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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report ENG-21-2023 Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2024-25 Funding Application – Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis

For Consideration by Council in Committee on October 31, 2023

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### OBJECTIVE:

To obtain the required Council resolutions for the Ministry of Transportation Connecting Link Program 2024 funding application.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report ENG-21-2023 Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2024-25 Funding Application – Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis be received;
2. AND THAT the Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis application meets the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program as described in the Program Guide;
3. AND THAT a comprehensive Asset Management Plan including connecting links has been completed and publicly posted;
4. AND THAT Haldimand County will comply with the conditions that apply to designated connecting links under the Highway Traffic Act to ensure the safe and efficient movement of provincial traffic;
5. AND THAT the Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis project put forward in the application will be completed and the milestones met as stated in the application;
6. AND THAT the Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis Connecting Links application is complete and factually accurate.

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**Reviewed by:** Kristopher R. Franklin, Manager, Engineering Services

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

**Approved:** Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff are submitting a funding application under the Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2024-2025 for Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Jarvis. One requirement of the Connecting Links Program application process is obtaining support of Council by approving the recommendations in this report.

### BACKGROUND:

Connecting links are municipal roads that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a community or to an international or interprovincial border crossing. These are critical roadways that

serve provincial and municipal interests, as they carry long distance provincial highway traffic moving through communities, as well as local traffic within the community.

Connecting links are formally designated under Section 21 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 50 as amended. Under the Act, a connecting link remains a “highway” under the jurisdiction and control of the Municipality, however it is still subject to certain conditions as outlined in the Highway Traffic Act.

Haldimand County has five designated connecting links on Highways 3 and 6 in the communities of Hagersville, Jarvis, Cayuga and Dunnville. The Ministry of Transportation’s Connecting Links Program provides dedicated Provincial funding for road and bridge projects on designated connecting link highways.

Through this program the Province is investing \$30 million in 2024/2025 for the construction and repair of roads and bridges on connecting links. This funding is available to the 77 Ontario municipalities with designated connecting links. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) will provide funding for up to 90% of total eligible project costs with a maximum amount of \$3 million funding per road project and \$5 million per bridge project. The objectives of the Connecting Links Program are to make connecting link investments that:

- address critical connecting link improvement needs;
- extend the lifecycle of the asset; and
- are cost effective and appropriate to address the connecting link need.

The Connecting Links Program has a one-stage application process requiring eligible Connecting Link municipalities to submit specific project information through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) System along with supporting documents by November 22, 2023. Funding decisions are expected in early 2024 and will be based on an assessment of connecting link needs, the MTO’s prioritization of submitted projects and the available budget in any year. The County has been successful in the past with Connecting Link Program applications receiving funding for the following projects:

- 2016 - Jarvis (Talbot Street) Highway 3 – \$1.3 million.
- 2017 - Hagersville (Main Street) Highway 6 – \$1.8 million.
- 2020 - Dunnville (Broad Street – Oak to Inman) Highway 3 – \$892,100.
- 2021 - Dunnville (Broad Street – Pine to Oak) Highway 3 – \$911,900.

It should be noted that the Highway 3 (Talbot Street) Connecting Link in Cayuga and the Highway 6 (Main Street) Connecting Link in Jarvis were completed by the County in 2015 and 2016, respectively, without funding through this program.

## **ANALYSIS:**

Based on an evaluation of the existing condition of the County’s Connecting Links, staff are submitting a funding application under this program for Highway 3 (Talbot Street) in Jarvis (see Attachment 1) with estimated eligible costs of \$865,980 (including non-rebateable HST). This includes the cost to mill and repave the roadway, required spot repair of curbs and sidewalks, and upgrades to the traffic signal detection system.

It should be noted that the County has submitted Connecting Links Program applications for this same section of Highway 3 in both 2022 and 2023 however neither application was successful. Based on the relative condition of the County’s Connecting Links it is anticipated that staff will continue to apply for this road section until successful or the program changes.

One requirement of the Connecting Links Program application process is to demonstrate Council support for the project identified in the application by approving Recommendations 2 to 6 in this report and submitting a Council resolution as part of the application.

Recommendation 2 identifies that the project is eligible for funding as per the guidelines. Recommendation 3 refers to the County's 2022 Asset Management Plan which has been posted on the County's website. Recommendation 4 refers to the County's legislated responsibilities for connecting links under the Highway Traffic Act including MTO approvals for signal lights, traffic by-laws and bridge load postings. The remaining recommendations direct staff to ensure accuracy in the application and follow the process for construction and reporting should the funding be received.

## **FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Funding for this project has not been previously budgeted. Based on current estimates, the eligible project costs will be \$865,980 (including non-rebateable HST), of which the County's share will be \$86,598 and would need to be funded from internal reserves.

If the County is successful in receiving provincial funding through the Connecting Links Program, a subsequent report will be required to confirm the award of the funding and request the required budget revisions. If the County is unsuccessful in the funding application, the project will not proceed and will be identified in future Connecting Links Program funding applications.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

Not applicable.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

## **REFERENCES:**

None.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Jarvis Highway 3 Connecting Link Map