

Thank you for filling out the survey! When completed, please drop it off at the City Hall Planning Department Counter.

If you have any questions, please contact James Neilson, Senior Project Manager at jneilson@stcatharines.ca

You can also keep up to date on the Study by visiting our website: www.engagestc.ca/DowntownHCD

Name _____ **Email Address** _____

Which of the following applies to you?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- I own a property in the downtown
- I operate a business in the downtown
- I own a property and operate a business in the downtown

If you own a downtown business, what type of business do you operate?

(Choose all that apply)

- Restaurant/Bar/Cafe
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Office
- Personal Services (ie. Hair/Nail Salon, tattoo shop, spa/relaxation, etc)
- Medical Services (ie. dentist, doctors office, physiotherapy etc)
- Hospitality
- None (I own the property but do not operate a business from it)
- Other (please specify)

At the end of 2026, approximately 100 downtown heritage properties will lose their current level of protection due to changes to the Heritage Act. This level of protection prevented demolitions of buildings but allowed owners to make alterations. Does it concern you that these properties will lose their protection?

(Choose any one option)

- Yes
- No

Note: The heritage district study is a response to these changes to the Heritage Act. The only way to prevent the demolition of historic buildings is through the Heritage Act, and a heritage district is the most efficient way of protecting buildings within a defined area. It is also a public process that allows the City to get feedback and input from people like yourself. We view this as your chance to help guide the future of the downtown.

Please provide your thoughts on the following statements:

Questions	Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree	Not Applicable
As a downtown property owner, the architectural character/appearance of the building was part of the reason I bought it.						
As a downtown property owner, I enjoy the architectural character/appearance of my building.						
As a downtown property owner, the architectural character/appearance of my building is something that I actively try to maintain.						
As a downtown business owner, the architectural character/appearance of the building was part of the reason I chose my location						
As a downtown business owner, the historical character of downtown was one of the reasons I wanted to be located downtown						
As a downtown business owner, I feel that the architectural character of my property contributes to the success of my business.						
As a downtown business owner, I wanted the historical character of my building to be part of my business' brand.						
As a downtown property owner who rents to commercial tenants, I feel that the architectural character/appearance of my building is a factor in the tenants that I attract.						
As a downtown business or property owner, I think that the character/appearance of surrounding buildings impacts my business or property.						

Downtown Heritage Conservation District Study

EngageSTC.ca/DowntownHCD

If a heritage district was in place for the downtown, a "District Plan" would provide policies and guidelines for property owners to follow. The Plan will only be pursued if Council chooses to proceed with the Plan following the Study. Which of the following ideas about what a potential plan could look like appeal to you?

Questions	Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
Properties identified during the Study to have heritage value would have guidelines to follow to avoid negative impacts to historical features.					
Properties identified during the Study to have heritage value should not be allowed to be demolished.					
There should be few restrictions on what property owners do with their property except for restrictions on demolitions to properties identified to have heritage value					
There should be no restrictions at all. Property owners should be permitted to alter and demolish their property as they wish.					
Interesting historical architectural features should be maintained but there should be no restrictions on changes to storefronts					
The plan should just prevent demolitions and provide guidance for new buildings					

On a scale of 1-5, how concerned are you about the following:

Questions	1 - Not very concerned	2	3	4	5 - Very concerned	Not applicable
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about getting approval to make changes to my facade						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about getting approval to develop my property						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about my property value increasing						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about my property value decreasing						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about the ability to sell my property						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about getting Insurance for my property						
If a heritage district was in place, I am concerned about getting financing from a bank						
I am concerned that the City has a history of historic buildings being torn down and not replaced.						
I am concerned that a large historic section of downtown (ie. St. Paul Street) could be purchased and demolished for development purposes						
I am concerned that one of the City's most significant landmarks (churches, prominent heritage buildings) could be torn down without adequate heritage protection or an appropriate public process.						
I want to see more development and investment in the downtown, but I would like the historic character to remain as well.						

Do you have any other concerns? (if you require more room, please use the back of the sheet.)

Downtown Heritage Conservation District Study

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How do the following questions affect your perception of a heritage district?				No, it makes my concerns worse	Not Applicable or I had no concerns before
Questions	Yes, greatly	Yes, slightly	No		
Does it help to know that not all properties are treated the same? Properties would be divided into "contributing" and "non-contributing" status based on their heritage significance as determined by the Study.					
If you have concerns about the timeline for receiving approvals for alterations, does it help to know that the City has recently revamped their heritage approval process so that most simple alterations can be approved in a few days, while complex applications can be dealt with in a few weeks?					
If you only needed to get approval from the City to change historic exterior features on the facade of your building, but all other changes could be made without requiring approval, would that be an appealing system to manage change in the downtown??					
Would it help if there was a clearly written list of changes that can be made to a property without requiring city approval?					
Does it help to know that while there might be some guidelines for alterations that you may need to follow, your neighbours would also have to follow those guidelines, and that it could prevent your neighbours from making negative changes that might affect your property/business?					
The City does not require specialized contractors to do work on heritage buildings. It is typically in a property owner's best interest to work with experienced professionals, but it is not a requirement. Does knowing that you don't need to find specialized labour ease your concerns?					
Does it help to know that an HCD would not require a property owner to make improvements to their property or restore their property.					
The City wants to see development in the downtown, and wants to actively work with property owners to find solutions for their property. Does it help to know that a heritage district would not restrict all development from happening?					
A recent study on commercial heritage districts in Calgary showed that buildings within commercial heritage districts added an average value of \$36.60 per square foot when compared to similar, non-heritage properties. Does a demonstrated positive impact on property values elsewhere ease your concerns about property values?					
That same study in Calgary found that heritage provided an added economic benefit of more than \$44M to the City's economy, and the lift to surrounding non-heritage properties (Heritage Halo) was found to be more than \$57M. Does this ease your concerns about the economic impact that heritage can have on a downtown?					
One of the most common calls that the City's Heritage Planner receives is from realtors who have clients wanting to buy heritage buildings. Does this ease your concerns about the ability to sell your property?					
The insurance industry sometimes has concerns about insuring heritage properties. Typically these concerns are based on myths about heritage and the City provides a letter to insurers to dispel myths in the rare case that an insurer is concerned. Does this ease your concerns about insurance?					
Given the large quantity of commercial heritage buildings in Niagara, we know that there are insurance providers who will provide insurance to heritage property owners, but you may need to shop around if your current provider has concerns. Does this concern you?					
Similarly, occasionally some banks have concerns about financing heritage buildings. Given the large quantity of commercial heritage buildings in Niagara, we know that there are banks who will work with heritage property owners, but you may need to shop around. Does this concern you?					
The City has a dedicated heritage planner who is there to provide support, connect you with contractors, and work on your behalf to find solutions to your issues. Does it help to know you would have a dedicated City staff member there to help you with any issues that might pop up?					
The City has 5 heritage districts in place (Yates Street, Queen Street, Power Glen, Port Dalhousie and the Port Dalhousie Commercial Core). All of these HCDs have been successful at conserving the character of the area. Does it help knowing that the City has a proven track record with HCDs?					
There are approximately 25 commercial heritage districts in Ontario including similar mid-size cities to St. Catharines like Oakville, Kitchener, Cambridge and London. Does it help to know that this is a common tool used in downtowns across Ontario?					

On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel about the following grant and tax incentives?

Questions	1 - Definitely disagree	2	3	4	5 - Definitely agree	Not Applicable
The City currently offers a grant of up to \$15,000 for heritage building facades and \$5,000 under the City's Heritage Committee program. Would you find these grants helpful?						
Do you think a larger grant amount would help you and your business/property?						
If you have applied for grants in the past, did you find the process to be easy?						

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Would a more streamlined grant program make it more likely for you to apply for a grant?							
The city is currently studying the ability to provide designated property owners with property tax rebates (between 0-40%). Would this incentive be useful to you?							
The city is also interested in learning more about other grants that are being offered to heritage property owners in communities across the country. Do you think additional grant opportunities would help property owners in the downtown?							

The City conducted a City-wide survey and found that 86% of people surveyed felt that the historical architecture of downtown is unique or special, does this change how you look at the downtown?

(Choose any one option)

- Yes, I am surprised that many people feel strongly about the downtown's historic character
- I already feel that the downtown's historical architect is unique or special
- No, despite what others think, this information does not change how I look at the downtown

Overall, do you think that protecting heritage buildings will help, hurt or have no impact on the downtown?

(Choose any one option)

- Help
- Hurt
- No Impact

Please let us know why you feel that a heritage district will help, hurt or have no impact on the downtown (if you require more room, please use the back of the sheet.).

Are there any downtowns in other communities in Ontario or elsewhere where you have had a positive experience? We can look into whether there are any special policies or initiatives that have been undertaken in those communities that might be worth pursuing in St. Catharines. (if you require more room, please use the back of the sheet.)

Please provide the postal code of your downtown business or property

Please let us know if you have any additional feedback, concerns, questions, etc. (if you require more room, please use the back of the sheet.)