



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED
Confidential Attachment**

Design Review Panel – Appointment of two new members

Date:	February 17, 2010
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Gary Wright, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards:	All
Reason for Confidential Information:	This report deals with personal matters about identifiable persons.
Reference Number:	Pg10009

SUMMARY

A vacancy on the Design Review Panel was created when a member of the Panel submitted a letter of resignation, citing additional work commitments, to City Planning staff in November 2009. Another opening on the Panel was created when City Council adopted recommendations within a report titled “Design Review Panel: Pilot Project Evaluation and Related Recommendations” (City Council meeting #42, November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009). One component of these related recommendations was the addition of a heritage conservation specialist to the Panel’s composition. The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of the nominated members to fill these vacancies on the Panel and to outline the rotation process for the remaining Panel members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Council approve the recommended new members for the Design Review Panel outlined in Attachment 1 to serve for a period of two years or until their successors are appointed;
2. All remaining Panel members continue to serve on an ongoing basis as outlined within this report, or until their successors are appointed; and

3. Council approve the public release of the confidential information in Attachment 1.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Upon City Council approval, the recommended individuals can serve as members on the Design Review Panel.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council first approved the Design Review Panel as a Pilot Project at its meeting of April 23rd and 24th 2007. City Council approved the Design Review Panel as a permanent component of the development assessment process at its meeting of November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009. Approval included the review of qualified capital projects and private development.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Design Review Panel (DRP) provides professional, objective advice aimed at improving matters of design that affect the public realm, which includes the design of streets, parks, open spaces and buildings. In doing so, the DRP can help raise standards of development, encourage designers to avoid compromising on quality, and help make new development compatible with its surroundings. The process of design review takes place as an additional stream of consultation within the existing framework and timeframe of development review.

Procedures for the DRP were developed through an analysis of best practices and were further refined throughout the course of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project. During this process, the need for a recognized heritage conservation specialist was identified. Creation of this position was endorsed by City Council (November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009). With the addition of the heritage specialist, the Design Review Panel is now comprised of thirteen volunteer design professionals as follows:

- 6 Architects
- 3 Landscape Architects
- 2 Urban Designers (professional planners, architects or landscape architects with expertise in urban design)
- 1 Engineer
- 1 Heritage Conservation Specialist (adjunct member)

A vacancy within the Urban Design category was created when an existing Panel member submitted a letter of resignation to City Planning staff, in November 2009. As noted above, the heritage specialist is a newly created position. All other positions are filled by the original members of the Pilot Project.

Appointment to the Panel is for a 2-year term, or until a successor is appointed. Rotation of remaining DRP members will begin in December 2010, which is one year from when the Panel received its permanent mandate. This process will involve the rotation of three to four members each year, thereby ensuring a good balance of new and existing membership is retained.

COMMENTS

Nomination Process

The nomination process was carried out according to the approved Panel member nomination procedures (City Council, June 2006). These procedures were based on those of other Canadian cities with Design Review Panels, such as Ottawa and Vancouver, and are in keeping with the City's Policy for Citizen Appointments for Program Advisory Bodies.

The 'Call for Members' was advertised by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and the Canadian Association of Heritage Consultants, as well as the Toronto Society of Architects. The professional associations collected expressions of interest and, in their role as regulating bodies, ensured that interested candidates were in good standing before submitting them to the City.

A team of City staff who represent the types of professions on the Panel and who are responsible for the design and building of municipal projects and review of private development, carried out the approved nomination procedures using the criteria described below. The following City Divisions participated in this process:

- City Planning (including Community Planning, Urban Design and Heritage Preservation Services);
- Parks Forestry and Recreation;
- Transportation Services; and
- Facilities Management.

Nomination Criteria

Criteria for Panel nomination includes a minimum of 15-years of relevant professional experience, and membership in a related professional association. All applicants were required to be articulate in discussing design issues related to their profession, possess a solid understanding of the municipal planning system and development economics, be registered members in good standing of their respective professional associations, and possess practical work experience across varying scales of project types, including large scale development. For the Urban Design applicants, an emphasis was placed upon experts with a track record of high quality design and place-making within the public realm. For the Heritage Specialist applicants,

an emphasis was placed upon experts with a track record of high achievement in the application of recognized heritage conservation standards.

Conclusion

The Official Plan recognizes that high quality design of the City's built environment is an important public interest. Good design of buildings, public spaces and their relationships to each other is fundamental to Toronto's economic success, competitive advantage and the quality of life of its citizens. City Council's direction to implement the Design Review Panel as a permanent advisory body recognized the significance of good design in city building. Approval of the nominated Panel members will allow the Design Review Panel to function at full capacity in their role as an advisory body on matters relating to design within the public realm.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Confidential Information
Design Review Panel – Recommended New Members