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PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated August 25, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Staff in all affected departments as identified in this report take all necessary steps and actions to prepare, modify and update Regional policies, procedures and methods to accommodate the design, construction and operation of Regional cycling facilities.
2. York Region Police and the local municipalities in York Region be engaged to establish an inter-municipal working group to coordinate implementation of cycling facilities and to harmonize policies, procedures and methods relating to cycling.
3. The City of Toronto be engaged to establish a formal framework to implement and promote the Lake-to-Lake cycling route.
4. A separate report be prepared on establishing a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Public Advisory Committee.
5. Progress on the above recommendations be included as part of an annual report on the implementation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.
6. Copies of this report be distributed by the Regional Clerk to the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region and the City of Toronto.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council on the steps and actions staff will take to implement the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP).

3. BACKGROUND

REGIONAL COUNCIL ENDORSED THE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING MASTER PLAN (PCMP) ON APRIL 24, 2008

A regional-scale network that connects communities and people of all ages with where they live, work and want to go

The PCMP consists of an infrastructure program, outreach program and implementation strategy. It recommends a series of actions in each of the three areas to:

1. Implement and operate a cycling network.
2. Educate and promote safe cycling to residents and motorists in York Region.

The planned network is intended to support commuter and recreational cycling including trips to work or school

For the infrastructure program, the PCMP recommends two-phased 10-year pedestrian and cycling networks as well as the long term networks. Phase 1 is proposed to deliver:

- 260 km of bike lanes and paved shoulders.
- 34 km of multi-use trails.
- 85 km of signed bike routes.
- 45 km of sidewalks.

Phase 2 is proposed to deliver:

- 198 km of bike lanes and paved shoulders.
- 27 km of multi-use trails.
- 39 km of signed bike routes.
- 17 km of sidewalks.

Attachments 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the Phase 1, Phase 2, and Long-Term Cycling Network as recommended in the PCMP.

The outreach program is equally important as the infrastructure program for walking and cycling to succeed in York Region

The PCMP recommends the creation of cycling maps, brochures, safe cycling training programs, and promotional events and activities geared towards students and adults alike. Many jurisdictions have developed educational programs and publications that can be adapted for use in York Region at nominal cost.

An implementation strategy that consults with all affected stakeholders

The PCMP recommends an implementation strategy that:

- Includes the PCMP in the Regional Official Plan.

- Uses the 10-year road construction program to maximise the speed of implementation of the infrastructure program and to gain cost efficiencies.
- Establishes a municipal partnership program to contribute up to 50% of the construction cost of approved local municipal and agency projects.
- Establishes an inter-municipal working group.
- Establishes a public advisory committee.
- Establishes a full-time pedestrian and cycling staff position.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Implementing the PCMP requires the cooperation of and coordination with various Regional departments

Planning and Development Services Department will take the lead in establishing an internal working committee on the PCMP to coordinate Regional works being done in various departments including Planning and Development Services, Transportation Services, York Region Police, and Community and Health Services. It will also provide liaison to the inter-municipal working group to be established as discussed below.

Need to incorporate the PCMP into the Regional Official Plan (ROP)

At the very least, the network components of the PCMP need to be incorporated into the ROP to ensure that development plans account and accommodate planned pedestrian and cycling facilities. As the Transportation Master Plan has been undergoing an update and scheduled for completion in early 2009, staff recommend that the PCMP be brought under the umbrella of the TMP when the next transportation related ROPA is prepared.

Implementing the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure program is being done by Transportation Services as part of Regional road construction projects

Bike lanes, paved shoulders, multi-use trails and sidewalks designed for safe cycling and pedestrian movements should be included in road widening, reconstruction and resurfacing projects at the beginning of each project. This is the recommended approach to speedy and cost effective way of constructing pedestrian and cycling facilities.

This approach to constructing cycling facilities has led to some early wins that will see the opening of the following facilities within the next year or two:

- bike lanes on Dufferin Street from Steeles Avenue to Glen Shields Avenue
- bike lanes on Teston Road from Bathurst Street to Dufferin Street
- paved shoulders on Bathurst Street from King Road to Highway 9

- paved shoulders on Stouffville Road from Woodbine Ave to Highway 48

Supporting public transit to create an inter-modal transportation system

A key design parameter of the network plan of the PCMP is the linkage of the sidewalk and cycling networks to public transit services such that the paths will feed all major transit routes. Together with the implementation of bike racks on buses and bike storage facilities at transit stops, when the PCMP is fully implemented, cyclists across York Region would be able to bike and transit to virtually every destination in York Region.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

Education and promotion are as important as infrastructure when it comes to cycling

Effective use of the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure requires the coordinated implementation of the outreach program delivered to students and adults across York Region. With its existing programs targeted at students, the public health unit's relationship with the school boards could be leveraged to deliver walking and cycling programs directly to students on a continuous basis.

Staff will coordinate joint marketing of cycling and transit use with York Region Transit as the bike on buses program is being rolled out over the next two years.

Proper maintenance and operations of bike lanes, paved shoulders and other cycling infrastructure are also key to increasing the use of cycling

Enforcement against illegal stopping and parking on bike lanes, educating and promoting safe cycling requires the support of York Region Police. Coordination with York Region Police is recommended to occur through direct meetings as well as through the inter-municipal working group.

An on-going and minimum level of maintenance of bike lanes and paved shoulders on Regional roads require policy and procedural changes in the Transportation Services Department. These will include policies and procedures for proper pavement markings and roadside signage, maintenance of pavement and clearance of debris from cycling lanes. Staff will utilise the Planning and Design Guidelines developed as part of the PCMP as a reference source in addition to other sources of information when updating the appropriate policies and procedures.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The proposed Lake-to-Lake route connecting Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario is a key feature of the PCMP

A highlight of the PCMP is a proposed cycling route that will stretch from the shores of Lake Simcoe through paths down the middle of York Region that connect to existing paths in the City of Toronto that ultimately leads to the shores of Lake Ontario. Once completed, these paths would form a very attractive destination for cyclists of all stripes and would add to the appeal of York Region as a tourist destination.

The City of Toronto has ramped up the implementation of their Cycling Master Plan. The context is favourable to begin work to define this Lake-to-Lake route. Staff recommend contacting the City of Toronto to begin work on establishing a formal framework that will lead to the joint implementation and promotion of the key feature of the PCMP.

Staff will also pursue the implementation of, where appropriate, other special projects that have been or will be proposed by cycling groups across York Region. One such example is the proposed Terry Fox Bikeway loop using Warden Avenue, Elgin Mills Road, McCowan Road, and St. John's Sideroad.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital budget requirements to be subject to capital budget approval process

A total of \$44 million is required over 10 years for implementation of the infrastructure, outreach programs and services with the Region's portion at about \$33 million. The remaining \$11 million portion would be from local municipalities and senior government level subsidies. As most of the Regional works are proposed as part of the 10-year road construction program, the capital budget requirements of the PCMP will be submitted as part of the annual review and approval of the 10-year road construction program.

Operating budget requirements will be incorporated into the budgets of individual departments affected by the implementation of the PCMP

The operating budget requirements of affected departments as a result of implementing the PCMP have yet to be determined and will depend on what changes are made to Corporate operating policies and procedures of each department. As such, these budget needs will be identified as service enhancements in future operating budget submissions for Council approval.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Establishing a public advisory committee

To ensure local and continuous public consultation throughout the implementation of the PCMP, the PCMP recommended the establishment of a public advisory committee to play that role. The establishment of such an advisory committee will require further examination and will require a separate report to Planning and Economic Development Committee later in the Fall of 2008.

Establishing a staff level inter-municipal working group to coordinate and share knowledge on pedestrian and cycling projects

As the PCMP builds upon local municipal plans, coordination of both infrastructure plans and outreach programs of the Region and local municipalities is vitally important. The PCMP recommends the establishment of an inter-municipal working group mandated to coordinate the efforts of the two levels of government to gain efficiencies in terms of design standards, costs, speed of implementation as well as performance or degree of uptake in cycling. In this regard, staff will begin to work with the local municipalities to establish this working group and to begin its work starting 2009. As noted in Section 4, York Region Police will also be invited to be part of this working group.

Success in assisting local municipal pedestrian and cycling projects

Our unique Municipal Partnership Program for funding local municipal cycling projects has been well utilised since its inception in 2007. To date, the Municipal Partnership Program is funding 3 projects on the Nokidaa Trail in East Gwillimbury, Newmarket and Aurora, a multi-use trail on Major Mackenzie Dr from Woodbine Avenue to Kennedy Road in Markham and 2 greenway projects in Vaughan.

7. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan will involve several Regional departments including Planning and Development Services, Transportation Services and Community and Health Services, York Region Police and coordination with local municipal efforts. This report directs those Regional departments to take the necessary steps to prepare, modify and update Regional policies, procedures and methods to accommodate the design, construction and operation of Regional cycling facilities.

To ensure coordination of Regional and local municipal efforts in implementing and operating cycling facilities, staff recommend the establishment of an inter-municipal working group that includes York Region Police.

To begin the implementation of the Lake-to-Lake cycling route linking Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario, staff recommend taking advantage of the current favourable policy position at the City of Toronto to begin working on a formal framework to implement and promote the Lake-to-Lake route.

For more information on this report, please contact Loy Cheah, Manager, Transportation Planning, Infrastructure Planning Branch at 905-830-4444, Ext. 5024 or Paul May, Director, Infrastructure Planning at Ext. 5029.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are included with this report.)