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Town of Aurora

Memorandum

Planning & Development Services

Re: Streetscape Needs Assessment

To: Environmental Advisory Committee

From: Lisa Hausz, Manager of Economic Development & Policy

Date: November 24, 2021

Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding Streetscape Needs Assessment be received; and
2. That the Environmental Advisory Committee comments regarding Streetscape Needs Assessment be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Purpose

As outlined in the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan, several action items were identified to improve the public realm of the Promenade. The majority of the proposed streetscape improvements will be implemented on Yonge Street and Wellington Street. These activities also align with the initiatives planned by the Aurora Downtown BIA. The purpose of the Streetscape Needs Assessment is to validate the original proposed improvements while taking into consideration new policies, technologies and needs. It is intended that staff will solicit ideas and input from the various advisory committees as well as the public.

Background

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

The completion of a Streetscape Needs Assessment study will detail the design requirements for street lighting and other improvements.

Several factors informed the need to evaluate and recommend the increasing the 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, a Streetscape Needs Assessment is being completed that will inform an updated robust design and construction plan that will include the following considerations:

- Street light pole replacements along Yonge Street
- Entry feature/signage/lighting/public art 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 engaged The Planning Partnership (TPP) to facilitate the Streetscape Needs Assessment project and to engage stakeholders.

Due to tight timelines to inform engineering requirements in 2022, staff retained The Planning Partnership (TPP) team to facilitate the project and engage 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:

- Lisa Hausz, Manager, Economic Development & Policy, Town of Aurora
- Anca Mihail, Manager, Engineering, Town of Aurora
- Sara Tienkamp, Manager, Parks, Town of Aurora
- Janine Cik, Policy Student, 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 Library Square.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Subject Area Map

Reference Documents

- [Promenade Concept Plan, Urban Design Strategy: 3.1 Public Realm](#) (2010)
- [Promenade Pamphlet](#) (concept highlights) (2013)
- [Promenade Streetscape Design and Implementation Plan](#) (2013)