

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE – JANUARY 19, 2010**

### **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN UPDATE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Director of Corporate Communications in consultation with the City Manager recommend:

1. That the report and the attached implementation plan be received for information purposes.

#### **Economic Impact**

N/A

#### **Communications Plan**

Various communication options will be considered as elements of the communications plan are implemented.

#### **Purpose**

To update the Strategic Planning Committee on discussions and issues dealt with by the Strategic Communications Sub-Committee.

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

The Strategic Communications Plan was approved by Council at its meeting on May 26, 2009. Council approved the establishment of the Strategic Communications Sub-Committee June 23, 2008. The objectives of the plan are the following:

- Turn the focus of media attention towards how the City is managing affairs in the best interests of Vaughan citizens
- Earn public acceptance of Vaughan as a City that works for its residents
- Ensure the City has the tools and protocols to anticipate and prepare for contentious issues
- Build acceptance and public support for the City's re-branding initiative

The Strategic Communications Sub-Committee met on January 13, 2010 to review the Strategic Communications Plan and the priorities for 2010 and 2011 concerning key recommendations in the strategy. These include:

- Developing a communications plan to promote the benefits of living, working and investing in Vaughan
- Developing a strategic communications campaign to promote the City's green initiatives, the Economic Development strategy, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, increasing voter turnout in the 2010 election, and other major City projects
- Review the City's issues management protocol and expand issue identification capabilities
- Evaluate communications products disseminated to media
- Determine the best use of new social networking and communications tools
- Develop a strategic communications plan to engage residents

**Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

The development of a Communications Strategy is listed as a strategic initiative in the Vaughan Vision 2020 strategic plan. It is linked to the strategic objective, Demonstrate Leadership & Promote Effective Governance.

**Regional Implications**

N/A

**Conclusion**

With the Strategic Communications Plan approved by Council and the priorities set for 2010 and 2011, staff are in a position to implement the plan.

**Attachments**

1. City of Vaughan Strategic Communications Plan Update – January 13, 2010

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Respectfully submitted,

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**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN  
UPDATE**

**January 13, 2010**

## **Communications Objectives**

- Earn public acceptance of Vaughan as a City that works for its residents
- Turn the focus of media attention towards how the City is managing affairs in the best interests of Vaughan citizens
- Ensure the City has the tools and protocols to anticipate and prepare for contentious issues
- Build acceptance and public support for the City's re-branding initiative

## **Communications Strategy**

Vaughan can change the current course of media and public opinion regarding the City and Council by:

1. Improving the issue preparedness function of the City
2. Developing greater message discipline among elected and non-elected officials
3. Conducting individual strategic communications review sessions with City officials
4. Using proactive communications to support and promote the Council Priorities Plan (2009)
5. Support a Public Relations component in the Corporate Communications office dedicated to promoting new strategic initiatives and strengthening the City's connection with its residents

## Issues Management and Media Relations

Task	Approach and Recommendation	Status
<p><b>Managing Current Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prepare scenario strategies, messaging, and other support documents such as Q&amp;As for each issue.</li> <li>➤ The City should refrain from statements or actions that would drive more media coverage of any issue under review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review of Issues Management Policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conduct a thorough review of the "Issues Management Communications Strategy" which is currently being used.</li> <li>➤ Identify and track potential issues (beyond media monitoring) by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tracking the timing of particular events such as the release of reports by auditors, citizens groups, and other stakeholders – these are in addition to the public calendar of events.</li> <li>○ Consulting with department managers to remain aware of potential issues that would be of interest to the media.</li> <li>○ Maintaining relationships with reporters – "what are they hearing?"</li> <li>○ Prepare issue-based communication strategies that prepare for multiple outcomes and have considered the City's response for each.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Conduct one or a series of education seminars for City staff to help them better identify potential issues.</li> <li>➤ The City Manager and the Director of Communications should represent the City on all corporate governance, day-to-day, and contentious business issues.</li> <li>➤ Council committee chairs should continue to represent their committee's work, though it is recommended Councilors refer all contentious issues to the City Manager or Director of Communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Q 1/10</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop messaging that will help the City to respond to external issues.</li> <li>➤ develop corporate messaging that positively reinforces and demonstrates how the City is working in the best interests of Vaughan citizens on a daily basis.</li> <li>➤ Ensure this messaging is part of all external communications products such as news releases, statements, speeches, etc. regardless of the issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Message Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strategic communications review sessions should be provided to all City officials who speak with journalists. These sessions provide the opportunity to work on all areas of media interaction.</li> <li>➤ Recommended for any staff member who deals with the media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Q 2/10</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Communications Review Sessions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conduct a thorough review of the "The Corporate Policies and Protocols for Media Relations for City Staff" to identify opportunities for improvement.</li> <li>➤ Reinforce requirement to communicate media requests of City departments to Corporate Communications.</li> <li>➤ Provide media training to staff that take media calls.</li> <li>➤ Reinforce protocols with department managers and staff and conduct regular updates and reminders via email, and staff meetings.</li> <li>➤ Include the Corporate Communications contact information on all news releases, media advisories, and other publicly released communications.</li> <li>➤ To ensure consistency of message, the Director of Corporate Communications office should be made aware of all interview requests from journalists and delegate accordingly.</li> <li>➤ All requests for interviews that come through City departments should immediately be referred to Corporate Communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Q 2/10</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<p><b>When the Media Call Protocols</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue tracking coverage of issues, including the messaging and tactics of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<p><b>Media Monitoring</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue tracking coverage of issues, including the messaging and tactics of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>

	<p>critics in order to better respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate the frequency, tone and placement of related coverage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2008 Complete</li> <li>➤ 2009 in progress</li> </ul>
<b>Review of Communications Materials Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The number, frequency, and targeting of these materials should be reviewed in order to ensure greater effectiveness.</li> <li>➤ Communications materials should be developed with a stronger media "hook."</li> <li>➤ Communications materials should be graded on their relevance and sent only to appropriate news organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 1/10</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<b>Media Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sussex to conduct media outreach to research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How Vaughan interacts with journalists.</li> <li>○ How effectively the City delivers its messages through the media.</li> <li>○ Suggestions for improving relationships with journalists.</li> <li>○ Additional issues that journalists are researching.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Provide the City with a more complete list of key journalists and their interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<b>Revising Materials as Appropriate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor communications activities through media monitoring, outreach, and meetings with key stakeholders to determine whether intended objectives are being met.</li> <li>➤ Modify strategy, tactics, and messages as appropriate to reach objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>

## Communication Initiatives in Support of the Council Priorities Plan 2009

Initiatives	Approach and Recommendations	Status
<p><b>Moving Vaughan Forward</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support extension of GO Transit into Vaughan.</li> <li>➤ Support land use issues in relation to transit, hospital and highway locations.</li> <li>➤ Develop a compelling campaign that will raise the City's infrastructure needs and allow for Council/Mayor participation in the public discourse - similar to Toronto's One-Cent campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> <li>➤ Q 1/10</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase Voter Turnout</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support the City in increasing voter turnout as per the recommendation of the task force.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 3/10</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Vaughan Corporate Centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hold public events to promote the Centre, to engage all stakeholders, and foster civic pride.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In progress</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vaughan, a City that Means Business</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hold news conference at a new-to-Vaughan business that highlights the benefits of locating in the City.</li> <li>➤ Produce marketing materials to be distributed in other jurisdictions and used in advertisements.</li> <li>➤ Use the campaign to deliver positive messages about the City and demonstrate to the public that council is working to bring more jobs and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 2/10</li> </ul>



	opportunities to Vaughan residents.	
<b>Expanded Comprehensive Integrity Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and then communicate policy initiatives that put the City at the forefront of transparent government. Actions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A lobbyist registry</li> <li>○ Voluntary ban on corporate and union campaign donations</li> <li>○ Council code of conduct</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In progress</li> <li>➤ Complete</li> </ul>
<b>I Love Vaughan Campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify and encourage well-known Vaughan residents and business owners to speak out in support of the City as a great place to live and work.</li> <li>➤ Use these spokespersons in print and radio advertisements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 1/11</li> </ul>
<b>I Love Vaughan Day</b>	<p>Invite GTA residents to visit many of the world class attractions in the City such as the McMichael Gallery, Canada's Wonderland, the Kortright Conservation Area, and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Announce the program through a news conference and support it with a promotional campaign in the weeks leading up to the day.</li> <li>➤ Waive entrance fees or discount them for visitors.</li> <li>➤ Have City of Vaughan staff at each site with a promotional booth display promoting Vaughan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 1/11</li> </ul>

### Other Communications Initiatives

<b>Rebranding Vaughan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formulate a communications plan that will positively position and highlight the City's rebranding initiative.</li> <li>➤ Develop a specific site on the City's website to update residents on the progress and alert them to public comment opportunities.</li> <li>➤ Prepare issue management strategies in anticipation of opposition to selection methods and results.</li> <li>➤ Develop a rebranding roll-out plan that embraces citizen participation.</li> <li>➤ Motivate third-party groups such as community leaders to participate in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Q 2/10</li> </ul>
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<p><b>A Green City Getting Greener</b></p>	<p>communicating the rebranding initiative and demonstrate public support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Working with appropriate City staff, develop a communications campaign promoting the City's green initiatives.</li> <li>➤ Underline Vaughan's recycling success to date and other environmental initiatives.</li> </ul>	<p>➤ Complete</p>
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**Corporate Communications and Public Relations**

A Corporate Communications department plays a vital role in shaping the City's public image. It is the key link between the City and its residents. Corporate Communications takes a leading role in promoting a consistent and coherent corporate image. By managing the flow of communications with both internal and external stakeholders, the department provides information on City initiatives to all stakeholders. It is recommended that Corporate Communications:

- ✓ Promote Corporate initiatives to the public through a range of media; both paid and earned
- ✓ Organize events, public forums and consultations that support Corporate initiatives
- ✓ Develop, plan, and execute strategic communications plans that support the Corporation's priorities and promote it successes
- ✓ Provide support to Vaughan City Council by developing all communications products that inform and notify the public of recent decisions and future consultations
- ✓ Develop department protocols to effectively communicate to both the public and media
- ✓ Lead comment on contentious issues while directing media calls to Council and the Mayor when appropriate

The department must also be, in a sense, a good listener and in touch with the community. It must have the ability to understand where the citizenry stand on issues, how they are moved (or not) by City actions, and the ability to respond accordingly. In this role Corporate Communications enhances and protects the City's brand.

<p><b>Establish a Public Relations Function Inside Corporate Communications</b></p>	<p>The development of a public relations component in the City's communications office could provide a more consistent ability to establish and maintain a positive image with all stakeholders and media. Public relations activities are inherently proactive. They include using a variety of measurement tools such as polling, focus groups, and surveys that guide communications activities and ensure the right message is reaching the right stakeholders, at the right time. A public relations ability would also allow the City to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Develop proactive communications campaigns based on Council initiatives</li> <li>o Engage the public through a variety of new and expanded communications vehicles (web site, publications, town hall meetings)</li> <li>o Provide key media with positive issues and opportunities for coverage</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Determine and approve appropriate resources to establish a public relations function within Corporate Communications</li> </ul>	<p>➤ TBD</p>
<p><b>Using Technology and the Web</b></p>	<p>The web combined with portable technology is continuously providing faster ways for people to communicate. Social networking sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Flickr to name a few, offer innovative ways for people to connect and share information. Each serves a useful purpose and as a group or individually, these could be incorporated into specific communications projects undertaken by Vaughan.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate the use of new social networking sites on a case by case basis with objectives, messages, and relevance all considered.</li> </ul>	<p>➤ In progress</p>