



Heritage Action Items

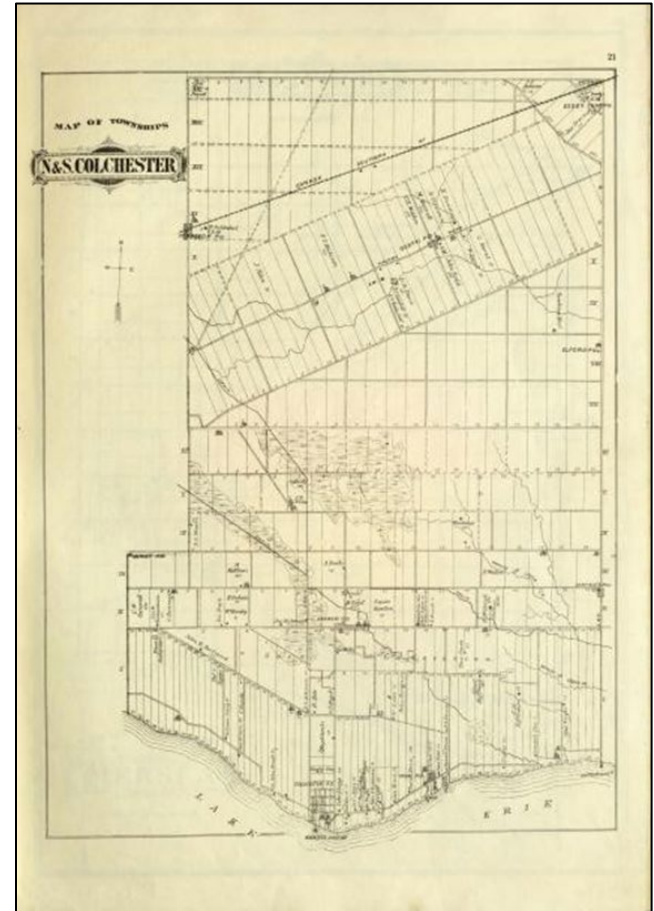
February 2, 2026

Heritage Week

Every year in February, the Town of Essex participates in Heritage Week, alongside other Municipalities across Ontario.

The Town of Essex has been celebrating Heritage Week since 2016 with a new theme each year.

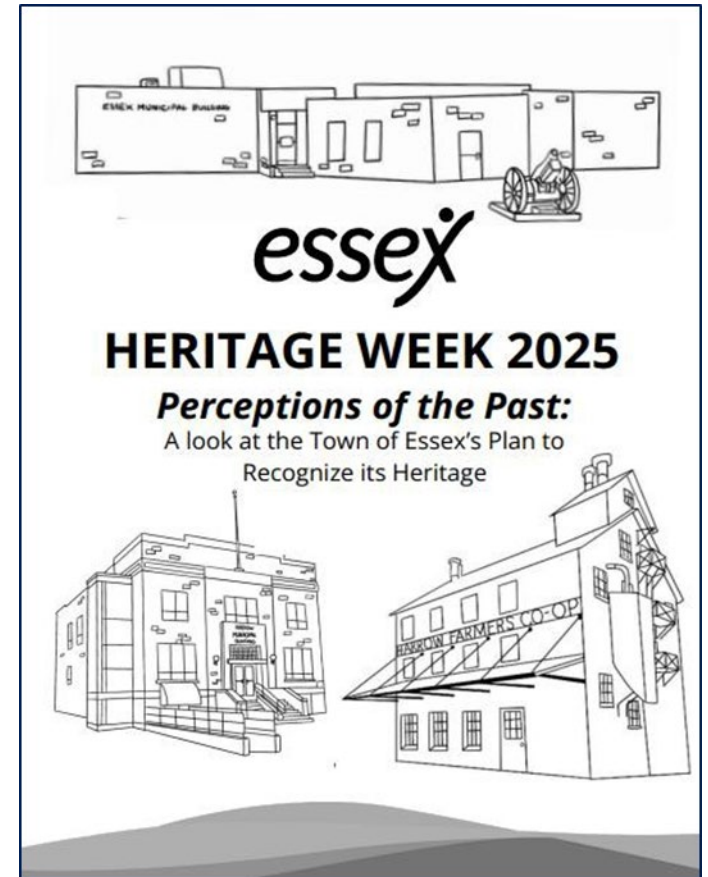
This year (2026) will mark 10 years of celebration!



Public Open House

Last year (2025) during Heritage Week, we engaged with heritage stakeholders, heritage property owners, and members of the public through meetings, information sessions, and Open Houses to discuss:

- The future of Heritage and Cultural Planning
- The strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats facing our Heritage Organizations, and,
- The needs of our Heritage property owners.



Public Feedback

Feedback forms received from members of the Public outlined a desire for:

- Additional Indigenous representation in the Town's history
- Year-long acknowledgment of local history
- More information on historic settlement areas
- Consideration of other areas as Heritage Conservation Districts – such as Downtown Harrow
- Additional funding for heritage organizations and heritage programming in the Town



Feedback from Local Heritage Organizations

Heritage organizations who participated included:

- The Canadian Transportation Museum and Heritage Village (CTMHV)
- Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum (ECSGEM)
- John R. Park Homestead and Conservation Area
- Essex County Historical Research Society
- Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society
- Heritage Essex
- Heritage Colchester
- Caldwell First Nation



The meeting provided a space for an open discussion between the groups and the Town, with the focus being each organization's individual concerns and the ways that the Town can better help each organization

Feedback from Local Heritage Organizations

At this meeting, a SWOT analysis was completed and solutions were proposed.

| Issues | Proposed Solutions |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of Relationship with the Town (CTMHV and ECSGEM)• Organization/Communication Issue between the Organizations• Funding Issues• Operations/Maintenace Issues• Storage Issues (HEIRS, ECHRS, Heritage Essex)• Falling Consumer Base• Lack of Volunteers• Lack of Indigenous Representation in Local Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Town of Essex Heritage Network between the Town and the Heritage Organizations to keep each other updated on items relevant to their work• Designate a Town Liaison for Heritage Organizations• Establish a Heritage Grant for Heritage Organizations to support maintenance Costs• Work alongside Caldwell FN to highlight Indigenous history in this area |

Feedback from Heritage Property Owners

Seventeen (17) heritage property owners attended the meeting.

The meeting promoted discussion between Town of Essex Administration and heritage property owners, looking for feedback on the programs available to them.



Heritage Property Owner Recommendations

- Changes to the existing Heritage Grant Programs
- Removing the limit on how many times a property can receive a heritage grant
- Addition of a Heritage Tax Program
- Addition of an Accessibility Grant for heritage properties
- Additional plaquing efforts made along the Greenway and in each of the settlement areas – former and current
- Revisions to the Property Standards By-Law to encompass the Designated Heritage Properties
- Revisions to their by-laws to clearly identify what is a heritage attribute – some are rather broad
- General information on what you can do as a heritage property owner – types of changes permitted, what designation means, etc.

Proposed Heritage Action Items

Common themes carried through the consultation efforts, therefore resulting in the following proposed Heritage Action Items:

| Action Item | Target Timeframe | Budget Impact, if any |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include more Indigenous related history in our programming, social media posts, and recognitions | Ongoing | To be captured in existing operational budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver more social media posts and programming related to local history year round | Ongoing | To be captured in existing operational budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider additional Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) to designate in Official Plan | In line with New OP or standalone OPA in the future | To be captured in existing capital budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Town of Essex Heritage Network | Complete | Captured in existing operating budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Heritage Grant Program for new grant opportunities | Winter 2026 | Captured in existing operating budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore creation of a Heritage Tax Rebate Program | Spring 2027 | Report to Council to outline impacts |

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|--|------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Amend Property Standards By-Law to include designated heritage properties | Fall 2026-2027 | Captured in existing operating budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop Heritage newsletter for general information on heritage matters | Winter 2026 | Captured in existing operating budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review Designation By-laws to ensure Heritage attributes are better understood | Summer 2026 | Captured in existing operating budget |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan to assist in managing cultural spaces | 2028-2030 | To be captured in a future Capital Budget |

Questions?