

Township of Southgate
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Staff Report PL2020-009

Title of Report: PL2020-009-Request to purchase road allowance
Department: Clerks
Branch: Planning Services
Council Date: March 18, 2020

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Council receive Staff Report PL2020-009 for information; and
That Council proceed with option ____, and direct staff to take all necessary actions in relation to this option as outlined in this staff report.

Key Map



The property owner of the E Pt of Lot 25, Con 4, Geographic Township of Egremont has approached the Township to purchase the road allowance between Lots 25 and 26 Con 4 in Egremont Township. At the Council meeting on March 4th, 2020 Council directed staff to bring forward a report regarding the road allowance. This allowance would be the extension of Side Road 61.

Discussions with the Public Works manager indicate that the northern portion of the road allowance in concession 5 is partially opened up to the driveway of the residence on Lot 26 concession 5. If the municipality were to offer up the concession 4 portion of the road allowance it would make sense to also offer the northern portion on concession 5 as well. This may pose a problem as there is little incentive for the landowner to the north on concession 5 to take the road allowance as they would then have to start ploughing their laneway right to Southgate Road 04, a distance of approximately 380m which the Township currently does now.

From a general planning principles perspective, it is not desirable to sell road allowances as it places the lands in private ownership, thereby closing the door on future development potential for adjacent lands and the allowance itself. Road allowances have benefits beyond future roads. A road allowance could include a new road way for access to future development but, it can also be used as a recreational corridor for hiking, cycling, ATV, horseback riding and snowmobiles usage. A road allowance in an unopened state also provides a linkage for natural wildlife to traverse the property supporting bio diversity. The biggest benefit of keeping road allowances is the ability to create a continuous trail system that links multiple concessions from one end of the township to the other under one ownership. As an example, The Bruce trail would not be a continuous trail system without the use of road allowances from some municipalities. The CP rail trail is another example of where public ownership of large linear tracks can provide excellent trails for public use. I am not suggesting that the Township will create a trail system tomorrow on this allowance just that by selling it you close the door on the future possibilities for continuous trails in this area.

As our CAO from a risk management point of view, pointed out in the previous discussion with Council, road allowances can also represent a risk to the Township should someone get hurt using a closed road allowance. Selling it would reduce this risk however large or small that risk may be. He also suggested that the Township is not in a position to look after "another road" and so it would not be developed except as a private road or laneway.

I agree with all the points the CAO has made above. We have sold road allowances in the past where it has made sense to do so. There is a concern however, that by agreeing to this request the Township will see more requests to purchase more right of ways in future.

Based on all of the above, I am still of the opinion that from a planning perspective, it would be better to keep the road allowances rather than sell them off piecemeal.

The followings options can be considered by Council

Option A: Council direct staff to inform the landowner that the Township does not wish to sell the road allowance at this time.

Option B: Council sell the road allowance and declare the lands surplus and direct the Clerk to take all necessary actions to bring about the sale of the entire road allowance between Concession 4 and Concession 5, lot 25 and lot 26.

Respectfully Submitted,

Municipal Planner: *Original Signed By*
Clinton Stredwick, BES, MCIP, RPP



CAO Approval: *Original Signed By*
Dave Milliner, CAO

Attachments: None