

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Transportation Services
November 5, 2020

Report of the Commissioner of Transportation Services

2020 Traveller Safety Report

1. Recommendation

Council receive this report for information.

2. Summary

This report provides Council with a summary of collision statistics for Regional roads, based on 2019 and preceding years' Motor Vehicle Accident Reports prepared by York Regional Police.

Key Points:

- Overall, travellers are involved in 5% less collisions and experience fewer injuries annually, while fatal collisions have increased
- More than half of fatal collisions are related to speeding
- Sideswipe collisions involving private and public buses averaged 98 over the past two years, compared to an average of 44 previously; majority of reported bus collisions resulted in property damage only
- Commercial truck collision rates have increased over the past two years by 13% compared to the previous five-year average; injuries have remained steady
- Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety continues to be an area of focus; approximately 8 out of 10 reported collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists result in injuries
- Staff will report back to Council in 2021 with an action plan to help address concerns with motorists speeding, leaving space for large vehicles and pedestrian and cycling safety

3. Background

Collision data is gathered from across the Regional road network to understand traveller behaviour, collision patterns and respond to key issues

The 2020 Traveller Safety Report (Attachment 1) provides analyses on collisions occurring on Regional roads, data on the frequency and type of collisions, locations and times and causes and severity. The objective of the report is to provide a deeper understanding of traveller behaviour, as well as patterns and trends, to identify actions and measures to improve safety. The report has been prepared annually since 2014.

Data is obtained through a partnership with York Regional Police, analysed by Regional staff and shared with Council in the fall of each year

Transportation Services maintains and manages the Region's traffic data system, which contains information on all collision types occurring on Regional roads. Collision information is collected from the provincial Motor Vehicle Accident Report, prepared by York Regional Police, and provided to the Region for record and collision analyses. The process to obtain and compile the collision information takes six to eight months. Staff completes the analyses and shares a summary of preceding years collision statistics with Council in fall each year. In spring of the following year, Council is informed of measures taken to address the areas of focus identified.

Council was informed pilot measures were being implemented to create safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists

In [June 2019](#), Council adopted the Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Improvements report. The report highlighted study results and identified various short-term safety measures, including leading pedestrian intervals (pedestrian gets a head start in crossing the road), right turn on red signal restrictions, fully protected left turns and advisory signage to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. In [August 2019](#), staff updated Council on short-term measures implemented on a pilot basis at select intersections to help reduce conflicts between drivers and pedestrians and increase driver awareness of pedestrians.

Preliminary findings of the pilot, shared with Council in [May 2020](#), appear promising in reducing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. Recognizing the preliminary assessment is based on limited data and irregular travel patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is too early to draw conclusive findings. Staff will continue to evaluate these pilot measures and report back to Council in 2021.

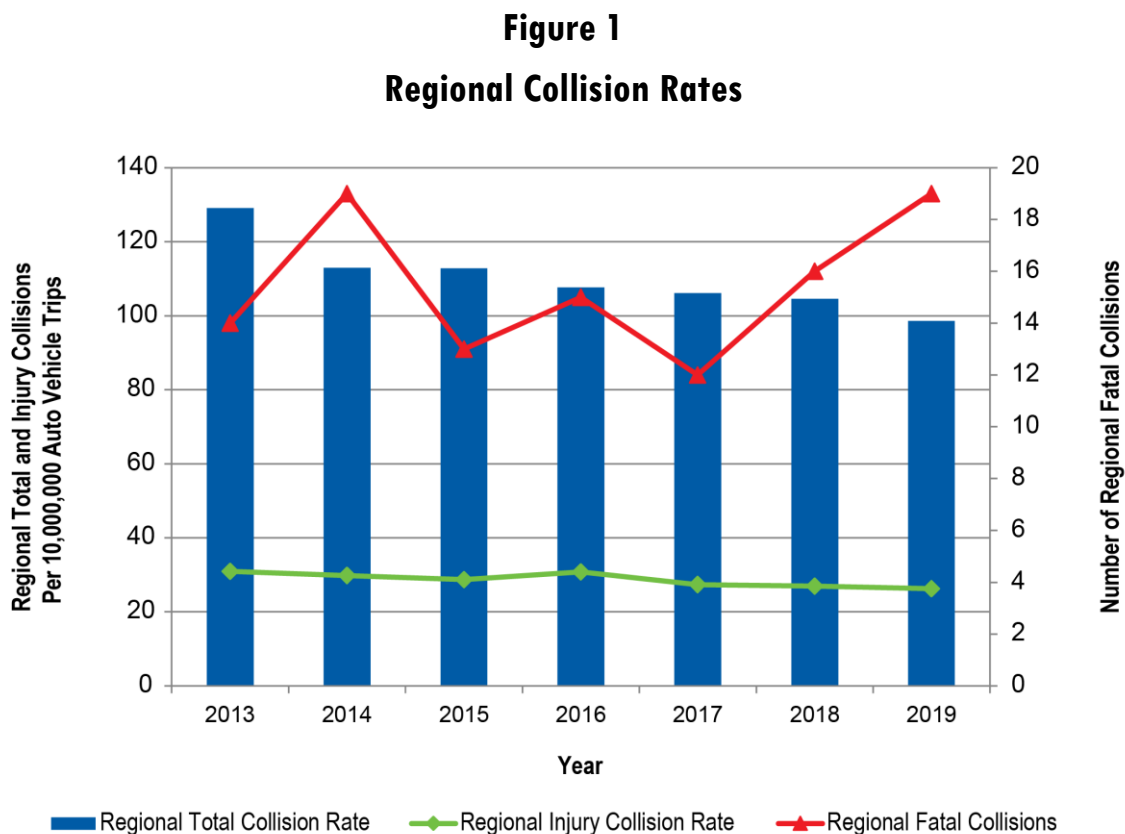
4. Analysis

The most notable findings of the 2020 Traveller Safety Report were speeding, leaving space for large vehicles, and pedestrian and cycling safety.

Overall, travellers are involved in 5% less collisions and experience less injuries annually; however, fatal collisions have increased

Collisions on Regional roads continue to decrease annually by approximately 5% and injury collisions by 3%, even with a 2% increase in population and trips made by travellers across the Region.

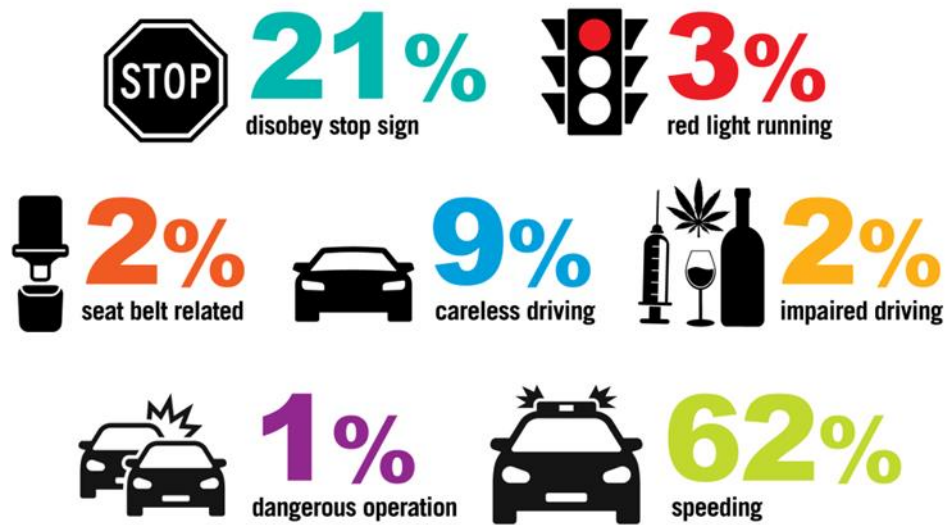
After the Region experienced a 10-year low in fatal collisions in 2017 with 12 fatalities, the number increased to 19 in 2019. The fatal collision rate over the past two years is 20% higher than the average of the previous five years (Figure 1).



More than half of fatal collisions are related to motorists speeding

Fatal collision statistics over the past two years show approximately 55% were related to speeding. Enforcement statistics over the past seven years also identify speeding as the top traffic violation in the Region, representing more than 60% of all traffic offences (Figure 2). Approximately 40,000 speeding convictions were issued annually over the last seven years.

Figure 2
York Region Traffic Offences (2013-2019)



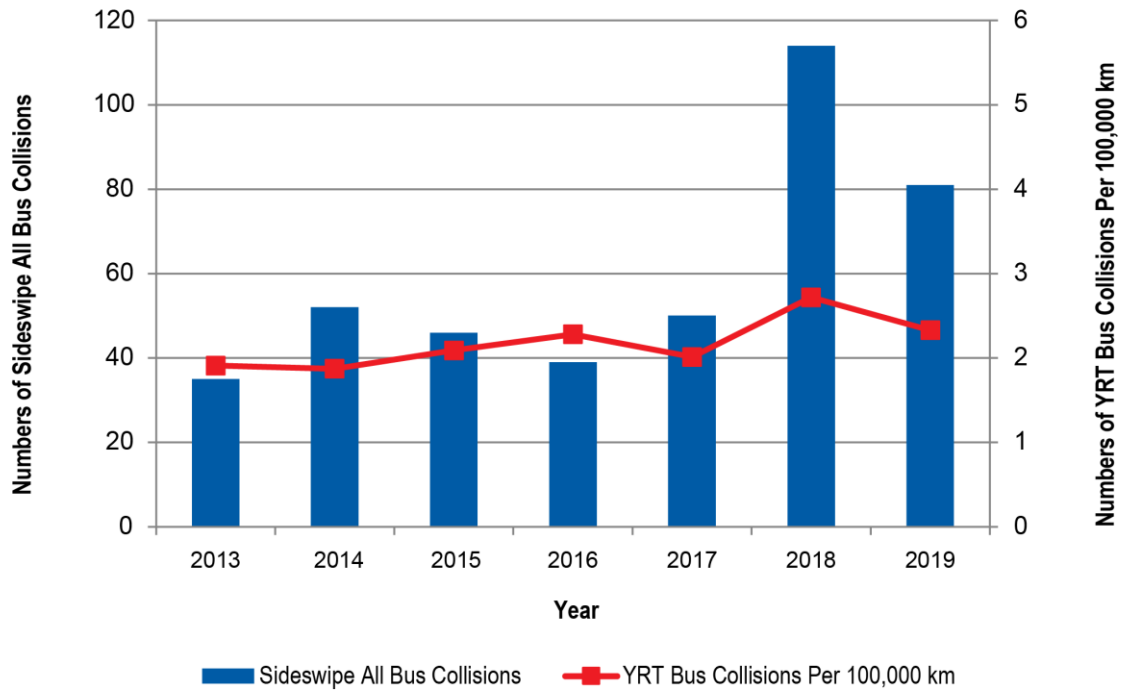
A slower rate of speed and leaving space between vehicles creates more time for motorists to react. Large vehicles like commercial trucks and buses need extra room to stop, turn and have many blind spots. By driving safely, leaving extra space and taking extra precautions around large trucks and buses, drivers of passenger vehicles can significantly reduce the risk of being involved in a serious collision.

Private and public buses averaged 98 sideswipe collisions over the past two years, compared to an average of 44 previously

Buses are slower, longer and require more space. While transit collisions have the lowest percent of injuries and fatalities (6%) in comparison to all other modes, a pattern of motorists failing to provide buses ample space have led to an increase in the number of sideswipe collisions. Sideswipe collisions involving private and public buses increased an average of 98 collisions over the past two years from an average of 44 collisions over the previous five years (Figure 3). The majority of bus collisions (70%) are a result of the other vehicle driver being at-fault.

York Region Transit service hours and kilometres travelled has increased 3% since 2017 and has experienced an annual collision rate increase of approximately 3.45% per 100,000 km. Transit continues to be the safest mode to travel.

Figure 3
Sideswipe Bus Collisions

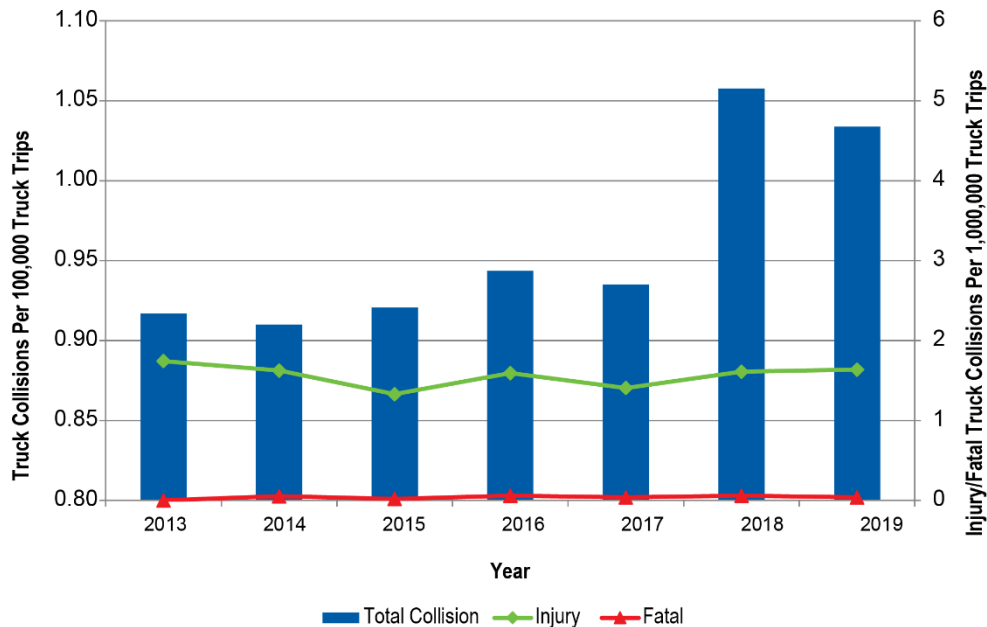


Commercial truck collision rates have increased over the past two years by 13% compared to the previous five-year average; injuries have remained steady

The average commercial truck collision rate over the past two years is 13% higher than the previous five years; 20% of this is attributed to sideswipe collisions. Fatality rates remain at low levels and injury rates remain steady (Figure 4).

More than half of commercial truck traffic and collisions occur in the City of Vaughan where trucking distribution centres are predominant. Major trucking corridors, such as Highway 7, Highway 27, Weston Road and Keele Street, provide key connections for goods movement to provincial Highways 400, 407 and 427.

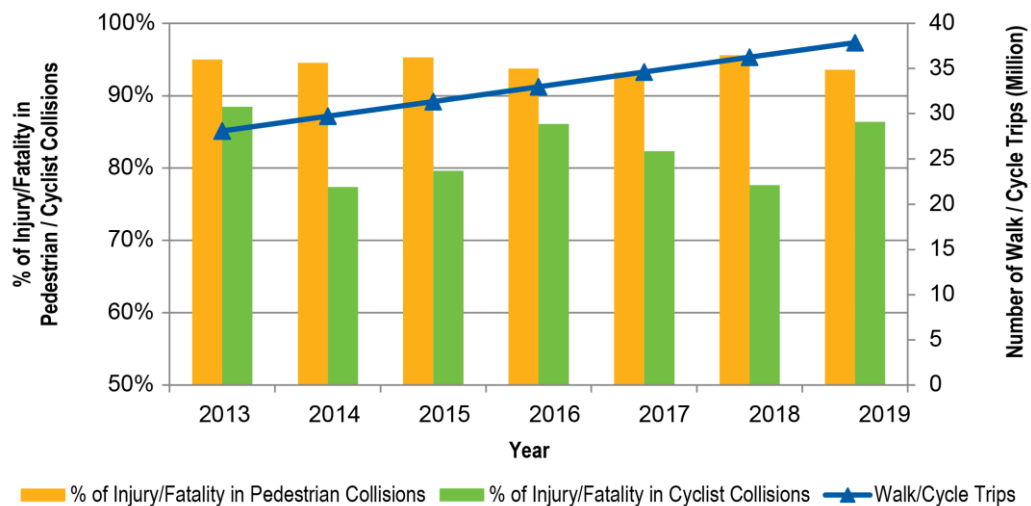
Figure 4
Commercial Truck Collisions



Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety continues to be an area of focus due to the percentage of injuries sustained

Rates of injuries sustained by pedestrians and cyclists remain a concern. While 24% of vehicle-only collisions resulted in injuries or fatalities, almost all pedestrian (94%) and cycling (82%) collisions result in injury or death. Pedestrians and cyclists are the most vulnerable travellers on the Regional transportation system and lack protection compared to travellers in enclosed vehicles (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Pedestrian and Cyclist Injury/Fatality Rates



The total number of daily trips on foot or bicycle has increased 5% annually over the last seven years. The increase in pedestrian and cycling across the Region and high rate of injuries sustained make these modes of travel a key area of focus for safety improvements.

Staff will report back to Council in 2021 with an action plan to help address specific areas of focus

As with previous reports, staff will identify strategies and measures to help address concerns with motorists speeding, leaving space for large vehicles and pedestrian and cycling safety and report back to Council in 2021. The plan will consider partnerships, education and awareness campaigns, best practices and pilots and will have a continued focus on changing driver behaviours using a data driven approach for engineering safer roads. This approach aligns with global road safety visions.

5. Financial

The Region continues to monitor and analyze traffic and traveller trends to ensure investments in the Regional road network are optimized. Costs of these activities are included in the annual Transportation Services Operating and Capital Budgets.

6. Local Impact

Staff will continue to work with local municipalities, York Regional Police, Public Health and Public School Boards to identify strategies and measures to address the traveller safety experience for all road users.

7. Conclusion

Transportation Services regularly analyzes collision data across the Regional road network to understand traveller behaviour, collision patterns and respond to key issues.

The findings of the 2020 Traveller Safety Report identify, overall, travellers are involved in less collisions and experience fewer injuries annually, while fatal collisions have increased. More than half of fatal collisions are related to motorists speeding. Sideswipe collisions involving buses increased in the past two years. The majority of reported bus collisions resulted in property damage only. Average commercial truck collision rates have increased over the past two years compared to the previous five-year average, while injuries have remained steady.

Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety continues to be an area of focus. Approximately eight out of 10 reported collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists result in injuries.

Staff will report back to Council in 2021 with an action plan to help address concerns with motorists speeding, leaving space for large vehicles and pedestrian and cycling safety. The plan will consider partnerships, awareness campaigns and a continued focus on changing driver behaviours using a data driven approach for engineering safer roads aligning with global road safety visions.

For more information on this report, please contact Joseph Petrungaro, Director Roads and Traffic Operations, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75220. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Paul Jankowski**
Commissioner of Transportation Services

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**
Chief Administrative Officer

October 16, 2020
Attachment (1)
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