

Budget Committee Minutes

No. 3

October 4, 2019, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Council Chamber

Members	Councillor Amanda Collucci, Chair	Councillor Keith Irish
	Councillor Andrew Keyes, Vice-Chair	Councillor Reid McAlpine
	Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton	Councillor Karen Rea
Regrets	Councillor Khalid Usman	
Roll Call	Regional Councillor Jim Jones	Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and
	Councillor Isa Lee	Director of Human Resources
	Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer	Joel Lustig, Treasurer
	Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Bryan Frois, Chief of Staff
	Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services	Matthew Vetere, Manager, Budgeting
	Arvin Prasad, Commissioner Development Services	Brian Lee, Director, Engineering
		Biju Karumanchery, Director of Planning and Urban Design

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Committee adjourned at 12:33 PM.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 24, AND 27, 2019

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

That the September 24, and 27, 2019 Budget Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

Carried

4. BUDGET PRESENTATION

4.1 Planning and Urban Design Capital Budget Items

Biju Karumanchery, Director of Planning and Urban Design presented the 2020 Planning & Urban Design Capital Budget Items.

Planning Capital Budget Items

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

20015 Consolidated Zoning By-Law – LPAT Defense and Refinement

Staff advised that the estimated cost of consolidating the City's zoning by-laws and the LPAT defense associated with the consolidation is based on the cost of similar exercises, such as the cost of updating the City's Official Plan. Staff felt this was a conservative cost estimate.

Design Capital Budget Items

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

General Responses to Inquiries about Parks

Staff advised that they believe the design and construction of Wismer Park, approved in prior year budgets, has been delayed due to work the City is currently undertaking on the standardization of park amenities such as maintenance buildings. An update on the status of the park was requested to be provided to Councillor Karen Rea and to Councillor Amanda Collucci.

Staff also advised that the City is investigating ways to add more off-leash dog areas in existing Markham parks. The challenge is finding locations that are compatible with the surrounding area.

Richard Fournier, Manager of Parks and Open Space Development advised that he will consult the community on the design of new parks once the plans are refined. The community will be presented with one park design with various options. The types of amenities will be determined based on the type of park.

The City has a policy determining which type of surface is used at a park. A rubberized surface is used at parks with a water play area and sand has traditionally been used at other parks. The City has also used engineered wood chips for play structure surfaces.

The Committee requested that staff report back on the cost of the design and construction of the Berczy Community Park.

20024 – Box Grove Community Park – Construction and, 20025 Cornell Community Park Construction

Staff advised that the Box Grove and Cornell Community Parks include a significant number of amenities at a higher cost, as they are community parks, and serve a greater area than local parks.

20026 – Cornell Parkette- Design & Construction

Staff advised that they believe high cost of this pathway is due to the grading, but will report back on the matter. More information was requested to be brought to the next Budget Committee meeting with comparisons to the standards at Wismer and Berczy.

20027 – Leitchcroft Building Construction

Staff advised that the Leitchcroft building will include both a service area and public washrooms.

20029 – Wismer McCowan Woodlot Park – Design & Construction

Staff advised that the in service date of Q4 2021 was accurate.

20030 –York Downs Park – Design and Construction

Staff advised that the City is starting the design of the York Downs Park so that the park is complete when residents start moving into the development.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the 2020 Planning Capital Budget items be approved.

Carried

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded by Councillor Keith Irish

That the Budget Committee approve the Design Capital Budget Items.

Carried

4.2 2020 Engineering Budget Presentation and Review of Capital Budget Items

Brian Lee, Director of Engineering presented the “2020 Engineering Capital Budget Presentation”.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

Engineering Fees

Staff advised that it can be challenging estimating the revenue collected from Engineering Fees, but the intent is to cover the City's expenses and a reserve equivalent to 1.5 times the annual fee funded operating costs. The Development Fee Reserve deficit was eliminated in 2018. The 2019 year-end forecast has identified draws from reserves from Planning & Design and Engineering which will put the reserve back into a deficit position. A consultant was hired in the late summer to perform a development process review and identify opportunities to improve the review process.

ePlan

Staff advised that redundant administrative tasks, like data entry have been eliminated with the implementation of ePlan.

Support Services Charged by the City

Staff advised that the Engineering Department's cost of support services charged by other tax based City departments has increased in 2020 mainly due to an increase in the cost of ITS contracts. All City departments share the cost of ITS contracts.

Councillor Reid McAlpine requested a breakdown of the cost of support service charged to the Engineering Department by other tax based City departments.

Gridlock

Staff advised that they are undertaking the following actions to address gridlock in Markham:

- Permitting higher density development in areas with rapid transit;
- Strategically building sidewalks and cycling lanes;
- Educating the public on alternative ways to get around the City or to commute to work;
- Prioritizing road work that will improve traffic flow;
- Partnering with other levels of government to improve transit in Markham.
- Traffic Signals and Bus Stop Locations

Staff advised that when there is a reconstruction of an existing area or a new development the location of traffic signals and bus stops are determined through the environmental assessment. City staff and other stakeholders provide input regarding the location of traffic signals and bus stops.

A Committee Member noted that residents have been complaining about the following: 1) trees interfering with the visibility of traffic signals in some areas of Markham; and 2) that there are no crosswalks or traffic signal where bus stops are located.

Photo Radar

Staff advised that they are speaking to York Region regarding the possible implementation of photo radar now that it is legally permitted. A report on road safety will be brought forward to a future Development Services Committee.

Engineering Capital Budget Items

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

20031 – 404 North District Water Supply

Staff advised that they are proceeding with the installation of a second watermain and system security for the 404 North District, as it is needed by residents and businesses in the area. This work was not anticipated in the last Development Charges Background Study update and will be included in the next update.

20032 – Active Transportation Program

Staff provided a high-level overview of the Cycling & Pedestrian Committee budget. The funds are spent on cycling awareness activities, including the Transportation Expo.

Committee deferred this item, as they requested a breakdown of how all of the funds are being spent.

The approval of this item was deferred.

20033 – Denison Street Extension Environmental Assessment

Staff advised that the extension of Denison Street in this section of the road is costly due to the environmental sensitivity of the area, but the extension is imperative as there are few roads going east west in the Box Grove area due to the constraint of the Rouge River.

20036 – Honda Blvd Extension

Staff advised that this project will be funded by Development Charges. An environmental assessment is required, as the road network cannot be disrupted. This work was not anticipated in the last Development Charges Background Study update and will be included in the next update.

20037 – Main Street Unionville Road Construction

Staff advised that this capital budget item is to approve the design portion of the Main Street Unionville Road re-construction. Heritage Staff are working with the community on the design of the street. Staff are also working with the Director of Operations to determine what the City is able to maintain on a long-term basis. It was anticipated that the design of the Main Street Unionville will be complete in the end of 2020 or in early 2021. All project costs are based on other recent similar City projects.

The following feedback from the Committee was provided on this item:

- Ensure the City learns from the reconstruction of Main Street Markham, and the issues that were experienced;
- Requested that the re-construction of the streetscape include the Varley Art Gallery, suggesting that the Gallery should be drawn into the streetscape.

Staff agreed to bring back these suggestions to the team working on the project.

20039 – Markham Centre Trail System

Staff advised that they will be seeking Council's direction on the phasing of the Citywide trail system, and confirmed that this portion of the trail will go over the Stouffville GO line.

20040 – New Traffic Signals –Kirkham/New Delhi (D & C)

Staff advised that traffic signals are being added to the intersection of Kirkham and New Delhi to improve the safety of the intersection. The intersection is far enough from Markham Road to permit enough space for queuing.

A Committee Member noted that the traffic signal will need to be timed with the traffic signals at Markham Road. They also questioned how the traffic signal will impact the gas station located at Markham Road and 16th Avenue.

Staff agreed to do a traffic analysis in regards to this inquiry and report back at a future Budget Committee meeting.

This item was pulled until staff report back.

20042 – Rouge Valley Trail (Kennedy Road North) - Design

Committee suggested that the City needs to think about its wayfinding on the Rouge Valley Trail, as residents are getting lost.

A Committee Member also suggested that the City should investigate the possibility of providing some funding to Milliken Cycles.

20043- Update on Markville Secondary Plan

A Committee Member requested that a meeting be set-up with York Region to discuss this project, and suggested that the entrance to FoodyMart be closed off.

The approval of this capital budget item along with project 20052 was deferred until Staff report back with additional information.

The approval of this item was deferred.

20045 – Sidewalk Program Design

Staff advised that Windridge work would be removed and agreed to add Elgin Street to this year's sidewalk program.

20046 – Smart Commute Markham-Richmond Hill

Staff advised that Smart Commute has reduced its services and maintained its core services in light of recent reductions to funding. Both York Region and Richmond Hill are retaining their contributions to the program. The City supports this program, as it strives to change behavior, and promote public awareness regarding ride sharing and other alternative ways to commute to work.

Committee requested that Smart Commute be invited to the next Budget Committee to provide a presentation on its program.

The approval of this capital budget item was deferred until after the presentation from Smart Commute.

The approval of this item was deferred.

20048 – Streetlight Program Construction

The approval of this capital budget item was deferred until Staff report back with additional information.

This approval of this item was deferred.

20050 – Traffic Asset Replacement

Staff advised that it is the City's preference is to rotate the traffic boards versus having them in fixed locations, as overtime residents will stop abiding to them.

Committee requested that City purchase eight additional speed boards in addition to replacing the two board at the end of lifecycle.

The approval of this capital budget item was deferred until Staff report back on the additional speed boards.

This approval of this item was deferred.

20052 – Transportation Study – Markville Secondary Plan

Committee suggested that all Markham Secondary Plan items should be approved as one project.

Staff advised that a holistic view is being taken with respect to the approval of each project related to the Markville Secondary Plan. Funding options for this project are still being determined.

Staff also advised that the Transportation for Tomorrow Study is conducted by the University of Toronto to understand how GTA residents travel on a daily basis. The results of the study are used to forecast transportation models, and funding.

The approval of this capital budget item along with project 20043 was deferred until Staff report back with additional information.

This approval of this item was deferred.

Major Mackenzie - Highway 48

Staff advised that York Region has plans to extend the Donald Cousens By-Pass in the next ten years. The funds have been diverted to other priority projects in the short-term. This matter can be discussed further at the October 15, 2019 Development Services Committee meeting when the report on York Region's Capital Acceleration Program is discussed.

It was noted that the extension of the By-Pass is required to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.

Staff were requested to advise Regional Councillor Jones if there were funds put aside in a previous budget for the Mount Joy Visioning Project.

Moved by Councillor Reid McAlpine

Seconded by Councillor Karen Rea

That the Budget Committee approve the Engineering Capital Budget Item (excluding item Nos. 20032, 20040, 20043, 20046, 20048, 20050, and 20052).

Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS

Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services provided an update on the potential school closures due to labour disruptions and the potential impacts to the City. It was also noted that the City will be offering a camp for staff and residents children if there is a strike.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

Joel Lustig, Treasurer advised that staff are investigating the possibility of adding two additional meetings.

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on October 29, 2019, at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Budget Committee adjourned at 12:33 PM.