

Establishment of a Tower Renewal Donation Reserve

Date:	May 4, 2010
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer
Wards:	All Wards
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to obtain authorization to establish a reserve account to receive donations from the Toronto Community Foundation and other partners to support the objectives of Tower Renewal. The first instance is to receive donations for St. James Town community.

The first donations will be used to develop community building projects in the St. James Town neighbourhood of Toronto. This funding opportunity supports specific goals and objectives of the Tower Renewal pilot project to deliver on building stronger communities including social and cultural benefits. The project is proposed to start in June 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager and the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer recommend that:

1. City Council accept, and authorize the spending of, a maximum donation of \$500,000 from Toronto Community Foundation for the development of community projects known as Recipe for Community in the St. James Town community proposed to begin in June 2010 as outlined in Appendix 1.
2. Appropriate adjustments be made to the 10-year capital plans and operating budgets of the various City programs, through variance reporting, once the project estimates are finalized.

3. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer be authorized to establish a reserve account called the “Tower Renewal Donation Reserve” to receive cash donations to deliver on building stronger communities, including social and cultural benefits.
4. *Municipal Code, Chapter 227* [Reserves and Reserve Funds] be amended by adding the “Tower Renewal Donation Reserve” to Schedule 5 – Donations Reserves.
5. All donations received by the Toronto Community Foundation and other partners for the St. James Community be held in the Tower Renewal Donation Reserve designated for this purpose.
6. The appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto; and that leave be granted for the introduction of any necessary bills in Council to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

This report recommends the creation of a Reserve to support specific goals and objectives of the Tower Renewal project to deliver on building stronger communities. The first project is located in the St. James Town community.

The St. James Town community project will be administered by the City Manager’s Office, through the Tower Renewal pilot project. Specific projects will be carried out by various City Programs, including Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Public Health, Public Realm Office and Toronto Community Housing Corporation to name a few. Once funding is confirmed by project, the 10-year capital plans and 5-year operating plans of the various City Programs will be adjusted accordingly (net \$0) to identify the projects that are ready to move forward. These adjustments will be identified through the capital and operating budget processes and/or quarterly variance reports, as appropriate. It is anticipated that maintenance costs for completed projects will be nominal. No additional programming costs are anticipated.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto has a successful history of working with donating partners to achieve social objectives. The opportunity now exists to work with current and future donors to build on the work presently underway within the City and help achieve the overall objectives of Tower Renewal. The current donation is comprised of multiple investments secured by Toronto Community Foundation (TCF) and the Toronto Office of Partnerships for the Recipe for Community initiative. With more than 400 endowment funds, and assets of over \$220 million, Toronto Community Foundation is one of Canada’s largest charitable foundations. The foundation has focused on community vitality since 1981, when it started connecting donors to community needs and opportunities. TCF helps its individual and family foundations invest in Toronto, making it a strong and resilient place to live, work, learn and grow.

In 2008 the City of Toronto, Toronto Office of Partnerships approached TCF to discuss strategic city building investment opportunities. In 2009 the City and TCF launched Recipe for Community in Alexandra Park. Recipe for Community is a community building investment program led by the Toronto Community Foundation in partnership with the City of Toronto, Toronto Office of Partnerships. This initiative aims to facilitate resident inspired projects that strengthen community belonging and pride, and build skills and capacity. The Recipe for Community model includes four “ingredients”: food, greening, neighbourhood beautification and youth engagement.

The initiative aimed to strengthen community belonging and pride by supporting activities focusing on greening, community gathering, food and nutrition and youth engagement. Some of the outcomes of the project in Alexandra Park included community visioning sessions for the naturalization of green spaces, the creation and display of public art installations, increased access for a resident-based cooking group to a community kitchen at the Alexandra Park Community Centre, strengthened opportunities for community recreation, created and published a book with local recipes, and built relationships with local community partners including the strengthening of a resident-based group called “The Green Space Collective”. Following the successful completion of the Alexandra Park project the Toronto Office of Partnership negotiated for the next Recipe for Community investment to be made in St James Town in partnership with Tower Renewal.

Tower Renewal is a multi-faceted project with a goal to identify the social, economic, environmental, cultural, financial and other benefits in apartment neighbourhoods. Once the pilot project is completed, the rollout of the program is expected to benefit Toronto residents and businesses in helping to achieve a sustainable future that includes a cleaner, healthier environment, stronger communities, greater cultural awareness and activities, and enhanced local economic activity, resulting in a greener, more liveable and prosperous city. The Recipe for Community model will be evaluated as part of the Tower Renewal pilot project and if determined to be successful, this approach will be recommended as part of the roll out of the Tower Renewal program.

COMMENTS

Donations up to \$500,000 are anticipated to be received from the Toronto Community Foundation to support the Recipe for Community project in St. James Town. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a donation reserve to hold the funds until such time as specific projects are confirmed and the various City Program capital and operating budgets can be adjusted. Such a reserve would be called the Tower Renewal Donation Reserve and would have the following criteria:

- (a) **Statement of Purpose:**
To receive cash donations to deliver on building stronger communities, including social and cultural benefits.

- (b) **Service Area or Beneficiary of the Program:**
The City Manager's Office shall have primary responsibility for the reserve account.
- (c) **Contribution Policy:**
Funds from donors will be deposited as received in the reserve.
- (d) **Withdrawal Policy:**
Funds will be withdrawn as part of the capital and operating budget processes.
- (e) **Review Cycle:**
The fund will be reviewed every three years and will be closed when the donated funds are spent.
- (f) **Donation Limit:**
The limit will fluctuate from year to year depending on the level of donations received for any given project.

The project description for Recipe for Community in St. James Town can be found in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

The work of the Toronto Office of Partnerships has shown that donating partners are a critical component in assisting the City to be successful in the implementation of many of its initiatives. The implementation of the Recipe for Community model in St. James Town will be evaluated as part of the Tower Renewal pilot project to determine its replicability as a model for building stronger communities as part of the city-wide implementation strategy for Tower Renewal. If the model is replicable in the future, staff will undertake a process of planned fundraising and donation activity through the annual budget process. The reserve fund provides an opportunity to hold funds until such time as specific projects are confirmed and various City program capital and operating budgets can be adjusted.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT:
Appendix 1: Recipe for Community – St James Town

Appendix 1

Recipe for Community – St James Town

The St. James Town community is one of four pilot site areas part of the Tower Renewal Project. The Recipe for Community Initiative complements the pillars of the Tower Renewal Project through a broad range of benefits which include:

A cleaner and more healthy environment through improved cycling and pedestrian options, greening of public spaces, and urban agriculture.

Stronger communities through enhanced availability of local food and services, safe and enjoyable community interactions, improved green space and outdoor recreational space, and the engagement of tenants in the planning and implementation of the pilot projects.

Greater cultural awareness and activities through a focus on collective and individual heritage, on-site public art, culinary arts, aesthetic qualities of external building and landscape heritage.

Enhanced local economic opportunities through the development of employment skills in areas such as the construction trades and hospitality services, the support for skills building in areas such as bicycle mechanics, and the access to training and resources to foster local entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The *Recipe for Community* program in St James Town will take place throughout 2010 with some activity into spring 2011. The activities will be developed in consultation with relevant City divisions, community organizations and residents of St. James Town.

Tower Renewal Office is working with City Divisions & ABCs including : Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Public Health, Transportation Services (Public Realm Office), Social Development, Finance & Administration, Economic Development & Culture, Toronto Environment Office, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the Toronto Police Service to begin program implementation plans. The Tower Renewal Office will be responsible for the administration of funds and overall project management, facilitation and coordination of all activities including Parks Beautification, Skills Development, Recreational Activities, Small Business Development, and Cooking & Gardening. The Toronto Office of Partnerships will continue to act as the relationship manager with the external public and private sector investors as well as supporting internal divisional partnerships.

Project Initiatives:

Parks Beautification

The Parks Beautification activities will create four connected sites that engage residents and those that work and play in the neighbourhood to experience the vitality, diversity, and strength of the community. Each site will be created in partnership with the children,

youth and adults of the community. The parks spaces will focus on four themes: art, gathering, play, and food.

The four sites being considered include the St. James Town West Park, the green space located behind the Wellesley Community centre and TCHC space located behind the 200 Wellesley Street and 275 Bleecker Street properties.

We note that part of the proposed community beautification project will be established on a portion of an existing recreation property adjacent to the Wellesley Community Centre. This property currently supports only passive use and is comprised of turf and a few small trees. The beautification activities will not prevent any future plans to develop this site.

Skills Development

The Recipe for Community initiative aims to build community skills and capacity. In St. James town skills development and employability skills will focus on food handling certification, landscaping, bike repair mechanics, video and photography, mural installation, and exposure to the trades opportunities including carpentry and building maintenance.

Recreation

The Recipe for Community project will renew a basketball court in the St. James Town neighbourhood into a multi-generational space with accessible recreational activities for all ages including seating areas for family and friends. Other activities include strengthening existing community-led basketball programs, provide access to City-led on-site sports programming, and organize multi-generational community events and gathering opportunities including organized tournaments and events.

Small Business Development

The project will implement a Small Business Skills Development Module for youth and adult newcomers to encourage entrepreneurship and new business start-ups. The topics covered include developing a business plan, securing start-up finances, insurance and liability, marketing and promotions.

Culinary & Food Production

This project will develop community gardening opportunities for residents including organic gardens, raised gardening spaces for residents with mobility challenges, balcony gardens and lamppost gardens.

The project will also explore options for the creation of an outdoor cooking area, improve access to indoor kitchen spaces in the local community centre and elementary school, support existing cooking groups and create new educational opportunities on healthy eating and nutrition.

Documentation and story telling

Similar to the Alexandra Park initiative Recipe for Community St James Town will engage partners in the creation of a book of stories and recipes capturing the strength and vitality of their neighbourhood and the people who live in it.