

## 7. EDUCATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The last element of the four-point strategy includes education and support programs that complement the transit and road initiatives while building upon the framework enabled through policy development. Education can raise awareness of the advantages of transit, biking, walking and carpooling for both residents and the business community. Support programs include a number of travel demand initiatives that can be implemented by employers or business associations.

### 7.1 BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS

The plan to promote awareness was initiated in the Fall of 2001 with the “Great Transportation Debate,” which drew attention to the need for a rapid transit system in Markham.

Following this event, the Town held four public meetings to present its transportation strategy to each of its four communities (Markham, Milliken Mills, Thornhill and Unionville). These meetings engaged the public and illustrated the plan for a balanced strategy to manage transportation demands during the next 20 years through rapid transit infrastructure and travel demand management.

The third awareness event was the “The Portland Experience” information session, which was held to educate developers and neighbouring municipal agencies of the merits of travel demand management and policy initiatives.

Additional media announcements and public information meetings will be required to increase awareness of the work being undertaken with respect to the public-private-partnership process, which will ultimately drive the design and construction of the rapid transit corridors in Markham.

Promotional events and activities will be initiated to provide information on the attributes of non-automotive modes of travel. Effective communication strategies will include public information sessions, the distribution of information brochures and literature to Markham residents and businesses, advertising campaigns, media kits and Town website initiatives.



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### 7.2 SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Support programs can be implemented by employers or business associations to:

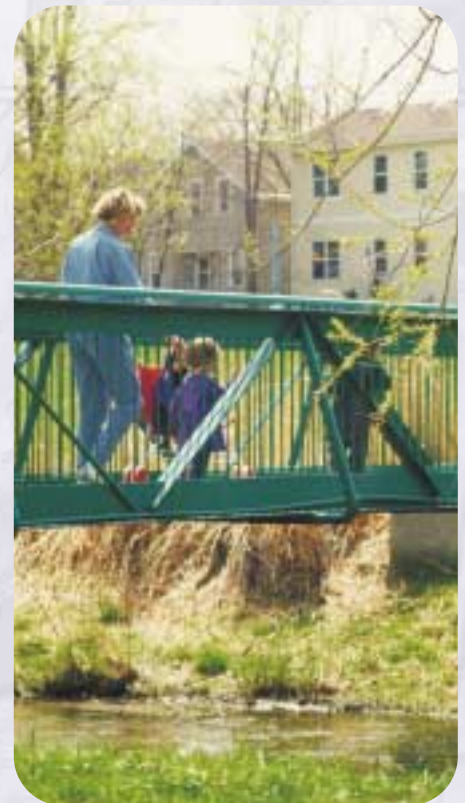
- Maintain access for employees and customers to commercial areas;
- Reduce auto dependency;
- Stimulate opportunities for intensification of mixed uses within districts;
- Reduce air emissions by promoting a healthy, sustainable lifestyle to employees and residents.

The main components of the support programs are the implementation of Travel Demand Management (TDM) plans and the formation of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to support reduced auto-travel related to our business parks during peak periods.

#### *Travel Demand Management*

TDM holds the most promise for reducing congestion and creating communities that are not dominated by the automobile. TDM strategies can include:

- Increasing the number of travel choices (transit, ridesharing, walking, bicycling);
- Promoting stakeholder benefits (energy conservation, road and parking facility cost savings, increased road safety, increased travel choices) and providing incentives to target audiences;
- Enabling programs, alternative mode improvements, driving disincentives and parking programs;
- Creating and supporting partnerships and initiatives that promote transportation options;
- Working with businesses to:
  - create such employee incentives as substantially reduced transit passes (the cost of which can be offset by reduced parking lot expenses);
  - promote non-automotive modes of travel;
  - initiate programs that help to reduce traffic volumes during peak periods (staggered hours, flextime, off-site work, telecommuting).



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- Providing preferentially located and priced parking for car pools;
- Developing interactive programs that illustrate the impacts of transportation choices on personal safety, health and the environment with a long-term goal to change behaviour.

### *Transportation Management Associations*

A TMA is an organization of interested people (employers, institutions and others) who work together to address local transportation problems. The formation of TMAs help to facilitate TDM strategies, particularly those that relate to the business community. TMAs can:

- Develop promotional and educational materials that target employers interested in programs to help their employees use non-automotive modes of transportation;
- Advocate for funding in order that they can eventually become self sustaining;
- Conduct Transportation Fairs in conjunction with business associations, education institutions and municipal facilities;
- Initiate web-based carpool/vanpool matching services and on-line safety guides for biking, walking, riding transit and driving; raise awareness about air pollution, traffic congestion, gasoline dependence and the other negative effects of driving alone to work and short, start-and-stop trips.

The Region is involved with the first TMA in the GTA (the Black Creek Regional Transportation Management Association). The Town of Markham is currently a member of the City of Toronto TMA Steering Committee. This experience will prove beneficial as the Town plans the development of TMAs in Markham.

According to the *Portland Transportation System Plan*, more money is spent each year in the United States to market the use of the automobile as the primary means of transportation than is spent to fund operations for all the transit systems in that country. This is not dissimilar to the Canadian situation. Further work is therefore required through marketing efforts to educate both the public and the business community about the financial, health-related and operational benefits of a sustainable transportation strategy.

***Further work is required to educate residents and the business community about the many benefits of non-automotive travel.***

