



February 26, 2015

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Attn: Jennifer Forkes, Executive Committee Clerk - Email: exc@toronto.ca

Re: EX3.4 2015 Capital and Operating Budgets – City Planning

Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee Members:

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations requests that the Executive Committee **not** approve the Budget Committee's proposals for budget reductions to City Planning. We recommend that the Executive Committee: 1) reinstate the capital and operating funds required for these important city planning functions; and 2) support the reinstatement of the Ontario Municipal Board solicitor in Legal Services.

I. We are writing **in opposition to** the proposed budget reductions regarding staffing and capital funds for Heritage Conservation Districts (HDC), and staffing for area and strategic policy planning, as recommended by the Budget Committee, specifically item 1, a and c:

The 2015 Staff Recommended Operating Budget for City Planning would be reduced by \$0.525 million gross and net and 8.0 positions to reflect the deletion of new positions planned to enhance Area Studies; Heritage Conservation District Plans / Studies; and the Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis group.

The City Planning 2015 – 2024 Capital Budget and Plan would be reduced by \$5.0 million gross and \$4.635 million in debt funding over the 10-year period, reflecting an annual decrease of \$0.5 million to the Heritage Conservation District Studies capital project (from \$1.0 million per year to \$0.5 million per year).

Four (of the eight) positions to be deleted are for development review and building permit review related to heritage properties. There are over 1600 new properties coming onto the Inventory of Heritage Properties (IHP) over the next 12-18 months from HCD currently under study. Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) is still at pre-amalgamation "staff to inventory ratio" levels, meaning the IHP has doubled but permit staff number has remained the same.

This capital budget reduction would mean that instead of starting three new HCD studies in 2015 and five new ones in 2016, only three new studies would be started in each of 2016 and 2017. With 16 nominated HCD areas, and more being worked on by community groups, it would take much longer to address the public interest in area-based heritage protection.

The four positions in the Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis group in City Planning are for area and City-wide studies. These studies are required to allow Toronto to undertake pro-active planning in an effort to get ahead of the ongoing development review and are imperative, especially in areas facing severe development pressures.

We believe that it is inappropriate and most unfortunate, that this proposed budget reduction is just as City Planning brings forward for approval its HCD Study Prioritization Report. Such a multi-year planned approach represents an example to be emulated, and perhaps rewarded with budget enhancement, not crushed by budget reduction.

II. We are writing **in support** of the Budget Committee's proposal to reinstate \$160,000 in the Legal Services budget for a solicitor position that supports and attends Ontario Municipal Board hearings, which was not included in the staff recommended 2015 Operating Budget. The loss of this position (and approval of the associated policy change) would mean that City Council would be unable to defend or appeal (depending on the circumstances) a decision of its Committees of Adjustment. As a result, it would be highly detrimental to the residents and resident associations of our City, and ultimately to the stability and character of our neighbourhoods.

In summary, we request that the Executive Committee **not approve** the Budget Committee's proposals for budget reductions in City Planning. Please reinstate the capital and operating funds required for these important city planning functions. The long-term public interest in good planning for our City demands as much. Also, we recommend that the Executive Committee **support** the reinstatement of the Ontario Municipal Board solicitor in Legal Services.

Yours truly,

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Cc: Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner and Executive Director
Toronto City Councillors
FoNTRA Representatives & Other Interested Individuals

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of 32 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The 32 residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.