

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE – NOVEMBER 30, 2005**

### **2006 COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM PARTICIPATION**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Communities in Bloom Beautification Committee recommends:

1. That Council provide direction with regards to participation of the City of Vaughan in the 2006 Communities in Bloom by considering Options 1 and 2 as outlined in this report; and,
2. That Council directs staff to explore opportunities for sponsorship to support the program in order to offset the City of Vaughan's direct cost.

#### **Economic Impact**

The economic impact of participation in Option #1 would be \$90,000 less \$15,000 in sponsorship revenues.

The economic impact of participation in Option #2 would be \$210,000 less \$30,000 in sponsorship revenues.

#### **Purpose**

To obtain Council direction respecting the City of Vaughan's options for participation in the 2006 Communities in Bloom program.

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

On September 24, 2005, the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan hosted the 11<sup>th</sup>, Edition of the Communities in Bloom National Awards Ceremony honouring municipalities from Canada, the United States, Japan and Europe. The City of Vaughan won the "2005 Communities in Bloom International Challenge Award in the Large City Category in addition to receiving a Special Mention for "Citizen's Groups Supporting their Community".

In four short years, the City of Vaughan has become a Communities in Bloom (CIB) success story. We are the first municipality to win the top prize at the Provincial, National and International categories in each of the three years we participated.

The city of Vaughan's approved and established high level of service and community involvement was key to our success. Specifically, streetscapes along Yonge Street, Woodbridge Avenue, Islington Avenue, Weston Road and Major Mackenzie Drive are adorned with flowers. Another benefit of the Communities in Bloom program is the partnerships that have been strengthened with the Region, TRCA, Earth Rangers, Horticultural Societies, Business' and Residential owners to clean beautify and enhance their surroundings. The Communities in Bloom program showcases our beautiful community and our unparalleled civic pride, as evident by Vaughan's recognition across Canada, the USA and Europe.

**Option #1:**

Option 1 includes participation in the Schools in Bloom Program within Vaughan; the registering as a participant in the Winterlights Celebration Program, the creation of a Best Practices Video Presentation and the continued ward plantings as outlined below.

(a) The Schools in Bloom Program

As part of our involvement in the Communities in Bloom Program, the staff would continue to expand our successful Schools in Bloom Program. This program would be expanded beyond the 26 schools (public, private) and further increase participation beyond the 3,500 children. The International Judges acknowledged they were very impressed with the variety of programs and participation by the students, teachers and volunteers. In addition, this program created a wonderful opportunity to build a stronger community and promoted partnerships between the City and the two Region of York Boards of Education. The cost of this program is \$5,000.

(b) WinterLights Celebrations Program – Celebrating Light and Life

The Winterlights Celebration program is CIB national competition that judges municipalities and their business partners on their achievements in developing a winter light programs on public, private and commercial properties. This competition is judged in December but is not solely focused on Christmas celebrations. It seeks to encourage community involvement in winter festivals, lights and decorations that demonstrate a continuing, year round pride in the community.

The evaluation is based upon the following five criteria: winter pleasures, festive celebrations, visual presentation, goodwill programs and tourism/promotion. The grading system is similar to the Bloom rating used by the Communities in Bloom program.

The City's participation in this program would strengthen civic pride and community involvement, increase our tourism potential and provide national promotion and visibility on the Winterlights Celebration website.

The cost of this program has been determined as follows and staff will be requesting sponsorship from external sources in the amount of \$15,000:

Design and printing of Booklet	\$30,000
Tour	\$5,000
Signage	\$5,000
Display Lights	\$15,000
Design and printing of Tour Guide	\$8,000
Events (Kickoff, Opening, Closing)	\$5,000
Conference and Program Registration	\$7,000
Awards Ceremony	<u>\$2,000</u>
	\$67,000

(c) Best Practices Video Presentation

The National Committee of Communities in Bloom views the City of Vaughan as a CIB success story and has requested that Vaughan create a best practices video to showcase our Communities in Bloom initiatives to other municipalities across the Canada and the world. This exciting endeavor would create networking opportunities in addition to reaffirming the City's commitment to the Communities in Bloom program and objectives. The cost of the video is \$18,000.

(d) Ward Plantings

Continue Ward Plantings and floral landscape displays as per the established 2005 levels. The cost of \$25,000 is included the Parks Operating budget.

**Option #2:**

Option #2 includes all activities listed above in Option #1 with the addition of participating in the Communities in Bloom Canadian Classic Challenge, as described below.

**(e) The Canadian Classic:**

The City of Vaughan participation in the Canadian Classic, would require “twinning” with another municipality/community that has never participated in the Communities in Bloom program in order to mentor and guide them in their first year of participation. It would be the responsibility of the City of Vaughan to chose and invite its partner. Together, both municipalities/communities would be evaluated by the judges and awarded a Bloom Ranking of 1 to 5 blooms. Furthermore, each community forming the pair will be awarded its own independent bloom rating.

The Canadian Classic competition would enable the City of Vaughan to mentor and guide another municipality in their first provincial competition however we would also be engaging in another year of competition beyond the current year in addition to having to compete and be evaluated against other municipalities.

The participation of the City of Vaughan in Option #2 would require staff time and financial resources similar to those resources utilized in the 2005 International Challenge. The cost of this competition would be \$120,000.

**Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

The Communities in Bloom program promotes a safe, livable environment for the local community.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated and approved.

**Conclusion**

That Council provide direction with regards to participation of the City of Vaughan in the 2006 Communities in Bloom by considering Option 1 or 2 as outlined in this report.

**Attachments**

None

**Report prepared by:**

Marjie Fraser, Director of Parks and Forestry Operations, Ext. 6137  
Paul Gardner, Director of Parks Development, Ext. 3209  
Lynne A. Bonneville, Administrative Manager, Ext. 8296

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen  
Commissioner of Community Services