

Case H00473

Background Study

Toward the Establishment of a
Heritage Conservation District
in Downtown Halifax

Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee
Thursday, April 15, 2021

Origin

The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy includes Policy 34:

HRM shall consider undertaking background studies and developing policies, strategies, and programs for a potential heritage conservation district in the Historic Properties area as shown on Map 7.

On May 14, 2019, the following motion of Regional Council regarding Item 15.2.2 was put and passed:

“THAT Halifax Regional Council:

2. Initiate a background study for the Historic Properties Heritage Conservation District that will consider additional potential heritage resources identified in Attachment D of the staff report dated December 28, 2018 within a boundary that is contiguous with the area identified in Attachment B of the staff report dated December 28, 2018, as Historic Properties;”

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A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) is a defined area of historic or architectural value.

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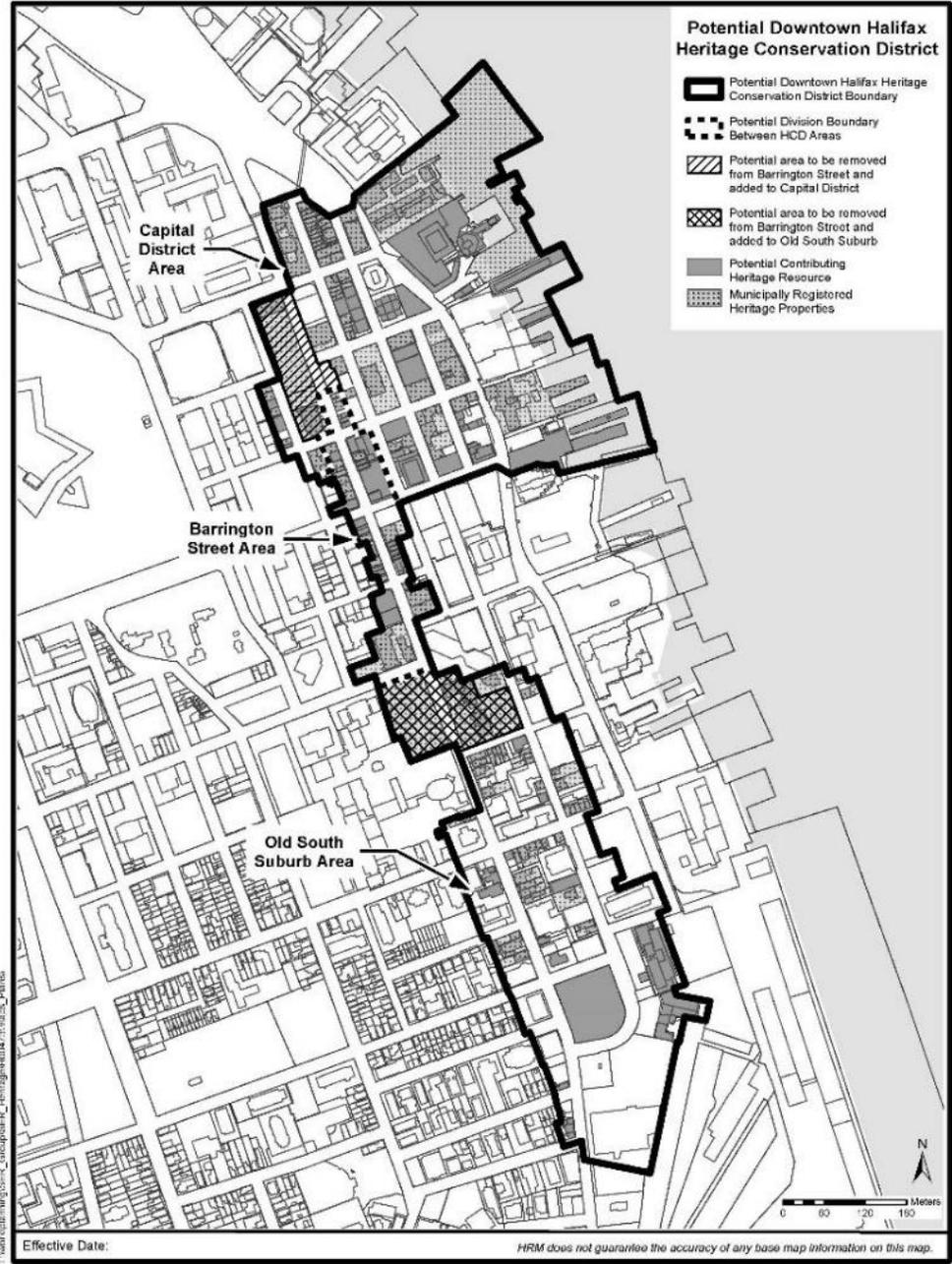
Effective: 22 Aug 2020

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.

2019 Regional Council motion to consider expanding the geographic scope of the potential HCD to encompass the many registered and unregistered heritage resources south of Historic Properties

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- Potential Downtown Halifax Heritage Conservation District**
-  Potential Downtown Halifax Heritage Conservation District Boundary
 -  Potential Division Boundary Between HCD Areas
 -  Potential area to be removed from Barrington Street and added to Capital District
 -  Potential area to be removed from Barrington Street and added to Old South Suburb
 -  Potential Contributing Heritage Resource
 -  Municipally Registered Heritage Properties



The Downtown Halifax HCD:

One HCD plan and boundary to encompass three areas: Capital Area; Old South Suburb Area; and Barrington Street Area



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Effective Date:

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any base map information on this map.

Process for Establishing an HCD

The statutory procedure for establishing a Heritage Conservation District is carried out in three separate phases:

- 1) Initiation and Adoption of a Background Study;
- 2) Community Engagement and Heritage Conservation District Plan & By-law Preparation; and
- 3) Adoption and Implementation of the Heritage Conservation District Plan & By-law.



Morris Street Terrace in the Old South Suburb Area

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Public Participation Program

In June 2020, Regional Council passed a motion to adopt a standard Public Participation Program to establish HCDs:

- HAC holds one initial public meeting to present background studies to the public
- HAC holds a second public meeting to discuss draft HCD Plan with the public
- Other methods as deemed necessary

All members of HAC are encouraged to participate in public engagement activities



Commercial Block in the Barrington Street Area

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Heritage Conservation Districts Regulations

This background study seeks to address the following *Heritage Conservation Districts Regulations* requirements in the preparation of a conservation plan and by-law:

- a) *the rationale or justification for heritage conservation measures in the district;*
- b) *the rationale for the boundaries of the district;*
- c) *the relationship of a conservation plan and conservation by-law with any municipal planning strategy, land-use by-law or provincial land-use policy or regulation in effect for the district; and*
- d) *an analysis of the social and economic implications of the establishment of the district, as these relate to clause (a).*

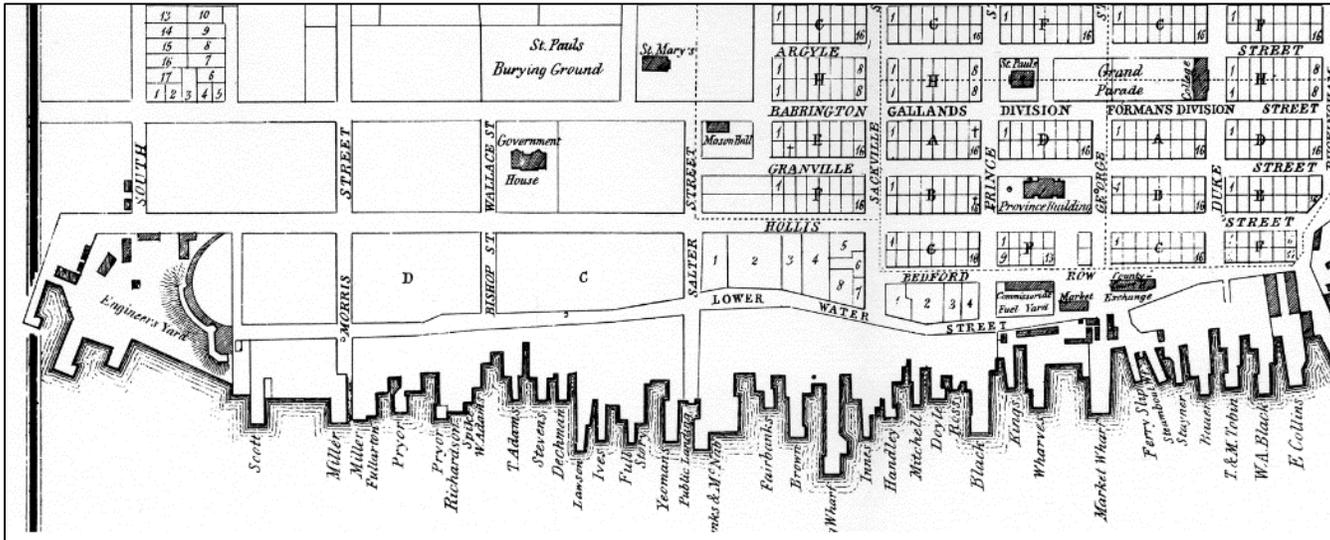


Historic Properties in the Capital Area

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Rationale for Heritage Conservation Measures

Heritage Values



Derived from 1835 Map of Halifax

Capital Area: original town, seat of provincial and municipal governments, important centre of commerce and waterfront industry.

Old South Suburb Area: first contiguous suburb, Georgian and Victorian residential architecture

Barrington Street Area: principal arterial street which became the main commercial street in late 19th century

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Rationale for Heritage Conservation Measures



Downtown Halifax

Development Pressure

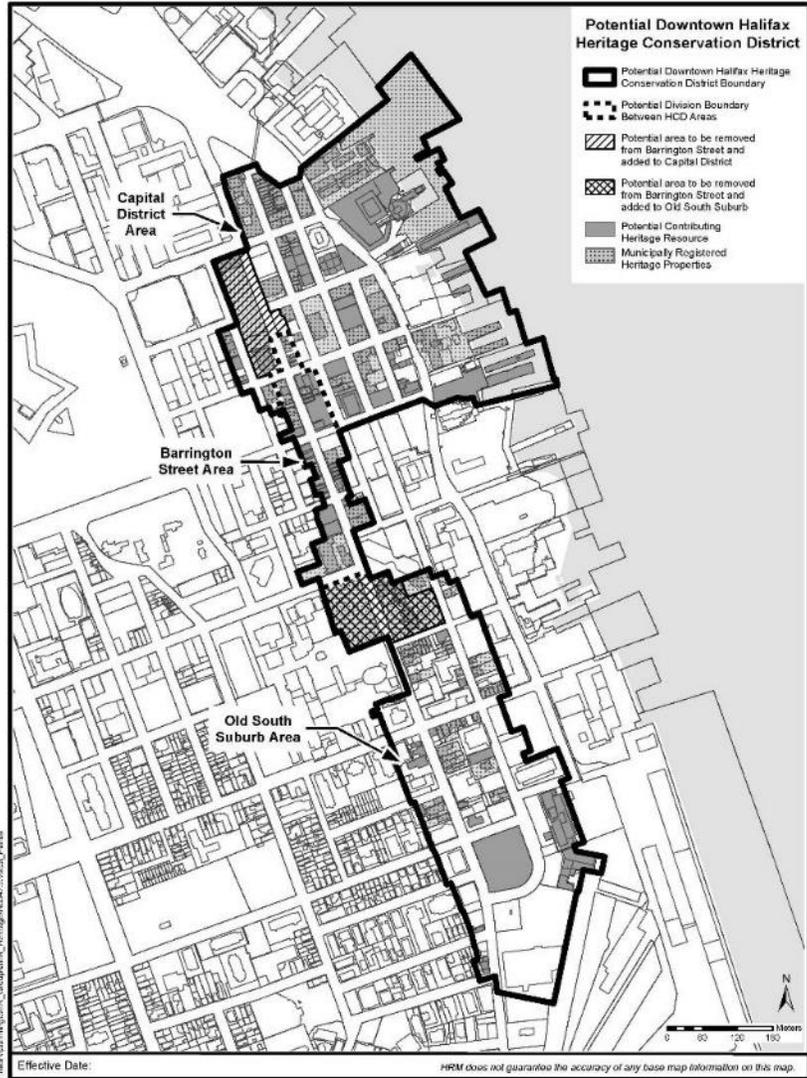
Some of the most valuable real estate in Halifax

Cogswell redevelopment project may spur development interest

50 per cent of non-registered potential heritage resources, identified in 2009, now demolished

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Rationale for HCD Boundary



- Consistency in administration of heritage policies and programs
- Boosting community interest and cultural heritage tourism
- Boundary will encompass contributing heritage resources, including buildings, structures, and open spaces

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Approach to Heritage Conservation Measures

The Downtown Halifax Heritage Conservation District will address four goals:

1. To conserve the historic integrity of Downtown Halifax
2. To accommodate residents and visitors by revitalizing aging buildings and by encouraging new development that complements the scale and character in the areas of Downtown Halifax, including the Capital, Barrington Street, and Old South Suburb areas
3. To promote the Downtown Halifax HCD as a cultural heritage destination
4. To establish consistent policies and programs that also address the unique challenges and needs of the Capital, Barrington Street, and Old South Suburb areas



Province House

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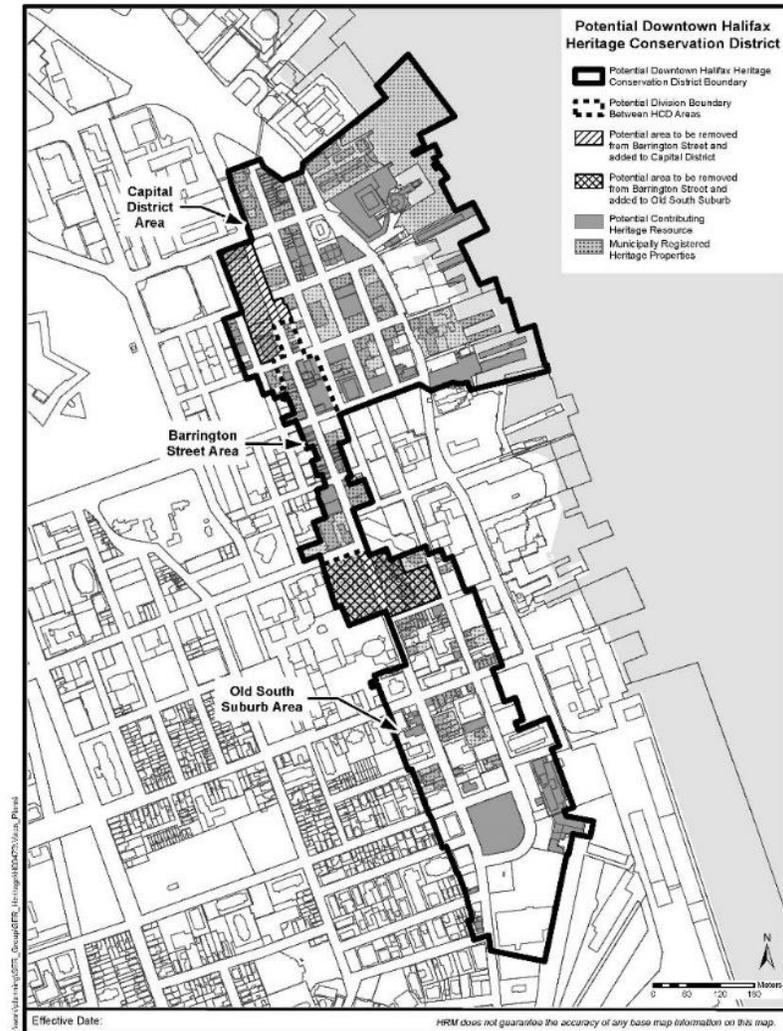
Approach to Heritage Conservation Measures



Barrington Street HCD
Est. 2009



Old South Suburb HCD
Est. 2020

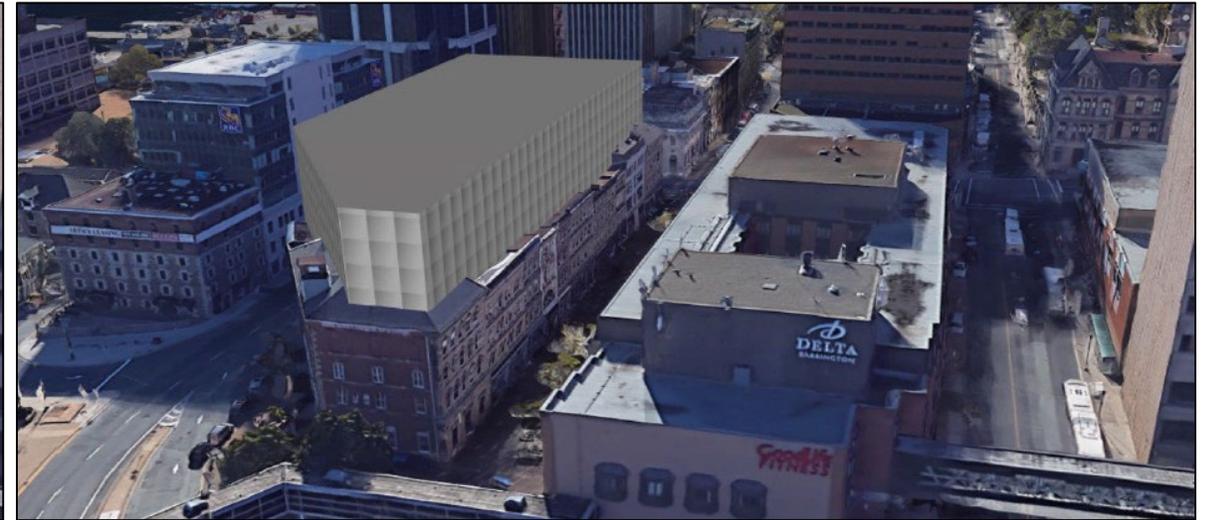


Proposed Downtown Halifax HCD
Incl. new Capital Area

Approach to Heritage Conservation Measures



Granville Mall



Granville Mall with Existing Permitted Height

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Approach to Heritage Conservation Measures



Streetscape Elements and Historic Public Works

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Social and Economic Implications

- Strengthened community identity
- Preservation of a human-scaled environment
- Public education
- Sustainable development
- Financial incentives for heritage building conservation and functional improvements
- Increase in cultural heritage tourism



"Khyber" Building



Historic Railway Park and Hotel

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How a Municipality Establishes an HCD

Adopts a public participation program by resolution

Undertakes and approves a background study

Submits study and public participation program to Minister

Begins the public consultation phase

Prepares a draft Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law

Gives notice of intention to hold a public hearing

Provides public access to the proposed documents

Holds a public hearing

Submits the HCD Plan and By-law to the Minister, if approved

Receives Minister's decision on the HCD Plan and By-law

Gives notice of approval of the HCD Plan and By-law and files documents

The logo for the City of Halifax, featuring the word "HALIFAX" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Accept the background study contained in Attachment A to initiate the process to establish a Heritage Conservation District in Downtown Halifax; and
2. Follow the Public Participation Program for HCDs, adopted by Regional Council on November 17, 2020, as contained in Attachment B, to obtain public input on the proposed Downtown Halifax conservation plan and by-law in accordance with Section 6 of the Heritage Conservation Districts Regulations.

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Questions / Comments