



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Toronto Street Furniture Program - Status Update; and Proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines

<b>Date:</b>	March 20, 2012
<b>To:</b>	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
<b>From:</b>	Acting General Manager, Transportation Services
<b>Wards:</b>	<b>All Wards</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	p:\2012\ClusterB\tra\pw12002pr

#### **SUMMARY**

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The Coordinated Street Furniture Program will deliver over 25,640 pieces of uniquely attractive, functional street furniture that provides a variety of public services across the entire City over a 20 year period. The Toronto program, now entering its fifth year, reflects an innovative partnership model for addressing budgetary pressures to the benefit of the public. It is unprecedented in its scale and scope, in comparison to similar initiatives in cities throughout the world. The program has delivered marked improvement to Toronto's streets, with high quality design and a better ordered and coordinated streetscape, characterized by reduced advertising and less general clutter.

The street furniture elements are provided and fully maintained by Astral Media and become the property of the City at the end of the contract. The City also receives significant revenues and other benefits from the contract. In all, the financial value to the City over the term of this agreement is \$1 billion. Beyond the substantial direct benefits the street furniture program brings to Toronto streets, the City proceeds from the agreement are invested in a variety of programs and initiatives, that would otherwise not have been possible, to tangibly enhance and upgrade the quality of the public realm.

The purpose of this report is two-fold:

- To provide a comprehensive update on the status of the coordinated street furniture program following the first 4 years of the 20 year contract with Astral Media; and

- To recommend guidelines to augment the parameters set out in 'Vibrant Streets' on the deployment of the InfoPillar element of the program and the role this element will play in the development of the City's wayfinding strategy.

In response to concerns related to the initial Fall of 2011 rollout of the InfoPillars (120 in total are called for by the City in the agreement), and their placement on Toronto's streets, a number of options were explored with Astral. These included elimination of the element entirely, reducing the numbers to be deployed, redesign the ad faces, enhanced transit shelter ad capabilities, as well as variations on the placement parameters. A number of these measures generally are more onerous and could have contractual implications.

Staff are confident the enhanced guidelines being recommended will ensure that safe and pleasing streetscapes remain the primary focus while respecting the mutual business responsibilities stipulated in the Agreement to sustain the overall program and its wide ranging benefits.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **The Acting General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:**

1. City Council adopt the new InfoPillar Placement Guidelines as an appendix to "Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Design and Policy Guidelines", as outlined in Appendix A to this report;
2. City Council direct staff to work with Astral Media to site the remaining InfoPillars within the context of the InfoPillar Placement Guidelines, and report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee if required should difficulties subsequently emerge with the feasibility of locating the entire inventory of 120 of these elements as stipulated in the agreement; and
3. City Council request the General Manager of Transportation Services to report annually to Council, through the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, such report to include status updates on implementation of the Street Furniture Program, revenue, completion rates, installation locations, complaints and maintenance issues.

### **Financial Impact**

This report has no direct financial impact to the City. The City Solicitor has provided legal comments in a separate report on the rights and obligations of the parties under the Street Furniture Agreement.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

Two Notices of Motion related to InfoPillars were considered by City Council at its November 29 and 30, 2011 meeting. In adopting Member Motion 14.4, "City Way-finding Strategy", Council requested staff to report to the March 21, 2012, meeting of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on the City's Way-Finding Strategy and the role of InfoPillars in the strategy. Member Motion 14.5, "InfoPillars on City Sidewalks", which included recommendations directing staff to review the new InfoPillar design and their placement on city streets, was referred to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

City Council at its February 6 and 7, 2012, meeting adopted as amended Item PW11.8, "Info Pillars on City Sidewalks". Among other things, Council directed that in accordance with the terms of the current agreement and until new guidelines are in place, no further InfoPillars be installed without express approval of the location by the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the local Councillor and that staff address the feasibility of design changes for the InfoPillar to better address concerns raised by the public and to better facilitate an effective Way-finding strategy. (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PW11.8>).

Finally, the Audit Committee at its meeting of February 29, 2012, considered the Auditor General's review of the Coordinated Street Furniture Contract (Item AU6.4) and recommended, among other things, that there be a status report on the implementation of the Street Furniture Program including revenue, completion rate, installation locations, public complaints and maintenance issues. This direction had also been set out in previous Council and Committee items.

## **COMMENTS**

### **1. Status Report - Toronto Coordinated Street Furniture Program**

#### **Overview - Providing Public Amenity and Value to City Streets**

The Toronto Coordinated Street Furniture Program (TSF), now entering its fifth year, has delivered extraordinary positive change in a relatively short timeframe to the streets of Toronto through the provision of a uniquely attractive, consistent and upgraded suite of functional street furniture. The TSF provides an opportunity to reorganize and de-clutter city sidewalks and also reduce the previous proliferation of advertising in the public right-of-way

The City of Toronto entered into an Agreement with Astral Media Outdoor LP (Astral) effective September 2007 following an extensive RFP process for the design, manufacturing, installation, maintenance, and repair of 25,640 street furniture elements over a 20 year term. The street furniture program replaced at least 12 legacy contracts of the seven pre-amalgamated municipalities. When the agreement was signed in 2007, there were 6,700 street elements with advertising and this has been reduced to a

maximum of 4,100 elements which are permitted to contain advertising. At this time, only 2,364 elements with advertising are deployed.

This program guarantees a minimum of \$429M of direct revenue to the City over the contract term, generated from the controlled advertising rights. The capital investment in the program is \$202M and the on-going maintenance is valued at \$294M. All elements will be owned by the City upon expiry/termination of the Agreement. This contract is considered to be one of the most important public/private partnerships in Canada. The program eliminates any pressures on the City's capital and operating budgets to fund and maintain these amenities on Toronto's streets. Any change that alters the revenues and scope of this contract must be approved by City Council.

The implementation schedule for deploying the new street furniture developed by city staff was purposely very aggressive, seeking to install as many elements, as early as possible in the contract term. Over 7,100 pieces of street furniture have been rolled out to date. The items include transit shelters, litter receptacles, benches, postering columns and boards, InfoPillars, multi-publication boxes and corrals, and the first fully automated wheelchair-accessible public washroom in North America.

All requests and issues related to the program are managed through one centralized office - the Street Furniture Management Unit in Transportation Services that is able to provide a full range of support to City Councillors and the public. The Street Furniture Unit is fully responsible for the contract management of this unique public-private partnership and its staff work closely with Astral and its contractors to ensure the proper installation of all planned elements and to ensure they are properly maintained. The City has also developed an independent tracking system to log all requests, surveys and installations as well as any maintenance requests requiring action.

### **A Model Initiative**

Toronto's Street Furniture Program is by far the largest of its kind in the world in terms of scope and dollar values. It has set a template as a model of a large-scale comprehensive approach. Our staff have been sought after for their input and have provided guidance and advice to many national and international cities with regard to the program, including the following:

- Montreal (Quebec)
- Ottawa and York Region (Ontario)
- Boston (Massachusetts)
- Oklahoma City (Oklahoma)
- Minneapolis (Minnesota)
- Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania)
- Amman (Jordan)
- Budapest (Hungary)
- Dubai, (United Arab Emirates)

- Hamburg (Germany)
- Newcastle (Aus.)
- Warsaw (Poland)
- Westminster (UK), and
- Zurich (Switzerland).

Unlike virtually every other street furniture system, Toronto's is not focused only on its downtown or well-travelled tourist areas, but provides benefits to every Ward of the city. Its scope, in terms of numbers and different types of elements, is also unprecedented.

In 2007, Transportation Services received the Gold Award of Excellence from the Public Sector Quality Fair for the development and implementation of the STREETview System, which was developed to catalogue street furniture elements across the city and has wide spread opportunities for cataloguing and managing other streetscape assets including street art murals and orphan spaces.

### **Public Benefits and Resources for City Programs**

The Street Furniture RFP was issued after considerable research and discussion with the general public, City Divisions, stakeholders such as the City's Pedestrian, Cycling and Disability Issues Committees, TABIA and BIAs, the design community (including two sessions for design professionals held at the Design Exchange) and other stakeholders.

The first matter to be addressed was the design of the elements and the improvement they would bring to city streets. The RFP was structured to ensure that design was the first priority of the system and outlined a program for a coordinated set of high quality elements which would be visually appealing and unique to Toronto. KDA's award-winning submission was then the subject of extensive design review and refinement with a multi-disciplinary team composed of members of various professional design organizations in Toronto.

Further, City Council directed that the coordinated street furniture, as well as other elements to be located in the public right-of-way, were now to be set out on the street in accordance with guidelines established in the Vibrant Streets document, which would provide for maximum pedestrian amenity and streetscape organization.

As a result of these efforts the new street furniture program has provided a dramatic improvement to Toronto's streets with high quality design elements, the establishment of a unique Toronto identity and a better ordered and coordinated streetscape.

The following are some of the specific divisional operational and policy requirements the TSF has addressed, at no cost to the City:

Solid Waste Management (SWM) – expanded street litter management, standardized street collection of garbage and recycling, cigarette butts collection. Units are placed for purposes of litter rather than advertising. Ergonomics for collection provide for

improved efficiency. A foot pedal allows the public to use the units without having to touch the opening flaps on the receptacles.

Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) – neighbourhood information pillars in support of the Postering by-law as approved by Council to provide an outlet for legal postering.

Economic Development – in support of the City's Five-Year Tourism Action Plan which identified enhancing Visitor Information Services as one of the five priority directions in the implementation of the plan, the street furniture program incorporates the previous InfoToGo pillar pilot program previously located in City parks, into the public right-of-way.

Public Service Messaging – A total of 8.5 per cent of the entire advertising capacity is provided to the City, free of charge, for public service announcements. The agreement also requires that street name information is displayed on the transit shelters.

Toronto Transit Commission – adaptability for GPS and passenger information systems now installed on selected test shelters. All shelters feature a TTC route map.

BIAs – this system has meant that BIAs no longer must contract for or maintain their own system of street furniture, but can utilize the City's program. At the same time certain elements such as litter bins can be designated with the name of the respective BIA and they can opt for black or grey elements.

Design to Accommodate the Disabled - all elements meet or exceed accessibility standards and meet functional ergonomic standards to reduce injury among the public, city staff and contractors.

Environmental Excellence – the use of sustainable materials, modular systems, high efficiency lighting, solar energy, efficient construction waste management and the use of fuel efficient fleet vehicles were all key goals identified, and achieved, in the coordinated street furniture contract.

Transportation Services Newspaper Vending Box Program – After a successful defence of the News vending Publication Box By-law in Superior Court and through aggressive application of the by-law, the number of publication boxes across the city has been reduced from over 16,000 to just over 12,000, and through aggressive collection, outstanding arrears payments in excess of \$1 million have been recouped by the City. The City also earns in the order of \$1M a year on the licensing of newspaper vending boxes. At the same time, a multi-publication box was specified in the RFP for locations where numerous individual vending boxes cluttered the street.

A number of pilot programs have also been initiated in accordance with City Council's directives (i.e. TTC Next Bus System, Kensington Market small receptacle pilot program,

Big Belly compacting litter bin, replacement of privately owned transit shelter at 1200 Bay Street and the installation of solar powered ad shelters).

### **Advertising in the Public Right of Way**

In the preparation of the RFP for the street furniture contract there was significant work undertaken to assess the legacy street furniture contracts and the amount and quality of advertising that previously existed on Toronto's streets. To respond to a widespread concern about the need to control advertising in the public right-of-way, an overall cap or limit of 198,200 square feet was established based on the estimated then-existing amount of advertising on City street furniture elements. In addition, the contract set out a number of new advertising distancing regulations which limit the distance between ads on Toronto streets.

The Astral Media proposal, working within the parameters specified by the City in the RFP, recommended limiting advertising to two items only – transit shelters and InfoToGoPillars, a potential maximum of about 4,100 pieces of street furniture that must generate sufficient revenue to fund the entire system of 25,640 elements. (Even at that, about 20 percent of the transit shelters do not include advertising.) This restriction on advertising to two items provides a significantly upgraded condition from the past, where ad hoc and poorly designed advertising was also included on city benches as well as garbage bins. Further, the contract prohibits any other advertising on street elements in the public right-of-way.

At this time, Astral has 113,472 square feet or about 57% of the allowable ad space installed. The termination of the contracts for benches and litter bins with advertising removed approximately 48,070 square feet of street level advertising from the public realm.

In order to respond to the concern that local business would not be able to afford higher-end advertising that would be provided in the transit shelters and InfoToGoPillars, Astral developed an affordable customized program for local businesses. As well, one free ad face per district is allocated to the BIA comprising the respective area.

### **Revenues to the City**

The Agreement between the City and Astral Media sets out the minimum yearly guaranteed fee or annual revenue to the City from Astral Media. The company pays the greater of the stipulated annual fee for each agreement year or the listed percentage of gross revenues, as set out in the attached chart (Appendix B). In year three, the City received an additional top-up as part of this formula. The Agreement required Astral Media to provide an upfront payment of \$36.5M (a \$28M payment plus the first three years of the contract valued at \$8.5M) upon signing the contract. To date, the City has received \$56.7M in direct revenue. As the Auditor General noted, the financial aspects of the agreement continue to be complied with.

## **Supporting a Wide Range of City Initiatives**

City revenues from the Street Furniture Program are directed to the Public Realm Reserve Fund. The purpose of this fund is set out in a report entitled, "Coordinated Street Furniture Program – Revenue; and Establishment of a new "Public Realm" Reserve Fund," adopted by City Council at its meeting of December 11, 12 and 13, 2007.

The direction for the use of these funds was to facilitate improvements in the public realm, and was set out in the following hierarchy:

- Funding the establishment and operation of the Public Realm Section, including management and administration of the Street Furniture Program, neighbourhood improvement programs, pedestrian infrastructure planning/implementation and graffiti eradication/management program.
- Maintenance of existing net revenue stream, to Transportation Services in its annual Operating Budget to replace revenue from the previous shelter contract.
- Disposition of new revenues for initiatives that will deliver enhanced streetscaping, neighbourhood beautification and other physical public realm improvements within the City's road allowances, in connection with annual capital and operating programs.

The 2007 report directed funding to:

- Street Tree Maintenance - Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R), \$700,000 a year.
- Support of the technical and mapping requirements of the InfotoGoPillars – Economic Development, \$300,000 a year.
- Development of the new Sign By-law - Toronto Building, a loan of \$943,000 (since repaid).
- The report also anticipated directing funds to combat graffiti vandalism.

In addition to the key direct services and benefits provided by the program, Council determined that it was appropriate to direct some of the revenues from the contract into enhancements of Toronto's streets and public amenities. The new Public Realm Section in Transportation Services was established to ensure that the public right-of-way use is optimized, and that our streets and public spaces are continuously being improved and upgraded. Staff have worked on a range of public-private partnerships to improve spaces and boulevards, large and small. These range from the Green Triangle at the foot of University Avenue in cooperation with Fairmont Royal York to the removal of boulevard parking on side streets and its replacement with planting beds and trees in local neighbourhoods.

As per the City Council budget direction for 2012, the Public Realm Reserve Funds are directed to the following:

- \$6.04M to fund the Public Realm Section including staff dedicated to:
- Street Furniture Management and the newspaper vending box programs.
- Pedestrian Projects including the Essential Links sidewalk program, pedestrian improvements and wayfinding.
- Neighbourhood Improvement program in which staff work with Councillors and the public in every ward of the city to improve and enhance city streets.
- The implementation of the new Graffiti Management Plan, including increased focus on the removal of graffiti vandalism, better coordination of all graffiti-related matters in the city, and the launch of a new public-private partnership program for street art.
- \$1.24M to fund the Orphan Space program, to maintain spaces with horticultural features in the public right-of-way that were previously abandoned, unkempt and an eyesore.
- \$5.52M to Transportation Services as per the previous transit shelter contract.
- \$5M to Facilities Management for the perimeter treatment of the Nathan Phillips Square Revitalization.
- \$2M for capital funding for the Neighbourhood Improvement program previously sourced from capital debt financing.

The Reserve Fund balance in 2012 is \$7.4M.

The program also included a contribution of \$100,000 towards a Design Links study which explored other potential street furniture elements and \$285,000 to cover costs of the City's RFP process. Other added value items included in the contract are a Scholarship Program valued at \$1,215,000, a Summer Student Program valued at \$6,123,000, an Art Program for the multi-publication boxes valued at \$1,215,000, free homeless access to public washrooms and nationwide radio and television advertising valued at \$66,000,000.

### **Scheduled Rollout of Street Furniture Elements**

The implementation of a substantive new and high-profile program of this scope across the entire city has been an enormous undertaking involving establishment of organization structures and staff, new processes and controls, business systems, training, education and extensive consultation with agencies, BIAs, businesses, residents and Councillors.

The original roll-out schedule of elements provided an excellent estimate of the total numbers of element required but the first four years of contract implementation have demonstrated the need for some flexibility in order to address issues as well as the changing requirements of the city (See Appendix C). As noted earlier, the original schedule developed by staff during the RFP process defined a very aggressive rollout of elements in the first few years and, not unexpectedly, experience showed that this target required refinement. Notwithstanding these factors, the roll-out of street furniture is 71% of target at the end of year four and with the current pace should be caught up within 2 to 3 years.

The agreement with Astral Media provides authority for the General Manager, Transportation Services, to substitute or 'swap' elements and to revise the original roll-out schedule of furniture provided the overall value of the capital program is not changed. To date there have been a number of delays to the original schedule including the need to test new elements such as the public washroom, to gain consensus with the newspaper industry around the details of the multi-publication box, to deal with the requirement for expedited roll-out of the postering columns in conjunction with the implementation of the City's Postering By-law, to respond to capital construction coordination pressures, as well as the particular needs of City Councillors and neighbourhoods.

The rollout of items has been affected by a combination of the following events since the initiation of the Agreement with Astral on September 1, 2007:

- Necessary design refinements to satisfy the Design Jury and address ergonomic concerns related to the litter bins meant the final renderings were not signed off until March 2009. This delay had an impact on the manufacturing of the elements.
- City start-up. A program of this magnitude and complexity required significant effort and actions upon initiation. Permission to fill Street Furniture Management staff positions did not receive necessary approvals until September 2008 which had an impact on the necessary site surveys. This caused a 6 month delay in the first piece of street furniture being installed and a permit approval delay of approximately 9 months. In addition, training of new staff, acquisition of office space and coordination of construction activity all required significant time.
- The need to terminate a number of legacy street furniture contracts and remove 3,800 old litter bins, 1,000 benches with ad faces as well as to undertake a condition audit of all existing transit shelters which were then transferred to Astral for maintenance.
- The 2009 labour disruption and the 2010 G20 summit - both events significantly slowed down the ability of staff to survey potential sites and for Astral to secure necessary permits for installation of elements. In the case of the G20, for security reasons, staff and Astral actually had to remove then subsequently replace 1,200 street furniture elements including publication boxes from within the cordoned area, Police Headquarters area and the University Avenue parade/protest route.
- The need for a Settlement Agreement, authorized by Council at its meeting of July 6 and 7, 2010 and finalized with Astral in May 2011, to resolve a dispute over who is responsible for the costs of design, supply, installation, maintenance, refurbishment, relocation and removal of concrete pads as a base for non-powered Street Furniture (i.e. litter bins).
- Due to recent implementation of regulatory changes made by the Ontario Energy Board to the Electricity Act, 1998 (Regulation 22/04), there have been considerable challenges involving Toronto Hydro providing power for new transit shelters and disconnecting existing shelters. Some progress has been made on the approvals process and in determining reasonable costs for the installation of power hook-ups and Astral continues to meet with Toronto Hydro on these issues.
- The mutual decision not to invest further in the Astral StreetSmart Tracker system which was designed to provide on-line monitoring capability, facilitate

- maintenance monitoring, integrate site planning, installation management, and response to repair, cleaning or replacement requests. As a result, from 2010 all planning & construction coordination between Astral, Astral contractors and the City was done using Google Docs as a short term measure until Astral was able to address their own internal business systems needs.
- Delays in internal IT approvals and subsequent implementation of the city's Work Management System (STREETview) have meant the module was not ready until March 2011, and staff began moving their documents from Google Docs to the new system as part of the first module in Fall 2011(see Appendix D). A second phase, anticipated for completion by year-end will provide additional reporting and mapping capacity, while the final phase, targeting completion by 2013, will provide direct connectivity to 311 and complete updating of the inventory system with the new street furniture elements.
  - Seasonal survey and construction limitations mean that rollout occurs between April and November, weather permitting. Staff capacity issues limit the number of surveys and approvals which can be done yearly.

## **Street Furniture Inventory Report**

### **Benches**

To date, 525 benches have been installed. A smaller backless bench was also developed and is available where there are site limitations or a need to orient in both directions.

### **Bicycle Rings**

No bicycle rings have been installed to date under the Astral contract. Management of the City's existing bike ring program, which has already installed about 16,000 bike rings, has recently been transferred to the Street Furniture Management Unit. In view of the scale of the City's ongoing program and the comparatively minor incremental increase (1,000 units) called for in the street furniture agreement, it was determined that the City's newly re-designed bike ring was preferable to the Astral model in terms of strength, cost and consistency with the existing bike rings. As a result, the city will continue to manage the placement of new and replacement single bike rings outside of the Astral contract. Staff are now working with Astral on options for multi-bike parking units in lieu of the 1,000 single bike posts to be provided under the contract.

### **Litter Receptacles**

A total of 4,897 litter receptacles have been installed to date. The litter bins are available in two or three stream sizes dependent on the available sidewalk space and the volume of waste generated. The BIAs and selected areas are also able to secure them in either grey or black versions. The litter bins were designed specifically for Toronto and have required functional improvements such as

changes to the foot pedal mechanisms, flap openings, door hinges, locks and the pedestals. As well, staff have supported the Kensington Market small receptacle pilot program and the Big Belly Solar compacting litter unit and its companion non-compacting recycling container pilot. The Big Belly solar pilot project was not successful for application on City streets due to concerns related to costs and safe collection, while the bins in Kensington were subject to breakage, frequent 'tagging' and deemed too small to meet the needs of this busy area. Staff are now working with Astral and its design team to develop a smaller model of litter bin to replace the off-the-shelf Rubbermaid containers that are now being used where there are site constraints.

### **Multi-publication boxes**

A small number of multi-publication boxes/kiosks (5) have been installed for testing at select locations. In addition, 39 corrals which organize separate publication boxes have also been installed. In the case of the multi-publication boxes necessary design modifications have included improvements for the vendors such as better locking mechanisms and electronic readers, and better handles and ease of opening for consumers. The corrals have also been updated with new locking tube mechanisms in order for publications to attach their boxes securely.

The TTC has determined that, through the termination of existing lease agreements, they will move newspaper vending boxes off their own property (69 stations) onto the public right-of-way, where possible. The Street Furniture Management Unit will now manage locations, enforcement and receive revenues. There will be a phased 3-year deployment and staff will be working closely with Astral and the TTC to place the multi-publication boxes or corrals in an effort to reduce sidewalk clutter. At the same time, there is also significant pressure from other areas of the city for multi-publication boxes and corrals, which may delay immediate implementation at TTC locations.

### **Poster Columns and Boards**

At its meeting of July 6, 7 and 8, 2010, City Council directed staff to expedite the installation of the poster columns as a legal outlet in support of the City's Postering bylaw. City staff have identified three downtown geographic quadrants for a poster enforcement pilot. Following a review of poster removal statistics provided by SWM and MLS, 55 poster columns were installed in one of the quadrants in the Fall of 2011. An additional 76 poster columns have also been placed city-wide in response to requests made by local councillors and BIAs. Staff are now working with SWM and MLS to confirm the strategy for the placement of approximately 300 poster columns this year. The role and placement of the poster columns will also be considered as part of a current freedom of expression court challenge to the Postering Bylaw.

In addition to the stand-alone poster columns, 367 poster boards have also been installed on the back of transit shelters. This element works best in instances where the transit shelter is placed close to the curb and, as a result, this feature can only be located on some of the shelters.

### **Public Washroom**

One fully accessible, automated public washroom has been constructed on Queen's Quay West at the foot of Rees Street and an additional one is planned for Woodbine Beach this year. Modifications to the unit have included the addition of emergency hatches, door opening protocols and a direct phone line to Astral's 24-hr Commitment to Quality service. Despite the enormous success of this unit, it has been difficult to find appropriate locations due to the size and weight of the 3 square metre unit and the availability of necessary water, sewer and power hook-ups.

### **Transit Shelters**

Twenty-six different styles of transit shelters have been developed to suit the particular dimensions and demands of Toronto's streets and to provide flexibility for removal/reinstallation for construction. New shelters are fully accessible and are constructed on the public right-of-way in compliance with the Vibrant Streets Guidelines. As a result, necessary design modifications included the development of mini shelters, new residential models, shelters for medians and streetcar routes, and adjustments to roof canopies to provide better weather protection. Legacy models of shelters are maintained by Astral and the goal is to replace the oldest (Ancaster) models within the next 2 years and continue to upgrade the remaining legacy shelters to the newer versions in an orderly fashion. Requests for new transit shelters must meet a minimum threshold of transit users (50/day) and normally take approximately two years to install. This is due to the high volume of requests; coordination of construction activity with City Divisions, Agencies and utility companies; and the need to ensure that they are fairly distributed. Currently 1154 shelters have been installed – of which 943 have advertising panels. To date, 52 shelters with ads and 194 non-ad shelters are solar-powered. As of 2009, all shelters with ads which are not solar-powered, utilize renewable energy through Bullfrog Power.

### **Maintenance**

The Street Furniture Management Unit and Astral work together to ensure the ongoing maintenance of Toronto's street furniture. Concerns about maintenance are received through 311, Astral's direct 'Commitment to Quality' service (1-866-827-8725 or [quality@astral.com](mailto:quality@astral.com)) as well as directly from the public and city councillors. City staff investigate all complaints with an initial inspection and photo record to verify the location and problem and then issue a work order to Astral for follow-up. This initial investigation assists Astral in ensuring there is an appropriate and immediate referral to

the correct sub-contractor(s), dependent on the nature of the complaint (i.e. cleaning or repair). In most cases, Astral advises the city that the work has been completed and the bylaw staff re-inspect to confirm compliance and advise the complainant accordingly.

Maintenance standards are set out in the Agreement. All elements are to be cleaned and inspected weekly and snow or ice are to be removed within 24 hours within transit shelters following an accumulation of at least 5 cm. Emergency situations are to be repaired as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after notice and other general cleaning or maintenance requests are to be managed within 48 hours. In cases of scratchitti, it is sometimes difficult to remove during colder months due to breakage of the glass, but all hate-related materials are removed regardless. One constant maintenance issue is the older legacy versions of shelters – some of which are over 30 years old. Many are scratched, dented or rusting and parts are not readily available for repairs. We are committed to working with Astral over the next 2 years to replace and/or remove the oldest legacy shelters as a top priority and will continue to upgrade the remaining legacy shelters to the newer versions in an orderly fashion.

Maintenance inquiries and complaints are divided into 3 categories: cleaning and maintenance, damage and repair, or issues related to location, removals or size (see Appendix E). In 2011, City staff received and investigated 2,165 inquiries and complaints related to the street furniture program. The highest volume are related to units that have been damaged and require some form of repair, followed by location/removal/size concerns and then requests for cleaning or general maintenance. Litter receptacles generate the most inquiries- although this is explained by the fact that they also reflect the majority of our inventory and are also the most mechanical of all the items. The complaints on each item are tracked for trends and have led to design modifications to reduce constant repairs and improve the functionality and safety of the various elements. Complaints about the location or size of a particular piece of street furniture require detailed investigation and will often include consultations with various parties in order to secure resolution. Coordination of removals and reinstallations of street furniture in order to accommodate public and private construction or other special requirements are also coordinated by the City and delivered by Astral.

In terms of maintenance management, Astral has revamped its business systems to better track city work orders and these are now being cross-referenced between the City and Astral for more timely responses. Astral's new business systems now provide the City with quarterly maintenance reports as well as the monthly complaints reports necessary to ensure timely and appropriate follow-up of complaints and for contract compliance purposes. Once fully implemented by the end of 2012, the Astral business system will also have the capacity to manage and report in real-time, on permits and approvals for street furniture and the actual roll-out and installation process – which will ensure a more effective and efficient process between city staff, Astral and Astral contractors. City staff will then work closely with Astral to develop and implement performance measurement systems and standards that will provide information on cost, productivity and performance trends. Astral is also completing the bar-coding of all street furniture

inventories and this also provides an opportunity to track all maintenance visits by site and element as well as the map all installed elements.

## **2. New InfoPillar Guidelines**

At its meeting of July 12, 13 and 14, 2011, City Council adopted, as amended, "Street Furniture Program – InfoToGo Pillar Design Modification" (Item PW5.5), and in doing so, approved a modified design of the original InfoToGo Pillars and authorized the exchange of design rights for the new design with Astral Media.

### **Origin of InfoPillars**

InfoPillars are intended to provide wayfinding information for the public, and tourists in particular. It is an approach common in many cities throughout the world. It is important to recognize this element was specifically requested in the scope of the street furniture RFP by the City, namely the Economic Development and Culture Division in support of the City's Five-Year Tourism Action Plan. This Plan identified enhancing Visitor Information Services as one of its five priority directions. For this reason, the street furniture program incorporated the previous InfoToGo pillar program piloted in City parks into the new coordinated system intended for the public right-of-way.

The City's street furniture terms of reference required the provision of a total of 120 Information/Way-finding Structures (InfoToGo or InfoPillars), as well as implementation early in the term of the contract. Astral's proposal, in response to the City's RFP, identified the info pillars as a premium advertising product and the second of only two elements that generate revenues to fund the street furniture program. Their early rollout was relied upon to provide proportionally higher revenues at the outset of the contract.

### **Design and Placement Issues with the new InfoPillars**

The original InfoToGo Pillar design proved to have numerous problems including a touch screen technology that was problematic to operate and required high levels of maintenance. Further, the original design was bulky and difficult to place on city streets (for example it had to be positioned to avoid direct sunlight on the display screen) and only 5 InfoToGo Pillars were installed in 2009. In addition, technological advances rendered the features as originally envisaged somewhat outdated.

In response to a request from Astral Media for a change to the original design, City Council approved their redesign. The new InfoPillars have a more compact design overall, being smaller in length, height, and width than the previous version. However, the ad panel was increased in size to the standardized 4 by 6 foot size template found on transit shelters. The wayfinding component of the pillar, the map, was now relatively smaller and situated at the end of the two ad panels. Notwithstanding the increase of the advertising panels from 3x5 to 4x6 feet, there is no change to the overall amount or cap of advertising (198,200 sq.ft.) permitted on city streets.

The new design also provided the option of non-ad pillars, i.e. featuring maps only, without the advertising caisson. Astral agreed to provide 20 non-ad pillars at no cost as part of design change. There is an option in the contract to provide for a 'swap' of items, and staff are currently assessing the number of non-ad pillars considered viable.

The rollout of the new InfoPillars began in October 2011 and there was considerable reaction to their deployment. Some of the concerns include the following: the placement in many instances narrowed the sidewalk and pedestrian clearway to an unacceptable width; sightlines for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers were obstructed; the map was not in place when the unit was installed; the InfoPillars read primarily as an advertising vehicle, rather than an element that provides information; the lighting level was too high; and sidewalks were not restored to their original condition after installation. Especially in many downtown areas, there was concern that the element dominated overcrowded sidewalks, hindered pedestrian movement and intruded into the pedestrian clearway.

The City's Design Review Panel requested Transportation Services staff attendance at their meeting of February 13, 2012. At the meeting, members acknowledged the overall benefits of the street furniture contract but also expressed considerable concern about the look of the InfoPillar, the process through which the design had been secured, and its impact on city sidewalks - which they believed overwhelmed the sidewalk with advertising.

City staff has reviewed the placement of the 73 pillars placed or scheduled for placement in the City right-of-way between October and December 2011. Thirteen InfoPillars have since been removed and 12 InfoPillars were placed on hold for a variety of reasons including insufficient pedestrian clearway, high pedestrian volumes, presence of public art or heritage sites, compromised site line visibility, or concerns about areaways. As well, all remaining old InfoToGo pillars have also been removed. At the time of writing, there are 48 InfoPillars on the street and none have been installed since the end of December 2011. Astral also took immediate steps to reduce the lighting levels in the ad caissons by 30% and have now completed the restoration of the original paving details.

### **Options for Addressing InfoPillar Concerns**

City staff met with Astral to discuss the prospect of redesigning the unit and placing the unit parallel to the street as raised in the Notice of Motion, by Councillors, the Design Review Panel and members of the public. Astral has advised the City that they are not in a position to consider a third redesign of the unit at this time under the terms of the agreement, given the significant costs already incurred with the production of the original InfoToGo units and the new redesigned element, the delay in deploying this element (revenue implications) and disposal of the original InfoToGo units. A repositioning of the unit parallel to the street would also reduce and/or eliminate the functionality of one of the ad faces, thereby materially reducing revenues.

These new guidelines provide additional direction in ensuring that safe and pleasing streetscapes remain the primary focus but, we believe, are not so onerous as to negatively

impact on the mutual business responsibilities stipulated in the agreement to sustain the overall program and its wide ranging benefits. Legal information on the contractual implications of these issues is set out in a separate in-camera report prepared by the City Solicitor.

### **Recommended Enhanced Placement Guidelines**

One of the significant accomplishments of the TSF was the development of the "Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program Design and Policy Guidelines" document which furthered the vision for streets established by the City's Official Plan and advances the practical implementation set out in the Streetscape Manual and the Streets By-law. This document assists with the appropriate placement of all street furniture in the public realm. It addresses issues such as the appropriate pedestrian clearway width, grouping of elements and the distancing of advertising faces. In addition, staff also evaluate proposed InfoPillars or transit shelter locations for consistency with the Highway Traffic Act (HTA), Transportation Association of Canada Guidelines (TAC), City standards and technical specifications. Together, these principles ensure the safety of all road users as well as a functional and attractive public realm.

Nevertheless, the concerns raised by the initial installation of the InfoPillars confirmed that the current set of guidelines did not address all aspects of the InfoPillars placement. Based on the staff review, including assessments of pedestrian volumes and additional studies prepared by the IBI Group for Astral Media in consultation with the City, a new set of placement guidelines specific to the redesigned InfoPillars has been developed for inclusion in the Vibrant Streets Guidelines and are included in Appendix A of this report.

The new guidelines will ensure that the InfoPillars are well placed to provide wayfinding and maps for pedestrians, work within the context of the area they are placed, and encourage their distribution across the city. In order not to impede pedestrians or have the element overwhelm the sidewalk, the pillar should fit within the furnishing zone.

Where the InfoPillar cannot be fully located within the furnishing zone, staff recommend that there be a wider pedestrian clearway than is now established under the current Vibrant Streets Guidelines. Staff carried out detailed review of various scenarios across the City and recommend that the InfoPillars take up no more than 40% of a sidewalk from the curb face to property line, secured public setback and/or building face, recognizing that there may be exceptions which would be managed on a case-by-case basis. This would provide for a minimum pedestrian clearway of approximately 2.79m., given that the unit and setback from the curb normally total 1.86m. In high pedestrian traffic areas, staff will conduct pedestrian volume analysis to ensure pedestrian safety, particularly at peak hours.

InfoPillars would not be installed if they block view corridors of heritage properties or public art and would be offset so they do not block or hinder access to building entrances, doorways or stairs. Streetscapes must be returned to their original condition with the installation of the InfoPillar and, if bike rings are removed, they will be reinstalled close

to the original location. All safety and sightline concerns would continue to be safeguarded through the implementation of the HTA, TAC Guidelines, the Streets By-law and other City standards and technical specifications.

City staff will review all potential locations with Astral to ensure they meet the approved placement guidelines and will consult with City Councillors and BIAs as to the placement of the pillars and with abutting property owners where there are special pavement treatments, i.e. granite.

### **Forthcoming Wayfinding System Strategy for Toronto and Role of InfoPillars**

A unified multi-modal Toronto wayfinding system has been long awaited by the tourism sector, City businesses, cultural and sports institutions, residents, commuters, and tourists themselves. The inclusion of the 120 InfoPillars within the street furniture contract, combined with the City's Walking Strategy provided the platform for the development of a wayfinding system for the City.

In September 2011 following a far-reaching RFP process, the Public Realm Section, Transportation Services engaged consultants Steer Davies Gleave of London, England and DIALOG of Toronto to prepare a wayfinding system strategy. Phase One of the project will develop a multi-modal approach for wayfinding in Toronto, including the development of principles, an implementation strategy, identification of funding sources and defining the parameters for a pilot implementation in Phase Two. Phase Two will include design guidelines and prototypes for pilot implementation. Phase Three will include a city-wide roll out and full implementation of the wayfinding strategy.

Work commenced with a kick-off meeting of the Steering Committee followed by a series of intensive consultations and workshops with various stakeholders (Appendix F). The consultants have conducted research into international best practices, as well as city-wide audits of existing wayfinding systems and options for digital and trip planning component(s). The consultants are working with a variety of existing City elements to form the basis of the wayfinding system strategy, including the new street sign program, highway directional signage and the existing InfoPillars and non-ad pillars. Following a December workshop with approximately 50 participants, two study areas representing significantly different wayfinding challenges were selected to test the proposed concepts and approaches. The two study areas are closely tied to Pan Am locations (Downtown East in downtown Toronto and Morningside/Military Trail in Scarborough) and offer the potential to serve as full pilot sites during Phase Two.

At the time of writing, a Public Forum is planned for March 28, 2012. It is expected that the report on the proposed wayfinding system strategy (Phase One) will be submitted to Council in the Fall of 2012.

### **3. Moving Forward**

Annual planning for implementation of street furniture takes into account upcoming capital projects and an attempt is made to ensure that elements are well-distributed across the City based on the agreed-upon schedule. In turn, Astral requires the quantities of each element well in advance in order to work with their manufacturers and ensure the availability of contractors for approval and installation purposes.

Both parties are committed to accelerating roll-out quantities over the next two to three years in order to catch up on the unavoidable delays that have occurred to date. This year, staff are working with Technical Services to include specifications for concrete transit shelter pads as part of capital reconstruction projects in order to reduce disruption to the public and develop a more efficient process for Astral, Astral's contractors and the City.

In 2012, a focus of the program is to roll out postering columns in support of the City's postering bylaw and multi-publication boxes along the Bloor-Danforth subway line. As noted above, staff are also working closely with Astral to remove older legacy transit shelters with the top priority given to the oldest versions.

A new, smaller litter bin is now under development to serve extremely confined areas such as Kensington or locations with limited clearance, as a permanent and ergonomically-sound substitute for the temporary 'Rubbermaid' containers currently maintained by the City.

On a go-forward basis, staff are proposing to consult with local Councillors and BIAs on the placement of the InfoPillars and to notify Councillors and BIAs, as requested, of the other elements to be installed each year. As well, staff will be consulting with Councillors where a roadside canopy version ('splashguard') is the only transit shelter option feasible due to right-of-way challenges, and will continue to work with Astral and its design team to develop models which address Toronto's varying needs.

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### **SIGNATURE**

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Andrew Koropeski, P. Eng.  
Acting General Manager, Transportation Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: InfoPillar Placement Guidelines

Appendix B: Revenue Report

Appendix C: Street Furniture Roll-out Report

Appendix D: Sample Work Management System (Cartegraph) – Asset Module

Appendix E: Sample Maintenance Report

Appendix F: Wayfinding Steering Committee & Stakeholders