



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Margaret Misek-Evans, Chief Administrative Officer

Date to Council: December 12, 2023

Report Number: CAO-2023-08

Subject: Amendments to ERCA Non-Mandatory Cost Apportioning Agreement

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report No. CAO-2023-08, Amendments to ERCA Non-Mandatory Cost Apportioning Agreement **be received**;

And that direction be given to Administration **to evaluate** the ERCA Land Acquisition Program and **review alternatives** for ecological stewardship initiatives in 2024 with a report out to Council prior to deliberations for the 2025 operating budget;

And further that By-law No. 2023-118, being a by-law to amend By-law No. 2023-111, to authorize the execution of a revised Cost Apportioning Agreement between the Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh and Essex Region Conservation Authority for a reduced funding contribution for non-mandatory ERCA programs and services as provided in Report CAO-2023-08 **be given consideration** for first, second, third and final reading.

Background

On November 14, 2023, Council received a presentation from Tim Byrne, Executive Director of the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) regarding the new arrangements for non-mandatory programs and services and the need for a separate

agreement with member municipalities to cost share in these items. Accordingly, Council considered and approved the recommendations to Report No. FS-2023-11, “Essex Region Conservation Authority Non-Mandatory Programs and Services Cost Apportioning Agreement” and adopted By-law No. 2023-111, being a By-Law to authorize the execution of a Cost Apportioning Agreement between the Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh and Essex Region Conservation Authority for a funding contribution for non-mandatory ERCA programs and services.

Since that time, we were advised that the City of Windsor decisions to not support the Land Acquisition fund contribution and to reduce its support for the Agricultural Stewardship and Outreach program would necessitate changes to the agreement recently adopted by Council. Without full participation by all member municipalities, the MVCA method of cost apportionment may not be applied. Accordingly, any funding of these elements of the non-mandatory program will be of a voluntary contribution. Subsequent to the Windsor decision, ERCA decided to remove the Agricultural Stewardship and Outreach program from the suite of non-mandatory programs levied in 2024, pending a full analysis of this program area over the next 12 months.

This leaves the remaining member municipalities to determine what level, if any, to which they would support the Land Acquisition fund. The City has decided to proceed with its own reserve fund in support of land acquisition and protection. ERCA notes that this decision disrupts the 20+ year model of the Clean Water~Green Spaces land protection and acquisition program by removing approximately 51% of the funding. This component of the non-mandatory programs and services accounts for over half of the \$900,000 estimated annual budget. Without Windsor’s contribution, the remaining municipalities would contribute up to \$256,350 should they continue at the same levels of support. For Tecumseh, the 2024 allocation was \$40,800, in line with our average annual contribution of \$41,844.

Comments

At this time, it is Administration’s position that Tecumseh take a pause on the Land Acquisition fund contribution for 2024 in order to permit an evaluation of the past performance of the fund, including such considerations as:

- Length of time the Land Acquisition program has been in effect;
- Lands purchased through the fund, including location, size, purchase price and ecological considerations for acquisition; and
- Levels of contribution to the program by each member municipality over its tenure.

Additionally, Administration would use this period to review other alternatives for ecological land stewardship and evaluate the merits of these alternatives to the ERCA program.

This work is planned for 2024 with in-house resources and a planned report out to Council prior to the 2025 budget deliberations.

Consultations

Development Services
Financial Services
Legislative Services & Clerk

Financial Implications

The original 2024 financial commitment under the recently approved cost-apportioning agreement with ERCA is \$73,617. With these changes to the programs as described herein, this commitment would be reduced to \$25,889.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2023-2026 Strategic Priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed by:

Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
Director Development Services

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

Robert Auger, LL.B.
Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None