

PARKS DEVELOPMENT RE-ORGANIZATION

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services and the Commissioner of Planning in consultation with the City Manager recommend:

- 1) That the "Review of Parks Development" report, dated May 2012, by Ms. Mary L. Baetz of Western Management Consultants be received; and,
- 2) That the recommendation and staffing outlined in the report be approved:
 - a. The Parks Development Department remain within the Community Services Commission with the dotted line relationship with the Commissioner of Planning,
 - b. That the recommended Landscape Architect position (contract) **to** increase the Department's ability to provide input and support on a timely basis to Development Planning, be referred to the 2013 budget deliberations,
 - c. That the position role and responsibilities of an existing Construction Coordinator be expanded to help manage the unit on a day-to-day basis.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 6, Objective 6.1:

- To fully support the implementation of Green Directions at all levels of City operations.

Economic Impact

The Director position is included in the base budget. The Landscape Architect position would cost \$92,000 will be included in the 2013 budget deliberations. To upgrade the existing Coordinator position to a Supervisor would cost \$10,000 and this will be absorbed in the current budget due to gapping of the Director's position and will be added in the 2013 budget. The total impact of the recommendations if approved is \$102,000 to the Parks Development operating budget.

Communications Plan

Once the recommendations have been approved, all staff will be notified.

Purpose

To seek Council approval for the recommendation and staffing scenario for Parks Development as outlined the "Review of Parks Development" report, dated May 2012, Western Management Consultants.

Background - Analysis and Options

Council at their meeting of November 29, 2011 approved Item 1, Report 8, of the Special Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee with the following amendment:

“That a future report be provided on the reporting structure for those operational units providing overlapping services identified in Western Management Consultants report such as boulevard maintenance, waste collection and parks development.”

The Parks Development Department is a 10 person unit headed by a Director (as of the date of this report, the position is vacant.) The Parks Development Department designs and co-ordinates and oversees the construction of new parks and open spaces as well as the renovation of existing parks. Much of the work of Parks Development involves participation on cross-departmental projects with two other departments, the Parks and Forestry Operations Department (which also reports to the Commissioner of Community Services) and to a lesser degree the Development Planning Department (which reports to the Commissioner of Planning).

There is no consensus within Vaughan’s peer group of municipalities, about the “proper” location of Parks Development Departments in their corporate structures. In some cities, Parks Development reports, as it does in Vaughan, to the equivalent of the Community Services Commission. In others, Parks Development reports to the Planning Commission or to Operations.

The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 Volume 1, Section 7.3 sets out the City’s Parks and Open Spaces policies. These policies recognize a rising importance for creating park amenities in areas of urban intensification where “space for larger parks is no longer available.”

The Parks Development Department has traditionally dealt with designing large parks in open spaces. The need for these skills will continue for new parks where land is still available near the outer limits of the City or to renovate or re-purpose existing parks. However, new skills and new ways of thinking will be required in order to deal with the complexities of developing parks within urban areas, such as the planned new downtown.

Options Considered by the Consultants

During the interviews, the following three options for the reporting relationship of the Parks Development Department were considered:

1. Move it to Planning: Fill the currently empty Director position and move Parks Department to Planning reporting to the Commissioner.
2. The Status Quo: Fill the currently empty Director position and keep Parks Development under Community Services reporting to the Commissioner
3. Split the Department: Separate the Parks Development functions into “design” and “construction co-ordination.” Put the “design” function into Development Planning under a manager, that is, do not fill the Director level position. Put the “construction co-ordination” function into Parks and Forestry Operations under a manager reporting to the Director.

There is little evidence supporting option #1, a move of Parks Development to the Planning Commission. The status quo, Option #2, is not sufficient either. Option #3, splitting up the Department based on design and on construction co-ordination will not work.

However, the Parks Development Department does need to develop the capability and resources to deal with the consequences of urban intensification. It does need to better fulfill its input obligations to the Development Planning Department and participation in OMB hearings.

The recommend solution is a custom made for Vaughan solution which will meet the future urban intensification needs of the City while preserving the capabilities, efficiencies and effectiveness of the present model.

The Recommendation

The recommend solution is that the Parks Development Department be led by a Director who has a direct reporting relationship to the Commissioner of Community Services *and a dotted line reporting relationship with the Commissioner of Planning.*

The Parks Development Department would remain within the Community Services Commission and would remain located physically close to the Parks and Forestry Operation Department thereby facilitating an interconnected working relationship. The dotted line relationship with the Commissioner of Planning would help ensure collaboration across boundaries with the various planning departments. This reporting structure helps achieve better cross-departmental functioning as recommended in the Corporate Structure Review prepared by Western Management Consultants in November 2011.

Other Staffing Requirements

The new reporting relationship involves the Director attending management meetings of two departments each week. This is an additional workload, but one that is critical to the success of the structure. Given the increase in work required by intensification, the City should also add another landscape architect (on a contract basis) to increase the Department's ability to provide input and support on a timely basis to Development Planning. Like the Director position, this person should have prior experience in an urban intensification environment.

In addition, consider upgrading one of the existing coordinator positions to a supervisor to help manage the unit day-to-day when the Director is attending Planning meetings and/or dealing with Planning issues.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**
 - Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to citizens.
 - Staff Excellence – Providing and organizational environment which fosters staff excellence.
 - Management Excellence – Providing excellence in the management of our city.

- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:**
 - Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery – To deliver a high quality of services within approved service standards to all City stakeholders e.g. staff, citizens and businesses.
 - Value and Encourage a Highly Motivated Workforce – To provide a positive and rewarding working environment for staff.
 - Enhance Productivity, Cost Effectiveness and Innovation – to develop and implement innovative solutions and technological infrastructure, providing enhanced productivity and operational efficiency.

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

Regional Implications

None.

Conclusion

The Parks Development Department is intimately involved in and affected by the urban intensification underway in the City of Vaughan. As such, the Department needs new skills and ways of working collaboratively on cross-departmental projects. The recommended direct / dotted line reporting structure will help achieve those goals, in addition to achieving better cross-department functions. The attached report address the reporting relationship of the Parks Development Department and elaborates on the advantages of the recommendation.

Attachments

1. "Review of Parks Development" report, dated May 2012, by Ms. Mary L. Baetz, Western Management Consultants, 4 King Street West, Suite 400, Toronto, M5H 1B6.

Report Prepared By

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Respectfully submitted,

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City of Vaughan

Review of Parks Development

June, 2012



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Review of the Parks Development Department

Background

On approving the new corporate structure for the City of Vaughan (December 2011) there were some aspects that remained undecided. To address these aspects, the Council directed the following:

That a future report be provided on the reporting structure for those operational units providing overlapping services identified in Western Management Consultants' report, such as boulevard maintenance, waste collection and parks development.

This is the report for the review of the Parks Development Department.

The Consulting Process

During the course of this project, Western Management Consultants studied various documents provided by the City and interviewed a total of 17 people by telephone or in person. The documents included such items as:

- Organization charts;
- Business plans;
- Written processes;
- Section 7.3 of the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 dealing with Parks and Open Spaces;
- Vaughan Vision 20|20 Strategic Plan 2020;
- Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries Master Plan November 28, 2008; and
- The minutes of the Operational Review Committee (June 21, 2001).¹

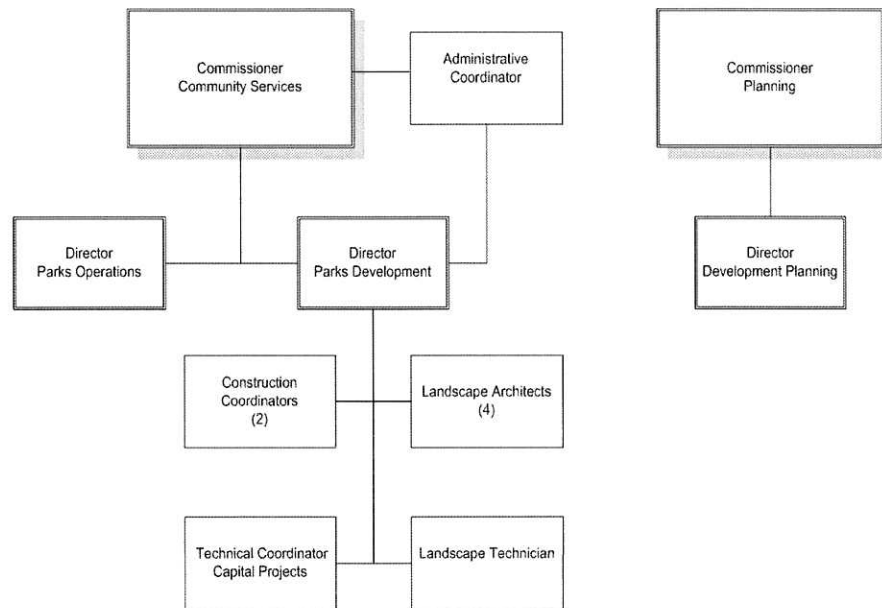
The people who were interviewed included four Councillors, the City Manager, the two Commissioners, three Directors, two Managers and five staff. Their comments and insights were important input for the recommendations that will best fit the needs of the City of Vaughan in the upcoming years.

¹ Which specified the division of functions between the (at that time) newly created Parks Development Department and the Urban Design Department (which previously was responsible for parks development.)



The Current Situation

The Parks Development Department is a 10 person unit headed by a Director (As of the date of this report, the position is vacant.) The Department is one of five units that currently report directly to the Commissioner of Community Services. The chart below shows the Parks Development department and its location relative to the two other units with which it interacts most directly.



The Parks Development Department designs and co-ordinates and oversees the construction of new parks and open spaces as well as the renovation of existing parks. Much of the work of Parks Development involves participation on cross-departmental projects with two other departments, the Parks and Forestry Operations Department (which also reports to the Commissioner of Community Services) and to a lesser degree the Development Planning Department (which reports to the Commissioner of Planning).

Parks Development transfers completed projects to Parks and Forestry Operations, so it must consult with Operations on design issues affecting the maintenance and sustainability of materials used in the construction of the facilities, the timing of the



hand-off of completed new parks and the identification of opportunities / challenges for parks in need of renovation, etc. Parks Development attends property developer meetings hosted by the Development Planning Department and provides input for property development agreements, designs on related Park issues.

As a consequence of the cross-departmental projects, there are many interdepartmental meetings, two-way consultations and interactions between the Parks Development Department and each of those two other departments. There is also an overlap in the skill sets and experiential background between some positions in Parks Development and various positions in those departments.

In light of the interconnections described above, the question arises as to the most appropriate placement of the Parks Development Department within the City's corporate structure.

Traditional Options – What Other Municipalities Do

In general, within Vaughan's peer group of municipalities, there is no consensus about the "proper" location of Parks Development Departments in their corporate structures. In some cities, Parks Development reports, as it does in Vaughan, to the equivalent of the Community Services Commission. In others, Parks Development reports to the Planning Commission or to Operations. Occasionally, the department moves from one to the other in an attempt to address difficulties inherent in each option. The rationale for the placement ranges from "that's the way it has always been" to subject matter interest on the part of individual commissioners to the waxing and waning of different priorities within the municipalities. Thus, what other municipalities are doing provides little guidance for Vaughan.

Urban Intensification – Consequences for Parks Development

The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 Volume 1, Section 7.3 sets out the City's Parks and Open Spaces policies. These policies recognize a rising importance for creating park amenities in areas of urban intensification where "space for larger parks is no longer available."



The Parks Development Department has traditionally dealt with designing large parks in open spaces. The need for these skills will continue for new parks where land is still available near the outer limits of the City or to renovate or re-purpose existing parks. However, new skills and new ways of thinking will be required in order to deal with the complexities of developing parks within urban areas, such as the planned new downtown. Necessary skills include supporting the negotiation of legal agreements for e.g., strata agreements, knowledge on appraisal methods and real estate matters, and environmental and cultural heritage planning to name a few.

To be successful in these downtown areas, the Parks Development function will increasingly be called upon to identify creative possibilities (within the policy framework) for new types of amenities and ways of using public and private urban space. It will require increased sophistication on achieving parks due to applications that are considering strata title arrangements (including underground parking beneath the parks and roads within these areas). These requests create the need for additional integrated planning involving engineering, parks development, urban design and development planning teams. The fast rate of development means that the thinking about what constitutes a “park”, must quickly evolve to deal with the up-coming realities of Vaughan’s urban areas.

As one indicator of just how quickly urbanization and intensification are occurring in Vaughan, consider this. At the moment, Vaughan has one high-rise building over 20 storeys. In four years, nineteen more are expected. Here is another indicator. By the fall of 2015, the subway extension will reach the City’s new Metropolitan Centre development at Highway 7 and Jane Street. As reported in the Toronto Star newspaper (April 6, 2012) “The goals are ambitious: Create a new urban, walkable, transit-oriented downtown with close access to green spaces, bike paths and cultural and entertainment facilities, that will offer residents a place to both work and live.” The article states that by 2031, the new downtown will have 25,000 residents and will provide employment for 11,000 people. Intensification areas include the Yonge Steeles Secondary Plan area, Highway 7, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the Vaughan Mills Secondary Plan area among others.

According to the Development Planning Department, most of those residents and jobs will be housed in high-rise buildings. While those numbers are stated in terms of the distant future, the first stages of development are happening right now. Now is the time when the parks and other amenities must be considered and incorporated into the development agreements.



As previously stated Parks Development currently attends meetings with the Development Planning Department and property developers and provides input for developer agreements on matters relating to Parks. However, when the Parks Development staff get too busy with designing and building new parks, they sometimes sacrifice their attendance at those development Planning meetings. As a consequence of urban intensification, Parks Development input will be even more important and the pressure for their attendance at these meetings will increase.

Moreover, property development applications are becoming increasingly complex and appeals to the OMB about park-related issues are contemplated by several landowners across the city. These factors will further add to the workload of the Parks Development Department and to the degree of interconnection between the Parks Development and the Development Planning Departments.

Just as importantly, the Parks Development Department will require intensification / urban space skills and experience, and may need to boost its staffing, if it is to effectively meet the future demands and complexities that growth brings.

Current Processes for Managing Plans and Reviews

The processes used to circulate proposed development documents and to gather comments was reported to be working appropriately. The processes depend heavily on judgment calls by those who receive the proposals as to whether additional review / comment is required. There has been delay in the past due to the Parks Director being "overloaded." In the absence of a Parks Director the two Construction Coordinators have been filling this role in consultation with the Commissioner and have managed to keep up with demand by putting in overtime hours, however, some of the parks construction timelines have also slipped.. The Department would benefit from additional capacity to review plans and attend meetings in the future.



Options Considered by the Consultants

During the interviews, people generally cited three different options for the reporting relationship of the Parks Development Department:

1. Move it to Planning: Fill the currently empty Director position and move Parks Department to Planning reporting to the Commissioner.
2. The Status Quo: Fill the currently empty Director position and keep Parks Development under Community Services reporting to the Commissioner
3. Split the Department: Separate the Parks Development functions into “design” and “construction co-ordination.” Put the “design” function into Development Planning under a manager, that is, do not fill the Director level position. Put the “construction co-ordination” function into Parks and Forestry Operations under a manager reporting to the Director.

Evaluation of the Three Options

All change is disruptive. In some cases, the disruption is for the good. In others, the change is simply disruptive.

A “good” disruption would occur when an organization uses a significant change as an opportunity to achieve a super-ordinate goal. An example would be where an organization decides to relocate its head office to another city as part of a strategy to make a complete break from the previous culture and to adopt new ways of doing business.

With the advent of urban intensification, the Parks Development Department needs to change how it thinks about parks and the process it uses to develop parks. It is possible that this change could better be effected by the moving the Department from the Community Services Commission to the Planning Commission assuming that the skill set resides in the Planning area. In other words, a fresh location supporting a fresh approach.

In the opinion of the consultants, the degree of required change is not sufficient, by itself, to justify shifting the reporting relationship to the Planning Commission. There are other ways of introducing the needed expertise, experience, resources and skills into the Parks Development Department while preserving the existing reporting



relationship. We describe these ways in the next section called, "Recommended Solution and Staffing Scenario."

As previously stated, in some cases the disruption caused by change is simply disruptive. As such, the weight of evidence supporting change must be strong. There must be good and valid reasons to make the change, reasons that will produce benefits that exceed the cost of the disruption. For example, if the department were incompetent and required a good shake-up, that would be a strong case for change. If the department were riddled with corruption, that would be another strong case for change. These situations simply do not exist in the Parks Development Department. Quite the opposite, the Department has been doing an excellent job. Therefore, the need for a shake-up cannot be used as support for moving the Parks Development Department into the Planning Commission.

Nor can Vaughan look to the practice of other municipalities to find strong evidence to support changing the reporting relationship. As described in the section, "Traditional Approaches: What Other Municipalities Do", there is no consensus about the proper reporting relationship for parks development departments.

With respect to Option #3, Split the Department, this option, while mentioned, had little support among the interviewees and the consultants agree that it is not the best option. There are two primary reasons for this assessment. The first reason is based on how the Parks Development Department actually works. Projects are assigned to individuals who then have full responsibility for both design and construction co-ordination of their projects. In other words, there is not one group in the Department that does the design work and another group that oversees the physical building of the park. The same people do both for their specific projects. So, splitting up the Department based on design and on construction co-ordination does not work.

The second reason for rejecting this option is that it does not facilitate the bringing in of new and creative ways of thinking about parks and park amenities necessitated by the urban intensification. As well, there is no supervisor within Parks Operations who would be a natural fit to manage any staff coming over from Parks Development. Current supervisors are reported to be fully loaded and also may not have the expertise to properly implement the more complex urban development as in the VMC.

In conclusion, there is little evidence supporting a move of Parks Development to the Planning Commission. That having been said, Option #2, the Status Quo, is not sufficient either. The Parks Development Department does need to develop the



capability and resources to deal with the consequences of urban intensification. It does need to better fulfill its input obligations to the Development Planning Department and participation in OMB hearings. We set out our recommendations for how best to do this in the following section.

Recommended Solution and Staffing Scenario

We recommend a creative solution for Vaughan, a custom made in Vaughan solution to meet the future urban intensification needs of the City while preserving the capabilities, efficiencies and effectiveness of the present model.

The Recommendation

We recommend that the Parks Development Department be led by a Director who has a direct reporting relationship to the Commissioner of Community Services *and a dotted line reporting relationship with the Commissioner of Planning.*

The Parks Development Department would remain within the Community Services Commission and would remain located physically close to the Parks and Forestry Operation Department thereby facilitating an interconnected working relationship. The dotted line relationship with the Commissioner of Planning would help ensure collaboration across boundaries with the various planning departments. This reporting structure helps achieve better cross-departmental functioning as recommended in the Corporate Structure Review prepared by Western Management Consultants in November 2011.

In practical terms, here is what would be involved. The Commissioner of Community Services would have primary responsibility for the department with the Commissioner of Planning having co-approval authority in the major decisions, such as:

- Selecting and hiring the Director.
- Conducting the performance assessment of the Director.
- The aspects of the Business Plan for the Department that deal with matters key to Planning.
- The Department's staffing and budget requests as they relate to / affect the ability of Planning to fulfil its mandate.
- Others as agreed to by the two Commissioners.



To be clear, the areas of joint accountability for the Director would not include the construction / renovation aspects. Where the Director feels that there is an issue that can't be resolved through the reference to existing policy, it would be the responsibility of the Director to bring together the two Commissioners to get resolution.

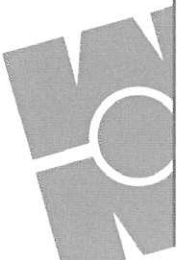
One process change would be to have the Director attend bi-weekly management meetings of both Commissions. This would help ensure that he is brought into plans and actions early enough to make a difference. It would also contribute to building relationships necessary to success for this position.

One advantage of this approach is to heighten the focus on "shared accountability" that was recommended in the Organization Review of the City (reported in November, 2011). In that report it was noted that Commissioners need to demonstrate their support of shared accountability (such as in corporate initiatives) and this recommended approach to Parks Development will assist in achieving that goal. The dotted line / solid line reporting relationship (if well executed) helps the Director understand his or her accountability to make sure both points of view are heard and considered.

Staffing the Director Role

In setting the desired qualifications of the candidates for the Director position, the following experience and skills should be added to the current job descriptions:

- Previous experience with other cities that have undergone urban intensification;
- Knowledge of the range of options for park amenities in different types of urban settings;
- Experience in negotiating development agreements (esp. strata title agreements) with respect to park amenities and public access to private property – what goes into such agreements, future contingencies, maintenance obligations, liabilities, etc.;
- Experience / knowledge on environmental and cultural heritage planning;
- Experience coordinating design processes and experience with park planning involving multiple stakeholders; and
- Ability to work collaboratively and support /coach staff on working collaboratively on integrated planning teams (engineering, parks development, urban design, and development planning).



The existing job description for the Director should be reformatted to put together those responsibilities that are key to both Commissions and separately put together those which remain within the context of the Community Services Commission.

Other Staffing Requirements

The new reporting relationship involves the Director attending management meetings of two departments bi-weekly. This is an additional workload, but one that is critical to the success of the structure. Given the increase in work required by intensification, the City should also add another landscape architect (on a contract basis) to increase the Department's ability to provide input and support on a timely basis to Development Planning. Like the Director position, this person should have prior experience in an urban intensification environment.

Consideration should also be given to upgrading one of the existing coordinator positions to a supervisor to help manage the unit day-to-day.

Conclusion

The Parks Development Department is intimately involved in and affected by the urban intensification underway in the City of Vaughan. As such, the Department needs new skills and ways of working collaboratively on cross-departmental projects. The recommended direct / dotted line reporting structure will help achieve those goals.

