

1.1 Guidelines Overview

York Region's road network reflects and supports provincial and Regional planning objectives. It contributes to city building and creating a sense of place.

York Region is one of the fastest growing regional municipalities in Canada, growing from a population of approximately 169,000 people in 1971 to a projected 1.8 million by 2041. Its nine local municipalities are experiencing considerable change and diversity, ranging from densely populated urban areas to small hamlets with vast agricultural lands. These diverse settlement patterns are mirrored by an equally diverse transportation network that is continually evolving to meet the needs of a growing and aging population.

Road design that supports evolving land use and intensification is an integral component of building complete communities that can effectively accommodate and respond to growth. The Province of Ontario's planning policies have required local and regional municipalities to focus on increased accessibility and mobility for Ontarians, more sustainable forms of transportation, sensitivity towards climate change and intensification in urban and built-up areas in response to this growth and other factors. This results in pressures on land, transportation networks and other resources.

In October 2006, York Regional Council approved

Towards Great Regional Streets which became the Region's design guidelines for six-lane Regional roads. The purpose was to provide a standardized approach to designing six-lane Regional roads while ensuring all modes of transportation were accommodated and enhanced streetscaping was provided. Dufferin Street between Steeles Avenue and Glen Shields Avenue, now built, was designed based on these guidelines.

York Region has evolved further in the past 10 years and there is recognition that one standard of road design is not enough. To best serve our citizens, a customized approach is required to reflect the street and the community it serves.

It is increasingly recognized that road design plays an important role in city building and the establishment of a sense of 'place'. Evolving best practices call for cross-disciplinary collaborative approaches to street design that integrate boulevard and roadway design and recognize the unique attributes of different places and land use contexts. This approach is referred to as Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). It seeks to shift the focus from planning for vehicle capacity to planning for streets that provide greater mobility for all users and contribute to a greater integration of land use



and community. Street design is now considered an integral component of the built form, urban design, public realm, health, safety and vibrancy of the community. It is also considered a key mechanism to promote sustainability and protection of the environment.

The Region has undertaken Designing Great Streets (“guidelines”) to update its road design process and develop road typologies that recognize the expanded role Regional roads play in keeping with current thinking on progressive roadway and urban design. The resulting priorities for accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and vehicles, in combination with the planned land use for each street, promote a more holistic means for creating street designs for individual projects. These guidelines are intended to simplify decision making for planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, developers and others involved in the road design process.

These guidelines provide:

- A set of six road typologies that reflect the Region’s aspirations for the Regional road network
- Design Guidelines outlining best practices for all elements of the street (between the curbs) and boulevard (between the curb and building face) as well as adjacent natural heritage features
- A Decision Making Process that guides designers through a flexible process to assess the long-term goals for Regional roads, as well as design roads supporting all modes of transportation in a growing urban environment

Implementation of these road typologies and the decision making framework will guide the design of Regional roads to provide multimodal transportation options while supporting community development and adjacent land uses.



A model for a cross-disciplinary, collaborative approach to street design