



Huron Sussex Residents Organization

February 27, 2015

Executive Committee, City of Toronto

Re: Amendments to the 2015 Operating Budget & 2016-2024 Capital Plan

On behalf of the Huron-Sussex Residents Organization (HSRO), I am writing to urge the Executive Committee to retain the current funding levels for Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) Prioritization, as well as the funding levels for the same program originally recommended in the 2015 Operating Budget.

The HSRO is strongly committed to heritage preservation of Toronto neighbourhoods, and believe that the proposed 8 positions singled out for deletion in City Planning are unwise, illogical and detrimental to both heritage preservation and city planning.

Cutting planning positions (especially positions meant to conduct heritage and other planning studies) doesn't make any sense when:

- 1) there are over 1,600 new properties coming onto the inventory with the next year or so (from HCD projects currently under study), and HPS is still at pre-amalgamation 'staff to inventory ratio' levels. While inventory has doubled, permit staff has remained the same.
- 2) With increasing pressure for development, particularly in Ward 20, the budget reduction would mean that the Kensington HCD will not be started for at least another year, and the Annex and Harbord Village studies will be pushed back for several years.
- 3) HCD plans are binding on development projects seeking zoning and planning approvals from Council (or on appeal to the OMB). Thus, if we want heritage to be considered, we first need to have the policies in place and we need sufficient staff to develop those policies.

These funding decreases are being proposed at a time when the City has been criticized for a lack of broad vision and an inability to implement new programs when it comes to planning. If Toronto really wants to be a world class city, it needs to take seriously its heritage resources. Consider, for example, HistoricPlacesLA. This new initiative co-sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, normally considered an example of bad planning/suburban sprawl, provides an integrated, searchable database on city-wide historic resources.

Sincerely,

Julie Mathien, President.
Huron-Sussex Residents Organization

"Citizen politics, unlike party politics, does not seek to change government, but to improve it by watchfulness, oversight and advice."

Benjamin Franklin