



Meeting Date: January 15, 2025

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Report No: PWE-01-2025

Subject: Requirement for Sidewalks in Hamlet Settlement Areas

Recommendation:

THAT Council report PWE 01-2025 Requirement for Sidewalks in Hamlet Settlement Areas be received;

AND THAT Council direct staff to proceed with Option #1 as outlined below.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction as to whether the requirement for sidewalks, as outlined within the Municipality's Infrastructure Design Guidelines, Official Plan, Trails Master Plan, and Transportation Master Plan, should apply within all, some or none of the Hamlet settlement areas within the Municipality.

Background:

There are a number of policies, standards, and guidelines that have been established to direct development throughout the Municipality. These include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic Plan
- Official Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- Servicing Master Plan/Stormwater Master Plan
- Zoning Bylaw
- Stormwater Management Policy Manual
- Infrastructure Design Standards
- Trails Master Plan

These documents speak to different layers of the planning and development process from high-level goals and objectives to specific design details, which establish a consistent framework to ensure new development aligns with the Municipality's long-term vision, protects public health and safety, is accessible, is sustainable and protects the interest of both existing and future residents.

While there may be cases where site-specific considerations warrant exceptions to certain guidelines or standards, staff endeavour to apply these requirements in a consistent manner.

With respect to the requirement for sidewalks within new development, there are several applicable policies, guidelines and standards:

Official Plan

The Official Plan provides policy direction for the orderly growth and development of the municipality. It includes goals and policies related to land use, agricultural and settlement areas, the classification of the natural areas system, economic, social, and servicing matters. The Settlement Area structure within the Official Plan identifies Urban Settlement Areas (Ilderton, Komoka-Kilworth), Community Settlement Areas (Arva, Delaware), and Hamlet Settlement Areas (Ballymote, Birr, Bryanston, Denfield, Lobo, Melrose, and Poplar Hill-Coldstream).

With respect to pedestrian infrastructure, the Official Plan contains high level policy direction to promote and encourage the establishment of safe, convenient, and visually appealing pedestrian opportunities within settlement areas ([9.4.1. f](#)). Section 6.2b of the Official Plan also identifies that new subdivision developments shall include sidewalks, as well as other infrastructure, as deemed appropriate by the municipality.

The Official Plan also contains the recommendations of the Trails Master Plan, which identifies proposed primary and secondary trail routes, shown on Schedule E, which identifies a number of desired pedestrian and/or multi-use trail routes within and between the settlement areas. These desired routes are intended to be implemented through major infrastructure upgrades, or through conditions of new development.

Transportation Master Plan (TMP), 2024

The TMP provides a functional road classification system to categorize Municipal roads as local, collector, or arterial and by their rural versus urban contexts based on their location either outside, or within an identified Settlement Area, and provides specific characteristics for each classification. This framework forms the basis for the complete streets approach to road design, ensuring that all road users are considered during the planning and design phases, and form the basis for standard cross sections and requirements for new roads.

With respect to sidewalks on local roads within settlement areas, the TMP recommends sidewalks on one, or both sides ([Exhibit 6.3: Urban Street Typical Characteristics](#)).

The Transportation Master Plan also recommended the completion of an Active Transportation Master Plan, which has been approved through the 2025 budget process, and is expected to be completed in 2025. The Active Transportation Master Plan is intended to specifically address active transportation infrastructure, including sidewalks, on a comprehensive municipal-wide basis.

Infrastructure Design Standards, 2018

The Infrastructure Design Standards provide the detailed requirements for the design of municipal infrastructure associated with new development. This document addresses everything from the placement and installation of stop signs, driveway culverts, traffic calming, and details relating to sanitary and storm sewer collection systems and water distribution systems.

[Section 1.1.23](#) contains the provisions relating to sidewalks:

- As a minimum, sidewalks are to be provided as follows:
 - Local street - one side *
 - Collector/Arterial – both sides
 - Cul-de-sacs – subject to municipal review

*In addition, the municipality may require additional sidewalks to provide linkages to parks, schools, or any areas where an increase in pedestrian activity may be anticipated.

The purpose of a sidewalk is to provide safe and designated space for pedestrians to walk, separate from vehicular traffic. Key functions of a sidewalk include:

- Safety; sidewalks improve safety by having dedicated space for pedestrians away from roadways, reducing the risk of collision and improving pedestrian comfort.
- Accessibility; sidewalks make it easier for people including those with disabilities, the elderly, children, and parents with strollers to be able to travel comfortably within the community.
- Active & Healthy Living; sidewalks provide designated space for walking promoting active and healthy lifestyles, using active transportation also results in lower carbon emissions and can reduce the number of vehicles on the roadway.
- Connectivity; sidewalks help improve the connectivity between neighbourhoods, schools, parks, community centres, libraries, businesses, and other public places making it easier for pedestrians to access various destinations.

Sidewalks are important for promoting pedestrian safety, accessibility, and community well being.

Analysis:

The Infrastructure Design Standards and TMP do not differentiate between Urban/Community Settlement Areas and Hamlet Settlement Areas.

Concerns have been identified with the application of the Infrastructure Design Standards specifically within new development within the Poplar Hill-Coldstream Hamlet Settlement Area, and specifically the requirement for sidewalks on at least one side of the road on new municipal roadways. More specifically, concerns have been raised with the requirement for payment in lieu of construction of sidewalks.

Staff have identified the following options for Council's consideration, noting that staff have recommended Option 1:

Option 1: The requirement for sidewalks on new municipal roads within settlement areas be addressed comprehensively and in more detail through the Active Transportation Master Plan, approved through the 2025 budget. This process will assess existing and future active transportation needs on a municipal-wide basis and will include public and stakeholder engagement.

With respect to pending developments, including ongoing developments in Poplar Hill-Coldstream, staff recommend that in lieu of the developer being required to install sidewalks as part of the development, that the developer provide the Municipality an amount of money representing what the cost would have been for the developer to install the sidewalks. These funds will be placed into the Municipality's Future Road Upgrade Reserve Fund. This requirement would be included within the development agreements which would also include clauses to ensure developers receive a refund should the Council-adopted Master Plan identify that sidewalks are not applicable in that location.

Requiring payment from the developer in lieu of requiring the developer construct the sidewalk as part of the development ensures that the cost burden to install the sidewalk when deemed appropriate is not fully borne by future taxpayers, but rather by the development proponent. The payment taken for the sidewalk will not cover the full cost of future construction, but it will help reduce the future burden on taxpayers when the sidewalk is installed.

While it is overall less expensive to construct sidewalks at the initial time of development, in those cases where there are no existing sidewalks along adjacent roads, requiring the up front payment versus construction of the sidewalk is also beneficial in that it reduces the Municipality's maintenance costs as it is inefficient to bring equipment to a hamlet to maintain one or two small areas of sidewalk.

This option is recommended by staff, as it ensures a comprehensive, consistent approach that will apply to all developments moving forward. It ensures that at least a portion of the cost burden to construct sidewalks is not borne by future taxpayers.

Option 2: Construction of sidewalks be required on at least one side of the road for new developments on new public roads as a condition of development within Hamlet settlement areas.

Construction of sidewalks at the time of development is generally the most cost effective, versus installing sidewalks at a later date within existing development areas. For example, installing sidewalks within existing development areas requires the removal of sod, the cutting of existing driveways, and the potential removal of existing trees or boulevard treatments, etc. However, this also results in “sidewalks to nowhere” until such time that linkages are developed. These short, fragmented sections of sidewalk may also result in additional maintenance cost and effort, which can be partially mitigated by signing and posting of no winter maintenance, until such time as there is sufficient sidewalk in place to warrant winter maintenance activities, this would be similar to the sidewalk in Bryanston.

Option 3: Sidewalks not be required within new developments on new public roads within Hamlet settlement areas, specifically where existing sidewalk connections do not exist.

Option 4: Sidewalks not be required within new developments on new public roads specifically within the Poplar Hill-Coldstream Hamlet Settlement Area.

Staff note that the Municipality has consistently invested year over year in a sidewalk expansion/rehabilitation program through the Municipal budget to improve pedestrian infrastructure and install sidewalks within existing areas which were developed without them. In 2021 the Municipality conducted a [sidewalk and streetlight](#) survey to gauge the public's desire for increased street lighting and sidewalks within the community. There were 514 survey responses received with the overwhelming majority of survey responses supporting expanded sidewalks in both urban/community settlement areas and in hamlet areas with the priorities being on creating connections to schools and parks. It is also important to note that there have been requests from residents at the south end of Denfield and from the southeast area of Bryanston for the extension of sidewalk. Staff recognize that these requests are along busier County roads, but it demonstrates that some residents that own larger lots do wish to have pedestrian facilities.

Financial Implications:

Funds received through the payment in lieu of construction options would generally be placed in an existing Reserve Fund, such as the Future Roads Upgrades fund, to be used to fund refurbishment, rehabilitation, and replacement costs associated with road infrastructure, as directed by Council. Funding for the rehabilitation and refurbishment of sidewalk infrastructure is typically obtained through various sources as part of the municipal budgeting process, including reserve funds, municipal tax levy, and grants where possible.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Balanced Growth
- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

Ensuring new development is designed in a way that meets the needs of both existing and future residents and aligns with Council's vision for the community.

Attachments:

N/A