

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Chair and Members of the Planning and Growth Management Committee

RE: By-law to Require and Govern the Construction of Green Roofs in Toronto

Discussion:

As you are aware, I have been effectively the Council Lead on matters relating to Green Roofs in the City of Toronto over the past five years. As such, I have had ongoing discussions with the many members of the community who are overwhelmingly strong supporters of City of Toronto's leadership of Green Roofs, a role that brings countless and well-proven benefits to our City directly, as well as to other municipalities that emulate Toronto's environmental initiatives.

The report "By-law to Require and Govern the Construction of Green Roofs in Toronto", dated March 25, 2009, can be a major step towards strengthening Toronto as an innovative environmental leader. The report proposes a By-law that will require Green Roofs on new buildings and establish construction standards for them. In order to do so, a series of recommendations are before the Committee.

I am recommending that you consider and approve the following changes to the proposed Green Roof By-law:

- 1) **That Schools not be exempt from the Green Roof By-law.** Schools are funded by the Provincial order of government. To exclude schools is to effectively state that the City of Toronto believes that the Provincial Government should be exempt. Furthermore, the school experience informs our young people who are our future citizens. If we want to change the world, let us ask ourselves: "What lessons are we teaching young people by exempting new schools?"
- 2) **That non-profit housing not be exempt from the Green Roof By-law.** Once again, non-profit housing is generally funded by other orders of government. To exclude non-profit housing is to inappropriately state that other orders of government should be exempt. Is the City of Toronto asserting that those who live in non-profit housing do not deserve the numerous benefits of Green Roofs?
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- 3) **That industrial areas not be completely exempt from the Green Roof By-law.** The Urban Heat Island Effect is at its worst in industrial areas and, furthermore, industrial areas are

adjacent to ravines and parks where flora and fauna will benefit from habitat creation. One way of supporting industrial development, as noted in the report, but at the same time achieving an environmental goal is to limit the size of the required green roof to 10 per cent of the available roof space or 2,000 m², whichever is less.

- 4) **That the graduated Gross Floor Area (GFA) and height thresholds be lowered.** The proposed by-law suggests a GFA and height that is too high -- GFA of 5,000 m for all new non-residential development and height equal or greater than 23 m for all new residential development. If left unchanged, these provisions will effectively exempt developments on Toronto's main streets from installing green roofs. Why not require developments with a GFA between 2,000 and 4,999 m² and residential developments over a height of 10 m² to construct green roofs?
- 5) **That the January 31, 2010 implementation date to be advanced to December 1, 2009.** As the by-law cannot be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board and as Toronto Council will consider the report at their May 25 and 26, 2009 meeting, six months is an adequate amount of time for the industry to take the necessary steps to adapt to a new bylaw.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to this important issue.

Recommendations:

- 1) That Report be amended to include that:
 - a) The By-law exemption be removed for Separate and Public Schools.
 - b) The By-law exemption be removed for non-profit housing.
 - c) The By-law exemption be removed for industrial areas and, instead, set at a minimum of 10 percent of the GFA or 2,000 m², whichever is less.
 - d) The By-law coverage and threshold be amended to include new developments of a GFA between 2,000 and 4,999 m² and new residential developments over a height of 10 m², which would be required to provide a minimum coverage of 20 %, and that
 - e) The By-law will come into effect on December 1, 2009.

Sincerely,

Joe Pantalone
Deputy Mayor
City of Toronto