

Frequently Asked Questions

Cambridge West Community Transportation Impact Study January 2018 (Updated)

View a list of frequently asked questions by Cambridge residents about the Cambridge West Community Transportation Impact Study

Q1. What is the current status of the Cambridge West Community Transportation Impact Study, Environmental Assessment and Secondary Plan?

A. The Cambridge West Community Transportation Impact Study was completed by Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited in March 2017 and submitted to the City of Cambridge and Region of Waterloo for review. That review is ongoing.

Approval of the planned roadway system involves an ongoing Environmental Assessment and related Secondary Plan and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications required for the development. The developers have appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board to decide on the Official Plan and zoning amendment, and the subdivision applications. The timing on when the Board will make a decision is not currently known, but the Board's decision will be final.

To date, services including sewer, water and stormwater management systems for the planned community have been approved.

Q2. What is the current status of the peer review of the Cambridge West Community Transportation Impact Study?

A. As a result of public input at the January 26, 2017 public information meeting on the Cambridge West community, the City has arranged a peer review of the Transportation Impact Study. The review is being conducted by IBI Group.

Phase 1 of the review has been completed focusing on:

- How the study was prepared
- The traffic forecasting approach

- Growth assumptions
- Future development scenarios

Most peer review comments for Phase 1 involve requests for further clarification and/or modification to determine if there is need for different roadway improvements. Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited has completed a response to these questions. Phase 2 of the peer review is dependent on a response to further specific questions raised by the peer reviewer. In addition, IBI Group has prepared responses to the 40 questions that the Neighbourhood Protection Association (WHNPA) submitted.

Phase 2 of the peer review is now complete. Results were explained at the January 10, 2018 public meeting and are available on the City's web site at:

<https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/Cambridge-West-Community.aspx>

Q3. How was future traffic from the planned development predicted?

- A. Traffic predictions were based on the proposed number of housing units and the amount of non-residential land (i.e. commercial, school, employment, etc.) and their anticipated trips.

The number of trips generated by the development was calculated using an industry-standard formula developed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The rates used in the Cambridge West study are industry standard rates, minus ten percent to reflect City and Region efforts in encouraging alternative ways of traveling. This includes provision of transit service, active transportation (cycling, walking), ride-sharing and telecommuting with the potential to reduce trips by single occupant vehicles.

Predictions were estimated based on existing trip distribution patterns in west Cambridge taken from the 2011 Transportation Tomorrow Survey. This survey is conducted by the Province every five years to collect travel information throughout southern Ontario. New data is now available from the 2016 survey, but not much change in west Cambridge travel patterns is anticipated since the previous survey in 2011, so an update of the trip generation is not required. However, the Transportation Impact Study peer review has recommended that the report be updated when the 2016 data is available to confirm this.

Q4. What road classification is applied to Blenheim Road, compared to some other roads?

- A. Blenheim Road in the City is classified in the Cambridge Official Plan as a Collector Road. It is planned as a Major Collector like other Major Collectors in the City such as Saginaw Parkway, Blair Road or Elgin Street. Minor Collectors typically do not connect with Regional Arterial Roads as these streets do.

A Major Collector collects traffic from Local and Minor Collector streets for distribution to the Regional Arterial Roads. In transportation planning, a Major Collector Road is assigned a capacity of 600-800 vehicle/lane/hour, with the high of this range currently

used to reflect the City, Region and Province's infrastructure optimization policies.

West of the City boundary, the Regional Official Plan classifies Roseville Road as a Regional Road with a capacity of 750 vehicles/lane/hour according to the Regional Transportation Master Plan. Two other examples of Regional Roads entering cities are:

- Cedar Creek Road entering Cambridge is an Arterial Road (Regional Road) in the City with a capacity of 1,550 vehicles/lane/hour.
- Fischer-Hallman Road entering Kitchener as an Arterial Road (Regional Road) with a capacity of 1,250 vehicles/lane/hour.

Q5. When do traffic conditions on a road warrant consideration of mitigation measures?

A. In traffic engineering, a road section or intersection is considered to be "at capacity" when traffic volume reaches 90% of capacity. When this happens, the authority responsible for the road considers how to mitigate this condition so it doesn't reach an unsuitable "congested level". Mitigation measures can range from signal timing adjustments and intersection expansion, through to diversion of traffic to alternative routes. Other factors including collision rates and types, and pedestrian crossing volumes are also considered.

Q6. Can very poor traffic conditions on a road ever be considered acceptable?

A. Poor traffic conditions such as excessive congestion are never considered ideal, but there are conditions where they have to be accepted. For example this happens every morning on the Conestoga Expressway or Highway 401 to Toronto. In other cases, conditions cannot be mitigated due to physical or financial limitation, like the impact of adding intersection turn lanes on abutting heritage properties in a downtown.

Q7. Are the existing traffic calming features on Blenheim Road, Brant Road and Lansdowne Road effective?

A. When these traffic calming features were first installed in 2001, the City conducted an after survey of traffic speed and volumes on Blenheim Road, Brant Road and Lansdowne Road. At that time the survey indicated a reduction in traffic speed and volumes on the treated roads. However, that was 16 years ago, and today Section 2.6.4 of the Paradigm Transportation Impact Study reports that the Blenheim Road speed humps are not having the desired impact on vehicle speed owing to the speed hump location and condition. The City is continuing to monitor vehicle speeds on Blenheim Road and will be conducting a review of the existing traffic calming features. The study will start in 2018 and continue into 2019 to allow for comprehensive data collection to take place in the spring and fall of 2018.

Q8. Has traffic congestion at the river crossings in downtown Cambridge been studied?

Yes, Section 2.4.2 of the Paradigm Transportation Impact Study examined the river crossing capacity and concludes that there currently exists “significant excess capacity at the Grand River crossings.” Furthermore, Section 3.5.2 concludes that there is no need for additional crossing capacity to accommodate forecast background traffic increases. The peer review of the Transportation Impact Study generally agrees with these findings.

The peer review also asked Paradigm to revise their trip generation forecasts as a sensitivity test with 10% more trips to the east and west of the Cambridge West development. They concluded that this added traffic would have a “negligible impact on bridge crossings”. This is in part because congestion on bridges during peak periods is a common condition in most cities. To confirm the impact on the other bridges in downtown Galt, the peer review recommends that the Transportation Impact Study review the traffic impacts on these bridges in more detail.

Q9. Why should Blenheim Road at the railway tracks be realigned?

A. As noted in the Transportation Impact Study report, the current crossing of Blenheim Road at the CPR tracks does not meet two Transport Canada geometric design features which are the reasons for realignment:

1. the angle of the road approaching the tracks, and
2. stopping sight distance for the train operator and approaching drivers.

However, traffic volume growth could eventually justify crossing improvements to better meet Transport Canada Guidelines. The peer review of the Transportation Impact Study agrees with these findings and concludes that realignment of Blenheim Road should occur whether or not a grade separated crossing is warranted.

The volume of vehicular traffic crossing the tracks is expected to increase as a result of the Cambridge West development. This development will provide an opportunity to improve the crossing geometry. It can add new speed control features such as a modern roundabout at the Bismark Drive extension intersection.

Q10. Without any sidewalks, how are pedestrians supposed to walk along Blenheim Road west of Parkwood Drive?

A. A municipality usually infills missing sidewalks in response to an overall public need (for example along Blair Road a number of years ago). Where there is no such need, or the need is very localized such as at the west end of Blenheim Road, an infill sidewalk may be requested by abutting property owners. Adding a sidewalk would significantly change the character of those properties, but may be warranted in the future with growth in both vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the road.

Constructing a sidewalk on one side on Blenheim Road west of Parkwood Dr. will likely be implemented when the road is reconstructed because adding a sidewalk in this area

will be challenging to implement as a standalone project. This is due to the limitations of topography and mature trees.

Q11. Can a road be extended west from the Cambridge West development area to Whistle Bare Road?

- A. There are a number of serious problems with a Whistle Bare Road west extension. The route was considered in the Master Environmental Servicing Plan and screened out from further consideration based on these problems:
- Whistle Bare Road is a North Dumfries Township road and not under the jurisdiction of either the City of Cambridge or Region of Waterloo;
 - The alignment would run through the rare ecological reserve;
 - The land is designated Environmentally Sensitive Landscape and Core Environmental Feature in the Regional Official Plan. Extending Whistle Bare Road would bisect and negatively impact the existing natural heritage features located directly to the west of the Cambridge West Lands;
 - Whistle Bare Road is primarily a haul route for gravel trucks; and
 - The Transportation Impact Study reports that only 11% of traffic generated by the Cambridge West development onto the street network will be westbound, which would be the direction of a Whistle Bare Road extension. The vast majority of the traffic will be eastbound via Blenheim Road, Bismark Drive and Newman Drive. The Transportation Impact Study peer review agrees with these findings since the vast majority of traffic generated by the Cambridge West development will be to and from the east.

Q12. What further public consultation does the City plan for the West Cambridge project?

- A. The City of Cambridge has committed to holding another public meeting to discuss transportation and planning matters associated with the Cambridge West development. This meeting is expected to occur in January 2018. The public can also get involved in the City-wide Transportation Master Plan process by contacting either Shannon Noonan at the City (noonans@cambridge.ca) or Don Drackley at IBI Group (ddrackley@ibigroup.com). Information on the Cambridge Transportation Master Plan is available at: <http://www.cambridge.ca/movingcambridge>

Information on the January 10, 2018 public meeting is available at:

<https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/Cambridge-West-Community.aspx>

Q13 Trucks are currently prohibited on Blenheim Road unless making a bona fide delivery or pick up in the area. Will this change?

A. The City does not intend to change the truck prohibition on Blenheim Road.

Q14. What are the next steps, and when in the Cambridge West development process.

A. The developers of Cambridge West lands have submitted appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board regarding their Draft Plan of Subdivision, Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendment applications to the City of Cambridge / Region of Waterloo. This was done because a decision had not been made regarding these subdivision applications within the required time period. By making these appeals, the proposed subdivision applications will now be decided by the Board, and the next steps and timing will be determined by the Board.

A full explanation of the next steps in the Cambridge West development process was provided at the January 10, 2018 public meeting and can be accessed on the City's website at <https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/Cambridge-West-Community.aspx>

Q15. How can an intersection still function at Level of Service (LOS) F

A. First, this depends on what movements at an intersection are operating at LOS F. All movements at any intersection would seldom if ever operate at LOS F. For example, LOS E conditions at Park Hill/Ainslie are forecast to occur only for certain movements in peak hours, not the whole intersection. When a left turn movement is delayed to LOS F, turning vehicle will miss the opportunity to turn left and have to wait until the next cycle for a gap in opposing traffic to turn. This can result in a turning delay of 90-120 seconds depending on the signal timing.

Q16. Why can't the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Bismark and realigned Blenheim Road be moved from proposed location to far West connection (at top edge of development) to encourage traffic flow?

A. Moving the proposed roundabout as suggested would place it within the required buffer of a designated Core Natural Heritage Feature. This location will have indirect and most likely direct impacts on the Provincially Significant Wetlands. The further west the roundabout is located, the more likely the potential of drainage runoff to Barrie's Lake. These impacts can be avoided with the current proposed location.

In addition, the suggested relocation would create a discontinuous and circuitous road network that is not coordinated with services and results in inefficient vehicular movements (including transit), increased costs and a less efficient community design. A westerly location will have little benefit in deterring traffic movements to and from the east as this is where most traffic is destined regardless of the roundabout location. Finally, the recommended location is preferred from a site visibility perspective. For further details, please refer the public to the "Further Evaluation Report" (September, 2017).

Note: This Frequently Asked Questions document is intended to provide a short summary of a

number of complex planning policies, regulations and processes. Please refer to the provided links for additional information. This document should be considered as a working document, which may be revised to incorporate questions and feedback received at the PIC #4.