EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consultant team was retained by the Town of Oakville in 2011 to undertake the preparation of a Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan related to Downtown Oakville. The direction to undertake the Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Study was identified in the Downtown Oakville Strategic Action Plan (DOSAP), and as such Town Staff undertook the preparation of a request for proposals in June 2011 to undertake the work.

Heritage Assessment Report

This study is the first part of a two-part process that comprises the Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Study. This first part comprises the heritage assessment component that describes and evaluates the cultural heritage value of the Downtown Oakville study area. The area comprises approximately 219 properties occupied by 411 built features (i.e., those that have street addresses). The study area being examined for the purpose of undertaking this work is generally defined by Sixteen Mile Creek-Dunn Street-Sumner Avenue (north and west), Allan Street (east), and Robinson Street (south) (shown below).

This report examines a number of aspects of the potential district, including: historical growth and development of Downtown Oakville; the built and architectural character of the study area; streetscape and landscape attributes; land use character; geographic boundaries of the area to be potentially designated; objectives of the designation and the content of the heritage conservation district plan; and potential changes that will be required to the Town of Oakville’s Official Plan and to any municipal by-laws.

Based on the work completed by the study team, a portion of the study area has been identified as a potential heritage conservation district. The proposed boundary appropriately contains a majority of properties of cultural heritage value, whether buildings, structures and streetscapes, that together, provide a rationale for the designation of this area as a heritage conservation district under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The proposed district boundary (as revised following public consultation and further described in Section 3) is shown below.
Within the proposed district, there are 60 inventoried properties or parcels of land containing 82 buildings or structures with street addresses. Of these 60 inventoried properties:

- 24 are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act;
- 12 are listed in the Town of Oakville’s Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest as non-designated property;
- 11 are considered to be of cultural heritage value and identified through this study inventory; and,
- 13 are considered to be of contemporary construction.

Accordingly, approximately 78% of the properties and 82% of buildings or structures within the proposed district are of cultural heritage value. The proposed district also contains properties and features that do not readily fall into the category of “cultural heritage” and are of more recent origins. It is not unusual to find these features co-existing with cultural heritage resources. Appropriate guidelines in the heritage conservation district plan (if one is prepared) will address the management of these more recent changes in the landscape, especially with respect to matters of urban design and potential streetscape master plans.

In summary, it is concluded that there is merit in proceeding to the second phase of the heritage conservation district study, namely the preparation of a heritage conservation district plan containing guidance on the management of the district’s character and attributes.

If as a result of the heritage assessment report the Town determines that it is feasible to proceed with potential designation then the second phase of work would begin. The second part of the Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District process will be the Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines which provide the basis for the careful management and protection of the area’s heritage character including its buildings, spaces and landscape features. The work prepared in this report will assist in the preparation of the second phase of the project, should it proceed.

**Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines**

If Council determines to proceed with the preparation of the Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines, this heritage assessment report has identified some potential initiatives that will be pursued in this second phase of work. All initiatives will be subject to further public discussion and input from property owners but will include a review of the following matters:

- The heritage conservation district plan will provide detailed guidelines related to the maintenance and repair of existing buildings, as well as guidance related to new construction and sympathetic additions to buildings.

- The heritage conservation district plan will provide guidance for conservation and enhancement of identified landscapes, their character and contributing features. It is anticipated that the guidelines will provide advice to private property owners and public authorities, most notably the Town of Oakville. Within the public realm, guidance will be provided on street tree removal and replanting, maintaining boulevards and other streetscape initiatives, particularly for Lakeshore Road East.
There is potential for future development within the proposed heritage conservation district, and it appears that the zoning by-law permits uses that are generally in keeping with the character of the area. The study team will further review zoning regulations as part of the Heritage Conservation District Plan and may make recommendations to assist with maintaining the character of the proposed heritage conservation district.

Given the predominant height characteristics of the commercial and residential areas, consideration will be given to amending the provisions of the zoning by-law within the District as part of the InZone project to accommodate appropriate building heights or building step-backs within the potential heritage conservation district. As there are a variety of alternatives and not necessarily any single correct answer, this will be more fully discussed and informed by community consultation as part of the Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines.

The heritage conservation district plan will provide clearer direction on a successful strategy of financial incentives through a system of heritage grants.

The Town of Oakville has a well-established system of heritage permit administration and minor changes to process may be provided in the District Plan focusing on any potential enhancements that could lessen processing time or allow for ease of coordination with other municipal processes such as tree preservation by-laws, sign by-laws and site plan control administration, as referenced in Section 2.