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DATE: April 15, 2003

TO: Chairman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

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

SUBJECT: **Central Waterfront Secondary Plan "Making Waves"**
City of Toronto
MEETING DATE: May 5, 2003

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Department

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

On April 4, 2003, at public meeting, the City of Toronto Planning and Transportation Committee approved a recommendation to adopt, subject to minor modifications, the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, as an amendment to the Official Plan of the City of Toronto. The Secondary Plan is a policy document governing the Central Waterfront Area, which generally extends from Dowling Avenue on the west to the eastern boundary of the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plan on the east, as shown on Exhibit 1. The Plan does not include the Toronto Islands or the Toronto City Centre Airport.

COMMENTS: The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is based on the premise that waterfront renewal will not be treated as a specific project with a defined finishing point. Rather, it will be managed as an ongoing, phased effort, part of the much larger City-wide

context, that will carry on over decades. The principles of the Plan are intended to act as a framework for the renewal activities and, according to the Plan, are intended to be as valid 30 years from now as they are today.

The Secondary Plan addresses, among other matters:

- road and transit improvements;
- parks and open space areas, including potential lakefill and natural areas;
- pedestrian, cycling and water routes, including a public promenade (dockwall/water's edge), key pedestrian linkages, multi-use pathways, and on-street bicycle lanes;
- land uses, including regeneration areas, parks and open space, existing use areas, the foot of Yonge Street Special Study Area, and a Public Promenade and Inner Harbour Special Place.

The Secondary Plan is built on four core principles:

1. Removing Barriers/Making Connections;
2. Building a Network of Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces;
3. Promoting a Clean and Green Environment;
4. Creating Diverse New Communities.

The Plan expands on these core principles. Each principle is divided into two parts: the "Big Moves" that will define the new Central Waterfront and the Policies that will bring the vision to life. The implementation of this Plan will take place over time in a phased manner, subject to budgeting and program availability and the active participation of other stakeholders and all levels of government.

Removing Barriers/Making Connections

The first principle is to remove barriers and reconnect the City with Lake Ontario. The Plan identifies this as the key to unlocking the unrealized potential of Toronto's waterfront. The new connections will be north/south and east/west. Among others, the following notable "Big Moves" will support the removal of barriers and the creation of new connections across the Central Waterfront:

- Redesigning the Gardiner Corridor - The Plan identifies the elevated Gardiner Expressway as a major physical barrier which cuts off the city from the waterfront. The Plan requires that funding for major improvements to the road system and GO Transit/TTC services including Union Station must be in place. The final configuration of the Gardiner/Lake Shore Corridor will depend on the outcome of further detailed study;
- Waterfront Transit - An extended light rapid transit line extending from Exhibition Place to the port lands, expanded GO transit services and Union Station upgrades are critical elements of a new transit plan;
- Lakeshore Boulevard will be transformed into an urban avenue, to function as an arterial road;
- Queens Quay will be designed to become a scenic water view drive, designed to accommodate the needs of motorists, transit, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Completing the Waterfront Trail.

A Network of Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces

The second principle recognizes the significance of the public realm in transforming the Central Waterfront into a destination for international tourism, national celebration and local enjoyment. The Plan promotes the remaking of the Central Waterfront as a special place permeated with waterfront parks and plazas and inviting natural settings.

The following will help transform the Central Waterfront into an area known for its waterfront parks and public spaces:

- Water's Edge Promenade - As renewal takes place, a continuous and highly accessible public waters edge promenade will connect a series of parks, open spaces, squares and plazas, which are linked back to the city along existing and extended street corridors. The public promenade will be of varying width and design such that a variety of primarily pedestrian activities can be accommodated and be integrated with a range of parks and public spaces;
- Foot of Yonge Street - will be designed to include major public amenities of high quality containing distinctive cultural buildings, appropriate tourist facilities and a range of public uses and other development that will contribute to the special nature of this area;
- An Improved Harbourfront Centre will be created by replacing surface parking lots with new year round structures;
- New and expanded parks, including a new Lake Ontario Park, south of Ashbridges Bay, and a new Fort York Park.

Promoting a Clean and Green Environment

The third principle is aimed at achieving a high level of environmental health in the Central Waterfront. A wide variety of environmental strategies will be employed to create sustainable waterfront communities. The following initiatives are identified:

- Priority for sustainable modes of transportation, including transit, cycling, walking and water transport;
- Protecting the West Don Lands from flooding through the construction of a flood protection berm along the Don River;
- Renaturalizing the mouth of the Don River to improve its ecological function, provide flood protection, and attract new wildlife.

Creating New Communities

The fourth and final principle is focussed on the creation of diverse waterfront communities. New waters edge communities will accommodate a range of development forms and be of sufficient scale to accommodate people both living and working in a neighbourhood setting. Among other matters, the Plan proposes the following:

- Redeveloping the Port Lands into several major mixed use neighbourhoods;
- Redeveloping the west Don Lands into diverse mixed use communities subsequent to the construction of the flood protection berm and the naturalization of the Don River;
- Expanding Exhibition Place as a place where people will live, work and visit.

CONCLUSION:

The overall basis and direction of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is consistent with the new City of Toronto Official Plan and is supported. It will increase the livability of the Greater Toronto Area by, among other matters: reurbanising and regenerating the City of Toronto; the creation of new communities with a variety of housing, including affordable housing, thereby, reducing urban sprawl; increasing the use of public transit, walking and cycling, and decreasing car dependence; the creation of significant parks and open space and the protection of the natural environment.

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is also consistent with the direction of the Lake Ontario Waterfront policies in the City Council - adopted Mississauga Plan. These documents recognize the importance of the Waterfront as an area of:

- high public demand for passive recreation;
- natural forms, functions, and linkages;
- tourism and economic development; and
- heritage resources.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report titled "Central Waterfront Secondary Plan "Making Waves" - City of Toronto" dated April 15, 2003 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be received for information.

Original Signed By: _____

Thomas S. Mokrzycki

Commissioner of Planning and Building