



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

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

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Subject: County Road 46 Environmental Assessment

Report #: 2025-1015-IPS-R23-JB

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide County Council with information on the County Road 46 Environmental Assessment process and provide a copy of the Environmental Study Report for approval.

Background

Road network improvements are required within the western sectors of the County of Essex to accommodate growth south of Highway 401 and bordering the City of Windsor. County Road 46 improvement is identified in the County of Essex Capacity and Expansion Program, as report 2023-1018-IPS-R34-AB.

The County of Essex in partnership with the Town of Tecumseh retained BT Engineering Inc. (BTE) to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) for improvements to County Road 46 (locally known across a number of local municipalities as Provincial Road/North Talbot Road/Middle Road) from Highway 401 (City of Windsor municipal limits) to County Road 19 (Manning Road).

In partnership with the Town of Tecumseh, the County Road 46 EA was expanded to include portions of Concession Roads 8 and 9. The EA for County Road 46 and Concession Roads 8 and 9 are being undertaken concurrently as one EA Study. The Study Area and road segments are depicted in Figure 1.

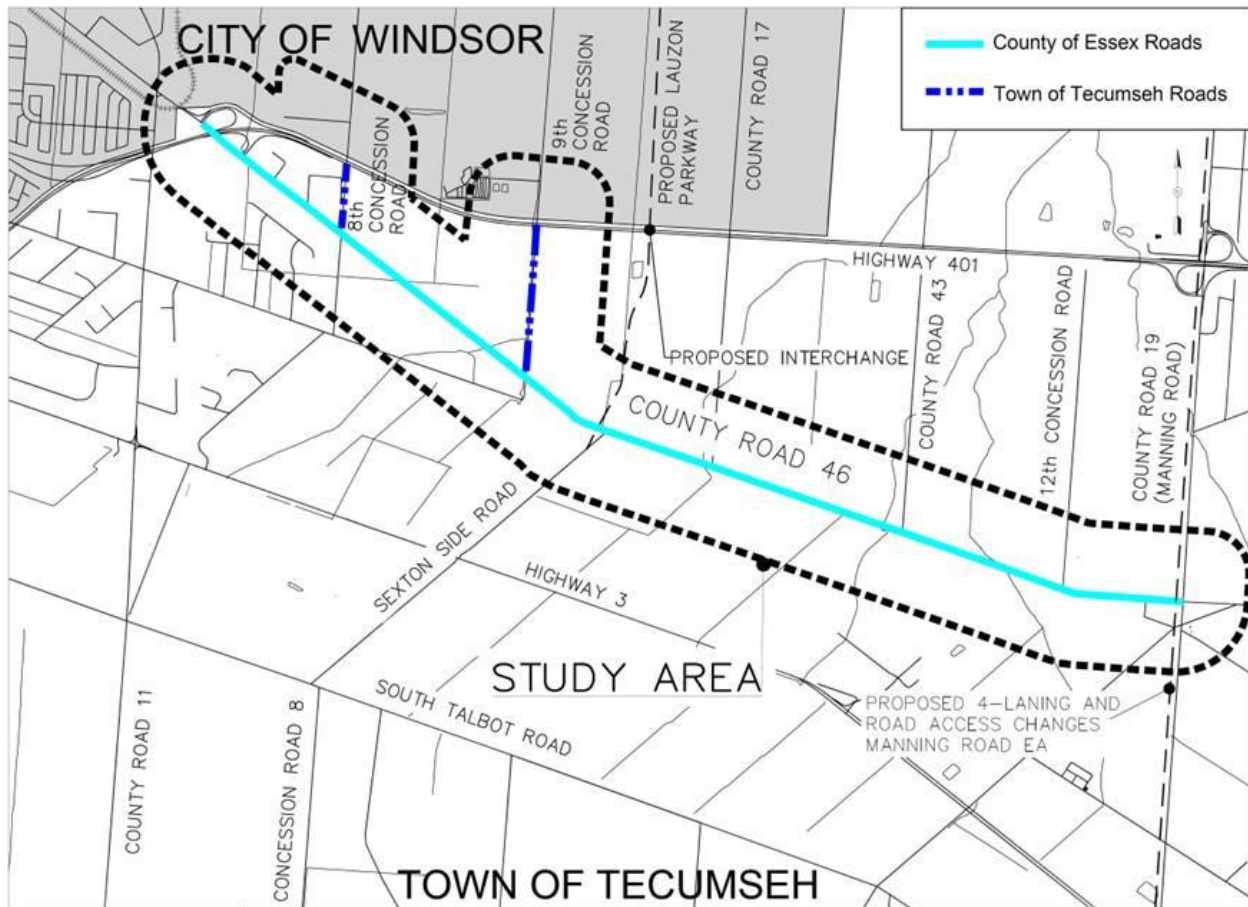


Figure 1

Discussion

The Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) in Ontario recognizes the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process as a streamlined approach tailored for municipal infrastructure projects.

Municipalities must complete a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) before proceeding with a project to ensure compliance with the Environmental Assessment Act and facilitate informed decision-making. This process assesses environmental impacts, manages risks, and aligns projects with sustainability goals. It also involves public and stakeholder engagement, enhancing transparency and trust. Completing the MCEA helps identify potential environmental issues early, allowing for cost-effective mitigation strategies and adherence to regulatory requirements, ultimately supporting strategic planning and sustainable development.

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process is undertaken in a series of phases commencing with problem identification

and culminating in the filing of an Environmental Study Report (ESR). This process includes an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives and the selection of a preferred alternative(s) with acceptable effects (including avoidance and mitigation of any residual adverse effects) on the natural and social/cultural environments. The MCEA process follows five phases:

Phase 1: Identify the Problem

Phase 2: Consider Alternative Solutions

Phase 3: Review Alternative Design Concepts for the Preferred Solution

Phase 4: Draft an Environmental Study Report

Phase 5: Implementation

A needs and opportunity statement is an initial and crucial part of every MCEA, helping to articulate the problem, objectives and goals. County Road 46 EA documents describe the need and opportunity as:

Road network improvements are required within the western sectors of the County to accommodate proposed development and improve traffic operations and safety. The Study will provide an opportunity to:

- *Improve efficiency of the roads considered.*
- *Improve access and reduce traffic delays.*
- *Implement active transportation policies and improvements consistent with the TMP and the County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS).*
- *Assess current and projected traffic demands along County Road 46 and Concession Roads 8 and 9 to identify areas for improvement, such as intersection enhancements and capacity expansions.*
- *Consider road safety.*

Public consultation is also important and this study used several techniques to proactively involve the public. The study was carried out in consultation with staff from the County of Essex and Town of Tecumseh, external agencies, stakeholders and the public. Three Public Consultation events were held:

- Public Consultation Centre #1 April 4, 2024
- Public Consultation Centre #2 Nov 13, 2024
- Public Consultation Centre #3 June 2, 2025

Alternatives were developed, reviewed, and refined through engineering analysis and public feedback. Key considerations included cross-section design, roadway alignment, intersection treatments, and potential impacts to property and the environment.

The Preliminary Design Alternatives under review are as follows:

County Road 46 Alignment Alternatives – options include widening to the north, on-centre, to the south, or using a meandering alignment to avoid constraints.

Concession Roads 8 and 9 Alternatives – including potential right-of-way widening to accommodate active transportation facilities.

Cross-Section Alternatives – evaluating rural and urban cross-sections, roadway widening, and the integration of active transportation elements.

Intersection Alternatives – comparing conventional intersection layouts with roundabout designs.

Due to the length and varying characteristics of County Road 46, the study area was divided into 3 sections as depicted in Figure 2.

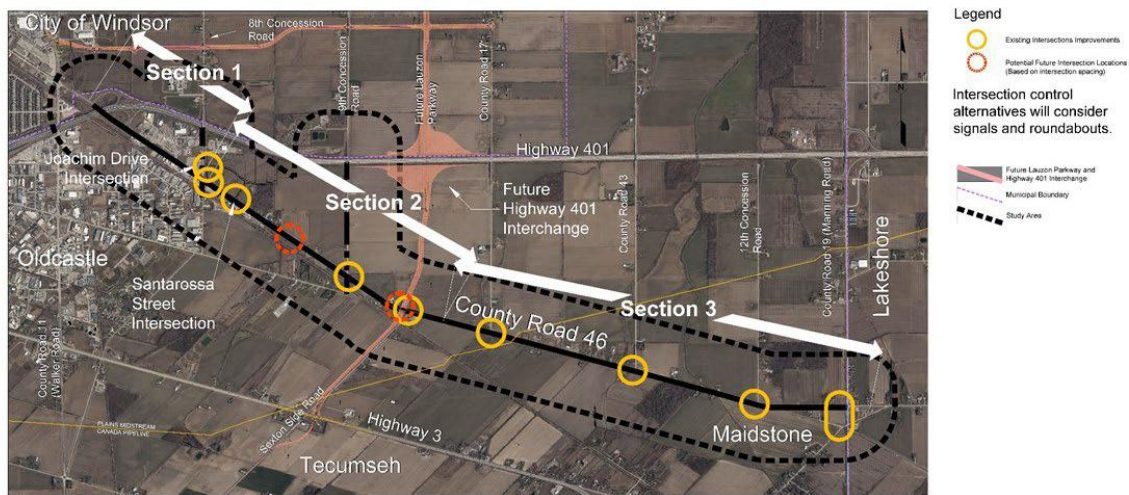


Figure 2

Section 1 and part of Section 2 (Highway 401 to Concession Road 9) recommended cross section is depicted in Figure 3.

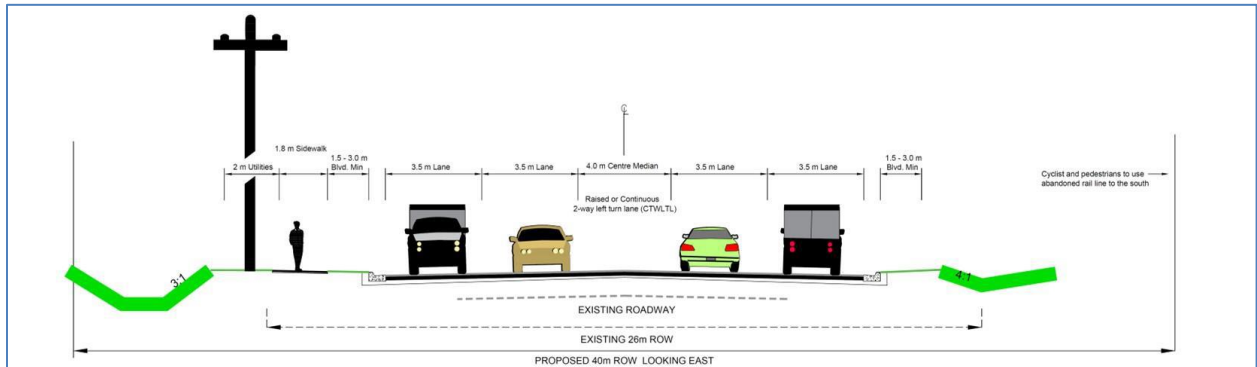


Figure 3

The remainder of Section 2 (Concession Road 9 easterly) recommended cross section is depicted in Figure 4.

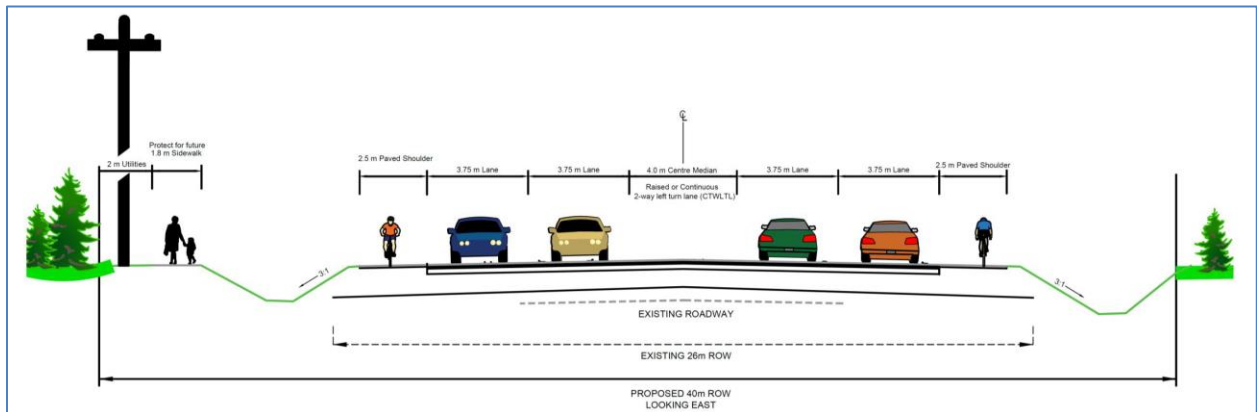


Figure 4

Section 3 recommended cross section is depicted in Figure 5.

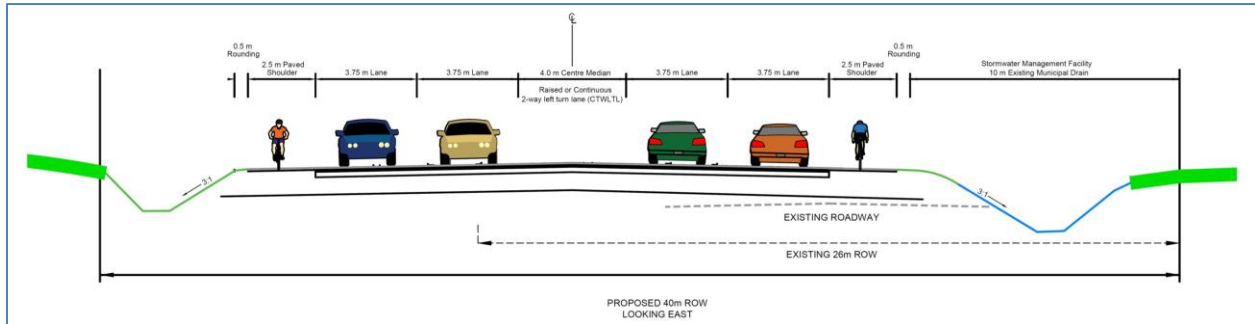


Figure 5

Additional detail and information of recommended solutions and options considered is provided in the Executive Summary of the Environmental Study Report attached as Appendix I.

Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications at this time as the consultant fees are within the approved 2025 budget of \$268,000.

Consultations

Administration from the Town of Tecumseh have been consulted throughout this process.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-1015-IPS-R23-JB, County Road 46 Environmental Assessment as information; and,

That County Council endorse the recommendations of the Environmental Study Report Executive Summary; and,

That County Council direct Administration to initiate the mandatory 30-day public review period of the Environmental Study Report.

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

Appendix	Title
I	County Road 46 Environmental Study Report Executive Summary