

# Report to Council

**Date:** November 17, 2020

**To:** City of West Kelowna Council

**From:** R. Villarreal, STPCO Administrator

**Subject:** Final Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan and Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council endorses the final versions of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and its supporting plans: The Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan (RBTMP) and the Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy (RDMS).

## **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an update on STPCO activities and Regional Transportation Planning work area items, including the results of the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey, the results of the summer 2020 draft Regional Transportation Plan engagement, and presentation of the final versions of the Regional Transportation Plan and its supporting plans: the Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan and the Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy for endorsement.

## **Background:**

The Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan (STPCO) is a formal partnership of the City of Kelowna, City of West Kelowna, Districts of Lake Country and Peachland, Westbank First Nation and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. The STPCO coordinates the regional delivery of sustainable transportation programs and projects in support of common regional interests, including development of the Regional Transportation Plan. The STPCO also provides a formal forum for discussion amongst elected officials, senior and technical staff, stakeholders and the general public.

The STPCO Work Plan is divided into the three areas: Strategic Partnerships with Senior Government, Transit Program and Delivery, and Regional Transportation Planning. This report provides an update on activities in the Regional Transportation Planning work area, including presentation of the results of the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey, the results of the summer 2020 draft Regional Transportation Plan engagement, and final versions of the Regional Transportation Plan and its supporting plans: the Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan and the Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy.

2018 Okanagan Travel Survey: The Okanagan Travel Survey is one of the largest public surveys undertaken in the Central Okanagan and provides the most comprehensive picture of how people travel around the region to date. Nearly 9,000 people from the Central Okanagan participated in the 2018

Okanagan Travel Survey and logged over 25,000 trips<sup>1</sup>. The survey builds on both the 2007 and 2013 Okanagan Travel Surveys.

One of the most significant findings in the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey is that residents are making fewer trips per capita (by all modes). While the population has grown by 20 per cent since 2007, the number of trips made on a typical weekday only grew by 10 per cent, resulting in fewer trips per person. Several factors may be contributing to this trend, including an aging population, changing nature of work, and a rise in e-commerce. Although residents are making fewer trips, these trips have become longer. As a result, the total vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) in the region has increased by 13 per cent. VKT is an important measure for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Another key finding is that, while driving remains the way most people get around, there has been a 2% shift region-wide towards sustainable modes since 2007. Between 2013 and 2018, mode share remained relatively stable (within the margin for error), which means that efforts to encourage mode shift are roughly keeping up with population growth.

More information on the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey is available as Attachment 1 and posted on the smartTRIPS website. STPCO staff are preparing a webinar for December 9<sup>th</sup> for interested participants who wish to better understand the results and how to use the data.

Attachment 1: <https://smartTRIPS.ca/2018-okanagan-travel-survey-final-report>.

Final Regional Plans: After more than two and a half years of technical studies, consultation, and unprecedented region-wide partnership and collaboration, the Regional Transportation Plan and its supporting plans, the Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan and Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy are ready for presentation to the STPCO Councils for endorsement.

Together, the plans identify transportation projects and priorities that will help build and maintain a healthy, thriving and connected future for the Central Okanagan region over the next twenty years. They set the direction for Central Okanagan governments to work together to prepare for future population growth, help people of all ages and abilities get around, reduce the growth of traffic congestion and greenhouse gases, and help the region's economic recovery post COVID-19.

The interconnected recommendations for projects, programs and policies in the plans will help connect people and places across the region, improve the movement of people and goods, achieve fast and reliable transit, and help create a region where more people can choose sustainable and affordable transportation options. Moving forward, the plans will help Central Okanagan governments collaborate on the delivery of regionally significant projects, coordinate with their local transportation plans, and seek funding for transportation investments that benefit the entire Central Okanagan region.

Draft Regional Transportation Plan Engagement Summary: The draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and its supporting plans: the draft Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan (RBTMP) and the draft Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy (RDMS) were presented to each of the STPCO partner councils and the RDCO Board in June and July of 2020 (including to the West Kelowna City Council on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Following the presentation of the draft plans, the project team launched a public engagement period in August 2020 to invite input from Central Okanagan residents on the draft plans.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey also included Vernon. The results in this report have been tallied to report results for the Central Okanagan region. A complete summary of findings is provided in Attachment 2.

Due to COVID-19, engagement activities were hosted in a digital format to align with advice from the Provincial Medical Health Officer. A virtual open house and online questionnaire was available from August 4 – 23, 2020, and two live video panel discussions were hosted on August 19th and 20th. In total, 322 people shared their thoughts and opinions by responding to the questionnaire and 18 people participated in the live video panel discussions. In addition, individual stakeholder groups reached out to the project team directly to provide comments on specific topic areas.

Over 1,200 open-ended comments were provided in response to the virtual open house and online questionnaire. The project team read each comment and developed a list of themes based on their content. Each time a theme was mentioned it was tallied. The top themes that were mentioned most often are shown below, with font sizes roughly corresponding to the number of times each theme was mentioned:

**Figure 1: Top Themes from Open-Ended Comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan**



A complete and more detailed summary of engagement activities and results, including verbatim comments, is available in Attachment 2 on the smartTRIPS website.

Attachment 2 – Draft RTP Engagement Summary:

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/rtp-engagement-summary-summer-2020>

The feedback received was used to help prepare final versions of the Regional Transportation Plan and its supporting plans for endorsement. An overview of the key refinements that have been made to each plan are described below:

- **Regional Transportation Plan:** Key refinements that were made to the Regional Transportation Plan include:

- Addition of a Preamble: The introduction was expanded to clarify the purpose and intended outcomes of the Regional Transportation Plan. The plan recommendations were summarized, including how the transit recommendations in the plan are intended to work together to create a fast and reliable “transit spine” that connects the region and increases the people-moving capacity of the highway corridor.
- Alignment with Provincial Plans: A new section was added in response to comments requesting measurable targets and asking how the RTP aligns with provincial plans related to climate and active transportation. The provincial CleanBC plan sets a target of a 25.4 Mt reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. While the Central Okanagan region lacks a formal regional governance structure for setting and enforcing region-specific targets, the RTP and its supporting plans have been developed to align with the strategic direction of CleanBC and the BC Economic Framework. The plans are designed to help the region trend in the desired direction of provincial GHG and active transportation targets.
- Incorporation of 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey Results: The Existing and Future Conditions chapter was updated to include the results of the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey. The survey findings were reviewed and the RTP direction and recommendations were still found to be highly relevant. In particular, given that people are making longer driving trips resulting in an increase in regional VKT, the recommendation to create faster and more reliable transit that better connects our region remains vitally important to help provide a convenient alternative to driving for longer regional trips.
- Updates to the Future of the STPCO: This section was updated to reflect the most recent direction from the STPCO Local Government Advisory (LGA) Board regarding oversight and implementation of the RTP after it is endorsed.
- Addition of Performance Monitoring Approach: In response to comments and in alignment with recent LGA Board direction, a new section called Monitoring the RTP Success was added to the plan. The section suggests key metrics and data sources that will be necessary to track plan progress over time.

Additionally, the document was reviewed for final edits, overall flow and final formatting.

The final version of the Regional Transportation Plan is attached to this report and available on the smartTRIPS website.

Attachment 3 – Regional Transportation Plan:

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-transportation-plan-final>

- **Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan (RBTMP)**: The Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan (RBTMP) updates the 2012 Regional Active Transportation Master Plan. The regional bicycling and trails network presented in the RBTMP are designed to provide safe and convenient active transportation connections to regionally significant destinations across the Central Okanagan. The proposed regional bicycling and trails network spans 193 km, including 82 km that exist today, 81 km that are not yet constructed, and 30 km that need to be upgraded.

Key refinements that were made to the draft Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan to prepare it for endorsement include:

- Alignment with Provincial Plans: Similar to the RTP, a new section was added in response to comments asking how the RBTMP aligns with provincial plans related to climate and active

transportation. The provincial active transportation strategy “Move. Commute. Connect.” aims to double the trips taken by active transportation in the province by 2030. While the Central Okanagan region lacks a formal regional governance structure for setting and enforcing region-specific targets, the RBTMP will help the region trend in the desired direction of the provincial active transportation goals.

- Incorporation of 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey Results: The RBTMP chapter on the Current Status of Active Transportation was updated to include the results of the 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey. In addition, the survey findings were reviewed and the RBTMP direction and recommendations were still found to be highly relevant. In particular, given that bike and walk mode share held relatively steady between 2013 and 2018, the recommendations to create a safe and convenient regional biking and trail network that better connects our region remains vitally important to help encourage more biking and walking trips.
- Strengthening alignment with the BC Active Transportation Design Guide: In response to comments, the text and language regarding the relationship of the RBTMP to the recently published BC Active Transportation Design Guide was clarified. In particular, some language and terms were made more consistent and the intent to refer primarily to the BC Active Transportation Design Guide, in conjunction with the TAC Geometric Design Guide for the design of regional active transportation facilities was clarified.

Additionally, some refinements to the network were made based on partner input and comments from provincial and local bicycling groups, and a final edit and formatting was completed. The final version of the Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan is attached to this report and available on the smartTRIPS website.

#### Attachment 4 – Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-bicycling-trails-master-plan-final>

- **Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy (RDMS)**: “Disruptive mobility” refers to changes in transportation technologies that will fundamentally change how people get around in the future. These changes are making transportation more connected, automated, shared, and electric. These changes have the potential to benefit the region, though negative impacts that work against current policy directions are possible as well.

In response to comments, it was determined that more clarity was needed in regards to the scope and intent of the Strategy to address some common misunderstandings. Rather than a strategy for promoting new technologies, per se, the RDMS is intended to help Central Okanagan governments *prepare* for inevitable technology change, harness its benefits, and minimize potential drawbacks, in alignment with our shared regional transportation vision and goals.

To help provide clarity, a new subtitle was developed so the full title of the document now reads “*The Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy: Helping Central Okanagan Governments Prepare for Transportation Technology Change.*” In addition, a tag-line was developed “*Technology will disrupt how we move around the region. Are you ready?*” These changes, among other small edits in response to comments are intended to help people understand that the Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy is a resource guide for Central Okanagan governments to pick and choose the tactics and actions that work best for their community to prepare for changes to transportation on the horizon.

The final version of the Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy is attached to this report and available on the smartTRIPS website.

Attachment 5 – Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-disruptive-mobility-strategy-final>

### **Next Steps:**

The Regional Transportation Plan provides guidance on transportation projects, policies and programs that benefit the region. It is not intended to replace local or provincial planning, but to support and enhance planning by other levels of government. Further study, including project-level planning and design, will be required at the provincial and local level prior to implementation. In particular, it is anticipated that recommendations that involve the highway and that require further study will be analyzed further as part of the next phase of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Central Okanagan Planning Study.

Final versions of the Regional Transportation Plan and its supporting plans are being presented to each of the STPCO partner councils and the RDCO Board for endorsement in November and December 2020.

To follow up on the progress of implementing the Regional Transportation Plan, the STPCO LGA Board has recommended the creation of a regional technical committee administered by the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and initially facilitated by City of Kelowna staff. Additionally, the LGA Board has recommended that the RDCO administration place the topic of regional transportation on the agenda at two RDCO Board meetings each year to promote discussion and cooperation on regional transportation issues.

### **Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – 2018 Okanagan Travel Survey Report

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/2018-okanagan-travel-survey-final-report>.

Attachment 2 – Draft RTP Engagement Summary:

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/rtp-engagement-summary-summer-2020>

Attachment 3 – Regional Transportation Plan

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-transportation-plan-final>

Attachment 4 – Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-bicycling-trails-master-plan-final>

Attachment 5 – Regional Disruptive Mobility Strategy

<https://smartTRIPS.ca/regional-disruptive-mobility-strategy-final>