



Subject: East Side Employment Lands - Design Procurement

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2024-47

Meeting Date: February 27, 2024

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2024-47 be received; and

That Associated Engineering be awarded the contract to design the servicing infrastructure of the East Side Employment Lands (ESEL); and,

That this project be funded from the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade's (MEDJCT) Southwestern Ontario Development Fund (SWODF) grant.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to hire Associated Engineering to design the servicing infrastructure of the ESEL and to fund the project from the MEDJCT SWODF grant.

Background:

The ESEL, shown in Appendix A, are located at the north end of Port Colborne, east of the Welland Canal, north of Second Concession Road, south of Third Concession Road, and west of Highway 140. These lands are not serviced, permit industrial use, and are primarily owned by the City of Port Colborne and Transport Canada. However, some lands are owned privately.

In 2014, AECOM Engineering were retained to develop a master plan for servicing the ESEL and completing improvements to Progress Drive (formerly Ramey Road) and the Third Concession Road. The rationale for undertaking this master plan was to help the City better respond to development inquiries for industrial land, meet economic growth objectives, and to allow for coordination with the Niagara Region to extend services under the canal to Second Concession Road.

Discussion:

Over the past three years, there has been a significant increase in the number of inquiries from site selectors, investors, and developers interested in serviced industrial land.

Niagara Region has a project within their existing capital works plan to bring municipal services and utilities on the west side of the City from Barrick Road, under the canal, to the east side to service the ESEL and future industrial development. In recent discussions with senior leadership and Public Works officials at the Niagara Region, City staff have been advised that the canal crossing servicing project will be completed in the third quarter of 2027.

In a previous Council report (number: 2023-109), City staff brought forward a proposal to design and construct specific portions of the ESEL in conjunction with a private partner to service and construct a new industrial site. Since then, the private partner chose an alternative serviced site outside of the City.

Given the continued interest from developers, staff would like to proceed with obtaining engineering and design services to have construction drawings completed to service the subject lands. Public Works staff initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process (reference # 2023-52) to invite qualified engineering firms to submit proposals. After the RFPs were received and evaluated, Associated Engineering were selected as the preferred proponent.

Upon approval of this report, staff will work closely with Associated Engineering to complete the design work including geotechnical work, a species at risk study, a topographical survey, and other necessary studies and assessments. The estimated cost of this work is \$550,000, which are eligible expenses under the MEDJCT's SWODF grant received by the City.

While design is underway, staff are finalizing cost estimates, funding strategies, and potential public-private partnerships for the completion of the servicing infrastructure.

Internal Consultations:

Discussions regarding the servicing and redevelopment of the City's ESELs have involved Corporate Services, Economic Development, Planning, Building, Public Works, and the Office of the Mayor and CAO.

Financial Implications

Staff have are recommending awarding the RFP for the design of the ESEL and have determined that \$550,000 is required to complete the design and related work.

The City's application to the MEDJCT and SWODF was approved for the maximum grant contribution of \$1.5 million. The ESEL servicing project was the project that was proposed in the SWODF application, which resulted in the granting of the funds to the City. Staff are recommending that SWODF be the funding source for this component of the project as it is an eligible expense.

Public Engagement:

Not Applicable

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillars of the strategic plan:

- Environment and Climate Change
 - Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Increased Housing Options
 - Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
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Conclusion:

The City of Port Colborne, along with Niagara Region, has a shortage of serviced industrial land and this deficiency hinders investment attraction efforts. The Niagara Region's capital project to bring municipal services and utilities under the canal in 2027 will support the City's efforts to service the ESEL. City staff are recommending that Associated Engineering be selected as the firm to complete the design of the ESEL servicing to ensure the success of future phases and the overall construction project. Staff are recommending that MEDJCT SWODF be the funding source for the \$550,000 estimated cost.

Appendices:

- a. East Side Employment Lands - Map

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.