
For Information

REPORT TITLE: Sustainable Transportation Strategy – Implementation Update

FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on the implementation of the Sustainable Transportation Strategy, including active transportation infrastructure and programs.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Region of Peel's Sustainable Transportation Strategy (STS) was endorsed by Regional Council in February 2018.
 - The key goal of the STS is to achieve a 50 per cent sustainable mode share by 2041.
 - Actions outlined in the strategy focus on active transportation infrastructure and programs to increase the number of walking and cycling trips in Peel, increased transit ridership, as well as encouraging carpooling and remote work.
 - In 2020, 15.6 kilometers of active transportation infrastructure was implemented, with an additional 6.4 kilometers projected for completion by the end of 2021. From 2022 to 2030, approximately 111.3 kilometers of new or enhanced active transportation infrastructure is currently planned for implementation.
 - Based on the results from the 2020 COVID-19 influenced Households' Interrupted Travel Schedules Survey, work-from-home rates more than tripled, walking and cycling increased, while transit usage and carpooling decreased, when compared to the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey.
 - Regional staff will continue to monitor the impacts of the ongoing pandemic on travel trends and adjust implementation of the STS accordingly.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

In February 2018, Regional Council endorsed the Sustainable Transportation Strategy, a component of the 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan and the key plan that recommends a 50 per cent sustainable mode share by 2041. Both studies recognize that continued widening of roads is neither feasible or desirable to support future growth, and identifies Transportation Demand Management measures, to reduce the number of trips taken, as well as the implementation of active transportation infrastructure and programs to increase the number of walking and cycling trips in Peel. Carrying out these action items support the Thriving focus area of the Region's Term of Council Priorities by expanding community mobility as the infrastructure and programs develop and encourage the use of a multimodal transportation network.

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On February 25, 2021, the Interim Commissioner of Public Works was requested to report to Council regarding Regional staff participation in existing local municipal transportation committees (Resolution 2021-157). On April 8, 2021, Regional Council directed staff to report back to a future meeting of Regional Council regarding the status of implementation of Sustainable Active Mobility infrastructure and programs throughout the Region on a semi-annual basis (Resolution 2021-402). This report provides an update on both matters, including information to respond to Regional Council's request of December 3, 2020, for information regarding public education on micro-mobility services and systems.

2. Implementation of the Strategy

To achieve the 50 per cent sustainable mode share target by 2041, the actions outlined in the STS focus on several key areas – increasing the number of trips taken by transit and carpooling to 35 per cent, and walking and cycling to approximately 10 per cent, as well as reducing trips altogether through remote work practices.

a) Active Transportation Infrastructure

Expansion of the active transportation network continues to be integrated with the Roads, Water, and Wastewater planned capital programs. This approach minimizes community disruption, makes best use of taxpayer dollars through economies of scale, and minimizes re-work costs.

In 2020, 15.6 kilometers of active transportation infrastructure was completed including multi-use pathways and paved shoulders. An additional 6.4 kilometers of active transportation infrastructure is projected to be built by the end of 2021, with an additional 111.3 kilometers currently planned for implementation between 2022 and 2030 through programmed capital projects currently in the planning and design phase.

Twelve crossrides with bicycle signals were built in 2020, with an additional eight planned for completion by the end of 2021. Crossrides are dedicated spaces at intersections identified by unique pavement markings for cyclists to legally ride their bikes across a roadway without dismounting.

More information on these projects can be found in Appendices I and II.

b) Active Transportation Programs

The Region of Peel leads and/or supports several active transportation programs, including Bike Month, Community Cycling Programs, the Ontario Active School Travel Fund Project, and Peel Safe and Active Routes to School. These programs support Peel residents looking to increase trips taken by walking and cycling by providing the public with education, equipment, and support. Program details are available in Appendix III.

Regional staff have recently expanded the Region's bicycle and pedestrian count program to further measure and monitor active transportation activity. Counters have shown consistent increases in volume in certain locations. The highest numbers in 2020 were counted on the sidewalk along the south side of Queen Street in Brampton, west of Dixie Road, where over 110,000 users were tallied, an approximate 14 per cent increase from 2019. The most significant increase in activity was counted along the Dixie Road buffered bike lanes in Mississauga, where 10,738 cyclists were counted in 2020 (west side only), nearly 40 per cent more than in 2019.

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c) Transit Planning and Infrastructure

Regional staff are currently undertaking a Major Transit Station Area Study as a part of the Peel 2051 Official Plan Review. This study will identify and delineate Major Transit Station Areas, establish minimum or alternative densities, and establish policies that support complete communities and provide a policy framework to enhance first and last mile connections to transit through active modes.

Regional staff have been coordinating with local municipal transit agencies to identify and implement transit improvements into the detailed design of Regional road improvement projects wherever feasible. Regional staff are also supporting MiWay on the implementation of the MiWay Infrastructure Growth Plan, which includes improvements to various transit stops along Regional Roads (Derry Road, Dixie Road, and Erin Mills Parkway), where feasible.

d) Carpooling and Remote Work

Over the course of 2020, work-from-home rates more than tripled while carpooling mode share decreased, as observed through the COVID-19 influenced Households' Interrupted Travel Schedules (COVHITS) Survey. Regional staff will continue to monitor the trends resulting from the pandemic to inform the ongoing work in these areas in support of the STS mode share target.

3. Collaboration and Coordination

Collaborating directly with local municipal partners and user groups is imperative to advance active transportation infrastructure and initiatives through the Region. In addition to capital budget meetings held biannually with regional and local municipal programming staff, infrastructure coordination meetings are held quarterly. These meetings are key in helping to connect the regional and local active transportation networks.

Citizen feedback is received through the respective local committees and task force, namely the Caledon Active Transportation Task Force, the Brampton Cycling Advisory Committee (BCAC), and the Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee (MCAC). Regional staff presented updates to BCAC and MCAC earlier this year, providing an overview and gathering feedback on planned work for the upcoming year. Annual updates are planned in the first quarter of each year moving forward, with additional updates throughout the year.

Regional staff are also involved in ongoing discussions with Conservation Authorities, such as the Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to support their respective trail networks including the Credit Valley Trail. Coordination with other agencies is also ongoing, for example, discussions with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to examine strategic active transportation connections along the Greenbelt Route.

The Province is another partner in delivering active transportation infrastructure. Regular meetings are held with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to review and discuss capital plans with active transportation requirements.

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A few projects which highlight the recent efforts with stakeholders and the public include:

- Burnhamthorpe Road multi-use path connection across Erin Mills Parkway via a crossride and bicycle signals and incorporation of an additional bus-only eastbound left-turn lane for MiWay, to support increased transit service levels. (Mississauga)
- Fletcher's Creek Trail crossing of Bovaird Drive via a crossride and bicycle signals west of McLaughlin Road, including green pavement marking. (Brampton)
- Bike route connection along Olde Base Line Road between Kennedy Road and Heart Lake Road via paved shoulders, including a hatched buffer. (Caledon)
- Active transportation crossing of the Queen Elizabeth Highway along Dixie Road via the Ministry's interchange project, including crossrides at intersections. (MTO)

In addition to coordinating with the local municipal transit agencies on conventional transit improvements along Regional roads, Regional staff are also currently working with Metrolinx and local municipal staff to study and advance the following higher order transit projects in Peel which are at varying stages of the planning, design, and delivery process:

- Dundas Street Bus Rapid Transit
- Eglinton Crosstown West Light Rail Transit Extension
- Hurontario Light Rail Transit
- Hurontario North Light Rail Transit Extension
- Queen Street Bus Rapid Transit
- Lakeshore Bus Rapid Transit

Lastly, Regional staff are also working with local municipal staff and the Province to advocate for the advancement of key inter and intraregional transit projects:

- Two-way, all-day, 15-min service on the Milton GO Rail Line
- Two-way, all-day, 15-min service on the Kitchener GO Rail Line from Union station to Bramalea GO Station and beyond to Mount Pleasant GO Station; and
- GO Rail Service to Bolton

4. Monitoring Modal Shift

During these unprecedented times, it is important to monitor and assess the short and long-term impacts resulting from the pandemic as we return to a new normal. To help understand changes in daily travel habits, the COVID-19 Influenced Households' Interrupted Travel Schedules (COVHITS) Survey was undertaken in late 2020 to collect data on travel pattern changes resulting from COVID-19 restrictions. The survey was undertaken by the University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute and collected data from households across the Greater Toronto Area.

The COVHITS Survey was designed based on the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS), which is collected every five years, such that the results of both studies could be compared against each other. Results show that the modal shares of walking and cycling in Peel Region increased from 7.9 per cent (2016 TTS) to 8.8 per cent (2020 COVHITS). Further, transit and carpooling mode shares both decreased, to 3 and 10 per cent, respectively. Regional staff will continue to collect and analyze travel pattern data to ensure Peel's sustainable transportation mode share is trending upward towards Council's goal of 50 per cent.

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5. Funding

The Region of Peel has been successful in securing funding from grant opportunities to fund active transportation initiatives, including approximately \$4.23 million and \$150,000 from the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling program and Ontario Active School Travel program, respectively. Regional staff will continue to pursue grant funding opportunities in support of active transportation.

Regional staff are currently awaiting further details on the recently announced \$400 million National Active Transportation Fund, which will be made available over five years to support the construction of new and expanded networks of active transportation infrastructure.

Additionally, in December 2020, Regional Council approved the Development Charges (DC) By-law Update, which provides funding for active transportation infrastructure required to support future growth.

6. Next Steps

Regional staff continue to work with various partners to successfully implement the STS and achieve the 50 per cent sustainable modal share by 2041. Staff will continue to monitor the impacts of the ongoing pandemic on travel trends and adjust implementation of the actions outlined in the STS accordingly.

Further to the December 2020 request from Regional Council, work to facilitate the use of micro-mobility modes is ongoing in conjunction with local municipal partners. Regional staff anticipate a separate report will be brought forward to Council in 2022 regarding the use of micro-mobility and the creation of an accompanying education campaign to advance safe and multi-modal transportation.

Regional staff acknowledge the direction to provide updates twice a year on the status of implementation of active transportation infrastructure and programs (Resolution 2021-402). However, due to the limited construction season and frequency of data collection, and to ensure Regional Council receives meaningful updates, staff propose annual updates, coupled with reporting at key milestones as necessary.

CONCLUSION

Staff will continue to implement infrastructure and programs in support of the 50 per cent sustainable mode share by 2041 and the achievement of a safe, comfortable, and convenient sustainable transportation network for Peel residents, that supports the Community Mobility Term of Council Priority and achievement of a Community for Life.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – 2020 and 2021 Active Transportation Infrastructure Projects

Appendix II – Active Transportation Infrastructure Map

Appendix III – 2020 and 2021 Active Transportation Programs

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