



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Creation of a Working Group – Mr. Christie Site, 2150
Lake Shore Boulevard West – Status Report**

Date:	March 28, 2013
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	6- Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides background information and an update on the City Council direction to move forward with the development of a working group and a visioning process to explore options to help maintain and grow jobs on the Mr. Christie site located at 2150 Lake Shore Boulevard West. The purpose of this exercise is to support the protection of valuable employment lands in Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development & Culture recommends that:

1. The Economic Development Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council at it’s meeting on November 29, 2012 adopted, as amended Item CC28.5, headed, “Making Room for Jobs - Protecting an Employment Area in Etobicoke Lakeshore” with a motion to the Economic Development Committee requesting the Creation of a Working Group to Explore Options on the Christie site:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.CC28.5>

At the January 30, 2013 meeting of the Economic Development Committee (EDC), this item was referred back to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture for consideration and report to the Committee meeting of April 16, 2013.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The recent decision by Mondelez Canada to close the former Mr. Christie's Bakery at 2150 Lake Shore Boulevard West in late 2013, is expected to result in the loss of 550 jobs. At the same time, Mondelez has requested, under the City's Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Review process, that the site be considered for uses other than those provided under the Employment Area designation. Specifically they have requested that the site be redesignated to a *Regeneration Area* which would allow the City to undertake a secondary plan exercise to determine future land uses on the site including the introduction of residential uses. City Planning staff are currently considering this request as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review and expect to report to Council in the fall of 2013.

In an effort to address the announced closure, City Council has referred the following motion to the Economic Development Committee requesting the creation of a working group to explore options on the Christie site:

City Council request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to strike a working group with Labour, Post-Secondary institutions and other stakeholders to explore options on the Christie site to maintain existing jobs by possibly hosting educational and/or commercial food incubator programs and possible new food industry tenants for the site, amongst other uses.

COMMENTS

Economic Development & Culture staff have met with Mondelez, the owner of the property, to discuss the announced closure of their facility with a view to maintaining existing jobs, continuing operations, supporting remaining production facilities and retaining jobs in Toronto. Mondelez been open and transparent in their response and maintained that the closure of Lake Shore Bakery is final and the site will be sold.

Economic Development & Culture and City Planning staff have developed a project team to respond to the council motion requesting the creation of a working group to explore options on the Christie site and have initiated a process which will see the development of a multi-stakeholder working group and facilitated visioning process for the site.

At this time, staff feel that the establishment of the working group is premature. City Planning staff is currently conducting its due diligence on the submitted conversion request. City Planning is targeting a preliminary assessment on the site to be heard by the Planning & Growth Management Committee in Spring 2013. Once Planning and Growth

Management Committee and Council have considered the Preliminary Assessment, it would appropriate for staff to initiate the working group process.

In the mean time the internal project team will explore the following:

- 1) Options on the Christie site to maintain the existing number of jobs by possibly hosting educational and/or commercial food incubator programs and possible new food industry tenants for the site, amongst other uses.
- 2) Other innovative and convergent employment options that can add employment density and the highest and best (employment) uses for the site that fit within the context of the area.

A Terms of Reference for a proposed working group will be developed and a Request For Proposals will be scoped and vetted by the project team to retain a facilitator to lead a visioning/charette type process to help explore creative and transformative options for the site.

CONCLUSION

Despite the announced closure by Mondelez Canada to close the former Mr. Christie's Bakery, the development of a working group should be postponed until City Planning has provided a preliminary assessment on the redesignation request as part of the Municipal Comprehensive and Official Plan Review process and there is more certainty about the ownership of the property. At that time a visioning process with the appropriate stakeholders will help to explore creative options and help to retain valuable employment land with a view to accelerating economic growth and job creation with the objective of achieving 1,500 jobs on the site.

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SIGNATURE

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