

To: **COUNCIL**

Meeting Date: **09/28/2021**

Subject: **2021 Implementation Plan for the Regional Transit Supportive Strategy - Cambridge**

Submitted By: **Jamie Croft, Acting Director of Engineering**

Prepared By: **Jason Leach, Sustainable Transportation Coordinator**

Report No.: **21-244(CD)**

File No.: **C1101**

Recommendation

THAT Report 21-244(CD), 2021 Implementation Plan for the Regional Transit Supportive Strategy - Cambridge, be received for information.

Executive Summary

Purpose

- Further to Memo IM21-014(CD) as part of the June 11, 2021 Council Information Package, this report looks to inform Council of the initiatives included in the 2021 Regional Transit Supportive Strategy Implementation Plan for Cambridge, approved by Regional Council at the September 14, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Key Findings

- Every year, the Transit Supportive Strategy (TSS) Working Group sets out to identify projects that would increase transit ridership and support Transit Oriented Development in the City of Cambridge. The 2021 Implementation Plan includes two new initiatives and the reallocation of previously committed funding as a contingency for other ongoing TSS projects.
- This report is the final implementation plan after 10 years of funding initiatives to increase transit ridership along the Stage 2 ION corridor. The items being recommended are consistent with the objectives of the TSS.
- This plan was developed in partnership with Regional and City staff.

- Since 2012, TSS funding in excess of \$7M has been used to support 38 transit-related initiatives in the City of Cambridge.

Financial Implications

All initiatives will be funded by the Region of Waterloo through the Transit Supportive Strategy funding. Two new initiatives and the reallocation of previously committed funding as a contingency for other ongoing TSS projects are included in the plan as follows:

- Purchase and implementation of long-term bicycle storage facilities across approximately nine locations in proximity to ION Bus/Stage 2 ION stations totalling \$75,000. Maintenance and operating costs associated with the long-term bicycle storage facilities, unspecified at this time, will be incorporated into future City operating budgets;
- Reallocate \$159,000 from previously committed TSS initiatives as a contingency for other ongoing TSS initiatives; and
- Transfer remaining funds totalling \$775,000 to the Regional Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing Fund to be used towards facilitating Regional Affordable Housing in Cambridge that supports ridership along the Stage 2 ION route.

Background

As part of the approval for ION implementation in 2011, Regional Council approved an annual allocation of \$1,000,000 for a period of ten years to implement a Regional Transit Supportive Strategy (TSS) for Cambridge. The ultimate goal of the TSS is to accelerate the implementation of Stage 2 ION LRT through initiatives that improve transit ridership and/or encourage transit supportive development, specifically within the Central Transit Corridor in Cambridge. The first annual TSS Implementation Plan was approved by Regional Council in 2012 (P-12-023/E-12-028) and the Region and City of Cambridge signed a TSS Funding Agreement in January 2014. Since 2012, TSS funding in excess of \$7M has been used to support 38 transit-related initiatives in the City of Cambridge.

The TSS Working Group, which consists of City of Cambridge and Region of Waterloo staff, identifies the initiatives that best meet the goals of increasing transit ridership and develops an implementation plan each year for Regional Council's consideration. Public transit falls under the jurisdiction of the Region of Waterloo.

Analysis

Strategic Alignment

PROSPERITY: To support and encourage the growth of a highly competitive local economy where there is opportunity for everyone to contribute and succeed.

Goal #7 - Transportation and Infrastructure

Objective 7.2 Work with the Region and other partners to better coordinate the planning, communication and delivery of infrastructure (including roads and other transportation assets) in Cambridge.

City and Regional staff worked collaboratively to develop meaningful initiatives that will support the growth and economy of Cambridge while meeting the Transit Supportive Strategy program requirements.

Comments

Every year, the TSS Working Group identifies the initiatives that best meet the program requirements and develops an annual implementation plan for Regional Council's consideration. The 2021 TSS Implementation Plan includes two new initiatives and the reallocation of previously committed funding as a contingency for other ongoing TSS initiatives. The two new initiatives proposed in the 2021 plan will require total funding of \$850,000 plus \$159,000 being reallocated to ongoing initiatives as a contingency. A summary of the 2021 Implementation Plan is summarized below:

1. Purchase and implementation of long-term bicycle storage facilities across approximately nine locations in proximity to ION Bus/Stage 2 ION stations totalling \$75,000. Maintenance and operating costs associated with the long-term bicycle storage facilities will be incorporated into future City operating budgets;
2. Reallocate \$159,000 from previously committed TSS initiatives as a contingency for other ongoing TSS initiatives; and
3. Transfer remaining funds totalling \$775,000 to the Regional Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing Fund to be used towards facilitating Regional Affordable Housing in Cambridge that supports ridership along the Stage 2 ION route

A full summary and budget details of initiatives one to three can be found in the Region of Waterloo Report PDL-CPL-21-38, attached as Appendix A.

Existing Policy/By-Law

There is no existing policy/by-law.

Financial Impact

All initiatives will be funded by the Region of Waterloo through the Transit Supportive Strategy funding. Two new initiatives and the reallocation of previously committed funding as a contingency for other ongoing TSS projects are included in the plan as follows:

- Purchase and implementation of long-term bicycle storage facilities across approximately nine locations in proximity to ION Bus/Stage 2 ION stations totalling \$75,000;
- Maintenance and operating costs associated with the long-term bicycle storage facilities will be incorporated into future City operating budgets;
- Reallocate \$159,000 from previously committed TSS initiatives as a contingency for other ongoing TSS initiatives;
- Transfer remaining funds totalling \$775,000 to the Regional Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing Fund to be used towards facilitating Regional Affordable Housing in Cambridge that supports ridership along the Stage 2 ION route.

Public Input

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

Internal/External Consultation

The TSS Working Group works collaboratively to develop the annual implementation plan and consists of City staff as well as Regional staff from Community Planning, Finance, Grand River Transit and Rapid Transit.

Conclusion

This report is the final implementation plan after 10 years of funding initiatives to increase transit ridership along the Stage 2 ION corridor. The items being recommended are consistent with the objectives of the TSS. Transit Supportive Strategy initiatives are focused on laying the foundation for increases in transit ridership and transit-oriented developments over the medium to long term horizon in anticipation of Stage 2 ION LRT.

Regional staff intend to prepare a 10-year review and assessment of TSS projects for Regional Council's information in early 2022. City staff will prepare a subsequent report for City Council's information in early 2022 as well.

Signature

Division Approval



Name: Jamie Croft

Title: Acting Director of Engineering

Reviewed by the CFO

Reviewed by Legal Services

Departmental Approval



Name: Hardy Bromberg

Title: Deputy City Manager, Community Development

City Manager Approval



Name: David Calder

Title: City Manager

Attachments

- Appendix A – Region of Waterloo Report PDL-CPL-21-38, Cambridge Transit Supportive Strategy – 2021 Proposed Implementation Plan

Region of Waterloo
Planning, Development and Legislative Services
Community Planning

To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: September 14, 2021
Report Title: Transit Supportive Strategy for Cambridge – 2021 Proposed Implementation Plan

1. Recommendation:

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the 2021 Implementation Plan for the Transit Supportive Strategy (TSS) for Cambridge as described in Report PDL-CPL-21-38, dated September 14, 2021 to:

- a) Approve the purchase and implementation of long-term bicycle storage facilities across approximately nine locations in proximity to ION Bus/ Stage 2 ION stations totalling \$75,000;
- b) Reallocate \$159,000 from previously committed TSS initiatives as a contingency for other ongoing TSS initiatives; and
- c) Transfer remaining funds totalling \$775,000 to the Regional Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing Fund (see Report CSD-HOU-21-11/PDL-ECD-21-08 dated June 22, 2021) to be used towards facilitating Regional Affordable Housing in Cambridge that supports ridership along the Stage 2 ION route.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To seek Council approval of the 2021 Implementation Plan for the Transit Supportive Strategy for Cambridge.

3. Strategic Plan:

The proposed 2021 TSS Implementation Plan addresses all areas of the Region's Corporate Strategic Plan 2019-2023 including Thriving Economy, Sustainable Transportation, Environment and Climate Action, Healthy, Safe, and Inclusive Communities, and Responsive and Engaging Public Service. Specific actions addressed by this report, among others, include:

- Enhance the transit system to increase ridership and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public (Strategic Objective 2.1); and
- Make affordable housing more available to individuals and families (Strategic Objective 4.2)

4. Key Considerations:

- a) **Final Implementation Plan** – This report is to be the final implementation plan after 10 years of funding initiatives to increase transit ridership along the Stage 2 ION corridor. The items being recommended are consistent with the objectives of the TSS.
- b) **Partnership and Collaboration** - This plan was developed in partnership between Regional and City of Cambridge Staff. In addition, Region staff have been working cross-departmentally to identify opportunities to align strategic directions and support future plans to bolster the Affordable Housing Framework and Waterloo Region Housing Master Plan efforts.
- c) **Long-term Bicycle Lockers** – Similar to long-term bicycle lockers implemented in the City of Waterloo, City of Cambridge staff have proposed to purchase, install, and maintain these lockers in key transit locations throughout the City. This proposed initiative totaling \$75,000 complements other TSS projects that have promoted transit ridership and supported sustainable transportation through investments in transit infrastructure improvements in Cambridge. Other approved TSS projects include: TSS funded transit shelters/sidewalks and accessibility improvements along the Hespeler Road Corridor and other key transit areas in Galt and Preston; creating a multi-use trail on Conestoga Boulevard; Ainslie Terminal Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements; and implementing improved markings and signage for a dedicated bus lane along Hespeler Road.
- d) **Reallocate TSS Funds as a Contingency** – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two previously approved TSS projects (High School Student Transit Promotion and the ION Bus / LRT Connection Promotion) have unused funds totalling approximately \$159,000. The TSS Working Group has agreed that continuing with these promotional projects in the short to medium term is not an effective use of funds. The TSS Working Group has identified several previously approved TSS projects (e.g. The City of Cambridge Growth & Intensification Study; GRT Transit Service Improvements – Routes 51, 53, 75, 72 Flex, and 203 iXpress; and other transit/pedestrian infrastructure improvements) that may have been under-funded as a result of pandemic related timing, deferrals (i.e. GRT 2020 service expansion deferral) and tendering disruptions. Therefore, reallocating these unused funds to be available, as a contingency to other approved TSS

initiatives, as necessary, will enable all ongoing TSS projects to be completed without the need to request additional funds.

- e) **Direct remaining TSS funds totalling \$775,000 towards facilitating Regional Affordable Housing Project(s) in Cambridge, that support ridership along the Stage 2 ION route.** These funds are to be transferred to the Regional Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing Fund (see Report CSD-HOU-21-11/PDL-ECD-21-08 dated June 22, 2021) to be used for items such as, but not limited to:
 - i) Consulting fees related to site selection/feasibility studies and other technical studies/work of strategic properties along the Stage 2 ION route. Funding is required to facilitate technical studies and site readiness for affordable housing development which could include environmental site assessments, market assessment and appraisals, survey and reference plans, zoning applications, external engagement, and additional assessments (heritage, design, engineering) as required;
 - ii) Coordinated purchase of strategic properties along the Stage 2 ION route for future affordable housing development. This proposal is intended to support the coordinated land acquisition strategy (see Report CSD-HOU-21-11/PDL-ECD-21-08 dated June 22, 2021) for future affordable housing development, seeking to collaborate on land acquisition and the development of Regionally owned lands for affordable housing along the Stage 2 ION route; and
 - iii) Preparation of Regionally owned lands for development as affordable housing along the Stage 2 ION route.
- f) **The Synergy of Linking Affordable Housing and Transit Services** – Locating affordable housing units close to the Stage 2 ION Route can help address two important Regional strategic focus areas and also meet the objectives of the Regional Transit Supportive Strategy for Cambridge. Linking affordable housing development along the Stage 2 ION route supports an increase in transit access and ridership, supports green energy while promoting sustainable transportation.

5. Background:

As part of ION approval in 2011, Regional Council approved an annual allocation of \$1,000,000 for ten years to implement transit supportive initiatives in Cambridge through a program known as the Transit Supportive Strategy (TSS). The objective of the TSS is to expedite the development of LRT in Cambridge by enhancing transit ridership and/or encouraging transit-supportive development. Every year, the TSS Working Group identifies the initiatives that best meet the program requirements and develops

an annual implementation plan for Regional Council's consideration. These projects can generally be categorized into four themes:

- 1) transit service and infrastructure improvements;
- 2) marketing and transit promotion;
- 3) long-term transportation or planning studies; and
- 4) financial incentives.

The projects proposed as part of this plan fit the transit service and infrastructure improvements, long-term transportation or planning studies, and financial incentive themes.

6. Public / Area Municipality / Stakeholder Engagement:

The TSS Working Group works collaboratively to develop the annual implementation plan and consists of City of Cambridge and Regional staff representatives including staff from Community Planning, Finance, Grand River Transit, and Rapid Transit.

7. Financial Implications:

The Transit Supportive Strategy for Cambridge was approved as part of the Preferred Rapid Transit System Implementation Option and Staging Plan approved June 15, 2011. This approval included an annual allocation of \$1,000,000 for a ten-year period, subject to budget approval (Report E-11-072). The Region's Approved 2021-2030 Capital Program includes a budget of \$2,000,000 for the Transit Supportive Strategy (TSS) for Cambridge to be funded from the RTMP Reserve Fund (100%). The additional \$1,000,000 allocation is a result of surpluses that have been carried forward from previous TSS implementation plans.

Historical TSS budgets are complicated by initiatives that have not been fully completed and those projects that span multiple years. A budgeted amount of \$1,000,000 has been carried forward from 2020, resulting in a total 2021 Budget of \$2,000,000. Previous commitments comprise \$1,150,000 for the 2021 budget, leaving a balance available for new initiatives of \$850,000.

This proposed TSS implementation plan is designed to commit the remaining Regional TSS funds in its entirety.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

As this is the final TSS implementation plan after 10 years of funding TSS initiatives to increase transit ridership and support the facilitation of Stage 2 ION in Cambridge, Regional staff intend to prepare a 10 year review and assessment of TSS projects for information to Council in early 2022.

9. Attachments / Links:

N/A

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