



Report to Council

Department: Infrastructure Services
Division: Operations
Date: August 11, 2025
Prepared by: Kevin Girard, P.Eng., MBA
Director, Infrastructure Services
Report Number: Operations-2025-07
Subject: Traffic Movements in Essex Centre Core
Number of Pages: 10

Recommendation(s)

That Operations-2025-07 entitled, “Traffic Movements in Essex Centre Core” prepared by Kevin Girard, Director, Infrastructure Services dated August 11, 2025 be received, and

That Council direct administration to amend By-Law No. 816 to implement a ‘no left turn’ from northbound lane of Talbot Street South onto Laird Avenue.

Purpose

On March 17, 2025, Council resolved the following motion:

R25-03-132

Whereas the Essex Centre Streetscape project is now complete; and

Whereas it is essential to evaluate how the revised streetscape plan has affected traffic flow and to identify opportunities for improving signage to enhance traffic efficiency and pedestrian safety; the key goals of the project.

Be it resolved that Council direct Administration to prepare a report addressing the following traffic efficiency and pedestrian safety aspects of the project, as a thorough review of these aspects will help ensure that traffic flow remains efficient and pedestrian safety is optimized in alignment with the Streetscape project's objectives:

- 1. No Left Turn Restriction into Schinkel's**
 - *Provide the rationale for the existing restriction on left turns into Schinkel's when traveling north on Talbot.*
 - *Explore options for removing the restriction, including potential impacts and considerations.*
- 2. No Left Turn Restriction onto Laird Avenue**
 - *Provide the rationale for the newly implemented restriction on left turns onto Laird Avenue when traveling north on Talbot.*
 - *Assess the feasibility of removing this restriction or introducing a time-based restriction, including potential impacts and considerations.*
- 3. Feasibility of Flashing Indicators at Key Crosswalks**
 - *Evaluate the potential for implementing flashing indicator functions at the two busiest crosswalks in Essex Centre:*
 - *Talbot Street North and Wilson Avenue*
 - *Talbot Street North and Laird Avenue*
 - *Include legislative requirements, estimated costs, and necessary steps for implementing new crosswalk controls at these locations.*
- 4. Assess the Traffic Flow and Safety of the intersection at Arthur Avenue and Talbot Street South**
- 5. Assess the Traffic Flow and Safety of the intersection at Victoria Street and Talbot Street North**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Shepley

Seconded by Councillor Garon

Carried

Background and Discussion

Upon review of the request by Council to evaluate the traffic movements within the Essex Core District, Administration utilized internal expertise, the engineer of record for the Essex Centre Streetscape - Stantec Consulting, and engaged a local traffic engineering consultant with significant local experience to provide a comprehensive report. Utilizing these sources, the following information is provided to Council.

1. No Left Turn Restriction into Schinkel's

The no-left turn was implemented by By-Law #816 in April 2007.

Administration was unable to determine the history for the implementation of this traffic restriction, therefore, an internal evaluation of the 'no left' restriction was completed to determine the rationale as to why the restriction could have been implemented. The following assumptions were developed:

1. The Centre/Gordon intersection is located only 40m from the Schinkel's driveway on Talbot Street. If northbound traffic is stopped at the intersection, this could pose visibility issues for left turn movements into Schinkel's. Whereas the left turn being made onto Centre to access the parking lot could be made with better visibility of oncoming traffic.
2. There could have been something circumstantial that would have provided the need, such as increased accident rates or previous building uses.
3. Due to the property constraints, the Schinkel's driveway is narrow for two vehicle traffic and due to the proximity to the adjacent building (formerly

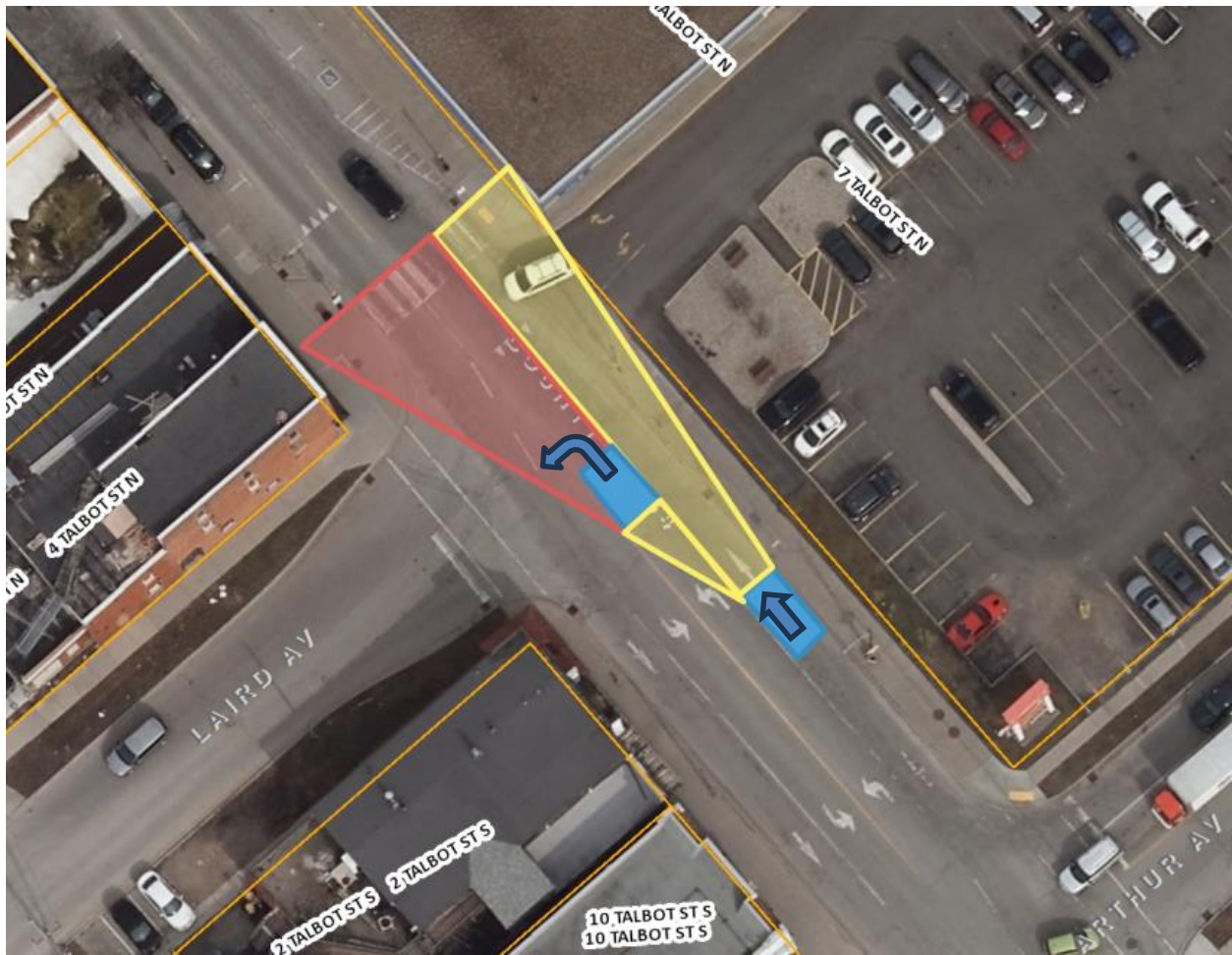
Bennigin's) and reduced sightlines due to on-street parking, exiting vehicles may encroach onto the entrance lane, blocking access and causing conflicts on Talbot Street.

For these potential reasons listed above, Administration recommends that the no-left restriction into the Schinkel's parking lot remain in effect. However, in accordance with the *Municipal Act*, Council has the authority to remove the traffic restriction by amending By-Law #816.

2. No Left Turn Restriction onto Laird Avenue

The no-left turn from Talbot Street onto Laird Avenue was implemented as part of the Essex Streetscape project. This restriction was implemented to address a safety concern raised by the public regarding near-misses at the pedestrian crossing at Laird, crossing Talbot Street.

Prior to the Essex Streetscape the road cross section on Talbot Street between Laird and Arthur was 4 lanes wide – 1 thru lane in each direction and a dedicated left turn lane for each Laird and Arthur. What was observed and reported to Administration was that near misses were occurring due to poor sight lines. As a vehicle was queued to turn left onto Laird, there was a large blind spot that hindered the ability for northbound thru traffic to see and react to crossing pedestrians. As depicted in the figure below, the vehicle approaching the pedestrian crossing at Laird would have clear sight lines of the pedestrian crossing on the east side of Talbot (yellow), but the sightline to the west would be impaired (red) by the vehicle making a left turn, resulting in many reported near-misses.



To alleviate this issue and improve safety of pedestrians, the left turn lane was removed. In addition, on the recommendation of Stantec, the left turn movement would need to be restricted to avoid vehicle queuing into the Arthur/Talbot intersection in the northbound lane.

This no-left restriction has not yet been adopted by By-Law. Therefore, Council has the authority to direct Administration to:

1. Leave the restriction in place and present a By-Law to implement the restriction.

2. Leave the restriction in place and present a By-Law to implement the restriction for certain hours of the day. (ie. 8am to 5pm only – where left turns would be permitted outside these hours)
3. Remove the restriction entirely.

It is Administration's recommendation to leave the restriction in place and keep with option 1 above. Although option 2 is a viable option, there are reported cases of vehicles not obeying the posted no-left restriction, and the implementation of a timed restriction may cause additional lawbreaking and enforcement challenges.

3. Feasibility of Flashing Indicators at Key Crosswalks

The guideline for the implementation of pedestrian signalization comes from the Ontario Traffic Manuals (OTM), specifically, OTM Book 15 for Pedestrian Crossing Treatments and OTM Book 12 for Traffic Signals. During the Essex Streetscape, these guidelines were used to determine the warrant criteria for pedestrian signalization at pedestrian crossings in the core which resulted in an assessment of four (4) controlled pedestrian crossings over Talbot Street - Laird Avenue, Centre/Gordon, Wilson, and the Heritage Gardens Park/CASO crossing. Since the only two pedestrian crossings that are not signalized are the crossings at Wilson and Laird, the focus of this report is on these crossings. It should be noted that although these crossings are not signalized, they are a Level 2 Type D controlled crossing and vehicles are required, by law, to yield to pedestrians at these crossings.

According to OTM Book 12, the installation of pedestrian signals are warranted if the subject site exceeds both the minimum pedestrian volume and the minimum pedestrian volume and the minimum pedestrian delay criteria for a period of 8

hours. The pedestrian volume criterion is defined as the total 8-hour pedestrian volume crossing the main road at an intersection or mid-block location during the highest 8-hour of pedestrian traffic. Similarly, the pedestrian delay criterion is defined as the total 8-hour volume of pedestrians experiencing delays of ten seconds or more in crossing the road during the highest 8-hour of pedestrian traffic. The assessment tools from the guideline are shown below.

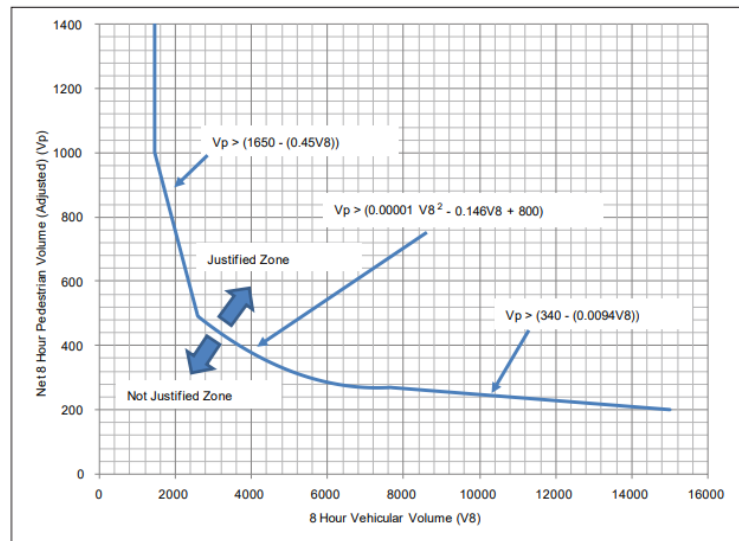


Figure 3: OTM Book 12 Justification 6 - Pedestrian Volume

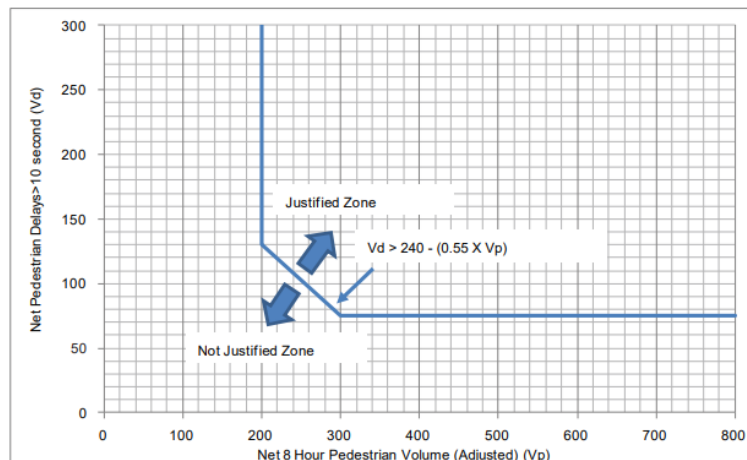


Figure 4: OTM Book 12 Justification 6 - Pedestrian Delay

In addition to this analysis, the guideline also states that signalization is not required where there is already a signal within 200m of the required crossing. The Laird crossing is located approximately 100m from the Gordon/Centre Street traffic signal and the Wilson Street crossing is located approximately 87m from the Gordon/Centre Street traffic signal and approximately 82m from the pedestrian signal at Heritage Gardens Park/CASO, and is therefore, not recommended.

Should Council still feel that signalization at these crossings is necessary, the cost of the signalized crossing at Heritage Garden Park/CASO that was included in the Streetscape project (2023 pricing) was \$45,000 plus engineering design. Therefore, Council would need to include approximately \$110,000 in the 2026 Capital Budget for design and installation of this infrastructure.

4. Assess the Traffic Flow and Safety of the intersection at Arthur Avenue and Talbot Street South & at Victoria Street and Talbot Street North

To assess the traffic flow, safety, and the needs for improvements to the intersections (if required), engineering analysis would need to be completed by a qualified engineer as this is beyond the resources of internal staff. In order to appropriately determine these needs, an engineering consultant would need to:

- Observe and conduct 8-hour traffic/pedestrian counts during weekday and weekend traffic at each intersection.
- Modelling traffic flow, evaluate capacity, and determine level of service of the existing intersections.
- Complete geometric and sightline analysis.

- Evaluate need for improvements (ie. Signalization, etc) and/or timing of such improvements.

Based on the above scope, funding of approximately \$10,000 would be required to complete both intersections. Alternatively, Council has approved the funding for a Transportation Master Plan in the 2025 Capital Budget where this will already be included in the scope of that project. By waiting and including this in the scope of the master plan, evaluation of these intersections would be more beneficial through that process as it will incorporate the traffic needs, flows, and required improvements of Essex Centre as a whole as opposed to a localized area. However, it should be noted that master plans are best to be completed in coordination with Official Plan reviews and updates. With the delay in the adoption of the Official Plan, Administration has delayed both the Transportation and Servicing Master Plans to ensure that future growth identified in the Town's Official Plan are incorporated into long term servicing plans such as these master plans.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

Consultations

Norm Nussio, Manager, Operations & Drainage

Link to Strategic Priorities

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town's competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex "home".
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Traffic Movements in Essex Core - Operations-2025-07.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jul 30, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Giurissevich". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Jul 30, 2025 - 3:51 PM