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CITY OF VAUGHAN VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE SUB-COMMITTEE AGENDA

If you wish to speak to an item listed on the Agenda, please pre-register by completing a Request to Speak Form online, emailing clerks@vaughan.ca, or contacting Service Vaughan at 905-832-2281, by 12 noon on the last business day before the meeting.

Wednesday, November 27, 2024 1:00 p.m. Online via Electronic Participation Vaughan City Hall

| | | Pages |
|------|--|-------|
| CONI | FIRMATION OF AGENDA | |
| DISC | LOSURE OF INTEREST | |
| СОМ | MUNICATIONS | |
| CON | SIDERATION OF ITEMS REQUIRING SEPARATE DISCUSSION | |
| 1. | 2025 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS Administrative matter | 3 |
| 2. | VMC CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - 2024 UPDATE Report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery | 4 |
| 3. | VMC STUDIES UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2024 Report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Mangement and Housing Delivery | 17 |
| 4. | VMC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2024 Report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery | 26 |

- 5. NEW BUSINESS
- 6. ADJOURNMENT

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Agenda Item 1 November 27, 2024 VMC Sub-Committee

VMC SUB-COMMITTEE 2025 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Meetings are held virtually at 10:00 a.m. on the last Wednesday of every month (unless specified otherwise)

2025 MEETING DATES

February 19

March 26 (1:00 p.m.)

April 30

May 21 (1:00 p.m.)

June 25 (1:00 p.m.)

September 3

(early due to Jewish holidays in the last week of September)

October 29

November 26 (1:00 p.m.)

Note:

Meeting dates may be subject to change if it is the consensus of the majority of the members.



VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - 2024 UPDATE

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the capital projects and implementation plan within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC).

Report Highlights

- Construction of several critical infrastructure projects, including roads and parks, required to support development in the emerging downtown, are underway or complete.
- The development of Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance.
- VMC's first Public Square Cortellucci Square was completed and opened to the public.
- Edgeley Pond and Park detailed design approval is awaiting the remaining approval agency, Ministry of Natural Resources. All other agencies have approved the detailed design.
- Jane Street Hydro Undergrounding construction began this year in September 2024 and is estimated to be completed by end of summer 2025.
- Black Creek Renewal detailed design is underway.
- On-Street Paid Parking Pilot was recommended to be transitioned to a permanent initiative after a successful three-year trial period.
- Public Art continues to advance creative placemaking in the VMC.

Recommendation

1. THAT the VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report be received for information.

Background

As construction progresses in Vaughan's downtown, staff continue to focus on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants in the VMC. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are well-aligned.

Construction has commenced for many of the priority infrastructure projects identified in Attachment No. 1 and several are now complete. In parallel with implementing these critical civil infrastructure works, staff focused on prioritizing the planning and design of parkland and social infrastructure to ensure that a complete community is developed aligned with the growing population. The VMC Development Activity Update Report (November 2024) and the VMC Studies Update Report (November 2024) outline the current situation in the downtown and provide projections to inform the City's focus going forward. This report presents the capital project efforts that have been undertaken, or are underway, in each of the quadrant areas to advance the infrastructure required to support growth.

Previous Reports/Authority

VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update April 2023

VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update September 2022

VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2021

Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park Project Update June 2021

VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2020

VMC Pay-and-Display On-Street Parking Pilot Project May 2020

VMC Implementation and Construction Update December 2019

VMC Parking Conditions and Management Strategy June 2019

VMC NW and SW Quadrants Implementation Update June 2019

VMC Implementation Plan and Priority Infrastructure Project Update March 2019

VMC Development Activity Update March 2019

Analysis and Options

Design and Construction activity is advancing in each quadrant of the VMC

At the April 2023 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff identified critical infrastructure improvements and construction activities completed or underway to support redevelopment activity in the downtown. Significant progress has been made through

Item 2 Page 2 of 12 2023 and 2024 on projects captured in the VMC Implementation Plan. The following sections highlight activities that have advanced in each quadrant of the VMC. Attachment 1, VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects Map, provides a geographical overview of the projects and initiatives currently underway (or completed) in the City's downtown.

For reference the VMC is broken down into four distinct quadrants, as shown in Attachment 1, with Jane Street providing the east-west split, and Highway 7 providing the north-south split.

Northwest Quadrant

Update on the Portage Parkway widening (Applewood Cres. to Jane St.)

Staff continue coordinated efforts with SmartCentres for the design and delivery of the Portage Parkway widening from Applewood Crescent to Jane Street. The detailed design of the road widening is nearly completed; however, to align with the recent VMC Secondary Plan update, a scope change is required to include the additional servicing upgrade to support the VMC Sub-committee endorsed expansion area (north of Portage Parkway).

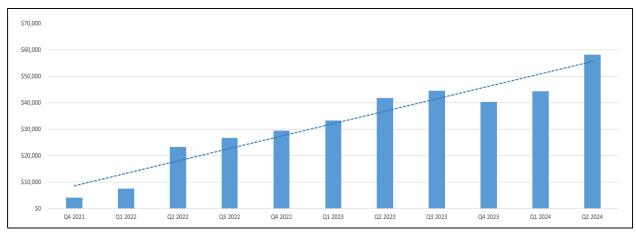
The ongoing collaboration between the City and SmartCentres includes the finalization of design and confirming fee simple and construction easement lands required for the road widening project. The relocation of existing utilities will be scheduled as part of the initial phase of construction activity to ensure road traffic is maintained while accommodating access to existing businesses and properties. The current implementation plan provides for the design of the Portage Parkway widening to be finalized in Q4 2024, followed by the release and award of a construction contract by Q2 2025. Timing for the road widening is expected to be initiated in Q2 2026, following the completion of the utility relocations in Q2 2025. The Portage Widening is expected to be completed by the end of Q2 2027.

Parking Pilot Project is in its third year of a five-year extended pilot project

In 2021, the City launched a two-year parking pilot project to implement pay-and-display on-street parking in the VMC. The Pilot was implemented in the VMC Mobility Hub area on sections of New Park Place, Apple Mill Road and Buttermill Avenue.

Since its launch, the pilot has demonstrated consistent growth and success. In 2023, Council approved the optional three-year extension of the pilot project and expanded the pilot to new streets within the VMC.

Item 2 Page 3 of 12 The graph below illustrates the quarterly revenue generated from permit sales. The upward trajectory indicates an increasing demand for parking in the City's downtown area. This trend emphasizes the successful achievement of the pilot's primary objective: to verify the viability of implementing paid on-street parking within the VMC.



Quarterly permit sales revenue from Q4 2021 to Q2 2024

Given the overall success and the positive impact of the parking pilot, the VMC Sub-Committee at its meeting on October 30, 2024, recommended that council approve the permanent implementation of the Pilot Project. As such, staff will be transitioning the pilot to a permanent initiative within the VMC following the conclusion of the pilot period in December 2026.

Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance with Phase 1 construction starting in Q2 2025

The North Urban Park (NUP) represents a significant urban development within the VMC, encompassing 3.18 hectares of city-owned land across three distinct blocks. City staff are undertaking two concurrent initiatives: updating the NUP Master Plan to align with the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan and advancing the detailed design of the park's first block.

The development of the NUP will proceed in phases, beginning with Block 1, located between Edgeley Boulevard and the KPMG Tower. This initial phase is scheduled to commence construction in Q2 2025.

Blocks 2 and 3 of the NUP present unique challenges that affect their development timeline, including a lease on Block 2 that expires in 2027. Staff are actively evaluating various detailed design and delivery options for these blocks to maximize benefits for the City. Construction on these blocks cannot begin before Q1 2027, with the lease expiration.

Upon completion, the NUP will serve as a vital community asset, offering both active and passive recreational amenities to meet the needs of the growing downtown population.

David Braley VMC Centre of Community celebrates its second-year anniversary

The iconic David Braley VMC Centre of Community celebrated its second-year anniversary in June 2024. The state-of-the-art facility located at 200 Apple Mill Road includes a YMCA, daycare, City of Vaughan library, and community recreation space. This facility is proving to be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for downtown residents and businesses and has been recognized with a Vaughan Urban Design Award of Excellence.

The Vaughan Studios and Events Space (VSES) has been open for just over two years and is continuing to increase its rentals of the event spaces, gourmet event and teaching kitchen as well as the professional recording studio. In addition, VSES offers a wide variety of recreational programming and camps for the community which too have seen an increase in participation since opening.

Jane Street Active Transportation Facility initiated construction

The Jane Street Uptown Link aims to connect the VMC to the north area of Vaughan. This also includes improving pedestrian/cyclist safety along Jane Street through building a new cycle track, connecting missing links of sidewalks, implementing new streetlighting, and traffic signal improvements between Highway 7 and Teston Road. Construction began for Phase 1 of the project (Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive) in July 2024 and is estimated to be completed by end of 2025.

Currently a new multi-use pathway has been constructed from Highway 7 to Bent Tree Drive and is expected to open by the end of the year.

Northeast Quadrant

The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design is complete and awaiting approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources

Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) is the largest open space, City-owned piece of land in the VMC and is located at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street.

The vision is to build a sustainable open space at the centre of the VMC that will function as a hybrid of vital stormwater management infrastructure and an innovative public space. In order to unlock future development potential, the EPP will be retrofitted with landscape enhancements including trails to create the iconic environmental open space and park while treating local drainage to achieve current and future stormwater management requirements.

The April 2023 VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan report provided an update on the EPP project. At that time, approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) was outstanding. Permits and approvals from the other approval agencies including Toronto Region and Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), York Region were previously obtained. A final resubmission will be made to MNR to address their concerns. The timing for the EPP approvals from MNR will continue to coincide with the other City activities for the Black Creek channel improvements from Highway 7 to Highway 407.

The EPP construction will be incorporated with the single Design-Build assignment known as the expanded Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project currently being managed by the City's Infrastructure Delivery Department. The expanded BCR project also includes detailed design and implementation of the Highway 7 culvert improvements at Jane Street.

Jane Street Streetscape & Plaza + Plateau detailed designs are complete

The detailed design for both the Jane Street streetscape and Plaza & Plateau are completed. The construction of these VMC projects will also be completed as part of the expanded Black Creek Renewal project.

Jane Street Hydro Underground construction has initiated

The hydro undergrounding project includes the conversion of the overhead transmission lines to below grade infrastructure fronting the Edgeley Pond and Park, along Jane Street from north of Portage Parkway to north of Highway 7. The City of Vaughan coordinated with Alectra to undertake this work. Utility companies were engaged in Q2 2023 to begin the design work for moving overhead wiring on the east side of Jane

Item 2

Street between just north of Highway 7 to north of Portage Parkway. Designs were completed in June 2024 and permits were issued by external agencies by September 2024.

Construction began on September 30, 2024, and trenching for new utility ducts is expected to be completed by the end of the year and operational by summer 2025. The undergrounding work will be completed prior to the construction of the Edgeley Pond retrofit and Jane Street streetscape works. It should be noted that the hydro undergrounding along the frontage of The Met development (currently occupied residential development) along the east side of Jane Street and south of Portage Parkway is complete, which included the future proofing and installation of the necessary utility ducts.

Construction of Cortellucci Square is Complete

The opening of Cortellucci Square (formerly known as Phase 1 of Edgeley Park) represents a significant milestone in the VMC as both Vaughan's first stratified park and the VMC's first public park. Initially designed in 2016 by DTAH as part of the Edgeley Pond and Park Conceptual Design, the park officially opened to the public on June 12, 2024.

This innovative space is built atop a private parking garage structure with several access portals integrated into the pavilion and landscape. The park features an array of recreational amenities, including a winter skating loop with supporting Zamboni garage, a splash pad, and unique natural junior and senior play structures. These features are enhanced by thoughtful site furnishings and robust planting. The park's pavilion includes a community-use room and accessible restrooms, enabling year-round events and activities.

As a pioneering project in the VMC, Cortellucci Square serves as a vital public space that emerged from extensive community consultation through the Edgeley Pond and Park planning process. The park is a crucial component of the broader Edgeley Pond and Park open space system.

Portage Parkway Extension (Black Creek to Creditstone Road)

The City of Vaughan 2012 Transportation Master Plan, A New Path, identified Portage Parkway Widening and the Easterly Extension to Creditstone Road as a strategic improvement and key element in support of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and subsequently, the Environmental Assessment for this project was completed in 2016.

Item 2 Page 7 of 12 The proposed 4-lane extension of Portage Parkway from West of Black Creek to Creditstone Road will provide much needed east-west connection and capacity between Highway 7 and Langstaff Drive. A budget request has been submitted as part of the 2025 City budget to initiate design activities.

Creditstone Municipal Class Environmental Assessment identified

The Creditstone Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) includes a study of the existing corridor between Peelar Road to the south and Rutherford Road to the north. The study will assess the addition of Active Transportation facilities and the potential widening for additional traffic lanes between Peelar Road and MacIntosh Blvd. The anticipated start for the EA study is in 2025.

Southeast Quadrant

Works for expanded Black Creek Renewal project scope are underway

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the northeast and southeast quadrants of the VMC and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. The Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project remains a high priority and supports the City's commitment to mitigate flooding, enhance stormwater management, and continue to grow the parks and open spaces network in the VMC.

Given the interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park retrofit (northeast quadrant), the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and the BCR project (southeast quadrant), all three project components are combined into one design-build delivery model, known as the expanded Black Creek Renewal project. The expanded BCR project commenced in 2021.

The project team is moving forward with property acquisitions required to facilitate construction. To date, the City has completed property acquisitions for private lands and York Region owned public lands. City staff are advancing negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation. Staff continue to advance negotiations with private property owners for property and easement acquisition that are expected to conclude in 2025.

The preliminary design of the Black Creek corridor is completed, and staff continue to work on the procurement to secure a Design-Build Contract.

Staff remain focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements along the Black Creek channel corridor north, south and through Highway 7 to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging downtown.

Southwest Quadrant

Construction of new local roads are underway

Development activity in the southwest quadrant continues to advance and construction is near completion on the Mobilio development which includes the delivery of significant municipal infrastructure. Underground infrastructure along the new Millway Avenue, Mable Smith Way and the widened Autumn Harvest Road (formerly known as Exchange Ave) are complete with final roadworks expected to be completed Spring 2025. This work includes the provision of a north-south and an east-west publicly accessible private pedestrian mews.

Block 3N, known as Festival, will include the delivery of a new local road named Celebration Avenue, and improvements to the existing Commerce Street and widening of Edgeley Boulevard (formerly known as Interchange Way). Completion of boulevard works on Edgely Boulevard are expected to be completed by the end of year.

Block 3S, known as Bravo, includes the delivery of the Commerce Street realignment based on the VMC Secondary Plan objective to create a fine-grain grid network of streets. The old curvilinear Commerce Street has been realigned and extended south to create a north-south minor collector road (Commerce Street) and traversing east to extend the minor collector road (Doughton Road) to Edgeley Boulevard. Both realigned Commerce Street and Doughton Road extension are now open to the public.

Block 4S, will include the delivery of the new Doughton Road extension, complete the widening of celebration avenue, and the future Street E. Construction servicing and roadworks are to be delivered as part of the QuadReal Draft Plan of Subdivision.

QuadReal Property Group has submitted a Draft Plan of Subdivision for the southwest quadrant to deliver vital servicing upgrades and expand the road network. Included with the draft plan of subdivision is the delineation for the first school blocks within the VMC.

Toromont Industries Ltd. has recently submitted a Draft Plan of Subdivision for the 3131 Highway 7 lands which will complete both the Millway Avenue and Doughton Road extensions. Proposed servicing in this area will enable further northern intensification within the newly endorsed expansion B limits of the VMC.

Item 2 Page 9 of 12 Completion of these draft plan of subdivision roads within the southwest quadrant will mark a major milestone for the road network as outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan.

The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is being optimized

The Millway Avenue Linear Park, delivered by QuadReal and Menkes through a Draft Plan of Subdivision, represents a significant addition to the VMC's parkland network and is expected to be the second VMC park to be open to the public.

The park is being delivered through the Developer Build Parks Policy and will include both passive and active elements. The design features flexible lawn spaces and extensive tree planting, along with active facilities such as a playground, basketball half courts, a shade structure, and social gathering spaces complemented by perennial planting beds.

The design is currently being optimized through collaborative efforts between the development team, landscape architect, contractor, and various vendors, with construction expected to commence in Q2 2025.

Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC

Public art continues to contribute to the downtown's identity as a distinctive cultural destination. Several public art projects are animating the urban landscape to bolster creative placemaking at the VMC.

a) Expo City CG Tower:

The first large-scale sculptural work, *Fathom*, poised to become a landmark feature at the VMC, has been installed and overlooks Edgeley Pond and Park near the northeastern corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street.

b) 7800 Jane Street Inc.

As part of their Section 37 Density Bonusing Agreement, 7800 Jane Street Inc. provided the City with a substantial \$2,185,000 Letter of Credit towards public art. A Public Art Plan was endorsed by the Design Review Panel, and includes a major gateway feature along Highway 7 and Jane Street.

c) ARTonBOXES program

The recently adopted ARTonBOXES Program 10-Year Implementation Strategy (2025-2034) earmarks the transformation of up to 10 municipal and regional traffic signal boxes into works of art. Marni Pellicane's inspired Canadian landscape, *Beauty of Banff*,

Item 2

Page 10 of 12

was installed on the box located at the VMC's prominent intersection of Apple Mill Parkway and Millway Avenue.

VMC wide initiatives

As part of the first cohort of the OVIN Demonstration Zone program, two companies will showcase their innovative mobility solutions in the VMC

The OVIN Demonstration Zone is phase 1 of the Council-approved Transportation Innovation program, which provides companies with short-term access to City space and infrastructure to demonstrate their innovative solutions in a real-world setting prior to broader implementation.

The following two technology demonstrations projects will be conducted within the VMC in Fall 2024:

- Monitoring vehicle parking violations
- Optimizing traffic flow and management

Micromobility pilot coming to the VMC

At its meeting on September 26, 2023, Council approved micromobility devices be permitted on designated cycling facilities and endorsed staff's recommendation to begin a shared e-bike/e-scooter pilot in the City. The VMC has been recommended to be included in the piloting area based on its high pace of growth, projected densities of employment and residential, and the presence of the TTC subway and VIVA services.

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Operational Impact

Consultation and collaboration is essential across various City operations to solicit feedback and identify potential impacts spanning different departments. Input and collaboration has been received and continues with Infrastructure Delivery, Economic Development, Transportation and Fleet Management Services and By-Law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration continues with regional stakeholders which is an important factor in realizing the success of the VMC.

Conclusion

Staff will continue to work closely with other City of Vaughan Departments, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, and VMC landowners to facilitate the advancement of priority projects in the downtown. These catalyst projects, together with the momentum generated by development activity, are rapidly contributing to the realization of Vaughan's downtown.

Staff are focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the transitioning downtown. Implementation of key infrastructure projects will continue to leverage investments in transit and support early placemaking strategies for the downtown.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning and Special Programs, ext. 8231.

<u>Attachment</u>

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects Map.

Prepared by

James Norris, Development Engineering Lead, VMC, Ext. 8557 Musa Deo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC, Ext. 8295 Cory Gray, Manager, Parks Development, VMC, Ext. 8579 Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, Planning & Urban Design, VMC, Ext. 8266 Mohan Toor, Manager, Infrastructure Delivery, Ext. 8144

VMC PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS **Attachment 1** Jane St. Active Edgeley Pond and Park - Phase 1 Temporary Jane Street Sidewalk & Lighting **Transportation Facilities** Pond Retrofit Construction Complete Design Construction 2025-2031 Portage Parkway Widening Construction 2024 Design 2024 Bent Tree Drive Construction 2025-2028 Construction Complete Northeast Portage Parkway Extension Quadrant (Black Creek to Creditstone Road) Detail Design 2025-2028* Construction TBD Northwest Quadrant Jane Street Hydro Undergrounding Complete North Urban Park Construction 2024-2025 Desian Phase 1 **Expo City Strata Park** Construction 2025 Construction Complete Phase 2 Opened June, 2024 Construction 2027 Phase 3 Construction 2027 Edgeley Pond and Park - Phase 3 Jane Streetscape and Plaza Design 2024 **Edgeley Blvd. Sanitary Upgrades** Construction 2025-2031 2025-2026 Construction 2026-2027 **Highway 7 Culvert Improvements** Construction 2025-2031 **Celebration Avenue** Complete Construction 2024-2025 **Celebration Avenue Extension** Design 2025-2026 Construction 2026-2027 Melrose 1.0 White Elm Road **Doughton Road** Construction 2024-2025 Desian 2025-2026 Construction 2026-2027 Celebration Avenue Design 2025-2026 **Doughton Road Improvements** Construction 2026-2027 Design 2025-2026 Construction 2026-2027 **Doughton Road Commerce Street** Design 2025-2026 Construction 2026-2027 **Road Realignment Doughton and Maplecrete** Completed 2023 **Water and Sanitary Updates** Southeast Under maintenance period 2023-2024 Design Quadrant Construction 2024-2025 Southwest Colossus Overpass EA Creditstone EA 2028* Design Quadrant Design 2025-2026 Construction TBD Construction TBD Millway Avenue and Interchange Way EA Design 2024 Construction TBD **Black Creek Renewal** Commerce Street Extension **Exchange Avenue and Millway Avenue** Issue RFP Complete 2024-2026 **Road Improvements** Detailed Design 2021/2023/2025 Construction 2026-2027 Construction 2024-2025 Construction 2025-2031 **Exchange Avenue Road Improvements** Millway Linear Park Jane Street Sanitary Upgrades 2024-2026 Design Design Complete EA (C1) Construction 2026-2027 Construction 2024-2025 2025-2026* Design Construction TBD Page 16 Roads and Servicing Parks and Placemaking * Estimated



VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 **WARD:** 4

TITLE: VMC STUDIES UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2024

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

<u>Purpose</u>

To provide an update on current Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) plans and studies, their purpose and implementation, and how they contribute to the creation of a complete community in the VMC.

Report Highlights

- The VMC Secondary Plan Update is currently in Phase IV –
 Recommendations which includes a revised planning framework that sets
 parameters to develop the VMC as a complete and balanced community with
 minimum heights and densities, but without prescribed maximums. The plan
 is anticipated to be completed by Q2 2025.
- The October 2024 VMC Sub-committee recommended that Council approve the completed VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan and staff be directed to implement the actions contained in the Plan.
- The VMC Transportation Master Plan Update is anticipated to be completed by Q2 2025 in conjunction with the VMC Secondary Plan Update.
- The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report as part of the Integrated Urban Water Plan recommendations were presented to Council in Q2 2024 and the final report was published on the project website in early Q4 2024.
- The VMC Stormwater Management and Drainage Enhancement Study has commenced and anticipated to be completed by Q3 2025.

Report Highlights continued

- Additional studies including the VMC Podium Schools Feasibility Study, the VMC Hydrogeological Study, Highway 400 Colossus Drive Overpass and Detail Design and Jane Street Sanitary Upgrade Environmental Assessment (EA) Study are all being considered.
- The various VMC plans and studies inform each other and are being closely coordinated to ensure their collective contribution to the Term of Council Strategic Priority of City Building to "Develop the VMC as a complete community, with emphasis on cultural development."
- Staff continue to ensure that every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input.

Recommendation

1. THAT the VMC Studies Update – November 2024 report be received for information.

Background

As outlined in the VMC Development Activity Update – November 2024 Report being received today, the approximate number of residential units built, under construction and approved by Council along with the associated estimated resident population are as follows:

| Status | Residential Units | Resident Population |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Built/Occupied | 6,528 | 12,925 |
| Under Construction | 6,016 | 11,912 |
| Council Approved | 12,923 | 25,588 |
| Total | 25,467 | 50,425 |

The realization of developments that are occupied, under construction, or approved greatly exceeds the population target established for the 2031 planning horizon. Given that this growth trend is expected to continue, staff continue to focus on the studies that will ensure the VMC develops as a complete and balanced community.

Studies that have been completed to date include the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report (FSSR) as part of the City's Integrated Urban Water Plan (IUWP), and the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan. Staff continue to advance the VMC Secondary Plan Update and the VMC Transportation Master Plan. Studies that have recently commenced or are being considered include the VMC Stormwater Management and Drainage Enhancement Study, VMC Podium Schools Feasibility Study, the VMC Hydrogeological Study, Highway 400 Colossus Drive Overpass and

Detail Design and Jane Street Sanitary Upgrade Environmental Assessment (EA) Study.

The VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update Report (November 2024) outlines activities that have been undertaken, or are underway, to provide the infrastructure to support development and growth in the emerging downtown.

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports relating to the VMC Studies Update can be found at the following links:

VMC Studies Update April 2023

VMC Studies Update September 2022

VMC Studies Update November 2020

VMC Studies Update May 2020

VMC Implementation Plan and Priority Infrastructure Project Update March 2019

Analysis and Options

This VMC Studies Update report includes the following plan/studies, led, supported and/or being considered by Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) and Policy Planning and Special Programs (PPSP) staff:

- 1. VMC Secondary Plan Update
- 2. VMC Podium Schools Feasibility Study
- 3. VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan
- 4. VMC Transportation Master Plan
- 5. Highway 400 Colossus Drive Overpass and Detail Design
- 6. VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report
- 7. VMC Stormwater Management and Drainage Enhancement Study
- 8. VMC Hydrogeological Study
- 9. Jane Street Sanitary Upgrade Environmental Assessment

The following includes a summary for each plan/study listed above.

1. VMC Secondary Plan Update

The VMC Secondary Plan (VMCSP) Update was initiated in August 2020. It is being undertaken to address Provincial and Regional policy updates, and to respond to the rapid growth that is putting pressure on realizing Council's vision for a vibrant and balanced downtown. The VMCSP Update will result in a renewed policy framework that supports the completion of a complete and balanced community that is well supported by municipal services and social infrastructure to 2051 and beyond.

The VMCSP Update is being undertaken in five phases, as follows:

- Phase I Background and Issues
- Phase II Prepare and Develop Land Use Options
- Phase III Elaborate a Preferred Network
- Phase IV Recommendations (current phase)
- Phase V Final Implementation

The project is currently in Phase IV – Recommendations, which involves the development of an updated Secondary Plan for the VMC. Updated and new Secondary Plan policies will be developed to align the Plan with the land use schedules developed through Phase III, and refined through Phase IV, and to address Provincial and Regional policy updates.

From the June 2024 VMC Sub-committee, the VMC Secondary Plan update will include a revised planning framework that sets parameters to develop the VMC as a complete and balanced community with minimum heights and densities and without prescribed maximums. As a result, staff, in collaboration with the consultant team, are developing a revised development concept to implement a framework without height and density maximums. Further engagement on the revised development concept is being considered for Q1 of 2025. The VMCSP Update is scheduled to be completed by Q2 2025.

2. VMC Podium Schools Feasibility Study

In the past, both the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) have constructed standalone schools with supporting outdoor facilities. Costs and other challenges in intensifications areas have led the school boards to plan and implement the first shared-facility dual school model in York Region. The joint facility will accommodate an elementary school operated by the YCDSB and another by the YRDSB, along with a childcare center. The new school will provide 1,134 student spaces and 49 licensed childcare spaces, supporting education and fostering community engagement by attracting families, and contributing to growing a diverse population and a vibrant local culture in the VMC. The VMC program, landowner and school boards are collaboratively working together to realize this vision. The joint school site is anticipated to be completed by the end of the decade.

Recent legislative changes, such as Bill 98 and Ontario Regulation 374/23, are supporting more efficient use of school properties in dense communities, allowing for shared uses and joint schools. VMC Staff are currently exploring the implementation of podium schools in high-density areas due to increasing challenges with traditional school development models. To support this, to the City will conduct a feasibility study that aims to address the growing constraints of rising property values and land scarcity that make conventional school construction increasingly difficult to implement and

maintain. The study will include design, costing, funding and ownership/tenancy options for podium schools in intensification areas. It will address additional costs associated with urban school requirements, as the current Provincial funding model does not cover these expenses. The study will also investigate necessary agreements for shared facilities in mixed-use developments. The request for proposal (RFP) is anticipated to go out in Q1 2025.

3. VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan

The VMC Parks & Wayfinding Master Plan (PWMP) encompasses a Parks Master Plan, which aims to guide the timely development of parkland within the VMC, and a Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan, including a Signage Pilot, to help people move through its public realm. The Parks Master Plan creates compact, balanced, and meaningful parks and open spaces within the VMC boundary. Similar to the City of Vaughan's other intensification areas, the Park Master Plan recognizes the need to access larger sporting facilities, trails, and green space outside of its boundary. The Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan helps residents, visitors, and businesses navigate through the VMC and guides the development of signage in the downtown area as it evolves.

In October 2024, VMC Sub-committee recommended that Council approve the proposed VMC PWMP, and that staff be directed to implement the actions contained within the Study. The PWMP will be considered in a future session of Council for final adoption.

4. VMC Transportation Master Plan Update

The VMC Transportation Master Plan Update (VMC TMP), as well as the Millway Avenue and Interchange Way Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) studies, are underway concurrently with the VMC Secondary Plan Update. To date, Phase 1 (identification of problems, opportunities and confirmation of transportation needs) has been prepared for both the VMC TMP and road Environmental Assessments (EAs). The VMC TMP study is currently in Phase 2 where transportation solutions are being developed and assessed based on the future population and jobs projections. The VMC TMP presented the problems and opportunities at Public Information Centre (PIC) #1 on February 1, 2023, and will present the transportation solutions at a future PIC anticipated by Q1 2025.

The preferred road alignments and cross-sections for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way were presented through display material at PIC #2 on December 5, 2023. PIC#2 material and an online survey were made available for the public to review and provide feedback until January 31, 2024. The Project Team is currently working on completing the two roadway Environmental Study Reports summarizing the environmental investigation findings, mitigation measures, and features of the Preferred Alternatives, with an estimated completion target of Q4 2024.

The VMC TMP is expected to be concluded in conjunction with the VMC Secondary Plan Update, by Q2 2025. As part of the VMC TMP, the Highway 400 Colossus Overpass corridor protection area is being coordinated in conjunction with the ongoing Weston 7 Secondary Plan and TMP.

5. Highway 400 Colossus Overpass Environmental Assessment (EA) and Detail Design

The Colossus Drive extension over Highway 400 was recommended as one of Vaughan's planned midblock crossings of Highway 400. This has been identified in several documents including:

- City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010),
- A New Path City of Vaughan Transportation Master Plan (2012),
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) TMP (2012 and ongoing update),
- Vaughan Transportation Plan (May 2023), and
- Weston 7 TMP (May 2024).

The Colossus overpass is a key element of the planned multi-modal networks for the Weston 7 and VMC Secondary Plan areas. In June 2024, the draft Weston 7 Secondary Plan (May 2024) was presented to Council. The Secondary Plan identified a policy protection area on the west side of Highway 400 that together with the policy protection area east of Highway 400 continues to protect a minimum area from development for the Colossus Drive extension across Highway 400 to Interchange Way. The Highway 400 Colossus Overpass Environmental Assessment will confirm the noted protection area.

Request for Proposals for the multi-phased Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Detail Design of the Highway 400 Colossus Drive overpass is anticipated by Q1 2025. The study will follow the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, Schedule C type projects. Once complete, the study will advance to implementation and complete detailed design to a construction-ready state. Critical engagement and consultation with the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and 407 ETR has already been initiated and will continue throughout all project phases.

6. VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update

The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report (VMC FSSR), is one of several study areas of the Integrated Urban Water Plan (IUWP), which is a culmination of a four-year study led by Infrastructure Planning & Corporate Asset Management (IPCAM). The VMC FSSR is an update of the current VMC Municipal Servicing Master Plan (2012), ensuring that servicing capacity can support the anticipated increase in height and density of future growth and intensification in the VMC.

The VMC FSSR documents existing issues and opportunities, considers and evaluates solutions, and identifies preferred water, wastewater, and stormwater servicing strategies. This Study was conducted in accordance with the Master Planning process outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class EA guidelines. Public engagement took place in-person and online with a dedicated project website. Key community and industry stakeholders as well as other levels of government were also consulted in the process.

The IUWP recommendations along with VMC FSSR were presented to Council in Q2 2024. The report was made available for public review in early Q3 2024. After a 30-day review period, comments were incorporated, and the final report was published on the project website in early Q4 2024.

7. VMC Stormwater Management and Drainage Enhancement Study
The VMC Stormwater Management and Drainage Enhancement Study (SWM
Enhancement Study) is being undertaken to support the growing population and
development in the VMC area. The purpose of this Study is to revisit and enhance the
end-of-pipe facilities plan from the 2012 VMC Municipal Servicing Master Plan and the
recent VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report (FSSR) to ensure effective
stormwater management and timely delivery of necessary infrastructure improvements.

The outcome of this Study will be a more flexible, practical stormwater management plan focused on at-source, conveyance and end-of-pipe infrastructure including non-conventional stormwater management facilities, which would allow for parkland above an underground SWM facility. The stormwater management strategy will follow the latest stormwater management best practices and City of Vaughan policies to treat storm runoff and reduce flood risks while considering the interests of landowners and developers.

The SWM Enhancement Study was awarded to TYLin Canada International and Third Party Public. The work just recently commenced (Q2 2024) and a Public Information Centre (PIC#1) is scheduled for December 5, 2024, with additional public engagements before completion of the study, which is anticipated by Q3 2025.

8. VMC Hydrogeologic Study

Current and approved development applications in the VMC have demonstrated concern with respect to high-water tables, challenges and increased costs with deep underground parking and long-term dewatering efforts. This has created varying underground parking structure depths, as well as proposals for podium parking which are less expensive to develop and less desirable as a design feature.

The VMC Hydrogeologic Study aims to establish a hydrogeological and geotechnical characterization of the full and expanded VMC areas (endorsed expansion areas A and B) utilizing existing information provided through development applications and supplementing with data from the well water information systems.

The Request for Proposals has recently concluded, and evaluation of proponents is currently on-going. The contract will be awarded in December 2024 and completion of the analysis and report are expected by the end of Q1 2025.

9. Jane Street Sanitary Sewer Upgrade Environmental Assessment (EA) Study The recently completed 2024 Integrated Urban Water Plan (IUWP) has identified the need for upgrades to the Jane Street Sanitary Sewer to support future development in the VMC and the drainage areas to the north. These required upgrades are based on population projections extending to 2051. However, recent changes in population projections, as approved by City Council, necessitate a reassessment of the recommended upgrades.

Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management staff has identified an Environmental Assessment (EA) study for Jane Street Sanitary sewer upgrades. This study is set to be initiated in Q3 2025, subject to the 2025 budget approval. It will incorporate the updated population projections approved by City Council as part of the finalization of the VMC Secondary Plan Update and satisfy the requirements of the Municipal Class EA. Upon study completion, the Infrastructure Delivery department will be facilitating the completion of the 100% detail design and ultimate construction.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

Operational Impact

The plans and studies developed by staff are well collaborated and coordinated with many City departments and with external agencies and other stakeholders. This input includes regular Technical Advisory Committee meetings and other engagement touchpoints throughout the duration of the project schedule

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration continues with Regional stakeholders which is an important factor in realizing the success of the VMC.

Conclusion

Building a downtown is an ambitious goal. The average density of development projects continues to increase with new applications, a factor which must be balanced with measured delivery of community services, social and hard infrastructure.

Item 3 Page 8 of 9 As a result of this growth, studies have been initiated and coordinated to ensure that the downtown continues to develop as a complete and balanced community that is transit supportive and pedestrian friendly, with a vibrant sense of place, a high-quality public realm, and environmentally sustainable design approaches.

The VMC team continues to collaborate across internal departments and with residents, landowners, and other stakeholders to deliver a complete community.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning & Special Programs, Ext. 8231.

Attachments

N/A

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VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2024

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

<u>Purpose</u>

To provide a status update on development activities in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre ('VMC').

Report Highlights

- Development activity in the VMC has shown signs of growth in 2024. An
 increase in interest and in the processing of new development applications,
 along with existing applications, demonstrate that growth trends continue to
 exceed the 2031 planning horizon targets as set out in the VMC Secondary
 Plan ('VMCSP').
- With growth significantly surpassing initial projections for Vaughan's downtown, ongoing efforts are focused on ensuring a balance between population growth and the provision of necessary physical and social infrastructure, including public services, green spaces, and amenities for future VMC residents.
- Summary of residential development includes:
 - 6,528 completed residential units housing 12,925 residents.
 - 6,016 residential units under construction, expected to accommodate an additional 11,912 residents.

Report Highlights (Continued)

- 12,923 residential units approved by Council, anticipated to house 25,588 future residents.
- 28,237 proposed residential units, potentially housing 55,909 residents, currently under active development applications being reviewed.
- The developments that are either occupied, under construction, or approved indicate a total of over 50,425 residents across 25,467 units, greatly exceeding the population target for the 2031 planning horizon.
- Office and retail development:
 - Currently, about 157,181 m² (~1,691,892 ft²) of new office space has been built or approved, representing 113% of the 2031 office space target.
 - Five (5) development applications currently under review are proposing 79,750 m² (~858,426 ft²) of office space thus bringing the built, approved, and new applications to represent 170% of the 2031 office target.
 - To date, about 82,602 m² (~889,121 ft²) of retail space is occupied, under construction, approved by Council, or subject to Council approval, representing 119% of the 2031 retail target.
- In spring of 2024, the Ontario government announced a new joint elementary school in the VMC which will accommodate an elementary school operated by the York Catholic District School Board ('YCDSB') and another by the York Region District School Board ('YRDSB'), along with a childcare center.
- In June 2024, the City and QuadReal Property Group (QuadReal) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the planning for a state-of-the-art performing and cultural arts centre in the VMC.

Recommendation

1. THAT the VMC Development Activity Update – November 2024 report be received for information.

Background

The VMC is envisioned as Vaughan's emerging downtown and central business district, aimed at becoming the city's financial and cultural hub. It is designed to foster a vibrant public realm while promoting sustainable design practices. The goal is to create a dynamic and well-balanced community featuring variety in built form and a mix of uses that support transit and pedestrian accessibility.

Item 4 Page 2 of 9 To achieve a critical mass conducive to a successful downtown and to meet the minimum density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare established by the Provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the 'Growth Plan'), the VMC Secondary Plan ('VMCSP') set a target of 25,000 residents and 11,500 jobs by 2031. The current VMCSP offers a robust vision and policy foundation that has guided development since its partial approval by the Ontario Land Tribunal ('OLT', formerly the Ontario Municipal Board and Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) in 2015. Since then, interest in VMC development has surpassed expectations, with residential density growth exceeding initial forecasts that did not account for such rapid intensification.

The City continues to update the VMCSP to align with provincial and regional policy updates and establish a renewed policy framework that supports the development of a complete and balanced community, with adequate municipal services and social infrastructure extending to 2051 and beyond. On June 26, 2024, staff was directed by the VMC Sub-Committee to proceed with making the required changes to the VMC Secondary Plan to set parameters for minimum heights and densities without prescribed maximums. Under this direction, the VMCSP update is now focusing on responding to the significant growth pressures that could threaten the realization of Council's vision for a balanced downtown.

The VMCSP Update is being coordinated with other relevant studies, including the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan ('PWMP'), the VMC Transportation Master Plan Update, and the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report. The findings from these studies will contribute to the VMCSP Update.

Previous Reports/Authority

VMC Development Activity Update – March 5, 2019

VMC Development Activity Update - November 10, 2020

VMC Development Activity Update - November 2, 2021

VMC Development Activity Update - September 20, 2022

VMC Development Activity Update - April 11, 2023

VMC Development Activity Update - October 4, 2023

VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 1 - March 2, 2021

VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 2 - Approach - June 8, 2021

VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 2 Land Use Options - June 21, 2022

VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 4 Recommendations - October 4, 2023

Analysis and Options

Development activity decreased in 2023 which resulted in a slowdown on new development applications. However, renewed interest in development in the VMC has resulted in an increase in new applications in 2024 which, along with other applications currently being reviewed, has reestablished a trend that continues to far exceed the original targets outlined in the VMCSP.

Current projections indicate that more than 55 high-rise buildings have been completed or approved in the VMC, reflecting a density that is 150% greater than that established in the Secondary Plan.

The details of residential development are as follows:

- 6,528 completed and occupied units, representing approximately 12,925 residents.
- 6,016 units under construction, accommodating about 11,912 future residents.
- 12,923 units approved by Council, expected to house around 25,588 future residents.
- 28,237 proposed units, with the potential for about 55,909 future residents currently being reviewed.

The total of occupied, under construction, or approved developments amounts to over 50,425 residents across 25,467 units, far exceeding the 2031 planning horizon target.

Additionally, other applications are in progress in areas surrounding the VMC, particularly in two areas under consideration for expansion as part of the ongoing VMC Secondary Plan Update. However, these developments are not included in the statistics presented in this report due to their location outside the established VMC boundaries.

As growth is significantly outpacing the initial targets for Vaughan's downtown, efforts remain focused on maintaining a healthy balance between population growth and the necessary physical and social infrastructure, including public services, green spaces, and amenities to serve the future VMC population.

Land Uses, Services and Community Balance

The development landscape in the VMC continues to be heavily dominated by residential uses, posing a risk to the original goal of creating a complete, balanced, and diverse community. The intensity of development is surpassing the VMCSP's maximum density targets by an average factor of 1.6.

While the rapid pace of development in the VMC is notable, the dominance of residential projects could jeopardize the vision of a vibrant and diverse downtown. This rapid growth necessitates a corresponding increase in non-residential uses, social services, facilities, and infrastructure to adequately support both current and future residents.

In response to these challenges, City staff are working on various VMC plans and studies to reassess the development context and align future efforts with the current growth trends, and best practice city-building principles.

Challenges in Building Diversity

The current built form in the VMC predominantly consists of high-rise residential towers on podiums, while other essential building types, such as low-rise and mid-rise structures, are lagging behind. Efforts are ongoing to encourage a broader range of building typologies to address the "missing middle" in the housing supply. This will become more difficult with the removal of height and density caps.

Currently, 99% of the housing supply in the VMC comprises apartment units, with townhouses making up the remainder. There is a concerning trend toward smaller units, with the majority being 1-bedroom (61%), followed by 2-bedrooms (35%), and only 4% being 3-bedrooms.

While the VMC has successfully introduced its first purpose-built rental building, there is a continuing emphasis on providing equitable and attainable housing, with additional rental developments currently under review.

Importance of Balanced Development

Vaughan's downtown growth has benefited from its strategic location and infrastructure investments, but this growth also brings challenges. As previously mentioned in this report, residential growth is fast outpacing non-residential development, creating an imbalance between population and job creation. Additionally, the unprecedented pace and scale of growth also threatens the provision of necessary physical and social infrastructure, including parks, schools, and community services, to adequately serve the growing population.

To uphold Council's vision for a lively and prosperous downtown, community services, facilities, and infrastructure must be developed in conjunction with ongoing residential growth.

Item 4 Page 5 of 9

Development of School Sites

In spring of 2024, the Ontario government announced that it would allocate \$47.2 million for the construction of a new joint elementary school in the VMC. The joint facility will accommodate an elementary school operated by the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and another by the York Region District School Board (YRDSB), along with a childcare center. The new school will provide 1,134 student spaces and 49 licensed childcare spaces, supporting education and fostering community engagement by attracting families, and contributing to growing a diverse population and a vibrant local culture in the VMC.

The demand for future school sites to accommodate the increasing residential population may necessitate the development of additional schools in the near future. As such, the City continues to collaborate with the School Boards and landowners to identify other suitable school sites and urban school typologies in the VMC. To address this, the City is set to start a Schools in Podiums Feasibility Study in 2025 to explore the potential of developing schools in mixed-use building podiums. The study will look into mitigating economic and logistical challenges in delivering schools in intensification areas by exploring innovative strategies involving potential public/private initiatives.

Office Development Trends

Since early 2020, there has been a marked decline in proposed office uses in mixed-use developments in the GTA, largely influenced by the shift to remote work due to COVID-19. Currently, 157,181 m² (1,691,892 ft²) of new office space has been built or approved in the VMC, representing 113% of the 2031 office space target. Five (5) development applications currently under review are proposing 79,750 m² (~858,426 ft²) of office space). If approved, this would exceed the original 2031 total targets by 170% but, as residential growth far outpaces non-residential development, this will not be enough to align with the balance of land-use and population per jobs targets that were originally established by the Growth Plan and the VMCSP.

Currently, the resident-to-jobs ratio stands at 6:1, based on completed, underconstruction and approved developments, this is significantly higher than the original 2.6:1 ratio envisioned in the VMCSP. This ratio could rise based on current trends in ongoing applications currently being reviewed. If this trend persists, it may jeopardize Council's goal of a vibrant central business district. Achieving a significant office presence is vital for realizing the vision of a world-class downtown.

> Item 4 Page 6 of 9

To address this imbalance, an Office Feasibility Assessment was conducted by Parcel Economics on April 14, 2023, to evaluate market demand for office space in the VMC. The assessment identified various policy mechanisms to enhance the feasibility of office development in the current post-pandemic environment. This study is currently being updated through the VMCSP Update.

Retail Development Update

Retail is crucial for a vibrant and sustainable downtown. While retail development often follows the establishment of a strong residential base, early planning for retail spaces is essential to create a complete community.

As of the middle of Q4 2024, approximately 13,690 m² (~147,358 ft²) of retail space has been completed and occupied, with nearly 13,917 m² (~149,801 ft²) currently under construction. Additionally, about 20,616 m² (~221,912 ft²) has received Council approval. 34,379 m² (~370,050 ft²) of retail space is proposed, pending approval. If all applications are successful and implemented, 82,602 m² (~889,121 ft²) of retail space representing 119% of the 2031 retail target could be reached.

The VMCSP Update will assess whether the emerging balance of uses aligns with the vision of a well-rounded community.

Arts and Culture

With the downtown poised to become a civic hub, the aspiration is to create a complete and balanced community that is supportive of the City's diversity in arts and culture. The continued advancement of culture and the arts in the VMC will benefit from the development of spaces for arts and cultural education, creation, and performances. In June 2024, the City and QuadReal Property Group (QuadReal) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the planning for a state-of-the-art performing and cultural arts centre in the VMC. The new performing and cultural arts centre is poised to become an essential component of Vaughan's emerging downtown as it will contribute to enhance cultural vibrancy and foster creativity, supporting the growth of local talent and stimulating the City's creative economy.

The City is preparing a request for proposals to develop a business plan that determines next steps for the implementation of a performing and cultural arts centre in the VMC.

Item 4 Page 7 of 9

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Operational Impact

Staff have coordinated with various City departments, including Economic Development, to contribute to this report.

Development applications for the VMC are reviewed through a Pre-Application Consultation process, where applicants present initial concepts to City staff. The City identifies requirements for a complete application, ensuring efficient processing. Staff review applications across departments and consult with external agencies to ensure compliance with the VMCSP and relevant City and Regional policies.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Building a downtown is a complex and ambitious objective. York Region's Official Plan emphasizes the importance of centers and corridors in achieving provincial growth targets for population and employment. On June 6, 2024, Bill 185 (*Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*) ("Bill 185") received Royal Assent which includes amendments to the *Planning Act*. In accordance with the amendments to the *Planning Act* implemented through Bill 185, York region became a Region without planning responsibilities effective July 1, 2024. Pursuant to subsection 70.13(2) of the *Planning Act*, YROP 2022 is deemed to constitute an official plan of the City in respect of any area in the City to which it applies and will remain in effect until the City revokes or amends it.

Notwithstanding the above, Regional staff are actively engaged in City initiatives, including the VMCSP Update and the development application process, providing feedback to ensure successful implementation and coordination of projects within the downtown. Collaboration with regional stakeholders is critical for the VMC's success.

Additionally, the York Region and York Catholic District School Boards are important stakeholders in implementing the VMCSP and continue to be active participants as part of the ongoing VMCSP update.

Conclusion

Development activity in the VMC has shown signs of growth in 2024. An increase in interest and in the processing of new development applications, along with existing applications, demonstrate that growth trends continue to exceed the 2031 planning horizon targets that were originally set out in the VMC Secondary Plan.

Given direction by the VMC Sub-Committee to set parameters for minimum heights and densities without prescribed maximums, and as the density of new projects continues to rise, significant attention must be directed toward delivering community services and infrastructure that keeps pace with growth.

City staff are dedicated to fostering the development of the VMC as a complete and balanced community characterized by high-density mixed uses that are transit-friendly and pedestrian-oriented. The primary goal is to create an engaging downtown core with a strong sense of place and high-quality public spaces, while also prioritizing environmentally sustainable design.

The VMCSP Update continues to integrate new provincial and regional policies to ensure the framework remains relevant given current and future development in the VMC. This update will continue to position the VMC as the City's priority for intensification and development, guiding its evolution into a complete and equitable community that's aligned with the City's strategic priorities from the 2022-2026 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning and Special Programs, Ext. 8231.

Attachments

N/A

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