University Avenue Improvements

Albert Street to Weber Street

City of Waterloo

Public Consultation Centre #2
Information Package

What: The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is looking to improve the University Avenue (Regional Road 57) corridor. This work will include a Schedule “C” Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA).

Where: University Avenue from Albert Street to Weber Street in the City of Waterloo.

Why: To improve roadway and underground infrastructure, active transportation facilities and traffic operation along the corridor.

When: 2023 Construction (Region Transportation Capital Program).

Who: Andrew Doman, P. Eng., Project Manager
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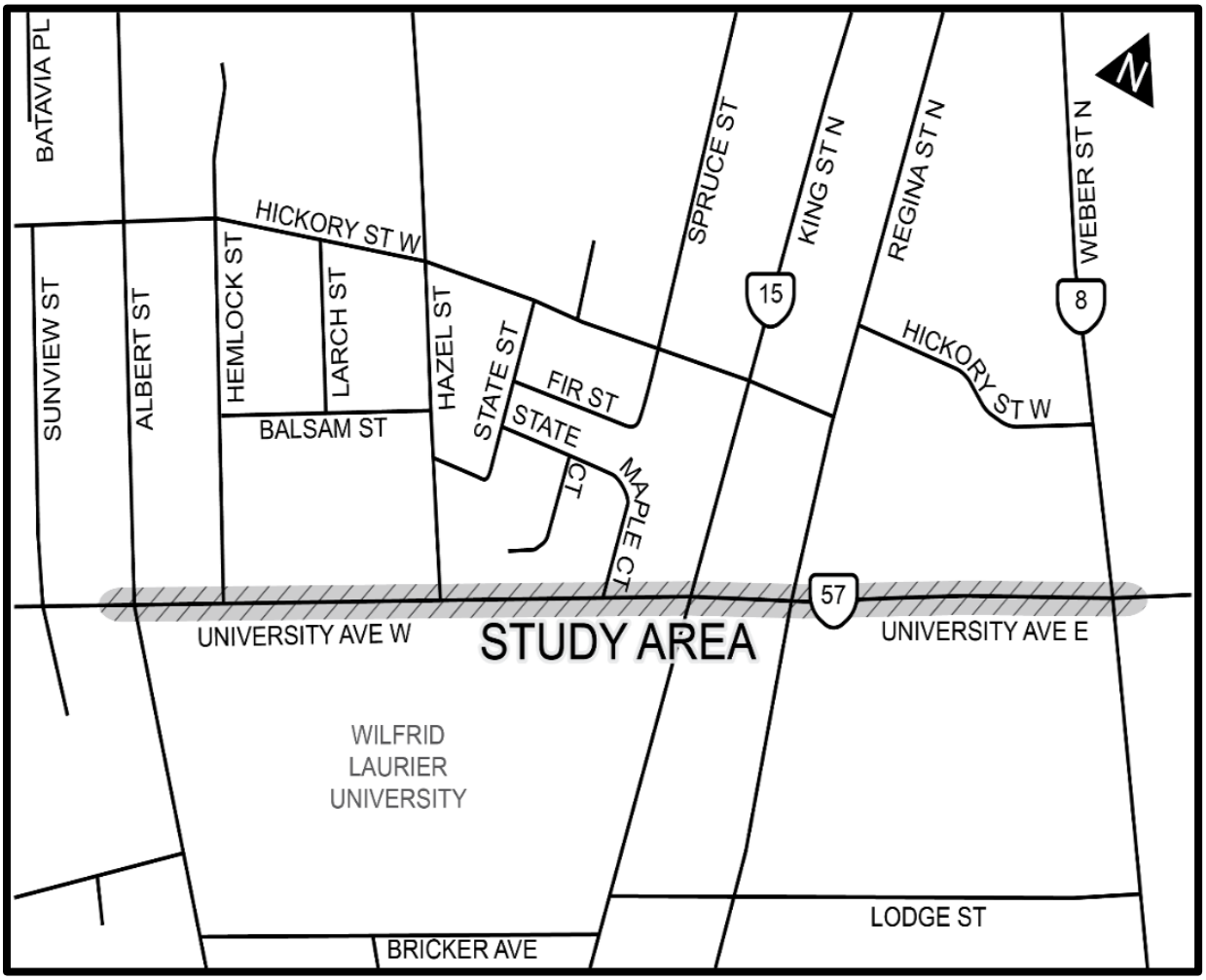
Public Consultation Centre #2
Held virtually online at www.engagewr.ca

1. What is the purpose of this second Public Consultation Centre (PCC)?

At this PCC, the project team will present a preferred alternative to meet the improvements needs of University Avenue. 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 online survey 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 "B".

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 Waterloo, along with the City of Waterloo Mayor and Region of Waterloo (Waterloo) Councillor Dave Jaworsky and City of Waterloo (Ward 6) Councillor Jeff Henry. The consulting engineering firm IBI Group has been retained by the Region of Waterloo to provide planning and preliminary design services during the study phase of this project, as well as detailed design, contract administration, and inspection services through the construction phase.

4. Why is the Region considering this project?

The Region's Transportation Capital Program has identified this section of roadway for major rehabilitation to address deteriorated pavement structure and provide active transportation and intersection improvements. Also, the City of Waterloo's watermain and sanitary sewer systems require replacement.

The Region's Transportation Master Plan has identified the road section on University Avenue from King Street to Weber Street for cycling infrastructure installation to complete cycling network connectivity in this area.

5. What work has been completed on this project to date?

The project was initiated in 2019 with the first Public Consultation Centre (PCC#1) held online between August 1, 2020 and October 2, 2020, to provide information on

the purpose of the Class EA study and need for improvements on University Avenue. 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; Natural Environment; Heritage and Cultural Environment; and Archeological.

No significant environmental constraints or potential for impact was identified from these studies.

6. What work has been completed on this project to date since the first public consultation?

Alternatives for improvements on University Avenue have been developed by the project team and are presented in section 7 below. The project team reviewed and responded to public comments from the first public consultation and continued consultation with stakeholders such as Wilfrid Laurier University, City of Waterloo, Grand River Transit and the public. The team also evaluated the identified alternatives.

7. What alternatives have been developed for improvements on University Avenue?

The alternate solutions for improvements considered by the Project Team are listed below and cross-sections are provided in Appendix A. Please note all alternatives maintain four lanes of vehicle traffic as these were deemed required as part of the Transportation Study.

1. **Do Nothing** – this alternative would include reconstruction of the road in its current cross-section configurations.

2. **On-road Buffered Bike Lanes** – this alternative maintains on-road bike lanes between Albert Street and King Street and adds bike lanes from King Street to Weber Street on both sides of the roadway. These bike lanes would be separated by a painted buffer space.

3. **Separated Bike Lanes with Enhanced Sidewalk** – this alternative would provide an enhanced 2.1m wide sidewalk, where possible, and separated bike lane facilities on both sides of the roadway separated with flexible bollards.

3a. Separated Bike Lanes with Enhanced Sidewalk – this alternative would provide an enhanced 2.1m wide sidewalk, where possible, and separated bike lane facilities on both sides of the roadway setting the bike lane off the roadway platform.

8. What other improvements have been completed in the project area and how do they impact this project?

As part of the Region's Transportation Capital Program, other road improvements in the project area that have recently been completed are as follows:

- Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements on King Street from Central Street to University Avenue
- Region's Separated Cycling Pilot Project was implemented in 2019 along King Street crossing University Avenue, University Avenue between King Street and the Laurel Trail and on Albert Street crossing University Avenue.

9. How have the improvement alternatives been evaluated?

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 University Avenue. 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?

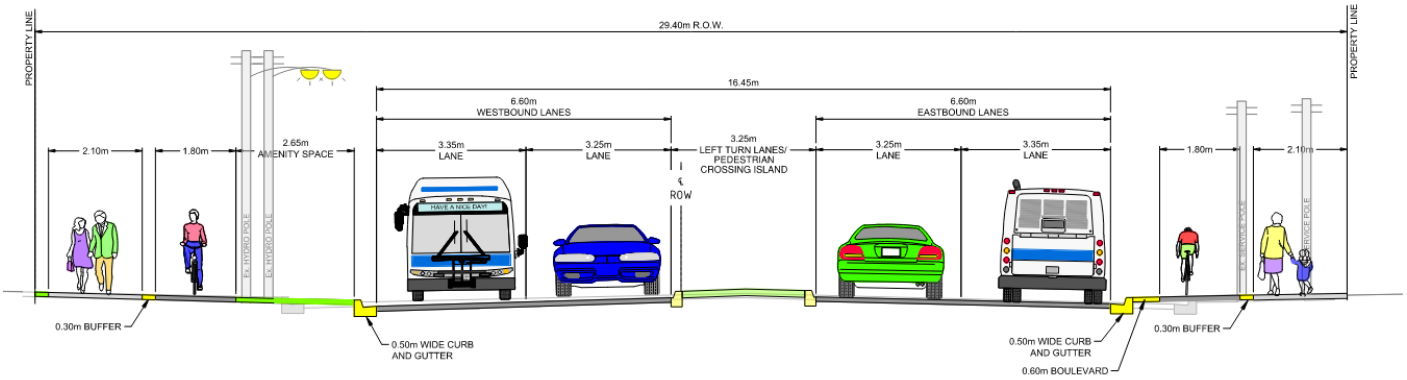
Following PCC #1, the Project Team reviewed public input, as well as the various identified constraints, in order to finalize the evaluation of the alternatives.

10. Has the project team identified a preferred alternative?

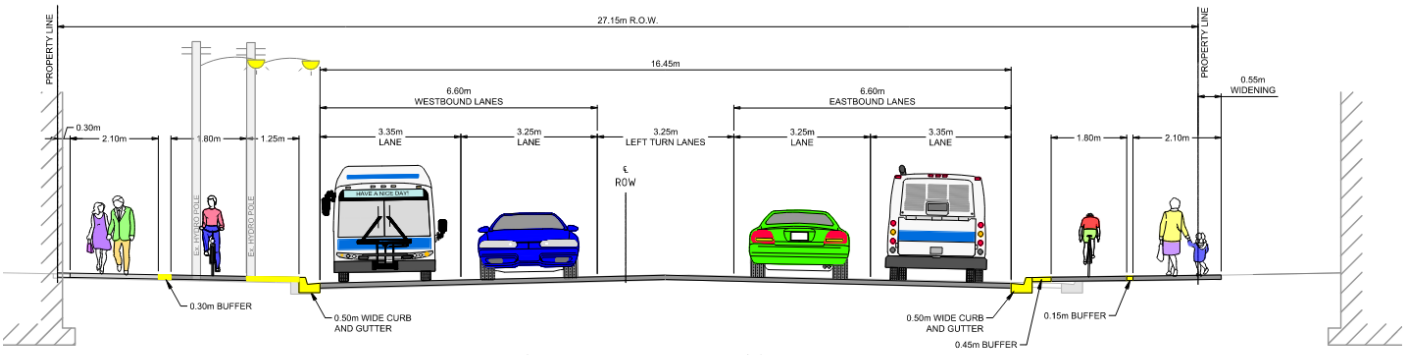
In consideration of the varying section and needs of University Avenue throughout the project limits, the Project Team has identified Alternative 3a as the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 3a – Separated bike lane with a physical barrier.
This preferred alternative includes the addition of separated bike lane off of the road level, wider 2.1m sidewalks along the corridor where possible, and two lanes of traffic in each direction with left turn lanes.

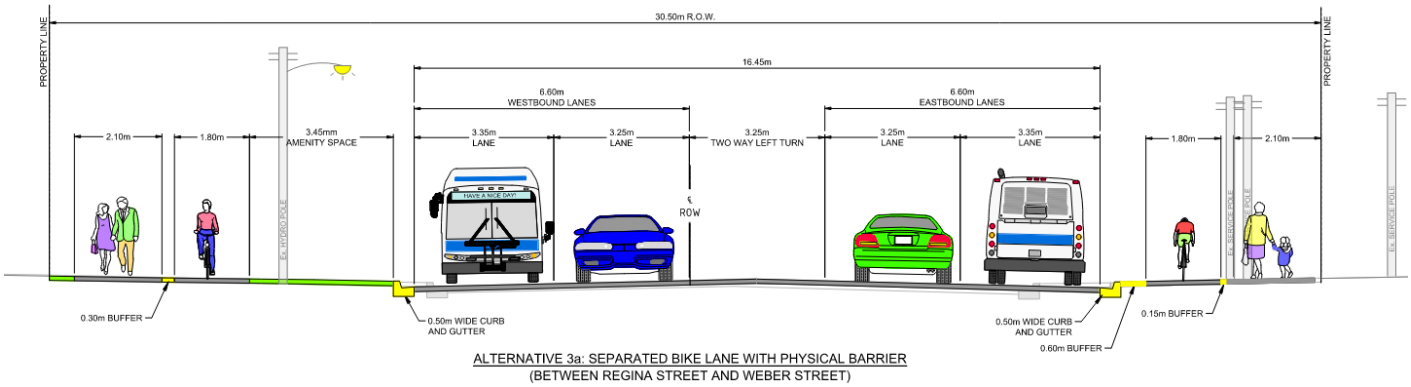
The preferred alternative for each segment is shown in the following figures:



ALTERNATIVE 3a: SEPARATED BIKE LANE WITH PHYSICAL BARRIER
(BETWEEN ALBERT STREET AND KING STREET)



ALTERNATIVE 3a: SEPARATED BIKE LANE WITH PHYSICAL BARRIER
(BETWEEN KING STREET AND REGINA STREET)



ALTERNATIVE 3a: SEPARATED BIKE LANE WITH PHYSICAL BARRIER
(BETWEEN REGINA STREET AND WEBER STREET)

Subject to additional comments received as a result of this second Public Consultation Centre, and additional agency comments, **Alternative 3a** is considered "Preferred" compared to all the other alternatives based on its overall impacts on the traffic, natural environment, socio-cultural environment and costs.

The following is a summary of the evaluation that resulted in the project team identifying **Alternative 3a, Separated Bike Lane with Physical Barrier,** as preferred at this point in the project:

1) **Technical**

Alternative 3a maintains the four lane road with turning lanes, and includes enhanced 2.1m wide sidewalks and a separated cycle track that will provide separated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists away from the road, encouraging greater use and providing greater safety for users. Separation from the road also keeps the road pavement widths to a minimum which may encourage lower operating speeds along the corridor.

2) **Natural Environment**

Natural Environment studies completed for this EA reviewed existing vegetation, trees, wetlands, wildlife, aquatic habitat and surface drainage in and adjacent to the study area. A single-candidate significant wildlife habitat was identified within the study area: Special Concern and Rare Wildlife Species (habitat for species of conservation concern). The preferred alternative does not directly impact any of the trees having potential suitable roost habitat features for species at risk bats, which comprise the candidate SWH. Information gathered through background review and field investigations, combined with technical input from reviewing agencies, was used to inform the evaluation of alternatives from a natural environment perspective, as well as determining mitigation strategies to avoid or minimize impacts to natural heritage.

3) Socio-Cultural Environment

A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment (Background Research and Property Inspection) was completed in July 2019. The Stage 1 Background Research indicated that two (2) previously registered sites are within the Study Area, but do not retain archaeological potential. The remainder of the Study Area does not retain archaeological potential due to prior deep and extensive land disturbance.

A Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment for Built Heritage Resources and Cultural Heritage Landscapes was completed for the study area. This study revealed a study area with a rural land use history, which has experienced significant commercial, institutional, residential, and road development. It was determined that three (3) cultural heritage resources are located within the study area. Based on these findings, construction activities and staging will be suitably planned and undertaken to avoid impact to the cultural heritage resources. No direct impacts to identified cultural heritage resources are anticipated.

4) Costs

Alternative 1 represents the least amount of work on University Avenue and respectively the least cost, however the do nothing alternative would require a reconstruction of University Ave due to failing pavement conditions and need to replace underground infrastructure at a cost of $1.9 million.

Alternative 2 with addition of on-road cycling facilities is estimated at approximately $4.2 million.

Alternative 3 with addition of separated bike lanes and enhanced wider sidewalks is estimated at approximately $4.3 million. Alternative 3A with addition of separated bike facilities and wider 2.1m wide sidewalks is at approximately $4.2 million.

Additional costs for the utility relocations are required for all alternatives and are estimated to be in the range of $180,000 to $220,000.

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

While it is the intent of the design process to minimize as much as possible the need to obtain property for the University Avenue Improvements, the Preferred Alternative being considered will require widening the road allowances in areas to accommodate the cycle track and wide 2.1m sidewalks, and limited temporary work on adjacent property to match grades and restore landscaping during the construction period. In areas where property is required, the property owner will be contacted directly by the Region of Waterloo's Land Purchasing Officer during the future detail design process. Compensation will be provided at fair market rates based on recent similar area sales. Please refer to Appendix "C" for further information on the property acquisition process.

12. How will existing trees be affected?

A tree assessment was completed in the summer of 2019 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.

13. What are the next steps in the project?

The project team will use the comments received from Public Consultation Centre #2, along with other input received from the public and approval agencies as well as technical data, to identify a recommended alternative for improvements on University Avenue.

Subject to comments received, we propose to present the Recommended Alternative to the Region of Waterloo's Planning and Works Committee for approval in Summer 2022. If the Recommended Alternative design is approved, the study process and findings will be documented in an Environmental Study Report (ESR) which will then be advertised, notification sent to interested parties and available for public review and comment for 30 days. This is a requirement of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Act (Part II Order requests). Any Part II Order requests unresolved after the 30 day review period will be sent to the Ministry of Environment for further consideration and ruling.

Further consultation and preliminary design for utility relocations are currently underway and will be incorporated into the assessment of alternatives being considered.

Pending project approval by Regional Council, detailed design and property acquisition would be completed throughout 2022 with utility relocations in 2022/2023 and construction commencing in 2023.

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

All property owners within the study area and members of the public registering at this Public Consultation Centre, or the first Public Consultation Centre, will receive any forthcoming additional information and be notified of any future meetings including Regional Council or Committee meetings. Advertisements will also be placed in local newspapers advising the public of the meetings and availability of the final Environmental Study Report for the University Avenue Improvements Class EA study.

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

We encourage you, stakeholder groups, and agencies to actively participate in this study by attending public consultation opportunities and/or contacting staff directly with comments or questions. If you wish to be added to the project mailing list, or would like further information on the project and any future project meetings, please visit our website at www.engagewr.ca/University-Ave or contact one of the following:

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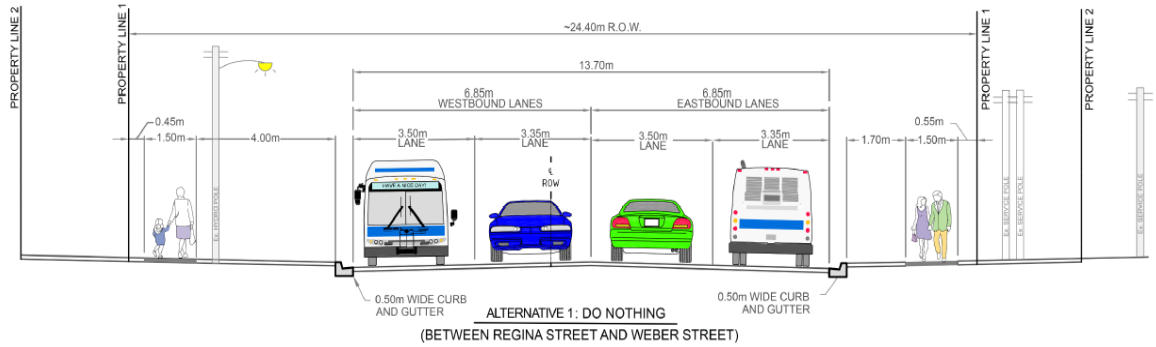
16. How can I view project information following the PCC?

All of the PCC display materials and other relevant 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.engagewr.ca/University-Ave .

Appendix A

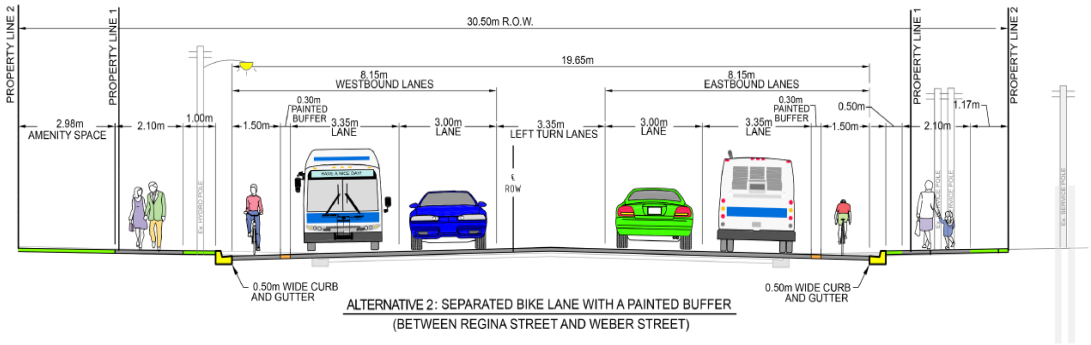
Alternative Solutions Considered

Alternative 1: Do Nothing



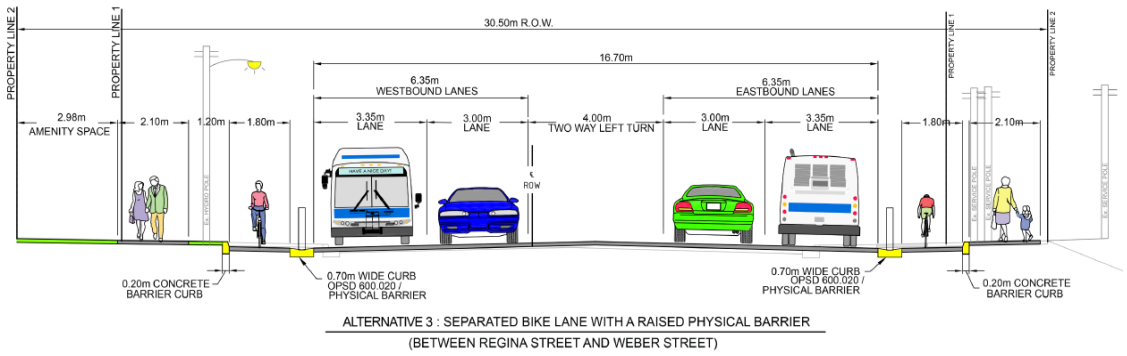
- Reconstructing the road in its current cross-section configurations

Alternative 2: Separated Bike Lane with a Painted Buffer



- Maintain on-road bike lanes between Albert Street and King Street North, add on-road bike lanes between King Street North and Weber Street North.
- Provide a 0.3m painted buffer between outside vehicular travel lane and the bike lane.

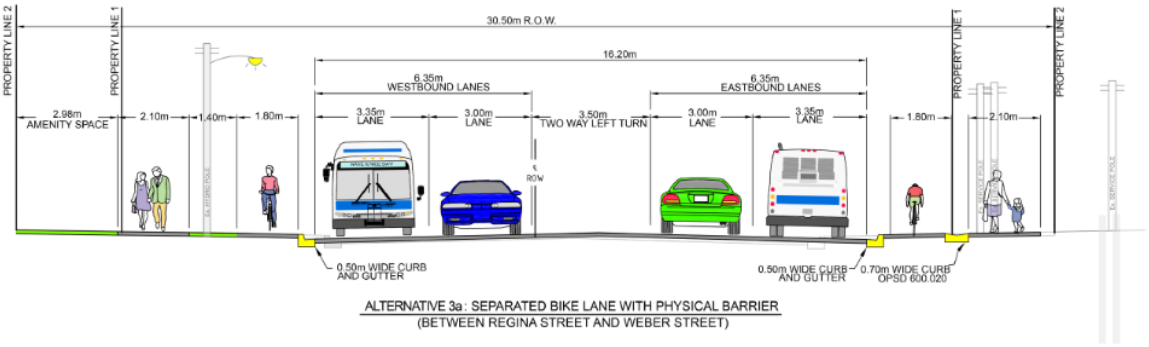
Alternative 3: Separated Bike Lane with a Raised Physical Barrier



ALTERNATIVE 3 : SEPARATED BIKE LANE WITH A RAISED PHYSICAL BARRIER
(BETWEEN REGINA STREET AND WEBER STREET)

- Modified travel lane widths to provide flexible bollards between the outside vehicular travel lane and the bike lane.
- Enhanced 2.1m wide sidewalk where possible.

Alternative 3a: Separated Bike Lane with a Physical Barrier



ALTERNATIVE 3a : SEPARATED BIKE LANE WITH PHYSICAL BARRIER
(BETWEEN REGINA STREET AND WEBER STREET)

- Provide a separated bike lane behind standard curb and gutter, further away from the vehicular travel lanes.
- Enhanced 2.1m wide sidewalk where possible.

Appendix B

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 in Ontario". 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 alternatives;
- Assessment of the environmental impacts for each alternative;
- Systematic evaluation of alternatives; and
- Clear documentation of the process followed.

The Municipal 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.

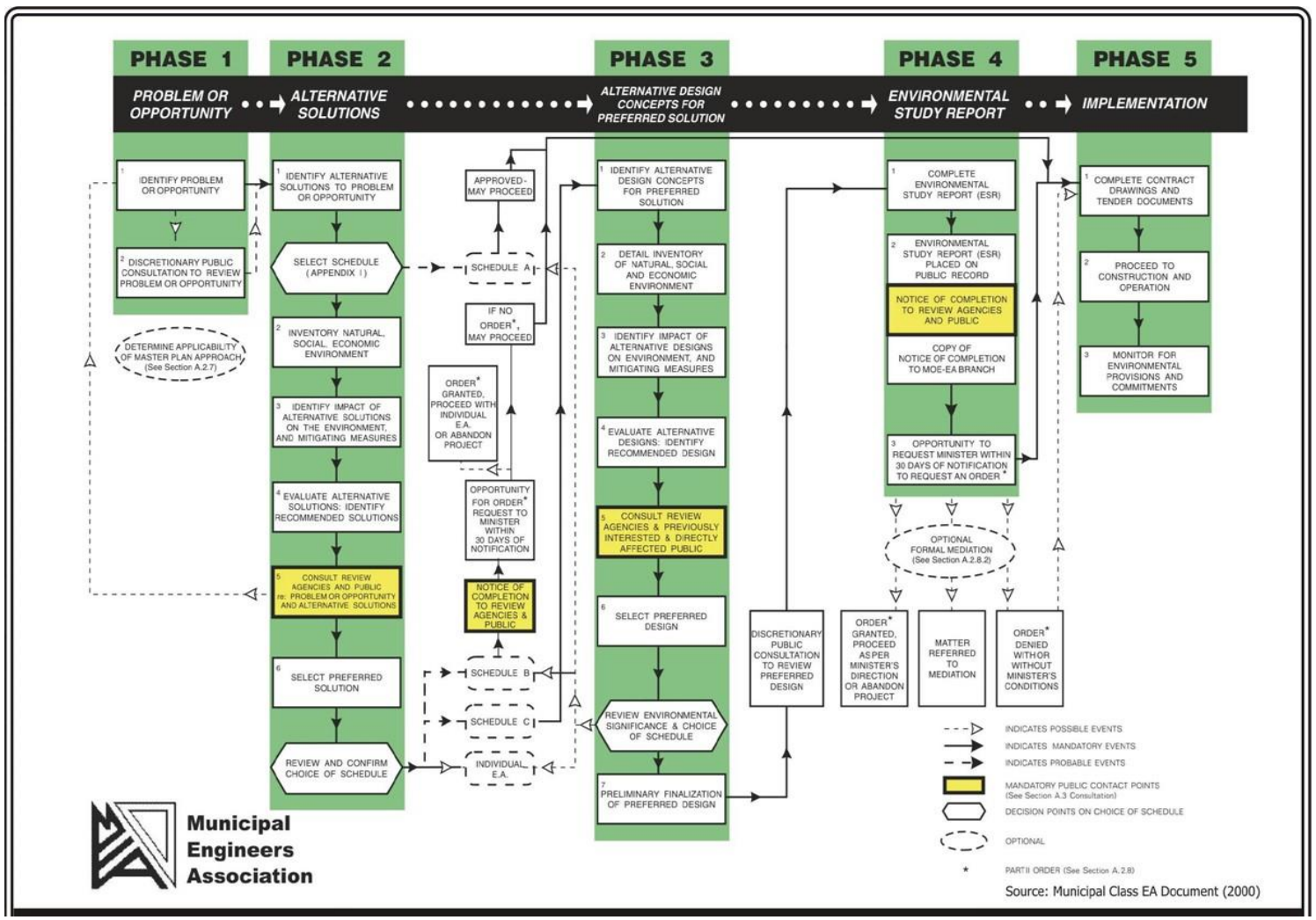
Schedule "A"	Includes routine maintenance, operation and emergency activities. The Municipality can proceed with this work without further approval or public consultation.
Schedule "B"	Includes projects with the potential for some adverse environmental effects. These projects are subject to a screening 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 EA and require a minimum of 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 EA process. For Schedule "C" projects there are a minimum of three (3) opportunities for public contact. These typically include two Public Consultation Centres and the Notice of Study Completion.

Class EA 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 the Environment by order to require a proponent to comply with Part II of the EA Act before proceeding with a proposed undertaking which has been subject to Class EA 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 EA 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:
The Ministry/Minister of Environment and Climate Change
77 Wellesley St. West, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5

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; and,
- Involvement of the person in the planning process and details of discussion held between the person and the proponent.

Appendix C

Property Acquisition Process Information Sheet

The following information is provided as a general overview of the property acquisition process and is not legal advice. Further, the steps, timing and processes can vary depending on the individual circumstances of each case.

Once the Recommended Design Concept has been approved, the property acquisition process and the efforts of Regional Real Estate staff will focus on acquiring the required lands to implement the approved design. Regional staff cannot make fundamental amendments or changes to the approved design concept.

Property Impact Plans

After the project has been approved and as it approaches final design, the project planners will generate drawings and sketches indicating what lands and interests need to be acquired from each affected property to undertake the project. These drawing are referred to as Property Impact Plans (PIP).

Initial Owner Contact by Regional Real Estate Staff

Once the PIPs are available, Regional Real Estate staff will contact the affected property owners by telephone and mail to introduce themselves and set-up initial meetings to discuss the project and proposed acquisitions.

Initial Meetings

The initial meeting is attended by the project engineer and the assigned real estate staff person to brief the owner on the project, what part of their lands are to be acquired or will be affected, what work will be undertaken, when, with what equipment, etc. and to answer any questions. The primary purpose of the meeting is to listen to the owner and identify issues, concerns, effects of the proposed acquisition on remaining lands and businesses that can be feasibly mitigated and/or compensated, and how the remaining property may be restored. These discussions may require additional meetings. The goal of staff is to work with the owner to reach mutually agreeable solutions.

Goal – Fair and Equitable Settlement for All Parties

The goal is always to reach a fair and equitable agreement for both the property owner and the Region. Such an agreement will provide compensation for the fair market value of the lands and address the project impacts (such as repairing or replacing landscaping, fencing, paving) so that the property owner will receive the value of the lands acquired and the restoration of their remaining property to the condition it was prior to the Project.

The initial meetings will form the basis of an initial offer of settlement or agreement of purchase and sale for the required lands or interests.

Steps Toward Offer of Settlement or Agreement of Purchase and Sale

The general steps towards such an offer are as follows;

1) the Region will obtain an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the lands and interests to be acquired, and an appraisal of any effect on the value of the rest of the property resulting from the acquisition of the required lands and interests;

2) compensation will be estimated and/or works to minimize other effects will be defined and agreed to by the property owner and the Region;

3) reasonable costs of the owner will be included in any compensation settlement;

4) an offer with a purchase price and any other compensation or works in lieu of compensation will be submitted to the property owner for consideration; and

5) an Agreement will be finalized with any additional discussion, valuations, etc. as may be required.

Depending on the amount of compensation, most agreements will require the approval of Council. The approval is undertaken in Closed Session which is not open to the public to ensure a level of confidentiality.

Expropriation

Due to the time constraints of these projects, it is the practice of the Region to commence the expropriation process in parallel with the negotiation process to insure that lands and interests are acquired in time for commencement of the Project. Typically, over 90% of all required lands and interests are acquired through the

negotiation process. Even after lands and interests have been acquired through expropriation an agreement on compensation can be reached through negotiation, this is usually referred to as a 'settlement agreement'.

Put simply, an expropriation is the transfer of lands or an easement to a governmental authority for reasonable compensation, including payment of fair market value for the transferred lands, without the consent of the property owner being required. In the case of expropriations by municipalities such as the Region of Waterloo, the process set out in the Ontario *Expropriations Act* must be followed to ensure that the rights of the property owners provided under that *Act* are protected.

Comment Sheet
Regional Municipality of Waterloo
University Avenue Improvements
City of Waterloo
Public Consultation Centre #2, March 8 – April 8, 2022

Please complete and email or fax your comments by April 4, 2022 to either contact below. Alternatively you can complete the survey online at: www.engagewr.ca/University-Ave

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1. Do you think there are any other problems, needs or opportunities that should be considered for this project?

2. What opportunities/challenges do you see with the Preferred Alternative (**Alternative 3a – Separated Bike Lane with Physical Barrier**)?

3. Are there any other general comments you have on this project?

_____

_____

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Do you wish to be placed on the mailing list for this project? Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone & email: _____

Thank you for your interest and time.

Collection Notice

All comments and information received from individuals, stakeholder groups and agencies regarding these projects and meetings 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. Questions regarding the collection should be forwarded to the staff member noted above.