



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: May 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Road Safety Strategic Plan Development Update
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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report and staff presentation entitled “Road Safety Strategic Plan Development Update” be received; and
2. That staff collaborate with York Region to develop a Road Safety Strategic Plan based on the combined study Terms of Reference and key deliverables described in this report; and
3. That staff report back at key milestones during the development of the combined Road Safety Strategy, including on the proposed study design and consultation program; and further
4. That staff be directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The report seeks Council approval to collaborate with York Region to develop a combined Road Safety Strategy based on common principles, methodology and objectives.

BACKGROUND:

Steps toward development of a Road Safety Strategy have been completed

The approach towards a Road Safety Strategy and Plan for the City of Markham was presented to Council in March 2019 through the “Road Safety in Markham” memorandum. It presented:

- Markham’s current traffic safety strategy;
- The need for a fundamental shift in attitude toward road safety and mobility;
- The need to prioritize safety for all road users over the expeditious movement of motorized vehicles;
- The “Vision Zero” Philosophy;
- The need for partnership with York Region in a two-tier municipal governance structure;

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- Development of a traffic safety audit followed by a road safety plan being the next major steps.

A City-wide Traffic Safety Audit was undertaken in 2019/20 and the results presented to Council in September 2020. This audit included:

- Collection and review of all City road infrastructure, traffic data and collision data (2014 – 2018);
- Collision network screening and safety risk analysis;
- Review of collision prone locations;
- Evaluation and comparison of the City's overall safety performance;
- Identification of a series of measures to mitigate specific road safety issues;
- Develop the Terms of Reference for development of a Road Safety Plan;

Vision Zero and the Safe System approach to road safety is the current best practice

Vision Zero is a Safe System approach and a concept established in Sweden in the 1990's as a means of broadening road user safety policy. Vision Zero requires cultural and systemic changes, aiming to transform traditional road safety strategy to a proactive focus on preventing and eliminating fatal and serious injuries from collisions on roads having particular regard for the most vulnerable road users. Jurisdictions around the world including in Canada and the US have applied the Safe System/Vision Zero approach to develop road safety plans and strategies.

Capital budget to develop a road safety strategy starting in 2022 was approved

Markham Council approved a 2022 capital budget for the development of a multi-year Road Safety Strategy, incorporating Vision Zero principles, and focusing on vulnerable road users. Staff had planned to issue a request for proposals from qualified consulting firms in Q2 2022 to undertake the development of the multi-year Road Safety Plan.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

York Region is developing a road safety strategy in 2022

In February 2022, York Region informed staff of their plan to develop a Regional road safety strategy beginning in 2022. York Region planned to seek proposals from qualified consulting firms in Q2 2022 to develop a multi-year road safety strategy, encompassing all modes of travel. The objective of the strategy is to build on Vision Zero principles and philosophies to develop a next generation road safety strategy. The strategy is to focus on changing traveller behaviours, setting realistic targets, and identifying quantifiable, practical and feasible mitigation measures. The resulting strategy will also be adaptable to local municipal road safety needs, covering both the Regional and local transportation networks, and provides an opportunity to coordinate and collaborate with the Region in the development of the City's road safety strategy.

Opportunities exist for Markham and York Region to collaborate on developing a coordinated road safety strategy

Road users do not recognize the separate jurisdictional responsibilities in a multi-tiered transportation network. The transportation network and approach to road safety should be contextually consistent whether traveling on a local municipal road or Regional road. Inconsistent messaging and methods for addressing road safety can result in road user confusion, inequitable application of road safety measures, and increased risks to public safety. Therefore, it is critical that a two-tiered municipal structure, such as York Region and Markham, share a consistent vision, methodology and objective when developing a road safety strategy.

To this end, staff met with York Region staff to discuss the terms of reference for the development of the respective road safety strategies. Through this review, it was clear that the Region and City shared an overlapping vision, overall methodology and objective towards the development of a road safety strategy. The overlaps include:

- the prioritization of vulnerable road users,
- need for extensive consultation and engagement with the public and key stakeholders,
- an evidence-based data driven action plan,
- using a Safe System (or Vision Zero) approach in enhancing infrastructure planning and design to prioritize road safety for all road users, and
- using the resulting road safety strategy as the guiding document for capital plan development and determination of future resource requirements.

Consolidated terms of reference have been prepared to include both York Region and Markham requirements

Through ongoing discussions, York Region and Markham staff have developed revised study Terms of Reference that will take into consideration the requirements of both municipalities. The revised Terms of Reference include the following key deliverables:

- Phase 1: Establish a project steering committee, consisting of representatives from local municipalities and agencies, to provide direction and approval of the strategy development;
- Phase 2: Review and incorporate current road safety initiatives and programs as the foundation of the new road safety strategy;
- Phase 3: Engage road safety partners and citizens through extensive consultation;
- Phase 4: Encourage changes in traveller behaviour and social culture through human factors research, vehicle trajectory data and a systemic safety analysis;
- Phase 5: Take a Safe System approach in enhancing infrastructure planning and design elements through a road safety lens;
- Phase 6: Identify quantifiable, practical and feasible mitigation measures (for specific Regional and local road locations) to address focus areas and develop

realistic road safety targets and key performance indicators that include a return-on-investment;

- Phase 7: Develop a business case describing resource needs and a financial plan to deliver a sustainable implementation strategy;
- Phase 8: Finalize the road safety strategy report and presentation material.

The projected completion of the combined road safety strategy study is the end of 2023.

Collaboration will ensure consistent messaging and offer several benefits

While collaborating on a joint road safety strategy will ensure consistency in messaging and application of such, this partnership will also allow for other efficiencies through its development, including the following:

- 1) The City will have the opportunity to leverage the resource capabilities of the Region through the development of a York Region business intelligence (BI) data warehouse and dashboard. This York Region traffic data BI initiative will incorporate and consolidate relevant data from stakeholders including local municipalities, Public Health and hospitals, York Regional Police, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, Office of the Chief Coroner, Environment Canada, etc.
- 2) The Region's access to connected vehicle data to better inform stakeholders on human factors, priority locations for review, and potential quantitative measures to correct driver behaviour.
- 3) The branding and overall vision of a combined road safety strategy will be developed internally by the Region in consultation with the steering committee, which will include municipal stakeholders. This will ensure consistent messaging across the Regional/local municipal levels and prevent confusion during the public consultation phase of the study.
- 4) Although this is a Region-wide strategy, the City will continue to have autonomy with respect to project and program decisions on City roads.
- 5) The Region is not seeking any financial contribution from the City for the development of the Strategy, resulting in significant cost savings.

Staff recommend collaborating with York Region on the combined road safety strategy development

York Region and Markham's transportation networks are fully integrated, with the majority of road users not recognizing jurisdictional authority between the two. Both York Region and the City have recognized the need to develop a road safety strategy that aligns with Safe System principles, namely, recognizing that humans make mistakes, and that the transportation network must be designed to take this into account in order to minimize serious injury and death.

In order to achieve a safer transportation network, York Region and the City have identified an opportunity to collaborate on the development of a combined road safety

strategy that will have consistent messaging, goals and objectives, and that recognizes the need for improving road safety regardless of jurisdiction or road user.

York Region will be issuing their request for proposal (RFP) for the development of a road safety strategy to the open market in May 2022. To ensure that the City plays a significant role in the strategy development and to realize the benefits of a combined effort, staff recommend that Council approve the collaborative development of a combined road safety strategy with York Region based on the study Terms of Reference and key deliverables described in this report. Staff will report back on study progress at key milestones in the development of the plan and to seek Council input and concurrence where necessary.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Region is not seeking any financial contribution from the City for the development of the combined Road Safety Strategy, resulting in significant cost savings to the City. However, some expenditure from the City budget, Development of Road Safety Strategy (account #640-101-5699-22043 with an available budget of \$434,700), may occur to address additional City-specific scope of work that could arise during the Regional study.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

In the Building Markham's Future Together Strategic Plan, development of a road safety strategy aligns with the strategic focus for a Safe & Sustainable Community by improving safety for all road users.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Operations and Finance have reviewed this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

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