

4

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING MASTER PLAN STUDY

(Regional Council at its meeting on October 27, 2005, amended the following clause to provide that the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services report to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on the composition of a task force or advisory committee comprised of regional and local municipal staff and citizens.)

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 23, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council authorize staff to engage a consultant to conduct a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study in consultation with the local municipalities.
2. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to proceed with a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan for York Region that will establish a bicycle path and walkway system in conjunction with local municipalities.

3. BACKGROUND

The Regional Municipality of York is committed, through policies in both the Regional Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan, to changing public travel choices and providing a range of accessible alternate transportation options for all users. The many benefits include improved health of residents, cleaner air, a more efficient transportation network and reduced dependence on the automobile. It is only through the promotion of alternate forms of active travel modes such as walking, transit and cycling that the Region will reach its sustainable transportation objectives.

The Region's Official Plan (ROP) sets ambitious targets in striving to shift public travel choices to minimize environmental impacts, the need for new and widened roads and

avoid network delay and congestion. York's ROP, under Section 6.3 states that it is the policy of Council to "recognize the importance of cycling and walking as an alternative form of transportation and aims to establish a bicycle path and walkway system in conjunction with local municipalities". 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 active transportation and results in a more liveable, walkable community.

As well, a Go for Green/EnviroNics (1998) study, a National Survey on Active Transportation found that 82% of Canadians showed an interest in walking, 66% showed an interest in cycling and indicated they would cycle 30 minutes or more to work if cycling lanes were available.

The Pedestrian and Cycling Plan will respond to the need to develop policies, guidelines and standards at the Regional level to support municipal efforts for the provision of cycling and pedestrian facilities and related infrastructure as well as the need to bring together policies and implementation issues. It is recognized that it takes more than bike lanes or recreational pathways/sidewalks to make the Region pedestrian and cycling-friendly. The plan will address how to promote active transportation and improve cycling and pedestrian safety through education, awareness and enforcement, enhance modal integration, and the provision of trip end facilities.

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. Section 12.0 of the attached Terms of Reference documents the studies and/or trail maps undertaken by the local area municipalities. There are locations where expansion of the local system could facilitate network connectivity and consistency and help increase access to walking and cycling opportunities by York Region residents. As such, the Region is looking towards the development of a comprehensive Pedestrian and Cycling Plan, which would improve the co-ordination of local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives and examine the range and appropriate treatments for bicycle and pedestrian paths within the Regional Road allowance. The proposed plan will also complement the Region's "Making Great Regional Streets—A Path to Improvement" which is currently being completed.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A summary of the draft Terms of Reference (Attachment 1) are presented in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Phase 1: Vision, Goals and Objectives

Phase 1 of the project will be the development of the Background Working Paper, which is intended to establish the context for the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan and will include the following:

- Consultation with residents, businesses, stakeholder advisory groups, ad hoc committees as required and local municipal staff to develop goals and objectives for the plan, building on the pedestrian and cycling vision outlined in the Region's Official Plan and the Transportation Master Plan and those of the local municipalities.
- The vision will define the desired pedestrian and cycling environment for the Region in the next 20 years and include specific examples of what that environment could look like, building on any examples that currently exist.
- At this stage, local municipal plans will be reviewed at a cursory level to determine potential linkages between the plans and how these linkages support the vision, goals and objectives of the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan.
- The goals, objectives, and vision will also include the rationale for the importance of walking and cycling for transportation, health, economic, environment, tourism, quality of life and community benefits for the Region of York's prosperity.

4.2 Phase 2: Development of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Phase 2 of the study will focus on the development of the various elements of the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan. This includes the following items detailed below:

- **Policies and Guidelines**

The development of pedestrian and cycling-related policies and program guidelines to outline implementation requirements for the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan. The policies and program guidelines will be developed in consultation with other Regional Departments, the local municipalities and other identified stakeholders and are intended to provide direction on the formation and implementation of cycling and pedestrian programs recommended for the Region.

- **Network Development**

One of the key aspects of the study is to develop a long-term Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Network building upon the existing draft on and off-road cycling and sidewalk networks developed by the local municipalities.

4.3 Phase 3: Implementation Strategy

Phase 3 of the study will be the development of an implementation strategy for the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan. In this strategy the actions necessary to support the implementation and administration of the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling network and program will be identified. The following identifies some implementation strategies that need to be addressed:

- How the plan will be administered, including Regional and Local Municipal responsibilities, financing, risk management, staff resources, organization, maintenance and liability.
- How much the Regional Cycling Network will cost.
- What are the priorities and timing (both short and long-term) for the Plan.
- How the Plan fits into the capital works budget.

4.4 Stakeholder Consultation

A public consultation strategy will involve the various municipalities and stakeholders (i.e. residents, businesses, Stakeholder Advisory Groups, Community Groups and internal regional staff) that will be affected by the plan, and will be a very important component of this study. A Municipal Advisory Committee will be established and at key project milestones, study information will be posted on the Region's Website for public comments. An open house for the study commencement and a set of Public Consultation Centres (PCC) to obtain public input on the draft Pedestrian and Cycling Plan is envisaged.

4.5 Timing of Project

The following preliminary work schedule is proposed.

- November 2005 Study starting date
- January 2006 Phase 1 Report on Vision, Goals and Objectives
- February 2006 Phase 2 Report on policies, guidelines, standards and best practices
- April 2006 Phase 2 Report on Network Development and Evaluation
- May 2006 Phase 3 Report on Implementation Strategy
- June 2006 Final Pedestrian and Cycling Plan

The study is anticipated to be completed by September 2006.

4.6 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

Funds to retain a consultant to undertake the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study are available from the approved 2005 Operating Budget at an estimated cost of \$150,000.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Pedestrian and Cycling Plan will respond to the need to promote health and wellness of our residents, develop policies, guidelines and standards at the Regional level to take a leadership role and to support municipal efforts for the provision of cycling and pedestrian facilities and related infrastructure as well as the need to bring together policies and implementation strategies.

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 Plan, which would improve the co-ordination of regional and local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives and examine the range and different appropriate treatments for pedestrian and bicycle paths within the Regional Road allowance.

7. CONCLUSION

The development of a Pedestrian and Cycling Plan will respond to the need to develop policies, guidelines and standards at the Regional level to take a leadership role and to support local municipal efforts for the provision of pedestrian and cycling facilities and related infrastructure as well as the need to bring together policies and implementation strategies. The plan will also outline the Region's short, medium and long term benefits for bicycle and pedestrian transportation and recommend a strategy for achieving such goals. Further, 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.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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