

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 1 2010**

### **SOCIAL SERVICES STUDY NEW VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN FILE NO. 25.1.3**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning in consultation with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Commissioner of Community Services and the Commissioner of Finance/City Treasurer recommend that:

1. The Social Services Study prepared by Urban Strategies Inc. BE RECEIVED, and circulated to the Engineering, Parks Development, and Recreation and Culture Departments for their consideration.
2. In order to provide a more tangible means of achieving the Provincial and Regional targets for affordable housing, an affordable housing study should be undertaken that incorporates and builds upon the recommendations from the Secondary Suites Study, and has regard for the findings of the Social Services Study.
3. Planning Staff prepare a Terms of Reference and a budget for an Affordable Housing Study, for consideration in the 2011 Budget.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

The Social Services Study is an important component of a sustainable approach to planning for the future needs of the Vaughan community. Sustainability incorporates the “triple bottom line” philosophy of addressing the community’s economic, environmental and social needs.

The application of sustainable community design principles, and supportive community services is expected to result in a municipality whose residents will enjoy improved quality of life and health on an individual and collective basis.

#### **Economic Impact**

The budgetary requirements of Recommendation 2 will need to be determined following the preparation of a Terms of Reference for the 2011 budget. Other recommendations of this study could have financial implications for the City; however, the recommendations would need to be considered by the respective Departments affected, and prioritized as they determine appropriate.

#### **Communications Plan**

The communications process for the Social Services Study was addressed, in part, in association with the public engagement process for the new City Official Plan (new City OP). In addition to the consultation which was done at the new City OP Public Open Houses of May 28 and November 18, 2009, a public opinion survey, and a daylong workshop with social services providers for the City and Region on October 8, 2009, were also undertaken. The public opinion survey was conducted by telephone, and collected a random sample of opinions from 600 residents in Vaughan, 18 years of age and older. The themes which emerged through the public survey were then compared with other relevant research and data from a variety of social service providers in Vaughan, and then vetted through the workshop on October 8, 2009. The recommendations included in this report are the result of identifying and analyzing the important themes which emerged through this process.

## **Purpose**

To present the Social Services Study (2009), and proposed next steps to the Committee of the Whole for their consideration.

## **Background - Analysis and Options**

Currently the social service needs of the City of Vaughan are primarily addressed through the Community Services Branch of the Region of York, and by non-profit organizations such as the United Way of York Region, Catholic Community Services, Family Services of York Region, Jewish Family and Child Services, and COSTI Immigration Services. These organizations address the needs of the population in areas such as health care, food banks, services for people with special needs, parenting programs, services for youth, and settlement support for new immigrants. With the expected growth in the City population of over 50% to the year 2031, the need for social services which cater to a diversifying Vaughan community, will also grow. The Social Services Study (Phase One), was to assess whether social service delivery in Vaughan is effectively meeting the needs of the community; and, if appropriate, to define an active role for the City in the provision of required services.

The Terms of Reference for the Social Services Study was approved by Vaughan Council on April 14, 2009. The Terms of Reference contemplated two Phases to this study; Phase One was to develop a community profile with respect to the delivery of social services at the City, and identify service gaps. The Phase One Study was also to determine whether a Phase Two Study would be required to further research the findings of Phase One, and to develop strategies to address identified social service gaps. The completed Study Report for Phase One was presented to the Official Plan Review Committee (OPRC), on September 15, 2009.

This Social Services Study (Phase One), entailed an examination of the range of social service needs of Vaughan citizens, now and in the future, and how best to meet those needs. The focus of the study was to identify the gaps in the services currently available from York Region and other providers, and to determine how such gaps can be addressed; including, defining a possible role for the City in addressing them directly in future.

The public opinion survey which was undertaken with the community asked residents their opinions regarding awareness, use, and importance of a set of 25 social services. The priority social services and areas of need which emerged as a result of the research, and community survey, focused on six key areas including:

- (i) Children and Families
- (ii) Youth
- (iii) Seniors
- (iv) New Immigrants
- (v) Affordability, Housing and Income
- (vi) Physical and Mental Health

The data trends and needs identified within each of these six key areas are not isolated to the one area of focus, but rather there are common linkages and implications among them. The study provides a wide variety of recommendations, of which the most pertinent have been reviewed and modified to be effective as Official Plan policies or as recommendations for further initiatives. Other recommendations of the study should be reviewed and considered by the relevant Departments for possible future actions.

Select recommendations of the Social Services Study are discussed in the following section of this report.

### Study Recommendations

#### 1. Physical and Mental Health Service Recommendations

The Vaughan Public Opinion Survey recorded high percentages of residents identifying the following health and specialized care services as under-served in Vaughan:

- General family physician 27%
- Specialized medical services 22%
- Services for children with special needs 22%

Additional research supports the findings of the community survey. It is documented in the Public Interest Strategy and Communications, 2009 Report, that there are only 59 general physicians per 100,000 people as opposed to an average of 72 in the Central Local Health Integration Network (CLHIN)\*. In terms of mental health services, there is a shortage of appropriate care. According to statistics from the CLHIN, southwest York Region (which encompasses most of Vaughan) has 42,880 people living with mental health issues and 1 in 9 people have serious mental health illness (Public Interest Strategy and Communication 2009 Report ). Vaughan has a disproportionately low number of psychiatrists with only 4.5 available per 100,000 people, whereas the Central LHIN average is 9 per 100,000.

*\* Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) are provincially created non-profit organizations for the planning of health services in 14 different geographic regions of the province. The Central LHIN covers the majority of the geographic area of Vaughan.*

Creating centralized areas of healthcare service increases awareness in the community that these services are available, and encourages providers of these services to locate at these sites. These centralized locations should be easily accessible by public transit. The following policy directives related to optimizing access to health services, have been included within the draft City Official Plan:

- (i) **Encourage the clustering of health care services at existing or planned health-care sites, such as the Vaughan Community Health Centre location (9401 Jane Street), and the new hospital site.**
- (ii) **Ensure the new hospital site in Vaughan develops as a comprehensive “campus of care”, planning for a broad range of health care and health promoting functions.**
- (iii) **Promote through Official Plan land use policies, the establishment of health services at nodes such as regional and local centres, and along regional and local corridors, easily accessible by public transit.**

#### 2. Affordable Housing Recommendations

A number of policy recommendations of the Social Services Study respond to the need for availability of suitable affordable housing. As per direction in the Provincial Growth Plan, and the housing policy contained within the Regional Official Plan recently adopted by Regional Council on December 2, 2009, a minimum of 25% affordable housing units are required across the City by the 2031 time frame. The Regional Plan also directs that 35% of affordable housing units shall be situated in the Regional Centres, including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and Regional corridors.

More than a quarter of Vaughan's residents (27.5%), are spending over 30% of their gross income on housing (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006). Currently, the percentage of rental housing in Vaughan is relatively low (7%), as noted in the Public Interest Strategy and Communications Report, 2009. Providing more affordable housing options, would help to address many economic challenges faced by Vaughan's lower income households. This would also serve the population who currently work in Vaughan, but commute from other municipalities due, in part, to a lack of affordable housing options in Vaughan. As part of the recommended study to provide a more practical means of achieving mandated targets for affordable housing, the idea of percentage minimums applicable to all new development could be explored. Care should also be taken to ensure that the required percentage of affordable housing be addressed via a variety of tenure types and dwelling sizes, in order to ensure adequate affordable housing options for families, singles, and seniors alike. The Social Services Study includes the following policy directives related to affordable housing:

- (i) In order to provide a more tangible means of achieving the Provincial and Regional targets for affordable housing \*, an affordable housing study should be undertaken that incorporates and builds upon the recommendations from the Secondary Suites Study, and has regard for the findings of the Social Services Study.**
- (ii) Establish more flexible land use policies within the Official Plan, which encourage a wider range of housing types and tenure, including rentals and affordable housing that is suitable for families of all incomes and compositions. (Policy included in draft City OP.)**
- (iii) The Secondary Plan for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre shall include policies and incentives to encourage developers to build affordable housing units. (Policy included in the draft Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan.)**

*\* Affordable housing is defined by the Province and the Region as both rental and ownership housing in which the cost of shelter does not exceed 30% of the annual household income, or is 10% below market values within the regional housing market.*

#### Next Steps

The Terms of Reference for the Social Services Study had contemplated the possibility of a Phase Two Study, if required, to develop strategies to improve social services delivery in Vaughan. However, the Phase One Study has provided a good basis from which to develop these policies. Based on the findings of Phase One, and the recommendations, it is Staff's view that a Phase Two Study is not necessary at this time.

The Social Services Study should be reviewed by the Engineering, Parks Development, and Recreation and Cultural Services Departments to determine future initiatives with respect to various recommendations, as they see appropriate.

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

This report addresses the Social Services Study, a background study to the new Official Plan now in preparation as part of the City's growth management initiative.

### **Regional Implications**

The recommendations of this study should result in increased co-ordination and efficiency between the Region of York and the City, to achieve a higher level of social service provision in Vaughan.

### **Conclusion**

The Social Services Study was conducted as part of the City's new Official Plan process to address the social needs of a growing population. It is recognized that a comprehensive planning process that addresses the implications of significant population growth cannot ignore the social health of the community. As part of the study, a community profile was developed, and a range of social service needs from physical and mental health needs, to affordability issues were examined. The study resulted in a number of recommendations aimed at improving community health and social well being, by addressing identified service gaps. Many of the social service issues identified are addressed through policies included in the new City OP, while other recommendations of this study would require further City initiatives.

### **Attachments**

1. Social Services Study (November 2009) (Mayor and Members of Council Only)

### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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