

# **TORONTO** Staff Report

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May 6, 2004

To: City Council

From: Commissioner of Urban Development Services

Subject: Supplementary Report on Union Station  
Application 03-195332 STE 28 OZ  
Applicant: City of Toronto  
Architect: N/A  
61-71 Front Street West  
Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 28

Purpose:

To respond to the direction given at the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting on April 28, 2004 for the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to meet with the independent taxi associations and the Taxi Advisory Committee and to report to Council on the integration of taxis at Union Station.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

At its meeting on April 28, 2004, the Planning and Transportation Committee requested the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to meet with the independent taxi associations and the Taxi Advisory Committee prior to the meeting of City Council scheduled for May 18, 19 and 20, 2004 and to report to Council on the integration of taxis at Union Station.

Comments:

On May 4, 2004, staff from Urban Development Services (including the Director of Licensing) and Works and Emergency Services met with representatives of the taxi organizations (including a representative of the Independent Cab Owners Co-operative). The group reviewed issues pertaining to taxi operations at Union Station and discussed opportunities for the improvement of taxi facilities at the Station. The meeting with the taxi operators was a useful first opportunity to discuss their concerns and potential solutions to the problems that were identified. In particular, concerns were raised about current operations on Front Street and the need to better organize taxi activity. Some of the possible measures suggested for further exploration included the following:

- the location of a permanent taxi stand and/or staging area on Bremner Boulevard and/or the creation of holding areas elsewhere in the area
- creation of separate drop-off and pick-up areas on Front Street and/or the expansion of taxi stands on Front Street to the east of Bay Street
- the illumination of taxi stand signage and creation of an illuminated signal system for cabs indicating the arrival of trains
- improved signage directing private passenger cars to nearby parking facilities
- in-station announcements/coordination for passengers needing taxis, including the possibility of re-introducing a taxi dispatcher to regulate operations.

Many of the changes suggested could be undertaken with little cost or significant change to the Station itself. Other changes that may be considered, however, could have significant implications on traffic movement or taxi service in the area. As such, a more thorough review of the ideas raised is warranted. Overall, a number of useful suggestions were made and staff will give serious consideration to finding ways of addressing these concerns.

It should be noted that the policies of the Railway Lands Secondary Plan require that the moats and teamways surrounding Union Station be a strictly pedestrian environment. These policies are also the basis for the binding Precinct Agreements pertaining to land development issues related to the Station. The rationale for this direction was based on the need to create a safe and strictly pedestrian environment in the vicinity of the Station and to meet the projected pedestrian requirements resulting from the expansion of commuter rail service.

Given that taxi operations at the Station also affect other venues in the immediate area, including service to the Royal York Hotel, adjacent office buildings and such attractions as the Air Canada Centre, the resolution of these issues can not be undertaken through a "quick fix". In the longer term, improvement of facilities for taxis and their passengers must also be addressed in the context of any reconstruction of Front Street that may be required for the TTC's Union Station south platform project, as well as the expansion of other facilities within the Station.

Both staff and the taxi representatives made a commitment to continue the discussion and include the taxi operators in ongoing public liaison meetings intended to deal with the Master Plan process and the program for the restoration and development of the Station. This can offer an opportunity to review both short and long terms improvements to taxi service in the vicinity of the Station and will assist in addressing issues that will arise as expansion of train service increases within the next several years.

Conclusions:

City staff were directed by both the Toronto South Community Council and by the Planning and Transportation Committee to continue the public consultation with respect to the draft Master Plan and to report back through the Administration Committee and the Planning and Transportation Committee at the conclusion of this review. Continued input from the taxi industry and the public will assist in guiding revitalization in respect to this issue, as well as the other concerns that need to be addressed in the Master Plan review. Any proposed changes to the regulations governing taxi stands in the vicinity of Union Station would need further consultation with staff from Urban Development Services and Works and Emergency Services, and would need to be in accordance with the findings of the Master Plan.

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Paula M. Dill  
Commissioner  
Urban Development Services