



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
Working Together Working for You!

REPORT

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Ivan Drewnitski, Transportation Planning Technologist

DATE: February 7, 2022

REPORT NO.: TPW-2022-0008

SUBJECT: Smart Commute Program Memorandum of Understanding -
Town of Oakville

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. TPW-2022-0008 dated February 7, 2022, regarding the Smart Commute Program Memorandum of Understanding - Town of Oakville, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve staff authorization to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Town of Oakville to establish arrangements for the delivery of the Smart Commute Program;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Oakville to formalize arrangements for the delivery of the Smart Commute Program;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve staff authorization to execute any updates to a subsequent MOU with the Town of Oakville as it relates to the delivery of the Smart Commute Program.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Smart Commute Program is a crucial strategy to achieve our overall Transportation Demand Management (TDM) goals within the Town, Halton Region, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), and the Province.
- In 2008, Metrolinx assumed the operation of the Smart Commute Program.

- In 2011, Halton Hills joined the Smart Commute Program under Halton's Smart Commute Transportation Management Association (TMA).
- In 2019, as a result of alternative funding priorities at the provincial level, Metrolinx ended their involvement in the Smart Commute Program. Halton Region subsequently informed the local municipalities that they were dissolving Halton's Smart Commute Program and the associated funding.
- In 2020, the neighbouring regional TMA's acquired all the resources of the Smart Commute Program from Metrolinx. They also initiated a GTHA-wide Smart Commute Regional Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- In 2021, the four local Halton municipalities partnered to create a new Transportation Management Association in Halton Region – Smart Commute Halton Region (Locals).
- The local municipalities wish to enter a Smart Commute Halton Municipalities Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow the Town of Oakville to represent the new TMA at the GTHA Regional Partner level.
- Staff are requesting Council approval to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shown in Attachment 1 with the Town of Oakville to continue to deliver the Smart Commute Program.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Smart Commute Program helps to expand the reach and effectiveness of current projects and initiatives that aim to achieve the same TDM mode shift targets identified above and throughout our plans and policies. This includes:

1. Continuing to apply our TDM initiatives as part of development applications through our approved OP policies and zoning by-law amendments for end-of-trip facilities such as bike parking and bike storage requirements;
2. Integrating future public bike share, car share, carpooling, and vanpooling initiatives and infrastructure;
3. Coordinating individual school travel plans for every elementary school in Halton Region in partnership with our Halton Active Sustainable School Transportation Hub (ASST) agencies; and,
4. Leveraging the recommendations from the Town's Active Transportation Master Plan to further expand and promote active transportation travel.

The Smart Commute Program assists local public and private employers and commuters explore different commuting options such as carpooling, telecommuting, cycling, walking and transit. This program is another powerful tool and strategy to achieve our overall Transportation Demand Management (TDM) goals and helps address climate change with the Town's net zero target through climate mitigation.

In 2008, Metrolinx assumed the operation of the Smart Commute Program ensuring continued financial support for the program and for the Transportation Management Associations such as Smart Commute Halton.

During the period of 2008 to 2018, the Smart Commute Halton initiatives included the expansion of the program to private businesses throughout the region. Services included a base-line employee survey, an on-site parking and building assessment, development of employer carpool sub-groups and employee ride matching, individual trip planning opportunities, special events and contests, workplace champion training, outreach lunch and learn events, emergency ride-home subsidies, promotional incentives, and an annual awards ceremony.

In early 2019, as a result of alternative funding priorities at the provincial level, Metrolinx concluded their involvement in Smart Commute Program. This subsequently resulted in the neighbouring regions and large municipalities initiating a partnership together to acquire the services, resources and branding materials for the Smart Commute Program from Metrolinx. The GTHA Regional Partners consisted of Durham Region, York Region, City of Toronto, Peel Region, Halton Region, and City of Hamilton.

However, in response to the cancellation of the provincial funding, Halton Region made the decision to refrain from partnering with the other regions, and to not participate in the creation and signing of a new Smart Commute Regional Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes a regional-level commitment to share resources and costs to maintain service delivery for the Smart Commute Program across the GTHA. Halton Region subsequently then gave notice to the local municipalities of their intent to conclude and cancel their involvement in the Smart Commute Program.

The Smart Commute Program has been established as a successful initiative, and the Town of Halton Hills has been a proud member since 2011 along with the regions and other municipalities of the GTHA. To continue with the Smart Commute Program, the four (4) local municipalities within Halton Region began working together to create a new Transportation Management Association known as Smart Commute Halton Region (Locals) and joined with the GTHA Regional Partners to deliver the Smart Commute Program.

The newly created Halton Region (Locals) TMA has been meeting monthly since November 2019, to develop the goals and future of the Smart Commute Program in Halton Region. The local municipalities have also developed a Smart Commute Halton Municipalities Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). At this time, the Town of Halton Hills and the Town of Oakville are prepared to enter into the MOU. It is anticipated that the City of Burlington will join later this year and the Town of Milton will enter in 2023. All municipal representatives will continue to meet monthly and provide in-kind resources to help progress the Smart Commute Program at a Regional level.

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, there was an immediate shift to telecommuting and digital services throughout the GTHA, resulting in an immediate shift

away from other TDM measures such as carpooling and transit due to lock down situations. As the pandemic persists to evolve, TMA's continue to evaluate the current health climate and what the anticipated transportation landscape may look like in a post pandemic era. Even in the current state, major highways and arterials continue to experience increased traffic volume, congestion, and delay. Staff are aware that when employers are ready to return to work in person, in some capacity or hybrid situation, commuters will be reluctant to return to options such as carpooling and public transit. Anticipating these changes, outreach tactics and offered services will be made available to adjust to the needs of an employer's return to work program. An enhanced outreach, communication campaign plan and a re-engagement strategy will include reevaluating individual employer needs to support their employee workplace commuter options.

Ongoing contact, engagement, encouragement, and support with the local employers continues to assist Halton Hills to reach our transportation demand management mode shared goals and to help implement the key actions indicated in the Town's Low-Carbon Transition Strategy.

Staff is recommending that Council enter into the Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Oakville which has been reviewed by the Town's Legal Counsel.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value to foster a healthy community that provides a clean environment and range of economic and social opportunities to ensure a superior quality of life in our community.

This report also identifies transportation as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report impacts and/or helps address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target through climate mitigation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement will be required; consultation with Communications staff to follow.

Upon Council approval of this report and finalizing the MOU, staff will work with Communications to create a Smart Commute Program webpage on the Town website. Additionally, all current Smart Commute Members will be contacted directly to inform them of the changes and details of the program.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The report was discussed internally with staff from Transportation and Public Works and the Town's solicitor in the development and review of the MOU. In addition, the Director of Communications was informed of the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report will be funded through an existing approved budget source.

Reviewed and approved by,

Maureen Van Ravens, Director of Transportation

Bill Andrews, Commissioner of Transportation and Public Works

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer