

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – OCTOBER 1, 2007

CARRYING PLACE SUPER MAILBOX DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends approval of the following:

(1) that the City Manager direct appropriate staff to work in partnership with the Carrying Place Ratepayers' Association, Canada Post, and private sector sponsors recruited by the association, in developing a detailed plan that addresses all issues relating to a proposed demonstration project for the visual enhancement of the streetscape in the immediate vicinity of the Canada Post super mailbox adjacent to 2 Water Garden Lane, Woodbridge; and

(2) that the plan for the execution of the demonstration project---including any proposal(s) for the maintenance of any short or long-term features of the project, or for the removal of any or all of them and the restoration of the site to its pre-project condition---be brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee of the Whole no later than March 31, 2008, for its review and recommendation to Council, if deemed appropriate at that time.

Economic Impact

To be determined; however, any contribution by the City shall be limited to that which can be accommodated within the normal operational budgets of any departments involved.

Purpose

To demonstrate to the general public that the appearance of super mailboxes can be enhanced substantially through the efforts of local residents, with a modest level of support from City staff and contributions from private sector sponsors recruited by local residents.

Communication Plan

Corporate Communications will arrange for coverage by the local press of a small ceremony on-site to mark the launch of this demonstration project, once approved by Council and all components are in place.

Background – Analysis and Options

The state of the sidewalks, boulevards, and roadways in the immediate vicinity of super mailboxes has been an on-going concern of successive Councils since this postal delivery system was first instituted approximately twenty years ago. Too frequently, the appearance of these areas is marred by litter, consisting principally of bulk (or 'junk') mail items discarded by residents who frequent these locales. Such litter is a constant source of complaints directed to members of Council and staff.

Nevertheless, a member of the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee recently reported a successful effort to address this problem in one neighbourhood. After the placement of a blue box under the super mailbox did nothing to reduce litter, an anonymous resident planted and tended a few annuals around the local super mailbox, and this very slight enhancement to the streetscape resulted in a startling drop in the amount of litter.

With this phenomenon in mind, Councillor Carella---along with the Director of Parks and Forestry Operations and staff of the Parks Development Department, recently met with a representative of the Carrying Place Ratepayers' Association, and Mario and Mary Verrilli, who reside at 2 Water Garden Lane, Woodbridge. The latter, with the support of the association, proposed a demonstration project which would see the construction of a shelter over the super mailbox adjacent to their residence.

It is important to note that the proposed shelter would be substantially similar to one that has been located within the Islington Woods subdivision for some years.

These local residents are seeking assistance from the City in bringing this proposal to fruition, such assistance to take the form of their being instructed in what the project will entail by way of process-related issues, from the perspective of the City; and assuming these issues can be addressed successfully, whether the City would oversee the design of the shelter through Urban Design, the site construction through Parks Development, the acquisition of necessary building permits through Engineering, and the selection and on-going maintenance of plant materials through Parks and Forestry Operations. The project plan must also contemplate a means of addressing any future structural repairs.

According to the residents, they would be prepared to recruit competent volunteers to construct the shelter and install the plantings---with appropriate staff oversight, to monitor the condition of the site on an on-going basis, and to take necessary steps to ensure its integrity is maintained.

The desire of local residents and their ratepayers' association to address this issue, by way of a plan to enhance the attractiveness of a single such site, with only a modicum of support from the City, and to attend to its on-going integrity, is nothing short of laudable. As a demonstration project, it has the potential to be a winning strategy for the building of a sense of civic engagement in general, and to foster pride in a local amenity jointly developed by themselves, the City, and the local private sector, all while addressing problems perennially associated with super mailboxes.

Given the manner in which the recommendation is structured, the proposal presently before the Committee of the Whole will allow the full exploration of the detailed implications of the proposal and the resolution of those implications prior to the City approving the project

Regional Implications

Nil

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 approval sought by way of this recommendation will permit detailed discussion of the proposal by staff and interested parties. If the implications of the proposal can be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned, it will be reported back to the Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella
Councillor – Ward 2