



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Brian Lee, Director, Engineering

Prepared by: Loy Cheah, Senior Manager, Transportation, Ext. 4838
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Date: June 10, 2019

**Re: Arterial and Collector Road Sidewalk Network Completion Program,
Communications Plan**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the memo dated June 10, 2019 entitled “Arterial and Collector Road Sidewalk Network Completion Program, Communications Plan” be received;

BACKGROUND:

On November 19, 2018, DSC endorsed a report entitled “Arterial and Collector Road Sidewalk Completion Program, All Wards”. The report summarized the program planning and resource implications to complete the program over the period of 2019 to 2028. In addition, an overview of a public communications plan to complement the program was summarized with a Council direction to staff to develop a detailed public communications plan for the sidewalk network completion program starting in 2019.

A City-wide public communications plan is needed and is part of the sidewalk completion program

The existing annual sidewalk capital construction program is often challenged by local opposition. Namely, residents that believe their properties will be negatively impacted by a new sidewalk can significantly delay a project. Under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process, the scope of a sidewalk project falls under a “Schedule A+” Municipal Class EA process. That is, only public notification is required to be provided to the community and no formal public consultation is necessary. Even so, the City will be exceeding this requirement through a comprehensive, City-wide, multi-year communications plan.

The communications plan will effectively convey the benefits of the sidewalk completion program and achieve positive public goodwill. It will emphasize the following key messages:

- Sidewalks increase mobility options for all road users, including pedestrians, younger cyclists, and transit users
- Sidewalk gaps on arterial and collector roads are prioritized as most community amenities and services (e.g. employment areas, schools, public transit, community institutions, etc.) tend to be located along these corridors
- Sidewalks encourage active and safe travel for children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities and other members of the community as a whole
- Sidewalks help promote healthier lifestyles
- Sidewalks enhance the sense of neighbourhood and community cohesion through better connections to public spaces where face-to-face interactions can occur

In addition, the communications plan will include the following information:

- Sidewalk network completion program overview (including policies, objectives, benefits, and links to Council reports)
- Mapping of the sidewalk program
- Scheduled timing of individual projects on an annual basis
- Program contacts

Corporate Communications helped develop the communications tactics to be employed

The communications plan has been developed with Corporate Communications and is premised on low-cost, high impact marketing and advertising to maximize exposure and awareness of the sidewalk program. Where possible, City assets (e.g. electronic information boards, web portal, social media) will be used to minimize costs. The tactics to be used on an annual basis are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – Annual Communication Tactics

Tactic	Notes	Cost
Brand Identity	Having a consistent and recognizable visual brand is important in promoting recognition of this program. Incorporating elements from the logos that have been developed for the City of Markham Active Transportation Master Plan and The Active Travel to School Pilot will assist in developing a recognizable brand that supports the objective of increasing mobility options for all road users.	N/A
Mobile Signs	Minimum of four signs over the duration of two months in the Summer	\$1,300
Ads in Newspapers	Free ads in the City of Markham pages of local papers. Paid ads in ethnic newspapers	\$1,000
Social Media	Three campaigns per year (e.g. Spring/Summer/Fall)	\$1,500
Posters/Brochures	To be implemented at City of Markham facilities	\$2,000
Digital Marquees	To be implemented at City of Markham facilities	N/A
Electronic Information Boards	To be implemented at City of Markham facilities	N/A
Video	For use on social media and City of Markham Portal with emphasis on the benefits of sidewalks	\$5,000
Media	Increase public awareness through articles in media, online, and print	N/A

Mayor & Councillor Newsletters	Content to be provided	N/A
Portal Presence	Create a new landing page with a vanity web address directing the public to project information	N/A
Contact Centre FAQ	Provide Contact Centre with basic information to address immediate concerns of callers	N/A

The Arterial and Collector Road Sidewalk Network Completion Program is starting in 2019

Detailed design of several sidewalk projects is proceeding in 2019 with construction commencing in 2020. It is imperative that the communications plan be rolled out this year in order to bring awareness to the program and convey the benefits of the sidewalk completion program right away. It is anticipated that elements of the communications strategy such as web portal and print materials will begin to be rolled out in the Fall of 2019.

Cost of the annual communications plan is a minimal part of the sidewalk completion program

The first year and initial cost of developing the materials and carrying out this communications plan is \$11,000. The subsequent annual cost of this communications plan is \$5,000. As the communications plan is part of the sidewalk completion program, the annual cost is to be covered under the sidewalk capital construction budget. For 2019, it is covered under project #083-535019039005.