

Parkside Drive Study Update

Date: June 14, 2023
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards: Ward 4

SUMMARY

Parkside Drive is a major arterial road that serves as the eastern boundary of High Park and provides multi-modal connections to key destinations in the City with residential frontage on the east side.

As directed by Council in November 2021, the Parkside Drive Study was initiated to explore possible design changes that could improve safety and mobility along the corridor with a focus on people walking, cycling and other vulnerable road users, as a companion to the High Park Movement Strategy. Over the last 18 months, Transportation Services has made several improvements to the roadway to manage vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian mobility.

The High Park Movement Strategy was adopted by City Council on May 9, 10 and 11, 2023. This report provides an update on the Parkside Drive Study including the vision for the corridor, public engagement plans, and improvements delivered to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendation in this report does not result in immediate financial impact.

Any financial resources associated with changes to Parkside Drive will be requested as part of the future capital budget submission process to be considered along with other City priorities, intergovernmental funding opportunities and City funding availability.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On May 9, 10 and 11, 2023 City Council adopted item IE3.7 High Park Movement Strategy - Final Report. This report described the preferred strategy for travel network improvements in High Park and next steps for implementation.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.IE3.7>

On July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022 City Council adopted item TE34.142 Pedestrian Crossing Protection and Parking amendments - Parkside Drive, Approximately 100 metres south of Spring Road (High Park Trail). This report authorized the installation of traffic control signals on Parkside Drive at High Park Trail and parking amendments to permit pay-and-display parking.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE34.142>

On May 25, 2022, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee received Item IE30.16 Interim Report for the High Park Movement Strategy. This report provided an update on the High Park Movement Strategy and Parkside Drive Study, summarized early engagement efforts and commented on next steps in developing strategy options.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.IE30.16>

On November 9, 10 and 12, 2021 City Council adopted item MM37.1 Parkside Drive Safety Measures, directing staff to implement a number of traffic safety measures on Parkside Drive and to include the development of a redesign of Parkside Drive as part of the High Park Movement Strategy public consultations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM37.1>

On July 14, 15, and 16, 2021 City Council adopted item TE.26.88 Removal of the Rush Hour Parking Prohibition on the East Side of Parkside Drive and rescinded parking prohibitions from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.TE26.88>

COMMENTS

Parkside Drive is a four-lane major arterial road providing multi-modal connections to local destinations in the area including High Park to the west, St. Joseph's Health Centre to the east, and key travel routes in the City including the Gardiner Expressway and the Martin Goodman Trail to the south. The east side of Parkside Drive is primarily residential, and the intersecting streets provide access into the Sunnyside and High Park-Swansea neighbourhoods. There is one school located on Parkside Drive, and several other schools, child care centres and community hubs located directly east and north of the street. Parkside Drive serves as an important route to local destinations like shops, restaurants, grocery stores, community centres and libraries that are located on nearby streets like Bloor Street West, Roncesvalles Avenue and Dundas Street West.

As the eastern boundary of High Park, Parkside Drive offers multi-modal access into the park through four entrance points. The Parkside Drive Study is a companion to the High Park Movement Strategy (HPMS) that determined a comprehensive strategy to manage mobility needs of park users. In May 2023, City Council adopted the recommendations in the HPMS final report ([see item 2023.IE3.7](#)) with amendments. The Council-approved strategy introduces 1.7km of roadway that is car-free at all times, and continues car-free days on weekends and holidays, year round. City Council also approved full road closures to visitor vehicles at all times as the long term strategy for travel network improvements in High Park.

Parkside Drive has residential frontage on the east side of the roadway, most of which rely on street and front yard parking if they own a vehicle or receive visitors and deliveries by vehicle. There is continuous (narrow) sidewalk on the east side of the street in front of the homes, with significant gaps in the sidewalk network with some discontinuous sidewalk segments on the west side. There are no designated cycling facilities along Parkside Drive.

Parkside Drive is the southward extension of Keele Street, a major north-south arterial in the City that provides a direct connection to Highway 400 and 401. The road is relied upon as a connection between highway access and a considerable catchment area to the north and east of High Park.

Traffic and goods movement is a primary function of Parkside Drive, with approximately 21,000 daily motor vehicles and 1,000 daily transit passengers. TTC bus service is provided along the Parkside Drive corridor, providing a connection from Keele Subway Station to Sherway Gardens in Etobicoke. Additionally, the western terminus of the 506 Streetcar route is on Parkside Drive which connects High Park to Main Street Subway Station.

Study Focus

As directed by City Council in November 2021 ([2021.MM37.1](#)), Transportation Services has made several improvements to Parkside Drive to manage vehicle speed and improve pedestrian mobility, and initiated a study of the corridor. The goal of the [Parkside Drive Study](#) is to develop a future vision of the corridor that better serves all road users while supporting safe mobility for the local community. The study area is Parkside Drive from Keele Subway station to the Martin Goodman Trail. A map of the study area can be found in Attachment 1. A summary of traffic studies and data analysis completed along Parkside Drive can be found in Attachment 2.

There is a history of community advocacy for change along Parkside Drive. Excessive vehicular speeds and narrow sidewalks are highly vocalized community concerns along Parkside Drive. The Parkside Drive Study will build on community advocacy for improved safety and comfort for pedestrians and people cycling, taking transit and driving and navigating among the many local destinations.

Improvements to Parkside Drive

Over the last 18 months, Transportation Services has made several improvements to traffic management and road geometry elements along the corridor to improve safety of vulnerable road users and reduce motor vehicle speeding. Changes include:

- Upgrades to the Howard Park Avenue and Parkside Drive intersection: removal of the eastbound right-turn channel, reduction of the pedestrian crossing distance on the east leg, improved pavement markings and increased pedestrian standing area on the north/east corner.
- Speed limit reduction from 50 kilometres per hour to 40 kilometres per hour on Parkside Drive between Bloor Street West and Lakeshore Boulevard West;
- Permanent "Watch Your Speed" signs;
- Automated Speed Enforcement camera;
- Traffic signal on Parkside Drive at Geoffrey Street;
- Temporary, asphalt sidewalk on the west side of Parkside Drive between Spring Road and just north of The Queensway underpass;
- Pay-and-display parking spots on the west side of Parkside Drive between Spring Road and High Park Trail;
- Lighting improvements in the City-owned underpass and;
- Pedestrian head start signals at Indian Valley Crescent, Howard Park Avenue, Geoffrey Street, and High Park Boulevard.

The following change is planned:

- Traffic signal on Parkside Drive approximately 100m south of Spring Road at High Park Trail to allow for safe pedestrian crossing to the TTC bus stop. The estimated activation of the signal is at the end of summer 2023.

The regulatory speed limit on Parkside Drive is 40 km/hr/ Data suggest that motor vehicle speeds have decreased since changes were implemented on Parkside Drive. In the southbound direction, operating speeds decreased by approximately 17%, from 62km/hr to 51 km/hr. In the northbound direction, operating speeds decreased by approximately 13% from 55km/hr to 48km/hr. Higher speeds in the southbound direction may be attributed to the downward slope of the roadway, two continuous lanes of travel, and lack of on-street parking in the curb lane (except between Spring Road and High Park Trail).

Vision for Parkside Drive

The Parkside Drive Study considered three scenarios for change on Parkside Drive. The three scenarios presented distinct approaches for improving safety and mobility along the corridor, and differing timelines for implementation. The three scenarios were: Road Reconfiguration, Road Geometry Updates, and a Traffic Management Plan.

Scenario 1: Road Reconfiguration

The first concept explored design options that would see major changes to the allocation of right-of-way space to improve safety and reduce speeding. Vehicular travel lanes would be removed and replaced with one or a combination of Complete Street

elements. Configuration options will explore opportunities to reduce vehicular travel lanes in one or both directions, and/or introduce a bi-directional vehicular centre lane.

Scenario 2: Road Geometry Updates

The second concept explored opportunities to improve safety and reduce speeding through geometric changes and road realignment at critical locations along the corridor. This concept focused on enhancing intersections and safety hot spots, but did not include a proposal to remove vehicular travel lanes. Interventions were aimed at improving compliance with road regulations.

Scenario 3: Traffic Management Plan

The third concept explored opportunities to improve safety and traffic operations through traffic management adjustments, like changes to signal timing plans, signage and regulations. This option did not include a proposal to remove vehicular travel lanes, nor make modifications to the curb lines.

Preferred Scenario

Parkside Drive's built form reflects legacy standards; the sidewalk is mostly limited to the east side of the street and there are no designated cycling facilities. The current configuration predates the [Complete Streets Guidelines](#) which aim to design streets for people, place-making and prosperity and to serve a multitude of roles, functions and users.

Through adopted policies contained in the TransformTO Climate Action Strategy, Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild's COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities report, City Council has directed Transportation Services to update corridors built to legacy standards when they are due for state of good repair (SOGR) work. Road work provides the opportunity to review a street's form and function and make changes to its features to support the divisional vision for Complete Streets.

The preferred scenario and future vision for Parkside Drive involves road reconfiguration. Road reconfiguration provides an opportunity to upgrade the corridor to current standards and support multi-modal travel options. It will change the current allocation of right-of-way space and incorporate Complete Streets elements. More information on the Complete Streets approach for Parkside Drive can be found in Attachment 3.

The Parkside Drive Study will determine an appropriate Complete Streets vision for the corridor that can be implemented through the SOGR capital plan. Staff will complete a high level budget estimate for detailed design and road reconstruction costs of Parkside Drive, including a possible need to initiate a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study, to be submitted to City Council for consideration as part of the latter half of the 2025-2036 capital plan. The study will also identify feasible interventions that can be delivered in the interim phase, in advance of road reconstruction. Interim improvements would not preclude or be done in place of road reconstruction.

Any changes contemplated for Parkside Drive must be considered in coordination with the Council-approved strategy for High Park. The intersection of Parkside Drive and

High Park Boulevard will become the main visitor vehicle entrance into the park; people driving or being driven to the park's interior destinations will be required to enter via Parkside Drive (at High Park Boulevard) and exit via Bloor Street West (at High Park Avenue). All other entry and exit points will permit two-way movements for non-motorized travel modes (e.g. pedestrians and people cycling).

Road reconfiguration options on Parkside Drive must consider the plans for High Park and support multi-modal travel movements along and across the corridor. The options need to account for the phased implementation of the HPMS which will see full road closures at all times in the long term.

Attachment 4 describes the existing conditions of Parkside Drive and four potential road reconfiguration design concepts that will be explored in the next phase of work.

Sidewalk Feasibility Study

In 2022 Transportation Services evaluated the feasibility of installing a sidewalk along the west side of Parkside Drive from Bloor Street West to The Queensway. The goal of the feasibility study was to identify options for a formal, continuous path of travel for pedestrians that enhances the north-south travel experience compared to existing conditions. Currently, the west side of Parkside Drive contains informal paths (e.g. dirt paths) and minimal formal pedestrian facilities (sidewalk segments and some asphalt or concrete surfaced areas at signalized intersections and bus stops).

Findings from the study identified that the environmental and civil engineering constraints mean that sidewalks cannot be installed on the west side of Parkside Drive from Bloor Street West to Spring Road along the current alignment behind the street light poles. Creating the space required for an accessible, high-quality, and all-season sidewalk in that alignment would impact environmentally sensitive and protected areas with established trees, shrubs, ravines, and other natural features. The study identified several civil engineering constraints such as grade changes, retaining walls, guard rails, and hydro poles. The Parkside Drive Study will continue to assess and determine the feasibility of installing sidewalks within the existing curb alignment, on the street side of the light poles.

The Sidewalk Feasibility Study supported the installation of a temporary sidewalk on the west side of Parkside Drive between Spring Road and just north of The Queensway underpass; it was installed in 2022.

Public Engagement

The participation of road users, local community members, and other stakeholders in the study is essential to determine the future vision for Parkside Drive. The study will be supported by two phases of public engagement activities. The first phase, hosted in summer 2022, gathered community concerns and priorities for the roadway through an online survey. The second phase of engagement is targeted for fall 2023 and will gather feedback on potential road reconfiguration options and opportunities for interim changes.

The first phase of consultation recorded over 2000 survey responses. The primary concerns identified by participants were related to road user safety and the need for the corridor to better serve people using various active modes of travel. Excessive speeding was identified as a top concern by survey respondents (74%), followed by not enough sidewalk space (58%) and lack of bikeways (54%). The top three priorities for future improvements to the corridor responded directly to the concerns. They were: making it easier and more comfortable for people to walk and cycle (74%); improving safety for all road users particularly the most vulnerable (70%); and reducing vehicle speeds (67%). Many respondents commented on the need for pedestrian improvements to address legacy conditions of the narrow existing sidewalk and the lack of sidewalk on the west side of the street.

Most participants expressed support for changes to Parkside Drive, however some were concerned about the impact of design changes, particularly lane reductions, on traffic volumes in adjacent neighbourhoods. A summary of survey results and communications received can be found in the [Phase One Consultation Report](#).

The second phase of engagement is targeted for fall 2023. Engagement activities will facilitate discussion and collect input on the Complete Streets vision for Parkside Drive and improvements that could feasibly be made in the interim period.

Next Steps

The Parkside Drive Study is ongoing; the next phase of work will determine feasible road reconfiguration scenarios and identify interim interventions that can be delivered in advance of road reconstruction. This phase will also consider changes that support the implementation of the HPMS, like intersection improvements and actions that support multi-modal movement to and from High Park.

Public consultation will be facilitated in fall 2023 to gather community feedback on both the road reconfiguration scenarios and interim improvements. Corridor concept plans for both the long-term vision and interim changes will be presented to road users, local residents and stakeholders.

A final report on the outcomes of the Parkside Drive Study is targeted for late 2023, after the second phase of public consultation. The final recommendation to Council on the preferred vision and interim plan for Parkside Drive will take into account community input, existing conditions assessment, technical feasibility assessment, and an implementation strategy.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Study Area Map
Attachment 2: Summary of Traffic Studies and Data Analysis
Attachment 3: Complete Streets Approach for Parkside Drive
Attachment 4: Potential Road Configuration Scenarios for Parkside Drive

Attachment 1: Study Area Map



Attachment 2: Summary of Traffic Studies and Data Analysis

Traffic data was compiled, collected and analyzed to assess traffic trends on Parkside Drive and identify potential areas of concern. Traffic studies and counts are completed in the City to quantify travel behaviours relating to speed and volume.

Available datasets on Parkside Drive range from 6 months to twenty years old. Pre-pandemic data, and data collected before Council-directed improvements ([2021.MM37.1](#)) were implemented were compared to 2022 speed and volume datasets. A comparative analysis was completed on Parkside Drive to determine the impact of the improvements on motorist behaviours on Parkside Drive.

Travel Patterns

Table 1 summarizes motor vehicle speeds by road segment.

Midblock Location on Parkside Drive	Direction	Date of Data Collection	Motor Vehicle Operating Speed (85 percentile)
South of Rideout St	Northbound	April 2017	58 km/hr
South of Rideout St	Southbound	April 2017	62 km/hr
South of Rideout St	Northbound	November 2022	52 km/hr
South of Rideout St	Southbound	November 2022	57 km/hr
South of Geoffrey St	Northbound	November 2021	57 km/hr
South of Geoffrey St	Southbound	November 2021	63 km/hr
South of Geoffrey St	Northbound	November 2021	48 km/hr
South of Geoffrey St	Southbound	November 2022	53 km/hr
North of Howard Park Ave	Northbound	November 2022	52 km/hr
North of Howard Park Ave	Southbound	November 2022	58 km/hr
South of High Park Blvd	Northbound	June 2017	54 km/hr
South of High Park Blvd	Northbound	November 2022	48 km/hr
South of High Park Blvd	Southbound	November 2022	49 km/hr
North of Garden Ave	Southbound	June 2017	62 km/hr
North of Garden Ave	Northbound	May 2022	48 km/hr
North of Garden Ave	Southbound	May 2022	51 km/hr

Midblock Location on Parkside Drive	Direction	Date of Data Collection	Motor Vehicle Operating Speed (85 percentile)
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Northbound	June 2017	51 km/hr
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Southbound	June 2017	62 km/hr
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Northbound	November 2022	44 km/hr
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Southbound	November 2022	47 km/hr

Parkside Drive is a major arterial road; traffic and transit movement is a primary function of the roadway. Major arterials roads typically carry over 20,000 motor vehicles per day. Data suggest that motor vehicle volumes have decreased by approximately 27% from over 28,000 daily motor vehicles to approximately 21,000 daily motor vehicles. The decrease in daily motor vehicle volumes may be attributed to the changes in travel patterns associated with the pandemic. Data analysis of parallel routes, like Indian Road, suggest that traffic has not been displaced or diverted elsewhere.

Table 2 summarizes motor vehicle volumes by road segment.

Midblock Location on Parkside Drive	Direction	Date of Data Collection	Motor Vehicle Volume
South of Rideout St	Northbound	April 2017	13,279
South of Rideout St	Southbound	April 2017	12,813
South of Rideout St	Northbound	November 2022	10,266
South of Rideout St	Southbound	November 2022	10,337
South of Geoffrey St	Northbound	November 2021	15,063
South of Geoffrey St	Southbound	November 2021	15,667
South of Geoffrey St	Northbound	November 2021	11,131
South of Geoffrey St	Southbound	November 2022	10,906
North of Howard Park Ave	Northbound	December 2011	14,207
North of Howard Park Ave	Southbound	December 2011	14,191
North of Howard Park Ave	Northbound	November 2022	9,889
North of Howard Park Ave	Southbound	November 2022	9,614
South of High Park Blvd	Northbound	June 2017	15,865

Midblock Location on Parkside Drive	Direction	Date of Data Collection	Motor Vehicle Volume
South of High Park Blvd	Northbound	November 2022	9,373
South of High Park Blvd	Southbound	November 2022	9,100
North of Garden Ave	Southbound	June 2017	17,471
North of Garden Ave	Northbound	May 2022	12,354
North of Garden Ave	Southbound	May 2022	11,713
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Northbound	June 2017	11,891
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Southbound	June 2017	13,371
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Northbound	November 2022	10,427
North of Lake Shore Blvd	Southbound	November 2022	11,559

Road Safety (10 Year History)

Collision history from the last ten years was reviewed with a special emphasis on collisions involving vulnerable road users, and those that resulted in a death or serious injury. Collision history provided by the Toronto Police Service for the ten-year period ending in December 2022, included seven (7) collisions that resulted in a death or serious injury on Parkside Drive. Six (6) serious injuries and three (3) fatalities resulted from the seven (7) collisions.

Collision history from the last ten years was reviewed with a special emphasis on collisions that resulted in a death or serious injury. In the last ten years there were seven collisions that resulted in a person being killed or seriously injured (KSI collision) on Parkside Drive. Table 1 provides an inventory of the location, date and collision type for each. Table 3 summarizes collision history.

Table 3: KSI Collision History (2012-2022) in the study area.

Location	Date	Collision type
Bloor Street West and Parkside Drive	March 15, 2015	Vehicle - Vehicle
Indian Valley Crescent and Parkside Drive	December 13, 2015	Vehicle - Cyclist
Spring Road and Parkside Drive	June 26, 2016	Vehicle - Pedestrian
Parkside Drive, south of Indian Valley Crescent (midblock)	September 15, 2018	Vehicle - Motorcyclist
Bloor Street West and Parkside Drive	June 1, 2019	Vehicle - Cyclist
Constance Street and Parkside Drive	July 8, 2019	Vehicle - Pedestrian

Location	Date	Collision type
Spring Road and Parkside Drive	October 12, 2021	Vehicle - Vehicle

Attachment 3: Complete Streets Approach for Parkside Drive

A Complete Streets approach will be used to determine the best use of the available space. It will be proposed that vehicular travel lane(s) be replaced with one or a combination of Complete Streets elements: cycling facilities, new and/or widened sidewalks, street parking, and green infrastructure features.

The roadway (the space between the two curbs) currently has four travel lanes and is an average of 12.8 metres wide. The sidewalk on the east side of the street ranges from 1.5-1.7 metres wide. Reconfiguration options will be limited to the existing hardscaped (paved) space. In some locations the right-of-way extends into the High Park greenspace on the west side, and into the driveways and front yards of the properties on the east. Widening the road to increase the width of hardscaped space is not feasible due to the environmental impacts and civil engineering constraints.



Feasible Complete Streets design options must adhere to the City's existing guidelines for transportation infrastructure. For example, new sidewalks are required to conform to the latest guidelines, which now include a pedestrian clearway of minimum 2.1 metres (not including furnishing zone for lamp poles, bus shelters, parking meters, bike parking, planting areas etc.). Cycling facilities are required to conform to the latest guidelines, which specify minimum widths and buffer space in relation to speed and volume of motor vehicle traffic. Street parking can only be installed where there are sidewalks and vehicular travel lanes are required to be 3.3 metres when used by a TTC route.

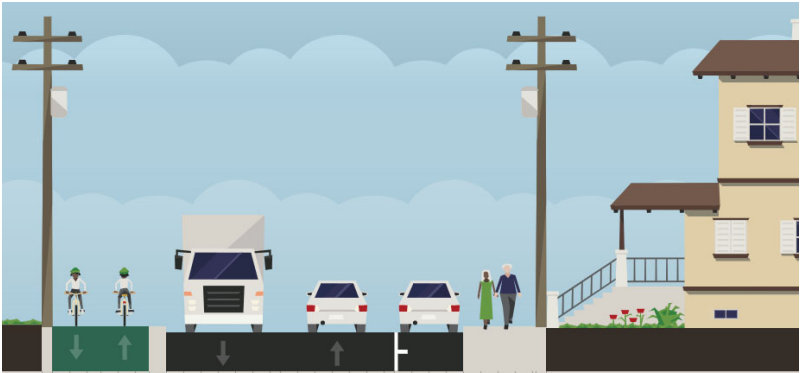

Design trade-offs between elements of a Complete Street will be carefully considered through research, analysis and consultation with road users and local community members in order to determine a preferred allocation of available space. Potential benefits and impacts, including to safety, volumes, travel times and goods movement along the corridor will be carefully considered.

Attachment 4: Potential Road Reconfiguration Scenarios for Parkside Drive

Table 4 describes potential road reconfiguration design concepts. The feasibility of the potential design concepts will be explored in the next phase of the project. Public engagement activities will be facilitated to gather feedback from road users, local community members and other stakeholders.

Table 4: Potential Road Reconfiguration Design Concepts

Scenario Number	Description	Cross Section
Existing Conditions	Existing conditions of Parkside Drive. Three driving lanes and one parking lane. Sidewalk on the east side of the roadway.	 <p>The diagram illustrates a three-lane road with a bus in the center lane, a car in the left lane, and a car in the right lane. A parking lane is located on the far right. A sidewalk is on the east side with two pedestrians. Utility poles are on both sides, and a house is on the right.</p>
1	Two driving lanes and one parking lane. Separated, northbound bike lane and widened sidewalk on the east side of the roadway. Separated bike lane on the west side of the roadway.	 <p>The diagram shows a reconfigured road with two driving lanes, a bus in the center, and a car in the right lane. A separated bike lane is on the west side with a cyclist. A wider sidewalk is on the east side with two pedestrians. A parking lane is on the far right. Utility poles and a house are also present.</p>

Scenario Number	Description	Cross Section
2	<p>Two driving lanes and one parking lane. A bidirectional, separated bike lane on the west side of the roadway. Widened sidewalk on the east side of the roadway.</p>	 <p>The diagram illustrates a roadway cross-section. From left to right: a green-paved bidirectional bike lane with two cyclists; a white van and two white cars in the two driving lanes; a white car in the parking lane; a wide sidewalk with two pedestrians; and a yellow house with a porch on the east side. Utility poles are positioned on both sides of the roadway.</p>
3	<p>Two driving lanes and one parking lane. Widened sidewalk on the east side of the roadway. A sidewalk and green infrastructure of the west side of the roadway.</p>	 <p>The diagram illustrates a roadway cross-section. From left to right: a sidewalk with two pedestrians and a green tree; a white car and two white cars in the two driving lanes; a white car in the parking lane; a wide sidewalk with two pedestrians; and a yellow house with a porch on the east side. Utility poles are positioned on both sides of the roadway.</p>

Scenario Number	Description	Cross Section
4	<p>Two driving lanes and a bidirectional centre driving lane to support peak-hour capacities. Widened sidewalk and green infrastructure on the east side of the roadway.</p>	