

# MOVING ROADS FORWARD



CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES



# Welcome

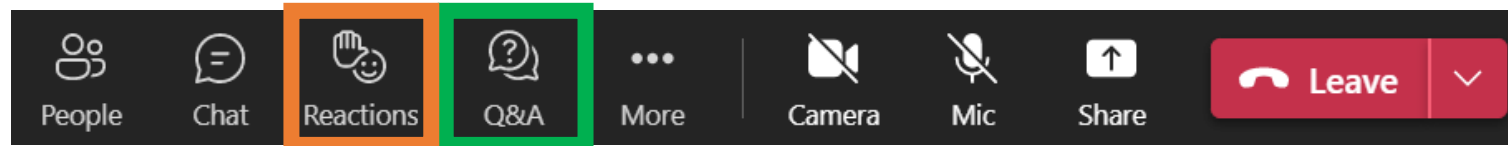
## Public Information Centre #1

### Louth Street and West St. Catharines Grade Separation Environmental Assessment

Thursday November 10, 2022  
6:00 pm

# Housekeeping Items

- When joining the online meeting, attendees will be muted and will not be able to use their microphone or camera.
- There will be an opportunity at the end of the presentation to ask any questions or submit comments. Please use the Q&A icon [in green] or “raise your hand” using the Reactions icon [in orange] to ask questions for the presenters to answer.



- In case you would like to submit your feedback later, the presentation materials and an online comment form are available on the project webpage: <https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/default.aspx>

# Project Team

## Niagara Region

- Josh Wilson
- Maged Elmadhoon

## IBI Group

- Stefan Sirianni
- Scott Johnston

## Morrison Hershfield

- John Grebenc
- Marc Rose

# Presentation Outline

## Study Background

- Study Overview & Municipal Class EA Process
- Study Background
- Existing and Future Conditions

## Development of Alternatives

- Problems and Opportunities
- Alternative Solutions: Grade Separation EA
- Alternative Solutions: Louth Street EA
- Proposed Evaluation Criteria

## Timeline and Next Steps

- Study Schedule
- Getting Involved and Next Steps
- Questions?

# Study Overview

Niagara Region is undertaking a Schedule C Municipal Class Environmental Assessment and detailed transportation assessment of:

- Louth Street (i.e. Regional Road 72 or “RR#72”); and
- A potential new roadway / railway grade separation in the City of St. Catharines.

Upon completion of the study, an Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be prepared to document the Municipal Class EA planning and decision-making process and made available for a 30-day public review period. A Notice of Completion will be issued at that stage.

# Study Area

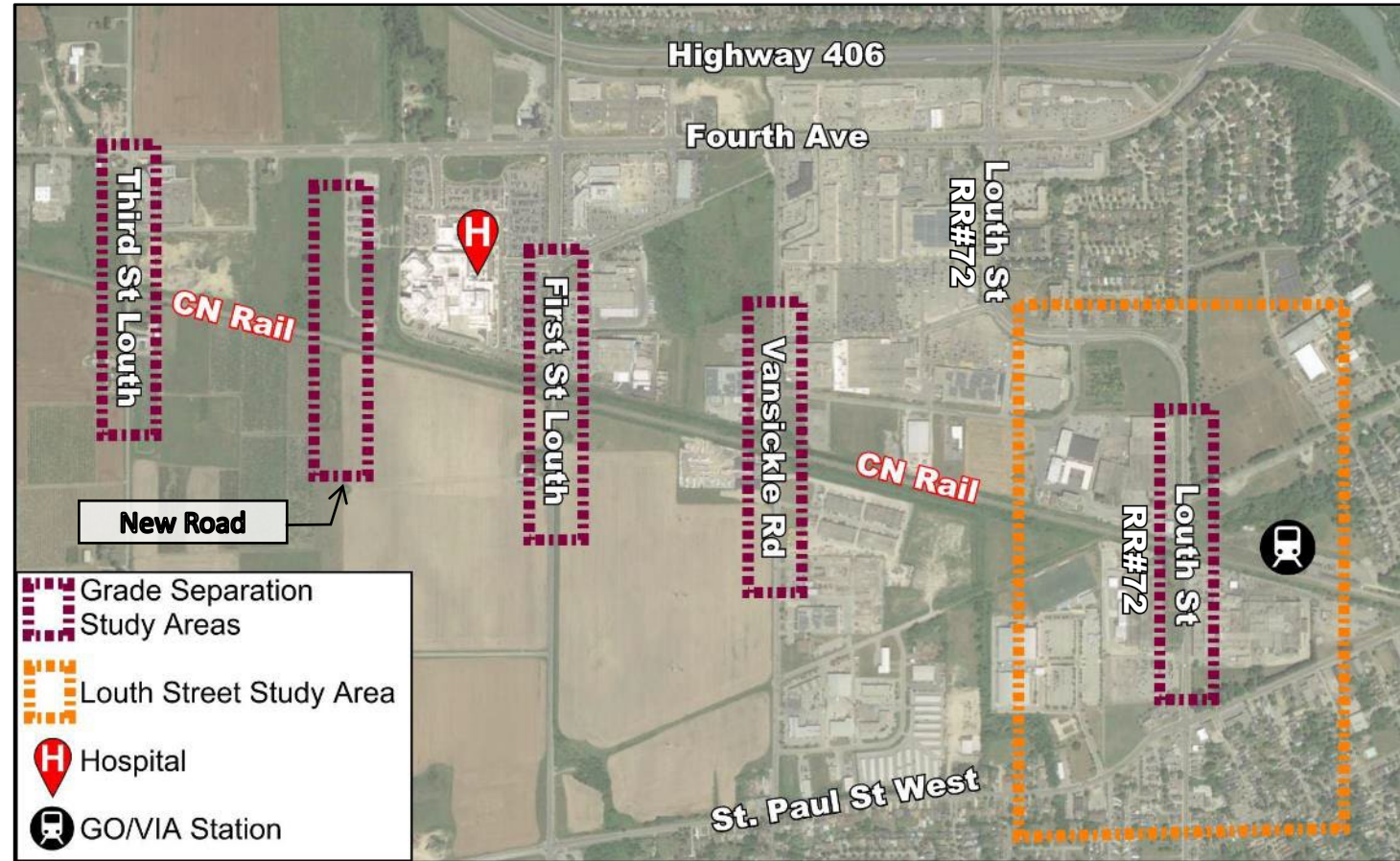
The study is split into two components which include:

## 1. West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA (Phases 1 to 2)

Determining the need for additional north/south transportation capacity by way of a potential new roadway/railway grade separation in west St. Catharines.

## 2. Louth Street EA (RR#72) (Phases 1 to 4)

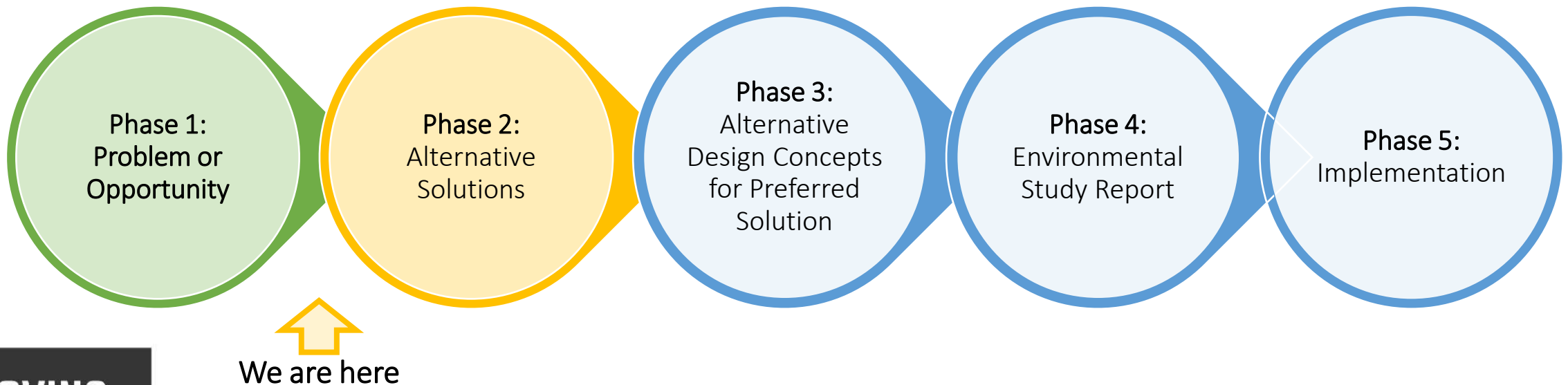
Redesigning Louth Street from Benfield Drive to St. Paul Street West using a Complete Streets approach to balance the various needs of the corridor, while providing dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive and connected.



# Environmental Assessment Process

The Class EA process is a standardized planning process for classes or groups of activities. It applies to projects which are carried out routinely and have predictable and readily managed environmental effects.

The Louth Street EA Study will address Phases 1 to 4 while the West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA Study will address Phases 1 to 2.



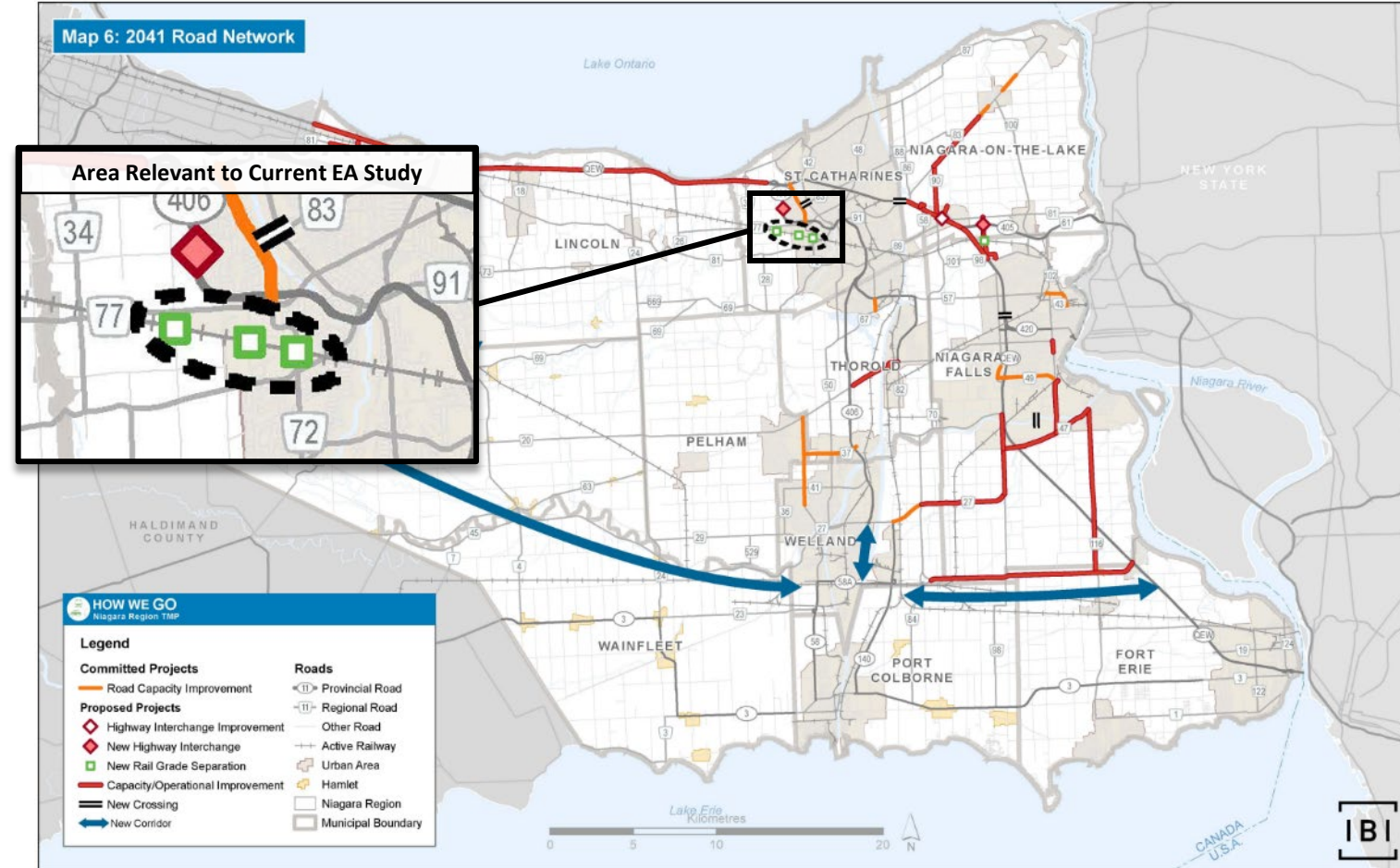


# Study Background

## Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan

Recommendations included:

- Review and consideration for grade separation at Third Street Louth, Vansickle Road, or Louth Street (RR#72)
  - Supports economic development
  - Maintains and improves the goods movement network
  - Develops a blueprint for implementation
  - Connects transportation routes in Niagara Region
  - Meets the needs of residents
  - Improves access to St. Catharines General Hospital
- Rehabilitating Louth Street



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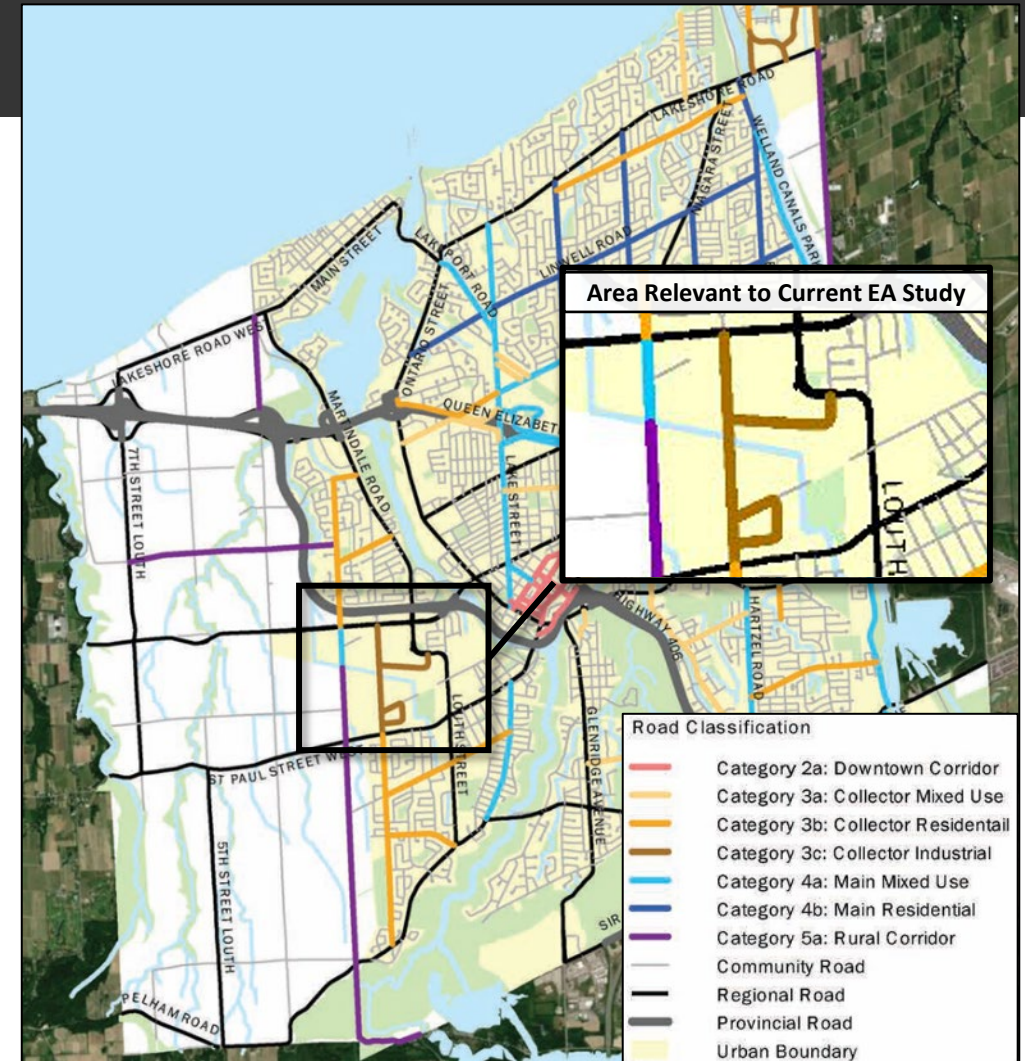
Niagara Region

# Study Background

## St. Catharines Transportation Master Plan

The City's TMP places an emphasis on linking land use and transportation planning to create context-sensitive solutions, and provides direction for the following:

- A grade separation of a north/south street and the CN Rail line in the west end of St. Catharines has been previously identified as a potential benefit to facilitate uninterrupted emergency access in the area of the Hospital on Fourth Avenue; and
- A potential new interchange on Highway 406 at Third Avenue Louth would help relieve traffic at the Fourth Avenue interchange.

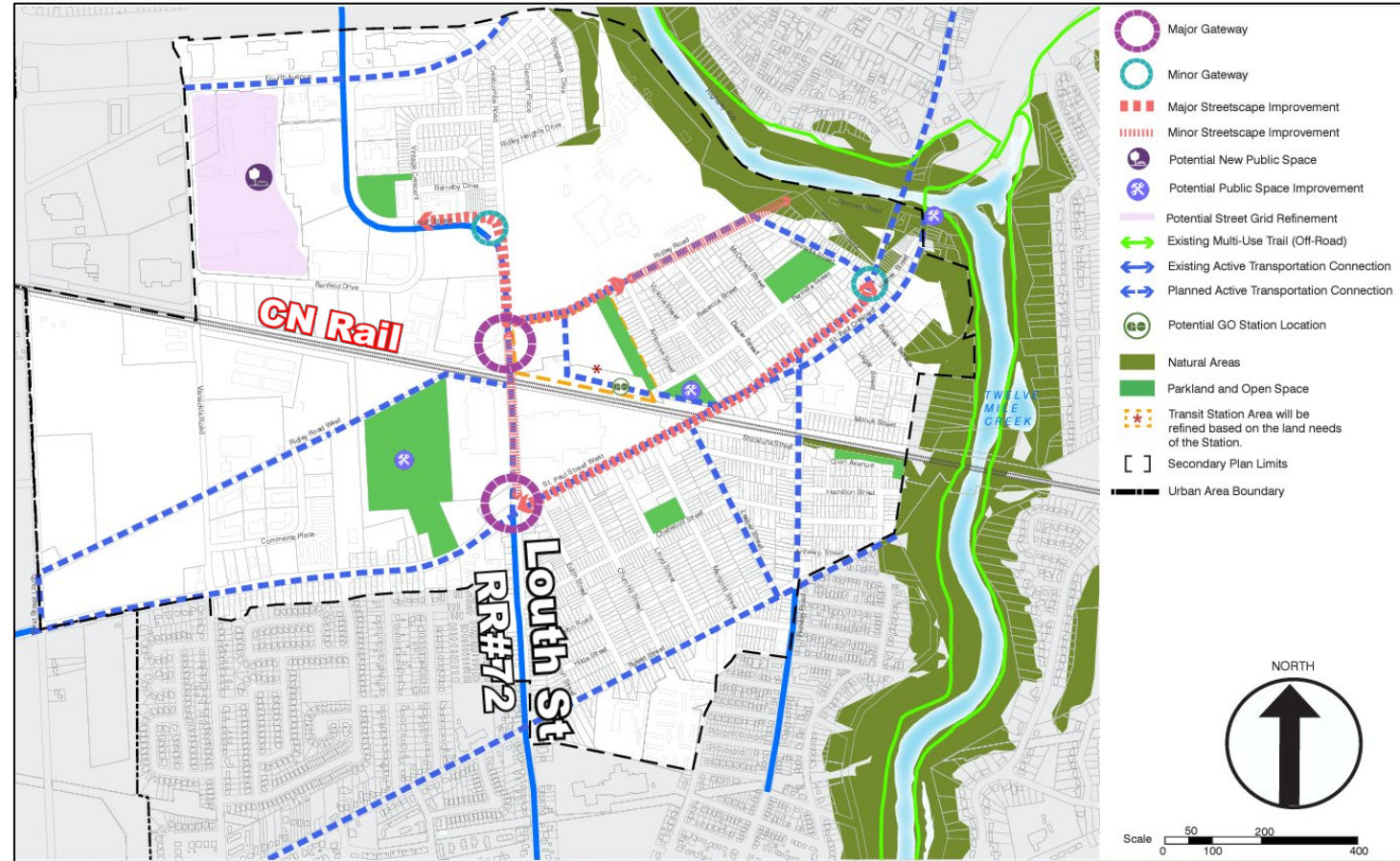


Source: St. Catharines Transportation Master Plan

# Study Background

## St. Catharines GO Transit Station Secondary Plan

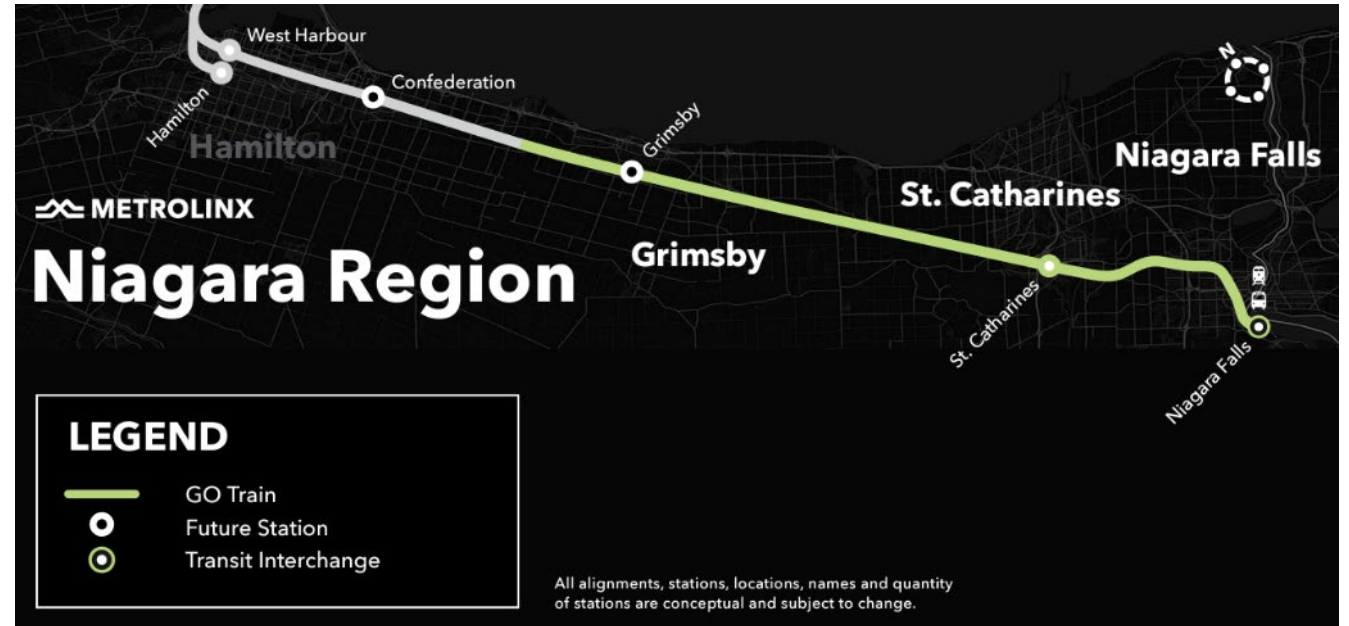
- Provides a 20-year vision and planning framework to guide transit-supportive development around the St. Catharines GO station, located at the existing VIA Rail station on Great Western Street; and
- Identifies capital infrastructure improvements necessary to provide residents and commuters with safe and efficient access to the GO station.



# Study Background

## GO Service Expansion

- GO Transit has proposed incremental service increases every year while working towards two-way, all-day service between Toronto and Niagara.
- This would lead to 11 daily trains travelling to/from St. Catharines GO Station in the coming years, up from 2 trains per day currently.



# Background Studies

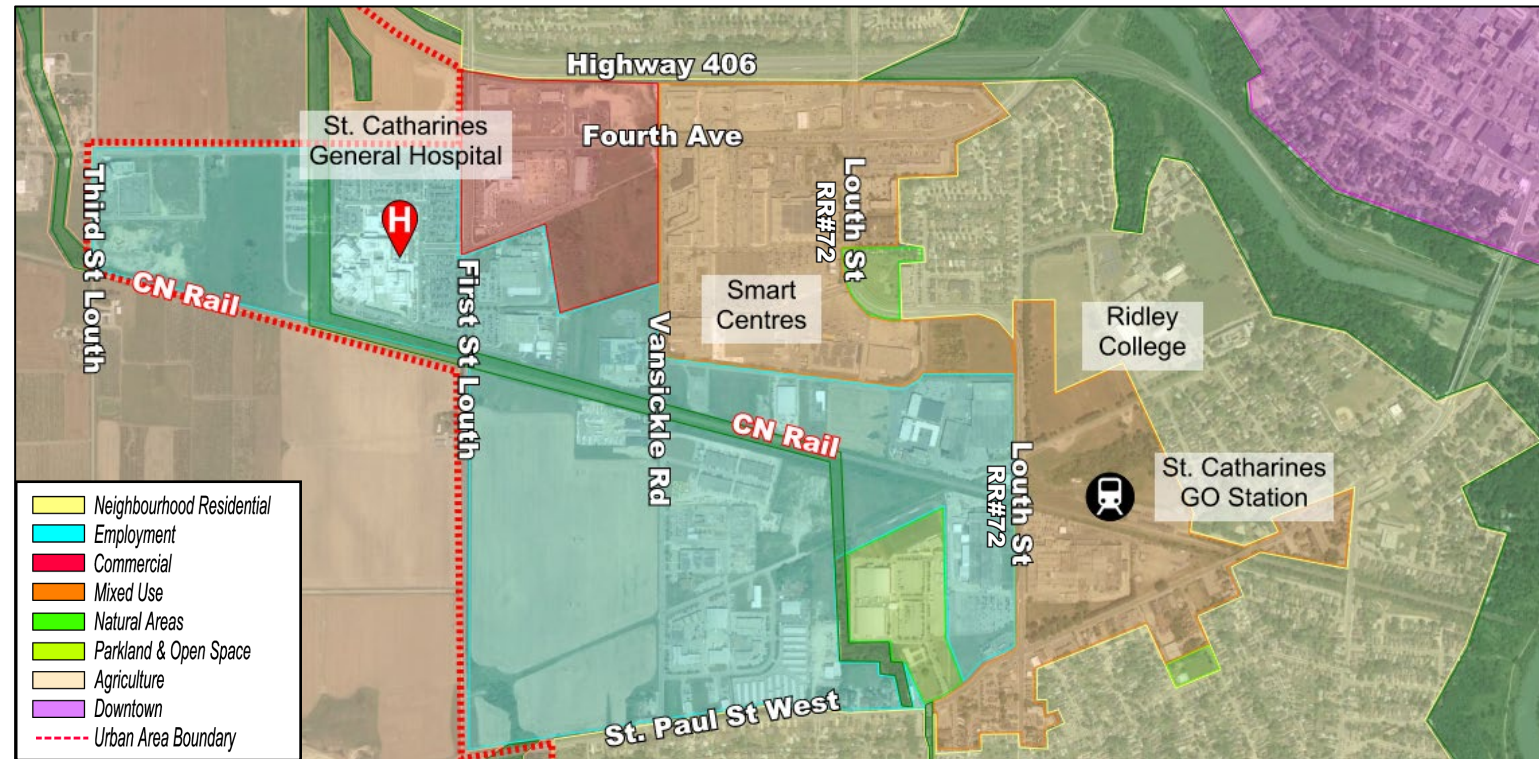
The following background reviews are being conducted as part of this EA Study:

- Traffic Analysis: Existing and future conditions
- Terrestrial field studies (vegetation, birds, Species at Risk)
- Aquatic field studies (fish habitat, Species at Risk)
- Stage 1 archaeological assessment
- Built heritage and cultural landscape assessment

# Existing Conditions

## Socio-Economic Environment

- The study area largely consists of mixed use, commercial, agricultural, and employment areas with residential neighbourhoods on the periphery.
- Key destinations within the study area include:
  - St. Catharines General Hospital;
  - Smart Centres;
  - Ridley College;
  - St. Catharines GO Station;

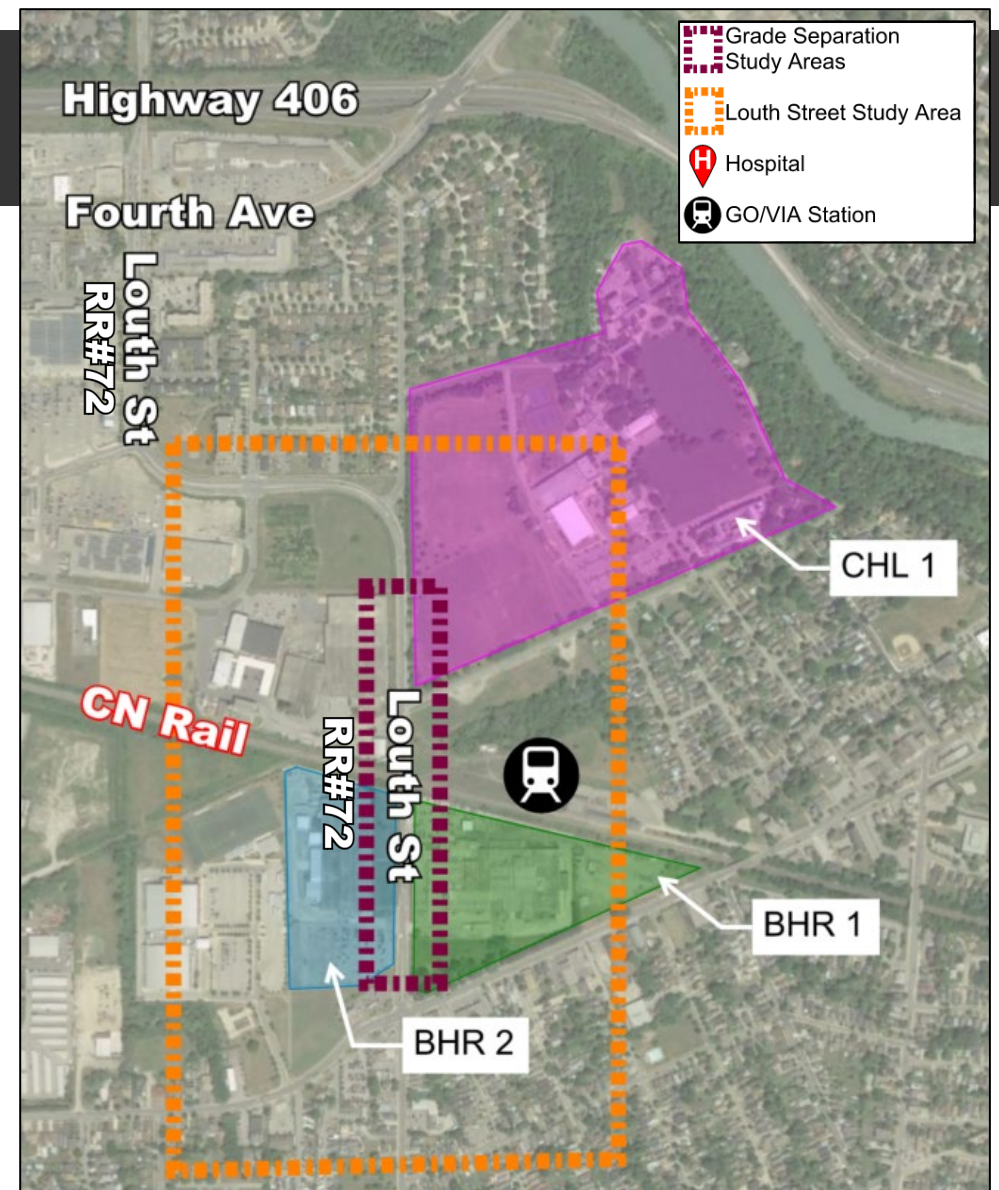


Source: St. Catharines Official Plan - General Land Use Designations

# Existing Conditions

## Cultural Environment

- Potential heritage resources within the study area most at risk include:
  - Industrial manufacturing plants on Louth Street
  - Ridley College
- Potential heritage resources just beyond the study area include:
  - Haynes Family Cemetery
  - St. Catharines Train Station
- Parts of the study area exhibit archaeological potential and may require further study.



Blue area: Potential Built Heritage Resource (BHR) for inclusion in Municipal Heritage Register

Green area: Potential BHR for designation and listing by City

Pink area: Potential Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL) for designation and listing by City

# Existing Conditions

## Natural Environment

- Parts of the study area are located within or near the Greenbelt or Specialty Crop Areas.
- Regulated floodplains, highly vulnerable aquifers, and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority lands have been identified within or near the study area.
- Within proximity of Third Street Louth, Barn Owls and a potential Bank Swallow habitat have been identified.
- Tributary of Twelve Mile Creek under Third Street Louth also provides high quality fish habitat.



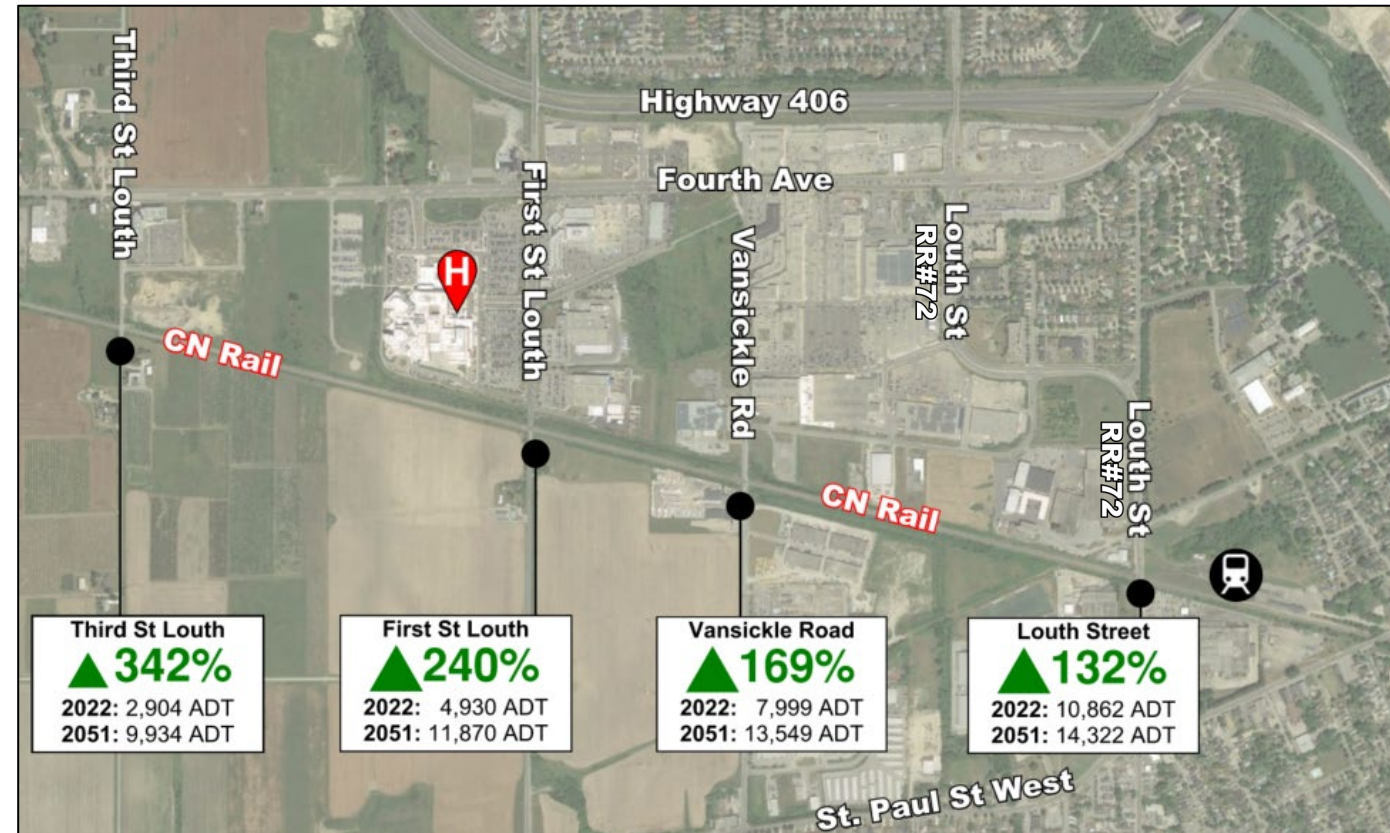
*Culvert at Third Street Louth CN Rail Crossing*



# Existing and Future Conditions

## Traffic and Transportation

- Significant traffic growth is expected in the study area.
- Traffic queues and delay at at-grade rail crossings.
- Need for rail-grade separation under review.
- Vehicular traffic is also expected to grow per the St. Catharines GO Station Secondary Plan.
- Train traffic is expected to grow with increased freight rail traffic and expanded passenger rail service (GO Metrolinx Niagara Region Service Expansion IBC).



Estimated Percent Increase in Traffic by 2051 over Existing (2022) Volumes

# Grade Separation: Problems and Opportunities

## West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA

- Expected increase in train traffic due to upcoming GO Service Expansion will create more frequent delays at these at-grade crossings.
- Access to the hospital by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) vehicles is currently affected by at-grade crossings.
- Building a new grade separation over the rail tracks would provide unimpeded access by EMS vehicles and improve the flow of non-EMS traffic.

### Potential Future Train Volumes

- **Total (CN+GO)**
  - **2022:** 18 trains/day
  - **2025:** 28 trains/day
- **CN**
  - **2022:** 16 trains/day
  - **2025:** 17 trains/day
  - **2051:** 23 trains/day
- **GO**
  - **2022:** 2 trains/day
  - **2025:** 11 trains/day

# Grade Separation: Alternative Solutions

## **Alternative 1**

No New  
Grade  
Separation

Do not provide a grade separated crossing. This alternative maintains existing transportation conditions.

## **Alternative 2**

First Street  
Louth

Create a new overpass crossing immediately east of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 480 m south of Fourth Avenue.

## **Alternative 3**

Vansickle  
Road

Create a new overpass crossing two blocks east of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 600 m south of Fourth Avenue.

## **Alternative 4**

Crossing at  
Louth Street

Create a new overpass crossing adjacent to St. Catharines GO Station three blocks east of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 1.2 km south of Fourth Avenue.

## **Alternative 5**

Third Street  
Louth

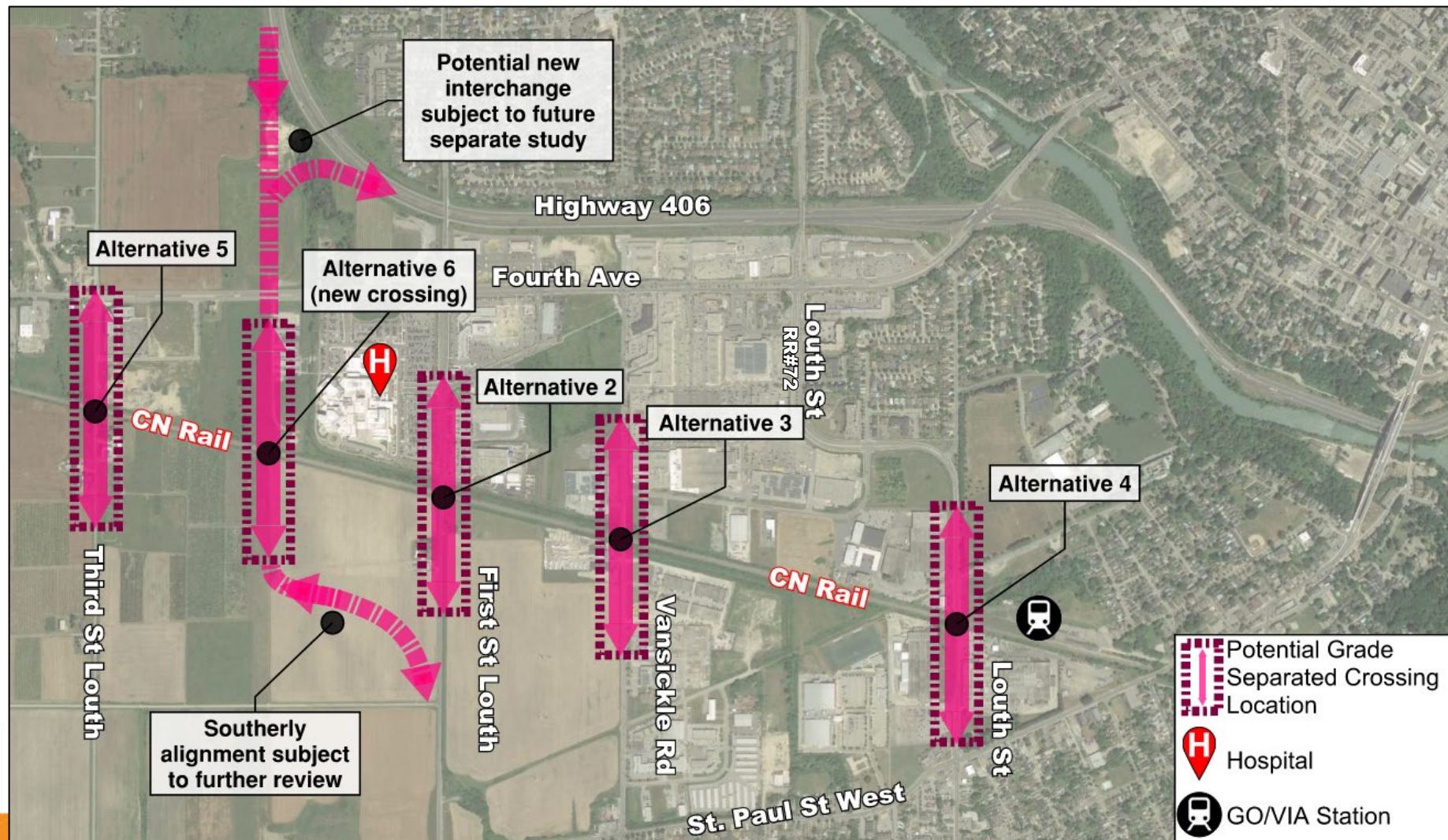
Create a new overpass crossing one block west of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 260 m south of Fourth Avenue.

## **Alternative 6**

New  
Alignment

Create a new road/alignment west of St. Catharines General Hospital which crosses over the CN Rail corridor. Southerly alignment and future connection to Highway 406 in the north would be subject to further studies.

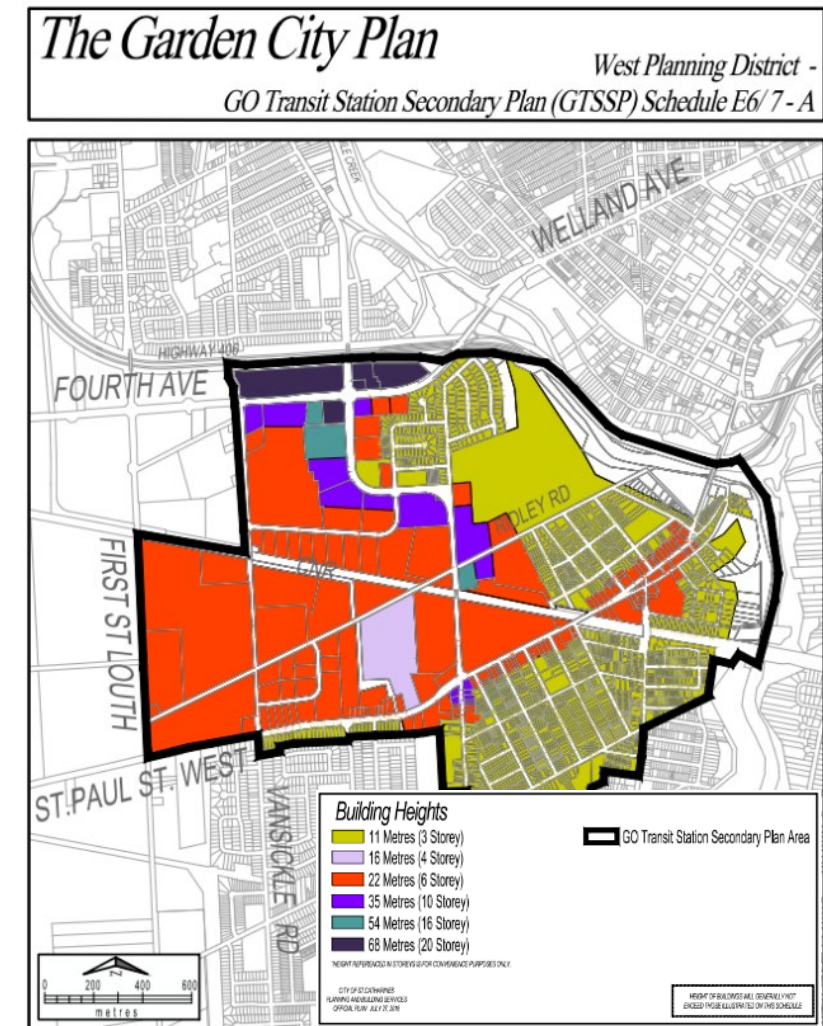
# Potential Crossing Locations



# Louth Street: Problems and Opportunities

## Louth Street EA

- Development is planned along Louth Street and the surrounding area, which is likely to increase the volume of traffic.
- Current two-lane road may be insufficient to handle future traffic volumes.
- Opportunity to improve infrastructure on Louth Street and upgrade pedestrian and cyclist facilities.
- Opportunity to coordinate with on-going GO transit improvements.

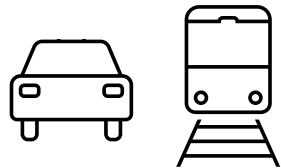


# Louth Street: Alternative Solutions

Alternative Solutions	Descriptions	Recommendation
Do Nothing	Do not improve Louth Street or provide a grade separated crossing. This alternative maintains existing transportation conditions.	Carry forward for comparison only
Limit Development	Limit development within the St. Catharines GO Station Secondary Plan Area.	Do not carry forward
Intersection and/or Other Operational Improvements	Enhance operations of roadway through intersection improvements (e.g. traffic signals, provisions of turning lanes, etc.)	Carry forward within overall strategy
Corridor Improvements to Louth Street	Urbanization, active transportation facilities, consideration for future traffic needs, and a possible future grade separation at CN Rail crossing.	Carry forward within overall strategy
Travel Demand Management Measures	Measures to manage travel demand, such as carpooling, flexible work hours, telecommute, etc.	Carry forward within overall strategy
Improvements to Other Roadways	Widen roadways in the immediate Study Area to beyond planned improvements.	Part of the overall Regional transportation strategy (TMP)

# Proposed Evaluation Criteria

- Alternatives for both Louth Street and the Grade Separation will be developed and evaluated based on key factors, including:



## Traffic and Transportation

- Access and intersection requirements
- Emergency services
- Future traffic patterns and delays
- Access management and goods movement
- Rail and transit operations
- Provisions for vulnerable road users
- Road user safety



## Socio-economic Environment

- Existing and future land uses
- Property and access requirements
- Community impacts
- Noise impacts



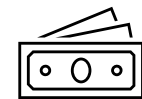
## Cultural Environment

- Cultural heritage landscapes
- Built heritage resources
- Archaeology resources



## Natural Environment

- Policy areas
- Watercourse and watershed impacts
- Habitat and vegetation
- Species-at-Risk / Species of conservation concern

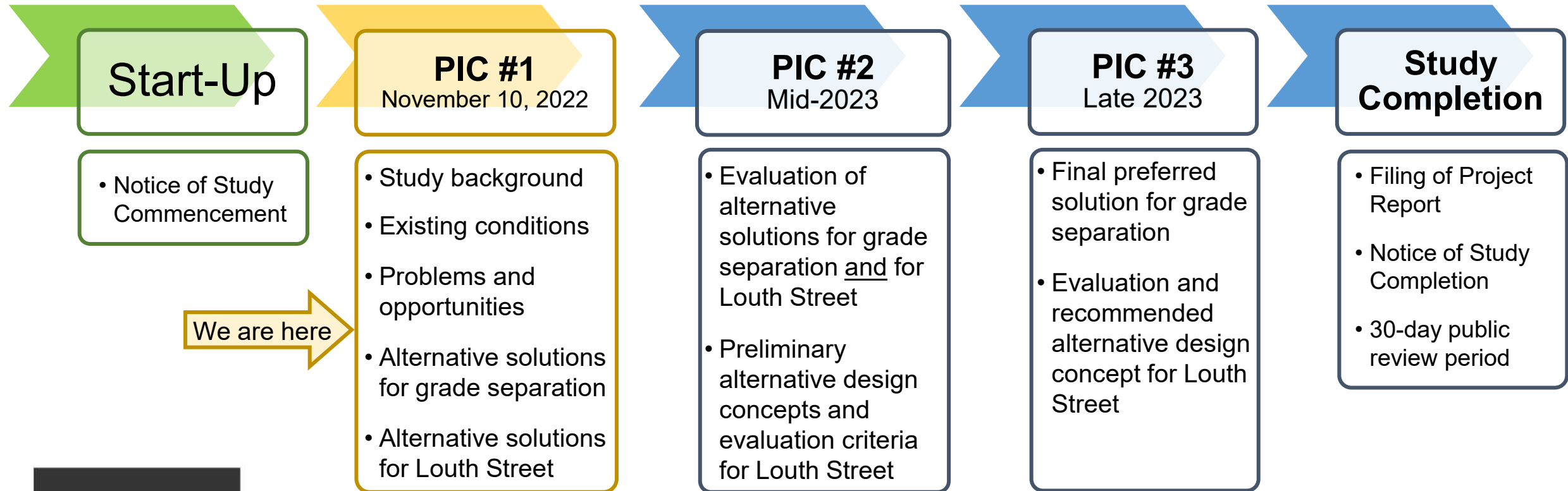


## Cost and Constructability

- Property acquisition and access impacts
- Impacts of construction
- Maintenance cost

# Study Schedule

## Louth Street EA & West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA





# Getting Involved and Next Steps



Review presentation slides on the virtual consultation platform/project web page.



Submit any questions, comments or suggestions for consideration using the online comment form on the project webpage.



Request to be added to the Study Contact List to receive Study notices for future points of consultation.



Visit project website for updates: [niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/](https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/)



Attend future Public Information Centres.

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Following this Public Information Centre (PIC), the Study Team will complete the following:



Develop a PIC Summary to document results of this PIC.



Initiate studies to collect existing condition information for natural, socio-economic and cultural environment.



Develop and evaluate alternative solutions to identify preliminary preferred solutions for grade separation and Louth Street.



Host PIC #2 to present the evaluation of alternative solutions.

# Questions?

Your feedback will be important to us. Your comments will be reviewed and considered, as the Study progresses.

To submit questions/comments/suggestions after this PIC, please use the online comment form available on the project webpage **by December 1st**:

[niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/](https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/)

If you have further questions please contact one of the Study's Project Managers:

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