

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 11/7/2023

Subject: **City Hall Campus, Market Square Placemaking Project**

Submitted By: Lesley Head, Director of Recreation and Culture

Prepared By: Alix Aitken, Manager of Recreation Older Adult Services, and the Cambridge Farmers' Market

Report No.: 23-295-CD

File No.: C1101

Wards Affected: Ward 4

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 23-295-CD City Hall Campus and Market Square Placemaking Project be received;

AND THAT Council approve the recommended pilot project to install a public drinking fountain as a placemaking and community building initiative at Market Square;

AND THAT Council approve the application to Ontario By Bike, Explore Waterloo Region Bike Friendly Business designation;

AND FURTHER THAT Staff report back in one years' time on results of the pilot project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

Council directed staff to provide a recommendation on installing a public drinking fountain as a placemaking and community building initiative in one of the core areas and that a further outline for installation of future drinking fountains in each core area be provided for future consideration.

This report seeks Council approval to move forward with a pilot project to install an outdoor drinking fountain and other complimentary placemaking amenities in Market Square.

Key Findings

- The Cambridge Farmers' Market has for several years been providing drinking water to the public and their pets each weekend during operating hours. The Market Advisory Committee is supportive of finding a way to provide free access to fresh water in a more sustainable way to patrons of the market and downtown core.
- The Cambridge Farmers' Market currently has an outdoor water tap that could be converted into a public drinking fountain.
- The Cambridge Farmers' Market is interested in applying to the Ontario By Bike, Explore Waterloo Region Bike Friendly Business designation. A successful application requires access to free drinking water such as a water fountain. Without access to a water fountain the Cambridge Farmers' Market may not receive approval.
- The Cambridge Farmers' Market is in an area supported by Civic Campus Security and 24/hr. video surveillance, which will help to decrease potential vandalism and inappropriate use.
- The Cambridge Farmers' Market would support the other requirements to becoming a certified Bike Friendly Business.

Financial Implications

- The cost of the water fountain is approximately \$15,000.
- The total cost for the water fountain and associated installation where an existing service is accessible is approximately \$15,000, total pilot project cost \$30,000.
- Costs associated with this pilot project are available within the 2023 Community Development operating budget.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Strategic Action

Objective(s): PLACEMAKING - Promote and create a wide range of destinations and activities that capitalize on the beauty of the rivers and heritage buildings

Strategic Action: Create and activate spaces that offer things for people to do

The Cambridge Farmers' Market Community Business Plan was endorsed by Council in 2021. The goal of the plan was to identify opportunities that would ensure the Markets

relevance in the downtown core and the everyday lives of the residents of Cambridge now and into the future.

The report identified a number of long- and short-term initiatives that could be undertaken to ensure the Cambridge Farmers' Market continues to thrive, meeting the needs of residents in this changing landscape. The importance of placemaking and enhancing the services offered in market square was identified as an opportunity for the community and the market.

Market staff and advisory members have been working to move the Business Plan forward, focusing on short term goals. The public drinking fountain project and Bike Friendly Business designation fit within their mission to create a community food hub.

The drinking water fountain pilot is intended to gauge public usage/need and explore the option to use this type of fountain (or other models) elsewhere in the City of Cambridge. It can also enable public education and awareness about the importance of clean municipal drinking water.

BACKGROUND:

- Council Directed staff to provide a recommendation on installing a public drinking fountain as a placemaking and community building initiative in one of our core areas.
- Cities across the province are reintroducing free, safe, access to fresh water for several reasons; increase in the length and frequencies of heatwaves and the promotion that municipal tap water is a healthy, easily accessible alternative to purchasing bottled drinks which coincides with a reduction of single use plastics.
- Any fountains that are installed will be added to the Blue W.org web-based application. Blue W is a community-based program where businesses agree to provide clean, free drinking water to anyone with a refillable water bottle. Signing up for Blue W is free.

ANALYSIS:

Existing Infrastructure

It is important for the City of Cambridge to recognize that many of our public parks have existing water infrastructure in place. We are currently providing the public access to

free water in our park washrooms. Municipalities in other regions are consistent in listing all water access points (both tap and bottle fillers). Moving forward the City of Cambridge will list these existing amenities on the Blue W application.

Operations and maintenance of the drinking water fountain will be supported initially by several City divisions. The usage and cleanliness of the fountain will be constantly monitored. The pilot project will also help determine if a contract cleaning service as part of ongoing maintenance and operations would be needed.

Feedback received through consultation with our regional partners has been that the re-introduction of fountains has been positive with limited or no incidents of vandalism or graffiti, nor concerns around inappropriate use of the water.

Suggested Pilot Project Site

The Market has been suggested as the pilot project site for the following reasons:

- Pre-existing community need established through the Cambridge Farmers' Market and existing Civic Square events.
- Pre established existing water service on site.
- Proximity to City Hall security and existing 24hr. video surveillance.
- Pre-existing facilities staff could facilitate the recommended maintenance requirements.
- Environmental Services has suggested that the fountain be metered so that water consumption is being monitored and further data can be shared back to Council for future decision making.

Possible Sites for Future Consideration

Galt:

- Lower Main Street could be considered if road closure program continues.
- Public space near Melville Café has a high volume of traffic when students are on site.
- Riverbank near LA Franks is a gathering and event space.

Preston:

- Central Park on King Street (decommissioned fountain on site) that has infrastructure to support a new installation.

Hespeler:

- Hespeler Square/Main Street.
- Jacob's Landing.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Estimated Costs for Water Fountain Installations

1. Access to Existing Infrastructure- \$20,000-\$30,000
2. Limited Access to Existing Infrastructure (i.e. opposite side of street)- \$30,000
3. No Access to Existing Infrastructure \$35,000-\$40,00

All prices stated above are estimations as locations will have potential unforeseen variables. There will also be associated maintenance and cleaning costs that will need to be added to future operating budgets.

The City of Cambridge will monitor these costs throughout the pilot project so the full operational cost will be known should City council decide to install future fountains. It is recommended that staff report back in one years' time to share the results of pilot project.

Any future water fountain installations outside of the pilot location of the Cambridge Farmers' Market will require further analysis of staffing resources required. Costs and resources associated with maintenance of the pilot project can be funded through the current facilities operating plan for City Hall campus.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Sustainability and Leadership:

This project is small in scale but could be very impactful. It will give residents and tourists the ability to refill their water bottles, actively choosing to reduce the number of single use plastic bottles purchased in the downtown core. It reinforces the narrative that municipalities provide safe, sustainable drinking water and it shows residents that the Corporation acknowledges the need to access drinking water. This pilot project supports other City initiatives including support for an Age Friendly Community.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Staff have consulted with several different Advisory committees as this project touches many groups and the work that they do.

The Cambridge Farmers' Market Advisory Committee is supportive of both the bottle pilot project and the Bike Friendly Business application. Support for the project was

discussed and reflected in the meeting minutes of June 2023. They will continue to be part of this project as this impacts their site, vendors, and customers.

The Cycling and Trails Committee and their staff liaison the Sustainable Transportation Coordinator have also been involved in the preparation of this report. Staff utilized their Bicycle Parking Guide to ensure we had the location and space required for the additional bike infrastructure. They attended a site meeting to go over installation requirements and they reviewed procurement options needed for this project. The October Advisory Committee meeting minutes reflect their support.

The Arts and Culture Advisory Committee was informed of this project as we would like to install a mural on the ground surrounding the fountain. They have been made aware of this project and our hope to have them help us inform local artist of the upcoming opportunity to submit an art design for this project.

The Environmental Advisory Committee was informed of this project as we felt they would be supportive of the potential reduction in single use plastics. They have been made aware of this project however at the time of writing this report their minutes are not available.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Staff have consulted with a number of different internal departments as this project touches many groups and the work that they do.

- Facilities staff have been involved in site location and installation for the suggested pilot project.
- By-law and Enforcement Services staff has been consulted and support the installation of this pilot at the proposed Market location.
- Transportation staff have been consulted regarding the Bike Friendly portion of the project (fountain, bike racks, bike repair station).
- Environmental Services staff have been consulted regarding site installation and fountain requirements and servicing.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommend the installation of a public drinking fountain in Market Square. This small project works to support the many groups and their mandates. Beneficiaries of this installation include but are not limited to the following- the public who occupies the space on Market and Special event days and throughout their daily routine in the downtown core; the Market Advisory Committee who is committed to supporting Bike Tourism and regular market shoppers; the Cycling and Trails Advisory Committee who is committed to advancing active transportation; the Environmental Advisory Committee who supports the reduction of single use plastics; and the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee who supports public art.

It is recommended that this pilot project be reviewed one year following installation with a full analysis of maintenance costs, water usage, incident reports, public feedback and any other relevant data that occurs over the course of the year. This would inform future decision making and direction for future budget allocation.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager