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Information Item No. 2
Transportation Standing Committee
January 22, 2015

TO: Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: *Original Signed*

Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 8, 2014

SUBJECT: Paving of Municipally Owned Gravel Roads

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 11.8.3, July 22, 2014 Regional Council meeting. Councillor Karsten moved that Regional Council request a staff report exploring options to the current process followed for the paving of gravel roads and possible amendments to the process including, but not limited to, changes to By-Law S-400.

Issue:

To look at a more comprehensive process for the paving of Municipally owned gravel roads.

Outcome Sought:

Request a staff report exploring alternatives to the existing process in regard to the paving of gravel roads.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, clause 79(1)(aa): "The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for (aa) streets, culverts, retaining walls, sidewalks, curbs and gutters;"

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, clause 104(1)(f) "The Council may make by-laws imposing, fixing and providing methods of enforcing payment of charges for... (f) laying out, opening, constructing, repairing, improving and maintaining streets, curbs, sidewalks, gutters, bridges, culverts and retaining walls, whether the cost is incurred by the Municipality directly or by, or pursuant to, an agreement with Her Majesty in right of the Province, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or any person;"

By-law Bylaw S-400, *Street Improvement Bylaw*

Local Improvement Policy, 1997.

BACKGROUND

HRM currently owns and maintains approximately 64 gravel roads (18 kms total) within the core area. The process to determine if gravel roads are to be considered for an upgrade to paving is premised on the requirements as outlined in the Local Improvement Policy. Under this policy,

“...there are two levels of project approval with respect to local improvements namely, Council and the affected property owners. This recommendation (The policy) recommends approval from property owners receiving the local improvement who collectively own a minimum of 50% of the total frontage, be required prior to a project going to tender. Council may initiate or proceed with a project without this approval if Council determines it is required based on consideration of HRM's best interests and the local improvement charges will still apply.”

All potential paving projects are prioritized based on a set of criteria approved by Council on November 14, 2006. The criteria is premised on the classification of the road, the level of maintenance (high, medium and low), and roads being considered within common geographical areas.

DISCUSSION

To date gravel roads are selected for consideration for paving through the outcome of the Local Improvement Charge (LIC) survey process, and prioritized based on the approved criteria as described above. Pursuant to the LIC policy, Council may also proceed (without a successful survey) if the project is in HRM's best interests.

The desired outcome of the above noted motion (refer to origin section) requests staff to review a more comprehensive process and to explore alternatives in regard to the paving of gravel roads. A number of factors should be considered, including a review of the local improvement charge (LIC) aspect of the process. In the Regional Council report dated February 28, 2012 (refer to <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/120814cow3ii.pdf>), one of the recommendations was to have staff provide “direction as to whether similar solutions should be considered for LIC's on other road features such as paving of gravel road upgrades.” This recommendation remains outstanding but has a direct correlation with respect to the motion identified above. Staff is currently reviewing this issue and will return to the Transportation Standing Committee with options for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no requirement for community engagement at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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