

SRPRS.17.179

Attachment 2

Regional Transportation Plan

Regional Parking Policy

Cycling Network Strategy

Town of Richmond Hill Comments

September 7, 2017

Regional Parking Policy

As growth occurs in the Town of Richmond Hill (Town) along major transit corridors and intensification areas, parking has been and is a growing topic of importance for consideration. Parking strategies can be effective tools to help increase the use of sustainable transportation while reducing automobile dependency.

Charging for parking is one of the key strategies of worthy consideration and could be an effective tool to encourage regional transit users to choose sustainable transportation modes as a means to arrive at transit stations instead of driving. However, since the Town does not currently charge for off-street parking, the reality could be that surrounding neighbourhoods and developments would be impacted by an uptake of parked vehicles as drivers do not prefer to pay for parking at regional transit stations. The following strategies could be considered by Metrolinx to mitigate unintended impacts of paid parking at regional transit stations:

- Coordinate with local municipalities to implement paid parking at developments along major transit corridors and near major regional transit stations;
- Collaborate with developers to provide supportive land uses near regional transit stations that would meet the everyday needs of users prior to and after their transit trips;
- Consult with local transit providers to improve transit service to a level of service that is convenient, flexible, accessible and affordable enough to encourage drivers to and from regional transit stations to utilize local transit; and
- Partner with local municipalities to provide sufficient dedicated and separated active transportation access connections to regional transit stations. Metrolinx to provide site specific internal active transportation connections, within transit station sites inclusive of parking lots, from the external transportation network and provide secure and convenient bicycle parking facilities at regional and local transit stations or bus stops.

When considering the recommendation of paid parking at regional transit stations, we encourage Metrolinx to consult with local municipalities and local transit operators on their needs to support the

notion of paid parking at GO Stations and Mobility Hubs. The Town would also welcome partnership opportunities with Metrolinx to implement parking strategies through pilot projects.

In terms of parking supply for transit oriented developments, the Town's Official Plan does provide policies to establish maximum parking standards, encourage shared parking between complementary uses and encourage Transportation Demand Management parking provisions including bicycle, car-share and carpool parking spaces. These policies generally align with the parking strategies outlined as New Development Parking (Commercial /Residential) in Metrolinx document with the exception of unbundled parking and electric vehicle parking.

It should be noted that the Town has been and is currently experiencing significant pressure to approve transit-oriented developments with reduced parking rates in anticipation for planned rapid transit corridors. This interim stage where parking supplies are reduced and transit service is not yet provided has created parking issues for the Town while developers benefit from reduced parking rates.

For example, the Town has allowed significantly reduced parking rates in the Richmond Hill Centre with the anticipation that the Yonge Subway Line would be extended to service this area in the near future. However, the extension of this subway line has been delayed for many years without any committed construction time. As such, the Town is receiving concerns from residents, asking for more parking to meet their needs due to unavailable transit services. Therefore, it is important to expedite and commit to the implementation of the Yonge subway extension to meet the needs of residents while implementing parking strategies as noted in the study.

The Town would request Metrolinx to consider a mechanism or funding model that would allow municipalities or transportation agencies to collect any financial resources from developers based on the reduction of parking supply or based on the development location (along a rapid transit corridor) that would ultimately help fund key transit projects including the Yonge subway extension.

Cycling Network Strategy

The following general and specific comments and questions relate to the draft Cycling Network Strategy.

General Comments:

- Given that the Cycling Network Strategy is currently a final draft, how will the following comments be considered and incorporated?
- The Town is generally supportive of the selected primary /secondary active transportation routes as they would connect the Town's Urban Growth Centre / Anchor Hub, intensification areas and corridors with those in other municipalities and would have significant importance to regional cycling travel.

- The Town supports the notion of physically-separated cycling routes for the primary and secondary routes as these routes tend to have higher traffic volumes and motor vehicle speeds. The physical separation would allow cyclists to feel safer and more comfortable, thus resulting in a higher likelihood of commuters choosing to cycle.
- There appears to be an error in section 3.1 with regard to route directness and the detour factor for a journey on a Regional Cycling Network Route. The ratio of distance travelled on the network to distance as the crow flies cannot be smaller than 1:1.

Network Specific Comments:

- The Town recommends the Lake to Lake Route from Leslie Street to Stouffville Road be considered as part of the Secondary Route. Although this section of the Lake-to-Lake trail is off-road, it provides a connection to the future North Leslie developments (from Bayview Ave to Leslie Street and from Elgin Mills to just north of 19th Ave) and would function as a more direct commuter route for many residents.
- The Town also recommends that the Lake-to-Lake trail on Leslie Street from Stouffville Road to Bloomington Road be included in the Secondary Route network.

First/Last Mile Challenges:

- The Town is poised to initiate the Transportation Master Plan Update later this year that will encompass a multimodal approach that will include active transportation and travel demand management. One goal of the Town's 2018 Transportation Master Plan Update is to enhance the AT network by addressing first/last mile challenges. This would include identifying and developing convenient and well-connected AT routes from communities to mobility hubs, to GO Stations, to rapid transit corridors and to the overall cycling network. This initiative would build on the Town's and the Region's ongoing AT/TDM efforts to support the primary and secondary routes that the cycling strategy has identified to further encourage commuting and other utilitarian trips using active transportation.

Metrolinx / Municipal Implications:

- For the routes ultimately recommended for implementation through the Regional Transportation Plan,
 - What are the implications (funding, building, maintenance, wayfinding) for Municipalities for a) primary and b) secondary routes?
- What role will Metrolinx play in coordinating, implementing and promoting these facilities?
 - How would Metrolinx's proposed implementation program address funding requirements to accelerate cycling network projects and to target a higher level of infrastructure quality?

Maintenance:

- Should this strategy have some sort of guidance on the maintenance of bike facilities?

- Or will maintenance strategies be provided in the RTP?

Wayfinding:

- What role will Metrolinx play in ensuring consistent wayfinding principles and branding for primary and secondary routes?

Data Coordination:

- The Town is supportive of Metrolinx's proposed role as coordinator of ongoing regional planning efforts, and for the provision of appropriate resources to enhance coordinated regional planning.
- What role will Metrolinx take in ensuring consistent data collection amongst municipalities?

Route Barriers:

- Will this report outline the strategies on how to minimize barriers (400 series highways and environmental constraints) along primary/secondary routes?
- Or will these strategies be outlined in the RTP within specific project recommendations?

Metrolinx Sites – Internal Cycling Routes:

- Metrolinx should also consider strategies to provide site-specific internal active transportation connections within larger sites like GO Stations. This would link pedestrians and cyclists from the overall external transportation network to the on-site bicycle parking facilities to minimize conflicts between vehicle types.