



CITY OF HAMILTON

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Transportation Division
Engineering Services Division**

TO: Chair and Members Public Works Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: WARDS 8 and 12
COMMITTEE DATE: January 13, 2014	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (PW14002) - (Wards 8 and 12)	
SUBMITTED BY: Gerry Davis, CMA General Manager Public Works Department	PREPARED BY: Lorissa Skrypniak (905) 546-2424, Extension 2732 Al Kirkpatrick (905) 546-2424, Extension 4173 Susan Jacob (905) 546-2424, Extension 2621
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the General Manager, Public Works, be authorized and directed to file Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street Class Environmental Assessment Environmental Study Report (ESR) with the Municipal Clerk for a minimum thirty (30) day public review period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton has undertaken an Environmental Assessment Study (EA) for Garner Road East/Rymal Road West corridor between Highway 6 South and the West 5th Street as well as Garth Street, Rymal Road to Stonechurch Road. (See Appendix A) Several previous studies (Meadowlands - Neighbourhoods 3,4 & 5 Class EA (February 2000), South Mountain Transportation Master Plan Study (2000), Airport Employment Growth District Study (2010), Hamilton Truck Route Master Plan Study (2010) that have been conducted and provide the rationale to address transportation needs and improvements in this area. More specifically, some of these studies identified that Schedule C projects were required to be completed. Meadowlands Class EA identified that Garner Road needed a Schedule C EA to be completed. South Mountain

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Transportation Master Plan Study also identified Rymal Road and Garth Street as needing a Schedule C Class EA.

The City of Hamilton has completed a study using the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process to address Schedule C projects, to concentrate on improvements needed for Garner Road East/Rymal Road West corridor and Garth Street. The purpose of this study is to recommend preferred alternatives to improve the road infrastructure to accommodate for the transportation demands. The Environmental Study Report (ESR) is complete and ready to be filed on the public record for the minimum thirty (30) day review period. Upon Council approval of this Class EA and subject to comments received during the review, staff will proceed with the detailed design and implementation of the preferred alternative subject to capital funding.

Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 9

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The funding for proposed works has been tentatively scheduled within the Capital Budget. Garth Street (Rymal Road to Stonechurch Road) construction is scheduled for 2015. Rymal Road (Garth to West 5th) is proposed for 2016 construction and Rymal Road (Upper Paradise to Garth) is proposed for 2017 construction subject to budget approval.

Staffing: There are no staffing changes anticipated.

Legal:

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process

The study has been conducted in accordance with the Municipal Class EA process with the intent to determine the preferred alternatives to accommodate growth in regional traffic demands. As a result, the study has fulfilled the Class EA requirements for Phases 3 and 4 to determine the preferred planning solution and design concepts and to document the results in the final report. This study will therefore fulfil all legal requirements of the planning process pertaining to Schedule C.

The City will be providing the Environmental Study Report to the public for a minimum thirty (30) day review in order for the public to provide any final comments that they may have with respect to this planning process. This will also be an opportunity for a Part II Order (appeal) for the public and agencies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton has undertaken an Environmental Assessment Study (EA) for Garner Road East/Rymal Road West corridor between Highway 6 South and the West 5th Street as well as Garth Street, Rymal Road to Stonechurch Road. The following planning studies have provided the rationale for widening the segments of Garner

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Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street under consideration, or otherwise exert some influence on the development of design concepts for transportation improvements in these corridors.

Meadowlands (Neighbourhoods 3, 4, and 5) Class EA (February 2000)

A study was prepared for Meadowlands of Ancaster to satisfy Environmental Assessment Act master planning level requirements. Various recommendations came from this study.

Recommendations:

- Identified the need to widen Garner Road to 4 lanes, and include additional left-turn lanes, between Southcote Road and Glancaster Road.
- Consider an additional connection to Garner Road and/or Southcote Road, or increased left-turn storage lanes on Garner Road, if Ancaster Fairgrounds are developed.

South Mountain Area Transportation Master Plan Study (SMATMP) (May 2000)

Included the current Garner/Rymal corridor study area east of Southcote Road as part of a much broader study area extending from Southcote Road to Upper Centennial Parkway and from Twenty Road to the Niagara Escarpment. Focused on problems and opportunities associated with traffic carrying capacity, road and corridor safety, and road structural condition.

Problem/opportunity analysis identified Rymal Road as a congestion area based on 2006 and 2021 traffic forecasts and possible traffic diversions from the Lincoln Alexander Parkway (Linc) as it becomes congested.

A range of transportation planning alternatives were assessed on a network basis and concluded that expanding and upgrading existing roadways to incorporate enhancements for all users was the preferred solution.

Recommendations:

- Widen Rymal Road to 4 or 5 lanes from the limit of the 4-lane section recommended as part of the Meadowlands development to West 5th Street.
- Widen Garth Street south of Stone Church Road to 3 lanes, with Two-Way Left-Turn Lane (TWLTL).

Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) Study (August 2011)

This study presents a transportation system to guide the transportation infrastructure and strategic policies of the Hamilton International Airport area up to the 2031 planning horizon year. The study area was bounded by Garner Road and Twenty Road to the north, Fiddler's Green Road to the west, Upper James Street to the east and White Church Road and Carluke Road to the south. The AEGD Study (August 2011)¹ recommended that Garner Road/ Rymal Road, between Fiddler's Green Road and

¹ Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) study – Dillon Consulting (May 2010)

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Glancaster Road, to be widened to 4-lanes simultaneous to the full build-out (Phase – II) of the AEGD areas. A similar recommendation to widen Garth Street between Rymal Road and Stone Church Road to a 4-lane section is also reflected in the AEGD Study to accommodate the AEGD developments.

The specific objectives of the study included:

- preparing a transportation strategy that supports development of the AEGD;
- identifying any problems or opportunities, including future transportation corridors; and
- developing a Transportation Master Plan for the AEGD area.

The study concluded that, with the ultimate build-out of the AEGD study area, the existing road network capacity will be constrained, especially on the east-west links within the AEGD. Other constraints include limited Highway 6 South access and the location of the Hamilton International Airport relative to major municipal road access. AEGD Study report indicated a scenario beyond 2031 under ultimate build-out conditions anticipating approximately doubling of the primary estimated cargo freight and passengers with respect to that under full build-out conditions to the Hamilton Airport. This scenario indicated an abnormal increase of traffic volumes under the ultimate build-out AEGD area beyond 2031. The Garner Road study corridor will require a close and continuous monitoring on and from the 2031 horizon year as the AEGD area grows further, inclusive of increasing passenger and freight carrying capabilities at the Hamilton Airport. In light of the above, this EA Study evaluates the traffic conditions under the full build-out AEGD (Phase – II) scenario and does not consider the ultimate build-out of AEGD scenario

Recommendations:

- Future transportation scenario included widening existing roads, enhancing transit service delivery, improving the bike lane network and implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.
- The road network improvements included widening Garner Road to four (4) lanes between Fiddler’s Green Road and Glancaster Road and extending Garth Street, as a four (4) lane road, from Twenty Road to Dickenson Road.

City of Hamilton Truck Route Master Plan Study (April 2010)

A City-wide study, developed a comprehensive truck route master plan, recognizing the City’s role as a major transportation centre (road, rail, air, port) and the economic need for efficient goods movement. Recognized that King's Highway 53 (now Garner Road/Rymal Road), constructed in 1935 by the Province of Ontario and downloaded to the Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth in 1997, has been a legal truck route from the day it officially opened for public use (1935). Also recognized that Garner Road/Rymal Road is a preferred corridor for over-sized loads.

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Recommendations:

- Acknowledged concerns expressed by residents about through truck traffic on Garner Road/Rymal Road between Upper James Street and Highway 6 South, but still envisaged this corridor remaining a designated full-time truck route.
- Foresaw the section of Garth Street under consideration being part of a designated part-time truck route in the long term (after urbanization of the cross-section).

The City of Hamilton has completed a study using the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process to address Schedule C projects, to concentrate on improvements needed for Garner Road East/Rymal Road West corridor and Garth Street. The purpose of this study is to recommend preferred alternatives to improve the road infrastructure to accommodate for the transportation demands. The Environmental Study Report (ESR) is complete and ready to be filed on the public record for the minimum thirty (30) day review period. Upon Council approval of this Class EA and subject to comments received during the review, staff will proceed with the detailed design and implementation of the preferred alternative subject to capital funding.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

These recommendations are consistent with the Urban Official Plan, Hamilton Transportation Master Plan, Shifting Gears - Hamilton's Cycling Master Plan and all corporate policies.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Members of Council

The study area crosses both Wards 8 and 12. Project details have been discussed with the Ward Councillors through various communications and they participated at the Public Information Centres.

Public

The Municipal Class EA process requires public consultation, according to the requirements of a Schedule C project. Consultation plans were developed and followed.

Public Consultation was carried out in the form of a Notice of Study Commencement and a Public Information Centre, which was issued on April 15, 2011 and April 22, 2011 in the Hamilton Spectator and the Ancaster News for the first Public Consultation Centre (PIC). Notification for PIC#2 was issued March 23, 2012 and March 30, 2012 in the Hamilton Spectator and the Ancaster News. A mail out was completed to pertinent agencies, City staff and 1,307 landowners within the study area.

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Stakeholder meetings were held with specific property owners who had concerns regarding the project. On site meetings were held with these interested property owners.

The pertinent project information was made available throughout the study on the project website. <http://www.hamilton.ca/Garner-Rymal-Garth-EA>

Agency/Stakeholder Consultation

Responses and comments were received from individuals and agencies. All comments have been addressed and contained in the Environmental Study Report, including the City's initiated contact with St. Elizabeth's Village, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Comments from concerned land owners have been dealt with and are contained within the Environmental Study Report.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process

The Class Environmental Assessment (EA) study follows the planning and design process of the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, October 2000, as amended in 2007 and 2011. The City is completing this study in accordance with the planning process applicable to Schedule C projects under the Municipal Class EA. These projects are approved under the Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act), as long as they are planned, designed and constructed according to the requirements of the Class EA document.

The specific requirements for the above Class EA process depend on the type of project, its complexity and the significance of environmental impacts. Four categories of projects are identified in the Municipal Class EA document, including Schedule A, A+, B and C projects. The road improvements identified in previous studies classified this work as Schedule C projects.

Meadowlands Class EA identified the need to widen Garner Road to four (4) lanes, and include additional left-turn lanes, between Southcote Road and Glancaster Road. Also, consider an additional connection to Garner Road and/or Southcote Road, or increased left-turn storage lanes on Garner Road, if Ancaster Fairgrounds were developed.

South Mountain Area Transportation Master Plan Study recommended that Rymal Road be widened to four (4) to five (5) lanes from the limit of the four (4) lane section recommended as part of the Meadowlands development to West 5th Street. It also recommended that Garth Street south of Stonechurch Road be widened to three (3) lanes with at two way centre turn lane.

The Garner Road East/Rymal Road West and Garth Street Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study is following the Municipal Class EA process as noted:

- An approved process under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act

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- It provides the preliminary planning and engineering direction to enable urban development of the neighbourhood into the existing urban structure.
- As Schedule C projects
- Includes consultation with stakeholders and the public during the process
- The Environmental Study Report (ESR) would be available for a minimum thirty (30) day review period and the Part II Order request (Appeal) process would be available.

Schedule C Projects generally involve the construction of new facilities and the major expansion of existing facilities, and have the potential for significant environmental effects. The proposed works confirm that Schedule C is the appropriate EA Schedule.

Screening of Alternative Solutions

The Garner Road East/Rymal Road West and Garth Street Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study have followed the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process for Schedule C projects. The Class EA process recognizes that there are many ways of solving a particular problem and requires various alternative solutions to be considered.

Rationale for Selection of Alternative Solutions

Previous studies and the need and justification update have established the necessity to widen Garner Road to 4 lanes, and include additional left-turn lanes, between Southcote Road and Glancaster Road. Also, consider an additional connection to Garner Road and/or Southcote Road, or increased left-turn storage lanes on Garner Road. Correspondingly, that Rymal Road be widened to 4 to 5 lanes from the limit of the 4 lane section recommended as part of the Meadowlands development to West 5th Street. In addition that Garth Street south of Stonechurch Road be widened to 3 lanes with a two way centre turn lane. The “do nothing” alternative would not adequately address the factors considered in the evaluation of alternatives, and there is no reason to reconsider the “do nothing” alternative in this study for the same reasons.

Identification and Description of Alternative Solutions

Three alternatives (Option 1, 2 and 2a) were identified and evaluated as part of this study and are in Appendix B.

Alternative 1

- Four (4) - three point seven five metre (3.75 m) through lanes
- Two (2) - one and a half metre (1.5 m) bike lanes
- Five metre (5.0 m) continuous median that accommodates left turn lanes and raised medians at most intersections
- Exclusive right-turn lanes as per the recommendations for the Traffic Study report
- Curb and gutter
- Three and a half metre (3.5 m) continuous boulevard width

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Alternative 2

- Four (4) - three point seven five metre (3.75 m) through lanes
- Two (2) - one and a half metre (1.5 m) bike lanes
- Exclusive right and left turn lanes, as per recommendations from Traffic Study report
- Curb and gutter
- Six metre (6.0 m) continuous boulevard width except at two exceptions
- The boulevard width has been reduced to three and a half metres (3.5 m) on the north side of Garner Road with an offset of half a metre (0.5 m) to sidewalk, eliminating impacts to the Garners Corners Cemetery (Garner Road/Southcote Road)
- The boulevard width has been reduced to three and a half metres (3.5 m) on the south side of Garner Road with an offset of half a metre (0.5 m) to sidewalk, eliminating property impacts to the Bowman United Church/Cemetery

Alternative 2A

- Four (4) - three point seven five metre (3.75 m) through lanes
- Two (2) - one and a half metre (1.5 m) bike lanes
- Exclusive right and left turn lanes, as per the recommendations from Traffic Study report
- Curb and gutter
- Three and a half metre (3.5 m) continuous boulevard width

Alternative 1 (Four (4) lane Widening with Two Way Left-Turn Lane) received the highest overall scores and has been identified as the technically preferred design concept for both the Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street corridors for the following reasons:

- The continuous median lane provides the maximum storage lengths for left turns and access points for entrances and side roads, including the flexibility to accommodate future developments (e.g. Airport Employment Growth District).
- The widened cross-section as a result of the continuous median facilitates bus transit operations, current and anticipated truck traffic and provides for easier future incorporation of alternate transit technologies.
- Provides the necessary room for locating municipal services within the road cross-section and clearances to other utilities and appurtenances.
- Is the easiest alternative to construct, as the five metre (5 m) median provides the greatest flexibility to shift traffic lanes to facilitate the road widening and storm sewer installation, with the fewest impacts to traffic operations.
- Provides opportunities for potential streetscaping in median areas and replacement of roadside trees on boulevards.
- Potential property requirements can be reduced through strategic modification of grading requirements.

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The alternative solutions were identified and evaluated as part of this study and are illustrated in Appendix B. Alternative transportation facilities were included such as transit, bike lanes and sidewalks.

Recommended Alternative

The recommended alternative is Alternative 1 - Widen to four (4) lanes with two-way left-turn lane which has been identified as the technically preferred design concept for both the Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street corridors.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The recommended alternative solution has been identified using an evaluation and screening process that fulfils the requirements of the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class EA document for Schedule C projects. These projects are approved under the Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act) once the required four (4) phase process is complete and subject to a public review period.

The MEA Municipal Class EA document was approved under the Environmental Assessment Act. If the City does not follow the process outlined in the Municipal Class EA document, the City would be in violation of the document and as a result would have contravened the EA Act. The Minister of the Environment could revisit the approval of a project or take away the City's right to use the Municipal Class EA document.

The recommended alternative solution is to proceed with Alternative 1, subject to budget approval. There are two (2) alternatives for Council to consider with respect to the recommendations of this report:

1. To file the Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street Municipal Class EA, Schedule C project with the City Clerk for a minimum thirty (30) day public review period in order to complete the phases 3 and 4 of the process. This will offer the public and agencies the opportunity for placement of a Part II Order (appeal) with the Minister of Environment and fulfill the City's legal obligations under the EA Act.
2. To not file the Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street Municipal Class EA Phase 3 and 4, Schedule C project with the City Clerk for a minimum thirty (30) day public review period and, as a consequence, to not proceed with implementation.

Should Council not wish to approve the filing of the Garner Road/Rymal Road and Garth Street Municipal Environmental Assessment Class EA, Schedule C project, the Municipal Class EA process would be considered by the provincial government as incomplete and the City will not have approval under provincial environmental legislation to implement the recommended alternative, required to address the transportation needs. The outcome would be equivalent to the do nothing alternative, which would result in the inability to effectively address both the short-term and the long-term

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infrastructure needs for the study area. Eventually the City would have to repeat the Class EA process, which would likely result in the same recommendations.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 - 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.2 Continue to prioritize capital infrastructure projects to support managed growth and optimize community benefit.
- 1.4 Improve the City's transportation system to support multi-modal mobility and encourage inter-regional connections.
- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

Strategic Priority #2

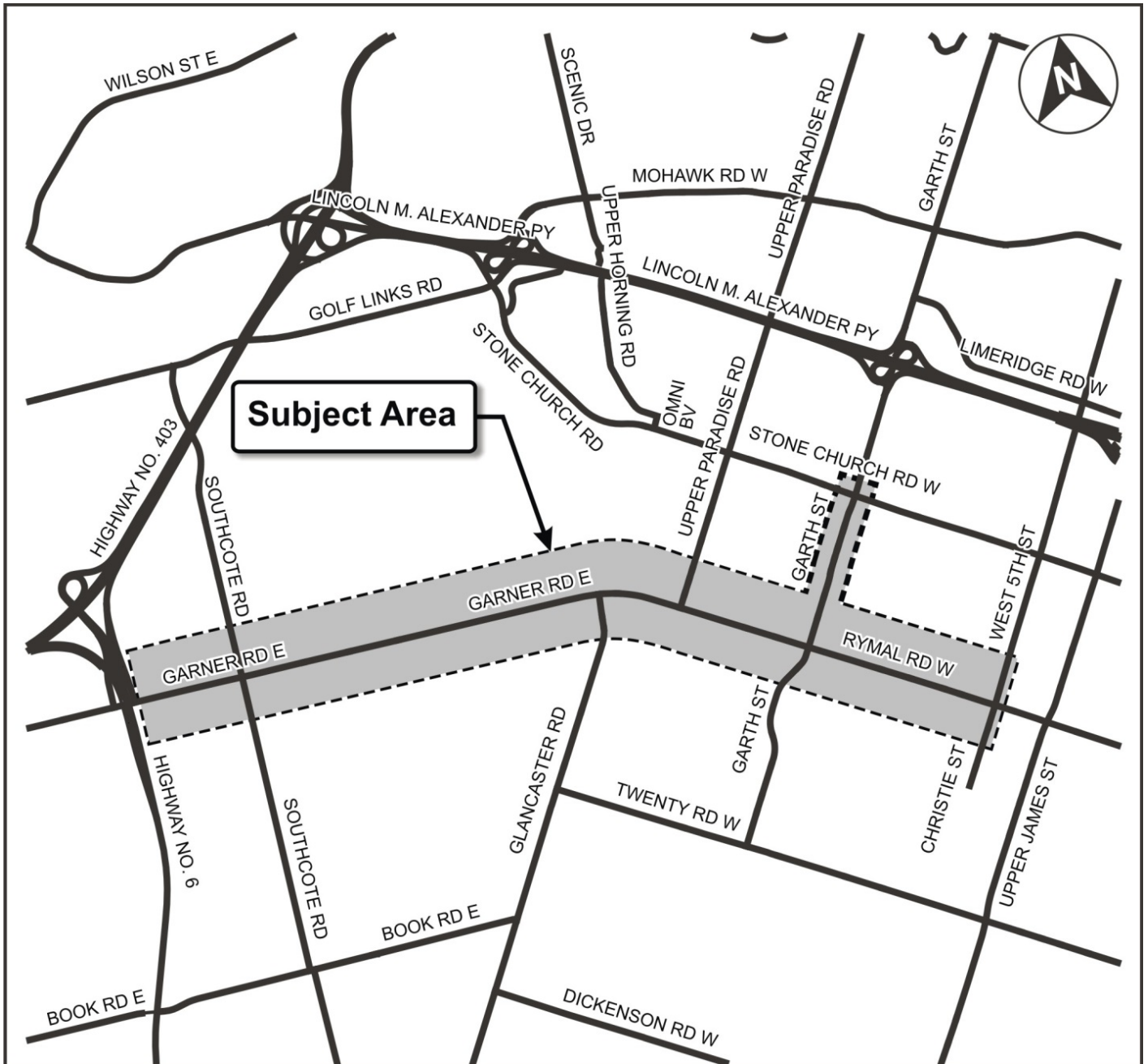
Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

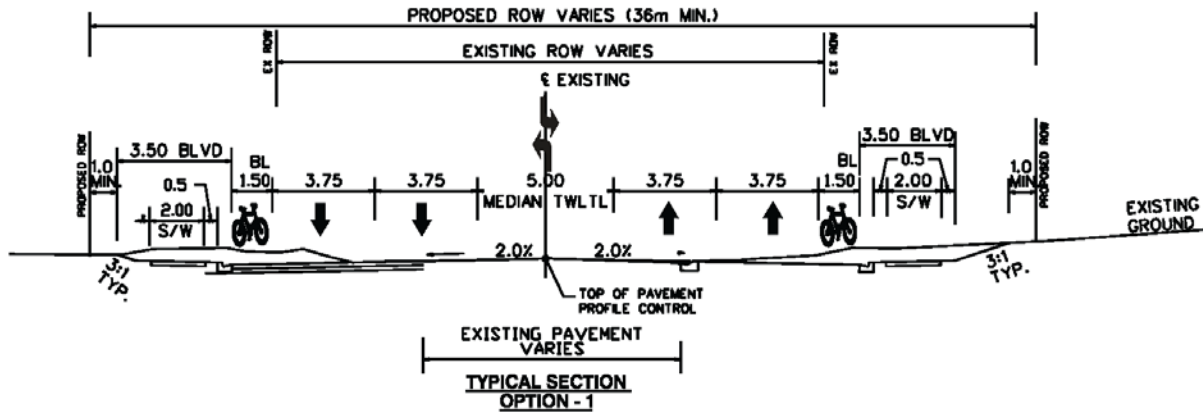
Appendix "A"	Study Area Map
Appendix "B"	Alternative Solutions

Study Area

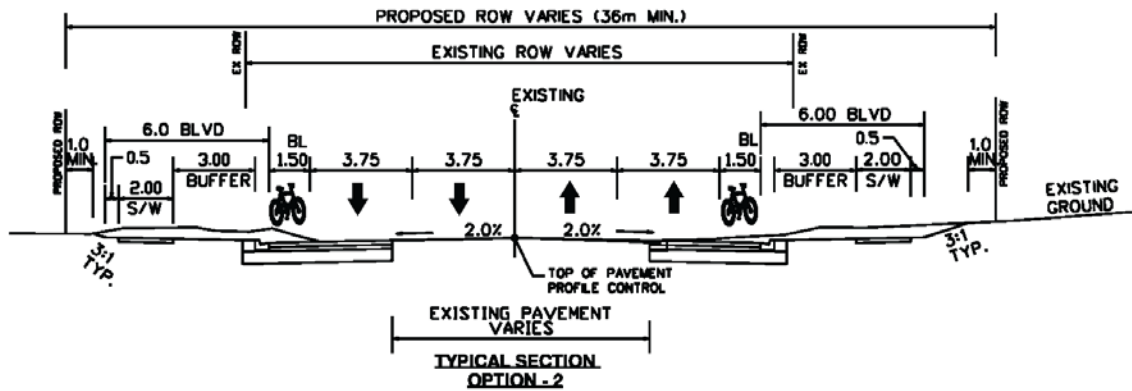


Alternative Solutions

Option 1 (Recommended)



Option 2



Option 2A

