



Town of Newmarket
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COVID-19 Recovery - Main Street Pedestrian Zones and Town-Wide Patio Expansion Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2020-39

Department(s): Economic Development; Legislative Services; Public Works Services

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Meeting Date: June 8, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled COVID-19 Recovery - Main Street Pedestrian Zones and Town-Wide Patio Expansion dated June 8, 2020 be received; and,
2. That Council direct staff to put Town-wide plans in place to respond to future Provincial announcements with respect to restaurant and retail expanded openings through working in collaboration with the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and local restaurant operators and retailers; and,
3. That for 2020, Council direct staff to waive patio licensing fees for 2020; and,
4. That for the 2020 patio season, Council delegates its authority to staff to amend the current Outdoor Serving Patio Program with respect to hours of operation, encroachment on Town lands, and any other relevant provisions to facilitate outdoor patios on a temporary basis; and,
5. That infrastructure/material/set up/tear-down costs associated with the downtown pedestrian zones in 2020 that directly involve the use of Town property be funded by the Town through the operating budget and/or applicable reserves as required; and,
6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

To seek Council direction with respect to ongoing business recovery support efforts specifically as it relates to patio expansions town-wide, with particular nuanced direction being sought to define support for Main Street retailers and restaurants given said expansion directly involves Town property.

Background

As Provincial announcements with respect to increased business recovery are anticipated in the near future, planning efforts are underway to ensure as proactive and timely response as possible can follow from the Town. To that end, the Town has engaged the BIA through a Special Meeting held on June 2, 2020 to explore initial options with the Board. In addition, considerable research has been ongoing based on other municipal responses being considered and planning in other communities.

Discussion

The Town's focus remains consistent in that it is committed to help support business recovery efforts, as evidenced through a multitude of new, unique business support initiatives launched in the midst of the COVID -19 pandemic. All of which are designed specifically to help local businesses. The recommendations in this report are intended to add another layer of support to help businesses through an incredibly difficult and unprecedented time.

Throughout considering options and recommendations it is bears mention that the Town remains steadfast on the first principle of public safety through respecting medical professionals' directives around social distancing and mass congregation.

Risk review is ongoing and requires additional work leading up to any implementation. This work would include a legal/liability review around potential installation options, as well as, traffic management considerations being explored in more detail between now and implementation.

Conclusion

The Town continues to pivot quickly to proactively respond to challenges and opportunities. These recommendations enable an added level of certainty and support to the local restaurant and retail community as they too are embarking on initial planning in anticipation of future Provincial announcements that are expected to influence their operating model.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well-planned and connected. This report also links to Council's 2018 – 2022 Strategic Pillars and Priorities.

Consultation

In addition to the Joint BIA/Town Task Force meetings, many inter-departmental consultations and research has been ongoing for the past few weeks. The BIA is also doing a survey of their membership gauging support of a unique approach for 2020 with respect to pedestrian zones along Main Street. Those results will be considered closely by the Town once tabulated. The Newmarket Chamber of Commerce and a cross section of restaurants town-wide is also being consulted on June 5th via a Zoom meeting with more details can be shared at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Human Resource Considerations

Implementation of these recommendations will involve additional Town human resource considerations beyond what is already within the approved operating budget.

Budget Impact

The projected cost of COVID-19 was presented to Council on May 19 (report 2020-34, Financial Update). Included in this was a provision for recovery costs, which could include the lost revenues and expenses incurred to support the execution of the recommendations contained in the report. As noted in the Financial Update, these costs will be funded by a combination of mitigating measures in the operating budget (staffing, expense reductions, and service levels) and financial tools (2019 surplus, reserves and investments).

As a point to reference, patio licensing fee revenues were approximately \$5,500 in 2019. Staff would anticipate 2020 impacts would be targeting a range of a \$10,000 budget impact related to patio licensing fee revenues.

The upset high level estimates for the Main Street support infrastructure (barriers, fencing, accessibility measures, etc) are subject to extensive additional research and considerable fine tuning specific to the number of jersey barriers, rent vs purchase of barriers, extent currently owned fencing can be utilized, extent retail is to participate in pedestrian zones, options/costs for accessibility ramp at curbside, etc. Financial order of magnitude is still to be determined, however staff would be targeting to complete this within a \$50,000 range. The cost estimates associated linked with Recommendation # 5 are based on utilizing up to 20 downtown parking spaces, with remaining spaces being a continued support for curb-side pick-ups. Actual number of parking spaces to be temporarily re-purposed is still to be determined and will be influenced by ongoing research, costing and the tabulation of the BIA survey.

Any decision to purchase support infrastructure would take into account any longer term potential for re-use to help support future large community events (safety measures) and possibly help support the advancement of Council's Strategic Priority around potential pedestrianizing of Main Street at various times in the future.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Esther Armchuk, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Ian McDougall, Commissioner, Community Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Jag Sharma, Chief Administrative Officer

Contact

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