

**3**  
**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**  
**TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES**  
**FOR RAILWAY CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS**

**The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, January 23, 2007, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:**

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Transportation and Works be appointed, by by-law, to authorize the temporary closure of a Regional road at a rail crossing, where necessary, for railroad level crossing improvements and maintenance.
2. The General Manager of Roads of the Transportation and Works Department be appointed as a designate to act in place of the Commissioner for the purpose noted in Recommendation 1.
3. The Regional Solicitor prepare the necessary by-law.
4. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Transportation, Provincial Offences office, Chief of York Regional Police, and the Clerks of all local municipalities.

**2. PURPOSE**

The report recommends that Council authorize the Commissioner of Transportation and Works to temporarily close Regional roads to through traffic to accommodate railway crossing improvements.

**3. BACKGROUND**

Throughout the year, Regional staff receives various requests from railway authorities to temporarily close roads to allow routine maintenance and rehabilitation of grade crossings.

Past practice has been to obtain authorization from Regional Council prior to permitting the temporary road closure. Quite often, these requests are the result of an immediate safety concern from the rail authority and little lead time is provided. Regional staff

attempts to allow these temporary road closures on week-ends when traffic volumes are generally lighter, therefore, lessening any inconvenience to motorists.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

##### **4.1 Rationale for Temporary Road Closures**

Where possible, Regional staff co-ordinate construction activities to keep the roads open to through traffic; however, it is not always feasible to maintain through-traffic because of the very nature of the work and it is often safer and more cost-effective to complete the work under a temporary full road closure.

Temporary road closures, where implemented, reduce safety risks to both the travelling public and work crews and provide a work environment that enhances construction quality. Furthermore, temporary closures significantly reduce the costs and time schedule for any work, thus minimizing public impact and disruption. Temporary road closures for crossing improvements will be a maximum of one day. Once a road closure is in effect, efficient use of the time period will be an obligation of the rail authority and its contractor to ensure that public impact and inconvenience is limited through effective work planning and operations.

##### **4.2 Public Notification and Mitigation**

It is the responsibility of the railway agency to notify all affected residents, emergency services (police, fire and ambulance), school bus operators, school transit authorities and the public of the closures at least two weeks prior to the closures.

Road signs notifying the public of the proposed road closures will be placed on the arterial roads a minimum of two weeks in advance of the closure. Temporary road closure notices will also be posted on the York Region website.

Access to local residences, businesses, schools and other institutions will be maintained.

##### **4.3 Delegation of Authority to Close Roads**

The *Municipal Act* allows municipal council to delegate authority to temporarily close roads for the purpose of construction or maintenance. It is proposed that the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be appointed to temporarily close roads at rail crossings to allow routine maintenance and rehabilitation of short duration (48 hours or less) of at grade crossings. This will eliminate the need for reports to the Transportation and Works Committee and Regional Council to authorize temporary road closures for rail crossing maintenance.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report. All costs associated with these temporary road closures will be borne by the applicable railway agency.

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

The rehabilitation and maintenance of at grade railway crossings improves the Regional road network in all local municipalities. Staff will endeavour to ensure these road closures are co-ordinated to ensure minimal disruption and that the work is completed as efficiently as possible. Emergency services and school boards will be notified in advance of the closure to ensure there is no interruption in their service provision.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

It is proposed that the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be appointed, by by-law, to authorize the temporary closure of a Regional road at a rail crossing, where necessary, for railroad level crossing improvements and maintenance in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Act* and the General Manager of Roads, of the Transportation and Works Department be appointed as a designate to act in place of the Commissioner as needed.

The Regional Solicitor should prepare the necessary by-law.

The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Transportation, Provincial Offences office, Chief of York Regional Police, and the Clerks of all local municipalities.

For more information on this report, contact Brian Harrison, Director, Operations, Roads Branch at extension 5205 in the Transportation and Works Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.