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NEWSPAPER BOX LICENSING

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, August 24, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize an agreement with the Town of Richmond Hill for the placement of newspaper boxes on Regional road allowances within the Town of Richmond Hill for a one-year trial period.
2. The Commissioner of Transportation and Works be authorized to execute the agreement, subject to approval by Legal Services.
3. Staff report back after the one year trial period on the effectiveness of the licensing program in reducing the proliferation of newspaper boxes.
4. Staff enter into discussions with the remaining local municipalities to consider a similar agreement on the licensing of newspaper boxes on Regional road allowances within each local municipality and report on the outcome of these discussions.

2. PURPOSE

This report is submitted to seek approval from Regional Council for an agreement with the Town of Richmond Hill to licence and regulate the placement of newspaper boxes on Regional Road Allowances within the Town limits.

3. BACKGROUND

On April 26, 2005, a resolution from Richmond Hill Town Council was received requesting approval for the Town to issue licences/permits for the installation of newspaper boxes on Regional Road Allowances within the Town limits.

Newspaper boxes are currently placed on road allowances, both local, and Regional, without any review and approval, and are often becoming unsightly. There are several daily newspapers and other boxes for “free” newspapers, booklets, etc. advertising condominiums, cars and trucks. Most of these boxes are placed at intersections and bus stops.

The Town of Richmond Hill has acted on this proliferation of newspaper boxes and plans to regulate them. The Town has requested the Region's agreement for the Town to regulate these boxes on Regional roads as well as their own roads within the Town of Richmond Hill.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Regional staff are in agreement with Richmond Hill's proposal for the Town to administer the issuance of permits for newspaper boxes on the Regional road allowances within the Town of Richmond Hill.

4.1 Town of Richmond Hill Model

The Town of Richmond Hill is proposing to licence all newspaper boxes within the Town limits, including those placed on Regional Roads. The Town, acting on the Region's behalf will receive the application from the newspaper distributor and will circulate the application to the Region for comments. Should the location requested be adjacent to a Viva or York Region Transit stop, staff from these groups shall be consulted on the placement location. The Town will then issue a permit, based on the Region's requirements to allow the installation of a concrete pad and hitching post. Town staff will inspect and affix a tag/sticker denoting the box/permit number and location.

The applicant would be responsible for the installation of the concrete pad and hitching rail to secure the box to. A non refundable processing fee of \$75.00 will be collected by the Town to cover the administration costs of processing the request and the field inspection. Once the location has been approved an annual permit fee of \$25.00 would apply.

In order for Richmond Hill to complete this on the Region's behalf on Regional road allowances, an agreement between the Town and the Region is required. It is proposed that this agreement be for a one-year period, as a trial and that staff will report back on the effectiveness of this agreement in reducing the proliferation of newspaper boxes. It is recommended that authorization be given for the Commissioner of Transportation and Works to sign this agreement.

4.2 Other Municipal Models

Many municipalities have responded to the newspaper box proliferation by enacting newspaper box by-laws which permit the boxes to be placed on public property if certain criteria are met. Typically, the municipality regulates the number, location and design of the concrete base and securing mechanism.

4.3 Regional Position

It is proposed that Regional staff participate in the Richmond Hill model and to hold discussions with staff of the remaining area municipalities to evaluate entering into a

similar agreement on the licensing of newspaper boxes on Regional road allowances and report on the outcome of these discussions to Committee and Regional Council with a recommended model for implementation.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The Town of Richmond Hill will collect the fees for the boxes on the Regional roads which will cover their costs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Town of Richmond Hill initiated this request that is supported by Regional staff.

7. CONCLUSION

The Town of Richmond Hill requested the Region to allow them to administer licences for newspaper boxes on the Regional road allowances. The licensing newspaper boxes will regulate the location and help reduce the proliferation on regional roads and reduce staff time in resolving problem installations. Region staff concur with this and recommend that Regional Council authorize staff to enter into an agreement with the Town of Richmond Hill. In addition, Regional staff should hold discussions with the remaining local municipalities to evaluate entering into similar agreements.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.