

Updates to Design Requirements

Program Overview

- The Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program provides funding for RMs to support road and bridge construction, culvert installation, and for maintaining eligible roads at primary weights.
- The RIRG program is funded by the Ministry of Highways, administered by SARM, and governed by a Program Management Board, which is made up of voting representatives of both organizations.

Program Review

- The Ministry of Highways periodically reviews their programs and services to determine if they remain relevant or require revision.
- A review of the minimum geometric design criteria for road projects to be eligible for RIRG funding was undertaken in spring 2025. This review was initiated to address concerns from municipalities over the standard right-of-way (ROW) width, including a resolution made at the SARM convention.

Program Updates

- As a result of the program review, it recommended revising the policy to allow for more flexibility in the minimum purchased ROW required and updating other design requirements. These changes will make the design requirements clearer, may reduce exception requests, and speed up turn-around time where exceptions are requested.
- Allowing the ROW to be less than 42 m where the terrain still allows the design to meet all other geometric requirements balances safety with real world limitations municipalities encounter. The requirement also differentiates high volume roads from low volume roads for the purpose of setting the minimum road width. This update brings the policy more in alignment with other standards used on the municipal system, as well as the existing widths of most higher volume roads.
- The proposed revisions ensure safety is maintained in the road design which is being cost shared (50/50) through a ministry program.
- Refer to the RIRG Policy Manual, Road Design Requirements, for more information. The updated RIRG Policy Manual can be found on the SARM website: sarm.ca/programs/rirg/about-rirg
- The design requirement changes will come into effect for applications and project approvals occurring after September 1, 2025.
- The RIRG program has moved to a standardized application intake and project announcement schedule that is intended to align with RM budgeting and planning cycles, as well as the cycles of the Provincial Government.
- The intake for road, bridge, and large diameter culvert projects will open September 1st and remain open until November 15th of each year. It is also intended that the project announcement for these applications will take place in January.