

May 10, 2010

Re: The next Chief Planner and the future of planning in Toronto

We, the undersigned, are aware that within the year the current Chief Planner will be retiring and that the City of Toronto will be undertaking the following processes:

1. The official plan review will commence;
2. A new harmonized by-law will be enacted;
3. The tall building guidelines and avenues report will be considered; and
4. The design review panel boundaries will be re-drawn.

This is a historic opportunity to create a new planning vision for Toronto.

As individuals who work in all aspects of design, architecture, planning, development, and construction and who are also members of neighbourhood and residents groups, we hereby petition city council and the city manager to defer the appointment of a new chief planner until the next term of council.

Further, we also urge that the appointment and powers of a new Chief Planner be considered as part of a comprehensive review of the city's planning functions, including its administrative practices, governance model, civic engagement, budget allocation, relationship with other city services and its reporting relationship to the Mayor and City Council. Toronto's ability to plan strategically is essential to the city achieving economic and social prosperity for all its citizens. We believe a review of the planning process must be city-wide, involving the public, neighbourhood groups and industry stakeholders, thereby engaging the city's diverse and cosmopolitan culture.

Toronto has the opportunity, obligation and native talent to imagine what form a more socially and economically sustainable urban future may take. To this end, the existing planning system's narrow focus upon transactional and utilitarian functions of land use and density zoning are no longer adequate. A new planning regime must pay attention to the daily lived experiences of Torontonians while proposing a narrative for an inclusive, creative, sustainable, beautiful and prosperous city in built form. It must seek to imagine a city for our children and their future.

Respectfully submitted:

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