



The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

Staff Report

Report Title: Road Maintenance Cost 2026

Date: Jan. 12, 2026

Report Number: PW-2026-04

Department: Public Works

File Number: C11 PW 26

Prepared By: John Yungblut, Director of Public Works

Attachments: Report PW-2021-02-17

Recommendation:

THAT Township of Huron-Kinloss Council hereby receives for information Report PW-2026-04 prepared by John Yungblut, Director of Public Works.

Background:

During the Dec. 1, 2025 Committee of the Whole, updated information was requested regarding the cost to maintain gravel roads compared to paved roads. This information was previously reported to Council in 2021 and that report is attached to this report for background information.

Township staff have analyzed the costs to maintain gravel and paved roads in 2024 based on the classification of the roadways. We did not consider our 2025 costs as we do not have all the final expenditures at this time.

We have used these figures to estimate the average annual cost to maintain gravel roads over a ten-year period. Paved roads require a longer-term analysis because a typical asphalt road is expected to last twenty years with routine maintenance.

When comparing the maintenance costs of a roadway, staff prefer to use lane kilometres as the unit of measurement. This is a more equitable method of comparing two lane roads with single lane width roads. Any road that is less than 5m (16.5 feet) in width is considered a one lane road.

"Table A" is a summary of the average annual cost to maintain 310 lane kilometres of gravel roads. Township staff have decided to use the Minimum Maintenance Standard (MMS) road classification system for both gravel and paved roads rather than "Priority" levels for gravel roads as described in the 2021 report. MMS road classes range from Class 1 to Class 6 and are based on traffic volume and the posted speed limit.

Township gravel roads consist of Class 4, Class 5 and Class 6.

Class 4 roads are generally graded several times per year, they received the heaviest concentration of dust control product, and they are typically resurfaced with gravel every 2-

3 years. Class 5 roads are typically located in urban areas and have a speed limit of 50 km/hr or less. Class 5 roads receive a similar Level of Service has Class 4 roads, but they are often narrower, so the cost of maintenance is often less than Class 4 roads. Class 6 roads are generally our lower volume rural sideroads that are often not winter maintained. Class 6 are typically graded 1-2 times per year, receive a lower concentration of dust control product and are gravel resurfaced every 8-10 years.

Table A

Maintenance Description	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Gravel Resurfacing	\$1,141	\$961	\$679
Grading/Scarifying	\$707	\$595	\$421
Dust Control	\$918	\$773	\$546
Annual Cost per Lane Kilometre	\$2,766	\$2,329	\$1,646

“Table B” is a summary of the average annual cost to maintain 453 lane kilometres of paved roads. The capital cost to repave a road amortized over a twenty-year period (without adjusting for inflation) is included to provide a fair comparison with the maintenance a gravel road. The costs have been calculated based on road the classification specified in the MMS.

Class 3 roads are the highest class of Township roads based on the traffic count data collected so far. These roads segments are found on Lake Range Dr. and some concession roads west of Highway 21 with a posted speed limit of 80 km/hr. Most other paved concession roads are considered Class 4 roads. Class 5 and 6 roads are generally local roads will speed limits of 50 km/hr with a very low traffic volume.

Table B

Maintenance Description	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Spray Patch/ Crack Sealing	\$167	\$103	\$106	\$66
Road Patching/ Pothole Filling	\$89	\$55	\$57	\$35
Amortized Paving Cost	\$2,875	\$2,875	\$3,450	\$3,519
Annual Cost per Lane Kilometre	\$3,131	\$3,033	\$3,613	\$3,620

Discussion/Analysis/Overview:

It should be noted that the cost breakdown across road classifications is an estimate based on the prices we have received in the past and our total expenditures. The Township does not split our road maintenance expenses based on road class.

In most cases, it is less expensive to maintain a lower road class, however, we find that construction costs are typically higher for Class 5 and Class 6 roads as they are often urban streets that are more complex to work on compared to rural roads. Class 5 roads typically have more utility appurtenances such as catch basins, maintenance holes and water valves that often require more surface maintenance as well.

While asphalt prices have increased significantly in the past five years, the cost to maintain our gravel roads have increased as well. There two main factors for this increase:

1. Grader Rental Rates: the rental rate that Township staff set to fund our equipment reserves when our grader is used have been steadily increasing since 2020. The grader rental rate in 2020 was \$40.00/hour and the 2024 grader rental rate was \$107.45/hour. The provincial standard rate was set at \$155.70/hour in 2020 and was increased to \$160.10/hour in 2024. This rate includes fuel and insurance costs, which the Township accounts for in a separate budget line item. We expect our rates will only see minor increases every 2-3 years rather than the large annual increases to bring us closer to the provincial standard.
2. The cost of dust control products has increased. Dust control expenses totalled \$88,200 in 2020 and increased to \$212,314 in 2024. We have started seeing less extreme price increases in the past few years and 2026 will be the first decrease in the price of 35% Calcium Chloride due to more competition in our area.

If the Township was to consider converting more gravel concession roads to asphalt, a further analysis of Class 4 road maintenance costs should be used in the decision-making process, as these roads generally fall into this classification. "Table C" compares the increased cost of maintaining a paved Class 4 road in 2024 compared to the amount provided in the 2021 report.

Table C

	2019-2020	2024
Class 4 Gravel Road Maintenance Cost (Per Lane Kilometre)	\$1,819	\$2,766
Class 4 Asphalt Road Maintenance Cost (Per Lane Kilometre)	\$2,242	\$3,033
Percent Increase of Average Asphalt Road Maintenance Cost	23%	10%

While it appears that the cost increase of maintaining a paved road compared to a gravel road has decreased in the past five years, Township staff do not see this trend continuing as the cost of dust control product and the Township grader rental rate are not expected to exceed the inflation rate of asphalt paving costs.

It should also be noted that the investment the Township has made into asphalt paving since 2020 has allowed for the conversion of 5.3 kilometres of gravel roads into paved roads and a minimal increase in our average Pavement Condition Index (PCI).

Performance Measurement:

The average PCI of Township paved roads in 2020 was 73 and based on the results of the PCI study in 2025, the average PCI is now 75. Township staff consider this to be a satisfactory average score for our paved road network.

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