



REPORT

Louth Street and West St. Catharines Grade Separation Environmental Assessment

Public Information Centre #2 Summary Report

Prepared for:

Niagara Region
By Morrison Hershfield
September 2023



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Appendix A: Notice of PIC #2

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1. Introduction

Niagara Region is undertaking a Schedule C Municipal Class Environmental Assessment and detailed transportation assessment of a potential new roadway/railway grade separation as well as improvements to Louth Street in the City of St. Catharines. The study will review potential improvements to accommodate the current and future needs of pedestrian, cyclists, transit users, and motorists.

Purpose of Public Information Centre #2

Public participation is key to the success of this study. Engagement for essential and priority projects continues in-person and online paired with universally accessible methods. As such, the second Public Information Centre (PIC #2) was held in person and the information available virtually. The purpose of Public Information Centre #2 included the following:

- Providing an update on study progress
- Reviewing the evaluation of alternative solutions and the preliminary preferred solution for both the potential grade separation and the redesign of Louth Street
- Presenting study timeline, next steps, and how to stay engaged.

Community members participated by:

- Attending in person on Tuesday June 13, 2023, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm in the Meridian Room at the Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre in St. Catharines, in a 'drop-in' format with project team members available to discuss the project and assist with any questions or concerns.
- Completing the comment form available at the in-person PIC

- Viewing the PIC#2 slides on the project's website at (<https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/default.aspx>)
- Completing the online commenting form, which was available online from June 13, 2023 to July 4, 2023. The public could visit the Region website (<https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/default.aspx>) anytime during this period to learn about and share their input on the study.
- Emailing additional comments directly to the Region.

2. Notification of Public Information Centre #2

Multiple methods of communication were used to inform the public of PIC #2, including:

- Notice letters mailed to all property owners within the study area via Canada Post addressed mail on June 1, 2023. In total, 833 letter notices were distributed. The notice can be found in **Appendix A**.
- Notice emailed to all individuals and organizations on the project contact list, including Indigenous communities, government agencies, elected officials, utilities, local businesses, and members of the public.
- Newspaper advertisements published in:
 - Niagara This Week (Thursday June 1; Thursday June 8)
 - St. Catharines Standard (Saturday June 3; Saturday June 10)

Copies of these advertisements can be found in **Appendix B**.

- Project website at <https://niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/default.aspx> which included the notice, online presentation and links, project team contacts, and project material.

3. In Person Meeting-Format/Participation

Public Information Centre #2 was held in person on June 13, 2023, at the Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre. Approximately 28 members of the public participated. The meeting format included:

- A 'drop-in' format with project members available to discuss the project and assist with any questions or comments.
- Presentation boards which included background information, existing conditions, alternative solutions, evaluation criteria, study timeline and next steps.
- Participants were invited to provide questions verbally to the study team and using the comment forms.

4. In-Person Meeting-Presentation

The display boards listed in Exhibit 1 were presented to the public during PIC #2.

Exhibit 1. List Of In-Person Public Information Centre #2 Display Boards

1. Welcome	14. Louth Street: Problems and Opportunities
2. Why We Are Here	15. Louth Street: Cultural Environment
3. Environmental Assessment Process	16. Louth Street: Natural Environment
4. Study Area	17. Louth Street: Existing and Future Traffic Conditions (2023)
5. Study Background	18. Louth Street: Alternative Solutions
6. Current Projects in the Area	19. Louth Street: Evaluation Criteria
7. Background Studies	20. Louth Street: Design Considerations for the Next Phase of the Study
8. Grade Separation: Problems and Opportunities	21. Louth Street: Consideration for the Next Phase of Study – Active Transportation
9. Grade Separation: Alternative Solutions	22. Study Schedule
10. Potential Crossing Locations	23. Getting Involved and Next Steps
11. Grade Separation: Evaluation Criteria	24. Thank you for Attending
12. Grade Separation: Alternative Solution Advantages and Disadvantages	
13. Grade Separation: Alternative Solution Evaluation	

5. Public Comments Received

During the in-person meeting, participants were encouraged to pose questions to the project team verbally or by using the comment forms. The project team discussed with participants and provided responses to participant questions and comments. Participants included residents, property owners, and local business owners.

The public was encouraged to submit comments following PIC #2 either by completing a feedback form on the Project website or by sending direct emails to the Region.

The topics discussed in the comment sheets, spoken verbally to the project team at the PIC, and submitted following the PIC are summarized in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Summary Of Questions and Comments From Public Information Centre #2

Grade Separation

Topic	Question/Comment	Response
Alternative 6	Participants were generally supportive of Alternative 6 for the grade separation, including connection to Highway 406.	At the current time, current and future traffic volumes do not require the construction of a grade separation, and the Region is recommending the “Do Nothing” alternative. However, if traffic volumes are anticipated to increase, the Region will restart this portion of the Class EA and develop and assess alternative designs for Alternative 6.
Access to the Hospital	Greater consideration should be given to the impact train traffic will have on access to the hospital. Since CNR removed one of the tracks further west, there have been multiple instances where multiple level crossings are blocked by stopped trains.	The assessment of grade separation alternatives considered the combination of vehicular and train traffic to determine whether a grade separation was justified based on Transport Canada guidelines. None of the alternatives met the threshold from the Transport Canada guidelines based on current or future (2051) traffic and train volumes.
	Concern that the future alignment for Alternative 6 would directly impact the helipad for the hospital.	If the Region proceeds with Alternative 6, future consultation with the hospital will be held to understand how the helipad will influence the design of Alternative 6.
Property Impacts	Suggestion to position Alternative 6 south of 3 rd Avenue so the interchange is only staged to access the 4 th Avenue area and avoid disturbance to neighbourhoods and homeowners near 3 rd Avenue and Highway 406.	If the Region proceeds with Alternative 6, discussions will occur with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to determine whether a connection to Highway 406 is feasible. If MTO is supportive of a connection between Alternative 6 and Highway 406, the Region will examine alternatives that minimize disturbance to neighbourhoods and homeowners during Phase 3 of the Class EA process.

Louth Street

Topic	Question/Comment	Response
Impacts to EMS from a centre median	Question about whether the centre median will meet the needs of EMS.	EMS has been engaged as part of the consultation process and will continue to be engaged to ensure that the road design accommodates EMS vehicles
Impacts to access from a centre median	Landowners fronting onto Louth Street must be consulted in detail on the proposed location of the median, which has the capability of restricting all-movement access for future developments.	The Region will be consulting with landowners affected by the proposed improvements to Louth Street during the next phase of the study.
Left turn at Ridley Road	Support adding a dedicated left turn lane from southbound Louth Street to Ridley Road to improve safety on Louth Street, particularly when a train stops traffic and drivers use the northbound lane on Louth as a left turn lane	The Region will explore adding a dedicated left turn from southbound Louth Street to Ridley Road during the next phase of the study.
Reconfiguring the intersection of Louth Street and Crestcombe Road	Reconfiguring the intersection of Louth Street and Crestcombe Road may impact access to properties including 10 Benfield Drive. Traffic volumes and sight lines should be reviewed in accordance with the proposed cross-sections for the street to understand the full impacts.	Should changes to the intersection at Louth Street and Crestcombe be considered as part of the next phase of the study, the Region will review traffic volumes and sight lines at that location during the design.
Active transportation	Support improving active transportation facilities along Louth Street	The Region will develop options for active transportation along Louth Street during the next phase of the study.

6. Agency Comments Received

One comment was received by email from Hydro One, indicating that there are no existing Hydro One transmission assets in the subject area.

7. Summary / Key Findings

A summary of the feedback received at Public Information Centre #2 and during the comment period from June 13 to July 4, 2023, is provided below. Key comments include support for Alternative 6 and concerns regarding impacted access to EMS. Recurring themes include:

- Consultation with EMS - Engagement with EMS on the project and how it might affect emergency response times and access.
- Property Access - Potential resulting impacts to property access due to grade separation and from a centre median on Louth Street
- Active transportation – Support for improving active transportation facilities along Louth Street.

Comments received from the public will be considered, in conjunction with the existing conditions review, as design alternatives are developed as part of the Louth Street and West St. Catharines Grade Separation Environmental Assessment. The alternative design concepts for Louth Street will be presented to the public for feedback at Public Information Centre #3 which is anticipated to be held in Fall 2023.

Appendix A: Notice of PIC #2

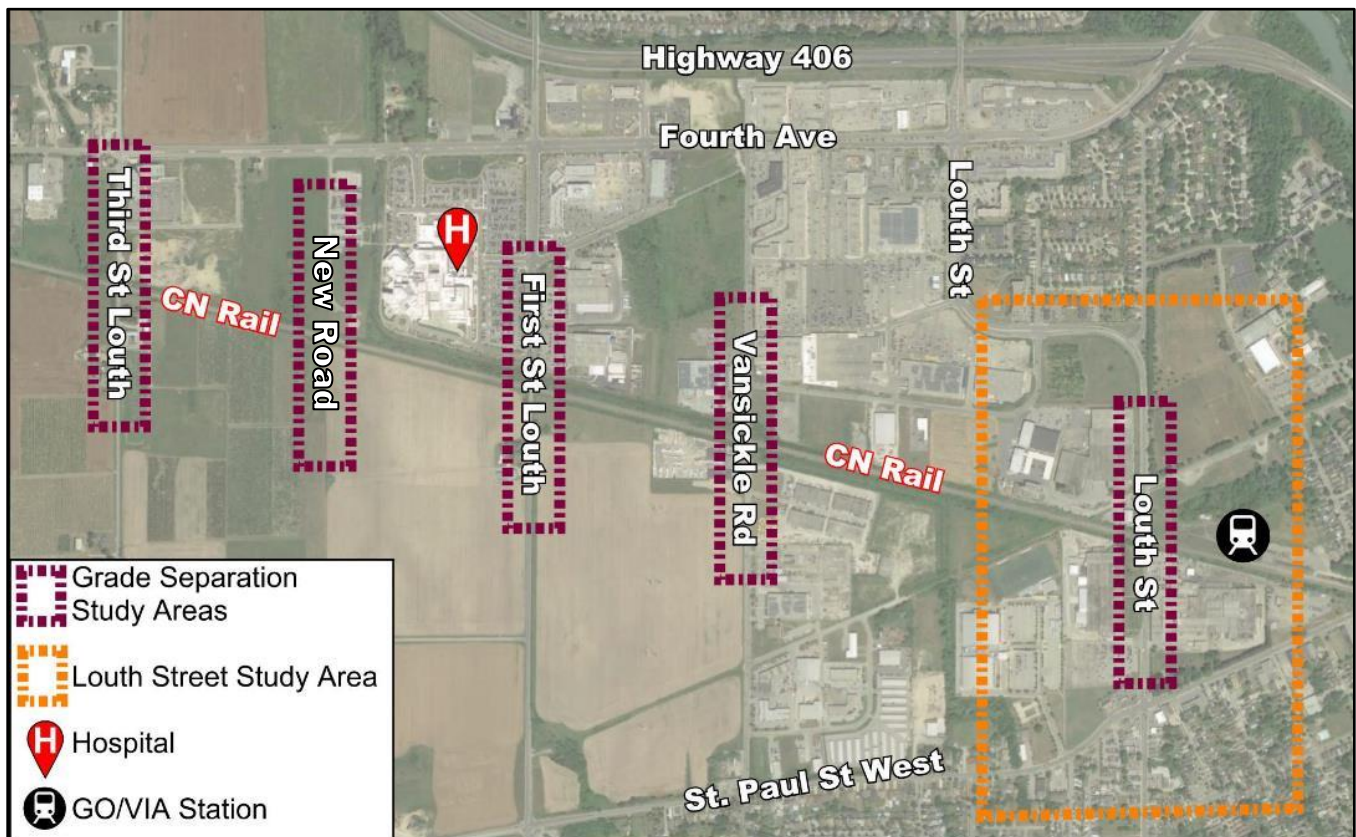
Notice of Public Information Centre #2

**Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for
the West St. Catharines Grade Separation and
Regional Road 72 (Louth Street), St. Catharines, Ontario**

The Study

Niagara Region is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) and Detailed Transportation Assessment of Regional Road 72 (Louth Street) and the West St. Catharines Grade Separation in the City of St. Catharines. The study is split into two components which include:

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



The study is being carried out as a **Schedule 'C'** project in accordance with the MCEA process, which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. This study will address Phases 1 to 2 of the process for the potential roadway/railway grade separation, and Phases 1 to 4 of the process for the redesign of Louth Street.

Upon completion of the study, an Environmental Study Report will be prepared to document the MCEA planning and decision-making process for the redesign of Louth Street and made available for a 30-day public review period. A Notice of Completion will be issued at that stage.

You Are Invited To Participate!

Niagara Region is hosting the second of three Public Information Centres planned for this study.

Public Information Centre #2 will provide an update on study progress, including the evaluation of alternative solutions and the preliminary preferred solution for both the potential grade separation and the redesign of Louth Street. This event will be held **in-person** in a 'drop-in' format with project team members available to discuss the project and assist with any questions or comments.

Public Information Centre #2

Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Time: 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. (drop-in anytime)

Location: Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Meridian Room

Address: 240 St. Paul Street W, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2E7

The information materials related to Public Information Centre #2 will also be made available on the project webpage (niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street/) starting June 13, 2023, and comments can be submitted through the webpage until July 4, 2023.

Stay Connected!

If you have any questions or comments regarding the study, or wish to be added to the email list, please contact one of the project team members:

Josh Wilson, M.Eng., P.Eng.

Project Manager, Transportation Planning

Niagara Region

905-980-6000, ext. 3336

Josh.Wilson@niagararegion.ca

John Grebenc, P.Eng.

Consultant Project Manager

Morrison Hershfield

416-499-3110, ext. 1011810

JGrebenc@morrisonhershfield.com

Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used, and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the **Privacy Office** at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or **FOI@niagararegion.ca**.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the **Accessibility Advisory Coordinator** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or **accessibility@niagararegion.ca**.

This Notice first issued on May 30, 2023.

May X, 2023

<Contact_Name>
<Title>
<Agency>
<Address>
<City_PR_PC>

Sample Indigenous Community

Six Nations of the Grand River
Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council
Haudenosaunee Development Institute
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Dear <Contact_Name>,

**Subject: Notice of Public Information Centre #2
Regional Road 72 (Louth Street) and West St. Catharines Grade Separation
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment – Schedule ‘C’ Project
Regional Municipality of Niagara – City of St. Catharines**

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region), through their consultant Morrison Hershfield (MH), is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) and Detailed Transportation Assessment of Regional Road 72 (Louth Street) and the West St. Catharines Grade Separation in the City of St. Catharines. This study is being carried out under the planning and design process as outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class EA Manual (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2023) as a Schedule ‘C’ project, with opportunity for input throughout.

Niagara Region is hosting the second of three Public Information Centres planned for this study. **Public Information Centre #2 (PIC #2)** will update on study progress, including the evaluation of alternative solutions and the preliminary preferred solution for both the potential grade separation and the redesign of Louth Street. This event will be held **in-person** in a ‘drop-in’ format with project team members available to discuss the project and assist with any questions or comments.

Niagara Region believes that engagement and consultation with Indigenous Nations is an integral part of the MCEA process, and as such, we would like to invite **insert Indigenous Nation name** to participate in PIC #2. PIC #2 will be held on **Tuesday, June 13, 2023**. Please see additional details in the enclosed notice.

We recognize that your community may be prioritizing a COVID-19 response to protect the health and well-being of your community, and as a result, this may impact your ability to formally respond to this letter. Should you have any comments, questions, or concerns on the proposed activities, or wish to receive more information throughout the study, please feel free to contact me by email at Josh.Wilson@niagararegion.ca or by phone at 905-980-6000 (Ext. 3336).

Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our email list, or if there are others in your organization who should be added to the list. Niagara Region will continue to engage you as this study progresses, and we are willing to schedule a virtual meeting to discuss this study further.

Sincerely,

Josh Wilson, M.Eng., P.Eng.
Project Manager, Transportation Planning
Public Works, Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON
Phone: 905-980-6000 (Ext. 3336)
Josh.Wilson@niagararegion.ca

cc: John Grebenc, P.Eng., Consultant Project Manager, Morrison Hershfield
Limited
Marc Rose, Senior Environmental Planner, Morrison Hershfield Limited

Enclosed: Notice of Public Information Centre #2

Appendix B: Newspaper Advertisements

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Information Centre #2 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for the West St. Catharines Grade Separation and Louth Street (Regional Road 72)

Niagara Region is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment and Detailed Transportation Assessment of Louth Street (Regional Road 72) and the West St. Catharines Grade Separation in the City of St. Catharines. The study is split into two components which include:

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

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Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Time: 5 - 7 p.m. (drop-in anytime)

Location: Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Meridian Room

Address: 240 St. Paul Street W, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2E7

The information materials related to Public Information Centre #2 will be available on the project webpage starting June 13, 2023:

niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street

Comments can be submitted through the webpage until July 4, 2023.

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This Notice was first issued on June 1, 2023.

niagararegion.ca



One Thorold photo

Some of the collection from a recent Thorold community wide food drive.

THOROLD COMMUNITY-WIDE FOOD DRIVE THIS WEEK

INITIATE WRAPS UP JUNE 3

Before you get into summer mode and start fixating on what you're going to do and where you're going to go for your vacation, One Thorold is asking that you consider the needs of people who are less fortunate.

The community-focused group is holding its fifth annual Thorold Community Wide Food Drive for Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold, with collection points set up in four different locations from Monday, May 29 to Friday, June 2. The loca-

tions are Prince of Wales Public School (40 Pine St. S.), the Thorold Library (14 Ormond St. N.), Thorold Community Activities Group (131 Richmond St.) and Westmount Public School (57 Ann St. W.).

The drive wraps up on Saturday, June 3, when people will be hosting food collections throughout the city. Those interested in hosting a drop-off point this year are asked to reach out to karenschilstra@gmail.com for all the details or to request a Community Care collection barrel.

All food collected during this week's drive benefits people in Thorold.

While summer can be

an enjoyable time, for many families there's extra hardship. Many food insecure households rely on school nutrition programs, which are not available in the summer. As well, Community Care traditionally finds summer to be a challenging time, as people, whose minds are on summer activities, tend to forget the general need — which is currently greater than ever — still exists.

According to Community Care, among the most needed items are canned vegetables, juice boxes, baby food, canned pasta and stew, peanut butter and hygiene items (toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and soap).

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THINGS TO DO



Luke Edwards/Metroland

In addition to the collaborative work and a few individual pieces, Art Me Up participants also created pieces of art in a trading card style with various messages on them.

OPENING RECEPTION ON JUNE 13

Continued from page 30

life. Or maybe it's a turning point. Either way, Duntsch believes it was an excellent example of the power of the Art Me Up program, which will be highlighted with the Branches exhibition later this month.

An artist in his own right, Duntsch helped facilitate the Art Me Up program during a brief contract job with Start Me Up. The art program goes back a while, but recently faced some challenges through COVID-19 restrictions and neighbourhood concerns about the previous self-run space.

For about two months, Duntsch would facilitate the drop-in art program, inviting visitors to produce art of their own. At some point, he rolled out a long, table-length roll of paper, and began drawing trees.

"I'd invite people to participate in drawing the tree, whether that was just slapping a leaf on there, branches or some scenery in the background. It varied," he said.

The Branches exhibition will showcase that collaborative work, as well as a few standalone pieces from artists, including the motorcycle sketch. There will also be some smaller pieces created in the form of trading cards on display.

Duntsch said growth and the unpredictability of plant life fits in well with the experiences of many visitors to Start Me Up.

"You know, sometimes the sun doesn't reach one part of one plant, but that doesn't mean that the whole plant has to die. You know, I think at the heart of it is the idea of growth," he said.

The main work isn't finished, but in Duntsch's

mind, that makes sense.

"The way I see it, it's ... a snapshot at the line of before and after, at the line of past and future. And that's where these the people that I work with, that's their everyday," he said.

An opening reception with refreshments is planned for the exhibition. It takes place Tuesday, June 13 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Film House. The art will remain up until the end of August. The PAC is located at 250 St. Paul St.

Duntsch is also working with Start Me Up on a Before the Barriers art installation project regarding the deaths at the Burgoyne Bridge in 2018 and 2019. He's accepting donations and seeking input from the public to help determine how best to proceed with the project. He can be reached through email at art@startmeupniagara.ca.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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This Notice was first issued on June 1, 2023.

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The Standard

Niagara Region PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Information Centre #2 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for the West St. Catharines Grade Separation and Louth Street (Regional Road 72)

Niagara Region is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment and Detailed Transportation Assessment of Louth Street (Regional Road 72) and the West St. Catharines Grade Separation in the City of St. Catharines. The study is split into two components which include:

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

This study is being carried out as a Schedule 'C' project in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process, which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. This study will address Phases 1 to 2 of the process for the potential roadway/railway grade separation, and Phases 1 to 4 of the process for the redesign of Louth Street. Upon completion of the study, an Environmental Study Report will be prepared to document the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment planning and decision-making process for the redesign of Louth Street and made available for a 30-day public review period. A Notice of Completion will be issued at that stage.

Niagara Region is hosting the second of three Public Information Centres planned for this study. Public Information Centre #2 will provide an update on the study progress, including the evaluation of alternative solutions and the preliminary preferred solution for both the potential grade separation and the redesign of Louth Street. This event will be held in-person as a 'drop-in' format with project team members available to discuss the project and assist with any questions or comments.

Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Time: 5 - 7 p.m. (drop-in anytime)

Location: Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Meridian Room

Address: 240 St. Paul Street W, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2E7

The information materials related to Public Information Centre #2 will be available on the project webpage starting June 13, 2023:

niagararegion.ca/projects/louth-street

Comments can be submitted through the webpage until July 4, 2023.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the study, or wish to be added to the email list, please contact one of the project team members:

Josh Wilson, M.Eng., P.Eng.
Project Manager, Transportation Planning
Niagara Region
905-980-6000, ext. 3336
Josh.Wilson@niagararegion.ca

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416-499-3110, ext. 1011810
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Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used, and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the Privacy Office at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the Accessibility Advisory Coordinator at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

This Notice was first issued on June 1, 2023.

niagararegion.ca



Appendix C: PIC #2 Display Boards



Welcome

Public Information Centre #2

Louth Street and West St. Catharines Grade Separation Environmental Assessments

June 13, 2023
5:00-7:00 pm

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

Why We Are Here

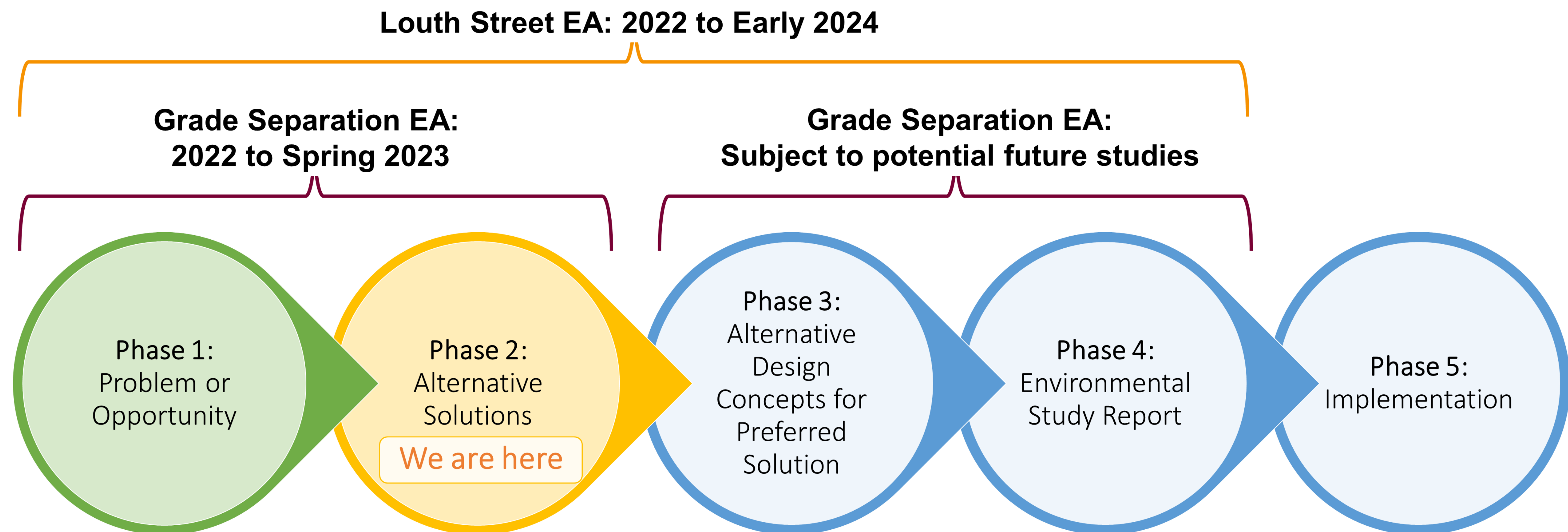
The purpose of this Public Information Centre (PIC) is to:

- Provide an update on both studies:
 - West St. Catharines Grade Separation Environmental Assessment (EA)
 - Louth Street EA
- Review the evaluation of alternative planning solutions, and recommended preliminary preferred planning solution, for both studies
- Provide an opportunity to speak with the Project Team and have your questions answered, and gather input on the preliminary preferred planning solutions
- Discuss the next steps of the studies

Environmental Assessment Process

Both the West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA and the Louth Street EA are being carried out as Schedule 'C' projects in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process, which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act.

The MCEA planning process applies to routine projects that have predictable and readily managed environmental effects.



Study Area

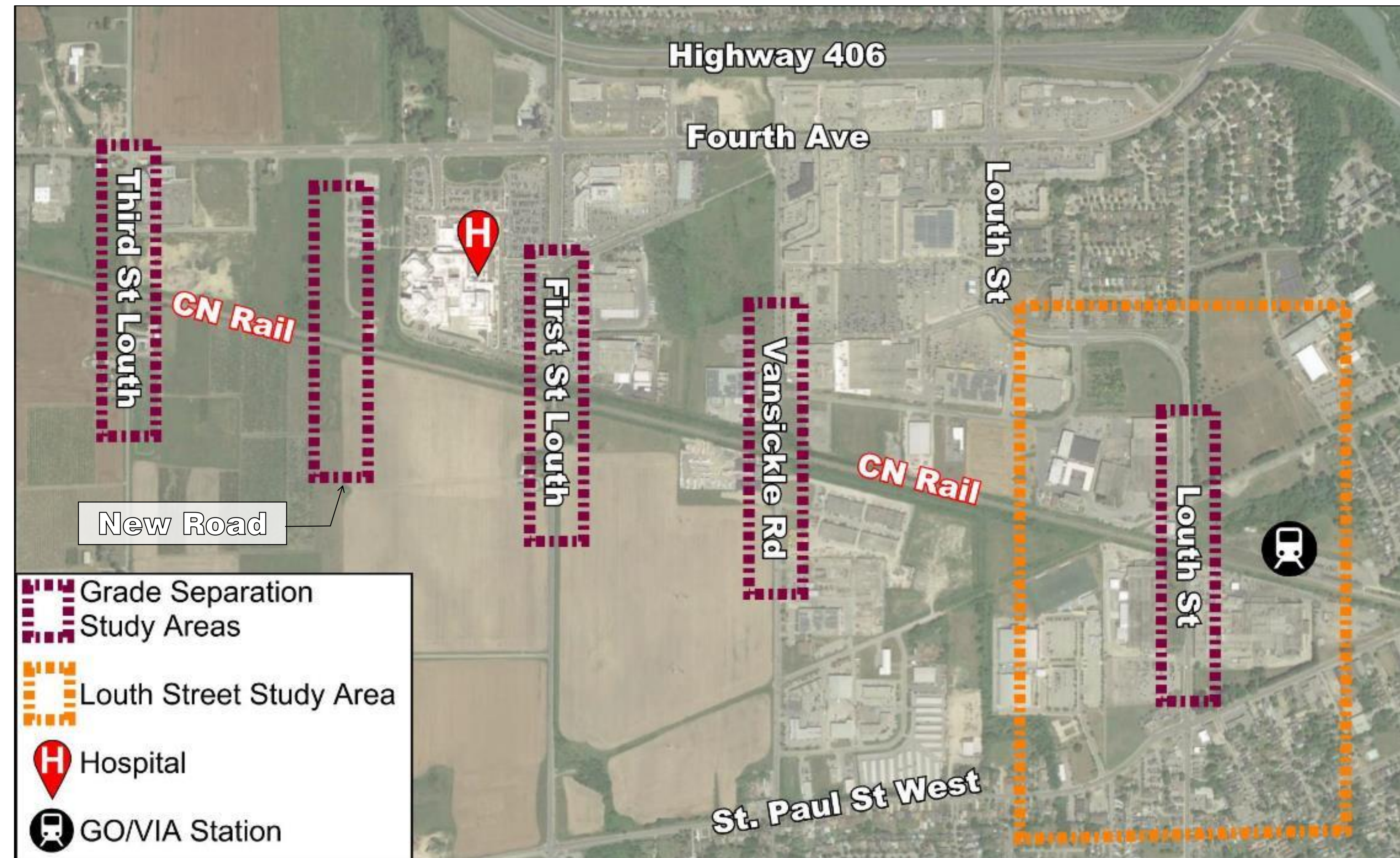
The study is split into two components which include:

1. West St. Catharines Grade Separation Schedule C 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 Schedule C EA (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."



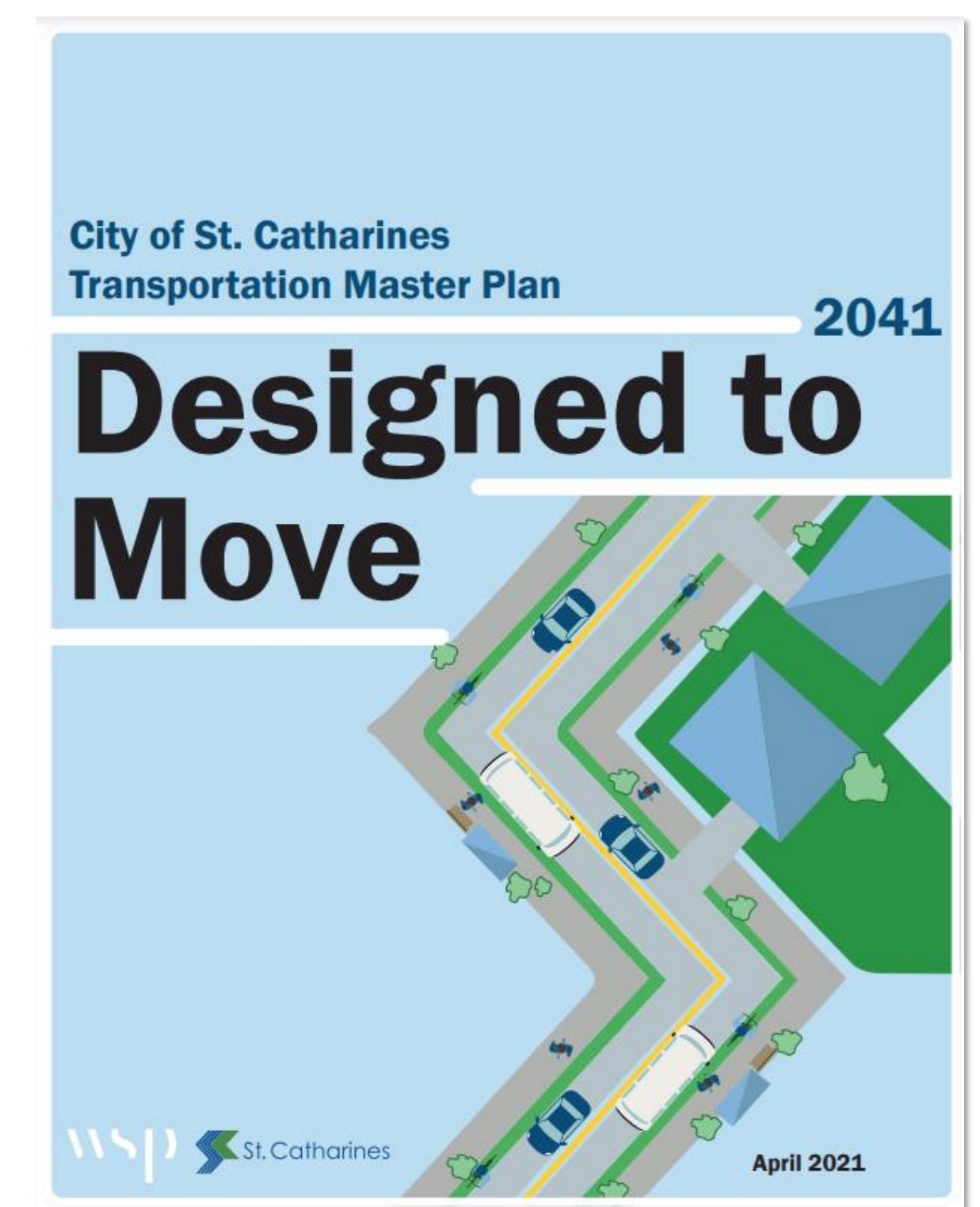
Study Background

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

- A potential new roadway/railway grade separation in west St. Catharines
- 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 (RR 72) EA
2. Ridley Road Reconstruction
3. VIA/GO Station Site Redevelopment
4. St. Paul Street West (RR81) CN Rail Bridge Replacement

Background Studies

The following background reviews were 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

Grade Separation: Problems and Opportunities

West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA

- The Ontario government recently increased the number of trains travelling to/from St. Catharines to 6 trains per day (3 daily roundtrips), and this could increase to 11 trains per day in the near future
- Access to the hospital by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) vehicles is currently affected by at-grade crossings (where the railway crosses the road)
- 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)**
 - 2023: 22 trains/day
 - 2031: 30 trains/day
- **CN**
 - 2023: 16 trains/day
 - 2031: 19 trains/day
- **GO**
 - 2023: 6 trains/day
 - 2031: 11 trains/day

Grade Separation: Alternative Solutions

Alternative 1 No Rail Grade Separation – Do Nothing

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

Alternative 2 First Street Louth Rail Grade Separation

Create a new overpass crossing immediately east of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 480 m south of 4th Avenue.

Alternative 3 Vansickle Road Rail Grade Separation

Create a new overpass crossing two blocks east of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 600 m south of 4th Avenue.

Alternative 4 Louth Street Rail Grade Separation

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 4th Avenue.

Alternative 5 Third Street Louth Rail Grade Separation

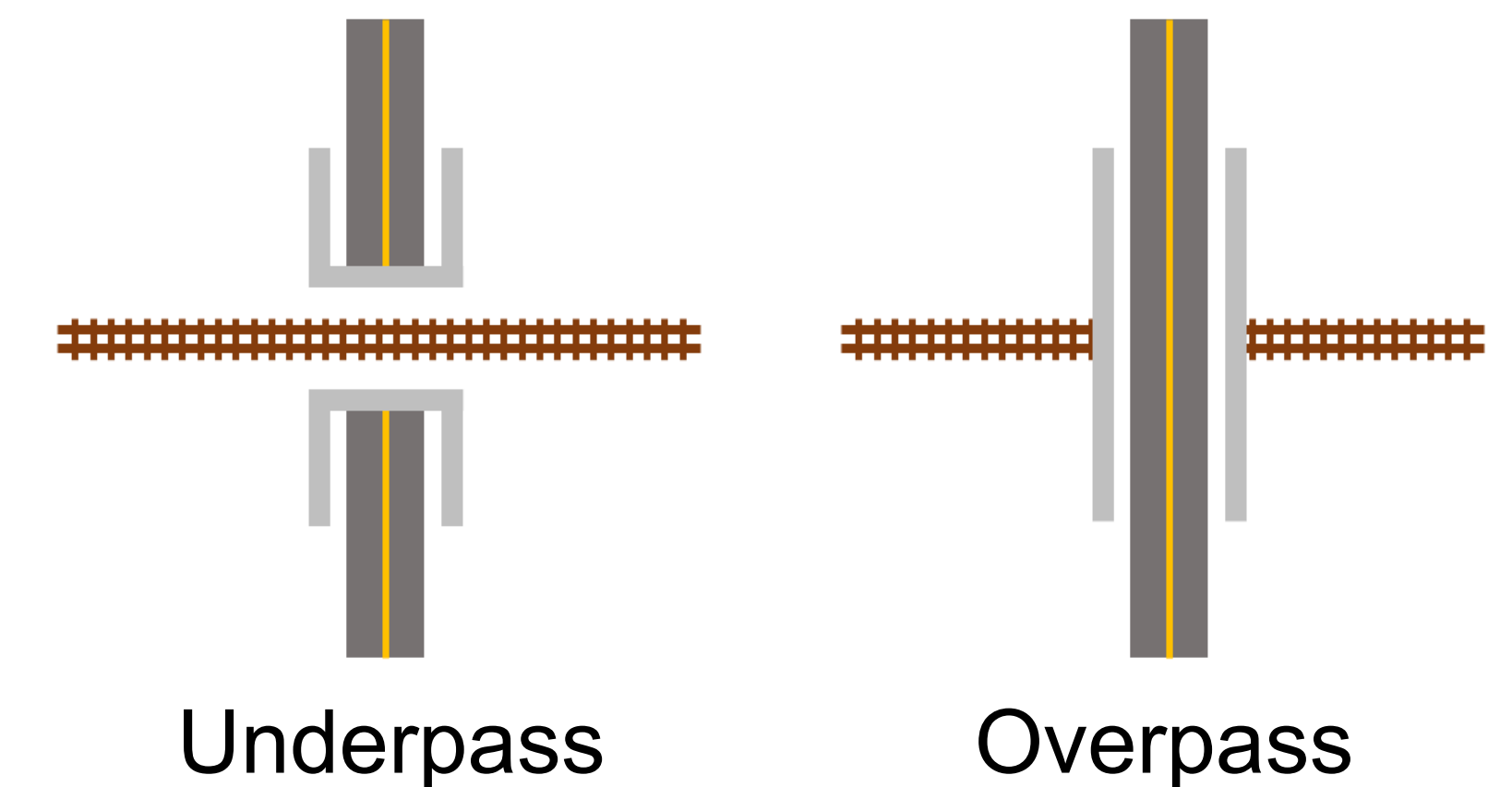
Create a new overpass crossing one block west of St. Catharines General Hospital, approximately 260 m south of 4th Avenue.

Alternative 6 New Road Crossing for Rail Grade Separation

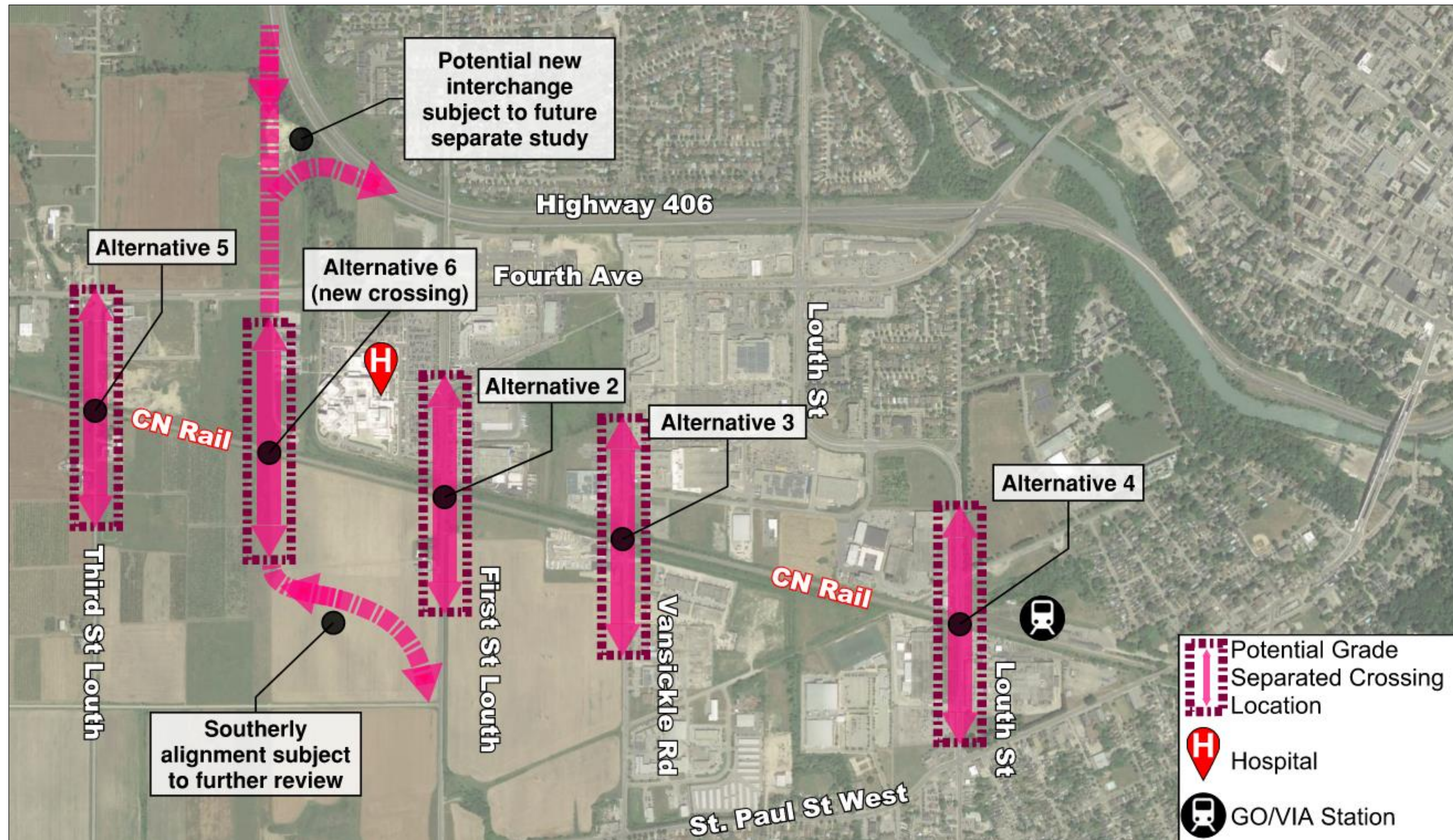
Create a new road/alignment west of St. Catharines General Hospital which crosses over the CN Rail corridor. Southerly alignment and future connection to Highway 406 in the north subject to further studies.

What is a grade separation?

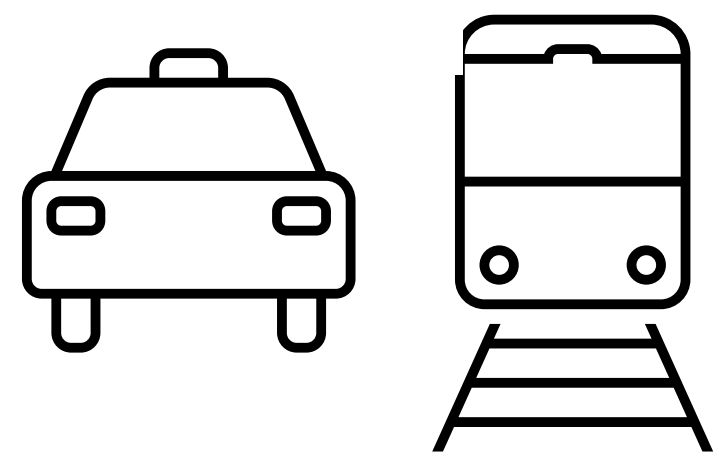
A grade separation is typically known as an underpass or an overpass. In this case, an underpass would have the road under the rail and an overpass would have the road over the rail.



Potential Crossing Locations

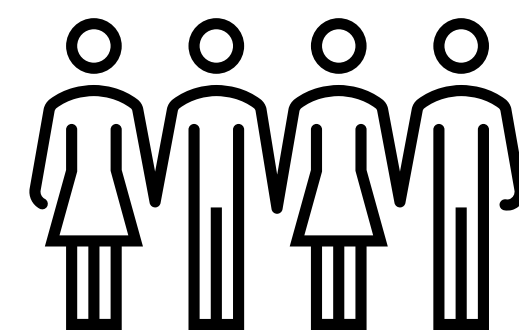


Grade Separation: Evaluation Criteria



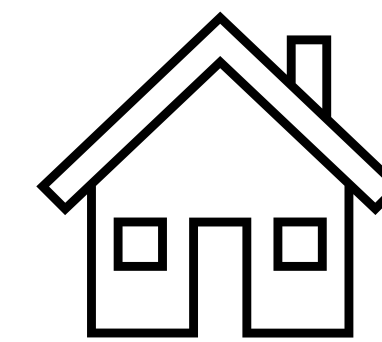
Traffic and Transportation

- Benefits to traffic patterns / delays
- North-south connectivity and network function
- Benefits to Emergency Medical Service



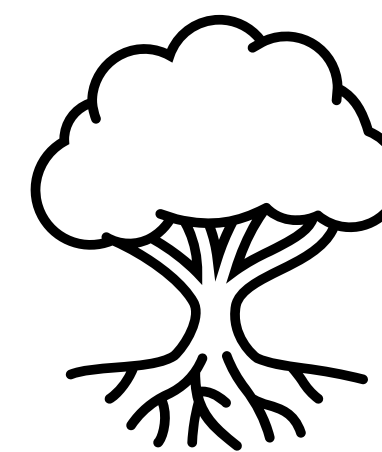
Socio-economic Environment

- Community and property impacts
- Access impacts
- Visual impacts
- Noise impacts



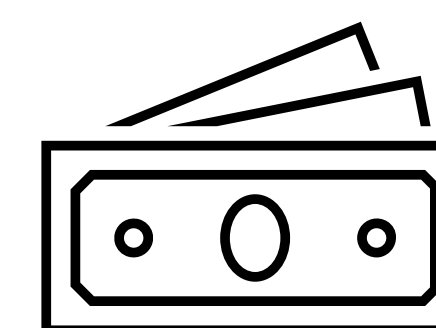
Cultural Environment

- Cultural heritage landscapes
- Built heritage resources
- Archaeology resources



Natural Environment

- Policy areas
- Watercourse and watershed impacts
- Wildlife and wildlife habitat impacts



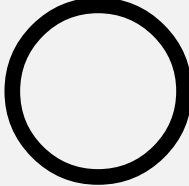
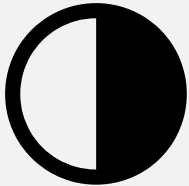
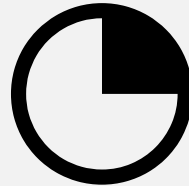
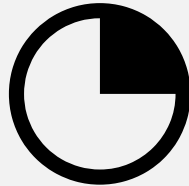
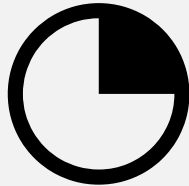
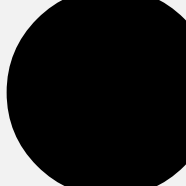
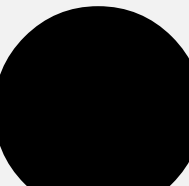
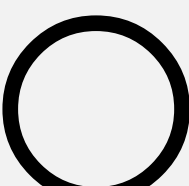
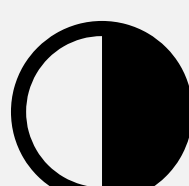
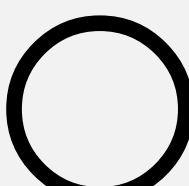
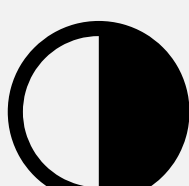
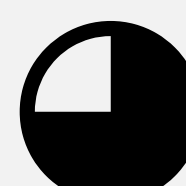
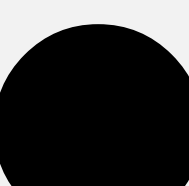
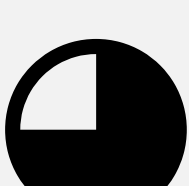
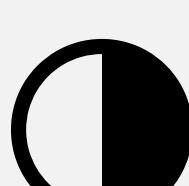
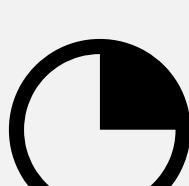
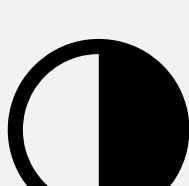
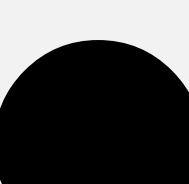
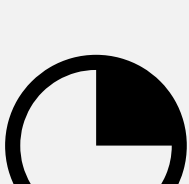
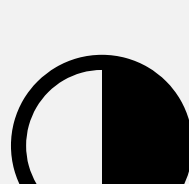
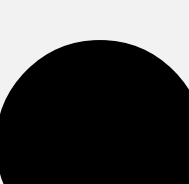
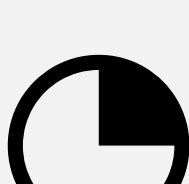
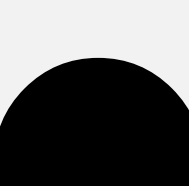
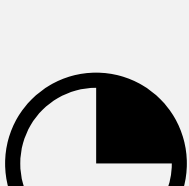
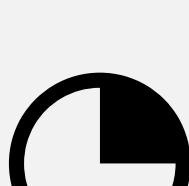
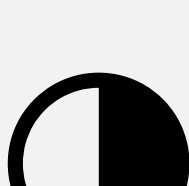
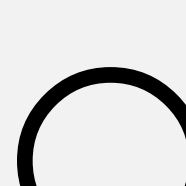
Cost and Constructability

- Capital cost estimate
- Maintenance cost

Grade Separation: Alternative Solution Advantages and Disadvantages

	Key Advantages	Key Disadvantages
Alternative 1: Do Nothing	• No community and property impacts • No cultural heritage impacts • No natural heritage impacts • No capital and maintenance cost	• Continued traffic delays
Alternative 2: First Street Louth	• Minimal potential cultural heritage impacts compared to other alternatives	• Major access impacts • Potential impacts to watercourses
Alternative 3: Vansickle Road	• No visual or noise impacts to residences	• Limited benefit to Emergency Medical Service response times
Alternative 4: Crossing at Louth Street	• No impacts to natural heritage policy areas, watercourses or wildlife	• Major access impacts • Greatest potential impacts to built heritage resources
Alternative 5: Third Street Louth	• No impacts to natural heritage policy areas • Lowest capital and maintenance cost	• Potential impacts to watercourses and wildlife
Alternative 6: New Road Crossing	• Large benefit to traffic patterns if connected to Highway 406 • Significant improvement to north-south connectivity if ramps to Highway 406 are provided • Minor access impacts compared to other alternatives • No visual or noise impacts to residences • No impacts to natural heritage policy areas	• Greatest potential impacts to archaeological resources • Greatest capital and maintenance cost

Grade Separation: Alternative Solution Evaluation

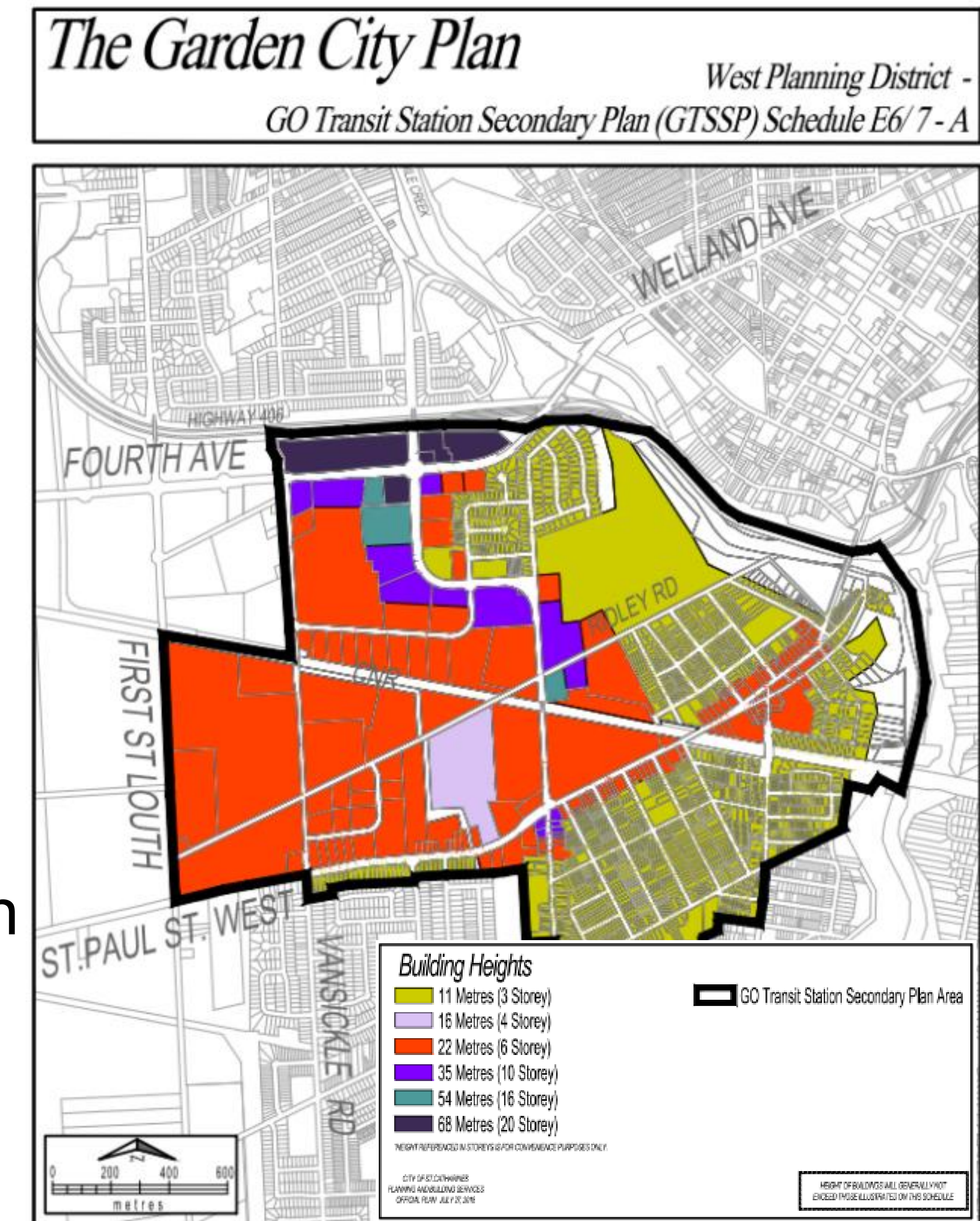
	Recommended					For Future Study
	Alternative 1: Do Nothing	Alternative 2: First Street Louth	Alternative 3: Vansickle Road	Alternative 4: Crossing at Louth Street	Alternative 5: Third Street Louth	Alternative 6: New Road Crossing
Transportation						
Socio-Economics						
Cultural Environment						
Natural Environment						
Cost & Constructability						

Other than Alternative 1, Alternative 6 has the fewest property impacts and provides greatest transportation benefit. However, existing and future traffic volumes do not currently justify building a grade separation. Traffic will be monitored for further consideration of a new grade separation road (Alternative 6).

Louth Street: Problems and Opportunities

Louth Street EA

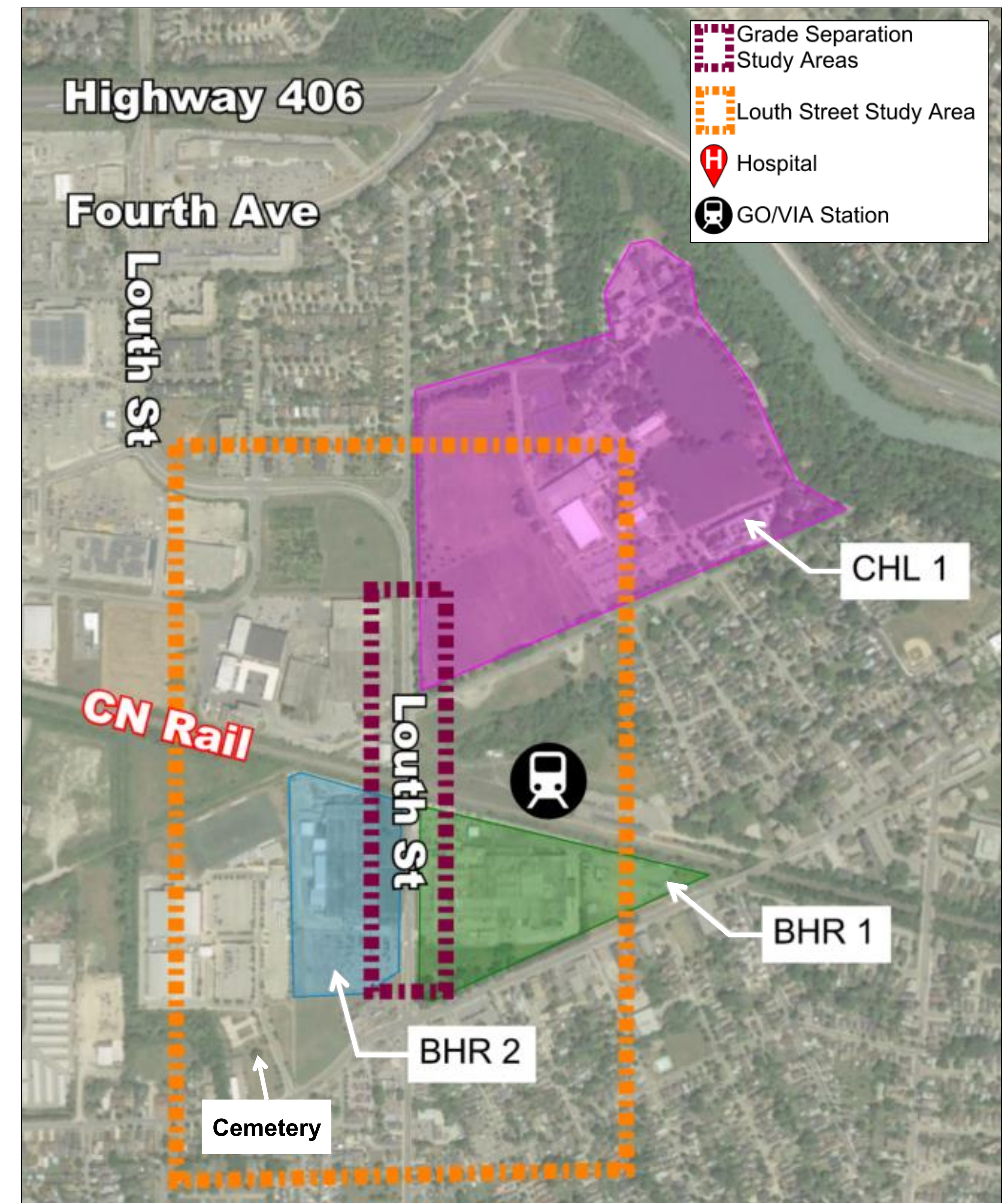
- Development is planned along Louth Street and the surrounding area, which will increase the volume of motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians
- Current two-lane road may be insufficient to handle future traffic volumes
- Opportunities:
 - Urbanize the corridor with curb and gutter, and upgrade pedestrian 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



Louth Street: Cultural Environment

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

	Potential Built Heritage Resource (BHR) for inclusion in Municipal Heritage Register
	Potential BHR for designation and listing by City
	Potential Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL) for designation and listing by City



Louth Street: Natural Environment

- Louth Street is located in an entirely urban setting
- Vegetation consists of street trees, unused fields and shrubs along the railway
- Migratory birds may nest in trees and abandoned fields

10 Benfield Drive, looking north

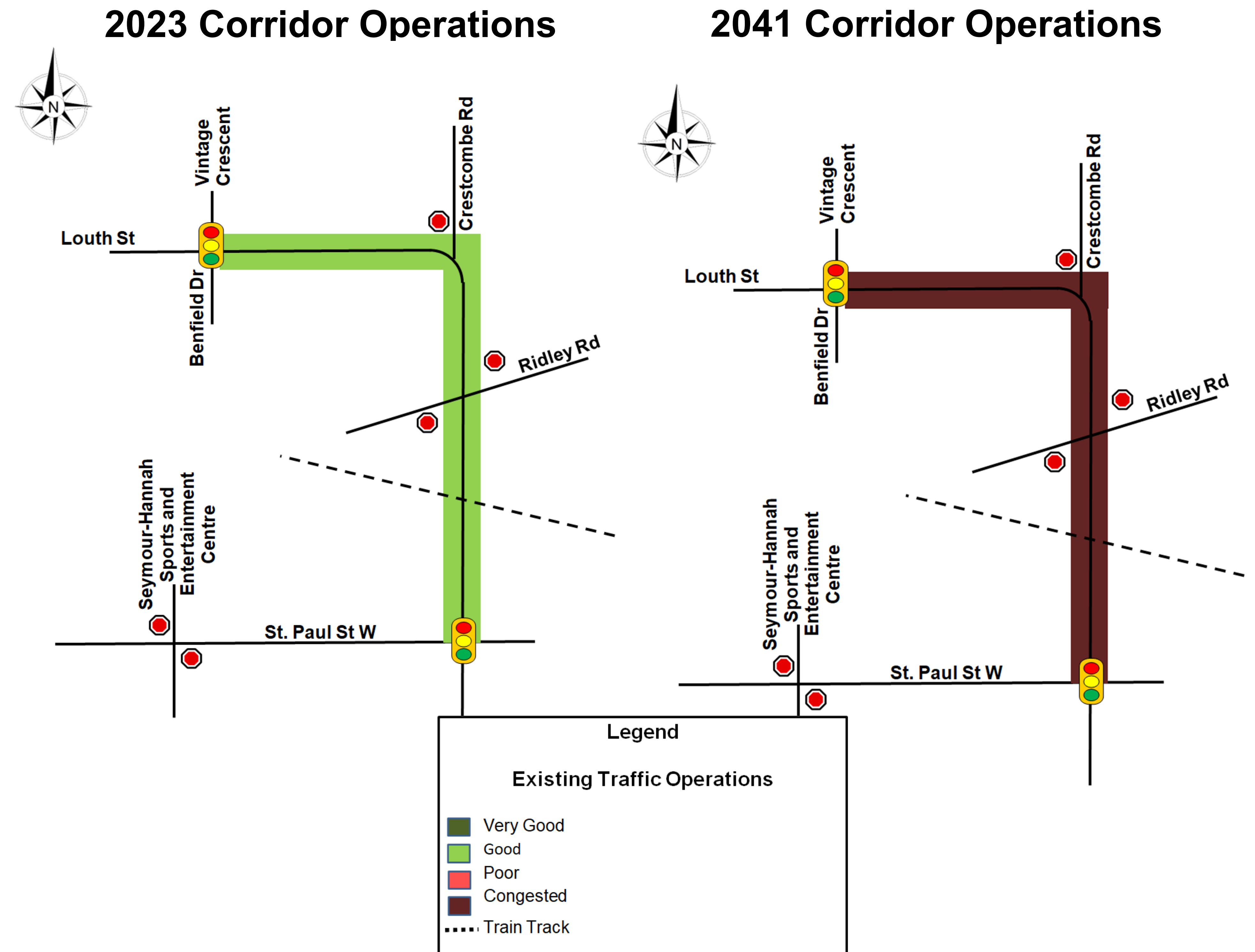


CN Rail Corridor at Louth Street, looking west



Louth Street: 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



Louth Street: 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

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY...

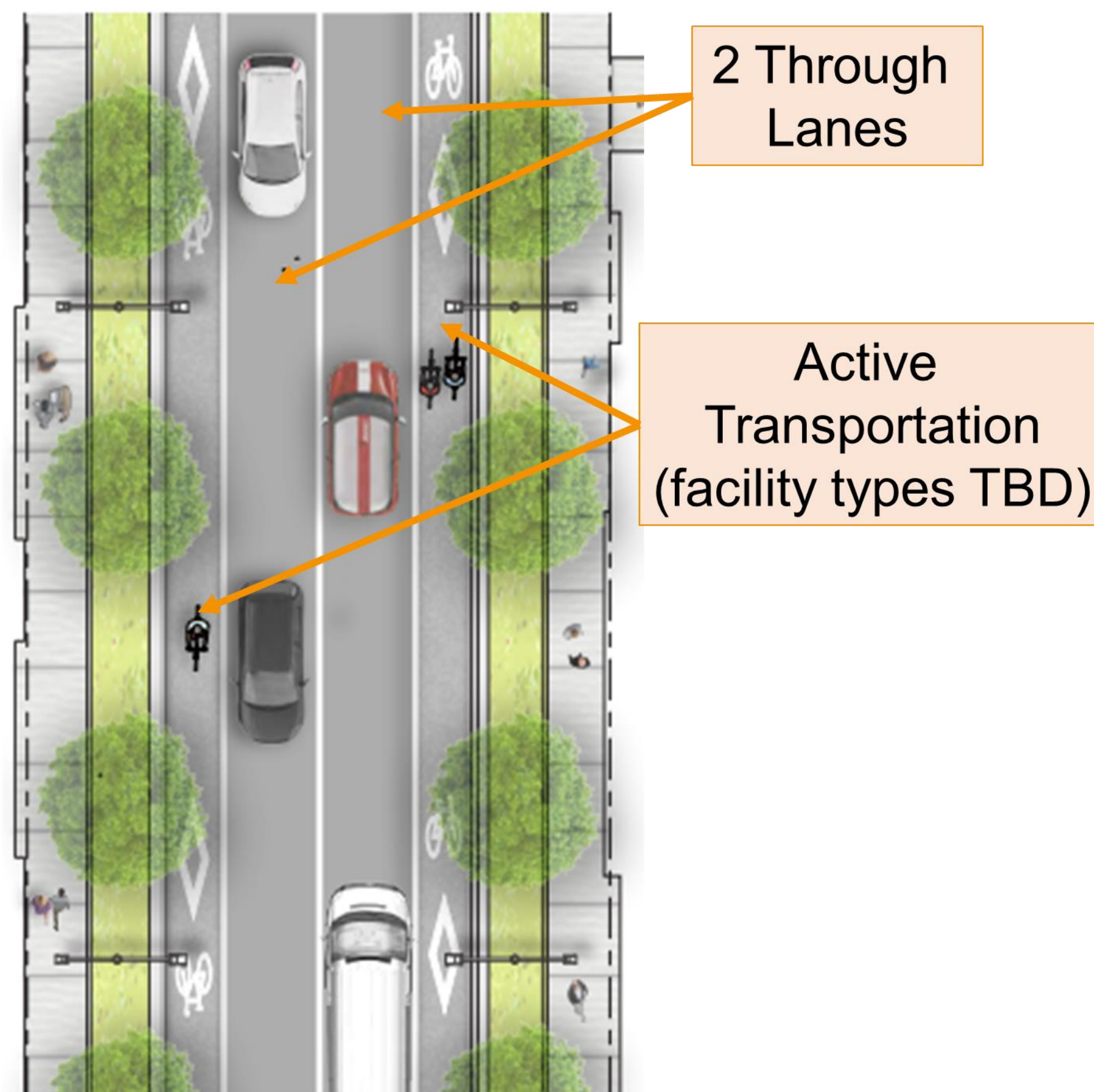
- **Travel Demand Management:** Strategies to make travel more efficient, such as carpooling, flexible work hours, telecommuting and encouraging travel by sustainable modes (i.e., walking, cycling, transit)
- **Urbanize roadway:** Install and/or improve the curb, gutter and storm sewer along the roadway
- **Intersection/operational improvements:** Install and/or improve traffic signals, turning lanes, and/or pedestrian crossovers

Louth Street: Alternative Solutions

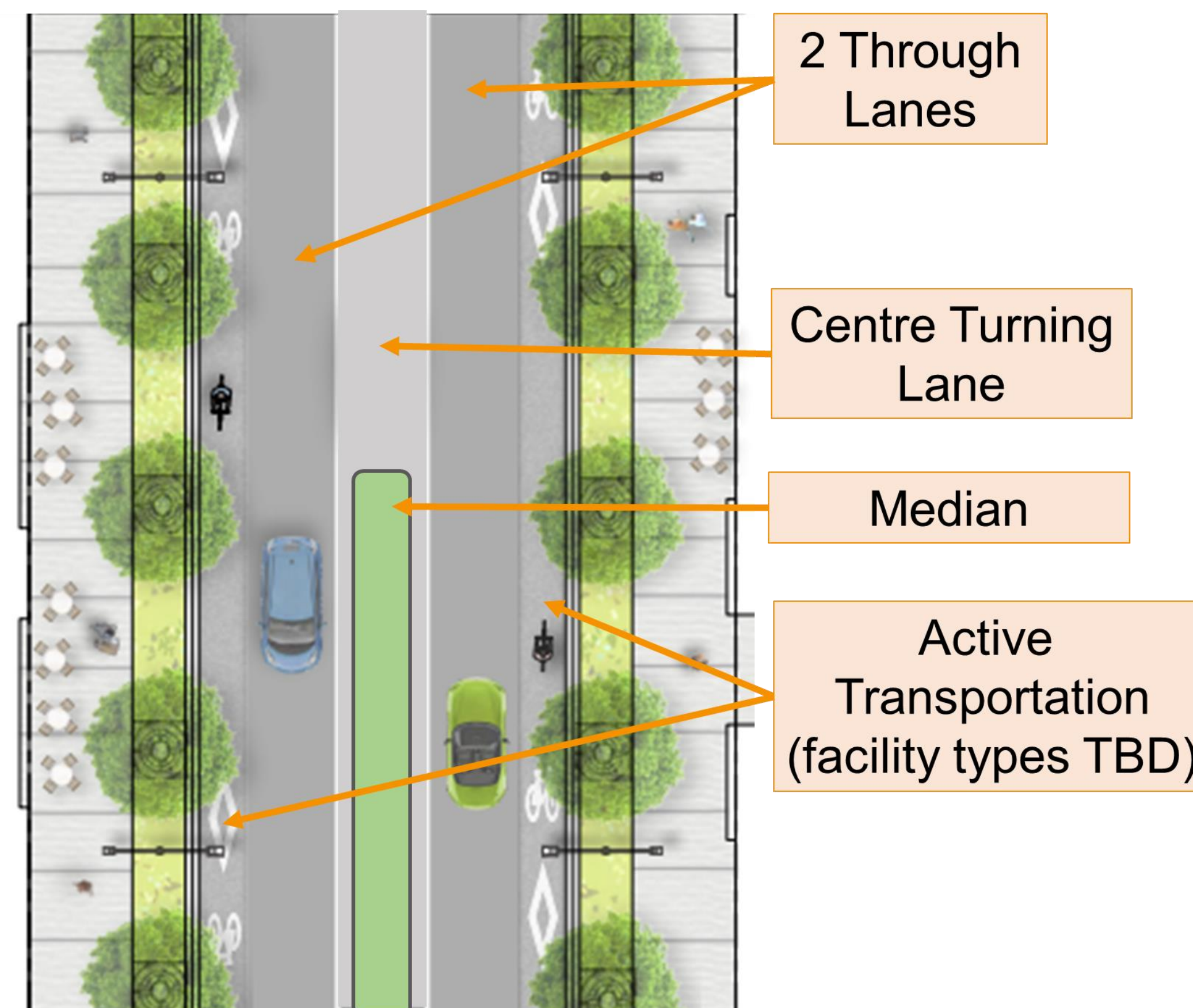
Conceptual Options for Visual Purposes Only

- Design alternatives will be developed in accordance with the Region's Complete Streets Design Manual
- The design and location of active transportation facilities will be determined during the next phase of the project

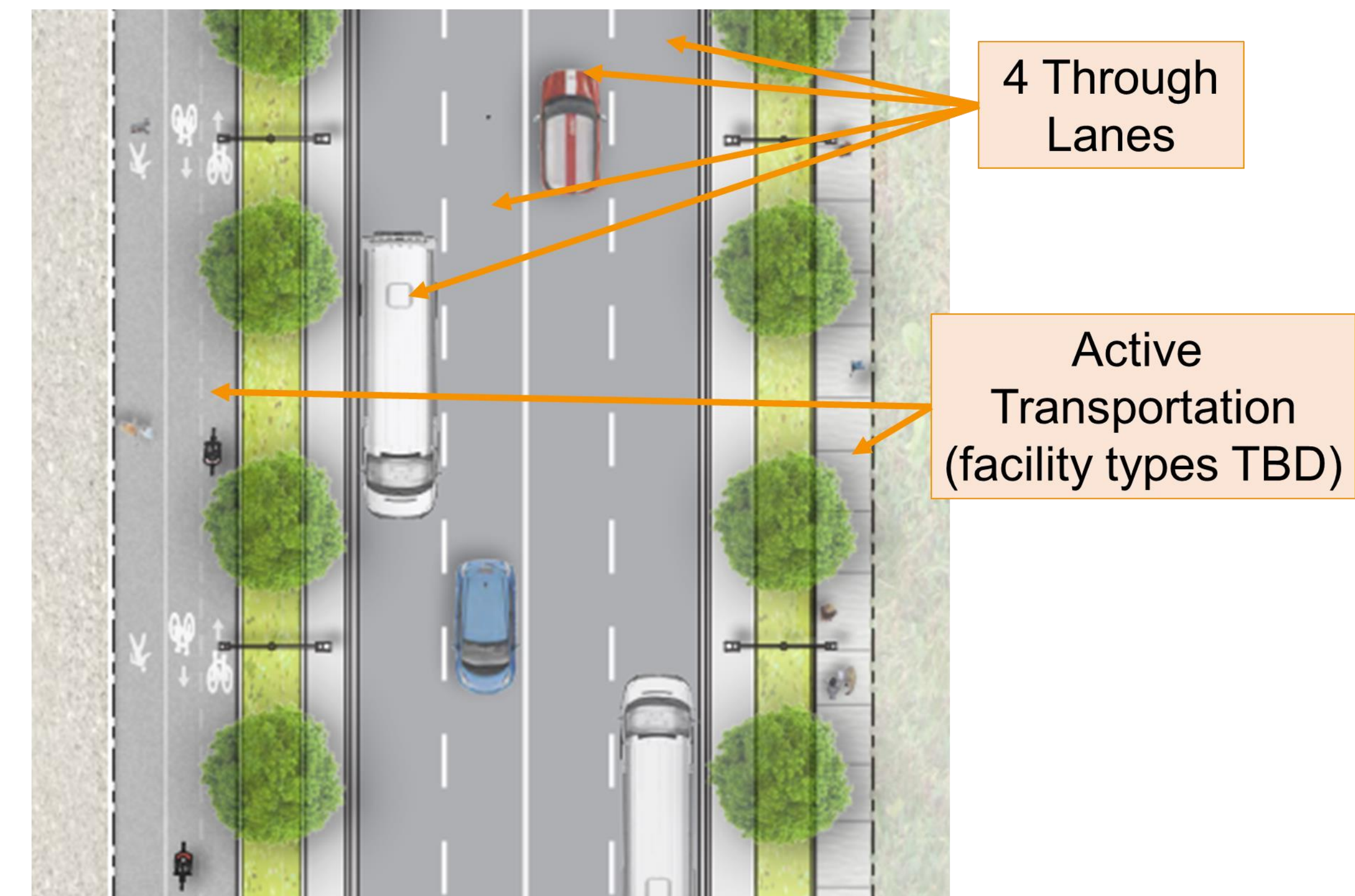
Option 2



Option 3

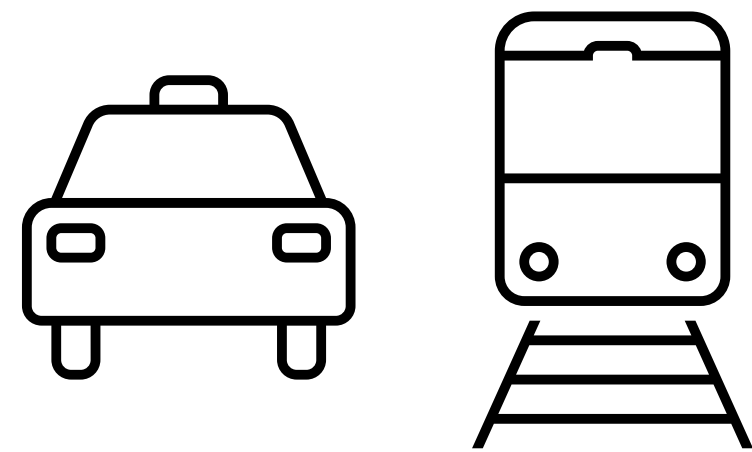


Option 4



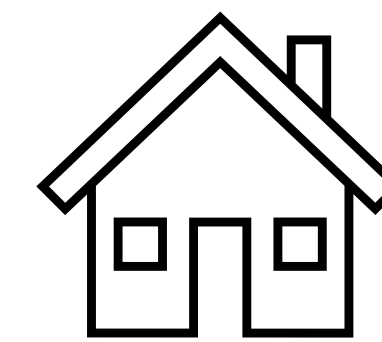
*Images derived from Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan –
Niagara Region Complete Streets Design Guidelines (IBI, June 2017)*

Louth Street: Evaluation Criteria



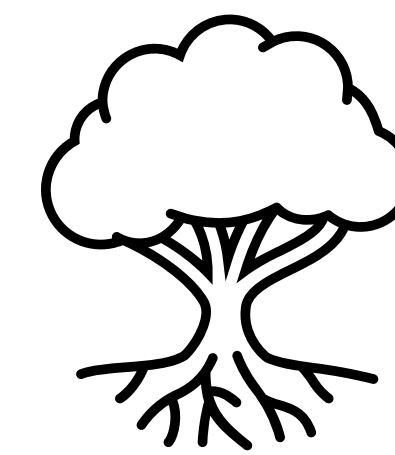
Traffic and Transportation

- Accommodation of complete street
- Improvement of current and future traffic operations
- Safety for all users



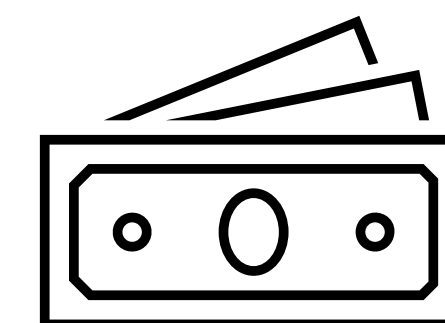
Cultural Environment

- Cultural heritage landscapes
- Built heritage resources
- Archaeology resources



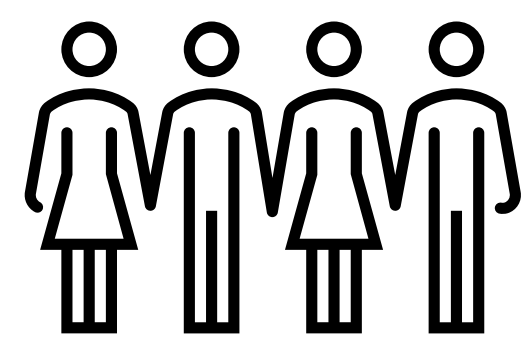
Natural Environment

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



Cost and Constructability

- Construction complexity
- Capital cost estimate
- Maintenance cost



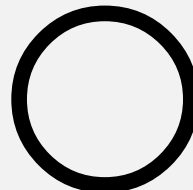
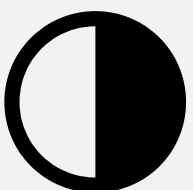
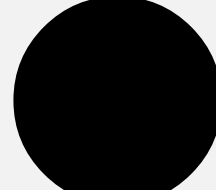
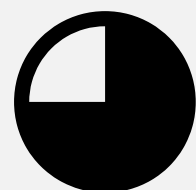
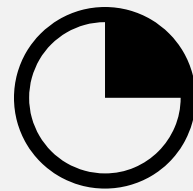
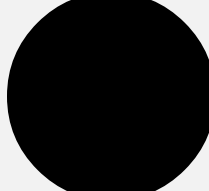
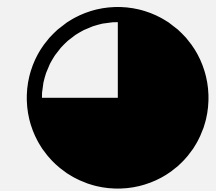
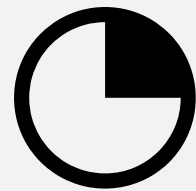
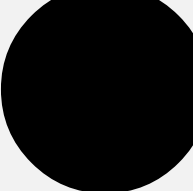
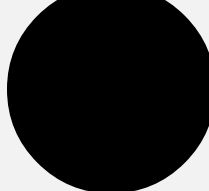
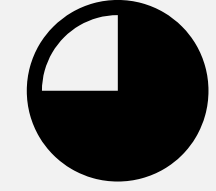
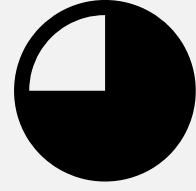
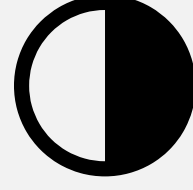
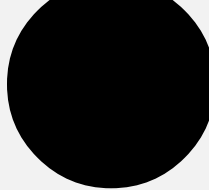
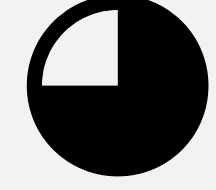
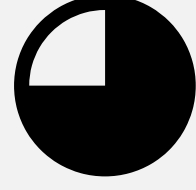
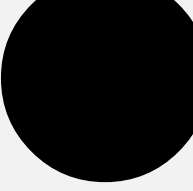
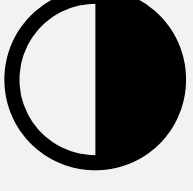
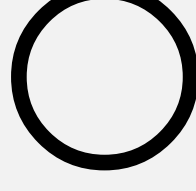
Socio-economic Environment

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

Louth Street: Alternative Solution Advantages and Disadvantages

Alternative	Key Advantages	Key Disadvantages
Alternative 1: Do Nothing	- No impact to properties - Lowest capital and maintenance cost	- Heavy future traffic congestion expected - No opportunity to implement Complete Streets principles, or improve traffic operations or safety - Unable to improve transportation equity
Alternative 2: Two Lane Corridor with Improvements	- Least potential impacts to properties and access, and to increase noise levels compared to Alternatives 3 and 4 - Able to improve transportation equity by improving crossings for pedestrians and cyclists	Significant future traffic congestion expected
Alternative 3: Three Lane Corridor with Improvements	- Limits future traffic congestion to appropriate level - Greatest potential to implement Complete Streets principles, and improve traffic operations and safety - Provides greatest opportunity for streetscaping along the corridor and within the median	- Potential to impact properties and access, and create noise disturbance - Potential to impact street trees - Moderate capital and maintenance cost
Alternative 4: Four Lane Corridor with Improvements	Greatly limits future traffic congestion	- Safety concerns associated with truck turns and active transportation at access points - Greatest potential to impact properties and access, and create noise disturbance - Potential to impact street trees - Greatest capital and maintenance cost

Louth Street: Alternative Solution Evaluation

	Option 1: Do Nothing	Option 2: Two Lane Corridor with Improvements	Recommended Option 3: Three Lane Corridor with Improvements	Option 4: Four Lane Corridor with Improvements
Transportation				
Socio-Economics				
Cultural Environment				
Natural Environment				
Cost & Constructability				

Option 3 is recommended to be carried forward because it improves future traffic operations, provides the opportunity to improve active transportation facilities and 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.

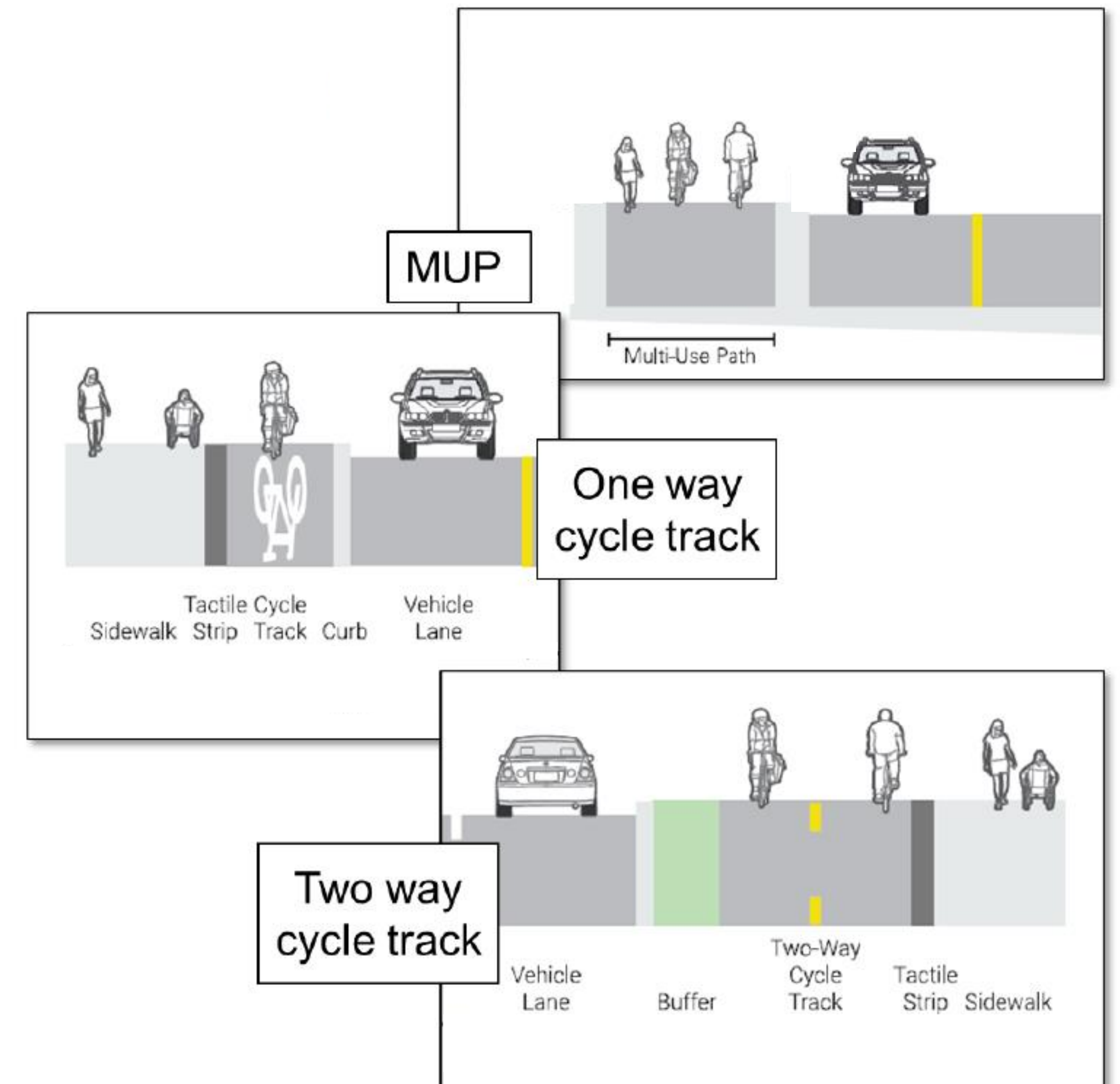
Legend: ● - Most Preferred ● - More Preferred ◐ - Moderately Preferred ◑ - Less Preferred ○ - Least Preferred

Louth Street: Design Considerations for the Next Phase of the Study



Louth Street: Considerations for the Next Phase of Study – Active Transportation

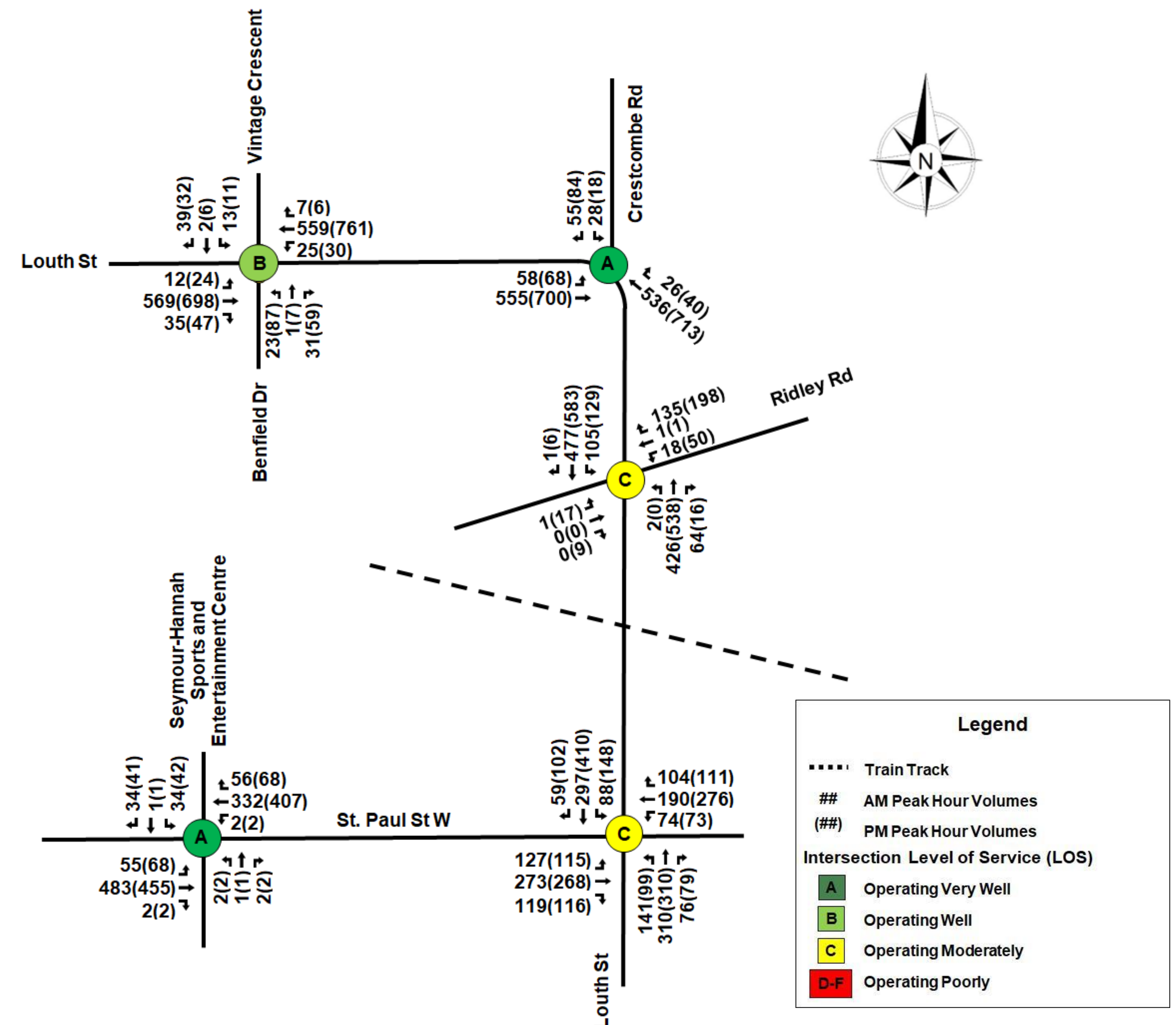
- Alternative design concepts will be developed for Louth Street, comprising of active transportation facility types (e.g., multi-use path (MUP), cycle tracks and sidewalks)
- Alternative design concepts will be evaluated based on a range of criteria, including considerations to mitigate property impacts and limitations to constructability



Louth Street: Considerations for the Next Phase of Study

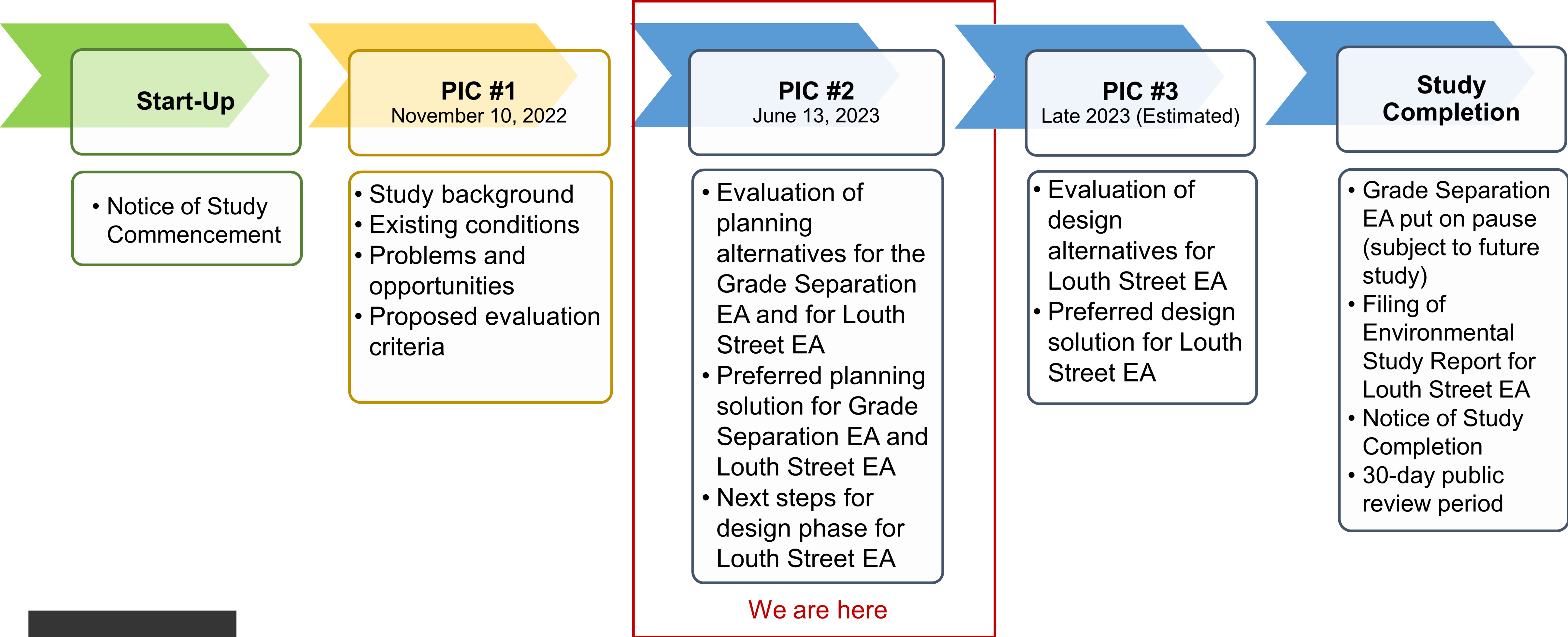
- Intersection performance within the study area is currently operating at a level of service (LOS) of C or better
- Traffic analysis will be reviewed for estimated traffic volume projections up to the year 2041 for impacts
- Alternative design concepts will include:
 - Intersection improvements (e.g., traffic controls and signals, turning lanes)
 - Operational and safety improvements (e.g., reduced lane widths, sections of centre curb median, access improvements/restrictions)

2023 Intersection Performance



Study Schedule

Louth Street EA & West St. Catharines Grade Separation EA



Getting Involved and Next Steps



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



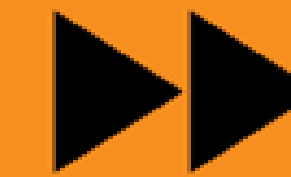
Complete the comment form to submit any questions, comments or suggestions (also available on the project webpage).



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.



Attend future Public Information Centre #3 (anticipated in late 2023).



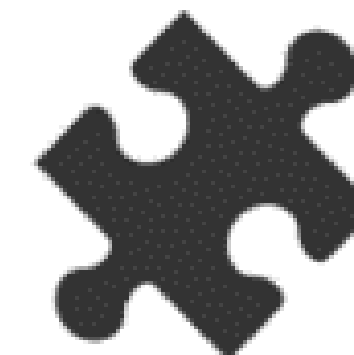
Following this PIC, the Study Team will complete the following:



Develop a PIC Summary to document results of this PIC.



Review comments received and adjust the study recommendations as appropriate.



Develop and evaluate alternative design concepts to identify a preliminary preferred design for Louth Street.



Host PIC #3 to present the preliminary preferred design alternative.

Thank You For Attending

Your Feedback is Important to Us

Your comments will be reviewed and considered, as the Study progresses.
To submit questions/comments/suggestions after this PIC, 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/