



Region of Waterloo

Waterloo Cycling Network Expansion

The City of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener

Virtual Public Meeting

<https://www.engagewr.ca/waterloocycling>

What: The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is finalizing a Feasibility and Preliminary Design Study for upgrading and expanding the Separated Pilot Cycling Network in Waterloo through a Schedule “A+” and Schedule “B” Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA).

Where: Virtual.

When: November 16 2023, 6:30 PM.

Who: Region of Waterloo Project Manager
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KEY PLAN

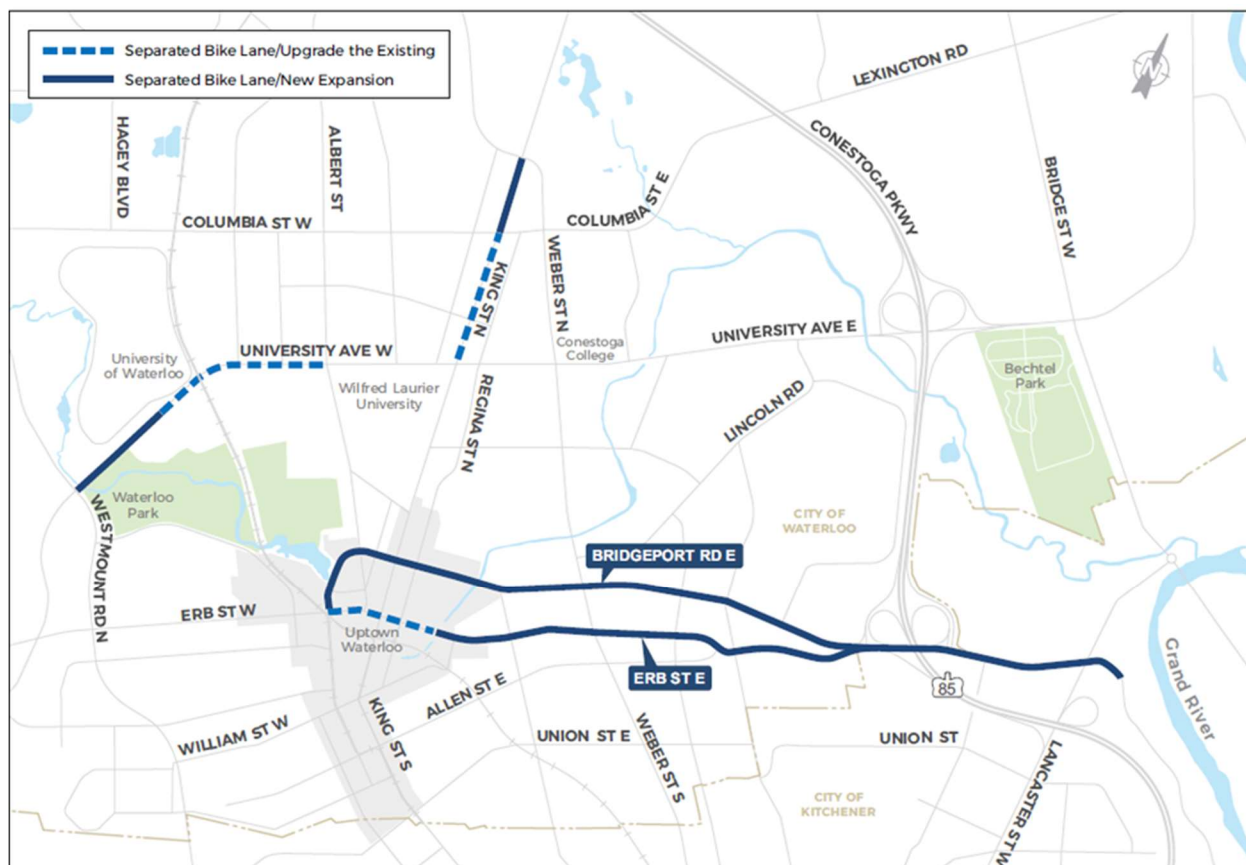


Figure 1- Map highlighting Feasibility Study. Bridgeport Road East and Erb Street East from Columbia Street to Riverbend Drive. University Avenue from Westmount Road to Albert Street and King Street North from University Avenue to Weber Street North.

1. Why is the Region considering this project?

In April 2017, Regional Council approved a Pilot Project for a network of separated cycling facilities in the City of Waterloo, which were installed in 2019. There was a significant increase in cycling volumes which indicated that the physical separation of cyclists from motor vehicle traffic is both effective and essential to increase cycling modal share and thus achieve the targets identified in the Region's Transportation Master Plan. Based on these results, the Region will be proceeding with the design and construction of permanent cycling facilities along the former Pilot Project Corridors:

- King Street from University Avenue to Columbia Street;
- University Avenue from Albert Street to Seagram Drive; and
- Erb Street from Caroline Street North to Peppler Street.

The Region has also undertaken a feasibility study to examine temporary and permanent facility alternatives for the Expansion Corridors:

- King Street from Columbia Street to Weber Street;
- University Avenue from Seagram Drive to Westmount Road;
- Erb Street from Peppler Street to Bridgeport Road;
- Bridgeport Road from Albert Street to Riverbend Drive; and
- Caroline Street from Albert Street to Erb Street.

Regional Planning and Works Committee approved the undertaking of a feasibility and design study for Erb Street and Bridgeport Road corridors on December 8, 2020 and the conversion of the Pilot Network to permanent facilities on April 13, 2021.

2. What Regional policies support this project?

The improvements and extensions of the cycling network support the Region's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Through the Climate-aligned Growth priority which seeks to support a healthy environment where communities can thrive.

To advance this outcome, the Region is looking to foster car-alternative options through complete streets and extended alternative transportation networks. By expanding equitable public and active transportation networks across the region, it will make it easier for people to get around and make climate-friendly choices.

3. Who is directing this project?

The planning and design of this project is being directed by staff from the Region of Waterloo. The consulting engineering firm WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) has been retained by the Region of Waterloo to develop preliminary designs and cost estimates for both the short term, temporary solution, and for the long term, ultimate design of these facilities.

4. How is this project being planned?

This project is being planned in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) process. The Municipal Class EA process is a planning and decision-making process approved under the Environmental Assessment Act that is used by municipalities to plan public infrastructure projects in order that potential environmental impacts are considered before a project is approved. It requires consultation with the public, involved stakeholders, and agencies in consideration of alternatives and their potential impacts on the project environment.

The design and construction of permanent cycling facilities along the Pilot Project Corridors are being planned under Schedule A+ of the Municipal Class EA (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2023), which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. These corridors are:

- King Street from University Avenue to Columbia Street;
- University Avenue from Albert Street to Seagram Drive; and
- Erb Street from Caroline Street North to Peppler Street.

The design and construction of permanent cycling facilities along the Expansion Project Corridors are being planned under Schedule 'B' of the Municipal Class E A (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2023), which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. These corridors are:

- King Street from Columbia Street to Weber Street;
- University Avenue from Seagram Drive to Westmount Road;
- Erb Street from Peppler Street to Bridgeport Road;
- Bridgeport Road from Albert Street to Riverbend Drive; and
- Caroline Street from Albert Street to Erb Street.

5. What is the purpose of this public consultation?

The purpose of this public consultation is to offer an opportunity for the public and interested stakeholders to:

- Learn about the project, including results of engagement to date and how previous feedback has been utilized in the preferred design alternative; and
- View the preferred design alternative and provide specific comments on the final design that should be considered as implementation is planned.

Updated information on this project is available at EngageWR.ca (<https://www.engagewr.ca/waterloocycling>).

Region and project consultant staff are available to answer questions. Staff can be reached through the EngageWR site, email, mail, or telephone. Contact information is available in this Information Package.

All comments received, study and technical findings, best practices, and all other information received will be considered by the Project Team to complete the planning and design for this project.

6. What is a separated cycling facility?

A separated cycling facility is a designated and protected travel lane for bicycles along a street that provides physical separation between people riding bicycles and motor vehicle traffic. Separated cycling facilities can be unidirectional or bi-directional and may be raised from the roadway. Separated cycling facilities can be on-road or placed within the boulevard space, outside of the portion of the roadway travelled by vehicles.

A number of different types of separated cycling facilities are being considered for this project, including:

- Physically separated cycling lanes – The portion of the roadway which has been designated for the exclusive use of cyclists is separated from the adjacent motor vehicle lanes by a horizontal buffer and separation elements that restrict encroachment of traffic. They can be single or bi-directional.
- Cycle tracks – The facility is horizontally and vertically separated from the travelled portion of the roadway by a curb and buffer, thus they are in the boulevard space. Cycle tracks are often positioned adjacent to a sidewalk and they could be single or bi-directional.
- Multi-use paths – The facility is horizontally and vertically separated from the travelled portion of the roadway by a curb and buffer, thus they are in the boulevard space. Multi-use paths are shared by cyclists and pedestrians.



**Physically Separated
Cycling Lanes**



Cycle Tracks



Multi-Use Paths

7. Why is it important to separate cyclists from motor vehicles?

When developing the 2018 Regional Transportation Master Plan the Region of Waterloo sought feedback on travel choices including why people do not cycle more regularly for shorter trips and what would enable them to do so. The responses indicated that safety concerns were a strong reason as to why they don't currently cycle. This has been a consistent finding in surveys of other Canadian cities.

Regional roads typically accommodate larger volumes of vehicles per day at speeds equal to or greater than 50 km/h. These types of roadways make cycling intimidating and uncomfortable without separation. In these situations the preferred solution is to physically separate cyclists and other vulnerable users from motor vehicles as this provides a more comfortable environment for people of all ages and abilities to cycle.

8. What will be presented at the Public Consultation Event?

This community engagement will provide staff an opportunity to share the following information with the public and seek feedback:

- Project overview and timeline;
- Cycling facility design and connectivity alternatives;
- Evaluation criteria;
- The final preferred design alternative; and
- Next steps for the project.

9. How was the final preferred design selected?

Evaluation criteria were developed and shared with the public at the first PCC event in September, 2022. The design alternatives were evaluated based on:

- Safety for all road users;
- Connection to existing and planned facilities in the surrounding area;
- User experience and attractiveness;
- Physical space limitations;
- Impact on winter maintenance and waste collection;
- Impact on other road users, pedestrians, motorists, and transit users/operation;
- Constructability; and
- Capital and maintenance cost.

The Project Team developed four alternative designs for Erb Street and Bridgeport Road. Based on preliminary evaluation through the above criteria, two options were carried forward for further consideration. Based on stakeholder and community feedback, as well as a technical evaluation of the alternatives, the final design alternative was selected.

For King Street and University Avenue the design alternative was selected to match the design on the adjacent sections of these roads.

10. Is any private property required for the implementation of the cycling facilities?

There may be some sections of the corridor that will require the acquisition of private property. The Region will make efforts to minimize impact to private property as the project moves towards implementation.

11. Will any vehicular lanes be removed for the implementation of the cycling facilities?

The inclusion of cycling facilities into the available right of way will require the reallocation of the available space at some of the locations. The impacts on the safety of all users, vehicle travel times, person carrying capacity of the street, and transit operation formed part of the evaluation process. Trade-offs have been analysed and documented for the selected alternative.

The resulting cross sections will provide safer environment for all users especially for pedestrians and cyclist, sufficient vehicular capacity for the anticipated vehicle demand, and will significantly increase the person carrying capacity of the particular streets/roads.

King Street between University Ave and Columbia Street will make the configuration developed through the pilot project permanent.

King Street from Columbia to Weber Street North will be reduced from four to three lanes including a two-way left turn lane. The proposed cross section would be a continuity to the cross section already implemented south of Columbia Street.

University Avenue: the preferred design maintains existing vehicular lane and uses the existing boulevard space for the cycling facility.

Bridgeport Road east of HWY 85 will be reduced from four to three vehicle lanes including a two-way left turn lane. This reduction will encourage lower travel speeds that are closer to the posted speed limit. In addition the capacity of the street is determined by the capacity of its bottleneck intersection at Lancaster and Bridgeport, which will not see a reduction in capacity.

Bridgeport Road and Erb Street west of HWY 85 will be reduced from three to two lanes. The two lane cross section will reduce speeds to values closer to the speed limit and will provide sufficient capacity for the anticipated demand. The lane reduction at Erb Street and Bridgeport corridor west of HWY 85 Ramps is consistent with the 2018 Transportation Master Plan (2018 TMP) recommendations. The 2018 TMP recommends removing one travel lane (road diet) at both corridors west of HWY85 ramps.

12. With the growth of population and the additional developments along these corridors shouldn't the Region construct additional vehicular lanes instead of repurposing them to cycling?

The vehicle carrying capacity of these corridors and the adjacent network can not be increased significantly by adding additional lanes without significant impact to property and substantial additional costs. Bridgeport Road east of Hwy 85 cannot be widened without significant impact on adjacent properties and without widening Lancaster and all other connecting streets. The situation is very similar to other corridors as well.

Growth in travel can be accommodated by modes that need less space than single occupancy cars. High quality active transportation facilities that accommodate all ages and abilities will attract many new users for shorter distance trips that are currently done by cars, leaving the vehicular lanes to those who must or chose to drive.

In addition to the ability of the proposed design to accommodate growing travel demand due to population growth, increasing the number of active transportation trips will also have a positive impact from the pollution and CO2 emissions perspectives, which is supportive of the Region's Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Strategic Plan.

13. How will the pedestrians and cyclist cross the high speed on/off ramps at the Hwy 85 Interchange?

The preferred design does not have free flowing on and off ramps and proposes a regular signalised urban intersection with crosswalks and cross rides. Modifying these two intersections needs the approval of the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO). MTO's approval has not yet been secured and discussions with MTO staff are ongoing.

14. What is the estimated cost of this project?

The estimated cost to construct the preferred design alternative (based on August 2023 valuations) for Bridgeport Road and Erb Street is \$19.5 Million. For King Street, the estimated cost is \$5.6 Million and for University Avenue the estimated cost is \$9.9 Million. These cost estimates include design costs and a 25% contingency. If integrated into existing or planned capital works projects, significant cost efficiencies can be achieved to reduce the overall costs of implementation.

15. What is the project schedule? When will construction occur?

The approved cycling facility design will be incorporated in the area's future road construction projects identified in the 10-year capital forecast or will be implemented as stand-alone projects based on funding availability. The current 10-year capital forecast captures various segments of the network in the period of 2027 to 2032.

Table 1 Transportation Capital Plan – Construction Years for the Cycle Network Expansion Corridors.

Road	Section	Construction Year (2023 TCP)
Bridgeport Rd	Lancaster St to Margaret Ave	2028
Bridgeport Rd	Margaret Ave to Weber St	2031
Bridgeport Rd	Weber St to King St	2031
Bridgeport Rd / Caroline St	King St to Erb St	2030
Erb St	Bridgeport Rd to Margaret Ave	-
Erb St	Margaret Ave to King St	2028
Erb St	King St to Caroline St	-
King St	University Ave to Weber St	2027
University Ave	Albert St to Westmount Rd	2032
Lancaster St	Wellington St to Bridgeport Rd	2024

This table shows the construction years for the cycle network expansion by section and year.

Construction Phasing of the Cycle Network

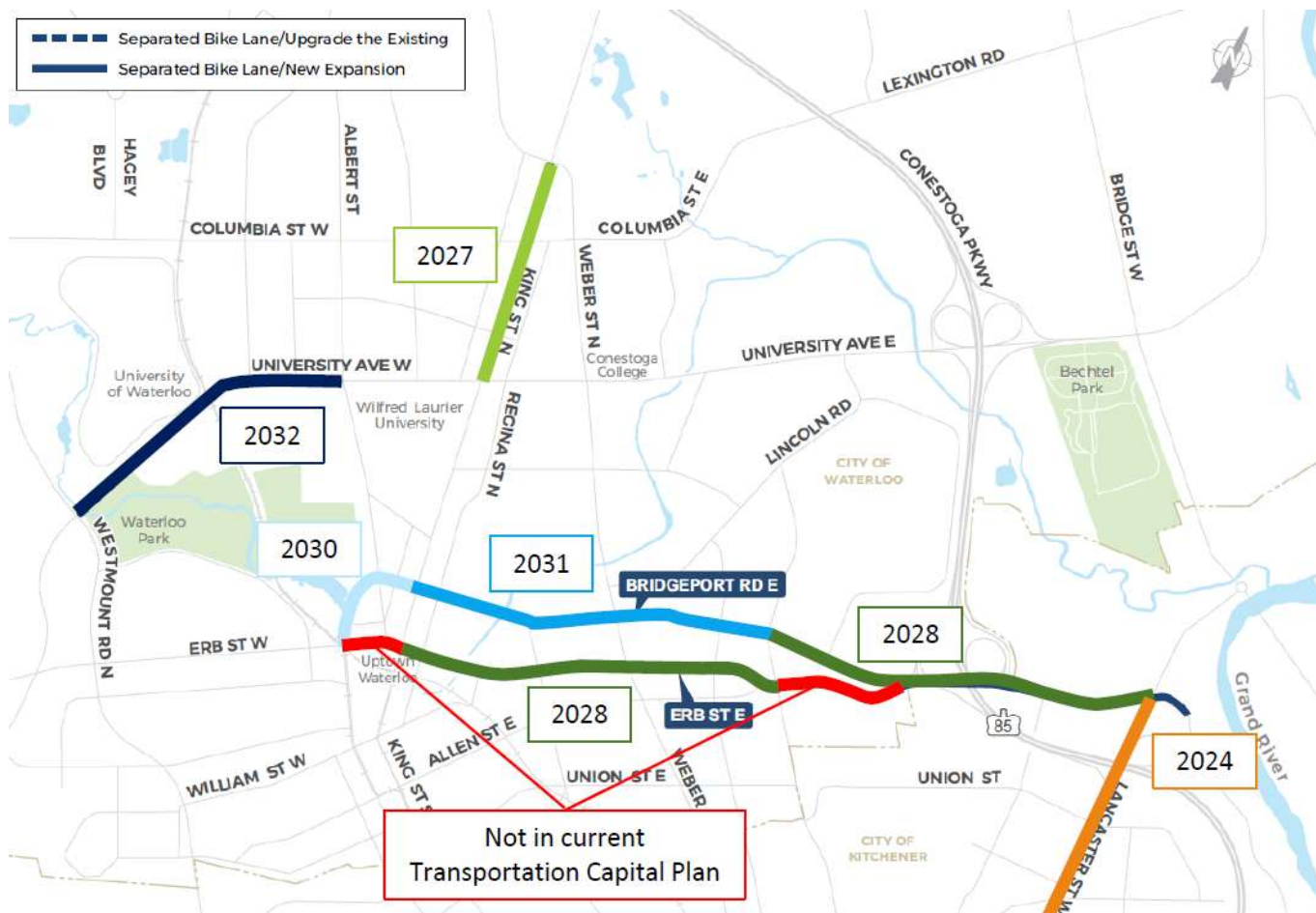


Figure 2 - Map of Feasibility Study showing the areas that would be delivered as part of the Transportation Capital Plan and the years they would be done. It also shows the two areas that are not in the current Transportation Capital Plan.

16. What are the next steps?

The Project Team is planning to conduct this virtual public meeting on November 16, 2023. The comments received will be included in the final report to the Region for consideration and inclusion in the detailed design and implementation of the projects. This project will be brought to Regional Council for approval in Q1 2024.

Following the meeting, an online tool will be made available for residents to view the preferred design alternative and provide specific comments on the final design that should be considered as implementation is planned.

Updated information on this project is available at EngageWR.ca (<https://www.engagewr.ca/waterloocycling>).

Region and project consultant staff are available to answer questions. Staff can be reached through the EngageWR site, email, mail, or telephone.

All comments received, study and technical findings, best practices, and all other information received will be considered by the Project Team to complete the planning and design for this project.

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

All members of the public registering at this public meeting will receive all forthcoming public correspondence, and will be notified of all future meetings, including information about when the project is being presented for approval.

All the information related to this project can also be found at <https://www.engagewr.ca/waterloocycling>. Please “subscribe” to the page to receive update notices.

18. How can I provide my comments?

We want to hear from you! Visit [engagewr.ca](https://www.engagewr.ca) to find a link to a tool where you can view the detailed drawings of the preferred design and provide your comments. You can also mail, or email your comments to the Project Team leads as indicated below.

Thank you for your participation. Please contact Tom or James if you have any questions or concerns.

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