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Town of Aurora

**Committee of the Whole Report**  
No. PDS24-013

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**Subject:** **Active Transportation Master Plan Draft Report Presentation**

**Prepared by:** Michael Bat, Traffic and Transportation Analyst

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** March 5, 2024

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## **Recommendation**

- 1. That Report No. PDS24-013 be received;**
- 2. That a presentation on the draft Active Transportation Master Plan by WSP Canada Inc. be received; and,**
- 3. That a future staff report be presented to Council to seek endorsement of the finalized Active Transportation Master Plan.**

## **Executive Summary**

This report presents to Council the draft Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP), its findings and recommendations. The ATMP provides both short-term and long-term recommendations through a 20-year time horizon to service Aurora's projected growth and identifies opportunities to create a sustainable, safe, and accessible active transportation network.

- The ATMP aims to build on previous municipal, regional, provincial, and federal planning documents to ensure that the ATMP aligns to the goals and vision previously established by the Town and other levels of government;
- Extensive consultation and engagement activities were completed to collect information and feedback on active transportation facilities from Town's residents and stakeholders;
- The development process of the active transportation network is a combination of both technical assessments and feedback received from consultation with stakeholders;

- The phasing strategy was developed over a 20-year planning horizon with short term (0-10 years) and long term (11-20 years) plans designed to ensure that the active transportation network is implemented in a way that is efficient, cost effective, and responsive to the needs of the community;
- To complement the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan, the ATMP recommends that a road diet and separated bicycle lanes be implemented on Yonge Street between Orchard Heights Boulevard/Batson Drive and Golf Links Drive/Dunning Avenue to support the implementation of the Promenade Streetscape Plan;
- A high-level cost estimation to implement the active transportation facilities was developed to help inform future capital budget planning and decision-making processes; and,
- A Town-Wide Pedestrian Crossing Treatment and Sidewalk Gap Analysis Study update is recommended to further enhance the active transportation network.

The draft ATMP is provided in Attachment 1.

## **Background**

Council approved the preparation of the ATMP as part of the 2021 capital budget process. The key objective of the ATMP was to review and assess the Town's current active transportation network plan, policies, and programs and to support future growth by providing recommendations to create a safe and well-connected active transportation network for all road users.

WSP Canada Inc. was retained to support the development of the ATMP. Guiding principles for the preparation of the ATMP included:

- Building upon the Town's existing trails and active transportation infrastructure to develop a continuous Town-wide network that connects to all neighbourhoods within the Town and adjacent municipalities;
- Encouraging and creating more opportunities for residents to integrate active transportation into their lifestyle by implementing communication and education plans, and;
- Collaborating with residents and stakeholders to ensure that community values were reflected in the ATMP.

The ATMP addresses Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Municipal Class Environment Assessment, which is an approved process under the Environmental Assessment Act.

## Analysis

**The ATMP to build on previous municipal, regional, provincial, and federal planning documents to ensure that the ATMP aligns to the goals and vision previously established by the Town and other levels of government**

To ensure the recommendations of the ATMP were consistent with the objectives envisioned by the Town and other levels of government, the following plans and policies were reviewed (Table 1).

**Table 1: Background Documents Reviewed**

| <b>Levels of Government</b>           | <b>Background Documents</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Municipal<br>(Town of Aurora)         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Aurora Official Plan (2023)</li> <li>• Town of Aurora Strategic Plan (2011-2031)</li> <li>• Town of Aurora Master Transportation Study (2020)</li> <li>• Town of Aurora Trails Master Plan (2011)</li> <li>• Town of Aurora Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan (2023)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Regional<br>(York Region)             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Municipality of York Official Plan (2022)</li> <li>• York Region 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan (2019)</li> <li>• Regional Municipality of York Transportation Plan (2022)</li> <li>• York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study (2008)</li> <li>• York Region Draft Climate Change Action Plan (2020)</li> <li>• York Region Sustainability Strategy (2007)</li> <li>• York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Planning and Design Guidelines</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Provincial<br>(Government of Ontario) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)</li> <li>• Ministry of Transportation Ontario Bikeways Design Manual (2014)</li> <li>• Ontario Traffic Manual Book 15: Pedestrian Crossing Treatments (2016)</li> <li>• Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18: Cycling Facilities (2021)</li> <li>• Tour By Bike: Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan (2017)</li> <li>• #CycleON Strategy (2013) and Action Plan 2.0 (2018)</li> <li>• Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways O.Reg. 239/02 (2018)</li> <li>• A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)</li> <li>• Provincial Policy Statement (2020)</li> </ul> |

**Table 1: Background Documents Reviewed (continued)**

| <b>Levels of Government</b>       | <b>Background Documents</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Federal<br>(Government of Canada) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Active Transportation Strategy (2021)</li><li>• Federal Sustainable Development Act (2008)</li><li>• Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (2019 – 2022)</li><li>• Transport Canada 2021 – 2022 Departmental Plan (2021)</li><li>• Transportation 2030: A Strategic Plan for Transportation in Canada (2016)</li></ul> |

**Extensive consultation and engagement activities were completed to collect information and feedback on active transportation facilities from Town residents and stakeholders**

To identify the needs and concerns of Town residents and stakeholders during the development of the ATMP, a series of consultation activities were undertaken:

- An online engagement platform using Engage Aurora was developed to keep the public informed with the development of the ATMP. Several engagement tools were employed on the platform to obtain feedback from residents including surveys and an interactive mapping activity;
- A public information and feedback booth was established at the Farmers Market on June 25, 2022;
- A project background and progression update was presented to the Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (ATTSAC) on April 26, 2023;
- The active transportation network development process and facility selection criteria was presented to the ATTSAC on June 28, 2023; and,
- A workshop was held on November 9, 2023, with ATTSAC to obtain feedback and comments on the proposed draft active transportation network recommendations.

The proposed draft active transportation network incorporates the feedback and comments obtained from the public and stakeholders obtained throughout the process.

**The development process of the active transportation network is a combination of both technical assessments and feedback received from consultation with stakeholders**

Having a well-connected and accessible active transportation network is essential to encourage people to participate in an active lifestyle. The proposed network is intended to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Utilizing a set of route selection criteria (Table 2), the candidate routes and facility types were selected to develop a preferred active transportation network.

**Table 2: Route Selection Criteria used in Development of ATMP**

| <b>Selection Criteria</b>               | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safety and Accessibility                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routes are prioritized based on their degree of improvement to safety and accessibility compared with current conditions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Support Multi-Modal Needs               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routes that support the development of a multi-modal transportation system by providing connections to transit facilities and other key destinations should be prioritized. First and last mile connectivity to transit service will improve accessibility and convenience for all users.</li> </ul>                                                                                                              |
| Connected and Continuous                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active transportation routes should provide a consistent user experience. Routes that close gaps in existing routes or provide an opportunity for a consistent active transportation corridor should be prioritized.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Connect and Expand upon Existing Trails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town's existing off-road trails system should be expanded. Routes that connect to the Town's existing off-road trails should be prioritized.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Feasibility                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects will be evaluated based on the level of capital investment required, their alignment with existing capital works projects and property ownership constraints to ensure that proposed routes have a high degree of constructability during the lifespan of this ATMP.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| Connection to Green Spaces              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active transportation facilities should provide connections to parks and green spaces and enhance opportunities for residents to engage with natural areas on a regular basis. Connections and improvements to the Tim Jones Trail (Nokiidaa Trail), Oak Ridges Moraine Trails, Fleury and Machell Park, Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area, and other surrounding natural areas should be prioritized.</li> </ul> |

The preferred network recommended in the ATMP (Table 3) includes the addition of approximately 190kms of new active transportation facilities spanning across eight

different facility types. Of this 190kms, approximately 103kms are pedestrian facility types. The different facility types are illustrated in Attachment 2.

**Table 3: ATMP Existing and Preferred Network**

| Facility Types                                | Existing Length (km) | Proposed Length (km) | Total Length (km) |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Bike Lane <sup>1</sup>                        | 3.6                  | 29.4                 | 33.0              |
| Signed Route                                  | 6.4                  | 31.5                 | 37.9              |
| Paved Shoulder                                | 2.6                  | 3.6                  | 6.2               |
| Multi-Use Path (in Right of Way) <sup>2</sup> | 18.3                 | 9.7                  | 28.0              |
| Separated Bike Lane <sup>3</sup>              | -                    | 7.5                  | 7.5               |
| Off-Road Multi-Use Trail                      | 61.0                 | 35.5                 | 96.5              |
| Desire Line <sup>4</sup>                      | -                    | 24.6                 | 24.6              |
| Sidewalk                                      | 201.2                | 33.1                 | 234.3             |
| Regional Bike Lane                            | 5.1                  | 15.8                 | 20.9              |
| <b>Total Active Transportation Facility</b>   | <b>298.2</b>         | <b>190.7</b>         | <b>488.9</b>      |

Notes:

1. Bike lanes may be implemented in the interim as urban shoulders forming part of a signed cycling route.
2. This includes Multi-Use Paths on regional roads which are operated and maintained by the Town.
3. The Town may select as an interim solution to implement buffered bike lanes, but the ultimate facility type is recommended to be physically separated in the long term.
4. Desire lines are intended to identify potential future trail corridors that are currently on private property but which the Town would like to secure, if the opportunity presents itself or when these lands become available for area redeveloped in the future. As such, distances identified are approximate and subject to changes. The actual location and distances will be determined from the development reviewing progress.

**The phasing strategy was developed over a 20-year planning horizon with short-term (0-10 years) and long-term (11-20 years) plans designed to ensure that the active transportation network is implemented in a way that is efficient, cost effective, and responsive to the needs of the community**

The proposed phasing strategy is strategically developed to provide a blueprint for the implementation of active transportation facilities, it is divided into short-term and long-term phases:

- Short-Term (0 to 10 years)
  - o Low investment “quick wins” such as adding signed bike routes, conventional or buffered bike lanes, or physically separated facilities along roadways;
  - o Eliminate key gaps in the trails and on-road networks to support network connectivity and continuity;
  - o Sidewalks that were identified as Medium and High Priority in the Transportation Master Plan and Sidewalk Gap Study analysis; and,
  - o Segments that form part of previously proposed capital/road resurfacing projects by the Town, Region, or Metrolinx.
- Long-Term (11 to 20 years)
  - o Routes that require additional investigation such as an environmental assessment or design feasibility studies before they can be implemented;
  - o Segments that are recommended to be implemented as part of a longer-term Town, Region, or Metrolinx/Provincial capital project;
  - o Sidewalks that were identified as low priority in the Transportation Master Plan and Study Sidewalk Gap Study analysis; and,
  - o Segments that should be implemented when a roadway undergoes full reconstruction in the future (i.e. not anticipated within the next 10 years).

The recommended detailed phasing strategy is illustrated in Figure 9-1 and Figure 9-2 of the attached ATMP draft report.

**To compliment the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan, the ATMP recommends that a road diet and separated bicycle lanes be implemented on Yonge Street between Orchard Heights Boulevard/Batson Drive and Golf Links Drive/Dunning Avenue to support the implementation of the Promenade Streetscape Plan**

The detailed design and planning process for the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan on Yonge Street (between Wellington Street and Church Street) is currently underway. To support the objectives of the Aurora Promenade Streetscape Plan, the ATMP

recommends implementing a road diet on Yonge Street between Orchard Heights Boulevard/Batson Drive and Golf Links Drive/Dunning Avenue.

A road diet is generally referred to as a transportation improvement concept that reconfigures a four-lane cross-section with two lanes per travel direction to three lane cross-sections with single lane per travel direction plus a centre two-way left turn lane (TWLTL). The implementation of a road diet will provide opportunities to include separated bicycle lanes within the subject section of Yonge Street to further enhance the active transportation network.

**A high-level cost estimation to implement the active transportation facilities was developed to help inform future capital budget planning and decision-making processes**

The estimated cost to implement the proposed active transportation facilities is approximately \$56 million over the next 20 years (Table 4).

**Table 4: Cost Summary for the Proposed Active Transportation Facilities**

| Facility Types                      | Short-Term<br>(0 to 10<br>years) | Long-Term<br>(11 to 20<br>years) | Total        |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Local On-Road Facilities            |                                  |                                  |              |
| Bike Lane                           | \$996,065                        | \$238,143                        | \$1,234,208  |
| Signed Route                        | \$54,821                         | \$0                              | \$54,821     |
| Paved Shoulder                      | \$429,576                        | \$616,225                        | \$1,045,801  |
| Multi-Use Path (in Right of Way)    | \$4,041,205                      | \$1,246,673                      | \$5,287,878  |
| Separated Bike Lane                 | \$3,821,417                      | \$1,583,735                      | \$5,405,152  |
| Sidewalk                            | \$6,583,065                      | \$17,442,420                     | \$24,025,485 |
| Local On-Road Facility<br>Subtotal  | \$15,926,150                     | \$21,127,197                     | \$37,053,346 |
| Local Off-Road Facilities           |                                  |                                  |              |
| Off-Road Multi-Use Trail            | \$13,281,659                     | 6,031,133                        | 19,312,792   |
| Desire Line                         | -                                | -                                | -            |
| Local Off-Road Facility<br>Subtotal | 13,281,659                       | 6,031,133                        | 19,312,792   |
| Town of Aurora<br>Total             | \$29,207,809                     | \$27,158,330                     | \$56,366,138 |

In addition to the cost of implementing the proposed active transportation infrastructure, the following elements are recommended in the ATMP to support the development and implementation of the recommended active transportation system:

- Education– Approximately \$10,000 per year;
- Amenities (i.e. bike racks, bike repair stations, charging station for e-bike and personal devices) – Approximately \$10,000 per year;
- Class Environment Assessment/Preliminary Design and Feasibility Studies for the selected grade separations in railroad corridors – Approximately \$500,000 to \$750,000.

**A Town-Wide Pedestrian Crossing Treatment and Sidewalk Gap Analysis Study update is recommended to further enhance the active transportation network**

The ATMP recommends that a separate Town-Wide Pedestrian Crossing Treatment and Sidewalk Gap Analysis Study be undertaken. The study should review the existing and proposed pedestrian network, provide recommendations on pedestrian crossing treatment at key locations, and develop a policy for the Town on pedestrian crossing implementation.

The study will also provide an assessment and update on the existing and future sidewalk network and provide recommendations on sidewalk gap prioritization.

**Advisory Committee Review**

A memorandum (Report No. PDS24-001) and Consultant presentation of the draft ATMP was presented at the Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (ATTSAAC) meeting on January 24, 2024. The ATTSAAC is in support of the proposed active transportation network and the recommended phasing strategy.

Comments were provided by the ATTSAAC that were considered and incorporated into the draft ATMP where appropriate (Table 5).

**Table 5: ATTSAC Comment Summary**

| Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Responses                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide recommendations in the ATMP to recommend applying for fundings from different levels of government to implement the active transportation facilities.                                                                                                                        | Included under Policy Recommendation no. 5.                                                                                                                            |
| Include the proposed active transportation network recommended in the ATMP in the Official Plan schedule.                                                                                                                                                                            | Included under Policy Recommendation no. 1.                                                                                                                            |
| Partner with York Region and York Region District School Board to develop Safe Routes to School plans.                                                                                                                                                                               | Included under Education and Encouragement Recommendation no. 3.                                                                                                       |
| The Wellington Street grade separation and multi-use path (in right-of-way) should be identified as a priority in the ATMP.                                                                                                                                                          | Included Wellington Street multi-use path (in right-of-way) under short-term phasing.                                                                                  |
| A cycle track should be included.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | A cycle track is a form of separated bike lane facility. Provided additional clarification and language to indicate this under the facility type review of the report. |
| Recommend the Town and York Region work together to improve the frequency of pedestrian crossings of major barriers, including consideration of mid-block pedestrian crossings to improve access to trail access points and to improve overall walkability in the Town for all ages. | Included under Phasing and Costing Recommendation no. 2.                                                                                                               |
| Provide an annual update to Council on the implementation of active transportation facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                       | Included under Policy Recommendation no. 12.                                                                                                                           |

## Legal Considerations

None.

## **Financial Implications**

The Town's 2024 10-year plan includes multiple capital projects in support of the ATMP but is not complete. Should Council approve the ATMP, all of its identified initiatives and individual projects will be presented to Council for its review and approval when appropriate as part of the Capital Budget process.

A total of \$29.2 million over the short term (0 to 10 years) and a further \$27.2 million over the longer term (11 to 20 years) are proposed under the ATMP. Of this amount approximately \$2.3 million (eight per cent) in funding for projects aligning with this plan have previously been approved. It is anticipated that roughly 60 per cent of these requirements may be recovered through development charges. The 2024 DC Study under consideration this evening has an ability to support directly or indirectly the majority of this plan's eligible identified short-term requirements. With the remainder (32 per cent) coming from alternative funding sources such as the Growth & New reserve and cost recoveries from York Region.

## **Communications Considerations**

A Notice of Completion will be issued once the ATMP is adopted by Council. At this time, it will be placed on the public record for a 30-day review period.

## **Climate Change Considerations**

According to the 2020 Community Energy Plan (Plan), the transportation sector accounts for approximately 37% of the total greenhouse gas emissions, and the major contributor (approximately 99%) are from personal vehicles. The Plan estimates that the transportation sector will account for 31% and 36% of greenhouse gas emissions by year 2030 and 2050, respectively.

The objective of the ATMP is to provide a safe, convenient, well-connected, and accessible active transportation network to help reduce reliance on personal vehicles. The use of active transportation can help reduce air and water pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

This report supports the Strategic Plan goal of Support an Exceptional Quality of Life for All by examining traffic patterns and identify potential solutions to improve movement and safety at key intersections in the community.

**Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

None.

**Conclusions**

The Town undertook an Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) to review and assess the Town's active transportation network plan, policies, and programs and to be a long-term guiding document that will provide the Town with a roadmap to support future growth and create a safe and well-connected active transportation network for all road users.

A future staff report will be presented to Council to seek endorsement/approval of the finalized ATMP once Council has an opportunity to review the draft ATMP.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Active Transportation Master Plan Draft Report

Attachment 2: Facility Type Illustration

**Previous Reports**

PDS23-052, Memorandum Active Transportation Master Plan Status Update, April 26, 2023; and,

PDS24-001, Memorandum Active Transportation Master Plan Draft Report Presentation, January 24, 2024.

**Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on February 15, 2024

**Approvals**

**Approved by Marco Ramunno, Director, Planning and Development Services**

**Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer**