



SUBJECT: Ontario’s Main Street Revitalization Initiative Fund
PREPARED BY: David Plant, Senior Manager Operations – Parks, Horticulture and Forestry Division ext. 4893

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report, “Ontario’s Main Street Revitalization Initiative Fund,” dated May 26, 2019, be received; and,
2. That Council approve the projects noted below (by Main Street Area) for the *Main Street Revitalization Initiative* funded by the Province of Ontario in the amount of \$320,609.39, as administered by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario with projects to be completed prior to March 31st 2020:
 - Main Street Unionville** – Total of \$140,304.53 to be allocated among three projects:
 - i. Access Gate Between Parkview Public School property and Main Street Unionville (to permit access during special events);
 - ii. Bandstand extension of hard surfacing for seating areas, site improvements and flagpole;
 - iii. Greening of laneway on Main Street.
 - Main Street Markham** – Total of \$140,304.53 to be allocated among three projects:
 - iv. Replacement of the planter/landscaping at Main Street and Robinson Street;
 - v. Heritage Style Clock (2 sided) as an entrance feature on the island south of Highway #7;
 - vi. Self-watering planters for streetscape.
 - Yonge Street Thornhill** – Total of \$40,000.33 to be allocated among two projects:
 - vii. Heritage themed banners
 - viii. Self-watering planters for streetscape; and,
3. That Council authorize the Director of Operations to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the owner of 98 Main Street Markham North to seek authority to use the property for public features and to outline the responsibility of the City to continue to maintain the planter and its contents subject to the review of the City Solicitor and the Commissioner of Community & Fire Services; and further,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

As required as a condition of the Municipal Funding Agreement for the Main Street Revitalization Initiative Fund (MSRI), Council needs to approve the projects for each Main Street Area. Council approved the allocation of the funding among three of the City's Main Street Business Areas as per the program criteria. This report is seeking Council approval of eight projects within these three areas: Main Street Markham, Main Street Unionville and Yonge Street Thornhill.

BACKGROUND:

The Province of Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative (MSRI) was designed to support capital improvements for energy efficiency, accessibility, aesthetics, and marketability of small businesses within main street areas, and encourage strategic public investments in municipal and other public infrastructure within main street areas that will support small businesses.

In June 2018, staff presented a report to Council outlining that the City would receive an allocation of \$320,609.39 from Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative, subject to fulfilment of its program parameters. This program was established by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) without the need for an application or matching funds. Markham can fund 100% of the total project costs with MSRI funds. Council approved the allocation of the City's funds among three business areas.

\$140,304.53 for Main Street Unionville
\$140,304.53 for Main Street Markham
\$40,000.33 for Yonge Street Thornhill

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Staff undertook an assessment of the three areas and undertook outreach to Local Councillors whom also serve on the Business Improvement Areas for improvements within the scope of the grant and the funding parameters. Staff also reviewed stakeholder feedback (such as input from the Historic Unionville Community Vision Committee), reviewed ACRs and feedback from event organizers/City staff on areas that could be improved. Following that, a review of a variety of initiatives was undertaken to determine what could be executed within the budget, criteria and project completion timelines.

The following projects by each Main Street Area meet the criteria and can be completed prior to the deadline of March 31st 2020 imposed by the MSRI:

Main Street Unionville:

Access Gate: An ornamental iron gate will replace the chain link fencing at the west end of the City-owned laneway immediately south of Blacksmith Bistro leading to Parkview Public School/Fonthill Boulevard and allow Main Street access during events and festivals facilitated through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the York Region District School Board. In addition, a culvert and asphalt paving will be replaced.

Bandstand: The hard surface at the Millennium Bandstand on Main Street Unionville, which is used for staging events and activities, is not sufficiently sized for the number of persons using the area, which has resulted in residents standing on the shrub beds and damaging plant materials. This venue has become a vibrant urban square and the surfacing is being expanded with paving stone and concrete to provide additional seating surface and general gathering space. In addition, a flagpole will replace the spruce tree that is declining and allow staff to install seasonal lighting on the pole as part of Main Street decorations.

Laneway Greening: The asphalt laneway on the south side of 142 Main Street is City-owned property and is going to be removed and repurposed as a pedestrian pathway from Main Street to Millennium Square which is immediately west of the bandstand. This access point will allow the public to walk directly to the park. The pathway will have bollards at the street and at the edge of the current parking lot to prohibit vehicular traffic.

Main Street Markham:

Replacement Planter and Site Improvements: The existing wooden planter immediately north of the old town hall building (96 Main St. N) and in front of Whyte's Fitness (98 Main St N.) was installed by the City and requires replacement. As this planter is on private lands, the reconstruction and maintenance will be facilitated through a Memorandum of Understanding with the property owner. The new planter will be constructed of Armour stone and will contain a new evergreen tree for seasonal decoration with updated site furniture and electrical.

Heritage Clock: The most southerly traffic island on Main Street South, south of Highway 7 contains a pedestal which to date has been occupied by a seasonal planter. This will be the site of the new Main Street clock that is a heritage style black iron double-sided clock, which will be solar powered. It will serve as a definitive gateway feature. Both the Main Street Vision Plan and the Main Street Markham Streetscape and Traffic Management Study identify the desire for an entry/welcome feature at this location.

Self-Watering Streetscape Baskets- Main Street business districts are enhanced seasonally with annual flower planters and hanging baskets. In an effort to deploy a more sustainable streetscape program, we are implementing new planters and hanging baskets, which are self-watering. These planters have a water reservoir which when filled will supply the plants with water for up to 3 days meaning less frequent use of City water trucks on busy business areas.

Yonge Street Heritage District

Seasonal Banners: This main street (Yonge St) is a regional road that is part of a master plan for regional streetscapes and will be subject to future changes with the expansion of the Yonge Street Subway up into York Region. The best approach for allocating funds into this area would be to not invest in items that would be a ‘throw away’ as a result of the major changes coming to the streetscape. Updating the existing banner program with new banners will provide an improved streetscape and identity for the area for the businesses in a fiscally responsible manner.

Self-Watering Streetscape Planters and Baskets – As noted above, Thornhill is also a major location for seasonal floral arrangements with annual flower planters and hanging baskets. The sustainable planters and baskets will be deployed in this location as well saving on time spent watering.

Heritage Considerations

All three project areas are also designated heritage conservation districts and all works are subject to the policies and guidelines of the respective heritage conservation district plans as approved by Council. Operations staff will continue to work with Heritage Section staff to ensure that the colours, materials and infrastructure associated with the identified projects comply with heritage requirements. Heritage Permit applications have been submitted.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

AMO has specified municipalities will not have to complete audits. Instead, the program will use a risk-based approach that recognizes municipalities as a mature and accountable order of government. In addition, AMO will audit approximately 10% of municipalities annually to provide assurance to Ontario on municipal compliance. The funds of \$320,609.39 once transferred to the City will be kept in an interest bearing reserve account until the earliest expenditure or March 31, 2020.

Operations staff have completed estimates for the above work and are confident that the grant is sufficient to meet the above objectives.

Staff will update the Life Cycle Reserve Study at the next update to incorporate the new assets.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This report supports the 2015-2019 Building Markham's Future Together strategic plan by focusing on the goals of Engaged, Diverse & Thriving City and Stewardship of Money & Resources.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Finance, Heritage, Public Realm

RECOMMENDED BY:

Morgan Jones
Director, Operations

Brenda Librecz
Commissioner, Community & Fire
Services

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Main Street Revitalization By-Law
2. June 18th 2018 Report - Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative Fund – Municipal Funding Agreement
3. Three (3) key maps identifying locations of the eight project locations