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**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE: Peel Goods Movement Update**

**FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works**

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the Region of Peel's Goods Movement program.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Region's Goods Movement Strategic Plan provides a long-term road map to accommodate growth related goods movement while maintaining a high quality of life for residents. The strategy is supported by a five-year (2017-2021) action plan.
  - In April 2009, Peel Regional Council directed that a Peel Goods Movement Task Force be created to promote and advocate for efficient goods movement in the Region. The Peel Goods Movement Task Force members meet quarterly to help advance the Goods Movement Strategic Plan. One of the major accomplishments of the Task Force throughout 2020 and 2021 was to work collaboratively to allow businesses to deliver goods any time of day in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The Smart Freight Centre was established in October 2018 between the Region, McMaster University, the University of Toronto, and York University with a mandate to carry out evidence-based research to address congestion in the transportation of freight.
  - The Smart Freight Centre's application for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Alliance Grant has been successful and will provide \$3.1 million over five years (2019 – 2023) to match the \$938,000 in cash contributions and in-kind contributions (3:1 ratio) from funding partners.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Importance of Goods Movement in Peel**

Peel Regional Council has taken an active leadership role in advancing goods movement improvements in Ontario. Goods movement has been identified as an integral component of the "Expand Community Mobility" Term of Council Priority for the 2019 – 2022 Term of Council. The Region of Peel is home to Toronto Pearson Airport (Canada's largest airport by freight and passenger volume) and the CN Brampton Intermodal terminal which is the largest in Canada and is traversed by 13,000 trucks weekly. Further the Region is directly adjacent to the CP Vaughan intermodal terminal. Close to half a million trucks travel through Peel carrying \$10.8 billion worth of commodity on a weekly basis. The strategic location of Peel also makes it a significant base for the movement of goods by truck

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between Canada and the United States representing 18 percent of the weekly Ontario-US International trips beginning or ending in Peel.

By maintaining and supporting an efficient, sustainable and safe goods movement network, the Region can continue to enhance the quality of life of Peel's communities and meet the needs of Peel's businesses. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the need for a safe, efficient, sustainable, and reliable goods movement system became more evident than ever before.

### **2. Peel Goods Movement Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021**

The Peel Goods Movement Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 provides a five-year action plan for goods movement in Peel. The Strategic Plan was approved by Regional Council in April 2018 (Resolution 2018-336) and contains an action plan categorized into four strategic directions: Infrastructure improvements; Partnership, Communication and Advocacy; Systems Optimization of Existing Infrastructure; and Planning and Forecasting.

The action plan contains nine key actions to improve how goods are transported within and through Peel Region (Appendix I). Throughout 2020 and 2021, the action items undertaken include:

- Goods movement and logistics planning – Regional staff completed an analysis of the concept of a Peel Enterprise Zone which involved identifying employment land needs related to goods movement. The purpose of this work is to support the consideration of goods movement in growth planning approaches.
- Expanded off-peak delivery pilot – Local municipalities relaxed their night-time noise by-laws to facilitate goods delivery at any hour. The objective of this project was to reduce truck congestion on Regional roads, however it also helped to support critical goods movement activity during the pandemic.
- Aggregate movement impacts on communities – A study is underway to identify the movement of aggregates in Peel and how this impacts local communities. The outcome of this work is to provide strategies that support the industry while minimizing impacts to local communities.
- Importance of freight fluidity – Work is underway to examine logistics costs, travel time information, last mile delivery metrics, and infrastructure utilization for goods movement in Peel. This information will be used to identify opportunities for network improvement, policy changes and to advocate for Peel infrastructure funding.

The majority of action items are either complete or underway and targeting completion in 2021/2022.

### **3. Peel Goods Movement Task Force**

In April 2009, Peel Region Council directed that a Peel Goods Movement Task Force be created to promote and advocate for efficient goods movement in the Region. The Task Force, chaired by the Peel Regional Chair, brings together public and private sector interests involved in goods movement to share information that will help address current challenges and identify future opportunities. In 2020, the Peel Goods Movement Task Force

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celebrated its 10-year anniversary. As of March 2020, there are more than 40 active Task Force members.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Task Force continued to meet virtually to discuss, understand, and address challenges to the goods movement industry introduced by the pandemic. One of the major accomplishments of the Task Force in 2020 was to work collaboratively to allow businesses to deliver goods any time of day.

### **4. The Smart Freight Centre**

Regional Council approved the establishment of the Smart Freight Centre (Resolution 2017-432) as a support to the approved Goods Movement Strategic Plan. Goods movement strategies require interdisciplinary teams as well as data drawn from cross municipal boundaries. In recognition of this, the Region took a leadership role in establishing a five-year Collaboration Agreement between the Region, McMaster University, the University of Toronto, and York University to advance goods movement research.

#### **a) Collaboration Agreement and Funding**

The Smart Freight Centre Collaboration, consisting of the Region and three universities, has been successful in attracting funding from various groups to help support goods movement research projects.

Notably, the University of Toronto in collaboration with four government agencies, 11 industry partners and three academic institutions submitted a proposal for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Alliance Grant. This grant application has been successful and will provide \$3.1 million over five years to fund research projects identified by the Smart Freight Centre. The Grant is supported by approximately \$1,000,000 in matching funds provided by the Region of Peel, City of Toronto, Region of York, Transport Canada, ESRI Canada, Gatik, Commercial Heavy Equipment Training Limited (CHET), Geotab, and Shipperbee.

In 2020 and 2021, the City of Toronto and York Region created separate research agreements with the three Universities to commit funding to research projects identified by the Smart Freight Centre. Ministry of Transportation Ontario staff have also expressed an interest in funding certain Smart Freight Centre research projects and are preparing a separate legal agreement with the Smart Freight Centre.

#### **b) Project Status**

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Smart Freight Centre advanced many projects, notably, the establishment of the Freight Data Warehouse which makes private freight data in aggregate form available for evidence-based research, a survey of Peel residents to understand e-commerce related trends and impacts, an analysis of interchanges and intersections for long combination vehicles, and an expanded off-peak delivery pilot.

A summary of projects underway or completed throughout 2020 and 2021 by the Smart Freight Centre, in support of the Peel Goods Movement Strategic Plan is provided in Appendix II.

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### **5. Proposed Direction**

The Region's Goods Movement Strategic Plan (2017-2021) will be updated starting in 2022. The update will examine recent changes and trends in goods movement, identify emerging opportunities and risks, and define an action plan for future years to improve the efficiency and sustainability of goods movement in Peel.

The Smart Freight Centre Collaboration Agreement likewise ends in 2023. This creates an opportunity for staff to review the Agreement for possible improvements. These may include updates to the governance and administrative structure, as well as contractual changes that would allow for the addition of new funding partners and research institutions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Goods movement has been identified as an integral component of the "Expand Community Mobility" Term of Council Priority for the 2019 – 2022 Term of Council. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the need for a safe, efficient, sustainable, and reliable goods movement system became more evident than ever before.

A number of key program initiatives have played a significant role in the advancement of this Term of Council priority including the establishment the Goods Movement Task Force; implementation activities under the 2017-2021 Peel Goods Movement Strategic Plan; implementation of the Off-Peak Delivery program and research completed by the Smart Freight Centre.

Staff will continue to report back on progress of the Peel goods movement initiatives and future updates to the Goods Movement Strategic Plan and Smart Freight Centre Collaboration Agreement.

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix I – Summary of Peel Goods Movement Strategic Plan Action Items and Smart Freight Centre 2021 Projects

Appendix II – Smart Freight Centre 2020 – 2021 Projects

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