

Authorization to Release Section 37 to Heritage Toronto for Streetscape Improvements

Moved by: Councillor

Amber Morley

Seconded by: Councillor

Jamaal Myers

SUMMARY:

In 1976, construction workers discovered a large set of antlers and a portion of a skull while excavating Islington subway station. The specimen was eventually identified and classified as a new prehistoric species, *Torontoceros hypogaeus* — meaning “horned Toronto deer from underground”. It was lovingly given the nickname Toronto Subway Deer.

This creature would have walked with mammoths during the last ice age about 11,300 years ago. As the climate warmed, its habitat disappeared, and eventually the species went extinct.

The antlers discovered at Islington station are currently the only known evidence of this species of prehistoric deer. As of September 2025, new DNA technology has confirmed the subway deer is most closely related to mule deer and white-tailed deer. Originally, the antlers' shape led scientists to believe it was part of the caribou family.

The Subway Deer antlers are currently on display at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). This specimen is a tangible connection to the days when giants roamed the earth.

The plaque will be placed at Islington station near the site of the antlers' discovery

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. City Council increase the 2026 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto on a one-time basis by \$10,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained in the development at 2 Fieldway Road (Source Account: XR3026-3700445), secured for streetscape improvements, for the production and installation of a heritage plaque in the vicinity of Islington station recognizing the Toronto Subway Deer (Cost Centre: HG0001).

Date March 25, 2026