



County of Simcoe
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June 23, 2017

Via Email: mayor@thebluemountains.ca

Mayor John McKean
The Town of The Blue Mountains
P.O. Box 310
32 Mill Street
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

Dear Mayor McKean:

Re: Highway 26 Alternate Route Signage

Please be advised that at its meeting of June 13, 2017, Simcoe County Council approved the following recommendation of the Council Committee of the Whole:

"That correspondence from the Town of The Blue Mountains requesting endorsement for Highway 26 alternate route signage attached as Schedule 1 to Item CCW 17-168, be received;

That the County of Simcoe continue to support the Town of The Blue Mountains in advocating for Highway 26 improvements; and

That the Town of The Blue Mountains be advised that the County of Simcoe will not be proceeding with alternate route signage using Simcoe roadways, as proposed; and

That a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the Town of The Blue Mountains, the Town of Collingwood and Grey County, for their information."

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Yours truly,


John Daly
County Clerk

/jm

Enc.

- c. Town of Collingwood
Grey County



To: **Committee of the Whole**

Agenda Section: Performance Management
Division: Corporate Services
Department: Transportation and Engineering

Item Number: CCW 17-168

Meeting Date: May 23, 2017

Subject: Town of The Blue Mountains Resolution Regarding Highway 26 Alternate Route Signage

Recommendation:

That correspondence from the Town of Blue Mountains requesting endorsement for Highway 26 alternate route signage attached as Schedule 1 to Item CCW 17-168, be received;

That the County of Simcoe continue to support the Town of the Blue Mountains in advocating for Highway 26 improvements; and

That the Town of the Blue Mountains be advised that the County of Simcoe will not be proceeding with alternate route signage using Simcoe roadways, as proposed; and

That a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the Town of the Blue Mountains, the Town of Collingwood and Grey County.

Executive Summary:

The Provincial Ministry of Transportation has been considering Highway 26 improvements along the entire corridor for many years. Sections of the Highway have been realigned and rehabilitated however, many of the recommendations of the needs assessment remain outstanding. Signing of an alternate route using Simcoe and Grey County roads is not recommended at this time as many of these roads are not built to handle the additional traffic. The increased load may reduce asset life cycles and accelerate maintenance and improvement requirements. Finally, both the Town of Collingwood and the County of Grey are not supporting the alternate route signage resolution as proposed.

Background/Analysis/Options:

This is a follow up report to Recommendation No. CCW-091-17 from the March 28, 2017, Committee of Whole meeting to consider correspondence received from the Town of the Blue Mountains. (see Schedule 1 attached)

Staff from the Town of the Blue Mountains met with staff from the Town of Collingwood, Grey County and the County of Simcoe in 2016 to discuss the potential for alternate route signing of Highway 26 (see map attached as Schedule 2). Although supportive, staff identified a number of concerns including that the Provincial Highway is intended to support provincially significant traffic which moves a larger number of people and goods through the region. Directing this traffic onto Simcoe roads with a lower level of service would be an additional burden and the increased traffic, including truck traffic, would have a financial impact on Simcoe roads by decreasing their useful life. There are also a number of intersections on the alternate route both in Simcoe and Grey which are not controlled by traffic signals. Directing an additional amount of traffic to these locations is generally not advisable.

The alternate route may be worthwhile if there was some benefit to travel time, as an example, however the proposal in general has no significant reduction in travel time; may cause additional frustration as Grey Road 2 includes a significant amount of agricultural traffic and can also see a significant amount of cyclists.

The Town of Collingwood recently passed a motion not in support of the alternate route signing plan for many of the same reasons but also identified a number of businesses within the Town rely on the traffic travelling through on Hwy. 26 to support their business. The County of Grey also passed a motion not supporting the Town of the Blue Mountains resolution for many of the concerns as the alternate route proposes to use Grey County roads.

Financial and Resource Implications:

Funding for additional signs and installation would be the responsibility of the Towns of Blue Mountains, however there is no indication of how any increased maintenance or construction would be funded.

Relationship to Corporate Strategies:

No relationship to corporate strategies.

Reference Documents:

There are no reference documents associated with this item.

Attachments:

Schedule 1 – Town of the Blue Mountains correspondence

**Schedule 1****Schedule 2 – Map of proposed alternate signage plan**

Hwy 26 alternate
route signage (2).JPI

Prepared By: Christian Meile, Director, Transportation & Engineering

Approvals:**Date**

Debbie Korolnek, General Manager, Engineering, Planning
and Environment

May 10, 2017

Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance

May 14, 2017

Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer

May 26, 2017



Town of The Blue Mountains

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OFFICE OF: MAYOR JOHN MCKEAN

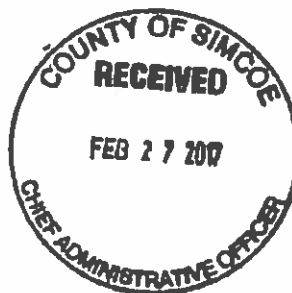
Email: mayor@thebluemountains.ca

Phone: 519-599-3131 Ext 401

Regular Mail

February 21, 2017

Warden and Council, County of Simcoe
1110 Highway 26,
Midhurst, Ontario
L9X 1N6



141-H26ALTRTE-02

Re: Endorsement for Highway 26 Alternate Route Signage – Collingwood to Thornbury

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) completed a Highway 26 Transportation Study – Needs Assessment Report in late 2015. The locations of roadway improvements and new transportation corridors recommended by the study include:

- i. Widening Highway 26 to four (4) lanes to the east of Stayner.
- ii. Widening Highway 26 to five (5) lanes between Hume Street / Pretty River Parkway and the western limits of Highway 26 New.
- iii. Widening Highway 26 to 4-5 lanes between Thornbury Bypass and the proposed Collingwood Bypass.
- iv. New Highway Bypass of Thornbury
- v. New Highway Bypasses of Collingwood and Stayner

Given the ever increasing traffic load on Highway 26 through the Town, the related congestion, and MTO's intention to at some point in the future consider widening the Highway 26 corridor to a 4 to 5 lane cross section between Collingwood and Thornbury, the Town had requested the Ministry keep the option alive for an alternate route along Grey Roads 19 and 2 through the Town of The Blue Mountains (ToBM) when the future road widening is studied during an environmental assessment. The ToBM feels that a dramatic widening of the highway corridor between Collingwood and Thornbury will essentially destroy the enjoyable experience of travelling along the southern shore of Georgian Bay which both residents of and visitors to Simcoe County enjoy. The impact on those that live or cottage along this corridor will be far-reaching.

In response to correspondence from the Town, a letter was received on March 21, 2015 from Minister Steven Del Duca stating the MTO has no objection to alternate route signage. With this endorsement, ToBM Staff have been in contact with their counterparts at the road authorities that would be affected – namely the Counties of Grey and Simcoe, and the Town of Collingwood. There was general support to consider

signage may need to be erected. The ToBM staff retained Greenland Associates to prepare a draft trailblazing signage for alternative route signage from east of Collingwood to Thornbury. Their draft signage plan is provided for your information.

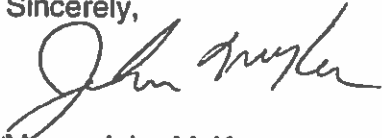
The ToBM wishes to obtain the agreement of the County of Simcoe to continue to mature the alternate route signage plan between the various road authorities and coordinate with the Ministry of Transportation regarding signage on the provincial highway. The following resolution is provided for your convenience.

WHEREAS the Town of The Blue Mountains is desirous of promoting a Highway 26 Alternate Route between Collingwood and Thornbury and seeking the endorsement of the County of Simcoe,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the County of Simcoe does hereby agree to cooperate with the Town of The Blue Mountains to mature the alternate route signage plan between the various road authorities involved and coordinate with the Ministry of Transportation regarding signage on the provincial highway.

If you have any question or comments please do not hesitate to contact me or Reg Russwurm, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works at (519) 599- 3131 x 260 or russwurm@thebluemountains.ca.

Sincerely,



Mayor John McKean
The Town of The Blue Mountains

CC: Council, The Blue Mountains
Shawn Everitt, Acting CAO, The Blue Mountains
Reg Russwurm, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works, The Blue Mountains