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PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING MASTER PLAN STUDY MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 11, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council support in principle the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.
2. 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.
3. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk 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.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval in principle for the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.

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 mode 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 development of a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan is one key step in steering the Region's growth over the next two decades and beyond.

Although many of the local municipal plans provide policies, guidelines, design standards and implementation measures for the development of both on-road and off-road local cycling and walking networks, their plans do not specifically address the need for an integrated network throughout the Region because it is not within their mandate. There are locations where an 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.

The Study's first Public Consultation meetings were held on May 30 and 31, 2006.

The conduct of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study will be supported by three different committees: Steering, Technical Advisory and Public Advisory Committee (PAC). The first PAC meeting has been tentatively scheduled for late September, 2006. The PAC will assist in the development and implementation of future regional pedestrian and cycling initiatives. The PAC will also serve as a public advocacy group for the development and promotion of any pedestrian and cycling facilities. It will make recommendations related to development, design and presentation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Local municipalities have approached the Region with regard to cost sharing 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 recognizes that significant additional benefits could be achieved on the Regional road network by partnering with local municipalities in funding the implementation of such projects. Further, it is the intent of the partnership program to review and prioritize projects of local municipal/conservation authorities that support the Region's goals and objectives and integrate them where feasible within the road capital program.

4.1 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study Update

The work program of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan is divided into three phases. Phase 1 of the Study established the context for the Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Plan. This phase is completed and a Vision and Goals document was prepared outlining the goals, objectives, and vision of the plan.

Phase 1 also involved a series of Public Consultation Centres (PCC#1) which were held on May 30 and 31, 2006. The Study's first Public Consultation meetings attracted about

70 members of the public who had the opportunity to make comments and identify issues that should be considered in the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Study. Display boards illustrating highlights of the Phase 1 component of the study, in addition to displays on health and community benefits were presented for public commenting and review.

In addition to the first PCC, an Active Transportation workshop was held June 27, 2006. The purpose of the Active Transportation Workshop was to encourage stakeholder participation and seek input on how the Region could improve conditions for walking, cycling and other active transportation modes. This workshop also provided preliminary analysis of public surveys involving walking and cycling which were made available on the Regional website.

The next PCC (PCC#2) will be held in early October, 2006 and will present to the public the candidate pedestrian and cycling route network, summary of findings from PCC#1 and route selection and evaluation criteria. The draft route network will be presented to Committee and Council in early 2007.

Anticipating the results of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan study, it is expected that a Regional staff member will be needed and be responsible for carrying out the Region's role in supporting the implementation of pedestrian and cycling facilities across the Region. A Cycling Coordinator has been included as part of the 2007 budget deliberation.

4.2 Municipal Partnership Program Objectives

The Terms of Reference for the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan was adopted by Regional Council on March 23, 2006, and some of the goals and objectives in the Terms of Reference are as follows:

- Assess the directions of the local municipal bicycle plans and identify opportunities for Regional participation in the implementation of these plans.
- Improve the co-ordination of local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives.
- Identify barriers and constraints to walking and cycling and propose solutions.
- Identify a continuous and connected pedestrian and cycling network in the urban and rural areas of the Region, which integrates and enhances the existing on and off-road cycling networks developed by local municipalities.
- The Region's Plan must be integrated with local municipal plans to determine appropriate partnerships.
- Identify opportunities and constraints (i.e. including funding opportunities) in the development of a pedestrian and cycling network in York Region.
- Recommend innovative new policies and programs, where appropriate.

In addition, 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:

- To promote compact urban form, transit use and trip reductions as a means of reducing energy consumption and improving air quality.
- To 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 essence, these goals and objectives imply the need for a continuous inter-municipal network of pedestrian and cycling facilities which is one focus of the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

4.3 Municipal Partnership Program

In response to the study goals and in consideration of comments and ideas received in the first Public Consultation meetings and the Active Transportation Workshop, staff and the Study consultant are proposing a Municipal Partnership Program to assist local municipalities and conservation authorities in implementing pedestrian and cycling facilities that supports a Regional scale network. This program will allow integration with local municipal/conservation authorities pedestrian and cycling plans, including public transit service that connects communities and people of all ages with places of interest. This is the first major draft recommendation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study and is being proposed now to allow incorporation of the funding into the 2007 budget deliberations.

The intent of the Pedestrian and Cycling Partnership Program is to provide a framework and policy for requests from the local municipalities with regard to funding municipal/conservation authorities pedestrian and cycling infrastructure when these priorities match Regional priorities.

This program is strictly for funding the capital expenditure of pedestrian and cycling facilities 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.

Details on how this funding program will be administered and managed will be subject to a later report. Those details will be developed in conjunction with the local municipalities through the on-going Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study.

The draft Municipal Streetscaping Partnership Policy/Program can be used as the reference template for this proposal. Therefore, details on the structure of the funding process, what projects are eligible and how they will be ranked will be defined clearly. An example of how the partnership program framework could work is noted below:

- Screening of Proposals (i.e. criteria to determine eligibility for funding)
- Category of Proposals (i.e. criteria to determine level of funding)

- Cost of Infrastructure (i.e. how much does the project cost)
- Priority Ranking for Funding (i.e. criteria to rank and compare eligible projects for a specific year).

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

- Are part of Regionally defined network.
- Provide inter-municipal connections.
- Link multi-modal facilities.
- Remove barriers (i.e. crossing of Regional Roads).
- Are supportive of commuter cycling.

Without knowing the magnitude of the projects for which local municipalities 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 multi-use pathway is in the order of \$100,000 per kilometre, potentially resulting in the construction of approximately 10 kilometres of multi-use trails according to the proposed program. This is assuming a 50/50 funding formula between the Region and the local municipality and/or conservation authority.

Staff will report back in early 2007 for policy approval of the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program. Upon approval of the new policy, staff will evaluate all upcoming funding requests from local municipalities and then recommend to Regional Council, on the basis of identified technical criteria, a number of projects with corresponding Regional funding contributions for the coming budget year.

4.4 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 and social 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 motorized vehicles. 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 Partnership Program is proposed to be funded in the amount of \$500,000 per year. It is proposed to be included in the 2007, 10-Year Road Capital Plan and subject to the normal budget approval process.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan will respond to the need to promote health and wellness of residents, develop policies, guidelines and standards at the Regional level. The Region will take a leadership role to support local municipal efforts for the provision of cycling and pedestrian facilities and related infrastructure.

Local municipal pedestrian and cycling network plans 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 co-ordination of Regional and local municipal cycling and pedestrian initiatives.

7. CONCLUSION

As part of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, staff have proposed a Municipal Partnership Program to assist local municipalities and conservation authorities in constructing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that supports a regional scale network. This program is one initiative to support and engage the local municipalities and conservation authorities in the need for coordinated pedestrian and cycling plans. It is 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.