

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Public Works

Road Rationalization

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council authorize the proposed road transfers as outlined in Report No. PW 2021-29 entitled 'Road Rationalization';
2. And further, that a by-law be enacted to amend By-law No. 4167-2001, being a by-law to consolidate the County of Oxford Road System, to implement the road rationalization with a transfer date of January 1, 2022.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to seek County Council authorization of the proposed transfers as part of road rationalization, which is intended to ensure that upper and lower tier roads are providing their intended functionality.
- Road rationalization was initiated during development of the Oxford County 2019 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) but was deferred following the announcement of the Provincial regional governance review.
- The proposed road transfers would result in the County acquiring 22.1 km (44.2 lane km) of road and 6 structures (bridges/culverts), and relinquishing 0.5 km (1.0 lane km) of access roads that were once part of former County road alignments to Area Municipalities.

Implementation Points

Approval by respective Area Municipality Councils, through the enactment of municipal by-laws, will be required before initiating the road transfers outlined in this report.

Road transfers will require matching County and Area Municipality by-laws to transfer ownership and jurisdiction of the roads between municipal tiers.

Once respective municipal by-laws have been enacted, the County will initiate the execution of legal documentation to finalize the transfers.

Financial Impact

The transfer of roads is proposed for January 1, 2022 to avoid impacts to the 2021 Roads operational budget.

Operational budget impacts associated with acquisition of net uploaded road and bridge/culvert assets will be included in the 2022 budget submissions based on operating cost estimates as summarized below.

Table 1: 2022 Operating Budget Cost Estimates

Item	Unit Cost ¹	Quantity ²	Subtotal
Road Maintenance (excluding winter maintenance)	\$4,249.15/lane km	43.2 lane km	\$183,563
Winter Road Maintenance	\$2,407.87/lane km	43.2 lane km	104,020
Bridge/Culvert Annual Maintenance	\$5.79/m ²	665.8 m ²	3,855
Estimated Annual Operating Cost Impact			\$291,438

1. 2019 Financial Information Return
2. Net lane km upload to the County

It is anticipated that annual operation and maintenance of the roads and bridges/culverts proposed for upload to the County can be undertaken with existing County staff and equipment resources.

The County's Asset Management Plan will be updated to include capital asset acquisitions/relinquishment associated with the proposed road transfers. With respect to capital works undertakings, Norwich was previously given \$40,000 of funding from the County to undertake anticipated bridge repairs on New Durham Road (formerly Oxford Road 21) which was transferred from the County to Norwich road network as part of the 2009 road rationalization program. Since the 2009 monetary compensation for bridge repairs was not utilized, Norwich will be responsible to reimburse the County for this amount (\$40,000).

Communications







Staff liaised with Area Municipality representatives earlier this year to discuss road rationalization that was initially discussed during stakeholder consultations as part of the Oxford County 2019 TMP development.

Report No. PW 2021-29 will be circulated to Area Municipalities for information and staff will have further dialogue with affected Area Municipalities to coordinate approval from their respective Councils and matching by-laws.

Pending approval of the proposed road transfers, adjacent properties will be notified of the jurisdictional change and applicable road authority. Partners such as Municipal 511 and other mapping services will be notified with support from the Web Team.

From a general public standpoint, the transfer of roads will be seamless with no impact to service levels.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
1.ii.		3.ii	4.ii.	5.i. 5.ii.	

DISCUSSION

Background

Upper tier (County) roads are intended to provide efficient movement of people and goods into and through the County as part of the overall road network, providing connectivity between communities, neighbouring municipalities, and the Provincial and lower tier (local) road networks.

Periodic review of road rationalization ensures that upper and lower tier roads are providing their intended functionality and continue to support transportation strategies identified in the County's Official Plan.

Road transfers may also benefit level of service where a low priority upper tier road, once transferred, may become a higher priority for the Area Municipality and see significant improvements over time. Likewise, a high volume local road primarily servicing a regional function may receive higher levels of service than the Area Municipality is able to provide.

Oxford County 2009 Transportation Master Plan

A comprehensive road rationalization undertaking was completed as part of the 2009 Oxford County TMP that resulted in several road transfers (upload/download) between the County and respective Area Municipalities.

During the development of the 2009 TMP, the final recommendations of the road rationalization undertaking were adopted by County Council on December 10, 2008 (Report No. [D-5 2008-103](#)) and further enacted by County By-law No. 5065-2009.

A preliminary list of recommended road transfers was initially developed by evaluating the County and local road networks using road rationalization scoring criteria (Attachment 1) that was based in part on the methodology prepared by the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) and TMP stakeholder consultations.

A scoring threshold was applied to identify a candidate list of roads for transfer that formed the basis for further consultation with Area Municipalities. Road segments with a score greater than 6.5 were identified to remain as part of the County road network or uploaded from Area Municipalities to the County. Conversely, road segments with a score of 6.5 points or less were identified to remain as part of the local road network or downloaded from the County to the Area Municipality.

The preliminary list of road transfers underwent an extensive review and consultation with Area Municipalities and their respective Councils. The feedback received led to further negotiations and resulted in adjustments to the initial road transfer recommendations.

To address associated financial impacts, the final approved road transfers included monetary compensation to the Area Municipalities for net download costs associated with 5 year capital upgrade requirements and 3 year graduated maintenance costs.

The 2009 road rationalization analysis also identified several County roads that were marginally above the scoring threshold and were recommended for further review as part of future TMP and road rationalization undertakings.

Oxford County 2019 Transportation Master Plan

Road rationalization was undertaken as part of the **Oxford County 2019 TMP** using the same methodology and scoring criteria as the 2009 TMP and road rationalization review. This was not intended to be a comprehensive review of the entire upper and lower tier road networks but rather an update to the extensive review completed in 2009.

The road rationalization update analyzed the following County road segments that were identified in 2009 as marginal and recommended for future review:

- Oxford Road 23;
- Oxford Road 25;
- Oxford Road 22 (north of Bright, and south of Oxford Road 2); and
- Oxford Road 37, east of Oxford Road 59.

In addition to the roads listed above, the 2019 TMP Advisory Committee (TMPAC) also identified the following road segments as potential candidates for transfer:

- 16th Line (EZT);
- Clarke Road (Ingersoll);
- Parkinson Road/Oxford Road 15 (Woodstock);
- New Durham Road (Norwich); and
- Curries Road/Oxford Road 40 (from OR 59 to OR 14).

The road rationalization scoring (Attachment 1) that was applied to the above noted road segments in 2009 was reviewed and updated based on current conditions and traffic data that may have changed since the previous analysis.

Staff also identified two existing access roads that are currently under the County's jurisdiction but no longer function as part of the County road network. These two roads were once part of former County road alignments and now serve to provide access to adjacent properties.

- Bonds Corners Road at the north west quadrant of Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 4 – Woodstock (part of former Oxford Road 4 alignment); and
- South side of Oxford Road 2, west of Oxford Road 30 – EZT (part of former Oxford Road 2 alignment).

The road rationalization update identified several candidates for road transfer but further discussion and negotiation with Area Municipalities was deferred due to the ongoing regional governance review initiated by the Provincial Government. As a result, the road rationalization update was not included in the 2019 TMP; instead, a recommendation to consider road transfers pending the outcome of the Provincial regional governance review was included.

Comments

As recommended in the 2019 TMP, the road rationalization review that was completed during development of the 2019 TMP was revisited earlier this year and presented to Area Municipality representatives on May 19, 2021 (Attachment 2). As part of this discussion, two additional local road segments were identified as potential candidates for transfer to the County.

1. Maplewood Sideroad (OR 59 to OR 5) in the Township of East Zorra – Tavistock (EZT) was identified as a potential alternate route to Oxford Road 24/Hope Street as part of the Speed and Road Safety Review completed in Tavistock (Report No. [PW 2021-26](#)).
2. Juliana Drive (OR 12 to OR 59) in Woodstock is considered to provide the intended functionality of an upper tier road and was proposed as a swap for Oxford Road 15/Parkinson Road (OR 12 to OR 59) that has historically provided this functionality.

A general discussion was also undertaken regarding all County roads within the City of Woodstock (Woodstock) that may no longer be serving the intended functionality of the County road network from the impacts of growth and development. However, it was agreed to consider a further review of road rationalization and potential road transfers within Woodstock as part of the Oxford Road 4 Corridor Master Plan Study planned for 2022. The objective of this study will be to identify the preferred alternative to effectively move traffic from the 401/403 corridor to north of Woodstock.

Following the May 19, 2021 meeting with municipal partners, staff reviewed capital improvement requirements (5 year forecast) for the recommended road transfers and engaged in further discussions with each of the respective Area Municipality representatives.

Review of capital asset condition information showed that the candidate roads for transfer were all generally in good condition, including associated structures (bridges/culverts), and did not identify any significant capital upgrade requirements within the five-year horizon.

Recommended road transfers as shown in Attachment 3 and summarized in Table 1 below, are fully supported by Area Municipality representatives. If approved by respective Councils, the road transfers will result in the County acquiring 22.1 kms of road, 4 bridges, and 2 culverts (>3m span), and relinquishing 0.5 km of roads that are not currently functioning as part of the County road network.

Table 2: Recommended Road Transfers

Road Segment	Transfer	Segment Length (km)	Bridges	Culverts (>3m span)
New Durham Rd – Norwich TWP (OR 59 to OR 22)	From Norwich to County	4.1	1	0
Maplewood Sideroad – EZT TWP (OR 59 to OR 5)	From EZT to County	9.3	2	2
16th Line – EZT TWP (OR 4 to OR 8)	From EZT to County	8.7	1	0
Bonds Corners Road – Woodstock (Access road from OR 4)	From County to Woodstock	0.3	0	0
Oxford Road 2 Access Road – EZT TWP (West of OR 30/11 th Line	From County to EZT	0.2	0	0

Financial Compensation

The impact to the County road operations budget with the acquisition of additional capital assets is summarized in the financial section of this report.

Financial impacts of the proposed transfers to Area Municipalities should result in operational cost savings for EZT and Norwich Townships, and an insignificant cost increase for Woodstock to assume Bonds Corners Road, which they are currently maintaining on behalf of the County under the Urban Road Maintenance agreement.

Since there are no significant short term capital upgrade requirements within the upcoming 5 year forecast, the recommended transfers are proposed without any monetary compensation with the exception of New Durham Road in Norwich Township.

New Durham Road was formerly Oxford Road 21 and was transferred to Norwich Township as part of the 2009 road rationalization undertaking. Norwich Township received financial compensation as part of the transfer that included \$40,000 for anticipated bridge repairs. However, following the transfer, the bridge repairs were deemed unnecessary in subsequent bridge inspections undertaken by the Township.

Traffic volumes on New Durham Road have increased since it was downloaded in 2009 due to heavy industry in the area, which resulted in higher road rationalization scoring (>6.5) to justify uploading back to the County. However, since the 2009 monetary compensation for bridge repairs was not utilized, Norwich will be responsible for reimbursing the County for this amount (\$40,000).

County By-law Amendments

Oxford County By-law No. 4167-2001, as amended, defines the County Road System and will be further amended to initiate transfer of ownership and jurisdiction of roads to be uploaded to the County and downloaded to the respective Area Municipalities.

Roads uploaded to the County will be assigned a County road number; however, this will not impact the 911 municipal address system and mailing addresses of adjacent properties.

Conclusions

Road rationalization determines the appropriate jurisdiction of a road or road segment and ensures that upper and lower tier road networks are continuing to serve their intended function.

Road transfers may also benefit level of service where a low priority upper tier road, once transferred, may become a higher priority for the Area Municipality and see significant improvements over time. Likewise, a high volume local road primarily servicing a regional function may receive higher levels of service than the Area Municipality is able to provide.

The proposed road transfers as recommended by staff and supported by Area Municipalities will ensure efficient and effective goods and people movement within and through the County.

SIGNATURES

Original signed by:

Frank Gross, C. Tech
Manager of Transportation and Waste Management Services

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by:

David Simpson, P.Eng., PMP
Director of Public Works

Approved for submission:

Original signed by:

Michael Duben, B.A., LL.B.
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Road Rationalization Scoring Criteria
Attachment 2: 2019 Road Rationalization Update to Area Municipalities
Attachment 3: 2021 recommended road transfers – Road Rationalization Map