June 17, 2004

Ms. Ulli Watkiss  
City Clerk  
City of Toronto  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2  

Dear Ms. Watkiss:

At its meeting on Wednesday, June 16, 2004, the Commission considered the attached report entitled, “‘Transit First’ Investments in Toronto’s Waterfront.”

The Commission approved the Recommendation contained in the report, as listed below:

“It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Request Toronto City Council to:

   i) Confirm its “transit first” approach to new development within the Central Waterfront;
   
   ii) Require that development or zoning by-laws to implement the East Bayfront and West Don Lands precinct plans, be conditional on the provision of a financial plan and implementation schedule to construct the streetcar rights-of-way and facilities required for the “transit first” approach, to the satisfaction of the TTC and the Commissioner of Urban Development Services;
   
   iii) Include funding in the City’s 2005-2009 Capital Budget for the City’s portion of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation’s (TWRC) cost to design and construct transit facilities for the East Bayfront and West Don Lands, (based on the understanding that the costs will be confirmed through further transit studies); and
   
   iv) Request the TWRC to initiate immediately, in co-operation with the TTC and the City of Toronto, Environmental Assessment studies for the transit projects required to serve East Bayfront and West Don Lands, notably:

   • expanded streetcar facilities and passenger platform at Union Station
   • the Queens Quay East streetcar line from Union Station to Parliament/Cherry through the East Bayfront precinct, and
   • extension of the 504 KING streetcar line through the West Don precinct;

2. Request the TWRC to:
i) Commit to implementing the “transit first” policies in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, in consultation with the City of Toronto and the TTC;

ii) Complete the transit-related planning studies required to support the precinct planning for the East Bayfront and West Don Lands; and

iii) Include in its business plans the cost of design and construction of the streetcar rights-of-way and facilities required to serve the East Bayfront and West Don Lands precincts, on a “transit first” basis, over the next five-to-ten years, and to obtain the necessary funding commitments to implement these plans from the government partners.”

The foregoing is forwarded to City of Toronto Council through the Planning and Transportation Committee and Policy and Finance Committee for consideration of the Commission’s request noted in Recommendation No. 1 above.

Sincerely,

Vincent Rodo
General Secretary
1-16
Attachment

Similar letter sent to:

Mr. John Campbell, CEO & President, Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation
RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Request Toronto City Council to:
   i) Confirm its “transit first” approach to new development within the Central Waterfront;
   ii) Require that development or zoning by-laws to implement the East Bayfront and West Don Lands precinct plans, be conditional on the provision of a financial plan and implementation schedule to construct the streetcar rights-of-way and facilities required for the “transit first” approach, to the satisfaction of the TTC and the Commissioner of Urban Development Services;
   iii) Include funding in the City’s 2005 - 2009 Capital Budget for the City’s portion of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation’s (TWRC) cost to design and construct transit facilities for the East Bayfront and West Don Lands, (based on the understanding that the costs will be confirmed through further transit studies); and
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      • expanded streetcar facilities and passenger platform at Union Station
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2. Request the TWRC to:
   i) Commit to implementing the “transit first” policies in the Central Waterfront
Secondary Plan, in consultation with the City of Toronto and the TTC;

ii) Complete the transit-related planning studies required to support the precinct planning for the East Bayfront and West Don Lands; and

iii) Include in its business plans the cost of design and construction of the streetcar rights-of-way and facilities required to serve the East Bayfront and West Don Lands precincts, on a “transit first” basis, over the next five-to-ten years, and to obtain the necessary funding commitments to implement these plans from the government partners.

FUNDING

No provision has been made in the TTC’s current capital program or operating budget for the “Transit First” investments in Toronto’s Waterfront. Should City Council adopt the recommendations in this report, appropriate allocations would be required in these budgets. Proceeding with construction would require up-front funding commitments from TWRC or other third-party for the entire capital costs of this work while ensuring that the funding available for the Commission’s existing State of Good Repair Capital Program is not compromised. In addition, the operating budget impacts of the additional service required (both initially and in the long-term) will need to be assessed with a view to providing sufficient additional operating subsidy to support this new service.

BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto and the TTC began developing an integrated transportation and transit plan for the waterfront in 2000. This plan evolved through a number of stages to form an essential part of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan that was approved unanimously by Council in April 2003. It was developed with a vision of the waterfront as a mixed-use, people-oriented, environmentally-friendly community whose travel needs are served primarily by non-auto modes.

It was recognised that a “transit first” policy was one of the key elements in achieving this vision, through the provision of excellent transit service from the outset, to establish non-auto travel patterns within, and to and from, the area. Such a policy requires the construction of substantial elements of transit infrastructure at an early stage of the development process. In total, it was estimated that full build-out of the plan would require $905 million in transit funding for precinct-specific projects. Additional funding was also identified as being required for “global” transit costs related to improvements to Union Subway Station and to GO Transit.

The TWRC Business Strategy, which was received by Council in February 2003, referred to commencing and continuing “investment in transit initiatives” but did not specifically address the City’s “transit first” approach. The strategy restated an earlier, unspecified, allocation for $800 million for transit projects in the waterfront and identified the first
TWRC transit project, the construction of a second subway platform at Union Station.

When Council approved the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan in April 2003, it articulated its “transit first” approach for the Central Waterfront in the following policy:

“District-specific Transit Implementation Schedule Required Before Development Can Proceed

Because of the area-wide, integrated, nature of developing an effective transit network, transit implementation must be managed on a broader area-planning basis. It cannot be managed effectively through precinct planning, or a sub-area planning process. To achieve the objectives of the Central Waterfront Plan, a high level of transit use is required in each of the development areas, and it is essential that transit-oriented travel patterns be established from the outset. For this reason, the implementation of transit improvements will require a separate financial planning and approval process.

For each of the development areas, a staged implementation schedule, and accompanying financial plan for the construction and operation of transit facilities, will be required before development can proceed in that area. This will ensure that higher-order transit services are constructed at an early stage in the development process and that the transit-oriented objectives of the plan are achieved from the outset.”

Since approval of the Secondary Plan, the TWRC, jointly with the City of Toronto, has undertaken an extensive planning and public review process to develop “precinct plans” for two of the development areas in the waterfront. Exhibit 1 shows the location of the East Bayfront and West Don precincts. The precinct plans will be used as the basis for preparing implementation by-laws that may include zoning amendments for the areas, and act as the basis for a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan for each of the areas. These could be brought forward for Council’s approval in the fall of 2004 to allow development to proceed in the 2005 construction season. The precinct plans generally protect for future transit facilities, but there are a number of key transit alignment issues that remain unresolved as noted below.

The purpose of this report is to clarify the steps required to respond to Council’s direction to implement a ‘transit first’ policy for waterfront development.

DISCUSSION

In the older part of Toronto, there are many examples of strong local communities where the majority of trips are made by non-auto modes including walking, cycling, and transit. In these communities, typically transit serves 40% to 50% of all trips, with auto travel making up only 30% to 40% of trips. Replicating this success in new waterfront communities will require both effective urban design that promotes non-auto travel, and an early investment in transit service to establish a pattern of transit use by residents and employees as they move into the area. Toronto’s waterfront represents a unique opportunity to completely transform a large “brownfield” site into a vibrant mixed-use
extension of the city’s downtown urban environment. To achieve this goal will require a different approach to transit investment than normally occurs in development areas that are undergoing a more evolutionary change.

This type of “transit first” approach has been used successfully in waterfront redevelopments in other cities to establish transit-oriented travel patterns and limit the need for expensive, land-consuming roads and other auto facilities. In particular, the experience in the London England with the Docklands development demonstrates that significant redevelopment, premised on investing in transit first, can be successful. In the Docklands area, a “light rail” rapid transit line was constructed, with the opening timed to coincide with the construction of the initial phases of development of the area. The existence of the transit service was a premiere selling point for prospective occupants of the development. From an overall transportation perspective, the initiative was very successful in reducing the need for auto travel and encouraging transit, walk and cycling use. The approach is now being expanded to other developments along the Thames River, notably the Woolwich Arsenal redevelopment and the King’s Docks area, both of which have transit facilities being constructed on a “transit first” basis.

Toronto’s waterfront plan involves the development of substantial residential communities in the East Bayfront, the West Don Lands, and the Port Lands, with an ultimate target of up to 40,000 new residential units overall. In addition, significant employment districts are also planned, primarily in the Port area. This scale of development will require a high-capacity transit service capable of efficiently moving up to 100,000 passengers per day into and out of the waterfront area. By way of comparison, the current 504 King service, the busiest non-subway route in the TTC system, carries approximately 50,000 passengers per day. Accommodating this level of transit demand will require substantial investments in transit infrastructure. Exhibit 2 shows the approved Secondary Plan transit network and includes the following key elements:

- for the West Don Lands, the construction of an extension of the 504 King streetcar line, in its own right-of-way through the West Don area, on Front Street, with a branch south on Cherry Street. Preliminary cost estimates prepared by the TWRC indicated that this could cost up to $75 million (excluding property and remediation) but this cost could be reduced to $25 million to $30 million if an acceptable at-grade option can be identified to replace the Parliament/Front grade separation shown.
- for the East Bayfront area:
  - an expansion of the existing Union Station streetcar loop and passenger loading location
  - the construction of a streetcar tunnel to the east from the existing tunnel under Bay Street at Queens Quay, with a portal to street level, and
  - the construction of streetcar tracks in their own right-of-way on Queens Quay
  The cost of this project will be in the range of $135 million to $200 million depending on the length of tunnel section on Queens Quay.
  - for the Port Lands, construction of streetcar tracks on a bridge over the mouth of the Don River and along Cherry Street and Commissioners Street.
• for the Waterfront West/Exhibition Place area, the extension of the 509 HARBOURFRONT line to the west with the potential to connect with the existing King and Queen streetcar services in the vicinity of Roncesvalles Avenue and King Street.
• plans also call for, among other things, a streetcar connection on Cherry Street, between Queens Quay and Front Street, and a longer-term potential extension of Broadview Avenue into the Port Lands area to provide additional transit capacity.

As the waterfront lands are transformed into new communities over many years, a staged approach to constructing transit facilities in advance of development can be implemented in a straightforward manner.

From work completed to date, to establish the “transit first” approach in the East Bayfront and West Don Lands areas, the initial phases of required infrastructure include:
• expanded streetcar facilities at Union Station,
• the Queens Quay East streetcar line from Union Station to Parliament/Cherry through the East Bayfront precinct, and
• an extension of the 504 KING streetcar line through the West Don precinct.

The operating costs associated with the planned streetcar services to the East Bayfront and West Don Lands area are expected to meet the TTC’s minimum financial standards for new service from the first day of operation. This will need to be confirmed closer to opening day based on the timing of construction and the rate of development in the area over the next five to ten years.

The construction of transit facilities serving the Port Lands could follow at a later date, in conjunction with plans for the reconstruction of the mouth of the Don River, and staged to coincide with development in the Port Lands as it proceeds.

It will take from five to ten years to get the initial portions of the proposed new streetcar lines in operation, given the time required for Individual Environmental Assessments along with the time for the design and construction of the facilities. For this reason, a “transit first” approach requires that these activities proceed quickly.

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation is preparing plans for East Bayfront and West Don Lands that protect for transit in the longer term, but commitments to specific transit investments are also required, timed to coincide with an early stage of the redevelopment plan for each precinct. The TWRC, in partnership with the City of Toronto and the TTC, must also initiate the Environmental Assessment processes required to allow construction of the transit lines to proceed as quickly as possible.

To ensure that these activities occur in a timely way, in support of Council’s approved transit-first policies for waterfront development, the Commission should take the actions listed in the recommendations section of this report.
JUSTIFICATION

The “transit first” approach is a fundamental element of the policies the City has established for the waterfront and the planning which has been undertaken for the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. It is especially important for areas such as the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands, which are to be transformed from industrial brownfields into intensive new communities. To ensure that this approach is implemented in a timely way, the TWRC must proceed quickly with obtaining approvals and constructing transit projects so that excellent transit services can be provided in conjunction with the initial build-out of lands in each development area. This will require commitments from the three government/funding partners of the TWRC to fund substantial construction costs for transit projects over the next five-to-ten years to allow initial development to proceed in the East Bayfront and West Don precincts.

TTC staff has consulted with the Waterfront Secretariat and Planning Division staff in Urban Development Services who concur with the recommendations of this report.

June 16, 2004

11-55-47

Attachments: Exhibit 1 - East Bayfront and West Don Precincts
Exhibit 2 - Waterfront Secondary Plan Transit Plan
Exhibit 1 - East Bayfront and West Don Lands Precincts