

Report to Planning and Environment Committee

To: Chair and Members
Planning & Environment Committee
From: Scott Mathers, MPA, P.Eng.
Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development
Subject: Single Source Procurement – Planning Application Signs –
Signature Graphics
Date: June 20, 2022

Recommendation

1. That, on the recommendation of the Director, Planning and Development, the following actions be taken with respect to Signature Graphics:
 - (a) Signature Graphics **BE APPROVED** as the single source provider of Planning Application signs and related activities for a period of one year with the option for an additional four (4), one (1) year renewals, with an estimated annual expenditure based on demand for services, of between \$75,000.00 and \$100,000.00 (HST excluded), in accordance with Sections 14.4 (d) and (e) of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy;
 - (b) The Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all the administrative acts that are necessary in connection with this purchase;
 - (c) The approvals given herein **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation entering into a formal contract and service agreement for this purchase; and,
 - (d) The Mayor and City Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute any contract, service agreement or other documents, if required, to give effect to these recommendations.

Executive Summary

The City's contract with Signature Graphics for the provision of Planning Application signs and related services has expired. The Administration is seeking approval of the single source process under Sections 14.4 (d) and (e) of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy to enter into a new one (1) year contract with Signature Graphics with the option for an additional four (4), one (1) year renewals. Signature Graphics has been operating within the original price schedule since February 14, 2018 and have requested price increases for some of the provided services, commensurate with increasing material and operating costs.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Strengthening our Community – Londoners are engaged and have a sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods and community.

Building a Sustainable City – London has a strong and healthy environment.

Leading in Public Service – The City of London is trusted, open and accountable in service of our community.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

March 23, 2015 – Improvements to Public Engagement in the Planning Process

December 12, 2016 – Improvements to Public Engagement in the Planning Process

June 19, 2017 – Improvements to Public Engagement in the Planning Process

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Contract History and Status

The City and Signature Graphics entered into the original contract for the provision of Planning Application signs and related services on February 14, 2018 following a rigorous Request for Proposal process. The contract was for a one (1) year period with options to renew which have now been exhausted. Signature Graphics did not request price schedule increases at the time of renewal and has been operating within the original price-per-service schedule since that time. The Administration is seeking the authority to enter into a new contract with Signature Graphics using the single source process provided for in Section 14.4 of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy, based on a new fee schedule reflective of Signature Graphics increased costs including, but not limited to, required materials, labour and fuel. Based on application trends in the years prior to 2018, the annual cost for sign provision services was estimated to be between \$62,000 and \$92,000. Services required for each sign include obtaining utility locates from Ontario One Call, sign production and installation, and removal. Annual sign costs can fluctuate significantly depending on the number and type of applications the City receives, and the need for additional price-per-service activities completed upon request as needed by the City, including sign maintenance, modification, and relocation.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

3.1 Historic and Anticipated Costs

The annual costs for Planning Application Sign services in the years 2019 through 2021 were \$72,399.34, \$46,362.81, and \$56,229.55, respectively. Based on the trends leading to these figures and the price adjustments Signature Graphics has requested, it is expected the one-year cost for service in 2022/2023 will range between \$75,000.00 and \$80,000.00.

4.0 Key Issues and Considerations

4.1 Public Value of Robust and Informative On-site Signs for Planning Applications

The current sign standard is one result of a multi-faceted 2015 City Council initiative to improve public engagement in the Planning Process by providing visible and informative signs on Planning Application sites and linking them to additional information available in mailed notices and application-specific pages on the City's website. The signs consist of custom artwork provided by the planning applicants and City staff, applied to various sizes of generic base signs that include standard information. These replaced the previous generic signs that simply indicated there was a planning application and provided a City phone number. The new signs have been in use for four years and enable members of the public to be better informed early in the planning process, to quickly decide whether/how they wish to seek additional information, and to identify key issues and ask more targeted questions when communicating with city staff.

4.2 Procurement of Goods and Services Policy

Section 14 of the City's Procurement of Goods and Services indicates that "the procurement may be conducted using a Single Source process if the goods and/or services are available from more than one source, but there are valid and sufficient reasons for selecting one supplier in particular". In this case, the following criteria for Single Source process apply:

- 1) There is a need for compatibility with goods and/or services previously acquired or the required goods and/or services will be additional to similar

goods and/or services being supplied under an existing contract (i.e. contract extension or renewal) (s. 14.4d); and,

- 2) The service requires special knowledge, skills, expertise or experience (s. 14.4 e).

The single source proposal meets these criteria in the following ways:

- Signature Graphics has developed the familiarity, special knowledge, skills expertise and experience to meet the complex and prescriptive requirements of the City with a high quality product and efficient service such as:
 - Providing sign production and installation services within short time frames and in all seasons of the year;
 - Co-ordinating and overseeing obtaining utility locates from Ontario One Call, keeping City staff advised of locate status/impacts and seeking alternative solutions when necessary;
 - selecting the correct sign bases for each custom sign;
 - maintaining high quality standards for colour matching and the application of vinyl decals to the base signs with a low tolerance for error both in the shop and on individual sites;
 - co-ordinating between City staff and landowners for non-standard sign production and installation where the established standards are not appropriate – this is becoming more common with infill or redevelopment applications in highly urbanized areas where there is no space for a ground sign or where built heritage resources may be otherwise damaged;
 - working with multiple City staff members, as each Planner manages the sign requests for their own applications.
- The methodologies developed specifically by Signature Graphics incorporate the re-use of durable base materials printed with durable eco-friendly inks as well as the lumber supports and hardware, while still delivering a high-quality application-specific sign for each application site. This results in cost savings since the generic Alu panel base signs can be re-used many times before they are too worn or damaged to be used for signs, at which point the material is sustainably repurposed or recycled. Signature Graphics indicates they have only needed to remove a few base signs from the rotation due to wear and damage since they began providing their services in 2018.
- Signature Graphics has produced an existing stock of base signs on an as-needed basis that are either currently in use on planning application sites or in their storage facility awaiting re-use. The ability to re-use the existing sign bases is a cost saving measure that is also environmentally responsible. A single source process continuing the services of Signature Graphics will allow the City to continue to practice fiscal and environmental responsibility through the re-use of the many sign bases in which the City has already invested, and which are compatible with the sign artwork standards adhered to by planning applicants and monitored by City staff.

Conclusion

The Planning Application signs have proven to provide additional transparency in the planning process and increased the public's access to information with respect to planning applications. The methodologies developed by Signature Graphics meet the complex needs of Planning and Development staff and the use of a single source process for a new contract with Signature Graphics will provide the required knowledge, skills, expertise and experience to continue to meet those needs, and provide continuity of service and fiscally and environmentally responsible re-use of existing product inventory.

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