

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 19, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS – FOURTH ANNUAL UPDATE

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To celebrate the strides made by the City and its partners in 2023 towards creating a more walkable, bikeable and micro-user-friendly Vaughan. This is the fourth annual update since the completion of the 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.

Report Highlights

- In 2023, more than 11 km of new cycle tracks and in-boulevard multi-use pathways were opened and 29 km of existing multi-use pathways and trails were updated with new pavement markings and signage.
- In 2024, residents and visitors can expect the construction of even more cycle tracks, in-boulevard multi-use pathways and sidewalks; most notably the Jane Street (Active Transportation) Uptown Link will begin construction.

Recommendations

1. That the City Manager be granted delegated authority to execute Agreement(s) on behalf of the City with the Regional Municipality of York as it relates to the Jane Street Uptown (Active Transportation) Link Project.

Background

Vaughan's Active Transportation Programs align with the goals outlined in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, the Vaughan Transportation Plan and MoveSmart. These programs are a strategic response to the Service Excellence Strategic Plan, which identifies Transportation and Mobility as a key priority for the 2022-2026 Term of Council. By focusing on policy, planning, and infrastructure, these active transportation initiatives aim to enhance modes of travel such as walking, bike riding, and emerging forms of mobility to enable choices in how people travel. While their primary focus is on transportation, they also contribute to broader City-Building objectives, Environmental Sustainability, Engaged and Inclusive Communities, Safety and Well-being as well as Economic Prosperity

The Active Transportation Programs Annual Update provides a yearly snapshot of the organizations efforts towards creating a more walkable, bikeable and micro-user-friendly Vaughan.

The Active Transportation Programs Annual Update provides a yearly snapshot and showcases the collaborative efforts of the organization and its community partners towards creating a more walkable, bikeable and micro-user-friendly Vaughan in support of a safe and comfortable experience when travelling. This report is the fourth annual update since the completion of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

For more comprehensive look at the City's progress since the completion of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, see previous updates to Council linked below. Improvements in Active Transportation are key components of the Vaughan Transportation Plan and the MoveSmart Mobility Management Strategy.

Refer to **Attachment 3: 2023 Active Transportation Accomplishments Highlights.**

Active transportation (AT) refers to the movement of people or goods powered by human activity whereas micromobility refers to lightweight electric-powered modes of travel.

Active transportation refers to the movement of people or goods powered by human activity. Active transportation includes walking, riding a bike and the use of human-powered or hybrid mobility aids such as wheelchairs.

Micro-users are users of lightweight electric-powered modes of travel such as e-bicycles, e-scooters and limited-speed motorcycles. Micromobility is an emerging mode in Vaughan and across the Greater Toronto Area. For more information visit [Vaughan.ca/micromobility](https://vaughan.ca/micromobility).

Previous Reports/Authority

[2023 Accommodating Micromobility \(E-Bikes and E-Scooters\) and Initiate a Shared Pilot](#) – Item 1, Report No. 35 of the Committee of the Whole (WS) adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 26, 2023.

[2023 Active Transportation Programs – Third Annual Update](#) – Item 6, Report No. 9 of the Committee of the Whole adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 22, 2023.

[Five Quick Wins to Address Member’s Resolution – Thinking Globally, Acting Locally in Vaughan](#) – Item 2, Report No. 38 of the Committee of the Whole which was adopted without amendment by Council of the City of Vaughan on November 29, 2022.

[Transportation and Infrastructure Task Force Findings and Recommendations Report](#) – Item 12, Report No. 24 of the Committee of the Whole adopted as by Council of the City of Vaughan on May 17, 2022.

[2022 Active Transportation Programs – Second Annual Update](#) – Item 6, Report No. 6 of the Committee of the Whole which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 15, 2022.

[2021 Active Transportation Programs – First Annual Update](#) – Item 10, Report No. 6 of the Committee of the Whole adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 17, 2021.

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update](#) – Item 10, Report No. 41 of the Committee of the Whole adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 17, 2019.

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update Progress Report & Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program Funding Update](#) – Item 9, Report No. 18, of the Committee of the Whole, adopted without amendment by Council of the City of Vaughan on May 23, 2018.

[Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Cycling Network Proposed Revisions](#) – Item 7, Report No.10, of the Committee of the Whole, adopted without amendment by Council of the City of Vaughan on March 20, 2018.

[Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Task Force Findings Report](#) – Item 8, Report No. 4, of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee, adopted without amendment by Council of the City of Vaughan on April 19, 2017.

Analysis and Options

Vaughan is home to a large active transportation network of sidewalks, cycle tracks, multi-use pathways and recreational trails – and it continues to grow. As Vaughan evolves, so does its commitment to awareness and culture, safety, infrastructure and connectivity by expanding this network to provide residents with a range of separated active transportation options, accommodate micromobility users and create an even more interconnected city. Every person starts and ends their trip by walking and most people use a combination of travel modes for their daily activities. As such providing choices allows people to use different forms of transportation conveniently and safely.

11 km of new cycle tracks and multi-use pathways were opened, and 29 km of existing multi-use pathways and trails were updated with new pavement markings and signage.

The City of Vaughan is actively working to create a more walkable, bikeable and interconnected environment for its residents. By investing in safe and connected infrastructure for all modes of transportation the City aims to provide viable active transportation options, accommodate micro-users and free up road space for those who must drive to get to where they are going. In 2023, the City made significant progress by completing the construction of over 11 km of new cycle tracks and multi-use pathways with another 11 km continuing construction into 2024. Additionally, 29 km of existing multi-use pathways and trails were updated with new pavement markings and signage.

The following projects were completed in 2023:

Weston Road Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks

- 2 km of new cycle track and 2 km of new sidewalk were added to each boulevard of Weston Road between Teston Road and Major Mackenzie Drive.

Martin Grove Cycle Tracks

- 1.7 km of new cycle tracks were added to each boulevard of Martin Grove between Steeles Avenue and Rainbow Creek Park Trail.

North Maple Regional Park Gateway - Keele Street Multi-use Pathway

- 2 km of new multi-use pathway on the east boulevard of Keele Street between Teston and Kirby Roads was substantially completed in 2023 and work around the intersection of Keele Street and Vaughan CARES Way will be completed in 2024. This multi-use pathway will provide active transportation access to Vaughan's North Maple Regional Park.
- This project was completed with the assistance of a \$750K contribution through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund.

Major Mackenzie Drive Multi-use Pathways and Cycle Tracks

- 2.4 km of new multi-use pathways on the south side boulevard of Major Mackenzie Drive between Highway 400 and Jane Street, and on both sides between McNaughton Road/Avro Road and Gram Street
- 0.7 km of new cycle track on each boulevard between Jane Street and McNaughton Road/Avro Road
- The City received a contribution of \$250K through the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program towards this project.

Garnet William Way Multi-use Pathway

- 0.7 km new multi-use pathway was constructed on the east side of Garnet William Way between East Corners Boulevard and Major Mackenzie Drive.

Dufferin Street Sidewalk and Cycle Track

- 0.8 km of new sidewalk and new cycle track were added to both boulevards along Dufferin Street between Apple Blossom Drive and Marc Santi Boulevard as part of York Region Capital Program.

Existing In-boulevard Multi-use Pathway Pavement Markings and Signage

- 29 km of existing in-boulevard multi-use pathways across the city were updated with pavement markings and signage.

In addition, several ongoing construction projects are expected to continue throughout 2024, including but not limited to:

Refer to **Attachment 2: 2024 Active Transportation Network Progress Map**, which provides an overview of existing active transportation facilities including those constructed in 2023.

New Westminster Cycle Tracks

- 2.0 km of new cycle tracks are being constructed in both boulevards along New Westminster Drive, between Clark Avenue and Bathurst Street, and a new pedestrian crossover at St. Elizabeth Catholic High School are underway.
- The City received a contribution of \$250K through the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program towards this project.

Rutherford Road Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks

- 5.4 km of new cycle tracks are being added to both boulevards along Rutherford Road and 3.7 km of new sidewalks from Jane Street to Westburne Drive, and from Peter Rupert Avenue to Bathurst Street.

Teston Road Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks

- 2 km of new cycle tracks and sidewalks are being constructed in both boulevards along Teston Road, between Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road, as part of York Region's Teston Road Widening and Reconstruction project.

Keele Street Bike Lanes

- 1 km new on-road painted bike lanes are being added on both sides of Keele Street between Steeles Avenue and Great Gulf Drive as part of York Region's road improvements project.

Attachment 1: 2024 Active Transportation Network Progress Map, provides an overview of existing active transportation facilities including those constructed in 2023. Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information appearing on the map is accurate and current as of the last updated date.

The City follows a 5 to 7-year process, encompassing study, budgeting, design and construction for active transportation infrastructure projects.

Before the city can proceed with construction, several essential steps are taken including study, budgeting, and design. In the context of active transportation infrastructure projects, the entire process typically takes 5 to 7 years. This timeline includes submitting the project for budget approval and carrying it through design and finally to construction completion. Currently, the City is managing more than 125 km of routine accommodation and standalone active transportation infrastructure capital projects at different stages of study, design and implementation. Further, new active transportation infrastructure constructed by developers is in addition to these City-or partner-led projects.

Attachment 2: 2023 Active Transportation Capital Infrastructure Projects List provides a comprehensive list of standalone active transportation capital infrastructure projects and those being accommodated through other capital opportunities by phase.

61 km of active transportation infrastructure were actively in the design phase in 2023.

The detailed design phase for active transportation projects typically takes 2 years, from procurement to completion. In 2023, 61 km of active transportation infrastructure were actively in the design process phase.

Nearly 27 km of infrastructure is anticipated to commence construction by 2025.

The following projects are scheduled to start construction in 2024 or 2025:

Jane Street Uptown (Active Transportation) Link – Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks

- 7.9 km of new cycle tracks on each side of the road and 4.0 km of new sidewalk between Portage Parkway and Teston Road

- 0.4 km of new multi-use pathway on the east side between Highway 7 and Portage Parkway

Thornhill Neighbourhood Network Cycle Tracks

- 1.2 km of new cycle track on Atkinson Avenue between Bathurst Street and Centre Street
- 0.6 km of new cycle track on Centre Street between Bathurst Street and Atkinson Avenue

Islington Avenue Cycle Tracks and Multi-use Pathways

- 1.4 km multi-use pathway replacement and improvements east side from Langstaff Road to Arista Gate
- 2.3 km cycle tracks – Major Mackenzie Drive to Highway 27 as part of Kleinburg Village Improvements
- 3.1 km of new multi-use pathway – Highway 7 to Kiloran Ave

Kirby Road Improvements

- 4.0 km of new multi-use pathways between Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street as part of Kirby Road Extension Project

Stegman’s Mill Road Multi-use Pathway

- 1.3 km of new multi-use pathway on the north boulevard of Stegman’s Mill Road between Islington Avenue and Kleinburg Summit Way

Connections to transit

- 1.3 km of active transportation connections to transit including an Active Transportation Bridge over Major Mackenzie Drive at GO Rail

With bike riding and micromobility use growing, the City continues to primarily implement sidewalks and cycle tracks.

Throughout 2023, the City continued to expand its network of sidewalks and cycle tracks to enhance safety for those walking, riding their bikes or using micromobility devices as well as to make street-level interactions a more comfortable and predictable experience for all users.

The necessary by-laws to permit and regulate the use of e-bikes and e-scooters on designated cycling facilities were enacted in October 2023.

With bike riding and micromobility use growing, clarifying the rules and regulations for all devices was important. In 2022, staff engaged a consultant to review accommodation of micromobility devices in the city’s cycling facilities. The report indicated that designated cycling facilities with appropriate widths can accommodate e-bikes and e-scooters. In October 2023, following staff recommendation, the necessary by-laws to permit and regulate the use of e-bikes and e-scooters on designated cycling facilities

and on certain roads where designated cycling facilities currently do not exist were enacted.

The new by-laws establish the appropriate parameters and regulations for the use of e-bikes and e-scooters as was necessary for the City to participate in Provincial pilot projects for e-scooters. Through this report, Council reaffirmed its support of separate pedestrian and cycling facilities to minimize conflicts between people walking and those riding bikes or micromobility devices. Public education and outreach efforts are accompanying the new by-laws.

For more information refer to [Accommodating Micromobility \(E-Bikes and E-Scooters\) and Initiate a Shared Pilot](#) – Item 1, Report No. 35 of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) which was adopted by Council of the City of Vaughan on September 26, 2023.

With a growing active transportation network and increase in walking, bike riding and micromobility use in Vaughan, education and outreach efforts are becoming increasingly important.

Similar to offering swimming lessons with the opening of a new community pool, it is important for the City to offer education and outreach as new active transportation facilities are implemented. With the opening of new active transportation facilities, as well as increase in walking, bike riding and micromobility use in Vaughan, education and outreach efforts are that much more important. Like 2022, the education and outreach program in 2023 used a combination of in-person (such as booths set up at Concerts in the Park) and virtual (for example, public service announcements and social media) efforts to engage citizens and visitors of all ages and abilities with a focus on engaging Vaughan's youth.

Vaughan is empowering youth voices through the Transportation Youth Ambassadors Program, a collaboration with local high-school co-op programs.

Incorporating the ideas and perspectives of youth is vital to building a transportation system and places that people will choose to live, work and play in for generations to come. According to Statistics Canada, nearly 23% (approximately 76,000) of Vaughan's residents are 19 years old or younger, making them the largest age group in the city. When young people share their vision for the future of transportation, it contributes to the development of a vibrant, inclusive, and convenient transportation system that meets the needs of tomorrow. Educating our youth about the evolving transportation sector is also essential for succession planning, knowledge sharing, and leadership development. Through the Transportation Youth Ambassadors Program, a collaboration with local high-school co-op programs, Vaughan has seen a significant increase in the representation of young voices in municipal transportation decision-making, leading to a better understanding of the transportation priorities of the youth population. This initiative received the Platinum MarCom award in the communications and public relations category.

Financial Impact

No financial changes are proposed in this report. All active transportation projects, programs, staffing requests, and operational funding items are brought forward through the annual budget approval process.

Since the completion of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, the City has significantly invested in advancing active transportation and enhancing road safety for all modes of travel. In November 2022, Council endorsed advancing and expediting, where possible, actions relating to implementation of active transportation stated in the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan as one of the Five Quick Wins To Address Member's Resolution – Thinking Globally, Acting Locally in Vaughan outlined in a report to Committee of the Whole and Council. Staff developed a plan that was brought forward to Council as part of the 2023 budget cycle outlining accelerated routine accommodation and implementation of active transportation throughout Vaughan.

Active transportation infrastructure projects are implemented using two methods: “routine accommodation”, which leverages existing capital projects and development opportunities, and “standalone projects”, implemented via annual reviews within active transportation implementation programs.

To create a cohesive network of facilities in a cost effective and timely manner, projects are constructed either as a routine accommodation project or a standalone project. For a routine accommodation project, active transportation facilities are being constructed as part of already planned capital projects, such as a road rehabilitation, watermain replacement, or opportunities through the development application process. For a standalone project, active transportation implementation programs have been established that identify new active transportation projects to be constructed in the next 10 years. Each year, these projects are submitted for funding requests through the annual budget approval process.

To offset the financial impact of the active transportation program, the City continues to leverage grant opportunities, cost-sharing and in-kind partnerships.

The City continues to exemplify fiscal responsibility in advancing active transportation by utilizing grant opportunities and partnerships to fund and provide in-kind support for various infrastructure projects, education and outreach initiatives and programs.

Table 1: Summary of Funding Partners

Project	Project Status	Funding Partner or Program	Funding Amount	Agreement Year
Keele Street Multi-use Pathway (Teston Road to Kirby Road)	Construction - completed	Canada Community Revitalization Fund	\$750K	2022
Major Mackenzie Drive Cycle Tracks (Jane Street to McNaughton Road)	Construction - completed	York Region Municipal Partnership Program	\$250K	2023
New Westminster Cycle Tracks (Centre Street to Bathurst Street)	Construction – ongoing	York Region Municipal Partnership Program	\$250K	2023
Humber Trail Extension – Boyd Conservation Park to Langstaff Road	Planning and Design - completed	National Active Transportation Fund - Planning Stream	\$50K	2023
Humber Trail/ Riverwalk and Doctors McLean Park redevelopment	Design - underway	Strategic Priorities Infrastructure Fund	\$3.6M	2023
Jane Street Uptown Link – Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks	Construction – commencing in 2024	Municipality of York Region	\$3.2M – pending agreement	2023 – pending agreement
Jane Street Uptown Link – Sidewalk and Cycle Tracks	Construction – commencing in 2024	National Active Transportation Fund - Capital Stream	\$9.6M – awaiting confirmation	awaiting confirmation
		TOTAL RECEIVED	\$4.9M	
		TOTAL PENDING	\$12.8M	

The applications for the funding programs listed in **Table 1** were reinforced with letters of support from York Region, York Region Police, York Region Cycling Coalition, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and other partners.

In 2023, the City engaged in various other cost-sharing and in-kind partnerships with external organizations.

In collaboration with Metrolinx and York Region, the implementation of two active transportation bridges adjacent to the Barrie GO rail corridor, crossing Major Mackenzie Drive and Rutherford Road will provide first/last mile connectivity to the Rutherford and Maple GO Stations. The AT bridge across Rutherford Road is now open. Furthermore, the City continually works with York Region to introduce active transportation facilities within Regional boulevards or beneath regional corridors as part of the York Region Capital Program. The expansion of the City's recreational trails system is a joint effort between the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Most recently the City partnered with TRCA to develop a feasibility study for the 7 km Humber Trail, spanning from Steeles Avenue to the Boyd Conservation Area Trail.

In addition to infrastructure projects, the city partners with various organizations to deliver campaigns, education and outreach as it relates to walking, bike riding, micromobility use and road safety. For example, the City works with York Region Police to promote micromobility safety, York Region District School Boards in support of active school travel and local high-school co-op programs to support peer-to-peer engagement on the topic of transportation and mobility for youth.

Operational Impact

Successful spring and winter maintenance requires coordination between the Region and local municipalities. To establish a consistent approach across York Region, the City is reviewing operations and maintenance practices for active transportation facilities within Regional boulevards.

Winter maintenance of sidewalks is a local municipal responsibility under the Municipal Act.

As per the Municipal Act, the construction and winter maintenance of sidewalks alongside Regional roads fall under local municipal jurisdiction, unless otherwise agreed upon by the municipalities.

Operations and maintenance practices for multi-use pathways and cycle tracks within Regional boulevards are not clearly defined and need to be formalized.

According to the Municipal Act, winter maintenance of painted bike lanes on Regional roads falls under the jurisdiction of the Region. However, the Municipal Act does not clearly define ownership and maintenance responsibilities for multi-use pathways and cycle tracks within Regional boulevards. On-road painted bike lanes for roadways with operating speeds exceeding 50 km/h are no longer considered best practice. Furthermore, in some locations, limited space available for snow storage between the Regional road and the sidewalk, multi-use pathway or cycle track can create difficulties for winter maintenance. Operations and maintenance practices for multi-use pathways and cycle tracks as well as snow storage requirements within Regional boulevards need to be formalized.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration between City of Vaughan and York Region has yielded tangible successes in enhancing active transportation options within Vaughan.

The City of Vaughan has achieved significant progress in its active transportation network through continued collaboration with York Region. Staff members have worked closely on various initiatives, including the design and construction of sidewalks, cycle tracks, multi-use pathways, and grade-separated crossings. These efforts are part of larger projects, such as regional road widening, first/last mile connections to transit, and the development of regional-scale trails like the South York Greenway.

Regional corridors play a crucial role in the active transportation network. They serve as the most direct routes, connecting to transit services and leading to essential destinations and amenities. However, if grade-separated crossings are not provided, these corridors can become significant barriers to the multi-use recreation trail network.

This collaborative approach has yielded tangible successes in enhancing active transportation options within the City of Vaughan. The ongoing partnership between the City and York Region continues to shape a more accessible and connected urban environment for residents and visitors alike.

Conclusion

In summary, Vaughan boasts an extensive active transportation network comprising sidewalks, cycle tracks, multi-use pathways, and recreational trails. This network is

continually expanding as Vaughan evolves, reflecting the city's dedication to awareness, safety, culture, infrastructure, and connectivity. By enhancing this network, Vaughan aims to offer residents a variety of separated active transportation choices, accommodate micromobility users, and foster a more interconnected city. Recognizing that walking is the common starting and ending point for every journey, providing transportation options ensures convenience and safety for all.

For more information, Selma Hubjer, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8674

Attachments

1. 2024 Active Transportation Network Progress Map, February 2024
2. 2023 Active Transportation Capital Infrastructure Projects List, December 2023
3. 2023 Active Transportation Accomplishment Highlights, December 2023

Prepared by

Dorothy Kowpak, Program Manager, Active and Sustainable Transportation, ext. 8812
Christopher Tam, Manager, Transportation Planning and Engineering, ext. 8702

Approved by



Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager,
Infrastructure Development

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager