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ROADSIDE MEMORIAL SIGNAGE PROGRAM MADD CANADA

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The recommendations contained in the following report, February 25, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services, be referred to the April 9, 2008 Transportation and Works Committee meeting at which time staff are requested to bring forward further information on roadside memorial programs and policies.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the roadside memorial signage program to allow the installation of roadside memorial signage on Regional roads.
2. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerk of each local municipality and to the Chief of York Regional Police.

2. PURPOSE

This report is to seek Council's endorsement of a proposed roadside memorial signage program. MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Canada has established a similar process with the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario and the Provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

3. BACKGROUND

Over the past number of years, forms of roadside memorials have been placed on roadways at locations where fatal collisions have occurred. These memorials are placed by family and friends of victims and range from floral tributes to handmade signs that are left to mark the location of a fatal collision. At this time, there is no Regional policy on the placement or removal of these tributes, which are left in place for long periods of time if they are in a safe location and do not create a hazard to traffic. Staff have removed or relocated tributes determined to be in an unsafe location. Recognizing the sensitivity of the situation, staff have contacted family members suggesting a tribute be relocated if there is a safety concern.

MADD Canada is a National registered charitable volunteer organization with established chapters in many communities throughout the country. These chapters are made up of a cross section of concerned citizens, ranging from parents and friends of impaired driving victims, to students and business professionals, wanting to make a difference in the fight against impaired driving. MADD continues to advocate for change to make our communities safer and provide victims of impaired driving with a voice. MADD Canada has several strategies to raise public awareness about the dangers of impaired driving.

On November 26, 2006, the Province of Ontario became the third Canadian jurisdiction to allow the placement of roadside memorials at locations where fatal collisions occurred involving a convicted impaired driver. The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario has recently reached an agreement with MADD Canada to allow memorial signage at locations along the Province's highways. The signs include the victim's name and MADD Canada's logo. Typically, these agreements allow the signs to be manufactured based on a standard sign layout and design and installed by the respective road authority. A photograph of a sample sign is shown on *Attachment 1*. At this time, similar programs exist in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Manitoba and more are expected to be implemented throughout Canada over the next few years.

MADD Canada is interested in partnering with York to implement a memorial signage program in our Region. A letter of support, dated February 25, 2008, is appended to this report labelled *Attachment 2*.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A roadside memorial signage program in York Region would create a partnership with MADD Canada and demonstrate that the Region is a leader in this initiative and is taking a strong stance against impaired driving. A roadside memorial signage program in the Region could be similar to existing provincial agreements where a sign, paid for by MADD Canada, with the victim's name would be installed on a Regional road by Regional staff. Upon endorsement by Council, York Regional staff will meet with representatives from MADD Canada and York Regional Police to discuss the implementation of a roadside memorial program in York Region.

York Region to become the first Regional municipal government to implement a roadside memorial program with MADD Canada

At this time, MADD Canada has reached agreements with four Provincial governments throughout Canada to implement roadside memorial programs on Provincial highways. Programs currently exist in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Ontario. The first roadside memorial placed in Ontario is on Highway 48, in York Region, in the area of Herald Road and Mount Albert Road for northbound traffic. A photograph of this sign is shown on *Attachment 3*. If this program is endorsed by Regional Council, York

Region will be the first Regional government in the country to enter into an agreement with MADD Canada.

MADD Canada establishes and administers the programs with each Province

MADD Canada has entered into specific separate agreements with each Province where roadside memorial programs have been established. These agreements outline the responsibilities of each of the parties. Although each Province has its own agreement with MADD Canada, the core responsibilities of MADD are generally:

- Initiate the request and fund the cost for the memorial sign.
- Be responsible for ascertaining that the driver involved in the fatal collision has been convicted of a Criminal Code driving offence where alcohol was a contributing factor.
- Provide the location and details of the collision.
- Obtain written consent from the next of kin confirming the name to be placed on the memorial sign.

York Region will contribute the cost to install roadside memorial signs

York Region's role in administering a roadside memorial program is to manufacture the sign, based on a standard sign layout and design, and contribute the cost of the labour for installation of the sign. The cost of manufacturing the sign will be the responsibility of MADD Canada. The maintenance and replacement of any damaged signs will be charged to MADD Canada with the installation costs being covered by the Region.

Memorial signs are a constant reminder of the effects of drinking and driving

MADD Canada will administer the memorial signage program, and in conjunction with York Region, signs will be installed in safe locations on the Regional road network. Any signs located on the Regional road network must be placed in a safe location respecting the location of existing and future underground utilities and must not create sight distance issues from existing driveways or access points. Similar to other existing memorial signage agreements throughout Canada, the Region will manufacture these memorial signs, at the cost of MADD Canada, and install them, at the cost of the Region, to ensure the signs are consistent and are installed in safe locations within standards and practices.

The detailed design of the signs will be reviewed with MADD Canada and York Regional Police to ensure the signs are an effective reminder of the consequences of drinking and driving.

Although York Regional Police have a year-round ride program, drinking and driving continues to occur on Regional roads

In the past five years, 19 fatal collisions occurred on York Region roadways where alcohol was a contributing factor. According to MADD Canada, 3,013 fatal collisions occurred on roadways throughout Canada in 2004. Of these collisions, MADD estimates that 1,157 of these fatalities involved impaired driving.

This program can include memorials from the past

This program will take effect upon endorsement by Council. All requests to install memorial signage for fatal collisions involving convictions for impaired driving that occurred on Regional roads will be considered. This includes those collisions which may have occurred before adoption of this program.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any funds required to administer, manufacture the signs and implement roadside memorial signage are the responsibility of MADD Canada. Financial costs to install the signs are part of the day-to-day operations for Roads staff and are included in the approved 2008 Roads Budget. It is estimated that, on an annual basis, a minimum number of signs will be required to implement a roadside memorial signage program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional roads traverse through all nine local municipalities in the Region. Road safety and strategies to reduce impaired driving affect all local municipalities. The implementation of roadside memorial signage on Regional roads will create awareness of the dangers of impaired driving for all residents of York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

This report endorses the installation of roadside memorial signage on York Region roads where fatal collisions have occurred involving impaired driving. MADD Canada will administer this program based on other established processes with the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario and the Provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Manitoba. The Region will be responsible for the manufacture and installation of roadside memorial signage based on requests through MADD Canada. The costs to manufacture the signs will be the responsibility of MADD Canada and their installation costs will be the responsibility of the Region.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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