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OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ CONSERVATION PLAN WATERSHED PLANNING STUDIES LSRCA AND TRCA PROGRESS REPORT TO JUNE 30, 2006

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, July 24, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the semi-annual progress report on Watershed Planning studies to fulfill requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), submitted by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).
2. Regional staff continue to work with Conservation Authority staff to ensure the timely and cost efficient delivery of these watershed planning components required under the ORMCP.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to area municipalities for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report is an to update Committee and Regional Council on the accomplishments of the LSRCA and TRCA for mid year 2006 on Watershed Planning studies on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Ongoing updates were requested by Regional Council at its meeting of February 19, 2004.

3. BACKGROUND

The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001* required that York Region and local municipalities bring their Official Plans and zoning bylaws (in the case of local municipalities) into conformity with the ORMCP by April 22, 2003 and October 22, 2003 respectively. This conformity date was achieved by the Region and has been achieved by area municipalities in the Region.

The ORMCP also contains several other critical target dates for the completion of Watershed Planning, including commencement of watershed planning for each watershed originating on the Moraine by April 22, 2003 (Section 24(1)); and completion of

watershed plans by April 23, 2007. The section also contains the minimum elements that a watershed plan ought to include.

LSRCA and TRCA have been active in developing and maintaining watershed plans in York Region for many years. With the introduction of the ORMCP, Regional staff and staff of the conservation authorities (CAs) together developed a comprehensive five year work plan to fulfill the ORMCP watershed planning requirements.

This workplan was adopted by Regional Council on February 19, 2004 with the request that the TRCA and the LSRCA provide semi-annual watershed planning progress reports to Committee and Council to ensure that significant progress is being made towards fulfilling the requirements of the ORMCP according to schedule and budget requirements.

The 2005 year end progress report for the authorities was endorsed by Committee and Regional Council in February 2006.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The watershed plan requirements of the ORMCP encompass a wide number of disciplines and the required watershed plans are expected to influence planning and development initiatives in and beyond York Region, including the Region's Growth Management Strategy and the York Region Sustainability Strategy.

Further consultation and collaboration on ORMCP watershed plan recommendations will be undertaken in late 2006 and into 2007.

In addition, a number of related watershed initiatives are taking place that have included extensive public and stakeholder consultation in partnership with both members of Regional Council and staff.

These initiatives include the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS), Intergovernmental Action Plan for Barrie, Simcoe and Orillia (IGAP), and the Assimilative Capacity Study for Lake Simcoe (ACS)

The processes and information gathered to produce these and the ORMCP watershed plans will provide support to York Region and the area municipalities in making more sustainable land use planning decisions.

While Regional and Conservation Authority staff is confident that the ORMCP target dates and requirements for completion will be met, it should be noted that the Province has not yet provided the anticipated technical guidelines in a final form that will indicate the specific technical requirements under the ORMCP for these studies, including water budget requirements. Regional staff is in contact with our Provincial counterparts to

attempt finalization of these elements. Regional and Conservation Authority Staff will review the status of ongoing work as part of the 2006 year-end report to Regional Council in 2007 and may, at that time, decide to request an extension of the ORMCP April 23, 2007 deadline if there remains lack of clarity with respect to Provincial expectations.

The 5-year work plan is summarized below, with a more detailed listing of deliverables along with estimated and actual budget and expenditures to date in *Attachments 1 and 2*.

A more comprehensive and in-depth report will be presented to Committee and Council in February of 2007 to present the final watershed plans and recommendations.

4.1 Status of Overall Program

4.1.1 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

During 2006, work has focussed on:

Rouge Watershed Plan

- Completed modelling and analysis of future land use and management scenarios. Scenarios address various urban growth forms, stormwater retrofits, enhanced natural cover, and climate change.
- Held workshops to discuss implementation options for key issues, including water balance management and enhanced natural cover. An innovative community-based social marketing study has engaged 100 single family residential owners and over 20 businesses regarding implementation strategies for lot level water management and naturalization practices. Additional workshops are planned.
- Preferred management strategies are being formulated in order to bring forward a draft plan in early September 2006.
- Formal consultation, peer review and ongoing plan refinement will occur during September-November 2006.
- Final watershed plan by end November 2006.

Humber Watershed Plan

- Completed modelling of four out of eight scenarios, similar to the Rouge study noted above; remaining modelling will be completed by end of August 2006.
- Development of preferred management strategies and discussion of implementation options is being conducted jointly with the Rouge watershed study to the extent possible.
- A full draft Humber watershed plan will be available by the end of September 2006.
- Consultation and formal peer review in October-November.
- Final plan by the end of December 2006.

Don Watershed Plan

- As reported in the last progress report, completion of the full Watershed Regeneration Plan update is being delayed to 2007, to accommodate a deferral of partnership

funding and allow focus on ORMP development-related management issues in this and neighbouring watersheds.

- A preliminary report for the two subwatersheds draining the ORM portion of the Don Watershed was completed by June 2006, thus allowing York Region staff to assess any further actions required under the ORMCP and take advantage of any opportunity that may remain to guide ongoing land use planning decisions which in that area are all well advanced in the planning process.
- Development of a regeneration priority setting methodology has been initiated. The resulting recommendations will identify key actions towards achieving watershed sustainability, and thus contribute to York's Greening Strategy and sustainability initiative.

4.1.2 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

During 2006, work has focussed on:

- Completion of the water quality modelling and analysis of future Official Plan land use and management scenario including detailed subwatershed Phosphorus loading targets have been developed as part of the Assimilative Capacity Study.
- Completion of the detailed geomorphic assessment analysis for each of the watersheds and recommendations for further action.
- Development and completion of an approach to evaluate proposed water takings.
- Completion of the terrestrial natural heritage system and policy recommendations.
- Initiation of the public consultation process (Early Winter 2007) to review results, develop resource targets and obtain feedback on proposed rehabilitation strategies.
- Development of a micro-website, distribution of a newsletter as part of public involvement/engagement process and public open houses.
- Initiate the consolidation of all technical information and development of report formats, map standards.
- Drafting of the preliminary watershed plans for distribution to stakeholders, academic institutes, and municipal, provincial and federal agencies for peer review.

The watershed plans will identify key actions towards achieving watershed sustainability, and thus contribute to York's Greening Strategy and sustainability initiative. The watershed plans will also contain specific recommendations for rehabilitation projects, policy initiatives, and continued environmental monitoring.

4.2 Outlook for the Remaining Watershed Planning Program to 2007

4.2.1 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

The watershed plans are still expected to be completed before the 2007 deadline and within the originally forecasted budget. Final delivery of the Rouge Watershed Plan is expected by November 2006 and the Humber Watershed Plan by December 2006. As noted, under section 4.2.1 of this report, a preliminary report fulfilling the Region's ORMCP requirements was completed for the Don Watershed by June 2006, while the full

regeneration-oriented watershed planning study will be extended and completed at year-end 2007.

4.2.2 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

The watershed plans will be completed before the 2007 deadline and within the originally forecasted budget. Deliveries of the finalized Watershed Plans are expected by or before March 1, 2007. Activities in 2007 will involve the incorporation of comments on the draft reports, a presentation to the Region regarding the final results and specific recommendations for future monitoring and implementation for 2007-2008.

4.2.3 Yonge Street Aquifer and Water Budget Analysis of the ORMCP

Sections 24 and 25 of the ORMCP require that the Region prepare watershed plans as well as water conservation and water budgets.

Section 24(7) of the ORMCP relates specifically to that portion of the Moraine served by the Yonge Street Aquifer. This section prohibits *major development* from occurring in these areas after April 22, 2004 if water budgets and water conservation plans have not been completed to demonstrate that the water supply required is sustainable.

Watershed Plans are well underway and anticipated to be completed on time and within budget as described elsewhere in this report.

A draft of the Yonge Street Aquifer water budget has been finalized for use as input to the Watershed Planning efforts on the East Holland River. Regional Council at its meeting of December 15, 2005, adopted Clause 1 of Report No. 10 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, which proposed a new policy and mapping reference to govern development in the area served by the Yonge Street Aquifer until such times as the Watershed plan is completed in 2007. This policy modification has been submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval as part of the ROP to demonstrate the Region's compliance with the ORMCP.

For the past eight years, York Region has been implementing one of the most comprehensive water efficiency plans in North America. The multi-award winning program, Water for Tomorrow, is currently saving over 22 million litres of water per day. Although not watershed specific, activity tracking indicates a high and effective participant rate in the Yonge Street Aquifer area. With the end of the eight year plan, York Region has contracted Resource Management Strategies Inc. (RMSi) in an extension of their role in overseeing the Water for Tomorrow Program to prepare a Water Efficiency Master Plan Update which will provide direction for future water efficiency measures for the next ten years. The completion of the Water Efficiency Master Plan Update is scheduled for February 2007 and will include public consultation. During this interim phase youth and public education, summer water use reduction and water saving maintenance activities continue.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2006 watershed planning allocations to the Conservation Authorities were approved by Regional Council as part of the 2006 budget. Both Authorities continue to provide twice yearly progress reports to Planning and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council on the watershed planning process required under the ORMCP. In addition, Authority staff were requested to provide an itemized list of deliverables for each year of the program along with their estimated updated budgets and the incurred costs. This itemized list is provided in *Attachments 1 and 2*.

Table 1 shows the 5 year budget and the expected costs of watershed planning between now and the 2007 study completion year. Approximately \$1,235,000 remains to be spent in the budget for this program.

Table 1
Five -year Watershed Planning Budget Estimates

Conservation Authority	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total Work Plan Length 2003-2007
LSRCA	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$360,000	\$260,000	\$250,000	\$1,760,000
TRCA	\$330,000	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$2,030,000
Total	\$630,000	\$1,200,00	\$860,000	\$660,000	\$450,000	\$3,790,000

These annual budget estimates will be confirmed each year during yearly budget discussions and allocations to the CAs. For the period from 2003 to 2007 funds for these projects are funded as special Capital Projects from Regional water rates. After 2007, funding for watershed planning will solely be funded under normal operating allowance to the Conservation Authorities from the Region's tax levy.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities have participated in the watershed planning process through advisory committees and during policy formulation. Ultimately, implementation of the objectives and principles of watershed plans may be implemented through amendments to Regional and/or local planning documents.

7. CONCLUSION

Watershed planning work is well advanced in the Region and the CA's work plans are also well underway with no significant issues or delays expected at this time.

The watershed plan requirements of the ORMCP encompass a wide number of disciplines and the required watershed plans are expected to influence planning and development initiatives in and beyond York Region, including the Region's Growth Management Strategy and the York Region Sustainability Strategy.

In addition to the collection and analysis of scientific data and mapping environmental information, the watershed planning processes undertaken as part of the ORMCP will include public and stakeholder consultation and collaboration.

Therefore, these watershed plans will provide a great deal of support to York Region and the area municipalities in making more sustainable land use planning decisions.

While Regional and Conservation Authority staff is confident that the ORMCP target dates and requirements for completion will be met, it should be noted that the Province has not yet provided the anticipated technical guidelines in a final form that will indicate the specific technical requirements under the ORMCP for these studies, including water budget requirements. Regional staff is in contact with our Provincial counterparts to attempt finalization of these elements.

Funds for the 2006 budget year were included in the 2006 Transportation and Works budget and funds to 2007 are included in the 10 year Capital Plan. Funding for watershed planning activities after 2007 will proceed through the normal Regional/CA budget allocation and approval process.

In order to ensure that efforts remain on track, the Conservation Authorities will continue to provide semi-annual updates to Committee on the workplan elements.

The next update will be provided in February of 2007.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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