

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: June 2, 2010

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT FLEET MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE
FACILITY – CONSIDERATION OF THE UNILEVER SITE

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission forward this report to Toronto City Council for information in conjunction with the report entitled “Request for Approval of the Replacement Fleet Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) Transit Project Assessment Study”.

FUNDING

The recommendation in this report will have no financial impact.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on May 18, 2010 the City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure Committee recommended to City Council, the recommendations of the City staff report PW33.9 “Proposed Use of Lands on the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Site for a TTC Light Rail Vehicle Facility”. In addition to the staff recommendation, “that City Council approve the proposed change of use for the TTC LRV Facility”, the Committee also recommended the TTC provide a report to Council on the potential use of the Unilever site. This report responds to that request.

A more detailed description of the overall Fleet Replacement Maintenance and Storage Facility project is provided in the report “Request for Approval of the Replacement Fleet Maintenance and Storage Facility Transit Project Assessment Study” which is before the Commission on this agenda as Report 2(b).

DISCUSSION

The Unilever site, owned by UL Canada Inc., located in the northeast quadrant of the Don Valley Parkway/Lake Shore Boulevard On/Off ramp intersection, was initially investigated as a potential site for the MSF in November 2008.

The 28 acre Unilever site (see Figure 1) is bounded by the CN Rail tracks on the north and south sides of the property, the Don Valley Parkway/Lake Shore Boulevard On/Off ramp to the west, Cinespace film studio, Enbridge Gas and City of Toronto Works yard to the east. A sliver of land provides vehicle access onto Eastern Avenue immediately east of the CN Rail overpass, west of the Enbridge Gas property.

At the time of the initial review, Korex Don Valley ULC was a ground tenant of UL Canada Inc. with a factory land lease of 25.4 acres. Cinespace Film studio leased the remaining 2.6 acre parcel of land. In November 2008, Korex Don Valley ULC was offering only 11 acres of the site, which was considered surplus to their requirements with a sub-lease of up to 14 years. It was evident that Korex was involved with a labour dispute over the manufacturing operations on the balance of the site (14.4 acres) which was not part of the initial land offer.

Due to the insufficient land area available (11 acres), the uncertainty of the term of the lease for a permanent TTC facility, the potential restrictions on a subtenant under the head lease, access to the adjacent road system and the connection to the existing streetcar network, the site was not considered a viable option for the MSF and was not carried forward for further assessment.

Since the site was originally investigated in 2008, Korex Don Valley ULC has gone bankrupt and it is understood UL Canada Inc. has regained control of the entire property. Consequently TTC has reconsidered the potential use of the site without Korex's manufacturing operations.

Site Availability

It is understood that Cinespace, the owner of the adjacent parcel to the east, continues to lease an approximate 2.6 acre portion of the 28 acre site, leaving the 25 acre balance unoccupied at this time. This is a sufficient size for the requirement of the MSF. The property is not currently listed on the market.

Building Demolition and Environmental Clean-Up

Due to the past industrial use on the site, it is anticipated that the buildings and site would require considerable amount of environmental clean-up to make the site suitable for construction. As well, the existing buildings on the site would have to be demolished to accommodate the required maintenance building and storage tracks.

Connection Track Options

Non-revenue service track will be required to connect the MSF to the existing streetcar network at Queen Street. One route option for the track connection is Booth Street to Eastern Avenue, west on Eastern Avenue under the CN Rail overpass to Broadview Avenue and north on Broadview Avenue to Queen Street. A second potential route option could be Booth Street to Queen Street.

Timing

Property acquisition, demolition of existing structures, anticipated environmental clean-up on the Unilever site and design of the MSF would delay the completion of the project of up to 3 years.

Other Considerations

In addition, as a result of past discussions with the film industry at other potential sites investigated for the MSF, expectations are that the film industry will have concerns with an LRV Maintenance and Storage Facility operating immediately adjacent to an active film studio.

Cost

The use of the Unilever site for the MSF is estimated to cost approximately 20% more than the preferred Ashbridges Bay site, located at Lake Shore Boulevard and Leslie Street. The higher costs can be attributed to property purchase and building demolition and additional capital and operating costs associated with a longer connection track from the MSF to Queen Street.

JUSTIFICATION

The Unilever site is not recommended for the location of the Replacement Fleet Maintenance and Storage Facility. The Replacement Fleet MSF at this location would be substantially more costly than the preferred site of Ashbridges Bay (Lake Shore Boulevard at Leslie Street) and would result in a significant delay in the completion of the Maintenance and Storage Facility to 2016. This delay would jeopardize the introduction of the new LRVs.

May 25, 2010
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Attachment: Figure 1

Figure 1
Unilever Site Location

