County Road 20 (Selwyn Road) Reconstruction Environmental Assessment

Introduction - Who I am
Gene Byrnes
2104 Truman Drive. Resident for 11 years and drive Selwyn Road 4 - 5 times (round trip) per week.
Appreciation for the opportunity to speak.

Comments on the EAR and process.
This letter is complement to a letter presented to Council August 28, 2019.

1. Public Awareness
There were 2 notices of public meetings published in the local newspaper and on the County website. *The notices advised of an environmental assessment. There was no mention of a speed limit reduction.* I have spoken to a number of residents in my area and no one had any knowledge of a speed reduction. They also strongly opposed a speed limit reduction and indicated they would make those views known to Council.

2. Interim Measures not fully assessed
The report contained a number of interim measures whose impact have not been fully assessed. Two of the more significant are identified here:
   i) **Reduce the speed limit from 80 km/hr to 60 km/hr.** Some of the impact and consequences were identified in my letter of August 29 and will not be repeated here.
   ii) **Two strip centerline.** I assume this is meant to stop cars passing. However, a two strip center line will work only until people figure out it is safe to pass because the road is straight for kilometers and there isn’t a passing hazard. The end result will be drivers totally ignoring the double line not only on the straight sections but on curves and hills. The respect for the double line will be degraded across the region.

3. Use of accident statistics
The EA consultant conducted a review of accidents on Selwyn from 2014 to the present. The number, with a brief description, is posted in the report. Unfortunately, the root cause of the accidents was not reported. Without knowing the root cause it's difficult to determine if a speed reduction will improve the situation.
Three of the accidents were head on collisions and there were fatalities. One involved an 83 old driver crossing the center line on a straight section of road in daylight conditions. A second involved one vehicle failing to stop for a stop sign and colliding with a vehicle on Selwyn Road. The third was on a straight section of road at the intersection of Birch Island and Selwyn Road.
There were a number of single vehicle lane departures where the vehicle ended up in the ditch. Possible causes could be distracted driving or impaired. I say impaired because during my review I found an incredible number of accidents and police reports listing impaired driving as a cause.

Selwyn Road is noticeably slippery whenever it's wet. This has been reported by a number of people who use the road. I'm not sure of the cause but it seems to be specific to certain sections of the road. It may be the type of asphalt but this again an asphalt change should be investigate as a possible alternative to reduce the number of accidents. Other roads in the County do not suffer the same phenomena.

4. The Issue of Liability

Council may be concerned with an issue of County liability should an accident occur. That needs to be evaluated to determine if this is a possibility. I do not believe this to be a given in all cases but each must be assessed based on the cause(s). If a driver was found to be distracted then speed and road condition can be minor contributors but once you take your eyes off the road to text or make a phone call then the responsibility for the accident must shift to the driver.

Conclusion

The Consultant, hired to complete an EA on reconstruction of Selwyn Road, appears to have done a good job regarding the long term measures. However the interim recommendations require more work to assess their impact before implementation.

Posting notifications, which have a significant impact on the public, in newspapers and on the County website is not an effective method of informing those who are being affected by the changes.