

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: IS-2024-34

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Jeff Molenhuis, P.Eng., Director of Infrastructure Services

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REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting CAO

DATE: 2024-10-07

SUBJECT: **Carmel-Koch On-Road Winter Parking**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council endorse the proposed on-road parking plan on Carmel-Koch Road, including the realignment of its intersection with Wilmot Line, to support public use of the Schneider Lands Bush Trail and enhance safety measures for pedestrians, motorists, and road operations.

AND THAT the capital and operating figures required to implement the plan be put forward in the 2025 Budget for consideration.

SUMMARY:

This report outlines a proposed roadside parking plan and intersection realignment designed to address safety concerns at the Carmel-Koch Road entrance to the Schneider Lands Bush Trail. The plan was developed in response to issues raised during the OPA and ZC review regarding sight line restrictions, and conflict between motorists, pedestrians, and winter maintenance equipment. Key measures include the widening of Carmel-Koch Road at the trail entrance to accommodate eight (8) formal roadside parking spaces, including the installation of line painting, flexible reflective delineators, and improved signage to allow for traffic flow with

reduced risks to pedestrians and drivers. The realignment of Carmel-Koch Road at Wilmot line will create a T-intersection, which will reduce the speed of southbound vehicles, turning onto Carmel-Koch Road.

BACKGROUND:

The Schneider Lands are generously made available for public use for hiking and cross-country skiing. An informal parking area is present on the road shoulder on the northwest side of Carmel-Koch Road, fronting the Schneider Lands Bush Trail entrance. However, this parking is not feasible in winter conditions, as the road shoulders are not sufficient width to accommodate parking without interfering with the travelled portion of the road, as well as the need for snow clearing and storage. Currently there is no asphalt surface area for parking, and the limited shoulder width at this location does not meet adequate space needs for separated space, parking stalls and snow management space.

Township staff recognize that through the majority of the year, there are limited parking demands for the Schneider Lands. However, when winter conditions are ideal for cross-country skiing, there are parking demands along Carmel-Koch Road. During the March 4, 2024, meeting Council brought forth the motion that staff report back by the October 7, 2024, meeting with further information on winter parking for cross-country skiers. This meeting included parking restrictions on Berlett's, Wilmot Line, and Carmel-Koch Road. The meeting minutes read as follows:

A motion was brought forward by Councillor S. Martin, seconded by Councillor S. Cressman, THAT the motion be amended to add THAT Staff report back by the October 7, 2024 Council Meeting with further information on winter parking for cross country skiers. The motion carried unanimously.

Within Report DS2024-05 recommending the OPA and ZC, the following was noted regarding On-Street Parking:

If parking is provided within the road allowance (on-street parking), recommendations include:

- *Providing wider shoulders to permit parking.*
- *Installing adequate signage to identify where parking is permitted.*
- *Amending by-laws to permit on street parking.*
- *Lowering speed limits in area.*
- *Installing signs prior to parking location outlining risk to drivers of parking in the area.*
- *Establish and document a higher standard of care for maintaining the location.*

As such, the Township has reviewed opportunities for formal roadside parking to alleviate the current safety concerns and support high traffic winter months. There are 5 informal parking locations surrounding the property, as shown on Attachment 3. These locations have been used informally in the past. With the detailed review of these locations through the OPA and

ZC, the spaces on Carmel-Koch and Berlett's Road have been shown to be problematic due to inadequate roadway width to accommodate operational, traffic and parking needs for the segment. With vertical and horizontal road curves, as well brush and grading close to the road in these areas, it generally would result in parking on the travelled path of the road in these locations, which would also create additional challenges with winter maintenance and snow clearing in these locations. In particular, at Berlett's Road, there is no roadside space to accommodate shouldering and ditching, with heavy brush on the south side of the road, and large quantities of fill on the north side of the road. These would have to be removed to accommodate adequate on-road parking space in this location. It also appears that this location is seasonally closed for access, as well.

With respect to Wideman and Wilmot Line parking opportunities for the trailhead at this location, it is noted that Wideman has a widened asphalt shoulder to accommodate on-road parking at the intersection. With improvements and controls to Wilmot Line/Wideman Road, the hope was a safe space for parking and pedestrian access could be consolidated for this area. Wilmot Line is not an area considered for parking at this time as a result of the volume and types of traffic that use this road segment.

The remaining locations on Carmel-Koch are the focus of this report as these are the most feasible to consider cross-section changes to accommodate on-road parking needs. The most westerly entrance is at the Musselman trailhead location, which was a previous generous donation that included land needs for parking location. This location currently has some space in the roadside to park, directly at the entrance, but the space would need to be revised to facilitate parking arrangements, clearing needs and drainage. More detailed review would be required.

A second location is noted along Carmel-Koch at the previous limit of parking restrictions. There does not appear to be a formal trailhead at this location. As such, it was not reviewed in more detail.

A third location on Carmel-Koch is the most easterly trailhead on Carmel-Koch and provides the most feasible opportunity to accommodate winter parking with revisions to the cross-section as it cannot currently accommodate the space needs of traffic, parking and winter maintenance. Staff are proposing to widen Carmel-Koch Road at the entrance to Schneider's Bush Trail Head to accommodate eight (8) proposed formal roadside parking spots. In this instance, it is best to consolidate parking at known trailhead locations so that point of use is directly accessible by the user.

REPORT:

Cross-Section Limitations for Space

The current cross section of Carmel-Koch Road along the Schneider's Bush Trailhead was not designed for roadside parking, as the existing shoulders, separated from traffic, do not meet the minimum 2.4m width requirement set by the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC). Being a rural 20m right-of-way, the Township's standard for this type of roadway includes 3.6m

travel lanes and 1.5m of shoulders, as shown in Attachment 2. This configuration leaves insufficient space for parking, making the road section too narrow to meet the required standards for on-road parking. Trail users parking here do not have a safe space to walk from their vehicles to the trailhead, they would need to enter into the roadway and walk within the travelled lane to enter the trailhead. In the winter, snowplows push snow into the ditches and parking area as part of general rural winter control operations, limiting its availability for parking use. When this occurs, and snow storage accumulates, this furthers the use of the travelled lane of the road for parking, which creates a substantial risk for road users, as well as the Township as a result.

If the existing trailhead area was widened and surfaced to meet safe standards, winter control equipment could clear the entire parking section and push or lift snow outside the designated area. Additionally, the current parking area lacks proper delineation, line painting, and signage, which can cause confusion and inconsistent parking format, and safety concerns for road and trail users. This could also be addressed in revising the arrangement in this area.

The small-order widening would involve approvals from the GRCA and Region of Waterloo with respect to the environmentally sensitive landscape. Staff have engaged both with proposed plans, with minimal concern identified at this preliminary stage.

Summary of Proposed Plan

The Township proposes to widen Carmel-Koch Road at the entrance to Schneider's Bush Trail to create eight (8) formal roadside parking spots for public use, in roughly the same footprint with expanded space to the north at the trailhead location. This plan addresses existing deficiencies and provides a solution to allow parking and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists. The work includes adding fill, grading, and installing asphalt surface to widen an approximate 50m of roadway along the northwest side of Carmel-Koch Road. The plan could be scaled for more spaces, if Council desires.

The design ensures a minimum of 0.5m of clearance on each side of parked vehicles, allowing pedestrians safe access in and out of the vehicle and to and from the trail entrance. Regulatory parking and no-parking signs will be installed to clearly indicate where parking is permitted. Parking spaces will be marked with line painting, and flexible reflective delineators will be installed during the warmer months to alert drivers to the parking area.

In addition, the realignment of the Carmel-Koch Road and Wilmot Line intersection are recommended to take place concurrently with the parking installation to improve sightlines and controlled vehicle movements for southbound traffic turning from Wilmot Line onto Carmel-Koch Road. This will involve installing curbs along the perimeter of the northeast and southwest radii of the intersection, with grading work required to ensure proper drainage is maintained, similar to what occurred at Wideman intersection.

Summary of Costs

The estimated project cost ranges from \$45,000 to \$60,000, covering detailed design, construction, contract administration, staff time, and project contingencies for the parking installation and intersection realignment. These costs ensure the necessary safety enhancements are implemented.

Additional Township operational time will be required for the removal and reinstallation of flexible reflective delineators, performing periodic touch-ups of parking line markings, and maintaining the expanded road width in the parking area. Time will also be spent on enhanced winter maintenance, including snow removal from parking areas, ensuring clear pedestrian access, and monitoring drainage systems to prevent accumulation. These efforts will establish and document an adequate standard of care, ensuring the location remains safe and functional year-round.

It is noted that these proposed spaces will likely accommodate weekday use of the site, however there may be more parking demand on weekends that would exceed available spaces proposed. If there is a desire to provide more parking to address the peak demand, it is noted that staff could pursue plans to address the Musselman trail location, create more than 8 spaces at the easterly trailhead, and/or discuss further with Rare about on-site opportunities to share the parking burden during peak times. It is further noted, at the time of approvals, there was a commitment made to monitor parking needs and address collaboratively, as needed. With that in mind, if Council wishes to proceed with creation of 8 spaces, further monitoring and enforcement of restrictions may be needed.

The pending Environmental Assessment for Wilmot Line could also provide further opportunities to review and include on-road parking and other traffic calming measures in this area.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

This initiative supports the goals and strategies of enhancing Responsible Governance through ensuring public safety and addressing municipal liability concerns.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The overall estimated project cost for the easterly trailhead on-road parking facility ranges from \$45,000 to \$60,000 with additional operation and maintenance expenses anticipated during winter months for snow removal, reinstalling flexible reflective delineators, and periodic repainting of the parking space lines. The operational costs will require additional hours to winter control operating budget, which will be presented with 2025 Budget. Note that these figures could be scaled to add more spaces at the easterly trail head location.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Carmel-Koch Road Schneider's Bush Trail Entrance Parking

Attachment 2: 20.0m Rural Road ROW WIL-DET-22-34

Attachment 3: Entrance points for Schneider's Bush