



**The Corporation of the City of Cornwall**  
**Regular Meeting of Council**  
**Report**

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation  
Division: Planning  
Report Number: 2020-334-Planning, Development and Recreation  
Prepared By: Mark A. Boileau, General Manager  
Meeting Date: July 13, 2020  
Subject: Beautification Project

**Purpose**

To provide Council with information concerning beautification within the community, as requested in a Motion approved on February 10, 2020.

**Recommendation**

That Council receive Report 2020-334-Planning, Development and Recreation.

**Financial Implications**

Beautification of the community can occur through regular operational programming, through administrative development review, or through major projects requested annually through Capital Projects.

**Strategic Priority Implications**

The City's Strategic Plan includes relevant policies including developing our waterfront, as well as enabling an environmentally sustainable community.

## **Background / Discussion**

A presentation was provided to Council by Etienne Saint Aubin and Dick Aubry regarding the general subject of beautification in the community. Both a written report was submitted, as well as a presentation on various subjects including: economic development, tourism and population growth; vegetation and property standards; preservation and redevelopment, public space enhancement, etc.

Beautification in the community is a subject that falls within the responsibilities of various departments, including but not limited to: Planning with its Waterfront Plan, Official Plan policies and Site Plan Control policies; Building and Bylaw with its Property Standards; Parks and Recreation with its Recreation Master Plan, and parks and landscaping efforts; Economic Development with its Community Improvement Programs including Brownfield, Heart of the City, Renaissance, and with Tourism related improvement projects; and with Infrastructure and Municipal Works with its subdivision designs, street designs, and general maintenance.

The February presentation stressed the importance of beautification in a community, which is essential to the pride of residents, and to the increasing number of visitors that Cornwall is receiving in its post-industrial and diversified setting. As their report indicates, a community needs 'a community development plan of action' in order to put its best foot forward in retaining and attracting residents and welcoming tourists. The City has a number of projects and programmes which are directed at that goal; these are described below, and are not intended to be comprehensive, but provide examples of our attempts to achieve a more beautiful community.

### **Planning Department:**

*Waterfront Plan:* With 17 kilometers of waterfront property, Cornwall's waterfront is arguably the most important natural element contributing to the City's beauty. And while its various components including Guindon Park, the Canal Lands, the Harbour and East Front all have their strengths, Lamoureux Park has always been considered the jewel of our waterfront. The 2019 Plan includes several projects which are aimed at improving each and every study area, but much like the last plans which dated back to the 90's, this one has a long term plan of 25 years, and funding will need to be set aside annually to achieve its numerous recommendations. A new Waterfront Committee will be formed, which together with administration and key stakeholders, will oversee the evolution and implementation of the plan.



*Picture by Reel Thing Film & Sound*

**Official Plan:** The Official Plan, approved in 2018, contains a number of policies which are intended to provide orderly and aesthetically pleasing development. For instance, on the subject of orderly development, it speaks to visual design guidelines for plans of subdivision, and the need for rigorous and consistent site plans which are further described herein, and on the subject of aesthetics, its Urban Design Chapter is dedicated entirely to streetscape, architecture/built form, landscapes and open space design. Staff members are cognizant of these elements when reviewing development proposals.

**Site Plan Control:** The City uses Site Plan Approval to address and resolve design matters related to the proper development of any site. Site Plan Approval works in conjunction with other approvals such as Zoning or Building Permit approval to provide for well designed and functional sites. It is a site-specific type of development control authorized under Section 41 of the Planning Act. The Site Plan By-law of the City of Cornwall was approved by Council July 13, 1981.

In Cornwall, the process is generally applied to residential developments of 5 units or more, as well as commercial, institutional and industrial developments. It



results in more consistent applications of standard details, such as landscaping, lot grading/drainage, access/egress, etc. for an equitable approach to design.

The process in Cornwall is managed at an administrative level, which allows for quicker turnaround for the developer.

*Urban Design:* While the presentation by Mr. Saint Aubin and Mr. Aubry occurred in February, prior to COVID-19, the pandemic has produced a fair amount of creativity in the community. Recent developments have resulted in: retailers and restaurants making better use of Pitt Street bump-outs; restaurants making use of on-street parking bays; restaurant encroachments into municipal and private property, etc.

Picture to the right shows the extended patio at Schnitzel's European Flavours.



Recently, the purchase of pop-up SEA cans allowed the community to reinvent its uses; while they were originally to be situated in Lamoureux Park, the demand for greater 'outdoor' space in the BIA's resulted in the arts community gathering to produce tremendous pieces of artwork. They will be rented at very affordable rates to vendors, artists and non-profit organizations in the downtown and Le Village. The project has resulted in one of the most creative placemaking projects for both areas.



### **Building and Bylaw:**

*Property Standards:* The City has several By-Laws which set out the minimum standards for building and property maintenance. The standards prescribed are intended to outline the reasonable maintenance and upkeep of yards, buildings and properties. In recent years, in addition to dealing with traditional standards, staff have dealt with a number of additional items such as errant grocery carts, urban pigeons, feral cats, and vacant building standards.

In addition, from a staffing perspective, Cornwall has recently gone from a specified Bylaw Officer arrangement, where only two officers were dedicated to property standards, to one in which all five officers are cross-trained to deal with property standards. It is our hope that this format, together with a somewhat more aggressive enforcement of deficiencies will be beneficial to the overall appearance of the community.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

The city has an annual flower and tree planting budget. Much like an economic development or marketing strategy budget, there is not a perfect science in determining what amount is right for a community of our size. It is safe to say however that there are expectations from the residents on meeting a certain norm in plantings. In addition, the visitors are always complimentary of the plantings throughout the community, and particularly in Lamoureux Park.

The greatest recent example of a diminished budget for flower planting was in the traffic circle plantings a couple of years ago. Similarly, a reduction in decorative lighting was not unnoticed by the community. In summary, the City has a reasonable budget for these beautification projects, but some would argue more funding would be beneficial to both residents and visitors.





On a similar note, tree planting by the municipality is certainly on par with most communities. Our subdivision requirements are similar to others, and the City's tree planting efforts are possibly higher, especially when we consider Lamoureux park. With the Environment and Climate Change Committee reviewing the City's Protection and Enhancement of Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy, this should result in additional vegetation overall, coupled with a reduction in clear cutting of large tracts of land.

In addition to the above, over recent years, Parks and Recreation have added attractive and popular features such as kilometers of off-road trails and paths, three splashpads, accessible play structures in community parks, and enhanced boat launches in Lamoureux and Guindon Parks.





## **Economic Development**

*Community Improvement Programs:* The City of Cornwall maintains three programs designed to encourage and assist property owners to improve their properties, and by extension, improve their local communities. They are Heart of the City, Brownfield, and Renaissance.

There are seven programs available through Heart of the City, with targeted areas for revitalization projects including the downtown core and Le Village. Generally speaking, the initiatives focus on aesthetic improvements, as well as upgrading and/or renovating commercial developments and ancillary residential units.

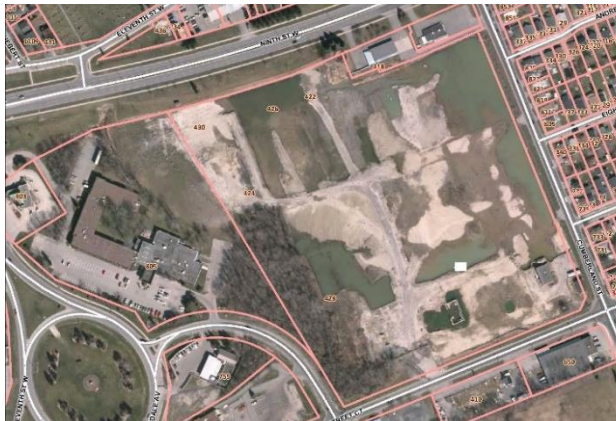
Brownfields are abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized commercial and industrial properties, usually provided with urban services, where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination. Redeveloping Brownfield sites provides an opportunity for neighbourhood revitalization, site clean-up and increased tax revenue, among other benefits.

Finally, Renaissance is a residential renovation program focused on improving the housing stock in this eastern district. All three programs have been successful in improving the aesthetics of various areas of the community, as described in photo examples below.





The photo to the left shows the former Clark's Shoe Store, Kid's Korner and Snetsinger's Hardware, while the photo to the right shows a revitalized segment of Pitt Street, accommodating Kid's Korner, Kingslea, Balance Massage and Pure Esthetics. This is just one of the many examples that Heart of the City has been able to beautify, and to raise the overall assessment values in Cornwall's business districts.



Cornwall's greatest example of improvements through the Brownfield program is with Cornwall South Investments' development of Smart Centres at 420 Ninth Street West. Formerly serving as a traditional industrial site for many decades, it sat vacant for many years, providing an unsightly and underutilised property in Cornwall's core. In 2013, with the assistance of a \$4.5 million tax increment grant, the developers have introduced the following commercial developments to the site: Walmart, Dollartree, A&W, Bank of Montreal, Petsmart, Winners, Taco Bell, Kawartha, and LCBO and Sleep Country will soon start construction.



**Tourism:** To assist tourists visiting the waterfront, bilingual wayfinding signs have been developed, and will soon be installed within Lamoureux Park from the Spillway Bridge to the west, to Pointe Maligne Park to the east. They will provide a list and location of each of the points of interest in the park. In addition, a new welcome sign is being constructed at the northeast corner of Brookdale Avenue and Water Street at a similar time.

These will be very complimentary to the historical plaques which have been situated in Lamoureux Park, as well as in the downtown and Le Village.



## **Infrastructure/Municipal Works**

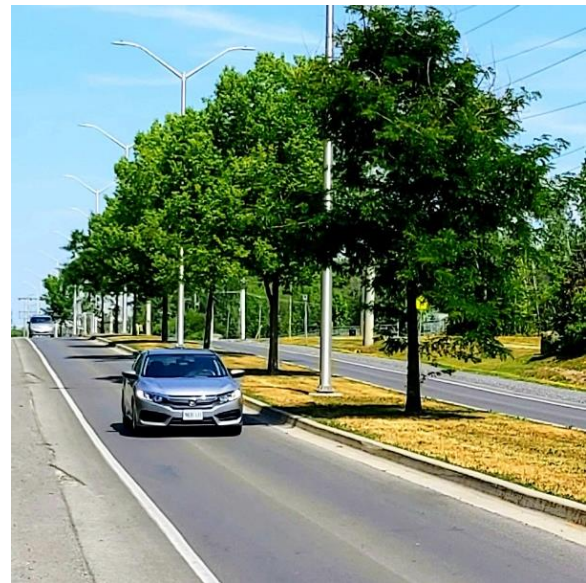
**Adopt-a-Street:** City of Cornwall staff support the delivery of the Adopt-a-Street program, which sees volunteers adopt specific streets, paths, or parks and collect litter at least once a month. City staff procure supplies, promote the program, pick up trash bags, and assist with special projects. Before the pandemic, the Cornwall Public Library partnered with the City to provide a location for supply pick-up, and it's expected that they will do so again as they re-open. Residents Pam and Ray Carson act as volunteer coordinators for Adopt-a-Street, which may have hundreds of active volunteers at any one time. It's

difficult to estimate how many bags of trash passionate volunteers have collected so far this year – but their impact is noticeable in our community.

*Tree Suckers:* The presentation included a number of pictures depicting “suckers” on trees owned by the municipality. Suckers are a tree’s attempt to grow more branches, often in response to some kind of injury. If the roots have been damaged, suckers may grow from the base of the trunk. If suckers grow higher on the trunk, they're called watersprouts and they are usually at the site of a pruning wound, a crack or some other damage. Trained arborist staff from the Parks & Landscape Section of the Municipal Works Department will be more vigilant in the future with respect to the removal of unsightly tree suckers. If necessary, trees responding with suckers due to probable fatal injury or disease will be removed and replaced.

#### *Boulevard trees:*

As part of the agreement with the Federal Bridge Corporation (FBCL) for the reconstruction of Brookdale Avenue from Water Street to Seventh Street West, FBCL provided the City \$100,000 to install trees along Brookdale Avenue following the completion of the reconstruction project. In 2017, the City retained a contractor to install trees along Brookdale Avenue from Water Street to Seventh Street West using the \$100,000 provided by FBCL. As noted in the presentation to Council, some of the trees which were previously planted have now



died, particularly those on the east side of the roadway. Some of the trees installed on Brookdale Avenue have since died likely due to the environment the trees were planted in (adjacent to an arterial roadway, heavy road salting in winter, close proximity to the roadway, etc.). The majority of the trees planted in the west boulevard and centre median have survived and are in good health. During the fall tree planting season, the dead trees along Brookdale Avenue will be removed and new trees will be replanted. In a few locations, the trees will not be replanted since the trees would be unlikely to survive.





In addition to traditional roadside tree plantings, the City has implemented a couple of centre median landscapes more recently, for example along Brookdale Avenue North, and along Nick Kaneb Drive, in the side photo. The design provides a more attractive visual in these wider arterial roads.

## **Conclusion**

The February presentation provided a good reminder of the importance of quality standards in our community, particularly in relation to general aesthetics. As mentioned, many City Departments play an important role in this effort, as does the entire community including its residents, its businesses and its volunteers.

It will be important for the City's operating and capital budgets to be maintained at their current levels in order to retain the community's existing beauty and benefits. Greater expenditures will be required, particularly in larger capital projects such as with the Waterfront and Harbour Lands, should the community want to create more attractive features to complement the existing landscape.



## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Beautification Project - 2020-334-Planning, Development and Recreation.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jul 8, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Tracey Bailey - Jul 8, 2020 - 10:07 AM**

**Maureen Adams - Jul 8, 2020 - 10:17 AM**