

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2009

Item 1, Report No. 31, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 15, 2009.

**1 PUBLIC SQUARES (PLACEMAKING AND CITY BUILDING) PRESENTATION
FILE #15.110**

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, dated May 25, 2009, be approved; and
- 2) That the presentation by the Director of Policy Planning and Urban Design, and presentation material entitled, "Public Squares – A Short History, Types, Characteristics, Examples and Case Studies", be received.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT staff and the City's consultants for the New Official Plan, Urban Strategies Inc. make public spaces a prominent focus of the Official Plan Review.

Economic Impact

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report, although the implementation of next steps may require an adjustment to the public space funding models.

Communications Plan

Discussions regarding public space will be an ongoing aspect of the New Official Plan and the Focused Area Study initiatives and as such the communication strategies for these projects will cover this topic.

Purpose

In response to a request made by the Official Plan Review Committee on March 10, 2009, the report outlines a preliminary strategy for the creation of public squares in the City of Vaughan. Public squares are a linchpin component that integrates the three main drivers of the Official Plan Review process - 'Placemaking,' 'City Building' and 'Sustainability.' The three key drivers provide overall direction and serve as the basis for the policies of the Official Plan. The enhancement of the public realm, of which public squares are an integral part, is essential in contributing to the transformation outlined by the Vaughan Tomorrow New Official Plan Process.

Background - Analysis and Options

Vaughan is transforming into a more urban City in its own right from a collection of residential and employment areas and historic villages. The City is now at a stage in its evolution where City building and placemaking go hand in hand.

With this change and growing civic consciousness come new imperatives for City-wide initiatives towards creating a high quality public environment with unique and memorable places for people that foster a stronger sense of civic belonging.

The invigoration of the public realm also promotes pedestrian-friendly, transit-supportive growth that is a catalyst for re-urbanization, intensification and sustainability.

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City Squares Through History

Starting with the Western world's Greek agora and Roman forum, the public square has been at the centre of great cities and great civilizations for most of recorded history. Squares serve the essential human need for face-to-face interaction, commerce, trade as well as a stage for cultural events.

At the end of the Dark Ages during Medieval times, cities began to flourish at the juncture of key trade routes. These junctures were enlarged into squares, which became the centres of social, cultural and economic life and the City evolved organically around them. During the Renaissance and Baroque period the design of squares became formalized using new artistic techniques of perspective. Landmark buildings such as churches, City halls and elegant residences enclosed their edges and anchored the square at the physical centre of the City.

Early North American towns that evolved with the horse and buggy developed formal town greens or commons such as the small, neighbourhood squares of Savannah Georgia or the Boston Common. The French layed out Lafayette Square in New Orleans, which has survived to this day. Thomas Jefferson hired the French architect L'Enfant to lay out grandiose avenues, squares and malls for Washington D.C, but these were largely an anomaly in the morphology of American towns.

The tradition of the grand pedestrian civic or market square did not permanently take root on the North American urban landscape. North American cities were primarily shaped by the Industrial Era and rapidly expanding cities were predominantly laid out on a grid to facilitate development and outward expansion with little sentimental attachment to public spaces during subsequent waves of redevelopment. San Francisco's Union Square, which was the world's first square with an underground parking garage, managed to buck this trend by reinventing itself many times while maintaining its status as a fixture of that City's urban landscape for the last two hundred years.

It was not until the City Beautiful Movement when the design of spaces in North America, albeit mostly for the automobile, was given a deliberate Beaux Arts and classical grandeur to impart a sense of harmonious order on the urban landscape. Toronto's grand University Avenue was inspired by this movement, but was the only vestige of a larger vision that never got built.

The modernist ideas of Le Corbusier found their expression during the post-war boom when the ubiquitous highway gutted the inner City and began to scatter people thinly over a larger urban landscape and housing projects relocated people from ghettos into placeless complexes. Traditional pedestrian and transit-oriented urban forms and architecture were rejected to serve the imperatives of the automobile and rapid suburbanization, effectively dissolving public spaces and causing social dislocation.

The public square returned as a pedestrian entity during the late Modern movement. Nathan Phillip's Square in Toronto, with its colonnade inspired by the Greek agora's peristyle, and numerous new plazas such as Boston's City Hall Plaza, the Portland Open Space Sequence (Lovejoy Fountain) and San Francisco's iconic Embarcadero Plaza, marked a tentative resurgence of civic life and reclamation of the public realm. They enjoyed varying degrees of success from a lack of understanding of their underlying dynamics.

During the postmodern period starting in the mid 1970's, there was a somewhat superficial attempt to reclaim some traditional City forms, public spaces and architectural design principles. However, without an understanding of the ecology of the public square, the planning regime, density, land uses, pedestrian and transit transportation networks needed to support it, projects such as Charles Moore's trend-setting Piazza D'Italia soon fell into disuse and disrepair.

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In response to the social dislocation, declining health, low levels of civic engagement and placelessness caused by suburban sprawl and an automobile-oriented concept of urban development, the New Urbanism movement sought to understand and recreate the underlying ecology of the public square that combined the disciplines of Urban Design and Planning.

Typologies

To support this important trend and building on such classic works as Camillo Sitte's 'The Art of Building Cities' and Jan Gehl's 'New City Spaces' to name a few, a growing body of knowledge on the subject of public squares began to grow to deepen the understanding of the anatomy and dynamics of public squares. Notable books including 'Public Spaces and Urban Spaces,' 'Public Life in Urban Places' and 'New City Spaces' analyzed the workings of the public realm and underscored the need to understand the ecology of public spaces, their taxonomy and to fit the space into its context. The monumental square, the traffic square, main City square, civic cove and forecourt became part of the urban planner's and designer's lexicon.

Characteristics

Christopher Alexander's seminal work 'A Pattern Language' and Jane Jacob's 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities,' to name relatively recent works, attempted to dissect the anatomy of design and planning of successful public spaces. A slew of new companies have sprung up over the last decade such as Project for Public Spaces - recently hired by the City of Mississauga - to apply a comprehensive approach to public spaces. Concepts such as enclosure, focal point and programming became part of the nomenclature of public space design.

Trends and Evolution

Over the past decade in particular, many older European cities such as Lyons, Rome and Warsaw have begun to reclaim more of their public realm while younger cities in North America such as Toronto, Mississauga and Waterloo are creating new squares from scratch.

Case Studies

A number of recent case studies are instructive to the Vaughan context and present opportunities. Spurred on by a community initiative, the City of Toronto began to carve Dundas Square out from a derelict area at Yonge and Dundas Streets. The local councilor hired Ron Sesconi, the planning consultant who was involved in creation of Battery City Park in New York and Canary Wharf for Olympia and York in London to lead. The primary objective was to recreate sense of space in this area long overshadowed by the inward-looking Eaton Centre. An Official Plan and Zoning Amendment was prepared and the City began to assemble land; however, not all of the necessary parcels could be obtained this way. Therefore a Community Improvement Area was created under Section 28 of the Planning Act which enabled the City to acquire land and hence initiated proceedings under Expropriation Act. The landowners appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board; however the Board ruled in favour of the City in June 1998. An RFP was prepared for the design of the square itself whereas the underground parking was built and managed by the Toronto Parking Authority. The winning design by Brown & Storey Architects was built. A Request for Qualifications led to the sale of lands on the north side of square to PennEquity where lively uses were envisioned to inject life into the square. The proceeds from this sale paid for the square construction. Land acquisition, design and construction of the square was financed and carried out as one capital project. The square is run by Board of Management consisting of the local Business Improvement Area, the City of Toronto and the community organizations, which are in charge of marketing and programming.

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The City of Waterloo began the metamorphosis of a City-owned parking lot in front of a parking lot into Uptown Waterloo Square ten years ago. Initially businesses balked at the loss of 66 surface parking spaces even though other parking sites were created within 2 minutes walk and a parking structure was built. The City studied the most suitable locations and established criteria for size, location and design, and as a result the Uptown Waterloo site was chosen. A business case was prepared to highlight the costs versus benefits and a two-part RFP was issued for both Planning and Design. The project manager attributes the successful creation of the square in part to a decision to enlist the renowned Project for Public Spaces group for a one day presentation to sell the City, residents and businesses on the idea of creating a public square. Given the groups' credibility and neutrality, the tide was turned in favour of the square's creation and once enough consensus was built, Council endorsed the second phase of the RFP for the design. The construction of the square was paid for through taxes and debentures and the final phase of design will be eligible for federal infrastructure money. Since the construction of the square, the new higher end businesses have moved in while some businesses who failed to adapt moved away. An LRT through the area is now being planned.

The City of Kingston reclaimed a former parking lot at the rear of their City Hall within an area with dense urban fabric and historic buildings. An historic square once existed here that was used as farmers' market and gathering place, which over time became disused and became a parking lot. The City sought to reclaim the public square as part of downtown revitalization and established a BIA and Downtown Action Plan to that end. The square encountered strong opposition due to the loss of parking. The development of the square was co-coordinated with replacement of storm, sanitary and electrical infrastructure and pedestrianization of the downtown. A fountain, skating rink, new lighting, benches are proposed to eventually enhance and support year-round uses. A Marketing and Programming Plan has already attracted events and tourists who have helped revitalize the downtown, even during winter months. As a result, the loss of vehicular traffic has been more than made up for with significantly more pedestrian traffic. The success of the square is now attracting private sponsorships and donations that account for 75% of its operating budget. More importantly, the revitalized pedestrian realm is attracting new developments and renovations.

Similar to Kingston, the City of Stratford is at the early stages of creating a downtown square on land owned by the City to the rear of City Hall. This measure is aimed at revitalizing the downtown that has been degraded by retail fleeing to outlying areas and power centres. Many downtown buildings having vacant upper floors. The Stratford City Centre Committee has initiated a public engagement process to develop a vision of Market Square and has concluded that it could become a focal point of downtown revitalization. The Market Square Advisory Committee prepared the Design Competition Guidelines for the recent design RFP won by PLANT Architect. The City has recently commenced an impact analysis including cost analysis, parking impact as well as a programming and business plan to support its development.

Planning Tools

Vaughan can learn from these case studies that to create successful public square critical steps must include: stakeholder engagement; studies that provide direction as to location and size; the creation of a supportive planning framework; and a proactive marketing plan.

All stakeholders including ratepayers and landowners should be engaged in a process of negotiation and discussion from the outset to make sure the many benefits of creating a stronger pedestrian realm are understood.

The experience of our sister cities and organizations such as Project for Public Spaces can be used to build support in a non-partisan way. The establishment of a City Squares Committee with an ongoing mandate to initiate and oversee the process and engage public/landowners may also be helpful.

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Under the Planning Act the City has specific tools at its disposal to promote this process. For example, where public squares or public realm amenities are created as part of a redevelopment, Section 37 of Planning Act may be used to provide a density bonus incentive. Section 37 permits the City to authorize increases in permitted height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefits, provided that there are related Official Plan policies in place.

In addition, Section 28 of the Planning Act allows municipalities with policies in their official plans for community improvement to designate by by-law a “community improvement project area” (CIP). Criteria include dilapidation, faulty arrangement or any other environmental, social or community economic development reason. Once a CIP has come into effect, the municipality may acquire land.

An initial review of City-owned land may yield possible sites that could avoid any protracted legal difficulties.

Based on the findings of the current Parking Review Standards Study, reduced parking ratios could free up surplus lands for public squares and promote redevelopment of existing sites in designated growth centres that are ripe for intensification. Possible sites include Vaughan City Centre and Vaughan Corporate Centre both having large areas of underused parking. Other areas include Market Lane in the Woodbridge core.

Planning and Design Process

Since Vaughan is now engaged in the Official Plan review process, the time is opportune to incorporate broad policy underpinnings for the creation of public squares tied to ‘Placemaking,’ which has been identified as a key driver of transformation. Other initiatives associated with the Official Plan Review, such as the Transportation Master Plan Study and the “Active Together” Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture and Libraries should be coordinated to foster the development of public squares as part of a hierarchy of parks and open spaces.

An assessment of the inventory of City-owned land or existing parks in urban areas may reveal opportunities for the creation of public squares in association with future libraries, community centres and other such generators of activity.

Once the planning framework is in place, a business case/financial model will need to be developed to identify costs and benefits of creating a square in a specific location along with a financial model to identify operating costs, capital costs, potential sources of revenue generated by the square. This work can be explored as an outcome of the New Official Plan. Marketing and Programming Plans have helped to establish squares in the civic consciousness and promote their long term economic viability.

Next Steps

The findings of this report will be incorporated into the Official Plan Review Process. Urban Strategies, the main consultant for Vaughan’s Official Plan Review will base demonstration site work on the aforementioned findings in order to illustrate how and where public squares can be realized. Furthermore, it is within the Official Plan Review scope of work, consistent with the ‘Placemaking’ theme, to provide direction on suitable locations, size and typologies for public squares as central nodes around which future growth centres and growth patterns in Vaughan may revolve.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly “Plan & Manage Growth & Economic Vitality,” “Lead & Promote Environmental Sustainability,” and “Preserve our Heritage & Support Diversity, Arts & Culture.”

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Regional Implications

This initiative is consistent with Region of York Official Plan (June 1, 2008) with respect to creating healthy, culturally vibrant communities that are safe, attractive, pedestrian-friendly and transit supportive.

Conclusion

City squares will not only serve as a catalyst for re-urbanization of Vaughan into a more compact, inherently sustainable urban form but also create the places that engender a sense of place and community and generate the cultural and economic synergies that will herald the next stage of Vaughan's evolution as a place to live, work and play. The Official Plan Review process provides an opportunity to integrate a process, planning and funding mechanism to realize these squares and the dream of Vaughan as a 'City of Squares.' City Staff and the City's consultants for the New Official Plan will make public squares and spaces a prominent focus of the New Official Plan Process.

This report has been prepared with reference to a number of different texts. Further information can be found in the following:

- 'The Art of Building Cities' by Camillo Sitte
- 'New City Spaces' by Jan Gehl & Lars Gemzoe
- 'Squares – A Public Design Guide for Urbanists' by Mark C. Childs
- 'Great Streets' by Allan B. Jacobs
- 'Genius of the European Square' by Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard, Henry L. Lennard
- 'Public Life in Urban Places' by Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard, Henry L. Lennard
- 'Public Places - Urban Spaces' by Matthew Carmona
- 'Design of Cities' by Edmund N. Bacon
- 'History of Urban Form – Before the Industrial Revolutions' by A.E.J. Morris
- 'Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture – Papers from the Wave Hill – National Park Service Conference' Edited by Charles A. Birnbaum
- 'A Pattern Language' by Christopher Alexander
- 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' by Jane Jacobs
- 'The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces' by William H. Whyte
- 'The Politics of Public Space' by Setha Low and Neil Smith

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Item 2, Report No. 31, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 15, 2009.

2 **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL PILOT PROJECT**
 VAUGHAN CORPORATE CENTRE
 FILE #25.5.1
 WARDS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) **That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, dated May 25, 2009, be approved subject to replacing “authorize” where it appears in Clause 3 with “consider” so that Clause 3 now reads:**
 3. **That Council consider a maximum yearly budget of \$10,000.00 to be included in the Development Planning Department’s 2010 Operating Budget, for the Design Review Panel, and that a request be referred to the 2010 budget deliberations; and**

- 2) **That the presentation by the Director of Policy Planning and Urban Design, and presentation material entitled, “Design Review Panel Pilot Project”, be received.**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the City of Vaughan undertake a Pilot Project to implement a Design Review Panel for a period of 2 years, addressing higher density development (mid-rise and high rise) in key locations as generally shown on Attachment 1 and including higher density development along the major corridors not otherwise identified;
2. That the Terms of Reference, attached hereto as Attachment 3, for the creation of a Pilot Project to implement a Design Review Panel be adopted;
3. That Council authorize a maximum yearly budget of \$10,000.00 to be included in the Development Planning Department’s 2010 Operating Budget, for the Design Review Panel, and that a request be referred to the 2010 budget deliberations;
4. That the prospective applicants be required to undertake pre-application consultation with the Design Review Panel prior to the site plan application being submitted; and,
5. That at the conclusion of the first and second year of the project Planning staff evaluate the pilot project, and provide an interim and final report respectively, on its conclusions and recommendations to Committee of the Whole.

Economic Impact

In order to establish and operate a Design Review Panel, it will be necessary to include funding in the yearly budget. The panel will provide their time on a volunteer basis, however, funding will be necessary for (staff overtime, if after hours work is required), administrative support, materials/supplies, lunch and travelling expenses for the panel members. The recommended yearly budget is \$10,000.00, to be included in the Development Planning Department’s 2010 Operating Budget.

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Communications Plan

Once the Pilot Design Review Panel has been established and operating for a period of time, the City will solicit feedback from the development community and design professionals, and report back to Council with respect to the panel's efficacy and any appropriate modifications.

Purpose

The purpose of the Vaughan Design Review Panel is to provide expert impartial advice and guidance on higher density and or complex development proposals within the City. The Panel would act as an independent urban design advisory body to the Planning Department, in order to assist in achieving high quality architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, and environmental sustainability in development.

The Panel is an advisory body and can make significant contributions to the development approvals process but it does not replace the process. Their input is integrated into the approvals process to provide advice to City staff. It does not have the authority to approve or refuse a project or make policy decisions.

Background and Analysis

The design quality of development is of significance to Vaughan. Economic, cultural and social, environmental benefits can be derived from high quality design streetscapes and landscapes, and contributes to:

- Achieving better aesthetics for buildings and associated streetscapes;
- Maximize amenity, security and safety for occupants and the broader public; and
- Minimize the consumption of energy from non renewable sources, conserve the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On December 8, 2008, when Vaughan Council was considering an award of contract for the Vaughan Corporate Centre Focused Area Study, Council resolved:

“That Staff be directed to bring a report to Committee of the Whole, Working Session, by June 2009 on the establishment of a pilot Design Review Panel to provide design advice on developments in the Vaughan Corporate Centre and potentially for other developments in the City.”

Council's recommendation was to provide advice on developments in the Corporate Centre Area and potentially for other developments in the City. It is appropriate that the Panel review other areas within Vaughan that have higher density development and/or require the same level of attention in terms of high quality architecture/design in public spaces. Furthermore, in the short term, there may not be enough applications in the Vaughan Corporate Centre alone, to take advantage of the Panel's expertise. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Panel also review developments in other areas where more complex, higher order and higher profile development is taking place, in areas such as, but not limited to, those outlined on Attachment 1.

In light of Council's resolution, staff is bringing forward this report for the Committee's information and consideration.

Design Review Panel

A number of Cities have determined that current regulatory development approvals process does not adequately address the quality of design in proposed developments. This can mean that opportunities are missed in achieving high quality architecture, landscape architecture and urban

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design. Many cities in Canada, United States, England and Europe, in order to improve the design quality of buildings and the public realm, use a Design Review Panel to augment the development approval process. In Canada review panels exist in Vancouver, the National Capital Commission in Ottawa, Montreal, Niagara Falls, Mississauga and London. Design Review Panels have been established in the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, and within the City of Toronto as a two year pilot project for specified areas within the City, with a view to test the feasibility of incorporating the Design Review Panel within the development approvals process.

Design Review Panels (Panel) provide professional, objective advice on matters that relate to design affecting the public realm, including the design of proposed buildings, streets, parks and open spaces. Their input assists in achieving and maintaining design excellence. Design Review Panels can make significant contributions to the development approvals process but do not replace the process. Their input is integrated into the development review process to provide advice to the City staff involved in this process. Panel members are design professionals who review development proposals based on publicly approved criteria such as secondary plans or urban design guidelines.

As noted previously, the Design Review Panel is strictly an advisory body and makes recommendations only. It does not have authority to approve or refuse projects or make policy decisions. It is not intended to replace the development approval process, or the role of Council. It is an additional stream of consultation to enhance the development approval process.

The advantages of a Panel is that it has the potential to be a catalyst for high quality design and will send a message to the public, the development industry and the design community that design standards have been raised commensurate with the vision for an attractive and sustainable City.

Accordingly, it is appropriate to develop and bring forward for Council's approval a Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Design Review Panel pilot project that would be applicable to the Vaughan Corporate Centre and would also apply to other sites associated with major nodes and corridors particularly those areas associated with higher order transit initiatives, such as Steeles West, Yonge Street and the Carville District.

A framework for a Design Review Panel pilot project is outlined below based on practices in other jurisdictions. The pilot project is proposed to test the feasibility of a city-wide Panel by implementing a permanent Panel for a trial period to review development proposals in select areas within the City.

Functions of the Panel

The Panel is an advisory group and makes recommendations only. It is not a decision making body. It is an independent design advisory body to the Planning Department. It does not have the authority to approve or refuse. Council will remain the decision making body on any recommendations brought forward from staff.

The functions of the Panel are as follows:

- to provide independent advice to staff, applicants, and their consultants, prior to and following the submission of relevant development applications in order to aid development proponents in delivering projects which contribute good quality design in the public realm;
- to promote the understanding of design quality, and provide advice on other mechanisms and initiatives in achieving high quality design, and

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- to foster an effective working relationship with the development industry.

Scope of Work

The Panel will evaluate development applications brought forward to it, and provide professional objective advice to the Commissioner of Planning, at the site plan pre-application and application stages, on matters of design that affect the public realm, including the design of proposed buildings, site plans, structures, open spaces, and associated streetscapes in order to promote and uphold standards of design excellence.

Whenever possible, it is recommended that prospective applicants be required to undertake pre-application consultation with Staff and the Design Reviews Panel. The mechanism for accomplishing this requirement, will be a component of the Bill 51 conformity process coming forward to Council in the latter part of 2009.

Design Review Panel Membership

The Design Review Panel will consist of 12 volunteer members with not less than seven (7) members for any given meeting, who have been appointed for a period of two years. The Panel will comprise at least six (6) architects, two (2) landscape architects, one (1) engineer, one (1) urban designer and two (2) other individuals with experience in planning, design or engineering.

The City will issue a request for Expressions of Interest for Panel members and will include criteria to ensure an appropriate mix of professionals with appropriate expertise.

The criteria for Panel membership nomination will be developed on best practices research of other municipalities with Design Review Panels and tailored to Vaughan's local needs. Emphasis will be placed on qualified design professionals who are well respected among their peers.

Panel member selection is based on the selection procedures of other Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Mississauga, and Ottawa. Attachment 2 provides a comparison of the roles, scope of work and membership composition of the Design Review Panels for the above noted cities, which will serve as a basis for Panel composition.

City staff will nominate Panel members from expressions of interest to ensure appropriate panel membership mix, and make recommendations for approval by City Council.

Panel members will serve a two year term. Panel members are to be non-paid positions. Traveling expenses will be covered by the City.

No City staff or members of Council shall be appointed to the Design Review Panel.

Panel Nomination Criteria

Emphasis will be placed on qualified design professionals who are well respected among their peers, who have a broad range of experience.

The following criteria will be employed to nominate members of the Design Review Panel:

- (i) Membership in a professional design association:
 - Ontario Association of Architects,
 - Ontario Association of Landscape Architects,
 - Ontario Professional Planners Institute, or
 - Professional Engineers of Ontario,
 - Toronto Society of Architects.

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- (ii) Minimum 15 years of practice in their respective field.
- (iii) The Panel shall have a wide range of relevant professional experience including:
 - High quality design in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, planning and engineering,
 - Mix of local and international practice
 - Mix of project scales
 - Mix of project types (commercial, residential, institutional, parks and public space design)
 - Knowledge and practice of sustainable design, and
 - Professional research and academic involvement.
- (iv) Respected among peers as recognized by awards, publications and teaching appointments.

Operation and Meeting Schedule

The Commissioner of Planning or his designate(s) will be responsible for the management/operation of the Design Review Panel.

The Design Review Panel will meet on a monthly basis as required, during regular work hours.

Meeting Procedures

Panel meetings will be attended by appropriate City staff as required. Planning staff will make a brief presentation to provide the Panel with an understanding of the planning and technical analysis of the project outlining its context, background, scope, related policies, design policies or guidelines and to reiterate the design concerns which staff would like the panel to address.

The applicant and their design consultant will be given an opportunity for a brief presentation to explain the project objectives and how it responds to the City's policies. Subsequent to staff and proponent presentation the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the project team on any aspect of their development proposal. The Panel will review the presentation material, followed by a discussion on the merits of the design of the project. With the guidance of the Chairperson, the Panel will formulate their recommendations for the project at the end of the Design Review Panel Meeting.

Integration of Development Approvals

To ensure that the Design Review Panel process is appropriately matched with the development approvals process, meetings will be held on a monthly basis. The meeting schedules will be coordinated with Council meetings to ensure that projects are moved through the approvals process in a timely manner. Meeting schedules will be monitored and adjusted if required.

Monitoring

A significant aspect of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project is the continual refinement of the Panel's process and evaluation of its function during the trial period. Accordingly, it will be necessary to monitor the Panel's function by collecting feedback from applicants and design consultants whose projects have been reviewed and to evaluate any necessary changes that may be needed to the procedures. Development Planning Staff will evaluate the pilot project and provide an interim report to Council after the first year with a further report at the end of the second year of the project.

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Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly “Plan and Manage Growth & Economic Vitality”.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

The establishment of a Design Review Panel Pilot Project for the City will create a higher quality of life for Vaughan’s citizens and enhance the City’s economic competitiveness by fostering design excellence in the public realm and improved environmental sustainability. Councils’ recommendation was to provide advice on developments in the Corporate Centre Area and potentially for other developments in the City. It is appropriate that the Panel review other areas within Vaughan that have higher density development and/or require the same level of attention in terms of high quality architecture/design in public spaces.

The Pilot Project will contribute to the development approvals process and further add to building a vibrant, beautiful and dynamic City. The advantages of a Design Review Panel is that it has the potential to be a catalyst for high quality design and will send a message to the public, the development industry and the design community that design standards have been raised commensurate with the vision for Vaughan. Should Council concur, a call for Expressions of Interest for Panel members should be undertaken.

The call for Expressions of Interest will be advertised through professional association newsletters and other appropriate media. The City will ensure that members who express an interest in serving on the Panel are in good standing through communication with the professional associations.

Staff will undertake advertising the call for Expressions of Interest during the summer months and it is anticipated that a list of recommended Panel Member candidates will be brought forward for Council’s consideration in the Fall of this year.

Attachments

1. Areas of Focus for Design Review Panel
2. Comparison of Other Cities Design Review Panels
3. Terms of Reference Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Report prepared by:

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

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Item 3, Report No. 31, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 15, 2009.

3 **ANIMAL SERVICES SHELTER**

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That staff explore options in existing City leased premises for the creation of an animal shelter facility in the City of Vaughan, including opportunities for the provision of animal services such as, dog grooming, pet supplies, and a veterinary clinic; and
- 2) That the report of the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services and City Solicitor, and the Director of Enforcement Services, dated May 25, 2009, be received.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services and City Solicitor, and the Director of Enforcement Services, recommend:

1. That staff proceed with a search for a property to lease, suitable for an animal shelter; and,
2. That staff report back to a Working Session in fall 2009 with the results and next steps for the creation of an animal shelter in the City of Vaughan.

Economic Impact

The economic impact has yet to be determined.

Communications Plan

None at this time.

Purpose

This report is to provide an update on the status of the animal shelter progress and to discuss next steps in the process.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan, along with other adjacent municipalities, has been looking for alternatives for animal services given known constraints and limited time horizon of the City's current service provider.

Municipalities have worked together in ad hoc committees, independently, and in focus groups. A consultant was retained by the Town of Richmond Hill to study and report on the preferred next steps in creating a joint animal shelter facility. The Town of Aurora, Township of King and the City of Vaughan were contributors to that study.

Options explored included establishing a joint facility. Following the presentation of that report, it appeared that Richmond Hill preferred building their own animal shelter, and on October 22, 2007, Council directed that staff provide Richmond Hill with an Expression of Interest to purchase animal shelter services from them.

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Ultimately, Richmond Hill backed away from their intention to create an animal shelter, opting for a service contract with the OSPCA.

Staff then began to review sites already owned by the City for a location to build a shelter. No suitable sites were identified.

Staff were also directed to contact the Township of King to review opportunities to provide animal sheltering services for both municipalities.

As reported by staff to Council on February 3, 2009, two options were explored:

1. Joint Venture with Seneca College at the King Campus. This option would have seen a facility constructed in conjunction with the Veterinary Technicians Course facility.

This option was not ultimately pursued due to restrictions on construction given its location within the Oakridges Moraine.

2. The location of 7th Concession and 18th Sideroad, Pottageville was identified. The property at this intersection includes a building on site. The building is owned by King and is used by a community group as a dance/community hall.

King Township and Vaughan had discussions surrounding funding and operating an animal shelter at this location. Recently King Township advised that, due to public opposition, this location could no longer be considered.

At this time there are no other proposals on the table. There remains a sense of urgency in identifying an alternative to the existing arrangement as the current service provider advises that their lease has only been extended until August 2010.

Next Steps

As site locations in King have not materialized, staff issued a request for Expression of Interest for a lease/build solution in Vaughan. This was circulated by the Purchasing Department on May 1, 2009. There was only one reply, but it did not meet the criteria as it was dependant on the City providing the land on which to construct the animal shelter.

It was envisioned that the City would lease the property, contracting out the operation and animal control function to the private sector.

The current projected contract cost to the City of Vaughan for animal control services in 2010 is \$700,000.

In order to meet an August 2010 occupancy date (should the current provider not be able to provide further extensions of service), staff are recommending that the Real Estate Department commence a search for a property meeting the criteria defined in the Expression of Interest.

Staff will report the results of the search to a meeting in fall 2009, recommending next steps.

In developing an animal shelter solution for its own use, the City would be “over-sizing” for growth. There will be capacity, at least initially, to sell service, or lease space to other municipalities which would help offset the impact to Vaughan. The option of contracting out the operation of the proposed facility still exists.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously approved by Council.

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Regional Implications

Not applicable.

Conclusion

Staff have canvassed numerous options without success and are recommending going public for a design/build/lease solution for occupancy in August 2010.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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