

Update to the Transportation Master Plan

A brief overview of the feeder studies to support the update to the Transportation Master Plan is outlined below

1) Transit Route Review and Long Term Growth Strategy

This study was initiated in the summer of 2018 and is being structured as a three part study.

Part One, and the primary objective of this project, will complete a review of the current transit route system in the City, develop recommendations to improve service levels and reduce travel times, and encourage increased ridership as means to improve the share of city wide travel who chooses to use transit.

Part Two of the study will expand upon the work in Part One and develop a future long-term transit vision for the City.

- This part of the study will define the level of investment and types of transit service that will be needed to achieve this vision.
- As part of this study, the consulting team will start with detailing a plan on how to achieve the target of 6% of all trips made using transit, which was established in the 2012 Transportation Master Plan; including service levels, routes, operating costs and capital costs for an expanded transit fleet and support facilities.
- The study will also test higher and more aggressive targets for future transit ridership, in terms of feasibility (given the City's size and density), the type of service level needed to attract even higher ridership levels, and the associated operating cost and new capital investment required over the next 30 years.

Part Three of the study will complete the functional planning and design for a new downtown Transit Terminal, based on the findings of the previous two phases, to support longer range land use planning and provide cost estimates for a new facility to facilitate future capital budgeting and external funding requests.

Parts One and Two are the most relevant portions of this study to the question of Parkway Alternatives, as the investment decisions made at these stages will establish the framework for the role transit can play in addressing and supporting longer term growth.

Part One of the Transit Review is expected to be completed and presented to Council by the fall 2019, with Part 2 and 3 expected to be completed and presented to Council in early 2020.

2) Cycling Network Update

The Cycling Network Update will build upon the cycling network established in the 2012 Transportation Master Plan, and will identify current gaps in the network and opportunities for new facilities to increase cycling and walking rates.

This plan would include off road trails, multi-use paths capable of supporting cycling and walking, and new on-road cycling facilities. Functional planning for some of the higher priority cycling routes will also be completed to determine a recommended design treatment, so that new infrastructure can be incorporated into upcoming capital projects.

As noted in Report IPSTR18-015 “Status of Transportation Plan Recommendations”, approved by Council at their meeting of July 12, 2018, past investment in infrastructure to support walking and cycling has resulted in a significant increase in the share of trips being made by these modes of travel; to the point where the 2031 targets established in the 2012 Transportation Plan were exceeded by 2016.

As part of this study, new targets will be established for the share of future trips that could be made by walking and cycling, based on the planned growth patterns established in the Official Plan, the recommended route system, and the investment levels identified to build the system.

The Cycling Network Update is anticipated to start in mid 2019 and is expected to be completed and presented to Council in late 2020. The investment decisions made at this stage will establish the framework for the role active transportation can play in addressing and supporting longer term growth.

3) Signal System Update

Work on the update for the City’s Traffic Signal System started in 2018 and will continue into 2019. This project will implement a new computerized system to optimize the co-ordination of our traffic signals and to test and evaluate the benefits of investing in the infrastructure needed to move towards “traffic adaptive” signals, which can automatically respond in real time to changes in traffic flow. New signal controllers and advanced vehicle detection systems need to be installed at each intersection so that the system can monitor traffic flows and adjust signal timing in real time to improve traffic flow.

Costs for this type of signal system can range from \$40,000 to \$60,000 per intersection, so the initial implementation will focus on a test corridor to evaluate and monitor the performance of the “adaptive” system prior to implementing the new infrastructure across the City. This monitoring program will also quantify the degree of capacity improvement that can reasonably be achieved by this type of system, to determine if new roads or road widening can be deferred or eliminated by improving traffic flow.

4) Jackson Park Management Plan

A Management Plan for Jackson Park is planned to guide future land use and infrastructure planning in the area bounded by Parkhill Road, Ackison Road, Lily Lake Road and Fairbairn Street. This study will clearly establish the extent of the Park and define any sensitive areas or features within the Park, so that appropriate protection measures and policies can be incorporated into future infrastructure planning work. This study would also identify if, where, and how any future transportation infrastructure should be planned within or adjacent to this broad study area.

It should be noted, that this review would not only influence any updates to the currently identified Parkway route, but the policy framework may also apply to any proposed upgrades to existing roads such as Fairbairn Street, and the “West By-Pass” alternative that was assessed as part of the original Parkway Class EA Study. It is anticipated that the Management Plan will begin late in 2019 with completion of this study by the end of 2020.

5) Traffic Operations Review

In 2019 the City will be starting a City-wide Traffic Operations review that will focus on improvements staff can make in the next few years to improve traffic flow and safety. The Traffic Operations review will assess a number of intersections with operational or safety concerns and identify improvements such as turning lanes, signal timing changes, new pedestrian infrastructure, or new lane arrangements that can maximize efficiency or reduce the potential for collisions. The study will also examine a few key arterial road corridors in the City and identify design changes that would maximize efficiency, such as turn lanes, improved signal coordination during different time periods, turning restrictions etc. Recommendations of this study could include construction of improvements such as local widening, turning lanes, etc. The outcome of the Traffic Operations review will be a series of implementable projects (assuming further approvals are not required) that could help to alleviate congestion or improve safety in the near term.

Another aspect of this review will be the development and refinement of a Traffic Calming Policy and neighbourhood engagement process that can be used to begin addressing some of the concerns in neighbourhoods currently experiencing cut-through traffic. Past experience has shown that achieving neighbourhood consensus on the most appropriate Traffic Calming measures to implement is often the biggest impediment to implementation. As part of this component of the study, the recommended policy, process and traffic calming tools developed as part of the review will be applied in a series of neighbourhoods across the City, so that staff can assess before recommending to Council elements of a Traffic Calming Policy for the City.