



Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

DATE: Wednesday, May 08, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: INBOUND AND OUTBOUND DELEGATIONS

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The City receives requests to host Inbound Delegations wishing to visit with elected officials and departments of the City. In addition, the City participates in Outbound Delegations outside Ontario for cultural and business development purposes. This Report recommends the adoption of Policy *02.C.02 Inbound and Outbound Delegations* to govern the City's participation in future Delegations.

Report Highlights

- The City currently participates in Inbound and Outbound Delegations without a formal Policy in place to govern these activities.
- As Vaughan's reputation grows as an international business center, the City is experiencing an increase in interest for Inbound and Outbound Delegations.
- Vaughan is at a juncture in its urban history whereby it should formalize strategy, policy, process and resources with respect to international business development protocol activities.
- A Policy provides a results-oriented approach to the City's engagement in Delegations and, at the same time, ensures transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the handling of Inbound and Outbound Delegation requests.

Recommendations

1. That Corporate Policy *02.C.02 Inbound and Outbound Delegations* be approved.

Background

The City of Vaughan receives numerous requests from Inbound Delegations wishing to visit City Hall and meet with Staff and/or Council. The City is also invited to participate or initiates participation in Outbound Delegations to locations outside Vaughan and Canada. Inbound and Outbound Delegations increase the profile of the City and can be used to achieve various outcomes, including: investment in the community; relationships with businesses and/or elected officials; the exchange and development of social, cultural, and economic best practices; tourism; study tours; marketing and promotion; and export development.

As global awareness and interest in the City of Vaughan grows, so have the requests for the City's participation. To date, the City does not have a Policy in place to direct and support these activities. Currently, ad hoc criteria are used to accept or decline Inbound Delegations while requests to participate in Outbound Delegations are submitted to Council for approval.

With this marked increase in global networking activity, a Policy to guide the City's engagement in Inbound and Outbound Delegations is required to ensure the effective deployment of resources. Moreover, a Policy encourages the City to cultivate those opportunities that offer the greatest potential for economic and cultural benefit.

Previous Reports/Authority

N/A

Analysis and Options

Economic and Cultural Development staff undertook a survey of municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and municipalities further afield to explore frameworks for processing Inbound and Outbound Delegations. Like Vaughan, growing cities have been experiencing an increase in the number of requests for Inbound Delegations in particular, and for this reason, are engaging in similar exercises to update or create policies that would enable them to be more efficient and effective in how they execute delegations.

Several challenges to current services were identified, including:

- Lack of resources to support increase in visits (staff time and budget pressures)
- Misalignment of objectives (the objectives of the Inbound/Outbound delegation do not align with a Corporate Strategy)
- Lack of consistent guidelines on accepting or declining requests for visits

The proposed Policy *02.C.02 Inbound and Outbound Delegations* attempts to address these challenges by drawing from the best practices of other municipalities and creating custom solutions.

Inbound Delegations

Vaughan is a major international center for businesses and residents

On an annual basis the City receives and hosts approximately 12 Inbound Delegations. As Vaughan's reputation continues to grow as a major international business center, the number of Inbound Delegation requests will rise.

Inbound Delegations are groups of government staff, businesses, dignitaries and/or elected officials, or any combination thereof, who represent a community outside the City. Hosting Inbound Delegations allows the City to showcase best practices and its assets including the business community, investment opportunities, infrastructure development, and commitment to service delivery.

To streamline the process for handling these requests, and ensuring the process is as transparent and efficient as possible, the Policy adopts a peer-to-peer framework for approving requests. This framework ensures that appropriate staff and officials of the City—those with knowledge of scheduling, resources, and objectives—are positioned to approve or deny the delegation request.

Therefore, delegations that include dignitaries and/or elected officials are reviewed and considered by the Mayor's Office (or Council designate); delegations without elected officials and related to economic and cultural development are reviewed and considered by the Director, Economic and Cultural Development. Other City-related requests are managed by the respective Department of the City.

Outbound Delegations

Vaughan is promoting its local businesses, and its economic and cultural advantages on the global stage

Based on the forthcoming Vaughan International Business Development Action Plan, the Economic and Cultural Development Department will be planning a number of major outbound missions over the course of this term of Council.

An Outbound Delegation comprises travel to a marketplace outside Ontario for business development, events, trade shows, arts and culture development, small business and

entrepreneurship, and other economic and cultural development purposes that may include the Mayor and Members of Council, City staff, or any combination thereof, and are coordinated by the Economic and Cultural Development Department.

Currently, *Ad-018 Employee Reimbursement for Business Related Expenditures and Advances Policy* and *CL-012 Council Member Expense Policy* provide guidance on the participation of staff and the Mayor and Members of Council, respectively, in Outbound Delegations. Where Department budgets are used, Outbound Delegations with elected officials require Council approval. However, the proposed Policy includes an exception to *CL-012 Council Member Expense Policy*: the Mayor (or designate) has the delegated authority to participate in an Outbound Delegation without Council approval under exceptional circumstances, which are detailed in the Policy. This provision ensures that at short notice, and in situations relating directly to attracting or retaining business investment and/or employment, the City is agile enough to be present to represent its interests.

Economic and Cultural Development staff prepare post-mission Council reports related to the outcomes of all Outbound Delegations involving elected officials.

Financial Impact

Expenses related to all Inbound and Outbound Delegations other than gifting Corporate Promotional items, which are subject to the draft Policy *02.C.03 Corporate Promotional Items*, are funded by the Council-approved Economic and Cultural Development Department Budget.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Consultations with other growing municipalities across the GTA reveal that, like Vaughan, cities are at a juncture where the increase in requests for Inbound and Outbound Delegations must be balanced carefully alongside available resources, strategic priorities, and the potential to cultivate, broadly speaking, economic and cultural benefit. Research indicates that several GTA municipalities do not currently have policies in place to govern Inbound and Outbound Delegations. The City of Vaughan, therefore, has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in this policy area, against the backdrop of an increasingly connected and networked world, unphased by geopolitical borders.

Conclusion

Based on recent trends, and as the City of Vaughan gains more visibility, staff predict that requests for participation in Inbound and Outbound Delegations will increase. A Policy to guide the City's participation in Inbound and Outbound Delegations amidst this growth is necessary for inviting transparency, efficiency and accountability into the

process. Moreover, this Policy is an opportunity to formalize Vaughan's reputation as a City receptive to facilitating international networks and economic and cultural opportunities.

For more information, please contact: Dennis Cutajar, Director, Economic and Cultural Development.

Attachments

1. *Corporate Policy 02.C.02 Inbound and Outbound Delegations*, Economic and Cultural Development, May 8, 2019

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