Subject: Ottawa Hospital Connection to Dow's Lake Station – Environmental Assessment Study Recommendations

File Number: ACS2026-PDB-TP-0003

Report to Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on 23 April 2026

and Council 13 May 2026

Submitted on April 14, 2026 by Jennifer Armstrong, Director, Transportation Planning, Planning, Development and Building Services Department

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Ward: Somerset (14), Kitchissippi (15), River (16), Capital (17)

Objet : Recommandations de l'étude d'évaluation environnementale de la liaison entre l'Hôpital d'Ottawa et la station Lac Dow

Dossier : ACS2026-PDB-TP-0003

Rapport présenté au Comité des travaux publics et de l'infrastructure le 23 avril 2026

et au Conseil le 13 mai 2026

Soumis le 14 avril 2026 par Jennifer Armstrong, Directrice, Planification des transports, Direction générale des services de la planification, de l'aménagement et du bâtiment

Personne ressource : Angela Taylor, Gestionnaire principale de projet, Planification des transports – Évaluation environnementale, Direction générale des services de la planification, de l'aménagement et du bâtiment

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Quartier : Somerset (14), Kitchissippi (15) , Rivière (16), Capitale (17)

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Public Works and Infrastructure Committee recommend Council:

1. **Approve the recommended option for a pedestrian connection between Dow's Lake Station and the new Ottawa Hospital via the Carling Avenue underpass as described in this report;**
2. **Direct staff to complete the functional design for the underpass connection and to fulfil any necessary Environmental Assessment requirements under the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*; and**
3. **Approve the functional design for the potential interim solutions outlined in this report at the existing at-grade crossing of Carling Avenue.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'infrastructure et des travaux publics recommande au Conseil :

1. **d'approuver l'option recommandée pour une liaison piétonne entre la station Lac Dow et le nouvel hôpital d'Ottawa par le passage inférieur de l'avenue Carling, telle que décrite dans le présent rapport;**
2. **de charger le personnel de finaliser la conception fonctionnelle de la liaison par le passage inférieur et de se conformer à toutes les exigences en matière d'évaluation environnementale prévues par la *Loi sur les évaluations environnementales* de l'Ontario;**
3. **d'approuver la conception fonctionnelle des solutions provisoires possibles décrites dans le présent rapport quant au passage au niveau du sol existant de l'avenue Carling.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

On 30 May 2022, Transportation Committee approved the Statement of Work for the Ottawa Hospital Connection to Dow's Lake Station Environmental Assessment (EA) Study (ACS2022-PIE-TP-0005). The study addresses conditions set out in the Ottawa Hospital Master Site Plan and the National Capital Commission's Federal Land Use, Design and Transaction Approval (FLUDTA) process. These conditions require a direct, seamless, accessible, and weather-protected connection between Dow's Lake Station and the new Ottawa Hospital.

Environmental Assessment Process

In accordance with Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*, a Municipal Class Schedule B EA process was carried out. The EA initially identified a bridge crossing as the preferred solution. When compared to a tunnel crossing, the bridge resulted in lower cost, reduced impacts to underground infrastructure, greater ease of construction, lower construction risk, and better integration with planned development and O-Train expansion. However, feedback from the public and stakeholders indicated strong support for a tunnel solution because of its more direct, seamless, and intuitive user experience. In response, the City and the Ottawa Hospital undertook further technical review to determine whether the Carling Avenue underpass could serve as a viable alternative.

Review of Underpass Options

An initial underpass option utilizing space within the existing Carling Avenue bridge structure was determined to be infeasible due to insufficient width. However, subsequent technical workshops led to the development of a refined underpass concept that would integrate the crossing with the planned replacement of the Carling Avenue bridge. The bridge was constructed in 1965 and is nearing the end of its service life (15 to 20 years).

The recommended concept (Figure 1 and 2) extends the Dow's Lake Station platform southward to connect directly to a new walkway under Carling Avenue and a southside headhouse providing street-level access. Compared to the bridge and tunnel, this solution provides a more direct, intuitive connection to the Ottawa Hospital for those accessing the site by transit, with direct line-of-sight connectivity across Carling Avenue. The design eliminates the need for a northside headhouse, reducing the project cost. Removing the north-side headhouse also avoids impacts to adjacent lands planned for high-density development and preserves redevelopment potential. Impacts on this property had been identified as a key concern by the property owner. While the connection will only be accessible by transit customers and will not be open to the general public, the signalized at-grade crossing of Carling Avenue will remain in place.

Coordinating construction of the crossing with replacement of the Carling Avenue bridge supports a better crossing solution. It also presents a significant opportunity to achieve cost efficiencies and economies of scale. A combined project would allow for shared design, procurement, construction staging, and utility relocation, reducing cumulative costs, shortening the overall construction period, and minimizing disruptions to traffic, O-Train operations, and bus service.

The replacement bridge would be designed to accommodate future transportation

infrastructure, including the ultimate Bus Rapid Transit corridor along Carling Avenue, future twinning of O-Train Line 2, and enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities. An additional pedestrian underpass adjacent to the future O-Train tracks would be required to provide access between the new station platform and the south side of Carling Avenue.

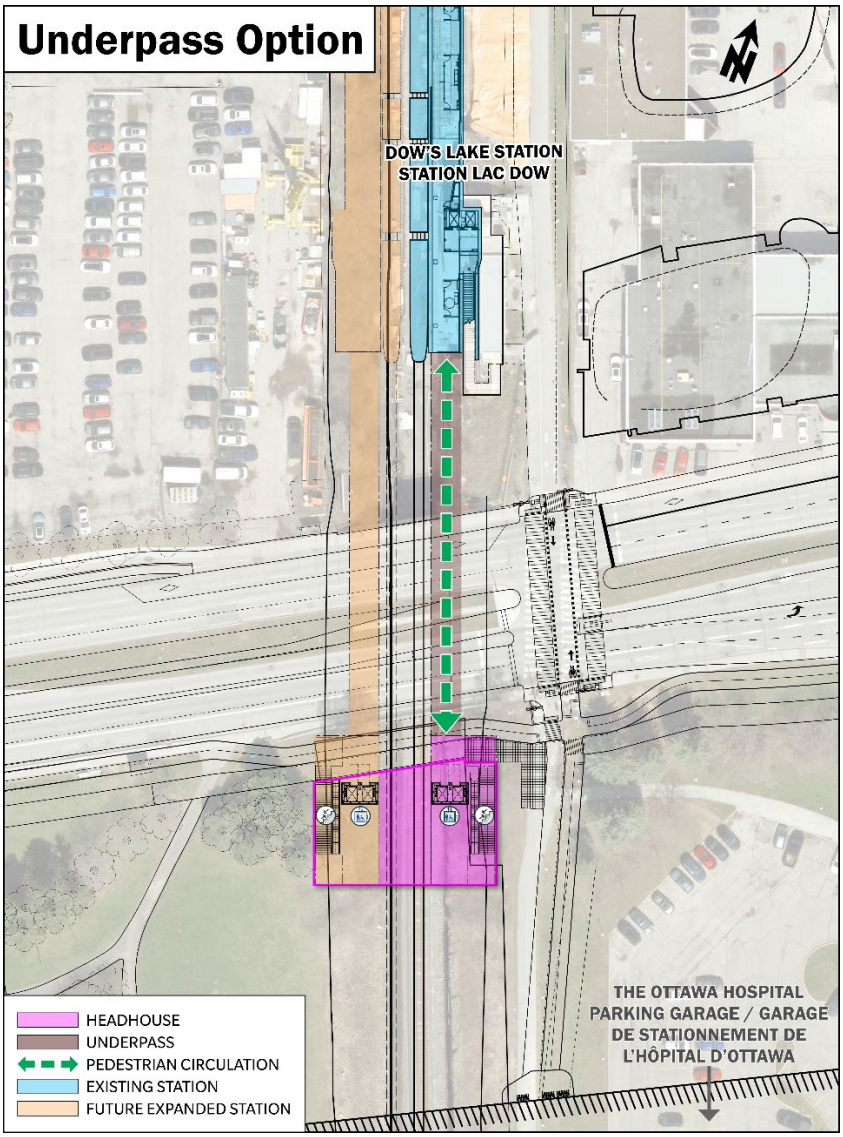


Figure 1: Underpass Concept Plan

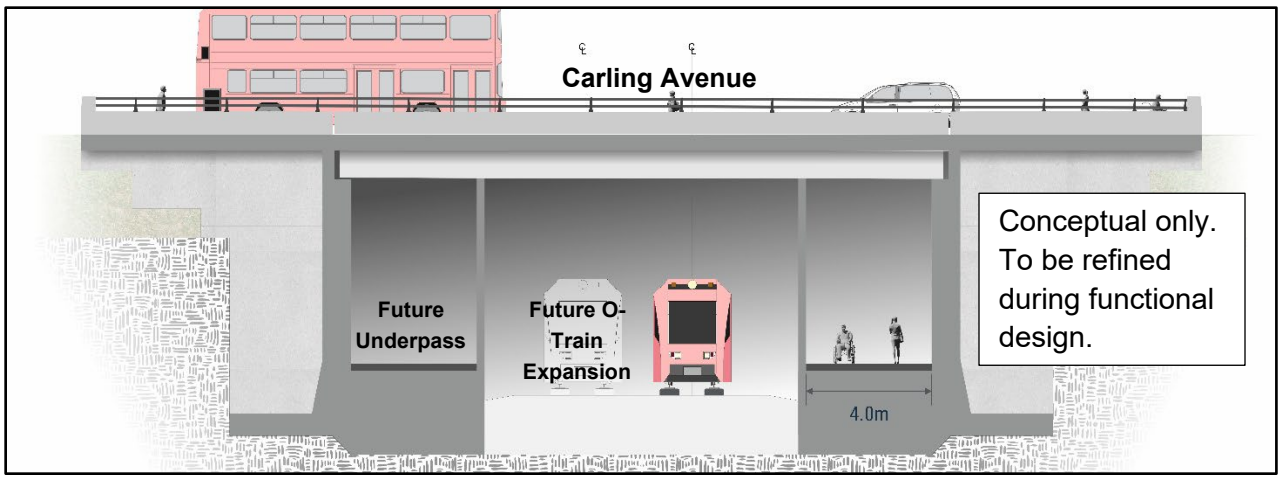


Figure 2: Underpass Cross-Section under Carling Avenue

Implementation of the pedestrian underpass together with the Carling Avenue bridge replacement is dependent on availability of funding. Should funding not allow for the connection to be in place in time for the opening of the Ottawa Hospital, three interim options could be considered: enhanced shuttle service using minibuses between Dow's Lake Station and the hospital campus; improvements to the existing midblock, at-grade signalized crossing at Dow's Lake Station, including the possible addition of weather protection along sections of the multi-use pathway; and a new active transportation bridge on the south side of Carling Avenue.

RÉSUMÉ

Contexte

Le 30 mai 2022, le Comité des transports a approuvé l'énoncé des travaux pour l'étude d'évaluation environnementale (EE) relative au projet d'aménagement d'un lien entre l'Hôpital d'Ottawa et la station Lac Dow (ACS2022PIETP0005). L'étude aborde les conditions énoncées dans le Plan directeur de l'Hôpital d'Ottawa et le processus pour l'approbation fédérale de l'utilisation du sol, du design et des transactions immobilières (AFUSDTI) de la Commission de la capitale nationale. Ces conditions exigent une liaison directe, fluide, accessible et protégée des intempéries entre la station Lac Dow et le nouvel hôpital d'Ottawa.

Processus d'évaluation environnementale

Conformément à la *Loi sur les évaluations environnementales* de l'Ontario, un processus d'étude d'évaluation environnementale municipale de portée générale de l'annexe B a été mené. L'EE proposait initialement un pont comme solution privilégiée. Par rapport à un tunnel, le pont comporte des coûts moins élevés, des impacts réduits sur les infrastructures souterraines, une plus grande facilité de construction, des risques

de construction moindres et une meilleure intégration avec les aménagements prévus pour le prolongement de l'O-Train. Cependant, les commentaires du public et des parties prenantes ont révélé un appui marqué en faveur d'un tunnel, qui offre une expérience utilisateur plus directe, fluide et intuitive. En réponse à ces commentaires, la Ville et l'Hôpital d'Ottawa ont entrepris un examen technique plus approfondi afin de déterminer si le passage inférieur de l'avenue Carling pouvait constituer une option viable.

Examen des options de passage inférieur

Une première option de passage inférieur utilisant l'espace disponible dans la structure existante du pont de l'avenue Carling a été jugée irréalisable en raison de sa largeur insuffisante. Cependant, des ateliers techniques ultérieurs ont conduit à l'élaboration d'un concept de passage inférieur amélioré qui intégrerait le passage piétonnier au remplacement prévu du pont de l'avenue Carling. Le pont a été construit en 1965 et arrive à la fin de sa durée de vie utile (15 à 20 ans).

Le concept recommandé (figures 1 et 2) prévoit le prolongement vers le sud du quai de la station Lac Dow afin de le relier directement à une nouvelle allée piétonnière sous l'avenue Carling et à un bâtiment de station côté sud offrant un accès au niveau de la rue. Par rapport à la solution du pont et du tunnel, cette option propose un lien plus direct et plus intuitif vers l'Hôpital d'Ottawa pour les usagers des transports en commun, avec une visibilité directe sur l'avenue Carling. Cette approche élimine la nécessité de construire un bâtiment côté nord, ce qui réduit le coût du projet et évite les impacts sur les terrains adjacents prévus pour des projets d'aménagement de grande densité, tout en préservant le potentiel de réaménagement. Le propriétaire avait d'ailleurs indiqué que les impacts sur ce terrain constituaient une préoccupation majeure. La liaison ne sera accessible qu'aux usagers des transports en commun et ne sera pas ouverte au grand public, mais le passage au niveau du sol doté de feux de l'avenue Carling restera en place.

La coordination des travaux de construction du passage avec le remplacement du pont de l'avenue Carling optimisera cette option, qui présente également l'occasion de réaliser des économies d'échelle et de réduire les coûts. Un projet combiné permettrait de mettre en commun des éléments liés à la conception, à l'approvisionnement, à l'organisation des phases de construction et au déplacement des réseaux de services publics, ce qui réduirait l'ensemble des coûts, raccourcirait la durée totale des travaux et minimiserait les perturbations pour la circulation, l'exploitation de l'O-Train et le service d'autobus.

Le pont de remplacement serait conçu pour s’adapter aux futures infrastructures de transport, notamment le couloir projeté pour le transport en commun rapide par autobus le long de l’avenue Carling, l’aménagement futur de la double voie de la Ligne 2 de l’O-Train et l’amélioration des infrastructures pour les piétons et les cyclistes. Un passage inférieur supplémentaire pour piétons, adjacent aux futures voies de l’O-Train, serait nécessaire pour assurer la liaison entre le quai de la nouvelle station et le côté sud de l’avenue Carling.

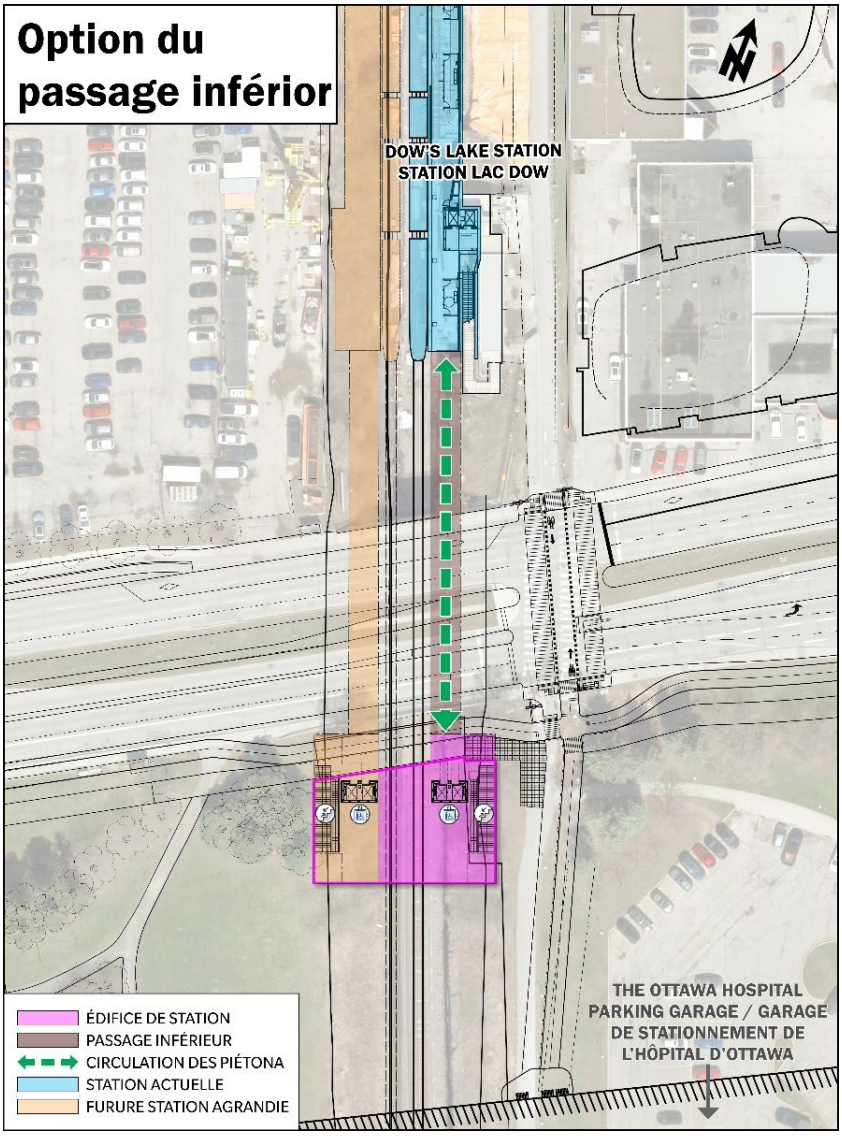


Figure 1 : Plan conceptuel du passage inférieur

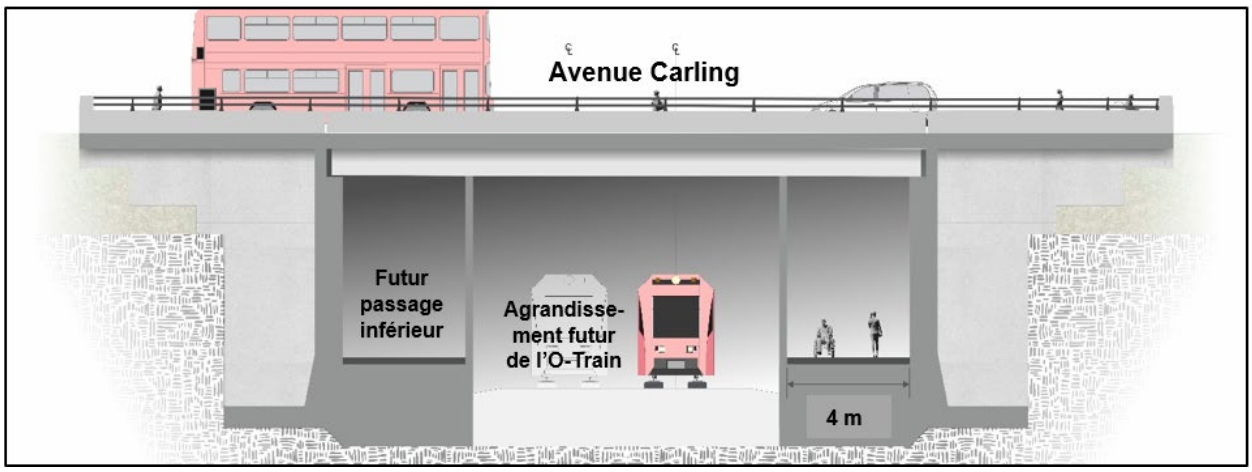


Figure 2 : Coupe transversale du passage inférieur sous l'avenue Carling

La mise en œuvre du passage inférieur pour piétons, ainsi que le remplacement du pont de l'avenue Carling dépendent de la disponibilité des fonds. Si les fonds ne permettent pas de mettre en place cette liaison à temps pour l'ouverture de l'Hôpital d'Ottawa, trois solutions provisoires pourraient être envisagées : un service de navette renforcé assurant la liaison entre la station Dow's Lake et le campus hospitalier à l'aide de minibus, l'amélioration du passage piétonnier au niveau du sol existant, à mi-pâté et doté de feux de signalisation, à la station Lac Dow, incluant l'ajout éventuel d'une protection contre les intempéries le long de certaines sections du sentier polyvalent, et la construction d'un nouveau pont destiné aux modes de transport actifs du côté sud de l'avenue Carling.

BACKGROUND

On 30 May 2022, Transportation Committee approved the Statement of Work for the Ottawa Hospital Connection to Dow's Lake Station Environmental Assessment (EA) Study (ACS2022-PIE-TP-0005). This connection is a required condition of both the Ottawa Hospital Master Site Plan and the National Capital Commission (NCC) Federal Land Use, Design and Transaction Approval (FLUDTA) process. The planning conditions (Document 1) call for a connection that is direct, seamless, accessible, and weather-protected. South of Carling Avenue, the connection will be integrated with the Hospital parking garage which provides access to the rooftop Highline. The Highline is an elevated, linear pathway within an urban public park on the roof of the parking garage which connects directly to the Hospital entrance. Figure 3 is a rendering of the Hospital green roof over the parking garage with the general location of the Highline and proposed connection to Dow's Lake Station.

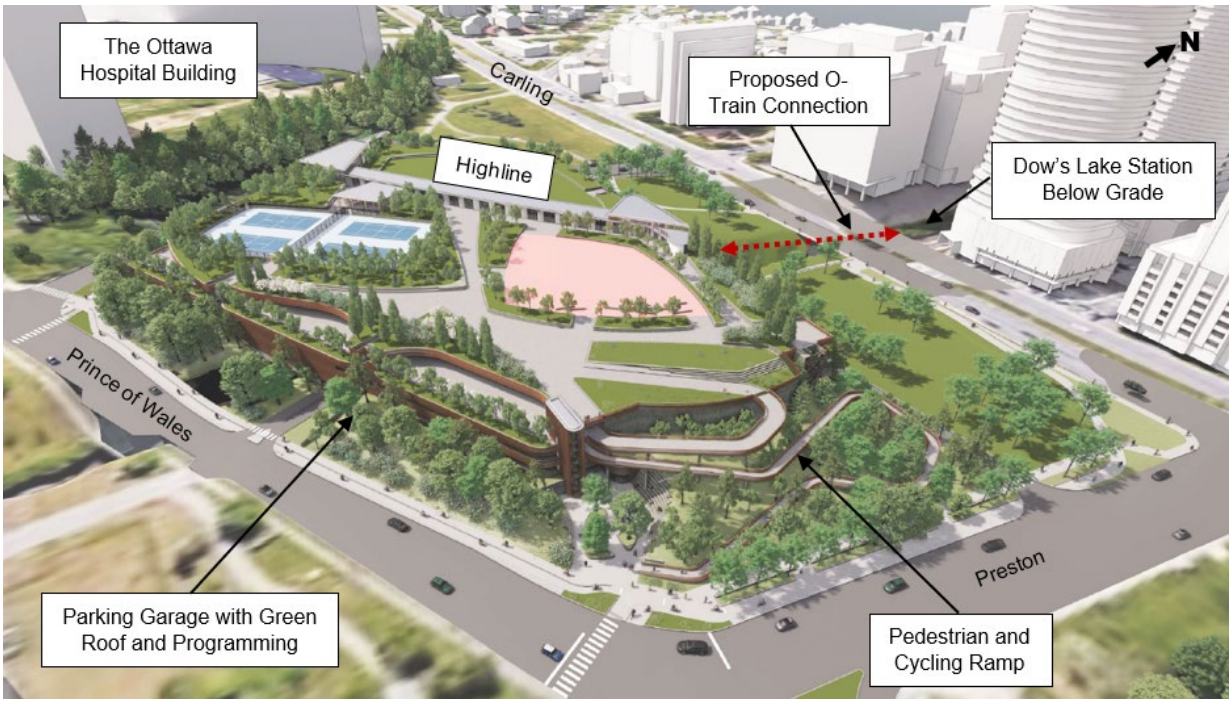


Figure 3: Study Area Context and General Location of Proposed Connection

To assess options for a connection between the parking garage and Dow's Lake Station, a Municipal Class Schedule B EA was initiated in accordance with Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*. This report summarizes the findings of the EA study.

DISCUSSION

Environmental Assessment Study Process

The EA study examined alternative crossing alignments and types to identify a preferred solution that is direct, seamless, intuitive, and accessible to the public, while minimizing environmental impacts. The study initially assessed two options: a bridge and tunnel crossing on the east side of the O-train tracks (Figure 4). Each option would require extending the existing station platform southward and providing new headhouses north and south of Carling Avenue, equipped with elevators, stairs, and escalators. Either option could accommodate a future connection to the Hospital parking garage from the southside headhouse.

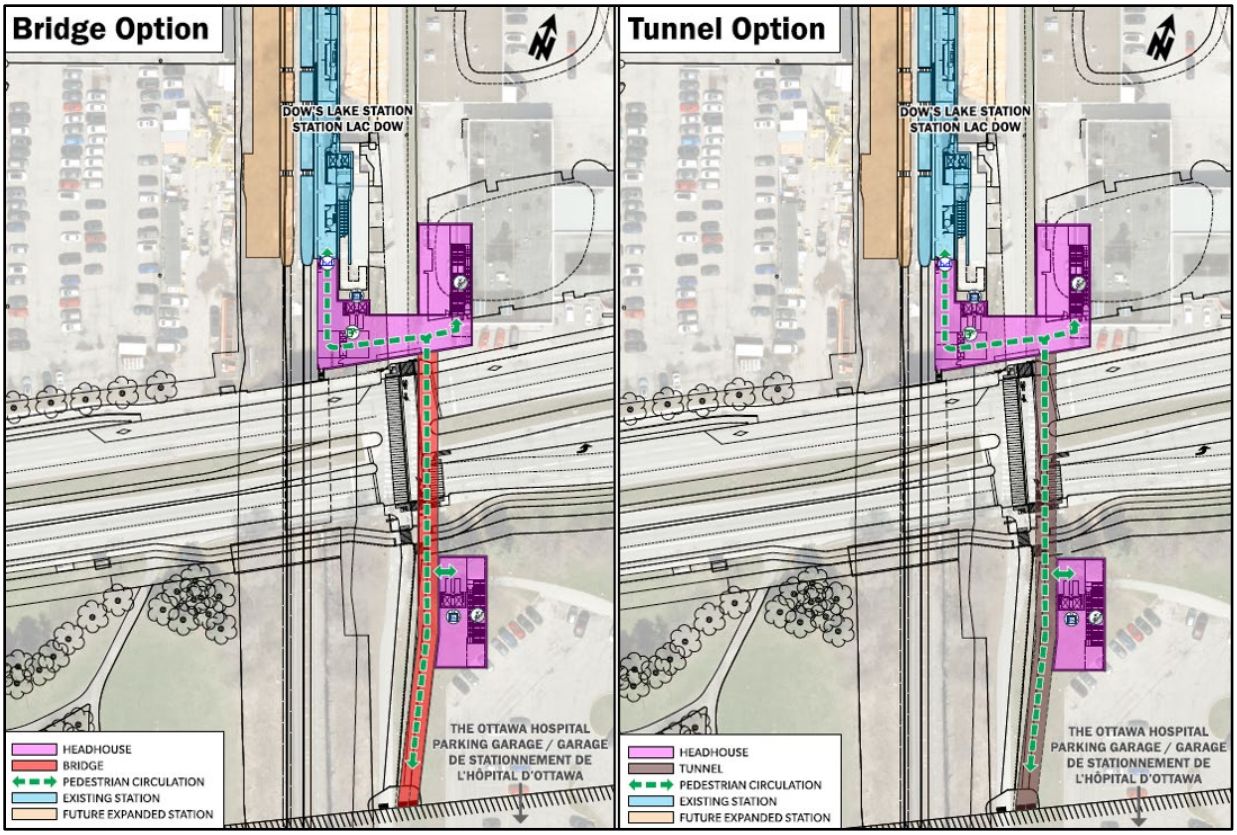


Figure 4: Bridge and Tunnel Concept Design

The bridge and tunnel options were comprehensively evaluated against four environmental lenses: Transportation Environment, User Experience, Social Environment, and Economic Environment. Key evaluation factors included cost, constructability, impacts to underground infrastructure, and directness of the pedestrian path of travel. While both options presented benefits and limitations, the bridge option performed more favourably overall, offering comparatively lower cost, reduced risk to underground infrastructure, greater ease of construction, and better integration with planned development and O-Train expansion. In contrast, the tunnel option offers a more direct, seamless and intuitive user experience, although at substantial construction complexity, including significant risks associated with underground infrastructure and the need for extended road closures and bus detours. Based on this comparative analysis, the bridge option was identified as the preferred option.

Public and stakeholder consultations completed to date focused on the evaluation and selection of the bridge crossing as the preferred solution. However, feedback received through consultation indicated a strong preference for a tunnel crossing, primarily due to the quality of the user experience as more direct, seamless, and intuitive. In response, the Ottawa Hospital initiated discussions with the City to explore the feasibility of an alternate crossing option using the Carling Avenue underpass.

Alternate Underpass Crossing Option

In collaboration with the Ottawa Hospital, an initial underpass concept was reviewed to assess the feasibility of fitting a pathway adjacent to O-Train Line 2 within the existing Carling Avenue bridge structure (Figure 5). This option had been previously assessed during implementation of Line 2 and was deemed infeasible.

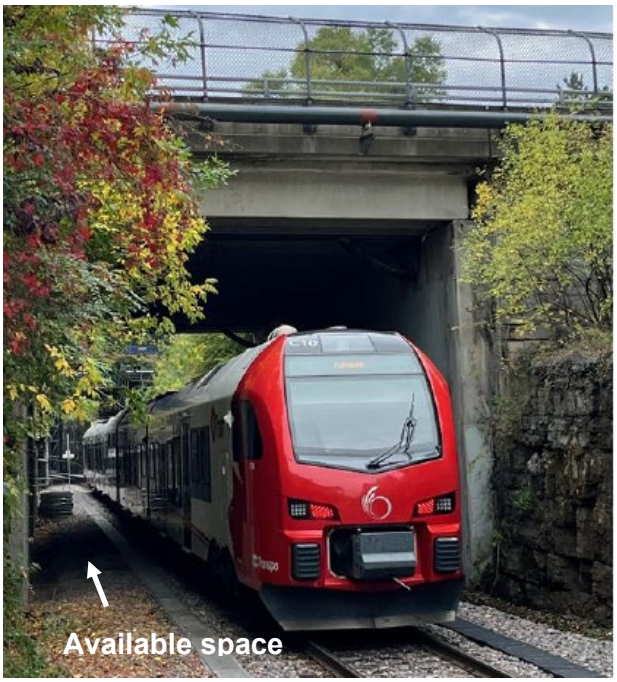


Figure 5: O-Train Line under Carling Avenue Bridge Showing Available Space

Although this option would have provided a direct and seamless user experience at potentially lower cost, it was determined that this option was not feasible due to insufficient width. Following this determination, subsequent technical workshops with City staff and the Ottawa Hospital explored a refined underpass concept that would involve replacing the existing Carling Avenue bridge. Constructed in 1965, the bridge has an estimated remaining service life of 15 to 20 years, presenting an opportunity to coordinate its replacement with construction of a new pedestrian crossing. This coordinated approach would allow the underpass to be appropriately sized to accommodate anticipated pedestrian activity while adhering to current safety and design standards adjacent to an active rail corridor.

The recommended concept (Figure 6 and 7) extends the Dow's Lake Station platform southward to connect directly to a new walkway under Carling Avenue and a southside headhouse providing street-level access. Compared to the bridge and tunnel, this solution provides a more direct, intuitive connection to the Ottawa Hospital for those accessing the site by transit, with direct line-of-sight connectivity across Carling Avenue from the O-Train platform. This configuration eliminates the need for a northside

headhouse, reducing the project cost. Removing the north-side headhouse also avoids impacts to adjacent lands planned for high-density development and preserves redevelopment potential. Impacts on this property were identified as a key concern through engagement with the landowner.

It is important to note that the pedestrian underpass will only be accessible by transit customers and will not be open to the general public, who will continue to use the signalized at-grade crossing of Carling Avenue. Initially, the EA study was based on the premise that the connection should provide access to all residents with a destination across Carling Avenue, whether arriving by O-Train or otherwise. Although the recommended solution does not achieve this objective, it offers significantly enhanced user experience for transit customers. For non-transit customers, all of the grade-separated solutions – whether the bridge, tunnel, or underpass – would require out of the way travel, with the at-grade crossing remaining the most convenient and direct (albeit with no weather protection).

Coordinating construction of the crossing with replacement of the Carling Avenue bridge supports a better crossing solution. It also presents a significant opportunity to achieve cost efficiencies and economies of scale. A combined project would allow for shared design, procurement, construction staging, and utility relocation, reducing cumulative costs, shortening the overall construction period, and minimizing disruptions to traffic, O-Train operations, and bus service.

To protect for future transportation infrastructure, the replacement bridge would be designed to accommodate the ultimate Bus Rapid Transit corridor along Carling Avenue, future twinning of O-Train Line 2, and enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities. An additional pedestrian underpass adjacent to the future O-Train tracks would be required to provide access between the new station platform and the south side of Carling Avenue.

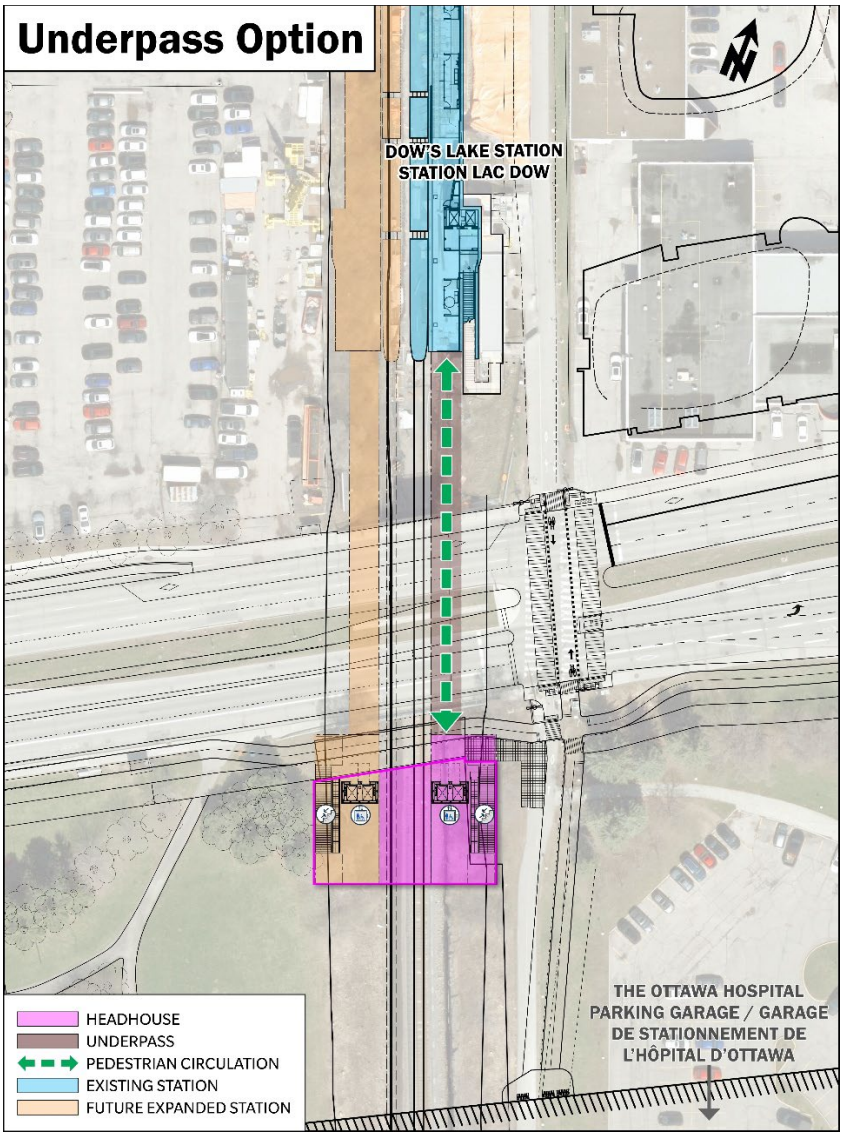


Figure 6: Underpass Concept Plan

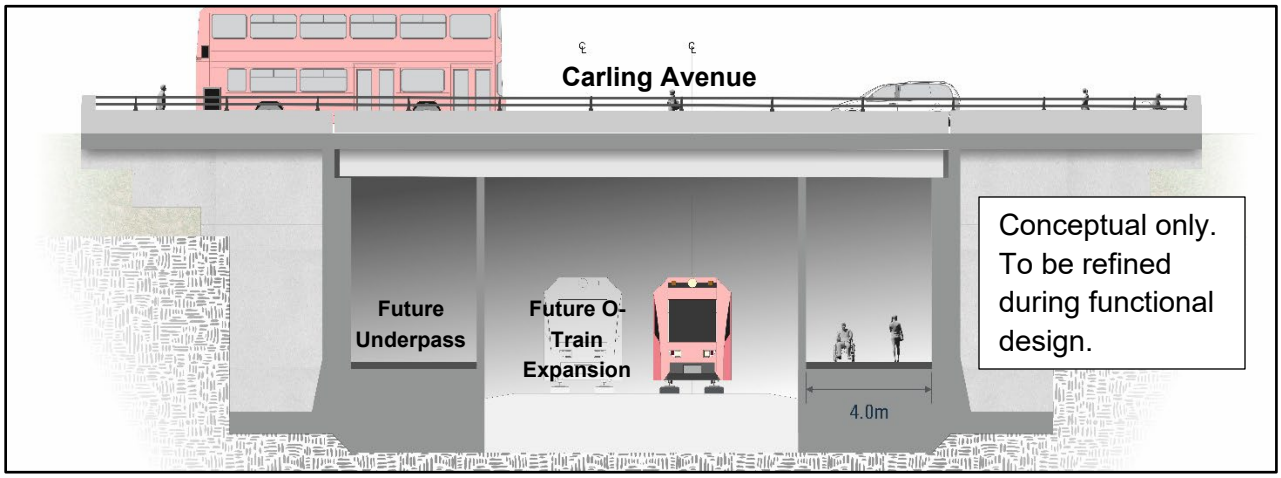


Figure 7: Underpass Cross-Section under Carling Avenue

Environmental Assessment Implications

The previously developed bridge and tunnel options were intended to serve the general public and were therefore subject to the Municipal Class EA (MCEA) process. However, given that the recommended crossing under Carling Avenue would be used exclusively by transit customers, with the southside headhouse serving as a fare paid zone, the project can be classified as a modification to an existing transit station. Ontario Regulation 231/08 confirms that modifications to existing passenger stations and associated enabling works are not designated projects under Part II.3. As such, the proposed undertaking does not trigger the Transit and Rail Project Assessment Process, and the EA requirements are governed by the MCEA. Under the revised MCEA, the reconstruction and expansion of existing passenger stations are exempt municipal transit activities. Where a project's EA classification changes during an EA study, documentation is finalized to reflect the confirmed schedule or exemption.

To avoid piecemealing, the Carling Avenue bridge replacement is considered as an enabling component of the overall undertaking and must be assessed under the MCEA. Determination of the applicable schedule or exemption requires completion of the Municipal Heritage Bridge Checklist to assess potential Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The ongoing study will complete the necessary MCEA requirements to support the next phase of preliminary and detailed design, when the project moves forward.

Interim Solutions

Implementation of the pedestrian underpass together with the Carling Avenue bridge replacement is dependent on availability of funding. Should funding not allow for the connection to be in place in time for the opening of the Ottawa Hospital, various interim options could be considered, as described below.

Shuttle Service Option

To enhance transit customer and hospital visitor connectivity in advance of the permanent underpass solution, an interim no-cost shuttle service using minibuses could be considered between Dow's Lake Station and the hospital campus. This shuttle would provide a fast, barrier-free, and weather-protected connection between the transit network and the hospital site. Provision could also be made to accommodate cyclists.

Upon completion and commissioning of the underpass, the shuttle service would be discontinued and replaced by walking access and conventional OC Transpo bus service. It is estimated that approximately $1.5 million in capital funding would be required for the acquisition of minibuses. Further analysis and discussion would be

required to determine ongoing operating and maintenance costs.

Existing Midblock Crossing Improvements

The existing at-grade signalized pedestrian and cycling crossing at Dow's Lake Station (Figure 8) will remain in place, and its pavement markings can be refreshed, as required.

This well-used crossing provides the most direct and shortest route between Dow's Lake Station and the Hospital parking garage. It also provides an important connection to the planned transit lanes along Carling Avenue and forms part of the Trillium Multi-Use Pathway (MUP), a key north-south active transportation link connecting to the Ottawa River and beyond via the Chief William Commanda pedestrian and cycling bridge.

Figure 8: Existing Midblock At-Grade Crossing of Carling Avenue

To improve the quality of the pedestrian connection in advance of the ultimate underpass solution, weather protection could be provided along portions of the route leading to the Hospital parking garage, reflecting the importance of weather protection in the planning conditions for the Hospital site. Given that cyclists typically travel longer distances and gain little benefit from weather protection for a short segment of their overall journey, cyclists would not be accommodated on the covered walkway but would use an adjacent route to minimize conflicts.

For the roadway portion of the Carling Avenue midblock crossing, the roof cover would need a clearance height of five metres, which would limit its effectiveness in providing weather protection, and therefore, is not recommended. Figure 9 illustrates the extent of the proposed weather protected walkway.

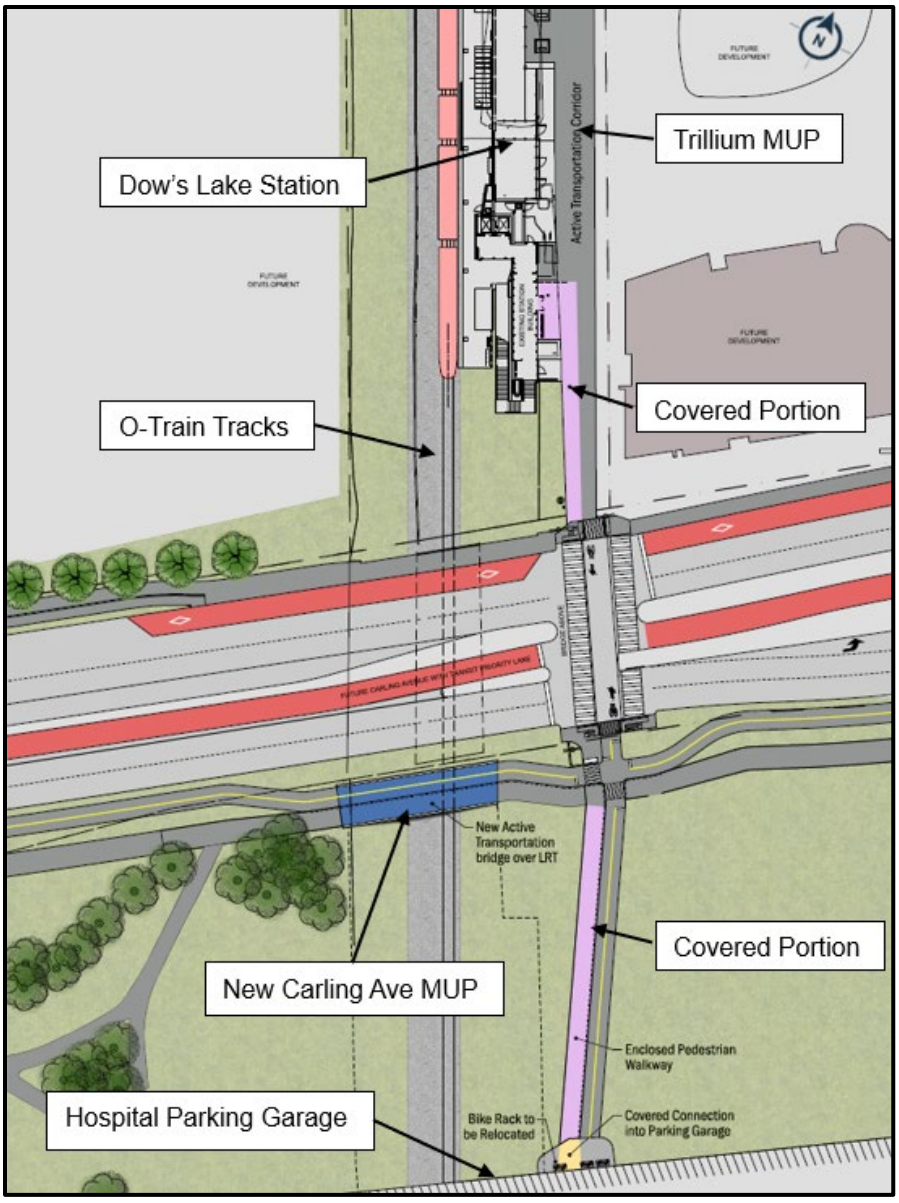


Figure 9: Weather-Protected Walkway and New Carling Avenue MUP

New Carling Avenue South-Side Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) Bridge

As part of the planned transit lanes along Carling Avenue, multi-use pathways are proposed on both sides of the roadway. However, where Carling Avenue crosses the O-Train tracks, the existing narrow roadway bridge structure can only accommodate a substandard 2 metre wide MUP on the south side of Carling Avenue. To improve active transportation connectivity, a new 6 metre wide active transportation bridge over the O-Train tracks is proposed to segregate pedestrians and cyclists (Figure 9). This bridge would only be constructed if the Carling Avenue bridge replacement and underpass is implemented in the longer term.

Cost Estimate

An initial concept level order-of-magnitude cost estimate for the combined Carling Avenue bridge replacement and underpass connection is provided in Table 1. An updated cost estimate will be developed once the functional design has been completed and the cost will be further refined during preliminary and detailed design.

Given that the Carling Avenue bridge replacement and underpass connection are costly, and timing of implementation is dependent on availability of funding, lower-cost interim solutions are presented, although also subject to funding. A class D cost estimate for the interim solutions was developed in accordance with the Council-approved Project Delivery Review and Cost Estimating process for implementing capital projects. These costs will be updated and refined during subsequent design phases of the project.

All costs include design, construction, property, public art, and contingencies and are presented in 2026 dollars.

Table 1: Cost Estimate

Implementation Phase	Cost Estimate in 2026 dollars
Ultimate Solution New Carling Avenue bridge and underpass connection from Dow's Lake Station to south side of Carling Avenue (based on initial concept level order-of-magnitude cost estimate)	+/- $80 million
Interim Solutions	
(a) Shuttle service using minibuses	$1.5 million (plus operating costs)
(b) Midblock crossing improvements with weather protected walkway	$1.0 million
(c) Carling Avenue South-Side MUP Bridge	$2.6 million

For comparison, the bridge option was estimated at $54 million, and the tunnel option was estimated at $82 million, both in 2026 dollars. Neither option included the replacement of the Carling Avenue bridge which would be an additional cost for the City to incur in the future.

Property Impacts

There are no property impacts associated with replacing the Carling Avenue bridge

structure and providing the underpass connection, beyond the Hospital site.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An initial estimate of the ultimate solution is estimated at approximately $80 million. Should funding not allow the connection to be in place for the opening of the Ottawa Hospital, three interim solutions could be considered. Both the ultimate solution and interim solutions are dependent on the availability of funding. The breakdown of the ultimate and interim solution projects, along with associated cost estimates for design, construction, property, public art, and contingencies is summarized in Table 1. These costs will be updated and refined during subsequent design phases of the project. There is currently no budget authority in place. Timing of implementation will be subject to Council approval through the annual budget process and in accordance with master plans, current and future Development Charge Background Studies and Long Range Financial Plans.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations as outlined in the report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

Comments from Ward Councillor Ariel Troster (Ward 14):

I am appreciative of the work staff has put into this proposal and the compromises made between all interest groups involved. This design creates a convenient connection for transit riders and utilizes the existing space for a safer pathway to the hospital. I am supportive of the staff recommendation.

Comments from Ward Councillor Jeff Leiper (Ward 15):

The new Civic campus will accommodate the equivalent of a small town like Arnprior when it’s at its busiest. It’s critical to adjacent neighbourhoods that the traffic impacts be mitigated as much as possible. Achieving high transit share is one of the best ways to accomplish that. I am very pleased that after months of discussion and consultation, the preferred design will travel under Carling to create as seamless and intuitive a path to the hospital from Dow’s Lake Station. When Ottawa throws its worst weather at employees, patients and visitors, the underground connection will help ensure those riders don’t choose to drive instead. If they do, we’ll deal with worse neighbourhood parking pressures, traffic congestion and safety issues. My thanks go to the Ottawa Hospital, the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association and City staff for persisting in finding a way to achieve the best outcome.

Comments from Ward Councillor Riley Brockington (Ward 16)

The various options considered to safely connect the Dow's Lake Station with the south side of Carling and ultimately the parking garage and elevated walkway are expensive. The goal is to endorse an option that is both safe and effective, to maximize the use of the tunnel and provide the best connection possible.

I am pleased after significant engagement from all four local Councillors, as well public feedback and input, City staff examined the options in depth and recommend an option I support.

Comments from Ward Councillor Shawn Menard (Ward 17):

This represents a better solution for transit riders and for hospital access. I am supportive of the staff recommendation.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was invited to the Open House events for the project as well as the two rounds of Public Consultation Group meetings and attended one of the meetings. Additionally, a presentation on the study was provided to the AAC in February 2024. AAC members noted a number of design features that the project should include. These features are summarized below, along with a description of how the comments are being addressed.

- **Wayfinding**: Wayfinding will be considered during the detailed design phase of the project.
- **Segregation of pedestrians and cyclists**: The connection will be a pedestrian focused facility, and cyclists will be required to walk their bikes through the area. The existing at-grade crossing is expected to be a more convenient route for cyclists.
- **Oversized elevators; two elevators at each vertical change**: The design will include oversized elevators to accommodate two wheelchair users and support persons, and two elevators will be included at the headhouse for redundancy should one elevator be out of service.
- **Handrails**: The connection will include handrails.
- **Benches**: Rest areas will be provided along the path of travel.

- **For persons with low vision, yellow markings on the edge of each escalator step, and tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI) at the top and bottom of the escalators**: These features will be incorporated as part of the required safety and accessibility treatments during detailed design.

CONSULTATION

A comprehensive consultation program was undertaken including three technical workshops, two rounds of Agency Consultation Group meetings, and engagement with a combined Public and Business Consultation Group. Participants included representatives from various City departments, the Ottawa Hospital, the National Capital Commission (NCC), Public Services and Procurement Canada, utilities (Bell, Rogers, Hydro Ottawa, Hydro One), local community associations, Transport Action, Bike Ottawa, Accessibility Advisory Committee, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Ottawa Disability Coalition, and local business owners, among others. A virtual public meeting (June 24, 2025) and in-person open house (June 25, 2025) were held to present the preliminary EA findings and obtain input on the initially proposed solution.

Stakeholder meetings and public consultation conducted up to June 2025 open house focused on the bridge and tunnel options, with the bridge presented as the preliminary preferred option. However, participants raised concerns that the bridge option was less direct, less intuitive, and required additional vertical changes, and was therefore less convenient for users. Overall, there was strong preference for a tunnel crossing, supporting the revised recommendation for a pedestrian underpass at the Carling Avenue bridge structure. Additional consultation on the features of the recommended crossing is planned once the project moves into the design phase.

Indigenous Engagement

Indigenous communities were contacted during the study to seek comments and feedback. Only the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nations (AOPFN) responded, and meetings have been held throughout the study period. To date, consultations with AOPFN are ongoing.

The Ottawa Hospital

Over the course of the study, extensive collaboration with the Ottawa Hospital team included eight meetings, three technical workshops, and two site visits. Through this collaboration, an improved solution was developed involving the use of the Carling underpass, addressing earlier concerns raised with the bridge and tunnel options. Support for this revised option was communicated at the last technical workshop with City staff and the Ottawa Hospital team on March 5, 2026.

The Ottawa Hospital team has also expressed interest in enhancing the profile and visibility of Dow's Lake Station. This is considered a longer-term initiative that can be explored as part of the future twinning of O-Train Line 2. Finally, the importance of coordinating infrastructure works was noted (particularly with regards to the southside headhouse), to ensure designs account for future transportation and development plans for this area.

National Capital Commission (NCC)

In a recent meeting with the NCC on April 7, 2026, NCC staff responded favourably to the underpass crossing. Follow-up correspondence received on April 13, 2026 notes the following:

"The National Capital Commission fully supports an underpass option to connect transit users from the Dow's Lake LRT Station to The Ottawa Hospital site. Once realized, this proposal would partially fulfill compliance of the Master Site Plan Federal Approval condition to provide universally accessible, seamless, intuitive, and weather-protected connectivity to the Hospital."

The correspondence also notes the importance of "a highly coordinated approach" with the Hospital design team to ensure the new headhouse on the south side of Carling Avenue is well integrated into the Hospital site, and highlights the need to deliver the project in advance of the Hospital opening.

Richcraft Homes

Richcraft Homes owns the property directly adjacent to and east of Dow's Lake Station (845 Carling Avenue) and expressed concerns over the property impacts associated with the initial bridge and tunnel options. However, the new recommended option has no impact on this site as the north headhouse has been eliminated. Accordingly, these concerns have been addressed.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The City of Ottawa is committed to ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and older adults in the development of public spaces. Accessibility impacts were assessed early on and throughout the project in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Ottawa Disability Coalition, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, as well as other community partners and members of the public.

The project will be designed in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation,* O. Reg. 191/11, of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act,* 2005, as well as the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Design Standards and other applicable

procedures and guidelines. Specific accessibility design features are described above under Advisory Committee(s) Comments.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations documented in this report are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Asset Management (CAM) Program objectives. The implementation of the CAM Program enables the city to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure to maximize benefits, reduce risk, and provide safe and reliable levels of service to residents. This is done in a socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically conscious manner.

When the City commits to the construction or acquisition of new assets, consideration must also be given to the City's commitment to fund future operations, maintenance, and renewal costs. It must also account for future depreciation when reviewing long-term financial sustainability. When reviewing the long-term impacts of asset acquisition, it is useful to consider the cumulative value and lifecycle costing of the acquired assets being taken on by the city.

This report recommends construction of an underpass structure replacing existing Carling Avenue bridge as the ultimate solution to establish a pedestrian and cycling connection from the new Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus to Dow's Lake Station on O-Train Line 2. It also recommends construction of a temporary MUP bridge over the O-Train corridor on the south side of Carling Avenue and construction of 90 metres of covered walkway along the MUP north and south of Carling Avenue, should the ultimate solution be postponed for long term due to funding availability to implement the ultimate solution.

Constructing these new assets will require upfront capital investments and will introduce ongoing operations and lifecycle maintenance costs to ensure they deliver their intended levels of service.

Once constructed, the new transportation infrastructure will be incorporated into the analysis and financial forecasts in the budget, LRFP and in future updates of the Transportation Services Asset Management Plan.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

Climate resiliency features will be incorporated into the design where appropriate, such as stormwater management to handle extreme weather events. The pedestrian underpass offers weather protection and the flexibility to integrate additional climate adaptation features such as low emissive glass coatings for the headhouse.

In addition, the connection will positively impact climate change by enhancing access between the O-Train system and the Ottawa Hospital, encouraging trips by transit and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Promoting transit aligns with the City's Official Plan climate change policies and supporting documents, including the 2020 Climate Change Master Plan.

The project contributes minimally to GHG emissions through the operation of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting, and elevator / escalator systems in the headhouse.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The proposed pedestrian connection will improve access to the new Ottawa Hospital – a key regional facility that supports economic development by ensuring Ottawa has the necessary health services to attract and retain employees.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The project adheres to Official Plan policies, with no impact to environmentally sensitive areas, water quality, habitat, resource use, energy use, or trees, as it is situated in a previously disturbed area.

While noise levels will increase during construction, all activities will comply with applicable noise by-laws.

INDIGENOUS GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The underpass connection enhances transit access to the Hospital, fostering greater equity. Data from the 2022 Origin–Destination Travel Survey indicates that women, youth, and lower-income households disproportionately rely on transit to meet their mobility needs.

Consultation with Indigenous Peoples was carried out in accordance with provincial legislation and is documented in the Consultation section of this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications in approving this report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications for this project.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations contained herein aim to support the following strategic objectives outlined in the 2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities:

- A city that is more connected with reliable, safe and accessible mobility options.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Master Site Planning Conditions

Document 2: Functional Design of Interim Solutions

DISPOSITION

Following Council approval of the report recommendations, Planning, Development and Building Services will complete the functional design of the underpass and fulfil any necessary requirements under the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Document 1: Master Site Planning Conditions

On October 13, 2021, Council approved the Master Site Plan and Lifting of the Holding Provision for the new Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus. A condition of the Master Site Plan requires a pedestrian and cycling connection from the new Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus to Dow‘s Lake Station on O-Train Line 2. Condition 31, paragraph c, of the Master Site Plan states the following:

c) Prior to occupancy of the main Hospital Building, the Owner acknowledges and agrees to integrate the Carling Light Rail Transit Station (future Dow’s LRT Station) into the Master Site Plan and future implementing phases in the following ways:

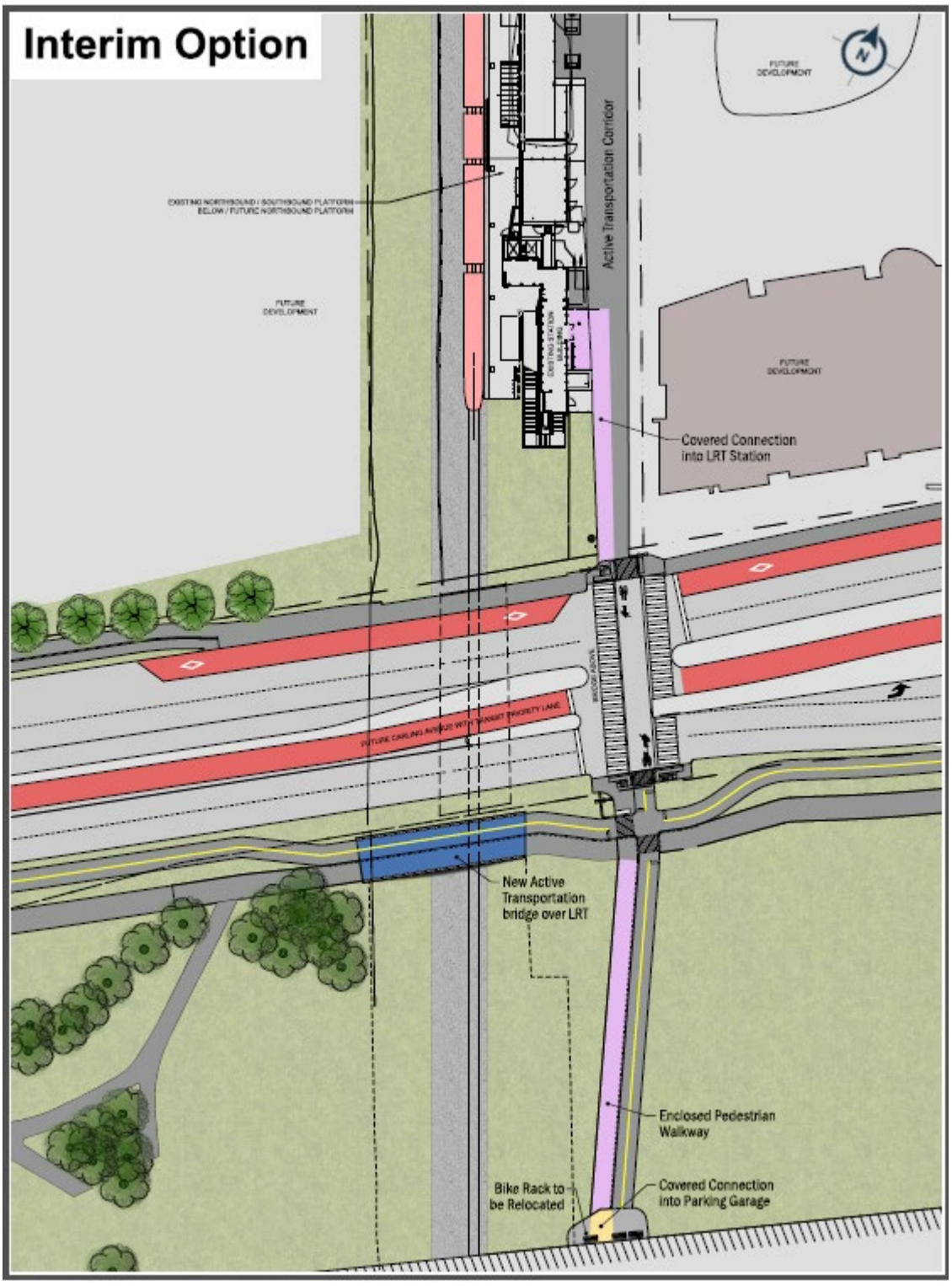
- Direct connection
- Accessible connection
- Weather protected connection
- Provide adequate, secure and highly visible bicycle parking
- Provide adequate wayfinding throughout the site to the O-Train Station

Furthermore, as the Ottawa Hospital is located on federal lands, on November 22, 2021, the National Capital Commission (NCC) granted federal land use approval for the new Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus development. The approval included a condition to connect the Ottawa Hospital to Dow’s Lake Station as follows:

2.3 In collaboration with the City of Ottawa, the Proponent must provide universally accessible, seamless, intuitive and weather-protected connectivity between Dow’s Lake LRT Station and the hospital’s main entrance when it opens in 2028. Grade-separated public access from the LRT station to the south side of Carling Avenue including public access to the street (Carling Avenue) shall also be provided.”

Document 2: Functional Design of Interim Solutions

Mid-Block Crossing Improvements Design



Carling Avenue Southside MUP Bridge Design