

# HIGHWAY 2 / 338 AVENUE INTERCHANGE FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OCTOBER 2022

## 1. Why is a study needed?

Alberta Transportation has been collaborating with the Town of Okotoks and Foothills County to complete a functional planning study at Highway 2 and 338 Avenue. The study has considered a new interchange to replace the existing at-grade intersection at Highway 2 and 338 Avenue. As traffic volumes continue to increase, it will be important to upgrade this section of Highway 2 to accommodate increased traffic and improve safety for drivers entering, exiting, and crossing Highway 2.

The Functional Plan developed has identified the highway right-of-way, alignment, interchange location, access management, interim and draft recommended plan for staging the improvements and estimated costs. This plan is required to support requests for funding, and move the project forward for future right-of-way acquisition, detailed design and construction.

## 2. What is the status of the project?

We are currently in the final stage of the study process, presenting the draft recommend plan for the alignment of 338 Avenue and the location of a new interchange. In phase 1 of the functional planning study, three short-listed options were shared with the public on the project website and at a virtual open house held March 10, 2022. An online survey was available between February 23 and March 17, 2022, to collect feedback on the options under consideration. Engagement materials and What We Heard documentation are available on the project website. Visit <https://www.alberta.ca/highway-2-to-338-avenue-interchange.aspx>.

The project team incorporated the input gathered from the public and other project stakeholders to refine the options and selected the draft recommended plan.

We are now in the final phase of the project and hosting an in-person public open house to present and gather feedback on the draft recommended plan. The open house is planned for October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It is important to note that funding, design and construction timelines have not been established at this time. Recommendations from this study will be considered for construction based on provincial priorities and funding plans.

## 3. How was the draft recommended plan determined?

The study has considered a wide range of options for the interchange location in the vicinity of the existing 338 Avenue intersection. In developing the options, a number of technical factors were considered:

- Existing conditions: current traffic volumes, collision history, safety concerns, environmental features, geotechnical conditions,
- Future growth and development: future highway and local traffic volumes, future land use and development plans
- Operational considerations: capacity, access, interchange configurations and right-of-way requirements

An initial technical evaluation was completed in January 2022 and confirmed by Alberta Transportation, the Town of Okotoks and Foothills County. A multiple account evaluation method was used and considered a range of technical criteria in four major categories:

- Community sustainability

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- Environment
- Finance
- User benefits

From the evaluation, three options for the Highway 2 and 338 Avenue interchange were short-listed for further development and evaluation. These options were shared with the public during the first round of public engagement in February and March 2022.

A second multiple account evaluation was conducted in spring 2022 to confirm the draft recommended plan. This evaluation has been confirmed by Alberta Transportation, the Town of Okotoks and Foothills County and has balanced all factors in the concept selection process, including cost, access, safety, right-of-way requirements and environmental factors as well as stakeholder and public feedback. An in-person public open house is planned to present the recommended plan on October 26th, 2022.

#### 4. Why are median closures proposed in the short term?

The median closure initiative that is being undertaken by Alberta Transportation is part of a separate project to improve safety and reduce collisions in this stretch of Highway 2. Between 2018 and 2020, Alberta Transportation completed safety reviews of 306 Avenue, 338 Avenue and 370 Avenue. Median closers were recommended at all three locations to improve safety and reduce collisions. Once the medians are closed, access at each location will be limited to right turns only. Closures are expected to take place summer 2023 in conjunction with pavement overlay work on Highway 2.

Additional information can be found at: [alberta.ca/major-transportation-projects.aspx](http://alberta.ca/major-transportation-projects.aspx)

#### 5. How will emergency vehicle access be maintained when the medians are closed?

Alberta Transportation is currently engaged with local emergency service providers to ensure emergency vehicles can access properties both east and west of Highway 2. Emergency vehicles can use maintenance crossovers to cross Highway 2 at-grade. The potential need for additional maintenance crossovers between 306 Avenue and 370 Avenue is currently under review. Alberta Transportation is committed to providing safe highway infrastructure and connections to local roadways for all Albertans

#### 6. Will any local roadway upgrades be completed when the medians are closed?

The Town of Okotoks and Foothills County have collaborated to complete an intermunicipal study to understand the impacts of the median closures on the local roadway network. The study indicates that the existing roadway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the changes to traffic patterns resulting from the median closures. Previous studies and analysis are available at the Town and County websites:

<https://www.okotoks.ca/your-community/living-okotoks/have-your-say/highway-2338-avenue-functional-planning-study>

<http://mdfoothills.com/services/public-works--engineering/infrastructure/projects.html?qd=072008>

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## 7. Why is an interchange needed?

Highway 2 is part of the National Highway System and the CANAMEX North South Trade Corridor linking Coutts, Alberta and Sweetgrass, Montana to the BC border on Highway 43. At-grade alternatives such as a traffic signal or a roundabout are not consistent with the longer-term vision for Highway 2 as a high-speed uninterrupted-flow route supporting the safe, efficient and effective transportation of people and goods interprovincially and internationally.

As Highway 2 is upgraded, at-grade access points will be closed and consolidated to grade separated interchanges at key locations. The Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board completed a South and East Calgary Regional Transportation Study in 2020. A future interchange at Highway 2 and 338 Avenue was ranked in the top 20 most beneficial regional projects within a 10-year window.

## 8. Why does the draft recommended plan include traffic lights and a roundabout? Why not one or the other?

A traffic signal is being recommended at the west intersection to accommodate higher 338 Avenue eastbound traffic in the long-term and free-flow right-turns to/from Highway 2. A roundabout is being recommended at the east intersection to improve traffic flow in both the short-and long-term, as well as provide options to connect Highway 2 to the local road network in the short-term. A roundabout at this location will also be beneficial as it will be designed to accommodate large agricultural vehicles and oversized truck movements.

## 9. When will the interchange be constructed?

This project is currently in the functional planning stage. Design, construction timelines and funding have not been established at this time. Functional plans are required to support requests for funding, and move a project forward to right-of-way acquisition, detailed design, and construction. The study is anticipated to be completed in late 2022. Once approved, recommendations from this study will be considered for construction based on provincial priorities and provincial funding plans.

## 10. How will transport trucks and farming equipment be accommodated?

Once the interchange at 338 Avenue is constructed, the intersections at the ramp junctions will be designed to accommodate large vehicles including oversized loads and agricultural equipment.

## 11. What considerations are being made for cyclists once the interchange is built?

The project team is aware that many cyclists use 338 Avenue today. The draft recommended plan includes space for a pathway on the south side of 338 Avenue and cross Highway 2 using the north side of the interchange bridge. Pathways in the draft recommended plan will cross interchange ramps at or near the intersections at the ramp junctions and minimize crossings at free-flowing, higher speed ramps. Details of how the pathway will connect into the existing roadway and/or pathway network on either side of Highway 2 will be determined during future stages of design in conjunction with separate development plans underway by the Town of Okotoks.

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## 12. How will public and landowner feedback be considered?

Stakeholder, landowner and public engagement is an important part of this process and gathering feedback at key project milestones is important. The first round of engagement was held online between February 24 and March 17, 2022, and included a virtual meeting with potentially impacted landowners, a virtual open house and an online survey. Materials shared during the first round of public engagement, including a recording of the virtual open house, can be viewed on the project website. The project team reviewed and incorporated the feedback into the evaluation process to determine the recommended plan from the 3 short-listed options.

Now the team is asking for public and stakeholder feedback to refine the selected draft recommended plan. We expect to hold a second round of engagement including an in-person public open house on October 26th, 2022.

The online survey will be open for round two of engagement from **October 18 to November 2, 2022**. You can also share your concerns or feedback with us about the project and the draft recommended plan presented by email. All feedback collected during the second round of public engagement will be compiled into a What We Heard Report and will be available on the project website.

***The project team will use feedback from stakeholders, landowners and the public to refine the final concept. Your input is an important part of the evaluation process and achieving a balanced solution that considers cost, access, safety, right-of-way requirements and environmental factors in addition to the preferences and priorities of area residents and stakeholders.***

## 13. How do I know if my property is impacted?

Adjacent landowners were contacted using land title information and were invited to attend a meeting in early March 2022 to discuss the project and potential impacts directly with the project team. Impacted property owners have been notified ahead of the next public information session planned for October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

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## 14. What options are available to landowners impacted by the recommendations?

Impacted property owners and willing sellers will be placed on a list for contact by the Alberta Transportation's land and properties staff for review and consideration if and when the project is approved to proceed.

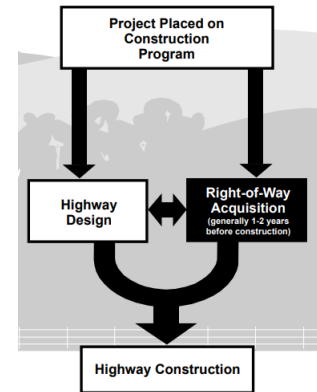
Alberta Transportation typically commences negotiations for the purchase of land generally one to two years before highway construction is scheduled to begin.

Negotiations are based on mutual respect and cooperation to create a partnership for future highway construction success.

Alberta Transportation respects the rights of the landowner by using accepted negotiation procedures and a compensation framework for provincial highways. Compensation is based on market value plus related or applicable damages.

More information on Alberta Transportation's land acquisition process and contact information the Property Manager for Alberta Transportation's Southern Region can be downloaded [here](#).

Steps in the highway land acquisition and construction process



### For more information about the project, please:

Visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/highway-2-to-338-avenue-interchange.aspx>

Email: [info@islengineering.com](mailto:info@islengineering.com)

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