

PERIMETER ROAD

One of the critical elements of the Setting Sail study is the completion of a Needs Assessment for the previously-proposed Perimeter Road

The concept of a Perimeter Road has been studied extensively.

Earlier planning studies called this proposed major arterial road the Industrial Perimeter Road. It was discussed in various planning documents since the 1960's, including redevelopment plans for the North End Neighbourhoods (1963), the Hamilton Area Transportation Study (1963), the Hamilton Transportation Strategy Study (1973), the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Official Plan (1982), and the City of Hamilton Official Plan (1982). Some property, including south of Strachan Street, was acquired in the 1960's through the Neighbourhood Improvement Program.

In 1978, an Industrial Perimeter Road Feasibility Study recommended and Regional Council endorsed a basic route for the Perimeter Road from Burlington Street to Highway 403. The Hamilton Perimeter Road was again studied quite intensively during the period 1987-1990. The option adopted by Council in 1990, in principle, (see accompanying diagram) included an initial four-lane (ultimate six-lane) Burlington Street with centre median or turning lanes between Sherman Avenue and Victoria Avenue, an interchange with a combined Victoria/Wellington, a four-lane controlled access roadway at track level along the north side of the North-Northwest Spur, grade separations with roadways that already cross the CN tracks, an interchange with Bay Street, a crossing to the south side of the Stuart Street Yard, through the former Route Canada property (now owned by the City of Hamilton), under York Boulevard in a cut-and-cover tunnel, to a new interchange with Highway 403 south of the Desjardins Canal.

The Regional Transportation Review (1996) concluded that the Perimeter Road connecting to Hwy 403 was not justified within the planning horizon (2020), but that a first phase from Wellington/Victoria to Bay or Queen, at an estimated cost of \$50 million, should be considered further to divert truck and through traffic around the downtown.

The Downtown Transportation Master Plan (2001) concluded that construction of a first phase of the Perimeter Road to Bay Street not be considered further, as it would simply redistribute traffic from east-west streets (York and Cannon) to north-south streets (Bay and Queen), with very little overall benefit.



The Perimeter Road option adopted by Council in 1990, in principle

Preliminary findings of the Needs Assessment indicate there is no demonstrated need for a Perimeter Road.

The population and employment growth in Hamilton over the next 20 years is projected to be concentrated in developing areas of the City, while growth in established lower city areas, by comparison, will be moderate in terms of employment and less significant in terms of population. Employment in the Bayfront area has declined substantially over the past 20 to 30 years, and future growth will simply return employment levels in the lower City to something approaching past levels.

Transportation modeling based on current travel and transit trends indicates that the existing road network in 2021 will be adequate to handle demand. Current levels of service are very good, and traffic growth to 2021 is not expected to use up all of the spare capacity in the system, even in the most constrained areas that are west of the downtown. When the Red Hill Creek Expressway is added to the network, the comfort margin becomes even greater. Significant additional road capacity in the downtown and west to Hwy 403 is simply not warranted.

Traffic generated by some combinations of land use options in the study area may result in some roadways in the study area becoming quite busy. If there are deficiencies identified that require improvements, those improvements could take many forms, including intersection improvements, traffic calming, improved transit, and even selected widenings on some road links. The analysis to date does not conclude that a Perimeter Road is required to support any of the options or combination of options.

Before the Needs Assessment is completed, other factors will be considered.

The Needs Assessment for the Hamilton Perimeter Road will be completed in conjunction with the other elements of the study. Factors that will come to bear include the following:

- ▶ a connection to Hwy 403 may be possible in some form, but will be constrained by non-conventional interchange design, future MTO widening plans, proximity of adjacent interchanges (1.8 km to King St., 1.9 km to Hwy 6, beside York Blvd ramps), impact of future Mid-Peninsula highway options, and impact on Cootes Paradise and the Waterfront Trail
 - ▶ because of its potential location, access to/from a Perimeter Road between Hwy 403 and Wellington/Victoria would be very limited in number and location, and Bay Street may be one of the only options
 - ▶ modeling indicates that east-west routes west of the downtown (west of Queen) are more constrained than those in and east of the downtown, and a first phase of a Perimeter Road would not address the situation
- Other planning considerations must also be considered:
- ▶ environmental assessment, design and construction of a Perimeter Road would take 10 years or more, assuming that all approvals are received, and in the interim, lands that could be used immediately for other purposes will be frozen
 - ▶ the estimated cost of the Hamilton Perimeter Road is approximately \$350 million
 - ▶ future travel patterns can be influenced by policy and targeted incentives/disincentives to use certain routes for example, an overt policy of not improving east-west capacity in and west of the downtown coupled with existing or improved connections to the east (Burlington/Industrial to QEW/RHCE) can shape demand

Recap:

The analysis to date concludes that a Perimeter Road is not required to support any of the options or combination of options, nor is it needed to accommodate growth in the lower city generally. This preliminary conclusion will be confirmed through completion of the comprehensive, integrated EA master plan process for the study area.



Hamilton West Harbour Planning Area Study

Perimeter Road

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