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2006 YORKINFO PARTNERSHIP

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report November 30, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Committee and Regional Council about the activities of the YorkInfo Partnership for 2006.

3. BACKGROUND

The YorkInfo Partnership works together to create and operate a geospatial information framework among tax-funded, not-for-profit organizations that operate within York Region. Membership includes all nine area municipalities, the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the York Catholic District School Board and the York Region District School Board.

4. 2006 YORKINFO PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The YorkInfo Partnership works together to develop and deliver an annual work plan that is guided by the *YorkInfo Partnership Charter* (Attachment 1). This report outlines the activities and achievements of the Partnership's 2006 work plan.

4.1 Governance Framework

The Partnership is coordinated through a framework of member representatives participating on an Executive Board, Coordinating Committee and an Information Management and Technology Team. These committees held a total of ten meetings in 2006. In addition, an Annual General Meeting attended by member representatives from all Partnership committees and sub-committees was also held.

4.2 Multi-Year Plan

On May 26, 2006, the Partnership's third Annual General Meeting was held. The focus of the full day meeting was to begin to develop a multi-year plan for achieving the Partnership's vision of "Our communities will be enriched through the provision of a coordinated geospatial infrastructure". Participants formed groups to discuss where they wanted the Partnership to be in 2009 and to identify the activities that would help to

achieve that goal. The multi-year plan will establish a three year activity framework that will guide ongoing activities, identify priorities for action, provide schedule of milestones, and a process for monitoring and updating the plan. The plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated annually.

Participants agreed on three key activities selected from the dozens discussed. These activities are the integration of GIS into organizational business processes, web portal knowledge sharing, and development of a parcel-based “What’s There” analysis. Project definition, scope and high level strategies are in development.

4.3 Annual Work Plan

Using the goals identified in the *Charter* as a framework, each year the Partnership works together to develop its annual work plan resulting in reduced redundancies and efficient programs. This is accomplished through a joint process of identification, prioritization and management. Partners identify potential activities that may benefit the Partnership. These suggested activities are compiled into a document and distributed to the Partners to rate as high, medium or low importance and to identify their organization’s top two priorities. From this analysis a work plan is developed, approved and monitored by the Coordinating Committee.

4.4 Policies

4.4.1 Data sharing and Licensing Agreements

Data sharing is an essential element of local government GIS activities. In order to satisfy internal procedures and legal requirements data sharing licence agreements are necessary. As a first step an inventory of data sharing and licensing agreements in use by the various Partners was undertaken. An analysis of the agreements is in progress with the goal of creating a one data sharing and licensing agreement that will serve the needs of all the Partners.

4.4.2 Standards

The establishment of geospatial information standards facilitates the sharing of data between municipalities and their third party contractors and results in reduced costs of integration and support. In 2006, the Region lead two task forces that contributed to the development of road network and parcel standards.

4.4.2.1 Road Network Data Standard

The development of a road network data standard is a complex process that must consider the requirements of users and many emergency and business critical applications. User needs and feedback was solicited through meetings and survey. These were considered in the development of the road model standards specifications and were inputs to the Region’s Single Line Road Network Geodatabase resulting in a significantly richer road network capable of supporting all of the identified business processes across the YorkInfo Partnership.

4.4.2.2 Parcel Fabric and Address Points Data Standard

A Parcel Standards Task Force was formed to research and recommend a region wide parcel standard. As part of the process, the Towns of Markham and Richmond Hill participated in parcel information exchange toward the development of one parcel fabric and eliminating duplication of effort around the creation and maintenance of this information. The enhanced parcel and address points will be disseminated in 2007.

4.4.2.3 Metadata Standards

Metadata is information about geographic data. It describes the content, quality, type, collection date, and geographic location and coverage of the information. Metadata helps a user assess whether a particular dataset is appropriate for their specific use. The development of common metadata standards help facilitate the searching and sharing of geographic information between different organizations. In order to work toward the development of common metadata standards, and to develop and communicate best practices, on December 15 a workshop was convened for the Partnership organizations.

4.5 Technology

4.5.1 YorkInfo Partnership Website

On October 20, 2006, the YorkInfo Partnership launched its new website www.yorkinfopartners.ca. The site enhances communications by providing one-stop access to communications, information about upcoming activities and status of projects, contact lists and links to Partners' websites. The password protected user log-in allows specified users permission to add, delete or change information. A second generic log-in enables anyone in their organizations to view the site and keep up-to-date on activities.

4.6 Knowledge Transfer & Training

York Region Geomatics provides Partners with access to its corporate GIS training curriculum. In 2006, over 22 participants participated in 6 courses that ranged from introductory to advanced level courses. Benefits realized include the expanded utilization of existing geospatial information and technology throughout organizations resulting in improved business processes and more efficient use of resources. This up-to-date technology training is provided without the high cost associated with vendor-based education. The modularized curriculum allows flexibility of gradual skill development with choice and timing of topic-specific modules.

4.6.1 Web Mapping Infrastructure Knowledge Sharing

York Region Geomatics met with the City of Vaughan's Information and Technology Management Department to profile the Region's technology infrastructure supporting web mapping and to share its experience and define best practices. These kinds of opportunities to share knowledge and experience amongst Partnership organizations are found to be of great benefit by building on best practices and decreasing the need to use consultants thus reducing or eliminating the costs of implementation.

4.7 Spatial Data Creation & Maintenance

4.7.1 Key Spatial Information Updates

Geomatics maintained and distributed regular quarterly updates of key geospatial data to the Partners. These datasets include:

- Single Line Road Network (SLRN)
- Parcel Fabric
- Draft Approved Plans and Pending Plans of Subdivision
- Forestry
- Water and Wastewater Facilities
- Emergency Services Locations and Boundaries
- School Locations
- Lakes and Rivers

4.7.2 Critical Infrastructure Mapping

In support of emergency management activities, Geomatics coordinates an annual review and update of critical infrastructure located within the Region with the Emergency Management Branch, Regional Departments and municipal Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMCs). This annual update is a requirement of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and is an important emergency management tool. Changes are incorporated into a geographic database and updated maps are created and distributed to each area municipal GIS department and CEMC members in January of each year.

4.8 Development and Acquisition of Tools, Licences and Training

4.8.1 Data, Tools, Policies and Standards Inventory

The Partnership conducts an annual inventory of data, tools, policies and standards. This inventory provides a greater understanding of what resources are available and assists in the identification of opportunities to reduce duplication and share the costs of development.

4.9 Joint Initiatives

4.9.1 GeoConnections Applications

York Region submitted two applications for GeoConnections funding on behalf of the YorkInfo Partners. The first proposal submitted on October 12, focused on facilitating land-use planning within an integrated management context. The proposed project will develop a land-use planning/sustainable development atlas that integrates diverse thematic and regulatory spatial data from several agencies within the geographic boundaries of York Region. The second proposal submitted November 21, includes developing a suite of geospatial applications to assist planners in modelling density scenarios related to *Places to Grow* in York Region to enable decision-making relating to sustainable development. A response on the application is expected in January 2007.

4.9.2 GIS Emergency Management Planning & Support

The GIS Emergency Task Force created and maintains an emergency GIS contact list and is working toward the development of notification procedures for coordinating the GIS response between member organizations during an emergency situation.

4.10 Memoranda of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding documents among the Partners were revised to reflect the content of the *YorkInfo Partnership Charter* and more clearly define the benefits and deliverables provided to individual Partner organizations. These agreements have undergone extensive review and revision by each of the Partners throughout the past year and are currently undergoing final review by the Region's and Partner's respective legal representatives.

4.10.1 2007 Work Plan Development

The successful implementation and completion of the 2006 work plan encouraged the Partners to follow the same process in the development and management of the 2007 YorkInfo Partnership work plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Some funds are recovered from YorkInfo Partnership fees related to data creation, information management, distribution, products and services. This approach reduces duplication and avoids cost expenditures among the tax-funded organizations of York Region. Reduced duplication and cost sharing benefits both the Region and the area municipalities.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All nine local municipalities are members of the YorkInfo Partnership. They and the Region have the responsibility to deliver services that fully employ the best use of technology for the best value to our residents. Through cooperation, the Partnership and its members can avoid duplication and costs related to data collection, information management and technology while developing an efficient information infrastructure that is requisite to manage the challenges of rapidly growing urban areas alongside agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive sites.

7. CONCLUSION

2006 has been a very productive year for the YorkInfo Partnership. Significant advancement was made toward achieving its goals. Communication was enhanced through meetings, task forces and minutes of meetings and the development of the YorkInfo Partnership website.

York Region Geomatics continues to look forward to working with the Partners to plan and implement the 2007 work plan and the Partnership's multi-year plan that will further achieve the vision of "enriched communities through the provision of a geospatial infrastructure".

For further information about this report, please contact Debra Kelloway, Senior GIS Analyst, Geomatics Branch at (905) 830-4444 ext. 1536 or Debra.Kelloway@york.ca.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)