

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – MARCH 9, 2010

GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN EMPLOYEE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Recommendation

The City Manager in consultation with the Senior Management Team recommends that:

1. This report be received;
2. Staff proceed with the development of a comprehensive environmental/sustainability education plan to familiarize all city staff in all facilities with the policies of Green Directions, which can be expanded into an on-going program; and
3. Any comments received at this meeting be taken into consideration during the development of the plan.

Contribution to Sustainability

The City has indicated its commitment to a more sustainable future as outlined in Green Directions Vaughan. Action 5.1.5 provides that the City, “develop an environmental education strategy to familiarize staff with the provisions of Green Directions expanding into an on-going education program”. The ethic, principles and goals of Green Directions will provide the foundation for the education program and support for a culture of sustainability.

Economic Impact

No economic impacts arise from the adoption of this report. Budget impacts will be identified in the preparation of the education plan and will depend on a number of factors. While it is expected that staff will play the largest role in the development of the program the need for external resources is anticipated. This could include specialized expertise in the design of educational material, printing, web content and facilitation. This will be addressed in the follow-up report.

Communications Plan

A communications plan is not required at this time. It will evolve with the development of the education plan. A formal launch date for the education plan will be recommended in the finalized plan. The communications plan will be developed to meet the needs of the event.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend a strategy for developing an employee education program for Green Directions and receive direction to proceed with the preparation of the plan.

Background - Analysis and Options

Origin

In 2009 Council approved Green Directions Vaughan, the City's first Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan. On December 14, 2009 the Environment Committee considered a report which provided an implementation update on Green Directions and the outlook for 2010. Discussion surrounding this item included the role of culture change in achieving a more sustainable city and how staff education can play an important role in this process. Also it was

recognized that the move into the new LEED Gold City Hall would be an important symbolic milestone for the city, being representative of the City's commitment to sustainability. Having a staff education plan in place at the time of the move to the new City Hall would further emphasize the role of sustainability in the City's corporate culture.

The Environment Committee adopted the following motion: "That staff provide an internal cultural plan in anticipation of the move to City Hall". This recommendation was ratified by Council on December 14, 2009. This report begins the process of cultural change. Cultural change is a process that takes place over time and requires a long term continued commitment.

This is consistent with the policies of Green Directions. Objective 5.1 is "To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community". Action 5.1.5 provides as follows:

Develop an environmental education strategy to familiarize staff with the provisions of Green Directions expanding into an on-going education program.

Action 5.1.3 states:

Use the Vaughan Civic Centre and other sustainably constructed facilities as learning centres by providing tours about sustainable construction and energy conservation.

Building on the potential synergies identified in the Environment Committee's discussions, integrating Actions 5.1.5 and 5.1.3 will:

- Introduce and familiarizing all city staff in all its facilities with Green Directions and its programs;
- Support the creation of a "culture of sustainability" amongst employees through the provision of information, programs and events designed to increase awareness of sustainability options and encourage better choices.

There are already a number of individual employee focused programs and events that support the creation of a culture of sustainability. They include the employee trip reduction program, the emergency ride home program, the Clean Air Commute Week, Energy Conservation Week, Earth Hour, the 20 Minute Makeover and the battery recycling program. The intent is to build on these and other programs, using Green Directions as a framework, to broaden the information and educational opportunities available to staff.

Developing the Plan

Green Directions is a multi-disciplinary plan which requires the cooperation of all of the city's commissions and departments. The same will be true in developing an employee education plan. For this reason consultation will also be a priority in developing the education plan.

a) The Plan Development Process

The following steps are proposed in the development of the plan.

1. Research best practices of other municipalities in delivering educational programs;
2. Work with the Commissions to:
 - Inventory existing staff programs;
 - Assess how any existing public programs or information may be made more readily available to employees;
 - Identify future educational needs arising from Green Directions or any other source.

3. Conduct research as to the types of programs that will best meet the needs of employees. Pertinent questions include:
 - How do employees want to receive information on city programs or sustainable choices, e.g. lunch and learns, e-mails, hardcopy, on-line or at events or tours?
 - What types of programs are preferred? (e.g. on-going or event-based)
 - What kind of incentives are the most effective for motivating behaviour change?
 - What are the perceived barriers to behavioural change and kinds of programs best address this?
 - How can success be measured?
 - Are there areas of particular interest or priority? General themes relate to energy, transportation, waste, water and food. Which ones are more timely or warrant immediate attention?
4. Identify priority programs for roll out in the first year including:
 - Assignment of responsibility for program implementation;
 - An overview of conceptual content;
 - Preferred media and techniques for distribution of the information;
 - Timing of commencement of program components; and
 - Resource/budget requirements.
5. Coordinate with and support the launch program for the new City Hall by assisting, where possible, in the development and provision of staff information pertaining to the sustainability features of the building and its operations.
6. Identify any programs for launch beyond the initial one-year time frame.
7. Report back to the Environment Committee with the sustainability education plan and the implementation time line.

Led by Buildings and Facilities with the assistance of Corporate Communications, the launch program for the new City Hall is also under development at this time. It is expected to have a sustainability component, which will be communicated to both staff and the public. Coordination between the two programs will be an important consideration in the development of the broader Green Directions staff education plan. This could include the strategic timing of launch dates and complementary content. This will ensure both programs are supportive while retaining a high level of individual prominence and corporate significance.

It will be helpful if education plans are developed to support the objectives of specific programs. For example, this could include reduction in energy consumption through the more economical use of lights, computers, photocopiers and printers.

The resulting plan will provide on-going education for both current employees and new hires undergoing orientation. The plan will build on existing programs and include Green Directions and its various actions. The intention is to provide the City's employees with an understanding of the City's approach to sustainability and help them make choices both at home and at work that will ultimately contribute to a "greener" workplace and a more sustainable city.

b) Organizational Framework – Plan Development

In order to pursue the development of the plan, it will be necessary to put together a staff team that will be representative of the interests and the expertise of the City's various functional areas. It is anticipated that the team will have approximately 10 members. It will be coordinated through the City Manager's Office by the Manager of Corporate Policy and the Economic Developer – Environmental Sector with the assistance of the Human Resources Department and the

Corporate Communications Department. Human Resources will provide its expertise in the development and implementation of staff education and training programs. Corporate Communications will provide guidance as to the best practices for branding, promoting and implementing the plan.

The balance of the team members will be drawn from City staff across the Corporation. They would bring to the team the technical understanding of the sustainability measures, a knowledge of existing employee outreach programs and provide a link back to the department for implementation. The goal is to build a program that reflects the objectives of the Environmental Master Plan and build on the accomplishments to date. It is anticipated that the team will have approximately 10 members in total.

Staff will be targeting May 25, 2010 for a follow-up report to the Environment Committee.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the Green Directions objective to lead and promote environmental sustainability and implement the Environmental Master Plan.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

Fostering a culture of sustainability amongst city staff will play a key role in ensuring the successful implementation of Green Directions. The City of Vaughan currently provides environmental education to its staff mainly through a series of events-based programs and initiatives. These programs are not part of an overall plan, many having preceded the approval of Green Directions. The actions prescribed by Green Directions recognize the need for a comprehensive education program based on the plan itself.

The opening of the new City Hall provides an important symbolic opportunity to engage both the general public and all city staff on matters of sustainability. One of the main elements of the City Hall launch program will be the sustainability features of the City Hall. This aspect will be of interest to both the staff and the public. As such, it would be important to work cooperatively and in support of the overall launch program for the new City Hall.

Given the breadth of the proposed plan it is suggested that a project team be created to guide its development. This will allow for staff from various functional areas to contribute to the plan's creation, while ensuring that their respective objectives, plans and accomplishments are reflected in an effective educational plan for staff.

Therefore, it is recommended that the City proceed with the development of a staff education plan, based on Green Directions;

Attachments

N/A

Report prepared by:

Rebekah McGurran, Economic Developer – Environmental Sector, ext. 8426
Roy McQuillin, Manager of Corporate Policy, ext. 8211

Respectfully submitted,

Clayton D. Harris
City Manager