

Proposed Land Lease for part of the City-Owned property at 311 Staines Road to the Tamil Community Centre

Date: July 9, 2020

To: CreateTO Board of Directors

From: Chief Executive Officer

Wards: 25 - Scarborough-Rouge Park

SUMMARY

City-owned 311 Staines Road comprises a north parcel and south parcel, separated by a Hydro corridor. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Board of CreateTO on the non-binding conversations between CreateTO staff and the principals of the Tamil Community Centre ("TCC") regarding a proposed land lease (the "Land Lease") for the south parcel of 311 Staines Road (the "Subject Property"). TCC have proposed a new community centre on the Subject Property which will serve the community as a whole while providing a focus on the Tamil Community.

The Tamil community has been working for some time to identify a location within Northeast Scarborough in order to build a new community centre with the goal to address the gap in services available to the broader Tamil community. The proposed location of the new TCC at the Subject Property is ideally located to serve the immediate community along with the broader Tamil communities in Pickering, Ajax and Markham. In addition, the community centre will work to incorporate the needs of community members at large, who would be able to access and use this facility through a Community Access Agreement which will work as a companion document to the Land Lease. This location is home to a large number of new immigrant families, single parent households, and/or individuals with socio-economic barriers. While the agreements will be with the TCC, it will be carried out with sensitivity to the needs of the many other communities in the neighbourhood. Communities including Indigenous, Black and Caribbean communities confront similar difficulties in terms of travel time to access vital services, a lack of recreational services, neighbourhood improvement projects, and affordable spaces for community and cultural events. The TCC will be a valuable resource to improve vital services to all communities in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO recommends that:

1. The Board of CreateTO direct the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, General Manager of Economic Development & Culture, Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning along with the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate the terms and conditions of a long-term fair market-value lease agreement with the Tamil Community Centre, to design, build, finance and operate a new not-for-profit Community Recreation Facility on the south parcel of the City-owned property at 311 Staines Road, as shown and outlined on Attachment 1 of this report;
2. The Board of CreateTO direct the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the General Manager of Economic Development & Culture, along with the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate the terms and conditions of a Community Access Agreement to accompany the Land Lease;
3. The Board of CreateTO direct the Chief Executive Officer to consult with the Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration and the Director of the Indigenous Affairs Office on how to ensure that the Community Access Agreement is developed to best meet the needs of vulnerable and Indigenous communities;
4. The Board of CreateTO direct the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Indigenous Affairs Office on the feasibility of how any agreements may include requirements for Indigenous Placemaking and how this would be incorporated into any redevelopment of the Subject Property;

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact for the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The City acquisition of 311 Staines Road comprising the north parcel and the south parcel and referred to as the Village Securities site, was authorized by GM4.12 adopted by City Council at its meeting on May 23, 24 and 25, 2007. The property is of significant cultural, indigenous and heritage value to the City, and is an important wildlife corridor. Recommendation 7 of GM 4.12 provides that the Village Securities site be restricted to a naturalized state. The acquisition was delayed for some months due to potential litigation, and was completed on December 20, 2007, in accordance with confidential instructions to staff, as set out in CC14.2 - November 2007.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/gm/bgrd/backgroundfile-3287.pdf>

COMMENTS

The subject property along with an adjacent parcel to the north ("Attachment 1") was acquired by the City of Toronto in 2007 partly for a new community centre to be constructed and operated by the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division ("PFR"). Subsequent to the City purchasing 311 Staines Road, PFR undertook a site suitability analysis and ultimately determined that the ideal location for their new community centre would be at the City owned Joyce Trimmer Park ("Attachment 2"). Construction of this new community centre at Joyce Trimmer Park is underway and allows for other opportunities to be explored at the Subject Property.

As a part of the due diligence undertaken by the City of Toronto at the time 311 Staines Road was acquired, it was determined that both parcels formed a part of the Little Archie II lands and that prior to any work undertaken, consultation with the Huron Wendat will be required. The Indigenous Affairs office at the City of Toronto have indicated that the proposal of a new TCC at the Subject Property provides an exciting opportunity to demonstrate Indigenous placemaking within any future redevelopment.

The TCC undertook an online consultation to identify and engage with a variety of stakeholders, which was launched on a bilingual (English and Tamil) website to address potential language barriers. The online consultation tool, as well as in-person public consultations, gathered data from community members as well as community organizations with diverse mandates designed to address various community needs, helped identify the stakeholder priorities, and the parameters for the project. The priorities identified here were an auditorium, gym, mental health services, history and archival space/museum, library, women's services and disability programming. On a municipal level, the proposed TCC project will create a better urban environment through the construction of a landmark building that will enhance the quality of the public realm through its conception within the cultural context of the surrounding neighbourhoods. Drawing on multiple human service sectors, such a facility would serve to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of a large, underserved population of not only Tamils, but also Indigenous, Black and Caribbean communities in the area, by providing equitable access to community services.

It is intended that the TCC be a dynamic, innovative, multi-purpose, and non-denominational facility incorporating spaces and services to help address the current and growing needs of the diverse Canadian Tamil community, as well as Black, Indigenous and other equity-seeking groups by acting as a community hub.

In due course, staff will submit a report to Committee and to City Council for consideration of potential litigation risk, to amend the "naturalized state" restriction for the Subject Lands, and for authority to enter into the Land Lease and related agreements.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Site Profile

Attachment 1 - Site Profile

Dimensions (approximate): Approx. Site Area:	16,722 m ² (180,000 ft ²) 4.13 Acres
Zoning:	Residential
Official Plan:	Neighborhoods
Current Use:	Open Space

