



Town of
East Gwillimbury

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT P2012-76

To: Committee of the Whole Council

Date: October 15, 2012

Subject: East Gwillimbury's University Project – Community Engagement

Origin: Development Services Department
Economic Development & Sustainability Branch

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT** Development Services Department, Economic Development & Sustainability Branch Report P2012-76, dated October 15, 2012 regarding a Community Engagement campaign for the university project, be received;
2. **THAT** Council endorse the interim Community Engagement campaign, as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

At its meeting of October 1, Council received the Outcomes Report prepared by the Town's consultants as a follow-up to the September 24th University Visioning workshop. At that time, Council requested that the staff team provide a report regarding next steps in the Post-Secondary Attraction Program addressing a strategy for community engagement.

BACKGROUND

The first phase of the university project consisted of the University Visioning Charette of September 24th. This session was intended to assist in developing a "shared vision" of what the campus could be and to develop a platform to build broad support and buy-in to the university concept in East Gwillimbury and the Region of York.

A Development Services memo was submitted at the October 1st CWC meeting. This memo provided a summary of the University Visioning Charette of September 24th and included an Outcomes Report, prepared by Western Management Consultants. The memo also stated that the next step in this project would be a community engagement campaign.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

At this point in the process, following from the Visioning Charette with industry leaders, it is considered appropriate and timely to move into a public engagement phase. As this project is somewhat time-sensitive, staff are proposing a 'scoped' public outreach program be implemented in November 2012.

Specifically, the following is proposed:

1. Facilitated Town Hall session for the general public
2. Facilitated session for Town Advisory Committees and the Chamber of Commerce
3. Broad Public Survey
4. York Region High School Student Outreach

1. Town Hall Meeting

In terms of soliciting input from the general public, it is proposed that a Town Hall Meeting be scheduled at the Town Office. This outreach would be similar to the visioning session of Sept. 24th. Project staff would provide a brief project overview and then, led by a moderator, residents would be asked if they support the project and if so, what they would like to see in terms of a campus and related developments. The estimated cost for this session would be \$1500, covering the cost of a moderator and refreshments.

2. Outreach to Advisory Committees

Staff recommend that another outreach session take place with the Town's Advisory Committees and the East Gwillimbury Chamber of Commerce. This facilitator-led session would take place at the Canada Room at the Sports Complex in Sharon. The estimated cost for this session would be \$1500, covering the cost of a moderator and refreshments.

3. Broader Public Survey

Staff are also recommending that a telephone survey be undertaken to understand the level of citizen support. This survey step is an initial as outlined in the Communication Director's comprehensive public outreach campaign strategy, in Appendix 1. The estimated cost is \$2,500.

The Town's website would also be used host a small survey, soliciting public input for those residents that could not make it to the Town Hall session but want to provide their input. In addition, the Town's website would be used to post project status reports (e.g. Outcomes Report from the Sept. 24th Visioning Charette).

Staff will also work the Business Development Committee (BDC) to expand the project's website profile. It is proposed that the BDC could set up a social network presence relating to

this project. The BDC's Facebook and Twitter accounts could also be referenced at all outreach sessions.

Staff would also work with the Era Banner to assess whether they could expand the project's website presence [i.e. a link to yorkregion.com]. A poll and/or the same survey, as posted on the Town home website, could be part of their yorkregion.com website.

4. Outreach to York Region Students

This component of the interim outreach phase would consist of one or two Charettes for York Region high school students. For this event, likely project staff team would work with the York Region District and York Region Catholic District school boards to host Visioning Charettes at either one or both of the School Boards' head offices. High school student leaders would be asked what they would look for in a post-secondary institution and what they would specifically expect of a York Region satellite campus.

Additional Outreach

Staff will work with York Region's Economic Development Office to investigate the best approach to soliciting input from the region's business community. Staff will also consult with provincial contacts throughout November to get a better understanding of the provincial commitment and timeline regarding this project.

As stated previously, the elements outlined in the report provide for an interim outreach process. However, if the project proceeds, a more comprehensive outreach strategy will be needed. A proposed strategy, from the Communications Director, is in Appendix 1, for information purposes.

PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

The University Visioning Charette of September 24th was a dedicated consultation session with Community and Regional leaders including landowners, educational representatives and other community stakeholders. This report presents next steps for broader community consultation and public engagement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To date, aside from staff costs, the Post Secondary Attraction activities have cost approximately \$20,000. These activities included the design and preparation of the prospectus document through South Lake CFDC funding support as well as the outside consulting work retained to prepare for, conduct and report out on the September 24th Visioning Charette, also supported by the CFDC.

The interim public outreach process outlined in this report has an estimated cost of \$6,000 and will be sourced from the existing budget.

A more extensive, comprehensive outreach strategy prepared by the Communications Director and attached as Appendix A and has an estimated cost of \$52,050, and will be subject to future reporting.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

The Economic Development Strategy supports the pillar “Manage Growth for a community that is environmentally responsible, profitable and provides healthy places to live, work and play” as it provides guidelines that ensure business development and job creation form an integral part of the Town’s ongoing growth.

NEXT STEPS

If the interim community engagement is deemed successful, Staff would initiate the second phase of the Charette process.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - University Campus Public Outreach Campaign Strategy – September 24, 2012

This Report has been reviewed by the Senior Management team.

Prepared by:

Original report signed by

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APPENDIX A – P2012-76

University Campus Public Outreach Campaign Strategy

September 24, 2012

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RATIONALE

Achieving meaningful outcomes rather than merely outputs requires an investment. A bid by the Town of East Gwillimbury for a York Region university campus located in East Gwillimbury requires such an investment. This investment is key if the Town hopes to be successful in their bid, especially when competing against other municipalities. A public outreach campaign is just the beginning of an intense public relations campaign to the Province and potential university partners. This public outreach campaign proposal is just one step in the Town's bid for securing a university campus.

A university campus would have a huge impact on the Town of East Gwillimbury both economically and socially. The goal is to provide a tangible demonstration to the Province and potential university partners that the entire community supports the location of a potential university campus in East Gwillimbury.

The Town's bid for a university campus in East Gwillimbury will be more successful if it engages in modern technologies because this is the current environment the Province works in. If the Town presents a bid that is out of touch with today's technology it may not look like such an attractive place to build a university campus.

SURVEY

1. In order to determine public sentiment and feelings about a potential university campus in the Town of East Gwillimbury we need to engage residents.
2. The best way to determine this information is by conducting a survey of a statistically representative sample of the residents and businesses in the Town of East Gwillimbury.
3. The purpose of the survey is to establish if there is high or low support among the Town of bringing a potential university campus to East Gwillimbury.
4. **Goal:**
 - A. To establish a benchmark of citizen support and to understand what kind of education work needs to be done with residents and businesses in the Town and to define the best timeframe for this education to occur (before launching the campaign or during).
5. The survey would be conducted using the telephone and would ask residents to participate in a quick five minute survey. We would need to receive at least 300 responses.
6. Questions could cover such topics as general interest, level of support and benefits.
7. **Results:**
 - A. **Low Support**
 - a. If the survey establishes there is low support within the community, education will need to be done among residents to establish positive feelings about a potential university campus.
 - b. An education program could include open houses to address residents and businesses concerns as well as educate.
 - c. Once education is complete, we will move onto the public outreach campaign.
 - B. **High Support**
 - a. If the survey establishes there is high support within the community about a potential university campus, education can begin at the same time as the contest.

- b. Moving forward we would proceed with and go right into the public outreach campaign.

EGU CONTEST

1. The purpose of the contest is to engage the community in discussion about having a potential university campus in the Town of East Gwillimbury.
2. The contest will create a tangible demonstration to the Province and potential university partners that East Gwillimbury has large community interest in and support for a university campus.
3. The contest will also establish the top 10 reasons and benefits to the Town and the residents of having a university campus in East Gwillimbury.
4. **Goal:**
 - A. To build community support and enthusiasm for a York Region university campus in the Town of East Gwillimbury.
5. **Contest Model:**
 - A. **Question**
 - a. What is the best reason or top benefit to the Town and the residents of having a York Region university campus in East Gwillimbury?
 - B. **Submissions Phase**
 - a. Submissions will be accepted until the deadline (to be determined at a later date).
 - b. Only East Gwillimbury residents and businesses will be allowed to enter the contest.
 - c. A contest advisory stating that any offensive material in submissions will not be considered and this will be thoroughly displayed to potential contestants so that they are made fully aware of this condition.
 - d. Anyone wanting to enter a submission will be required to fill out an online form.
 - e. The online submission form will ask for the following information:
 - I. Name

- II. Address (including City, Province and Postal Code)
 - III. Telephone Number
 - IV. Email Address
 - V. Submission (max. 150 words or max. 1 minute video or other creative ideas such as photographs, etc.)
- f. How to submit photos:
- I. Photos will have to be shrunk to under 10 megabytes and emailed.
 - II. This requirement will be similar to the one that was used for the Town's 2009 photo contest.
- g. How to submit videos:
- I. Video submissions will be done through YouTube since this is the easiest way for people to submit video content.
 - i. The Town's email system does not have the capacity to receive large files such as videos that have file sizes over 10 megabytes.
 - II. Video submissions will need to include #ISupportEGU in the title, making submissions easy to collect and track.
 - i. A video contest held by the Town of Newmarket for Earth Hour in 2012 requested video submissions through YouTube and asked that submissions have #NewmarketEarthHour in the title.

C. Selection Phase

- a. A Selection Committee would be established to maintain some control and encourage participation from key stakeholders and the community.
- b. These individuals would become champions of the contest and the university campus initiative and would promote the contest within the community and among community groups/businesses with the use of social media.
- c. The Selection Committee would choose the 10 finalists (the top 10 reasons/benefits).

D. Voting Phase

- a. The shortlisted submissions (10) would be posted on a contest website (see page 8 under Website for details) and open for public voting.
- b. Voting will be open to everyone, regardless of geographic location.

- I. This will allow the campaign to reach a broader audience and help gain media attention and momentum in the Town and throughout York Region.
- c. Voting would be limited to one computer per day thus increasing momentum and attention to the contest and webpage since people will be able to vote more than once and will continue to follow the contest.
 - I. This voting system allowing people to vote more than once would be clearly displayed under the contest rules and regulations.
 - II. This voting system will eliminate the ability to hack the system.
 - III. If this system were compromised, the Town would reserve the right to revert to the Selection Committee to determine the winner. This clause would be clearly displayed under the contest rules and regulations.
- d. The 10 finalists would become contest ambassadors since they would try to get everyone they know to vote for them and to continue to do so throughout the contest. This will create and increase traffic to the webpage.
- e. The submission with the greatest number of votes will be declared the winner.

E. The Prize:

- a. All 10 finalists would be featured in the campaign video (see page 9 under Video for more details).
- b. The finalists (9) would get:
 - I. Free tickets to a local event;
 - II. Gift Certificate (\$50);
 - III. Have their name posted on the official town website and printed in the Town Page;
- c. The winner would get:
 - I. Free tickets to a local event;
 - II. Have their name posted on the official Town website and printed in the Town Page;
 - III. A free trip for two to Cuba (see page 16 under Budget for more details);
 - IV. If the Town's bid were successful, the winner would get a street in the university campus named after them.

WEBSITE

1. A website would be established where residents of East Gwillimbury could go to learn more information about the university campus initiative, including background information (FAQ), why the Town wants to make a bid and what the current situation is.
2. The website would also be used to promote the campaign video (the YouTube channel with the video would be embedded on the website).
3. The website would be used to announce the 10 finalists once they were chosen.
4. The announcement of the winner will be displayed on the website.
5. The website would have minimum content/pages as to keep the cost down.
6. **Contest:**
 - A. A page on the website will be dedicated to the contest, including official contest rules and regulations (including who is allowed to submit content, vote, etc.), a brief explanation of the contest and how it works, how you submit your content and how voting/the winner will be chosen.
 - B. A countdown to the deadline for submissions would also be on the contest page and once voting begins this countdown will display the deadline for voting.
7. **Voting:**
 - A. Voting will take place on the website
 - B. The current percentage of votes will be displayed on the website.
8. The Economic Development website would also be used for keeping the community up-to-date on the contest and camapaign.

VIDEO

1. The top 10 finalists/ideas would become the Town's 10 key messages in its bid for a university campus.
2. The video and its ideas would be a demonstration of support that is coming directly from the residents and not the Town, Council, or staff.
3. The contest video would go up on the current East Gwillimbury YouTube channel and a link embedded on the homepage would be on the contest website.
4. The release of the video would be timed to announce the top 10 finalists as to gain momentum at the contest halfway point when interest might be at a low.
5. **Benefit of the video:**
 - A. Have tangible proof to the Province and potential university partners that the entire community supports the location of a potential university campus in East Gwillimbury.
 - B. Gain public support in having a university campus in East Gwillimbury.
6. **Tools of the video:**
 - A. Garner local and national media attention.
 - B. Radio and television advertising for the campaign/contest and promote the Town's potential bid for a university campus in East Gwillimbury.
 - C. Market to potential university partners to gain their interest in having a university campus in East Gwillimbury.
 - D. Put the video in with the Town's submission and bid to the Province.

THE TOWN PAGE – LETTERS TO THE DEAN

1. Since the newspaper is the second highest way residents get their information about the Town, we will utilize this traditional form of media to engage residents who are not active on social media.
2. This will provide an opportunity for residents to engage in discussion with the Town and have their concerns/questions answered regarding how a potential university campus will affect them
3. One to three questions (depending on how many letters/questions we get) should be chosen each week and answered by the best possible Town staff member (depending on the type of question).
4. Corporate Communications will advise and assist with answering the questions and work with other Town staff to get the proper and best answers.

EDUCATION – OPEN HOUSES

1. Open houses would be held to engage, speak to and educate residents on the Town's bid for a potential university campus.
2. This would provide an opportunity for public input into the project and would be a good opportunity for the Town to share information with the public.
3. Priorities would be to address residents concerns as well as educate on potential benefits to the community.

DIRECT MAILERS – STICKERS

1. Direct mailers will be in the form of a clear large sticker that says in big bold letters “I Support EGU” and would have the campaign website below.
2. This would be put tangible proof in the hands of every resident.
3. Stickers will be blown into the Town’s Spring Leisure Guide that is delivered in February 2013 to 7,800 homes and businesses.
4. We would ask people on the contest website to send us pictures of where they put their stickers.

STAFF CHAMPIONS

1. Champions would add the campaign slogan “I Support EGU” to their email signatures thus showing their support for the initiative.
2. Champions are staff, community groups, sporting clubs, community leaders, and small business owners.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Town staff will not engage in social media tactics but the campaign's community champions will use social media. These individuals would be the ones to generate content and conversation, post updates and monitor the pages.

1. Facebook:

- A. An 'unofficial' Facebook page for the contest would be created and the campaign community champions would post updates, monitor all content and remove any offensive material.
 - a. An advisory on the page would state that it is not an official Town page and updates are posted by the champions and the views expressed on this page do not reflect the Town.
- B. Regular posts would include links to current video submissions on YouTube to generate discussion and ideas.
- C. The page will also be used as an unofficial way to update people on the progress of the Town's university bid.

2. Twitter:

- A. An 'unofficial' Twitter account would be created and the champions would post regular updates about the contest and submissions.
 - a. An advisory on the page would state that it is not an official Town page and updates are posted by the champions and the views expressed on this page do not reflect the Town.
- B. One of the main updates in the first half of the contest (submission phase) would be about video submissions.
 - a. This would generate regular tweets and allow for discussion on whose ideas/submissions people like (without official voting) and encourage people to come up with new and creative ideas of their own.
- C. People who entered their own video submissions would be able to tweet and refer people to their video link.

- a. This would also create buzz and get people talking about the contest on Twitter and other social media.

MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION

1. **Gain resident support for the Town's university campus bid.**
 - A. The ultimate goal is to get the Town to show high support in its bid for a university campus and to have something tangible to show the Province and potential university partners that the entire community supports the location of a potential university campus in East Gwillimbury.
 - B. Another survey would be conducted after the contest to support these findings.
2. **Solicit at least 500 submissions for the contest and at least 2000 votes.**
3. **Generate local media mentions/hits throughout the contest and at least one national media story.**
2. **Get traffic to the campaign/contest website.**
3. **Receive positive comments and feedback at open houses.**
4. **Evidence of the stickers around East Gwillimbury.**
5. **Engage an online audience for the contest using social media.**

BUDGET

1. Survey		
A. Before contest	\$2,500	
B. After contest	\$2,500	
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Total		\$5,000
2. Campaign logo and background for contest webpage/Twitter/Facebook pages		
A. Design	\$1,500	
B. Set-up	\$1,000	
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Total		\$2,500
3. Contest prizes		
A. \$50 gift cards (for runner-ups)	\$450	
B. Trip for two to Cuba (through paid radio advertising)	\$0	
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Total		\$450
4. The video		
A. Creation and implementation	\$5,000	
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Total		\$5,000
5. Advertising		
A. Radio ad campaign (12 weeks)	\$6,000	
B. TV ad campaign (6 weeks)	\$2,500	
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Total		\$8,500
6. Open houses (4 events, lasting 2 hours)		

Public Outreach Campaign Strategy
Town of East Gwillimbury

A. Community room rentals	\$0	
B. Event supplies (food, set-up)	\$600	
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Total		\$600
7. Mailers/stickers (7,800)		
A. Design	\$500	
B. Printing	\$4,500	
C. Fulfillment	\$1,000	
D. Postage	\$1,000	
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Total		\$7,000
8. Staff		
A. Implement and oversee all public outreach campaign initiatives including contest, community groups, media relations, etc. (except social media).		
B. This individual would be ideally someone at a junior to intermediate level (2+ years experience) with project management, community outreach, communications and media relations expertise.		
C. Working over a 6 month period, 35 hours per week, \$25 per hour		
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		\$23,000
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Total Budget		\$52,050