



TORONTO

Backgrounder

Coordinated Street Furniture Project

The City has launched a number of Clean and Beautiful City projects to strengthen, celebrate and elevate the quality of Toronto's public spaces. Since the current transit shelter and waste/recycling bin contracts were due to expire from 2007 to 2009, Toronto used the opportunity to make significant improvements to the look and feel of city streets through the development of a coordinated street furniture program.

Ensuring Toronto streetscapes have a high quality of urban design is an essential part of the coordinated street furniture initiative. During the extensive consultation process leading to the preparation of the Request for Proposals (RFP), the public indicated that design, functionality and minimization of advertising space must be foremost in the development of the program. The guiding theme was "Design Matters".

City Council, at its meetings in June and July, 2006, established a compelling but challenging direction for this RFP, focusing on achieving exceptional quality of street furniture design and maintenance standards with strict criteria on advertising. Council specifically directed that "the RFP be formulated in such a way as to allow an evaluation matrix that gives design, beauty and functionality primary consideration."

An intensive consultation and outreach program was conducted by the Coordinated Street Furniture project team in 2006 to generate interest and excitement for the improvement of Toronto's streetscapes, to seek advice and hear concerns, and to lead to the development of guiding principles and policy parameters for the City's Request for Proposals (RFP).

The consultation was highlighted by a number of key events: four public workshops, one held in each district of the City; two charrettes for the design community, co-hosted with the Design Exchange; and a Council authorized process for seeking input from potential bidders. The Roundtable on a Beautiful City and its subcommittee were also consulted.

Advice was also received from numerous interested stakeholders representing pedestrians, cyclists, persons with disabilities, public space interests, Business Improvement Areas, publication box owners and utilities. The project team placed newspaper ads, developed a project website that received over 5,600 visits and conducted a public survey.

The entire RFP process was monitored by a Fairness Commissioner, former Justice Coulter A. Osborne.

The RFP called for a family of products that encompassed cohesive, flexible, functional and durable high quality design to reflect Toronto's identity. Equally important was the need to focus on pedestrian circulation and safety considerations. The deployment and placement of

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street furniture was required to complement and be effective in the various diverse physical environments within the city.

RFP design elements were evaluated by an independent Design Jury, comprised of recognized professionals in their disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design, graphic design and the arts. An accessibility consultant was retained to ensure that new street furniture is fully accessible for people with disabilities. While design was a key element, other factors such as functionality, maintenance and financial benefits to the City were weighed in making the final decision for the successful bid.

Astral Media was the successful proponent in the RFP process. The contract is for a 20-year term.

A contract of this length is not unprecedented in Toronto. The majority of pre-amalgamation transit shelter contracts, which were all of a far smaller scope with significantly less capital, included maintenance and revenue sharing commitments for a 15-year term and many extended well beyond 20 years.

The expectation is that nearly 26,000 street furniture elements will be provided over the term of this program.

The City's new street furniture includes:

- (a) Transit Shelters (5,000 new - replace 3,000 existing; 2,000 new locations; retain 1,000 existing new design)
- (b) Litter/Recycling Receptacles (12,500 - replace 3,800 stainless steel, 2,700 city bins; 6,000 new locations)
- (c) Benches (2,000 – replace 1,000 advertising benches; 1,000 other locations)
- (d) Multi-Publication Structures (500 multi-box; 2,000 fencing/attaching bar/enclosure)
- (e) Information/Wayfinding Structures (infoTOgo) (120)
- (f) Postering/Neighbourhood Information Pillars (500 pillar; 2,000 board/pole type)
- (g) Public Washrooms (20)
- (h) Bicycle parking units (1,000)

An advertising-funded approach for the specified street furniture elements was recommended as the best way to ensure the economic viability of the program. In this way, the City will achieve benefits in terms of a greater number of elements that are of better quality, with maintenance and upkeep paid. Advertising will be restricted to only transit shelters and the info pillars (no ads on benches, litter bins, etc.), and the total amount of advertising will not be permitted to exceed levels existing prior to commencement of the contract.

The City anticipates receiving revenue of \$428 million that is generated from advertising over the 20 year term of the contract with Astral Media. These funds will be used for municipal purposes and consideration will be given to investing all or part back into streetscaping and public realm improvements that otherwise would not be possible. This will also help to effectively plan and manage the City's public spaces.