
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traffic congestion is a growing and urgent concern for municipal governments, who are struggling to keep up with the demand on their roadways. In the post-war period, congestion mitigation policies have traditionally sought to increase the capacity for cars. This approach has not worked, since this approach has little if any long-term positive effects and has a tendency to actually increase congestion long term. A more appropriate approach to mitigating congestion is with transportation demand management (TDM). Instead of reducing congestion by making driving more convenient, TDM strategies attempt to influence the convenience, price and safety of alternative travel modes. The TDM approach seeks to reduce that demand through incentives, disincentives, promotion, education, and policy reform. TDM manages the *demand* for travel by drive alone private car, rather than catering for that demand, or managing the road system.

The Regional Municipality of York is a southern Ontario regional municipality that has incorporated TDM policies into several of its plans. This report investigates the TDM components of York Region's plans in order to assess its policy environment for TDM, by answering two research questions:

Question 1: Does York Region accurately interpret TDM?

Question 2: Has York Region created a policy environment that supports TDM?

First, the interpretation of TDM in three case studies considered best practices is analyzed and compared to York Region's to ascertain whether York Region's interpretation is appropriate. This is done by identifying themes used by the best practice case studies and by York Region to interpret TDM, and comparing the themes found in the best practices' plans to the ones found in York Region's. York Region's themes were found to be generally consistent with those of the best practices. Where there were inconsistencies, this report issues a recommendation to include that theme in York's plans and improve York Region's interpretation of TDM.

Second, York Region's plans were evaluated against a set of nine criteria for creating good TDM policy. This is done by reviewing each of York Region's plans and identifying whether a criterion was addressed, somewhat addressed or not addressed, using a qualitative process. Where a criterion is found to be somewhat addressed or not addressed, this report issues a recommendation to improve upon it. This report also provides an example where this recommendation was carried out in a best practice case study or in another of York Region's plans.

York Region was found provide a better interpretation of TDM than the best practice case studies and to perform fairly well against the list of criteria, though not all plans performed well against all of the criteria. The recommendations from both parts of the analysis are:

Recommendation 1: Directly relate TDM to achieving the long-term vision described by Vision 2051, the ROP and the RTMP.

Recommendation 2: Present TDM as a decision-making tool in evaluating potential road investments.

Recommendation 3: The Vision should explicitly call for integration of TDM at a variety of scales, to be implemented by policies in lower-level plans.

Recommendation 4: The Vision should express the relationship between land use and TDM, to be implemented by policies in lower-level plans.

Recommendation 5: The ROP should explicitly stipulate that alternative modes of transportation must be reliable and predictable.

Recommendation 6: The Vision and RTMP should include equity as part of its vision and/or goals, and develop actions and policies to implement equitable TDM policy.

Recommendation 7: The Vision should include TDM as an integral part of its vision for 2051.

Recommendation 8: The ROP and RTMP should include a more comprehensive set of strategies to disincentivize SOV trips.

Recommendation 9: The Vision should aim to be a leader in TDM in order to be an example to other corporations and individuals in the Region and beyond.

The themes identified in the interpretation analysis have applications for municipalities attempting to interpret and define TDM in their own plans. By keeping the common themes in mind in the planning process, a solid foundation can be set that leads to more justifiable TDM policies. The list of criteria that was developed to evaluate York Region's plans is also applicable to other municipalities and can be used as a checklist for developing comprehensive TDM policies. Further research should be done to scrutinize this set of criteria by testing it against other municipalities and case studies. Further research is also needed in order to assemble criteria with regards to themes for interpreting and defining TDM. The combination of these two could lead to a TDM policy-planning toolkit, to help municipalities integrate TDM into their plans in a comprehensive, well thought-out manner.