

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2012

Item 33, Report No. 33, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 25, 2012.

33 PROCLAMATION OF OCTOBER AS INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL MONTH

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Community Services, dated September 4, 2012:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, Director of Recreation and Culture, and Manager of Environmental Sustainability, recommends:

1. That Council proclaim the month of October as “International Walk to School Month” in the City of Vaughan.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goals 3 and 4:

- 3.1 To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation.
 - 3.3.2 Work with partners to develop and implement a trip reduction / active transportation strategy for the community including such transportation demand management initiatives as the Active & Safe Routes to School.
- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.
 - 4.1.1 Develop an implementation plan for the initiatives described in the City's Active Together Master Plan through a phased and budgeted program.

Economic Impact

Funding for the activities and events indicated in this report is included in the 2012 base operating budget.

Communications Plan

The proclamation of October as “International Walk to School Month” in the City of Vaughan will be posted on the City website and promoted through a launch of Vaughan's first “active route focused” school. It will also be communicated through the York Catholic District School Board and York Region Public District School Board. Outreach to community groups and organizations will take place via social media and a news release for the launch event.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request that Council proclaim the month of October as “International Walk to School Month” in the City of Vaughan and to present an overview of Vaughan's Active and Safe Routes to School Program including the launch of Vaughan's first “active route focused” school.

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Background - Analysis and Options

“International Walk to School Month” gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking.

In 2011, millions of children, parents, and community leaders from 40 countries around the world joined together in celebration of International Walk to School Month. Walkers from around the world walked to school together for various reasons, all hoping to create communities that are safe places to walk. The goal of the walk varies from community to community. Some walks rally for safer and improved streets, some to promote healthier habits and some to protect the environment. Whatever the reason, International Walk to School Month events encourage a more walkable world one community at a time. International Walk to School Month is more than just getting together with children and going for a walk to school as a special event. This is certainly important, but the event's greater aim is to bring forth permanent change in communities across the globe, such as:

- Encourage physical activity by teaching children the skills to walk safely, how to identify safe routes to school, and the benefits of walking;
- Raise awareness of how walkable a community is and where improvements can be made;
- Raise concern for the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation;
- Reduce crime and take back neighborhoods for people on foot; and
- Reduce traffic congestion and vehicular speed near schools.

The City of Vaughan in its strategic plan, Vaughan Vision 2020, is committed to Service Excellence through enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness. The Active Together Physical Activity Strategy initiatives, such as the Active and Safe Routes to School Program, will help achieve the objective of community health and wellness.

The City of Vaughan believes the development of a more physically active community enhances the quality of life of its residents; that physical activity levels are a critical economic, environmental health and social issue for the community and that participation in physical activity is a key requirement for individual physical and mental health and well-being.

The Vaughan Active and Safe Routes to School Program is also a priority and strategy in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP), and the recently approved Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which was adopted by Council in fall 2011. This plan outlines the long term future and sets out the “New Path” for the evolution of the transportation system serving the entire City. In regard to schools, the “New Path” is about making investments in the health and well-being of our children by providing more sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The new TMP also recommends that the City develops and implements School Travel Plans at both the elementary and secondary school levels.

In keeping with the Vaughan Active and Safe Routes to School program, the City of Vaughan will launch York Region's first “active route focused” school. St. Michael the Archangel, located at 161 Via Campanile in Woodbridge has been designated an “active route focused” school because of the implementation of the Active and Safe Routes to School comprehensive action plan which will overcome barriers to children's active school travel by mobilizing children and families one step at a time. The York Catholic District School Board, York Region Planning and Community Health Services staff, Green Communities Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation, York Regional Police, Vaughan Community Health Centre and various City Departments have all collaborated to launch the school travel action plan. A temporary school crossing guard will be provided, at the intersection of Via Campanile and La Rocca Avenue for the 2012/2013 school year to help promote pedestrian activity.

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The community partners noted above have come together to identify key areas of need for school travel planning and have put together an action plan to implement initiatives and events to support the broader initiative to stop traffic jams around schools, increase physical activity levels and get students walking and cycling. The group will introduce an application process for future schools to access City of Vaughan and York Region resources to implement the Active and Safe Routes to School Program.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

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

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**
Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery; and Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness – To deliver high quality services and promote health and wellness through program development and increased awareness.

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

Regional Implications

Staff from the Regional Municipality of York Region is supportive of the Active and Safe Routes to School Program and will continue to provide staff resources to the project.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan is taking a proactive approach to improve the health and active lifestyles of its citizens by proclaiming October as International Walk to School Month. By working in collaboration with all community partners we will increase the number of residents walking and cycling to school. As an initiative of the Physical Activity Strategy of the *“Active Together” Master Plan For Parks, Recreation, Culture And Libraries*, the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan*, *Transportation Master Plan* and *Green Directions Vaughan*, the *Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan*, International Walk to School Month and the Active Safe Routes to School Program will help achieve the objective of improving environmental sustainability and community health and wellness.

Attachments

1. St. Michael the Archangel School Attendance Area and Boundary

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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.)