

6
COMMUNITY STREET NAME SIGN PROGRAM
COMMUNITY OF MAPLE
CITY OF VAUGHAN

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 31, 2007, from the General Manager, Roads:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The community street name signage program for the community of Maple be endorsed by Regional Council for a one-year trial period, with all program costs to be borne by the City of Vaughan.
2. Regional staff prepare a follow up report in June 2008, outlining the effectiveness of the community sign program in Maple.
3. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerk of the City of Vaughan.

2. PURPOSE

This report is to obtain Council approval to implement community street name signs on the mast arms of traffic signal poles in the community of Maple in the City of Vaughan for a one-year trial period.

3. BACKGROUND

The Region has received a request from the Maple Heritage Street Name Committee to install community street name signs (see Figure 1) on traffic control signal mast arms at 13 intersections along Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street in the community of Maple (*see Attachment 1*). The committee, in partnership with the City of Vaughan, has agreed to pay for the manufacture, installation and maintenance of the community street name signs.

York Region started placing street name signs on mast arms in 1996. This has been a very successful program with much support from residents, commuters and seniors. It is proposed the existing mast arm signs in the community of Maple be replaced with a new color street sign that reflects the heritage status of Maple.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

York Region's history is reflected in its built form and heritage streetscapes. Maple is no exception as it is endowed with rich cultural heritage. Its heritage enhances quality of life and identifies it as a distinctive community within the City of Vaughan. In York Region's Official Plan, some of the objectives that are identified pertaining to cultural heritage are as follows:

"To encourage any area municipality undertaking community improvement plans and programs to conserve cultural heritage resources".

"To encourage area municipalities to consider design that depicts heritage qualities when approving developments in older neighbourhoods or main street areas, so, that development or redevelopment reflects the character and streetscape of the area".

The installation of street name plates, which reflect the local heritage, supports these objectives. The street name plates will enhance and beautify the streetscapes in Maple, thereby contributing to the unique character of the Maple community.

Figure 1 shows an example of what the community street name plates will look like. These signs are different from the current road name signs in several ways. The most noticeable differences will be the font and the shape of the signs.

Figure 1
Proposed Community Street Name Sign



4.1 Sign Font

Currently, the Regional standard for street name signs on mast arms is the Gothic C uppercase font. This standard has been used since 1996. The community street name signs will use the Clearview font (with mixed case letters). Recent research by human factors experts has found the Clearview font to perform considerably better than the Gothic C uppercase font, especially at night. The Clearview font is more legible – it is easier to read, and is not as susceptible to the halo effect (where letters cannot be distinguished clearly as a result of headlight glare). The Clearview font is used by many authorities in North America, in part, due to its significant benefits to the aging driver population.

4.2 Sign Design

The shape of the sign is more ornate than the regular street name signs, although, the base of the street sign is straight to allow the arm support to extend further for stability and resistance to wind loads. There is an opportunity to develop a colour scheme for each individual heritage community to differentiate one from another. In addition, the local community's logo can be incorporated into the sign. A well proportioned finial is an architectural element which gives the sign simple elegance and character suited to a heritage community.

It is anticipated that requests may be received for similar signs in other areas within York Region, and as a result it is recommended that the installation of community street name signs in Maple be a pilot project for a one-year period. After a year, staff will evaluate the pilot project and report back to Council on the opportunities and constraints of this

sign program. If necessary, York Region will develop a policy for the implementation of community street name signs in other communities in York Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications associated with the manufacture, installation and maintenance of these signs is covered by the City of Vaughan.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The implementation of the community street name plates will benefit the local municipality by creating a distinctive feel for the heritage. Heritage communities enrich neighbourhoods, increase property values, and support retail and service activities. Urban centres which are vibrant and well designed create focal points for the municipality and instil a sense of civic pride.

Street name plates are a small investment in contributing to the historic image of Maple. On a larger scale, this is a program which, if successful, could potentially be applied to other locations.

7. CONCLUSION

There is a growing interest in revitalizing and enhancing heritage areas which is in accordance with York Region Official Plan policies. The Maple Heritage Street Name Committee in the City of Vaughan initiated a program, to fabricate and install community street name signs to reflect the heritage area in Maple. The new signs will replace the existing mast arm signs at no cost to the Region on a trial basis.

Street name plates are a small investment in contributing to the historic image of Maple. It is recommended that Regional Council endorse this initiative and support the community street name sign program in the community of Maple in the City of Vaughan.

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 attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)