
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 3-2023

Subject: Collaboration to Support Industrial Development in Fort Erie

Date: March 8, 2023

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Phill Lambert, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development
Engineering

The purpose of this memo is to inform Committee of the collaboration between the Town of Fort Erie, Niagara Region, Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade, and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to facilitate a new industrial development at 1700 Pettit Road in Fort Erie.

The initial industrial development interest started out as a unanimous site selection request that originated through the Invest Ontario office at the Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade and was circulated throughout Southwestern Ontario including Niagara Economic Development (NED). NED in turn circulated the request to the local area municipalities (LAMs). In 2020, the Town of Fort Erie responded to the Request for Information and put forward the 33 acre industrial site located at 1700 Pettit Road for consideration and was subsequently purchased by the Siltech Corporation in March 2021.

The Site Plan approval process was completed in 2022 in order to have the Siltech Corporation ready to construct a new 210,000 square foot manufacturing plant (representing a \$55 Million investment) at 1700 Pettit Road in Fort Erie by the end of 2024. The MTO permit was the only outstanding item that needed to be resolved before the new facility could proceed. The Siltech investment is anticipated to create 35 new full-time positions in its first year of operation, building to 50 full-time positions in its third year and 75 full-time positions in its fifth year of operation.

The Economic Development team from the Region and Town have been working with Siltech on their plans since 2021 which included the approval of a Niagara Gateway Economic Zone Incentive Application, as well as a Niagara Region Industrial Development Charge Grant Program.

Additionally, Siltech has applied to the Southwest Ontario Development Fund (SWODF) administered through Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade (Medjcat). Both the Town of Fort Erie and Regional Economic Development staff have provided letters of support for this application as receipt of these funds are contingent upon all permitting processes being approved at all levels.

This development is located in an Employment Area, as well as the Niagara Economic Centre and Zone as identified in the Region's Official Plan. The Town of Fort Erie has proactively completed the Fort Erie Industrial District Coordinated Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to evaluate transportation impacts for the employment buildout of this area. The study identified the QEW/Gilmore Road northbound and southbound intersections/ramps would require turning lanes and signalization by build out, assumed to be 2031.

The TIS for the Siltech Development identified that the minimum warrants were met at the QEW/Gilmore Road northbound ramp terminal for an eastbound left turning lane and westbound right turning lane which were required due to background growth and traffic.

During 2022, Regional staff had several meetings with the MTO discussing the need and timing for these road improvements. The Region proposed that an Environmental Assessment (EA) be completed to evaluate the full build out of this area and determine the overall transportation improvements required with a plan and commitment for future construction. This approach was not acceptable to MTO to allow Siltech to move forward. The MTO required the turning lanes to be constructed prior to Siltech opening. Regional staff continued discussions with MTO to find an acceptable solution to resolve their concerns.

Region and Town staff were in constant communication with the Siltech Corporation providing updates as the MTO approval impacted their ability to move forward in a timely manner which was their paramount concern.

Through further review and discussions with Public Works, Planning and Development Services, Corporate Services, and Economic Development (Region and Town) an innovative solution to constructing these road improvements was developed. Intersection improvements such as these are identified as a 100% Development Charges (DC) funded project in the 2022 DC Background Study. The estimated budget for these road works is \$500,000 to be funded by 100% DC-Roads in accordance with

the Budget Control By-law 2017-63. The plan for construction is to package this work with the Public Works 2023 Hot Mix Resurfacing contract and prioritize it in the tender so that it will be completed first. Regional Transportation staff is actively working through the detailed design to provide to the MTO for their review and approval, as well as submitting for the necessary application for the MTO Construction Encroachment permit.

The MTO has recently agreed to this plan with the condition that the road improvements be completed in 2023. The MTO will now process the permit which will allow Siltech to commence construction.

Town and Regional staff have worked together collaboratively as one team in order to support this new industrial development in Fort Erie. Town staff are very supportive of this approach and provided input for this memo.

This project is an excellent example of collaboration and co-operation within the Region and between all three levels of government from the very beginning.

This memo has been prepared in partnership with Public Works – Transportation, Corporate Services, Economic Development, and Planning and Development Services.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Phill Lambert, P. Eng.

Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering