



## **Administrative Report**

### **Office of the Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Allan Botham, P.Eng.  
Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services

**Date:** Wednesday, May 17, 2023

**Subject:** Howard Avenue Connector – MTO Transfer to the County of Essex

**Report #:** 2023-0517-IPS-R16-AB

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Administrative Report is to inform Council of the intention of the Ministry of Transportation of the Province of Ontario (the "**Ministry**") to transfer portions of Howard Avenue to the County of Essex. The Ministry is also looking for agreement from the County of Essex to the limits of the property transfer.

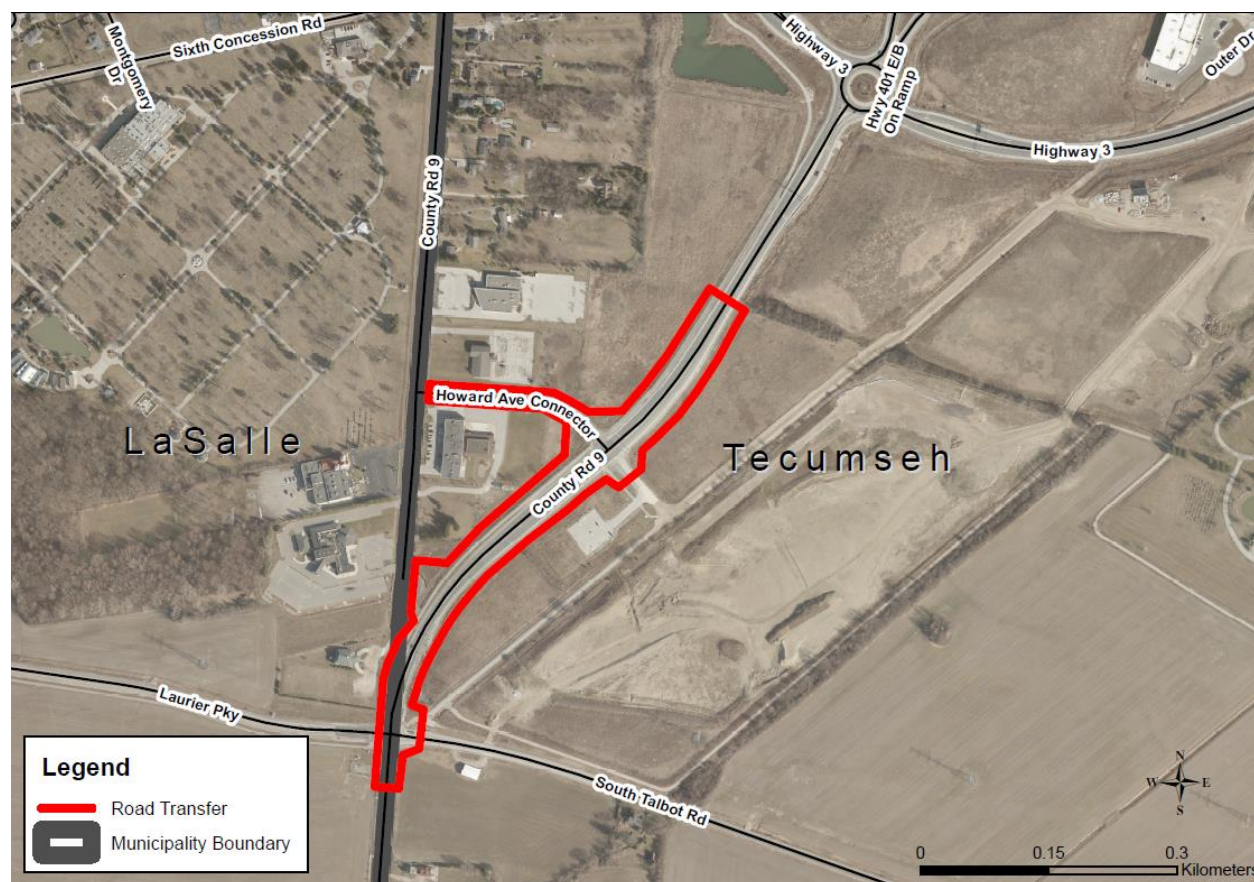
#### **Background**

The federal governments of both Canada and the United States, along with the Province of Ontario and the State of Michigan, recognized the value of an improved border crossing between Windsor and Detroit through a new bridge connected directly to the highway networks of both Ontario and Michigan. As part of that initiative to improve system connectivity and the flow of people and goods, the new Herb Grey Parkway (the "**Parkway**") was constructed.

To facilitate construction of the Parkway, the Province purchased or expropriated numerous properties. Following construction of the Parkway it was determined that in some instances the property takings exceeded the need and final configuration of the Parkway. A portion of Howard Avenue is one of those instances. Upon completion of the works the Province has decided to contract their property holdings and transfer ownership of the portions of the new Howard Avenue interconnection to the County of Essex depicted in Figure 1 below.

Section 9.3.13 of the final Environmental Study related to the Parkway notes the following:

“The Howard Avenue Diversion will be designated as Controlled Access Highway between the roundabout and the Howard Avenue Connection, South of this point it will be designated as King’s Highway. The portion designated as King’s Highway will be transferred to the relevant municipality after the completion of construction.” The “relevant” municipality in this case has been determined to be the County of Essex, as the connection ties into County Road 9.



**Figure 1**

## Discussion

The Ministry is now preparing to transfer the portions of Howard Avenue and the Howard Avenue connector, depicted in Figure 1 above, to the County of Essex by way of an Order in Council. The Ministry has communicated that it is preferred that the Order be accompanied with agreement of the County of Essex.

The road allowance generally includes: asphalt pavement, paved shoulders, streetlights, guiderail, two complete traffic signal systems, and swales/ditches. The traffic signal systems are at the intersections of South Talbot Road/Laurier Parkway and County Road 9, and the Howard Connector and County Road 9. IPS staff have reviewed the new construction works and find it to be in good condition, and as good as or better than County standards.

With respect to maintenance, operation and rehabilitation, all assets will be measured and added to the asset management plan. Grass cutting and traffic signal operations will become the responsibility of the County. Winter control already occurs along the subject segments of the Howard Avenue Connector and County Road 9.

Administration recommends that the County of Essex confirm that it agrees to accept the transfer of the road allowance as presented by the Province.

## **Financial Implications**

Future financial implications will be realized as the assets are inserted into the asset management plan, and we prepare for maintenance and rehabilitation. It is intended that the County will receive 3.8 lane kilometres of roadway and 1.8 kilometres of paved shoulder.

Regular maintenance will occur almost immediately with our Roads group taking over grass cutting. Line painting and pavement marking would likely not be required until next year, and winter control would begin during the upcoming winter season. The added cost of pavement marking, sign maintenance and grass cutting is approximately \$6,000 per year (2022 dollars), which will be absorbed and managed through the approved 2023 Budget. There is no increase in the cost of winter control as our vehicles pass over this segment of road on our current plow routes.

Annual maintenance of traffic signals and streetlighting is not easily quantified, however the equipment is less than 5 years old. The addition of 2 signalized intersections to an inventory of 44 signalized intersections may impact the annual maintenance program in future years by an additional \$20,000.

Road rehabilitation is not expected to occur before 2033, and will be rolled into the County of Essex State of Good Repair program as a mill and pave candidate.

## Consultations

Finance Services and the County Solicitor were consulted in preparation of this Administrative Report.

## Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report 2023-0517-IPS-R16-AB; and,

That the County of Essex confirms its agreement to assume ownership should the Province transfer their interest in the subject lands by way of an Order in Council within a reasonable time; and

That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to prepare and send a letter to the Province on Ontario indicating the agreement of the County of Essex to receive the subject land transfer.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Mary Birch*

Mary Birch, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix Number	Title
Appendix A	Letter to County of Essex Re: Municipal Road Transfers
Appendix B	Handback - Legal Survey Plans