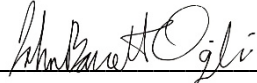




WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☒	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: Mayor Zebian and Members of West Hants Regional Municipality Council

Submitted by: 
John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator

Date: 2025-09-09

Subject: Award of RFP# WHRMPL25-01: Consulting Services to Complete a Zero Emissions Transportation Feasibility Study

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

NS *Municipal Government Act*, Section 65A

RECOMMENDATIONS

...that Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve awarding RFP# WHRMPL25-01 for consulting services to complete a zero-emissions transportation feasibility study to WSP Canada Inc., for the proposed cost of \$92,845.00 plus applicable taxes.

... that Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a 10% consulting contingency in the amount of \$9,284.50 plus applicable taxes for the zero-emissions transportation feasibility study.

BACKGROUND

Property ☐	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☒	Social ☒	Economic ☒	Councillor Activity ☐
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The Municipal climate action goal is to reduce corporate and community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 45% 2030. To progress toward this goal, the WHRM *GHG Emission Local Action Plan* includes transport-focused action items such as:

- item 6.3, to explore opportunities to create a transportation hub; and
- item 6.4, to integrate active transportation considerations into land use planning decisions.

On September 26, 2023, Council made the following motion:

“...that Council direct staff to explore funding opportunities for a transportation feasibility study”.

The Climate Action Committee (CAC) then included exploring accessible transportation feasibility in the 2024 and 2025 CAC Work Plans.

Following the direction from Council, WHRM applied unsuccessfully to the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund in November 2023 for funding to complete a transportation feasibility study. As this application was denied, staff continued to explore other avenues of funding the study. Staff worked with the NS Department of Energy to identify and apply for departmental funding aligned with the Provincial *Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth* for a transportation feasibility study, with a focus on zero-emissions options. This application was successful, allowing staff to move forward with issuing a request for proposals (RFP) from consulting firms to perform the study.

DISCUSSION

This zero-emissions transportation feasibility study will provide WHRM with scientifically developed advice for the next steps to implement a local transit service. It will produce cost estimates, vehicle-type options, system design options, infrastructure requirements, GHG emissions estimates, and incorporate feedback from stakeholders and the public. It will be the backbone for WHRM to apply for grants to set up a transportation system in Council’s preferred format and do further analysis on specific components of such a system. By integrating this study with research and reporting done by Link Nova Scotia (formerly the Joint Regional Transportation Agency), WHRM can tap into existing and future opportunities to provide a holistic transportation system for the region.

Staff issued an RFP for consulting services to complete a zero-emissions transportation feasibility study on June 16, 2025. The original deadline for proposals was June 30, 2025, so staff could bring forward a recommendation for the July 8 Committee of the Whole meeting; however, following multiple requests for extensions, staff extended the deadline to July 28, 2025. This helped to ensure multiple proposals were submitted, giving WHRM options to evaluate and proponents time to offer quality submittals. The RFP timeline is shown below:

- 1) Posting Date: June 16, 2025
- 2) Closing Date: July 28, 2025
- 3) Award Date: September 24, 2025 (following anticipated final approval by Council on September 23, 2025)

There were three (3) proposals submitted, which are shown in Table 1 below with pricing.

Table 1: Proposals Submitted

Proponent	Price (not including HST)
Parsons Inc.	\$71,905.00
WSP Canada Inc.	\$92,845.00
Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC)	\$99,282.00

Planning and Development and Climate Action staff reviewed and scored each proposal from a technical and financial standpoint. Despite not being the lowest-cost option, staff determined based on technical scoring and overall quality of the proposal that WSP Canada Inc. is the recommended proponent. All proposals met the minimum 75% score in technical points. The overall score for each proponent is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Proposal Scoring

Proponent	Technical Score (%)	Financial Score (%)	Overall Score (%)
Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC)	84	73	81
Parsons Inc.	77	100	84
WSP Canada Inc.	88	77	85

Due to the extremely small difference in scores of the proposals, staff reviewed the proposals and scoring multiple times to ensure fairness. Distinct factors that separated the quality of the submittals for the purposes of this study include the total hours dedicated by the proponent for this study, the quantity and format of stakeholder and public engagement, and the ability to focus on the two (2) major themes of this study, which are accessible transportation options and a zero emissions system.

The hours dedicated to this study varied in each proposal from 568-617 hours. Along with the work breakdown structure, this indicated to staff the dedication of each proposal to rigorously evaluating and modelling options and spending significant amounts of time gathering stakeholder and public feedback.

The number of engagement sessions with stakeholders and the public varied between proposals for one (1) stakeholder and one (1) public session, up to five (5) stakeholder and five (5) public sessions. The format of the stakeholder and public sessions also varied, with some proposed to be online/virtual and others proposed to be in person. The quantity, format, and timing of these sessions was an important factor in the overall quality of proposals, indicating

how seriously stakeholder and public feedback will be included in recommendations for a local, zero-emissions transportation system.

As the RFP indicated, this study not only involves the feasibility of an accessible transportation system for WHRM, but also the benefits, costs, infrastructure, and GHG emissions implications associated with a zero emissions system. A key requirement of the funding received was that the Municipality study zero emissions options, making this a major portion of the project. Demonstrating an ability to focus on both themes in a balanced manner was a significant part of the evaluation. Staff felt during the evaluation that the proposal from WSP Canada Inc. demonstrated the strongest balance of both themes and how to study a local zero emissions transportation system that will offer recommendations to serve residents, commuters, and stakeholders/service providers within the region.

NEXT STEPS

Pending Council approval, staff will award the contract to the successful proponent to begin the zero-emissions transportation feasibility study immediately after. Staff will then work with the consulting team to complete the study and grant reporting requirements before March 31, 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Table 3: Proposed Project Cost

Proposed Price	\$92,845.00
Contingency (10%)	\$9,284.50
Non-Recoverable Tax (3.86%)	\$3,942.20
Total Proposed Project Cost	\$106,071.70
2025-26 Budget Value	\$100,000.00
Variance (over budget)	(\$6,071.70)

Table 4: Project Funding Sources

Provincial Grant	\$80,000.00
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Housing Accelerator Fund (includes 10% contingency)	\$26,071.70
Total Project Budget	\$106,071.70

The provincial funding will reduce the draw from the Housing Accelerator Fund, under action 10.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may choose not to move forward with the zero-emissions transportation feasibility study, which would cause the Provincial Government to retract the grant provided for this project.

ATTACHMENTS

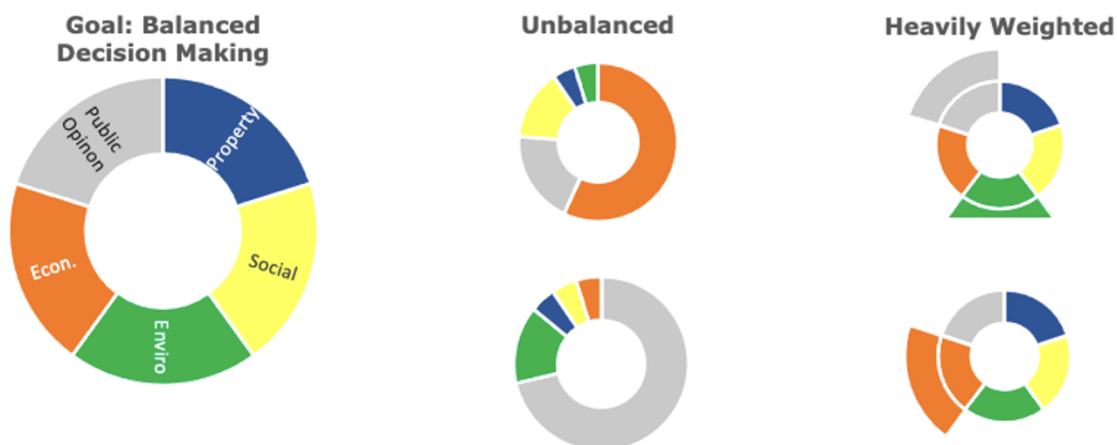
There are no attachments to this report.

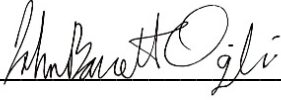
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

The report is very detailed in its description of the procurement process and specifically the rationale and priorities set when evaluating the proposals for the feasibility study. Staff have made a recommendation that they feel reflect the best value.

I support the recommendation.

Council has been provided with a reference taken from the *Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy*, Appendix C “Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole”, as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.



Report Prepared by: _____

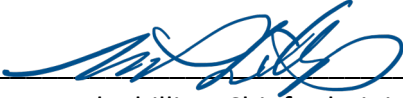
John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator

Report Reviewed by: _____

Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning and Development

Report Reviewed by: _____

Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services

Report Approved by: _____

Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer