



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Allen Road Individual Environmental Assessment (EA)

Date:	June 3, 2016
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Ward 9 (York Centre), Ward 10 (York Centre), Ward 15 (Eglinton-Lawrence), and Ward 21 (St. Paul's)
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster B\TRA\TIM\Pw16014tim

SUMMARY

At its meeting of July 5, 6 and 7, 2010, City Council endorsed, in principle, the Lawrence Allen Revitalization Plan (LARP), a 20-year plan for the evolution of the Lawrence-Allen area and the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood. As part of this plan, and recognising that Allen Road has operational issues, is in need of repairs, does not integrate well with the local neighbourhood, and exists within a changing physical and policy context, City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services to initiate the Allen Road Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) Study Terms of Reference (ToR).

City staff submitted the proposed ToR to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (for formal government review and acceptance in September 2014. Following the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's (MOECC) detailed review of the City's proposed ToR, the City was advised that the proposed alternatives for Allen Road were too broad. Particular concern was raised that the land use planning in the study area was not developed to level commensurate with the infrastructure planning and that without a similar land use planning exercise for the area south of the LARP to support consideration of the alternative EA solutions, it was unlikely that the City would be in a position to implement the EA recommendations in the near future. Funding for this work is not included in Transportation's Capital Budget or 10-year Capital and an alternative funding source has not been identified.

Given the extensive deficit in municipal infrastructure that exists throughout the City and the number of other critical investments in infrastructure that are needed, City staff are recommending that no further work proceed at this time and are instead requesting City Council to provide authorization for the General Manager of Transportation Services to withdraw the proposed ToR from the MOECC. In place of the Allen Road EA, Transportation Services will refocus its efforts on localized operational and state of good repair issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager of Transportation Services to withdraw the proposed Terms of Reference for the Allen Road Environmental Assessment from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

Financial Impact

Funding of \$2.5 million for the Allen Road EA is included in the 2016-2025 Capital Budget and Plan for Transportation Services. If the Allen Road EA project is cancelled, the funding would be available for reallocation within the 2016-2025 Capital Budget and Plan for Transportation Services.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 5, 6 and 7, 2010, City Council endorsed the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan (LARP) and directed the General Manager of Transportation Services to initiate the Allen Road Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) Study ToR before the end of 2010 (NY35.67). Relevant documents are available at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/cc/decisions/2010-07-06-cc51-dd.htm>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2011/law1414.pdf>

A proposed ToR for the Allen Road EA was developed and at its October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2013 meeting, City Council adopted the following:

"City Council authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services to issue a Notice of Completion for the Terms of Reference for the Allen Road Environmental Assessment, and to submit the Terms of Reference document for the Allen Road Environmental Assessment to the Ministry of the Environment of Ontario for agency and public review and approval in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act of Ontario."

<http://app.Toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PW25.9>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In July 2010, City Council endorsed the LARP (see Attachment No. 1) and, in so doing, directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to initiate the Allen Road Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) ToR. The LARP recognized the critical role that Allen Road plays in the community and recommended that its design and operation be reconsidered in light of the potential

benefits that changes to the Allen corridor could bring to the Lawrence-Allen area and the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood.

In October 2013, Toronto City Council approved the Allen Road ToR for EA Study. The ToR was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EAA and describes the broad procedures to be followed in carrying out the EA Study, including the study objectives, the types of alternatives to be evaluated, the evaluation process, and the public and agency consultation plan.

This study followed the provincial Individual EA process, which includes a two-stage approval. The first stage involves the preparation of a ToR, which sets out what will be studied during the EA. An approval by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is required before the EA can proceed. If approved, the ToR becomes the framework for how the EA will be carried out.

On September 5, 2014, the City of Toronto submitted a proposed ToR for the Allen Road Individual EA to the MOECC for review and decision. Ministry staff carried out a detailed review of the proposed ToR. Minor amendments to the ToR were requested in December 2014 and were made in the form of an errata letter submitted to the MOECC on January 5, 2015. Amendments to the proposed ToR were largely editorial in nature.

At the request of the MOECC, a meeting was held on September 18, 2015 with City staff to discuss how the EA process intersects with land use planning and what the City's plans are for implementing the infrastructure improvements that may be recommended at the conclusion of the EA process.

The City was advised that the proposed alternatives for Allen Road were too broad. Particular concern was raised that the land use planning in the study area was not developed to level commensurate with the infrastructure planning and that without a similar land use planning exercise for the area south of the LARP to support consideration of the alternative EA solutions, it was unlikely that the City would be in a position to implement the EA recommendations in the near future.

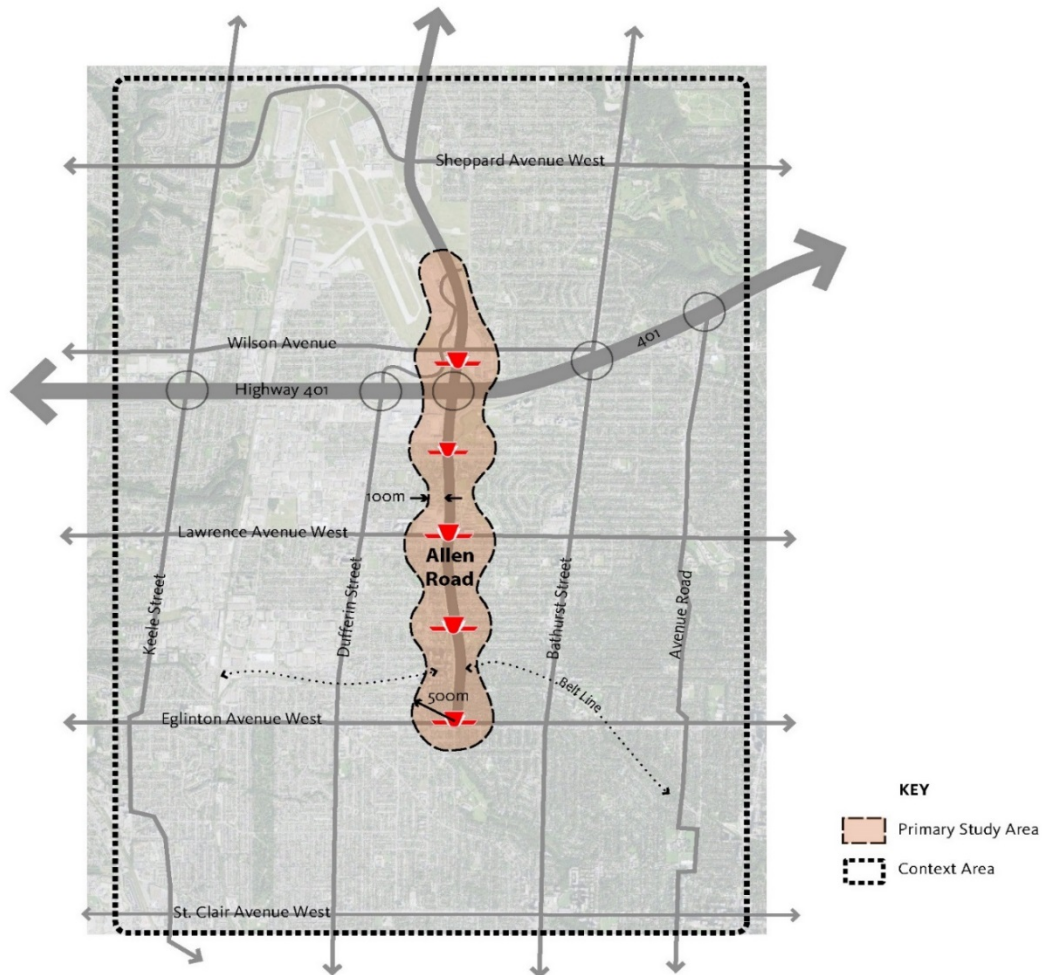
The City confirmed to the MOECC that there are no immediate plans to proceed with the physical works associated with this Individual EA as the Allen Road ToR contemplates transformative infrastructure changes within the study area that will require significant capital investments. Therefore, the City must consider its next steps before further land use studies are completed to support the completion of the Allen Road EA.

COMMENTS

Study Area

As part of the EA process, a primary study area was established in the proposed ToR. This includes the expressway portion of the Allen Road corridor from Eglinton Avenue West to just south of Transit Road, with a 100 metre (m) radius to either side of the corridor and a 500 m radius around the TTC stations. For the purpose of assessing the broader transportation network impacts, a larger context area was defined, which includes Keele Street to the west, Avenue Road to the east, Sheppard Avenue West to the north and St. Clair Avenue West to the south. The primary and context study areas are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Allen Road Study Area



Alternative Solutions

Alternative solutions are the functionally different ways of addressing a problem and/or opportunity. The proposed ToR identifies six alternative solutions (see Attachment 2) as follows:

1. Do Nothing;
2. Enhance the Allen Road corridor with safety and operational improvements, better access to TTC facilities, traffic signal coordination, noise attenuation, improved lighting, etc...
3. Modify the Allen Road corridor with physical changes to the public realm, streetscape, traffic operations or infrastructure to better connect and integrate communities. Possible examples include: HOV lanes, new/modified interchanges, new/widened bridges, new cycling infrastructure;

4. Transform the Allen Road corridor with a new surface road. This alternative would replace the expressway function with an at-grade lower speed facility and would result in the introduction of new intersections and land parcels;
5. Transform the Allen Road corridor by decking over the expressway. This alternative would maintain the expressway function in a below-grade facility and make use of the newly created land for other purposes, such as parks, new streets, etc...; and
6. Transform the Allen Road corridor by removing the expressway entirely without replacing it with another high speed facility.

The proposed ToR contemplated a combination of the above alternatives and provided the flexibility to accommodate new alternatives as part of the EA study itself.

Consultation

Consultation is a key aspect of any EA process and preparation of the proposed ToR was carried out in full consultation with the community and technical stakeholders. In general, there was a broad range of support for the Allen Road EA. The EA study would define the long-term future of Allen Road and its surroundings. In that respect, the EA study would be an essential component of urban planning and City building in the study area.

Implementation

As a result of the significant deficit in funding for infrastructure projects across the City, many of which are needed to maintain the City's roads and bridges in a state of good repair, it is anticipated that implementation of any Allen Road EA recommendations would require significant funding to be secured from non-City sources, likely through the disposition of surplus lands that may have been created through changes to Allen Road. As the development market in this part of the City has not yet fully materialized, completion of the Allen Road EA is considered premature at this time and it is recommended that the City refocus its efforts on localized operational and state of good repair issues.

Coordination with Concurrent Projects

Following City Council's direction to commence the Allen Road EA study, a number of improvements have been implemented or planned within the study area, including:

- **Eglinton Crosstown LRT (Metrolinx)** – construction of an LRT station at Eglinton Avenue West / Allen Road is in progress;
- **"Eglinton Connects" Study** - a comprehensive planning study, including an EA, along the segment of Eglinton Avenue where the underground portion of the LRT will be constructed..
- **Lawrence Avenue West resurfacing** – resurfacing of Lawrence Avenue West, from to, is planned in 2016:

- **Traffic safety improvements** – a number of roadway and pedestrian safety improvements at the Lawrence Avenue West/Allen Road on-ramp intersection will be implemented as part of the Lawrence Avenue resurfacing work;
- **Bridge Rehabilitation** – Transportation Services is planning minor rehabilitation of the Flemington bridge in 2016, with replacement scheduled for 2018.
- **Lawrence Heights Pedestrian Bridge EA** – Transportation Services is reviewing opportunities to initiate a Municipal Class EA for the Lawrence Heights pedestrian bridge over Allen Road;
- **Operational Reviews** - Transportation Services is reviewing the Eglinton Avenue West and Lawrence Avenue West interchanges with Allen Road for opportunities to improve traffic safety and operations
- **Operational Improvements** – a number of traffic operational improvements have been implemented at the Lawrence Avenue West and Eglinton Avenue West interchanges with Allen Road, including:
 - the implementation of dual westbound right-turn lanes at the Eglinton Avenue West / Allen Road on-ramp intersection in 2011; and
 - removal of a southbound left turn lane from the Lawrence Avenue southbound off-ramp.

Next Steps

Upon authorization by City Council, City staff will take necessary steps to withdraw the draft ToR from the MOECC.

Transportation Services has consulted about the recommendation in this report with the local Ward Councillors and no concerns have been expressed. As part of these consultations, the local Ward Councillors have identified transportation network operational issues and/or opportunities for some smaller scale improvements that merit further investigation.

To address on-going transportation operational issues within the study area, Transportation Services is proposing to carry out a focused review of the Lawrence Avenue West and Eglinton Avenue West interchanges. Specifically, the following will be further investigated and studied:

- Eglinton Avenue West / Allen Road Northbound Intersection – the potential addition of a dual eastbound left-turn lane to the Allen Road on-ramp and whether this work can be coordinated through Metrolinx's LRT construction.
- Lawrence Avenue West / Allen Road Intersection – Transportation Services staff will undertake a traffic operations review to assess the impact of a number of planned improvements that will be implemented at this interchange this year. Further analysis is needed to determine the effectiveness of the improvements and whether additional potential operational and/or physical improvements for this intersection can be implemented.

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ATTACHMENTS

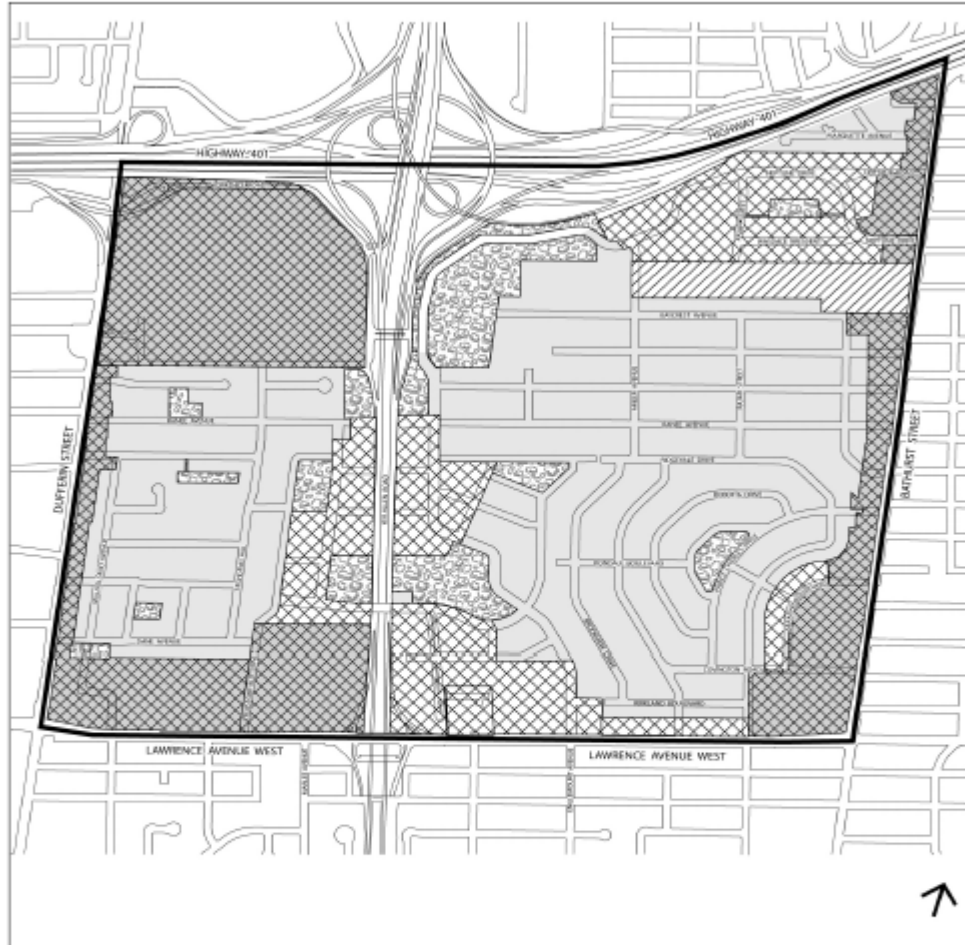
Attachment 1: Lawrence-Allen Secondary Plan
Attachment 2: Allen Road EA Alternative Solutions

PW14.8 - Attachment 1

Attachment 1: Lawrence-Allen Secondary Plan

City of Toronto By-law No. 1414-2011

Schedule I



TORONTO City Planning
Official Plan Amendment
Revisions to Land Use Map 16 and Land Use Map 17

Lawrence-Allen Secondary Plan

File # 08_167708

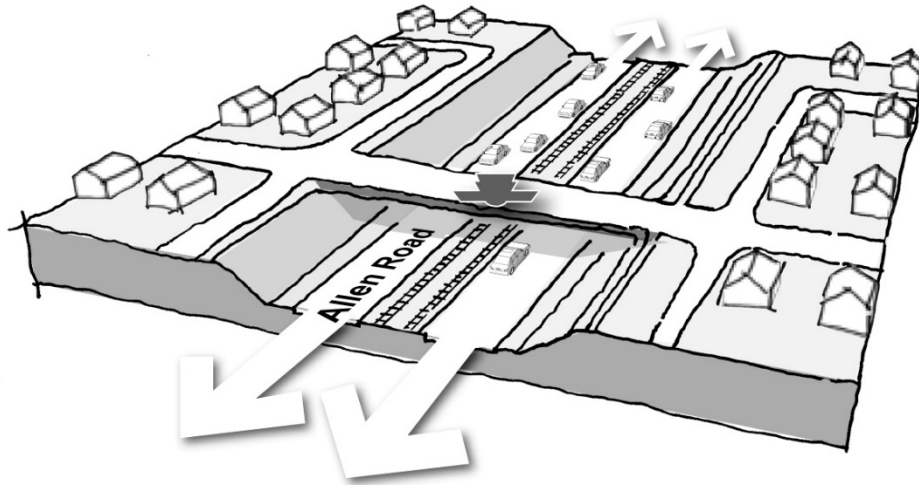


Not to Scale
02/16/2011

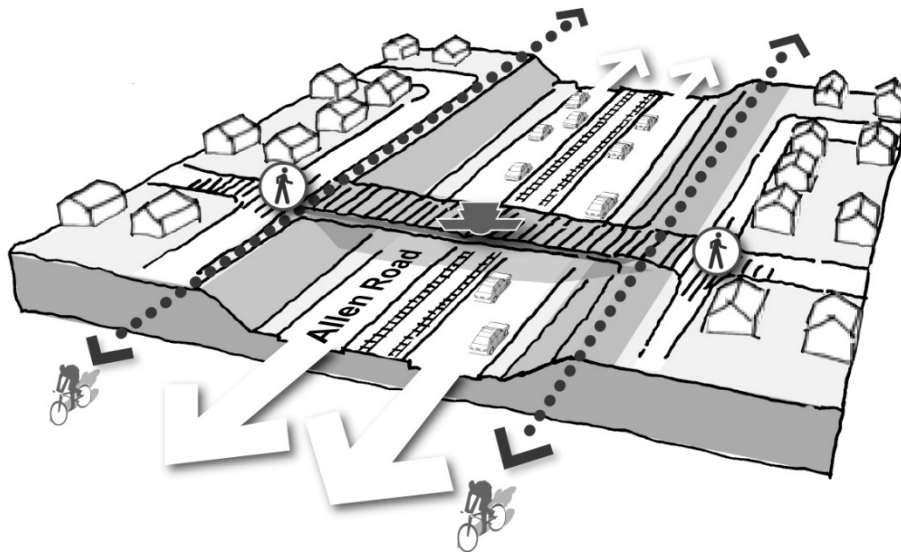
PW14.8 - Attachment 2

Attachment 2: Allen Road EA Alternative Solutions

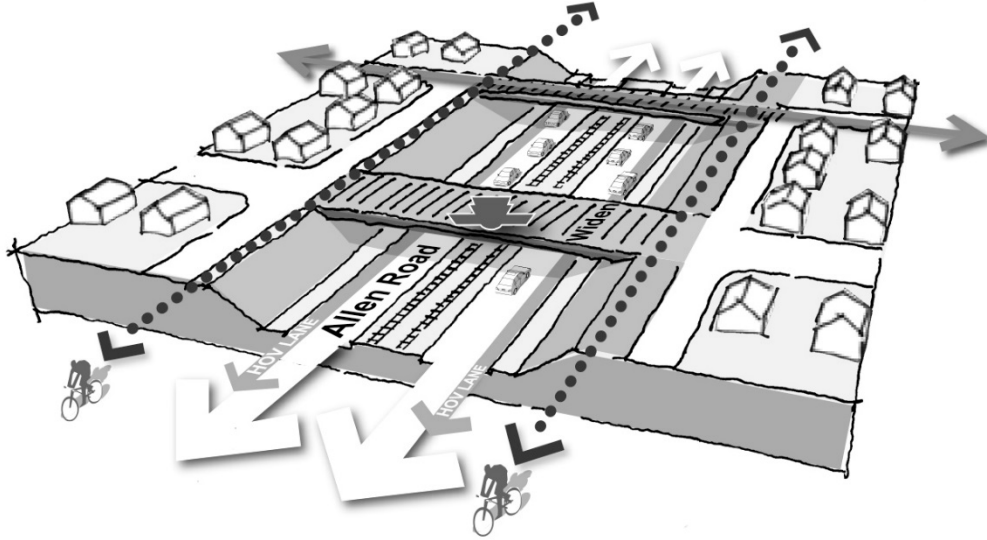
Alternative Solution 1:
Do Nothing



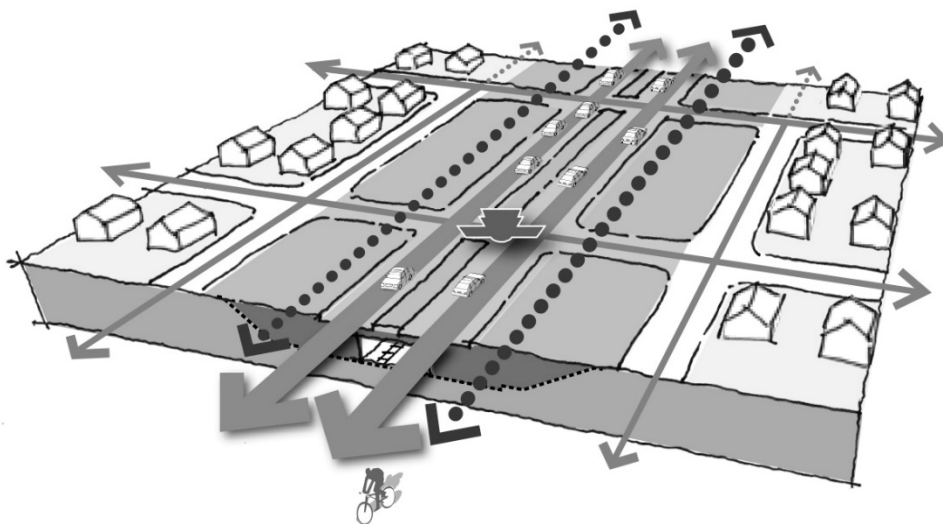
Alternative Solution 2:
Enhance



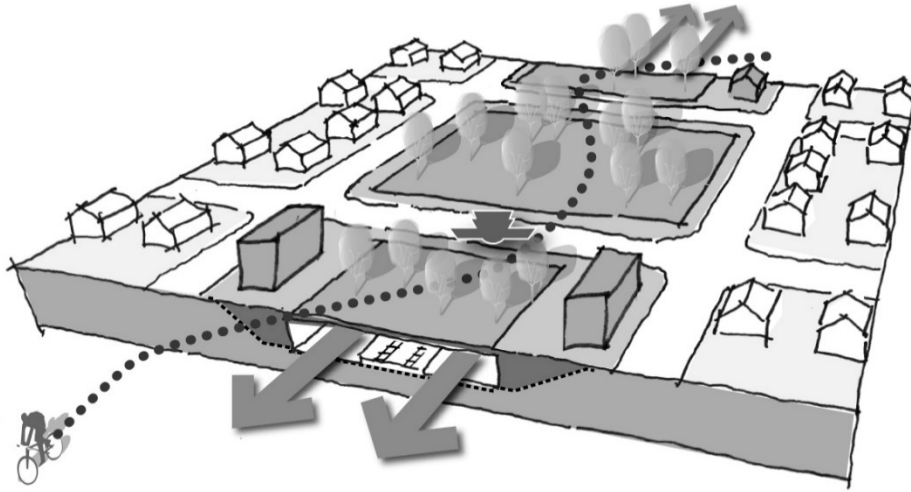
Alternative Solution 3:
Modify



Alternative Solution 4:
Transform – Surface Road



Alternative Solution 5:
Transform – Tunnel/Deck



Alternative Solution 6:
Remove

