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DATE: August 13, 2002

TO: Chairman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Thomas S. Mokrzycki, Commissioner of Planning and Building

SUBJECT: **City of Toronto Draft Official Plan**
MEETING DATE: September 3, 2002

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Department

BACKGROUND: This report is part of an ongoing program to update City Council on the significant planning initiatives in adjacent municipalities.

On January 1, 1998, the City of Toronto, containing 2.4 million people covering 620 square kilometres (239 square miles), came into existence. One of the first acts of the new Toronto City Council was to initiate an Official Plan Review to replace the existing seven inherited Official Plans. In March, 1999, Toronto City Council adopted a framework to guide the creation of a new Toronto Plan.

In September, 2000, the City of Toronto released a consultation document titled *"Toronto Plan - Directions Report - Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping Our Future"*. It summarizes the opinions received from numerous open houses, letters, e-mails and faxes and extensive research carried out by a team of consultants and staff to date pertaining to the state of the City. Mississauga staff commented on the "Directors Report" in a corporate report dated October 31, 2000 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building.

In June, 2002 the new Draft Official Plan for the City of Toronto was released for public, government and agency review. It focuses on the integration of land use, transportation and quality of place as key themes. It will replace the seven current Official Plans that the City of Toronto inherited when seven former municipalities were amalgamated to form the new City of Toronto on January 1, 1998.

Attached as Exhibit 1 is a summary of the Draft Official Plan; a copy of the entire Plan may be viewed in the Planning and Building Department.

COMMENTS:**1.0 Plan Overview**

What kind of City will Toronto be in the 21st century? The Draft Official Plan sets out the choices to address this question. It is directed at fundamental social, environmental and economic choices to meet the needs of today and those of future generations. It is directed at preserving and strengthening the character of the City's neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces - which comprise 75% of Toronto, and directing growth to the remaining 25%; areas like the downtown and main roads. It is based on four core principles:

- diversity and opportunity;
- beauty;
- connectivity; and
- leadership and stewardship.

The Plan recognizes that : *"Toronto's future is one of growth, of rebuilding, of reurbanizing and of regenerating the City within an existing urban structure that is not easy to change ."* It identifies that population growth is needed to support economic growth and social development within the City and to contribute to a better future for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

According to the Draft Plan, the GTA is forecast to grow by 2.7

million residents and 1.8 million jobs by 2031. The forecast allocates to Toronto 20% of the increase in population (537, 000 additional residents) and 30% of the employment growth (544,000 additional jobs). Over the past 30 years, Toronto captured 23% of the GTA population growth while accommodating 35% of the GTA wide employment growth. The Plan recognizes that accommodating a large share of the GTA growth in Toronto will mean a more liveable and sustainable urban region. More people and jobs in Toronto will reduce urban sprawl, protect natural areas, and reduce air pollution by development patterns which better support public transit.

The Plan identifies that the way growth and change is managed in Toronto must mesh with that of its neighbours because they are linked in many ways:

- all are part of a dynamic regional economy;
- traffic doesn't stop at borders;
- watersheds are shared as part of a larger biophysical region; and
- the housing market, social needs, and shopping does not recognise municipal boundaries.

A key principle of the Draft Official Plan is to direct major growth to transit accessible locations that can best accommodate it. These areas are :

- **downtown** - the Plan gives priority to improving transit access and providing for housing development;
- **centres** -the Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and Yonge-Eglinton Centres, are places with excellent transit where mixed use development will be concentrated, as determined by a detailed Secondary Plan;
- **avenues** - major streets, where new housing and employment will gradually be developed to perform a main street role;
- **employment districts** - are protected from non-

economic functions to accommodate the forecast substantial growth in jobs;

- **neighbourhoods** - will benefit from the Plan's policy of directing growth to the Centres and Avenues as well as policies to ensure that any physical change will respect the existing physical character of the area; and
- **greenspace system and waterfront**- will be protected, improved, and added to.

The Draft Official Plan contains strategic policies to guide decision-making based on the Plan's goals for the built, human, natural and economic environment.

The built environment is addressed through specific urban design policies for the public realm (streets, plazas, parks, and public spaces), tall buildings, public art, and heritage resources.

The Plan is based on the notion that strong communities are the foundation of a healthy City. The human environment is addressed by policies which focus on housing, community services, the development of new neighbourhoods, and the natural environment.

The plan contains policies directed at the provision of adequate, affordable and appropriate housing to provide a diverse range of housing need. It contains policies which address the need to control the loss of existing housing, as well as to encourage the construction of new affordable housing

With respect to the natural environment, the Draft Official Plan identifies sustainable development including the protection of natural areas and features as an important principle for a successful city. It also recognizes that the City is part of a larger biophysical region and that it is connected to surrounding municipalities through the natural environment and through shared servicing corridors. The policies speak to working with neighbouring municipalities to protect, enhance and restore the region's system of green space and natural heritage features, the natural ecosystem and the natural corridors that connect these features.

Finally, the Draft Official Plan complements the City's Economic Development Strategy by supporting the foundations of Toronto's economic competitiveness.

The Plan's eight land use designations, which are one of the tools for achieving the Plan policies, are divided into two categories: designations that reinforce existing physical character, and designations for growth. For each land use designation, the Plan sets out permitted uses and criteria for evaluating development applications. In keeping with its strategic nature, the Plan does not contain density provisions, except for those within the secondary plans or special site policies.

The four land use designations that reinforce existing physical character - *neighbourhoods*, *apartment neighbourhoods*, *parks and open space areas*, and *utility corridors* - are intended to protect and reinforce the existing physical character of about 75% of the City.

Neighbourhoods are made up of a full range of residential uses in low scale buildings, as well as parks, schools, local community uses and small scale stores. The neighbourhood designation protects the established character of these areas. It contains policies to ensure that physical changes are sensitive and gradual, and that they respect and reinforce the general physical patterns in a neighbourhood.

Apartment Neighbourhoods are stable areas of the City where major growth is not anticipated. In apartment neighbourhoods, key considerations are improving amenities, accommodating sensitive townhouse or apartment infill development and promoting environmental sustainability.

The *Parks and Open Space Areas* designation applies to Toronto's many parks and open spaces, and contains policies to prohibit development in this green open space network.

The *Utilities Corridors* designation protects rail and hydro rights

of way for future public uses.

The four designations for growth - *Mixed Use Areas*, *Employment Areas*, *Regeneration Areas* and *Institutional Areas* - are intended to accommodate the majority of growth.

The *Mixed Use Areas* designation applies to many of the properties within the Downtown, the Centres and along the Avenues. The Plan proposes that the Mixed Use Areas absorb a large share of the anticipated increase in housing, retail, office and service employment. The policies will allow Torontonians to live, work and shop in the same area or even the same building, decreasing car dependence.

The *Employment Areas* will require intensification to accommodate the anticipated employment growth over the next 30 years.

Regeneration Areas open up unique areas of the City to a wide range of uses to attract investment and spur growth. In regeneration areas, commercial, residential, live/work, institutional and light industrial uses can be mixed within the same block or building.

Toronto's major health, education and government campuses are designated *Institutional Areas* in the Plan. This designation recognizes that a network of major institutions must be supported in Toronto.

In keeping with the principle of connectivity, future growth in Toronto will be steered to areas which are well served by transit, the existing road network, and which have redevelopment potential. Generally, the growth areas are locations where good transit access can be provided. Key elements of the Transportation network are:

- subway, LRT, streetcar and bus lines;
- GO Transit rail network;

- expressways and major streets;
- railway corridors;
- bikeway network;
- sidewalks, pathways and trails; and
- potential use of hydro corridors for transit, bikeways, and walkways.

The Plan provides for the planned expansion of the transportation network through the designation of public rights of way and transit corridors . Further, the Plan indicates sections of major streets that are candidates for bus and streetcar priority measures. The Plan intends to implement transit services in exclusive rights of way in the identified corridors as priorities are established , funding becomes available and Environmental Assessment Review processes are complete.

2.0 Implications for Mississauga

The environmental, economic, and social health of the GTA is linked to the management of growth by the City of Toronto, which is forecast to pass Chicago as the fourth largest metropolitan area in North America, after Mexico City, New York and Los Angeles. Within this context, the Draft Official Plan is correctly based on the premise that Toronto cannot plan in isolation or stand alone in dealing with the effects of urban growth. It notes that the way in which growth and change are managed in Toronto must mesh with that of its neighbours . The entire GTA will benefit from this approach of the Plan, because it is directed at reducing the demands on nature and improving the livability of the GTA by:

- reducing the rate by which the countryside and agricultural lands are urbanized;
- reducing reliance on the automobile;
- reducing emissions, including greenhouse gases; and
- reducing consumption of non renewable resources.

The overall basis and direction of the Plan is supported, and

there is agreement that population growth is needed to support economic growth and social development within Toronto, thereby, contributing to a better future for the entire GTA. The Plan may be too modest in using minimum growth assumptions.

The Draft Toronto Official Plan and the recent City Council adopted Mississauga Plan are similar in many ways:

- both plans are more simplified , streamlined documents with a reduction in land use designations, and a more flexible, less regulated approach;
- both plans are based on the principle that reducing urban sprawl cannot happen without intensification;
- both plans focus development in centres and along mainstreets with good transit access, thereby, protecting and enhancing the physical character of neighbourhoods;
- both plans aim to increase use of public transit and decrease car dependence ; and
- both plans contain strategic policies for the protection of the natural environment.

Because the Etobicoke Creek and major roads form the Toronto/Mississauga boundary, and given the existing pattern of development, site specific development in Toronto in the vicinity of the municipal boundary is not likely to have a significant land use impact on Mississauga. There are, however, inter-municipal planning policy issues addressed by the Plan which could affect Mississauga, namely:

- transportation, including public transit;
- natural environment, including air quality;
- aircraft noise policies; and
- economic development.

2.1 Transportation

The Draft Toronto Official Plan states that the current GTA forecast to 2031 " allocates to Toronto 20% of the increase in

population (537,000 additional residents) and 30% of the employment growth (544,000 additional jobs), ... and "prepares the City to realize this growth, or even more, depending on the success of this Plan in creating dynamic transit oriented mixed use centres and corridors."

Some unofficial statements have been made indicating that as many as 1 million additional residents could be accommodated in Toronto by the Draft Plan. Staff are not aware of any studies being released which document the impact of this higher level of growth on the rest of the GTA. However, the implications would be significant for transportation plans and strategies throughout the GTA, not only in terms of changing travel patterns but also infrastructure requirements.

One indication of the impact of higher growth levels in Toronto is the extensive higher order transit network identified in Map 4, Higher Order Transit Corridors. Although no estimate of the cost of that network could be found, it would obviously cost billions of dollars to implement.

The potentially significant GTA wide impacts of this Plan, underscore the importance of developing a GTA Growth Management Strategy and supporting transportation investment plan, in order to establish priorities for transportation investment across the GTA. This issue should be adequately addressed by the Province through a Smart Growth Panel. However, it will still be important for Toronto to coordinate the implementation of its Plan with its neighbouring municipalities, such as Mississauga.

Section 5.3.2 entitled "Implementation Plans and Strategies for City Building" states that, "The Official Plan provides a long-term vision based on principles that are durable, but detailed action-oriented plans, programs and strategies will be needed to implement the Plan ..."

One of the proposed implementation plans specifically listed is a

"transportation plan to set priorities for new transit investment". The City of Toronto should be requested to consult with the City of Mississauga in the development of the aforementioned public transit implementation plan to ensure proper coordination with Mississauga's recently approved Transit Strategy.

Map 4, Higher Order Transit Corridors, shows a westerly extension of the Bloor Subway across the Mississauga boundary pointing in the direction of Queensway East. Given the potential impacts on Mississauga, a statement should be added to Map 4 indicating that the alignment would be based on further study in conjunction with the City of Mississauga. Further, in light of the frequent transit service on Dundas Street East within Mississauga, compared to the limited bus service on Queensway East, and the designation of Dundas Street East as a Major Transit Corridor in the recently approved Mississauga Plan, any future extension of the Bloor Subway into Mississauga would more logically connect with Dundas Street East. As such Map 4 should be revised to show the Bloor Street Subway extension pointing towards Dundas Street in Mississauga.

The Bloor Subway Extension E.A. Study identified an East Mall Subway Station at Dundas Street East as part of the Bloor subway extension, and should be shown on this map in view of its potential role as an inter-regional hub for Mississauga Transit services and other services utilizing the Highway 427 corridor.

A number of transit corridors are shown connecting to the airport. In view of their potential impacts on Mississauga, the former Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan contained the following statement:

“Alignment and technologies for rapid transit services to Pearson International Airport will be the subject of further studies to be coordinated by the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and involving all affected municipalities.”

In view of the possible involvement of other agencies such as the Federal Government and the GTAA, it is suggested that the statement be amended as follows and added to Map 4:

“Alignment and technologies for higher order transit services to Lester B Pearson International Airport will be the subject of further studies in conjunction with the appropriate agencies and affected municipalities.”

2.2 Natural Environment

The City of Toronto Draft Official Plan provides an overview of the policies and procedures put in place to protect and preserve the natural environment. The Plan outlines the City's 15 main policies that deal with the natural environment. These policies cover a wide range of issues from forestry to natural heritage areas and air quality.

The Draft Plan also provides a general overview of how growth will be promoted in locations and forms that support the use of transit, that will reduce energy consumption and also air pollution caused by auto use. The City will also strive to assess the impacts of development in natural heritage systems and urban forest areas.

Since the Official Plan provides a general overview, no comments can be made on the specific practices and procedures used to carry out the main policies. However, it appears that the City of Toronto has a comprehensive and wide ranging set of actions to improve the health of the natural environment.

The draft policies for the protection of the natural environment are consistent with Mississauga's. Toronto differs slightly in their approach to identifying natural areas and hazard lands. These areas are shown together on one map. It is not possible to differentiate those areas which are subject to steep slopes and flooding from those that are not but have natural features. Notwithstanding the mapping, the policies are clear that no development will be permitted within the Etobicoke Creek

Corridor, other water course corridors or the Lake Ontario Shoreline. Most of the Natural Heritage Areas are designated “Parks and Open Space Areas”. Development is generally prohibited within this land use category with the exception of recreational and cultural facilities, conservation projects, cemetery facilities, public transit, and essential public works and utilities. Further, although the plan refers to the need to have clean air, there are no specific policies that speak directly to how the City will ensure good air quality or deal with compatibility issues with respect to locating sensitive land uses.

The Draft Official Plan identifies that the issue of storm flow/snow melt is to be addressed in regards to “managing the quantity and improving the quality of stormwater flows and groundwater infiltration” through a hierarchy of controls starting with “at source” controls down to “end of pipe” techniques. It would appear that specific techniques will be dealt with in greater detail in the “Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan” which is currently under development. The Wet Weather Plan is to be in compliance with the Storm Water Management Practices Planning and Design Manual June, 1994 as well as the latest provincial guidelines (policy administration by conservation authorities). Mississauga should be given an opportunity to review this Plan , particularly with respect to any impact on its shared watershed.

2.3 Aircraft Noise

With respect to aircraft noise, the Draft Toronto Official Plan contains site specific policies which incorporate an airport operating area, and policies consistent with the policies the City of Mississauga agreed to in a settlement reached in 2001 with the City of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) with respect to an appeal of Toronto's aircraft noise policies to the OMB.

2.4 Economic Development

The Economic Development Office has no comments regarding the Draft Toronto Official Plan.

3.0 Future Steps

Subsequent to the completion of a community consultation strategy this summer, a statutory public meeting will be held at a Special Meeting of Planning and Transportation Committee on September 24, 2002.

CONCLUSION:

The Draft Toronto Official Plan sets out the choices to address the fundamental social, environmental and economic choices to meet the needs of today and those of future generations. The environmental, economic, and social health of the GTA is linked to the management of growth by the City of Toronto, which is forecast to pass Chicago as the fourth largest metropolitan area in North America, after Mexico City, New York and Los Angeles. Within this context, the new Official Plan is correctly based on the premise that Toronto cannot plan in isolation or stand alone in dealing with the effects of urban growth. It notes that the way in which growth and change are managed in Toronto must mesh with that of its neighbours. The entire GTA will benefit from this approach of the Plan, because it is directed at reducing the demands on nature and improving the livability of the GTA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the City of Toronto be requested to amend the Draft Official Plan by:
 - (a) revising Map 4, Higher Order Transit Corridors, to show the Bloor Subway Extension pointing towards Dundas Street East in Mississauga, and an East Mall Subway Station at Dundas Street.
 - (b) revising Map 4, Higher Order Transit Corridors, to include the following statement:

“Alignment and technologies for higher order transit services to Lester B. Pearson International Airport will be the subject of further studies in conjunction with the appropriate agencies and affected municipalities.”

2. That the City of Toronto be requested to consult with the City of Mississauga in the development of the public transit implementation plan to ensure proper coordination with Mississauga's recently approved Transit Strategy.
3. That the City of Toronto be requested to give City of Mississauga an opportunity to review the "Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan" when completed.
4. That a copy of the report titled "City of Toronto Draft Official Plan" dated August 13, 2002 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be forwarded by the City Clerk to the City of Toronto.

Original Signed By:

Thomas S. Mokrzycki
Commissioner of Planning and Building