



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 17, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Traffic Island Beautification Program (PW16094) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch, B. Sc. Director Environmental Services Division
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

In an effort to enhance traffic island beautification city-wide through conversion of hard surface traffic islands to floral traffic islands, staff is requesting approval of the following recommendations:

- (a) That a three (3) year program to convert eighty seven (87) hard surface traffic islands to floral traffic islands city-wide be approved;
- (b) That the capital cost of \$1,550,000 for traffic island conversions be funded in two separate years and referred to the 2017 Capital Budget and 2019 Capital Budget process for consideration;
- (c) That annual operating costs to maintain the converted traffic islands commence in 2018 at \$143,000 and 1.49 full-time employees (FTE), and in 2020 at \$71,000 and 1.24 full-time employees (FTE), and be incorporated into the 2017 and 2019 Capital Budget submission as operating impacts from Capital.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on June 8, 2016 through PW Report 16-010, Item 6.2, Council directed staff to report back with recommendations on how to enhance the Traffic Island Beautification Program, including information on the associated capital and operating costs. Staff was also asked to provide information on funds committed to traffic island beautification over the past five-years, and any previously planned traffic island conversions that have not yet been completed.

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City-wide there are currently 303 traffic islands enhanced with annual floral displays that are maintained by Horticulture staff. In addition to the noted floral islands, there are 71 planted roundabouts or gateway features that are also maintained by Horticulture staff.

There is one outstanding traffic island conversion that is planned for implementation in 2018 to coordinate with roadworks through Engineering Services. This report recommends an additional 87 hard surface traffic islands be converted to floral traffic islands. These conversions were determined in consultation with Ward Councillors. A full list of the recommended traffic island conversions is attached to Report PW16094 as Appendix A.

It is recommended that the funding be spread out over a span of three years, with capital funding provided in only two of those years (2017 and 2019). This will reduce the burden of sourcing the required funds in one year while still expediting the desired conversions in a timely manner. This approach will also allow work to be completed on the 2017 funded work prior to additional funds being committed.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

This report recommends the conversion of 87 existing hard surface traffic islands to floral traffic islands at 34 locations. Some locations have multiple planted islands (e.g. one in each direction in a 4-way intersection). Five locations have been deemed not suitable for conversion from hard surface to a floral traffic island, yet suitable for the addition of a floral display through the use of planters. A list of all locations is attached to Report PW16094 as Appendix A.

The estimated design, tender and construction cost associated with the noted conversions is \$1,550,000. It is recommended to fund this cost over two-years with \$760,000 in 2017 and \$790,000 in 2019.

The operating impact of \$214,000 and 2.73 FTE to maintain the additional floral traffic islands would also be funded over two-years beginning the year following the first capital funding year (\$143,000 and 1.49 FTE in 2018, and \$71,000 and 1.24 FTE in 2020). These operating impacts are required to maintain the additional 87 floral traffic islands. Costs are detailed in Table 1 below.

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Table 1, Two Year Implementation

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Construction	\$690,000	-	\$717,800	-	-	-	
Design	\$ 70,000	-	\$ 72,200	-	-	-	
TTL Capital	\$760,000	-	\$790,000	-	-	-	\$ 1,550,000
Operating	-	\$143,000	-	\$71,000	-	-	\$ 214,000
FTE	-	1.49	-	1.24	-	-	2.73

Staffing:

An additional 2.73 FTE (as noted above) is required to maintain the 87 floral traffic islands created through the conversion of existing hard surface islands.

Legal:

There are no legal implications from this report.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At its meeting of June 8, 2016 through PW Report 16-010, Item 6.2 Council directed staff to bring back to Public Works Committee, a report outlining the number of outstanding locations throughout the City for Traffic Island Conversions, and to include the past five-years of budgets allocated to the Traffic Island Beautification Program. Direction was also given to provide recommendations on how to enhance the Traffic Island Beautification Program including associated capital budgets and operating costs.

In response to the above direction this report provides information regarding recommendations for continuation of a Traffic Island Beautification Program including the associated capital and operating requirements.

Traffic Islands

Historically, the standard for traffic island installation during roadworks construction has been hard surface. The upgraded treatment of a plantable island has been either by specific request, or if identified as a priority location. Identification as a priority location is typically where a traffic island is situated in a main corridor, has a large volume of traffic, and has drawn some attention from staff and the City of Hamilton residents as an area in need of a floral focal point. In addition to the conversions recommended through this report, Horticulture staff has begun working with Engineering Services staff to have plantable islands constructed during roadwork where feasible. Installation at the time of

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roadwork is the most cost effective approach versus conversion. Operating impacts associated with these new floral traffic islands are referred to the associated annual Capital Budget process for consideration.

There is currently no inventory of hard surface traffic islands across the City. Three hundred and three (303) traffic islands are enhanced with annual floral displays and are maintained by Horticulture staff. In addition to the noted floral islands, there are 71 planted roundabouts or gateway features that are also maintained by Horticulture staff.

Budget allocation over the past five-years for creation or conversion of planted islands through the Traffic Island Beautification Program (previously referred to as: traffic island conversions program, or horticultural enhancements program) has been \$796,000 funded through the capital budget process. In addition to the Traffic Island Beautification Program funding of \$796,000 there have been mid-year requests for traffic island conversions brought forward by Motion to Council, and funded through Ward specific area rating funds in the amount of \$234,000. The result has been a total of 15 converted medians at a cost of \$1.03M over the past five-years.

The one outstanding traffic island conversion, identified through the above noted programs is Upper Gage and Fennell Avenue, where four planted islands will be coordinated with roadwork construction for 2018.

Roundabouts

Currently the standard for roundabout installation is a treatment that consists of coniferous trees as the central focus, surrounded by medium to low growing shrubs. The ground plane is wood-chipped and occasionally treated with sod if there is irrigation present. An upgraded treatment of a roundabout is either by specific request, or if identified by staff as a priority location. Identification as a priority location is when the traffic island is situated in a main corridor, has a large volume of traffic, and has drawn some attention from staff and the City of Hamilton residents as an area in need of an enhanced floral display.

There has been no budget allocation through the Traffic Island Beautification Program over the past five-years for an upgraded treatment of planted roundabouts. These are a relatively new venture and typically installed in coordination with new development and/or through Engineering Services.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Ward Councillors provided information to staff on suggested candidate locations for the conversion of hard surface traffic islands, including suggestions for priority locations. The benefits of installing plantable islands at the time of construction were discussed with support for coordinated efforts.

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The Public Works Coordination Committee has representatives from various staff groups: Corporate Assets & Strategic Planning, Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Hamilton Water, Operations, and Transit. The purpose of this group is to discuss the coordination of Public Works construction projects. The Traffic Island Beautification Program was discussed at this Committee on June 22, 2016 to identify the recommendations of this report, and confirm that efforts will be coordinated to identify candidate locations for plantable islands to be installed during roadwork construction. Candidate locations will be confirmed as part of the design process for roadworks.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Traffic island floral displays are a source of civic pride across the City as is witnessed through the quantity of thank-you messages forwarded to staff regarding them. There appears to be enjoyment and delight brought to residents of, and visitors to, the City of Hamilton.

In recognition of these benefits Council directed staff to make recommendations on how to enhance traffic island beautification. Through consultation with Ward Councillors a list of 87 conversions from hard surface to floral has been identified along with the associated capital and operating requirements. The recommendation to forward these costs through the capital budget process allows Council to consider these costs in balance with other city-wide priorities. The recommendation to fund these costs over two-years reduces the burden of sourcing the required funds in one year. Having the first funding year begin in 2017 allows staff to commence design and construction preparation during the next calendar year in order to expedite the desired conversions. The administration of all 87 conversions in one year is not feasible, which contributes to the recommendation to balance the funding over two years. Having a funding gap in 2018 represents the process of having work initiated with 2017 funds continue through 2018 prior to requesting the second portion of funding in 2019, which will initiate work on the balance of the identified conversions.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

An alternative approach is to fund the program over five-years instead of the recommended two-years. The estimated design and construction cost associated with the conversions would escalate to correspond with estimated inflation over five-years to a total of \$1,582,200.

Operating impacts of \$214,380 and 2.73 FTE to maintain the additional floral displays would also be divided over five-years, to begin the year following the first capital funding year. Costs are detailed in Table 2 below.

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Table 2, Five Year Implementation

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Construction	\$276,000	\$281,500	\$287,200	\$293,000	\$299,000	-	
Design	\$28,000	\$28,500	\$29,000	\$29,700	\$30,300	-	
TTL Capital	\$304,000	\$310,000	\$316,200	\$322,700	\$329,300		\$ 1,582,200
Operating	-	\$60,780	\$34,700	\$48,500	\$11,200	\$62,000	\$214,380
FTE	-	.58	.33	.58	.33	.91	2.73

This alternative would address the desire of Council to increase the quantity of planted traffic islands suggested through direction to staff (at its meeting of June 8, 2016 through PW Report 16-010, Item 6.2) to report back with recommendations to enhance the Traffic Island Beautification Conversion Program, however would delay implementation of the recommended traffic island conversions and may result in increased construction and operating costs toward the end of the five-year window. This option is therefore not recommended by staff at this time.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A - Recommended List of Existing Hard Surface Traffic Islands to be converted to Floral Islands