

 **TORONTO** Staff Report

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December 15, 2004

To: Planning and Transportation Committee

From: Commissioner of Urban Development Services

Subject: Union Station Precinct Urban Design Study Budget Submission  
61-71 Front Street West  
Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 28

Purpose:

To respond to City Council's request at its meeting on November 30, December 1 and 2, 2004, for the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to report as soon as possible to the Planning and Transportation Committee and the Budget Advisory Committee, as part of the 2005 budget review process on a budget, terms of reference and continuing the Master Plan with an urban design study for Union Station which would lead to an Urban Design Plan.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The financial impact in adopting this report will necessitate increasing the 2005 EMT Recommended UDS Capital Budget by \$0.500 million in order to undertake the Union Station Urban Design Study. The 2005 EMT Recommended UDS Budget will therefore increase from \$8.308 million to \$8.808 million, with the incremental increase of \$0.500 to be debt financed.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Planning and Transportation Committee:

- (1) recommend to the Budget Advisory Committee that the 2005 EMT Recommended UDS Capital Budget be increased \$0.500 million to undertake this study, be considered during the Budget Advisory Committee review of the 2005 EMT Recommended UDS Capital Budget;
- (2) authorize the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to develop Terms of Reference for the study within the context outlined in this report and retain such

outside consultants as may be required to assist in the preparation of the Urban Design Plan to ensure that the work can be completed in a timely manner;

- (3) that the Commissioner of Urban Development Services be requested to report back to the Planning and Transportation Committee on the completion of the study.

Background:

City Council at its meeting on November 30, December 1 and 2, 2004 adopted the Master Plan for Union Station setting out a comprehensive direction for the restoration, development and operation of Union Station. The development of the Master Plan for Union Station included a comprehensive public consultation process. Council asked the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to report as soon as possible to the Budget Advisory Committee and the Planning and Transportation Committee as part of the 2005 budget review process on a budget, terms of reference and implementation of the Master Plan with an urban design study for Union Station and its environs. Any proposed work arising from the Union Station Urban Design study would be outside the scope of the agreement negotiated with the Union Pearson Group and any proposals developed through this study should be co-ordinated with, but in no way delay the implementation of work within the Station.

It should also be recognized that the Union Station Urban Design Plan resulting from this study must be coordinated with the conditions of the Heritage Easement Agreement for Union Station which is held by Parks Canada. In addition, further study should be undertaken to determine whether or not the Precinct area merits Heritage Conservation District status.

Comments:

Introduction to the Urban Design Study and Related Work

The Council-adopted Master Plan resulting from an independent peer review identifies four “Big Moves” intended to be bold statements to ensure the realization of the future vision for Union Station. These moves summarize the vision for Union Station contained within the Master Plan and are entrenched in the policies for the development and maintenance of the Station. The moves are fundamental to ensuring that the Station is revitalized in such a way that the bold initiatives outlined in the Master Plan can both incubate and materialize.

Union Station and its surrounding context are vital to the future development of the City. A complementary vision for the surrounding context of built form, streets, connections and open spaces is fundamental to the functioning of the Station complex and to reinforcing its civic design and prominence. Union Station lies at the centre of an east/west cultural corridor stretching between Fort York and the Distillery District. The implications of this need further study and will impact the recommendations of the urban

design study. Further consideration of the appropriate qualifications, location, form and character of any development above the Station complex must also be given consideration within an Union Station Urban Design plan.

The urban design, heritage and related transportation planning tasks that comprise this work will consolidate planning and design details relating to connections to roads, sidewalks, transit facilities, open spaces, treatment of sidewalks and roads, pedestrian and bicycle routes, linkages to other precincts, and provisions for public art and cultural facilities. These tasks will result in design and planning guidelines that address setbacks, build-to lines, building heights and envelopes, the nature of interior and exterior open spaces, weather protection, on-site parking, entrances to the Station, pedestrian routing/wayfinding, innovative pedestrian interfaces, definition of a streetscape design vocabulary and opportunities for public art.

The study area for this work should generally be bounded by Wellington Street to the north, Simcoe Street (and future extension) to the west, Lake Shore Boulevard to the south and Yonge Street to the east. Proposed treatments to the public realm should be coordinated to connect physically and visually with adjacent precincts and key public buildings and destinations to heighten the civic prominence of Union Station as a landmark, transportation gateway and link between the downtown and the Waterfront. The study will also need to recognize the work undertaken by staff to date at the direction of Council for the Lower Yonge and Lower Bay Pedestrian Promenade Plan which is undergoing technical review. The overall study should serve to complement and embrace this work.

## Key Components of the Union Station Urban Design Study and Related Work

### An Integrated and Enhanced Public Realm

The pedestrian environment within Union Station will be upgraded by the Union Pearson Group (UPG) working in collaboration with the City and all stakeholders, including GO Transit, VIA Rail and the TTC. The areas outside the Station also need strategic improvements to pedestrian facilities to better connect the surrounding City to the Station. UPG and the City are undertaking a joint Pedestrian Study that is analyzing the existing and future volumes and movements of pedestrians to and from the Station and defining areas where improvements need to be made. This information will be critical input to the final Urban Design Plan outlining the parameters of critical at grade and below grade connections to the Station. Additional transportation planning work will be required to further inform the urban design exercise.

The overall goal is to create a Union Station Precinct that is well designed and recognizable as a unique place within the city. The Urban Design Plan will describe how the Union Station precinct should be upgraded to meet its full potential as a link between the waterfront and the downtown. It will illustrate how these improvements should be made, while addressing technical requirements and providing detailed cost estimates and funding options for their implementation. The Urban Design Plan will outline a phasing

strategy and priorities for these improvements. Many of the projects illustrated in the Urban Design Plan will be taken to a level of detail that makes them ready for final design and implementation.

#### Development Potential within the Union Station Urban Design Study Area

Lands within the vicinity of Union Station, including the trainshed and the unbuilt blocks of the Railway Lands East to the south of the Station represent a tremendous opportunity to create development with unparalleled accessibility to all modes of transportation. There are a number of projects within the study area which are either approved and under construction or which are under active consideration. The review of these development proposals, including the potential to incorporate an inter-city bus terminal within the precinct, needs to be co-ordinated with this study.

The Urban Design Plan study will also examine the redevelopment potential of the existing trainshed within the development context of adjacent lands and define the outside limits of any building envelope for new construction over the tracks. This study will need to co-ordinate any development options above the trainshed with GO Transit's and Parks Canada's plans for the restoration of the trainshed.

#### Other Issues to be Addressed

It is intended that the role of a consultant would be to prepare an Urban Design Plan responding to the following key issues and tasks. In addition to undertaking the study including the tasks outlined below, the consultant would be expected to lead a significant community consultation process:

- co-ordination with other civic objectives and ongoing programs including the Clean and Beautiful City program, PATH connections, an integrated GO and inter-city bus terminal and the TTC Union Station South Platform work
- identification of opportunities for joint funding/co-ordination with other projects
- review of sources of funding (including S. 37 funds, provincial and federal sources) and recommendations on how to lever any such funds to achieve the findings of the study
- co-ordination of issues related to the heritage designation of buildings within the study area and the potential of a Heritage Conservation District
- outreach/liaison with civic and corporate partners
- study of possibilities for improvement of taxi operations and integration of taxis into the "fabric of the station" and recommendations for location of taxi facilities within the Union Station precinct

- study of possibilities of providing “state of the art” cycling facilities at Union Station, modelled on a review of best practices at other successful rail stations
- creation of a “Pedestrian Sensitive Area” within the Union Station Precinct
- review of innovative approaches/best practices aimed at creating a plaza on Front Street that gives priority to pedestrian and Station-related activity
- review of innovative means of accommodating pedestrian mid-block and intersection crossing activity
- review of innovative approaches to create a plaza on the south side of the Station on Bremner Boulevard adjacent to the Air Canada Centre
- co-ordination of public meetings
- presentation requirements and attendance at public meetings as well as Committee and Council meetings
- preparation of all presentation materials and reports

More detailed terms of reference and a clear list of deliverables would be defined in the Request for Proposal process.

#### Work Program

It would be the intention to proceed immediately with drafting detailed terms of reference and then issue the necessary Request for Proposals through the usual City procedures to select qualified consultant(s) upon receiving funding approval for the study. It is anticipated that the work could be initiated by May 2005 and would involve an early outreach to the public and stakeholders in the area by the beginning of summer. During the summer period significant work could be completed in terms of preparing materials for public presentation in the third quarter of 2005 and completion of the overall project by the end of the fourth quarter. It is anticipated that the cost to undertake this work would be \$500,000.

#### Conclusions:

Preparation of an Urban Design Study leading to an Urban Design Plan for the Union Station Precinct was identified by the Master Plan as a high priority. Given the high profile nature of this project, this overall program will require a team with considerable urban design, heritage and transportation planning expertise as well as public consultation skills. It will therefore be necessary to seek outside consulting services to ensure a high quality product can be delivered in a timely manner.

This study is fundamental to achieving the successful development of the historic Union Station and to ensuring the Station fulfils its many roles, as a multi-modal transportation

hub, public space, gateway and link to the downtown and the Waterfront. It is imperative that this work be undertaken immediately to ensure that monies related to various City programs are appropriately harmonized in a cost-effective manner.

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