

Subject: Weather Catcher**APPROVALS:****Annette Antoniak**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

THAT Administration proceed with the removal and disposal of the Weather Catcher located at Jubilee Plaza.

Summary:

The Weather Catcher is an intended focal point of Jubilee Plaza and has been in place and operational since construction completion in 2015. During the February 26, 2019 Council meeting, Administration was directed to report back to Council through the following motion:

“THAT Administration be directed to determine the cost necessary to dismantle the Weather Catcher and identify alternative options for that space and disclose the projected ongoing maintenance and completion costs for the weather catcher.”

Administration has brought this report forward in response to that motion.

Background:

The Jubilee Centre was developed in the 1980's and was originally intended to be the site of an above-ground parkade tower. The Municipality purchased the Jubilee Tower from the Provincial government and a Condominium Corporation was formed. The buildings are substantially setback from the four streets onto which they front. While these conditions rendered the complex out of step with the urban design objectives of the City Center Area Redevelopment Plan (CCARP), it presented an opportunity to convert the area to a public gathering place, hence the idea for an Urban Plaza was born. The strategic objectives that supported the direction for its creation included:

- Municipal Development Plan - Strategy 4.1.2: Foster opportunities for social interaction
- Municipal Strategic Plan 2012-2016 - Priority 3: Revitalize the City Centre

- CCARP - Policy 5.4.1.5: Facilitate the development of new public attractions downtown, including a public square to act as a focal point for the downtown and accommodate major public events and gatherings

The original name for the Plaza within the CCARP was Franklin Square and this transitioned to the name we have now, “Jubilee Plaza.” The vision for the plaza was to provide a community hub for year-round civic celebrations, performances, community events and programming. The capital budget for the creation of Jubilee Plaza, inclusive of all design elements was approved in July of 2012. After budget approval in December of 2012, a public Request for Proposal (RFP), was posted to hire design consulting services for the completion of the Jubilee Centre Re-urbanization Project (QU2897). The RFP was closed in January of 2013, and the project was awarded to Public Work Architects.

The design of Jubilee Plaza included natural stone and foundation for the Plaza, moveable podium, renovations to accommodate a new café space and the proposed McMurray Experience, a modular ice rink and a fog and mist feature (now called the Weather Catcher).

The Weather Catcher, which was installed in the Plaza in April of 2015, was intended to be an iconic focal point of Jubilee Plaza. It is a three-dimensional stainless-steel grid, 65 feet tall and 25 feet wide with water features designed to complement the different seasons. During the summer, it can disperse water and fog elements; during the winter it can produce ice and snow elements. The original intent included the ability to add additional audio/video features that included interactive screens to further its prominence in the Plaza. The capital request for the audio/video component was defeated at the December 2, 2016, Council meeting.

Key Considerations:

Since the formal opening of Jubilee Plaza with the Weather Catcher and the Mobile Podium in 2015, there have been several safety concerns:

- Instances of residents trying to climb the Weather Catcher structure
- Snow and Ice feature created large chunks of ice that could fall and hit patrons on the plaza (therefore this feature has not been activated each winter)
- Children falling off the mobile podium (podium moved out of plaza)
- Residents tripping on the cracked ice surface at the rink due to elevation change in the plaza (ice surface removed)

In addition to these safety concerns, there are limited instances that the fog and mist feature can be activated, due to the impact to the café operator. If the winds blow from the south or east, the mist will impact either the café or blow the mist into the air intake for the parkade and potentially lead to long-term damage.

Budget/Financial Implications:

Jubilee Plaza	\$16.9M
Weather Catcher	\$2.2M
2016 Capital Request for Audio/Video	\$424K
Annual operation cost	\$23K
Dismantle Cost	\$20K

Rationale for Recommendation:

- Savings in operating and potential future capital cost
- Increase the programming space available in the Jubilee Plaza
- Remove any future liability due to potential public endangerment
- Operational complexity and timing result in the Weather Catcher's use being limited
- Audio/Video technology has changed, it is much more efficient and cost effective to explore LED technology to be incorporated on top of the Café building rather than on the weather catcher

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government

Attachments:

Weather Catcher Presentation