

Clause 9 in Report No. 1 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on January 22, 2015.

Smart Commute Update

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated December 17, 2014 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the local municipalities as an update on the progress of the Smart Commute program by the three Transportation Management Associations operating in York Region:

- a) Smart Commute Central York (Newmarket, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Georgina, King)
- b) Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill
- c) Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan

2. Purpose

This report is to update Council on the progress of the Smart Commute program in York Region.

3. Background

York Region was one of the founders of the Smart Commute program

Smart Commute was created in 2004 through the initiative of York Region along with the Regions of Durham, Halton and Peel, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. York Region was the initial corporate home of the program until it was acquired by Metrolinx in 2008.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the use of policies, programs, services and products to influence whether, why, when, where and how people travel

Smart Commute provides TDM solutions for employers across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area including York Region. TDM measures can motivate people to:

- Shift modes — walk, cycle, take transit or rideshare instead of driving
- Make fewer trips — telework, teleconference, videoconference, compressed work week
- Drive more efficiently — shop locally, do several things on each trip, and avoid peak traffic periods and congested routes

York Region has provided annual funding to Smart Commute since 2006

In 2014, York Region provided \$185,187 in funding to Smart Commute. The Town of Newmarket, City of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill, and City of Vaughan also provide funding, and Metrolinx provides matching funding. Tables 1 to 3 show a breakdown of funding sources for the three Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) operating in York Region.

Table 1
2014 Funding – Smart Commute Central York

Source	Total (\$)	Percentage (%)
Metrolinx	108,000	49.5
Sponsorship	11,111	5.0
Town of Newmarket	25,000	11.5
York Region	74,075	34.0
Total	218,075	100

Table 2
2014 Funding – Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill

Source	Total (\$)	Percentage (%)
Metrolinx	175,000	45.6
Sponsorship	10,000	2.6
City of Markham	75,000	19.5
Town of Richmond Hill	50,000	13.0
York Region	74,075	19.3
Total	384,075	100

Table 3
2014 Funding – Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan

Source	Total (\$)	Percentage (%)
Metrolinx	125,000	39.6
Membership/Partnership Fees	122,000	38.6
City of Toronto	22,000	7.0
City of Vaughan	10,000	3.2
York Region	37,037	11.7
Total	316,037	100

The Region’s partnership with non-governmental organizations to provide Smart Commute services leverages its annual funding

In 2014, the Region’s \$185,187 in funding garnered approximately \$602,150 in dedicated funding for the Smart Commute program in York Region and provided thirteen full-time staff equivalents dedicated to promoting transportation options and improving traffic on our roads.

Since 2004 Smart Commute has partnered with more than 100 large York Region businesses and post-secondary institutions to serve more than 100,000 staff and students

Overall, based on data from online ride-matching tools, Smart Commute’s efforts in York Region have produced the following results:

- Avoided over 12,850,000 vehicle kilometres travelled
- Eliminated 2,600,000 kg of greenhouse gas emissions
- Saved commuters \$4.7 million in commuting costs

4. Analysis and Options

Smart Commute was created to partner with local businesses to reduce Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips

Smart Commute offers a variety of programs to staff at member businesses including, ride-matching, Emergency Ride Home and personalized travel planning. Smart Commute conducts a site assessment and survey of staff commuting habits before recommending a customized strategy for each work site to increase use of sustainable modes of travel. The program also conducts a follow-up survey of employees every two years to assess results.

Smart Commute assists employers in making decisions about investments and incentives that lead to behaviour change, such as preferential carpool parking, discounted transit passes, employee bike share and end-of-trip facilities like showers and lockers. Smart Commute also offers a workplace designation program which recognizes employers for their dedicated efforts and commitment in providing sustainable travel options.

As part of its outreach effort, Smart Commute assists the Region in communicating important information to residents

Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations communicate continuously with staff at member businesses through on-site outreach and presentations. As part of these efforts, Smart Commute supports York Region's efforts to provide services and information to its residents including:

- Updating businesses and their employees about York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) services and improvements; most recently the construction of vivaNext Rapidways
- Distributing active transportation-related information such as the York Region Cycling Map
- Facilitating York Region's Public Health efforts to reach out to workplaces to increase active transportation and improve health
- Promoting York Region events, hosted by various departments, which support sustainable transportation

The 2012 Development Charges Bylaw update allocated ongoing increases in funding for Smart Commute tied to the annual increase in the number of jobs

Ninety per cent of York Region's Smart Commute funding is obtained through Development Charges. As the number of jobs in York Region is anticipated to grow by 50 per cent from 539,000 in 2012 to 778,000 in 2031 (Growth Plan, Hemson, 2012), adjusting Smart Commute's funding on a per-jobs basis provides the program with the resources required to serve the Region's growing economy.

Link to key Council-approved plans

The recommendations of this report support the York Region Official Plan (2010), and the York Region Transportation Master Plan Update (2009). Both include policies to use the Region's existing and future infrastructure more efficiently, and call for the Region to support and work closely with local Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations. The Region's ongoing partnership with Smart Commute directly supports the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan objective to "improve mobility for users on Regional transportation corridors", and results will be observable in the Plan's "increase in non-automotive travel" indicator.

Smart Commute is also in line with the actions of the Region's Vision 2051, specifically:

- Implementing and supporting Transportation Demand Management initiatives that reduce automobile dependence by enhancing opportunities for residents and workers to walk, cycle, take transit and carpool
- Promoting initiatives including, telecommuting, hoteling of offices, shared space, land use and working and learning arrangements that reduce the need to travel
- Reducing emissions of air contaminants and greenhouse gases that contribute to poor air quality and climate change

5. Financial Implications

The 2012 Development Charges Bylaw update allocated ongoing increases in funding for Smart Commute tied to the annual increase in the number of jobs in the Region. This allows Smart Commute to serve the growing number of employees in York Region. The budget for the Regional contribution to this initiative is included in the approved Roads Capital Program. These expenditures are funded 90 per cent through Development Charges and ten per cent through tax levy.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Smart Commute helps local municipalities to attract and maintain businesses in the municipality. Its goal is to reduce local greenhouse gases and air pollution from single occupant vehicles and improve air quality in general. For the community as a whole, the benefits include reduced traffic congestion, increased system mobility, road and parking cost savings, reduced traffic collisions, environmental protection, more efficient land use and livable communities. More importantly, benefits to individual employees or commuters include reduced personal stress, improved physical health and travel cost savings.

7. Conclusion

York Region's continuing support of the Smart Commute program is an important service to manage transportation demand.

For more information on this report, please contact Stephen Collins, Director, Infrastructure Management and PMO at ext. 75949.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request