

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – FEBRUARY 25, 2008

STATUS UPDATE PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN

Recommendation

The City Manager recommends that:

1. This report in respect of the status of the Environmental Master Plan study be received for information purposes.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from the receipt of this report. All activities described herein have been accounted for in the project budget for the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan.

Communications Plan

Not applicable to this report.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Environment Committee with an update on the work that has been undertaken in the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan since the January Committee meeting and on the work that is expected to be undertaken over the next month.

Background – Analysis and Options

Previous Action

On November 26, 2007 the Environment Committee received a presentation by the project consultant (DPRA Inc.), which outlined the work plan and timeline (Attachment No. 1) for the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan. In addition, it was directed that the work plan and timeline be presented to a Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting in January of 2008; and that staff provide updates on the status of the Environmental Master Plan study at each Environment Committee meeting throughout the duration of the project. These recommendations were ratified by Council on December 10, 2007. This report is in response to the requirement for a status update at each Committee meeting.

Summary of Activities Undertaken and Planned

a) Staff and Council Consultation

The interviews with staff from the City Commissions started on January 7, 2008. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain a fuller understanding of the environmental issues, challenges and opportunities facing the City. Topics of discussion included: Defining sustainability from a Vaughan perspective; establishing an environmental ethic for the City; identification of the most important environmental challenges facing the City; areas where the City is providing leadership and future directions. The staff interviews have been completed.

Interviews with individual Councillors began during the week of January 21, 2008. The members of the Environment Committee have been interviewed. Interviews have been started with remaining Councillors. The original intention was to complete these interviews by Friday, February 8. However, due to illness and inclement weather, several were postponed. They are being rescheduled.

Presentation to Committee of the Whole

In accordance with the Council direction of December 10, 2007 Joe Pittari and Amanda Kennedy of DPRA Inc. presented the EMP Work Plan and Timeline to Committee of the Whole (Working Session) on January 29, 2008. Committee recommended that the presentation be received and this motion was ratified by Council on February 11, 2008.

b) Other Consultation Measures

The work plan identifies three additional components of the consultation process. They include the creation of a Stakeholders' Committee, outreach to ratepayers and the general public and a Technical Advisory Committee.

The Stakeholder Committee

The Stakeholder Committee is composed of people from organizations in a variety of fields or sectors of society that have expertise and/or an interest in environmental/sustainability issues and policies. The committee format allows them to share ideas and provide the City with their views and input on the preparation of the EMP. The first Stakeholder Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, February 20, 2008 at the Vellore Village Community Centre. A total of 20 organizations participated. In addition, representatives from Policy Planning and the consultant for the OP Review (Urban Strategies) were in attendance to observe the discussion.

World Green Building Council - Toronto Area Chapter
Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
York Region District School Board
York Region Catholic School Board
Vaughan Public Libraries
Powerstream
S.A.V.I (Seniors Association)
McMichael Gallery
Smart Commute NTV
York Region Environmental Alliance
Windfall Ecology
Clean Air Partnership
Evergreen Foundation
Bridgepoint Group
COSTI
United Way of York Region
BILD (Building and Land Development Association)
CMHC
Friends of Boyd Park
Sustainable Urban Development Association

Some of the organizations invited were unable to attend this meeting. It is expected that a number will be able to join the Committee for the subsequent sessions and they will be notified accordingly.

The meeting was facilitated by DPRA Inc. with the assistance of City Staff. The consulting team introduced the Environmental Master Plan process and discussed the role of the Stakeholder Committee. In plenary and breakout sessions, input was sought on the meaning of sustainability, what are the most important environmental issues facing the City and what actions the City can take to address these issues. The discussions were very productive and the consultants received valuable insight on sustainability issues that affect this diverse group.

This was the first of three meetings. The second will take place in late May-early June and focus on policy development. The final meeting will take place in September, at which time the draft Environmental Master Plan will be reviewed for comment.

The Public Consultation Process

The public consultation process for the Environmental Master Plan will be undertaken as part of the Growth Management Communications Strategy, which is currently under development. This will include the public consultation processes for both the EMP and the Official Plan Review. From the perspective of the Environmental Master Plan, the process will focus on obtaining the participation of the general public and ratepayer organizations and securing their input into the preparation of the EMP. This information will complement the input that will be obtained from staff and Council, the Stakeholder Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

The Growth Management communications program will include a branding strategy, website development and the identification of public consultation measures designed to improve participation levels and promote quality comment and input. It is expected that the consultation process will commence in the latter part of March of 2008. It will be the objective to complete the majority of the public consultation process for the EMP by the end of June 2008.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee will be meeting in late March. It is shared jointly by the Official Plan Review and Environmental Master Plan processes. The TAC will be updated on the status of the EMP and comment will be pursued.

Environment Committee Meeting – March 31, 2008

A report and presentation is planned for the Environment Committee meeting on March 31, 2008. This will be a milestone event. It will convey the results of the initial consultation processes, focusing on the development of the City's definition of sustainability and the City's environmental ethic. The objective is to obtain comment from the Environment Committee and direction to proceed to consultation with the broader public on the basis of a set of draft policies that address these issues.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the City's objective of leading and supporting environmental sustainability through the development and implementation of an Environmental Master Plan as part of the Growth Management Strategy 2031.

Regional Implications

Regional Staff will be involved in the consultation program primarily through the Technical Advisory Committee.

Conclusion

Work is proceeding consistent with the approved timeline. A full report to the Environment Committee of the outcome of the work conducted in the first quarter of 2008 remains targeted for the end of March. This report will include a draft of the City's definition of sustainability and the environmental ethic for the Environment Committee's consideration. Subject to comment and direction to proceed, this material will be made available for further public review in the second quarter of 2008.

Therefore, it is recommended that this report be received for information purposes.

Attachments

1. Environmental Master Plan: Work Plan and Timeline (From November 26, 2007)

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

Environmental Master Plan - Draft Work Plan

Attachment #1

Phase	Time frame	Tasks	Outcomes
Phase I: Establishing the EMP Planning Process	October to December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct background research Develop consultation and communication program Work with staff/OP Review consultants on public portion of the consultation process Present to Senior Management Team – November 14 Present to Environment Committee on November 26 (with direction to proceed to a presentation to Committee of the Whole (Working Session) in January) Define TAC membership Define stakeholder group membership Plan Council/staff interviews and engagement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Consultation and communication program ⇒ A strong work program and consultation framework for the EMP
	Jan. to March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with background research Presentation to Committee of the Whole Working Session; Initiate meetings with the TAC Initiate and complete interviews with Councillors and SMT/Staff Begin stakeholder engagement process Continue to plan and coordinate public and community engagement process with staff and OP Review team Report on outcomes in March 2008 to SMT, Environment Committee, Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Definition of sustainability ⇒ Vision statement, guiding principles and ethics
Phase II: Developing a Vision, Goals and Principles Phase III: Action Planning and Developing Performance Measures	April to June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate community engagement process in concert with OP Review Continue TAC meetings and stakeholder engagement Begin drafting of EMP Report on outcomes in June 2008 to: SMT, Environment Committee, Committee of the Whole Working Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Ideas for goals, objectives and actions ⇒ Draft EMP
Phase IV: Developing and Finalizing the EMP	July to August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize draft of EMP Submit draft to the following for review and comment in August 2008: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team Technical Advisory Committee Affected consultants (e.g. OP Review) Revise draft on the basis of comments Present revised draft to SMT for review and comment (mid to late August) Obtain direction to submit to the Environment Committee and Committee of the Whole, prior to going back to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Draft EMP (with comments) ⇒ Final draft EMP for public review
	September to November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present revised draft to the Environment Committee and Committee of the Whole to obtain comment and direction to obtain public comment (September 2008) Obtain comment from the stakeholders' group, with appropriate commenting window Hold final community open house with appropriate commenting window Receive and analyze comments Prepare report to Environment Committee recommending approval with any changes resulting from the comments Report to Committee of the Whole recommending approval late October 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Final EMP