



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: May 12, 2016
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Andre Morin, Acting CAO
Report#: FIN16-029
Attachments: None

Title: Market Square – Design Features and Expenses

Objective: To determine which design features will be incorporated into the redevelopment of Market Square and their impact on Capital and Operating expenses.

Background:

I) DESIGN ELEMENTS

As we move towards finalizing the design for Market Square, Council will have several options to consider. The design elements that we incorporate into the revitalized space produce initial capital costs, and also have long-term operational cost implications. Replacement costs will also have to be factored into our Asset Management Plan. The most critical consideration at this stage is the inclusion of the underground work for a future skating rink.

II) BUS TERMINAL

Within the Market Square Request For Proposals (RFP), the Vision for Market Square included moving the transit buses away from Market Square, however, we will retain bus stops close to City Hall. The proposed GSP design for Market Square Phase 1 included keeping the transit buses along each side of City Hall (3 on each side). The December 2015 Transit Study considered a number of options for the relocation of the transit hub; with St. Patrick Street being the recommended option.

III) PROGRAMMING

The success of the newly revitalized Market Square will depend on adequate programming and special event coordination. Council may wish to consider hiring an event coordinator to help program this space and take on special event coordination for the City of Stratford.

Analysis:

I) DESIGN ELEMENTS

The new Market Square seasonal and annual O&M costs are estimated below (these estimates are subject to change as staff refine the estimates)

Item	Cost
Setup and Removal of Furnishing	\$2,500
Tree and Plant Maintenance	\$15,000
Snow Removal	\$15,000
Hard Surface Maintenance	\$25,000
Urban Water Feature – O&M	\$20,000
Specialized Electrical and Lighting Costs	\$4,000
Site Furnishing Maintenance	\$2,000
Future Replacement Reserve	\$42,000
Total Estimated Annual O&M Costs	\$125,500

Of the costs included above, it is estimated that following costs can be absorbed into current operations:

Item	Cost
Setup and Removal of Furnishing	\$2,500
Tree and Plant Maintenance	\$13,000
Snow Removal	\$10,000
Hard Surface Maintenance	\$22,000
TOTAL	\$47,500

Therefore, new annual operating budget for Market Square would be estimated at approximately **\$78,000** per year. Note that this cost may increase or decrease as certain elements are changed or reconfigured.

➤ **Skating Rink**

Item	Cost
Estimated Capital Cost:	
Infrastructure Installation (Phase I)	\$215,000
Construction (Phase II)	\$250,000 - \$300,000
Estimated Annual Operating Cost	\$35,000 - \$50,000/year
Estimated Annual Capital Replacement	\$12,000/year

The inclusion of a skating rink in Market Square has been strongly advocated by some members of our community. It was cited as one of the reasons to reinitiate a design competition for the space instead of adopting the PLANT design. However, the 2015 AtFocus survey revealed a relatively low desire for a skating rink, with 37.97% of respondents (390) indicating that a skating rink was a preferred design element.

The inclusion of a skating rink will allow excellent utilization of the space during the winter months. However, it increases capital costs for installation that could be utilized for other priorities. Furthermore, the inclusion of a skating rink increases annual operating costs and also produces facility requirements that the City may struggle to accommodate (ie – change room facilities, washrooms, Zamboni storage area, etc). Additional costs may also be incurred for having City Hall open after hours for washroom access. Noise pollution from the ice plant is something staff are investigating that may need to be mitigated. Finally, liability for accidents should also be taken into consideration.

II) BUS TERMINAL

There are many operational concerns with maintaining the transit transfer hub at City Hall with the Market Square redevelopment. Having 3 buses along each side of City Hall poses the following challenges:

1. Transfer Times - If a passenger needs to transfer from one side to the other side of City Hall, for some of our passengers with mobility issues, this may take a considerable amount of extra time causing possible timing delays;
2. Transfer Bus Site Lines - City Hall will block the view of transit buses from one side to the other, causing confusion for those passengers not familiar with the site – some may not realize that their transfer bus is on the other side of City Hall;
3. Specific Bus Parking - With the proposed format, the buses on each side will have to pull in to the bus terminal on a first come first serve basis, meaning that

each specific route bus will not necessarily be in exact same spot every time – This will add much confusion to the transfer hub.

If buses are to remain at Market Square, another option discussed internally was to move the bus transfer hub to the south side of Market Square; however that would eliminate most of the parking recommended to remain at Market Square.

This item was discussed at the stakeholder meetings and permanently moving the bus transfer terminal, as long as there are sufficient stops near Market Square, was favourably received. As such, staff has reviewed the Transit report and investigated proposed locations for a transit terminal and agree with that the St. Patrick Lot would be the best alternative for a new location. Staff has begun to further investigate the option of permanently moving the Transit Bus Terminal to the St. Patrick Street Lot – a more detailed report will be provided in the near future.

III) PROGRAMMING

Creating a vibrant and well-utilized community space will require programming. The AtFocus survey indicated a strong desire for a programmed space in Market Square, with 66.5% of respondents indicating they would like the Square to include festivals, 67.96% wanted a market, and 50.43% wanted mobile food pop-ups.

At present, City Staff process and coordinate approximately 50 special street events each year, and the number is increasing annually. In 2015, the Clerks Department processed 53 special event applications. 45 special event applications were processed in 2014. These special event permits do not include the events and conferences held in our facilities not requiring a special event permit.

Each event requires a tremendous amount of a staff time amongst many departments requiring coordination and communication. Depending on the event, Staff are required to book facilities, licence vendors and businesses, liaise with event planners, facilitate street closures, notify emergency personnel, draft letters, web postings and media releases, ensure compliance with our Municipal Alcohol policy (along with other related policies) and work with the Ministry of Transportation for approvals if connecting links are affected. Large events such as the World Festival Children's Theater become even more complicated and time consuming. More importantly, this adds much confusion to event organizers and community non-profit organizations that need to contact various departments with the City. Therefore, the amount of special events that Market Square is expected to continue to generate may necessitate the creation of a special events coordinator position. If the City wants to continue to enhance its community events, along with providing coordination and programming for the revised Market Square, a dedicated Event Coordinator position will be a tremendous asset.

The cost of the position depends on many factors, if direction is provided for further investigation, a detail business case will be prepared:

Item	Cost
Event Coordinator – annual cost including salary, benefits, office costs, etc.	\$40,000 - \$100,000

As well, in the coming months, Council will need to consider a policy for use of Market Square that specifies the terms of use (ie – non-profit; corporation uses) and potential charges/user fees for the use of the space (ie – to cover expenses such as electricity use and security for City Hall building access after-hours). These policies will need to be in place in early 2017.

Financial Impact: Financial impacts noted above.

Staff Recommendation:

That Council provide staff direction on what further information is required for Council to make a decision on including an outdoor skating rink within the Market Square;

That Council direct staff to provide a conceptual drawing and cost estimates on the permanent relocation of the Bus Terminal to St. Patrick Street;

That Council direct staff to prepare a business case for a Special Event Coordinator (or similar position) for future consideration of Council;

That Staff be directed to prepare policies for the use of Market Square for the consideration of Council.



Stephanie Potter, Policy and Research Associate



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