

## King sets the bar high with streetscape plan

**By Mark Pavilons**

King Township is setting its sights on sprucing up local villages.

Council received and supported staff recommendations contained in the draft Streetscaping and Beautification Plan 2015-2019. The final version will head back to council for approval in early December.

Staff noted as part of the 2015 budget process, council approved the inclusion of a dedicated streetscaping and beautification budget. The money was to develop and enhance a variety of efforts aimed at increasing the village aesthetics. This includes banners, flowers, signage, decorations and street furniture.

Staff has been consulting with various parties and held a working session in April to talk about these efforts with community stakeholders.

The plan, according to the staff report by Chris Fasciano, director of parks, recreation and culture, is designed to guide the Township in its streetscaping and beautification over the next five years, providing a strategic approach. It represents a vision for King that has been echoed in several community plans and strategies.

The plan offers a perspective on where we want to go; outlines implementation over the next five years; establishes detailed standards; creates a draft budget and establishes goals.

The draft policy will be circulated to interested parties and stakeholders and brought back to committee for approval before the end of the year.

There will be a Village Revitalization Forum held Nov. 18.

Wayfinding and community signage is a part of the plan and it includes directional, promotional and tourism based information on attractive signage. Hopes are some of these can be installed this year. The look and feel of these signs will be consistent with other municipal signage and gateway markers.

Fasciano pointed out the hardscaping and capital improvements involve the intersection of Keele and King Road in King City. Major investments have come as part of the intersection improvement and sidewalk enhancements. Nobleton is slated for some as well. He stressed these upgrades are best timed to coincide with York Region improvements to get the most out of the Municipal Streetscaping Partnership Program (MSPP) funding.

Financial constraints are an issue and Fasciano said the program will grow over the years based on need and council investment. It's recommended the Township banner program be redefined to include public art, event promotion, etc. It is time to start fresh, Fasciano observed.

He's urging council to make an annual capital investment in sidewalk work in the village cores. There's a push to establish a standard, unified look across the municipality, but this doesn't mean individual village character will be compromised.

It is an achievable plan that represents a holistic vision for King, Fasciano wrote.

He's estimating an annual budget in the \$90,000 range. It notes everything from bicycle racks and concrete benches to hanging baskets and lights.