



## Staff Report

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**Report To: Council Meeting**

**From: Lee Gosnell, Manager of Operations & Community Services**

**Date: 2023-01-12**

**Subject: Blacks Road Surface Treatment Request**

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### **Recommendation:**

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Lee Gosnell, Manager of Operations & Community Services re: Blacks Road Surface Treatment Request; and

That West Elgin Council hereby directs staff to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction on the surface treatment request for Blacks Road between Johnston Line and Fleming Line.

### **Background:**

In 2019, the Municipality of West Elgin received a grant through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program for Blacks Road between Hwy 401 and Johnston Line. The project included rehabilitation of bridge #6 at McDougall Line, replacement of Culvert #6 at Kintyre Line, and associated road works to convert this section of Blacks Road from gravel to surface treatment. Due to COVID 19 and delays in obtaining the necessary permits, the tender process for this project was delayed until spring of 2022. The successful contractor chose to begin work on the bridge and culvert this past fall season, with a completion date of late December '22/early January '23.

Once the contractor provided an estimated completion date, staff could schedule the additional work required to complete the project. Remaining drainage work and road construction operations are slated for completion in the summer of 2023, and conversion of the driving surface from gravel to surface treatment will take place in 2024. This will allow time for any deficiencies in bridge or road work to be corrected before the surface treatment is applied.

Municipal staff received a letter from residents living along Fleming Line regarding the possibility of surface treating Blacks Road between Johnston Line and Fleming Line as part of the above-mentioned project. The section in question is 2.4 km long, with two homes and an Average Daily Traffic Count of approx. 77 vehicles per day (based on the two years of data prior to COVID). The first intersecting road north of Johnston Line is Gibb Line, which has no houses to the west and approx. 6 homes to the east. Blacks Road ends where it meets Fleming Line, which is the second intersection north of Johnston Line. Fleming Line has approx. 14 homes between Clachan Road and Furnival Road. It is important to note that some of these residents would use Clachan and Furnival vs. Blacks as their properties are closer to these roads than they are to Blacks (depending on the destination).

There are benefits and drawbacks to changing a gravel road to surface treatment.

Benefits of this operation can include -

- Smoother and more stable driving surface
- Elimination of dust during the dry summer months
- Substantial reduction in annual maintenance costs over a 12 – 15 life span if the road base and drainage are properly prepared before surface treatment is applied.

Drawbacks of this operation can include –

- Higher vehicle speeds once the road is converted to a solid surface
- Very susceptible to damage from oversize/overweight farm equipment and heavy trucks
- Added costs during winter control for material usage (sand/salt)
- Large capital investment required in year 1 of the life cycle

When contemplating a conversion from gravel to surface treatment, one must place consideration on the following factors –

- What is the ADT and speed limit on the identified section (determines class of road)?
- What type of vehicles and equipment will utilize the road section?
- Would this result in the connection of two roads that are already solid surface?
- Are there any high-risk road features that would be made safer by conversion?
- Are there any notable destinations along the route that would benefit from a hard driving surface (such as Beattie Manor Retirement Home)?
- Are there sufficient budgetary funds to cover the initial capital expense?

In the end, it is Councils' decision on how we move forward with these requests, but honest answers to the questions above should help determine a logical answer.

### **Financial Implications:**

The residents' letter is correct in stating that the cost to surface treat this section of Blacks Road will increase over time, as all things typically do. There is, however, no cost savings in bundling this request with the ICIP project south of Johnston Line. Margins are very tight to begin with, and quantities are not sufficient to trigger any reduction in pricing.

At a very high level, municipal staff typically budget \$80,000 to \$100,000 per km for conversion of gravel roads. This number can vary depending on the quality of existing road base, required gravel and condition of drainage features such as culvert pipes and roadside ditches. If this project were to move forward, it would require a budget number of approx. \$192,000 - \$240,000.

## Report Approval Details

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|----------------------|---|
| Document Title:      | Blacks Road Surface Treatment - 2023-05-Operations Community Services.docx                                |
| Attachments:         | - Attn_ General Municipality Mayor Duncan McPhail, Deputy Mayor Richard Leatham Councillors and Staff.pdf |
| Final Approval Date: | Jan 10, 2023  |

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jana Nethercott