



**Barrie
Advance**

Greyhound wants to set up express buses for commuters

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Greyhound Canada is looking for land in Barrie as it wants to build a terminal that would include not only a café bar and a dry cleaner, but perhaps even a daycare centre.

"Barrie's a major focus for us ... we're looking at Barrie as a bona fide hub," Greyhound marketing director Paul Dillon told council Monday.

"Our customers want to commute and we have to give them more value. This promotes private sector innovation."

Greyhound officials envision a terminal in the south end, possibly near the Highway 400/Essa Road interchange. They have already started discussions with federal representatives for a one-time capital contribution to buy land and construct the terminal, which the city would own but the bus company would lease and operate.

The facility would also require parking for 1,000 cars; the lot would also feature security.

"I think there's a lot of up-side to the bus service, especially if you ever get to the point where we have dedicated (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes on the buses are flying along," said Mayor Rob Hamilton.

By contrast, talks with GO transit for the return of GO train service "are not steaming ahead," he said.

City officials, including the mayor, met with Greyhound officials and Barrie MP Patrick Brown to discuss the opportunities for a transit-hub partnership, as well as a site in Barrie.

Greyhound proposes the city would give the company a break on its taxes for the free-parking spaces for commuters. The facility would require 10 acres of land, but if Greyhound adds in a maintenance facility, the need would rise to 20 acres.

Greyhound makes 32 daily scheduled QuickLink trips to Toronto – that is, they are express routes that do not stop between Barrie and Toronto.

"Our customers want to go more and stop less, so our commuter service has no stops. Commuters don't require luggage and we added a viable courier service because of that capacity," said Dillon.

Greyhound's figures show 90,000 commuter trips from Barrie were made last year. In

the GTA, the total is about 900,000.