

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - NOVEMBER 26, 2007

REUSABLE BAG / INFORMATION PACKAGE

Recommendation

The City Manager and Manager of Economic Development recommend that:

The Environment Committee direct staff to move forward with a project to create and distribute environmentally-friendly bags containing City-related environmental information.

Economic Impact

Funding for this project is available from the base budget (\$2,500) and additional funding of \$2,500 is available from Powerstream.

Communications Plan

A communications strategy for this project will be developed in conjunction with the Corporate Communications Department, Economic & Technology Development Department, PowerStream and the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee.

Purpose

To obtain Environment Committee direction to proceed with developing an environmentally-friendly bag for distributing City-related information packages and promotional materials.

Background - Analysis and Options

On September 25, 2006 Council passed a resolution to address excessive packaging in Vaughan. As a result of this motion, interest was expressed in producing a reusable bag which could serve multiple purposes, one of which would be to provide residents with an alternative to disposable plastic shopping bags when receiving information or promotional materials from the City and/or its partners. Subsequently, the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee (GVAC) also expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of either banning or taxing plastic shopping bags and/or providing alternatives to Vaughan residents. Additionally, surveys have continually indicated that Vaughan residents would like to receive more information about programs and services available through the City.

PowerStream, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) and other community service organizations (such as COSTI, United Way and Welcome Wagon) that distribute information have expressed an interest in partnering on a joint venture such as a welcome package, housed in a reusable bag. Staff have explored this possibility and propose the following:

- Proposal: 2,500 recycled/recyclable non-woven, environmentally-friendly polypropylene bags.
- Purpose: To distribute city-related promotional materials and hardcopy information packages in an environmentally sustainable manner, which demonstrates the City's commitment to the environment and environmental leadership.
- Potential Partners: GVAC, VPL, Powerstream, York Region
- Distribution Channels: Council, VPL, COSTI, Welcome Wagon, United Way, local builders.
- Cost: Approximately \$2/unit (\$2500 recoverable from Powerstream).

This project is proposed as a pilot program for 2007 as Powerstream has indicated that \$2,500 is available for 2007 only. Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of this delivery mechanism for city-related information based on level of usage, feedback and satisfaction.

Each reusable welcome package will potentially include the following:

- Greening Vaughan information (calendar, FAQs, acceptable items list)
- Powerstream information on energy conservation and efficiency
- Water for Tomorrow materials on water conservation (York Region)
- Vaughan Public Library information
- Upcoming tourism brochure
- A compact fluorescent light bulb
- Information on recycling compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Spotlight on Environment brochure
- Other supplemental information on environmental programs available in Vaughan

Should the Environment Committee concur, staff will source the reusable bags and target having the welcome packages available for distribution by January 2008.

Plan-It Promotions has been identified as a potential supplier for this product. Unlike other sources explored, Plan-It Promotions will supply in quantities of less than 5000 units, at comparable or lower prices per unit than similar products. Plan-It Promotions has the capability to produce the required quantity at short notice before the end of 2007. Additionally, the City has dealt with Plan-It Promotions on several occasions and they have proven themselves competent and capable.

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.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan is committed to demonstrating environmental leadership. The creation and distribution of a welcome package containing information about a variety of programs and initiatives will provide new residents with the materials and information they need to make more environmentally friendly choices. It will also demonstrate the City's commitment to improving the quality of our environment and providing residents with access to the necessary information and tools.

Attachments

N/A

Report prepared by:

Rebekah McGurran, Economic Developer – Environmental Sector, ext. 8426

Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

Shirley Kam
Manager of Economic Development