



SEVEN HEROES - Innisfail artist Karen Scarlett lovingly touches seven silhouettes of Innisfail military heroes, images that were taken directly from photographs of each man, that are being prepared for a massive mural on the exterior southwest, south and southeast walls of the Innisfail Royal Canadian Legion Branch #104. The entire mural, which has had support from the legion, local citizens and members of the Innisfail Art Club, is expected to be completed by mid-September.

Johnnie Bachusky/MVP Staff

Cost to upgrade Sundre's high load underground infrastructure balloons

BY Simon Ducatel, MVP Staff

SUNDRE – The originally budgeted cost of upgrading water and wastewater infrastructure under the Highway 27-Main Avenue high load corridor has ballooned by more than \$1 million.

Initially approved by council in the municipality's 2023-2032 Capital Plan at a cost of a little more than \$1.8 million, the project has since for a variety of reasons increased substantially to nearly \$3 million.

Administration presented a report to council on Aug. 14 during a special meeting to discuss the increase.

"The intent of the project is to repair and replace the end-of-life infrastructure under Highway 27 and to time this underground work to coincide with the Alberta Transportation (AT) overlay project," reads part of the background information outlined in the agenda package, which is available in full on the municipality's website.

An infrastructure manager with Alberta Transportation had officially announced in the summer of 2022 plans to complete the overlay project this construction season.

But that project, which will make the mini-roundabouts permanent as well as install a set of traffic

lights at the Highway 27-760 intersection and a full-size roundabout at the intersection of highways 22-27-584, ended up being postponed until 2024 to give the municipality time to first upgrade its own underground infrastructure.

As a highway, the high load corridor that also doubles as Sundre's Main Avenue falls under the jurisdiction of the Alberta government's transportation department. However, all of the underground infrastructure belongs to the municipality, which is responsible for maintaining and upgrading those services.

Administration informed council that a tender process was conducted in July.

"Unfortunately, as contractors are very busy this year, only one bid was received," reads a portion of the report, adding that AIC Construction, which had previously worked on town projects with good results, was the only candidate to submit a proposal.

Limited availability of contractors was not the only factor that resulted in the substantially increased cost.

"Other significant constraints exist for the project including it being a high load corridor, a busy highway with limited options for detour, timing the completion of the project with AT, and removing the temporary roundabouts," states part of the report.

As a result of these factors, administration said the

bid amount surged above the previous estimate to a revised amount of about \$2.9 million.

"Administration is attempting to access alternative sources of funding but these are uncertain at this time," reads the background.

To ensure the project proceeds in a timely manner, council was told it would have to allocate funding from the municipality's coffers with any outside funding received at a later date being returned to the appropriate restricted surplus account.

Council approved administration's recommended action to accept AIC Construction's bid at a revised total project cost of \$2.9 million, with the additional roughly \$1.1 million being drawn from the utility life-cycling restricted account.

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