

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2015

Item 2, Report No. 3, of the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 23, 2015.

2 GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – ANNUAL UPDATE

The Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Senior Manager of Strategic Planning, dated June 1, 2015, be approved; and
- 2) That Communication C2, presentation material titled “Green Directions Vaughan, Implementation Update”, be received.

Recommendation

The Senior Manager of Strategic Planning in consultation with the Acting Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services recommend that:

1. That this report be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

The City of Vaughan recognizes that the principles of sustainability must be incorporated into our activities. The City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan (*Green Directions Vaughan* (GDV)), was designed to establish the principles of sustainability in Vaughan, working to direct the development of other master plans to help achieve a healthy natural environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy now and for the future.

Objective 6.1 of *Green Directions Vaughan*, outlines the commitment “To fully support the implementation of *Green Directions* at all levels of City operations”, and provides under Action 6.1.6 that an annual report to the Environment Committee be prepared on the status of existing programs and accomplishments for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the plan. With the retirement of the Environment Committee in 2010, all subsequent update reports have been directed to the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee (PKI). In addition, *GDV* subsection 4.2 Monitoring and Reporting on Progress notes that indicator reporting should complement the annual status update to inform the community and relevant stakeholders of any changes in the baseline sustainability/environmental indicators. Indicator reporting generates further awareness of the implementation progress, works to celebrate successful project progress, and also identifies areas in need of additional focus, which allows for continuous program improvement and advancement.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from the adoption of this report. All activities related to the establishment, tracking and communication of the *Green Directions Vaughan* indicators are supported through existing budget allocations.

Communications Plan

The Environmental Sustainability Office continues to work directly with Corporate Communications staff on such communication tactics as Public Service Announcement (PSA), social media schedule and website updates to help promote the implementation progress of *Green Directions Vaughan* and to highlight the successes and achievements to date. Additionally this report will be made publicly available on Vaughan.ca in an effort to share the most recent updates of *Green Directions Vaughan*.

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee with an update on the implementation of *Green Directions Vaughan* including reporting on 24 baseline indicators.

Background - Analysis and Options

In April 2009 Council approved *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan. As the City's sustainability plan, *Green Directions Vaughan* contains a set of recommended actions that address the range of municipal responsibilities including both operational and regulatory functions. It also serves as the City's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The ICSP is a long-term plan designed to guide the community toward a more sustainable future by addressing environmental, cultural, social, and economic issues.

Green Directions establishes a definition of "sustainability", an "environmental ethic" and a set of "principles" to guide the implementation of the plan. The definition of sustainability reflects the breadth of municipal responsibilities, where, "Sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations."

The plan identifies six categories that classify Vaughan's functions. These are further broken down into goals, objectives and a series of actions, which describe how each of the goals can be achieved. The categories and goals include:

What We Use:

Goal 1: To significantly reduce our use of natural resources and the amount of waste we generate.

How and Where we Grow:

Goal 2: To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment.

How We Get Around:

Goal 3: To ensure that Vaughan is a city that is easy to get around with low environmental impact.

How We Live:

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community where citizens, businesses and visitors thrive.

How we Lead:

Goal 5: To be leaders in advocacy and education on sustainability issues.

How we Operate:

Goal 6: To ensure a supportive system for the implementation of *Green Directions*.

The objectives are more specific statements of the general goals and they describe how the goals will be achieved. Each of the goals has multiple objectives. The actions refer to tasks that need to be undertaken to achieve the prescribed objective. There can be multiple actions attached to each objective. Actions are assigned to a Commission for implementation within a specific timeframe.

On May 25, 2010, a report was received on the implementation of *Green Directions Vaughan* following the first anniversary of its approval. The report highlighted the status of existing programs, key accomplishments, new initiatives and further opportunities for the purposes of

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monitoring the implementation of the plan. The primary focus of the report was directed to projects that were identified in the 2009-10 timeframe or those that were targeted as “on-going”.

On April 5, 2011, a report was ratified by Council on the implementation of *Green Directions Vaughan* following the second anniversary of its approval. A media release and web based report highlighting specific actions under each of the six goal areas were generated as a result of the report recommendations.

In March 2012, it was reported that over 94% of the 85 actions outlined in *Green Directions Vaughan* had been initiated and 14 of the 44 action items with an established time frame were completed. On November 26, 2012, PKI approved 24 baseline indicators to be reported on annually along with the *Green Directions Vaughan* implementation update. These core indicators were designed to be easily tracked, meaningful to the associated departments responsible for tracking the indicators and compatible with existing benchmarks.

In March 2013, it was reported that 96% of the 85 actions outlined in *Green Directions Vaughan* had been initiated. At that time, all of the actions yet to be initiated were dependent on activities that were already underway and/or had been targeted for the later portion of the implementation timeframe. Six action items with established time frames were fully completed.

In March 2014, 98% of the 85 action items outlined in *Green Directions Vaughan* have been initiated. Sixteen of the action items have been completed and a further 67 of the actions are ongoing as the implementation of *Green Directions* continues to progress. Only two of the 85 action items – items 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 relating to the City’s Growth Management Strategy.

Report Format

A significant portion of the success of *Green Directions Vaughan* has depended on the internal operations and functions that support its implementation. In order to monitor the implementation of the plan, action 6.1.6 indicates the City should prepare an annual report addressing, among other things:

- The status of existing programs
- New initiatives
- Accomplishments
- Further opportunities

Although action 6.1.6 makes reference to new initiatives, this report will focus predominantly on the action items that have been implemented, planned within the initial timeframe of *GDV* or classified as ongoing. In an effort to keep the Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan a dynamic and living document, the Environmental Sustainability Office will continue to explore new initiatives and program opportunities with Council particularly as *GDV* comes up for revitalization later in 2015.

As of April 2015, 98% of the 85 action items outlined in *Green Directions Vaughan* have been initiated. Twenty-eight of the action items have been completed and a further 55 of the actions are considered ongoing or in progress as implementation of *Green Directions* continues to progress. Only two of the action items – items 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 relating to the City’s Growth Management Strategy – had not been actioned at the time of this report as they are currently scheduled for initiation and implementation in 2016 following the York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review that will inform the amendment to Vaughan Official Plan 2010.

Attachment No.1 is based on the section within *GDV* that summarizes key actions for each of the identified action items; the Goals, Objectives, Time Frames and Project Responsibility have been noted.

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Indicators

In November 2012, Council adopted 24 quantitative indicators to measure the progress and impact of the outcomes of *Green Directions Vaughan*. Tracking core environmental indicators helps the City to measure progress towards achieving a sustainable environment, vibrant community and strong economy, meeting the reporting commitments outlined in Section 4.2 and Appendix C of *Green Directions*. Now in the twilight years of the current *Green Directions Vaughan* Master Plan, the changes noted in the year-over-year tracking of these indicators will work to inform the future iterations of this Master Plan.

The table included in Attachment 2 of this report outlines the indicators and includes a table displaying the progress over the past 4 years of reporting. The 24 indicators monitored align with the strategic framework of the City; correspond to indicators being tracked in the Global City Indicators project; are meaningful to the departments responsible for tracking them; and, are compatible with existing benchmarks. Noted changes in the progress of several of the indicators in each of the *Green Directions Vaughan* goal areas can be identified:

GDV Goal	Indicator	Achievement
1: What we use	Energy Use: Total residential electricity use per capita	4% decline (2011-2012) 7% decline (2012-2013) 4% decline (2013-2014)
2: How we grow	Sustainable Built Form: Building floor area certified under recognized green building standards	73% increase (2011-2012) 3% increase (2012-2013) 43% increase (2013-2014)
3. How we get around	Walking and Cycling Paths: Length of walkways and cycling paths	10 km increase (2012-2013) Total length: 1,149 km 97 km increase (2013-2014) Total length: 1247.40 km
4: How we live	Active Community: Total participant hours in City recreation programs	14% increase (2011-2012) 7% increase (2012-2013) 2% decrease (2013-2014)
5: How we lead	Environmental Engagement: Number of environmentally related public outreach events	8 events (2011) 9 events (2012) 12 events (2013) 12 events (2014) *Participant numbers increased 80% from 2013 to 2014 with over 19,000 participants in environmental events.

This reporting year, many of our indicators progressed. Most notably, our participant engagement in environmental events increased 80% over the last year with over 19,000 in attendance. Stakeholder involvement in community events (community meetings, social media, on-line newsletters, etc.) grew significantly (353%) due to the increased frequency of social media posts compared to previous years. For example, in 2013 only 34 tweets were reported pertaining to *Green Directions Vaughan* whereas in 2014 over 160 tweets were relevant resulting in a 376% increase in Twitter reach. Similar growth was experienced for both Facebook and the City's Blog – 'Our Story, Our City'.

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Furthermore, built sustainable form increased significantly as did walking and cycling paths. The only indicator that experienced a slight decline is the number of participant hours in City recreation programs, by 2%.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the VV2020 Strategic theme to lead and promote environmental sustainability.

Regional Implications

In 2007, York Region released its Sustainability Strategy, outlining its commitment to creating a sustainable future for the current and future residents of York Region. With the goal to balance a sustainable natural environment and a healthy community with economic vitality, the regional plan aims to inform decision making processes within the region. Of the nine municipalities in York Region, seven have drafted integrated community sustainability plans and/or sustainability development guidelines. The City of Vaughan was one of the first of these municipalities to draft and release an established plan with *Green Directions Vaughan*.

The continued progress and communication of the achievements and successes of this plan will work to establish the City of Vaughan as an environmental leader within the region. Additionally the City, under the guidance of *Green Directions* and through its program progress, continues to contribute positively as a member of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Clean Air Council. Working collaboratively with partner municipalities across the Region, the City's actions under *Green Directions Vaughan* work to help advance regional clean air and climate change solutions.

Conclusions

Continuing to promote the principles of sustainability in Vaughan, the implementation phase of *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City of Vaughan's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan continued throughout 2014. A number of the major initiatives as outlined in the plan have progressed significantly as is to be expected during these latter stages of the implementation process.

To date, 98% of the 85 action items outlined in *Green Directions Vaughan* had been initiated with 28 action items fully completed. Of the remaining action items, 55 are ongoing or in progress as the implementation of *Green Directions* continues. As *GDV* moves into the latter stages of implementation, only two of the 85 action items have yet to be initiated but are scheduled for implementation in 2016.

The fifth and final year of reporting qualitatively continued to be complemented by a set of 24 quantitative indicators. These quantitative indicators, approved by Council in November 2012, are working to measure the impact and outcomes of *Green Directions Vaughan* and to highlight successes and identify areas in need of continued focus and improvement. Modest changes in the tracked indicators were noted this reporting year, signifying the ongoing progress and success of *Green Directions Vaughan* actions and programs.

As the final year of implementation of *Green Directions Vaughan* comes to a close, our next steps are to explore the options to review and update the plan to reflect the next iteration of *Green Directions Vaughan*.

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Attachments

1. Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan Implementation Update June 2015
2. Green Directions Vaughan Indicators

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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.)