

**Municipality of Chatham-Kent**  
**Infrastructure and Engineering Services**  
**Public Works**  
**Information Report**

**To:** Budget Committee  
**From:** Ryan Brown, P.Eng., Director of Public Works  
**Date:** November 25, 2025  
**Subject:** Dust Suppressant Program Level of Service

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This report is for the information of the Budget Committee.

**Background**

On June 9, 2025, Council passed the following motion:

“That Council instruct administration to follow the procurement process for dust suppression program for 2025 with the goal of having a partial application completed this calendar year. The cost of the 2025 application be taken from the Strategic Reserve. And that Administration brings a report in time for next year’s procurement in order to make a decision on whether to re-instate effective dust control on gravel roads.”

As of late August 2025, administration completed the partial application of dust suppressants on approximately 40% of the gravel road network. This report to Council addresses the later portion of the motion, to discuss options for the dust suppressant program for future years.

**Comments**

Chatham-Kent has historically placed dust suppressants on gravel roads in the Municipality annually using naturally occurring salt brines comprised of combinations of calcium, magnesium, and sodium chlorides. The service level prior to 2025 had been as follows:

- One application to each gravel road per season.
- Roads that are receiving lifecycle gravel are not completed until gravelling is complete.
- Touch-ups to graded sections of busy roads and in front of houses if weather and budget permits.
- The rate of product per km will vary on Supervisor’s discretion based on multiple factors such as traffic volumes, residences on road, type of gravel.

During the 2025 Budget process, this level of service and funding was removed from the base budget. After Council direction in June 2025, a partial application of the dust suppressant program was completed this year, funded from the strategic reserve. Currently no budget exists for a program in 2026. Should Council wish to reinstate a program, several options exist based on a jurisdictional scan of other municipalities level of service.

### **Option 1: No Level of Service**

Under this option, Public Works would not apply dust suppressants across the municipality. This option would not require an increase to the 2026 budget. There is no regulation that requires the use of dust suppressants in Ontario and as such is a service that the municipality can choose to offer, or not. This level of service is common in rural areas of Alberta and Northern Ontario for example.

If no Council approval of the increased level of service is approved through the 2026 Budget process, this will be the default level of service.

During the 2025 Budget update process<sup>1</sup> administration recommended this option for several reasons, including:

- Substantial savings to the Public Works operating budget (\$1,398,335).
- The municipality has implemented a gravel road conversion program.
- The existing program was ineffective in eliminating dust and associated complaints.
- The environmental impact of salt on surrounding land.

### **Option 2: Reinstate Previous Level of Service**

Public Works could reinstate the previous 2024 level of service. Recent tender results yielded two bidders, the lowest price being \$350 per flake tonne equivalent of effective chlorides. Public Works has historically used an average product rate of 2.26 flake tonne per km, with lower volume roads receiving slightly less and the busiest roads receiving slightly more. With one application per year and some additional product available for touch-ups, the cost to implement this level of service would be an increase of \$1,427,700 to the base in the 2026 Budget, based on assumptions of 2026 pricing. The final costs would be determined through a public tendering process, as required by the purchasing by-law.

This level of service has been reviewed and compared to geographic comparator municipalities and is similar to neighbouring jurisdictions such as West Elgin and Dawn-Euphemia.

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<sup>1</sup> [2025 Budget Update- Dust Suppressant Removing Level of Service- Page 412](#)

### **Option 3: Reinstate a Reduced Level of Service**

Several options exist to re-instate a level of service that is less expensive based on a review of other municipalities such as Rocky View County, Alberta.

Their program consists of one application of calcium chloride to 100 m either side of a driveway, as long as the residence is less than 150 m away from the gravel road. More calcium in the form of distance or repeat applications are funded through a user pay system.

A high-level review of the Chatham-Kent Road Network shows this level of service applied would require 20-30% of the flake tonne identified in Option 2. Pricing per tonne could increase due the delivery truck having to travel further and take longer to place a load. This level of service could cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000 annually.

Another alternative would be to reduce the rate of product per kilometer with a corresponding reduction in effectiveness. The existing rate of 2.26 flake tonne/km has been historically used. If the rate of product was changed to an average of 1.13 flake tonne/km the total cost for 2026 would be approximately \$713,850.

The final costs would be determined through a public tendering process, as required by the purchasing by-law.

### **Option 4: Reinstate a More Effective Level of Service**

Public Works received 100-300 complaints annually regarding dusty roads under the previous level of service. A more effective level of service could reduce these complaints. Several options exist to enhance the program. An increase to the rate is unlikely to yield significant performance gains. A more effective program would include applying the product multiple times per year as the salt content is washed away with rain and disturbed from traffic activity and grading. Doubling the level of service from Option 2 would cost approximately \$2,855,400.

Other improvements that could be made to the program include experimenting with 35% calcium chloride manufactured solution which has historically been 25% more expensive based on previous bids. Although both solutions would be the same rate of effective chlorides the less expensive calcium/magnesium blends would be replaced with manufactured calcium. Thorough analysis of performance has not been done to date due to costs and adequate performance of calcium/magnesium blends.

**Council Term Priorities**

This report supports the following Council Term Priorities:

			
<b>Deliver Excellent Service</b>	<b>Promote Safety &amp; Well-Being</b>	<b>Grow Our Community</b>	<b>Ensure Environmental Sustainability</b>
<b>2a</b>			

**Consultation**

Other local municipalities adjacent to Chatham-Kent were consulted to review best practices for dust suppressants. Public Works supervisors and managers were also consulted.

**Communication**

Communication is proposed to be through the inclusion of this report on the Council agenda and minutes.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)**

This report does not have implications related to diversity, equity, inclusion, or justice.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications related to this information report. Should Council wish to re-adopt a level of service, the base budget impact would need to be evaluated through the 2026 Budget update process.

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Reviewed by:

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Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

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Attachment: None