



REIMAGINING ROBERTSON ROAD

ROBERTSON ROAD ACTION PLAN

MARCH 2026



Prepared for Councillor Laine Johnson by Mobycon Corp.

LETTER FROM THE COUNCILLOR

Dear Bells Corners Community,

It is my pleasure to share the Reimagining Robertson Road Action Plan with you, a community-driven roadmap for the future of Bells Corners.

The Action Plan offers a community-led vision for revitalizing the “Village in the Greenbelt” with a vibrant main street, welcoming public spaces, and connections within and beyond the community. I wanted to make sure that for all the changes our city continues to see, the Bells Corners community vision came first.



While Robertson Road is an essential corridor in the West end, the community along the corridor often gets overlooked in broader City investments. The vision articulated in these pages highlights the importance of the corridor as the Main Street of the Bells Corners community. Robertson Road serves more than cars; it serves the community itself.

Residents want a place where they can comfortably walk and bike through their community, where they can rely on transit to reach their destinations, enjoy public spaces that are more than parking lots, and support the local businesses that call this street home.

It is time to see investments that reflect the diverse ways this corridor is already used by the people of Bells Corners. I’m hopeful this Action Plan is one step in moving towards these future investments.

The success of this project comes directly from the time, care, and dedication of many individuals, organizations, and businesses in Bells Corners.

I want to give my biggest thanks to Lynwood Village Retirement Home, Chartwell Stillwater Creek, Centennial Library, and Our Lady of Peace School for hosting our engagement sessions; the Bells Corners BIA and local businesses in the Bells Corners community; City staff from Traffic Services, Transportation Planning, Active Transportation, and Right-of-Way, Heritage, and Urban Design Services; and the Mobycon consulting team for all their hard work and passion for this project: Matt, Arianne, Suzanne, Jamie, and Nick.

Finally, and most importantly! A heartfelt thank you to all the residents, students, and community members who came along for the ride and inspired me throughout this process. Your voices shaped the vision behind this report and truly reflect the spirit and heart of the Village in the Greenbelt.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LJ'.

Laine Johnson
City Councillor for College Ward 8

ROBERTSON ROAD TODAY

A STREET AT A CROSSROADS

Robertson Road runs through Bells Corners, a community of nearly 10,000 people surrounded by Ottawa’s Greenbelt. Bells Corners is home to five schools, eight churches and places of worship, and four retirement residences that reflect a wide range of ages, cultures, and needs. The neighbourhood is also increasingly diverse, with about 22% of residents identifying as racialized and up to 24% as immigrants.¹ This mix of diverse residents contributes to a vibrant community with varied perspectives, travel needs, and priorities that shape the future of the corridor. Despite having shops, services, and housing within walking distance—the makings of a “15-minute community”—the area is developed around the car. Stores sit behind parking lots, walking routes are disconnected, and transit access is limited.

The problem is that Robertson Road serves two conflicting purposes. Built as a high-speed gateway into Ottawa, it still functions as a commuter corridor carrying 28,000 vehicles daily, with traffic spiking to 1,500 vehicles per hour during peak periods. Yet it’s also the community’s main street, where people need to shop, catch buses, and increasingly, live.

TODAY’S CHALLENGES

The road’s design creates serious problems for anyone not in a car:

- **Walking is difficult and dangerous.** Sidewalks have gaps forcing pedestrians onto paved shoulders. Where sidewalks exist, some have pinch points while others require crossing highway-style ramps. Long distances between traffic signals—combined with development on both sides—tempt people to cross mid-block on a road where speeds hit 60–80 km/h.
- **Cycling is only for the brave.** West of Vanier Road, narrow bike lanes offer little protection from fast traffic. East of Vanier, there’s nothing at all. Most residents won’t cycle here.
- **Transit requires risk.** Bus service exists, but the most frequent service runs along Robertson Road—meaning riders must cross the street to access it.
- **Safety is compromised.** Recent collisions have caused property damage and serious pedestrian injuries. The road’s design—high speeds, excess off-peak capacity encouraging speeding, two-way left-turn lanes creating conflicts, and long signal cycles—all contribute to crash severity.

The city’s new Official Plan designates Robertson as a “Mainstreet Corridor” for dense, mixed-use development, and the City’s new zoning bylaw allows significantly more housing, especially on the north side of the street. The new Moodie O-Train station will open just 2.5 km to the north in 2027. But without changes, Robertson Road will remain a barrier rather than a community spine—too fast for walking, too hostile for cycling, and too dangerous for the denser, more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood Ottawa envisions.



¹ Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. *Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS): An interdisciplinary population health research initiative*. University of Ottawa and Bruyère Health Academic Family Medicine. Accessed March 31, 2026. <https://ons-sqo.ca/>

BY BELLS CORNERS, FOR BELLS CORNERS

This vision for Robertson Road was developed from the ground up, with insights and input from the people who call Bells Corners home.

HOW WE ENGAGED

Walkshop

In June 2025, an initial conversation was held with 30 community members on a walking tour of Robertson Road (a “walkshop”) that discussed the needs of older adults, community connections, gathering places, local businesses, and designing for kids.

Public Survey

Next, over 300 people participated in an online public survey (68% of respondents were residents of Bells Corners) that gathered input on key issues, possible changes to the street, and trade-offs.

Focus Groups

Between November 2025 and January 2026, 6 focused sessions were held with different community groups to openly discuss challenges and solutions for the street.

WHO WE ENGAGED

In total, this project has heard from more than 430 people across 8 different events:

- June 28, 2025: Community Walkshop with 30 participants
- August 27 to September 23, 2025: Online public survey with 302 responses
- November 13th, 2025: In-person session at Lynwood Village Retirement home (~25 residents)
- December 11th, 2025: Community pop-up at Centennial Library Branch (~10 people)
- December 15th, 2025: Virtual session with Bells Corners BIA (3 attendees)
- January 19th, 2026: Our Lady of Peace School (30-40 students)
- Bells Corners BIA Board Meeting (6 attendees)
- Stillwater Retirement Home (~21 people)

WHAT WE HEARD

People choose to live in Bells Corners for many reasons, including:

- The variety of services and businesses offered along Robertson Road
- Access to the Green Belt
- The quality of retirement communities
- They were born & raised in Bells Corners

The community raised the following issues along Robertson Road:

- Speeding and traffic congestion during peak hours
- Unpleasant for pedestrians to walk alongside the traffic and difficulties to cross
- Poor conditions of the sidewalks and gaps in sidewalk coverage
- No safe space for people to cycle
- Challenging to turn left onto Robertson Road or into driveways as a driver
- Inequalities between Lynwood Village and Westcliffe Estates

Opportunities for Robertson Road:

- Fill vacant land and empty parking lots to densify and create mixed-use communities, community hubs, and green spaces.
- The wide right-of-way gives an opportunity to rebalance space for all modes.

Hesitations from the community:

- Removal of vehicle lanes could worsen congestion and affect local businesses
- Removal of parking spots that could affect local businesses
- Investing in a big project instead of maintaining and improving what exists



Councillor Laine Johnson with residents of the Lynwood Village Retirement Home



Students at Our Lady of Peace School drew their desired visions of Robertson Road following a class presentation by Councillor Johnson

COMMUNITY QUOTES

“Robertson Road looks quite dumpy... it is hard to have pride in where you live when it looks like this.”

“The road has lots of potential to become a lively strip of road. Make it look more welcoming for walkers or bikers.”

“I used to use the bus 50 years ago, but I can’t imagine how you would use the bus now.”

VISION FOR THE STREET

Based on community feedback, the vision for Robertson Road is for this street to transform from a high-speed commuter corridor into a vibrant, safe, and green main street that serves as both a welcoming gateway and an active year-round gathering place where walking, biking, and transit are the preferred ways to access thriving local businesses and community life.



Figure 1. Conceptual sketch of a safe vision of Robertson Road.

SAFER FOR EVERYONE

Robertson Road will provide protected spaces for people walking, biking, and waiting for transit, ensuring that all users, regardless of age or ability, feel secure, with elements like:

- Sidewalks and protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) along the whole corridor.
- Slower vehicle speeds, narrower lanes, and a continuous planted median will make the corridor safer and more predictable.
- Protected intersections, improved pedestrian crossings, and signaled left turns will reduce conflicts and improve visibility.
- Enhanced winter maintenance will ensure that sidewalks and bike lanes remain usable and safe year-round.

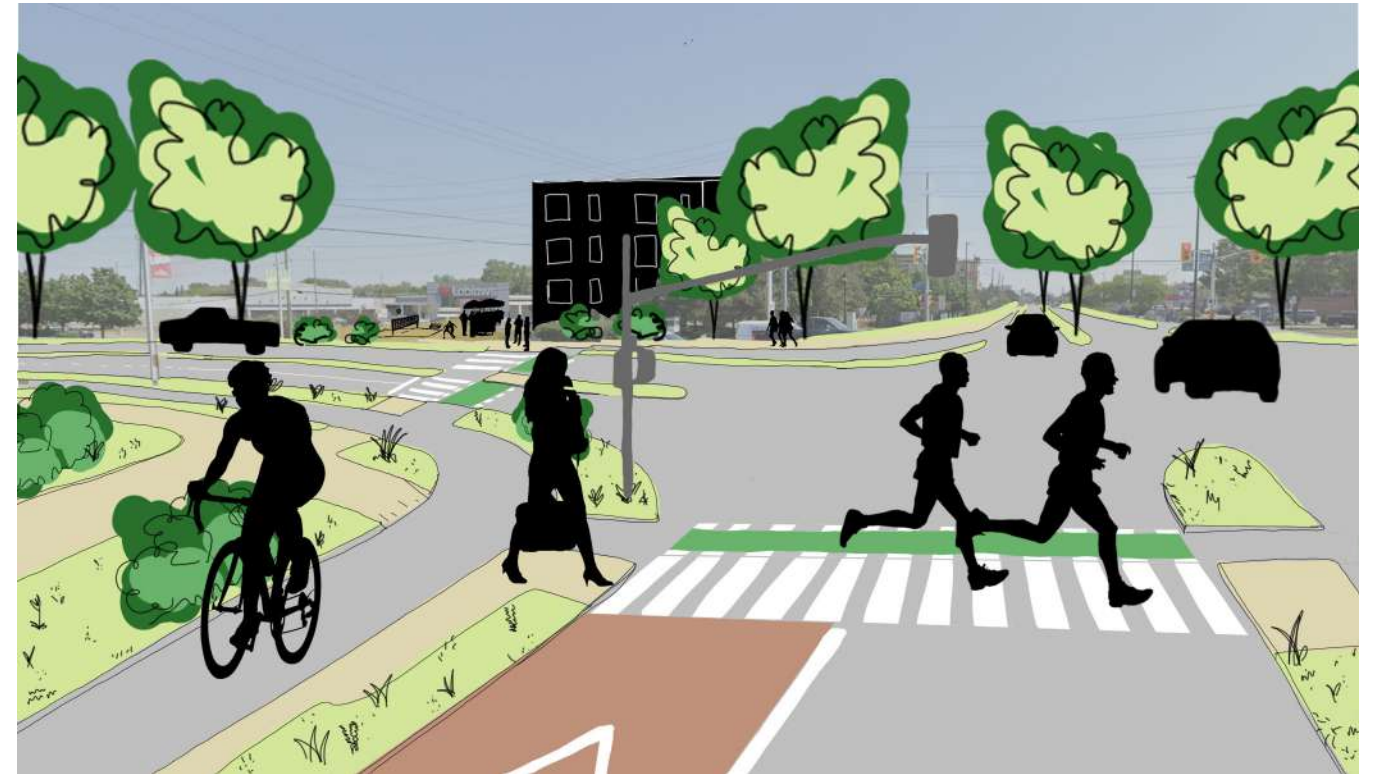


Figure 2. Conceptual sketch of a community hub vision of Robertson Road.

A COMMUNITY HUB

Placemaking, green elements and a friendlier traffic environment will transform Robertson Road into a welcoming main street where conversations can be heard, nature is present, sidewalks are shaded, and businesses thrive. Elements include:

- Improved bus stops, streetscape design, and future ground-floor mixed-use development will make the corridor feel like a place to linger and belong.
- As many as three continuous lines of trees will turn the corridor into an urban forest, providing shade, cooling, traffic calming, and stormwater management.
- Public spaces like the Loblaws Plaza area will evolve into places to gather, rest, and socialize, supported by comfortable seating, lighting, and art that reflect community character.



Figure 3. Conceptual sketch of a locally connected Robertson Road.

CONNECTED LOCALLY

Robertson Road will be a street that connects, not divides. Everyday trips will be made more convenient with measures like:

- More **pedestrian crossings**, aligned with key desire lines.
- **Reduced wait times for pedestrians** and side street traffic at signals.
- **Completing gaps in sidewalks and bikeways** so that residents can move safely and easily between homes, parks, and businesses.
- Creating new **pedestrian “shortcuts”** between Robertson Road and residential streets over time through redevelopment.



Figure 4. Conceptual sketch of a regionally connected Robertson Road.

CONNECTED REGIONALLY

Robertson Road will remain an important destination in the regional transportation network, but car trips through Bells Corners between other parts of the city, especially commuting trips, will be shifted to other corridors, with measures like:

- **Reducing the number of vehicle lanes** to support a more pedestrian-oriented street.
- Adding **transit priority measures** to ensure that frequent OC Transpo service on Robertson Road can avoid traffic delays, making transit a more reliable option for moving between Bells Corners and surrounding communities.
- Improving service between Bells Corners and **O-Train Line 1 at Moodie Station** when it opens in 2027.
- A **mobility hub at Robertson and Moodie** to seamlessly link walking, cycling, transit and shared mobility services like car-sharing and bike-sharing, giving residents more options for regional travel without relying on cars.

VISION FOR THE NETWORK

Based on community feedback, Bells Corners' transportation network will connect to all important destinations. The network will provide more travel options, regardless of the mode.

BUILDING THE FUTURE WE WANT

To make big changes to Robertson Road, it's important to think about its role in the transportation network. Should Robertson Road continue to be a key commuter route, and for which modes? What are the most important destinations for locals and people who work there? How will future developments change the needs of the street?

Imagine one of your favourite shopping streets in Ottawa. Does traffic there flow quickly and smoothly? Probably not. Walkable main streets cannot thrive while also carrying high volumes and speeds of car traffic. For Robertson Road to become a true Mainstreet, its design must prioritize trips accessing Bells Corners by all modes of travel, rather than trips simply driving through it. This means narrowing the road and sacrificing some car capacity to shorten crossing distances and free up space for trees, wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and placemaking.

Figure 5 illustrates a conceptual roadmap for the future vision of the transportation network.

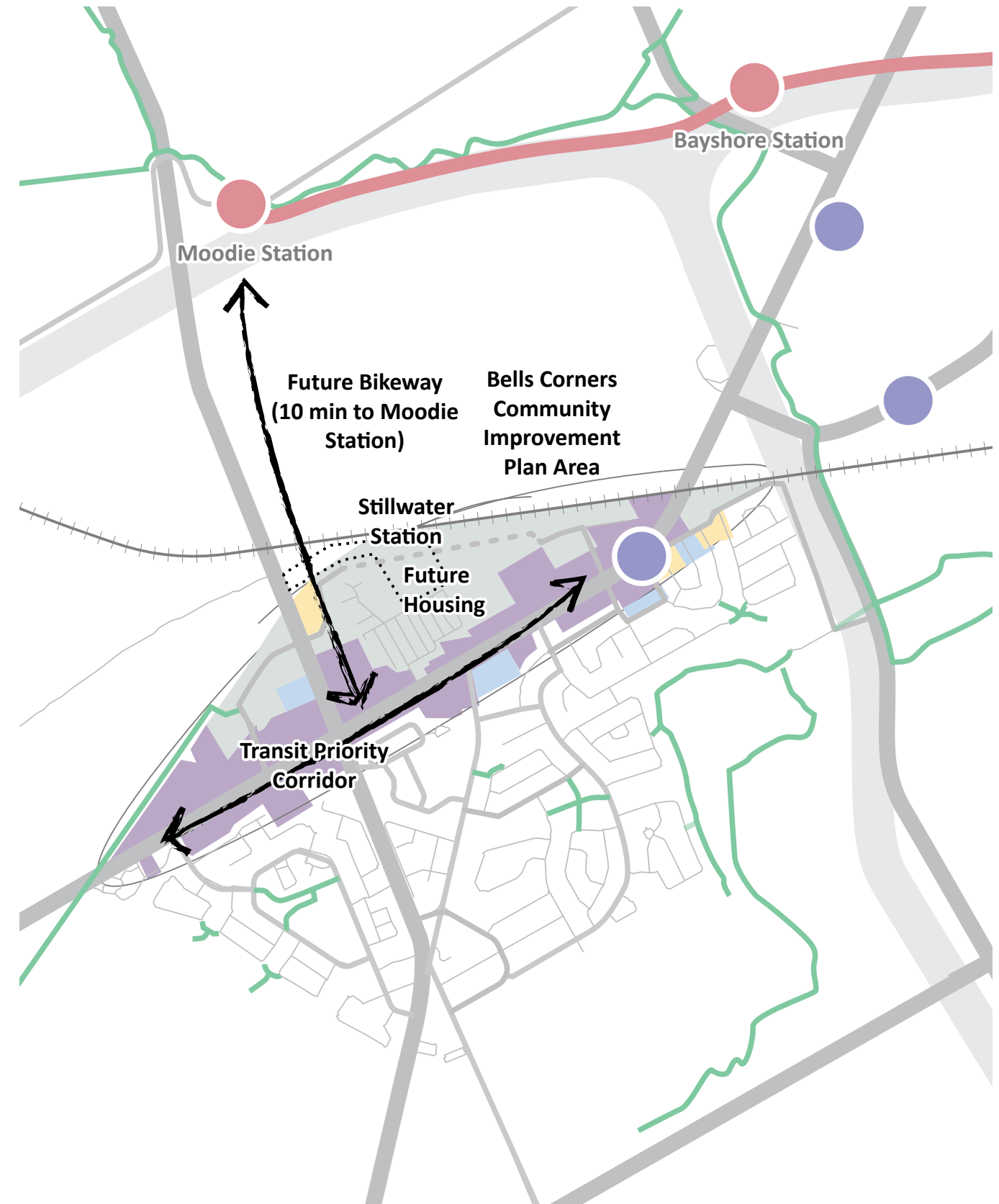


Figure 5. Roadmap for the future

WHAT ABOUT TRAFFIC?

Traffic data shows that congestion on Robertson Road is generally limited to one direction at a time—eastbound in the morning and westbound in the evening. For the rest of the day, and even in the opposite direction during rush hour, the road carries far fewer vehicles than it is designed for, typically less than 60% of its capacity. In other words, there is unused space on the roadway for much of the day that could be used more effectively.

By reducing the number of lanes and reallocating space to other modes, the traffic will flow differently:

- More people on foot, on bike and on transit, and fewer in cars
- More consistent traffic flow and less stop-and-go
- Less cut-through traffic and more local trips
- Strategic improvements on parallel corridors (like the recent widening of Hunt Club Road) can absorb some of the displaced traffic.

These improvements are illustrated in Figure 6.

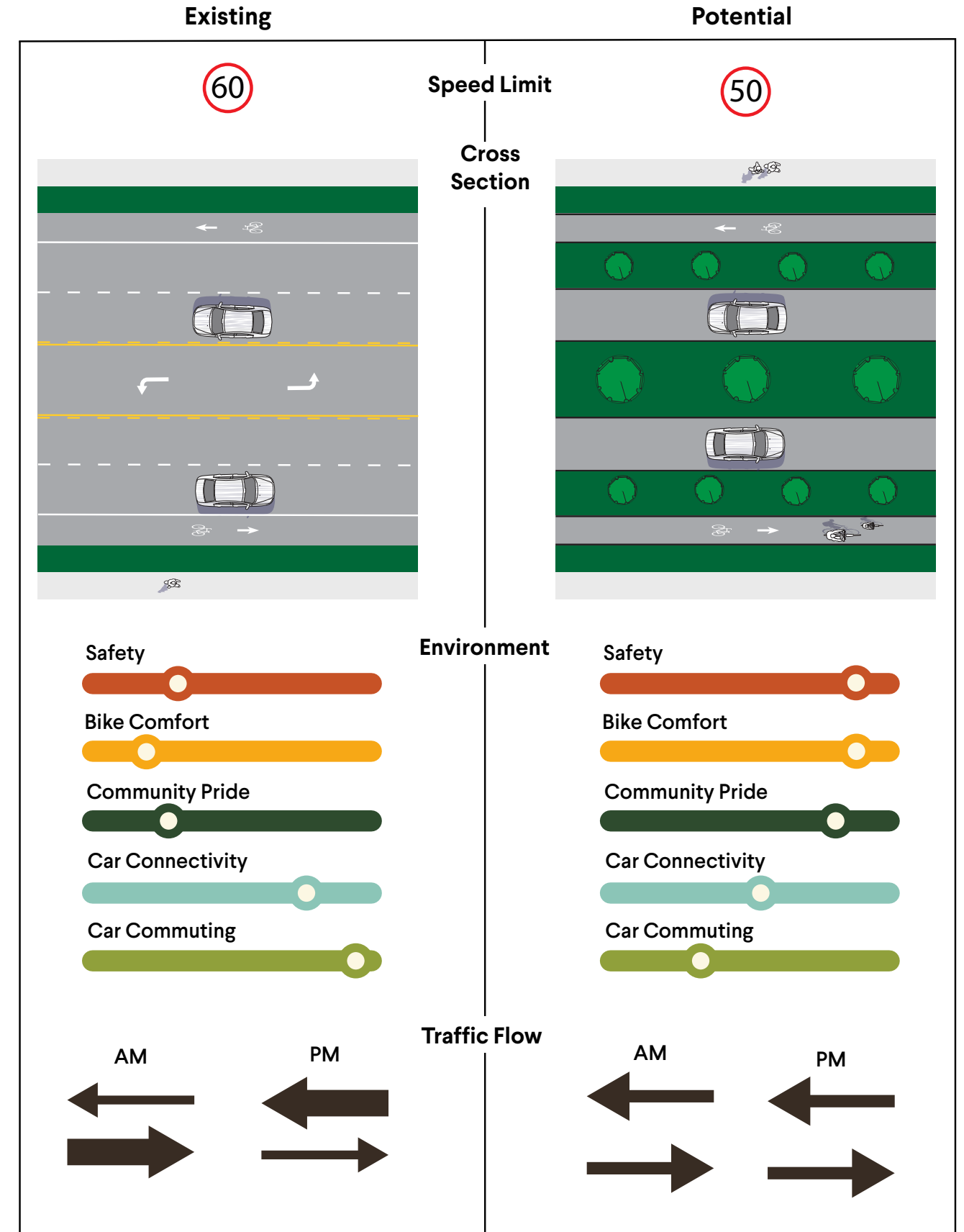


Figure 6. Traffic impacts of Robertson Road changes

ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

Everything in this plan starts with the community. Using the community’s input on problems and opportunities of the corridor, the College Ward office and Mobycon engaged with City staff to identify tangible actions and steps for achieving the vision.

Big changes take time and require big conversations. The Action Plan, summarized in the table below, is built with this in mind. It identifies projects already underway that contribute to the vision, tactical improvements that the City and community can work on together in the near-term, and studies that should be initiated to guide larger changes and investments on the corridor.

Type	Action	Key Partners
Projects Underway	• Add Missing Sidewalks	City’s Active Transportation Planning team
	• Expand Rapid Transit	City’s Stage 2 LRT office
Tactical Opportunities	• Improve Pedestrian and Cycling Safety	City’s Traffic Services division
	• Placemaking Through Community Partnerships	Councillor’s office, the BIA, community associations, and the City’s Right of Way, Heritage and Urban Design team.
Studies	• Create and Invest in Public Spaces	City’s Right of Way, Heritage, and Urban Design Team
	• Complete a Corridor Study to Guide Street Investments	City’s Transportation Planning department
Longer Term	• Cycling Connection to Moodie O-Train Station	Planned work is included as part of the Transportation Master Plan in years to come

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Add Missing Sidewalks

Many people experience challenges walking along Robertson Road, but this is most severe west of Fitzgerald Road where there is no sidewalk on the north side of the street. The City is currently developing a design to add a new sidewalk to fill this gap, between Westcliffe Road and Fitzgerald Road, with public engagement expected in 2026.

Expand Rapid Transit

People in Bells Corners mentioned they find the current transit system to be unreliable and difficult to access. One project underway to help with this is the westward extension of O-Train Line 1. With service set to begin in 2027, the new Moodie Station will open just over 2 km north of the community with a direct, rapid connection to downtown.



Bells Corners residents participate in the Reimagining Robertson Road Community Walkshop

TACTICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Improve Pedestrian and Cycling Safety

Community members frequently spoke about challenges crossing Robertson Road on foot and travelling along it by bike. Main streets should be safe places to walk for people of all ages and abilities and with this in mind, there is a wide range of tactical measures available to slow traffic and improve comfort for people outside of cars.

TOOLS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING SAFETY

- **Reduce Posted Speed Limit.** The posted speed limit indicates to drivers the speed they should drive at based on the context, and for a multimodal commercial corridor like Robertson Road, speeds over 50 km/h make the street environment unpleasant and less safe for everyone. Research has shown that even if it only slightly reduces the speed at which people travel, it can have big improvements to safety and collisions. Over the longer term, a reduced speed limit creates more opportunity for redesign measures that reinforce the speed.
- **Retime Traffic Signals to Reduce Pedestrian Wait Times.** Traffic signals on Robertson Road are currently timed to give a lot of green time to east-west traffic, making it easy to commute through Bells Corners but leaving side-street traffic and pedestrians waiting for long periods to get a green. Retiming these signals to reduce the cycle length could shorten wait times for local trips.
- **Add Protected Left Turn Signals.** Left turns on multi-lane roads create some of the most severe collisions for motorists and pedestrians. By creating dedicated left turn signals, this conflict can be eliminated, improving comfort and safety for people walking
- **Prohibit Right Turns on Red.** When motorists are allowed to turn right on red, they often “creep” up during a red light and end up blocking pedestrian crosswalks. Prohibiting this keeps crosswalks clear and gives pedestrians more priority.
- **Paint Ladder Markings on Pedestrian Crosswalks.** Painting “zebra” crossings gives people walking more visibility to motorists.
- **Add Pedestrian Head Start Signals.** Giving pedestrians the walk sign before vehicles get the green (called a Leading Pedestrian Interval, or LPI) improves pedestrian safety by allowing them to start crossing first.
- **Add Flex Posts to Existing Bike Lanes.** Comfort of existing bike lanes could be improved by adding seasonal flex posts between the bike and vehicle lanes. This could also help encourage slower driving speeds.

The City’s Traffic Services division is the key partner necessary to advance tactical safety opportunities for the corridor. The Councillor should meet with staff to identify what measures are supported and feasible in the short term.

Placemaking Through Community Partnerships

Local businesses and community groups are keen to see Bells Corners and Robertson Road become a vibrant, village-like destination, and with support from the City there are many short-term actions possible to achieve this:

- Planting more trees and installing more benches along the street on public and private property, leveraging upcoming City projects where possible.
- Adding public art (gateway treatments) where Robertson Road enters Bells Corners, to create a sense of arrival in the “Village in the Greenbelt”. This would need to be led by the community / BIA with support from the City.
- Activating private spaces for public use like the parking lot in front of the former Zellers. In partnership with the landowner, there is potential to create more regular opportunities for the public to benefit from this underused space.
- Working with landowners to remove barriers to walking between businesses and the community, with new pedestrian shortcuts on public and/or private property

Key partners for placemaking initiatives are the Councillor’s office, the BIA, community associations, and the City’s Right of Way, Heritage and Urban Design team.



Councillor Johnson leads a community pop-up at Centennial Library Branch

STUDIES

Create and Invest in Public Spaces

The City is initiating a City-Wide Public Realm Strategy that will identify areas for investment in the City. Since Robertson Road in Bells Corners is designated as a “design priority area” in the Official Plan, the Strategy will identify and prioritize projects within that corridor.

The City’s Right of Way, Heritage, and Urban Design team is leading this effort.

Complete a Corridor Study to Guide Street Investments

Corridor Studies bring together stakeholders, technical expertise, and decisionmakers to make big decisions about how a street and the buildings that surround it should change over time. A similar study was undertaken recently for St. Joseph Boulevard in Orleans, to help the corridor become a more walkable main street in the short term as well as over time as new development occurs. A corridor study should be pursued for Robertson Road, with attention given to:

- Options to redirect through/commuter traffic to other corridors to create a more intimate, pedestrian-oriented street.
- Strategies to reducing conflicts, including replacing the centre turn lane with a treed median and reducing the number of driveways when properties redevelop
- Identifying locations for new pedestrian crossings
- Planning how new developments can create new pedestrian shortcuts
- Reviewing options to add protected bike lanes (recognizing current provincial constraints)

The City’s *Transportation Master Plan* has dedicated funding for projects that help create new main streets, and Robertson Road is a good candidate for this within the City. A successful Corridor Plan will identify how this funding could be best used to transform the street. The City’s Transportation Planning department is the key partner necessary to start and lead this work.

Figure 7 at the end of this Action Plan illustrates how a corridor study could lead to a larger transformation, with safer places to walk and cycle, priority for transit, major investments in streetscaping, and the construction of new buildings.

LONGER TERM

Cycling Connection to Moodie O-Train Station

Many community members commented on the need for a quality cycling connection to the soon-to-open Moodie O-Train station, especially since the station will not have car parking. The City’s Transportation Master Plan includes adding a cycling connection from the Trans Canada Trail to Moodie O-Train station via a new multi-use pathway, but due to funding requirements, the project is currently not planned for implementation in the next 7 years.

The Transportation Master Plan is the guiding document that could provide greater priority to this project. The community and the Councillor should advocate for the importance of this connection, and **advocate to higher levels of government for its funding.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE THIS VISION HAPPEN

Transforming Robertson Road is no small task. While this Action Plan identifies many short-term actions that could deliver great benefit, the community can continue to play a significant role in shaping the future of the street.

Here is how you can keep the energy and enthusiasm for the vision alive:

- Join the Ward 8 mailing list to keep up-to-date on developments related to the corridor
- Volunteer through community associations or the BIA to support public art and placemaking projects.
- Spend more time exploring Bells Corners and sharing ideas with friends and neighbours.
- Participate in upcoming public engagements for local projects, including for the new sidewalk between Fitzgerald and Westcliffe.
- Engage in the next Transportation Master Plan update when it is undertaken in five years.
- Share feedback with the Councillor on your ideas for improving the corridor by emailing collegeward@ottawa.ca



Reimagining Robertson Road project team at the Community Walkshop

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Suzanne Woo
Jamie Arnau
Nick Falbo



Figure 7. An illustration of how some of the design principles could lead to a larger transformation of the street through a corridor study, with safer places to walk and cycle, priority for transit, major investments in streetscaping, and the construction of new buildings.