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Downtown Parking Update Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2024-06

Department(s): Engineering Services

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Meeting Date: February 5, 2024

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled “Downtown Parking Update” dated February 5, 2024 be received; and,
2. That staff be directed to hire a consultant to complete a study to recommend updated parking time-of-use rules, technology supports for customer interface and enforcement, as well as potential paid parking scenarios in Newmarket, including the downtown area; and,
3. That staff be authorized to initiate an RFP procurement process for the “design-build” construction of a modular parking structure to be constructed in the Tennis Court area of the Commons North municipal parking lot; and,
4. That staff report back to Council with a multi-faceted approach aimed at alleviating parking pressures in the downtown in 2024, during the construction of the modular parking structure; and,
5. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is threefold:

1. To seek approval from Council to hire a specialized consultant to conduct a business case to analyze various scenarios for parking time-of-use rules to optimize utilization and efficiency and consider paid parking in the community,

- including the downtown area, specifically focused on potential pay-back period for a ground-plus-one-level parking structure; and,
2. To seek approval from Council for staff to enter into a 'Design-Build RFP' procurement process to hire a contractor to design and construct a modular parking structure to be located in the current tennis court area of the Commons North municipal parking lot (formerly P-3) capable of being expanded to multiple levels in the future, if the need arises; and,
 3. To seek Council support for staff to take the initiative and report back with creative and effective approaches to alleviate what will be short term parking pressure in 2024 during the construction of the parking lot/structure.

Background

In 2023, Engineering Services Staff procured a consultant to produce a design and develop tender documents for the decommissioning of the downtown tennis court facility, which is to be relocated to a larger, more modern, new facility to be built within the Shining Hill lands in the southwest quadrant of the Town. Staff in Recreation and Culture are working with the Newmarket Tennis Club to facilitate the transition to the new facility once completed. In the interim period, between the closure of the current club and the opening of the new location, the 2024 season for the summer tennis club will be accommodated through alternative arrangements, the details of which will be communicated once finalized.

The design for the surface parking spaces required the demolition of the Tennis Clubhouse currently in the Commons North Municipal Parking Lot (formerly known as P3), the removal of the concrete courts and the construction and paving of the new parking spaces. This project would result in a total of 119 new parking spaces being created in the Commons North Parking Lot, for a new grand total of 422 spaces in Commons North. The total budget to demolish the existing facilities and construct the new parking spaces, including design, contract administration and contingencies, was estimated at \$2,150,000.

The Town has temporarily paused the tender process for the new ground-level parking lot while it reconsiders the construction of an added parking structure. The work done to prepare a design and tender in 2023 is not lost because, even if the Town decides to build a one-level structure, the tennis courts and clubhouse will still need to be demolished, and the area still needs to be prepared and paved as part of the process of constructing a parking structure. The tender documents produced by the consultant continue to be relevant, because they provided the scope of work, the standards to be applied, the quantities for each tender item, and the cost estimate for the work that needs to be done, whether a parking structure is built or not.

Discussion

The Town is very aware of the mounting need for more parking in the downtown core. There are currently a total of 526 parking spaces in the downtown area, including Main Street parking plus all municipal lots except the Gorman Pool lot, and 566 if the Gorman Pool parking lot is included. According to feedback heard from the BIA and community about downtown parking availability, this is not enough to service the downtown businesses, facilities/public spaces, and residences.

A new parking structure would consist of a modular, ground-plus-one-level structure, capable of being expanded to more levels in the future if necessary. A modular structure is preferred for many reasons. Firstly, the pre-stressed concrete elements for a modular structure are manufactured inside the supplier's facilities, under ideal and consistent environmental and temperature conditions. As a result, the fabrication can be done throughout the coldest and snowiest days of winter, or the rainy days of other seasons without any interruptions or delays, and with no negative consequences. The same cannot be said of a traditional, poured-in-place structure, which is very challenging and slow to construct (if not impossible) through the winter and will take 8 to 12 months, or even more additional months to construct, when compared to a modular structure. The prefabricated modular elements are transported to the site and are mounted on top of each other. This results in a much shorter time to construct than if it were a traditional poured-in-place structure. This modular structure has been done in a number of communities and is a proven effective and efficient construction methodology.

With a modular structure, very little lead time is needed to begin the project after the tender is awarded, regardless of the season. As a result, the fabrication can proceed quickly and immediately, regardless of the time of year that the tender is awarded. A non-modular structure could require a much longer lead time before any activity can start, depending on when the tender is awarded. For example, if a tender is awarded in the late fall, winter or early spring, it will take much longer before the construction of a traditional poured-in-place structure can even begin, resulting in the possibility of longer down time while waiting for the weather to be suitable for construction.

The construction time on the site is much quicker with a modular structure. The time expected to erect a ground-plus-one-level modular structure, such as the one being proposed herein, is about a 10-month construction window, whereas a traditional, poured-in-place structure could take 18 to 24 months.

There is also much less disturbance in the existing parking lot and less space required for the construction of a modular structure. Staging of materials would be simpler and of less duration, as premanufactured components would be delivered and installed in short order.

A modular structure is less expensive to construct than a poured-in-place structure. Maintenance costs are dramatically reduced for a modular structure and are reported to be up to 90% lower than conventional parking structures. Part of the reason for this is that a modular structure does not require an epoxy topping throughout the garage's surface, whereas traditional structures do. This epoxy topping in non-modular structures

has to be stripped and replaced every 5 to 6 years, resulting in downtime for the garage and high maintenance costs. Modular structures are also more durable and are estimated to be able to last up to 100 years.

There are fewer structural columns required in a modular parking structure, resulting in more open parking spaces and a safer feel to the garage. This is because the manufactured steel and concrete elements making up the structure are stronger and can therefore have a longer span than poured-in-place concrete members.

A detailed preliminary business case analysis shows that a structure as proposed could be self-sufficient and self-funded, with a viable payback period depending on the parking revenue scenario followed.

Conclusion

It is recognized that the parking demand in the downtown area will only continue to increase. A parking structure, as proposed in this report, will address the current and future parking needs of the community. A preliminary cost analysis done by staff shows that such a structure could be built and be self-sustaining, without impacting the Town's budget, by implementing some form of paid parking in some 'to be determined' zones within the downtown area. It is recommended that Council direct staff to procure a specialized consultant to conduct a high level, detailed business case in order to recommend the best scenario for paid parking in the community, including the downtown area, that will not have a detrimental financial impact on users or the economic health of the downtown. It is also recommended that Council approve entering into an RFP procurement process for the 'Design-Build of a Modular, Ground-Plus-One-Level Parking Structure' to be constructed in the Commons North municipal parking lot and for staff to report back with a series of short-term solutions to help alleviate parking pressures downtown during construction in 2024.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well-Planned and Connected:

Planning and managing growth through long-term plans and strategies, supported by short-term action plans.

Well-Equipped & Managed:

Creating a clear vision of the future and supporting plans and strategies to guide the way; **AND:**

Providing municipal services that meet existing and future needs of residents.

Consultation

Internal consultation was conducted with several departments including Finance, Economic Development, Legislative Services and the Office of the CAO. External

consultation was done to obtain a draft preliminary design and cost to manufacture and construct a parking structure. External consultation was also conducted regarding paid parking technologies and working with a third party to collect comprehensive current parking utilization data that can inform future recommendations. The BIA, area residents, and the community as a whole will be engaged throughout the course of the consultant's fulfilling their scope of work and to help inform research and recommendations.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

The budget section of this report at this time is subject to a closed session discussion based on the following:

A trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality of local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons or organization as per Section 239(2)(i) of the Municipal Act, 2001.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development and Infrastructure Services

Ian McDougall, CAO

Contact

For more information, please contact the Director of Engineering Services, Rachel Prudhomme, at RPrudhomme@Newmarket.ca