



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: April 14, 2011

SUBJECT: Public Realm Status Report
PREPARED BY: Paul Ingham, General Manager – Operations
Ext. 4852
Karen Boniface, Technical Coordinator – Operations
Ext. 2700

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the Public Realm Status Report be received;
- 2) And that the Public Realm Advisory Committee be formed, comprised of Deputy Mayor Heath, Councillors Burke, Chiu and Kanapathi as approved at the April 5th 2011 Council meeting and including, two (2) members of the public with appropriate experience.
- 3) And that the Public Realm Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be approved as attached as Appendix “A”.
- 4) And that the Public Realm staff working team will continue to work on the demonstration projects and develop and advise on the Public Realm Strategy and Guidelines.
- 5) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Public Realm program and the establishment of a Public Realm Advisory Committee.

The goal is to design and maintain public spaces that actively engage communities, invest in the public realm and create a sense of place and belonging for Markham residents and neighbourhoods.

BACKGROUND:

Markham is developing in collaboration with our communities an integrated Town-wide public realm program for the enhancement of all public spaces both new and existing to ensure that our shared public spaces are *Engaging, Sustaining and Beautiful*.

The Public Realm can be defined as all publicly owned streets, sidewalks, rights-of-ways, parks, open spaces and civic buildings. Making our public spaces more meaningful, lively and accessible are key objectives.

The Public Realm Program is a long term program that will provide a framework for enhancing the quality of life for our residents, which will include: key goals, priorities, neighbourhood character, streetscape design, heritage considerations and landscape elements. The process will

be inclusive and engage our communities. It will align and integrate existing successful programs such as Trees for Tomorrow and Adopt-a-Park.

Many departments contribute to the public realm, including Operations, Culture, Recreation, Planning and Urban Design, Engineering, Asset Management, Bylaw Enforcement, along with stewardship from community groups and businesses. There is the opportunity to better coordinate and align these services from the lens of the public realm. The formation of the staff team ensures that issues and opportunities of the public realm are identified and investigated on an ongoing basis, resulting in an integrated and coordinated approach to achieving shared outcomes.

The program will build on a public realm legacy for new projects, will identify problem areas within the existing public realm and develop a strategy for improvements. Community safety, accessibility, civic engagement, public art, monitoring and maintenance are factors for consideration.

In 2010, the Public Realm Program was funded with a capital budget of \$150,000. The Project Manager is Karen Boniface, with Brenda Librecz and Jim Baird as Project Sponsors, and Paul Ingham as Project Champion. A Public Realm Staff Working Team was initiated as a cross commission working group and was formed with staff representing Operations, Planning and Urban Design, Engineering, Sustainability, Corporate Communications and Culture.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The program will ensure the alignment with the Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan.

The Integrated Leisure Master Plan recommended in Goal 5 – Placemaking:

- To design public spaces that actively engage communities, invest in the public realm, and create a sense of place and belonging for Markham residents and neighborhoods.
- Recommendation # 102 – Establish a Public Realm Strategy and Guidelines

IDENTIFIERS

- "*Markham's Shared Places Our Spaces*" is a verbal identifier and a graphic identity is being developed by the Cultural Services Department.
- "*Engaging, Sustaining and Beautiful*" help to describe the public realm as approved by Council in 2010.

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

The staff working team recognized the need to review the components of the public realm as they relate to staff work plans and identify where there is a need for improvements, and program development. From this a public realm strategy and guidelines will be developed and reviewed on an ongoing basis. It is anticipated that there will be improved communication and collaboration between departments to achieve a more coordinated and enhanced public realm.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The following demonstration projects were identified and approved by Council in 2010:

- Flowering Trees in Parks – Trees were planted in the fall of 2010 at German Mills Settlers Park, Wismer Park and Highgate.

- Spring bulbs of tulips and daffodils were planted in the grass at the Markham Civic Centre and John Daniel Park.
- Artful bike racks are being designed in conjunction with staff from Culture, Transportation and Urban Design.
- A small mural project at Pomona Mills Tennis Club is being developed with staff from Culture, in conjunction with the Public Art Committee.
- A bake oven is being considered for the Markham Civic Centre with staff from the Culture and Asset Management Departments.

PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Public Realm Advisory Committee will be formed to review the public realm objectives, program, partnership funding applications and provide recommendations to General Committee.

The Public Realm Advisory Committee (PRAC) will work with Town resource staff and community groups to encourage partnership funded community driven and sustainable local projects. These projects would be developed on Town owned land to create vibrant engaging and relevant public spaces that reflect the social and cultural identity and diversity within Markham.

Many staff and departments address the public realm and report their progress to Council through the Building and Parks section of General Committee, and Development Services Committee. The Public Realm Advisory Committee will not duplicate these existing projects and programs.

Council approved four members of Council (Deputy Mayor Heath, and Councillors Burke, Chiu and Kanapathi) on April 5, 2011, to lead the Advisory Committee subject to the Council approval of new committee appointments for 2011. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix "A".

WORKPLAN

- Demonstration Projects – 2010 and 2011
- Formation of Public Realm Committee – spring 2011
- Development of Public Realm Strategy and Guidelines – 2011-2012
- Development of 5 year Work Plan - 2011
- Public Realm Projects, partnership funding and capital requests to be submitted for consideration in the 2012 budget review.

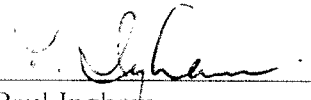
HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

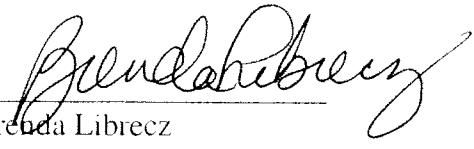
Not applicable

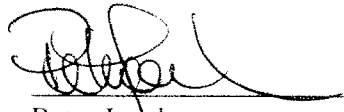
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

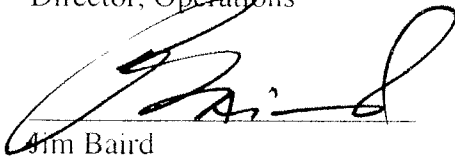
Sustainability Office, Culture, Bylaw Enforcement, Communications & Community Relations, Planning, Engineering and Urban Design.

RECOMMENDED BY:


Paul Ingham
General Manager, Operations


Brenda Librecz
Commissioner, Community and Fire Services


Peter Loukes
Director, Operations


Jim Baird
Commissioner, Development
Services

ATTACHMENT:

Appendix "A" Public Realm Advisory Committee Terms of Reference