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REGIONAL ROAD ASSUMPTION CRITERIA APPROVAL

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, June 1, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The attached policy and criteria be adopted for use when considering the transfer of a road either from the local municipality to the Region or from the Region to the local municipality.
2. The Regional Clerk forward copies of this report and the policy to the Clerks of the local municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the comments received from local municipalities on the proposed road assumption criteria and recommends the proposed criteria to determine if roads perform a Regional function and should be transferred to the Region. Some Regional roads also perform more of a local function and should be considered in these criteria for possible reversion to the local municipality.

3. BACKGROUND

At its meeting of October 21, 2004, Regional Council adopted a report from the Transportation and Works Committee authorizing staff to circulate proposed Road Assumption Criteria to the local municipalities for their review and comment by December 17, 2004. Several municipalities requested extensions to this date to the end of February, 2005. To date, staff has received comments from a number of local municipalities which are summarized in section 4.3.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Regional roads fall into two categories, rural and urban, and for the purposes of this report will be treated separately. Regional roads are arterial roads which carry vehicles travelling longer distances, typically between home and work and between different communities and business centres. Regional arterial roads also have fewer access points

than do local or collector roads. Regional roads, in general, form part of the main concession grid road system. Mid-block roads would not generally be considered as a Regional road.

4.1 Rural Roads

Rural roads are in those areas which fall outside urban areas as defined in the Official Plan. The clear edges between these rural and urban areas are defined in Map 5 of the Official Plan (*see Attachment 1*).

The following criteria were proposed in the October 6, 2004 report for the assumption of existing roads as Regional roads in rural areas:

1. Connects designated rural settlements, having existing major commercial/industrial development or more than 150 persons, to each other and a Regional road or Provincial Highway.
2. Connects a Provincial Highway or Regional road to:
 - a. Provincial Highway.
 - b. Major commercial and industrial areas.
 - c. Major institutional complexes such as colleges, hospitals, etc.
3. Provides service close to consistent major attractors or generators of heavy vehicles.
4. Provides service parallel to and, where justified, crossing major barriers to free traffic movement.
5. Provides service on those roads which are extensions of roads designated as Regional roads in urban areas and thence to a Regional road or a Provincial Highway.
6. Provides service on those roads which are extensions of roads designated as Regional or County roads in neighbouring jurisdictions and, thence, to a Regional road or a Provincial Highway.
7. Roads should have a current traffic volume greater than 4,000 annual average daily traffic (AADT).
8. Roads should be part of the original concession road grid.

In order for a road to be designated as a Regional road in the rural areas, it is proposed it must meet at least one of the criteria one through six and it must meet criteria seven and eight. This will help ensure that only the major arterial roads are transferred to the Region.

4.2 Urban Areas

Urban roads are in those areas designated as urban areas as defined in the Official Plan. These urban areas are defined under Map 5 of the Official Plan (*see Attachment 1*).

The following criteria were proposed in the October 6, 2004 report for the assumption of existing roads as Regional roads in urban areas:

1. Provides the necessary arterial capacity in a major travel corridor and in general, should be used for inter-municipal traffic.
2. Comprises a reasonable direct and unbroken major traffic route or corridor which connects with major arterial roads or to one or more existing or proposed Provincial Highways at a grade-separated interchange.
3. May include a linkage, existing or proposed, required to cross or circumvent a physical barrier that breaks the logical continuity of the route.
4. Roads should have a current traffic volume greater than 5,000 AADT.
5. Roads should be part of the original concession road grid.

In order for a road to be designated as a Regional road in urban areas, it is proposed that it must meet at least one of the criteria one through three and it must meet criteria four and five, to ensure only the major arterial roads are transferred.

4.3 Local Municipal Comments

The following is a summary of the comments from the local municipalities and how each has been addressed.

- Comment. Require an agreement as a condition of transfer to establish and maintain the appropriate streetscape and urban design standards to reflect the local municipal objectives.

Response. As part of the discussions when considering a transfer, the streetscape and urban design standards will be taken into account.

- Comment. Any road transfers, either from the Town to the Region or from the Region to the Town be subject to appropriate consultation with local and Regional staff.

Response. All proposed transfers will be discussed with staff from the Region and the affected local municipality prior to reporting to the Transportation and Works Committee.

- **Comment.** The criteria should not be so rigid in the AADT number for consideration of the transfer as there may be other issues that would influence the decision.

Response. Each proposed road transfer will be considered on its own merit. The criteria will be used as a guideline for determining if a road meets the general function of a Regional or local road.

- **Comment.** If a road is being considered to be transferred from the Region to the local municipality, the development charges collected for that road should also be transferred.

Response. Staff agree with this and the criteria have been changed to reflect this.

- **Comment.** Do not agree with transferring the maintenance costs for the road.

Response. It is proposed that the maintenance costs for the road will not be transferred.

- **Comment.** The criteria should be reviewed from time to time.

Response. Staff agree to this.

- **Comment.** There should be a process to initiate the transfer of a road.

Response. Typically a request is submitted by the local municipal Council for the Region to assume a local road. This process can work both ways.

- **Comment.** There were several comments on the list of potential road transfers, in particular, there was disagreement with some of the identified roads.

Response. The list was not meant to be a definitive list, just possible transfers. Each road will be considered on its own merit and discussed in depth with the affected local municipality.

4.4 Proposed Criteria

In consideration of the comments received from local municipalities, it is proposed that the criteria as presented in the October 6, 2004 report be adopted, except that the conditions noted at the bottom of each section have been amended as follows:

Rural Roads: In order for a road to be designated a Regional road in rural areas, all the criteria above must be considered and used as a guideline to ensure only the major arterial roads are transferred.

Urban Roads: In order for a road to be designated a Regional road in urban areas, all the criteria above must be considered and used as a guideline to ensure only the major arterial roads are transferred.

4.5 Process for Considering a Road for Transfer

The following process can be used as a guide when considering a road for transfer from a local municipality to the Region or from the Region to a local municipality.

- Either the local municipality or the Region can initiate discussions to consider a road for transfer.
- The initial discussions can commence upon staff receiving direction from the respective Council.
- Regional staff will assess the road against the criteria and discuss with local municipal staff.
- If agreed to by both staff, a report to the Transportation and Works Committee will be prepared recommending or denying the transfer and the associated transfer of funds, plans, records, etc., and local municipal staff would also prepare a report to their respective Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

For each new lane kilometre of road assumed into the Regional road system, there is an immediate corresponding operation and maintenance cost and a future capital cost of reconstruction and/or widening. The local municipality will have an immediate reduction in their operating and maintenance costs. The growth related portion of the future capital cost is included in the Development Charge By-law to partially cover the reconstruction and widening costs. The cost apportionment is typically 76.5% development charges and 23.5% tax levy. The operating and maintenance cost is currently \$6,719/lane km, all tax levy. This cost is based on the costs in the 2004 Business Plan.

5.1 Operating and Maintenance

Over the next 25 years or so, based on the criteria in this report, it is expected that approximately 386 lane km of road could be assumed by the Region from the local municipalities. There is also approximately 59 lane km of Regional road no longer performing a Regional function and should be transferred to the local municipality leaving a net increase to the Regional road system of 327 lane km.

This represents a \$2,198,000 increase in the annual operating and maintenance budget (at maturity). The savings in annual operating and maintenance costs realized by the local

municipality will free up tax room in the order of \$2,000/lane km for paved roads and \$4,500/lane km for loose top, which should be transferred to the Region with the road.

5.2 Capital Cost

Based on current estimates, the cost to widen and reconstruct a two-lane arterial to a five-lane urban arterial road is \$2.0 million per km, ie. two-lane km. This translates into \$299 million over the next 25 years for local municipal road transfers. Based on 76.5% development charges and 23.5% tax levy, this equates to \$70.26 million increase in tax levy over 25 years. This considers that all transferred roads will require widening and/or reconstruction within the 25 year timeframe. It is fair to assume that not all the listed roads will be transferred in the next 25 years, nor will they be reconstructed within that timeframe. Hence, the estimated tax increase should be much less. The amounts will be offset by the development charges collected by local municipalities which will be transferred to the Region when the road is transferred.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This report proposes criteria to be used for evaluating the incorporation of a road into the Regional road system. When a road is transferred from the local municipality to the Region, the local municipality will have a corresponding reduction in the maintenance costs creating some tax room, which should be transferred to the Region.

Regional staff recommends that a copy of this report be sent to the Clerks of each of the local municipalities for information.

7. CONCLUSION

At its meeting of October 21, 2004, Regional Council adopted a report from the Transportation and Works Committee authorizing staff to circulate proposed Road Assumption Criteria to the local municipalities for their review and comment. Comments have now been received from most local municipalities and have been addressed in this report.

It is therefore recommended that the attached criteria be adopted for use when considering the transfer of a road either from the local municipality to the Region or from the Region to the local municipality.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)