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OAK RIDGES MORaine SIGNS

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The following report, January 21, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be received; and**
- 2. The proposed Oak Ridges Moraine signage be referred back to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation for further discussions regarding the prototype.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council support the request from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF) to install signage on Regional road rights-of-way to identify the location of the Oak Ridges Moraine (Moraine).
2. The signs be placed in the locations depicted on *Attachment 1*.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is seek Committee and Council support of the request from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF) to place signs identifying the Oak Ridges Moraine (Moraine) within Regional road rights-of-way. The signs are proposed to be installed in spring 2004 at the locations depicted on *Attachment 1*.

The signs will raise the public awareness of the Moraine across York Region.

3. BACKGROUND

The Moraine is the largest, distinct and significant landform within York Region. Making the public more aware of the Moraine's presence within the Region, and its specific location is important. It creates a sense of identity for the community and helps foster private land stewardship by increasing public appreciation of our natural heritage resources. The Moraine is also a significant feature on the Provincial Landscape. Promoting its presence and location may also assist in promoting tourism within the Region.

The ORMF has expressed interest in placing signage identifying and promoting the Moraine, and requested our support in placing signs on Regional roads. This Greening Strategy partnership sets a municipal standard in sign design for promoting the Moraine across southern Ontario.

3.1 Provincial Highway Signs

Recently, the ORMF erected four Moraine signs on the north and southbound lanes of Highways 400 and 404. These signs, identifying the Moraine to travelers as follows: *Oak Ridges Moraine – Next 10 Kilometres*, were unveiled on September 9, 2003. In general, feedback on the Provincial signs has been positive.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

This initiative is consistent with Greening Strategy objectives to increase awareness of the Region's natural heritage features and values. Increasing public awareness will foster greater respect of the environment by residents and may lead to improved private land stewardship.

The Greening Strategy placed great emphasis on strategic partnerships. This partnership with the ORMF is likely to be the first of many that achieve mutual benefits of the two agencies.

4.1 Sign Design

Attachment 2 is a graphic of the sign design. The signs are to be 4' by 6' in size. This size and design meets technical requirements to be visible, and not hazardous, to Regional road drivers. Keeping the design simple sends the appropriate message without being overbearing or commercial. Signs will be manufactured by the Roads Transportation Branch, Transportation and Works Department.

4.1.1 Sign Wording

The signs will identify to drivers that they are "Entering the Oak Ridges Moraine". This wording was selected as it sends a positive message about the upcoming driving experience. It also provides notice to vehicle occupants that they now have the opportunity to observe features of the Moraine as they continue their travels.

An additional benefit of this wording is that it is general enough to provide some flexibility for locating signs. Specifically, signs can be located just prior to, immediately at, or just after the start of the Moraine. The benefit of this flexibility is elaborated in the following section.

4.1.2 Sign Locations

The signs will be located as shown on the attached map (*Attachment 1*). The proposed locations have been chosen having regard for the following:

- The limits of the Moraine as depicted in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- Proposed and existing adjacent land uses.
- Future capital works.
- Traffic volumes.
- Views and vistas of the Moraine.

Signs will be installed by Regional staff.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

Promoting the Moraine through signage supports several Vision 2026 goal statements:

"In 2026, York residents continue to value and embrace the Region's unique natural heritage (land, air, water) and cultural heritage (sites and buildings important to our history, faiths and cultures)."

"In 2026, York Region will have grown at a pace that supports healthy communities, economic vitality, sustainable natural environment and effective human services."

Signage will help to promote the Moraine and its protection, as well as encouraging tourism in the area of the Moraine, strengthening the Region's commitment to the natural environment and, therefore, Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The signs will be fabricated, installed and maintained by Transportation and Works, Roads Transportation Branch. The total cost for the production and installation of 12 signs will be approximately \$10,000 (\$900/sign). The ORMF has committed to funding 50% of the expenditures. The remaining 50% will be funded through the 2004 Greening Strategy budget allocation. The maintenance and upkeep of these signs will be integrated with the existing Road Signage Program. Given an average life expectancy for these signs of 10 to 12 years, and the small number proposed, maintenance and replacement expenditures will be included within the existing road maintenance budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All Regional residents and local municipalities benefit from a greater appreciation of our natural environment. Increasing public awareness of this significant feature has the potential to improve private land stewardship and increase tourism.

7. CONCLUSION

Increasing public awareness of the Moraine within York Region has natural heritage, social and economic benefit. This report is being submitted to seek Committee and Council support of the request from the ORMF to install signs promoting the Moraine within Regional road rights-of-way.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)