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PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING MASTER PLAN MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP POLICY

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated June 5, 2007, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and General Manager, Roads:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council adopt the municipal partnership policy for funding local municipal, conservation authority and other agency projects as set out in the attached “Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Policy” (*Council Attachment 1*).
2. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region, Conservation Authorities, Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Association, York District School Board, York Catholic District School Board and Rouge Park Alliance.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Regional Council approval of the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Policy (*see Attachment 1*) and to address local municipal requests to confirm Regional commitment to this partnership program.

3. BACKGROUND

This is second part of a two part report on the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. The first report provides an overall study update and releases draft pedestrian and cycling networks for public review while this report details the Municipal Partnership Program and Policy.

3.1 Need for Municipal Partnership Program

Local municipal cycling and trails plans provide policies, guidelines, design standards and implementation measures for the development of both on-road and off-road local cycling and walking networks. However their plans do not specifically address the need for an integrated network throughout the Region because it is not within their mandate. There are strategic locations where an expansion of the local system could facilitate network connectivity and consistency and help increase access to walking and cycling opportunities for all York Region residents. As such, the Region is developing a

comprehensive Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, which would provide an additional tool to improve the co-ordination of local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives.

Local municipalities have approached the Region with regard to cost sharing for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. In some cases, the projects proposed by the local municipalities support the goals of our Official Plan and Vision 2026, however the current policy does not provide the flexibility for York Region to participate financially in these projects.

Regional staff recognize that significant additional benefits could be achieved in the Regional transportation system by partnering with local municipalities in funding the implementation of such projects. Furthermore, it is the intent of the partnership program to review and prioritize projects of local municipalities, conservation authorities and other stakeholders that support the Region's goals and objectives and integrate them, where feasible, within the Region's road capital program.

The proposed partnership program forms part of the Region's sustainable growth management initiatives by accelerating the construction of local municipal pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that serves a regional context. From a sustainability perspective, this partnership program and the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan will benefit the natural environment, the economy and communities in York Region.

3.2 Council Approval in Principle of the Municipal Partnership Program

At its meeting on October 19, 2006 Regional Council adopted recommendations contained in Clause No. 7, Report No. 8 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee including the following:

“Regional Council support in principle the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program”, and;

“Staff report back to Planning and Development Services Committee in early 2007 on the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Policy and follow up with the selection of proposed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure works eligible for Regional funding in 2007 and 2008”.

The selection of the proposed infrastructure works eligible for Regional funding in 2007 and 2008 will be subject to a later report.

The Municipal Streetscaping Partnership Policy was used as the reference template for this proposed partnership program. This model is working well and is understood by the local municipalities.

The pedestrian and cycling municipal partnership program does not deal with cycling lanes in the Regional roads capital program, funding of municipal sidewalks within the Regional road allowance and is not intended to fund recreational trails.

This report details the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Policy for Council adoption.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

There are numerous goals in the Region's Official Plan, Vision 2026 and Greening Strategy that address the need for Pedestrian and Cycling facilities. Some of these include:

- Promote compact urban form, transit use and trip reductions as a means of reducing energy consumption and improving air quality.
- Facilitate walking, cycling and trails.
- York Region residents will live, work, play and learn in healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods that are vibrant, exciting and people friendly.

In response to this and the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan initiatives, staff have proposed a municipal partnership policy or program to assist the local municipalities, conservation authorities and other agencies in the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Eligible infrastructure must support a Regional scale network and be integrated with local municipal and/or key stakeholder plans, including public transit service that connects communities and people of all ages with where they live, work and want to go.

This is the first major recommendation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study and funding has been incorporated into the 2007 10-Year Road Capital Plan.

4.1 Municipal Partnership Program Implementation

4.1.1 Municipal Partnership Program Stakeholder Consultation

An important part of the municipal partnership program development was consultation with stakeholders. Local municipalities, conservation authorities, school boards, Markham's Cycling Public Advisory Committee and York's Pedestrian and Cycling Public Advisory Committee were requested to comment on the principles of the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.

The overall consensus from the stakeholders was enthusiastic support and that a regional policy in this regard should be adopted soon to begin implementation.

The Town of Newmarket has expressed significant interest and support for the proposed Municipal Partnership Program. The Town of East Gwillimbury has also expressed support for the program. At its meeting of April 2, 2007 Vaughan Council adopted

recommendations regarding Vaughan's Pedestrian and Bicycling Plan including the following:

“That the City request confirmation from the Region of York on the Region's commitment to funding for pedestrian and cycling facilities within the Regional right-of-ways and any other options and programs being developed for the implementation of a Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan”.

It should be noted that provision of on-street bike facilities on Regional roads falls within the mandate of the Region and will be formally committed to upon Council's adoption of the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. Funding for multi-use pathways within the Regional road allowance (i.e. the boulevard) will be addressed via the adoption of this report. The Region will consult further with Vaughan and other stakeholders regarding other options and programs to be developed as part of the Region's implementation strategy.

A summary of the comments from local municipal staff and other stakeholders are contained in *Council Attachment 2* along with Regional staff responses.

4.1.2 Municipal Funding Partnership Objectives

The intent of the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program is to provide a program to assist funding local pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that match Regional priorities and goals of the Master Plan.

This program is strictly for funding the capital expenditure of pedestrian and cycling facilities that serve a regional context and not for ongoing operating and maintenance cost of the same facilities. It should also be noted that the majority of the construction of on-street bike lanes on the regional roads will be incorporated as part of the road construction/resurfacing program and not via the program recommended in this report. However, retrofitting of regional roads to accommodate bike lanes may be incorporated as part of this program.

Examples of projects that may be eligible for funding could include facilities that:

- Are part of a regionally defined network.
- Provide inter-municipal connections.
- Link multi-modal facilities (i.e. transit terminals, bus stops/viva stations, commuter and carpool lots).
- Remove barriers (i.e. crossing of Regional Roads).
- Are supportive of commuter walking or cycling.

Without knowing the magnitude of the projects for which local municipalities and/or stakeholders will be seeking Regional funding, staff recommend that this funding program be initiated with a budget of \$500,000 annually. The annual budget will be

reviewed in more detail and adjusted up or down in subsequent years when infrastructure costs for projects are known. The cost of constructing a basic multi-use pathway is in the order of \$100,000 per kilometre. Assuming a 50/50 funding split between the Region and local municipality and/or key stakeholder group, this program will potentially result in the construction of approximately 10 kilometres of multi-use pathways annually.

4.1.3 How the Municipal Partnership Program Works

Upon approval of the new policy, staff will evaluate all upcoming funding requests from stakeholders and then make a recommendation to Regional Council. On the basis of identified technical criteria, a number of projects with corresponding Regional funding contributions for the coming budget year will be identified.

The following framework describes how the program will work:

1. On an annual basis, approval of a budget from the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program will be sought from Regional Council. For 2007, an initial budget of \$500,000 has been approved. The budget for 2008 and beyond may vary depending on the response to this program.
2. Local municipalities and/or key stakeholder groups will complete design studies for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. The municipality and/or stakeholder must commit their share of the funding required for each project prior to seeking financial assistance from the Region.
3. The local municipality and/or stakeholder prepare and submit applications to York Region by the established annual deadline.
4. The York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Review Team evaluates each application and recommends qualifying applications for funding as part of the budget process for the coming year. The list of recommended projects would be presented for Regional Council approval.

4.1.4 Establishment of a Pedestrian and Cycling Review Team

A Pedestrian and Cycling Review Team will be created in order to take on the role of reviewing and scoring pedestrian and cycling project applications. The team will be made up of the following personnel:

- Manager, Transportation Planning.
- Cycling Program Coordinator.
- Director, Roads Capital Delivery.
- Manager, Service Planning, Transit.
- Manager, Long Range Planning.
- Manager, Health Department.

Consideration will also be given to include local municipal representatives on an as need basis to help clarify information in their submissions.

Further information on the Application process can be found in the program policy and guidelines (*Council Attachment 1*) and the application form (*Council Attachments 3*).

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Vision 2026 goals include a vibrant economy, managed and balanced growth and responding to the needs of our residents and engaging communities. Pedestrian and Cycling programs will impact positively on these goals by providing improved accessibility and active travel options for workers and residents of the Region. These programs will also promote physical, social and emotional well-being by encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviour. Associated with the provision of alternative transportation options will be improvement in the natural environment due to reductions in green house gas emissions from transportation sources. The development of a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan is one step in steering the Region's growth over the next two decades and beyond, with a focus on improving both the pedestrian and cycling environment that supports and promotes alternative modes of transportation and results in a more liveable community.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Funding Partnership Program is funded in the amount of \$500,000 per year. The funding for the program is included in the 2007 10-Year Road Capital Plan.

Any unallocated funds from the Municipal Partnership Program will be carried forward year to year.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Although most of the local municipal plans provide policies, guidelines and design standards and implementation measures for the development of both on and off-road local cycling networks, they do not address the need for an integrated network throughout the Region. There are locations where expansion of the local system could facilitate network connectivity and consistency and help increase the level of walking and cycling in the Region. As such, the Region is looking towards the development of a comprehensive Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, which would improve the coordination of Regional and local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives.

Upon adoption of this report, the Region will take a leadership role to support and accelerate local municipal efforts for the provision of cycling and pedestrian facilities and related infrastructure.

Local municipal staff are supportive of the Municipal Partnership Program which will assist local municipalities and key stakeholder groups in expanding their network by funding up to 50% of eligible capital work. The Program share is calculated from the total capital cost of the project net of all third party contributions. Therefore, the municipality and its non-Regional partners must secure 50% or more of the capital cost for each funding application.

7. CONCLUSION

A Municipal Funding Partnership Policy will assist local municipalities and/or stakeholders in implementing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that supports a Regional scale network. This program is one initiative to support and engage the local municipalities, conservation authorities and other stakeholders in the implementation of coordinated pedestrian and cycling plans. It is only through the promotion of alternate travel modes such as walking, transit and cycling that the Region will reach its sustainable transportation objectives.

For more information on this report please contact Eric Gupta, Senior Transportation Specialist, Infrastructure Planning at 905-830-4444 ext. 5146 or eric.gupta@york.ca.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)