

# DEPUTATION REQUEST

REGIONAL COUNCIL

OCTOBER 21, 2021

**Subject:** YR Municipal Comprehensive Review / Bradford Bypass

**Spokesperson:** Bill Foster

**Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable):**

Forbid Roads Over Green Spaces

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**Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:**

Discuss October 18th letter sent to East Gwillimbury Council and copied to York Region Councillors concerning East Gwillimbury's request to develop 100% of Whitebelt and how this was impacted by the proposed Bradford Bypass. Request to hold off on setting any planning targets until ability to safely service area is assured and impact of Bradford Bypass finally determined.

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

1-877-464-9675 x. 71320

york.ca



FORBID ROADS OVER GREEN SPACES  
20989 YONGE ST.  
EAST GWILLIMBURY ON  
L9N 0J6



October 18, 2021

East Gwillimbury Mayor and Council  
Via Clerks tlajevardi@eastgwillimbury.ca

VIA EMAIL

Copy: to York Region Council

Dear Mayor Hackson and East Gwillimbury Councillors,

Re: York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review and Bradford Bypass

We are writing to request council:

1. Rescind its request to York Region to allocate 100% of East Gwillimbury's whitebelt lands as lands for development over the next 30 years.
2. Rescind its apparent unconditional support for the Bradford Bypass, and request:
  - Ontario reject the proposed Bradford Bypass and conduct a new, full Environmental Assessment for a proposed controlled access highway connecting highways 400 with 404 for the purpose of assisting with the distribution of traffic volumes on these highways in an environmentally responsible manner.
  - The Corridors for consideration include, those corridors considered in the December 1997, Bradford Bypass Environmental Assessment Study Report.<sup>1</sup>
3. Advise both York Region and the Province of Ontario that East Gwillimbury supports The City of Barrie and the Townships of Brock and Georgina in voicing their concerns about the potentially serious harm the Bradford Bypass will cause to Lake Simcoe from salt and other toxic runoffs.
4. Provide its support for The Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition's request to The Hon. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries to protect the Lower Landing as a Cultural Heritage Landscape of Provincial Significance.

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<sup>1</sup> TAB 1 - Exhibit E 5 - Bradford Bypass Environmental Study Report December 1997 and assessment scoring chart.

## **1. York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review**

We understand that York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review is a formal process to allocate the province's 2051 mandated growth targets amongst York Region's member municipalities. We further understand that regional council has scheduled October 21 for a special meeting of Regional Council to make a final decision about these allocations. A major, highly contentious, component of these decisions is the degree of growth that is being imposed upon northern York Region by the province and how this will be accommodated. Specifically, the issue is; where will this growth occur? Will growth occur within existing built communities or on properties not currently zoned for development known as whitebelt lands? A combination of solutions are being considered. The amount of growth within existing built communities is referred to as intensification while growth on whitebelt lands is frequently referred to as sprawl.

We believe the Province is counting on induced demand, caused by the proposed Bradford Bypass, to justify imposing unsustainable population growth targets on northern York Region. These excessive growth targets have forced East Gwillimbury to look to virtually all of its whitebelt property to accommodate this new population. This type of extensive sprawl development flies in the face of today's climate supportive planning principles and just as importantly, the express desires of East Gwillimbury's residents.

Competent planners now realize new highways only produce sprawl and that sprawl is unsustainable. Today's planners are now calling for community-centric, transit supportive, development that has the least impact on climate change. East Gwillimbury's Official Plan, which is the product of extensive public consultation, follows these community centered principles.

York Region has managed an extensive public consultation program for their Municipal Comprehensive Review. Their findings are consistent with those of East Gwillimbury in the preparation of its 2010 Official Plan for 2031. We are not aware of East Gwillimbury having undertaken any public consultation for this Comprehensive Municipal Review or their proposal to develop 100% of the town's whitebelt properties. This proposal appears to fly in the face of known public opinion. The following is an excerpt from York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review website:

## What we heard: <sup>2</sup>

- Transit is the top Regional service that residents indicate they will rely on most in the future and York Region should continue to invest in public transit
- Residents want compact, walkable communities that offer employment opportunities, community facilities, local services, stores and places for social connection
- Affordable housing is one of the most important components of building complete communities, however, many of us are facing housing market challenges
- Residents want our communities to reduce emissions and are aware of the impacts of climate change in York Region
- Residents want to protect our forests, parks, trails, agricultural lands and green spaces
- Residents want a variety of Employment Opportunities within their community

## Planning Process is fatally flawed

It is our contention that not only do the residents of East Gwillimbury and Northern York Region not want this level of population growth, they also do not want the sprawl this growth will cause. There are already very serious concerns being stated by a number of very knowledgeable environmental organizations such as Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition and Environmental Defence Fund about the inability for the south Lake Simcoe Basin to safely absorb anything close to the level of population being imposed on us by the province.

Lake Simcoe is a true gem within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. There is even an Act to protect it! The Lake Simcoe Protection Act. Regrettably, our current provincial government, continues to show absolutely no appreciation for the seriously deteriorating state of this provincial gem. The province's recent MZO approving the Innisfil Orbit Community with a potential population in excess of 100,000 is a glaring example of this develop at all costs attitude. This is now being challenged in court by The Williams Treaties First Nations. The recent passage of the Bradford Bypass Exemption Regulation, which grants full approval for the Bradford Bypass without regard to its potentially devastating impact on Lake Simcoe due to salt and other toxic highway runoffs, is another egregious example of the current government's total disregard for our environment.

Given the current government's disrespect for the fragility of the South Lake Simcoe Basin and ecosystem, it is fundamentally wrong for East Gwillimbury and York Region to support this atrocious behaviour by unquestioningly accepting and planning for this level of unsustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review

[https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/yorkregion/yr/municipalcomprehensivereview!/ut/p/z1/jZBNT4QwEEB\\_iweOS2e7HzTeGoxbwA0mxoi9mLlppQm0TWEh-uttVi8myjq3mbyZeTOlowpxlyatxKitEV3IX\\_n-LaOHjLEc8nJLUgBQ0hwnBEiRoJcLAH8EBcT\\_078A8Oxx-bUF4QLsj-IRIe7E2K60aSyq-rPRJ-1Ed7K987KVZtCT9HLScg5O\\_DIV4-2erVPIgZUEsvvkcxH2BrS3RWgwN\\_AsrjqBP31Y2rqDQmGXjZBwsdnH8rtOLrhNolI5nmOlbWqk3HwjeC3ltYOI6p-ksj1z9XHQ\\_OUrXj9PtObT8\\_oXKo!/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#.YWdEB9rMJPY](https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/yorkregion/yr/municipalcomprehensivereview!/ut/p/z1/jZBNT4QwEEB_iweOS2e7HzTeGoxbwA0mxoi9mLlppQm0TWEh-uttVi8myjq3mbyZeTOlowpxlyatxKitEV3IX_n-LaOHjLEc8nJLUgBQ0hwnBEiRoJcLAH8EBcT_078A8Oxx-bUF4QLsj-IRIe7E2K60aSyq-rPRJ-1Ed7K987KVZtCT9HLScg5O_DIV4-2erVPIgZUEsvvkcxH2BrS3RWgwN_AsrjqBP31Y2rqDQmGXjZBwsdnH8rtOLrhNolI5nmOlbWqk3HwjeC3ltYOI6p-ksj1z9XHQ_OUrXj9PtObT8_oXKo!/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#.YWdEB9rMJPY)

This growth target allocation problem is further exasperated by the lack of environmentally acceptable waste water servicing capacity for this area.

Until the sewage issues are properly resolved, it is pointless to plan for future growth in this area. What is really needed is to go back to first principles and rather than accept that all this growth is inevitable, start seriously looking at how to manage projected growth within our region's capacity to absorb it.

Contrary to what the province might think, the South Lake Simcoe Watershed is not an unlimited resource for sprawl. It is a very special resource with finite capabilities to support population intensive growth. The fact that the province is pressing forward with the Bradford Bypass in its current corridor is disgraceful! It shows a complete lack of regard for the health of this precious lake. Experts predict that salt and other toxic discharges, will essentially kill the lake within as little as 38 years<sup>3</sup> and likely much sooner if the Bradford Bypass is built. Imagine, our children swimming in a salt water lake with no fish but other strange organisms, perhaps even within our own lifetimes! We must not let this happen!

How, in good conscience, can anyone, especially an elected representative of the residents of this region, possibly plan for extensive growth in this watershed when you don't even know how or when we will safely be able to provide sanitary sewage for these residents? This also raises the possibility of inadequate supplies of potable water!

We urge you to be responsible stewards for the South Lake Simcoe Basin by rejecting the Province's recklessly imposed growth targets.

## **2. Bradford Bypass Implications**

The Ford government has been lying to all of you and us since coming into power. Contrary to their repeated statements, this highway is not needed in this environmentally sensitive location and will not solve Bradford's traffic problems.

The public and apparently impacted local and regional governments, believe this highway will solve the following long standing transportation problems:

- Traffic congestion in Bradford at the intersection of Hwy 88 and Hwy 11<sup>4</sup>
- Out-of-the-way-travel between locations east and west of the Holland River north of Queensville Sideroad / Hwy 88 and south of Cooks Bay

In their EA approved 1997 EA Study Report, MTO clearly state these traffic problems are not the province's responsibilities but rather local responsibilities<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> TAB 2 - Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition –July 5 Letter to East Gwillimbury Council

<sup>4</sup> NOTE: the names of many of the highways listed in this letter have since been changed as a result of the downloading of responsibility for them to local / regional governments. We are using the historic names for these highways to coincide with their names when these reports were published.

<sup>5</sup> ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL - BRADFORD BYPASS \ HIGHWAY 400 TO HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY - SEPTEMBER, 1994

- “the appropriate municipal government, not the Province is responsible for intra-municipal transportation”.
- “More than just the proposed Bradford Bypass would probably be required to address area traffic problems - a combination of measures may be needed”.
- “The current study will only deal with those elements of the total solution which fall under the MTO’s proponentcy or mandate”.
- Proponent reserves the right to seek approval for only selected facilities and to set aside other facilities to be studied in detail at a later time or by another proponent.”
- “The opportunity to relieve congestion and its effects, both now and in the future, is dependent on there being a viable alternative(s) which, on balance, has less impact on the environment.”

As explained in significant detail in our Bait and Switch Report,<sup>6</sup> the government has been lying to all of you and us since coming into power in June 2018. Contrary to their repeated statements, this extremely expensive highway is not needed in this environmentally sensitive location. It will not solve our out-of-the-way-travel problems nor will it significantly reduce Bradford’s traffic congestion.

However, if this highway is not built in this northern location, it will dramatically reduce the growth pressures expected for Bradford and East Gwillimbury thus permitting these communities to develop in a much more orderly fashion in accordance with their resident’s clearly expressed desire for community centered, transit supportive growth.

Additional information about the Bradford Bypass can be found at:

TAB 3

### **3. Support the City of Barrie and the Townships of Brock and Georgina**

TAB 4

The City of Barrie is acting properly by requesting an impact assessment of the Bradford Bypass on Lake Simcoe and consideration of possible alternative routes (or solutions) for this highway. To comply with the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008, (LSPA), MTO must prove the need for this highway in this area is so compelling that it justifies the impact it will have on Lake Simcoe. To date, all MTO has stated about the need is that it will reduce travel time between highways 400 and 404 by up to 35 minutes.<sup>7</sup> A similar highway between Newmarket and Aurora will provide similar time savings.

Simply providing reports concerning highway discharges and proposed mitigation measures over the entire length of the highway does not satisfy the requirements of the LSPA. The pertinent question is: post mitigation, how much toxic discharge will enter the lake and what impact will that have on the health of the lake? The second part of

<https://frogs.ca/wp-content/uploads/shared-files/Bradford-Bypass-Bait-Switch-with-Critical-Update-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://frogs.ca/wp-content/uploads/shared-files/Bradford-Bypass-Bait-Switch-with-Critical-Update-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://thepointer.com/article/2021-07-02/we-can-t-keep-doing-this-pc-government-speeds-ahead-with-bradford-bypass-advocates-say-process-lacks-proper-scrutiny>

Barrie's question is: do we really need a controlled access highway to solve our travel problems in this immediate area? Will regional / municipal roads solve the problem(s) or if a controlled access highway is really needed, does it need to be this close to the lake?

Georgina Township has taken a different tack in addressing their concerns about this highway. The basis of their motion is to ensure that the government not pass the proposed exemption regulation to short circuit the class EA study currently underway, does not undertake any "early construction" and does not eliminate the public's appeal rights concerning this project. [The province passed the exemption regulation on October 1, 2021].

#### **4. Support the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition's request to protect the Lower Landing as a Cultural Heritage Landscape of Provincial Significance.**

On July 27, 2021 The Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition made a formal request to The Honorable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries to use her influence to cause MTO to conduct an archaeological assessment of the privately owned, residential property located at 20866 Yonge Street, East Gwillimbury. The basis for this request is the historical information indicating this is the location of the Historic Lower Landing. A summary of key historical attributes of the Lower Landing are provided in the Appendix to the Coalition's letter. TAB 5

Once you agree that the Bradford Bypass's EA approval is now "spent" and a controlled access highway is no longer required in this area, we hope you will see your way to supporting this request for historical designation of the Lower Landing submitted by The Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition.

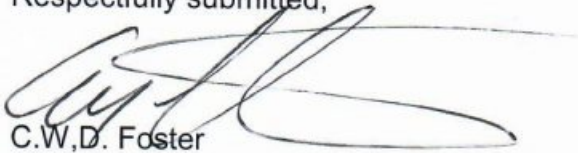
#### **Requests:**

We request the Town of East Gwillimbury:

- Withdraw its request to utilize 100 percent of its whitebelt lands for development over the ensuing 30 year planning cycle.
- Advise York Region and the Province that the Town of East Gwillimbury will not plan for further growth until it is satisfied this growth can be safely accommodated by the South Lake Simcoe watershed ecosystem and that environmentally responsible waste water services have been properly approved and are in process of being implemented.
- Formally voice its objection to the Province of Ontario concerning the proposed Bradford Bypass in its currently approved corridor, formally request a new full Environmental Assessment for a corridor south of Newmarket and share your actions with all other Lake Simcoe Watershed governments.
- Take whatever steps are necessary to have alternative routes, other than a controlled access highway, studied by York Region and Simcoe County for the following traffic problems:

- Out-of-the-way-travel between locations east and west of the Holland River north of Queensville Sideroad / Hwy 88 and south of Cooks Bay
- Traffic congestion in Bradford at the intersection of Hwy 88 and Hwy 11
- Advise the Hon. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries that you Support the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition's request to protect the Lower Landing as a Cultural Heritage Landscape of Provincial Significance.

Respectfully submitted,

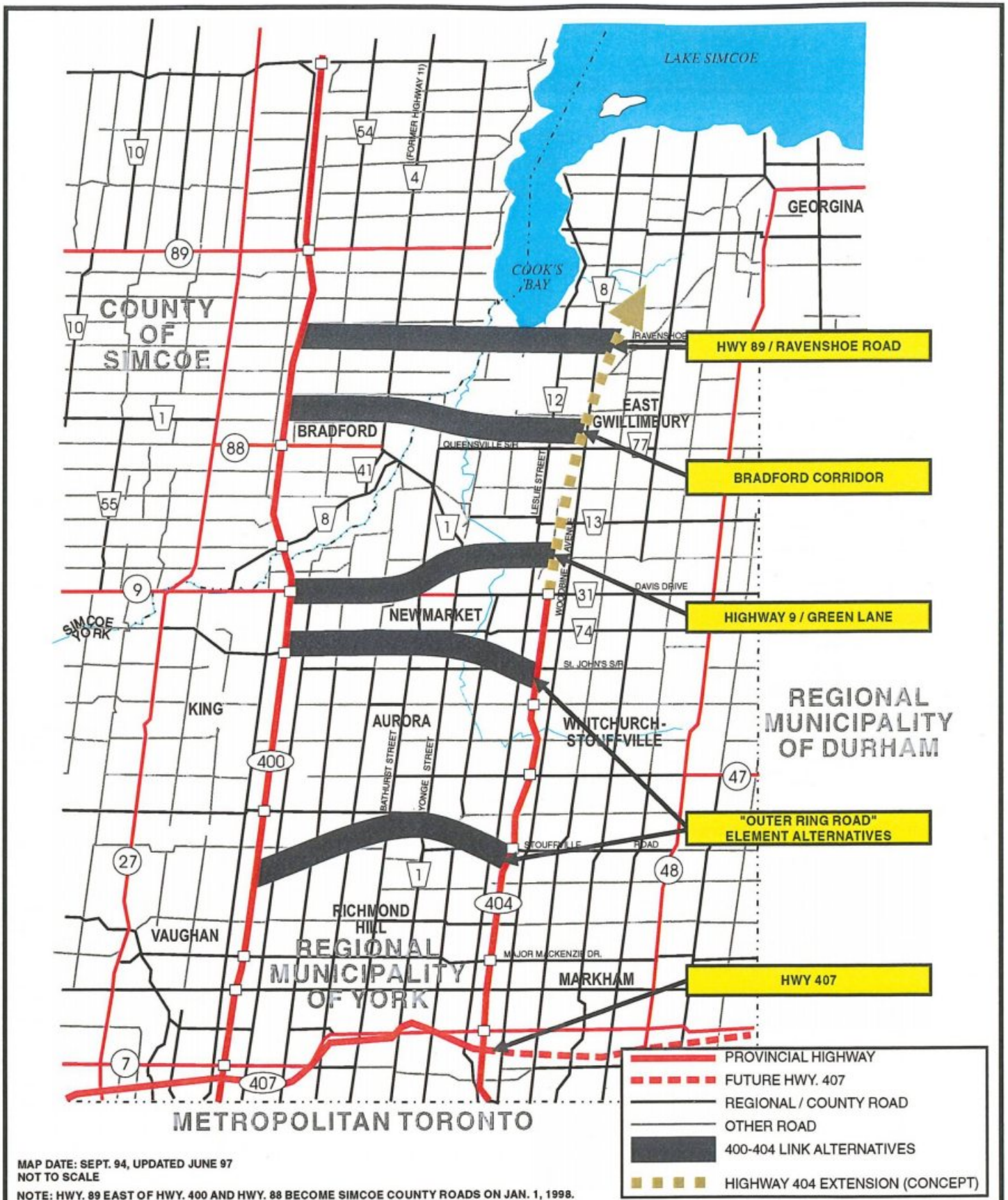


C.W.D. Foster

On behalf of  
Forbid Roads over Green Spaces

Enc.





**HIGHWAY 400 TO HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION LINK  
 (BRADFORD BYPASS) ROUTE LOCATION  
 AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY**

**CORRIDORS**

**EXHIBIT  
 E-5**



FACTOR / CRITERION		RATING				Better	Worse	Better	Worse
		SOUTH OAK RIDGES	AURORA / NEWMARKET	HIGHWAY 9 - GREEN LANE	BRADFORD				
1. TRANSPORTATION									
1.1	Traffic Operating Speed	●	●	●	●				X
1.2	Traffic Volume	●	●	●	●	X			X
1.3	Traffic Operations	●	●	●	●				X
1.4	Safety	●	●	●	●				
1.5	Efficiency	●	●	●	●			X	
1.6	Network Aspects	●	●	●	●		X		X
1.7	Financial	●	●	●	●				X
1.8	Construction	●	●	●	●				
1.9	Staging	●	●	●	●	X			
2. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT									
2.1	Fisheries and Aquatic Habitat	●	●	●	●		X	X	
2.2	Wildlife	●	●	●	●	X			
2.3	Vegetation	●	●	●	●	X			
2.4	Wetlands	●	●	●	●	X			X
2.5	Groundwater	●	●	●	●	X		X	
2.6	Surface Water	●	●	●	●	X			
2.7	Greenways and Open Space Linkages	●	●	●	●		X		
2.8	Soil	●	●	●	●	X			
						8	3	3	6

FACTOR / CRITERION		RATING			
		SOUTH OAK RIDGES	AURORA / NEWMARKET	HIGHWAY 9 - GREEN LANE	BRADFORD
3. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT					
3.1	Aesthetics	●	●	●	●
3.2	Highway and Construction Noise	●	●	●	●
3.3	Community / Recreation	●	●	●	●
4. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT					
4.1	Agriculture	●	●	●	●
4.2	Commercial / Industrial	●	●	●	●
4.3	Special Land Use Strategies	●	●	●	●
4.4	Property Waste and Contamination	●	●	●	●
4.5	Aggregates	●	●	●	●
5. CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT					
5.1	Archaeology	●	●	●	●
5.2	Historical	●	●	●	●
6. APPLIED ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS					
6.1	Stormwater Management	●	●	●	●
6.2	Erosion and Sedimentation Control	●	●	●	●
6.3	Sustainable Development	●	●	●	●

Good / Most PreferredFairPoor / Least Preferred

HIGHWAY 400 TO HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION LINK  
(BRADFORD BYPASS) ROUTE LOCATION  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE  
FREEWAY CORRIDORS

EXHIBIT  
3-12

The red 'x's reflect subsequently discovered issues - archaeological site on Lot 118 and Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

East Gwillimbury Council  
Via Clerks [tlajevardi@eastgwillimbury.ca](mailto:tlajevardi@eastgwillimbury.ca)

Rescue Lake Simcoe Charitable Foundation  
120 Primeau Dr.  
Aurora, ON  
L4G 6Z4



## Regarding the Bradford Bypass and letter from Barrie

Dear Mayor Hackson and East Gwillimbury Council,

July 5, 2021

It is our understanding that all Lake Simcoe municipalities have received a letter from the City of Barrie that reflects that Council's position on the Bradford Bypass. We urged Barrie Councillors to pass such a motion as Barrie Council has a clear understanding of the importance of the health of Lake Simcoe for the viability of their waterfront area, among other things. Though Innisfil Council could not come to an agreement about a motion, were stalemated and did not pass a resolution, we were pleased that Innisfil Council did not "strongly support" the Bradford Bypass. We appreciate these Council actions.

Now that all Lake Simcoe area municipalities have received correspondence on this item from Barrie, we would like to support other Councils in passing similar motions to signal to the province that their Bradford Bypass EA proposal is inadequate to protect the health of Lake Simcoe and our delicate climate.

Indeed, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) wants the provincial government to examine alternatives, like public transit. OPSE CEO, Sandro Perruzza, acknowledged "the project could create jobs for engineers, but said the profession also has a duty to protect the public and the environment. .... Before the project should proceed, an updated environment assessment (should) be done by qualified professional engineers."<sup>1</sup>

Ontario's Auditor General also has reservations about the province's Environmental Assessment system. In a letter to 413 activist Jennie Leforestier, the Auditor General says

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/06/10/news/ontario-engineers-raise-red-flags-about-bradford-bypass>

that 81% of her office's recommended actions for the EA process following an audit of the program in 2016 are still outstanding.<sup>2</sup>

It will be increasingly difficult to maintain clean water with the impacts of climate change and invasive species. So we all have to work harder, and be far more careful with what we have today. To that end, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP) was supported unanimously by MPPs at Queen's Park in 2008 because people of all political stripes want clean water. The LSPP lays out a path to recovery, but the lake's recovery will be undermined by the Bradford Bypass and uncoordinated urban / suburban growth.

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan objectives undermined by the Bradford Bypass:

- Achieve protection of wetlands
- Achieve a greater proportion of natural vegetative cover in the watershed
- Restore natural areas or features
- Achieve increased ecological health based on the status of indicator species and maintenance of natural biodiversity

We do not think it is appropriate or responsible for a government to fast-track an ancient highway plan that makes a mockery of the effort to save Lake Simcoe in an astounding number of ways. There is no evidence that the objectives of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan can be achieved with the Bradford Bypass in place.

A recent letter from Environment Minister Jeff Yurek to our organizations claims that "a previous EA process has been completed and the effects are well understood". We disagree with this statement. I quote from the letter written by our lawyer Laura Bowman, at Ecojustice, to Federal Minister Wilkinson in March of 2021:

The EA for this project was completed 23 years ago. It concluded that the project would cause adverse effects to fish habitat including severe stormwater and groundwater impacts. The environmental assessment did not evaluate the impacts on species at risk, migratory birds or climate change. This study has not been updated.

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk, dated May 18, 2021, to Jennie Leforestier regarding EAs and provincial highway plans: *"In 2016, my Office published a value-for-money audit report on the province's environmental assessment process. The report included 12 recommendations, consisting of 21 actions, to address our audit findings. Recommendations in this report were intended to help achieve the objectives of the Environmental Assessment Act, which was designed to ensure the protection, conservation and wise use of the environment prior to proceeding with activities that could harm the environment. As part of our normal process, we conduct a follow-up audit after two years to determine the status of implementation of recommendations. We continue to follow-up on recommendations every year after the standard two-year follow-up until every recommendation is either fully implemented or no longer applicable. As of March 31, 2020, 17 of the 21 recommended actions, or 81%, were still outstanding. We will continue to follow-up on these recommendations and publicly report the implementation rates as part of our Annual Report."*

It did not consider cumulative effects, climate change, or detail the impacts on natural heritage, migratory birds, fisheries, First Nations or discuss air pollution. The 1997 EA was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act in 2002. The 2002 Notice of Approval conditions required upgraded studies on archaeological resources, stormwater management, groundwater protection plan, noise, and compliance monitoring. Pursuant to the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act the EA required 5-year updates through the streamlined, self-approved, class assessment process. However, the plans for the highway were put on hold in the mid-2000s. As a result, no 5-year updates were completed.

On July 8, 2020 the Ontario Government proposed to exempt the Bradford Bypass from completion of any environmental assessment updates, and to exempt the project from all existing conditions of approval including those mentioned above for stormwater management and groundwater protection. The project is proposed to be exempted from further environmental assessment studies before construction begins on early works, such as bridges and water crossings.

The 1997 EA also rejected, without any scientific basis, mitigation measures and impact studies recommended by experts such as the Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources for addressing loss of forest cover and wetlands and impacts from stormwater.<sup>3</sup>

To be perfectly clear, on the Environmental Registry of Ontario, the Province is still considering an exemption to the EA Act for the Bradford Bypass<sup>4</sup> which would mean they would not do many of the activities listed on their project website.<sup>5</sup>

There are currently no mitigation measures for Bradford Bypass that have been demonstrated to protect and restore the health of Lake Simcoe. Take salt, for instance. Lake Simcoe is on a trajectory to reach the chronic guideline level of 120 mg/L in 38 years. It has recently come to light that the building of highway 404 has increased salt pollution in the Maskinonge River<sup>6</sup>. Before the 404, 12% of samples of river water quality tests exceeded the provincial acceptable chloride levels; post 404 74% of samples exceeded the acceptable chloride level. We believe there are little to no remediation techniques for this impact of highways. Building the Bradford Bypass as proposed would contribute to this problem in

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<sup>3</sup> Letter to Minister Wildonson, February 2021 [https://rescuelakesimcoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210203\\_Bradford\\_Bypass\\_EA\\_request.pdf](https://rescuelakesimcoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210203_Bradford_Bypass_EA_request.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-1883>: Proposal to exempt various Ministry of Transportation projects from the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bradfordbypass.ca/ea-process/> MTO project site.

<sup>6</sup> Presentation to Friends of the Maskinonge by LSRCA staff, on Zoom, June 2, 2021.

other sub-watersheds such as the East and West Holland River, as well as in the Maskinonge watershed.

As made clear by the statements above, the impacts to Lake Simcoe are not well studied or clear. If the province intends to fast track this highway project, then most of the communications driven by Minister Mulroney, and the MTO project team are disingenuous. It is vitally important for municipal governments to demand that the province come clean about which studies will be done, when, and what can and cannot be changed based on those studies. We submit that it is entirely irresponsible to build bridge supports before environmental impact studies have been completed, before impacts to Lake Simcoe are known, understood, or are going to be mitigated. For us this fight is far from over.

**We request a new full provincial individual EA, a complete update to the 1997 EA, including an examination of alternatives to a highway, and examination of need. We also would like a transparent review by the Federal government of endangered species and fisheries impacts.**

Finally, the ultimate irony. In the recent introduction of Bill 306,<sup>7</sup> *York Region Wastewater Act*, Minister Yurek was quoted saying to Queen's Park Today, "Protecting Ontario's water resources, now and in the future, is a top priority for our government — but any changes to that system need to be based on the most current and accurate information. That is why the province is proposing legislation that would put a hold on the current application from York Region to expand its sewage servicing capacity using infrastructure going to Lake Simcoe and establishing an Expert Advisory Panel to provide us with recommendations on a path forward." This standard should apply equally to a wastewater treatment plant and a highway. We would appreciate it if this attitude were also apparent and applied to development planning.

Lake Simcoe is seriously stressed by growth, sewage, inadequate natural heritage protection, salt, invasive species, and climate change. The solutions to these problems are cross-jurisdictional and require new ways of making decisions that affect multiple Ministries and municipalities. We have asked the province repeatedly to bring together the Lake Simcoe watershed municipalities and First Nations to discuss in a transparent way, how we can save Lake Simcoe together, while sharing the benefits that a healthy Lake and watershed bring to our area municipalities. We hope you will do the same.

We are asking your council to support Barrie's motion in your municipality and notify MTO and MOECP that you would like the impacts to Lake Simcoe fully studied before any early works or construction can begin.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-306>

Sincerely,

Claire Malcolmson

Executive Director, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

[www.rescuelakesimcoe.org](http://www.rescuelakesimcoe.org)

Margaret Prophet

Executive Director, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition

<https://simcoecountygreenbelt.ca/>



## Bradford Bypass Issues

At council's July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, the following resolution was passed:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the correspondence from C. Malcolmson, Executive Director, Rescue Lake Simcoe Charitable Foundation and M. Prophet, Executive Director, Simcoe Country Greenbelt Coalition, dated July 5, 2021, entitled "Bradford Bypass<sup>1</sup> and letter from Barrie"<sup>2</sup>, be received; and

THAT the correspondence be referred back to staff to be a subject item for a future Council meeting.

## The Ford Government's Bait & Switch Scam

The truth is that these "local responsibility" problems were never intended to be addressed by the Bradford Bypass! In its, 1994 Bradford Bypass Environmental Assessment Study Proposal,<sup>3</sup> MTO clearly sets out very different "Problems" for this highway to solve:

- **Traffic Problems** - termination of provincial highways at lower-capacity municipal roadways (e.g. Highway 9 at Davis Drive).
- **Road Discontinuities** - Inefficient, out-of-the-way travel .... barrier to east-west travel formed by the lack of a crossing of the Holland River north of Highway 11 at Bradford.

The Traffic Problems set out for the Bradford Bypass to solve no longer exist as a consequence of other provincial actions. The Road Discontinuities problem is not solved by the Bradford Bypass. This is a local responsibility. As a result, there is no longer any legitimate necessity to build this Controlled Access Highway anywhere near this highly environmentally sensitive area. If the Bradford Bypass is not built, the projected growth figures for northern York Region will drop significantly due to the removal of this highway's induced demand. If addressed locally, the above noted traffic problems will not attract long distance travel thus the local solutions will achieve their objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> TAB A

<sup>2</sup> TAB B2

<sup>3</sup> ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL - BRADFORD BYPASS \ HIGHWAY 400 TO HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY - SEPTEMBER, 1994  
<https://frogs.ca/wp-content/uploads/shared-files/Bradford-Bypass-Bait-Switch-with-Critical-Update-FINAL.pdf>



This highway, if still needed, will require a totally new Environmental Assessment Study which relies on current factual information. Because the Road Discontinuities problem is now a Regional responsibility, the **Problem** for this new Environmental Assessment Study would now simply be:

**To create a controlled access highway linage between highways 400 and 404 in an environmentally responsible manner.**

While the initial study area should be similar to the one utilized for the Bradford Bypass, (TAB 1) the selected corridor for detailed study will probably best be somewhere between Newmarket and Aurora.

As MTO is not prepared to solve the ongoing out-of-the-way travel problem by connecting Hwy 89 to Ravenshoe Road, even though Hwy 89 is still their jurisdiction, the appropriate regional government(s) should do so employing the Regional Road network and a bridge over the Holland River immediately south of Cooks Bay. This new roadway will likely address the congestion in Bradford. If Bradford's congestion remains, then Queensville Sideroad should be connected with Bradford's 8<sup>th</sup> Line via Bathurst and Hochreiter Road. This will require a regional road bridge over the West Branch of the Holland River. (This type of regional road routing is similar to linking Highways 404 and 400 using Green Lane and Hwy 9 via Bathurst St.). These suggested routes are set out in

TAB 6

## **Conclusion**

Given that the problem addressed by the Bradford Bypass, for which EA approval was granted, no longer exists, this EA approval is now spent. There is no longer any justification for building a controlled access highway in this environmentally sensitive corridor. The above noted out-of-the-way-travel, and congestion problems are now regional or municipal responsibilities which, in any event, would not have been resolved by this controlled access highway.

There are now three Lake Simcoe waterfront councils that have passed resolutions concerning the conduct of the Bradford Bypass Class Environmental Assessment and the potential impact of this highway on Lake Simcoe.

On May 31, 2021, Barrie's City Council passed the following motion:

**PROPOSED BRADFORD BY-PASS**

1. That, in accordance with the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the City of Barrie requests that the Government of Ontario conduct a comprehensive impact assessment on Lake Simcoe and those vulnerable watersheds and inflows into Lake Simcoe and identify considerations for alternate routes.
2. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Provincial Minister of Transportation, Provincial Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, all local MPPs and municipalities along the Lake Simcoe watershed along with a request for support.

Brock Council supported Barrie's resolution on July 19 2021<sup>1</sup>

On August 11, 2021, Georgina Council passed the following resolution:<sup>2</sup>

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Georgina hereby makes the following statements and requests:

1. That the Council of the Town of Georgina continues to support the need for the Bradford Bypass;
2. That the Council of the Town of Georgina requests the Province of Ontario completes all of the above required studies and assessments as laid out above and as per the notice of approval under the Environmental Assessment Act in 2002;
3. That the Council of the Town of Georgina requests that the Government of Ontario commits to publicly releasing all studies and assessments;

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting can be viewed at: <https://pub-townshipofbrock.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=ea33e194-cee3-47d4-883e-f11e3e59867b&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=38&Tab=attachments>

<sup>2</sup> This meeting can be viewed at: <https://pub-georgina.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=6acf313b-1c7d-48b9-a482-a2301351972d&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=43&Tab=attachments>

4. That the Council of the Town of Georgina requests that the Government of Ontario remove the exemption authority to not comply with the conditions listed above as per the approval under the Environmental Assessment Act;
5. That the Council of the Town of Georgina requests that the Government of Ontario commit to involving the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority for voluntary project review as permitted by the Conservation Authorities Act;
6. That a copy of this resolution be sent to all Lake Simcoe Region members of Provincial Parliament and the Premier of Ontario.



# Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition

36 Hillview Crescent  
Midhurst, ON L9X 1N4

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Lisa MacLeod  
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries  
6th Floor  
438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1N3

Email c: The Honorable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation  
The Honorable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Kevin Finnerty, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries  
Debbie Jewell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Heritage, Tourism and Culture Division  
Beth Hanna, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Heritage Trust

Re: The Lower Landing  
20866 Yonge Street, East Gwillimbury, Ont.  
Archaeological Potential and Significant Cultural Heritage Landscape

Minister MacLeod,

Please accept this as a formal request for you to exercise the influence of your ministry to prevail upon the Ministry of Transportation (MOT) to conduct an archaeological assessment of the property at 20866 Yonge Street, East Gwillimbury, Ont.

The property is located on the eastern shore of the Holland River East Branch at Lot 118 Concession 1 WYS, East Gwillimbury. The entire eastern shore in the area of Lot 118 is recognised for its cultural heritage significance to Indigenous peoples and for its association with the Euro-Canadian colonial exploration and settling of what became Upper Canada via the historical site of the Lower Landing.

As the Minister may be aware, the Province of Ontario has undertaken plans towards the Bradford Bypass, a proposed 16.2-kilometre long freeway connecting Highway 400 and Highway 404 in the Regional Municipality of York and County of Simcoe. The proposed route crosses the shores of the Holland River East Branch at Lot 118 Concession 1 WYS, East Gwillimbury.

Recognising that the 2002 Approved EA Right-of-Way of the Bradford Bypass would impact the registered archaeological site BaGv-42 East Holland River on the property of 20938 Yonge Street, the northern parcel of Lot 118, two proposed Refinement Alternatives cross the river's

eastern shore further south, the southern parcel of Lot 118. This is the privately owned, residential property of 20866 Yonge Street, East Gwillimbury.

Regardless of the ultimate route of the Bradford Bypass, the construction of a bridge over either parcel will have a negative and permanent impact on the ability for the properties to yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of Ontario's history, the property's aesthetic, visual and contextual importance to the province, as well as its association with events of importance to the province.

It is reasonable to expect that use of your ministry's checklist for determining archaeological potential will confirm the 20866 Yonge Street property's archaeological potential thus requiring an archaeological assessment of the land and water within or adjacent to MOT's project area.

In the event a land and a marine archaeological assessment within or adjacent to MOT's project area determines it contains archaeological resources it is reasonable to expect that the 20866 Yonge Street property will be identified to be of cultural heritage value or interest. As such, the property should be identified as containing *archaeological resources* and as a *significant cultural heritage landscape* as defined by the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*, under the *Planning Act*. Further to this, it is reasonable to expect that Policy 2.6 of the PPS 2020 in regards to conservation, development, site alteration, archaeological management plans, cultural plans, and engagement with Indigenous communities shall be implemented.

Please see the attached appendix and documents supporting the potential for the property to be considered of cultural heritage value or interest in order to substantiate the need of an archaeological assessment.

I look forward to your response at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Margaret Prophet  
Executive Director, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition  
[www.simcoecountygreenbelt.ca](http://www.simcoecountygreenbelt.ca)

## APPENDIX

### Property address:

20866 Yonge Street, East Gwillimbury, ON, L9N 0J8

### Legal Description:

PT Lot 118 Con 1 W Yonge St East Gwillimbury

PTS 1 & 2 65R-11336

ST B74151B, Town of East Gwillimbury

PIN 03416-0046S

### Property owner:

Thomas Kar Shing To

Olivia Wai Mun Luu

Summary of special association for historic, social, or cultural reasons or because of traditional use:

- For millennia, Indigenous peoples used this area of the Holland River as a junction to get to and from other places. Arriving here from the south were trails from Lake Ontario following the Don River and running northwest from the lake along the Rouge River. Further west, starting at the mouth of the Humber River on Lake Ontario, the Toronto Carrying Place and its trails took foot travellers north to its terminus on the Holland River West Branch where both the river and, its believed, a trail headed east to join up here on the Holland River East Branch.
- For generations the area north of here was home to the Wendat and other Algonquian and Iroquoian-speaking peoples. To these peoples the Lower Landing area was the natural focus of assembly and their travels between points south and home.
- It's believed the first Europeans in the Lower Landing area were Jesuit missionaries Fathers Jean de Brébeuf and Joseph Chaumonot passing through on their return to the Wendat in the spring of 1641.
- Notable French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle used this route on his August 1681 voyage to the Mississippi.
- For over 150 years the fur trade, including coureurs de bois, voyageurs, and the North West Company, used this route to the upper Great Lakes and beyond.
- The first definitive record of the Lower Landing's use is of that by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe and his party on October 11, 1793. They stopped here on their return from Georgian Bay to the new capital of Upper Canada at York while seeking a northern military route. Alexander McDonell, Home District Sheriff, who accompanied Simcoe, wrote in his journal:

*"11<sup>th</sup> - About 9 O'clock left our encampment, embarked and soon got out of the Lake, paddled up the River about three miles, then got in to another River, and about 2 O'clock got to the landing place at the red pine fort."*

On their October 1793 map, Lt. Robert Pilkington, Royal Engineer, and Alexander Aitken, Deputy Surveyor, also of Simcoe's party, marked this location as Landing Place.

- Following a survey by Augustus Jones, Deputy Surveyor General, work cutting out a trail by the Queen's Rangers began on January 4, 1796 and reached the area of the Lower Landing on February 16. The importance of this to the fledgling colony cannot be understated. In a February 27, 1796 letter to the British Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lt. Gov. Simcoe wrote:

*"The Road from York to the Head Waters of Lake Huron has been opened, and by these means, a very excellent Tract of Country is rendered available to future settlers."*

- From then on the Lower Landing became of strategic importance to the British colony, its military, its traders, and its settlers. Soon after, a depot of hewn log trade and storage buildings was erected by the North West Company to support its vast fur trade empire. Here Indigenous traders regularly arrived from all over the upper Great Lakes by fur laden canoes to do business. Records speak of no less than 30 large wigwams at times clustered about the banks of the Holland River.
- In 1812, David Thompson, the great cartographer and explorer of Canada's west and participant in the Boundary Commission, stopped at the Lower Landing on his way home to Montreal.
- The pivotal role of the Lower Landing in the survival of the young Canadian colony during the War of 1812 is immeasurable. The September 1813 defeat of the British Navy by the Americans in the Battle of Lake Erie was of strategic importance. This heightened the risk of American invasion of Canada as well as their recapture of Fort Michilimackinac, a military and trade outpost strategically located at the straits between Lakes Huron and Michigan, and the resulting British loss of control of the northwest and upper Great Lakes. Lt. Col. Robert McDouall of the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles was ordered to strengthen Michilimackinac's defences. This being the only practical and safe departure point remaining for a route to Lake Huron, in February 1814, with 10 officers, 220 infantry and artillerymen, and 20 seamen McDouall travelled to York and made his way to the Lower Landing, now an important military and naval depot. Following the trek to the Willow Creek Depot at the end of the portage to the Nottawasaga River, south of present day Edenvale the company built a fleet of 29 bateaux to carry supplies and the reinforcements for Michilimackinac. Arriving at Michilimackinac on May 18, McDouall set about strengthening its defences. On August 4, American Captain Arthur Sinclair with 600-700 troops and a fleet of four brigs anchored off Michilimackinac and attempted a landing. With McDouall's preparation, the fort's defenders successfully defeated the attack on Michilimackinac resulting in Sinclair sending most of his ships back to Lake Erie.
- The Royal Ontario Museum's 1815 painting by Robert Irvine of the Royal Naval Depot Holland Landing shows the many buildings and wharves that stood at the Lower Landing at the time of Lt. Col. McDouall's use.
- On the second of his three Arctic expeditions, in April 1825, renowned explorer Sir John Franklin leading the Mackenzie River Expedition is recorded as arranging passage across Lake Simcoe from the Lower Landing.

- During the first decades of the century, the annual distribution of gifts to First Nations from across Upper Canada took place here. At times these events were the occasion of large missionary meetings which included many Indigenous people. One such was attended by the Rev. Peter Jones, (Kahkewāquonāby) Ojibwe chief and Methodist minister, who described the events in his journal of August 13-15, 1828.
- From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the building of the railway, the Lower Landing's docks were a bustling departure point for many steamers carrying mail, cargo, and passengers across Lake Simcoe.

#### Attachments

- extract of October 1793 map by Lt. Robert Pilkington, Royal Engineer, and Alexander Aitken, Deputy Surveyor who accompanied Lt. Gov. Simcoe, noting location of Landing Place
- Instrument #11057, December 16, 1908 sale of parts of Lot 118 Con 1 WYS East Gwillimbury from Duncan Bell to His Majesty, King Edward VII including a Plan noting location of Lower Landing
- Ontario Heritage Trust historical background report supporting its provincial plaque to commemorate the Holland's Landing Depot



On September 30, 2010, the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Town of East Gwillimbury unveiled a provincial plaque at the Town of East Gwillimbury Civic Centre in Sharon, Ontario, to commemorate the Holland's Landing Depot.

The bilingual plaque reads as follows:

### **HOLLAND'S LANDING DEPOT**

The Royal Navy Depot Holland Landing, constructed during the War of 1812, stood just north of this site on the east bank of Soldiers' Bay. Its buildings and other facilities served as an administrative and transshipment centre within a network of roads, waterways, portages and posts that connected Lake Ontario to the upper Great Lakes. To avoid American forces in the Niagara-Lake Erie-Detroit River corridor, British authorities moved vital supplies from York (Toronto) through this depot to Georgian Bay to support the successful war effort on the upper lakes. In addition, they distributed gifts to Aboriginal allies in the region from this site. After the return of peace in 1815, officials gradually concentrated most local military operations at Penetanguishene, which led to the decline and abandonment of the depot in the 1830s. Afterwards, travellers occasionally used it for shelter until it was transferred to private ownership in the 1860s.

### **DÉPÔT DE HOLLAND LANDING**

Le dépôt de la Marine royale de Holland Landing s'élevait au nord de ce site, sur la rive Est de Soldiers' Bay. Centre administratif et de transbordement construit lors de la guerre de 1812, il dessert tout un réseau de routes, de voies navigables, de portages et de postes entre le lac Ontario et le secteur supérieur des Grands Lacs. À l'époque, les forces américaines occupent le couloir Niagara-lac Érié-rivière Détroit. Les autorités britanniques se servent de ce dépôt pour les contourner et acheminer des fournitures essentielles entre York (Toronto) et la baie Georgienne, et ravitaillent ainsi les troupes qui mettent l'ennemi en déroute dans la région des lacs Supérieur et Huron. En outre, ce dépôt leur permet de faire parvenir des cadeaux à leurs alliés autochtones. En 1815, une fois la paix rétablie, la plupart des opérations militaires locales sont organisées à Penetanguishene : le dépôt, de moins en moins utilisé, est abandonné dans les années 1830. Les voyageurs l'utilisent parfois pour s'y abriter, jusqu'à ce qu'il devienne une propriété privée dans les années 1860.

## **Historical background**

### **Early settlement and transportation in the vicinity of Lake Simcoe**

The expansive marsh and pine-forested area surrounding the east branch of the Holland River has a history that stretches back before the earliest written records. Archaeological findings provide evidence of Paleo-Indian encampments and hunting dating back almost nine millennia to the Archaic period.<sup>1</sup> Closer to the present age, the Wendat (Huron), Petun and later peoples from the Anishinabek Nation gained prominence in the region.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that, “the Holland River, Lake Simcoe and the Severn River were considered one stream” by the First Nations peoples.<sup>3</sup> The French were the first European people to recognize the complexity of these waterways.<sup>4</sup> The interior route was acknowledged as having great value by First Nations travelers, French missionaries, North West Company traders and British soldiers alike. Travelling north from Lake Ontario it provided a timely shortcut to what is now known as Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and the Upper Great Lakes without having to travel south, confront the falls at Niagara and then navigate northward again on Lake Erie.<sup>5</sup>

Several different interior routes existed; however, one of the most prominent was to arrive at the area of Holland Landing by land and then board canoes (later flat-bottomed bateaux) for a journey down the river and into Lake Simcoe. Offering a shortcut from the Severn River route, these small vessels would then enter Kempenfeldt Bay and land at the present-day city of Barrie. From that point there was a nine-mile (14.5-km) portage to Willow Creek and then upon re-entering boats travelers would continue down the creek to the Nottawasaga River and onward to Georgian Bay.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the 1780s, successive British governors requested surveys of the Upper Great Lakes and the possibility of creating a means of communication following the traditional First Nations' routes between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe.<sup>7</sup> When Yonge Street was completed in 1796 (starting at York and spanning to the Holland Marsh) these trails would parallel and occasionally criss-cross the meticulously surveyed and unbending road.<sup>8</sup> The importance of the interior route took on new meaning at this time, as British authorities looked for methods of transportation that were less perilously close to the new and expanding American republic to the south.

### **The landings on the east branch of the Holland River**

Following France's declaration of war on Great Britain in 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe decided it was important to review the colony's transportation and communication network. That fall he set out with a surveying party to review firsthand possible inland communication routes between Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario. On October 11, 1793, Deputy Provincial Surveyor Alexander Aitken wrote that Simcoe and the surveying party camped near the Lower Landing in an area believed to be near present-day Soldiers' Bay and

the future site of the Holland's Landing Depot.<sup>9</sup> This uninviting area, however, was not the natural first choice of landing in the area. "The Pond to the West and the North part of the Village," a surveyor later wrote of the area in 1811, "is very shallow water with a very deep mud and some Bullrushes."<sup>10</sup> Considering the natural impediments of the pond, the two established landings – both having been used by countless generations of First Nations travelers – were used instead.<sup>11</sup> The Lower Landing, near Soldiers' Bay, was a point closer to the convergence of the two branches of the Holland River as they headed toward Lake Simcoe. The Upper Landing, on the other hand, was at a bend of the river further south which met with traditional footpaths and in 1796 the spot where Yonge Street terminated. Of the two transshipment points, the Upper Landing had become the most prominent further boasting a fortified structure known in several contemporary accounts as the "Pine Fort."<sup>12</sup> This wooden building acted as a combined shelter, defensive structure and storehouse for First Nations' gifts and was an early landmark easily recognizable to non-native inhabitants in an otherwise seemingly endless terrain of forest and marshes. As the two traditional landings met the requirements of most travelers, the situation on the Holland River remained relatively unchanged for the first two decades of Upper Canada's existence.

### **The War of 1812 and the naval and military establishment at Holland Landing**

With the American declaration of war on Great Britain in 1812 Upper Canada's interior naval defenses were bolstered and domestic shipbuilding expanded to meet the wartime demand.<sup>13</sup> The British loss at Moraviantown in the fall of 1813 gave American forces control of the Detroit River and resulted in the interior route becoming the principal means of supply to the Upper Great Lakes.<sup>14</sup> In spite of its notable navigational drawbacks, the inauspicious pond was chosen as the spot for a new naval and military establishment at the mouth of Lake Simcoe. Close to the Lower Landing, it provided a wide – though shallow and muddy – shelter from the Holland River. The pond also boasted an expanse of dry land around it that could easily accommodate the requisite barracks, storehouses, and docks required for a minor shipyard and naval depot.

Supplies required for the war effort on the Upper Great Lakes were stored at the site officially referred to as the *Royal Navy Depot Holland Landing*. Everything from ammunition and artillery to sundries and ships' chandlery was packed on flat bottom boats at the depot's wharf and sent down the river to Lake Simcoe and onward through the system of waterways and portages to Georgian Bay and beyond. The establishment also acted as the distribution centre for gifts given annually to First Nations, taking over the role that the original Pine Fort situated near the Upper Landing had played.

In 1815, watercolourist Robert Irvine<sup>15</sup> painted a landscape showing the depot at the height of its operations. Against the backdrop of a seemingly endless coniferous forest, the painting shows a bateau landing on Soldiers' Bay, five log and clapboard structures, a yard surrounded by

a stockade at the back of the central structure and several large bell tents.<sup>16</sup> Sir Edward Owen in his 1815 report on the state of the navy on the Great Lakes observed that there were two boat crews employed by the Commissariat at the depot for the forwarding of goods.<sup>17</sup> The establishment, not only offered what one British officer remarked, “a Considerable depot of Naval Stores,”<sup>18</sup> it was the administrative centre for the southern portion of the interior navigation route. British Admiralty pay lists – compiled at the depot – show a complement of 28 shipwrights, one head clerk and two store porters based at Holland Landing and deployed from there to the head of the Nottawasaga River.<sup>19</sup> In spite of the relative success of the strategically important depot, Sir Edward Owen was not fond of its location which he wrote, “seem badly placed upon a shallow pond, almost choked up with hedge and rushes. The Upper Indian landing is a better situation upon a sand bank of ten or twelve feet [3 or 3.6 m] high, by which the water is deep as to permit good Vessels alongside of it without requiring a Wharf.”<sup>20</sup> Although Owen did not recommend its closure, his words describing the inherently impractical nature of the depot foreshadowed what would be its eventual demise.

News of the end of the war arrived at a depot filled with items waiting to be forwarded to the stations along the interior navigation route. In the fall of 1815 there were over 21,000 pounds (9,525 kg) of flour, an equal amount of salt pork and 719 gallons (3,269 l) of rum,<sup>21</sup> as well as gun powder, cannon and a 4,000-pound (1,814-kg) kedge anchor<sup>22</sup> allegedly destined for transport to the ship yard at Schooner Town (present-day Wasaga Beach).<sup>23</sup> In the letter accompanying Owen's 1815 report it was recommended that the Admiralty expand naval operations at Gwillimbury and acquire the land of the Upper Landing as a naval reserve.<sup>24</sup> This ambitious suggestion, however, did not come to fruition. Over the next decade the men stationed at the depot were slowly demobilized<sup>25</sup> and the majority of the stores removed with the notable exception of the large anchor which was left in the depot's yard. By the 1820s, it appears that the depot's role as a storehouse for gifts given annually to the First Nations had supplanted its naval and military uses.

### **Decline of the establishment**

After the end of the war several factors led to the slow decline and the eventual abandonment of the depot. Most significantly, the reduction of American hostilities and the demilitarization of the Great Lakes through the 1817 Rush-Bagot agreement<sup>26</sup> diminished the strategic importance of the interior communication route to Georgian Bay. The same agreement saw the eventual centralization of Royal Navy resources in Penetanguishene which became the primary naval establishment in the region by 1830.<sup>27</sup> The Holland's Landing Depot continued to be used for annual First Nations gift giving ceremonies until the late 1820s.<sup>28</sup> However, by 1830 Penetanguishene had also eclipsed the depot in this regard, becoming the primary store for such gifts and reporting over 6,000 visits alone during the summer of that year.<sup>29</sup> Not required as a naval post, and of limited importance as a government storehouse, the decade of the 1830s saw the abandonment of the Holland's Landing Depot.

By the beginning of the 1840s Sir Richard Bonnycastle observed that the site was derelict, being “formerly a military post and naval dépôt.”<sup>30</sup> In 1851, an act of parliament was passed which facilitated the sale of Admiralty reserves throughout the united Canadas including the land situated, “on the east branch of the Holland River, in the town plot of Gwillimbury... west side of Meadow Street, containing together about four acres [1.6 ha].”<sup>31</sup> George Tremaine’s map of York County does not provide any clear indication of ownership of the property in 1860;<sup>32</sup> however, land registry records reveal that in 1862 the title for the lot 116W – at the centre of the depot site – was held by the Crown but granted to James McClure.<sup>33</sup> McClure is listed in the land registry as holding a mortgage on the property in 1865. By the late 1870s, the *York County Atlas* showed that the property that the depot stood on and most of Soldiers’ Bay was then owned by “Wm. Stephenson.”<sup>34</sup> Around the same time, the old anchor that had been left at the depot at the end of the War of 1812 was moved south to the prosperous settlement of Holland Landing to become the marquee gateway to the town’s Anchor Park. With the anchor’s removal the last notable vestige of the depot and its vital role disappeared from Soldiers’ Bay. Although the Holland’s Landing Depot came to a rather quiet end it played a critical role in the security and progress of the colony that would become Ontario.



The Ontario Heritage Trust gratefully acknowledges the research of Michael Eamon, BA (Hon.), MA, M.Phil., in preparing this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew M. Stewart, “Intensity of Land-Use Around the Holland Marsh: Assessing Temporal Change from Regional Site Distributions,” in Lawrence J. Jackson and Andrew Hinshelwood, eds., *The Late Palaeo-Indian Great Lakes: Geological and Archaeological Investigations of the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene Environments*, Archaeology Paper 165, (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2004), pp. 85-116; and Gordon Charles Dibb, *Late Palaeo-Indian settlement patterns along the margins of the Simcoe lowlands in south central Ontario*, Unpublished M.A Thesis, 1985, Trent University, in Bata Library, Trent University, Peterborough.

<sup>2</sup> See: Andrew F. Hunter, *History of Simcoe County*, (Barrie: Simcoe County Council, 1909), Vol. I, p. 10; Alan D. McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988), pp. 64-74; Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), pp. 122-139; and Donald B. Smith, “The Mississauga and the Building of Yonge Street, 1794-1796,” in Wyn Millar, ed., *The Simcoe Legacy: The Life and Times of Yonge Street*, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1996), pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin C. Guillet, *Early Life in Upper Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 385.

<sup>4</sup> This is clearly illustrated in Bellin’s 1745 map by the Great Lakes and tributaries including *Lac Toronto* (also called *Lac aux claires*, and *Lac Clie*) and later renamed Lake Simcoe. British Library, 70620.(1), Nicholas Bellin, *Partie occidentale de la Nouvelle France ou Canada*, printed in Paris, Nuremberg, and London, 1745.

<sup>5</sup> One of the most comprehensive accounts of the Toronto era in the age of early European contact remains Percy

James Robinson, *Toronto During the French Regime: A History of the Toronto Region from Brulé to Simcoe, 1615-1793*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1933.

<sup>6</sup> An early description of this route can be found in: David William Smyth, *A Short Topographical Description of His Majesty's Province of Upper Canada in North America to which is Annexed a Provincial Gazetteer*, (London: W. Faden, 1799), pp. 23-26.

<sup>7</sup> A safe route to Michilmackinac or Mackinaw was a preoccupation of Governor Frederick Haldimand who on at least two separate occasions in 1780 and 1784 requested officers to undertake surveys including an inland passage. In 1788, his successor Lord Dorchester requested that another officer, Gother Mann, undertake a survey of all coasts and harbours of Lake Ontario, Erie and Huron reaching as far as Sault Ste. Marie. Mann took great care to map Georgian Bay and Matchedash Bay which was known as the end of the First Nations' inland passage. See: *Simcoe County Pioneer & Historical Society Pioneer Papers*, 4 (1911): p. 11; and Fred Landon, *Lake Huron* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), pp. 286,289.

<sup>8</sup> Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG 11, Colonial Office 42/171, Map #33, "Road from York to Matchedash" attached to Croker's Letter of the 6th July 1816, State of the Naval Establishments in Canadas & Survey of the Lakes by Sir E. Owen," Reel B-137.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Peterborough, Ontario, Crown Land and Surveys, Journal of Alexander Aitken, "York, Road to Lake Simcoe," 11 October 1793, p. 257.

<sup>10</sup> MNR, Crown Land and Surveys, Surveyors' Letters, L & F, Volume 35, Number 120, Samuel Wilmot to Thomas Ridout, 9 April 1811.

<sup>11</sup> MNR, Crown Land and Surveys, F.N.Book.436, Volume 6, Samuel L. Wilmot, "A Plan of the Village of Gwillimbury...", 9 April 1811; LAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 42/171, Map #35, "Town of Gwillimbury" attached to Croker's Letter of the 6th July 1816, State of the Naval Establishments in Canadas & Survey of the Lakes by Sir E. Owen," Reel B-137; LAC, NMC 13819, "Tremaine's map of the county of York, Canada West, compiled and drawn by Geo. R. Tremaine, from actual surveys. Toronto. Published by Geo. C. Tremaine 1860."

<sup>12</sup> For early references to the "Pine Fort" see: Alexander Macdonell, "Diary of Governor Simcoe's Journey to Matchedash Bay," in A. Cruikshank, ed. *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe*, Volume II, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1924), pp. 70-79; J. Ross Robertson, ed. *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe Wife of the First Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, 1792-6*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), p. 298; Smyth, *Gazetteer*, p. 154.

<sup>13</sup> For more on the early-War state of naval forces including the Provincial Marine see: Robert Malcomson, *Lords of the Lake: The Naval War on Lake Ontario, 1812-1814*, (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1998), pp. 25-37.

<sup>14</sup> Barry Gough, *Through Water, Ice and Fire: Schooner Nancy of the War of 1812*, (Toronto: Dundurn, 2006), p. 114.

<sup>15</sup> British artist Robert Irvine was actively painting in Upper Canada from 1812-1817.

<sup>16</sup> Royal Ontario Museum, Sigmund Samuel Trust, 977.177.1, "The Naval and Military Depot at Holland Landing, Upper Canada, 1815," by Robert Irvine, watercolour, gouache.

<sup>17</sup> LAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 42/171, "Croker's Letter of the 6th July 1816, State of the Naval Establishments in Canadas & Survey of the Lakes by Sir E. Owen," p. 154, Reel B-137.

<sup>18</sup> Letter Major-General Robinson to Commodore Sir Edward Owen, 12 August 1815, original at Library and Archives Canada, copy found in "Military Records," file, East Gwillimbury Historical Society.

<sup>19</sup> LAC, MG 12, Admiralty, Yard Pay Books, ADM 42/2170, "A Pay List for the 28 Artificers employed at Holland Landing and Kempenfelt Bay... November 1814 to May 1815;" ADM 42/2173, "A Pay List of One Clerk and Two Store Porters sent... to the Posts at Holland Landing and the Head of the Nottawasaga Creek... 25<sup>th</sup> November 1815;" Reel B-6005.

<sup>20</sup> LAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 42/171, "Croker's Letter of the 6th July 1816, State of the Naval Establishments in Canadas & Survey of the Lakes by Sir E. Owen," p. 153, Reel B-137.

<sup>21</sup> LAC, RG8, C-Series, Volume 120, #3, "Statement of Provisions etc. remaining at Holland River, Kempenfeldt Bay, Nottawasaga and Nottawasaga Bay, Upper Canada 21 November 1815."



<sup>22</sup> Markings on the anchor, which has rested at Anchor Park in Holland's Landing since 1870, show that it was forged in Chatham, England and weighs "35-3-0" or approximately 4000 pounds. Various newspaper articles and local histories have remarked upon the anchor; however, one of the most detailed accounts is written by nineteenth-century freemason and historian John Ross Robertson of what he termed the "Strange Relic of the War of 1812 That Never Reached Its Destination." J. Ross Robertson, *Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto: A Collection of Historical Sketches of the Old Town of York from 1792 until 1833, and of Toronto from 1834 to 1908*, Fifth Series (Republished from the Evening Telegram), (Toronto: J.R. Robertson, 1908), pp. 54-57.

<sup>23</sup> There is an Ontario Provincial Plaque commemorating the Schooner Town located at the Schoonertown Parkette near the site of the former base, River Road West and Oxbow Park Road, Wasaga Beach Provincial Park, Simcoe County. For information see the on-line plaque guide at [www.heritagetrust.on.ca](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)

<sup>24</sup> LAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 42/171, "Croker's Letter of the 6th July 1816, State of the Naval Establishments in Canadas & Survey of the Lakes by Sir E. Owen," p. 11, Reel B-137.

<sup>25</sup> There is no clear indication when the last personnel left the Holland Landing Depot. In June 1817, orders were sent to dismiss any remaining artificers in the region of the new Penetanguishene establishment, yet there was still confusion over the nature of the store porters at Holland Landing and Nottawasaga. This appears to have been resolved by 1818 and George Chiles, the longstanding clerk at Holland Landing, begins to correspond as the "clerk in charge, Penetanguishene." This timeframe for personnel being stationed at the Holland's Landing Depot is corroborated by The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office, London) finding aid to Admiralty records which lists the existence of muster and pay rolls for the Depot between the years 1814 to 1817 only. See letters: Robert Hall, Kingston to George Chiles, Holland Landing ff. 2 June 1817; Lieutenant Kent, Penetanguishene to George Chiles, Holland Landing 2 July 1817 and Thomas G. Ridout, York to George Chiles, Penetanguishene 12 September 1818. Originals at Library and Archives Canada, copies found in "Military Records," file, East Gwillimbury Historical Society and National Archives Research Guides, *Royal Naval Dockyards, Military Records 41*, see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help/catalogue/researchguides.htm>

<sup>26</sup> There is an Ontario Provincial Plaque commemorating the Rush-Bagot Agreement, located in front of the Stone Frigate building on the grounds of the Royal Military College of Canada, Highway 2, Kingston. For information see the on-line plaque guide at [www.heritagetrust.on.ca](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)

<sup>27</sup> Owen in 1815 recommended the centralization of Royal Navy operations at Penetanguishene and over the next decade this would come to fruition with the closing of Schooner Town and Drummond Island posts. The decline continued and the Royal Navy presence was not long lived at Penetanguishene with it ceasing operations there in 1834. See: Barry Gough, *Fighting Sail on Lake Huron and Georgian Bay: The War of 1812 and its Aftermath*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 159-167.

<sup>28</sup> Hunter, *History of Simcoe County*, Vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> LAC, RG8 C-Series, Volume 1328, #11, Letter Sir John Colborne to Military Secretary, Head Quarters Québec, 30 November 1830.

<sup>30</sup> Sir Richard Bonnycastle, *The Canadas in 1841*, Volume I, (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> 14-15 Victoria (1851), c. 67.

<sup>32</sup> City of Toronto Archives, County York, Canada West, Tremaine, 1860, MO 4.

<sup>33</sup> Copy of the Township of East Gwillimbury, Land Registry page for Lot. No. 116 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Concession West, obtained from the York Region Land Registry Office at 50 Bloomington Rd W, 3rd Floor Aurora, ON L4G 3G8. The 'Grantor' for this parcel of land is listed as the 'Crown', with James McLure noted as the 'Grantee' and the 'Instrument' as 'Patent'. The instrument used by the Crown, or representatives of the Crown, to convey title to a homestead grant in Upper Canada was known as a land patent. Before title to a homestead was granted by the Crown, the homesteader had to meet certain conditions of residency and cultivation for a fixed period of time.

<sup>34</sup> Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York, 1878; reprint, (Toronto: Peter Martinand Associates, Ltd., 1969), p. 38.



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114

McGowan & Gibbon, Limited, Law Solicitors, Toronto

# This Indenture

made in duplicate the *Ninth* day of *December*  
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and *eighteen*  
In pursuance of the Act respecting Short Forms of Conveyances

THE said *McGowan & Gibbon, Limited* of the County  
of York, Wardens,

of the first part,

against *the said party of the first part,*  
of the second part,

His Honor the Judge of the Will,

of the third part,

Witnesseth, that in consideration of *Two hundred and sixty-one and twenty-one*  
*hundred's* Dollars of lawful money of *Canada*  
now paid by the said party of the *Third* part, to the said party of the  
first part (the receipt whereof is hereby by him acknowledged) *He* the said  
of the first part DO GRANT *and surrender* unto the said party of the *Third*

All and Singular the *same* certain parcel or track of land *and premises* situated  
in the Township of *East Gwillimbury* and County of York and Province of Ont-  
ario, containing by measurement Eleven and Sixty-five hundredths acres  
*11.65 / 100.00*, be the same more or less, and being composed of parts of Lots  
Numbers *117* and *118*, Concession *1*, west Yonge Street in the said Township of  
East Gwillimbury, and which said parcel is more particularly described as  
follows:

*number*  
Commencing at a point in the southerly limit boundary of Lot 117,  
at the distance of Thirteen hundred feet (1300') measured westerly thereon

3  
from the westerly limit of Yonge Street: Thence North Sixteen degrees  
and ten minutes ( 16 ' ) west, Nine hundred and ninety- three  
feet six inches ( 993 ' 6 " ) to a stake planted in the limit between the  
northerly and southerly halves of said Lot No 118, at the distance of Fifteen  
hundred and one feet ( 1501 ' ) measured westerly thereon from the said  
westerly limit of Yonge Street: Thence easterly along the limit between the  
said halves of said Lot No 118 One hundred and Thirty-four feet ( 134 ' )  
to the southerly margin of the East Branch of the Holland River: Thence

4  
limit of Lot No 117: Thence Easterly, along the last mentioned line, One  
hundred and sixty feet ( 160 ' ) more or less, to the place beginning

The said parcel being further shewn coloured pink on a plan of  
survey made by Ontario Land Surveyors Speight and Van Nostrand dated 1st  
1907  
April and herewith attached.

and do hereby release the said part from the consideration  
afore said, released to the party of the second part all its claims upon the  
said lands, and further released to the party of the third part from all  
claims and demands for severance or depreciation or arising out of the exprop-  
riation or taking by the party of the said lands or the construction maintenance  
and operation thereon of the work known as the Trent Canal.

do have and to hold unto the said party of the third part and successors  
heirs and assigns to and for his and their sole and only use forever Subject  
Nevertheless to the reservations, limitations, provisoes and conditions expressed in the original  
Grant thereof from the Crown

In Witness Whereof the said parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals

Signed, Sealed and Delivered,  
IN THE PRESENCE OF

A.S. Williams  
after having been  
read over and  
explained.

Duncan Bell  
for  
Margaret x Bell  
mark

Dated 14 Dec 1914

Duncan Bell,

TO

HIP MARY KIM EDWARD VII.

Deed of Land

SITUATE

in the

Reginald & Gilliam, Limited, Law Solicitors, Toronto.

Parcel 18

I certify that the within  
document is a true and correct  
copy of the original as  
registered in the Registry Office  
for the Eastern Division of this  
Province of the County of  
York, Book No. 20,  
Page 18, of the  
volume of A.D. 1914  
of the 11th Dec 1914

Registrar

The said party of the first part Covenants with the said party of the Third  
part That he has the right to convey the said lands to the said party of the Third  
part notwithstanding any act of the said party of the first part

And that the said party of the Third part shall have quiet possession of the said  
lands free from all encumbrances

~~And the said party of the first part Covenants with the said party of the Third  
part That he has the right to convey the said lands to the said party of the Third  
part notwithstanding any act of the said party of the first part~~  
And the said party of the first part will execute such further assurances of the said lands as may be requisite.

And the said party of the first part Covenants with the said party of the Third  
part that he has done no act to encumber the said lands.

And the said party of the first part Releases to the said party of the Third  
part All his Claims upon the said lands.

And the said Margaret Gill, wife of the said party of the first part, hereby  
bars her dower in the said lands.

County

of

J. Rufus D. Williams

of the town

of

Sumner

and

in the

County

of

York

TO WIT:

Bornton

make oath and say:

1. That I was personally present and did see the within Instrument and Duplicate thereof duly signed, sealed and executed by *Duncan Bell and Margaret Bell his wife*

The parties

said Instrument and Duplicate were executed by the said parties at the town of *Sumner*

2. That I know the said parties

3. That I am a subscribing witness to the said Instrument and Duplicate.

Sworn before me at the town of *Sumner*

in the County

of *York*

this *10th* day of *December*

in the year of our Lord 18*98*

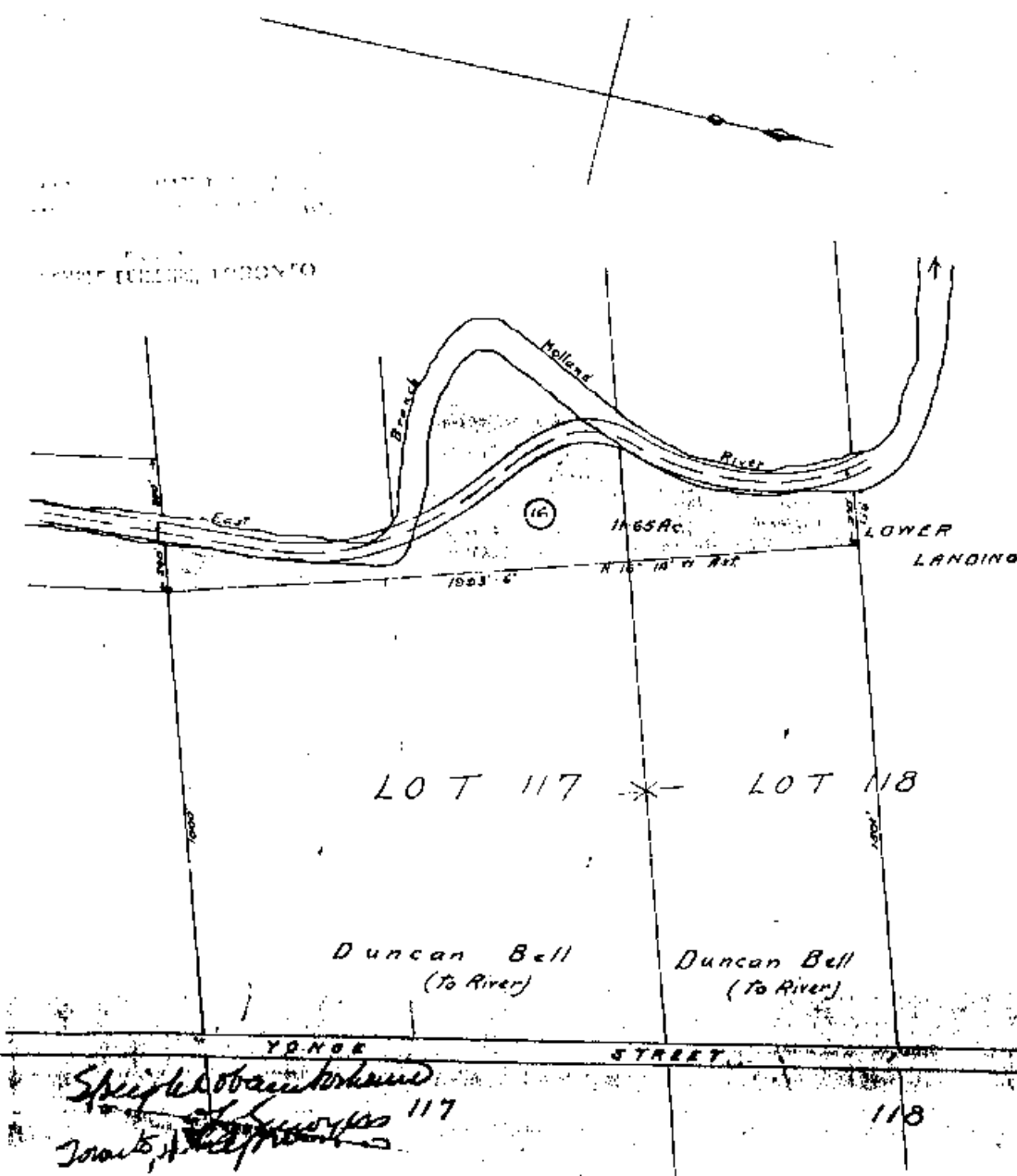
*C.S. Williams*

*as Commissioner*

A Commissioner for taking Affidavits in H.C.J., etc.

GG

Scale - 1 inch = 400 feet.



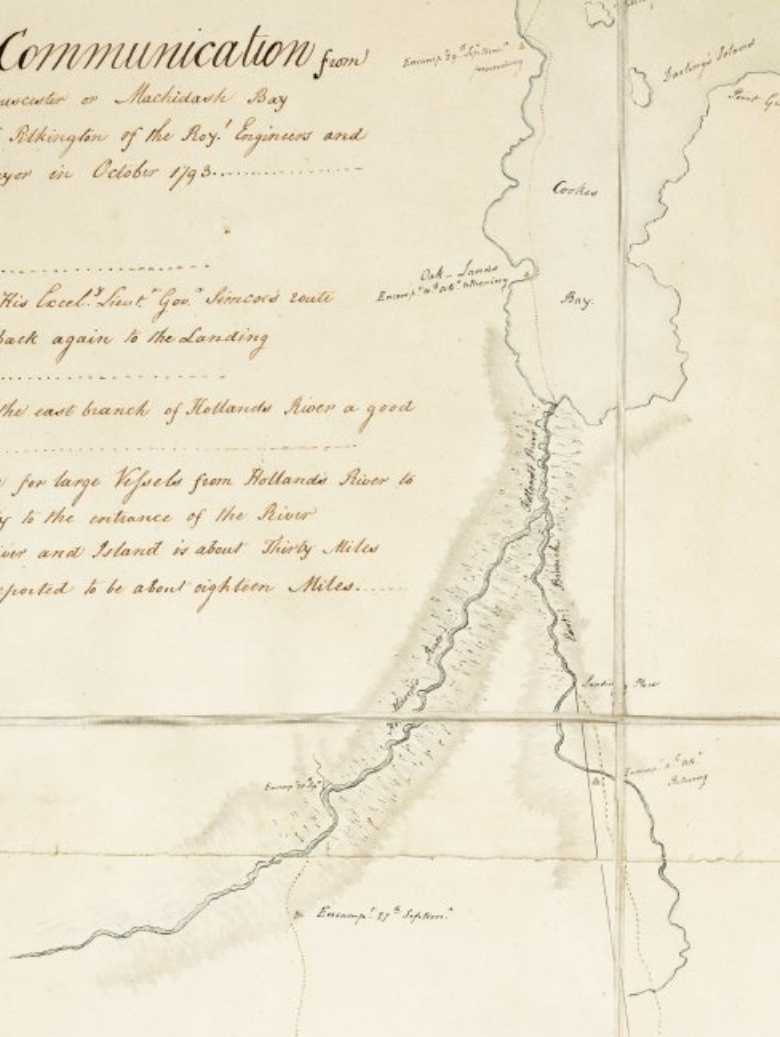
*Sketch of the Communication from*  
*York on Lake Ontario to Gloucester or Machidash Bay*  
*Lake Huron taken by Lieut. Pilkington of the Roy. Engineers and*  
*Alex. Arthen Deputy Surveyor in October 1793.*

*Remarks.*

*The line dotted red shows His Excell. Lieut. Gov. Simcoe's route*  
*from Holland's River and back again to the Landing*  
*on the East branch.*

*From the landing place on the east branch of Holland's River a good*  
*Road may be made to York.*

*Lake Simcoe is navigable for large Vessels from Holland's River to*  
*Francis Island and probably to the entrance of the River*  
*its length between said River and Island is about Thirty Miles*  
*and its extreme width is reported to be about eighteen Miles.*





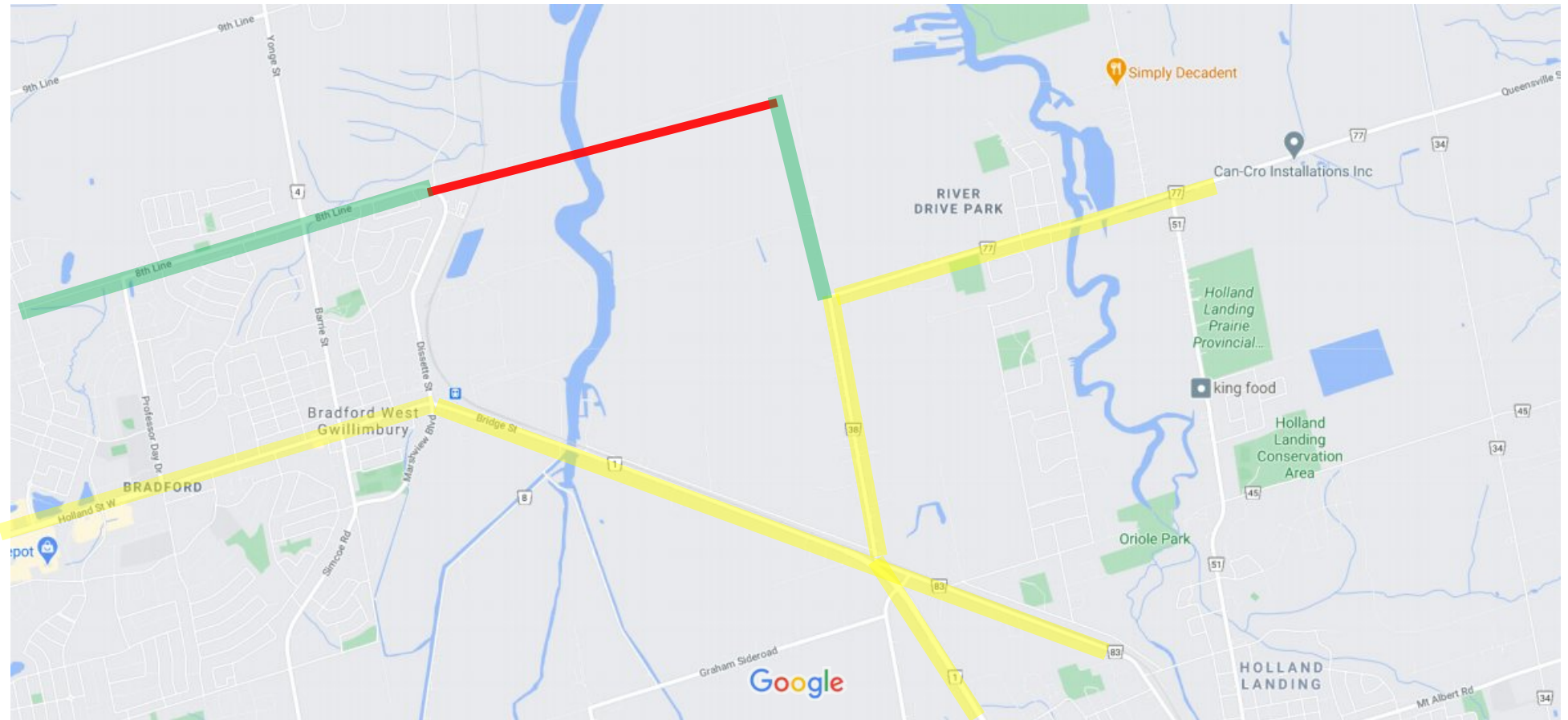


Imagery ©2021 Google, Imagery ©2021 CNES / Airbus, First Base Solutions, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2021 1 km

Connect Ravenshoe Road to Hyw 89 via Line 13 and 20th Sideroad







Connect Queensville Sideroad to Bradford's 8th Line via Bathurst St. and Hochreiter Rd.

Roads in Yellow are existing routes through Bradford. New route, marked in green with red for new construction, would double the east / west capacity of roads through Bradford