

## **Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**

### **Corporate Services**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Cathy J.E. Hoffman, MPA, CHRL  
General Manager, Corporate Services /Chief Human Resource Officer

**Date:** December 8, 2020

**Subject:** Ontario's COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream

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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. The Ontario COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream in the amount of \$1,264,874 be applied for to cover the following projects:
  - Library Radio-Frequency Identification & Self Service;
  - Recording Studio;
  - Public Works Facility Infrastructure Upgrades; and
  - Corporate Training Equipment

### **Background**

The Ontario government is providing up to \$1.05 billion in combined federal-provincial funding through the new COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure stream to build or renovate health and safety related projects in long-term care, education and municipalities. The funding is part of the federal government's Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program and reinforces the commitment of both the federal and provincial governments to protect the health and well-being of individuals and families during the pandemic.

A total of \$1,264,874 will be allocated to the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

Eligible projects under the COVID-19 Resilience stream will fall under four main categories:

- Community, recreation, health and education renovations (e.g. retrofits, repairs or upgrades to long-term care homes, publicly funded schools and co-located childcare centre facilities, recreation centres or shelters);
- COVID-19 response infrastructure (e.g. heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, new builds or renovations to enable physical distancing);
- Active transportation (e.g. parks, trails); and
- Disaster mitigation, adaptation, or remediation (e.g. flood mitigation).

The COVID-19 Resilience stream will deliver:

- Up to \$700 million for education-related projects to be nominated and administered by the Ministry of Education;
- An allocation-based program that will deliver \$250 million to municipalities to address critical local infrastructure needs, including \$6.5 million that will be directed toward Indigenous and on-reserve education, through the Ministry of Infrastructure in collaboration with the Ministries of Education and Indigenous Affairs; and
- Up to \$100 million for long-term care projects to be identified and administered by the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Eligible projects must begin by September 30, 2021 and be completed by December 31, 2021. Additional details about the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream and intake opening dates will be available in the days and weeks ahead.

### **Comments**

Each project identified within the scope of the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream and being recommended in this report are described below.

#### **Library Radio-Frequency Identification & Self Service**

Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) and touchless self-checkout is not a new or innovative technology but it has become a best practice in public libraries across North America. Currently, Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL) has six self-checkout machines located in Blenheim, Bothwell, Chatham, Dresden, Ridgeway, Tilbury and Wallaceburg. These machines are not touchless, are not equipped with RFID and have reached end of life in terms of their technology.

Implementing RFID technology will enable CKPL to leverage technology to support efficient service delivery to library patrons. It will enable customers to check out their own materials, which allows for patron confidentiality and patron responsibility for their own safety. Additionally, it frees up staff time from checking out each item individually and devote more time to providing excellent customer service and connections to library resources and services.

Open+ Count will assist CKPL to track the number of patrons at each branch location allowing CKPL to monitor branch capacity, patron counts through the door and peak usage, which will greatly assist with prioritizing staffing.

The benefits to CKPL include:

- enhanced staff and patron health and safety
- improve customer service and increase customer satisfaction
- Cashless transactions
- increased item security
- increased inventory control and accuracy

### Recording Studio

CKPL is creating a Recording Studio that could be used by all areas of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to promote services and resources. The bookable free-to-use recording studio will provide equipment and software for staff from any municipal department to work on audio and video projects and programs, create podcasts, record songs and edit projects. When not in use by staff, the room and equipment could be made available to Chatham-Kent residents.

The benefits to CKPL and the Municipality include:

- Access to equipment and technology to produce high quality virtual programs promoting library services and resources
- Shared resource = reduction in duplication of equipment across departments
- Maximizes use of expensive equipment

### Public Works Facility Infrastructure Upgrades

Public Works plans to implement Public Works facility infrastructure upgrades in the amount of \$679,000 to improve communications, increase training efficiency and enhance COVID safety.

Currently, only one of the eleven Public Works' garages has the capability to arrange employee team meetings, physically distance and connect remotely to a communication or training meeting. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the need for timely communication to all employees. Currently management communications must be done in person over multiple days. With the proposed new communication and building upgrades, training efficiencies will increase allowing the majority of our legislated training to be done virtually. Completing this training virtually will gain efficiencies by reducing staff travel time, vehicle lifecycle and mileage. Most of the public works garages were built decades ago and were never designed to accommodate 21<sup>st</sup> century technology or to accommodate the physically distancing requirements of the ongoing pandemic.

This investment will pay dividends both directly with cost efficiencies and indirectly with management being able to communicate to all staff at the same time. As many of the services we offer are legislated, Public Works has an increased vulnerability to COVID-19 and these upgrades will provide another level of risk management. In addition, the Public Works division faces many retirements in the near future and it is important that an efficient means is found to quickly train our new employees so they can contribute efficiently.

### Corporate Training Equipment

In response to the ongoing pandemic, there is an increased need to effectively conduct daily business remotely. At current, our technology at CKLearning is inadequate for our corporation to be most efficient, effective and maximize our ability to create safe online and remote options and still achieve business continuity surrounding:

- facilitating remote and online mandatory and developmental training for employees
- conducting remote interviews to fill vacancies
- hosting and participating in virtual meetings, conferences and seminars
- leveraging technological and remote working advancements that have changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic

This investment will enable us to fulfill our training requirements by taking advantage of safer remote and blended training programs and by allowing us to ensure that our business units remain resilient and prepared for potential disruption now and in the future. Additionally, it enables us to provide dedicated space for managers and supervisors to keep remote workforces connected and will also allow us to build a strong foundation to leverage innovation and technology. If approved, this will be achieved through the conversion of four classrooms at CKLearning to multi-use spaces equipped with the required technology to achieve all of the Learning & Organizational Development business continuity outcomes outlined above.

### **Consultation**

The Executive Management Team reviewed several projects and identified the projects put forward that meet the criteria of the funding stream.

### **Financial Implications**

The following outlines the costs associated with the various project items that would be applied for through the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Funding.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Library Radio-Frequency Identification & Self Service	\$510,000
Recording Studio	\$ 20,000
Public Works facility infrastructure upgrades	\$ 679,874
Corporate Training Equipment	\$ 55,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,264,874</b>
Grant Available	<b>\$ 1,264,874</b>

Prepared by:

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Attachments: None

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