



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

Report # 2018-052

To: Mayor and Council

From: W. Troy Dunlop, Director of Public Works and Utilities

Date: March 21, 2018

Committee of the Whole Date: March 26, 2018

Title: Application Update - Connecting Links Program 2018-2019

For Direction

For Information

For Adoption

Attachment __ pages

Recommendation: THAT Council of the Corporation of the Town of Smiths Falls receive the update on the application filed under the Connecting Links Program 2018-2019 for information;

Purpose: To update Council on the outcome of grant applications filed with the Ministry of Transportation for the reconstruction of Phase 1 of Beckwith Street (Chambers to Russell) under the 2018-2019 Connecting Links Program.

Background: On August 11th, 2017, the Minister of Transportation announced the launch of the third round of funding under the MTO Connecting Links Program 2018-2019. This program currently supports over 350km of roads and 70 bridges along connecting links in 77 municipalities across Ontario. The third round released last fall included a total of \$30 million in eligible funding to support municipalities with the construction and repair of critical road and bridge infrastructure on connecting links. Eligible costs under the program included aspects such as design, construction, renewal, rehabilitation and replacement of connecting link infrastructure.

On October 23rd, 2017, the Public Works and Utilities Department presented a list of candidate projects for Council's consideration as priorities for funding under the 2018-2019 program. After much consideration, Council passed the following resolution at a special Council meeting held later that evening:

Resolution 2017-10-244

Project Selection – Connecting Links Program 2018-2019

THAT Council of the Corporation of the Town of Smiths Falls approve Option 3 – Beckwith Street (Chambers to Russell) as the priority for funding under the Province's Connecting Links Program (2018-2019);

AND THAT Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to submit an application to the Ministry of Transportation for funding a total project estimated at \$1,948,541.63 (HST included).

On March 14th, 2018, the Town received formal notice from the Ministry of Transportation that its application for the third round of Connecting Links had not been approved. A follow up meeting was then scheduled with the Ministry on March 19th that included the CAO, Director of Public Works and Utilities, and the MTO Regional Operations Officer. This meeting was advanced in the effort to better learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the Town's application and with that gain a greater understanding of any improvements that could be made for the next round. During this meeting, the Town was advised of the following:

- The province received 44 applications for the 2018/19 fiscal year;
- The value of all 44 applications exceeded the budget of \$30M for the 2018/19 fiscal year;
- Owing to the high level of interest, they prioritized projects that were "shovel ready" and had reached the detailed design stage; and
- Projects that exhibited a greater degree of certainty that they would be completed within the funding window timeframe were ranked higher.

We shared our plans to advance this project to the detailed design stage within the month of April with the expectation that the project would be tender ready in February 2019. During these discussions it was acknowledged that having the designs well advanced would position the Town well for the next intake in October 2018, with a funding announcement expected to be released in March 2019.

Analysis and Options: The Town has received formal notification that it will not receive its funding request for \$1.75 million for the Beckwith Street Project as part of the third round of the Connecting Links Program (2018-2019). With that said, the Ministry of Transportation has advised the Town that it may apply for these works under the fourth round of Connecting Links which will be released in October 2018. The MTO has provided further assurance that the advancement of tenders in February of 2019 will not preclude the Town's eligibility from the fourth round. Those funding announcements are otherwise expected to be released in March of 2019.

It should be noted that the Town of Smiths Falls has presently secured grant funding under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund – 2017 Top Up in the amount of \$934k. This funding will cover 90% of the cost for design and construction of planned sewer and drainage upgrades included in the Phase 1 Beckwith Street project. Terms of this agreement specify that all works must be substantially complete by December 31, 2019 and that the final report be filed with the Ministry on or before May 14, 2020.

Looking ahead, staff are therefore recommending that a new funding strategy be prepared for the project to ensure the successful advancement in 2019. This strategy would include maximizing use of fixed federal and provincial subsidies (federal gas tax / OCIF fixed funding) along with the annual capital investment levels presented within the Town's long term financial plan. This

strategy would not however preclude the Town from continuing to seek any other new grant programs that may be rolled out in the current federal and provincial fiscal year.

Budget/Financial Implications: There are no implications to the 2018 budget associated with this report.

Link to Strategic Plan:

Strategic Priority No. 2 Financial Sustainability

Objective 2.10 of the Strategic Plan outlines that the municipality will continue to research funding and grant opportunities with the objective of increasing the ratio of grant funding to taxation revenue.

Strategic Priority No. 5 Waterfront Development

Objective 5.1.5 of the Strategic Plan outlines the objective to undertake a complete Beckwith Street Redevelopment Plan.


Existing Policy:

- 2013 Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan
- Asset Management Plan – 2016

Consultations: Treasurer.

Notes/Action (space for Council Member's notes):

Respectfully Submitted:



W. Troy Dunlop, C.E.T.
Director of Public Works and Utilities

Approved for agenda by CAO:



Malcolm Morris, CMO