

ROUNABOUT ENHANCEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of landscaping in a roundabout is one of the distinguishing features that give roundabouts an aesthetic advantage over traditional intersections. The intent of this report is to establish guidelines to enable creation of roundabout landscaping enhancements, to do them safely and in a manner likely to be well maintained over time.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Instruct Administration to apply the Landscaping guidelines within roundabouts; and
2. Direct administration to develop a mechanism to use fees from License of Occupations for future long term maintenance of roundabouts.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2014 JULY 18:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report TT2014-0485 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2013 February 11 combined meeting of Council, NM2013-02 was approved which directed Administration to “engage with citizens and industry as well as relevant City departments to investigate the feasibility, costs and aesthetics options for a City-wide roundabout enhancement program (that encourages roundabout enhancements by all relevant parties) with consideration to the Roundabout Policy, Roundabout Guidelines, Complete Streets Guide, Optional Amenities Agreements, Public Art Policy as well as any other policy or guideline that may be seen as pertinent.” Council also directed Administration to bring forward “a report including recommendations on implementation opportunities and options as well as funding options and report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit no later than 2013 June.”

On 2013 July 22 combined meeting of Council, TT2013-0421 was approved which directed Administration to “continue to engage Urban Development Institute - Calgary, citizens via community groups, and relevant City departments in regards to roundabout features” and “report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit once recommendations are developed or provide an update no later than January 2014 on progress to date.”

On 2013 November 18 combined meeting of Council, TT2013-0665 was approved which directed Administration to “continue to engage Urban Development Institute - Calgary, citizens via community groups, and relevant City departments in regards to roundabout features” and “report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit once recommendations are developed or provide an update no later than January 2014 on progress to date”

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On 2014 February 10 combined meeting of Council, TT2014-0084 was approved which directed Administration to “report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit with recommendations on enhanced landscaping and amenities no later than 2014 July”

BACKGROUND

On 2011 April 15, Council approved the Roundabout Policy. Shortly thereafter, Administration released a list of guidelines which discusses functionality and utility of roundabouts from a technical point of view. In the guidelines, sightlines and landscaping are discussed without suggestion of what can be placed within a roundabout.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Landscaping is a key feature of roundabouts that can enhance function and aesthetics of the intersection. Landscaping can support safe guidance for road users through the intersection with visual cues, reduce vehicle speeds approaching the intersection and in the circulatory roadway, provide a transitional gateway between land uses and road facility types, and enhance the identity of an intersection and its surroundings through community expression. Good landscaping design will support safety, facilitate adequate sight distances, and discourage speeding, and therefore should not be taken lightly. There can, however, be considerable on-going expenses related to maintenance, which should be considered as part of the landscaping process. Before landscaping designs are completed, designers should meet with the City to discuss issues, concerns, opportunities, maintenance aspects and determine if or what agreements are required.

Previous City guidelines indicated that landscaping the central island beyond grass and/or low maintenance/drought-tolerant plants were to be maintained by someone other than The City of Calgary (ex. Homeowners’ Association through an Optional Amenities Agreement). The new guideline now recommends that for landscaping well beyond City standards, an Enhanced Maintenance agreement be established and for items other than landscaping, a License of Occupation agreement is required. License of Occupation fees will be a percentage of estimated costs to remove or reconstruct features and shall be determined by Roads. These fees will then be directed to fund long term maintenance of roundabout longer life infrastructure elements.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Administration has engaged Councillor Demong, Urban Development Institute - Calgary, Federation of Calgary Communities and relevant City departments regarding feasibility, aesthetics and costs for enhancing the landscaping and amenities of a roundabout. Feedback from the groups was incorporated into the Landscaping Guidelines.

Strategic Alignment

Determining the feasibility, aesthetics and costs for enhancing the landscaping and amenities of a roundabout aligns with Council Policy TP016 – Roundabout Policy, the Calgary Transportation Plan, and the 2020 Sustainability Direction objectives.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Roundabouts provide transportation services in a safe, effective, affordable and efficient manner that ensures reasonable accessibility for all citizens. Landscaping of a roundabout should enhance the experience of road users by safely guiding them through the intersection while defining the intersection structure. Roundabouts can also contribute to local character and context via landscaping.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Current or future operating budgets are not impacted by this report as the goal is for communities to maintain their own enhancements on a local basis.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

A mechanism to use fees from License of Occupations for future long term maintenance of roundabouts shall be developed.

Risk Assessment

The ability to increase landscaping opportunities within roundabouts depends on industry and The City's capacity for increased maintenance costs. Directing fees from License of Occupations into long term maintenance would give The City the ability to assume long term maintenance risks for longer life infrastructure elements.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The use of landscaping at a roundabout is one of the distinguishing features that give roundabouts an aesthetic advantage over traditional intersections and can potentially complement urban design. For this reason, The City of Calgary has developed a guideline to assist the design and long term maintenance of the landscaping within roundabouts.

ATTACHMENT

Landscaping Guidelines within Roundabouts