



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Public Works & Engineering Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Phil Bartnik, Director Public Works & Engineering Services

Date to Council: Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Report Number: PWES-2025-43

Subject: Emergency Culvert Replacement – Gzowski Drain

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That report PWES-2025-43 Emergency Culvert Replacement – Gzowski Drain **be received;**

And that the emergency replacement of the culvert over the Gzowski Drain pursuant to Section 124 of the *Drainage Act* **be authorized.**

Background

Pursuant to the *Drainage Act* (Act), the Town has a responsibility to ensure the proper function of Municipal Drains within the Town's boundaries.

The Gzowski Drain (Drain) is currently under the appointment of Gerard Rood, P.Eng. from Rood Engineering Inc. to recommend improvements to the drain after the submission of a Request for Improvement was submitted to the Town. Mr. Rood is currently finalizing the details of the Engineer's Report, including the proposed recommendations for improvements to the Drain.

An aerial of the pertinent site locations and approximate drainage watershed boundary is included in Attachment 1 for reference.

Procurement Policy

Procurement for services necessary to address incidents in an Emergency are per the Town's Purchasing Policy No. 17, Sections 3.10 and 3.11:

3.10 Non-Competitive Purchases

3.10.1 The requirement for competitive bid solicitation for goods, services and construction may be waived under joint authority of the appropriate Department Director and the Purchasing Coordinator and replaced with negotiations by the Department Director under the following circumstances:

(f) where in the event an "Emergency" as defined by the Policy, a requirement exists;

[Where "emergency" means a situation, or the threat of an impending situation, which may affect the environment, the life, safety, health and/or welfare of the general public, or the property of the residents of the Town of Tecumseh, or to prevent serious damage, disruption of work, or to restore or to maintain essential service to a minimum level.]

3.11 Procurement in Emergencies

3.11 Where, in the opinion of the Chief Administrative Officer, or two Department Directors, an emergency has occurred requiring the immediate procurement of goods, services or construction,

3.11.1 A Department Director, with authorization by the Chief Administrative Officer, or two Department Directors, may initiate a purchase in excess of the preauthorized expenditure limit by the most expedient and economical means; and

3.11.2 Any purchase under such conditions together with a source of financing shall be justified and reported to the next meeting of the Town Council following the date of the purchase.

Comments

On June 9, 2025, a Cityworks request (the Town's work order communication platform) was received from a landowner on the Gzowski Branch Drain concerning the function of catch basins given observed high water levels.

On June 12, 2025, the area was investigated by Town staff and an unusually high water level was noted through the Gzowski Branch Drain into its outlet into the Gzowski Drain (Drain). The high water level was investigated further and followed downstream until a point where the Drain crossed the old railway corridor, currently owned by the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA).

It was at this location that a large difference in water elevation on each side of the two culverts across the old railway was observed. In addition, large sinkholes were present overtop of the culverts. It was assumed that these culverts were blocked and/or collapsed (blockage).

This blockage posed several concerns, including the lack of outlet for this drainage system and others connected to it, the possibility to incur ponding water around and onto King's Highway #3, the potential to flood lands (agricultural and residential) and damage to the drain itself.

This blockage was monitored daily along with weather conditions, while mitigation efforts were evaluated, including the removal and replacement of the culverts. Additionally, discussions were had with ERCA and relevant utility companies. It was determined that an active Canadian National fibre optic cable runs overtop of the culvert, which would require specific construction considerations and could lead to substantial risk should the culvert be solely removed.

On June 17, 2025, the Drainage Superintendent explained the situation to the Acting Director Public Works & Engineering Services. This was deemed an Emergency by the Acting Director Public Works & Engineering Services and the Acting Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer per Section 3.10 of the Town's Purchasing Policy. A Contractor was retained to access the site and commence pumping operations immediately to mitigate the risks mentioned above.

Since an Engineer was previously appointed to review this drain, and draft replacement plans were already prepared for this culvert, an Emergency Designation was applied for from Minister Trevor Jones of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA), under Section 124 of the Act. This would allow the Council to authorize the replacement of the culvert prior to adoption of the Engineer's Report under by-law. On July 2, 2025, the Minister granted the Town the Emergency Authorization designation.

At this time, a Contractor has also been retained to replace the culvert. We are awaiting delivery of the pipe and the coordination of utility locates prior to this work being completed. In the meantime, the Town will continue to monitor the pumping operations and ensure the risk of flooding is mitigated.

Consultations

Financial Services
Essex Region Conservation Authority
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
Rood Engineering Inc.

Financial Implications

The Contractor provided a cost quotation for the supply and delivery of a pump, site access works and for daily operation and monitoring of the pump. Discounted prices were also provided for weekly and monthly operation of the pump. As this work was required to ensure flow through the Drain and for the benefit and protection of upstream lands, this would be considered a watershed cost shared with all upstream lands and roads.

In the draft Engineer's Report, cost sharing provisions were included for this culvert. Therefore, all costs will be held until the time this report is completed, and all the costs will be recovered in the prescribed manner.

At the time of assessing these costs, any costs to the Town will be funded through the Town's Drain Lifecycle Reserve fund.

At the time of writing this report, the incurred costs related to the emergency works are provided below. We have also outlined the expected future costs related to the culvert replacement. Note all costs are exclusive of HST.

Incurred Costs:

- Permitting/Utility Locates – \$500

Expected Costs:

- Permitting/Utility Locates - \$1,300
- Access to Site and Pumping Costs (Monthly Charge)* – \$16,400
- Culvert Removal and Replacement – \$45,300

Total Approximate Costs: \$63,500

*Note that the pumping costs may increase should it be longer than a month of rental fees.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2023-2026 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐

Social Media ☐

News Release ☐

Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Matthew Shiha, E.I.T.
Drainage Superintendent

Reviewed by:

John Henderson, P.Eng.
Manager Engineering Services

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

Phil Bartnik, P.Eng.
Director Public Works & Engineering Services

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Aerial of Culvert Location and Approximate Watershed Boundaries