

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – FEBRUARY 4, 2008**

### **CREATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

#### **Recommendation**

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati recommends that:

1. The process to establish an Economic Development Committee (EDC) be initiated.
2. A Steering Committee be struck to make recommendations to Council as to the Economic Development Committee's:
  - Mandate and Terms of Reference;
  - Membership; and
  - The resources required to support its work.
3. The Steering Committee be composed of:
  - The Mayor;
  - Two Members of Council;
  - The City Manager; and
  - The Director of Economic Development.
4. The Steering Committee report back to Council at first opportunity with the recommendations identified in 2 above.
5. The Steering Committee be supported by Council Secretariat services and staff as required.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact resulting from the approval of this report.

#### **Communications Plan**

No communications plan will be required at this time.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council direction to initiate the development of an Economic Development Committee. The creation of the Economic Development Committee would be facilitated by a Steering Committee that would be struck to make recommendations to Council as to the EDC's mandate and terms of reference, membership and resource needs.

#### **Background and Analysis**

The City of Vaughan has a large and vibrant employment sector, which takes advantage of the city's outstanding location in the Greater Toronto Area and the excellent and continuously improving transportation links. Preliminary allocations, by the Region of York, of the *Places to Grow* employment projections for 2031, indicate that the number of jobs in the city could grow from approximately 150,000 in 2005 to over 270,000 by the end of the planning period.

However, there are challenges emerging that may affect the City of Vaughan's ability to take advantage of these opportunities. The issues facing Vaughan and its employment sector include:

- Globalization and national/international competition for investment;
- The strength of the Canadian dollar versus the US dollar;
- High fuel prices;
- In the short-term, a slowing economy;
- The on-going decline in the manufacturing sector;
- The continuing shift to a more service based economy;
- The implications of declining job quality; and
- Sustaining and growing the City's employment base.

In the face of these challenges it is important that the City continue to be proactive and continually support and improve its economic development efforts, especially those that focus on the growth and preservation the City's employment sector.

There are a number of concurrent opportunities emerging in the policy area, which will need to take the positive and negative conditions into account. The City will be updating its economic development strategy over the next year. Also, as part of the Growth Management 2031 Strategy, the City will be preparing an "Employment Sectors Strategy". It will identify the types of employment the City should be seeking based on Vaughan's assets and advantages. It will support the Official Plan Review and it will be one of the bases for the land use policies that will apply to our employment areas.

It is recommended that Council move ahead with establishing an EDC, the first step being the creation of a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee would investigate best practices for the operation of the EDC, research initiatives originating with other municipalities and consult with other levels of government and potential partners. It would develop the EDC's mandate, the terms of reference, its membership and identify the resources needed to operate effectively. This information would form the basis of a recommendation to Council to set up the Committee, backed by a fully-developed and well-considered plan for moving forward.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision objectives pertaining to Planning and Managing Growth including, "Revise and update the Economic Development Strategy"; and "Prepare an employment area plan for the Vaughan Enterprise Zone and employment lands".

### **Regional Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Conclusion**

Over the next twenty-five years the City will be faced with a range of opportunities that are not available to most municipalities. These include the potential for substantial employment growth, major investments in rapid transit and highway infrastructure and an outstanding location in the GTA. There are also a number of challenges ahead that will have to be addressed. It is recommended that the City proceed with the creation of an Economic Development Committee. This would help to ensure that the City and its employment sector remains strong for the long-term by developing and committing to policies and strategies that optimize the City's opportunities and mitigate the challenges.

**Attachments**

Not Applicable

**Report prepared by:**

Respectfully submitted,

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati

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