

## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – MAY 25, 2010**

### **GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN EMPLOYEE EDUCATION PLAN**

#### **Recommendation**

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

1. Staff proceed with the development of the Green Directions Employee Education Plan as set out in this report;
2. The Green Directions Employee Education Plan and the supporting *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* site be operational no later than September 2010;

#### **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* provide the foundation for the education program and support for a corporate culture of sustainability.

#### **Economic Impact**

No economic impacts arise from the adoption of this report. It is expected that staff will play the largest role in the development of the plan. However, there will be the need for additional resources to support specific activities and programs. Any additional resources required to implement the plan in 2011, e.g. campaign support, website development, printing, facilitation etc. will need to be considered in the preparation of the 2011 Operating Budget.

#### **Communications Plan**

A communications plan is not required at this time. A detailed communications plan will be prepared for the internal launch of the Employee Education Plan and the *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* site in September of 2010. This will introduce the Employee Education Plan and the *Green Directions* site to staff.

#### **Purpose**

To report on the development an Employee Education Plan for *Green Directions Vaughan*.

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

##### **Origin**

In 2009 Council approved *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City’s 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. The Environment Committee adopted the following motion: “That staff provide an internal cultural plan in anticipation of the move to City Hall.” A follow-up report was prepared for March 9, 2010. At that time the Environment Committee directed staff, “to proceed with the development of a comprehensive environmental/sustainability education plan to familiarize city staff in all facilities with the policies of *Green Directions*, which can be expanded into an on-going program.”

## The City's Approach to Sustainability – The Policy Context

Vaughan's approach to a sustainable future is incorporated into the City's recently approved and emerging policy documents. The preparation of *Green Directions* is part of City's *Vaughan Tomorrow* plan, which is mandated by the City's Strategic Plan *Vaughan Vision 2020*. The Strategic Plan describes Vaughan as "A City of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable." It further provides that the City lead and promote environmental sustainability by preserving, protecting and enhancing Vaughan's natural and built environment through responsible leadership and innovative policies, practices and education.

*Green Directions* elaborates on this direction. It provides a definition of sustainability, an ethic and a number of principles to guide the City in the performance of its operational and regulatory functions. They form the underlying basis for the City's corporate culture of sustainability, as follows.

### Definition of Sustainability:

*Sustainability First: Sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations.*

### The Ethic:

*In Vaughan we lead by example as responsible stewards of our community. Our decisions entail determining the impact of our actions on the environment; weighing the social/cultural consequences; and understanding any financial implications. Our actions will enhance both the cultural and built environment.*

### The Principles:

*LEADERSHIP: We act as advocates for a sustainable future and support positive initiatives emerging from all sectors of society.*

*INNOVATION: We build upon best practices to create "Made-in-Vaughan" solutions to guide our operations and shape our plans and policies.*

*TRANSPARENCY: Our actions are open and traceable; we monitor and report on our progress;*

*ACCOUNTABILITY: We take responsibility for our actions and we build on past experience.*

*RESPONSIBILITY: Everyone in Vaughan has a role to play in the plan.*

*ENGAGEMENT: We involve our citizens and partners in decision making.*

The approval of the new Official Plan and the related master plans will complete the suite of policy documents that make up the *Vaughan Tomorrow* plan. This will give the City a solid foundation of policies that are based on the principles of sustainability. The City will now move into a period where implementation is the priority. Continuing to build and promote a corporate culture of sustainability among city employees will support this objective by providing staff with a clear understanding of the benefits of this approach and the City's expectations.

## The Employee Education Plan

### Operational Responsibility

The implementation and day-to-day operations of the Employee Education Plan will be led by the Manager of Environmental Sustainability. This is a newly created position and the recruitment process for the new staff member is nearing completion. In *Green Directions* all City commissions are identified as “Resources” for the purpose of implementing the plan (Action 5.1.5). This recognizes the fact that all employees and Commissions have a role in the plan if we are to be successful in moving toward a culture of sustainability. Their work will be showcased as part of the education program. As such, the participation of each affected department in the development of the plan and the implementation of its educational programs and campaigns will be essential to its success.

### Purpose, Goal and Objectives of the Employee Education Plan

In developing the Employee Education Plan the following Purpose, Goal and Objectives were adopted to guide its preparation.

#### **Purpose:**

- To support and promote the adoption of a corporate culture of sustainability at the City of Vaughan.

#### **Goal:**

- To provide staff with the education programs, information and resources that will allow them to operate in a more sustainable manner in the workplace and assist in their personal transition to a more sustainable lifestyle in their home life.

#### **Four Primary Objectives:**

##### Share Information

- Introduce and explain the concept of sustainability to City of Vaughan employees and its importance to the Corporation;
- Convey to staff the City’s policies, plans, initiatives and expectations in the area of sustainability;
- Make information readily available through a variety of user-friendly media, while establishing a central consolidated source (Vaughan On Line) pertaining to corporate sustainability.

##### Take a Holistic Approach

- Provide programs and information that will allow City Staff to adopt more sustainable practices and behaviours while at work;
- Provide information that will also assist employees in adopting more sustainable lifestyles away from the workplace;

##### Engage Staff

- Promote and support the launch, implementation and monitoring of departmental programs or campaigns that will further a culture of sustainability;
- Give employees the opportunity to provide comment and input into the development and operation of City programs;

##### Commitment to Improvement

- Promote continuous improvement and learning in Corporate sustainability.

### Achieving Culture Change

The finalization of the education plan and its on-going implementation will have to recognize the important role of culture change. This entails bringing together people from a wide range of disciplines, ages, experiences and knowledge levels to support common cause. There will be perceived and real barriers to be overcome, knowledge will have to be exchanged and understanding achieved. Therefore, an understanding of the current situation will be the first step.

A number of methods can be used to obtain a better understanding of staff's perspective on sustainability and related issues. These can include focus groups, surveys, seminars, round table discussions and individual interviews. This information will be useful in identifying concerns and shaping the educational programs that will make Vaughan a more sustainable City. The objective should be to identify the key measures that will make sustainable behaviour the everyday choice.

This is not a discrete activity that can be confined to a single event, survey or focus group. It must be built in to every aspect of the plan. Solutions and inspiration can originate anywhere in the organization. All programs should be undertaken in a way that supports continuous change and evolution, recognizing the contributions that all staff can make in designing and implementing the programs that will help transform the City. This will be undertaken in the development of the plan.

### The Sustainability Message

The incorporation of the concept of sustainability into the City's policy documents is one aspect of culture change. There is also the need to obtain employee buy-in to ensure the best implementation of the plan. Expanding all employees' interest will be supported through education and easily accessible information that will allow staff to take actions consistent with City-policy and best practices. However, sustainability should not be treated as a workday experience alone. The City's approach should be built on the practising sustainability both as an employee and a citizen by:

- Explaining the benefits of a more sustainable city and lifestyle;
- Encouraging staff to treat sustainability as a 24/7 commitment;
- Supporting sustainable behaviour at home and at work;
- Building on the connection between a Sustainable Work Place and a Sustainable Household to support comprehensive culture change
- Developing programs that focus on the work environment but also assist employees by providing information that allows them to act in a sustainable manner at home – as community examples or community ambassadors;

The education plan should provide employees with information that will allow them to make informed choices in the workplace and home.

### Building on the *Green Directions* Brand

*Green Directions Vaughan* provides the policy basis for the City's sustainability program. The intention is to build on this brand and broaden its presence with City staff. It will be the identifier for the Employee Education Plan, i.e. *The Green Directions Employee Education Plan* with any necessary modifications. All of the education and information functions will appear under the *Green Directions Vaughan* logo.

## The Role of Vaughan On Line

A key element for delivering the Employee Education plan and its programs will be a dedicated site on Vaughan On Line, the City's intranet system. The Vaughan On-line site will adopt the name, "*Green Directions Vaughan On Line*", building a connection to the two brands. Other media will be used to convey information and support programs as appropriate. This may include measures such as flyers, brochures, posters, seminars/lectures, lunch and learn sessions, events, webinars and videos depending on the program or campaign. Personal contact and staff and interdepartmental interaction will also play an important role in the delivery of the plan.

## Delivering the Plan: The Three Pillars

The *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* site will deliver three general types of information to the City staff, as described below. Each will serve a particular function and are the three pillars of the program. Using the website as the home base provides a clear and contemporary way of organizing the plan. Schematically, this arrangement is illustrated on Attachment No.1. The three pillars are as follows:

### **NEWS, OUTREACH AND INTERACTIVE**

The purpose of this group is to inform, encourage interaction with the City and to engage in interactive learning. Examples of these types of features may include:

- A message centre providing notification of events, activities, programs and educational opportunities relating to sustainability (both internal and external);
- Provide a survey tool to obtain feedback on policies and programs;
- Featured City Projects, changing periodically, e.g. project of the month.
- A suggestion box;
- Tip of the Week/Enviro-myth buster;
- Provide opportunities for interactive learning, e.g. a personal carbon footprint calculator.

### **LIBRARY – ARCHIVE – RESOURCE CENTRE**

This section would provide staff with research and information sources that would assist in the day to day performance of their jobs and in supporting a culture of sustainability. This function is scalable over time and it can be an important record of past action as well as a link to up-to-date information and practices that will drive innovation. Initially, the following types of content would be anticipated:

- *Green Directions Vaughan: A Synopsis of the Plan and Brochure*;
- *Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan* (The full plan);
- *Green Directions Vaughan* Newsletter and Archive (A Potential Initiative);
- New Employee Brochure (A potential Initiative)
- Link to the Environment Committee Agendas and Minutes;
- Archived Webinars;
- Resource Library (Postings and Links Related Internal and External Documents.

Examples include:

- Vaughan Official Plan;
- Vaughan Master Plans;
- City Departments on VOL;
- Region of York Official Plan;
- Region of York Sustainability Strategy;
- Region of York Master Plans;
- Pertinent Agencies, e.g. TRCA, Ontario Power Authority; CMHC

- Non Government Organizations;
- Personal Sustainability – Useful Links.

## **CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS**

The delivery of campaigns and programs will be one of the most important elements of the education plan. The “News” and “Library” functions identified above are necessary to the delivery of a complete plan. They can support culture change, but they are less well equipped to drive it. Change can be best effected through targeted campaigns and programs that have clear objectives and employ messages and communication tools that will resonate with the intended audience. Ideally, the results should be measureable to determine whether the program has met its objectives.

The home base for these activities will be *Green Directions Vaughan On Line*. All information about the campaign or program will be provided on this site. However, it is not intended that the campaigns or programs be static or web-bound. All other communication techniques will be considered and applied, depending on the nature of the initiative, the message and the targeted audience. This could include events, seminars, lunch and learn sessions, reward programs, print material (posters, brochures, flyers) and audio/video tools. Personal contact and staff interaction will also be important. Consideration will be given involving staff as “Green Advocates” possibly on a departmental basis. They could act as resources and immediate links to information and programs that would be useful to staff members.

*Green Directions Vaughan On Line* would provide convenient and immediate access to all aspects of an on-going campaign including its objectives, the timelines, milestone dates and events, archived materials and ultimately the monitoring of the results.

These types of activities require staff resources to develop and run and there will need to be budget allocations for program material. For example: Consulting or facilitation assistance may be required, speaker’s fees could be involved, branding and design exercises may be necessary and supporting print materials and brochures may need to be produced. For this reason, the number of campaigns and programs undertaken each year will need to be carefully planned and budgeted accordingly; and staff availability will need to be taken into consideration. Such initiatives will need to be incorporated into the annual business plans and operating budgets.

### Implementation and Launch of the Employee Education Plan and *Green Directions Vaughan On Line*

Given its symbolic value, it will be helpful to tie the launch of the Employee Education Plan to the opening of the new City Hall. A ceremonial opening of the new building is being planned for early summer (June). This event will have a dedicated communications strategy and supporting content, which will highlight the attributes of the building.

From a practical perspective, it will be more advantageous to tie the start-up of the Employee Education Plan and *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* to the beginning of staff occupancy of the new City Hall. This would give the launch of the education plan greater focus. Full occupancy is anticipated near the time of Council inauguration and the education plan will be fully functioning. Initiating the Employee Education Plan and the *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* site no-later than September of 2010 will complement this timeframe.

The staff launch of the education plan and website will focus on the operational content and benefits. The communications plan for the launch of the education plan and the website will be developed over the summer. Corporate Communications will assist in the design of the plan and provide advice on the appropriate techniques.

## Education Campaigns and Programs for 2010

Based on the proposed timeline, *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* would be available to staff in September. As a living website it will grow and evolve over time. The *News, Outreach and Interactive* and *Library – Archive – Resource Centre* content would be posted for use. The *Campaigns and Programs* section would support the the continuing roll out of a number of programs during the first four to six months of operation. A number of potential programs are identified below. Some are continuations of existing programs and have budget available, which will be incorporated into the plan and the website. The initiatives may include:

- **Staff Familiarization with Green Directions Vaughan:** Staff will need to be provided with information about *Green Directions*. This should include information about its role in the City's policy regime, an explanation of its definitions and terms, its policies and actions and the importance of staff participation.
- **City Hall Staff Education Program:** It will be necessary to develop a dedicated staff program aimed specifically at the occupancy of the new City Hall. This program will need to cover the "green" attributes of the building as well the information needed by staff to ensure that the building can function at its planned LEED Gold level of accreditation. This program should be available around the time of occupancy to assist in the delivery of any training or information sessions necessary to the move-in. This campaign will need to be developed in conjunction with Buildings & Facilities, Corporate Communications and Human Resources. Funding will need to be assigned to this task.
- **Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan – Employee Trip Reduction Program:** With the greater staff concentration at the new City Hall, it will make opportunities for ride sharing and accessing other alternative modes more convenient for more employees. This should be promoted aggressively for the opening of the City Hall and for the remainder of 2010 and into 2011. This will also be important to reduce the parking demand at the Civic Centre, given the on-going construction, the increase in employee parking demand and limited space for new supply.
- **Introduction of Three Stream Waste Collection in City Buildings:** With the move to three-stream waste collection there will be the need to provide staff with the necessary information on this program's operation. This should be undertaken City-wide as three-stream waste collection is commenced throughout City buildings.
- **Energy Conservation:** With costs rising, the City should be looking for ways to reduce energy consumption. To economize, staff should be encouraged to minimize their energy use. For example, there are a number of simple and practical behaviours that can be used to reduce electricity consumption. These include ensuring that all non-essential lights, computers and printers and are turned off at the end of the work day. This would include turning out office/task lighting and computers when away from the office during the day.

## Education Campaigns for 2011

In addition to the on-going initiatives, new education programs for 2011 have not been established as yet. A number of opportunities are being investigated by staff. These include:

- Local Food – To focus on local food sources, harvest season and making connections between food choices and sustainability;
- Eco-savvy Consumerism – Making more sustainable purchasing decisions, with a focus on understanding certifications and labelling systems;

- Water Conservation – Centred on International Water Day (March 22, 2011) it will focus on water conservation techniques being used at work and in the home and garden (In conjunction with the Region's Water for Tomorrow program).

Program evaluation and development will continue through the summer and fall. Funding and staff resources will be assessed and taken into consideration in the preparation of the 2011 Business Plans and the Operating Budget.

#### Development of the *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* Site

The *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* site will be an important component of the Employee Education Plan. For this reason staff, with the assistance of the Information and Economic Technology Department, has been developing the site architecture and preliminary examples of content. Staff will have additional information on its status at the May 25 Environment Committee meeting. Further development will take place over the summer as content is created in consultation with staff and as new and on-going educational programs are moved onto the site, in time for its launch. Going forward, working with the departments on the plan's content and programs will be critical to its success.

#### Foundation for an Environmental Education Strategy for the Public and Business

Action 5.1.7 of *Green Directions* also provides for the preparation of an environmental education strategy for businesses and citizens. This is planned for the 2011-14 Time Frame. The lessons learned in developing the Staff Education Plan and the *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* intranet site will be of assistance in developing the public education program. It is anticipated that a new external website will be developed to support the public program and a substantial amount of content may be shared. Opportunities to proceed with the development of the external plan will be assessed. Resource issues will be evaluated as part of the 2011 Business Planning and Operating Budget approval process.

#### 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

As a result of *Vaughan Vision 2020* and the *Vaughan Tomorrow* program, the City has been amending its policy regime to adopt a more sustainable approach to its operations. With the new policy framework nearly completed the City will now move into a period where implementation will be the primary focus. Having this sound policy base in place is one aspect of culture change. However, the effectiveness of this program will be strongly influenced by the actions of City employees. Understanding of the *Green Directions* plan and employee buy-in will assist the City meeting its sustainability objectives. The proposed education plan will help complete the transition to a corporate culture of sustainability.

The goal of the plan is to provide staff with the education programs and information that will allow them to operate in a more sustainable manner in the workplace. Information should also be provided that will assist in their personal transition to a more sustainable lifestyle in their home life. The education plan should provide employees with the resources that will allow them to make informed choices both at home and in the workplace. Gaining an understanding of staff needs and perceptions will help to develop a more responsive plan.

A dedicated site will be developed to support the implementation of the plan. It will build on the *Green Directions* brand and be known as *Green Directions Vaughan On Line*. The site will provide structure to the education plan and deliver three general types of information:

- News, Outreach and Interactive: This section will provide updates, opportunities for consultation and interactive learning;
- Library, Archive and Resource Centre: This would provide research and information sources;
- Campaigns and Programs: It would be the home base for campaigns and programs designed to support a culture of sustainability. These programs would be the drivers of culture change and would use a variety of communication tools in addition to the website, depending on the objective, message and targeted audience.

These three components will support the delivery of the plan. Moving forward, it is proposed that the Employee Education Plan commence operation no later than September 2010 along with the launch of the *Green Directions Vaughan On Line* website.

Five major campaigns have been identified that have potential for implementation in 2010. The timing and implementation of these programs will be evaluated and the program details developed. Three additional campaigns have been identified for potential launch in 2011. They will be evaluated as part of the budget process and business planning process.

*Green Directions Vaughan* has established a solid policy base to support a more sustainable city. The Employee Education Plan will move beyond policy to address the human factors that will influence the success of the program. On this basis it is recommended that staff proceed with the implementation of the Employee Education Plan as set out in this report and that its recommendations be approved.

### **Attachments**

1. *Green Directions Vaughan On Line Employee Education Plan* (Schematic)

### **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

**ATTACHMENT 1  
GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN  
EMPLOYEE EDUCATION PLAN  
GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN ONLINE INTRANET SITE**

