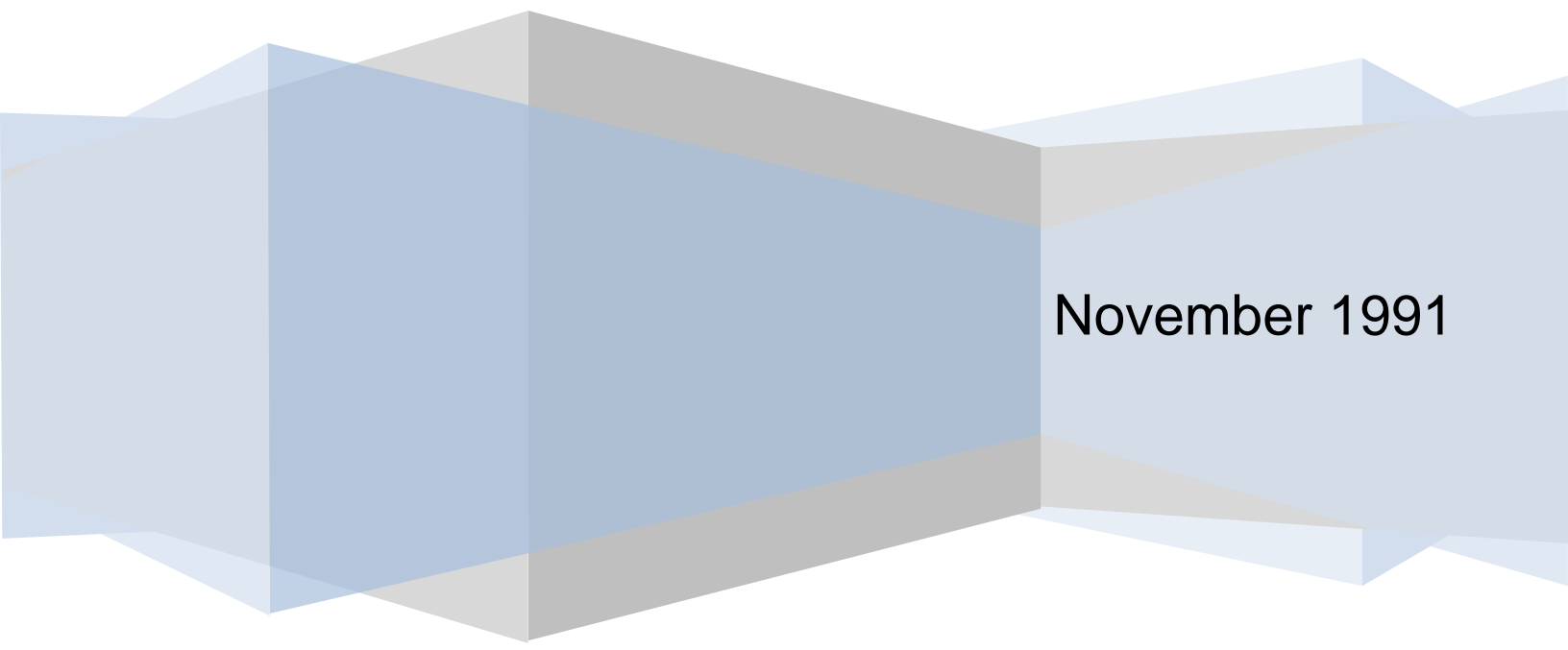


Government of Yukon

RURAL ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY

(Updated April 01, 2003 to reflect Department name change from Infrastructure to Highways and Public Works. No change to Policy.)



November 1991

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RURAL ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY	2
POLICY GOAL	2
POLICY OBJECTIVES.....	2
PRINCIPLES	2
1. Environmental Considerations.....	2
2. Rural Road Construction.....	3
3. Rural Road Standards for Development.....	3
A. Minimum “Maintainable” Standard for Existing Roads	3
B. Minimum “School Bus” Standard for Existing Roads.....	3
C. New Roads.....	4
4. Provision for Rural Road Maintenance	4
A. Application	4
B. Criteria	4
C. Third Party Equipment Rental Agreement	6
5. Maintenance Levels.....	6

RURAL ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY

Public roads maintained by the Yukon Government are currently identified by being included in Policy Directive 4/9 (issued effective April 1, 1983). While this policy lists the roads and highways which will be maintained, it does not set forth minimum standards required in order for maintenance to be possible on rural roads or other criteria by which a road may be included on the list for maintenance. Until now, inclusion on the list has been a judgement decision, subject to available funding.

Over the years Yukon people have acquired residential, recreational and commercial properties throughout rural Yukon. In many cases rural property owners have requested or even demanded government maintained access as one of the services related to property taxes.

Given the high cost of road construction, development and maintenance in both summer and winter, government is often faced with the difficult decision of when to provide maintenance in light of variable traffic densities, different road lengths, unique residential requirements and the relative associated upgrading and maintenance costs.

POLICY GOAL

The Yukon Government is committed to providing maintenance, when monies have been appropriated, to public rural roads in a fair, equitable and cost effective manner.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. To provide rural road maintenance where feasible as one of the basic services covered by property taxes.
2. To ensure that maintenance of any one rural road is not subsidized to the extent that it is unfair to other property owners throughout Yukon.
3. To provide a road maintenance service where appropriate and feasible under a Third Party Equipment Rental Agreement for rural property owners otherwise not eligible for fully funded government maintenance service.

PRINCIPLES

A rural road, for the purpose of this policy, is considered to be a road used for rural residential, recreational or commercial/institutional purposes, but does not include a road used for industrial purposes, roads under Municipal jurisdiction or control, or private roads.

1. Environmental Considerations

Standard regulatory requirements and considerations for land use and environmental reviews will apply to all construction, upgrading or maintenance work undertaken pursuant to this policy.

2. Rural Road Construction

Generally new rural road construction or upgrading of an existing road to a standard which will allow the maintenance equipment to operate is the responsibility of the property owner(s) and/or user(s). In some cases, particularly in subdivisions, road development is included in the cost of property. The Yukon Government has made available limited capital funding to assist in making improvements to roads to bring them to a minimum “maintainable” standard.

3. Rural Road Standards for Development

In order for any type of road maintenance to commence, certain standards must be met to allow maintenance equipment to operate and for road user safety. In addition, the road must be available for use to the public; be within a surveyed right of way, where designated; on public land; or must otherwise be formally designated as a “public road”.

A. Minimum “Maintainable” Standard for Existing Roads

The following standards are the minimum that will permit or allow the equipment to operate in order for the road to be maintained:

- road surface must be, at least 4.5 m wide;
- road surface must be a minimum of “pit-run” gravel and be capable of supporting the intended traffic, for example, residential or light commercial traffic;
- road must have grades suitable for equipment operation;
- brush clearing at least 2.0 m either side of the shoulder of the road;
- drainage ditches must be constructed and culverts installed where necessary to ensure adequate drainage;
- a turnaround “T” must be located at or near the end of the road to be maintained and reserved for the use of maintenance equipment.

B. Minimum “School Bus” Standard for Existing Roads

It is the responsibility of the users of the road and/or property owners to apply directly to the Department of Education for school bus service. However, the Department of Education will not approve school bus service on any rural road unless the road meets the minimum “School Bus” standard and is approved for maintenance under the provisions of this policy.

The following standards are the **minimum** that must be met before a school bus will operate on an existing road:

- road surface must be at least 6 m wide (to allow 2 vehicles to pass safely);
- brush clearing at least 4 m either side of the shoulder of the road;
- drainage ditches on either side of the road, culverts where necessary, and a crowned road bed for positive drainage; and
- a “cul-de-sac” turnaround with a minimum radius of 18 m at the end of the road.

C. New Roads

Standards for construction of new roads must meet Yukon Government engineering standards for rural roads which encompasses a more complete list than shown above. These standards are based on the nationally recognized Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) standards. Further information can be obtained from the Transportation Engineering Branch, Department of Highways and Public Works.

4. Provision for Rural Road Maintenance

A. Application

Maintenance on a rural road will not be automatic even if a road has been developed to a "maintainable" standard. New or extended maintenance will only be considered upon application by the main users. Applications must be made to the Department of Highways and Public Works by a spokesperson representing at least 75% of the users and/or property owners with a seasonal or permanent residence located along the road in question.

For the purposes of this policy, "property owner" includes tenure to:

- titled land
- leased land
- land under a satisfactory Agreement for Sale
- and under a Federal or Territorial Government land reserve
- Land Set Aside

"user" includes:

- licensed or registered commercial users (such as: trappers, outfitters, woodcutters, tour companies, etc.)
- registered institutions

Upon application, officials of the Department of Highways and Public Works will meet with the representatives to determine the following:

1. road location;
2. road construction standard;
3. length of road to be maintained; and
4. use of the road based upon:
 - the number of permanent residences along the road;
 - the number of permanent residents (i.e. vehicles) using the road;
 - the number of school aged children;
 - commercial use;
 - recreational/cottage use; and
 - institutional use.

B. Criteria

Because of the large number of variables which could apply to or affect the provision of maintenance to any particular rural road, one of three methods may be used to determine if and when maintenance should be provided and if there will be any additional costs to the users for the maintenance service.

1. Permanent Residences

If there is a minimum average of 2 permanent residences per kilometer along the road identified, maintenance service will be provided at government expense.

2. Traffic Counts

The Department may install traffic counters to determine the average daily vehicle use on a road. This method will be used if there are relatively few permanent residences but an apparent large commercial, institutional or recreational use of the road. If the year round average daily road use exceeds 25 vehicles along the length of the road, maintenance service will be provided at government expense.

3. User Density (Shared Responsibility)

If for whatever reason(s) either traffic counts or the average density of permanent residences do not automatically qualify the road for government funded maintenance, a user density value may be calculated as follows:

Residences:

5 points per each permanent residence located along the road;

Population:

1 point per each multiple of 10 (or less) adult residents living on the road;

1 point per each multiple of 5 (or less) school aged children living along the road;

Commercial/Institutional:

2 points per each licensed commercial/institutional long term, active users of the road;

Recreational:

1 point per each multiple of 2 cottages located along the road.

Note: If a residence is used for more than one purpose (i.e. commercial, recreational) it can only be counted for one use.

To calculate the User Density value for any road, total the number of points as per the above table and divide that number by 10.

For example:

4 residences	4 x 5	20
8 adults (multiple of 10)	1 x 1	1
6 school children (multiples of 5)	1 x 2	2
1 commercial wood cutter	1 x 2	2
2 cottages (multiple of 2)	1 x 1	1
	Total	<hr/> 26

User Density value is $26 - 10 = 2.6$

Once a User Density value has been calculated, that figure will represent or equate to the actual length of road measured in kilometers, which will be maintained at government expense. (In the above example, 2.6 kilometers of road would be maintained at government expense).

If the road in question is longer than the User Density figure provides for, it may be necessary to negotiate with the users for the recovery of costs for that portion of the road in excess of the User Density Figure. Normally the Third Party Equipment Rental process will be used for any such excess charges. (In the above example, if the road in question was 3 kilometers long, applicants may be required to pay the costs to maintain 0.4 kilometers).

4. Seasonal Use/Maintenance

Where a road is used on a seasonal basis, and is eligible under any of the criteria described above, maintenance will be provided for that season.

5. If at any time the use of a road falls below the levels identified in criteria 1 or 2 above, or if the User Density value changes, maintenance may be discontinued, negotiated on a cost shared basis or undertaken by the users on a Third Party Equipment Rental Agreement basis.

C. Third Party Equipment Rental Agreement

A Third Party Equipment Rental Agreement essentially allows private road owners or users to use the equipment and operators from government necessary to either construct, improve or maintain a road on a regular or one-time basis at a specified hourly rate. This service is normally only supplied by the Yukon Government where there are no local private equipment rental services otherwise available.

5. Maintenance Levels

The level of maintenance provided for rural roads will normally range from one to four "dry bladings" per year in summer and snow clearing following a major storm or after a significant accumulation of snow. This level will vary depending upon a number of factors including road construction standards, user density, public service requirements (i.e. school bus etc.) and, in some cases, user preference.

Rural road maintenance will normally be undertaken after high priority and/or high use highways, airstrips and secondary roads have been maintained. As well, maintenance of these rural roads may require different equipment than is used on higher standard roads (i.e. graders vs. plow trucks) and therefore special trips may be necessary following completion of higher priority work.