



Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting
From: Robert Brown, Planner
Date: 2024-09-11
Subject: Request to Alter Status of Road – Dymock Line & Gray Line

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Robert Brown, Planner for information purposes.

That Council refuse the request for a change in the status of Dymock Line from a no winter maintenance road to a full year round road.

And further that Council direct administration to advise prospective purchasers and/or the affect landowners that the Municipality is not prepared to change the status of Gray Line from no winter maintenance to a full year round road at this time.

Purpose:

West Elgin Administration has received a formal request from a landowner with a property located to the southwest of the end of Dymock Line (See Figure One) to upgrade the status of a portion of the road from a no winter maintenance road to a year round opened road. The purpose being to provide the necessary access to a public road to construct a new dwelling.

In addition to the formal request for Dymock Line administration has also been fielding a number of inquiries about the possibility of upgrading a section of Gray Line from Graham Road. (See Figure Two)

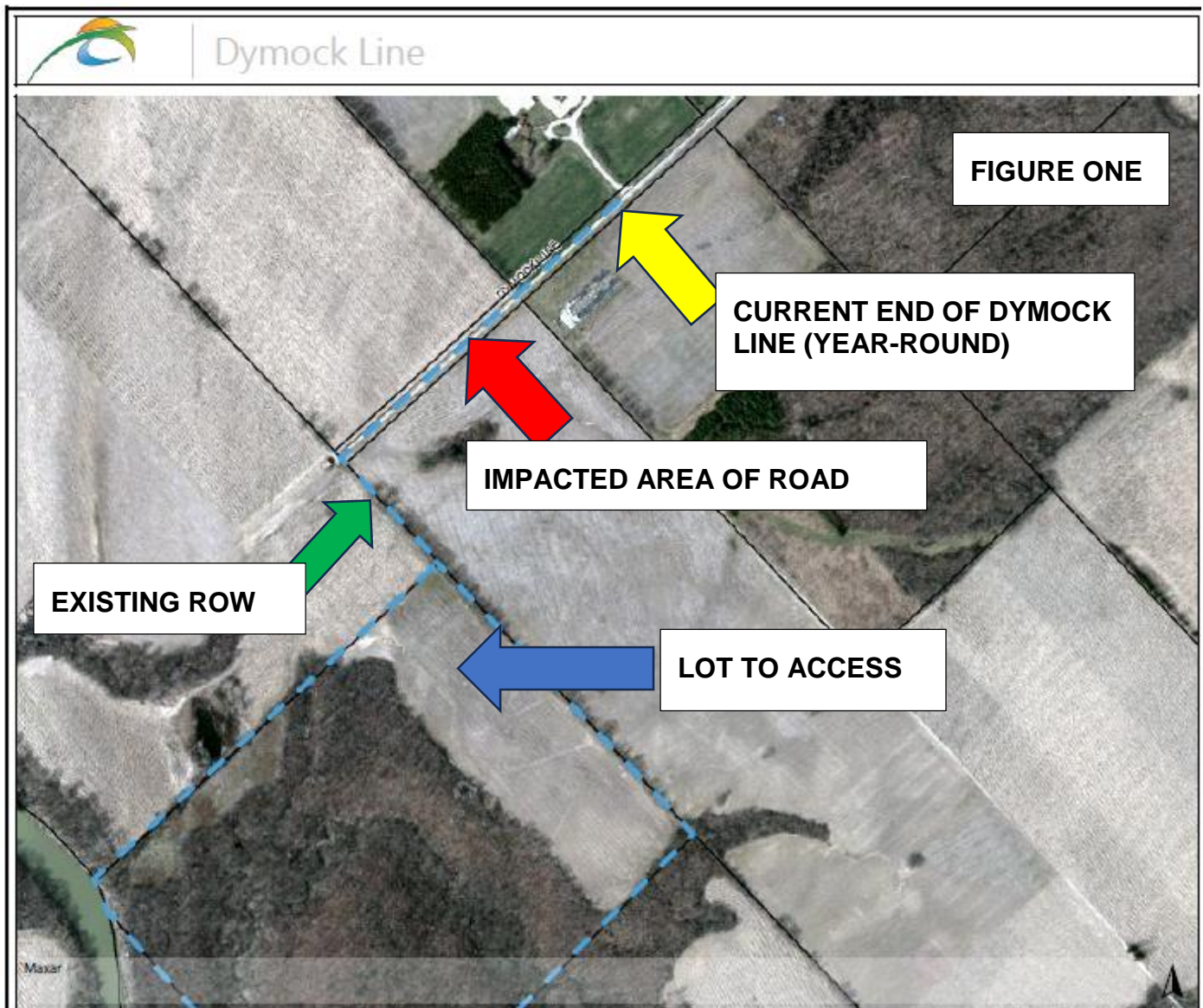
Background:

Dymock Line is a gravel road with access to Dunborough Rd. There are four rural residential lots, one farm operation with a dwelling and livestock and seven vacant farm lots. The portion of the road that would require upgrading is approximately 450 m in length. The current condition of the road is somewhat narrower than the year round portion and it is only used for access to vacant farmlands likely during the spring and fall.

The landowner that has inquired about upgrading the road owns a parcel that is south of the farm property location at the end of Dymock Line. They have indicated that they have a legal access over this parcel to their lands. The purpose of the requested upgrading is to provide access to a year round fully maintained road for the purpose of making application for the construction of new dwelling. Without upgrading of the road, the Building Department is not able to legally issue a permit as the lands do not have access to an opened and fully maintained municipal or County road. Even with upgrading of the roadway the landowner would need to provide proof of both a legal right-of-way and that the right-of-way is passable for general access and emergency vehicles.

The portion of Gray Line that is under consideration is 340 m in length with three abutting farm fields and is essentially a dirt road demarked by tracks, often referred to as a cow path. There are a number of buildings, and a dwelling located at the end of the portion of the road under consideration but they have not been maintained in recent years and the house has actually partially collapsed. The road allowance is basically just field access for the abutting lands.

What has sparked interest in the road allowance and its current classification is that a 33 acre parcel, the one where the existing dwelling is located, on the Lake side has been listed for sale. Several prospective purchasers have inquired about access to the lot and the potential to either construct a new dwelling or develop lots. Although no formal request has been received the question of upgrading the road to a year round condition has been raised.





Gray Line

FIGURE TWO

IMPACTED AREA OF ROAD

LANDS TO ACCESS



Maxar

Financial Implications:

In the case of both road allowances there would be the need to undertake works to upgrade the roads. In the case of Dymock Line there is roadway in place however it would require some basic condition review, widening, likely drainage upgrading, and construction of some form of turning area at the end for emergency services. In the case of Gray Line the existing condition of the road allowance would require considerably more investment to establish the minimum standard required for the road to be opened to travel today or year round. The cost of upgrading both roads could easily exceed \$300,000. This is a significant investment to potentially provide access to only two new dwellings. This cost does not factor in the expense of maintaining the additional roadway annually. The increased assessment value created by the addition of even two modest homes would likely not result in an increase to tax revenue of more than \$15,000.

Policies/Legislation:


The lot that would be accessed by the upgrading of Dymock is currently landlocked but zoned in such a way that the provisions of Section 4.5b) do not apply that requires any existing lot to have a minimum lot frontage of 10 m, and Section 4.8 that requires frontage on a public road. Despite this without clear proof that safe access can be provided from the end of Dymock to the lot it remains uncertain whether a building permit could be issued. This in combination with the associated upgrading costs demonstrates that there is no long-term benefit to the Municipality to consider upgrading the road.

The parcel requiring access from Gray Line is split into the Lakeshore Development zone which limits development to agricultural uses and forestry and the Agricultural zone. Any form of development on the property would require additional planning approvals. With this in mind there may be other options available including surplusing of the road allowance and conveyance to a prospective purchaser for use as a laneway access or if lots are proposed a purchaser would be responsible for the upgrading of the road to provide access. At this point is likely premature to alter the current state of the road allowance, particularly given the associated cost to the Municipality.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Infrastructure Improvement	Recreation	Economic Development	Community Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth.	<input type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents.	<input type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living.	<input type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents.

Respectfully submitted by,



Robert Brown, H. Ba, MCIP, RPP
 Planner, Municipality of West Elgin

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Request to Alter Status of Road - Dymock Line and Gray Line - Recommendation Report - 2024-29-Planning.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Oct 7, 2024

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

Terri Towstiac