BAYFIELD STREET TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (MCEA)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & INFORMATION FORM

General Information

1. Why is the City of Barrie improving Bayfield Street?

The Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) will be reconstructing and widening Bayfield Street from Grove Street to Coulter Street to six lanes. The MTO detail design process for the Highway 400 and Bayfield Street project is anticipated to begin this year.

These improvements require the City to implement transportation improvements on Bayfield Street from Coulter Street to Cundles Road in the near-term and coordinate with the MTO on including active transportation improvements within their project limits from Grove Street to Coulter Street.

The City is studying both near-term needs and establishing a long-term vision for the corridor with consideration for all travel modes.

2. Who is directing this project?

This study is being directed by a Project Team consisting of staff from the City of Barrie. A consulting engineering firm, WSP Canada Inc. (WSP), has been retained by the City to assist with the project.

3. Is this study a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study?

This study is following the planning and design process outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association's Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Municipal Class EA) process for a Schedule 'C' undertaking, which is an approved process under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The Municipal Class EA process is an informed decision-making process to evaluate alternatives, assess potential effects, and identify measures to avoid or reduce project impacts. When we assess the potential environmental impacts of a project in the EA process, we don't just consider the natural environment. We also consider other factors like economic, social and cultural factors, so that the EA process is all-encompassing.

The City recognizes the importance in completing a comprehensive study and in engaging stakeholders and the public during the study. As such, the study is following the MCEA process generally from Phase 1 to 4 (1: Identify Challenges and Opportunities; 2: Alternative Solutions; 3: Alternative Designs; 4: Documentation). We are currently at the end of phase 3.

Once the study phases are completed, the study will move into preliminary and detailed design stages to further refine the design prior to construction.

4. What is the purpose of this public consultation process?

Engaging the public is an integral part of the planning process! While public consultation is required under the MCEA process, the City is exceeding these requirements by hosting three Public Information Centres, property owner meetings, an interactive project webpage and conducting surveys about the study to encourage residents' participation.

5. How can I provide my comments for this study?

In order to assist the Project Team in addressing comments or questions, we ask that participant complete the online form on the Bayfield Street Transportation Improvements project website at: www.buildingbarrie.ca/bayfieldstudy or by email at bayfieldstudy@barrie.ca between Friday May 30, 2025 and Friday June 12, 2025.

6. How can I view project information from Public Information Centres?

Public Information Centre display materials, recorded presentations, notifications of project milestones and contact information are available on the Bayfield Street Transportation Improvements project website at: www.buildingbarrie.ca/bayfieldstudy.

7. What changes are being considered within the study area?

There's a need to address traffic capacity deficiencies, road safety concerns and better support all modes of transportation on Bayfield Street. Changes may include intersection improvements and/or additional travel lanes to increase the vehicular capacity of the street, a raised median to address road safety concerns, cycling facilities to provide a dedicated space to cycle as well as sidewalk improvements.

8. Are active transportation facilities being considered?

Yes, separated cycling facilities and improved sidewalks are being considered.

9. What is a separated cycling facility?

A separated cycling facility is a designated and protected travel lane for bicycles along a street that provides physical separation between people riding bicycles and motor vehicle traffic. In general, separated cycling facilities tend to get used more by cyclists as they feel more comfortable being physically separated from cars rather than cycling in mixed traffic on the road.

10. What is a centre median?

A centre median is commonly used on multi-lane arterial road comprising 4 to 6 lanes to reduce conflict points by restricting access, thus improving the overall safety of the roadway.

11. What is a protected intersection?

A protected intersection prioritizes the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists, using a combination of geometric and signalization measures to reduce and/or eliminate potential for conflict.

12. What are controlled turns?

Access to driveways and businesses can be controlled by U-turns at intersections, specific median openings and through private owner agreements allowing cross-access between properties. The creation of sufficient space to allow passenger vehicles to make U-turns is being studied for this project.

13. What is improved transit infrastructure?

Transit system efficiency and reliability on Bayfield Street can be achieved by introducing transit priority lanes, transit queue jump lanes and/or transit shelters. Depending on the improvement type, it may require the City to acquire private property.

Preferred Design Solution

14. What is the preferred design solution?

The study is recommending the following on Bayfield Street from Coulter Street to Cundles Road:

- An additional travel lane per direction
- Cycle tracks
- Wider sidewalks
- A raised median

Minor improvements are identified for the west leg of Grove Street to implement a left turn lane.

15. What will traffic on Bayfield Street look like in 2041 without and with the proposed improvements to the corridor?

Stretch of Bayfield St	**AM/PM peak Travel Speed/Time Without City improvements, by 2041**	**AM/PM peak Travel Speed / Time With Improvements, by 2041**
Livingstone Street to Highway 400	Reduce to 10-30 km/hr (average ~20 km/h)	0-50 km/hr (average ~45 km/h)
Hamner Street to Wellington Street	increase from 5.5/6.7 min (AM/PM) to 14/10.4 min (AM/PM)	7.5/7.1min (AM/PM)
Wellington Street to Hamner Street	increase from 5.4/6.0 min (AM/PM) to 8.3/8.7 min (AM/PM)	5.8/7.1 min (AM/PM)
Cundles Rd to Ferris Lane	Large Queues	Queuing similar to existing conditions

Preferred Design Solution – Recommendation to Include a Raised Median

16. Why is a raised median being recommended.

A raised median is being recommended to improve road safety. A raised median is required due to the following technical warrants:

High Traffic Volume	✓	Traffic volumes on Bayfield Street have been recorded as high as 50,000 vehicles per day.	High traffic volumes on urban arterial roads are typically defined as 20,000 vehicles per day. High traffic volumes increase turning conflicts and reduces gaps for safe left turns.
Six-Lane Configuration	✓	Bayfield Street is being proposed to be widened to six-lanes.	A six-lane configuration increases the number of conflict points and left-turns become more challenging.
Closely Spaced Driveways	✓	Bayfield Street has numerous closely spaced driveways.	Closely spaced driveways increases conflict points and create overlapping turning movements.
Mid-block Collision History	✓	Bayfield Street has a history of mid-block collisions.	Mid-block collisions indicate conditions that require access management to improve safety.
Active Transportation Infrastructure	✓	Bayfield Street is being proposed to include cycling infrastructure.	Cycling infrastructure requires access management to improve safety. Reducing conflict points help drivers make safe and predictable turning movements. Left-turns by drivers are hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists.

17. How would the addition of a raised median make Bayfield Street safer?

Research has shown that introducing a raised median can result in 85% fewer conflict points, eliminate 71% of collisions associated with driveway turning movements[1] and decrease overall collisions 39%[2]. Traffic flow can be smoother and more predictable for all corridor users. Pedestrian and cyclist safety can be improved from the intersection improvements and design, which results in safer driveways crossings and reduced turning vehicle conflicts.

Better access management means safer roads, smoother traffic, and a stronger, more vibrant business environment.

18. Is there a safety concern or collision history indicating the need for

Bayfield had 1,055 collisions over a 5-year period (2018 to 2022):

- 116 collisions resulted in injury; no fatalities
- 15 collisions involved pedestrians, 14 resulting in injury
- 13 collisions involved cyclists, 8 resulting in injury
- 900 collisions occurred at intersections and 155 mid-block

The high number of uncontrolled driveways is resulting in more collisions, more congestion and an unpredictable driving experience. The current roadway configuration encourages unsafe turning movements into and out of businesses that are contributing to serious collisions, traffic delays and frequent traffic disruptions. Collision rates and severity will increase without changes to access management.

19. How is access changing with a raised median?

A raised median will prevent left-in and left-out turning movements from uncontrolled driveways. This will require drivers to make U-turns at controlled intersections, use the local street network to change direction or plan an alternate route.

20. Will a raised median negatively impact my business?

Before and after studies indicate that 80% of businesses experience either no impact or a positive impact when a median is installed[4]. Only 5% reported a decrease in business.

Additionally, a raised median will help reduce travel time on the corridor. A study assessed impacts of corridors experiencing congestion and delays that noted a travel time increase of as little as 10% can decrease market area by 19%. A raised median will aide in reducing travel times.

Safe, orderly and predictable traffic flow is good for both residents and businesses.

Preferred Design Solution – Potential Impacts

21. Will my property be impacted by this project and what are the steps to mitigating property impacts?

Partial private property acquisition will be required for this project. The Project Team has reduced the amount of property required by using design minimums and eliminating corridor landscaping.

22. Will the natural environment be impacted by this project?

There may be potential minor to moderate impacts to existing vegetation (i.e. street trees, manicured plants) within the landscaped open space due to proposed multi-use trail and sidewalk locations between Coulter Street to Glenwood Drive, as well as minor impacts to landscaped areas and residential trees south of Highway 400 due to minor widening.

The City of Barrie has limited widening to the extent possible. The City's Official Plan includes long-term protection for additional corridor width on Bayfield Street to allow for enhanced streetscape with landscaping.

23. Will the cultural environment be impacted by this project?

Cultural Heritage

During construction, there may be temporary and common indirect impacts affecting nearby heritage properties:

- Edwardian style house: Potential impacts through vibration
- Queen Anne style house: Potential impacts through land alteration and vibration from construction

As part of standard studies prepared following the Ontario Heritage Act, the potential heritage values will be confirmed through Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) to determine the presence of heritage value. These assessments may recommend to more detailed mitigation measures, where appropriate.

Archaeology

A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment (AA) was completed for the study.

24. Will the air quality and noise be impacted by this project?

Air Quality

The preferred alternative has the potential to improve local air quality in the long term. Local air quality will be improved because of reduced congestion and idling on Bayfield Street from the implementation of additional travel lanes and active transportation elements. The Environmental Study Report will document the outcomes of the Air Quality Study.

Noise

Temporary increases to noise will occur during construction; however, construction activities will need to adhere to the City of Barrie Noise by-law (there may be the potential consideration for exemptions if necessary). There is the potential for negligible to low potential environmental effects to the existing acoustic environment in the long-term. The Environmental Study Report will document the outcomes of the Noise Study.

Next Steps

25. What are the next steps for this project?

As a key part of the MCEA process, the Project Team will elicit input from residents, stakeholders and businesses through the study and at key milestones.

Following PIC No. 3 the project team will undertake the following next steps:

- Review public input received from PIC No. 3 and respond to comments
- Refine the Preferred Design based on public and agency input
- Finalize environmental impact assessment
- Prepare the Environmental Study Report (ESR) summarizing the results of the study over the summer and early fall.
- Present recommendations to City Council for approval by end of year.
- Subject to Council approval, The ESR will be filed for a 30-day public review period
- After completion of the 30-day public review period, the project will proceed to detailed design in 2026.

Any deputations regarding study recommendations can be made at City Council when project recommendations are submitted for consideration. Study recommendations to Council are planned to be presented prior to the end of year.

Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Bayfield Street Interchange Project

26. What is the MTO doing?

The MTO will be replacing the Bayfield Street interchange and widening Bayfield Street to six lanes from Grove Street to Coulter Street.

27. I have concerns about the MTO project and it's impacts to my property.

Members of the public who wish to speak to the MTO regarding their project can contact the project manager at Rebecca.Lariviere@ontario.ca.

Endnotes

1 – FHWA - Access Management in the Vicinity of Intersections - FHWA-SA-10-002

2 – CMF Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse – CMF ID:3034

3 – National Cooperative Highway Research Program – NCHRP 1032

4 - FHWA (via NCHRP): *Safe Access is Good for Business* brochure. Based on reported sales. 53% same, 33% increased, 9% uncertain, 5% decreased.