



**Bronte Road
(Regional Road 25)
Town of Oakville**

**ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDY REPORT**

**Class Environmental
Assessment**



Prepared for:



September 2002

increases will result from new development near the Bronte Harbour and the Bronte Community Shopping Area. Major population growth will result from new subdivisions west of the Twelve Mile Creek.

Residents North of the QEW

The Committee for a Safer and Greener Bronte Road represents residents who live on, or in the vicinity of, Bronte Road. This group is already aware of the potential road improvements and the committee put forward an alternative median divided concept and their preferred list of roadway appurtenances, including a frontage roadway with a consolidated entrance opposite the Saw Whet Golf Course driveway. This option was fully investigated along with other road cross section options. Other factors such as auxiliary lanes will also need to be considered, given the long queues southbound to access the QEW.

The location and limited separation between the existing residences on the west side of Bronte Road, the Bronte Creek gorge and the Halton Regional Centre facility pose significant constraints to the road widening. The study investigations will assess the various alternatives for improvements north of the QEW while addressing the residential/business access considerations. The options put forth by the local residents have merit, but require further refinement in the context of the traffic requirements and traffic operations investigations.

The White Oak Tree Issue

An old, mature White Oak Tree was identified by the Committee for a Safer and Greener Bronte Road on the property just north of the Halton Regional Centre. The age, health and quality of the tree was investigated in the context of the various roadway cross section alternatives needed to meet the future traffic demand at site. This analysis has been an integral part of the evaluation of the roadway and access options for Bronte Road in this area.

The White Oak tree is approximately 240 years old. The average life expectancy of this type of tree is from 150 to 250 years. The tree is currently in the last 10 percent of its life expectancy.

As part of the environmental assessment, the possibility of relocating the tree was investigated. National Shade, a firm specializing in large tree transplanting was retained to assess this option. In addition, Aboud and Associates Inc., a local arborist was retained to provide an assessment of the tree and implications of the various roadway alternative scenarios.

Aboud and Associates has been monitoring the health of the tree since May 2001. Their report indicates that the health of the tree is moderate to high with minor crown dieback and a moderate decay of a main surface root.

National Shade has moved over 40 trees since 1993 with one tree being lost. Their report indicates that while the White Oak is on the larger scale of trees that they have moved, given the proper pre transplant and post transplant procedures and long term monitoring, the chances of survival are over 90 percent. The cost to move the tree and the associated pre/post transplant procedures is approximately \$340,000 dollars US (~ \$535,000 dollars Canadian).

The northbound lanes would be located on the east side of the tree on a curvilinear alignment. The location of the northbound lanes is restricted by the location of the existing Regional Operation Centre and would require extensive relocation of parking and property acquisition.

This option significantly affects the Regional Operations Centre requiring additional property and reconstruction of the parking area but does not affect the homes and the vegetation on the west side of the roadway. This option, although it does not require the removal or relocation of the Oak Tree, does have a significant impact on the tree. Paving around the tree on the east side will affect the roof system. This will change the existing drainage conditions, which could stress the tree. The location of the tree in the middle of the road makes it more vulnerable to impact of winter salt spray. It is not known if the tree could survive the change in its environment caused by the roadway construction. In addition, this option requires a retaining wall on the Bronte Creek Bank in order to build the sidewalk and the bike lane. Refer to the bottom concept on Figure 6.6.

A road safety audit of the option to locate the road around the tree also identified this solution as having a number of safety issues. The concerns include the fact that the tree is a hazard in the middle of the road, sight distance may be compromised, and the operation of the roadway may be compromised with respect to wrong way travel.

The additional cost to widen around the tree, in addition to the other road costs, for the property acquisition, reconfiguration of the existing parking area and is \$1,131,000 to widen the road around the tree.

Each of these options was evaluated using the factors outlined in section 6.2. The evaluation matrix generated for these options is shown in Figure 6.7. The east widening alternative is the recommended alternative because it provides for good traffic operation, a preferred road geometry with the best safety potential, has the least impact for noise, vegetation and property impacts to the west side of Bronte Road. This option requires removal or relocation of the White Oak tree. *

6.3.3 Area 3: Bronte Rd at Saw Whet Golf Course

Four alternatives were developed for this area. The options involved widening to the east, widening to the west, balanced widening and a frontage road option. The cross section of the frontage road option is shown in Figure 6.8. The frontage road option was an option put forward by the local residents. The resident's option was upgraded to ensure proper fire access to the Town of Oakville standards, as the laneway would be shared by a number of property owners and would need to meet municipal standards.

Description

The "west widening" option avoids on the Golf Course on the east side of the road but has a significant impact on the homes and vegetation on the west side. Additional property on the west side is required for this option. The overall impact of this option is significant. Refer to the top concept on Figure 6.9.