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2016 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Current Backlog of Requested Area Studies and Properties to be Evaluated for Potential Heritage

Issue/Background:

- At its meeting of January 11, 2016, the Budget Committee requested that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division provide a budget briefing note on:
 - (a) The current backlog of requested area studies that includes timeline for completion with current staff levels and potential timeline for completion with increased staff levels; and
 - (b) The current backlog of properties to be evaluated for potential heritage value that includes timeline for completion with current staff levels and potential timeline for completion with increased staff resources.

This briefing note responds to the Budget Committee's request with respect to potential budget impacts for the above planning matters.

A – The Current Backlog of Requested Area Studies
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Key Points:

- Area Studies are part of City Planning's Study Work Program which implements the Official Plan, responds to growth and change, facilitates public investment (transit), supports Corporate priorities (Open Door, Rooming Houses, Schools, Environmental Assessments etc.), and addresses Provincial legislative changes.
- In 2015 City Planning completed 14 area studies and there are currently 28 area studies underway with completions targeted for 2016 with another 34 studies in the preliminary forecast for 2017 and beyond. These studies are being led by City Planning staff with consultant support. It is important to note that area studies are part of City Planning's overall workload, which includes development review and other planning activities. Staff are typically involved in a particular study along with other work assignments.
- In addition to active area studies, City Planning identifies other potential area studies through its work across the city. City Planning also regularly receives area study requests from Council.

- In 2015 City Planning received 9 new area study requests from City Council and its Committees.
- The list of potential area studies, either identified by staff or Council, far exceeds City Planning's capacity in a given year. This is to be expected in a city as large as Toronto with areas experiencing different types of city building interest, activities and investment. To effectively manage an active multi-year study work program requires prioritization of the various potential area studies. Accordingly, in any given year study initiatives are advanced that meet a series of criteria directly tied to implementing the Official Plan.
- From a Budget Service Level perspective, area studies are captured in City Planning's Service Level for City Building Studies, which also includes Secondary Plan/Avenue Studies, Environmental Assessments and Transportation Studies.
- Through the annual budget process City Council approves Services Levels and provides funding to support service delivery. For City Building Studies, the approved Service Level is 18 studies per year. In 2015 City Planning met this Service Level by completing 20 City Building Studies.
- An increase in the Service Level for City Building Studies would require additional resources to deliver the enhanced service. Through the 2014 Budget approval process City Council increased the Service Level for City Building Studies from 13 to 18 studies per annum with a corresponding increase in staff resources of 5 full-time positions representing an additional operating impact of \$0.594 million. The Division's capital budget was also increased by \$0.250 million to help deliver the new Service Level. A comparable Service Level increase of 5 additional studies (from 18 to 23) per year would represent approximately \$0.641 million in additional funding for 5 fulltime staff in the 2016 Operating Budget. Multi-year adjustments to the capital budget would also have to be factored in if Council decided to enhance the Service Level for City Building studies.

Questions & Answers:

- **What is the Service Level for area studies to be completed each year by City Planning?**
 - Area studies form part of City Planning's Service Level for City Building Studies. The Council-approved Service Level is 18, which City Planning meets. City Planning balances the need to meet its Service Level with advancing its overall work program, including development review and addressing Council priorities
- **How long do studies take and how does City Planning staff area studies?**
 - Major, multi-phase projects require a 2-3 year timeframe to complete. Other studies take between 18 – 24 months. Staff resources for studies varies depending on the complexity and the availability of consulting resources. Additional studies can be undertaken if

additional staff resources are made available, this would include planning, urban design, graphic, research and transportation expertise.

- **Can the City hire more consultants to deliver area studies?**

- City Planning studies already involve consultant teams and the intent is to continue this practice. Staff project manage and ensure that deliverables meet the quality expectations of senior management and Council. Hiring additional consultants would require additional staffing for project management and delivery.

- **When does City Planning report in its Study Work Program?**

- City Planning reports on its Study Work Program to Planning and Growth Management Committee on bi-annual basis with the next report scheduled for the Committee's February 2016 meeting. The first report was adopted by Committee at its October 2015 meeting.

B – The Current Backlog of Properties to be Evaluated for Potential Heritage Value

Key Points:

- The City maintains a register of properties with cultural heritage value in accordance with the Official Plan and the Ontario Heritage Act
- Individual properties are evaluated under provincially regulated criteria that consider design, associative/historic and contextual values
- Currently, two heritage planner FTEs, under the supervision of a Program Manager, are dedicated to researching, evaluating and reporting on properties with potential heritage value
- Properties to be evaluated come from a variety of sources, including identification through planning studies and heritage surveys, requests from ward councillors, nominations from members of the public/preservation panels and through development review. Issues arising such as TDSB school sales and TCHC sale of heritage properties have also added significantly to the list of properties pending evaluation
- In 2015, 82% of all staff reports related to adding properties to the heritage register and/or designating properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, came through the development review process, with the remaining 18% associated with a planning study or councillor/public requests
- The total number of properties waiting to be evaluated as of December 31, 2015 is 560, broken out as follows:

Council Requests	Public/Panel	Planning Studies	TDSB	TCHC
238	105	148	60	9

- 1 FTE can research, evaluate and report on 3-4 potential heritage properties per reporting cycle (on average 25 per year)
- Current staff complement is not sufficient to address any of the outstanding evaluations
- It is estimated that at least 100 new property evaluations will be needed yearly
- With the addition of 2 new FTEs it would take 10 years to complete 2010-2015 requests. New requests would not be addressed.
- With the addition of 4 new FTEs it would take 10 years to complete 2010-2015 requests and 50 new evaluations could be prioritized each year where urgent.

Questions & Answers:

- How does staff currently monitor and prioritize what to evaluate?

All requests are logged in a database and staff prioritize listing and designation reports on a monthly basis.

First priority is given to properties undergoing active redevelopment and/or properties at risk of demolition. Properties undergoing redevelopment have fixed timelines related to planning applications such as Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan Control and Minor Variance applications. The Ontario Heritage Act requires that municipal councils designate a listed property within 60 days of receiving an application to demolish it, should council wish to stop the demolition.

- Didn't City Planning add an additional FTE in 2013 to help address outstanding and on-going evaluations?

Yes. However, increased heritage-related development activity has absorbed all of the new FTE's time over the past two years and very few requests from previous years have been addressed.

- Is it possible to finish the City's heritage register?

No. The register is a living document that grows over time as planning studies are done and as ideas about cultural heritage value evolve.

- Do you expect the number of requested/required evaluations to continue to rise?

Yes, heritage surveys need to be completed within planning studies in order to implement the City's Official Plan. Community engagement at a local level has increased across the City, resulting in a larger number of nominations/Council requests.

- Why do individual evaluations have to be done for each property? Why can't you just add addresses to the heritage register?

The Official Plan requires that candidate properties for the heritage register be evaluated using provincial criteria. Properties on the register are subject to all heritage policies in the Official Plan and therefore must have demonstrated significance. The identification of heritage values and attributes for register properties guides development review and implements the Planning Act and Provincial Policy Statement.

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