



STAFF REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Frotten

DATE: June 10, 2019

SUBJECT: Signage Strategy

ORIGIN

On January 14, 2019, Council tasked staff with developing a signage strategy for the municipality.

BACKGROUND

Signage is a powerful tool for communities to develop a strong brand for their region, create a positive first impression for visitors, provide important information about an area and aid navigation and way finding.

The goal of a strategy is to provide guidance on the planning, design and installation of signage and it is intended to facilitate the development of well designed and positioned signage that reflect the values of the region and communicates a strong brand identity. Legible and consistent signage plays an important role in the streetscape and can improve peoples understanding and experience of their environment.

A signage strategy would also coincide perfectly with the adopted branding of the Municipality as the strategy would take into account the colours, fonts and themes of the brand.

Finally, the Municipality's strategic plan includes key strategies such as economic growth and the promotion and support of the tourism industry, which would directly benefit from a signage strategy.

DISCUSSION

To develop and implement a strategy, Council could choose one of the three following options:

1. Develop and implement the strategy internally;
2. Develop the strategy externally and implement it internally;
3. Develop and implement the strategy externally.

The quickness and cost of the development and implementation of the signage strategy will depend on Council's direction. If Council chooses option 1, results will take considerably longer than the other

options, but would cost significantly lower. Option 3 on the other hand, would be completed much quicker, but would cost substantially more.

The desired quality of the strategy should also be considered. It would be entirely possible to develop this strategy inhouse but if the strategy were to be developed externally, its quality (including research, design elements and innovations) would be superior as we do not have this acute expertise inhouse.

The scope of the project will also have a direct impact on the length of the project. For instance, if Council is only interested in welcome signage to try and attract visitors and travellers off of Highway 103 (i.e. Shelburne - <http://www.form-media.ca/town-of-shelburne>), the project could be completed fairly quickly. However, if Council was interested in a system introducing parking, directional information, pedestrian oriented wayfinding, and/or interpretive elements (i.e. Yarmouth - <http://www.form-media.ca/town-of-yarmouth-signage-directory/> or Lunenburg - <http://www.form-media.ca/town-of-lunenburg-wayfinding>), the project will be more extensive thus extending its length.

Finally, Council's strategic plan, capital plan and upcoming projects should be taken into consideration when gauging its interest in developing and implementing a signage strategy. Regardless of the direction chosen by Council, this project would demand an investment of both time and money which will have an impact on other projects.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The cost of developing and implementing a strategy internally will be employee hours, fabrication and materials as the research, design, development and installation will be done by municipal staff. Whereas the cost of developing and implementing the strategy externally won't cost any employee hours but will be entirely contracted to a third-party company. It is difficult to provide an exact cost estimate due to the uncertainties of the scope but an entirely inhouse project could cost approximately \$75,000-\$100,000 with a complete external project costing approximately \$225,000.

An investment of this nature could not be included in this fiscal year and would more than likely be spread over multiple years. Gas Tax Funding would be eligible for this type of project, but it would be staff's preference not to use any reserve funds for this project.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

PUBLIC CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATIONS

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Council's capital plan is already saturated with important projects that will require substantial time and financial investments. As noted, signage is important, but it will only be beneficial if we have the appropriate assets and infrastructure in place. For that reason, I would recommend focusing on the development of our beaches and other recreational/tourism infrastructure and assets and add the development and implementation of a signage strategy in year 4 of Council's Capital Investment Plan. Once the time comes and, in an effort to produce a comprehensive strategy that is both realistic and time sensitive, I recommend that its development be tendered in order to attract qualified individuals but that its implementation/installation be done internally.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move that the Municipality of Barrington add the development and implementation of a signage strategy to year 4 of its capital investment plan.

ATTACHMENTS