



City of Hamilton

Report for Consideration

To: Mayor and Members
Public Works Committee

Date: May 4, 2026

Report No: PW26028

Subject/Title: Safari Road Municipal Class Environmental Assessment
(Kirkwall to Valens)

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 13

Recommendations

- a) That the General Manager, Public Works, **BE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED** to file the Safari Road (Kirkwall Road to Valens Road) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Project File Report with the Municipal Clerk for a minimum thirty (30) day public review period; and
- b) That upon completion of the 30-Day Review Period , the completion of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks review period and resolution of any Section 16 Order requests, the General Manager, Public Works, **BE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED** to proceed with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative (attached as Appendix “C” to Report PW26028) to be funded from the existing capital funds as per the “Financial Considerations” section of this report and through future budget requests.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to present the final assessment findings and to request approval to proceed with the final stages of the Safari Road (Kirkwall Road to Valens Road) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process for the project.
- The section of road being studied includes a significant segment that traverses a low-lying area that is part of a regulated wetland complex. This segment of road is subject to frequent and prolonged flooding, which has resulted in the closure of the road to through traffic.
- The preferred alternative recommends reconstructing the road to current day standards including, elevating the low portion of the roadway using a combination of fill embankment and retaining wall to limit intrusion into the adjacent wetland.
- The preferred alternative ensures operational safety for all road users (vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists) in alignment with Complete Streets and Vision Zero design principles, while minimizing impacts to the adjacent natural features, including the wetlands, watercourses, wooded areas, and wildlife.
- Issuing a Notice of Completion, the completion of the thirty (30) day review period, the completion of the Ministry's review period, and the resolution of any Section 16 Order requests is required before the project can proceed to detailed design and construction.

Financial Considerations

The capital cost of proceeding with the design and construction of the Environmental Assessment recommendations is estimated to be approximately \$8,100,000. This is based on a Class D cost estimate developed through the Environmental Assessment and it includes: detailed design, utilities, roadworks, structures, eco-passages, and property needs. As a Class D estimate, the amount is subject to change and will be refined as the project proceeds through detailed design and the applicable budget year.

The Class D estimate will be reflected and refined through the Tax Supported Capital Budget (Transportation Network Budget) and the Rates Supported Capital Budget.

While the exact construction times are dependent on the completion of the Environmental Assessment and on the completion of the detailed design phase, it is anticipated that construction could commence in 2029 and reach completion in 2030. The timing of the planned works will also be coordinated with the Municipal Drain project.

Upon completion of the Environmental Assessment, the budget items associated with Safari Road (Kirkwall Road to Valens Road) project will be updated to reflect the future forecast.

The current total existing and forecasted funding in the 2026 Tax Supported Capital Budget, under Project ID 4032219321, is \$ 4,791,000 and is broken down as follows:

- \$291,000 in 2026
- \$4,500,000 in 2028

It is also important to recognize that the Class D estimate for the design and construction is based on the City moving forward with the statutory process to designate the reach of watercourse, downstream of Safari Road, as a Municipal Drain and completing the associated drainage works downstream of the road. Similarly, the construction timelines for this project are also dependent on implementation of the Municipal Drain works. If the City does not complete the Municipal Drain, the Preferred Alternative Solution can still be implemented. However, the road will need to be raised higher, to achieve the applicable flood resiliency standard. This would in turn necessitate construction of higher and longer retaining walls than are reflected in the current Class D estimate of approximately \$8,100,000. The additional cost of this work is estimated to be approximately \$2,200,000.

Background

The subject section of Safari Road is 2.5 km long and is situated in rural Hamilton. In accordance with the City's approved Transportation Master Plan, Safari Road forms part of a designated east-west heavy vehicle/truck route and serves to move traffic between Highway No.6 and Highway No.8. Considering Safari Road's function in the City's road network, it has been identified for structural improvements and upgrades to also facilitate active transportation, in accordance with the City's Complete Street Guidelines and in keeping with Vision Zero.

The middle third of the subject section of Safari Road is relatively low lying and bisects an area of natural wetland. This "lower" lying area of the road is vulnerable to flooding. Flooding of the road had historically been observed to be short-term, and infrequent, typically resulting from spring melt or after abnormally heavy rainfall. To ensure safety, this required temporary closure of the road to through traffic. However, in recent years, the frequency and duration of flooding progressed resulting in the need to close the road to through traffic more frequently and for longer durations. The flooding of Safari Road corresponded with the presence of prolonged high-water levels in the adjacent wetland area. As a result of the increased severity of the flooding, the damage to the road, and associated repairs needed to open the road, also became more extensive and costly. Ultimately, an engineering firm was brought in to evaluate the structural condition of the road and, by 2022/2023, deterioration from repeated and extended flooding was such that it was no longer safe to reopen the road to vehicle traffic without extensive rehabilitation works.

In response to the overall flooding challenges, two projects were initiated: a Municipal Drain project and this Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. Both projects are coordinated and are taking place in parallel but address different challenges, produce different solutions, and are subject to different pieces of legislation. The Municipal Drain project looks to address drainage challenges on private property whereas this Municipal Class Environmental Assessment focuses on improvements within the right of way. This report, PW26028, is exclusively for the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment which examined the feasibility of implementing improvements on Safari Road a level of

service, including public safety, in accordance with its status as an arterial road and part of the heavy truck route.

Analysis

In following the Schedule B process, the Safari Road (Kirkwall Road to Valens Road) Environmental Assessment aims to fulfil Phases 1 (Problem and Opportunity Statement) and 2 (Alternative Solutions) of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process. Key findings and considerations from the project are detailed below.

Phase 1: Problem and/or Opportunity Statement

Through engagements and a preliminary review of the surrounding area, it was determined that a solution needed to be developed that would provide an adequate and safe road platform and restore operation and connectivity of the wider area network for trucks, residents, and cyclists, in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan.

Phase 2: Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

Three (3) alternative solutions were identified and evaluated as part of Phase 2 of this study. These were: Alternative 1 - Do Nothing; Alternative 2 - Close the Road; Alternative 3 - Raise the Road. Further details on the options and the evaluation criteria are included in Appendix “B” to Report PW26028 and will be detailed in Section 4.0 of the Project File Report. The primary evaluation criteria are summarized as follows:

- Technical Environment: impact on safety; truck route and active transportation requirements; drainage and stormwater management requirements.
- Socio-Economic Environment: impact on adjacent land use, properties, and access.

- Natural Environment: impact on wetlands, wildlife, habitats, vegetation, and watershed connectivity.
- Cultural Environment: impact on heritage resources such as archaeology and cultural heritage.
- Financial Environment: relative capital cost; on-going maintenance and operational costs.

The selection of the recommended alternative solution involved identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the various alternatives. The recommended alternative solution was determined to be Alternative 3 - Raise the Road. The recommended alternative provides the required level of flood resiliency and operational safety for all road users (vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists) while minimizing impacts to adjacent properties and natural features, including wetland, watercourse, and wooded area. A cross-section depicting the preferred design is provided in Appendix "C" to Report PW26028.

Legislated Requirements

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study follows the planning and design process of the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, October 2000, as amended 2024. The City has completed this study in accordance with the planning process applicable to Schedule B projects under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. These projects are approved under the Environmental Assessment Act, as long as they are planned, designed and constructed according to the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. If the City does not follow the process outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association's Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document, it could be found to be in contravention of the Environmental Assessment Act.

Through following the legislated process, the study has fulfilled the Class Environmental Assessment requirements for Phases 1 and 2 to determine the Preferred Alternative solution and to document the results in the final report.

Following Council approval, the Project File Report will become available to the public for a minimum thirty (30) day review period, during which the public can submit any final comments they may have with respect to this study. This will also be an opportunity for any interested party to request a Section 16 Order. Upon completion of the 30-Day Review Period, completion of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks review period, and resolution of any Section 16 Order requests, the study will therefore fulfil all legal requirements of the planning process pertaining to Schedule B projects.

Policy Implications

The recommended Preferred Alternative, developed during the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, is consistent with the Rural Hamilton Official Plan, Stormwater Management Master Plan, City-Wide Transportation Master Plan, Complete-Liveable-Better Streets Policy and Framework, Vision Zero, and all other corporate plans and policies. This recommendation will not bind the Corporation or alter or contravene any established City Policy.

Relevant Engagement During the Project

Members of Council: The study area spans Ward 13. Project details have been provided, throughout the project, to the Ward Councillor's Office via various communications, including invitation to the two (2) Public Information Centres.

Indigenous Nations: The following Indigenous Nations were engaged during the Environmental Assessment process: the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (represented by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Chiefs Council and the Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council), Mississaugas (represented by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), the Huron-Wendat (represented by the Huron-Wendat at Wendake), and the Métis.

Public and Stakeholders: The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process requires public and stakeholder consultation, according to the requirements for a Schedule B project. This project surpassed minimum engagement requirements for a Schedule B project; the first public meeting was voluntary and was implemented based on preliminary feedback from the community who had indicated an interest in early engagement. The key public consultation actions are summarized as follows:

- A Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre #1 was issued on August 30, 2024 and September 6, 2024, in the Hamilton Spectator. A mailout was also sent to pertinent agencies, City staff and all landowners within the study area. Public Information Centre # 1 was held on September 10, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The PIC was held in-person at Valens Community Centre, 1818 Valens Road, Puslinch and it provided attendees an opportunity to review display information, present comments and discuss them with City of Hamilton and their consultants.
- A Notice of Public Information Centre # 2 was issued on September 5, 2025, and September 12, 2025, in the Hamilton Spectator. A mailout was also sent to pertinent agencies, City staff and all landowners within the study area. Public Information Centre #2 was held on September 16, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Public Information Centre was held in-person Valens Community Centre, 1818 Valens Road, Puslinch. The panels presented at the Public Information Centre #2 have been attached as Appendix “D” to Report PW26028.
- The pertinent project information was also made available throughout the study on both the project website (<https://www.hamilton.ca/SafariRdEA>) and on the Engage Hamilton website (<http://www.engage.hamilton.ca/SafariRdEA>).

Internal: The following groups were consulted in the preparation of this Project File Report and the associated technical studies: Engineering Services; Hamilton Water; Transportation; Transportation Planning and Parking; and Planning.

Alternatives

None.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

his report is related to the following Council Strategic Priorities:.

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development

1.3. Accelerate our response to climate change

This road forms part of the City's arterial road network. However, damage from repeated flooding has made conditions unsafe and required the road to be closed to through traffic for an extended period of time. The reconstruction of this road will entail raising it and providing augmented culverts to achieve current day flood resiliency standards that are appropriate to provide reliability and safety in accordance with its status as an arterial road.

2. Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods

2.2. Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit or car

This road has been designated as both a truck route and rural cycle route in the City's Transportation Master Plan. The reconstruction will allow for vehicle lanes and cycle lanes to be established that are in accordance with current municipal standards. Reopening this road to through traffic will also allow for the removal of temporary detours which divert trucks to less desirable adjacent areas

3. Responsiveness & Transparency

3.2 Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving

This study included the application of public engagement practices through two public information centres and communications with the public that occurred throughout the duration of the project.

Previous Reports Submitted

N/A.

Consultation

As noted previously, the following groups were consulted in the preparation of this Environmental Study Report and the associated technical studies: Engineering Services; Hamilton Water; Transportation; Transportation Planning and Parking; and Planning.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Study Area Map

Appendix B: Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

Appendix C: Preferred Design Cross-Section

Appendix D: Public Information Centre 2 Panels

Prepared by:

Megan Salvucci, Senior Project Manager, Engineering Services, Public Works

John Kukalis, Senior Project Manager, Engineering Services, Public Works

Submitted and Recommended by:

Brian Hollingworth, Director, Engineering Services, Public Works