

RE-VISITING THE \$80 DRIVEWAY SNOWPLOW CHARGE FOR SENIORS

I assume the policy change to charge \$80 for the plowing of seniors' driveways from \$0 was made because of fiscal constraints, i.e., services like this cannot be maintained because of cost.

In order to request a return to \$0 cost, a revenue stream should be found, hence the following:

The County has for years approved clearing and tillage of road allowances. This includes permitting landowners a document which allows them to log and sell timber on these road allowances.

The County allows this land, which is under their management, to be used for agriculture, with no charge.

A section of land has 16 acres of road allowance adjacent to it. Thus, if one considers that many of these road allowances are used for crop production or grazing, the amount of land that is being farmed for free, i.e., no taxes, no user fees, in this County is in the hundreds of acres.

Land rental cost/acre is anywhere from \$50 to \$80 per acre. Therefore, a small user fee of \$35 to \$40 per acre is not unreasonable.

Keep in mind that cropping these road allowances is done for profit, and the only person that benefits for this taxpayer-owned land is the farmer.

Having said the above, road allowances are supposed to be used for access, not agricultural production. As the road authority, the County has management authority under the Provincial Government's overall management authority.

A small user fee, not rental or taxing, is something that is in line with the County's authority.

It is my hope that going forward, road allowances will remain uncleared other than for reasons of access or road construction.

These allowances provide wildlife habitat, retain moisture/ground water, and are buffers to slow wind erosion.

So, the revenue generation from a reasonable user fee would more than make up for laneway snow clearing of seniors' driveways.

And it is fair to charge a user fee to users of this land because all taxpayers own this land, and only the farmer is benefitting from it financially.

ADDED POINT:

Road allowances were surveyed between sections of land, and did not come out of a section.

So, a section (360 acres), 1 mile by 1 mile, was surveyed. Then running east/west a 66 foot by 2640 foot was surveyed, then the next section of 360 acres.

North/south – every 2 miles (2 sections) the same 66 feet by 2640 feet road allowance was surveyed.

66 feet by 2640 feet = 4 acres