

**Fort York Visitor Centre Design Competition**

<b>Date:</b>	August 26, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Economic Development Committee
<b>From:</b>	Rita Davies, Executive Director, Cultural Services Economic Development, Culture and Tourism
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:/2008/Cluster A/EDCT/ECON DEV/ed0809-037 (AFS #8187)

**SUMMARY**

The Cultural Services Section seeks approval to proceed with a competition for the design and development of a new Visitor Centre at Fort York National Historic Site. The bicentennial of the War of 1812 presents an unprecedented opportunity to fully restore and upgrade Fort York National Historic Site as a City Bicentennial legacy project, the centrepiece of which is the construction of a Visitor Centre (VC).

A two-stage limited design competition will be administered by Cultural Services, under the advice of a Steering Committee and Professional Advisor. The competition will be open to local and international architects and teams with experience working with historic sites such as Fort York.

The winning team will be responsible for undertaking all Phase I 'Preconstruction' components for the Visitor Centre. Subsequent work, including contract administration, and actual construction of the Visitor Centre is contingent upon receipt of funds from other sources, including from other levels of government. Staff will be reporting back once Phase I work is complete, with an update on the Visitor Centre Design, costs, and funding sources for Phase II construction.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The General Manager of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division recommends that:**

1. The process of a limited design competition, including the establishment of a Steering Committee, retention of a Professional Advisor and Selection Committee, issuance of a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) and Request for Proposals (RFP) as outlined in Attachment 1 of this report be adopted;

2. The Executive Director of Cultural Services in consultation with the Fort York Visitor Centre Steering Committee work with the successful architect/design team to undertake all aspects related to the Phase I 'Preconstruction' work;
3. That the Executive Director of Cultural Services report back after Phase I 'Preconstruction' work is complete, with an update on the Visitor Centre design, projected costs, and sources of funding for Phase II 'Construction';

### **Implementation Points**

With the adoption of this report, a Fort York Visitor Centre Steering Committee will be established in the fall of 2008. Membership on this group will ensure key stakeholders are represented in order to provide advice on the design and implementation of the Visitor Centre at Fort York. This committee will be Chaired by the Ward 19 Councillor, and will have membership including but not limited to appropriate staff from Economic Development, Culture, and Tourism; Urban Development Services; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; the Friends of Fort York; the Fort York Management Board; and local community representatives.

A Professional Advisor will be responsible for providing advice on the competition conditions and program and administering the competition as outlined in Attachment 1.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The financial implications resulting from this report are related to the Phase I 'Preconstruction' costs only. The approved 2008 Capital Budget has \$120,000 gross (\$20,000 net) for the project, should there be any costs associated with the competition before January of 2009. The majority of costs will be incurred in 2009 and 2010. The 2009 Capital Budget for the project includes \$917,000 gross and \$250,000 net, and the 2010 Capital Budget for the project includes \$4 million gross and \$1.25 million net. The Pre-construction phase includes the design competition process, design development, and all components required to prepare for construction tender, and will cost approximately \$1 million.

The Capital Budget figures take into account a \$617,000 Federal grant recently approved by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, under the Cultural Spaces Canada Program. This funding will allow for completion of Phase I 'Preconstruction' work.

The Phase II 'Construction' cost of the Fort York Visitor Centre is estimated at \$12.7 million and has been included in EDCT's 10-Year Capital Plan and Forecast (2010 – 2018). The project is planned to be completed in two phases and construction is contingent upon receipt of funds from other sources (other levels of government and private-sector fund raising).

Staff will be reporting back once Phase I work is complete, with an update on the Visitor Centre design, costs, and funding sources for Phase II 'Construction'.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The construction of a Visitor Centre at Fort York National Historic site has been studied for several years.

At its meeting on October 23, 2001, The Toronto and East York Community Council endorsed the Fort York and Garrison Common Parks and Open Space Design and Implementation Plan. The plan set forth the direction for several parks and open space projects within the Fort York area, and identified a preferred location for a new Visitor Centre; <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2001/minutes/committees/to/to011023.pdf>.

At its meeting on December 5, 6 and 7, 2005, City Council adopted a report from the Economic Development and Parks Committee titled 'Fort York: Adding New Buildings'. The Adding New Buildings report, a study published jointly by the Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Management Board, sets out a capital development program for Fort York, including the construction of a new Visitor Reception Centre to coincide with the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The Economic Development and Parks Committee, in endorsing the report, requested the Manager or EDCT to, among other things, provide a detailed critical path showing how new facilities can be completed by the end of 2011 in order to be available for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 ; <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc051205/edp10rpt/cl001.pdf>

City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, adopted a report from The Economic Development and Parks Committee regarding the War of 1812 Bicentennial. The report recommended the establishment of a Bicentennial Steering Committee, and that initiatives outlined in Adding New Buildings and the Fort York Open Space Plan be expedited in order to coincide with the Bicentennial. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/edp6rpt/cl001.pdf>

## **COMMENTS**

The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 presents an unprecedented opportunity to fully restore and upgrade Fort York National Historic Site as a City of Toronto major legacy project. The centrepiece this revitalization will be the construction of a Visitor Centre (VC) at the new entrance to the fort on Fort York Blvd. The need for a Visitor Orientation/Interpretation Centre at Fort York has been identified as a major missing component for well over 25 years. A number of needs can be satisfied with this building, including: a visible point-of-entry to the site; reception, retail sales, food service and other facilities to enhance visitors' experience; orientation to the entire 18-ha National Historic Site; interpretive programs; exhibition space; increased travel trade to the site; a sustained community presence at the site; permanent space for curatorial offices and administrative functions; and opportunities for increased revenues for the site. It will also allow staff to remove modern uses from heritage buildings so they can be returned to a heritage format that is accessible to the public.

### **Phase 1 'Preconstruction':**

## Competition

The first stage of the competition will include a call for Expressions of Interest from eligible professional design firms/teams. The second stage will continue with short-listed teams who will submit schematic designs to illustrate their design approach (these will not be final schematic designs). Proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee/ Jury and Technical Advisory Team. Jury evaluation will be based on criteria in the competition brief and feasibility of each design.

## Design Development

The Pre-construction phase includes the design competition process, design development, related technical studies, required environmental assessments (Federal), and preparation of contract documents. At the end of Phase I, the project will be 'construction ready'. Phase I work will be undertaken using approved capital in 2008, 2009, and 2010, and the funds approved by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to defray part of the costs associated with the Phase I 'Preconstruction' work.

## **Phase 2:**

If funds from other sources have been committed, the project will be tendered for construction as early as possible in 2010, and the building will be complete by December of 2011, in order to allow for exhibit installation and commissioning for a June 2012 opening as the City launches its Commemoration of the War of 1812 Bicentennial program. Staff will report back to Economic Development Committee prior to Phase II 'Construction' work.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Rita Davies, Executive Director, Cultural Services  
Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

## **ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1 – Fort York Visitor Centre Design Competition Process