

Project Overview

Highway 2 is part the National Highway System and the CANAMEX North South Trade Corridor linking Coumts, Alberta and Sweetgrass, Montana to the BC border on Highway 43. It is currently a four-lane divided freeway used by approximately 27,000 vehicles per day. As traffic volumes continue to increase in the area, this section of the highway requires upgrading to safely accommodate growing traffic.

This study will consider:

- Operational considerations (e.g. capacity, access, interchange configurations and right-of-way requirements) to develop functional plans for a new interchange;
- 338 Avenue's alignment and how it connects to the future proposed interchange; and
- Input from Albertans including multiple stakeholders and adjacent property owners.

The study is anticipated to be completed in late 2022.

The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) completed a South and East Calgary Regional Transportation study in 2020 and a future Highway 2 and 338 Avenue interchange was ranked in the top 20 most beneficial regional projects within a 10-year window. Design, construction timelines and funding have not been established at this time. Recommendations from this study will be considered for construction based on provincial priorities and funding plans.

Engagement Overview

Engagement for the functional planning study is organized into two phases – each tied to key milestones in the development of the functional plans.

- **Phase 1: Data Collection – Fall 2021**
 - Environmental Evaluation
 - Geotechnical and Utility Review
 - Traffic Forecasting and Collision Analysis
- **Phase 2: Alternative Development and Assessment (January to May 2022)**
 - Develop and Evaluate Options
 - Open House #1 – March 2022
 - Virtual Landowner Group Meeting – March 9, 2022 (6-8pm)
 - Virtual Public Open House – March 10, 2022 (6-8pm)
 - Online Survey – February 23 to March 17, 2022
- **Phase 3: Recommended Alternative (May to December 2022)**
 - Develop Recommended Concept
 - Open House #2 – September 2022
 - Finalize Functional Plan and Report

In compliance with public health recommendations in effect at the time of planning the first round of engagement, engagement for Phase 2 was held entirely online. A virtual landowner group meeting and public open house were held via Zoom on March 9 and 10 from 6 to 8 p.m., respectively. An online survey was used to gather feedback and was available from February 23 to March 17, 2022.

Approximately 25 people attended the virtual landowner meeting, and 100 people attended the virtual public open house. The project team received 397 survey submissions.

Highway 2 / 338 Avenue Interchange Functional Planning Study Round 1 Engagement – What We Heard Summary

Engagement opportunities were advertised through the Alberta Transportation and Town of Okotoks websites, Town of Okotoks Facebook posts, letters to landowners immediately adjacent property owners and key stakeholders, newspaper ads in the Okotoks Western Wheel newspaper, a public service announcement and interview on the Eagle 100.9 radio station, and road-side signs placed near the study area.

What We Heard

The key themes we heard during the first round of public engagement are highlighted in the sections below.

Overall Themes

- There was general support for an interchange at the Highway 2/338 Avenue interchange to improve access and safety at this location. It was noted that the high traffic volumes and speeds on Highway 2 make it challenging to exit/enter the intersection and cross Highway 2.
- There were concerns raised about the Highway 2 median closures at 306, 338 and 370 Avenue intersections proposed for 2023, independent of this interchange project. Several respondents expressed concern about the impacts to access and safety (I.e. emergency response time) related to changes in traffic patterns on local roadways that the closure of medians would have, especially when the timing of the Highway 2/338 Avenue interchange construction is unknown at this time.
- There was more support for Option A and Option C than Option B. Several respondents indicated that Option A and C provide more direct access to Highway 2 and would result in fewer impacts to properties and residents, in comparison to Option B.
- In general, the most common concerns about all options included the impact to residential, agricultural and commercial properties, residents and businesses, as well as how access would be impacted by each of the options.
- Several respondents had questions about when the recommended option would be shared publicly and when construction of the interchange would occur.

For a detailed summary of the feedback that was provided, please see the **Summary of Input** section.

Next Steps

Input from adjacent landowners and businesses, key stakeholders and the public, along with technical expertise, will help inform the recommended concept for the study area. The recommended concept will be shared during the final phase of engagement for the planning study in September 2022. Feedback gathered on the recommended concept, along with technical expertise, will be used to finalize the recommended concept. There will be future opportunities for engagement in the next phase of the design process (timing to be confirmed).

Summary of Input – What We Heard

Landowner and Public Session

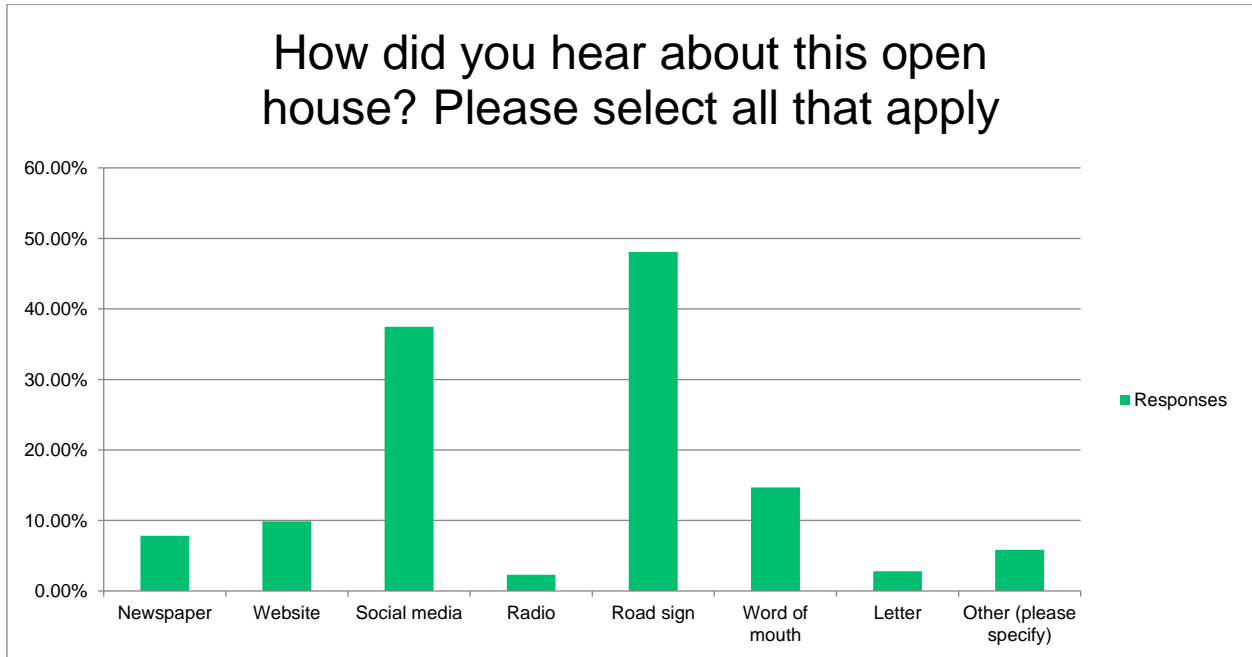
Below is a high-level summary of what we heard from participants at the virtual landowner meeting and virtual public open house on March 9 and 10, 2022.

Summary of Input:

- Several participants at the sessions had questions about which short-listed option was preferred, when the recommended option would be shared publicly, how access would be provided to area residents and businesses, and when the interchange would be built.
- Some participants had concerns about the impacts to their property, access and property values due to the interchange. Concerns about how access would be provided to residents on 1064 Drive in Option B and C were raised by some participants.
- Several participants had concerns about the impacts to access and safety (i.e. emergency response time) related to changes to traffic patterns on local roadways that the closure of medians at Highway 2 and 306, 338 and 370 Avenue intersections in 2023 (led by Alberta Transportation as a separate project) would have, especially when the timing of the Highway 2/338 Avenue interchange construction is unknown at this time.
- Some participants asked whether the median closures could be postponed until the interchange was built or if one or two of the medians could remain open until the interchange was built.
- Some participants asked how they could provide feedback on the short-listed options presented, how their feedback would be used to inform the recommended option and if feedback received would be shared publicly.
- Some participants had questions about what other interchange options were considered and if traffic lights instead of an interchange were considered.
- Some participants had questions and concerns about how the interchange would connect to existing roads in the area and if there were plans to upgrade or widen other area roads.
- Some participants had questions about the number of collisions that have occurred at this intersection in the past and if the interchange was needed. Others noted that the current intersection was unsafe and that accidents and near misses were a concern.
- Some participants had questions about area intersections and interchanges to the south and if there were plans to upgrade them.
- Some participants asked how access for cyclists would be accommodated on interchange options.
- Some participants had concerns about the impacts to the adjacent watercourse and Champion Park.
- Some participants noted that in-person rather than virtual engagement sessions are preferred to share information and respond to questions.

Online Survey

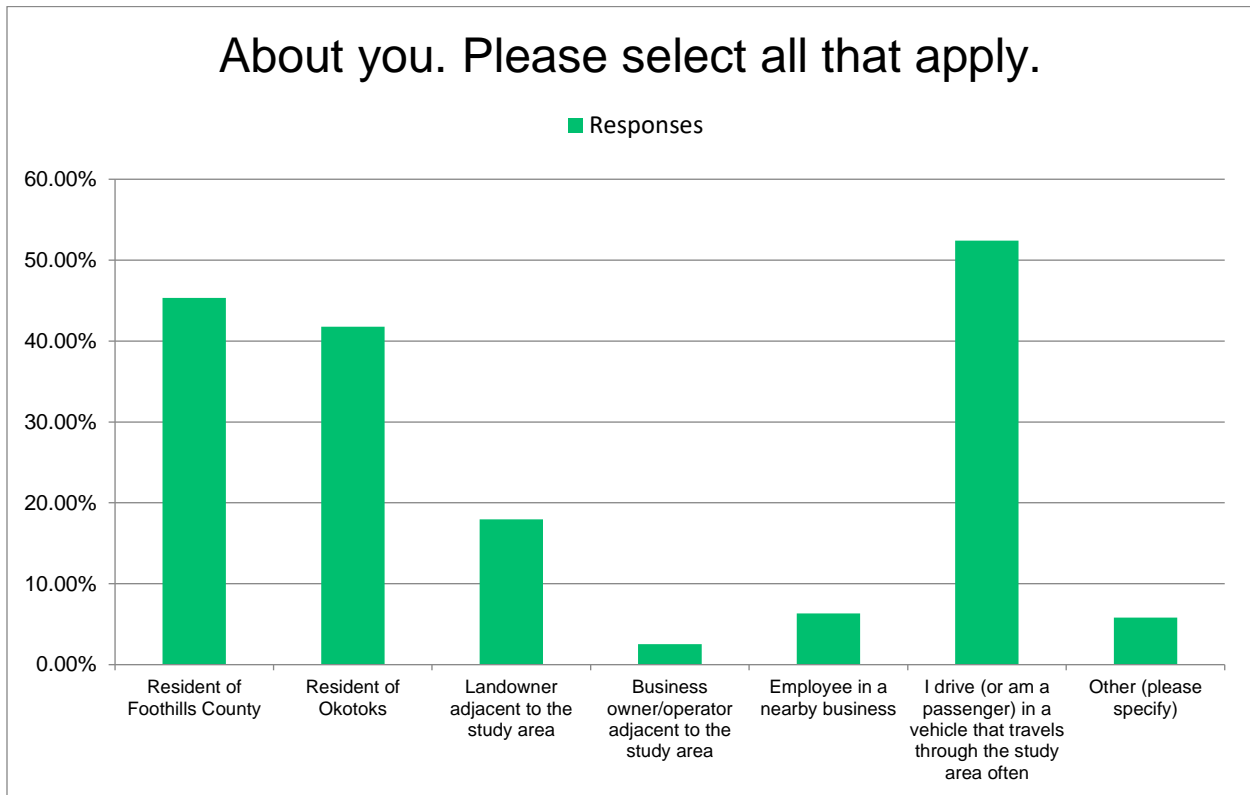
Question 1: How did you hear about this open house?



Other:

- Neighbours (x4)
- Okotoks online
- Neighborhood communications
- You mailed me as a Adjacent land owner
- I work right next to it
- Email from Town of Okotoks Engineering
- Foothills county
- Work
- Friend
- Billboard
- been actively corresponding with my District Councillor
- Newspaper
- Contacted highway dept
- Town of Okotoks internal employee newsletter
- Highwood Cycling Club
- Sister sent to me
- Purchased land in area
- I live on 338 and 80st
- Facebook

Question 2: About You. Please select all that apply.



Other:

- My Neighbours and friends live here
- Lived 10 years on high wood meadows drive
- live in effected area on 338/80th
- Alberta Bicycle Association Recreation and Transportation Committee Member
- Developer and former owner of Champion Park
- Landowner on 48th street
- Cyclist
- Member & Director of the Highwood Cycling Club (interest group)
- Member of local Okotoks cycling club that frequents the study area
- First Responder in study area
- I cycle through the effected area
- will directly affect our western access to Okotoks and points south
- Recreational bicyclist
- Cyclist
- Mother of daughter and family who live nearby (x2)
- Driver accessing Highway 2 in all directions daily
- I have to cross there from time to time.
- We live on the east side of Highway 2 near 338 Ave
- I commute past this every week day
- Area resident who lives on 80 Street close to 338 Avenue
- Landowner within 3km, south on 370 Ave & 76 Str
- I am a RCMP officer for Foothills County rural

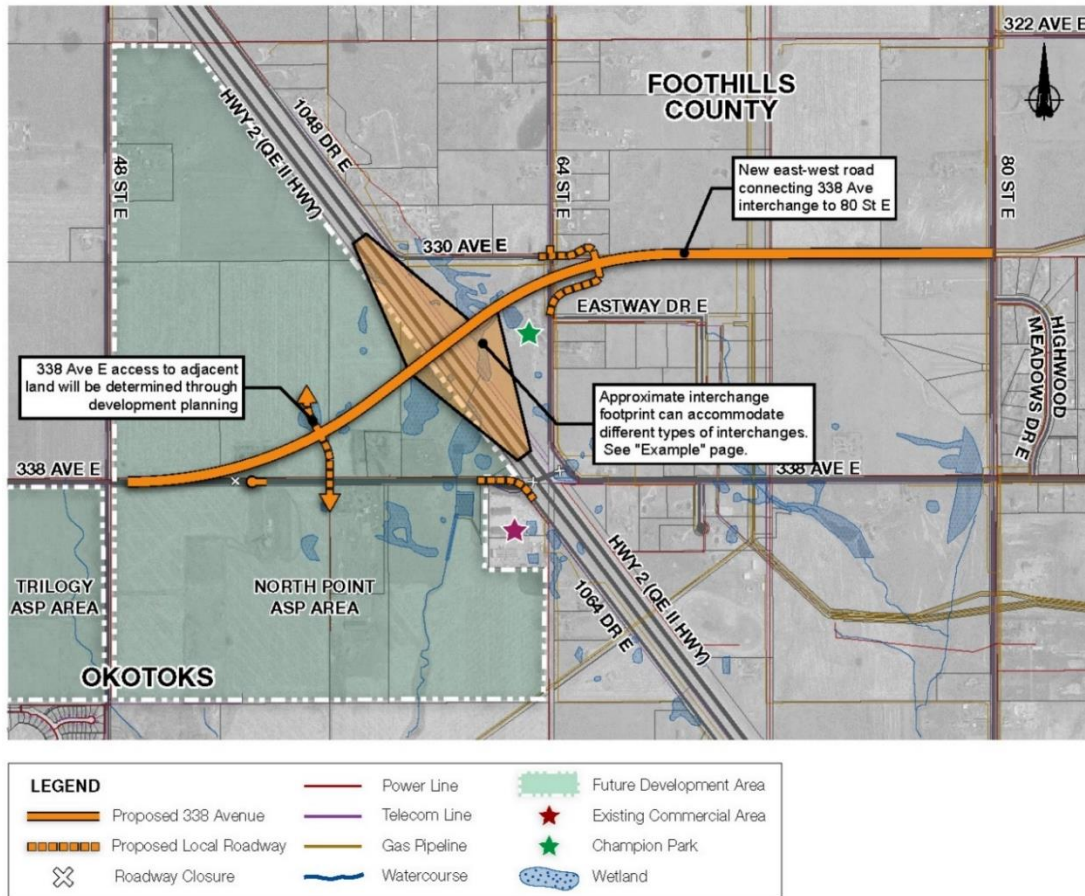
Question 3: Do you have any issues, concerns or information to share about the current Highway 2 / 338 Avenue intersection? If yes, please briefly summarize your concern(s).

Summary of Input

- Several respondents were concerned about the safety and challenges of entering, exiting, and crossing at the current Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection during peak travel times due to the high rate of speed and high traffic volumes on Highway 2.
- It was indicated by respondents that the turning movement for drivers travelling eastbound on 338 Avenue to northbound on Highway 2 was of particular concern driver safety.
- It was indicated by some respondents that due to the long wait times to enter Highway 2 from 338 Avenue, some drivers enter the highway unsafely when there is not adequate spacing.
- Many respondents were concerned about the number of collisions and near misses that have occurred at the Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection to date.
- It was noted by several respondents that there are high traffic volumes in the area of the Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection during peak morning and evening travel times during the week in general and on the weekends when drivers are accessing area amenities such as The Saskatoon Farm.
- Some respondents indicated that they avoid using the current Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection due to their concerns about safety.

Question 4: What do you like or not like about Short-Listed Option A (see image below)? Please briefly summarize your input.

Short-Listed Option A

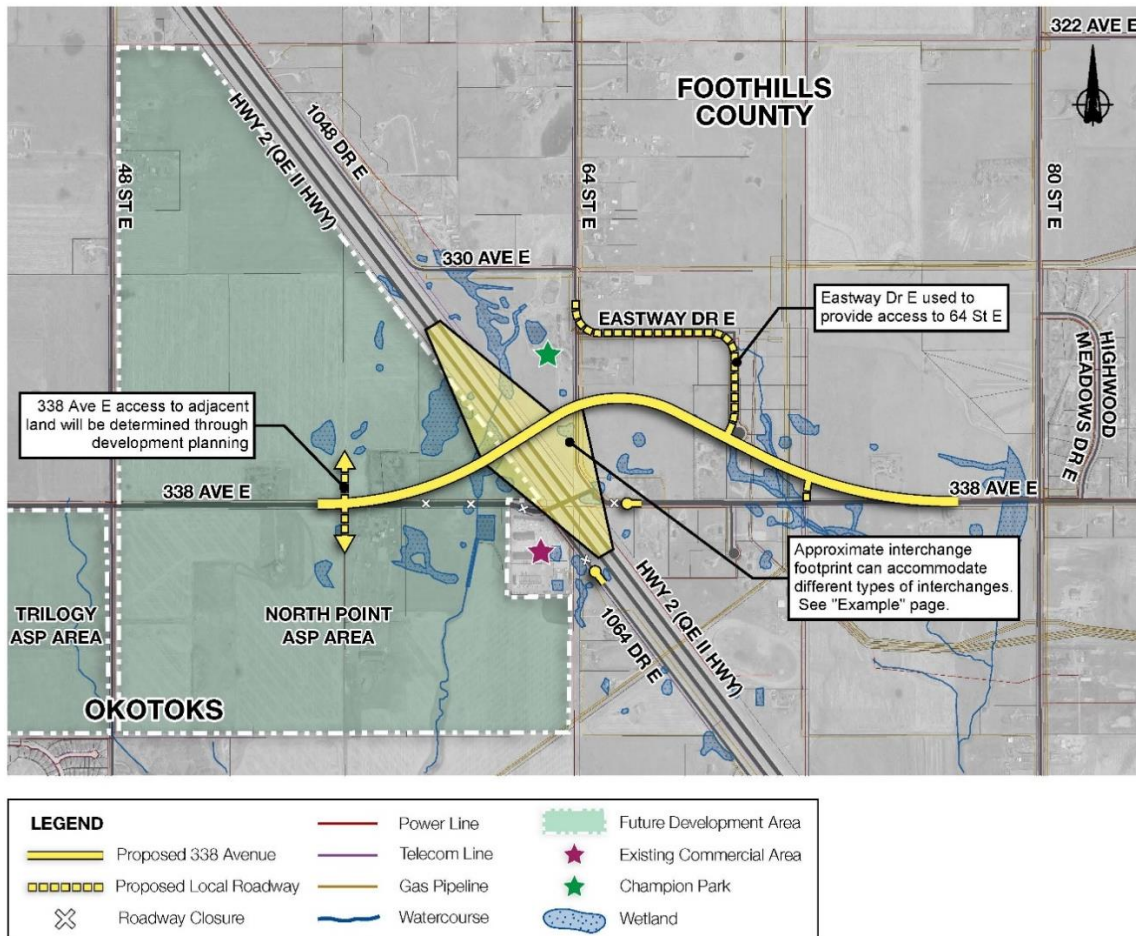


Summary of input

- Several respondents preferred this option over the other two options proposed. Some reasons why respondents indicated they preferred this option include improved visibility and traffic flow, ease of use, configuration and alignment of the interchange and access provided for residents on the east and west side of the interchange.
- Several respondents were concerned about the impact that Option A would have on adjacent residential properties as well as businesses and Champion Park.
- Some respondents were concerned that Option A would negatively impact or remove access to adjacent residents and businesses.
- Some respondents were concerned that this option does not connect to 338 Avenue on the east side of Highway 2 and would increase traffic volumes on other local roads.

Question 5: What do you like or not like about Short-Listed Option B (see image below)? Please briefly summarize your input.

Short-Listed Option B



Summary of Input:

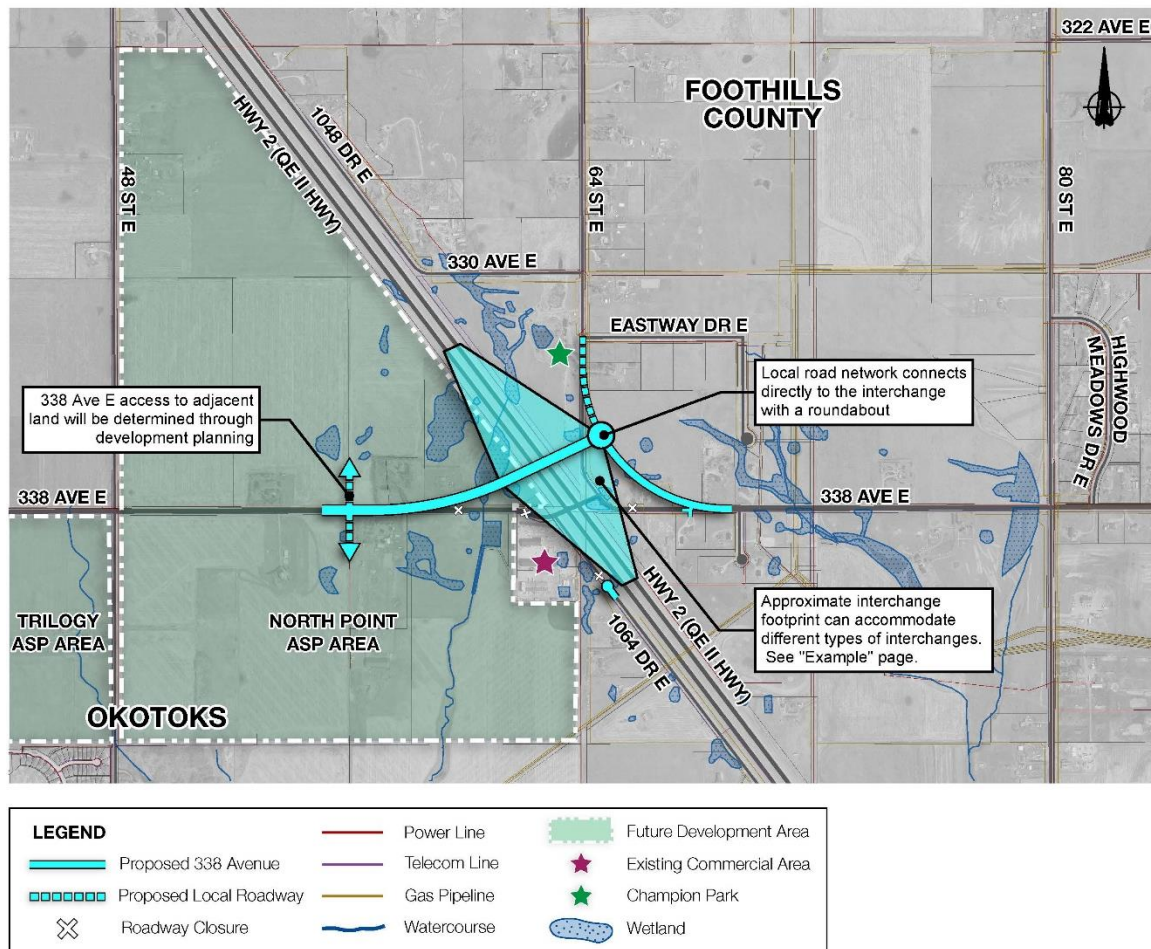
- Several respondents preferred this option over the other two options proposed or thought it was as good as the other options presented (however more respondents indicated that they preferred Option A). Some reasons why respondents indicated they preferred this option include that it makes better use of the existing 338 Avenue roadway, minimizes the impact on adjacent properties, the location is close to the existing Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection, improves the flow of traffic and provides a more direct route for drivers.
- Several respondents did not support Option B. Some reasons why respondents indicated they did not support this option include: the realignment of 338 Avenue would negatively impact adjacent residential land, access, property values and it would cause increased traffic and noise through the residential area. Other concerns included the impacts to the watercourse and access to area businesses.

**Highway 2 / 338 Avenue Interchange
Functional Planning Study
Round 1 Engagement – What We Heard Summary**

- Some respondents suggested that the curved roadway proposed for 338 Avenue in Option B be straightened to improve access, safety and reduce impacts to adjacent properties.
- Some respondents were concerned about the number of residential properties impacted and land that would be split up on the east side of Highway 2 as a result of Option B.
- Some respondents had concerns about how access for adjacent residential properties would be impacted by this option. General concerns were also raised about the less direct access from 338 Avenue to the interchange.

Question 6: What do you like or not like about Short-Listed Option C (see image below)? Please briefly summarize your input.

Short-Listed Option C



**Highway 2 / 338 Avenue Interchange
Functional Planning Study
Round 1 Engagement – What We Heard Summary**

Summary of Input:

- Several respondents preferred this option over the other two options proposed (respondents indicated a preference for Option A and C over B). Some reasons why respondents indicated they preferred this option include a reduced impact on adjacent residents and land, how it utilizes the existing road network, that it would cost less than other options, how access would be provided using the roundabout and that it would provide a more direct access for drivers. It was also noted that this option would have less impact on Champion Park.
- Some respondents didn't like Option C. Some reasons why respondents indicated they did not support this option include concerns about how the roundabout and tight access would accommodate the traffic flow and volumes in the long-term, the impacts to adjacent residents and land and increased traffic volumes on area roads. There were concerns that roundabout may not accommodate large vehicles.
- Some respondents suggested that the project team look at the design of the interchange access to the east to ensure that the road lengths, curves and roundabout will accommodate traffic volumes in the near and long-term and allow for safe speeds and turning movements.
- Some respondents had concerns about the impact that this option would have on residential properties, homes, businesses and farms on the east side of the interchange.
- Some respondents had concerns about how access for adjacent residential and commercial properties would be impacted by this option.

Question 7: Do you have anything else to share that you feel should be taken into consideration for any aspect of the study? If so, please elaborate.

Summary of Input

- Some respondents suggested that roundabouts vs. traffic signals be considered east and west of the interchange, moving the interchange to the north be considered to reduce property, traffic and noise impacts on property owners and to avoid the slope.
- Some respondents were concerned about the impact on access that the median closures would have on area businesses and residents.
- Some other suggestions provided by respondents were to consider an overpass vs. an interchange or traffic lights instead of an interchange.
- Several respondents reiterated that the current Highway 2/338 Avenue intersection was unsafe and that building an interchange such as one of the ones presented was a high priority and would greatly improve safety.
- Some respondents were concerned about how access would be impacted by the interchange options as well as with the proposed median closures (independent of this interchange project). It was noted by many respondents that providing all-directional access to Highway 2 in the area was a high priority.
- Some respondents indicated that the construction of the Highway 2/338 Avenue interchange was needed in the short-term.
- Some respondents liked the information and engagement opportunities provided. However, some suggested that additional, in-person engagement opportunities be made available to potentially impacted area landowners and stakeholders.