

Subject: Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant Update

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report # 2021-0033- Corporate Services; and Council receive this report for information.

Background:

The Ontario RED grant program provides cost-share funding to support activities that create strong rural communities in Ontario, and opens doors to rural economic development through:

- funding assistance to address barriers to economic development, better position rural communities to attract and retain jobs and investment, and enhance economic growth
- funding to build community capacity and support for economic development in Ontario's rural communities
- investments in rural communities to help diversify and grow local economies-making economic growth more inclusive so Rural Ontario continues to share in the province's economic prosperity.

Funding amounts for the Strategic Economic Infrastructure Stream: up to 30% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$250,000.

Application deadline is February 1, 2021.

Analysis:

The Town of Pelham has received funding for reconstruction of Pelham St under the Infrastructure Community Improvement Program: Northern and Rural Stream in the amount of \$4.1 M. This RED grant will help fund the bike lanes and wayfinding for Pelham.

Project Summary:

Bikes mean business in Pelham. The addition of wayfinding signage throughout the town and of bike lanes on Pelham Street, a main arterial road in Fonthill undergoing

a multi-phase reconstruction will ensure that cyclists, whether residents or visitors, will have safe access to shops, restaurants, services, and community events. Funded by the Town of Pelham and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, the reconstruction of Pelham Street is vital to the community. Taking advantage of the reconstruction of Pelham Street to include bike lanes will add to the Town's considerable investment in active transportation, including additional sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-use pathways and other AT infrastructure such as benches and bike racks.

Pelham is a well-known destination for cyclists, attracting more cycling tourism through efforts by the Niagara Cycling Tourism Centre. The 2022 Canada Games will have a significant economic impact of at least \$180 million, according to Regional government sources, and Pelham will be showcased as it hosts the cycling road races. Pelham's support for local businesses is multi-faceted and includes a Community Improvement Plan (\$737,194 invested to-date), beautification strategies for business areas and improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, which increase property values and stimulate the local economy. Wayfinding signage and bike lanes on Pelham Street, as per the Town's approved Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP), will add another important component to the cycling network.

Businesses in Pelham have embraced the economic benefits that cyclists can generate. Fonthill businesses participated in a pilot project, the Bike Friendly Business Network, designed to attract cyclists' business, including cycling clubs which regularly schedule rides and road races in Pelham. Some businesses are registered with Ontario by Bike and other bike friendly certification organizations. Post-pandemic, Pelham's businesses will be eager to attract customers who are local cyclists or cyclists touring the area.

Financial Considerations:

The \$250,000 from this RED grant will help to offset the costs of the Pelham St project that the Town is contributing through reserves.

Alternatives Reviewed:

If the Town does not apply for this grant, then the Town will miss out on an opportunity to receive additional grant funding which will reduce the need to use Town reserves. The \$250,000 which would be saved from the Town's reserve if the Town received this funding could be used for other road projects listed in the 10-year capital plan.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Financial Sustainability

It the RED grant is approved, it will improve the Financial Sustainability for the Town by reducing the amount of Roads Reserve allocated to the Pelham St project by \$250,000 which will enable more funds available for future roads capital projects.

Consultation:

Director Public Works

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

None

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