

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

August 15, 2006

To: Planning and Transportation Committee
From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Subject: Design Review Panel Pilot Project – Incorporating Public Projects

Purpose:

To report on the public consultation process and recommend implementation of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from this report for 2006. Staff will report on financial implications to the Planning and Transportation Committee in early 2007.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

City Council at its meeting of June 27, 28, 29, 2006 adopted Planning and Transportation Committee Report 4, Clause 4 “Design Review Panel Pilot Project” with amendments. In doing so, Council directed:

“That Deputy City Manager Fareed Amin be requested to submit a report to the Planning and Transportation Committee for its meeting to be held on September 5, 2006, in consultation with Deputy City Manager Sue Corke and the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer Joseph Pennachetti, on project thresholds, procedures and financial implications that will be established to determine the inclusion of municipal projects in the Design Review Panel Pilot Project during the Pilot Period beginning in 2007.”

Comments:

Public projects in the City of Toronto are built and commissioned by fifteen divisions in all three Clusters. Public projects in most cities are the purview of their planning departments and

procedures are therefore standardized. With the exception of a modest Civic Improvements program, City of Toronto Planning Division is not involved in building or commissioning of public projects in order to report on the project thresholds, procedures and financial implications of including public projects in the Design Review Panel Pilot Project, consultation with the following divisions is necessary:

Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
Solid Waste Management
Toronto Water
Facilities & Real Estate
Emergency Medical Services
Affordable Housing Office
Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Social Services
Public Health
Children's Services
Fleet Services
Homes for the Aged
Court Services
Fire Services
Transportation Services

It should be noted that the above divisions have differing procedures for programming, budgeting, purchasing and approvals due to varying division standards and the varied nature of their projects. In addition to differing approvals procedures some divisions or projects are not subject to the Site Plan By-law and do not require Site Plan Approval. Most divisions are subject to the Site Plan By-law which has different project exclusions in the six former municipalities. The harmonization of the Site Plan By-law is underway and is projected that staff will report on it in 2007.

In order to report on the project thresholds, procedures and financial implications of including public projects in the Design Review Panel Pilot Project it is necessary for City Planning to carry out consultation with the other divisions. To facilitate this consultation City Planning has requested division heads to name representatives and an interdivisional work team has been struck. The work team includes representatives from the above divisions, City Planning and the City Beautiful Secretariat. The first meeting of the interdivisional work team took place on August 1, 2006 and further consultation is necessary to gather information for recommendations to the Planning and Transportation Committee. Meetings will take place on a monthly basis until the end of 2006.

Conclusions:

Design Review Panels are used successfully by many cities in Canada and internationally to improve the design quality of buildings and public spaces. City Council (June 27-29, 2006) directed Planning Staff to implement the Design Review Panel Pilot Project which includes procedures for private development. To achieve the goals of the Official Plan and City Council's Beautiful City Initiative, the City should lead by example by including public projects in the pilot

project to determine how they can best benefit from the Panel. Planning staff will continue to consult with the interdivisional work team as outlined above and report back on the results of the consultation to the Planning and Transportation Committee in early 2007.

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