

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - WORKING SESSION - APRIL 27, 2004

JOINT YARD PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TRCA

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Public Works and the Manager of Parks and Forestry recommends:

That Council provides direction in regards to entering into a partnership with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to share an Operations yard with the Parks and Forestry Department.

Purpose

To provide information and seek council direction in regards to entering into a partnership with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to share an Operations yard with the Parks and Forestry Department.

Background – Analysis and Options

The TRCA has approached the City of Vaughan with the possibility of entering a partnership to share a Joint Operational Yard located on the east side of Islington Avenue, south of Major Mackenzie. The TRCA owns approximately 4 acres of land and is planning an Operational yard for their Horticultural and Arboriculture staff.

The Parks and Forestry Department has an immediate need for storing summer equipment during the winter months as the present locations are no longer available. Locations previously used for storage were the MNR lands and the Woodbridge yard. The MNR lands have been used as a temporary storage facility for this equipment; however, with the impending implementation of the approved MNR master plan, the current building including the quonset huts and asphalt will be removed completely in accordance with the mater plan. Part of this area will be reforested in conjunction with the TRCA. Furthermore, the entire warehouse space at the Woodbridge yard is required by Public Works for winter plowing operations.

The Parks and Forestry Department also requires a workable yard for outside staff in close proximity to their job location. The present satellite yard referred to as Woodbridge yard, shared with the Public Works Department, is no longer large enough to house the needs of both departments.

The TRCA is aware of the Parks and Forestry's need for a yard with the following requirements: outside storage and minor stock pile capabilities, enclosed 5,000 square foot structure for equipment storage, service bays, parking area with electrical hook-ups, staff and vehicle parking up to 100 vehicles, office space, etc.

The TRCA, who have similar requirements recognize that a partnership with similar needs will have the following benefits:

- Cost savings for sharing the land and utilities
- On-site training
- Small nursery tree storage
- Strengthened partnership for future endeavors

Public Works and Parks have evaluated the TRCA shared land proposal as it relates to the following criteria:

- a) Would the TRCA land be capable of incorporating the Public Work's needs, otherwise;
- b) Should the Parks/Forestry Department only be pursuing a yard with Public Works; and
- c) What are the preliminary costs associated with this proposal.
 - a) Since Public Works requires 10 acres and room for two salt domes, the TRCA site would not be practical for them. Furthermore, the TRCA is not supportive of a Public Works yard that may negatively impact the environmental ecosystem of the property. The site has two wetland habitat features in close proximity to the proposed development. In addition, a native tree/shrub nursery is also located on the site.
 - b) Public Works is completing a cost analysis to determine the funding requirement for a joint Public Works, Parks and Forestry yard. Demand analysis and proposed costing for a Public Works and Parks yard in the amount of 10 million has been forecasted. Additionally, Development charges have been budgeted for 2006 for future yard requirements. Notwithstanding that a shared site with Public Works and Parks/Forestry will provide advantages, there are no immediate plans to proceed with a joint site.
 - c) Preliminary site plans and associated costs have been discussed internally only. The yard would require space for 5 offices, parking for up to 100 vehicles, a storage shelter for equipment, as well as other costs including; truck bays, plumbing, grading, concrete, asphalt/bases, furniture/equipment, exterior lighting etc. Preliminary costs indicate that the facility would cost the City of Vaughan approximately 3 million dollars. The TRCA and the City of Vaughan have not discussed specific costs associated with this project although there are many possibilities for sharing costs that may lower the initial costs. Options such as a long-term lease agreement assessed at market value has been discussed with the TRCA, rather than splitting the site and purchasing the block of land outright. The recent decision to have York Region's EMS and Vaughan Fire station located at the west end of the site, will have some additional cost savings associated with servicing the site.

The TRCA will be proceeding with plan development for the Operational yard and has requested that the City of Vaughan secure their position so they may proceed with their project.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

In keeping with the Vaughan Vision, a shared yard with the TRCA will provides service excellence through efficiencies and partnerships. The TRCA as well as the City of Vaughan share the same vision to meet with the Environment Sustainability Standards.

This report recommends a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated.

Conclusion

The Parks and Forestry Department and the Public Works Department, both have a need for operational yards. The benefits to the Public Works Department to have full access to the Woodbridge yard would improve their efficiencies. Likewise, based on the information provided and to meet the immediate requirements of Parks and Forestry, a yard shared with the TRCA would have short and long term benefits to both the Parks and Forestry and the Public Works Department's as outlined.

It is therefore recommended that the City of Vaughan enter into discussion with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to pursue a plan to share space in the north/west section of the City of Vaughan in order to better serve our residents.

Attachments

None

Report Prepared By

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Community Services