

**Report from** Transportation and Environmental Services, Engineering and Construction

**Date of Report:** January 19, 2018

**Date of Meeting:** January 22, 2018

**Report Number:** TES-B005-2018

**File:** 77.37.99

**Subject:** Active Transportation Program

## Recommendation

That the Budget Committee receives this report for information and consideration.

## Background

At the November 8, 2017 Budget Standing Committee staff were requested to report on:

“Active transportation money received through Federal Gas Tax Allocation of \$250,000 / year, how has the funds been spent since its implementation, what project is it to be used on in the future and what is the approval process.”

Active Transportation is typically defined as cycling and pedestrian activities. The use of alternative modes of transportation are growing and is encouraged by the City's Official Plan and various provincial policy statements.

At its meeting of September 22, 2014, as part of report TES 272-2014 - Third Street Louth – Traffic Mitigation Update, Council directed, among other items “that staff include \$300,000 a year in the Capital Budget starting in 2015 towards active transportation initiatives”. Subsequently, staff recommended the Federal Gas Tax Program include an allocation for Active Transportation Infrastructure at \$250,000 per year. In addition staff continued to recommend an allocation of \$300,000 per year for new sidewalks funded by the Capital Budget.

Where cycling facilities are added in the course of typical road reconstruction or resurfacing projects that have been triggered by the existing pavement condition, then the incremental costs to incorporate cycling infrastructure have been funded by the Road and Drainage Improvement program. Recent examples of such improvements are on Queenston Street from Page Street to Eastchester Avenue and on Oakdale Avenue from Westchester Crescent to Disher Street.

## Active Transportation Advisory Committee

During this term of Council a volunteer citizen's committee, the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), was established to provide advice to Council and staff on policies, strategies and programs related to the development, implementation and

sustainability of active transportation in St. Catharines, including on-road facilities and off-road trails. The Committee encourages and promotes active transportation and provides input on related matters within the City.

## **Report**

### **Criteria for Locations**

Priorities for Active Transportation (Cycling) facilities are largely governed by the routes identified in the City's Official Plan (The Garden City Plan) and the Region's Master Bicycling Map, in conjunction with recommendations of the ATAC.

Priorities for Active Transportation (Sidewalks) are detailed in a future report for the New Sidewalk Program and recreational trail priorities were established in the Recreation Master Plan, the Trails Master Plan and the recommendations of the ATAC.

In all cases the opportunity to co-ordinate with other construction work is considered beneficial and may accelerate the construction of some facilities.

### **2015 to 2017 Active Transportation Program**

From 2015 to 2017 \$750,000 has been approved by Council. A further amount of \$400,000 is proposed as part of the 2018 Federal Gas Tax Program (FGTP).

Minor expenses were incurred for meeting costs associated the ATAC for public meetings held in 2015. These meetings helped the Committee gauge with the public's desires and concerns for Active Transportation regarding independent initiatives, the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) underway by the City and the TMP recently completed by the Region.

During the period of 2015 to 2017 Staff were aware of two potential locations which could be difficult to afford from within typical Capital Budget amounts. Those locations were:

#### **Third Street Louth: Lakeshore Road to Fourth Avenue**

As part of the aforementioned report TES 272-2014 - Third Street Louth – Traffic Mitigation Update, Council directed, among other items "... that consideration be given in the 2015 Capital Budget for the detailed design of Third Street Louth ...". Funding for the project was subsequently included in the 2015 and 2017 Capital budgets and an Environmental Assessment (EA) was initiated for Third Street Louth from Lakeshore Road to Fourth Avenue.

The preferred alternative identified by the EA recommends the widening of Third Street Louth to accommodate cycling lanes. Due to budget constraints staff recommended a phased approach with the South Service Road to Third Avenue Louth proceeding first. This section includes the widening of the Richardson Creek

box culvert and extensive utility relocations to accommodate the widened road platform.

Although costs to date have been funded by the Road and Drainage Improvement Program, the project is moving into the construction phase in 2018 and the Road and Drainage Improvement Program is no longer able to afford all of the costs. Third Street Louth's existing pavement condition is sufficiently high that it does not meet the trigger for resurfacing or reconstruction.

### **St. David's Road @ HWY 406 Interchange**

The Ministry of Transportation – Ontario (MTO) is undertaking major rehabilitation of all structures within the Highway 406 / Highway 58 / St. David's Road Interchange. This location has long been an area of concern for pedestrians and cyclists attempting to traverse this section of St David's Road.

The City and Region had previously initiated an EA to identify options for active transportation through this corridor, however the MTO was not supportive of the preferred alternative. When the MTO approached staff from the Region, Thorold and St. Catharines about their current construction plans, local staff (and ultimately Councils) lobbied the MTO to include active transportation routes through this corridor, stressing the need to address this safety concern. After subsequent discussions with the MTO and municipal staff, an option of a Multi-use Trail on the south side of St. David's Road and the reconfiguration of some of the highway ramps was deemed an acceptable compromise to all parties.

The incremental costs to incorporate the installation of the multi-use path is being shared between the Region (50%) and the Cities of St. Catharines and Thorold (25% each). The City's share (25%) of the incremental costs to install the multi-use path and reconfigure the ramps is approximately \$900,000.

Within the 2017 Construction Program report staff recommended that all accumulated Active Transportation Fund projects be earmarked for this project.

## **2017 Ontario Commuter Cycling Fund**

In August of 2017, the City applied for funding through the Province's Ontario Commuter Cycling Fund. Late in 2017, the City was advised that we were successful in securing funding in the amount of \$552,098 from this fund. Eligible expenses for these external funds can be up to 80% of commuter cycling infrastructure related costs and must be completed by 2020. However the remaining 20% must be financed by the City and not from another Provincial or Federal program (such as the Federal Gas Tax Program).

The funding that was received can be used on any one or all of the locations approved in the application. Listed in the City's application, were the following locations:

- St. David's Road at Highway 406 (multi-use trail)
- Third Street Louth from the South Service Road to Third Avenue (road widening for bicycle lanes)
- Pelham Road from St. Paul Street West to Glendale Avenue (restriping after resurfacing)
- Bunting Road from Welland Avenue to Eastchester Avenue (line painting only)

Staff recommend that all of the City's allocation of the funding be used for the Third Street Louth project.

The multi-use path on St. David's Road at Highway 406 is being recommended to be fully funded by the Federal Gas Tax Program. Hence the 20% City share requirement would not be met.

A portion of Pelham Road is included in the Road and Drainage Program for resurfacing in 2018. It would be eligible for this funding, however the value of the cycling related facilities is much lower than that of Third Street. Bunting Road is also a low cost initiative, consisting of restriping of the existing roadway.

## 2018 Active Transportation Program

Staff are recommending the following Active Transportation initiatives as part of the 2018 Construction Program with the funding sources as shown below:

| Capital Budget/Funding Source *  | Project                   |   |                    |
|--|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | St David's Road @ HWY 406 | Third St: South Service Rd to Third Ave | Total              |
| 2015-2017 – FGTP-AT  | \$750,000                 |   | \$750,000          |
| 2018 - FGTP-AT   | \$150,000                 | \$250,000                               | \$400,000          |
| 2015-2017 – RDIP   |                           | \$910,000                               | \$910,000          |
| 2018 – OCCF  |                           | \$552,098                               | \$552,098          |
| 2018 – RDIP  |                           | \$2,097,902                             | \$2,097,902        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$900,000</b>          | <b>\$3,810,000</b>                      | <b>\$4,710,000</b> |
| Notes *<br>FGTP-AT – Federal Gas Tax Program – Active Transportation<br>RDIP – Road & Drainage Improvement Program<br>OCCF – Ontario Commuter Cycling Fund |                           |   |                    |

## **Niagara Region Fund for Cycling Facilities on Non Regional Roads.**

Niagara Region has an annual fund to assist the area municipalities to install cycling facilities on non-Regional Roads. The maximum total fund value is \$200,000 which is distributed on a first come basis and with consideration for previous funding commitments to that municipality. The projects must be on the Region's Bicycling Master Plan. Pelham Road and Bunting Road are not routes on the Master Plan.

## **Future Active Transportation Initiatives**

The following projects are being considered for future Active Transportation initiatives:

### **Glendale Avenue: Welland Canal to Homer Road**

Conceptually a multi-use trail would connect an existing trail in Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) east of Homer Road to an existing multi-use path on Glendale Avenue west of Welland Canals Parkway and the recreational trail along the Welland Canal. In the "block" of Glendale east of the canal, the south side is in the City of St. Catharines and the north side is in NOTL. Grading and existing bridge crossings are anticipated to be complex. Very preliminary costs estimates indicate the cost of this multi-use trail would be in excess of the annual "Active Transportation" Program and the annual New Sidewalk Program.

### **Third Street Louth: Third Avenue to Fourth Avenue**

### **Third Street Louth: Lakeshore Road West to the South Service Road)**

This project would involve the final two phases of the Third Street Class EA recommendation.

## **ATAC independent location priorities**

Annually, the ATAC has reviewed the proposed Construction Programs.

When the ATAC identifies to staff high priority locations, staff will recommend construction in subsequent Construction Program Reports or by separate report.

Depending the nature of the project, a Class Environmental Assessment process may or may not be triggered.

## **Financial Implications**

Costs associated with this report are contained in the annual construction program report and summarized early in this report.

## **Relationship to Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following Goals of the Strategic Plan namely Goal 5: Connect people, places and neighbourhoods and specifically Action 5.3. Accelerate the implementation of active transportation networks that link people with parks, trails and waterfront and support the development of complete streets.

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