

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - DECEMBER 1, 2009**

### **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES GRANT**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

1. That the following be received:
  - Presentation from the Director of Recreation and Culture on the *Active Together* Physical Activity Strategy and Youth in Action Strategy;
  - Information on the “On Your Mark” initiative; and,
  - Cheque presentation with respect to the Healthy Communities Grant.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan:

4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

- 4.1.1. Develop an implementation plan for the initiatives described in the City’s Active Together Master Plan through a phased and budgeted program.

#### **Economic Impact**

The Healthy Communities grant of \$28,800 will offset costs related to the “On Your Mark” program.

#### **Communications Plan**

The promotion of the “On Your Mark” program will be through Vaughan schools, the City website, Recreation Guide, flyers, posters and our community partners.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to receive the presentation and information on the Healthy Communities grant of \$28,800 received by the City of Vaughan; the status presentation on the Active Together Strategy and the Youth Strategy.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

In November 2008 City of Vaughan Council approved the “*Active Together*” Physical Activity Strategy, a component of Vaughan’s ten year *Active Together* Master Plan for the provision of parks, recreation, culture and library facilities and services.

The purpose of the *Active Together* Physical Activity Strategy is to increase awareness of rising inactivity and obesity levels across Vaughan, and encourage involvement in physical activity among residents by removing barriers to participation. The target population that possesses below normal activity levels is comprised of the following demographics:

- Females, who tend to be less active than males and show a drop in participation during the pre-teen years;
- Children and youth, who show declining activity with age;
- Persons with disabilities, who experience barriers to participation both from an access standpoint and through an adequate supply of opportunities; and,
- Older adults, who are becoming more active but also face barriers in terms of transportation.

The provincial Ministry of Health Promotion's new Healthy Communities approach is part of an evolving process that will position Ontario as a leader in health promotion. The Ontario government has committed to implementing a holistic and integrated approach that will work to improve the health of Ontarians. This new approach, "Healthy Communities Ontario" encourages the development of new partnerships and strengthens existing ones, resulting in improved access to priority health promotion programs and services for Ontarians. This new approach will be mobilized by the Healthy Communities Fund, which supports provincial and community organizations to plan and deliver integrated initiatives that address multiple risk factors and promote health and wellness, at all levels, across the province.

The City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture Department applied for a grant under the Healthy Communities Fund and received a \$28,800 grant from the Ministry to support the new City initiative "On Your Mark", a physical activity and healthy lifestyle program for children and youth in Vaughan.

In 2009, *Youth in Action – Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond* was approved by Council. The Strategy outlines five (5) goals, including objectives and measurables to be implemented within defined timeframes. The five goals are to:

1. increase participation of youth in physical activities;
2. expand the scope of the program selection for youth;
3. provide programs and services to youth in geographically under served areas;
4. increase the number of active youth memberships; and,
5. increase the awareness of youth programs and opportunities.

The grant funding will help in achieving the goals of the Youth Strategy by increasing youth participation in physical activities, and provide programs and services to youth in geographically under served areas.

A presentation on the status of the Active Together and Youth Strategy will be presented at the meeting by the Director of Recreation and Culture.

The "On Your Mark" initiative is a component of the *Active Together* Physical Activity Strategy. The program, in partnership with Vaughan Community Health Centre, is designed to increase awareness of healthy lifestyle choices in communities city wide, with a focus on children and youth. It will provide opportunities that support a welcoming, inclusive and social environment, while increasing the physical activity levels and healthy choices of Vaughan residents.

The "On Your Mark" initiative will increase awareness of healthy lifestyle choices in communities city wide. It will increase participation from isolated communities and increase the numbers of active residents specifically children and youth. Through the *Active Together* Physical Activity Strategy it will assist us in achieving our objective by providing opportunities that support a welcoming, inclusive and social environment, while increasing the physical activity levels and healthy choices by Vaughan residents. The participants will participate in physical fitness activities provided by City of Vaughan recreation staff while participating in healthy eating, goal setting, motivation and injury prevention workshops provided by Vaughan Community Health Centre. The participants will have the opportunity to track their goals and progress through an

interactive journal and diary that will also be distributed to all secondary schools. After the participants go through the fitness program they will have the materials to take home with them to continue their physical activity goals and prepare for the retreat that challenges them to meet their goals in the summer.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:  
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health & Wellness.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

### **Regional Implications**

N/A

### **Conclusion**

The grant received by the Ministry of Health Promotions will help get Vaughan children and youth active through the "On Your Mark" program. This initiative will increase awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. It will increase participation of youth and children in isolated communities and increase physical activity. Through the *Active Together* Physical Activity Strategy it will assist us in achieving its objective by providing opportunities that support a welcoming, inclusive and social environment, while increasing the physical activity levels and healthy choices.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Report Prepared By**

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Respectfully submitted,

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