

Committee of the Whole Report (2)

DATE: Tuesday, November 12, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: CORPORATE POLICY-REVIEW OF ADVERTISING CONTENT
ON CITY PROPERTY**

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To obtain approval of a new Corporate Policy, titled, “*Review of Advertising Content Displayed on City Property Policy No. 02.C.05*”. This Policy is intended to guide Council, Staff and the public in an open and transparent way on reviewing advertising content on City property. Further, the Policy safeguards the City’s reputation, assets and interests.

Report Highlights

- The City of Vaughan sells advertising in city-owned communication mediums to help off-set budget requirements for City programs and services.
- This Policy supports the placement of third-party advertisements on City Property to assist in the provision of City services.
- This Policy and Corporate Procedure outlines a process for administering requests to review advertising content on City property in a way that ensures access, fairness and conformity with prevailing legislation, standards and bylaws. And, safeguards the interests, property and reputation of the City.

Recommendations

1. That Corporate Policy No. 02.C.05, *Review of Advertising Content Displayed on City Property Policy*, be approved.

Background

In March 2019, Council adopted the following staff recommendation, “THAT, staff be directed to prepare for Council approval a new City of Vaughan corporate policy and procedure regarding third-party advertising on municipal property”. This Council resolution represents the origin of this report.

The City of Vaughan currently supports the sale of third-party advertising on City Property to generate non-tax revenue for City services. Examples include ads in the Recreation Guide, Community Centres and corporate magazines and publications. Council also approved the future development of digital billboards on City property for the purpose of generating non-tax revenue.

Advertising content displayed on City Property must comply with the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*, applicable statutes in Canada and Ontario, and City By-laws and policies.

The City of Vaughan does not have a formal policy in place to manage complaints and/or requests for review of advertising on City property that may arise from Council members, staff, the public, and other stakeholders.

Previous Reports/Authority

Staff report titled, “Billboard Revenue Potential Update” presented to the former Finance Audit and Administration (FAA) Committee on Monday March 4, 2019 [Extract Item 4, Report No. 5 of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee](#)

Analysis and Options

On October 22, 2019, the Corporate Policy Review Committee, comprised of the Interim City Manager and Senior Leadership staff, reviewed this Policy and directed it to Committee of the Whole and Council for approval.

This Policy and related Corporate Procedure provides clear decision-making principles and a process to guide Council Members and Staff on how to review requests related to advertising content on City property

Advertising mediums currently exist to generate revenue from the sale of advertising on City property, such as print, digital and out-of-home. All of these advertising programs will be subject to the proposed Policy. Review of advertising on private property is out of Policy scope. These types of requests are referred to the owner of the advertising medium for their review.

Other municipalities and government agencies have similar Policy and Procedures to formally review advertising content on their assets

The City of Mississauga has a policy that outlines a review process that is administered by an advertising review panel (ARP) made up of Council Members. The City of Brampton's advertising review panel is comprised of three (3) members of their Senior Management Team as selected by the City Manager. Conversely, the Toronto Transit Commission ARP is made up of TTC Staff. As can be seen, the make-up of the advertising review panel varies.

This report recommends that the advertising review panel be comprised of City staff as outlined in the Corporate Procedures. Further, all decisions of the Vaughan Advertising Review Panel will be communicated to Council on a public Standing Committee or Council agenda. In extraordinary situations, for ad content that is deemed or has created community wide sentiment or concern, the City Manager has the authority in the proposed Policy to opt-out of the advertising review panel process and refer a matter directly to a Standing Committee or Council for a decision.

Financial Impact

The sale of advertising on City property generates revenue for City programs and services that off-sets the budget and relieves the tax burden. The cost of administering the Policy is operational in scope. A budget amendment is not required as a result of approving the recommendations in this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

N/A

Conclusion

Adoption of the proposed Advertising Content Displayed on City Property Policy will establish decision-making principles and a process for administering ad content review requests in a manner that ensures access and fairness. While the City supports the placement of third-party ads on City Property to assist in the provision of City services, the proposed Policy helps to safeguard the City's reputation, assets and interests.

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

Attachments

Attachment 1: Policy No. 02.C.05 - Review of Advertising Content Displayed on City Property

Prepared by

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