



**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**
Staff Report

REPORT NO: CAO-2024-03
TO: Council
SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Chambers, Chief Administrative Officer
PREPARED BY: Sharon Chambers, Chief Administrative Officer
REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: February 26, 2024
SUBJECT: Prime Minister's Path: Options for Next Steps

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive Report CAO-2024-03 Prime Ministers Path: Options for Next Steps; and further,

That Council directs staff to proceed with Option 1, as presented in Report CAO-2024-03.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to provide options to Council on the next steps as it relates to the Prime Ministers Path statues, in accordance with the following motion adopted by Council at its January 15, 2024, Regular Council Meeting:

WHEREAS in 2020 the Township of Wilmot retained First Peoples Group to assist the Township with a consultation process on the future of the Prime Ministers Path Statues; and,

WHEREAS on July 5, 2021, Wilmot Council received Report CAO-2021-03 Presentation of Findings and Recommendations First Peoples Group Prime Ministers Path Community Engagement recommending:

THAT the report from First Peoples Group dated June 30, 2021, be endorsed,

THAT staff arrange for the immediate removal and temporary storage of the four remaining statues on the Prime Ministers Path and discontinue any future expansion or investment in the Prime Ministers Path as it exists today;

THAT staff work with the Township solicitor to activate the termination clause in the agreement with Createscape;

AND FURTHER, THAT staff be directed to report back to Council with an implementation plan for the incorporation of the remaining recommendations from First Peoples Group, including;

- a) Creating a working group comprised of a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township to discuss, develop and suggest plans for the implementation of next steps centred in community cohesion and healing.*
- b) Commitment to transforming community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township in a way that encourages greater openness, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making; and further,*

WHEREAS on July 5, 2021, Wilmot Council voted in favor of the recommendation contained in Report CAO-2021-03 and temporarily remove and store the Prime Ministers Path Statues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Staff be directed to report back to Council at the February 26, 2024, Regular Council Meeting on any interim actions taken since the statues were placed in storage;

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that staff be directed to prepare options on ways to proceed with a permanent plan for the Prime Ministers Path Statues, including information relating to a potential referendum, for Council's consideration at the February 26, 2024, Regular Council Meeting.

As such, this report presents three options for Council's consideration.

BACKGROUND:

The concept of the Prime Minister Statues Project was initiated by residents of Waterloo Region with a vision to create statues of each Prime Minister of Canada as part of Canada's celebration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Createscape Waterloo Region, a registered charity

with objectives to promote arts and culture and the creative sector in Waterloo Region for purposes of public benefit, adopted the Prime Minister Statues Project as a charitable activity within its objectives.

In 2014, the Prime Ministers Statue project was proposed to Kitchener City Council. Prior to accepting the proposal Kitchener City Council invited residents to respond to an online survey to indicate their support for the project that proposed to erect 22 bronze statues of Former Canadian Prime Ministers in Victoria Park. Of the 2,441 respondents, 1,920 (79%) expressed opposition to the statue proposal.

The Prime Ministers Statue Project was then proposed to, and accepted by, the Laurier University Board of Governors in 2015. Following the acceptance of the project, concerns were raised which included, but were not limited to, the lack of consultation in relation to the educational components of the project, the narrow historical scope and focus on prime ministers, and the potential for visual representation of certain historical narratives to conflict with goals of inclusiveness for Indigenous and marginalized students.

In November, 2015, the President of Laurier University established a Special Advisory Committee tasked with creating opportunities for all interested community members to provide their insights into the impact(s) of the project on Laurier and the broader community. The consensus reached by the Special Advisory Committee, following an extensive community consultation process, was that the Prime Minister Statues Project in its entirety should not proceed. Their reason for the recommendation stated:

“As conceived, this project is unlikely to successfully provide opportunities for the intellectual inquiry and critical reflection necessary to understand the full context of the individuals, the complexities of their historical significance, and how this specific narrative of Canadian history interacts with a contemporary, diverse and inclusive understanding of Canada.”

- Special Advisory Committee to the President Final Report on the Prime Minister Statues Project, 2016

In May 2016, the Township of Wilmot entered into an agreement with Createscape Waterloo Region to transfer ownership of various bronze statues of Canada’s Prime Ministers. Part of that agreement included the Township’s responsibility to provide an educational component to accompany the installation of the statues:

“The Township shall oversee the development and ongoing operation of an educational program that is accessible to the public with respect to the PM Statues and the history of the prime ministers duplicated in the PM Statues, their importance to Canada and their times, that is of a quality that meets public expectations.”

On May 5, 2016, Createscape Waterloo Region transferred the statues, associated research, intellectual property and other assets to the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot as the sole recipient, via a contract that was approved unanimously by the Mayor and Council of that time.

The first statue installed was that of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. In 2020, the statue was repeatedly doused in red paint, presumably in protest against the treatment of Indigenous people in Canada under Prime Minister Macdonald's leadership.

The Township of Wilmot is in possession of statues that represent nine former Prime Ministers. Four of the statues were on public display on the path, four others were received into storage and not installed. The Sir John A. Macdonald statue was removed to storage as per the July 2020 Council resolution.

First Peoples Group and Engagement

On July 27, 2020, the Council for the Township of Wilmot passed a resolution recognizing that there was an unbalanced historical representation within the Prime Ministers Path project located on Township property. This representation was said to perpetuate sentiments of oppression and marginalization for some residents of Wilmot, as well as individuals who may visit the area.

It was resolved that the statue of Canada's first prime minister be removed from the public property while a transparent public consultation process would be implemented with the goal of compiling a findings report with recommendations and considerations to be presented to Council for further action on the future of the entire Prime Ministers Path project in the Township of Wilmot.

In Winter 2021, First Peoples Group was asked to design and conduct an engagement process to receive input from Township of Wilmot residents about the Prime Ministers Path project. The public engagement process officially launched with a meeting between First Peoples Group and the Prime Ministers Path Consultation Working Group (PMPCWG) on April 15, 2021.

Over a 6-week period in Spring 2021, First Peoples Group heard from more than 475 residents through several engagement activities. In analyzing the comments received and conversations had, three major themes emerged:

1. A discussion on the educational value of the Prime Ministers Path project;
2. How community cohesion has been affected by the Prime Ministers Path project; and,
3. Lack of effective community engagement/consultation in Wilmot and opportunities to improve these processes in the future.

Finding of Children's Bodies in Kamloops, B.C.

On May 28, 2021, mid-way through the public engagement process, tragic news from Kamloops, British Columbia, was announced informing that Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation leaders had confirmed the bodies of 215 children were found buried in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The headlines shook Canadians and prompted investigations into mass unmarked graves at several other residential school sites across the country. Further, on June 24, 2021, Cowessess First Nation announced a preliminary finding of 751 unmarked graves at a cemetery near the former Marieval Indian Residential School which operated from 1899 to 1997.

At the time of the news coming out of Kamloops, First Peoples Group issued a statement to the residents of Wilmot stating our understanding and acceptance that many Canadians simply did not know or are only now learning about some of the horrors of the Indian Residential School policy.

First Peoples Group recognized that perspectives of Wilmot residents may have shifted with the news of the confirmation of the bodies of 215 children found buried in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. With that, residents of Wilmot who had already participated in the engagement activity were encouraged to revisit the Community Voices Forum to share their thoughts and perspectives if they were impacted by the stories being shared out of Kamloops.

Findings of First Peoples Group Engagement

Based on what First Peoples Group heard during engagement with the community, and based on their experience working with communities and municipalities on similar issues, First Peoples Group advised the Township of Wilmot Council to consider:

1. Immediately removing existing statues related to the Prime Ministers Path and to discontinue any future expansion or investment in the Prime Ministers Path as it exists today.
2. Creating a working group comprised of a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township to discuss, develop and suggest plans for the implementation of next steps centred in community cohesion and healing.
3. Committing to transforming community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township in a way that encourages greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision making.

First Peoples Group indicated that the divisiveness and challenges that the Township faced with extreme polarization runs much deeper than the Prime Ministers Path project alone and that by discontinuing any further commitment to the project would not erase the fear, harm, hate and division in the community.

They advised that working to restore relationships and community cohesion will not only take dedicated effort but it will also take time. This work cannot and should not be rushed, which is why they suggested taking a pause on this recommendation for a period of time to allow for the time for reflection prior to moving forward with next steps.

The work of First Peoples Group formally concluded on July 5, 2021, when the report Results, Considerations & Recommendations from the Prime Ministers Path Public Engagement Process was presented to Council at a Special Council Meeting for a final decision on the issue.

On July 5, 2021, Council received Report CAO-2021-03, which presented the findings and recommendations from First Peoples Group, Prime Ministers Path Community Engagement. This report recommend:

THAT the report from First Peoples Group dated June 30, 2021, be endorsed,

THAT staff arrange for the immediate removal and temporary storage of the four remaining statues on the Prime Ministers Path and discontinue any future expansion or investment in the Prime Ministers Path as it exists today;

THAT staff work with the Township solicitor to activate the termination clause in the agreement with Createscape;

AND FURTHER, THAT staff be directed to report back to Council with an implementation plan for the incorporation of the remaining recommendations from First Peoples Group, including:

- a) Creating a working group comprised of a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Wilmot Township to discuss, develop and suggest plans for the implementation of next steps centred in community cohesion and healing.*
- b) Commitment to transforming community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township in a way that encourages greater openness, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making.*

On July 5, 2021, Council voted in favor of the recommendation contained in Report CAO-2021-03 and removed and temporarily stored the remaining Prime Ministers Path Statues.

Information relating to Prime Ministers Path, the First Peoples Group Report, and all previous Council meeting reports and meeting minutes are available on the Township's website at wilmot.ca/primeministerspath.

REPORT:

On January 15, 2024, Council directed staff to report back at the February 26, 2024, Regular Council Meeting on any interim actions taken since the Prime Ministers Path statues were placed into storage.

Council also directed Staff to prepare options on ways to proceed with a permanent plan for the Prime Ministers Path Statues, including information relating to a potential referendum, for consideration at the February 26, 2024, Regular Council Meeting.

Action Taken Regarding the Prime Ministers Path Statues Since 2021

Here are some actions taken by the Township since 2021 regarding the Prime Ministers Path project.

Statues

In September 2020, the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald was placed in secure storage following public outcry. In July 2021, the remaining Prime Ministers Path statues were placed into storage.

The cost of this storage is \$661.44 a month, for a total of \$23,252.16 between 2020 and January 2024. The statues remain in storage pending the direction of Council.

Multiculturalism Grant

In 2021, the Township applied to the Community Support, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Initiatives fund for a grant of \$45,000 identified for consultation to be led by First Peoples Group. In March 2023, the Township of Wilmot received confirmation of a grant of \$45,000 for the Prime Ministers Path Stakeholder Consultation Project. The Township has approval of the funding under the Multiculturalism Program to be used as late as June 2024.

Pause in 2022

With the Municipal Election and staff shortages in 2022, the Township took a pause on moving toward engagement on the Prime Ministers Path project.

Engagement Progress

In 2023, the Township moved forward on its commitment to transforming community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot in a way that encourages greater openness, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making.

In September 2023, Council received the draft Communications Strategy created for the Township by Redbrick Communications. The strategy identified communications and engagement activities to take place between the fourth quarter of 2023 and 2027.

- The EngageWR platform is being customized for the Township of Wilmot's brand and will be used starting in Q2 of 2024.
- The Manager of Communications and Strategic Initiatives position has been hired.
- The Manager of Communications and Strategic Initiatives has experience in community engagement, and has received International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) training.
- In 2024, the Township will be developing its Strategic Plan and Council is discussing moving forward with next steps in the Prime Ministers Path project. Both projects are expected to include community engagement.

Options for Next Steps on Prime Ministers Path

This report provides three options for Council's consideration for the future of Prime Ministers Path:

- 1) Maintain current direction and create a Working Group of Individuals and Communities in Wilmot following completion of the Strategic Plan development.
- 2) Engage further on the Prime Ministers Path Project to Assess Community Support for Establishing the Working Group or Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making.

- 3) Conduct a Referendum on the future of the Prime Ministers Path, first sharing information with the community about the intention and history of the Prime Ministers Path. This option will require a reconsideration, which is a two-thirds yes vote (four of six Council members) to reopen the 2021 direction of Council.

Option #1: Maintain Current Direction and Create a Working Group Comprised of a Balanced Representation of the Individuals and Communities within Wilmot Township.

This option would follow the previously given Council direction of July 5, 2021, and include creating a working group comprised of a balanced representation of the individuals and communities within Township of Wilmot to discuss, develop and suggest plans for the implementation of next steps centred in community cohesion and healing, including engagement with Indigenous representatives.

Further, this option advances the work done by the First Peoples Group on behalf of the Township, using a collaborative approach to help to determine a path forward for the Prime Ministers Path statues.

To move forward with this work, staff recommend engaging an experienced firm that specializes in creating inclusive engagement plans for diverse communities. This firm would take the lead in shaping the work and providing guidance on the following aspects:

1. **Working Group Implementation:** The firm can offer insights on how to establish an effective working group. This includes defining the group's purpose, structure, and composition, citing best practices and case studies of similar working groups.
2. **Terms of Reference and Mandate:** The firm can assist in crafting clear and comprehensive terms of reference for the Working Group. These documents outline the group's objectives, scope, and responsibilities.
3. **Selection Process:** Drawing from their experience, the firm can propose best practices for selecting Working Group members to ensure a diverse representation.
4. **Advice to the Working Group:** The firm can provide ongoing advice and support to the working group throughout its operation. This might involve facilitating meetings, addressing challenges, promoting collaboration and assisting with research.

Fostering inclusivity is crucial for successful community engagement. By involving experts experienced in this field, the Township can enhance the effectiveness of the Working Group and achieve better outcomes.

In terms of project timing, it is recommended that the work be staged in conjunction with the Township's strategic planning process, as follows;

- March to August, 2024 – Undertake strategic planning process to develop a vision and goals for the community, based on robust community engagement.

- April to June, 2024 – Engage a firm specializing in inclusive engagement to make recommendations regarding the creation of the Working Group, Terms of Reference and mandate.
- September 2024 Establish the Working Group.

Option #2: Engage Further on the Prime Ministers Path Project to Assess Community Support for Establishing the Working Group or Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making.

Council and staff have informally received feedback that the engagement process carried out by First People’s Group was insufficient and the final report did not fully reflect the diverse views and opinions of the community.

Staff consulted with First Peoples Group and they indicated that the engagement process was impacted due to the inability to conduct in-person engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the timeline imposed by Council for the engagement was tighter than their previous experience leading similar initiatives.

If Council wishes to confirm community support for the First Peoples Group recommendations, including the creation of the Working Group, they could engage further with the community and explore alternative approaches for citizen engagement and decision-making.

If this alternative is selected, the Township could use the CASMARI funding to hire a firm specializing in inclusive engagement to lead the work and report back on the findings and develop further recommendations for next steps.

Option #3: Conduct a Referendum (question on the ballot)

Section 8(1)(b) of the *Municipal Elections Act* gives Council the power to submit to its electors a question. This process, also known as a “referendum” (though not defined as such under the *Municipal Elections Act*), is a process by which the electors of the municipality formally vote on a question that Council would like answered. Referendums are run similarly to a municipal election, including the use of the Voters’ List, voter notification, vote technology and polling stations, etc.

In communication with the Township’s Municipal Affairs Advisor at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, no recent examples of a municipality holding a referendum outside of a municipal election or by-election could be identified. When combined with an election, there are a few examples including City of Kingston (2018) and the City of Cambridge (2018) of when questions have been added to an election ballot.

There are restrictions on the question Council can ask electors, meaning the municipality **cannot** ask any question it would like. The *Municipal Elections Act* provides conditions on the kind of questions that may be asked of electors. These conditions include:

- it must be about a matter that the municipality has authority for, and that the municipality can implement
- it can't be a matter of Provincial interest
- the wording of the question must be clear, concise and neutral
- the possible answers to the question must be “yes” and “no”
- multiple choice or multi-part questions are not permitted

The scope of this report does not provide sample wording or suggestions on the question Council may wish to put to the electors.

At a high-level, the process of submitting a question to electors would look as follows:

- Council establishes a question to submit to the electors;
- Before passing a by-law, the Clerk gives at least 10-days' Notice of the intention to pass the by-law to the public and the Minister. Council must hold at least one public meeting to consider the matter.
- Council passes a by-law that outlines the question to be submitted to the electors and the date of the vote.
- Within 15 days of passing the by-law, the Clerk will give Notice of the by-law to the electors.
- **Appeal Period:** Following the issuance of the Notice of Passing, there is a 20-day appeal period to which any elector in the Township of Wilmot may appeal the by-law to the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario.
 - If there is an appeal, the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario (or their designate) must hold a hearing within 60 days.
 - The Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario may dismiss the appeal or allow the appeal in whole or in part.
- If there is no appeal, the Clerk would proceed with planning for a vote.
- There would be a voting period (staff would recommend following the same model as the 2022 municipal election and offer a 10-day window for voting).
- Following the final voting day, there would be a period where an elector may request a recount.
- If there are no requests made for a recount, the Clerk would certify the results of the vote.
- If an affirmative answer receives the majority of votes, the municipality shall do everything in its power to implement the results of the question in a timely manner.
- If a negative answer receives the majority of the votes, the municipality shall not do anything within its jurisdiction to implement the matter which was the subject of the question for a period of four years following voting day.

It's important to understand that the outcome of a referendum is not always binding. Section 8.2 (1) of the *Municipal Election Act* outlines a specific threshold required for a decision to be binding. Specifically, if more than 50% of the eligible voters in the municipality vote on the question, the result is binding on Council. Moreover,

- if “yes” receives more than 50% of the votes, the municipality must implement the results of the question in a timely manner
- if “no” receives more than 50% of the votes, the municipality cannot implement the matter in question until four years have passed since voting day

If less than 50% of the eligible voters in the Township vote on the question, the results are not binding. Council may consider the results, but it is not required to act or not act on whatever the question was about. Of course, Council could use the information obtained by the referendum in future decisions, not bound by the referendum result, on the future of Prime Ministers Path.

For reference the municipal election turnout for the past two election cycles for the Township of Wilmot was 40.35% (2022) and 37.8% (2018). According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) the municipal average in Ontario for the past two municipal elections was 36.30% (2022) and 41.5% (2018).

From a resource and workload perspective, it is anticipated that conducting a referendum would operate very much like a regular municipal election. Generally speaking, municipal election planning begins approximately 18 months prior to Voting Day. In a regular election year, the Office of the Municipal Clerk is almost solely dedicated to the execution of that election. Municipal election planning involves contract negotiations, staff and resource planning, the creation and distribution of statutory notices, advertising, updating and maintaining the Voters’ List, training (internal and external staff) election staff, and, reviewing and implementing the appropriate policies and procedures in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act* to ensure a fair and legally binding election.

Should Council choose to proceed with a referendum, this would significantly impact the 2024 workplan for the Office of the Municipal Clerk. Projects slated to begin in 2024 include: an audit of municipal facilities for compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the integrated standards for the built environment; the implementation of an electronic corporate records management system; the corporate-wide implementation of SharePoint; the continuation of the comprehensive review and modernization of corporate policies for continued legislative compliance and alignment.

Certainly, this does not preclude the day-to-day business that is normally conducted in the Office of the Municipal Clerk (such the issuance of lottery and marriage licenses, maintaining vital statistics, responding to access to information requests, records and policy management, coordination with various statutory accountability officers and coordinating meetings of Council, etc.).

As such, should Council choose to proceed with this option, staff would recommend Council consider a temporary contract position solely dedicated to working with the Municipal Clerk on planning and delivering the referendum. A temporary contract position is not an uncommon resource request during an election cycle. Given the significant workload anticipated and the fact that because there are no examples of a referendum being conducted outside of general

election, staff will need to develop new policies and procedures, statutory notices, etc., to implement the vote.

Cost

In order to appropriately provide Council with an estimated cost for a referendum, staff have referred to the last Municipal Election (2022) as a baseline. The 2022 Municipal Election costs were approximately \$61,912, and included Internet and telephone voting with an option for in-person voting. Given the similarities in legislation requirements and anticipated scope of work, the following provides a budget estimate for Council's consideration:

OPTION “A” COST ESTIMATE – Referendum held in October 2024

(Concurrent with Nova Scotia Municipal Election)

	Cost
Contracted Services	\$ 34,992.80
Staffing	\$ 44,315.00
Advertising Printing and Postage	\$ 35,170.30
Supplies	\$ 2,500.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$ 116,978.10

OPTION “B” COST ESTIMATE – Referendum held in 2024 (Not October)

(Not concurrent with Nova Scotia Municipal Election)

	Cost
Contracted Services	\$ 81,049.40
Staffing	\$ 44,315.00
Advertising Printing and Postage	\$ 35,170.30
Supplies	\$ 2,500.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$ 163,034.70

Why are the estimated costs higher than for the 2022 Municipal Election, and why are there two pricing options?

Aside from general inflation, there are two primary drivers for an increase in costs from the 2022 Municipal Election.

1. Contracted Services

In 2022, the Township of Wilmot partnered with the Townships of Wellesley and Woolwich to contract internet and telephone voting to SCYTL ELECTION TECHNOLOGIES (hereafter “SCYTL”) for the regular municipal election cycle. As that election event coincided with the regular Ontario municipal election cycle, the Townships were able to leverage SCYTL’s organizational mobilization which allowed for cost savings (e.g., SCYTL’s infrastructure and staffing resources were already being dedicated to a large election event in Ontario and therefore reduced redundancy costs).

For 2024, SCYTL has provided the Township with two options: **OPTION “A”** which aligns with the 2024 Nova Scotia Municipal Election, and **OPTION “B”** which would provide for a referendum at another date preferred by Council.

With **OPTION “A,”** SCYTL has suggested the Township could leverage the planned mobilization and resource allocation assigned to the implementation of the 2024 Nova Scotia Municipal Election, to keep costs lower. This election event would take place over ten days between October 9 and 19, 2024, and cost \$27,292.80 (not including HST) for the delivery of internet and telephone voting.

OPTION “B,” on the other hand, would allow for a referendum outside of the October 9 to 19, 2024, dates, but would require the mobilization of SCYTL’s resources and cost \$73,349.40 (not including HST) for the delivery of internet and telephone voting.

For reference, the Township’s costs for internet and telephone voting for the 2022 Municipal Election were \$17,706.24.

2. Staffing

As outlined above, staff would recommend Council consider a temporary contract position solely dedicated to working with the Municipal Clerk on planning and delivering a referendum. Using the October 2024 dates as a starting point, a 7-month contract would be appropriate with an estimated \$30.00/hour salary. The addition of a temporary contracted position would cost approximately \$42,315 (including benefits and overhead costs).

What is included in each of the four categories?

The four budget categories outlined above include:

1. Contracted Services

- Internet and Telephone Voting
- Legal Services (as needed)
- Elections Ontario ePoll Book Kits
- Datafix (Voters’ List management)

2. Staffing

- External Poll Workers

- 7-month temporary contracted position

3. Advertising Printing and Postage

- Voter Notification Letters
- Ballots (for in-person voting options)
- Print and digital media paid advertising
- Postage for mailings

4. Supplies

- Miscellaneous supplies such as ballot boxes, seals, signs, etc.

Timing:

With respect to timing, Section 4(2) of the Municipal Elections Act states that:

A vote on a by-law or question that a municipality wishes to submit to the electors shall be combined with the next regular election, unless the municipality provides, by by-law that the vote shall be held at another time.

As such, there is flexibility as to the date Council sets for a referendum, bearing in mind the legislative steps and timelines outlined in the *Municipal Elections Act*. SCYTL has expressed that at minimum they would require at least 3 months from the date a contract is executed.

Should Council select Option #3 in this report, Staff would recommend the October dates as suggested by SCYTL for a number of reasons. An October date would allow for public engagement on the development of the question being submitted to the voters; a period of sufficient internal planning; notification and advertising to voters; and a reduced cost by leveraging the Nova Scotia Municipal Election.

Procedurally, in accordance with the Procedural By-law, a vote to reconsider the initial staff direction would be required before Council could implement this option.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Engaging with the community on the permanent home for the Prime Ministers Path statues support the goals of Community Engagement, Quality of Life and Responsible Governance. It aligns with the Township's values of Health and Wellbeing, Community, Legacy, Accessibility and Inclusivity, Forward-thinking and Balance.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The following funding sources have been identified for each option outlined in this report:

Option 1:

Total Estimated Costs

Range from \$45,000 to \$60,000

There is existing funding available for engagement regarding Prime Ministers Path. Pending certain conditions, including diversity and inclusion requirements, the grant can be used for engagement, which meaning Options #1 would be fully funded within the existing budget.

Total Funding Available

Capital budget \$116,000

Includes Canada Heritage Multiculturalism Program Grant of \$45,000
(Consultant identified as First Peoples Group) Available into June 2024

Option 2:**Total Estimated Costs**

Range from \$45,000 to \$60,000

There is existing funding available for engagement regarding Prime Ministers Path. Pending certain conditions, including diversity and inclusion requirements, the grant can be used for engagement, which meaning Options #2 would be fully funded within the existing budget.

Total Funding Available

Capital budget \$116,000

Includes Canada Heritage Multiculturalism Program Grant of \$45,000
(Consultant identified as First Peoples Group) Available into June 2024

Option 3:**Total Estimated Costs**

Option "A": \$116,978.10

Option "B": \$163,034.70

Capital Funding

There is an existing \$71,000 in capital that could be used towards a referendum.

Grant Funding

Due to program scope requirements, the Township cannot use the Heritage Canada Grant to offset the costs associated with a referendum on the Prime Minister's Path Statues.

Total Funding Available

Capital budget (approved)	\$71,000
Total Tax Funded Amount	
Option "A":	\$45,978.10
Option "B":	\$92,034.70

ATTACHMENTS:

None.