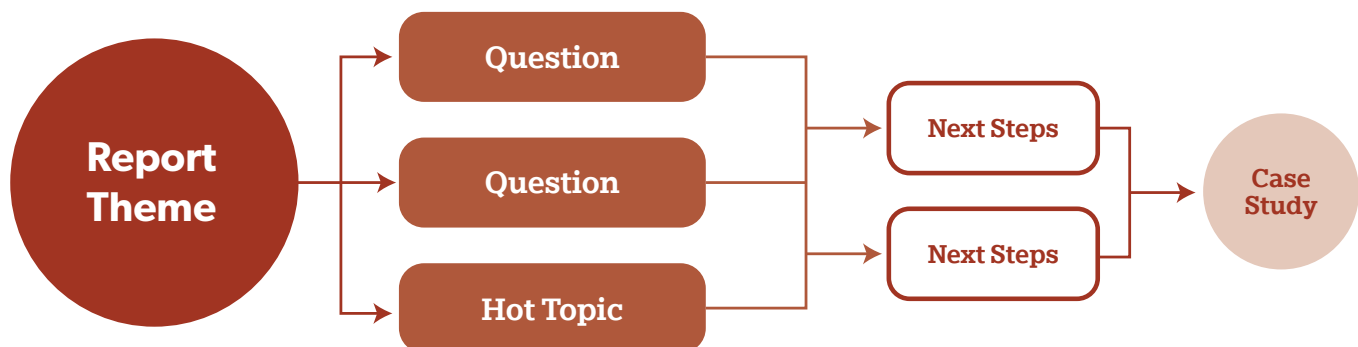
Heritage is sustainable.

Image by Mike Portt

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT:

This Report is divided into three themes: Social Cohesion, Economic Development, and Sustainability. Within each theme, we have identified questions that reflect ongoing challenges and the potential within the heritage sector. To address these issues, we have proposed relevant next steps to effect positive change in heritage throughout the city.

The Report also presents case studies that highlight existing issues in heritage programming as well as unresolved debates relevant to the city, offering comparative models that can be used to implement these recommendations throughout Toronto's heritage sector.



Introduction

Who We Are

Heritage Toronto is a charity and agency of the City of Toronto that celebrates our city's rich heritage and the diverse stories of its people, places, and events—both to make sense of our present and to inform our future. In 2017, Heritage Toronto presented 99 events across 28 wards, and welcomed over 8,000 people to its programs.

Background and Purpose of the Report

In 2001, following amalgamation, Heritage Toronto produced an initial report which aimed to take the pulse of Toronto's heritage sector. The last report was released in 2015. As part of its mandate to advise the City on heritage matters, Heritage Toronto produces the Report:

- To provide measurable goals and recommendations for decision makers.
- To provide a unified voice for the municipal heritage sector, which comprises a plurality of local community groups and volunteers.
- To maintain and deepen the relationship between Heritage Toronto and these groups and other stakeholders.
- To provide essential information on the sector to the general public.

The 2019 Report is also grounded in the following value-based principles on the ongoing role of heritage:

- Heritage is infused into our civic and social infrastructures.
- Heritage plays a crucial role in economic development, civic identity, social connectivity, and environmentalism.

- Experiences of heritage are both individual and collective; they are informed by socio-economic and cultural identities.
- Heritage is active not static and is both tangible and intangible.

WHO IS THE REPORT FOR?

The Report's goal is to inform all Torontonians about the contributions made by those who participate in the heritage sector, including developers, BIAs, community groups, property owners, renters, historical societies, volunteers, and financial supporters.

Municipal decision-makers should read this Report, take inspiration from the good work underway throughout the city, and develop the political will to make bold choices that protect and support the diverse heritage sector in Toronto. It is clear the sector needs to be better resourced, but there are often alternative, strategic solutions to be found. This Report presents the actions, the hopes, and the hurdles of our heritage sector.

METHODOLOGY

The 2019 Report has been informed by dialogue with City staff, heritage professionals, and volunteers. Throughout 2018, we held consultations at six sites across Toronto. We spoke to 400 individuals, including representatives of many groups that reflect the diversity and strengths of Toronto's heritage communities. We held a sold-out public consultation with 130 attendees at The Great Hall in July. Representatives from historical associations, heritage organizations, community groups, and First Nations communities were invited to attend. That same month, we issued a digital public survey with 400 respondents. In anticipation of the October 2018 election, we invited mayoral candidates to respond to four priority questions on heritage as determined by our Board of Directors. We shared the unedited answers from participating candidates through both our e-newsletter and website.



Attendees during the Heritage Toronto summer Tours program.

Image by Marcus Mitanis

Then and Now: The State of Heritage Since 2015

WHAT WE ASKED FOR IN 2015:

- Consider a more holistic approach to heritage conservation, recommending greater inclusion of both cultural landscapes and natural heritage features.
- Find more compelling and relevant ways to tell stories and engage new audiences (including telling stories that connect with more diverse groups like younger generations and new Canadians).
- Appreciate, celebrate, and commemorate natural and intangible heritage through educational programming.

WHAT WE'VE SEEN FROM THE CITY:

City Planning is integrating multifaceted notions of heritage into its major projects.

- Adopted by City Council in 2018, the TOcore downtown plan is a policy framework to enhance the core's long-term livability and to protect cultural and built form heritage.
- We have also seen more frequent use of Heritage Conservation Districts as a way of identifying the cultural heritage value of neighbourhoods. In 2017, City Council prioritized 13 Heritage Conservation District studies, recommending interim protective measures while the areas await study.

The City is also making it easier to participate in heritage preservation and celebration on a smaller scale by offering:

- Grants and rebates to assist homeowners with the cost of preserving heritage homes.
- Community grants to support grassroots cultural organizations and events.
- Public permit categories that make it easier for cultural events to take place in city parks.

WHAT WE'VE SEEN IN THE COMMUNITY:

- Historical societies and cultural heritage organizations have worked hard to tell the stories of Toronto's marginalized populations and get them recognized through relevant and diverse programming.
- Indigenous organizations and arts-based partnerships have forged commemorative spaces and are working to ensure untold stories are brought to light and honoured, celebrating a diversity of Indigenous cultures.
- Digital experiences of cultural heritage are becoming more common through downloadable apps and street markers that incorporate augmented reality.
- Developers and private firms continue to adapt buildings and spaces to integrate heritage into everyday living. They've helped to create interesting destinations and interpretations of culturally and historically relevant places.

INTRODUCTION

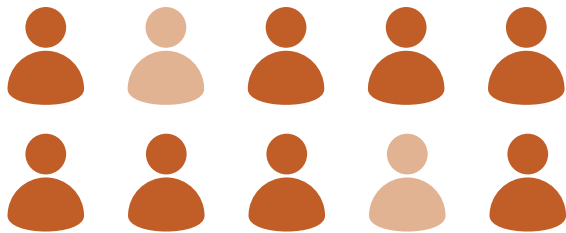
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We have made great strides since 2015, using new platforms and engaging new communities to share and commemorate the diverse history of Toronto. But more can be done. In addition to our city's built heritage, our natural heritage is increasingly under threat. Our heritage programming must reach beyond the downtown core and we must take stock of our heritage volunteer programs.

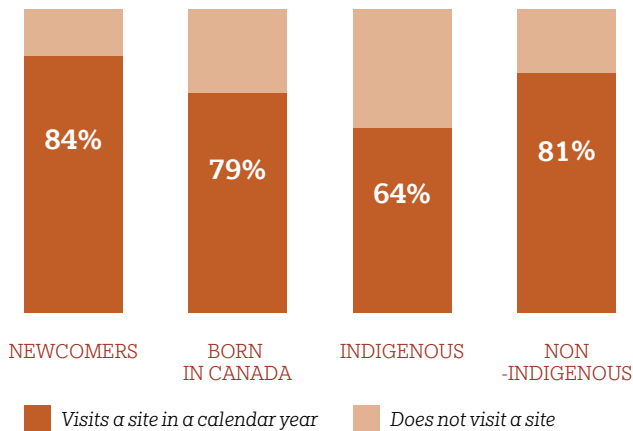
Our 2019 recommendations ask our City Council, heritage stakeholders, and all Torontonians to consider the daily and diverse experience of heritage in our city **to ensure all of our stories are preserved for future generations.**

FAST FACTS

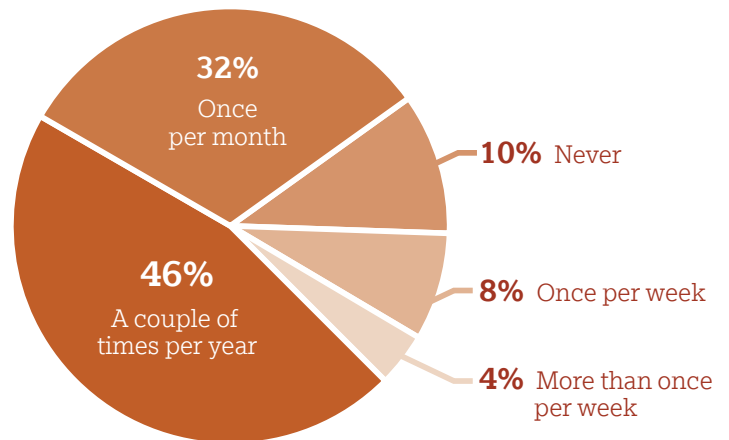
In 2016, 8 in 10 Canadians visited a heritage institution or historic site.¹



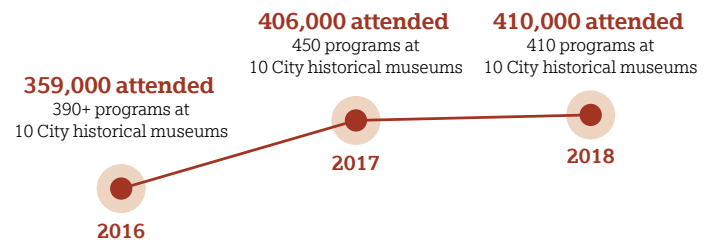
Overall annual attendance to heritage sites and institutions is higher among newcomers to Canada and lower among Indigenous people.



According to a Heritage Toronto survey, Torontonians engage in a heritage-related educational activity:²



Attendance to City-Run Heritage Programs in Toronto is on the rise!³



From 20th-century skyscrapers, to the sites of former Indigenous villages, to the city's first Chinatown, historical plaques document Toronto's diverse history. With over 500 plaques, Heritage Toronto has the most active historical plaque program in North America.⁴



1. Heritage and Social Cohesion

“In a city as diverse as Toronto, it’s imperative to work in more inclusive ways that allow for diverse leadership and participation in heritage to emerge and thrive.... Representation is not enough. Participatory approaches, genuine partnership and acknowledging the entrenched power dynamics at play are needed in order to make lasting and meaningful change in the sector.”

PARTICIPANT, HERITAGE TORONTO STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION, SEPTEMBER 2018



WHAT IS SOCIAL COHESION?

What makes someone feel like they are part of a community? How does heritage contribute to that feeling of being included? Throughout the world, the promotion of cultural diversity and heritage can help create strong community bonds, fostering social inclusion and equity in urban areas. In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development for the United Nations defined a cohesive society as “**one in which all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, recognition and legitimacy.**”⁵

Heritage belongs to everyone. Our programming, resources, and funding must reflect this. There must be a broader recognition of the diverse stories and neighbourhoods that comprise Toronto’s heritage, its cultural communities, and the broad geographic scope of the GTA. We must also engage our communities on accessible platforms, including a more creative application of digital tools for heritage.

WHAT WE HEARD



80% of Canadians agree that heritage “**helped me feel part of my local community.**”⁶

Over 80% of Torontonians we surveyed believe that **heritage is crucial to Toronto’s local and city-wide communities,** bringing people together to learn from our past.⁷

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF HERITAGE SECTOR WORKERS SELF-IDENTIFY AS A VISIBLE MINORITY IN ONTARIO?

Only
2.4% of
museum
employees

Only
4.5% of
archive
employees

Only
8% of
historic site
employees⁸

HERITAGE FOR YOUR HEALTH!

Piloted in 2018, Ontario physicians can now prescribe a visit to the Royal Ontario Museum as a remedy for anxiety and loneliness. As part of the project, the ROM will offer 5,000 free passes, each valid for up to four people. As reported by Jason Miller of the *Toronto Star*, the program “target[s] health needs of people who aren’t well-served by the mainstream health system, such as people who are racialized, LGBTQ, those facing employment barriers, and Indigenous people.”⁹

How can we encourage more diverse involvement in heritage?

1.1 Expand heritage educational and networking opportunities for elementary, secondary, post-secondary students and young professionals from all backgrounds

We need to engage young and fresh voices with our city’s heritage. This process must start in our education system. Both in terms of curriculum content and volunteer opportunities, more can be done to show the relevance of heritage and public history in 21st-century Toronto. There is an opportunity to engage students in the classroom through dynamic, inclusive curricula and outside the classroom through engaging, meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Historical institutions, like the Scarborough Museum, have been successful in creating impactful volunteer opportunities that spur interest among younger students. These have included making space for volunteer-created exhibits as well as collaborations with local arts organizations, such as the inPrint Collective.



Students and young professionals in the Emerging Historians program attend the Heritage Toronto Awards.

Image by Herman Custodio

Students who pursue heritage-related studies at the university or college level also need support as they transition to careers in the heritage sector. The Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement celebrates outstanding contributions to heritage by individuals under 24. Recent award winners were recognized for their involvement with projects dedicated to conserving the cultural practices of marginalized groups and diverse communities.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario's (ACO) NextGen program uses hands-on learning and social engagement to meet the unique needs of students and emerging professionals who are interested in the field of built heritage and cultural landscapes. Programs like Heritage Toronto's Emerging Historians provide a platform to hone skills under the mentorship of a heritage professional during both the summer Tours program and the Heritage Toronto Awards.

1.2 Make space for new voices by promoting and funding new ways for Toronto's diverse communities and marginalized voices to tell their own histories

Many of our city's most important heritage stories may not be found in history books or on a museum wall. Although there is room for improvement within local schools and historical societies, we must think outside these traditional institutions to encourage new voices to participate in creating and maintaining personal and community memories. Organizations such as the Toronto Ward Museum and Myseum of Toronto, municipal initiatives like Toronto For All¹⁰ and art projects like the Department of Public Memory¹¹ demonstrate innovative approaches to our heritage stories. These projects illustrate new approaches to our city's collective past, but more can be done. Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods. Those neighbourhoods need more dedicated resources to help them preserve and share stories from their past.

We must also remember we live in a linguistically diverse city, one that stretches beyond the Canada's official languages of French and English. Since 1982, the Ontario Heritage Trust has provided both French and English text for all new and replacement plaques. In recent years, a wider linguistic representation of the city has been featured on numerous heritage plaques, including Mandarin, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Gaelic, and Ukrainian. But we must be more inclusive in fostering non-English heritage resources that connect to Toronto's varied linguistic communities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 1 in 4 Toronto residents

does not speak English or French at home.¹²

CASE STUDY

Redefining Heritage Spaces: The Toronto Ward Museum

The Toronto Ward Museum tells Toronto's immigrant history through new and different stories that engage both residents and visitors. Online and mobile exhibitions and public programs have highlighted newcomer communities and issues. The Ward Museum exemplifies the type of organization which can successfully support local communities to capture and preserve their own stories. Its structure and goals allow it to provide a forum for sharing community memories in a digital space.

"Almost half of Toronto's population was born outside of Canada...[We need to] strengthen our understanding of immigration history through innovation in interpretation and public engagement."

TORONTO WARD MUSEUM¹³

CASE STUDY

Redefining Heritage Spaces: Recording Recipes with the Manitoba Food History Project

Mobile projects and resources are an innovative solution to communities and neighbourhoods where infrastructure is inaccessible or underdeveloped. The Manitoba Food History Project (pictured right) offers a creative approach to community memory by recording and making cherished family recipes. It is also a mobile solution, meeting and engaging community members in their own neighbourhoods and spaces. Using a custom-built food truck, the project travels throughout Manitoba, conducting interviews and cooking local, historical, and meaningful recipes.¹⁴



Image courtesy of the Manitoba Food History Project

How can Indigenous¹⁵ cultural heritage become part of daily life in Toronto?

1.3 Increase the availability of Toronto's heritage spaces, historic sites, and museums to Indigenous communities and knowledge keepers as spaces to tell their community's stories

The Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada have directly asked for increased support and evaluation within the museum sector through Call to Action #67:

"We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and to make recommendations."¹⁶

The museums and heritage sectors have a direct role to play in the process of reconciliation. This includes fostering knowledge of Indigenous history and current events to develop strong and respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities. It also means supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.¹⁷ Although Call to Action #67 is directly addressed to the federal government, it is appropriate that organizations, including Heritage Toronto, also provide the heritage-specific support requested by Call to Action #79: the "[integration of] Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices" into the sector's interpretative frameworks. This will ensure that programming stays relevant to all Canadians and visitors.

CASE STUDY

The Royal Ontario Museum's Daphne Cockwell Gallery

The Royal Ontario Museum's recently reopened Daphne Cockwell Gallery (pictured right), dedicated to First Peoples Art & Culture, exemplifies one way in which TRC Call to Action #67 can be realized. The Gallery offers Toronto residents and visitors a permanent gallery space highlighting the communities that have lived in the Toronto area for millennia.¹⁸ ROM Director and CEO Josh Basseches announced in April 2018 that the Gallery would be permanently free of charge to all visitors. An Indigenous Knowledge Resource Teacher is available in the Gallery during peak hours during the week.¹⁹ The ROM also announced the intention to hire a permanent Curator of Indigenous Art & Culture, which will be held by a person of Indigenous heritage. This is representative of the overall need for greater inclusion of Indigenous communities on the staff and boards of heritage institutions.



Image by Mike Portt

1.4 Increase the visible presence of Indigenous history through art and educational markers on every corner

New spaces for sharing stories and histories must be found. Organizations, such as the Jumblies Theatre, offer creative, innovative ways to share Indigenous stories and knowledge. Other artists, advocates, and community groups are finding and creating space throughout the city to highlight the ongoing presence and contribution of Indigenous communities to Toronto. The aim must be a holistic one—not to create a separate space for Indigenous communities and history but to infuse the Indigenous experience throughout Toronto, from the street corner, to the classroom, to City Council.

In 2018, the City added a Medicine Wheel to the Toronto sign at Nathan Phillips Square as part of National Indigenous Peoples Day and during the Indian Residential School Survivors Legacy Celebration.



Image by Mike Portt

CASE STUDY

The Ojima Mikana (Reclaiming/Renaming) Project

Spearheaded by Hayden King, this project restores Anishinaabemowin place names (the language of the Anishinaabeg) to the streets, paths, and trails of Ontario. First seen on Toronto street signs (pictured right), the project has expanded to signage with Anishinaabemowin place names or messages in Anishinaabe territory throughout Ontario. Such art-based projects make First Nations languages and history visible for all residents, an integrated and holistic approach to heritage.



Image by Emily Berg

The Indian Residential School Survivor (IRSS) Project at Nathan Phillips Square

The IRSS Legacy project at Nathan Phillips Square marks an important local step in healing, remembrance, and acknowledgement with regard to the Indian Residential School System. Created by the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in partnership with the Province of Ontario, the IRSS project responds to TRC Call to Action #82, which requests the establishment of a publicly accessible and highly visible Residential School sculpture in each capital city to honour survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.²⁰

A Teaching, Sharing, Learning, and Healing Space with a central sculpture will be installed at the southwest corner of the Square (rendered below).

The IRSS Legacy Sculpture, designed and created by Anishinaabe artist Solomon King of Stone Artisan Studios and Studio Niiwin in consultation with Toronto Council Fire, will depict the Turtle, a symbol of Mother Earth. The sculpture and space will remind everyone of the struggles and experiences by Residential School Survivors and reflect their ongoing recovery and resilience. In late 2018, a cultural gathering at Nathan Phillips Square highlighted the project, spreading awareness through workshops, ceremonies, and dances.²¹ The anticipated total cost of the project is estimated to be \$5.2 million. At time of publication, the Government of Ontario has contributed \$1.5 million and the City of Toronto has contributed \$500,000—leaving more than \$3 million to be raised by other fundraising efforts.



Rendering courtesy of Toronto Council Fire Native Culture Centre

How do we showcase the depth and breadth of heritage outside downtown Toronto?

1.5 Increase support to heritage programming outside the downtown core

The geographic scope of Toronto demands a collaborative approach to recognizing and promoting the city's diverse heritage. Entering its sixth year in 2019, the city's Cultural Hotspot program highlights arts, culture, and community by celebrating and investing in Toronto's diverse neighbourhoods. The initiative celebrates local culture, heritage, and business with special events, festivals, and art happenings.²²

From La Société d'histoire de Toronto to the Toronto Workers' History Project, the city is home to dozens of diverse heritage organizations and volunteer groups. Each contributes a different lens to Toronto's history but more must be done to link neighbourhood-based and city-wide heritage resources and organizations together.

An interactive digital platform could foster collaboration and provide information about events and volunteering to the general public.



Image by Hanifa Mamujee

MORE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMMING OUTSIDE THE CORE

In 2017, the city-wide MomenTO celebration highlighted 150 years of people, places, and events of significance to the history of Toronto and Canada. Engaging over 81,000 participants, programming included a pop-up museum, 60 city-wide events, and projects such as a Heritage Toronto lecture series on innovation featuring six talks, attended by over 750 people.²³ Other events invited residents to discover the history and heritage of Toronto's natural spaces. "MomenTO by Canoe" (pictured right) offered guided canoe trips along the Humber and Rouge Rivers, both nationally significant waterways.

Image by Summer Leigh Photography



CASE STUDY

*A Digital Database of Toronto's Built Fabric: TOBuilt*²⁴

Developed and curated by the Toronto Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO), TOBuilt is an open-source database that includes information and images for approximately 10,000 Toronto buildings. Accessible online, ACO members can upload their own photos and descriptions of buildings to the database. Although TOBuilt currently is heavily weighted towards buildings, ACO Toronto is looking to expand the diversity of entries to include landscape architecture, cultural landscapes, and non-building structures. ACO Toronto has also been in discussion with City staff about incorporating TOBuilt data for City use, such as in Heritage Conservation District applications, heritage property designations, and the proposed city-wide heritage survey (see page 31 for details).

A HERITAGE HOT TOPIC: HISTORICAL STATUES AND MONUMENTS

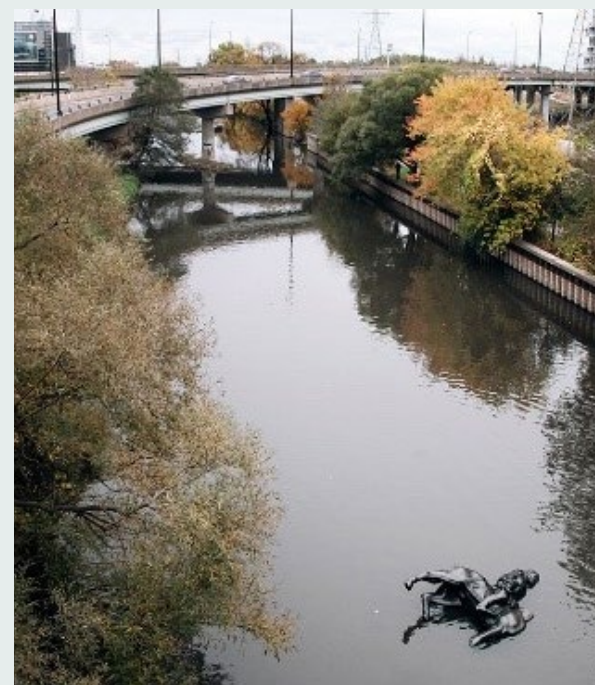
Statues and monuments are prominent visual symbols of a city's history. The enduring and highly visible nature of these depictions of prominent individuals create moments of consideration for locals and tourists alike. Recently, cities across the world have been removing or re-evaluating the prominence of their statues, the presence of which may be interpreted as tacit support of colonial and discriminatory agendas of the memorialized individuals. Many of Toronto's statues depict politicians or monarchs whose actions or beliefs negatively impacted numerous communities. Ultimately, statues represent only one historical perspective; this is dangerous as it offers a single-sided, uncomplicated interpretation of our city's past.

Recent performance art has highlighted this issue, including the dropping of a life-size replica of a statue depicting King Edward VII into the Lower Don River (pictured right).²⁵ Other actions, including the June 2018 installation of a Truth and Reconciliation plaque next to a statue of the University's founder and namesake, Egerton Ryerson, illustrate the numerous paths that can be taken to contextualize a statue's role within 21st-century Toronto. The plaque installation came at the end of a significant debate, led by the University's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, about the appropriateness of a public statue of Ryerson, given his leading role in the establishment of the Residential School System.

The Ryerson University community decided to leave the statue in place with an adjacent plaque explaining Ryerson's deeply problematic and racist beliefs while acknowledging his role in the foundation of a modern, inclusive university in the heart of Toronto.

The heritage sector cannot avoid this topic— we must face it head on. Steps should be taken to encourage and foster greater social inclusion in viewing, interpreting, and interacting with monuments to our city's history.

Image by Yuula Benivolski



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE...

2. Heritage and Economic Development

“In the 21st century, only the unwise city will make the choice between historic preservation and economic development. The wise city will effectively utilize its historic built environment to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of its citizens far into the future.”

DONOVAN RYPKEMA, HERITAGE STRATEGIES INTERNATIONAL²⁶

HOW DO WE MEASURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN HERITAGE?

Through tourism, community partnerships, and diverse programming, heritage is a proven contributor to economic development. Heritage events and resources increase the number of jobs, business incomes, and tax revenue, all positive forces for Toronto’s economy. Heritage also enhances quality of life which, in turn, can contribute to attracting and retaining new businesses in neighbourhoods.²⁷

As cities have transformed from “landscapes of production” to “landscapes of consumption,” new cultural patterns are being established.²⁸ Heritage and urban regeneration are in a dynamic relationship with economic development, both driving and being threatened by it. Tourism revenue has often driven the discussion of economic impact with regard to heritage.

Out-of-town visitors to heritage sites and museums are only one piece of heritage’s wider relationship to Toronto’s businesses, communities, and property development. We must consider how heritage contributes to the overall economic climate of our city—from how to adapt heritage buildings into modern residences and businesses to our understanding of employment trends and career opportunities within these sectors.

The newly opened Berczy Park attracts animals and humans alike in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.

Image by Herman Custodio



How can we highlight the value of the heritage sector?

2.1 Regularly assess the economic impact of heritage on the city

Heritage helps Toronto's economy thrive. From hosting city-wide cultural festivals, to providing unique heritage buildings as the backdrop to film shoots, to creating construction jobs, the heritage sector is a major, positive contributing force for Toronto's economy. With over 290,000 attendees at 150 locations at Doors Open in 2017, and over 410,000 visitors to the City's historical museums between 2017 and 2018, heritage is an economic draw for the city and deserves to be recognized on its own terms. Strong numbers from these successful annual programs provide an indicator of how much heritage contributes to Toronto's bottom line. An annual assessment could more clearly define this economic impact, taking a wider view to how heritage helps Toronto grow as a global city.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, heritage contributed the following to Canada's economy:

- **Museums: over \$1.1 billion**
- **Archives: \$368 million**
- **Historic sites: \$145 million**²⁹

Toronto Arts Council's Animating Historic Sites program provides funding to arts organizations, collectives, or professional artists to re-imagine and animate selected Toronto historic sites. **Since 2015, the program has awarded over \$520,000 in grants to 39 eligible projects and arts groups.**³⁰

2.2 Create a city-wide evaluation of heritage employment and volunteer demographics

Work in the heritage sector ranges from drop-in volunteers at local heritage sites to directors of international cultural institutions. In a sector that depends so heavily on both volunteer engagement and part-time employment, the path to a career in heritage is rarely clear or easy. Although colleges and universities throughout the Greater Toronto Area offer undergraduate and post-graduate programs in heritage-related fields, these emerging professionals face a unique job market where permanent, full-time work is often the exception rather than the rule.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, the Canadian heritage sector received assistance from over

115,650 volunteers, contributing over 6.6 million hours.

This is equivalent to approximately 3,200 full-time positions.

If one were to apply only a minimum wage salary to that equation,

it would total nearly \$70 million.³¹

DID YOU KNOW?

A **significant portion of heritage employees** are **part-time** or **work on contracts**?

43% of museum employees are part-time.

53% of museum employees are part-time or contract workers.

70% of historic site employees are part-time.

80% of historic site employees are part-time or contract workers.³²

In comparison, **only 26% of employment in Toronto was part-time** in 2017.³³

The 2017 *Government of Canada Survey of Heritage Institutions* provided financial and operating data of not-for-profit heritage institutions in Canada, captured in 2015. We must dig deeper into this high-level data to ask why part-time workers outnumber full-time workers in this sector (sometimes by three to one). Without a better understanding of who is working in this sector, it is difficult for institutions, employers, and prospective employees to see shifts in hiring patterns or job opportunities. A city-wide evaluation of the sector could provide the necessary information to address underlying issues that may affect who is entering the heritage sector seeking a career and what opportunities are available in the sector. It also may provide clues as to who is leaving or prevented from entering the heritage workforce and why.

2.3 Tailor volunteer programs to recognize skills and contributions

Volunteers provide the backbone of labour in the heritage sector and they deserve widespread recognition and support. Although many cultural and heritage institutions advertise the benefits active volunteers can expect as part of their work, more could be done to recognize a volunteer's contributions, experience, and knowledge. For example, active volunteers at the City of Toronto's historical museums are eligible for the Toronto Attractions Reciprocal Program, which allows free or discounted entry to museums, attractions, and sites throughout the city.³⁴ However, many volunteers and volunteer coordinators expressed a hesitation to take advantage of these benefits. Without an identification card or other formal documentation, volunteers expressed a lack of confidence in approaching these institutions to take advantage of their reciprocal benefits. A more structured recognition program for city-wide volunteers could alleviate these issues, giving volunteers the confidence to take advantage of their well-earned benefits.

CELEBRATING THE DIVERSITY OF HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS AT EVERY STAGE

From Emerging...

Sites like the Scarborough Museum, which boasts a largely student-aged volunteer pool, often recognize their young volunteers through workshops or other large group activities throughout the city. These activities are great for volunteer morale but also provide opportunities to introduce students to other Toronto heritage or arts-based institutions. More could be done to make space in these institutions and sites for volunteer recognition workshops, lunches, and other educational events.

...To Established

Historical institutions often depend on the expertise of volunteers who have recently retired or stepped away from active and successful careers. More also can be done to recognize their unique skill set and knowledge. Their participation on heritage panels or local historical advisory boards could provide a more direct and helpful outlet for their expertise to be valued within the sector.

How can we reward heritage-friendly development and renovation?

2.4 Offer a fast-track program to heritage property developers, providing a swifter approval process for developments that adhere to Ontario Heritage Act requirements and provincial policy statements

In property development, time is money. Permit delays and lengthy review times pose significant barriers to adaptive reuse projects.³⁶ For developers and property owners who face monthly charges such as mortgage payments or construction crew salaries, these delays can make heritage property renovation unappealing and will discourage adaptive reuse of heritage properties.

We must make adaptive reuse appealing to developers. One solution is to expedite permit reviews for heritage projects. An award-winning policy adopted in Phoenix, Arizona offers development guidance, streamlined processes, reduced timeframes, and cost savings to applicants looking to adapt older buildings for new business. It also provides a priority service for heritage applications rather than public hearings to ensure faster turnaround times. This solution empowers City staff but could also be seen to restrict avenues for debates over the appropriateness of a redevelopment. Other cities throughout North America have attempted to clear the backlog by offering expedited services for renovation projects that propose high-quality heritage adaptive reuse.

The creation of new specialist positions or multi-departmental review teams also could allow for faster consideration and expedited heritage redevelopment. Pre-approved solutions for common heritage building types could lighten the currently overwhelming load of heritage applications and permits on City offices.³⁷ Although Toronto by-laws currently make some accommodations for heritage buildings, these could be expanded as an incentive for adaptive reuse.

WHAT WE HEARD

According to a Heritage Toronto survey:

52% feel that the City is doing, at best, **a below average job** at enforcing existing heritage bylaws.

78% feel that the City is doing, at best, **an average job** of celebrating or protecting our architectural heritage.

66% feel that access to heritage buildings is **below average or average.**³⁵

DID YOU KNOW?

Only **66% of Torontonians** are aware that **heritage buildings are eligible for grants and tax rebates.**³⁸

2.5 Increase the City's commitment to providing heritage renovation and preservation incentives to match the pace of urban intensification

The heritage sector must think creatively about ways to make conscientious and high-quality heritage redevelopment attractive to both property owners and developers. Since 2007, the City of Toronto has offered a Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program to eligible heritage properties. It allows commercial, and industrial properties that are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act to apply for rebates to provide matching funds for eligible maintenance and conservation work.

Under current guidelines, property owners may receive a rebate of 50% of the cost of eligible maintenance and conservation work up to 40% of annual taxes paid.³⁹

However, existing grants or funding are often not substantial enough to offset the higher costs associated with redeveloping a heritage building. It also means the funding is ineffective at preventing demolition or redevelopment projects that ignore heritage features.

The City can mitigate the impact of urban intensification on quality of life by prioritizing heritage in specific, community-driven contexts, such as through Cultural Heritage Landscapes or Heritage Conservation District studies. Heritage resources should be identified early in any appraisal, so they can be assessed and included in the process from the start.

CASE STUDY

The Cost of Delay: Davisville Public School

Adaptive reuse is not necessarily the more expensive option. In many cases, choosing adaptive reuse over new construction can save a project thousands if not millions of dollars. Such may have been the case for the Davisville Public School (pictured bottom left), located in North Toronto. The 1960s school building, which had been the subject of an ongoing debate over its heritage status, was demolished in December 2018 (pictured bottom right).

However, writer Alex Bozikovic, alongside architecture firms Giaimo and ERA Architects, recently demonstrated that the plan to demolish and build a new structure on the site may cost the City \$3 million more than had the original 1960s modernist building been renovated and reopened as a joint school and community centre.⁴⁰



Images by Vik Pahwa Photography

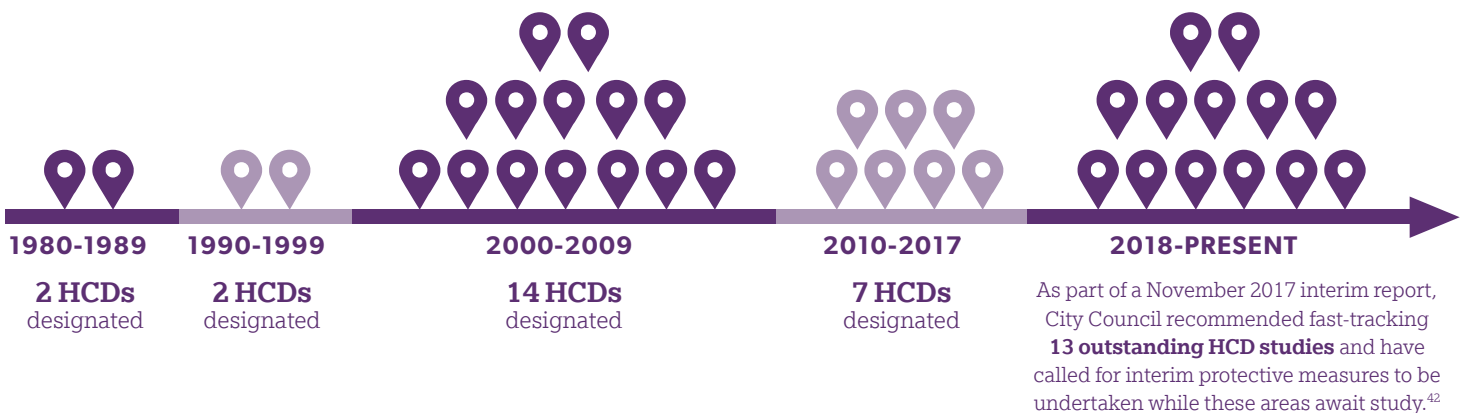
What is an effective way to measure the costs and benefits of heritage designation?

2.6 Clarify the process of designating heritage properties and neighbourhoods

Navigating the designation process outlined in the Ontario Heritage Act and according to City of Toronto criteria can be daunting. How are properties added to the City of Toronto Heritage Register? What benefits does heritage designation offer a property owner or community? The problem often stems from a lack of knowledge of available resources or guidance on the designation process. Without easy access to this information, individuals may be reluctant to purchase, own, or renovate a heritage property. This puts Toronto’s heritage properties at risk. More resources should be made available to property owners so they can make informed decisions about heritage designation.

A similar case can be made for Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). According to a recent survey, 35% of Torontonians are unaware of what defines a Heritage Conservation District.⁴¹ Throughout stakeholder consultations and a July 2018 Heritage Toronto public forum, there were numerous calls to both clarify what HCDs are and what value they hold for the individual property holder and local communities. Without clear information, property owners may anticipate more restrictions than rewards with the creation of a local HCD. Improving access to existing City resources as well as providing additional digital tools would help to illustrate the process not to mention the potential costs and benefits of living within a heritage neighbourhood.

TORONTO’S HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (HCD) DESIGNATION THROUGH THE DECADES



WHAT IS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (HCD)?

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are planning tools that guide change in neighbourhoods which represent Toronto’s rich social, cultural, and architectural history—places that contribute to the livability and appeal of Toronto as a multicultural, sustainable, and equitable city. HCDs provide place-based policies that conserve and enhance historic neighbourhoods while highlighting opportunities for contextually appropriate growth and change.⁴³

THE ADDED VALUE OF LIVING IN A HERITAGE DISTRICT

Owning a property in a heritage district can make financial sense. There is often a misconception among Canadian property owners that living in a heritage district can reduce property values and create financial stress. In fact, recent studies conducted in Hamilton (Ontario) suggest that historic districts significantly and positively affect property values over time. In these districts, property values have increased at a faster rate than surrounding areas.⁴⁴ Between 2010 and 2016, the average assessed property value in Hamilton's seven Heritage Conservation Districts increased by an average of 33%. In comparison, overall property values in those areas only increased by 22% over the same period. By 2016, the average property value in a Hamilton HCD was 87% higher than comparable properties in the same wards.⁴⁵

DID YOU KNOW?

In a study of almost **3,000 Ontario designated heritage properties**, **59% had higher than average property values** for their respective areas.⁴⁶

HERITAGE PROPERTIES OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN CORE

Although Toronto marked the 20th anniversary of amalgamation in 2018, many communities feel excluded from the resources and attention of City Hall's heritage services. The overwhelming proportion of designated properties in central Toronto in comparison to regions such as North York and Scarborough on the City's Heritage Register demonstrates not a lack of heritage properties in these areas but a failure to recognize them.

In consultations and public forums, Scarborough residents expressed frustration with the city's timeline for heritage designation of properties, often at the expense of the property itself; **"We're the poor cousin of downtown"** said one attendee at a Scarborough Archives consultation in October 2018. The city continues to grow but we must grow together. The addition of satellite offices for the City's heritage services, situated in Etobicoke or Scarborough, may be better able to respond and process requests for local communities. These offices could build on or supplement existing heritage organizations and societies in these areas. Similarly, extending funds to existing organizations could leverage resources for community-based experts to expedite the approval process for heritage designation or HCD approval.

Pictured right: Number of heritage properties in outlying community councils compared to core Toronto listed on the Heritage Register as of April 2018.⁴⁷



CASE STUDY

Waiting for Decades: The Proposed Agincourt Heritage Conservation District

Even with a population of over 600,000, comprising 20% of Toronto's area, Scarborough has yet to have a Heritage Conservation District. In 2005, the Scarborough Community Council recommended that Toronto City Council adopt staff recommendations to identify the Agincourt neighbourhood for potential designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as a Heritage Conservation District and to seek authority for the City to receive donations to fund the necessary studies.⁴⁸ This area of north Scarborough includes the location of one of Scarborough's oldest schools and offers numerous examples of late 19th-century Ontario farmhouses.

After the 2005 decision, ten years went by without any action from City Council on the proposed district. Finally, in November 2017, alongside an expedited push for HCD approval throughout the city, City Council recommended a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) to identify the area's potential heritage value and advance recommendations with respect to the area's district designation.⁴⁹ Even with this push, the residents of the Agincourt neighbourhood do not yet have a firm timeline on when their neighbourhood will receive designation as an HCD.

"Heritage [in Toronto] ignores the former municipalities....[It] is very former City of Toronto centred. The city's online registry only lists Toronto neighbourhoods, no Agincourt, no Highland Creek, etc. Suburban heritage properties wait many years to be acted upon."

RESPONDENT, HERITAGE TORONTO SURVEY

2.7 Promote new, inclusive uses of heritage properties that meet current and future residential and commercial needs

In an ever-expanding city like Toronto, are heritage buildings harming our city's economic growth? How can smaller, older buildings compete economically with high-rise properties? Studies have found that smaller, mixed-use heritage buildings have a considerable and demonstrably positive impact on neighbourhoods as well as on the overall economic vitality of cities.⁵⁰ This positive impact can be expanded with the adoption of flexible building and zoning codes.⁵¹ Offices in adaptive reuse projects are commanding more rent per square metre than their counterparts in new buildings. Evidence also suggests that companies are increasingly moving into older buildings in historic commercial areas to provide a walkable, dense, urban experience, features desired by a young workforce.⁵²

We must think creatively about how vacant and underutilized heritage buildings can address ongoing city challenges such as the lack of affordable housing, medical services, and inclusive community spaces. Heritage properties can be a catalyst for and a home to community networks if given the opportunity. These opportunities exist beyond single properties. Heritage Conservation Districts can also spur community-building activities.

"Protecting the City's built heritage and growing the city are not mutually exclusive. We need to increase the supply of housing in the city but not at the expense of the city's historic buildings and neighbourhoods... I am committed to protecting the city's built history and continuing to provide space for our growing city."

MAYOR JOHN TORY, HERITAGE TORONTO MAYORAL QUESTIONNAIRE, OCTOBER 2018

CASE STUDY

Richmond Street Redevelopment: The Waterworks Building

Once home to St. Andrew's Market, 505 Richmond Street West has served as a police station, library, and, beginning in 1932, a City of Toronto Water Works facility. Woodcliffe Landmark Properties and MOD Developments Inc. are imagining the former public works building and the adjacent St. Andrew's playground as an expansive 13-storey neighbourhood hub, which will include a food hall, YMCA, condos, and a rooftop garden.⁵³ Adapting the 1930s horseshoe-shaped building for 21st-century mixed use poses a unique challenge. However, the project exemplifies a creative and inclusive approach to adaptive reuse. Development is currently underway with a projected opening in 2020, but the site is already home to new communities. The building's eastern side is the new location for Eva's Phoenix, which provides transitional housing for youth experiencing homelessness.⁵⁴



Rendering courtesy of Woodcliffe Landmark Properties

A HERITAGE HOT TOPIC: FAÇADISM AND HIGH-RISE TOWERS

We need to understand the cumulative impact of Toronto's growth and intensification on urban design, heritage properties, and overall quality of life. The physical makeup of a city—its buildings, streets, plants, and open spaces—has been shown to have a direct effect on emotional and physical health.

This urban fabric of Toronto embodies the stories of the city's diverse communities. However, the demolition of heritage buildings and the elimination of open space threatens to disrupt these stories. New buildings that are much larger and taller than their adjacent neighbours cast shadows and create a discontinuity in our streets and neighbourhoods. The current focus on particular forms of high-rise towers in the city has reduced the opportunity for building more innovative and creative alternatives.

Similarly, the retention of just the façades of older structures is only a superficial acknowledgement of the building and its previous inhabitants and activities. It trivializes the city's rich and diverse history. To improve quality of life in our city, Torontonians need to collectively advocate for a more sensitive and comprehensive approach that seamlessly connects our past to our future.



Image by Vik Pahwa Photography

WHAT IS FAÇADISM?

The architectural practice of conserving the façade or façades of a building while the rest of the building is demolished to construct a new, often larger building behind the retained façade.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE...

3. Heritage and Sustainability

"[It is] about human beings...working in harmony with their natural and manmade environments.... It is about addressing social, environmental, and economic issues in an integrated way, meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs."

DENNIS RODWELL, INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT IN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT⁵⁵

WHAT IS NATURAL HERITAGE?⁵⁶

According to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Terrestrial Natural Heritage includes plants, animals, and natural communities associated with the land. It also encompasses wetlands as well as plants and animals that require land for at least part of their life cycle (such as amphibians and waterfowl).⁵⁷

- Aquatic habitats
- Interconnected water bodies including lakes and rivers
- Lands under active agricultural use
- Urban open spaces (e.g. manicured parks)
- Valleylands
- Wetlands
- Woodlands

Heritage and sustainability are natural allies. Building retrofits can often improve energy efficiency, whereas demolitions send buildings to landfills. Environmental heritage conservation supports a rich diversity of natural features, including plants, animals, wetlands, and geological formations—even in a city as large as Toronto.

To take the critical next steps in environmental sustainability, there must be wider recognition and cohesion to the city's approach to natural heritage. This means an increased focus on the creation of a comprehensive network of green spaces, parklands, and waterways that integrate Toronto's natural past with a sustainable future. Sustainability is not an end unto itself but has considerable quantifiable benefits on all Torontonians. These include a positive impact on wellbeing and mental health, spaces that foster community and social interaction, and land and water routes that provide numerous recreational opportunities.⁵⁸

Urban living does not and should not stand in opposition to the natural environment or the preservation of natural heritage. Larger incentives for sustainability must be made available to developers and property owners to encourage environmentally friendly practices within the city's built environment. The adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is a tool through which we can lessen landfill waste, carbon emissions, and other environmental impacts related to construction and building developments.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since European settlement, approximately **80%** of the Toronto region's **woodlands**, **72%** of **wetlands**, and more than **99%** of **local grasslands have been lost to clearing and development.**⁵⁹

How can we create incentives for adaptive reuse, an environmentally friendly and sustainable way to preserve heritage buildings?

To what extent is preserving heritage buildings good for the environment? There is a strong case to be made that the greenest building is the one that's already built. The development and construction sector has serious environmental costs, consuming an estimated 40% of global resources.⁶³ As Toronto grows, city builders must be creative and mindful in their approach to offset construction's significant negative impact on the environment.

One strategy to minimize the impact of construction is the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, which leaves the basic structure and fabric of a building intact while changing its use. Reusing heritage buildings is a long-term strategy to preserve our existing built resources without additional environmental cost. The City can do more to encourage developers and property owners to take advantage of the environmental benefits of adapting an existing building rather than demolishing it. However, guidelines are necessary. Updates or adaptations to a heritage building must go hand in hand with an emphasis on maintaining heritage character.

3.1 Include recommendations for commercial and residential heritage properties within the Toronto Green Standard

Reusing an existing building has been shown to be considerably more energy efficient than both demolition and new construction. However, the issue is much bigger than just reuse. Making a building energy efficient can be financially efficient. Currently, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) offers a premium refund of up to 25% on the CMHC mortgage loan insurance premium to buy or build an energy-efficient home. Similar refunds are available for making energy-saving renovations to an existing home.⁶⁴

WHAT WE HEARD

Torontonians believe the following are the "most pressing challenges to the protection and celebration of our city's natural heritage":⁶⁰

74% Encroachment of development

on natural space

68% Lack of enforcement

of protective policies
(e.g. waste dumping in parks)

61% Lack of public funding

for new park initiatives

DID YOU KNOW?

- It can take between 10 and 80 years for a new, energy-efficient building to offset the negative environmental impact created during the construction process.⁶¹
- Annual construction and demolition debris accounts for roughly 24% of municipal waste and can create approximately 550 to 750 kilograms per square metre.⁶²
- With minimal upkeep, original wood and metal windows can survive practically indefinitely in comparison to vinyl windows, which rarely last more than a decade.⁶³

Although the City of Toronto’s Zero Emissions Buildings Framework outlines best practices for energy efficiencies for new constructions and significant renovations (over 1000m²), these frameworks do not include recommendations for either heritage commercial or heritage residential properties.⁶⁵ In 2016, the Federal Provincial Territorial Historic Places Collaboration issued practical guidelines for sustainable building rehabilitation throughout Canada, intended to offer a “sustainable building toolkit” to enhance understanding of the environmental benefits of heritage conservation.⁶⁶ City planners and heritage offices can expand on these existing recommendations, offering clear methods for incorporating energy-efficient renovations to heritage properties.

3.2 Create financial incentives for heritage property owners and developers to meet environmental efficiency standards

Heritage property owners often face the difficult choice between financial incentives and heritage conservation. The 2018 abandonment of Ontario’s GreenON program, which proposed financial rebates to home owners for making energy-efficient changes, has even further reduced the availability of incentives for and information about how to update heritage properties. Currently, there are no established practices or incentives that consider any environmental benefits resulting from adaptive reuse or heritage preservation.

There are currently no government incentives for developers or property owners to certify heritage buildings with local or international efficiency standards, such as a LEED® designation (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Neither is there financial encouragement to minimize these buildings’ energy emissions. Heritage property owners should be rewarded, not punished, for their efforts to both conserve heritage structures and simultaneously update them for 21st-century energy efficiency.

CASE STUDY

Evergreen Brick Works’ TD Future Cities Centre

Beginning in 1889, the Don Valley Brick Works provided the essential building materials for landmarks like Massey Hall and Old City Hall. The Brick Works closed in 1989. The Evergreen Brick Works (pictured below) revitalized the site as a beacon for innovative adaptive reuse and sustainable design. The redeveloped site opened in 2010 and now welcomes over 500,000 visitors annually.⁶⁷

Thanks to a partnership among EllisDon, CRH Canada, LGA Architectural Partners, and heritage design specialists ERA Architects, the 2017 redesign of the 19th-century brick-making kilns focused on integrating sustainable, low-energy building practices with the historic character of the site. As part of the project, the site’s former drying kilns were significantly altered to make room for the City Builders Gallery, which opened in May 2018. This space now hosts rotating exhibitions on the past, present, and future of cities.

Additional renovations to the 4,900-square-metre building have been recently unveiled as the TD Future Cities Centre. The urban planning centre provides a gathering space to celebrate urban innovation surrounded by the brick works’ historical legacy.⁶⁸

Features of the TD Future Cities Centre

- Solar thermal integrated with a ground source system to collect and store heat for use during the winter months
- Low-impact landscape design strategies for flood and stormwater management
- Geothermal infrastructure and solar panels, which provide an energy-efficient heating and cooling system for the entire complex.⁶⁹

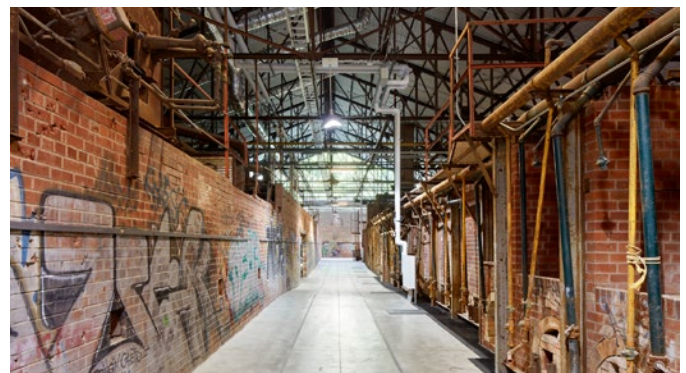


Image courtesy of Evergreen Brick Works

“Every neighbourhood park should tell the story of the area’s natural setting and the neighbourhood’s built development.”

ATTENDEE, HERITAGE TORONTO PUBLIC FORUM



Attendees enjoy an annual Doors Open event at Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Image by Denise McMullin

How can we create an inclusive natural heritage network throughout the city?

Parks and green spaces provide the long lens on our city’s past. They offer unique opportunities to cultivate knowledge about Toronto’s natural history. These stories can be found in our local flora and fauna as well as Toronto’s geological formations. They provide a testament to the human settlements and communities that have lived for millennia in the region known today as the Greater Toronto Area, particularly those communities whose presence was not marked by permanent structures.

An inclusive natural heritage network, made up of integrated green spaces, would sustain and celebrate the natural biodiversity of our region. It also would foster a range of community activity, providing a space in which local histories (particularly Indigenous histories) are animated and commemorated. The creation of such a network requires appropriate collaboration, a knowledge of and commitment to environmental preservation practices, and funding to support community-led efforts of preservation and celebration.

FAST FACTS ABOUT TORONTO’S GREEN SPACES

As of 2018, Toronto has over 1,600 parks. This roughly corresponds to 7,700 hectares of land or 13% of its land area.

Since 1998, the City of Toronto has increased its parkland by 245.7 hectares.⁷⁰

- Most of that land has been acquired in Scarborough (119.5 hectares), followed by North York (54.6 hectares), Toronto and East York (44.1 hectares), and Etobicoke (27.7 hectares).⁷¹
- Parkland supply is still considered low (often under 12 m² per person) in major parts of the city.
- Areas of very low parkland supply (under 4.0 m² per person) include the Danforth, Yonge and Lawrence, North York Centre, and St. Clair West.⁷²



Since 2012, Toronto has added several new parks and green spaces including

- Corktown Common
- The Bentway
- Underpass Park
- Trillium Park
- Rouge National Park

According to an online survey, over 40% of Torontonians hadn't visited any of these new parks within the last year.⁷³

3.3 Move forward with city initiatives to increase Indigenous access to and use of Toronto's green spaces and parks for ceremonies, festivals, and sacred fires

Canadian cities are burdened with an enduring colonial legacy, which is woven throughout their geography. Toronto is no different. However, geological markers and natural features bring forward cultural stories and natural patterns that speak to the many Indigenous histories that are rooted in the area from before, during, and after the early colonial period. Indigenous place-naming in City parks was formally suggested through the Parks and Environment Committee in 2017. In that same year, Toronto City Council adopted a motion to consult with the Aboriginal Affairs Committee with the intention to develop a framework for applying Indigenous place-making principles to projects within the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 10-year Capital Plan.⁷⁴

In November 2017, recommendations for the incorporation of Indigenous place-making in Toronto's parks and public realm included:

- Recognition of Toronto as the traditional territory and home to diverse Indigenous peoples.
- The celebration of Indigenous culture and history in parks.
- Partnership with Indigenous communities in design, development, and programming.
- A focus on place-making, naming, wayfinding, art, and interpretive features.
- Linking and restoring the natural features encircling the downtown core.
- An enduring need for protocol surrounding the response to and management of sacred fires.⁷⁵

Several of these recommendations were included in the TOcore Downtown Plan, which was adopted by Toronto City Council in 2018.⁷⁶ Since then, few steps have been taken to implement these proposals into the park and green space policy across the city. City councillors, heritage sector leaders, and green space policy makers must act on these recommendations with further consultation and collaboration with Indigenous partners. The creation of an inclusive natural heritage network is dependent on making space for Indigenous histories to be honoured, remembered, and recounted across the city's green spaces.



Trillium Park and William G. Davis Trail

Photo courtesy of Infrastructure Ontario

CASE STUDY

Ontario Place's Trillium Park

The new Trillium Park at Ontario Place provides a space for Torontonians to enjoy the natural heritage waterfront of their city. The park's design also emphasizes the endurance of living practices of Indigenous communities.⁷⁷ Carolyn King, the former elected Chief of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, was a frequent participant in the consultation process for many of the park's features. King helped in the design and installation of the carved images of moccasins on the granite park entrance.⁷⁸ The granite walls reference both southern Ontario's ravine systems and the Moccasin Identifier Project, a province-wide campaign created by King that offers visual reminders that we are on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples.⁷⁹ At time of publication, the project added a much-needed Indigenous cultural heritage framework to the park, accessible to all visitors. However, given recent provincial government announcements related to the potential development of Ontario Place, the park's future remains unclear.

"If we, as First Nations people, don't get a marker in the ground today, we will be lost Forever."

CAROLYN KING, FORMER ELECTED CHIEF OF THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE NEW CREDIT FIRST NATION

3.4 Look to the historical use of green spaces and urban farms as inspiration for new sustainable and environmentally friendly projects

As a sector, we must encourage active, not passive, engagement with Toronto’s natural heritage. Features such as playgrounds or walking trails are established methods to encourage use and enjoyment of these spaces. But historic use of a natural space can also inform modern interpretation and engagement. Local ecosystems, such as the 17 hectares of High Park’s Black Oak Savannah and Woodlands, reflect the historical efforts of Indigenous peoples to preserve these landscapes and to create space for crops, trails, and villages. Savannahs are dependent on periodic fires to maintain their open character and rich variety of plant species; however, 20th-century beautification efforts in High Park such as frequent mowing threatened this unique ecosystem’s existence. Today, High Park employees no longer mow the savannahs; they have implemented a regular system of controlled burns, inspired by historical care and maintenance of the area.⁸⁰

“Natural heritage is...the site of agriculture, which is connected to our consumption of food. We need to find ways that this aspect of heritage is much better woven into our daily lives, so we don’t remain so disconnected with nature—and heritage offers many ways to create ties that weave their ways into people’s lives.”

RESPONDENT, HERITAGE TORONTO SURVEY



Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust

THE URBAN FARM PROJECT AT ASHBRIDGE ESTATE

Located in Toronto’s Leslieville neighbourhood, the Ashbridge Estate was once the 18th-century centre of a 242-hectare farm. Food from the estate sustained surrounding communities. Eventually, as the nearby communities grew, the farm shrank to a small urban estate.

In 2016, several local groups revived the farming heritage of the site with assistance from the Ontario Heritage Trust, Building Roots, NishDish Marketaria, and holistic nutritionist Heather Allen.⁸¹

One group involved in the project, the Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective, used the harvest from their first fall crop to create affordable food options for local communities. In 2016, the Collective brought their fall harvest to farmers’ markets in various neighbourhoods including Moss Park. In the summer of 2018, the project was expanded to include more land on the property for agricultural use. Projects such as these demonstrate how natural heritage can seamlessly integrate with public spaces, fostering community engagement.



Monsters for Beauty, Permanence and Individuality, a series of concrete sculptures by Omaskêko Cree artist Duane Linklater, is part of Evergreen's Don River Valley Park Art Program.

Image by Yuula Benivolski

3.5 Make tangible and intangible heritage a priority in the City's 25-year Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan

The proposed Downtown Parks and Public Realm (PPR) Plan comprises the City's 25-year plan for Toronto's parks, open spaces, and streets with the intention to substantially increase public space in the city core.⁸² The plan aligns with ongoing strategies to expand and enhance parkland, many of which have the potential to highlight the tangible and intangible heritage of our city.

This long-term strategy to increase and consolidate the City's park network is a strong step towards the preservation of Toronto's natural heritage. It also offers the potential to increase heritage programming that supports the integration of urban life with our natural surroundings.

CASE STUDY

12 Great Streets: A Focus on Front Street

One idea proposed by the PPR Plan is to highlight and develop Toronto's "Great Streets." These streets hold cultural and historical significance and provide connections to Toronto's downtown. They are also destinations in themselves, lined with landmark buildings and important public spaces. The Great Streets plan provides an opportunity to consider new approaches to the sustainability of natural heritage within the city's built environment. It also emphasizes integration among urban infrastructure, heritage architecture, and the natural environment.⁸³

Front Street, Toronto's first east-west street, will be revitalized as part of the Great Streets program through a new emphasis on heritage buildings and spaces, such as Union Station, St. Lawrence Market, and the Front Street Promenade. It will also feature a renewed recognition of the street's route along the historical shoreline of Lake Ontario. Devoid of green space for much of the 20th century, Front Street will be reintegrated with Toronto's natural environment, bookended and connected to the City's park network through the future Rail Deck Park to the west and Corktown Common to the east.

"Parks should be venues for telling neighbourhood histories, Indigenous and settler histories, and reveal the natural qualities of the area, connections to the watersheds, fauna, and flora."

**ATTENDEE, HERITAGE TORONTO
PUBLIC FORUM**



The future of heritage sites like the Hearn Generating Station (left) and the Port Lands neighbourhood (right) remain unclear.

Images by Mike Portt and Erica Allen-Kim

A HERITAGE HOT TOPIC: THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF TORONTO'S WATERFRONT

Toronto's waterfront is changing. But will the new shoreline of the city represent its past or its future? Although the designation of the Humber as a Canadian Heritage River in 1999 was a step towards recognizing the heritage significance of Toronto's waterways, the city's waterfront has not been widely recognized in terms of its heritage value. Thanks to the presence of industrial and manufacturing sites along Lake Ontario as well as the Don River for much of the city's history, the natural features of this landscape have been dramatically altered. City projects like the Don Mouth Naturalization Program have brought the river's course back to something that more closely resembles its original route. Early stages of the project also reduced flood risks in nearby residential and commercial areas, such as Corktown Common, and the current project hopes to remove flood risks for an additional 240 hectares of land.⁸⁴

Other projects for the city's waterfront offer new hope for natural heritage. As part of the restoration of the Don Mouth, there are plans to redevelop nearby Villiers Island in the Port Lands. Villiers Island will transform from an industrial port into a mixed-use island created through extensive flood protection measures, including the re-naturalization of the Don River and the restoration of the historic Keating Channel.

However, the status of natural heritage as well as many heritage sites along Toronto's waterfront remain undecided. In 2017, the City proposed an adaptive reuse project for the landmark Hearn Generating Station. The station has not been in use since 1983 and could have become a destination for the Port Lands neighbourhood. However, in November 2018, Ontario Power Generation (a provincial Crown corporation) sold the property for \$16 million to its long-term tenant, bringing the question of the building's future into sharp focus.

The Past, Present, and Future of Big City Initiatives in Heritage

BIG CITY INITIATIVE: **A CITY OF TORONTO MUSEUM**

WHAT WE HEARD

- **71% of Torontonians** think that it is very or extremely important that **a Museum of Toronto be created.**
- **80% of Torontonians** think that the **museum should not be funded entirely by tax dollars.**⁸⁵

What should a Museum of Toronto be?

Throughout our consultations and public forum, we heard lots of ideas about what a new City of Toronto Museum could be. **Here is a snapshot of some of the creative suggestions we heard:**

- Structure the museum to act as a hub for visitors and residents to learn about and visit other Toronto historic sites. Make it the starting point for buses or other transportation to these sites, such as the Scarborough Museum or Montgomery's Inn.
- Make diverse stories, specifically the history of former townships and boroughs such as Scarborough or East York, as well as Indigenous history the core of the museum's content.

Where are we now?

In 2018, City Council approved the development of a design and plans for Old City Hall that include a 5,100-square-metre space for a Museum of Toronto. Before the museum project can begin, base-building improvements are required to accommodate new tenants at Old City Hall. These improvements are

estimated to cost \$190 million. The Museum of Toronto project is estimated to cost an additional \$66 million. The aim is to have all tenants in place in 2024, but this timeframe may be pushed out if the provincial courts extend their current lease.

Where do we go from here?

Depending on City funding, Museums and Heritage Services **will work on the following goals to make the City of Toronto Museum a reality over the next two years:**

- Develop a site-specific concept plan for the museum within Old City Hall
- Determine a budget and the total usable space that can be dedicated to a museum
- Develop governance options (i.e. who will run the museum?)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OTHER CITY MUSEUMS?

The Museum of London (England): This free museum, located in the heart of London, offers permanent exhibitions on London's long and diverse history. The Museum acts as a starting point for visitors and residents to explore other museums, historical sites, and points of interest throughout the city. It also offers rotating galleries that have featured a history of animals in the city and women's history, as well as monthly educational programs for babies and caregivers.

The Museum of the City of New York (USA): This fee-based museum offers digital stories, permanent exhibitions, and rotating galleries that spotlight the city's diverse communities over its 400-year history. Rotating galleries showcasing the history of fashion, disease, and activism reveal the distinctive nature of urban life in one of the world's most influential cities.

BIG CITY INITIATIVE:

A CITY-WIDE HERITAGE SURVEY

A city-wide heritage survey would be the first-ever comprehensive program to identify heritage resources throughout post-amalgamation Toronto. It offers the chance for City services to provide a pro-active, systematic, street-by-street identification of Toronto's cultural heritage resources. Such a survey could provide a faster and easier way for individuals and communities to ensure local, heritage-rich spaces are celebrated and preserved for future generations.

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good city planning. It contributes to a sense of place, economic prosperity, as well as healthy and equitable communities. A city-wide survey would mark a coming of age for identifying heritage in the city and would serve as a centerpiece in implementing Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan: "The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable city that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the city."⁸⁶

Since the enactment of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) in 1975, municipal governments have had the power to designate individual properties and districts within the city as being of "cultural value or interest."⁸⁷ Under Part IV and Part V of the OHA, designated properties and districts are included on a growing inventory of heritage sites maintained and updated by the City. Although the City currently offers this list of designated heritage properties and approved Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) online, a city-wide survey could provide a broader, in-depth resource about the heritage features of any Toronto property.

"The first heritage issue I will address is the need for a city-wide heritage survey to catalog and map the city's built heritage. This will engage and excite volunteers across the city and provide us with an updated database of the city's historic buildings."

MAYOR JOHN TORY, OCTOBER 2018

A SURVEY SUCCESS STORY: SurveyLA

SurveyLA, the historic preservation program undertaken by Los Angeles (USA), offers a potential model for a city-wide survey in Toronto. Completed over the course of ten years and costing approximately \$7 million (US dollars), the program identified significant historic sites throughout LA.⁸⁸ As Toronto City Council considers moving forward with this ambitious project, the goals and guidelines for such an undertaking must be considered. Although a city-wide survey would provide never-before-seen information about the depth and breadth of heritage sites throughout Toronto, a survey modeled on LA's program would not necessarily guarantee additional protection to threatened heritage buildings.

THEN:

In 2017, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the creation of a city-wide heritage survey that would list all buildings that have potential heritage value.

NEXT:

As the City moves forward to undertake this project, several questions remain:

- When will the survey begin and how will City Council decide which areas of the city will be surveyed first?
- How can volunteers and communities participate in a city-wide heritage survey?
- When and how will the survey help advance our understanding and conservation of Toronto's heritage?
- What funding will be required to execute a city-wide survey successfully and to maximize its results?

NOW:

City Planning is completing research, a sector scan for best practices, stakeholder and public consultations, and analysis to prepare a feasibility study for a city-wide heritage survey in Toronto, and will make recommendations to the Toronto Preservation Board, the Planning and Housing Committee, and Toronto City Council in early summer 2019.

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- City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Department of Public Memory
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- Friends of Fort York
- Friends of Kensington Market
- GBCA
- The Great Hall
- High Park Nature Centre
- Kensington Market Historical Society
- Lambton House
- La Société d'histoire de Toronto
- Leaside Matters
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Mizrahi Developments
- Ontario Black History Society
- Ontario Heritage Trust
- Ontario Jewish Archives
- Spacing
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