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Council-In-Committee Meeting – October 11, 2023

Subject: Connecting Link Program – 2024 Project Selections
Report Number: EIS-23-064
Division: Environmental and Infrastructure Services
Department: Engineering
Ward: Ward 5
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

THAT Staff Report EIS 23-064, Connecting Link Program – Project Selections be received as information;

AND THAT applications for funding through the Connecting Link program be prepared and submitted for the resurfacing of Queensway East from Ireland Road to 150 meters west of Donly Drive in Simcoe and for traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvements at Norfolk Street North and Davis Street in Simcoe:

AND THAT the Council of Norfolk County declares:

1. The submitted Applications meet the requirements of Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program as described in the Program Guide;
2. A comprehensive Asset Management Plan including connecting links has been completed and publicly posted;
3. The municipality will comply with the conditions that apply to designated connecting links under the Highway Traffic Act to ensure the safe and efficient movement of provincial traffic;
4. The project(s) put forward in the application will be completed and the milestones met as stated in the Application; and
5. The Application is complete and factually accurate.

AND FURTHER THAT Norfolk County's funding be determined based on the proposed submission under the Connecting Links Program.

Executive Summary:

The Connecting Links Program provides dedicated provincial funding for road and bridge projects on designated Connecting Link highways. Norfolk County has Connecting Links in two (2) urban areas: The Queensway East, Queensway West and Norfolk Street North in Simcoe, and King Street and James Street in Delhi. The total length of Norfolk County's Connecting Links is approximately 8.65 km.

Norfolk County having two (2) communities with Connecting Links, are eligible to submit up to two funding applications.

The maximum funding available per project is \$3,000,000 for road projects and \$5,000,000 for bridge projects, which may represent up to 90% of the eligible project costs. Not all project elements are funded. Specifically, for road works, it is noted that municipal infrastructure is not funded, so should the project include such works (water and wastewater), the entire cost of the non-funded works would be paid by the municipality and increase their contribution beyond the 10% of the total project cost.

Norfolk County has applied for funding annually since the program was reinstated in 2016 and has been successful in obtaining funding on several occasions, the most recent for the 2024 project for James Street and Church Street intersection reconstruction in Delhi and traffic signal upgrades. The intake for 2024/2025 is currently open with a submission deadline of November 22, 2023.

This report is to seek Council direction on their agreement to proceed with funding applications under the connecting link program for Queensway East resurfacing from Ireland Road to 150 meters west of Donly Drive in Simcoe and traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvements at Norfolk Street North and Davis Street in Simcoe (Resubmission).

Discussion:

Queensway East – Ireland Road to 150 meters west of Donly Drive - Simcoe

Queensway East from Ireland Road to 150 meters west of Donly Drive is a four-lane major arterial road. Queensway East from Ireland Road to Norfolk Street is currently identified in the Approved 2023-2032 Capital Plan for full reconstruction in 2031 (Project 5533016). The section of road from Ireland to 150 meters west of Donly will require resurfacing work prior to 2031. The underground infrastructure in this section is in good shape, so staff are proposing that this section of road be milled and resurfaced. There will also be minor repairs to the curb and sidewalk and required upgrades to the traffic signals as part of the project. This section of road is being proposed in advance of the planned work in 2031 to take advantage of some potential provincial funding opportunities.

The preliminary estimate for this project is \$500,000. This number will be confirmed prior to the submission of the application in November. As estimated \$450,000 would be considered eligible Connecting Link Project Costs.

Norfolk Street North and Davis Street - Simcoe

Staff report EIS 22-071 in September 13, 2022 recommended that the required traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvements be included in the 2023 Capital Budget for consideration. These improvements were:

The reconfiguration of the existing cross section by completing pavement marking removal and repainting to convert to a Three-Lane Cross-Section and Designate the Centre Lane for Dedicated Left-Turns. The configuration will address the safety concern for left turn movements and will not impact the level of service.

Traffic signal upgrades to install pedestrian signal heads, push buttons, replace traffic signal heads, and traffic controller components as required.

The project was submitted as part of intake 8 in the fall of 2022, however funding was not granted. Engineering on the project has commenced and is at approximately 60% design stage. It is anticipated that the project would be tendered in April of 2024

Total current cost estimate for this work is \$528,000, with \$450,000 being eligible Connecting Link Project Costs.

A project is currently included in the Approved Capital Budget for these works, however at an insufficient budget allocation. As communicated through the July 31, 2023 Capital Status Report, this will be rebudgeted at current estimates in the Proposed 2024-2033 Capital Plan.

Financial Services Comments:

The Connecting Link Program (CLP) provides a funding cap of \$3 million for provincial funding on road projects, and \$5 million for bridge projects. Up to 90% of the total eligible project costs may be funded from provincial funding.

The deadline for applications for Intake 9 of the CLP is November 22, 2023. Once the Ministry has selected and approved the Connecting Link projects for funding, the successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Contribution Agreement. Funding will be provided for eligible project costs on a milestone payment approach in addition to reporting requirements.

As mentioned in the report, staff plan to submit an application for funding for both connecting links in Simcoe.

The first project is for the resurfacing of a section of the Queensway east. This project is not currently identified as a standalone project in the Capital Plan, however is being

submitted to take advantage of potential provincial funding.). This project will only move forward in 2024 if the funding application is successful.

The second project is Project 5532343 (Intersection Improvements – Norfolk and Davis Street, Simcoe) which is currently included in the Approved Capital Budget at \$300,000 (\$78,000 Engineering, \$220,000 Construction). As communicated in the July 31, 2023 Capital Status Report, this construction estimate is insufficient to complete the proposed works which currently has a completion estimate of \$450,000. The Proposed 2024-2033 Capital Plan will include this project in 2024 at a revised value for Council discussion. The initial funding for this project was provided from the 2023 Levy. All funds levied to date remain attributed to this project, with any incremental requirements to be accommodated through the New/Incremental Capital Reserve.

If successful in either application for Intake 9 of the Connecting Links Program, staff will bring a subsequent report to Council clearly identifying Norfolk County's share of costs after funding allocations are known.

Interdepartmental Implications:

Not applicable

Consultation(s):

Financial Services were consulted in the completion of this report and will work with the Engineering team through the process of project applications.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Building Norfolk - Develop the infrastructure and supports needed to ensure complete communities.

Explanation:

Explanation: The road surface and traffic signal infrastructure along these road sections is nearing the end of its life cycle and resurfacing and replacement are required.

Conclusion:

Staff is recommending that Council approve the applications for MTO funding under the Connecting Link program for the resurfacing of Queensway East from Ireland Road to 150 meters west of Donly Drive in Simcoe and for traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvements at Norfolk Street North and Davis Street in Simcoe. The improvements will include upgrades to the road, concrete curb and sidewalk and traffic signals as required.

Attachment(s):

- Project location maps

Approval:

Approved By:
Andrew Grice.
General Manager Environmental and Infrastructure Services.

Reviewed By:
Jacob Columbus
Project Manager

Prepared By:
Mike King.
Director Engineering