2012 VAUGHAN URBAN DESIGN AWARDS
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Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning and Director of Economic Development recommend:

1.   THAT the following report BE RECEIVED for information purposes.

2.   THAT City Council nominates two (2) members of Council to serve on the jury panel for the 2012 Vaughan Urban Design Awards.

Contribution to Sustainability

The 2012 Vaughan Urban Design Awards reflect the City of Vaughan's commitment to the goals and objectives within *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, specifically:

Goal 1: To significantly reduce our use of natural resources and the amount of waste we generate.

Goal 2: To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment.

Objective 2.2 "To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum greenspace and an urban form that supports our expected population growth"

Goal 3: To ensure that getting around in Vaughan is easy and has a low environmental impact.

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community for citizens, businesses and visitors.

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

Objective 4.2 "To ensure that the City of Vaughan attracts businesses and investment that will result in well-paying jobs for Vaughan citizens, a sustainable tax base, and continuing prosperity into the 21st century"

Goal 5: To be a leader on sustainability issues.

Economic Impact

The Development Planning Department has partnered with the Economic Development Department to jointly host and fund the 2012 Urban Design Awards Gala. Costs have been allocated in the approved 2012 operating budgets of the respective departments.

Communications Plan

To promote the 2012 Urban Design Awards, City staff will advertise on the web-sites of OAA (Ontario Association of Architects), OALA (Ontario Association of Landscape Architects), OPPI (Ontario Professional Planners Institute), and through posters to be placed in various public facilities throughout the City, commencing June 1, 2012. The awards gala will also be advertised on the City of Vaughan's "City Page", the corporate web-site, as well as, the Economic Development Business link E-News. Staff will also prepare and send an e-mail broadcast to

BILD, firms within the design and development industries, as well as their professional associations. In addition, an informational brochure and application form will be available to the building industry and design professionals when development applications are submitted. Following the Gala, the City will prepare and issue a press release announcing the winners, in accordance with the Corporate Communications protocol.

Purpose

This report has been prepared to inform Council on the 2012 Urban Design Awards, to be held on Wednesday November 14, 2012 at Vaughan City Hall.

Background - Analysis and Options

History

The City of Vaughan initiated the Urban Design Awards program in 1992, to promote excellence in urban design, architecture and landscape architecture, and to help recognize the manner to which the built environment contributes to the overall quality of life for the residents and businesses of Vaughan.

The last Vaughan Urban Design Awards Gala was held on November 12, 2008 at the Bellagio Event Venue, which included new award categories, judging criteria, and an expanded jury to better recognize the wide range of projects being built in the City. The evening was a great success, and staff was congratulated by many of the design professionals, and members of the building industry for a well executed Urban Design Awards Gala.

Impact on Economic Development Outcomes

The design quality of development is of significance to Vaughan. Economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits can be derived from high quality streetscapes and landscapes, and contributes to:

- Achieving better aesthetics for buildings and associate streetscapes;
- Maximize amenity, security and safety for occupants and the broader public; and
- Minimize the consumption of energy from non-renewable sources, conserve the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Design excellence also meets Economic Development objectives. It has bearings on the City's ability to attract creative and skilled workers, their families and innovative firms. The City's Economic Development Strategy: "Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy" Goal 4 encourages the City to grow its dynamic quality of place and creative economy. It recognizes that place-building must be pursued as a means to attract creative class and knowledge workers to Vaughan. This up-and-coming sector looks for communities that are reflective of their values, their workstyle, living and recreating preferences.

Setting the standards for high quality urban development projects has the effect of creating spaces that are lively, and engaging for residents, visitors and workers. As the City aspires to attract creative class workers, iconic buildings, which are both beautiful, livable and sustainable, cannot be underestimated. Quality working and living spaces stimulates creativity, enhances productivity and strengthens synergistic connections between its occupants as well as the users of the public realm. Although urban design and architecture may be perceived to have "soft" qualities about them, there are certainly hard currency values that are associated with rising property values and/or rents associated with high quality and iconic buildings.

Recognizing the benefits of high quality urban development and public spaces, the City of Vaughan has undertaken several initiatives to promote and encourage great design, as well as

environmental stewardship. In 2011, the City approved a new Design Review Panel, whose members meet monthly to provide professional recommendations to the City on proposed high density and high priority development projects. Complementing the Design Review Panel, Vaughan also holds an Urban Design Awards Program.

The Urban Design Awards recognizes and promotes local development initiatives that exemplify excellence in urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and environmental stewardship in the City of Vaughan. The spotlight that is placed on award-winning projects instills pride amongst the entire design team and the community.

<u>2012 Urban Design Awards Poster Design</u>

The poster design and graphics for the 2012 Urban Design Awards will be available for June 1, 2012, to promote the event. The poster will recognize and celebrate the contribution of the design industry in helping the City achieve the vision outlined in the City's Strategic Plan (Vaughan Vision 2020) that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable.

<u>Jury Panel and Judging Process</u>

To provide an objective review of the submissions, a 6 member jury panel to consist of 3 representatives from the City, and a representative from each relevant professional discipline from the design industry, will make-up the jury panel, which proved to be very successful in the 2008 Urban Design Awards. On this basis, the Vaughan 2012 Urban Design Awards jury panel will consist of a landscape architect, architect, urban designer or planner, Commissioner of Planning, and 2 representatives from City Council. The jury panel will be reviewing both the submissions and undertaking site visits. Upon completion of judging, a Jury Report will be compiled, printed and published for distribution at the Awards Gala. Following the Gala, the City will prepare and issue a press release announcing the winners, in accordance with the Corporate Communications protocol.

<u>Scheduled Date and Venue</u>

The 2012 City of Vaughan Urban Design Awards Gala will be held on Wednesday November 14, 2012 at Vaughan City Hall. Staff has chosen this date as to not conflict with regular scheduled meetings, professional association meetings and other municipal events.

<u>Judging Criteria and Award Categories</u>

The judging criteria and award categories were changed for the 2008 Urban Design Awards, to better recognize the wide range of projects being built in the City, and that demonstrate the City's commitment to building attractive sustainable communities with appealing landscape architecture, strong identity and high quality architectural design. Based on the positive feedback received by the professional design industry on the 2008 Urban Design Awards, the following judging criteria will continue to be used for the 2012 Urban Design Awards:

1. Significance – City Wide Scale: Contribution to the City design objectives related to City image, visual identity, vistas, streetscapes, recognition of significant sites and location opportunities.

2. Significance – Community Wide Scale: Contribution to the quality of environment within a community which demonstrates a regard for the context of the locale, enhancing a sense of place and conserves and protects the natural environment.

3. Sustainability Design: Performs well in terms of location and linkage, energy efficiency, neighbourhood pattern & design, and green construction & technology.

4. Compatibility: The integration or blending of built forms and public or private spaces with existing and planned development, and respect for or enhancement of the existing development character.

5. Innovation and Creativity: The degree of creative response to program requirements, site constraints and ability to influence urban design trends.

6. Execution: The quality of construction materials, and interpretation of the design into reality.

The following 3 types of award categories will continue to be used for the 2012 Urban Design Awards, which allow for a better recognition of various types of urban design projects throughout the City, and also give emphasis to "green" initiatives which are supportive of sustainable development:

1. Award of Excellence (the number of awards presented in this category is at the discretion of the jury): This award is presented to projects which exemplify, as much as possible, the judging criteria and the City's design principles.

2. Award of Merit (the number of awards presented in this category is at the discretion of the jury): This award is presented to projects and consultants, for excellence in one or more areas of judging criteria and the City's design principles.

3. Environmental Green Award (the number of awards presented in this category is at the discretion of the jury): This award is presented to projects that achieve a high degree of environmental sustainability through green construction and technology, including but not limited to, integration of environmental design, stewardship, prevention, conservation, recycling, enhancement, rehabilitation, and energy efficiency.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly "Manage Growth & Economic Well-being".

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

The Urban Design Awards recognizes excellence in architecture and urban design, and instills great pride and goodwill, from landowners, to architectural firms, landscape consultants and tenants. The recognition that comes with the Urban Design Awards is positive reinforcement for future development projects. It further demonstrates a commitment by the City to encourage great and sustainable design as a means of attracting those business investors that value excellence in their public and private urban spaces. This report has been prepared to inform Council on the 2012 Urban Design Awards, to be held on Wednesday November 14, 2012 at Vaughan City Hall.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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