



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Submitted by: Chris Traini, County Engineer/Deputy CAO

Subject: Good Roads Rural Road Safety Initiative

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Directors of Good Roads is advocating for improvements of rural road safety across Ontario and are asking for support by municipalities across the province. A copy of their Queens Park advocacy briefings and request for Council resolution are attached for information.

ANALYSIS:

Middlesex County has been a proud member of the Ontario Good Roads Association (GR) and have had three representatives serve as President of the Association: Dennis Merrall, Joanne Vanderheyden and Chris Traini. One of the core priorities of GR is to advocate to the Province of Ontario on behalf of their member municipalities. A recent push has been for support for municipalities to build safer rural roads and addressing of municipal liability.



The statistics clearly show a disproportionate distribution of road fatalities on rural roads. For example in 2021 there were 561 road fatalities across Ontario of which 426 were on rural roads. Although only 17% of Ontario residents reside in rural areas, the incidence of fatal serious collisions constitutes 55% of all serious collisions.

A rural road safety program has been proposed that would target high risk areas and perform 'road safety audits' to review and propose capital improvements that would reduce risk and potentially eliminate serious injuries and/or fatalities. Good Roads is asking the province to support a five-year \$183 million dollar program to fund these studies and to pay for road safety improvements.

Good Roads is asking for municipal support of this program in the form of a Council resolution to be forwarded to the Province. The resolution below matches the ask from Good Roads.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Priority	Goal	Objectives
<p>Collaboration & Partnerships</p> 	<p>Strengthen collaboration with local municipalities and regional partners to improve economic efficiency, enhance service delivery, and support regional development in alignment with community priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimize service delivery through inter-municipal collaboration and shared services to improve efficiency and seamless operations.• Build and enhance relationships with municipal, regional, First Nations, community, and private sector partners to align priorities, share resources, and implement joint initiatives that improve community well-being and economic growth.• Improve communication and transparency through open engagement, accessible information, and informed decision-making.
<p>Sustainable Infrastructure Development</p> 	<p>Expand and upgrade critical infrastructure to enhance resilience, efficiency, and accessibility while prioritizing sustainability and long-term cost-effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance and maintain road infrastructure to improve connectivity, traffic efficiency, and encourage active transportation, while preserving the unique character of municipal main streets.

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS official statistics from the Government of Ontario confirm that rural roads are inherently more dangerous than other roads;

AND WHEREAS, despite only having 17% of the population, 55% of the road fatalities occur on rural roads;

AND WHEREAS, rural, northern, and remote municipalities are fiscally strained by maintaining extensive road networks on a smaller tax base;

AND WHEREAS, preventing crashes reduces the burden on Ontario's already strained rural strained health care system;

AND WHEREAS, roadway collisions and associated lawsuits are significant factors in runaway municipal insurance premiums. Preventing crashes can have a significant impact in improving municipal risk profiles;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the County of Middlesex requests that the Government of Ontario take action to implement the rural road safety program that Good Roads has committed to lead. It will allow Ontario's rural municipalities to make the critical investments needed to reduce the high number of people being killed and seriously injured on Ontario's rural roads; and

FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Premier Doug Ford, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation, Hon. King Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, Hon. Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs, Hon. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response and Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, and Good Roads; and

FURTHER THAT this resolution be circulated to all municipalities in Ontario requesting their support.

Attachment.