

Lakeshore Road West Improvement Plan

Preliminary Concept? Its Role in the Overall EA Process

Municipal Class Environmental Assessments (MCEA) apply to municipal infrastructure projects including roads, water and wastewater projects. A Schedule C assessment, which is what the current Lakeshore Road West Improvement Project represents, generally includes the construction of new facilities and major expansions to existing facilities.

As the Town's review process continues on Lakeshore Road West, it is worth understanding the Environmental Assessment (EA) process overall and what it represents at various stages.



Of Note:

- 5-Step Process
- Town Council approves Preferred Plan
- Preferred Plan sent to Ministry of Environment for review & approval
- Approved Preferred Plan becomes blueprint for final road design
- Final road design will reflect aspects of approved Preferred Plan
- Only minor modifications permitted after approval
- Significant modifications would require addendum.

The EA Process has five stages. The table below shows a flow of work that takes place from the initial review to identify problems or opportunities, through to the implementation, which in the case of Lakeshore Road West, would be construction of elements such as a new road surface with cycle lanes, stormwater controls using gutters and curbs, etc. It also would include changes to the areas bordering the road, such as removal of trees to accommodate additional multi-use paths or widening of the road to accommodate a turning lane.



CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

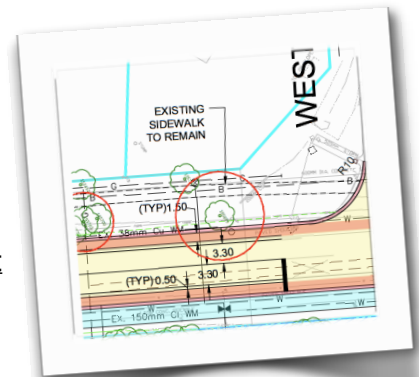
PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
IDENTIFY PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY	ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS	ALTERNATIVE DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR PREFERRED SOLUTION	CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY REPORT. SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL	IMPLEMENTATION

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It's More Than Preliminary. Why It's Important to Be Informed.

Under the Phase 3 EA Process, the recent comments from residents made regarding the “revised design alternatives” are to be taken into consideration when devising the Environmental Study Report (ESR) which will be presented to Council for approval in June 2021.

While the Town of Oakville states “*The EA is a draft design only*”, it does not clarify that the ESR report presented to Council for approval will also be the preferred plan that will be sent to the Ministry of the Environment for the Minister’s approval. Thus, if the multi-use path, that will cause the removal of scores of trees, is included in the ESR and is given approval, it will become the “blueprint” the Town will use for the final road design, which in turn is used for implementation.



The Town is required to follow the EA process and its rules. If it were to make a big modification to the approved ESR, it would be in a position of having to undertake an amendment. This is supported by the following:

Section A.2.4 *It is imperative that the commitments and decisions made during Phases 1 through 4 be clearly documented in the ESR and implemented during Phase 5.*

and further,

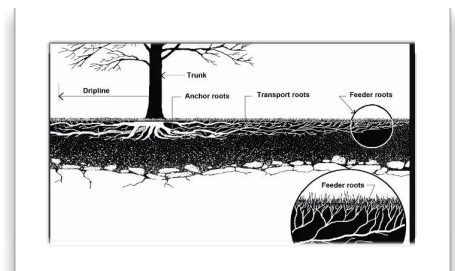
The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011 & 2015) states “any significant modifications to the project or change to the environmental setting for the project which occurs after the filing of the ESR shall be reviewed by the proponent and an addendum documenting the basis for the changes to the ESR and revised recommendations shall be prepared”.

Tree Protection

The Town states “*At the detailed design stage, the town will look for opportunities to further mitigate tree impacts by narrowing the sidewalk or trail, or by curving the sidewalk or trail around trees where possible*”.

In reality, the multi-use path that causes the biggest loss of trees, is 3m wide (approximately the same width as a single lane of traffic) and requires even more width during construction. Feeder roots that nourish trees and provide stability, spread horizontally below the surface. The excavation, grading and soil compaction required to create the path cause significant harm and often result in the tree failing within a short period of time.

Given the proximity of the proposed trail to mature trees and the limited land remaining to facilitate a meaningful digression from the planned route, it is hard to imagine the above “curving” could ever be accomplished.



As such, we continue to support Town Council’s motion passed in 2018 that directed staff to develop an option for Lakeshore Road West that would result in no loss of trees.

**Send your Councillors an email. Tell them you want Lakeshore Road West conserved as the Scenic Corridor it is. Pave the road. Add bike lanes.
Retain sidewalks and enhance them where possible.
No unneeded multi-use path. No loss of trees.**

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