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ADVANCING YORKEXPLORER PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, November 9, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and that the presentation for this project be made at the next meeting of the Committee:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Update Council on the Advancing YorkExplorer project.
2. Describe the new ways information is made available to the public and YorkInfo partners.

3. BACKGROUND

In March 2004, the Planning and Economic Development Committee adopted the recommendations outlined in the report on “Advancing YorkExplorer Through GeoConnections Funding”. The Federal Government funding of \$100,000 was awarded following the adoption of the report and signing of a formal agreement to enhance the Region’s ability to share and display geographic information through web enabled applications. The initiative has three main components:

- The updating of the Region’s web mapping software and hardware.
- Enabling users to browse a “card catalogue” of the geographical information available in the Region.
- Enhancing the Region’s ability to create and display interactive web maps to staff and the public.

The technical advancements achieved throughout this project have not only enhanced Geomatics initiatives and client access to information, but will also be leveraged in future initiatives.

4. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Significant advancements have been realized to date. On December 16th, Geomatics will launch a new component to the YorkExplorer application, YorkCatalogue, marking a

major milestone in the project and the completion of several enhancements to the Region's web mapping technology.

4.1 Technical Infrastructure Advancements

- A dedicated server has been secured for web mapping. This will improve the speed and capacity of both the Region's general web server and its web mapping application, YorkExplorer.
- The web mapping software has been upgraded to take advantage of technological advancements and improved functionalities for the end-user.
- A new toolkit for rapid development of web map sites has been acquired. It creates greater stability, supports flexibility of the mapping application and enables continuous improvement to the functionalities and capabilities offered to the end user.

4.2 Geographical Information Advancements

- OpenGIS Standards have been adopted to allow users with different systems (various software vendors) to view and use the geographical information from the Region's mapping web site.
- YorkCatalogue has been launched, which is a "card catalogue" application for information describing (metadata) the geographical information available at the Region.
- Four (4) OpenGIS web map services have been created and registered with Natural Resources Canada's GeoConnections data portal. This will allow anyone searching the GeoConnections web site to find and use Regional base map data in their mapping as background information.
- YorkCatalogue has also been registered in GeoConnections' data portal to allow a broader audience to browse the geographic information available in York Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project is proceeding within the Planning & Development Department approved 2004 budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Advancing YorkExplorer Project increases local municipality access to Regional geographical information and Regional information sharing abilities. This will allow for increased collaboration and reduced duplication of data maintenance efforts.

The creation of OpenGIS web services of geographical information allows local municipal users to incorporate this information with any OpenGIS compliant application. This reduces the reliance on a specific application vendor and eases the ability to incorporate geographic information into applications such as asset management and computer assisted drafting.

The creation of YorkCatalogue will allow YorkInfo partners, including local municipalities, district school boards and conservation areas, along with corporate and public users, to view the Regional geographical information library and quickly find out what information is available, when it was last updated, which department is responsible for it and who should be contacted for additional information. Local area municipalities, along with all YorkInfo Partners, will be invited to post their geographical information descriptions into YorkCatalogue, a concept proved through cooperation with the Town of Richmond Hill. Having geographical information descriptions from local municipalities within YorkCatalogue will allow easy search and discovery of the geographical information for local, regional, provincial, and federal governments, as well as individual public users.

7. CONCLUSION

The Advancing YorkExplorer Project was initiated in March, 2004. The GeoConnections award represents a \$100,000 (50%) investment augmenting the strategic enhancements associated with YorkExplorer. Through this project we have been able to:

- Secure dedicated hardware technology
- Upgrade our software to the take advantage of new industry standards
- Create new user tools
- Document core data layers
- Create a one-stop-shop for browsing the geographic information available in York Region area

The project has enabled York Geomatics to align with emerging service and technology directions, introducing flexibility into the way in which we share and distribute spatial data to the benefit of internal and external clients and citizens of York Region.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.