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PARKING RESTRICTIONS
ST. JOHN'S SIDEROAD, EAST OF YONGE STREET
TOWN OF AURORA

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The recommendations contained in the following report, March 16, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted; and**
- 2. The optional parking issue be referred to Staff for a further report.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The existing Regional by-law prohibiting parking on the north side of St. John's Sideroad (Y.R. 26) from the east limit of Old Yonge Street to a point 500 metres easterly be amended to include both sides of St. John's Sideroad (Y.R. 26).
2. The Regional Solicitor prepare the necessary by-law.
3. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Chief of York Regional Police and to the Clerk of the Town of Aurora.

2. PURPOSE

This report investigates the feasibility of permitting parking on St. John's Sideroad, in the vicinity of the Mackenzie wetlands just east of Yonge Street, in the Town of Aurora. A location plan is provided as *Attachment 1*.

3. BACKGROUND

Regional staff received a recommendation from the Town of Aurora Council to consider permitting parking, during off-peak traffic periods after the completion of the current reconstruction project on St. John's Sideroad, east of Yonge Street.

Typically, parking is not permitted on Regional roads other than locations where the Regional road passes through downtown cores where opportunities for off-street parking are limited and commercial properties directly front the Regional road. Although there are no specific businesses located on St. John's Sideroad to attract patrons or necessitate parking, the Mackenzie wetlands are unique and tend to attract visitors year round. No

provision for off or on-street parking was included in the design for the current reconstruction project.

The Environmental Assessment completed for this project investigated the provision of parking in the vicinity of the wetlands and does not recommend parking for safety reasons.

Currently, there is a by-law prohibiting parking on the north side of St. John's Sideroad from the east limit of Old Yonge Street to a point 500 metres easterly. Essentially, this by-law prohibits parking on the north side of St. John's Sideroad between Old Yonge Street and the railway crossing. Furthermore, a by-law regulating general parking on all Regional Roads prohibits parking within 15 metres of an intersection; within 15 metres of a level rail crossing; and for a longer period of time than three consecutive hours.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

St. John's Sideroad is an east-west arterial road and carries an average of 15,400 vehicles per day. The posted speed limit is 50-km per hour. This section of roadway is currently being reconstructed and will have an ultimate cross section of four lanes with additional turning lanes at local intersections. The Mackenzie wetlands are located approximately 390 metres east of Yonge Street. A level railway crossing intersects St. John's Sideroad approximately 630 metres east of Yonge Street. This rail crossing is to remain as a level crossing and in its current location.

The Mackenzie wetlands are situated north and south of St. John's Sideroad and are frequented throughout the year, for recreational purposes, by residents of the area and the general public. As a result of construction, the centreline profile of St. John's Sideroad through the Mackenzie wetlands, will be raised considerably and will limit pedestrian access to the wetlands. A new boardwalk and viewing areas will be constructed as part of the reconstruction project.

The Town of Aurora Council has requested the Region investigate the feasibility of providing parking within the right-of-way of St. John's Sideroad. Throughout the Class Environmental Assessment, some members of Aurora Council and the public, expressed interest in providing parking to accommodate visitors to the area. The recommendations included in the Class Environmental Assessment suggested parking not be permitted on St. John's Sideroad and, due to safety reasons, parking be located on the local roads in the area.

On-street parking, in this situation, is not recommended. Current Regional parking by-laws prohibit parking within 15 metres of a level railway crossing and require 125 metres of clear sight lines on each side of the rail crossing if visibility is restricted by a grade change. The elevation at the existing railway crossing will not be changed as part of the reconstruction. St. John's Sideroad will continue to have a slope approaching and

departing the rail crossing; therefore, parking within 125 metres east and west of the railway crossing is not feasible.

Through the wetland area, the road will be constructed between retaining walls, complete with curb, gutter, a typical boulevard area with sidewalk and boardwalk, and a hand railing on the waterside of the boardwalk adjacent to the sidewalk which will provide protection for pedestrians.

The overall safety of the Regional roadway is of concern to the Region and the local municipality. The terrain through the Mackenzie wetlands is flat; however, the east and west approaches of St. John's Sideroad to the wetlands are rolling. The suggested location to provide on-street parking is on the north side of St. John's Sideroad, adjacent to the boardwalk; however, allowing parking at this location could create an unsafe condition, particularly with the opening of vehicle doors that may impede through traffic.

A component of creating and maintaining a safe roadway is to utilize consistent parameters and promote consistent driver expectations. Motorists do not expect to encounter parked vehicles within the travelled portion of the road particularly on the far side of a hill and in a relatively rural area. Additionally, any pedestrians crossing St. John's Sideroad after parking and exiting their vehicles increases the potential for vehicle/pedestrian collisions.

The Mackenzie wetlands tend to attract visitors for both summer and winter activities. During the winter months, on-street parking can hinder snow clearing operations and limit snow storage capacity.

For the above reasons, staff recommends that on-street parking not be permitted. As a result, upon completion of the reconstruction project, it is proposed that the current No Parking by-law be amended to include both sides of St. John's Sideroad from Yonge Street to the railway crossing.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs associated with the manufacturing and installation of the necessary No Parking signs are included in the proposed 2005 Capital Roads Budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Town of Aurora Council requested Regional staff to consider allowing parking during off-peak times on St. John's Sideroad in the area of the Mackenzie wetlands. The recommendation to not allow parking will maintain a safe road for vehicles.

7. CONCLUSION

In response to a request from the Town of Aurora Council, the Roads Transportation Branch has investigated the feasibility of providing parking, during off-peak traffic periods after the completion of the reconstruction project on St. John's Sideroad, east of Yonge Street.

Staff has investigated the request and concluded that it is not recommended to permit parking on St. John's Sideroad in the vicinity of the Mackenzie wetlands.

A copy of this report should be sent by the Regional Clerk to the Clerk of the Town of Aurora and to the Chief of York Regional Police.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the April 6, 2005 Committee meeting.)