

2. RIVERCARE 2000

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposed Rivercare 2000 Project.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Director, Water Environment Protection Division, Environment and Transportation Department report dated 6 Jan 2000 is immediately attached.

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. Your File/V/Réf.	50 05-99-0894-T
DATE	06 January 2000
TO/DEST.	Co-ordinator Planning and Environment Committee
FROM/EXP.	Director Water Environment Protection Division
SUBJECT/OBJET	RIVERCARE 2000

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning and Environment Committee recommend that Council endorse the proposed Rivercare 2000 Project.

BACKGROUND

Over the years many initiatives have been undertaken by government, community groups and volunteers to protect the Rideau-Catawaqui river system from further degradation and, where necessary, enable it to recover.

Ottawa-Carleton has been very active in this area within its boundaries. Specific initiatives include provisions in the Official Plan to protect and enhance natural areas, identification of a watershed planning framework, identification and protection of significant wetlands, identification and application of development conditions which support sustainability, enhanced sediment control for regional construction sites, ongoing surface water quality monitoring and reporting, fish habitat assessments, development and enforcement of the Sewer Use By-law, the Rural Clean Water Program, Urban Stormwater Quality Pilot, etc. Other levels of government, conservation authorities and community groups all continue to proactively provide water quality protection and enhancement within their respective areas of responsibility.

Even with this level of commitment, extensive remaining work has been identified by municipalities and community groups to enhance and improve the river condition, both within the boundaries of Ottawa-Carleton as well as along the overall length of the waterway extending from Ottawa to Kingston. It is with this knowledge that several water quality partners within the Rideau-Catawaqui watershed met to discuss the possibility of developing a 10 to 20-year program focused on overall water quality improvements which would accommodate outstanding needs as well as new and emerging opportunities to protect the health of our waterway from one end to the other.

The Project

"Rivercare 2000" is the concept developed by these key water quality partners interested in the long-term care of the Rideau-Catarqui waterway from Kingston to Ottawa. The project envisions a 10 to 20-year program of action to ensure the Rideau-Catarqui continues to serve the economic and social needs of the community while keeping the sparkle in the river system for future generations of Eastern Ontario.

A steering committee chaired by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has been established to lead the preparation of a detailed project proposal to be utilized to raise funds from various levels of government and the private sector in support of the program. Work to date has included preparation of a technical summary on the status of the Rideau-Catarqui system, public consultation, attendance at forums, and formulation of a preliminary project list and eligibility criteria. Funding for this phase of the project has been provided by the Federal Government, Parks Canada, the Catarqui and Rideau Valley Conservation Authorities, and the municipalities of both Kingston and Ottawa-Carleton. These agencies have and will continue to develop key strategic partnerships with such partners as the Canadian Museum of Nature and key research and educational institutions in creating a model waterway stewardship program - Rivercare 2000.

Given that environmental protection is truly a partnership between individuals, the community and its government, the program is being designed to address all three areas of responsibility. Projects identified include infrastructure works, private individual improvements, community-based improvements, and planning, research and education initiatives aimed at establishing appropriate long-term river protection as fundamental to the way we live.

While river protection and enhancement are at the core of the program, the projects identified address, directly and indirectly, many of our national obligations under the Great Lakes International Joint Commission, the Kyoto Convention on Greenhouse Gas Reductions, the Rio Convention on Biodiversity Protection and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetland Protection. Job creation and maintenance of our research capabilities as they relate to environmental issues will be spin-off benefits.

Endorsement of this project is being sought at this time from the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. Presentations to senior governments will be occurring in the near future, and it will be important to demonstrate local government commitment at that time.

CONSULTATION

The public consultation process will form an integral part of this project throughout.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The types of public infrastructure projects anticipated within Ottawa-Carleton include rural servicing, stormwater treatment facilities, shoreline conservation, municipally-based monitoring and research/education, landfill rehabilitation, and policy, regulation and planning matters. Where municipal infrastructure projects meet the eligibility criteria, funding would be available through the program to offset a portion of the municipality's costs. Although preliminary cost estimates to assure the success of this project total \$135 million at this time, as eligibility criteria and project parameters are defined, those estimates may vary. It is intended that Rivercare 2000 costs be shared between federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, as well as the private sector, with the present goal of cost-sharing percentages being 35% federal, 33% provincial, 16% municipal and 16% private sector. The portion of costs to be borne by the Region of Ottawa-Carleton will be presented as part of the Capital Budget once projects and estimates are known.

CONCLUSION

This project, if successful in attracting the necessary funding, will represent a unique opportunity to showcase how water quality partners can work together to collectively achieve a multitude of benefits for the environment and the community.

*Approved by
Nancy B. Schepers, P. Eng.*

NBS/ls