

June 24, 2025

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# **Robie Street Transit Priority Corridor: Project Update**

Halifax Regional Council

# Origin

March 27th, 2025 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee (Item 16.1):

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Cleary:

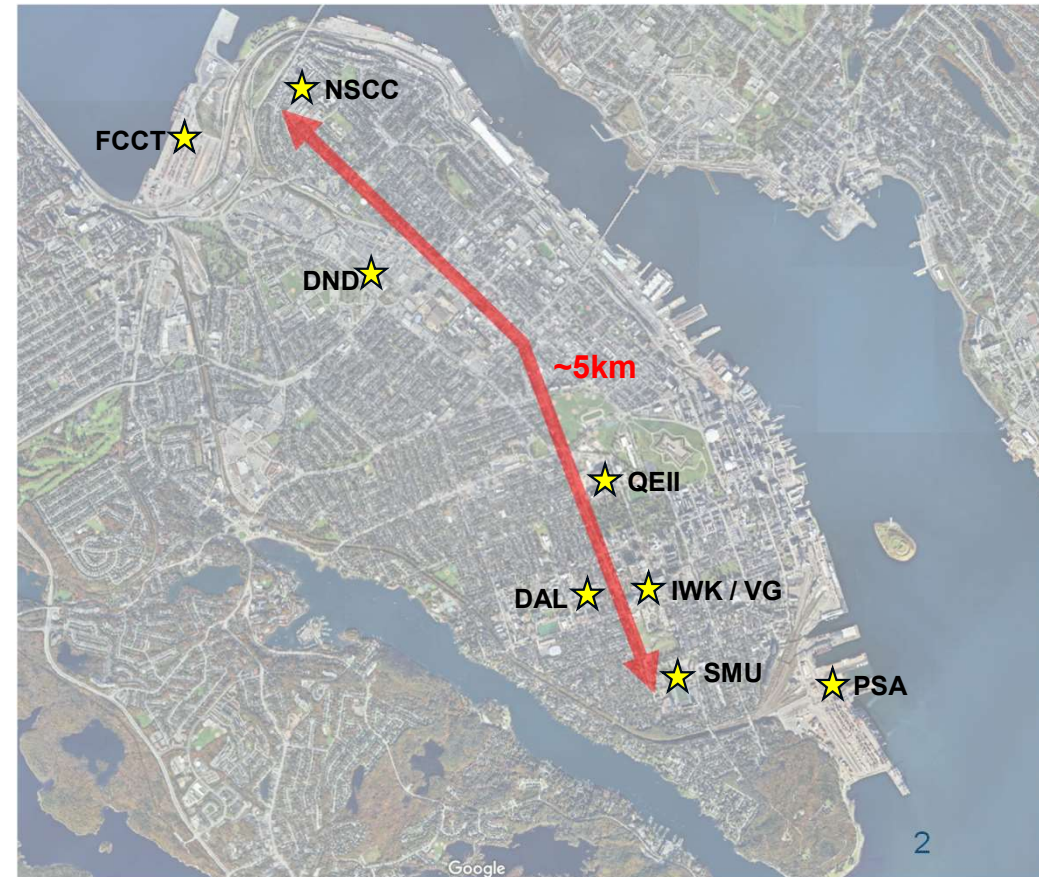
THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff information report on the Robie Street Transit Priority Corridor Project that provides an overview of the project origin, design options that have been considered, past Council direction, community engagement, project status, projected timeline for implementation, current budget commitments, and project risks.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

# Background

## Robie Street:

- Central arterial roadway
- ~20,000 vehicles per day
- Key Halifax Transit corridor
- Full-time Truck Route
- Connects to several regionally significant destinations
- One of the most densely populated areas in the Municipality

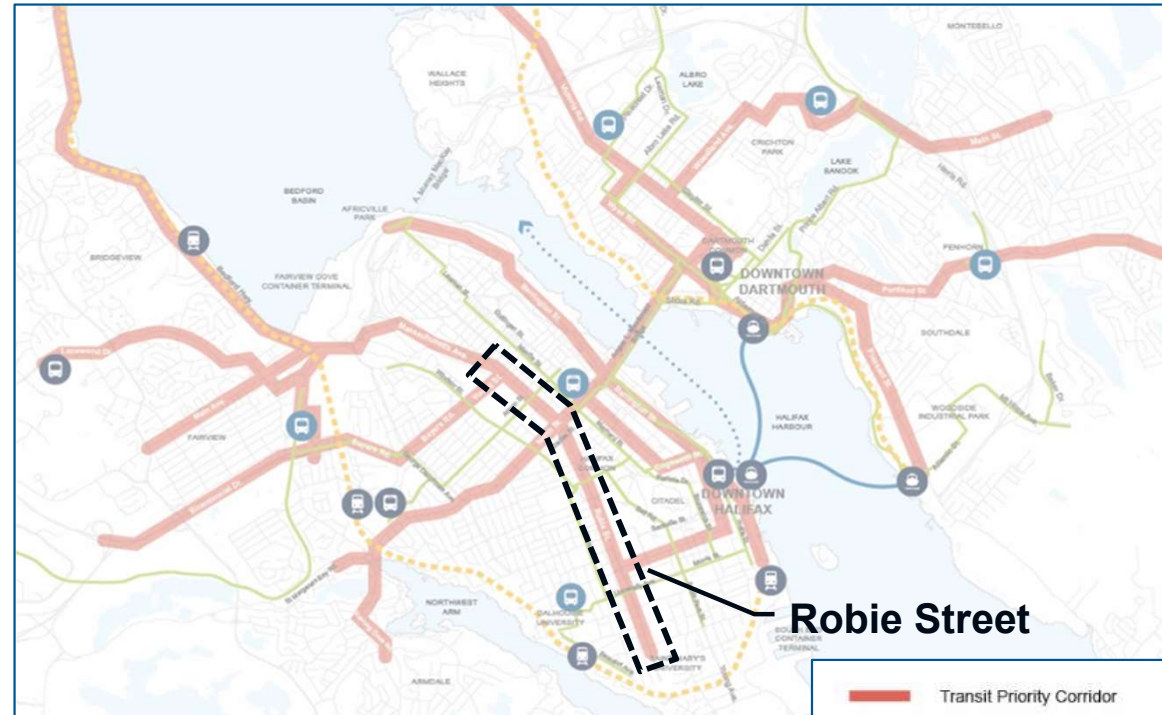


# Planning Context

## Integrated Mobility Plan:

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) was approved by Regional Council in December 2017.

The IMP recommended Robie Street as a proposed transit priority corridor and prioritized its delivery (Action 91)



# Planning Context

## Rapid Transit Strategy:

Regional Council approved the Rapid Transit Strategy, which included implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service as a core recommendation, in 2020.

Robie Street was identified as a key component of the proposed BRT network as a major spine on the Halifax peninsula that would serve two of the four proposed BRT lines.



# Planning Context

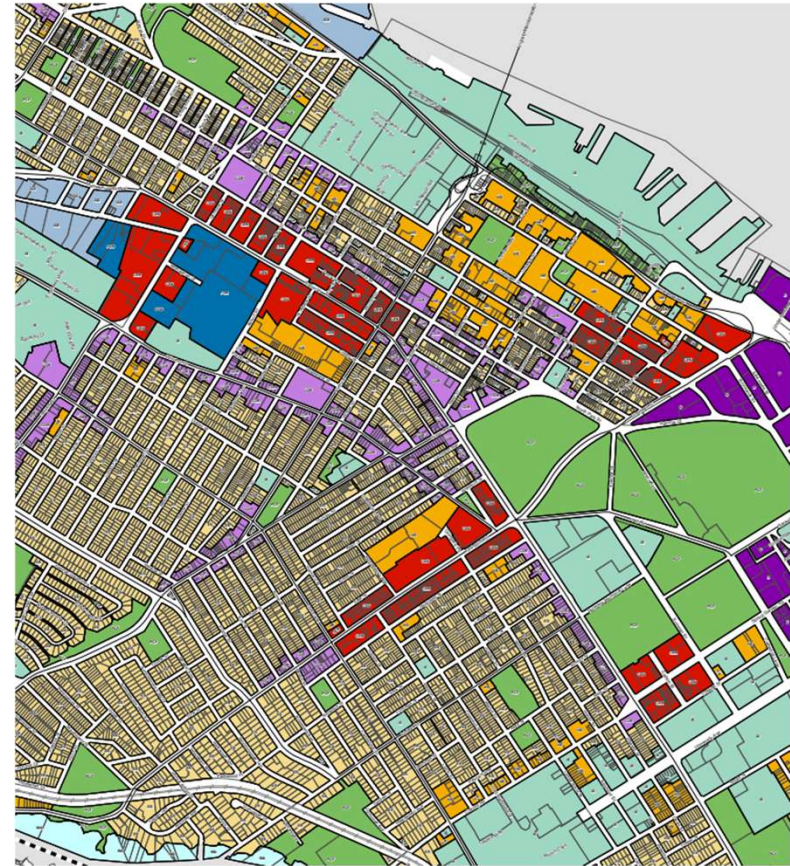
## Development Potential

Centre Plan Package B (2021):

- Identified Robie Street as a major strategic growth corridor
- Lands along the corridor were zoned as Centre, Corridor and Future Growth Node

Housing Accelerator Fund (2024)

- Increased Floor Area Ratio by 25% in Centres
- Increased height for some COR zoned lands
- Allowed 4-8 units per lot in low density residential areas



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Robie Street Transit Priority Corridor

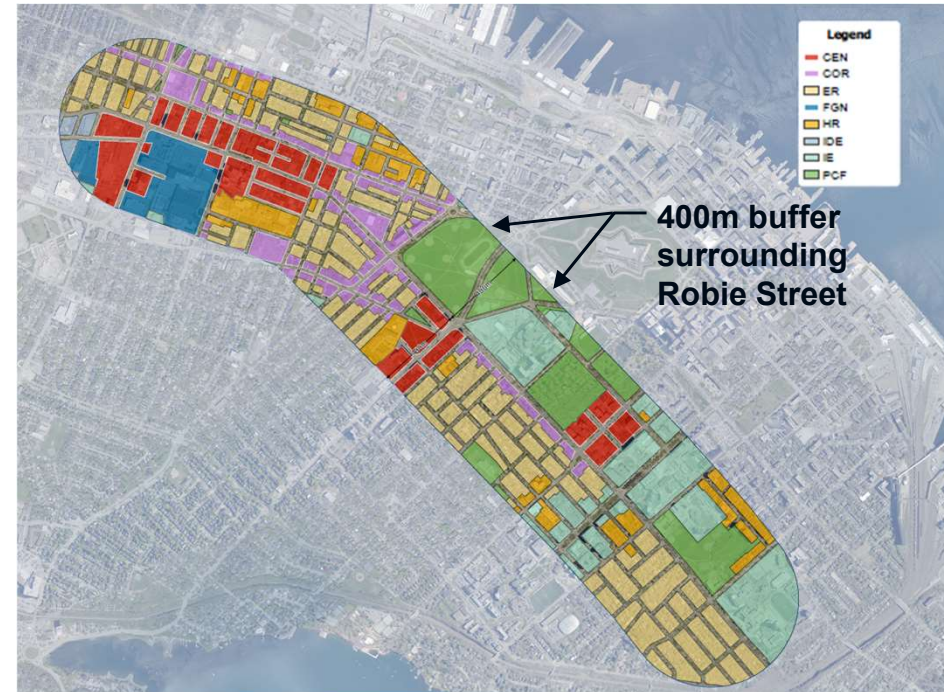
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# Planning Context

## Future Development / Population

	Within 400m of Robie Street	
	Units*	Population*
Current	11,900	20,600
Enabled Development (Net new)	22,300	42,300
<b>Total (Current + Enabled Development)</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>62,900</b>

\* estimate based on general zoning regulatory capacity

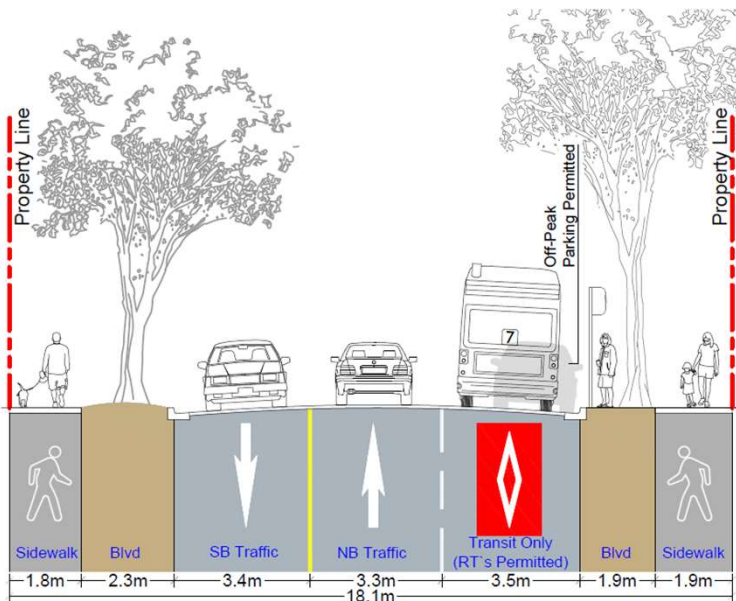


Zoning: Robie Street and surrounding 400m

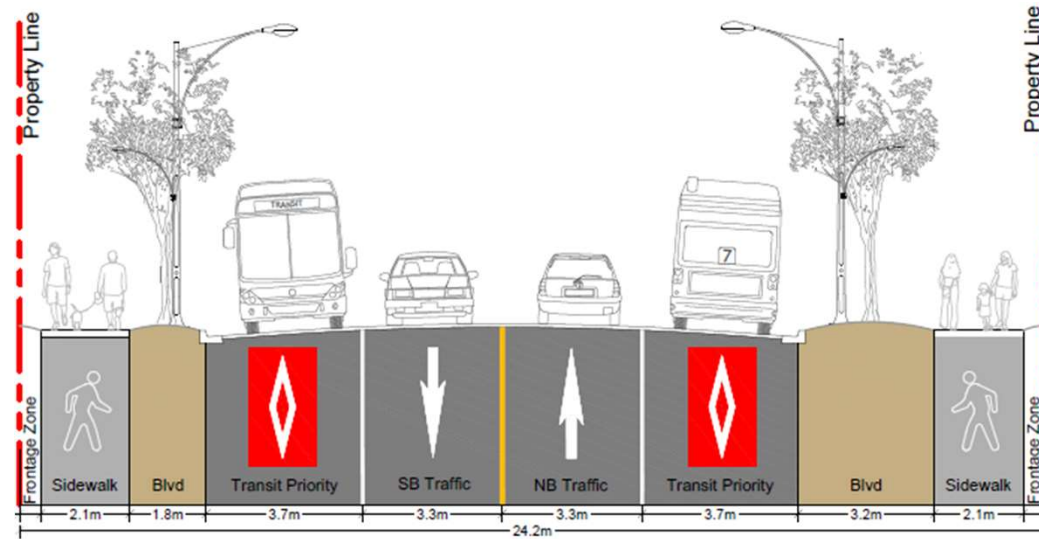
# Project Delivery

## Functional Design

Robie Street: between Cunard Street and Almon Street



Existing Conditions



Option 1: Curbside Bus Lanes

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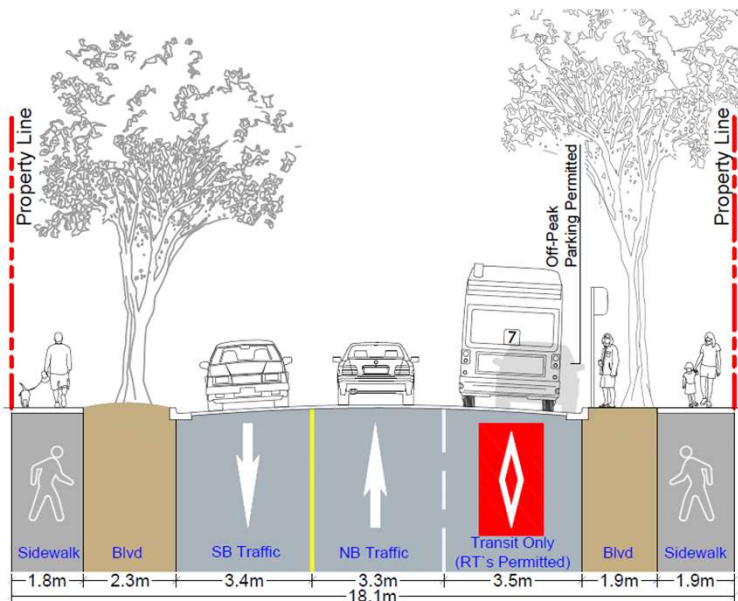
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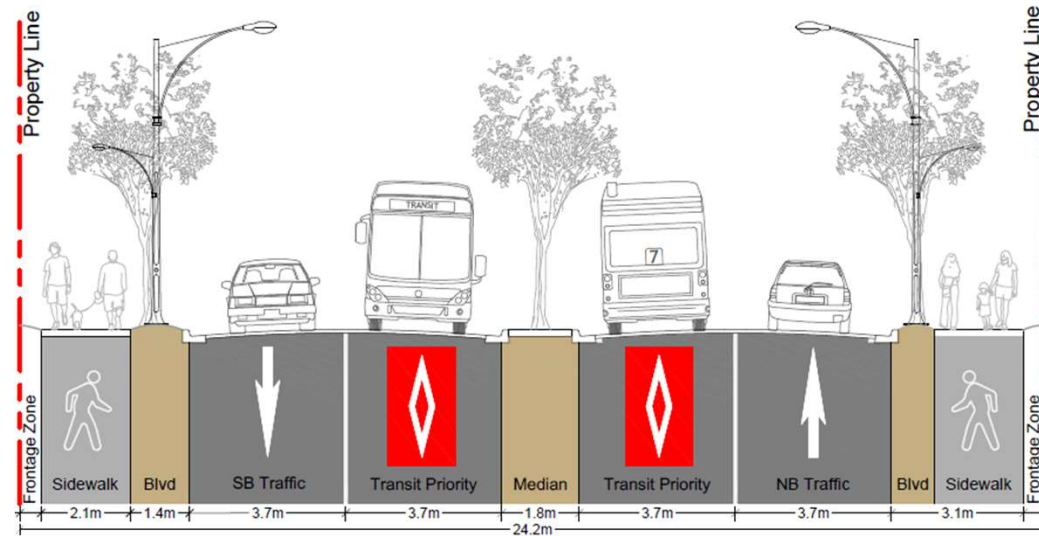
# Project Delivery

## Functional Design

Robie Street: between Cunard Street and Almon Street



Existing Conditions



Option 2: Center Median Bus Lanes

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# Project Delivery

## Community Engagement

Robie Street Functional Plan:

- Two in-person community engagement sessions
- Online feedback survey (600+ responses)
- Consultation sessions also held with several community interested groups

Related engagement was also completed as part of the Integrated Mobility Plan, Centre Plan, and most recently the Link Nova Scotia Regional Transportation Plan.

# Project Delivery

## Functional Design

In July 2019, Regional Council directed staff to proceed with delivery of curbside transit priority upgrades on Robie Street in two phases:

- Phase One: Add bus lanes by reallocating traffic lanes where possible.
- Phase Two: Investigate land requirements to add bus lanes on remaining segments

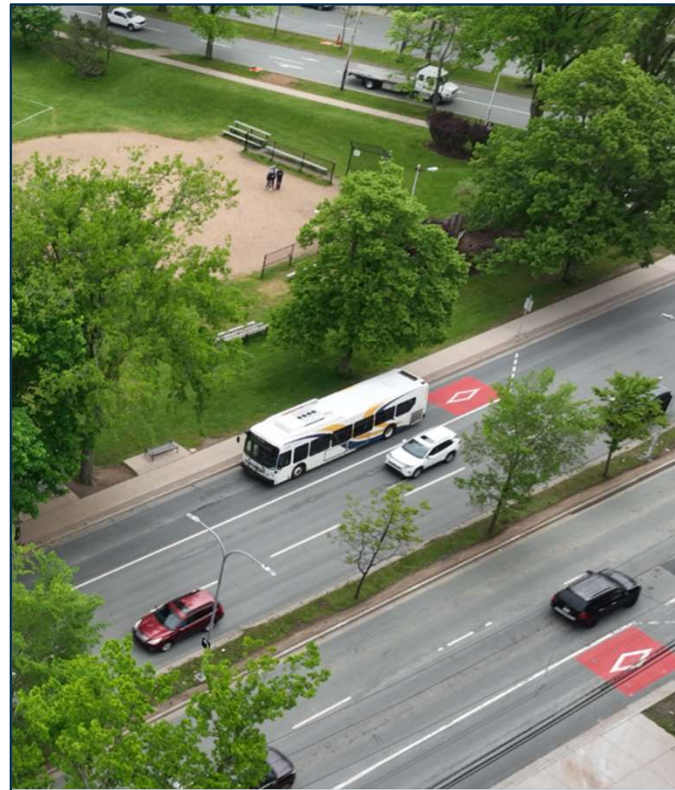
Council also directed staff to investigate land requirements to add future potential center median transit lanes on Robie Street

# Project Delivery

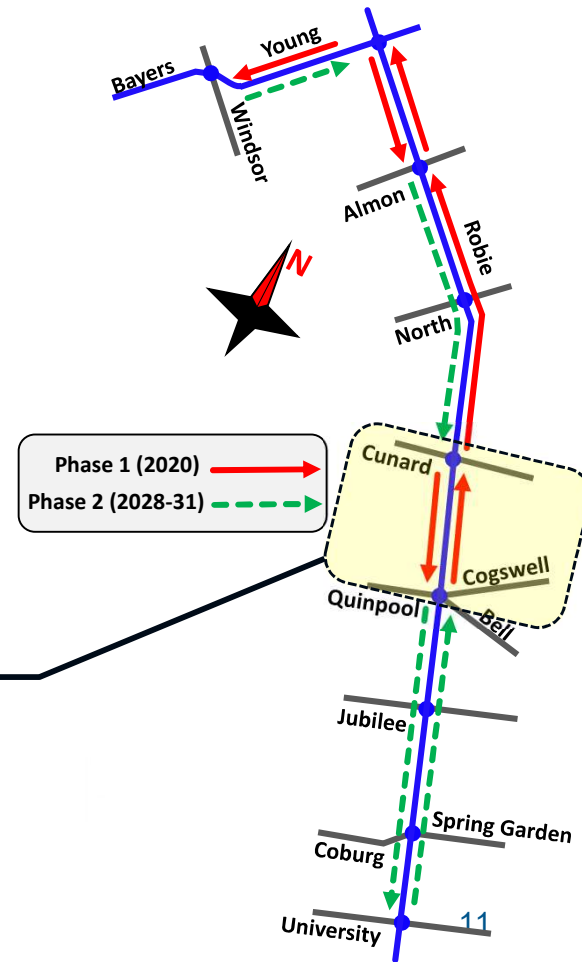
## Phased Implementation

Phase One was completed in 2020.

Phase Two is currently in planning and design phases, anticipated for completion by 2031.



Robie Street (just north of Quinpool Road)



# Project Delivery

## Timeline

		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<b>Functional Design</b>		█	█	█												
<b>Phase 1 (Interim Bus Lanes) Young St to Quinpool Rd</b>	<b>Detailed Design</b>			█	█											
	<b>Construction</b>				█											
<b>Phase 2 (Curbside Bus Lanes, Both Directions): Young St to Inglis St</b>	<b>Land Acquisition</b>					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
	<b>Preliminary Design</b>						█	█	█	█						
	<b>Detailed Design</b>								█	█	█					
	<b>Construction</b>											█	█	█	█	

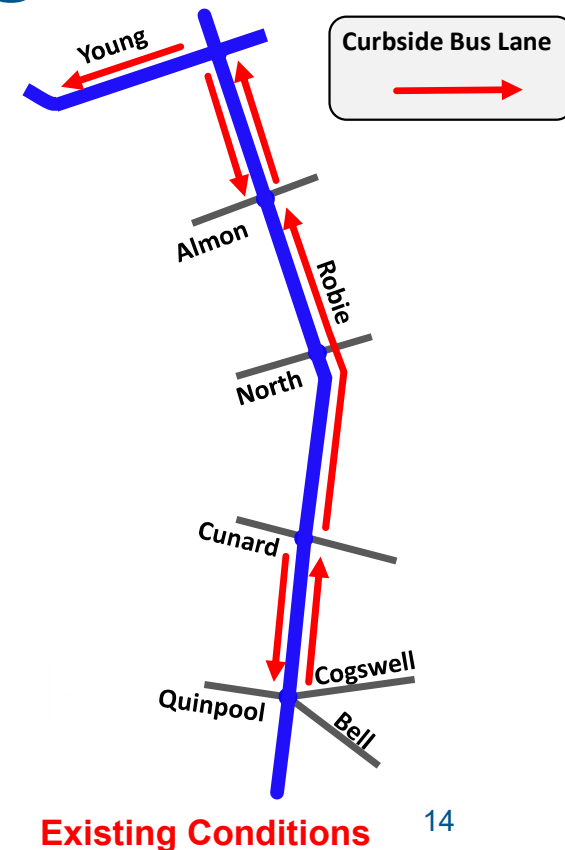
# Project Delivery

## Costs / Budget

	A	B	C	D	E
	Costs to date (2018-2025)	Projected Costs (2025-2032)	Est. Gross Total (2018-2032) (A plus B)	Estimated Cost Recovery / Acquisitions by Others	Est. Net Total (C less D)
<b>Design Costs</b>	\$234,520	\$4,500,000	\$4,734,520	-	\$4,734,520
<b>Construction Costs</b>	\$2,530,711	\$77,400,000	\$79,930,711	-	\$79,930,711
<b>Property Acquisition</b>	\$15,000,000	\$89,000,000	\$104,000,000	\$68,500,000	\$35,500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,765,231</b>	<b>\$170,900,000</b>	<b>\$188,665,231</b>	<b>\$68,500,000</b>	<b>\$120,165,231</b>

# Transit Operational Benefits

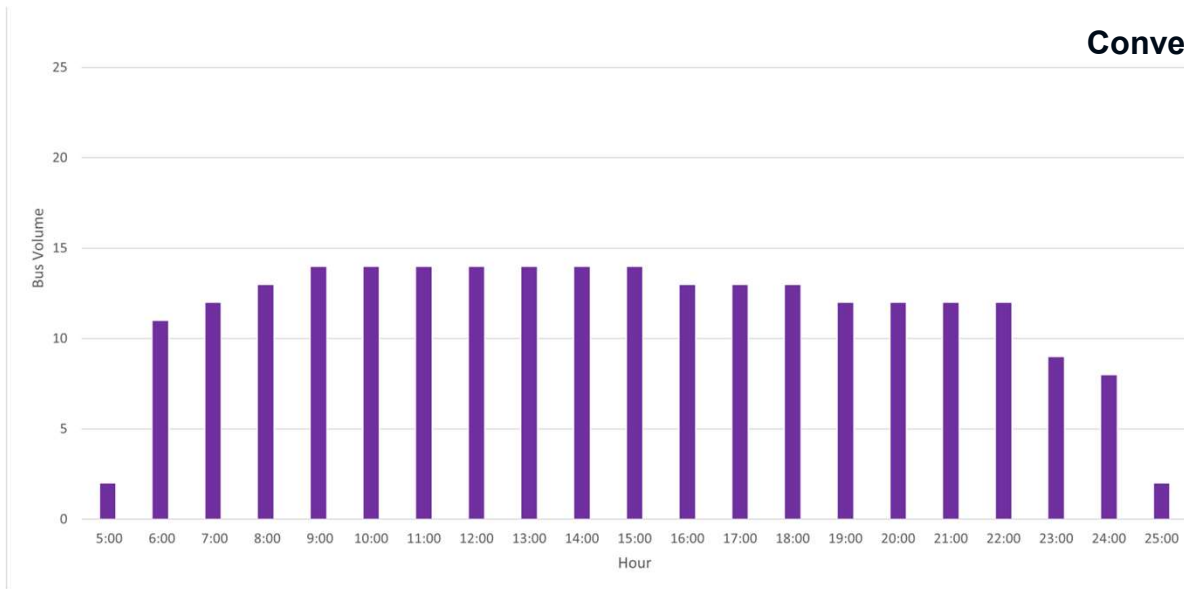
- Phase One improvements have provided significant improvements in the on-time performance and reliability of transit since implementation
- Lack of dedicated transit lanes in both directions has affected performance for southbound buses
- Continuous transit lanes in both directions will be critical to accommodating increased transit service on Robie Street, including BRT




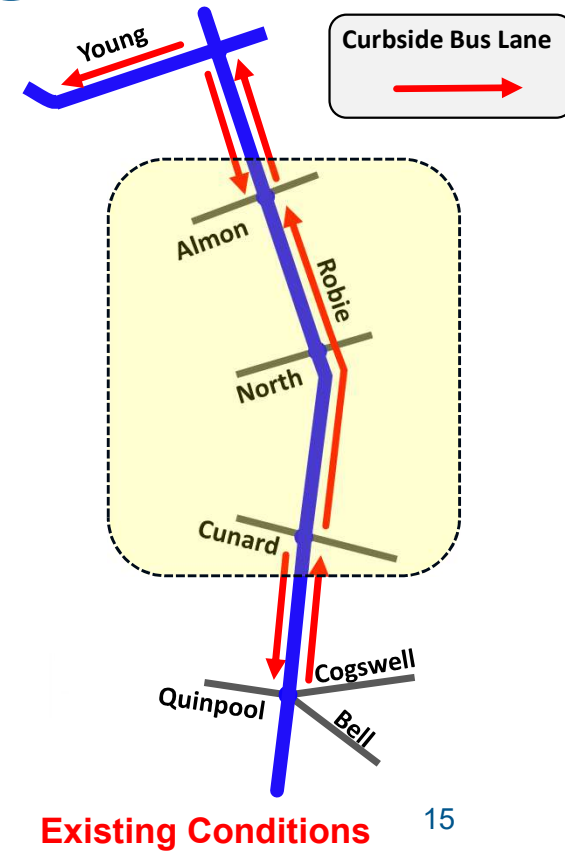
# Transit Operational Benefits

## # Buses using Robie Street (Current)

Buses Per Hour: Robie St. (Almon St. to Cunard St.)



Service  
Conventional 



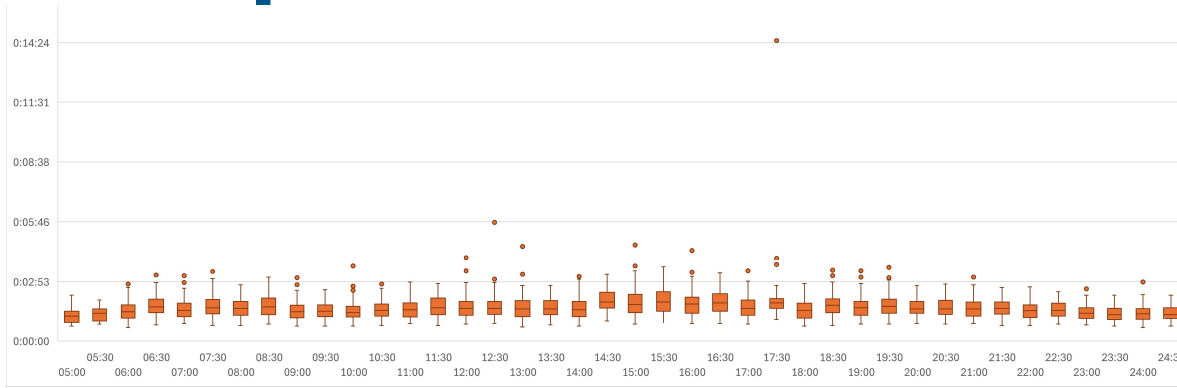
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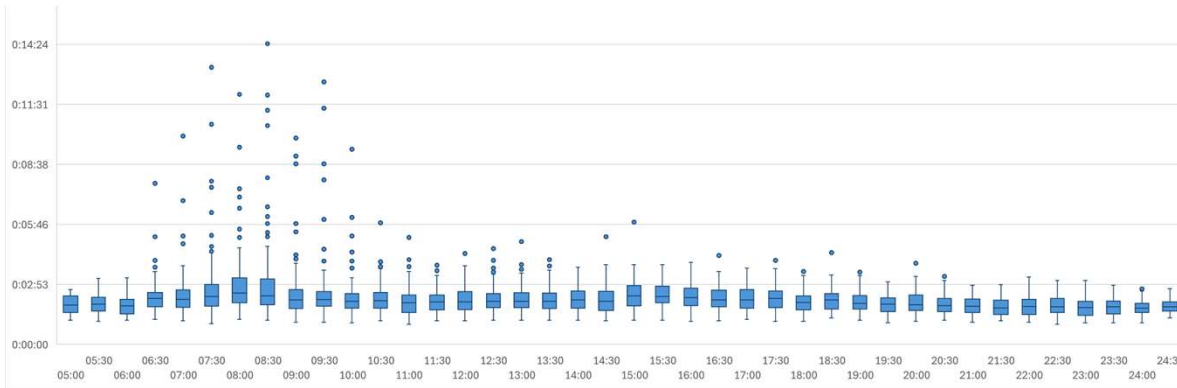
# Transit Operational Benefits



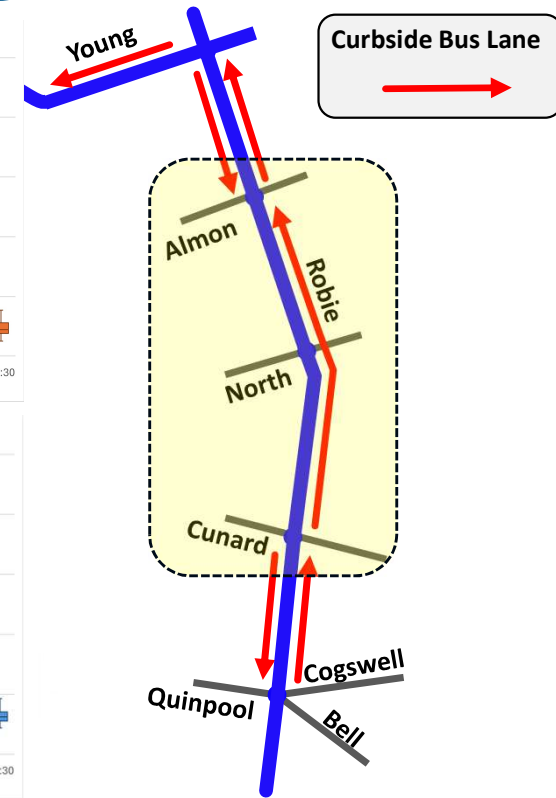
**Travel Time  
Cunard to Almon  
Northbound Buses  
(in dedicated bus lane)**



**Travel Time  
Almon to Cunard  
Southbound Buses  
(in mixed traffic)**



**Travel Time Data (January – March 2025)**

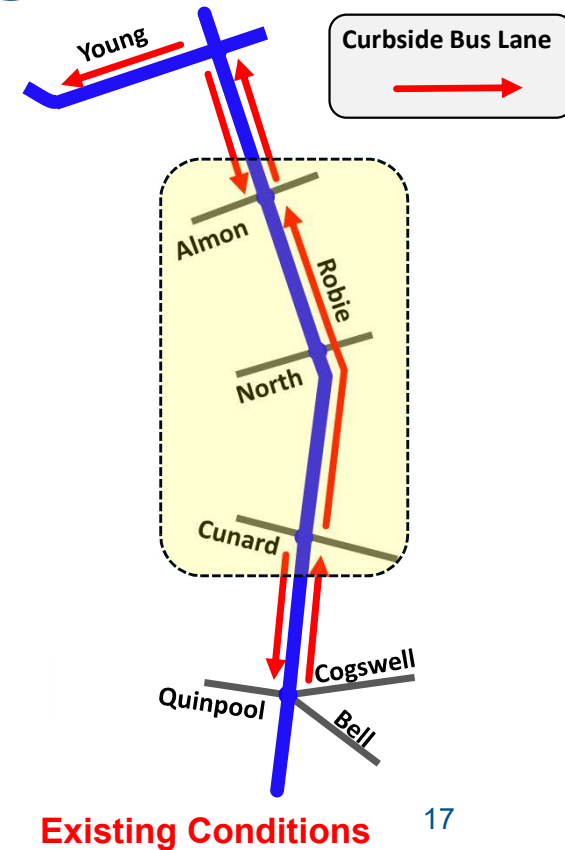
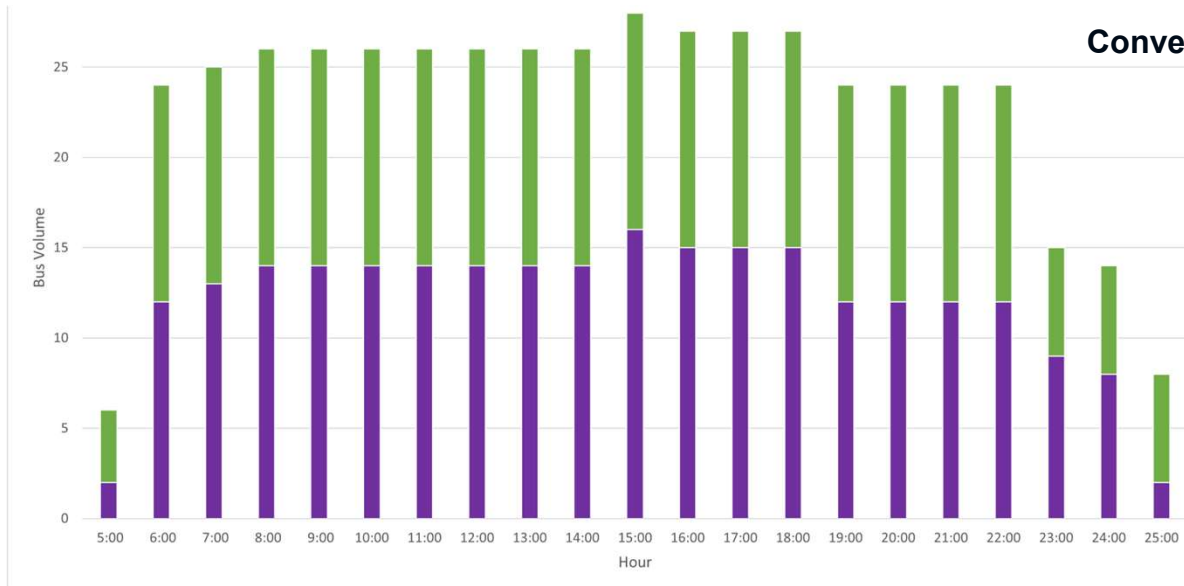


**Existing Conditions**

# Transit Operational Benefits

## # Buses using Robie Street (with BRT)

Buses Per Hour: Robie St. (Almon St. to Cunard St.)



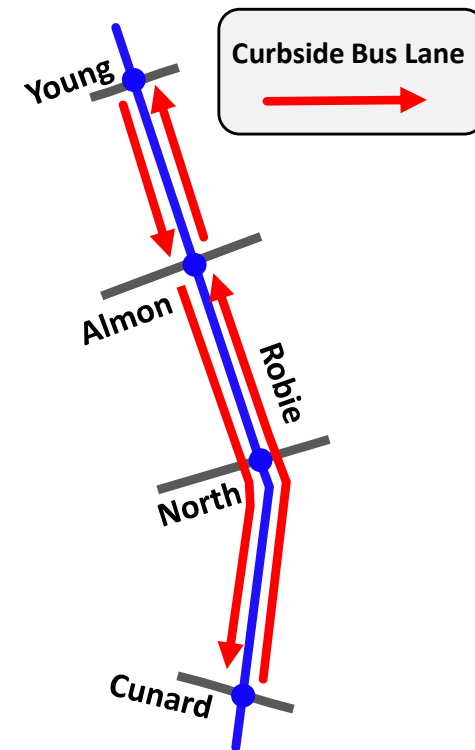
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# Transit Operational Benefits

Projected Transit Benefit with Curbside Bus Lanes (2031):

- Delay Reduction for Buses: Average travel time decrease by up to two minutes (20%) between Young Street and Cunard Street during peak periods
- Improved Reliability of for Buses: Reduction in travel time variability of approximately 40%



Phase One Complete 18

# Pedestrian Realm Benefits

Improved pedestrian realm will be important to the significant increase in population density expected along the Robie Street corridor

Increased off-street space consistent with Municipal Standards

- Consistent 2.1m sidewalk widths (accessibility improvements)
- 2.2 – 2.5m boulevard widths (suitable for healthy street tree growth)
- Added opportunities for streetscaping amenities

# Property Impacts

Widening of Robie Street between Young Street and Cunard Street requires impacts to a total of 33 properties

Robie Street Transportation Reserve was approved as part of the Centre Plan Package B in October 2021.

To date, approximately half of the impacted properties have been acquired or are under agreement.

# Tree Impacts

Impacts are to existing trees is required to accommodate street widening.

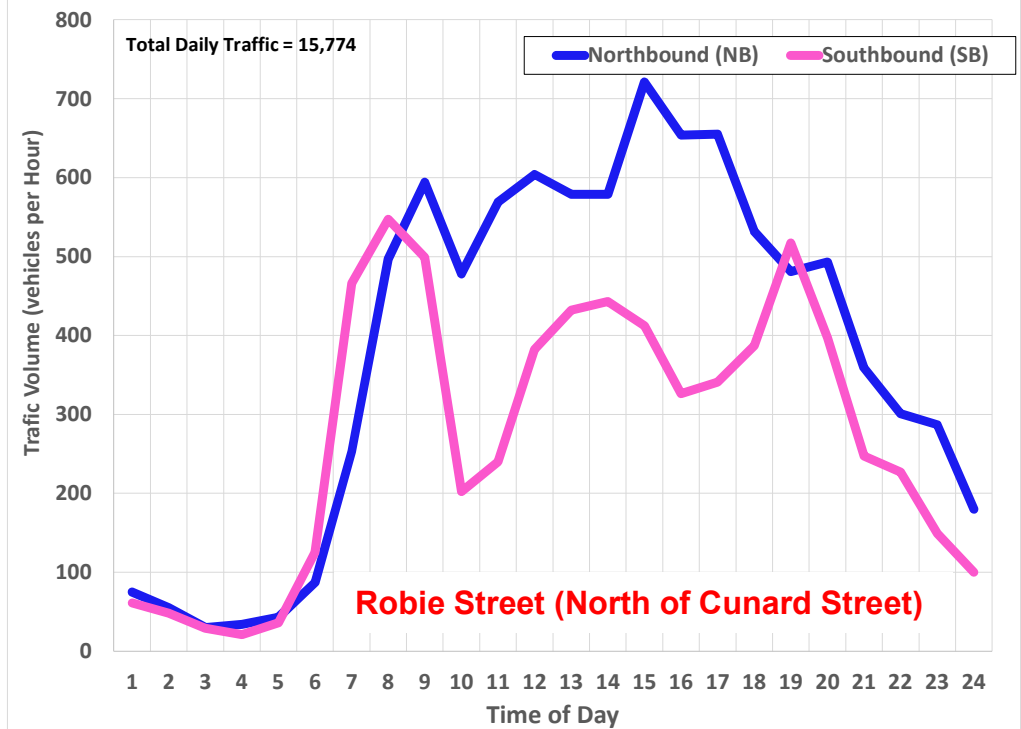
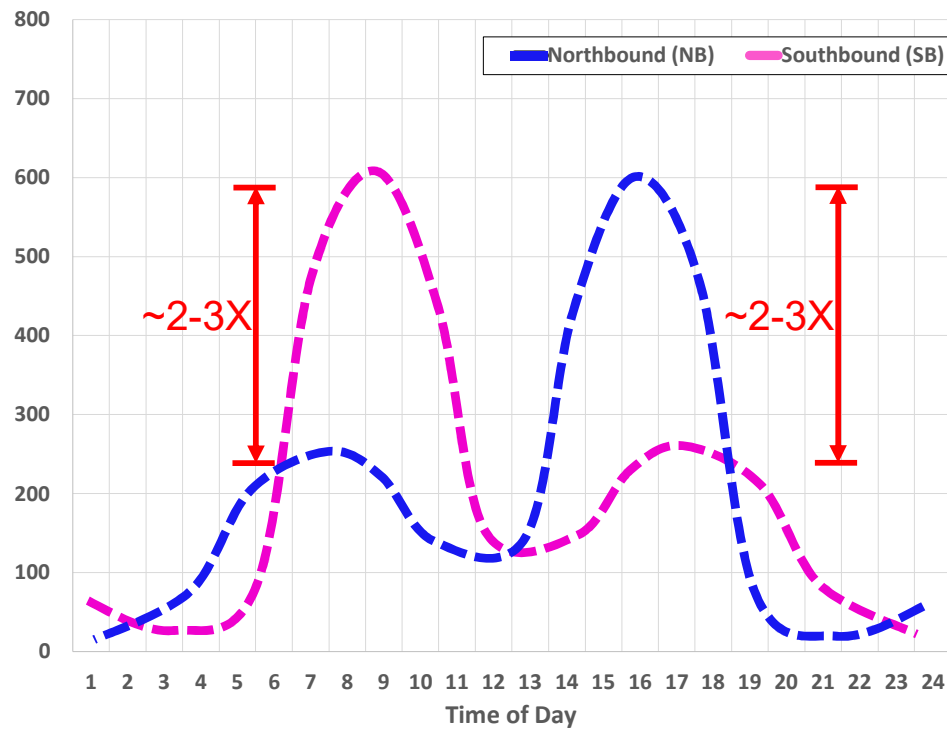
The most impacted section is between Almon St. and Cunard Street, where removal of 20 young trees, 33 mature trees and seven very mature trees is required.

Addition of new trees will mitigate losses and is expected to result in a net increase

Section	Trees Added	Trees Lost	Net Gain/Loss
Cunard to North	+ 83	- 24	+ 59
North to Almon	+ 76	- 36	+ 40
Almon to Young	+ 57	- 6	+ 51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>+ 216</b>	<b>- 66</b>	<b>+ 150</b>

# Potential for Alternatives?

## Reversing Lanes Configuration



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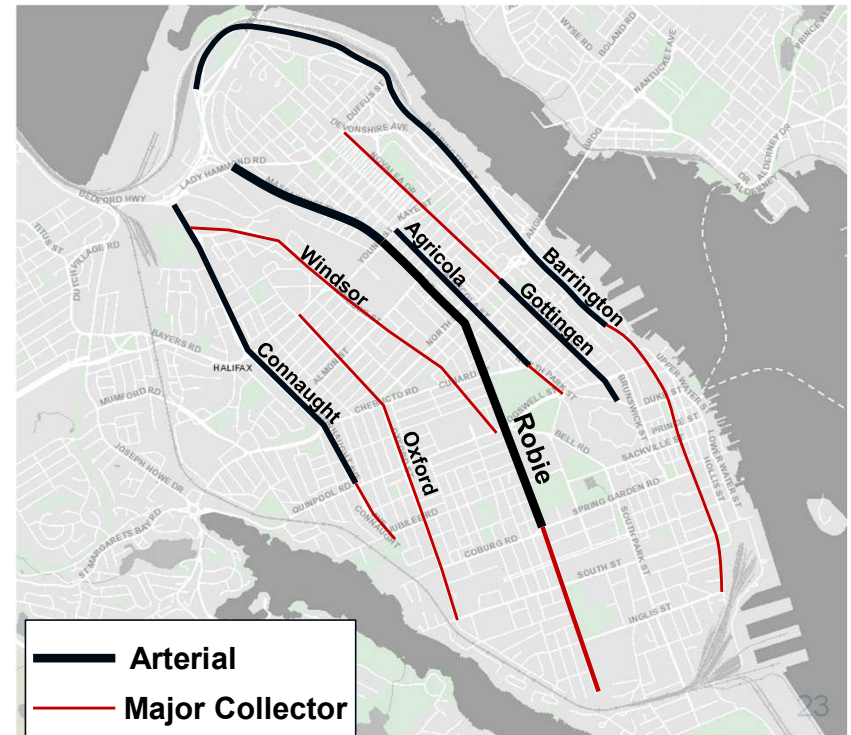
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# Potential for Alternatives?



## One-way Street Conversion

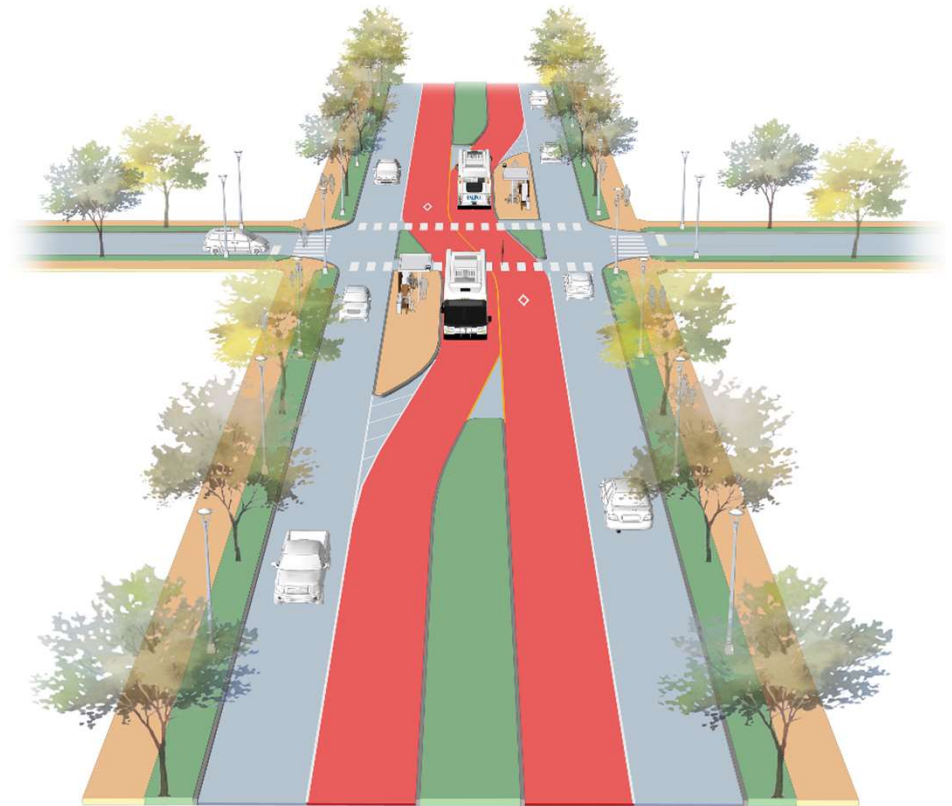
- Not ideal for Robie Street due to lack of a suitable continuous, closely spaced parallel street



# Long-Term Considerations

## Higher Order Transit

- Robie Street Transportation Reserve allows for future transition to centre median running BRT
- Long-range potential for conversion to Light Rail Transit



# Conclusions

- Continuous, dedicated transit priority on Robie Street is critical to mobility both locally and across the region.
- Bus Rapid Transit, which is expected to play a key role in the future of mobility in HRM, relies on dedicated space to operate efficiently in congested areas.
- The Robie Street Transit Priority Corridor has significant costs and major trade-offs to private property and public assets / infrastructure. These impacts are very challenging but necessary to accommodate the significant amount of growth anticipated to occur.

# Next Steps

- Preliminary (60%) design and property acquisition are ongoing (Young Street to Cunard Street)
- Staff will return to Council following completion of the 60% Design (anticipated fall 2025)

# Questions?