



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON

Report To:	Chairman and Members of the Planning and Public Works Committee
From:	Patrick Murphy, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works
Date:	August 24, 2002
Re:	Bronte Road (Regional Road 25) - Environmental Study Report - between the Queen Elizabeth Way and Highway 407, Town of Oakville
Report No.:	PPW115-02

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Bronte Road (Regional Road 25) - Environmental Study Report prepared by Marshall Macklin Monaghan, dated August 2002, be endorsed by Regional Council;
2. THAT staff be directed to place the Bronte Road (Regional Road 25) – Environmental Study Report prepared by Marshall Macklin Monaghan, dated August 2002, on the public record for review for a period of 30 days commencing in late September and that staff advertise the Notice of Completion of the Environmental Study Report;
3. THAT staff be directed to prepare a Regional Official Plan Amendment to modify the right-of-way requirements to 42m for Bronte Road between the QEW and Highway 407 and identify the new realignment of Bronte Road; and
4. THAT the Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report PPW115-02 to the Town of Oakville, Ministry of Transportation, and 407 ETR for their information.

REPORT

Background

In May 2001, staff in conjunction with Marshall Macklin Monaghan commenced a Schedule "C" Environmental Assessment (EA) Study to identify improvements required for Bronte Road (Regional Road 25), from Wyecroft Road to Highway 407, in the Town of Oakville. The study was undertaken as a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Municipal Class EA).

The need for the roadway improvements was identified through the North Halton Transportation Plan (1999). The Regional Road 5 and 25 Transportation Master Plan (1999) study identified the potential need for roadway realignments in the area of Palermo. The study reviewed the requirements for widening the road, new road alignments, and improvements to intersections.

#### Public Consultation

Due to the substantial public interest in this study, an expanded public consultation program was carried out. The program included three Public Information Centres (PICs), over 30 meetings with individual property owners and interest groups, and the establishment of a Technical Agency Committee (TAC) as well as a project Steering Committee consisting of three Regional Councillors and senior Halton Region and Town of Oakville staff.

The PICs were held to inform the public and regulatory agencies about the Project and to solicit feedback on the following:

- Environmental features inventoried within the Study Area Corridor,
- Planning process followed,
- Proposed evaluation criteria,
- Alternate Solutions/Designs identified, and
- Preliminary Preferred Solution/Design.

A number of issues were identified by the public including:

- Truck volumes on Bronte Road;
- Traffic congestion/volume on Bronte Road;
- Turning difficulties at the intersections;
- Difficulty entering and exiting driveways;
- Pedestrian/bicycle safety;
- The high operating speed on the roadway;
- The high posted speed (80km/hr) on the roadway; and
- Poor pavement condition.

#### Recommended Solution

Based on the EA, evaluation, and public and regulatory agency consultations carried out throughout the Study process, the Preliminary Preferred Design for widening of the approximately 6.0 km segment of Bronte Road between the QEW and Highway 407 will consist of:

***Bronte Rd at the QEW interchange*** - As the Ministry of Transportation is in the process of reviewing the preliminary design at the interchange, the Bronte Road configuration south of the existing WB QEW off ramp will be excluded from this ESR pending the review of the interchange requirements by MTO.

***Bronte Rd at the Regional Centre*** – The mature Oak tree in this location required that several options be considered in order to fully explore the opportunity of protection this heritage. The White Oak Tree is approximately 240 years old with an average life expectancy of 150 to 250 years. The tree is currently in the last 10 per cent of its life expectancy. A monitoring of the tree's health has been

undertaken by Aboud and Associates Inc since May 2001 and indicated that the health of the tree is moderate to high with minor crown dieback and moderate decay of a main surface root.

Four alternatives for widening of Bronte in this area were considered, widening to the east, to the west, balanced widening and widening around the Oak Tree.

When evaluating all of the issues, widening to the east, which requires the removal of the White Oak Tree, was selected as the preferred option. This option provides the most safe and effective roadway design, limits the environmental impact on Bronte Valley, and minimizes the impact on adjacent residents.

The environmental assessment also considered the possibility of relocating the tree and retained National Shade, a firm specializing in large tree transplanting to assess this option. 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 per cent. The cost to move the tree and the associated pre/post transplant procedures is approximately \$ 340,000 US (~\$535,000 dollars Canadian).

During the detailed design stage, Regional staff will examine the implementation benefits of reforestation along the corridor as an alternative to transplanting the White Oak Tree. During this time, staff will continue to monitor the health of the tree and provide an up to date assessment. Prior to finalizing the detailed design of Bronte Road, staff will report on the recommended option of transplanting or reforestation along the corridor.

***Bronte Rd from the Regional Centre to Upper Middle Road*** - 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 preferred option is widening to the east with an opening in the median to allow for the ingress/egress of the local residents. The majority of the widening will be accommodated within the existing right-of-way and will not impact the residential homes along the west side of the roadway.

***Bronte Rd at Upper Middle Road*** - The existing Bronte Road is centered with the existing right-of-way; and, as the development in this area is limited; the road alignment avoids significant impact to the adjacent properties. This eliminated the need to consider several alternatives at this location. The Region of Halton intends to provide for the new Upper Middle Road proposed by the Town. It is expected that the work will be done concurrently. If the work on Bronte Road proceeds before the Upper Middle Road reconstruction, then the temporary connections as shown in the recommended plans can be implemented.

***Bronte Rd through Palermo*** - The four alternative alignments originally investigated included widening Bronte Road within the existing corridor; realigning Bronte Road with a short by-pass to the west; realigning Bronte Road with a long bypass to the west; and widening Bronte Road with a by-pass to the east. As a result of input received through the public consultation process, an additional option for a shorter realignment was developed. This preferred option incorporates a shifting of Bronte Road to about 130m to the west of the existing intersection. The realignment of the existing roadway provides the least impact on the existing heritage features, limits property acquisition of existing residences, and addresses traffic safety and operations issues, noise impacts and truck traffic concerns raised by residents.