

5

REVIEW OF THE CITY OF VAUGHAN YOUTH COUNCILLOR'S STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends:

1. the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, December 17, 2007, from the Chief Administrative Officer; and
2. the Regional Chair send a letter to Mr. Steven Xu acknowledging Council's appreciation for Mr. Xu's efforts, together with a copy of this report.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

At Regional Council's June 21, 2007 meeting, Mr. Steven Xu provided a deputation and a *State of the Youth Report* outlining his activities as a Youth City Councillor for the City of Vaughan, and urged Council to establish similar youth councillor positions in their own municipalities. Council requested a follow-up report to this deputation.

3. BACKGROUND

In May 2005, Vaughan Council recommended a youth councillor position, as well as the establishment of an advisory committee to council on youth issues. The purpose of Vaughan's youth councillor position is to engage local youth in public matters. The Vaughan youth councillor is allowed to sit as a non-voting member at council meetings and to take part in all council proceedings, with the exception of closed sessions. Mr. Steven Xu was Vaughan's second youth councillor.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

***State of the Youth Report* has some Regional implications**

Mr. Xu's *State of the Youth Report* focuses on 8 municipal issues that are considered the most pertinent issues affecting youth in the City of Vaughan. These issues are: Youth Representation; Communication; Recreation and Cultural Opportunities; Community Involvement; Public Transit; Safety and Law Enforcement; Environmental Initiative; and

Youth Employment. A copy of the full report is available at:
www.york.ca/youth_report_07.html.

The Region has influence over three of these issues in particular – namely Public Transit, Safety and Law Enforcement and Environmental Initiative.

4.1 Public Transit – Overall students are satisfied with service

Overall, the report states that students' experiences with the York Region Transit/VIVA system are positive, and they are typically satisfied with the service. However, perpetual issues were raised by students such as service frequency in Woodbridge and Maple, and education around the services offered, bus schedules and bulk ticket purchasing.

York Region Transit/VIVA regularly review service needs, and reach out to student populations

Service levels in all areas, including Woodbridge and Maple, are established based on standards relating to service effectiveness, financial performance, amount of service and service design. Services levels are reviewed annually and ongoing adjustments are made to meet varying conditions.

In January 2007, York Region Transit launched a Youth on Board (YO!) pilot program in nine high schools throughout the region. The program recruits two students from each participating high school to act as transit ambassadors for York Region Transit/VIVA. As a result of the pilot program, 80% of students found it useful and made them more aware of transit and its benefits. The program will be introduced to all high schools in York Region, and should be fully operational by February 2008.

4.2 Safety and Law Enforcement – Students have a neutral to positive relationship with York Regional Police

York Regional Police have assigned one law enforcement officer to every three schools in Vaughan. This liaison program encourages positive relations between law enforcement and students. York Regional Police also run Empowering Student Partnerships programs across Vaughan.

York Regional Police are engaging students

In addition to the school liaison program and Empowering Student Partnerships programs mentioned above, School Education Officers are assigned to 60 high schools across the region, and community Youth Coordinators are assigned to each of the 5 York Regional Police district areas. York Regional Police also provide many youth and student-focused programs and services on an ad-hoc basis throughout the region.

4.3 Environmental Initiative – Recycling programs in schools are generally inconsistent

Most schools in Vaughan have a recycling program, but the programs vary from school to school, and from activity to activity. For example, most classrooms have a bluebox for recycling paper products, but blueboxes are often scarce or hidden in school cafeterias.

Also, inconsistent labelling and colouring of recycling receptacles further student confusion, apathy and negligence.

York Region's Waste Management staff support schools in their diversion efforts

Although local municipalities are responsible for recycling receptacles in schools, York Region supports school diversion efforts through various mechanisms including offering free blue box material processing and providing diversion videos to each school in the region. Over 2,000 tonnes of blue box material has been diverted from landfill since the start of the program. Staff are also available to speak to classes about recycling, composting and waste processing upon request.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Providing a forum for youth to be part of the local political landscape assists local municipalities in bringing youth perspectives to local policies, encourages local municipalities to establish linkages with other local youth services and organizations, and allows local municipalities to take into account a range of issues that can impact the success of youth in their communities.

7. CONCLUSION

The City of Vaughan's youth councillor's *State of the Youth Report* highlights a number of municipal issues that are important to youth. Three initiatives' primary responsibility lies within regional government. These initiatives have been addressed in this report, along with a description of additional services and/or supports offered by York Region.

Although the City of Vaughan was the first city in Canada to create a youth position on City Council, almost every local municipality has engaged youth through initiatives such as Youth Action Committees, Youth Advisory Committees, Youth Leadership Councils and Mayors' Task Force on Youth. These opportunities provide youth with a venue to develop skills and contacts that will assist them in becoming leaders in their communities, and achieving their full potential.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Krista South, Program Manager Strategic Initiatives at Ext. 1208.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.