
2013 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

City Planning Division – Operating Budget

Issue/Background:

- At its meeting of December 4, 2012, the Budget Committee requested that staff prepare a briefing note describing the budget impacts of providing adequate staff on the following planning matters:
 - (a) have robust planning reviews of Employment Lands Conversion requests;
 - (b) comment on all Committee of Adjustment applications which have large Zoning or Policy implications;
 - (c) conduct planning studies in a more timely fashion; and
 - (d) clear the backlog of heritage study requests.

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

A - Have robust planning reviews of Employment Lands Conversion requests

Key Points:

- The City has commenced its statutory Five Year Review of the Official Plan. The review of employment lands is a mandatory requirement under the Planning Act.
- Under the Provincial planning framework the comprehensive review of the Official Plan is the only time that employment lands may be converted to non-employment uses providing an opportunity for land owners to request the redesignation of their lands to non-employment uses.
- As of December 10, 2012, the City Planning Division had received 107 requests and/or applications to convert employment lands, the majority of which are for residential purposes. These requests/applications will continue to be received until the statutory meeting dealing with Official Plan employment land policies and designations expected later in 2013. The

conversion requests/applications cover every Employment Area of the city, with the exception of Tapscott/Milliken and Airport Corporate Centre.

- The review of each conversion request requires the due diligence work of a City Planning team (Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis and staff in the districts) in consultation with Economic Development and Culture Division to evaluate and prepare a defensible recommendation for Committee and Council's consideration.
- Amendments resulting from the Five Year Review of the Official Plan require approval from the Province's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- Following the Minister's decision on the employment policies and land use designations amendment, those who have submitted conversion requests may appeal the Minister's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. At that time, City Planning will assess its staffing and resources to ensure appropriate defence of the City's position in any Ontario Municipal hearings anticipated in 2014.
- City Planning is aggressively moving forward to fill current vacancies which will improve the Division's capacity in terms of its review of the Employment Lands conversions. The Division is also exploring outside resources to assist with the work program.
- Given the current rate of submissions of conversion requests, the resources of the Official Plan team will be dedicated primarily to the evaluation of the ongoing submission of conversion requests and will be challenged to advance other areas of the Official Plan Review in 2013.

Questions & Answers:

Is there an opportunity for cost recovery in the consideration of the conversion requests?

- There is no requirement to submit an application in order to have lands considered for conversion under the Provincial framework.

Should a fee be charged for the conversion requests?

- There is no current framework for cost recovery of the review of requests for conversion.

Will staff be able to sustain a robust review of the conversion requests and still maintain the timeline on the reporting out on the Review?

- City Planning continues to monitor its Official Plan Review work program. At this time the Division anticipates maintaining the schedule for statutory components (e.g. employment lands, heritage, transportation) of the Review.

B - Comment on all Committee of Adjustment applications which have large Zoning or Policy implications

Key Points:

- In 2011, the Committee of Adjustment received 3321 applications (2999 minor variance and 322 consent); similar numbers are expected for 2012.
- Based on a past analysis on the types of minor variance applications submitted, the majority of applications relate to variances of performance standards (e.g. side-yard setbacks, floor area) associated with residential dwellings or low-rise additions.
- Based on a recent sample survey, it is expected that approximately 525 City Planning staff reports or letters will be submitted to the Committee of Adjustment in 2012, which translate into a report/letter on approximately 18% of the agenda items.
- Currently, Committee of Adjustment applications and agendas are reviewed by assigned Community Planning staff to assess when a report/letter to the Committee is recommended, including when a concurrent Site Plan Approval application is in progress, or where the application is in a Heritage Conservation District, or when significant zoning and/or policy implications have been identified.
- Provided vacancy rates are minimized, in particular, at the Assistant Planner level in Community Planning, the Division has the capacity under its current staffing organization model to provide the necessary comments to the Committee of Adjustment on applications that have larger zoning or policy implications.

Questions & Answers:

What is the breakdown of Committee of Adjustment applications received, by district?

- In 2011:
 - Toronto and East York: 1110 (33%)
 - North York: 1014 (31%)
 - Etobicoke York: 822 (25%)
 - Scarborough: 375 (11%)

How does Community Planning review Committee of Adjustment agendas?

- In each district, Community Planning is circulated Committee of Adjustment applications. Community Planning staff review the application. Where an application warrants input from Community Planning, staff will prepare a report/letter for submission to the Committee of Adjustment Panel for its consideration. Report recommendations could include approval with conditions, deferral or refusal.

C - Conduct planning studies in a more timely fashion
--

Key Points:

- City Planning regularly receives new study requests from Council that results in a need to continually prioritize and re-prioritize the list of planning study requests.
- The Division is undertaking an analysis of previously requested studies to determine if some can be addressed through broader studies underway such as the Official Plan Review.
- In 2012 the Division re-aligned existing resources to establish a Strategic Initiatives section within the Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis unit. The section is responsible for enhancing the Division's ability to deliver planning studies.
- The Division's 2014 Outlook includes enhance funding for capital budget growth-related studies over three years coupled with a staff complement request of five positions, starting in 2014. These additional resources will improve study completion dates.
- City Planning is also aggressively filling vacancies which will enable the Division to undertake some of the requested studies, which have not presently been allocated staff resources.
- In addition, City Planning is considering increased opportunities to advance studies by utilizing outside resources for all or a portion of a study, enabling staff to manage the study and provide direction.

Questions & Answers:

How many new staff are anticipated to be requested in 2014 to the new Strategic Initiatives Section?

- As noted in the Division's 2014 Operating Budget Outlook, five full-time employees will be requested for consideration in the 2014 Operating Budget.

Does this mean that studies will not be initiated or advanced until following the 2014 budget?

- No. The filling of vacancies in 2013 will enable the Division to build its capacity and to allocate staff to undertake some of the studies that have not been finished or commenced.

D - Clear the backlog of heritage study requests

Key Points:

- In accordance with the Council-approved framework, City Planning staff are undertaking five high priority HCD studies and plans in King/Spadina, Garden District, Queen Street East, Yonge Street and St. Lawrence areas commencing early 2013.
- Three other funded areas were prioritized and identified as medium priorities by Council. They are Casa Loma, Summerhill and Weston Phase 2 areas. These areas will be scheduled for study following the significant completion of at least one of the five high priority HCDs. At the earliest one of these three studies could be initiated in 2014.
- In addition, there are five authorized HCD areas without funding: Agincourt, Balmy Beach, Liberty Village, West Queen West and the Toronto Islands areas. As these studies do not have secured funding, funding sources would need to be identified in order for the Division to deliver these studies.
- Interest in HCDs is growing with Council's adoption of HCD policies. Area associations or local councillors currently interested in or preparing nominations include Bloor Street West, Lawrence Park, Leaside, West Toronto Junction, Corktown, Kensington Market, Harbord Village, Annex West and two areas in the Beach. These are not considered to be part of the backlog given that they are not yet authorized by Council.

Questions & Answers:

How many City staff are required to address the Council-approved priority HCD studies?

- A maximum of 3-4 study areas can be managed by a single staff person, depending on size and complexity of the study/plan. The Division can accommodate the five high priority HCD studies with its current staff complement. To concurrently address the three medium priority funded HCD areas, an additional FTE position (Preservation Officer) would be required.

What is the cost of each study?

- It is estimated that \$50,000 to \$150,000 will be required for each area, depending on the nature of the area.

What are the resources needed to clear out the five unfunded areas already authorized for study?

- The effect of clearing the five unfunded areas authorized for study could range from \$250,000 to \$750,000 in consultant fees coupled with two additional FTE positions (Preservation Officers).
- Currently, the only revenue tool being utilized by the City for undertaking HCD studies is derived from S.37 funding. None of the unfunded areas has S.37 funds allocated for that purpose.

Can the private sector fulfill HCD study requirements?

- The study and planning of HCDs is already largely undertaken by the private sector and the intent is to continue this practice. Staff project manage and ensure that deliverables meet the quality expectations of senior management and Council.

Are there any other City Planning Division resources required during HCD studies?

- Staff technical advisory teams are created to support HCD studies and plans and they include community planners and urban designers. Representation on a multitude of concurrent studies would need to be addressed.

What is the on-going work and staff requirement once an HCD is in place?

- Each HCD also creates increased staff requirements to process heritage permits once plans are adopted. In general, it is estimated that for every 3-4 new HCDs added to the inventory an additional FTE preservation officer or assistant may be required to review permits and development applications. The number of properties and area type (commercial/residential) are key factors in forecasting required staffing.
- In the 2013 Recommended Operating Budget, the Division has identified an additional Preservation Officer position. This will help to address the current backlog with respect to listings and designations.

Prepared by:

Allen Appleby, Director, Community Planning, City Planning, 416-395-7170, aappleby@toronto.ca
Corwin Cambray, Acting Program Manager, Office of the Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning, 416-392-7566, ccambra@toronto.ca

Further information:

Item A (Employment Lands)

Kerri Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning, 416-392-8148, kvoumva@toronto.ca

Item B (CofA)

Michael Mizzi, Acting Director, Community Planning & Special Projects, City Planning, 416-338-0429, mmizzi@toronto.ca

Item C (Planning Studies)

Kerri Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning, 416-392-8148, kvoumva@toronto.ca

Item D (Heritage Studies)

Mary MacDonald, Acting Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, Urban Design, City Planning, 416-338-1079, mmacdon7@toronto.ca

Date: December 10, 2012