

Province commits \$3.7M to resurface 10-km stretch of Hwy. 48

BY PATRICK CASEY
Staff Writer

The provincial government will commit \$3.7 million to resurface a 10-kilometre stretch of Hwy. 48 in northern York Region.

The contract, awarded to King City's K.J. Beamish Construction Company Ltd., includes resurfacing of Hwy. 48 from 1.4 kilometres east of York Road 18 to just west of York Road 23. The tender also includes repairs to the Pefferlaw Brook Bridge and the CNR overhead structure, both located west of Road 23.

"In an increasingly global economy, good highways truly are roads to prosperity," Transportation Ministry David Turnbull said in a press release on Tuesday.

"The Ontario government continues to invest in safe and efficient highways to support jobs and growth across Ontario."

The investment is part of the government's five-year, \$20-billion SuperBuild initiative.

Work is scheduled to begin immediately and should be completed next spring.

"This stretch of Hwy. 48 carries a high volume of local, commuter and cottage traffic, especially in the summer months," said York North MPP Julia Munro.

Transitway to get environmental assessment

York Region has committed \$30,000 to conduct an environmental assessment for a proposed transitway in the corridor between Hwy. 7 and Hwy. 407.

Identified by the Greater Toronto Services Board as a transit corridor of GIA-wide significance, the transitway would use high occupancy vehicle lanes across Hwy. 7, as well as wider bus lanes and station platforms for awaiting and departing riders.

The region has already started the first stage of an environmental assessment of the Yonge Street transitway. The transportation committee last week agreed to begin the assessment of the Hwy. 7 corridor at the same time studies begin for the widening of the road east of Woodbine Avenue to Sciberras Road in Markham.

The Markham section of Hwy. 7 currently exists as a five-lane road, including a centre left turn lane, but estimated future growth of traffic indicates the need for additional capacity.

In the existing 10-year road program, the portion west of Warden Avenue is scheduled for construction in 2002, while the section east of Warden will be upgraded in 2006. However, regional staff are reviewing the possibility of advancing the construction timetables to commence both projects within two years.

Bridge will help save forest

York Region's transportation and works committee has agreed to construct a \$1.6-million concrete girder bridge to help save a valley in Richmond Hill's Jefferson Forest.

The 70-metre precast bridge will comprise part of the Bayview Avenue extension project and will allow pedestrian and wildlife to travel between Jefferson Forest and the Bond Lake community.

Last week's decision was a sharp reversal from January, when regional politicians rejected a suggestion to build the bridge, instead electing to create a 62-metre box culvert, mea-

suring four metres wide and four metres high, under the road.

A separate standard drainage culvert was also proposed for storm water, costing \$350,000 in total, piling in comparison to the more than \$6 million estimated cost of the original proposal for a 180-metre long bridge spanning the entire valley.

Meanwhile, the region has now committed up to \$80,000 to design the project, with the new bridge included in the construction tender.

"This is quite a change and more fitting with the whole scope of what is happening in the region," said Alan Wells, the

region's chief administrative officer.

Combined with appropriate fencing to direct animals toward the passage, the bridge may reduce the potential for wildlife fatalities crossing Bayview Avenue, as well as lower the risk of personal injury accidents resulting from collisions between vehicles and animals.

Although the project is now \$1.25 million over original estimates, there will be sufficient funds in the 2000 roads capital budget after delays forced several budgeted projects to be deferred until next year.



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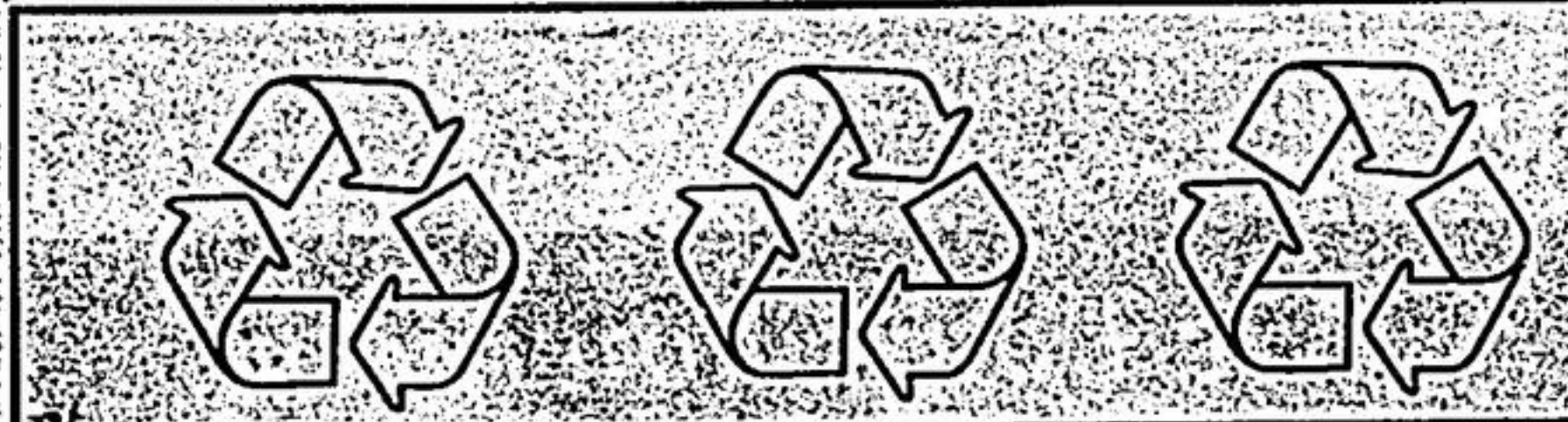
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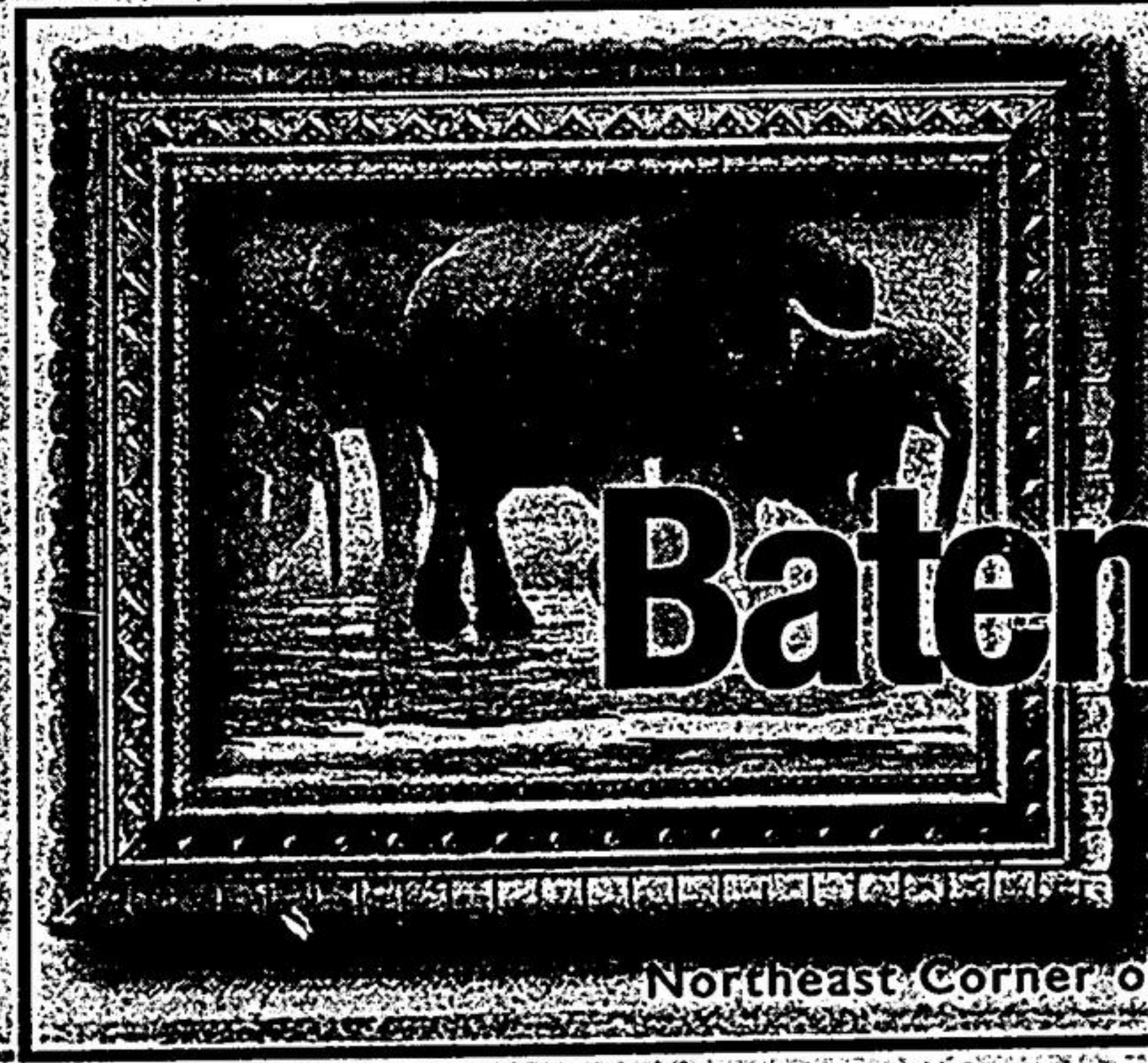
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