



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

City Planning Division – Further Information on Studies and Organization

Date:	January 29, 2008
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	pg08005

SUMMARY

This report provides additional information regarding the Planning Division’s work program and organizational structure. The focus is on listing the various planning studies that are currently underway, targeted for 2008 or pending. To fully appreciate the depth and breadth of the Planning Division’s work program and the planning process, this report should be read in conjunction with the Chief Planner and Executive Director’s earlier, more comprehensive report entitled “Response to Request for Information on Work Program and Planning Process” (November 14, 2007).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

The Planning and Growth Management Committee consider the information provided in this report and Attachments “A” and “B” in conjunction with an earlier report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director entitled “Response to Request for Information on Work Program and Planning Process” (November 14, 2007) that was deferred by the Committee at its meeting of November 29, 2007.

Financial Impact

The recommendation of this report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of November 29, 2007 the Planning and Growth Management Committee had before it a report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director entitled “Response to Request for Information on Work Program and Planning Process” and dated November 14, 2007. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-9312.pdf> The Committee deferred this item and further requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director to report back on:

- a) a list of all outstanding
 - Secondary Plans
 - Avenue Studies
 - Heritage Conservation Studies
- b) an organizational chart for the Planning Division

This report is written in response to the above request and supplements the information provided in the earlier November 14, 2007 report.

COMMENTS

Plans & Studies:

Attachment “A” of this report provides a list of the outstanding Secondary Plans, Avenue Studies and Heritage Conservation Studies as requested by the Committee. In addition, Attachment “A” includes two other categories of outstanding studies: Area Studies and Community Improvement Plans. The five study categories presented in Attachment “A” cover the major types of district, neighbourhood or local area studies that the Planning Division undertakes. These studies typically draw upon the Planning Division’s full range of expertise and may involve specialized sub-studies related to the analysis of such matters as built form, environmental assessments, provision of community services and facilities, surveys and asset management. As well, these area studies normally include extensive public consultation. Each of the area study categories can be briefly described as follows:

1. **Secondary Plans** - establish local development policies to guide growth and change in a defined area of the City and are not intended to apply to stable areas of the City where major physical change is not expected or desired. Typically, an implementing zoning by-law is prepared concurrently for new Secondary Plans which are formally adopted as amendments to the Official Plan. Secondary Plans guide the creation of new neighbourhoods and employment districts and are prepared on the basis of comprehensive planning studies and community consultation. As stated in Section 5.2.1 of the Official Plan, Secondary Plans apply to areas with one or more of the following characteristics: large areas of vacant or underutilized land; areas targeted for major public or private investment; areas where the scale of development requires a review of the public infrastructure, including roads and open space.

2. **Area Plans** - are less formal than Secondary Plans and cover a wider range of planning situations. Area Plans may vary in geographic scale from a number of properties to larger districts, and may range in focus from one particular planning issue to a host of local planning concerns. In some instances, an Area Study may be the precursor to undertaking a Secondary Plan exercise. In addition to the input of community planning staff, Area Plans may also call upon the specialized expertise of the Planning Division's functional sections.

3. **Avenue Studies** – re-urbanizing the mixed use, targeted growth areas designated as Avenues on Map 2 of the Official Plan is to be achieved incrementally through the preparation of Avenue Studies for the whole or part of each individual Avenue. It is recognized that no “one size fits all” and a framework of change will be tailored to the situation of each Avenue through a local Avenue Study that will specifically involve local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Avenue Studies involve a comprehensive assessment of local planning conditions and issues and, again, draw upon the full range of the Planning Division's resources. A key output of each Avenue Study is the identification of contextually as-of-right zoning and other regulations designed to achieve high quality development.

4. **Heritage Conservation District Studies** – the Ontario Heritage Act enables a municipality to designate heritage conservation districts where guidelines can be applied to protect and enhance the special character of groups of properties in an area as redevelopment proceeds. However, the Act requires that a study of the area has to be undertaken to justify its designation as a heritage district. Such Heritage Conservation District Studies provide background to the historical, architectural and character-defining features that make the area special and appropriate design guidelines are put forward. Extensive consultation takes place with the community. After the study is completed and the Toronto Preservation Board consulted, City Council may pass a by-law that establishes the Heritage Conservation district and implements the District Plan.

5. **Community Improvement Plans** – are a means of stimulating reinvestment and revitalization, often in local areas that are economically underperforming. By developing a Community Improvement Plan, the City can be an active agent in redevelopment by such means as buying, developing, rehabilitating and selling land and buildings, or by providing grants and loans to support reinvestment or revitalization. A Community Improvement Plan may offer tax relief for contaminated properties that are being cleaned up. Recently, Community Improvement Plans have supported development by providing grants that are based on the increase in property taxes resulting from the improvements.

It should be noted that there are other categories of planning studies of a more functional or city-wide nature which are not listed in Attachment “A”. Notably, the Planning Division is engaged in or preparing to undertake studies related to: various comprehensive, long-range planning initiatives; growth-related implementation studies;

transportation planning; zoning by-law project; the public realm; guidelines; surveys and monitoring. The more important of these studies are listed in Attachments 1, 2 and 3 of the earlier (November 14, 2007) report on the Planning Division's work program and planning process.

Indeed, Attachment "A" and the text of this report relate only to planning studies and by no means capture the full depth and breadth of the Planning Division's work program and its role in the civic administration. For this reason, the information provided in this report should be considered in conjunction with the report on "Response to Request for Information on Work Program and Planning Process" (November 14, 2007) referred to above. This report more fully describes the Planning Division's three main service areas:

- Development Review, Decision and Implementation
- Civic and Community Improvements
- City Building and Policy Development

In reviewing these service areas, it can be seen that studies comprise only a part of the Planning Division's work program and responsibilities. A considerable proportion of planning staff resources is devoted to the day-to-day tasks of dealing with development pressures and other city-building activities. Most aspects of planning work also involve a large public consultation component.

Planning Division Organizational Chart:

Attached to this report, as requested, is an organizational chart for the City Planning Division which shows how staff are structured to deliver the Division's work program. (Attachment "B")

OMB Hours:

In the November 14, 2007 report to Planning and Growth Management Committee information was presented on the number of cases before the Ontario Municipal Board in 2006 and January-September 2007. To illustrate the range and complexity of OMB cases five examples of recent Board appeals were chosen and presented. The cases included a range of hearing types from a one-day committee of adjustment hearing to a six-week defense of the City's Drive through By-law. Information was presented on the amount of Planning staff time spent on these hearings.

Information on the efforts to defend City Positions by other Divisions was also presented. For example the City Legal Division noted that they use a ratio of about 2 days of preparation time for every day of hearing. For 2006 this represents approximately 696 hours of preparation for 348 hearing dates. In total the Legal Division estimates that a total of 1,044 staff days are dedicated to OMB work.

Committee members were seeking information on overall Planning Division staff time allocated to the OMB on an annual basis. Based on information available it is estimated

that Planning staff spend approximately 4 – 5 days of preparation time for every day of hearing. Preparation can involve preparation of the case to be presented at the hearing, the documentation materials, witness statements, witness outlines, experts' meetings, motion affidavits, exhibit production and sometimes mediation as well as negotiation and settlement discussions. During the hearing, additional preparation may be required where the OMB requests the production of materials during the course of the hearing. The preparation varies depending on complexity of the hearing and the issues to be addressed. Based on 2006 hearing dates this would result in approximately 1,392 – 1,740 days of preparation time for 348 hearing dates. In total this represents approximately 1,740 – 2,088 days of planning staff time dedicated to OMB work. This is the equivalent of 6.6 – 8 full-time positions.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment “A” – Studies & Plans
Attachment “B” – City Planning Division Organizational Chart