

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program Agreement

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That County Council hereby authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Corporate Services to execute a Funding Agreement with the Ministry of the Solicitor General, under the Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program, as outlined in Report CS 2024-03.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Court Security and Prisoner Transportation (CSPT) Program provides partial funding for municipal court security and prisoner transportation costs
 - 2024 budget estimate for court security and prisoner transportation costs related to the County's Provincial Offices Administration (POA) is \$19,000
 - 2024 court security grant - \$82,936 to support Woodstock Police Services providing court security and prisoner transportation for the Oxford County Court House
- 2024 funding allocation under the CSPT program – up to \$45,649

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Subject to the County entering into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry, the Ministry will provide allocations of funding based on the County's 2022 provincial court security and prisoner transportation costs. Funding allocations will be received in four instalments over the course of the year – the first being upon final execution of the funding agreement (due February 16); the second instalment upon the Province's receipt and approval of the County's 2023 Annual Financial Report; and, the remaining two instalments will be released in September and December 2024 respectively.

Financial Impact

A provision for Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Funding was not included in the 2024 budget, as the Ministry announcement for allocations was not provided until after the County’s annual budget approval. Considering funding allocations are determined in relation to all municipalities’ CSPT actual costs for two years prior to the transfer payment, and is limited to a \$125 million provincial funding commitment, it is not a calculation that can accurately be estimated by municipalities.

Transfer Payment Agreements have now been issued to all eligible municipalities and the County’s 2024 allocation has been calculated to be \$45,649.

Communications

The communications requirements of the transfer payment agreement indicate that the County will acknowledge the Province’s financial support for these services and any related publications be qualified as views of the County that do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
		Goal 3.4 – Financial sustainability

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

In response to *The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR)* that was completed in 2008, commencing in 2012 the Province began uploading costs of court security (including prisoner transportation) over seven years, by providing funding to municipalities to a maximum of \$125 million annually at maturity. Table 1 below illustrates the timing of the upload and the percentage of \$125 million allocated to municipalities across the Province over the transition period.

Table 1 – Provincial Upload Schedule – Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Costs

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Court Security	14%	29%	43%	57%	71%	86%	100%

In 2018, the newly elected provincial government immediately initiated a province-wide review of government expenditures. In the ensuing years, municipalities have received notice of the continuation on the CSPT funding program on an annual basis early within the fiscal year. The final review report was released by the Ministry in January 2022, committing to continue the CSPT Funding Program with no changes to the overall funding envelope, subject to the regular fiscal process.

In addition, a phased approach is being taken in response to the program review to ensure a pathway for future planning and continuous improvement founded on evidence that addresses gaps in the program review. In 2022 the first step in this phased approach was implemented by enhancing reporting requirements for the CSPT Funding Program through the introduction of a performance measurement framework. This is designed to assist in creating a foundation for continuous quality improvement and program efficiencies that are evidence-based.

Comments

An expenditure-based model is used to determine funding allocations for each municipality eligible for funding under the CSPT Program. The 2024 CSPT funding allocations are based on each municipality's relative share of the total 2022 court security and prisoner transportation costs across the province. As a result, the County's allocation for 2024 in comparison to years 2018 to 2023 is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – 2018 – 2024 CSPT Funding Allocations vs Costs for Oxford County

Calendar Year	County Allocation	Actual/Budget Costs	% of Actual/ Budget Court Security Costs ^{1,2}
2018	\$10,850	\$131,358	8.3%
2019	9,842	108,579	9.1%
2020	99,911	51,525	193.9%
2021	30,431	95,088	32.0%
2022	39,522	60,203	65.6%
2023	73,958	18,627	397.0%
2024	45,649	101,936	44.8%
Total	\$310,163	\$567,316	54.7%

Note 1: 2024 percentage is based on 2024 approved budget costs

Note 2: 2018 was the first year court security costs includes the court security and prisoner transportation grant to the City of Woodstock

Note 3: 2021 CSPT allocation was reduced by \$48,387 due to suspended court proceedings in response to the pandemic resulting in significant decrease in court security and prisoner transportation costs – a similar adjustment will likely be imposed in 2024 due to 2023 actual costs incurred being less than the funding allocation

Staff continue to compile the prescribed performance measures for reporting to the Ministry at the end of the first quarter in the following calendar year. The performance measures include:

- Number of court appearances – broken down by in-person and virtual;
- Number of full-time sworn police officers and special constables supporting prisoner transportation and/or court security – broken down by sworn police officers and special constables; and
- Number of prisoner transportation trips – broken down by sworn police officers and special constables.

CONCLUSIONS

Securing a Funding Agreement for the CSPT Program will allow the County to receive up to \$45,649 in 2024 to offset the cost of providing court security and prisoner transportation in the Provincial Offenses Courtroom and offices, and the grant paid to the City of Woodstock.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Lynn S. Buchner, CPA, CGA
Director of Corporate Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer