

Funding for Arterial Road Widening Backlog

Recommendation:

That the November 25, 2011, Transportation Services report 2011TS6666 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides a summary of potential funding options for widening arterial roads over the next ten years.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 16, 2011, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed.

That Administration bring options to the 2012 – 2014 Capital Budget on the expansion of two to four-lane arterial roads, as well as funding options for four to six lane arterial roads.

Report

This is an update to a previous (February 8, 2011) Transportation Services report 2011TS3550 on the status of road widening priorities. The previous report indicated that up to \$170 million would be needed in the next ten years to widen arterial roads not included as part of the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw. These are locations where developers had already constructed the first two lanes before the Bylaw was amended to increase the developer's requirement to four lanes. It also includes locations where widening from four to six lanes is

required. Additional funding beyond the next ten years will be needed to continue to upgrade these arterial roads.

The Northeast Anthony Henday Drive connector roadways that will need to be constructed before November 1, 2016, are not included in this list. Separate funding for these connector roadways will need to be identified in the 2015 – 2017 Capital Priority Plan. However, since these Northeast Henday connectors are included in the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw, the City will eventually recover these funds as development occurs. Also, not included in this list are improvements to major corridors such as Whitemud Drive, Terwillegar Drive, or Yellowhead Trail.

Administration has undertaken additional work to determine the unfunded arterial roadways along with a review of the potential costs associated with them. There are approximately 34 kilometres of unfunded projects that are the City's responsibility. The majority of these arterials are adjacent to complete or nearly complete neighbourhoods.

The following criteria are used to determine the need to widen arterial roadways:

- existing traffic volumes
- projected traffic volumes in future years
- bus volumes
- whether or not the road is a truck route
- existing pavement conditions
- collision history
- potential of coordination with developer work

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- potential to coordinate with other City funded initiatives (i.e. Transit Centres, Recreation Centres)
- options for public transit solutions to accommodate commuter traffic

In general, widening from two to four lanes is considered when the daily two-way traffic volumes exceed 15,000 vehicles per day. Similarly, widening from four to six lanes is considered when the volumes exceed 35,000 vehicles per day.

Approximately \$50 million in funding is required to implement the immediate two to four-lane widening priorities. This would address those locations that meet or will soon meet the volume criteria. Four to six-lane needs over the same period are estimated at \$30 million. In the five to ten-year time horizon an additional \$60 to \$70 million will be required. Beyond ten years, additional funding will be needed until the City's widening obligations are completed. The total cost over the next ten years is approximately \$150 million. Arterial widening projects will need to be considered relative to available funding and departmental capital priorities.

The values above represent four and six lane widening projects of considerable length. It is possible to provide localized capacity improvements by limiting widening at key signalized intersections while deferring the "mid-block" widening to a later date. This would provide localized congestion relief at a lower initial cost; however, it does result in higher overall costs in the long-term.

Funding Options

In the draft 2012 - 2014 Capital Priorities Plan there is no funding allocated to roadway growth projects. This is due to the limited funding available and the fact that many of the transportation renewal needs are not being met. Should City Council wish to fund some level of roadway widening, the following options are available:

1. Change the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw to include this funding short-fall as a special rate in each of the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw Basins or as a general city-wide assessment. This would require negotiations with Urban Development Institute and an amendment to Bylaw 14380, the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw.
2. Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw Recoveries – Over the past few years the City has advanced a number of roadways that are eligible for recovery as part of the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw. These included the Anthony Henday Drive connector roadway construction for the Northwest Anthony Henday Drive. Much of this is recoverable through the Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw process over the next several years, depending on the rate of development. The value of the recoveries will be in the order of \$50 million. However, the rate of recovery is unknown as it is dependant on development activity as developers enter into subdivision servicing agreements. Depending on the original funding source for these City front-ended Arterial Roads for Development Bylaw projects, funds recovered from developers

could be used to fund some of the road widening backlog.

3. Special One-time Grants – Administration and City Council could work with the Provincial and Federal Governments to obtain one-time funding grants to complete this work. This same approach may also be considered for the Northeast Anthony Henday Drive connectors that will need to be constructed before 2016. In the past, the Province has been reluctant to entertain the idea of special one-time grants as their position has been that they provide the City adequate grants at this time.
4. Regular Budget process – Fund these road improvements through the current budget. Using the \$150 million over ten years as a baseline, this would represent \$45 million in the 2012 – 2014 Capital Plan. From a department priority perspective, Administration would recommend directing funding to other underfunded projects such as active modes, arterial and streetlight rehabilitation, and transit fleet prior to arterial road widening.

In all but the first option, special money directed to upgrading these roadways would circumvent the transportation or corporate project ranking process. Unless the locations benefit transit or goods movement, the projects could be interpreted as being contrary to the Corporate Goal of “Shift Edmonton’s Transportation Mode.” The prioritization process established for transportation projects considers all projects and looks to fund those with the highest priority based on the established criterion.

Should City Council wish to provide immediate funding for arterial roadway widening, Administration should be directed to fund the arterial road backlog out of Arterial Roadway Assessment recoveries.

Corporate Outcomes

- Edmonton has sustainable infrastructure that fosters and supports civic and community needs.
- Goods and services move efficiently through the city.
- The City has well managed and sustainable assets and services.
- The City of Edmonton delivers valued, quality, cost effective services to its citizens.

Budget/Financial Implications

The recommended 2012 – 2014 Capital Budget does not provide for new growth funding for arterial road widening.

Others Reviewing this Report

L. Rosen, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer