



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Measures for Mitigating Traffic Congestion at BMO Field

Date:	March 31, 2014
To:	City Council
From:	City Manager
Wards:	Ward 19
Reference Number:	P:\2014\Internal Services\Cf\Cc14007Cf (AFS19310)

SUMMARY

This report responds to a directive from Executive Committee to:

- Secure a financial contribution from Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Limited ("MLSEL") for transportation planning studies to improve access to Exhibition Place and report on the outcome of these negotiations
- Develop options to improve and encourage the use of public transit to BMO Field and to report on options to include in the Letter of Intent with MLSEL

MLSEL has agreed to commit \$200,000 towards measures that are aimed at alleviating potential congestion or traffic issues at Exhibition Place. It is anticipated that this amount will be invested in the following initiatives:

- New wayfinding signage at Exhibition Place (up to \$83,000)
- Funding for transportation studies that will examine options for improving access to Exhibition Place
- Financial incentives that will encourage attendees at BMO Field events to travel to these events using public transit

In addition to the new commitment provided in response to the directives from Executive Committee, the original LOI already included terms that addressed increased transportation congestion issues through scheduling restrictions on BMO Field events.

City Planning staff have indicated that MLSEL will also, as part of the site plan control process, be required to fund a Transportation Demand Management study which will further examine local transportation capacity issues and measures that are specifically related to BMO Field for implementation in the site plan approval.

Furthermore, GO Transit has indicated that work will begin shortly on significant improvements to the Exhibition Place station which will encourage more intensive use of this station by attendees at Exhibition Place events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. The draft Letter of Intent from Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Ltd. attached to the report (March 5, 2014) from the City Manager and Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer be amended to secure a financial contribution from Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Ltd. for transportation initiatives and planning studies to improve access to Exhibition Place and enhance utilization of public transit, by adding a clause substantially in the form set out in Attachment 1 to this report.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City or the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place resulting from the recommendations in this report.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of March 19, 2014, Executive Committee adopted the staff recommendations in the March 5, 2014 report on the Renovation and Expansion of BMO Field (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-67466.pdf>).

The Committee also directed the City Manager to

1. Secure a financial contribution from Maple Leaf Sports Entertainment Ltd. for transportation planning studies to improve access to Exhibition Place, and that the City Manager report directly to the April 1, 2014 City Council meeting on results of these negotiations.
2. Develop, in consultation with the TTC, Economic Development Culture, and Metrolinx, options to improve and encourage the use of public transit to BMO Field and report directly to the April 1, 2014 City Council meeting on options to be included in the Letter of Intent and mechanisms for securing these options.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

BMO Field is a 21,566 seat stadium owned by the City of Toronto but currently managed by Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Ltd. ("MLSEL"). The principal user of the stadium is the Toronto FC soccer team, which is a franchise member of professional Major League Soccer ("MLS").

In late 2013 MLSEL approached City staff with a proposal to increase the permanent seating capacity to 30,000 and allow for an additional 10,000 in temporary seating capacity for special events.

MLSEL is proposing an expansion to seating capacity in the stadium because they anticipate that attendance for FC games will increase as a result of their current efforts to improve the team's performance.

The ability to host CFL games has also become an important objective for BMO Field because the Toronto Argonaut ("Argos") CFL team has indicated that they are seeking a new location to hold their home games. The Argos have expressed a preference for playing at a smaller, open-air stadium which they expect will provide a more attractive atmosphere for their fans.

At a meeting of the Exhibition Place Community Liaison Committee held on March 5, 2014, a number of participants raised concerns over the potential impact that the proposed expansion would have on traffic congestion and parking availability at Exhibition Place.

COMMENTS

Traffic Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Existing Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent attached to the March 5, 2014 staff report already incorporates a number of measures that address the increase in traffic congestion that may result from the proposed increase in seating capacity at BMO Field.

MLSEL Contribution to the cost of new parking wayfinding digital signage

The Letter of Intent ("LOI") commits MLSEL to contributing 1/3 of the cost of the new digital parking wayfinding signage that is to be placed around Exhibition Place. The LOI sets the maximum total expenditure for the wayfinding signage at \$250,000.

Capital Maintenance Reserve Funds Made Available to Exhibition Place For Signage

Under the terms of the LOI, MLSEL will become fully responsible for all of the stadium's future capital maintenance costs during the term of the agreement and the LOI requires that a minimum of \$400,000 from the existing balance in BMO Field's Capital Maintenance Reserve be released to the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place at the

end of 2014. A portion of these funds can be used to fund the Board's share of the costs for the new digital wayfinding signage.

Scheduling Constraints on Toronto FC and Toronto Argonaut Games

The LOI incorporates the following constraints on the earliest times that Toronto FC and Toronto Argonaut games can commence on weekends when other major events (e.g. Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, National Home Show) are also taking place at Exhibition Place:

- Games that are not playoffs or finals shall not commence before 6:00 pm
- Playoff games shall not commence before 2:00 pm except when the time is dictated by national television broadcast commitments - but no playoff game shall start before 1:00 pm

These requirements are intended to allow the attendees of the other events to gain access to parking at Exhibition Place before the start of BMO Field events.

Additional Traffic Mitigation Measures to Be Incorporated in the Letter of Intent

MLSEL has offered to amend the Letter of Intent currently before Council with the following additional clause:

“MLSE agrees to commit not less than \$200,000 (in cash or in kind contributions) over a three year period towards measures that are aimed at alleviating any potential congestion or traffic issues arising from an expanded Stadium and in this regard MLSE agrees to work in good faith with such parties as TTC and GO Transit, a division of Metrolinx, to improve and encourage the use of public transit to the Stadium. This commitment amount shall include the parking wayfinding digital signage contribution referred to in Part II, Section 1 (j) of the LOI as well as a financial contribution to transportation and planning studies to improve access to Exhibition Place.”

It is anticipated that the new incremental commitment of approximately \$117,000 (the amount remaining from the total \$200,000 commitment after making expenditures related to the existing wayfinding signage commitment of up to \$83,000) will be used for measures such as:

- Financial incentives that will encourage attendees at BMO Field events to travel to these events using public transit
- Funding for transportation studies that will examine options for improving access to Exhibition Place

Traffic Mitigation Measures to Be Addressed Through the Site Plan Control Process

In conjunction with the required Site Plan Control application process for the proposed expansion of BMO Field from 21,566 capacity to 30,000, the City will require a

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to address increased travel to the site. TDM plans are focused on a wide range of measures to minimize single occupant auto travel trips, and transit improvements would be a key component of such a plan.

BMO Field is currently served by the Dufferin bus, the 511 Bathurst Streetcar, the 509 Harbourfront Streetcar, and the Exhibition Place GO Transit Station. Opportunities to improve and encourage transit use that would be examined through the site plan control process include:

- improved pedestrian links between the transit stops/station and the entrances to the stadium (weather protection, protection from vehicular traffic, shorter routes, wider walking area, wayfinding measures, etc.)
- improved transit stop/station conditions such as wider platforms, signage, lighting, transit information (arrival/departure times, route connections, estimated travel times, traffic conditions, etc.)
- transit personnel to organize transit patrons
- advance fare collection to improve loading
- secure bike parking facilities
- accessibility improvements

Upon submission of the TDM and plans and drawings appropriate measures to address travel to and from the site will be secured in the site plan approval.

There may also be additional opportunities for improved transit service beyond the site. For example, special TTC express bus service from Union Station to BMO Field, and GO Transit bus service to the site.

In the longer term, City plans include the Waterfront West LRT line connecting Union Station to South Etobicoke. The line would extend the current service beyond the Manitoba Drive loop to the intersection of Queen, King and Roncesvalles, and continuing on to Etobicoke via the Queensway. This line is included in the list of future improvements being considered in the City's Official Plan update (the Feeling Congested campaign).

Measures Already Being Undertaken to Improve the GO Station at Exhibition Place

GO Transit has recently issued a tender document which will result in the Exhibition Place station being provided with the following standard amenities:

- Canopies over the platforms
- Integrated and heated shelters

- Elevator for improved accessibility

GO Transit has indicated that its objective is to have this work completed in time for the Pan-Am Games in 2015. A new station building is scheduled to be constructed after the Pan-Am Games.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Joseph P. Pennachetti
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Amending Clause for Letter of Intent for Expansion of BMO Field

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Amending Clause for Letter of Intent for Expansion of BMO Field

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