



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: July 8, 2020
Report Number: SRPRS.20.085

Department: Planning and Regulatory Services
Division: Development Engineering & Transportation

Subject: SRPRS.20.085 – Installation of 16th Avenue
Pedestrian Connection, Signature 153 16th Inc.
(370 Red Maple Road), Our File: D06-12122

Purpose:

To receive and consider a request from Signature 153 16th Inc. with respect to their obligations associated with Site Plan Agreement File D06-12122 regarding the construction of a municipal pedestrian connection.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Council receive for their consideration, the letter from Signature 153 16th Inc., dated June 3, 2020;
- b) That Council approve a City contribution of \$305,000 toward the construction of a 16th Avenue staircase;
- c) That \$127,500 of the City contribution be funded from the City-Wide Development Charges Reserve Fund;
- d) That \$177,500 of the City contribution be funded from the Gas Tax Reserve Fund; and
- e) That Council authorize the execution of any agreements necessary to facilitate the construction of the staircase.

Contact Person:

Dan Terziewski, Director, Development Engineering and Transportation, phone number 905-747-6358; and or/
Paul Guerreiro, Manager, Development Engineering (Site Plans, Infill and High Rise and Construction), phone number 905-747-6448.

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services

Page 2

Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Page 3

Background:

Site Plan File D06-12122, known as Signature 153 16th Inc., is located east of Yonge Street on the south side of 16th Avenue adjacent to the east side of the CN Railway, municipally known as 370 Red Maple Road, as indicated on Map 1.

The subject development consists of a townhouse residential development with above and below grade parking. A Traffic Impact and Parking Study (TIPS) prepared by the owner's consultant proposed a parking supply that did not meet the City's parking rate requirement. With a deficiency in parking spaces, the site would have required a second level of underground parking. However, reduced parking rates recommended in the City's 2010 Parking Strategy can be applied if a development is located within a 400m walking distance of a Viva Rapid Transit stop. To satisfy this requirement, the Traffic Impact and Parking Study prepared by the developer's consultant recommended the provision of a more direct pedestrian connection between Red Maple Road and 16th Avenue through the construction of a municipal staircase to connect Red Maple Road with the grade separated portion of 16th Avenue.

A municipal sidewalk presently exists on Red Maple Road across the frontage of the subject property. The sidewalk currently provides a pedestrian connection to 16th Avenue at the Red Maple Road and 16th Avenue intersection, located approximately 250m east of the subject site (as shown on Map 2). Residents from the townhouse block or existing neighborhood to the south that are destined to the Yonge Street rapid transit stop currently need to walk 250m easterly in the opposite direction along Red Maple Road and then backtrack west approximately 600m along 16th Avenue to reach Yonge Street, for a walking distance of 850m. Conversely, a direct walkway connection from the townhouse development to 16th Avenue would shorten the travelled distance by less than half from 850m to approximately 350m. This would satisfy the 400m walking distance criteria and recognize the subject site to be within a rapid transit corridor as per the Town's Parking Strategy. Map 2 provides an illustration of the walking distances from the site and its configuration with and without a direct pedestrian connection to 16th Avenue.

It should be noted that there are clear pedestrian desire lines exhibited by the presence of travelled footpaths at the base of 16th Avenue embankment at this location and by the frequent holes cut in the safety fence along the CN corridor. The footpaths suggest that residents are currently walking up the embankment as a shortcut to get to 16th Avenue and Yonge Street from Red Maple Road.

However, the grade separation of approximately 8 metres between 16th Avenue and Red Maple Road limits the infrastructure options to provide a more direct connection. Various options to cross over or under the CN railway were explored, but proved to be very costly and regulatory approvals and dealing with the railway could prove challenging. As a result, the construction of a municipal staircase was considered as an alternative option to provide a direct connection and make up the grade difference between Red Maple Road and 16th Avenue. The public staircase would be installed

Page 4

within the Region's right-of-way, adjacent to the CN tracks by way of an encroachment agreement, refer to Map 2.

To satisfy the reduced parking rate, the owner was obligated through a site plan agreement to undertake the construction of the public staircase, at an estimated cost of \$144,000. The cost of this construction was secured as part of the site plan approval.

The original cost of the staircase submitted by the developer in 2016 contemplated an 8m high freestanding stair system. However, since the initial planning approvals for this site, a number of factors have modified and influenced the final design and have affected the overall cost of the project, including:

- Significant increases in raw material costs over the last few years;
- The Region's Environmental Assessment for 16th Avenue, completed in December 2019, assessed impacts to the staircase design thus requiring modifications and adjustments to the design to accommodate the future widening of 16th Avenue;
- Utility conflicts within the Region's right-of-way requiring modification from the original design.
- The desire and need to provide pedestrian scale illumination, which added an additional \$81,000 in illumination costs that was not contemplated in the original design for these stairs; and
- An additional consulting fees to accommodate these changes.

As a result, the estimated construction cost of \$144,000 secured in the site plan agreement in 2016 has increased to \$425,000 based on the revised estimate submitted by the owner. On June 3, 2020, Staff received a letter from Signature 153 16th Inc. requesting that the City contribute funding to the construction of the staircase citing the reasons noted above.

In order to keep the project moving forward, Signature 153 16th Inc. is seeking confirmation that the City is willing to contribute to the cost of the stairs, before commencing construction of the public staircase.

In addition to the \$30,000 already spent on engineering fees, the owner has indicated that they are still committed to contributing \$120,000 to the cost of construction. This results in a shortfall of \$305,000, for the remainder of the staircase costs, which the developer is requesting the City of Richmond Hill contribute. The full details of the request can be found in the letter, included as Attachment 1 to this report.

Staff support this request for contribution based on the following reasons:

Page 5

- The sidewalk is to public infrastructure which will service the broader community (existing and future) beyond that of Signature 153 16th Inc. development;
- The stairs will continue to support and promote the strategic objectives of the Municipality by providing better connectivity choices and by promoting active transportation and transit use by providing a more direct pedestrian linkages to public transit on Yonge Street and reducing car dependency and ownership;
- The stairs will address an existing safety concern as residents frequently climb the abutment and also try to illegal cross the CN tracks; and
- The City is currently collecting Development Charges in the City's City-Wide Development Charge By-Law for active transportation improvements such as this.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

As noted above, the total construction cost of the 16th Avenue Staircase is estimated to be \$425,000.

As per their original commitment, Signature 153 16th Inc. will fund \$120,000 of this cost directly to offset the direct benefits realized for their site from reduced parking.

The 2016 City-Wide Development Charges (CWDC) Update Study approved by Council currently collects monies for growth related Multi-modal Transportation Initiative projects which support pedestrian linkages to public transit (refer to Attachment 2 (Line 38)).

Based on the DC background study, 30% of the infrastructure costs for these types projects can be funded from this account (70% benefit to existing development), which currently has a balance of \$469,373.

As such, it is recommended that \$127,500 of the City's contribution be funded from this account (which represents 30% of the \$425,000), to subsidize the benefits to residents associated with future growth in the area.

It is recommended that the remaining \$177,500 of the City's contribution be funded from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund, which is allocated to municipalities by the Province to support local infrastructure to offset impacts of automobile use. This will subsidize the benefits of this project for the existing residents in the area.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

The requested funding for a public staircase would support the City Council Strategic Plan goal of providing "stronger connections" and "better choices" in Richmond Hill by improving the function of streets to provide better mobility for pedestrians and supporting active transportation as well as providing more direct linkages to public

Page 6

transit to help promote and support transit use and reduce auto dependency and congestion.

It also fulfills the City's objective of serving as a role model for municipal management as it promotes the timely delivery of infrastructure, manages and funds resources wisely, and anticipates the growing needs of the community while helping to minimize existing safety concerns.

Conclusion:

Signature 153 16th Inc. have requested that the City provide a financial contribution toward the construction of a municipal staircase required as part Site Plan Agreement File D06-12122.

Staff support this request, as there is a benefit to existing and future residents in the area beyond the 153 16th Inc. site. Staff recommend that of the \$305,000 contribution, \$127,500 be funded from the City-Wide Development Charges Reserve fund and \$177,500 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

Page 7

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format, please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Map 1 – Site Plan File D06-12122 (Signature 153 16th Inc.)
- Map 2 – Municipal Staircase Location
- Attachment 1 – June 3, 2020 Letter from Signature 153 16th Inc.
- Attachment 2 – 2019 Development Charges Background Study, Project number 38 Multi-modal Transportation Initiatives

Page 8

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPRS.20.085 - Signature Communities (370 Red Maple) Staircase.docx
Attachments:	- SRPRS.20.085 - Attachment 1 - Signature Letter.pdf - SRPRS.20.085 - Attachment 2 - DC Calculation Table.pdf - SRPRS.20.085 - Map 1 - Site Location.pdf - SRPRS.20.085 - Map 2 - Location of Municipal Staircase.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 24, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dan Terziewski - Jun 17, 2020 - 12:38 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Jun 17, 2020 - 1:21 PM

David Dexter - Jun 23, 2020 - 12:37 PM

MaryAnne Dempster - Jun 24, 2020 - 9:04 AM