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YORKINFO PARTNERS 2003/2004

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, December 16, 2003, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The following report be received for information by Committee and Council.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Council and Committee about the activities and successes of the YorkInfo Partnership in 2003 and the outlook for 2004.

3. BACKGROUND

The YorkInfo Partnership works together to create and operate a geospatial information framework among the Partners that enhances sharing opportunities, creates efficiencies and common application. By standardizing land information data themes, duplication of effort is reduced and costs avoided among tax-funded organizations serving the residents of York Region. The Partnership currently includes the Region's nine local municipalities, the York Region District School Board, the York Catholic District School Board, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 2003 Successes

In 2003, significant progress was made in revitalizing and strengthening the YorkInfo Partnership model. This was accomplished through improved communication, development of a governance model including sub-committees and the development of an annual business plan.

The Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan joined the YorkInfo Partnership completing the membership of all nine local municipalities.

Individual meetings were held with each of the Partners to identify and prioritize key projects for 2003 and develop project plans that set out specific deliverables and timelines.

The YorkInfo Partnership comprises management and technical representatives from each of the Partners' organizations who are responsible for or are prime users of geospatial information within their respective organizations. The YorkInfo Partnership Group and its sub-committees met six times over the year to discuss items related to governance, information management, and technology.

Geomatics continued to create, enhance and maintain the core datasets essential to the business activities of the Region and its Partners. One example of the power of the Partnership working together was the development of the catchbasin database to support the York Region Health Department's West Nile Virus larviciding program. Wherever available, municipalities provided available CAD files or hard copy information on their catchbasin locations. Geomatics standardized the information, field collected data where none existed, incorporated the data into the GIS and provided the information to the Partners.

4.2 Examples of Services Provided

4.2.1 Town of Aurora

Geomatics provided the geospatial information required to bring the Town's Official Plan into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity Act, and supported a variety of other project initiatives including creation of the Town's Parks and Trails map.

4.2.2 Town of East Gwillimbury

Geomatics worked with the Town to create information and products to bring the East Gwillimbury Official Plan, Mount Albert Community Plan and Zoning by-law into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. This project established an implementation model for other municipalities to follow. Town staff also participated in GIS courses offered by the Region.

4.2.3 Town of Georgina

Geomatics worked with the Town to update the Georgina Official Plan, Keswick Secondary Plan schedules and Zoning By-law data and maps. At the Town's request, Geomatics provided advice on the technology infrastructure for their GeoSmart application. Four Town staff attended GIS training courses held by Geomatics.

4.2.4 Township of King

Geomatics worked with the Township to bring the Township of King Official Plan documents into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. An extremely tight schedule required Geomatics to develop a strategy that would ensure the required mapping would be completed on time. This strategy included project management and the provision of a workstation, training and support for Township staff at the Region's offices. York Region Geomatics and Township staff worked side-by-side to successfully complete the required mapping.

4.2.5 Town of Markham

Markham has a well-developed GIS. The focus of the Partnership is on the exchange of geographic data, applications, and resources to promote various GIS project initiatives.

These exchanges result in expediting project completions, as well as improvements in the quality of service provided.

4.2.6 Town of Newmarket

Newmarket's GIS is developing into a mature system. The focus of the Partnership is on the exchange of geospatial data, applications and resources. York Region Geomatics supported the Town's GeoSmart application through the Partnership. On the Town's request, Geomatics created a Newmarket municipal parks and cultural points dataset and a customized Town base map for distribution to the Town's residents. The Town reviews the Region's parcel and single line road centre network for the Newmarket area and provides the Region with updates and corrections.

4.2.7 Town of Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill is a recent YorkInfo Partner with a well established GIS capability. The focus of the Partnership is on the exchange of geospatial data, applications and resources to promote various GIS project initiatives. The Town received delivery of the 2002 Digital Elevation Model mass points and break lines. Richmond Hill provided Geomatics with data on a request-by-request basis for Regional projects such as Rapid Transit "Quick Start".

4.2.8 City of Vaughan

Vaughan is the most recent member to join the Partnership and has had GIS capabilities for several years which they are now implementing across the organization. Therefore the nature of the Partnership will primarily focus on collaboration of geospatial data and applications. The Region also supported the City on their response to the Asian Long Horned Beetle.

4.2.9 Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville does not currently have in-house GIS capabilities. Consequently, through the Partnership Geomatics provides geospatial data, products and services to meet the needs of the Town. Products and services provided this year included providing maps for Ontario Municipal Board hearings and data for the Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity mapping. Early in 2003, Geomatics staff held a half day Introduction to GIS seminar for eleven Town staff that provided information on what GIS is and how its use could benefit the Town. As a result, the Town is looking to implement an internal GIS in 2004 and Geomatics is providing consultation to them on their requirements.

4.2.10 York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board

The two School Boards work closely together and have common GIS requirements. As GIS capabilities have developed within the Boards, the nature of the Partnership focuses on provision of data. York Region provides regular updates of the geospatial and development tracking information vital to the Board for planning the locations of future facilities, student catchment areas and bus routing. When the Boards identified the need for the development of a walkways dataset to assist in the planning of school bus routing, Geomatics created and provided it to them on a timely basis.

4.2.11 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

The relationship between Geomatics and the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority is primarily one of data exchange. Geomatics provides the Authority with base infrastructure data in exchange for natural resource data. In addition, Geomatics coordinated the development of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management System website. The Region currently hosts the website on behalf of the Authority.

4.2.12 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

The relationship between Geomatics and the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority is primarily one of data exchange. Geomatics provides the Authority with base infrastructure data in exchange for natural resource data. The Authority staff attended GIS courses held by the Region.

4.3 2004 Outlook

In 2004, the YorkInfo Partners will continue working together to support and advance the business activities of the Partners. Several opportunities identified for 2004 are:

- Finalizing of YorkInfo Partnership charter and full implementation of the governance and sub-committee structure and standards.
- Development of a data warehouse infrastructure for accessing and sharing high quality, well maintained geospatial data.
- Development of the policies, procedures and standards necessary to facilitate data exchange and for collaboration when building GIS applications.
- Development of a YorkInfo Partner Emergency GIS Response Task Force to address issues surrounding coordinated GIS response to emergency situations that may arise within the Region.
- Development of a web bulletin board website to improve communication and information exchange between the Partners.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The YorkInfo Partnership fees recover \$190,000 to the Geomatics Branch related to data creation, information management, distribution, products and services. This approach reduces duplication and avoids cost expenditures among tax funded organizations of York Region.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All nine local municipalities are members of the YorkInfo Partnership and directly benefit from the Partnership through improved data, reduced costs and increased efficiencies.

7. CONCLUSION

The YorkInfo Partnership reduces duplication of effort among organizations and increases productivity through complementary initiatives that optimize the GIS expertise and resources of each organization.

Considerable progress has been made this year to improve and enhance the benefits of the Partnership for all Partners.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.