



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning

DATE: April 8, 2026

SUBJECT: Heritage District News – Proposed Spring 2026 Edition

Project: Heritage District News (newsletter)

Background:

- See attachment for the Program Outline and a copy of the Spring 2025 newsletter.
- In June 2025, the last newsletter was mailed to 1200 properties located within the City's four heritage conservation districts (HCDs) by Heritage Section staff.
- The newsletter included:
 - What is a HCD
 - Heritage Markham celebrates 50 years
 - Marking Changes in a HCD- Major and Minor Permits
 - Awards of Excellence Program
 - Commercial Signage and the need for a Sign Permit
 - Financial Assistance available
 - Profile of the four HCDS and how to find their boundaries
 - Promotion of Doors Open Markham 2025

Status/ Staff Comment

- Heritage staff are looking for any input on the upcoming newsletter
- Our preliminary thoughts are that the newsletter will repeat some of the key messaging that was part of the 2025 brochure and add some current items of interest. These would be:
 - What is a HCD.
 - What is Heritage Markham.
 - Contacts for more information.
 - Making Changes in a HCD – major and minor heritage permits
 - Need for Commercial Signage Permits
 - How to find out if you are in a HCD
 - Financial Assistance (including highlighting the new grant program)
 - Highlight some Award of Excellence winners from the 2025 ceremony (perhaps the Group of 7 project for Thornhill)
 - Promote Doors Open Markham 2026 (Sept 26, 2026)
 - UHCD commercial streetscape completed.
 - MVHCD Plan update is ongoing- next meeting

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

That Heritage Markham receive as information the update on the proposed Spring 2026 Heritage District News newsletter;

And that Heritage Markham suggests the following information be included in the newsletter:

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1. Program Outline

Program:

A newsletter directed to residents and property owners in the City's heritage conservation districts.

Purpose:

- To foster communication between the City and those who live and work in heritage conservation districts
- To inform property owners in the district about district related news
- To remind readers of the special obligations that comes with being in a heritage district.

Name:

Heritage District News

Format:

- Four pages, 11X17 folded into brochure (5 ½ x 8 ½).
- Clear circular seal to hold together
- One section left black for Mailing label and stamping
- Text and photos
- Colour

Typical Content:

- Land use related news and developments in a district (i.e. a new building or façade improvement)
- Requirement for seeking approval of alterations (i.e. Heritage Permits, other approvals)
- Update on studies happening in the District (i.e. Yonge Street study, Heritage District studies)
- Examples of good restoration projects underway or completed
- Examples of good infill and new development
- Award winning projects in the Districts
- Restoration techniques and sources
- Information on financial assistance programs (Property tax program, façade and signage grant programs, Heritage loan program)
- Heritage Policy news and updates (changes to provincial polices, municipal policies)
- Public works happening in the District
- Information on related organization (SPOHT, historical societies, MVC)
- Heritage Markham and its members (local contacts)
- Explanation of Heritage Principles (preservation of original materials)

Content Preparation:

To be prepared in-house by the Heritage Section, Development Services Commission.

Content Review:

To be reviewed by Director of Planning and Urban Design (or designate) and Corporate Communications Advisor

Distribution:

Property owners in the City's heritage conservation districts

Method of Distribution:

Option A – Canada Post regular mail

Option B – Canada Post postal code unaddressed mail (requires too large an area for distribution)

Option C – Community Group delivery

Option D – Staff Delivery

To date, only Option A has been used.

Funding:

Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve)

087 2800 115

Approvals:

- Heritage District Newsletter concept was approved by Council on January 27, 1998 as part of the Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan approval.
- Heritage District Newsletter Pilot Program approved on January 26, 1999.
- Heritage District Newsletter Program was endorsed and funded through the Heritage Preservation Account (Reserve)- #087-2800-115 at a cost of \$1200 per issue and not to exceed \$3600 per year – March 21 2006



The Old Markham Highschool



Cedar Grove Schoolhouse



HERITAGE DISTRICT NEWS

Spring 2025
A City of Markham Publication

If you need help on a heritage matter, please contact us at heritage@markham.ca

The Good Neighbour Handbook

The City has created a resource called the "Good Neighbour Handbook" which has information that is useful to all residents, regarding property maintenance, animal services, permits, property taxes and more.



Scan the code for a copy of the handbook.

Doors Open is Back on Saturday September 20, 2025!

Explore Markham's unique cultural, heritage, and innovative buildings as they open their doors for one day. This year's theme is "Markham's Learning Landscape" with a focus on heritage education. Get a behind-the-scenes look at select buildings throughout the city and discover the stories that made Markham what it is today.

Learn more at www.markham.ca/DoorsOpen

What is a Heritage Conservation District (HCD)

An HCD is a defined geographical area within a municipality that has cultural, historical, or architectural significance and is legally protected to preserve its character. In these districts, buildings, landscapes and streetscapes are managed through specific guidelines to maintain their historical integrity while allowing for appropriate development and restoration. HCDs help safeguard a community's heritage while supporting sustainable growth and tourism.

Heritage Markham Committee

Celebrating 50 years of service, the Heritage Markham Committee was created in 1975 to advise and assist Council on the protection and conservation of heritage resources and areas in the community. Comprised of ten volunteer representatives appointed by Council and three members of Council, the Committee meets once a month as a whole to review various forms of applications and projects. If you are interested in serving on the Committee in the future, please contact us at heritage@markham.ca

Making Changes to a Property in a Heritage Conservation District – Major and Minor Heritage Permits

Renovations and alterations to existing buildings or construction of new buildings anywhere within a Heritage Conservation District require either a Minor or Major Heritage Permit.

Minor Heritage Permits – required for routine maintenance, minor repairs and alterations that don't typically require any other type of permit and are free. Examples of minor exterior changes include,

- Exterior painting, new siding and roofing
- Driveway replacement/changes, fencing, hard landscaping and exterior lighting
- Window and door replacements
- Major vegetation removal

Major Heritage Permits – required for more substantial alterations, additions, including accessory buildings and new building construction and have an application fee.

Work undertaken without approval is subject to prosecution and fines under the Ontario Heritage Act and a penalty application fee (\$600 + HST).

All applications are to be submitted on-line. Additional information on how to apply can be found on the City's website under **Planning and Development Applications/Heritage Permits** or by contacting Heritage Section staff at heritage@markham.ca. Staff is available to help you along your property improvement journey.



Alternate formats are available upon request.

HERITAGE DISTRICT NEWS - SPRING 2025

905.477.5530 | markham.ca

Alternate formats are available upon request.



Awards of Excellence

The Heritage Markham Awards of Excellence celebrate outstanding contributions to heritage conservation, showcasing the best completed projects such as preserving heritage in new development, restoration (corporate and private residential), complementary new infill buildings and additions to heritage buildings. This event highlights those who go above and beyond to protect and promote Markham's rich history.

We invite you to submit a nomination for an owner who has done commendable heritage conservation work since 2017.

Nomination submission details can be obtained from Heritage Staff at heritage@markham.ca

Nomination deadline: July 15, 2025
Help us celebrate the people and projects keeping Markham's heritage alive!

Commercial Signage Requires a Sign Permit

As a business owner, you must obtain a sign permit before ordering or installing a new sign or replacing an existing sign face, whether ground-mounted or attached to a building.

Heritage Conservation Districts are designated as "Special Sign Districts", with specific regulations regarding sign size, design, colour, and lighting, to ensure compatibility with the area's heritage character. These regulations apply to both public and private properties. To obtain a sign permit, contact the City's Building Department and review Section 10 of Sign By-law 2002-94 for guidance.

By-law Enforcement Staff will ensure that illegally installed signs are removed.

Markham Village

Main Street in Markham Village is a charming and historic destination that blends small-town warmth with vibrant local culture. As one of Markham's oldest areas and protected as a heritage conservation district, it boasts beautifully preserved heritage buildings, independent stores, and a diverse dining scene. The pedestrian-friendly street is home to a variety of local businesses, making it a perfect place to shop, dine, and explore. Annual events like the Markham Village Music Festival, the Farmers' Market, and Christmas Parade bring the community together, adding to the lively and welcoming atmosphere.

Beyond its historic charm, Markham Village is also a gateway to nature, with the Rouge River and nearby Milne Dam Conservation Park providing scenic spots for relaxation and outdoor activities.

A recent improvement to the District is the exterior remodeling of a modern building at 27-37 Main Street North to enhance the heritage character of the commercial core. The City is also in the process of revising the policies and guidelines in the current Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Plan and we will be seeking your input in the near future. More details to follow.

Thornhill Village

Historic Thornhill Village was Markham's first heritage conservation district (1986). Founded in 1794, the name Thornhill did not come into existence until 1829 when Benjamin Thorne, a local resident and merchant, was successful in having a post office established. The District is primarily residential, offering many fine examples of preserved heritage dwellings along with several commercial properties on Yonge Street. Adjacent areas north and south along Yonge Street are currently being examined as part of the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan to determine appropriate development opportunities and standards.

Buttonville

Although Buttonville is Markham's smallest heritage conservation district, exciting conservation work is happening including the former Buttonville Mill House which has been restored and redeveloped as part of a new 33-unit townhouse development.



Remodeling of the exterior at 27-37 Main St. N Markham

Historic Unionville: Watch the future unfold!

Unionville, which became a heritage conservation district in 1997, is a beloved heritage village that continues to welcome both local residents and visitors from across the region.

Currently the commercial area of Main Street is undergoing a major streetscape renovation to restore and refresh its heritage character. Our unique shops, outstanding restaurants and scenic walkways remain open for you to enjoy while we revitalize our charming village. Stroll through the village, support local businesses, and experience the history, beauty, and vibrancy that make Unionville so special.

How to find HCD Boundaries and Heritage District Plans

To view the boundaries of the four Heritage Conservation Districts, and access the corresponding Heritage District Plans, which outline policies and guidelines for alterations and new development, visit the Heritage Services section on the city website or contact Heritage Staff for a digital copy.

The boundaries, as well as much more information, can also be discovered through the Heritage Property Register at markham.ca/heritage

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HERITAGE PROPERTIES

Heritage Property Tax Reduction Program

Owners of heritage properties can get an annual property tax refund which will help offset the added cost of maintaining heritage buildings. The city offers a 30% reduction on the municipal and education portions of your tax bill for eligible properties. For a property to be eligible, it must:

- Be a "historic building" within a heritage conservation district or individually designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Have a Heritage Easement Agreement registered on title.

If you don't have a Heritage Easement Agreement, contact Heritage Staff to initiate the process.

Designated Heritage Property Grant

Conserve, restore or replicate missing heritage features on your designated property using this grant program which can provide up to 50% of the eligible conservation work to a maximum of \$5000. Regular maintenance work is not included.

Commercial Façade Improvement Grant

Obtain matching grants for the exterior restoration or improvement to a designated property in commercial use.

For Heritage Properties: projects may include repair or restoration of original features, windows, doors, masonry work and removal of non-original materials.

For Non-Heritage Properties: projects may include renovations of storefronts and the introduction of more traditional materials.

Amount – 50% of the eligible costs to a maximum of \$15,000 per property for heritage buildings (\$10,000 for non-heritage buildings)

Commercial Signage Replacement Grant

Replace grandfathered, non-conforming commercial signage in a heritage district. This 50/50 matching grant helps to fund the production and installation of new complementary signage up to \$1000.