

= Ontario Highway 406 =

King 's Highway 406 (pronounced " four @-@ oh @-@ six ") , commonly referred to as Highway 406 , is a 400 @-@ series highway in the Canadian province of Ontario . The primary north @-@ south route though the central portion of the Niagara Peninsula , Highway 406 connects Welland , Thorold and downtown St. Catharines to the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) .

Construction of Highway 406 began in 1963 . The first section opened between St. Davids Road and Geneva Street on December 7 , 1965 , followed by a southward extension to Beaverdams Road in late 1969 . The route was later extended south as a super two to Merritt Road where it became Highway 58 . In 1977 , construction began to connect the freeway with the QEW ; this was completed in late 1984 . Construction on the route resumed in 1987 , connecting the route with East Main Street in Welland , completed during the mid @-@ 1990s .

In 2009 construction resumed on the highway to expand the remaining two lane sections to a four lane divided freeway , with the existing route becoming the southbound lanes of the new freeway . The southern terminus in Welland was converted to a roundabout while the remaining at @-@ grade intersections were rebuilt as interchanges .

= = Route description = =

From 1987 until 2015 , Highway 406 was unique as the only 400 @-@ series highway with two lane sections and with an at @-@ grade rail crossing . The highway is heavily travelled within St. Catharines , but volumes drop considerably south of the city . The speed limit on Highway 406 varies from 80 km / h (50 mph) to 100 km / h (62 mph) . It is patrolled by the Ontario Provincial Police .

The 406 designation begins at East Main Street in Welland at a roundabout immediately west of East Main Street Tunnel beneath the Welland Canal . From here the now @-@ four @-@ lane divided road veers northeast and travels parallel to the canal . Two golf courses separate the canal . As the highway passes to the west of them , it jogs to the west and crosses a Trillium Railway spur (formerly at @-@ grade , now over the railroad) , and meets Daimler Parkway and Woodlawn Road at a newly constructed interchange . Soon after , it crosses the Welland River and then the former channel of the canal , which was replaced by the current Welland By @-@ Pass in the 1970s .

The highway curves to the northwest as it passes through thick forest , and meets another newly built interchange with Merritt Road (formerly Highway 58) , which as of 2009 was being rebuilt as a grade @-@ separated interchange . After this , it returns to its northward orientation and passes the final at @-@ grade intersection (now an overpass) , Niagara Regional Road 63 (Port Robinson Road) .

North of Port Robinson Road , Highway 406 widens to four lanes and a median opens in the centre , making it a controlled access freeway . The forests break and the freeway continues straight north for 7 km (4 @.@ 3 mi) through a mostly agricultural area . Along the straightaway are interchanges with former Highway 20 and Niagara Regional Road 67 (Beaverdams Road) . The freeway crosses over Lake Gibson , infamous for its connection with the crimes of Paul Bernardo , and curves to the northeast . It passes beneath Niagara Regional Road 71 (St. Davids Road) and Highway 58 at a complicated interchange as it descends the Niagara Escarpment , a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve , and enters St. Catharines .

Within St. Catharines , Highway 406 twists frequently , entering the Twelve Mile Creek valley south of a complicated interchange with Westchester Avenue and Geneva Street and curving west . Within the valley , the freeway features a lower design speed and reduced speed limit of 80 km / h (50 mph) . It passes beneath the high @-@ level St. Paul Street bridge , crosses the creek and intersects Fourth Avenue . Exiting the creek valley , the freeway parallels Fourth Avenue for a 1 kilometre (0 @.@ 62 mi) , gradually curves to the north and ends 3 km (1 @.@ 9 mi) to the north , merging with the QEW .

= = History = =

Planning for Highway 406 began in early 1959 , when Minister of Highways Fred M. Cass presented the Ontario Roads and Streets report to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on March 16 , outlining highways needs for the province over 20 years . One of the planned routes was a freeway to link Highway 3 in Port Colborne with the QEW , travelling alongside the Welland Canal . By 1961 , route studies and planning were well underway . The future route was designated as Highway 406 despite construction not beginning until 1963 ; the first section , between Geneva Street and St. Davids Road , opened December 7 , 1965 . This was followed several years later by an extension south to Beaverdams Road , which opened November 21 , 1969 . During the early 1970s , the highway was extended south as a Super 2 to north of the Welland River , where it curved west along Merritt Road and became Highway 58 . This extension , which included the Beaverdams Road interchange and a signalized intersection , was opened on June 30 , 1971 .

In 1977 , construction began on the section of Highway 406 between Geneva Street and the QEW . This work included the construction of several large bridges over the widened ravine , a curving structure over Twelve Mile Creek , and the first single @-@ point urban interchange (SPUI) in Ontario (the only other SPUI is located on Airport Parkway in Ottawa) . The original design plans for Highway 406 called for this section to follow the creek valley the full distance to the QEW , interchanging with it east of Martindale Road . Instead , the alignment was moved west of the city . Realignments to several streets in St. Catharines were completed in advance of construction on overpasses , ramps and the bridges over Twelve Mile Creek ; this work was finished in late 1983 . Grading contracts were awarded in mid @-@ 1983 for the entire extension . Paving took place during the summer of 1984 , and the route was opened to traffic in October 1984 .

Further work to extend the future southbound lanes Highway 406 to East Main Street in Welland began during the fall of 1987 , including an eastward extension of Woodlawn Road . Construction of the bridges that carry the extension over the Welland River and old canal began in mid @-@ 1988 , and was completed during the fall of 1989 . Work then began to grade and pave the Woodlawn Road Extension to Highway 406 and Highway 406 between there and East Main Street . The extension was completed by the mid @-@ 1990s .

= = = Expansion = = =

Highway 406 was the last 400 @-@ series highway that featured at @-@ grade intersections and two lane sections . The original intention was to twin this two @-@ lane section shortly after it was constructed in the 1970s . Plans were deferred multiple times , until the project resumed in the early 2000s . The first phase of this twinning opened to traffic in 2007 , extending the four @-@ lane highway 5 @. @ 6 km (3 @. @ 5 mi) from its previous convergence south of Beaverdams Road to a point north of Port Robinson Road .

On May 15 2009 , Minister of Transportation Jim Bradley announced that the section from Port Robinson road to East Main Street in Welland would be converted to a full freeway ; this work includes a roundabout at East Main Street to replace the current southern terminus . Work on the Merritt Road overpass began in September 2009 , and was scheduled for completion in mid @-@ 2011 . On August 19 , 2011 , full construction began with a groundbreaking ceremony . The roundabout with East Main Street opened to traffic on September 5 , 2013 , featuring no central island . Despite requests from local politicians , there are no plans to extend Highway 406 to Port Colborne at this time .

= = Exit list = =

Highway 406 's northern terminus is tied at the QEW , whereas the southern terminus has been relocated in various proposals . As a result , exits were unconventionally numbered from north to south . The entirety of Highway 406 is located within the Regional Municipality of Niagara .