

## = Ontario Highway 61 =

King 's Highway 61 , commonly referred to as Highway 61 and historically known as the Scott Highway , is a provincially maintained highway in the Canadian province of Ontario . The 61 @-@ kilometre ( 38 mi ) route connects the Pigeon River Bridge , where it crosses into the United States and becomes Minnesota State Highway 61 , with a junction at Highway 11 , Highway 17 and the Harbour Expressway in Thunder Bay . The highway forms part of the Lake Superior Circle Tour .

Highway 61 was added to the highway system on October 6 , 1937 following the amalgamation of the Department of Northern Development into the Department of Highways . Prior to that it was known as the Scott Highway . The bridge over the Pigeon River was originally known as The Outlaw , as it was constructed without formal approval of the Canadian or American governments .

## = = Route description = =

Highway 61 begins at the international border between Ontario and Minnesota at the Pigeon River ; the road continues south to Duluth as State Highway 61 on the American side . It passes the customs station and curves to the north . Passing its former routing along Highway 593 , the highway curves eastward to avoid mountains . It zig @-@ zags around a range of mountains , eventually turning northward and passing to the west of Cloud Bay . The highway continues north for 20 kilometres ( 10 mi ) through Neebing , running between mountain ranges on either side . It rises at Moose Hill , meets Highway 608 and enters one of the few agricultural areas in northwestern Ontario . Shortly thereafter , Highway 61 curves to the east , passing the southern terminus of Highway 130 along the way . It then enters the outskirts of Thunder Bay .

The highway passes Chippewa Road , its former route through Thunder Bay , and returns to its northward orientation . It officially enters the city as it crosses the Kaministiquia River . The highway swerves east at Thunder Bay International Airport as it widens to four lanes then continues north , crossing Arthur Street . North of Arthur Street , the highway is also known as the Thunder Bay Expressway . It continues north for 3 km ( 1 @.@ 9 mi ) and ends at the Harbour Expressway and Trans @-@ Canada Highway .

The northernmost section in Thunder Bay is a four @-@ lane , undivided expressway . The remainder of Highway 61 is a conventional two @-@ lane highway . Traffic volumes along the southern portion of the highway are generally low , with an annual average daily traffic ( AADT ) of 1 @,@ 000 vehicles . This increases progressing north ; within Thunder Bay the AADT peaks at 17 @,@ 200 vehicles .

Highway 61 also forms a small portion of the Lake Superior Circle Tour , a tourist route of highways following the shoreline of Lake Superior . To the south , the tour continues along Minnesota State Highway 61 ; to the north it continues along Highway 17 towards Sault Saint Marie .

## = = History = =

The road that would become Highway 61 was first constructed in 1916 . The Pigeon River Timber Company had cleared lands surrounding the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William , but no road existed to connect to locations outside . A narrow wilderness trail reached as far as the Pigeon River , and was chosen as the route for the new road . The Department of Mines and Resources agreed to fund the project , and citizens proceeded to lay a new road as far as the river , beginning in 1913 . This road was initially known as the " Scott Highway " after lumberman William Scott . On the opposite shore , Cook County and the State of Minnesota constructed a new road north from Grand Marais . The roads were completed by late 1916 , but no bridge existed to connect them .

In response , the Rotary Clubs of Port Arthur and Duluth met to discuss a solution . As an international crossing , any bridge over the river would require federal approval from both governments . Both sides agreed that the approval process would be too slow , and decided to construct the bridge regardless . " The Outlaw " bridge was opened by a travelling motorcade on August 18 , 1917 , finally permitting travel between Ontario and Minnesota . To the surprise of the

Rotary Clubs , J.E. Whitson , Roads Commissioner of Northern Ontario , and Howard Ferguson , Minister of Lands , Forest and Mines , were present at the opening , and agreed to pay the \$ 768 @, @ 000 ( \$ 12 @. @ 3 million in 2016 ) bridge cost . The bridge and the Canadian road approaching it fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways ( now the Ministry of Transportation ) on April 1 , 1937 , and the Scott Highway became Highway 61 on October 6 . The Outlaw was rebuilt as a steel truss structure in 1934 following several accidents .

By 1962 , construction was underway to bypass the inland route of the highway as well as the bridge . This bypass opened on November 1 , 1963 ; the American approach was rebuilt along the shore of Lake Superior , and a new bridge constructed over the river 10 km ( 6 @. @ 2 mi ) to the east . This bridge was opened on May 23 , 1964 . Highway 61 was realigned as a result ; the former route was redesignated as Highway 593 on September 1 , 1964 .

In 1963 , Charles MacNaughton , minister of the Department of Highways , announced plans for the Lakehead Expressway to be built on the western edge of the twin cities of Port Arthur and Fort William ( which amalgamated in 1970 to form Thunder Bay ) . Construction began in the late 1960s and progressed rapidly . Following its completion by late 1970 , Highway 61 was rerouted along it as far north as Arthur Street . The former route followed Chippewa Road , turned north on James Street and then east on Frederica Street . From there , it turned north along Ford Street and followed it and Kingsway to Highway 11 and Highway 17 at Arthur Street . This route was renumbered as Highway 61B ; it remained in place into the 1990s , but was decommissioned by 1999 .

Beginning in 1991 , Highway 61 was completely reconstructed south of Thunder Bay to the border in preparation for the 1995 World Nordic Ski Championships . This involved replacing eight bridges , improving sightlines , and adding five passing lanes and paved shoulders throughout the length of the highway . The highway was extended 3 km ( 1 @. @ 9 mi ) to the north on August 17 , 2007 when the Shabaqua Highway opened , redirecting Highway 11 and Highway 17 off Arthur Street .

= = Major intersections = =

The following table lists the major junctions along Highway 61 , as noted by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario . The entire route is located in Thunder Bay District .