

Consolidated Clause in Planning and Transportation Committee Report 1, which was considered by City Council on January 31, February 1 and 2, 2006.

2

**Union Station Precinct
Implementation of Master Plan**

City Council on January 31, February 1 and 2, 2006, adopted this Clause without amendment.

The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (December 8, 2005) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning:

Purpose:

To seek Council approval for a strategy to implement the Union Station Master Plan initiatives.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The Union Station Master Plan recommended a series of Bold Moves to revitalize Union Station and the surrounding precinct. Some of these are public infrastructure projects. Other developments and public projects in the vicinity pose both opportunities and constraints to the implementation of the Bold Moves. This report recommends establishing a working group to develop a funding strategy to implement those infrastructure projects with the least impact on the City's capital budget. The scope of the current Union Station Precinct work can be expanded to develop the funding strategy. Funding is available for this work. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council establish a working group consisting of City Councillors and staff, representatives from the Union Station transportation operators, the Union Pearson Group and the Union Station Revitalization Public Advisory Group to prepare a strategic implementation plan to fund the Bold Moves identified in the Master Plan for consideration with the recommendations of the Union Station Precinct Study; and
- (2) appropriate City staff be authorized and directed to take all necessary actions to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting held November 30, December 1 and 2, 2004, City Council adopted the Master Plan for Union Station setting out a comprehensive direction for the revitalization of Union Station. Council also directed the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to work with the public and the Union Pearson Group (UPG) to report on ways and means of implementing the bold new initiative contained in the Master Plan. In addition, as part of its approval of the 2005 capital budget on February 28, 2005, City Council authorized the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to commission an Urban Design Study for Union Station and its environs. Architects Alliance, in association with ERA Architects, Entra Consultants Metropolitan Knowledge International, Bruce Mau Design and Diana Gerrard Landscape Architects were selected through a public request for proposals process and have started work on the Precinct Study that includes a heritage conservation district study, associated transportation work and an urban design plan for the Union Station Precinct. The terms of reference for this study, to be completed by April 2006, include design, prioritizing and costing of the infrastructure elements identified in the Union Station Master Plan.

Comments:

The Union Station Master Plan identifies Four Big Moves that capture the vision for the future of the Station complex in keeping with three key initiatives: maintaining and promoting Union Station as a multi-modal transportation hub; restoration of the heritage aspects of the building; and revitalization of the Station to ensure its financial stability. The Four Big Moves are a series of dramatic changes intended to renew Union Station as a grand public space that contributes broadly to city building while protecting and enhancing transportation uses:

An Integrated Public Realm—celebrates the Station’s two key frontages, Front Street and Union Plaza, and advocates redefining both in terms of function and design.

A Modern Station, Accommodating Change – addresses two outstanding issues that hold enormous capacity to reshape the experience of Union Station: the future character of the trainshed and potential for development above.

Revitalization of Underutilized Spaces – recognizes the Station as valuable downtown space that can be redesigned to better serve transportation functions and to add vitality to the downtown.

Maximized Porousness through Extended Pedestrian Connections – identifies the Station as fundamentally a pedestrian environment, that serves not only functions related to transportation, but also the urban environment of which it is a part. New connections to the South and Northwest are advocated.

Inherent in the “Big Moves” are a number of key infrastructure projects that will support the anticipated growth of Union Station as a transportation hub and re-create the precinct surrounding Union Station as a landmark destination.

(1) Front Street and Union Plaza

The Master Plan envisions a Union Station Precinct characterized by high quality urban design standards that will create a unique identity for the area. It invites a rethinking of Front Street as a

splendid open space, an integrated and organized public space for travellers to and from the Station allowing pedestrians to share the space safely with cars, cabs and other means of transportation.

Similarly, development of a new Union Plaza on the south side of the Station is intended to redefine the relationship between the Station and the lands to the south, providing a hospitable and modern south face to the station and a new gateway to the waterfront.

(2) The Trainshed and Development Above the Tracks

The Master Plan promotes the creation of an astonishing trainshed roof and the possibility of development above the tracks to the rear of Union Station.

(3) Revitalization of Underutilized spaces

Union Station is seriously underutilized at present. The Master Plan identifies the moats, teamways and the parking/service areas within the Station for potential expansion. The Concept Design for Union Station to be implemented by the Union Pearson Group will re-organize space to provide flexibility to the transportation users and revitalize the Station interior by the addition of complementary commercial activities.

(4) A new South Access Route and Northwest Path Connection

Union Station currently acts as more of a barrier than a gateway to the environment around it. Increased vibrancy in the Union Station precinct is contingent on ensuring that people permeate the building. The Master Plan calls for the creation of pleasant, engaging pedestrian routes both within and through the Station. To better connect Union Station to its surroundings and to accommodate the projected increases to transportation operations, the Master Plan calls for below-grade connections to the south and north west.

Other Opportunities and Constraints:

The Master Plan creates a vision for Union Station. Implementation of that vision requires a co-ordinated strategy, time and money. Once completed, the transaction with UPG would provide the funding to revitalize the interior of Union Station. The Master Agreement executed with UPG provides as a closing condition that both parties (the City and UPG) must be satisfied with the outcome of the Master Plan Review. UPG has made its position very clear that revitalization of the interior of the Station will be wasted if a plan is not in place to upgrade the surrounding infrastructure and it may refuse to close the transaction if it is not satisfied that these projects will be implemented. As directed by Council, UPG has been consulted in the drafting of this report and will continue to be involved in formulating the strategy to implement the Master Plan for the Union Station precinct. It should be emphasized that the infrastructure improvements recommended in the Master Plan must proceed regardless of who develops the interior space of Union Station and the Precinct Study and other implementation initiatives are independent of the transaction with UPG.

The Precinct Study currently underway will recommend design options, a phasing strategy and costing for those public infrastructure elements identified in the Master Plan for those areas surrounding the Station. The consultants have included a significant public consultation process to build on the success of the Master Plan. This is also consistent with City Council's instructions in this regard and it is anticipated as more detailed planning continues within the Union Station Precinct that a full review of the individual initiatives will continue this public involvement. The Union Station Public Advisory Group has also been closely involved with the Precinct Study and is considering hosting one or more events to engage the public.

There are a number of proposed improvements to municipal infrastructure and private sector development applications in and adjacent to the Union Station Precinct which may provide opportunities and constraints to the timing and implementation of the vision set out in the Master Plan. These include:

- (a) GO Transit is embarking on a program of rail corridor improvements, including repair of the trainshed roof;
- (b) TTC will be re-constructing Front Street as part of its new Union Station south platform construction with detailed design work commencing in 2006 and is also assessing design modifications to the subgrade Bay Street LRT loop to accommodate a new Queens Quay East line to the East Bayfront and Portlands from Union Station;
- (c) streetscape improvements are proposed for the Bay and Yonge Street corridors;
- (d) construction of the Simcoe Street tunnel is expected to commence in 2006;
- (e) TEDCO, with an interdepartmental team, is reviewing the potential to relocate the Inter-City Bus Terminal to Union Station; and
- (f) development applications have been received for the Air Canada Centre expansion, Block 5 (Maple Leaf Square adjacent to the Air Canada Centre), 151 Front Street/ 7 Station Street (to the West of the Station) and preliminary discussions are underway with respect to Block 4 (immediately south of Union Station).

Both the federal and provincial governments have infrastructure funding initiatives and Union Station would be a prime candidate for this type of funding. GO Transit and VIA Rail have also indicated their interest in a co-ordinated approach to funding the Bold Moves from the Master Plan.

In order to take advantage of these opportunities at both a political and staff level, it is recommended that a working group be assembled similar to the group considering Inter-City Bus terminal options, consisting of Councillors, City staff and representatives from UPG, the transportation operators and the Union Station Revitalization Public Advisory Group to work concurrently with the Precinct Study to identify funding sources and partners in addition to the City's capital budget. These sources range from traditional large scale infrastructure programs to business or community improvement initiatives, development charges or other levies to more innovative strategies such as structured financing or tax increment financing (TIFs). Discussion needs to be undertaken quickly with potential funding partners including the provincial and

federal governments and other agencies including TWRC and the transportation providers to create an innovative funding strategy for all or some of the public infrastructure elements identified above, in order to bring forward a comprehensive financing strategy for Council's consideration with the Precinct Study.

While the Precinct Study will identify the estimated costs of the recommended infrastructure, a more comprehensive financial analysis is required to research and analyze alternative funding mechanisms suitable for these projects and the economic impact generated by the investments. It is therefore recommended that the scope of work to be undertaken by the financial consultants already working on the Precinct Study be expanded to incorporate these tasks.

Conclusions:

Union Station is an important civic asset. While the proposed partnership with Union Pearson Group will revitalize the interior of the Station, the Master Plan also identifies a number of public improvement projects that will improve the function of Union Station and make the Union Station Precinct an inspiring downtown district. The resolution of many of the issues identified in the Union Station Master Plan hinges on matters of funding and the appropriate timing of actions to be taken. The Urban Design Study is a fundamental first step to define those projects. Equally important is to identify innovative funding strategies in addition to the traditional legislative tools to allow these initiatives to proceed in a timely fashion without undue pressure on the City's capital budget.

There are a number of opportunities and constraints that will impact implementation of the Master Plan initiatives and so work should commence immediately to address these opportunities and constraints and put in place an implementation strategy. This report recommends establishing a broad based working group to assess funding sources and mechanisms for these public infrastructure projects. It recommends expanding the scope of the terms of reference for the financial consultants already engaged on the Precinct Study so that a full implementation strategy that includes sources of funding can be considered by City Council concurrently with the Precinct Study recommendations.

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