



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

129 Peter Street – Community Safety and Noise Audits

Date:	May 22, 2007
To:	City Council
From:	Chief Corporate Officer and General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Wards:	Ward 20 – Trinity Spadina
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

As requested by the Government Management Committee this report provides information on a review of community safety and noise audits related to 129 Peter Street, the site recommended by staff as the new location for the Assessment and Referral Centre and Shelter.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting held on April 12, 2007, Government Management Committee deferred the report, “Acquisition of 129 Peter St,” to its meeting on May 10, 2007, and requested the Chief Corporate Officer and General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) to report back to the Government Management Committee on other potential properties that could be acquired in the downtown core. An electronic copy of the April 12th report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/gm/bgrd/backgroundfile-2556.pdf>

At its meeting of May 10, 2007, the Government Management Committee considered and forwarded to Council without recommendation a staff report recommending the purchase

of 129 Peter Street and a confidential attachment. An electronic version of this report, excluding the confidential attachment, can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/gm/bgrd/backgroundfile-3484.pdf>

The Committee requested that staff report directly to Council on a noise audit and a community safety audit of the 129 Peter Street site.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Chief Corporate Officer and the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration have recommended that the City purchase 129 Peter Street as the new location of the City's Assessment and Referral Centre and Shelter. These services are currently located at 110 Edward Street which is slated to be demolished to make way for the development of affordable housing. In considering the purchase of 129 Peter Street, the Government Management Committee requested the Chief Corporate Officer and the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, in consultation with appropriate staff to:

1. conduct a safety audit on the property and in the surrounding area on a weekend, at night, and that the Toronto Police Service, neighbours, City officials, the local Councillor and other stakeholders be requested to participate and report on the results directly to City Council for consideration with this matter; and
2. conduct a noise audit in the building during a weekend, at night, and report the results directly to City Council, for consideration with this matter.

This report provides information related to the community safety and noise audits.

COMMENTS

1. Community Safety Audit

As part of the due diligence regarding 129 Peter Street, staff completed a community observation exercise with local residents and a community safety audit with 52 Division.

On Saturday, March 25, 2007 four staff from Shelter, Support and Housing Administration joined three representatives of the King-Spadina Residents Association (two residents and one club operator) at midnight on March 25, 2007 until approximately 3:30 a.m. to tour the area and observe the community and activity.

The tour covered the area of John Street to Spadina Avenue, Queen Street West down to King Street West. Community members identified bars and clubs in the area, pointed out alleyways where problems had occurred, and discussed related

licensing violations and frustrations with noise and behaviour of club goers. As expected, this tour demonstrated that there was a high volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and nightlife activity on a weekend night in the area. During the tour staff were also approached by and observed a number of homeless individuals and panhandlers.

Staff spent a significant amount of time at or near the intersection of Peter and Richmond (where 129 Peter Street is located) and identified the following safety enhancements for consideration:

- a. Enhancing/increasing lighting around the exterior of 129 Peter Street
- b. Securing of alleyways and driveways surrounding 129 Peter Street, perhaps through the use of gates
- c. Removal of recessed doorways in the building to make building perimeter flush with sidewalk and to dissuade individuals from loitering
- d. Installation of close circuit television (CCTV)/security cameras on the exterior of 129 Peter Street

On March 28, 2007 a community notification meeting regarding 129 Peter Street was held at Metro Hall. During the course of the meeting, local residents, businesses and property owners expressed some concerns related to pedestrian traffic and activities in the Peter-Richmond St. area and questioned whether this area was safe for homeless individuals. In response to questions regarding this matter, staff noted that there were already homeless individuals in this area and that they did not anticipate that homeless individuals in this area would be more vulnerable than those in other areas of the City. Staff further noted that it was significantly safer for people to be staying inside a shelter than for them to be remaining out on the street, regardless of which area they were in. Staff also noted that for the majority of the week – daytime and early evening hours throughout the week and even overnight early in the week – the neighbourhood had low levels of pedestrian traffic and neighbourhood activity.

On April 4, 2007, City staff met with members of the Toronto Entertainment District Association (TEDA) to discuss the proposed use of 129 Peter Street. While the Association had concerns related to panhandling in the area, TEDA did not have any specific safety concerns related to 129 Peter Street.

On April 10, 2007, staff from SSHA attended at 129 Peter Street to conduct an exterior safety audit of the site with the Community Safety Specialist from 52 Division. Additionally, several meetings have been held with staff from Central Command and 52 Division, including officers from the Community Response Unit. 52 Division is very knowledgeable of the activities in the Peter and

Richmond area. Suggestions generated from the Community Safety Audit and from discussions with 52 Division included:

- a. Installing security cameras/CCTV
- b. Having a security presence on site
- c. Having one main controlled entrance to 129 Peter Street
- d. Having one main controlled exit to 129 Peter Street
- e. Securing of the alleyways, perhaps by increasing lighting
- f. Examining ways to implement noise control related measures
- g. Enhanced training for staff
- h. Controlling the use of the front patio

These recommendations confirm the observations made by SSHA during their community visit.

On May 18, 2007, staff met with the owner of 340 Richmond Street, the property next to 129 Peter Street to discuss community safety issues. The owner confirmed the impact of club goers on his property including the use of the alleyway for congregating and drinking, vandalism of the outside phone connections and the need to often clean up garbage and vomit after night club activity. The owner emphasized the need for vigilance on the nights of major club activity (Thursday/Friday/Saturday 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.) and the need for constant presence on the street at these times. The need for garbage clean-up was also emphasized. For the rest of the week and during the day the owner noted the street is “like any other” in Toronto.

Staff from SSHA are committed to working with 52 Division, the King-Spadina Resident Association and the Toronto Entertainment District Association to develop and implement an effective community safety strategy and consultation with these groups will continue. Staff will also establish a Community Liaison Committee which will allow the opportunity for community residents and businesses to have ongoing input into the operation of 129 Peter Street.

2. **Noise Audit**

As requested by the General Management Committee, staff retained a consultant to conduct a noise audit in the building during a weekend, at night. The audit was conducted on the evening of Friday, May 18, 2007 into the morning of Saturday, May 19, 2007 on the Victoria Day long weekend.

Sound levels inside and outside the building were measured. The inside measurements in rooms with outside walls/windows facing Peter and Richmond Streets ranged from 52 to 53 decibels (dBA). Typical outside measurements ranged from 67 to 69 dBA.

The baseline established by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) for evaluating noise impact during the late night for indoor sleeping quarters is 45 dBA. This compares with the 52 to 53 dBA recorded inside the building. The impact of noise inside the building can be reduced both by building renovation and program design. For example, windows, wall and floor coverings can all be designed to reduce noise transmission. Noise impact can further be reduced by having the sleeping quarters inside the building behind additional interior walls to attenuate noise.

Staff believe that 129 Peter Street will provide a safe service for homeless men and women and will not have a negative impact on the community. With some building re-design, additional lighting, cameras and trained staff in the area, any outstanding safety and noise concerns can be addressed, and the City presence at 129 Peter Street will be an asset to the community and to homeless clients.

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