

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - MAY 16, 2005

CITY OF VAUGHAN YOUTH STRATEGY

Recommendation

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri recommends:

1. THAT Council approves the City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy Proposal;
2. THAT Council approves the establishment of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VYC) and attached terms of reference to replace the former Youth Advisory Council; and
3. THAT Council approves the creation of a Vaughan Youth City Councillor and accompanying roles and responsibilities for the position.
4. THAT this youth initiative be a pilot project for the duration of this term of Council and that staff report back at a Committee of the Whole in the Fall of 2006 with recommendations for full implementation.

Economic Impact

The funding source for the City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy Proposal will be the Youth Advisory Committee budget (\$7,000) and a \$7,500 grant which has been received from the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to support a Youth Leadership Conference in 2006. Any initiatives without funding will be phased in over time as additional resources become available through the future fundraising efforts of the Vaughan Youth Council (VYC).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of Council with information on the work that has been undertaken by the Vaughan Youth Strategy Task Force and to seek Council approval of the City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy Proposal.

Background - Analysis and Options

As part of the strategic planning review process in January 2004, Members of Council agreed to look into the development of a Youth Strategy that would provide direction and a plan to support the delivery of services for this growing segment of the City's population. Regional Councillor Mario Ferri volunteered to lead this initiative and work with staff and community partners to develop a Civic Youth Strategy and plan to Council for their review and approval. A Youth Forum was held on Wednesday April 21, 2004 at the City of Vaughan. Over 40 participants attended including youth from various high schools across the city along with the following agencies: York Regional Police, York Region Community Services, Youth Assisting Youth, York Catholic School Board and Toronto Youth Cabinet. The session was Chaired by Councillor Mario Ferri and attended by Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco.

In June 21, 2004 a preliminary report on the City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy was prepared. The report introduced the creation of a Vaughan Youth Task Force which would work with youth, Council representatives and city staff to develop a Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy.

Establishment of the Vaughan Youth Task Force

Shortly after the June 21, 2004 Council report the Vaughan Youth Task Force was established. The task force consists of the following representatives:

Youth Task Force Representatives

Rahim Bapoo
Jennifer Corriero
Adrian Corsin
Mark Anthony Frisoli
Lauren Grossi
Sharon Kaur
Tavlin Kaur
Nancy La Neve
Vittoria La Neve
Stephen Lecce
Ana-Lisa Lombardi
Amanda Magnifico
Nick Pasquino
Adam Settecase

City Representatives

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri
Lina Masci
Gina Soriano, Rick DeMederios, Ajay Sharma, Diane LaPointe-Kay (staff)

York Region Advisor

Howard Dayton

Goals of the Civic Youth Strategy

The Civic Youth Task Force adopted the following goals for the Civic Youth Strategy:

1. To identify the needs of youth;
2. To identify and develop a model to collaborate with Vaughan youth and agencies on the delivery of youth services;
3. To develop an overall framework and plan of action in the delivery of services that will assist the City of Vaughan in addressing the issues of preteens and youth;
4. To identify funding opportunities and other resources to support the youth strategy;
5. To develop a framework that gives youth a voice on City council and civic matters;
6. To recognize youth and their contributions to the quality of life in the City of Vaughan.

Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy

The Youth Strategy Task Force has been active over the last year undertaking primary research, and meetings to discuss the scope and structure of Vaughan's current youth initiatives. The research included the review of the City of Toronto's "Toronto Youth Profile 2001", and the York Regions Human Services Planning Coalition's A Call to Action – Youth Strategy Task Force. November 20, 2002." Meetings and discussions were held with key community leaders such as

Bill Fisch, Chair of York Region, Board of Education representatives as well as local service providers and youth.

A number of subcommittee groups undertook various tasks such as identifying challenges, formulating possible solutions and preparing proposals for consideration. Over a number of productive meetings, the information was consolidated and titled the "City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy, May 2005". (Attachment #1)

Following are the key initiatives to address the six strategies identified in the report by the Youth Task Force:

Initiative #1 To establish a non-statutory advisory committee of Council called the Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

The Youth Strategy Task Force recommends the establishment of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VYC). The purpose of VYC is to become the official youth voice for young people between the ages of 16 - 25 years of age in the City of Vaughan. The VYC would be created to serve the population of Vaughan by empowering youth to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

The Vaughan Youth Cabinet would replace the former Youth Advisory Committee which has not been in operation since 2002. The primary difference between the VYC and the former Youth Advisory Council is the new organizational structure which allows for broader representation of youth through the various portfolios and general membership. The new structure lends itself for greater youth involvement. It also affords the opportunity for the Vaughan Youth Cabinet to build a stronger network of youth to undertake various initiatives.

The VYC would be a non-statutory Advisory Committee of Council. This committee will include a VYC Executive and subcommittee(s) along with opportunities for general membership. (See Attachment #1 City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy – Organizational Structure Pages 18 and 19) Through the new structure VYC can engage more youth and ensure that the programs and strategies outlined in their proposed plan can be met. A detailed Vaughan Youth Cabinet Terms of Reference is enclosed in Attachment #2.

The proposed Vaughan Youth Cabinet is similar to the City of Toronto - Toronto Youth Cabinet model which was founded in 1998 and has been successful in undertaking numerous youth related initiatives and programs.

Initiative #2 To establish a Vaughan Youth City Councillor position.

The Youth Strategy Task Force recommends that a Vaughan Youth City Councillor position be established to represent youth on civic matters. The Vaughan Youth City Councillor will act as a conduit for information and ideas among youth through the Vaughan Youth Cabinet and City Council.

The Vaughan Youth City Councillor would be a non-recording member of City Council and be invited attend the Committee of the Whole and Council public meetings. The Task Force recommends that Council appoint a youth, between 16 years to 25 years of age to each serve a one year term over a three year period. This term may be extended on an annual basis. The attached proposed position description outlines their role and responsibilities. (Attachment #3 - Vaughan Youth City Councillor – Position Outline) The York Catholic District School Board and the York Region District School Board have a similar program in place which is successful in enhancing the communication and needs of youth. Both Boards have shown interest in potentially offering co-op credits to high school students wishing to pursue the Youth City Councillor position.

A Youth City Councillor Handbook would be developed by the Vaughan Youth Cabinet in consultation with the City. A training program would be provided to assist the Youth City Councillor in carrying out their role and responsibilities.

Initiative #3 To implement youth initiatives in community and civic involvement.

Within the VYC strategy document, the Vaughan Youth Task Force identified four (4) key areas in which initiatives would be developed. The organizational structure and mandate for the VYC is also structured around these areas. The following activities would be developed over time and as resources are secured:

- a) **Community Services** – support and undertake community events (i.e. Annual food drive, park clean-up days, etc)
- b) **Leadership Development** – the creation of an annual City-Wide Youth Leadership Recognition Awards Night, Youth Leadership Conference and Scholarship program.
- c) **Community Building** – the creation of a network of youth through the VYC membership, youth agencies/clubs and community youth leaders; disseminate information through a website and quarterly newsletter
- d) **Civic Involvement** – the establishment of the Youth City Councillor position to enhance civic participation amongst youth in Vaughan. (attend Council meetings and official youth-related civic events)

Initiative #4 To undertake a youth needs assessment study.

The Recreation and Culture Department will be undertaking a strategic master plan which will guide the development of parks, recreation and facilities and services over the next 5-10 years. Part of this process will include conducting an assessment of youth needs. Youth will be an active participant in this process. The Vaughan Youth Cabinet will assist in gathering some of the primary research. The information will also assist the City and VYC in identifying gaps and opportunities to further enhance the delivery of services to Vaughan Youth.

Staff Support and Resources

An appointed staff liaison from the Recreation and Culture department will attend meetings and provide information in an advisory capacity, as appropriate to the Committee. The role of staff is to act as a resource to the committee, but not to do the work of the committee. The VYC committee's work is to be conducted by the executive members and/or members of the subcommittees. Other additional support is available from the Office of the City Clerk as outlined in the General Rules, Roles and Procedures Policy Governing Advisory Committees.

A grant for \$7,500 from the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation has been received to assist in the development of a Youth Leadership Conference in 2006. Within Community Services \$7,000 is allocated to support the youth advisory committee. (VYC)

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

The Vaughan Youth Strategy identifies opportunities to enhance the delivery of services, participation and communication for youth in Vaughan. This report is consistent with the direction set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved to support a number of strategies within the Vaughan Youth Strategic proposal. Any initiatives without funding will be phased in over time as additional resources become available through the fundraising efforts of the VYC group.

Conclusion

As part of the strategic planning review process in January 2004, Members of Council agreed to look into the development of a Youth Strategy that would provide direction and a plan to support the delivery of services for youth in Vaughan. Led by Regional Councillor Mario Ferri a Vaughan Youth Task Force developed the Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy Proposal. The Vaughan Youth Task Force is seeking Council's approval of the Vaughan Youth Strategy Proposal. The proposal includes the creation of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VYC), the creation of a non-recorded Youth City Councillor position and a plan to implement various youth initiatives to encourage participation of youth in community and civic matters. Some staff assistance will be available to support the proposed Vaughan Youth Cabinet; a Ministry of Tourism and Recreation grant of \$7,500 has been approved for a Youth Leadership Conference in 2006. Within Community Services Commission, \$7,000 is allocated to support the youth advisory committee. (VYC)

Attachments

1. City of Vaughan Civic Youth Strategy, Vaughan Youth Strategy Task Force, May 2005
(Available in the Clerks Department)
2. Vaughan Youth Cabinet – Proposed Terms of Reference
3. Vaughan Youth City Councillor – Proposed Position Outline

Report Prepared By

Mario Ferri in consultation with Diane LaPointe-Kay, Director of Recreation & Culture and Monika Piil, Supervisor, Recreation & Culture.

Respectfully submitted,

Mario F. Ferri
Regional Councillor

City of Vaughan Youth Cabinet Proposed Terms of Reference

1. Introduction and Background

From May 2004 to May 2005, the Vaughan Youth Strategy Task Force identified ways to improve the current youth strategy for the City of Vaughan. The Task Force recommended changing the Vaughan Youth Advisory Committee to the Vaughan Youth Cabinet. The Vaughan Youth Cabinet will become the new central body for youth initiatives in the City of Vaughan.

2. Terms of Reference

The City of Vaughan Youth Cabinet shall promote understanding and respect for the workings of local government through education, involvement and participation. Further, it shall function to enhance the responsiveness of the City to those issues that are likely to have a direct impact on the youth of the community.

3. Objectives

The Vaughan Youth Cabinet shall have the following objectives:

- a. Review current youth programmes and services and recommend future direction.
- b. Participate in discussions between individuals and/or groups to promote understanding and harmony throughout the City of Vaughan.
- c. Identify strategies to respond to increasing the profile of youth and enhancing the awareness of Vaughan's position on youth related issues as they relate to other levels of government.
- d. Identify and review trends affecting youth and recommend options to address these trends.
- e. Incorporate youth involvement through partnerships with other service providers such as the City of Vaughan's Department of Recreation and Culture, York Region Board of Education, York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, York Regional Police, the Vaughan Public Library Board, the York Region Community Services Council, York Region Board of Health and other relevant institutions and voluntary organizations to advocate on behalf of the City's youth
- f. Review youth related strategies in place in surrounding municipalities looking at the strengths and weaknesses to assist with the development of the City of Vaughan's youth initiative.

4. Structure and Membership

The City of Vaughan Youth Cabinet should have the following structure:

- a. Shall consist of 15 members (three (3) per ward) reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds, age, geographic distribution, and socio-economic situations of the youth of the City of Vaughan to the extent possible.
- b. Shall include one (1) elected representatives to act as the Youth City Councillor.
- c. Shall attend orientation and training sessions as determined by the City Clerk's office.
- d. The Vaughan Youth Cabinet shall include an Executive Committee consisting of an Executive Director, Directors of portfolios such as Leadership Development, Community Services, Civic Involvement and Community Building, Chairs of the aforementioned portfolios, Youth City Councillor, and a Vaughan Youth Cabinet General Membership.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Vaughan Youth Cabinet

- i. Implement the City Council approved City of Vaughan Youth Cabinet Terms of Reference.
- ii. Develop and implement youth related initiatives.
- iii. Attend Vaughan Youth Cabinet meetings.
- iv. Solicit input from various service providers on youth initiatives.
- v. Provide ongoing status reports.
- vi. Make recommendations to the City of Vaughan Council, as required.
- vii. Attend orientation and training sessions as determined by the City Clerk's office.

b. Vaughan Youth City Councillor

- i. Follow the approved City of Vaughan Youth Cabinet Terms of Reference.

c. Department of Recreation and Culture

- i. Attend meetings and provide information as appropriate.
- ii. Act in an advisory capacity to the Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

d. Office of the City Clerk

- i. Provide support as outlined in the General Rules, Roles and Procedures Policy governing Advisory Committees.
- ii. Provide orientation and training sessions for Vaughan Youth Cabinet members and Youth City Councillor.

6. Nomination and selection criteria for the Youth Councillor position

a. Interested applicants

- i. Must be 16 – 25 years of age.
- ii. Must demonstrate they are able to complete the duties of the Youth City Councillor without jeopardizing their academic standing where applicable.
- iii. Must be informed of current affairs taking place in the municipality.
- iv. Must be able to identify opportunities for youth.
- v. Must possess excellent oral and written communications, leadership and organizational skills.

b. Each high-school in the City of Vaughan will be invited to submit two (2) names for consideration.

c. Youth attending university or college may submit their names for consideration.

d. Non students may also submit their names for consideration.

e. The list of nominees will be reviewed by the Vaughan Youth Cabinet which will present a list of six (6) candidates for City of Vaughan Council's review and consideration.

f. City Council would select and appoint one (1) of the six (6) youth to serve a one year term. Appointments or re-appointments would be done annually .

City of Vaughan Proposed Youth City Councillor Position Outline

General

The City of Vaughan values the importance of youth leadership and the contributions that youth leaders make to the Vaughan community. The Vaughan Civic Youth Task Force identified in their Civic Youth Strategy Proposal of May 2005, the need to create a Youth City Councillor position.

The primary role of the Youth City Councillor position is to provide a meaningful voice on issues and matters that affect youth and to act as a conduit for the flow of information and ideas between Vaughan City Council and youth.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Youth City Councillor must be between the ages of 16 and 25 years of age.
2. City Council would appoint three (3) youth, to each serve a one year term over a three year period.
3. The Youth City Councillor is a non-recorded voting member of the City of Vaughan Council.
4. The term of the Youth Councillor may be terminated at any time for violations of the established guidelines, through motions and resolutions of Vaughan Council.
5. The Youth City Councillor would attend the Committee of the Whole and public Council meetings.
6. In their function as Youth City Councillor, the youth representative will maintain consistent attendance and conduct him or herself in appropriate manner abiding by the rules and guidelines set out by Council and Council meeting protocol.
7. In the event that the Youth Councillor is unable or unwilling to fulfill his/her duties, City Council, with input from the Vaughan Youth Cabinet, will select an interim Youth City Councillor.
8. The Youth City Councillor will not count for quorum at Council meetings, but is expected to inform the Clerk's Department if s/he is unable to attend.
9. The Youth City Councillor will receive an annual honorarium of \$500, recognizing their service to the community, a letter of service from the Mayor and a school credit (to be confirmed by both Boards of Education).

10. The Youth City Councillor must demonstrate that s/he is able to complete the duties of Youth City Councillor without jeopardizing his/her academic standing where applicable.
11. They must keep themselves informed of current affairs that are taking place municipally identifying opportunities that may affect youth positively.
12. They represent youth on matters affecting youth in areas such as civic involvement, transportation, employment, housing, recreation, environment, arts, culture and education.
13. From time to time the Youth City Councillor will provide reports reflecting areas of interest on youth civic issues and matters.
14. The Youth City Councillor is a representative on the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VYC) and provides monthly reports on the activities of the portfolio.
15. They must have demonstrated leadership experience through participation on student councils or other volunteer organizations.