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2004 YORK REGION CORDON COUNT PROGRAM

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, April 21, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Toronto, GO Transit, The Toronto Transit Commission, The Regional Municipalities of Peel, and Durham and the nine local municipalities of York Region.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this 2004 cordon count program is to report changes in the number of persons and vehicles crossing given screenlines in York Region. This is accomplished by measuring the total traffic volume on an average weekday, classified by vehicles and occupancy.

3. BACKGROUND

Cordon counts are conducted every five years and timed to coincide with other programs, such as the Transportation Tomorrow Survey and the Federal Statistics Canada Census. The 2004 interim set of monitoring counts was conducted in between the two major count programs in 2001 and the next cordon count that is scheduled for 2006. It is needed to assess changes in transit use, congestion levels and travel patterns due to the rapid growth in the Region. All day 12-hour counts (6:30 a.m.- 6:30 p.m.) were conducted on a typical weekday (excluding Fridays) during the month of May. This provided a snapshot of the complex travel behaviour and changes in travel patterns across the north/central part of the Greater Toronto Area. The data collected in 2004 was compared to the 2001 counts along York Region's screenlines, which are usually defined by city boundaries and highways. Collecting consistent and accurate traffic information is a very important component of the planning process.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A cordon count program is undertaken on a regular basis once every few years along the same screenlines. It is considered very important to monitor internal changes in travel patterns within the region and interregional behaviour at the boundaries. The 2004 Cordon Count Bulletin sheds light on the impact of economic activities on travel patterns. It shows the change in traffic that has taken place between the years 2001 and 2004. A summary of results for the all day period (between 6:30 a.m.– 6:30 p.m.), the morning peak period (between 6:30 a.m.- 9:30 a.m.), and the afternoon peak period (between 3:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.) are shown.

4.1 Highlights

- Population in York Region, between the years 2001 and 2004, has grown by 114,000 people (15%) from 759,000 to 873,000 people based on mid-year population figures.
- The **York-Toronto** screenline experienced a growth of 13.5% in total traffic volume, an increase of 122,500 vehicles, during the 12-hour period. Average vehicle occupancy decreased from 1.16 persons per vehicle to 1.14 persons per vehicle. Truck usage all day increased from 6.0% to 6.6%.
- The **York-Peel** screenline experienced an increase of 8.1% in total traffic volume in the 12-hour period. Vehicle occupancy level increased to 1.12, from 1.11 persons per vehicle in 2001. Transit usage has grown from 1% to 2.5% between the 2001 and 2004 time period.
- The **York-Durham** screenline experienced a growth of 31.0% in traffic. This may have been due to the opening of Highway 407 east extension to Brock Road. Transit ridership increased from 2% in 2001 to 2.4% in 2004. There was a drop in truck usage of -1.0%.
- Traffic across the **York-Simcoe** screenline has increased by 3.5% in the 12-hour period between 2001 and 2004. There was also an increase in car occupancy of 0.03 persons per vehicle and a marginal increase in transit usage of 0.1%, while truck usage stayed at the same level of 7%.
- Traffic grew by 19.1% at **Highway 404, south of Stouffville Road** during the period from 2001 to 2004. There was 1.6% increase in transit usage in the 12-hour period.
- Traffic at **Highway 400, north of King-Vaughan Road**, experienced a growth of 8.5% in the 12 hour day time period between the years 2001 and 2004. Transit usage increased by 1.2% during the same period.

- There was a very slight growth of 0.4% in total of all day traffic at **Highway 407, east of Highway 400**. Transit usage increased by a marginal 0.7% during the same period of time.

The 2004 Cordon Count Bulletin (*Attachment 1*) contains the above analysis and additional findings resulting from the 2004 counts. Hardcopies of this bulletin is being distributed to the local municipalities, adjacent area and regional municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation. The bulletin will also be available from the York Region website for the general public.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A small quantity of the bulletin is printed at a minimal cost. General access to the bulletin will be through the Region's website.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The 2004 Cordon Count Bulletin will be made available to all local municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2004 monitoring counts reported changes in the number of persons and vehicles crossing given screenlines. It also compared data to the last cordon count completed in 2001. This bulletin provides a snapshot of the 2004 travel pattern across York Region.

A regular monitoring program is an essential component in road operations and an important tool for planning purposes; it is conducted every five years to coincide with Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) and the Federal Census. York Region conducts counts in intermittent years to update the data in support of the Region's planning and transportation initiatives.

York Region's population has increased by 15% in the period between 2001 and 2004. As a result of this rapid growth, traffic across the Region has also increased significantly. Traffic has grown by 13.5% across York-Toronto, 8.1% across York-Peel, 31.0% across York-Durham, and 3.5% across York-Simcoe. These trends are not favourable for commuters; therefore the Region has undertaken a number of projects in attempting to reduce traffic congestion. These initiatives include numerous road improvements, providing additional local transit routes and implementing VIVA rapid transit service in the fall of 2005. York Region has also embarked on setting up bold programs such as Transportation Management Associations in different parts of the Region as part of the Smart Commute Initiative.

A full cordon count program, including both internal and boundary screenlines, is planned for 2006.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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