

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 15, 2012

VAUGHAN CYCLING FORUM FEEDBACK CITY-WIDE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, in consultation with the Commissioner of Community Services, recommends that this report be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The Vaughan Cycling Forum was organized to facilitate discussions with residents that have an interest in cycling. Discussions include various cycling matters and the initiatives set out in the approved City Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP). Increased cycling in the City will reduce automobile dependency, traffic congestion and transportation related greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the establishment of this forum supports many of the goals and objectives of Green Directions Vaughan, in particular Objectives 3.1 and 3.3:

Objective 3.1 *To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation*

Objective 3.3 *Reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips by supporting active transportation, car pooling and public transit*

Economic Impact

The nominal cost associated with organizing and facilitating the Vaughan Cycling Forum, and future 2012 meetings of the forum, can be accommodated within the current Capital and Operating Budgets.

Communications Plan

Staff will communicate future Vaughan Cycling Forum meeting dates through invitation of past participants, advertisements in local newspapers, posters and on the City's website.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of feedback from the inaugural meeting of the Vaughan Cycling Forum held on April 11, 2012.

Background - Analysis and Options

On June 14, 2011, staff informed Council about its intention to organize and facilitate regular Vaughan Cycling Forum (VCF) meetings with residents that have an interest in cycling. The VCF is intended to play an important role in the ongoing implementation and review of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP), and provide input into future cycling initiatives.

On April 11, 2012, City of Vaughan staff hosted and facilitated the inaugural meeting of the VCF, with participation from York Region. Vaughan residents and cycling enthusiasts were invited to learn about what is to come for Vaughan cyclists and provide input into future cycling initiatives in the City.

50 people attended the inaugural meeting, which included a keynote presentation from Eleanor McMahon, Founder of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition

About 50 people attended the inaugural meeting, including residents representing all parts of the City and neighbouring municipalities, cycling club members, stakeholders, and York Region staff. The agenda included a keynote presentation from Eleanor McMahon, Founder of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Ms. McMahon spoke about the benefits of building a cycle-friendly community, and her cycling advocacy work with municipalities across North America. This was followed by panel presentations from Vaughan and York Region staff, which outlined cycle facilities and programs in Vaughan today. The remainder of the meeting was open for VCF participants to share their comments about their cycling needs and suggestions to encourage cycling.

The Vaughan Cycling Forum provided valuable feedback on the needs of the cycling community

For a portion of the agenda, VCF participants were invited to engage in open dialogue. VCF participants were also given comment and evaluation forms for written feedback. The following is a summary of the key comments and suggestions raised by the participants:

- Need for better connected cycle network (10)
- Need for bike lanes and paved shoulders (9)
- Need for cycling events to encourage cycling (7)
- Need for safe cycling infrastructure that caters to the variety of cycling types (7)
- Need for cycle parking at destinations (6)
- Need for Cycling Advisory Group (6)
- Need to educate children (5)
- Need for driver education (e.g. "Share the Road" signs) (5)
- Need for multi-use pathways (5)

For a full list of VCF feedback, see Attachment No. 1.

Evaluation of the inaugural meeting was very positive and participants want forums to be held more than once per year

Feedback received on the meeting evaluation forms was very positive. 90% of VCF participants agreed that the meeting was productive and worth their time. In addition, 74% agreed that the meeting format allowed plenty of opportunity to provide comments. All respondents suggested that the City hold at least two VCF meetings each year. For a full summary of the VCF evaluation, see Attachment No. 2.

Recent cycling achievements at the City of Vaughan have contributed towards implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

Since the previous PBMP implementation update was presented to Council on June 14, 2011, the following cycling initiatives have been completed, or are currently underway. The initiatives have been organized as per the objectives of the PBMP.

Network

- The City's Transportation Master Plan was approved in principal with an updated PBMP Bicycle Network to account for the growth areas identified in the new Official Plan.

Implementation

- Approximately 68km of bicycle route signage was installed on the local road network in 2011 with match funding from the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.

- New neighbourhood bike lanes are under consideration in 2012-13 with funding assistance from the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.
- York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program funding secured for signed bicycle routes and shared pathway signage in 2012.
- New boulevard multi-use pathway is to be constructed on Highway 27 in Woodbridge in 2012.
- 1km of additional multi-use trails to be constructed in the Bartley Smith Greenway in 2012.
- A 1.5km multi-use trail extension is currently under development for the Humber Trail/ William Granger Greenway (south of Boyd Conservation Area).
- Five bridge replacements are currently under development as part of the PBMP trail network, and seeking approval for two new bridges on the William Granger Greenway.
- Capital budget approved for trail connection linking Rainbow Creek to Mapes Park.

Education

- The City now offers a CAN-BIKE cycle training program for children and adults at Maple Community Centre in the Fall, Spring and Summer.
- A pilot Active and Safe Routes to School Program at Maple High School in 2011/12, which focuses on encouraging youth to walk or cycle to and from school. The program will be expanded at several elementary and secondary schools in Vaughan.
- Wayfinding system under development for off-road multi-use trail network.

Encouragement/Promotion

- The annual CAN-BIKE Kids Bike Festival is offered in partnership with the Region of York. This event is free and offered to all elementary children.
- New cycle parking will be installed at destinations in 2012-13 with current Capital Budgets of the Development/Transportation Engineering Department.
- The City requires all new developments to be planned and designed in a pedestrian- and cycle-friendly manner, and to be consistent with the PBMP.

It is important that staff that is responsible for implementing the PBMP has the technical expertise and knowledge of current trends, standards, advancements and initiatives related to active transportation. To this end, staff are participating in the following working groups and summits related to cycling:

- Staff continue to participate on the Region's Inter-Municipal Working Group on Pedestrian and Cycling Implementation.
- The City continues to participate on the technical committee for Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18 (Bicycle Facilities), which consists of traffic and bicycle infrastructure experts. Vaughan is also a funding partner for Book 18.
- Staff attended the 2011 and 2012 Ontario Bike Summits in Ottawa and Toronto respectively.

The feedback from the VCF will be valuable in programming future cycling facilities in Vaughan

The valuable feedback received from VCF participants provides a better understanding of the needs of the cycling community, which will assist staff in programming the implementation of cycle facilities, particularly bike lanes, multi-use pathways and trails in the City.

In addition, staff is exploring new programs to encourage cycling in partnership with the Region of York including:

- Events to promote cycling (e.g. Bike Month, Bike to Work Day, cycling group rides)
- "Share the Road" public awareness/education campaign for motorists

Due to the success of the VCF and the demand for continued opportunities to provide comments, the City will continue to facilitate VCF meetings. The feedback received from VCF participants will help staff structure the next forums. Potential topics for the next meeting will include:

- Bike lanes
- Cycling encouragement
- Cycling education

The next VCF meeting is planned to be held in Fall 2012.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of Vaughan Vision 2020, this report relates to the following Strategic Initiatives:

1. The pursuit of excellence in service delivery
2. Enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness
3. Planning and managing growth and economic vitality

The report is therefore consistent with the priorities previously set by Council. The necessary resources to hold regular VCF meetings have also been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

Region of York staff participated and presented at the inaugural meeting of the VCF. A copy of this report and attachments will be forwarded to the Region for review. City staff will continue to work with Region of York staff on future programs to encourage cycling.

Conclusion

City staff held the inaugural meeting of the Vaughan Cycling Forum on April 11, 2012 with participation from York Region. The meeting provided valuable feedback into the needs of the cycling community in Vaughan. Through collaboration with various departments and the Region of York, staff will continue to program new facilities to provide a safer and better connected cycle network, continue to explore cycle parking and new programs to encourage cycling. Staff plan to hold regular forums and the next VCF meeting is planned for Fall 2012.

Attachments

1. Vaughan Cycling Forum Feedback
2. Vaughan Cycling Forum Evaluation

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment No. 1

Vaughan Cycling Forum Feedback

Feedback (i.e. needs, suggestions, concerns)	No.
Need for better connected cycle network	10
Need for bike lanes and paved shoulders	9
Need for cycling events to encourage cycling	7
Need for safe cycling infrastructure that caters to the variety of cycling types	7
Need for cycle parking at destinations (e.g. bus stations, community centres, parks, schools, Bathurst Clarke Library, Rutherford GO Station, Dufferin Street at City of Toronto border)	6
Need for Cycling Advisory Group	6
Need to educate children	5
Need for driver education (e.g. "Share the Road" signs)	5
Need for multi-use pathways	5
Concern about vehicle speeds	2
Need for segregated bike lanes with physical buffer	2
Form cycling groups/clubs for children and adults	2
Suggestion to develop new off-road bike park	2
Need "Share the Road" signs on Arterial Roads	1
Bike lanes are expensive as retrofits	1
Give out cycling rewards/discounts (e.g. if you've cycled to store)	1
Suggest tax credits for bicycle maintenance	1
Need to establish bike policy	1
Use social media to encourage cycling	1
Set up an ad hoc Community Group for the VCF	1
Need signage	1
Repaint roads with narrower lanes to give room for cyclist	1
Complete the Bartley-Smith Greenway through Maple	1
Connect Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street	1
Do not support bike lanes on municipal streets	1
Regional Roads should not have a one-size fits all solution (unsafe)	1
Need for bike lane on Keele Street (north of Teston Road)	1
Gravel trails are unpleasant to ride on	1
Need more information about existing facilities (e.g. trails, facilities) that is easily accessible	1
Need destinations for cycling clubs in Vaughan for rest stops (e.g. heritage centres)	1
Need more trails in green spaces (e.g. river valleys, greenbelt lands)	1
Need paved shoulder on McNaughton Road	1
Do not support sharrows on Jane Street	1
Need cycle facilities on Jane Street to connect to new subway stations	1
Suggestion to connect Humber trail between Kleinburg and Lake Ontario	1
Suggestion for bike rental program	1
Concern about cyclists on traffic circles	1
Need tips for commuter cyclists and cycling clubs	1
Advertise through local newspapers	1
Need standards for showers in commercial developments	1
Suggestion to host/encourage world class cycling events (e.g. bike race, century ride, Gran Fondo)	1
Suggestion to advertise free parking for cyclists at community centres	1
Need for signs to warn motorists of cyclists at mid-block crossings	1
Need for regular street cleaning on bike routes	1
Not supportive of bicycle license proposal	1
Do not feel safe on Major Mackenzie, Dufferin (south of Kirby), Rutherford Road (east of Keele)	1
Make arrangements to encourage mountain biking on private land in Vaughan	1
Promote cycling events (e.g. Ride for Karen, Tour de Vaughan)	1

Attachment No. 2

Vaughan Cycling Forum Evaluation

Question	Response
The meeting was productive and worth my time	55% – Strongly agree 35% – Somewhat agree 10% – Somewhat disagree 0% – Strongly disagree
The meeting format allowed me plenty of opportunity to provide my comments	45% – Strongly agree 30% – Somewhat agree 20% – Somewhat disagree 5% – Strongly disagree
The meeting time was convenient and appropriate	75% – Strongly agree 20% – Somewhat agree 5% – Somewhat disagree 0% – Strongly disagree
The Multipurpose Room would be suitable for future VCF meetings	70% – Strongly agree 20% – Somewhat agree 5% – Somewhat disagree 5% – Strongly disagree
The length of meeting was _____	85% – About right 5% – Too short 10% – Too long
I found out about this meeting from _____	35% – Word of mouth 20% – Vaughan website 20% – Poster 15% – Newspaper advertisement 20% – Invitation (mail/email) 0% – News story
What worked well, and what could have been improved?	35% – Keynote speaker was well received 15% – Allow more time for cyclists to speak
In your opinion, how many VCF meetings should the City hold each year?	0% – 1 30% – 2 20% – 3 30% – 4
Do you have any suggestions for future VCF discussion topics?	-Commuter cycling (2) -Sharing with motorists (2) -Public awareness campaigns (2) -Share the boulevard initiative -Stepping up implementation programs -Review plans and milestones -Invite Police -Recent City initiatives and strategies -Moving business and developers -Routes/Paths -Separated facilities on Regional Roads -Intersections -Family cycling -Cycling to school -Cycling Advisory Committee -Working with businesses
Overall, how would you rate this meeting on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)?	Average: 7.5