

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN

Recommendation

The Chair of the Vaughan Environmental Task Force recommends:

1. That Council pass a resolution to develop a corporate-wide Environmental Master Plan (EMP) as part of the Consolidated Growth Management Strategy - 2031
2. That Staff be directed to develop Terms of Reference for the Environmental Master Plan
3. That Staff report back to Senior Management Team, the Environmental Task Force and Council with the draft Terms of Reference developed on timelines to be in concert with the Consolidated Growth Management Strategy and
4. That following Council direction, a Request for Proposal be prepared based on the approved Terms of Reference.

Economic Impact

The initial preparation of the Terms of Reference will involve only staff time and in-house resources. Subsequent phases will require the retention of consulting services.

Purpose

To obtain direction from Council to proceed with the development of Terms of Reference for the Environmental Master Plan, as part of the Consolidated Growth Management Strategy - 2031 approved by Council on June 26, 2006.

Background and Options

The City of Vaughan is approaching a critical juncture in its evolution as a major urban municipality in the Greater Toronto Area. After three decades of rapid and sustained growth, the full urbanization of the municipality is approaching.

It is incumbent on the City to make decisions on all aspects of its development while being mindful of its economic, social/cultural and environmental sustainability or “triple bottom line” sustainability. To move ahead, the City will need to develop an EMP that will include a definition of sustainability with supporting policies, objectives and standards. This will allow the growth management process to proceed with proper guidance and allow for both on-going and future innovations in pursuit of sustainable growth, operations and financing. A corporate-wide environmental master plan is required to anticipate the myriad of issues facing the City be it municipal operations; planning policies; resource management, risk management, etc.

These issues and decisions are not confined to specific silos. They cross multiple internal departments, external agencies, organizations and levels of government. The need to deal with a broader picture, than what was ever contemplated in the past, necessitates a corporate environmental policy framework much the same as an official plan framework for land use and development.

The necessity of an EMP is further supported by the requirement for an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (Schedule G) as a condition for the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenue under the New Deal for Cities and Communities. The purpose of the integrated community sustainability plan is to enhance or build upon existing planning instruments and processes.

Over the life of the Agreement for “Gas Tax Funding”, municipalities will be required to demonstrate through its existing planning instruments and processes or through the creation of new planning document that the municipality has:

- a co-ordinated approach to community sustainability (e.g., linkages of various plans, planning and financial tools that contribute to sustainability objectives)
- reflected and integrated social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability objectives in community planning
- collaborated with other municipalities where appropriate to achieve sustainability objectives
- engaged residents in determining a long-term vision for the municipality.

Municipalities that have completed an comprehensive EMP will also have addressed the above Integrated Community Sustainability Plan requirements.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

The development of an Environmental Master Plan is proposed as a component of an updated strategic plan, which will supplant Vaughan Vision 2007 and the Consolidated Growth Management Strategy. It will serve to create triple bottom line sustainability for the municipality allowing it to provide environmental leadership as well as delivery of services in a manner which is fiscally and environmentally responsible.

Conclusions

The City of Vaughan has already committed to completing a Consolidated Growth Management Strategy to the year 2031. An environmental master or strategic plan has already been identified as one component of the Consolidated Growth Management Strategy. Preparation of the EMP beginning in 2007 will dovetail with this project as well as the expected Official Plan Review.

This report formally requests Council’s endorsement to proceed with the completion of the Environmental Master Plan.

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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Regional Councillor
Chair of Environmental Task Force