

Consolidated Clause in Planning and Transportation Committee Report 6, which was considered by City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006.

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Update on the Smart Commute Initiative and the City's Efforts in Transportation Demand Management

City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, adopted this Clause without amendment.

The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (August 15, 2006) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning:

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Smart Commute Initiative, the associated Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and the City's employee trip reduction pilot program and to seek Council endorsement of continuing and expanding these initiatives.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications for 2007.

Existing funding and transportation planning staff can be deployed to enable the Smart Commute Initiative to continue beyond the scheduled expiry of federal funding support in March 31, 2007. The City will be able to contribute its share to support the centralized functions of the GTA-wide Smart Commute Association and maintain, in large part, its on-going commitments to support the operations of local transportation management associations (TMAs) as well as the expansion of the City's own employee trip reduction program.

The proposal to create a new Downtown TMA will be put on hold during 2007 while other opportunities for providing TDM services for downtown employees are explored. All the municipal partners in the Smart Commute Association hope that 2007 will prove to be a transitional year during which the Province will step in to continue the support initially provided by the Federal government. By the end of 2007 a clearer picture of the project's long-term financial situation should emerge and firmer recommendations for the future sustainability of the program can be brought forward for Council's consideration at that time.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) maintain support for the centralized transportation demand management programs and services provided region-wide by the Smart Commute Association;
- (2) maintain support for the local transportation management associations, namely Smart Commute-North Toronto, Vaughan and Smart Commute Northeast Toronto;
- (3) direct staff to explore ways of delivering transportation demand management programs and services to downtown employers, including the possible formation of a Downtown transportation management association;
- (4) support the expansion of the City of Toronto Smart Commute employee trip reduction pilot project to other civic centres and work sites where feasible; and
- (5) forward this report to the Budget Committee for consideration in the 2007 operating budget process.

Background:

At its meeting of January 27, 28 and 29, 2004, Council adopted the report from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services (dated December 11, 2003), as contained in Clause 8 of Report No. 1 of the Planning and Transportation Committee, and re-affirmed its support for the Smart Commute Initiative. Subsequently, Council approved funding for the Smart Commute Initiative in the amount of \$400,000 for the period 2004-2006.

In June 2001, Transport Canada announced the Urban Transportation Showcase Program (UTSP) and called on Canadian municipalities to participate in a two-stage nation-wide competition. Municipalities were invited to submit projects in the form of “Showcase” proposals that will reduce urban transportation emissions by reducing travel demand and by shifting travel away from energy-intensive modes.

The proposal entitled “Greater Toronto Area Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program” (later renamed the “Smart Commute Initiative”), was submitted as a collaborative effort of GTA-wide municipalities. The partners include the City of Toronto, Town of Markham, City of Mississauga, City of Vaughan, City of Brampton, Town of Richmond Hill, City of Hamilton, York Region, Halton Region, Durham Region and Peel Region.

On November 26th, 2003, Transport Canada announced that the “Smart Commute Initiative” had been selected, along with seven others, to receive federal funding. The UTSP allocated up to \$2.5 million in funding for the GTA/Hamilton Area proposal over three years.

The Smart Commute Initiative's objectives are to:

- (1) Develop 10 TMAs across the GTA and Hamilton (GTAH).
- (2) Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while improving air quality.
- (3) Develop a GTAH-wide ride matching service and emergency ride home program.
- (4) Reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) modal share by 3 percent.
- (5) Contact 2,000 employers across the GTAH (200 per TMA).
- (6) Marketing exposure/contact with 10% of commuters in the GTAH by 2010.
- (7) Reduce approximately 150,000 tonnes of GHG emissions by 2010.

In order to facilitate the achievement of these objectives, the project team created and agreed to financially support the central office of the Smart Commute Association – an arms length, unregistered non-profit organization. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the member municipalities, the Smart Commute Association operates within York Region's administrative and financial structure and its offices are located within the City of Toronto (East York Civic Centre).

The Smart Commute Association is responsible for providing support to municipal staff in their efforts to create the local TMAs and creating “modules” that TMAs could use to offer programs like ride matching and emergency ride home to their members.

In Toronto, three local initiatives were identified for development:

- (1) City of Toronto Smart Commute: An employee trip reduction program geared towards City of Toronto staff. This program was piloted at North York Civic Centre in partnership with Toronto Public Health's *20/20 The Way to Clean Air* program.
- (2) Smart Commute Northeast Toronto: A new TMA centred on the Consumers Road area near Highway 401 and the 404/Don Valley Parkway. Smart Commute Northeast Toronto is managed by Smart Commute North Toronto, Vaughan.
- (3) Smart Commute Downtown Toronto: A new TMA centred on the downtown core of Toronto, roughly bordered by the lake, Dupont Street to the north, the Don Valley Parkway to the east and Bathurst Street to the west.

In addition, the City of Toronto continued its support of Smart Commute-North Toronto, Vaughan (SCNTV). The City of Toronto is a founding partner of SCNTV and has been supporting the organization since conception in 2001. SCNTV receives funding from UTSP and the Smart Commute Initiative to support expansion of the TMA and its services.

Transport Canada's role in providing funding for the Smart Commute Association and the local TMAs ends on March 31, 2007. Federal funding has provided the impetus to implement a TDM strategy on a regional scale and given the opportunity to demonstrate the advantages that such a coordinated approach can bring. Municipal partners are working together to ensure that this momentum is not lost and that the Smart Commute Association continues to provide valuable centralized programs and services to the local TMAs.

Comments:

(A) Smart Commute Initiative/Smart Commute Association:

The table below provides a status update on each of the Smart Commute Initiative's objectives. The program ends on March 31, 2007.

Objective	Status
(1) Develop 10 TMAs across the GTA and Hamilton	Five launched, four in development.
(2) Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while improving air quality	Ongoing.
(3) Develop a GTA-wide ride matching service and emergency ride home program	Completed.
(4) Reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) modal share by 3%	Will be evaluated upon program completion.
(5) Contact 2,000 employers across the GTA (200 per TMA)	Completed.
(6) Marketing exposure/contact with 10% of commuters in the GTA by 2010	Completed.
(7) Reduce approximately 150,000 tonnes of GHG emissions by 2010.	Will be evaluated upon program completion.

Table 1: Status of the Smart Commute Initiative's objectives

Other major accomplishments have included:

- (1) Registering the Smart Commute as an official trade mark;
- (2) Developing name branded information material;
- (3) Securing and advertising contact points (website, email address and toll free number);
- (4) Establishing four committees (Technical, Budget, Steering and Advisory);
- (5) Establishing partnerships with GO Transit and the Clean Air Partnership;
- (6) Developing an operational database of participants;
- (7) Conducting a baseline attitudinal survey in May 2005 of 1000 commuters in the GTA and Hamilton;
- (8) Coordinating 48 promotional events and numerous media releases.

Appendix I of this report provides a brief overview of the activities and achievements of the Smart Commute Association.

(B) City of Toronto Smart Commute Employee Trip Reduction Pilot:

The City of Toronto Smart Commute (COTSC) Pilot project was launched on June 28, 2005 as a joint program of Toronto Public Health's 20/20 The Way to Clean Air campaign and City Planning's Smart Commute Initiative. The main goal has been to reduce congestion and

improve air quality and health by providing City staff with resources to help them make the switch from driving alone to taking public transit, carpooling, walking and cycling to work. The pilot program targets City employees at the North York Civic Centre.

From its inception, Toronto Public Health has supported the development of the pilot program. A part time Program Coordinator (0.6 FTE) was hired to oversee the implementation of the pilot program. To-date, Toronto Public Health continues to provide approximately 0.2 FTE of in kind support towards the expansion and implementation of the program.

In order to gauge the success of the pilot program, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted, which incorporated the review of both qualitative and quantitative indicators in several areas.

In May 2005 a baseline commuter survey and site assessment were completed for the North York Civic Centre (NYCC). Commuter surveys provide a snapshot of commuting modes and commuter behaviour and serve as a benchmark for follow-up surveys. The follow-up survey was completed in July 2006. The survey results suggest that 16% of respondents may have made the switch from single occupant vehicles towards more sustainable choices. The City of Toronto Smart Commute Pilot Evaluation Report (Appendix II) provides more details on this and other results of the one-year evaluation of the North York Civic Centre pilot project.

In addition, feedback from program staff and participants was obtained through informal discussions which have provided valuable information about the barriers to, and opportunities for, improving the program. Organizational practices have been identified as a challenge to the implementation of several TDM strategies. Staff are currently exploring the possibility of modifying the City's organizational practices, such as the introduction of an alternative work arrangements policy, that would facilitate sustainable transportation choices for its employees.

The program's results were achieved through the following activities:

- (1) Implementation and promotion of the TTC Volume Incentive Pass program.
- (2) Participation in the regional launch of the Carpool Zone ride-matching website and the development of a specific site for NYCC staff.
- (3) The availability of discounted rates, for staff who cycle or walk/run to work and wish to access the shower facilities at the nearby Douglas Snow Aquatic Centre.
- (4) Installing secure and sheltered bike parking facilities in the P2 level of the underground parking garage.
- (5) Launching an Emergency Ride Home program. City staff registered in the Smart Commute Pilot are offered a free taxi ride home in the event of a personal emergency.
- (6) Promoting the development of an alternative work arrangements (e.g. telework, compressed work week and flexible hours) proposal. A joint letter has been sent from the Medical Officer of Health and the City's Chief Planner to the City's Human Resources Department in an effort to move such a proposal forward.
- (7) A variety of face-to-face outreach and education events, including displays, workshops and presentations.

There is clearly a demand amongst City staff for these services – 32 people from North York Civic Centre have signed up on the Carpool Zone website. In addition, 78 people from other City work locations have signed up on Carpool Zone and, with a greater marketing effort, these numbers could likely be significantly increased.

(C) Smart Commute Northeast Toronto:

Smart Commute Northeast Toronto has been operating since April 2006 focusing on the Consumers Road area of North Toronto. This area has a large concentration of employers and is, in some places, poorly served by transit. Some early successes include:

- (1) The TMA has already recruited 4 major partners.
- (2) All members have recently been setup with Carpool Zone subgroups.
- (3) All members are in the process of completing site assessments and commuter surveys.
- (4) The TMA is currently gearing up for a large showcase recruitment event in late 2006.
- (5) The TMA is currently studying the feasibility of creating a shuttle from Don Mills subway station to the Consumers Road area.
- (6) The TMA is studying the feasibility of expanding the existing Enbridge vanpool program.

Smart Commute Northeast Toronto will host its official launch event in September 2006. It is run under the auspices of Smart Commute-North Toronto, Vaughan, which is also supported by UTSP and the City of Toronto.

Some recent North Toronto, Vaughan successes include:

- (1) Provides services to nine large employers in its catchment area (in addition to the businesses in Northeast Toronto).
- (2) Over 6 million impressions in local media coverage.
- (3) An estimated 125 SOV trips per day at York University shifted to carpooling.
- (4) 2,000 tonnes of GHG emissions reduced in 2005.
- (5) An estimated 12 million of VKT (vehicle kilometers traveled) reduced.
- (6) 430,848 web visits in 2005.

Smart Commute-North Toronto, Vaughan is continuing to expand and recruit new businesses within northern Toronto.

(D) Smart Commute Downtown Toronto:

According to the Contribution Agreement with Transport Canada, the City of Toronto is expected to create a transportation management association to provide services to businesses in the downtown Toronto core. However, given the City's financial constraints and the expiry of federal funding in March 2007, the need and timing of creating a formal downtown TMA is being re-evaluated. City staff will, in the coming months, explore the options that exist for providing TDM services to local downtown businesses that do not necessitate the immediate creation of a new TMA.

(E) Benefits to Toronto:

The long-term benefits of these initiatives to Toronto can be illustrated through a conservative scenario that is based on industry standard assumptions for GHG-emission reductions. The scenario looks at City residents who drive during the morning peak period. It is assumed that 1% of these drivers switch to carpooling, 1% shift to transit and 1% to walking/cycling as a result of the SCI and TMA programs. This net change can bring the following benefits:

- (1) Financial:
 - \$3.7 million increase in annual TTC fare revenue
 - Productivity gains typically associated with TDM measures/reduced congestion
 - Potential for annual savings in road capital and operating costs*
 - * *Note:* Staff at York Region have calculated, in a similar scenario, that the Region would save \$4 million per year in road capital and operating costs.
- (2) Environmental:
 - More than 7,000 tonnes per year in greenhouse gas emissions reduction, helping Toronto achieve its reductions targets with respect to climate change
 - Improved air quality from reduced emissions of NO_x, SO_x and particulate matters
- (3) Health:
 - Improved health from reduced air pollution and smog
 - Increased physical activities through active commuting (i.e., cycling, walking and running to and from work)
- (4) Leadership
 - Improved image as a leader in addressing congestion and poor air quality
 - Improved image as a good place to do business

Given this level of potential increases in annual transit revenues and reduced road costs, totalling in the order of millions of dollars, continuing to support the Smart Commute Initiative at current funding levels is considered a cost effective air quality improvement and congestion relief measure.

(F) The Future of the Smart Commute Initiative:

The Smart Commute Initiative and local TMAs/initiatives, like the City's employee trip reduction program, face uncertainty about the future, in part due to the end of the funding arrangement with the federal government.

Two recent events provide some suggestion as to the possible sources of future funding. First, the provincial government has recently announced the creation of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA). Second, Ministry of Transportation staff have recently convened a "Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton TDM Committee". It is the hope of the program staff and our municipal partners that this signifies a new interest in TDM by the provincial government that will eventually lead to the Smart Commute Association becoming a part of the operations of the GTTA or some other provincial arm.

The continued support of the City of Toronto to the Smart Commute Initiative and the local TMAs will serve as critical bridge funding during this uncertain transitional stage. SCA and the local TMA staffs will seek to leverage local municipal funding and the work that has already been done to ensure a more sustainable financial future for the Smart Commute Initiative.

(G) Relationship to Official Plan:

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an important component of the city's Official Plan. The transportation policies in Section 2.4 promote efforts to counteract the growing dependence on vehicle use in Toronto while putting TDM in the spotlight.

TDM is fundamental to Toronto's economic success and environmental health. By creating more travel choices and offering incentives to those who participate in modes of transit that reduce auto use, it reflects a creative way for confronting the connected issues of urban transportation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Conclusions:

The Smart Commute Association (SCA) and the local TMA initiatives described above have been very beneficial to the City of Toronto and the other member municipalities across the GTA. The TMAs have been working hard to provide programs and services for commuters to help them make the switch from single occupant vehicles to alternative transportation modes. The employee trip reduction program is setting the stage for the corporation of the City of Toronto to be seen as a leader in transportation demand management – one that understands the importance of getting its own house in order before asking the same of the business community. It is important for the City to maintain and enhance its leadership role if the overall objective of reducing auto dependency is to be achieved.

The funding provided by Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program (UTSP) has been critical to the successful launch of the Smart Commute Initiative. Among staff, there are indications that the province may become a partner in TDM initiatives in the GTA and elsewhere throughout the province. Now that the federal program is nearing its scheduled conclusion it is important for the municipal partners to maintain their support of the SCA and the local TMAs during this uncertain transitional period.

The net effect of TDM programs works towards the goals set out in the Official Plan and by various divisions working towards improving air quality, reducing congestion and promoting sustainable growth. As a result, staff recommend continuing the funding of the SCA, the local TMAs and City of Toronto Smart Commute employee trip reduction program.

The Medical Officer of Health and his staff have been actively involved in the development and implementation of the City of Toronto Smart Commute pilot program. The Medical Officer of Health and the Executive Director of Policy, Planning, Finance and Administration Division support the City's directions in transportation demand management.

The recommendations in this report are supported by and reflected in the draft report and recommendations of the Clean Air Action Plan, which was mandated by the Roundtable on the Environment and is expected to be finalized in March 2007.

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(Appendix I and II referred to in the report were forwarded to all Members of Council with the September 5, 2006 agenda of the Planning and Transportation Committee, and copies thereof are also on file in the Office of the City Clerk.)