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ADVANCING YORKEXPLORER PROJECT FINAL REPORT

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Rica Saporta, GIS Analyst, Geomatics, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, May 19, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be adopted:**

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 completion of the “Advancing YorkExplorer Project” on time and on budget.
2. Update council on new ways in which geographic information can be made available to the public and YorkInfo partners through the web.

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 project was carried out with the support of GeoConnections matched funding following the signing of a formal agreement to enhance the Region’s ability to share and display geographic information through web enabled applications. The initiative had 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

The “Advancing YorkExplorer Project” embodies the principles of business process re-engineering by creating efficiencies through new ways of documenting and accessing details on geospatial information and viewing data from different sources. This new business model for discovery and distribution of geographical information benefits Regional departments, partners, businesses and citizens. Project components included:

- **Metadata:** A procedure has been created, documented and implemented for describing geographic information available at York region to be used by YorkInfo Partners and clients
- **YorkCatalogue:** The information created can now be browsed and searched by both staff members and the public making it easier to find information of interest.
- **Partner Metadata Hosting:** In co-operation with the Town of Richmond Hill a process has been established to allow external organizations to add their metadata information into the Region’s service. This allows users of YorkCatalogue to search geographic information from more than one organization. Other YorkInfo Partners can adopt this process for others to view their metadata.
- **Web Map Services:** Direct data access is now being offered through the use of ISO compliant web map services. Four data “packages”, involving road, forestry and elevation information along with historical aerial photographs, are being made available to users through documented industry standards. This enables users to view the information regardless of the GIS vendor they are using and to incorporate this information with any web- or desktop- based mapping.
- **Service Registration:** Discovery of the four data “packages” and information catalogue has been enabled on the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CGDI), enabling a larger number of users to find and use this information.
- **YorkAtlas:** A new web map viewer will be implemented on June 24th, 2005 with increased user functionalities and improved mapping capabilities, including the ability to mark-up maps and add labelling.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project was completed within the Planning & Development Department’s approved 2004-05 budget, with in-house funds augmented through a matching grant from Natural Resources Canada GeoConnections’ Public Agency Connectivity program. The project was completed on time and within budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

- Improved Identification of Desired Regional Geographic Information Access: The implementation of YorkCatalogue allows local area municipalities, and their various customer bases, to efficiently identify regional geographical information and ascertain its value to their specific needs.
- Improved Regional Geographic Information Delivery: Local area municipalities can access regional geographic data by using the web map services. Additional web map services may be created to remove the need for CD based data exchange (a process already in place for those users requesting aerial photographs).
- Increase Potential Geographic Information Users: Local area municipalities can increase the reach of their geographic data by publishing descriptive information on YorkCatalogue, and in this way exposing the information to regional and national users through the registration with the GeoConnections' federal information portal.
- Through the YorkInfo Partnership, local area municipalities are being encouraged to publish descriptions of their geographic data layers through YorkCatalogue.

7. CONCLUSION

The Advancing YorkExplorer project has significantly increased the ability to search, discover, share and deliver the Region's geographical information among staff, local area municipalities and the general public. The project delivered several tools and services identified during the user needs study. The funding from the Federal GeoConnections grant program enabled Geomatics to address user needs in a timely manner, accelerating program delivery and benefiting users.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.