

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Tuesday, October 29, 2024
Subject	Grant Opportunity – Endorsement Request for the Connecting Links Fund Application

Recommendation

1. That Council endorse the City of Guelph’s grant application to the Connecting Links Program for Intake 10 – Repair and Rebuild, offered through the Ministry of Transportation, for the York Road Phase 4 Stage 1 project as outlined in the Grant Opportunity - Endorsement Request for the Connecting Links Funding Applications report dated October 29, 2024.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To request Council endorsement for an application through the provincial Connecting Links Fund to satisfy the funder’s grant submission requirements which states that municipalities submitting funding applications must seek Council endorsement to undertake the projects identified for the submission to be considered eligible for funding.

Key Findings

Announced by the Ministry of Transportation on October 8, 2024, the fund provides dedicated provincial funding for road and bridge projects on designated connecting link highways. After completing a review of the fund’s eligibility criteria, staff are recommending the York Road Phase 4, Stage 1 project to move forward under this program. The completion of this project will result in extending the life of the assets above and below grade and ensure the safe and efficient movement of all modes of traffic.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The key findings of this report are aligned with the Strategic Plan’s Foundations theme and “Maintain the City’s healthy financial position” objective. This grant would offset existing project funding and alleviate pressures on the capital reserve funds. The project identified aligns with supporting action 4.2 to prioritize infrastructure needs and schedule rehabilitation and construction activities to meet the needs of the community.

Future Guelph Theme

Foundations

Future Guelph Objectives

Foundations: Maintain the City's healthy financial position

Financial Implications

The York Road Phase 4 Stage 1 project is funded in the 2024 capital budget. The majority of this work (86 per cent) is funded by development charges (DCs). Stormwater rate reserves fund another 11 per cent and the Infrastructure Renewal tax reserve funds the remaining three per cent. If this application is successful, the grant funding would be used to proportionately offset the existing funding sources. The maximum possible grant amount is \$3.0 million. If granted the maximum amount, the Stormwater Capital reserve fund (#165) would be relieved of \$339 thousand in commitments, and the tax supported Infrastructure Renewal reserve fund (#150) would be relieved of \$77 thousand in commitments. The remaining \$2.6 million would offset DCs.

Report

The Connecting Links Program was announced by the Ministry of Transportation on October 8, 2024. The program provides dedicated provincial funding for road and bridge projects on connecting links highways designated under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. Connecting links are defined as municipal roads that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a community. These linkages are designated by the province under section 21 of the *Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 50 as amended.

Following an evaluation process, staff are recommending the York Road Phase 4, Stage 1 project as the best aligned project under this program. Given its designation as a connecting link, and the ability to meet the defined timelines for tender and construction milestones, the York Road Phase 4 project is best positioned for a successful application.

This project aims to address connecting link improvements, extend the life of the asset, and ensure safe and efficient movement of provincial traffic. The grant will fund up to 90 per cent of total eligible project costs, up to a maximum of \$3 million per road project.

Eligible costs include funding for the design, construction, renewal, rehabilitation and replacement of connecting link infrastructure. The York Road Phase 4 project may include specific work such as:

- Repairing approximately 750 m of road works – sub-grade preparation, resurfacing, curbs, improved active transportation etc.
- Replacement of 750 m of local watermain – potential for replacement of watermain and sanitary sewers where the connecting link makes it necessary to undertake the work. Scope for this portion is still under review and consideration in partnership with the funder.
- Traffic control devices – installation of signal upgrades at Watson Rd and Watson Parkway.
- Drainage – ditches and construction of 150m of storm sewers.

This project supports growth through the development of infrastructure to support traffic flow, as well as underground water infrastructure expansion to support

intensification. Additionally, this work will extend the useful life of the assets above and below grade and ensure the safe and efficient movement of all modes of traffic.

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Consultations and Engagement

Consultations on project selection and evaluation included input from Finance and Engineering and Transportation Services.

Attachments

None.

Departmental Approval

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