Council Direction:

At its Budget meeting on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, the Committee of the Whole requested staff to provide additional information on the Comprehensive Wayfinding Strategy.

Information:

The origins of the “wayfinding strategy” are found in the Council approved Downtown Secondary Plan (2001). The Plan provides in Policy 2.4.3.3.1 p) that:

"Signage shall be used for way-finding and identifying buildings and public places in the downtown. The City will undertake a pedestrian oriented signage study to establish comprehensive sign policies for the Downtown."

One of the key principles of the Secondary Plan is to strengthen connections from the downtown to surrounding neighbourhoods, the Waterfront and the Escarpment. While investments in infrastructure are crucial in providing sound physical linkages, it is also important to be able to complement these by fostering supportive features such as well designed signage or other wayfinding tools (sidewalk directional markings, pathway markings, etc.), to enable pedestrians and other users to navigate their way within the Downtown and beyond. Through the Downtown West Harbourfront Capital Co-ordinating Sub-committee, this project was identified as one that should now be moving forward for a number of reasons:

- **Creation of Meaningful Links**
  The desire to create meaningful links from the downtown to the waterfront is especially important to be able to guide tourists, visitors and local residents along
safe and interesting pathways that showcase important places, buildings, features, streetscapes and parks.

- **Adopting a Comprehensive Approach**
  The Council adopted Downtown Mobility Streetscape Master Plan, prepared in 2003-2004, provided initial design concepts (such as colour-coded street sign plates and colour-coded City kiosks) to show how wayfinding could be accomplished. It became evident that an overall and comprehensive strategy was required rather than piecemealing such a wayfinding system through each individual streetscape master plan.

- **Avoiding Clutter and Enhancing the Downtown**
  Kiosk location and design is vitally important in contributing to the reduction of visual and physical clutter and promoting a cleaner physical and visual downtown environment. Kiosks can also assist either as wayfinding devices in their own right (such as incorporating street maps and place names), or in supporting other interpretive or directional signage and lighting, through supportive colour coding.

Accordingly, the Downtown-West Harbourfront Capital Co-ordinating Subcommittee identified the comprehensive wayfinding system as a priority project that could be accommodated through the Downtown Block Fund. $150,000 was allocated to the study. While reviewing a number of projects in 2006, Public Works also identified their kiosk location and design study as one that could be suitably integrated into the wayfinding project and allocated $50,000 for this component.

Staff intends that the comprehensive wayfinding and kiosk strategy study will have a number of objectives and tasks, including:

- A SWOT analysis and inventory of existing wayfinding and related signage in the downtown.
- Examination of alternative wayfinding measures and their design.
- Selection of one or more wayfinding devices for potential installation.
- Identification of potential locations (spot and route locations).
- Examination of potential kiosk designs for the downtown (and potentially for use elsewhere in the other downtown cores and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), of the City).
- Identification of specific potential kiosk locations in the downtown core.
- Development of kiosk location criteria for selecting locations in other downtown cores and BIAs.
- Determination of costs including installation and future maintenance.

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