



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: February 15, 2022

SUBJECT:	York Region Transportation Master Plan Update
PREPARED BY:	Loy Cheah, Senior Manager, Transportation, Ext. 4838 Samson Wat, Sr. Project Engineer, Transportation, Ext. 2077

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report dated January 24, 2022 entitled “York Region Transportation Master Plan Update” and the presentation by York Region staff be received;
- 2) That York Region be requested to consider incorporating the following changes into the 2022 Transportation Master Plan Update:
 - a. Extend the Leslie Street rapid transit corridor via Major Mackenzie Drive and Woodbine Avenue to the employment lands in the Markham Innovation Exchange (MiX) district;
 - b. Road-rail grade separation on 16th Avenue, east of Highway 48 be subject to the recommendation of the Markham Road/Mount Joy Secondary Plan study;
 - c. Confirm the Regional plan for the Highway 48 – Donald Cousens Parkway connection in the northeast quadrant of the Major Mackenzie Drive/Highway 48 intersection;
 - d. Add the Denison GO Station;
 - e. Confirm the Regional role and responsibility for infrastructure on Regional road boulevards, including sidewalks, multi-use paths, cycle tracks, and street-lighting, and prepare a York Region 10-year capital plan for the cycling network on Regional corridors that is aligned with the City’s Active Transportation Master Plan and implementation strategy;
 - f. Jurisdictional transfer of local Markham roads to the Region, such as 19th Avenue and Reesor Road, as they increasingly serve a Regional function;
- 3) That comments in this staff report and additional input from Council be forwarded to York Region as the City’s formal comments on the draft York Region Transportation Master Plan; and
- 4) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview and seeks Council input on the draft York Region 2022 Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which includes draft transportation network plans for cycling, rapid transit and roads. A presentation by York Region staff accompanies this report (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND:

In April 2021, the Region of York commenced an update to the Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP). An update to the TMP is one of York Region's initiatives being developed along with the Municipal Comprehensive Review that include updates to the Regional Official Plan, the Wastewater Master Plan and the Development Charge By-law.

The Region is engaging with the public, stakeholders, and government agencies through each phase of updating the TMP to seek input on the future of transportation in York Region. Markham staff is participating through the study's Partnership Advisory Group (PAG).

Purpose Statement, Guiding Principles and Strategic Objectives

In the initial phase of the TMP update, the Region engaged the public, stakeholders and other government agencies, including the City of Markham, to formulate the purpose statement, guiding principles and strategic objectives of the TMP.

Feedback from the initial public and stakeholder engagement on the most important aspect of the transportation system generated the following:

- Safety is a top priority
- Provide a range of viable, affordable travel options
- Create connections between and within communities
- Complete and connect networks for walking, cycling and taking transit
- Provide fast and convenient travel options
- Develop an environmentally sustainable transportation system

A summary of the study's purpose statement, guiding principles, and strategic objectives is included in Attachment 2.

Proposed Transportation Master Plan Networks

The 2022 TMP strives to balance transportation needs for all modes of travel and to develop a flexible and fiscally sustainable master plan that is adaptable to external factors, including changing travel patterns and behaviours, climate change impact, economic conditions, development market trends, evolving Provincial infrastructure investment priorities, and funding requirements.

It will not include phased infrastructure maps that summarize network requirements in five-year horizons, as were included in the previous 2016 TMP. Instead, the timing for implementation of the recommended transportation network improvements will be determined through the Region's 10-year Roads and Transit Capital Construction program, reviewed and approved annually by York Region Council through the budget process.

As part of the 2022 TMP update, proposed cycling, rapid transit and roads networks were developed based on the above guiding principles and the Region's fiscal strategy.

Proposed 2051 Cycling Network

Enhanced cycling network supports active and sustainable transportation, and is vital to improving the effectiveness of the Regional and local transportation networks. Increasing cycling trips have been observed for both commuting and recreational purposes across the Region. Therefore, it is essential for the Region to prioritize building a well-connected cycling network to further encourage and support cycling as an active and sustainable mode of travel in the Region.

The draft TMP proposes a commuter cycling network (Attachment 3), located on the arterial road system, and a Regional trails network (Attachment 4).

Proposed 2051 Rapid Transit Network

The proposed 2051 Rapid Transit Network, included in Attachment 5, is generally consistent with recommendations in the 2016 TMP and aligns with the Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (2018) and the ongoing Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Study being undertaken by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

The rapid transit network map focuses on identifying transit infrastructure improvements and does not identify conventional transit service lines, rural bus connections and mobility on-request services. Instead, these future transit service changes will be proposed and summarized in the York Region Transit 5-Year Strategic Plan.

In comparison to the 2016 TMP, the key change to the proposed 2051 rapid transit network in Markham is the replacement of a potential Woodbine rapid transit corridor with a proposed McCowan rapid transit corridor (Steeles Avenue to Major Mackenzie Drive).

Proposed 2051 Road Network

The proposed 2051 Road Network, included in Attachment 6, is developed to recognize the need to maximize the benefit to travellers and connect communities within the Region while recognizing financial realities for both today and the future. The proposed arterial road improvements in the 2022 TMP focuses on the following areas:

- Region's most congested corridors
- Areas of new development and major employment
- Areas that facilitates access to freeways, Regional Centres and rapid transit corridors.

Details of the road improvements, such as four or six lanes roadway, will not be identified in the 2022 TMP. This provides flexibility to the project-specific environmental assessment process to better identify local needs and improvements. The timing of each improvement will be identified through the Regional budgeting process, where Regional Council reviews and approves the 10-year Road and Transit Capital Construction Program on an annual basis.

In comparison to the 2016 TMP, the key changes proposed to the 2051 Regional road network in Markham include:

-
- Eliminating the need for a separate corridor for the conceptual Donald Cousens Parkway extension from Highway 48 to Highway 404 through capacity expansions or other improvements to the existing roads in the area;
 - Removing road improvements between 16th Avenue and Major Mackenzie Drive on Woodbine Avenue, Warden Road, Kennedy Road, and McCowan Road;
 - Removing the 16th Avenue road-rail grade separation, east of Highway 48.

York Region staff have indicated that these changes are consistent with the guiding principles and strategic objectives of the TMP Update as noted in Attachment 2.

Proposed Focused Areas

The TMP update proposes five focus areas that summarize transportation priorities that will require further studies to address key transportation issues. These focus areas were developed based on public and shareholder consultation, and they align with the TMP's purpose statement, guiding principles and strategic objectives. The five proposed focus areas are:

- Safety for all travellers
- Transportation equity
- Reduce car travel
- Financial and environmental sustainability
- Role and function of Regional corridors

Next Steps for the 2022 TMP

The Region is working with local municipalities, agencies and stakeholders to finalize the transportation network plans as well as the five focus areas for the 2022 TMP. A revised draft TMP will be presented to York Region Council in March 2022. Shortly after, the third and last virtual public information centre will be held in spring of 2022 to seek public and stakeholder input on the draft final TMP. The Final TMP will be presented to Regional Council for approval in June 2022.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Preliminary Staff Comments to York Region:

As mentioned earlier, Markham staff is participating in the TMP update through the Partnership Advisory Group (PAG). Preliminary feedback was provided to York Region to ensure the proposed transportation networks do not preclude transportation improvements that are significant to City growth. Key transportation infrastructures to be reviewed with Regional staff for the 2022 TMP update include:

- Extending the Leslie Street rapid transit corridor via Major Mackenzie Drive and Woodbine Avenue to the employment lands in the Markham Innovation Exchange (MiX) district;
- Road-rail grade separation on 16th Avenue, east of Highway 48 to be subject to the Markham Road/Mount Joy Secondary Plan study;
- Status of the Highway 48 – Donald Cousens Parkway connection in the northeast quadrant of the Major Mackenzie Drive/Highway 48 intersection;
- Adding the Denison GO Station;

-
- Regional role and responsibility for infrastructure on Regional road boulevards, including sidewalks, multi-use paths, cycle tracks, and street-lighting, and prepare a York Region 10-year capital plan for the cycling network on Regional corridors that is aligned with the City's Active Transportation Master Plan and implementation strategy;
 - Jurisdictional transfer of local Markham roads to the Region, such as 19th Avenue and Reesor Road, as they increasingly serve a Regional function.

The Region is working with local municipalities, agencies and stakeholders to finalize the transportation network plans, including the cycling, rapid transit and roads plans, as well as the five focus areas for the 2022 TMP. Staff recommend that Council endorse the above comments and provide any additional inputs to be issued to York Region for consideration.

Staff will report back in April/May 2022 if the above comments are not satisfactorily incorporated into the draft TMP to be reported to Regional Council in March 2022.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

York Region's proposed 2022 TMP network maps and focus areas are compatible and align with the City of Markham's Official Plan policies and Building Markham's Future Together 2020-2023 Strategic Plan related to the Safe, Sustainable & Complete Community goal. The proposed improvements balance transportation needs for all modes of travel, emphasizing enhancing the Regional cycling and rapid transit networks and optimizing the road network between communities in York Region.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Planning Policy and Research staff have reviewed the content of this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Frank Clarizio, P.Eng.
Director of Engineering

Arvin Prasad, MPA, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1: “2022 Transportation Master Plan Update”, York Region Presentation to City of Markham Development Services Committee
- 2: 2022 TMP Update – Proposed Statement, Guiding Principles and Strategic Objectives
- 3: Draft proposed 2051 Commuter Cycling Network
- 4: Draft proposed 2051 Recreational Cycling Network
- 5: Draft proposed 2051 Rapid Transit Network
- 6: Draft proposed 2051 Road Network