**“Regenerating Urban Neighborhoods”: Sample Interview Request Letter**

*NOTE: Text that is subject to change for different interview subjects has been placed in square brackets [ …]*

Dear [ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ],

My name is Martin Horak. I am an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario. I am conducting an academic study of policies aimed at helping distressed neighborhoods in the City of Toronto, and I would like to conduct an interview with you to discuss your insights and experiences in relation to this topic.

The study that I am conducting aims to help us understand the factors that shape public policy responses to neighborhood distress in Toronto. The study examines recent neighborhood revitalization policies, with a detailed focus on initiatives in two neighborhoods: Regent Park and Scarborough Village. The study is funded by a grant from University of Western Ontario’s Academic Development Fund. The study is part of a cross-national research project involving 21 academics, who are analyzing neighborhood regeneration policies in 18 cities in 11 countries. I expect to complete my study in November 2008; the result will be one or more published academic papers.

As part of my study, I am conducting confidential interviews with key individuals, such as you, who have been involved in neighborhood regeneration issues in Toronto. I aim to interview a broad range of people, who I am selecting based on my review of written documents, or based on referrals from other interviewees. [I selected you based on [*insert appropriate rationale*]. Given your experience as a policy analyst for Toronto’s Community and Neighborhood Services Division], I would like to focus our discussion in particular on the following issues: [1. The evolution of the city-wide Strong Neighborhoods Strategy, and the involvement of C&NS in this process; 2. Your understanding of the key challenges facing distressed neighborhoods in the City; and 3. Your assessment of the state of intergovernmental support for neighborhood regeneration policies in Toronto].

The interview may provide you with a useful opportunity to reflect on the issues I mention above. Furthermore, I hope that the paper(s) I write as a result of this research may provide you with some new insights into the dynamics of neighborhood regeneration in the City. If you would like the results of the research made available to you, please let me know during our interview and I will make them available once they are ready. I anticipate no risks to you as a result of participating in the interview.

I ask for about 45 minutes to an hour of your time. The interview will be confidential and you will not be identified by name in the resulting published work, but rather by a descriptive label that you will help me to choose at the end of the interview (eg., “municipal official”). At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to sign a form saying that you have read this request letter and consent to be interviewed. The form will also give you the option of consenting to tape recording of the interview. If you decline taping, I will take notes.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or terminate the interview at any time. Interview notes / tape recordings will be securely stored, and will be used only for this study.

Please do let me know if you could meet with me [sometime during the next three weeks]. Many thanks in advance for considering my request. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at the coordinates below.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Horak

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If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact:

The Office of Research Ethics

The University of Western Ontario

519-661-3036