

4. Draft Citizen-lead Heritage Conservation Areas Policy

John O'Reilly provided a brief summary of the draft policy.

Panel Questions and Comments

- The 75% threshold required to move forward with community research is unrealistically high; 75% is appropriate for approval.
- A whole block is too much to require for an HCA; however, it should be more than two buildings. John O'Reilly: The area needs to be significant.
- The draft policy is too rigid for community members; enthusiasm is required initially with a reality check from City staff later.
- The character merit checklist is good; however, it is biased towards pre WWI buildings and unrealistic to expect 50% of the windows to be intact.
- Would a consultant or City staff prepare Statements of Significance? John O'Reilly: Citizens would do the research; a consultant would review and verify the research and create an SOS. This is dependent on the available budget.
- To offer incentives to owners is a very good idea. Density bonuses and permission for additional units is more focused on developers. John O'Reilly: Rear additions and garden suites would likely be allowed in an HCA.
- Why is 75% "desired" versus "required"? Staff should review the process for the Avalon Road and Robert Street HCAs, both community-led and by consensus.
- What traits do the buildings have in common? Define terms such as West Coast Modern, Craftsman, etc. within the policy.
- The matrix is a good idea, but the scoring may have challenges.
- Will there be more red tape for repairs or alterations to non-protected properties if they are located in an HCA? Where does maintenance end and the need for an application begin? The need for applications for repairs or alterations for non-protected and protected properties should be minimized.
- Will there be a promotional campaign? John O'Reilly: A package will be created.
- Is there a list or schedule of protected properties in existing HCAs? Merinda Conley: Those properties are on the Heritage Register. The City has not used HCAs to formally protect properties.
- The meaning of "protected heritage property" is not clear in the *Local Government Act*.
- Concern was expressed about citizens leading the process. HCAs are complicated. John O'Reilly: Citizens will be involved in nominating properties and research only. The City will retain interest in the process as a positive actor.
- There need to be more benefits for those who own a property in an HCA.
- In the draft policy, the words merit, recognition and protection are used. Management is a better word to use as it conveys a positive approach.
- What is the long-term plan for HCAs? HCAs need to be understood in the larger context.
- The draft policy's emphasis is architectural. The value of an area may not be architectural; it may be one of the other themes in the Heritage Thematic Framework. It is best to keep the perspective broad.
- Having a property registered in an HCA is positive as long as it does not trigger exemptions.