Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – November 14, 2023

REPORTS

Item No. 3 Memorial Options for Hope Alley

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, as amended, and recommended to Council:

1. That the Public Service be directed to continue to collaborate with stakeholders and report back to the Human Rights Committee of Council with an update after:

    A. A project manager has been identified by stakeholders; and

    B. A funding source has been secured.

2. That the Public Service be directed to report back to the Executive Policy Committee in 90 days on the costs associated with all the different placemaking features discussed at the November 6, 2023 community consultation.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Duncan,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in, with the following amendment:

- Add the following new Recommendation 2:

  "2. That the Public Service be directed to report back to the Executive Policy Committee in 90 days on the costs associated with all the different placemaking features discussed at the November 6, 2023 community consultation."

and forwarded to Council.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 21, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee granted a further extension of time of 60 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On June 12, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee granted an extension of time of 60 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On December 7, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Human Rights Committee of Council and directed the Winnipeg Public Service to report back in 180 days on the matter.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 20, 2022, the Human Rights Committee of Council passed the following motion:

WHEREAS on September 1, 2022 the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee designated Henry Avenue between King Street and Main Street as "Hope Alley";

AND WHEREAS temporary signage was erected at the location to reflect the new name;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

AND WHEREAS community activists have expressed a desire for further renewal and memorial initiatives on the public right-of-way, including the possible installation of a larger 'Hope Alley' marker;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Policy Committee be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to report back in 180 days on:

1. The feasibility and costs associated with the installation of a permanent memorial on Henry Avenue between King Street and Main Street;

2. Memorial options that are best suited for 'Hope Alley', given its status as a public right-of-way.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Memorial Options for Hope Alley

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Patman, P.Eng.	J. Berezowsky	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service was asked to report back on options for a potential memorial in the "Hope Alley" area of downtown Winnipeg. Initial discussion took place in February 2023 at an in-person meeting at City Hall which included City staff and area representatives/stakeholders. At this meeting, a number of ideas for placemaking, public art, and functional improvements were described that would benefit the public in the area. At present, no project manager has been identified to lead this effort.

Public engagement and further research is needed to determine which of these elements should move forward.

Although no timeline for implementation has been identified, the Public Service is prepared to support ongoing efforts to move forward with these improvements through further dialogue with area stakeholders, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service be directed to continue to collaborate with stakeholders and report back to the Human Rights Committee of Council with an update after:

    A. A project manager has been identified by stakeholders; and

    B. A funding source has been secured.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

At its December 7, 2022, meeting, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Human Rights Committee of Council, that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back in 180 days on:

1. The feasibility and costs associated with the installation of a permanent memorial on Henry Avenue between King Street and Main Street;

2. Memorial options that are best suited for 'Hope Alley,' given its status as a public right-of-way.

Subsequent extensions of time were provided by the Executive Policy Committee.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no direct implications to the recommendation of this report. At this time, the project is not at a point where a decision has been made on the nature of the memorial, so there are no financial recommendations to be made.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

“Hope Alley” refers to a short segment (approximately 40 metres long) of Henry Avenue’s right-of-way east of the alley east of King Street and Main Street (see Figures 1-3, below). Hope Alley is a short, paved segment between the Bell Hotel (to the north) and the parking structure for WRHA ACCESS Downtown that is currently used for parking and back-of-house uses for these facilities. The area is close to a number of services for Winnipeg’s unhoused population, including the Salvation Army: Winnipeg Centre of Hope, Thunderbird House, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority ACCESS Downtown and Winnipeg’s new public toilet facility, Amoowigamig. Siloam Mission, the Main Street Project, and other services are also nearby.



Figure 1: Google Street View image looking west towards Henry Avenue. Hope Alley is the open area between the two buildings.



Figure 2: Google Street View image looking east from Henry Avenue at Main Street (Hope Alley): Amoowigamig is large metal structure in center of photo.



Figure 3: Google Street View image showing the paved area making up the Hope Alley area between Bell Hotel and WHRA parking structure.

Initial discussion took place in February 2023 at an in-person meeting at City Hall which included city staff and area representatives/stakeholders.

Potential elements to address the needs of the public in the Hope Alley area were discussed, as an initial step towards change-making to benefit the unique needs and challenges in the area. The Public Service went to this meeting with a focus on listening, with a mindset of wanting to support rather than stymie potential memorial or other beneficial improvements/enhancements in the area.

Some of the ideas brainstormed were:

- Some type of memorial feature to the unhoused.
- Some type of public art that incorporates names of those who frequent the area.
- Resources for adding additional benches and landscaping (including Indigenous plantings), and awnings/weather-protection.
    - Use of walls on the structures in the area for the fastening / mounting of murals (that could be removable to permit the artwork to be substituted from time to time), potentially with a public-participation effort to create the artwork. Would need to liaise with property owner to secure permission to do this.
    - Use of multiple languages on the artwork/memorial to communicate positive statements.
- Building upon potential funding / upgrades being made to Thunderbird House: expand on those improvements to link Hope Alley and Thunderbird House.
- Upgrades to Hope Alley to make it more of a raised park-like area / shared street / green space – raise the surface of the pavement, restrict auto use, eliminate use as parking / back-of-house area.
- Upgraded pedestrian crossing at Main Street; possibly a half signal.
- Garbage bins.
- Basketball hoops and/or other athletic equipment.
- Artwork feature over the roadway at Main Street, possibly similar to the one approaching Corydon Avenue from Pembina Highway (see Figure 4).

Note that these ideas were not (at this point) being ranked or evaluated in terms of constructability or other “showstoppers”, and are not intended to cut off further brainstorming or be the only ideas under consideration. There would need to be engagement with the public and further research to determine which of these elements should move forward. A funding source would also have to be identified. At this time, it appears there are multiple interested parties, in addition to the City of Winnipeg, that would be open to potentially contributing towards this project.

Note that there is a functional element inherent to many of the ideas that were brainstormed at the February meeting; so not simply a memorial but rather the type of features that could be considered “placemaking” features -- that would provide benefit to the public in this area. An important concept brought up at the discussion was that the improvements/art/memorial may encourage those who frequent the area to feel a sense of belonging. A comment was also made that creating features with input from the public would inspire the public to respect the new additions to the area.



Figure 4: Example of Entry Feature at east-end approach to Corydon Avenue (Google Street View)

It was suggested that local agencies with expertise such as architects, landscape architecture firms, and design classes from local colleges/universities should be engaged to provide input and support. In the past, at least one architecture firm has looked into a concept for providing upgraded elements in Hope Alley, and other projects are also being considered / are in the process of being explored near Thunderbird House and the public toilets project.

It should also be noted that the Hope Alley area also has a functional “back of house” purpose for the adjacent Bell Hotel. This stakeholder would need to be involved in future discussion.

Public Works noted at the February meeting that, theoretically, the Public Service could assist with ongoing efforts, providing useful information and support as well as potential contributions of resources (including in-kind effort, support to navigate “red tape”, explanation of processes to follow to ensure success, etc.) once identified. The Public Service often provides such support to community-led projects and grassroots initiatives.

The Public Service indicated they can support this project through technical means (i.e. data collection and analysis): for instance, the Public Service can collect data on pedestrian crossings and traffic flow in support of analysis leading to potentially the provision of an upgraded lighted pedestrian crossing. However, it was also noted that the Public Service would need to communicate with the public and local area agencies prior to collecting data, as it might be inadvertently perceived as the Public Service conducting a “surveillance” of the area. It would be important to ensure trust was established and maintained throughout the process.

The Public Service notes two definitions in OurWinnipeg that are pertinent to this project – that will need to be considered as the nature of the project continues to be pursued.

Human Rights: Everyone in the world is entitled to the same fundamental human rights, including a life of equality, dignity, respect, and a life free from discrimination.

Universal Design: Refers to the design of inclusive environments, products, services, and communications that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible - regardless of a person's age, size, ability, or disability. It follows the seven principles of equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance of error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use. The human-centered approach to design that Universal Design supports is user-friendly and convenient, as well as respectful of user dignity, rights and privacy.

At this time, a detailed timeline, project scope, etc. have not been set, given the nature of this project. This appears to be an effort that needs to be organic and grassroots-based. At present, no project manager has been identified to lead this effort.

That said, the Public Service is supportive of the project and will continue to work to provide support and resources, as appropriate, as the project continues. The Public Service is prepared to work with the stakeholders, to provide insight and support towards area enhancements in this area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** September 12, 2023

Project Name:
Memorial Options for Hope Alley

COMMENTS:

As this report is for information purposes, there are no financial implications.

J. Ruby - 2023-09-18
J. Ruby CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: n/a

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The final form of the Memorial / area enhancement is to be determined, only a preliminary discussion has taken place, and the project is still in the earliest, nascent stages.

However, this project will ultimately support the OurWinnipeg goal pertaining to social equity objectives:

1) upholding human rights so that no one is left behind;
2) building bridges spanning ideas, cultures, identities and generations on a foundation of truth, understanding and rights-based reconciliation;
3) building social cohesion through community development, solutions, coordinated, effective partnerships, and responsive service delivery.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The final form of the Memorial / area enhancement is to be determined, only a preliminary discussion has taken place, and the project is still in the earliest, nascent stages. However, the concepts under discussion appear to realistically be in alignment with a number of the Goals of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, including, but not limited to, the following Goals:

Goal 1 | Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change
Goal 3 | Equity is Embedded in all City Employment and Income Opportunities
Goal 5 | Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
Goal 7 | Food Security and Food System Resilience is Expanded
Goal 8 | Equity in Community Safety is Increased through Collaboration

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Transportation
Prepared by: David Patman, P.Eng. – Manager, PWD-Transportation
Date: September 19, 2023