Information Package

Bleams Road Improvements

From Just West of Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road

City of Kitchener

Public Consultation Centre #2
August 15–September 12, 2022
online at engagewr.ca

What: The Region of Waterloo is planning improvements to the Bleams Road (Regional Road 56) corridor. This work will include a Schedule “C” Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA).

Where: Just west of Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road, in the City of Kitchener.

Why: To provide needed pavement reconstruction and road improvements for traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists along the corridor.

When: 2024 and 2025 Construction (tentative)

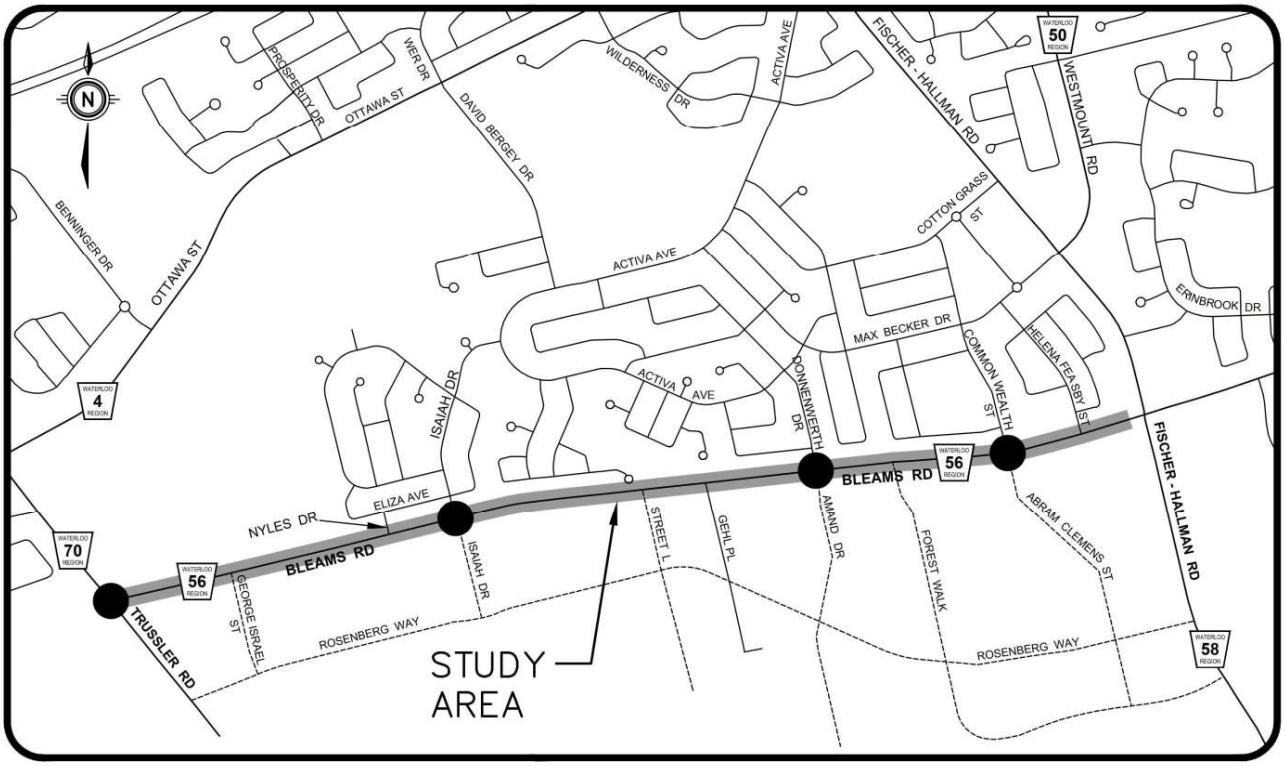
Who: Region of Waterloo Project Manager
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1. What is the purpose of this second public engagement opportunity? Public Consultation Centre (PCC)

At this PCC, the project team will present a preferred alternative to meet the improvement needs of Bleams Road. We will share the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA) in terms of the improvement needs, what other solutions were considered, how we evaluated all alternative solutions to reach a preferred solution, and ask the public for their comments on the preferred solution.

Region and project consultant staff are available to answer any questions the public may have.

To complement this Class EA process, the Region of Waterloo will use its EngageWR engagement platform to help reach as many of the public as possible to get input on this project. Your comments will be considered by the project team in conjunction with all other relevant information in recommending a preferred alternative for this project.



2. What is a Class Environmental Assessment?

The Municipal Class EA is a planning and decision-making process approved under the Environmental Assessment Act that is used by municipalities to plan public infrastructure projects so that potential environmental impacts are considered before a project is approved. It requires consultation with the public, involved stakeholders and agencies to consider alternatives and their impacts on the project environment.

This project is being planned in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Schedule "C" which applies to larger, more complex projects with the potential for significant environmental impacts (natural, social, cultural and economic) and requires multiple opportunities for public input.

For additional details regarding the Municipal Class EA process, please refer to Appendix A.

3. Who is directing this project?

The planning and design for this project is being directed by staff from the Region of Waterloo and City of Kitchener, including City of Kitchener (Ward 5) Councillor Kelly Galloway-Sealock. The Region of Waterloo has retained the consulting engineering firm MTE Consultants Inc. to assist the us in leading this Class EA Study, along with providing planning, design, construction, inspection and administration services.

4. Why is the Region considering this project?

The section of Bleams Road, from just west of Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road, is in fair to poor condition, and is nearing the end of its useful life. With the substantial developments to the south, there is a need to reconstruct this section of Bleams Road and consider the increased travel demands on the overall corridor. The 2018 Regional Transportation Master Plan Update has also identified the need for active transportation improvements for pedestrians and cyclists along the corridor. This study will analyze traffic demands and recommend a solution that addresses all future transportation needs.

The following needs are driving this project:

i) Deteriorated road condition

The pavement condition on Bleams Road is in fair to poor condition. In general, the deterioration is simply due to the age of the asphalt combined with poor drainage. The proposed works would replace the deteriorated pavement and urbanize the roadway by removing the existing ditches and installing an underground storm sewer system that will outlet to adjacent developments along the south side of Bleams Road.

ii) Recent and future traffic patterns

A study of the current and projected traffic patterns along Bleams Road, between Fischer-Hallman Road and Trussler Road, has determined that there is a need for improvements to Bleams Road to accommodate the recent and future intensification of land along both sides of Bleams Road. A detailed evaluation of the existing and proposed streets that intersect Bleams Road has suggested a number of potential intersection improvements that could increase the capacity and safety of the corridor to meet future needs in the area while providing a balance with the needs of other corridor users.

iii) Pedestrian and cycling needs

Currently there are no pedestrian or cycling facilities on Bleams Road. The Region of Waterloo 2018 Transportation Master Plan identifies Bleams Road as having a "Future Boulevard Multi-Use Trail" on both sides. Accordingly, a multi-use trail is being considered on both the north and south sides of Bleams Road for the entire length from Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road. A single-direction cycle track and sidewalk is also being considered as a potential alternative to the multi-use trail. Efficient and desirable interconnections for pedestrians and cyclists between proposed and existing developments on both sides of the roadway will be considered with the design.

5. What work is complete on this project to date?

The project was initiated in 2020 with the first Public Consultation Centre (PCC#1) held online between February 14, 2022 and March 7, 2022, to provide information on the purpose of the Class EA study and need for improvements on Bleams Road. Comments received at PCC#1 generally supported the need for traffic, pedestrian and cyclist improvements along the corridor. Comments received from PCC#1 have been incorporated into the needs and opportunities of the project for the development of alternatives and evaluation of impacts.

In accordance with the Class EA, environmental studies were completed for the study area in order to identify areas of concern related to potential for impacts along the corridor. Environmental studies completed include: Traffic and Transportation; Archaeological; and a Noise review.

The Traffic and Transportation study prepared Peak hour and Average Annual Daily Traffic ("AADT") forecasts for 2031, which were then analyzed to develop a traffic forecast for the corridor.

The Archaeological Stage 1 assessment determined that the study area comprises a mixture of areas of archaeological potential and previously assessed lands of no further concern. Areas that will require a Stage 2 assessment are limited to a two small areas on the south side of Bleams Road between Helena Feasby Street and Fischer-Hallman

Road, as well as one on the south side of Bleams near Gehl Place, and a triangular section of land on the south-east corner of the intersection of Bleams and Trussler Road.

6. Has road noise been assessed?

In accordance with the Region's Noise Policy, a noise review was conducted for the section of Bleams that will be widened from two lanes to four lanes (Fischer-Hallman Road to the just west of Commonwealth Street/Abram Clemens Street). Preliminary findings indicate that additional noise attenuation will not be required in this section of Bleams Road. After modeling the 10-year traffic increase there is an increase in the noise levels in this section, but it does not meet the Region's criteria for additional noise attenuation.

7. What alternatives have been developed for improvements on Bleams Road?

From the responses received during PCC#1, the public support of the three alternatives presented to improve four intersections on Bleams Road (Trussler Road, Isaiah Drive, Donnenwerth Drive/Amand Drive, and Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Drive) is:

- **50 per cent support for roundabouts at all four intersections**
- **20 per cent support for all traffic signals at all four intersections**
- **30 per cent for the hybrid combination of signals and roundabouts**

The solutions for improvements considered by the project team so far are described in the list below. The project team has screened and evaluated each of these potential solutions and has made recommendations as described below. For a broader description of the potential solutions and the associated preliminary evaluation of each, please refer to Appendix B.

In reviewing the potential solutions, the project team considered the widening of Bleams Road to manage future traffic growth and forecasted intersection operational deficiencies, as well as adding active transportation facilities as the Region's primary objectives for the corridor.

A. **Do Nothing** – As part of any Class EA process, there is always a consideration of the "Do Nothing" alternative to assess what would happen if no action is taken to address the project concerns beyond typical restoration measures. In this case, the "Do Nothing" solution would involve reconstructing Bleams Road in its current two-lane rural cross-section with shoulders and roadside ditches. This solution was screened out because it does not satisfy the Region's primary objectives for the corridor.

Recommendation: Do not carry forward

B. **Traffic signals** – The addition of traffic signals and auxiliary lanes to accommodate turning movements at certain intersections. This solution can only satisfy all of the Region's primary objectives for the corridor if it is combined with other solutions.

Recommendation: Do not carry forward

C. **Roundabouts** – The Region uses a standard 'screening tool' for determining where roundabouts will be considered. Generally, roundabouts offer a potential alternative to expanding or installing signalized intersections and can be more effective in moving traffic, reducing delays, and improving safety in certain cases.

Recommendation: Carry forward as Preferred Alternative

D. **Traffic signals and roundabouts, hybrid version** – a design which constructs a roundabout at the west end of the project (Trussler Road) and one near the east end of the project (Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Street). This is coupled with a traffic signal installation at the intersection of Donnenwerth Drive/Amand Drive and one at Isaiah Drive.

Recommendation: Do not carry forward

E. **Widening Bleams Road from Fischer-Hallman Road to Commonwealth Drive /Abram Clemens Drive** – the projected volume of vehicular traffic has shown that Bleams Road, from Fischer-Hallman Road to Commonwealth Drive /Abram Clemens Drive, needs to be widened to four through lanes (approx. 15 per cent of project length) while the remainder of the corridor (approx. 85 per cent of project length) can remain as two lanes**.**

Recommendation: Carry forward

F. **Active Transportation Facilities** – Providing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians on Bleams Road from Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road is considered a necessary component of the overall solution for this corridor. There are two options under consideration: a multi-use trail (two directional), or a single directional cycle track and sidewalk. **Recommendation:**

Carry forward (require input at this PCC)

G. **Traffic Control at Side Streets**

Through analysis of intersection operations and anticipated safety performance, the project team has determined that Bleams Road should contain raised center medians between roundabout intersections throughout the section between Fischer-Hallman Road and Donnenwerth Drive/Amand Drive. The raised medians will mean that the existing stop-controlled intersection of Helena Feasby Street as well as the proposed Forestwalk Street will effectively operate to allow inbound and

outbound right-turns only; no left turns will be allowed in or out of these minor streets. Full access to those side streets will be provided to motorists through circulation of the appropriate adjacent roundabout(s). The following side streets will operate with full movements:

- George Israel Street (future street on south side of Bleams near Trussler)
- Nyles Drive
- Street L (future street on south side of Bleams just west of Gehl Place)

Recommendation: Carry forward in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative

8. How has the project team evaluated the design alternatives to establish a preferred design alternative?

The improvement alternatives have been assessed against a set of evaluation criteria by the project team to determine which alternative is "Preferred" and is considered to best address the needs and opportunities for improvement on Bleams Road. The evaluation criteria included the following:

1) **Technical**
   How well does the alternative manage traffic performance and network connectivity, transit access and pedestrian/cyclist needs?

2) **Natural Environment**
   What impact does the alternative have on the natural environment features such as trees and wetlands, wildlife, aquatic habitat, air quality and surface drainage?

3) **Socio-Cultural Environment**
   What impact does the alternative have on adjacent communities and properties (access, property acquisition), landscapes, archaeological or heritage resources and traffic noise?

4) **Costs**
   How do the alternatives compare for anticipated capital, operating and property acquisition costs?

Following PCC #1, the project team reviewed public input, as well as the various identified constraints, in order to finalize the evaluation of the alternatives

9. Has the project team identified a preferred alternative?

In consideration of the competing demands on the Bleams Corridor, and considering the public response from PCC#1, the project team has identified Alternative 1 – Roundabouts as the Preferred Alternative.

Some minor modifications have been made to Alternative 1, based on feedback received during PCC#1:

- The centre two roundabouts (Isaiah and Donnenwerth) are to be constructed as single-lane roundabouts on opening day. They will be designed to allow future expansion to multi-lane roundabouts. In the fullness of time the project team expects that auto traffic demands associated with the substantial planned growth in the area will require that these single lane roundabouts be converted to a two lane roundabout. Single lane roundabouts are more comfortable and safer for pedestrians, cyclists and auto traffic. Additionally, the growth planned to the south of Bleams Road will take a number of years to build out. A single lane roundabout in these two locations better meets the needs of all the users in the short term and supports the prioritization of walking and cycling through the intersection during the time when new residents are establishing travel patterns in the area. Before converting either of the single lane roundabouts to a two lane roundabout, some congestion for non-active users can be expected during the typical weekday morning and afternoon peak hours.

- We will acquire sufficient land for the ultimate (and interim) roundabout condition at all four locations. This includes sufficient land so that the roundabouts can be converted in the future with separate bike paths across the splitter islands alongside the pedestrian crossings. This conversion could then take place in the future if legislation changes to allow cross-rides at roundabouts.

This is subject to the additional comments received after this PCC#2, and additional agency comments.

At this point, there is a question of whether to proceed with multi-use trail, as outlined in the 2018 regional Transportation Master Plan, or a single-direction cycle track and sidewalk. This active transportation component will be run the length of the project, from Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road, and will connect to adjacent road projects that will extend active transportation.

10. What happens when property is required for the approved alternative?

One of the goals of the planning and design process is to minimize the impact on adjacent properties and the need to acquire private property. An initial review of the existing Bleams Road allowance indicates that there will be a need to acquire a significant amount of land to accommodate the preferred alternative. It is currently recommended that the acquisition of the necessary land be from those properties that have not been developed yet along the south side of Bleams Road. There will also be a need for a small section of land on the north east and west side of the intersection of Bleams and Trussler Road.

11. How will existing trees be affected?

A tree assessment was completed in the spring of 2022 to inventory the various trees within the study area. Any potentially impacted trees will be reviewed as to their significance and health and a determination made if disturbance should and/or could be avoided. A streetscape design will be completed for planting of any new trees and any trees removed will be considered for replacement with nursery stock of a Region-approved native species on a two for one basis.

12. What are the next steps in the project?

After the second Public Consultation Centre, the project team will review the public and agency comments and identify a Recommended Design Alternative to be brought to Regional Council later in 2022 for design approval. Upon approval by Regional Council, detailed design, property acquisitions and utility relocations will commence, followed by construction, which will be completed in stages. Construction is tentatively scheduled to start in 2024 and be completed in 2025.

13. How will I receive further notification regarding this project?

Property owners and tenants abutting the project site and members who register through the Region's project engagement page (https://www.engagewr.ca/bleams-rd) will receive all upcoming information and meeting notifications.

14. How can I provide my comments at this stage?

In order to assist the project team in addressing any comments or concerns you might have regarding this project, we ask that you provide your comments on the Region's Engage site at https://www.engagewr.ca/bleams-rd, email comments to the project team members listed below, or complete the enclosed Comment Sheet and mail or fax it to us.

We thank you for your involvement and should you have any questions or concerns please contact one of the following:

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Email: droga@mte85.com

15. How can I view project information following the PCC?

All of the PCC display materials and other relative project information, notifications of upcoming meetings, and contact information are available for viewing at the Region of Waterloo municipal office as identified above. Alternatively, you may visit the Region's website at www.regionofwaterloo.ca or the Engage Waterloo Region site at www.engagewr.ca.

Appendix A – Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process
Ontario Environmental Assessment Act

The purpose of the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act) is to provide for "the betterment of the people of the whole or any part of Ontario by providing for the protection, conservation and wise management of the environment of Ontario". The term "environment" is applied broadly and includes the natural, social, cultural, built and economic components.

The key principles of successful environmental assessment planning include:

- Consultation with stakeholders and affected members of the public;
- Consideration of a reasonable range of practical alternatives;
- Assessment of the environmental impacts associated with each alternative;
- Systematic evaluation of alternatives; and,
- Clear documentation.

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) is a planning process approved under the Environmental Assessment Act that is used by municipalities to plan infrastructure enhancement projects while satisfying the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act. Under the Class EA process, projects are planned in one of three ways depending on their scope, complexity and potential for adverse environmental impacts.

Schedule "A"

- Includes routine maintenance, operation and emergency activities.
- The Municipality can proceed with this work without further approval or public consultation.

Schedule "B"

- Includes projects with potential for some adverse environmental effects.
- These projects are subject to a screening process that includes consultation with directly affected public and agencies.

Schedule "C"

- Includes larger, more complex projects with the potential for significant environmental effects.
- These projects are subject to all phases of the Class Environmental Assessment and require a minimum of three (3) points of public contact.

Public Involvement

Members of the public that have a stake in the project are encouraged to provide comment throughout the Class Environmental Assessment process. For Schedule "C" projects there are a minimum of three (3) opportunities for contact. These opportunities typically include two Public Consultation Centres and the Notice of Completion which includes a mandatory 30-day public review period to review the project documentation.

Class Environmental Assessment Process for Schedule "C" Projects
Change in Project Status – Appeal Provision

It is recommended that all stakeholders (including the proponent, public and review agencies) work together to determine the preferred means of addressing a problem or opportunity. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with the proponent and

try to resolve them. In the event that there are major issues which cannot be resolved, you may request the Minister of Environment by order to require a proponent to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act before proceeding with a proposed undertaking which has been subject to Class Environmental Assessment requirements. This is called a "Part II Order". The Minister will make one of the following decisions:

1. Deny the request (with or without conditions);
2. Refer the matter to mediation; or
3. Require the proponent to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act, ordering a full Environmental Assessment.

All stakeholders are urged to try to resolve issues since it is preferable for them to be resolved by the municipality in which a project is located, rather than at the provincial level.

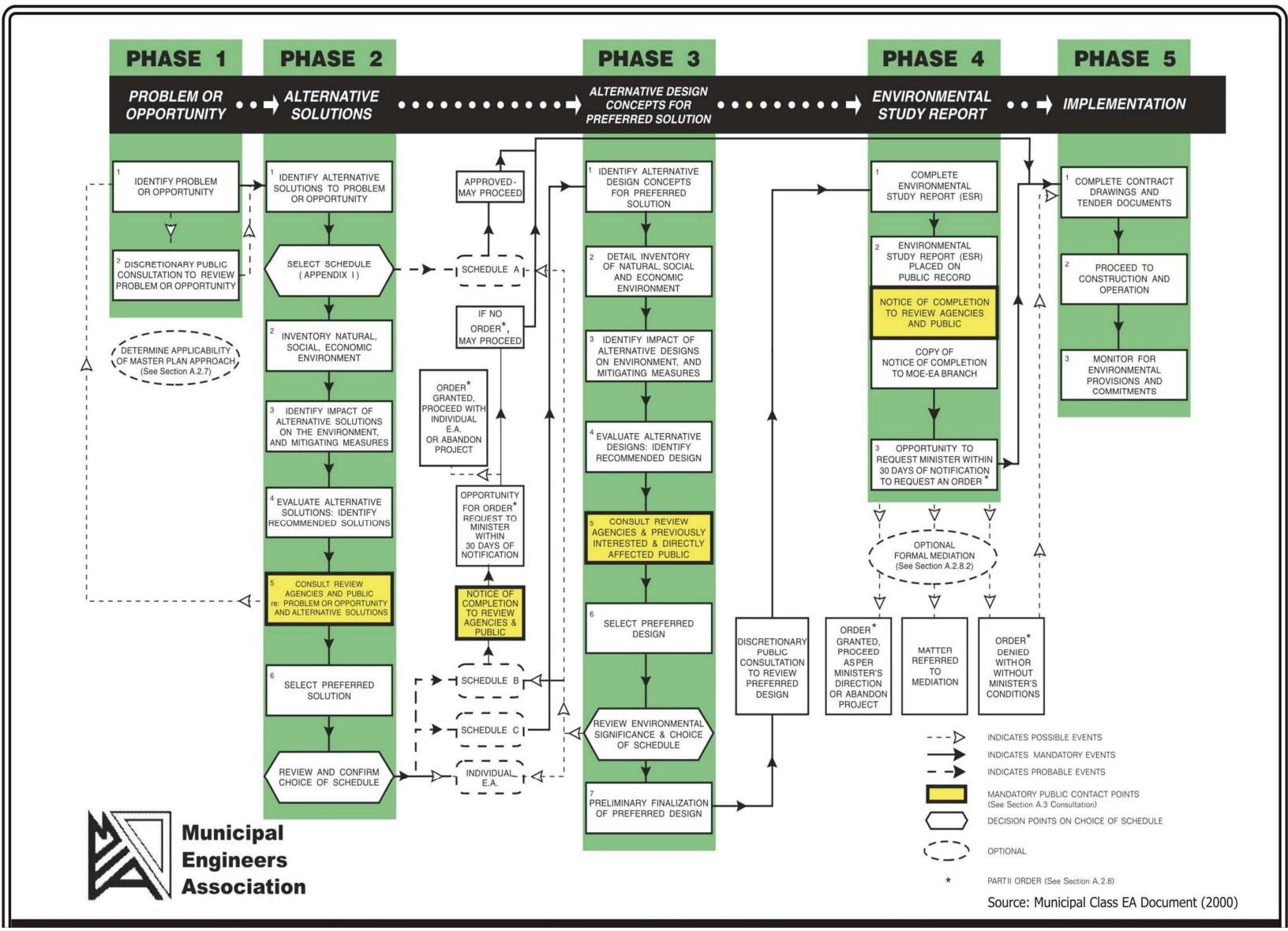
To request a Part II Order, a person must send a written request to:
Minister of Environment
135 St. Clair Avenue West
12th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5

The request must address the following with respect to the identified concerns:

- Environmental Impacts and specific concerns;
- Adequacy of the planning and public consultation process;
- Involvement of the person in the planning process; and,
- Details of discussions held between the person and the proponent.

A process diagram depicting the Class Environmental Assessment process is included on the following page along with an indication of where we area with the current study process.

Appendix A
Municipal Engineers Association Class Environmental Assessment Flow Chart



Source: Municipal Class EA Document (2000)

Preliminary Appendix B - Summary of the Alternative Solutions for the Bleams Road Corridor

Planning Alternatives	Description	Preliminary Evaluation	Recommendation
Do Nothing	This solution identifies what would happen if no action is taken to address current deficiencies within the corridor, in both the short and long terms. This assessment provides a baseline to which other project alternatives may be measured.	The Transportation Study completed as part of this project found that there are existing capacity deficiencies on Bleams Road that the "Do Nothing" solution will not remedy.	Do not carry forward
Traffic Signals	This solution involves the installation of traffic signals and auxiliary/turning lanes to accommodate turning movements.	This alternative will be analyzed in further details as the introduction of a series of traffic signals provide effective traffic control at intersections, but may suffer from lower level of service for vehicles during peak periods, which result in large traffic queues.	Do not carry forward
Roundabouts	Roundabouts are characterized by their lack of traffic signals and a circulating roadway providing for continual traffic flow through the intersection. Roundabouts generally provide more traffic capacity than standard signalized intersections due to their ability to reduce delays.	This alternative will be analyzed in further detail as the introduction of a series of roundabouts may address or reduce traffic future delays and improve safety at intersections. Four intersections on Bleams Road will be analyzed for the suitability of roundabouts and in comparison to Intersection Improvements.	**Preferred Alternative**
Traffic Signals and Roundabouts, Hybrid Version	This solution involves installing roundabouts along Bleams Road at Trussler Road and at Commonwealth Drive, while installing traffic signals at Isaiah Drive and Donnenwerth Drive/Amand Drive.	The effective use of both roundabouts and traffic signals along this corridor may satisfy the objectives of traffic control adequately.	Do not carry forward
Widen Bleams Road	Widening Bleams Road to 4 lanes in the short section from Fischer-Hallman Road to Commonwealth Drive/ Abram Clemens Drive.	The widening of Bleams Road in this section of the project will improve corridor capacity and address future congestion issues	**Carry Forward in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative**

Planning Alternatives	Description	Preliminary Evaluation	Recommendation
Active Transportation Facilities	Providing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians on Bleams Road in addition to efficient crossings and connections between the north and south side of the roadway.	Active Transportation Facilities are considered an essential component of this project and their design will be undertaken in conjunction with other improvements, such as, widening the east section of Bleams Road, along with roundabouts and/or traffic signals.	**Carry Forward in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative**

Appendix C - Summary of Region Noise Policy

The Region's Noise Policy is made up of three Parts:

Part A: **New development** impacted by existing roads and railways.

Part B: **Existing development** impacted by proposed Regional road widenings.

Part C: **Existing development** impacted by noise from existing Regional roads.

Since there is no new development proposed, only **Parts B or C** may apply to this project.

The Bleams Road Class Environmental Assessment from just west of Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road is proposing to:

- ✓ **Widen** Bleams Road from just west of Fischer-Hallman Road to Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Drive – therefore Part B applies to this section of Bleams Road; and

- ✓ **Reconstruct** Bleams Road only and maintain existing 2 lane "vehicle lane" configuration in all other areas.

    - Noise is calculated at a residence **outdoor living area** – typically defined as the backyard or patio within 3 metres of the rear wall of a residential unit.

    - Noise is calculated using a Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) model that calculates a 16-hour average noise level for the outdoor living area based on several factors, such as traffic volumes, distance from the outdoor living area to the centre of the road, and elevation differences between the outdoor living area to the centre of the road. The noise level used in the policy is not based on peak levels that may be recorded at a given location/time.

Part B of Region Noise Policy – Road Widening

The Region will consider designing and constructing a noise barrier if:

- ✓ The projected noise level in 10 years is calculated to exceed 65 dBa; or

- ✓ The projected noise level in 10 years is calculated to exceed 60 dBa and increase the existing noise level by 5dBa or more.

By constructing a noise barrier, projected noise is required to be calculated to be reduced to 60 dBa or less and reduced by 5dBa or more.

Part C of Region Noise Policy – No Road Widening – Complaint Driven

The Region will consider cost-sharing (50-50) noise barrier design and construction if:

- ✓ A resident raises a noise concern; and

- ✓ Existing noise levels are calculated to exceed 60dBa; and
- ✓ Two thirds (2/3) of affected property owners are in agreement to build noise barrier (based on rear yard property length) in accordance with Local Improvement Act; and
- ✓ All property owners pay 50% of cost of noise barrier based on length of wall installed at their property with payments charged over a period of ten (10) years (in accordance with Local Improvement Act).
- ✓ Residents may also decide to take other measures such as installing a privacy fence, air conditioning or window improvements at their own expense

Comment Sheet
Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Bleams Road Reconstruction
From Just West of Fischer-Hallman Road to Trussler Road
City of Kitchener

Please complete the survey so that your comments can be considered for this project. Comments can be submitted on the Region's engagement page at **https://www.engagewr.ca/bleams-rd**, by September 12, 2022.
Comments can alternatively be submitted by filling out this comment sheet and returning it by mail or e-mail by September 12, 2022 to:

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Comments regarding this project:

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_____
_____
_____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Collection Notice:

All comments and information received from individuals, stakeholder groups, and agencies regarding this project are being collected to assist the Region of Waterloo in making a decision. Under the "Municipal Act", personal information such as name, address, telephone number and property location that may be included in a submission becomes part of the public record.

Additional Comments:

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