

## **Toronto Street Furniture Program – Further Report on Status Update and Proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines**

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| <b>Date:</b>             | April 30, 2012                                  |
| <b>To:</b>               | Public Works and Infrastructure Committee       |
| <b>From:</b>             | Acting General Manager, Transportation Services |
| <b>Wards:</b>            | All Wards                                       |
| <b>Reference Number:</b> | p:\2012\ClusterB\tra\pr\pw12003pr               |

### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to various amendments to the proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines and provides a summary on the progress of staff's work with Astral on the options for multi-bike parking units to be provided in lieu of 1,000 single bike posts. This report is a complement to the original report entitled, "Toronto Street Furniture Program - Status Update; and Proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines" (Item PW13.8).

The report also discusses a proposed change to the InfoPillar design, as a result of the request to explore the possibility of a modified InfoPillar design which would be more in keeping with the size of the sign that was originally approved.

The recommendations in this report supercede those in the previous staff report of March 20, 2012.

### **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 the "Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Design and Policy Guidelines," as outlined in revised Appendix A attached to this report.

2. City Council direct staff to work with Astral Media to site the remaining InfoPillars within the context of the revised 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.
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.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting of April 3, 2012 considered the report, "Toronto Street Furniture Program-Status Update; and Proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines" (Item PW13.8). The Committee referred Item PW13.8 back to the General Manager, Transportation Services for a further report to the Committee on May 16, 2012. The referral included a number of motions suggesting amendments to the proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines, as set out further in this report.

In addition, staff were requested to submit a report on the progress of work with Astral Media and a timeline on the options for multi-bike parking units to be provided in lieu of the 1,000 single bike posts.

Finally, staff met with Astral to discuss modifications to the InfoPillar design such that the advertising panel was reduced in size, in keeping with the size of the InfoToGo pillar approved as part of the original Astral RFP submission in 2007.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Proposed Amendments to the InfoPillar Placement Guidelines**

The placement of all street furniture is guided primarily by the "Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program Design and Policy Guidelines." 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, concerns raised by the initial installation of the InfoPillars confirmed a need to enhance existing placement guidelines. Based on a 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 was proposed for inclusion in the Vibrant Streets Guidelines.

These new guidelines were considered by Public Works and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting of April 3, 2012 and a number of motions related to the proposed InfoPillar Placement Guidelines were referred back to staff for consideration. The majority of the motions have been integrated into the proposed InfoPillar Guidelines (see revised Appendix A attached). Following are the motions (reordered for purposes of consistency with the original InfoPillar Placement Guidelines) referred by the Committee. Staff are in agreement with all the proposed placement and process guidelines identified below, but propose an alternative approach for placement guideline No. 4 to achieve the intended directive. In addition, for greater clarity, staff propose a few other modifications which are described below.

**InfoPillar Placement Guidelines (numbering corresponds with those items listed in Appendix A)**

1. No amendments requested.
2. Amendment requested, "That City Council amend Appendix A, Item 2 by adding "including ensuring that no single ward has greater than 20 percent of the total number of infopillars installed." (Motion e - Councillor Layton)
3. Amendment requested, "That City Council amend Appendix A, guiding principle Item 3 by replacing the word "optimal" with "permitted," so that Item 3 now reads "The permitted location for InfoPillars is completely within the furnishing or planting zone of the sidewalk where they can be appropriately integrated into the streetscape, and not impede the passage of pedestrians." (Motion b – Councillor Perks)
4. Amendment requested, "That City Council amend Appendix A by deleting guiding principle Item 4." (Motion a – Councillor Perks)

Staff do not recommend that Item 4 be deleted from the Guidelines, but recommend instead that there be additional clarification provided with regards to the furnishing zone placement and the treatment of secured privately-owned public setbacks.

InfoPillars must be located within the furnishing zone as set out in the "Vibrant Streets Guidelines," which is now reinforced by the modified Placement Guideline 3 described above. The furnishing zone is often but not always defined

by unique paving treatments (i.e. pavers) and refers to the area in which poles, trees and all other street furniture (i.e. shelters, litter bins, bike rings) are placed along a sidewalk. For this reason, staff have removed the previous statement that "When InfoPillars are not located entirely within the furnishing zone" because InfoPillars will always be located within a furnishing zone, although not necessarily within areas of distinct pavement treatment. For purposes of InfoPillar installation, the furnishing zone from the curbside must be at least 1.86 metres in width. The provision of a minimum clearway (which has been enhanced in the previous guidelines, beyond what is set out in the "Vibrant Streets Guidelines") of at least 2.79 metres recognizes that the sidewalk must accommodate both stationary map-readers, as well as flow of pedestrians.

This enhanced pedestrian clearway can be up to the property line and/or building face and may include a secured, privately-owned public sidewalk or setback. In most cases, the City secures encroachment agreements to ensure the public has the right of access across private lands abutting City-owned sidewalks. The pedestrian is usually unable to distinguish between the public and privately-owned sidewalk or setback as they "read" as a more generous space in front of a building(s) that is accessible to all. If the privately-owned public setback is no longer available and the pedestrian clearway is reduced to less than 2.79 metres, then the InfoPillar would be removed and relocated at no cost to the City. Further, staff have added language that refers to the subsequent relocation of the InfoPillar should this be required. Relocation would be in accordance with all the amended guidelines.

Modified Placement Guidelines Item 4 is now proposed to read as follows:

The InfoPillar shall consume only up to 40 percent of the sidewalk from the curb face to the property line, secured privately-owned public setback and/or building face. (There may be exceptions to this standard, and these will be handled on a case-by-case basis.) If the privately-owned public space is no longer available and the pedestrian clearway is reduced to less than 2.79 metres, then the InfoPillar would be removed and relocated at no cost to the City.

5. No amendments requested.
6. Two amendments requested, "That City Council amend Appendix A, guiding principle Item 6a by adding the words "for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists," so that Item 6a now reads " all safety and sightline matters are addressed for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists," and that City Council amend Appendix A, Item 6 by adding the following new subsections " adhere to the accessibility safety principles that impact people with disabilities." (Motions c and d – Councillor Layton)
7. No amendments requested.

8. No amendments requested.
9. Additional guideline requested that "Any InfoPillar located in the vicinity of parking bays be placed on the downstream end of the bay." (Motion a – Councillor Layton)

### **Process Items**

An amendment was requested to Process Item No. 4 (Motion b – Councillor Layton) by adding the words "immediately or within a reasonable amount of time," so it now reads: "The local Councillor will be advised if the installation of pillars requires the removal of bike rings. Bike rings will be reinstalled close to the original location immediately or within a reasonable amount of time."

The revised InfoPillar Placement Guidelines have been reviewed with Astral, and they are in agreement. The new revised guidelines provide additional direction in ensuring that safe and pleasing streetscapes remain the City's primary focus while not being so onerous as to disrupt the business model which supports the overall Coordinated Street Furniture Program and its wide-ranging benefits.

Also requested (Motion c – Councillor Perks), a report is forthcoming to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee for its meeting of June 14, 2012 with a revised implementation plan for installation of the remaining required elements.

### **Multi-bike Parking Update** (Motion – Councillor Shiner)

As part of the Coordinated Street Furniture Contract, Astral responded to the City's RFP requirement to install and maintain 1,000 single bike ring posts over the 20-year contract term. The City currently has approximately 16,000 bike rings installed and receives a large number of requests and suggestions as to additional placements. Following an extensive design review, a decision was made to continue with the City-designed bike ring as it is stronger and more cost-effective than the Astral model.

In accordance with the Coordinated Street Furniture Agreement, staff have met with Astral to explore a possible 'swap' of elements – substituting the single rings for multi-bike parking options to be installed and maintained by Astral. Multi-bike options are being considered for streetscape situations where there is high demand but concerns about a 'wall' of single rings alongside the curb face or in areas with continuous tree trenches guarded by sidewalk 'lids' – which do not lend themselves to the installation of single rings.

Astral has agreed to pilot at least three different models of multi-bike parking stands using proven designs this year. Based on an evaluation of these multi-bike parking options, staff will then work with Astral as to the preferred model(s), quantity and roll-out years. It is anticipated that this work could be completed by Spring 2013 – given the need for a reasonable time period in which to evaluate the performance of the rings. This information would be provided to Council as part of the annual status updates on the implementation of the Street Furniture contract.

At the same time, individual bike rings will continue to be rolled out under the City's current program.

### **InfoPillar Modifications**

Staff met with senior Astral Media staff to discuss modifications to the InfoPillar design. Staff reviewed the dimensions of both the old InfoToGo pillar and the InfoPillar with Astral as to functionality and dimensions. Appendix B demonstrates the difference between the two models and illustrates, that while the size of the advertising panel size itself has increased, the redesigned model has a thinner frame so that the actual depth of the element is only nominally larger (19mm or  $\frac{3}{4}$  in). Further, with the redesign that eliminates the arc shape and replaces it with a slender panel, the new InfoPillar now takes up about one third the overall sidewalk area of the previous design.

Staff also raised the possibility of a reduction in the ad face size from 4 x 6 to 3 x 5. However, Astral advised that the 4 x 6 ad face is an industry standard (similar in size to its transit shelter ads) and is their premium ad product – commanding more than twice the revenue of shelter ad faces, revenue in which the City shares. Astral has advised the City that they are not in a position to redesign the InfoPillar further. Astral advises that one redesign of this element, as approved by Council in July 2011, has already taken place; that there would be additional lost revenues due to a continued roll-out delay; as well as the ability of the new InfoPillar Placement Guidelines to solve many of the problems previously raised. They also noted that the new InfoPillar design is illuminated using a new LED light technology that consumes 40 percent less electricity than the previous design. As well, the new maps allow for more enhanced communication technologies than the previous design, including Quick Response codes (QR) and Near Field Communications (NFC) which are compatible with mobile or smartphones and can direct users to web addresses, notify users of special events, and guide users to specific destinations.

However in response to the concerns raised about the element, Astral is pursuing a design change to promote the InfoPillar's wayfinding functionality. The current InfoPillar design contains an 'I' at the top on two sides which is located parallel to the street. Astral Media

is proposing a redesign which will add 'T's perpendicular to the sidewalk. The effect will be to make the 'T' visible to users from every direction and will make the element more visible to pedestrians. This feature will be included on the remaining InfoPillars to be installed and retrofitted on the existing pillars.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A – Revised InfoPillar Placement Guidelines (May 16, 2012)  
Appendix B – Comparison of InfoToGo and InfoPillars