



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City-wide Interest and Cross-Boundary Issues

Date:	December 13, 2007
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	Pg070085

SUMMARY

Planning and Growth Management Committee at its meeting on May 31, 2007 deferred consideration of the report entitled 'Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City-wide Interest and Cross-Boundary Issues' to enable the Chair and the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning to consult with Committee members to create a solution which protects overall City Planning interests, without unnecessarily removing jurisdiction from Community Councils.

Following consultation with Committee members, Staff has modified the 'Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City-wide Interest and Cross-Boundary Issues' to address the singular concern raised by some Committee members regarding whether Planning and Growth Management Committee or Community Councils would be responsible for dealing with the creation of a new Secondary Plan or amending the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan. The attached guidelines (see Attachment 1) have been revised to reflect recommended changes resulting from these discussions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the guidelines contained in Attachment 1 which set out a process for dealing with City-wide planning matters.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

BACKGROUND

Guidelines for determining city-wide interests in planning matters are not new. In 1998, shortly after amalgamation, Council approved guidelines which have provided direction for these matters for the past 9 years. With the establishment of a new Council, approval of a new Official Plan and a new Committee structure it is important to refresh these guidelines, to ensure they remain current.

In developing these guidelines (as with the previous guidelines) the following principles were considered:

- guidelines should provide clarity in interpretation, yet allow for flexibility in application;
- matters should be considered to be of local interest and be processed through community council unless identified by Council (chief planner) as having a city-wide interest;
- decisions regarding how planning matters are routed through committees of council should be made as early as possible;
- community councils should continue to have some input in planning matters identified to be of city-wide interest; and
- only one committee of council should make recommendations to Council on any given planning matter.

A report dated May 11, 2007 was forwarded to the May 31, 2007 meeting of Planning and Growth Management. The online link to that report is:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-3912.pdf>

That report contains a more detailed history regarding this matter.

COMMENTS

Staff met with interested Committee members and reviewed the guidelines with them. Committee members articulated their support with the majority of the guidelines, although two Committee members had concerns pertaining to which Committee would be responsible for dealing with the creation of new Secondary Plans and/or amending the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan. As originally proposed, the Guidelines identified that the creation of new Secondary Plans and/or changing of Secondary Plan boundaries would be a matter dealt with by Planning and Growth Management Committee. Amendments to lands within Secondary Plans would continue to be matters dealt with by Community Councils.

Following meetings with Committee members, it was suggested that the creation of new Secondary Plans should be dealt with by Community Councils rather than Planning and Growth Management Committee. It was further presented that the creation of a new Secondary Plan was a local matter and that it would be difficult for Councillors from different areas of the City to understand the often subtle complexities of local planning matters.

Official Plan policies state that Secondary Plans are intended to establish local development policies to guide growth and change in a defined area and to stimulate and guide development in keeping with the Plan's objectives. Secondary Plans guide the creation of new neighbourhoods and employment districts while ensuring adequate public infrastructure and environmental protection policies are in place. Secondary Plans will generally be prepared in areas where:

- there are large areas of vacant or underutilized land which would benefit from comprehensive planning; and
- development is occurring, or proposed, at a scale, intensity or character which necessitates reconsideration or reconfiguration of local streets, blocks, public works, open space or other public services or facilities.

With this in mind the creation of a new Secondary Plan or amending the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan should still be considered by Planning and Growth Management Committee. The creation a new Secondary Plan would mean undertaking a study which would have staffing implications for the City Planning Division and may have city wide budgetary implications (i.e. construction of significant infrastructure such as roads and/or community centre).

To address these concerns, Staff recommends the guidelines be revised to indicate that the Request for Direction report that is normally prepared to establish the creation of a new Secondary Plan or amend the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan be initially sent to Planning and Growth Management Committee for direction. Should Planning and Growth Management Committee determine that a study to create a new Secondary Plan is appropriate or that a study to expand the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan is appropriate any subsequent reports, including the Final Report be sent directly to the appropriate Community Council for its consideration and approval.

One exception to the revised approach would be when lands to be added to a Secondary Plan are shown on Map 2 as an Employment District and/or are designated as an Employment Area. The Committee has already determined that any conversion of lands from Employment Districts/Employment Areas have City-wide significance and is to be dealt with by Planning and Growth Management Committee. Therefore, the creation of a new Secondary Plan or amending the boundaries of an existing Secondary Plan that involves an Employment District/Employment Area would remain under consideration by Planning and Growth Management Committee.

No other issues were raised by Committee members and no other changes are proposed to the attached "Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City-wide interest and Cross-Boundary Issues".

Furthermore, at the May 11, 2007 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting Committee designated the Planning and Growth Management Committee as the Committee of Record for any application seeking to re-designate lands designated as Employment Area on the Land Use Maps. The Guidelines have been revised to incorporate this change.

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SIGNATURE

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City Planning Division

ATTACHMENT

Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City Wide Interest and Cross Boundary Issues

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ATTACHMENT

Guidelines for Identifying and Processing Planning Matters of City-wide Interest and Cross-Boundary Issues

Purpose:

These guidelines describe the type of planning matters of City-wide interest and set out a process to route these planning matters primarily through the Planning and Growth Management Committee structure to City Council. The guidelines are rooted in the principle that a planning matter will be considered to be of local interest and will be processed through Community Councils unless identified by the Chief Planner (through these guidelines) as having a City-wide interest.

In general, the majority of development applications will be of local interest and will be processed through Community Councils to City Council for a decision.

In cases where a City-wide interest is identified for a development application, Community Councils may be consulted in accordance with these guidelines.

A. Application

The Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning will apply and interpret these guidelines.

1. The guidelines apply to planning applications which involve:
 - amendments to the Official Plan; and/or
 - combined applications that involve an amendment to the zoning by-law and related applications (e.g., subdivisions) as identified by the Chief Planner;
2. The guidelines also apply to all planning policy and research work including transportation and infrastructure projects; and
3. All administrative matters of the City Planning Division.

B. Guidelines for Determining City-Wide Interests

Planning matters of City-wide interest should meet at least one of the following considerations, (examples are provided for illustration purposes only):

1. Major planning policy and research of interest to the entire City.

Examples include amending structural components of the Official Plan:

- Map 2, Urban Structure

- including amendments to the boundaries of the Employment Districts,
 - initial consideration of amendments involving changes to the boundaries of a Centre Secondary Plan,
 - initial consideration of a major review of a Centre's Secondary Plan,
 - adding new Avenues,
 - amendments to the Green Space System
- Map 3, Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets – including amendments to width of designated streets;
 - Map 4, High Order Transit Corridors – including amendments to expansion elements to a Transit Corridor;
 - Map 5, Surface Transit Priority Network – including amendments to expansion elements to a designated Surface Transit Route;
 - Establishing a comprehensive zoning by-law;
 - Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (i.e. demolition of 'Listed' Heritage Properties);
 - Applications that do not comply with the Provincial Growth Plan
 - Community Improvement Plans with city-wide implications (i.e. Community Improvement Plans involving financial incentives such as Tax Increment Financing);
 - Toronto Heritage Grant Program;
 - City-wide Official Plan or zoning by-law amendments;
 - Harmonized Residential Demolition Control By-law;
 - Household and housing stock issues such as a City-wide condominium conversion policies;
 - Urban Design Guidelines of City-wide application (e.g. Tall Building Design Guidelines, infill townhouse guidelines)
 - Site Plan Control By-law and amendments;
 - Toronto Green Development Standards;

- City-wide issues arising from research and monitoring (i.e. Toronto Office Market Bulletin, Residential Front Yard Parking Standards and Parking Space Dimension Review); and
 - Public Art Incentive Program.
2. Any amendments to lands designated Employment Areas on the Lands Use Maps.
 3. Changes to key infrastructure, transportation, and open space systems and publicly-owned property which would affect the City as a whole, including Environmental Assessments (EA's). Examples include:
 - Waterfront trail expansion;
 - Initial consideration of the creation of new Secondary Plans
 - Pearson Airport transit link;
 - St. Clair streetcar improvements;
 - Union Station Master Plan;
 - Rouge Park; and
 - Don Mills Road Transit Improvements.
 4. A site or area specific planning matter straddling more than one Community Council boundary. An example would include:
 - the O'Connor Avenue Planning Study.
 5. An external government and agency initiative and/or jurisdictional issue affecting the entire City. Examples include:
 - reviews of provincial initiatives such as Places to Grow, Bills 51 and 53;
 - changes to federal legislation;
 - changes to Regional Official Plans; and
 - creation of a GTA Transportation Plan.
 6. A City Planning Division administrative matter. Examples include:
 - changes to applications fees; and
 - service planning.

C. Process

- A. Process for dealing with planning applications to amend the official plan and/or zoning by-law(s):

1. Upon receipt of a complete application:
 - (a) application is circulated as per the established process;
 - (b) the Chief Planner evaluates the application against the Guidelines to determine if a City-wide interest exists. In balancing all the issues associated with the application, if both City-wide and local interests are identified the application is considered to be of City-wide interest; and
 - (c) the Status/Preliminary Report on the application will indicate whether a City-wide interest exists and the recommended routing through the Committee structure to City Council.

2. If a City-wide interest is identified in respect to the application:
 - (a) the Planning and Growth Management Committee is the Committee of Record responsible for convening the Statutory Public Meeting and making recommendations to City Council on the application;
 - (b) a Community Information Meeting will be held prior to the preparation of the Status/Preliminary Report;
 - (c) all Reports including the Status/Preliminary Report and Final Report from staff will be sent to the Planning and Growth Management Committee. Consultation with Community Council(s), if any, will be determined by the Chief Planner; and
 - (d) The Planning and Growth Management Committee will hold the Statutory Public Meeting however, it may consider holding the Statutory Public Meeting in one of the affected communities. The Planning and Growth Management Committee forwards its recommendations to City Council.

- B. Process for dealing with planning policy and research work of the City Planning Division identified to be of City-wide interest:
 - (a) the Planning and Growth Management Committee will be the Committee of Record responsible for convening any public meetings and making recommendations to City Council; and

- (b) reports to City Council will be routed through the Planning and Growth Management Committee, with appropriate consultation with and input from Community Council(s) as determined by the Chief Planner, if any.
- C. Process for dealing with transportation related matters of the City Planning Division for planning matters identified to be of City-wide interest:
 - (a) The Planning and Growth Management Committee will be the Committee of Record responsible for convening public meetings and making recommendations to City Council, except for system wide infrastructure type projects (e.g. Steeles Avenue widening) which may be directed to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee which would then become the Committee of Record. Instances may arise where a joint report would be prepared involving the TTC which would be forwarded to Planning and Growth Management Committee and the Toronto Transit Commission for recommendations to City Council. All reports to City Council will be routed through the Planning and Growth Management Committee or the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee as determined by the Chief Planner.
- D. Process for dealing with City Planning Division administrative matters.
 - (a) For City Planning Division administrative matters to be considered by City Council, the Planning and Growth Management Committee will be the Committee of Record responsible for making recommendations to City Council. Reports to City Council will be routed through the Planning and Growth Management Committee, with appropriate consultation and input from Community Council(s), as determined by the Chief Planner.