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Media Release

Ontario Ministry of the Environment approves Terms of Reference for Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Project for York and Durham Regions

Approval allows Environmental Assessment to move forward on critical wastewater project

NEWMARKET – The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has approved the Terms of Reference for the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer project. The approval allows the Regions of York and Durham to move forward with an Individual Environmental Assessment for this portion of the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS).

The Regional Municipality of York and Durham Region are co-proponents of the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer project, which is planned to move wastewater from communities throughout York Region to the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) in the City of Pickering. Durham Region is a co-proponent since both Regions are co-owners of the existing YDSS, located within Durham Region.

“The Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer is one of a number of critical infrastructure projects necessary to provide wastewater servicing to York Region residents,” said York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch. “I am very pleased that the Minister of the Environment has allowed us to move forward in a timely manner to initiate our Environmental Assessment and work towards expanding our existing capacity.”

The project is one of a number of projects to add more capacity to the YDSS by joining sections of existing pipes. The existing portion of the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer is approximately 14 kilometres long, extending from 9th Line in the community of Box Grove in the Town of Markham to Valley Farm Road in the City of Pickering. The YDSS ultimately discharges into the Duffin Creek WPCP. The existing Southeast Collector will reach capacity by approximately 2010, and the Environmental Assessment will look at all possible alternatives to address the capacity constraint in this section of the system, including additional sewers along various possible routes and other alternatives such as water efficiency initiatives.

“Moving ahead with the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) at this time is critical if we are to put into place the required wastewater infrastructure to meet our growing needs,” said Town of Markham Regional Councillor Bill O’Donnell, Chair of York Region’s Transportation and Works Committee. “I applaud the Government of Ontario for recognizing the critical need for this work and helping to accommodate our timeframe for project completion.”

The Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Individual EA will consider a proposed twinning route to the existing collector. While a preferred route has not yet been determined, the potential twinning must address the capacity constraint in the existing system between Box Grove and Valley Farm Road. Completion of the Individual EA process is anticipated by 2007. The sewer will be required to be in service by 2010 to meet forecasted population growth.

Project personnel for the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Individual EA will now meet with City of Pickering representatives at an upcoming Management Forum to provide updated information on the Terms of Reference. Officials will provide updates to both the City of Pickering and the Town of Markham throughout the project.

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York and Durham Regions will also now proceed with planned public outreach and consultation initiatives on the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer project. A newsletter outlining the scope of the Terms of Reference will be mailed to all postal codes in the study area, which is generally bounded by 16th Avenue and Highway 7 to the north, 9th Line to the west, Finch Avenue to the south, and the Pickering-Ajax municipal boundary and 16th Sideline to the east.

Plans are also underway to develop a forum for key stakeholders, to identify areas of concern and provide an opportunity for focussed discussion, and to receive critical feedback. Material gathered as a result of this meeting will be used to ensure clarity of information for six Public Information Forums planned throughout 2006 and into 2007.

Consultation with members of the Southeast Collector Advisory Committee (SECAC) is ongoing and will continue throughout the duration of the project. Members of this committee include representation by residents and property owners, environmental and conservation groups, economic development specialists, developers, staff with the Federal and Provincial government, the City of Toronto, and the Towns of Markham and Pickering, in addition to the project team.

The Public Information Forums will take place both in Markham and Pickering, and the public will be advised in advance of these meetings via advertisements in local newspapers and through personal invitations for those on the project contact list.

For more information on the Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Individual EA, or to get onto the project contact list, please visit the project Web site at <http://sec.cenet.ca>

For more information on the YDSS, please visit www.york.ca and follow the link on the main page titled, "York Durham Sewage System Information."

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