

Subject: Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP) Grant
Rice Road and Port Robinson Road**Recommendation:**

THAT COMMITTEE receive Report #2019-0147; and recommend that Council endorse the proposed landscaping improvements and allow staff to proceed with finalizing the landscaping plan to complete the works in 2020.

Background:

Established in 2016, the Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP) is a value-added program that allows the Region to partner with local municipalities on capital projects that provide public realm enhancements on over 250 kms of Regional Roads in urban and core areas. Public realm enhancements attract investment and help to create vibrant and enlivened public realms that sustain businesses, improve all modes of transportation, and celebrate community. People seek out and enjoy well-designed places that are inclusive and accessible, where they enjoy personal comfort, safety, happiness and well-being. These attractive and vibrant places offer a higher quality of life to residents and visitors. To encourage investment in great public places for people, the Region is offering this incentive program to all of its local municipalities. Investing in with local municipal partners to complete our streets with enhanced boulevards, sidewalks, and spaces in the public realm across Niagara helps our region attract new residents, promote tourism, grow the economy, beautify our communities, and is key to building strong and resilient communities in Niagara.

The purpose of the program is to encourage investment in the urban and core area public realms along Regional roads by providing matching funding to local municipal partners for upgrades to existing capital projects.

The Public Realm Investment Program provides matching funding to eligible local municipal projects that are initiated and constructed by either the local municipality or Niagara Region in consultation or collaboration with the local municipality. The maximum Regional funding contribution is limited to an amount of \$100,000.

This program is available to all of Niagara's local municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA). Projects must be within or directly adjacent to a Regional Road right-of-way. Projects must be completed by the end of the year following the award. Maintenance agreements are required.

Analysis:

In 2017, Town staff applied for funding from the PRIP grant to make improvements around the Rice Road and Hwy 20 Storm Water Management (SWM) pond. The original request included a complete landscaped vision for improvements surrounding the SWM pond with a total estimated project cost of \$830,000. The original funding request of \$100,000 was not approved by the Region; however, there was funding set aside in the amount of \$12,000 to place benches overlooking the pond. This project would enhance the seating area located in front of the SWM pond near the intersection of Hwy 20 (RR20) and Rice Road (RR54).

The funds for this project have been reserved for the Town of Pelham for implementation in 2020. Based on the 50/50 cost sharing split the Town of Pelham would be responsible for \$12,000 with a total estimated project cost of \$24,000. This project is identified in the 2020 Capital Budget under project RD 17-20.

In 2018, the Region began the reconstruction of Rice Road (RR54) from Hwy 20 (RR20) to Merritt Road. Included in this project was the reconstruction and signalization of the intersection at Rice Road and Port Robinson Road.

As part of this project it was the vision of the previous Council and Town staff that the intersection act as a gateway feature to East Fonthill from the south limit.

Region staff worked with Town staff to develop a gateway/landscaping feature on the north-west corner of the intersection at Rice Road and Port Robinson Road. This project will enhance the streetscaping for the local community. In addition, it will promote a higher usage of the Regional Road (Rice Road) by active transportation users by providing a crucial rest area along the multi-use pathway that connects East Fonthill to the Meridian Community Centre and urban core.

The proposed project includes a seating area and parkette adjacent to the SWM pond for the River Estates subdivision. The feature will provide a space for rest and reflection and views of the SWM pond as an amenity. This project also capitalizes on the Region investment on Rice Road and provides for a finishing touch to make it a memorable street and pleasing entrance to East Fonthill.

The estimated project cost for this street and landscaping feature is approximately \$24,120. The Town's contribution will be 50 percent or \$12,060. (Appendix A provides the concept developed by the Region for consideration).

Financial Considerations:

The total approved 2020 capital budget for the landscaping improvements at the Rice Rd SWM pond and the gateway feature at the intersection of Rice Road and Thorold Stone Road is \$48,120.

Funding in the amount of 50 percent (\$24,060) is being made available through the Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP) grant offered through Niagara Region.

The Town's contribution to the project is 50 percent or \$24,060 and will be funded through the Roads Reserve as part of the 2020 Capital Budget.

Alternatives Reviewed:

The alternative to consider is to not proceed with the planned landscaping initiatives at the Rice Road SWM pond and /or the intersection at Rice Road and Thorold Stone Road. If council chooses to not proceed with the project(s) then the Town will not be able to receive the \$24,060 in grant funding from the Region under the PRIP Grant.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets

This project relates to Council's strategic priority of building strong communities and cultural assets by providing users of active transportation and pedestrians with an aesthetically pleasing area surrounding the storm water management ponds in the East Fonthill area. In addition, the landscaping features would provide a gateway feature to visitors entering the Town from Thorold and Welland.

Consultation:

Consultation was provided through the Pelham Beautification Committee who have endorsed this project.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Appendix A – Rice Road and Port Robinson Road Landscaping Feature

Appendix B – Public Realm Investment Program 2019 Application Guide

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