Date: November 5, 2019  
Report No.: 2019-641

To: Chair and Members  
Community Development Committee

From: Russ Loukes, Acting General Manager Public Works

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [ ]  
Item For Consideration [X]

2.0 Topic  
Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2019-641.docx

3.0 Recommendation

A. That Report 2019-641 Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2020-21 BE RECEIVED; and

B. That Staff BE DIRECTED to complete the application for the Connecting Links Program 2020-21 for the resurfacing (and other associated works) of King George Road from Kent Road to Powerline Road and submit said application to the Ministry of Transportation; and

C. The City Council ENDORSE the application of The Corporation of the City of Brantford to the Ministry of Transportation Connecting Links Program 2020-21; and

D. That, subject to approval of the project funding from the Ministry of Transportation through the Connecting Links Program 2020-21:

   i. the funding for the City's share of the project costs for the resurfacing (and other associated works) of King George Road from Kent Road to Powerline Road BE APPROVED to an upset
limit of $200,000 to be funded from RF0537 – Roads and Related Reserve; and

ii. the General Manager of Public Works or designate BE AUTHORIZED to execute the financial Contribution Agreement and any additional documents or agreements required pursuant to the Connecting Links Program 2020-21, subject to approval of same as to form by the City Solicitor or designate.

4.0 **Purpose and Overview**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to submit a grant application for roadway improvements on King George Road in response to the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario’s Connecting Links Grant Program for 2020-21.

5.0 **Background**

On October 3, 2019 the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario announced that the 2020-21 grant program specifically for Connecting Links was to open for applications. Connecting links are municipal roads or bridges that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a community or to a border crossing. Provincially there are 352 kilometers of connecting links in the Province, with 70 bridges in 77 Ontario municipalities. The City of Brantford has one Connecting Link roadway that being the 2.3 km portion of King George Road from Highway 403 northerly to Powerline Road.

The objectives of this annual program as described within the Project Application include making connecting link investments that:

- Address critical connecting link improvement needs,
- Extend the lifecycle of assets; and
- Are cost effective and appropriate to address the connecting link need.

The ministry will prioritize project submissions from various municipalities under this program that best meet these objectives and focus on addressing critical and urgent connecting link needs first.

The ministry will provide funding up to 90%, to a maximum of $3 million of eligible project costs should the project be selected. Under the program eligible costs include the design, construction, renewal, rehabilitation and replacement of municipal roads and bridges that run through communities and connect to provincial highways.
The program has a one-stage application process and the City is permitted to submit one application.

In addition to a detailed project application request for the funding, application submissions must include:

- The City’s most recent Asset Management Plan, which was approved by City Council in 2017.
- A declaration certifying all submission requirements have been met; and
- A Council Resolution/bylaw supporting the application along with a commitment to funding the City’s share of the project costs.

The Connecting Links Program requires that municipalities submit detailed information on all connecting link road sections and structures and a maintenance plan/strategy is included with the application. This will enable the ministry to assess the current and future state of connecting link infrastructure and determine how to best target connecting link investments on a multi-year basis.

The application submission deadline for the 2020-21 program is November 22, 2019. Successful recipients are to be notified by March 2020 (estimated) and legal agreements would be executed in April 2020 (estimated).

City staff have reviewed the program guidelines, application criteria and completed an analysis of the infrastructure within the City’s connecting link roadway. Staff recommends making an application under this program that will address road condition needs on King George Road.

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

Excellence in Governance and Municipal Management

7.0 Input From Other Sources

Staff from Public Works Engineering and Operational Services have reviewed this report and reviewed budget estimates for the works. Staff from Corporate Finance has reviewed the Financial Implications.

8.0 Analysis

The Connecting Links Program provides potential funding for the design, construction, renewal, rehabilitation and replacement of connecting link infrastructure. Maintenance costs, including winter maintenance, are not eligible for funding.
Expansion projects (road widening) resulting from general traffic growth (provincial and municipal), would also be considered eligible projects. However, the costs for improvements directly related to increased traffic from new development or major expansion of an existing development continue to be the responsibility of the municipality (and/or the developer).

The connecting link right-of-way typically includes some municipal infrastructure that is not eligible for funding under the Connecting Links Program, such as watermains, sanitary sewers, utilities, etc. The municipality is responsible for costs related to these assets and all other ineligible items.

A summary of the types of work that may be eligible include:

- Road works – reconstruction, surfacing and resurfacing, replacement of sidewalks, accessibility improvements, curbs and gutters, guiderails etc.
- Traffic Control Devices – upgrades to and installation of new traffic control signals
- Pedestrian Signals – Installation of “warranted” mid-block pedestrian signals and crossings
- Illumination – illumination of intersections with warranted traffic signals or unsignalized.
- Drainage and stormwater – curbs, minor culvers and other drainage works
- Preservation Management – remedial capital improvements such as resurfacing, continuous or selective pavement, crack sealing

The City’s asset inventory, condition assessment programs and the 2014 and 2017 Asset Management Plans have put the City is a very good position for responding to this grant application.

The Public Works Commission has completed various condition assessment programs within the King George Road corridor from Highway 403 to Powerline Road. The City’s holistic Asset Management Plan meets the Provincial guidance document requirements and based on the condition of assets, and previously presented State of the Infrastructure Reports demonstrates that additional funding for City road surfaces is required.

Based on a careful review of the program guidelines and the infrastructure assessment, it is recommended that the City make an application under this program for the resurfacing of approximately 900m of King George Road from Kent Road to Powerline Road including the intersection of King George Road and Powerline Road. The southerly section between Kent Road and Highway 403 is
considered to be in good condition and maintenance activities only are recommended for this stretch of roadway.

Road condition surveys completed in 2017 indicate that the northerly section of King George Road from Kent Road to Powerline Road is in Fair to Poor Condition. It should be noted that intersection improvements requirements have already been identified as short term needs but are currently identified in 2028/2029 in the City’s capital budget and forecast due to affordability.

Road resurfacing is a prudent approach at this time given the potential for long term servicing requirements in the future to accommodate the boundary lands and future development. A resurfacing is considered preservation, with a minimum of a 10 year life expectancy. This would improve the road surface for the short term until future infrastructure requirements to service lands north of Powerline Road are better defined.

9.0 Financial Implications

Based on a preliminary review, the cost for this project is estimated to be $1.3 million. Should the City be successful in this application, $1,170,000 would be covered by the grant with the City’s share being the remaining $130,000. Given that the detailed project design has not been completed, it is recommended that the City’s upset limit for this work be $200,000 to ensure this project can proceed.

Should additional funds be required, staff will report back to City Council for further direction.

The Finance Department has confirmed that there is sufficient funds for the City’s share of $200,000 and can be funded by the Roads and Related Reserve RF0537.

Should the City be successful in securing funds through this Provincial Grant Program, the allocation of $1.1M in future capital works would be avoided. Securing funds through this program would free up future capital funding which in turn would allow for the inclusion of additional projects in the City’s Capital program or a reduction from other funding sources to offset the grant amount and close the funding gap in the City’s state of good repair program.

The pursuit of grant funding through programs such as this is another method of increasing the investment in the City’s infrastructure base.
10.0 Conclusion

The 2014 and 2017 Asset Management Plans described the processes that the City uses to assess infrastructure condition and forecast anticipated expenditures. The justification for the projects and ultimately the selection of them for this program has been aided by the Asset Management Strategy and 10 Year Capital Financial Forecast that the City has in place.

Staff is able to clearly articulate the need and priority for projects, identify the fiscal challenges and demonstrate a financial necessity for additional revenue sources to fund the City’s infrastructure deficit.

A submission under this grant program supports the mandate of seeking alternative revenue sources and should the application be successful allow the City to accelerate a necessary project using a significant alternative funding source.

Geoff Linschoten, Director of Facilities & Asset Management
Russ Loukes, Acting General Manager

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required [X] yes [ ] no
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk [ ] yes [X] no
Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? [ ] yes [X] no