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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2011 5:30 PM
FROM:	J. FLEMING DIRECTOR OF LAND USE PLANNING
SUBJECT:	Thames Valley Parkway Extension on Westdel Bourne Road Allowance at Kains Road

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Executive Director of Planning and Environmental Services, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- a) this report **BE RECEIVED** for information regarding the background of the project, public consultation, and a review of potential pathway alignment options, and;
- b) the project **PROCEED** as revised with a narrower (2m wide) asphalt pathway along the east side of the existing trees and enhanced landscape buffering for adjacent neighbours who request it.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

November 2, 2009. Planning Committee report for the Thames Valley Parkway Extension on Westdel Bourne Road Allowance at Kains Road,

BACKGROUND

Municipal Council, at its session held on November 9, 2009, resolved that the proposed Thames Valley Parkway Extension on the Westdel Bourne road allowance at Kains Road be referred back to staff:

“That the proposed Thames Valley Parkway Extension on the Westdel Bourne road allowance at Kains Road **BE REFERRED** back to staff to undertake further discussions with neighbouring residents with respect to alternative routes for the pathway, the width of the pathway, landscape buffering, as well as to review linkages to other existing or planned pathways within the City, and to report back at a future public participation meeting of the Planning Committee.”

The proposed Thames Valley Parkway (TVP) Extension (Appendix C) lies in the Riverbend Community Planning Area; located north of Oxford Street W. The Thames River Valley defines the northern and eastern boundaries of the Area.

The Riverbend Community includes a unique pathway system that supports a strong neighbourhood focus towards an ‘active’ community. In Riverbend, the Thames Valley Parkway veers away from the river and Kains Woods ESA, as the ESA is restricted to hiking trails only (Appendix A). The pathway runs in the Kains Road boulevard in an enhanced landscape and returns to parkland west of the Riverbend Golf Community. This pathway runs behind homes on Riverbend Road, similar to this proposal (Appendix B). Currently, the TVP stops at the storm

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water detention pond behind homes on Riverbend Road. The extension of the pathway westward outside of the Kains Woods ESA is on hold until the lands west of Westdel Bourne are developed. Currently, there are no active development applications for these parcels of land.

Pathway linkages such as these are basic neighbourhood and community infrastructure. Pathways provide convenient and accessible routes for all residents to move around their neighbourhoods and encourage an active healthy lifestyle.

In June 2009, City Staff met with approximately twenty (20) neighbours to discuss pathway alignment and landscaping/privacy options. The majority of people in attendance at the onsite meeting were residents that backed immediately onto the unopened road allowance and generally would not consider any pathway being constructed within sight of their back yards regardless of enhanced landscaping/privacy options. This group of residents signed a petition, included in previous report, stating that they were opposed to any pathway construction. Most of these residents said that they were unaware of the planned pathway when they purchased their homes. After considering the project further, one resident asked that their name be removed from the petition.

CONSULTATION

Under the direction of Parks Planning and Design, Realty Services staff met with the land owner to the west on May 11, 2010 to discuss the possibility of acquiring a temporary easement on their property situated immediately to the west of the Westdel Bourne road allowance (Appendix C). The proposed easement would accommodate a temporary pedestrian pathway to be used until future development in the area would include a neighbourhood pathway connection to the Thames Valley Parkway. Realty Services were not able to secure a temporary easement as requested.

An issue regarding the potential safety of adding a pathway behind homes was raised at the November 2, 2009 meeting. Basic and proven planning principles for all public spaces are that more users (neighbours walking through a park or on a pathway) discourage 'bad' uses (loitering, partying, crime). Installing pathway systems has been demonstrated to deter crime, increase property values and support healthy life styles. In this case, London Public Services have indicated that there have been no break-ins to homes along the existing pathway corridor at the eastend of Riverbend Road.

On April 20, 2011, Parks Planning & Design staff held a Public Open House at the Byron Optimist Community Centre. This provided the residents of the Riverbend Community with an opportunity to review a concept plan for a district park and to comment on whether the proposed pathway extension is desirable within their community. Based on the comments on a city provided comment sheet, eighty-four [84] percent of the survey participants were in favour of completing the pathway connection.

Many residents in the area knew of this planned pathway project and bought their homes partly because of Riverbend's planned pathway and trail systems.

A petition was subsequently received by Parks Planning & Design with one hundred and ninety-five [195] signatures stating "*I **support** the extension of the Thames Valley Parkway pathway from the intersection of Kains Road and Westdel Bourne to the end of the existing path north of Riverbend Road. The path should be constructed to match the existing path with regards to its width and sideline landscaping*".

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PROPOSED ACTIONS

As a result of the broader community interest and benefit in seeing this path completed, staff recommend the following:

Proceed with installation of pathway in Westdel Bourne road allowance east of the mature treed hedgerow. As the area is open and must remain cleared over the existing gas pipeline, construction costs of the trail would be minimized. Path development in this area would not impact the large maple and oak trees on the western edge of the road allowance which are a valuable natural asset to the community.


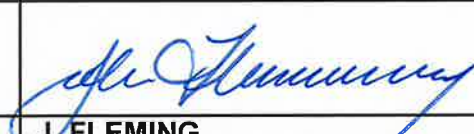

To address the concerns of several adjacent residents, we also recommend:

- a) Reduce the size of pathway from a system standard 3-4m to a 2m width;
- b) Provide landscape buffering between the property line and pathway, for those who request it, to increase privacy of residences backing onto the road allowance.

CONCLUSION

The recommendations support the broader community interest and values, while responding to adjacent neighbour concerns and allows protection and enhancement of the treed corridor.

The completion of the Thames Valley Parkway to the intersection of Westdel Bourne and Kains Road provides a much superior access point, more central to the community, and encourages greater neighbourhood use, interaction, recreation and healthy activity.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
	
A.W. MACPHERSON MANAGER-PARKS PLANNING & DESIGN	J. FLEMING DIRECTOR OF LAND USE PLANNING
RECOMMENDED BY:	
	
P. MCNALLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	

2011-09-14

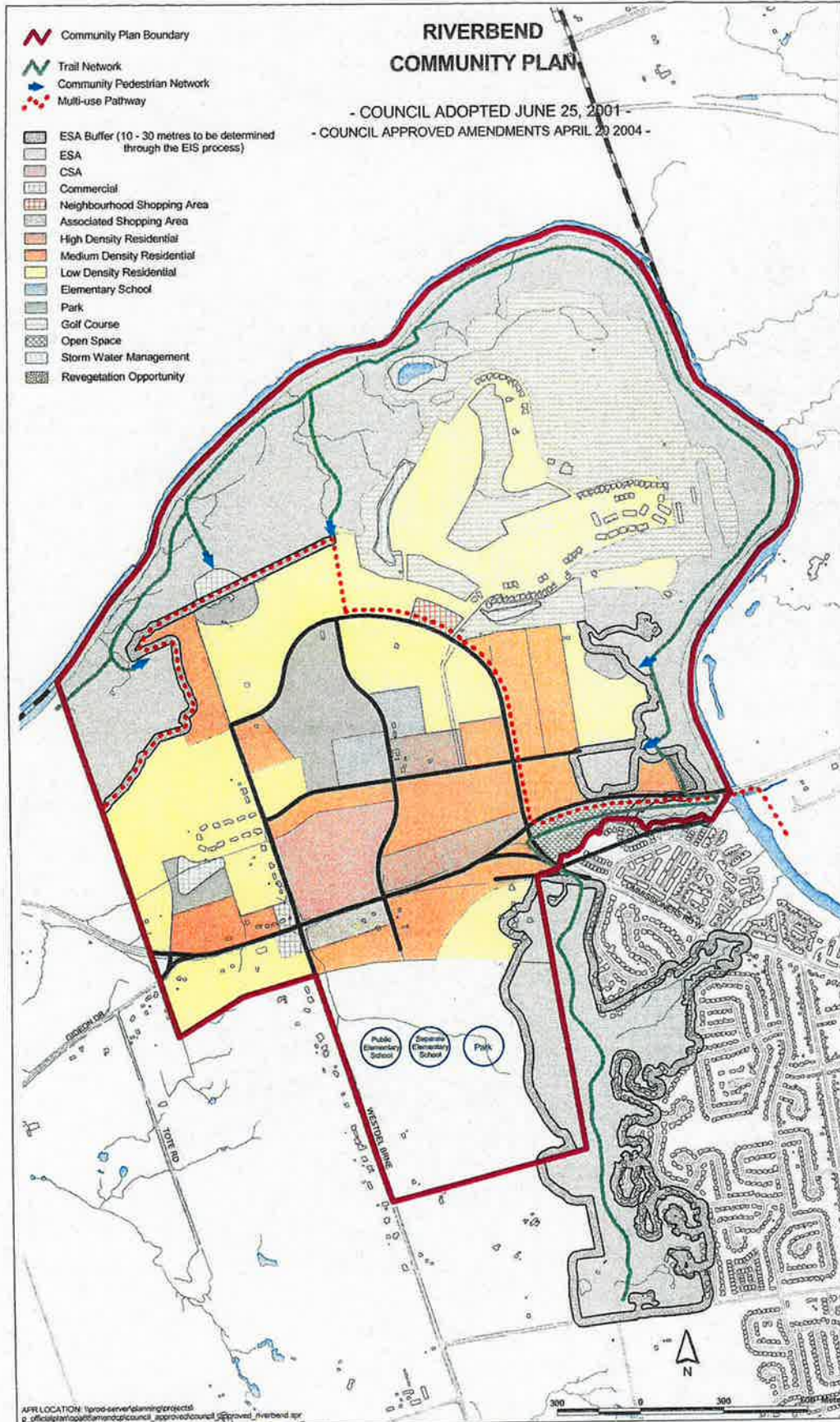
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- Attach
- Appendix A: Riverbend Community Plan
 - Appendix B: Existing path alignment
 - Appendix C: Pathway alignment options

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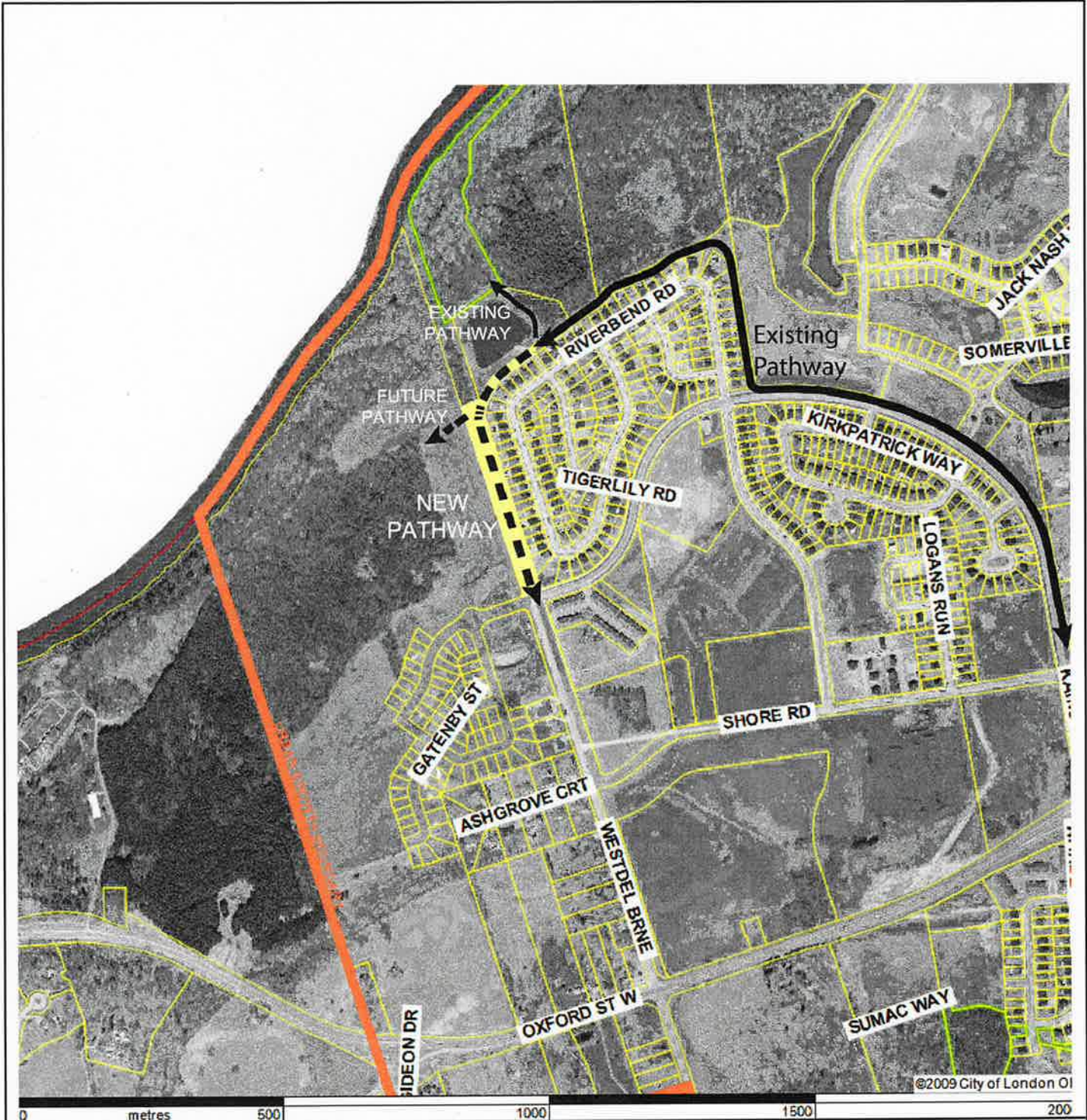
APPENDIX A ~ Riverbend Community Plan

The approved Community Pedestrian Network, from the Area Plan, is shown below. The Area Plan states that the exact routing of the Community Pedestrian Network would be determined at subsequent planning stages and would incorporate a wide range of design components including but not limited to sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, engineered walkways and through block connections.



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APPENDIX B ~Existing pathway alignment



Subject Site: **Riverbend**
Date: **2009-04-15**

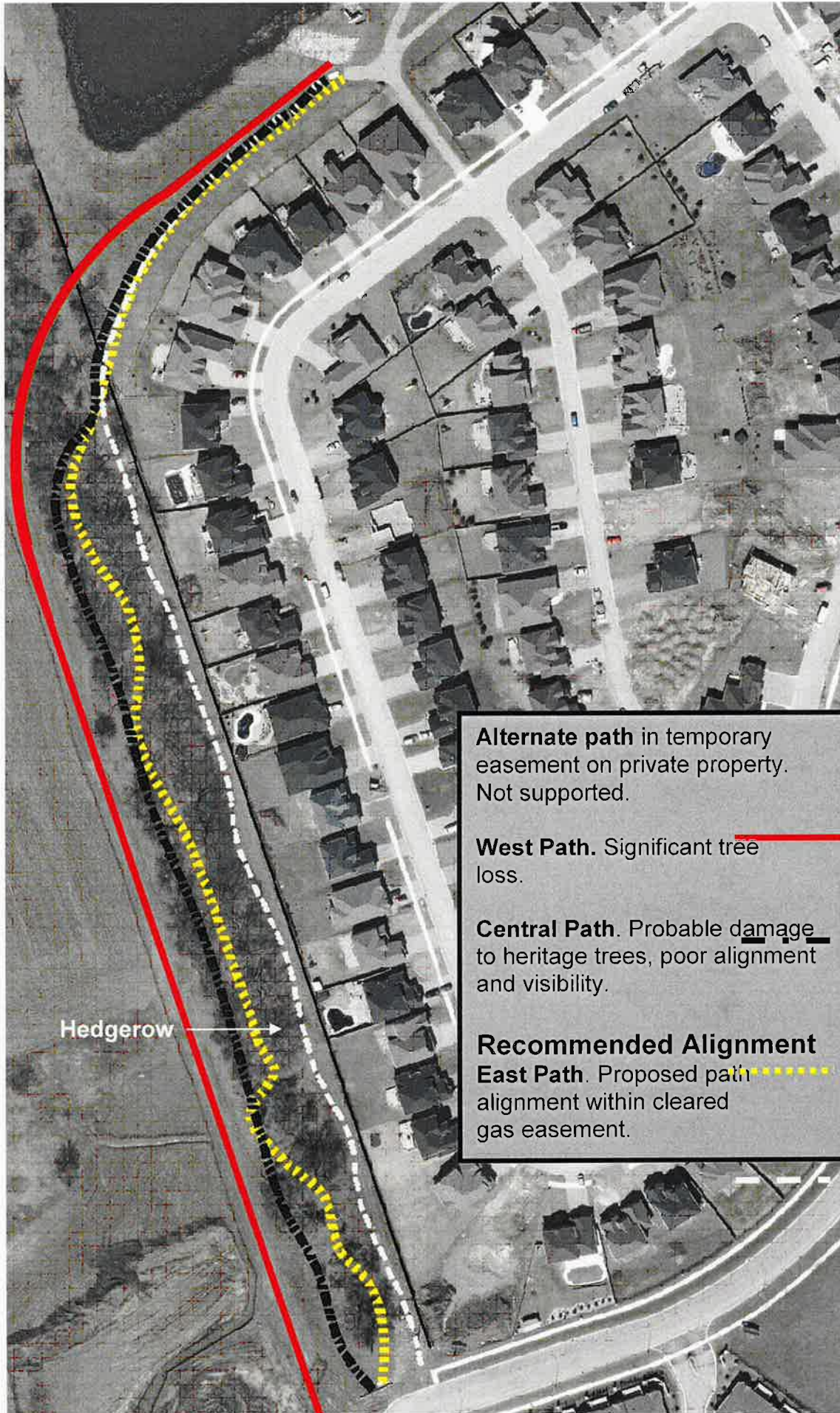


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Prepared By: Planning and Development



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APPENDIX C - Trail Alignment options investigated in Westdel Bourne Road Allowance



Alternate path in temporary easement on private property. Not supported.

West Path. Significant tree loss.

Central Path. Probable damage to heritage trees, poor alignment and visibility.

Recommended Alignment East Path. Proposed path alignment within cleared gas easement.