



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: September 17, 2018

Report Number: SRCAO.18.20

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Subject: SRCAO.18.20 - Downtown Village District
Wayfinding Strategy Execution – Sign Design
Recommendation

Purpose:

To present and seek approval for a wayfinding system design for the Downtown Village District.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That SRCAO.18.20 be received by Council;
- b) That Option 1 – Progressive Prominent design as described in Attachment 1 (Sign Design Recommendation, Richmond Hill Village District Wayfinding Strategy) to SRCAO.18.20 be approved as the design for the Downtown Village District wayfinding system.

Contact Person:

Martina Jedinak, Coordinator, Economic Development Programs, extension 6382

Graham Sue, Manager, Economic Development Programs, extension 6515

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Gwen Manderson, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Approved by: Neil Garbe, Chief Administrative Officer

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), Town Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

The Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy (SRCAO.17.24) was developed by staff to help revitalize the downtown area. In November 2017, as part of the 2018 Capital Budget process, Council approved funding for its implementation.

Executing the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy involves developing designs for, and implementing a system of, navigational and information signs for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic in the Village District. The intent is to attract visitors to the downtown, identify places of interest for them, and help them find their way around. With a well-designed wayfinding system in place, the flow of traffic and pedestrians is expected to improve with better identification of public parking lots and places of interest in the area. The goal is to encourage people to come and stay in the downtown core, supporting revitalization and spending in this area.

The Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy staff report (SRCAO.17.24) identified key directions for execution of this Strategy. The report provided recommendations regarding the approximate location and information for:

- directional signage to places of interest,
- directional signage to public parking lots,
- signage at destinations (public parking lots),
- other signs (information boards at gateways), and
- gateways to the downtown Village District.

After receiving approval for funding for the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy by Council as part of the 2018 Capital Budget process, staff prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) and retained two firms to undertake this initiative. The design of the wayfinding signage was awarded to Stempki Kelly Associates Inc., and the manufacturing and installation of the signage was awarded to Fontasy Signs and Display Inc.

The Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy is being undertaken in four phases:

- Phase 1: *Development of a Conceptual Design*
During Phase 1, design consultants Stempski Kelly Associates Inc. engaged downtown stakeholders, Council and Town staff to develop a conceptual design for the Village District wayfinding system. A workshop with downtown stakeholders was convened to obtain input on preferred design elements and features that could be considered for new wayfinding signage. This working session was convened in downtown Richmond Hill to ensure that downtown businesses were able to participate and provide their input. In addition to the workshop, the consultants conducted phone interviews with the members of Council who were not able to attend the downtown stakeholders' meeting.

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Three options were developed by the consultants and discussed with staff, with one design option being recommended by the consultants. The option being recommended by Stempski Kelly Associates Inc. is a design they have entitled Progressive Prominent. This design concept represents a progressive style with traditional forms. It uses the Town's brand colours as a messaging element and the original Richmond Hill logo with the 'Village' identity. This design concept's modular format uses a tubular frame and grill. Both frames/posts and grill are made of steel or steel-like looking materials with aluminum signs.

This unique design, as identified by the Consultants, integrates well with the existing Village District architectural fabric (forms, materials and heritage style), but maintains a progressive look through use of colour materials and fabrication detailing. The bright and cheerful colours, part of the Richmond Hill Branding Guidelines, will assist with messaging intent (i.e. green for parks, blue for civic, lime green for parking lots, etc.). The grey steel pole and associated hardware integrates the sign with future Richmond Hill furnishing projects. The destination blades are removable for flexibility (alterations or changes). This design should fare well into the future, demonstrating longevity with fit into an evolving streetscape.

The consultant's final report including additional details on the recommended design option is found in Attachment 1 to this staff report.

- *Phase 2: Final Design and Specifications*
Should Council approve the recommended design, Stempski Kelly Associates Inc. will provide detailed specifications (such as size and material for each sign and structure, font, type, and sizing of letters) for each wayfinding piece. In addition, the consultants will confirm the location of the wayfinding signs and structures, and recommend ways to install/support each one. This information will be provided to Fontasy Signs and Display Inc., the firm that will manufacture and install the signage. This phase is targeted to be completed during fall 2018.
- *Phase 3: Manufacturing*
Based on the approved design and specifications, Fontasy Signs and Display Inc. will manufacture the wayfinding pieces. This phase is targeted to be completed in late 2018/early 2019.
- *Phase 4: Installation*
Once the signs are manufactured, the consultant will install each wayfinding piece in Richmond Hill's downtown's Village District. This phase is targeted to be completed in early 2019.

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Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

A total of \$150,000 was approved in the 2018 Capital Budget for implementation of the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy. There are no new financial/staffing/other implications associated with this staff report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

The Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan vision and Goal Three – A More Vibrant Richmond Hill.

A more vibrant Richmond Hill conveys a unique sense of place and identity and is an exciting destination to live, work or visit. Outcome two of this goal promotes 'a sense of identity and place' by celebrating, promoting and enhancing the Town's unique places. Executing the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy will help foster a vibrant downtown.

Conclusion:

The new wayfinding system will promote a sense of identity and contribute to placemaking in Richmond Hill's downtown. The unified branded look and feel of the new wayfinding signage and gateway structures is expected to engage users and create a sense of arrival and connectivity to the downtown.

Staff are recommending that design Option 1 – Progressive Prominent as identified in Attachments 1 to this staff report be approved. With Council's approval of this design, detailed specifications can be developed for the manufacture and installation of the wayfinding system in the downtown.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Sign Design Recommendation, Richmond Hill Village District Wayfinding Strategy

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCAO.18.20 - Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy Execution - Sign Design Recommendation.docx
Attachments:	- Sign Design Recommendation Report FINAL.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 5, 2018

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Gwen Manderson - Sep 5, 2018 - 8:14 AM

David Dexter - Sep 5, 2018 - 8:40 AM

Neil Garbe - Sep 5, 2018 - 9:17 AM