

1
2003 TO 2006
TRANSPORTATION AND WORKS COMMITTEE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, September 1, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This reports sets out the major accomplishments advanced by Regional Council during its mandate through the Transportation and Works Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

The Transportation and Works Committee is one of nine standing committees with monthly meetings. The Committee oversees activities in the Transportation and Works Department (or, more specifically, activities in the Roads and Water and Wastewater Branches) and makes recommendations to Council on related business and policy matters.

During the 2003 – 2006 term of Council, the Committee considered more than 600 staff reports and recommendations – approximately 20% of the number of Committee reports considered by Council over its term.

The Roads and Water and Wastewater Branches of the Transportation and Works Department account, collectively, for about \$270M of the overall Regional gross operating expenditures – or approximately 25% of the operating budget. Capital expenditures in the branches account for about \$400M annually – a figure that represents approximately 75% of the overall Regional 2006 capital budget.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The major accomplishments achieved throughout the recent term of Council in areas overseen by the Transportation and Works Committee are presented in four categories:

- 1) Roads
- 2) Forestry and Urban Woodlot Protection
- 3) Drinking Water Supply and Quality
- 4) Wastewater Treatment and Source Water Protection

4.1 Roads

Major accomplishments carried out by the Roads Branch are centred on asset management, traffic safety, congestion relief and improved urban streetscaping. A list of major roads projects for this period is appended to this report (*see Attachment 1*).

Highlights include:

- Confirmed Council's commitment to maintaining road assets through a pavement management system and overlay program with expenditures of \$10 to \$15M annually.
- Took lead role in coordinating GTA-wide Transportation Demand Management through the Federally sponsored Urban Showcase Program, including a Transportation Management Area in the Highway 407/404 employment area.
- Promoted a revised speed limit policy and provided balanced oversight for the application of traffic signal warrants. The Committee dealt with about 30 speed limit changes. Over the term of Council, the number of signalized intersections on York Region roads increased by 81, from 594 to 675. Countdown pedestrian crossing signals were also introduced on busy arterials to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings.
- Recommended a policy to encourage local, mid-block collector road construction to cross 400-series highways and improve traffic circulation and transit penetration. The policy sets out criteria and funding sources for Regional cost-sharing of 1/3 of the capital cost for highway crossings.
- Advanced improvements to the provincial highway system, including areas downloaded in the past decade. Completed the Bathurst/Green Lane by-pass and substantially completed the Markham by-pass. Constructed a full highway interchange at Elgin Mills Road and Highway 404 and initiated a similar upgrade at Teston Road and Highway 400.
- Upgraded the urban streetscape on Regional arterials through (i) a revised noise policy establishing a higher standard for new construction and encouraging retrofits where ultimate traffic volumes will warrant sound attenuation; (ii) improved street-tree maintenance programming; (iii) revised streetscaping policies for six-lane arterial roads and enhanced plantings in partnership with local municipalities. The Committee also advocated for tougher, *Highway Traffic Act* controls for the use of engine brakes on trucks and implemented signs to control this emerging noise concern in urban areas.

- Managed congestion through the timely delivery of over \$100M in capital road improvements annually. Authorized expenditures to pursue adaptive traffic signal controls to enhance vehicle movement on the Regional road network. Advocated for long-range funding commitments from the Provincial government to set out multi-year improvements to the controlled access, 400-series highway network. Acknowledged Regional funding sources to facilitate construction of Highway 404 and Highway 427 extensions.
- Authorized updated criteria for prioritizing the 10-year Roads Capital Forecast, taking into consideration emerging transit and congestion relief priorities as well as environmental constraint considerations. Integrated streetscaping and noise mitigation projects into revised criteria.
- Established a Road Salt Management Plan in advance of any legislated requirement to do so with the objective of reducing impacts of road salt on the natural environment. Updated road assumption criteria in consultation with local municipalities to balance Regional and local municipal responsibilities and resources.
- Advocated for *Highway Traffic Act* improvements to facilitate the use of digital and wireless technologies to encourage cost-effective red-light camera and photo radar installations.

4.2 Forestry and Urban Trees

Forestry services are delivered through the Roads Branch. The 2003-2006 Committee accomplishments in this area include:

- Amended the Tree By-law to protect urban woodlots of 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or more and established a defensible, scientifically-based definition of significant woodlands warranting protection.
- Advanced the public acquisition of lands on the Oak Ridges Moraine through partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and Conservation Authorities.
- Managed the local concerns related to controlling Asian Long-Horned Beetle infestation.
- Maintained the Regional Forests (5,000 acres) and stimulated ongoing interest in the community through improved communications, walks, classroom tours and other targeted activities.
- Contributed resourcing to improved urban streetscaping standards and practices.

4.3 Water Supply

Major accomplishments in the 2003-2006 term include:

- Constructed approximately \$100M of infrastructure required to supplement the Lake Ontario-based water supply traditionally derived from the City of Toronto with a additional supply from Peel Region.
- Continued the successes of the Regional water conservation program, “Water for Tomorrow” – a multi-year commitment that has saved enough water supply to accommodate a community of nearly 80,000 population and won prestigious recognition for the program in Kyoto, Japan.
- Met the strict, provincially-mandated criteria under the *Safe Drinking Water Act* for drinking water protection, testing and reporting.
- Participated in a partnership with Conservation Authorities and provincial ministries to enhance the Regional groundwater modelling capabilities and understanding.
- Worked with local municipalities to clarify criteria for setting out Regional and local responsibilities for watermains and trunk sewers. Considered and adopted revised criteria to avoid duplication and balance resources.

4.4 Wastewater and Source Water Protection

Growth and environmental protection pressures prevailed over the past three years. Committee accomplishments include:

- Managed critical objections to YDSS trunk sewer construction and the attendant growth demands by authorizing an unprecedented level of scientific investigation and reporting in addition to widespread agency and public consultation – including an industry-leading project website.
- Completed a diversion from the westerly limit of the YDSS service area (Woodbridge) into the adjoining South Peel service area, capturing energy savings and reduced emissions resulting from repetitive wastewater pumping.
- Amended the Sewer Use By-law to apply stricter limits on discharges into the sanitary sewer system and instituted annual reporting of inspection and violation statistics.
- Authorized and implemented a program known as “Optimize Works” to address industry changes and skill requirements in water and wastewater delivery. Program resulted in a transition to service areas or “hubs” with cross-training providing a more skilled and productive workforce with lower travel requirements.

- Implemented the recommendations of a vigorously-tested Environmental Assessment for servicing of the King City community. Extended trunk sewer servicing to the Stouffville community and tendered a decommissioning contract for an aging treatment plant discharging to an upstream tributary of Duffin Creek.

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 has evolved into the framework for sustainable communities throughout the Region. The focus is on eight goals:

1. Quality Communities for a Diverse Population
2. Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture
3. A Vibrant Economy
4. Responding to the Needs of Our Residents
5. Housing Choices for Our Residents
6. Managed and Balanced Growth
7. Infrastructure for a Growing Region
8. Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region

The actions of the Transportation and Works Committee focus on maintaining and delivering infrastructure while maintaining the health and well-being (quality) of our communities. Adequate infrastructure ensures environmental protection and reasonable movement of people, goods and services to keep our economy attractive and growing.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of the accomplishments set out in this report have been managed by Council in its administration of annual budgets and related, longer-term financial planning.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The decisions of Committee and Council are often reviewed with local municipal staff on an informal and formal basis. Major policy decisions with local implications are routinely referred to local municipalities by the Committee for further opportunity to consider the full implications of recommended changes.

7. CONCLUSION

The Transportation and Works Committee is completing a three-year term in which it provided oversight to ensure completion of several initiatives that addressed:

- The travel needs and expectations of our residents.

- Protection of the natural environment.
- Balancing resources and capabilities between local and regional levels of municipal government
- Planning and delivering multi-year capital improvements to deliver sustainable road, water supply and sewage disposal services for a population approaching 1,000,000 people.

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