

Clause 4 in Report No. 12 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on September 22, 2016.

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Pedestrian and Cycling Program Update

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated August 24, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Report dated August 24, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

2. Purpose

This report provides Council with an update on the 2015 Pedestrian and Cycling Program. This report documents infrastructure improvements and initiatives throughout 2015 that promote and encourage walking and cycling in York Region.

3. Background

Walking and cycling are critical to addressing York Region's transportation challenges

Transportation continues to be identified as the single most important issue facing York Region residents according to the annual Environics survey. With a strong reliance on the automobile in York Region, Council endorsed the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) in April 2008 to provide guidance in the long-term implementation of the Region's pedestrian and cycling network. The PCMP includes an implementation strategy, infrastructure recommendations and complementary outreach programs and initiatives to promote walking and cycling. The PCMP conceived York Region's Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. Approved in June 2013 ([Clause 9, Report No. 6 of the Transportation Services Committee Meeting, June 27, 2013](#)), the Lake to Lake Route is a linear on- and off-road route serving as the north-south spine for York Region's cycling network, extending from Lake Simcoe in the north to Lake Ontario in the south. The promotion of alternative travel modes such as walking and cycling will help the Region reach its sustainable transportation objectives to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips.

The 2016 Transportation Master Plan provides a cohesive vision for active transportation and promotes the delivery of an interconnected system of mobility in York Region

In June 2016, Council approved the update to the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The vision for the TMP is an interconnected system of mobility which builds on the strong foundation established in the previous 2009 TMP and the 2008 PCMP. One of the goals of the TMP is to make active transportation more comfortable, safe, and convenient and help residents choose walking and cycling more frequently to meet their daily travel needs. Integration of the PCMP with the TMP serves to strengthen the Region's role in providing on- and off-road facilities for walking and cycling.

The TMP also introduces new policy areas to improve active transportation. These include addressing the provision of sidewalks and illumination on Regional roads through boulevard jurisdiction and the finer grid network. While the PCMP has been superseded by the 2016 TMP, Transportation Services will continue to track progress of the Pedestrian and Cycling Program as well as additional actions coming from the TMP.

Recent trends show strong support for cycling in York Region and greater opportunities to create a bike-friendly community

At all levels of government, there is a desire for a modal shift to increase the proportion of trips using sustainable transportation. Active transportation provides savings to the provincial healthcare system, strengthens the economy, increases tourism opportunities, helps to manage congestion and provides a cleaner environment.

The following trends highlight opportunities for increased growth in cycling in York Region:

- 53 per cent of York Region residents ride a bike and a majority want to ride more than they already do
- 47 per cent of all trips in York Region are less than five kilometres, which can be completed by bicycle in under 20 minutes
- 73 per cent of residents agree that York Region should invest in more cycling facilities so more people can get around by bike
- There was a 233 per cent increase in the number of cycling trips in York Region between 2001 and 2011
- The number of cyclists using the Dufferin Street bike lanes increased by 13 per cent between 2014 and 2015
- There are more than 1,000 kilometres of existing cycling routes in York Region and more infrastructure is being added each year to make it more comfortable and convenient to ride a bike
- Projects like the Greenbelt Route and the Lake the Lake Route will help make York Region a cycling destination and capitalize on the growing cycling tourism market

4. Analysis and Options

Infrastructure Improvements

Since 2008, the Region has made significant advances in delivering active transportation infrastructure

The network has grown by 154 kilometres of multi-use trails, 28 kilometres of bike lanes and 243 kilometres of paved shoulders. The Region added 14 kilometres of cycling facilities to Regional roads in 2015, summarized in Table 1. Cycling facilities on Bloomington Road and Ninth Line were added through the Region's roads capital program and those on Bayview Avenue and Green Lane west of Yonge were added through the municipal partnership program. Attachment 1 is a map of these cycling facilities.

The cumulative total of the cycling network includes:

- 74 kilometres of bike lanes
- 74 kilometres of shared paths (in boulevard)
- 185 kilometres of off-road multi-use trails
- 233 kilometres of paved shoulders
- 428 kilometres of signed routes

Delivery of these facilities was coordinated with the Roads Capital Program and partnership opportunities with local municipalities and conservation authorities.

Table 1
Cycling Facilities Added to Regional Roads in 2015

Location	Facility Type	Length (km)
Bloomington Road from Bathurst Street to Highway 404 (Aurora and Richmond Hill)	Bike lanes, multi-use path, paved shoulders	7.0
Ninth Line from south of Major Mackenzie Drive to Hoover Park Drive (Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville)	Paved shoulders, bike lanes	5.6
Bayview Avenue from Hartwell Avenue to St. John's Sideroad (Aurora)	Multi-use path	0.5
Green Lane from east of Woodspring Avenue to west of Lady Gwillim Avenue (East Gwillimbury)	Multi-use path	1.0
Total		14.1

Since 2007, the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program has allocated a total of \$5 million to leverage a \$20 million investment in active transportation

The Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program provides funding to local municipalities and conservation authorities to assist with implementation of active transportation projects meeting Regional objectives. The Region contributes up to 50 per cent of eligible construction costs for an approved project. The program has an annual budget of \$500,000.

In 2016, four projects were approved for funding and implementation:

- City of Markham - Phase 2, Area 1 of a Multi-use path in the Rouge River Valley System from 16th Avenue and Kennedy Road to Carlton Road and Main Street in Unionville (Regional funding: \$85,000)
- Town of Richmond Hill - Leslie Street Lake to Lake Cycling Route from Highway 7 to 230m north of 16th Avenue (Regional funding: \$325,000)
- Township of King - Reconstruction of Sideroad 19 between Rebellion Way and Highway 27 to accommodate on-street paved shoulders (Regional funding: \$25,000)
- Toronto and Region Conservation Area (TRCA) - Phase 4 of a Multi-use Path in Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve (Regional funding: \$65,000)

Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program will invest \$1.3 million for four projects in York Region by March 2018

In 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation launched the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program to fund cycling infrastructure across the province. Four projects from York Region were awarded funding under this program with each receiving the maximum funding limit. These projects are:

- City of Markham - Rouge Valley Trail system (\$325,000)
- Town of Richmond Hill - Lake to Lake Route in Richmond Hill (\$325,000)
- Town of Newmarket - Protected bike lanes on Srigley Street and Prospect Street (\$325,000)
- York Region - Lake to Lake Route in Markham (\$325,000)

York Region and its partners have made progress on implementing the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail

The Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail (Route) will connect Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario, spanning 121 kilometres in York Region and the City of Toronto. Sixty-nine per cent of the Route is already built. The Route will provide transportation, recreation and tourism benefits and form the north-south spine of the Regional walking and cycling network. The Route will also connect to trails such as the Greenbelt Route, Oak Ridges Trail, East Don Valley River Trail, Finch Hydro Corridor Trail, Toronto Pan Am Path and the Waterfront Trail. Table 2 shows segments of the Lake to Lake Route in progress or complete.

Table 2
Complete or Active Projects for Lake to Lake Route in York Region

Project	Location	Status
Shoreline Place bridge replacement	Georgina	Complete
Nokiidaa Trail extension to Yonge Street	East Gwillimbury	Design
Nokiidaa Trail grade separation at 2 nd Concession	East Gwillimbury	Construction
Keith Bridge trail crossing at Davis Drive	Newmarket	Complete
Paving trail on west side of Fairly Lake	Newmarket	Complete
Trail improvements through Tannery/Newmarket GO Station parking lot	Newmarket	Construction
Bayview Avenue from Nokiidaa trail terminus south of Vandorf Sideroad to Bloomington Road	Aurora	Design
Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve	Richmond Hill	Construction (Phases 1-3 complete)
Bayview Avenue from Stouffville Road to Elgin Mills Road	Richmond Hill	Construction
Bayview Avenue from Bloomington Road to Stouffville Road	Richmond Hill	Design
Leslie Street from Highway 7 to Elgin Mills Road	Richmond Hill	Design
Leslie Street from Highway 7 to John Street, German Mills Settler's Park	Markham	Design

York Region is developing new design standards for walking and cycling facilities

As the Region continues to urbanize, new types of facilities should be considered to improve the safety, comfort and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists. The Pedestrian and Cycling Program is currently updating design standards to reflect new solutions and provide facility selection and design details, customized to Regional needs, to assist in the implementation of the active transportation network including on-going maintenance needs. This will ensure facilities are applied in a consistent way to best meet users' needs.

The Region is also working on a maintenance strategy for walking and cycling facilities including identifying desired level of services and funding resources. Recommendations, along with a detailed cost analysis, will be presented to Council in 2017.

Community Engagement

The Region works collaboratively with local municipalities and stakeholders on active transportation education and encouragement

A Safe Cycling Campaign, in partnership with York Regional Police (YRP) and the Canadian Automobile Association, was launched on May 14, 2015. The York Region Cycling Handbook, a practical guide containing rules of the road and safety tips including the new one metre passing law, was also released. York Region works closely with the York Region Cycling Coalition, which is made up of more than 2000 cyclists from more than 20 cycling clubs and more than 25 bike shops in the Region to promote safety among cyclists and motorists.

York Region is a local supporter of Bike Month, a month of events celebrating cycling, including festivals, workshops, community rides and races. The Region participates in a Bike Month coordinating committee for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area led by Metrolinx and Cycle Toronto.

Many activities were undertaken to collect public feedback on walking and cycling for York Region's Transportation Master Plan update such as focus groups, open houses, tables at events and surveys.

York Region offers cycling education programs to schools

In 2015, 372 elementary school students improved their cycling skills by participating in the Region's BikeFest, a hands-on cycling education program. In 2016, the Region is offering "Making Tracks" providing cycling, walking and scooter skills training for elementary school students where teachers are trained to deliver the program.

The Active and Safe Routes to School Committee promotes active travel to school through the School Travel Planning approach. Last year, a toolkit was developed to provide information to principals to encourage schools to get involved in active and safe routes to school programs.

The Region collects walking and cycling data to support investments in active transportation

The Region has six permanent bicycle and pedestrian counting stations as well as undertaking short-term counts. These stations are important for monitoring seasonal variations in cycling, understanding impacts of investments, planning maintenance priorities and tracking active transportation traffic levels over time. A counter on the Tom Taylor Trail in Newmarket had a seasonal daily average of

400 cyclists per day, with a peak day of more than 1000 cyclists. On Dufferin Street in the City of Vaughan, the seasonal average was 79 cyclists per day, up 13 per cent from the previous year.

The Greenbelt Route was officially opened in August 2015 with an organized bike tour

The Greenbelt Route is a 470-kilometre signed provincial cycling route from Northumberland County to Niagara Region, including 65 kilometres in York Region. Launch of the Greenbelt Route in the summer of 2015 included a bike tour with 200 participants from across North America, bringing in \$176,000 for local economies. Eighty-four per cent of participants agreed the Greenbelt Route provides a great cycling experience.

Link to key Council-approved plans

This report links to the following Council-approved plans and policies:

Regional Official Plan

The Pedestrian and Cycling Program supports the following objectives:

- To promote human health and well-being in York Region, where people can live, work, play and learn in accessible and safe communities
- To ensure streets support all modes of transportation including walking, cycling, transit, automobile use, and efficient movement of goods
- To create high-quality, sustainable communities

Vision 2051

The Pedestrian and Cycling Program supports the goal areas of:

- “Interconnected Systems for Mobility” by supporting transportation demand management initiatives that reduce automobile dependence and enhance opportunities for residents and workers to walk and cycle
- “Livable Cities and Complete Communities” by enhancing mobility within Regional Centres and Corridors through completion of the active transportation network
- “An Innovation Economy” by encouraging a strong, resilient, competitive and diverse economy that attracts global investment and supports the efficient movement of people throughout the Region and surrounding area

- “Living Sustainably” by promoting an energy efficient transportation network and reducing fossil fuel emissions by promoting walking, cycling

2015-2019 Strategic Plan

The Pedestrian and Cycling Program supports the strategic priority areas of:

- “Strengthening the Region’s Economy” by fostering an environment that attracts, grows and maintains businesses
- “Supporting Community Health and Well-being” by making our communities more welcoming and inclusive
- “Managing Environmentally Sustainable Growth” by managing traffic congestion

5. Financial Implications

The Region has an annual budget of \$500,000 for the Pedestrian and Cycling Program and an annual budget of \$500,000 for the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program. These are approved through the annual budget process.

The Region is working on a maintenance strategy for walking and cycling facilities including identifying desired levels of service and funding resources. Recommendations, along with a detailed cost analysis, will be presented to Council in 2017.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Pedestrian and cycling initiatives highlighted in this report provide a range of travel options to people living and working in York Region. The Region coordinates and collaborates with local municipal staff through an Active Transportation Working Group to ensure consistency and integration of walking and cycling facilities between municipalities. The Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program assists in implementing local municipal pedestrian and cycling projects of Regional interest.

7. Conclusion

The Region continues to provide sustainable travel choices, such as public transit, carpooling, walking and cycling. Efforts to implement the Pedestrian and Cycling Program include infrastructure and outreach programs to build a supportive cycling community.

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan has been integrated into the 2016 Transportation Master Plan to support a cohesive transportation system, recognizing the critical role active transportation plays, particularly for short trips and in supporting transit.

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.

August 24, 2016

Attachment (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

Cycling Facilities Added to Regional Roads in 2015

