

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Monday, March 09, 2020

WARD(S): 2

**TITLE: CP BRIDGE ENHANCEMENT AND DIGITAL SIGN
MODERNIZATION PROPOSAL**

FROM:

Mary Reali, Acting City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval to enter into an agreement with Van Horne Outdoor (VHO) for the design, construction, installation, City/community usage, financing, maintenance, operations, municipal approvals and other matters associated with four digital/static sign faces at two CP rail bridge locations in the community of Woodbridge.

Report Highlights

- Owned by CP Rail, this project beautifies, modernizes and enhances two existing CP rail overpass bridges located at (i) Highway 27 south of Royalpark, and (ii) Highway 7, west of Islington Avenue in the community of Woodbridge (Ward 2).
- Digital outdoor signs increase the City's inventory of communication channels, thereby improving City and community communications with commuters, residents, community groups and businesses.
- The proposed agreement provides a positive opportunity to leverage exposure and profile on key corridors to address community needs for promotion, marketing awareness and communications of local events, happenings, safety alerts, etc. in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
- The City would receive 10% of guaranteed screen time throughout the year and up to an additional 5% of screen time for two four-week periods during the year for community use.
- Other than the staff time required to prepare City content, this project shall be delivered by CP and their agents at no cost to the City.

Recommendations

1. That the presentation (Attachment 1) from Van Horne Outdoor be received;
2. That the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to enter into an agreement with Van Horne Outdoor (a limited partnership between CP and AllVision Canada) on matters of mutual interest related to digital and static signs at two locations in Vaughan, being: (i) Highway 27 south of Royalpark, and (ii) Highway 7, west of Islington Avenue, subject to the content of this agreement being satisfactory to the Acting City Manager (or designate) and the form being satisfactory to the City Solicitor (or designate); and
3. That staff of the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be authorized to manage content related to the City allocation on the subject digital and static signs.

Background

Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway has initiated a national effort to enhance and modernize its rail overpasses along its federally regulated rail corridors. Van Horne Outdoor (VHO), a limited partnership between CP and AllVision Canada, a national digital billboard consulting firm, will facilitate this multi-year program.

CP will be replacing a bridge located on Highway 27 south of Royalpark Way in Woodbridge, with construction scheduled to commence in 2020. In January 2020, Van Horne Outdoor approached the City of Vaughan (see Attachment 2) to participate in the bridge enhancement program at two locations:

1. Highway 7, west of Islington Avenue
2. Highway 27, south of Royalpark Way

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable

Analysis and Options

Increasing the inventory of communication channels to alert, inform, educate, and engage the public is a priority of the City

Digital signs have existed in Vaughan in various formats (e.g. pylon signs, billboards) for many years. There are precedents with the City entering into agreements with the private sector and public agencies (e.g. Metrolinx, CN and RCC Media) for digital and vinyl signage displays throughout the City.

Supporting Community Groups and Their Events

As a growing city, Vaughan has a roster of community organizations that actively support and deliver programming; as well as facilitate engagement with residents, businesses and constituents. These organizations perform much-needed services, often with limited financial and human resources.

The proposed agreement with VHO would provide a guaranteed 10% of screen time for City's use throughout the year, as well as up to additional 5% of screen time for community use for two four-week intervals during the year, at no cost to the City. VHO will provide overrides during emergencies, including amber alerts, natural disasters, etc.

Proposed Signage Locations Shall Improve the Look and Aesthetics of CP Rail Bridges

Under its modernization program, CP proposes to erect four digital and static signs, at two overpass locations in Vaughan (see Attachment 3). The overpass on Highway 27 south of Royalpark Way is due to be replaced in 2020. CP through its joint venture partnership with Van Horne Outdoor will be erecting two signs and has offered to provide digital and static signage opportunities to the City of Vaughan as well as third party advertisers on the north and south face of the bridge overpass. Similarly, VHO is also proposing signs on the CP overpass on Highway 7, west of Islington Avenue.

Compliance with City By-laws and Permits: Construction and Materials

VHO proposes to improve the appearance of the overpasses by adding modern galvanized metal cladding and static digital signs. The dimensions of each face are approximately 8'11" by 28'1".

Signs being developed in partnership with the City are exempt from the provisions of the Sign By-law 140-2018, however the proposed digital signs will be in compliance with key provisions of Section 19 - General Provisions for Digital Signs, such as with respect to levels of illumination, and furthermore, VHO will be required to obtain the necessary

approvals, such as from York Region and the City of Vaughan prior to commencement of work.

Modern digital billboard displays offer versatility and control in illumination levels

'Digital Sign' means a sign that displays information or images on a digital or electronic screen. Digital billboard technology produces images which are changed via computer, from remote locations, eliminating the need for manual application or removal of billboard copy. Electronic billboards offer advantages for greater versatility and flexibility in reaching residents and travelling public.

The proposed signage will be static digital displays that do not scroll, flash or feature motion pictures so as to promote road safety and reduce driver distractions. The modern digital billboards proposed, are equipped with photocells and will be compliant in illumination and brightness levels at different times of the day, adjusting for daylight hours and at sunset. They can be positioned so as to not cast light on adjoining residential areas. VHO intends to operate the signs at 200 nits (luminescence measure) approximately at a 33% lower level than the City's guidelines for night-time brightness (i.e. 300 nits).

One half of each sign face will incorporate the City's corporate logo and the remaining half will be available to third party advertisers. The corporate logo will be backlit during evening hours to provide visibility.

Proposed Agreement with VHO

Due to the jurisdictional nature of the signage on federally regulated rail corridors, VHO proposes to replicate a master agreement that they have implemented with the City of Mississauga. Subject to City of Vaughan Council approval of the recommendations in this report, the Mayor and City Clerk shall be authorized to enter into an agreement with VHO, subject to the satisfaction of the Acting City Manager and City Solicitor.

Financial Impact

Other than the cost (primarily City staff time) to prepare City content/messages, there are no municipal financial or budget implications as the project will be funded entirely by VHO.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

As the proposed signs will span regional roadways, the City Clerk will circulate a copy of this report to York Region.

Conclusion

This proposal from VHO aims to improve the appearance of rail/bridge infrastructure and provide branding and engagement opportunities for Vaughan in two busy travel corridors. The 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan supports initiatives that increase engagement with residents, businesses and the public. The provision of digital signage at no additional cost to the City provides opportunities for communicating city and emergency messaging, as well as support community-led events and initiatives.

For more information, please contact Dennis Cutajar, Director of Economic and Cultural Development, ext. 8274, or Mary Reali, Acting City Manager, ext. 8234.

Attachments

1. Bridge Enhancement and Digital Sign Modernization Program Proposal.
2. Correspondence from Van Horne Outdoor dated January 7, 2020.
3. Proposed Signage Location Maps.

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