

--	--

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	J.M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT	PLANNING DIVISION 18 MONTH WORK PROGRAM MEETING ON NOVEMBER 26, 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of Managing Director of Land Use Planning and City Planner, the Planning Division work program priorities identified in this report **BE ENDORSED**, recognizing that these priorities will serve as the focus of the Division’s activities over the next 18 months.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is intended to clarify and focus the Planning Division work program and ensure that the projects included in the work program are consistent with Council’s priorities.

The report documents what has been accomplished since the last work program report was submitted to Council. It also identifies those projects that will be addressed within the next 18 months, and identifies projects that will be re-considered for inclusion in the Planning Division work program through a similar report in late 2014.

Focusing the Division’s work program will allow Staff to:

- meet statutory time requirements associated with planning applications
- continue to deliver Council’s highest priority planning services within existing resources
- provide clear and reasonable objectives and workload for Planning Staff

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
--

- April 26, 2010 – presentation to Planning Committee regarding the Planning Division Work Program and resources
- June 21, 2010 – report on Planning Division work program, based on a special meeting of Planning Committee to prioritize work program items
- July 18, 2011 – report to Built and Natural Environment Committee outlining the Division’s 12-18 month work program

--	--

BACKGROUND

Planning Division Services

In general terms, the Planning Division delivers the following services:

- Planning applications
 - Official Plan amendment applications
 - Zoning By-law amendment applications
 - Minor variance applications
- Planning policy development
- Secondary planning
- Community improvement planning
- Economic revitalization programs through Downtown, Old East and SOHO incentives
- Brownfield revitalization incentives
- Heritage preservation incentives
- Urban design
- Environmental planning
- Ecological assessment and management
- Parks planning, design and development
- Urban forestry
- Community-partnered parks projects
- Commemorative programs
- Heritage Planning

It is noteworthy that the Planning Division is separate and distinct from the Development Services team which is housed within the Development and Compliance Services Division. Development Services handles applications that are generally later in the development process, such as subdivision, condominium, site plan, and consent applications.

Planning Application Processing

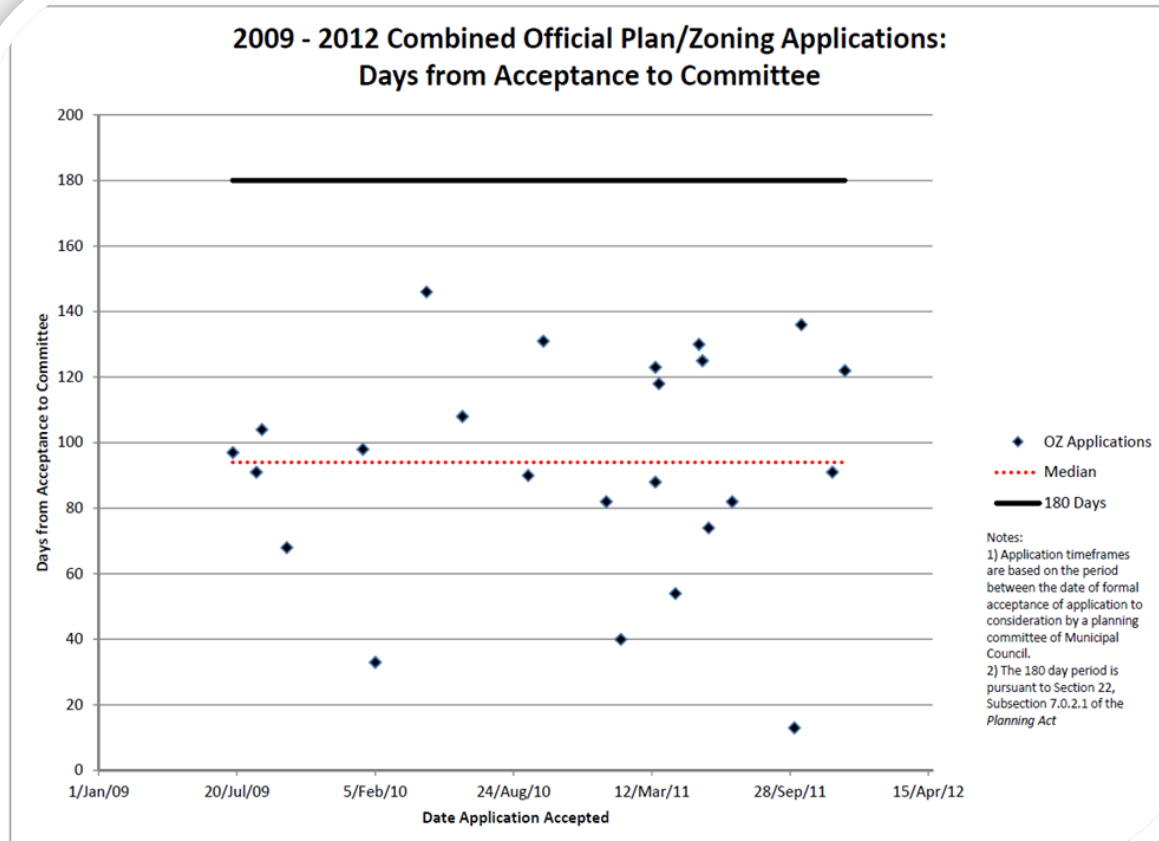
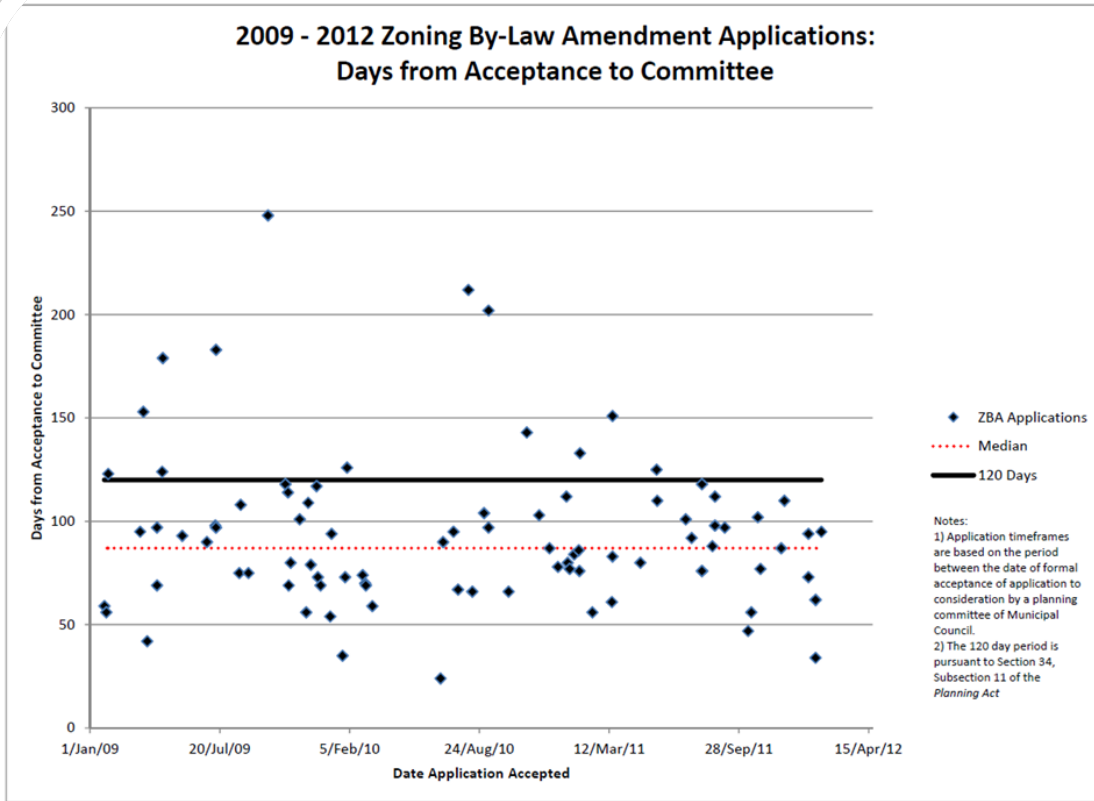
The Planning Division tracks planning application processing times to ensure that processes are efficient and timely. These processing times are compared to Planning Act statutory time frames and are assessed for trends and outliers. Where outliers are identified, files processing is evaluated to determine the source of any delays and to make process improvements where possible. Figure 1a and 1b shows that the Division consistently delivers processing times well below those statutory time frames relating to both Official Plan amendments and Zoning By-law amendments.

A recent study prepared in August of 2012 for the City of Guelph by GGA Management Consultants with IBI Group noted London’s “timely and expeditious process” and cited the City of London as demonstrating several best practices, as follows:

Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in London

- *London requires an early mandatory pre-consultation, together with the submission of complete applications prior to formal development application review to ensure that all development issues and requirements are identified early on and to inform developers what is required to gain approval of their applications.*
- *London has designated file managers who coordinate development review with a supportive team approach.*
- *London monitors its application processing against published performance standards and uses the information for management purposes.*
- *London tracks and reviews applications as a whole relative to the time taken for processing as a means to improve their review process and also to ensure due diligence is undertaken. e.g. OP and zoning amendments*
- *London has an Urban Design Review Panel made up of professionals from the community who volunteer. Selected applications are referred to them for comment which is seen as beneficial and providing additional input on design issues which can sometimes be contentious.*
- *London’s Official Plan and zoning application processing is timely and expeditious and most applications are processed well within provincial standards.*

--	--



--	--

Planning Division Resources

The Planning Division's professional resources consist of:

- 1 Heritage Planner
- 2 Ecologists
- 1 Research Analyst
- 1 Urban Forestry Planner
- 2 Urban Designers
- 1 Landscape Architect
- 1 Community Projects Coordinator
- 2 Parks Project Coordinators
- 14 Planners

In addition, there is a management team and a number of technicians, technologists and clerical staff members that provide support.

The Division is separated into four Sections:

1. Policy Planning and Programs - Gregg Barrett
2. Environmental and Parks Planning – Manager, Andrew Macpherson
3. Community Planning and Design – Manager, Jim Yanchula
4. Urban Forestry – Manager, Ivan Listar

Planning Division Work Program Pressures

The Planning Division work program has grown significantly in scope and “length” over the past 5 years. The following are pressures that have led to this growth (note that some of these trends are seen as very positive; however, they are noted to demonstrate pressures on work program):

- The growth of advisory committees and an increase in the frequency with which these committees ask Council to review policy issues.
- The heightened involvement of communities in planning issues and the associated increase in community expectations.
- An increased demand for community consultation and the Division's/City's desire to better engage the public in planning activities..
- Regular requests from Council to review policy issues outside of the 5-year Official Plan review process.
- The referral of planning applications back to Staff for further review and consideration.
- Cross-departmental projects which require significant involvement from Planning Division Staff.
- An increase in the complexity of planning processes, due to new or heightened requirements (based on provincial requirements or new Council policies)
- New subject areas that were not previously addressed
- The “parking” of various policy projects to address planning applications which are treated as a priority.
- New rules and regulations regarding capital projects.

In general, the resources of the Division are inadequate to take on the complete work program as assigned by Council. The above pressures continue to stretch existing resources beyond capacity.

--	--

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM LAST 18 MONTHS
--

Work Completed - Ongoing Processes

The following list represents the ongoing processes and duties that are carried out by Planning Staff on a daily basis. These items are not project-specific, but rather, represent the regular ongoing duties and responsibilities of the Division. Many of these activities consume significant time resources.

- Processed planning applications (Official Plan, Zoning & Minor Variances)
- Processed heritage applications (demolition and alteration permits and designations)
- Processed incentive applications (Downtown, Old East, SOHO, Brownfield)
- Other applications (tree cutting, site alteration, boulevard parking, etc.)
- Urban design review (OPA/ZBA/subdivision/site plan/city projects)
- Parks review (OPA/ZBA/subdivision/site plan/city projects)
- Ecological review (development applications, EIS's, EA's, etc.)
- Ontario Municipal Board Hearings
- Advisory Committee Support (EEPAC, UDPRP, LACH, TAC, AAC, TGC, TFAC, IEPC)
- Parks projects – design and project management
- Community initiatives
- Consultation initiatives (community, development industry, subject-specific projects)
- Counter duty and enquiries
- Tree planting program
- Consolidate, maintain, analyze data
- Map making, GIS development and graphics
- Plans and maintenance of municipally owned heritage buildings
- Industrial Land Strategy
- Commemorative programs (eg. bench, tree donations)
- Coordinate parks community projects with numerous partners

Completed Projects Sorted by Strategic Plan Results

The following are Planning Division accomplishments achieved over the past 18 months, above and beyond those regular responsibilities and ongoing processes identified above. These accomplishments have been sorted according to the five results, identified in Council's Strategic Plan.

COMPLETED - A Strong Economy

- Southwest Area Plan
- LPH Secondary Plan – resolved OMB appeal
- Meadowlilly Secondary Plan – land use options
- Industrial Land Strategy – Phase 1 Report
- Downtown Summit – Covent Garden Market
- City of Opportunity – Downtown vision renderings & development concepts
- Downtown Master Plan background study
- State of the Downtown Bi-annual Report
- Several reports and presentations to Investment and Economic Prosperity Committee (IEPC)
 - Building the City of Opportunity – An Investment Strategy
 - Positioning London for Prosperity
 - Developing a Strategic Investment and Economic Prosperity Plan
 - Establishing the Context for an Economic Prosperity Plan
- Launched South Street Campus (Victoria Hospital) re-development project
- Processed Downtown and Old East financial incentives leading to significant revitalization
- Richmond Street and Hillview development concept and community process
- Fanshawe College Downtown – prepared reports and assisted in development of agreements
- Completed economic analysis of McCormick Area
- Review of commercial lands in Hyde Park community
- Office policies review

--	--

- Resolved and defended against OMB appeals to last Official Plan review
- Design Guidelines for Advanced Manufacturing Park
- City Hall options report (led by Realty Services)
- Processed many significant planning applications relating to large projects. Some examples are:
 - Automall zoning amendment
 - ABODE University development project
 - Apartment buildings – Sunningdale, Southdale, Old East (Medallion) & Downtown (Tricar)
 - Large medical building – Springbank Drive
 - Wortley Village mid-rise development
 - Mixed use office/retail (Shoppers) in Downtown London

COMPLETED - A Vibrant and Diverse Community

- Launched ReThink London engagement program – unprecedented reach and involvement
 - Peter Mansbridge launch event
 - Web-site development and engagement program
 - Discover Your City event
 - ReThink community workshops
- SOHO Community Improvement Plan
- Draft Urban Design Guidelines
- Downtown Heritage Conservation District
- Old South Heritage Conservation District – Phase I
- Market Lane national design competition
- Horton Street re-design project – consistent with SOHO Plan
- New infill and intensification policies
- Old East Village Urban Design Guidelines
- Forks of the Thames Lookout Park and fountain
- New “urban parks” policies
- Piccadilly urban park project
- Heritage assessment and repurposing of heritage buildings on South Street campus lands
- Beaufort, Irwin, Gunn and Saunby (BIGS) Neighbourhood Plan – Draft
- Piccadilly Neighbourhood re: Montessori School
- Assisted Argyle community in establishment of Argyle BIA
- Urban design program update report

COMPLETED - A Green and Growing City

- Many parks projects
- Thames Valley Corridor Plan – and associated action plan
- Emerald Ash Borer strategy and EAB implementation plan
- Organized and hosted Canadian Urban Forestry Conference
- Launched the Million Tree Challenge with ReForest London
- Completed UFORE project
- Green Development Incentives report
- Kiwanis Park Pathway Corridor
- Trail Planning and Design Standards for ESA’s
- Established new Significant Stream Corridor policies
- Tree hazard review
- Gibbons Wetland OPA
- Successful defense of woodlands policy OPA 403 at OMB and in courts
- Thames Valley Parkway – Kains Link
- Collaborated with Forestry Operations to plant a record number of trees on City-owned land
- Re-designed Riverbend Park to accommodate endangered species habitat
- Policy changes to clarify distinction between ESA’s and parks
- Installed Thames Valley Parkway counters

COMPLETED - A Sustainable Infrastructure

- Growth planning report and presentation
- Southwest Area Plan servicing and phasing options report
- King Street streetscape improvement project
- New Secondary Plan policies
- Downtown Tree Planting in support of World Figure Skating Championships

--	--

- Parkland dedication report
- Arva servicing report
- Sugar Creek Park – collaborative approach/agreement for construction and maintenance
- Telecommunications consultation policies
- Growth Forecasts – to be used for servicing studies, dev. Charges, and OP review
- New zoning set-back for municipal drains
- New zoning provisions for road allowance widenings

COMPLETED - A Caring Community

- Defended Methadone Interim Control Bylaw at OMB
- Adult daycare amendments to zoning by-law
- New methadone clinic and pharmacy policies and zoning regulations
- Near Campus Neighbourhood policies and regulations
- Interpretive signs and bike racks in Victoria Park
- Major participant in community engagement task force
- Interpretive signs in Victoria Park
- Managed the Tolpuddle commemorative sculpture installation in Ivey Park
- Veterans Memorial Parkway community planting program agreement and yearly projects
- Continuation of bicycle pathway network development
- Assisted in Age-friendly task force initiative – led by Community Services
- Assisted in Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy team – led by Community Services
- Community Gardens Program update
- Byron skate park
- Built form and safety report
- Adopt-a-park program

FOCUS FOR NEXT 18 MONTHS

In addition to the ongoing activities of the Division as noted above, the following list includes those projects that the Planning Division will address during the next 18 months. The ReThink London project will constitute the most major focus of time and effort over the next 18 months.

A Strong Economy

- ReThink London – new Official Plan
 - Discussion papers
 - Growth allocations and urban growth boundary evaluation
 - Urban structure plan
 - New policy approach to land use planning - new Official Plan
- Zoning By-law Review – launch project to implement the new Official Plan
- Downtown Master Plan
- South Street Campus Secondary Plan, Master Development Plan, RFP process
- Meadowlilly Secondary Plan
- McCormick Area Plan
- Industrial Land Strategy – Land Needs Report and Urban Growth Boundary Expansion
- Review of revitalization incentive programs processes
- Dundas street rebuild – flexible street project
- Development Charges Study (led by Finance)
- Evaluation of retail uses permitted in Industrial areas

A Vibrant and Diverse Community

- Old South Heritage Conservation District
- Delegation of heritage alteration permits approvals
- Queens Park heritage building project
- Downtown improvements/upgrades for World Figure Skating Championships
- Market Lane design project – collaborative with Fanshawe College
- Downtown streetscape improvements for World Skating Championships
- York/Wellington gateway feature to Downtown London
- Old East Village and New Soccer Dome – Evaluate and Plan for Stronger Connections
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Beaufort, Irwin, Gunn, Saunby (BIGS) Neighbourhood Plan
- Market Lane Project
- BMX Bike/Environmental Protection Strategy

--	--

- 4th Dogs off-leash park construction
- London Normal School expression of interest and request for proposals
- Revise intensification policies

A Green and Growing City

- Urban Forestry Strategy
- 1 Million Tree Challenge
- Downtown tree planting strategy
- Veterans Memorial Parkway project – trees and features
- Implementation of Thames Valley Corridor Action Plan
- Medway Valley North Trail System Project
- Medway Valley Conservation Master Plan
- South Coves ESA Conservation Master Plan
- EIS process review and guideline update
- ESA boundary delineation guideline
- Establish management zones – Sifton Bog
- Nauralization manual
- Small patch mapping – Schedule B1
- ESA Encroachment and Buffers Review
- Invasive species report
- Environmental Management Guidelines for Plantations (deferred item 3.53)
- Adopt-a-park Program
- Revise boulevard tree protection by-law
- Buckthorn removal and Scout Forestry projects

A Sustainable Infrastructure

- North Branch of Thames Valley Parkway project
- Westminster Area Pathway project
- Urban Structure Plan
- Transportation Master Plan implementation (led by Transportation)
- Meadowlilly Bridge Team
- Kiwanis Tunnel EA for key pathway linkage in East London
- A variety of parks and trail projects

A Caring Community

- Strengthening Neighbourhoods Implementation Team (Community Services lead)
- Age Friendly London Implementation Team (Community Services lead)
- Cultural Heritage Landscape Plan – Western Counties Wing Site
- Corporate web site redesign
- Cultural Master Plan (led by Culture Office)
- New notice procedures to allow for earlier access to planning reports

**PROJECTS TO DEFER AND EVALAUTE FOR
WORK PROGRAM INCLUSION IN 12-18 MONTHS**

The following projects have previously been added to the Planning Division Work Program. Planning Staff believe that they will not be unable to address these within the next 12 to 18 months. They will be deferred and evaluated again in 12 to 18 months for potential inclusion in the Division’s work program at that time.

- Old South Neighbourhood Plan
- Richmond Row – concentration of entertainment uses (deferred item 3.48)
- Talbot North Community Improvement Plan
- SOHO Heritage Conservation District Plan
- Downtown Development Corporations
- Floodplain/floodfringe policy review
- Boulevard Parking Policy and Process Improvements
- Richmond Street Gateway Design Plan (north of Sunningdale)
- Woodland Acquisition By-law Update (deferred item 4.10)
- Protection of non-significant trees through development processes
- Self Storage Facility Review

--	--

- Tempo area policy review
- Zoning review considering mandatory site plan for R3 Zoning (deferred item 3.52)
- Review of Senior Lodging Home definition
- Feasibility assessment of London growing own tree stock
- Review trim cycle to include young trees in rural areas
- Develop tree monitoring program
- Evaluate private tree planting incentives
- Integrated pest management strategy
- Evaluation of Local Appeal Body for Minor Variance Applications
- Review of alternative development areas for student housing projects
- Review of tree by-law to protect private trees (deferred item 4.3)
- Review bicycle master plan – full public consultation
- Review convenience commercial policies
- Springbank Park Master Plan Update
- Noisewall implementation guidelines
- Update Inventory of Heritage Resources and heritage mapping on web site
- Springbank Cultural Heritage Landscape Plan
- Policies and procedures regarding property standards and demolition of heritage properties (deferred item 3.45)
- Thames Valley land acquisitions priorities

SUMMARY

It is important to focus the Planning Division work program. The preceding report identifies the projects that will be addressed by the Division in the next 12 to 18 months. While there is some contingency allowance, if significant additional projects come forward during this time, these targets may not be met. The report also identifies projects that will not be addressed by Staff in the next 12 to 18 months (to be deferred) and recommends that various items be removed from the work program and the BNEC deferred items list for a variety of reasons.

Focusing the work program will ensure that Council's priority work items are addressed, will assist in meeting statutory timeframes within existing staff resources, and will allow for an appropriate and manageable workload for Staff.

PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED BY:
JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER