

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2013

Item 35, Report No. 52, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 10, 2013.

35 BUSINESS MISSION TO ISRAEL 2013 – POST MISSION UPDATE

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Economic Development, dated November 26, 2013, be approved; and**
- 2) That the following deputations be received:**
 - 1. Mr. Sheldon Potter, Coldspring Commerce Inc, Campbell Avenue, Thornhill; and**
 - 2. Mr. Gino Di Rezze, Groundheat Systems, Bass Pro Mills Drive, Vaughan.**

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Director, Office of the City Manager recommends;

1. THAT staff continue following up on Economic Development and investment opportunities generated from the 2013 Business Mission to Israel;
2. THAT Council endorse a collaboration between the City of Vaughan and Centennial College to develop a strategy to establish and implement a Vaughan-Centennial Trade Development Office in Israel; and
3. THAT staff report back to Council with an updated International Business Development Strategy.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a *Sustainability First* principle and states that sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. Under this definition, activities related to economic development contribute to the sustainability of the City.

During the business mission to Israel the City had an opportunity to explore a range of green technologies, including City applications in the areas of renewable energy, emission reduction and energy conservation. In fact many of the academic and business mission participants are focused on pursuing and establishing relationships that involve working with innovative energy, sustainability related technologies and companies, as well as social enterprises.

Economic Impact

All costs associated with the outbound trade mission in this report were budgeted within the Economic Development Department's 2013 Operating Budget.

Communications Plan

By working collaboratively with the Corporate Communications Department, the business mission to Israel has succeeded in garnering media attention locally and internationally within Israel generating close to twenty media articles (Attachments 1 & 2).

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Multiple communications channels were leveraged in the promotion of the business mission to Israel. Some of the tools used included print, social media channels, micro-site (www.vaughan.ca/Israel), Business Link and Business E-Link newsletters (Attachment 3 – 2013 Vaughan Business Mission Marketing Initiatives).

Following this Mission, the Economic Development Department will be meeting with the Province, Region of York and the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance to ensure that the City's efforts are aligned with and supported by those organizations' international marketing strategies.

Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of the 2013 Business Mission to Israel; present results generated to date; and to seek Council approval to move forward with preparing a strategy to develop a Vaughan-Centennial Trade office in Israel.

Background – Analysis and Options

The City's 10-year Economic Development Strategy "Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy" identifies international business development activities as a crucial component of improving the City's economic competitiveness. In addition to contributing toward positioning Vaughan as a gateway for flows of goods, services and capital for the Toronto economic region, international business and trade missions also assist with the development of strategic convergent sectors: Advanced Goods Production and Movement, and Innovative Research Development and Design.

The Economic & Market Opportunity

Israel is a wellspring of ingenuity and enterprise. In a very short time, millions of people from all over the world came together to build a modern, prosperous, vibrant, and democratic country. The country itself is a perpetual start-up, defying existing norms and challenging conventional industrial development.

Challenging geo-political circumstances has placed Israel in a unique position of being without a large regional trading partner. That coupled with a small domestic marketplace, has led Israel to search for global strategic partners in the development of its economy. From the outset, Israeli firms have taken a global export strategy, developing technologies and solutions to tackle complex issues such as security, water scarcity, alternative energy, etc.

Israel has positioned itself as a critical research and development center for the world's leading technology companies. Close to half of the world's top technology companies have bought Israeli start-ups or opened research and development centres to take advantage of Israel's culture of innovation.

Rather than being hamstrung by its lack of natural resources and raw materials, the country has chosen to focus its energies on creating a highly qualified labour force, scientific institutes, and R&D centers. Today, Israel's industries concentrate on manufacturing products with high added value. In the process, the technological innovations nurtured by the Israeli science and technology incubator ecosystem have found widespread applicability and transferability, generating commercial success for its firms.

As explained in the book called ***Start-up Nation – The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle***, "there are more new innovative ideas, as opposed to recycled ideas or ideas repackaged in a new box coming out of Israel than there are out in Silicon Valley now". The authors observed that this flow of ideas and innovation is not hampered or slowed by global economic downturns.

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Some recent Israeli economic achievements worth noting include:

- Israel absorbed almost 1.2 million immigrants in a decade, augmenting the country's civilian labor force, from 1.65 million in 1990 to 2.8 million in 2006.
- Foreign investments rose steadily, enlarging the GDP and accelerating growth of exports from \$175 million in 1987 to \$5.8 billion in 1997, to \$10.7 billion in 2005, and \$25.2 billion in 2006.
- Industrial exports grew almost six-fold in the past two decades, from \$6 billion in 1985 to \$35.6 billion in 2005 and \$38.1 billion in 2006.
- In 2004 there were almost 13,000 industrial plants that produced an output of more than \$58 billion, more than half of which was exported.
- Nearly 80 percent of hi-tech products are exported, while the more traditional, low-tech firms export close to 40 percent of their products.
- More than 90 percent of public budgets for R&D (\$7 billion in 2006) were allocated to hi-tech industries, much of which is channeled via joint venture capital funds.
- The quality of R&D in Israel is ranked, according to U.N. experts, among the first 10 in the world; largely due to the academic research institutes, which provide much of the basic R&D and venture capital.

Developing the Relationship between Israel and Canada

According to the Honorable James Fox, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of Canada in Tel Aviv, Vaughan's mission came at a most opportune point in time, in that it builds upon numerous Canada-Israel initiatives that have been undertaken over the past three years, including the Canada-Israel Technology Innovation Partnership that began in November 2010.

The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) eliminated tariffs on industrial products and some agricultural and fisheries products. Since its inception, Canada-Israel bilateral goods trade has more than doubled, from \$507 million in 1996 to \$1.4 billion in 2010. Canada and Israel have strong, multidimensional bilateral relations, marked by close political, economic, social and cultural ties. One of the underlying strengths of the Canada-Israel bilateral relationships lies in the extensive people-to-people ties.

There are approximately 20,000 Canadian citizens living in Israel and many Canadians have family in Israel. The Canadian Jewish community, which stands at around 350,000, acts as an important bridge between Canada and Israel.

Looking specifically at York Region the Jewish population is approximately 52,080 people, with 33,745 of those people living within the City of Vaughan, representing 11.8 percent of the City's total population. In terms of newcomers to Vaughan, Israeli immigrants are within the top three groups, representing 6.8 percent of all new immigrants to Vaughan. These findings were confirmed during the City's recent business mission. The strong connection between Israel and Vaughan is undeniable as many entrepreneurs mentioned they had either lived in Vaughan at one time or knew someone who lives in Vaughan today.

Creating a Results-Oriented Business Mission

A systematic approach was created to ensure a results-oriented business mission, which will become a template for future missions. This approach includes the following stages:

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Stage 1:	Exploratory Visit & Pre-Planning
Stage 2:	Mission Development
Stage 3:	Mission Execution
Stage 4:	Post-Mission Follow-up, Results Generation & Tracking

Stage 1: Exploratory Visit & Pre-Planning

Although the City of Vaughan has had cultural relations with Israel since its friendship twinning with Ramla in 1993, the Economic Development Department took its first economic-driven mission to Israel in 2012. The 2012 Mission was exploratory in nature, establishing that there were sufficient business opportunities and economic ties to make Israel a strategic market for Vaughan.

In September 2012, Council directed Economic Development Staff to undertake a business mission to Israel in 2013. The goals for the 2013 Business Mission to Israel were to help participants to:

1. **Connect** – with one of the most dynamic and innovative economies in the world.
2. **Collaborate** – and network with business owners from a targeted set of industries from around the world and identify innovative technologies and approaches.
3. **Grow** – and position their business as a significant global player.

The Economic Development Department focused on developing further market intelligence, sector research and identification of strategic partnerships with the assistance of in-market experts. Working directly with professionals that are well-known and established within the target market provided the City with a strong competitive advantage and increased the level of success with matchmaking and new investment attraction.

Strategic partners for the 2013 Business Mission included:

- UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
- Israeli Consulate
- Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce
- Government of Israel, Economic Mission to Canada
- Ambassador, Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv
- Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor of Israel – Office of the Chief Scientist
- Investment Promotion Center of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor
- Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation
- Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
- Jerusalem Business Networking Forum
- Local business leaders

Stage 2: Mission Development

One of the many lessons learned from the 2012 Mission is the need to take a very business-focused approach to entering the Israeli market. Israel's success has brought international attention, making it necessary for companies or organizations wishing to do business to make advance preparations, and do extensive groundwork prior to engagement. The City also took this approach in its mission development:

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April – June 2013	Development of conceptual business mission itinerary
June 27	Official Business Mission Launch Call-for-Participation Public Relations Campaign Kick-off
June – August	Participant Recruitment & Acceptance Process On-Boarding Activities (including corporate calls)
August – September	Pre-Mission Matchmaking
September – October	Business Mission Structure/Detailed Itinerary Finalization
September 16	Business Mission Participants' Breakfast

Mission Launch

The Official Business Mission Launch June 27, a collaborative effort that included the Consul General of Israel in Toronto, the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce and ColdSpring Commerce drew attendance of approximately 200 business people not only from Vaughan, but from around the GTA. Fifty-five business owners signed up for a pre-mission consultation and evaluation.

The Mission's target audience is:

- Comprised of a diverse range of industry and interests, representing a cross section of the Vaughan economy.
- Capable of gaining immediate value from interacting with their Israeli counterparts.
- Willing to engage in long-term international relationships.
- Able to act as ambassadors to expand Vaughan's Israel Economic Development program.

Participant Recruitment

Once interested businesses were identified, or self-identified through communication efforts, significant time and effort was placed on the recruitment, qualification and on-boarding process. More than 80 one-on-one meetings were held with companies, in some cases meeting with companies multiple times. This process ensured that potential candidates met the goals of the economic mission and the team had valuable information necessary for successful matchmaking. The list of potential participants was narrowed down, and the final delegation totaled 23 participants, which included municipal representation.

Mission Matchmaking Efforts

From the onset, City Staff identified the need to establish a solid business proposition to potential participants thus, the mission needed to provide opportunities for business outcomes as a result of participation. ColdSpring Commerce was retained by the City to assist with these efforts. Based on the in-depth interview and onboarding exercise, Vaughan companies were matched with companies in Israel well in advance of the mission where possible. Pre-Mission matchmaking activities included:

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- Identifying and assessing potential Israel-based matches.
- Communication of matches with Mission delegates.
- Establishing linkages between the two parties for initial discussions, i.e. conference calls and e-mail correspondence.
- Organization of appointments and meetings with these entities prior to the mission and while in Israel for further discussions.

In this way, the City worked to have relationships commence even before the delegates were in-country. Indeed, in one instance the contacts established in the “before travel” time frame, which resulted in the reverse first happening - the Israeli entity visiting the Mission delegate prior to the Mission’s departure.

While significant effort was expended to make sure that the maximum number of business linkages could be established prior to the trip, there were some linkages that occurred during the trip.

Stage 3: Mission Execution – Activities Undertaken

Through the delegate recruitment process, the final 2013 Business Mission team was comprised of 23 delegates, including representation from industry, academia, healthcare, utilities, and municipal government. A robust, multi-stream and aggressive business mission itinerary was created to optimize the potential number of pre-qualified and intensive meetings for each of the participants.

The mission schedule was, by design, arranged to be business intensive and engaging. During the Mission, more than 100 meetings took place. Most of these meetings occurred in Tel Aviv, Eilat/Eilot, Haifa and Jerusalem. However, there were many meetings and site visits that required travel across the entire country, and took place concurrently.

The three streams represented on this mission included the following:

Business Stream: Focused on expanding their product portfolio, expanding their global market reach, entering the Israeli market, and finding quality investment targets. Participants from this stream included:

- A.B.A Science Play
- Caesarstone Canada
- Canadian Gift Concept
- CompuOffice Software Inc.
- Domir Blinds Manufacturing Inc.
- Elias Custom Metal Fabrication Ltd.
- Groundheat Systems Inc.
- Gulf & Pacific Equities Corp.
- Hughes-Decorr
- Planet Paper Box
- Mircom Group of Companies
- SLGoldberg Consulting Inc.

Academic Stream: Focused on increasing their scope of research interactions and faculty/student exchanges and developing industry cooperation opportunities. Participants from this stream included:

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- Centennial College
- York University

Municipal / Public Sector Stream: Focused on seeing new technologies to apply in the City and specifically in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), reinforcing relationships with different levels of Israeli government. Participants from this stream included:

- City of Vaughan
- Mackenzie Health
- PowerStream

Every participant was provided with a customized itinerary which identified their specific business meetings along with detailed company profiles on each prospective economic/business opportunity. It is important to mention that due to confidentiality agreements between the business mission participants and the prospective partners/investors with whom they have been matched, full disclosure of details is barred.

For the most part, during business hours each day, each “stream” operated on an unique agenda. Each evening, the entire team came together to participate in evening receptions with local Israeli business executives, occurring in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Eilat/Eilat, and Jerusalem. Attachment 4 provides a detailed description of the day-by-day itinerary.

Stage 4: Post-Mission Follow-up, Results Generation & Tracking

This following section presents from a high level perspective, a sample of some achievements and opportunities generated by this Mission to date.

Business Stream Results

Each one of the business participants reported one or more business-related outcomes as a result of the Mission. Again, confidentiality agreements preclude a detailed reporting on business outcomes, as they can identify individual participants; pose potential competitive advantage; or are simply too premature for discussion. On a high level, some of these outcomes include:

- requests for quotations;
- product design improvements;
- access to competitive market data;
- market entry / local market penetration opportunities;
- manufacturing process coordination opportunities;
- beta-testing opportunities in Canadian markets;
- financial investment and acquisitions; and
- project bids; etc.

All business participants came away with greater understanding of the Israeli market and other valuable intelligence, along with key contacts with industry leaders – connections necessary to advance their growth strategies. The participants also had got to know each other better, making connections at the local level.

Academic Stream Results

Both post-secondary institutions participating in the Business Mission reported outcomes that corresponded with their goals of developing research collaborations; faculty/student exchanges and industry cooperation opportunities. Discussions and exchanges with the Israeli education community increased the understanding of the nature of post-secondary education in the context

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of the Canadian system relative to the Israeli model, which is somewhat different. An overarching agreement was also signed with the Board of Public Academic Colleges of Israel (VaRaM) and with two of its members, Jerusalem College of Technology, and Hadassah Academic College.

Meetings were held with Canadian Embassy and other student interest agencies to discuss international student movements, including challenges in the visa process. Seven Memorandums of Understanding were signed by Centennial College with Israeli learning institutions and organizations in an effort to enhance student mobility and learning internationally.

York University has developed arrangements with the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology and Haifa University for joint research and student exchange and is continuing to formalize a partnership.

Following the business mission, Centennial made a return trip to Israel sending a recruiting officer to follow-up on some of the newly established relationships and successfully recruited more than 50 new international students.

Centennial College and York University have also formed new relationships with Mission companies for joint applied research and focused training initiatives.

Municipal / Public Sector Stream Results

In addition to the City's desire to see results and outcomes for its Business and Academic participants, the City/public sector stream interests lie in learning about best practices and technologies which may be applied to improve service delivery to constituents. The opportunities to network with local partners and Israeli-based entities produced results that varied from:

- Economic development best practices exchanges with Jerusalem;
- Discussions about opportunities for a foreign trade office using joint space;
- Discussions initiated establishment of a design district related to buildings and interior spaces;
- Technologies and best practices related to automated parking systems for urban areas such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre;
- Renewable energy technologies – knowledge exchanges with City of Eilat and Hevel Eilat Region;
- Potential showcase for leading-edge playground systems in municipal parks;
- Interests in the establishment of a Vaughan International Commercialization Centre (VICC) / Business Accelerator in Vaughan;
- Attraction of an international business conference;
- Heightened awareness amongst Israeli associations about Vaughan companies' capabilities as well as the City's commitment to being a gateway into North America;
- Enhanced brand awareness and competitiveness positioning (as a result of press coverage); and
- Increase in business investment leads.

Attachments 5 and 6 are participant testimonials and photographs, to provide further insight on the execution and outcomes from the Mission.

Proposed Vaughan-Centennial Trade Development Office

The 2012 and 2013 Business Missions to Israel highlighted the need to continue to build upon the City's successful international business development program. It was recognized that a longer term, in-country relationship was required. The momentum developed by all our business, academic and public sector partners needs to be sustained with strategic relationships and a steady or growing stream of business activity.

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To this end, Economic Development will collaborate with Centennial on a trade development office strategy in Israel. Centennial College has already established an in-market office and it has indicated that it is willing to enter into discussions to have a joint office which serves the mutual needs of its partners. From the City's perspective, the trade office will provide a venue to meet and to develop detailed plans for expanding specific economic and business opportunity relationships and linkages. Some of the goals from the municipal perspective include:

- Creation and enhancement of Vaughan's business image in Israel by showcasing its competitive advantages.
- Driving Vaughan business revenue linkages between Vaughan and Israel and recognition as a gateway to North America.
- Generating new economic investment opportunities.
- Sharing best practices and valuable market intelligence.

From Centennial's perspective, the educational institution is interested in attracting international student exchange and collaborative program development. This office also expresses a high level of commitment to this market. Their goals include:

- Driving linkages between Centennial and Israel by recruiting:
 - i. Post bachelor's level students from Israel from Centennial's Toronto campus and receive and process students from Canada for placement with Israeli institutions.
 - ii. Exchange students.
 - iii. International corporate training candidates.
- Supporting recruited students and facilitating their travel, accommodation, and government interfaces to Canada.
- Supporting collaborative research, innovation and commercialization.

The notion of an international trade office based out of Centennial College's facility in Israel appears to be in parallel from both organizations' goals and objectives. However, the City should consider this concept as a pilot project and the details of such an arrangement need to be worked out in much greater depth including: staffing, location, access, annual operating costs, and possibly even an exit strategy for the partners.

Next Steps

The foundation has been established and the Economic Development Department is now ready for the next stage of implementation which largely involves the creation of a supportive ecosystem for its business, academic and public sector partners' interests and being responsive to the business investment interests being shown in target markets.

Providing Business Support

The City's role in international business development is to facilitate efforts for collaboration amongst local partners/participants and international business groups. However, once the relationship has begun, it is incumbent on the participant to take the lead on these projects and sustain the momentum that is achieved. The Economic Development Department will play a support role in facilitating business and government connections.

Many participants are also exploring business opportunities amongst one another. In an effort to continue to nurture this now cohesive group, the opportunity exists to work with one of the business participants to host a post-mission event at their location. This event could include a tour and networking session.

An opportunity also exists to include the more than 55 companies who expressed a strong desire to participate on the business mission to Israel, completed the pre-mission evaluation process, but for many reasons was unable to commit to participating on the mission itself, but had expressed a strong desire to be a part of the Vaughan-Israel Business Development Program.

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Working with the Province, Region of York and Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance

The work that Vaughan has undertaken in the Israeli market has garnered the attention of other economic development agencies. The City will undertake to ensure that its program and initiatives are recognized and aligned with the efforts of these agencies in order that synergies can be achieved as they too engage in attraction and retention of business investments.

Enhanced Brand Awareness & Competitive Positioning

All activities related to this business mission including the pre-mission and post mission activities have succeeded to raise the City of Vaughan's profile. This initiative has generated more than 20 media articles in Canada and Israel, as well as significant word of mouth promotion across the business, academic and municipal sectors. This mission has helped to effectively differentiate the City from other jurisdictions, increasing Vaughan's competitive positioning and brand awareness on an international scale.

In an effort to continue to position Vaughan as the gateway to North America, the City needs to continue to outreach to entities interested in accessing North America via Vaughan is important. This spreading of the word can be done in several ways such as:

- Interactions and knowledge sharing among municipal Israeli and Vaughan governments, particularly in the area of share best practices in the field of Economic Development.
- Developing ongoing relationships with the overarching Israeli industry associations either directly or through the Government of Israel.
- Partnering with the Canadian Embassy, as they are often involved in such matters.
- Interfacing to the consulting professions (e.g. major accounting firms) who represent clients who are positioned to expand globally.
- Further development of strategic partnerships locally with organizations such as the Canadian Israel Chamber of Commerce, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Government of Israel Economic Mission to Canada, among others.

What will make the difference between a good mission and an extremely successful mission relates directly to the commitment to allocate time and resources to following up on opportunities and further developing strategic partnerships.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 20|20 / Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council. Specifically, this report assists in fulfilling Vaughan Vision 20|20 Goal: Manage Growth and Economic Well-being as the International Business Development Program is focused on supporting existing Vaughan businesses with their international growth strategies, securing strategic partnerships; as well as, attracting new investors from abroad to locating in the City of Vaughan.

This results-oriented approach to international business development also aligns with the Vaughan Vision 20|20 Goal: Demonstrate Effective Leadership as the City of Vaughan's Economic Development Department is striving to become a leader within the profession and creating new and innovative approaches to international business attraction.

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Regional Implications

Geo-political borders are inconsequential to business flows, especially in a globalized economy; therefore, staff in the Economic Development Department will be working with the Economic Strategy Branch of the Regional Municipality of York to ensure they are aware of the City's international business development initiatives.

Conclusion

Vaughan's 10-year Economic Development Strategy identifies international business development objectives as being integral to supporting local business growth; attracting capital and jobs; and enhancing its global image. It recognizes that our resident populations, local businesses and public institutions house significant human, financial and intellectual capital; and needs to be leveraged for the City's future growth and prosperity.

Vaughan's direct involvement with Israel began in 2012 with an exploratory mission, which focused on gathering and evaluating market intelligence in order to adequately assess the business investment attraction opportunity for the City of Vaughan. Based on extensive meetings with business owners, government officials and other stakeholder groups, the City of Vaughan validated Israel as a strategic market for international business development, particularly as it relates to investment opportunities, business attraction potential and a strong desire from business and government leaders to work collaboratively for the common good of both countries economically.

The 2013 Business Mission further built on the work to date that established all Economic Development initiatives in foreign markets, be focused on a business agenda. The tactics employed for mission planning and execution, placed business and economic outcomes and results squarely in the crosshairs of any activities undertaken pre-and-post mission. This approach contributed tremendously to its success, and is a model for any future international business development endeavors.

One message that came across loud and clear was that many business delegations come to Israel to learn, take the insights home and never return. Should the City proceed to establish a trade office in Tel Aviv, it would send a clear signal of Vaughan's commitment to operate in the Israeli market, and that it intends to do so, with the strong support of its business, academic and public sector stakeholders.

The Economic Development Department will continue to follow-up on the prospects and leads generated by this Mission. It will provide on-going support to all participants as well as those firms that are preparing market entry strategies. And it will seek opportunities to collaborate with Jerusalem and Eilat/Eilot for best practices and new approaches for city building. Going forward the Economic Development Department intends to focus on three strategic markets: Israel, Italy and China and will be bringing a report to Council on its International Business Development Strategy.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Summary of Media Coverage Report
- Attachment 2 – Sample Media Coverage
- Attachment 3 – 2013 Vaughan Business Mission Marketing Initiatives
- Attachment 4 – Detailed Mission Itinerary
- Attachment 5 – Quotes for Israel Business Mission Participants
- Attachment 6 – Israel Business Mission Photos

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Report prepared by:

Jennifer Ladouceur, Director of Economic Development

(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.)