



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Division: Infrastructure Planning
Report Number: 2020-362-Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Prepared By: Michael Fawthrop, Division Manager
Meeting Date: September 28, 2020
Subject: MTO Connecting Links Program Intake 6 – Project Application

Purpose

To provide information to Council regarding the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Connecting Links Program Intake for 2021-22 and to recommend a project submission.

Recommendation

That Council approve the following:

- a) That Council endorse a submission of an application to the 2021-22 MTO Connecting Links Program; and
- b) That the project submitted for the funding program be a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for Brookdale Avenue from Seventh Street, West to Fourteenth Street, West.

Financial Implications

The Connecting Links Program will provide \$30 million in 2021-22 to support municipalities with the construction and repair of roads and bridges on Connecting Links. Through the 2021-22 Connecting Links Program, the MTO will provide funding of up to 90%, to a maximum of \$3 million for road projects and \$6 million for bridge projects, of eligible capital costs for approved projects.

The estimated cost to complete a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Brookdale Avenue from Seventh Street West to Fourteenth Street West is \$300,000. Through the Connecting Links Program, the City may receive funding of up to \$270,000 (90%). The remaining \$30,000 would be funded from the Brookdale Avenue – Traffic Analysis capital project which was included in the 2019 Capital Budget.

Strategic Priority Implications

This project includes future upgrades to Brookdale Avenue from Seventh Street West to Fourteenth Street West, which addresses Economic Development and Pursuing Diverse Population Growth of 50,000: (4) Continue to Invest in Infrastructure and (5) Encourage Infill Project (Brookdale).

Background / Discussion

Through the MTO Connecting Links Program, the Province of Ontario is investing \$30 million in 2021-22 for the construction and repair of roads and bridges for Connecting Links. Connecting Links are municipal roads designated under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a municipality or to an international crossing or interprovincial border crossing. The objectives of the program are to make investments that:

- Address critical connecting link improvement needs;
- Extend the life of the asset;
- Are cost effective and appropriate to address connecting link needs; and
- Ensure the safe and efficient movement of provincial traffic.

The MTO will provide funding of up to 90 percent to a maximum of \$3 million for road projects and \$6 million for bridge projects, of eligible capital costs for approved projects.

There are 77 municipalities with designated connecting links eligible to apply to the MTO's Connecting Links Program. Cornwall is one of those municipalities as Highway No. 138 (Brookdale Avenue) connects from Cornwall Centre Road to the International Bridge access at Water Street.

In 2016, the City was successful in securing funding through Intake 1 of the Connecting Links Program for the Brookdale Avenue at Canadian National Railway (CNR) Overpass Rehabilitation. In 2020, the City was successful in

securing funding through Intake 5 of the Connecting Links Program for the Brookdale Avenue North Road Rehabilitation & Widening project from the north limits of the CNR Overpass to the south limits of the Highway 401 Overpass.

For the 2021-22 MTO Connecting Links Program, Administration is recommending that the project submitted for the funding application shall be a Municipal Class EA for Brookdale Avenue from Seventh Street West to Fourteenth Street West. Please refer to the attached sketches of the project location. The current traffic volumes along Brookdale Avenue are substantial with an average of 20,000 vehicles per day. Furthermore, the asphalt/pavement condition ratings (PCR) along the Brookdale Avenue corridor from Seventh Street West to Fourteenth Street West continues to deteriorate, nearing levels which will require substantial investment in the near future. The PCRs along this section of Brookdale Avenue range from 56 to 58 which is well below the City's standard of 70 for an arterial roadway.

Prior to any asphalt resurfacing and reconstruction work being completed, an EA for the corridor is proposed in order to assess the existing and future transportation system deficiencies along the corridor and to develop a Recommended Plan. The EA will also identify the improvements needed to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow. The EA will take into consideration the existing high traffic volumes along Brookdale Avenue as well as evaluate the impacts of future growth and development along the corridor. The goal of the EA will be to improve the Brookdale Avenue transportation network for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. The EA will take into consideration feedback from City residents, local Brookdale Avenue property owners and Council. As noted on the attached sketch, a Harmonized EA was completed along Brookdale Avenue from Water Street to Seventh Street West (2003) and an EA was completed along Brookdale Avenue from Fourteenth Street West to Tollgate Road West (2005) prior to the reconstruction of those sections of roadway. The completion of an EA along Brookdale Avenue from Seventh Street West to Fourteenth Street West is necessary prior to completing any rehabilitation/reconstruction in this corridor. Through the EA process, the existing and future transportation network deficiencies will be identified/assessed and a Recommended Plan for the corridor will be developed. A Recommended Plan for the corridor will allow the City to proceed in planning future capital works.

The MTO Connecting Links Program provides funding for the design, construction, renewal, rehabilitation and replacement of Connecting Link infrastructure. Connecting Links serve both provincial and local traffic needs;

therefore, a Provincial/Municipal cost sharing partnership is considered appropriate. Funds from the program can be used for the following project costs: EA, Design/Engineering, Project Management/Contract Administration, Materials and Construction. A municipality may submit for detailed design and construction as one project; or alternatively, a municipality may submit detailed design for funding as a separate project prior to construction. Additionally, a municipality can elect to submit for an EA as a separate project and submit for the design/construction component of the project in a subsequent year. As such, Administration recommends that the City submit for only the EA along the corridor at this time and plan to submit for the construction component in a subsequent year. Submitting only for the EA will allow the City to develop the Recommend Plan for the corridor which will establish the need for the project which will help justify further funding for the project under the Connecting Links Program in a future intake. Furthermore, by applying for funding in phases, the likelihood of receiving funding for the project increases due to the relatively low cost of the study compared to the cost of construction projects many other municipalities will be submitting for. The Connecting Links Program is a relatively small program with 77 different Ontario municipalities vying for only \$30 million to fund large scale capital projects. Only a limited number of project applications are actually approved for funding under the program. Since the City received funding of \$1.6 million (90%) from the MTO through the 2020 Intake for the Brookdale Avenue North Rehabilitation & Widening project, it is recommended that the municipality only submit for the EA at this time and plan to submit for the associated construction works in a subsequent year once the EA has been completed.

The estimated cost of the project is \$300,000. Through the Connecting Links Program, the City may receive funding of up to \$270,000 (90%). The remaining \$30,000 (10%) would be funded from the Brookdale Avenue Traffic Analysis capital project included in the 2019 Capital Budget.

The funding application stipulates that a By-law be submitted with the application declaring that:

- The submitted application meets the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation's Connecting Links Program as described in the Program Guide;
- The municipality has a comprehensive asset management plan that includes all of the information and analysis described in Building Together: Guide for Municipal Asset Management Plans in place;



- The municipality will comply with the conditions that apply to the designated connecting links under the Highway Traffic Act to ensure the safe and efficient movement of provincial traffic; and
- The information in the application is factually accurate.

Should Council endorse the application, the associated By-law authorizing the submission of a funding application to the 2021-22 MTO Connecting Links Program will be included in the Agenda for the October 13, 2020 regular Council meeting.

If the City is successful in receiving funding through the program, the Mayor and Clerk must be authorized to execute and sign the associated documents and agreements.

Document Title:	Connecting Links Program Intake - Project Application - 2020-362-IMW.docx
Attachments:	- MTO Connecting Link Program Guide - Intake 6.pdf - 2021-22 Connecting Link - Project Map 1 - 8-5 x 11.pdf - 2021-22 Connecting Link - Project Map 2 - 8-5 x 11.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 23, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Bill de Wit - Sep 23, 2020 - 11:40 AM

Tracey Bailey - Sep 23, 2020 - 4:14 PM

Maureen Adams - Sep 23, 2020 - 4:23 PM