

Planning and Development Services Briefing to

Infrastructure and Planning Committee

2024 March 13

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Heritage Conservation Tools and Incentives Implementation Briefing

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this briefing is to update Council on the implementation to-date of policy tools to support heritage conservation, following a two-year phased program (2021-2023) as directed by Council through PUD2020-0758.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Since 2020, Administration has been working to implement three heritage conservation policy tools. While it is too early into the implementation of the tools to draw definitive conclusions, the tools are showing promise and receiving community support. Further monitoring will continue to ensure lessons learned are incorporated in future conservation tools.

The following provides an overview of each policy tool, as well an update on implementation.

1. Heritage Incentive Area:

This tool would offer new or additional development opportunities to encourage owners to keep and/or reuse their heritage asset, rather than demolish and redevelop. The tool would be enabled through the Land Use Bylaw and would only be available to owners of low-density heritage assets that meet certain criteria within a defined area.

Implementation Status

- Public engagement with interested and affected parties occurred throughout 2022 and 2023. Feedback suggested the most valuable incentives that would encourage heritage asset retention would be financial (out of scope) or additional residential development opportunities, followed by additional commercial development opportunities.
- Draft Land Use Bylaw amendments were prepared following engagement. These focused on additional uses (e.g., suites, additional dwellings, commercial uses), development size (e.g., lot coverage, addition size, setbacks) and procedural incentives (e.g., fee elimination, timeline extensions).
- Through Home is Here: The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030, some of the residential incentives noted above will be made broadly available across Calgary.
- Given ongoing work to develop the new Zoning Bylaw and the forthcoming deliberations by Council on rezoning to a base residential district with more housing options, the Heritage Incentive Area tool has been paused to assess the impacts and opportunities of these new regulations. With the City Building Program underway, Administration will also explore opportunities to incorporate incentives for heritage asset retention into the new Zoning Bylaw.

2. Heritage Guideline Areas:

Heritage Guideline Areas are developed collaboratively with working groups through the Local Area Planning process and enabled through the discretionary Land Use Bylaw approval process. The guidelines focus on conserving certain heritage character-defining elements in areas where residential blocks have at least 25% of properties identified as a heritage asset. Those guidelines are contained in the approved Local Area Plan and are applied in the discretionary review of any new residential development within the specified areas. Land use redesignations and new development continue to be allowed and supported within the Heritage Guideline Areas.

Implementation Status

- Discretionary Guideline Areas were incorporated within the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan.
- Work is underway to develop guidelines in Local Area Plans for the Riley Communities, Westbrook Communities and West Elbow Communities.
- With approval of these plans, almost all areas previously identified as potential heritage guideline areas will be covered by Local Area Plans. Only Bridgeland, Inglewood and Ramsay will be outstanding.
- Since 2023, there have been 11 development permits released, 10 in review or pending release, 13 land use applications and 24 pre-application discussions on properties within the North Hill Communities guideline areas.
- Attachment 2 illustrates some of the approved development permits from North Hill and demonstrates how the designs evolved to align with the Guidelines.

3. Direct Control Heritage Areas (DCHA):

This tool is applicable only to the highest-integrity historic blocks in the city (>50% identified heritage assets). The tool offers a unique set of development regulations for all properties within a defined area to help preserve the heritage character of the blocks and enable additional development opportunities for property owners. The tool is implemented through a Direct Control district with rules in place to protect heritage elements.

Implementation Status

- The DCHA implementation has been through a pilot project, developing a unique Direct Control district for a historic block on 25 AV SW in Bankview. The Direct Control covers 100% of the block, incorporating seven heritage properties all dating from pre-1912.
- The Bankview DCHA was recommended for approval by Calgary Planning Commission in 2024 February and is scheduled to be presented at a Public Hearing of Council in 2024 April.
- Attachment 3 provides a summary of the Bankview DCHA.
- The Bankview pilot was complicated by multiple property sales during the development of the bylaw and engagement with property owners. As authorization from the property owners is required, each sale required The City to pause the project and re-engage with a new set of property owners. While this may be a rare situation, it remains a risk in any future DCHA.

- Due to the complexity associated with the development of this tool, and the considerable staff time this required, future DCHAs would be created solely at the request of affected property owners.
- The City is currently piloting a community-led request process in the Riley Communities Local Area Plan, which will be expanded to include the West Elbow Local Area Plan and the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan areas. Requests for DCHAs will only be considered from those communities at this time and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The completion of the Bankview DCHA bylaw is expected to reduce staff-hours required because it can now be used as a template for future bylaws.
- The success of the Bankview DCHA will be monitored, but the community and property owner support suggest that it is a useful and successful tool for the rare, highest-integrity heritage blocks in our city.

FUTURE WORK

Administration will continue to work on the implementation and monitoring of the three heritage conservation policy tools and will incorporate lessons learned as appropriate. Administration will also continue to explore, implement and recommend to Council other heritage conservation tools and incentives (both planning and financial) for residential and non-residential properties.

Future work will identify opportunities to pilot alternative incentives for heritage assets. One example is an upcoming proposed update on the terms of reference for the Historic Resource Conservation Grant Program, which would allow for small conservation incentives to support the retention of heritage assets.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. North Hill Communities Heritage Guideline Development Permit and Applications Overview
3. Summary of the Bankview Direct Control Heritage Area

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Acting General Manager Debra Hamilton concurs with the information in this Briefing.