

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE REQUEST:**

Provide the cost of replacing the digital display boards in downtown Oakville with directories.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the information be received.

### **KEY FACTS:**

- In 2022, three digital display kiosks were installed in Downtown Oakville as part of the Lakeshore Road Reconstruction and Streetscape Project.
- These current kiosks each display a static image on only one side, oriented away from the street.
- Content for the digital kiosks is provided by the Downtown Oakville Business Improvement Association (BIA) and is remotely uploaded by Town staff. The content typically promotes Downtown Oakville BIA events. If a static map/directory was created as an image, it could be uploaded to the existing kiosks. Interactive directories would require touchscreen capabilities.
- Touchscreen capabilities were not part of the original kiosk project scope or Request for Proposal (RFP).
- The existing kiosks are expected to have a 10-year lifecycle.

### **COMMENTS/OPTIONS:**

#### **Background**

The Lakeshore Road Reconstruction and Streetscape Project launched in 2019 and included the addition of smart technology such as public Wi-Fi, traffic counters, and three static digital display kiosks. The digital kiosks went live in April 2022 with an estimated lifecycle of 10 years.

The original scope of the kiosk project did not include touchscreens; however, midway through the project, staff were requested to investigate touchscreen capabilities. At that time (fall of 2021), staff did not recommend touchscreen capabilities due to public resistance to touching screens and additional cleaning of the screens due to COVID-19. Further, the touchscreen functionality increased the kiosk unit costs, would have added an additional three to six months to the project schedule, and a mapping/directory interface had not been developed.

#### **Cost of Replacement**

Based on the cost estimates collected at the time of the original project, staff are estimating that new touchscreen kiosks would cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000 per

unit. This estimate is based on pricing that was provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, and pre-tariffs, and may not be reflective of current pricing. The cost may also vary depending on whether the same physical cabinets can be re-used, or if any changes would be needed to the pedestals on which the units are mounted. A Request for Information (RFI) would be required to obtain accurate pricing. If this project was requested to move forward, funding would likely come from the Town's Capital Reserve, which has some existing pressures; however, one option would be to request support from the Downtown BIA given the location and nature of the kiosks.

In addition to the cost of the physical kiosk units, there will also be costs associated with creating and maintaining the dynamic content that would be required for the kiosks to function as directories, like those found in a shopping mall. Staff would need to explore who would create, update and maintain that content, as this is not currently an expertise of Town staff, nor do Town staff have access to a data source that would provide consistently updated information on tenants/businesses needed to maintain an up-to-date and functional directory.

### **Other considerations**

In 2026, staff from multiple departments, with Planning as lead, will develop a wayfinding strategy to be applied incrementally town-wide for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The recommended outcomes and implementation of the strategy will inform the types of and locations for information kiosks and directories, along with the full suite of wayfinding signage to deliver a more complete navigation system. As was recommended with the Downtown Streetscape Project, the development of wayfinding signage systems has been recommended in the recently completed Streetscape Studies for Bronte Village and Kerr Village and have been included in the policy and implementation plans for Midtown, Uptown, Palermo, and other districts and corridors in Oakville.

Any digital display must comply with the Town's Sign By-law 2018-153 and the Use of Town Digital Kiosks for BIA Sponsorship Policy.

### **Conclusion**

Staff consider it premature to replace the current units with touchscreen models. A town-wide wayfinding strategy will be developed over the next year, establishing criteria for signage type, location, messaging, and user interface. Furthermore, the existing units are currently at approximately 30 per cent of their lifecycle.