

Telephone Road Asphalt Plant Proposal

The Telephone Road Asphalt Plant Proposal history begins with a development proposal by Fidelity Property Group to expand an existing licensed gravel pit on Telephone Road in Cramahe Township into a permanent hot mix asphalt plant operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The proposal marked a major change in land use, shifting the site from a temporary extraction operation to a continuous industrial facility with year-round manufacturing, storage, and heavy trucking activity.

In the early stages, the CRAA (Cramahe Resident Advocate Association) was formed in response to growing community awareness of the application. Initial efforts focused on informing residents about what was being proposed, including the scale of the operation and its potential impacts on the surrounding rural community. Outreach included community meetings, public information materials, and efforts to ensure residents participated in the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultation process.

As details of the proposal became clearer, community concern increased significantly. Residents raised early issues related to increased truck traffic on rural roads, noise from 24/7 operations, potential air emissions, and risks to groundwater. The proposed location, surrounded by homes, farms, and environmentally sensitive lands, intensified concerns about compatibility with existing rural land uses.

As the proposal moved through regulatory review in 2025, CRAA transitioned from awareness-building to formal advocacy and technical analysis. The organization coordinated petitions that gathered hundreds of signatures opposing the project and participated in municipal discussions where local council withheld support pending further information from the proponent.

A key phase of the project involved independent technical and legal reviews, including engineering analysis of traffic impacts from asphalt production.

CRAA Traffic Studies concluded the project would generate extremely high volumes of heavy truck traffic, far exceeding what the rural road network—particularly Telephone Road—was designed to accommodate. Telephone Road is not intended for such loads, and a May 2025 Township study already recorded 669 vehicles per day, about 1.7 times the recommended threshold. Additional truck traffic of this scale would significantly accelerate road deterioration, with infrastructure expected to last 20 years potentially failing prematurely under sustained heavy use. Construction and haul activity for even one kilometre of road can generate hundreds of truck trips, while comparable asphalt operations on a single-lane highway may require roughly one truck trip every 3 to 12 minutes.

A **Legal Submission** by Gowling WLG, representing the CRAA, opposed the proposed asphalt plant's Environmental Compliance Approval (Air) application on both process and policy grounds. It argues that the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting is incomplete because key technical documents and the full application have not been made publicly available, limiting meaningful public review and undermining the intent of the Environmental Bill of Rights.

On planning grounds, the submission states the project conflicts with the Township of Cramahe Official Plan (2024), which only permits asphalt plants when they are linked to active aggregate extraction. Since the gravel pit is no longer operating, the proposed facility would function as a standalone industrial use, which CRAA argues is not permitted without an Official Plan amendment.

The submission also cites non-compliance with the **Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)** (2024), noting that asphalt plants are considered major facilities and must be appropriately separated from sensitive land uses such as homes, farms, and conservation areas. With residences located very close—some within about 20 metres—the required buffering to mitigate impacts like noise, odour, air emissions, and safety risks cannot be achieved.

The **CRAA Environmental report** argues the site's geology does not provide a reliable barrier to prevent groundwater contamination, meaning spills of fuel or chemicals could seep into wells, nearby streams, and eventually Little Lake. It also highlights risks from hazardous materials used on-site, such as diesel, oils, and solvents, noting that spills or fire suppression efforts could spread pollutants further.

The report raises concerns about light pollution from industrial floodlighting affecting nearby rural homes, and noise pollution from continuous plant operations and heavy truck traffic, including frequent loud unloading and engine braking on rural roads.

Finally, it cites strong odour emissions from asphalt production that could travel beyond the site and reduce residents' ability to comfortably use outdoor spaces or keep windows open.

At the provincial review stage, CRAA submitted formal objections through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) process, arguing that the application was incomplete or inadequately disclosed to the public. They contended that key supporting documents, including the full Environmental Compliance Approval application and technical studies, were not made accessible, limiting meaningful public participation. CRAA also raised concerns that the proposal conflicted with requirements under the Aggregate Resources Act regarding site rehabilitation following the end of extraction activities.

As the process proceeded, the CRAA position evolved into a coordinated legal and regulatory challenge. The organization engaged experts in engineering, planning, and environmental assessment, and submitted detailed arguments to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and

Parks. These submissions emphasized procedural fairness, regulatory compliance, and long-term environmental risk.

By the most recent stage of the project history, the issue had expanded beyond a single development application into a broader community and policy dispute. The CRAA framed the proposal as a test case for rural land-use protection, environmental oversight, and infrastructure capacity in small communities facing industrial expansion pressures.

The project has progressed from initial public awareness, to community mobilization, to formal technical and legal challenge, with CRAA consistently opposing the transformation of a rural gravel pit into a permanent industrial asphalt production facility.

As of April, 2026, The proposed Fidelity Property Group asphalt plant is **currently at the Provincial Review Stage**, with the main Environmental Compliance Approval (Air) application posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO). The proposal was submitted in 2025 and involves converting a former gravel pit on Telephone Road into a permanent 24/7 hot mix asphalt facility, but the public comment period has now closed and the Ministry is reviewing submissions.

From a regulatory standpoint, **No Approval Has Been Issued Yet**, and the project cannot proceed until the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks completes its review and makes a decision on the Environmental Compliance Approval.

In practical terms, the project is currently **in limbo: fully applied for, formally opposed by the community, and under active provincial assessment**, with CRAA continuing to advocate for refusal or significant revision based on legal, environmental, and planning concerns.

Historical Timeline

Pre-2024: Cramahe Official Plan permits only temporary (portable) asphalt plants; Telephone Road designated as a local road.

2024–Early 2025: Proposal submitted for a permanent asphalt plant at 13945 Telephone Road.

2025: Technical reviews identify road limitations, safety risks, and policy conflicts.

Mid–Late 2025: Residents form CRAA to oppose the project and organize community response.

CRAA commissions planning, and engineering reports and launches public outreach.

July 2025: CRAA commissions legal response to Environmental Compliance Approval (Air).

Late 2025: Formal objections submitted citing environmental, traffic, and zoning concerns.

2025–2026: Community engagement intensifies (petitions, meetings, advocacy).

2026: Project remains under review and actively contested.