1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

2. REPORT – TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
   a) E-11-027, Weber Street (College Street to Union Street) Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study – Public Input Meeting for Preferred Design Concept
      Staff Presentation

3. DELEGATIONS

4. ADJOURN
TO: Chair Jim Wideman and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

DATE: March 8, 2011

FILE CODE: T04-20, 7101

SUBJECT: WEBER STREET (COLLEGE STREET TO UNION STREET) ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN STUDY – PUBLIC INPUT MEETING FOR PREFERRED DESIGN CONCEPT

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is being submitted for Committee’s information in advance of the Public Input Meeting for the Weber Street (College Street to Union Street) Class Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study to be held on March 8, 2011 at 7:00PM in the Regional Council Chambers, 150 Frederick Street, Kitchener, Ontario.

SUMMARY:

The Region of Waterloo is undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the reconstruction of Weber Street between College Street and Guelph Street in the City of Kitchener. In addition, a Preliminary Design Study is being done for the reconstruction of Weber Street from Guelph Street to Union Street in the City of Waterloo. The study limits are shown on the Key Plan in Appendix A. This combined study is being guided by a Project Team consisting of staff and Councillors from the Region of Waterloo and the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo.

The Preliminary Design Study for the section of Weber Street between Guelph Street and Union Street is being undertaken as a Schedule “A” project in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. Since this section of the road is four lanes wide, further widening is not being contemplated. No significant environmental impacts from the proposed reconstruction are expected. As a result, the proposed work within this portion of the study area is pre-approved under the Environmental Assessment Act.

The EA component of the study between College Street and Guelph Street is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements for Schedule “C” projects outlined in the Class EA document. Public and agency consultation has been on-going since the study was initiated in 2009 and has contributed to the findings extensively.

The objective of the study is to determine the optimal solution to resolve existing traffic congestion on Weber Street within the study limits, provide additional capacity for future growth, reduce delays to traffic and improve safety at the railway crossing north of Victoria Street. Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist facilities are also a key objective of this project.

The Project Team developed ten alternative solutions to resolve the transportation needs including intersection improvements, traffic operation improvements, road widening, transit system improvements, a grade separation at the railway crossing north of Victoria Street, access management, upgrades to adjacent roads and the construction of new roads. These solutions were compared to a “do nothing” alternative. Based on the input received from the public and a technical
evaluation of each alternative and its ability to meet the project objectives, the Project Team concluded that a combination of road widening and the construction of a road/rail grade separation would be brought forward as the Preferred Solution for further consideration.

Four alternative Design Concepts to implement the Preferred Solution were prepared by the Project Team. The Concepts included widening towards the west, widening towards the west including parallel service roads, widening towards the east including parallel service roads and a combination of the second and third Concepts including widening to the east south of Louisa Street and widening to the west north of Louisa Street. The alternative Concepts were evaluated based on technical factors including property impacts, pedestrian/cyclist access, traffic capacity and operations, safety and cost. Based on this evaluation and the public comments received to date, the Project Team identified “Design Concept B – Widening towards the West including parallel Service Roads” as the Preferred Design Concept.

Public comments received by the Project Team are generally supportive of the evaluation methodology and the Preferred Design Concept. Several specific aspects of the Preferred Concept have been modified to address public comments. Several concerns regarding property acquisition and the need for cycle lanes remain.

Design Concept B (modified) will be presented as the Project Teams Preferred Design at the Public Input Meeting (PIM) for the Weber Street Environmental Assessment Study to be held on March 8, 2011 at 7:00PM in the Regional Council Chambers. The purpose of this meeting is to solicit comments from the public and other stakeholders regarding the proposed improvements and potential impacts. Following the PIM, the Project Team will review comments received and report to Regional Planning and Works Committee with responses and identify the Recommended Design Concept for approval by Regional Council. Subject to approval by Council, the Environmental Study Report for the project will be finalized and made available for a 30 day public review period and subsequent approval by the Ministry of the Environment. Subject to the receipt of all necessary approvals, detailed design and property acquisition are planned to begin in 2011. Phased construction is expected to begin in 2015.

REPORT:

1. Project Description

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is undertaking a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the reconstruction of Weber Street between College Street and Guelph Street within the City of Kitchener. In conjunction with this, the Region is also preparing a Preliminary Design Study for the reconstruction of Weber Street between Guelph Street and Union Street in the City of Waterloo. The consulting engineering firm, Stantec Consulting Ltd., has been retained to carry out both studies in a comprehensive manner. This has allowed the Region to combine some of the required tasks in order to reduce the overall consulting fees. The study area is shown in the Key Plan included in Appendix A.

Weber Street between Victoria Street and Guelph Street is two lanes wide. North of Guelph Street and south of Victoria Street, the road widens to four lanes. The objective of the combined study is to determine the optimal solution to resolve existing traffic congestion and reduce potential collisions on Weber Street within the study limits, provide additional capacity for future growth and reduce delays to traffic and potential collisions at the railway crossing north of Victoria Street to a horizon year of 2031. Issues examined as part of the study include traffic congestion, a potential grade separation at the CN Rail railway tracks north of Victoria Street, traffic safety, access management, road widening and intersection improvement alternatives, and the impacts of various design
solutions on the natural and social environments, including property acquisition needs. The study also assesses opportunities to enhance facilities for cyclists and pedestrians within the corridor.

1.1 Problem Statement

The following problem statement has been developed, identifying the traffic and transportation needs to be addressed by this study:

The Region is currently experiencing traffic congestion on Weber Street. Transportation Studies in the Kitchener area have identified a need for north-south capacity improvements to accommodate future growth. Improvements to the Weber Street corridor, between College Street and Guelph Street are needed to reduce delays for vehicles and transit. There is also a need to assess opportunities to enhance facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and reduce traffic collisions. In addition, pending increases to rail traffic movements at the existing CN Rail tracks (north of Victoria Street) will further increase traffic delays at the existing level crossing, and produce appropriate warrants for a grade separation (underpass) at this location.

1.2 Project Team

The Class EA and Preliminary Design Study is being directed by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo through a Project Team consisting of staff from the Region and the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, plus Regional Councillors Jim Wideman and Tom Galloway and City of Kitchener Councillor Dan Glenn-Graham.

1.3 Class Environmental Assessment Process

The EA component of this project between Guelph Street and College Street is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements for Schedule “C” projects outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. Public and agency consultation has been on-going since the study was initiated in 2009 and has contributed to the findings extensively.

The Preliminary Design of Weber Street from Guelph Street to Union Street is being undertaken as a Schedule “A” project under the Class EA. Since this section of the road is four lanes wide, further widening is not being contemplated. No significant environmental impacts from the proposed reconstruction are expected. As a result, the proposed work within this portion of the study area is pre-approved under the Environmental Assessment Act.

2. Transportation Requirements

Within the Weber Street corridor, vehicular traffic is constricted to two lanes between Victoria Street and Guelph Street. The roadway between these two intersections is presently experiencing significant traffic congestion and delays. This congestion is expected to continue to increase in the future as overall traffic volumes rise. King Street roughly parallels Weber Street in the vicinity of the study area and is also a significant four lane transportation corridor between Kitchener and Waterloo. The proposed route for the Region’s Rapid Transit System includes King Street from Allen Street in Waterloo to Victoria Street in Kitchener. The Rapid Transit system will occupy two of the existing lanes on King Street, effectively reducing its vehicle carrying capacity by 50%. The congestion on Weber Street is expected to worsen in the near future when traffic is initially diverted from King Street once the Rapid Transit system becomes operational.

The need for traffic capacity improvements throughout the Weber Street corridor has previously been identified in the Regional Transportation Master Plan Update Study and the Weber Street Transportation Study completed as part of this Class EA. These studies examined future
transportation network requirements to accommodate rapidly increasing traffic growth and changing traffic patterns within and around the City of Kitchener and Region of Waterloo. Increasing the capacity of the Weber Street corridor supports the Master Plan goals of optimizing the Region’s transportation system, promoting transportation mode choice and supporting sustainable development.

The recently updated Regional Transportation Master Plan (RTMP, 2010) provides a long range transportation system improvement plan for the Region, and identifies the nature and location of new or improved facilities required to achieve the Region’s transportation and planning objectives and policies. It incorporates Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies focusing on public transit enhancements, bicycling and pedestrian programs/facilities, and TDM supportive land uses to affect a reduction in auto use through encouragement of opportunities for increased use of non-auto related modes of travel.

The Weber Street Transportation Study Report (March 2010) was completed specifically as part of this Environmental Assessment Study, and uses data contained in the RTMP, along with supplementary field counts, to focus on direct needs within the study corridor. The traffic forecasts for Weber Street have provided for the reductions associated with the TDM initiatives assumed by the RTMP. Despite the reductions, there is still a need to address capacity deficiencies on Weber Street and the section of Weber Street from Victoria Street to Guelph Street has been identified to be widened to four lanes. This report is the basis for the project Problem Statement and supporting improvement recommendations.

2.1. Road Needs

Existing traffic volumes on Weber Street within the study area are approximately 13,000 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic (AADT)). This volume is approximately the maximum vehicle carrying capacity for a two lane road. Traffic is expected to rise to approximately 20,000 AADT by the planning horizon of 2031. If Weber Street was not widened, this additional traffic would infiltrate into abutting neighbourhoods seeking ways around a gridlocked Weber Street.

At several intersections within the study area including Union Street, Louisa Street, Breithaupt Street and Victoria Street, the number of vehicular collisions that have occurred over the last 5 years is much higher than expected.

The traffic analysis justifies a need to widen Weber Street from 2 to 4 lanes within the Study Area. Benefits of widening the roadway would include:

- Reduction of traffic infiltration into adjacent neighbourhoods;
- Improvements in roadway safety and traffic operations;
- Potential for improvements to roadway geometry and,
- Potential for improvement to active transportation infrastructure.

2.2. Railway Needs

At the present time, there are 10 train “pass-bys” (4 freight and 6 passenger) per day at the dual track at-grade railway crossing just north of Victoria Street. These tracks are owned by CN Rail. The existing operators, Goderich/Exeter Railway and VIA Rail, have indicated that there is a potential to add 6 more train “pass-bys” per day by 2012 (all passenger). This will result in a total of 16 “pass-bys” per day at the existing crossing.
Go Transit has recently completed an Environmental Assessment and intends to add one additional track through Kitchener to accommodate new service to the community. Initial implementation will include 4 trains per day (8 “pass-bys”) providing service to Toronto using the existing CN Rail tracks.

As a result, train “pass-bys” are expected to rise from 10 to 24 per day within the next two years. Transport Canada uses as a general “rule of thumb” that if the product of AADT multiplied by the number of train pass-bys per day exceeds 200,000, a grade separation may be warranted. Existing train and traffic volumes on Weber Street result in a product equal to 130,000. However, by 2012 the product becomes 312,000 based on the increase in train traffic to 24 “pass-bys” assuming vehicular traffic does not increase. Therefore, the increase in train activity alone is sufficient to warrant a grade separation at this location, regardless of whether Weber Street is widened or not.

The at-grade crossing of the Waterloo Spur Line north of Louisa Street is not protected with gates or signals. This single track crosses Weber Street at an acute skew angle. There are currently 8 train “pass-bys” per week at this crossing. No future additional “pass-bys” are expected. Gates and signals are not warranted at this crossing based on future vehicular traffic volumes. However, gates and signals are being considered in order to address potential safety concerns with respect to the poor visibility related to the angle of the crossing.

2.3. Pedestrian, Cyclist and Transit Needs

The Regional Official Plan gives direction to balance the design of new and reconstructed roads to meet the needs for all modes of transportation including walking, cycling, motorized vehicles and transit. Pedestrian traffic in the Weber Street corridor is typically lighter at the north end and heavier in the south, closer to downtown. Pedestrian movements as high as 130 pedestrians per hour were measured at Weber Street and College Street. Sidewalks are present over most of the length of the Study Area. In many locations, the sidewalks abut the roadside curbs. This is not a preferred location for sidewalks as the close proximity to the travelled roadway does not create a pedestrian-friendly environment. The lack of a boulevard between the curb and sidewalk leaves no place for snow storage during the winter or household garbage for roadside pickup without encroaching onto the sidewalk.

The corridor is not heavily used by cyclists. An improved corridor, in conjunction with the encouragement of using alternative transportation forms, may result in increased cyclist activity on Weber Street. The current Cycling Master Plan (CMP) identifies the Waterloo Spur Line corridor located north of Louisa Street as a core off-road trail that links Downtown Kitchener and Uptown Waterloo. A study has recently been initiated to determine the feasibility of constructing a multi-use trail within the Spur Line Corridor. Weber Street within the study area is not identified as a cycling route in the CMP.

Weber Street is serviced by bus Route 18 which provides 30 minute service in each direction within the study area. The existing congestion present on Weber Street impacts the ability of this bus to remain on schedule at certain times during the day.

3. Alternative Solutions to address the Transportation Requirements

3.1. Alternative Solutions

For the EA component of the study area between College Street and Guelph Street, the Project Team developed ten Alternative Solutions for consideration to address the Problem Statement. The following solutions were considered as “stand alone” alternatives and also in various combinations.
• **DO NOTHING**

As part of any Class EA process, consideration must be given to the “Do Nothing” alternative as a comparator to assess what would happen if no action was taken to address the problem statement. This assessment provided a baseline against which the other alternative solutions can be measured. **Carried forward as a baseline for comparison.**

• **TRAFFIC OPERATION IMPROVEMENTS**

By changing existing traffic signal timing and sequencing, the traffic capacity of the existing road could potentially be increased. This alternative was not brought forward as a stand-alone option for further consideration since the Weber Street corridor lacks through traffic capacity. **Not considered further.**

• **INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**

The addition of auxiliary lanes to reduce turning movement problems at intersections could reduce the delay times for through traffic and improve traffic flow along Weber Street. This alternative was not brought forward as a stand-alone option for further consideration since the Weber Street corridor lacks through traffic capacity. **Considered only in conjunction with other solutions.**

• **WIDEN WEBER STREET**

Widening Weber Street by adding more traffic lanes within the study area would provide increased through traffic capacity, thereby addressing existing and future traffic congestion issues. Two widening scenarios were considered;

1. **Two Through Lanes with a Two-Way Centre Turning Lane and an at-grade rail crossing.** This alternative was considered but not brought forward for further consideration since the Weber Street corridor lacks through traffic capacity. There is no demonstrated high incidence of collisions that could be mitigated with implementation of a two-way centre turning lane. **Not considered further.**

2. **Widen Weber Street to 4 lanes with an at-grade rail crossing.** This alternative would increase overall capacity of the transportation corridor and improve operations of the corridor but would require more property than other alternatives. Considered as a stand-alone solution, this was not carried forward since it does not address the complete problem statement and because the analysis of projected road and rail traffic concluded that a grade separation is warranted. **Carried forward only in combination with a grade separation.**

• **GRADE SEPARATION OF CN RAILWAY TRACKS**

A road-under-rail grade separation at the existing at-grade dual track crossing north of Victoria Street would relieve congestion at specific times during the day and eliminate the potential for vehicle/train collisions. As a stand-alone solution, this does not address the need to increase the capacity of Weber Street. **Carried forward only in combination with the widening of Weber Street.**
• **ROUNDABOUTS**

Roundabouts were considered at the Victoria Street, Water Street, Wellington Street and Guelph Street intersections. Due to the significant requirement to acquire property they were not carried forward. **Not considered further.**

• **ACCESS MANAGEMENT**

Due to the congestion present on Weber Street, vehicular access to abutting properties is extremely difficult at certain times of the day and, in part, contributes to additional congestion. Consideration was given to consolidating or restricting accesses, or constructing a raised centre median to prohibit access to some properties. This option was not carried forward since restricting access could negatively impact the use and value of a property while not appreciably increasing the capacity of the road. **Not considered further.**

• **IMPROVING TRANSIT SERVICE**

Measures to improve the level of transit service within the corridor were considered. These could potentially reduce reliance on vehicle travel and traffic on Weber Street if the widening of the road is implemented. **Considered only in conjunction with other solutions.**

• **UPGRADE OTHER ROUTES**

By improving other existing north-south roadways that perform a similar arterial function, traffic could be potentially diverted away from Weber Street, thereby freeing up corridor capacity on Weber Street. The only Regional Road within a reasonable distance of Weber Street that could provide this function would be King Street. However, the vehicular capacity of this road is planned to be reduced with the implementation of Rapid Transit. **Not considered further.**

• **BUILD OTHER ROUTES**

The planning, design and construction of new north-south road corridors may reduce the demands on existing roads by diverting existing and future traffic away from congested routes. However, in a built up urban environment, this option is not practical and was dismissed as an option. **Not considered further.**

3.2 **Public Consultation Centre #1**

The first Public Consultation Centre (PCC) for this project was held on April 15, 2010. Notices for this meeting were mailed out and/or delivered to property and business owners within the project limits as well as appropriate regulatory agencies and stakeholders. Notices were also placed in the local newspaper and on road-side signs.

At this Centre, background information including the need and justification for the project was presented. Current and future traffic volumes and patterns were available for review. The alternative solutions being considered and the proposed evaluation methodology were also available for review. The potential need to acquire property was identified and the Region’s Property Acquisition Process (Appendix B) was explained. A listing of properties potentially impacted by each of the alternative solutions was presented for the information of property and business owners.
A total of 62 people signed the attendance register for the PCC. In general, the response to the proposed Weber Street widening and the Grade Separation at the CN tracks, based on written comments and oral feedback, was favourable. For the most part, the public recognized the shortcomings of this 2 lane section of Weber Street, as well as the need to eliminate the conflicts associated with the at-grade railway crossing.

Following the PCC, 11 written comments were submitted to the Region’s Project Manager for consideration by the Project Team. Two of the written comments expressed no concerns about the project. Two comments were also made regarding the need for gates and signals at the Waterloo Spur Line crossing, the availability of access to property after construction and the need for an underpass at the CN Rail crossing. Single comments regarding property value impact, Weber Street becoming “one-way” and the purchase of remnant parcels were received. The Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee also submitted a written list of comments. Staff contacted most of the respondents to discuss their concerns. A summary of the comments and Study Team responses are included in Appendix C.

3.3 Preferred Solution

The alternative solutions for the section of Weber Street between Guelph Street and College Street were assessed to determine which solutions, either on their own, or in combination with other solutions best addressed the problem statement. After the evaluation process and consideration of the public comments received, the Project Team selected **Widen Weber Street – widen to 4 lanes** combined with **Grade separation of CN railway tracks** as the preferred solution.

4. Alternative Design Concepts to Implement Preferred Solution

4.1. Alternative Design Concepts

Four design concepts for the widening of Weber Street between Guelph Street and College Street were prepared by the Project Team. These included;

- **Concept A** included widening to four lanes towards the west side of Weber Street.

- **Concept B** included widening to four lanes towards the west side of Weber Street. This concept also included one way service roads parallel to Weber Street between Breithaupt Street and Wellington Street.

- **Concept C** included widening to four lanes towards the east side of Weber Street. This concept also included one way service roads parallel to Weber Street between Breithaupt Street and Wellington Street.

- **Concept C/B,A** included a combination of various aspects of each of the other concepts. Widening would be towards the east south of Louisa Street and towards the west north of Louisa Street with one way service roads parallel to Weber Street.

An alternative concept incorporating widening on both sides of the existing right-of-way was not considered. Given the amount of widening required to accommodate all of the required roadway elements, such a concept would double the number of properties that would need to be acquired by the Region.

In order to address the study problem statement and opinions expressed by the public, each of the alternative Design Concepts brought forward included a road-under-rail grade separation at the CN tracks sufficient to accommodate three tracks. Each concept also included improved sidewalk
facilities (wider sidewalk and wider boulevard) on the east side of the road and portions of the west side as well as a multi-purpose trail on the remaining portions of the west side of the road between the Waterloo Spur Line crossing and Water Street to provide cyclist access to the proposed Waterloo Spur Line multi-purpose trail.

4.2. Evaluation of Alternative Design Concepts

The selection of a Preferred Design Concept was based on a review of both quantitative and qualitative factors. Staff met one-on-one with major business owners to discuss the Alternative Design Concepts and the potential impacts on access and the continued viability of their operations. These discussions, along with the development of construction and property acquisition cost estimates were all key inputs into the decision making process.

Key criteria in the evaluation of the Design Concepts included impact on traffic capacity, operations and safety, the natural and social environment and cost. Each Concept was compared to the others and a relative score given under each criterion. The scores were based on whether each Concept had a positive, negative or neutral impact compared to the others. The scores were then added to create a ranking. The evaluation of the Design Concepts is shown in Appendix D.

Traffic Capacity, Operations and Safety – Each of the Concepts will address the need for additional traffic capacity in the short and long terms since each includes widening the road to four lanes. Concepts B, C and C/B,A will provide improved operational effectiveness over Concept A due to the availability of service roads to provide access to those properties impacted by the construction of the proposed grade separation. Without the service roads, alternate access locations would be required or additional property’s purchased.

Widening of the road to the west north of Louisa Street and to the east south of Louisa Street will allow the alignment of the road in the vicinity of the Waterloo Spur Line crossing to be straightened somewhat thereby improving sight distances. Therefore Concept C/B,A would be preferred.

Natural Environment – Each of the Concepts will require the removal of most of the existing trees within the roadway corridor. More properties with a potential of contaminated soils are located east of the roadway. Therefore widening to the west, as envisioned with Concepts A and B, is preferred.

Social Environment – The only Designated Heritage Structure within the study limits is the Kitchener VIA Station. None of the Concepts would adversely impact this building. Concept B would require the full or partial acquisition of 43 residential and commercial properties. The other Concepts require as many as 54 property acquisitions. The proposed road/rail grade separation north of Victoria Street will significantly impact the commercial properties on one side of the road or the other due to the distance the road must be lowered to provide adequate vertical clearance to the railway bridge. Based on the number of properties impacted, Concept B was preferred.

Costs – The total estimated project cost, including property acquisition and the grade separation, for each Concept is:
- Concept A - $52,520,000
- Concept B - $51,500,000
- Concept C - $59,300,000
- Concept C/B,A - $56,560,000
5. Selection of Preferred Design Concept

Following an assessment of the Concepts, including the “Do Nothing” alternative, the Project Team identified Design Concept B as the Preferred Design Concept. Concept B has the least impact on property acquisition and the lowest estimated project cost while having fewer negative relative impacts compared to the other Concepts.

5.1. Preferred Design Concept

Design Concept B would include the following elements;

- Weber Street to be widened to 4 lanes, between College Street and Guelph Street. A typical cross-section of the proposed improvements is shown in Appendix E.

- A road-under-rail grade separation is proposed at the existing CN tracks, north of Victoria Street. An artist’s conceptual drawing of the grade separation is shown in Appendix F.

- All right-of-way widening to accommodate the widened road will be on the west side of the existing Weber Street alignment. Between Water Street and the CN tracks, some localized widening will also be required on the east side of the existing right-of-way.

- The intersection at Breithaupt Street will be eliminated since the elevation of Weber Street will be substantially lowered at this location to accommodate the grade separation at the CN Rail tracks. Service roads parallel to Weber Street connected to Breithaupt Street will be constructed to provide access to those properties impacted by the construction of the grade separation. A stairway and ramp will be provided from Breithaupt Street to the proposed sidewalk on Weber Street to provide access for pedestrians at this location.

- Sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, over the entire length of the study area, constructed to Regional width standards. Increased boulevard width which will provide more separation between the travelled roadway and pedestrians.

- A multi-purpose pathway within the western boulevard of Weber Street from Water Street to the Waterloo Spur Line. This trail will connect to the proposed multi-use trail within the Waterloo Spur Line corridor.

5.2. Public Consultation Centre #2

The second Public Consultation Centre for this project was held on November 30, 2010. Notices for this meeting were mailed out and/or delivered to property and business owners within the project limits as well as appropriate regulatory agencies and stakeholders. Notices were also placed in the local newspaper and on road-side signs.

At this PCC, drawings and details of the alternative Design Concepts, results of the preliminary evaluation and the Project Team’s Preferred Design Concept were presented for public and stakeholder review and comment. A total of 47 people signed the attendance register. In general, the overall response by the public to the “Preferred Design Concept” for widening Weber Street was favourable. Opinions expressed at the Centre included questions about the project schedule, property disruptions and the process for property acquisitions and compensation. Several attendees expressed that the project is long overdue, particularly with respect to the grade separation at the railway tracks.
Following the Centre, 9 written comments were submitted to the Region’s Project Manager for consideration by the Project Team. Four of the written comments expressed no concerns about the project. Two comments were made supporting efforts to straighten the road as much as possible. Single comments regarding property value impact, the purchase of remnant parcels and the need for wider sidewalks were received. A summary of the comments and Study Team responses are included in Appendix C.

Design Concept B has been modified by the Project Team to incorporate the following detailed components to address specific issues raised by property and business owners and other stakeholders at, and following, PCC #2;

- The type of bridge (steel or concrete) to be incorporated into the grade separation has not been confirmed. However, the Project Team has recommended that the design of the bridge incorporate architectural and aesthetic enhancements due to its location in the downtown core. During the detailed design process, alternatives for architectural and aesthetic enhancements for the bridge will be presented for input from the public.

- Additional boulevard width on the west side of Weber Street between the Waterloo Spur Line north to Blucher Street was created to allow the proposed multi-use trail on the west side of Weber Street to be extended farther north. This will improve access to cyclists wishing to travel on Weber Street north of the Spur Line.

- Landscaping, including the planting of 107 large calibre trees, to re-establish the character of the neighbourhood and create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Remnant parcels of land have been identified for potential enhanced landscaping. Implementation of some of these features will require the concurrence and funding of the City of Kitchener in accordance with Regional policy.

Based on the comments received from the second PCC, the Project Team has confirmed its assessment that **Design Concept B, as modified** is the Preferred Design Concept.

6. **Main Concerns Raised by the Public and Other Stakeholders.**

6.1. **Property Acquisition**

**Concern** - Several property and business owners within the study area have expressed concern over the need to acquire their property or the potential for loss of business. Questions have been asked about how a fair value for their property will be determined or how they will be compensated for recent improvements made to their property. Some other property owners have expressed a concern that their property has not been identified for acquisition.

**Project Team Response** - The existing Weber Street right-of-way within the study area varies in width between 12.0 metres and 21.0 metres. In order to accommodate a four lane roadway complete with curbs, sidewalks and space for streetlights and signage, a minimum right-of-way width of 21.0 metres would be required. The standard right-of-way width envisioned in the Regional Transportation Design Corridor Guidelines for roads such as Weber Street is 30.0 metres. This width would allow for the installation of turning lanes, landscaping, cycle lanes or off-road trails, utilities and transit facilities.

The proposed right-of-way width of the Preferred Design Concept for Weber Street within the study area varies between 21.0 metres and 50.0 metres but in all cases is the minimum required to accommodate all components included in the Preferred Design Concept while minimizing the number of properties to be acquired. The largest amount of widening is required to accommodate the railway grade separation and the abutting service roads.
Once a final design concept is recommended and approved by Regional Council and the Environmental Study Report (ESR) is approved by the Ministry of the Environment, the process of property acquisition will be initiated by Regional staff. Affected property owners will be contacted by Region Real Estate staff to discuss the necessary property acquisitions and related issues. It is the Region’s standard practice to negotiate agreements of purchase and sale with the affected property owners, based on an independent appraisal of the land’s fair market value. If agreements cannot be reached in time to meet the project schedule, the Region can acquire the needed lands through expropriation. The acquisition process is explained in further detail in Appendix B.

6.2. Consideration of Pedestrian and Cyclist Needs

Concern – The Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee provided comments to the Project Team following the first PCC in April 2010. Subsequent to this, several of the Project Team members met with the Steering Committee to discuss their comments. The Committee’s comments are summarized below;

a) Roadworks should be designed based on the principles of “Complete Streets”
b) Connectivity to sidewalks and trails outside the study area should be considered
c) Sidewalks and trails should be accessible to people with disabilities
d) Provide a stairway connection from the closed section of Breithaupt Street to the proposed multi-use trail/sidewalk on Weber Street
e) Provide on-road cycling lanes on Weber Street
f) Provide mid-block pedestrian crossings
g) Incorporate wider sidewalks and boulevards and landscaping into the final design

The Regional Cycling Advisory Committee has also advised that they would support the provision of cycling lanes on both sides of Weber Street.

Project Team Response - The Preferred Design Concept includes a number of components designed to enhance the streetscape for pedestrians and cyclists. With specific regard to the comments made by the Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee, the following responses are provided by the Project Team;

a) The detailed design for this project will be undertaken in accordance with the Regional Transportation Corridor Design Guidelines which are based on the principles of “Complete Streets”.

b) The proposed multi-use trail on the west side of the widened Weber Street will connect to the proposed Waterloo Spur Line Trail and provide a much needed linkage for pedestrians and cyclists between the downtown cores of Kitchener and Waterloo.

c) The Region’s Design Standards for sidewalks and trails are accessible to disabled persons.

d) A stairway connection from Breithaupt Street to the proposed multi-use trail on the west side of Weber Street has been included in the Preferred Design Concept.
e) The Project Team is of the opinion that the proposed multi-use trail on the west side of Weber Street will provide adequate access for cyclists. Cycle lanes are not present on Weber Street north or south of the study area. The current Cycling Master Plan does not recommend on-road cycling facilities on Weber Street. However the Project Team is in agreement that an off-road cycling connection between College Street and the proposed Waterloo Spur Line Trail should be made available. The additional construction cost to widen the proposed road to incorporate on-road cycle lanes is estimated to be approximately $500,000. This additional widening would also necessitate the full acquisition of ten additional residential properties. The Project Team considered that this additional cost and need for property could not be justified and recommends that on-road cycle lanes not be constructed within the study limits.

f) Mid-block crossings are usually provided in locations where a combination of high pedestrian volumes, large distances between intersections and significant pedestrian destinations located between intersections creates an unsafe situation for pedestrians crossing the road. This combination of conditions does not exist within the study area.

g) The Preferred Design Concept includes wider grassed boulevards between the edge of the road and sidewalk/multi-use trail to increase the comfort of pedestrians and cyclists. This Concept also includes the planting of large caliber boulevard trees to improve the appearance of the corridor, provide shade for pedestrians and help to lower the speed of vehicular traffic.

7. Estimated Project Cost

The capital cost for the Preferred Design Concept is estimated to be approximately $51,000,000. Some of this cost will be recovered from contributions from benefiting railway companies towards the cost of the proposed grade separation. At this stage, staff have initiated only very preliminary conversations regarding cost-sharing with the railway companies. Until Council approves the Recommended Design Concept for this project, staff believe it would be premature to engage the railway companies in further cost-sharing discussions for this project. Once Council has approved a Recommended Design Concept, staff will work diligently with the rail companies to ensure cost-sharing arrangements are finalized well before the scheduled 2015 construction start date for this project. The Region’s share of the project estimate and the Ten Year Transportation Capital Program will be updated once these agreements are finalized.

8. Next Steps

All comments made by the public and stakeholders during the Public Input Meeting on March 8, 2011 will be reviewed and addressed by the Project Team after which a Recommended Design Concept will be presented by the Team to Regional Council for approval in Spring 2011.

Subject to receipt of Council’s approval, the Environmental Study Report will be finalized and “filed” on the public record for a 30 day review period. This filing will be advertised by mail-outs and notices in newspapers. If a member of the public or any other stakeholder feels that the study did not fully address all the issues, they can request that the Minister of Environment order the Project to a more detailed environmental assessment. The Minister of Environment must receive such requests in writing, with a copy sent to the Region’s Commissioner of Transportation and Environmental Services. The Minister will determine if a more detailed environmental assessment is required and the Minister’s decision will be final.
If there are no significant unresolved objections following the 30 day review period, the project will proceed to detailed design and construction. It is anticipated construction of the improvements will be phased over 2-3 years beginning in 2015.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The proposed improvements to Weber Street support Focus Area #5 (Infrastructure) by providing infrastructure needed to accommodate planned growth.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The estimated cost of the improvements proposed in the Preferred Design Concept is approximately $51,000,000. The Draft 2011 Ten Year Transportation Capital Program includes funding in the amount of $45,300,000 for this project with expenditures between 2011 and 2017 funded from the Region Development Charges and Roads Capital Levy Reserve Funds. This estimated cost does not yet account for the value of remnant parcels of land (to be acquired for this project but eventually to be sold for possible re-development after construction) nor does the estimated cost account for any expected contributions towards the cost of the road/rail overpass by the benefiting railway companies. The estimate and budget will be further refined during the detailed design phase of this project.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Nil

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Project Key Plan
Appendix B – Property Acquisition Process Information Sheet
Appendix C – Public Comments from Public Consultation Centre’s and Project Team Responses
Appendix D – Evaluation of Design Concepts
Appendix E – Proposed Typical Road Cross-Section
Appendix F – Artist Concept of Proposed Grade Separation

PREPARED BY: Peter Linn, Senior Project Manager, Design and Construction

APPROVED BY: Thomas Schmidt, Commissioner of Transportation and Environmental Services
APPENDIX A
PROJECT KEY PLAN

REGION ROAD No. 8
WEBER STREET
COLLEGE STREET TO GUELPH STREET AND GUELPH STREET TO UNION STREET EAST

Figure 1: Key Plan of Study Area
Region of Waterloo
Weber Street Improvements
Class Environmental Assessment
APPENDIX B-1

Property Acquisition Process Information Sheet
(Projects requiring Class Environmental Assessment Approval)

The following information is provided as a general overview of the property acquisition process and is not legal advice. Further, the steps, timing and processes can vary depending on the individual circumstances of each case.

Once the Class Environmental Assessment is complete and the Environmental Study Report outlining the Recommended Design Concept has been approved, the property acquisition process and the efforts of Regional Real Estate staff will focus on acquiring the required lands to implement the approved design. Regional staff cannot make fundamental amendments or changes to the approved design concept.

Property Impact Plans
After the project has been approved and as it approaches final design, the project planners will generate drawings and sketches indicating what lands and interests need to be acquired from each affected property to undertake the project. These drawings are referred to as Property Impact Plans (PIP).

Initial Owner Contact by Regional Real Estate Staff
Once the PIPs are available, Regional Real Estate staff will contact the affected property owners by telephone and mail to introduce themselves and set-up initial meetings to discuss the project and proposed acquisitions.

Initial Meetings
The initial meeting is attended by the project engineer and the assigned real estate staff person to brief the owner on the project, what part of their lands are to be acquired or will be affected, what work will be undertaken, when, with what equipment, etc and to answer any questions. The primary purpose of the meeting is to listen to the owner and identify issues, concerns, effects of the proposed acquisition on remaining lands and businesses that can be feasibly mitigated and/or compensated, and how the remaining property may be restored. These discussions may require additional meetings. The goal of staff is to work with the owner to reach mutually agreeable solutions.

Goal – Fair and Equitable Settlement for All Parties
The goal is always to reach a fair and equitable agreement for both the property owner and the Region. Such an agreement will provide compensation for the fair market value of the lands and address the project impacts (such as repairing or replacing landscaping, fencing, paving) so that the property owner will receive the value of the lands acquired and the restoration of their remaining property to the condition it was prior to the Project.

The initial meetings will form the basis of an initial offer of settlement or agreement of purchase and sale for the required lands or interests.

Steps Toward Offer of Settlement or Agreement of Purchase and Sale
The general steps towards such an offer are as follows;

1) the Region will obtain an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the lands and interests to be acquired, and an appraisal of any effect on the value of the rest of the property resulting from the acquisition of the required lands and interests;

2) compensation will be estimated and/or works to minimize other effects will be defined and agreed to by the property owner and the Region;
3) reasonable costs of the owner will be included in any compensation settlement; 
4) an offer with a purchase price and any other compensation or works in lieu of compensation will be submitted to the property owner for consideration; and 
5) an Agreement will be finalized with any additional discussion, valuations, etc as may be required.

Depending on the amount of compensation, most agreements will require the approval of Council. The approval is undertaken in Closed Session which is not open to the public to ensure a level of confidentiality.

**Expropriation**

Due to the time constraints of these projects, it is the practice of the Region to commence the expropriation process in parallel with the negotiation process to insure that lands and interests are acquired in time for commencement of the Project. Typically, over 90% of all required lands and interests are acquired through the negotiation process. Even after lands and interests have been acquired through expropriation an agreement on compensation can be reached through negotiation, this is usually referred to as a ‘settlement agreement’.

Put simply, an expropriation is the transfer of lands or an easement to a governmental authority for reasonable compensation, including payment of fair market value for the transferred lands, without the consent of the property owner being required. In the case of expropriations by municipalities such as the Region of Waterloo, the process set out in the Ontario *Expropriations Act* must be followed to ensure that the rights of the property owners provided under that Act are protected.
## Public Comments from Public Consultation Centre’s and Project Team Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th># of times comment made</th>
<th>Project Team Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No concerns, proceed with project as shown in Preferred Design Concept</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No response required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the Region provide compensation for loss in property value for properties not purchased.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Region will only purchase those properties which are physically required to accommodate the proposed widening of the road. The proposed road improvements will include streetscaping and pedestrian and cyclist facilities meant to enhance the travelling environment for all modes of transportation. All reasonable efforts are made to minimize adverse impacts on remaining properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber Street should be straightened north of Louisa Street</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Preferred Design Concept incorporates a straightening of the road at this location sufficient to meet Regional geometric standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will vehicular access be available to my property after construction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access to all properties not acquired by the Region will be maintained after construction. In some cases, the location or configuration of some accesses may have to be changed. However, this will be done at the Region’s expense to a proper standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install gates and warning signals at the Waterloo Spur Line crossing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The installation of gates and warning signals is not warranted at this location based on standard railway crossing criteria. Straightening of Weber Street at this location will improve sight distance and the skew angle of the crossing. This will be investigated further during detailed design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An underpass is required at the railway crossing north of Victoria Street</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>This is included in the Preferred Design Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in Purchasing remnant parcels of land after the road is widened</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Any remnant parcels will be disposed of in accordance with Regional policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**APPENDIX C-2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weber Street should be made one-way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vehicular traffic on Weber Street is expected to increase by more than 60% over the next 20 years. If Weber Street was made a one-way road, approximately half of the traffic volume would have to be accommodated on surrounding roads necessitating widening on other roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider sidewalks and boulevards, including trees should be included</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Preferred Design Concept includes wide sidewalks and boulevards. Large calibre trees will be planted to enhance the walkability of the street environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D-1

#### Evaluation of Design Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Do Nothing</th>
<th>Design Concept A</th>
<th>Design Concept B</th>
<th>Design Concept C</th>
<th>Design Concept C/BA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Capacity, Operations and Safety</td>
<td>Accommodation of the forecasted traffic volumes</td>
<td>Road capacity not sufficient. Significant traffic delays and infiltration onto abutting roads</td>
<td>Widening to four lanes will increase capacity to accommodate traffic growth</td>
<td>Widening to four lanes will increase capacity to accommodate traffic growth</td>
<td>Widening to four lanes will increase capacity to accommodate traffic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation network requirements</td>
<td>Traffic diverted by implementation of Rapid Transit on King Street will add to congestion</td>
<td>Widening will provide capacity for traffic diverted by implementation of Rapid Transit on King Street</td>
<td>Widening will provide capacity for traffic diverted by implementation of Rapid Transit on King Street</td>
<td>Widening will provide capacity for traffic diverted by implementation of Rapid Transit on King Street</td>
<td>Widening will provide capacity for traffic diverted by implementation of Rapid Transit on King Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution of known safety issues</th>
<th>Increased rail and vehicular traffic will significantly degrade safety at existing level crossing. Existing concerns regarding the alignment of the Victoria Street intersection and Waterloo Spur Line crossing remain.</th>
<th>The proposed grade separation at the CN Rail crossing will greatly improve vehicular safety. The improved alignment of the Victoria Street intersection will improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.</th>
<th>The proposed grade separation at the CN Rail crossing will greatly improve vehicular safety. The improved alignment of the Victoria Street intersection will improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.</th>
<th>The proposed grade separation at the CN Rail crossing will greatly improve vehicular safety. The improved alignment of the Victoria Street intersection will improve vehicular and pedestrian safety. This concept will marginally improve the existing curve in the roadway alignment north of Louisa Street.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>score</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact on property access</strong></td>
<td>Increased congestion will make access to abutting properties extremely difficult</td>
<td>Several properties would be acquired due to loss of access in the vicinity of the proposed grade separation</td>
<td>Service roads will provide access to properties that would otherwise be land-locked</td>
<td>Service roads will provide access to properties that would otherwise be land-locked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>score</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>

DOCS 923663
**APPENDIX D-3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on future transit needs</th>
<th>Increased congestion will delay transit service</th>
<th>Less traffic congestion will improve transit service</th>
<th>Less traffic congestion will improve transit service</th>
<th>Less traffic congestion will improve transit service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation of pedestrian needs</td>
<td>Narrow curb-face sidewalk does not create pedestrian friendly environment</td>
<td>Wider sidewalk and boulevard will improve walkability of corridor</td>
<td>Wider sidewalk and boulevard will improve walkability of corridor</td>
<td>Wider sidewalk and boulevard will improve walkability of corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation of cyclist needs</td>
<td>No existing facilities</td>
<td>Multi-use pathway will connect to proposed Waterloo Spur Line trail</td>
<td>Multi-use pathway will connect to proposed Waterloo Spur Line trail</td>
<td>Multi-use pathway will connect to proposed Waterloo Spur Line trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Environment</td>
<td>Approximately 30% of trees proposed to be replaced are in poor condition would remain</td>
<td>68 trees to be removed. More than 100 to be planted</td>
<td>72 trees to be removed. More than 100 to be planted</td>
<td>76 trees to be removed. More than 100 to be planted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>O</td>
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## APPENDIX D-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disturbance to any areas with potentially contaminated soils</th>
<th>Vicinity of Krug Furniture may cause soil disturbance</th>
<th>Vicinity of Krug Furniture may cause soil disturbance</th>
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<td><strong>score</strong></td>
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### Social Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts to Heritage or Archaeological Resources</th>
<th>Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment required at Krug Furniture</th>
<th>Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment required at Krug Furniture</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>score</strong></td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts to Cultural or Recreational Resources</th>
<th>Provides connection to proposed Waterloo Spur Line Trail</th>
<th>Provides connection to proposed Waterloo Spur Line Trail</th>
<th>Provides connection to proposed Waterloo Spur Line Trail. Alignment may require a reduction in the size of the George Lippert Park north of Louisa Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>score</strong></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>
### APPENDIX D-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts on existing Businesses</th>
<th>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 10 commercial properties</th>
<th>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 10 commercial properties</th>
<th>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 9 commercial properties</th>
<th>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 9 commercial properties</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on existing Residences</td>
<td>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 38 residential properties</td>
<td>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 33 residential properties</td>
<td>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 45 residential properties</td>
<td>Requires the full or partial acquisition of 38 residential properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructability</td>
<td>Construction timeline similar to other alternatives</td>
<td>Construction timeline similar to other alternatives</td>
<td>Construction timeline similar to other alternatives</td>
<td>Construction timeline similar to other alternatives</td>
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<td>score</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on Community Character</td>
<td>Increased traffic congestion and infiltration to adjacent streets may degrade character</td>
<td>Opportunity present for streetscaping</td>
<td>Opportunity present for streetscaping</td>
<td>Greater opportunity for streetscaping due to larger number of remnant properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>
### APPENDIX D-6

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total construction cost including property acquisition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>$52,520,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$51,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$59,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$56,560,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OVERALL RELATIVE SCORE**

least preferred ↔ most preferred
APPENDIX E

Proposed Typical Road Cross-Section North of Wellington Street
APPENDIX F

Artist Concept of Proposed Grade Separation