



**Subject:** *Winter Road Maintenance Service Levels for the Mount Uniacke Business Park*  
**To:** Council (Budget)  
**Date Prepared:** February 6, 2026  
**Related Motions:** C26(25)  
**Prepared by:** Jesse Hulsman, Director of Infrastructure & Operations  
**Approved by:** Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

### Summary

In January 2026, Council requested a report to be added to budget discussions in regards to the Mount Uniacke Business Park being added to the winter road maintenance contract list, and aligning it to the same service standard as the Elmsdale Business Park.

There is a strategic opportunity to shift winter road maintenance to include the Mount Uniacke Business Park. Due to the projected number of new roads coming online, the current exchange total kilometer difference will potentially have no net increase overall in roads served, then would otherwise have been served with a historic annual road exchange with the province. The unknown of contract availability will still exist, but this risk would be part of understanding the market for serving the Mount Uniacke area in a bigger way in the future.

### Financial Impact Statement

Assuming \$8,000-\$10,000/km based on the last 5 years (excluding the 1 heavy year), if the Municipality were to take on winter maintenance of the Mount Uniacke Business Park without trading back any of the roads completed by the Municipality for the past 2 winters, the increase of the 0.509 km will project an annual cost in the range of \$4,072-\$5,090.

Note: The assumption has not factored in several unknowns that could impact cost as listed within the report

### Recommendation

Prior to the fiscal 2026-27 winter, there are no notable changes in forecasted costs, other than contractual unknowns of market price differences that could occur for Mount Uniacke, versus adding kilometers in the annual winter exchange with the province. Therefore, Staff recommend that the municipality takes on the winter maintenance of the Mount Uniacke Business Park going forward and establish a Priority 1 level road service standard.

### Recommended Motion

*Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend that Council direct staff to provide the Mount Uniacke Business Park winter road maintenance at a Priority 1 service level as established in the “East Hants Policy for Winter Clearing Standard for Roads & Sidewalks”, aligning it to the same priority level as the Elmsdale Business Park for fiscal year 2026-27, and to set the same service level of winter road maintenance for all Municipally developed Business Parks going forward, with adjustments to be made for no salt use areas as required.*

## Background

### Annual Winter Road Exchange

Each year the municipality and the province trade roads with respect to performing winter road maintenance. This practice began during the 1995 service exchange, where municipalities started to own all new residential and subdivision style roads on a go forward basis. With the province continuing to own the pre-existing residential or subdivision roads, over time the road ownership has become a scattered pattern across East Hants, creating inefficiencies for winter road maintenance. An example of this is where crews would skip several provincial roads to get to the next municipal road. Though the winter road exchange, it is important to note that the Municipality makes recommendations on which roads to exchange to maximize efficiency, however the province makes the final decision as they have overriding authorities over Municipalities. Since established in 1995, the service agreement means that the Municipality is charged a base rate per kilometer on any residential/subdivision style road that the province plows, regardless of the listed road ownership value.

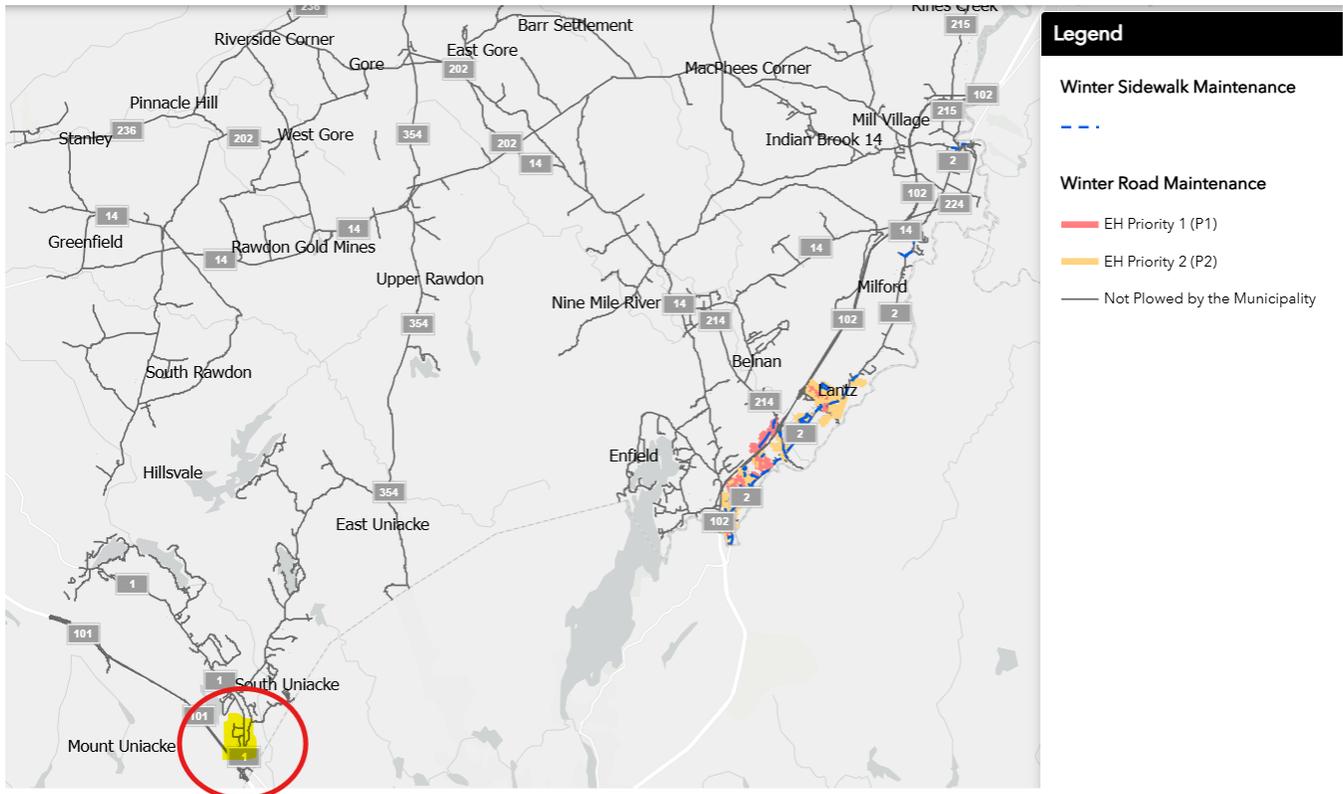
### Motion C26(25)

Moved that Council directs the CAO to provide a staff report during budget discussions on snow removal levels for the Mount Uniacke Business Park with options to consider aligning it with the service level in the Elmsdale Business Park.

### Visual of areas currently serviced by East Hants during winter;



### Visual of the Mount Uniacke Business Park location relative to current roads serviced by East Hants during winter;



### Historic Cost Per Km

Fiscal Year	Actual Cost	Km served	Cost/Km
2020-21	\$203,285	27.6 km	\$7,365/km
2021-22	\$430,878	34.8 km	\$12,382/km
2022-23	\$249,088	35.6 km	\$6,997/km
2023-24	\$259,156	35.7 km	\$7,259/km
2024-25	\$265,096	36.3 km	\$7,303/km
2025-26	tbd	36.3 km	n/a

\*There were 2 historic winters of note in the last 10 years; 2014/15-\$351,627 and 2016/17-\$355,838

## Discussion

### Contractor Availability/Eligibility

The Municipality will not look to extend the existing Winter Road Maintenance Contract to include the Mount Uniacke Business Park as the current provider is located in the Corridor area. A contract will need to be sourced that can meet all municipal contract requirements (i.e. insurance, WCB, etc.) and that can ensure response times for the specific geographic area. The current provider could potentially offer a bid option that achieves this, but with no guarantees, going to market on a standalone service offering will be the required approach.

## Level of Service

The Elmsdale Business Park is a Priority 1 level road, receiving the following level of service through contract;

### Priority One Roads:

Road Type	Turnaround	Anti-Icing	Start Time	Time to Clear (from end of snow)	Lane Width	Finished Condition	Salt Spread Rates
P1	3 hours maximum	Yes Pre-salting	Immediately as the snow starts	24 hours	Cut-through (See Note 1)	Bare pavement full width	Minimum 85kg per lane km to 110kg per lane km

*\*Roads may require repeat plowing/sanding/salting to achieve finished condition. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure ongoing and repeated application of salt and or sand in order to achieve the prescribed level of service and finished condition.*

#### Notes:

1. Cut-through is defined as the clearing of the plow curl at the street intersection to allow traffic access and 6 meter wide plowed traveled way to allow access for residents.
2. Special care must be taken when plowing gravel roads when ground conditions are soft.
3. Some conditions (i.e. blowing/drifted snow) may require an additional cut-through to maintain access.
4. Certain conditions may prevail which will require that ice/snow pack be bladed, shaved or scarified to ensure the road remains safely passable, including the elimination of ice potholes. This work is included in the contract pricing.

The following is the provincially posted level of service targeted by provincial crews;

### SERVICE TIMES

Type of Road	Clearing Time
100-Series and trunk highways, and other high traffic roads	<b>8 hours</b> after snow stops
Secondary routes and other medium traffic roads	<b>12 hours</b> after snow stops
Local paved roads, most subdivision and residential streets	<b>24 hours</b> after snow stops
Gravel roads	<b>24 hours</b> after snow stops

### SALTING<sup>1</sup> AND SANDING

#### 100-Series and trunk highways, and other high traffic roads

- ◆ Salted to achieve bare pavement
- ◆ Salt applied before, during and after a storm if required

#### \*Secondary routes and other medium traffic roads

- ◆ Salted to achieve a bare centre line
- ◆ Salt applied at beginning of storm and after a storm if required

#### \*Local paved roads, most subdivision and residential streets

- ◆ Salted to achieve a bare centre line
- ◆ Salt applied only after a storm

#### Gravel roads

- ◆ Snow packed
- ◆ Sanding as needed

What is clear is that the province has no commitment to complete regular cut throughs during large and/or long duration storm events. That is where the difference in service approaches can be most obvious to localized road users.

The province does enable the public to track plow activity online via a web-based map tool. The Municipality does not offer that service due to using contractors exclusively and the ability for our staff to check on finished road conditions within a tight geographic location.

### Road Exchange Status and Forecast for Next Winter

During the exchange process, the Municipality proposes a list of roads with the intent to balance the total road length as evenly per kilometer as possible, with the caveat that the difference can never be in favor of the municipality for the province to except a list. The list goes back and forth with the province until such time as they except the exchange list from the municipality.

For the past 2 winters the municipality has taken on a difference of 0.532km extra to the benefit of the province.

It is anticipated that the Municipality will take ownership of 3 new municipal roads prior to next winter that will be adding new factors to the road exchange list;

- Moonlight (0.863 km), plus an extension of Old Mines Rad (0.280 km)
- Next phases of Kiln Creek (tbd km) - but will likely not be traded in the exchange regardless as it is grouped with an established neighborhood already receiving winter services at the Municipal service standard.
- Next phases of Garden Meadows (0.815 km)
- West Park is also under development (1.800 km) The timing of turnover to the municipality is unknown at this time, so not factored into calculations

The Mount Uniacke Business Park is currently made up of the following roads;

- James Boyle Drive (0.515 km)
- Martha Avenue (0.615 km)
- Richard John Drive (0.426 km)
- Lady Mary Way (0.473 km)
- Andrew Mitchell Drive (0.091 km)
- Alicia Scott Avenue (0.347 km)

A total of 2.467 km of road within the current Mount Uniacke Business Park.

To receive the Mount Uniacke Business Park roads and then trade the kilometer from Moonlight and the next phase of Garden Meadows, it would increase the difference in the road exchange by 0.509 km. When added to the existing 0.532 km currently in the provinces favor for the road exchange, that would increase the benefit of the exchange to 1.041 km.

There are outlier roads in the current road exchange that the Municipality could propose that the province take back. Those being (with estimated distances);

- Elmbel Drive (0.555 km)
- Isnor Road (0.665 km)
- School Road (0.350 km)

Trading back any 1 of the 3 listed roads would make for a more balanced road exchange than exists today and all of those roads are provincially owned roads. However, it is anticipated the province would push back on taking back any of those 3 roads at they are all difficult to manage in winter due to limitations in how they were originally built (pre-dating many of today's public road standards).

These roads can be challenging due to factors such as, requiring specialty gear due to narrow widths or tight turning areas, more than average sanding due to poor lighting, and there being jurisdictional confusion on end boundaries due to changes in ownership to private roads or unofficial endings without a proper turn around area.

### Risks

Contracts do not guarantee results. Any contract could require the management of service outages from poor performance by a contractor. Once a winter season has begun, it is unlikely to have an option of changing contractors as a result of performance issues until the following winter season. If there are 2 separate contractors completing work, it is reasonable to assume approaches on how to achieve the service level listed in the contract could differ between companies, which could lead to differences on public opinion of service levels provided between the 2 contracts regardless of documented service level goals being the same.

It is anticipated that the unit rate for sanding of the Uniacke Business Park will be greater than in the corridor. Currently there is a notable unit rate difference between sidewalk sanding versus road sanding, as an example. There may be a market adjustment for sand cost based on vendor access to road sand for the Mount Uniacke area.

The Uniacke Business Park is also partially in the Pockwock Watershed. This may require difference in sanding volume and potentially no use of salt. The extent of cost and adjustments needed for standards documents has not had a full impact review but could also lead to higher costing.

Going to market for winter snow clearing service for the Mount Uniacke Business Park provides uncertainty on whom may bid on the work, and if there are enough companies that meet the procurement condition requirements of the Municipality, and within a close enough geographic location to the Mount Uniacke Business Park for there to be a financially competitive process. If few qualified bidders exist, it could inflate the per kilometer cost for this specific area, or it could also result in no bids.

The additional staffing workload complexity was not factored into this report, which will also factor into managing more contracts and setting up additional standards needed to address Priority 1 levels in areas where salt cannot be applied.

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## Alternatives

### Continue with historic practice

This maintains historic data comparable and known risk levels without testing a new market for snow clearing contractor availability.

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## Attachments

Provincial Winter Road Maintenance Fact Sheet

East Hants Policy for Winter Clearing Standard for Roads & Sidewalks