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Town of Aurora

General Committee Report

No. PDS21-137

Subject: Promenade Streetscape Needs Assessment

Prepared by: Lisa Hausz, Manager, Economic Development & Policy

Department: Planning and Development Services

Date: November 2, 2021

Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS21-137 be received for information.

Executive Summary

The Town of Aurora is undertaking a Streetscape Needs Assessment in order to validate the original proposed public realm improvements while taking into consideration new policies, technologies and needs. The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the background, the project team conducting the update, and the steps to engage stakeholders through public consultation.

- A Streetscape Needs Assessment is now being undertaken to validate the original proposed public realm improvements while taking into consideration new policies, technologies and needs.
- The Town has retained The Planning Partnership (TPP) to facilitate the Streetscape Needs Assessment project and to engage stakeholders.
- Stakeholders will be consulted and engaged through a variety of means.

Background

As outlined in the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan 2013, several action items were identified to improve the public realm in the Promenade Area. The majority of the proposed streetscape improvements are proposed for the segments of Yonge Street and Wellington Street that are located within the Promenade Secondary Plan.

The Aurora Promenade Streetscape Design & Implementation Plan was presented to Council at the January 2013 Public Planning Meeting.

During the January 2013 meeting, Council resolved the following:

THAT report PL13-003 regarding the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Design and Implementation Plan be received; and,

THAT staff report back with a multi-year capital project for some of the priority projects that staff will further refine and bring forward to Council for further discussion.

Following the January 2013 Public Planning meeting, staff evaluated implementation options and phasing with an emphasis on maximizing the potential impact of improvements and minimizing costs and disruptions. Based on this evaluation, the several recommendations (as articulated in the Plan) were identified for implementation. Some of the recommendations were implemented, or altered to accommodate current conditions, while other recommendations were never implemented and require further investigation as to their feasibility. Examples of the 2013 public realm improvements included:

- Updating all concrete sidewalks with decorative concrete paving that extend from the curb zone to building face.
- Implementing hanging baskets on light poles.
- Installing street furniture throughout the pedestrian street zone that is both respectful of the heritage character and the new town square.
- Developing historic downtown promotional banners for area, events and seasons.
- Plant street trees with 6 metre spacing (maximum) where there is adequate setback for the pedestrian zone to borrow sidewalk width from the frontage zone. Trees should be planted in appropriate tree pits, with optimum soil conditions, protective grates, and tree guards.
- Relocating traffic signs from rebar poles onto street poles where possible.
- Landscaping mid-block connections similar to the existing mid-block connection at the town square.

In February 2014, staff presented a report recommending that the Town focus the planned improvements within the “Main Streets” area. This approach ensured that a critical mass of improvements could be completed within a relatively short timeframe in a focused geographic area. In October 2019, Council partially lifted a conditional hold on a previously approved capital project to fund some of the removable public realm streetscape elements of the 2013 plan including container landscaping, new street

furniture and promotional banners that can be relocated in the event that construction occurs.

Analysis

A Streetscape Needs Assessment is now being undertaken to validate the original proposed public realm improvements while taking into consideration new policies, technologies and needs

Several factors informed the need to evaluate and recommend the increased scope of the Streetscape Design and Implementation Plan including: condition of infrastructure to accommodate future signage and lighting needs; current developments underway in the area; connectivity and broadband availability; parking requirements; accessibility needs; and the involvement of the local businesses and residents in the area.

Therefore, staff are undertaking a Streetscape Needs Assessment for the study area identified on Attachment 1 that will inform a robust design and construction plan that will consider the following elements:

- Street light pole replacements along Yonge Street
- Entry feature/signage/lighting infrastructure requirements
- Sidewalk improvements
- Crosswalk improvements/enhancements
- Accessibility elements along Yonge Street
- Parking improvements in the Downtown BIA catchment area
- Broadband/high speed internet and cell service in the area

The Town has retained The Planning Partnership (TPP) to facilitate the Streetscape Needs Assessment project and to engage stakeholders.

Staff retained The Planning Partnership (TPP) to facilitate the project and engage the various stakeholder groups. TPP was the originator of the Aurora Promenade Plan, have worked on several projects within the Promenade and are engaged as part of the Aurora Town Square project.

The Project Team consists of the following Town staff and external consultants:

- Lisa Hausz, Manager, Economic Development & Policy, Town of Aurora
- Anca Mihail, Manager, Engineering, Town of Aurora
- Sara Tienkamp, Manager, Parks, Town of Aurora

- Wai Ying Di Giorgio, The Planning Partnership, was involved in the preparation of the Stable Neighbourhoods Urban Design Guidelines and will manage the development of the Streetscape Needs Assessment report;
- Donna Hinde, The Planning Partnership, was responsible for managing and leading the public consultation for both The Promenade Plan and the Library Square and will be in charge of developing and leading the consultation for this exercise;
- David Leinster, was responsible for the development of the Promenade Design Guidelines and is currently leading the public realm design for Aurora Town Square.

Stakeholders will be consulted and engaged through a variety of means.

Various stakeholders will be consulted through Advisory Committees:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee (Oct. 27 or by Nov. 10, 2021)
- Aurora Economic Development Corporation (Oct. 26, 2021)
- Aurora Business Improvement Association (Oct. 28, 2021)
- Heritage Advisory Committee (Nov. 1, 2021)
- Community Advisory Committee (Nov. 18, 2021)
- Environment Advisory Committee (Nov. 24, 2021)

Additionally, one-on-one conversations will take place and feedback will be solicited through the Town's engagement platform at www.EngageAurora.ca/DowntownStreetscape.

Legal Considerations

None.

Financial Implications

Staff have consulted with the Procurement and confirmed that this project falls under an exemption category within the Town's Purchasing By-law 6076-18 as a single source item as it was funded through the existing Capital Plan 81016.

The streetscape needs assessment will include the development of a comprehensive financial plan outlining the financial implications as well as any impacts to the Town's existing levels of service for all recommendations arising from the assessment. Should

Council approve the presented recommendations, they will be included in a future budget for Council's formal review and approval.

Communications Considerations

The Town will use "engage" as the level of engagement for this project. A page will be set up on the Town's engagement platform, and stakeholders will be consulted through various means, including one-on-one conversations, committees, and virtual engagement on a broader level. Results of the engagement will be reported back to Council at a later date.

Link to Strategic Plan

The report supports the Strategic Plan goal of enabling a diverse, creative and resilient economy and to promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown. The report also supports the Economic Development Strategic Plan of *Establishing Downtown Aurora as a Destination and Focal Point for the Community*, through specific actions identified in the Implementation Matrix 2021-2022 including partnership opportunities and engaging with entrepreneurs.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council to provide direction.

Conclusions

As outlined in the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan, several action items were identified to improve the public realm within the Promenade Area. The majority of the proposed streetscape improvements will occur on Yonge Street and Wellington Street. An approach to focus on 'main street' areas first was intended to ensure that a critical mass of improvements could be completed within a relatively short timeframe in a focused geographic area.

A Streetscape Needs Assessment is now being undertaken to validate the original proposed improvements while taking into consideration new policies, technologies and needs. The intent of the Streetscape Needs Assessment is to solicit feedback through consultation with various groups and the public that will inform an updated plan. It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Subject Area Map

Previous Reports

Public Planning Report PL13-003, January 23, 2013

General Committee Report PL13-030, June 4, 2013

General Committee Report PL14-010, February 4, 2014

General Committee Report PDS19-053, October 1, 2019

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on October 14, 2021

Approvals

Approved by David Waters, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer