

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Transportation Services  
October 14, 2021

Report of the Commissioner of Transportation Services

## Annual 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 Motor Vehicle Accident Reports prepared by York Regional Police for 2020 and the two preceding years. Initiatives outlined in this report are being implemented in collaboration with York Regional Police to help change driver behaviour and improve road safety.

Key Points:

- Collisions decreased by 40% due to reduced traffic volumes during public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Speeding continues to be a major contributing factor in serious injury and fatal collisions across the Province
- Actions have been and continue to be taken to encourage motorists to slow down to improve road safety in collaboration with the Province and York Regional Police

### 3. Background

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

The [Traveller Safety Report](#), prepared annually, provides analyses on collisions occurring on Regional roads, data on frequency, types of collisions, locations, times, causes and severity. The report illustrates patterns and trends that identifies traveller behaviours informing staff decisions on the implementation of road safety programs.

Collision information is collected from provincial motor vehicle accident reports, prepared by York Regional Police, and provided to the Region for collision analyses. The process to obtain and compile the collision information takes six to eight months. Staff completes the analyses and each year shares a summary of the preceding year’s collision statistics with Council.

**2020, the Region partnered with the Province and York Regional Police to implement several initiatives with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable road users**

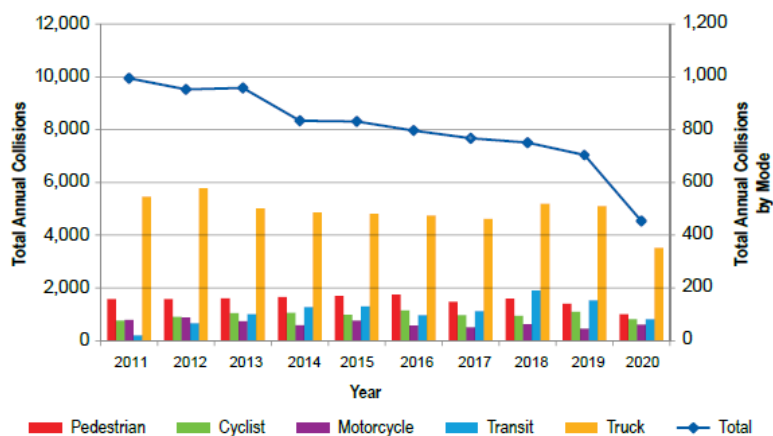
In 2020, staff focused on the reduction of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on Regional roads. Using a data-driven approach, staff targeted locations for changes that could benefit the most vulnerable users of the Region’s transportation system; pedestrians, school children and cyclists. Primarily, focus was on aggressive and distracted driving, speed being a major contributing factor in serious injury and fatal collisions, with stunt driving infractions increasing.

**4. Analysis**

**Overall collisions on Regional roads decreased by 40% in 2020, attributed to reduced traffic volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic**

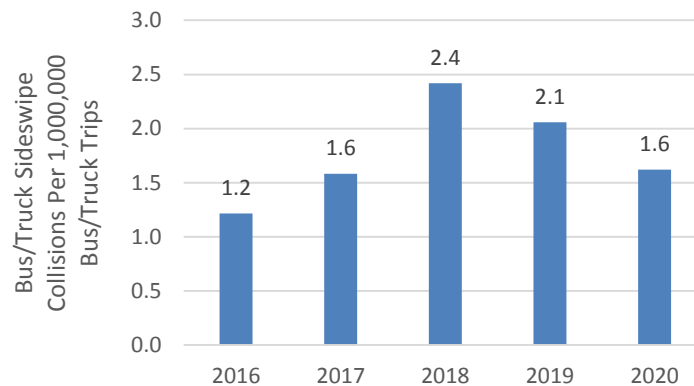
A review of collision statistics over the last decade reveals overall collisions on Regional roads continue to decrease. In 2020, there were approximately 4,000 collisions recorded on the Regional road network, representing a reduction of approximately 40% compared to 2019 (Figure 1). This has been attributed to the significant decrease of up to 50% in traffic volume on Regional roads during the COVID-19 pandemic and is consistent with the decrease in the total number of collisions shown across the province. Provincially, collisions were down approximately 30% between January and September 2020, compared with the same period in 2019.

**Figure 1  
Annual Collisions by Road User Mode**



In 2020, Council was informed sideswipe collisions involving trucks and buses increased in 2018 and 2019 by an average of approximately 60%. A pattern of motorists failing to provide buses and trucks ample space had led to this increase. Buses and trucks are slower, longer and require more space. Due to lower traffic volumes in 2020, the collision rate decreased to the 2017 rate (Figure 2).

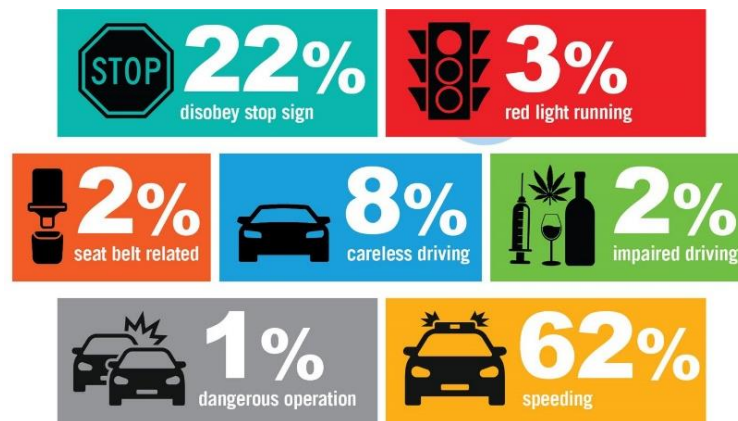
**Figure 2**  
**Annual Bus and Truck Sideswipe Collisions**



**Across the province, speeding continues to be a major contributing factor in serious injury and fatal collisions, with stunt driving infractions increasing**

It is well documented higher speeds lead to higher injury severity in a collision. Fatal collision statistics on Regional roads in 2020 indicate more than 30% of all fatal collisions were related to speeding. Enforcement statistics over the past five years also identify speeding as the top traffic violation in the Region, representing more than 60% of all traffic offences (Figure 3). York Regional Police reported stunt driving infractions almost doubled in 2020 compared to 2019. This is consistent with the provincial experience.

**Figure 3**  
**York Region Traffic Offences 2018-2020**



Traffic violation data obtained from YRP Annual Statistical Reports.  
Red light running does not include violations caught by red light cameras.

## **The Province of Ontario has introduced legislation to deter street racing, stunt driving, aggressive and unsafe driving**

On July 1, 2021, the [Moving Ontarians More Safely Act](#) came into effect to address street racing, stunt driving, aggressive and unsafe driving. Under the Act, drivers caught driving 40 km/h or more over the posted speed limit in an 80 km/h or lower speed zone face stunt driving charges. These drivers also face tougher penalties, including a 30-day roadside driver's license suspension, a 14-day vehicle impoundment and an escalating post-conviction driver's license suspension for drivers convicted of stunt driving.

## **The 2021 Ministry of Transportation of Ontario 2021 Road Safety Survey reveals concerns about driver behaviour during the pandemic**

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario 2021 Road Safety Survey shows that Ontarians feel risky driving behaviours have increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 30% believe all forms of distracted and impaired driving have increased
- 50% believe speeding has increased and young drivers and motorcyclists are most likely to speed
- 40% asked a driver to slow down in the past 12 months
- 15% of passengers felt unsafe because of the speed motorists were driving

## **Vehicle trips decreased and pedestrian and cyclist trips increased due to public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic**

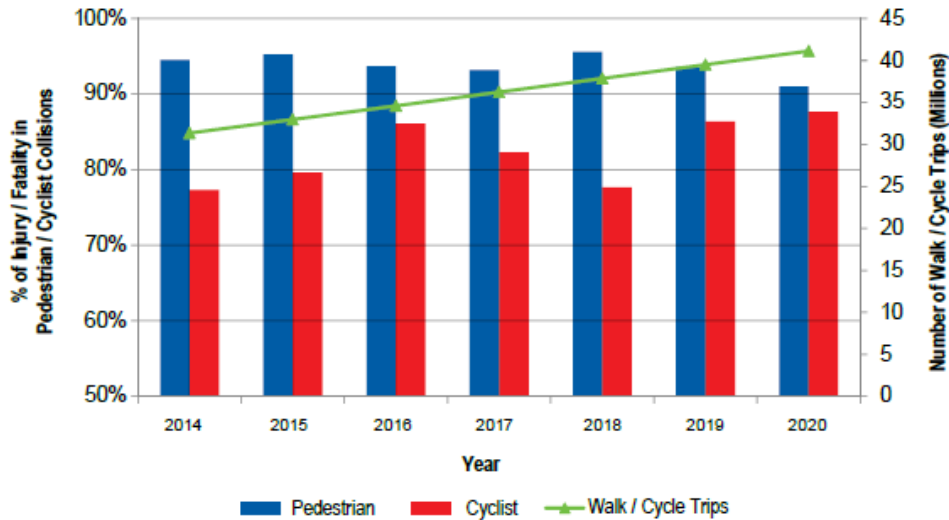
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted how travellers used road networks. Between March and December 2020, public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in decreased vehicle trips on Regional roads between 20% and 50% compared to 2019.

While there has been decreased vehicle trips, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario 2021 Road Safety Survey indicates more than one-third of Ontario citizens say they are walking outdoors more and nearly one-quarter say they are riding a bicycle more often as a leisure/recreational activity.

## **Pedestrians and cyclists are the most vulnerable road users and continue to be a priority**

Pedestrian and cyclist collision rates decreased between 15% and 25% in 2020 due to reduced traffic volumes on Regional roads (Figure 4). However, pedestrian and cyclist safety continue to be a priority as walking and cycling trips are increasing by approximately 5% annually and more than 84% of pedestrian and cyclist collisions result in injuries.

**Figure 4**  
**Pedestrian and Cyclist Collision Injury Rates**



Starting in late 2019, enhanced operational measures were piloted at four signalized Regional intersections to help protect pedestrians and cyclists. Pilot results are being reported separately to Council in October 2021.

**Staff, in collaboration with the Province and York Regional Police, are taking action to improve road safety**

To address concerns of undesirable speeds at specific locations, along corridors or within a road network, several road safety measures and focused campaigns are either underway or being planned:

- Piloting a two-year, limited use, automated speed enforcement program in school zones at select locations to reduce operating speed and help increase safety (2020-2022)
- Implemented a Region-wide 10 km/h speed limit reduction by time of day in school zones, using the new school zone maximum speed sign (2021)
- Launching the annual Slow Down campaign, with a focus on stunt driving and speeding (annual fall campaign)
- Expanding the [SpeedWATCH](#) program to increase road coverage (2021-2023)
- Installing advisory signs that advertise speeding fines and demerit points to remind drivers of the penalties (2021)
- Implementing turning movement controls and changing road design elements, including tightening curb radii and reducing lane widths to slow drivers down (some recently installed as part of bus rapid transit projects) (ongoing)

- Installing speed limit pavement markings or transverse pavement markings that give motorists the perception they are travelling at a higher speed (ongoing)
- Providing York Regional Police with excessive speeding locations for targeted enforcement based on collected data (ongoing)
- Encouraging citizens to complete a [Road Watch](#) complaint to report dangerous or unsafe motorist behaviour in their community (ongoing)
- Addressing street racing and stunt driving concerns through “[Project Takeover](#)”, a joint operation between York Regional Police and other Greater Toronto Area police forces (ongoing)
- Developing a traveller safety plan in collaboration with our safety partners (2022-2023)

## 5. Financial

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

## 6. Local Impact

Staff will continue to work with our partners, the Province, York Regional Police, local municipalities, Public Health and public-school boards, to identify strategies and measures to address traveller safety for all road users. Both the Traveller Safety Report and this report have been shared with our partners and no concerns have been raised.

## 7. Conclusion

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

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, vehicle trips decreased significantly while recreational walking and cycling trips increased.

Speeding continues to be a major contributing factor in serious injury and fatal collisions, with stunt driving infractions increasing. Initiatives to reduce operating speeds and encourage compliance with speed limits to help improve safety continue in collaboration with the Province and York Regional Police.

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



Recommended by:

**Ann-Marie Carroll**  
Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services



Approved for Submission:

**Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

September 22, 2021  
Attachment (1)  
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