

# The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

## Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number MAYOR 2020-001

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**Meeting Date:** January 14, 2020

**Title:** Deputy Mayor's 2019 Round Table Meetings on Roads

**Description:** Recommendations from Roads 101 Round Table Meetings held in 2019

**Ward Number:** All

**Author and Title:** Doug Elmslie, Deputy Mayor

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### Recommendation(s):

**That** Report MAYOR 2019-001, **Deputy Mayor's 2019 Round Table Meetings on Roads**, be received;

**That** staff be directed to provide a report to Council that outline recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of road drainage by the end of Q2, 2020;

**That** staff be directed to provide a report to Council with recommendations to enhance education and awareness related to our roads network, work plans, and allotted resources by the end of Q2, 2020;

**That** staff report to Council each spring regarding life cycle extension needs in relation to the approved budget; and

**That** the recommendations of this report be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next regular Council meeting.

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background:**

The Deputy Mayor's Round Table meetings were held to provide an opportunity for residents to engage with their elected officials, municipal staff, and each other about roads.

Roads 101 Round Table Meetings were held around the municipality; representatives from each ward were given the opportunity to participate in their respective panel. Each Councillor was responsible for extending invitations to 6-8 residents of their ward to participate as panelists. The round table panelists were provided information in advance of the meeting and were challenged to provide three recommendations for how to better manage the City's 5400 lane kilometers of roads.

Each meeting included a presentation outlining current financial pressures, information on how the municipality's roads are built, and how the roads are maintained. Round table participants had the opportunity to ask questions of staff before they made their recommendations for improvement. After the recommendations were confirmed, questions were taken from the public.

At each Round Table meeting, the panelists were challenged to indicate whether the City was spending enough on roads and if not, how an increased budget would be funded. These findings are included within the Financial/ Operational impacts portion of this report.

As Deputy Mayor, I have found that holding issue-specific Public Meetings in all wards is a worthwhile endeavor and has served as a valuable tool for engaging with our residents. This exercise has served to promote openness and transparency, and has created cross regional connections within our municipality.

The conclusions we can draw from these meetings are that residents are interested in not only learning about, but offering input to our infrastructure and monetary challenges. Residents have put forth varied recommendations, three of which, will be explored as main priorities in this report. It is recommended that the practice of issue specific meetings continue.

The recommendations from each Round Table meeting are attached as Appendix A and are available online at <https://jumpinkawarthalakes.ca/>

## **Rationale:**

The recommendations from the Round Table meetings were reviewed; the cumulative top three are listed below:

### **1) Drainage Improvements**

Proper drainage is one of the most important factors in maintaining good roads. When water can drain effectively from the roadway it maintains its integrity for a longer period of time. While there are a number of contributing factors that influence optimal drainage, the two that were referenced the most in Panel discussions were:

- i) Ditching & Brushing – the roadside ditching and brushing programs have been affected by budget cuts in the past. In order to maintain an effective ditching and brushing program stable funding must be in place and maintained.
- ii) Paved shoulders – Paved shoulders are now included for arterial road reconstruction. It is recommended that this practice continue and be expanded to other road classifications, where feasible.

### **2) Communication, Education and Engagement**

Panelists and members of public commented that they failed to understand the scope of our roads program until they attended the meeting. A number of Round Table panelists recommended that public education and engagement be increased to help Kawartha Lake's residents understand the challenges that the municipality is facing.

Concerns were also voiced regarding staff's responsiveness to reported issues and communication relating to ongoing issues and major projects. Education should support resident expectations related to reported concerns and raise awareness around the scope of our responsibilities in relation to the limited resources available to the City.

### **3) Preventative Maintenance**

Kawartha Lakes residents would like the municipality to be more proactive in its road maintenance. This includes reporting to Council annually on preventative maintenance (lifecycle extension) needs. Additionally, staff should seek viable options for long lasting patching materials, to further extend the life span of the road.

## **On-Going Operational Changes**

Operational changes, and subsequent implementation decisions, will be made pending staff reports to Council. However, feedback from these meetings informed the 2020 Capital Budget deliberations and as a direct result, Council invested in the following initiatives:

- Six additional hot mix boxes were purchased tripling former inventory and resulting in one hot mix box for each Public Works Depot. These additions will assist in long term pothole remediation.
- Increased funding of \$1.2 million for roads and bridge maintenance in the 2020 Operating Budget.

In addition to the aforementioned changes, prior to the Deputy Mayor Round Tables, the municipality had made the following upgrades:

- Increased communication on major road and bridge projects.
- Approved the restructure of the Public Works division that establishes additional in-house expertise and full time staff.

## **Other Panel Themes:**

- Hire more staff. The staffing challenges were addressed and many groups felt despite an increase in initial funding, an influx of “in-house” staff would provide a more consistent standard of work and provide essential back up during staff absences. It was also suggested that we work with post-secondary institutions to facilitate training and mentoring. By informing curriculum development and highlighting critical skill sets, the municipality will be better able to employ qualified candidates moving forward.
- In some areas, the panel suggested that they would like to see more gravel roads upgraded to hi-float, and hi-float upgraded to asphalt. In other areas, it was recommended that poor condition hi-float roads be pulverized and taken back to gravel until they could be reconstructed. Ultimately, these are levels of service set by Council.
- Enforce heavy vehicle restrictions. Heavy vehicles were a concern in many areas. Residents indicated that heavy trucks were using secondary roads rather than haul routes. This is an enforcement issue.
- Reduce the amount of material used for winter control to save money. Currently the City adheres to provincial minimum maintenance standards and the Salt Management Plan for application rates for materials. The City is mandated to adhere to these provincial standards. Ultimately, these are levels of service set by Council.

## **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

It is important to note that each recommendation carries its own financial repercussions. Until Council receives the requested reports from staff, it is difficult to discern the impact of these recommendations.

Round Table participants came to understand that the municipality's vast road network was funded by a comparatively small population. To this end, it was recommended that Council consider the following avenues to generate additional income for road maintenance and capital projects:

- Impose an annual roads levy
- Take out additional debenture
- Reduce spending in other programs and reassign funding to roads related endeavors
- Encourage development so as to increase the tax base and subsequent funding for capital and operational initiatives.

## **Relationship of Recommendation(s) to the Strategic Plan:**

The Deputy Mayor's Round Table Meetings on Roads aligns with the goals of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan: A Vibrant and Growing Economy, and An Exceptional Quality of Life. It is also reflected in the Strategic Enablers of Municipal Service Excellence and Efficient Infrastructure and Asset Management.

Consultation and roads management continue to be a priority moving forward. Though still in draft form, it is important to note that the Deputy Mayor's Round Table Meetings on Roads aligns with the proposed 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. On going public consultations help the City to deliver the highest standard of municipal services while adhering to the guiding principles of fiscal responsibility, open and transparent governance, and collaborative service.

## **Consultations:**

- Panel meetings with representatives from each ward
- Director, Managers and Supervisors of Public Works
- Director, Managers and Supervisors of Engineering & Assets
- Office of Strategy Management
- Communications Manager and Officers
- Mayor and Ward Councillors

## **Attachments:**

Appendix A – Deputy Mayor's Round Table Recommendations



Appendix A - Deputy  
Mayors Round Table |

For Meeting Minutes, supporting documents, and a comprehensive list of recommendations, please visit Jump In, Kawartha Lakes:

<https://jumpinkawarthalakes.ca/>