



Public Information Centre #1 Summary Report

Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for
Regional Road 37 (Merritt Road) and Regional Road 54 (Rice Road) Town of
Pelham, City of Thorold, and City of Welland, Ontario

Prepared for:

Niagara Region

10 May 2021



Public Information Centre #1 Summary Report

Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for
Regional Road 37 (Merritt Road) and Regional Road 54 (Rice Road)

Prepared for:

Niagara Region

Prepared by:

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10 May 2021

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1.0 Introduction

The Niagara Region (the Region) is undertaking a Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road as a result of proposed developments in the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold, and the City of Welland. The purpose of this Class EA is to identify improvements to the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conforms to a complete streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in the three local municipalities. This study is being conducted in accordance with the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) requirements for a Schedule 'C' Project (Phases 1-4) as outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association's Class EA document (Municipal Engineers Association, 2000 as amended in 2011 and 2015).

This report documents the methods of distribution of Notice of Study Commencement and Notice of Public Information Centre #1, the purpose and content of PIC #1, and the comments received and responses provided by the Study Team.

2.0 Study Contact List

A Study Contact List was developed at the onset of the Study to identify contacts to distribute Study notifications. This list includes contacts from Indigenous Nations, Federal and Provincial Agencies, local Conservation Authority, various departments from the Niagara Region, the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold, the City of Welland, utility companies, special interest groups, members of the public who expressed interest in the study and the area residents.

The Study Contact List will be updated throughout the Study. **Table 2-1** identifies the contact groups that are listed on the Study Contact List. **Figure 2-1** shows the consultation study area and highlights the area properties for which addresses are included in the Study Contact List.

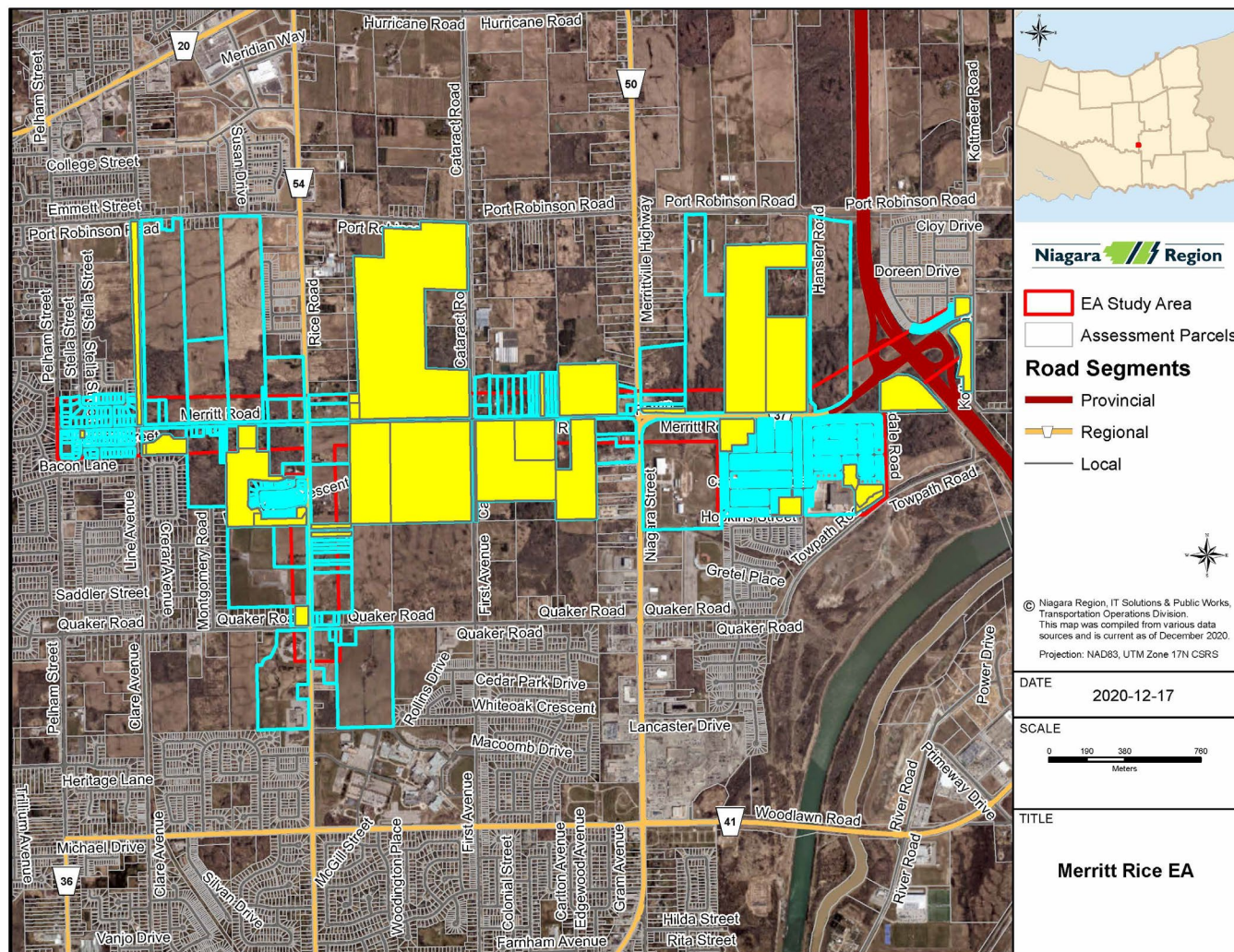
Table 2-1: Contact Groups on the Study Contact List

Contact groups	
Indigenous Nations	
Six Nations of the Grand River	Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council c/o Haudenosaunee Development Institute
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation	
Federal Agencies	
Transport Canada	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Provincial Agencies	
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Ministry of Transportation
Infrastructure Ontario	
Conservation Authority	
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority	
Niagara Region	
Regional Clerk; Transportation Systems & Planning; Planning and Development Services; Transit; Water/Wastewater; Public Health	Real Estate; Emergency Medical Services; Police Services; Active Transportation Sub Committee; Elected Officials
Town of Pelham	

Public Information Centre #1 Summary Report
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Public Works; Planning & Development; Fire Services	Active Transportation Committee; Elected Officials
City of Thorold	
Engineering Division; Fire and Emergency Services	Active Transportation Advisory Committee; Elected Officials
City of Welland	
Planning; Development and Building Services; Engineering and Public Works	Fire & Emergency Services; Elected Officials
Utility Companies	
Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc.	Bell Canada
Cogeco Cable	Rogers Communications Inc.
Enbridge Gas Distribution	Niagara Region Broadband Networks
TransCanada Pipelines	Hydro One Networks Inc.
Special Interest Groups	
Niagara Regional Agricultural Society	Ontario Federation of Agriculture
District School Board of Niagara	Niagara Catholic District School Board
Welland Pelham Chamber of Commerce	Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce
Merritt Meadows Rinaldi Homes	Niagara Association of REALTORS
Ontario Trucking Association	Niagara College

Figure 2-1: Consultation Study Area for Area Residents



3.0 Notice of Study Commencement

A Notice of Study Commencement was issued to introduce the Class EA Study and invite the public, Indigenous Nations, regulatory agencies and stakeholders to participate in the Study process. The notice was issued via the following means:

Table 3-1: Distribution Method for the Notice of Study Commencement

Notice Distribution Method	Date
Posting on project webpage	January 4, 2021
Posting on Niagara Region's Twitter and Facebook pages	January 5, 2021
Email circulation to Government Agencies, Emergency Services, Active Transportation Committees, Utility Companies and Special Interest Groups	January 7, 2021
Email circulation to Regional and municipal clerks for distribution to elected officials	January 8, 2021
Issued for mailout to the area residents (Figure 2-1)	January 11, 2021
Publication in Voice of Pelham	January 13, 2021
Publication in Niagara This Week, Welland Tribune and Thorold News	January 14, 2021
Email circulation to the Indigenous Nations (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council c/o Haudenosaunee Development Institute)	January 14, 2021

The Notice of Commencement is provided in **Appendix A**.

4.0 Notice of Public Information Centre #1

A Notice of Public Information Centre #1 was issued to invite the public, Indigenous Nations, regulatory agencies and stakeholders to participate in the Public Information Centre #1. The notice was issued via following means:

Table 4-1: Distribution Method for the Notice of Public Information Centre #1

Notice Distribution Method	Date
Posting on project webpage	March 2, 2021
Posting on Niagara Region's Facebook page	March 2, 2021
Email circulation to the Indigenous Nations (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council c/o Haudenosaunee Development Institute)	March 5, 2021
Issued for mailout to the area residents (Figure 2-1)	March 10, 2021
Email circulation to Government Agencies, Emergency Services, Active Transportation Committees, Utility Companies and Special Interest Groups	March 11, 2021
Email circulation to regional and municipal clerks for distribution to elected officials	March 11, 2021
Publication in Voice of Pelham	March 10, 2021 March 17, 2021
Publication in Niagara This Week, Welland Tribune and Thorold News	March 11, 2021 March 18, 2021

The Notice of Public Information Centre #1 is provided in **Appendix B**.

5.0 Online Public Information Centre #1

As part of the Online Public Information Centre (PIC), an online meeting was held on March 24, 2021, which started at 6:00 p.m.. PIC #1 was held virtually in a meeting room through Microsoft Teams. The information materials and Virtual Consultation Platform for PIC#1 were posted online on the project webpage. Comments were invited at the online meeting and during a two-week period following the event (March 24 - April 7). The purpose of the PIC #1 was to:

- Provide a summary of study background and the Municipal Class EA process;
- Provide an overview of technical studies completed and planned;
- Present the Problem and Opportunity(s);
- Identify the constraints and opportunities;
- Present the possible cross-sections;
- Allow the public to provide input;
- Enable the use of public feedback in the next stage of developing and evaluating potential alternative designs; and,
- Identifying the next stage of the process.

Online meeting attendees were encouraged to voice their comments during the meeting, or to email them to Study Team Members following the event. A total of 47 attendees joined the online meeting. Following the online meeting, a recording of the event was also made available on project webpage. There was also an online comment form available on the project webpage which residents could fill out until April 7, 2021. The PIC #1 slides are provided in **Appendix C**.

5.1 Summary of PIC #1 Comments and Study Team's Responses

As noted above, the PIC #1 participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the Study by submitting comments on via email, or through the online comment form. The deadline for comments was April 7, 2021. Seven members of the public voiced comments during the online meeting. Seven PIC participants submitted comments via the online comment form. The Study Team continued to receive comments via email after April 7, 2021. A total of six members of public had submitted comments via email at the time of preparation of this report (April 13, 2021). The comments received are provided in **Appendix D**.

A summary of key PIC #1 comments and Study Team's responses is provided in **Table 5-1**. The comments received through PIC #1 were grouped by road segment and the content of comments was summarized. Please note that the comments provided in **Table 5-1** do not reflect the exact wording, but instead provide a summary of those comments.

Table 5-1: Summary of PIC #1 Comments and Study Team's Responses

Subject	Summary of Comments	Study Team Response
Road Segment 1: Merritt Road between Rice Road (Regional Road 54) and Cataract Road	Does the extension of Merritt Road between Rice Road and Cataract Road need to happen? Could 'No Segment 1' be an option? This road extension is not needed. The existing parallel roads can handle the traffic.	'No Segment' will be reviewed as an option among the others being put forward.
	Who owns the land through which Segment 1 would be constructed?	Segment 1 is currently owned by the City of Thorold and the Town of Pelham.
	Can the order of Segments 1, 2 and 3 be reversed? (Undertake improvements of Merritt Road from Highway 406 to Cataract Road first, then determine if the Merritt Road extension is justified)	The numbering of the Segments has no bearing on the order in which any improvements were undertaken.
	For Segment 1, will sidewalks be installed? The word possible was used.	The cross-section displayed in the presentation is just a possible option for the segment. Given the Regions mandate to provide active transportation, however, Segment 1 will almost certainly have some form of active transportation provided with provisions for pedestrians and cyclists.
	In Section 1, will there be any water or sewer services installed for future residential developments?	At this time, we cannot address this question. These services will depend on recommendations from the EA and the proposed and approved design. Upon completion of the designs and prior to construction we will be able to answer this. If services will be installed, we will work with Niagara Region to facilitate these changes.
	Concerned about impacts of extension of Merritt Road (Segment 1) on Provincially Significant Wetlands and the natural environment. What mitigation measures might be taken to address impacts to the natural environment?	The Study team will complete a Natural Environment Assessment to identify sensitive environmental features, wildlife and wildlife habitat and any species at risk. The Natural Environment Assessment will also identify potential impacts of the project on the environment and how those impacts can be avoided/mitigated. The Natural Environment Assessment will be completed in accordance with Niagara Region's Environmental Impact Study Guidelines. The Study Team will complete this assessment in consultation with staff from Niagara Region's Planning and Development Services and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. At this time, we are at an early stage in our Natural Environment Assessment and have not yet determined any mitigating measures. The mitigating measures would be identified based on the preferred option identified by the Study Team, in consultation with the Region of Niagara and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

Subject	Summary of Comments	Study Team Response
	The PIC #1 slides show a two-lane road design for Segment 1, however, the recently completed (2020) City of Thorold Transportation Master Plan recommended that capacity improvements (widening) be undertaken on Merritt Road (to a four-lane cross section). Can you clarify if a four-lane cross-section being considered, just not shown, yet?	A two-lane cross section was shown as a possible option for Segment 1. As noted, previous studies in this area (the City of Thorold's Transportation Master Plan) have recommended a four-lane cross section. As part of this study, we will be analyzing future traffic conditions to determine whether a two-lane or four-lane cross section is justified.
	The PIC #1 slides mention a possible sidewalk in Segment 1. Why do you want to add a sidewalk through PSWs? Is residential development being anticipated? If destroyed PSWs are down-rated at a later date?	Active transportation (walking/cycling) is a key component of this study. We will be recommending that the needs of pedestrian and cyclists be met along Segment 1, should it be determined that Segment 1 is being opened. Development of lands (i.e., residential development) adjacent to the Segment 1 would be determined by the Town of Pelham (western portion) or the City of Thorold (eastern portion). We would suggest that you contact each of them regarding this specific question.
	The Niagara Region is in the process of developing a Natural Heritage System through the new Niagara Official Plan. The Niagara Region needs to show its commitment to preserving Niagara's natural features.	The study area includes the following Regional Core Natural Heritage System (CNHS) features: • Provincially Significant Wetland • Significant Woodland • Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest • Type 2 (Important) Fish Habitat The Regional Official Plan Policy 7.B.1.14 allows "essential public uses of a linear nature, including transportation routes, may be permitted within the Core Natural Heritage System or adjacent lands where an Environmental Assessment for the proposed use has been approved under Provincial or Federal legislation." Based on the input received from the Niagara Region Planning and Development Services staff, the proposed works can be undertaken while protecting natural heritage features through the EA process, by evaluating all potential natural environmental impacts, identifying appropriate mitigation measures and complying within all other environmental protection requirements, including but not limited to potential Permits required by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Given the proximity of the intersection to the Core Natural Heritage features listed above, the alternative design concepts will recognize the sensitivity of the natural areas outlined above. Any future works will avoid negative impacts to the Port

Subject	Summary of Comments	Study Team Response
		Robinson Creek system wherever possible and consider enhancement of the features and associated buffers.
	Would there be value in having a resting place along the multi-use path in Segment 1 to highlight some of the significant wetland features? Providing people with learning opportunities about the sensitivities of the environment encourages the future environmental behaviours.	The Class EA Study will identify the recommended design for road improvements. Recommendations for streetscaping will be included in the preliminary design in Phase 3 of this study, including a possible resting place along the multi-use path, if deemed to be feasible.
Road Segment 2: Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street	Will Segment 2 (Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street) include storm infrastructure? There are some drainage concerns in this area already.	There is a stormwater component in the technical studies which will be addressing this issue.
	The road width in Segment 2 is very narrow. Car drivers speed down this roadway resulting in speed control measures (speed cushions). In the spring the ditches become very full with water creating a drowning hazard. If possible, an urban cross section with curbs, sidewalks and/or bike lane/multiuse path would be ideal. Many people use this section of roadway (e.g., parent driving their children to school and Niagara College students). Providing appropriate and divided use lanes would be ideal. Please consider pedestrian level lighting for facial recognition as well as tree coverage for sun protection in the summer.	Various alternative design concepts will be developed and evaluated to identify a preferred design for road improvements. The preferred design will incorporate road safety, stormwater management, active transportation and pedestrian safety considerations. Recommendations for active transportation will be included in the preliminary design in Phase 3 of this study, i
Road Segment 3: Merritt Road between Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street and Highway 406	Any considerations of traffic lights into Merritt Meadows? The turn lane into Merritt Meadow both eastbound and westbound is a challenge, particularly when accessing from west to east.	This has not yet been investigated but is something that could be explored further on in the project.
	It is important to mention that Road Segment 3 helps connect neighbourhoods within the West Port Robinson Secondary plan. For example, it connects the neighbourhood on the east side of the Highway 406 with the new neighbourhood to the south-west of the Highway 406, as well as the homes along Segment 2 of Merritt Road.	Comment noted.
	Segment 3 segment has high speed traffic exiting from the Highway 406. Other than the access to the neighbourhood on the south side of road, there are few points of interest along this segment which also encourages speed right up to the stop light at Woodlawn. Separated and protected bike lanes are necessary as well as pedestrian facilities. A multiuse path would be ideal. Thought should be given to people on bikes or who may be walking	Various alternative design concepts will be developed and evaluated to identify a preferred design for road improvements. The preferred design will incorporate road safety, stormwater management, active transportation and pedestrian safety considerations. Recommendations for active transportation will be included in the preliminary design in Phase 3 of this study.

Subject	Summary of Comments	Study Team Response
	westward who would like to make a left into the new neighbourhood. The current west exit on from the highway is sweeping which makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross. This type of sweeping infrastructure creates a conflict zone. Consider working with the MTO to add in bike and walking facilities on the overpass. This will also help to connect the neighbourhoods on either side of the highway.	
Road Segment 4: Rice Road between 200m north of Merritt Road and Quaker Road	Can you provide insight to what intersection improvements may be expected at Rice Road and Quaker Road intersection?	At this time, we are not at a point in the project where we can definitively say what improvements will be involved. The Rice and Quaker intersection will need to be signalized with dedicated turn lanes and road widened on approaches. These improvements will be part of a fulsome road analysis which will take place later in the assessment and will also keep in mind active transportation considerations.
	What improvements could be dropped (and costs saved) on Segment 4 (Rice Road), if Segment 1 were not built — i.e., with no 4-way intersection at Merritt Road?	Cost implications will be one of the criteria we will use to evaluate the various options, which will include not constructing Segment 1.
	What side of Rice Road will be used to widen the road approaching the turn onto Merritt Road? Concerned about potential property impacts.	At this point in the study, it is too soon to address this aspect. The study team is confirming the need to widen Rice Road. Once a cross-section has been confirmed that will define how much ROW will be required and then the correct alignment for Rice Road can be assessed. If there is a need to widen Rice Rd, we will assess variations of widening on each side. It is unlikely that it will be a combination of widening on each side. These options will be presented at a later PIC.
	Concerned that the proposed improvements will convert Merritt Road into a highway. This road is not suitable for thru traffic all the way from South Pelham to the Highway 406. This is a residential street. I understand that there is discussion about adding sidewalks and bike lanes but that should be done regardless.	This study is building on the recommendations of the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that was completed in 2017. The Study will aim to identify improvements to the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The Study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conform to a Complete Streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in the three local municipalities. In parallel, the Town of Pelham will be addressing future needs on the section of Merritt Road west of Rice Road, including the need to accommodate active transportation.
	There has been increased development along Rice Road in Segment 4. Build active transportation into the plans early to ensure connectivity. This would be an ideal location for a multiuse path.	Various alternative design concepts will be developed and evaluated to identify a preferred design for road improvements. The preferred design will

Subject	Summary of Comments	Study Team Response
		incorporate road safety, stormwater management, active transportation and pedestrian safety considerations.
Other / General Comments	Merritt Road between Pelham Street & Rice Road is already dangerously narrow and cannot support increased traffic. Will these concerns be addressed before opening the Merritt Road connector and increasing the traffic to and from Pelham Rd?	The study area ends at Rice Road and does not include this section of Merritt Road west of Rice. This section of the roadway is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Pelham who is aware of this concern and will consider this from their perspective to address the issue. Town Comment: Merritt Road between Pelham Street and Rice Road will be reviewed by the Town of Pelham. The Town has indicated that they are looking at a full urbanization of this section of roadway. .
	Has either the City or the Town identified to the Region whether they will be looking to open the unopened ROW between Quaker Road and Merritt Road on Rice Road in Stage 4?; Referenced Summerlea Avenue extension	The Project Team is not aware of any plans to extend Summerlea Avenue to connect to Rice Road.
	Through the Students on the Move research study, Niagara College students identified and photographed community requests for sidewalks along Quaker Road to the school. Although Quaker Road is not part of the EA consideration for the future connection of sidewalks and multiuse paths is important. Over time it could be anticipated at a fully connected multiuse path system will be developed for the area.	Comment noted.

6.0 Next Steps

Comments will be further reviewed by the Study Team and will inform the next phase of the Study. The project team will identify and evaluate alternative solutions to address the problem based on comments received. Preferred Solution will be presented to the public in PIC #2.



Appendix A:

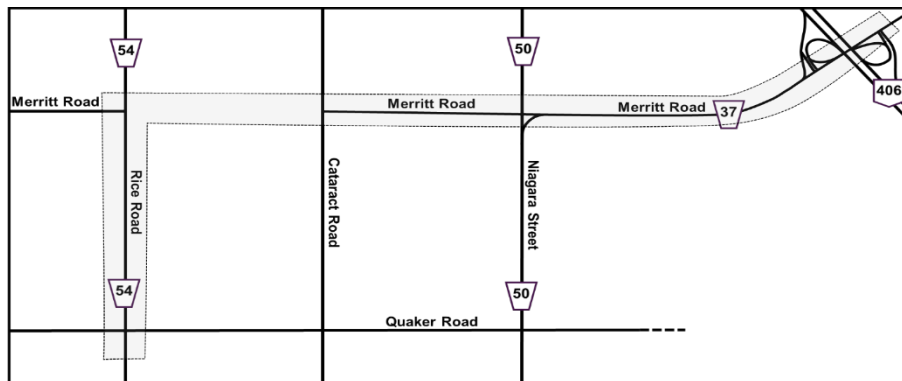
Notice of Study Commencement

Notice of Study Commencement

Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for Merritt Rd. (RR 37) and Rice Rd. (RR 54) in Pelham, Thorold and Welland

The Study

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region) has initiated an Environmental Assessment Study for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road as a result of proposed developments in the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold and the City of Welland.



This study will build on the recommendations of the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which included the following:

- Extension of Merritt Road between Regional Road 54 (Rice Road) and Cataract Road;
- Capacity improvements of Merritt Road from Cataract Road to Highway 406; and,
- Capacity improvements to Regional Road 54 (Rice Road) from 200 meters north of Merritt Road to Quaker Road.

The Study aims to reimagine the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conform to a complete streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in the three local municipalities.

The Process

The study is being carried out as a Schedule 'C' project in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class EA document (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011 & 2015), which is an

approved process under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. Once the study is complete, an Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be prepared and available for public review and comment. A Notice of Completion will be issued at that stage.

Public Comments Invited

Consultation with the public, Indigenous Nations, regulatory agencies and stakeholders is a key element of the Class EA process. Project notifications will be issued at key milestones through advertisement in local newspapers, emails and mail outs to the contacts on the Study Mailing List. Three (3) Public Information Centres (PICs) **(possibly in an online format)** will be conducted to solicit public input. The PICs will provide an opportunity for the public to review the proposed alternative solutions and designs, as well as provide comments and discuss concerns and issues with the project team. As the Study progresses and more information becomes available, it will be posted on [the project webpage](#).

COVID-19

Niagara Region recognizes that this project is being carried out during uncertain times with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic. Niagara Region will take all necessary steps to ensure maintaining the health and safety of the public. Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, most of the future consultation and communications with the public will be online. As such, the project team is asking that **if you would like to receive future notices via email, to please provide your email address** to the Region Project Manager identified below. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the project team members identified below:

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Notice First Issued: January 4, 2021.

Information will be collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

Public Notices - Niagara Region, X

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[Notice of Study Commencement for Merritt Rd. and Rice Rd. in Pelham, Thorold and Welland](#)

Public Notice

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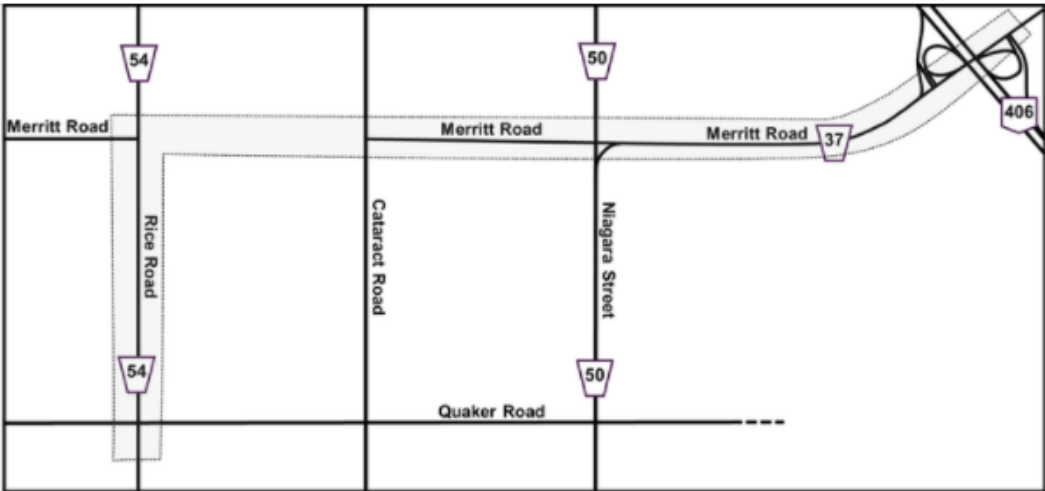
Email or Phone Number

Niagara Region

January 5 · 🌐

Niagara Region has initiated an Environmental Assessment Study for improvements to Merritt Rd. and Rice Rd. as a result of proposed developments in the Town of Pelham City of Thorold and City of Welland.

Learn more: [niagararegion.ca/news/notices/notice.aspx?q=514](#)



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Tweet

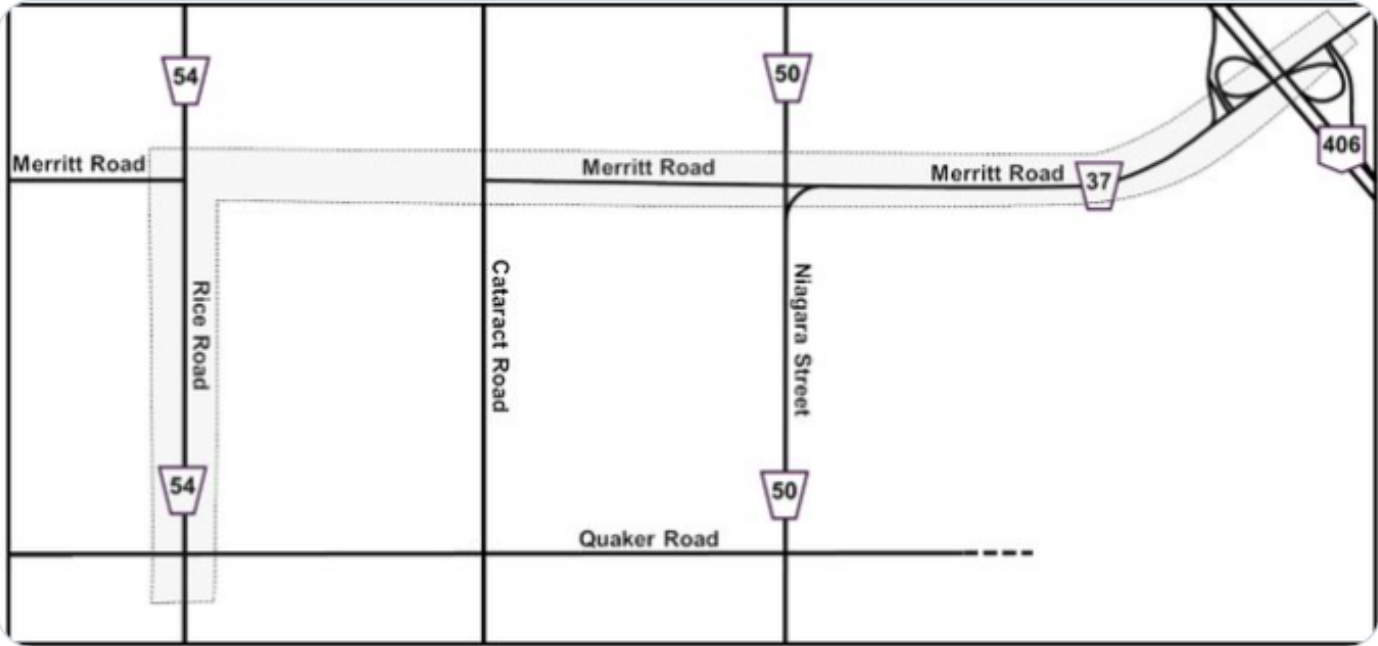
Niagara Region

@NiagaraRegion

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Niagara Region has initiated an Environmental Assessment Study for improvements to Merritt Rd. and Rice Rd. as a result of proposed developments in the @TownOfPelham @CityofThorold18 and @Welland.

Learn more: [niagararegion.ca/news/notices/n...](#)



3:29 PM · Jan 5, 2021 · TweetDeck

WAINFLEET FIREFIGHTER AWARDED MEDAL OF MERIT FOR HIS ACTIONS AT CRASH SCENE THREE YEARS AGO

MATTHEW DEVRIES CAME UPON CRASH SCENE AT CHAMBERS CORNERS

A Wainfleet firefighter who went above and beyond the call of duty at the scene of a crash in 2017 was awarded the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario Firefighter's Medal of Merit.

Matthew DeVries came upon a crash near the intersection of Forks Road West and Highway 3 (Chambers Corners) on July 14, 2017.

A 60-year-old man was driving his Harley-Davidson motorcycle northbound on Regional Road 24, while a 20-year-old Pelham man was headed southbound in a Chevrolet Silverado truck when the crash took place.

The motorcycle rider was thrown from his bike after striking the truck, which turned in front of him.

A release from the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario said the motorcyclist suffered life-threatening injuries, including having a leg severed below the knee.

"With no medical or personal protective equipment, DeVries immediately tended to the injured motorcycle driver by fashioning a tourniquet from his belt to slow the loss of blood. Within seconds of DeVries' arrival, he had secured the scene, rendered life-saving first aid and updated 911 operators," the release said.

The motorcycle driver was airlifted to an out-of-region hospital by Ornge air ambulance.

"If not for Matt's quick



Metroland file photo

Wainfleet Fire and Emergency Services firefighter Matthew DeVries was awarded a Fire Fighters Association of Ontario Firefighter's Medal of Merit for his actions at a crash scene near the intersection of Forks Road West and Highway 3 (Chambers Corners) on July 14, 2017.

thinking and training, I do believe the driver would have died at the scene," said Wainfleet Lieut. Jay Mous in the release.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, DeVries and two other recipients will receive their medals at a later date.

The medal of merit is awarded for an emergency event during which a firefighter or firefighters showed good judgment, and/or took a calculated risk to save a life.

Firefighters are nominated for the medal, and each nomination reviewed by the Ontario Fire Marshal, the Mutual Insurance Association of Ontario and the Fire

Fighters Association of Ontario.

According to the association's website, 55 medals of merits and citations have been awarded for 33 separate incidents involving firefighters from 25 fire departments across Ontario since 1983.

Other firefighters who received a medal of merit or citation include Pelham Fire and Emergency Services Chief Bob Limburger in 2012 and Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services firefighters Thomas Lasovich and John Smits in 1985. The website does not say what the medals/citations were awarded for in those cases.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Study Commencement Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for Regional Road 37 (Merritt Road) and Regional Road 54 (Rice Road), in the Town of Pelham, City of Thorold and City of Welland

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region) has initiated an Environmental Assessment Study for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road. The Study aims to reimagine the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conform to a complete streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in three local municipalities, the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold and the City of Welland.

Consultation with the public, Indigenous Nations, regulatory agencies and stakeholders is a key element of the Class EA process. Project notifications will be issued at key milestones through advertisement in local newspapers, emails and mail outs to the contacts on the Study Mailing List. As the Study progresses and more information becomes available, it will be posted on the project webpage: niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-37

Niagara Region recognizes that this project is being carried out during uncertain times with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic. Niagara Region will take all necessary steps to ensure maintaining the health and safety of the public. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the project team members identified below:

Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng.

Manager, Transportation Planning
Niagara Region

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Notice First Issued: Jan. 14, 2021

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A6 | STANDARD • REVIEW • TRIBUNE THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021

>> LOCAL

Lincoln humane society continues adoption program

St. Catharines animal shelter hopes to find homes for 102 pets

KARENA WALTER
THE ST. CATHARINES STANDARD

Lincoln County Humane Society is continuing its contactless, virtual adoption program through Ontario's latest lockdown in hopes of connecting 102 pets with new homes.

The St. Catharines animal shelter has been holding virtual meet and greets during the pandemic so humans can see animals ready to be adopted.

Photos of available pets are posted on the agency's lchs.ca website, Facebook and Instagram.

"We are doing virtual where we can," said executive director Kevin Strooband. "They're doing Zoom appointments, it's all appointment-based."

He said the process is contactless, with paperwork and animals passed through doors in the entranceway.

Last spring when COVID-19 first hit and the humane society had reduced staff and volunteers, it put out a call for foster



JULIE JOCSAK TORSTAR

families to help get its animals out of cages.

Within a week, it had an overwhelming 400 responses and had fostered out 60 animals.

"The 60 that were fostered because of that call have all been recalled, had their surgeries and all found homes," Strooband said, adding some were adopted by their foster families.

The agency is not looking for new foster families right now, but does want families who will give pets a permanent place to call home.

The 102 animals currently in care include 19 dogs, seven of

which are now available to adopt. The rest are cats, rabbits and other small animals.

Fourteen cats from the humane society in London, Ont., were being processed Tuesday as well and will be available as early as next week.

Brianna Howard, an animal care technician at the Lincoln County Humane Society, pets Tipper, a cat who is looking for a home.

Last year at this time, the humane society had 150 animals in its care.

It's seen quite a drop in numbers during the pandemic.

The humane society had more than 600 fewer animals in its shelter in 2020 compared to 2019, down from 2,886 pets to 2,244.

Stray dogs and cats dropped from 1,233 in 2019 to 793 in 2020.

"What that tells me is that people aren't away from their houses, so their animals are getting away less frequently," Strooband said.

He said about 80 per cent of strays are reconnected and returned to their owners.

The humane society was unable to bring in dogs from other countries in 2020 because of the pandemic. In the past, it has helped out international animal agencies in Louisiana, Mexico and even the Cayman Islands because there is always a demand for dogs in Niagara. Karna Walter is a St. Catharines-based reporter, primarily covering city hall for the Standard. Reach her via email: karna.walter@niagaradailies.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Study Commencement Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for Regional Road 37 (Merritt Road) and Regional Road 54 (Rice Road), in the Town of Pelham, City of Thorold and City of Welland

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region) has initiated an Environmental Assessment Study for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road. The Study aims to reimagine the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conform to a complete streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in three local municipalities, the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold and the City of Welland.

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niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-37

Niagara Region recognizes that this project is being carried out during uncertain times with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic. Niagara Region will take all necessary steps to ensure maintaining the health and safety of the public. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the project team members identified below:

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A look back at
October 2020

THE ST. CATHARINES STANDARD

October 1 – Premier Doug Ford blasted members of a Niagara antimask group as a bunch of "yahoos," urging them to "give your heads a shake" and see the health risk of COVID-19.

October 3 – U.S. President Donald Trump confirms he has tested positive for COVID-19.

Meanwhile, an advocacy group called the province's decision to give personal support workers a temporary raise too little, too late.

October 6 – Headline: "Niagara has first COVID-19 death since mid-July."

October 9 – This date marked a new era of garbage: Two new collectors, Miller Waste Systems and GFL Environmental – contracted by Niagara Region – were ready to roll on seven-year contracts.

October 13 – Niagara reports 40 new COVID cases over the weekend. Along with eight active outbreaks and 116 active cases regionwide, the numbers were shocking.

October 14 – A Niagara Falls Tourism ad urging people to book at getaway to the Hon-eymoon Capital was scrapped for adjustments. FedDev Ontario felt it wasn't right for the times.

October 16 – Turns out the Costco store in St. Catharines would have a new life after all, following the opening of the new outlet in Niagara Falls. Costco announced the St. Catharines store will become a business centre, catering to small business clients.

October 17 – Holy smokes! Marijuana worth more than \$10 million was seized by U.S. customs officers at the Peace Bridge.

October 20 – The public health department was investigating reports that a St. Catharines church allowed several elderly parishioners to use the same shared spoon as they were served sacramental wine. The church was later ordered to stop it.

October 23 – Headline: "Niagara says yes to safe trick-or-treating."

October 28 – Niagara West MPP Sam Oosterhoff was blasted by critics after he posted photos from his family's event to social media, showing 40 or more people side by side in a restaurant, without masks.

October 29 – Maci, a three-year-old poodle-bichon mix living in Grimsby, became Canada's first known case of a dog being diagnosed with COVID-19.

October 31 – In Niagara Falls, several residents had a negative reaction to one hotel group's request to the city for a one-year

Truck lights up for seasonal fundraiser

Some \$2000 directed to Pelham Cares coffers

BY DON RICKERS
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

There are a number of homes on Timber Creek Crescent with trucks parked in the driveway. But the Dodge 1500 at number 48 is something special.

Brad Saplywy and his ten-year-old son, Brayden, spent seven hours attaching 5000 LED multi-coloured lights to the vehicle with Gorilla tape, and are driving it around Niagara as a mobile Christmas light show, with a fundraising angle.

"I'm only running 108 watts for all 5000 lights, because the LEDs don't draw much power," said Brad. "But it's best to have the engine running, or the lights will drain the battery pretty quickly."

A resident of Fonthill for ten years but originally from Thunder Bay, Saplywy usually returns to the Lakehead for Christmas with his family, but the COVID lockdown put the freeze on to those plans this year. He and his spouse, Lucianna, encouraged Brayden to come up with an idea to spread some local seasonal cheer, and the result was a glowing truck tribute Brayden named the "JoyMaker."

"People are really sad this year because of the pandemic and the lockdown, and they can't see their families," said Brayden. "So I decided to call our lit-up truck the

JoyMaker, because it brings happiness to people that see it."

The reaction was immediate. "On the inaugural drive with the lights attached, we hadn't gone a block before other cars were honking and waving out their windows and giving us a thumbs up," said Brad.

When they saw the truck, they were all waving and clapping to show their appreciation

They decided to drop in on a few families that night to offer a socially-distanced Merry Christmas. One friend suggested that local businesses join forces to offer a prize package draw to people who took a photo of the JoyMaker, and tagged it to their Facebook pages. The concept took on a charitable flair, as it was decided that people would be required to make a donation to Pelham Cares before sharing their picture of the truck online.



Brad Saplywy and his son Brayden with their "JoyMaker."

DON RICKERS

The idea went viral overnight, and donations flooded in. Over the next few nights, the JoyMaker truck was driven around town, and parked in Pelham shopping plazas to promote the cause.

"The first two nights we did just over \$1000, said Brad. "It's been hard because of the government's COVID restrictions...a lot of businesses are closed, and we can't solicit donations in pub-

lic, so we've been posting on our Facebook pages where we're going."

On Christmas Eve, the Saplywys visited long-term care homes in the area, in the hope of bringing some joy to the elderly.

"We called ahead to the Woodlands of Sunset on Pelham Street, and the charge nurse brought all the residents to the windows," said Brad. "When they saw the

truck, they were all waving and clapping to show their appreciation. Brayden, my wife, and I had tears in our eyes, as they touched our hearts too."

By the end, the father-son team raised \$2000, not including non-perishable food items that were donated as well. Melissa Harker, of Fonthill, won a \$725 gift basket of items donated by local businesses.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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Notice First Issued: Jan. 14, 2021



THOROLD NEWS

WATCH: Premier Doug Ford, officials provide update on vaccine rollout, stay-at-home order

2

Students with special educational needs returned to Niagara classrooms Monday

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro VP accused of fraud over \$425K

Ontario to lay out 'legal parameters' of stay-at-home order today

20

BEYOND LOCAL: Theatre shows how the art of inclusion can help build a better Canada in 2021

Good morning, Thorold!

CANADA: Experts call for a coherent global health strategy

2

Brace for icy roads, sidewalks overnight: Environment Canada

Delayed arrival of migrant workers causing worry among some Niagara greenhouse growers

Eight in Welland accused of breaching COVID-19 social gathering rules

Ford: 'Bad actors' flouting emergency orders will be fined

40

Read your way through the stay-at-home order with the help of Thorold's library

New partnership to allow union members to

TOP STORY



190 cases of COVID-19, 9 deaths reported today in Niagara

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Study Commencement
Environmental Assessment Study for Merritt Road and Rice Road

[Learn More](#)

Niagara Region

niagararegion.ca/projects

SPOTLIGHT

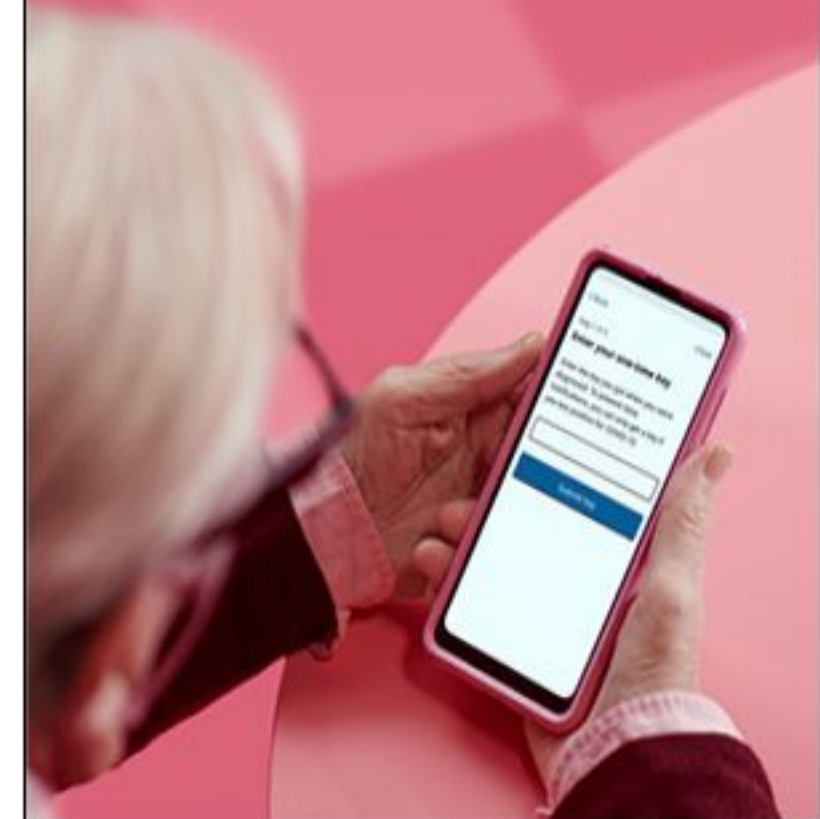


Gain control of your personal finances the DIY way



7 ultimate backcountry adventures in Sault Ste. Marie

Paul tests positive for COVID-19 and enters his code.



Health Canada

Santé Canada

Canada

Listings Today

Events

[view all](#)

11

This Week

12

Total

Buy & Sell

[view all](#)

0

This Week

5

Total

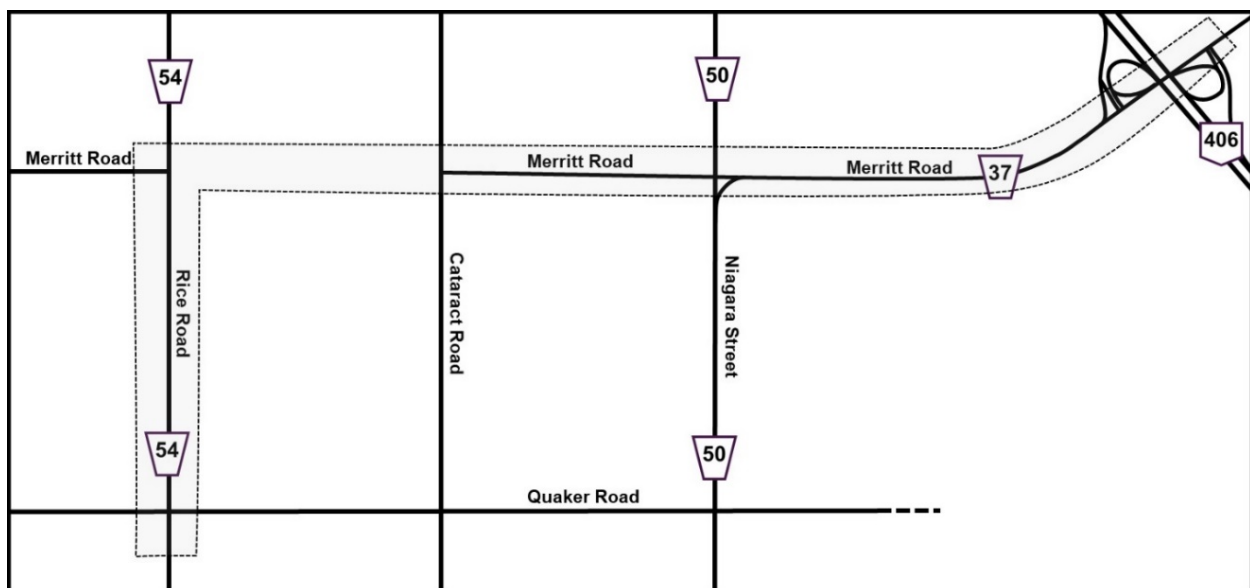


Appendix B:
Notice of Public Information Centre #1

Notice of Online Public Information Centre #1 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for Merritt Rd. (RR 37) and Rice Rd. (RR 54) in Pelham, Thorold and Welland

The Study

Niagara Region is undertaking an Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road as a result of proposed developments in the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold and the City of Welland.



This study will build on the recommendations of the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which included the following:

- Extension of Merritt Road between Regional Road 54 (Rice Road) and Cataract Road;
- Capacity improvements of Merritt Road from Cataract Road to Highway 406; and,
- Capacity improvements to Regional Road 54 (Rice Road) from 200 meters north of Merritt Road to Quaker Road.

The Study will aim to identify improvements to the two roadways to meet the future needs of the surrounding community for all road users. The study will address active transportation needs by providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive, conform to a complete streets approach, and compatible with the changing land use in the three local municipalities.

The process

The study is being carried out as a Schedule 'C' project in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class EA process, which is an approved process under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. This study will address the requirements of Phases 1 to 4 of the Municipal Class EA process. Once the study is complete, an Environmental Study Report will be prepared and available for public review and comment. A Notice of Completion will be issued at that stage.

You are invited to participate

Consultation with the public, Indigenous Nations, regulatory agencies and stakeholders is a key element of the Class EA process. Three (3) Public Information Centers will be conducted throughout this study to solicit public input. At this time, the Niagara Region is planning to host the Public Information Centre (PIC) #1. The purpose of the first PIC is to share information about the project background, Class EA Study process, the problem to be addressed by this study, and obtain preliminary input from the public for consideration into the Study process. The PIC #1 will be held in **an online format**. You can participate in this PIC by attending an online presentation and/or by viewing information materials on Wood's Virtual Consultation Platform.

Online Presentation: The Study Team will deliver an online presentation on **March 24, 2021**, starting at **6:00 pm**. There will be an opportunity at the end of the presentation to ask any questions or submit comments. Please email mir.talpur@woodplc.com (**Mir Talpur, Environmental Planner**) to receive an invite to the online presentation.

Virtual Consultation Platform: Information materials related to the Online PIC #1 will be available on [Wood's Consultation Platform on project webpage](#) starting **March 24, 2021** and comments will be received until **April 7, 2021**.

Stay Connected

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Information will be collected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

facebook

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2

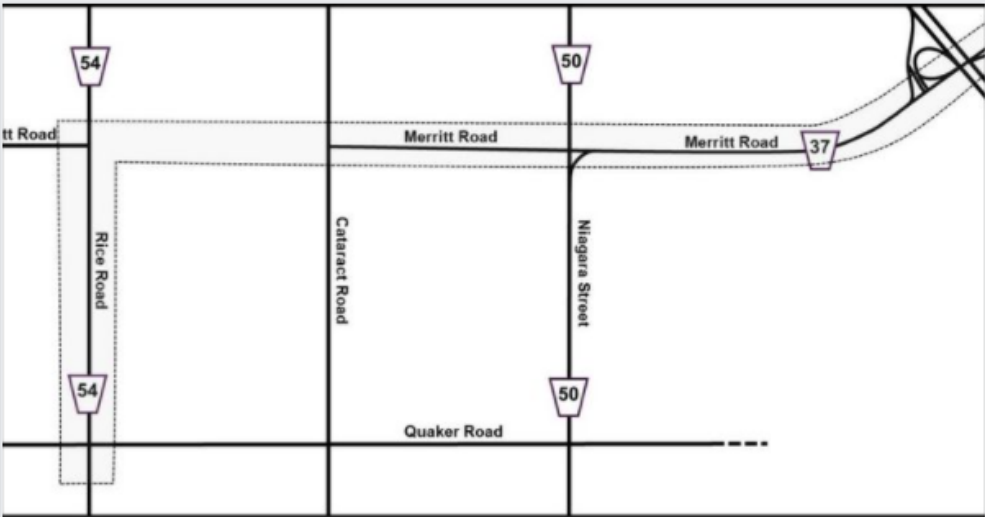
Events

Events

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Find events happening near Thorold that fit your interest.

FIND EVENTS



MAR 24

Notice of Virtual Public Information Centre #1 for Merritt Rd. (RR 37) and Rice Rd. (RR 54)

Public · Hosted by [Niagara Region](#)

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 6:00 PM EDT
about 1 month ago

←

Tweet



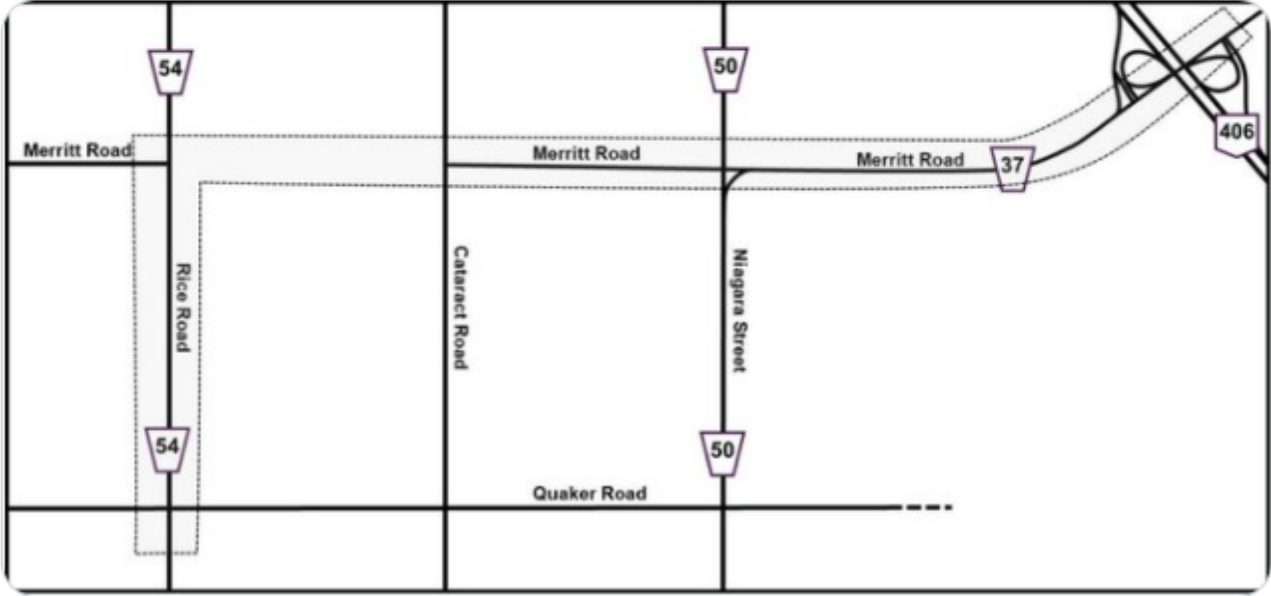
Niagara Region

@NiagaraRegion

Join us for the public information centre #1 for improvements to Merritt Rd. and Rice Rd. in [@TownOfPelham](#) [@Welland](#) & [@CityofThorold18](#)

Date: March 24, 2021
Time: 6 p.m.

For details and how to register, visit [niagararegion.ca/news/notices/n...](#)



11:00 AM · Mar 4, 2021 · TweetDeck

PUBLIC NOTICE

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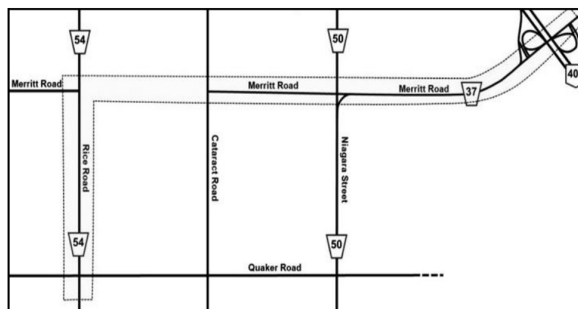
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Notice first issued in the newspaper on March 11, 2021.

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WHAT'S ON

GRANT WILL FUND VIRTUAL SENIORS' PROGRAMS

A grant for the province will help the city's Recreation and Culture division provide programming for seniors can access at home.

Funding of \$20,600 from the provincial government's Seniors Community Grant Program will be utilized for Welland's Seniors' Centre Without Walls program that connects seniors with a variety of essential programs and activities from the comfort of their home.

Starting March 22, seniors can easily join and enjoy free programming using their telephone; no computer or internet is needed. Participants dialing in can be connected with educational discussions, health and wellness activities, local history conversations, games sessions and service information.

Programming will be available for both morning and afternoon sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

To register, email recreation@welland.ca or call 905-735-1700, ext. 4000 and reference Seniors' Centre Without Walls. A downloadable calendar of events is available on the Seniors' Centre Without Walls section on the city's Online Wellness Guide <https://wellness.welland.ca>. Printed copies are available at the Welland Community Wellness Complex and all branches of the Welland Public Library.

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THOROLD NEWS

Niagara's drinking water gets 100 percent in ministry rating

Thorold man arrested in connection to series of catalytic converter thefts

WATCH: Ontario will have administered 1M vaccine doses by the end of today, Ford says

Niagara Falls school reports COVID-19 case

COVID-19: Variants continue to increase in Niagara

Don't test your luck this St. Patrick's Day, Brock U urges students

COVID-19: What we can learn from the great polio vaccine heist of 1959

ONTARIO: Vaccinations in long-term care homes saved hundreds of lives, report says

Good morning, Thorold!

CANADA: Factors that could dictate the success or failure of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Police seek missing 12-year old from Niagara Falls (update: located)

'Bet on the Bunny' with the Fonthill Lions Club this Easter

DSBN identifies new COVID-19 case in area school

Man accused of personating police officer in Welland: NRPS

Police investigate rash of vehicle break-ins in Grimsby

TOP STORY



Interpol investigation leads to arrest of St. Catharines man

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Online Public Information Centre #1
Environmental Assessment Study for Merritt Road and Rice Road

Learn More

Niagara Region

niagararegion.ca/projects

SPOTLIGHT



Gain control of your personal finances the DIY way



7 ultimate backcountry adventures in Sault Ste. Marie



Ways to save money on auto insurance during COVID-19 outbreak

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WELLAND TRIBUNE

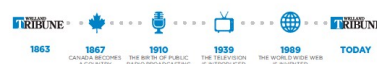
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In this era of fake news and alternative facts, journalism is more important than ever.
The Niagara Falls Review and its journalists are still dedicated to bringing you trusted stories that matter to you and your community.

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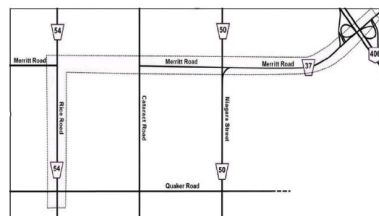
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Sad success: The transformation of Eldrick into Tiger

Before I watched the recent HBO documentary, "Tiger," on Eldrick Tont Woods (his given name; "Tiger" is the nickname of a friend of his dad's, which was transferred to the chosen one) I'm thinking, what more is there to know about this guy and where are they going to get their information? It was unauthorized, and Tiger and his current team played no part in the making of it.

Well there was a lot more to know, and, it turns out, there are many out there who knew Woods or his family very well at one time who were as willing to talk about Tiger as the current team is unwilling. It seems the man and the family aren't particularly good at breaking up.

I feel a parent's goal should be to give their children the best chance to find out who they are, and what they want to do, in a supportive environment. Not everyone has the same time or financial resources to devote to this undertaking, but within your capabilities, strive for this. You cannot let what you want your child to be or what your child can do for you (or the rest of the world) get in the way of job one. The documentary on Tiger Woods was fascinating because it revealed how overwhelmed he was by the world that he, his parents, and his team had created. Earl wanted his son to be the most dominant golfer in the history of the planet and, because he was black, then use that platform to change the world. Stomp his competition on the course and then stamp out racism and privilege off of it.

Earl spent two tours of duty in Vietnam risking his life for a country that was beating and dehumanizing its black populations in the south while he was away. When he returned there were still golf courses he couldn't play and hotels at which he could not stay. Through the game of golf Earl was determined his son could and would change all that.

Was it good for Tiger to focus

on golf at the expense of all other sports? The results may say yes but what does it do to a six-year-old who wants to play little league like the other kids in his school but can't even muster the courage to ask? How does he ever figure out how to be a good teammate? How to show support for others and deal with winning and losing together? It's great when you can say your dad is also your coach and your best friend, but he shouldn't be your only friend. You need to hang with some of your own. We don't live this world in isolation so you shouldn't be growing up in isolation.

When you're the parents of one of the most talented 18-year-olds in the world and he has finally found that one person he can be at peace with, one person who knows and loves him for who he is and not what he does, you don't force her out of his life with a letter because she might interfere with "the plan." You have to let your kid decide when he wants to be Tiger, and when he

wants to be Eldrick. It can be devastating to a parent who was training a full-blooded Tiger and got part of an Eldrick, but it can be more devastating yet for the Eldrick who is being held captive as a Tiger.

As much as Tiger was set up to succeed on the course he was equally set up to fail off of it. It was painful to watch scenes of Tiger in those massive crowds of people who all wanted a piece of him muttering "F*** me" under his breath. The look of despair when forced to sit on Oprah's couch so the world could learn more about "the real Tiger." When he tried to break out of his shell and hang in Vegas with Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley and the gang, he had no idea what to say and do. All these people and women fawning all over him and he was just lost. Michael's advice? "Tell them, 'I'm Tiger Woods.'" This apparently is all you say when talking to a woman who wants desperately to "get to know you better."

Thanks for the advice, Michael,

but off the course he wasn't Tiger, he was Eldrick. The high school kid who was one of the best golfers on the planet but didn't have a friend in class.

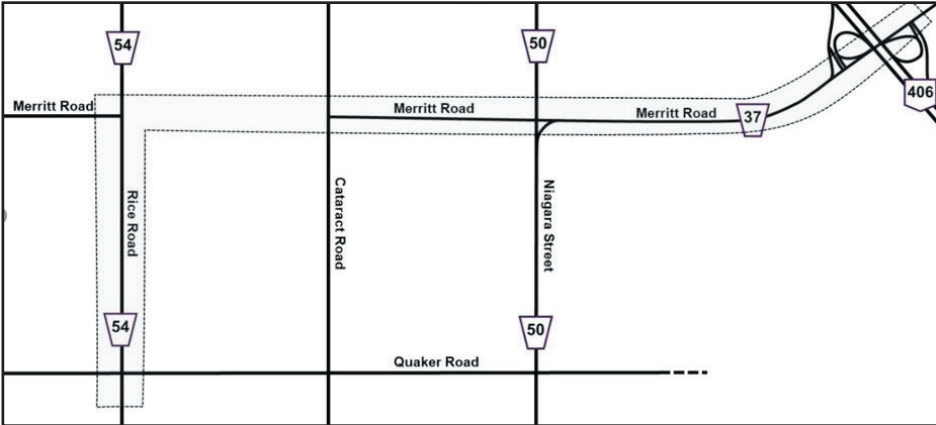
The people who spoke in this documentary did not come across as angry at Tiger for being pushed out of his life. They were his coach growing up who was embarrassed by his (and Earl's) constant womanizing—this was Tiger's exposure as to how married men acted. There was a family friend who was open and honest about many things good and bad. His girlfriend, who was dumped by letter (she still has it), who still seems to genuinely care about the lovely boy, dancing like a goofball, she knew so many years before. Steve Williams, who went to golf war with Woods as caddy longer than anyone else, was very open about their relationship (and still a bit angry). More than anything what came across was a sadness for

See TIGER Page 14

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NEWS

CITY TO HAVE ONE
LOCALS-ONLY BEACH,
1 OPEN TO ALL

JAMES CULIC

jculic@niagarathisweek.com

Port Colborne will attempt to have the best of both beach worlds this summer, as it moves toward a two-tier system for restricting access to its waterfront.

After overcrowding caused chaos throughout town last year at both Nickel Beach and Cedar Bay Beach, the city is restructuring how both are operated. Nickel Beach will remain open to everyone, but with reduced capacity and parking limits, and no more option to park on adjacent streets and walk to the beach. Depending on where you live, parking at Nickel Beach will fall into one of three categories. Port Colborne residents can park for free, as long as they register for a beach pass. Niagara residents will pay \$20 on weekdays and \$25 on weekends and holidays. And finally, the parking fee for non-Niagara residents (which saw a 200 per cent hike last season) will remain in place, costing \$50 on weekdays and \$55 on weekends and holidays.

Although staff initially proposed a similar setup for Cedar Bay Beach, councillors on Monday made an amendment to instead cut off access to anyone from outside Niagara's borders.

"To me, Nickel Beach is more of a commercial operation, with more room, more people, more control, whereas Cedar Bay is more of a community beach," said Ward 4 Coun. Ron Bodner, who proposed the amendment.

Last summer when city hall restricted beach access, it defined "local" as Port Colborne residents only, but this year "local" is being expanded to include all of Niagara. The only exemption for non-locals to get on to Cedar Bay Beach will be those who are renting a cottage nearby. The city will provide beach passes to the owners of those rental properties to be used by those renting the cottages.

"This is a good solution because I look at Cedar Bay as a locals beach," said Ward 2 Coun. Angie Desmarais. "This gives local people a feeling that they always have someplace they can go."

As for the gridlock of cars that swarmed Nickel Beach every weekend, causing problems for residents who lived in the east village area, Desmarais said she hopes the new capacity and car limits would take care of that issue.

Nickel Beach can hold 300 cars parked across the waterfront, but this summer the city is cutting that back to 150. The reduced limit will allow for better physical distancing during the pandemic, and reduce the traffic jams on the roads leading to the beach.

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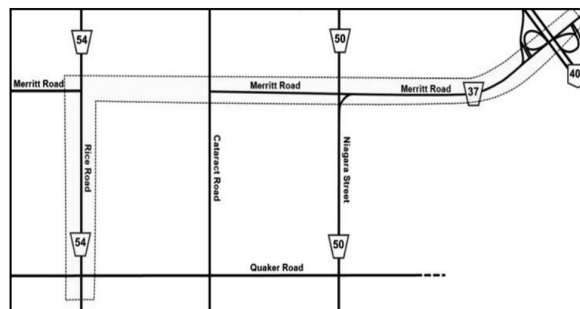
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THOROLD NEWS

Niagara's drinking water gets 100 percent in ministry rating

Thorold man arrested in connection to series of catalytic converter thefts

WATCH: Ontario will have administered 1M vaccine doses by the end of today, Ford says  4

Niagara Falls school reports COVID-19 case

COVID-19: Variants continue to increase in Niagara

Don't test your luck this St. Patrick's Day, Brock U urges students

COVID-19: What we can learn from the great polio vaccine heist of 1959  1

ONTARIO: Vaccinations in long-term care homes saved hundreds of lives, report says  3

Good morning, Thorold!

CANADA: Factors that could dictate the success or failure of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout  5

Police seek missing 12-year old from Niagara Falls (update: located)

'Bet on the Bunny' with the Fonthill Lions Club this Easter

DSBN identifies new COVID-19 case in area school

Man accused of personating police officer in Welland: NRPS

Police investigate rash of vehicle break-ins in Grimsby

TOP STORY



Interpol investigation leads to arrest of St. Catharines man

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SPOTLIGHT



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Ways to save money on auto insurance during COVID-19 outbreak

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021 STANDARD • REVIEW • TRIBUNE | A7

>>LOCAL

COVID-19

continued from // A6

ing action, Niagara Health leaders including Ali met with the region's acting medical officer of health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, and his public health department to start pandemic planning.

The first shock came on Jan. 27, when a man with COVID-19-like symptoms arrived in the St. Catharines emergency room. It was a false alarm, but after that Ali starting taking swabs from anyone with symptoms at the hospital.

"It was only a matter of time before we would start seeing something," he said.

At St. Catharines City Hall, chief administrative officer Shelley Chemnitz was aware for months that a pandemic was possible after an annual hazard identification and risk assessment done for Ontario municipalities.

"Pandemic had been rising as of the last number of years and I know in the fall of 2019, looking at those numbers, we thought that's coming up to a higher probability than we've seen in other years," Chemnitz said. "Then in January you start to hear the news and you're looking across the world and it's like, OK."

The city began to actively



Leah Carline, owner of The Hub, a downtown St. Catharines café, had to lay off her employees and close the café shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began one year ago.

monitor the emerging crisis and prepare for the worst. Small details mattered. Instead of getting rid of some old computers as planned, they held on to them in case city employees had to work from home.

It turned out they would be needed. On March 12, the city activated its emergency operations centre — the day after the World Health Organization declared the pandemic — and started shutting down its facilities March 13.

Niagara officials drew up their plans to fight a pandemic with the hope they would not be needed.

For Hirji, that hope had died in mid-February.

Iran was grossly under-reporting cases. Italy was in lockdown. The virus was found in the United States.

"We saw there are cases in the U.S. that had gone undetected and realized, oh, it's been here for several weeks now. And that was the point

when I realized it's out of the box, it's spreading in the community," Hirji said.

"There's no way that we are going to stop it. It's going to come here and it's going to have a really big impact."

Grant Lafleche is a St. Catharines-based investigative reporter with the Standard. Reach him via email: grant.lafleche@niagaradailies.com

Karena Walter is a St. Catharines-based reporter, primarily covering City Hall for the Standard. Reach her: karena.walter@niagaradailies.com

KEY DATES

Dec. 31, 2019: World Health Organization learns of 'viral pneumonia' cases in Wuhan, China

Jan. 9, 2020: WHO reports Chinese authorities have determined the outbreak is caused by a novel coronavirus

Jan. 11, 2020: Chinese media report first death from the novel coronavirus

Jan. 25, 2020: The first case of COVID-19 is reported in Canada in Ontario

March 9, 2020: Canada's first COVID-19 death is reported in British Columbia

March 11, 2020: WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic

March 12, 2020: St. Catharines enacts its emergency operations centre and decides to close its facilities starting March 13

March 13, 2020: First case of COVID-19 reported in Niagara

March 16, 2020: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urges Canadian travellers to return to Canada. It's the first day of March break in Ontario.

March 17, 2020: Ontario Premier Doug Ford declares a state of emergency. The province shuts down all non-essential services

March 24, 2020: The first death is reported in Niagara. There are seven cases in the region.

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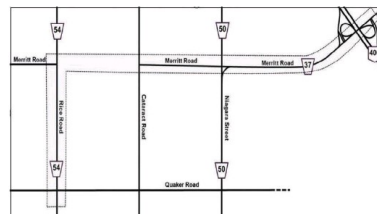
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REJECTED

continued from Page 9

to the Official Plan. This non-conformity with the Official Plan is itself sufficient reason for the tribunal to conclude that the consent should not be approved.”

While the residents of the adjoining and neighbouring properties are happy with the result of this drawn-out process, they are expressing their dismay over the apparent conflict between what the residents of the Town clearly want, supported by the Town’s own committee, and what the Planning Department continued to recommend. Neighbour Foster Zanutto, in a letter to Councillor John Wink, made available to the Voice, said, “It bothers me... that the Planning Department seems to be so out of touch with the wishes and visions of the council, the

Committee of Adjustment and its citizens, and when advised by any of these bodies that maybe they should revise their position after hearing from others, they refuse to change and in fact they ‘double down’ on their erroneous original position.”

Zanutto’s opinion was echoed by another neighbourhood resident, Ted Gallotta. “Although we should feel relief that 20 Alan did not pass, we should take this opportunity to highlight the poor direction this planning department is taking.”

Mayor Junkin downplayed any conflict between the Town and its Planning Department. “Where council has acted against a staff recommendation [and] that staff is then summoned by the developer to testify on their behalf before LPAT, this is a common occurrence.”

The Director of Planning and Development,

Barb Wiens, noted that the Planning Department cannot simply make decisions based on the desires of the Town’s citizens, since it is constrained by the restrictions imposed by Provincial, Regional, and Town of Pelham policies, bylaws, and regulations.

“Staff’s role is to provide objective professional planning opinion to the authorities making decisions on land use planning matters and in this case that was to the Committee of Adjustment initially, and then to the LPAT at the LPAT hearing, due to receiving a summons to attend the hearing. Staff’s professional opinion is based on existing planning policies and Planning Act requirements.”

Both the Mayor and Councillor Wink noted that time still remains in the 30-day appeal period, so this saga may yet turn into an epic.

SIEGEL

continued from previous page

minister recently approved construction of a huge glass manufacturing plant, much to the consternation of many local residents. And MZO’s are not subject to appeal.

MZO’s were conceived as a way of dealing with issues in remote areas without much development and few governing mechanisms. However, they are now being used more frequently to shortcut public involvement in planning decisions. This does dam-

age to the planning system described in this brief that goes to great lengths to invite public involvement.

Giverin and Conteh’s work gives a good picture of how the system should work and how residents and businesses can participate in the process. We should be vigilant to maintain this system and avoid shortcuts that speed up the decision-making process at the cost good public participation. ♦

David Siegel is Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Brock University.

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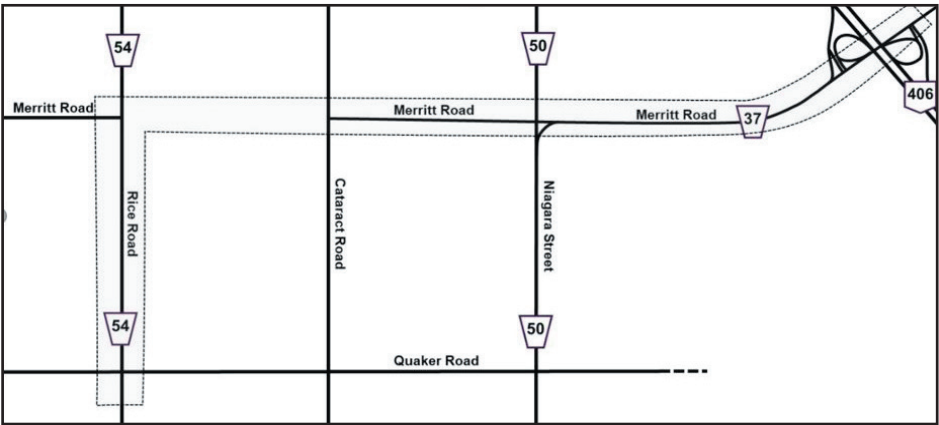
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 - **Virtual Consultation Platform:** Information materials related to this PIC will be available on Wood’s Consultation Platform on project webpage starting **March 24, 2021** and comments will be received until **April 7, 2021**. The project webpage is niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-37.

If you would like to receive future notices via email, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact one of the Study Team Members identified below:

Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng.
Manager, Transportation Planning
Niagara Region
905-980-6000 ext. 3583
maged.elmadhoon@niagararegion.ca

Jeff Suggett, M. Sc.
Consultant Project Manager
Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions
905-380-3601
jeff.suggett@woodplc.com

Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)**. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the Privacy Office at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the **Accessibility Advisory Coordinator** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

Notice first issued in the newspaper on March 11, 2021.



Appendix C:

PIC#1 Presentation Slides



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Welcome to the Online Public Information Centre #1

Municipal Class Environmental
Assessment Study for Merritt Road and
Rice Road in Pelham, Thorold and Welland

March 24, 2021

(Live Presentation 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM)



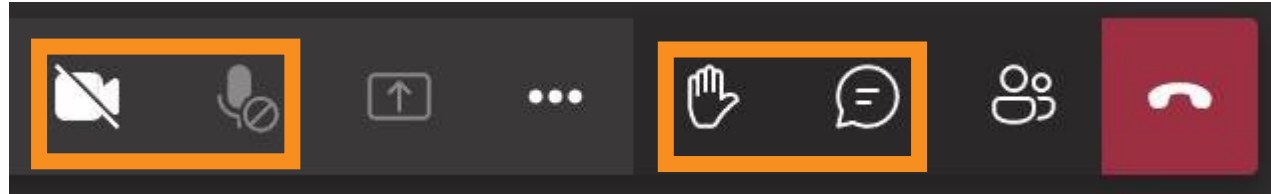
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Housekeeping Items

- When joining the online meeting, the attendees will be muted. We request you to please turn off your camera.
- There will be an opportunity at the end of the presentation to ask any questions or submit comments. Please use the chat function to type in your questions/comments or click on “Raise hand”.



- This presentation is being recorded and will be posted on the project webpage.
- In case if you would like to submit your feedback later, the presentation materials and an online comment form are available on the project webpage: <https://niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-37/default.aspx>

Presentation Outline

- Introductions
- Study Overview
- Overview of Road Segments
- Municipal Class EA Process & Study Timeline
- Provincial, Regional and Local Policies
- Class EA Phase 1 – Problem or Opportunity
- Constraints and Opportunities
- Technical Studies to be Completed
- Possible Cross-sections for the Road Segments
- How to Get Involved in this Study and Next Steps
- Questions?

Introductions

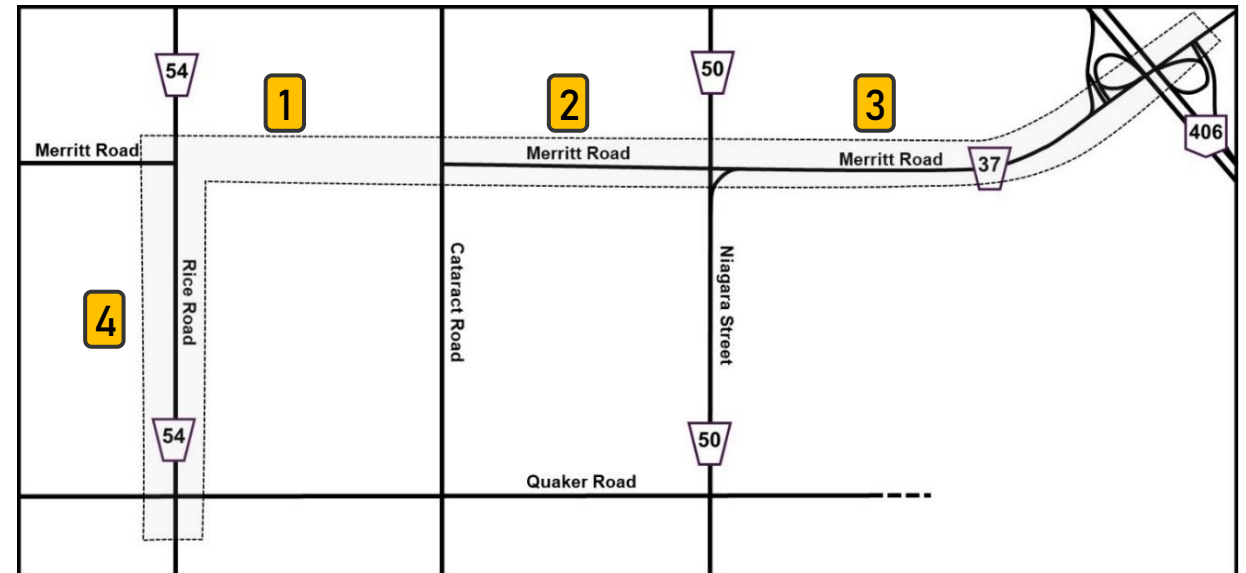
Niagara Region	Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions
Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng. Manager, Transportation Planning	Jeff Suggett, M. Sc. Project Manager
Sulaf Alkarawi Associate Director, Transportation Planning	John McGill, P.Eng., PTOE, RSP Project Advisor
	Mir Ahsan Talpur, M.Env.Sc., EP Environmental Planner

Study Overview

The Niagara Region has initiated an environmental assessment study for improvements to Merritt Road and Rice Road as a result of proposed developments in the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold and the City of Welland. The study is being carried out as a Schedule 'C' project in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process (Class EA). This study will address the requirements of Phases 1 to 4 of the Class EA process.

Building upon the recommendations of the 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan, this study will propose improvements and active transportation facilities to the following segments of Merritt Road and Rice Road:

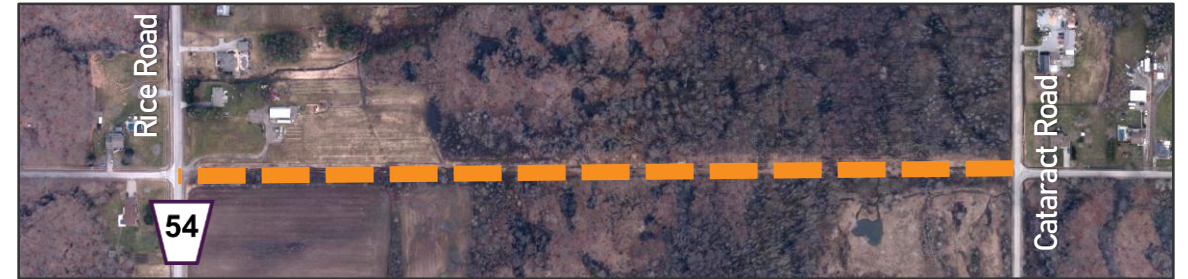
- Segment 1 – Merritt Road between Rice Road and Cataract Road
- Segment 2 – Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street
- Segment 3 – Merritt Road between Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street and Highway 406
- Segment 4 – Rice Road between Merritt Road and Quaker Road



Road Segments 1 & 2

Segment 1 – Merritt Road between Rice Road (Regional Road 54) and Cataract Road

- This segment functions as an unopened road allowance between Rice Road and Cataract Road.
- It is located within the Town of Pelham and City of Thorold and spans an approximate distance of 800m.
- It was identified for new road construction along with active transportation facilities.



Segment 2 – Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Merrittville Highway (Regional Road 50)/Niagara Street



- This segment functions as a two-lane, rural, local, undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of 50km/h.
- It is located entirely within City of Thorold and spans an approximate distance of 800m.
- It was identified for improvements along with active transportation facilities.

Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

Road Segments 3 & 4

Segment 3 – Merritt Road (Regional Road 37) between Merrittville Highway (Regional Road 50)/Niagara Street and Highway 406

- This segment functions as a two-lane, rural, arterial, undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of 60km/h.
- It is located within the City of Thorold and spans an approximate distance of 1.80km.
- This segment was identified for improvements along with active transportation facilities.



Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

Segment 4 – Rice Road (Regional Road 54) between 200m north of Merritt Road and Quaker Road

- This segment functions as a two-lane, rural, collector, undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h.
- It is located in the Town of Pelham and the City of Welland and spans an approximate distance of 1.20km.
- This segment was identified for improvements along with active transportation facilities.



Municipal Class EA Process & Timeline

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
▪ Notice of study commencement ▪ Problem or opportunity statement ▪ Public Information Centre #1	▪ Inventory natural, social and economic exiting conditions ▪ Identify and evaluate alternative solutions ▪ Identify preferred solution ▪ Public Information Centre #2	▪ Inventory natural, social and economic exiting conditions ▪ Identify and evaluate alternative design concepts for preferred solution ▪ Identify preferred design concept ▪ Public Information Centre #3	▪ Document Study process and findings in Environmental Study Report (ESR) ▪ Notice of Study Completion ▪ Place ESR on public record for a minimum of 30-day review period	▪ Proceed to the detailed design and construction of the project ▪ Monitor environmental provisions and commitments
Winter 2021	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021 / Winter 2022	TBD



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Consultation Process

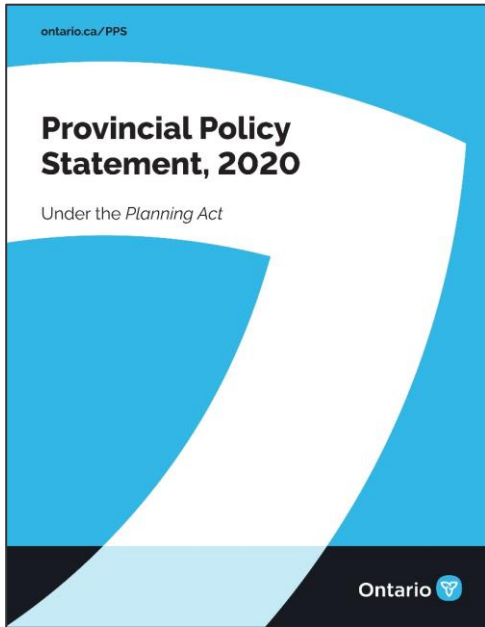
Consultation with the public is a key element of the Class EA process. Public will be invited to participate at various planned points of contact throughout this study. Given the uncertainty associated with the pandemic, most of the future consultation and communications with the public will be completed in a virtual format. In addition to the public, the following groups will be consulted throughout the study:

- Indigenous Nations
- Provincial Government Agencies (for example, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks)
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Various staff and elected officials from the Niagara Region, the Town of Pelham, and the City of Thorold and the City of Welland
- Emergency Services
- Active Transportation Committees
- Utility Companies
- Special Interest Groups (for example, agricultural society)

Points of Public Contact

Notice of Study Commencement
Notice of Public Information Centre #1
Public Information Centre #1
Notice of Public Information Centre #2
Public Information Centre #2
Notice of Public Information Centre #3
Public Information Centre #3
Notice of Study Completion
Environmental Study Report

Provincial Planning Policies



Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) provides policy direction on the matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development.



Growth Plan (2020)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) contains specific policies and directions regarding transportation infrastructure, land use planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection to be considered by municipalities in their planning activities.

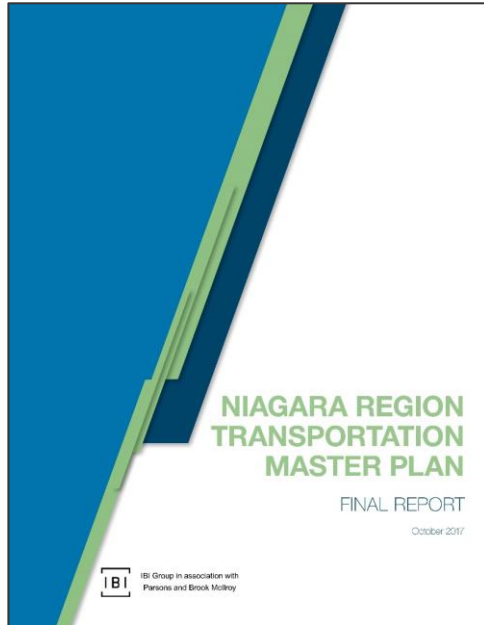
This study is consistent with the relevant policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). The study aims to propose transportation improvements while addressing/minimizing impacts on natural, cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

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Regional Planning Policies



Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (2017)

The Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (2017) is a strategic planning document that sets out an action plan to address future transportation needs through pedestrian and cycling facilities, transit, and an integrated network of roads and highways.



The Niagara Region Official Plan (2014)

The Niagara Region Official Plan (2014) contains objectives, policies and mapping that implement the Niagara Region's approach to managing growth, growing the economy, protecting the natural environment, resources and agricultural land, and providing necessary infrastructure.

The need for the proposed road improvements were identified within the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (2017). The Study is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies of the Niagara Region Official Plan (2014), as it aims to propose transportation improvements while addressing/minimizing impacts on natural, cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

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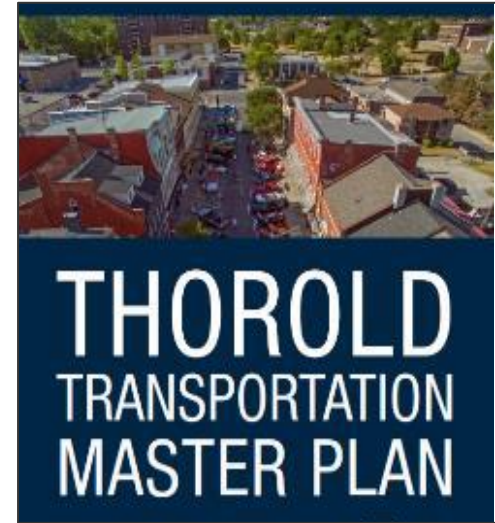
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Local Planning Policies – City of Thorold

Transportation Master Plan (2020)

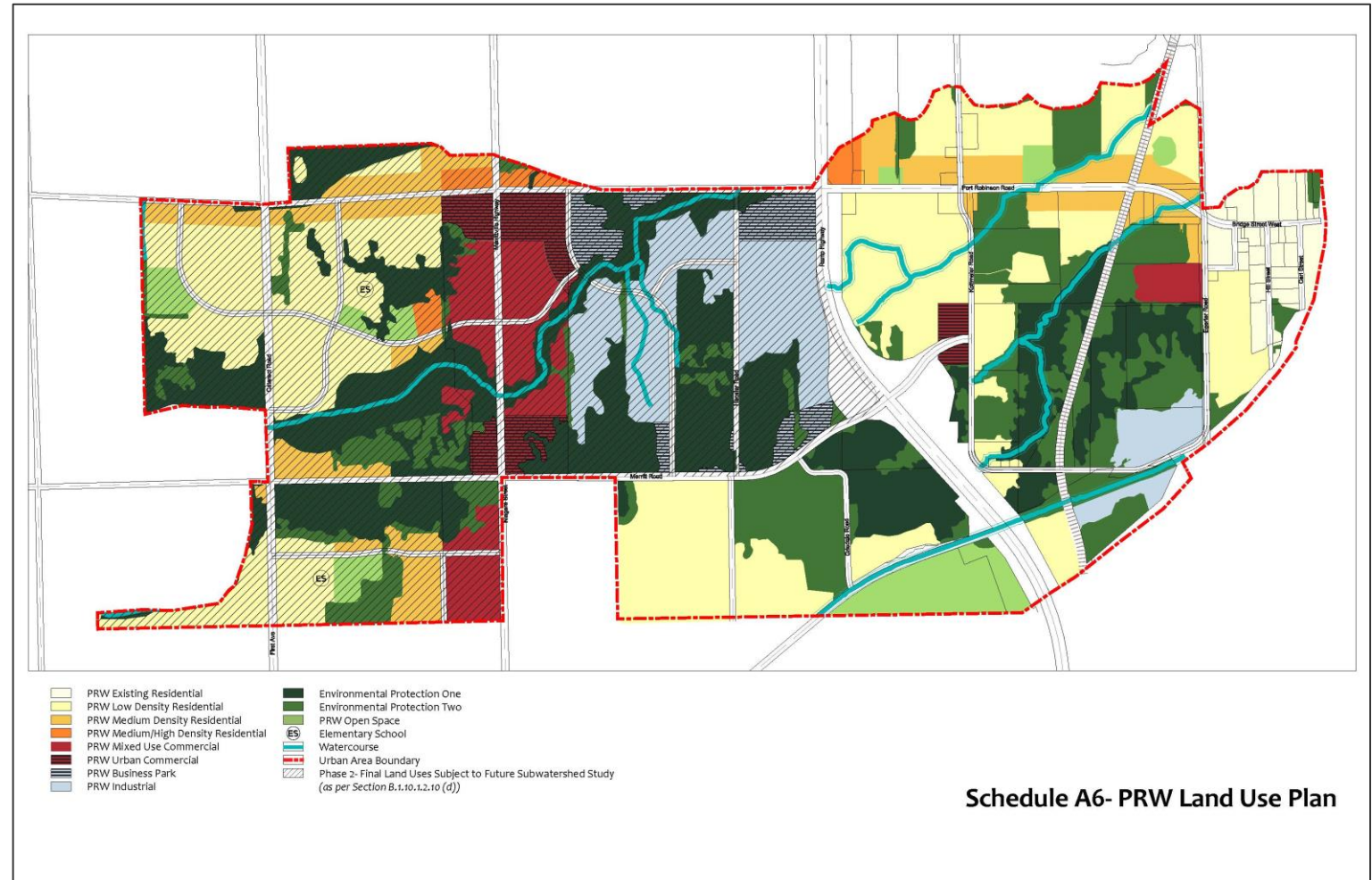
The recently completed (2020) City of Thorold Transportation Master Plan recommended that capacity improvements (widening) be undertaken on Merritt Road (to a four-lane cross section). Segment 2 (Merritt Road from Cataract Road to Merrittville Highway) is to be transferred to the Niagara Region, and the extension of Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Rice Road is to be constructed (Segment 1). A multi-use pathway is recommended along the entire length of Merritt Road within the City of Thorold (including the newly constructed section).



Local Planning Policies – City of Thorold

Port Robinson West Secondary Plan

The Port Robinson West Secondary Plan sets out the land-use and transportation structure and associated policies for the secondary plan area. This area includes lands roughly bounded by Port Robinson Road to the north, the Thorold-Welland border to the south, the Pelham-Thorold border to the west and the Welland Canal to the east. Direction will be sought from the Port Robinson West Urban Design guidelines for the proposed improvements for Segments 1, 2 and 3.

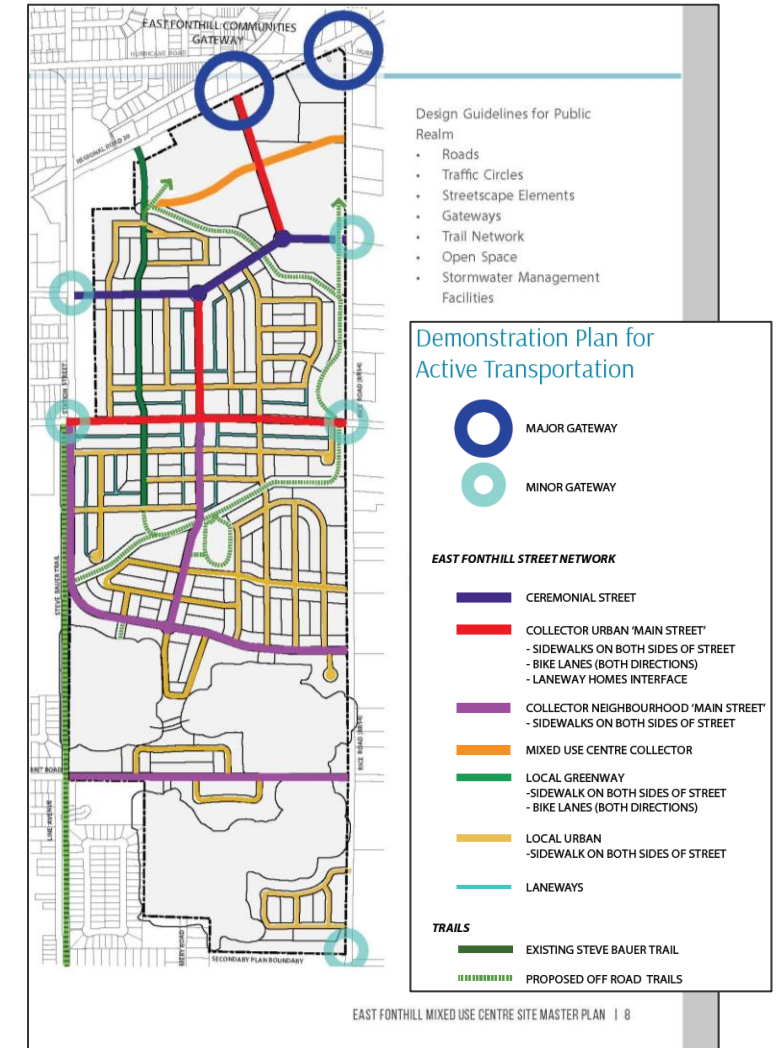


Schedule A6- PRW Land Use Plan

Local Planning Policies – Town of Pelham

East Fonthill Secondary Plan

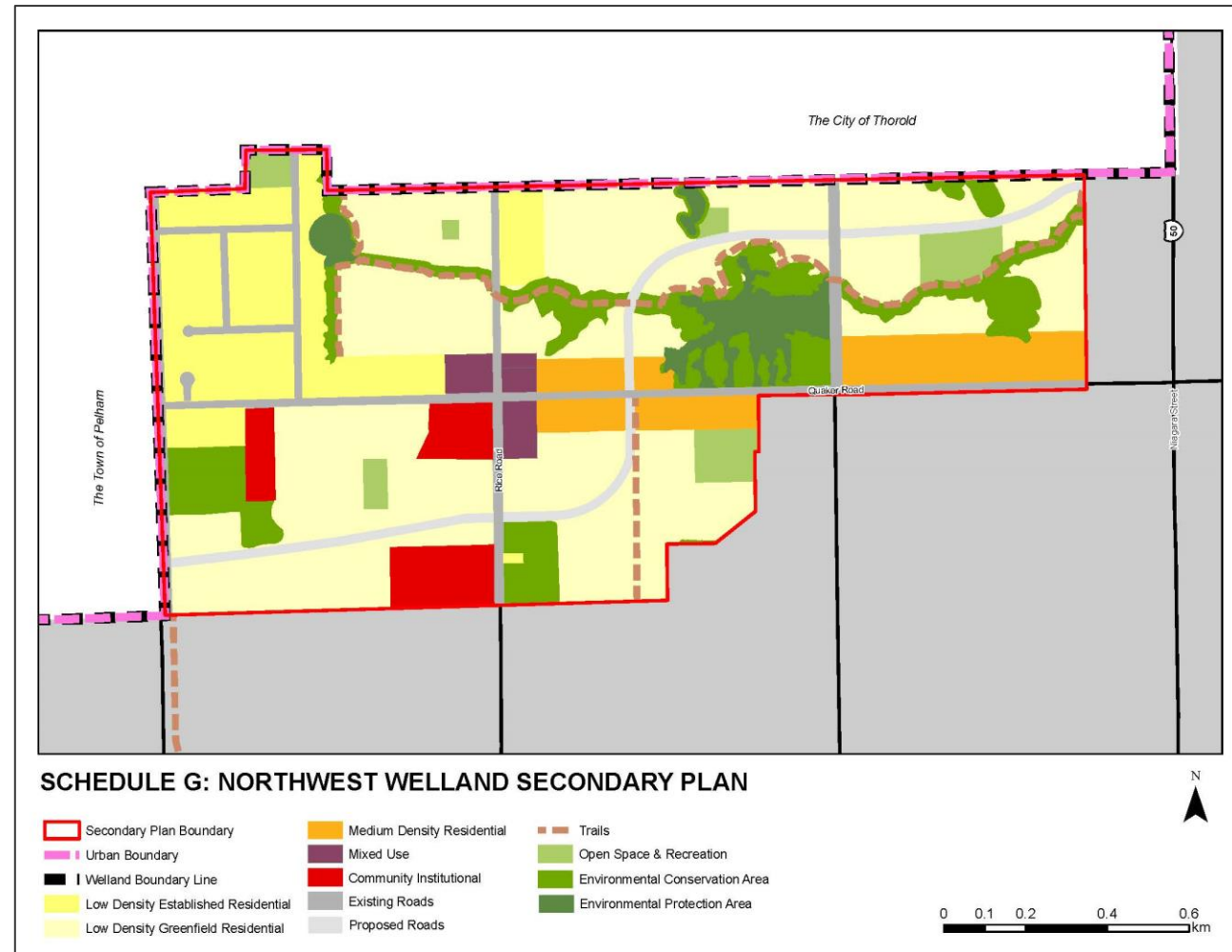
The East Fonthill Secondary Plan provides land-use and transportation framework and associated policies for the secondary plan area. This area includes lands bounded by Rice Road (Regional Road 54) to the east, Steve Bauer Trail to the west, Regional Road 20 to the north and the Pelham-Welland border to the south. Direction will be sought from East Fonthill Secondary Plan Area Urban Design Guidelines for the proposed improvements for Segment 4 – Rice Road (Regional Road 54) between Merritt Road and Quaker Road.



Local Planning Policies – City of Welland

Northwest Welland Secondary Plan

Northwest Welland Secondary Plan was recently completed, which is intended to accommodate future urban growth within the City and along a portion of Segment 4. The Northwest Welland Secondary Plan Area is generally bound by the City of Welland border with the Town of Pelham and the City of Thorold to the north, the Niagara College Welland Campus to the south, the rear lot lines of properties abutting Niagara Street to the east, and Line Avenue and Clare Avenue to the west. Once approved, this plan will propose land-use and transportation framework and associated policies for the secondary plan area.



Class EA Phase 1: Problem or Opportunity

Problem / Need Identification

The need for the proposed improvements was identified through the following documents:

- The Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan;
- The Town of Pelham's East Fonthill Secondary Plan;
- The City of Thorold's Port Robinson Secondary Plan; and
- The City of Welland's Northwest Welland Secondary Plan.

Opportunity

The Niagara Region is committed to creating a safe, integrated and environmentally sustainable network of cycling and pedestrian facilities, transit, and roads. The Niagara Region is taking this opportunity to improve Merritt Road and Rice Road in the Town of Pelham, City of Thorold and City of Welland in order to:

- Address transportation capacity issues
- Address active transportation connectivity issues
- Address Complete Street theme

Existing and Future Right-of-Way Widths

The existing and future right-of-way widths for the four road segments are identified in the table below:

Road Segment	Existing Right-of-Way Width	Future Right-of-Way Width
Segment 1: Merritt Road between Rice Road (Regional Road 54) and Cataract Road	~20m	26m ¹
Segment 2: Merritt Road between Cataract Road and Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street	~20m	-
Segment 3: Merritt Road between Merrittville Highway / Niagara Street and Highway 406	~30m	35m ²
Segment 4: Rice Road between 200m north of Merritt Road and Quaker Road	~20m	26.2m ²

¹ City of Thorold Official Plan (2016)

² Identified in Niagara Region Official Plan (2014)

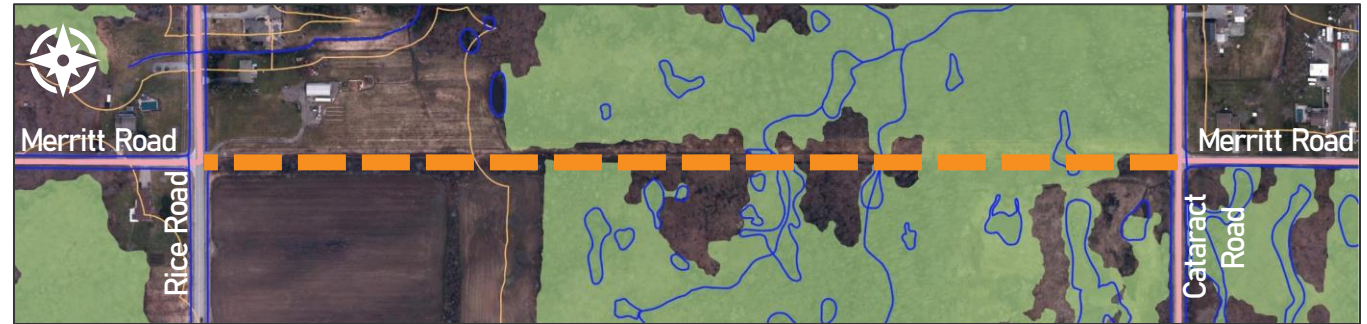
Constraints and Opportunities – Segment 1

Constraints

This unopened road allowance passes through Provincially Significant Wetland, Significant Woodland and Fish Habitat. In addition, there are low-voltage utility poles located along the north side of the road allowance.

Opportunities

In order to maintain adequate clear zone to the utility poles, there is an opportunity to provide a multi-use pathway between the utility poles and the proposed travel lanes.



- Bike Route
- Watercourse
- Regulation Wetlands
- NPCA Approximate Regulation Lands

Data Source: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

Constraints and Opportunities – Segment 2

Constraints

There are residential homes along the north side of this segment near the west end, and Provincially Significant Wetlands and Woodlands to the northeast and south. The section has narrow gravel shoulders, ditches and no active transportation facilities are provided. The existing travel lane widths are narrower than desirable for a Regional road. Trees on the south side represent a fixed object hazard.

Opportunities

There are opportunities to widen the travel lanes to meet Regional standards, provide active transportation facilities and eliminate fixed object hazards by the clearing and grubbing of trees.



- Bike Route
- Watercourse
- Regulation Wetlands
- NPCA Approximate Regulation Lands

Data Source: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

Constraints and Opportunities – Segment 3

Constraints

There are Provincially Significant Wetlands and Woodlands to the north and south of this segment. There is also a subdivision to the south (Merritt Meadows). There are limited active transportation facilities (paved shoulder for cyclists only).

Opportunities

The need to widen this section to four lanes is being investigated. There are opportunities to make the signalized intersection at the west end pedestrian friendly. As traffic volumes increase in the future, a buffer between cyclists and the adjacent travel lanes or a separate multi-use pathway will be considered.



- Bike Route
- Watercourse
- Regulation Wetlands
- NPCA Approximate Regulation Lands

Data Source: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

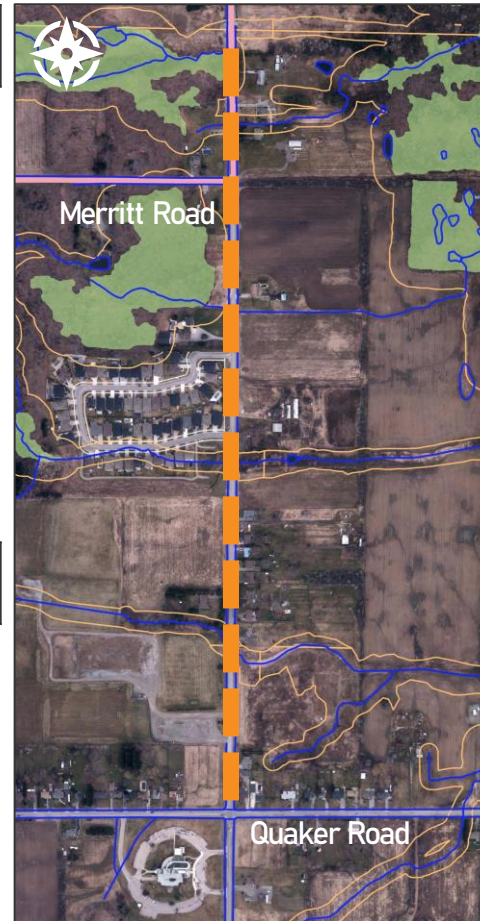
Constraints and Opportunities – Segment 4

Constraints

Lands on the east and west side of the roadway are a mixture of residential development (Rosewood Crescent subdivision), some residential homes directly fronting onto Rice Road and some vacant lands. The roadway has narrow gravel shoulders, ditches and no active transportation facilities. There are also utility poles on both sides.

Opportunities

The need to widen this section to four lanes is being investigated. There are opportunities to explore different options for active transportation (either sidewalks, bicycle lanes and/or a multi-use pathway).



- Bike Route
- Watercourse
- Regulation Wetlands
- NPCA Approximate Regulation Lands

Data Source: Niagara Peninsula
Conservation Authority
Imagery Source: ESRI Imagery

Technical Studies

Following studies will be completed as part of this Class EA Study:



A Transportation Assessment will be completed to examine existing and future transportation needs and will identify road improvements (e.g., number of lanes, alignment, etc.). An Active Transportation Plan will also be developed by applying Complete Street Design concepts to identify desirable active transportation facilities.



A Natural Environmental Assessment will be completed to understand existing natural environmental conditions within the Study Area, identify project's potential impacts on the natural environment and propose mitigation measures.



A Socio-Economic Review will be completed to identify existing land uses within the Study Area. This review will inform the evaluation of the alternatives processes.



A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment will be completed to identify any archaeological sites/areas of archaeological potential within the Study Area and propose next steps / mitigation measures.



A Cultural Heritage Assessment will be completed to identify any protected and potential built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes within the Study Area and propose mitigation measures.



A Stormwater Management Assessment will be completed to develop existing drainage conditions using hydrologic / hydraulic model and propose stormwater management measures for the proposed road improvements.



A Health Impact Assessment will be completed by the Niagara Region to identify and mitigate potential negative health impacts of the project and maximize potential positive health impacts. This assessment will complement the Class EA Study process.

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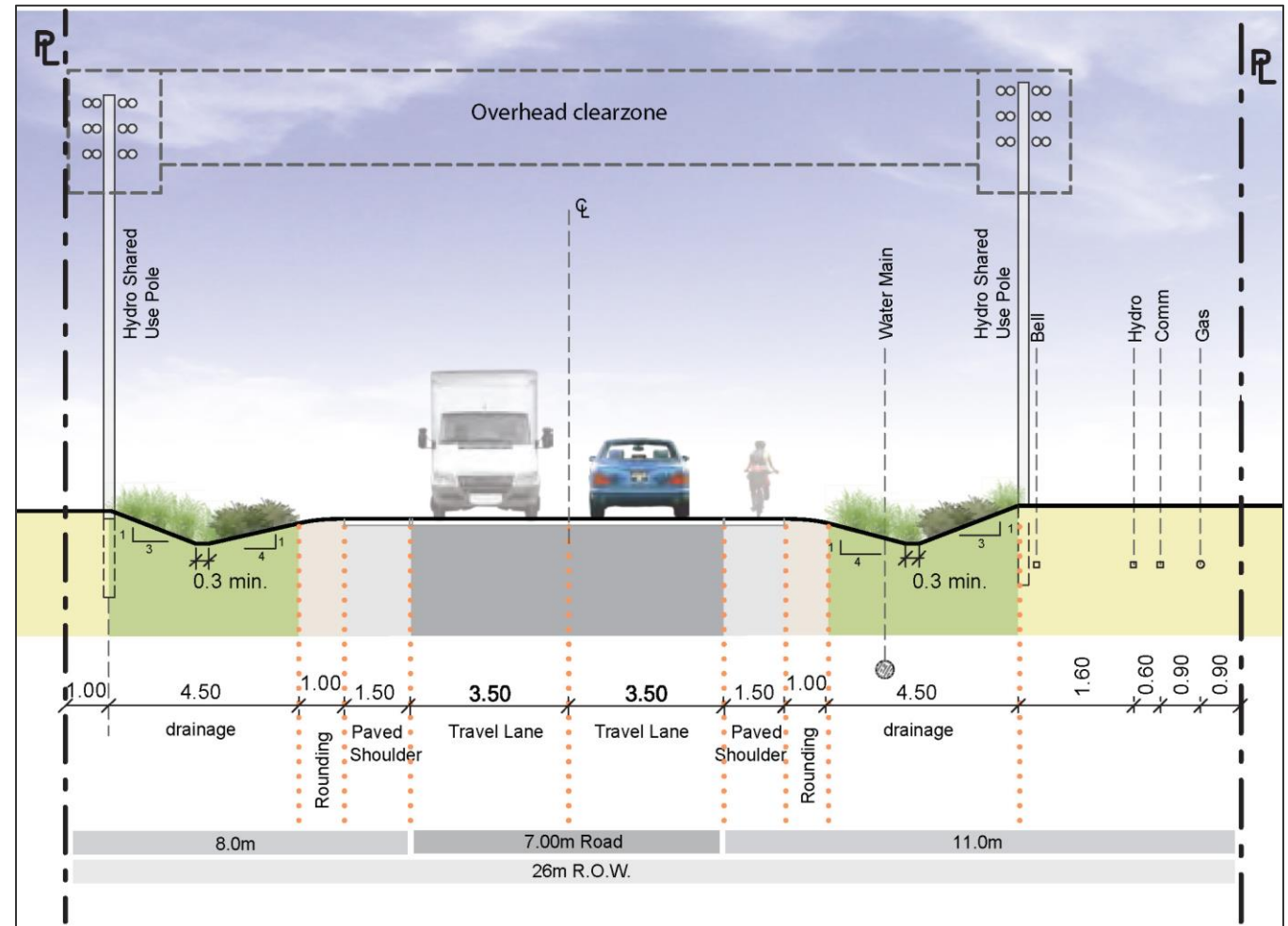
Niagara  Region

Segment 1 – Possible Cross-section

Based on the Niagara Region's Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2017) a possible cross-section for this segment would include the following rural elements with a 26.0 metre right of way width:

- Two lanes of vehicle traffic
- Paved shoulder for bicyclists on each side of roadway*
- Possible sidewalk on one side

* Guidance in a new Complete Street Design Manual (currently underway) is to separate bicycle lanes from the vehicular traffic lanes.

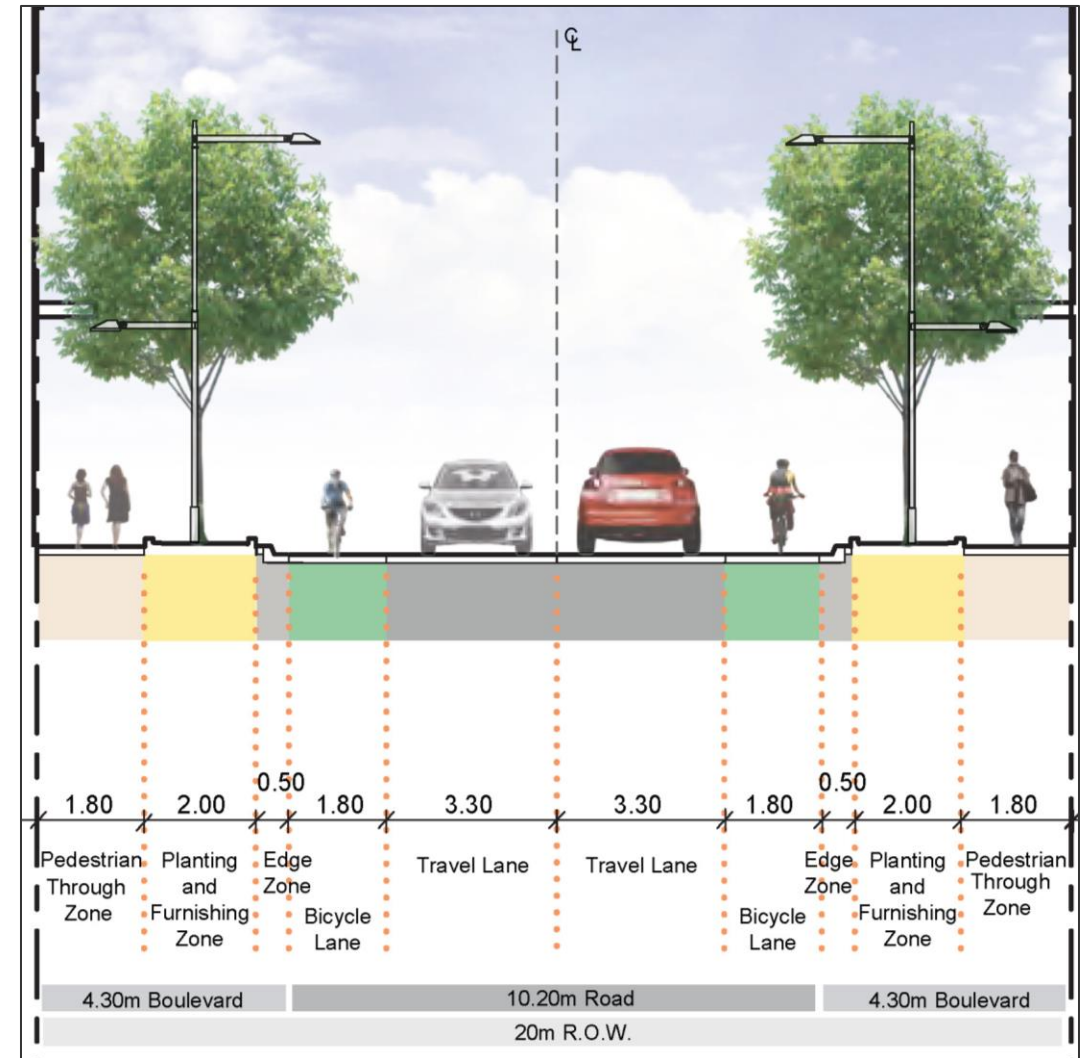


Segment 2 – Possible Cross-section

Based on the Niagara Region's Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2017) a possible cross-section for this segment would include the following Urban General (Narrow) elements with a 20.0 metre right of way width:

- Two lanes of vehicle traffic
- Bicycle lanes on each side of roadway*
- Separated pedestrian sidewalks on each side

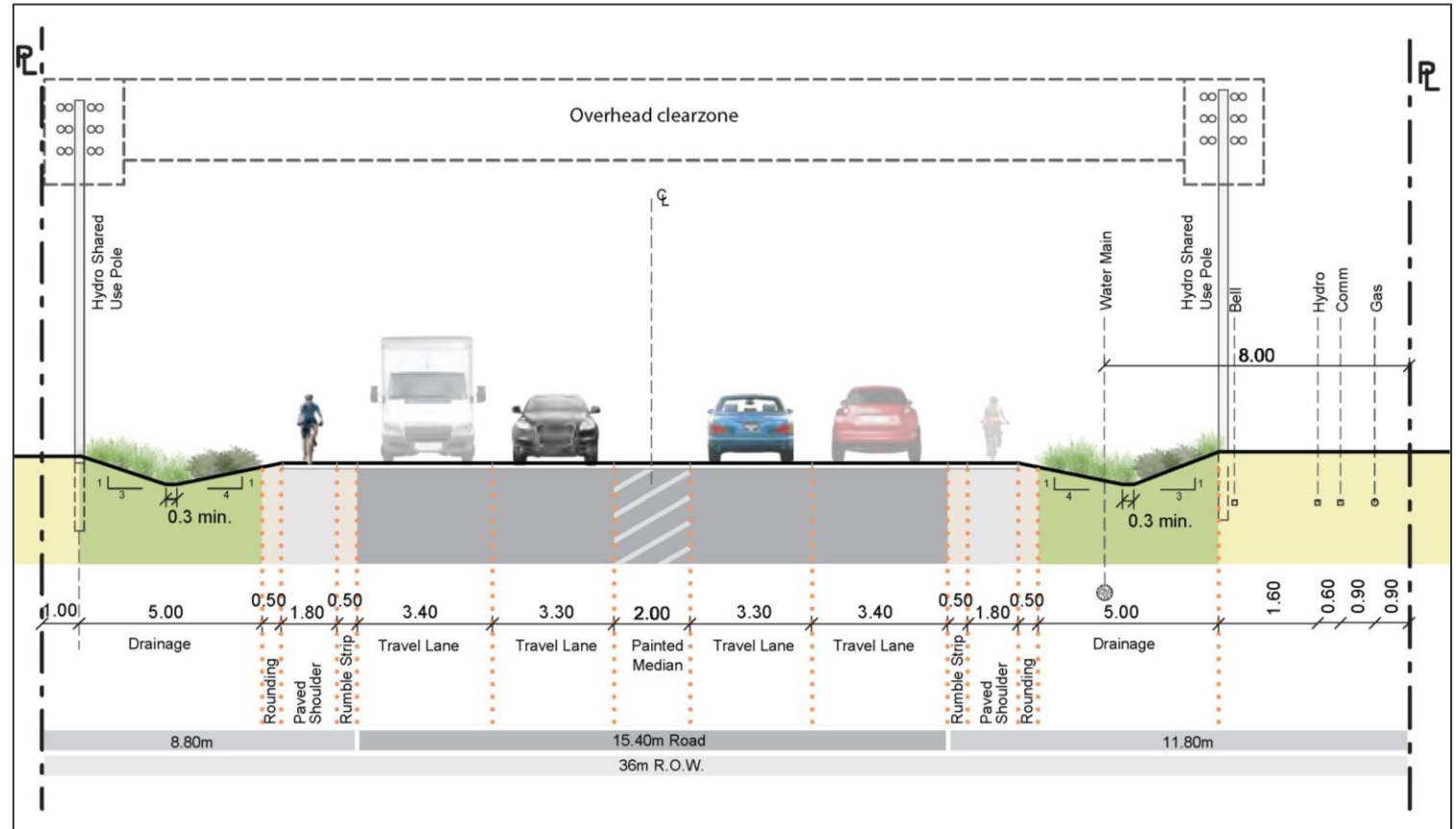
* Guidance in a new Complete Street Design Manual (currently underway) is to separate bicycle lanes from the vehicular traffic lanes.



Segment 3 – Possible Cross-section

Based on the Niagara Region's Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2017) a possible cross-section for this segment would include the following Rural elements with a 36.0 metre right of way width:

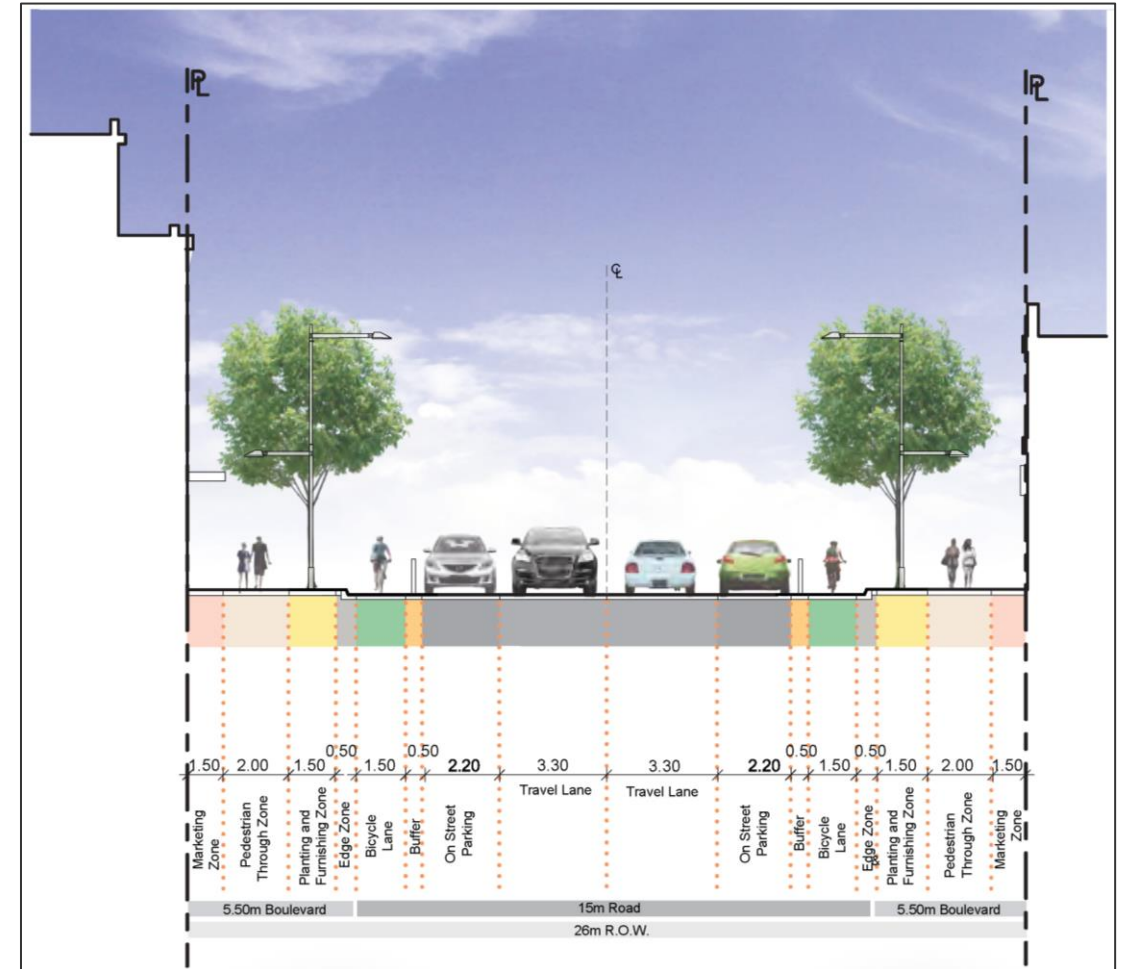
- Four lanes of vehicle traffic
- Painted median to act as barrier
- Rumble strips to separate paved shoulder from roadway
- Possible sidewalk on south side



Segment 4 – Possible Cross-section

Based on the Niagara Region's Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2017) a possible cross-section for this segment would include the following Main Street elements with a 26.0 metre right of way width:

- Four travel lanes proposed instead of two travel lanes with on-street parking
- Separated bicycle lanes on each side of roadway
- Separated sidewalks on each side of roadway



Getting involved in this study and next steps



Review presentation slides on the virtual consultation platform / project web page.



Submit any questions, comments or suggestions for consideration using the online comment form on the project webpage.



Request to be added to the Study Contact List to receive Study notices for future points of consultation.



Visit project website for updates:
<https://niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-37>



Attend future Public Information Centres

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Following the Public Information Centre (PIC), the Study Team will complete the following:



Develop a PIC Summary to document results of this PIC.



Initiate studies to collect existing condition information for natural, socio-economic and cultural environment.



Develop and evaluate alternative solutions to identify a preliminary preferred solution



Host PIC #2 to present the evaluation of alternatives process and the preliminary preferred solution



Questions?

Your feedback will be important to us. Your comments will be reviewed and considered, as the Study progresses. To submit questions/comments/suggestions, please use the online comment form available on the project webpage or contact one of the following Study Team Members:

Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng.
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Email: Jeff.Suggett@woodplc.com

Please copy: Mir Talpur, Environmental Planner
Mir.Talpur@woodplc.com

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Appendix D:

PIC #1 Comments Received

Comments about the Problem / Opportunity Statement	Comments about the constraints and/or opportunities	Preference of active transportation infrastructure	Do you have any additional comments or questions?
		Multi-use trail;	
		Sidewalk;	
The road is not needed. The roads running parallel can handle the traffic. Because of the PSWs, the land adjacent cannot be developed. The problems and opportunities identified on slide 17 are clear. I think it is also important to mention that this road segment helps to connect neighbourhoods within the West Port Robinson Secondary plan; for example it connects the neighbourhood on the east side of the 406 highway with the new neighbourhood to the south-west of the 406, as well as the homes along section 2 of Merritt Road and it will connect to the neighbourhood in Section 4 of the study.	The PSWs would be greatly compromised if this connection were built. The long-term ecological services provided by the PSWs far outweigh any benefit the road could provide. Segment 1 - Thought/question - never having walked along the unopened road segment, would there be value in having a resting place along the multi-use path to highlight some of the significant wetland features? Providing people with learning opportunities about the sensitivities of the environment encourages the future environmental behaviours we would like to see. Segment 2 - Observations of this road: the road widths is very narrow; car drivers speed down this roadway resulting in speed control measures (speed cushions); in the spring the ditches become very full with water creating a drowning hazard; the forested land to the south of the roadway often becomes quite water saturated. Comments: If possible, an urban cross section with curbs, sidewalks and/or bikelane/multiuse path would be ideal. Many people use this section of roadway (e.g. parent driving their children to school and Niagara College students) Providing appropriate and divided use lanes would be ideal. Please consider pedestrian level lighting for facial recognition as well as tree coverage for sun protection in the summer. Segment 3 - This segment has high speed traffic exiting from the 406. Other than the access to the neighbourhood on the south side of road there are few points of interest along this section which also encourages speed right up to the stop light at Woodlawn. Separated and protected bike lanes are necessary as well as pedestrian facilities. A multiuse path would be ideal. Thought should be given to people on bikes or who may be walking westward who would like to make a left into the new neighbourhood. The current west exit on from the highway is sweeping which makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross. This type of sweeping infrastructure creates a conflict zone. Consider working with the MTO to add in bike and walking facilities on the overpass. This will also help to connect the neighbourhoods on either side of the highway. Segment 4 - Along Rice Road there has been increased development. Build active transportation into the plans early to ensure connectivity. This would be an ideal location for a multiuse path. Other considerations: Through the Students on the Move research study, Niagara College students identified and photographed community requests for sidewalks along Quaker Road to the school. Although Quaker Road is not part of the EA consideration for the future connection of sidewalks and multiuse paths is important. Over time it could be anticipated at a fully connected mutliuse path system will be developed for the area.	Sidewalk; Sidewalk;Bike Lane;Multi-use trail;	The Region is working on a natural heritage system. The Region needs to show its commitment to preserving Niagara's natural features. Longer term planning is needed for the sake of future generations.
I am extremely disappointed that the region is considering the merritt rd expansion. This will undoubtedly turn merritt rd into a highway. This rd is not suitable for thru traffic all the way from South Pelham to the 406. There are no stop signs even where the Steve Bauer trail crosses Merritt. This is a residential street and many families with Children live on it. I understand that there is discussion about adding sidewalks and bike lanes but that should be done regardless. It makes me sick to think that every vacant piece of land in Niagara is being viewed as some place that should have a road running through it or a sub division built on it. Fonthill is especially becoming a place where people don't want to live. This road expansion is just more evidence that niagara loves roads and buildings, not nature and people. The fields where animals and birds live. We are running out of wild spaces and for once it would be nice if someone at the region would just leave it alone! If you care at all about the people (and wildlife) who live in this area please stop building roads and buildings and start focusing on a little conservation.			
			I am very interested in continuing to get any hard copy and electronic notifications moving forward. It appears that my property will be quite impacted by the future road improvement due to my property being located at the southwest corner of Rice Road and Merritt which means my property will be impacted not only by any road improvement along Rice Road but also by any improvement that will be apparently required at the intersection. There is also a bit of history affecting my property resulting from a previous Niagara Region project (Rice Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer) in the past which I would like to inform you of. A component of that project the Town on Pelham had coordinated approval from the Niagara Region to allow all sanitary laterals be provided to the existing Pelham residence on the west side of Rice Road (the east side of Rice Road is under the jurisdiction of City of Thorold and is outside the urban area boundary). There was an error in the design drawings that missed a sanitary lateral to service my house. I was notified by the Region that it was an error because the design engineer wrongfully assumed the house fronted on Merritt Road because the driveway entrance is off the side road but the house faces Rice Road. I was assured at the time that there will be another opportunity to have this lateral installed which appears to be now under the construction phase of this project while these road improvements are made. I just wanted to bring this up to make the project team aware that I will be strongly pursuing this now and request the Region to install the lateral that was admiringly missed during the region's trunk sanitary sewer construction.
			I was the fellow concerned about access to Merritt Meadows from Merritt Rd.Currently,access is great going east to west,as there is a turn lane.Coming from the west,the "turn lane" is non existent and drivers behind the turning vehicle are looking(without success) to get past.This is a head on collision waiting to occur. With the proposed 4 lanes,and a painted separation strip,west bound vehicles turning into Eastman Gateway will need to cross the separation strip plus 2 lanes.Speed limit is posted at 60,but is not adhered nor enforced. This intersection will be safer with traffic lights.

Comments about the Problem / Opportunity Statement	Comments about the constraints and/or opportunities	Preference of active transportation infrastructure	Do you have any additional comments or questions?
Here we go again - Niagara's transportation department proposing a roadway in contradiction to the Region's supposed attempts to protect the environment going forward – another case of pave is vs save it, aptly named “Moving Roads Forward.” In what amounts to a local mini Hwy 413m the proposed extension of Merritt Rd. between Rice Rd. (Regional Rd 54) and Cataract Rd. runs straight through Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) – in order to save a minute or two driving time vs either of the two existing parallel roadways (Port Robinson Rd. and Quaker Rd). Spare the cost of the environmental assessment/impact studies. Common sense tells us, paving a 26m swath severing a PSW will cause profound, irreparable, and permanent destruction. This same Regional transportation department has also been doggedly pushing for years (repeated and ongoing attempts, in spite of public and municipal objection) to build a ‘parallel’ road through Irish Grove in Grimsby – the largest remaining patch of Carolinian forest between the escarpment and Lake Ontario. Neither road is necessary, both are a disgraceful waste of natural resources and tax dollars. How is it that Niagara's transportation planning could be so out of touch with the Region's current ongoing plans (and massive public input) to create a Natural Heritage System (NHS), combat climate change, and realize science-based benefits of PSWs? The argument that this is “building upon the recommendations of the 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan” is no excuse for proceeding. It denies lessons learned since then: When we know better, we should do better. It also ignores the ‘consider the source’ factor: That plan was masterminded during a proven-corrupt period in Niagara politics. “The Study is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies of the Niagara Region Official Plan (2014)” – but that plan did not even include a Natural Heritage System (NHS). So it “aims to propose transportation improvements while addressing/minimizing impacts...” on natural resources not even identified back then, and not fully addressed even yet, in terms of protection within the (still-in-the-works) Official Plan's NHS component. PSWs (plus Significant Woodland and Fish Habitat within Segment 1) should be protected vs listed as “Constraints” in “Moving Roads Forward.” I submit (7) questions out of earnest concern – with considerable thought and sincere hope Segment 1 of this project will NOT move forward.			1. Could “No Segment 1” be an option? 2. Who OWNS the land through which Segment 1 would be constructed? 3. Why not reverse the order of Segments 1, 2 and 3? (Undertake improvements of Merritt from 406 to Cataract Rd. first – then determine if the Cataract-Rice Rd. extension is justified.) 4. What improvements could be dropped (and costs saved) on Segment 4 (Rice Rd.), if Segment 1 were not built – i.e. with no 4-way intersection at Merritt? 5. A 2-lane road design (only) is shown for Segment 1, “located within the Town of Pelham and City of Thorold.” BUT “The recently completed (2020) City of Thorold Transportation Master Plan recommended that capacity improvements (widening) be undertaken on Merritt Road (to a four-lane cross section).” So is a 4-lane being considered, just not shown...yet? 6. Segment 1 mentions “Possible sidewalk on one side” – through a PSW – why? Is residential development being anticipated...if destroyed PSW is down-rated at a later date? 7. “A Natural Environmental Assessment will...identify project’s potential impacts on the natural environment and propose mitigation measures.” What mitigation measures do you have in mind to propose for a roadway + multi-use path + (possible) sidewalk through a PSW? [Biodiversity Offsetting of PSWs is supposedly not being included in Niagara’s NHS.]
			I was going through my notes from the Public meeting of 24 Mar 2021. I was wondering if we had any data for traffic volumes for the project including the Pelham portion of Merritt. The assumption is being commonly made that the project will greatly reduce traffic on Highway 20. I am not convinced of that. I think the whole area grow. Do you think that the Region could take on our portion of Merritt? It is pretty narrow.
			In the virtual presentation, staff and the consultant identified segment 1 of the study as Provincially Significant Wetland and Significant Woodlands. My key concerns are as follows: 1. This area has been identified as PSW and significant woodlands. The PSW and Significant Woodlands designations should be a full stop and there should be no further money allotted to consideration of degradation of the site. Running a main road through such an area will have both immediate and long term, cumulative impacts to the system. 2. The optics for the Region, which is currently developing a Natural Heritage Strategy, are as bad as it gets. The Region’s credibility is at risk if its ok for the Region to pave over wetlands yet citizens are told not to disturb them. “Do as I say, not as I do” does not go over well with anyone and there should be a level playing field. This road is not special, so justifications of the sort which was provided in the open house fall flat. 3. The road is identified as being considered to address ‘future needs’ and is not currently needed. Port Robinson Road and Quaker Road both run parallel to this road allowance and are in close proximity so addition of this segment of road is not needed. I use Port Robinson multiple times a day and that road is nowhere near capacity. It would also be useful to understand why this idea is being brought forward now. While understanding that this type of initiative can have a long planning timeline one also has to consider whether the current provincial approach has a part to play in the timing. 4. During the Q&A session it was revealed that the Town of Pelham plans on full build out in this section once the road is in. Cumulative degradation of the natural systems is inevitable once this area is opened up, it will be significant, and it won't be possible to mitigate. 5. Though I understand that this is a preliminary study, cost estimates have not been provided which would assist in populating a cost/benefit analysis. They should be. Even in preliminary stages there can be an educated guess as to how much it would cost to install a raised 2 lane road, with associated bike lanes and sidewalks, with multiple culverts and/or bridges, over a 800m distance and that information should be made available. Don't forget the gray infrastructure costs, sewer and water. Oh, and some estimates of annual operating costs would be useful as well. We have enough roads, we don't have enough wetlands and forests. Segment 1 of the study should not be considered to be developed as a road and should be dropped from the study. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

