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FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF LAKE-TO-LAKE CYCLING ROUTE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated December 16, 2010 from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Council endorse the proposed framework for implementation of the Lake Simcoe-to-Lake Ontario cycling route project (Lake-to-Lake cycling route).
2. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, City of Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, and Metrolinx.

2. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the Lake Simcoe-to-Lake Ontario (Lake-to-Lake) cycling route project progress and seeks Regional Council's endorsement of the proposed framework for implementation of Lake-to-Lake cycling route project.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan endorsed in April 2008

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan consists of a network infrastructure program, an outreach program and an implementation strategy. It recommends a series of actions to:

- Implement and operate a Regional wide pedestrian and cycling network, and
- Promote safe cycling and educate residents and motorists in York Region about the benefits of increased active transportation and the responsibilities of facility users.

Lake-to-Lake cycling route is a key highlight of the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan to appeal to cyclists of all levels

A highlight of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan is a proposed cycling route that will stretch from the shores of Lake Simcoe to the shores of Lake Ontario, a distance of approximately 100 km in one direction. Made up initially of a main path connecting Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario, the Lake-to-Lake route concept may evolve over time to include supplementary paths that take riders to different parts or points of interests in York Region and City of Toronto in reaching Lake Simcoe or Lake Ontario. Once completed, this route would form an attractive destination for cyclists of all skill levels and would add to the appeal of York Region as a tourist destination.

Council Attachment 1 shows the recommended long term cycling network from the York Region 2008 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan and conceptually illustrates the Lake-to-Lake cycling route.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the Lake-to-Lake cycling route has been established

A Technical Advisory Committee for the Lake-to-Lake cycling route was established in Spring 2010. The Committee consists of representatives from the nine local municipalities, conservation authorities, York Regional Police, as well as Regional staff from various departments. The purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee is to provide insight, guidance, and advice on the development and implementation of the project from the perspective of local municipalities and key stakeholders. The Technical Advisory Committee has provided comments related to the proposed draft work plan and continue to provide feedback as the project progresses.

City of Toronto staff to work collaboratively with Regional staff to provide cycling connections between the two municipalities

Regional staff met with City of Toronto staff on October 12, 2010 to initiate discussions on the project. Staff provided background on the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, vision for the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project, and updates on cycling initiatives that York Region is currently undertaking. City of Toronto staff also provided updates on the City's current and future projects that may have impacts on the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project. Potential enhancements of the cycling connections between York Region and City of Toronto cycling facilities were discussed. City of Toronto staff indicated that they would coordinate and work collaboratively with Regional staff to seek opportunities

to provide seamless cycling connectivity between the City and the Region, including the Lake-to-Lake cycling route, and be further engaged in the process.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The framework consists of a workshop initiative and a proposed work plan for implementation of the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project. The proposed work plan, with its key steps described below, has been prepared with the assistance of the Technical Advisory Committee, various departments in the Region, and City of Toronto staff. Once this work plan has been approved, it will provide input in developing the terms of reference for a consultant to assist the Region in completing this project.

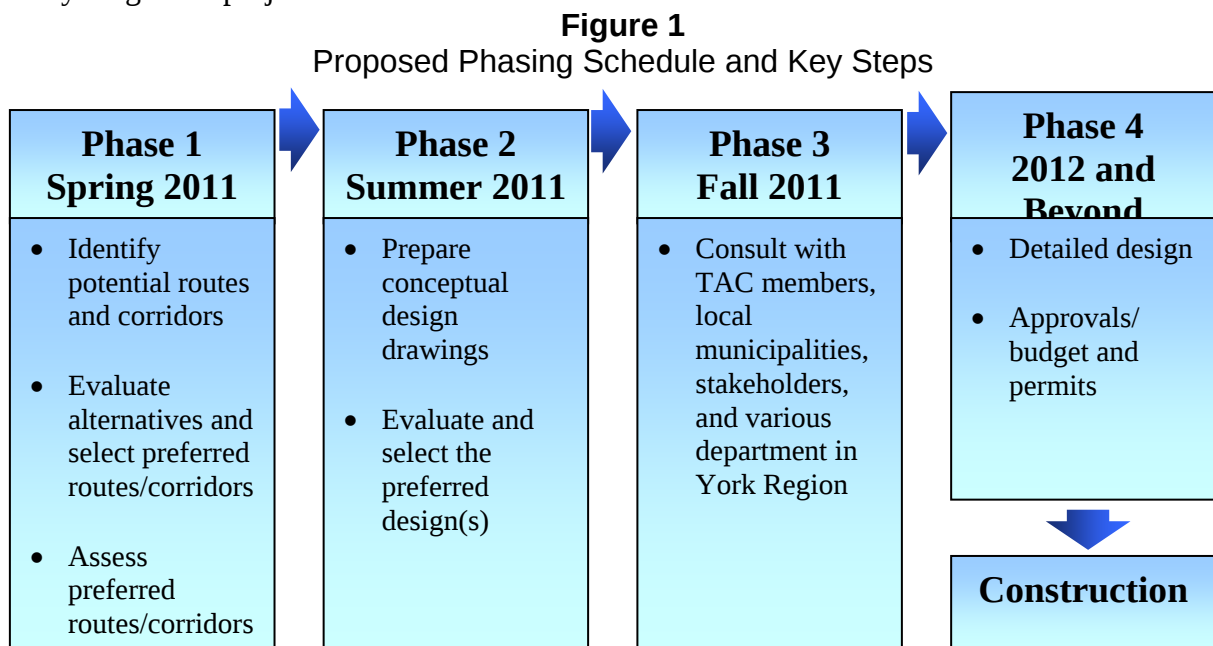
A workshop for the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project will assist in identifying potential opportunities and constraints in the corridor

Staff are in the process of preparing a Technical Advisory Committee workshop for this project that will identify the potential opportunities and constraints in the corridor. The background materials for this workshop will include maps and digital/aerial inventories of the existing and potential routes.

The detailed comments and feedback from the workshop will also provide input in developing the terms of reference for consultant assistance in this project. The workshop will commence in early 2011 upon the endorsement of this report by Council.

The implementation workplan for the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project will consist of some key steps

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed steps in the work plan to implement the Lake-to-Lake cycling route project.



Phase 1 of the work plan will identify and evaluate the potential routes/corridors including routes identified at the workshop. Based on evaluation criteria developed as part of this phase, a preferred route will be selected and assessed. Phase 2 will involve the preparation of conceptual design drawings including preliminary costing. The preferred design will also be selected based on evaluation criteria. Phases 3 and 4 include consultation with stakeholders leading to the detailed design and implementation of the preferred route/corridor in 2012 and beyond.

Planning and Transportation Services staff will coordinate to manage and complete the work program

Once this report is approved by Regional Council, staff will organize the workshop to identify opportunities and constraints of potential corridor alignments. Staff will also issue a Request for Proposal to retain a consultant to assist the Region in completing the proposed work program. It is anticipated that the study and design elements of the work program for the Lake-to-Lake cycling project will take about one year, while physical implementation/construction of the route will be coordinated through local and Regional capital works projects. Staff from the Planning and Transportation Services departments will collaborate on an on-going basis to manage the project from the initial study, to detailed design and, finally to construction of the route.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A consulting assignment to undertake the proposed work program as described in this report will involve a firm with specialized planning and engineering services. The cost for the assignment will be determined once the work program and terms of reference are developed in more detail. The funding to retain a consultant for the proposed work program is included in the proposed Transportation Services 2011 capital budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipal staff are providing technical input and local knowledge of potential routes through the Technical Advisory Committee

Local municipal representatives participate on the Technical Advisory Committee of this project, as well as staff from the Conservation Authorities, Regional Planning, Health and Transportation Departments, York Region Police, and school boards. The goal of the Lake-to-Lake cycling route is to link local municipalities through a seamless active transportation corridor extending from Lake Simcoe to the southern Regional border and beyond.

Many of the links in the preferred alignment for the Lake-to-Lake route is anticipated to be segments under the jurisdiction of local municipalities

The Tom Taylor Trail and Nokiidaa Trail through East Gwillimbury, Newmarket and Aurora will form the core segment of the Lake-to-Lake route. Staff anticipate many more local municipal cycling facilities will be identified as part of the preferred route. A number of these local municipal links have or are receiving Regional funding through the Municipal Partnership Program for improvements to the links. Currently, up to \$500,000 annually is made available for local municipal projects which meet the Region's criteria. This funding program can also be used to implement the local municipal elements of the Lake-to-Lake cycling route where applicable.

7. CONCLUSION

The Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario cycling route project (Lake-to-Lake cycling route) is one of the key projects identified in the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008). This route would promote more active transportation activities such as cycling and walking in the Region, for both commuter and recreational users.

Preliminary work has been initiated for this project, including discussions with City of Toronto staff, and involvement of staff from the local municipalities and various departments in the Region, and to develop a proposed work plan and implementation framework.

The proposed framework for implementation of the Lake-to-Lake cycling route includes a workshop initiative and work plan for identification, evaluation, selection, and design of a preferred route. This work plan will provide input to the development of the terms of reference for a consultant to assist the Region in completing this project.

It is anticipated that the study and design elements of the work program for the Lake-to-Lake cycling project will take about one year, while physical implementation/construction of the route will be coordinated through local and Regional capital works projects.

For more information on this report, please contact Richard Hui, Manager, Transportation Planning, at Ext. 1578 or Loy Cheah, Director, Infrastructure Planning at Ext. 5024.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

PROPOSED LONG-TERM CYCLING NETWORK

