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2012 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Committee of Adjustment: Applications caseload

Issue/Background:

On December 6, 2011, the Budget Committee requested that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, provide a Briefing Note to their special wrap-up meeting on December 9 and 13, 2011 on:

1. the caseload per staff number ratio for each of the district panels including:
 - a. the number of staff and number of applications and the average number of items on each agenda; and
 - b. the average length of time to get an application reviewed at a hearing from point of application to decision.

Key Points:

- Committee of Adjustment citizen member panels are administered by City Planning staff in 4 districts (based on Community Council boundaries), with a Manager/Deputy Secretary-Treasurer in each office.
- Approved staff complement in all 4 districts is 38:
 - Currently there are 2 vacancies (1 in the North York district and 1 in the Toronto and East York district).
 - processes have commenced to recruit and fill these vacancies.
- Application volumes have been increasing since 2009:
 - 2009: 2,341 applications.
 - 2010: 2,909 applications.
 - 2011 (as of November 30th): 3,035 applications.
 - 2011 (Year-end projection): 3,288 applications.
- Application volumes up 13% from 2010 and 40.5% from 2009.

District	Approved FTEs	Number of applications received			
		January 1-November 30, 2011			Year-end projection
		Minor variance	Consent to sever	Total	Total
Etobicoke York	9	694	68	762	825
North York	11	843	68	911	987
Toronto and East York	12	930	90	1020	1105
Scarborough	6	277	65	342	371
Total	38	2744	291	3035	3288
Percent		90%	10%	100%	

- Except for the Scarborough panel, which meets approximately once a month, the other 3 districts average 2 meetings per month.
- Number of applications heard by all the panels averages 39 per meeting.
- Average wait-time for a hearing is 10 weeks, which is down 10% from a similar assessment completed in September 2011.
- Average wait-times vary across the 4 districts based, in part, on the following:
 - North York and Toronto and East York district offices were impacted by staff turnover and vacancies in early to mid-2011; and
 - delays earlier in 2011 that resulted from additional variances and applications related to overlap between the approved pre-amalgamation zoning by-laws and the proposed City-wide harmonized zoning by-law.

District	Number of Hearing dates (2011)	Average number of applications tabled per meeting (2011)	Number of applications received per FTE ² (2011)	Length of time: Application submission to Hearing/Committee Decision (weeks)
Etobicoke York	22	41	92	5
North York	24	37	90	18
Toronto and East York	25	44 ¹	92	11
Scarborough	12	28	62	7

¹Based on applications received data projected to the year-end.

²Based on projections to the year-end for the number of applications received in 2011.

Next steps:

- New Committee of Adjustment technical-administrative staffing model implemented through the division's Program and Organization Review in mid-2011 to:
 - reduce staff turnover and increase processing capacity by increasing the proportion of Application Technicians; and
 - transfer the planning commenting/reporting role to Community Planning staff.
- Since mid-2011, staffing priority of the division is to fill vacancies in the Committee of Adjustment.
- Additional meetings are being scheduled for the North York panel in early 2012 to reduce the back-log and wait-time.

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