

Request for Recommendation

Downtown Streetscape Study, Phase II Report

Presented To: Priorities Committee

Presented: Wednesday, Sep 03,
2008

Report Date Wednesday, Aug 27,
2008

Type: Citizen Delegations

Recommendations

1. That Council receive and approve in principle the Downtown Sudbury Streetscape Project Phase II: Site Amenity Design specifications and Cost and Costing prepared by JL Richards and Associates and dated July 23, 2008.

2. That Council direct staff to create an interdepartmental team to develop an implementation plan and budget, as described in this report, for Council's future consideration and, in the meantime, have regard for how to achieve the recommended design through any existing planned capital works and other decision making.

3. That Council direct staff to prepare a budget option in the amount of \$250,000 for priority streetscape improvements, for consideration through the 2009 budget process.

Finance Implications

An option for \$250,000 to fund priority streetscape improvements will be presented in the 2009 budget.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Planning
Digitally Signed Aug 27, 08

Division Review

Bill Lautenbach
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Recommended by the Department

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Recommended by the C.A.O.

Mark Mieto
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Aug 28, 08

BACKGROUND

Downtown Sudbury is the historic core of Greater Sudbury and is the centre of retail, arts and culture, government and business services. Downtown Sudbury's health and vitality is shaped by a broad array of variables occurring at different scales and undertaken by many actors. Experience in Greater Sudbury and other communities show that the quality of the Downtown public realm, in particular the streetscape, plays a key role in shaping the Downtown's health and vitality, as well as the City's image and competitiveness.

Downtown Sudbury's streetscape was revitalized almost 20 years ago through the Community Improvement Plan for the Sudbury Metro Centre: Street and Streetscaping Improvement Component. At that time, the commercial streets in the downtown were unattractive and lacked a coherent design and unifying identity. Some streets required complete reconstruction, while others required improvements. Responding to these issues, this Plan called for \$7.4 million of comprehensive and coordinated improvements to better the function, condition, image and appearance of streets and the streetscape within the Downtown Business Improvement Area. This involved activities such as the replacement of underground infrastructure, roadway redesign, installation of interlocking stone, introduction of traffic calming measures, and installation of new lighting, planters and street trees.

These activities, which were phased over a number of years and substantially complete, improved the quality and character of streets and the streetscape Downtown. The pedestrian realm (e.g. sidewalks) have been delineated and unified through the use of interlocking stone. Pedestrian safety has been improved through the use of bulbouts and crosswalks at key intersections. The raised planters provide informal opportunities for seating and add an important green element to the Downtown.

However, these improvements are becoming older and are showing signs of their age. Below grade electrical wiring is deteriorating in some locations, which impacts the ability of above grade electrical outlets to support some of the Business Improvement Area's beautification initiatives, such as the seasonal lighting and decoration program. Most curbs have deteriorated and are in need of replacement. The raised planting beds are experiencing mixed success. The existing "downtown" light standard has been discontinued, affecting maintenance costs and replacement. New street furniture (e.g. benches, bicycle racks and trash/recycling receptacles) are required. Improvements should also be extended to those streets that were not able to be improved in the past and to reflect the Business Improvement Area's current boundaries.

DOWNTOWN SUDBURY STREETScape PROJECT

The Downtown Sudbury Business Improvement Area (BIA), Downtown Village Development Corporation (DVDC), City of Greater Sudbury and Greater Sudbury Development Corporation (GSDC), with the support of FedNor, have examined ways to further improve the Downtown streetscape in the last several years. This work was undertaken in two phases.

The first phase, which occurred in 2005, resulted in the creation of eight guiding themes and a conceptual plan to revitalize the streetscape. Council endorsed the final report for this first phase at its April 24, 2006 meeting through resolution 2006-605.

The second phase of work occurred between January and July of this year. This latter phase, which was undertaken by a consultant overseen by a Steering Committee (consisting of representation from the BIA, DVDC, GSDC and the Planning Services Division) and involving an interdepartmental Technical Committee, focussed on the creation of a more detailed streetscape improvement plans and specifications.

The result of this phase is the report Downtown Sudbury Streetscape Project Phase II: Site Amenity Design Specifications and Cost and Costing prepared by JL Richards and Associates and dated July 15, 2008

(attached under separate cover). This report was accepted and supported in principle by the BIA and DVDC at a joint meeting held on July 23, 2008 (see Attachment #1).

The Phase II Report is aimed at growing the vitality of the Downtown by enhancing its image, and attracting people and investment. The proposed streetscape design is based on three principles: landscape; mining; and, community history. Six key moves are suggested to further strengthen the quality and character of Downtown Sudbury, including:

Marking gateways through special landscaping treatments, entry markers, signage, lighting and public art to create a stronger sense of arrival;

Upgrading the existing sidewalks and extending sidewalk improvements throughout the Downtown;

Planting new, alternating birch and maple tree species to augment existing and healthy street trees to further green and strengthen the pedestrian realm;

Installing new street furniture (e.g. benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles) using a consistent palette of materials (i.e. brushed nickel and cedar);

Installing new street light standards that are reflective of the community's mining heritage and do not detract from the night sky; and,

Using mechanisms such as a boreal wall and trellis' to define the edges of the area and to buffer the pedestrian realm.

The Phase II Report also provides recommendations in other areas (e.g. container plants; parking metres; street banners and flags; public art; signage; and, awnings) and provides detailed design specifications for certain streetscape elements (e.g. street signs, bicycle racks).

The Phase II Report provides some suggestions to implement the proposed improvements and recommends that a five-year implementation plan be developed. City staff agree that a phased implementation plan should be developed for Council's future consideration. This plan should be developed by an interdepartmental staff team, led by the Planning Services Division. The intent of the plan would be to review and confirm the required improvement work, and develop a phased implementation plan and budget for Council's future consideration. The plan would take into account anticipated capital works and be based on the following key principles:

Improvements should build on the strengths of the Downtown's streets and streetscapes;

Improvements should be tailored to each street, giving priority to those streets in greater need of improvement;

Improvements should be planned in a logical and coordinated sequence, taking into account anticipated public and private sector developments;

Improvements should be planned to minimize disruptions to the local business community;

Improvements should respect the proposed design intent and emphasize final design solutions over interim ones; and,

Improvements should yield the highest possible value for money.

In the meantime, it would be appropriate for the City to have regard to the recommended design through any existing planned capital works and other decision making.

The Phase II Report estimates that \$17 million will be required to upgrade Downtown Sudbury's streetscape. The historic streetscape improvements were funded through a partnership involving the province (50

percent), the municipality (25 percent) and the BIA (25 percent). The program that facilitated provincial involvement in funding streetscape projects no longer exists. Therefore, any future recommendations with respect to funding the proposed improvements should be based on a shared funding arrangement between the City and BIA. It should be noted that the BIA Board approved the allocation of \$100,000 towards the implementation of the proposed streetscape improvements at its Annual General Meeting earlier this year. The attached resolution seeks \$250,000 from the City for the implementation of priority streetscape projects to match these allocated funds. This request should be referred to the 2009 budget exercise for consideration. It should also be noted that the DVDC has secured additional FedNor funding to develop a marketing plan that will be used to attempt to secure private sector sponsorship funding for non-municipal infrastructure streetscape elements (e.g. public art).

CONCLUSION

Downtown Sudbury Streetscape Project Phase II: Site Amenity Design Specifications and Cost and Costing represents an important milestone in the community's ongoing efforts to revitalize Downtown Sudbury's streets and streetscapes. It is recommended that Council receive and approve the report in principle, and give direction to staff to develop the implementation plan as described above. It is also recommended that the BIA's funding request be referred to the 2009 budget exercise for consideration.

*A copy of the Downtown Sudbury Streetscape Project Phase II: Site Amenity Design Specifications and Cost and Costing prepared by JL Richards and Associates is available at the City Clerk's Office, 2nd Floor, 200 Brady Street, Tom Davies Square, Sudbury. A copy of the report can also be downloaded from <http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca> by selecting the agenda for the Priorities meeting dated September 3, 2008.

DOWNTOWN SUDBURY MEETING

Date: Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Res. #: 08-140

WHEREAS Downtown Sudbury, Greater Sudbury's First Neighbourhood, continues to evolve and change;

AND WHEREAS Downtown Sudbury's streetscape is ageing and requires improvement that continues to enhance the look and feel of Sudbury's Historic Downtown;

AND WHEREAS 'Downtown Sudbury' (the Business Improvement Area), in partnership with the 'Downtown Village Development Corporation', and with the support of the City of Greater Sudbury, Greater Sudbury Development Corporation and FedNor, have developed a plan to improve the streetscape;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Boards of Directors of both 'Downtown Sudbury' and the 'Downtown Village Development Corporation' accept and support in principle the Downtown Streetscape Project Phase II Amenity Design Specifications and Costing Final Report, as presented by the project Consultant J.L. Richards & Associates;

AND FURTHER THAT this Report be presented to the Priorities Committee of the City of Greater Sudbury, with the request that funds be assigned for 2009 in the amount of \$250,000 for the implementation of priority streetscape projects, in partnership with 'Downtown Sudbury's' allocated funds;

AND FURTHER THAT the City of Greater Sudbury confirm their partnership to this project and the long term commitment to ensure its implementation over a phased process.

CARRIED