



## **Administrative Report**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Jerry Behl, P.Eng., Manager, Transportation Planning and Development

**Date:** Wednesday, October 1, 2025

**Subject:** Transportation Master Plan Update

**Report #:** 2025-1001-IPS-R22-JB

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Essex County Council (Council) with an update on Transportation Master Plan (TMP) work that has been completed to date and next steps in the process.

### **Background**

In 2005, Council adopted the most recent Transportation Master Plan, completed in partnership with the City of Windsor (the City). The study goal was "to develop a new comprehensive Regional Transportation Master Plan for the Essex-Windsor region with recommended policies and an implementation strategy that will serve the needs of this region to year 2021". With the 2005 Transportation Master Plan in hand as a first step in the planning process, the County of Essex (the County) completed a number of Environmental Assessments in support of construction projects, when funding became available. The Finance department then worked to best position the County for expansion/capacity projects.

In July 2023, R.J. Burnside and Associates Limited (the Consultant) was hired to begin working on the TMP Update. The intent of the study is to evaluate and recommend solutions in consultation with the public, indigenous communities, stakeholders, and agencies. At the conclusion of the study, the process will be documented in a study report, prepared for public review.

## Discussion

### Overview

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The TMP Update is necessary due to the significant growth in population, employment, and traffic volumes Essex County has experienced since the 2005 TMP was completed and adopted. Since then, there has been a growing interest in active transportation facilities from residents. The transportation industry has also introduced new best management practices, including a greater focus on active transportation and road safety. The updated plan will consider future changes in residential and commercial development.

The TMP Update has the following objectives:

- Facilitate long term planning and policy framework for transportation infrastructure for the next 30 years;
- Establish a blueprint to develop future transportation network;
- Develop a safe, sustainable multi-modal strategy;
- Recognize unique needs for municipalities and all types of road users; and,
- Enhance the County's connectivity to the internal and external transportation network.

The planning process for the TMP Update has followed these five stages:

- **Stage 1** - Review and Consult
- **Stage 2** - Develop the Plan
- **Stage 3** - Evaluation of Options
- **Stage 4** - Draft the Plan
- **Stage 5** - Finalize the Plan

Since the project began, the Consultant has focused on the following:

- 1) Reviewing guiding documents from the Province, the County, and Local Municipal Partners (LMP)
- 2) Stakeholder and Public Engagement
- 3) Establishing a Regional Transportation Model

In 2023, the City of Windsor also began the process of updating their Transportation Master Plan. Administration is collaborating closely with the City,

and additional traffic modelling is being undertaken in partnership to achieve coordination between the jurisdictions.

## **Alternative Solutions**

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The Consultant has developed draft evaluation criteria that includes:

- Transportation Service
- Equity
- Alignment with County objectives
- Environmental Impact
- Cost

Using these criteria, the Consultant assessed the following alternative solutions:

- Do Nothing: Proceed business-as-usual
- Alternative 1: Maintain roads with transit upgrades
- Alternative 2: Upgrade roads, transit and active transportation
- Alternative 3: Focus on transit and active transportation

Based on the County and LMP strategic objectives, the County Official Plan, technical analysis, environmental impacts, input from key stakeholders (including the public), input from local partners (including MTO and the City), the TMP Update is recommending a preferred solution that is a multi-modal strategy and encompasses improvements to road safety, active transportation and transit.

## **Additional Work**

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In addition to the original scope of work, RJ Burnside has been assisting the County with tasks to help strengthen the Transportation Master Plan Update. This primarily includes additional stakeholder engagement and developing a full transportation forecast model.

Through the TMP planning process, opportunities for engagement such as Public Information Centres (PIC) have been held however, attendance and feedback were limited. Most comments were received from participants in the age range of 55 or older. With the TMP being a critical document that plans the long-term transportation vision for the County for the next 20-30 years, it is imperative to have more representation and engage the public, including vulnerable populations, in a more meaningful way. To gather additional feedback and strengthen stakeholder outreach, RJ Burnside and County staff held a public presentation discussing critical transportation topics (such as equity and active transportation) and hosted an online survey that closed in Spring 2025. The

team's outreach included connecting with students, Indigenous Communities, and migrant worker programs. The project team received **897** comments from residents and impacted stakeholders through the online survey.

In the initial analysis of the TMP, RJ Burnside began with an existing, but older, transportation model. While the original scope of services provided for refinement, it had certain limitations due to the structure and age of the original model. In partnership with the City of Windsor, the County requested that RJ Burnside undertake the development of a full, robust transportation forecast model that would assist in validating the results of the TMP analysis and as a resource for future transportation studies, supporting the County's growth and planning needs even after the completion of the TMP.

These additional efforts provide a stronger basis for developing alternatives and recommendations for the County's road infrastructure and network through the TMP planning process.

## **Next Steps**

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Following this Council report and presentation, the following steps are planned:

- PIC 3 – November 2025
- Finalize Environmental Study Report (ESR) – January 2026
- Present Final ESR to Council – February 2026
- Publish Notice of Study Completion – February 2026

## **Financial Implications**

In 2023 County Council approved a budget of \$300,000 toward completion of the works, and a contract was signed with RJ Burnside for \$225,000 (including applicable taxes).

As the work progressed, additional tasks were identified to strengthen the plan, including development of a new transportation model in partnership with the City of Windsor. The City has agreed to contribute approximately \$58,000 toward these costs. To enhance stakeholder engagement, an additional \$40,000 is projected in 2025, with a further \$40,000 anticipated in 2026 to finalize the project.

Overall, the project is expected to exceed the original budget by approximately \$10,000. Administration recommends that this shortfall be funded through the Rate Stabilization Reserve.

It is important to note that these costs relate only to completion of the Transportation Master Plan Update. Future implementation of the plan's

recommendations may require additional investment. Those costs will be brought forward separately for Council’s consideration through future budgets and capital planning processes.

**Consultations**

Consultation with Infrastructure & Planning Services, Finance, and Engineering staff from the LMPs has taken place. A Technical Advisory Group was established with staff from the LMPs to provide an opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Two Public Information Centres have been held:

- PIC #1: Purpose, Background, Needs & Opportunities - June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- PIC #2: Preliminary Alternative Solutions - June 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 3 different locations in the County
- Public Presentation: Transportation Master Plan: Possibilities and Potential – December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Online survey – closed in Spring 2025

Upcoming stakeholder engagement includes:

- Transit Group Presentation – September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- CWATS Committee Presentation – September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- PIC #3: Present TMP Final Recommendations – Mid-November, 2025

**Strategic Plan Alignment**

<b>Working as Team Essex County</b>	<b>Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence</b>	<b>Building a Regional Powerhouse</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

## **Recommendation**

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-1001-IPS-R22-JB ,  
Transportation Master Plan Update as information; and,

That Council approve the funding of the projected shortfall of approximately  
\$10,000 from the Rate Stabilization Reserve.

## **Approvals**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jerry Behl*

Jerry Behl, P.Eng., Manager, Transportation Planning and Development

Concurred With,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Sandra Zwiers*

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
N/A	N/A