Welcome

Public Information Centre #3

Louth Street Environmental Assessment

March 20, 2024
6:00-8:00 pm

Thank you for attending! Please sign in at the front table.

MOVING ROADS FORWARD

CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES

Niagara Region

Why We Are Here

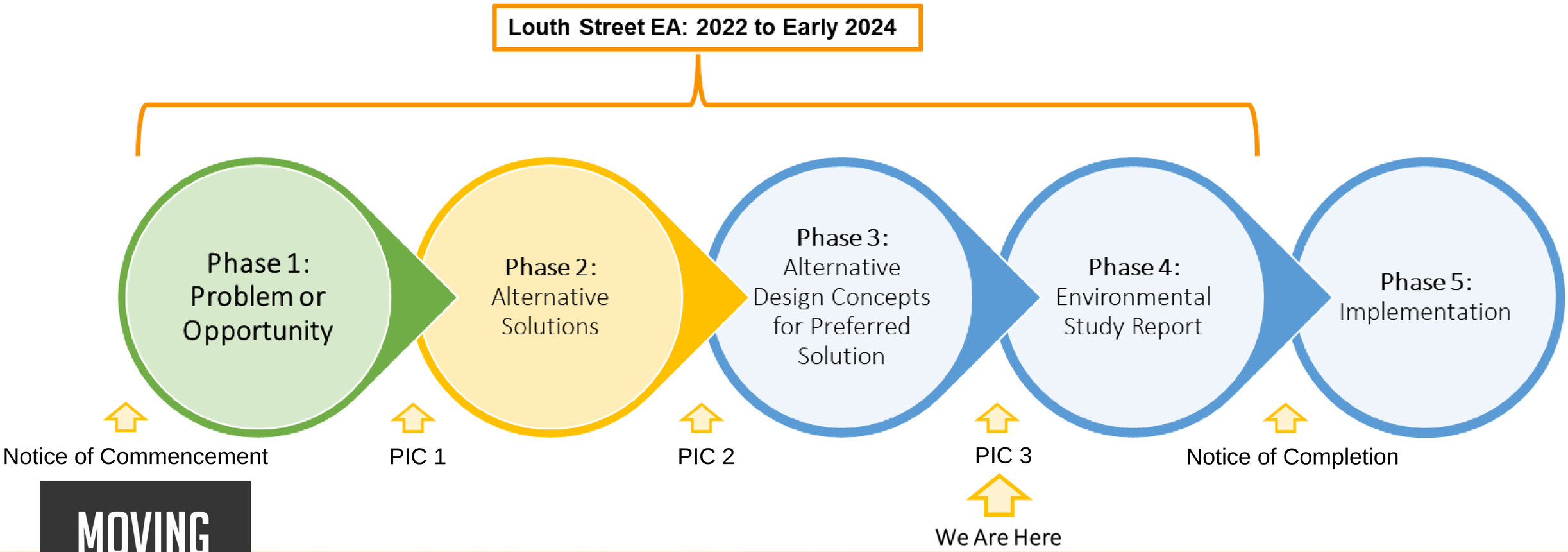
The purpose of this Public Information Centre (PIC) is to provide an update on the Louth Street Environmental Assessment (EA). As part of this update, we will:

- Discuss the EA process, study background and work completed to date
- Summarize the findings from the last PIC, including the recommended planning solution for Louth Street
- Review the evaluation of alternative design concepts for Louth Street and present the preliminary preferred design
- Provide an opportunity to speak with the Project Team and have your questions answered, and gather input on the preferred design
- Discuss the next steps of the EA

Environmental Assessment Process

The Louth Street EA is being carried out as a Schedule 'C' project in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process.

Upon completion of the study, an Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be prepared to document the MCEA 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.

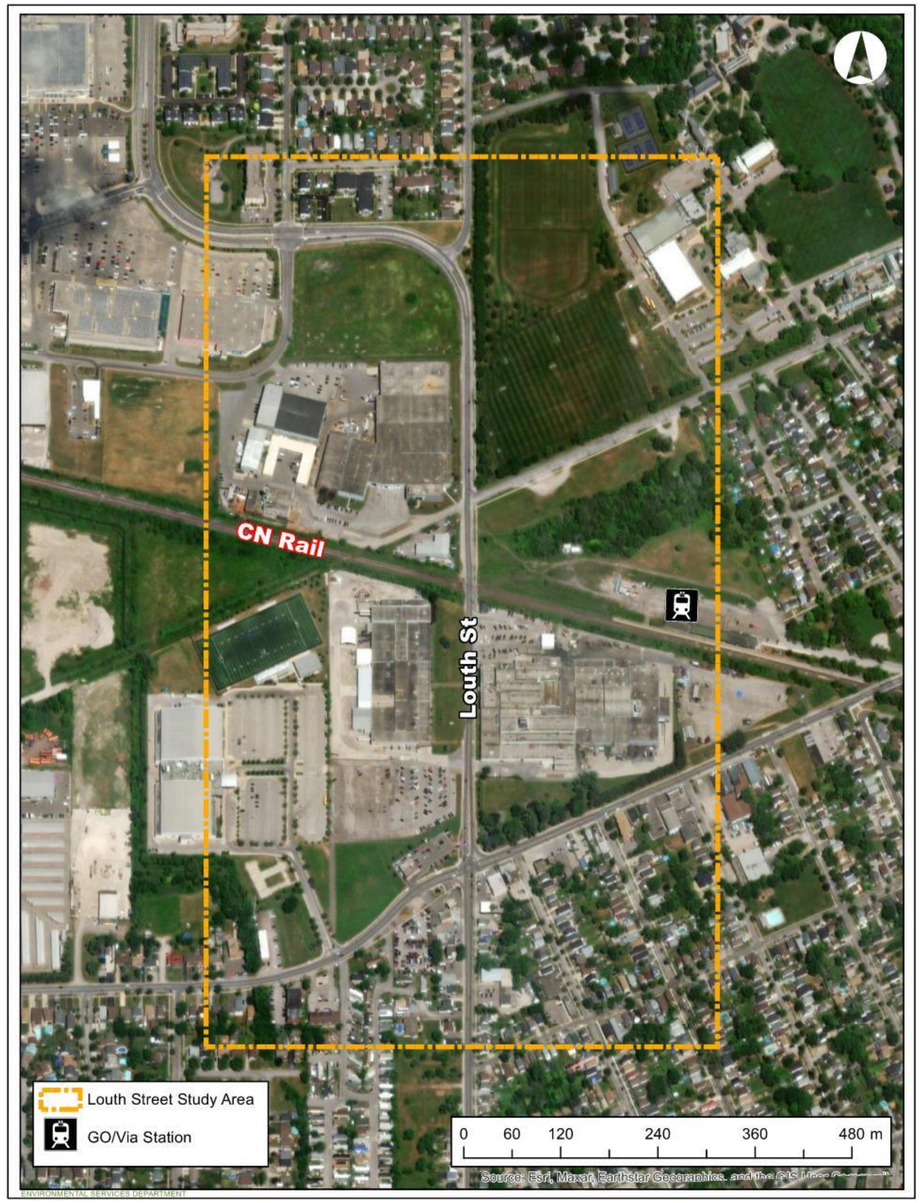


Study Area

The Louth Street study area is located within an urbanized setting with industrial, institutional, commercial and residential land uses.

The main access to the St. Catharines GO/VIA Station is located off Louth Street and Ridley Road.

This study looks to redesign the corridor 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.



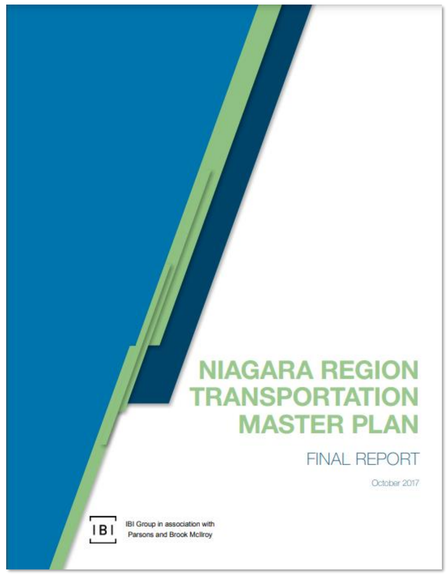
Study Background

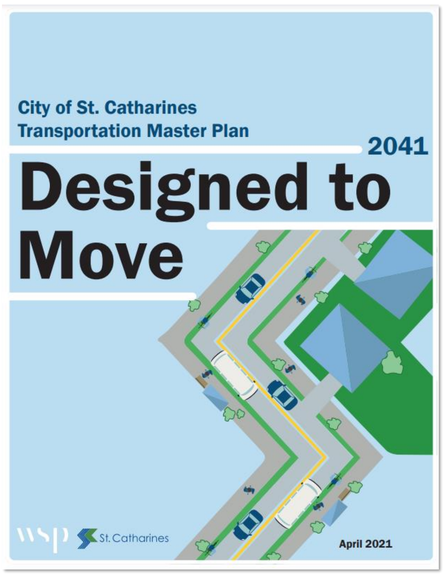
Niagara Region, St. Catharines and Metrolinx have developed plans and studies to implement:

- Infrastructure improvements to provide safe and efficient access to the St. Catharines GO Station, including the rehabilitation of Louth Street
- GO service expansion to 11 trains per day travelling to/from St. Catharines GO Station, up from 6 trains per day currently

Relevant planning documents include:

- Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan
- St. Catharines Transportation Master Plan
- St. Catharines GO Transit Station Secondary Plan
- Niagara Falls Rail Expansion Initial Business Case



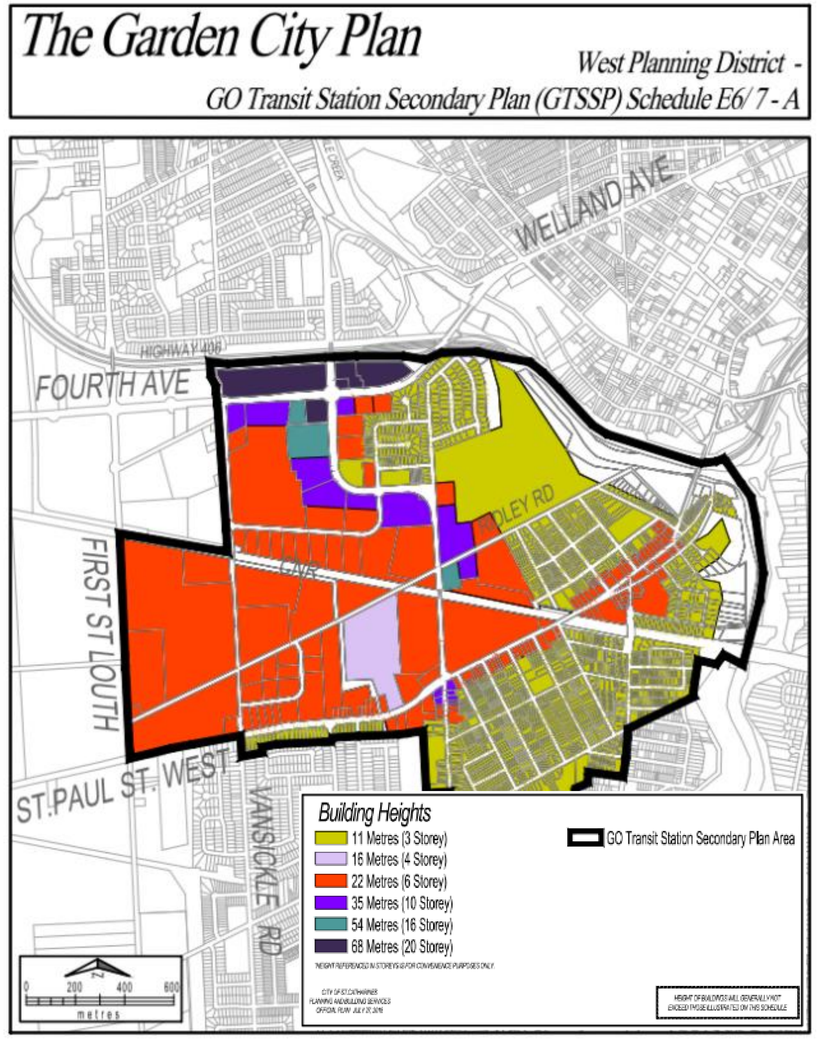


Current Projects in the Area

1. Louth Street (Regional Road 72) EA
2. Ridley Road EA and Reconstruction
3. VIA/GO Station Site Redevelopment
4. St. Paul Street West (Regional Road 81) CN Rail Bridge Replacement

Problems and Opportunities

- The development currently planned along Louth Street and the surrounding area, will increase the volume of motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians
- The current two-lane road may be insufficient to accommodate future traffic volumes
- Opportunities:
  - Urbanize the corridor with curb and gutter infrastructure
  - Upgrade pedestrian and cyclist facilities
  - Coordinate with the other ongoing projects in the area
  - Redesign Louth Street using a Complete Streets approach to balance the various needs of the corridor
  - Provide dedicated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that is safe, attractive and connected



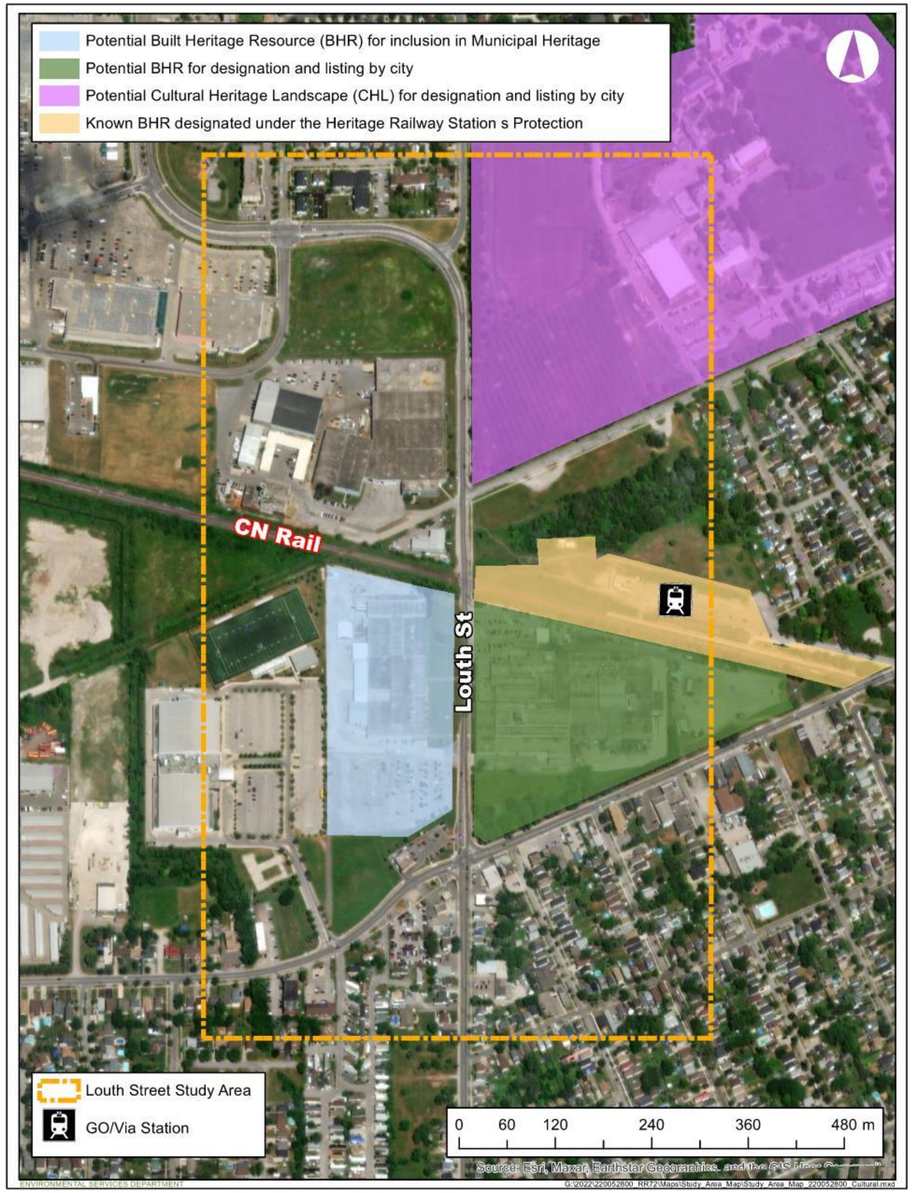
Technical Work Completed

The following technical reviews were conducted as part of this EA Study:

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

Cultural Environment

- Potential heritage resources within the study area include:
  - Industrial manufacturing plants
  - Ridley College
  - Haynes Family Cemetery
  - St. Catharines Train Station
- Parts of the study area exhibit archaeological and cultural heritage potential and may require further study prior to construction



Natural Environment

- Vegetation located along Louth Street consists of mowed lawns, planted street tree species such as Norway Maple, and areas of naturalized vegetation along the railway including species such as Brome grasses, Common Milkweed, and Goldenrod species
- While no birds were observed within the study area, migratory birds may nest in trees and abandoned fields. It is expected that only species well adapted to urban living will nest within the study area

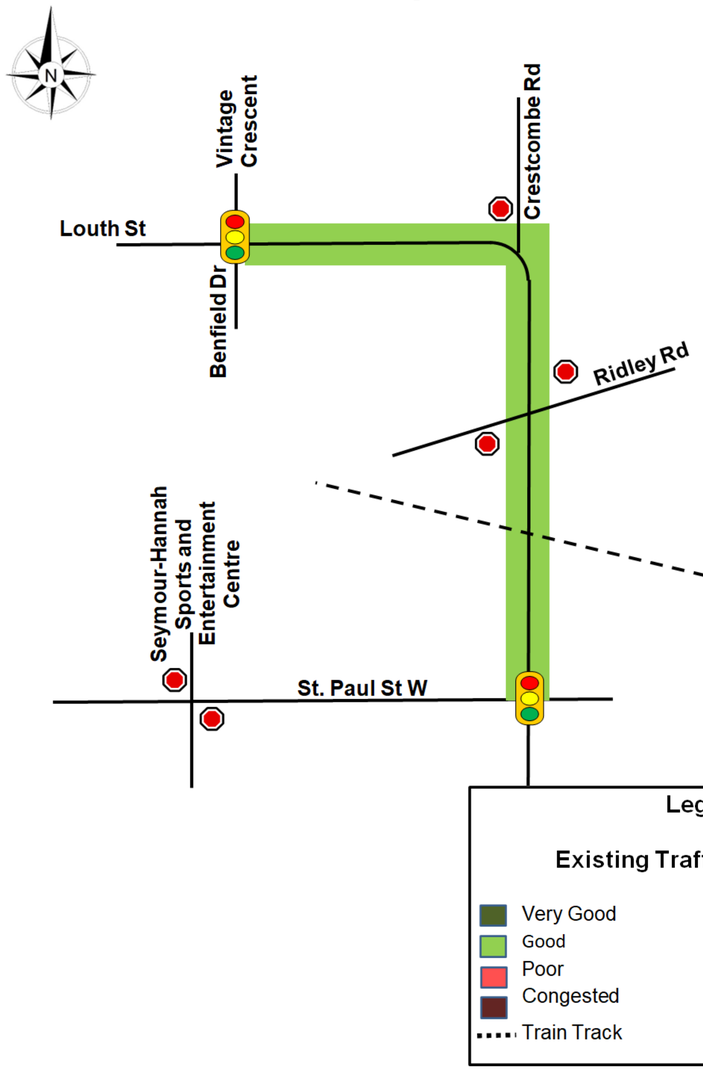
10 Benfield Drive, looking north

CN Rail Corridor at Louth Street, looking west

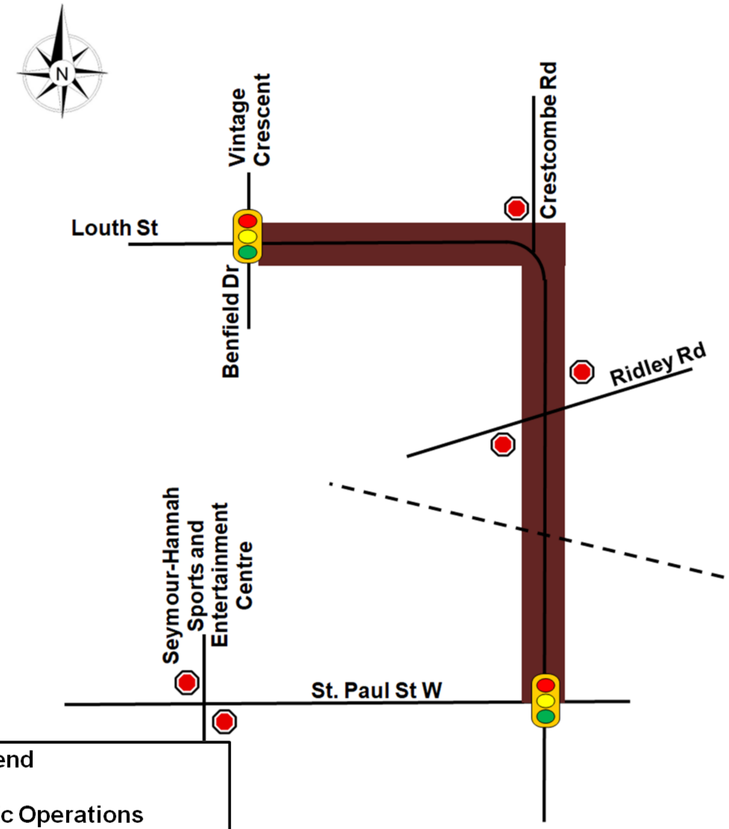
Existing and Future Traffic Conditions (2023)

- Currently, there is sufficient capacity on the Louth Street corridor to accommodate existing traffic demand
- However, as the area develops/intensifies and GO transit service expands, traffic congestion will worsen unless improvements are made

2023 Corridor Operations



2041 Corridor Operations



Recap of Alternative Solutions

Option 1 Do Nothing	• Travel Demand Management	**Option 3** Three Lane Corridor with Improvements	**The same as option 2 plus:** • One additional centre turning lane
Option 2 Two Lane Corridor with Improvements	• Urbanize roadway • Intersection/operational improvements • Enhanced active transportation facilities	**Option 4** Four Lane Corridor with Improvements	**The same as option 2 plus:** • Two additional through lanes

Following the last PIC in June 2023, **Option 3** was identified as the preferred alternative solution because it:

- Improves future traffic operations
- Provides the opportunity to improve active transportation facilities
- Does not pose safety concerns or access movement conflicts (unlike Option 4)

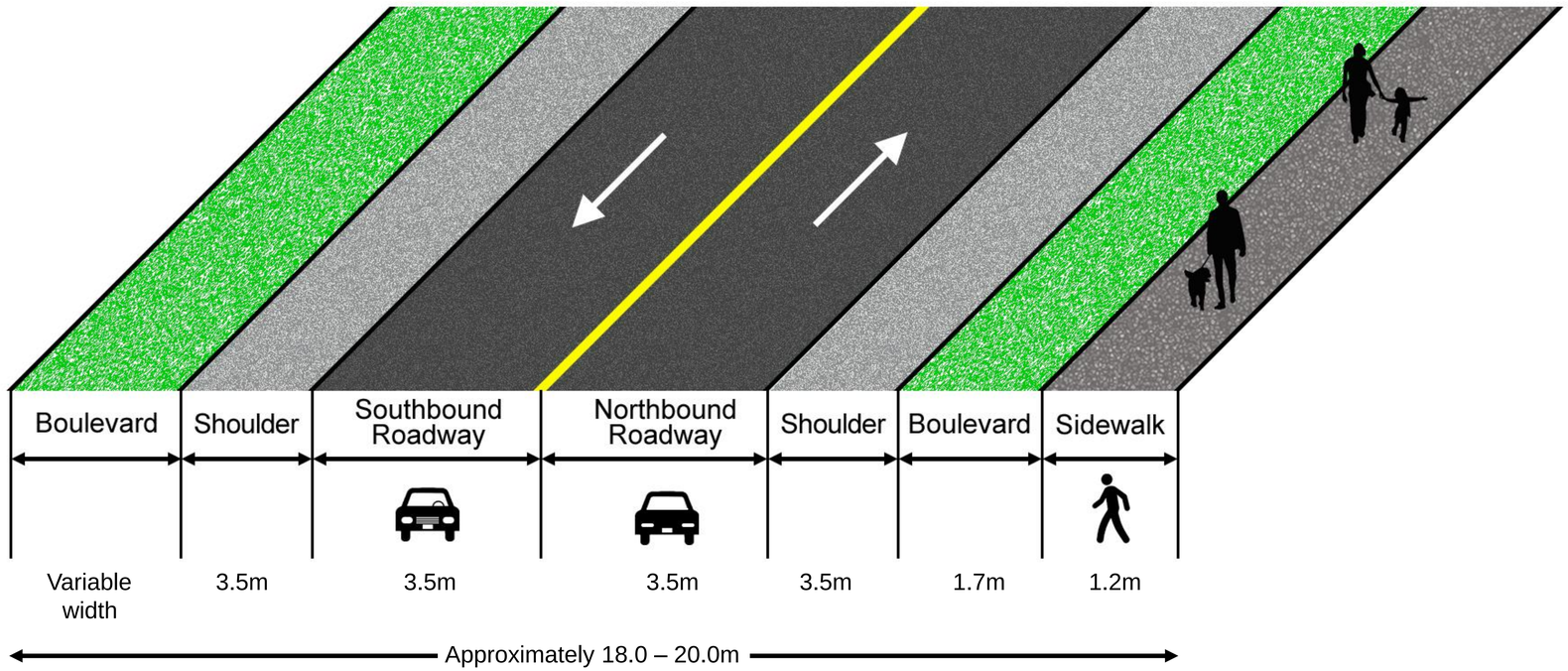
These benefits make up for the limited potential impacts on properties, cultural resources and natural environment. Potential mitigation measures are being explored within the alternative design concepts.

Overview of Alternative Design Concepts

- Using the Niagara Region's Road Typologies, three Alternative Design Concepts were developed. These Alternative Design Concepts are:

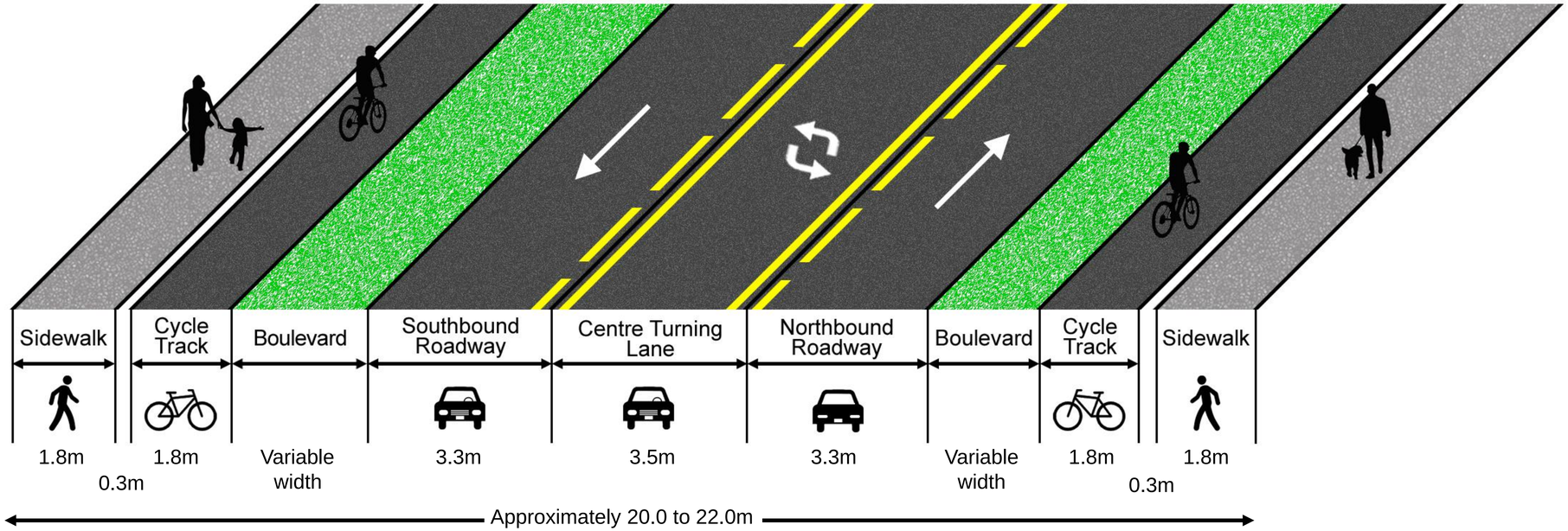
Alternative 1 Do Nothing	• Travel Demand Management
Alternative 2 Three Lane Corridor with Cycle Tracks and Sidewalks	• Urbanize roadway • Intersection/operational improvements • Enhanced active transportation facilities (cycle tracks and sidewalk on both sides of Louth Street
Alternative 3 Three Lane Corridor with Multi-Use Path and Sidewalk	• Urbanize roadway • Intersection/operational improvements • Enhanced active transportation facilities (multi-use path on east side and sidewalk on west side of Louth Street

Alternative 1: Do Nothing



- Two lane corridor
- No dedicated cycling facilities
- No sidewalk on west side and a narrow sidewalk on east side

Alternative 2: Three Lane Corridor with Cycle Tracks and Sidewalks

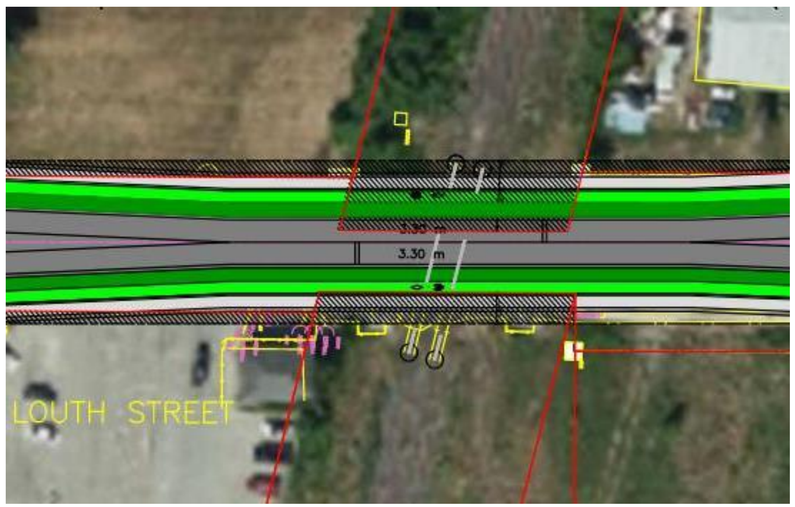


- Alternative 2 involves a three-lane corridor with cycle tracks and sidewalks on both sides of Louth Street.
- The roadway is widened to accommodate one lane of traffic in each direction, a centre lane to allow for left turns, and some median islands.
- The roadway is urbanized with curbs and gutters, and storm sewer infrastructure.

Cycle tracks are one-way facilities built in the boulevard rather than on the road platform, physically separating cyclists from motor vehicles. They are separate from sidewalks.

Key Highlights of Alternative 2 Design

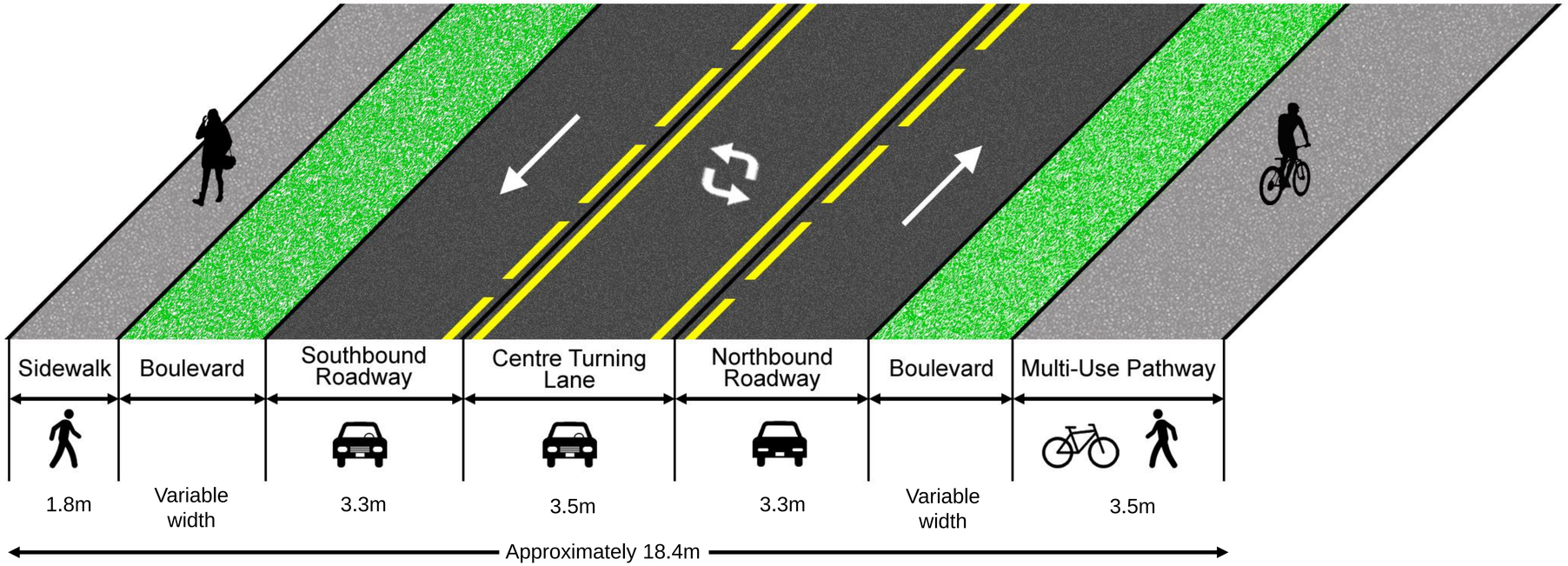
Widened roadway extends beyond existing right-of-way on both sides of Louth Street between Ridley Road and Crestcombe Road



Active transportation facilities continue west of rail tracks on both sides of Louth Street

Centre turning lane tapers out on either side of rail tracks

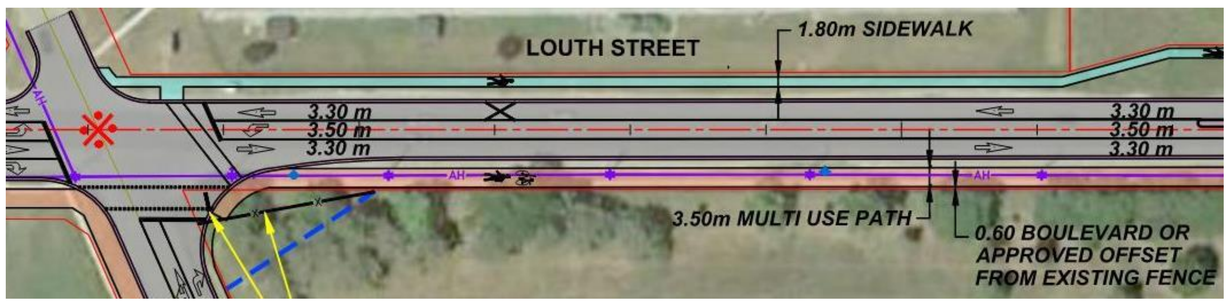
Alternative 3: Three Lane Corridor with Multi-Use Path (E) and Sidewalk (W)



- Alternative 3 involves a three-lane corridor with a multi-use path on the east side of Louth Street, and a sidewalk on the west side.
- The roadway is widened to accommodate one lane of traffic in each direction, a centre lane to allow for left turns, and possibly median islands.
- The roadway is urbanized with curbs and gutters, and storm sewer infrastructure.

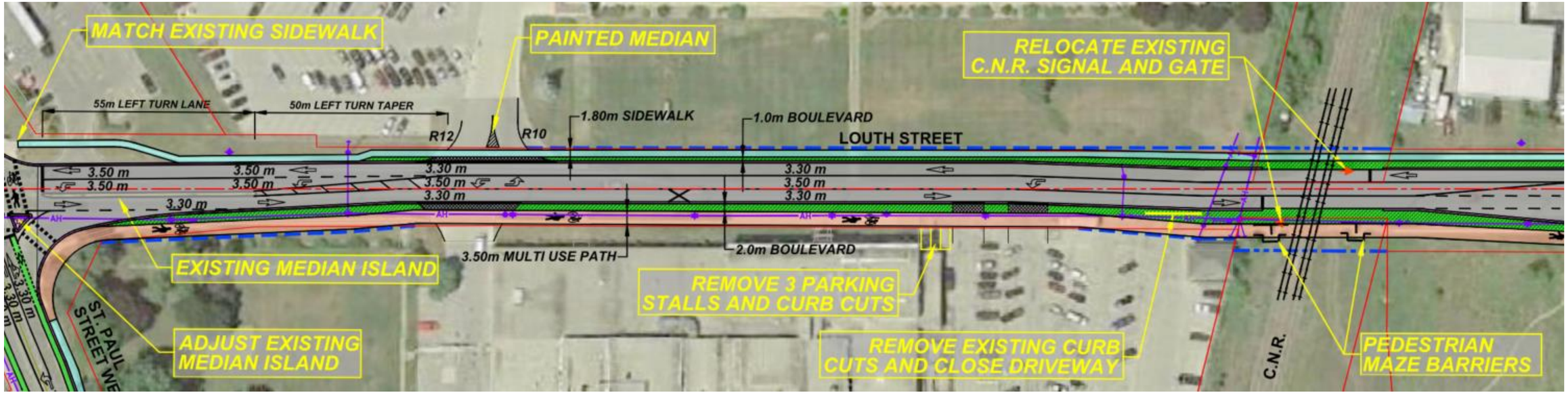
A multi-use path is a shared pedestrian and cyclist facility built in the boulevard, again physically separated from motor vehicles. It allows travel in both directions.

Design of Alternative 3



◀ Widened roadway located within existing right-of-way on both sides of the street

▼ Realigned sidewalk on west side of Louth Street north of St. Paul Street West to match rest of Louth sidewalk and avoid impacts to hydro pole and fire hydrant



▲ Design of railway crossing to be further developed in detailed design

Evaluation Criteria

Traffic and Transportation

- Accommodation of complete street principles
- Improvement of current and future traffic operations
- Safety for all users including cyclists and pedestrians

Socio-economic Environment

- Community and property impacts
- Access impacts
- Visual impacts
- Noise impacts
- Health and transportation equity

Cultural Environment

- Cultural heritage landscapes
- Built heritage resources
- Archaeology resources

Natural Environment

- Aquatic species and habitat impacts
- Terrestrial species and habitat impacts
- Climate change considerations

Cost and Constructability

- Construction complexity
- Capital cost estimate
- Maintenance cost

Alternative Design Concepts Advantages and Disadvantages

Alternative	Key Advantages	Key Disadvantages
Alternative 1: Do Nothing	• No impact to properties • Lowest capital and maintenance cost	• No opportunity to implement Complete Streets principles and accommodate GO demand • Heavy future traffic congestion expected • Does not address safety concerns • Unable to improve transportation equity
Alternative 2: Three Lane Corridor with Cycle Tracks and Sidewalks	• Incorporates Complete Streets principles to safely accommodate multiple modes of travel • Improves accessibility / reducing barriers to travel • Limits future traffic congestion to appropriate level • Provides some opportunity for streetscaping along the corridor and within the median	• Moderate impact to properties and access • Requires relocation of some utilities • Potential removal or trimming of street trees • Limited opportunity to implement cycle tracks on surrounding roads give property constraints • Some noise disturbance during construction • Moderate capital and maintenance cost
Alternative 3: Three Lane Corridor with Multi-Use Path (E) and Sidewalk (W)	• Incorporates Complete Streets principles to safely accommodate multiple modes of travel • Improves accessibility / reduces barriers to travel • Can be integrated with multi-use path being constructed along Ridley Road and into GO Station • Limits future traffic congestion to appropriate level • Provides some opportunity for streetscaping along the corridor and within the median	• Moderate impact to properties and access • Requires relocation of some utilities • Potential trimming of street trees • Some noise disturbance during construction • Moderate capital and maintenance cost

Alternative Design Concepts Evaluation

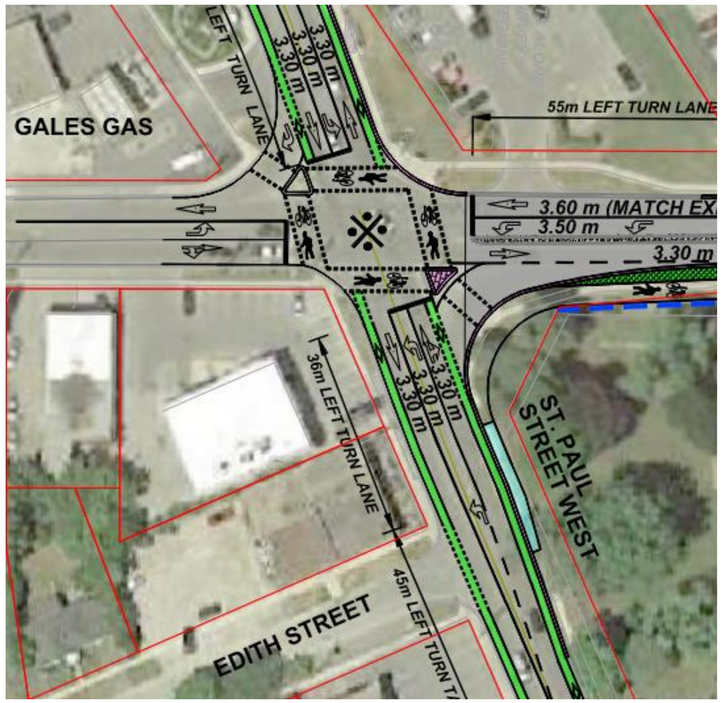
Evaluation Factor	Alternative 1: Do Nothing	Alternative 2: Three Lane Corridor with Cycle Tracks and Sidewalks	Alternative 3: Three Lane Corridor with Multi-Use Path (E) and Sidewalk (W)
Transportation	Least Preferred	Most Preferred	Most Preferred
Socio-Economics	Least Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Most Preferred
Cultural Environment	Most Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Moderately Preferred
Natural Environment	Moderately Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Most Preferred
Cost & Constructability	Most Preferred	Least Preferred	Moderately Preferred

Alternative 3 is recommended to be carried forward as it improves road capacity, improves pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, and in contrast to Alternative 2, results in fewer impacts on property, utilities and trees/vegetation. These benefits make up for the limited potential impacts on properties, cultural resources and the natural environment.

Intersection Improvements for Alternative 3

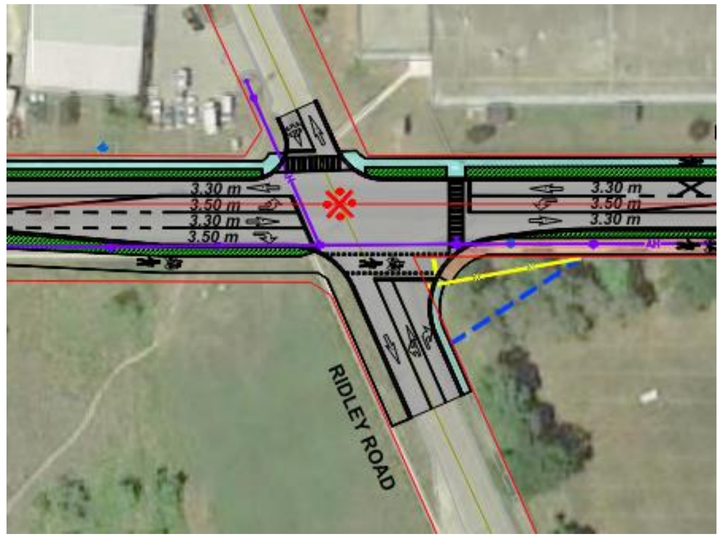
St. Paul Street West

- Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists
- Geometric improvements to make intersection safer



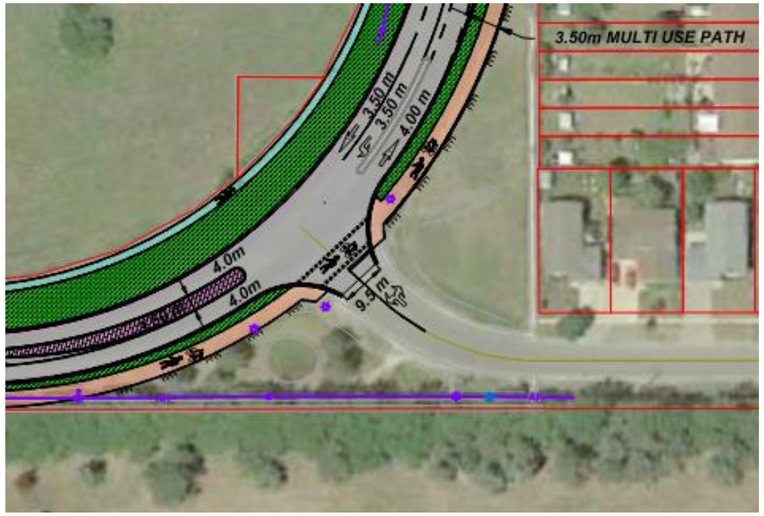
Ridley Road

- Addition of traffic signals and turning lanes



Crestcombe Road

- Geometric improvements to make intersection safer



Public Consultation Summary

Start-Up

- Notice of Study Commencement

PIC #1
November 10, 2022

- Study background
- Existing conditions
- Problems and opportunities
- Proposed evaluation criteria

PIC #2
June 13, 2023

- Evaluation of planning alternatives for the Grade Separation EA and for Louth Street EA
- Preferred planning solution for Grade Separation EA and Louth Street EA
- Next steps for design phase for Louth Street EA

PIC #3
March 20, 2024

- Evaluation of alternative design concepts for Louth Steet EA.
- Identification of preferred design concept for Louth Street EA.
- Recommended intersection improvements.

We Are Here

Study Completion

- Grade Separation EA put on pause (subject to future study)
- Filing of Environmental Study Report for Louth Street EA
- Notice of Study Completion
- 30-day public review period

Getting Involved and Next Steps

Review display boards on the project web page: niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/

Complete the comment form to submit any questions, comments or suggestions (also available on the project webpage).

If not on the contact list already, request to be added to the Study Contact List to receive Study notices for future points of consultation.

Following this PIC, the Study Team will complete the following:

Review comments received and adjust the study recommendations as appropriate.

Develop a PIC Summary Report to document the results of this PIC.

Finalize the technical studies and document the process and findings in an Environmental Study Report.

Notify the Study Contact List when the Environmental Study Report is available for 30-day public review.

Thank You For Attending

Your Feedback is Important to Us

To submit questions/comments/suggestions, please fill out a comment sheet (also available on the project webpage).

Project Contact Information

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Project Webpage

niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/