

CITY OF VAUGHAN

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013**

Item 8, Report No. 9, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on March 19, 2013.

**8                    ACTIVE TRAVEL CHARTER FOR CANADIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Community Services, dated February 26, 2013:**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, Director of Recreation and Culture, and Manager of Environmental Sustainability, recommends:

1. That the Mayor, on behalf of the City of Vaughan, be authorized to sign the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth, as shown on Attachment 1.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, Goals 3 and 4:

- 3.1 To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation.
- 3.3.2 Work with partners to develop and implement a trip reduction/active transportation strategy for the community including such transportation demand management initiatives as the Active & Safe Routes to School.
- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.
  - 4.1.1 Develop an implementation plan for the initiatives described in the City's Active Together Master Plan through a phased and budgeted program.

**Economic Impact**

Funding for the activities and events indicated in this report is included in the 2013 base operating budget.

Site specific improvements coordinated by the Engineering departments, will be identified following a site visit/audit and consultation with the school, and funded from the approved Capital Budget (DT-7108-13) for School Travel Planning Measures. These could include infrastructure improvements to slow traffic, pedestrian improvements, new signs, pavement markings and educational materials.

**Communications Plan**

Recreation and Culture will distribute information on the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and Vaughan's Active Routes are the Way to Go program to all schools in Vaughan through a number of methods including meetings, information packages and the Healthy Schools newsletter. Further a toolkit for the Vaughan's Active Routes are the Way to Go program will be posted on the City's website.

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

### EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013

Item 8, CW Report No. 9 – Page 2

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to authorize the Mayor to sign the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth on behalf of the City of Vaughan and present an update for the Active Routes are the Way to Go program.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

##### **Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth**

As the number of children being driven for short trips grows, community streets and spaces where children gather bear greater congestion and traffic safety issues; air quality where children play suffers; and many children are denied the opportunity for exercise, fresh air and independence. Built on extensive discussions with experts throughout Canada, the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth, details how we can create a culture where children choose to use active travel. The Charter may be signed by any individual, organization, authority or neighbourhood group that supports its vision and strategic principles regardless of formal position and ability to independently progress implementation.

##### **City of Vaughan Active Routes Are the Way to Go Program**

The City of Vaughan in its strategic plan, Vaughan Vision 2020, is committed to Service Excellence through enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness. The Active Together Physical Activity Strategy initiatives, such as the Active Routes are the Way to Go program, will help achieve the objective of community health and wellness and supports the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth.

The City believes the development of a more physically active community enhances the quality of life of its residents, that physical activity levels are a critical economic, environmental, health and social issue for the community, and that participation in physical activity is a key requirement for individual physical and mental health and well-being.

The Active Routes are the Way to Go program is also a priority and strategy in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP), and the recently approved Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which was adopted by Council in Fall 2011. This plan outlines the long term future and sets out the "New Path" for the evolution of the transportation system serving the entire City. In regard to schools, the "New Path" is about making investments in the health and well-being of our children by providing more sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The new TMP also recommends that the City develops and implements School Travel Plans at both the elementary and secondary school levels.

##### **School Travel Planning promotes active and sustainable modes of school travel; Successful programs in Ontario have reduced car traffic**

School Travel Planning uses "Active and Safe Routes to School" programming combined with Transportation Demand Management principles to encourage active and sustainable modes of school travel for students, families and staff" (Green Communities Canada, 2012). School Travel Plan actions and measures are aimed at reducing car traffic at schools and creating safer, healthier conditions for students, staff and families. Actions and measures are drawn from among the 'Five Es', depending on the school (Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation).

As one example, Halton District School Board's Active and Safe Routes to School Program has successfully implemented a School Travel Planning program. After working with 23 schools, 940

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

### EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013

#### Item 8, CW Report No. 9 – Page 3

students participated in activities such as Walking School Buses, which saw a reduction in car traffic of 25-30% at targeted schools after four weeks of the program (Metrolinx, Stepping It Up – Final Report, June 2012).

#### **In October 2012, staff launched the Active Routes are the Way to Go program at a pilot school – St Michael the Archangel**

On October 10, 2012, the City of Vaughan launched its first “active route focused” school. St. Michael the Archangel, located at 161 Via Campanile in Woodbridge, has been designated a “active route focused” school because of the implementation of the Active and Safe Routes to School comprehensive action plan which overcomes barriers to children’s active school travel by mobilizing children and families one step at a time. The York Catholic District School Board, York Region Planning and Community Health Services staff, Green Communities Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation, York Regional Police, and various City Departments have all collaborated to launch the school travel action plan. The community partners noted above have come together to identify key areas of need for school travel planning and have put together an action plan to implement initiatives and events to support the broader initiative to stop traffic jams around schools, increase physical activity levels and get students walking and cycling. To evaluate the success of the program, traffic counts will be collected at the end of the school year, which will be analyzed and compared to the baseline counts.

#### **In Spring 2013, schools will be invited to apply to participate in the 2013-14 Active Routes are the Way to Go program**

Building on the success of the pilot school, the City of Vaughan, in collaboration with the York Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board, will be asking schools to submit an application in the spring of 2013, to determine their interest and readiness to participate in the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. All schools will be able to access an online toolkit to get started, including checklists, samples, and resource materials. Schools requiring a more in depth approach and support will need to be reviewed by City Staff, York Region staff and school board representatives. The City intends to support up to two schools per year.

#### **The Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group supports the Active Routes are the Way to Go program in collaboration with the School Boards and Public Health**

To be successful at the community level, School Travel Planning requires the support and participation of many stakeholders. The Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group consists of the following stakeholders:

- City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture
- City of Vaughan Development/Transportation Engineering
- City of Vaughan Engineering Services
- City of Vaughan Environmental Sustainability Office
- City of Vaughan Enforcement Services
- York Regional Police
- Heart and Stroke Foundation
- York Region Public Health
- Vaughan Community Health Centre
- York Catholic District School Board
- York Region District School Board

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

### EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013

#### Item 8, CW Report No. 9 – Page 4

The roles are organized as follows:

##### School Board

- Represent York Catholic District School Board & York Region District School Board with respect to Active and Safe Routes to School programs;
- Support the community partners in implementing the Active and Safe Routes to School Program;
- Assist in developing school site and travel plans;
- Collaborate with community partners in monitoring and reviewing of School Travel Plans as needed;
- Provide school specific data;
- Promote Active and Safe Routes to School within the community.

##### Public Health

- Participate in School walkabout;
- Contribute to policy development that supports active travel;
- Contribute ideas for Action Plan;
- Educate and campaign to parents and students.

##### City of Vaughan

###### **Recreation and Culture**

- Chair of Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group;
- Develop School Travel Plan Action Plan in collaboration with Healthy Schools Committee;
- Implement Action Plan measures.

###### **Recreation and Culture, Development/Transportation Engineering, Engineering Services, Environmental Sustainability Office and Enforcement Services**

- Participate in Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group and assist with actions and measures;
- Help with data collection;
- Provide historical data and maps;
- Participate in School walkabout;
- Contribute to Action Plan development and research;
- Liaise with Recreation and Culture and Healthy Schools Committee on actions and measures;
- Plan Capital budget to incorporate recommended engineering improvements (Development/Transportation Engineering);
- Design and implement engineering improvements (Engineering Services).

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:  
Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to citizens
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:  
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013**

Item 8, CW Report No. 9 – Page 5

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

**Regional Implications**

Staff from the Regional Municipality of York Region is supportive of the Active Routes are the Way to Go program and will continue to provide staff resources to the project.

**Conclusion**

The City of Vaughan is taking a proactive approach to improve the health and active lifestyles of its citizens by supporting the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. By working in collaboration with a number of City departments, and community partners Vaughan will increase the number of residents walking and cycling to school. As an initiative of the Physical Activity Strategy of the “*Active Together*” Master Plan For Parks, Recreation, Culture And Libraries, the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan*, *Transportation Master Plan* and *Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan*, the Active Routes are the Way to Go program will help achieve the objective of improving environmental sustainability and community health and wellness.

**Attachments**

1. Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and background information

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)