



McKellar Ward Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 26, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Slovak Legion

801 Atlantic Avenue

1. McKellar Ward Meeting 04-2024

Chair: Councillor Brian Hamilton

2. Resource Persons

Aaron Ward, Project Manager-Development Services

Crystal DePeuter, Council & Committee Clerk

3. Guests

Eric Conway, Landscape Architect, Scatliff + Miller + Murray.

4. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and provided introductory comments.

There were approximately 33 people in attendance.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the McKellar Ward meeting held on September 25, 2024, for information.

6. Victoriaville Update

Project Manager Aaron Ward and Landscape Architect Eric Conway provided an overview of the Reimagine Victoriaville project and responded to questions.

Construction is anticipated to begin Spring 2025 and completed October 2026.

Highlights of the presentation include:

- A pedestrian corridor will be included.
- Storefronts currently within the mall structure will be made weather tight for outdoor exposure.
- Space can accommodate events.
- Public washrooms and elevator will be included.

There was discussion regarding access for emergency services to the area. The Project Manager advised that emergency services will be able to access the area.

There was discussion held about safety in the area and cost for maintenance and security. The Chair advised that one of the purposes of the project is to attract people to invest and visit the area and that operating costs will be increased in the budget when the project is complete.

There was discussion held about landscaping and storm water management, including the use of native plants, rain gardens, and artificial turf. The presenters advised that underground storm water management systems have been incorporated and that native plants will be used in the plaza area with more robust trees used on the streetscape.

There was discussion held about angle parking, lighting and cameras in the area and potential collaboration with the Fort William BIA on landscaping. The Project Manager advised that angle parking is typically used on one-way streets and that the Eye on the Street program will be expanded.

There was discussion held about the cost of project. The Project Manager advised that \$18 million is budgeted and that the project has had small adjustments to offset inflationary increases. The actual amount will not be known until the project comes back from tender. Financing will be a combination of debenture and tax dollars, with potential applications to other levels of government funding.

There was discussion held about the materials from the demolition and if they will be reused or recycled. The Project Manager advised that it will depend on the results of the Designated Substance Survey as some materials will have disposal regulations.

There was discussion held about the lack of planned transit service to the project area. The Chair advised that transit reviews routes to adjust as needed and the potential on-demand system will alleviate pressure on low service areas.

7. Housing and Homelessness

The Chair advised that the Miles Street Temporary Shelter location was defeated and administration has been asked to come back to council with alternatives.

There was discussion held about the need for the City to have control of public spaces, the potential effect of the Temporary Shelter on the residents and small businesses in the area, supports and services that will be provided, and the need to address unsheltered homelessness.

There was discussion held about the opportunity for residents to participate as community liaisons with attendees expressing interest.

There was discussion held about existing programs and strategies, funding for the Temporary Village from other levels of government, and advocacy the City is doing to alleviate pressures on social systems.

8. 2025 McKellar Ward Infrastructure Projects

The Chair advised that the Pacific Avenue bridge will be rebuilt.

There was discussion held about the need for improved accessibility, challenges with alternate routes, and safety underneath the bridge. The Chair advised that the Accessibility Advisory Committee reviews major projects and plans for construction will include alternate routes.

The Chair advised that Simpson Street would be closed next year to continue with the reconstruction between Dease Street and Victoria Avenue. Leith Street, Finlayson Street, and Dufferin Street will all have work done. A concern was raised about streets not paved to the sidewalk. The Chair advised that the City works through the streets and is unable to complete all the infrastructure demands at once.

The Chair advised that the Cumberland Street Roundabout will be completed this year.

9. Ward & City Issues

There was discussion held about garbage and donation bins. The Chair advised that the City does not have the capacity to address garbage on private property and that community clean ups can help.

There was discussion held about safety, police resources, and crime in the area. The Chair highlighted the work of community organizations to address social challenges and advised that he would invite the Chief or a representative from Thunder Bay Police Service to the Spring ward meeting.

There was discussion held about the practicality of the new recycling bins and the challenges when the area is primarily street parking. The Chair advised that he would monitor the issue.

There was discussion held about the recent changes to parking fees and the inclusion of the marina. The Chair advised that he is putting forward a motion to address.

There was discussion held about the Parkade and why it is not being demolished in the Reimagine Victoriaville project or sold to private interests. The Chair advised that it would be premature to remove or sell the Parkade when there is a focus on revitalization and surface parking lots in the area are potentially being used for housing development.

There was discussion held about inaccurate population numbers. The Chair advised that the published population is determined through the Stats Canada Census and inaccurate data has the potential to create a funding pressure with per capita funding streams.

There was discussion held about the lack of transit availability past 6:00 p.m. for residents in the East End. The Chair advised that transit uses formulas to determine routes that best utilize resources and that the routes are routinely reviewed.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.