



## **STAFF REPORT**

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**Meeting Date: March 28, 2022**

**Title: Connecting Link Contract and Funding**

**Prepared By: Blake Poole**

**Department:** Public Works

**Report Number: Public Works-2022-007**

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### **Recommendation:**

**THAT Council accepts the tender amount of \$1,303,060.07 plus HST, from Moncrief Construction Limited to provide construction services for the Connecting Link Project of replacement and upgrade of 8 sets of Traffic Lights on the Highway #17 and Highway #594 Corridor;**

**THAT Council commits \$475,452.77 in Gas Tax Funds for the Connecting Link Project of replacement and upgrade of 8 sets of Traffic Lights on the Highway #17 and Highway #594 Corridor;**

**And that the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to sign all documentation related to this matter;**

**And that the necessary By-Law is presented to City Council for ratification.**

### **Background:**

The Connecting Link funding program under the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario was announced in November of 2015. This \$15 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.

The funding program is 90% funding. The City does have to provide the municipality's asset management plan and an up-to-date bridge condition assessment in order to apply for funds for any project.

The City has been successful in all 5 previous intakes for the Connecting Link Funding program.

The 2021/2022 intake deadline was November 06/2020.

The City applied for funding for the following project.

The project proposed by staff for this intake was a replacement and upgrade of 8 sets of Traffic Lights on the Highway #17 and Highway #594 Corridor.

In September 2018 the Ministry of Transportation requested the City supply under Section 144(3.1) of the Highway Traffic Act updated PHM125s for each intersection on the Connecting Link corridor for Ministry compliance, review, and approval.

The City of Dryden requested funds under the 2019 intake of Connecting Link funding to meet the above request by the Ministry of Transportation. The City was successful in receiving money for the study and new PHM125s. This project was completed in December/ 2019.

The report came back with several deficiencies along with the recommendation:

“As a note connected to the scope of this study, consideration should be given to the age of existing traffic signal installations when adopting the strategy for the implementation of improvements recommended in this report. Basically, the original signal installations took place about 40 years ago, proving that the signal equipment at some intersections survived about two lifecycles, and over one lifecycle at other intersections where maintenance replacements or upgrades were called for throughout time. Overall, it should be considered that the existing traffic signal equipment has reached the end of its life and requires replacement.”

Other intersections require upgrading to meet new standards. An example would be the advanced Flashing Greens should be replaced with separate turning arrows.

Some observations included in the report are not mandatory improvements. However, some improvements are made in reference to best design practices.

Other potential improvements include removing in ground Loop Detectors and going with a camera type system. Modernizing this part of the system also resolves several issues from the report including location of loop detectors. The camera type can be easily repaired in winter/summer, detect all vehicles, and can provide additional data such as traffic counts to help improve timing of the lights.

Public Works has also completed some recommendations such as line painting changes (arrows, crosswalks), moving pedestrian heads and buttons, and adjustments to the cone of vision under the regular Operations Budget in 2020.

Staff have seen problems recently with some of the traffic controllers. They are basically obsolete, and Dryden has been lucky enough to get an additional backup from the Town of Fort Frances (removed from their systems when they updated in 2019) for a negotiated price.

Last year a new controller was purchased and installed at the intersection of Duke St (Hwy #594) and Colonization Ave due to failure and lack of backup. We are now using that removed old controller as backup.

The project would consist of replacing all components that have reached their end of life and modernize the systems. Controllers, electrical wiring, electrical components, loop detectors, and signal heads will be replaced. In addition, mast arms will be replaced with new and proper arm lengths. Some existing poles are also up for replacement and there are requirements to move some to increase visibility and traffic protection.

The project would also make the City AODA compliant with the new requirements for Pedestrian Crossing Signals.

It was announced on April 08/2021 the City was successful in its funding application. The funding agreement was signed September 02/2021

Funding for the project was announced at \$1,332,880.00. MTO portion (90%) is \$1,199,520.00 and the City of Dryden contribution (10%) to the funding is \$133,360.00.

The City had reached out to multiple Engineering firms with experience in this field. The City hired the consulting firm WSP from Thunder Bay. An agreement was signed on Sept 28/2021 for both Design Services - \$97,100 and Construction Administration Services -\$47,140.00. The City also required drawings be submitted by WSP to MTO Traffic Section for approval.

The City also began purchasing the Hardware from Econolight due to the long lead times for Hardware. The Hardware was ordered under 3 separate agreements for \$361,032.70.

WSP provided an estimate \$769,475.00 for construction before tendering which did not include Engineering and Hardware.

**Discussion:**

Tenders for the work were posted Jan 07/2022 and potential bidders were notified. The Tender closed on February 09/2022.

The City of Dryden only received one bid. The bid was from Moncrief Construction for a total of \$1,445,929.34 plus H.S.T.

This bid put the project substantially over the intended budget and estimate provided by WSP.

WSP Design and Admin	\$144,240.00
Econolight Hardware	\$361,032.70
Moncrief Bid	\$1,445,929.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,941,201.04</b>

MTO was also contacted to see if there were any additional funds available in 2022 to complete this project. MTO indicated there were none and preferred the tender kept the work to each intersection intact.

After review of the bid it was determined there may be potential to bring the price down. After multiple discussions with Moncrief Construction the revised price for the tender received on March 07/2021 is \$1,303,060.07

WSP Design and Admin	\$144,240.00
Econolight Hardware	\$361,032.70
Moncrief Bid	\$1,303,060.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,808,332.77</b>

**Financial Implications:**

The Capital budget for 2022 for this project includes \$1,332,880.00 for the Traffic Light Replacement project. The City portion of this is 10% of this amount.

The project currently requires approximately \$ 475,452.77 in additional City funds.

After discussions with the CAO and Treasurer, it was determined the project meets the eligibility requirements of the Gas Tax Funding. Staff is asking that \$475,452.77 in Gas Tax Funds be used to cover the overage on this project. This funding approach for the shortfall has also been discussed with the Finance Committee.

Staff will continue to work with MTO staff to receive additional funding.