



SUBJECT: Funding Opportunities – Audit & Accountability Fund Intake 2 and COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Strategy, Risk and Accountability

Report Number: CM-36-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: n/a

Date to Council: December 14, 2020

Recommendation:

Direct staff to submit an Expression of Interest regarding the Audit and Accountability Fund, Intake 2 to the Province of Ontario by the December 18, 2020 deadline, and;

Direct the Chief Financial Officer to single source a third-party consultant to complete the By-law Consolidation Review should the City of Burlington's request for funding be approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and;

Direct staff to submit these four projects: the Elgin Street Promenade, Stage 4, the Palmer Trail, the City Hall customer service window renovations and the Roads, Parks and Forestry operations centre renovation as the City of Burlington's submission to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) – Program COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, and;

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary Transfer Payment Agreements between the City of Burlington and Province of Ontario in relationship to the Audit and Accountability Fund, Intake 2, should the funding be approved, and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) – Program COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, along with any other related documents or by-laws to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Counsel.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
 - Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
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Background and Discussion:

Audit and Accountability Fund Intake 2

In 2019 the Government of Ontario announced the creation of the Audit and Accountability Fund; \$7.35 million for large urban municipalities and district school boards interested in conducting service delivery and administrative expenditure review with the goal of finding efficiencies while protecting important front-line services. Eligible municipalities could apply individually or collectively, with other eligible municipalities to conduct an independent third-party review of municipal service delivery expenditures to find efficiencies.

Projects that are eligible for funding could take the following forms:

- A line-by-line review of the municipality's entire budget
- A review of service delivery and modernization opportunities
- A review of administrative processes to reduce costs.

For the first intake, in 2019, the City of Burlington received \$250,000 to complete reviews of the following City services:

- Corporate Fleet
- Leaf Collection
- Winter Maintenance
- Pre-Building Permit Development Approval Process

In November 2020 the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced the Province would be accepting applications for Intake 2 of the Audit and Accountability Fund. Considering COVID-19 the Province is encouraging municipalities to submit proposals that support the following priorities: digital modernization, service integrations and streamlined development approvals.

Only independent third-party reviews are eligible for funding.

City Submission:

The City will be submitting the By-law Consolidation Review as our review project for funding through the Audit and Accountability Fund, Intake 2.

By-law enforcement in the City of Burlington is currently distributed across many departments which can result in duplication of work, inconsistent application of enforcement, outdated and conflicting by-laws and confusion for customers looking for service.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of enforcement in maintaining public safety. The lack of resources has made it difficult to maintain appropriate service levels and has increased the levels of staff fatigue.

The goal of the third-party review is to provide options for cost effective, alternative service delivery options for by-law enforcement that:

- Maximizes the use of shared resources (human and technology) through integration;
- Provides a simplified single point of contact for customers;
- Aligns with industry standards and benchmarks, and;
- Offers suggestions for future growth.

Timing:

The deadline for submitting an expression of interest is December 18, 2020. The final reports including the analysis, findings and actionable recommendations must be publicly posted by October 15, 2021.

Investing in Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream

In August 2020 the Federal Government announced adjustments to the ICIP program to help provinces and territories and ultimately municipalities to deal with the financial pressures brought on by COVID-19. This new stream of funding is designed to deliver more infrastructure projects during the pandemic by increasing the types of eligible projects and accelerating approvals. The new time-limited stream will have an increased federal cost-share (80 per cent) for a broadened range of infrastructure projects and a simplified approval process to allow work to get underway quickly while respecting public health measures. The provincial share of the program funding is 20 per cent. Municipalities are not required to cost-share under this this stream.

Through this new COVID stream, \$250 million in combined federal-provincial funding will be dedicated to local governments across the province. The City of Burlington's allocation is \$852,201 for this new stream.

The federal government has indicated that investments under this stream must support public infrastructure, defined as tangible capital assets, including temporary infrastructure related to pandemic response, primarily for public use and/or benefit.

Eligible projects include:

- Retrofits, Repairs and Upgrades for municipal, provincial, territorial and indigenous buildings, health infrastructure and educational infrastructure;
- COVID-19 Response Infrastructure, including measures to support physical distancing; *
- Active Transportation Infrastructure, including parks, trails, foot bridges, bike lanes and multi-use paths; and
- Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation, including natural infrastructure, flood and fire mitigation, tree planting and related infrastructure. *

*Projects in these categories must have a clear rationale of how they will support responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and/or economic recovery.

The number of projects a municipality can submit is based on their funding allocation.

- One project submission for those receiving a maximum of \$100,000;
- Two project submissions for those receiving \$100,001 to a maximum of \$500,000;
- Five project submissions for those receiving \$500,001 and above.

City Submission:

The City of Burlington will be submitting these projects for consideration by the Province:

- **Elgin Street Promenade, Stage 4** - A 4m-wide fully accessible pedestrian and cycling facility located in the downtown core. Approximately 75 per cent of this trail is complete. This is the final phase of this four-part construction project and represents a vital link to connecting the downtown to an existing 8km trail that links to the broader community.
- **Palmer Trail:** A 3m-wide fully accessible pedestrian and cycling facility located the heart of the City. Phase 1 was constructed in 2019. Approximately 50 per cent of this trail is complete. This proposed work is to complete the final phase, providing a key north-south link connecting neighborhoods to the larger trail system.

Please note that the proposed width of these new trails will easily accommodate physical distancing between people passing each other and also allows for people to walk side by side.

- **City Hall Customer Service Window Renovation:** The existing City Hall service counter requires a renovation to facilitate physical distancing and customer service requirements. Funding will be used towards the reconfiguration of the existing counter location to allow for customer privacy and an adequate queuing area away from the common traffic flow area.
- **Roads, Parks and Forestry (RPF) Operations Centre Renovation:** A reconfiguration of the existing floor plan at the operations centre is necessary to accommodate RPF service requirements. The renovation will allow for supervisors and staff to work and collaborate efficiently and will also provide for additional physical distancing for staff and contractors through controlled queuing areas.

Timing:

Applications for multiple projects must be submitted by January 7, 2021. The expected notification on project approval is spring 2021. Projects must be started before September 30, 2021 and must be completed by December 31, 2021.

Financial Matters:

For the Audit and Accountability Fund, Intake 2 once again, only third-party consulting fees will be eligible. City administrative costs such as staff time are not eligible. Our estimate for the cost of this review is approximately \$50,000.

Unlike other ICIP streams of funding the City is not required to contribute any matching funds for the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream. This funding will allow us to move forward with these important capital projects. Over the coming weeks staff will be finalizing and confirming the specific funding requests for each of the four projects outlined above.

Climate Implications

As Burlington intensifies, the need for additional regulations aimed at protecting the environment and the need for enforcement will also increase.

Building and encouraging new infrastructure that supports active transportation, while providing opportunities for outdoor recreational use, contributes to building greater climate and community resilience

Through the design phases for the City Hall customer service window and the Roads, Parks and Forestry operations centre renovation project carbon reduction strategies will be reviewed.

Engagement Matters:

Engagement with RPF operations staff, the customer experience working group and individual service areas has already started and will determine the functional layout requirements for both the RPF operations centre and the City Hall customer service window.

Earlier this year an online community engagement took place to gather input on the design concept for the Elgin Promenade.

Conclusion:

The City of Burlington is grateful to the Governments of Canada and Ontario for their continued support of municipalities during this unprecedented time. This funding will allow us to complete important infrastructure projects within the community. We will also be able to complete a fulsome review of our corporate by-law enforcement, which will allow us to better serve the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Walihura

Government Relations Manager

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.