

CHAPTER 2 WHY A REGIONAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING PLAN IS NEEDED

The Regional Municipality of York is one of Canada's fastest growing communities. Currently, York Region's population is approximately 983,000 (December 2007), is growing at a rate of 30,000 to 35,000 new residents per year, and is expected to reach a population of 1.5 million by 2031. The Region is creating new jobs at an even faster pace. With more than 380,000 people currently working in the Region, this number is expected to more than double by 2031. With this growth, the safe, efficient and reliable movement of people and goods will become increasingly more important and challenging. In order to meet these challenges and to support a more sustainable Region, York is actively taking steps to move more people by public transit, carpooling, on foot and by bicycle, thus shifting the focus away from single occupant motor vehicles to more sustainable travel modes. Significant investments in expanding York Region Transit (YRT) service and the rollout of the first phase of the Region's successful Viva bus rapid transit (BRT) service, are evidence of York Region's resolve to offer a more sustainable and balanced transportation system.

The Region also recognizes that every transit trip begins with some form of a walking or cycling trip and that an increasing number of York Region residents are choosing to walk and cycle to work, school or for recreation, for economic, environmental and health reasons. Public opinion research clearly indicates that more people would walk and cycle more often if a connected system of on and off road pedestrian and cycling facilities were provided. As a result, York Region has determined a need exists to develop a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan that can guide

the Region in improving conditions for walking and Cycling in York Region and encourage transit use.

2.1 SUPPORTS TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FOR A GROWING REGION

York Region recognizes that transportation systems will need to be adapted as population increases. In response to this, the Region has developed the Smart Commute Initiative, which provides a set of regional and local transportation demand management (TDM) measures to reduce auto-dependency and support the following objectives:

- Improve alternatives to single-occupant vehicle (SOV) use;
- Encourage use of less-congested travel times and routes; and
- Enable reductions in trip volumes and lengths.

The Smart Commute Initiative includes the establishment of GTA-wide carpooling/ride-matching, vanpooling and car sharing programs and the creation of a network of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) throughout the GTA.

TMAs are organizations aimed at providing sustainable transportation solutions and improved mobility and accessibility. TMAs provide a framework from which TDM programs are promoted, applied and managed. The central objective of the TDM program is to change travel behaviour by reducing single-occupant vehicle trips. This is achieved by promoting a variety of

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transportation services that encourage more efficient use of the existing transportation infrastructure and services, and includes encouraging more people to walk and cycle, especially for trips within Regional and Local centres.

2.2 INCREASING DEMAND FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Public opinion research consisting of statistically valid data collected from York Region residents in 2000 as part of the Transportation Master Plan study, and more recently in 2005 as part of the York Region supplement to the Smart Commute Survey (Decima Research, 2005, 2006 and walkability) was collected and reviewed. A key component of the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan study was to prepare a “Synthesis” paper that summarizes the public opinion research from existing sources of information.

2.2.1 DECIMA RESEARCH

Decima Research Inc., a member of the PCMP study team, prepared a report entitled, “Increasing Active Transportation in York Region, May 2006”, which is available on the York Region web site at www.york.ca and is provided in a separately bound technical appendix (Appendix D). The Decima Report “profiles active transportation in York Region and suggests mechanisms to increase its activity based on actions taken by other jurisdictions”¹. It states, “Active Transportation can be defined as any human-powered form of transportation. For the purposes of this report, the scope of this term will focus on cycling and walking”². The

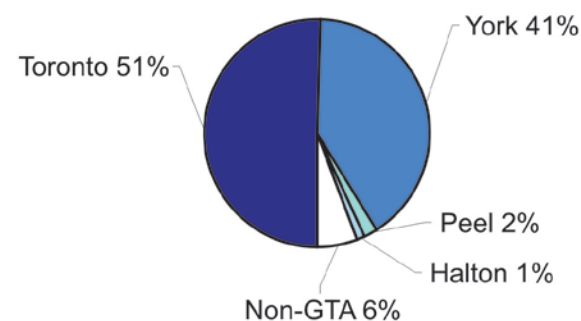
¹ Decima Research, “Increasing Active Transportation in York Region, Draft Report”, May 2006

² Ibid

objective of the Decima report was to provide the necessary background information, which will allow York Region to take important steps that will promote active transportation among its residents.

York Region residents are currently dependent on their automobiles. During a typical weekday morning commute, eight-in-ten residents travel by automobile with fewer than one-in-ten commuting by walking or cycling. York Region residents travel to work within regional boundaries (41%), commute to Toronto (51%), or travel to neighbouring regions³.

Figure 2-1
Destination of York Region Commuters



Source: Smart Commute Association - Commuter Attitudes Survey (Nov. 2005)

Utilitarian cyclists are categorized as those who cycle to work, to school, to run errands, to go shopping, etc. Based on Decima's studies of other communities, they estimate that one-fifth of York Region residents can be classified as utilitarian cyclists. Recreational cyclists are those who ride a bicycle for recreational and fitness purposes. Based on Decima's studies of other communities, they estimate that one-half of York Region residents can be classified as recreational cyclists.

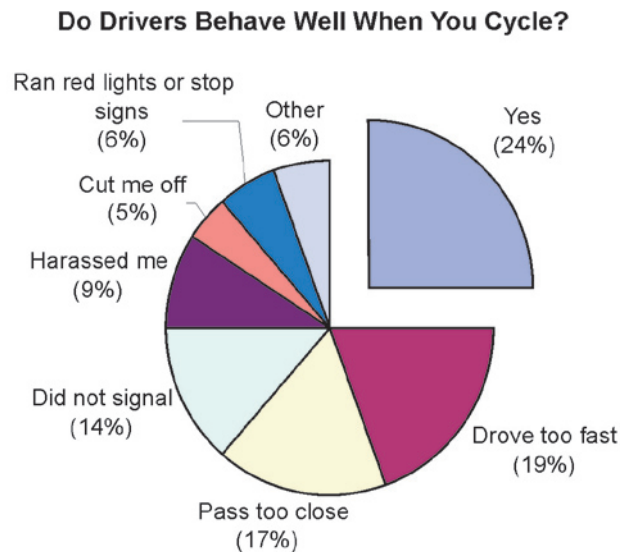
³ Ibid

“Active Transportation can be defined as any human-powered form of transportation.”

York Region has strong opportunities to affect change and increase active transportation.

Bicycle Lane Safety

In every municipality studied, cyclists cite the need to improve access to safe and secure on-road bike lanes and off-road bike paths. In addition, cyclists become more comfortable on major roads if there is a separate bike lane or at least a wide curb lane where they have a “safety zone” from vehicles.



Source: City of Vaughan – On and Off-Road Trail User Survey (May 2003)

As noted above, many commuters are deterred from cycling because they perceive road conditions to be less than ideal for their safety and security. Improving access to bike lanes and bike paths and widening road shoulders is a vital way in which York Region can provide a cycling-friendly environment.

An additional consideration for York Region is offering ongoing education of cyclists and motorists so that awareness and mutual respect is built. By providing improved access for cyclists to awareness and respect programs, York Region can put into place

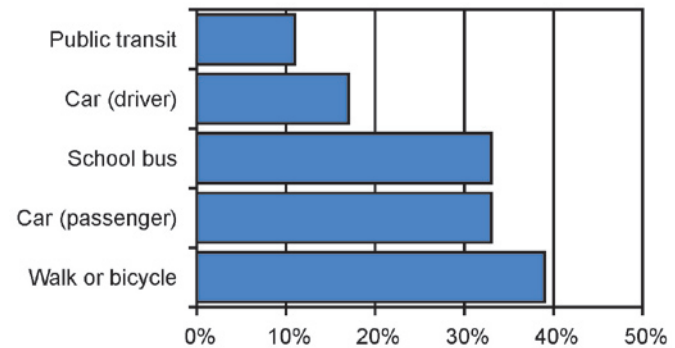
two important ingredients that will encourage more residents to consider active transportation.

Distance and travel time are the primary constraints preventing recreational cyclists from commuting to work and school by bicycle. Evidence from across Canada suggests that the average one-way distance travelled by those who commute to work is 7.5 km. According to the data collected by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the median commuting distance for York Region residents is approximately 12 km, which is among the highest in Canada. This finding is particularly relevant, since 51% of York Region residents commute to Toronto.

In York Region, almost four-in-ten children walk or cycle to school, which is more than any other mode of transportation. Programs like the “Walking School Bus” and “Safe Routes to Schools” are proof that walking and cycling are popular among children. However, many parents are concerned that the volume of traffic in the Region presents a safety issue.

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Figure 2-3
How Children Get to School in York Region



Source: York Region Transportation Master Plan/EnviroNics Research Group - A Survey of Residents' Attitudes (Oct. 2000)

As York Region notes in its 2004 Transportation Fact Book:⁴ “Sidewalks are essential to encourage walking to school, to support efforts to reduce obesity and to improve the fitness levels of today’s youth.” The report goes on to cite roadside landscaping and proper lighting as factors that lead to increases in both pedestrian safety and activity. A survey of Vaughan residents found that one-in-five pedestrians claim to be inconvenienced by sidewalks and paths that start and end abruptly.⁵

According to the 2004 Transportation Fact Book, York Region currently provides 394 linear kilometres of sidewalks along Regional roads. “Only 50 percent of Regional roads in the existing settlement areas currently have sidewalks, while only 47 percent of transit routes on Regional roads have sidewalks.”

2.2.2 WEB BASED WALKABILITY AND BIKEABILITY OUTREACH SURVEY

As part of the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, “Walkability” and “Bikeability” surveys were developed and provided on-line at www.york.ca. Surveys were also available at two Public Open Houses, held in May and October, 2006.

These surveys are not statistically valid. The purpose of these two user surveys was to gain a better understanding of public attitudes towards walking and cycling issues within York Region.

Specifically, the surveys were used to:

- Determine user characteristics of both pedestrians and cyclists;

- Estimate the frequency and purpose of walking and cycling trips;
- Determine the types of improvements sought by pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Promote and raise awareness of walking and cycling in York Region.

The results outlined below are based on 32 walkability and 102 bikeability surveys.

2.2.2.1 General Findings

The majority of pedestrians walk for recreational purposes, accounting for approximately 72% of users. Of the total cyclists surveyed, 55% cycle for commuter purposes, showing a nearly 50/50 split between recreational and commuter cyclists in York Region.

Of the total pedestrians surveyed, 38% were male, and 62% were female. Males accounted for 67% of the total cyclists surveyed.

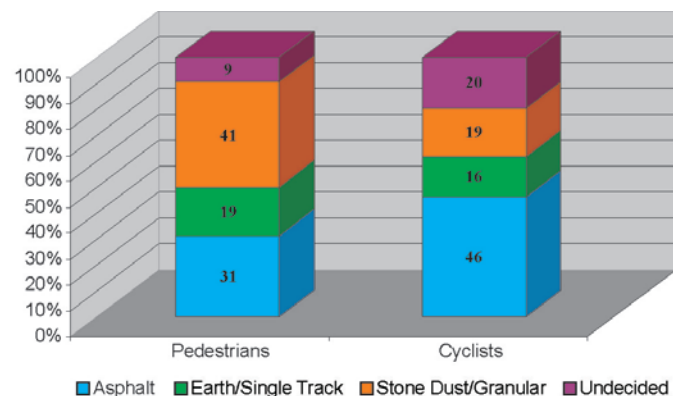
Walking and cycling are most popular with the 35 to 44 age group, accounting for 46% of cyclists and 34% of pedestrians surveyed. 16% of the pedestrians surveyed were in the 25 to 34 age group and 23% of the cyclists surveyed were aged 45 to 54.

The top choice of surface type for pedestrians is stone/dust surfaces (41%), while the top choice for cyclists is asphalt surfaces (46%) as illustrated in Figure 2-4.

⁴ York Region 2004 Transportation Fact Book, Published June 2005

⁵ Decima Research, Increasing Active Transportation in York Region, Fact Book, May 2006

Figure 2-4
Surface Type Preference

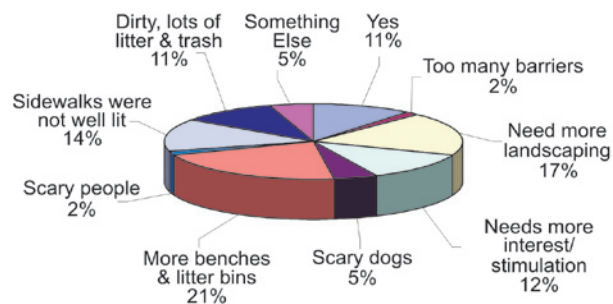


Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

2.2.2.2 Walking

As illustrated in Figure 2-5, only 11% of respondents indicated that they had a pleasant walk. Respondents indicated that more litter bins and benches (21%) and more landscaping (17%) were required and that sidewalks were not well lit (14%).

Figure 2-5
Walking Conditions



Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

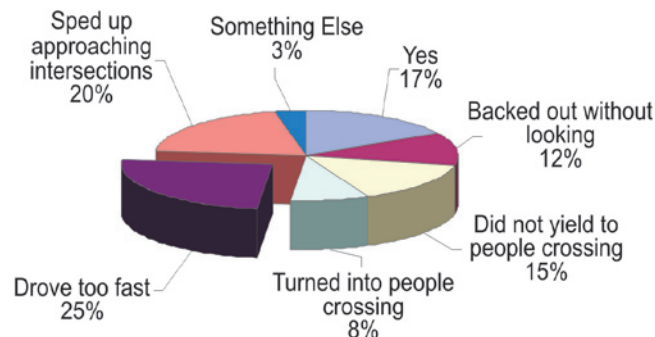
A quarter of the respondents generally felt confident when crossing streets at signalized intersections. Some of the concerns of crossing at intersections include waiting too long at traffic signals (28%), needing more marked crossings and traffic signals (13%), roads are too wide (11%) and curbs or ramps need repair (11%).

Valleys and open space pathways were readily available to pedestrians. The results show that 45% of the total pedestrian respondents live less than a 10 minute walk from a valley or open space pathway. An additional 19% of respondents either don't know the distance or do not know where the nearest trail is to them.

Half of the respondents (50%) walk 2 to 4 days per week and another 47% walk 5 to 7 days per week on the sidewalks and trails in York Region.

Pathways were viewed as spacious and comfortable for walking by 29% of those surveyed. Another 24% of respondents indicated that they were inconvenienced by no sidewalk, paths or shoulders along their route, followed by 17% indicating that sidewalks or paths started and ended abruptly.

As illustrated in Figure 2-6, only 17% of respondents felt that drivers behaved well when they were walking along streets. The results show that respondents felt that drivers drove too fast (25%), they speed up while approaching intersections (20%), and do not yield to people crossing the street (15%).

Figure 2-6**Driver Behaviour**

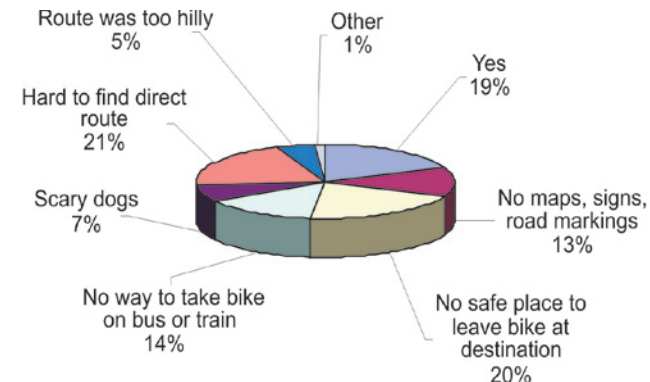
Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

The following were the top five suggested improvements for walking in York Region:

- Improve connections between neighbourhoods;
- Add destinations to walk to;
- Add street trees;
- Create interesting places to see on-route; and
- Add or widen trails in open spaces.

2.2.2.3 Cycling

Only 19% of respondents indicated that it is generally easy to cycle in York Region. The majority of respondents reported difficulties. 21% indicated it was hard to find a direct route, another 20% said there was no safe place to leave a bike at their destination, 14% had no way to take their bike on a bus or train and 13% indicated that there are no maps, signs or road markings, as illustrated in Figure 2-7.

Figure 2-7**Cycling Conditions**

Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

Cycling is a very popular activity during good weather months in York Region. The results show that 16% of cyclists surveyed cycle every day during good weather months. An additional 42% said they cycle 15 or more days per month during good weather months. Another 37% state that they cycle five to ten day per month during good weather months.

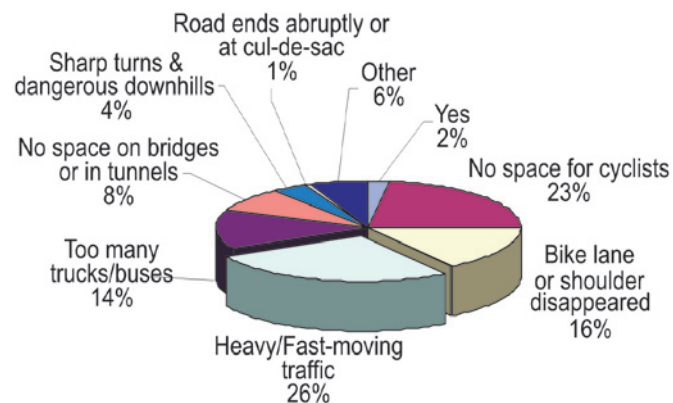
The majority of respondents are generally comfortable riding through signalized intersections. 23% of respondents indicated that there was no signal change for cyclists, and an additional 18% of respondents stated they had to wait too long for the signals to change.

The following are the primary concerns of cyclists:

1. Safety: Only 2% of the cyclists surveyed felt they had a safe place to cycle on streets, when sharing the road with motorists. Respondents complained about heavy / fast moving traffic (26%), no space for cyclists (23%), bike lane or shoulder disappeared (16%) and too many trucks / buses (14%), as illustrated in Figure 2-8.

Figure 2-8

Cycling Safety



Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

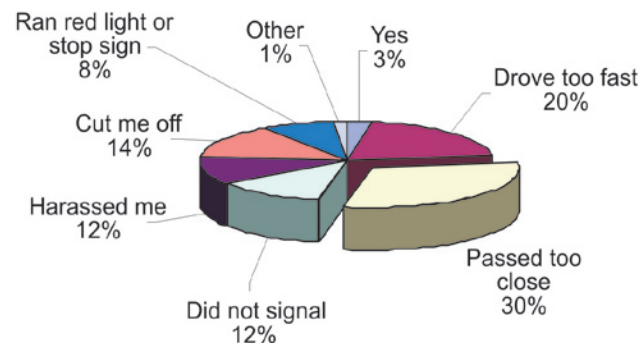
Only 10% of the cyclists surveyed felt they had a safe place to cycle on open space trails and paths, where motor vehicles are not allowed. Respondents complained that the path did not go where they wanted it to go (23%), the path intersects with difficult to cross roads (17%), the path surface is too rough (15%), and the path ended abruptly (15%).

Only 3% of the respondents felt that drivers behaved well when they were cycling on the street. Respondents complained that drivers passed too close (30%), drove too fast (20%), cut them off (14%), did not signal (12%) and harassed them (12%), as illustrated in Figure 2-9.

2. Maintenance: Only 6% of respondents felt comfortable with on and off road surfaces. The remainder complained about cracked / broken pavement (23%), potholes (19%), debris (19%), and uneven surface or gaps (17%).
3. Better Facilities: The following were the top seven suggested improvements for cycling in York Region:

Figure 2-9

Driver Behaviour



Source: York Region PCMP - Web Based Walkability and Bikeability Outreach Survey (May/Oct. 2006)

- Add on-street bike lanes;
- Repair potholes and broken pavement on roads;
- Add or widen bike paths and trails off-street;
- Decrease auto traffic;
- Introduce shower/change facilities at work;
- Add secure bike parking (lockers); and
- Provide bike racks at key stops/destinations.

2.2.2.4 Findings

The majority of pedestrians and cyclists indicated that conditions for walking and cycling in York Region need to be improved.

Respondents provided the following suggestions:

- Provide education and enforcement programs for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists;
- Mark routes with attractive signage and rest areas welcoming all users;

Municipalities in southern Ontario and throughout North America are implementing initiatives to promote and encourage walking and cycling as a feasible alternative to the private automobile for short-distance trips and as a method of promoting a more active and healthy lifestyle.

- Develop 'Share the Road' campaigns to increase public awareness of cycling as a mode of transportation;
- Provide cycling and walking route maps;
- Provide connections to major destinations (shopping centres, libraries, etc.) with ample and secure bicycle parking on site; and
- Provide better connections through residential neighbourhoods, on open space trails and on-street networks.

A report summarizing the findings of the "Walkability" and "Bikeability" Surveys is provided in Appendix D.

2.2.3 RESPONDING TO WHAT YORK REGION RESIDENTS HAVE ASKED FOR

York Region has strong opportunities to affect change and increase active transportation. More importantly, taking advantage of these opportunities now will pay off over the long term as York Region grows and becomes more densely populated. There are innovative measures that York Region can undertake to encourage more residents to integrate cycling and walking into their daily lives. These initiatives include:

- Infrastructure initiatives such as bicycle lanes, paved shoulder bikeways, sidewalks, and walking trails, plus widened curb lanes and shoulders;
- Active promotion and facilitation of these activities by building walking trails and cycling paths and lanes;
- Commitment to integrating local municipal cycling and walking plans;

- On-going education of motorists to build awareness and respect for cyclists;
- Incorporating cycling-friendly road design and maintenance measures;
- Availability of cycling facilities such as bicycle parking and access to showers;
- Integration of cycling and public transit throughout York Region;
- Delivery of youth and adult cycling education programs; and
- Building resident awareness of the location and accessibility of walking trails and cycling paths and lanes.

York Region has to provide the necessary infrastructure that will make cycling and walking activities pleasurable and convenient for residents. Once the infrastructure is in place, building awareness and providing consistent marketing, promotion and on-going support becomes paramount. By providing an environment favourable to cycling and walking, York Region can positively impact residents' health and fitness, address increased traffic concerns, and foster civic pride.

2.3 BENEFITS TO WALKING AND CYCLING

Walking and cycling provide significant environmental, health and economic benefits. Municipalities in southern Ontario and throughout North America are implementing initiatives to promote and encourage walking and cycling as a feasible alternative to the private automobile for short-distance trips and as a method of promoting a more active and healthy lifestyle.

Recreation, Health and Fitness Benefits

Walking and cycling provide an enjoyable, convenient and affordable means of exercise and recreation. The most effective fitness routines are moderate in intensity, individualized and incorporated into our daily activities.

In 2001, approximately \$2.8 billion was spent on health care due to physical inactivity in Canada, which could be reduced by \$280 million if physical activity was increased by 10%.⁶ Our health system is shifting from protecting people from hazards in the environment to developing healthy environments in which people can live. Evidence suggests that improved cycling facilities leads to increased bicycle use. Increased physical activity such as walking, cycling and other trail related activities could help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, premature death, high blood pressure, obesity, adult-onset diabetes, depression and colon cancer. A more active population can reduce the cost of medical care, decrease workplace absenteeism, and maintain the independence of older adults.

There are other health benefits in addition to the physical gains. Cycling can enhance one's mental outlook and well-being, improve self-image, social relationships and increase self-reliance by instilling a sense of independence and freedom. These can contribute to healthier and happier personal relationships, and improve work and school productivity.

Improving active transportation methods such as walking and cycling and reducing automobile traffic can help make communities more livable by creating an environment that is pleasant and safe without noise and pollution, such as greenhouse

gases. This can help to encourage more social interaction within a neighbourhood and create a stronger sense of community. Cycling can provide a form of mobility for people who do not have regular access to an automobile and live in communities with limited transportation alternatives.

Trail projects can help to foster partnerships among individuals, government, local business and interest groups. There are many examples of successful private and public-sector partnerships that have developed as a result of the development of trails across the country, such as the Chrysler Greenway through Essex County, near the City of Windsor and the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail that passes through York Region.

Making an investment to include active transportation modes such as walking and cycling into daily commuting habits and errands can help to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for York Region residents.

Transportation Benefits

Walking and cycling are both popular recreational activities and a means of transportation that are efficient, affordable and accessible. They are the most energy efficient mode of transportation and generate no pollution. The transportation benefits of walking and cycling include reduced road congestion and maintenance costs, less costly infrastructure, increased road safety and decreased user costs. For distances up to 10 km in urban areas, cycling is the fastest of all modes from door to door.

Canadians make an average of 2,000 car trips per year over distances less than 3 km. Surveys show that 66% of Canadians would like to cycle more than they presently do. Seven in ten Canadians say they would cycle to work if there "were a dedicated

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⁶ The Business Case for Active Transportation, The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling; Section 4.7.2; Go for Green, March 2004

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lane which would take me to my workplace in less than 30 minutes at a comfortable pace”.⁷ These facts clearly demonstrate the potential for increasing the number of trips by bicycle.

In Edmonton, a survey of 2400 cyclists in 1989 found that 75% of reported bicycle trips were for utilitarian reasons. Almost 20% of the cyclists surveyed rode all year round, indicating that winter cycling is viable.

The addition of even a small volume of traffic to a congested road can create enormous delays for all users. In fact, at capacity conditions, increasing traffic by 5% can reduce speeds by up to 25%. Congestion costs in Ontario were estimated to be \$6.4 billion annually and could grow by an additional \$7 billion annually by 2021 without increased investment in alternative modes of transportation.⁸ Shifting a little traffic off busy roads can create surprisingly large time savings for individuals as well as for time-sensitive commercial vehicles.⁹

Typical roadway funding requirements include maintenance costs, safety and enhancement costs plus the addition of roadway capacity through lane widenings or additions. Furthermore, the costs for road construction, reconstruction and maintenance are usually paid for by road users through gas taxes. An emphasis on walking, cycling and other active transportation modes can result in a reduction in roadway costs since bicycles are lightweight vehicles that take up little space and cause little wear and tear on a road surface.

⁷ Ontario Trails Strategy, Ministry of Health Promotion, 2005, Province of Ontario

⁸ Transportation Demand Management Strategy, City of Ottawa

⁹ Transportation Demand Management Strategy, City of Ottawa, Travelwise, Transportation, Utilities and Public Works, April 2003

Road improvements to increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists can and should enhance the safety of other road users. For example, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration reports that paved shoulders on two-lane, rural roads have been shown to reduce run-off-the-road, head-on and sideswipe collisions by 30 to 40%. In addition, many municipalities have found that paved shoulders reduce maintenance costs related to shoulder deterioration, grading and snow ploughing.

A roadway can carry 7 to 12 times as many people per lane per hour by bicycle compared to that of motor vehicles in urban areas operating at similar speeds.¹⁰ It is also much cheaper to provide paved shoulders on a road for cyclists than to provide two additional motor vehicle travel lanes. A small portion of a City’s transportation budget can be used to facilitate high levels of bicycle use.

A reduction in car use results in a reduction in the amount of parking spaces required. Parking is a significant cost of operating an automobile. Encouraging more people to walk and cycle to work could lead to a reduction in the number of parking spaces required at a place of employment. Bicycle parking facilities could be provided in an existing surface or underground parking lot with no additional parking lot expansion required.

Health and Environmental Benefits

Walking and cycling are energy-efficient, non-polluting modes of travel. Short distance, motor vehicle trips are the least fuel-efficient and generate the most pollution per kilometre. These trips have the greatest potential of being replaced by walking or cycling trips and integrated walking-transit and cycling-transit

¹⁰ Ibid

trips. Shifting to these modes can mitigate global climate change, local air pollution, photochemical smog, acid rain, water pollution and hydrologic disruptions, land use and noise pollution.

Reducing the amount of vehicles on the road reduces the number of pollutants that are emitted into the atmosphere by motor vehicles. Climate change is another problem that can be mitigated by encouraging drivers to use other modes, or to travel outside rush hours. Motor vehicles, roads and parking facilities are major sources of water pollution and hydrologic disruptions due to such factors as road de-icing, air pollution settlement, roadside herbicides, road construction along shorelines, and increased impervious surfaces.

Noise refers to unwanted sound and vibration. Motor vehicles generate various types of unwanted noise that cause disturbance and discomfort to residents. This includes engine acceleration, tire/road contact, braking, horns and vehicle theft alarms. Bicycles make little or no noise, and are not disruptive to communities from a noise perspective.

Automobile dependent communities require more land for road rights-of-way and parking than communities that are not as reliant on the automobile. Making communities less auto-dependant by providing infrastructure for alternative transportation modes, such as walking and cycling, can reduce the amount of land required to construct new communities, thus creating more compact subdivisions that are easier to manage from a transportation perspective.

Economic Benefits

A study published by Go for Green in March of 2004 establishes a convincing Business Case for Active Transportation in the report

entitled “The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling”.¹¹ These benefits include:

- Reduction in road construction, repair and maintenance costs;
- Reduction in costs due to air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reduction in health care costs due to increased physical activity and reduced respiratory and cardiac disease;
- Reduction in fuel, repair and maintenance costs to users;
- Reduction of costs due to increased road safety;
- Reduction in external costs due to traffic congestion;
- Reduction in parking subsidies;
- Reduction of costs due to air pollution;
- Reduction of costs due to water pollution;
- The positive economic impact of bicycle tourism;
- The positive economic impact of bicycle sales and manufacturing;
- Increased property values along greenways and trails; and
- Increased productivity and a reduction of sick days and injuries in the workplace.

There is ample evidence that on and off-road trails provide significant economic benefits for adjacent landowners and local businesses. Trails provide benefits to the local economy during both construction and operation. Trail construction results in direct benefits such as jobs, including the supply and installation of materials. Following

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¹¹ The Business Case for Active Transportation, Go for Green, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation - BEST, March 2004

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The Region is able to provide more collective oversight and linkages between various stakeholders than if local municipalities were to be solely responsible for implementing a PCMP.

construction, benefits emerge in the form of expenditures by trail users. A few examples include:

- The Adanac Bikeway in Vancouver was completed in 1993 and bicycle volumes increased 225% during the period from 1992 to 1996;
- Trails in New Brunswick employ around 1500 people for an average of six months per year;
- 70% of Bruce Trail users cite the trail as the main reason for visiting the area, and they spend an average of about \$20.00 per user per visit within a 10 km corridor on either side of the trail;
- Annual expenditures linked to La Route Verte rose to \$95.4 million in 2000, representing 2,000 jobs and \$15.1 million and \$11.9 million for the governments of Quebec and Canada, respectively;
- In 2002, Quebec hosted 190,000 bicycle tourists who spend an average of \$112 per day and an average of 6.5 nights compared to \$52 per day and an average of 3.1 nights spent by other tourists; and
- In Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance estimated that at the end of a ten year build-out period, 320 km of their system, constructed at a cost of \$5.4 million, will generate approximately \$36 million in annual economic benefits in the communities through which it passes, and create/sustain over 1,100 jobs.

Trails systems can have varied levels of attraction for tourists. They can be travel destinations in themselves, encouraging visitors to extend their stay in the area or enhancing business and pleasure visits. By increasing the level of tourist draw, travelers can be

expected to stay longer, resulting in an additional night's lodging and meals, a major direct new benefit to local businesses.

A 1997 survey of Canadian tourists active in the outdoors showed that 30% of Ontario tourists cycled on at least one occasion while on vacation. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation reported that touring cyclists spend an average of \$130 per day in Ontario, and bicycle retail and tourist industry contributes to a minimum of \$150 million a year to the Ontario economy. Bed and breakfast operators between Ottawa and Kingston report that the majority of their business is from touring cyclists. Cyclists in Vermont spend an average of \$180 U.S. per day, the same amount expected of someone traveling by car.

Bicycle manufacture, sales and repairs, as well as bicycle tourism, recreation and delivery services contribute to the economy with little to no public investment or subsidy. In 2002, Canadian households spend an average of \$42 on bicycles, parts and accessories for a total of approximately \$500 million.¹²

2.4 SUPPORTS REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT

With population growth in mind, York Region has taken several steps towards improving Regional public transit. York Region Transit (YRT) and the bus rapid transit system Viva are now both operating to serve the Region's residents and employees. Residents and employees are more likely to take public transit when accessing transit is convenient. Improving walking and cycling conditions in the Region and integrating walking and cycling facilities with transit will encourage more residents and employees to choose transit.

¹² The Business Case for Active Transportation, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation - BEST, Go for Green, March 2004. Section 4.5.4, pg. 24

2.5 A NEED FOR COORDINATION

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan is an important undertaking. While all nine local municipalities are included in the PCMP, the Region is responsible for coordinating its development and leading its implementation. The Region is in a position to work with local municipalities and conservation authorities as well as Community and Health Services, Regional Police Services and school boards to ensure the objectives of the PCMP are properly addressed, and that outreach extends to as many residents as possible. The Region can also ensure that pedestrian and cycling friendly land development occurs, and in a manner that respects the natural heritage of the Region. The Region is able to provide more collective oversight and linkages between various stakeholders than if local municipalities were to be solely responsible for implementing a PCMP.

2.6 BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTING IN PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

This chapter supports a business case on why York Region should invest in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and supporting programs. Implementing the PCMP will provide the Region with numerous health, transportation, environmental and economic benefits, as indicated in this chapter. Additionally, the PCMP will support Regional public transit, and the Region's Smart Commute initiative, further strengthening the case for implementing a PCMP.

