

Motion C22(349): Public Gravel Roads

Planning Advisory Committee

February 20, 2024

Planning & Development Department



EAST HANTS

Background

- As part of the Plan Update, Council considered a report from staff on whether Developers should continue to be permitted to construct public gravel roads as part of their developments.
- The reason for the review was due to the maintenance cost of public gravel roads compared to public paved roads.
- Council decided to maintain the current Subdivision regulations regarding public gravel roads as part of the adoption of the 2023 East Hants Official Community Plan.
- In addition, Council passed the following motions:
 - C22(349) Moved that Council authorize staff to maintain the current regulations that permit the construction of new municipal gravel public roads at this time but to bring back a report addressing some of the discussion held here today around what regions it might be appropriate or not and under what circumstances it might be appropriate to prohibit gravel roads.
 - C22(350) Moved that Council authorize staff to bring a report reviewing the paving petition policy and possible incentives options for both developers and residents to pave their current public gravel roads.

Discussion

- Under the current Subdivision Bylaw regulations, public gravel roads are not permitted to be constructed in the Growth Management Areas and the Growth Reserve Areas.
- A public gravel road is permitted to be constructed in all other parts of East Hants where new roads are permitted.
- Although the choice to construct a public gravel road may be less expensive for the Developer it costs the Municipality more per linear metre to maintain a gravel road, particularly for gravel grading.
- East Hants owns approximately 8 km of public gravel roads.
- Infrastructure and Operation staff have updated the costs associated with the maintenance of all public road types from the previous report presented as part of the Plan Update.

Road Maintenance Table Costs

Road Maintenance Cost Table

Road Details	Asphalt W/o SW	Gravel
Length	1000 m	1000 m
Width	7 m	11 m
Shoulder	3 m	
Sidewalk		
Ditches	2 m	2 m
Area of Road		
Travelled Surface	7000	11000
Shoulders	3000	0
Ditches	2000	2000
Sidewalk	0	0
Costs		
Lifespan replacement of Travelled Surface	\$ 723,278.00 Every 25 years	\$ 203,104.00 Every 10 years ($\$203,104 \times 2.5 = \$507,760$ per 25 years)
Life Cycle maintenance	\$ 378,000.00 Per 25 years	\$ 100,000.00 Per 10 Years ($100,000 \times 2.5 = \$250,000$)
Ditch Maintenance per year	\$ 8,333.33 ($8333.33 \times 25 = \$208,333.25$)	\$ 8,333.33 ($8333.33 \times 25 = \$208,333.25$)
Dust Control per year		\$ 10,600.00 ($10600 \times 25 = \$265,000$)
Gravel grading per year		\$ 55,000.00 ($55000 \times 25 = \$1,375,000$)
Life span Travel Surface	25	10
25-year life span	\$ 1,309,611.25	\$ 2,606,093.25
equal life cycles (50yrs)	\$ 2,619,222.50	\$ 5,212,186.50

Discussion

- The costs shown on the preceding slide are estimates based on best practices from asset management. Current spending in East Hants per km of gravel road is less than recommended.
- Looking strictly at the numbers, the most cost-effective road type for the Municipality to maintain and replace are paved roads without sidewalks.
- The most expensive road type to maintain and replace are gravel roads.
- Another cost that should be considered with the construction of public gravel roads is the location of the road.
- We estimate that it could cost an additional \$1,500 a year to service rural areas of East Hants.

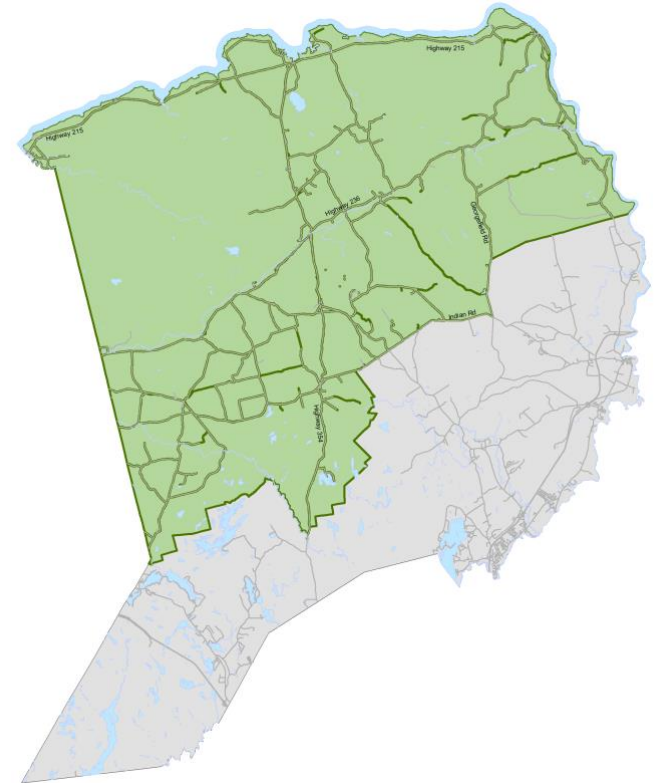
Discussion

- Other items PAC may want to consider when deciding whether to allow for public gravel roads is what is the intention of the road?
- What volume of traffic will be using it?
- A benefit of gravel roads is that the speed at which traffic flows is usually slower than paved roads.
- Gravel roads offer developers a less expensive option for the construction of a public road.
- In addition, these types of roads also offer a more rural experience compared to paved roads.

Rural Subdivision Development Area

- Rural Councillors have had concerns with deterring development along the Noel shore and in central East Hants in the past.
- Therefore, an alternative to completely removing the ability to construct public gravel roads is to allow the construction of public gravel roads only in the Rural Subdivision Area.
- This area is already included in the Subdivision Bylaw.
- Property owners in the Rural Subdivision Development also can construct private gravel roads if Council decides to move forward with amendments to the SUB to remove the ability of Developers to construct public gravel roads.

Green Area = Rural Subdivision Development Area



Recommendation & Alternatives

- Staff's recommendation is to remove the ability to construct new Municipal gravel roads in East Hants, due to the cost of maintenance between a paved public road and a gravel public road.
- There are two alternatives for Council to consider:
 1. Amend the Subdivision Bylaw to only permit the construction of new public gravel roads in the Rural Subdivision Development Area.
 2. Make no changes to the Subdivision Bylaw, which permits public gravel roads to be constructed outside of GMAs and GRAs.

Recommendation

- That Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council authorize staff to proceed with amending the SUB to remove the ability to construct public gravel roads.

Recommended Motion

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- *authorize staff to proceed with amending the Subdivision Bylaw to remove the ability for developers to construct Municipal public gravel roads in all areas of East Hants.*

Alternative Motion 1

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- *authorize staff to proceed with amending the Subdivision Bylaw to remove the ability to construct Municipal public gravel roads in areas of the Municipality outside of the Rural Subdivision Development Area.*

Alternative Motion 2

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- *maintain the current Subdivision Bylaw regulations that permit the construction of Municipal public gravel roads outside of GMA's and GRA's.*