

## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – SEPTEMBER 29, 2008**

### **PRESENTATION BY DPRA INC. DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN**

#### **Recommendation**

The City Manager recommends that:

1. This report and the presentation by DPRA Inc. be received;
2. A workshop with Senior Management and members of the Environment Committee be convened to build on the input received at this meeting;
3. The draft Environmental Master Plan be amended prior to the next phase of public consultation, incorporating:
  - a) The comments of the Environment Committee received at this meeting;
  - b) Input obtained at the proposed workshop.
4. The resulting revised draft of the Environmental Master Plan be made available for public comment during the week of October 20-24, (posted on the *Vaughan Tomorrow* website) in advance of the Stakeholder Meeting, which will be held on Thursday, October 30, 2008 and the Public Information Meeting, which will be held on Thursday, November 20, 2008; and
5. The Environmental Master Plan proceed to finalization on the basis of the proposed schedule set out in section b) of this report - "Next Steps".

#### **Economic Impact**

Direction to proceed with the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan has been obtained and was included in the 2007 Capital Budget.

#### **Communications Plan**

The communications plan for the Environmental Master Plan forms part of the overall Growth Management Communications Strategy, which will also encompass the Official Plan Review and the Master Plan studies. It is the intention that the revised draft of the Environmental Master Plan be placed on the *Vaughan Tomorrow* website, with an invitation to comment.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to:

- Facilitate the consulting team's presentation of the first draft of the Environmental Master Plan;
- Provide the Environment Committee with the opportunity to make its initial comments on the draft and identify the measures to secure any follow-up input from the Committee members;
- Set out the proposed steps leading to the finalization of the EMP.

## Background – Analysis and Options

### a) The First Draft of the Environmental Master Plan

The first draft of the Environmental Master Plan was distributed to the members of the Environment Committee on September 22, 2008. The plan was developed with the benefit of earlier input from the following sources:

- City Staff and the Environment Committee;
- Two meetings of the Stakeholder Committee;
- The five public Visioning Sessions held in conjunction with the Official Plan Review as part of the *Vaughan Tomorrow* growth management exercise;
- The Official Plan review team and Technical Advisory Committee.

The version before the Committee represents a working draft focusing on the introductory sections and the goals, objectives and action plans. It will provide the basis for further review and modification. The immediate objective is to use this draft, subject to its modification, for further public consultation. The revisions will be based on the input of the Environment Committee and staff, with the intention of providing a draft document that will give the public an understanding of the issues and the potential actions as its basis for commenting. It is intended that the revised draft be posted on the *Vaughan Tomorrow* website during the week of October 20, 2008. A Stakeholder Committee meeting has been scheduled for October 30 and public meeting has been scheduled for November 20.

It is noted that staff is recommending that a workshop be held with members of the Environment Committee and Senior Management during the first half of October as a means of facilitating input into the preparation of the revised draft.

### b) Next Steps

The proposed schedule for the finalization of the EMP is summarized below:

- **September 29, 2008:** Environment Committee meeting, presentation by the consulting team with discussion and comment;
- **September 30 – Mid-October 2008:** Receive follow-up input from committee members and staff (a workshop with senior staff and the committee members, facilitated by DPRA may be scheduled in this period) and redraft for public review;
- **Week of October 20, 2008:** Make EMP available for public comment on-line and to those who have requested review copies;
- **October 28, 2008:** Provision for an update to Committee of the Whole (Working Session) – Scheduling to be discussed;
- **Thursday, October 30, 2008:** Present plan at a Stakeholder meeting for comment and input;
- **Thursday, November 20, 2008:** Public meeting to present the plan;
- **Friday, November 28, 2008:** Last day for public input;
- **Week of December 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>:** Complete revisions to the plan;
- **December 8, 2008:** Submit the final draft of the EMP to the Environment Committee for consideration at its scheduled meeting;
- **January 2009:** Council ratification of the Environmental Master Plan.

c) Characteristics of the Environmental Master Plan

In reviewing the draft EMP, some key considerations should be noted.

- i. The Environmental Master Plan is an integral part of the City's *Vaughan Tomorrow* Growth Management Strategy – 2031. *Vaughan Tomorrow* and the EMP originate with the City's Strategic Plan, *Vaughan Vision 2020*. The Environmental Master Plan is designed to work as part of the City's Strategic Plan and the other components of the growth management strategy to ensure that Vaughan will continue to be an attractive place to live and work.
- ii. The Environmental Master Plan is a "Sustainability" plan which embraces the "Triple Bottom-Line" concept of a healthy natural environment, attractive and liveable communities with strong social, cultural and educational opportunities and a solid economic and financial foundation. All City actions should achieve positive outcomes in each of these areas.
- iii. The City acts through its operational and regulatory functions. It provides infrastructure and services to its communities and operates as a regulator through such processes as *Planning Act* approvals. The plan focuses on these areas as being the ones that the City will have the greatest opportunity to obtain positive results. However, it does identify a significant role for the City as an advocate, an innovator and a partner promoting change in areas beyond its jurisdiction. The City can also play an important role as an educator of our staff, residents and the business community.
- iv. The plan was strongly influenced by the public consultation process which took place in the spring of 2008. While the public was very supportive of measures that would address environmental issues like greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, air quality, the preservation of green space and waste-reduction, they also saw sustainability as a broader concept, in a manner consistent with both the triple-bottom line approach and the Province's *Places to Grow* plan (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) objective of developing "Complete Communities". Complete Communities meet peoples' needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime. As such the plan includes elements that support the provision of the community, social, cultural and economic infrastructure, services and amenities necessary to achieve this objective.
- v. The EMP contains a broad range of goals, objectives and actions. When taken together they reflect the City's comprehensive position on sustainability and how a more sustainable future will be achieved. Many of the initiatives will be under the jurisdiction of the Environment Committee. Others, like the new Official Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, will be the responsibility of other committees. Since the EMP represents the City's approach to sustainability it will be necessary to monitor and periodically report on the progress that is being made in implementing the entire plan. This would include all of the initiatives identified in the EMP, while recognizing that some will have a separate reporting track.
- vi. A critical consideration is the need to maintain a sustainable financial position when identifying services, setting service levels and evaluating the various master plans. There will be costs incurred in the planning and implementation processes set out in this plan. This must be carefully planned and staged in such a manner so as not to place a burden on either the short or long-term financial health of the City. Ultimately, the City must live within its means.

- vii. A sustainable environment is important, but sustainability is more broadly defined. The approach entails the careful balancing of the mix of investments in all areas within reasonable spending limits, which will need to be established after the evaluation of both the short and long-term implications. If one aspect or sector is consistently neglected over time it could result in Vaughan becoming a less attractive place to live, work and invest, which would compromise the City's financial sustainability and competitive position in the GTA and beyond.
- viii. In supporting complete, sustainable communities the EMP should also be considered as an integral part of the City's economic development strategy. Vaughan is in a transitional phase. It is becoming an increasingly urban municipality, moving away from the post-1945 suburban forms of development. In addition, one of the City's primary economic bases, the manufacturing sector, is under pressure. For the City to continue to prosper it will need to adapt to these changing conditions and attract the businesses and industries that will be successful in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With the planned transportation investments (e.g. Spadina and Yonge Subway Extensions, the Viva Bus Rapid Transit Service on Highway 7 and the Highway No. 427 Extension) and supportive land use policy, the city will be well-positioned to succeed.

Quality of community and quality of life will be a major consideration for businesses in deciding where to locate or expand, if already located in Vaughan. This will have a direct impact on businesses' ability to attract the employees they need. Long-term, there are indications that the labour market will be tightening. A competitive municipality will increasingly be seen as one that is both complete and sustainable with a healthy environment, strong communities and financial and economic strength. This would be an enduring competitive advantage in attracting the businesses of the future and the necessary human capital that will be one of the sources of Vaughan's long-term success.

- ix. Currently, the plan includes many on-going initiatives. However, the City is somewhat restricted in its ability to move forward with a number of plans because of the lack of baseline information. This would include areas like energy consumption and the control greenhouse gas emissions. Progress will be slow on climate change actions until this information is captured as a basis for calculating the effectiveness of future actions. Benchmarking will need to be an early priority if the plan is to be successfully implemented and monitored.
- x. It is the intention that the EMP be a living document, which evolves when new challenges arise or when new opportunities appear. However, it will be necessary to give careful consideration to new initiatives to ensure that additional commitments will not exceed the City's financial or staffing capacity.
- xi. It will be important to adopt an administrative structure to support the implementation of the Environmental Master Plan and the operations of the Environment Committee. This will include ensuring sufficient staff and budget are assigned, with the appropriate reporting relationships. The solution will be advanced as the plan approaches its final form.

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

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020 objective to "Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability" by developing and implementing an Environmental Master Plan as part of the Growth Management Strategy 2031.

### **Regional Impact**

Not Applicable.

### **Conclusion**

The version of the Environmental Master Plan, which is the subject of this report and the consultant's presentation, is a working draft. Over the next two months, the intention is to refine the EMP based on the input of the Environment Committee, the Stakeholder Committee, the public and on-going staff review. The objective is to bring the final draft of the Environmental Master Plan to the Environment Committee meeting of December 8, 2008 for approval in principle. This would lead to Council ratification in January of 2009.

The initial step in moving toward finalization is obtaining the Environment Committee's input on the working draft. This will help provide direction on priorities and content that will assist in preparing the next version of the EMP, which will form the basis for public discussion and comment. The proposed plan for finalizing the Environmental Master Plan is set out in this report.

Therefore, to move toward completion of the EMP, it is recommended that the recommendations of this report be approved.

### **Attachments**

N/A

### **Report Prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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City Manager