

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** General Government Committee

**Date of Meeting:** May 31, 2021

**Report Number:** PWD-024-21

**Submitted By:** Stephen 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 Update

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### Recommendations:

1. That Report PWD-024-21 be received;
2. That Council provide direction for Staff to commence the process of demolishing the former Newcastle fire hall building located at 247 King Avenue East to help prepare the property for sale, as detailed in report [PSD-007-15](#);
3. That Staff be directed to notify Metrolinx, the operator of GO Transit who currently use the property as a bus turnaround, about the requirement to terminate our lease agreement due to the impending sale of the property; and
4. That Metrolinx, be requested to work cooperatively with Clarington Staff on public consultation and the implementation of a suitable revised bus route that will ultimately ensure the continuation of transit service for Newcastle customers.

## **Report Overview**

The Municipality of Clarington has been delaying the demolition and sale of the former Newcastle Village fire hall property located at 247 King Avenue East since 2016. This approach has been taken to ensure the continuity of GO Transit bus service into the Village as the property continues to be used as the turnaround for the eastern end of the Lakeshore East route. Metrolinx, the operator of GO Transit, has been recently contacted by Clarington staff about this matter and as a means of resolution they have committed to validating an alternate route that would allow for the disposition of the property while maintaining bus service into the Village.

## **1. Background**

### **The Former Newcastle Fire Hall**

- 1.1 The old Newcastle Fire Hall located at 247 King Avenue served the community until 2014 when it was replaced by the new Alfred Aldread Fire Station at the west end of the Village. In early 2015, Council declared the former fire hall property as surplus and it was agreed that the building would be demolished and the site prepared for sale. GO Transit buses, however, continue to use the property as a turnaround for the eastern terminus of the Lakeshore East route.

### **GO Transit Service for the Village of Newcastle**

- 1.2 Until 2020, GO Transit has been providing bus service into Newcastle every 20 minutes on its Route 90 from Oshawa along Highway 2 and King Avenue, with a terminus east of Beaver Street. As the frequency and route timing overlapped two buses by several minutes, Clarington Staff, in conjunction with Staff from Region of Durham, dedicated and installed two on-street layby areas for the buses. This was done to address opposition from local residents on Harmer Drive, claiming excessive noise and pollution from buses using the old fire hall property as a layby.
- 1.3 Metrolinx fleet includes double decker buses that operate just within the maximum allowable height permitted in the Ontario Highway Traffic Act. Therefore, protocols are in place for each bus route and any deviations from the approved route are strictly controlled by Metrolinx staff. During past special events in Newcastle where King Avenue is closed, GO bus service has been re-routed to the collector roads of Rudell Road, Edward Street and Brookhouse Street after being approved by Metrolinx as suitable for their fleet.

- 1.4 Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and the associated reduction in ridership, GO Transit network service was adjusted in December 2020, resulting in Route 90 being eliminated. The replacement Route 88 between Oshawa and Peterborough now stops at the Highway 2 Carpool Park & Ride lot, with its alternate Route 88A providing commuter service into the Village with three early morning trips and three late afternoon trips.

## **2. Proposed Changes in Newcastle**

### **Future GO Bus Service in Newcastle**

- 2.1 Staff have recently inquired with Metrolinx about the future of bus service into Newcastle. Metrolinx has confirmed that they currently have no plans to discontinue Route 88A into Newcastle even though they are aware of the proposed future sale of the old fire hall property and its related effects on service.
- 2.2 Metrolinx has confirmed that they will review and divert buses, as necessary, to continue providing inter-regional bus transportation to the area. At present, Metrolinx has committed to validate a re-route once the old fire hall property is no longer available. One such proposed new route may include Baldwin Street south of King Avenue, left on Edward Street, left on Brookhouse Drive and north to King Avenue. Similar to the practice that has been followed during special event road closures, nearby collector roads will be considered as primary choices since they are built with the capacity and width to accept periodic transit vehicles.

## **3. Concurrence**

Not applicable.

## **4. Conclusion**

It is respectfully recommended that Council direct Staff to proceed with the process of demolishing and disposing of the old fire hall property located at 247 King Avenue East in Newcastle. The process will include suitable notification to Metrolinx of Council's decision such that a re-route of the GO Transit bus service can be validated and implemented. Clarington staff will work cooperatively with Metrolinx on conducting public consultation and determining the most suitable revised route through the Village.

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Staff Contact: Slav Potrykus, Traffic Engineering Supervisor, 905-623-3379 ext. 2315 or [spotrykus@clarington.net](mailto:spotrykus@clarington.net).

Attachments:

Not Applicable

Interested Parties:

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