

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Transportation Services
October 3, 2019

Report of the Commissioner of Transportation Services

Smart Commute Program Review

1. Recommendations

1. The Commissioner of Transportation Services be authorized to enter into new agreements with the three Transportation Management Associations (Smart Commute Central York, Smart Commute Markham, Richmond Hill, and pointA Smart Commute North Toronto/Vaughan) that provide transportation demand management services on behalf of York Region subject to 2020 budget approval.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities.

2. Summary

This report seeks council authorization to enter into new agreements with the Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) since Metrolinx ended their involvement and funding on June 29, 2019.

Key Points:

- The Region contributes \$200,000 annually to the Smart Commute Program as part of the multi-year budget process and is proposed to remain the same subject to the 2020 budget approval
- The Smart Commute Program also receives annual funding from some local municipalities (City of Markham, Town of Newmarket, City of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan)
- The Smart Commute program, originally launched in 2004, became a program of Metrolinx in 2008
- On June, 29, 2019, Metrolinx's terminated their involvement and funding of the Smart Commute program
- The Region intends to enter into new agreements with the Transportation Management Associations (Smart Commute Central York, Smart Commute Markham, Richmond Hill, and pointA Smart Commute North Toronto/Vaughan) as part of a revised community-based model, to make travellers more aware of alternative travel choices during rush hour

- Council approval is required at this time to initiate development of new agreements to allow sufficient planning to enable projects to commence/continue in 2020 - agreements will not be finalized until the 2020 budget is approved
- The new agreements will include an evaluation process to measure program outcomes

3. Background

In June 2019, staff provided an update to Council on Metrolinx's decision to terminate their funding of the Smart Commute Program

Further to the [June 13, 2019](#) memorandum, this report outlines the revised Smart Commute Program that is proposed to be delivered through the three Transportation Management Associations (Smart Commute Central York, Smart Commute Markham, Richmond Hill and pointA Smart Commute North Toronto/Vaughan). The revised travel demand program was developed in consultation with the three TMA's and local municipal funding partners, City of Markham, Town of Newmarket, City of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan.

Delivered through the three TMA's, the Smart Commute Program has historically focused on workplace travel and delivered programs such as site assessments, customized travel plans and outreach events that improve travel options for employees and encourage travel behavior change.

While it is difficult to measure travel behavior change, a small shift away from single occupancy vehicle trips can have a positive impact on travel demands during rush hours and parking demands at workplaces. The TMA's have been successful in implementing workplace transportation demand management strategies, as outlined in Attachment 1, which show the past successes of transportation demand management projects implemented in the Region.

4. Analysis

York Region is committed to reducing single occupancy vehicle trips by increasing awareness of alternative travel choices during rush hours

TDM strategies have the potential to positively impact travel demand during rush hours on the road network by shifting a small proportion of travellers away from single occupancy vehicles into more sustainable modes of travel. For travellers who have the option, more sustainable travel modes include walking, cycling or carpooling during rush hours, or encouraging travellers to make trips outside of rush hours.

York Region currently delivers TDM programming through a multi-faceted approach including internal staff resources to conduct education outreach and events, consultant-led assignments such as the MyTrip Program focusing on personalized trip planning, and the

Smart Commute Program led by the TMA's. This approach maximizes the reach of TDM programming with a small number of committed internal resources.

Four service delivery options for the Smart Commute Program were considered as part of the program review

Metrolinx ending their involvement in the program created an opportunity to review the program services to best meet the needs of the Region and local municipalities.

Staff considered four options to deliver the Smart Commute Program offerings:

- Option 1 - Revise the Smart Commute Program model to allow TMA's to deliver travel demand programming to better reflect the needs of the Region and the local municipal funding partners.
- Option 2 - Bring the program in-house which would require additional Regional staff resources in order to achieve the program objectives.
- Option 3 - Contract out the Smart Commute Program to consultant-led assignments. A portion of TDM programming is already contracted out to consultants as part of the Region's multi-faceted approach. While external consultants do provide specialized expertise, it has an increased cost.
- Option 4 - Stop the program entirely delivered through the TMA's which would negate the potential of the program to positively impact travel demand during rush hours.

Option 1, a revised Smart Commute Program model, was identified as the preferred option. This option allows the TMA's to deliver travel demand programming with a broader mandate to better reflect the needs of the Region and the local municipal funding partners.

Continuing the Smart Commute Program model allows the Region to share the costs of dedicated staff with other funding partners. There is also value in maintaining the community relationships that have been established by the TMA's since their creation in 2004.

The recommended approach will be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure transportation demand management outcomes are being achieved. If the recommended approach is not effective, options 2, 3, and 4 remain viable.

Regional and local staff have worked with the Transportation Management Associations to develop a revised community-based Smart Commute Program

A series of meetings have been held with the Town of Newmarket, the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan and the TMA's to discuss the program and its future. The Smart Commute Program has historically focused on workplace travel; however, there is opportunity to revise the program in order to best meet the individualized needs of the community and continue to offer good value for money.

Given the diverse landscape of York Region, the revised Smart Commute Program will better focus on the needs identified by the Region and local municipalities. In addition to workplace travel, the community-based model would help target the specific challenges each municipality faces including work travel to and from schools and mobility hubs such as GO and subway stations.

The revised Smart Commute Program agreements will include an evaluation process to measure program outcomes

The new mandate for the Smart Commute Program will aim to target priorities for the Region and local municipalities beyond workplace travel. Current service delivery agreements with the TMA's will be revised to incorporate this change.

The TMA's have been successful in delivering TDM strategies to workplaces throughout the Region, helping to grow companies and bring new business to the Region. With the program responsibility transferred to the Region, staff will be able to ensure accountability through an evaluation process that better tracks the outcomes of municipal investment.

Evaluation criteria will include measuring program outcomes and monitoring results annually. The Region may decide to continue its agreements with all three or only select TMA's based on the results. This regular review of the program will ensure the program remains effective.

5. Financial

The Smart Commute Program is funded by the Region and the Town of Newmarket and the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan (see Table 1). The Region contributes \$200,000 as part of the Capital Plan, divided among the three TMA's, and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget process. The TMA's are their own entities and are also funded by other partners. Should other partners choose to cease their funding, this could impact the ability for individual TMA's to continue to be viable. If external funding allocations change in the future further reviews of the program may be necessary.

Staff will continue to monitor and analyze the Smart Commute Program to ensure it is providing positive outcomes for the Region and the local funding municipalities.

Table 1
Municipal Funding Allocation

TMA	Funding Source	2018	2019	2020
Smart Commute Markham, Richmond Hill	Metrolinx	\$180,569	\$90,546	\$ 0
	York Region*	80,000	80,000	80,000
	City of Markham**	75,000	75,000	75,000
	City of Richmond Hill**	50,000	50,000	50,000
Subtotal		385,570	295,546	205,000
Smart Commute Central York	Metrolinx	107,719	53,979	0
	York Region*	80,000	80,000	80,000
	Town of Newmarket**	25,000	25,000	25,000
Subtotal		212,720	158,980	105,000
pointA	Metrolinx	58,063	29,601	0
	York Region*	40,000	40,000	40,000
	City of Vaughan**	3,000	3,000	3,000
Subtotal		101,063	72,602	43,000
Total		\$699,353	\$527,128	\$353,000

*Subject to 2020 budget approval

** The local municipalities that fund the TMAs include the Town of Newmarket, Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, and are subject to local budget approvals

6. Local Impact

TDM strategies aim to balance travel demand on the road network by shifting travellers to more sustainable travel modes such as walking, cycling or carpooling during rush hours, or encouraging travelers to make trips outside of rush hours. With continued growth in the Region, the need to shift travel modes to more sustainable modes of transportation is becoming increasingly important. The Region is committed to improving the efficiency of the Regional transportation network by increasing awareness in alternative travel modes and will continue to work with local municipalities and the TMA's to deliver the Smart Commute Program to communities throughout the Region.

7. Conclusion

As the Region continues to grow, congestion on the road network remains a significant challenge affecting communities. There is a need for travellers to shift their modes to more

sustainable transportation options to realize a positive impact on travel times throughout the Region.

TDM strategies continue to be an effective way to redistribute demand on the road network, especially during peak periods.

Revising the smart commute program to target areas outside of workplace travel, ensures efforts are focussed on meeting community needs on a more strategic and localized level. Given the TMA's established relationship with the existing community and dedicated staff resources to deliver TDM strategies, York Region can maximum the return on investment in the Smart Commute Program through the revised model.

For more information on this report, please contact Brian Titherington, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901. 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

September 20, 2019
Attachment (1)
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