

= Ontario Highway 21 =

King 's Highway 21 , commonly referred to as Highway 21 , is a provincially maintained highway in the Canadian province of Ontario that begins at Highway 402 midway between Sarnia and London and ends at Highway 6 , Highway 10 and Highway 26 in Owen Sound . The roadway is referred to as the Bluewater Highway because it remains very close to the eastern shoreline of Lake Huron .

Highway 21 was first designated by the Department of Highways (DHO) between Highway 3 and Highway 7 in mid @-@ 1927 and extended to Goderich in 1934 . A year later , a final extension completed the route to Owen Sound . In 1997 and 1998 , the portion of the route south of Highway 402 was transferred to the counties in which it laid .

Highway 21 is often subject to winter closures due to lake effect caused by snowsquall , which can create sudden whiteout conditions along the Lake Huron shoreline . Several Emergency Detour Routes have been established further inland to guide drivers around such closures . Care should be taken during the winter months , as these storms can progress rapidly and unexpectedly .

= = Route description = =

Highway 21 is a long lakeside route through southwestern Ontario which serves numerous communities along the eastern shoreline of Lake Huron . Once over 100 kilometres (62 mi) longer than it is today , the highway now begins at Highway 402 near the community of Warwick , where it progresses north through the towns of Forest , Grand Bend , Goderich , Point Clark , Kincardine , Tiverton , Port Elgin , and Southampton . At Southampton , the highway veers away from the Lake Huron shoreline and travels east to Owen Sound .

The route is generally smoothly @-@ flowing , but can be somewhat congested through towns during the summer from tourists and cottagers . Highway 21 is often subject to closures at various points as it lies on the lee shore of Lake Huron . Lake effect snow squalls frequently subject motorists to poor visibility and slippery conditions , leading to whiteout conditions . Because of this , the Ontario Provincial Police claim that the road is the most often closed in the province . Highway 23 provides an alternative inland route .

The highway begins at Exit 34 and progresses north towards Lake Huron . This mostly straight section of the route lies within Lambton County and passes through the town of Forest . Near Kettle Point , the route abruptly curves north west and begins to parallel the shore of the lake , providing access to the village of Port Franks and The Pinery Provincial Park prior to entering Grand Bend . North of that village , the highway crosses into Huron County and intersects former Highway 83 . Between this point and Goderich , the west side of the highway is dominated by roads providing access to shoreline cottages .

At Goderich , the route encounters Highway 8 , then crosses the Maitland River along a bypass constructed during the early 1960s ; the original routing followed portions of Saltford Street and River Ridge Crescent . The highway proceeds straight north as the baseline at the shore of Lake Huron until it reaches Sheppardton . There the surveying grid changes orientation , and Highway 21 follows a forced road allowance that meanders approximately 2 km (1 @.@ 2 mi) inland from lake north to Amberley , where it encounters former Highway 86 , which travels to Waterloo , and enters . The route curves northeast as it enters Bruce County to align with the surveying grid and proceeds out of Amberley towards Kincardine .

Between Atherley and Tiverton , Highway 21 travels straight @-@ as @-@ an @-@ arrow along what was originally a rural concession road through the hamlets of Reid 's Corners , Pine River , Huron Ridge and Slade . It bypasses inland of Kincardine , intersecting the western terminus of Highway 9 . Within Tiverton , which acts as the primary town serving Bruce Nuclear Generating Station , traffic must turn to remain on Highway 21 . As it exits southeast from the town , the highway makes a broad curve to the northeast and continues through the hamlets of Underwood and North Bruce .

As it approaches the southern end of the Bruce Peninsula , the route bisects Port Elgin , then curves abruptly towards Lake Huron and passes through Southampton before curving to the east

towards Owen Sound . Between those two places , the highway is generally straight , except at the boundary between Bruce and Grey Counties as well as the descent of the Niagara Escarpment at Springmount . Several communities line this inland stretch of highway , including Chippewa Hill , Kelly 's Corners , Elsinore , Allenford , Alvanley and Jackson . At Springmount , the route encounters Highway 6 , which joins Highway 21 to form Ontario 's only wrong @-@ way concurrency east to Owen Sound .

= = History = =

Highway 21 was the first King 's Highway in Lambton County when it was assumed in 1927 between Highway 3 at Morpeth and Highway 7 at Reece 's Corners . This original section of highway changed from a mudhole to a plank road circa 1860 . When James Miller Williams , a Hamilton businessman , set out one day from during a drought to dig a well , he chose a spot downhill from an existing oil seep in the village of Black Creek . Instead of encountering water , Williams hit a shallow oil deposit . As a result of the ensuing oil @-@ boom , which would begin the petroleum industry in North America , Williams laid out the village and changed its name to Oil Springs . Two competing plank road companies were formed , the Black Creek Plank Road Company (of which Williams was a principal investor) and the Sarnia to Florence Plank Road Company , both of which aimed their roads through Oil Springs . Although both roads were constructed , the former company was more prosperous in its endeavours ; in 1886 , a significant portion of the Sarnia to Florence Plank Road was closed up and turned over to local property owners . The Black Creek Plank Road Company meanwhile had transformed the muddy quagmire of a path into a well @-@ maintained road . By 1863 , three miles of road south of Wyoming had been paved , and the remainder south to Oil Springs planked (the Sarnia Road followed two years later) . However , as the oil boom faded , so too did improvement to the road .

On May 23 , 1927 , the Department of Highways assumed the unpaved road between Highway 7 at Reece 's Corner and Highway 3 at Morpeth , via Dresden , Thamesville and Ridgetown as Provincial Highway 21 ; this was changed to the current King 's Highway 21 in 1930 . That year , the department set out to improve the new highway . Concrete slabs were laid between Petrolia and Highway 7 , as well as along a 7 @. @ 25 @-@ kilometre (4 @. @ 50 mi) section between Thamesville and Dresden . The following year , the route was paved between Dresden and Edys Mills before the effects of the Great Depression forced the department to concentrate on paving Highway 22 . The election of a new government in mid @-@ 1934 led to the resumption of work in June as a depression relief project . New equipment (namely a Caterpillar Excavator) , as well as the expertise of Andy Newman , an engineer who was hired when he demonstrated his abilities with the machinery upon passing a construction site on his drive home . Newman , who helped design the machine that nobody else could operate , allowed work to proceed at a much faster rate than before . The machinery could dig quicker than 50 men , and this effort showed when the gap between Petrolia and Edys Mills and the remaining gaps between Dresden and Thamesville were graded and paved by the end of the summer . On October 19 , 1934 , Highway 21 was officially opened by Robert Mellville Smith , deputy minister of the Department of Highways .

On April 4 , 1934 , Highway 21 was assumed through Huron County as far north as Goderich . This was followed by the assumption of a section through Bosanquet Township on April 18 , creating a 40 @. @ 6 kilometres (25 @. @ 2 mi) concurrency with Highway 7 from Reece 's Corners to Thedford . From there , the route travelled through Thedford to Port Franks , where it merged into the present highway . A final 137 @. @ 4 @-@ kilometre (85 @. @ 4 mi) extension to Owen Sound was assumed on May 15 , 1935 , bringing the highway to its greatest length of 333 @. @ 1 kilometres (207 @. @ 0 mi) .

Meanwhile , on April 11 , 1934 , the department assumed control of a road connecting Highway 7 with Forest as Highway 21A . It was later extended to connect with Highway 21 at Port Franks on August 19 , 1936 . By 1938 , Highway 21A had been renumbered as Highway 21 , and Highway 21 through Thedford renumbered as Highway 82 .

Beginning in 1960 , a small bypass of Highway 21 was constructed on the north side of Goderich ,

avoiding a nearby hairpin turn . The 160 m (520 ft) curving structure over the Maitland River was completed in mid @-@ 1961 at a cost of C \$ 1 @.@ 39 million and opened ceremoniously on July 17 , 1962 .

During the early 1980s , the construction of Highway 402 east from Sarnia resulted in a shift in the route of the highway . The route was extended north from Reece 's Corners to Exit 25 , while the section from Highway 7 north to Exit 34 was " downloaded " , or transferred to the local municipality in which it resided . Further transfers were performed in 1997 and 1998 . On April 1 , 1997 , the section of Highway 21 from Highway 401 south to Morpeth was transferred to Kent County . On January 1 , 1998 , the section between Highway 401 and Highway 402 was transferred to Kent and Lambton counties .

= = Major intersections = =

The following table lists the major junctions along Highway 21 , as noted by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario .