



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: September 4, 2018

Report Number: SRCAO.18.19

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Subject: Grants and Funding Status Report

Purpose:

To update Council on the status of grants and gas tax funding and the role that this funding plays in accelerating infrastructure renewal and financing innovative projects.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That SRCAO.18.19 be received for information purposes

Contact Person:

Daniel Olding, Manager of Grants & Strategic Initiatives, extension 5505

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Gwen Manderson, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Approved by: Neil Garbe, Chief Administrative Officer

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), Town Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

Numerous financial grants and funding sources are available to municipalities, creating the opportunity for Richmond Hill to invest in our community while lessening the load on property tax. Through grant funding Richmond Hill has been able to accelerate infrastructure renewal and finance innovative projects which might not otherwise have been possible due to financial constraints.

The ongoing success of Richmond Hill's grant applications is linked to, a) the creation of a Grant Strategy and the alignment of that strategy with the Town's capital plan and other strategic priorities, and b) having a staff position in the Office of the CAO that actively pursues grant opportunities and manages all aspects of the grants process. The Grant Strategy, which is updated annually, helps Richmond Hill to:

1. anticipate opportunities and be prepared for funding programs with strong projects which are attractive and fit the program criteria. A number of Town grant funded projects have gone on to win awards for the innovative approach and excellence demonstrated in the projects, such as the Oak Ridges Community Centre.
2. integrate grant funding sources that are application-based, with longer-term predictable grant funding such as the gas tax. The use of gas tax funds for projects in Richmond Hill often is linked to leveraging funds from other funding programs.
3. create our own opportunities with a growing emphasis on soliciting funds for strategic projects outside of established application-based grant funding programs.
4. strengthen relationships with funding agencies by regular monitoring and reporting on grant funded projects and joint promotion of project successes, such as the grant funded project profiles on the Town's website.

The Town has received \$52.9 million in gas tax funding since the program began in 2005. This funding has supported dozens of Town infrastructure projects and studies resulting in more energy efficient buildings, stronger stormwater protection, sidewalks and trails throughout our community, and modern IT systems for managing our infrastructure.

Key projects supported by gas tax funding include the environmentally friendly LEED Silver Oak Ridges Community Centre, for which the Town won an Association of Ontario Municipalities Gas Tax Award in 2013, the Pioneer Park Stormwater Rehabilitation Project, the Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve Trail, and the development of the Town's Environment Strategy and Corporate Asset Management Plan.

A strategy to allocate gas tax funds is reviewed and established annually as part of the grants strategy and included in the capital budget process. Richmond Hill is set to receive \$5.9 million in gas tax funding in 2018.

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In addition to gas tax funding, approximately \$37.1 million in grant funding from a number of federal, provincial and other grant programs have been received from 2007 to present. Approximately 33% (\$12.1 million) of this was from the Federal Government, 65% (\$24.3 million) from the Provincial Government and 2% (\$0.7 million) from other sources such as to Ontario Tire Stewardship and the Region of York. This grant funding advanced projects worth more than the grant funding, contributing to over \$71 million of total project value.

A long list of projects and initiatives have successfully received grant funding. Major projects include the rehabilitation of Elgin Barrow, Elvis Stojko and the Bond Lake arenas, the restoration of the George Forster House and Barns and the Elmer Wideman House, several road reconstruction and stormwater management rehabilitation projects, parks infrastructure renewal at Richmond Green, Crosby Park and Morgan Boyle Park and accessibility upgrades at Richmond Hill's municipal offices to mention just a few.

The most recent year of grant seeking activities resulted in five successful applications with a total value of \$4.5 million in approved grant contributions. These grants will be contributing to the rehabilitation of stormwater management facilities, construction of the lake-to-lake cycling route, and providing incentives for downtown revitalization and for the construction of purpose built rental housing in Richmond Hill.

Promoting awareness of projects with grant funding is a key part of the Grants Strategy. Activities include media releases for gas tax and successful grant applications and the development of grant funded project profiles which are posted on the Town's website at <https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/register-apply-or-pay/Infrastructure-Grants.aspx>.

Over the past ten years Richmond Hill has focused on being prepared to apply for grants, on actively engaging with funding agencies to understand what they are looking for, and on developing and promoting opportunities to contribute and build our community. The investment the Town has made in grant-seeking activities has more than paid for itself while contributing to the quality of life in Richmond Hill, reducing the reliance upon the Town's financial reserves and lessening the load on the tax rate.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

Richmond Hill has received \$52.9 million in gas tax funding since 2005 and has attracted around \$37.1 million in grants from a number of federal, provincial and other grant programs since 2007.

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Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Grants and gas tax funded projects have helped the Town make progress towards all four Strategic Plan goals. Pursuing funding for Town infrastructure and initiatives aligns to Goal One: Stronger Connections by advocating for other levels of government and agencies to meet our community's needs and Goal Four: Wise Management of Resources by serving as a role model for municipal management.

Conclusion:

Richmond Hill has received \$90 million in grants and gas tax since 2005, accelerating infrastructure renewal and other innovative initiatives, and reducing the need for financial reserves and tax rate increases. The investment the Town has made in grant-seeking activities has more than paid for itself while contributing to the quality of life in Richmond Hill.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Grants and Funding Status Report 2018

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCAO.18.19 - Grants and Funding Status Report.docx
Attachments:	- SRCAO.18.19 - Grants - Attachment 1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 17, 2018

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Gwen Manderson - Aug 13, 2018 - 11:41 AM

No Signature - Task assigned to David Dexter was completed by delegate Anna Jovicic

Anna Jovicic on behalf of David Dexter - Aug 17, 2018 - 1:24 PM

Neil Garbe - Aug 17, 2018 - 1:41 PM