

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – SEPTEMBER 6, 2005**

### **NEW CITY HALL - LANDSCAPING PILOT PROJECT**

#### **Recommendation**

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that staff of the Parks Department be directed to undertake a pilot project during the 2006 growing season, in order to

- (1) *identify* a variety of environmentally-friendly landscaping practices (including but not limited to “zeroscaping” or low water use, the exclusive use of natural fertilizers, and the avoidance of chemical pesticides, herbicides and emission-causing lawn mowers); and to
- (2) *test* these practices on a pilot basis in a park or area of a park in Ward 2, during the 2006 growing season; and to
- (3) *use the information and experience* garnered as a result of the pilot project, to ensure that all landscaping relating to the new City Hall and its campus shall be environmentally friendly: to wit
  - a) only species of flora native to southern Ontario or, in the alternative, those tolerant of local climate patterns will be used in the landscaping of the new city hall;
  - b) preference will be given to perennial as opposed to annual plants, particularly to those that are (1) drought-resistant and/or require minimal watering beyond normal summer rainfall; (2) pest-resistant, and (3) require little or no maintenance (e.g., other than natural fertilization); and
  - c) employ any other environmentally-friendly landscaping practices which staff may identify as a result of this pilot project.

#### **Economic Impact**

Whatever the costs associated with the 2006 pilot project, the principal outcome is the identification of cost-efficient and environmentally-friendly landscaping practices which will reduce the cost of maintaining new city hall landscaping over the long-term.

#### **Purpose**

To promote environmentally friendly landscaping among the citizens of Vaughan

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

A host of environmental issues (global warming, fresh water depletion, etc.) continue to confront Canadian society, issues which can best be addressed by citizen education rather than government fiat. The most immediate experience of the natural environment available to the citizens of Vaughan is to be found in our open spaces, parks, and residential gardens.

While the City is making the transition to environmentally-friendlier practices in the maintenance of its parks, private gardens still evidence practices which are not truly friendly to the environment, practices such as (1) the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers to support the growth of plant species which would not otherwise grow in the climate of southern Ontario, and (2) the need for vast quantities of fresh water to sustain plants that are not resistant to drought or cannot otherwise survive without water beyond that supplied by summer rainfalls.

As the chief public space of the City of Vaughan, the landscaping of the new civic campus represents an optimum opportunity to educate our citizens about difference ways of treating the landscaped environment, ways that are in fact environmentally friendlier.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

### **Conclusion**

The construction of the new civic centre is an outstanding opportunity to begin to educate the citizens of Vaughan to new ways of treating the natural components of the built environment, with the twin goal of protecting and enhancing the natural environment while reducing the expense to the City and to individual homeowners of maintaining the landscapes of parks and private residences.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Report prepared by:**

Councillor Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella  
Councillor – Ward 2