

chapter **five**

Supporting Sustainable Transportation



Carpool parking at York Region Administrative Centre

Sustainable Transportation in York Region

As York Region continues to be one of the fastest growing municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), there is a need to manage congestion to accommodate growth and provide residents and businesses with an efficient transportation system. The *2009 Transportation Master Plan* outlined the long term plan for achieving the necessary transportation system to meet growth demands. This update identified Transportation Demand Management (TDM) as a key component of the transportation system that should be enhanced in addition to roads and transit.

A York Region Transportation Demand Management Implementation Strategy has been developed and includes a vision for sustainable transportation to be implemented in partnership with numerous stakeholders. The TDM Strategy will be integrated into York Region's *Transportation Master Plan*.

In addition to expanding our transportation network and working to keep traffic flowing as smoothly as possible, York Region is working to reduce the demand on the road network. History has demonstrated that expanding roads and highways to relieve traffic congestion is, at best, a temporary solution. Many Regional roads do not have space left to add lanes.

Reducing the demands on our road network has a number of direct and indirect benefits:

- Reducing or eliminating the need to add new and costly transportation infrastructure
- Preservation of sensitive environmental features and wildlife that enhance our communities
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improving air quality
- Improving public health (from increased use of active transportation modes, such as walking and cycling as well as public transit)

The need to manage traffic congestion is very important to accommodate growth and provide mobility choices for residents. According to the latest Environics Survey (Spring 2013), transportation issues remain the most important local issue for residents. Increasing public transit use, carpooling, walking and cycling can help to reduce single-occupant-vehicle trips and trip generation. By promoting sustainable modes of transportation, the Region's transportation infrastructure can be used more effectively and efficiently.

York Region will continue to be a leader in making sustainable modes of travel more accessible to residents in collaboration with local municipalities and other agencies.

Promoting Alternative Modes of Transportation

Since 2004, York Region has already implemented numerous initiatives, measures and policies to increase public transit use, carpooling, walking and cycling. The forefront of these initiatives and measures are Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

Transportation Demand Management is a way to promote alternative modes of transportation. It can be defined as policies, programs and initiatives aimed at reducing single-occupant-vehicle trips and providing mobility options for all trips, as well as trip elimination through telecommuting. Managing demand can be a cost-effective alternative to increasing capacity, and

also has the potential to deliver a better environment, improved public health, stronger communities, and more prosperous and livable cities.

Transportation Demand Management initiatives involves changing the way the Region plans and builds infrastructure, public education, social marketing and, innovation. York Region has implemented a number of Transportation Demand Management initiatives. Some have become established programs, while others have been piloted to assess their potential for broader implementation.



Smart Commute parking at the York Region Administrative Centre

Promoting Alternative Modes of Transportation (continued)

Some examples of the Region's Transportation Demand Management measures and initiatives include:

Smart Commute

York Region was the first Smart Commute program host and a funding partner when the program started in 2004. The program has since been adopted by Metrolinx to provide employers and employees with alternative commuting solutions, such as carpooling, cycling and public transit.

Since its inception, Smart Commute has helped reduce approximately 1,763 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in York Region based on statistics from Smart Commute's carpool-matching website, Carpool Zone. Smart Commute programming has contributed to further GHG emission reductions through other initiatives that promote sustainable travel modes.

Pedestrian and Cycling Planning and Implementation

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008) provides the framework for a Regional-scale pedestrian and cycling network to make it easier for residents to walk and bike. It also guides local municipalities and developers in

establishing connections to the Regional network. Some of the local municipalities in York Region also developed their Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plans to integrate the local bicycle and sidewalk network. Since adoption, approximately 315 kilometres of bike facilities have been implemented on Regional roads.

The Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program provides up to 50 percent of the capital costs of pedestrian and cycling facilities that meet Regional objectives. To date, this Partnership Program has committed \$3.5 million and supported the creation of 100 kilometres of cycling facilities, including multi-use paths, and signed bike routes in various local municipalities.

The Regional Cycling Map

The first version of the Cycling Map was produced in 2011 and the second version was released in the summer of 2013.

Carpool and commuter parking lots

Carpool and commuter parking lots are made available at various locations throughout York Region. Commuters can use these lots to carpool with other drivers or connect to GO Transit or York Region Transit.

Promoting Alternative Modes of Transportation (continued)

High-Occupancy-Vehicle and dedicated bicycles lanes

First introduced on Dufferin Street between Steeles and Glen Shields Boulevard/Draper Boulevard in the City of Vaughan. Along with the landscaped median and sidewalks on both sides of Dufferin Street, this was the first application of Towards Great Regional Streets road design in York Region.

Personal Travel Planning

In 2011, the Region worked with households or individuals in the communities of Thornhill and Cornell who expressed an interest in changing their travel behaviour. The Thornhill pilot resulted in a 17 percent drop in single-occupant-vehicle trips among participants, while the Cornell pilot had negligible behaviour changes.

Regional Official Plan (2010)

Section 7.1 of the *Official Plan* includes policies related to TDM in order to reduce single-occupant-vehicle trips. Regional staff co-ordinate with local municipalities and stakeholders to develop consistent TDM conditions for the development applications and planning studies based on the policies in the *Official Plan*.

School Travel Planning

Currently, there are more than 25 projects in progress across the Region. York Region Public Health collaborates closely with York Region School Boards to increase the number of students walking and cycling to school.



Walking to school in the City of Markham

Promoting Alternative Modes of Transportation (continued)

Bike ‘n’ Bus

Bike racks have been installed on most of the YRT buses. This initiative helps cyclists to travel longer distances by combining cycling trips with the bus trip. The YRT bike racks are part of YRT’s Bike ‘n’ Bus program. Bike ‘n’ Bus is part of the Metrolinx BikeLinX program for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, in partnership with Smart Commute.

Public Health Injury Prevention

The Bicycle and Helmet Safety program is part of York Region Public Health’s initiatives that aimed to reduce the number of unintentional injuries and fatalities related to cycling by increasing the awareness, knowledge and skills of residents and employees in York Region.

Integrating Transportation Demand Management into new developments

York Region is working with land developers to integrate Transportation Demand Management initiatives and measures into new developments, to ensure that new residents and employees are aware of the full range of transportation options available to them when they are moving into these developments. The specific Transportation Demand Management measures that will be included in new developments will vary depending on the characteristics of the development, such as land use, density and transit service.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact:
Transportation Planning Branch
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Integrating cycling and walking trails into new developments in the Town of Richmond Hill



Pedestrian and cycling paths connecting neighbourhoods



Better transit service, Centre Street in the City of Markham



Smart Commute

Smart Commute is a partnership between Metrolinx and the cities and regions of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Its goals are to reduce traffic congestion and to take action on climate change by providing commuters with viable alternatives to single-occupant-vehicle trips.

Smart Commute helps local employers and commuters explore different commuter choices like carpooling, teleworking, transit, cycling, walking or flexible work hours. Its goal is to help make commuting easier, healthier and more enjoyable.

Smart Commute offers a wide array of services to make commuting easier in the GTHA, including:

- www.carpoolzone.ca a ride-matching site that identifies potential carpooling partners based on travel route and work hours
- Site assessments and surveys to understand employee commuter behavior and recommend a trip reduction strategy best suited to each work site

- The Emergency Ride Home program
- Employee Work Arrangement Solutions: telework, compressed work weeks and flex hours, workshops, lunch and learns and seminars
- Incentives and promotions
- Bike to Work Day and other fun events

Smart Commute is implemented primarily through local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). TMAs are non-profit organizations aimed at providing sustainable transportation solutions as well as improved mobility and accessibility. TMAs can be defined by municipal or physical boundaries, or they can also include a smaller employment area.

The programs provided by each TMA are unique to its service area but involve some combination of the full range of TDM measures identified above. A TMA will identify which services are best suited to an employer, given their location and commuting patterns of their staff.

quickfacts

Smart Commute aims to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation and to take action on climate change by providing commuters with resources and support to make changes and drive less.



Smart Commute (continued)

The contributing municipal partners of Smart Commute include:

- Region of Durham
- Region of Halton
- Region of Peel
- The Regional Municipality of York
- City of Brampton
- City of Burlington
- City of Hamilton
- City of Mississauga
- City of Toronto
- City of Vaughan
- City of Markham
- Town of Newmarket
- Town of Richmond Hill



Commuter parking lot at Newmarket GO Bus Terminal



School children walking home from school in the Town of Newmarket



GO train crossing Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket



Going to work by bike on a residential street in the Town of Newmarket



Viva stations on Highway 7 in the City of Markham and the Town of Richmond Hill



Smart Commute in York Region

In 2008, the Smart Commute program won the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Award for Transportation. Also in 2008, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute recognized Smart Commute with two awards: Excellence in Planning and the inaugural Healthy Communities Award.

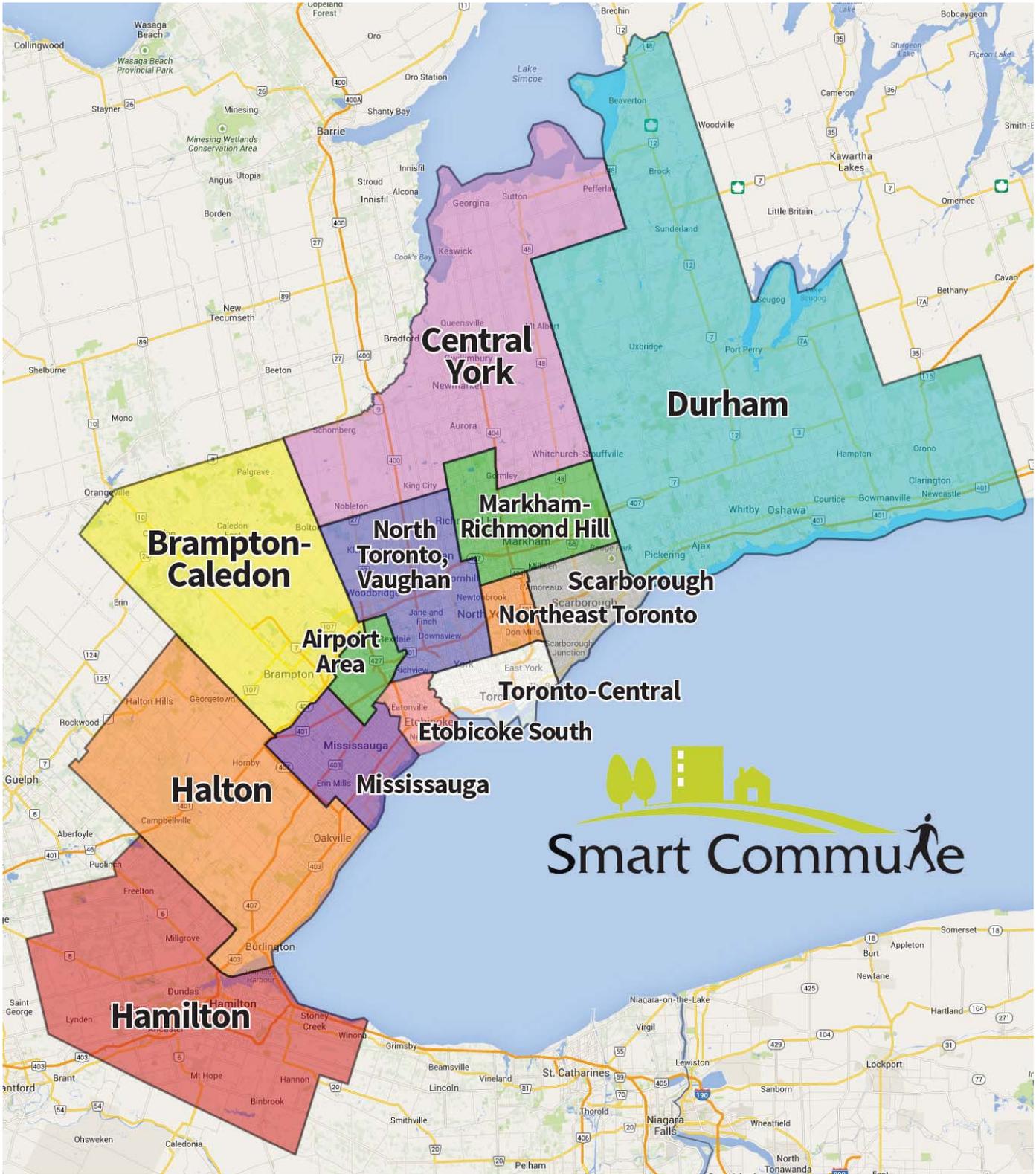
York Region is a leader in the Smart Commute program. Currently, there are three TMAs operating in York Region. The Region, along with local municipalities, provides funding for these organizations in partnership with Metrolinx. **Table 10** summarizes the Smart Commute TMAs and **Figure 38** illustrates the TMAs in the GTA.

Table 10 - Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations

Smart Commute North Toronto, Vaughan	Smart Commute Markham, Richmond Hill	Smart Commute Central York
<p>Previously known as the Black Creek Transportation Management Association, this was the first TMA in the Greater Toronto Area. North Toronto, Vaughan works with major employers, including Powerstream, Direct Energy, Humber River Regional Hospital, Vaughan Mills Mall and Seneca College.</p>	<p>Operated by the Markham Board of Trade and the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, Markham Richmond Hill reaches out to businesses affiliated with the Board and Chamber. Several major employers in Markham and Richmond Hill are engaged in providing their staff with viable sustainable transportation options, including Markham Stouffville Hospital, Bank of Montreal, CGI Canada, Elgin Mills Professional Centre and the offices of the Town of Richmond Hill and City of Markham.</p>	<p>Operating out of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce, Smart Commute Central York serves Newmarket, Aurora and East Gwillimbury. Its major employers include Southlake Regional Hospital, State Farm Insurance, Scholastic Publishing, the Town of Newmarket and the Region's offices in Newmarket.</p>
<p>Contact: Brian Shifman, Executive Director Tel: 416-736-2100, ext. 70690 Email: bshifman@smartcommutentv.ca www.smartcommuteNTV.ca</p>	<p>Contact: Flo McLellan, Program Director Tel: 289-844-3021 Email: fmclellan@smartcommuterh.ca www.smartcommutemrh.ca</p>	<p>Contact: Pat Lusink, Program Manager Tel: 905-898-5900 ext. 224 Email: pat.lusink@smartcommute.ca www.smartcommutecentralyork.ca</p>

Figure 38

Smart Commute Transportation Management Associations





High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and bicycle lanes on Dufferin Street in the City of Vaughan



Registered Carpool Parking at York Region Administrative Centre in the Town of Newmarket

Carpool and Commuter Parking Lots

Commuter parking lots are used to facilitate carpooling and transit. Carpool lots are typically located at highway interchanges and provide convenient access to and from 400-series highways. Some of these sites also serve as transit stops. Park ‘N’ Ride and GO Transit stations provide commuters with convenient locations to access YRT/Viva or GO services. Many of the YRT Park ‘N’ Ride lots are located at convenient trip ends such as shopping malls or recreational centres. **Figure 39** illustrates the carpool and commuter parking lots in the Region.

Carpool Lots

- Highway 7 and Highway 400
- Highway 9 and Highway 400
- Major Mackenzie Drive and Highway 400
- King Road and Highway 400
- Aurora Side Road and Highway 404
- Davis Drive and Highway 404

YRT/Viva Park ‘N’ Ride Lots

- **Aurora Community Centre**
Aurora Heights Drive, one block north of Wellington Street
- **South Keswick Commuter Parking**
Southwest corner of Woodbine Avenue and Glenwoods Avenue

- **Denison Square**
Highway 48 and Denison Street
- **First Markham Place**
Highway 7 and Fairburn Drive
(Bay - Home Outfitters Parking Lot)
- **Fortino’s Super Mall**
Kennedy Road and Denison Street
- **Markham Village Community Centre**
Highway 48 and Highway 7
- **Markville Mall**
Highway 7 and McCowan Road
- **Thornhill Community Centre**
Bayview Avenue & John Street
- **Al Palladini Community Centre**
9201 Islington Avenue
- **Maple Community Centre**
10190 Keele Street

Carpool and Commuter Parking Lots (continued)

GO Transit Park 'N' Ride Lots

- **Aurora Road and Highway 404**
Carpool Lot
- **Aurora GO Station** - Wellington Street
- **Markham Centennial Community Centre** - McCowan Road
- **East Gwillimbury**
Green Lane and 2nd Concession
- **Finch GO Bus Terminal**
Yonge Street and Bishop, North York
- **King** - Station Road
- **Highway 9 and Highway 400**
Carpool Lot
- **Langstaff** - Highway 7
- **Maple** - Major Mackenzie Drive West
- **Major Mackenzie Drive and Highway 400** - Carpool Lot
- **Markham** - Main Street
- **Milliken** - Steeles Avenue
- **Mount Joy** - Highway 48
- **Newmarket GO Rail**
Davis Drive East
- **Newmarket Bus Terminal**
Highway 9 and Eagle Street
- **Stouffville** - Main Street and
Lincolnville - Bethesda Sideroad
- **Richmond Hill**
Major Mackenzie Drive East
- **Rutherford** - Maple
- **Unionville** - Kennedy Road



Bicycle parking at the Town of Newmarket GO Bus station

Figure 39

Carpool and Commuter Parking Lots

LEGEND

-  GO Transit Stations/Park 'N' Ride Lots
-  Carpool Lot
-  YRT / VIVA Park 'N' Ride Lots
-  Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
-  Provincial Highway
-  Road
-  Railway
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Regional Boundary
-  Lake *
-  River *
-  Town or Village
-  Urban Area



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