

DATE: February 23, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND VALIDATION OF REGIONAL COUNCIL'S 2011 - 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN AND TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

FROM: David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to enter into direct negotiations with MASS LBP to use its Citizens Assembly approach for public engagement, education and validation of Regional Council's 2011 to 2014 Strategic Plan (the Plan) and Term of Council Priorities (TOCP) in the estimated contract amount of \$100,000 (excluding applicable taxes) all in accordance with Purchasing By-Law 63-2008

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Council has identified in its Strategic Plan the need to inform and educate taxpayers on the services provided by the Region, and the implications for the shared municipal tax base.
- On March 10th, 2011 Council received a presentation from Peter MacLeod on MASS LBP's approach to public engagement and education of a representative group of people to provide validation of Regional Council's Strategic Plan and Term of Council Priorities.
- Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to Council on the cost, timing and any other implications of engaging MASS LBP for this purpose.
- The CAO is recommending that MASS LBP be engaged to use its Citizen Assembly approach as described on March 10th through a sole source contract in the estimated amount of \$100,000 plus taxes and incidentals.
- The project will be completed over the summer of 2011 with a report to Council with recommendations from the consultation by September, 2011.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

Council spent two full days in workshops reviewing and editing the Plan and TOCP. As mentioned, Council's concern about education and awareness has been incorporated into the Plan. That revised Plan was approved by Council on March 10, 2011.

As outlined to Council in the report on this subject presented at the March 10th Council meeting, during the development of the draft Strategic Plan and Term of Council Priorities,

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members of Council raised the issue of citizen engagement in and education about the planning, delivery and cost of Regional programs and services. Council members expressed concern that the public is not aware of the services provided by the Region. This is troublesome for Council as the Regional services are funded by approximately 40 per cent of the property taxes raised in Peel. This need for increased awareness and education has been reflected in the goals and actions contained in the Plan and will be reinforced through the execution of the TOCP.

Mass LBP is based in Toronto and works with governments and corporations to deepen and improve public consultation and engagement. Since 2007, MASS has led some of Canada's most original and ambitious efforts to engage citizens in tackling tough policy options while pioneering the use of Civic Lotteries and Citizen Reference Panels on behalf of a wide array of clients. It has successfully completed this type of work with municipalities, hospitals, LHINs and private companies. On March 10th, 2011, Peter MacLeod made a presentation to Council and answered questions about the process MASS LBP uses for public engagement and consultation. Council directed the CAO to report back on the costs and implications of engaging MASS LBP to undertake this work.

2. Proposed Direction

The CAO is recommending that MASS LBP be engaged to manage a project for public engagement, education and validation of Regional Council's Strategic Plan and Term of Council Priorities. The details of the project are:

a) Project Goals

The project will demonstrate a proven citizen engagement process that encourages public participation and learning, and provides Council with substantive, informed perspectives that are broadly representative of the views and interests of Peel residents. Specifically, it will provide recommendations and advice to Peel Regional Council concerning its new Strategic Plan and future priorities.

b) Project Elements

Civic Lottery to Recruit Panel Participants

MASS will conduct a 10,000 household civic lottery to identify 36 residents to participate on the 'Peel Citizens' Reference Panel (CRP)'. Membership on the panel will be balanced to match the gender, age and population distribution of the Region. The civic lottery will also help to inform Peel residents about the process and Council's strategic planning priorities. It will also encourage residents to contribute their views online.

Curriculum and Program Design

MASS will develop the program and curriculum and hold a Peel Staff Workshop, the Citizens' Reference Panel process, the Public Round Table Meeting, and any requested Stakeholder meetings. This work will include the design of the learning program and group discussion activities.

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Thirty-six member Citizens' Reference Panel (CRP)

MASS will design and host four day-long meetings of the CRP. Each day would feature a mix of learning sessions, group activities and discussions as the Panelists work towards drafting and endorsing a series of recommendations for the Region's future priorities for Council's consideration.

Public Roundtable Meeting

MASS will design and host a public meeting for interested residents. The Public Roundtable Meeting will be a structured three-hour thematic discussion open to all Peel residents, allowing anyone to participate in the CRP process. This three-hour session typically takes place in the afternoon of the third day of the Citizens' Panel process. Citizens' Panelists will lead small group discussions anchored to specific themes; MASS LBP facilitators will be present in a support role.

Reporting and Final Presentation

MASS will produce short reports following each public meeting. These reports will be the basis for the in-depth final project report that would summarize the process in a narrative format and present the Panel's recommendations in clear language.

c) Stakeholder Workshop

MASS will work with Peel to identify special interest groups and community stakeholders and conduct specialized workshops for these groups. The feedback obtained from the stakeholder workshops would be used to inform the deliberations of the Citizens' Reference Panel.

d) Online Engagement

MASS will work with a technology partner to develop an interactive site that will encourage Peel residents to learn more about Council's Strategic Plan and register their views on a series of clearly defined policy options. The data obtained from this site will be presented to the Citizens' Reference Panel and Roundtable participants. The site will be featured in the civic lottery mail-out, and through other channels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost for the Civic Lottery and Citizen's Reference Panel, the additional stakeholder workshops and the additional On-Line Engagement is \$100,000. All taxes and incidental expenses are extra. The funds are available in cost centre GC01004.

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CONCLUSION

Council has identified through the strategic planning process that municipal taxpayers should be offered the opportunity to be better informed about both the Regional services funded by the property tax and the pressures that are driving the annual budgets. Staff is recommending that Council consider a novel approach to providing that education to select groups of residents who in turn will educate other residents. This work will result in recommendations for Council to consider as it reviews its Term of Council Priorities for budget years 2012 through 2014.


Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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c. Legislative Services

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