



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Design Review Panel Pilot Project – Request for Extension

Date:	May 14, 2009
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	p:\2009\ClusterB\pln\pg090024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request a 4-month extension of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project, including the length of membership term for Panel members. This Project was approved by City Council to operate for a 2-year test period beginning in July 2007. With the end of the test period approaching, staff are seeking Council's approval to continue operating the Panel in its Pilot phase until November 2009. This extension will provide City Planning staff with time required to finalise the monitoring program, to evaluate the results of this program, and to incorporate findings into the overall evaluation of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council extend the two year period of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project, including the length of membership term for Panel members, by a period of four months, to November 2009.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of December 5-7, 2005, City Council directed City Planning staff to consult with key stakeholders on the development of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project. The framework for the Design Review Panel Pilot Project was based on an

analysis of best practices in other jurisdictions which use Design Review Panels. Recommendations arising from this process were approved by City Council (June 27-29, 2006) and the approved procedures are available for viewing at:
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/plt/plt060601/it004.pdf>.

At this same meeting (June 27-29, 2006), City Council provided additional direction for City Planning staff to report on the possible inclusion of municipal projects in the Design Review Panel Pilot Project. At its meeting of April 23-24, 2007, City Council approved the project thresholds and procedures for incorporating municipal projects in the Pilot Project and the 12 members of the Design Review Panel. City Planning staff were requested to report back at the end of the pilot period with recommendations as to whether to continue to incorporate the Panel into the development approvals process.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Design Review Panel Pilot Project is a proposal to test the feasibility of a city-wide Design Review Panel in Toronto by testing review procedures and practices in select 'pilot' areas of the city. The Panel's first meeting was in July 2007. It was proposed that staff would report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the outcome of the Pilot Project at the end of the two-year test period, in July 2009.

COMMENTS

The pilot project integrated monitoring into its structure to assist in the refinement of the Panel's process and ongoing evaluation of its feasibility during the trial period. Central to this evaluation process is the collection and analysis of feedback from process stakeholders including the development industry, design professionals, the public, and various divisions and agencies of the City of Toronto.

To-date, City Planning staff have met with the development industry and the design community, and have conducted a survey of applicants and consultants whose projects were reviewed by the Design Review Panel. Staff have also met with representatives from the following divisions and agencies of the City of Toronto: Tower Renewal, Technical Services, Affordable Housing, Transportation Services, Facilities and Real Estate, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Heritage Preservation Services, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), and Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO).

Consultation meetings are still required to be held with the Community, Build Toronto, and Toronto Water, as well as a follow-up consultation meeting with the development industry. The recommendation within this report will allow the Panel to continue

operating while City Planning staff finalise the monitoring program, evaluate the results of this program, and incorporate these findings into their overall evaluation of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project.

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