



Staff Report

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Report To:	General Government Committee	
Date of Meeting:	October 19, 2020	Report Number: PWD-002-20
Submitted By:	Steve Brake, Director of Public Works	
Reviewed By:	Andrew C. Allison, CAO	Resolution#:
File Number:	C.01.27.016.D.01	By-law Number:
Report Subject:	GO Transit Newcastle Village - Annual Status Update	

Recommendations:

1. That Report PWD-002-20 be received;
2. That the sale of the former fire hall site in the Village of Newcastle be further delayed to continue to allow GO Transit to use the property as a turnaround until such time as Durham Region Transit is able to provide a local service that ensures continuity for residents;
3. That Staff be directed to continue to work with Durham Region Transit to define future growth patterns and establish appropriate service levels;
4. That Staff be directed to report back to Council in the fall of 2021 on the progress of our discussions; and
5. That scheduling the sale of the site of the former fire hall in Newcastle be revisited at that time.

Report Overview

In 2016, Clarington Council committed to ensuring continuity of transit service to the Village of Newcastle by choosing to delay the development and demolition of the former fire hall at 247 King Avenue East to allow GO Transit to continue to use this location as a turnaround. The intent was to delay the development or sale of this site until such time as Durham Region Transit could offer a service that would fill any gaps that GO Transit might leave if the turnaround location were no longer available. Staff committed to provide an annual update to Council regarding the status of transit service within Newcastle, and staff confirmed that there will be minor changes to the current service in 2020-2021.

1. Background

- 1.1 Transit service connecting Newcastle residents to other towns and cities, as well as the GO Train and other transit services, is currently being provided through the GO Bus. In 2016, Council committed to ensuring continuity of service for our residents by choosing to delay the sale of the former fire hall at 247 King Avenue East as this site has been used by GO Transit as a turnaround location for some time. It was agreed that staff will continue to work with both transit authorities to encourage a transition to local, Durham Region Transit (DRT) service so continuity can be assured. Once an alternative arrangement for transit in Newcastle has been established, the Municipality would consider moving forward with the sale of the site as detailed in PSD-007-15.
- 1.2 Currently, the lease agreement with Go Transit is month to month and requires the Municipality to provide at least nine months' prior notice to Go Transit should we wish to terminate the lease.
- 1.3 Staff have been in discussions with GO Transit and were advised of two minor route changes, however regular scheduled service to Newcastle and use of the former fire hall as a turnaround will continue. Earlier in the year, DRT considered extending scheduled service into Newcastle, however due to low ridership numbers, they implemented an "On Demand" option instead, which does not provide a level of service to residents that could replace the Go Transit route. DRT continues to review ridership numbers within Newcastle and will continue with the On Demand service until ridership reaches the threshold to introduce scheduled service.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Staff recommend that the sale of the former fire hall at 247 King Avenue East continue to be deferred until such time as a viable transit alternative to the GO Bus can be provided. Any enhancement of service provided by DRT will be subject to annual Regional budget approvals.

- 2.2 In preparation for the eventual repurposing of the site and to minimize our ongoing maintenance requirements for the old fire hall building, staff will plan for the demolition of the building in 2021.

3. Concurrence

Not Applicable.

4. Conclusion

It is respectfully recommended that Council continue to support the residents of Newcastle by deferring the sale of the former fire hall so GO Transit can use it as a turnaround. In delaying the sale of these lands, Council is able to ensure continuity of transit service to the Village so residents who use the GO Bus to access work, school and other transit services can continue to do so.

Staff Contact: Ron Albright, Manager of Infrastructure, 905-623-3379, Ext. 2302 or ralbright@clarington.net

Attachments:

Not Applicable

Interested Parties:

There are no interested parties to be notified of Council's decision.