

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, December 03, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: FINAL VERSION - GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN 2019

FROM:

Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek adoption of the City's revised community sustainability plan, Green Directions Vaughan 2019, thereby completing a key activity in the 2018-2022 Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

Report Highlights

- The revision of Green Directions Vaughan began in late 2016 to fulfill a Service Excellence Strategy initiative
- City staff prepared Green Directions Vaughan 2019 in-house with input from staff, stakeholders and community members
- A community engagement effort from June 2019 to August 2019 provides validation that the 2019 Plan is endorsed by the community
- Green Directions Vaughan 2019 contains a set of 69 sustainability actions assigned to 18 City departments
- Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on climate resiliency, as well as greater recognition of community and stakeholder contributions to sustainability achievements are new to Green Directions Vaughan 2019

Recommendations

1. THAT City Council adopt Green Directions Vaughan 2019, the City's revised community sustainability plan appended as Attachment 1, in support of the 2018-2022 Service Excellence Strategic Plan.
2. THAT City Council direct staff to prepare a plain-language, easily accessible summary of Green Directions Vaughan 2019 for use in a wide range of communication channels.

Background

Green Directions Vaughan 2019 completes a key activity in the Service Excellence Strategic Plan

In April 2009, Council approved Green Directions Vaughan, the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan. Green Directions Vaughan (the "Plan") contains a set of recommendations to implement sustainable actions in corporate functions and the city-building process. A revision of the Plan began in late 2016 to fulfill a Service Excellence Strategy initiative. It resulted in modifying sustainability actions following departmental consultation, a policy review and municipal benchmarking.

In 2017, IndEco Strategic Consulting Inc. helped structure the City's community engagement effort in support of the Plan revision. Community and stakeholder input were incorporated into the draft Green Directions Vaughan 2019 document.

City staff prepared the draft Green Directions Vaughan 2019 in-house with the assistance of ongoing internal departmental consultation by way of a Technical Advisory Committee. Through 2018 and into 2019 staff finalized the 69 sustainability actions that implement the Goals and Objectives of the Plan.

Public consultation is a vital part of the city-building process. City of Vaughan staff planned and undertook a comprehensive community engagement effort completely in-house from June 2019 to August 2019 on the draft version of Green Directions Vaughan 2019. The main objective was to generate awareness of Green Directions Vaughan in order to validate the City was moving in the right direction in relation to how the community imagines a sustainable Vaughan. The community engagement effort was developed as a partnership between the Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability department and the Corporate and Strategic Communications department.

In October 2019, City staff brought forward a draft Plan to City Council in order to receive and incorporate feedback before producing a final document. Prepared in collaboration with the Corporate and Strategic Communications department, the Green Directions Vaughan 2019 document is appended as Attachment 1.

Green Directions Vaughan 2019 supports Environmental Stewardship as a strategic priority area in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports considered by City Council regarding the Plan can be found at the following links:

The update of Green Directions Vaughan for the September 20, 2016 meeting of the Committee of the Whole included an outline of the renewal of the Plan.

[Green Directions Vaughan Annual Update 2016](#)

An update of the quantitative indicators was the focus of the annual update of Green Directions Vaughan adopted by Council on April 11, 2018.

[Green Directions Vaughan Annual Update 2018](#)

At the October 16, 2019 meeting of the Committee of the Whole, City staff brought forward a draft Plan to City Council in order to receive and incorporate feedback before producing a final Plan.

[Draft Green Directions Vaughan 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

As a living document, the actions and priorities in Green Directions Vaughan have evolved since 2009. Some of the main changes to the new Plan include:

- emphasizing collective action and encouraging community partners to collaborate to achieve sustainability outcomes
- describing the sustainability actions as outcomes to better track progress and find ways to collaborate for success
- aligning sustainability actions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Council on City Data (WCCD) framework
- recognizing the importance of the Agricultural System and supporting urban-agriculture and local food opportunities within the City
- supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to create a resilient City and low carbon economy

Through the successful implementation of the sustainability actions, the City contributes to the achievement of ten SDGs reported by the City through the WCCD framework.

Green Directions Vaughan 2019 measures progress in support of Environmental Stewardship in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan

The main content of the Plan includes 69 sustainability actions, delegated to 18 City departments for implementation. To ensure that these actions are implemented and to measure progress in support of Environmental Stewardship as a strategic priority area in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, a governance framework will be utilized that includes the following:

- developing milestones as key achievements to deliver project outcomes and tracking their completion with City departments
- aligning milestones with departmental business plans
- ongoing tracking of quantitative community indicators

Objective 6.1 of Green Directions Vaughan outlines the City's commitment to support the implementation of Green Directions at all levels of City operations and provides that an annual report to Council be prepared on the status of existing programs and accomplishments.

Ongoing community engagement of Green Directions Vaughan will aim to foster collective action to build partnerships and capacity in the local community

Success of the sustainability actions relies on local collective action that involves residents, community groups, environmental organizations, businesses, industry leaders, and other levels of government. Ongoing communication of Green Directions Vaughan 2019 requires more than education and outreach. It will require strategic projects to drive participation on individual and neighbourhood-scale actions, as well as building partnerships and capacity in the local community.

Once adopted by Council, staff from Corporate and Strategic Communications will work closely with staff from the Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability department on a comprehensive and ongoing communications plan to promote the approved 2019 Green Directions Vaughan plan, its actions and the expected positive impacts on the city. The communications plan will be developed to reach a wide range of audiences.

City staff are keen to accelerate the implementation of Green Directions Vaughan 2019

City staff will undertake the following next steps to implement Green Directions Vaughan 2019:

- Identify the progress milestones for each action and begin reporting in 2020 in support of Business Plans and the Service Excellence Strategic Plan
- Develop a communications plan and partnership strategy to foster community action, including cost estimates to incorporate the communications plan into future budget deliberations
- Provide input to the Terms of Reference and strategic objectives of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force
- Identify and support, where possible, grant funding opportunities with partner City departments

Financial Impact

The remaining budget from the Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability department Capital Project ES-2521-15 will cover the costs of broader community engagement efforts. Communication efforts through the website, social media and eNewsletters, as well as the design of communications and print material can be provided in-kind by the Corporate and Strategic Communications department.

Environmental sustainability can often contribute to financial sustainability. The Environmental Sustainability team will work with colleagues in other departments to develop a financial framework for each sustainability action, as needed, to track the incorporation of the actions into City budget processes. In addition to informing operating and capital budgets, the financial framework will consider items such as:

- Anticipated cost savings
- Revenue generation potential
- Return on investment
- Grant/funding opportunities

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Green Directions Vaughan 2019 is aligned with York Region Vision 2051 and the revised 2018-2022 Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

The revised Plan, Green Directions Vaughan 2019, describes the City's environmental and sustainability priorities. Green Directions Vaughan 2019 outlines a new set of sustainability actions that will guide the City of Vaughan to help achieve a healthy natural environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy in support of the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

Ongoing communications about the Plan and strategic partnerships aim to foster collective action and community collaboration to achieve sustainability outcomes for the Corporation and the community. City staff are keen to accelerate the implementation of Green Directions Vaughan 2019.

For more information, please contact: Alanna MacKenzie, Sustainability Coordinator, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8941

Attachments

1. Green Directions Vaughan 2019

Prepared by

Alanna MacKenzie, Sustainability Coordinator, ext. 8941

Tony Iacobelli, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, ext.8630

Bill Kiru, Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8633