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The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Information Report to Council

SUBJECT: Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update
DATE: 2024-04-16
REPORT #: OPS-24-022
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DEPARTMENT: Operations Services

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2019 Town staff initiated the preparation of a Terms of Reference for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to carry out a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) update to the previously completed TMP carried out in 2004.

The TMP serves as a long-range strategic plan for the Town that addresses and evaluates existing challenges and opportunities, supports, and accommodates growth, and recommends policies that support an efficient, multi-modal transportation network, including vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit mobility. The TMP is a high-level master planning exercise undertaken per the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Municipal Engineers Association, 2000 as amended) (Class EA), approved under Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act. The TMP will provide a framework for future projects requiring further detailed studies under the Municipal Class EA process.

That RFP was issued on September 6, 2019, and closed on October 18, 2019, with a total of five (5) proposal submissions received for consulting services to undertake a Transportation Master Plan.

Upon closing of the RFP, a technical review committee was formed which included Town staff from Public Works and Finance in addition to the Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Town's external Transportation consultant from Associated Engineering with the task of evaluating the submissions and providing a recommendation back to Council.

The technical review committee completed their selection process on November 28, 2019, with a recommendation to award the TMP to Stantec Consulting Ltd. based on the submission which was deemed to be technically sound while demonstrating a significant amount of knowledge and awareness of the Town's needs as was set out in the RFP. A report to Council (OPS-19-026) was received and approved by Council on December 9, 2019.

A subsequent kick-off meeting was held on January 9, 2020, with Town staff and the consultant to discuss and review a proposed work plan/schedule to include a four phased approach to developing the TMP where context/issues and challenges were noted to the consultant.

Phase 1 – Background Report (Existing Conditions) - Information gathering stage and determination of existing conditions including public consultation and stakeholder engagement.

Phase 2 – Future Needs & Opportunities - Forecasting future conditions, growth with existing road network with proposed solutions.

Phase 3 – Alternatives Assessment & Preferred Solutions - Focus area identification and major areas influenced by specific conditions and tourist travel demands.

Phase 4 – Implementation - Implementation plan, costing and final TMP document.

At the onset of the global pandemic the Town received formal notification on March 18, 2020, that under the Professional Services Agreement signed with the consultant that the COVID-19 Pandemic fell under the “Force Majeure” clause for which the consultant would be entitled to relief of potentially both schedule and cost. As a result, the timelines for completion were impacted.

Subsequently development of the above noted reports, virtual engagement with the public and consultation with the Town’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was undertaken where at the April 25, 2022, Council meeting, Council received the Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes from April 12, 2022, which included the following recommendation:

- Receive the Transportation Master Plan;
- Endorse the 30-day consultation period as per the MCEA; and
- Endorse the TMP in principle, pending the 30-day consultation.

The TAC recommendation was amended and approved by Council as follows:

- Receive the Transportation Master Plan;
- Endorse the 30-day consultation period as per the MCEA; and
- Refer the recommendation to ‘endorse the TMP in principle pending the 30-day consultation’ to staff for further consultation with the TMP consultant.

A notice of study completion was issued on June 30, 2022, and a 30-day public review period was initiated where comments that were received upon completion of the review period were consolidated by the Town’s communication team and provided back to the Town’s consultant Stantec. Upon completion of their review of comments received in October of 2022 it was recommended for the Town’s consideration of reviewing and revising the TMP to align with various Town and Regional plans, studies and other associated documents as noted by Council.

In early 2023. Stantec was advised by the Town to proceed with a review as was detailed in an information report to Council on February 21, 2023 (OPS-23-021).

On August 3, 2023, an updated draft of the final TMP report was received by the Town and circulated to the Town's Operations staff for review and comment. Over the course of the next several months Town Operations staff continued discussions with the consultant to determine the appropriate next steps. Upon the completion of the internal review in early December 2023, in consultation with the former Director of Operations, it was decided to circulate the draft TMP to the Town's Planning Department and Regional Transportation/Planning staff prior to finalizing the report and bringing back to Council for receipt and adoption in the summer of 2024.

In January 2024, in discussion with the Town's consultant it was noted that changes to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process had been adopted in 2023 since revision of the draft final report had been completed and completion of the circulation of review including a determination of oversight with consultation requirements.

The Town's consultant Stantec presented options to the Town on how to proceed with meeting the changes and completing the necessary consultation requirements in accordance with the revised Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Master Plan requirements based on a completed TMP that would reflect the most recent data and information available. In consultation with the Interim CAO and Acting Director of Operations, it was recommended that staff engage the consultant to proceed accordingly to finalize the TMP. The additional funds required is approximately \$23,700 (excluding HST). The additional funds would be utilized from the DC account (90%) and the capital reserve (10%).

NEXT STEP / CONCLUSION

The Town's consultant Stantec is prepared to proceed with fulfilling the requirements in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Master Plan as follows including anticipated timelines:

MCEA Consultation Requirements (Notice of Study Commencement, Notice of PIC (Online), On-line Survey etc. which includes the public, agencies, stakeholders, and First Nations.) **(May-August 2024)**

TMP Technical Update (Review of TMP content to ensure the most up to date information since the last update.) **(May-September 2024)**

TMP Draft Report Update (Upon completion of a final draft report, circulation to the Town and Regional staff for comments prior to public comment review period.) **(October 2024)**

MCEA Consultation Requirements (Notice of Master Plan of final draft report in conjunction with a 30-day public comment period with comments received summarized and included in the final report.) **(November 2024)**

Staff recommendation report and receipt of final Transportation Master Plan Report for Council's approval. **(December 2024)**

ATTACHMENTS

- N/A