

**To: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer**

**From: Adam Cave, Manager of Municipal Infrastructure**

**Re: Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program – Housing Enabling Core Servicing Stream (MHIP-HECS) Application**

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## **AIM**

To obtain Council direction to proceed with a funding application through the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program – Housing Enabling Core Servicing Stream (MHIP-HECS).

## **BACKGROUND**

The Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Infrastructure is accepting applications to the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program – Housing Enabling Core Servicing Stream (MHIP-HECS). This program offers investment for eligible road and bridge projects that enable housing opportunities and promote growth with a focus on improving and developing more reliable road and/or bridge assets to support this growth.

MHIP-HECS offers funding, to a maximum of 50% provincial contribution, for eligible projects up to a maximum contribution of \$20 million. To be considered eligible, projects must commence no later than September 30, 2025, and must be completed no later than March 31, 2028.

Projects are subject to a two (2) stage evaluation. Stage 1 verifies the submission is complete, the applicant is eligible, new housing units are created and the funding timelines can be met. Submissions that fail on any one of Stage 1 criteria do not move on to the Stage 2 of the evaluation. Submissions that progress to Stage 2 are further evaluated based on project readiness, new housing units enabled because of the project, cost of the project per housing unit enabled, technical merit to improve roads and bridges to be more compatible with proposed development, financial capacity of the applicant to undertake the project and the readiness of the housing development.

The MHIP-HECS application deadline is October 18, 2024. MHIP-HECS stipulates a maximum of one (1) project application can be submitted.

## **COMMENTS**

The City of Woodstock is experiencing rapid residential growth and development throughout the city. Generally, the city's existing road and bridge infrastructure is capable of supporting infill growth within the established areas of the city. However, with

expansive residential growth currently occurring towards the outer limits of the city, the connecting road and bridge infrastructure needs to be prioritized for upgrades to support this continued growth.

There are two (2) roads under city jurisdiction that primarily serve the expansive residential growth areas in the city. Pittock Park Road and Karn Road are both strong candidates for investment under MHIP-HECS.

Pittock Park Road, formerly Thirteenth Line, is comprised of a two-lane rural cross section that was annexed into the City of Woodstock in 2006. It is approximately 2000 metres in length and connects Vansittart Avenue to Oxford Road 17. Prior to the expansive residential growth in the north limits of the city, the primary function of the road in its current state was to serve low volume vehicular traffic. Expansive growth in the north limits of the city is ongoing, consisting of approximately 1200 housing units constructed since 2012 and an additional 1680 housing units projected prior to 2031 through approved developments. Pittock Park Road has been inundated with increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic and needs to be upgraded with the appropriate infrastructure to continue to safely serve the increased volumes and modes of transportation now utilizing Pittock Park Road. Without the timely delivery of infrastructure upgrades for this corridor, road users will continue to experience increased risks while utilizing the corridor.

Conceptually, the addition of cycling facilities, sidewalks and street lighting are critical to ensure the increased volumes and modes of transportation can safely utilize the corridor and ensure continued long term expansive growth has a safe corridor to access critical amenities within the community.

To strengthen the application, a unique perspective can be offered through an application for Pittock Park Road, as currently there is no pedestrian infrastructure in place on any corridor into Woodstock to support safe travel of the growing volume of pedestrian traffic in the north end of the city. Reviewing all alternatives to implement pedestrian infrastructure, Pittock Park Road offers the most shovel ready alternative. Other perspectives to strengthen the application will include extending and connecting cycling infrastructure to the expansive growth area in the north.

Project readiness is a determining factor in reviewing and evaluating projects for funding. Engineering staff are certain this project can be delivered within the associated timelines should the application for funding be successful.

The estimated project costs, including the implementation of cycling infrastructure, addition of sidewalks and installation of street lighting, are approximately \$4 million. Based on the terms of the funding stream \$2 million would be the eligible provincial contribution. This translates into an approximate provincial cost per housing unit enabled of \$1190/unit.

Karn Road is the extension of Bowerhill Road that was annexed into the City of Woodstock in 2020. It is approximately 875 metres in length. Since the annexation occurred, adjacent lands have been approved for a large residential development consisting of a maximum of 981 residential units. As this development begins to translate into occupancy, Karn Road is going to experience a major increase in vehicular and

pedestrian traffic. Very similarly to Pittock Park Road, the recently annexed portion of Karn Road is currently primarily equipped to serve low volume vehicular traffic. Safety concerns will develop as vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes increase on a corridor that is not equipped with the appropriate infrastructure.

Karn Road offers strength in an application as this section of road is directly adjacent to a large residential development and the correlation to enabling new housing units is undeniable. Karn Road was annexed at the same time as the lands now undergoing development, so the correlation is very strong.

Considering project readiness, with the amount of phased construction activity required to take place on adjacent sites including utility upgrades within the right of way, Engineering staff caution that proceeding with Karn Road may pose conflicting adjacent site challenges to meet the associated timelines should the application be successful.

The estimated project costs, including full road reconstruction, and the addition of sidewalks, are approximately \$2.5 million. Based on the terms of the funding stream, \$1.25 million would be the eligible provincial contribution. This translates into an approximate provincial cost per housing unit enabled of \$1275/unit.

Engineering staff have conducted simulated evaluations for Pittock Park Road and Karn Road based on the sample evaluation criteria provided. The outcomes are fairly consistent on a provincial cost/housing unit calculation; however, project readiness and development readiness are more favourable for Pittock Park Road. Additionally, Pittock Park Road offers some unique perspectives that can be highlighted through an application.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That City Council direct staff to prepare and submit an application for Pittock Park Road Urbanization to the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program – Housing Enabling Core Servicing Stream (MHIP-HECS).

*Authored by: Adam Cave, C.E.T., Manager of Municipal Infrastructure*

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