

Clause 4 in Report No. 14 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on October 20, 2016.

4

Smart Commute Workplace Program

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated September 23, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. Council approve transfer of governance of the Smart Commute Workplace program from Metrolinx to York Region starting January 1, 2017, with Metrolinx continuing to provide support and funding.
  2. Council approve the direct award of new funding agreements for a total of \$222,000 of annual Regional funding and \$340,643 in annual Metrolinx funding to three Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations in York Region, namely:
    - a) Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill
    - b) Smart Commute Central York
    - c) Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan
  3. Staff evaluate the current delivery model and report back to Council on the recommended long-term approach for delivery of the services.
  4. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to Clerks of the local municipalities and Metrolinx.
-

Report dated September 23, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services now follows:

## 1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve transfer of governance of the Smart Commute Workplace program from Metrolinx to York Region starting January 1, 2017, with Metrolinx continuing to provide support and funding.
2. Council approve the direct award of new funding agreements for a total of \$222,000 of annual Regional funding and \$340,643 in annual Metrolinx funding to three Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations in York Region, namely:
  - a) Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill
  - b) Smart Commute Central York
  - c) Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan
3. Staff evaluate the current delivery model and report back to Council on the recommended long-term approach for delivery of the services.
4. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to Clerks of the local municipalities and Metrolinx.

## 2. Purpose

This report seeks Council approval for staff to proceed with transfer of governance of the Smart Commute Workplace Program from Metrolinx to the Region and obtain authorization to directly fund and execute new agreements with the Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in York Region.

### 3. Background and Previous Council Direction

Under the leadership of York Region and Metrolinx, the Smart Commute Program has expanded significantly

Smart Commute was created in 2004 through an initiative of York Region along with the Regions of Durham, Halton and Peel and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. York Region was the initial corporate home of the program until it was acquired by Metrolinx in 2008. The program mandate is to encourage those living and working in the GTHA to choose more efficient transportation choices that reduce congestion and help to improve quality of life.

When Metrolinx adopted the Smart Commute initiative, they also assumed the existing program's structure, services and TMA relationships. The network consisted of ten TMAs servicing 104 workplaces and educational institutions. The program has since grown to 13 TMAs and more than 340 members, representing approximately 730,000 commuters across the GTHA. In York Region, Smart Commute communicates with more than 100,000 staff and students of more than 100 member businesses to coordinate ride-sharing and make them more aware of their travel options.

The Smart Commute Workplace Program supports the Region in achieving its goal of reducing auto travel demand

The Smart Commute program is conducted through partnerships between Metrolinx, regional and local municipalities and non-governmental organizations. As previously reported to [Council in January 2015](#), Smart Commute provides several benefits to York Region to manage travel demand. This service helps commuters make travel choices that best meet their own needs as well as benefit the efficiency of the entire transportation system.

A 2015 impact review by Metrolinx found a 6:1 return on investment for the Smart Commute Workplace Program. Key benefits include reduced congestion and travel time, lower commuter operating costs, and improved health. The program takes an estimated 2.4 million annual car trips off the road, which is 1.7 per cent of all trips. This reduction is directly attributable to the Smart Commute Program.

Overall, based on data from online ride-matching tools, Smart Commute's efforts in York Region have produced the following results:

- Avoided more than 12,850,000 vehicle kilometres travelled
- Eliminated 2,600,000 kg of greenhouse gas emissions
- Saved commuters \$4.7 million in commuting costs

#### 4. Analysis and Implications

Metrolinx is shifting program governance and will directly fund all GTHA municipalities

Metrolinx has chosen to modify the Smart Commute Workplace Program to build on program successes and better focus on transportation behaviour change and results. Relationships with the TMAs are complex, with several delivery and funding models. To ensure good and transparent governance, Metrolinx will no longer provide funds directly to non-municipal TMAs. Instead, Metrolinx will provide funds directly to York Region, as well as the Regions of Durham, Halton and Peel and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. York Region will be given the authority to administer the program through the delivery model of its choosing to increase flexibility and create greater alignment with Regional objectives, such as supporting new infrastructure.

The Province is committed to the Smart Commute Workplace Program. one goal of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan is to create an ambitious transportation demand management program. By changing whether, when, and how we travel, we can make more efficient use of our transportation system. The impacts of this were realized during the 2015 PanAm Games with a reduction in background traffic of around 20 per cent, some of which was attributed to the efforts of the Smart Commute Workplace Program. Smart Commute will be able to support GO Station access and construction mitigation as part of the Regional Express Rail initiative.

Metrolinx's new role will be to support municipalities with the Smart Commute program

Activities will be project-based to demonstrate impact as a direct outcome of services and activities. Metrolinx has developed a two-tier program for Smart Commute member businesses:

- Level 1: Businesses will receive a standard level of service across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, primarily on a self-serve basis, with services focused on information and awareness of travel options
- Level 2: TMAs will offer businesses or groups of businesses custom transportation demand management solutions on a project-by-project basis, such as delivery of cycling workshops to businesses on or near Highway 7 East to increase usage of new cycling infrastructure

## Smart Commute Workplace Program

Total Metrolinx funding will be split according to these levels, with 40 per cent allocated to Level 1 and 55 per cent allocated to Level 2. The remaining five per cent funding will be provided based on program results as collected via an annual travel survey. The increased project focus of the program is expected to provide greater transparency of spending and improved results, offering an opportunity to ensure the projects undertaken are well aligned with Metrolinx and Regional strategic plans and objectives.

The new Smart Commute Workplace Program was soft-launched in Halton, Hamilton and Durham with a full launch expected in York Region on January 1, 2017

Metrolinx has taken a collaborative approach to the Smart Commute Workplace Program review, consulting with staff from York Region as well as the Regions of Durham, Halton and Peel and Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. Metrolinx has also sought and received feedback from TMAs and member businesses on Smart Commute's service offerings and behaviour change impacts.

The Regions of Halton and Durham and City of Hamilton soft-launched the new program April 1, 2016. York Region, Region of Peel and City of Toronto requested a nine-month extension of the existing TMA contracts to December 31, 2016. Metrolinx expects the new model to be in place at that time to ensure funding continuity.

Changes to the Smart Commute Workplace Program will improve value for money and better demonstrate results through project-based reporting.

Council authority is required to release budgeted funds directly to the Transportation Management Associations

Annual Regional funding of \$222,000 will be allocated to the three Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations in York Region as follows:

- Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill (40 per cent)
- Smart Commute Central York (40 per cent)
- Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan (20 per cent)

Since Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan is jointly-funded by York Region and the City of Toronto, staff recommended, for consistency, Regional funding be one-half of the other TMAs.

## Smart Commute Workplace Program

A service delivery agreement between Metrolinx and the Region for the Smart Commute Workplace Program is under review in anticipation of the full launch on January 1, 2017. Agreements with the individual TMAs with respect to program governance, service delivery and conditions of funding will be prepared. The Smart Commute Workplace Program in York Region will be coordinated by staff in Transportation Services, with support from Metrolinx.

Staff recommend Council approve transfer of the Smart Commute Workplace program governance from Metrolinx to York Region starting January 1, 2017. Metrolinx will continue to provide support and funding to the program.

Staff recommend Council delegate authority to the Commissioner of Transportation Services to release budgeted and partnership funds directly to Smart Commute Central York, Smart Commute Markham-Richmond Hill and Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan.

In 2017, staff will look for opportunities to maximize the Region's investment in Smart Commute and the delivery of transportation demand management

Advances in technology will mean there are opportunities to explore alternate delivery models for Smart Commute in the future. Staff will undertake a review of the current delivery model in 2017 to evaluate opportunities to streamline and maximize investments in Smart Commute. As stated in the Transportation Master Plan, the Region will work with partners to review the service area boundaries of local Smart Commute organizations and investigate changes that could better match demands with the available resources. A report, including detailed performance measures, will be presented to Council in 2018.

The Smart Commute Workplace Program supports the 2016 Transportation Master Plan, Regional Official Plan and Vision 2051 goal area of interconnected systems for mobility

The Region envisions a future where a seamless network of mobility options provides access to all destinations for residents, employees and visitors and safely and efficiently moves people and goods. Staff will continue to work with Metrolinx to implement and support transportation demand management initiatives that reduce automobile dependence and use existing and future infrastructure more efficiently by supporting local TMAs. An ongoing partnership with Smart Commute directly supports the objective to manage traffic congestion. It also supports trip reduction and active transportation policies in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the Regional Official Plan.

## 5. Financial Implications

Funding for the Smart Commute program is provided by Metrolinx, the Region and local municipalities

Coordination of the Smart Commute program in York Region occurs through three Transportation Management Associations. Funding from participating parties is provided directly to three TMAs within York Region, all of which are operated by non-government organizations. These TMAs are:

- Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill – operated in partnership by the Markham and Richmond Hill Chambers of Commerce
- Smart Commute Central York – operated by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce
- Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan – operated as an independent, non-profit organization

Funding allows the TMAs to hire 13 full-time staff equivalents to work with large York Region businesses and post-secondary institutions to promote transportation options and improve mobility in the Region.

Program funding is provided through the annual budget process with Metrolinx matching funding

York Region has provided annual funding to Smart Commute since 2006. In 2016, the Region provided funding in the amount of \$190,272. The Cities of Markham and Vaughan and Towns of Newmarket and Richmond Hill also provided funding. Metrolinx matches municipal funding and contributed \$413,500 in 2016. Table 1 provides a summary of funding in 2016.

**Table 1**  
**2016 Smart Commute Funding for York Region TMAs**

TMA	Regional	Local Municipal	Metrolinx	Other <sup>1</sup>	Total
Smart Commute Central York	\$76,109	\$25,000	\$107,000	\$3,700	\$211,809
Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill	\$76,109	\$125,000	\$179,000	\$15,625	\$395,734
Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan	\$38,054	\$32,000	\$127,500 <sup>2</sup>	\$80,000	\$277,554
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$190,272</b>	<b>\$182,000</b>	<b>\$413,500</b>	<b>\$99,325</b>	<b>\$885,097</b>

1. Includes fees, dues and sponsorships (estimated not actual)

2. Funding includes work in both the City of Toronto and York Region, which will be split and operate independently going forward

For 2017, the Region's Smart Commute budget is \$222,000 and leverages more than \$800,000 in total combined funding for promoting transportation options and improving traffic on our roads. Metrolinx is contributing \$340,643 in 2017. This amount is lower than previously reported years because figures in the past reflected funding for all Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan's member companies including in the City of Toronto. The 2017 contribution represents member businesses in York Region only.

Ninety per cent of the Region's Smart Commute funding is obtained through development charges. Funding is being collected specifically for transportation demand management programs per the Development Charges Bylaw. Funding to the Smart Commute Program is adjusted annually on a per-jobs basis based on \$0.32 per job in York Region. This provides the program with the resources required to serve the Region's growing economy.

Transportation Services recognizes the value provided by transportation demand management programs, such as Smart Commute, in supporting new transportation infrastructure and encouraging more transit, cycling, walking, ridesharing, reducing trips and improving quality of life. For example, in a neighbourhood of 100 people, if only three people change their travel behaviour, there will be benefits to everyone.



## 6. Local Municipal Impact

Local municipal partnerships are key to the success of the Smart Commute Program. There are no impacts to existing funding amounts from the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and Towns of Newmarket and Richmond Hill. Program structure changes will better align with local municipal strategic plans and objectives.

## 7. Conclusion

Metrolinx is shifting program governance and will now directly fund all six regional municipalities. The Region will be given authority to administer the Smart Commute Workplace Program through its choice of delivery models in order to increase flexibility and create greater alignment with Regional objectives. These changes will improve value for money and better demonstrate results through project-based reporting.

Staff recommends Council approve proceeding with the transfer of governance of the Smart Commute Workplace Program from Metrolinx to the Region and authorize the Commissioner of Transportation Services to execute new agreements and release budgeted and partnership funds directly to Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations in York Region.

The Region recognizes changes to the built environment must be accompanied by transportation demand management initiatives to build individuals' awareness and understanding of their travel options, shape their preferences and encourage them to try new ways of travelling.

The Smart Commute Program will be reviewed by Transportation Services staff in 2017. A recommended long-term approach for delivery of services will be reported back to Council.

For more information on this report, please contact Angela Gibson, Acting Director Infrastructure Management and PMO, at ext. 75949.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

September 23, 2016

7003560

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request