

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 24, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: 2019 VAUGHAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS
MISSION TO ISRAEL**

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The City of Vaughan has an opportunity to join the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce's Business Mission to Israel. Economic and Cultural Development recommend that the City participate in the Business Mission and supplement it with additional days of programming to promote strategic city building projects, learn best practices from leading Israeli municipalities and other organizations, showcase Vaughan's business sector, and reaffirm Vaughan's international partnership with the City of Ramla.

Report Highlights

- The Vaughan Chamber of Commerce is planning a Business Mission to Israel (November 27-29); the City of Vaughan can join as a participant and make additions to the existing itinerary.
- The Mission would enable the City to promote key market opportunities to an Israeli audience.
- Vaughan is home to a significant Jewish and Israeli diaspora, in addition to businesses with active trade relationships with Israel.
- The City has maintained an international partnership with the City of Ramla, located in Central Israel, since 1993.

Recommendations

1. That, in accordance with *Corporate Policy 02.C.02*, the City join the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Business Mission to Israel (November 27-29) and supplement it with additional programming (November 23-26) to maximize the City's presence in Israel, funded by the existing Council approved 2019 operating budget of the Economic and Cultural Development Department; and
2. That, two (2) Members of Council selected by the Mayor and Council, and two (2) staff selected by the Interim City Manager participate in the Mission; and
3. That, City staff submit a post-mission report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting highlighting outcomes of the business mission.

Background

The Vaughan Chamber of Commerce (VCC), in conjunction with the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, has organized a Leisure and Business Mission to Israel from November 20-29, 2019; the Business Mission portion runs from November 27-29. The Chamber has enlisted the services of Indus Travel Agency and CAA Travel Vaughan to organize the logistics of the trip, and the Toronto-based Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) to support the itinerary of the business portion of the Mission. The VCC is also working directly with the Federation of Israel Chambers of Commerce to build a business-to-business component into the mission for Vaughan businesses interested in targeted introductions.

Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and City of Vaughan departments continue to work together in a positive and collaborative way

The City's proposed 2019 Mission to Israel arose from the opportunity to work with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce (VCC), a key partner, on their existing Business Mission to Israel. The VCC is focused on supporting business-to-business transactions while the City of Vaughan's primary objective, in addition to supporting the VCC's mandate, will be to promote Vaughan's key market opportunities to an Israeli audience.

Vaughan's previous Mission to Israel was robust and well-attended.

The City conducted a 7-day Mission to Israel in 2013 (Tel Aviv, Haifa Eilat/Eilat, Jerusalem) with the support of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Government of Israel Economic Mission to Canada, and the Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce. This successful Mission was led by Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, Councillor Tony Carella, and Councillor Alan Shefman with representation by several academic institutions and Vaughan-based small and medium-sized enterprises. The Mission was focused largely on identifying companies and

investment opportunities for business-to-business transactions, with opportunities to visit leading innovation parks and incubators and participate in networking events.

Vaughan's dynamic Jewish and Israeli diaspora can promote international business development

The City of Vaughan is home to one of the largest Jewish diasporas in Canada. A total of 18,625 residents or 6.1% of the overall population identify their ethnic origin as Jewish or Israeli. Vaughan's total Jewish and Israeli population constitutes 25.3% of the entire Jewish and Israeli population in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Vaughan also has the highest percentage of Hebrew speakers in the Toronto CMA: it is home to 43.6% of all speakers in the Toronto CMA who list Hebrew as their mother tongue, and 48.8% of all who responded that Hebrew is the language spoken most at home (4,530 residents and 2,145 residents in Vaughan, respectively) (source: 2016 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada). Home to synagogues, Jewish community centres, and educational institutions, Vaughan's Jewish and Israeli community have established a strong and notable presence in the community. The potential to leverage the local Jewish diaspora in combination with the innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, and export-readiness of Israeli-based firms, have made Israel an attractive market to Vaughan, and as such, Israel was identified as a priority area in Vaughan's 10-year Economic Development Strategy in 2010 and continues to remain relevant.

Previous Reports/Authority

[CW Item 4, Report 19: Inbound and Outbound Delegations, May 14, 2019](#)

[CW Item 3, Report 19: Cultural and Economic Partnerships, May 14, 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

The purpose of the City's 2019 Business Mission to Israel is to promote the City of Vaughan internationally and lay the groundwork for economic investment and knowledge exchange.

Specific objectives include:

1. Highlight Vaughan's dynamic Jewish diaspora and access to Vaughan companies
2. Promote the Hospital and VMC Downtown to government audiences with access to private sector interests
3. Support local business retention and expansion through targeted visits to the Israeli headquarters of Vaughan-based businesses
4. Promote the Hospital and VMC Downtown directly to the private sector

5. Learn best practices in the areas of health-related economic development and smart city planning and implementation from leading hospitals, incubators, and municipalities
6. Reaffirm Vaughan's International Partnership with the City of Ramla

Collaborating with local and Israeli-based partners to achieve the City's objectives

The City has been working with several partners and stakeholders to ensure objectives are met over the course of the Mission. The support of the following partners has been enlisted to ensure a robust itinerary, including strategic meetings and academic and corporate site visits:

- Government of Israel's Economic and Trade Mission to Canada
- Economic and Trade Mission to Canada at the Ministry of Economy in Jerusalem
- Consulate General of Israel in Toronto
- Embassy of Canada to Israel in Tel Aviv
- Export Institute of Israel in Tel Aviv

Financial Impact

As per *Corporate Policy 02.C.02*, expenses related to all Outbound Delegations, and delegation-related activities, are funded by the Council approved Economic and Cultural Development Department budget. The estimated budget for four delegates from the City of Vaughan (two elected officials and two Economic and Cultural Development staff) is \$20,485. For a detailed cost breakdown, please refer to Attachment 3.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Municipalities in York Region are responsible for developing and executing their own International Business Development Programs. Outbound Delegations are within the mandate of Economic and Cultural Development's Business Plan as a vehicle for promoting Vaughan's advantages, strategic projects, market opportunities and local businesses in global centers. The Mission to Israel also serves as an opportunity to work closely with a key partner, the VCC, and support the business-to-business function of their itinerary.

With respect to foreign direct investment, York Region's agreement with Toronto Global—the agency responsible for promoting investment in the Toronto Region—does not currently identify Israel as a priority country. Working in markets that are not represented by Toronto Global expands Vaughan's market reach and awareness and complements Toronto Global's efforts to promote York Region and Vaughan abroad.

TorontoGlobal staff were advised of Vaughan's potential participation on this business mission to Israel.

Conclusion

Economic and Cultural Development recommends joining the Business portion of the VCC's Mission to support the attendance of Vaughan-based businesses, and to leverage the confirmed logistical and business support that the Chamber has obtained to achieve the City's objectives. The 2019 Mission to Israel is an opportunity for Vaughan to work with key partners to market and promote Vaughan's businesses and strategic city-building projects on a world stage.

Upon approval, Economic and Cultural Development will finalize the itinerary including all logistical requirements and travel-related bookings. The support of Corporate communications will be enlisted to create and implement a Communications Plan, and targeted marketing collateral for distribution prior to and during the Mission. Economic and Cultural Development will also support the business recruiting efforts of the VCC.

For more information, please contact: Dennis Cutajar, Dennis.Cutajar@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Leisure and Business Mission, Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, August 30, 2019.
2. 2019 Israel Business Mission: Draft Itinerary, Economic and Cultural Development, September 24, 2019.
3. 2019 Israel Business Mission: Draft Budget, Economic and Cultural Development, September 24, 2019.

Prepared by

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