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WATERCOURSE IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE ON REGIONAL ROADS

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 27, 2010, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council support the principle of Regional road watercourse identification signage.
2. Regional Council support the watercourse identification signage partnership request from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Town of Markham to install signage on Regional road rights-of-way within the Don and Rouge River watersheds at the total cost of \$10,800.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks Council support for watercourse identification signage on Regional roads. Specifically, a partnership request has been received from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Town of Markham to place signs within the Don and Rouge River watersheds.

3. BACKGROUND

Signage for the Don and Rouge River watersheds within the Town of Markham is being proposed for 2010

As supported by the Don and Rouge River watershed plans, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the Don Watershed Regeneration Council, the Town of Markham, and the City of Toronto have been developing a program to install watercourse identification signage along roads within these watersheds *Attachment 1*. Standard design protocols have been approved by the TRCA, Markham and the City of Toronto. This template is proposed as the standard for watercourse identification signage within TRCA jurisdiction. Examples of graphic is shown in *Attachment 2*.

The TRCA and the Town of Markham are seeking support to place watercourse identification signs on Region road rights-of-way for the Don and Rouge Rivers within the Town of Markham.

Identifying watercourses through signage increases public awareness and builds community respect for streams

In York Region, the health of our watercourses is largely dependent upon good stewardship by our communities. Signing watercourses heightens awareness of this natural resource and reinforces the interconnectedness of our natural environment with our local communities. Identifying river systems and their tributaries through the installation of watercourse identification signs along Regional and local roads have been a long-standing objective expressed through watershed planning documents.

By attaching a name to a local river, creek or stream, and linking it to a watershed, people are more likely to take ownership and have pride in it. The objective is to raise awareness and reduce behaviours that negatively impact our aquatic systems, thus promoting proactive stewardship activities.

York Region has limited watercourse signage along Regional roads. Currently, approximately 20 signs are in place within the jurisdictions of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Examples of watersheds signage can be found on only some Regional roads crossing the Holland, Maskinonge and Humber Rivers. In addition, in 2003, Richmond Hill Council endorsed a report which recommended placing watercourse signage on local and Regional roads. It appears the Town installed some signage on local roads; however, the Regional signage has not been installed to date.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The TRCA and Town of Markham are requesting the Region's assistance with the installation of signs

The TRCA and the Town of Markham have identified locations for watercourse signage within the Town. Specific to Regional Roads, 10 sites (20 signs) are being proposed for the Don River watershed and 50 sites (100 signs) for the Rouge River watershed. The signs are being produced by the Town of Markham at their cost. The partnership request is for the Region to be responsible for installation, maintenance and future replacement.

Watershed Plans identify benefits of watercourse signage

Most watershed and sub-watershed plans within York Region recognize the value of watercourse identification signage. In recent months, the Maskinonge River Recovery Project Public Committee has also expressed an interest in having watercourse signs placed within Regional road rights-of-way. The Maskinonge proposal is less advanced than the current request, but could be considered as part of a broader Region-wide

signage initiative. Roughly 20 sites (40 signs) have been identified as potential locations for the Maskinonge River watershed.

Full signage implementation throughout the Region would require approximately 1,000 signs if considering the same standard as proposed for the Town of Markham. The potential financial implications of a Region-wide program are presented in Section 5.

It is recommended that the Region support the concept of watercourse signage and the Markham - TRCA partnership request

It is further recommended that the request by the Town of Markham and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for signage within the Markham portions of the Rouge and Don River watershed be supported. It is also recommended that the standards established for the Town of Markham initiative be the basis for future requests. It is also recommended that further implementation of watercourse signage partnerships be considered by Council on an individual basis, allowing Transportation staff to assess budget implications.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Signage for the Don River and Rouge River on Regional roads in the Town of Markham will cost \$10,800

Markham Don and Rouge watershed project costs are outlined in Table 1. The Town of Markham will be providing the Don and Rouge River watercourse signs in support of this partnership. The Region is being requested to cover installation costs. Installation costs are approximately \$90.00 per sign; this includes the cost of obtaining utility locates, installation hardware and labour. The total 2010 cost to the Region is \$10,800.

Table 1
Markham Don and Rouge River Identification Signage Project costs

Project Component	Costs Incurred by Partners	Regional Costs	Total Project Costs
Signs (120)	\$10,800		\$10,800
Installation		\$10,800	\$10,800
Total Upfront Costs	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$21,600
Maintenance/Replacement		\$18,000*	\$18,000*
Total	\$10,800	\$28,800*	\$39,600*

* Maintenance/replacement costs will be incurred over a period of approximately 10 years.

On-going costs would be incurred by the Region for the maintenance and replacement of the signs. The average life of a sign is approximately 10 years, with replacement costs (material and labour) being approximately \$150.00 per sign. As a result, it should be assumed that an additional \$18,000 will be required over the next 10 years to maintain and/or replace these signs.

The up-front Regional contribution of \$10,800 for installation would be allocated from the approved 2010 Transportation Services budget. The maintenance/replacement costs that will be incurred in the future will form part of the annual Roads Maintenance operations budget request.

Region-wide implementation of watercourse identification signage would require approximately \$180,000 in total partnership funding

Although not being requested at this time, Table 2 identifies an estimate of the costs that would be required to implement watercourse identification signage Region-wide. There are 9 major watersheds across York Region (*Attachment 1*). These costs are based on Regional road sign installation at the same standard as proposed across the Town of Markham. The actual number of signs will vary based on specific watershed objectives and site conditions. Total costs to the Region will depend on the financial partnerships developed for each implementation project.

Table 2
Estimated Region-wide Watercourse Identification Signage Costs

Project Component	Total Project Costs
Signs (1000)	\$90,000
Installation	\$90,000
Total Up-Front Costs	\$180,000
Maintenance/Replacement	\$150,000*
Total	\$330,000*

* Maintenance/replacement costs will be incurred over a period of approximately 10 years.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Town of Markham is a strong proponent of watercourse identification signage and is one of the partners requesting the Region's involvement in this project. Further watercourse signage implementation (including cost sharing) would occur on a project by project basis with the support of the local municipality and Regional budget approval.

7. CONCLUSION

Watercourse identification signage is important for building community support and stewardship of the Region's aquatic resources. It is recommended that Council support the concept of watercourse signage and specifically support the current request for implementation within the Town of Markham.

For more information on this report, please contact Joseph Petrungaro, Manager Road Maintenance at Ext. 5220 or Ian Buchanan, Manager Natural Heritage & Forestry at Ext. 5204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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

Watershed Boundaries and Markham Request Area

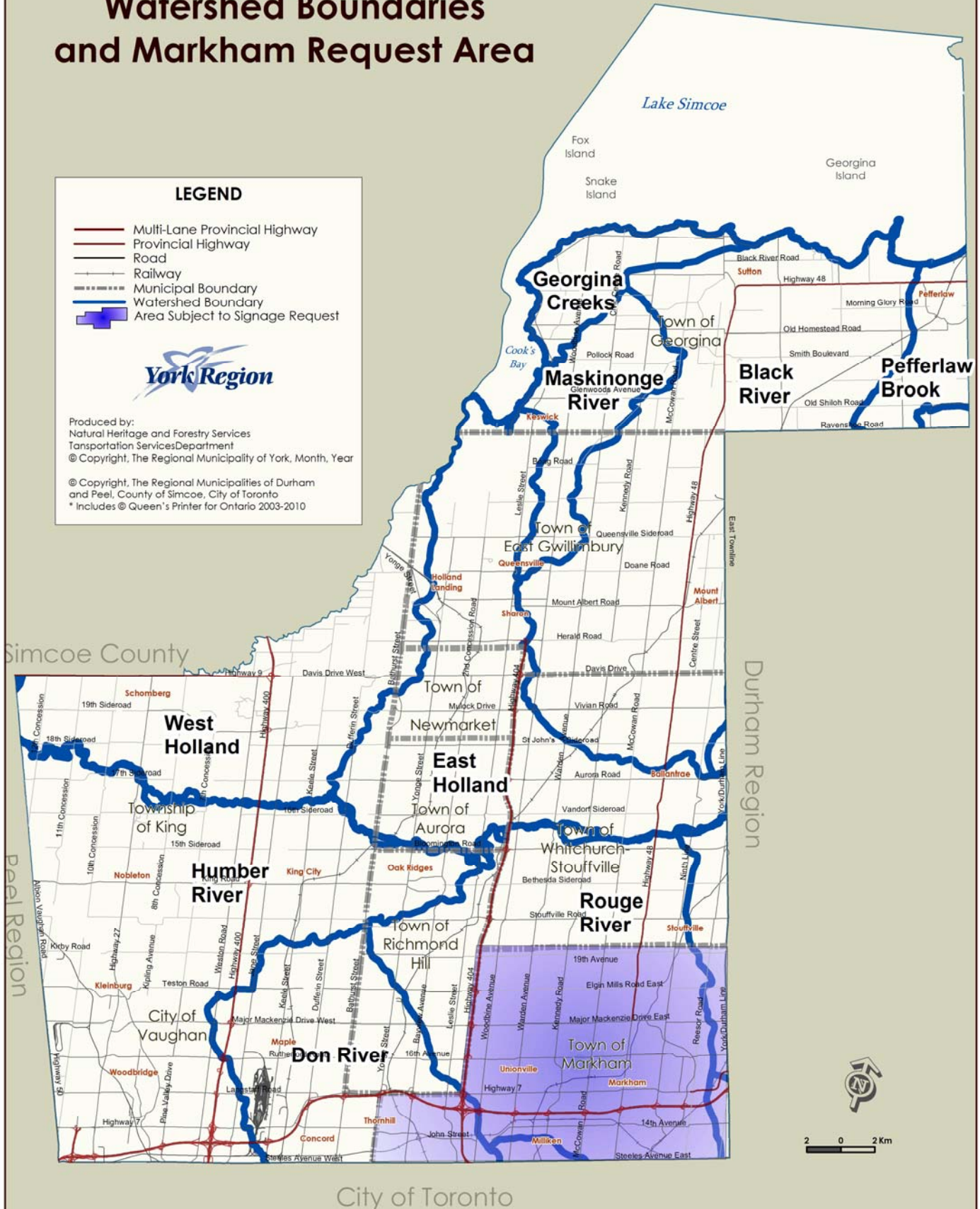
LEGEND

- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- - - Municipal Boundary
- Watershed Boundary
- Area Subject to Signage Request



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Sample Watercourse Identification Signs



Note: Within the Rouge Watershed, signs within the Rouge Park will have the Rouge Park logo in place of the new Rouge Watershed logo, outside of the park the Rouge watershed logo will be used. All signs on Regional Roads will include the Region logo.