

Clause embodied in Report No. 5 of the Administration Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on June 24, 25 and 26, 2003.

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**Next Steps in the Redevelopment of the
St. Lawrence Market North Property
(Ward 28 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale)**

(City Council on June 24, 25 and 26, 2003, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (May 28, 2003) from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek City Council's endorsement of a set of steps that would lead to the formulation of a preferred redevelopment option or options for the St. Lawrence Market North property.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Commissioner of Corporate Services be directed to form a Working Committee, in a manner as set out in Section 3 of this report, to provide a forum for community and City staff input into a set of planning and design guidelines for redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property;
- (2) the Commissioner of Corporate Services be directed to report back to the Administration Committee in the first quarter of 2004 with the results of the Working Committee; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

This report follows up on a 2002 report from the Commissioner of Corporate Services which raised the possibility of redeveloping the City-owned St. Lawrence Market North property at 92 Front Street East. The subject property is a prime redevelopment site, currently occupied by a

one-storey block-style structure dating from the 1970s. Vastly underutilized in terms of development potential, the St. Lawrence Market North lands form part of a string of heritage or cultural properties along or near Front Street East, including the Hummingbird Centre, the Distillery District (Gooderham and Worts), the new police station at Front and Parliament, and the First Parliament Site at 265-271 Front Street East and 65 Berkeley Street.

In 1999, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) began to publicly advocate redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property. The SLNA elected a subcommittee known as the St. Lawrence Community and Farmers (North) Market Redevelopment Initiative (the St. Lawrence NMI), whose goal was redevelopment of the North Market as a multipurpose facility for farmers, the community, general commerce and other users. The City's Facilities and Real Estate staff provided support and direction to the SLNA, but at the same time, made it clear that any redevelopment of the North Market property would require strong stakeholders' support and a supportable business case.

The St. Lawrence NMI established a steering committee made up of representatives from an array of stakeholders, and held a series of meetings to develop its vision of the North Market redevelopment. Through consultation with various community groups, the steering committee produced a preferred redevelopment option that it refers to as "three up, three down".

The SLNA's "three up, three down" proposal consists of a building rising three storeys above grade, with three storeys below grade. Each of the above- and below-grade floor plates has approximately 2,600 m² of gross building area. Below grade, 239 parking spaces are distributed over three levels. The proposal's above-grade functional program consists of:

- (i) a Farmer's Market/multipurpose hall on the ground floor and mezzanine levels;
- (ii) a trade/convention centre on the second floor;
- (iii) office space or more convention space on the third floor; and
- (iv) mechanical space above.

Both the SLNA and the St. Lawrence NMI are members of the South East Downtown Economic Redevelopment Initiative (SEDERI), which commissioned a feasibility report and design report to substantiate the "three up, three down" vision. These reports were funded by Human Resources Development Canada, and included a November 2001 report by Spears and Associates Inc. dealing with financial feasibility, and an April 2002 Concept Design Report prepared by Bregman + Hamann Architects.

Subsequent to the community's issuance of these feasibility and design reports, Council adopted Clause No. 14 of Report No. 10 of The Administration Committee, entitled "Studying the Redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North Building (Ward 28 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale)" at its Special Meeting held on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2002. In doing so, Council:

- (1) approved in principle the concept of redeveloping the St. Lawrence Market North Building;

- (2) directed “the Commissioner of Corporate Services to study redevelopment options with due consideration to transitional planning issues that optimize the accommodation of existing tenants for the St. Lawrence Market North Building and, after consultation with affected stakeholders, report back to the Administration Committee in the spring of 2003 on a preferred redevelopment option”; and
- (3) authorized and directed the appropriate City officials to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

This report follows up on Recommendations No. (2) and (3) noted above.

Comments:

- (1) Review of the SLNA/SEDERI “three up, three down” proposal:

Facilities and Real Estate (F&RE) staff met with counterparts from several City departments to review the “three up, three down” proposal, dated March 2002, produced for SLNA/SEDERI by Bregman and Hamann Architects.

Departments which contributed feedback on the “three up, three down” proposal, as well as some criteria for site redevelopment included: Urban Development Services (UDS)/Community Planning, Works and Emergency Services (WES)/Technical Services and Transportation Services, the Toronto Parking Authority (TPA), Community and Neighbourhood Services/Shelter, Housing and Support, and from Economic Development, Culture and Tourism (EDCT), both Heritage Preservation Services and Parks and Recreation Policy and Development.

The “three up, three down” proposal showcases the effort, care and community dedication of the SLNA/SEDERI collective in regard to the St. Lawrence Market North site. F&RE staff note that the community and the City have many shared development objectives, including:

- (i) heritage sensitivity (with regard to the many heritage buildings nearby);
- (ii) respect for the 23 metre height limit specified in the zoning by-law;
- (iii) limiting the noise impact of the Farmer’s Market North on adjacent uses;
- (iv) contributing towards the management/solution of parking and loading problems in the immediate area;
- (v) retaining the Farmer’s Market function on the ground floor of a St. Lawrence Market North building on Saturdays;
- (vi) retaining the Antique Market function on Sundays;
- (vii) finding a suitable temporary relocation for the Farmer’s Market North vendors during redevelopment of the site;

- (viii) having the Toronto Parking Authority operate the below-grade parking that could form part of site redevelopment; and
- (ix) ensuring that the overall development is financially viable.

City staff noted that some of the shared objectives were reflected in the proposal, but that there was also some divergence on how some development objectives ought to be met on the site. The comments of City staff are set out below:

(a) Uses:

Beyond certain givens, such as the placement of parking and loading below grade, and the use of the ground floor for a Farmer's Market on Saturdays, it is recommended that the City examine and consider a wide range of uses. Uses to be considered would have to fully respect the provisions of the Official Plan and zoning by-law, be mutually compatible, be marketable, take full advantage of the location attributes of the site, limit the City's development risk, and maximize net present value to the City taxpayers.

While F&RE staff agree with the ideas of parking below grade and a Farmer's Market at grade as shown in the "three up, three down" scheme, the feasibility study commissioned by SLNA/SEDERI does not appear to lend much support to the uses proposed above the ground floor (i.e., trade show and office space).

It should be noted that the City already owns a \$180 million trade and consumer show facility, the National Trade Centre (NTC), built in 1997. The operators of the NTC have commented that the SLNA/SEDERI feasibility study restricted its research of the trade show industry to a few facilities only; consequently, the SLNA/SEDERI study failed to recognize the potential for direct conflict and competition between two City-owned facilities in an already struggling industry. The NTC notes that it hosts many smaller consumer shows of the type that the SLNA/SEDERI study focuses on, and that such competition "would not be economically advantageous to the City's bottom-line".

The NTC advises that, beyond the November 2001 issue date of the feasibility study, the trade show industry has suffered substantial losses of revenue and an economic decline. There is "a surfeit of show space and fewer shows to fill them, aggravated by the post 9/11 economy" and by the economic fallout from SARS.

Beyond issues of marketability and competition with existing City-owned facilities, City staff and the NTC have a number of operational concerns related to the proposed trade show space, including:

- (i) the sufficiency of parking relative to the demand that a trade show space would generate;
- (ii) the lack of loading facilities, whereas loading is a key and onerous component of trade show operations; and

- (iii) the marshalling of large transport trucks to serve trade shows, especially in the middle of the night, and their lack of compatibility with adjacent residential uses by generating noise and blocking road allowances.

However, the SLNA advise that their notion of “trade show” differs from that contemplated by the NTC, and that consequently, the concerns expressed above would not be valid. Some discussion between City staff, the NTC and the SLNA would be useful to clarify the SLNA’s proposed trade show use in relation to that understood by the City and the NTC.

The SLNA have subsequently advised that the idea of a trade show is not a fixed element of their proposal. Their goal is simply to program a viable Monday-to-Friday use for the Farmer’s Market ground floor space, one that would be fully compatible with the Farmer’s Market layout, and with limited impact on parking and loading requirements. Further discussion with City staff would be beneficial in this regard.

Another element of discussion with City staff should deal with retail uses. The “three up, three down” proposal shows new retail shops in the ground floor lobby of the existing St. Lawrence Hall, without any street frontage or visibility. City staff consider these retail uses to have limited viability precisely because they lack street frontage and visibility. Heritage Preservation Services also considers the proposed retail uses to be problematic, since significant interventions the heritage fabric of St. Lawrence Hall would be required. Consequently, Heritage Preservation Services do not support the retail conversion of the centre core of the ground floor of that building.

- (b) Site access and circulation:

The “three up, three down” proposal shows a two-way underground parking access ramp off King Street East located immediately to the west of St. Lawrence Hall, approximately 57m west of Jarvis Street.

Staff from F&RE, UDS/Community Planning, EDCT/Heritage Preservation Services, and EDCT/Parks and Recreation Policy and Development all agree that the proposed entrance to the underground parking on King Street East is not desirable, as it would interfere with the substantial heritage streetscape and pedestrian activity on the south side of King Street and would consume a substantial part of the Market Lane Pedestrian Mall, a key visual and pedestrian corridor between Front Street East and King Street East. As an alternative, staff suggest that Jarvis Street become the access point to the underground parking garage, and not King Street East.

The Toronto Parking Authority also states that if a single vehicular access location were used, Jarvis Street would be preferable.

WES staff advise that, once a full development proposal is arrived at, the traffic impacts of the development on the adjacent road system would have to be assessed through the submission of a Traffic Impact Study. Activity related to passenger pick-up/drop-off and charter buses, if any, would also have to be assessed in this study. This work would have to be completed by a qualified transportation consultant to the satisfaction of Transportation Services.

Further, once a finalized site plan is submitted, WES would require a detailed assessment of the site layout in order to determine any operational concerns with respect to traffic access and circulation. Issues such as ease of access to/from the site of all vehicles, conflict points, turnaround areas and dimensional requirements for driveway aisles and parking spaces would have to be reviewed. In addition, the suitability of any pedestrian connections/crossings proposed within public road allowances would have to be reviewed in terms of safety and distance from signalized intersections. This could be included as part of the required Traffic Impact Study.

(c) Parking:

Both City staff and the SLNA/SEDERI seem to agree on the desirability of having the TPA operate a below-grade parking lot in the redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North lands. However, the SLNA/SEDERI “three up, three down” proposal does not match the TPA’s needs or possibly WES’ requirements.

The TPA notes that the “three up, three down” proposal appears to have three levels of parking containing 77 or 81 spaces per level (a total of 239 spaces), whereas TPA’s initial assessment indicates that about 150 spaces (two levels) would be appropriate. This would be confirmed through a parking demand study undertaken by the TPA, which would look at its parking needs both on-site and in the vicinity. In the TPA’s initial assessment of the SLNA/SEDERI scheme, the proposed garage would be about a break-even financial proposition. The parking revenue would not likely yield a large net return, and would not be able to fund certain desirable below-grade functions such as loading docks.

In addition, TPA’s design standards require:

- (i) sloped parking garage floors with integrated ramps, while the SLNA/SEDERI proposal has flat floors with connecting ramps;
- (ii) specific column spacing (not shown in the SLNA/SEDERI proposal);
- (iii) a ramp entrance to the parking garage which is three lanes wide (rather than the two indicated in the SLNA/SEDERI scheme), to allow for vehicular stacking and redundancy during periods of repairs; and
- (iv) an additional pedestrian access point at the west side of the garage (not shown in the SLNA/SEDERI proposal).

WES advises that the proposed number of parking spaces must adequately satisfy the Zoning By-law requirement and the estimated parking demand generated at full-build out of the site. WES would also require a parking demand study, to be submitted by a transportation consultant. The study would have to examine parking demand generated by any proposed development, and should also review other nearby off-site parking opportunities in the assessment.

(d) Loading:

The small loading area proposed along Jarvis Street in the “three up, three down” proposal will probably not be adequate for the Farmer’s Market and other contemplated uses. WES notes that the loading arrangements will have to comply with the Zoning By-law and must adequately service the development. In any redevelopment of the lands, all loading vehicles would have to be able to enter and exit the site in a forward motion and complete all turning activities entirely within the site.

The noise impacts associated with loading activities would also need to be managed and contained, particularly given the site’s adjacency to high-density residential developments. It is worth exploring the possibility of creating a large loading area on the first level below grade (under which parking would be located), although the TPA notes that a large below grade loading area combined with commercial parking might be very difficult to achieve technically and financially.

(e) Urban Design, Massing and Height, Streetscape:

In the late 1980s, the former City of Toronto Property Department developed a set of planning and design guidelines for a proposal call regarding the lands at 103-109 and 139-151 King Street East, located just north-west of the St. Lawrence Market North property. These guidelines focused on topics such as façade proportions, build-to planes, angular planes, entrances, relationship to adjacent open spaces and sidewalks, construction materials, servicing, parking and loading. The planning and design guidelines for 103-109 and 139-151 King Street East were instrumental in the successful redevelopment of the property from both a commercial and aesthetic perspective.

F&RE staff note that such guidelines are not included in the SLNA/SEDERI feasibility and design reports, and consequently, are not reflected in the “three up, three down” proposal. In the opinion of City staff, the “three up, three down” design needs substantial fine-tuning to achieve a better fit with its surroundings. As such, the production of planning and design guidelines would be a beneficial, “value-added” exercise. These guidelines could focus on massing (roof lines, setbacks, and step-backs), surface (façade) and sectional building proportions (e.g., the covered pedestrian arcade), streetscape treatments, and building materials, among other topics.

(f) Heritage compatibility, architectural expression:

With regards to architectural expression, UDS/Planning’s view is that the design of the new building at St. Lawrence Market North should not replicate historic architecture, but, rather, should make modern reference to it.

EDCT/Heritage Preservation Services’ concerns are that, while the basic mass and height of the proposed building and the linkage to St. Lawrence Hall seem appropriate, the design details need more work. For example, in the view of Heritage Preservation Services, the roof design seems excessively complex.

Issues of heritage compatibility and architectural expression could certainly be addressed through the development of planning and design guidelines, as described above.

(g) Surrounding open spaces:

EDCT/Parks and Recreation Policy and Development notes that the proposed parking garage in the “three up, three down” proposal encroaches under the Market Lane Pedestrian Mall. This encroachment is not desirable to EDCT/Parks and Recreation Policy and Development, and is not supportable by WES in the absence of a substantial rationale to demonstrate why it is necessary.

WES cautions that there are underground services and utilities under the Market Lane Pedestrian Mall, which would be affected by encroachment of an underground parking structure. While these services and utilities can be relocated in theory, an investigation of the implications and awareness of the constraints must take place.

In addition, if below grade parking were to be agreed to, the parking structure would have to be constructed to bear the weight load of the soil depth of the park, which is at minimum 1.5 metres deep. EDCT advises that:

- (i) title to the below grade portion of land should be severed and sold to the operator of the parking facility;
- (ii) the City would have to be indemnified from any repairs or damages incurred by the parking structure; and
- (iii) whoever is developing the property would be responsible for full reinstatement of Market Lane Pedestrian Mall to the satisfaction of EDCT.

In summary, any redevelopment of the North Market property would require concurrent consideration of the Market Lane Pedestrian Mall in terms of its design, ownership in the case of encroachment, and jurisdiction.

(3) Next steps:

As demonstrated in Section 2 above, City staff recognize that there are a number of good ideas in the SLNA/SEDERI proposal, but find that some ideas could use further discussion and refinement.

There is a need for intensive, structured dialogue involving the community and City staff, to ensure that the redevelopment vision is a shared one. The dialogue should focus on matters including use, site access and circulation, parking, urban design, massing, height and streetscape; heritage compatibility and architectural expression; and relationship to surrounding open spaces. It is recommended that a Working Committee be struck to achieve this.

Objective of the Working Committee:

The objective of the Working Committee would be to provide a prompt and efficient forum for community and City staff input into a set of planning and design guidelines for redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property.

Participants:

It is proposed that the Working Committee be composed of:

- (a) Two designates from St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association;
- (b) Two designates from St. Lawrence North Market Initiative;
- (c) One designate from the South Market Merchants' Association;
- (d) One designate from the North Market;
- (e) One designate from the St. Lawrence BIA;
- (f) One designate from Citizens for the Old Town;
- (g) One designate from Heritage Toronto;
- (h) City staff representation from the following departments:
- (i) Corporate Services - F&RE - Business and Strategic Innovation;
- (j) Corporate Services - F&RE - Real Estate Services;
- (k) UDS – Community Planning;
- (l) UDS – Urban Design;
- (m) EDCT – Heritage Preservation Services;
- (n) EDCT – Parks and Recreation Policy and Development;
- (o) EDCT – Economic Development;
- (p) EDCT – Culture;
- (q) Works and Emergency Services - Development Engineering;
- (r) Works and Emergency Services - Traffic Planning;
- (s) Toronto Parking Authority; and
- (t) Representation from Councillor Pam McConnell's office;

Schedule and Work Programme:

The Working Committee would likely convene four or five times over a condensed time frame in July and August 2003 at mutually convenient times. The following matters would be included for discussion at the meetings:

- (i) background information - e.g., Official Plan and zoning provisions, land easements or restrictions, existing urban design guidelines;
- (ii) site access and circulation;
- (iii) parking;
- (iv) loading and other servicing needs;
- (v) urban design, massing and height, aesthetics, streetscape;
- (vi) heritage/architectural sensitivity;
- (vii) treatment of surrounding open spaces;
- (viii) management of development impacts – including noise; and
- (ix) potential uses.

The schedule, agendas and detailed work programmes for the meetings would be set by the designate from F&RE/Business and Strategic Innovation, in consultation with the rest of the Working Committee members. It is anticipated that a facilitator would chair the meetings, and that decisions would be arrived at through consensus of the Working Committee.

Product of the Working Committee:

In September and October 2003, the Working Committee's conclusions and findings regarding planning and development parameters for the St. Lawrence Market North site would be transformed into document form, including graphics, an effort that would involve the co-operation and contribution of all participating committee members. The document would be completed in time for the celebration of the 200 anniversary of St. Lawrence Market in late fall, 2003. Council's endorsement of the planning and development parameters would be sought in the first quarter of 2004, so that they could subsequently form part of an RFQ or RFP issued by the City for redevelopment of the site.

Once the planning and development parameters are completed and approved by Council, Facilities and Real Estate would solicit the Working Committee's input on a strategy for the temporary relocation of existing North Market tenants who would be affected by redevelopment.

Conclusions:

The community neighbouring the St. Lawrence Market North site, represented by SLNA and SEDERI, has created a positive momentum for the redevelopment of North Market site. In order to build upon this momentum, and to collectively define the parameters for development of the site, it is recommended that the Commissioner of Corporate Services be directed:

- (a) to form a Working Committee to provide a forum for community and City staff input into a set of planning and design guidelines for redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property; and
- (b) to report back to the Administration Committee in the first quarter of 2004 with the conclusions and findings of the Working Committee.

Contacts:

Bruce Bowes, Executive Director, Facilities and Real Estate Division
Phone (416) 397-4156, fax (416) 392-4828, e-mail bbowes@toronto.ca

Jodie Parmar, Director, Business and Strategic Innovation Unit, Facilities and Real Estate Division
Phone (416) 338-1295, fax (416) 392-4828, e-mail jparmar@toronto.ca

Anne Milchberg, Manager, Development and Portfolio Planning,
Facilities and Real Estate Division
Phone (416) 397-4437, fax (416) 392-4828, e-mail amilchbe@toronto.ca