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GTA

Toronto's Bay Street bus terminal reaches the end of the line

By **Ben Spurr** Transportation Reporter

Wed., June 9, 2021 | ⌚ 3 min. read

🔄 Article was updated 14 hrs ago

After 90 years, it looks like the Toronto Coach Terminal has just about served its last weary bus passenger.

For almost a century, the grey building near the corner of Bay and Dundas Streets downtown has been Toronto's hub of intercity bus service, but according to a new report it will cease operations next month and be handed over to the municipal government for potential redevelopment.

The terminal at 610 Bay St. is owned by a subsidiary of the TTC, the Toronto Coach Terminal Inc. (TCTI), which for years has leased it out to private bus operators. [A report](#) going to the TCTI board next week says its agreement with a joint venture of Greyhound and Coach Canada will run out on July 7, and the bus companies "will not be occupying the properties after the lease expiration."

Neither the TTC nor its subsidiary has "any current or future operations plans" for the site, the report states. It recommends the TCTI transfer the Bay Street property, as well as an addition to the bus terminal at nearby 130 Elizabeth St., to the city once the lease expires.

In exchange TCTI will ask for \$4.2 million from the city so it can pay down a loan, although the valuation of the property "significantly exceeds this amount," according to the report.

According to the report, the Greyhound and Coach Canada intend to move their operations to the new Union Station Bus Terminal near Bay and Front Streets. Coach Canada relocated to the new station this week.

Greyhound Canada [announced last month](#) it was permanently shutting down its operations across the country, although its U.S. affiliate will continue to run cross-border routes to major Canadian cities once the border is reopened.

A city spokesperson could not immediately say Wednesday what the municipal government intends to do with the terminal building, which sits on prime downtown land.

But in 2019 the city identified the property as underutilized, which makes it a suitable location for new development that would meet municipal objectives like the provision of affordable housing, employment uses, or other community infrastructure.

Under city policy, surplus land is administered by the municipal real estate agency, CreateTO.

The Toronto Coach Terminal opened in 1931 and initially housed the TTC's now defunct intercity bus service. The art deco building was designed by Charles Dolphin, a British-Canadian architect who was also responsible for the Canada Post Delivery Building, portions of which now form the facade of Scotiabank Arena.

Jamie Bradburn, a writer and historian, said the terminal was built at a time when the city was investing in grandiose buildings for transportation like Union Station, which opened four years earlier. With its grand staircase and stylish light fixtures, the bus station

would have given people arriving in the city an impressive welcome.

But over the decades it [fell into disrepair](#). The second floor at the top of the grand staircase was closed to the public, [escalators were reportedly left out of service for years](#), and building entrances became [littered with pigeon droppings](#). Any awe it once inspired was replaced by grimmer feelings that likely inspired more than a few would-be bus travellers to shell out for a train ticket.

Still, council added 610 Bay St., to the city's heritage registry in 1987, and Bradburn predicted there will be "a hard battle" if "anybody tried to do anything to substantially alter the exterior."

He said ideally the facade would be preserved and repurposed to house retail or restaurants. Then there's always the quintessential Toronto solution, "which would be to make it the podium of a condo."



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