
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 20-2019

Subject: Regional Road 20 Alternative Tourism Route
Date: December 4, 2019
To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Katie Young, Planner

At the September 11, 2019 meeting of Planning and Economic Development Committee, Council requested that staff identify existing and proposed projects that contribute to the use of Highway 20 as an alternative tourism route in Niagara.

Background:

The former Provincial Highway 20 begins in Niagara Falls, crosses the region and ends at its western terminus in the City of Hamilton. Originally built in the 1930's to alleviate traffic from Provincial Highway 8, upon completion of the Queen Elizabeth Way, Highway 20 was not used at its anticipated frequency. In 1998, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) downloaded the majority of the Niagara portion of Highway 20 to the Region. This portion was renamed Regional Road 20, with the exception of one segment in Niagara Falls which remains under the jurisdiction of the MTO.

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP), approved by Council in 2017 establishes the long-term transportation vision for Niagara over the next 25 years, balancing the needs of various road users (goods movement, active transportation, complete streets, and tourism). Although the TMP focuses on the long-term option of a new Niagara-to-GTA Corridor, existing and proposed projects and utilizing Regional Road 20 as an alternative tourism route are as follows:

- A portion of Regional Road 20, west of Regional Road 24 is identified as a trade corridor to facilitate the movement of goods while the Niagara-Hamilton Trade Corridor is planned.
- Regional Road 20, east of Regional Road 24 is identified as a future cycling facility within the Strategic Cycling Network.
- There is an opportunity to add signage through the Tourism-Oriented Signing (TODS) Program on Regional Road 24, directing traffic into Pelham along Regional Road 20 to Niagara Falls. Prior to this being a viable option, consideration of how this would impact traffic, existing infrastructure, and the TMP's identification of Regional Road 20 for the movement of goods and as a future cycling facility would need to be studied in depth.

Tourism-Oriented Directional Signing Program:

In order to direct tourists to Regional Road 20, signage would need to be provided by the Tourism-Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) Program, which is run by a third party organization on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport to place signs on Ontario's roadways. Signage for tourists routes require TODS signing and reassurance markers including:

- access signs leading to the route;
- terminal signs at the start and end of the route;
- reassurance signs; and
- decision point signs, which includes signs to spur routes and attraction signs to eligible stopping points.

Highway Corridor Management:

The MTO is responsible for managing the provincial highway corridor network. Although Regional Road 20 is no longer a provincial highway, the portion between Highway 58 and Regional Road 70 remains the provincially controlled Highway 20. This means that for any proposed changes to the use of this road requires approval by the MTO.

Permits are required for construction projects on or near provincial highways. For the use of Highway 20 to be signed as an alternative tourism route, two types of highway corridor management permits may be necessary:

- sign Permits to erect or alter a sign or advertising device on a property within 400m of any provincial highway right-of-way; and
- encroachment Permits are required for any installation or works, upon, under or within the limits of a provincial highway right-of-way placed by someone other than MTO. This may include signs, survey work, banners, acceleration and deceleration lanes, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, safety islands, sewers, pipelines, other works or structures that in any way interfere with the land within the limits of a highway.

As the majority of the above listed projects and programs are managed by the Region's Transportation Department, Planning staff met with Transportation Services staff to verify these projects.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Katie Young
Planner