

Committee of the Whole Report (2)

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FROM:

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ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update and highlight the City's current efforts in advancing active transportation in support of the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

Report Highlights

- Face-to-face conversations and interactions with over 3,000 community members were the focus of public and stakeholder consultation efforts.
- Awareness and Culture, Safety, Infrastructure and Connectivity emerged as community priorities.
- On-going pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational projects that address community priorities.
- Summary of key recommendations to guide active transportation planning, design, implementation, promotion as well as operation and maintenance of pedestrian and cycling facilities and multi-use recreational trails.

Recommendations

1. THAT Council approve in principle the updated 2019 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
2. THAT the 2019 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan be used as the foundation in the planning, design, future implementation and maintenance of pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trails throughout the City of Vaughan.
3. THAT the implementation of the recommendations in the updated 2019 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan be subject to the reconciliation and impact assessment of other completed or ongoing City of Vaughan Master Plans/Studies and Secondary Plans.

Background

The Service Excellence Strategic Plan has identified the advancement of active transportation as a key activity related to Transportation and Mobility strategic objective for the 2018-2022 Term of Council. The completion of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update, initiated in 2017, is a key planning initiative aimed at achieving this objective.

The original Plan was Visionary, the updated Plan is Evolutionary

The 2007 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was progressive for its time, setting the City on a path towards becoming a more walkable and bikeable community. It was the first active transportation focused master plan in York Region and one of few in the Province. The original plan was visionary, long-term and included a wide-range of recommendations for the City.

In the last ten years, there has been a steady increase in societal and governmental interest, support and understanding of cycling and walking as a viable and healthy mode of transportation. Demand for safer active transportation infrastructure including pedestrian and cycling facilities and multi-use recreational trails has grown. As a result, there has been significant advancement in strategies, policies, legislation and guidelines for the planning, design, implementation, education and operation of safer active transportation networks.

The intent of the updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update was to be evolutionary, building on the original plan creating a path forward that is flexible, shorter-term and focused on the needs of the community. It reflects lessons learned from the last 10 years and current state of practice. The Plan formalizes the on-going progress

the City has made in making our community more bikeable and walkable within our road right-of-way and open spaces. It is intended to be a fluid document and as such it is recommended that an annual update be provided to council on key active transportation initiatives and accomplishments.

Previous Reports/Authority

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update Progress Report & Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program Funding Update – [May 23, 2018, Committee of the Whole \(Item 9, Report No. 10, Recommendation 1 and 2\)](#)

2018 City-wide and Area Specific Development Charge Background Study and By-laws Review Highlight Report (Referred) – [May 7, 2018, Finance, Administration and Audit Committee \(Item 2, Report No. 5\)](#)

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Cycling Network Proposed Revisions – [March 20, 2018, Committee of the Whole \(Item 3, Report No.10, Recommendation 1 and 2\)](#)

Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Task Force Findings Report - [April 19, 2017, Finance, Administration and Audit Committee \(Item 8, Report No. 4, Recommendation 1\)](#)

Connecting the Dots: The Vaughan Super Trail – [April 19, 2017, Finance, Administration and Audit Committee \(Communication C2\)](#)

Analysis and Options

Face-to-face conversations and interactions with 3,000+ community members were the focus of public and stakeholder consultation efforts

Face-to-face conversations and interactions with community members were the focus of public and stakeholder consultation efforts. In 10 months, 3,089 residents were engaged through 128 hours of face-to-face conversations at 39 local events and two public workshops. The face-to-face efforts were complemented by digital engagement. A summary of consultation and engagement efforts can be found in **Attachment 1 – Public and Stakeholder Consultation Highlights Infographic**.

Awareness and Culture, Safety, Infrastructure and Connectivity as community priorities through extensive consultation efforts

The community's care and passion for shaping the future of walking, rolling and riding within the City of Vaughan was evident from what was heard throughout the engagement process. Many participants expressed excitement for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update and were enthusiastic to provide their thoughts and opinions to the project team regarding this important city-driven initiative. Four key themes emerged as community priorities from the feedback collected: Safety, Infrastructure, Connectivity and Awareness & Culture. These key themes align with the findings outlined by the Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Task Force in February 2017.

'Awareness and Culture' is an important ingredient in advancing active transportation

Public awareness and a shift in culture is an important ingredient in advancing active transportation and successfully implementing the goals and objectives of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update for the City of Vaughan. There is a strong public perception that roads are primarily used by motorized vehicles and key messaging that the City supports all modes of transportation is strongly desired by citizens. Training programs, education and marketing campaigns were repeatedly suggested to generate public awareness of existing pedestrian connections, cycling facilities and multi-use recreational trails.

Much progress has been made in the City's efforts to provide education and awareness to Citizens through several initiatives. Most notably, the Great Walks of Vaughan initiative highlights 12 Great Walks along 41.8km of local trails. It is a multi-generational program that encourages Vaughan residents to explore and discover the City's multi-use recreational trails and park paths to promote physical activity, healthy living and wellness in the community. The guiding principle for the program was to promote active routes and activities that are publicly accessible to citizens across the City.

In addition, as part of the education and outreach plan for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update, the project team utilized existing City and community events in order to reach a wide range of citizens. The tactic of bringing the consultation to people was so successful that staff have continued to utilize existing city-wide events to deliver education and awareness around active transportation and connect with residents. The City should continue to use these annual events as a means of reaching, educating and informing residents about walking, cycling and multi-use recreational trails. The plan recommends that an annual communications plan and calendar of on-going annual messaging be developed and aligned with outreach efforts.

Physically separated infrastructure for all ages and abilities and seasonal maintenance are key to addressing ‘Safety’

Safety was an extreme concern and was consistently expressed throughout the engagement process. Regarding both walking and biking, many community members noted they are currently uncomfortable moving through the City, regardless of the distance of travel required. A focus on school zones and community gathering areas (transit and major destinations) were desired.

The plan outlines a framework for planning active transportation infrastructure for all ages and abilities to accommodate everyone including the City’s aging demographic and school children. The provision of physically separated infrastructure for walking and cycling within our boulevards, parks and open spaces, and through developments as well as direct connections to transit and major destinations are key components of this framework. The all ages and abilities framework has been applied with the implementation of:

- Separated cycling facilities along Millway Avenue, Apple Mill Road and Applewood Road through the development approval process;
- In-boulevard multi-use pathway along McNaughton Avenue being constructed within the vicinity of the Maple GO station in partnership with York Region;
- Separated cycle tracks along Clark Avenue to be implemented by end of 2020 through the Provincial Government’s Ontario Municipal Partnership Program;
- Approximately 5 km of multi-use recreational trails through the North Maple Regional Park;
- A pedestrian underpass beneath Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Keele, allows for a safer crossing and supports the future extension of the Bartley Smith Greenway, connecting residential neighbourhoods to local commercial businesses;
- City-wide and local multi-use recreational trails secured through the development application approval process in Blocks 11, 12, 18, 40/47, 55, and 61.

On-going seasonal maintenance was emphasized as important to users from an accessibility and comfort perspective. This was especially important for community members with mobility challenges.

As the network expands, and best practices emerge, maintenance practices and level of service standards will need to be adapted to address existing and new facilities, expectations of the public, and best practice municipal maintenance standards. Operating and maintaining the active transportation network will require a service level and financial commitment from the City that should be embedded into the asset

management plans. Staff are currently undertaking a review of current best practices for maintaining pedestrian, cycling, shared-use and recreational assets as part of the VMC Operations and Maintenance Service Level project to understand the impact to operating budgets, equipment needs and resources. The VMC Service Level Project findings will be used to inform city-wide service levels.

Annual budgets to support active transportation planning and implementation programs will address gaps in pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trail 'Infrastructure'

Many residents noted the need for more and improved infrastructure to make active transportation a viable travel option.

Identifying and leveraging comprehensive capital projects and urban grown developments to improve active transportation infrastructure, also known as routine accommodation, is the most cost-effective way to implement or enhance the pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trail networks. Although routine accommodation provides good value for money and has served well in advancing active transportation infrastructure in the City, as a sole strategy it often does not result in a cohesive network of facilities in a timely manner. In the pursuit of providing an active transportation network that is suitable for all ages and abilities, facilities must be connected to each other to form an interconnected network.

Pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trail infrastructure gaps along key corridors not addressed through routine accommodation should be identified, prioritized and incorporated into the annual active transportation planning and implementation programs and confirmed through the budget approval process. The active transportation planning and implementation programs allow flexibility in responding to active transportation needs and gaps within the pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trails networks as they are identified. See **Attachment 2 – Network Implementation Framework**.

The priority cycling and multi-use recreational trails network that emerged from the study process, include sidewalk/pathway and lighting needs, critical active transportation crossings as well as travel demand management programs, which have been included in the 2018 Development Charges By-law 083-2018 in order to service growth City-wide. This funding source is critical to the planning and implementation of pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trail infrastructure gaps.

Bill 108 amendments may result in policy changes to the Planning Act and Development Charge Act

The Bill 108 amendments to the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act, 1997 may result in several financial implications to the City's ability to provide Community Benefits to historical service levels, including City-wide multi-use recreational trails. Some impacts to Community Benefits may be minor in nature, while others may have more significant impacts to Vaughan's fiscal future to provide public services. Many of these implications are, however, difficult to estimate at this time. Once the province releases the necessary information regarding the cap on the value of the community benefit and associated regulations are issued, there should be greater clarity around specific financial implications.

Localized networks, the Vaughan Super Trail and access across physical barriers will provide 'Connectivity'

Though the City has made progress in the implementation of active transportation infrastructure, we heard from the community that the current lack of connectivity significantly impedes the viability and comfort of walking, rolling or cycling for transportation or recreation.

Based on current travel patterns, three existing neighbourhoods emerged that warranted prioritization leading to the identification of three localized mini-networks within the Maple, Thornhill and Woodbridge communities. Progress is already being made on the build out of these localized networks through partnerships with the Regional and Provincial Governments and agencies including York Region Transit (YRT), Metrolinx, and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA), as well as the development community. Other localized networks include those in the City's intensification areas. Implementing separated active transportation facilities in key corridors such as Jane Street, Edgeley Boulevard, within Regional rights-of-way and major utility corridors are crucial in linking these localized networks and building the beginnings of a connected City-wide network. The build out of these localized networks and key linkages continues with the identification of projects through the annual capital programming and budget approval processes.

The Vaughan Super Trail was identified as a key priority for a City-wide multi-use recreational trail network. This bold initiative to create a world-class, identifiable city-wide trail loop connects a variety of major destinations, green spaces and right-of-way pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. The proposed loop is approximately 100km in length of which 40% currently exists. A key goal of the Vaughan Super Trail is to link

communities and people with local nature, cultural heritage, communities and special destinations throughout the City of Vaughan. A crucial connection was recently completed in conjunction with the emergency culvert replacement under Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Keele Street, providing a grade-separated route across this major arterial road. See **Attachment 3 – Priority Cycling and Multi-use Recreational Trails Network Map** and **Attachment 4 – Vaughan Super Trail Proposed Concept Framework Map**.

Many of the City's intensification areas and new communities are still in their emerging stages. This presents a unique opportunity to provide access to high-quality and connected local active transportation networks by allocating space for active transportation through the development application approval process reducing the risk of implementing less effective and more expensive retrofits in the future. The City has recognized this opportunity and has worked with the development community to implement enhanced (wider) sidewalks, separated cycling facilities and multi-use recreational trails at the on-set of these urban grown development projects. Once such example is the March 2018 approval of a revised Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Cycling Network within the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan. See **Attachment 5 – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Cycling and Multi-use Recreational Trails Network**.

Access across physical barriers is critical and extremely valuable to user connectivity. As part of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update, a number of key active transportation connections were identified and informed the 2018 Development Charge By-law Update. The recent approval of an active transportation bridge over Major Mackenzie Drive and Rutherford Road as a means of connecting the Block 18 neighbourhoods with the Maple and Rutherford GO Station exemplify the City's commitment to work with provincial and regional agencies in providing these crucial connections. Additional crossings at key barriers across the City are being actively pursued by City Staff.

The PBMP should inform the policy updates to the Transportation Master Plan and Official Plan updates

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan should inform policy updates to the Transportation Master Plan and ultimately the Official Plan. It is recommended that the upcoming municipal comprehensive review consider including an active transportation schedule in the Official Plan that shows separated cycling facilities on all arterial and collector roadways as well as the Vaughan Super Trail and comprehensive multi-use recreational trails network. This is in line with local best practices as seven out of York

Region's nine local municipalities currently have at least one active transportation related schedule in their Official Plans.

There are seven functional areas for which the City should have expertise to ensure the strategic vision and goals can be achieved

Best practices in the planning, design, maintenance and operation of cycling and multi-use recreational trails in North America is evolving at a rapid rate. Many municipalities that are leading the way in the delivery of cycling and multi-use recreational trail programs and projects have dedicated teams that manage and coordinate the implementation of pedestrian/cycling and trails plans. More importantly these teams keep up with emerging trends and evolving best practices playing an advisory role to other departments and their projects.

To successfully advance active transportation as per the Term of Council Strategic Plan, increased resources dedicated to active transportation are required and linked to expected level of service. The City should consider establishing dedicated coordination teams with expertise in the following functional areas:

- Strategic Policy and Network Planning
- Infrastructure Feasibility
- Infrastructure Design and Implementation
- Education, Outreach and Communication
- Operations and Maintenance
- By-law and Enforcement
- Data Collection, Monitoring and Analysis

Active transportation within the City should be supported by a review of roles and responsibilities, knowledge sharing, focused working groups, and the development of a vendor of record linked to the active transportation program to be used on an as-needed basis.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

All active transportation projects, programs and staffing requests will be brought forward through the annual budget approval process.

The priority cycling and multi-use recreational trails network that emerged from the study process, sidewalk and lighting needs, critical active transportation crossings as

well as travel demand management programs are included in the 2018 Development Charges By-law 083-2018 in order to service growth City-wide. This funding source is critical to the planning and implementation of pedestrian, cycling and multi-use recreational trail infrastructure gaps.

Depending on the final Community Benefit Regulations to Bill 108, there may be impacts to the planning and implementation of City-wide multi use recreational trail network (Vaughan Super Trail). The hope in many of these cases is that the impact may be either neutral or negligible, however City staff will need to continue to monitor to ensure the impacts are mitigated where possible.

City staff continue to utilize grant opportunities and partnerships with upper tier governments to fund active transportation projects. Through the 2017-2018 Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Funding Program the City received \$908,000 for the implementation of Clark Avenue Cycle Tracks and \$7,500 for safe cycling public education. The City also received \$250,000 from York Region's 2019 Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program for the McNaughton Road East Active Transportation Facility capital project.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

City staff continually work with York Region staff on the design and implementation of Regional road widening projects throughout the City. As part of this continual process, the coordination of efforts on road design, streetscape aesthetics and design of separated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and grade-separated multi-use recreational crossings has led to real successes throughout the City of Vaughan. Recent examples include the emergency culvert replacement east of McNaughton Road on Major Mackenzie, the widening of Major Mackenzie between Jane Street and Hwy 50 and the upcoming road widenings along Rutherford Road between Jane Street and Bathurst Street.

In existing practice, the City is responsible for the construction, maintenance and operation of all sidewalks within the Regional road allowance as mandated by Section 55(1) of the Municipal Act and is currently silent on cycling facilities. York Region pays for the construction of all cycling facilities within the Regional road allowance whether on-road (e.g. Dufferin Street Bike Lanes), in-boulevard curb-side (e.g. Centre Street and Bathurst Street Asphalt Cycle Tracks) or in-boulevard adjacent to the sidewalk. Formal maintenance and operation practices of cycling facilities within the Regional road allowance have not been confirmed and require further discussion between York Region and the City of Vaughan as this may impact the operating budget of the City.

York Region staff, including representatives from York Region Transportation Services, York Region Community and Health Services, York Region Police, York Region Transit, York Region School Boards, etc. have been directly involved in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update as members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update continues to reinforce the coordination and development of projects within both jurisdictions.

The Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) have been consulted in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update.

Conclusion

The support generated through the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update process, and recent delivery of state-of-the-art infrastructure, is crystallizing the vision for vibrant, walkable and bikeable neighbourhoods in Vaughan. The City is well underway in advancing active transportation, one of three themes identified for Transportation and Mobility in the City's 2018-2022 Term of Council Strategic Plan. It is recommended that an annual update is provided to Council on key active transportation initiatives and accomplishments.

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Attachments

1. Public and Stakeholder Consultation Highlights Infographic
2. Active Transportation Network Implementation Framework
3. Priority Cycling and Multi-use Recreational Trail Network Map
4. Vaughan Super Trail Proposed Concept Framework Map
5. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Cycling and Multi-use Recreational Trails Network – VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan
6. Summary of Key 2019 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP) Recommendations

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