

2. EARLIER STUDIES

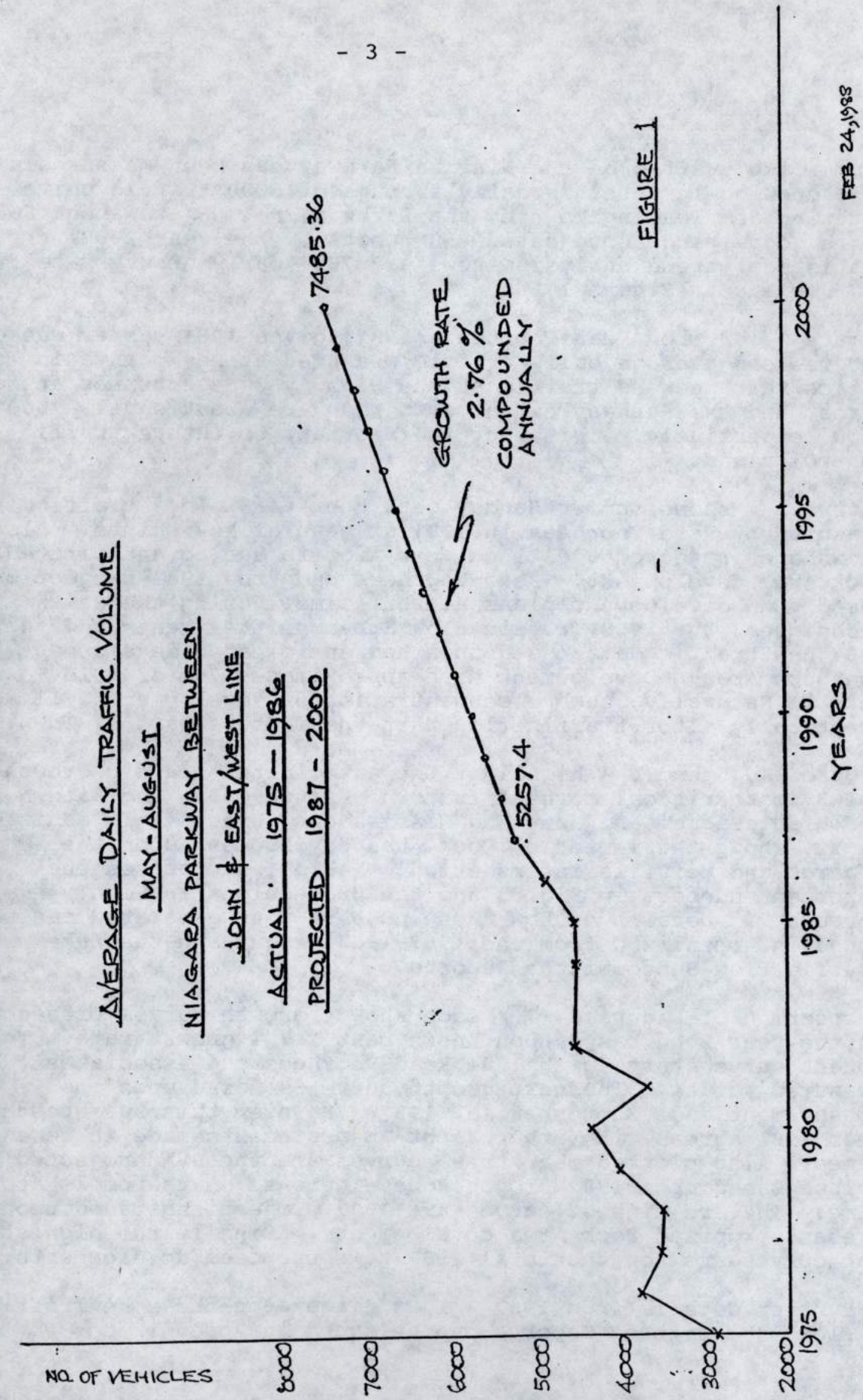
Traffic congestion created by tourists is not new or unique to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Prof. Geo. Doxey (Doxey Report, October 1974) warned of increasing strain upon the Town's infrastructure to meet the growth of tourism. He further emphasized the absolute need of the local residents to solve their own problems. Despite a small static population of about 4,000, summer traffic has grown at a 2.76% annual rate, fueling the growth problems identified by Doxey. It is estimated that almost 2.5 million visitors now pass through Town in the summer.

Fortunately Read-Voorhees & Associates Ltd. (RVA) completed a rather thorough traffic study in 1974 as well, (Niagara-on-the-Lake Traffic Operations & Parking Study, Dec. 1974). Good quantitative data on traffic and parking are given.

In 1977, Parks Canada commissioned Proctor & Redfern to do an in depth study of the economic impact of tourism. (Parks Canada; "Economic Impact of Tourism" 1977). Here it was revealed that aside from all the benefits tourism brings to the Town, property taxes paid by residents do not cover the infrastructure needs to support tourism. (Unfortunately, the business tax base is so small that only \$1.2 million or 36% of the total \$3.6 million taxes in 1988 "Old Town" comes from business. It has been estimated that a meager 37% of the business tax comes from tourism). Thus the residents have grounds to complain of their increasing taxes going to support a growing tourist industry. Recently, this conclusion was substantiated, (Tourism Impact Update Study, Sedley Assoc. May 1989).

Other reports emphasize the benefits tourism brings to the Town, such as jobs, business enterprise, profits and taxes. The unique nature of the attractions appeal to the tourist of high, orderly character, ("The Economic Impact of Tourism on the Community of Niagara-on-the-Lake", Judy Dyck, Chamber of Commerce 1986: "Tourism Economic Impact on the Niagara Region", Region Niagara Tourist Council, 1987). Probably the most helpful report for our purpose is a 1982 update of the 1974 Read-Voorhees Report ("Niagara-on-the-Lake Traffic Operations Study", June 1982). This study not only gives a 1981 inventory of traffic, parking, and pedestrians in the "Old Town", but projects changes due to various scenarios of future development and for road closures in the Fort George and Dock Area. Helpful recommendations are given as well.

Finally two other recent studies, while brief, supply much useful information. The Shaw Festival Theatre Foundation, "1983 Marketing Study", Feb. 1984, gives many data about auto & bus traffic to their performances. A report by Judy D. Coward (Town Planner), PD11/86 (1986:03:03) concerns data on private parking facilities on Queen Street.



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