Report of the Committee on Works and Operations dated April 9, 1979

Granular Surface Roadways
File SC 3.4

1009 - 16. Since amalgamation in 1972, numerous reports and recommendations have been made in an attempt to arrive at a reasonable solution to the perennial problem of maintenance of unimproved rights-of-way and granular surface roadways.

Initial Construction

Your Committee has been advised that there are two specific problem areas associated with this matter, namely:

(1) Existing unimproved rights-of-way.
(2) Existing granular surface roadways that have outlived their useful life span and are badly deteriorated because of increased traffic volume and require extensive and costly regarding and regravelling.

There are three possible methods of funding which can be used to finance the construction of granular surface roadway. These are:

(a) as a total local improvement,
(b) as a total City-at-large expenditure,
(c) as a local improvement with a limitation as to assessable frontage.

Alternative (a), which has been the most recent approach, has met with only limited success. It would appear that the reason is that on existing unimproved rights-of-way, a large percentage of the fronting properties are zoned agricultural, and, as such, constitute large individual holdings. Recent experience has shown that attempts to improve such rights-of-way to a granular surface by way of a local improvement have been almost totally unsuccessful primarily because at the current assessable rate of $7.15 per front foot, the total assessment for large holdings is prohibitive to the owner. Because of the cost, the proposed local improvements are petitioned against.

Subsequent to the defeat of the local improvement, your administration is constantly being requested to maintain rights-of-way in a passable condition, which cannot be done in a proper manner since there are no funds allocated in the operating budget for this type of work function.

Alternative (b), funding by City-at-large, would of course, resolve the problem of financing provided Council approved the construction in an annual capital budget. However, the financial burden to the City would be enormous. At present, there are about 28½ miles of

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unimproved rights-of-way which provide access to existing dwellings. At current construction costs, it is estimated that $2,100,000.00 would be required to construct improved roads at these locations. If a five year program were adopted, annual costs would be over $400,000.00 a year. In addition, should such policy be adopted, there are potential request to improve other rights-of-way which at present are not physically open and not required for access, but dwellings could be built at these locations and requests for improvements. There are some 160 additional miles of such right-of-way with a potential additional expenditure for improvements estimated at some $12,000,000.00.

Furthermore, City funding of works which directly benefit private property is totally contrary to a philosophy of local improvements.

Alternative (c), provides that the properties benefiting would be assessed at least some portion of the cost of performing the initial improvement. This would provide a means of recovering a portion of the cost of constructing an all-weather road on unimproved rights-of-way while still providing some deterrent in that the owner of agriculturally zoned land would still be required to pay for the improvement on a basis of 300 feet assessable frontage.

This is the minimum width for an A5 zoning. At the same time, the resident so assessed would only have proportionate rights of this same 300 foot frontage should he wish to petition against the local improvement. The City-at-large would be expected to pay for the balance of the agricultural frontage, the cost of ditching, grading and initial placement of gravel. At the same time, owners of residential property would pay the full assessed cost for their full frontage.

Maintenance

With respect to maintenance of existing granular surface roads, your Committee has been advised there are again two possible methods of funding, namely:

(a) City-at-large in perpetuity,
(b) City-at-large for the terms of the local improvement with subsequent reconstruction to be financed by means of local improvement.

Alternative (a) is presently the policy in force with respect to maintenance of all works originally constructed as a local improvement. The problem with granular surface roadways is that they have a relatively short life span of approximately three years during which the yearly maintenance requirements are regarding and dust treatment. This is similar to the policy with respect to maintenance of more permanent roadway surfaces except, of course, that the maintenance costs of gravel roadways are very much greater. After that the maintenance costs of gravel roadways are very much greater. After the lifespan of a gravel road has expired

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some fairly major regarding and regravelling is required, which is charged to the City-at-large, would require substantial funding from annual operating budgets. Should traffic volumes increase, the road surface would deteriorate more rapidly lading to reconstructions with could be economically unfeasible from a cost benefit analysis.

The next alternative (b) would mean that once the term of the local improvement has expired major reconstruction of the roadway would be advertised as a local improvement. Should the local improvement be defeated, the cost of minor maintenance, regarding and dust control could be recovered either from the City-at-large operating budget or from a local improvement for this maintenance. In keeping with recent recommendations regarding inclusion of local improvements in a capital budget, the property owners benefiting would be required to petition the City for either a permanent concrete pavement, temporary asphaltic concrete or the reconstruction as a granular surfaced roadway. The reason for including asphaltic concrete as an alternative is in recognition of the facts that normally underground service scold still be installed under the temporary asphalt without breaking up a permanent type pavement.

There are presently 188.5 miles of granular surface roadways, and 28 ½ miles of existing right-of-way which should be improved to an all-weather roadway.

The cost of annual maintenance of these roads is estimated to be $1,250,000.00.

Your Committee has been advised that no adverse comments have been received from the Community Committees. In addition the City Solicitor has commented on the following recommendation contained in the administrative report, namely:

> "That owners of lands which ware now exempt from payment of the local improvement costs would become liable for these costs for future improvements but not retroactively upon rezoning or titles split".

The City Solicitor advises that the above approach is in conformity with Sections 383(2) and (3) of The City of Winnipeg Act, and there would seem little problem of application of this provision, as the Finance Department has indicated through its Local Improvement Accountant, that the situations could be handled as they arose.

Your Committee therefore recommends that the following policy with respect to the construction and maintenance of granular surface roadways be adopted.

(i) Existing unimproved rights-of-way shall be constructed to an all-weather granular surface and financed as a local improvement. For those properties which are zoned agricultural, the maximum accessible frontage

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for any single property shall be limited to 300 feet, as provided under Section 370(1) and 383(1) of The City of Winnipeg Act.

(ii) Granular surface roadways constructed as a local improvement be maintained at a cost of the City-at-large for a period not in excess of three years from the date of completion of construction.

(iii) Beyond the three years referred to in Clause (ii), the City will carry out only those works necessary to keep the roadway passable. These works consist of basic grading only and will not keep the roadway in a condition comparable to that after completion of the local improvement. Restoration of the roadway to the original local improvement construction standard (continuous application of granular material and dust palliative treatment) would only be done at the expense of the fronting owners as a new improvement.

(iv) Provide, in the Local Improvement By-law No. 98/72, for the assessment, as a local improvement, the cost of placing gravel and crushed stone on existing gravel surface roadways.

Your committee further recommends that the City Solicitor be authorised to prepare the amending by-law for submission to Council.

Moved by Councillor Filmon,
Adoption of the clause.

Carried

(Sgd.) Gary A. Filmon, Chairman.