

STAFF REPORT: ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation
 Committee

MEETING DATE: April 10, 2012

REPORT NO.: EPW.12.031

SUBJECT: Grey County – Lower Tier
 Cooperation Opportunities.

PREPARED BY: Reg Russwurm, Director of
 Engineering and Public Works

A. Recommendations

THAT Council supports Engineering and Public Works Staff coordinating with the County and other lower tier municipalities in the County to develop the concepts of greater coordination for municipal structure inspection, electrical expertise and sign reflectivity testing.

B. Background

The Director of Transportation for the County of Grey organised a meeting of the head of the various road authorities to discuss opportunities for cooperation between and among the County and the lower tier municipalities. The goal was to find means to work collaboratively together to provide a better service to the public at reduced costs.

Several opportunities were identified; three however were shortlisted as having the most potential of positive impact in the short term. These opportunities are:

1. The completion of municipal structure (bridge) assessments.
2. Coordinate maintenance of electrical infrastructure (traffic control signals, beacons, illumination).
3. Coordinate the completion of the sign reflectivity testing.

It appears all municipalities spend approximately \$30,000/year on bridge inspection. The County has estimated that one third of the current costs expended on consultants could be saved (County Report TR-TAPS-18-12). Similarly, consultants and contractors are used extensively to provide electrical advice and servicing. There is a possibility that centralised electrical expertise will be financially beneficial. Furthermore all municipalities complete sign reflectivity testing to mitigate liability. There is an opportunity for coordination to provide an economy of scale which results in cost savings.

One viable option to retain the expertise required under the three initiatives and realise savings is for the County or one of the lower tier municipalities to hire an employee who would then be “hired” out to the other municipalities on a fee for service or pro-rated basis. The model of how this would occur has not been matured.

Instead of a public sector employee, a consultant or contractor could be cooperatively retained to provide the same service, however it is not felt the same savings could be realised. A key benefit of in-house expertise is the ready availability of an expert at low marginal cost.

Upon the endorsement of these initiatives by Council, Staff will continue discussions with the County and other lower tier municipalities to develop the concept for the future deliberation of Council. The key consideration will be whether there is a positive cost savings to the municipalities involved.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

This report furthers the Town's Strategic Goal #2 "Addressing the Town's municipal infrastructure needs" and Strategic Goal #6 "Providing a strong well managed municipal government".

D. Environmental Impacts

None

E. Financial Impact

The reimbursement of the costs that will be incurred will be either based on a pro-rated basis or on a fee for service basis, or a combination of both

F. In Consultation With

Jim McCannell, Manager of Roads and Drainage

G. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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