

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: May 6, 2010

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE
SHEPPARD MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE FACILITY
TRANSIT PROJECT ASSESSMENT STUDY

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Approve the recommendation of the joint City/TTC Sheppard Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) Transit Project Assessment Study, as described in the attached Draft Environmental Project Report (EPR) Executive Summary;
2. Note that three formal public consultation meetings and one community consultation meeting have been held;
3. Forward this report to the City of Toronto Executive Committee for its meeting on May 17, 2010 and for submission to the June 8, 2010 meeting of City Council recommending that Council approve the recommendations of the Sheppard MSF Transit Project Assessment Study and authorize staff to submit the EPR to the Ministry of Environment; and
4. Forward this report to Metrolinx and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for information.
5. Request the City's final report for the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment for the Sheppard MSF site be submitted to the June 16, 2010 Planning and Growth Management Committee Meeting and for submission to the July 6, 2010 City Council meeting.

FUNDING

Funding for the Sheppard East LRT project was included under Transit City approved priority projects in the TTC 2010-2014 Capital Program as amended by the Commission on October 29, 2009 and adopted by the City of Toronto Council on December 8, 2009. Project commitment approval of \$190.232 million was included for the Sheppard East LRT line to cover incurred expenditures to the end of 2010.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of March 21, 2007, the Commission endorsed the *Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan* as the basis for rapid transit expansion in the City of Toronto. This plan included the Sheppard East LRT line as one of seven lines forming a network of fast, reliable, environmentally-sustainable light rail transit throughout the City. Subsequently at its meeting of November 14, 2007, the Commission received the staff report entitled, *Transit City Light Rail Plan – Evaluation and Ranking of Routes*, which assessed all seven of the light rail lines which comprise the Transit City plan, and confirmed the earlier staff conclusion that the Sheppard East, Etobicoke-Finch West, and Eglinton Crosstown LRT lines are the priority projects for the start of implementation of the plan.

On June 15, 2007, the Province of Ontario announced the *MoveOntario 2020* rapid transit plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA). *MoveOntario 2020* includes the TTC-City of Toronto *Transit Light Rail Plan*, including the proposed Sheppard East LRT line as well as the upgrade and extension of the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) line. In the spring of 2009 the Provincial and Federal Governments announced funding of \$950 million for the Sheppard East LRT project and the Province announced funding for the SRT at \$1.4 billion. The Sheppard LRT and the upgrade and extension of the SRT line are included as priority projects in the *Metrolinx Big Move Transit Plan* for the GTHA. In its March 25, 2010 Provincial Budget, the Province announced that it was deferring \$4 billion in transit construction work over the next five years by working with Metrolinx to phase construction on these identified priority projects. While the details of this construction phasing are not yet available, it is understood that the Sheppard East LRT project is viewed as “under construction” and is not impacted by these project deferrals.

In the fall of 2009, the City of Toronto and Toronto Transit Commission initiated preliminary planning for a Transit Project Assessment Study for the Sheppard MSF. The Transit Project Assessment is being conducted in accordance with the Transit Projects Regulation of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EA). Under this Regulation, transit projects, such as the Sheppard MSF, are exempt from the requirements under Part II of the *Act*.

This report provides a summary of the public consultation process, results of the Transit Project Assessment Study and the rationale supporting the various elements of the recommended preferred design for the Sheppard MSF.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Sheppard MSF Project

The objective of this project is to provide a Maintenance and Storage Facility for the Light Rail Vehicles that would serve Sheppard and SRT lines. The maintenance facility is required to ensure the new LRVs are maintained in a state of good repair in order for the LRT lines to provide reliable, high-capacity, environmentally-sustainable transit service to the public. Outdoor space is also required to store 100 LRVs which will provide daily revenue service to the LRT lines for 35 LRVs for Sheppard East LRT and 63 for SRT project at full build out.

Site Location and Study Area

The property for the Sheppard MSF is located at 8304 Sheppard Avenue East in the northwest corner of Sheppard Avenue East and Conlins Road in the City of Toronto, Scarborough District. The vacant site is approximately 12.9 hectares (31.8 acres) in size. The property lies west of Meadowvale Road, east of Morningside Avenue, and south of decommissioned railway corridor and the Rouge River Valley. The site extends approximately 900 m to the north of Sheppard Avenue. The property also fronts on Thornmount Drive along a portion of its western boundary and is adjacent to an unopened road allowance for Conlins Road on the eastern boundary.

The Study Area has been identified as the project site and surrounding area as dictated by the potential effects for each discipline. Where a potential effect may extend beyond the existing site boundary, the Study Area for that effect has been correspondingly extended.

The Process to Date

The process to date has involved a number of study phases to develop a preferred site layout for the MSF and to assess the impacts of its construction and operation. These phases included:

- An LRV Maintenance and Repair Facilities Master Plan study was completed that identified the need for additional storage capacity and facilities to maintain new LRVs for Transit City.
- Site selection process to identify a parcel of land of sufficient size to accommodate the facility (min. 25 acres), located close to Sheppard LRT Line, availability to meet scheduled timelines and ready access to utilities.

- Data collection and analysis of existing conditions for transportation facilities, the natural environment, and the social environment were completed for the study area.
- For those areas where issues had been identified, alternative designs were developed and evaluated. The preferred option was incorporated into the preferred project design.
- Environmental issues were identified and alternative elements were selected for the site design to minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts.
- Meetings were held with City departments, Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, and interested stakeholders (e.g., Toronto Zoo, Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board).
- A comprehensive public consultation program was developed and implemented to allow the public to review the proposed project and provide comments. Three public consultation open houses have been held. Information was posted on the City and TTC websites. Opportunities were provided for the public to comment verbally, by email or by fax. In addition, a meeting arranged by the local Councillor provided additional opportunities for the public to receive and respond to detailed information similar to the open houses. A Community Consultation meeting was also held in conjunction with the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law amendment application for the site. In total, five meetings have been held with the public, Councillors and community groups about the project. Responses to questions received from individuals have been provided where requested and public consultation records prepared summarizing concerns and comments.
- The full process has resulted in the development of a preferred site design and associated facilities for the Sheppard MSF.

The Preferred Design

The preferred site layout proposed for the Sheppard MSF includes the following primary components:

- *Indoor Maintenance and Repair Facility (Carhouse)*. The proposed carhouse building will be approximately 16,900 m². The building will be designed to comply with Toronto Green Standards including a 50% vegetative green roof. Automobile and truck access to the building will be from Thornmount Drive;

- *Maintenance of Way (MoW) Building.* The MoW will be approximately 1,500 m², and will provide office and shop areas for servicing the LRT right-of-way. The MoW building will provide an area for electrical, signal, track and overhead crews. Space will also be provided for recovery vehicle storage and a work car garage which will provide load up area and repair bay for rail bound work cars;
- *Electrical Substation Building.* The substation building will be approximately 890 m², and will provide electrical power to the Sheppard East LRT line as well as the storage yard, MoW and carhouse;
- *Outdoor LRV Storage Yard.* The yard will provide storage for approximately 100 LRV's. An area within the yard is available for future storage track expansion.
- *LRV Access.* From the site, LRVs will access the Sheppard East LRT line from two access points along the frontage of Sheppard Avenue East.
- *Stormwater Management Pond.* A stormwater management pond will be provided on site at the north end of the property.
- *Acoustical Wall.* An acoustical barrier will be installed along the north and east borders of the site to mitigate noise; and
- *Toronto Green Standards.* The development of the site will comply with the City's Toronto Green Standards.

The facility is anticipated to employ approximately 350 employees over three shifts with the majority of the employees on the day shift.

The development of the site will require the realignment of the existing drainage watercourse at the south end of the property. The surface water will be conveyed within a new box culvert extending approximately 230m from the west property boundary towards the east property boundary. The culvert will end at an outflow to the existing drainage facility located to the east of the property boundary, within the unopened Conlins Road right-of-way.

An existing City of Toronto 1050 mm diameter trunk sewer that crosses the site will be relocated along the east side of the site. To the north of the site, the sewer will be aligned within the former rail corridor westward until it reconnects with an existing section of the trunk sewer.

Property Requirements

The property is currently owned by the Province of Ontario under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and has designated this property be used for the Sheppard Maintenance and Storage Facility.

Schedule

Assuming all necessary approvals are received by September 2010, construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2010 and continue until 2013, to coincide with revenue service date of the Sheppard East LRT.

Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment

Toronto's Official Plan Urban structure map (Map 2) identifies the lands as part of an Employment District. The lands are primarily designated as Employment Area with a portion of the lands also designated as Natural Areas. The Natural Areas designation applies to the lands along the existing watercourse and the east property line. The lands are also subject to Site and Area Specific Policy 135 which permits uses within the Employment area designations that are compatible with the Toronto Zoo. The policy permits the use of holding (H) provisions in the zoning by-law.

An Official Plan Amendment is required for the site to permit:

- Proposed development within 10 meters of the established stable top of bank (subject to the TRCA approval);
- Permit the realignment of the watercourse within the subject property and adjust the corresponding Natural Area designation on Land Use Map 22 subject to the Environmental Assessment and the approval of the TRCA; and
- Remove Site and Area Specific Policy 135.

A Zoning By-law Amendment is required to permit a public transportation use and outside storage and to remove the existing holding (H) provisions.

TTC has submitted an application to the City of Toronto for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law amendment as described above. A preliminary report on the application was received by the City's Planning and Growth Management Committee on March 8, 2010. A Community Consultation meeting, as required by the City's planning process, was held on April 13, 2010.

Transit Project Assessment Process

Under the Transit Projects Regulation of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EA), transit projects, such as the Sheppard MSF, are exempt from the requirements under Part II of the *Act*.

The preliminary planning has been completed for the project and the Transit Project Assessment Process Notice of Commencement was issued March 25, 2009. Public consultation has been included throughout the process. The attached report, entitled "Sheppard MSF, Draft Environmental Project Report, Executive Summary" provides additional details on:

1. The process followed to develop the project;
2. The rationale for the design elements selected for the Sheppard MSF; and
3. A summary of the environmental impacts of the project and the net effects following proposed mitigation measures.

Complete details on the Sheppard MSF, including the site layout will be contained in the project's Environmental Project Report, which will be finalized in mid 2010. The Environmental Project Report will be placed on the public record for the mandatory 30-day review period in summer 2010.

JUSTIFICATION

The Sheppard MSF project is a component of the *Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan*, the Province's *MoveOntario 2020* plan and Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan.

April 13, 2010
55-11-AL

Attachments: Sheppard MSF, Draft Environmental Project Report, Executive Summary