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Date December 10, 2024 **Report No.** 2024-678

To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Planning and Administration

From Nicole Wilmot
Chief Planner and Senior Director of Planning and Development Services

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item For Consideration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2.0 Topic **Second Phase of Neighbourhood Consultation Results for Three Potential Heritage Conservation Districts [Financial Impact - None]**

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2024-678, titled “Second Phase of Neighbourhood Consultation Results for Three Potential Heritage Conservation Districts”, BE RECEIVED for information; and
- B. THAT, due to a lack of widespread resident interest, heritage conservation district designation NOT BE PURSUED at this time for any of the consulted neighbourhoods; and
- C. THAT Staff REPORT BACK with options for heritage commemoration with the various neighbourhoods consulted by Q4 2025.

4.0 Executive Summary

At its meeting on January 30, 2024, Council directed Staff to consult property owners in five City neighbourhoods regarding 1) their interest in historic research being conducted and a commemoration strategy being explored; and 2) whether the owners wanted their neighbourhood to be considered for heritage conservation district (“HCD”) designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. A sixth neighbourhood was added by a Council resolution approved on June 24, 2024.

To date, Staff have completed consultation with all six neighbourhoods shortlisted for consultation. This Report discusses the consultation for the three neighbourhoods in the second phase of consultation: Erie Avenue; Dufferin Avenue, Lorne Crescent, and surrounding Neighbourhood; and Lansdowne Park Estates.

The consultation strategy involved the creation of a project webpage to hold details of the proposed consultation (i.e. time and place, scope, etc.). Staff further mailed out a notice and invitation to a neighbourhood meeting at least two weeks ahead of scheduled in-person meeting dates. Two meetings were held for each neighbourhood, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Copies of display boards for each neighbourhood consulted are attached as **Appendices A, B, and C**. Response rates were between 16% and 20% of properties’ owners participating.

Based on the response rates from this consultation, Staff notes that implementing an HCD for any of the three neighbourhoods consulted and discussed in this Report would not appear to have widespread grassroots neighbourhood support at this time. Further consultation may build interest, and Council could decide to proceed with an HCD in any of the neighbourhoods consulted to recognize their contributions to Brantford’s history.

Should Council decide to proceed with one or more HCDs, Staff will prepare a follow-up report detailing a workplan and estimated budget. Otherwise, for consulted neighbourhoods where Council does not direct an HCD project start, Staff will follow-up with interested owners and offer them an option for individual designation of their properties.

The Brantford Heritage Committee will also be adding a research and commemoration project to its 2025 Priorities, selecting from among the neighbourhoods consulted and conducting additional research on the neighbourhood. Following research, Heritage Committee and Long Range

Planning staff can create draft signage and report back to Council with an implementation strategy.

Lastly, one neighbourhood (Riverview Drive) of the original six identified as a potential HCD has not been consulted. The intention had been to consult this neighbourhood at a future date. Should Council wish to proceed, Staff can be directed to consult the Riverview Drive neighbourhood (**Appendix D**) for interest in becoming an HCD.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with the results of neighbourhood consultation for three neighbourhoods identified as potential heritage conservation districts (“HCDs”).

6.0 Background

Following the Provincial government’s passage of Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, that amended existing Provincial legislation including the *Planning Act*, *Ontario Heritage Act* and others, the viability of the City of Brantford’s Heritage Register Project was negatively affected.

Staff consulted the Brantford Heritage Committee with respect to alternatives to the Heritage Register Project before reporting to Council. The Committee considered [Report 2023-114](#) at its meeting on January 30, 2023 and provided the following comment respecting potential heritage conservation districts (“HCDs”) as [part of its resolution](#):

“iii. The Brantford Heritage Committee highlights that there are a number of notable areas within the City which could merit being included in a Heritage Conservation District. The Committee requests that the Council target to do so in the next five years, and provide the financial resources required to achieve that goal.”

Following the Heritage Committee consultation, Staff prepared Report 2023-153 which included the Committee’s comments for Council’s consideration. On March 28, 2023, Council passed a resolution and Item C of the resolution addressed potential HCDs:

“C. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to Report back to Council in Q4, 2023 regarding Alternative 2, potential Heritage Conservation Districts as outlined in Report 2023-153;”.

To respond to Council's direction, Staff prepared a follow-up report to Brantford Heritage Committee and Council respecting a prioritization strategy for the potential districts. Brantford Heritage Committee considered [Report 2023-685](#) at its meeting on November 27, 2023 and passed the following resolution:

- "A. THAT Report 2023-685, titled "Potential Strategies to Consider Designation of Heritage Conservation Districts within the City of Brantford", BE RECEIVED; and*
- B. THAT the following comments of the Brantford Heritage Committee BE INCLUDED in Staff's future report to Committee of the Whole – Planning and Administration:*
- i. The Brantford Heritage Committee recommends further investigation into mapping and consider possible revisions or expansions (specifically in the Commercial Downtown area);*
 - ii. The Brantford Heritage Committee suggests staff consider what areas will have the most overall support and the 'distinctness' of the areas, and highlights the need to have community collaboration;*
 - iii. The Brantford Heritage Committee recommends that staff investigate the Cultural Heritage Character Area concept that the Municipality of Clarington has in place;*
 - iv. The Brantford Heritage Committee recommends that staff explore promotional opportunities such as an information session for property owners of Heritage Designated Properties be held, or social media promotion;*
 - v. The Brantford Heritage Committee highlights the size of consultation that this project will require and recommends that certain areas be consulted together where possible;*
 - vi. The Brantford Heritage Committee notes that certain property owners will be subject to the Heritage Conservation District's rules despite being listed or designated properties, and emphasizes the need for staff to articulate what they will be responsible for."*

Staff considered the comments of the Brantford Heritage Committee and addressed them in [Report 2024-46](#) to Combined Committee of the Whole – Operations and Planning & Administration on January 16, 2024. Staff scoped down the recommended consultation in 2024 to focus on four potential HCDs

which featured properties that were recommended for listing by the Heritage Register Project. At its meeting on January 30, 2024, Council amended the recommendation of Combined Committee of the Whole to include the Victory Housing Neighbourhood in Ward 5 and adopted the following resolution:

“A. THAT Report 2024-46, titled “Potential Heritage Conservation Districts within the City of Brantford” BE RECEIVED, and

B. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to proceed with community consultations for the following neighbourhoods identified as potential heritage conservation districts as detailed in Report 2024-46:

i. Commercial Downtown;

ii. Dominion Steel Neighbourhood;

iii. Waterloo Court; and

iv. Dufferin Avenue, Lorne Crescent and Neighbourhood; and

v. Victory Housing in Ward Five

C. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to Report back to Council with the results of community consultations by Q4 2024.”

Staff presented one final report to Brantford Heritage Committee at its meeting on March 25, 2024 (refer to [Report 2024-121](#)) where Staff detailed a strategy to consult neighbourhoods shortlisted for potential HCDs. The Brantford Heritage Committee voted to “receive” the Staff Report.

Subsequently, on June 25, 2024, Council adopted a [resolution](#) directing Staff to consult property owners on Erie Avenue about their interest in a heritage conservation district. This consultation was added to Staff’s work plan, resulting in a total of six neighbourhoods being consulted. Based on the timing of Council’s direction, Staff scheduled Erie Avenue in the second phase (Fall 2024) of neighbourhood consultation.

Consultation with three neighbourhoods (“Phase 1”) was completed in May-June 2024, consisting of neighbourhood meetings for Waterloo Court, Commercial Downtown, and Victory Housing (Ward 5) neighbourhoods. Staff reported the results of those consultations in [Report 2024-464](#). Council ultimately voted to receive Report 2024-464.

Staff are now reporting back with the results of neighbourhood consultation for the second set of three neighbourhoods (“Phase 2”) that were scheduled for consultation: Erie Avenue; Lorne, Dufferin, and surrounding neighbourhood; and Lansdowne Park.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

This Report aligns with Strategic Theme 6 of the 2023-2026 Council Priorities document (Effectively and consistently engage with the community).

8.0 Input From Other Sources

Staff presented Report 2024-677 to the Brantford Heritage Committee on November 25, 2024. The Report addressed the results of consultation in three neighbourhoods identified as potential heritage conservation districts. The Brantford Heritage Committee provided the following comments via resolution:

- A. *“THAT Report 2024-677, titled “Results of Potential Heritage Conservation District Consultation – Erie Avenue; Lorne, Dufferin, and Neighbourhood; and Lansdowne Park”, BE RECEIVED; and,*
- B. *THAT the following comments of the Brantford Heritage Committee BE INCLUDED in Staff’s report to Committee of the Whole – Planning and Administration:*
 - i. *The Brantford Heritage Committee recognizes the significant value in homeowners expressing interest in designating their properties; and*
 - ii. *The Brantford Heritage Committee encourages staff to continue and expand efforts to support this initiative.”*

9.0 Analysis

9.1 Project Webpage

Planning Staff and Communications and Community Engagement Staff created a project webpage for the neighbourhood consultation project, hosted on the City’s new Community Development website “BuildBrantford.ca.” The project webpage was given a short-URL (www.BuildBrantford.ca/HCDConsultation) which was included on notices mailed to property owners.

The webpage features an overview of each potential heritage conservation district (“HCD”), showing the boundaries of the area to be consulted, together with a meeting date, location, and details of subsequent reports.

9.2 Erie Avenue

Notices: Staff sent an invitation to all property owners along Erie Avenue, from 60-62 Erie Avenue south to Birkett Lane two weeks ahead of the neighbourhood meetings. Given the number of properties within the potential HCD, Staff mailed invitations to the addresses on file for tax purposes.

Neighbourhood Meetings: The neighbourhood meetings were held as two sessions, one in the afternoon (1pm – 3pm) and one in the evening (6pm – 8pm) on Monday, November 4th in the large meeting room upstairs in Doug Snooks Eagle Place Community Centre. The meeting was scheduled as a drop-in session with information boards that property owners could read at their own pace (see **Appendix A**) and Staff present to answer questions and discuss the project with property owners.

Attendance: 25 property owners attended the neighbourhood meeting and three sent emails. The response rate was 28 properties represented of the 174 properties in the potential HCD that was consulted. The response rate for the consultations was therefore 16% of properties responding.

Responses: The information slides in **Appendix A** include transcribed comments and answers from property owners. Staff have summarized the results as follows:

- Ten property owners who responded were in favour of heritage conservation district designation; Nine property owners were opposed to HCD designation. Two indicated that they were unsure.
- Of the property owners who responded, 14 were in favour of the neighbourhood’s history being researched and commemorated while six respondents were not interested.

9.3 Dufferin Avenue, Lorne Crescent, and the surrounding Neighbourhood

Notices: Staff sent an invitation to property owners in the Lorne Crescent, Dufferin Avenue, and surrounding neighbourhood potential HCD two weeks ahead of the neighbourhood meetings. Given the number of properties within the potential HCD, Staff mailed invitations to the addresses on file for tax purposes.

Neighbourhood Meetings: The neighbourhood meetings were held as two sessions, one in the afternoon (1pm – 3pm) and one in the evening (6pm – 8pm) on Wednesday, October 13th in the gym at T.B. Costain – SC Johnson Community Centre. The meeting was scheduled as a drop-in session with information boards that property owners could read at their own pace (see **Appendix B**) and Staff present to answer questions and discuss the project with property owners.

Attendance: 50 people attended the neighbourhood meeting and seven sent emails. The response rate was 40 properties represented of the 217 properties in the potential HCD that was consulted. The response rate for the consultations was therefore 18% of properties responding.

Responses: The information slides in **Appendix B** include transcribed comments and answers from property owners. Staff have summarized the results as follows:

- 24 property owners who responded were in favour of heritage conservation district designation while 19 were opposed to HCD designation. Two indicated that they were unsure.
- Of the property owners who responded, 37 were in favour of the neighbourhood's history being researched and commemorated while six respondents were not interested.

9.4 Lansdowne Park

Notices: Staff sent an invitation to all property owners in the Lansdowne Park potential HCD two weeks ahead of the neighbourhood meetings. Given the potential for a Canada Post strike in the weeks ahead of the meetings, Staff hand delivered notices to properties that were owner occupied in the neighbourhood to ensure invitations were received. A

small number of invitations were couriered to property owners outside of the City, using the mailing addresses on file for tax purposes.

Neighbourhood Meetings: The neighbourhood meetings were held as two sessions, one in the afternoon (1pm – 3pm) and one in the evening (6pm – 8pm) on Wednesday, October 20th in the gym at T.B. Costain – SC Johnson Community Centre. The meeting was scheduled as a drop-in session with information boards that property owners could read at their own pace (see **Appendix C**) and Staff present to answer questions and discuss the project with property owners.

Attendance: Approximately 50 people attended the neighbourhood meeting and six sent emails. The response rate was 41 properties represented of the 201 properties in the potential HCD that was consulted. The response rate for the consultations was therefore 20% of properties responding.

Responses: The information slides in **Appendix C** include transcribed comments and answers from property owners. Staff have summarized the results as follows:

- 22 property owners who responded were in favour of heritage conservation district designation and 18 owners voted against HCD designation. Additionally, six owners were undecided at this time.
- Of the property owners who responded, 34 were in favour of the neighbourhood's history being researched and commemorated while 7 respondents were not interested. One voted that they were undecided.

9.5 Next Steps

The *Ontario Heritage Act* gives municipal councils the ability to designate all or part of the municipality as a heritage conservation district to recognize cultural heritage value within the municipality. This authority does not require support of property owners, but such a project does benefit immensely from an interested neighbourhood. Based on the results of this consultation alone, Staff notes that implementing an HCD covering any of the neighbourhoods discussed in this Report would not appear to have the benefit of grassroots neighbourhood support.

Despite the foregoing, Staff notes that proceeding with an HCD study for any or all of the neighbourhoods could demonstrate that the

neighbourhood meets the threshold criteria to warrant designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Similarly, completing an HCD study may reveal additional information that contributes to Brantford's history and identity that is worth celebrating.

- Should Council direct Staff to proceed with establishing an HCD, Staff will prepare a subsequent Report identifying a work plan, budget needed, potential funding sources, and study area.
- Should Council decide to not proceed with an HCD project, Staff will have ongoing discussions with property owners that were interested in an HCD to see if they are interested in individual property designation instead. This work would be funded within the existing Long Range Planning budget.

With respect to the participants' interest in neighbourhood history being researched, the Brantford Heritage Committee considered its 2025 Priorities at its meeting on November 25, 2024 and will be selecting neighbourhoods from amongst those consulted to date (Phase 1 and Phase 2), reviewing available historic information together with existing display board content, and preparing potential historical information signage. This work will not require a budget at this time; existing research combined with new research by Brantford Heritage Committee members (volunteer time) would be utilized. Notification to selected neighbourhoods can be completed within the existing Long Range Planning budget and Planning Staff can coordinate with other departments (e.g. Parks and Facilities; Communications; Economic Development, Tourism, and Cultural Initiatives) as needed. Any designs for commemorative signage will be brought to Council once a cost to implement can be accurately quantified.

9.6 Remaining Consultation: Riverview Drive Neighbourhood

At its meeting on January 30, 2024, Council directed Staff to consult with five of the six neighbourhoods identified in the Heritage Register Project recommendations report as potential heritage conservation districts; Erie Avenue was added later by Council in June. The one remaining neighbourhood, which has not been consulted to date, is Riverview Drive (refer to **Appendix D**). Staff refer to Report 2024-46 which did note that Riverview Drive could be reconsidered at a later date. Should Council direct Staff to consult Riverview Drive, Staff will proceed to schedule

neighbourhood open houses in early 2025 and hold meetings in a similar format to those held for the neighbourhoods already consulted. Staff would report back to Council with an opportunity for Brantford Heritage Committee to provide comments.

10.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this Report. As noted in Subsection 9.5, next steps related to individual designation as well as a Brantford Heritage Committee priority to draft historical information signage can be accommodated within the existing Long Range Planning budget.

Should Council direct one or more neighbourhoods be considered for a heritage conservation district, Staff will prepare an additional Report to outline the work plan and associated financial implications.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no climate and environmental implications associated with this Report.

12.0 Conclusion

Staff has completed the second phase of neighbourhood meetings to consult three selected neighbourhoods for interest in becoming a heritage conservation district (HCD). As of this consultation, none of the three neighbourhoods expressed widespread grassroots interest in becoming an HCD. Staff also asked property owners about their interest in historic research being completed for their neighbourhood. The Brantford Heritage Committee indicated an interest in such a project being a Committee Priority for 2025. Staff will work with the Brantford Heritage Committee to support research and commemoration in 2025 and at an appropriate time, prepare a report to Council with costs to implement commemorative signage for a select group of consulted neighbourhoods.



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Attachments:

Appendix A: Display Boards from the Erie Avenue Open House with Transcribed Comments

Appendix B: Display Boards from the Dufferin Avenue, Lorne Crescent, and Surrounding Neighbourhood Open House with Transcribed Comments

Appendix C: Display Boards from the Lansdowne Park Open House with Transcribed Comments

Appendix D: Riverview Drive Consultation Area

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no