

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – SEPTEMBER 15, 2003**

### **CITY OF VAUGHAN TOURISM FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Recommendation**

The Mayor recommends:

1. That the position of Tourism Coordinator be considered in the 2004 budget process, and;
2. That the cost of the position be considered in the Economic/Technology Development Department's Operating Budget for 2004, and;
3. That a Tourism Coordinator job description be prepared and approved by Human Resources and;
4. That marketing efforts be undertaken in cooperation with Vaughan businesses in the tourism sector for the promotion of tourism opportunities and events.

#### **Purpose**

To support and strengthen the segment of Vaughan's business community that operates within the Tourism sector.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The City of Vaughan's business community is dynamic and diverse, with close to 8,000 businesses operating successfully. An increasing number of these businesses are in some way tied to the tourism industry: golf courses, restaurants, hotels/bed & breakfast, entertainment complexes (AMC, Colossus, Launch, Dave & Buster's et al) and, of course, Paramount Canada's Wonderland. It is anticipated that with the arrival of the Vaughan Mills mega mall, in late 2004, the level of tourism-related activity in Vaughan will significantly increase.

Over the past several years, the tourism function has been predominantly executed through outside agencies such as the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and York Region. However, both of these entities have focused on very broad, generic forms of promotion of the attractions and events/activities offered in Vaughan. In the case of the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, for example, their approach has been member driven, choosing to spotlight those businesses that are a part of their membership with little or no exposure for the other, quite significant, portion of the business community that makes an important contribution to the tourism trade in Vaughan.

In the case of York Region, while there is greater depth to their promotion, it remains, nonetheless, driven by the broader objective of attracting visitors to the Region as a whole. Through this approach, a great deal of business development opportunity for our individual businesses is minimized or lost in the cacophony of the promotion of such a large geographic area.

In addition, with the arrival of the Vaughan Mills mega mall, it is anticipated that tourist traffic in Vaughan will significantly increase. Mills Corporation research shows that more than 2 million visitors are anticipated to pass through the Mills on an annual basis, and tourist traffic will account for a full 20% of all visitors. In fact, Mills projects have become recognized as national and international tourist destinations, with approximately 220 million people visiting Mills projects in 2002.\*

When this impact is added to the existing base of tourism-related activity, driven by such local businesses as Paramount Canada's Wonderland (3 million visitors annually), the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, picturesque Kleinburg, numerous outstanding golf courses, local festivals and the unique Dave & Buster's emporium, the opportunity to address this burgeoning segment of our economy is evident. Through the establishment of an internal resource dedicated

to supporting this sector, we can pro-actively work to create business development opportunities for our existing tourism operators as well as encourage new businesses to establish in Vaughan.

Opportunities are clearly present for co-marketing initiatives, aimed at strengthening the City of Vaughan's overall visibility as well as attracting new business to the area. Local tourism operators will gain the advantages that branding their business with the City of Vaughan will bring, and the City will position itself as offering one more reason to make the City of Vaughan a desired destination for tourists and GTA residents alike.

Strengthening tourism in Vaughan will mean greater strength in the business community as a whole. It will further diversify our economic base and add an additional dimension to our business expansion and retention goals.

\* Mills Corporation research as quoted on their fact sheet, June 2003.

### **Role and Responsibilities of Tourism Coordinator**

The primary functions of the Tourism Coordinator will be:

- To provide continuous and up-to-date research pertaining to the activity levels of this sector in Vaughan, including the economic impact of Tourism in Vaughan and
- To create and maintain a database of those businesses in Vaughan that are involved in the Tourism sector and
- To seek co-marketing partners for the purpose of creating joint marketing opportunities to benefit our tourism operators as well as the City of Vaughan and
- To work in cooperation with various levels of government and tourism agencies and
- To assist in attracting tourism investment to Vaughan (eg. Facilities such as hotels)

### **Conclusion**

In light of the generalized approach to regional tourism promotion undertaken by the York Region Tourism office and considering the limited approach selected by the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce through the *Vaughan Tourism* initiative, and in anticipation of the heightened tourism activity expected with the arrival of the Vaughan Mills Mega Mall in Fall 2004, it is incumbent on the City to bring forward the position of Tourism Coordinator to be considered in the 2004 budget process.

The City of Vaughan has grown into a vibrant, dynamic place to live, work and play. Almost one quarter of a million people choose Vaughan for its quality of life, for its diversity and excellent lifestyle. Augmenting our efforts to showcase the myriad activities, events, attractions and exceptional business community will further cement our sense of civic pride in our beautiful City.

### **Attachments**

None

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Di Biase  
Mayor