

King looks to the future with transportation master plan update

By Mark Pavilons

In order to keep planning documents current, King council received an update on its revamped Transportation Master Plan recently. Originally adopted in 2015, King's first Transportation Master Plan set out a strategy regarding roads needs, infrastructure, traffic and future transportation needs.

With the approval of the new Official Plan in 2019, there was a need to revamp the transportation plan.

Included in the updated plan are a re-evaluation of local and arterial roads; reviewing connecting links and identifying transit networks.

Input from the public was sought at open houses in the fall of 2019. The draft updated plan was presented Feb. 10 during a working session of council.

Staff are working on the final Transportation Master Plan update, which will be presented to council Feb. 24. It's hoped the new infrastructure schedules contained in the plan will be provided to York Region to be included in the final OP in April.

Population, employment, land use and travel behaviour were all analyzed. The Township is envisioning active transportation facilities, transit routes and roads that support the communities and planned growth, over the next decade.

Staff took into account greater connectivity within the transportation network, as well as environmental concerns with certain roads. The existing and proposed active transportation network was reviewed to look for any gaps and areas where infill links can enhance connectivity. The network not only includes roads, but walking and cycling paths, as well as recreational uses such as skateboarding. York Region Transit and GO currently provide transit in King and these services are expected to continue and grow. Staff did, however, identify some gaps in service:

King has one transit service that connects all three urban villages and the existing GO station. It operates only on week days during morning and afternoon rush hours and does not run weekends or holidays.

Traffic congestion is expected to increase when GO increases the frequency of its trains to every 15 minutes during the day. Some improvements and upgrades will come with a cost.

Staff said from a capital expense perspective, recommended road improvements and construction of Township-owned roads will cost roughly \$650,000. New roads for future subdivisions are expected to be collected as part of the developers' applications.

The TMP also identifies improvements to the active transportation network. Expansion over time, of more than 250 kilometres of facilities, is expected to cost roughly \$50 million. This will be shared among other levels of government. However, the total cost to King for full implementation in the long run is pegged at roughly \$28 million.

The TMP update includes important recommendations regarding physical infrastructure projects, new services, more studies, etc. Part of the process will include studies to assess the impacts of the planned GTA West Corridor as it dips south of King near Nobleton and King City.

The Township will also start with an environmental assessment of the 15th Sideroad.

Staff will also look at the design and parking at the King Road and Keele Street intersection.

King will continue to work with Metrolinx and York Region on new GO station changes. King and York will work together on new pedestrian crossings in the main three villages.

In the long-term, attention will be paid to the widening of the 15th Sideroad, between Highway 400 and Bathurst. Cycling loops will be considered in King City, Nobleton and Schomberg. At-grade rail crossings will also be reviewed and revamped, with help from Metrolinx and the Region.