FAQ for PCC#2

Q1: Why is the Region of Waterloo undertaking this project?

A1: We are planning improvements to address the deteriorated roadway, accommodate increased vehicular traffic from recent and future development in the area, as well as to take the opportunity to include enhancements to the road such as cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Q2: What improvements will be made to Bleams Road?

A2: In addition to active transportation features, a comprehensive analysis of projected vehicle volumes on Bleams road has determined the need for improvements at each of the intersection along Bleams Road including Trussler Road, Isaiah Drive, Donnenwerth Drive/Amand Drive, and Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Drive. The traffic analyses also identified the need to widen Bleams Road from two lanes to four lanes for the short section between Fischer-Hallman Road and Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Drive. The remainder of the road would stay as two lanes.

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 traffic signals at all four intersections
- 30 per cent for a hybrid combination of signals and roundabouts

Based on the above, along with other technical considerations and the studies that were conducted, the project team has developed a preferred design, which has roundabouts at the four key intersections.

Q3: How will the improvements accommodate active transportation?

A3: 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. In addition, we are looking at easy and convenient connectivity between communities on both sides of the road.

Q4: How will traffic be accommodated during construction?

A4: Local access will be maintained at all times. However, there will be extended periods when through traffic will not be available for sections of Bleams Road. Where practical, alternate routing of traffic around the construction will be accomplished with detours. We understand the interruption to traffic will be inconvenient and we will try to minimize the length of road closures as much as possible.

Q5: How is the natural environment being considered?

A5: As part of the Municipal Class EA, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and Tree Preservation Plan (TPP) are being completed. This work is still in progress.

To date there has been no evidence of existing Species at Risk or Significant Wildlife Habitat in our screening exercises, and a scoped field inventory program will be developed with the progressing design. The EIS will analyze potential impacts of the final designs. An EIS report will be prepared to describe the findings and analysis.

Q6: How is the archaeological environment being considered?

A6: In consultation with our Indigenous communities, a Stage 1 Archaeological assessment has been completed for Bleams Road within the project limits. The report identifies the need to complete a Stage 2 assessment on 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.

Q7: What is the current timeline for construction?

A7: Construction is currently expected to start in 2024 and be completed by the end of 2025.

Q8: Will noise walls be constructed along Bleams Road adjacent to the existing residential properties on the north side?

A8: The Region has a Noise Policy which is used to determine when noise barriers, such as noise berms or walls, would be recommended as part of an upcoming project. For this project, Part B of the Region's Noise Policy applies since Bleams Road is proposed to be widened from two to four lanes for the section from just west of Fischer-Hallman Road to Commonwealth Drive/Abram Clemens Drive.

Part C of the Region's Noise Policy could be applied in those areas where noise barriers are not recommended under Part B of the Noise Policy. Under Part C, a noise barrier may be considered under certain circumstances, if property owners are willing to share in the cost of a noise attenuation.

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 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.