

Report to Council

Report Title: Pleasure Valley Road Petition - OFSC

Prepared By: Cally Mann, Municipal Executive Coordinator

Department: Operations

Date: August 25, 2020

Report Number: PW2020-25 **File Number:** C11PW

Attachments: Map of Pleasure Valley Road

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number PW2020-25 – Pleasure Valley Road Petition – OFSC, prepared by Cally Mann, Municipal Executive Coordinator, for information purposes and recommends that no further action be taken.

Report:

Background:

Staff received a petition from Pleasure Valley Road, Walkerton, residents on August 12, 2020. The petition itself has not been attached due to privacy concerns, but the topic and number of signatures has been summarized in this report. The purpose of the petition was to express concern regarding the upcoming and future snowmobile season and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) use of Pleasure Valley Road. Over the 2019/2020 winter, residents have been in contact with the OFSC regarding the fact that the signed snowmobile trail moved from the centre median, which is between County Road 4 and Pleasure Valley Road.

The petition contained four (4) signatures from the four (4) residents on Pleasure Valley Road.

The petition quotes the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) website regarding Snowmobile Safety, which states that a snowmobile is not permitted to ride on:

- Certain high-speed roads (400-series highways, Queen Elizabeth Way, Ottawa Queensway, Kitchener-Waterloo Expressway)
- The pavement of public roads where vehicles drive
- The ploughed portion of the shoulder

It should be noted that the above statement is only in relation to MTO roads, which are classified as Highways, such as Highway 6 or Highway 21 – County roads and Municipal roads do not fall under the jurisdiction of the MTO and therefore the restrictions on MTO roads do not apply. As per the *Motorized Snow Vehicles Act*,

R.S.O. 1990, c. M.44, under the *Highway Traffic Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, snowmobiles are licensed vehicles and are permitted on roads with the exception of King's Highways and where a municipality has passed a by-law stating otherwise.

Staff contacted the local OFSC District 9 manager, Karen Buratynski, who has provided additional background on the history of this issue. In 2019 there was ditch work and a culvert replacement done on the median between County Road 4 and Pleasure Valley Road. When the Hanover Neustadt Snowmobile Club began their trail building for the 2019/2020 season, they noticed that the topography within the recently constructed median would pose a significant safety hazard to both the groomer operator and the snowmobilers. She further confirmed that Pleasure Valley Road was not groomed, nor was it signed as an OFSC prescribed trail – it was used as a “connector” for riders to get from one trail to another. Ms. Buratynski and her colleagues have spoken with the Pleasure Valley Residents and have discussed that should there be enough snow accumulation to safely route the trail through the median, it would be done, however to do so would require approximately 6 feet of snow.

Snowmobiles are built with a single track on the back that propels the snowmobile forward and the skis on the front are how the machine turns. On hard surfaces such as pavement or frozen gravel, without snow, such as on roads, it becomes extremely difficult for the users to make a turn and therefore have an extremely decreased ability to swerve on the road in the event of an impending accident. Given the location that the trail comes out to on the County Road, it is has been deemed as an unsafe crossing location, which is why the OFSC signage states that the users are to follow the road to the next safest crossing to rejoin the trail. Staff questioned if there was a possible reroute or alternative approach, to which Ms. Buratynski confirmed that they have considered other crossings and possible route connectors but they were rejected.

In order for the snowmobile trail to connect from Hanover to the east end of Walkerton they have to cross both the Saugeen River and Bruce County Road 4 and the current location is the safest spot to do so.

Staff also received correspondence from a resident with concerns about the maintenance and aesthetics of the groomed path. Some residents felt that it churned up the soil and created an unsightly mess. The grooming concerns have been forwarded to the OFSC for consideration.

Analysis:

Given that the trail and its use 1) is permitted under the Highway Traffic Act and the Motorized Snow Vehicle Act, 2) has not been abused, and 3) making changes to the trail crossing would result in an unsafe crossing, Staff recommends that no action be taken by the municipality unless Council wishes to proceed with the creation of a by-law that will regulate and enforce the operation of snowmobiles within the municipality.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |

- Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? Yes
- Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? Yes

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?
N/A

This report has no financial impact.

Reviewed By:

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:

Cally Mann, Municipal Executive Coordinator

Reviewed By:

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer