



The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

Staff Report

Report Title: Sunset PI Remediation (2)

Date: Aug. 7, 2024

Report Number: PW-2024-08-33

Department: Public Works

File Number: C11 PW 24

Prepared By: John Yungblut, Director of Public Works

Attachments: None

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives Report PW2024-08-33 prepared by John Yungblut, Director of Public Works,

AND FURTHER directs Staff to develop a cost sharing proposal to enclose ditches along Sunset Pl. to be included in the 2025 budget deliberations.

Background:

On Feb. 5, 2024, Township staff brought forward a Report PW-2024-02-5 explaining some issues with the ditch on a new residential subdivision in Point Clark, known as Sunset Pl. During the meeting, the Committee of the Whole directed Staff to proceed with public engagement based on two possible solutions. One design was a modified open ditch design, and the other was an enclosed ditch design.

On June 11, 2024, letters were sent out to nineteen property owners providing some background of the situation and three options for making improvements to the open ditches. The first two options were selected by the Committee and the third option was the "do nothing" option as Staff felt it was important to determine how many property owners preferred to not make any improvements. Each letter included the estimated construction cost for each option based on an estimate provided by a local contractor familiar with the development. The estimated costs ranged from \$5,000-\$16,000 per lot for Option 1 (modified open ditch design) with most properties falling in the \$5,000-\$10,000 range. The estimated construction cost of Option 2 (enclosed ditch design) ranged from \$8,000-\$39,000 per lot with most properties falling in the \$15,00-\$17,000 range.

The following table summarizes the seven letters that were returned, with a ranking of their preference with 1 being the most preferred option and 3 being the least preferred option.

Name	Option 1 (Regraded ditches)	Option 2 (Enclosed ditches)	Option 3 (Do nothing)
Respondent #1	2	1	3
Respondent #2	2	3	1
Respondent #3	2	3	1
Respondent #4	3	2	1
Respondent #5	2	3	1
Respondent #6	2	3	1
Respondent #7	-	-	1

Township staff also received three other responses that did not specify a preference but indicated that they were not satisfied with the options provided in the letter. It should be noted that one letter was returned to sender, so we expect that eighteen property owners received the letter.

Discussion/Analysis/Overview:

The general consensus of the responses we received is that the estimated constructions costs were significantly higher than the respondents thought was reasonable. Most of the property owners that selected Option 3 as their preferred option, requested that the Township allow them to enclose the ditches in front of their property themselves because they expected they could do it for significantly less.

It is possible that the actual construction cost could be lower if we requested multiple bids, but a 50% reduction as some property owners suggested is not realistic. Township staff made it clear that the amount included in the letter was intended for discussion purposes only and would not necessarily be the amount the Township would collect from the property owner.

The main challenge with this situation is most property owners are not familiar with the cost of drainage work that meets Township standards and is in compliance with the Ontario Provincial Standards (OPS). These standards allow for the materials used to last their designed life expectancy, maximizes the capacity of the system and provides access to the storm sewers for inspections and routine maintenance work. These benefits come at a significant cost both in the cost of the materials and the labour required to install the materials to this standard.

A simple and inexpensive ditch enclosure project that costs \$5,000-\$7,000 may work fine if only one property undertakes it, but if all properties complete similar work, the functionally and longevity of the system would be greatly reduced.

It is the opinion of Township staff that a cost sharing proposal for a ditch enclosure is the only solution that will resolve this issue over the long term and would be acceptable to most of the property owners in this development. This would address the existing issues with the development and prevent requests in the future for ditch enclosures.

The rationale for a cost sharing arrangement is based on evidence that we collected showing that most of the ditch grading issues began with some of the entrance culverts that were installed by the subdivision developer near the Huron Road intersection. The ditch grading was accepted by the Township based on a visual inspection and it did not become apparent that there was an issue until much time had passed. Once the first few culverts were installed at the incorrect elevation, it did not provide many options for the installation of upstream entrance culverts, so the problems compounded.

A decision to not make any improvements to the existing ditches will require some repairs in the near future and it is difficult to justify recovering the cost for making from property owners for making these repairs since most of these issues were caused by the developer. In the opinion of Staff, the funds required for ditch repairs would be more effective if they are used for improvements that will reduce the ongoing maintenance costs.

Since the drainage system in this development is functional, we don't see any need to make a final decision at this time. Therefore, Township staff recommend that a cost sharing proposal is created and included in the 2025 budget deliberations.

Financial Impacts:

There are no capital funds allocated to this project.

Performance Measurement:

N/A

Strategic Area:

- Embrace a thriving rural lifestyle
- Enhance Municipal Service Delivery
- Prepare for Inclusive Growth
- Ensure Financial Stability

Strategic Goal: Manage assets and infrastructure

Respectfully Submitted By:

John Yungblut, Director of Public Works

Report Approved By:

Jodi MacArthur, Chief Administrative Officer