

**CITY OF VAUGHAN
VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE SUB-COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

This is an Electronic Meeting. The Council Chamber will not be open to the public. Public comments can be submitted by email to clerks@vaughan.ca. If you wish to speak to an item listed on the Agenda, please pre-register by contacting Access Vaughan at 905-832-2281 or clerks@vaughan.ca by noon on the last business day before the meeting.

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021
9:30 a.m.**

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2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST	
3. COMMUNICATIONS	
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AND VIDEO BROADCAST

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VMC Sub-committee Report



DATE: Tuesday, March 2, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE – PHASE 1

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To provide an update on the status of the VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 1 and seek Council's endorsement on the geographic limits of the potential expansion boundary areas through the VMC Secondary Plan Update.

Report Highlights

- The average density of development projects continues to increase with new applications, a factor which must be balanced with measured delivery of social and hard infrastructure.
- As a result of this growth, a number of studies have been initiated and coordinated to ensure the downtown continues to develop as a 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 City in August 2020, initiated an update to the existing VMC Secondary Plan to address new provincial legislation and regional policies and to confirm the framework is still relevant, while considering the nature of existing, approved and proposed development in the VMC.
- The scope of the Phase 1 - Background and Issues includes a review of existing policies, initiatives, developments, studies and background reports; understanding the VMC's opportunities and challenges; and consultation with landowners, stakeholders, and the public.
- Staff recommend study area limits for both the potential boundary expansion areas to be explored in Phase 2, as shown on Attachments 1 and 2.

Recommendations

1. That the VMC Sub-Committee:
 - a. endorse the geographic limits of Study Area A related to the potential eastern boundary expansion as contained in Attachment 1; and
 - b. endorse the geographic limits of Study Area B related to the potential northern boundary expansion as contained in Attachment 2;
2. That staff report to a future VMC Sub-Committee Meeting with land use options related to Study Areas A and B to determine their appropriateness for inclusion in the VMC Secondary Plan area; and
3. That the above recommendations be forwarded for Council's approval.

Background

To achieve the critical mass of a downtown and meet the density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare established in the Province's *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2006), the VMC Secondary Plan established a population target of approximately 17,000 residents and 6,500 jobs by 2031 for the portion of the VMC identified as an Urban Growth Centre. The population target for the larger VMC area, including the Urban Growth Centre, is 25,000 residents and 11,500 jobs by 2031. As reported in Item 2 of the November 10, 2020 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, these targets are anticipated to be met and exceeded based on the development pipeline.

Due to rapid growth in the VMC and recent changes to municipal and regional legislation and policies, the City initiated an update to the existing VMC Secondary Plan (VMC SP) in August 2020. The successful consulting team for this study consists of Gladki Planning Associates with Ken Greenberg, dTAH, and Urban Metrics.

The existing VMC SP provides a strong policy foundation that initiated the development of Vaughan's emerging downtown. The City has been successful in working with landowners to create the first phase of the downtown build-out. Updates to the VMC SP policy framework and land use plan must continue to recognize the VMC as the City's priority intensification area and emerging downtown, while ensuring the area continues to develop as a complete community. With the introduction of Bill 197, a Community Benefits Charge (CBC) will replace Section 37 following adoption of a CBC By-law. The VMC SP update will also review this regulatory change to ensure that the VMC is able to fund community services to serve the growing downtown population.

The update will include a Community Services & Facilities analysis and implementation plan to assess the amount and types of facilities and community services needed to support the VMC and density and population targets as mandated by the Region and the

Province. The impact of COVID-19 on city building will also be assessed through the VMC SP Update.

Potential boundary expansions are also being considered to incorporate additional lands into the VMC Secondary Plan area and will explore land use options, which will likely include opportunities for new parkland, informed by findings of the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan.

Previous Reports/Authority

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

[VMC Development Activity Update – November 10, 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

[VMC Development Activity Update – March 5, 2019](#)

[VMC Implementation Plan and Priority Infrastructure Project Update March 2019](#)

[VMC Development Activity Update – April 10, 2018](#)

[VMC Term of Council Priorities and Implementation Update April 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

The VMC SP Update is being conducted over 5 phases:

Phase 1: Background and Issues

Phase 2: Prepare / Develop Options

Phase 3: Elaborate a Preferred Framework

Phase 4: Draft Secondary Plan

Phase 5: Final Implementation of Secondary Plan Update

The VMC SP Update is currently in its first phase. The scope of the VMC SP Update - Phase 1 Background and Issues includes a review of existing policies, initiatives, developments, studies and background reports; defines an understanding of the VMC's opportunities and challenges; and outlines a consultation strategy to obtain input and feedback from technical experts, landowners, stakeholders, and the public to inform the SP Update.

Background Study Report

The Phase 1 Background Study Report takes stock of existing development pressures in the study area through a survey of completed, approved, and proposed developments and analyzes the evolution of the VMC to-date through the lens of population and employment, land use, built form, public realm and street design, housing, community services and facilities, and parks and open spaces.

Key Messages

The City of Vaughan has achieved a great deal in creating a downtown in the VMC, guided by the 2010 Secondary Plan. The SP Update will refresh this blueprint, continuing the original Plan's trajectory recalibrated for emerging conditions and addressing challenges to achieving the plan's complete vision. Through the review and synthesis of background information, including existing policies, initiatives and developments, the following key highlights and messages were concluded:

- Development is proceeding at a greater intensity than anticipated in the 2010 Secondary Plan and the Plan needs to be recalibrated to account for development pressures
- Development interest is creating a different balance of uses than envisaged in the 2010 VMC Secondary Plan
- Recent developments in the VMC feature considerably higher than planned building heights and densities, therefore the hierarchy of heights and densities in the VMC will need to be carefully planned.

Key Findings

Finding a Balance of Uses

Development interest in the VMC is far greater than anticipated in the 2010 Secondary Plan and heavily weighted to residential uses. Employment uses, retail and commercial services are also important parts of a complete community. Careful thought must be given to what needs to be done to continue to achieve a balance of uses in Vaughan's downtown.

The arrival of the subway and its connection to other higher order transit has given the VMC a marked competitive advantage relative to other office-attracting centres in the region. The work of the VMC SP update should aim to strengthen the downtown's Central Business District, building on the success of the City to date in realizing office development and attracting high profile anchor tenants. The pursuit of this ambition will have to be undertaken considering the potential changes to the office market related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next phase of the VMC build-out should also focus on creating more destinations. As Vaughan's downtown, the VMC should be a focal point for the city, drawing people to the area for multiple reasons; to work, to access unique retail and entertainment offerings, to experience a dynamic and attractive urban environment, to enjoy arts and culture, and to access public facilities and services. The creation of a hub of cultural and arts-based institutions, facilities and installations has been identified as an opportunity with great potential to draw people to the VMC. Item 3 of the March 2, 2021 VMC Sub Committee

Meeting outlines next steps to advance Phase 2 of the Feasibility Study for a Cultural Arts Centre in the VMC.

Serving the Population with Public Amenities and an Attractive Public Realm

The Secondary Plan needs to evaluate the new opportunities presented by future development interest while staying true to its vision of creating a place of exceptional quality and contributing to an outstanding quality of life for those that experience it.

The provision of parks and community facilities included in the 2010 Secondary Plan was calibrated to a much smaller anticipated population. This provision needs to be re-evaluated to reflect new development projections. The ability to adequately provide these amenities in the VMC may lead to measures that tie new growth to the provision of these amenities. Planning for community services and facilities needs to ensure development does not outpace supporting infrastructure, and parks planning needs to reflect new demographic projections, characteristics, and densities.

The Background Study Report noted that initial phases of development in the VMC, particularly around the subway station and transit terminal, demonstrate a conscientious approach to creating an attractive and engaging built environment through building orientation and animation, and the inclusion of public spaces and investments in the quality of the public realm. Vaughan must continue to hold development to a high standard, while itself investing in parks, open spaces, streets and public facilities to create an exceptional built environment with a strong sense of place. The City must also focus on delivering amenities that people need in their daily lives – retail, services, parks, community facilities, and even work – at a walkable scale. The next critical step in the evolution of the downtown is to create a comprehensive network, including mews and mid-block connections, for pedestrians and cyclists to move within the VMC and surrounding areas.

Realizing the Housing Variety Necessary for an Inclusive Community

The Secondary Plan must focus on stimulating the kinds of housing that may not be provided otherwise, including purpose-built rental, family size units and affordable housing. Key aspects of housing, in type and tenure, are unlikely to be provided if left to the market alone.

To date, development interest in the VMC is heavily focused on high-rise tower form buildings, with some interest in townhouses. Rarer is interest in mid-rise form buildings. The 2010 Secondary Plan envisaged a VMC that had areas of varying character and built form intensity. The VMC SP Update must strengthen and reinforce the policy framework to deliver on this vision and avoid an undifferentiated mass of tall buildings. With respect to housing types, approved and proposed developments have been predominantly geared towards the delivery of condominium tenure housing in the form of 1 and 2-

bedroom units. To ensure that the VMC emerges as an inclusive community, the provision of a wider variety of housing types and tenures, unit sizes and affordable rental and ownership models must be explored through the SP update.

Finally, the report stressed the importance of harnessing development interest to realize a broader vision. Development interest in the VMC is much more intense than anticipated. This development interest is the fuel that will power the realization of the City's ambitions for its downtown. However, it must be harnessed to achieve a built environment and a community that meets the public interest.

Considerations Moving forward

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything, in the short term at least. The nature of office-based work, working from home and retail has been especially impacted. In setting out a plan for the future, the Secondary Plan must distinguish between this immediate disruption and the long-term trends.

Another consideration moving forward is the appropriate boundary of the VMC Secondary Plan area. The vision for the VMC is a stark contrast, in terms of built form intensity and quality of place, to its surroundings, especially the low density industrial commercial areas to the north and east. The SP Update is contemplating two boundary expansions, and these must be considered in the context of the long-term plans for the relationship of the VMC to its surroundings.

Potential Boundary Expansion Areas

Staff recommend geographic study area limits for both the potential northern and eastern boundary expansion areas to be studied in Phase 2 of the VMC SP Update. As identified in Attachment 1, the potential eastern boundary expansion limit (Study Area A) extends to Creditstone Road to resolve the jog that exists in the southeastern quadrant and to normalize the limits of the Plan within the existing SP framework. The southeastern quadrant has faced implementation challenges with respect to resolving grading, access and land consolidation within its narrow extents and is underserved in terms of community infrastructure.

As identified in Attachment 2, the potential northern boundary expansion limit (Study Area B) is the depth of one typical VMC urban block, extending east of Jane Street to the Black Creek channel. The purpose of this potential expansion area is to introduce an intentional built form transition in height from the Mobility Hub to the prestige employment lands to the north, and provide an edge to the VMC boundary that is double loaded with development frontage. Currently, the VMC boundary is single loaded along the south side of Portage Parkway.

Several site-specific employment area conversions within both Study Areas A and B have been approved by Regional Council (see Attachment 3) to allow for potential redevelopment of these sites to non-employment uses. Due to proximity of these sites to the existing VMC SP boundary, their respective employment conversion approvals and ability to act as a transition between the City's downtown and adjacent employment areas, the inclusion of these sites into the potential boundary expansion study areas is appropriate to be explored as potential expansions of the VMC boundary.

In exploring the potential boundary expansion areas, several key principles should be considered that will help provide stronger transition to meet the objective upon which they are potentially being included into the plan. Both boundary expansion study areas should introduce meaningful transitions to the surrounding context and prestige employment uses, offer opportunities for much needed parkland and social infrastructure, provide appropriate buffering of uses, and consider newly approved employment conversions shown on Attachment 3. Open spaces should bookend the expansion areas to continue the existing structure of the VMC SP.

These potential expansion study area limits match the scope of work identified in the VMC SP update RFP documents and are within the contract of Gladki Planning Associates.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

A robust public and stakeholder engagement strategy has been developed in consultation with Corporate and Strategic Communications to ensure that meaningful engagement points are planned for each phase of the project. As part of the Phase 1 work, a dedicated webpage was developed to provide information and ongoing updates on the study with the friendly URL www.vaughan.ca/vmcplan.

The study's first survey was launched on November 18, 2020 to understand the public's sentiments on the progress of the VMC developments to-date, and what other opportunities and improvements should be explored through the VMCS Update. Results of the survey can be found on the study's dedicated webpage.

Several focused meetings were held with key stakeholders from December through February, including Councillor interviews, an external agency working session, and meetings with landowners east and west of Jane Street within the VMC.

In addition, the study's first Public Open House was launched mid-February with a pre-recorded background presentation which will run through the end of Q1 2021. Participants will be able to participate during this time period at their leisure and can provide feedback through thematic idea boards, a monitored questionnaire, or providing

comments directly to staff via email. All presentations will be housed in the study's dedicated webpage and will be refreshed with new content throughout subsequent study phases.

Next Steps

The VMC SP project team will continue to engage with stakeholders, including public agencies, staff, landowners and members of the public throughout the project to seek input and feedback, and ensure alignment with the related studies including the VMC Transportation Master Plan Update, VMC Functional Servicing Strategy and the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan. The Phase 1 Background Analysis will be used as the foundation for the work to follow, which falls into several phases:

Phase 2 – Prepare Options

The project team will generate options exploring different mixes and locations of uses and built form. These options will be considered in terms of the provision of parks and open spaces, transportation, and municipal servicing, in conjunction with work conducted by parallel studies. A strategy will also be prepared for provision of community services and facilities.

Phase 3 - Elaborate a Preferred Framework

Integrating feedback from landowners, stakeholders, and the public, the next step is to create a preferred option and framework that draws on the best parts of the development options. Further consultation will allow the preferred concept to be refined and presented as a recommendation.

Phases 4 and 5 - Create the Secondary Plan

The recommend concept will be the basis for developing a draft update to the Secondary Plan. Following additional public consultation and stakeholder engagement, the revised Secondary Plan will be presented.

The study is targeted for completion in Q2 2022.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of City staff and other government agencies has been established. Public agencies including, York Region, Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority, School Boards, Ministry of Transportation, Infrastructure Ontario, Nav Canada, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Toronto Transit Committee, Metrolinx and 407 ETR have been invited as part of this study's TAC.

The purpose of the group is to provide specialized advice and technical input on various key aspects of the VMC SP Update.

Conclusion

The VMC is transforming into a vibrant, modern urban centre for residents and businesses that encompasses all amenities of an urban lifestyle. The average density of projects continues to significantly exceed those planned in the current VMC SP, a factor which must be balanced with measured delivery of community services and social infrastructure. Developments and approvals to-date are heavily weighted towards residential uses in the form of high-rise condominiums, predominantly consisting of 1 and 2-bedroom units. A balance of uses, variety housing types and tenures, unit sizes and building types are critical to achieving a complete downtown community that is vibrant and diverse.

An update to the VMC Secondary Plan has been initiated to address new provincial and regional policies and to confirm that the framework is still relevant considering the nature of existing, approved and proposed development in the VMC.

Updates to the VMC Secondary Plan policy framework will continue to recognize the VMC as the City's priority intensification area and downtown, while ensuring the area continues to develop as a complete community and support the City's strategic priorities as outlined in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

For more information, please contact: Christina Bruce, Director, VMC Program, ext. 8231

Attachments

1. Potential eastern boundary expansion Study Area A limit.
2. Potential northern boundary expansion Study Area B limit.
3. Approved employment conversions.

Prepared by

Jessica Kwan, Senior Planner, VMC, ext. 8814

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC, ext. 8035

Christina Bruce, Director, VMC Program, ext. 8231

Approved by

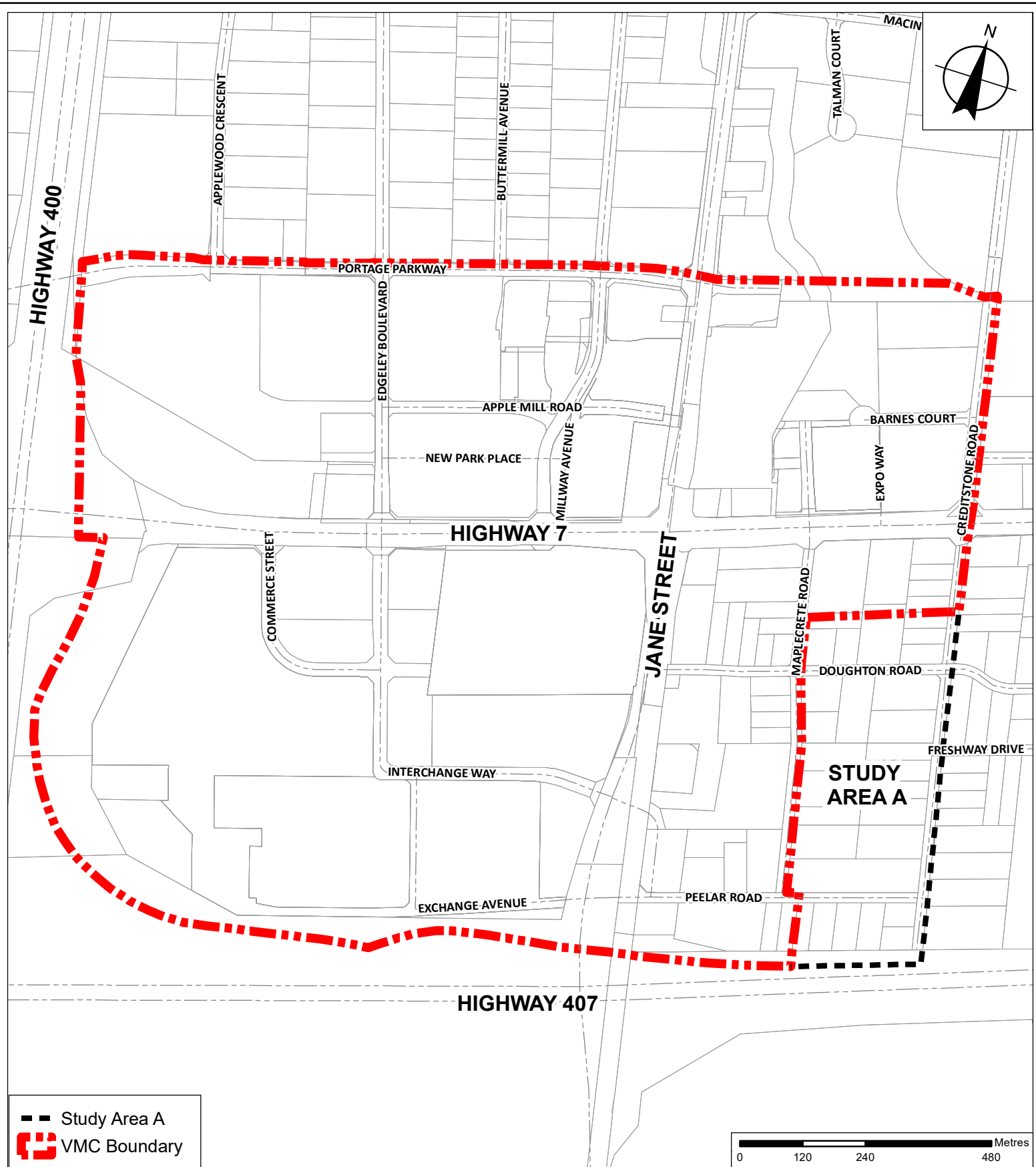
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mauro Peverini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mauro Peverini, Acting Chief Planning Official

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Harnum', with a long horizontal flourish.

Jim Harnum, City Manager



Potential Eastern Boundary Expansion Study Area A Limit

LOCATION:
Part of Lots 4-7,
Concessions 4, 5

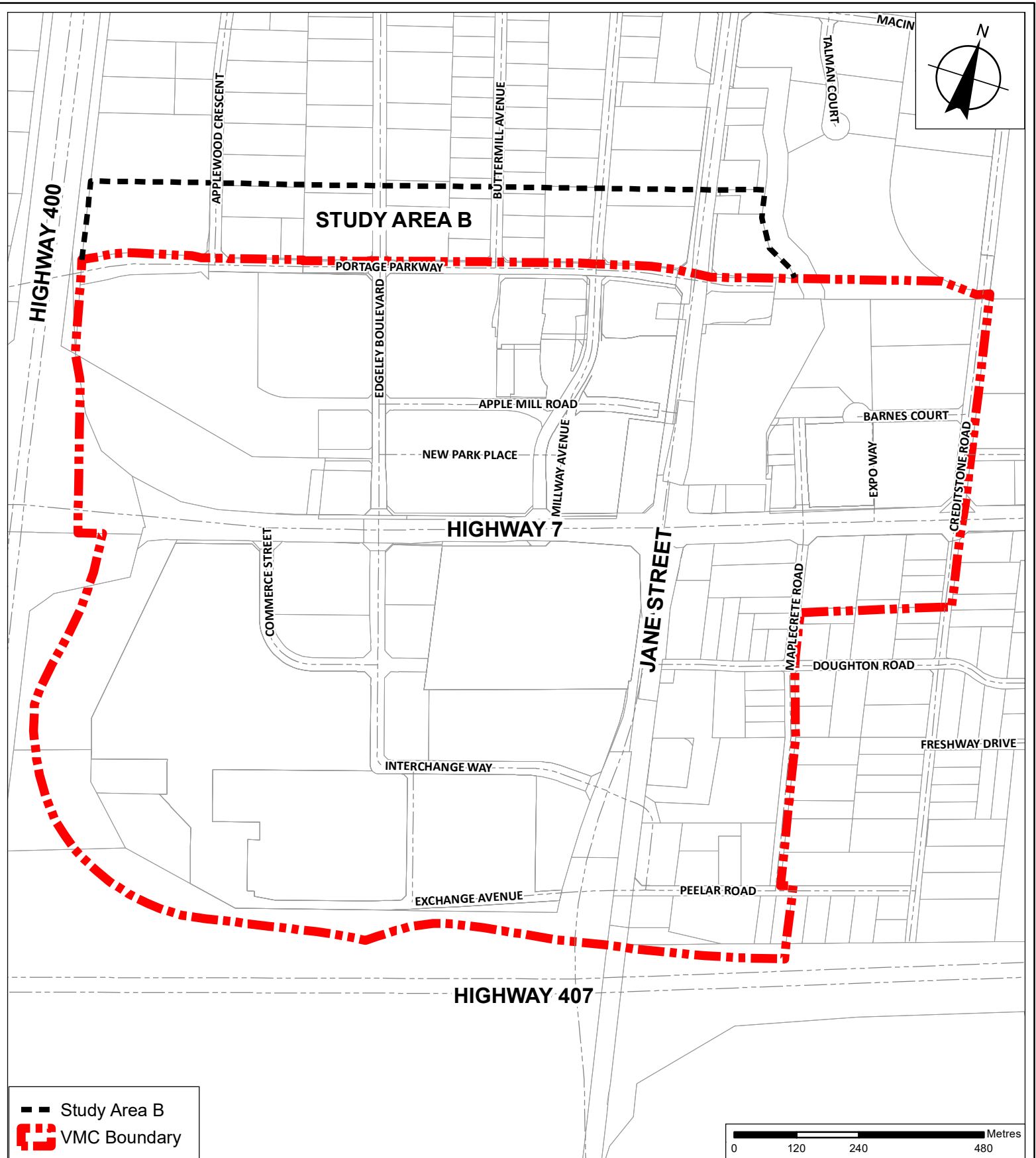


Attachment

FILE:
N/A

DATE:
March 2, 2021

1



Potential Northern Boundary Expansion Study Area B Limit

LOCATION:
Part of Lots 4-7,
Concessions 4, 5

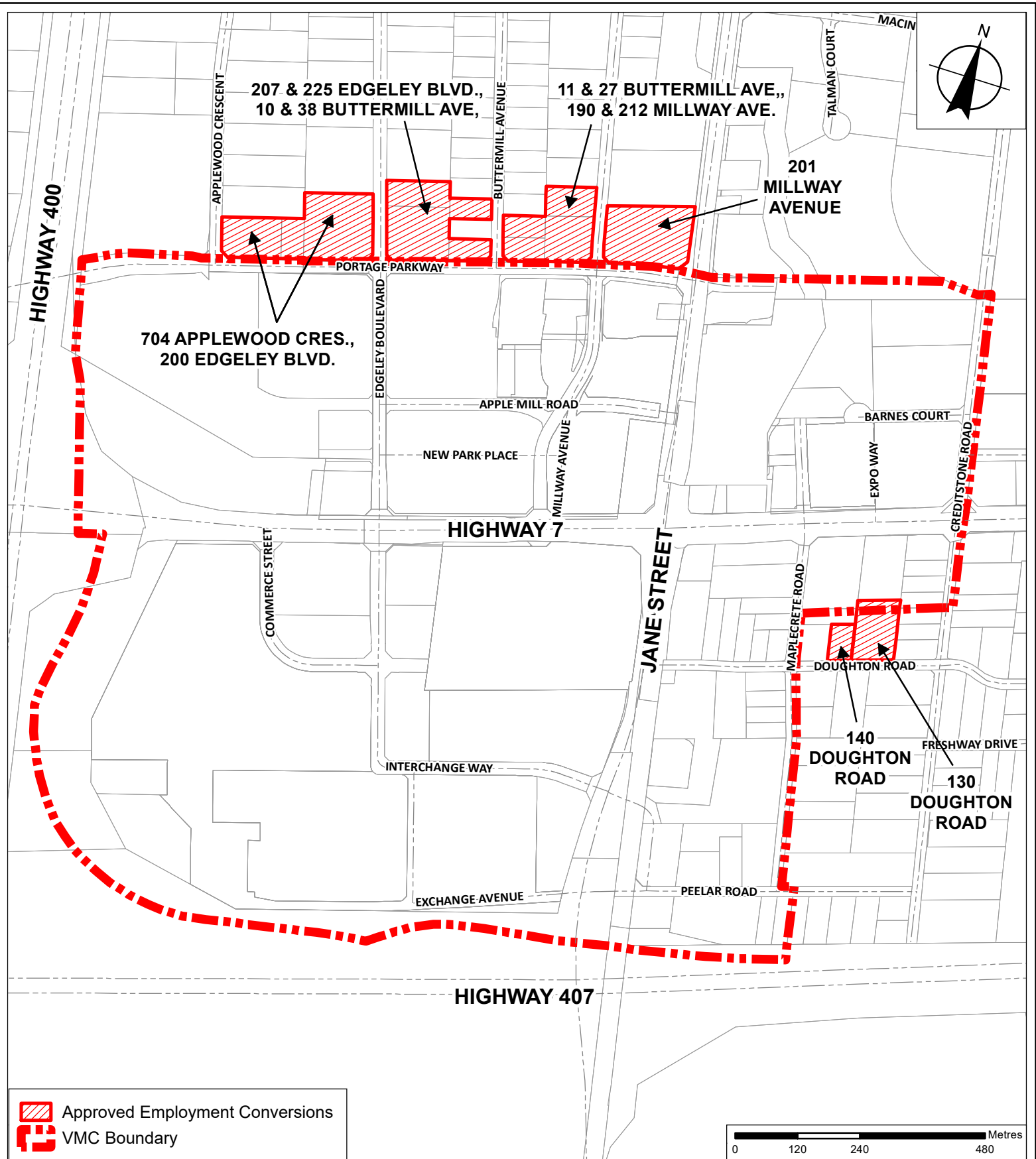


Attachment

FILE:
N/A

DATE:
March 2, 2021

2



Approved Employment Conversions

LOCATION:
Part of Lots 4-7,
Concessions 4, 5



Attachment

FILE:
N/A
DATE:
March 2, 2021

3

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 2, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC PARKS AND WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan (PWMP), its progress and implementation, and how it contributes to the creation of a complete community in the VMC.

Report Highlights

- The findings of the Assessment Report, the first deliverable of the VMC PWMP, provided the City with valuable insight into demographics, service levels, and benchmarks to guide the timely provision of parkland in the VMC and made clear that active parkland and social infrastructure are critical priorities for the VMC.
- Efforts are being undertaken to maintain a balance between current population density trends and available hard and soft infrastructure, including community services and parks and open spaces.
- The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan has advanced and has prepared multiple scenarios for the development of parks and open space in the VMC, informed by findings from the previously completed Assessment Report and input from the public, staff, and stakeholders.

Report Highlights (continued)

- The concurrent VMC plans and studies, including the VMC PWMP, VMC Secondary Plan Update, and the VMC Transportation Master Plan Update, inform each other and will be 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 will ensure every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan (VMC PWMP) was initiated in May 2020 with the successful proponent, Janet Rosenberg & Studio. As previously reported, the consultant has completed their background research and assessment of the parks and open space in the VMC and environs, culminating in their draft Assessment Report considered by the VMC Sub-committee in November 2020.

The challenges of COVID-19 have made clear how vital parks are to our citizens, especially in high-density communities that have little private open space. The intent of the VMC PWMP is to prepare a master plan and implementation strategy to facilitate the timely development of parks and open space for VMC residents, commuters and visitors, as outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan and envisioned in supportive placemaking studies, together with the development of a public realm wayfinding strategy that can be implemented to achieve a legible and cohesive public realm.

The findings of the Assessment Report, the first deliverable of the VMC PWMP, provided the City with valuable insight into demographics, service levels, and benchmarks to guide the timely provision of parkland in the VMC and inform the next phases of the study. Highlights of the assessment include:

- Active parkland and social infrastructure are critical priorities for the VMC
- Existing parks and open spaces within the VMC, or immediately adjacent to it, may be explored for potential expansion and/or improvements to service the new downtown’s population
- The VMC is uniquely situated among three significant greenways that run along the Humber River, Black Creek, and the West Don River. These greenways are

linked by the hydro corridor running south of Highway 407, where a future extension of the Vaughan Super Trail is proposed. If this trail system is combined with a safe and accessible connection across Highway 407 for pedestrians and cyclists, it will provide VMC residents with access to many kilometers of trails, parks, and green spaces

- The area south of Highway 407 also contains two large parcels of publicly owned lands where active parkland could be located: a 40-hectare parcel west and south of the Highway 407 TTC Station and the 12.8-hectare north parcel of Black Creek Pioneer Village.

The VMC PWMP is being coordinated with the concurrent updates of the VMC Secondary Plan, VMC Transportation Master Plan, and the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report.

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports relating to the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan can be found at the following links:

[VMC Studies Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

Analysis and Options

The VMC PWMP has significantly advanced its next phase and has developed parks and open space scenarios based on the following draft design principles:

- The 20 hectares of parkland outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan (2010) may not be adequate to support the future VMC population, given current development trends. Additional parkland and facilities should be met by providing parks that are either in the VMC or conveniently accessible by walking or cycling.
- Environmental Open Space in the VMC should be designed to maximize its use for passive recreation. Stormwater infrastructure and natural heritage features should be designed in accordance with this principle.
- While parks and open space must be designed serve their immediate neighborhoods, all parks and open space within the VMC must be conveniently and safely accessible from any part of the VMC. Roads should not function as barriers to a connected VMC.
- Outdoor facilities should reflect the unique needs and demographic of a dense urban population.

- Parks and open space in or adjacent to the VMC should be programmed according to a hierarchy that recognizes the frequency and importance of use to ensure that facilities are appropriately located.
- The VMC Secondary Plan vision for a north-south 'urban spine' along Millway Avenue is important and should be reflected in the VMC parks and open space system.
- The organization of Edgeley Pond and Park, particularly the integration of Active Parkland and Environmental Open Space, responds well to the VMC's planning principles and should be continued along Black Creek south of Highway 7.
- Public Squares, POPS, Mews and Flex Streets should be located and programmed to supplement parks by providing facilities, connections and 'green' features that best address gaps in the VMC's parks and open space system.
- A safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling connection should be made south to an extension of the Vaughan Super Trail in the Hydro Corridor south of the VMC. This would provide VMC residents with access to many kilometers of trails, parks, and open space.
- Low-impact stormwater management facilities should be incorporated into the design of all parks and opens spaces in the VMC.

The master plan scenarios, a summary of which will be presented to the VMC Sub-committee, incorporate a detailed facility fit study. The tasks informing these scenarios include:

- A demographic analysis of the VMC
- A study of park facility requirements based on projected populations and demographics
- A study of facilities that fit within the parkland defined in the VMC Secondary Plan (2010)
- A study of potential additional parkland available within the VMC boundaries
- A study of parkland potential in close proximity to the VMC and its capacity to absorb facilities and its potential effect on service levels

The scenarios derived from these tasks include the following:

- Intensifying park facility distribution within the existing parkland defined in the VMC Secondary Plan (2010), including adding a small amount of parkland
- Expanding south to create new parkland south of Highway 407 and west of the 407 subway station

- Expanding north to create new parkland in the elbow of the Black Creek north of Portage, effectively enlarging Edgeley Pond and Park, and potentially other sites
- Expanding east to create new parkland between Maplecrete and Creditstone

These scenarios, which can be implemented over time in a measured response to development, will provide the City with options for service level delivery, and ultimately create a diverse, multi-functional, and seamlessly interconnected parks and open space network.

In addition to the master plan scenarios, the consultant is has begun the signage and wayfinding design process. The study has defined an area encompassing the mobility hub, part of Edgeley Pond and Park, and Strata Park for the initial wayfinding design exercise. This area was chosen because it includes most of the types of parks and public realm spaces likely to require signage across the VMC.

The findings of the VMC PWMP will inform the Community Services & Facilities study to be completed as part of the VMC Secondary Plan Update.

The study is targeted for completion in Q4 2021.

An Innovative and Coordinated Consultation Plan is Being Undertaken

Current consultation methods are focusing on virtual connections and will be evaluated over time. The initial VMC PWMP survey received over 500 responses, both online and through hard copies. Current and future phases of the project will continue to use online surveys and will also utilize online focus groups, idea boards, and other virtual engagement tools.

Phase two of the consultation plan will commence in March, 2021 with a virtual focus group with members of the public, followed by gathering feedback online on the proposed VMC Parks and Open Space scenarios. A presentation video and interactive engagement tool will be available to the public for an extended period.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration continues with regional stakeholders which is an important factor in realizing the success of the VMC. Certain options developed through the VMC PWMP will require coordination with regional stakeholders and external agencies to determine their feasibility and advance the study.

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. Active parkland and social infrastructure are critical priorities for the VMC.

The VMC PWMP is moving toward a preferred scenario for the VMC's parks and open spaces, vetted by public and stakeholder input, and coordinated with concurrent VMC studies. The study will ultimately contribute to downtown's continuing development 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 VMC Program, ext. 8231

Attachments

N/A

Prepared by

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Approved by



Mauro Peverini,
Acting Chief Planning Official

Reviewed by



Jim Harnum, City Manager

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 2, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: PHASE II - DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE IN THE VMC

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the next stage of implementation for the future development of a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC).

Report Highlights

- Cultural hubs are amenities that create community, social and economic benefits including city building and placemaking; investment attraction; job creation; tourism attraction; academic and social innovations; and civic pride.
- A strong planning context and framework exists to support the development of a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
- The Phase I - Feasibility Study concluded that market demand and community need is evident to support a cultural hub in Vaughan's downtown given the critical mass of high-order transit and highway infrastructure, open spaces, and ongoing population, business and employment growth in the VMC.
- An RFP is being developed for a Phase II - Site Selection and Development scope of work to build on the findings of Phase I and inform the ongoing VMC Secondary Plan Update, which is expected to be released in April 2021.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

In 2018, the City of Vaughan commissioned Hariri Pontarini Architects, AMS Planning and Research, and FDA to conduct a Phase I Feasibility Study for a Cultural Arts Centre in the VMC. The Study assessed market demand, community need supported by extensive engagement, best-practices, development concepts, management and operating models, and financial analysis.

Agenda Item 2 of the December 4, 2019 VMC Sub-committee meeting contained the findings of the Phase 1 work and concluded that market demand and community need is evident to support a cultural hub in Vaughan's downtown, given the critical mass of high-order transit and highway infrastructure, open spaces, and ongoing population, business and employment growth in the VMC.

In order to continue momentum on the project, Council directed staff to advance the next implementation phase of work focused on site selection, refinement of planning and urban design matters, exploration of senior government funding, and detailed business planning (i.e., governance, management operations, programming, capital and operating budget). Council further directed staff to include a site-specific Cultural Arts Centre designation in the VMC Secondary Plan Update to ensure land-use planning, site selection, urban design, cultural and economic planning policy and other matters are determined for future development.

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports relating to the VMC Cultural Arts Centre can be found at the following links:

[Feasibility Study for a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre – December 4, 2019](#)
[VMC Culture and Public Art Framework](#)

Analysis and Options

A strong planning context and framework exists to support the development of a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

The vision for a rich cultural base in the VMC is well articulated in planning, policy and placemaking documents, recognizing that civic and cultural facilities, and other destinations, will attract people from across the City and Region, and generate economic impacts for businesses in the VMC, city-wide and across the Greater Toronto Area.

The VMC Secondary Plan recognizes that “successful downtowns have a strong identity, sense of place and civic attractions. To these ends, it is an objective of this plan to establish civic uses and spaces in the VMC that serve residents from across the City and to realize a high quality of development and public realm initiatives. To reinforce the VMC’s and the city’s identity, the plan anticipates one or more major civic facilities, including a landmark cultural facility”. The Plan further notes that cultural facilities may be developed as a catalyst for broader development and to establish an identity and civic role for the VMC.

The VMC Culture and Public Art Framework and the Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study build on the VMC Secondary Plan policy structure, envisioning the downtown as a top destination for cultural entertainment in the GTA, where state-of-the-art facilities and spaces provide a vast range of experiences for all users.

The VMC Secondary Plan Update - Phase 1 findings, reported as Agenda Item 1 of the March 2, 2021 VMC Sub-committee meeting, identifies that the next phase of the VMC build-out should focus on creating more destinations. The creation of a hub of cultural and arts-based institutions, facilities and installations has been identified as an offer with great potential to draw people to the VMC.

A cultural arts centre could stimulate more than \$100 million in economic activity related to one-time construction, and on an annual basis has the potential to inject over \$2.5 million directly in the local and regional economy. Indirect and induced impacts, such as spending in the supply chain, hospitality sector and retail trades represent additional benefits for businesses, jobs, and households in the VMC, city-wide, and in the Greater Toronto Area. The development of a cultural hub in the VMC supports the community Vision, Key Priorities and Themes outlined in the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, creating a cultural legacy for Vaughan and serving as a driver for economic growth, city building and creating an active, safe, and diverse community.

Feedback from the public and City of Vaughan leading developers suggest there is an appetite for investment in both facilities and other resources to support the continued evolution of Vaughan’s creative industries. Demand for programming clearly aligns with a flexible approach to animating space in the VMC through not just fine arts and traditional performances, but through a range of new, distinctive programs and services that celebrate Vaughan, reinforce the City’s unique brand, and position the City to continue its remarkable growth trajectory.

In order to continue momentum on the project, Council directed staff to advance the next implementation phase of work

The Phase II - Site Selection and Development will build on the findings of the Phase I final report and deliver on Council's direction that staff advance implementation and business planning for a Performing and Cultural Arts Centre in the VMC as a key priority for the downtown. Staff are working with Procurement Services to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Phase II of the project which will include a review and update of the operational models developed through the Phase I work, reflecting any lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with a facilitated consultation process with VMC landowners and impacted stakeholders that results in the final selection of a site and partnership model through a transparent evaluation process.

The findings and recommendations of the Phase II - Site Selection and Development will assist the City in addressing the following relevant issues:

- mandate of the performing arts centre
- governance model
- business operating model
- operating budget and capital budget forecast for the first five years
- size of facility, number of seats, land requirement and building size
- site selection
- economic and community impact
- partnership and funding opportunities.

The result of the Phase II recommendations will provide direction on a scaled approach to implementing priorities, policy framework, strategies, structures, timeline, and funding/operational requirements essential to enhancing Vaughan's cultural sector, with benchmarks to measure success. The findings of the Phase II final report will be integrated into the ongoing VMC Secondary Plan Update as policy updates. Staff will include a provision to study the inclusion of a site-specific Cultural Arts Centre designation, one that does not exist today, as part of the scope of work.

The final report will provide recommendation for the selection of a site location and operating model for the cultural arts centre which supports the key priorities outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

Next Steps

The RFP is expected to be released through the City's Bids and Tenders portal in April 2021 and the duration of the study is anticipated to extend through Q4 2021.

The Phase II study will be led by Economic and Cultural Development, in close partnership with the VMC Program team.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact resulting from this report as Council has previously approved that \$100,000 be allocated to this project from Capital Project DP-9555-17 VMC - Consultation Services to support the implementation of key findings and a decision-making framework from the Cultural Arts Centre Feasibility Study.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The potential development of a cultural hub may have implications for York Region's Centres and Corridors and its Economic Development Action Plan. Copies of this report and subsequent work plans will be communicated to York Region Planning and Economic Strategy, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, York Region Arts Council, VMC stakeholders and landowners.

Conclusion

Over the years, Vaughan has employed community and civic spaces to foster, incubate and host creative and cultural activities. Community centres, libraries, heritage properties and Vaughan City Hall have supplemented as venues for cultural incubation, innovation, program delivery and demonstration, including exhibitions, studio, and performance spaces. Cultural uses have competed, and at times, conflicted with recreation and local community uses for limited space.

As the downtown matures with a growing population and employment base, and to leverage public transit and infrastructure investments made by various levels of government and the private sector, the time has come for a concerted and dedicated effort to establish a creative hub. To advance the planning of a cultural and performing arts centre in the VMC, an RFP is being developed for a Phase II - Site Selection and Development scope of work to build on the findings of Phase I and inform the ongoing VMC Secondary Plan Update, which is expected to be released in April 2021.

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Attachments

None

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Mauro Peverini, Acting Chief Planning Official

Reviewed by

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Jim Harnum, City Manager