

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MARCH 26, 2007**

### **SIGN OFF INITIATIVE – PROJECT REPORT**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services & City Solicitor, and the Senior Manager of Enforcement Services, recommend:

That this report be received for information purposes.

#### **Economic Impact**

Not applicable

#### **Communications Plan**

Not applicable

#### **Purpose**

This report is to provide details on the Sign Off Initiative undertaken by the City of Vaughan in late 2006.

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

The City of Vaughan launched a “sign-off” program in July 2006 to clean illegal signs from City streets and to prevent further signs being posted. The program was primarily focused on advertising placards and stickers placed on the backs of traffic signs and metal street poles.

Illegal advertisements were removed and stickers scraped off. After the sign was cleaned, an environmentally friendly product was applied. The product contained a residue that prevented advertising with an adhesive back from adhering to metal. The plan was to clean and spray all intersections in the City.

The solution that was used was non-toxic, non-flammable, non-hazardous, and had been approved as environmentally safe by the provincial Ministry of the Environment.

As a result of the program, approximately 1,600 intersections were made the subject of this initiative, and approximately 4,000 placard signs were removed, and at least as many stickers scraped from the back of traffic signs. This work was performed primarily by staff from the Enforcement Services Department. The Region of York also participated in the program for approximately 32 hours.

The product used was applied to all sign backings where stickers had been removed. On subsequent removal of stickers from repeat locations, sticker removal was easier, but still time consuming.

It was determined that the solution was not as effective if the solution was applied on any sign having significant sun exposure. It appeared as though the solution was not resilient to that of the sign when subjected to direct, prolonged sunlight. This was an unanticipated shortfall of the product.

The product represented a viable solution to the problem of illegal signs being stuck to signs and poles. The initiative would have been more successful if intersections were visited on a more frequent basis. However, the intention was to inspect as many intersections as possible at least

once. The number of intersections inspected and re-inspected was proportionate to the staff available to be redeployed to the project. Staff did re-inspect intersections on a complaint basis.

The operating cost of the six month project was approximately \$12,000. Staffing costs represented 87.5% of these costs. The solution, application system, and equipment, made up the remainder of the costs. This cost does not include cost impacts of having Enforcement Services staff redeployed to this initiative. This redeployment in turn results in unforeseen losses in enforcement revenue and other delays in follow-up action on other files.

Since the commencement of the project, the Sign By-law has been amended to provide for the laying of charges against those responsible for, or benefiting from, posting of these illegal signs.

The City would benefit from the continuation of this type of project, however, it would need to become a specific assignment for several staff members to be more effective. Also, Enforcement Services may not be the most appropriate department to conduct this project on an ongoing basis. Redeploying staff has a direct impact on the ability to maintain an acceptable service delivery standard for response times. As well, safety concerns expressed by Enforcement staff were a potential issue. A multi-seasonal maintenance program performed by departments which are properly equipped would allow for safe and consistent removal.

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

This report was consistent with the Vaughan Vision as it used innovative and collaborative solutions.

#### **Regional Implications**

Although the Region did commit some staff time to this project, the majority of Regional Road intersection signs were cleaned by City staff. The majority of the illegal signs are posted at Regional Road intersections. A more coordinated approach should be undertaken.

#### **Conclusion**

This project was successful in that thousands of illegal placard and sticker signs were removed from signs and posts at 1,600 intersections.

The product was not as effective as anticipated. Other product solutions should be explored.

#### **Attachments**

None

#### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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