

COUNCIL REPORT



TO: Council
FROM: George Vadeboncoeur
SUBJECT: Preparing the Beach Area One Lands for Development
DATE: May 24, 2019

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that it authorize staff to proceed to engage consultants to undertake the technical studies for the beachfront development lands as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Master Plan (DDMP) was approved on March 28, 2017 and identified several steps that need to be undertaken for the successful implementation of the plan. (pg. 157 of the plan or Section 6.1 Implementation Process) This section identified the, "steps the Town would need to take over a period of at least 24 to 36 months prior to any significant construction beginning".

The Master Plan recommended that:

"...the Town should immediately begin work to property detail and plan the infrastructure proposed in the DDMP. This would be one of the most intensive stages and could consume anywhere from 12 to 18 months, depending on the complexity of servicing and engineering issues that arise. It should be noted that the need for an environmental assessment or multiple environmental assessments could add a significant amount of time to the implementation timeline."

In 2014, in anticipation of future development at Beach Area One, the Town commissioned a Natural Hazard Study for the Beach One and Two areas.

In 2018, a report outlining the servicing capacity assessment for water and waste water related to the density and land use was completed; however, other than environmental assessment described below, the detailed work identified in the DDMP was never commenced.

During the preparation of the DDMP and the completion of the Urban Design Guidelines it was confirmed that the proposed streetscaping and, more specifically, the reconstruction, including lane reconfiguration of Main Street would require the completion of a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA). Terms of Reference for the EA were developed and a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued with the following goal:

"The goal of this EA Study is to implement and determine a common shared vision and design of the downtown streetscape and to create an aesthetically beautiful environment with the highest level of visual impact on streetscape elements to boost awareness, image, character, confidence in the downtown revitalization efforts and to attract new business, investors, and the public. The downtown

revitalization details are to be confirmed / consistent with the Downtown Development Master Plan and the Official Plan Amendment including Urban Design Guidelines established by the Town through 2017/2018. One of the main objectives from Council is to create a user-friendly street for all modes of transportation that will capitalize the walkability and pedestrian capacity of downtown, to animate these streets to become a place-making destination capturing the heart of locals and visitors of Wasaga Beach.

In conjunction with the vision of downtown, the Town will also evaluate the existing storm, sanitary, and water main infrastructure with the study area to limit the impact of construction to businesses, residents, and the public in the downtown core....”.

In February, Committee of the Whole awarded the EA to CC Tatham and Associates, with an estimated completion time of 12 months. The EA included a modified scope to focus the EA on roads and the interaction of the beach to Beach Drive, including expanding the evaluation of alternative road/streetscaping design concepts (cross-sections). (Recommendation Report was originally presented to Coordinated Committee in December and deferred until February)

The EA study is currently underway. The project initiation meeting with the consultant team occurred on April 5, 2019.

DISCUSSION

The Director, Public Works, Town Engineer, Director, Planning and Economic Initiatives, Director, Building and Development Standards and the writer met to discuss further technical studies and reports that would be required in order to prepare the beachfront for development. These are technical studies and reports that a developer would be required to undertake to support a development proposal at Beach Area 1. Normally each development proposal would be required to undertake similar studies to support the development on its own. To facilitate development at the beachfront development lands, it is proposed that the Town undertake the required technical studies and reports so that this aspect of the development process is covered. The cost of the work would be allocated to the beachfront purchase reserve fund.

As related work is being done under the EA, it is recommended that the following topics be added to the scope of the EA. These projects are viewed as being complementary, and in some cases, simply an extension of scope to that which is already being prepared for the road allowances. Moreover, the selected consultant has the expertise on staff to undertake these components (specific to the Town-owned development lands):

- Scoped Geotechnical Report for some properties (to supplement a report already done)
- Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Report
- Built Heritage and Cultural Report

For the following projects, it is recommended that staff be authorized to engage consultants under the Town's purchasing policy:

- Overall Master Parking Study, including financial contributions – for proposed land uses and tourist needs
- Composite Master Utilities Plan based on DDMP– electricity, cable, bell, fibre, natural gas, etc.

- Update of the 2014 Natural Hazard Study based on the outcomes of the Beach Drive design alternatives
- Master Topographical and Legal Survey for all properties
- Jenetta Well Site Chlorination Chamber relocation preliminary assessment
- Micro climate urban design guidelines to deal with wind, sand and climate impacts for the new building faces on Beach Drive
- Review of the Community Benefit/Section 37 of the Planning Act (Including changes under proposed Bill 108) analysis of developer contributions for public realm improvements

CONCLUSION

The authors of the implementation section of the Downtown Master Plan recognized that several steps would have to be taken to implement the master plan. One of the key steps would be to undertake the technical engineering and environmental studies required by approval authorities, such as the Town and the NVCA, in order to re-develop the properties at the beachfront. Having an understanding of the requirements prior to development being considered for approval, “reduces uncertainties regarding costs and approvals”. The studies will also facilitate development and inform developers as to the development potential of the lands and costs going forward.

Staff are of the view that since the studies would apply to the entire beachfront area at Beach Area 1, there is benefit to the Town in undertaking these studies. Some of the requirements can be added to the scope Environmental Assessment Study currently underway. Other technical studies would have to be undertaken by other consultants, using the provisions of the Purchasing Policy in the award of these contracts.

Respectively Submitted,

George Vadeboncoeur
Chief Administrative Officer