

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services
Meeting Date: October 23, 2023
Report Code: CS-23-112
Subject: Manitoba Lighting (22D.43) and Lighting of Shade Sails in the River District

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-23-112 respecting Manitoba Lighting (22D.43) and Lighting of Shade Sails in the River District, City Council:

1. Approves increasing the amount to be funded from the Festival of Northern Lights reserve to \$36,000 for the Manitoba Lighting and \$3,500 plus HST for lighting the shade sails as described in the report; and
2. Directs staff to transfer any remaining amount in reserve upon completion of the projects to the tax stability reserve, eliminating the legacy Festival of Northern Lights reserve.

Highlights:

- Council had approved a capital project to re-light the Manitoba.
- The funds allocated to the project were insufficient to complete the work.
- Staff are recommending an additional allocation of the reserve to this project, as well as an allocation of the reserve to fund the lighting of the existing shade sails during the winter months in the River District.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: City Building - KR2 - Increase pedestrian counts in the River District by 10%

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

Previous Report/Authority:

Manitoba Lighting, Capital Project 22D.43 (attached)

[CS-23-093](#) River District Additional Street Lighting Enhancements

Background:

Lighting of the Manitoba

Council had approved a capital project to replace the lights on the Manitoba (22D.43).

The Manitoba sculpture located on the east harbour walkway symbolizes the "Manitoba". This ship was built in Owen Sound by Polson Iron Works. The 305' long ship was launched in May of 1889 and featured 64 staterooms finished in antique oak. The Manitoba was the only CPR ship to have never lost a passenger or have a serious accident.

The sculpture was re-lit on June 29, 2017, as part of the City's Sesquicentennial project. The lighting used was a residential standard that has not stood up in this commercial waterfront application.

Grant funds from the Festival of Northern Lights Reserve were allocated to the project of \$25,000. The estimates for the project are \$36,000 plus HST.

Lighting the Shade Sails in the River District

The following is an excerpt from report CS-23-093 regarding street lighting enhancements that was presented to the River District Board of Management:

Decorative and seasonal lighting in the River District can support placemaking, beautification and creating a warm and friendly

environment. It has the added benefit of helping to create and build strong communities where people feel comfortable.

Lighting is an important component of the revitalization plan for the Downtown River Precinct area along both sides of the Sydenham River. Lighting with the decorative street poles was included in the Downtown and Harbourfront Master Plan, and these lights were installed on 2nd Avenue East from 7th to 11th Streets and on 10th Street between 4th Avenue East and 2nd Avenue West. From November to January, the Noma Lights add additional lighting along 2nd Avenue East within the River District in the winter months. The annual Festival of Northern Lights provides lighting of the riverbank areas along 1st Avenues East and West.

With the first phase of the Downtown River Precinct, the lighting along the 800 block of 1st Avenue East was significantly improved. In the winter months, the shade sails provide a canvas for additional lighting. The lights along 2nd Avenue East are now being replaced and upgraded, retaining the heritage design, and improving lighting. Street lighting has not been upgraded to the heritage luminaire along 8th and 9th Streets East at this time.

Many studies have attempted to uncover the correlation between the lighting of darkened public areas and how those spaces are used.

The stakeholder engagement that was completed in 2020 as part of the River District Action Plan included current views on the River District. While some residents have positive associations when they describe the area using language such as "friendly, artistic, eclectic, beautiful, quaint, charming, historic," residents also use terms like "vacant, scary, unclean, and in need".

The Action Plan has four key areas, including River District Management. One of the strategic objectives of creating a safe and clean space includes working to increase the safety and comfort of patrons and business owners, noting that patrons who feel safe are more likely to return and relate their experience in a positive manner to friends. For business owners, the plan notes that if they feel safe, they are more likely to keep their business in the area and recommend a new business to locate in the River District.

By working with building owners, the City of Owen Sound, and local businesses, the Owen Sound River District could create a safer and more appealing River District as well as help to activate and beautify the alleyways that lead to the majority of long-term parking in the City's core. Once activated, the amount of foot traffic should grow, and as there are more people, public perception of the space should improve.

One of the actions approved by the River District Board was to: Work with the City and Festival of Northern Lights to improve the lighting of the shade sails in the Percy England Parkette and at the corner of 9th Street and 1st Avenue East during the winter months.

Analysis:

Council is requested to consider an increase in the approved allocation of the reserve funds to the Manitoba lighting project. The current allocation is \$25,000 and \$36,000 plus HST is required to complete this work. A contractor would complete this work, and this is included in the price.

Additionally, staff have developed a plan for the shade sails. The cost to purchase the commercial-grade lighting for this application is \$3,500 plus HST.

Both projects will improve the lighting in the River District and Harbourfront areas consistent with the River District Action Plan.

Financial Implications:

The current Festival reserve is \$42,000. This is a discretionary reserve of the City.

It is proposed that:

- \$36,000 plus HST be allocated to the lighting of the Manitoba; and
- \$3,500 plus HST be allocated to the lighting of shade sails in the River District.

Following the completion of these projects, any remaining balance in the reserve will be transferred to the tax rate stability reserve.

Communication Strategy:

None.

Consultation:

River District Board of Management (through staff report CS-23-093)
Manager of Parks and Open Space

Attachments:

1. Capital detail sheet 22D.43

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services, at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1252.