
Summer 2018 Initiatives in the Downtown

Recommendations

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council:

1. That the Administration continue to work with the Downtown Saskatoon Business Improvement District to implement Downtown initiatives in 2018;
2. That the request to change the scope of work for Capital Project 2458 - City Centre Plan Phase 4 (Civic Precinct Master Plan) to support the preparation and delivery of identified initiatives in the Downtown in 2018 be approved;
3. That \$125,000 of the existing funding in Capital Project 2458 be allocated to support the new scope of work; and
4. That the Administration report back on the remaining scope of work for Capital Project 2458, including timing and funding required to complete the remaining scope of work.

Topic and Purpose

This report provides an overview of the activities that have occurred to date to support the City Council Outcome of Saskatoon's Downtown as a place that is active and attractive to all residents and visitors, and to request allocation of a portion of existing capital funding to support implementation of a number of ideas in 2018 with Capital Project 2458 – City Centre Plan.

Report Highlights

1. The Civic Precinct Master Plan (Master Plan) began in 2016 with background work; timelines have been extended due to the need to coordinate with a number of specific Downtown-related initiatives. Further work on the Master Plan will occur in a phased manner.
2. A series of “Downtown Where You Belong” workshops were held in the fall of 2017 that have resulted in a series of ideas for Downtown which could be pursued.
3. The workshop results were categorized and vetted by the project team, with a number of ideas that have been identified as “preferred”.
4. The Administration is requesting approval to change the scope of work for Capital Project 2458 to allocate up to \$125,000 for implementation of projects related to the workshop results, as well as the Plan for Growth Bus Rapid Transit and Transit Plan implementation.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City's Strategic Goals of Sustainable Growth by supporting measures that will enhance the Downtown and attract visitors and residents to the area. This will also support economic growth and vitality in the Downtown.

Background

In 2010, Capital Project No. 2458 – City Centre Plan was approved by City Council with a three-year allocation of \$750,000 involving four distinct phases:

1. Phase 1 - November 21, 2011 - City Council received the "Public Spaces, Activity and Urban Form Strategic Framework" document.
2. Phase 2 - The consultation for the City Centre Plan was contained within the two-year public consultation program known as "Saskatoon Speaks," which resulted in a Community Vision for a "Thriving City Centre."
3. Phase 3 - December 16, 2013 - City Council endorsed Phase 3, the City Centre Plan.
4. Phase 4 - December, 2014 - City Council approved the capital expenditure of \$250,000 for the development of the Master Plan.

A project update on the Master Plan was provided to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services and to City Council in June 2016. The preparation of the Plan was being timed to consider several proposed projects and initiatives that will have a significant impact on the public realm within the Civic Precinct over the long term. Examples include the future transition to BRT, removal of the Transit Terminal, installation of protected bike lanes, and ongoing discussions regarding the development of a new central library. The Master Plan would be created to provide direction on the integration of these projects and influence how they contribute to the public realm.

The project was divided into two phases. The first phase involved gathering background information, analysis of the study area, a review of best practices and current trends, and stakeholder engagement. Phase one has not yet been completed.

The second phase would build upon the findings in phase one, and would identify improvement projects, detailed design drawings for public realm improvements, recommended phasing, and implementation strategies. Stakeholder engagement would continue to play an important role in phase two, along with the engagement of the broader community.

Phase one was anticipated to occur in 2016, with phase two to begin in 2017. The completion of the entire project was originally anticipated for late 2017. Funding for the Master Plan remains in Capital Project 2458 with a current balance of \$266,984.

Report

Master Plan Components to Proceed

A variety of initiatives must be considered and incorporated into the ultimate Master Plan. The Administration intends to focus resources on advancing these various initiatives in existing capital projects, in addition to the re-allocation of funding as outlined in this report.

The streetscape design for 3rd Avenue and 23rd Street will be addressed through the Plan for Growth Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Transit Plan implementation project. This will include consideration of the design of 23rd Street to the east and west of 3rd Avenue, as well as 3rd Avenue itself. This work will ensure integration with the BRT design work that is underway, but will also serve to establish a design concept for the Civic Precinct. As future land use and development conditions in the Civic Precinct are resolved, the design concept can then be applied to additional work in the area. This work is within the existing scope of the approved capital project.

Downtown Where You Belong Workshops

In 2017, the Office of the Mayor, in partnership with the Downtown Saskatoon BID, hosted a set of “Downtown Where You Belong” workshops, including local volunteers from the community, along with Administration and other stakeholder representatives. The workshop participants were tasked with determining what actions could be taken towards creating an energetic and vibrant Downtown.

The participants undertook outreach activities to gather information and insights from people in the Downtown. Based on these insights, the participants then brainstormed a variety of ideas and potential projects to help overcome key challenges or address a particular issue. A journey map of this process is included in Attachment 1.

Ideas and Preferred Options

The workshops resulted in many new ideas and ranged from changes to physical infrastructure to promotions and activities. The themes included:

- Transportation;
- Things to Build;
- Communications and Promotions;
- Branding and Way-finding;
- Technology;
- Animation and Programming;
- Social Services;
- Lighting and Music;
- ‘Wild Ideas’; and
- Policy Changes.

There were also a number of miscellaneous ideas that were difficult to categorize.

Following the workshops, the project team, which includes the Downtown Saskatoon BID Executive Director, Mayor Clark, Councillor Block, and the Director of Planning and

Development, reviewed the potential projects and ideas created in the workshops. A series of ideas were identified as “preferred” by the team, which is included in Attachment 2.

The project team has discussed the preferred ideas and identified a number of initiatives for potential implementation in 2018:

- Alley conversions;
- Project seed funding;
- Downtown residential focus items; and
- Potential implementation grants for community stakeholders to implement an idea.

2018 Implementation

The Administration would like to continue to work with Downtown Saskatoon to advance these ideas, seeking partnerships with business and property owners to undertake these activities. The residential focus items may be pursued differently; potentially working with Community Development to find project ideas of interest for Downtown residents.

However, in order to act on the results of the workshops, resources are required. There are currently no resources, either for staffing or implementation, to address the outcomes of the workshops. This project is aligned with the overall goals of the City Centre Plan, and is in a position to advance at this time. Other than the streetscape design component described above, the rest of the Master Plan scope of work is not in a position to advance. Therefore, the Administration is requesting approval to change the scope of work for Capital Project 2458, and to allocate a portion of the existing funding, up to \$125,000, to support implementation of these projects. Implementation may occur a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- b) potential seed funding for projects by business or property owners;
- c) potential Requests for Proposals or other competitive methods to undertake project work (for example, a public art project, or building a physical feature);
- d) potential creation of an implementation grant program, similar to the Winter City grants; and
- e) staffing support to undertake design, execute a project, or provide support to businesses, the BID, or other project partners.

Staffing resources will be required to support the overall efforts and ensure internal collaboration occurs as necessary to facilitate these projects. At this time, staff on the Urban Design Team will be assigned to this project and additional resources will be added when needed to achieve the desired outcome.

Options to the Recommendation

Committee could chose not to approve the recommendation as presented. Further direction would then be required in order to implement any of the ideas presented, as there is no current funding to support these initiatives.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

A variety of stakeholders were involved in the workshops held in the fall of 2017. Moving forward, stakeholder involvement will be determined based on the initiatives chosen to implement. The Administration will work with the Downtown Saskatoon BID to engage the relevant stakeholders.

Communication Plan

The additional initiatives resulting from the workshops are proposed to be a joint initiative with Downtown Saskatoon. As such, the Administration will work in partnership with the BID to develop the communications related to this project.

Financial Implications

Allocating existing funding from the Master Plan project will reduce the available funding for that project. When the remaining components of the Master Plan are ready to proceed, additional funding may be required. A future budget request will be prepared if additional funding is required.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no options, policy, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

A further report will be prepared to provide an update and the next steps on the Master Plan project, including potential timing and required funding. Consideration will be given to the possibility of closing the project, returning funding to the source, and making a future request for a new project when the remaining components of the Master Plan are deemed ready to proceed.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachment

1. Downtown Where You Belong Workshop – Journey Map
2. Downtown Where You Belong Ideas – Categorized and Preferred Options
3. City Centre Plan - Capital Project 2458

Report Approval

Written by: Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department