



SIoux LOOKOUT
Hub of the North

REPORT

MEETING TYPE: Regular Council Meeting

To:	Mayor and Council
From:	Jennifer Esposito, Economic Development Officer
Date:	September 18, 2024
Subject:	Downtown Revitalization- Front Street Updated Design and Centennial Park Phase 1 Design Concept
Report No.:	2024-283

TITLE: Downtown Revitalization- Front Street Updated Design and Centennial Park Phase 1 Design Concept

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approves the Phase I design concept for Centennial Park and the Front Street concept design as guidelines for future improvements; and further,

THAT Council direct staff to issue an RFP for engineering & design to estimate implementation expenses; and further,

THAT Council direct staff to seek suitable funding opportunities for the implementation of Centennial Park - Phase I and present them to Council as they arise.

PURPOSE:

To obtain Council's endorsement of updated designs for Front St. & Centennial Park, and receive direction to research possible implementation opportunities.

BACKGROUND:

October 18th, 2023- Council directed staff to engage HTFC Planning & Design to update the Downtown Revitalization Plan that they finalized in 2010 as part of the Sioux Lookout & Hudson Revitalization Study.

April 10th, 2024- HTFC provided draft concepts for the Front St. & Centennial Park areas based on:

- Public consultation done by HTFC Planning & Design between 2008 - 2010 as part of the 2010 Downtown Revitalization Plan process.
- Public input gathered by the economic development officer from the business community and Council

Staff reviewed these concepts and made some initial changes.

April 17th, 2024 - HTFC Planning & Design presented draft concepts. Council directed staff to include the concepts as guides for the 2024 Community Improvement Plan (CIP) intake, and to seek public input on the designs. Staff posted the designs on the website with a link for the public to provide feedback, conducted interviews, hosted an Open House on July 18th, and made the drawings available at the August 1st & 2nd Trade Show for comment.

DISCUSSION:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Investing in downtown cores using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques enhances public safety by reducing opportunities for crime. Strategic improvements such as better lighting, open sightlines, and active spaces promote natural surveillance, deter criminal activity, and encourage community interaction. These design changes not only improve safety but also boost local business and attract investment, making downtown areas more vibrant and economically viable. The proposed concepts utilize CPTED.

Public Consultation Summary

The feedback survey received 310 responses, with around 40 attendees at the Open House and dozens of residents and visitors engaging at our trade booth to discuss the conceptual designs. Overall, the community's feedback was positive, though some expressed uncertainty about the impact of the changes. After learning more about CPTED, most residents became more supportive. A few notable concerns were raised.

Front Street

Previous consultations for the 2010 Sioux Lookout Hudson Downtown Revitalization Study highlighted a desire for a more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly community. This sentiment was echoed in 2024 feedback, especially during the trade show, where many residents admired the updated downtown infrastructure concepts and expressed their support of proposed improvements to the downtown core. Over 70% of survey respondents emphasized the importance of pedestrian crosswalks on Front Street, while nearly half supported curb extensions for safety, with only 30% opposing them. Cycling lanes were more divisive, with 42% in favor and 38% against. Although there was a slim margin of support for bike lanes, it's crucial to consider the long-term benefits of this infrastructure for a more carbon-neutral and accessible community for both residents and visitors. This aligns with Deloitte's 2024 Sports Tourism Diversification Infrastructure Enhancement DRAFT interim report where the following risk is highlighted:

"Failing to address walkability and pedestrian/cycling infrastructure represents a potential risk in terms of accessibility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. This, in turn, can reflect poorly on the community when sports tourism participants explore the area and discover a lack of amenities".

Trees received the strongest support, with over 70% of residents identifying them as a key improvement. Notably, the proposed trees will feature high foliage to prevent visibility issues, addressing concerns that led to the removal of previous trees.

Completed Front St. Improvements

The recent improvements on Front St. between 3rd and 4th Avenues were based on the only available master plan which was the HTFC 2010 design. HTFC Planning & Design's new concept will integrate seamlessly with this earlier design, eliminating the previously proposed one-way street while retaining the cycling lanes, but removing parking on the south side.

Centennial Park- Recreational Elements

Trees received strong support from over 70% of residents, though opinions were mixed on recreational opportunities. One-on-one basketball was the least popular option, while a splash pad was the most favored. However, residents were divided on whether these investments should be located downtown and on the use of another outdoor rink dedicated to leisure skating. To finalize the plan and ensure it meets the needs of our diverse community, further consultation—particularly with youth and senior groups whose voices might not be represented—is recommended.

Public Concerns related to Centennial Park Improvements

- 1. Safety and security** . Residents have suggested integrating security features such as cameras, lighting and fencing when improving Centennial park to minimize potential vandalism and loitering and protect child safety.
- 2. Minimize or delay major investments in Centennial Park** . Several residents expressed hesitation about significant development of recreational opportunities in the downtown core while social issues remain prevalent. Nearly half of the respondents preferred delaying the integration of recreational elements until social issues are resolved.

Phase 1 Implementation Concept- Centennial Park

The proposed first-stage implementation plan offers a cost-effective solution to enhance the park's functionality while preparing it for future investment, without adding maintenance burdens or increasing the risk of vandalism through substantial investments. The existing bricks from the parking lot retaining wall would be repurposed to level the rounded patio area, aligning it with the parking lot to create a usable space for small events that foster community interaction. An accessible sloped walkway would ensure the area is usable for all residents, addressing current accessibility issues. Using sod to complete the open park area is a low-cost approach that addresses public concerns while encouraging positive pedestrian traffic and improving the space. These changes would enable activities which deter crime and loitering without developing structures susceptible to damage. More extensive public consultation is needed to identify further investments that would optimize the use of the space.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The public consultation and updated concepts resulting from this project further goals in three strategic pillars:

Pillar 1: Community Innovation & Development

Goals:

- Collaborate with community partners to foster growth and economic development
- Enable community growth through innovative, proactive planning
- Strengthen and enhance Sioux Lookout's status as 'Hub of the North'

Pillar 2: Community Wellness

Goals:

- Maximize and enhance our natural assets and facilities to encourage physical activity
- Work to ensure that our community is a safe place to live

Pillar 3: Community Engagement

Goals:

- Encourage our residents and local organizations to provide input to Municipal decision making
- Reach out to stakeholders to better understand their needs and priorities

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [23-061 Sioux Lookout - Front Street Draft Concept Plan 2024-04-16 \(002\).pdf](#)
2. [23-061 Sioux Lookout - Phase 1 \(002\).pdf](#)
3. [23-061 Sioux Lookout - Centennial Park 2024-03-28.pdf](#)
4. [DowntownPublicFeedback.pdf](#)

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Approved By:

Brian P. MacKinnon, CAO/Municipal Clerk