

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) NOVEMBER 26, 2002

**CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURING
"MASTERING COMMUNICATIONS EXCELLENCE"**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications recommends:

- 1) That the Draft Corporate Communications Strategic Plan entitled "Mastering Communications Excellence", prepared by CVS Consulting Group, be received and adopted as the first step towards the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive communications function for the City of Vaughan;
- 2) That, to implement the recommended Client Services Model, Departments be directed to allocate 2 to 5% of annual project/program budgets, to communications/promotions, to be administered in consultation and with the assistance of the Corporate Communications Department.
- 3) That staff be authorized to continue to review and if necessary adjust the plan's Action Steps and Target Dates, based on the input of the new Director and staff.
- 4) That staff be directed to proceed with operationalizing the Plan through the 2003 budget process and throughout the next six months to a year, and
- 5) That the draft policies attached to the Plan be adopted in principle for further refinement and implementation, based on the input of the new Director and staff.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to move forward with a new strategic communication plan for the City of Vaughan that coordinates existing communications functions and staff into one corporate unit, and creates a new structure and functions to ensure that the City's communications efforts reflect consistent imaging and messaging and are aligned with the Vaughan Vision 2007.

Background - Analysis and Options

On June 24, 2002, Council adopted the recommendations of the Operation Review Committee as they related to the restructuring of the Corporate Communications Department, which created an organizational structure as identified in the report. Ted Hallas was transferred from his existing position in Development Services to the new position of Senior Communications Specialist – Media Relations and Web Content. The Information Desk Attendant position was transferred from Clerk's Department to Corporate Communications and subsequently filled by Pat Rossi. Heather Heagle and part-time staff were transferred from her existing position in Recreation and Culture to the new position of Communications Specialist – Corporate and Community Relations. Recruitment has commenced for the new Communications Account Specialist (Internal/Public Relations), and this position is expected to be filled shortly. Recruitment for the new Communications Account Specialist (Hydro) has been referred to Hydro Vaughan Distribution Inc., pending the hiring of the new Vice President – Corporate Services, and a transfer of this responsibility from the City Corporate Communications Department to HVDI. The final position, Communications Account Specialist (Community and Corporate Relations), has been included in the 2003 budget submission.

Analysis/Comment

"Mastering Communications Excellence"

The new Strategic Plan identifies a significant shift from how communications has been approached in Vaughan in the past. Not only does it coordinate existing functions but provides new direction, initiatives and a stronger emphasis on the communications process, as identified in the new Vaughan Vision 2007.

CVS Consulting Group will present an overview and summary of the process, development and key elements of the "Mastering Communications Excellence" report.

Outstanding Issues

a) Director of Corporate Communications Position

Recruitment has progressed for the above position, following to the resignation of Victoria Leskie. Implementation of the new Strategy will commence with the filling of the position, although the target dates and finalization of the plan may be affected to allow the new Director and opportunity to become familiar with the organization.

b) Office Space for the new Department:

The Department has not yet secured office space to house the new complement and transfers. A location is being sought that is central to the Mayor's Office, the City Manager's Office and the client departments, and is a complete self-contained unit. Staff are working with the Buildings and Facilities staff to identify appropriate office space.

c) Transfer of staff from Recreation and Culture:

Although the transfer of the Special Events staff has taken place, duties have not yet been reallocated or finalized and await the new Director of Corporate Communications.

Conclusion

The restructuring of the new Corporate Communications Department as directed by Council in June, is already well underway. The adoption of the new Plan will further guide its development and act as a 'road-map' for the City to implement the many new communications initiatives identified as necessary in achieving communications excellence in Vaughan.

Report prepared by:

Victoria Leskie

Respectfully submitted,



Frank Miele

Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications