



Welcome to Open House #1

Elgin Mills Road / CN Railway Crossing
(Yonge Street to East of Newkirk Road)
City of Richmond Hill

Welcome to the first Open House for the Elgin Mills Road / CN Railway Crossing Environmental Assessment (EA) Study.

The commenting period for Open House#1 is from **January 27 to February 17, 2022.**



How to Navigate

- Click on the arrows at the bottom of your screen
- Use the navigation bar on the left of your screen to revisit any part of the Open House slides or to skip to a slide of interest to you
- Click the “Audio” button at the top right corner of the page to play audio for each slide

How to Participate

- Click on the arrows at the bottom of your screen to get started and learn about the project. Some slides have areas to leave feedback on the information presented. Enter your feedback and press **SUBMIT** to send your comments to the project team
- You can also email your comments to the project team at Jackson.Marin@york.ca

Purpose of Open House#1

Introduce the Project

Share key feedback received so far

Summarize the Region’s 2016 TMP recommendations for the corridor

Present the study findings to-date

Introduce Alternative Design Concepts to be developed in the **next phase** of the study

Obtain your input about the project

Contact Information

Name:

Postal Code:

Email Address:

- Yes, I would like to join the mailing list to receive updates for the study

SUBMIT

Privacy Statement:

Please note your personal information (e.g. name, address, and phone number) is collected, maintained, and disclosed under the authority of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for transparency and consultation purposes.

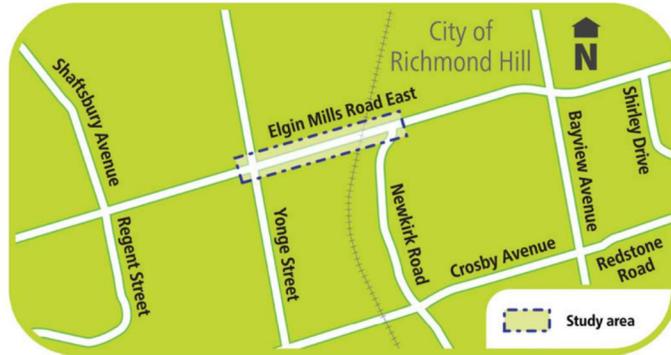
Personal information submitted will become part of a public record that is available to the general public unless it is requested that the personal information remain confidential.

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EA Process and Study Objectives

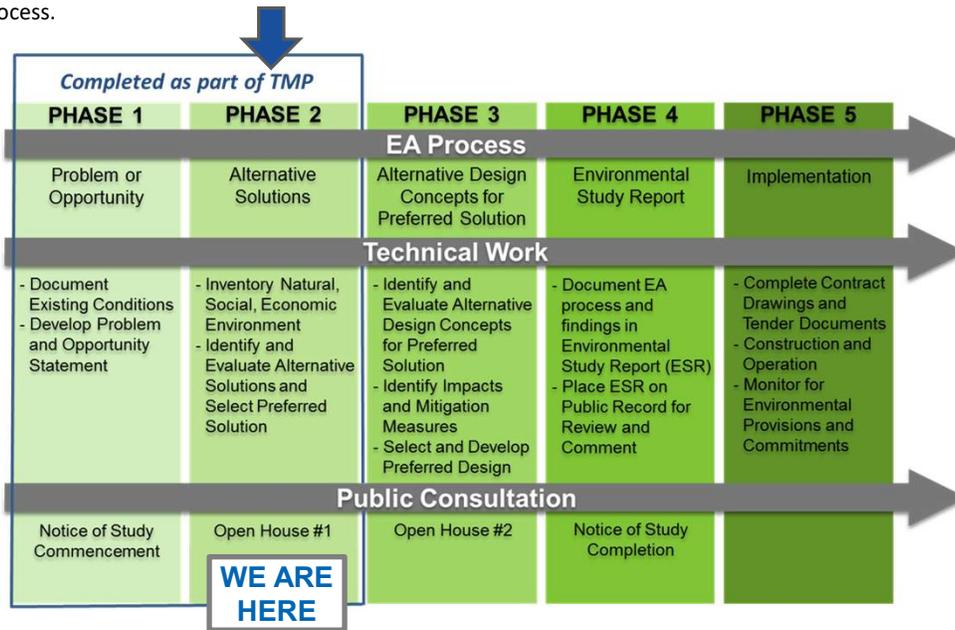
Project Description

York Region is undertaking a transportation **Environmental Assessment (EA) Study** for improvements to Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road, in the City of Richmond Hill.



Environmental Assessment (EA) Process

An **Environmental Assessment (EA)** is a planning and approval process for municipal infrastructure projects, legislated by the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. This EA study is being conducted as a Schedule 'C' project under the Municipal Class EA document (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, and 2015). This EA study incorporates the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) process.



Study Objectives



To accommodate current and future transportation needs for all modes (pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists)



To supplement the findings of the 2016 York Region Transportation Master Plan (YR TMP)

NEXT

Study Area Features

The EA study area is along Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road, in the City of Richmond Hill.



Image Source: Yorkmaps.ca

Key features of the corridor include:

- 1 German Mills Creek Crossing
- 2 Yonge Street Rapidway
- 3 Sidewalks on both sides, no cycling facilities
- 4 CN Railway / Richmond Hill GO Rail Crossing

-  Residential, Commercial and Industrial land use adjacent to Elgin Mills Road
-  Four Lane Urban Arterial Road
60km/h posted speed
-  Traffic Signals at Yonge Street, Yorkland Street/
Enford Road, and Newkirk Road intersections

Community Outreach and What We've heard

Community Outreach

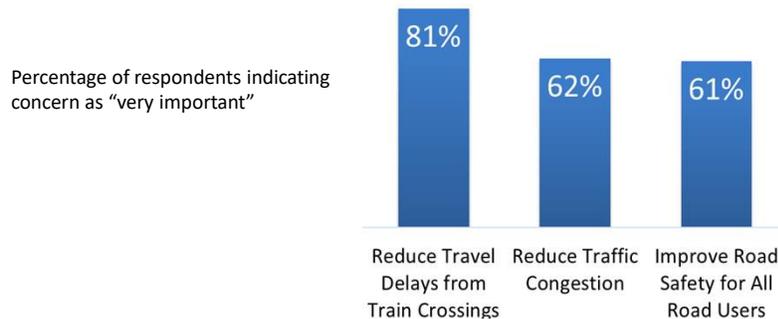
-  Direct Mail Notices
-  Project Website
York.ca/ElginMillsStudy
-  Technical Review Agencies
-  Newspaper Notices
-  York Region Social Media
 (Facebook, Twitter)
-  Online Survey
-  Open Houses
-  Stakeholders

What We've Heard

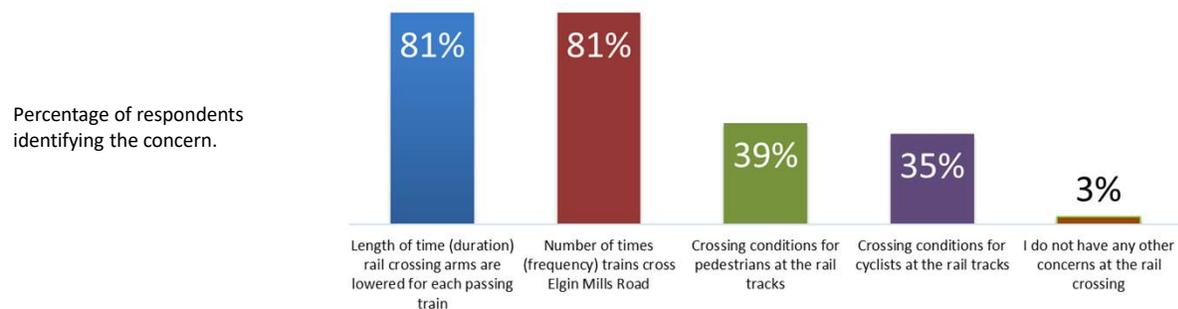
Online Survey Results

Based on 222 survey responses collected between November and December 2021:

Your top 3 concerns along Elgin Mills Road:



Your top concerns at the Railway Crossing:



Your most important features along Elgin Mills Road:



What We've heard (continued)

What We've Heard

Online Survey Results

Based on 222 survey responses collected between November and December 2021:



Your top 3 factors to make WALKING more attractive along Elgin Mills Road:

- 1) Pedestrians do not cross at the same level as the train tracks (Elgin Mills Road raised / lowered)
- 2) Increased separation from moving vehicular traffic
- 3) More attractive, comfortable streetscape (e.g. more street trees, landscaping, amenities such as benches and public art)



Your top 3 factors to make CYCLING more attractive along Elgin Mills Road:

- 1) Cyclists do not cross at the same level as the train tracks (Elgin Mills Road raised / lowered)
- 2) New paths (in boulevards) for cyclists, separated from walking
- 3) I would not cycle along Elgin Mills Road



Your top 3 factors to make TRANSIT more attractive along Elgin Mills Road:

- 1) Efficient transit routes
- 2) On-time transit service
- 3) Transit routes with connections to GO Train stations / services

General Comments:



The frequency and duration of trains passing (especially freight trains) are extensive and result in significant delays for all users



Strong support to construct either an overpass or underpass and build it soon. Request to leave the crossing at-grade as improvements aren't needed



Concerns with the maintenance at the rail crossing (bumpy travel for vehicles crossing the tracks)



Increased development and population growth will contribute to existing congestion



Delays to Emergency Vehicles while trains are passing



Construction of an overpass / underpass will be costly and take a long time to complete.



Noise concerns



How did you hear about Open House #1? Please select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed Notice | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Advertisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Region's Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Project team email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth |

Did you participate in the Online Survey (November to December 2021)?

- Yes
 No

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Planned Growth and Planning Policy Context

Planned Growth

York Region is forecasting significant growth. Infrastructure improvements are needed to support this growth. This EA study reviews opportunities for infrastructure improvements along Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road.



Population



Employment



Planning Policy Context

To establish the vision for the Elgin Mills Road corridor the project team completed a review of relevant planning documents and background studies including but not limited to:

Municipal

- Richmond Hill Official Plan
- Transportation Master Plan Update
- Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan
- Richmond Hill Railway Crossing Grade Separation Prioritization Study

Regional

- Regional Official Plan
- York Region Strategic Plan (Vision 2051)
- Regional Transportation Master Plan
- York Region's Sustainability Strategy
- York Region's Pedestrians and Cycling Master Plan
- York Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Planning Design Guidelines
- York Region's Transit Annual Service Plan
- York Region's Roads and Transit Capital Construction Program

Provincial

- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
- A Place to Grow (Growth Plan for GGH)
- 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (Metrolinx)
- Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan
- Greenbelt Plan
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

Key findings from the document review include:

Richmond Hill Railway Crossing Grade Separation Prioritization Study (2016)

- The Elgin Mills Road crossing of the CN Railway corridor east of Yonge Street was identified as the **highest priority crossing** requiring a grade separation of the seven road /rail crossings studied in the City of Richmond Hill

YR Official Plan

- Designates a **36.0m official plan right-of-way** for improvements to Elgin Mills Road

Planned Growth and Planning Policy Context (continued)

YR Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Study (2016)

Development of a Road Network Fit for the Future (2041), YR TMP 2016 Map 8



Four lanes for Elgin Mills Road and the need for a **Proposed Grade Separation** at the CN Rail Crossing

Supporting the Frequent Transit Network (2041), YR TMP 2016 Map 7



Elgin Mills Road as part of the **Frequent Transit Network**

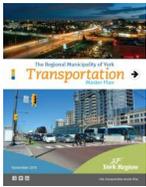
Growing the Cycling Network (2041), YR TMP 2016 Map 9



Separated active transportation facilities for pedestrians and cyclists along Elgin Mills Road

NEXT

Summary of TMP Recommendations for Elgin Mills Road



The York Region TMP (2016) completed Phases 1 and 2 of the EA process and identified the **Preferred Solution** for improvements to Elgin Mills Road.

TMP Phase 1: Problem and Opportunity Statement



Identified the **Needs and Justification** to define the **Problem and Opportunity Statement** for improvements to the Elgin Mills Road corridor

Network improvements for the Elgin Mills Road corridor are needed to:

- Address existing congestion and future travel demands
- Support walking, cycling, and transit along the corridor
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety at the crossing and reduce delays to transit and traffic along the corridor

PROBLEM	OPPORTUNITY
Anticipated delays at the existing at-grade CN Railway Crossing	➔ Improve CN Railway Crossing and reduce delays and congestion with the associated crossing
Existing railway crossing does not support enhanced transit service and results in delays	➔ Improve the efficiency and reliability of transit
Lack of continuous pedestrian and cyclist facilities	➔ Improve pedestrian and cycling facilities to encourage other modes of transportation to reduce congestion and single occupancy vehicle (SOV) use
Safety and operational concerns at CN Railway Crossing	➔ Improve safety, performance, and operational efficiency for all modes at the CN Railway Crossing

TMP Phase 2: Alternative Solutions



Developed and Evaluated **Alternative Solutions** to address the P&O Statement

1. "Do Nothing"
2. Improve Grade Crossing Safety
3. Transportation Improvements To Adjacent / Parallel Corridor

4. Construct Rail Grade Separation Structure

Recommended because:



- Traffic and train volumes are expected to exceed exposure warrants for grade separation
- Grade separation improves pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Reduces delay to transit and traffic along the corridor

TMP Preferred Solution



Selected a **Preferred Solution** for the Elgin Mills Road corridor

The Preferred Solution for Elgin Mills Road was identified as **Construct Rail Grade Separation Structure** due to its alignment with the five YR TMP objectives (support transit, support road network, support active transportation, support goods movement, and supports last mile).

Reconfirming the Preferred Solution Transportation Conditions

To reconfirm the recommendations and TMP Preferred Solution, the EA project team completed an updated Transportation Assessment and assessed the existing and future conditions for Elgin Mills Road. The following highlights the key findings.

Traffic Operations

Existing Traffic Conditions



- Elgin Mills Road
 - **Operates within capacity** with **localized congestion points** experiencing longer delays
 - **Vehicle queues from train crossings** extend to and **impact intersection operations** (Yorkland Street and Newkirk Road) and driveways
 - **Vehicle queues extend to the railway crossing** from Newkirk Road intersection during the morning peak

Future 2041 Traffic Conditions



- Elgin Mills Road **capacity will improve with a grade separation, but still experience congestion.** Anticipated vehicular demand in the area should be monitored in the future
- Separating Elgin Mills Road at the railway crossing (grade separation) is forecasted to:
 - **Increase throughput** along Elgin Mills Road
 - **Reduce delays** at the rail crossing
 - **Reduce vehicle queue** spillbacks from the railway crossing to adjacent intersections

Grade Separation Exposure Index

An exposure index is used to determine whether a grade separation should be considered based traffic volumes, and the number of trains at the crossing each day. Grade separation is considered when the exposure index exceeds 1,000,000.

At the Elgin Mills Road crossing of the CN rail in future conditions (2041) the exposure index is anticipated to be >1, 698,000.

The grade separation exposure index is exceeded.



Image Source: GoogleMaps

Existing Rail Crossing Conditions



Image Source: Yorkmaps.ca



Rail corridor is currently serviced by CN Freight Rail, CN Corridor Maintenance, GO Commuter Rail and VIA Commuter Rail



Vehicles are delayed at the crossing as they are required to stop for trains to cross – safety concerns for motorists due to conflicts with crossing trains



Increased train frequency is forecasted. Lengthy duration of train crossings (e.g. freight trains)



Vehicle queues extend to adjacent intersections when crossing arms are lowered for passing trains



Safety concerns for pedestrians at the existing CN Railway crossing



Elgin Mills Road does not support cycling facilities at the CN Railway crossing

NEXT

Reconfirming the Preferred Solution Transportation Conditions (continued)

Pedestrians



- Sidewalks are found along the north and south boulevards of Elgin Mills Road
- Pedestrian connections / pathways to residential and commercial / industrial lands are present northwest and southeast of the rail crossing
- Pedestrians cross many lanes at signalized intersections
- Pedestrians cross the rail tracks at a level crossing



Cyclists



- There are no existing cyclist facilities along Elgin Mills Road. Cyclists travel in mixed traffic
- Cyclist cross the rail tracks at a level crossing



Transit



- Route 80 Elgin Mills and Rouge 86 Newkirk - Red Maple travel along Elgin Mills Road
- Viva Blue and Route 99 Yonge Street cross Elgin Mills Road at Yonge Street
- Transit vehicles are required to stop at the railway crossing and with each train passing



Image Source: YRT System Map (Accessed December 2021)

Traffic Safety Review (2015 to 2020)

Top collision prone intersection in the study area:

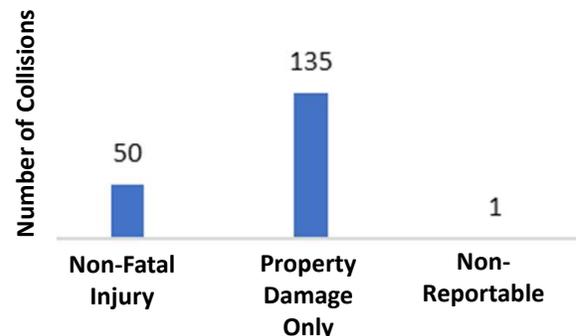
1 Elgin Mills Road & Yonge Street

Vehicles stopped for passing trains extend to adjacent intersections, causing driver frustration. Pedestrians and cyclists cross at the same level as the train tracks.



Image Source: GoogleMaps

Most collisions in the study corridor resulted from human error (e.g. following too closely, not obeying traffic controls at intersections, failing to yield the right-of-way, or improperly changing lanes, passing, or turning)



Preferred Solution

Based on the Transportation Assessment and review of the existing and future conditions for Elgin Mills Road, there are opportunities to:

- Improve the CN Railway crossing and reduce delays and congestion with the associated crossing
- Improve pedestrian and cycling facilities to encourage other modes of transportation to reduce congestion and single occupancy vehicle (SOV) use
- Improve the efficiency and reliability of transit
- Improve safety, performance, and operational efficiency for all modes along the study corridor

The Preferred Solution for Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road is confirmed as **Construct a Rail Grade Separation Structure** as it:

- Addresses improvements at the CN Railway crossing (alternative design concepts for overpass and underpass will be assessed in the next stage of the study)
- Provides for separated active transportation facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
- Supports Elgin Mills Road as a Frequent Transit Network
- Accommodates the safety, performance and operational efficiency for all modes



Do you agree with the Preferred Solution to construct a rail grade separation structure and accommodate active transportation along the Elgin Mills Road corridor?

- Yes No

Comments:

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NEXT

What's Next?

Alternative Design Concepts – Grade Separation

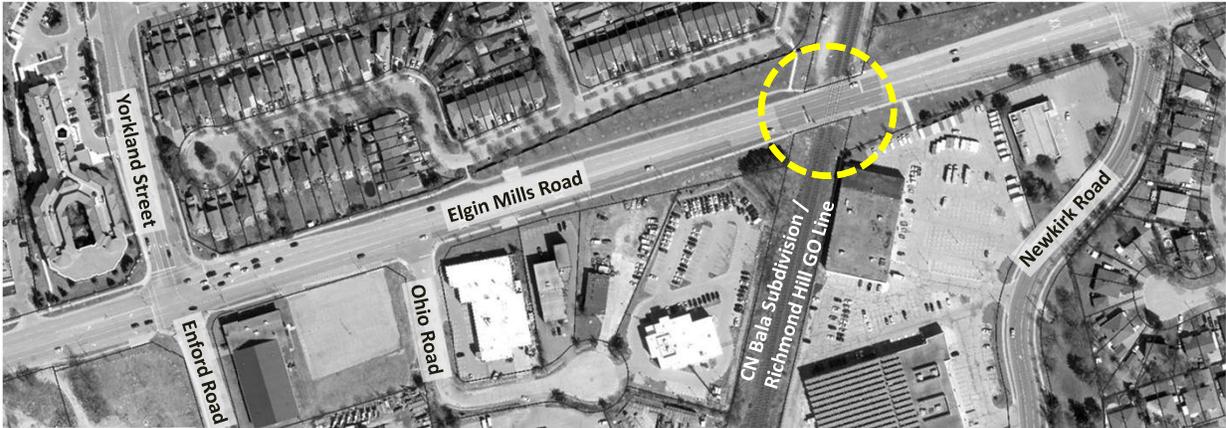


Image Source: Yorkmaps.ca

To determine how to best separate Elgin Mills Road from the level rail crossing and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists the project team will develop the following design alternatives in the next phase of the study. The evaluations and recommendations will be presented at Open House #2.

Alternative 1 – Maintain At-Grade Crossing

Elgin Mills Road crosses the CN rail tracks at the existing level crossing



Existing Elgin Mills Road at-grade crossing East of Yonge Street

Alternative 2 – Underpass

Elgin Mills Road is lowered under the CN rail tracks



*Underpass example
Major Mackenzie Drive east of Keele Street*

Alternative 3 – Overpass

Elgin Mills Road is raised above the CN rail tracks



*Overpass example
Bantry Road east of Yonge Street*

Some key considerations the project team will study when developing and evaluating the design alternatives for the grade separation include:

- Distance to Newkirk Road signalized intersection
- Distance to Ohio Road unsignalized intersection
- Proximity between rail crossing and residential homes and businesses
- Existing pedestrian connections to the north and south
- High Groundwater
- Existing Floodplain
- Pedestrian and Cyclist conditions
- Utilities
- Life Cycle Costs

?

Please share any comments on the grade separation options. Are there other items the project team should consider while developing these options?

SUBMIT

NEXT

What's Next?

Alternative Design Concepts - Active Transportation

Along Elgin Mills Road sidewalks are currently provided on north and south boulevards and there are no cycling facilities. To determine how to best accommodate pedestrians and cyclists along Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road the following design alternatives will be developed and studied in the next phase of the study. The evaluations and recommendations will be presented at Open House #2.

Alternative 1

- **Sidewalk** on one side
- **Multi-use Path (MUP)** on other side, shared space for pedestrians and cyclists to travel in both directions
- Opportunities for boulevard landscaping



Sidewalk



Multi-Use Path

Alternative 2

- **Sidewalk** on both sides
- **Separated Boulevard Cycle Tracks** on both sides, cyclists travel in same direction as vehicle traffic
- Opportunities for boulevard landscaping



Boulevard Cycle Track and Sidewalk

Alternative 3

- **Multi-use Paths (MUP)** on both sides, shared space for pedestrians and cyclists to travel in both directions
- Opportunities for boulevard landscaping



Multi-Use Path



What is your preference for accommodating pedestrians and cyclists along Elgin Mills Road between Yonge Street and East of Newkirk Road?

- Multi-use Path on one side and Sidewalk on the other side
- Separated Boulevard Cycle Tracks and Sidewalks on both sides
- Multi-Use Paths on both sides
- I do not have a preference.

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What's Next?

Key Technical Studies

Key Technical Studies

The following technical studies will inform the development of the design alternatives, evaluations and impact assessment of the proposed improvements:



Transportation & Traffic Assessment



Noise Impact Assessment



Streetscape and Landscaping



Natural Heritage



Stormwater Management and Drainage



Structural Design



Arborist / Tree Inventory



Geotechnical Investigations



Sub-surface Utilities Investigations



Archaeological Assessment



Hydrogeological Investigations



Cultural and Built Heritage Assessment



Contamination Overview Study

NEXT

What's Next?

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess the design alternatives in the next phase of the study:



Transportation Service

- Reduce Traffic Congestion and Delays
- Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Environment
- Create a Cyclist-Friendly Environment
- Improve Public Transit Service
- Improve Safety at the Rail Crossing
- Improve Safety for all Travel Modes
- Improve Mode Choice
- Accommodate Emergency Services



Natural Environment

- Protect Designated Natural Areas
- Protect Vegetation
- Protect Wildlife
- Protect Aquatic Habitat
- Improve Air Quality
- Protect Surface Water and Ground Water
- Minimize Effects on Climate Change
- Minimize Flooding and Erosion and Protect Slope Stability



Social Environment

- Minimize Impacts to Residential, Institutional and Recreational Dwellings / Properties
- Improve Access to Residential Areas, Institutional and Recreational Facilities
- Mitigate Traffic on Local Streets
- Minimize Traffic Noise
- Preserve Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Features
- Improve Visual Aesthetics
- Improve Community Character



Infrastructure Design & Economic Environment

- Minimize Utility Relocation
- Accommodate Planned Development and Growth
- Minimize Impacts and Improve Access to Businesses and Key Employment Areas
- Minimize Property Requirements
- Life Cycle Cost (Maximize Construction Value, Minimize Operating Costs)
- Minimize Disruption due to Construction
- Minimize Constructability Complexity



Are there additional evaluation criteria you would like considered?

Yes

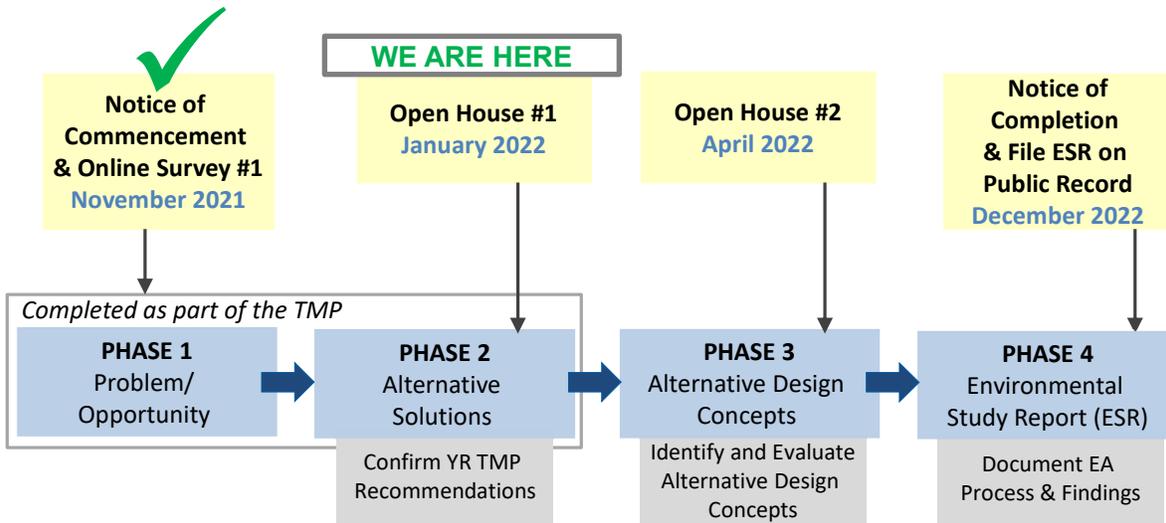
No

Enter additional evaluation criteria below or leave blank:

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Project Timeline and Next Steps



Next Steps



Review feedback from the public and stakeholders



Develop and Evaluate Alternative Design Concepts. Identify Preferred Design.



Present the Preferred Design at Open House#2 (April 2022)

Timing of Improvements

Timing of Improvements for Elgin Mills Road is identified in the Region's 2022 10-Year Roads and Transit Capital Construction Program and is subjected to annual review

Recommended improvements:

- Construction to commence in 2026



Contact Us

Your input is very valuable to us!

Please provide any additional comments on the **Elgin Mills Rd / CN Railway Crossing EA** study by entering them below, or contact us by email or phone by **February 17, 2022**.



Comments:

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York Region Transportation Services



Jackson.Marin@york.ca



1-877-464-9675 ext.75131
TTY: 1-866-512-6228

SUBMIT

Thank you for participating!



For more information visit us at:
york.ca/ElginMillsStudy