



Birchcliff Property Owners Association of Douro-Dummer, Inc.
858 Birchview Road, Douro-Dummer, ONT K0L 2H0, www.BPOA.ca

December 8, 2023

Mayor Heather Watson and Members of Council
Township of Douro-Dummer
894 South Street
P.O. Box 92
Warsaw, ON K0L 3A0

Re. 2024 Budget and Birchview Road

On behalf of the property owners on Birchview Road and all the tributary roads to Clear and Stony Lakes, we would like to thank you for including the road resurfacing project in the draft 2024 budget for the Township. The cost of the project is budgeted at \$370,000 and after government grants, the taxpayer cost will be \$130,000.

As you all know, Birchview Road has serious road safety problems. The blind hills, the blind corners, the fact that there are no shoulders on the road, and at a speed limit of 60kph makes the road a high risk for a serious accident (reference DM Wills report to Council in December 2021) and potential for liability to the Township from lawsuits that may ensue in the event of a serious accident.

If there is ever a good time to make an investment into improving the safety for all users of Birchview Road, it is when the equipment is already on the road doing something like a resurfacing job. We also know that Bell Canada is planning to put internet fibre cable along Birchview Road in 2024 and there is a good chance they will want to bury it rather than using hydro poles. Again, heavy equipment will be along the road and burying the cable under a widened shoulder may be appealing to Bell Canada. It should be noted that the hydro poles are approximately 70 years old and in bad shape and overdue for replacement. Hydro officials have advised Birchview Road is in the queue but there is a big backlog and they will get to it when they can.

We respectfully ask Council to consider including a provision to spend upwards of \$1,500,000 of infrastructure spending to improve Birchview Road. The monies are to be spent on shoulder improvements and warning signage on the portion of the road from Fiddlers Lane to the bottom of Cardiac Hill.

As you may recall, BPOA commissioned a cost estimate to be done for shoulder improvements from Thomas Tooke Contracting in and around the time of the DM Wills engineering study. Thomas Tooke was the chief estimator for Drain Brothers prior to setting up his own business. The area to be widened was Fiddlers Lane to the bottom of Cardiac Hill. The report indicated a cost of slightly over \$1,000,000 for widening the shoulders and a copy of that report was given to

Township staff and Council at the time. BPOA is prepared to help with the cost of warning signage and planning for the best messaging and locations for those warning signs. The Township obviously has their statutory obligations for certain signage. There should also be guard railing systems installed on the steep hills and perhaps a widening of the culvert at the blind corner just past Dunford Road. Hence, \$1,500,000 seems like a reasonable request under the circumstances.

Although this is essentially a local improvement to Birchview Road, the potential liability to the entire Township because there are significant road deficiencies makes this a Township issue. It is our understanding that the Township is exposed to potentially significant legal liability in the event of any lawsuits arising from a personal injury or fatality on Birchview Road. The Township and Council are fully aware of all the road deficiencies and it is incumbent upon them to remedy the situation as best they can.

In the absence of any widening of the shoulders, we respectfully ask Council to consider adding a significant amount of money to the road maintenance budget to cut the grass and weeds along both shoulders of the road. A suggestion would be every 2 weeks plan to cut down the shoulder growth to 2" to 3" maximum height. The present shoulder cutting is done once or twice for the entire summer and it does nothing to solve the road safety problems. There is poison ivy and other weeds everywhere and you just cannot walk comfortably through 1' to 2' of weed growth on the shoulders so everyone walks on the road. It should be noted that there are some property owners along Birchview Road who do a good job cutting down the shoulder growth in front of their properties with their own lawn mowing equipment on a regular basis throughout the summer and this has been very helpful and appreciated.

We all know that the property owners along Birchview Road and the tributary roads to Clear and Stony Lake contribute in excess of \$1,500,000 annually to the tax revenue for the Township and County. We realize that this is a big ask and we do apologize for bringing this up at such a late date in the budget process. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by the Road Safety Committee of BPOA.

Bruce Johnson (Chair), Jeff Chalmers, Daniel Miskin and Jim Coyle

cc. Elana Arthurs, CAO

cc. Martina Chait, Clerk of Council