

INFORMATION REPORT

Renaming Request - Traffic Bridge – Information to Tell the Story of the Traffic Bridge

ISSUE

In 2018 the City of Saskatoon (City) contracted Meewasin to develop interpretive sign panels to be installed on the new Traffic Bridge.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on February 26, 2018, City Council resolved that:

- “1. That the City Council resolution of 2007, officially naming the Traffic Bridge “Traffic Bridge”, be maintained for the new structure when it opens, in recognition of the original name from 1907, and as of 2007 the official name “Traffic Bridge” refers to a bridge for foot and vehicle traffic; and
2. That the Administration report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, on installations of historical storytelling and interpretation, on both walkways. This could be used to tell the story of the Traffic Bridge, and how it relates to the City of Saskatoon’s History as the bridge at the heart of the city that brings different parts of the community together. Please include a recommended process for engaging the entire community in this process.”

The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) reviewed the draft interpretive sign panels at its meeting held on May 1, 2019. MHAC resolved that:

- “1. That the information be received;
2. That the following feedback be provided to the Administration regarding:
 - That interpretive sign panel 1 ‘Saskatoon’s Humble Beginnings’ and interpretive sign panel 7 ‘Spanning Our History’ not be forwarded to the SPC on PDCS for further review on:
 - Interpretive Sign Panel 1 ‘Saskatoon’s Humble Beginnings’
 - Text Length within Panel – Revision to shorten the length to ensure appealing to all viewers. Recommend 2 panels if required; and
 - Have Indigenous stakeholders provide confirmation of history within panel, if not previously received.
 - Interpretive Sign Panel 7 ‘Spanning Our History’
 - Revised photographs not only of the demolition but with a photo of the bridge lit up;

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- Showcase the romantic view of the bridge;
 - Include information from 1930s to before the decommissioning, which potentially may be result in adding an additional panel; and
3. That other means are brought forward to tell Saskatoon’s history, including folklore that are engaging and enticing to the public.”

CURRENT STATUS

Completed in 1907, Saskatoon’s original Traffic Bridge played a critical part in joining the communities of Nutana, Saskatoon and Riversdale. It served faithfully in this role for more than a hundred years before closing permanently in the fall of 2012.

After extensive public consultations, City Council voted on December 6, 2010, to demolish the Traffic Bridge and replace it with a modern steel truss bridge. The new Traffic Bridge opened in October 2018. The design of the new bridge was intended to respect the original heritage and character of the former 1907 bridge, while meeting modern bridge engineering standards.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In 2018 the City contracted Meewasin to develop interpretive sign panels to be installed on the new Traffic Bridge. As a result, Meewasin initially developed seven panels to tell the story of the Traffic Bridge. At its meeting on May 1, 2019, MHAC reviewed the content of these panels. MHAC resolved that the first panel (which outlined Saskatoon’s origins) be shortened in text length and that various indigenous stakeholders be consulted to ensure that history is accurately reflected. MHAC also resolved that the seventh and final panel include revised photographs of the Traffic Bridge lit up, that it showcase the romantic view of the bridge, and that the panel include any information available from the 1930s to the decommissioning of the bridge. MHAC also wanted to see folklore references as they relate to the Traffic Bridge.

Based on the feedback obtained from MHAC, Meewasin has revised the initial panels, and consulted with Indigenous stakeholders. A total of nine panels are now being proposed, as shown in Appendix 1. The panel titles are as follows:

- 1) The Original Inhabitants;
- 2) Establishing Saskatoon;
- 3) Beyond Wood and Steel – Broadway Bridge;
- 4) The First Crossings;
- 5) Bridging the Gap;
- 6) Beyond Wood and Steel – University Bridge;
- 7) Built for People, Not For Trains;
- 8) Hills, the Long and Short of It; and
- 9) Spanning Our History.

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Meewasin ensured that the content of these panels was reviewed by the City Archivist, the City's Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and various Indigenous stakeholders.

The Interpretive Sign Panels will be attached to the walkway railings at the bridge lookouts on either side of the Traffic Bridge, as demonstrated in the final graphic in Appendix 1. Installation is expected to take place beginning in the fall of 2019, with completion in the winter.

IMPLICATIONS

The cost to design, develop, fabricate and install the interpretive panels on the Traffic Bridge is estimated to be \$42,000 plus taxes. This cost was included as part of the overall project budget and will be funded by Capital Project No. 2407 – North Commuter Parkway and Traffic Bridge Replacement Project. There are no legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Meewasin will install the Interpretive Sign Panels beginning in the fall of 2019.

APPENDICES

1. Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee Submission Background Information – Traffic Bridge Interpretive Signage

Report Approval

Written by: Catherine Kambeitz, Heritage and Design Coordinator, Planning and Development

Reviewed by: Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development

Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services Department

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