

COMMENT FORM Grey County Transportation Master Plan

Submitted by Edith Galloway President IVDAARA

This Comment Form is a Submission from the Island View Drive and Area Ratepayers' Association (IVDAARA), Georgian Bluffs. The Association was formed in 1975. On July 12, 1991 Letters Patent were filed to incorporate in Ontario as a not-for-profit corporation governed by the **Corporations Act**. The membership spans **Grey Road 1** and Area, east of Wiarton, 33 kilometres around the shore and including Presqu'ile Road and Sutacriti Park. Please visit our website for an overview of our involvement in community and municipal issues.
www.islandviewratepayers.com

As noted, "the median age in Grey County (44.4 years) is above the Provincial median (39.0 years)" and higher than neighbouring counties. The residents along **Grey Road 1** are representative of this higher median age. We are retirees, thought we were retirees and planning to be retirees. Few cottages from the 1950's remain, replaced by homes and weekend homes. Although we no longer daily commute to a workplace, some retiring baby boomers continue to work from a home office.

The Study Design employs consultant language by referring to "review available traffic data" and "using industry planning principles and guidelines". This presents somewhat of a learning curve in order to submit comments. However, one consultant quoted in The Owen Sound Sun Times November 5, 2012 simplified the task. "It's not just about accommodating cars but accommodating people," said Suzette Shier. Thank you Ms. Shier, the IVDAARA submission is about accommodating people not just today but to 2036, a time period parallel to our next 25 years of retirement.

1. What are the biggest transportation issues within your local area?

Our Membership could be classified into two groups, permanent retirees and seasonal/weekend residents with perhaps a common denominator in that the ratepayers have experienced the services of larger urban centres. **Safety** is the biggest transportation issue.

In the winter, roads must be maintained to standards, which will accommodate emergency vehicles and safe passage to local services. In the summer, the roads also convert into a surface for recreational activities; walking for exercise, walking to family and friends homes, walking dogs, jogging and cycling. Along **Grey Road 1**, residences are placed side by side similar to an urban setting but without curbs and sidewalks. The issue of mixing people and cars/trucks in a safe manner is an important issue. Speed limits must reflect multi purpose roads. The need to move traffic efficiently in a link between Owen Sound and Wiarton is challenged with driveways that enter the road at close intervals.

What are the biggest transportation issues within Grey County as a whole?

The greatest asset in Grey County is the natural beauty of the landscape: Georgian Bay, the Islands, the Lakes, the Niagara Escarpment Bluffs, the Blue Mountains, the Highlands and the deep Beaver Valley. At the same time these attributes do form major physical barriers with escarpments to climb and broad rivers to cross. Many roads are unable to link due to these barriers. Even GPS does not provide a sure route at this time. Signage should be improved. **Grey Road 1** sign is a postage size sign. Perhaps small lettering on the sign could read Big Bay –Warton, for example. The same applies to signs in the Highlands to guide one over the mountains and along the Big River. However, signage may become archaic with the change taking place in technology.

Technology, especially hand held communication devices will present new issues in planning transportation. Accommodating people will move up a notch as travellers using GPS for directions will also talk to a smart phone or a tablet and seek others advice for not only the best route but also possible side routes, longer perhaps, but scenic.

Does a well-surfaced wide road ensure travellers will follow this route? The Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin Island have planned wind turbines along the tourist corridors. There has been a reported decline in cars using the ferry service. Without traffic to Manitoulin Island will there be a rationale for Provincial Highway 6 to extend beyond Owen Sound.

2. Do you support Active Transportation (walking / cycling)?

Active Transportation (accommodating people) is a very important use of **Grey Road 1**. The Road is also a link for cycling races and tours from nearby Owen Sound. The summer is a busy cycling time for tourists with heavy backpacks. We support the continuation of bicycle lanes for increased safety in active transportation. The County in its efforts to prepare to add bicycle lanes may be too aggressive in cutting shade trees in mass. Maples and cedars growing along the southern edge of the route serve a purpose of providing shade. It takes years of growth to replace this stolen shade.

Would you use public transit if it was available in urban centres? Would you use public transit if it was available in rural areas? No comment.

3. What do you think should be the priorities for Grey County's Transportation System?

If the TMP is about accommodating people, residents should feel secure in that **the road they bought on** continues to be **the road they live on**. In 2003 many County roads were re-named as County roads or re-named, and passed over to the municipalities.

When the County changes a road name, public notice needs to be given: "published once a week for four successive weeks in "The Sun Times", a newspaper of general circulation and notice has been posted on the County's web site". When a road was re-named in the past, resident's addresses were not altered, thus no need for direct notification to the resident.

Likewise, the Civic 9-1-1 Addressing numbering (green numbers at each residence) were seldom affected. The County would notify emergency services.

Canada Post has now made it mandatory that Civic 9-1-1 Addressing be part of a rural mail address. Along **Grey Road 1** just to the stop sign at the Kemble Women's Institute Lookout, there are 462 Civic 9-1-1 numbers that Canada Post considers a mailing address.

A mailing address is very personal and becomes one's identity in government and other documents. Canada Post invested time to personally communicate to each resident exactly the new address required to ensure mail delivery. Residents were given twelve months to have all addressing changed. Even though computer communication has reduced mail delivery to a mailbox, an address change is still required for paperless mail.

In spite of the offer of twelve months to comply, change is not easily accepted. A huge uproar arose which involved residents, the Municipality, the Post Office and the MP's Office. **Grey Road 1** is an apt description for the scenic shoreline route of the County of Grey's northern most road. Residents expect no further interruptions to their identity.

4. How satisfied are you with the current road infrastructure within Grey County? What would you change?

The section of Grey Road 1 east of Big Bay needs widening and resurfacing to accommodate people/bicycles and traffic. Many RV's travel this route and in sections the road is not wide enough when traffic meets.

Do you have any other comments you would like to share with the study team?

Sections from the Design Study

2.6. Harbour and Airport

Land use development and industry can also be further promoted around the existing airports to provide complimentary service (e.g. development of an Airport Industrial Business Park as in North Bay).

IVDAARA Comment: The Wiarnton Airport location was chosen in the 1940's by the Federal Government because the solid rock formation accommodated large aircraft, not because it would be central to commerce. Transport Canada financed the airport for fifty years for air traffic in a flight path over the airport, not into the airport.

Two municipalities with a tax base from residential assessment should not be placed in a position to reinvent and finance the Wiarnton Airport. A "Grey Bruce Owen Sound Airport Park" would be a good discussion starting point at which to examine the financial feasibility of the Wiarnton Airport.

2.2. Existing Travel Characteristics and Operation

Typically, public perception is that there are too many trucks on the road system and is often a major concern given associated impacts to built communities and land uses. This is particularly true of aggregate-based truck traffic.

IVDAARA Comment:

- Aggregate-based truck traffic:
Aggregate trucks entering the County roads do so without stopping as there are no stop signs at the pit entrances. Oncoming drivers unaware of this practice are easily irritated when the truck turns onto the roadway when it was expected to stop. Signage warning drivers that heavy trucks merge without stopping may help drivers to slow down rather than speed up and be right behind the truck in a dust cloud.
- ATV's
We support the County of Grey's ban on ATV's on County roads.
- Roadside
The County of Grey has one of the oldest forest management by-laws in Ontario, dating back to the 1940's. Unfortunately this comprehensive by-law applies to private landowners and not the County or the municipalities. The TMP Study does not touch on the value and protection of roadside vegetation as shade, windbreaks and natural landscape.