

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

May 16, 2006

To: Administration Committee

From: Chief Corporate Officer

Subject: Below-grade Parking Access Options for the Redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property
(Ward 28 - Toronto Centre - Rosedale)

Purpose:

To respond to City Council's request to investigate and report on access options to below-grade parking on the St. Lawrence Market North property, and make recommendations thereon.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the St. Lawrence Market North Building Redevelopment, Traffic Impact Study, Final Report by iTrans, dated May 2006 be received for information;
- (2) the Chief Corporate Officer, in consultation with the City Solicitor, the General Manager of Transportation Services and the President of the Toronto Parking Authority, investigate with the owners of the existing below-grade parking facility (Market Square garage) immediately to the west, the economic, legal, physical and operational feasibility of constructing a connection to provide the proposed parking garage in the North Market property with access to Church Street;
- (3) in the event that there are insurmountable economic, legal, physical or operational limitations to obtaining the connection described in Recommendation (2), the Chief Corporate Officer, in consultation with the General Manager of Transportation Services and the President of the Toronto Parking Authority, be authorized to undertake the following:

- (i) review the financial feasibility, technical requirements and policy issues of constructing a parking ramp underneath Market Lane Park to provide access to King Street, having regard for key Official Plan policies which discuss maintaining and improving the public realm and providing priority to surface transit vehicles on key Downtown streets; and
 - (ii) review mitigation measures to address impacts to the heritage environment and the quality of the pedestrian environment in Market Lane Park.
- (4) the Chief Corporate Officer consult with the Director of Court Services to investigate the feasibility of Court Services becoming the primary tenant in the three upper floors of a redeveloped North Market building;
- (5) the Chief Corporate Officer, in consultation with the Chief Building Official, the General Manager of Transportation Services and the Chief Planner & Executive Director of City Planning Division, to determine the optimal number of parking spaces to be constructed in conjunction with a redeveloped North Market building, having regard for economic viability, Zoning By-law requirements, City building objectives and operational feasibility;
- (6) the Chief Corporate Officer report to Administration Committee, by September 2006, on the results of the investigation in Recommendation (2) and if necessary, Recommendation (3) to confirm the recommended access option and outline next steps in the redevelopment of the North Market property; and
- (7) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting of October 26, 27 and 28, 2004, City Council adopted Clause 7, Report No. 8 of the Administration Committee, entitled, "Redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North property" and in so doing, Council:

- (1) adopted the Development Parameters for the St. Lawrence Market North and a Strategic Vision Statement for the entire St. Lawrence Market Complex;
- (2) directed the Commissioner of Corporate Services to investigate and report on access and parking options for St. Lawrence Market North; and
- (3) authorised and directed the appropriate City officials to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

The Development Parameters and the Strategic Vision Statement stemmed from the work of the St. Lawrence Market North Working Committee. This committee was established by City Council as a forum for the community and City staff to provide input into a set of planning and design guidelines for the redevelopment of the property.

Given the history of community interest in the site, membership in the Working Committee was extensive and it achieved consensus on a number of matters including:

- urban design, massing, height, aesthetics, and streetscape treatment;
- how heritage/architectural compatibility could be achieved on the site;
- treatment of surrounding open spaces;
- management of development impacts, including noise;
- potential uses including the provision of on-site underground parking; and
- loading and other servicing needs.

One matter that remained unresolved was the location of access ramp(s) to on-site underground parking. The Working Committee began its discussion with the Toronto Parking Authority's advice that it has an operational requirement of 3 lanes (in total) for flexibility, maintenance and repair. Each of the lanes would be 3.5 metres in width.

The North Market site is on a block bounded by King Street to the north, Jarvis Street to the east, Front Street to the south and a park, Market Lane Park, to the west (see Appendix 1). The Working Committee discussed a number of ramp location options. Each frontage (Jarvis Street and King Street, off Market Lane Park) was considered as well as the option of tunnelling under Front Street East from Market Street (see Appendix 2). The Working Committee also discussed the feasibility of connecting the contemplated parking garage under the North Market to the existing parking garage under Market Square, using Market Square's Church Street ramp for access.

Recognizing that a redeveloped North Market building would generate additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic to an area that is already a busy retail shopping and tourist attraction, in September 2005, Transportation Services and Facilities and Real Estate jointly issued a Request for Proposals for a traffic consultant to undertake a traffic impact study for the proposed redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Market North Building.

Comments:

Traffic Impact Study

The consultant was asked to analyze traffic capacity at key intersections, determine the ideal location(s) for access ramp(s) to on-site underground parking and assess traffic activity for two land use scenarios. One scenario was a worst-case scenario from a traffic perspective, in which the proposed land use(s) for the upper levels of the North Market building generate the most traffic. The other scenario was a modified one in which the proposed land use(s) generates less traffic. In both scenarios, it was assumed that the main level and the mezzanine of the new

building would be used for a Farmers' Market on Saturday and an Antique Market on Sundays and other compatible short term uses from Monday to Friday.

A key component of the consultant's work was to review existing traffic operations at the King and Jarvis and at the Front and Jarvis intersections to determine the ideal location(s) for a ramp to below-grade parking such that vehicles are able to enter and exit the site safely, do not impede traffic flow, including the flow of transit vehicles, and that the ramp location be as safe as possible for pedestrians who must cross in front of entering and exiting vehicles.

The consultant evaluated the option of placing a ramp consisting of 3 lanes for vehicles to enter and exit the site along Jarvis Street immediately south of St. Lawrence Hall and along King Street, in Market Lane Park. As well, the consultant evaluated the option of having entrance and exit lanes on different frontages (i.e., a combination of Jarvis Street and King Street). The consultant also evaluated the option of utilizing the existing parking ramp on Church Street which serves the Market Square garage.

Consultation

Facilities & Real Estate staff met with the affected Councillor and informed her of the recommended option. On May 10, 2006, staff and the consultant attended a meeting chaired by the Councillor with selected members of the Working Committee. The meeting was an information-sharing session in which the consultant presented the findings of the Traffic Study along with the recommended option for access to below-grade parking.

Options studied

The following is a summary of some of the options studied by the consultant.

(i) Church Street Option

With respect to the option of utilizing the existing parking ramp on Church Street which serves the Market Square garage, the consultant identified a number of benefits. This option would have limited impact to pedestrians, no direct impact to streetcar delay, and good accessibility to the garage. From a traffic operations perspective, there is also sufficient capacity at the driveway to handle the volume of traffic stemming from a new 250 space parking garage and a redeveloped North Market building. However, the consultant noted that the option had a number of challenges which needed to be further explored, including:

- structure and cost requirements of connections to the adjacent parking facility;
- a strategy for ownership and operation of the facility;
- security requirements between the properties; and
- easement requirements and related legal agreements.

Until recently City staff anticipated that the North Market building would be developed by private sector interests (to be procured through RFP). The notion of one third party (the North Market developers) dealing with another third party (the owners of the Market Square garage) to secure an access arrangement was not advisable or manageable from the City's perspective.

However, City staff's approach to the viability of pursuing the Church Street option changed recently, when Court Services, contacted Facilities and Real Estate staff to inquire about consolidating its court room and office operations into one location. Court Services' total floor space needs would match the aggregate area of floors 2 to 4 of a new North Market building (i.e. all of the floor area above the Market and mezzanine floors). If the City were to accommodate Court Services at St. Lawrence Market North, it could potentially redevelop the entire property itself instead of having a third party do so, and could more easily enter into discussions with the owner of the existing Market Square garage.

- (ii) Jarvis/King Option - One in-bound lane off Jarvis Street and two out-bound lanes off Market Lane Park and onto King Street

The consultant identified one in-bound lane off Jarvis Street and two out-bound lanes off Market Lane Park and onto King Street as the best option purely from a traffic operations perspective, without taking into consideration the financial, technical and City policy issues that also need to be considered. According to the consultant, the degree of delay for in-bound turns (both left and right) from Jarvis Street is acceptable. With respect to the two out-bound lanes on King Street, they will not be affected by vehicle queues along King Street and there are sufficient gaps in the flow of traffic for cars to exit the site.

The benefits of this option from a traffic operations perspective are as follows:

- the pedestrian impact on Jarvis Street would be minimized as a single in-bound lane will require less right-of-way;
- there is a high degree of accessibility to the garage because a single in-bound lane off Jarvis Street will serve both northbound and southbound traffic and does not require the driver to go around the block to enter the facility;
- this option does not rely on out-bound left turn movements onto Jarvis Street (a movement with insufficient capacity and limited sight lines); and
- this option does not rely on in-bound left turn movements from King Street which would impact westbound TTC streetcars.

In this option, the one in-bound lane on Jarvis Street would be located at the north limits of the North Market property in order to limit the effects of southbound Jarvis Street vehicle queues on driveway operations. The two out-bound lanes onto King Street would be situated within Market Lane Park.

(iii) Jarvis Street only Option

The consultant also studied the option of placing a ramp consisting of 3 lanes for vehicles to enter and exit the site along Jarvis Street immediately south of St. Lawrence Hall. Purely from a traffic operations perspective, the consultant did not recommend the option of having vehicles entering and exiting on Jarvis Street because of unacceptable outbound movements. For vehicles exiting the site onto Jarvis Street there would be limited sight distance and a high level of pedestrian interaction due to patrons of the outdoor vendors from the Farmers' and Antique Markets. In addition, there is insufficient capacity for outbound left turn movements on Jarvis Street. There are limited gaps in the flow of traffic and long vehicle queues (see Appendix 3 which illustrates the extent of vehicle queues along Jarvis Street as they wait for a light to change at Front Street and at King Street).

(iv) King Street only Option

The consultant also did not recommend the option of vehicles entering and exiting solely on King Street because in-bound left-turns would impact westbound TTC streetcars. The cost and physical feasibility of providing a westbound left-turn lane on King Street to separate turning traffic from streetcar traffic would be prohibitive.

Detailed descriptions of the options and the evaluation process and criteria are described in further detail in Section 5 of the Traffic Impact Study. A full copy of the St. Lawrence Market North Building Redevelopment, Traffic Impact Study by iTrans will be available for review on the City's WEB site as of the end of May, 2006 at: http://www.toronto.ca/stlawrence_market.

Next Steps

Investigate Church Street Option

The consultant recommended a number of next steps for the City. Given the benefits of the Church Street option, the consultant identified, as a next step, that the City investigate the economic, physical, legal and operational feasibility of connecting the contemplated parking garage under the North Market to the existing parking garage under Market Square. Given this new information regarding the needs of Court Services, there is merit in considering the Church Street option.

City staff would investigate the Market Square parking garage connection at the same time it studies the feasibility of Court Services becoming the sole or primary tenant in the upper three floors of a redeveloped North Market building.

Investigate Potential Impact of Jarvis/King Option

Another next step is that the City should investigate the financial feasibility of constructing the ramp underneath Market Lane Park to provide the access to King Street that would be required to implement the access option of one in-bound lane off Jarvis Street and two out-bound lanes off King Street. Although the Jarvis Street entrance could be contained within the structure of the new building, the King Street exit would be contained within a stand-alone ramp located within the north end of Market Lane Park. This ramp would be fairly long with resultant maintenance costs and there may be technical requirements from Parks and Forestry staff that will add to the overall cost of the ramp.

Also, it should be noted that outbound movements from King Street could affect the TTC streetcar operations along King Street and as a result, it may be necessary to restrict movements to exiting right turns only. Any further consideration of a King Street exit should include a detailed analysis of the feasibility of restricting exits to King Street to right turns only.

In addition, the consultant recognized that there are Official Plan policies that need to be considered, especially those policies which emphasize maintaining and improving the public realm and providing priority to surface transit vehicles on key Downtown streets. The TTC has advised that it will oppose any driveway access on King Street, even one that is out-bound only. Also, Planning staff have raised some concerns with the use of King Street to provide access, given the policies in the Official Plan.

Mitigation measures would be needed to ensure that the ramp is sensitive to the heritage streetscape. Market Lane Park is also a key open space connection between St. James Park and Front Street so measures would have to be taken to mitigate the “portal effect” that an underground ramp would have on the park and to not interrupt any key visual or pedestrian connections.

In summary, staff recommend that the implications of access via King Street be reviewed from a City policy, legal, physical and traffic/transit operations perspective, so that the limitations and benefits of this option are better known.

Conclusions:

The traffic study prepared by iTrans examined a number of site access options from a traffic operations perspective and provided the City with a number of next steps.

City staff will pursue these next steps to find a solution for parking under the North Market site, one which best manages traffic and benefits pedestrians, traffic, future North Market patrons and tenants and the surrounding residential and business community.

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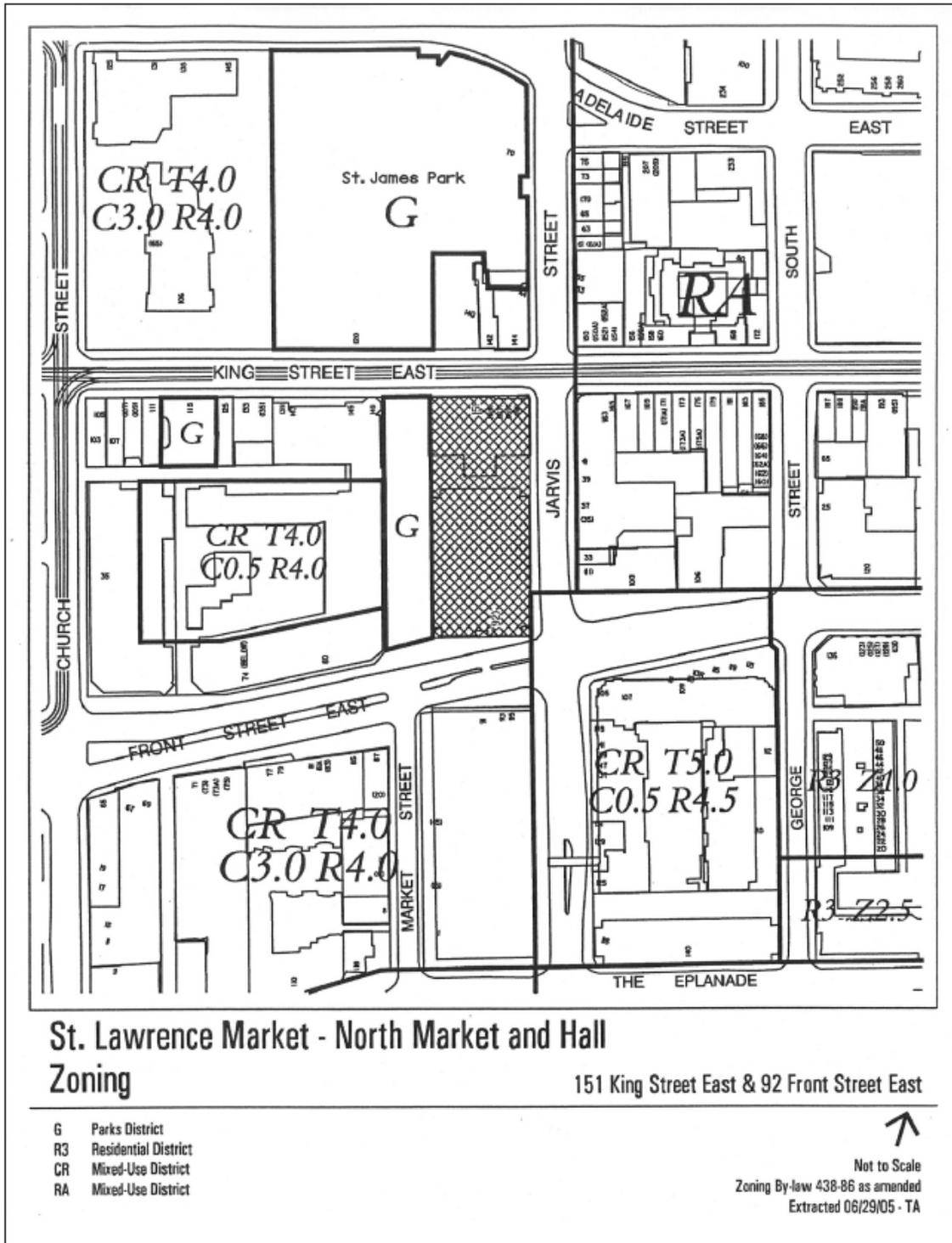
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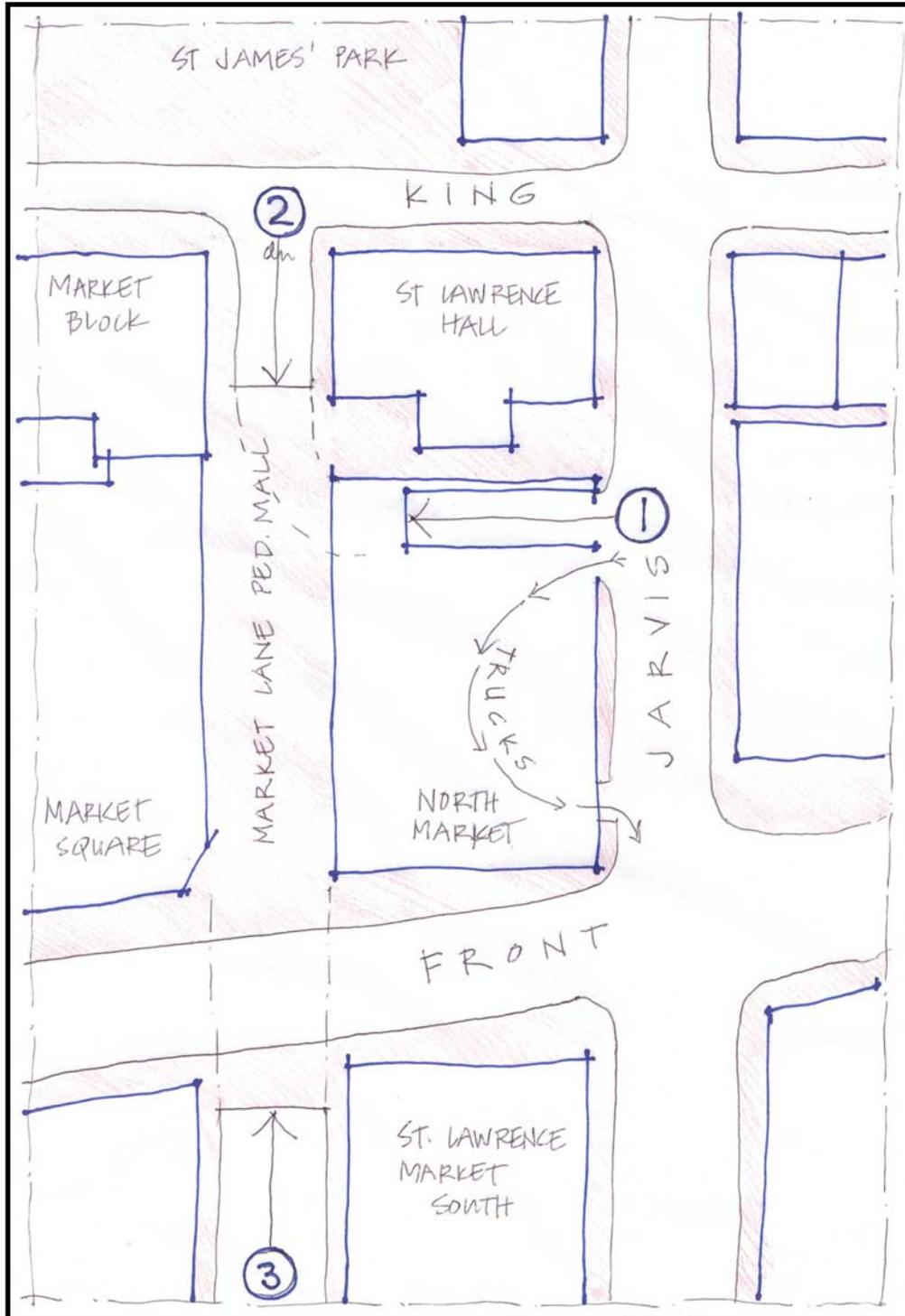
List of Attachments:

Appendix 1: St. Lawrence Market North (includes St. Lawrence Hall)
Appendix 2: Access Options discussed by the Working Committee
Appendix 3: Existing AM Peak Hour Queues

Appendix: 1: St. Lawrence Market North (includes St. Lawrence Hall)



Appendix 2: Access Options Discussed by the Working Committee



1. Jarvis Street
2. King Street East
3. Under Front Street

Appendix 3: Existing AM Peak Hour Queues



Source: St. Lawrence Market North
Redevelopment, Traffic Study, May 2006 by
iTrans