

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2013**

Item 2, Report No. 55, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 10, 2013.

**2 PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS-FOLLOW UP REVIEW**

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**FILE: 12.29**

**ALL WARDS - CITY WIDE**

**The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:**

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning and the Director of Development Planning, dated December 3, 2013, be approved; and**
- 2) That Communication C3, presentation material, entitled, “*Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications – Follow up Review*”, be received.**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning and the Director of Development Planning in consultation with the Director of Corporate Communications recommend:

1. THAT the following enhancements to the Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications Protocol, BE APPROVED, to incorporate:
  - a) a “Planning Department Public Notice Hotlink” on the City of Vaughan’s official website landing page;
  - b) E-Communications including Vaughan TV, the Vaughan e-newsletter, and various forms of social media; and,
  - c) a coloured rendering as shown on Attachment #2, to be required in lieu of the standard mapping for property notice signs shown on Attachment #1, for planning applications that facilitate the construction of a new building(s).
2. THAT a Committee of the Whole (Public Hearing) be scheduled to consider an amendment to Official Plan Amendment No. 478 respecting Notification Procedures for Public Meetings, to delete the provision requiring staff to prepare a report requesting direction from Council for a second Public Hearing, and replace it with a provision requiring staff to schedule a Public Hearing when proposals do not meet the established criteria of being considered within 2 years, or when the nature of the application has been amended to increase the proposed density or building height beyond what is permitted by the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

By implementing a Public Hearing Notification Protocol that includes a social media and e-communications strategy, the number of mail outs and paper would be reduced as would the need for automobile trips for the delivery of courtesy non–statutory notices.

**Economic Impact**

There are no economic implications as a result of this report, other than the \$100 per year cost of purchasing the software to create QR Bar Codes to be placed on staff business cards, with an additional one-time license cost of \$40 each per Development and Policy Planning Departments (total of \$80). The costs would be absorbed through the respective Departmental annual operating budgets.

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#### **Communications Plan**

May 17, 2013: Questionnaires were mailed out to all registered Ratepayer Organizations in the City of Vaughan and BILD

June 7, 2013: Questionnaire responses due to the Development Planning Department from the Ratepayer Organizations and BILD.

November 22, 2013: Courtesy non-statutory meeting notice was sent via Canada Post and e-mail blast to all Ratepayer Organizations and BILD.

#### **Purpose**

This report has been prepared in response to the following resolution (in part) adopted by Vaughan Council on February 3, 2009, respecting a report prepared by the Development Planning Department to review and evaluate the Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Studies Protocol and prepare a Notice Sign Protocol:

“THAT the Development Planning Department prepare an evaluation report on the new notification procedures for a future Committee of the Whole meeting.”

#### **Background-Analysis and Options**

##### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

On February 9, 2009, Vaughan Council adopted a comprehensive report from the Commissioner of Planning respecting Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Planning Studies. To summarize, the following initiatives and/or changes were implemented:

- a) A “Notification for Planning Applications Protocol” for planning applications requiring a Public Hearing was established. This protocol identifies the City’s procedures for the notification of Public Hearings and includes:
  - i) an increase in the minimum notification area from 120 m to 150 m;
  - ii) opportunity to increase the notification area beyond 150 m depending on the nature of the application;
  - iii) a new signage policy;
  - iv) posting notices on the City’s website; and,
  - v) the hand delivery of notices in new development areas;
- b) A “Notification for Policy Study Protocol” for Policy Planning studies was established, which includes:
  - i) the Terms of Reference for each study to review and identify signage opportunities within the study area and require an implementation plan (including new development areas);
  - ii) utilizing an electronic registry to notify stakeholders at all key milestone events during the study; and,
  - iii) the posting of notices in community facilities;
- c) The adoption of a new “Sign Policy” that identifies the City’s requirements for a notice sign to inform the public on planning applications and policy studies, which includes a larger sign size, simplified wording, and a map illustration of the application;
- d) The Public Hearing notice to notify the public of a planning application and of a policy planning study was modified to be more “reader-friendly”;

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- e) The placement of a permanent icon on the landing page of the City's website with a direct link to Public Hearing notices for planning applications; and
- f) A policy requiring that a new Public Hearing is considered for all planning applications under the following circumstances:
  - i) any application that has not been considered by the Committee of the Whole within two (2) years after being considered at a previous Public Hearing;
  - ii) where the nature of the application has been amended to increase the density of the proposal, change the nature of the land uses or arrangement thereof, and increase the proposed building height; and,
  - iii) in respect of i) and ii) above, the Development Planning Department is to prepare a brief report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing and that Council will make the final decision with respect to holding a further Public Hearing.

The current notification policies identified above exceed the minimum requirements prescribed by the Planning Act. As part of Vaughan Council's approval, the Development Planning Department was directed to prepare an evaluation report on these new notification procedures for a future Committee of the Whole meeting. The subject report will discuss how the current in-effect procedures are working and will identify additional improvements and modifications to the public notification process.

#### Questionnaires (Attachments #3 and #4)

- As part of the evaluation process, the Development Planning Department engaged the City of Vaughan Registered Community Ratepayer Associations (20 in total) and BILD (representing the land development industry) for input on the City's current process, via a questionnaire (Attachments #3 and #4, respectively), which was mailed out on May 17, 2013, with a request to respond by June 7, 2013. At the closing date, 5 completed questionnaires were received. On July 22, 2013, follow-up telephone calls were made to those that did not submit a response to the questionnaire. At that time, 5 Ratepayer Associations requested the Questionnaire (Attachment #3) be emailed to them, and in 2 instances, the questionnaire was completed via a telephone conversation between the Ratepayer Association and Development Planning Department Staff. In conclusion, the Development Planning Department received a total of 8 responses from the following Ratepayer Associations: Beverley Glen Ratepayers' Association; Brownridge Ratepayers' Association; Concord West Ratepayer's Association; Lakeview Estates Ratepayers' Association; Mackenzie Ridge Ratepayers' Association; Rimwood Estates Homeowners' Association; Pinewood Estates Ratepayers' Association; and, Woodbridge Core Ratepayers' Association. The findings of the questionnaire are summarized below: 75% responded that the increased area for notification to 150 m from 120 m has generated more public interest or responses on planning applications or studies;
- the City of Vaughan's current policy is to increase the public notification area, depending on the nature of an application (ie. high density development). When asked the appropriate distance the public notification area should be in these instances, 87.5% responded that this area be extended beyond 250 m;
- 87.5% recommend the City's Website to area residents for information on specific meetings respecting planning applications and/or studies, whereas 12.5% utilized the General Planning Mailbox to send any comments on planning applications or studies;

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- 62.5% were of the opinion that the notification signs effectively communicate the nature of the development proposal to the public;
- 62.5% prefer the notice sign be amended to include an artist's rendering of what the proposed development will look like. Comments received indicate that landscaping on these renderings are distracting;
- 25% of the Associations were aware of the "City Page Online" resource currently in place to advertise Public Hearing notification; of the 25% that utilize the "City Page Online" to obtain information on Public Hearing notices, the effectiveness of this resource was ranked 3 on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least effective and 5 being the most effective;
- 62.5% do not want to be notified of public meetings for planning applications and studies via a form of social media, and would not utilize social media to obtain same;
- 12.5% are aware the Policy Planning Department maintains an electronic registry to provide notice for public meetings to those requesting it on specific planning studies and do find this resource useful;
- The Associations have indicated the following means of notification, in ranking:
  1. 62.5% e-mail
  2. 50% standard mail
  3. 12% for Notice Boards, Facebook, Ad, Booth at local mall
  4. 12% for Advertisement in the local newspapers (Liberal and the Citizen);
- 50% of those polled indicate the City's current policy respecting Public Hearing Notification is working; and,
- The following suggestions on how to improve the current process were received:
  1. Multiple forms of notifications; electronic communication (ie. e-mail)
  2. Local Councillors and Regional Councillors should notify Associations;
  3. City Clerk should notify association by Ward issue, and with sufficient notice;
  4. Signs should be posted in various places in the affected area, and not just on the property;
  5. For large developments, notices should be sent to the Ratepayer Association for that area to be forwarded to members; and,
  6. Booth at local mall for a few hours on weekend and one evening.

BILD's response to the Questionnaire (Attachment #4) is summarized below:

- Re-engaging the public after 2 years is appropriate, if there are significant revisions made to the application;
- The increased notification area for public meetings from 120 m to 150 m has not necessarily generated more public interest/response respecting planning applications/studies. Increased public interest/response appears to be more related to the nature of the application given its surrounding context or ratepayer group/political concerns. Given the future growth of the City of Vaughan and trend towards higher density, it seems the 120 m notification area would be appropriate. With areas such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre on the horizon, an increased notification area could generate an onerous public notification protocol for the City of Vaughan;

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- The extension of the public notification area beyond the 150 m of the property impacts the application process/development proposal. This increase inherently implies there may be a potential impact to the area circulated, hence the potential for increased interest in a development proposal. The City's current practice of installing notification signs for development applications coupled with the notices sent within the zone of influence appear to inform the public appropriately;
- The use of social media as a means to advertise planning applications and/or studies is appropriate, as it provides a portal for information sharing that Vaughan residents can utilize. It provides residents and businesses with the ability to access applications online, if for nothing but interest for what is occurring in the City;
- Considered a good idea to provide as much information as possible on signage, as it will answer a lot of questions for the public. In certain instances, the public may attend a meeting because they did not have enough information on the proposed application; and,
- In general, the move to posting more information online seems to be an appropriate way of moving into the future, given how things have progressed. However, providing information to a larger surrounding area does not seem appropriate, because where do you draw the line? Some may advocate to have public notices circulated to the entire municipality, which does not seem reasonable.

The information received through the questionnaires has been considered in the analysis prepared below.

## **2.0 ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

### **2.1 Older and Revised Applications:**

The City's adopted policy requires that Vaughan Council determine if a new Public Hearing be held when a planning application has been significantly revised, for example an increase in density and or building height. An application may also require a new Public Hearing if it has not been considered by the Committee of the Whole within two (2) years after being considered at the initial Public Hearing.

This policy is consistent with OPA #478, which states that Vaughan Council is to determine whether a further Public Hearing should be held when a proposal is changed after the original or first Public Hearing. In the instance when a new Public Hearing is being considered the Planning Department is to prepare a brief report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing.

Planning Staff has evaluated this policy and has determined that a new Public Hearing for planning applications that has not been considered by Council within 2 years of the original Public Hearing or has changed significantly is effective and recommends no change. However, staff recommends that the requirement for the Planning Department to prepare a report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing be eliminated for the following reasons:

- a) The Development Planning Department would be preparing two reports for Council's consideration; that being, a report outlining the rationale, and a Public Hearing report. These reports that would include essentially the same information (i.e. purpose, background, official plan, zoning and issues to be addressed) resulting in increased administration and a duplication of effort and resources; and,

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- b) The frequency of Council meetings has decreased in recent years, as meetings are now held every three weeks, instead of every two weeks. Additionally, summer hiatus of Council, statutory holidays and election hiatuses further reduce the opportunity to forward a report to Council for consideration. For example, in 2014, there are no meetings in the months of July, August, October and November. Given the change in the Council meeting structure it would be onerous for the Applicant/Proponent to wait for the next available Committee of the Whole meeting for Council to consider if a new Public Hearing is required, and then wait for the next available Public Hearing meeting, should Council determine it is required.

Should Council concur, a recommendation is included in this report to amend OPA #478 so as to allow Planning Staff to decide if a new Public Hearing is required based on the policies in OPA #478. This will ensure that applications are processed in a timely manner and not unduly be held back because of the Committee of the Whole meeting schedule.

#### 2.2 150 m Notification Area

The City's Notification for Planning Applications Protocol states that planning applications requiring a Public Hearing provide for a minimum notification area of 150 m, which exceeds the minimum requirement prescribed by the Planning Act (120 m). Furthermore, the Protocol allows an opportunity to increase the notification area beyond a 150 m radius, depending on the nature of the application. For example, certain applications for high density developments have been extended well beyond the 150 m polling area (as high as 600 m to 1000 m) by the Development Planning Department, in consultation with the Local Councillor. Given that the existing Protocol provides the ability to extend beyond 150 m when considered appropriate, the current 150 m notification area is sufficient.

Through the review of the Public Hearing Notification Protocol and the results of the questionnaire received by the Ratepayer Associations and BILD, the Development Planning Department is of the opinion that the current 150 m polling area is sufficient and should be maintained. The Ratepayer Association Questionnaire indicates that 75% are of the opinion that the increase from 120 m to the current 150 m has generated more public interest. In addition, with respect to the City of Vaughan's current policy to increase the public notification area depending on the nature of an application (ie. high-rise development), 87.5% responded that this area be extended beyond 250 m. The City's current policy allows the polling area to increase well beyond 250 m (no minimum), and therefore, these findings are in keeping with the current protocol in place. Expanding the current notification area in all instances would create additional cost and require additional labour creating the potential for budgeting and staffing issues. The current policy exceeds the requirements of the Planning Act and also implements criteria that would allow for an extension of the polling area when deemed appropriate.

#### 2.3 City Website and the "City Page Online"

2.3.1 Current Practice City Website: The Development and Policy Planning Departments each utilize the City of Vaughan's website to advertise development planning applications, official plan, secondary plans and studies. Each development application, secondary plan and any studies requiring a statutory Public Hearing notification process are advertised by posting a copy of each Public Hearing notice on the respective departments online webpages, which are accessible through the City's official website. As indicated in the Background section of this report, it was previously recommended that an icon be placed on the landing page of the City's official website, which would act as a "Hotlink" taking users directly to the Public Hearing Notification page. Through the VOL exercise, the "Hotlink" feature was eliminated from the landing page because of space, but can still be accessed on the Departmental web-page.

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**2.3.2 Current Practice “City Page Online”:** The “City Page” was a regular feature in the local newspapers, which has evolved into the “City Page Online”, and is available through the City’s official website providing an opportunity to advertise City events. Postings of events are managed by the Corporate Communications Department at the request of city departments requiring the advertising. Both the Development and Policy Planning Departments utilize the City Page Online. The Policy Planning Department uses this feature regularly to advertise both statutory Public Hearings and non-statutory public meetings for various studies, official plans and secondary plan meetings. The advertisement is specific to the study or plan being undertaken.

The Development Planning Department also utilizes the City Page Online under certain circumstances such as the Vaughan Health Care Centre and development applications in the VMC with ads as well as standardized wording that links the reader back to the Development Planning webpage where the Public Hearing notices are advertised.

**2.3.3 Recommended Enhancement:** Both the accessing of the departmental pages through the City Website and the “City Page Online” features require the user to navigate through the City’s official website. A recommended enhancement is to have a “Hotlink” on the City of Vaughan’s official website landing page, linking the website user directly to a page posting Public Hearing notifications, which has been reviewed by the Corporate Communications Department. This practice is consistent with other municipalities across York Region and the GTA, and is being recommended to also be undertaken in Vaughan.

#### **2.4 E-Communications**

**2.4.1 Current Practice for E-Communications:** there is no current established protocol for the use of E-Communications to advertise Public Hearing Notifications for statutory and non-statutory meetings respecting Planning Applications.

**2.4.2 Recommended Enhancement:** The use of E-Communications was not contemplated in the previous reports. E-Communications refers to Vaughan TV, the Vaughan E-Newsletter titled “City Update” and the various forms of Social Media including Twitter, Facebook and the use of QR codes and ‘Friendly URLs’. As noted by BILD in the questionnaire, the move to advertising through E-communications is appropriate. Advertising through E-Communications can be implemented as follows:

**2.4.2.1 Vaughan TV:** Utilizing Vaughan TV would allow for information on Public Hearing meetings for development applications and policy studies to scroll in a continuous loop across the TV screens located throughout the City Hall building. This has been done in the past by request from the Policy Planning Department to advertise policy studies such as the Vaughan Mills Secondary Plan.

**2.4.2.2 City Update E-Newsletter:** “City Update” is an electronic newsletter that is managed by the Corporate Communications Department and has a circulation of 8,500 subscribers. The E-Newsletter is promoted on the City’s Official Website, in the recreation guide, in the local newspapers and at local festivals. As already mentioned, there is no established protocol for advertising statutory Public Hearing and non-statutory public meeting notices on the “City Update,” however, when requested by the Policy Planning Department, an advertisement referencing a specific study has been added to the newsletter. Through discussions with the Corporate Communications Department, it was determined that as an enhancement to the current Public Hearing Notification protocol standard wording similar to that used for the City Page Online can also be incorporated into the newsletter linking readers directly to the Development Planning or Policy Planning Department’s posted public meeting notifications.

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**2.4.2.3 Twitter and Facebook:** Currently, the City of Vaughan has both Twitter and Facebook accounts managed through the Corporate Communications Department. There is an opportunity for advertising Public Hearing notifications through both sites. The Development Planning and Policy Planning Departments can create standardized wording for “tweets” that are broadcast through Twitter and postings on the City’s Facebook account reminding the followers of both accounts that a Public Hearing is upcoming and providing the URL where the Public Hearing information is available. Both Twitter and Facebook are set-up for 2-way communication, and in order to ensure users are not replying to the ‘Tweet’ or Facebook post directly, it is important to include a statement in the standardized wording that advises the users that any comments on the applications or studies must be sent to the Development Planning or Policy Planning Department’s directly.

**2.4.2.4 QR Bar Code and/or Friendly URL:** Although the use of a QR Bar Code and/or ‘Friendly URL’ are not forms of notification, they are being recommended as both methods allow users direct access to information posted on the departmental webpages, and therefore, have been included as a means of notification. Both the QR Code and ‘Friendly URL’ are avenues of providing interested parties with convenient access to the necessary information. Currently, neither the Development or Policy Planning Departments have used QR Bar Codes or developed ‘Friendly URLs’ to provide direct access to the departmental pages on the City of Vaughan’s official website. This suggested enhancement would provide the QR Bar Code and/or the ‘Friendly URL’ on staff business cards, allowing users to scan the barcode with their personal mobile device (e.g. cellular phone) and in turn create a direct link to the Development or Policy Planning Department pages on the City’s official website, as well as, have a URL readily available on the business cards to provide direct access to the departmental webpages.

After the initial set-up of the QR Bar Codes, this system of providing access to the departmental webpages and in turn to the Public Hearing Notification would require minimal up-keep. Initial costs would include an annual fee of \$100.00 for purchasing the software to produce the QR Bar Code, which would be absorbed through the Planning Department’s annual operating budget. This fee could also be shared with other City Departments using the same software. There is also an additional one time license cost of \$40.00 per QR Bar Code (ie. one each for Development and Policy Planning Department’s) for printing the QR Bar Code onto the staff business cards.

#### **2.5 Property Notice Sign**

A public notice sign of a Planning application is required to be posted on the actual property subject to the planning application(s). The City’s Property Notice Sign Protocol outlines requirements for sign timing, materials, size, location, wording and lettering, and mapping as shown on Attachment #1. The Protocol requires the Development Planning Department to review and approve the wording and mapping, prior to the proponent erecting the sign on the property.

Staff has reviewed the Protocol and has determined that the property public notice signs are working well to present the prescribed information clearly; they are appropriately sized and placed in a visible location on the property; and, they effectively communicate the intent and purpose of the planning application(s) to the public in a reader-friendly format. Accordingly, Staff recommends a minor enhancement that is consistent with the questionnaire responses; that being, a coloured rendering be required in lieu of the standard mapping shown on Attachment #1, when a landowner proposes to facilitate the construction of a new building(s). The example shown on Attachment #2, of the proposed KPMG office building in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, provides the public with the most accurate representation of what will be built on site.

The standard property notice sign shown on Attachment #1 will continue to be used for applications that do not propose a building such as a change to an Official Plan policy, a zoning standard, or a subdivision or condominium, where only the site plan is shown or simply just text to describe the proposal.



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Should Council concur with the recommended enhancement, the Planning Department will administer the required changes to the existing Notice Sign Protocol to also facilitate the use of a rendering as shown on Attachment #2.

#### 2.6 Timing of the Public Hearing

The Planning Act requires that the Public Hearing notice for a planning application be mailed 20 days in advance of the Public Hearing date. Delivery of the notice is via Canada Post. Allowing 4 to 6 days for delivery, a landowner located within the notification area should have the notice at least two weeks or 14 days in advance of a Public Hearing.

The Development and Policy Planning Departments also mail out courtesy “non-statutory” notices for those individuals or parties that have specifically requested to be notified of a particular application or study advancing to a Committee of the Whole Meeting or a Committee of the Whole (Working Session). Timing for the courtesy “non-statutory” notice is not prescribed by the Planning Act, and the Planning Department endeavours to send out this notice as soon as possible. However, before this notice can be delivered, the Development and Policy Planning Departments must be satisfied that the technical report is finalized and confirmed for the Agenda. Whenever possible, a courtesy “non-statutory” notice via an e-mail blast to those who provided an e-mail address can be facilitated for both the Development and Policy Planning Departments.

2.6.1 Recommended Enhancement: The timing of statutory Public Hearing Notices are prescribed through the Planning Act and do not require any enhancement.

However, the timing and delivery of courtesy “non-statutory” notices can be enhanced by addressing the following:

- 1) The template for the courtesy ‘non-statutory’ notice has been revised as shown on Attachment #5. The original notice was labeled “Notice” and did not include any reference to the notice being sent as a courtesy, which may have confused the reader of which notice they are receiving (ie. Statutory or Non-statutory) and for which Committee of Council the notice is speaking to. The new template (Attachment #5) is specifically titled “Courtesy Non-Statutory Meeting Notice” and advises the reader in the body of the notice that it is a courtesy notice mailed out for information purposes.
- 2) Courtesy “non-statutory” notices can be sent via e-mail when available, as the time allocated to postal delivery significantly delays receipt of the notice. In cases where the resident does not have an email address, or an e-mail address is not provided to the City, a courtesy notice will be mailed or hand-delivered, depending on timing. In order to help address the issue of timing, the Planning Department will request the Clerk’s Department to amend their “green” form at Public Hearings to add an area on the form where an e-mail address and/or telephone number can be provided by those individuals requesting additional information on planning applications and studies.

#### 2.7 Community Information Meeting:

Members of Council can introduce a motion at any Public Hearing requesting that a community meeting be held in order to encourage further dialogue on a development proposal when necessary. This meeting is typically arranged through the local Councillor’s office, or as directed through the Development Planning Department, and is usually held in the evening at a convenient location for all interested parties to attend.

Furthermore, Council adopted a policy on June 25, 2013, respecting the Councillor Involvement in the Development Planning Process. The policy applies to planning applications proposing mid

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and/or high-rise mixed use as defined in the Vaughan Official Plan 2010. The policy provides opportunity for a meeting with the Ward Councillor, the Applicant, Staff and other stakeholders as determined, to gain Councillor and stakeholder input after the statutory public hearing and prior to the preparation of the technical staff report.

Pursuant to the recommendation in the June 25, 2013 Member's Resolution report, the Planning Department has since advised Applicants proposing mid and/or high-rise mixed use developments of the policy and will administer the required changes to the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Guide for Applicants. In addition, the Development Planning Department will typically advise the landowner proposing mid and/or high rise developments to arrange a meeting with the local area Councillor, and local residents and ratepayer associations ahead of submitting an application and/or during the planning process.

### **3.0 POLICY STUDIES**

Policy planning studies can vary in scope and scale from an issue specific study (i.e. Section 37) to an area specific study or secondary plan (i.e. Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan) to a City-wide planning policy review (Secondary Suites or the Vaughan Official Plan 2010). The tools used to engage public participation in a policy planning study would vary depending on the scope and complexity of the study. Prescribing a specific procedure to be followed is challenging as each study has particular characteristics or specifications which may require deviating from a specified protocol. The approach to notification will be customized to reflect the needs of the individual project. The primary examples are set out below.

#### **3.1 Statutory Requirements: Planning Act Conformity**

Most policy studies will result in an amendment to a City policy document such as the Official Plan or Zoning By-law. For approvals considered under the Planning Act, the minimum prescribed statutory requirements will be satisfied and may be to subject to enhancement as discussed in this report. Further enhancements may be required to reflect the scope of the individual study process.

#### **3.2 Posting of Signs/Posters for Study Areas**

When the scope of the study permits, the Policy Planning Department on behalf of the City may erect notification signs similar to those used to advertise Development Planning applications. Signs and posters (poster located in public facilities) would be utilized when a study is being conducted for a defined area. At the onset of the study, the Policy Planning Department will determine whether a sign(s) and/or poster(s) are required, and if required, where the sign/poster will be located. If required, the sign/poster will be budgeted for through the project budget. The sign(s) and/or poster(s) will include a graphic illustration of the boundary of the study area and a brief description of the purpose of the study. The sign and/or poster will remain posted throughout the study process and removed once the study has been completed.

No changes are being recommended to the procedures, which will remain discretionary based on the details of the study.

#### **3.3 Notification Posted in Community Centres and Libraries for City-wide Studies**

For larger and city-wide study processes, such as the Vaughan Tomorrow Official Plan Review or Secondary Suites Study, the Policy Planning Department will prepare a notice for advertisement in the local newspapers, and when deemed appropriate, notification can also be posted in community centres, libraries, and at City Hall. Additional notification will also be provided throughout the study process for all key events including open-houses, charettes, workshops,

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non-statutory public meetings, etc. The specific measures will be identified in the approved project work plan and will be funded through the project budget.

No changes are being recommended to the existing procedures, which will remain discretionary based on the details of the study.

#### **3.4 Electronic Registry and Other Methods of Notification**

An electronic registry for each Policy Planning study containing the contact information, more specifically an e-mail address of interested individuals, including residents, ratepayers associations, landowners, and consultants/professionals is maintained and utilized to electronically disseminate information usually through an e-mail blast, throughout the planning study process at key milestones. The electronic registry is maintained to provide those requesting notification with information on key events such as non-statutory public meetings and statutory Public Hearings. This involves the collection of e-mail addresses of all interested parties throughout the study process.

In addition to an electronic registry, the Policy Planning Department also engages the City of Vaughan Corporate Communications Department to determine whether the use of social media is appropriate. If so, those who follow the City of Vaughan's Twitter and Facebook accounts will receive the information on public non-statutory and statutory meetings through these media.

When deemed appropriate, the Policy Planning Department has also advertised Policy studies, and secondary plans on the City of Vaughan's e-news (scrolling information available on TV's throughout the Civic Centre) and on the City of Vaughan's on-line main page. As standard practice, notices for non-statutory meetings are also advertised on the City's "City Page On-Line".

No enhancements are being recommended through this review. The Policy Planning Department is satisfied with its established practice respecting public notification. The methods used to notify the public of statutory Public Hearings and non-statutory public meetings are determined based on the specific study, official plan or secondary plan process being undertaken. Recently, the Policy Planning Department was recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) for the public consultation process undertaken for the Vaughan Tomorrow Official Plan Review Process.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly "Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery," "Ensure Financial Sustainability," and "Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Well-Being".

#### **Regional Implications**

The recommended enhancements in this report will not affect the Region of York, and will be administered by the Vaughan Planning Department, if approved.

#### **Conclusion**

In consideration of the review undertaken on the current Public Notification for Planning Applications process in place since 2009, the Vaughan Development Planning and Policy Planning Departments advise that the process is working efficiently, however, recommends some enhancements to the process as provided in the recommendation of this report.

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2013**

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 55 – Page 12

**Attachments**

1. Property Notice Sign
2. Proposed Property Notice Sign
3. Questionnaire for Ratepayers Associations Respecting the Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies
4. Questionnaire for Stakeholders Respecting the City of Vaughan Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies
5. Revised Template - Courtesy Non-statutory Meeting Notice
6. Statutory Meeting Template - Notice of a Public Meeting

**Report prepared by:**

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Carmela Marrelli, Senior Planner, ext. 8791  
Christina Napoli, Senior Planner, ext. 8483  
Mauro Peverini, Manager of Development Planning, ext. 8407

(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.)

C3 - CW(ws)

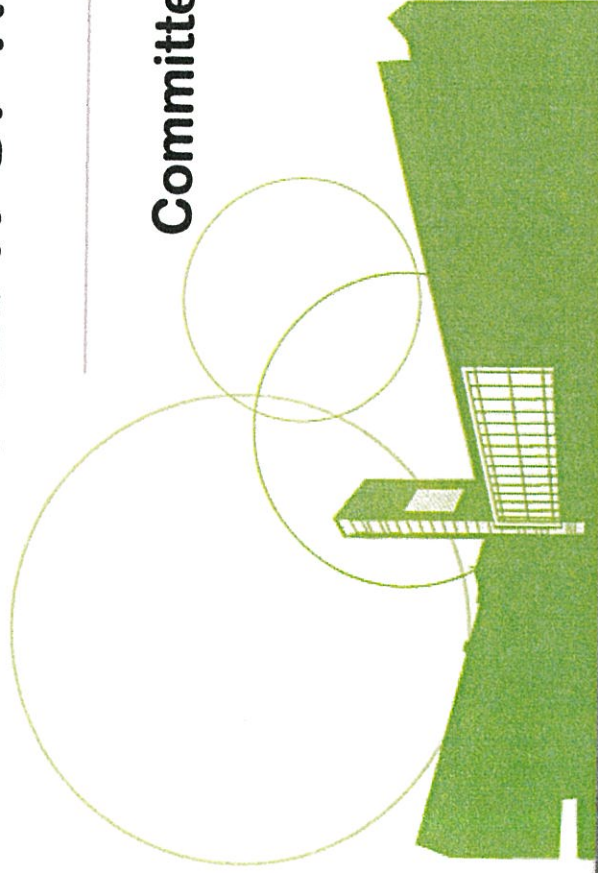
December 3/2013  
Item 2

# **PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATIONS FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS – FOLLOW UP REVIEW**

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**Committee of the Whole Working Session**

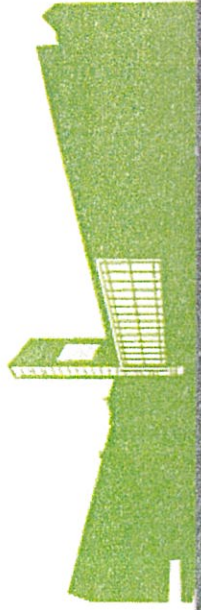
**December 3, 2013**





# BACKGROUND

In February 2009, Vaughan Council adopted recommendations respecting Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Studies.



# BACKGROUND

The following initiatives/policies were implemented:

- Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Study Protocols
- Sign Policy-notice sign requirements informing the Public on Planning Applications and Policy Studies
- Reader-Friendly Public Hearing Notice
- New Public Hearing requirements (older and revised applications)



# BACKGROUND

- Current initiatives/policies exceed the minimum requirements of the *Planning Act*
- As part of Vaughan Council's 2009 approval, the Development Planning Department was directed to prepare an evaluation report
- This presentation identifies enhancements and modifications to the current Public Notification Protocol





# BACKGROUND

The evaluation process included:

- Questionnaire sent to all City of Vaughan Registered Community Ratepayer Associations
- Questionnaire sent to BILD (Building Industry and Land Development)
- Consultation with Development Planning and Policy Planning, Corporate Communications, Legal Services and the City Clerk's Departments



# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Older and Revised Applications

### Current Policy:

- New Public Hearing (PH) is required within 2 years and/or when planning application(s) have been revised significantly
- Department is to prepare a report to Council outlining the rationale for a new PH meeting, if required

### Enhancement:

- Automatic PH scheduled when above requirements are not met





# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 150m Notification Area

### Current Policy:

- Notices for Planning Applications requiring a Public Hearing are circulated to all property owners within a 150m radius, whereas the *Planning Act* requires 120m
- Ability to extend beyond 150m when appropriate (i.e. high density developments)

### No Enhancement:

- Policy is effective



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# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## City Website and the “City Page Online”

### Current Policy:

- Development and Policy Planning advertise Statutory and Non-Statutory notices of Planning Applications on the City Page Online and the City’s website through their respective departmental webpages



### Enhancement:

- That a “Hotlink” be incorporated on the City’s website landing page





# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## E-Communications

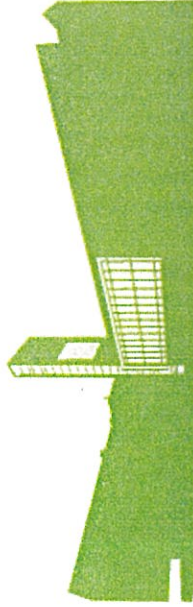


### No Current Policy:

- No established protocol for the use of E-Communications

### Enhancement:

- Advertise Statutory Public Hearings and Non-Statutory public meetings on Vaughan TV, City Update E-Newsletter, Twitter and Facebook
- Provide direct access to the departmental webpages by including QR Bar Code and/or Friendly URL on business cards



# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Property Notice Sign

### Current Policy:

- Notice Sign is erected on the property that is subject to the Planning Application
- City's property notice sign protocol establishes requirements for material, size, and wording

### Enhancement:

- The standard notice sign will continue to be used for Planning Applications where no new building(s) is proposed
- A coloured rendering will be required in-lieu of the standard map when the proposal facilitates construction of a new building(s)

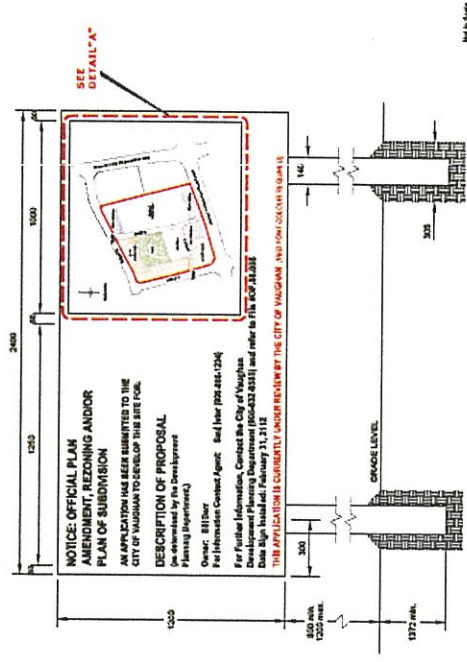


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# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**STANDARD NOTICE SIGN**  
 (To be used for a Plan of Subdivision/Condominium, Zoning standard or OP policy change)



11

**COLOURED RENDERING**  
 (To be used for a proposal that facilitates the construction of a new building)



# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

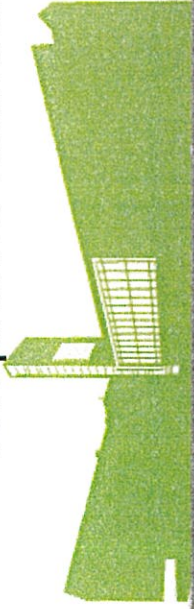
## Timing of the Public Hearing

### Current Policy:

- Statutory Public Hearing Notices are mailed 20 days in advance of the Public Hearing, as prescribed by the *Planning Act*
- Courtesy Non-Statutory notices are also sent to those requesting additional information on Planning Applications

### Enhancement:

- Revised template for the Courtesy Non-Statutory notice (*Attachment #5 in report*)
- Amend deputation form to include an e-mail address and/or telephone number





# ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Community Information Meeting

### Current Policy:

- Council can introduce a motion at Public Hearing requesting a community meeting
- Pursuant to the policy adopted on June 25, 2013, respecting mid and/or high-rise mixed-use development as defined by Vaughan Official Plan 2010, a meeting with the Ward Councillor, Applicant, Staff, and/or Stakeholders must be held after the Statutory PH and prior to the preparation of the technical report

### No Enhancement:

- Policy is effective



# POLICY STUDIES

The Policy Planning Department currently utilizes the following methods of notification for Statutory Public Hearings and Non-Statutory public meetings:

- Electronic Registry
- Twitter and Facebook
- E-Communications including - E-News  
Vaughan TV  
City Page On-Line



# POLICY STUDIES

- Policy Planning Studies can vary in scope and scale
- Prescribing a specific procedure to be followed is challenging
- The minimum Statutory requirements prescribed by the *Planning Act* will be satisfied





# POLICY STUDIES

## Posting of Signs and Posters for Notification of the Study Area (e.g. Block Plans, Secondary Plans)

- If deemed appropriate signage will be budgeted for through the project budget at the onset of the study
- Signage will remain posted throughout the study process



# POLICY STUDIES

- For large and city-wide studies, a notice for a public hearing or meeting may be advertised/posted in community centres, libraries and the City's Civic Centre
- Additional notification will also be provided for key events relating to the study (e.g. public open houses, charettes, workshop, non-statutory public meetings)



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS



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**PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS-FOLLOW UP REVIEW  
CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**FILE: 12.29**

**ALL WARDS - CITY WIDE**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning and the Director of Development Planning in consultation with the Director of Corporate Communications recommend:

1. THAT the following enhancements to the Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications Protocol, BE APPROVED, to incorporate:
  - a) a "Planning Department Public Notice Hotlink" on the City of Vaughan's official website landing page;
  - b) E-Communications including Vaughan TV, the Vaughan e-newsletter, and various forms of social media; and,
  - c) a coloured rendering as shown on Attachment #2, to be required in lieu of the standard mapping for property notice signs shown on Attachment #1, for planning applications that facilitate the construction of a new building(s).
2. THAT a Committee of the Whole (Public Hearing) be scheduled to consider an amendment to Official Plan Amendment No. 478 respecting Notification Procedures for Public Meetings, to delete the provision requiring staff to prepare a report requesting direction from Council for a second Public Hearing, and replace it with a provision requiring staff to schedule a Public Hearing when proposals do not meet the established criteria of being considered within 2 years, or when the nature of the application has been amended to increase the proposed density or building height beyond what is permitted by the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

By implementing a Public Hearing Notification Protocol that includes a social media and e-communications strategy, the number of mail outs and paper would be reduced as would the need for automobile trips for the delivery of courtesy non-statutory notices.

**Economic Impact**

There are no economic implications as a result of this report, other than the \$100 per year cost of purchasing the software to create QR Bar Codes to be placed on staff business cards, with an additional one-time license cost of \$40 each per Development and Policy Planning Departments (total of \$80). The costs would be absorbed through the respective Departmental annual operating budgets.

**Communications Plan**

May 17, 2013: Questionnaires were mailed out to all registered Ratepayer Organizations in the City of Vaughan and BILD

June 7, 2013: Questionnaire responses due to the Development Planning Department from the Ratepayer Organizations and BILD.

November 22, 2013: Courtesy non-statutory meeting notice was sent via Canada Post and e-mail blast to all Ratepayer Organizations and BILD.

### **Purpose**

This report has been prepared in response to the following resolution (in part) adopted by Vaughan Council on February 3, 2009, respecting a report prepared by the Development Planning Department to review and evaluate the Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Studies Protocol and prepare a Notice Sign Protocol:

“THAT the Development Planning Department prepare an evaluation report on the new notification procedures for a future Committee of the Whole meeting.”

### **Background-Analysis and Options**

#### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

On February 9, 2009, Vaughan Council adopted a comprehensive report from the Commissioner of Planning respecting Public Hearing Notification for Planning Applications and Policy Planning Studies. To summarize, the following initiatives and/or changes were implemented:

- a) A “Notification for Planning Applications Protocol” for planning applications requiring a Public Hearing was established. This protocol identifies the City’s procedures for the notification of Public Hearings and includes:
  - i) an increase in the minimum notification area from 120 m to 150 m;
  - ii) opportunity to increase the notification area beyond 150 m depending on the nature of the application;
  - iii) a new signage policy;
  - iv) posting notices on the City’s website; and,
  - v) the hand delivery of notices in new development areas;
- b) A “Notification for Policy Study Protocol” for Policy Planning studies was established, which includes:
  - i) the Terms of Reference for each study to review and identify signage opportunities within the study area and require an implementation plan (including new development areas);
  - ii) utilizing an electronic registry to notify stakeholders at all key milestone events during the study; and,
  - iii) the posting of notices in community facilities;
- c) The adoption of a new “Sign Policy” that identifies the City’s requirements for a notice sign to inform the public on planning applications and policy studies, which includes a larger sign size, simplified wording, and a map illustration of the application;
- d) The Public Hearing notice to notify the public of a planning application and of a policy planning study was modified to be more “reader-friendly”;
- e) The placement of a permanent icon on the landing page of the City’s website with a direct link to Public Hearing notices for planning applications; and
- f) A policy requiring that a new Public Hearing is considered for all planning applications under the following circumstances:



- i) any application that has not been considered by the Committee of the Whole within two (2) years after being considered at a previous Public Hearing;
- ii) where the nature of the application has been amended to increase the density of the proposal, change the nature of the land uses or arrangement thereof, and increase the proposed building height; and,
- iii) in respect of i) and ii) above, the Development Planning Department is to prepare a brief report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing and that Council will make the final decision with respect to holding a further Public Hearing.

The current notification policies identified above exceed the minimum requirements prescribed by the Planning Act. As part of Vaughan Council's approval, the Development Planning Department was directed to prepare an evaluation report on these new notification procedures for a future Committee of the Whole meeting. The subject report will discuss how the current in-effect procedures are working and will identify additional improvements and modifications to the public notification process.

#### Questionnaires (Attachments #3 and #4)

- As part of the evaluation process, the Development Planning Department engaged the City of Vaughan Registered Community Ratepayer Associations (20 in total) and BILD (representing the land development industry) for input on the City's current process, via a questionnaire (Attachments #3 and #4, respectively), which was mailed out on May 17, 2013, with a request to respond by June 7, 2013. At the closing date, 5 completed questionnaires were received. On July 22, 2013, follow-up telephone calls were made to those that did not submit a response to the questionnaire. At that time, 5 Ratepayer Associations requested the Questionnaire (Attachment #3) be emailed to them, and in 2 instances, the questionnaire was completed via a telephone conversation between the Ratepayer Association and Development Planning Department Staff. In conclusion, the Development Planning Department received a total of 8 responses from the following Ratepayer Associations: Beverley Glen Ratepayers' Association; Brownridge Ratepayers' Association; Concord West Ratepayer's Association; Lakeview Estates Ratepayers' Association; Mackenzie Ridge Ratepayers' Association; Rimwood Estates Homeowners' Association; Pinewood Estates Ratepayers' Association; and, Woodbridge Core Ratepayers' Association. The findings of the questionnaire are summarized below: 75% responded that the increased area for notification to 150 m from 120 m has generated more public interest or responses on planning applications or studies;
- the City of Vaughan's current policy is to increase the public notification area, depending on the nature of an application (ie. high density development). When asked the appropriate distance the public notification area should be in these instances, 87.5% responded that this area be extended beyond 250 m;
- 87.5% recommend the City's Website to area residents for information on specific meetings respecting planning applications and/or studies, whereas 12.5% utilized the General Planning Mailbox to send any comments on planning applications or studies;
- 62.5% were of the opinion that the notification signs effectively communicate the nature of the development proposal to the public;
- 62.5% prefer the notice sign be amended to include an artist's rendering of what the proposed development will look like. Comments received indicate that landscaping on these renderings are distracting;

- 25% of the Associations were aware of the “City Page Online” resource currently in place to advertise Public Hearing notification; of the 25% that utilize the “City Page Online” to obtain information on Public Hearing notices, the effectiveness of this resource was ranked 3 on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least effective and 5 being the most effective;
- 62.5% do not want to be notified of public meetings for planning applications and studies via a form of social media, and would not utilize social media to obtain same;
- 12.5% are aware the Policy Planning Department maintains an electronic registry to provide notice for public meetings to those requesting it on specific planning studies and do find this resource useful;
- The Associations have indicated the following means of notification, in ranking:
  1. 62.5% e-mail
  2. 50% standard mail
  3. 12% for Notice Boards, Facebook, Ad, Booth at local mall
  4. 12% for Advertisement in the local newspapers (Liberal and the Citizen);
- 50% of those polled indicate the City’s current policy respecting Public Hearing Notification is working; and,
- The following suggestions on how to improve the current process were received:
  1. Multiple forms of notifications; electronic communication (ie. e-mail)
  2. Local Councillors and Regional Councillors should notify Associations;
  3. City Clerk should notify association by Ward issue, and with sufficient notice;
  4. Signs should be posted in various places in the affected area, and not just on the property;
  5. For large developments, notices should be sent to the Ratepayer Association for that area to be forwarded to members; and,
  6. Booth at local mall for a few hours on weekend and one evening.

BILD’s response to the Questionnaire (Attachment #4) is summarized below:

- Re-engaging the public after 2 years is appropriate, if there are significant revisions made to the application;
- The increased notification area for public meetings from 120 m to 150 m has not necessarily generated more public interest/response respecting planning applications/studies. Increased public interest/response appears to be more related to the nature of the application given its surrounding context or ratepayer group/political concerns. Given the future growth of the City of Vaughan and trend towards higher density, it seems the 120 m notification area would be appropriate. With areas such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre on the horizon, an increased notification area could generate an onerous public notification protocol for the City of Vaughan;
- The extension of the public notification area beyond the 150 m of the property impacts the application process/development proposal. This increase inherently implies there may be a potential impact to the area circulated, hence the potential for increased interest in a development proposal. The City’s current practice of installing notification signs for development applications coupled with the notices sent within the zone of influence appear to inform the public appropriately;

- The use of social media as a means to advertise planning applications and/or studies is appropriate, as it provides a portal for information sharing that Vaughan residents can utilize. It provides residents and businesses with the ability to access applications online, if for nothing but interest for what is occurring in the City;
- Considered a good idea to provide as much information as possible on signage, as it will answer a lot of questions for the public. In certain instances, the public may attend a meeting because they did not have enough information on the proposed application; and,
- In general, the move to posting more information online seems to be an appropriate way of moving into the future, given how things have progressed. However, providing information to a larger surrounding area does not seem appropriate, because where do you draw the line? Some may advocate to have public notices circulated to the entire municipality, which does not seem reasonable.

The information received through the questionnaires has been considered in the analysis prepared below.

## **2.0 ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

### **2.1 Older and Revised Applications:**

The City's adopted policy requires that Vaughan Council determine if a new Public Hearing be held when a planning application has been significantly revised, for example an increase in density and or building height. An application may also require a new Public Hearing if it has not been considered by the Committee of the Whole within two (2) years after being considered at the initial Public Hearing.

This policy is consistent with OPA #478, which states that Vaughan Council is to determine whether a further Public Hearing should be held when a proposal is changed after the original or first Public Hearing. In the instance when a new Public Hearing is being considered the Planning Department is to prepare a brief report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing.

Planning Staff has evaluated this policy and has determined that a new Public Hearing for planning applications that has not been considered by Council within 2 years of the original Public Hearing or has changed significantly is effective and recommends no change. However, staff recommends that the requirement for the Planning Department to prepare a report to Council outlining the rationale for a new Public Hearing be eliminated for the following reasons:

- a) The Development Planning Department would be preparing two reports for Council's consideration; that being, a report outlining the rationale, and a Public Hearing report. These reports that would include essentially the same information (i.e. purpose, background, official plan, zoning and issues to be addressed) resulting in increased administration and a duplication of effort and resources; and,
- b) The frequency of Council meetings has decreased in recent years, as meetings are now held every three weeks, instead of every two weeks. Additionally, summer hiatus of Council, statutory holidays and election hiatuses further reduce the opportunity to forward a report to Council for consideration. For example, in 2014, there are no meetings in the months of July, August, October and November. Given the change in the Council meeting structure it would be onerous for the Applicant/Proponent to wait for the next available Committee of the Whole meeting for Council to consider if a new Public Hearing is required, and then wait for the next available Public Hearing meeting, should Council determine it is required.

Should Council concur, a recommendation is included in this report to amend OPA #478 so as to allow Planning Staff to decide if a new Public Hearing is required based on the policies in OPA #478. This will ensure that applications are processed in a timely manner and not unduly be held back because of the Committee of the Whole meeting schedule.

## 2.2 150 m Notification Area

The City's Notification for Planning Applications Protocol states that planning applications requiring a Public Hearing provide for a minimum notification area of 150 m, which exceeds the minimum requirement prescribed by the Planning Act (120 m). Furthermore, the Protocol allows an opportunity to increase the notification area beyond a 150 m radius, depending on the nature of the application. For example, certain applications for high density developments have been extended well beyond the 150 m polling area (as high as 600 m to 1000 m) by the Development Planning Department, in consultation with the Local Councillor. Given that the existing Protocol provides the ability to extend beyond 150 m when considered appropriate, the current 150 m notification area is sufficient.

Through the review of the Public Hearing Notification Protocol and the results of the questionnaire received by the Ratepayer Associations and BILD, the Development Planning Department is of the opinion that the current 150 m polling area is sufficient and should be maintained. The Ratepayer Association Questionnaire indicates that 75% are of the opinion that the increase from 120 m to the current 150 m has generated more public interest. In addition, with respect to the City of Vaughan's current policy to increase the public notification area depending on the nature of an application (ie. high-rise development), 87.5% responded that this area be extended beyond 250 m. The City's current policy allows the polling area to increase well beyond 250 m (no minimum), and therefore, these findings are in keeping with the current protocol in place. Expanding the current notification area in all instances would create additional cost and require additional labour creating the potential for budgeting and staffing issues. The current policy exceeds the requirements of the Planning Act and also implements criteria that would allow for an extension of the polling area when deemed appropriate.

## 2.3 City Website and the "City Page Online"

2.3.1 Current Practice City Website: The Development and Policy Planning Departments each utilize the City of Vaughan's website to advertise development planning applications, official plan, secondary plans and studies. Each development application, secondary plan and any studies requiring a statutory Public Hearing notification process are advertised by posting a copy of each Public Hearing notice on the respective departments online webpages, which are accessible through the City's official website. As indicated in the Background section of this report, it was previously recommended that an icon be placed on the landing page of the City's official website, which would act as a "Hotlink" taking users directly to the Public Hearing Notification page. Through the VOL exercise, the "Hotlink" feature was eliminated from the landing page because of space, but can still be accessed on the Departmental web-page.

2.3.2 Current Practice "City Page Online": The "City Page" was a regular feature in the local newspapers, which has evolved into the "City Page Online", and is available through the City's official website providing an opportunity to advertise City events. Postings of events are managed by the Corporate Communications Department at the request of city departments requiring the advertising. Both the Development and Policy Planning Departments utilize the City Page Online. The Policy Planning Department uses this feature regularly to advertise both statutory Public Hearings and non-statutory public

meetings for various studies, official plans and secondary plan meetings. The advertisement is specific to the study or plan being undertaken.

The Development Planning Department also utilizes the City Page Online under certain circumstances such as the Vaughan Health Care Centre and development applications in the VMC with ads as well as standardized wording that links the reader back to the Development Planning webpage where the Public Hearing notices are advertised.

**2.3.3 Recommended Enhancement:** Both the accessing of the departmental pages through the City Website and the “City Page Online” features require the user to navigate through the City’s official website. A recommended enhancement is to have a “Hotlink” on the City of Vaughan’s official website landing page, linking the website user directly to a page posting Public Hearing notifications, which has been reviewed by the Corporate Communications Department. This practice is consistent with other municipalities across York Region and the GTA, and is being recommended to also be undertaken in Vaughan.

## 2.4 E-Communications

**2.4.1 Current Practice for E-Communications:** there is no current established protocol for the use of E-Communications to advertise Public Hearing Notifications for statutory and non-statutory meetings respecting Planning Applications.

**2.4.2 Recommended Enhancement:** The use of E-Communications was not contemplated in the previous reports. E-Communications refers to Vaughan TV, the Vaughan E-Newsletter titled “City Update” and the various forms of Social Media including Twitter, Facebook and the use of QR codes and ‘Friendly URLs’. As noted by BILD in the questionnaire, the move to advertising through E-communications is appropriate. Advertising through E-Communications can be implemented as follows:

**2.4.2.1 Vaughan TV:** Utilizing Vaughan TV would allow for information on Public Hearing meetings for development applications and policy studies to scroll in a continuous loop across the TV screens located throughout the City Hall building. This has been done in the past by request from the Policy Planning Department to advertise policy studies such as the Vaughan Mills Secondary Plan.

**2.4.2.2 City Update E-Newsletter:** “City Update” is an electronic newsletter that is managed by the Corporate Communications Department and has a circulation of 8,500 subscribers. The E-Newsletter is promoted on the City’s Official Website, in the recreation guide, in the local newspapers and at local festivals. As already mentioned, there is no established protocol for advertising statutory Public Hearing and non-statutory public meeting notices on the “City Update,” however, when requested by the Policy Planning Department, an advertisement referencing a specific study has been added to the newsletter. Through discussions with the Corporate Communications Department, it was determined that as an enhancement to the current Public Hearing Notification protocol standard wording similar to that used for the City Page Online can also be incorporated into the newsletter linking readers directly to the Development Planning or Policy Planning Department’s posted public meeting notifications.

**2.4.2.3 Twitter and Facebook:** Currently, the City of Vaughan has both Twitter and Facebook accounts managed through the Corporate Communications Department. There is an opportunity for advertising Public Hearing notifications through both sites. The Development Planning and Policy Planning Departments can create standardized wording for “tweets” that are broadcast through Twitter and postings on the City’s Facebook account reminding the followers of both accounts that a Public Hearing is upcoming and providing the URL where the

Public Hearing information is available. Both Twitter and Facebook are set-up for 2-way communication, and in order to ensure users are not replying to the 'Tweet' or Facebook post directly, it is important to include a statement in the standardized wording that advises the users that any comments on the applications or studies must be sent to the Development Planning or Policy Planning Department's directly.

**2.4.2.4 QR Bar Code and/or Friendly URL:** Although the use of a QR Bar Code and/or 'Friendly URL' are not forms of notification, they are being recommended as both methods allow users direct access to information posted on the departmental webpages, and therefore, have been included as a means of notification. Both the QR Code and 'Friendly URL' are avenues of providing interested parties with convenient access to the necessary information. Currently, neither the Development or Policy Planning Departments have used QR Bar Codes or developed 'Friendly URLs' to provide direct access to the departmental pages on the City of Vaughan's official website. This suggested enhancement would provide the QR Bar Code and/or the 'Friendly URL' on staff business cards, allowing users to scan the barcode with their personal mobile device (e.g. cellular phone) and in turn create a direct link to the Development or Policy Planning Department pages on the City's official website, as well as, have a URL readily available on the business cards to provide direct access to the departmental webpages.

After the initial set-up of the QR Bar Codes, this system of providing access to the departmental webpages and in turn to the Public Hearing Notification would require minimal up-keep. Initial costs would include an annual fee of \$100.00 for purchasing the software to produce the QR Bar Code, which would be absorbed through the Planning Department's annual operating budget. This fee could also be shared with other City Departments using the same software. There is also an additional one time license cost of \$40.00 per QR Bar Code (ie. one each for Development and Policy Planning Department's) for printing the QR Bar Code onto the staff business cards.

## **2.5 Property Notice Sign**

A public notice sign of a Planning application is required to be posted on the actual property subject to the planning application(s). The City's Property Notice Sign Protocol outlines requirements for sign timing, materials, size, location, wording and lettering, and mapping as shown on Attachment #1. The Protocol requires the Development Planning Department to review and approve the wording and mapping, prior to the proponent erecting the sign on the property.

Staff has reviewed the Protocol and has determined that the property public notice signs are working well to present the prescribed information clearly; they are appropriately sized and placed in a visible location on the property; and, they effectively communicate the intent and purpose of the planning application(s) to the public in a reader-friendly format. Accordingly, Staff recommends a minor enhancement that is consistent with the questionnaire responses; that being, a coloured rendering be required in lieu of the standard mapping shown on Attachment #1, when a landowner proposes to facilitate the construction of a new building(s). The example shown on Attachment #2, of the proposed KPMG office building in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, provides the public with the most accurate representation of what will be built on site.

The standard property notice sign shown on Attachment #1 will continue to be used for applications that do not propose a building such as a change to an Official Plan policy, a

zoning standard, or a subdivision or condominium, where only the site plan is shown or simply just text to describe the proposal.

Should Council concur with the recommended enhancement, the Planning Department will administer the required changes to the existing Notice Sign Protocol to also facilitate the use of a rendering as shown on Attachment #2.

## 2.6 Timing of the Public Hearing

The Planning Act requires that the Public Hearing notice for a planning application be mailed 20 days in advance of the Public Hearing date. Delivery of the notice is via Canada Post. Allowing 4 to 6 days for delivery, a landowner located within the notification area should have the notice at least two weeks or 14 days in advance of a Public Hearing.

The Development and Policy Planning Departments also mail out courtesy “non-statutory” notices for those individuals or parties that have specifically requested to be notified of a particular application or study advancing to a Committee of the Whole Meeting or a Committee of the Whole (Working Session). Timing for the courtesy “non-statutory” notice is not prescribed by the Planning Act, and the Planning Department endeavours to send out this notice as soon as possible. However, before this notice can be delivered, the Development and Policy Planning Departments must be satisfied that the technical report is finalized and confirmed for the Agenda. Whenever possible, a courtesy “non-statutory” notice via an e-mail blast to those who provided an e-mail address can be facilitated for both the Development and Policy Planning Departments.

2.6.1 Recommended Enhancement: The timing of statutory Public Hearing Notices are prescribed through the Planning Act and do not require any enhancement.

However, the timing and delivery of courtesy “non-statutory” notices can be enhanced by addressing the following:

- 1) The template for the courtesy ‘non-statutory’ notice has been revised as shown on Attachment #5. The original notice was labeled “Notice” and did not include any reference to the notice being sent as a courtesy, which may have confused the reader of which notice they are receiving (ie. Statutory or Non-statutory) and for which Committee of Council the notice is speaking to. The new template (Attachment #5) is specifically titled “Courtesy Non-Statutory Meeting Notice” and advises the reader in the body of the notice that it is a courtesy notice mailed out for information purposes.
- 2) Courtesy “non-statutory” notices can be sent via e-mail when available, as the time allocated to postal delivery significantly delays receipt of the notice. In cases where the resident does not have an email address, or an e-mail address is not provided to the City, a courtesy notice will be mailed or hand-delivered, depending on timing. In order to help address the issue of timing, the Planning Department will request the Clerk’s Department to amend their “green” form at Public Hearings to add an area on the form where an e-mail address and/or telephone number can be provided by those individuals requesting additional information on planning applications and studies.

## 2.7 Community Information Meeting:

Members of Council can introduce a motion at any Public Hearing requesting that a community meeting be held in order to encourage further dialogue on a development proposal when necessary. This meeting is typically arranged through the local

Councillor's office, or as directed through the Development Planning Department, and is usually held in the evening at a convenient location for all interested parties to attend.

Furthermore, Council adopted a policy on June 25, 2013, respecting the Councillor Involvement in the Development Planning Process. The policy applies to planning applications proposing mid and/or high-rise mixed use as defined in the Vaughan Official Plan 2010. The policy provides opportunity for a meeting with the Ward Councillor, the Applicant, Staff and other stakeholders as determined, to gain Councillor and stakeholder input after the statutory public hearing and prior to the preparation of the technical staff report.

Pursuant to the recommendation in the June 25, 2013 Member's Resolution report, the Planning Department has since advised Applicants proposing mid and/or high-rise mixed use developments of the policy and will administer the required changes to the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Guide for Applicants. In addition, the Development Planning Department will typically advise the landowner proposing mid and/or high rise developments to arrange a meeting with the local area Councillor, and local residents and ratepayer associations ahead of submitting an application and/or during the planning process.

### **3.0 POLICY STUDIES**

Policy planning studies can vary in scope and scale from an issue specific study (i.e. Section 37) to an area specific study or secondary plan (i.e. Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan) to a City-wide planning policy review (Secondary Suites or the Vaughan Official Plan 2010). The tools used to engage public participation in a policy planning study would vary depending on the scope and complexity of the study. Prescribing a specific procedure to be followed is challenging as each study has particular characteristics or specifications which may require deviating from a specified protocol. The approach to notification will be customized to reflect the needs of the individual project. The primary examples are set out below.

#### **3.1 Statutory Requirements: Planning Act Conformity**

Most policy studies will result in an amendment to a City policy document such as the Official Plan or Zoning By-law. For approvals considered under the Planning Act, the minimum prescribed statutory requirements will be satisfied and may be to subject to enhancement as discussed in this report. Further enhancements may be required to reflect the scope of the individual study process.

#### **3.2 Posting of Signs/Posters for Study Areas**

When the scope of the study permits, the Policy Planning Department on behalf of the City may erect notification signs similar to those used to advertise Development Planning applications. Signs and posters (poster located in public facilities) would be utilized when a study is being conducted for a defined area. At the onset of the study, the Policy Planning Department will determine whether a sign(s) and/or poster(s) are required, and if required, where the sign/poster will be located. If required, the sign/poster will be budgeted for through the project budget. The sign(s) and/or poster(s) will include a graphic illustration of the boundary of the study area and a brief description of the purpose of the study. The sign and/or poster will remain posted throughout the study process and removed once the study has been completed.

No changes are being recommended to the procedures, which will remain discretionary based on the details of the study.



### **3.3 Notification Posted in Community Centres and Libraries for City-wide Studies**

For larger and city-wide study processes, such as the Vaughan Tomorrow Official Plan Review or Secondary Suites Study, the Policy Planning Department will prepare a notice for advertisement in the local newspapers, and when deemed appropriate, notification can also be posted in community centres, libraries, and at City Hall. Additional notification will also be provided throughout the study process for all key events including open-houses, charettes, workshops, non-statutory public meetings, etc. The specific measures will be identified in the approved project work plan and will be funded through the project budget.

No changes are being recommended to the existing procedures, which will remain discretionary based on the details of the study.

### **3.4 Electronic Registry and Other Methods of Notification**

An electronic registry for each Policy Planning study containing the contact information, more specifically an e-mail address of interested individuals, including residents, ratepayers associations, landowners, and consultants/professionals is maintained and utilized to electronically disseminate information usually through an e-mail blast, throughout the planning study process at key milestones. The electronic registry is maintained to provide those requesting notification with information on key events such as non-statutory public meetings and statutory Public Hearings. This involves the collection of e-mail addresses of all interested parties throughout the study process.

In addition to an electronic registry, the Policy Planning Department also engages the City of Vaughan Corporate Communications Department to determine whether the use of social media is appropriate. If so, those who follow the City of Vaughan's Twitter and Facebook accounts will receive the information on public non-statutory and statutory meetings through these media.

When deemed appropriate, the Policy Planning Department has also advertised Policy studies, and secondary plans on the City of Vaughan's e-news (scrolling information available on TV's throughout the Civic Centre) and on the City of Vaughan's on-line main page. As standard practice, notices for non-statutory meetings are also advertised on the City's "City Page On-Line".

No enhancements are being recommended through this review. The Policy Planning Department is satisfied with its established practice respecting public notification. The methods used to notify the public of statutory Public Hearings and non-statutory public meetings are determined based on the specific study, official plan or secondary plan process being undertaken. Recently, the Policy Planning Department was recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) for the public consultation process undertaken for the Vaughan Tomorrow Official Plan Review Process.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly "Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery," "Ensure Financial Sustainability," and "Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Well-Being".

### **Regional Implications**

The recommended enhancements in this report will not affect the Region of York, and will be administered by the Vaughan Planning Department, if approved.

## **Conclusion**

In consideration of the review undertaken on the current Public Notification for Planning Applications process in place since 2009, the Vaughan Development Planning and Policy Planning Departments advise that the process is working efficiently, however, recommends some enhancements to the process as provided in the recommendation of this report.

## **Attachments**

1. Property Notice Sign
2. Proposed Property Notice Sign
3. Questionnaire for Ratepayers Associations Respecting the Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies
4. Questionnaire for Stakeholders Respecting the City of Vaughan Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies
5. Revised Template - Courtesy Non-statutory Meeting Notice
6. Statutory Meeting Template - Notice of a Public Meeting

## **Report prepared by:**

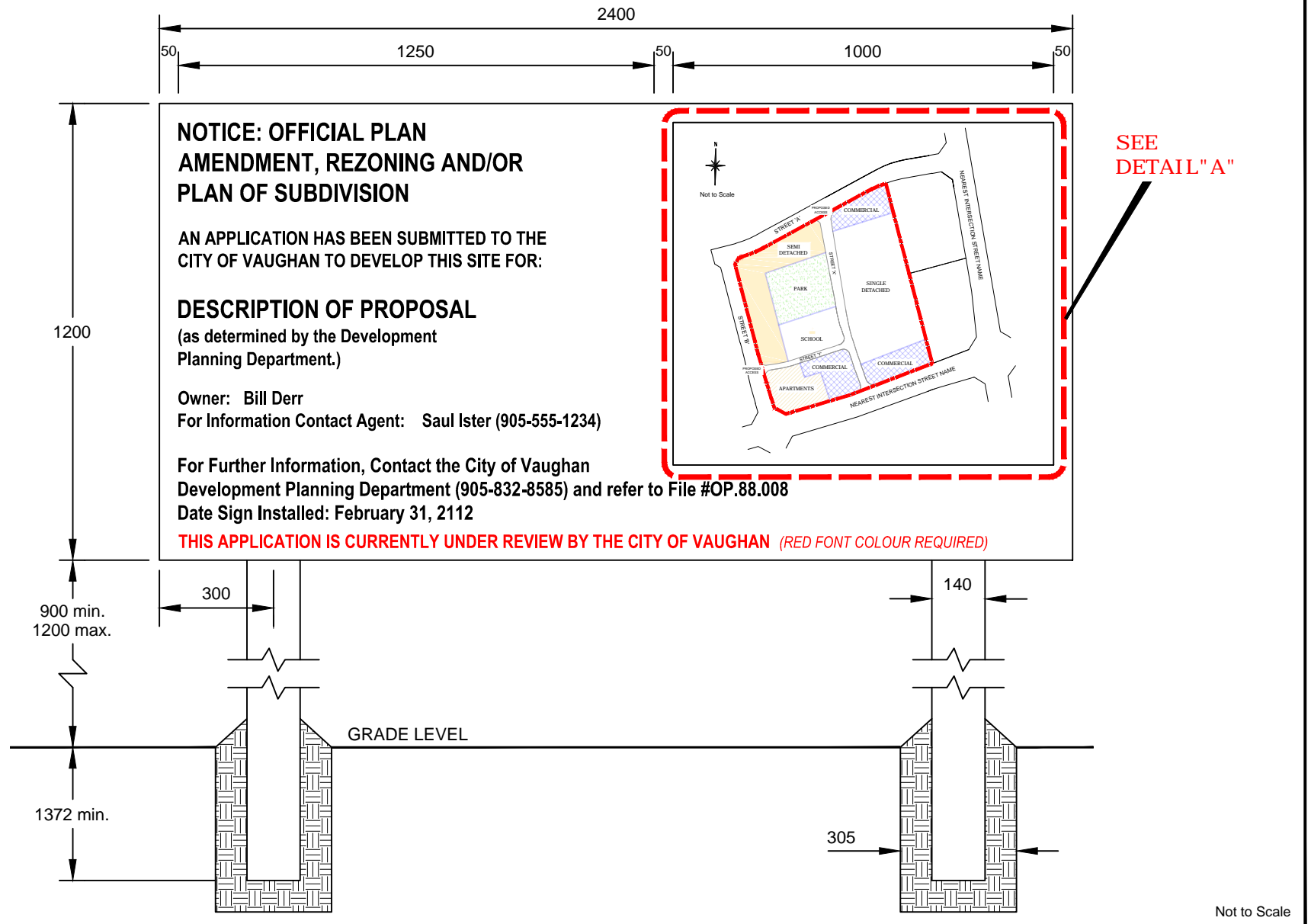
Arminé Hassakourians, Planner, ext. 8368  
Carmela Marrelli, Senior Planner, ext. 8791  
Christina Napoli, Senior Planner, ext. 8483  
Mauro Peverini, Manager of Development Planning, ext. 8407

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE  
Commissioner of Planning

GRANT UYEYAMA  
Director of Development Planning

/CM



# Property Notice Sign

## LOCATION:

City Wide

## APPLICANT:

City of Vaughan



# Attachment

FILE:  
12.29

DATE:  
November 8, 2013

1



Not to Scale

## Proposed Property Notice Sign

**LOCATION:**  
City Wide

**APPLICANT:**  
City of Vaughan



## Attachment

**FILE:**  
12.29

**DATE:**  
November 8, 2013

**2**

## Questionnaire for Ratepayers Association Respecting the Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies

1. The City of Vaughan increased the area for notification for planning applications from 120 m to 150 m (to all lands surrounding a property subject to a planning application). In your opinion, has this increase generated more public interest/response respecting planning applications and studies?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s) / Explanation:

2. The City in certain instances has extended the public notification area beyond 150 m of the property subject to the application(s) when deemed appropriate (such as when a high rise development is proposed). What do you feel is an appropriate distance?

☐ 150m -200m

☐ 200m-250m

☐ 250m+

Comment(s):

3. a) Does your Association recommend the City's website ([www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca)) to area residents when searching for information on specific meetings respecting planning applications and/or studies?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):

- b) Have you used the General Planning Mailbox service offered by the Development Planning and Policy Planning Departments to send comments to us on planning applications and/or studies?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):

4. a) The City has modified its' procedures and protocols for the display of information on notification signs (white signs) located on lands subject to development applications. Is the sign layout, which includes a site plan, a brief description of the application proposal, and contact information, effectively communicating the nature of the development proposal to the public?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):



- b) Instead of the 2 dimensional site plan, would you prefer to see an artist's rendering of what the proposed development will look like?

☐ YES    ☐ NO

Comment(s):

5. a) The City continues to utilize the "City Page Online" to advertise Public Meeting notification. Is your Association aware of this resource?

☐ YES    ☐ NO

Comment(s):

- b) Does your association use "City Page Online" to obtain information on public notices respecting public meetings? If so, what has been the Association's experience? Rank effectiveness on a scale of 1–5, 1 being the least effective and 5 being most effective.

☐ YES    ☐ NO

Comment(s):

6. a) Do you want to be notified of public notification meetings for planning applications and studies via social media?

☐ YES    ☐ NO

Comment(s):

b) What types of social media do you use? (Please List)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

c) Would you use social media to obtain notice of public meetings for planning applications and/or studies?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):

7. a) The Policy Planning Department currently maintains an electronic registry to provide notice for public meetings to those requesting it, on specific planning studies. Is your Association aware of this service?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):

b) If you answered "Yes" to 7a), do you find being on an electronic registry useful?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):



c) Has your Association requested specific notification and been placed on a mailing list for a specific study?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Comment(s):

8. Please rank in order how your Association and residents within your community prefer to be notified. What are your top 3 means of being notified (1 being the most preferred)?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

9. a) In your opinion is the City's current policy respecting Public Meeting Notification working?

☐ YES

☐ NO

b) What if any suggestions do you have on what can be done to improve the current process or ensure better Public Meeting Notification of planning applications and studies?

10. Does your Association have any additional comments you would like to add respecting the Public Meeting Notification process for planning applications and studies?

Thank you for your input. Our next steps include preparing a report for consideration based on input received.

Do you wish to be notified of the report going to Council? ☐ YES

☐ NO

If so please provide your contact information below:

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Questionnaire for Stakeholders Respecting the City of Vaughan Public Meeting Notification Process for Planning Applications and Studies

1. Current City Policy requires that Vaughan Council determine if an additional meeting for a planning application is required when the proposal has been significantly revised or when an application has not been considered by the Committee of the Whole within two (2) years after being received at a public meeting. Do you have any comments/suggestions on this policy?
2. Have you noticed that the City's increased notification area for public meetings from 120 m to 150 m has generated more public interest/response respecting planning applications and/or studies?

4. The City has undertaken the practice of posting public meeting notifications through various forms of social media including the City's Official Website Vaughan On-Line (VOL). Do you have an opinion on the use of social media as a means to advertise planning applications and/or studies?

5. The City has modified its' procedures and protocols respecting notification signage. Changes include: the display of information on notification signs, the number of signs located on the subject lands, a new sign layout which now includes a site plan and the proponent's contact information, and sign construction/materials. Please discuss or comment on the impact of these modifications.
6. Do you have any comments you would like to add respecting the City's Public Meeting Notification process?



**COURTESY NON-STATUTORY MEETING NOTICE**

Date

Re: **Application File #(s)**

**Application Name:**

Please be advised that the application noted above will be considered at a Committee of the Whole Meeting/Working Session Meeting/etc. on:

**Date**

**At (Time)**

**Vaughan Civic Centre, Council Chamber**

**2141 Major Mackenzie Drive**

**Vaughan, Ontario, L6A 1T1**

Please be advised this is a courtesy notice, pursuant to a request to be notified of further consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned at 905-832-8585, ext. .

A copy of the staff report can be obtained for your information on the City's web-site at: [www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca), or in person from the City Clerk's Office, as of **DATE**.

Respectfully,

(Planner name)



## **NOTICE OF A PUBLIC MEETING**

A public meeting to receive input on the following planning application(s) will be held on:

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC HEARING)**

**(Insert date) 2010 at 7:00 pm**

**at**

**VAUGHAN CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER  
2141 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE, VAUGHAN, ONTARIO, L6A 1T1**

**PROPERTY:** \* Insert Property Address whenever available and general location i.e. - 10197 & 10211 Keele Street (southeast corner of Keele Street and McNaughton Road), City of Vaughan. (Attachment #1 – Ward \_\_\_\_).

**APPLICATION:** \*\* Insert simplified description of the proposal.

*Example:*

*To amend the City's Zoning By-law 1-88 to develop the property with a 3-storey building with 1,073 m<sup>2</sup> of ground floor commercial uses (office and retail) and a total of 95 residential condominium apartment units on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors (Attachment #2).*

**APPLICANT:** \* Insert Applicant's Name

**FILE NUMBER(S):** \* insert File #

**CONTACT:**

Additional information may be obtained from \*\* (Planner's name) of the Development Planning Department at 905-832-8585, Extension \_\_\_\_\_. Comments may also be mailed to the Development Planning Department at the same address, or faxed to (905) 832-6080, or e-mailed to [DevelopmentPlanning@vaughan.ca](mailto:DevelopmentPlanning@vaughan.ca) prior to the meeting (please quote file name and number).

*The Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13 authorizes the City of Vaughan to collect any personal information in your communication or presentation to City Council or its Committees. The City collects this information to enable it to make informed decisions on the relevant issue(s). If you are submitting letters, facsimiles, e-mails, presentations or other communications to the City, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the City will become part of the public record and will appear on the City's website. The City will also make your communication and any personal information in it such as your address and postal code or e-mail address available to the public unless you expressly request the City to remove it.*

*The City audio records Council and Committee meetings. If you make a presentation to a Council or Committee, the City will be audio recording you and City staff may make these recordings available to the public.*

*Please direct any questions about this collection to the Planner listed above.*

**JOHN MACKENZIE, Commissioner of Planning  
JEFFREY A. ABRAMS, City Clerk**