

Region of Waterloo
Engineering and Environmental Services
Design and Construction

To: Planning and Works Committee
Meeting Date: June 4, 2024
Report Title: Project Approval – Victoria Street Improvements, Lawrence Avenue to Fischer-Hallman Road, City of Kitchener

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo:

- a) Approve the refined recommended design alternative for Victoria Street Improvements, Lawrence Avenue to Fischer-Hallman Road in the City of Kitchener, as outlined in Report EES-DCS-24-003, dated June 4, 2024; and
- b) Approve an extension to the consulting services agreement with Associated Engineering Ltd. to complete the final design and tender documents in the amount of \$245,320 plus HST for a total value of \$1,104,600 plus HST.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To approve refinements to the recommended design alternative previously approved under Report TES-DCS-18-04 including, reduced travel lane widths; reallocation of right turn lanes to boulevard space at Westmount Road; and conversion of on-road buffered bike lanes to raised cycling facilities (separated from traffic) on Victoria Street between Lawrence Avenue and Westmount Road.

3. Strategic Plan:

The Victoria Street Improvements project supports the Region's Strategic Plan priority area for Climate Aligned Growth and Equitable Opportunities and Services. This project will improve accessibility and mobility along the Victoria Street corridor, provide enhanced facilities for transit and other modes of travel to make it easier for people to get around, and consider climate-friendly transportation options.

4. Report Highlights:

- Following a public consultation process completed during the planning stages for this project, a recommended design alternative for the Victoria Street and Westmount Road project was approved under Report TES-DCS-18-04.

- Following project approval, a more comprehensive transportation study began for Westmount Road (north of Victoria Street) and improvements planned along Victoria Street were put on hold until additional assessments could be completed for Westmount Road and adjacent Regional road corridors.
- During this time, the scope of work planned on Victoria Street has evolved along with Regional Transportation policies and best practices and the design for Victoria Street has been refined to minimize property impacts and improve the level of service for active forms of transportation and transit.
- In 2024, utility relocation work is tentatively scheduled to be completed and road construction is scheduled to commence in spring 2025, with completion of the work anticipated in summer 2027.

5. Background:

The improvements planned as part of the Victoria Street project include road reconstruction, sidewalk replacement, new turn lanes, traffic signals, streetlights, pedestrian refuge islands, traffic medians, transit stops and cycling facilities, as well as sections of watermain and sewers to be replaced on behalf of the City of Kitchener.

The active transportation design approved under Report TES-DCS-18-04 includes installation of multi-use trails on Victoria Street from Fischer-Hallman Road to Westmount Road, and along Westmount Road from Victoria Street to the Henry Sturm Greenway. Additionally, on-road buffered bike lanes were planned at that time on Victoria Street from Westmount Road to Lawrence Avenue.

A more comprehensive review was completed while advancing the detailed design for Victoria Street and it was determined that property impacts could be reduced and cycling facilities could be improved with a refined design alternative. These refinements include reducing the width of travel lanes planned on Victoria Street between Fischer-Hallman Road to Lawrence Avenue, reallocating space reserved for right-turn lanes planned at Westmount Road to provide more separation and boulevard space for pedestrians and cyclists, and the conversion of on-road buffered bike lanes to raised cycling facilities on Victoria Street between Westmount Road and Lawrence Avenue, as shown in Appendix B.

These design refinements were presented to the public on the EngageWR website in March/April 2024 and feedback received will be taken into consideration while completing the final design stage for this project. Subject to Council approval, the detailed design drawings will be completed and work will proceed to construction in 2025.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities:

City of Kitchener staff were consulted as part of the planning process and have provided input into the design at various stages of the project. Overall, City staff are supportive of the refined design, will be consulted further regarding winter maintenance and provide input during the final design stage of the project. Additionally, the City is planning to reconstruct Lawrence Avenue between Victoria Street and Karn Street in 2024 and the design is being coordinated with the improvements planned on Victoria Street.

Public:

Letters were delivered to businesses and property owners located within the project limits as well as properties on the side-streets adjacent to Victoria Street. The refined design improvements were posted on the EngageWR website for public review and feedback. Notices were placed on social media and road signs were installed on Victoria Street to direct members of the public to the Engage website for more information.

Members of the public were able to submit comments via Engage, by mail, email, telephone, and/ or fax. Collectively, there were approximately 4,300 visitors to the Engage website and 200 provided comment on the design, asked questions, or submitted an email. The public consultation period was completed from March 26 to April 10, 2024.

Generally, the majority of respondents support the design refinements and proposed transportation improvements for Victoria Street. Several themes were observed in the public responses including feedback on the benefits of off-road cycling facilities; need for pedestrian crossing at Paulander Drive; width of the road and travel lanes between Westmount Road and Lawrence Avenue.

Letters providing notification of this Committee Report were delivered to local residents, stakeholders and those attended previous public meetings for improvements planned on Victoria Street.

7. Financial Implications:

An extension to the consulting services agreement with Associated Engineering Ltd. is required to complete the final design and tender documents in the amount of \$245,320 plus HST for a total value of \$1,104,600 plus HST.

The Region's approved 2024-2033 Transportation Capital Program includes a budget of \$3,402,000 in 2024 and \$8,075,000 in 2025-2027 for the Victoria Street from Lawrence

Avenue to Fischer Hallman Road (project #05656) to be funded from the Canada Community Building Reserve Fund (60%, \$6,897,000), the Roads Regional Development Charges Reserve Fund (34%, \$3,907,500) and from the Transportation Capital Reserve (6%, \$672,500).

There is sufficient budget to accommodate this increase.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Subject to Council approval, the project will continue with final design work in the summer of 2024 and proceed to tendering in the fall of 2024. Utility relocations will be completed in 2024 to permit road and sewer construction from Lawrence Avenue to Westmount Road in 2025 and from Westmount Road to Fischer-Hallman Road in 2026 with surface paving in 2027.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A – Key Plan

Appendix B – Detailed Design Alternatives

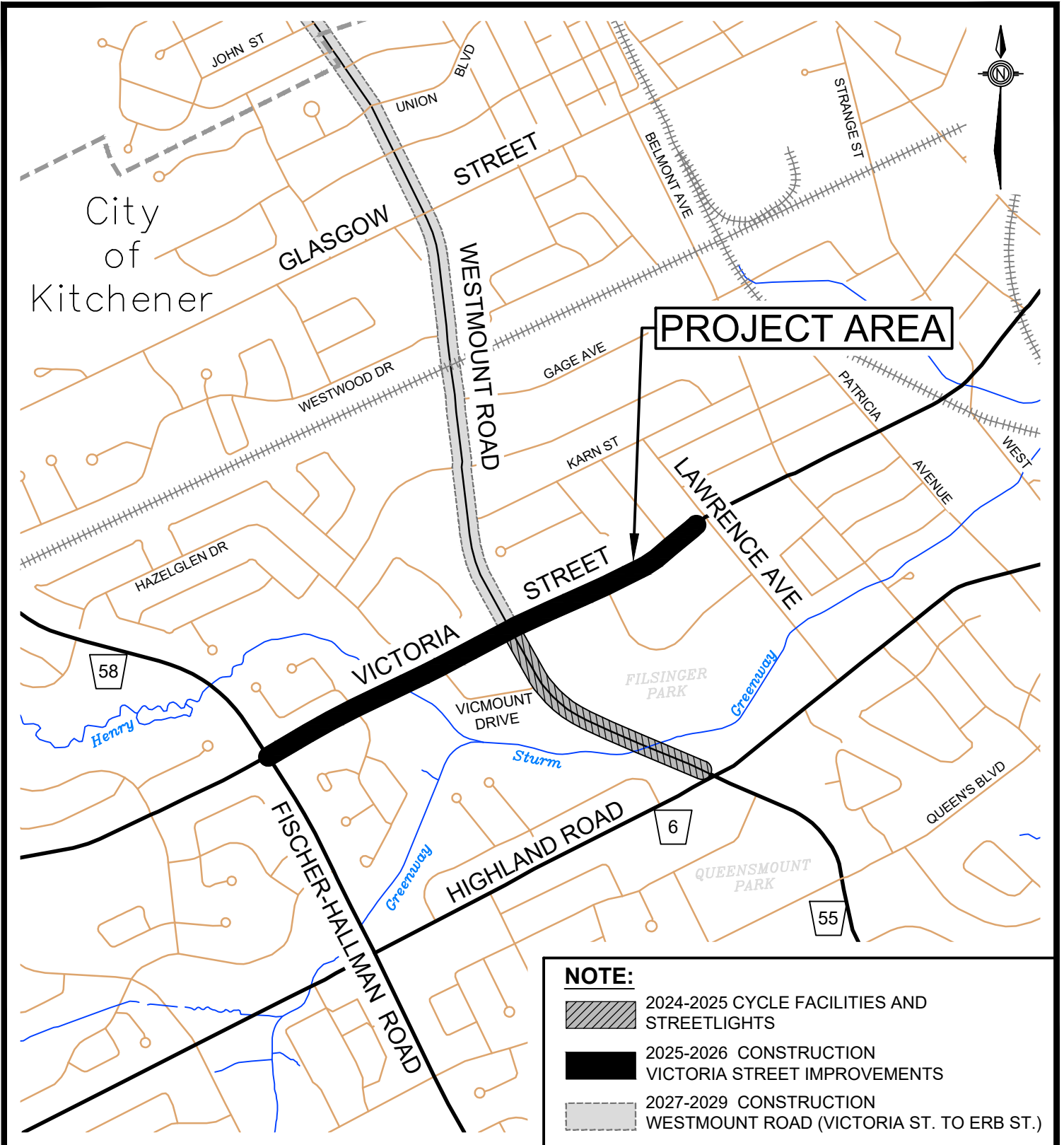
Prepared By: Eric Saunderson, Senior Engineer, Design and Construction

Skylar Van Kruistum, Head, Design and Construction

Reviewed By: Frank Kosa, Director, Design and Construction

Approved By: Jennifer Rose, Commissioner, Engineering and Environmental Services

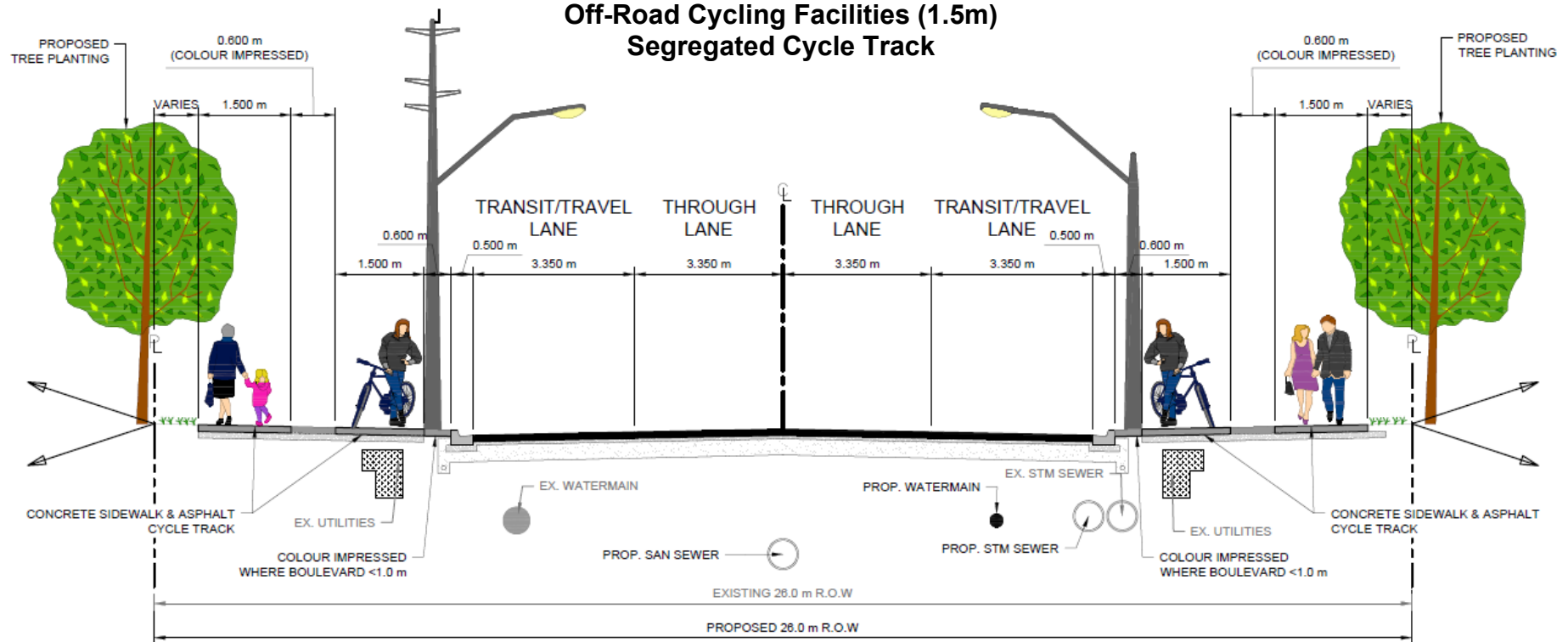
Appendix A - Key Plan



**REGION ROAD No.55 (VICTORIA STREET)
FISCHER-HALLMAN ROAD TO LAWRENCE AVENUE
CITY OF KITCHENER**

Appendix B - Detailed Design Alternative

Off-Road Cycling Facilities (1.5m) Segregated Cycle Track



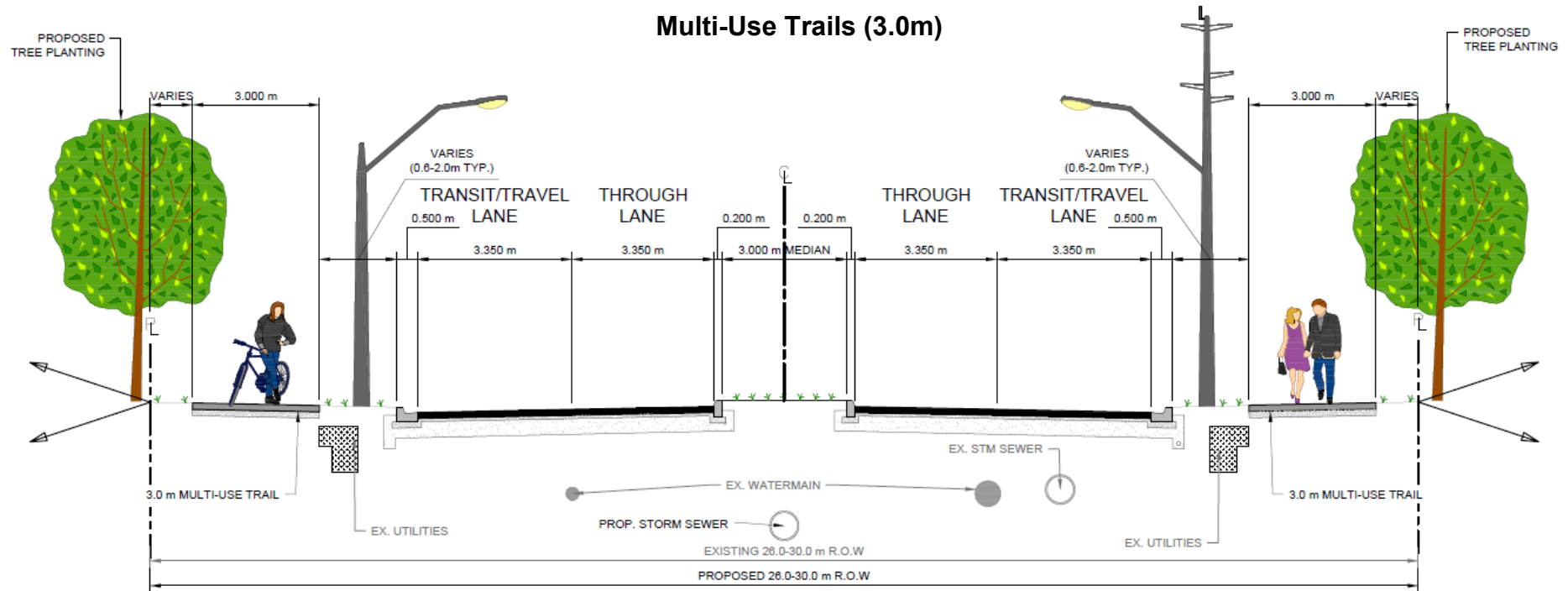
Victoria Street (Lawrence Avenue to Westmount Road):

The preliminary design included on-road buffered bike lanes on Victoria Street from Lawrence Avenue to Westmount Road. At that time, an off-road separated cycling facility (or segregated cycle track) design was considered by the Project Team which included wider bike lanes (2.0m); utility space (2.0m); and travel lanes (3.65m). This design alternative is preferred to provide additional separation for cyclists and the cross-section has been refined to reduce construction costs, installation of retaining walls and mitigate impact to private property.

Bi-directional cycling facilities, such as, multi-use trails are not preferred for this section of Victoria Street since, many of these front-lotted properties have limited sightlines to/from driveway entrances, due to the change in grading and retaining walls located near the existing back of sidewalk. An off-road cycle track, and uni-directional cycling facility, will provide greater visibility for motorists, reliability on the direction of travel and increase separation with driveway entrances.

Detailed Design Alternative

Multi-Use Trails (3.0m)



Victoria Street (Westmount Road to Fischer-Hallman Road):

The approved design alternative under Report TES-DCS-18-04 includes construction of a 3.0m wide multi-use trail on both sides of Victoria Street between Westmount Road and Fischer-Hallman Road. Multi-use trails are preferred on this section of Victoria Street as there is a change in land-use, less conflicts with driveways and rear-lotted properties near Fischer-Hallman Road. These multi-use trails will connect to an existing community trail along Henry Sturm creek, multi-use trails on Fischer-Hallman Road and west of the intersection on Victoria Street.

The detailed design will include cross-ride pavement markings setback from the intersection in accordance with Regional best practices and Protected Intersection design. The offset crossing location provides motorists with sufficient space to stop their vehicle beyond the pathway of oncoming vehicles to yield to a pedestrian or cyclist after committing to a turn. Studies have shown offset crossings improve safety at signalized intersections and similar results are expected along Victoria Street.