



Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

December 22, 2025

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON
L0S 1T0
Attention: Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment

RE: Application for consent for conservation severance from property described as PT TWP LT 92 NIAGARA AS IN RO561129; NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE (municipal address: 6147 Niagara Townline Road (Stamford Townline Road))

We respectfully submit this Planning Justification Report in support of a consent application to sever land for conservation purposes and to secure a portion of the Bruce Trail Optimum Route corridor.

Proposed Development

The subject land comprises ± 0.47 hectares (1.16 acres) located on Niagara Townline Road/Stamford Townline Road, east of St. Paul Avenue, in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The property is designated Escarpment Natural and Escarpment Protection in the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Edword Friesen and Jessica Friesen are the owners of the subject land. The purpose and effect of our application is to support the severance of vacant land that the owner is selling to the BTC to conserve it for the Bruce Trail corridor (consent sketch attached). The subject property is improved with a dwelling, which the owner proposes to retain.

The proposed severance is as follows:

- **Conservation Lot to be severed and conveyed to BTC:** ± 0.0576 hectares to be preserved and protected as part of the Bruce Trail conservation corridor. Approximately 48 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route crosses the property. The severance will thereby secure public access to the Niagara Escarpment and protect and enhance habitat for species at risk.
- **Lot to be retained by owner:** ± 0.4107 hectares developed with a house, with no change in use proposed as part of this application.

This proposal ensures we maintain the existing community and open landscape character of the Escarpment, as well as preserve existing natural heritage, hydrologic features and functions as well as the Bruce Trail corridor.

The proposed severance requires approval of a consent application by the Town's Committee of Adjustment.

Niagara Escarpment Plan

This application is consistent with the Lot Creation policies under of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), including policies under Parts 1.3.4, 1.4.4 and 2.4.12 that permit a severance for conservation and Bruce Trail purposes, which is also consistent with policies under Part 3 (Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System). BTC is a recognized *public body* within the NEP, and is able to sever land for conservation and Bruce Trail purposes. In this instance, approximately 48 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route will be secured.

NEC staff have had an opportunity to review the proposal and have confirmed that it is consistent with the NEP. The NEC does not consider this type of severance to constitute development under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. Thus, it is not subject to a permit from the NEC.

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan

This proposal is consistent with Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Official Plan (OP), which in turn must be consistent with the Niagara Escarpment Plan in supporting the severance of lands by a public body containing natural features and the Bruce Trail. Section 6.32.3 A.4. of the OP states that the Plan will provide for appropriate public access and linkages to the Bruce Trail. Section 2.8 recognizes the Bruce Trail as a major inter-Regional Trail within the Town. Finally, the Bruce Trail is recognized as an integral part of the Niagara Escarpment Parks System within the Town, and states that it is the policy of the Town to support the development of the Parks System in this area (Section 17.3(7)).

Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024)

This proposal is consistent with the PPS 2024, which promotes the importance of building healthy, active, and inclusive communities that provide for a full range of publicly accessible natural settings for recreation, including trails and linkages (s. 3.9.1(b)). The PPS also states that "natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term" (s. 4.1.1).

Background

The Bruce Trail is Canada's oldest and longest footpath. It was founded in the early 1960s as a way of raising awareness for the need to protect the Niagara Escarpment. Today, the Bruce Trail stretches 895 kilometres from Queenston on the Niagara River to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. Including side trails, it is more than 1,300 kilometres long, and it is recognized as one of Canada's premier natural recreational opportunities and one of the world's great hiking trails. It forms an integral part of the Southern Ontario landscape, allowing people to explore the beautiful Niagara Escarpment, and become more aware of the need for its preservation.

Over the past 50 years, the Bruce Trail and the work of the Bruce Trail Conservancy has brought about expansive and lasting benefits for the people of Ontario. The Bruce Trail Conservancy has been responsible for conserving more than 16,000 acres and to date has secured 72 percent of the Bruce Trail's Optimum Route. The work continues, however, to secure the remaining links within the NEPOSS consisting of over 163 parks and open spaces, the majority of which are connected by the Bruce Trail. Preserving this property will add a further 0.0576 hectares to NEPOSS and secure 48 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon. You can reach me at joel.swagerman@brucetrail.org you have any questions or require any further information.

Best regards,



Joel Swagerman, MCIP, RPP
Land Securement Planner
Bruce Trail Conservancy