



Northridge Drive Corridor Functional Review

Prepared for Town of Okotoks
By Stantec Consulting Ltd. on
behalf of United Communities

May 2016

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Authorization

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01. Introduction

Stantec Consulting Ltd. ('Stantec') on behalf of United Communities L.P. ('United') was tasked with updating the Northridge Drive Functional Study Draft (2006) developed by Urban Systems Ltd. in order to develop a revised preferred concept for the Northridge Drive corridor, a Plan Area that is delineated by the 338 Avenue E intersection to the north and the Sandstone Gate intersection to the south.

This report's Plan Area is proposed to consist of three distinct character zones, as illustrated in **Fig. 01 Northridge Drive Study Area** on page 7 which include:

- A landscaped transition zone to the north (338 Avenue E to a future intersection south of Northgate Circle);
- A central urban zone (a future intersection south of Northgate Circle to Banister Gate); and
- A parkway zone to the south (Banister Gate to Sandstone Gate).

The urban zone will have the highest level of activity and also is proposed to have the narrowest right-of-way (ROW) to support a more 'urban' condition. As a result of this intensity, the report focuses primarily on this zone. Three separate options are examined, with a preferred option recommended. The recommended concept is then extended and integrated with the entire Northridge Drive corridor.

The recommended corridor concept is intended to contribute to developing a sense of place along Northridge Drive that will enable the corridor to act as an iconic northern gateway to the Town. Recognizing that there is a need to balance all modes of travel and associated users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and motorists, the Northridge Drive corridor is envisioned as a place that encourages a variety of users and will bring more people out onto the streets. The recommended concept, particularly with the identification of three distinct character zones, emerged from facilitated discussions with Town Administration at a workshop held in July 2015, and follow-up meetings with Town Administration in August and October 2015. These engagements with the Town explored the design intent of Northridge Drive and 338 Avenue, with consideration of the final build-out of adjacent lands within the North Okotoks Area Structure Plan (NOASP) and the Northwest Okotoks Area Structure Plan (NWOASP). Written

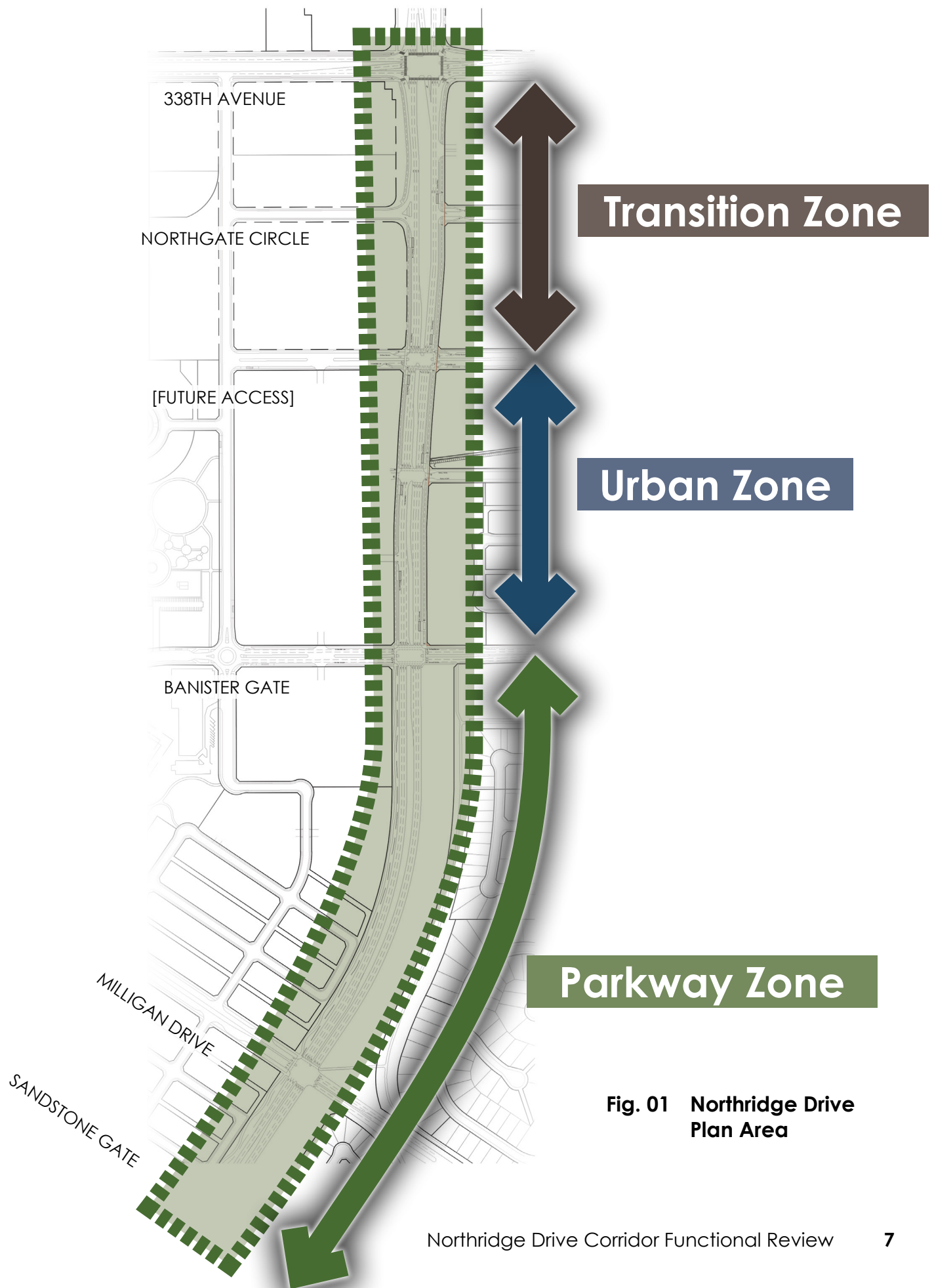


Fig. 01 Northridge Drive Plan Area

Introduction

comments received from the Town and feedback received at the North Okotoks Open House in December 2015 were reviewed, and assisted in the process of finalizing a recommended concept and expanding it to encompass the entire corridor and its three distinct character zones.

The Northridge Drive corridor, guided by the recommend concept, is intended be a multi-modal gateway into Okotoks and will have six signalized all-turn intersections and two right-in, right-out intersections. The number, spacing, and suggested treatment of intersections for the recommended concept were all modeled through high-level traffic analysis submitted to the Town by Stantec as part of the NOASP application in December 2015. It is important to note that the recommended corridor is conceptual and subject to change following the completion of a Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA), which will be submitted in support of the Outline Plan (OP) applications for the NOASP and NWOASP Plan Areas.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the *Northridge Drive Functional Study Draft* (2006) by taking into account both the current planning context and implications of future build-out of both adjacent areas to the Northridge Drive corridor, and providing an updated recommended concept. The intent of the recommended concept is to create an iconic northern gateway and transition into the Town from the surrounding rural landscape that will achieve the following objectives:

- Create a distinct entry into Okotoks;
- Achieve an active and vibrant urban corridor in character and function;
- Promote safe and comfortable active transportation movement across and along Northridge Drive;
- Balance multiple modes of transportation within the corridor; and
- Accommodate increased traffic demand.

Consistent with the *Northridge Drive Functional Study Draft* (2006),

these objectives will be achieved through a functional review of the Northridge Drive corridor from 338 Ave E south to Sandstone Gate by:

- Establishing future intersection locations;
- Establishing the intersection laning and traffic control;
- Establishing future development access locations and control; and
- Establishing preliminary north gateway landscape design concept.

02. Existing Conditions

Existing Traffic Volumes

Existing traffic volumes were obtained on March 3, 2015 at the intersections within the Plan Area. The counts were conducted for the AM peak period (6:00-9:00 am) and the PM peak period (4:00-7:00 pm). The daily volumes along Northridge Drive were estimated by applying a factor of 10 to the PM peak hour volumes (Stantec, 2015).

Section	Daily Two-way Traffic Volumes (vpd)
Highway 2A north of 338 Ave Intersection	27,950
338 Ave E to Banister Gate	24,700
Banister Gate to Milligan Drive	23,450
Milligan Drive to Sandstone Gate	23,650

Existing Roadway Plan

Northridge Drive is a four-lane divided roadway that typically carries commuter traffic between the Town of Okotoks and the City of Calgary. In total, there are four intersections within the Northridge Drive corridor, including 338 Avenue E, Banister Gate, Milligan Drive and Sandstone Gate. Three of these four intersections are signalized, with the exception of Banister Gate. The ROW varies depending on the section of Northridge Drive.

For motorists entering the Town on this main north-south corridor, there is minimal indication within the function and form of the corridor that they are transitioning from a rural provincial highway to an urban roadway after they pass the 338 Avenue E intersection. The existing roadway, as illustrated in **Figure 01: Northridge Drive Plan Area**, gradually transitions from a rural provincial four lane highway to a more

Existing Conditions

conventional four lane highway through several key shifts. Moving north to south, the centre median just south of the 338 Avenue E intersection that consists of a depressed median gradually narrows and transitions into a raised median just north of Banister Gate. There is also a transition from no curb and gutter, to curb and gutter along Northridge Drive south of Banister Gate. The Northridge Drive corridor transitions from 60 km/h just south of the 338 Avenue E intersection to 50 km/h just prior to the Sandstone Gate intersection. Last, beginning with the 'Welcome to Okotoks' sign at the southwestern corner of the 338 Avenue E intersection, there is a gradual appearance of Town signage and wayfinding, including, but not limited to, a new community sign and an existing tourism information sign along a pull-off while moving South along the corridor.

Beyond these gradual changes, there are limited visual or design cues to indicate a distinct transition away from a rural provincial four lane highway to a more urban corridor.

With amendments to the NWOASP specific to the D'Arcy Ranch lands on the western edge and the development of the NOASP on the eastern edge of the corridor currently under review by Town Administration, it is anticipated that two new communities will develop in phases on both the east and west sides of the corridor. Recognizing current development changes underway, it is important that the existing roadway plan be reevaluated, particularly with respect to accommodating all modes of transportation as identified by the Town.

The existing roadway plan does not have regional paths or dedicated off-street cycle tracks running parallel to the four-lane highway, nor marked and visible intersections to facilitate safe and comfortable crossings for pedestrians and cyclists across Northridge Drive. In its current configuration the existing roadway may struggle to accommodate potential transit stops and increased traffic demand once adjacent areas are fully built-out. As a result, the corridor does not reflect Town Administration's vision for a more urban corridor that emphasizes place-making.

03. Corridor Concept

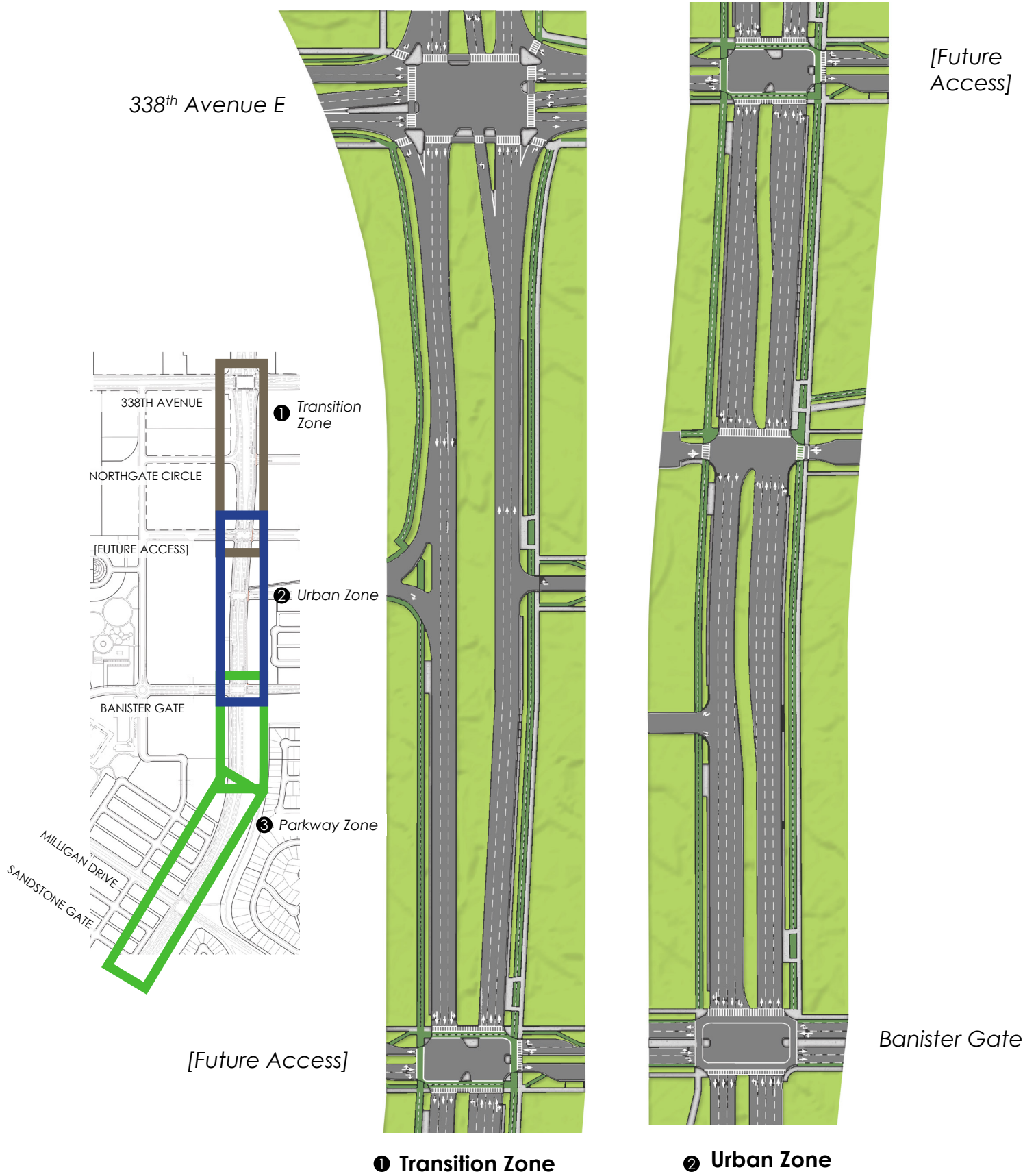
Proposed Concepts for Northridge Drive Corridor

Three potential concepts for the central urban zone have been evaluated and a detailed analysis of key features of each option can be found in Appendix A. The central urban zone was identified as an area that required additional focus because it is anticipated to have the highest intensity of activity and the narrowest ROW, which makes it an ideal candidate for place-making.

Although there are merits to each of the concepts outlined in Appendix A, only one concept (**Fig. 07 Concept Three**) has been identified as the preferred due to its ability to achieve the Town's vision for Northridge Drive. The preferred central urban zone option is integrated with a landscaped transition zone and a parkway zone, as illustrated in **Fig. 02 Preferred Option**, to reflect all three character zones identified by Town Administration.

Preferred Corridor Concept

Based on high-level traffic analysis, discussions with Town Administration in July, August and October 2015, and feedback received of the North Okotoks Open House in December 2015, Concept 3, as illustrated in Appendix A, and illustrated in greater detail in **Fig. 02 Preferred Option** to encompass the entire Northridge Drive corridor. While this concept is not optimal for strictly moving vehicular traffic, the balanced approach in the preferred corridor design ensures that it will accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists while minimizing conflicts between the various users. This relatively new approach to corridor design recognizes that while a street is a 'Link' that is required for movement; it should also be considered as a destination in itself and should offer a unique sense of 'Place'. By celebrating Northridge Drive as a 'Place', the pedestrian realm and urban fabric are enhanced through a comprehensively designed multi-modal corridor that is urban in design and form. The planning rationale in support of the recommended corridor concept for this central urban zone is as follows.



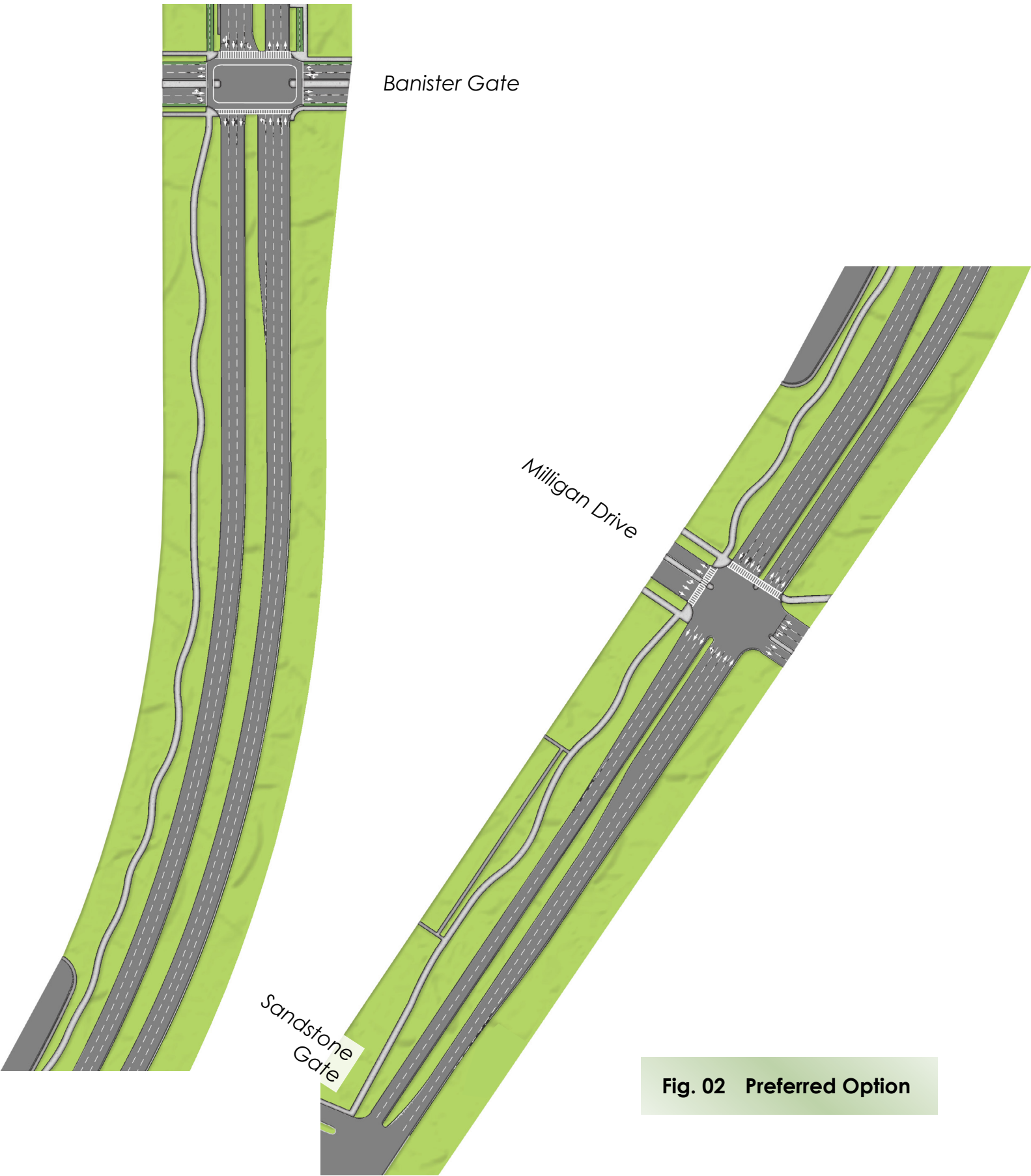


Fig. 02 Preferred Option

③ Parkway Zone

Corridor Concept

Achieving an Urban Boulevard

Town Administration identified, at both meetings and through written comment, a common vision for Northridge Drive to become an Urban Boulevard with a lower speed limit of 50 km/h. This vision is a distinct departure from the traditional eight-lane highways that would use interchanges rather than intersections and does not typically include basic streetscape elements that enhance the environment at the human-scale for non-motorists. The Northridge Drive corridor is envisioned to be an urban six-lane roadway in the central zone that features elements, including but not limited to, a raised median, tree lined boulevards, buildings fronting onto the streets, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, a protected two-way cycle track and on-street parking during off-peak hours. The potential design and layout of the three character zones that form the larger urban boulevard are illustrated in **Fig. 03 Corridor Concept Sections**.

Balancing All Modes of Transportation

Town Administration identified a need to balance all modes of transportation and placed particular emphasis on active modes. As such, the preferred concept has considered the needs of potential users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists. Some of the specific design elements aimed at balancing all modes of transportation comprise of the integration of a regional pathway, a protected off-street two-way cycle track, and a sidewalk that runs directly adjacent to the track and connects users to adjacent developments within the central urban zone. Additionally, the inclusion of marked and well-lit crossings will assist in the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists across Northridge Drive by raising awareness for both bicyclists and motorists to potential conflict areas. These visible crossings also assist in guiding cyclists and pedestrians through intersections and make movements of active modes more predictable for motorists, which may reduce potential

conflicts. **Fig. 04 Intersection Concepts** identifies how this interaction between modes of transportation would function conceptually. In contrast to the existing roadway, the preferred concept gives needed support to pedestrians and cyclists by creating safe, attractive and comfortable routes for active transportation users to move comfortably. It also may heighten levels of visibility between competing modes of travel, particularly at major intersections. Without these types of conceptual design features, it may be difficult for active transportation users to move along and across this major urban corridor in north Okotoks. The intent is that active transportation improvements will be applied to the entire corridor area, including the transition and parkway zone. It is important to note that within the preferred concept, the dedicated off-street two-way cycle tracks on the east and west side do not continue south of Banister Gate. However, within the parkway zone south of Banister Gate, a meandering regional pathway continues along the west side of Northridge Drive to ensure cyclists and pedestrians are able to connect from the corridor south into the rest of Okotoks.

Accounting for Future Public Transit

The preferred concept accounts for anticipated public transit, whether regional or local, by identifying potential bus stops on the outside lane in each travel direction within the central urban corridor. While the details of public transit will require further analysis by the Town to determine exact routes and details, this concept prepares areas of the corridor where the intensity of activity is highest and the ROW is narrowest for the potential to be used as part of the main transit network. In turn, this could connect users to the rest of Okotoks and the Calgary Region – depending on the type and level of service provided.

Corridor Concept

Accommodating Increased Traffic Demand

The preferred concept accommodates increased traffic demand without compromising other objectives outlined by Town Administration, particularly the desire for an active and vibrant urban corridor. The introduction of three travel lanes in each direction and dedicated left turn bays at specific intersections assists in the movement and flow of traffic. Recognizing that there are peak travel times associated with commuting to and from Calgary along Northridge Drive, this concept also is designed to accommodate off-peak on-street parking.

Adaptability

The preferred concept, relative to the other proposed concepts, has the greatest flexibility to better account for change over time as conditions and demands shift in a growing Okotoks. This preferred concept for the central urban zone provides flexibility and versatility by being able to be modified as required overtime.

Appendix C provides four figures that illustrate an overlay of the proposed changes to the existing configuration for the entire corridor based on the preferred option.

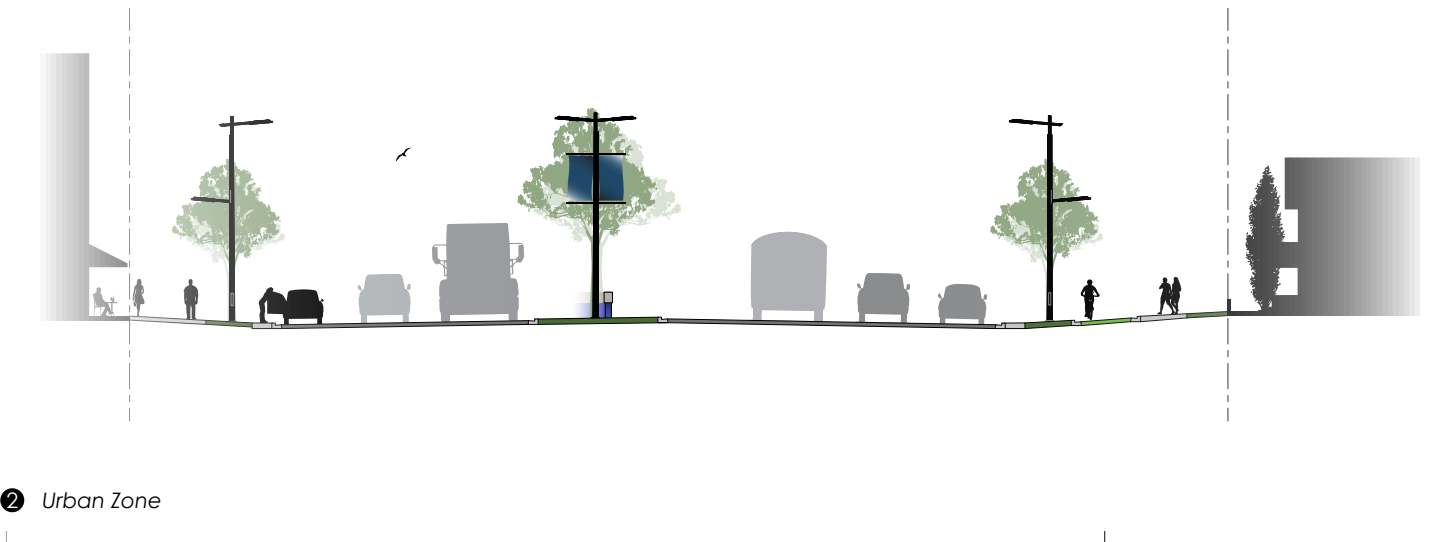
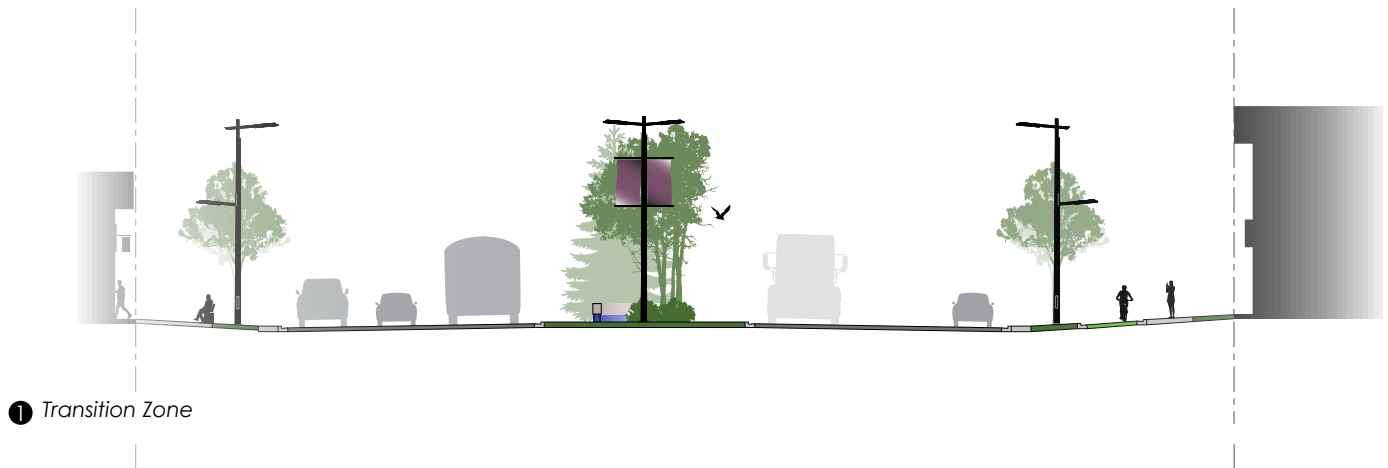


Fig. 03 Corridor Concept Sections

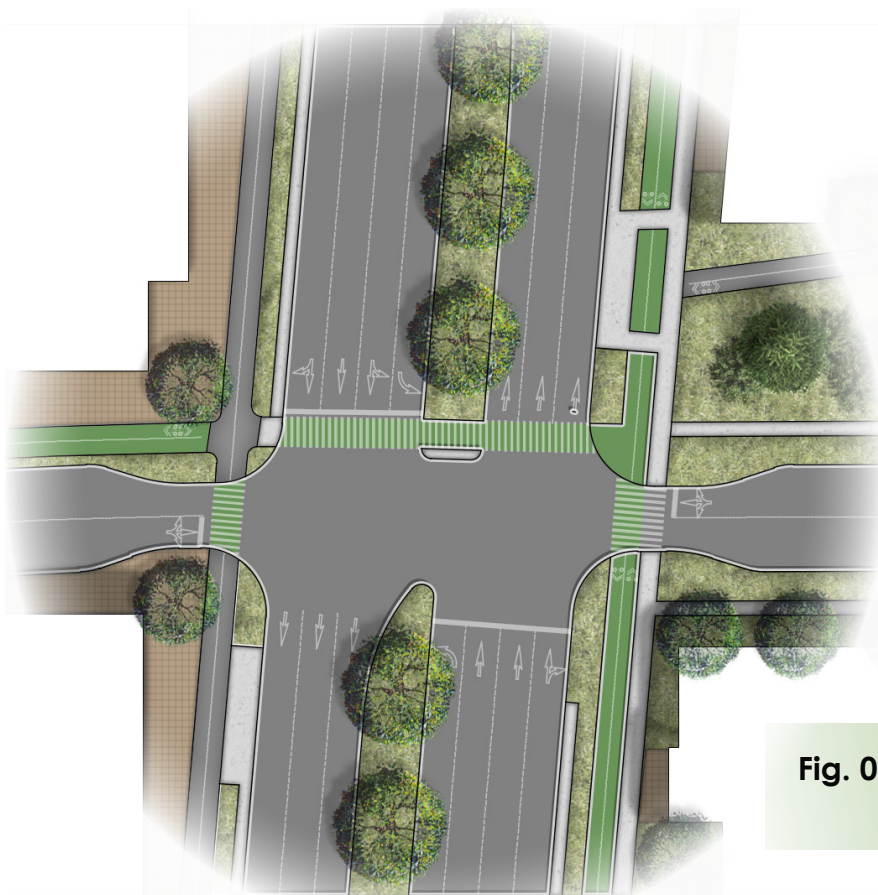
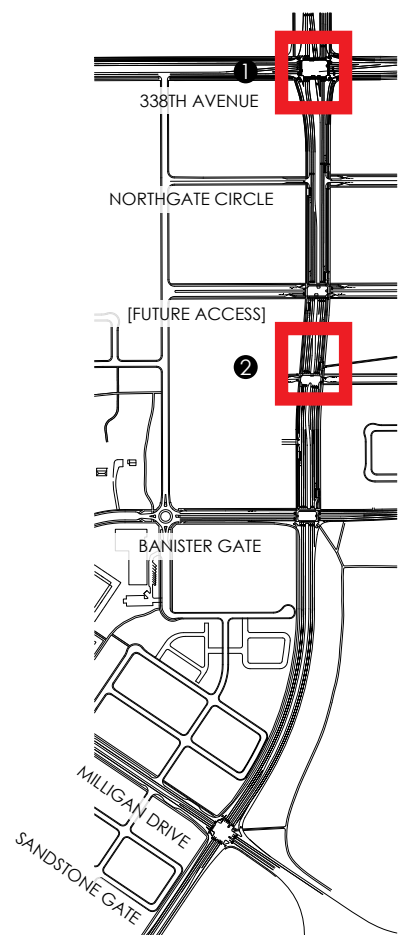
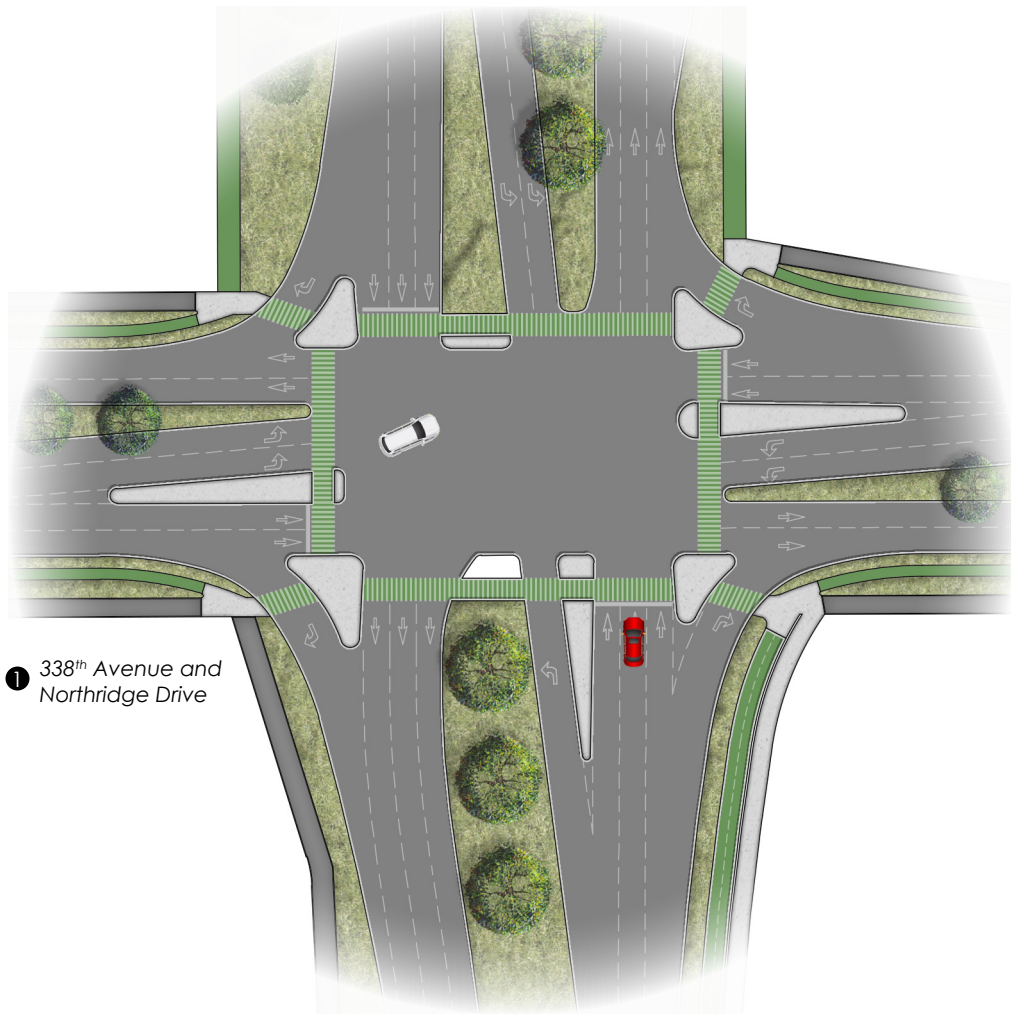


Fig. 04 Intersection Concepts

04. Next Steps

The preferred corridor concept option provided in this review will be refined further through traffic analysis and a formal TIA for Northridge Drive prepared by Stantec. The TIA will examine in greater detail:

- Existing conditions;
- Full Build-out (30-Year Planning Horizon);
- Internal Road Network Assessment;
- External Intersection and Access Review; and
- Active Modes and Transit Assessment.

This report is also intended to be considered in conjunction with the TIA to help inform the Town in deciding the timing of long-term upgrades to the existing Northridge Drive corridor.

In terms of preliminary landscape design, Appendix B provides a high-level overview of design elements for the Town to consider when finalizing a preferred design to implement for the Northridge Drive corridor. Further analysis and detailed design will be required for all urban design, wayfinding and landscaped elements prior to tender and construction. Adherence to branding principles, as well as all relevant construction standards is required, and should follow accepted tendering and detailed design protocols.

05. References

Stantec Consulting Ltd. ('Stantec') (2015) North Okotoks ASP and Northwest Okotoks ASP - Transportation Analysis DRAFT.

Urban Systems Ltd. (2006). Town of Okotoks Northridge Drive Functional Study Draft.

Appendix A:

Corridor Concept Comparison

Concept One

Concept 1, as shown in **Fig. 05 Concept One** consists of a central urban zone with a 40 m ROW, no centre median and three travel lanes in each direction.

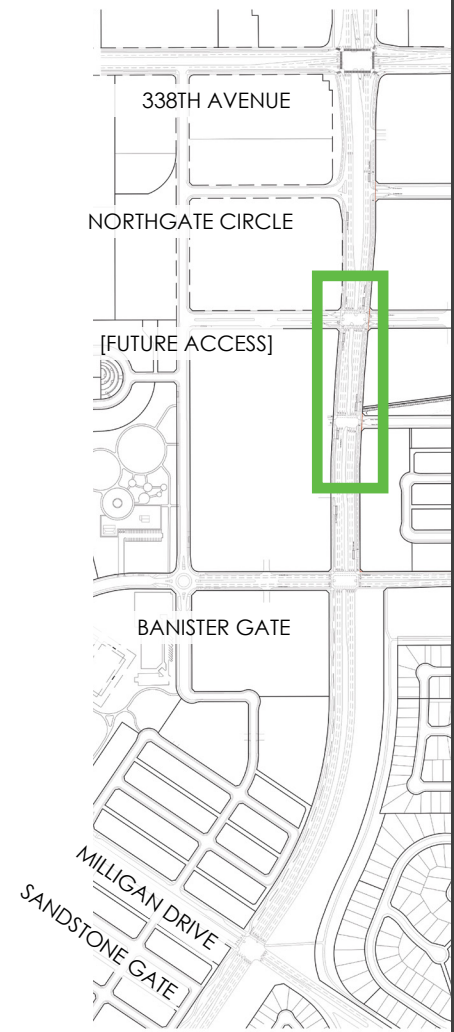
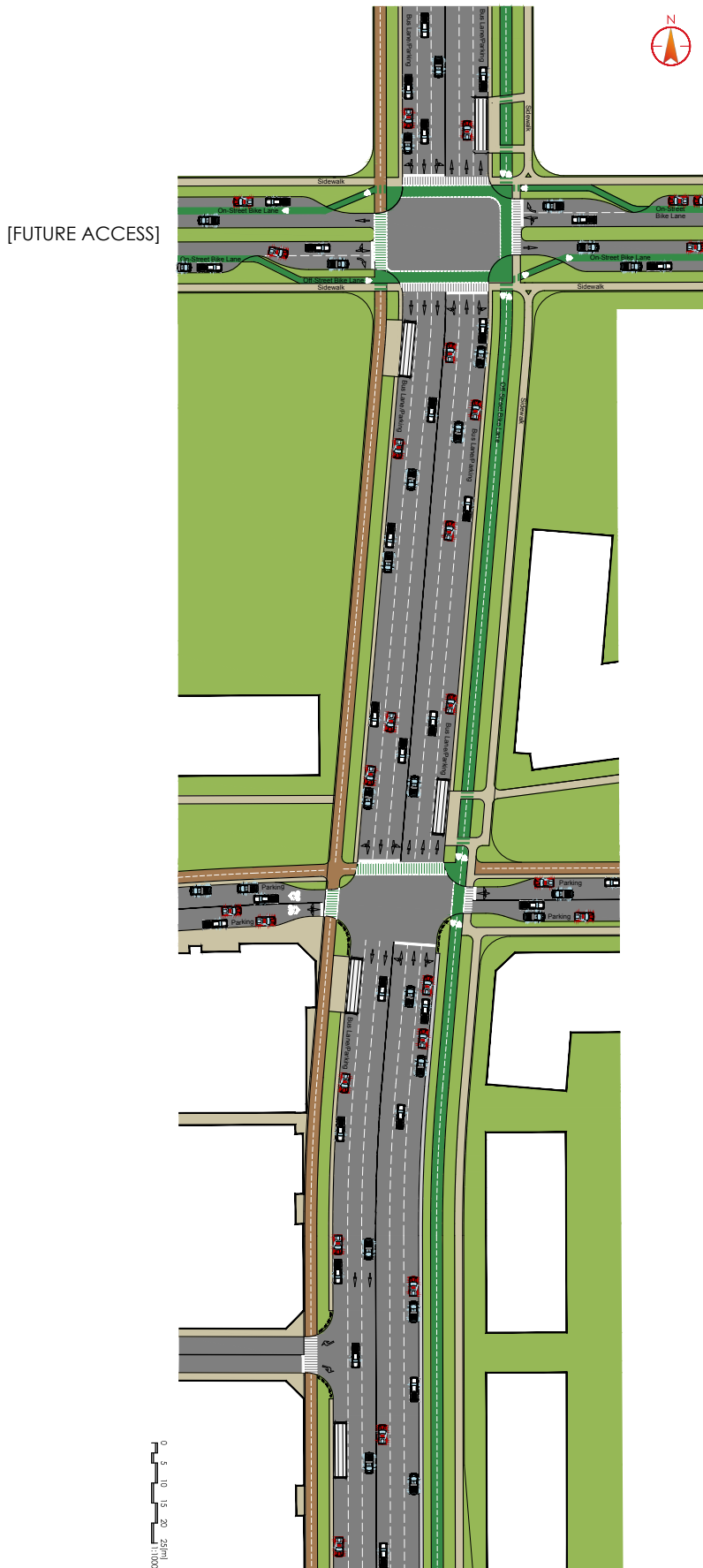


Fig. 05 Concept One

Concept Two

Concept 2, as shown in **Fig. 06 Concept Two** consists of a central urban zone with a 46 m ROW, a raised centre median and three travel lanes in each direction.

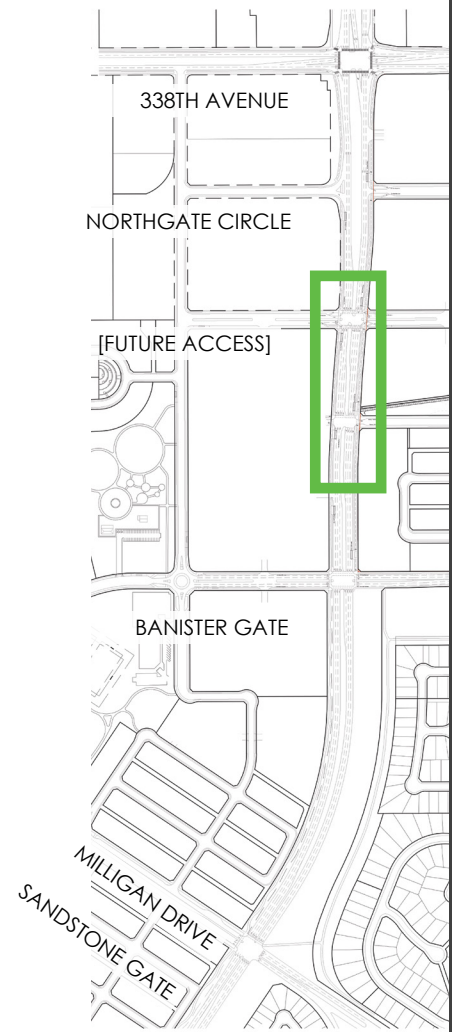
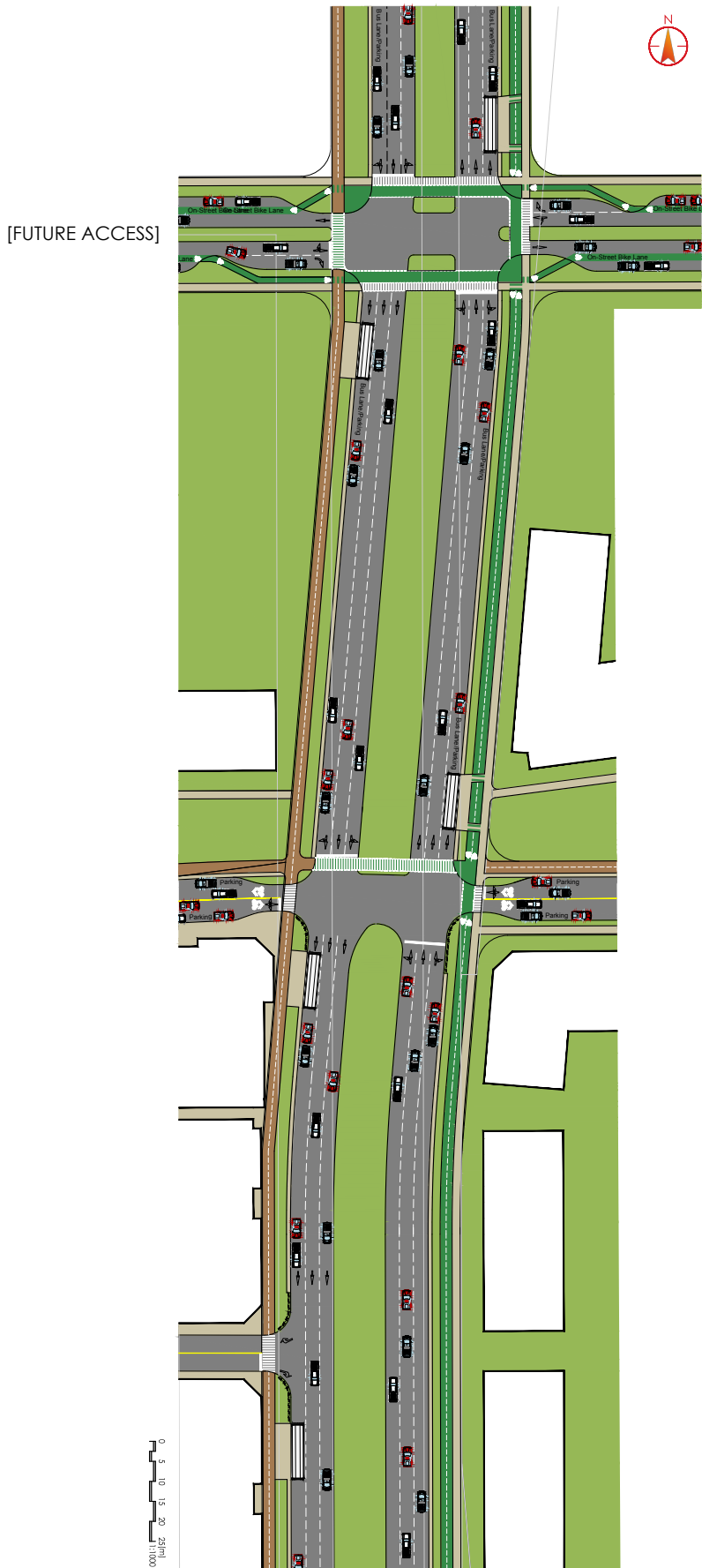


Fig. 06 Concept Two

Concept Three

Concept 3 as shown in **Fig. 07 Concept Three** consists of a central urban zone with a 46 m ROW, a raised centre median and three travel lanes in each direction and dedicated left turn bays.

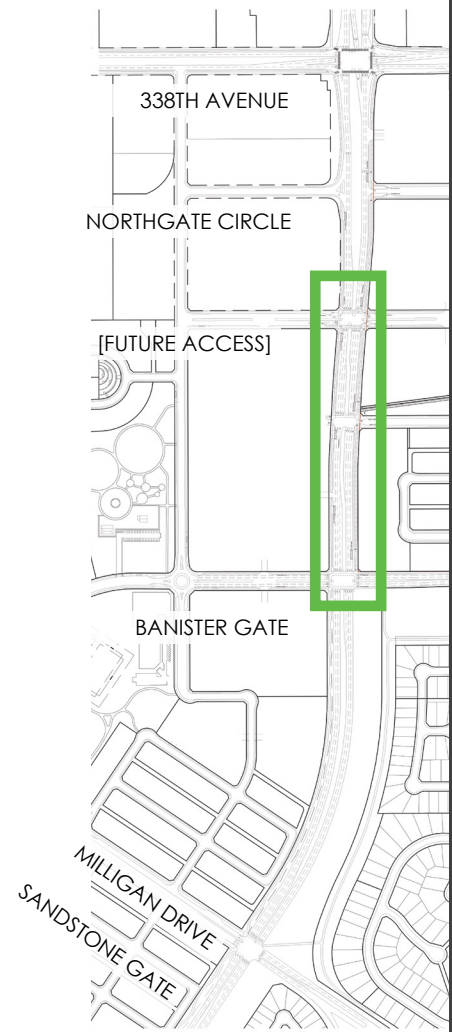
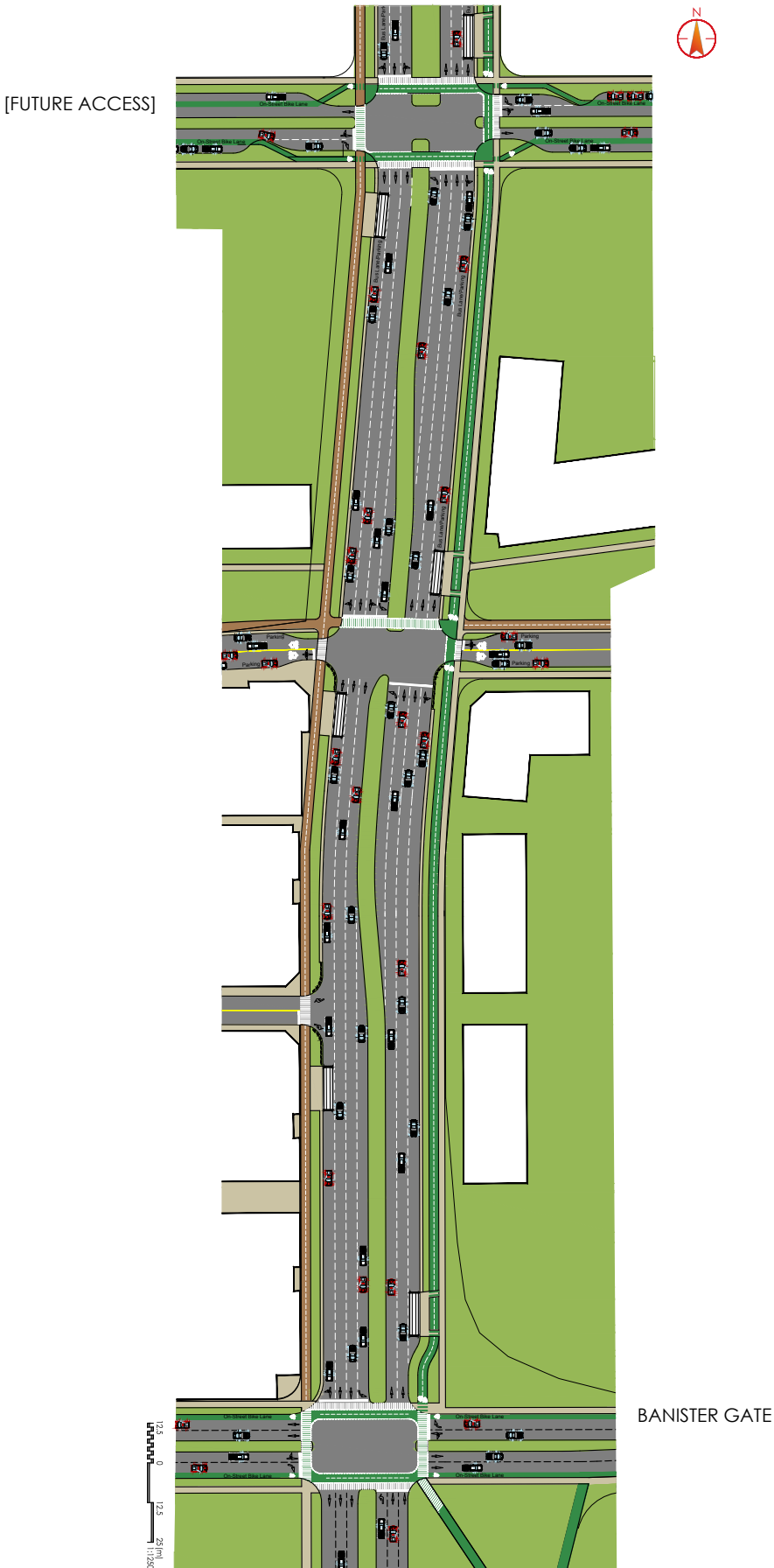


Fig. 07 Concept Three

Corridor Concept Comparison

Table 01: Corridor Concept Comparison

Key Elements	Concept One
Right-of-way	40 m
Number of Travel Lanes	Three travel lanes in each direction with potential to accommodate on-street parking in the outside travel lane during off-peak hours
Intersection Treatment	Marked Cycling and Pedestrian Crossings
Dedicated Left Turn Bays	No Dedicated Left Turn Bays
Centre median	No centre median
Speed Limit	50 km/h
Pedestrian + Active Modes Circulation	This concept includes a regional pathway along the western edge (illustrated in brown) and a dedicated off-street two-way cycle track along the eastern edge of the corridor (illustrated in green). Both run directly parallel to Northridge Drive and are protected and separated from adjacent travel lanes with a 2 m grass median.
Sidewalks	This concept includes a sidewalk that runs parallel to the two-way cycle track and is separated from the cycle track with a grass median
Additional Conceptual Design Treatment	Curb and gutters along the entire corridor
Public Transit Readiness	The outside lane of each set of three travel lanes is conceptually shown with designated bus stops to accommodate anticipated public transit

Concept Two	Concept Three
46 m	46 m
Three travel lanes in each direction with potential to accommodate on-street parking in the outside travel lane during off-peak hours	Three travel lanes in each direction with potential to accommodate on-street parking in the outside travel lane during off-peak hours
Marked Cycling and Pedestrian Crossings	Marked Cycling and Pedestrian Crossings
No Dedicated Left Turn Bays	Dedicated Left Turn Bays
Raised Centre Median (approximately 9 m wide)	Raised Centre Median (approximately 6 m wide)
50 km/h	50 km/h
This concept includes a regional pathway along the western edge (illustrated in brown) and a dedicated off-street two-way cycle track along the eastern edge of the corridor (illustrated in green). Both run directly parallel to Northridge Drive and are protected and separated from adjacent travel lanes with a 2 m grass median.	This concept includes a regional pathway along the western edge (illustrated in brown) and a dedicated off-street two-way cycle track along the eastern edge of the corridor (illustrated in green). Both run directly parallel to Northridge Drive and are protected and separated from adjacent travel lanes with a 2 m grass median.
This concept includes a sidewalk that runs directly adjacent to the two-way cycle track and is separated from it by a mountable curb	This concept includes a sidewalk that runs directly adjacent to the two-way cycle track and is separated from it by a mountable curb
Curb and gutters along the entire corridor	Curb and gutters along the entire corridor
The outside lane of each set of three travel lanes is conceptually shown with designated bus stops to accommodate anticipated public transit	The outside lane of each set of three travel lanes is conceptually shown with designated bus stops to accommodate anticipated public transit

Appendix B:

Landscape Design

Landscape Design

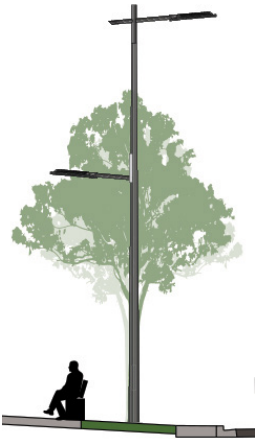
Design Intent

Northridge Drive is the primary corridor into Okotoks, and as such should achieve a number of key principles to make it a welcoming and engaging gateway:

- Announce entrance and gateway into the Town;
- Give a sense of character and identity for the Town;
- Provide a visual transition from rural to urban;
- Reinforce a sense of place and home for the residents of Okotoks;
- Provide a bold statement of arrival;
- Leave departing pedestrians, cyclists and motorists with a desire to return;
- Give a sense of community connections and safety; and
- Encourage safe multi-modal uses.

Elements

The following list of landscape elements can act as a reference or guide for the Town when designing the Northridge Drive corridor in the future. All of these elements, or a combination of some, can be used at the Town's discretion to achieve the aforementioned principles.



Lighting

Specialized light standards, luminaires and bollards, give a more human scale and aesthetic to the road corridor. A chosen style for lighting elements contributes to a unified street identity and elevates the streetscape from being a purely infrastructure-focused space to a place for people.

The *Dark Sky Initiative* is one that is being gradually incorporated into municipal policy nationally and internationally. It seeks to reduce the amount of errant light that escapes into the sky without providing any meaningful illumination, thereby protecting the night sky from light pollution. Luminaires that adhere to these principles direct light downward, are only used when required, illuminate only specific areas and are no brighter than required.

One of the great draws of Okotoks is its relationship with the wider landscape, including the night sky. By reducing the amount of light pollution, that community asset can be protected. This is further necessitated by the proximity of the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, a facility operated by the University of Calgary, which is located 35 km from Okotoks. Its telescope benefits from a dark sky.

Considerations for lighting elements, apart from adherence to Dark Sky principles, include cost, aesthetics, ease of obtaining replacement parts, maintenance, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) considerations.

Fig. 08 Lighting Concept Plan provides a concept-level layout of lighting, emphasizing intersections and bus stops. It is recognized that this portion of the design will be developed at a later stage; however, the Town may wish to pay special attention to the transition between intersections, as well as the transition between highly-lit areas to darker areas. Abrupt changes in illumination result in diminished visibility as the eye adjusts, and by designing for this transition, overall light levels may be reduced while ultimately increasing visibility within the environment. Proper light can also reduce uncomfortable glance while reducing energy cost through efficient sources such as LEDs.

Along with light provided by standard light posts, the Town may also consider incorporating lit elements into the landscape treatment, further enhancing the gateway design at night time. Consideration should be made of these light elements so that complimentary arrangements may be incorporated. An example of such decorative lighting elements is found in **Fig. 11 Landscape Concept**, which illustrates a possible lighting and sculptural treatment for the Northridge Drive median space. While not intended to illuminate the corridor, or to distract drivers with glare, it nonetheless enhances the evening landscape.

Landscape Design

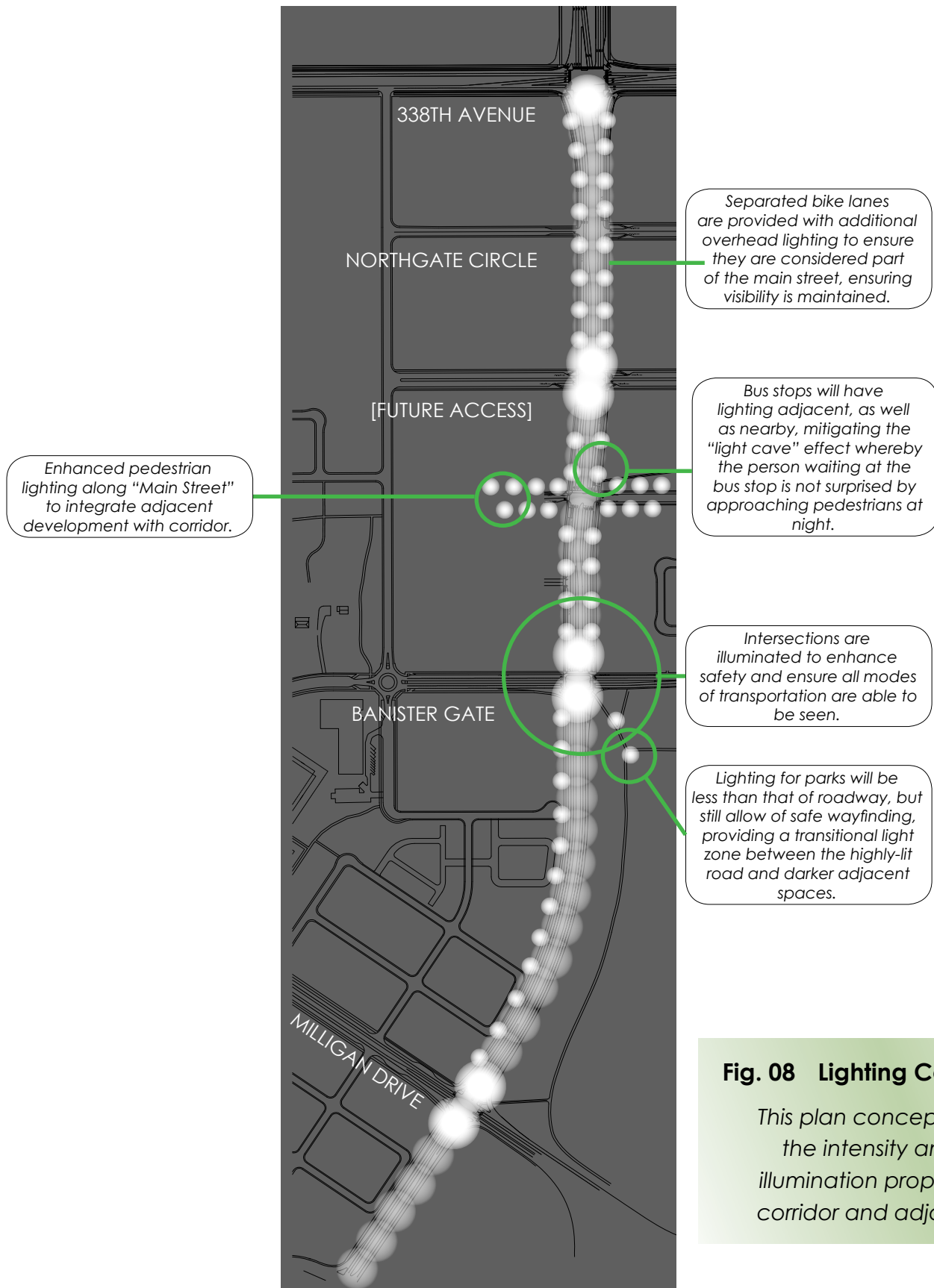


Fig. 08 Lighting Concept Plan

This plan conceptually shows the intensity and type of illumination proposed for the corridor and adjacent areas.

Signage and Wayfinding

“Wayfinding” is a strategy for helping people navigate the urban landscape that includes both formal and informal elements including:

- Signage and graphics hierarchy of signs with varying heights, font sizes, graphics and typefaces appropriate to the level of information to be communicated;
- Visual cues such as pavement widths and consistent use of palette of materials;
- Landscape Typologies: Differentiating different types of roads and pathways;
- Lighting quality, heights and quality to appropriate to type of mobility and use; and
- Landmarks to provide overall orientation in the urban landscape.

Principles for a Coherent Wayfinding Program

Connectivity - routes that lead to meaningful destinations, promoting alternative transportation options and allowing easier transit across the Town.

Accessibility - the consideration of all ability levels when designing signage heights and media, location, obstruction-free paths, visibility, etc.

Consistency - the provision of signage materials, colours and locations that are predictable and harmonized, without being too prescriptive or inflexible.

A key component of any streetscape design is the provision of signage for active modes and motorists that is informative, accurate and expresses the community character through its aesthetics. To this end, a suite of signs should be developed that address the needs of multi-modal users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Additionally, special attention should be paid to children, as part of future Town-led initiatives to identify, implement and maintain a comprehensive system of safe routes throughout Okotoks.

Landscape Design

Rationale

Supporting multi-modal transportation requires the provision of pedestrian-scale wayfinding, in the form of signs and maps. A suite of signs will help pedestrians make connections with the wider community, provide a sense of welcome, and unify the neighbourhood visually. It is recommended that the signage suite for the gateway landscape should coordinate, though not necessarily replicate, existing signage strategies in the town.

The qualities necessary for a successful signage suite include legibility, compelling graphics, and well-considered content. In the interest of sustainability, the quality of the materials must be high to reduce maintenance and extend the lifecycle of the signs.






The goals of the signage strategy are to:

- Enable visitors to recognize the unique features within Okotoks, setting the town apart from the surrounding communities;
- Ensure visitors and residents can easily navigate the area, finding desired destinations and enhancing their security; and
- Minimize potential conflicts between active modes and motorists

Sign Classification

An important step toward establishing a successful signage strategy is identifying different sign types, their function and design. **Fig. 10 Signage Typologies** illustrates examples of these sign types, which are further explained in Table 02 below.

Table 02: Sign Typologies

Sign Category		Overall Function
Existing Tourism Information		Sign provides information for visitors arriving into the Town and is intended to be relocated.
Information		Sign directing pedestrian traffic toward a more general amenity , such as a playground or library. Located where highly visible.
Circulation		Wayfinding devices to help clarify direction of recreational trails or other circulation patterns. Located at pathway junctures.
Map		Pedestrian-scale diagram located at major crosswalks or points of decision-making.
Entry Feature		Sculptural, visually significant sign intended for drivers as well as pedestrians.

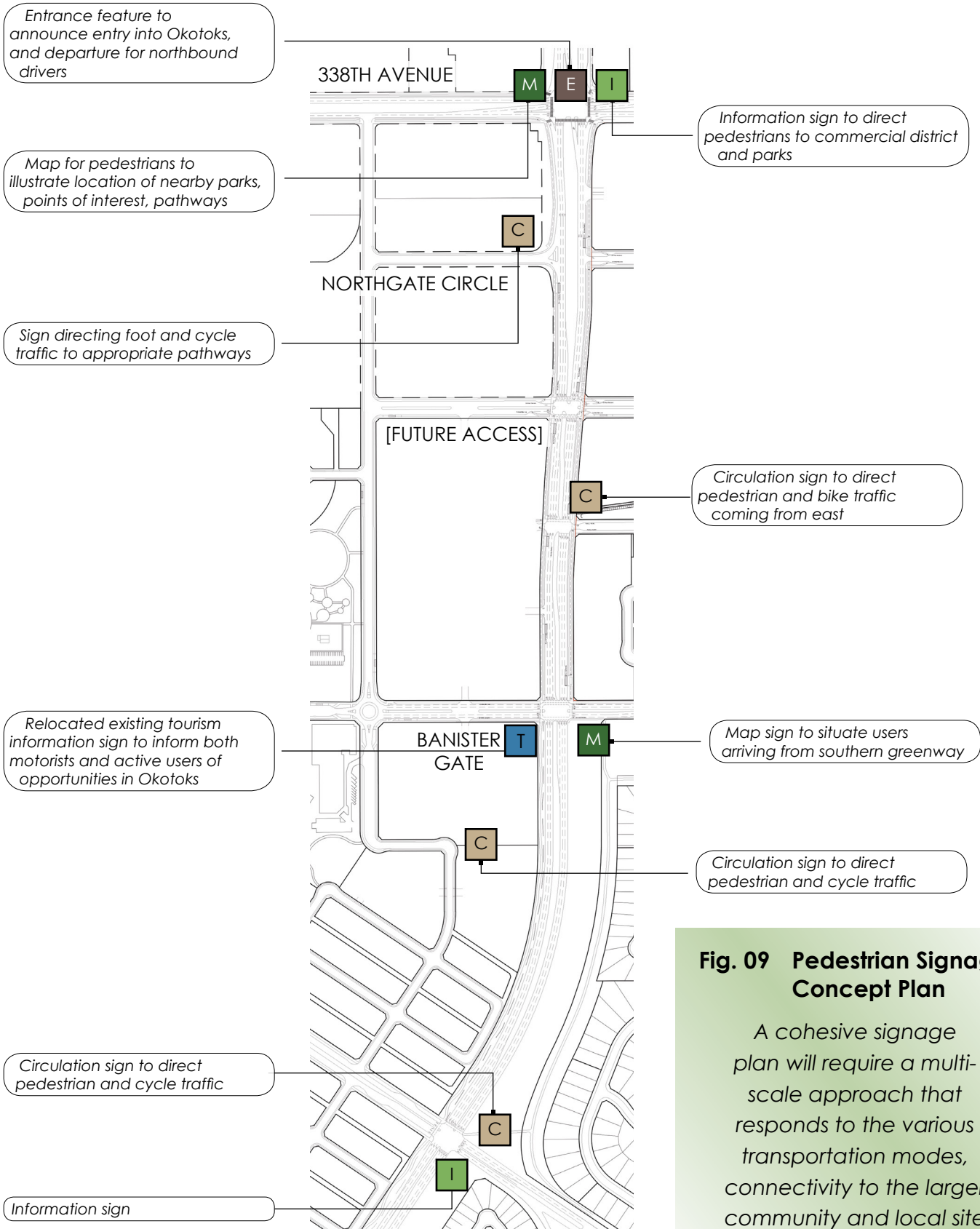


Fig. 09 Pedestrian Signage Concept Plan

A cohesive signage plan will require a multi-scale approach that responds to the various transportation modes, connectivity to the larger community and local site programming.

Landscape Design

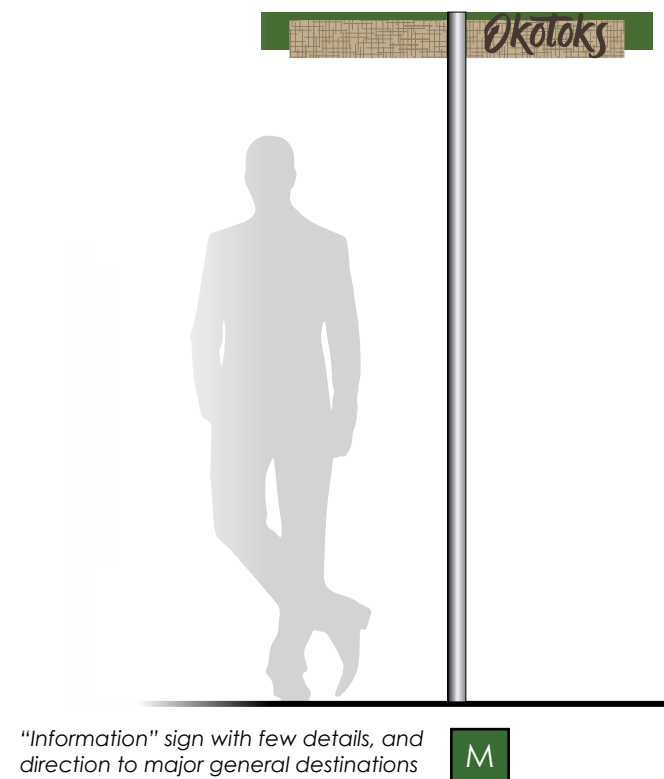
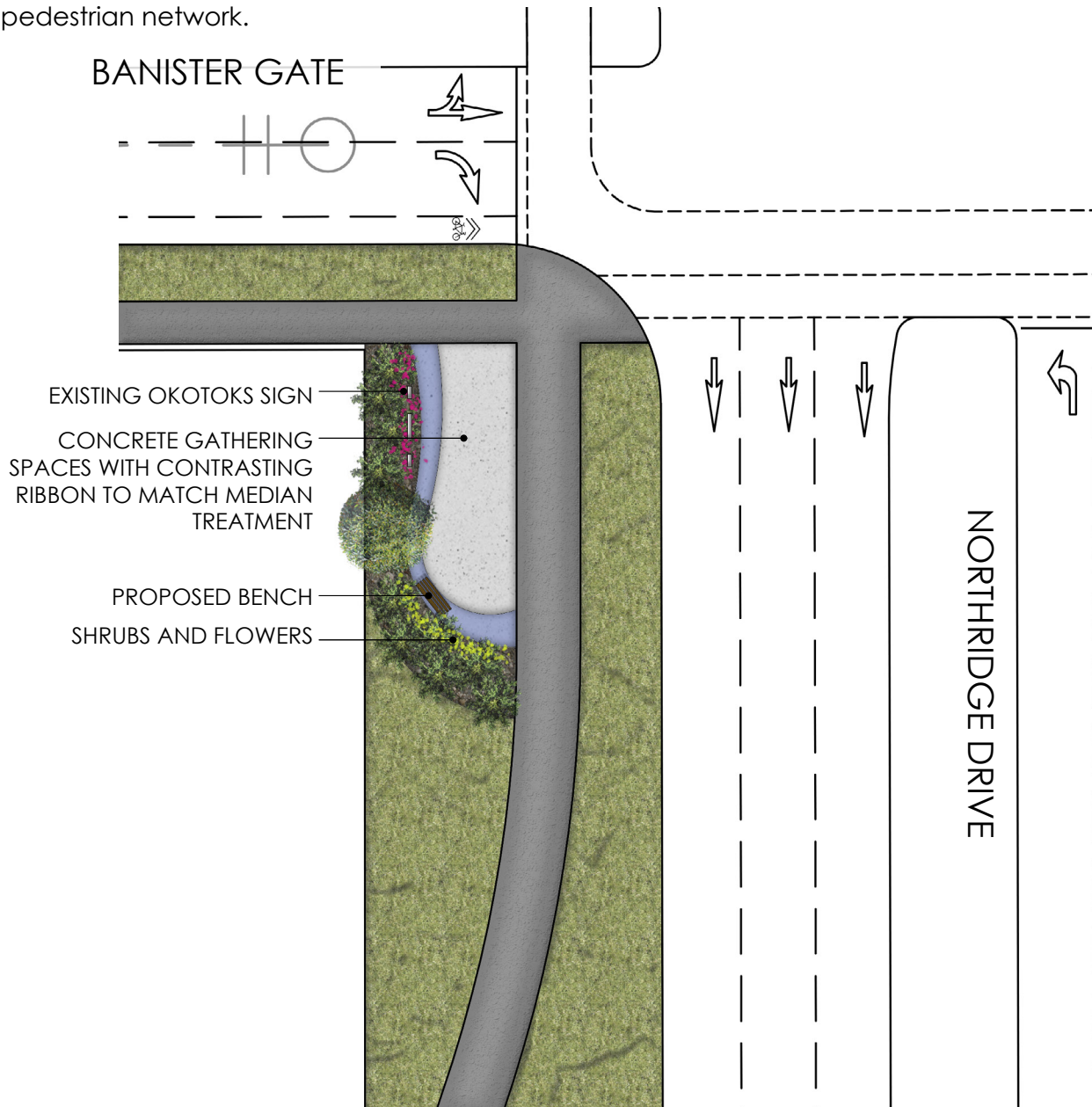


Fig. 10 Signage Typologies

These signs represent examples of sign types that would be used in coordination with the ongoing Town of Okotoks branding exercise. Their final design would require further detail and analysis.

A conceptual arrangement of the signs as described in the signage typologies table has been provided in **Fig. 09 Pedestrian Signage Concept Plan**. It identifies possible locations for the various sign types, and is subject to further analysis and investigation, but provides a starting point for further investigation.

The existing tourism information sign is currently located next to a roadside pull-out, where it provides detailed information for visitors arriving into the Town. This sign has historic and cultural significance, and its integration within an updated Northridge Drive corridor is vital. The proposed location on the southwest corner of Northridge Drive and Banister Gate, as illustrated below, would ensure its prominence, placing it in a highly-visible location with access to the pedestrian network.



Landscape Design

Landscaping

The Northridge Drive corridor is an important roadway that will act as a northern gateway to the community. As such, the treatment of the landscaping needs to reflect a high level of quality, while still retaining ease of maintenance and sustainability throughout its life cycle. Guiding principles of landscape design in the municipal context should include:

- **Locally-sourced plant material** because of its resilience to local climate challenges.
- **Native species** selection to ensure as little disruption to the local plant communities as possible.
- **Drought-tolerant species** that, once established, require fewer inputs to ensure success, thus contributing to a higher level of sustainability.

Specific to the Northridge Drive gateway landscape, consideration should be given to the following conditions:

Effect on vehicle speeds - the placement of landscaping (trees and shrubs) adjacent to the roadway has an effect on driver speeds. As vehicles approach the urban centre, landscaping should become denser and closer to the roadway, encouraging drivers to diminish their speed and take greater care.

Dramatic entry - Okotoks should be boldly announced to visitors, and residents should be welcomed home warmly. The landscaping along the Northridge Drive corridor should be beautiful, have year-round appeal and enhance the experience of entering the Town.

Safety - Intersections should be highlighted with enhanced landscaping that signifies to drivers when to expect disruptions to the flow of traffic. Tall trees in clusters can achieve this. For pedestrians and drivers alike, intersections are areas where one can expect to wait until a light changes. This is an opportunity to have flower beds or other visually-appealing dense landscaping at the intersections, again signifying the shift from rural to urban.

Natural landscape

Okotoks is situated at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, alongside the Sheep River with remarkable natural features such as the Big Rock (from which the town gets its name) as well as the beautiful vistas set this area apart.

Using the natural features of Okotoks' setting in a metaphoric way is the design intent for this concept. The central median features a sculptural element that references the river, alongside creative soft landscaping and river rock. Features at the intersections both enhance the visibility of the intersections, but also frame and reference the rolling topography of the landscape.

Sustainability

“Leaving a legacy for our children.”

Sustainability is an important part of the Okotoks' identity, and is clearly articulated in the *Okotoks Community Visioning 2014*. As such, it is a compelling theme for the gateway into Okotoks, which would emphasize community stewardship, conservation, innovation and low-impact design.

These elements would come together in the form of a landscape treatment with regional local characteristics, an education component and a refined approach to natural forms.

Rural to Urban

The transition from rural life to urban is more than a spatial one; the demographics of Canada speak to the migration of families into cities from one generation to the next, a phenomenon that is having implications for the rural Alberta culture. Okotoks' proximity to Calgary positions it as a place where that transition is the most pronounced, with strong ties to both landscapes. Okotoks is a gateway to and from city life, with Northridge Drive being a primary movement corridor for that change to occur.

The landscape concept that is proposed as an option for Northridge Drive comprises of a boulevard and median treatment that changes from rolling, naturalistic forms, to more angular shapes that reflect a more urban aesthetic. The elements become more densely spaced and intensely lit. The space will be unified by colour and materials that tie both landscapes together.

Landscape Concept - Sheep River

This concept uses a transition of plant material and arrangement to reflect the change from rural to urban. The unifying 'river' sculptural wall is a stylized version of the Sheep River, which itself travels from the outlying areas into the urban setting.

The design of the river wall is an opportunity to introduce subtle lighting in the form of LED strips. Their colour could be adjustable, allowing for a seasonal theme, such as red and green for the holidays. Otherwise, the blue of the tiles would reflect the Town's colour scheme.

Roadway lighting includes upright standard street lighting in the median, with double-davit poles.

The proposed entry sign is intended to replace the existing one, and its design ties into the proposed median design. The sign would be double-sided with a "welcome" message for southbound traffic, and a greeting for departing visitors traveling northbound **Fig. 11 Landscape Concept** illustrates this concept. It is important to note that this preliminary concept is a possible design and is meant to illustrate one potential option. Other design concepts could be established and considered in the future.

Landscape Design



ENTRY FEATURE CONCEPT IDEA



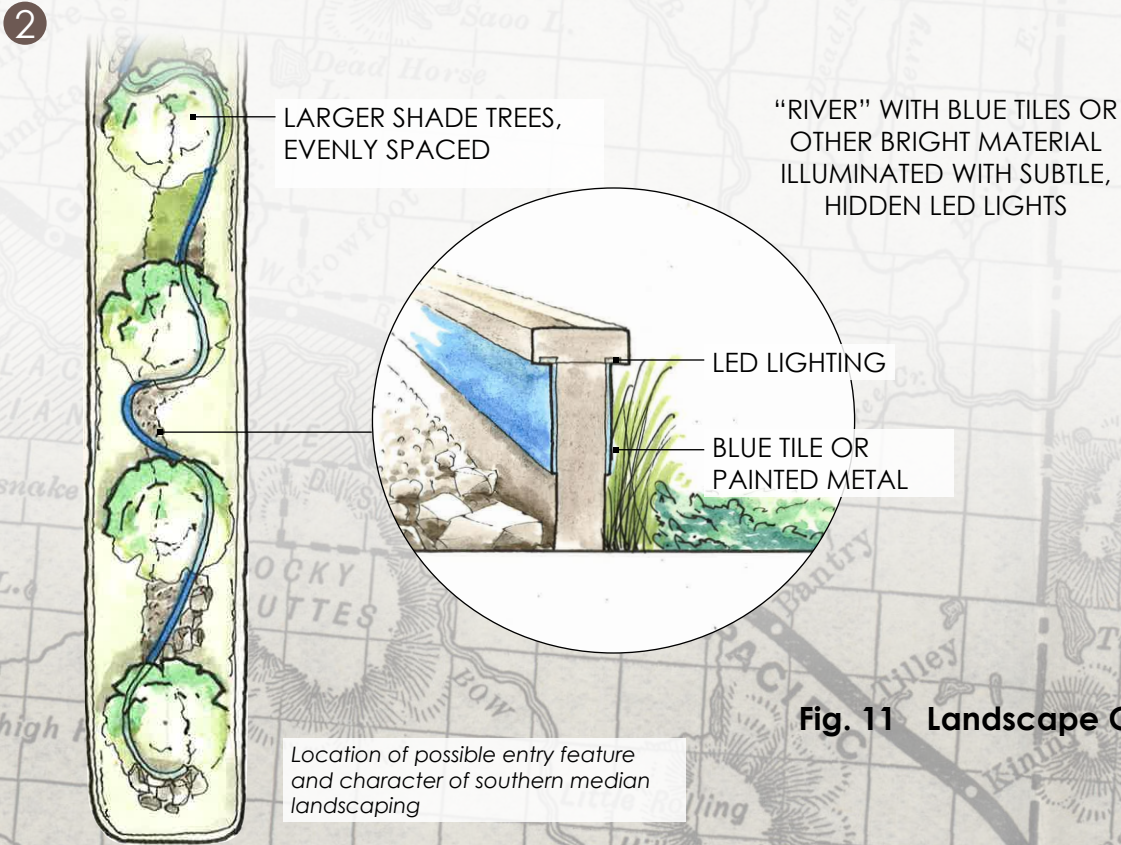
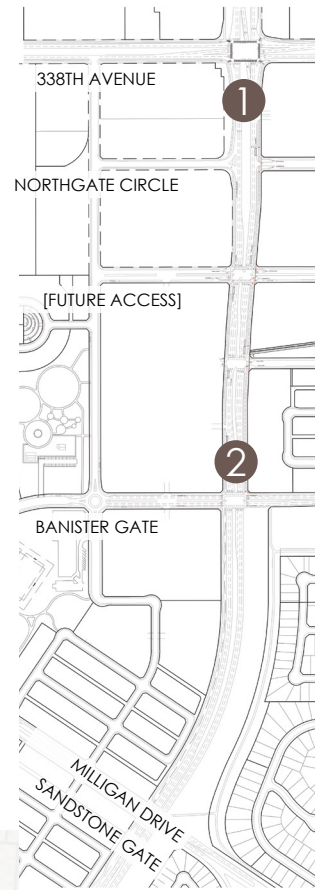
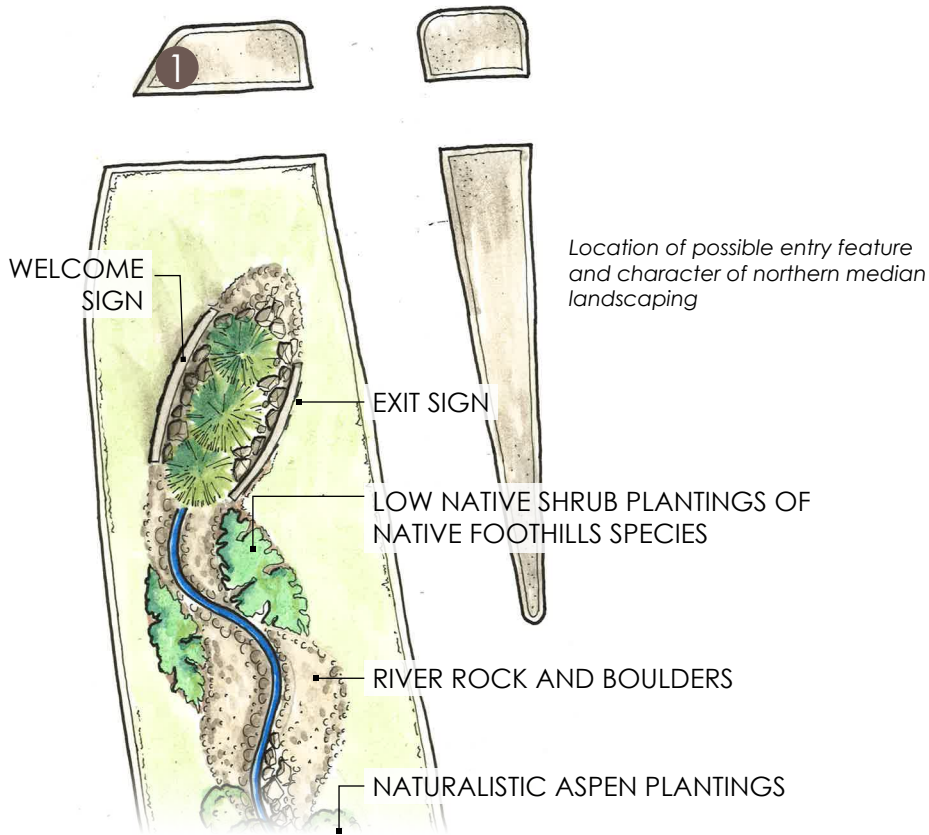
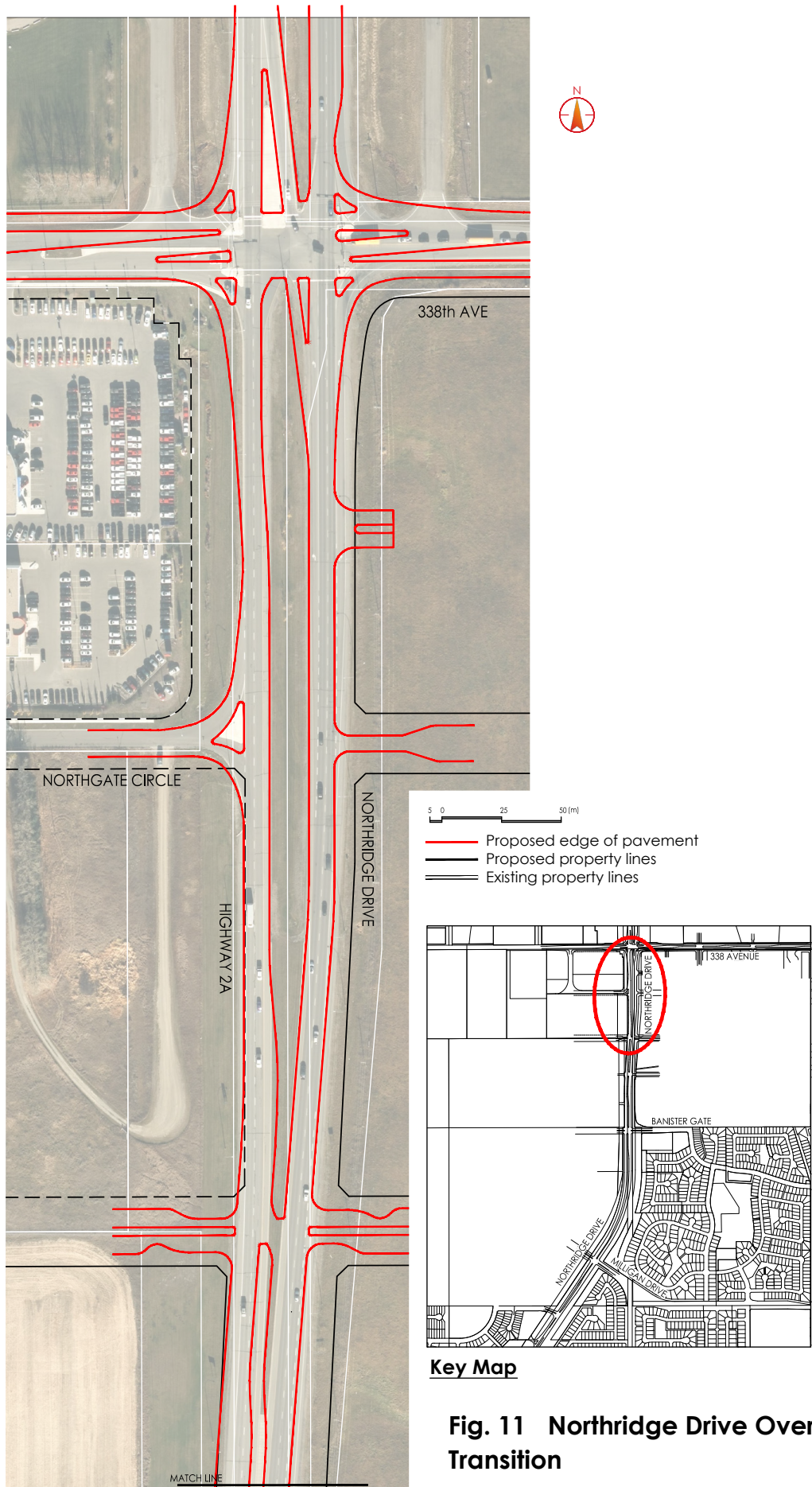


Fig. 11 Landscape Concept

Appendix C:

Recommended Option Overlay



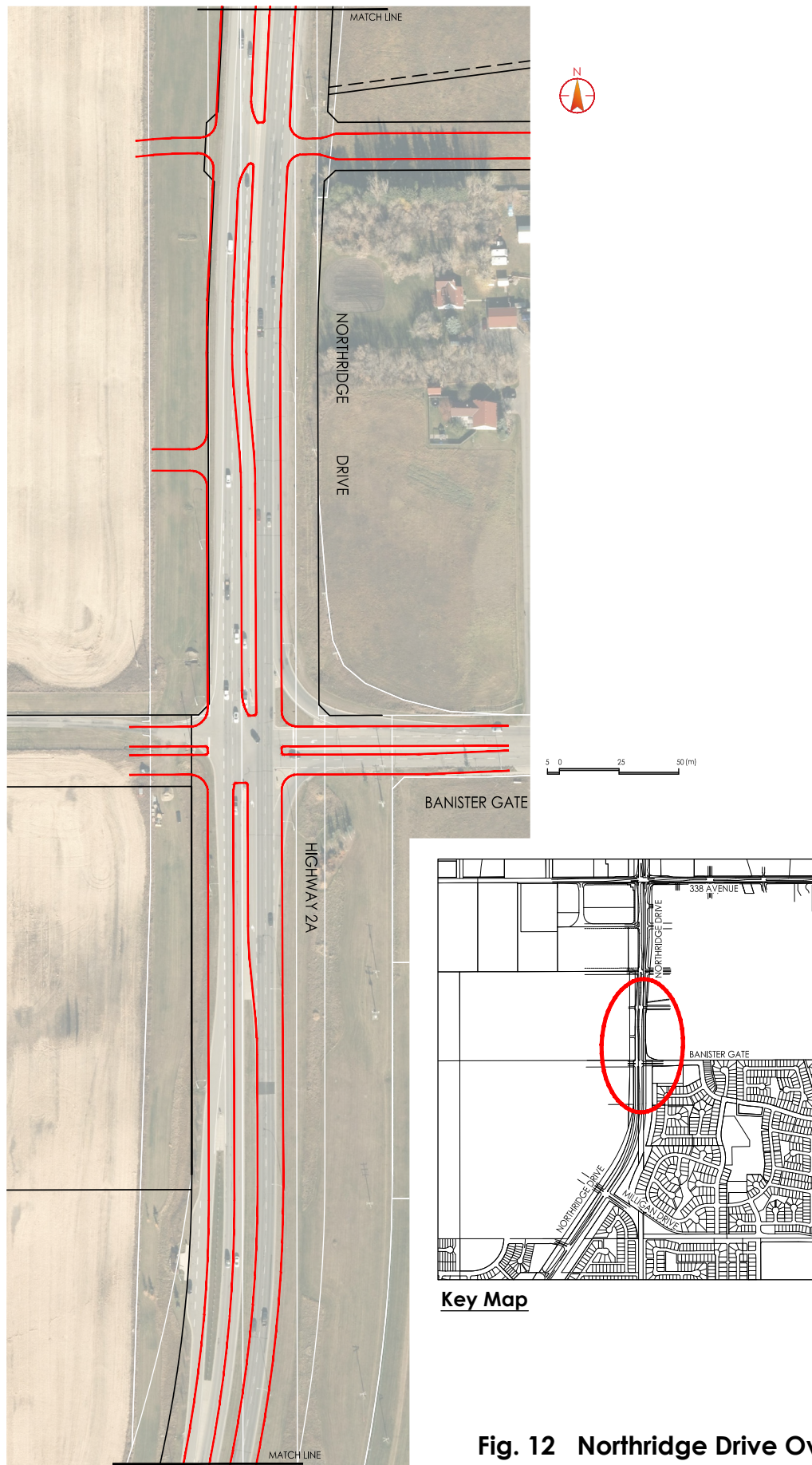
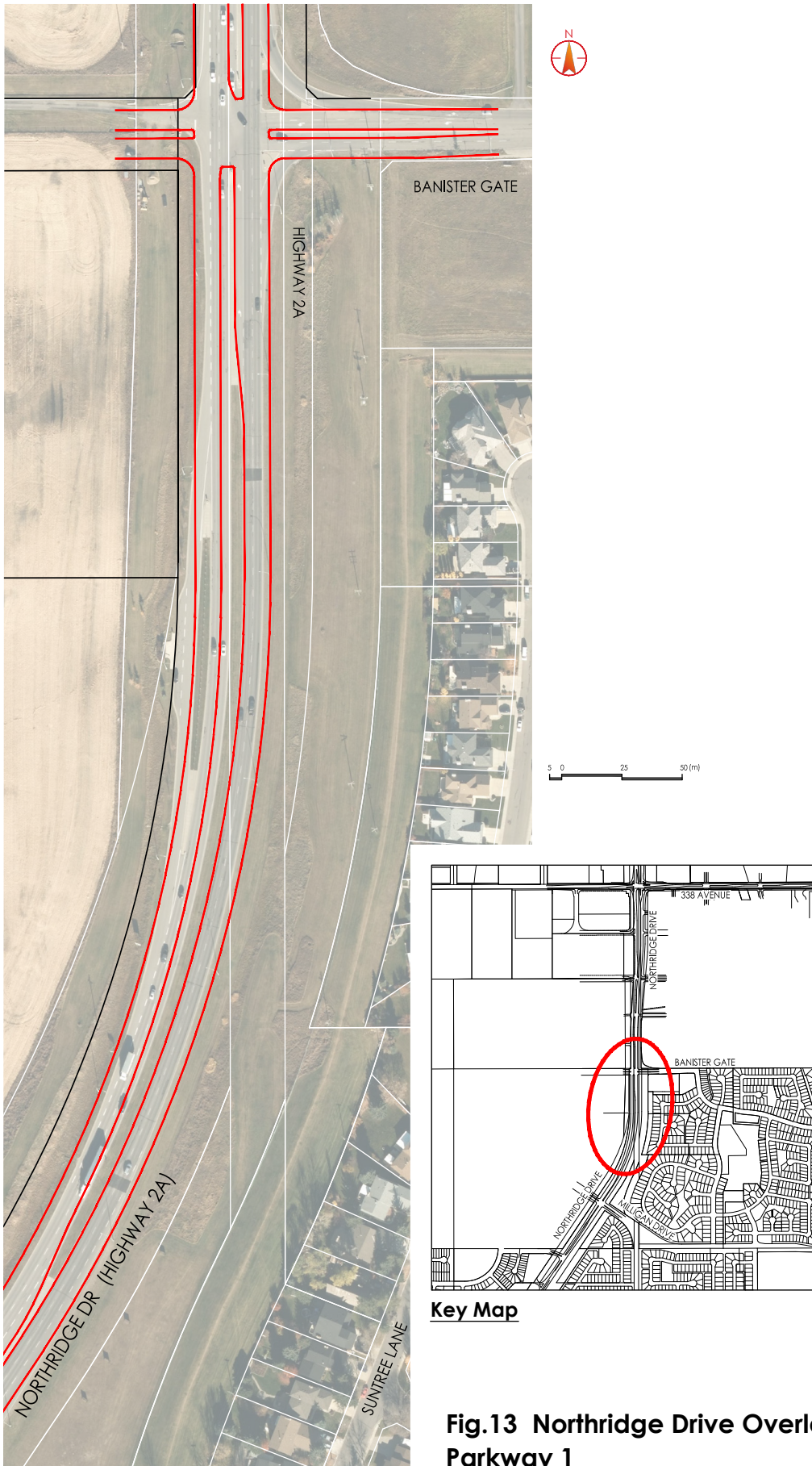


Fig. 12 Northridge Drive Overlay-Urban



**Fig.13 Northridge Drive Overlay-
Parkway 1**

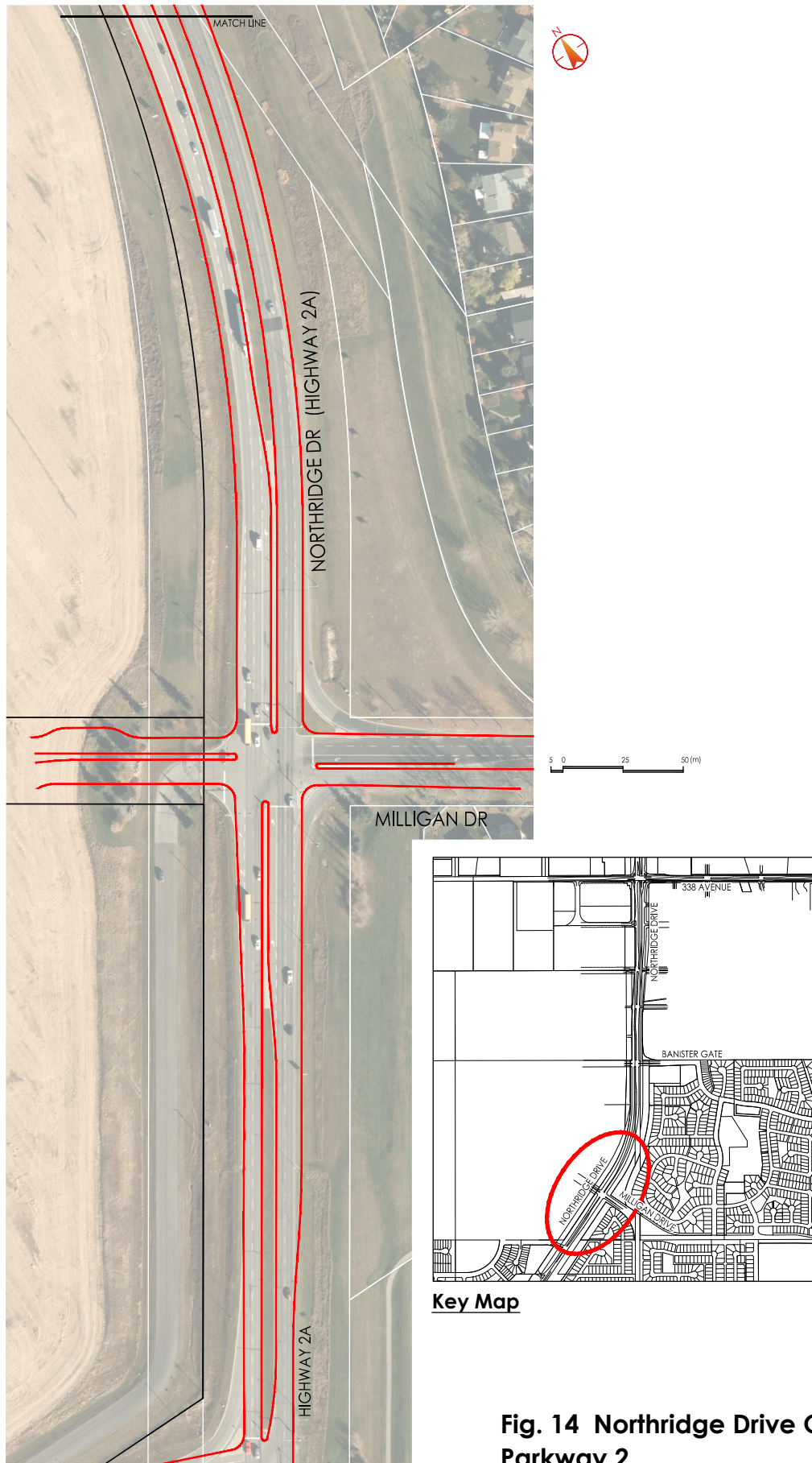


Fig. 14 Northridge Drive Overlay-Parkway 2



May 2016

