

March 28, 2007

Coordinated Street Furniture Project: Request for Proposals

1. What is street furniture?

Street furniture consists of different elements installed in the public right-of-way for the convenience and use of the public. These elements include, but are not limited to, items such as transit shelters, waste/recycling bins and benches.

2. What street furniture items are being considered by the City?

The scope of the project includes transit shelters, litter/recycling receptacles, benches, postering and information kiosks, publication box structures, public washrooms and bicycle parking units.

3. What is the process for securing a new system of street furniture?

The City conducted an intensive public consultation process in order to help prepare Design and Policy Guidelines. These guidelines entitled, “Vibrant Streets”, and other matters were considered by City Council in June and July 2006. The directions which emerged were incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP), issued in September 2006. The proposal call closed January 31, 2007 and teams comprising of staff from various City Divisions and outside experts as necessary are evaluating the Financial, Technical and Qualifications aspects of the submissions. As well, the City has retained an independent Design Jury to evaluate the design submissions. City Council will select a preferred bid based on the evaluations to be outlined in a staff report and the winning submission will then be implemented over time throughout the City.

4. How important is the design component?

It is a very critical component. An independent Design Jury composed of professionals with competencies and qualifications in design have assisted City staff in reviewing the RFP submissions. Local design expertise as an element of the proposed bids was explicitly encouraged to achieve a well-designed and functional product. We delivered a strong message that “design matters” in the context of the proposal. In keeping with Council’s direction, the design aspects which deal with such matters as form, scale, materials, sustainability, modularity, and enhancements, comprise the largest single element of scoring, at 40 points (of a total of 100). The design and functionality elements combined represent 60 points.

5. When will the public find out about the results of the RFP evaluation?

City staff will prepare a report to the City's Executive Committee. It is expected that this report will be presented in April.

6. How many proposals did the City receive?

Three proposals were received.

7. How does the number of bids compare with other cities that have undertaken street furniture RFPs?

Our understanding is that New York and Vancouver received three proposals each while Los Angeles received two and Chicago received five.

8. Why is the approach for one contract over 20 years?

A full discussion of this matter was held at City Council in June of 2006. This approach reflects the understanding that a 20-year contract was required for any street furniture company to invest in the quality of street furniture that was being demanded. One contract will allow the City to achieve a system that is truly coordinated and to minimize the amount of advertising space on city streets.

Provisions are set out within the RFP which anticipate changes to the program over 20 years that will be required due to new technologies, materials or requirements.

9. What role does advertising play in the street furniture RFP process?

City Council's position is that the best way to achieve a high quality and well-maintained coordinated street furniture system for the city is through an advertising based program. This is the model that has been used in Montreal, New York, Paris and Vancouver. At the same time, it was recognized that the pieces should be designed to fulfill their function and not for the purpose of advertising. Accordingly, Council set strict criteria on advertising.

10. What has the City done to ensure new street furniture is accessible for people with disabilities?

The City appointed an accessibility expert to the Technical evaluation team to ensure new street furniture is fully accessible for people with disabilities.

11. Some BIA/Resident Associations have street furniture items that they have designed and maintained. How will these items be affected under a coordinated street furniture program?

Furniture that has already been purchased by individual associations will not be affected. Discussions with these associations will help decide how existing items can be incorporated and which new amenities can be customized for specific areas.

12. How will the city decide where to place the new items on the street?

It is important to note that this is a City-wide program and new street furniture elements will be deployed across all areas of the city. The Vibrant Streets document and a Streetscape Manual prepared by the City's Urban Design group set out the parameters for placement of new street furniture. These guidelines address technical requirements and issues of public circulation and access associated with street furniture. Each element will meet specific design and placement criteria. Input from the public was used to formulate these criteria.

13. My neighbourhood just received new transit shelters. What will happen to new transit shelters under a coordinated program?

It is expected that the new street furniture will be phased-in to city locations. Many of the existing items, including those in good repair, will remain on the streets for a number of years. The details of both the roll-out and the change to existing street furniture will be worked out as the process advances. It is likely that when the time eventually comes to replace any serviceable element of existing street furniture – such as a newly designed transit shelter – the existing piece would be relocated to another location in the City. This is the practice used in the current transit shelter contract.