Hello Mr. Mayor and members of the Executive Policy Committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. It was brought to our attention recently that funding for housing that filters down to our community has been removed from the 2005 budget. It is to this concern that I wish to speak.

My name is Sue Ziemski and I sit on the board of William Whyte Residents Association as chair of their Housing Committee. I have lived in the William Whyte Neighbourhood on Redwood Avenue since 1978 and I choose to stay in this neighbourhood and fight for its' future to restore it to the wonderful rich neighbourhood it once was.

I have seen the gradual decay of the community over the last decade and a half, particularly from1990 through till 2003. In 1978 when my husband and I first purchased our home on Redwood, this neighbourhood was alive with homeowners proud of their heritage and of their homes. They took great care in preserving what they had worked so hard to attain. The homes were immaculate and gardens abounded and the streets were full of people strolling the sidewalks and conversing with their neighbours. In 1990 things started to spiral downwards due to the lack of attention paid to the neighbourhood by the city. City Inspector's positions were cut. These inspectors were mandated to ensure the safety of the residences and therefore the people who occupy the homes. With fewer inspectors to enforce rules the neighbourhood fell prey to slum Landlords. William Whyte has its share of these questionable landlords and their gradual and systematic contamination of those around them as many homeowners gave up spending dollars on repairing their homes. With this state of mind, the general value of the neighbourhood declined. But in 2001 the City turned the lights back on and we became a "Neighbourhood Improvement Zone". City dollars started to be allocated to William Whyte and into the areas that had the potential to be leveraged the greatest. Within a short 3 years we can see and more importantly we feel the difference in our neighbourhood. Homes are being repaired, eyesores are being torn down, slum landlords are getting the message, gardens are springing up and residents are back out strolling the neighbourhood. Why you ask. Well, very simple. This is a direct result of the spark of hope that the city's dollars injected into the area turning into the reality of homes being repaired. One of the incredible programs that your funding supported is our Neighbourhood fix-it. The city has funded $30,000 for William Whyte each year for the past 4 years. Through diligent administration by NECRC $1,000 grants are given to randomly selected entrants towards any exterior renovation of their home. Now $30,000 isn't much but the Province matches it and running for it's 4th year we have seen those grant dollars leverage by 400%. Not only do grant recipients spend far more than their $1,000 grant but you should see the effect on the other neighbours. When one neighbours sees the house next door with a new front sidewalk, fresh coat of paint or an new fence they feel uplifted and inspired to put their own efforts into repairing their own home. If you take a drive down any street in William Whyte you will see tangibles of this fix-it phenomena that started 4 years ago.

There are so many more reasons that we need the city allocation of dollars to housing in the targeted neighbourhoods like William Whyte preserved. The infill-housing program, the rehabilitation of homes in the neighbourhood, the Tenant Landlord Cooperation program. There is so much that the city's allocation means to all of us in William Whyte. We can not take another decade of having the city turn it's back on us.

Please put us back as a line item in your budget.

Thank you.
Sue Ziemski
Chair of Housing Committee
William Whyte Residents Association