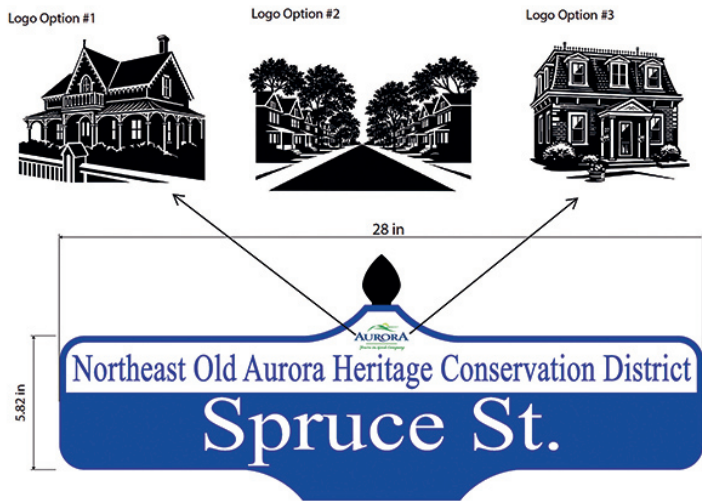


Heritage Conservation District to get special street signs to mark anniversary



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Aurora's Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and, to mark the occasion, street signs in the neighbourhood are set to get a makeover.

New street signs to celebrate the milestone of the community, located in the northeast quadrant of Yonge and Wellington Streets, were put in motion by Council this spring following a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Additional gateway signage is also planned for the Yonge Street side of the HCD.

In his motion, Mayor Mrakas said the designation of the HCD "has been instrumental in guiding the preservation" of the area, "known as one of the first major residential expansions of Aurora, spurred by the arrival of the railway in the mid-1800s."

"2026 marks the 20-year anniversary of this designation and the creation of the Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District," he said, noting the original plan for the HCD "encourages" the installation of street name signs unique to the community's structure.

"Promotion of the HCD through dedicated signage will further enhance awareness and encourage the preservation and celebration of this distinct and historically and culturally significant part of Town."

The motion, which was unanimously approved by Council, called on staff to come up with some design options and costs to come back to Council.

Preliminary designs got their first review at this month's Heritage Advisory Committee meeting

The initial design has a unique shape compared to other street signs used in Aurora, but denote "Northeast Old Aurora Heritage Conservation District." The mock-up leaves space for a specific logo to be included, and while the draft included the Town of Aurora's corporate logo as a placeholder, black-and-white renderings of landmarks, including Hillary House, were offered as alternatives to the corporate brand.

"The street sign blade is designed to be more decorative than traditional street signage and feature a finial as well as [the] text," said the report before Committee, noting that approximately 28 signs will be needed for the HCD's 14 intersections.

The report notes the cost for replacing the signs in question could reach \$3,500.

Aurora's Heritage Planner, Adam Robb, told the Committee last week that staff believe the costs were 'quite reasonable' and could be paid for out of Aurora's existing Heritage Reserve Fund.

Members of HAC were generally pleased with the project and the overall mock-up presented, but suggested more work could be done in font and overall design to better reflect the HCD's heritage attributes.

Additional suggestions included wrought-iron framing for the new street signs, again being in keeping with the area's heritage nature, and the incorporation of additional wayfinding, including potential QR codes, to allow neighbours and Aurora residents alike to scan and learn more about not just the HCD overall but specific landmarks within the area.

The committee also weighed in on plans to construct the special gateway feature to the HCD. While a final location for the gateway feature has not been set in stone, staff have suggested an ideal place might be at Yonge and Catherine Streets near the existing Lions Parkette adjacent to Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.

By Brock Weir
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