



## **REPORT**

**REPORT TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**REPORT FROM:** Susan Silver, Senior Advisor, Strategic Initiatives

**DATE:** March 12, 2021

**REPORT NO.:** ADMIN-2021-0018

**RE:** Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2 Applications

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Report No. ADMIN-2021-0018 regarding the Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2 Applications, dated March 12, 2021, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the two project applications submitted by the Town of Halton Hills to the province on March 12, 2021 under the provincial Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2 as outlined in Report No. ADMIN-2021-0018, namely the Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project and the Property Tax System On-Line Services and Website Modernization Project.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In January 2021 the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs announced the Municipal Modernization Intake 2 Program. The program is to assist municipalities to become more efficient and modernize service delivery. Ontario's 405 small and rural municipalities are eligible to apply for funding under two streams – a review stream and an implementation stream. Municipalities may make more than one application. The Town of Halton Hills has made two applications under the implementation stream.

In March 2019, under a previous, similarly named program, the Town of Halton Hills unconditionally received \$156,503 as part of the one-time unconditional Municipal Modernization Program. The funding was made available to municipalities to modernize and find efficiencies. The town dedicated this funding to initiating the Business Concierge program, centralizing fire dispatch and advancing e-services on the town's website. In July 2019 Mayor Bonnette wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to report on how the town had used the unconditional funding and the town received a very favourable response from the Minister to the town's use of the funding.

## **COMMENTS:**

The purpose of this staff report is to seek Council's endorsement of two projects submitted by the Town of Halton Hills to the province for grant funding under the Municipal Modernization Intake 2 Program. A Council resolution supporting the applications will strengthen the applications. Due to the short time frame to prepare applications to meet the March 15, 2021 deadline, staff have already submitted the applications to the province, but ministry staff have indicated that a Council resolution submitted after the deadline will be considered with the application.

The Town of Halton Hills has made two applications under the implementation stream of the Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2, namely the Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project and Property Tax System On-Line Services and Website Modernization Project. Both of these projects are part of the Town's approved 2021 Capital Budget.

The goal of the Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2 is to provide provincial funding for municipalities to undertake projects that increase municipal efficiency and effectiveness. Municipalities can apply under the implementation stream for projects that implement the findings of previous reviews or other evidence-based reports.

To be eligible an implementation project proposal must:

1. Be based on demonstrated evidence of savings the municipality intends to realize through the project;
2. Begin no earlier than January 26, 2021 and be completed by September 30, 2022;
3. Include a high level workplan with project milestones;
4. Include a commitment to providing a final report that forecasts annual savings and other efficiency and effectiveness outcomes for at least three years as a result of project completion;
5. Include a commitment to reporting back one-year post project completion with actual savings over the course of the year and a revised forecast of annual savings and other efficiency and effectiveness outcomes for the following two years.

The provincial program guidelines indicate that priority may be given to projects that address one or more of the following priorities:

- Digital modernization
- Service integration
- Streamlined development approvals
- Shared services/alternative service delivery models

The program will not cover projects where the:

- expected outcome is a reduction in front line services; or
- expected outcome would not result in efficiencies or cost savings; or
- municipality would not be prepared to support any ongoing maintenance costs resulting from the project.

The cost of implementation projects under this program will be shared between the province and the municipality. For municipalities with greater than 5,000 residents the cost sharing is maximum 65% maximum province and 35% minimum municipal. The province indicates it anticipates that the provincial share of most projects will be between \$20,000 and \$250,000.

The two implementation projects submitted by the Town are as follows:

### **Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project**

The Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project leverages the TripSpark Novus (scheduling software) and DriverMate (software for inside the paratransit vehicles) that was successfully configured and installed in 2018. This project leverages the existing infrastructure by adding two modules;

- Trip Broker (for specialized transit services) and
- TripSpark Passenger Portal (Web/Mobile application for trip booking and cancellations for specialized transit, as well as support passenger trip information).

The TripSpark software is an on-line/mobile application for clients to self-serve and increase booking efficiency. The software will also validate taxi usage by Town staff and ensure trip costs are defined by the Town prior to the trip delivery through a taxi vendor. The project also includes the installation of at least four kiosks at municipal locations to allow customers to book an on-line trip while out in the community.

This software also supports accessibility by allowing customers to book online. It further supports nonverbal customers. The software validates taxi program usage and sets trip cost parameter potentially reducing Town cost for contractual services. Through the Municipal Modernization Program Phase 2 application the Town has submitted an estimated maximum cost of \$91,300 for this project.

### **Property Tax System On-Line Services and Website Modernization Project**

The purpose of this project is to expand the functionality of the Town's new tax system to enable online/self-service options to residents. Taxpayers have come to expect online services for many Town functions, especially tax related items.

Revenue and Taxation and ITS divisions are in the process of implementing a new tax system to replace Vailtech. The new tax system has gone live for the January 2021 interim billing cycle. With the previous Vailtech system, there was never an opportunity to offer online/self-services due to system limitations. The new tax system offers online options. The approach adopted by staff is to implement a fully functioning and stable tax system for 2021 and then separately implement online service modules later in 2021. Through the Municipal Modernization Program Phase 2 application the Town has submitted an estimated maximum cost of \$130,000 for this project.

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Local autonomy and Advocacy Priority identifies the province as a focus area for supporting local autonomy, including seeking financial support.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Both the Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project and the Property Tax System On-Line Services and Website Modernization Project represent approved capital projects in the 2021 Capital Budget.

**CONSULTATION:**

The Acting CAO and staff provided input on the potential candidates for submission. Information and input was received from the program areas responsible for the projects as well as Finance for the projects that were submitted.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

No public engagement is required for the submission of the funding applications.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

Not applicable.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Should the Town be successful in its application the appropriate communications in concert with the province will be prepared and publicly released.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff have submitted applications for the Online/Mobile Transit Booking and the Scheduling Project and Online/Mobile Transit Booking and Scheduling Project for consideration under the provincial Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Leighton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Moya Jane Leighton, Director of Finance & Town Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Cockfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Cockfield, Director of Strategic Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Mills". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer