

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Council Report

Report Number ED2019-018

Date: August 13, 2019
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Council Chambers

Ward Community Identifier: All

Title: Downtown Revitalization – Public Washrooms in Downtowns

Description:

Author and Title: Carlie Arbour, Economic Development Officer – Community on behalf of the Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council

Recommendations:

That Report ED2019-018, Downtown Revitalization – Public Washrooms in Downtowns, be received; and

That Staff provide Council with high level capital and operating cost estimates for providing public washrooms near the wharf in Coboconk and in Downtown Fenelon Falls, including location options by Q1 2020; and,

That Staff be directed to work with the Downtown Revitalization Committee to better understand the current gaps and potential alternative opportunities for addressing the need for washrooms in downtowns (including, but not limited to walking distance, signage, and locations).

Department Head:_____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other:_____

Chief Administrative Officer:_____

Background:

At the Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council Meeting of June 11, 2019, the following resolution passed;

Moved by Dinah Wilson

Seconded by Steve Podolsky

That staff be directed evaluate the costs associated to the installation and maintenance of washrooms by the wharf in Coboconk and in Downtown Fenelon Falls in advance of the 2020 budget deliberations.

CARRIED

At the Council Meeting on March 7, 2019, Council approved the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans were approved:

CR2017-194

RESOLVED THAT Report ED2017-005, **Downtown Revitalization Update and Action Plans**, be received;

THAT the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans for Coboconk-Norland, Fenelon Falls, Lindsay and Omemee, as outlined in Appendices A to D respectively to Report ED2017-005, be approved;

THAT financial considerations for projects beyond those already identified in existing budgets and work plans be incorporated in future budgets for consideration;

THAT a Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council be established with representation including each community that has a completed Downtown Revitalization Plan; and

THAT staff develop the Terms of Reference for the Downtown Revitalization Committee and forward to Council for approval.

CARRIED

The request for new public washrooms in Downtown Coboconk and Downtown Fenelon Falls is outside of existing budget and work plans and therefore being brought to Council for consideration.

Rationale:

The City of Kawartha Lakes has demonstrated the importance of Downtowns as cultural, economic and social centers of our local economies and communities through the development of the Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council.

Downtown Infrastructure: Washrooms

The Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council believes that public washrooms in the Downtowns are important to support the vitality, functionality and accessibility of our Downtown spaces. In three of the four Downtown Revitalization Strategic Action Plans approved by Council, the communities identified the need for public washrooms (Attachment A).

The availability of publically accessible washrooms is a key infrastructure component in downtowns. Destination Development Association, after surveying 400 successful downtowns, developed a list of “The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination.” They identify public washrooms as one of these necessary ingredients. They state that washrooms are the primary reason for traffic to stop in a community, and once visitors have parked and exited their vehicles, they are up to four (4) times more likely to spend money (Attachment B).

The Downtown Revitalization Committee has identified an immediate need for access to washrooms in downtown Coboconk and Fenelon Falls citing that the walking distance to the existing public facilities and their limited hours of operation present a challenge for visitors in both communities.

Coboconk

Throughout the summer months in Coboconk, the waterway is a main access point to the community. When users dock their boats to explore the Downtown, there are no public washrooms available for use within a short walking distance. Local residents and businesses have expressed their concern that with no public options at the wharf, boaters are relieving themselves directly into the water in addition to creating increased demands on the local businesses to provide this service.

Public washrooms are currently available at Lions Park, and the Service Centre, and a port-a-potty is available on the North side of the wharf located at a government dock. Staff investigated washrooms on the South side at the wharf. To date, they have not permitted by the Trent-Severn Waterway due to proximity to the water and the need for a 30-meter buffer. There is currently no City owned property on the preferred South side of the wharf to erect permanent washrooms.

Fenelon Falls

Historically in Fenelon Falls, public washrooms were located in the Downtown on Francis Street. These facilities are closed and the property listed as Surplus on the City’s website.

This has created an ongoing demand for facilities from private business owners. Public washrooms are available at Garnet Graham Park, the Public Library and on Trent-Severn Waterway property.

While in operation, the public washrooms in both Downtown Fenelon Falls and Coboconk Lions Park were badly and continuously vandalized. Each building had structural issues that led to the Council decision not to replace the facilities.

Downtown Program: Opportunities and Limitations

The Economic Development Division leads the Downtown Revitalization program, which by nature, identifies projects and improvements that could affect other City departments. Public washrooms, including the capital, operating expenditures and maintenance are the responsibility of Community Services. Council has not historically prioritized public washrooms in the Downtowns, but maintains those in City-owned and operated facilities.

By the time of this report, the timeline to present new capital budget projects for 2020 has passed. Considering staff work plans and workload, a cost estimate to be included in the 2020 budget deliberations, as requested by the committee presents a challenge. Community Services has recommended a report back for early 2020.

There are initiatives that might support the committee's immediate requests:

Coboconk

Portable washrooms may be possible on the South side of the wharf, pursuant to obtaining the appropriate set back allowances and an agreement to locate them on private property.

Fenelon Falls

Community Services is currently amidst preliminary discussions regarding the renovation of the Fenelon Falls Public Library that could include upgraded public washroom facilities.

The report back from staff in Q1, 2020 would include a high-level estimate of the costs associated for washrooms in each of the downtowns. With direction from Council, Staff would work alongside the Committee to explore the existing gaps and best practices to meet the demands for washrooms in Downtowns.

Other Alternatives Considered:

The Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council has identified public washrooms as an immediate need in downtown Coboconk and Fenelon Falls. Council's responsibility is to decide if the installation and ongoing maintenance of public washrooms in the Downtowns is a core function of the Municipality.

Other alternatives could be:

That staff be directed evaluate the costs associated to the installation and maintenance of washrooms by the wharf in Coboconk and in Downtown Fenelon Falls in advance of the 2020 budget deliberations. (DRAC Recommendation)

Or;

That Council choose not to pursue funding for additional public washrooms in the Downtowns.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

There are no immediate financial implications from this report.

The Committees request for Council to evaluate the costs of installing and maintaining public washrooms in Downtowns could influence future budget deliberations.

Relationship of Recommendations to The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan:

The Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council relates to the Council Adopted Strategic Plan in supporting **A Vibrant and Growing Economy**.

Consultations:

Downtown Revitalization Committee of Council

Director of Community Services

Attachments:

Attachment A: Downtown Revitalization Action Plans, Public Washrooms



Downtown
Revitalization Action Pl

Attachment B: Destination Development Association: The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination



20 Ingredients
Handout.pdf

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