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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES FOR RAILWAY CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS TOWNS OF EAST GWILLIMBURY AND WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

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 delegated the authority to temporarily close the following roads, for a maximum period of one day, for rail crossing improvements:
 - 1.1 Warden Avenue (Y.R. 65) north of Aurora Road (Y.R. 15) at the CN level crossing in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (*see Attachment 1*).
 - 1.2 Vivian Road (Y.R. 74) east of Kennedy Road (Y.R. 3) at the CN level crossing in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (*see Attachment 2*).
 - 1.3 McCowan Road (Y.R. 67) north of Davis Drive (Y.R. 31) at the CN level crossing in the Town of East Gwillimbury (*see Attachment 3*).
2. The Regional Solicitor prepare the necessary by-laws.
3. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerks of the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville and to the Canadian National Railway.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide authorization 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. 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.

As a result of such past experience, Regional Roads staff recently undertook to try to schedule such work with the rail companies in a more proactive manner. Although CN has been reluctant to commit to definite dates, CN did recently identify its intention to carry out such work at three Regional road crossings in 2007.

3.1 CN Crossing Improvements

CN, in a letter dated November 24, 2006, has requested a temporary road closure at three sites, where railway crossing rehabilitation is required.

- Warden Avenue, north of Aurora Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Vivian Road, east of Kennedy Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- McCowan Road, north of Davis Drive, Town of East Gwillimbury

Since no specific dates are known, it is appropriate to delegate authority for the Commissioner of Transportation and Works to temporarily close these roads as required to complete the necessary work.

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.

4.2 Public Notification and Mitigation

It is the responsibility of CN 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 and local roads a minimum of two weeks in advance of the closure by CN. 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.

Temporary road closures for CN 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 CN and its contractor to ensure that public impact and inconvenience is limited through effective work planning and operations.

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. Regional Roads staff will work with CN staff to assure that the closures and the notification and mitigation works are completed as appropriate.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. All costs associated with these temporary closures will be borne by Canadian National Railway.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Signage notifying the public of the proposed temporary road closures will be placed a minimum of two weeks in advance of the road closure dates. Local traffic will be maintained at all times to provide access to businesses and residences. Detour signs will be installed to properly guide motorists around the closure. 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 recommended that the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be delegated the authority for the temporary closure of:

- Warden Avenue, north of Aurora Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Vivian Road, east of Kennedy Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- McCowan Road, north of Davis Drive, Town of East Gwillimbury

Regional staff will take all necessary precautions to ensure the duration of these road closures is kept to a minimum and that appropriate notification is made to all affected parties.

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.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)