



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No.
Transportation Standing Committee
May 28, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee
Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Bob Bjerke, Director and Chief Planner, Planning & Development

DATE: May 8, 2015

SUBJECT: 2015 Connect2 Funding Application

ORIGIN

The 2014-19 Active Transportation Priorities Plan proposes an Active Transportation Greenway corridor connecting the Chain of Lakes Trail to Northwest Arm Drive. The approved 2015-16 Project Budget includes \$150,000 in funding for the first phase of this project.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The HRM Charter section 79(1)(ah) states: "The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for playgrounds, trails, trails developed, operated or maintain pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas, and other recreation facilities."

The HRM Charter section 74 (1) states: "The Municipality may agree with one or more municipalities, villages, service commissions, the Government of the Province or of Canada or a department or agency of either of them or a band council pursuant to the Indian Act (Canada) to provide or administer municipal or village services."

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Audit and Finance Standing Committee to recommend to Halifax Regional Council to:

- 1) submit an application to the provincial Connect2 funding program for the COLT-to-North West Arm Drive Greenway Phase 1 Bridge Construction and Phase 2 Alignment/Design Study, and
- 2) contingent on the provincial approval of Connect2 funding, to increase the project budget for Active Transportation (CTU00420) by the amount of the Connect2 funding award and to increase the scope of the Chain of Lakes Trail to North West Arm Drive Greenway project, accordingly.

BACKGROUND

Making Connections: 2014-2019 Active Transportation Priorities Plan (page 73) approved by Regional Council September 9, 2014, identifies a connection between the Chain of Lakes Trail and the St. Margaret's Bay Road bike lanes as a proposed multi-use facility project. The approved 2015-16 Project Budget for Active Transportation (Page K1) includes \$150,000 in funding for the Chain of Lakes Trail to North West Arm Drive Greenway (Phase One).

DISCUSSION

Staff has become aware that the Province intends to announce a new funding program for sustainable transportation projects called Connect2 in mid-May. This program replaces the NS Moves program that has been in place for the past three years.

Key elements of the program are expected to include:

- Focus on project construction and on active transportation connections of two kilometers and shorter
- June 30, 2015 deadline for applications
- Projects must be fully completed by March 1, 2016
- Total funding of \$600,000 available with a total cap of \$100,000 on study/design projects
- Will fund up to 50% of a project to a total of \$150,000
- Funding awards to be announced in mid-August

Staff recommends submitting an application for a project that is primarily construction since that is where the bulk of available funding is targeted and there is less potential competition for other municipalities. The timing of a mid-August funding announcement combined with a March, 2016 completion deadline limits us, however, to proposing a project that is already fully funded and is ready to be tendered once program funding is announced. The prospect of additional external funding allows us to either propose an increase in scope to the project or to reallocate the portion of the approved funding that would then be covered by the program.

Staff recommends submitting an application for the Chain of Lakes Trail to North West Arm Drive Greenway project as the following characteristics mesh well with the Connect2 program requirements and HRM's capability:

- Design work for Phase One (a bridge across the Chain of Lakes watercourse and a trail connection between the Chain of Lakes Trail and Chain Lake Park) is 90% complete and we will be in a position to issue a tender immediately following any funding announcement.
- Phase Two of the project, the connection from the Chain of Lakes Bridge to North West Arm Drive and St. Margaret's Bay Road was intended to be undertaken in a future year but the assessment of alignment alternatives and preliminary design work could be proposed as an extension of the project scope. This work can easily be completed by the March, 2016 deadline.
- The planning will also consider connections to a proposed future Active Transportation Greenway that would parallel North West Arm Drive and that would extend southwards alongside Long Lake Provincial Park and northward across Highway 102. This would connect to communities such as Spryfield and Mount Royal and the Macintosh Run and Mainland Linear AT Greenways.
- The two phases together will create an important connection between current and future major active transportation corridors, thereby completing a number of connections shorter than two kilometers.
- The value of the funding requested will be consistent with the level of funding received by HRM in previous years of the NS Moves program.

In addition to increasing the scope of the project to include Phase Two, program funding will allow a small increase to the Phase One budget to allow construction of short sections of greenway connection that were intended to be left to Phase Two but can easily be added to Phase One.

The proposed funding model (Table 1) below takes advantage of the HRM funding approved for the project while reducing the ask from the Connect2 Program to a level consistent with funding granted to HRM in the past (see Table 2) and below the maximum 50% contribution. The reduction below the 50% maximum can be expected to improve the attractiveness of the proposal to the funders. Even so, this funding model results in some surplus approved funds that can be utilized by other approved active transportation projects that may run into funding challenges.

TABLE ONE: PROJECT BUDGET PROPOSAL

| PROJECT COMPONENT | WITHOUT CONNECT2 FUNDING | WITH CONNECT2 FUNDING | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | HRM | HRM | CONNECT2 |
| Phase One – Bridge Construction with Expanded Scope | \$150,000 | \$90,000 | \$90,000 |
| Phase Two - Alignment Options Study | Funded in a future year | \$25,000 | \$5,000 |
| Phase Two – Engineering Design | Funded in a future year | \$25,000 | \$5,000 |
| TOTAL | \$150,000 | \$140,000 | \$100,000 |
| PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL | | 58% | 42% |

TABLE TWO: FUNDING HISTORY

| | TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING | FUNDING AWARDED TO HRM |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| NSMoves Round One Funding (2012-13) | \$900,000 | \$150,000 |
| NSMoves Round Two Funding (2013-14) | \$1,350,000 | \$105,000 |
| NSMoves Round Three Funding (2014-15) | \$602,000 | \$100,000 |
| Connect2 Funding (2015-16) | \$600,000 (expected) | \$100,000 (proposed) |

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should funding be offered, the project budget for Active Transportation (CTU00420) will be increased by the amount of the Connect2 funding award and the scope of the Chain of Lakes Trail to North West Arm Drive Greenway project will be increased accordingly. Should funding not be granted, the project will proceed as originally described in the approved project budget.

Development of the Connect2 program application and management of the increased project scope of work can be done with existing HRM Planning and Active Transportation resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Once the phase one design work is completed, information will be provided to the local community for comment and feedback. Should Phase Two proceed with Connect2 funding, public engagement will be

undertaken as part of the assessment of alignment alternatives. The Chain of Lakes Trail Association (COLTA) will be engaged throughout the process.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental issues associated with the trail will be identified and mitigated to the degree possible through the design process.

ALTERNATIVES

The Standing Committee may choose to:

- (1) Not submit an application to the Connect2 program
- (2) Direct staff to prepare and submit a project application(s) in addition to the one proposed
- (3) Direct staff to prepare and submit a project application(s) instead of the one proposed

Staff recommend against each of these alternatives, as we believe the project proposed is most closely positioned to match the program criteria while meeting our capability to deliver in the timeline specified. Proposing additional projects for funding may reduce the chances of receiving program funding for this project and may exceed our capability to deliver.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment One: Project Study Area
Attachment Two: Greenway Network

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: David McCusker, P.Eng., Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning, 902.490.6696

Original Signed

Report Approved by:

David Hubley, P.Eng., Manager, Design & Construction, 902.490.4845



