
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 30-2021

Subject: Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP) 2021 Funding Commitments

Date: June 16, 2021

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Khaldoon Ahmad, Manager, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update to the Planning and Economic Development Committee with respect to the “**2021 Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP)**.” This memo summarizes the results of the 2021 PRIP applications for funding from Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) for public realm enhancement projects along Regional Roads. A brief description of each project is included.

Program Background

The Public Realm Investment Program was initiated in 2016, as a means to partner with LAMs to create attractive and vibrant places. These projects contribute to elevating the public realm across Niagara and include streetscaping, street furnishings, civic gateways, urban plazas, active transportation facilities, and a myriad of other public realm features. The program provides matching funding to LAMs for capital costs of public realm enhancements up to a maximum of \$150,000 per project (new in 2021). For this budget year, the annual budget was increased from \$250,000 to \$350,000.

Now in its sixth year, the Program continues to build on the successes of past years. The uptake of the program continues to grow in the number of submissions received, quantity of funding requested, and quality of submissions received.

One of the factors that contributes to the Program’s success has been the availability of landscape architecture and urban design expertise to the LAMs that do not have these resources. This practice allows local and regional staff to collaborate and amplify resources and thereby raising the overall quality and value of built projects.

2021 Funding Commitments

On February 1, 2021, the 2021 PRIP Application Package and supporting material was distributed to LAM staff. LAMs were invited to make submissions for funding requests to the program. The submission deadline was April 2, 2021.

Similar to previous years, the 2021 Program was over-subscribed with total funding requests of \$800,715. Combined, the 2021 applications contain a total project value of \$1.9 million.

Staff received eight submissions from six LAMs. New for 2021, the program adds, Fort Erie to the list of LAMs that are utilizing the program for the first time. Staff is also working closely with Port Colborne to identify potential projects for submissions in 2022.

A multi-disciplinary team of Regional staff evaluated the submissions to determine technical feasibility and funding priority. Staff met virtually with staff from several LAMs to discuss the technical aspects of the projects in detail.

Of the eight submissions, 4 did not reach the program pre-requisites to achieve funding. Submission in Lincoln, St. Catharines, and Welland were not funded. Staff will continue to work closely with these communities to identify projects for 2022 and beyond. One of the submissions from Niagara Falls was withdrawn for technical reasons and will be resubmitted in 2022.

For 2021 staff was able to assign \$279,800 of the total program budget of \$350,000. The remaining \$70,200 is being re-offered to all 12 communities through a subsequent call for submissions as permitted through the program's structure. The deadline for second submissions is July 2, 2021. This will allow communities that missed the earlier call to make submissions. A multi-disciplinary team of Regional staff will again convene to evaluate the submissions and determine technical feasibility and funding priority. Staff will provide the Planning and Economic Development Committee with a funding commitment update once the remaining funding is assigned.

For 2021, the funding will complement and enhance three transformational Region led capital projects that promote the Region's complete streets initiative in Niagara. Two of the projects will directly enhance the Region's investments in bringing GO Transit to Niagara. The following projects are assigned PRIP funding in 2021:

Project Name and Description	Total Project Value	Regional Commitment
<p>1. Fort Erie: Dominion Road and Lakeshore Road Roundabout Landscaping and Gateway In partnership with the Niagara Parks Commission and the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, this project will enhance the proposed roundabout. The funding is committed to the installation of street trees, native plants at the roundabout, street furniture, a gateway feature, interpretive signage, and other associated elements.</p>	\$634,140	\$80,000
<p>2. Grimsby: Casablanca Road Streetscape features and Parkettes In conjunction with the reconstruction of Casablanca Road from Main Street to the North Service Road. Streetscaping including street trees, street furniture, enhanced lighting, and plantings. In addition, two parkettes at Livingston Road and the North Service Road will be developed and will include seating, planting, and other amenities for pedestrians and cyclists. This funding will contribute to the transformation of Casablanca Road into a pedestrian and cycling friendly complete street.</p>	<p>\$681,620 <i>(This amount does not include the Region's capital funding for the reconstruction of Casablanca Road)</i></p>	\$125,000
<p>3. Niagara Falls: Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street Roundabout and Gateway Features. In conjunction with the Thorold Road Extension the Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street Roundabout was identified as a gateway opportunity in the Niagara Falls GO Secondary Plan. Funding will be directed to landscaping, gateways, and lighting within the roundabout. This investment will contribute to creating complete streets and the transformation of this area into a mixed use and transit oriented area. Beautification at this scale will attract investment and people and contribute to significant investments by the Region and the City.</p>	<p>\$188,296 <i>(This amount does not include the Region's capital funding of the Thorold Stone Road Extension and construction of the roundabout)</i></p>	\$74,200

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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