
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report ECW-02-2022 Proposed Ward Specific Funding Program For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 6, 2022



OBJECTIVE:

To provide Council with the proposed Ward Specific Funding Program for inclusion in the 2023 Draft Tax Supported Capital Budget and Forecast.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report ECW-02-2022 Proposed Ward Specific Funding Program be received;
2. AND THAT the Ward Specific Funding Program, as outlined in Report ECW-02-2022, be implemented in the 2023 Draft Tax Supported Capital Budget and Forecast.

Respectfully submitted: Tyson Haedrich, M. Eng., P. Eng., General Manager of Engineering & Capital Works

Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Over the past number of years, staff and Council have used various methods to add projects into the tax supported capital budget that weren't included in the draft budget documents presented to Council. While this process has been improved over the years there is still uncertainty and a sense of competition as to whether a specific project can be brought forward outside of the standard budget process.

Council has approved in principle the incorporation of a Ward Specific Funding Program within the 2023 Capital budget which is intended to formalize this process and allow Councillor-driven projects to move forward in a fair and transparent manner. Council also requires that the details of the program be provided and approved in advance of the budget deliberations. The program will provide each Ward Councillor with a \$50,000 funding allocation per year for capital projects on municipal property within their ward, and this funding will be available for each of the four years of the Council term for a total of \$200,000.

The program is planned to be implemented starting in the 2023 budget year to align with the start of the new Council term and to be funded from the Non Specified 20% portion of the Community Vibrancy Fund.

BACKGROUND:

At the March 3, 2022 Council of the Whole meeting to consider the 2022 Draft Tax Supported Capital Budget and Forecast, staff were given direction through the following resolutions:

"THAT a Ward Specific Funding Program be supported in principle, and be included for consideration in the 2023 Tax Supported Capital Budget;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back to Council in December 2022 on proposed project criteria and other considerations to be taken into account with this program.”

Over the past number of years staff and Council have used various methods to add projects into the tax capital budget that weren't included in the draft budget documents presented to Council. Prior to 2018 this was typically done through a Council resolution directing staff to include the project in the draft budget or, alternatively, raised during the Council budget deliberations.

In 2018, a more formal process was adopted that allowed Councillors to identify projects during the year through a resolution. A budget brief would be written for each project and the briefs would be considered together at the Council budget deliberations including identifying the cumulative financial effects on the budget. This method has brought some formality and order to the process of introducing new projects into the capital budget, however it still creates some uncertainty and a sense of competition as to whether a project will be included in the budget.

The proposed Ward Specific Funding Program (see Attachment 1) is intended to replace this process and allow Councillor-driven projects to move forward in a process that ensures fairness and transparency.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed Ward Specific Funding Program is intended to provide each Ward Councillor with a \$50,000 funding allocation per year for capital projects on municipal property within their ward. The intent is this funding will be available for each of the four years of the Council term for a total of \$200,000. The program is planned to be implemented starting in the 2023 budget year to align with the start of the new Council term.

The program is proposed to allow Councillors the ability to 'roll forward' any unspent funds to future years within the four year term and that any unspent funds at the end of the four-year Council term will be returned to the reserves.

The intent is that, prior to each year's capital budget, staff will meet with each Ward Councillor to review potential projects for the upcoming year based on the following criteria and that the ward specific projects will be included in that year's Tax Supported Capital Budget for approval by Council.

Ward Specific Funding Program Criteria:

- Projects must take place on County (public) property.
- Funding must be used for capital projects such as, infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, pedestrian crossovers, etc.) or beautification (i.e. tree planting, decorative streetlights, etc.).
- Funding can be used to accelerate/enhance projects which are part of other County programs (e.g. Urban Paving Program, Community Partnership Program, etc.) provided the cost of the acceleration/enhancement is funded by the project.
- Projects will be reviewed by County staff to ensure that all health and safety, installation warrants and legislation are met.
- Projects should support at least one of the County's three corporate priorities (Economic Opportunity; Community Health/Vibrancy; Efficient Government/Enhanced Corporate Image).
- Projects should not create significant inequity in County-wide programs (i.e. purchase of a large number of electronic speed signs for one ward).
- Projects should try, where possible, to not set new levels of service (i.e. park enhancements).
- Joint projects between Ward Councillors can be accommodated.
- In order to manage staff workload, only one project per ward will be considered each year.

It is recognized that this program could add up to six new capital projects per year, however the benefits to identifying the projects as part of the budget development and having the ability to plan for the projects should enable staff to deliver the projects within the expected timelines.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed funding level is \$50,000 per ward per year or \$300,000 annually. It is proposed that the capital component of this program be funded from the Non Specified 20% portion of the Community Vibrancy Fund.

Depending on the projects implemented it is anticipated that there will be some effects on operating costs. These operating costs will be identified however it is assumed that this program will not be responsible for covering the operating costs.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ward Specific Funding Program Summary.