

MAKE HISTORY.

Preserve Manitoba's Past.

PART 2: **YOUR MUNICIPAL HERITAGE FRAMEWORK**



CREATING AN EFFECTIVE HERITAGE BYLAW

An effective, proactive, empowering heritage bylaw is something every municipality should have. By setting out heritage policies on advisory committees, evaluation processes and heritage permits in advance, a municipality (and its council) can avoid piecemeal, hurried decision making, and the appearance of favouritism or inconsistent treatment.

Municipalities should consider a single heritage bylaw that integrates:

- the appointment of a Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and a statement of its role
- procedures for reviewing site designation requests
- a process for issuing heritage permits, including a requirement that owners of municipal heritage sites get approval for alterations to sites by obtaining a permit before starting work
- a statement of heritage policy that outlines the council's authority to regulate heritage resources through zoning and/or secondary plans under *The Planning Act*
- the process for designation that complies with the *Heritage Resources Act*. (Site designations can be handled by separate/additional bylaws if preferred. Completing several designations at one time can save cost and administrative time.)

Sample bylaws are included in template form in Part 5 of this guide. Councils should get legal advice and adapt these samples for their municipality.



MUNICIPAL HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Municipal Heritage Advisory Committees (MHACs) are committees of council, established by bylaw, to advise council heritage or the *Heritage Resources Act*. Typically, a Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee **advises council** on designation of sites or commemoration of themes, people and events which are municipally significant. A MHAC may also initiate projects to promote the community's heritage resources. Some examples of popular initiatives include walking/driving tours, regional bus tours, oral histories, artifact preservation and special events.

Authority to establish an MHAC is outlined in subsection 34(1) of *The Heritage Resources Act*. **The sample heritage bylaw included in Part 5 of this guide includes sections that establish a MHAC.**

MHAC members:

The committee should represent various interests in the municipality. Suggested membership for the committee includes municipal councillors, business people, local architects and planners, museum or historical society volunteers and others with a keen interest in the heritage of the area.

Forming a MHAC:

A MHAC should be formed when a council would like advice on a heritage matter. The matter can be a specific issue – a development proposal or a threatened landmark, or when a proactive strategy is needed to protect, interpret or promote the community's heritage.

It is important to remember that although MHACs can perform many of the same functions as a historical society, they also have, as part of their mandate, a duty to serve the council and the community.

To form a MHAC:

1. Recruit volunteers from existing heritage organizations or recruited through a public notice. If there are specific things the council would like the MHAC to address, these should be stated.
2. Pass a municipal bylaw establishing the committee (sample included in Part 5 of this guide)
3. Work with MHAC to clarify and define committee responsibilities. These could include reporting on a specific issue, providing annual reports or completing a project.



MHACs in action:

- To date, over 50 municipalities have formed MHACs.
- Community Heritage Manitoba is an umbrella organization representing and supporting Manitoba MHACs.
- The Historic Resources Branch can advise your community on establishing a MHAC, or put you in touch with a nearby MHAC which can offer first-hand knowledge and experience.



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS

A Community Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is the single best tool for ensuring the conservation of heritage resources and helping a community maximize the potential of its heritage resources. Whether you are just starting out or are a heritage veteran, a CHMP can help you focus your efforts, attract resources and volunteers and measure results.

A CHMP can be used by a MHAC, a council or a heritage organization to organize activities to reach certain goals within the limits of budget, time and energy. The process assesses where you are now, deciding where you would like to be by a certain time and creating realistic strategies for getting there.

In the **traditional approach to heritage planning**, the first step in managing the community's heritage was to prepare a heritage inventory, which could be used to evaluate resources and rank them into levels of significance. Once the inventory was done, a management plan could be produced to show how these resources should best be conserved. This approach works well if heritage conservation is a top priority in your community, if you have a lot of time and if you have extensive human and financial resources. Few communities, however, have such a commitment to heritage.

The new approach to heritage planning is a form of planned, managed opportunism, building from the bottom up, one piece at a time. Instead of preparing a single, comprehensive inventory, information is gathered and processed only as it is needed and it reflects community values. The inventory evolves over time and is based on the needs of the plan.

This incremental approach to planning and information gathering involves:

1. Understanding where the community is now.
2. Defining where it wants to go.
3. Identifying which programs and activities will achieve the goal.
4. Gathering the information needed to meet the goal.
5. Evaluating the information.

Historic Resources Branch has staff to help your community create a management plan that works for you.



Advantages of Community Heritage Management Plan:

- Very few Manitoba municipalities have annual CHMPs, but these communities have become provincial heritage leaders.
- Developing a basic plan can take as little as an afternoon, time that can be repaid tenfold in efficient use of resources and effort.
- A CHMP can help focus resources on community priorities.
- A well-articulated plan reduces confusion and conflict.
- Clear objectives make it easier to attract volunteers, grants and other financial resources, and community support.