

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Reduced Load Limit By-Law Amendment

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Public Works

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council enact a by-law to amend the Reduced Load Limit By-law 6608-2024 to authorize the Director of Public Works to determine the start and end dates of seasonal load restrictions;
2. And further, that the amending by-law also remove seasonal load restrictions from certain roads as outlined in Report PW 2025-07.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to provide delegated authority to the Director of Public Works to amend the start and end dates of seasonal load restrictions for County roads identified in the reduced load limit by-law, utilizing the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Reduced Load Period (RLP) predictive tool that incorporates weather data to determine when freeze/thaw cycles begin and end.
- The traditional RLP has started on March 1 and ended on April 31 each year to align with the Spring thaw periods. However, in recent years, freeze/thaw cycle periods are starting and ending earlier with the onset of warmer temperatures prior to March 1.
- By-law amendments include removal of seasonal load restrictions on Oxford Road 16 (Road 84) between Oxford Road 119 (19th Line) and Oxford Road 6 (37th Line) which has been fully reconstructed, and on Oxford Road 22 (Muir Line) between Oxford Road 55 (Highway 53) and Oxford Road 21 (New Durham Road) as an administrative amendment.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Following Council approval of the recommendations contained in this report, a by-law amendment will be presented at the February 26, 2025 County Council meeting for enactment, and the Delegation of Powers and Duties Policy 6.14 will be updated following the passing of the amending by-law.

Changes to the RLP start and end dates will be determined using the MTO predictive tool and coordinated with Area Municipalities to ensure a consistent approach County-wide.

The removal of applicable signage identifying seasonal load restrictions will be completed to correspond with the by-law amendment.

Financial Impact

Signage modifications and website updates will be completed within the 2025 Transportation operations budget.

Communications

An updated map of reduced load limits on the County road network will be posted on the County's website at <https://www.oxfordcounty.ca/en/services-for-you/moving-permit.aspx>.




A copy of Report PW 2025-07 will be forwarded to Area Municipalities and Oxford Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council's vision of "Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future." These pillars are: *(1) Promoting community vitality, (2) Enhancing environmental sustainability, and (3) Fostering progressive government.*

The recommendations in this report support the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
Goal 1.4 – Connected people and places	Goal 2.1 – Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions Goal 3.2 – Collaborate with our partners and communities

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Oxford County By-law 6608-2024, as amended, identifies reduced load limit periods on specific County road segments in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act (HTA).

Reduced load periods occur seasonally from March 1 to April 30 during spring thaw periods when damage is most likely to occur on road segments with substandard pavement/base structure and inadequate drainage. Seasonal load restriction requirements are re-evaluated following the rehabilitation of County roads.

In recent years, spring thaw periods have started and ended early with the arrival of warmer temperatures prior to March 1. In response, some Area Municipalities have revised the RLP in their respective by-laws which doesn't align with the County's RLP and creates confusion for road users.

The Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) recently developed a Reduced Load Period (RLP) Onset and Removal Model supported by data from its province wide Road Weather Information System (RWIS). This system allows municipalities to access frost depth, moisture, and temperature data. The model allows municipalities to optimize the timing of RLP's, including amending the start and end dates when conditions permit, which helps support agriculture, agri-business, construction and the trucking industry, while protecting valuable road infrastructure.

Comments

Proposed amendments to the County's reduced load limit by-law as shown on Attachment 1 include the removal of seasonal load restrictions from the following road segments:

- Oxford Road 16/Road 84 (from Oxford Road 6 to Oxford Road 119)
- Oxford Road 22/Muir Line (from Oxford Road 55 to Oxford Road 21)

Staff are proposing to remove the seasonal load restriction from Oxford Road 16 (Road 84) between Oxford Road 119 and Oxford Road 6, as recent road rehabilitation has been completed with improved drainage making it less susceptible to damage during spring thaw.

Staff are also proposing to remove the seasonal load restriction from Oxford Road 22 (Muir Line) between Oxford Road 55 and Oxford Road 21 which is a boundary road maintained by Brant County on Oxford's behalf. Although currently identified in the Oxford County by-law as a seasonally reduced road section, required regulatory signs are not posted and there has been no enforcement. This road section is not identified in Brant's seasonal load restriction by-law and road damage from heavy truck use during spring thaws has not been an issue on this section of Muir Line.

To implement the MTO's RLP Onset and Removal Model, staff are recommending the by-law be amended to provide delegated authority to the Director of Public Works to amend the duration of RLP's when conditions allow. The County's Delegation of Powers and Duties Policy 6.14 will also be updated to include that the Director of Public Works has authority to amend the RLP duration when the MTO's predictive model confirms that weather conditions permit.

When considering amendments to the RLP, consultation between the Director of Public Works will take place with Area Municipality representatives to synchronize a County wide RLP on affected County and area municipal roads where possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Continuous improvements to the County road network through ongoing rehabilitation and/or replacement serves to enhance goods movement through and within the County in a manner which further supports economic prosperity.

Providing the Public Works Director with delegated authority to amend the RLP duration for seasonally restricted roads will provide improved access to County roads in the Spring when conditions permit.

SIGNATURES

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Departmental approval:

Original signed by

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Director of Public Works

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Oxford County Reduced Load Limit Amendment Map

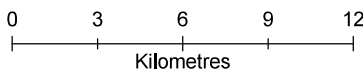
OXFORD COUNTY REDUCED LOAD LIMIT AMENDMENT



Oxford Road 16
From Oxford Road 119
to Oxford Road 6

Oxford Road 22
From Oxford Road 55
to Oxford Road 21

- Reduced Load Applies
- Road Not Designated
- Removal of Reduced Load Limit
- Provincial Highway / Freeway
- County Road
- Municipal Road
- Railroad
- Village / Town
- Municipal Limit



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Map updated January, 2025. Load restrictions are outlined in By-law 8605-2024, Reduced Load Roads.