

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – JUNE 23, 2008

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN (EMP) STATUS UPDATE PRESENTATION BY DPRA INC.

Recommendation

The City Manager recommends that this report and the presentation by DPRA Inc. be received.

Economic Impact

Direction to proceed with the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan has been obtained and was included in the 2007 Capital Budget.

Communications Plan

The communications plan for the Environmental Master Plan forms part of the overall Growth Management Communications Strategy, which will also encompass the Official Plan Review and the Master Plan studies.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the recent public consultation meetings; and
- Introduce the proposed format for the Environmental Master Plan.

Background – Analysis and Options

a) Previous Action

On April 28, 2008 the Environment Committee considered a report entitled *“Environmental Master Plan (EMP) Update – Definition of “Sustainability”, the “Environmental Ethic” and “Principles” – Presentation by DPRA Inc.”* Its purpose was to obtain approval of a draft definition of Sustainability, the Environmental Ethic and Principles for the Environmental Master Plan, subject to input from the Environment Committee. Public comment would then be sought through the Community Visioning Sessions and the Stakeholder Committee.

At the meeting, the Environment Committee raised a number of issues pertaining to the definition of the terms. One of the main concerns was whether the proposed language conveyed the City’s strong commitment to sustainability and the environment. It was the consensus that the terms would be improved if they reflected a more assertive approach that would more clearly express the City’s high level of commitment.

The Environment Committee received the report and the presentation by DPRA Inc. and deferred the matter, pending further consultation with DPRA Inc. This decision was ratified by Council on May 12, 2008.

As a result of the Environment Committee’s deferral a workshop session, facilitated by DPRA Inc., was held on May 1, 2008. Eighteen attended, including the members of the Environment Committee, Senior Management and staff representing a number of departments. The results of the workshop were presented at the Environment Committee meeting on May 26, 2008. The Committee adopted the following recommendation, in part:

2. The alternative approaches to the definitions of “Sustainability”, the “Environmental Ethic” and “Principles”, which emerged from the Environment Committee/Staff Workshop on May 1, 2008, form the basis for further analysis with the intention of developing a unified version for inclusion in the draft Environmental Master Plan;
3. The analysis shall include input from the public on sustainability issues emerging from the five Community Visioning Sessions and the Stakeholder Committee meeting.

This recommendation was ratified by Council on June 11, 2008.

b) Update on the Public Consultation Process

The first phase of the public consultation process is nearing completion. DPRA Inc. will be presenting the initial observations from the Visioning Sessions and the second Stakeholder Committee meeting. The second phase of consultation will take place starting in the fall, when the first draft of the Environmental Master Plan is ready for public review.

The Visioning Sessions

The presentation by DPRA Inc. will summarize the major findings of the Visioning Sessions to-date. Four of the five have been completed. The final one, for the Concord/Thornhill area, will take place on June 23. The first four were in:

- Maple on May 21, 2008;
- Thornhill on May 27, 2008;
- Kleinburg on June 4, 2008; and
- Woodbridge on June 11, 2008.

The Visioning Sessions were facilitated by the Official Plan Review Team as part of the *Vaughan Tomorrow* growth management program. Consistent with the *Vaughan Tomorrow* mandate, sustainability is a consideration in all of the City’s operational and regulatory functions, including its planning and development. As such, one of the topics for public discussion was sustainable city-building and the future of Vaughan. The public was posed a series of questions, which included: “What does sustainable city-building mean to you?” The presentation will focus on the responses to this question.

The Stakeholder Committee Meeting

The presentation by DPRA Inc. includes the results of the second Stakeholder Committee meeting, which was held on June 16, 2008. 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 first Stakeholder Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, February 20, 2008 at the Vellore Village Community Centre.

A total of 15 organizations participated at the most recent meeting. In addition, representatives from Policy Planning and the consultant for the OP Review (Urban Strategies) were in attendance to observe the discussion. The attending organizations included:

1. Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
2. York Region District School Board
3. York Region Catholic School Board
4. PowerStream
5. McMichael Gallery

6. Smart Commute NTV
7. Clean Air Partnership
8. Bridgepoint Group
9. United Way of York Region
10. BILD (Building and Land Development Association)
11. CMHC
12. Friends of Boyd Park
13. Sustainable Urban Development Association
14. West Humber Naturalists
15. Region of York Human Services Planning Coalition

Facilitated by DPRA Inc, this meeting focused on refining the definitions of sustainability, the environmental ethic and principles; and the development of action plans that may be undertaken to address the priority sustainability issues facing the city. DPRA Inc. will provide a briefing on the outcome of this meeting in its presentation.

c) Format of the Environmental Master Plan

The consultants will be drafting the Environmental Master Plan over the summer. The typical plan format identifies Goals, Objectives, Actions, Steps, Indicators, Time Frame and Responsible Department(s). Going into the drafting phase it would be helpful to illustrate, using a practical example, how this format would be applied in the EMP. This will be illustrated in the presentation.

The example chosen suggests actions that could be taken to support some of the initiatives raised during the consultation process, in this case advocacy, education and awareness building. It is noted that the example is not comprehensive in this topic area and has been prepared only for the purpose of illustration. As such, it does not necessarily represent the version that will be contained in the draft document.

The intention of the presentation is to give the committee a better idea of the proposed format and provide the basis for input and discussion.

d) Next Steps

Over the summer the consulting team will be working with staff and the Senior Management Team to prepare the initial draft of the Environmental Master Plan. Once the draft has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Environment Committee, it will proceed to the next round of consultation. This will include: A presentation to the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), distribution of the draft document to citizen reviewers, the Stakeholder Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee (e.g. Region of York, TRCA) and the Official Plan Working Group. A public meeting will also be held to present the plan to the general public and to obtain comments. It is also intended that the draft EMP be posted on the *Vaughan Tomorrow* website for public viewing and comment.

The comments will be reviewed and incorporated as necessary. Subject to internal review, a final draft will be presented to the Environment Committee for its consideration and approval. Subsequent steps would include a presentation to Committee of Whole and ultimately, approval by Council.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020 objective to “Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability” by developing and implementing an Environmental Master Plan as part of the Growth Management Strategy 2031.

Regional Impact

Not Applicable.

Conclusion

The objective over the next two months is to prepare the initial draft of the Environmental Master Plan for presentation to the Environment Committee. In order to advance the project, an additional meeting of the Environment Committee has been scheduled for September 2, in addition to the regularly scheduled September 29 meeting. The draft EMP will be informed by input from the public and stakeholders, Senior Management and staff. The objective will be to obtain the Environment Committee's endorsement of the draft in September, sufficient to make it available for further public review and comment, prior to its finalization and approval.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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