

HESPELER HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT – PLAN & GUIDELINES

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE
DECEMBER 4TH, 2024

EVENING AGENDA: 7:00-8:30PM



- Presentation by TRACE.
- Break-out groups.
- Questions, display panels, feedback.

01. HERITAGE CONSERVATION

TRACE specializes in Heritage Conservation. We look at the value of places regardless of institutional recognition, tangible, or intangible.

02. LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

This approach allows us to better understand that a place, be it its past, present, or future, is not stagnant and requires a unique sensitivity to achieve balanced solutions (Especially important in a HCD).

03. INTER-DISCIPLINARY

We are unique in our collective approach to architecture and research. This collaborative sensibility extends to the creation of this identity, an exercise that the team helped create.

Chris Warden

Senior Conservation Architect

Chris is Principal and Senior Conservation Architect at TRACE. Well into his second decade working within the architectural field, 15 of which have been with Trace Architectures. Chris gravitates towards rehabilitating and adaptive reuse as he enjoys working with buildings and sites with layered histories to draw on.

Emily Guy

Project Lead, Research and Outreach

Emily comes from a research background, and leads the research and policy projects at TRACE, complimenting the work of the architectural team. She's lived in Montreal, St. John's and now Ottawa, and her work is rooted significantly in heritage community building projects, such as HCDs.



Heritage Conservation District Plan & Guidelines

Public Information Centre – December 4, 2024

HCD PLAN INTRODUCTION

**Planning Tool connected
to Provincial Policy**

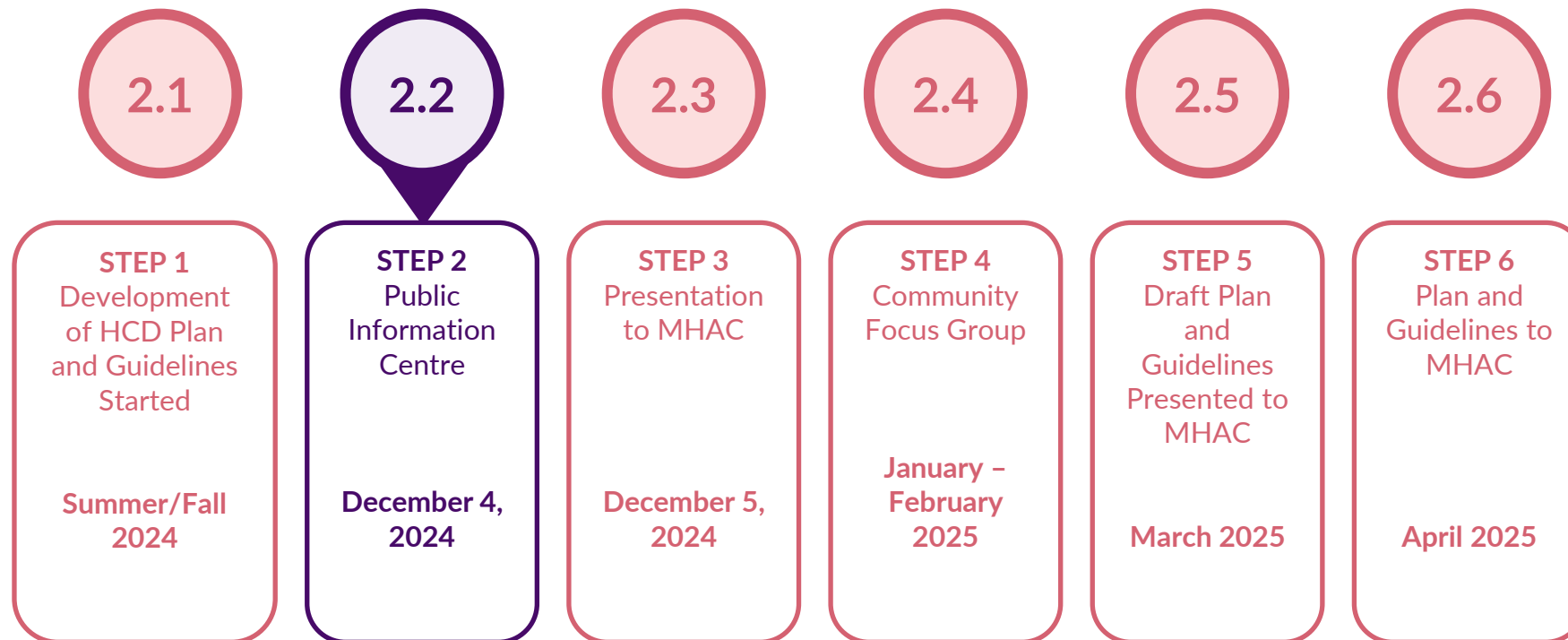
Protecting Sense of Place

**Driven by Process and
Community Engagement**

THE STUDY PHASE – WHERE WE HAVE BEEN



THE PLAN PHASE – WHERE WE ARE



WHY ARE WE HERE?



- Public consultation comes in multiple forms for this process
- Important to get feedback because people who live here understand the sense of place the best
- Ultimately an HCD plan is a policy document that seeks to manage change while working to protect the core sense of place

WHAT IS A HCD PLAN



- Builds on the research and understanding developed during the Study Phase
- Designated area recognized under the **Ontario Heritage Act**
- Heritage Value includes: historical, cultural, or architectural significance.
- Key goal is to preserve the unique heritage character of buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes.
- Municipalities regulate alterations, new construction, and demolitions within these areas to maintain their integrity through policies and guidelines.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HCDS



- A **concentration of heritage** buildings, sites, structures; designed landscapes, natural landscapes that are linked by aesthetic, historical and socio-cultural contexts or use.
- A **framework of structured elements** including major natural features such as topography, land form, landscapes, water courses and built form such as pathways and street patterns, landmarks, nodes or intersections, approaches and edges.
- A **sense of visual coherence** through the use of such elements as building scale, mass, height, material, proportion, colour, etc. that convey a distinct sense of time or place.
- A **distinctiveness** which enables districts to be recognized and distinguishable from their surroundings or from neighbouring areas.

HCD PLAN: OHA REQUIREMENTS



- **Statement of the objectives** to be achieved in designating the area as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD);
- Statement explaining the Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of the HCD;
- Description of the **heritage attributes** of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;
- **Policy statements, guidelines and procedures** for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district (Policies and Guidelines); and
- **Description of the alterations or classes** of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of property in the heritage conservation district may carry out without obtaining a permit.
- **Consultation**

HCD PLAN: HIGHLIGHTED CONTENT



- **Policies** in a Heritage Character District are formal rules set by municipalities to protect the district's heritage value, guiding development, conservation, and land use.
- **Guidelines** are recommendations or best practices to ensure changes align with the district's character, focusing on materials, design, scale, and landscaping. They provide flexibility while preserving heritage integrity.



HCD PLAN EXAMPLE OF A POLICY

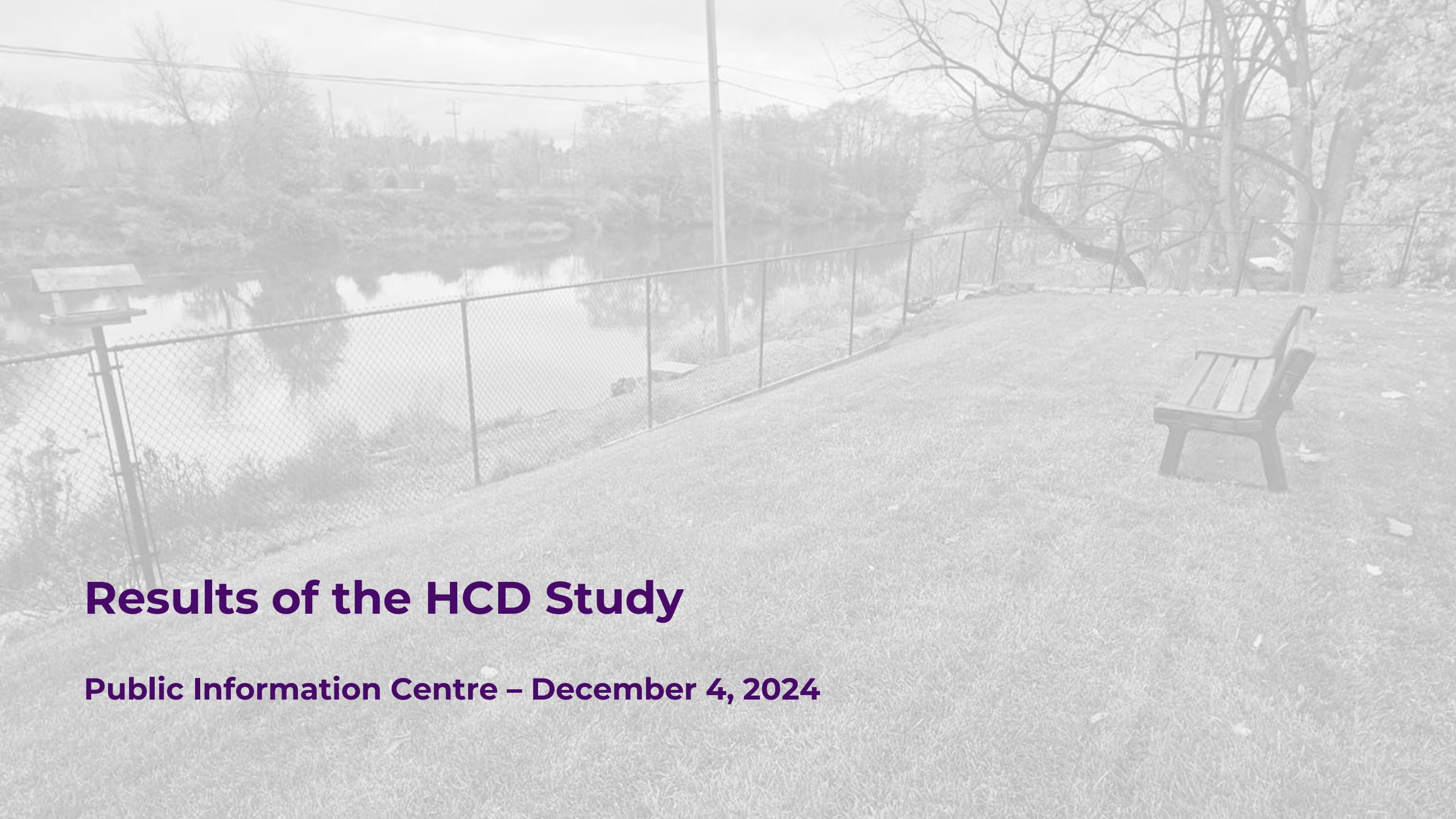


- “Contributing properties and their buildings shall be conserved in a manner that ensures their integrity and long-term conservation of the District’s cultural heritage values and heritage attributes.” –*GALT HCD Plan for Contributing Properties 6.1.1 Conservation*
 - Goal is for long term conservation of buildings and materials that contribute to the district
- Policies are the “What” of what needs to be done to protect, manage and enhance the heritage value of an HCD

HCD PLAN EXAMPLE OF A GUIDELINE



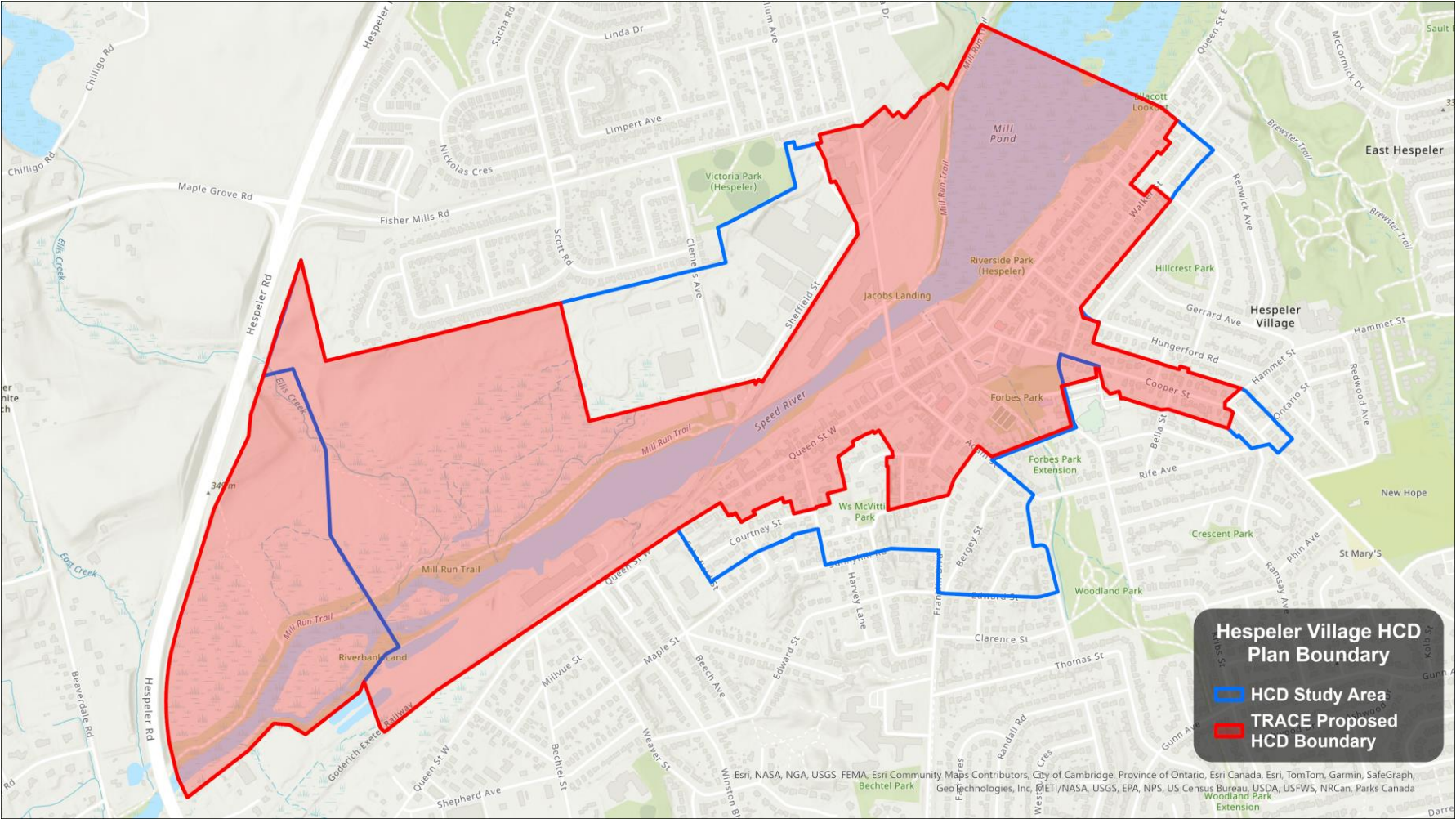
- Conservation through preservation, rehabilitation, and/or restoration of contributing buildings should be based on documentary and physical evidence. –*GALT HCD Plan for Contributing Properties 6.1.1 Conservation*
 - Provides best practices and guidance on how policies can be acted on.
- Guidelines are the “How” to protect, manage and enhance the heritage value of an HCD



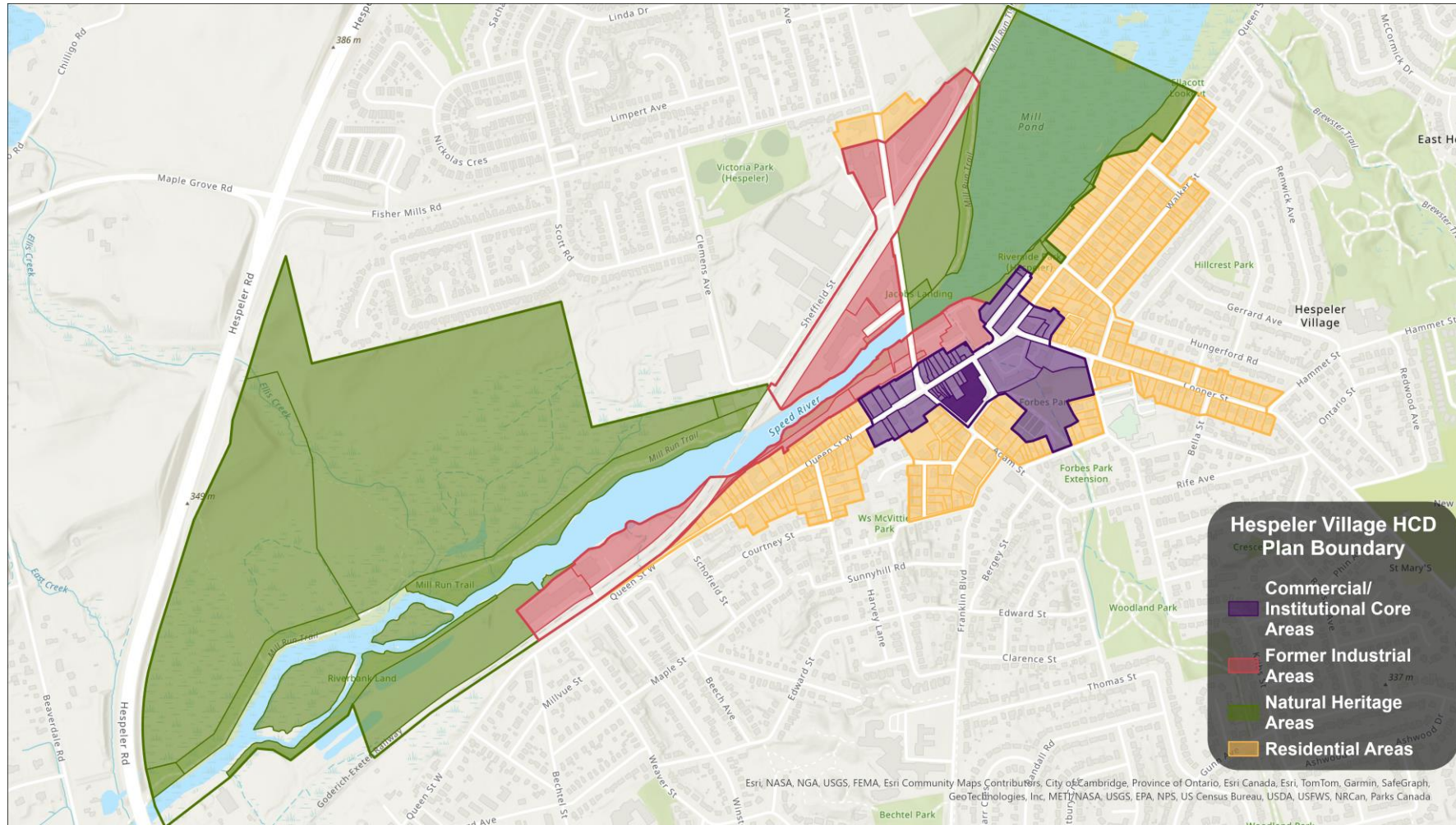
Results of the HCD Study

Public Information Centre – December 4, 2024

BOUNDARY



CHARACTER AREAS



DRAFT STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST FROM THE STUDY

Description of the Place:

Hespeler, located along the Speed River in Cambridge, Ontario, is a historic village shaped by its 19th-century origins as a mill town. Its unique charm lies in its topography, river views, and preservation of early North American village character. The downtown core, centered on Queen Street, features a mix of commercial, residential, industrial, and institutional buildings, including landmarks like the former Forbes Textile Mill. Residential areas reflect a blend of architectural styles, from workers' housing to stately homes of industrial elites, with streets often named after local founders. Hespeler boasts the region's highest concentration of historic industrial buildings, highlighting its prosperous past.

The Speed River:

Hespeler developed along the Speed River, which features two historic dams: the mid-19th-century Speed River Dam and the 1906 Silknit Dam. The 6.5 km Mill Run Trail follows the northern riverbank through natural areas and Riverside Park. The river's eastern banks are natural, with vegetation and park space, while the western banks blend industrial structures, including retaining walls, old buildings, and a railroad bridge, with natural elements.

Cultural Heritage Value:

The history of Cambridge, Ontario, is rooted in thousands of years of Indigenous presence, including the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples. Hespeler's 19th-century development as a mill town along the Speed River shaped its unique small-town character, with a tightly composed urban form centered on a commercial/industrial core and elevated residential areas. Its cultural heritage stems from its picturesque river-based landscape, historical mills, industrial prosperity, and railway arrival in 1859. The town features industrial buildings, bridges, public green spaces, and adaptive reuse of industrial sites, blending natural beauty with historical and recreational value.

HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

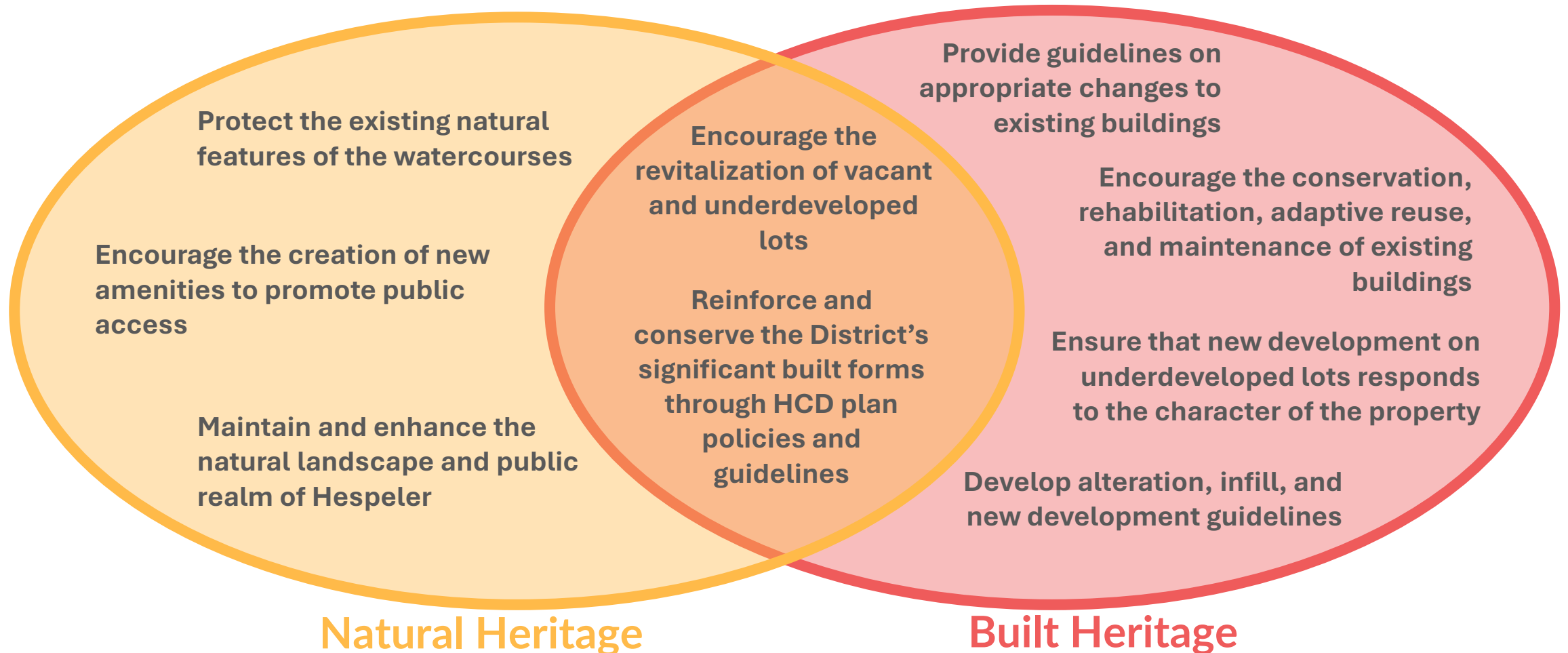
- The river's flow supported industrial buildings, powering factories and enabling growth.
- Queen Street features 19th and early-20th century commercial buildings with unique storefronts.
- Commercial buildings on Queen Street have minimal setbacks, lot-line placement, and two- or three-story heights.
- Residential architecture on Queen Street mixes styles, materials, balconies, and river-access lots.
- Landmark civic and religious buildings showcase late-19th and early-20th century architecture.
- Residential styles from 1830–1930 include worker cottages, Gothic Revival, and Edwardian designs.
- Key views include rooflines, steeples, and smokestacks from streets leading into the district.
- Green spaces and paths around the river enhance public access and heritage appreciation.
- Cooper and Walker Streets feature large homes, tree canopies, and deeper setbacks.
- Natural and former industrial spaces downtown evolved into informal recreation areas.
- Industrial infrastructure includes bridges, dams, and the Mill Pond.
- Riverfront industrial buildings reflect Hespeler's industrial roots and success.
- Community events, like parades and cultural activities, enrich the town's historical charm.

HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES



OBJECTIVES

To conserve and enhance the cultural heritage value and character-defining elements of the HCD, including built forms, street and landscape elements, and landmarks that contribute to Hespeler's sense of place.



OBJECTIVES FROM STUDY



- Ensure new construction fits the character of the area, especially on vacant or underdeveloped lots.
- Revitalize vacant sites, like former industrial properties, while preserving the natural and cultural heritage.
- Preserve and enhance the district's built heritage by maintaining consistent architectural styles, setbacks, and streetscapes.
- Protect historic residential areas near the commercial core with appropriate design measures.

OBJECTIVES FROM STUDY



- Preserve and improve natural areas, including the Speed River, parks, and public access to the river.
- Protect natural features and create new trails for public enjoyment of these spaces.



OBJECTIVES FROM STUDY



- Support the conservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, with guidelines for appropriate changes.
- Conserve and enhance Hespeler's cultural heritage, including its buildings, streets, and landmarks.
- Improve key gateways to Hespeler, such as bridges and street entries, and highlight the town's industrial history.
- Set guidelines for new development that respects the area's history and cultural value.
- Integrate heritage policies into the city's regulatory framework to support conservation.
- Create a Heritage Permitting process to guide property owners in preserving and maintaining buildings.
- Encourage community involvement in the heritage conservation process and ensure clear communication with property owners.

BRINGING IT BACK TO THE CONSERVATION PLAN AND GUIDELINES

Connecting the Plan to the Place and Policies

- Purpose of the plan is to provide guidance on how to protect sense of place and manage change within the boundary of a Heritage Conservation District
- It is a policy that is part of a broader suite of municipal documents that provide guidance and clarity on how a place is anticipated to evolve.

Connecting the Plan to the People

- Places gain value by being viewed as important by the people that use and interact with these places
- Our understanding is there are 4 key zones within the proposed HCD boundary: Commercial/Institutional Core, Former Industrial, Natural Heritage Areas and Residential Areas
- Everything radiates from the Speed River

NEXT STEPS

- **TODAY:** Public Information Centre (PIC) – December 4. Feedback integrated into the development of the policies and guidelines in the plan.
- **TOMORROW December 5, 2024:** MHAC presentation December 5th, 2024.
- **JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025:** Begin the Community Focus Groups.
 - Include reviews of draft policies, guidelines, workshops.
- **MARCH 2025:** Presentation of Draft HCD Plan to MHAC.
- **APRIL 2025:** Presentation to City Council.

BREAK OUT GROUPS

- Mainstreet & Commercial Core
 - *Description*
- Residential
 - *Description*
- Industrial and Natural Space
 - *Description*

- *Questions:*
 - *What do you feel is important in this area?*
 - *What concerns do you have about HCD in this area?*
 - *What development do you feel works?*

QUESTIONS

Thank you!

More Information:

<https://www.engagewr.ca/hespeler-heritage-conservation-district-study-and-plan>

