

Thorold Transportation Master Plan Background Report F: **Goods Movement Strategy**

Final Report
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1 Introduction

Goods movement is central to Thorold's identity and geography. The 40 km Welland Canal passes through the City, carrying nearly 3,000 ships per year between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. However significant, the impacts on Thorold's road network are minimal; the Thorold tunnel is the main route across the canal and as such is not impeded by shipping traffic.

Trucks, while less prominent, are the focus of this goods movement overview. Trucks have a direct impact on the road network for all road users and trucks themselves require efficient access to industrial areas, provincial highways, and businesses. This document provides an overview of trucking in Thorold and provides recommendations for how Thorold can manage truck traffic in the future.

2 Existing Policy

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The Provincial Policy Statement consists of a set of policies for building strong healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting public health and safety. Several policies in the Provincial Policy Statement relate to land uses in proximity to major facilities, such as railways, pipelines, airports, and other transportation infrastructure and corridors. These are:

- **Policy 1.2.6.1:** Major facilities and sensitive land uses should be planned to ensure they are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other to prevent or mitigate adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term viability of major facilities.
- **Policy 1.6.8.3:** Planning authorities shall not permit development in planned corridors that could preclude or negatively affect the use of the corridor for the purpose(s) for which it was identified. New development proposed on adjacent lands to existing or planned corridors and transportation facilities should be compatible with, and supportive of, the long-term purposes of the corridor and should be designed to avoid, mitigate or minimize negative impacts on and from the corridor and transportation facilities.
- **Policy 1.6.9.1:** Planning for land uses in the vicinity of airports, rail facilities and marine facilities shall be undertaken so that:
 - a) their long-term operation and economic role is protected; and
 - b) airports, rail facilities and marine facilities and sensitive land uses are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other, in accordance with policy 1.2.6.

2.2 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe contains several policies that are relevant to Thorold's Goods Movement Strategy. These include the following components of policy 3.2.4 (Moving Goods):

The Province and municipalities will work with agencies and transportation service providers to:

- (a) co-ordinate, optimize, and ensure the long-term viability of major goods movement facilities and corridors;
- (c) promote and better integrate multimodal goods movement and freight-supportive land use and transportation system planning; and
- (d) accommodate agricultural vehicles and equipment, as appropriate.

The Growth Plan further states that:

Municipalities will provide for the establishment of priority routes for goods movement, where feasible, to facilitate the movement of goods into and out of employment areas, including prime employment areas, and other areas of significant commercial activity and to provide alternate routes connecting to the provincial network.

2.3 Niagara Official Plan

The Niagara Region Official Plan contains policies to manage the impacts of goods movement facilities and traffic, while recognizing the importance of these facilities to the Region.

- **Policy 9.H.1.1:** The Region and the local municipalities will provide for the establishment of priority routes for goods movement, where feasible, to facilitate the movement of goods into and out of areas of significant employment, industrial and commercial activity and to provide alternate routes connecting to the provincial network.
- **Policy 9.H.1.2:** Local municipalities will plan for land uses in Urban Areas adjacent to, or in the vicinity of transportation facilities, such as inter-modal facilities, rail yards, airports, ports and major highway interchanges that are compatible with and supportive of, the primary goods movement function of these facilities.
- **Policy 9.H.1.3:** It is the policy of the Region to work with appropriate levels of government to improve all modes of transportation infrastructure including cross-border connections, upgrades to the Welland Canal and other maritime facilities, improved capacity for rail services and road improvements, such as the extension of Highway 406 to Port Colborne, improvements to Netherby Road between Welland and Douglastown, and development of the Niagara to GTA corridor as well as continuous upgrades and improvements to the QEW.

2.4 Thorold Official Plan

Like Niagara Region, Thorold's Official Plan contains policies that focus on the need to manage the impacts of goods movement facilities and traffic.

- **Policy D2.5:** Truck traffic in the City shall be managed by:
 - a) Directing it away from, or around, residential or sensitive areas where the road capacities are inadequate or where there is a potential for noise and/or safety hazards, and, in particular, designate, establish and monitor truck routes in co-ordination with the Region;
 - b) Encouraging the relocation of existing land uses (which generate volumes of truck traffic which contribute to current noise and safety hazards) to more suitable locations in the City; and,
 - c) Discouraging the movement of heavy truck traffic on all collector and local streets in residential areas.
- **Policy D2.10:** Planning for land uses in the vicinity of rail and marine facilities shall be undertaken in a manner that protects the long-term operation and economic role of the facility and integrates surrounding land use in a compatible manner.

3 Goods Movement in Thorold

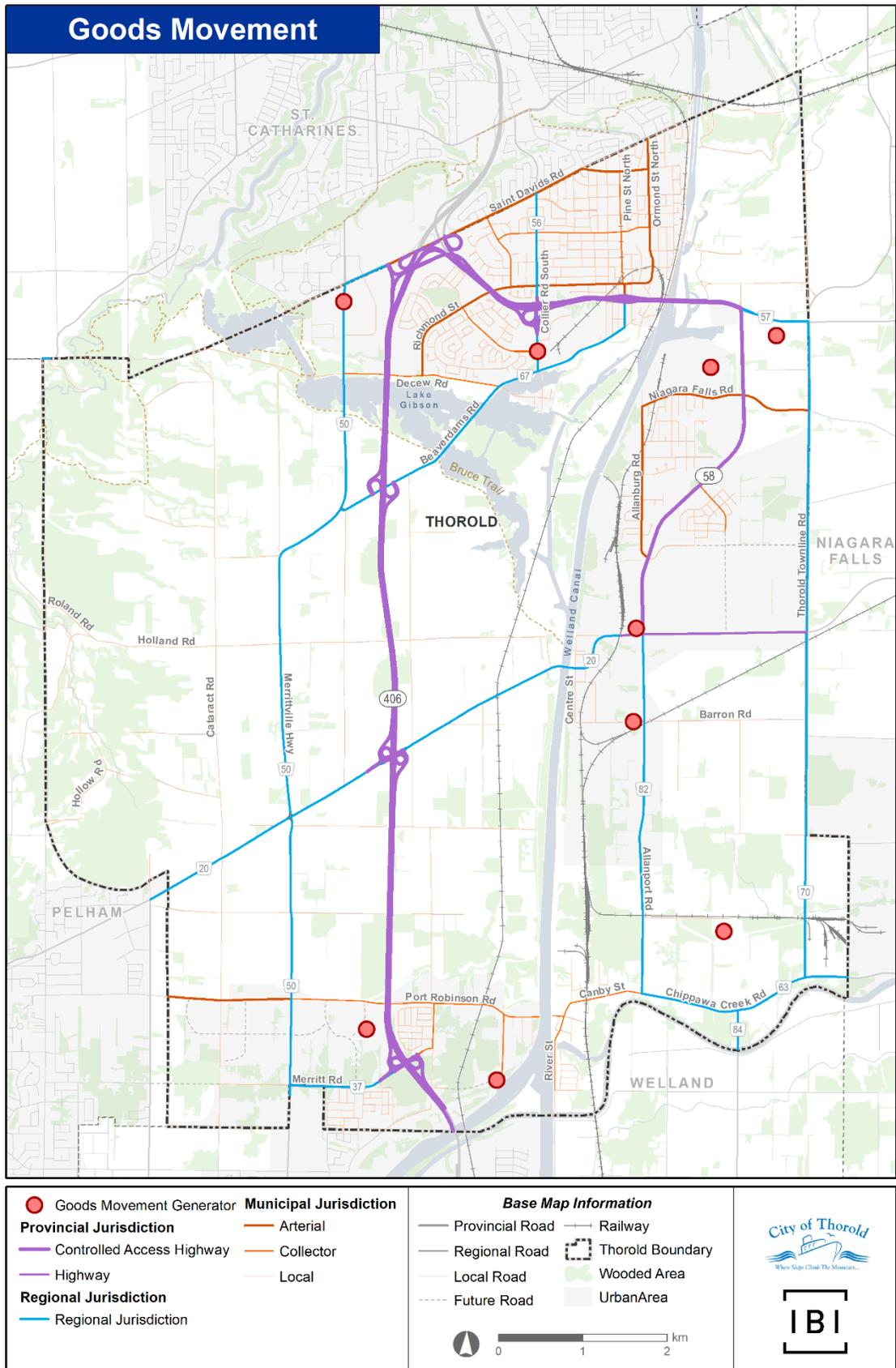
Niagara Region has significant goods movement volumes that travel primarily on the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW). It is estimated that trucks represent 15% of weekday volumes on the QEW (2011). The Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan estimated that goods movement traffic in Niagara Region will grow by 57% between 2011 and 2041, from approximately 35,000 to 55,000 daily trips.

Most of the goods movement traffic in Niagara Region is through traffic. That is, they start and end outside of Niagara Region. Only about 15% of trips that cross the Canada-US border start or end in Niagara Region, and of these 40% start/end in St. Catharines or Lincoln. The City of Thorold is not a major activity centre for trucks. Current truck volumes in Thorold are low and are expected to increase modestly between now and 2041.

3.1 Existing Generators

Areas in Thorold that produce and attract truck traffic, highlighted in Exhibit 3.1, are located throughout the City. In addition to these areas, all residential areas and business areas in Thorold generate some commercial vehicle traffic; residents have packages delivered and businesses have products delivered.

Exhibit 3.1: Primary Goods Movements Generators in Thorold



3.2 Truck Routes

There are no formal truck routes in Thorold or Niagara Region, but trucks are permitted to use all Regional Roads and Provincial highways, which are highlighted in Exhibit 3.1. Most of the significant goods movement generators in Thorold are located near Regional Roads and therefore a formal network of truck routes is not currently needed in Thorold.

3.3 Goods Movement and Complete Streets

As part of the TMP, Thorold is adopting a Complete Streets approach to planning its transportation network. Balancing the needs of all road users – in particular, planning with a renewed focus on pedestrians and cyclist – can pose challenges for goods movement. This section provides guidance on how to balance the needs of freight movement with the need to safely accommodate pedestrians and cyclists on the road network.

The interaction between Complete Streets principles and goods movement generally occurs in two locations: on truck corridors adjacent to industrial areas and commercial main streets that generate a lot of truck traffic and pedestrian/cyclist activity.

In the former locations, the Ministry of Transportations Freight Supportive Guidelines contain several recommendations to manage the needs of trucks and vulnerable road users. These include:

- Limiting the number of cycling corridors that overlap with higher volume truck corridors;
- Planning an off-street bike path where cycling routes and truck routes overlap;
- Implementing marked bike lanes and signs where cycling routes and truck routes overlap, and an off-road facility is not possible; and
- Ensuring that truck access points are well signed with cyclist-oriented signage.

Main street commercial areas present other challenges. While not typically high-volume goods movement corridors, commercial and retail uses generate a lot of delivery traffic. Delivery traffic often conflicts with active transportation users. For example, delivery vehicles may illegally park in bike lane to make deliveries. In cases where road space is a constraint for making deliveries, drivers may temporarily park unlawfully, resulting in fines for the delivery company and temporary congestion on the roadway.

Several strategies can be used to manage deliveries on commercial main streets. These include:

- Providing designated on-street loading areas where off-street loading facilities are not possible;
- Ensuring that new developments provide off-street loading facilities;

- Working with local businesses to understand their delivery needs; and
- Providing education and enforcement of appropriate delivery procedures.

4 Recommendations

The following are recommended actions to support goods movement in the City of Thorold both now and as the city grows.

- **Data Collection** – Collect truck counts at regular intervals at key locations in the City, focusing on areas that generate truck traffic as identified in Exhibit 3.1. Work with Niagara Region to coordinate and expand data collection efforts.
- **Goods Movement Network** – Based on the data collection above, work with Niagara Region to develop a designated goods movement network, if it becomes warranted in the future.
- **Complete Streets** – Implement the strategies identified in Section 3.3 so that the needs of freight movement are considered when designing Complete Streets.
- **Engagement** – Engage with goods movement stakeholders when projects and other changes to the road network are being planned.