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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE MOUNT ALBERT ROAD TOWN OF EAST GWILLIMBURY

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 18, 2007, from the General Manager, Roads:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize the temporary closure of Mount Albert Road (Y.R. 13), between Colonel Wayling Boulevard and Woodbine Avenue (Y.R. 8), from April 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008.
2. The Regional Solicitor prepare the necessary by-law.
3. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Transportation, the Clerk of the Town of East Gwillimbury and to the Chief of York Regional Police.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks authorization to temporarily close Mount Albert Road, between Colonel Wayling Boulevard and Woodbine Avenue. This temporary closure is required to accommodate the construction of the northbound and southbound Highway 404 structures and the lowering and reconstruction of the profile of Mount Albert Road in the vicinity of these structures.

3. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Transportation is currently working on the design of the bridge structures over Mount Albert Road as part of the extension of Highway 404, from Green Lane to Ravenshoe Road. In addition to the construction of these structures, the existing profile of Mount Albert Road, in the vicinity of these structures, is to be lowered. A full temporary closure of Mount Albert Road is required to complete this work (*see Attachment 1*).

In order to complete some roadwork activities, it is often necessary to temporarily close sections of road to traffic. At its meeting of September 21, 2006, Regional Council

authorized the temporary closure of a section of Green Lane in the vicinity of the Highway 404 extension for similar construction activities.

It is now intended to close Mount Albert Road between the intersection of Woodbine Avenue and the intersection of Colonel Wayling Boulevard. This temporary road closure will commence in April 2008 and will re-open to traffic by the end of 2008.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Rationale for Temporary Road Closures

Where possible, Regional staff co-ordinate construction activities to keep the roads open to through traffic. However, it is not always feasible to maintain through traffic because of the very nature of the work and it is often safer and more cost effective to complete the work under a temporary full road closure.

Temporary road closures, where implemented, reduce safety risks to both the travelling public and work crews and provide a work environment that enhances construction quality. Furthermore, temporary closures significantly reduce the costs and time schedule for any work, thus minimizing public impact and disruption when applied.

The Ministry of Transportation has considered the option of constructing the northbound and southbound Highway 404 structures and the lowering and reconstruction of the profile of Mount Albert Road during a full temporary road closure detouring traffic away from the site altogether versus a temporary local detour where traffic would be permitted adjacent to the bridge site on a temporary roadway. In consideration of cost savings, it has been determined that a full temporary road closure is preferred. A full road closure would also allow the bridges to be constructed with longer spans accommodating four traffic lanes and at least one sidewalk under these bridges in the future.

Once this road closure is in effect, efficient use of the time period will be an obligation of the contractor to ensure that public impact and inconvenience is limited through effective work planning and operations. Under a full road closure, the work will be completed more quickly, with a greater level of safety for both road users and workers, and be more cost effective.

4.2 Public Notification

Road signs notifying the public of the proposed road closure will be placed on the arterial roads a minimum of two weeks in advance of the closure. Emergency services (police, fire and ambulance), school bus operators, York Region Transit, school transit authorities and the public will be notified of the closures as well. Notification of this temporary road closure will also be posted on the York Region website.

4.3 Detour Route

The Ministry of Transportation has considered alternatives to detour traffic away from the site. A detailed traffic analysis was conducted based on a designated detour route using Woodbine Avenue, Green Lane, and Leslie Street. Based on recent turning movement counts for surrounding intersections, and assuming that all traffic on Mount Albert Road would be diverted to the detour route, it has been established that this detour route can accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic due to the temporary closure of Mount Albert Road.

During temporary road closures, some motorists will choose to use local roads regardless of the posting of a designated detour route. Farr Avenue is a local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of East Gwillimbury that provides an east west link between Woodbine Avenue and Leslie Street. In anticipation that some traffic will use this local road to by-pass the construction area, additional measures will be implemented. The Ministry of Transportation, the Region, and the Town of East Gwillimbury have agreed to implement temporary traffic control signals at the intersection of Woodbine Avenue and Farr Avenue prior to the closure of Mount Albert Road. After construction, it has also been agreed to complete pavement improvements on Farr Avenue. Every measure will be taken to minimize traffic infiltration on the local roadways.

4.4 Detour Plan

A detailed signage plan will be put in place for this closure to clearly identify detour routes. Measures will also be provided to maintain local access to residents, businesses, schools and other institutions. If needed, any property owner that will be affected by the local access only will be advised directly. Advance warning detour signage will be installed to alert drivers of the closure and to indicate alternative routes via the Regional road system.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The work will be undertaken at the expense of the Ministry of Transportation. There are no financial implications to the Region associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Signage forewarning the public of the proposed temporary road closure will be placed a minimum of two weeks in advance of the road closure date. Detour signs will be installed in the area to properly guide motorists around the closure. Staff of the Town of East Gwillimbury will be involved in the planning of the detour route and are in support of the temporary road closure. Emergency services and school boards will be notified in advance of the closure to ensure no interruption in their service provision.

7. CONCLUSION

As part of the extension of Highway 404, from Green Lane to Ravenshoe Road, the Ministry of Transportation will be constructing bridge structures over Mount Albert Road and will be lowering the existing profile of Mount Albert Road. In order to complete this work, a temporary road closure is required.

It is therefore recommended that Regional Council authorize the temporary closure of Mount Albert Road between Colonel Wayling Boulevard and Woodbine Avenue from April 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008. Regional staff will take all necessary precautions to ensure that the duration of this road closure is kept to a minimum and that appropriate notification is made to all affected parties.

The construction of these structures and lowering of the existing profile of Mount Albert Road, in the vicinity of these structures, during a full temporary closure of Mount Albert Road is the safest and most cost-effective construction method.

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 was included in the agenda for the October 3, 2007 Committee meeting.)