



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Council Approves Old Town Heritage Conservation District and Adopts District Plan

For Immediate Release

March 17, 2026

At its February 24, 2026, meeting, Town Council enacted By-law 2026-009, establishing the Old Town Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and adopting the Old Town Heritage Conservation District Plan.

The Old Town HCD Plan establishes a comprehensive framework for conserving the District's cultural heritage value while providing clear policies, guidelines, and procedures to guide alterations, new construction, and demolitions within the District under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Plan is designed to ensure that change is managed thoughtfully and in a way that respects the heritage attributes and enhances the unique character of Old Town.

"This is a significant milestone in protecting the historic character that defines Old Town and contributes to our community's identity and vibrancy," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "Council's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan identifies heritage conservation as a key initiative, and this plan gives residents, property owners, and the Town a clear, consistent framework to manage change while safeguarding what makes Old Town special."

The Plan includes:

- A Statement of Cultural Heritage Value and objectives for the District
- Identification of the heritage attributes that embody the District's value
- Policies and guidelines to manage change while conserving heritage
- Procedures for certain alterations that may not require a heritage permit

The Plan applies to all properties within the District boundary, encompassing 533 properties, with 255 identified as contributing to the District's cultural heritage value.



“Staff and our project partners have worked to develop a plan that meets *Ontario Heritage Act* requirements while improving clarity and consistency for property owners,” said CAO Nick Ruller. “The HCD Plan provides clear guidance on what requires approval and what may be exempt, helping residents navigate changes with greater confidence while supporting long-term stewardship of Old Town.”

Effective Date / Appeal Period

Notice of the passage of By-law 2026-009 was published in local newspapers on March 12, 2026, and the 30-day appeal period was initiated. If no appeals are received by April 11, 2026, the by-law comes into force following the conclusion of the appeal period. If any appeals are received, the by-law will come into force when all appeals have either been withdrawn, dismissed or resolved by the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

More information, including the Plan and District boundary and FAQs for property owners, is available through the [Town's website](#) as part of the implementation and rollout.

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