



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED
with Confidential Attachment**

WoodGreen Community Services Facility - Proposed Relocation

Date:	October 30, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Ward(s):	30
Reason for Confidential Information	This report is about a proposed or pending land acquisition by the City. This report involves the security of property belonging to the City.
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

WoodGreen Community Services (WCS) is a non-profit, multi-service organization offering a range of social services to approximately 37,000 individuals every year. WCS provides programs and services through its primary service location at 835 Queen Street East, and from 40 different locations within the east central portion of the City. WCS has adopted a facility renewal strategy and has determined that it requires a new facility that will enable WCS to integrate its services into one location, accommodate growth and meet the changing needs in the community, and improve its accessibility by public transportation.

WCS has been searching for an alternative location for a new facility since 2000. In October 2007, WCS requested the City's assistance in locating a suitable site. At its meeting held November 5, 2007, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested City staff to meet with WCS with a view to providing assistance to WCS in finding a relocation site at no cost to the City.

Staff from Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDF&A), City Planning, Parks and Recreation, Facilities & Real Estate and Legal have met with WCS and believe there is an opportunity for the City to facilitate a re-location at no cost to the City. With

the assistance of IBI Group, WCS has identified three prospective sites and one preferred site. Staff from SDF&A are facilitating the process and coordinating the City's interest. The confidential attachment outlines the issues with the preferred site and this report requests direction from City Council for staff to continue to work with WCS to resolve the identified issues and report back to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. City Council authorize the Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration to convene a working group of City staff and other City agencies as appropriate to work with WoodGreen Community Services to resolve the issues identified in acquiring its preferred site and to negotiate principles for a real estate transaction that would assist WoodGreen Community Services to implement this relocation and report back on the results.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact on current or future capital, operating, or reserve funds. WoodGreen Community Services will absorb any and all costs associated with the project.

DECISION HISTORY

At the November 5, 2007 Community Development and Recreation Committee (CDRC) meeting, the President and CEO of WoodGreen Community Services (WCS) made a deputation to the CDRC and requested the City's assistance in identifying and facilitating a possible re-location. In response, the CDRC requested Deputy City Manager Sue Corke to direct the appropriate staff to meet with WSC with a view to assisting with the search for a suitable site for a new facility in East Toronto, including a review of any City-owned properties in accordance with City policy. Staff were requested to report back on how the City might be able to assist WCS at no cost to the City. Item CD10.11 can be accessed at: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-8312.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

835 Queen Street East is WoodGreen Community Services primary service location. This property has undergone several renovations and is no longer large enough or in the best location to provide the level of services needed by clients. The existing building has many physical and structural deficiencies and is becoming more and more costly to maintain each year. In addition, WCS has determined that having multiple leased sites for programming is not cost effective and is confusing for clients.

Since 2000, WCS has been searching for alternative facilities in order to relocate to a larger facility in a more central location within their catchment area. WCS has determined that they require a 60,000 sq. ft. gross floor area building to meet their projected program requirements in the future and have approached the City to assist in locating a replacement property, at no cost to the City.

COMMENTS

1. WoodGreen Community Services Existing Relationship to the City of Toronto

WoodGreen Community Services and its housing corporation, WoodGreen Community Housing Inc., are both non-profit charitable organizations that have been providing housing and social services to communities within the city for 71 years.

WCS has had a financial relationship with the City of Toronto since 1946. In the 2007/08 fiscal year, the City provided a total of \$5,402,372 in operating funds, including funding for specific programming, such as child care and employment services.

WCS shares many of the same community goals and priorities as stated in the City's Official Plan and Social Development Strategy. WCS is a United Way Member Agency and also receives funding from the Federal and Provincial Government.

2. Identification of a Preferred Relocation Site

Based on the site search that has been undertaken by WCS to date, three alternative sites have been identified. WCS retained IBI Group to undertake a site evaluation study to objectively evaluate the sites and rank their suitability. The IBI Group developed a set of 18 evaluation criteria that took into consideration the City's land use planning instruments, public interest considerations, as well as WCS' future space and site needs. Through the evaluation process a preferred site was identified.

City staff have reviewed IBI's *Site Evaluation Study* (October 2008) and are comfortable that the evaluation approach and criteria used are reasonable. In committing to an independent evaluation of the three sites, WCS has demonstrated due diligence in the site selection process and in identifying a preferred location. Because all the sites include privately owned properties which would have to be acquired, the preferred site, the potential issues associated with it and a proposed course of action are discussed in the confidential attachment.

3. Next Steps

If City Council confirms proceeding in this direction, Social Development, Finance & Administration staff will convene a working group including staff from City Planning, Parks and Recreation, Facilities & Real Estate, Legal, and other City agencies as appropriate to explore options with WCS including the preliminary issues that have been identified:

- Developing a comprehensive business plan for the redevelopment of the site. The plan will ensure there is a clear understanding of the project amongst all parties, including costs, funding, timelines, roles and responsibilities.
- How to reconfigure and accommodate all of the required uses on the site.
- A full planning evaluation of the site will need to be undertaken by City Planning once redevelopment plans are better developed.

City staff believe that there is potential for a mutually beneficial relocation to the preferred site however, a number of issues will require a more in-depth review and consideration along with implementation options. If these can be addressed, staff would report back to City Council on a potential real estate transaction that would allow WCS to relocate to the preferred site at no cost to the City.

CONCLUSION

This project represents a unique opportunity for the City to support a community agency improve its capacity to provide much needed community services and programs, and to further the City's community goals and priorities as stated in the City's Official Plan and Social Development Strategy.

WoodGreen Community Services has been consistent and diligent in their approach to identify a site for a new facility and move forward with its redevelopment. This report requests Council's authority for staff to continue to support WoodGreen Community Services in their efforts and the directions identified.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: WoodGreen Community Services Facility – Proposed Relocation