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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AWARD SIGNIFICANT WOODLANDS STUDY

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, June 3, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. RFP No. P-04-22 for the supply of all labour, material and equipment necessary to carry out work associated with the York Region Significant Woodlands Study in accordance with the Terms of Reference (closed April 20, 2004) be awarded to North-South Environmental Inc. at the upset limit of \$58,246.52.
2. The Director of Supplies and Services be authorized to issue the purchase order.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek authorization to award the Significant Woodlands Study to North-South Environmental Inc. in accordance with their proposal and the Terms of Reference (closed April 20, 2004).

This study is of paramount importance for efficient and effective implementation of Greening Strategy, most directly aiding in the securement of a healthy Greenlands System and directing rehabilitation efforts which will result in the greatest enhancement to our natural environment. In addition, this study will provide current information for an update of the Regional Official Plan Significant Forest map and policies.

3. BACKGROUND

The Region has a strong commitment to the protection of woodlands and forest cover as a key component of its diverse environmental resources and natural heritage. Through the goals of Vision 2026, the sustainable natural environment policies in the Regional Official Plan (ROP), the implementation of the Greening Strategy and the administration of the Tree By-law, the Region has demonstrated leadership in the protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.

3.1 Regional Forest Cover

In southern Ontario over the past 200 years, the landscape has been altered from a predominantly forested landscape to one dominated by a wide variety of agricultural, industrial and urban land uses. Over 70% of the original woodlands have been lost.

It is recognized that woodlands across the landscape provide a variety of important environmental and economic benefits. These benefits include erosion prevention, water retention, provision of wildlife habitat, recreation and the sustainable harvest of woodland products. Greater knowledge of the significance of the Woodlands comprising the 39,000 hectares (18% of entire Region, or 22.5% of the lands base) of forest across the Region will help us manage this valuable resource.

3.2 The Regional Official Plan (ROP)

In 1994, the province approved the Region's first Official Plan. This ROP contained a number of policy areas that were, at the time, environmentally innovative within upper tier official plans. The Regional Greenland System was shown on a Map within the ROP along with policies that directed development away from the system. Forested areas were similarly displayed within the ROP along with policies that were intended to protect those areas. At the time, the Significant Forested Area designation was based on patches greater than approximately four to five hectares in area identified through an air photo survey. These identifications did not differentiate between forest characteristics nor did it attach significance based on the proximity of forests to other forest patches and natural heritage features. Since that time, new research and a number of policy documents have demonstrated advancement in the science of forest identification and forest significance. These include draft Significant Woodlands Criteria produced by Ontario Nature (formerly the Federation of Ontario Naturalist), the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Terrestrial Natural Heritage Program, significant work undertaken on the Oak Ridges Moraine and others.

In 2001, the Region initiated an Official Plan amendment (ROPA 37) which was designed to update environmental mapping within the ROP through updated GIS techniques and information. Following a public meeting on the amendment, it was decided that the portions of the amendment dealing with Significant Forests and their identification should be held in abeyance pending the completion of this Significant Woodlands Study as the rationalization of the mapping and policy framework.

3.3 The Regional Greening Strategy

In 2001, the Region adopted the Regional Greening Strategy. This strategy is an umbrella program that supports and coordinates environmental initiatives to protect, manage and rehabilitate the Region's wealth of natural resources. This strategy has the following nine themes; Information Management, Naturalization and Rehabilitation, Securement of Priority Greenlands, Community Education and Promotion, Regional Operations, Role of Federal/Provincial Government Legislation, Urban Forest, Corporate Green Partnership, and Monitoring Results.

Greater knowledge of the significance of the woodlands throughout the Region would greatly assist in the implementation of the Greening Strategy.

3.4 York Region Significant Woodlands Study

The deliverables of the study are as follows:

1. York Region specific Significant Woodlands Report including the criteria and all background material.
2. The following maps/GIS datasets:
 - a. Significant woodlands.
 - b. Woodlands greater than 0.5 acres, for Trees By-law administration.
 - c. Prioritized strategic restoration locations to assist in directing securement, stewardship and naturalization Greening Strategy initiatives.

The study will also include:

- No less than four public open houses.
- A presentation of the draft criteria to a Technical Advisory Team and municipal staff.
- A presentation of the Final Draft to the Committees of Transportation and Works and Planning and Economic Development.

The purpose of this study, and these products, is to facilitate sound policy planning in accordance with Provincial Policy, innovative and proactive implementation of the Greening Strategy and Trees By-law administration.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Fourteen firms received the Request for Proposals documents for the Significant Woodlands Study. The following proponents submitted proposals:

Table 1
Bids Received

Name of Company	Technical Score / 75%	Total Price Score / 25% (Total Bid Price)	Score (100%)
North-South Environmental Inc.	65.3	16.6 (\$58,246.52)	81.8%
Azimuth Environmental Consulting Inc.	56.3	11.0 (\$87,355.00)	67.3%
Dillon Consulting Limited	27.3	25 (\$38,568.15)	52.3%
SENES Consultants Limited	45.3	5.4 (\$178,466.07)	50.7%
Dougan & Associates	39.5	10.3 (\$93,274.36)	49.8%

The proposals were evaluated for their technical completeness based on the experience and credentials of the firm and resources assigned to the project as well as relevant experience. The submission was also evaluated for completeness, responsiveness, innovation and demonstrated understanding of the requirements of the Region. The North- South proposal reflects a clear understanding of the Region's requirements, the policy climate and the scientific opportunities. Their proposal offers substantial benefits to the Region.

This technical review was weighted for 75% of the total score. The remaining 25% was awarded for the financial component with the lowest bid receiving 25 and the remaining bids prorated according to their cost proposals.

North-South Environmental Inc. received the highest technical score (weighted at 75% of the total), and the highest overall weighted score. North-South Environmental Inc. had the second lowest financial bid. The lowest financial bid was received from Dillon Consulting Limited. This bid, however, received the lowest technical score. The technical aspects of the proposal accompanying the lowest bid would not meet the needs of the Region to complete a comprehensive Significant Woodlands Study.

4.1 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 through the Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture goal identifies Securing a Green York Region as an action area. The development of a Significant Woodlands Study is intended to help meet these goals and objectives of this action.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total required funding of \$58,246.52 North-South Environmental Inc. to complete the Significant Woodlands Study is provided in the 2004 Greening Strategy Securement Reserve.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The terms of reference for the Significant Woodlands Study dictated that Significant Woodlands, and total woodland coverage, be mapped to include all woodlands down to a minimum size of 0.5 acres. This data will assist local municipalities in implementing local Tree By-laws or facilitate arrangements with the Region to have Tree By-law matters for woodlots down to 0.5 acres cooperatively delivered by the Region. Municipal staff will be informed and involved in the study through formal and informal contact and meetings. Information and data will be shared with the local municipalities assisting them with implementation of a variety of woodland protection, restoration and rehabilitation initiatives.

7. CONCLUSION

The need for a York Region Significant Woodlands Study has been consistently identified through ROP policy planning initiatives, Forest Conservation By-law development and implementation of the Greening Strategy. The proposal received by North-South Environmental Inc. is comprehensive, technically strong and within budget.

The completion of this study will greatly assist in the delivery of the Trees By-law and future Forest Conservation By-law, advancement of new ROP policies for Significant Woodlands and the associated development review functions, as well as implementation of the Greening Strategy, particularly rehabilitation efforts and land securement activities.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.