

**Comments and Discussion: Residents Meeting Held on Oct 18, 2021 Concerning
RMAP Proposed Designation of Anderson St as a Truck Route and Bridge
Crossing of Grand River at Highway 29**

Attendance: see attachment 1

Five issues were identified for further discussion – (1) Pedestrian Safety/John Black School (2) Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve (3) Traffic/Noise/Health (4) Planning/Cost/Justification (5) Cultural/Black History/Heritage

Pedestrian Safety/John Black School/Maranatha Christian School

- Our area is home to many families who have children in attendance at the local schools. Many of these children walk and take their bikes to school, and use Anderson, Lamond, St. George and St. Andrew Streets. Some of these streets are currently inadequate for safe pedestrian use and have no sidewalks. There are very serious safety concerns related to turning these streets into busy commercial thoroughfares used by heavy trucks travelling at speeds considerably greater than the current speed limits.
- John Black School students frequently use the Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve for outdoor educational purposes, and as well they use Lamond, Anderson, and St. Andrew Street East for physical education and special events such as the annual Terry Fox Run. It is usual to see large numbers of students using these roads at all times during the school year. This use has greatly increased since covid 19 lockdowns as teachers strive to utilize more outdoor education for students in accordance with public health recommendations.
- The Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve access from the Anderson Street parking area gives students the ability to study the unique river ecosystem and diversity of the Grand River at this location. This is an extremely quiet, out of the way place that is ideal for outdoor education. It is safe to access, and it is quiet enough that the students can hear their teachers without a constant roar of truck traffic.
- These streets are also well used, popular walking routes for families, seniors, dog walkers, runners/joggers and cyclists. These existing uses and enjoyment of our quiet residential streets will be lost if a truck route is permitted. Being able to exercise outdoors by walking is considered to be a cornerstone to a long and healthy life by most health experts. One only needs some good walking shoes, and a safe route to stay fit and healthy all during the year. The loss of being able to

enjoy this activity is very serious and very real. Who will be walking along the truck route if it is constructed? No one.

Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve

- The unique natural environment of the Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve is a sensitive area and provincially significant. It is the prime destination for flyfishing close to major populations in Southern Ontario. It attracts local flyfisherman, but also fishermen from the Tri-City area, GTA, London, Kingston and Windsor. Even international flyfisherman from far away places such as Saudi Arabia have sought out this beautiful area. It is easy to see how unique it is. How many similar other places exist such as this in Ontario that you know about? This section of the Grand River is very special and unique.
- The uniqueness of the river at the proposed crossing point is partially created by the steady flow of cold water from Lake Belwood, created by the Shand Dam. This stretch of the river below the dam has also had very limited impacts from agricultural and other uses on this stretch, and the water is clean and clear. The rock bottom favours a very productive hatch of aquatic fauna and insects, and it is this food source that creates this niche ecosystem that supports a complex web of top avian predators such as owls, hawks, and bald eagles, as well as songbirds, migratory birds, trout, and mammals such as beaver, otter, foxes, porcupine, and deer. A bridge crossing at this location would bring with it dust, noise, road salt and sand that will pollute the river and destroy this valuable ecosystem forever. It will have a negative domino effect on all of the fish and wildlife populations that are currently thriving in this ecosystem.
- Above all, flyfishermen value the sanctity that their sport provides. The high noise levels from trucks crossing a bridge and ascending and descending the significant grades at this location would be completely incompatible with the experience of flyfishing. The high natural values of this area will be degraded and destroyed by truck traffic noise and road pollutants especially salt, sand, vehicular emissions, fine particulates from tires and brake components, and PAHs from oil and grease.
- The tourism income from the flyfishermen is totally sustainable, locally beneficial and will be lost forever if this area is written off by heavy trucks. One estimate of the value of this activity to our local community is \$1.4M. In contrast, local businesses will not be able to capture any income from commercial traffic seeking the fastest and easiest way through Fergus.
- Anderson Street is home to many huge, old growth trees – many are at least 150 – 200 years old. They are huge, healthy specimens of oaks, maples and other varieties as well. Other communities respect and protect trees such as this for their grand scale, beauty and the environmental benefits they produce that are

enjoyed by small wildlife populations and humans alike. The environmental benefits and quality of life benefits of healthy large trees cannot be overstated. Trees like this cannot be planted and enjoyed at this scale within one's lifetime. These trees clearly exist within the road ROW, and would need to be removed in order to accommodate truck traffic. This would be a completely unacceptable tradeoff. Conservation of large mature trees is also an important national cause, because they are very important resources in our battle against climate change and for what they represent as symbols of our living history.

- The area of the Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve has been developed and nurtured by hundreds of hours of community volunteers time planting trees (including under the Green Legacy Program), installing infrastructure, and doing clean ups. The Reserve itself was very generously donated by the Grant Family who recognized what a special area it is and wanted to secure its protection and enjoyment for public use for future generations as well as preserve the legacy of Richard Pierpoint. The environment and enjoyment of this area would be seriously diminished if a bridge is constructed and trucks permitted to dominate this section of the Grand River's beautiful valley.

Traffic/Noise/Health

- The assessment of our areas transportation needs would benefit from a comparative study of how the challenges of planning and design of truck bypasses have been addressed in other communities. The destruction of our neighbourhood in order to impose a transportation corridor through it is unjustified and irrational.
- The noise impact of truck traffic at this particular location would be more severe than on level terrain because of the grades involved at Highway 29 and extending up Anderson Street to Highway 19. The noise of diesel engines ascending and descending throughout this extreme gradient into the valley of the Grand River would cause increased noise levels and further exacerbate the harm and injury that this proposal would cause residents along the route, as well as on nearby streets.
- The surficial disturbance from ground shaking from heavy trucks and use of engine brakes would have the potential to damage residential wells that are nearby the road bed and within the proposed corridor.
- There have been provincial air quality studies undertaken regarding the human health impacts of residents living within the heavy vehicular emission plume along major commercial corridors. Studies such as the one of the Huron Church corridor in Windsor Ontario have shown that serious health concerns exist, particularly for vulnerable people such as seniors or those with asthma or other lung conditions. As well, these vehicles emit tiny particles that float in the air for long periods of

time that are carcinogenic and should not be inhaled to protect human health. These studies further illustrate the fact that a truck route would be completely incompatible with a single family residential area in terms of human health.

Planning/Cost/Justification

- Turning a quiet residential street into a county road and a truck by pass is completely incompatible with the existing character of the residential neighbourhood, which has some of the highest residential property values in the community and its residents pay the highest taxes. Land use and transportation go hand in hand, and it is totally insufficient to plan one in isolation of the other as is plainly being done now. The devaluation of these properties will represent millions of dollars of losses of private personal investment that have been created, in some cases, over several generations. These losses cannot be fairly passed onto the affected property owners to bear without compensation – known as injurious effect. The court costs and costs of injurious effect compensation need to be factored into the viability of this option and the decision making process. Does this unnecessary expense represent the best use of scarce public tax dollars to be borne by future property owners in our community? Would these funds not be best used in addressing other pressing needs?
- Many residents at our meeting were completely mystified why it would be necessary to destroy our neighbourhood for such a poorly justified purpose. No one was aware of the virtual meeting held this past summer or had the opportunity to attend it, however some did respond to the survey. Very little has been done to communicate or interact with the community on this important matter. Similarly, no one present at our meeting was aware of when, or how the Township betrayed the neighbourhood by offering Anderson Street as a concept for a truck bypass originally in its long term transportation plan several years ago. In fact, our Township Ward Councillor, Mr. Kitras was unaware himself that this designation had been made in a Centre Wellington concept plan until only recently. How has an idea this bad gotten this far? How was it approved without any consultation or objection from local, affected residents?
- As taxpayers, the entire Wellington County needs to question the feasibility of a truck route option that requires the immense funding of another major crossing of the Grand River, when we cannot look after the bridges that we already have. For example, the Township of Centre Wellington has 111 bridges, which cross over the many waterways that wend their way throughout the Township. This number is made up of both bridges and culverts that have a span that is 3 meters or more on township roads and walkways. There are currently 12 closed

as the township does not have the resources to repair and or replace them. We have 27 structures that are identified as needing repair or replacement by 2030 at a cost of over 28 million dollars. A 2% dedicated capital levy was approved by Council in December 2015 and Centre Wellington taxpayers continue to support an infrastructure program to replace or reconstruct our bridges. This term of council will not be able to fix the existing bridges that are closed and our residents are continually asked to pay a levy for bridges. It is very difficult to understand why we would want to build more bridges when we cannot maintain the ones we have now. Truck route options that significantly add to high infrastructure costs should be avoided so that bad planning decisions are not compounded by bad fiscal management decisions that will burden future residents and elected representatives with unsustainable commitments far into the future.

- <https://www.centrewellington.ca/en/living-here/bridges-and-culverts.aspx#>

Cultural/Black History/Heritage

- This is the site of the first settlement in Fergus, beginning in 1820, when Richard Pierpoint was granted 100 acres of land on the Grand River in Garafraxa Township at this location. Pierpoint's settlement was a settlement of Black Canadians, person's fleeing enslavement and people wanting to build a Black community in Canada. In 2013, the Government of Canada named a federal building in London Ontario the Richard Pierpoint Building. The Pierpoint Flyfishing Reserve exists on the remnant lands of the original land grant. We should be protecting and celebrating our heritage. It is insulting to Pierpoint's legacy that we ignore and disrespect this historically significant site by imposing all of the negative impacts of a truck route on it. Should the County approve building a truck route, it would severely diminish and limit its value and public use.
- Link
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/richard-pierpoint>

County Archivist:

- There are a number of resources that discuss the life of Richard Pierpoint. He was granted land in West Garafraxa Township at Concession 1 Lot 6 North East ½.
- Archives staff put this story map together of Richard's life earlier this year:
[Richard Pierpoint \(arcgis.com\)](#)

- A search of our Online Collections catalogue finds a number of other resources most of which you would have to visit the Archives to review:
[561963FC-A404-418F-9ECC-780511471394 \(pastperfectonline.com\)](https://pastperfectonline.com/561963FC-A404-418F-9ECC-780511471394)
- In among the online resources are references to articles in the Wellington County Historical Society's annual journal "Wellington County History". These articles are online and can be found here: [Wellington County Local History Articles Museum - Wellington County](#) Just type in the search term Pierpoint
- You may have seen the heritage minute that Historica Canada has put together : [Richard Pierpoint | Historica Canada](#)
- A book by Peter Meyler was mentioned as well as a reference that is available at Indigo:

<https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/a-stolen-life-searching-for/9781896219554-item.html?ikwid=a+stolen+life&ikwsec=Home&ikwidx=1#algoliaQueryId=ef8>

It was also noted that it is understood that Heritage Canada is considering a Pierpoint plaque that is planned for Centre Wellington to be installed at this location.

- It is noted that other jurisdictions have recognized Richard Pierpoint, but not here where his land grant was originally given.

<https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news/council/2021/09/28/re-naming-park-after-black-loyalist-proud-moment-for-st-catharines.html?fbclid=IwAR1TCy9yE1C-Dx9oC51URnr4zCg0Twba1ELIf8aQn12m332hKD2R-g3bwcY>

Community Heritage Landscape Report:

<https://www.connectcw.ca/CHL>

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Study and Inventory was approved by Council on June 28, 2021.

Pierpoint settlement identified as an area that requires further research (NOT one of the culturally significant areas!!). Specifically states needs consultation with Black community and that archeological analysis is beyond the scope of report.

5.3 The earliest known settlement was Pierpoint, in West Garafraxa on the eastern edge of present-day Fergus. The settlement was established starting in 1819 by freed black slaves, who were granted their freedom for their service to the British during the American Revolution. The area later became known as Glenlamond (Hutchinson 1998:271).

Garafraxa Township

Garafraxa was surveyed by Samuel Ryckman and Joseph Griffin in 1821. Garafraxa was surveyed into double front lots of 200 acres (McIlwraith 1997:57, Fig 4.6). In 1869 the township was divided into West Garafraxa and East Garafraxa (Hutchinson 1997:246). The earliest settlement in the township was Pierpoint, established by Africans who were previously enslaved and brought to the United States by their captors. Fleeing slavery, they enlisted themselves in Butler's Rangers to fight for the British during the American Revolution. They regained their freedom through their allegiance to Britain and came to Upper Canada, first being granted land in the Niagara area and then coming to West Garafraxa starting in 1819. The settlement became known as Pierpoint after Richard Pierpoint, who arrived in 1822 and was a leader of the community. By 1826, Pierpoint had six or seven log cabins and at least 35 acres of cleared land. One of the Pierpoint settlers, a Mr. Scott, built the first house in Fergus, on the site of the present Fergus library at 190 St. Andrew Street West, and he built the first bridge across the Grand River on Tower Street with the help of other Pierpoint residents (Hutchinson 271 - 2). Further settlers arrived in 1826 (Byerly 1935:60). West Garafraxa had one village, Belwood, and a number of small hamlets, including Carmel, Glen Lamond, Living Springs/Green Settlement, Metz, Craigsholme, and Dracon (Byerly 1935, Hutchinson 1997)

6.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

The evaluation of candidate C.H.L.s found 18 of the 23 areas to meet the criteria as Significant C.H.L.s. Significant C.H.L.s met a range of criteria in all three evaluation categories: cultural heritage value or interest, historical integrity, and community value. The information produced at the inventory stage of the identification of C.H.L.s is of a preliminary nature. Further understanding of cultural heritage values, heritage attributes and boundaries, and identification of specific protective measures to enable conservation are recommended to occur as part of future technical studies.

6.2 Areas Determined to Require Further Research

The following area was determined to require further research and consultation to determine its cultural heritage value, historical integrity, and community value.

Additional information is included in Appendix J. Pierpoint This area is located generally in Lot 6, Concession 1, Garafraxa Township, east of Fergus on the north side of the Grand River. Pierpoint is recognized as the earliest known settlement within the former townships and is

associated with the early Black Canadian community in the township which demonstrates the area's cultural heritage value. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine if the archaeological remnants of this important settlement are extant. Based on the current level of analysis, it is recommended that further research be conducted to understand its potential for historical integrity. Specific consultation with the Black Canadian community should be initiated to appropriately determine community value. This area may be considered for an interpretation plan to disseminate the history to the broader community

Appendix J- last page is specifically about Pierpoint but also included throughout appendix (if link doesn't work, access appendices in report)

https://ehq-production-canada.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/c803815c4e09582f2fb6d6bf5d8d6e3a9cdc677f/original/1632327856/d7374f16cb87390023b690d9c68aee65_Centre_Wellington_Cultural_Heritage_Landscape_Study_Volume_2_June_15_2021.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIBJCUK4Z04WUUA%2F20211030%2Fca-central-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211030T150550Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=1b1f641084960dec6856967babff0b819af548b8ae98a65e3e1f93130ea6b96f

museum and archives exhibit on Pierpoint:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fb872c6d06f84fc88aac5c37883d199a>