



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: October 28, 2024

Title: Connecting Link Application 2025/2026

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Department: Public Works

Report Number: Public Works-2024-011

Recommendation:

THAT Council direct staff to apply for a grant opportunity from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Connecting Link Program 2025/2026 for the following project: Highway #594 (Duke Street) Road Reconstruction from Casimir Avenue to Earl Avenue;

AND FURTHER THAT the City of Dryden commits to using Capital Funds for the municipal contribution component;

AND FURTHER THAT if the application is successful, the City of Dryden will proceed with the project in accordance with the timelines specified in the application;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to sign all documentation related to these matters;

AND THAT the necessary By-Laws are presented to City Council for ratification.

Background:

The revised Connecting Link funding program under the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario was announced in November of 2015. This \$30 million annual program was launched once again to assist 77 municipalities pay for construction and repair of roads

and bridges on designated Connecting Links. There are 352 km of road and 70 bridges that qualify in Ontario.

Project Funding is 90% Ministry of Transportation and 10% municipal contribution. The City does have to provide the municipality's asset management plan, maintenance plans, and an up-to-date bridge condition assessment in order to apply for funds for any project.

The City has been successful on all 8 of 9 previous intakes of Connecting Link since 2015 as seen below:

May/2016 - Routing and Sealing Cracks Highway #17 \$80,000

Sept/2017 - Duke Street Bridges Capital Repairs \$65,000

March/2018 - Duke Street (Highway #594) – West of Earl Ave \$275,000

July/2019 - Detailed Design of Signalized Intersections (8 Sets of PHM125s) \$125,000

May/2020 - Duke Street (Highway #594) Pavement Resurfacing \$450,000

May/2021 - Replacement of 8 sets of Traffic Lights on the Highway #17 and Highway #594 Corridors \$1,332,880

May 2023 - Rehabilitation of Highway #17 from the West Limit of Highway #17 (Leach Rd/Anton Rd) to the King Street Underpass

May 2024 - Rehabilitation of Highway #594 from Gordon Road for 1500m East

Discussion:

The Connecting Link Program (Intake 10) for 2025/2026 was announced on August 16/2024. The due date for applications is Wednesday, November 13/2024. The expected award date is April 2025.

There are some changes recently to the applications and data required to be provided with the application. However, the biggest change over the last few Intakes is now municipalities can request funding for bridge projects to a maximum of \$5.0 million, which is an increase from the \$3.0 million in previous intakes. This could affect the number of municipalities awarded funding in 2025 as the total fund has not increased in value.

Proposed Project

The City of Dryden in 2017 had 5 Shovel Ready projects prepared by a consultant. One project is a portion of the Connecting Link Highway #594 (Duke Street) - Casimir Ave to Earl Ave. All aspects of the roadway were assessed including both above ground and subsurface features. This includes but is not limited to existing watermains, storm and sanitary sewer piping and structures, curbing, gutters, sidewalks, and asphalt pavement. These assets were assessed on their existing condition and lifecycle planning.

The City of Dryden currently has tender documents, drawings, and specifications developed for this specific project which would have to be updated for a 2025 tender call.

Scope of Work developed for this project

The scope of work, in general terms, involves the reconstruction of a section of Duke Street between Earl Avenue and Casimir Avenue. Work will include but is not limited to:

- Mobilization and Demobilization.
- Place and maintain detour signage.
- Establish traffic/pedestrian control and environmental protection.
- Remove entire asphalt roadway (full depth) and asphalt island area including excavation to underside of new Granular 'A' base, to limits indicated on drawings. Dispose of materials off-site at designated disposal areas to be identified by the contract administrator. All disposal areas will be within a 5km radius of the project site.
 - Install new Granular 'A' base material and provide one-40 mm lift of Superpave 19.0 binder coarse and one-40 mm lift of Superpave 12.5 surface coarse asphalt to roadway & one-50mm lift of HL4 asphalt to island area.
- Replace sections of storm sewer, as indicated.
- Replace catch basins, catch basin leads & catch basin manholes, as indicated and re-establish all existing connection into structures.
- Replace sections of sanitary sewer, as indicated and re-establish lateral connections.
- Replace sections of sanitary services, as indicated.
- Replace manholes, as indicated and re-establish all existing connection into structures.
- Complete epoxy grout patch repairs to inside of manhole structures, as indicated.
- Complete asbestos abatement measures for removal and disposal of existing asbestos cement sewer pipe.
- Establish temporary potable water system, including testing, as required.
- Remove existing 150mmØ watermain and appurtenances with replace with new 300mmØ watermain c/w appurtenances.
- Re-connect existing fire hydrants and intersecting watermains to new 300mmØ watermain.
- Complete watermain lowering as required.
- Re-connect existing building water services c/w new corporation stops to new 300mmØ watermain.
- Replace concrete curb and gutter c/w new perforated subdrain, as indicated.
- Replace sections of sidewalks, as indicated.
- Install new tactile walking surface indicators in new concrete sidewalk at signalized intersection, as indicated.
- Reconstruct disturbed driveway approaches, walkways, etc.
- Reconstruct all surface features disturbed during construction.
- All work as indicated on the Drawing and Specifications.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation does not typically fund the underground portion of Connecting Link projects.

Staff have had several conversations with the Ministry of Transportation concerning this matter. This was brought forward at a pre-ROMA Conference Video call on January 17/2024 with Herb Villneff, Director, Northern Operations. A discussion also occurred at the 2024 ROMA Conference with the Minister of Transportation. The City also had a follow up Video call with Herb Villneff, Director, Northern Operations on June 03/2024.

A major concern the municipality faces is being able to fund both the above ground and below ground to be rehabilitated during a single construction season.

If the City requests Connecting Link Funding from the ministry for the above ground, it also requires funding from another funding stream to complete the underground during the same construction season.

The City must complete their budget process (City Portion of Funding) and put aside this amount at the beginning of the year for both portions of the project not knowing if funding is available and tying up City Resources from other projects until the award of the funding stream is announced.

This application will include the underground infrastructure.

Financial Implications:

The Project Costs are estimated at \$4,833,972.00.

At this time MTO will fund up to 90% at a maximum of \$3,000,000.00. Therefore, the Amount of Provincial Funding requested (90% of eligible project costs) is \$3,000,000.00.

The City Contribution to this project would be 10% or \$300,000 of the \$3,300,000.00 currently eligible.

In addition, the remaining portion would be a City Contribution of \$1,533,972.00 for a total of \$1,833,972.00 City funds.

There is an opportunity for the funding to include more than the \$3,000,000.00 maximum from the Ministry, if the Ministry is willing to fund the underground portion.

These amounts are included in the draft 2025 Capital budget.

Current Budget Allocation:

Account #: 2025 Capital Budget (Draft)