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YORK REGION TRANSIT
LAND ACQUISITION
BERNARD BUS TERMINAL

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, February 16, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize the acquisition of land as outlined in this report from the Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill for the property known as the Bernard Bus Terminal for nominal consideration.
2. The Regional Solicitor be authorized to prepare the necessary documents.
3. The Regional Chair and Clerk be authorized to execute the land transfer documents on behalf of the Region.

2. PURPOSE

York Region Transit (YRT) is seeking authorization to acquire lands from The Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill for lands know as the Bernard Bus Terminal.

3. BACKGROUND

On June 16, 1994, a development agreement between the Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill and Bernard Homes Ltd. was signed allowing Bernard Homes Ltd. to construct a retail plaza located on the south east corner of Yonge Street and Bernard Avenue. As part of the conditions of the agreement, Bernard Homes Ltd. conveyed land and an easement to the Town of Richmond Hill at a nominal fee for the purpose of constructing and operating a bus turn around. The Town of Richmond Hill currently owns the road portion of the Bernard Bus Terminal and the easement is for a concrete sidewalk area where customers board and alight from the buses.

As part of the 2000 plan for the amalgamation of the local transit systems, the Bernard Bus Terminal and the Promenade Bus Terminal were proposed to be transferred to the Region at no cost. If at some point the terminals were no longer required for transit purposes, the properties would be transferred back to the two municipalities.

The Bernard Terminal is one of the major facilities and transfer points used by YRT, with four routes connecting in the terminal. There are three local routes and YRT's Route 99 Yonge service, which operates to and from the GO Finch Terminal in the City of Toronto and the Bernard Terminal. GO Transit's Newmarket 'B' service to the Town of Newmarket can be easily accessed on-street just outside of the terminal.

Discussions with the Town of Richmond Hill determined that they no longer require the use of Bernard Terminal lands since the responsibility for public transit now belongs to the Region. It is agreed that the lands should be transferred to the Region for a nominal fee.

With respect to the Promenade Terminal, a lease agreement has been executed between the City of Vaughan and the Region for the use of the property.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The agreement between the Town of Richmond Hill and Bernard Homes Ltd. included a condition that permitted these lands to be used for the purpose of a public transit terminal. In the event that the Town determines the lands are not required for the purposes of the Town, The Regional Municipality of York or the Province of Ontario for the operation of a public transit service, the lands are to be conveyed back to the Owner.

Currently, there are four routes operating from the Bernard Terminal. The four routes involve 320 bus movements daily, which combined, move 9,000 passengers each working day. Beginning September 2005, the new bus rapid transit (BRT) service will also operate in the terminal. Routes that service the Bernard Terminal connect customers to the GO Finch Terminal and the Finch Subway Station in the City of Toronto, Hillcrest Mall in Richmond Hill, as well as many schools and community centres. The terminal provides bus turn-around and recovery time for schedule adherence, driver facilities and a convenient and accessible transfer location.

Stated in the existing agreement between the Town of Richmond Hill and Bernard Homes Ltd. are the responsibilities of both parties. Bernard Homes Ltd. maintains all landscaping, removes all garbage and debris and provides snow clearing and ice removal within the limits of the easement. The Town of Richmond Hill is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the roadway, including snow clearing and ice removal, and janitorial services for the drivers' washroom. With the transfer of land and easement, the Region will assume the responsibilities that were originally assigned to the Town of Richmond Hill. YRT staff have established a professional working relationship with the property management company caring for the retail/commercial complex, the Conservatory Group. YRT staff have also worked with the Conservatory Group to identify required improvements and to coordinate the installation of the ticket vending equipment for the proposed BRT service.

4.1 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Bernard Terminal enables route connections from GO Transit's Newmarket Bus Terminal into the City of Toronto, as well as to various major east and west-bound routes within the Region, and supports the Region's goal to "...have *efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation, waste management and water systems*". It is also supportive of the related actions identified to make transit accessible throughout the Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Town of Richmond Hill has agreed to convey the lands for nominal consideration.

The Region currently pays to the Town of Richmond Hill approximately \$10,000 annually for snow clearing and ice removal on the terminal roadway. This will be a continued cost to the Region. The transfer of land will increase the Region's operating cost by approximately \$15,000 annually for janitorial services for the drivers' washroom and for general maintenance and repairs, which are currently covered by the Town of Richmond Hill and not charged back to the Region.

The draft 2005 Business Plan and Budget includes funding in the amount of \$120,000 to make improvements to the Terminal. Required improvements were identified by YRT staff in consultation with the owner and York Regional Police. YRT would take the lead in executing these improvements as the changes are to improve customer and bus operator safety and comfort while in the terminal area. Improvements include upgraded lighting, changes to the landscaping to make the terminal visible from Yonge Street for enhanced police surveillance, and painting and cleaning of the drivers' facility.

Sufficient funding is included in the 2005 Business Plan and Budget to cover both the operating costs and the proposed capital improvements.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Town of Richmond Hill will continue to benefit from bus services operating from the terminal and will no longer be responsible for the lands designated as the Bernard Bus Terminal.

7. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the Region acquire the lands required for the Bernard Terminal from the Town of Richmond Hill for nominal consideration. It is also recommended that the Region assume the Town's obligation under the site plan agreement with Bernard Homes Ltd. with respect to the maintenance of this site.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.