



July 4, 2008

Erik Andersen
Gabriola Island Ratepayers
635 Rollo Road
Gabriola Island, BC
V0R 1X3

RE: Gravel Road Maintenance on Gabriola Island

Thank you for both a very productive meeting on May 26 and your letter of June 5. Ministry staff were impressed with Mr. Nick Doe's presentation on the gravel testing your team has done thus far. It was obvious that your team has worked hard to do a careful, thorough analyses that quantifies your concerns.

Following our meeting on May 26, Ministry staff internally agreed that additional testing of the gravel was necessary. This work has started but is not yet complete. In the interim, I offer what information is available, beginning with a summary of the items discussed at our meeting:

- Emcon Services will work this summer to re-grade gravel roads to a 4% crown. This crown will assist with drainage and we anticipate this will resolve some of the pothole problems.
- Emcon Services will be removing shoulder sod this summer. This applies to both gravel and paved roads. This sod removal will also improve drainage from the road surface thereby reducing potholes. Canso Road and Rollo Road have been identified as priorities for drainage-related improvements and they will have sod removed, ditch work conducted, and gravel added.
- The grading specifications for maintenance contractors are contained in Section 1-130 of the maintenance contract. The following link will take you to the Ministry's website where you may view the contract language in whole:
http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BCHighways/contracts/maintenance/Sched_21_Maint_Specs_Apr07.pdf
Maintenance contracts are based on "end product specification" which means that there are no preset numbers of times a year gravel roads must be graded. Instead, it is based on the road classification (traffic volumes) and pothole development; the timing of the response (grading) is dependant on weather conditions.
- Emcon Services will send a representative to the Ratepayers' meetings. They will attend at least two meetings, one in the spring and one in the fall, to explain their summer and winter programs. As well, the Ratepayers will be invited to Emcon's winter orientation meetings. Your contact for these meetings is Rob Heaslip, Roads Supervisor. Rob is based out of Emcon's Duke Point Yard and his phone number is (250) 722-9494.

- Emcon Services will use gravel from an alternate source such as Vancouver Island for winter pothole filling.
- Emcon issued its own internal non-conforming process (NCP) report for the winter potholes. As a result of the Ratepayers feedback and Emcon's NCP, additional monitoring by Emcon was initiated and a grader was relocated to the island for faster response on the gravel roads.
- Per your team's request, I have forwarded your concerns about gravel specifications to Reg Fredrickson, Director, Rehabilitation and Maintenance Branch, for additional consideration.
- Magnesium chloride is an approved product for Ministry usage. It has been tested for use as a dust palliative and has been in use by the Ministry for more than 15 years. In addition, the Ministry's Engineering Branch has developed guidelines for maintenance contractors on reducing potential environmental impacts. You may wish to contact Al Planiden, Manager, Roadside Development at (250) 387-7771 if you have ongoing concerns about its application on gravel roads.

In your letter of June 5, you asked for information about the gravel test results provided previously. The tests were conducted on gravel at the quarry itself. Emcon Services provided the results in summary form from LaFarge Canada Inc, the owners of the quarry on Texada Island. A gravel sample from Emcon's yard on Gabriola Island was taken for use in the additional tests currently underway for the Ministry.

All testing methods meet the American Standard Testing Methods (ASTM) standards. The numbers quoted as MOT Material Specification on the two-page sheet handed out at the meeting are the ASTM testing numbers.

Our communications with Vancouver Island Health Authority have been conducted by email. The full content of the email quoted was as follows:

May 8, 2008

Mr Hickman

A review was made of the available information including an engineer's report and the results of our site inspection. Based on all the available information, I have concluded that there is no evidence that a public health concern exists. Our EHO who visited the site felt that Mr Anderson was satisfied at the time that his well was not threatened. Mr Anderson was however asked on two occasions to resample his well using improved sampling techniques and submit the results to us. This has not yet happened.

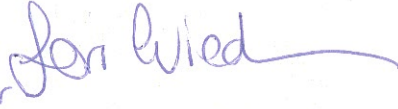
Our contact at VIHA is Terry Preston; you may wish to contact him at (250) 755-6215 if you have additional questions.

There are two pieces of information which I will forward to you when available:

- Whether washing the gravel pre-application is a viable option; and,
- What our additional testing showed.

The Ministry is committed to finding a resolution to the gravel road issues on Gabriola Island and I trust we are moving towards that together.

Yours truly,

for 

Barbara R. Thomas. P. Eng.
District Manager Transportation
Vancouver Island District

cc: Geoff Battimelli – General Manager, Emcon Services Inc.
Reg Frerickson – Director, Highway Maintenance – Victoria
Al Planiden – Manager, Roadside Development – Victoria
Terry Preston – Health Inspector, VIHA