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# "Because Heritage Matters"

A Discussion Paper on Heritage in the New Toronto

July 15, 1997

H E R I T A G E T O R O N T O

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Heritage Toronto would like to begin sharing its vision for the future with you by asking you to imagine what the present would be like if the past didn't matter.

The past thirty years in the development of our City have clearly demonstrated one thing over and over again - *that heritage matters!* Heritage is a significant quality of life issue that directly affects the health and well being of the community and its citizens.

Torontonians care strongly about their heritage.

We would like you to think for a moment about what Toronto might be like if we didn't care about our heritage:

- Old City Hall might be long gone, demolished to make way for the original proposal for the Eaton Centre ( a windowless, aluminum sided box). Only the clock tower might remain, framed by cracking concrete in the middle of a cramped and windswept plaza;
- Some of our successful residential neighbourhoods, such as the Annex and Cabbagetown, which are currently lauded as being in the forefront of the new urbanist movement, might not exist. These and other inner- city neighbourhoods could have easily been swallowed up in the rush to build wider roads and more high rise apartment complexes;
- Union Station might not be the subject of interest by the Toronto Maple Leafs, because it likely would have been long ago subsumed by a massive office and retail complex;
- popular municipal heritage attractions such as Gibson House, Montgomery's Inn and Spadina might not exist.

We think everybody would agree that we are all fortunate the above has not come to pass. That it hasn't, however, is largely because Torontonians have clearly expressed, time and again, that *heritage does matter*, that *heritage is integral to the health and well being of our community*.

Because heritage matters so much to all of us, Heritage Toronto has put together this paper for discussion and feedback. Over the past several months, we have been involved in discussions with various departments, agencies, groups and individuals concerned with heritage matters. These discussions have informed our vision for the future delivery of heritage services within the new City of Toronto, and helped us to identify the fundamental principles, issues and opportunities before us. Within this discussion paper, we have also recommended a conceptual framework which we feel provides a good starting point for developing a model that will best serve the needs and interests of the larger community.

We look forward to your comments on our discussion paper. While we have made some recommendations, we strongly feel that this report is an opportunity to extend the ongoing dialogue between all of those who are actively involved in and concerned with our City's heritage. We are confident that together we will realize the goal of arriving at a shared vision for the future delivery of heritage services in the new Toronto.

## About Heritage Toronto

Since its establishment in 1960 (as the Toronto Historical Board), Heritage Toronto has played a leading role in the provision of heritage services for the City of Toronto and surrounding area. Our advisory role in historical preservation has led to the development of an Inventory of Heritage Properties identifying more than 5000 properties of architectural or historical significance, as well as the designation of more than 500 properties and the creation of three heritage conservation districts under the Ontario Heritage Act. In addition to this, we are currently responsible for seven historic properties incorporating twenty-three individual buildings and twenty acres of grounds, collections valued in excess of ten million dollars, as well as monuments and memorials within the existing City of Toronto.

Throughout our long history, Heritage Toronto has established a strong track record of growth in the range and quality of services provided, and has also taken a strong pro-active approach in responding to changing times and future needs.

### *Heritage Toronto's Mission*

*Heritage Toronto is committed to the development of a shared sense of place and memory among the citizens of Toronto, and believes that community involvement is essential to achieving this. Working in collaboration with citizens, community groups and business groups, Heritage Toronto interprets, protects and acts as an advocate for the City's Heritage.*

*Heritage Toronto has trusteeship of the preservation of the City's built heritage, monuments, artifacts, and the City's historic site museums, and uses these physical assets, in addition to community resources, as the basis for its interpretation of the City's history.*

## Heritage Toronto's "New Direction"

It was in response to changing times and challenging economic conditions that we recognized in 1994 a need to clarify our organization's role and to carefully plan for the future. Specifically, we recognized that there was a need to build stronger working relationships with the public, community groups and City departments in order to more positively impact the preservation of the built environment. We also recognized the very real need to become more entrepreneurial and limit dependence on government funding, and to build a framework for more dynamic and diverse public programming.

In short, it was recognized that we needed to find a genuinely new direction for heritage - one that would respond to the challenges we faced and also encourage Toronto's citizens and visitors to actively experience and celebrate our City's rich heritage.

In order to find the best direction for heritage, we undertook a comprehensive strategic planning and organizational review process, which included extensive consultation with external stakeholders. The result of this detailed process was our report, "A New Direction for Heritage." The recommendations of the report were adopted by Toronto City Council in April of this year.

Within "A New Direction for Heritage," we analysed in detail the various options for the delivery of heritage services, and concluded that heritage would be best served by the continuation of an arms-length management Board, repositioned and restructured to provide a more integrated public history programming approach that would link museums and preservation of the built environment, encourage community involvement and support, facilitate trusteeship and increase the opportunity for revenue generating activities.

Adoption of this report has involved radical shifts in service delivery, governance structures, and staffing structures. To reflect that the level of fundamental change involved in adopting this "new direction," the organization also adopted "Heritage Toronto" as the 'brand name' under which the Toronto Historical Board now operates.

We strongly believe that the approaches identified within "A New Direction for Heritage" are still valid within the megacity context.

## Heritage Toronto and "The Megacity"

Heritage Toronto has taken a very reasoned approach to the "megacity" issue.

During the process leading up to the passage of the City of Toronto Act, 1997, Heritage Toronto, while reiterating Mayor Barbara Hall's admonition to "slow down and get it right," focussed its energies on delivering the message that heritage services must be adequately maintained and appropriately positioned within any new municipal structure.

With amalgamation now underway, and given the range and scope of the issues and resources involved, Heritage Toronto has been, and will continue to be, actively involved with the Transition Team and other stakeholders to ensure that heritage continues to have a strong and effective presence in the new City of Toronto.

We are proud of Heritage Toronto's strong track record of cooperation with other metro-area governments - we were involved in the restoration of Montgomery's Inn in Etobicoke and Gibson House in North York (and indeed the Board operated Gibson House under contract with North York from 1970-1977), and we worked closely with Metro on the restoration of the Music Building at Exhibition Place. We look forward to building on this past record by working cooperatively with all of the interested parties in the months ahead.

The following table summarizes some of the parallel consultative processes now underway which will involve (or should involve) discussions on the delivery of heritage services. Heritage Toronto will continue to monitor, and where possible, maintain an active involvement in these processes.

PROCESS	HERITAGE TORONTO'S INVOLVEMENT	CURRENT ACTIVITY/OUTCOME as of June 30, 1997
Municipal Heritage Alliance	Heritage Toronto is a part of this alliance of Metro Museums/LACAC organizations	Group is meeting periodically, has prepared a position paper, and is in the process of collecting data.
General consultation by individual Metro-area municipalities	Heritage Toronto will monitor heritage related information arising from the consultations	Heritage Toronto will forward its concerns as part of the City of Toronto's consultation process.
Transition Team	Heritage Toronto staff have met with Mr. John Wimbs, the Transition Team member who will be dealing with heritage matters. Material is also being sent to the Team as available.	Heritage Toronto will continue to forward material to the Transition Team, and will attempt to meet with the Team to the extent possible to discuss heritage issues.
Toronto Arts Council	Heritage Toronto is participating in the regular meetings held by the Council, and including arts and cultural organizations	Heritage Toronto is continuing to participate in the TAC's process. The TAC has prepared a position paper "A Blueprint for Change."
Metropolitan Toronto	Heritage Toronto is an active part of the Metro Round Table on Culture process	Heritage Toronto is continuing to participate in this process.
Parks, Recreation and Culture Commissioners	A sub-group on culture and heritage has been established involving Heritage Toronto participation	Heritage Toronto will continue to participate in this process, which is now linked to that of the Metro Cultural Network.
Larger Heritage Community	Heritage Toronto is monitoring and taking part to the extent possible, in the discussions taking place within the larger heritage community.	Heritage Toronto will continue to engage in a dialogue with the metro-area heritage community. A public meeting with John Wimbs has been scheduled for Aug 14/97.

## The Fundamental Principles

In beginning our discussion of the issues and options relating to the delivery of heritage services, Heritage Toronto would like to clearly state that it believes that there are some fundamental principles which must guide any discussion.

**Our fundamental principles and core assumptions include:**

- That there is an important and **central quality of life, and economic, role for heritage** within the community.
- That there is a **genuine municipal responsibility** to support and encourage the preservation and appreciation of heritage.
- That heritage management should include policies and programmes in support of heritage preservation, the promotion of heritage, heritage education and public awareness, heritage tourism, museums, historic sites, artifact collections, natural, built, and archaeological resources, monuments and memorials.
- That there is a requirement to manage heritage assets in a way which will deliver maximum public benefit within an environment of limited public sector resources
- That an effective heritage management system will be a **partnership which includes both staff and volunteers, and which maximizes community and private sector linkages.**
- That **heritage programming should be accessible and relevant** to a wide range of the public, and should inform and respond to opportunities to speak to current issues.
- That any system must provide for the traditional and specialized stewardship/trusteeship, educational and legislated roles of the heritage management sector, while seeking opportunities to maximize linkages with related sectors such as arts, archives, libraries.
- That **new heritage structures must provide for advocacy and a strong independent voice** for heritage.

These are the principles and assumptions on which Heritage Toronto has based its consideration of the options available with respect to delivering heritage services within the new Toronto.

## Some of the Key Issues to Consider

There are also key issues to be addressed when considering changes to the provision of heritage services in the new Toronto. These include:

- **The need for adequate time** to develop and implement new heritage management systems. There must be interim approaches that provide both an ongoing continuity of quality service, and the development, implementation, and refinements of longer term systems.
- The requirement for changes to the provision of heritage services to:
  - (1) respect the unique character of the diverse areas of the city; and
  - (2) respond creatively to variations in the extent, magnitude, and nature of heritage resources within the previous municipalities, and to the history of their local management. The new system must accommodate a wide range of flexible delivery mechanisms.
- The need for heritage services delivery to provide an appropriate balance of centralization/coordination, as well as critically important opportunities for local and community involvement, participation and responsiveness with respect to heritage issues.
- The requirement and responsibility to actively involve the heritage community and the public at large in the development of heritage management strategies.

## The Opportunities to be Maximized

While this time of great change brings with it a wide range of issues and challenges, we feel strongly that there are also some real opportunities to be maximized by the heritage community. By responding creatively and cohesively, the heritage community could emerge from this process being more energized, focussed and effective.

We see opportunities to:

- Respond to the larger challenges facing heritage, such as limited resources and funding, limited legislative controls, increased development pressures, etc.
- Build on the overall size, strength and significance of the heritage resource portfolio
- Allow for application of the best heritage practices on a city-wide basis
- Maximize shared resources on a city-wide basis
- Lobby for an appropriate and reasonable level of municipal support for heritage management given the significant role of heritage within the community.

Taking advantage of these and other opportunities will require the heritage community to work together cohesively to achieve the most positive end result.

## Our Vision for Heritage in the New Toronto

Heritage Toronto has put considerable energy over the past few years into developing a vision for the delivery of heritage services in the next century. Our Board has recently reaffirmed its belief in this vision. We would like to share it with you as the basis for our discussions on heritage services within the new Toronto.

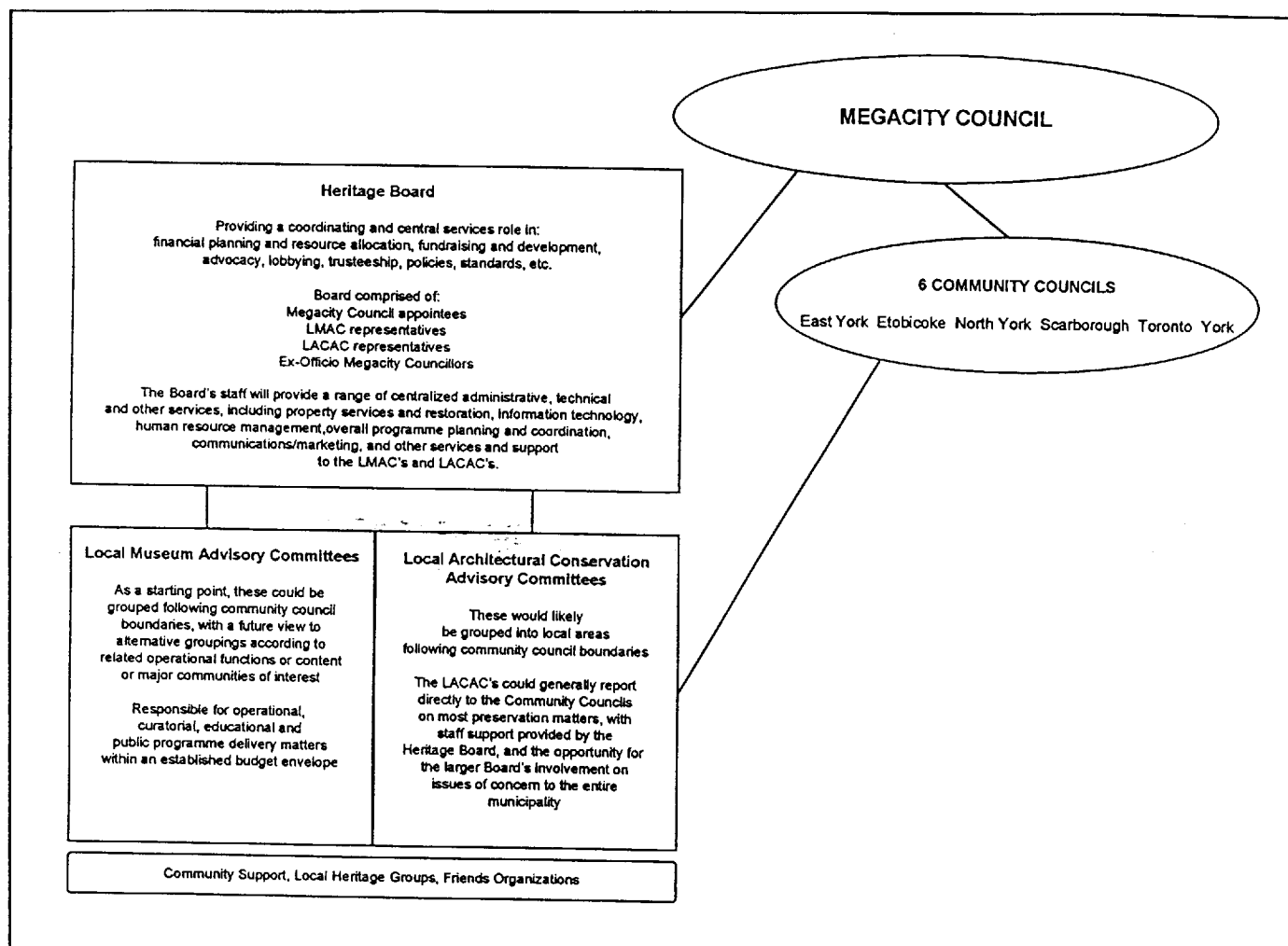
### The essential components of our vision are:

- *to interpret the urban landscape of the city - its buildings, monuments, artifacts, and natural features - to engage the citizens of Toronto and their visitors in the City's history and to develop a shared sense of place*
- *to work in collaboration with community groups to operate an evocative public history program using artifacts, historic sites and museums, built and natural landscapes, monuments and public art, to address a broad range of themes in Toronto's past. Public history programs, tours, and exhibitions should provide information about our past, as well as evoke and challenge*
- *to ensure responsible and creative trusteeship of built heritage, of monuments, artifacts and the municipality's historic site museums*
- *to continue, through an arm's length relationship, providing informed and independent advice to City Council, and with an agreed upon financial arrangement with City Council, to be directly responsible for the delivery and economic viability of heritage services.*



# How to Achieve the Vision

## A Framework for Heritage Service Delivery in the New Toronto:



This framework is intended as a starting point for integrating services within the new City of Toronto. The LACAC's would be set up according to community council boundaries, and would report on most matters directly to the Community Councils. Staff support for the LACAC's would be provided at the Heritage Board level, and there would be the opportunity for the larger Board to become involved on heritage preservation matters of interest or concern to the entire municipality. The Local Museum Advisory Committees would also likely be set up initially according to the Community Council boundaries to ensure continuity of services and local input, but would also provide the flexibility to allow future change that would respond to linking related operational functions and/or major communities of interest. This structure is designed to provide for maximum flexibility, and to naturally evolve to meet changing needs and priorities, to maximize linkages between interrelated functions, and to allow resources and energies to be shifted in order to meet specific goals.

## **The Key Principles of this Framework:**

The framework proposed above is based on key principles which we have identified as being integral to achieving the vision outlined previously in this report. These are:

### **1. HERITAGE SHOULD BE AT ARM'S LENGTH**

We feel it is critical that heritage services in the new Toronto be provided by an arm's length body with its own staff (rather than having heritage as part of one or more civic departments) and charitable status. Heritage at arm's length has the potential to:

- involve the community and local organizations in the most effective manner
- allow for independent advice and stronger advocacy positions;
- allow for greater cost efficiencies than may be possible within a City staffing establishment;
- provide greater opportunities for fundraising, membership and independent revenue generation than would be possible within a civic department; and
- provide the ability to maximize links between interrelated issues and functions, including preservation, public history, museums and public education.

### **2. HERITAGE SERVICES SHOULD BE INTEGRATED**

We have spent considerable time over the past few years examining various options for heritage service delivery. After exploring all of these options, we have strongly concluded that heritage is best served by a combined approach which integrates both built heritage (LACAC) and public history/museums functions (rather than the creation of separate bodies). This approach provides a range of opportunities for shared resources and mutually supportive activities.

### **3. HERITAGE SHOULD HAVE A DIRECT VOICE TO CITY COUNCIL**

We also feel that heritage should have a direct voice to the Council of the new municipality, possibly through the Community Councils (depending on their structure and responsibilities). This would provide heritage with the strong, independent voice it would not have if it reported through a City department.

### **4. HERITAGE SERVICES SHOULD BE STRUCTURED IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES WHILE MAINTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITY INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT AT ALL LEVELS**

We feel that the structure for heritage services should include provision for the efficiencies inherent in sharing central services (eg. administrative, operational, technical) while ensuring continued and meaningful local/community involvement and participation in areas such as programming and preservation activities.

## **The Building Blocks - How this Framework Would Operate:**

The proposed framework incorporates the following basic elements:

### **1. A STRONG FOUNDATION OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT**

A strong base of community support, as well as the support of volunteers, friends organizations and local heritage organizations.

### **2. LOCAL MUSEUM ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND LACAC'S TO PROVIDE CONTINUED NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Local Museum Advisory Committees and Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees, which as a starting point might be laid out geographically according to the boundaries for the six Community Councils (which are intended to follow as closely as possible the existing boundaries of the six municipalities to be amalgamated). Each of these Committees could have seven to nine members, plus one or two area megacity Councillors on each.

### **3. A CENTRAL, ARM'S LENGTH BOARD TO PROVIDE THE EFFICIENCY AND COORDINATION OF CENTRALIZED SERVICES**

An arm's length central Heritage Board, which will have its own staff that will provide technical, administrative and other related services to the local Committees. The Board of Trustees for the Heritage Board will be comprised of at-large members appointed by the Megacity Council, as well as members appointed from the Local Museum Advisory Committees and the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees. The Megacity Council would also appoint two or more of its members on an ex-officio basis.

Within the context of actual delivery of services to the public, we feel that there are real benefits to a system which would combine local operations with the efficiency and coordination of centralized administrative, technical and other services and support. This would involve:

- The supporting of local operations and service delivery supported by central services, utilizing allocated financial and human resources, but with authority to manage funds outside of the operating and capital budgets on a self-sustaining basis;
- Local Museum/Public History operations with responsibility for operational, curatorial, educational and public programme delivery matters, and the provision of any specialized services required;
- Local LACAC operations supported by Heritage Board Staff, with responsibility for listings, designations, heritage review, etc. Reporting would likely take place primarily at the Community Council level, and there would be linkages to the planning function. There would also be opportunities and benefits of direct reporting to the megacity council on major issues;
- The Heritage Board staff providing a coordinating and central services role in resource allocation, communications/marketing, programming, fundraising and development activities, property services, advocacy, lobbying, trusteeship, policy and standards.

**We strongly feel that this arm's length framework, combining the strengths of local autonomy with the inherent efficiencies of a central coordinating function, would deliver the most efficient service to the public.**

## Why we have Concluded that this Framework is the Best Approach:

In considering the various options for the delivery of heritage services, we considered several key issues that a structure for heritage services would have to address. We have summarized these in the following table.

Key Issue to Consider	Why This Framework is the Best Approach
How to maintain a balanced focus on the wide range of heritage related responsibilities from museums through preservation.	This framework links preservation and museum/heritage site interpretation within a single public history programming concept; Governance and staffing structures will follow a unified approach (with critical local advisory functions); organization would maintain a balanced focus by having Museum and LACAC functions supported by central services of a single heritage organization.
How to best provide community responsive heritage protection	The arm's length framework proposed maximizes the linkages and accessibility between the grassroots community and the heritage preservation function; continues the role of the Board as a barometer for public sentiment on heritage issues and allows wider public participation; increased opportunities for public education, neighbourhood and community history programs, supported by the central services of the central organization.
How to best ensure the protection of built heritage.	The arm's length organization with its own staff would have a strong independent voice for heritage, especially with greater emphasis on public education, early heritage identification, and area recognition and protection through community involvement; centralized staff supporting local LACAC's assures the availability on a municipality wide basis of specialized and technical knowledge and skills base.
How to develop long term public and corporate financial support in order to make heritage services more cost effective	Arm's length organization provides the opportunity to continue the currently available separate charitable status (rather than being part of the municipality) which greatly increases the potential for fundraising and partnerships; single organization provides more cost effectiveness, greater flexibility in application of resources; combines the economy and flexibility of a smaller, arm's length organization while being of a size to have professional/technical resources and coordinated operational and support systems.
How to increase the public profile of heritage and heritage issues.	An arm's length organization with enhanced fundraising and entrepreneurial ability will provide better public programming and marketing; the single organization will maintain a higher profile with integrated and linked approach to preservation issues and community relations;
What framework would provide the best opportunity to utilize community skills and volunteer resources.	The framework recommended will be very integrated into local communities, maximizing the use of community skills, and developing the use of volunteer resources to a greater extent than would be possible within a city department.
How to develop an orientation towards heritage tourism.	The framework recommended provides for coordinated marketing and programming approaches that contribute to developing a city-wide strategy for heritage tourism. Opportunities for linkages to related services and institutions.
How to develop a structure that provides for movement towards new and evolving approaches.	The framework we have recommended provides the flexibility to restructure operations in ways that maximize natural linkages and synergies. The arm's length organization will also have more ability to shift resources and energies to meet specific goals

Our consideration of the above issues has led us to the strong conclusion that the conceptual framework we are proposing represents the best approach for heritage in the new Toronto.

## The Issues Remaining to Resolve:

The framework we have proposed lays out the most basic structure for heritage service delivery in the new municipality. There remain a wide range of more detailed issues and considerations which will need to be addressed in order to develop a model that will function effectively as the voice of heritage in the new Toronto. Addressing these issues will require time and focussed energy on the part of all stakeholders.

The following are some of the issues that we have identified that would have to be resolved. You may have others, and we would like to hear your feedback on how the issues we have indicated might be effectively resolved within the basic framework set out.

The issues that must be resolved include:

- governance
- budget and financial management
- charitable status, donations, fundraising, sponsorships
- membership programmes
- human resource management - staff and volunteers
- trust accounts, special purpose donations
- City-held reserve funds (eg Municipal Heritage Fund, 45 Richmond Street West Fund)
- public history operations and public programming
- collections management and development
- preservation related by-laws (designation, heritage easement agreements, residential demolition, parking/loading, etc), legislation (Ontario Heritage Act, PR57, etc), policy and procedures (listing, application review, grants, easements), departmental relationships (planning, parks, property, clerks, legal, fire, etc), preservation policy and incentives, etc
- issues of scale of operations and functionality at a megacity level
- extent of dependance and/or emphasis on entrepreneurial approaches
- nature and extent of operational linkages with the arts and culture, and other related sectors

As we have said, these are all very serious issues, and resolving them to the satisfaction of all concerned will take a considerable amount of detailed focus and energy.

# 5. Managing the Transition to a Megacity

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## Goals for January 1, 1998

While we strongly feel that our vision and model as outlined in this paper represent the best approach for the future delivery of heritage services, we recognize that implementation will take time and involve considerable discussion with all the parties and stakeholders involved.

With this in mind, we have identified some key goals that we feel must be achieved by January 1, 1998 in order to ensure that heritage services do not suffer or decline during the transition period.

These goals are:

- Ensuring that current levels of service delivery and funding for heritage management within individual municipalities be maintained for the 1998 fiscal year.
- Ensuring that interim operating systems are in place which permit both the development and implementation of effective long term approaches, as well as an ongoing ability to provide continuity of quality service delivery over the transition period.
- Ensuring that a complete inventory of heritage facilities and resources, programmes and activities, including currently associated budgets, staffing (direct and indirect), sources of funding and support, etc. is in place.
- Ensuring that the overall vision/mission statement for the longer term be in place, along with a plan for widespread promotion of an awareness and understanding of the important central quality of life role of heritage within the community, and for development and implementation of a model for the delivery of heritage management services within the new city

## A Possible Next Step

As we have said, we recognize that the vision and model outlined in this discussion paper will require consideration and refinement by the large number of stakeholders within the municipalities to be amalgamated.

In order to accomplish this in the most neutral and effective manner, Heritage Toronto would agree that the Transition Team should strongly consider the possibility of securing external, independent involvement/assistance in the preparation of a detailed heritage sector report to the newly elected Council.

We thank you for taking the time to read our vision for the future delivery of heritage services in the new Toronto.

Our strongest hope in sharing our vision for heritage in the new Toronto is that we will convey the message **that heritage truly matters to all of us.**

Heritage isn't just about saving a few old buildings among downtown's shiny office towers, or keeping a few historic houses or museums open for schoolchildren. Heritage is an integral part of the fabric of our City, part of what makes Toronto so unique and livable.

The next several months will bring special challenges for all of us who care strongly about ensuring that heritage retains its strong presence in our City. Everybody involved in the "megacity" process - the Transition Team, the local Councils facing amalgamation, and the larger civic service - faces daunting challenges to ensure that levels of service throughout all of the various municipal sectors are maintained during the transition period.

Because of this, it will take considerable diligence and energy to ensure that heritage receives the time, attention and resources that this critical function requires.

Please get involved and let the Transition Team and your elected officials know that heritage matters to you. The Transition Team and the local municipalities are planning a number of consultation sessions. We would ask that everybody who is interested in heritage take part in these consultations to make their views on the importance of heritage known.

**Heritage Toronto would like to hear your feedback** on the vision for heritage that we have presented in this discussion paper. Please call, write, fax or e-mail your comments to either our Chair, Marion Joppe, or the Acting Managing Director, Mr. George Waters at 205 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1N2, Telephone (416) 392-6827, Fax (416) 392-6834 or e-mail at [info@torontohistory.on.ca](mailto:info@torontohistory.on.ca).

We hope you will agree that by making all of our voices heard, and sharing information and ideas, that together we can achieve the best possible future for our past.