

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – DECEMBER 1, 2008**

### **TASK FORCE ON DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION & RENEWAL** **SECOND INTERIM REPORT OF PANEL 1**

#### **Recommendation**

Ward 2 Councillor Tony Carella and Mr. Steven Del Duca, Co-Chairs, Panel 1, Task Force on Democratic Participation and Renewal, recommend the attached Second Interim Report for the six-month period ending September 30, 2008, be received for information.

#### **Economic Impact**

Nil

#### **Communication Plan**

In consultation with the co-chairs, the Corporate Communications Department will issue a media release upon the adoption of this recommendation.

#### **Purpose**

To inform Council of the work of Panel 1 to date.

#### **Background – Analysis and Options**

The *Task Force on Democratic Participation and Renewal* was appointed in the spring of 2007 to make recommendations for increasing voter turnout in the 2010 municipal election. While Panel 2 will be making recommendations for increasing first-time voter turnout to 60%, Panel 1 is charged with increasing the participation rate of currently qualified voters to 50%, from 38% in the 2006 municipal election. To that end, Panel 1 met for the first time in September of last year, and six times subsequently, to address the issue from a variety of perspectives: comparing participation rates in democracies around the world, examining factors which reduce the likelihood of voter turnout, and discussing strategies for mitigating those factors---much of which work was described in its first report, which covered the period ending March 31, 2008.

The panel has continued to move its agenda forward since submitting that report, focusing on the development of a questionnaire to assess the attitudes of eligible voters with regard to the exercise of their franchise at the municipal level.

Out of desire to maintain momentum, the panelists agreed to meet in July and August---months during which statutory and special purpose committees normally do not meet as achieving a quorum is usually an issue. And while meetings in those months did not in fact achieve quorum, those panelists who were available and did attend continued, in an informal way, discussion of issues relating to the refinement of the aforementioned questionnaire.

In September panelists turned their attention to their immediate priority---the finalizing of the questionnaire, to determine current attitudes to municipal voting and what might be done to improve such attitudes and thereby result in greater voter turnout in 2010. The final version of that questionnaire as follows is attached:

At the conclusion of this reporting period, the panel was poised to deal with the issue of how best to ensure the questionnaire is widely distributed, completed, returned, and

appropriately analyzed.

**Regional Implications**

Nil

**Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

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

**Conclusion**

The attached report outlines the work done by Panel 1 to date.

**Attachment**

Questionnaire

**Report prepared by:**

Councillor Tony Carella, FRSA

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella, FRSA, Co-Chair  
Councillor – Ward 2

Steven Del Duca, Co-Chair

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### *Introductory statement (to be completed)*

**Please identify which age bracket describes you:**

18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and over

**Please indicate the length of time that you have lived in the City of Vaughan:**

0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, over 30 years

**Please identify which part of Vaughan you reside in:** Kleinburg/Nashville, Maple, Thornhill/Concord, Other (please specify)

**Are you currently a home owner or a tenant:** Home owner (apartment), Home owner (single family dwelling), Tenant, Family member of owner or tenant

**Please identify which of the following elections you have previously voted in (select all that apply):**

- Municipal election 2006 (Linda Jackson and Michael Di Biase running for Mayor)
- Ontario election 2007 (Dalton McGuinty, John Tory, and Howard Hampton running for Premier)
- Federal election 2008 (Stephen Harper, Stephane Dion, Jack Layton, and Elizabeth May running for Prime Minister)
- None of the above

**If you voted in the previous municipal election, please identify how important the following items were to you during the campaign (1 = not important at all, 5 = very important)**

- Advertisements by the city
- Advertisements for candidates in local newspapers
- Campaign websites
- Candidate literature
- Newspaper coverage (daily or community)
- Signage
- Television coverage
- Others (please list)

**If you didn't vote in the last municipal election, please identify the reason(s) why you chose not to vote. (Select all that apply)**

- I didn't understand the issues
- The issues were not important to me
- I didn't have time to vote (polls open too late, polls close too early)
- I couldn't get to the polling location (out of town, traveling on business, inaccessible to handicapped voters, etc.)
- I didn't know who the candidates were
- I didn't receive any election information
- I didn't know where to vote
- I don't have any interest in municipal politics
- Other (please specify)

**The City of Vaughan is currently exploring possible adjustments to its election process. The following questions focus on some of the potential changes that may take place in future municipal elections.**

**(NOTE – all questions will have 5 options – will not encourage me to vote, not likely to encourage me to vote, undecided, might encourage me to vote, will encourage me to vote)**

- Expanding the number of advanced polling days (e.g. advance voting for two consecutive weekends before the general vote)
- Expanding the number of polling stations
- Introducing Internet voting
- Extending voting hours into the early morning rush hour and into the evening

**One proposal for the 2010 election is to have candidates submit a mandatory biography and platform to be posted on a City website with all other candidate bios and platforms. Would you likely review this site before casting a ballot?**