

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Monday, March 09, 2020

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: 2019 ISRAEL POST-MISSION REPORT

FROM:

Mary Reali, Acting City Manager and Deputy City Manager, Community Services

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

The City of Vaughan joined the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce's Business Mission to Israel (November 2019) and supplemented the Mission with a government relations, business development and city promotion itinerary. This Report provides an overview of the key accomplishments of the City's Mission and follow-up activities.

Report Highlights

- The City of Vaughan completed a successful Business Mission to Israel organized by the President and CEO of the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, in association with the Vaughan Economic and Cultural Development Department.
- The Vaughan delegation included 22 participants representing 15 organizations from relevant sectors of Vaughan's local economy, such as business, academia, health care, government and research-innovation.
- The City accomplished the Mission's key deliverables and is committed to advance its successes by continuing communication and exploratory projects with its stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. That, the staff report, titled: "2019 Israel Post-Mission Report" be received for information; and

2. That, Committee of the Whole supports staff in their continued follow-up activities and initiatives generated by the 2019 Israel Business Mission.

Background

Led by the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce (VCC), the City of Vaughan participated in a successful Business Mission to Israel from November 22 – November 30, 2019. The mandate of the City's trip was to promote job-creating trade, learn best practices from leading Smart City and Healthcare practitioners, support the growth of local companies and globally-recognized institutions who took part in the effort, and strengthen relations with Jewish and Israeli communities.

Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua led the City's delegation, joined by Local and Regional Councillor Linda Jackson, Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman and City staff: Director, Economic and Cultural Development and Director, Corporate and Strategic Communications.

The City undertook a robust itinerary that included meetings with senior government officials and visits to leading healthcare and smart city organizations and corporations.

Over the course of seven days across Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa, the City had productive meetings with the following officials and leaders:

- Mayor of Ramla
- Mayor of Tel Aviv
- Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv
- Mayor of Jerusalem
- Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem
- Deputy Mayor of Haifa
- Chairman of Shalva National Center
- VP of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and Israel Office Director of Canada's Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)
- Director of the Americas, Ministry of Economy and Industry
- Director of Innovation Entrepreneurship and Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Director of North American Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Program Director, North America, Israel Innovation Authority
- Head of Local Market Implementation, Fuel Choices & Smart Mobility Initiative
- Counsellor and Senior Trade Commissioner, Embassy of Canada to Israel

- Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of the Kababir neighborhood in Haifa

Site visits included:

- Rambam Healthcare Campus
- Shalva National Center
- Shmeltzer Institute for Smart Mobility, University of Tel Aviv
- Teva Pharmaceuticals, Digital Health Initiatives
- Center for Israeli Innovation
- Yad Vashem Museum
- Jerusalem Old City Holy sites

The City worked closely with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce to support their delegation of Vaughan-based businesses.

In addition to the City's agenda, which focused on government relations and city promotion of key projects, the Delegation supported the VCC's business-to-business program in conjunction with the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce. The City Delegation participated in the business roundtable comprised of over 40 Israeli businesses and coordinated joint learning and business development opportunities with VCC delegates including York University, Niagara University, Mackenzie Health, and ventureLAB, amongst others.

Previous Reports/Authority

[2019 Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Business Mission to Israel, CW\(2\) Report, September 24, 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

The Vaughan Delegation accomplished its multiple goals of showcasing key City projects on the international stage, highlighting investment opportunities, learning best practices in the areas of healthcare innovation and smart city development and execution, improving international government relations, supporting the international business development of Vaughan-based businesses, and strengthening relations with Jewish and Israeli communities.

The City showcased priority city-building initiatives such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital, and Smart City initiatives as foreign direct investment opportunities to key audiences.

Through speaking opportunities and dedicated marketing collateral (see Attachment 1), major City projects were highlighted to municipal counterparts as well as governmental departments and organizations such as the Ministry of Economy and Industry and the Israel Innovation Authority, whose clients include Israeli firms wishing to expand their operations to North America. Investment opportunities were also shared directly with Israeli-based businesses during the VCC's business-to-business agenda. As a result of this exposure, the Tel Aviv-based smart city solutions provider, Colu technologies, is scheduled to Vaughan in January 2020 to discuss their North American expansion plans.

The City and VCC delegates gained exposure to world-leading practices in healthcare innovation.

Together with the City's Healthcare Precinct Partners—York University, Mackenzie Health, and ventureLAB—the Delegation participated in a study tour of Rambam Hospital located in Haifa: one of the largest and most advanced medical centers in Israel. The tour featured Dr. Rafael Bayer, a leader of the world-class center, who addressed the strategic alignment of startups and academic institutions to create medical breakthroughs and enhance front-line health services. The tour was an important opportunity for Precinct Partners to learn of proven best practices in public-private partnerships and healthcare innovation.

Established municipal partnerships were solidified and new intergovernmental relationships were formed.

Mayor Bevilacqua and Mayor Vidal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to advance shared cultural opportunities and experiences between Vaughan and Ramla and in so doing, reaffirm the existing Vaughan-Ramla Agreement dating back to 1993. The MOU signifies a commitment to continue and modernize the Cultural Partnership under the City of Vaughan's new Cultural and Economic Partnerships Policy.

Strong relations were made between Vaughan and the Cities of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa with commitments to liaise directly with Tel Aviv and Jerusalem staff responsible for their respective smart city initiatives, and with the Economic Development Corporation of Haifa to learn best practices and form partnerships that could contribute to Vaughan's Smart City planning and execution.

The Mission to Israel demonstrated Vaughan's commitment to strengthening relations with Jewish and Israeli communities and celebrating interfaith dialogue.

The City visited Yad Vashem—Israel’s official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust—in addition to the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Stations of the Cross. While in Haifa—a City known across Israel for its fusion and intermixing of Jewish and Arab cultures—the delegation met with Emir Muhammad Sharif Odeh, head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community of the Kababir neighborhood.

Financial Impact

As per *Corporate Policy 02.C.02*, expenses related to all Outbound Delegations, and delegation-related activities, are funded by the 2019 Council-approved Economic and Cultural Development Department budget.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

While the focus of the Business Mission was to elevate the City of Vaughan and its businesses’ profile in the international marketplace, the City also strengthened considerably its profile at the local, regional, and national levels, including its relationships with local partners, in the process.

Corporate and Strategic Communications staff undertook a robust promotional campaign to highlight the City’s Mission. Efforts included six media products published (1 statement, 2 news releases and 2 photo releases), in addition to an editorial by Mayor Bevilacqua in the *Canadian Jewish News*. Extensive social media messaging also took place on the City’s corporate social media channels. Content was provided in Council eNews for further distribution.

Through the course of planning and executing the Mission, the City worked closely with the Consul General of Israel in Toronto, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and the Government of Israel’s Economic and Trade Mission to Canada, and as a result, these relationships have been enhanced. The positive collaboration between the City and these partners has set the stage for productive follow-up meetings and projects.

In addition, staff has formally extended its thanks and gratitude to all organizations that helped make this mission a success.

Conclusion

Economic and Cultural Development staff is currently engaged in follow-up activities from the Mission including: business development meetings related to expansion of Israeli businesses to Canada as well as promotion of investment opportunities to Israeli business delegations organized by the Ministry of Economy; planning for best practice adoption related to the Fuel Choices and Smart Mobility Program, Tel Aviv’s Smart Card

initiative, and Health Israel Innovation; and strengthening municipal relationships with the Cities of Ramla, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa.

Economic and Cultural Development will also work directly with VCC Delegation participants to support business development opportunities arising from the Mission, where possible.

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

Attachments

1. Israel Trade Mission 2019, Economic and Cultural Development, November 2019

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