

**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, June 8, 2021
9:30 a.m.**

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1. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA	
2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST	
3. COMMUNICATIONS	
4. DETERMINATION OF ITEMS REQUIRING SEPARATE DISCUSSION INCLUDING MEMBERS RESOLUTION(S)	
1. VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE – PHASE 2 APPROACH Report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management with respect to the above.	3
2. VMC PARKS AND WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN UPDATE – REFINED SCENARIO Report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management with respect to the above.	28
3. BLACK CREEK RENEWAL AND EDGELEY POND AND PARK PROJECT UPDATE Report of the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development with respect to the above.	34

4. VMC MARKETING UPDATE 2021
Report of the City Manager with respect to the above.

5. **ADOPTION OF ITEMS NOT REQUIRING SEPARATE DISCUSSION**
6. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REQUIRING SEPARATE DISCUSSION**
7. **NEW BUSINESS**
8. **ADJOURNMENT**

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VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 8, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE – PHASE 2 APPROACH

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an overview of the approach that will be explored in the development of land use options through Phase 2 of the VMC Secondary Plan (VMCSP) Update.

Report Highlights

- At the March 2, 2021 VMC Sub-committee meeting, the consulting team for the VMCSPP Update provided an overview of preliminary findings from the Phase 1 - Background Study Report and highlighted that the VMCSPP area needs to be recalibrated with a balance of land uses and supporting social infrastructure to account for significant development pressures.
- Phase 1 - Background and Issues is now concluded with the completion of the study's first Public Open House which was held virtually from February 25 to March 25, 2021.
- Preliminary land use options to be developed through Phase 2 will take into account the key messages and concerns that have been identified by members of the public, stakeholder groups and the consulting team, namely; the continued exceedance of the average density of development proposals; lack of services and infrastructure to support this growing population at such an unprecedented pace; the imbalanced variety of uses proposed; and the lack of variety in housing and building types, tenure and unit sizes.
- The VMCSPP Update will be a nuanced recalibration exercise, not a departure from the original plan. The Update will be an opportunity to adjust elements of the plan that need to be refined to rebalance delivery of a complete community into the future to achieve Council's vision for the downtown.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

The VMCSPP Update commenced in August 2020 and is being undertaken by VMC Program staff, in consultation with the successful consultant team of Gladki Planning Associates, with Ken Greenberg, dTAH, and Urban Metrics.

Since Vaughan and York Region Council approval of the original VMCSPP in 2010 and 2012 respectively, the VMC area has undergone significant physical changes. Delivery of the first development and infrastructure projects has advanced the vision of creating the City's downtown, including the establishment of the Mobility Hub and several residential, office, and mixed-use buildings and public spaces.

Through this initial phase of development, Vaughan's skyline has been dramatically transforming as buildings continue to reach greater heights, setting new benchmarks for the Region. With the increased building height comes increased density, both of which are significantly above what was originally contemplated in the VMC Secondary Plan. This scale of development has implications for build-out of the downtown.

Due to the rapid growth in the VMC and recent changes to municipal and regional legislation, the City initiated an update to the existing VMCSPP to ensure that the planning framework is still relevant to realize Council's vision for a vibrant downtown. The update to the VMCSPP will result in a revised secondary plan that supports the City's downtown as a complete community to 2051 and beyond.

The VMCSPP Update will be conducted over 5 phases. Phase 1 of the VMCSPP Update is now concluded, and the findings that resulted through the initial background review, stakeholder consultation and public engagement will inform the development of land use options to be explored through the next phase of work. The approach to development of these land use options will be described below in the Analysis and Options.

The VMCSPP Update is being coordinated with the concurrent projects including the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan, VMC Transportation Master Plan Update, and the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report. The findings of these related studies will inform the update to the VMCSPP.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Secondary Plan Update – Phase 1](#)

Analysis and Options

Recap of Phase 1 Findings

At the March 2, 2021 VMC Sub-committee, the VMCSPP team presented preliminary findings based on Phase 1 work and conveyed several key messages, including:

- 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 original VMC Secondary Plan
- Recent residential developments in the VMC feature, particularly in the Neighbourhood Precinct, considerably higher than planned building heights and densities, therefore the hierarchy of heights and densities in the VMC will need to be carefully planned
- 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 will be critical
- Planning and provision of community services and facilities needs to ensure development does not outpace supporting infrastructure

Development interest in the VMC has been more intense than anticipated. The average density of projects continues to exceed those planned in the current VMCSPP, a factor which must be balanced with measured delivery of municipal services and social infrastructure.

Based on the Background Study Report, the uplift in development proposals represents an approximate average rate of 1.6 times the as-of-right permissions. Furthermore, proposed 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. While the pace of office development in the VMC is generally in line with the VMCSPP projections, with retail trending slightly below targets as a critical mass of residents and employees materialize, it is in the residential category where development interest is greater than planned. This development trend presents a dramatic future possibility of the VMC building out as more of a bedroom community, raising concern that achievement of a dynamic mixed-use downtown with adequate supporting infrastructure may be at risk. A balance of uses, variety housing types and tenures, unit sizes and building types, including the provision of services are critical to achieving a complete downtown community that is vibrant and diverse.

While development interest is the fuel that will power the realization of the City's ambitions for its downtown, it must be harnessed to achieve a built environment and a healthy community that meets the public interest. To balance the unplanned increase in residential population, increases in the capacity and provision of hard and soft infrastructure will be required to support the community, including parks, community services and facilities, transportation, and municipal servicing systems.

Public Consultation Feedback

As part of the project's consultation strategy, the VMCS Update launched its first virtual Public Open House (POH) through an online engagement platform on February 25, 2021 to build on the findings of the Phase 1 survey which launched in November 2020 and to introduce the study to a broad audience and seek input from the general public and stakeholders about the issues, strengths and opportunities in the VMC.

Participants were prompted to use the digital engagement tools provided to share ideas, join the discussion, ask questions, and subscribe for project updates. The following questions were posed:

- How would you like to describe your downtown in the next 10-20 years? What do you think is missing from the VMC vision and principles?
- What features and/or amenities would make the VMC a great downtown?
- What do you like about the VMC today? Which amenities do you enjoy?
- What are the VMC's challenges? What ideas do you have for improving them?

Much of the commentary voiced by members of the public in response to the study's online POH questions and public survey echo the key messages and findings of the consultant team presented as part of the Background Study Report at the March 2nd VMC Sub-Committee meeting. Key comments included the following:

- **Housing Variety** - The VMC needs housing options that are accessible to multiple demographics. Rental properties and below-market affordable housing will balance existing residential options to ensure a diversity of residents and families call the area home
- **Local retail and dining** - There should be dining options throughout the VMC and at-grade, small-scale retail on downtown streets. The VMC should be a place for locally owned small businesses
- **Hub for arts, culture, and entertainment** - The VMC's identity should be rooted in arts, culture, and creativity. Downtown Vaughan can be an entertainment hotspot with festivals, food trucks, music venues, and outdoor events.

Employment in the VMC can also focus on creative industries including digital media, visual arts, fashion, and music

- **Built form variety and design** - Vaughan's downtown should have a variety of built form types. Community members would like to see more than just high- and low-rise buildings, and believe colourful, attractive architecture and design should push the boundaries and be held to the highest standards
- **A connected transportation network** - The VMC should have a fine-grain street network that promotes walkability and lessens dependency on cars. Dedicated YRT bus lines, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian-friendly streets will create a multi-modal downtown. There are also opportunities for transit connections to surrounding areas/communities, including, York University, and Kleinburg. Improvements can be made to pick-up/drop-off at the VMC Subway Station
- **Public spaces for building community** - The VMC should be a safe, clean, vibrant place to interact with others in parks and open spaces. There should be diverse facilities and amenities to promote recreation such as an outdoor ice rink or cricket pitch. Markets, fairs, festivals, and arts and culture venues are important ways to foster community in Vaughan

Full summaries of the Phase 1 POH and survey are appended as Attachment 1 to this report and can also be found on the VMCS Update dedicated webpage:
www.vaughan.ca/VMCPlan.

Current and Future Projections based on Development Trends

The VMCS Update will be exploring a number of elements when developing the preliminary land use options, including different mixes and locations of land uses and built form typologies. These options will be considered in the context of the provision of parks and open spaces, community facilities, transportation, and municipal servicing, in conjunction with work conducted by parallel studies.

To frame an informed approach to the development of options, dTAH, the urban design members of the consulting team, undertook an exercise to graphically demonstrate the implications of the current development trends reported numerically through the planning analysis and findings of the Phase 1 – Background Study Report against the original VMC Secondary Plan vision. The team developed a series of models to graphically illustrate the current development trends and communicate the compounded impact of the increased density in the downtown against the as-of-right permissions, built projects, approved developments, and new proposals.

The development trends represent a potential density of people and jobs that departs from and exceeds the assumptions upon which the original VMCSPP was developed. The number of residents in the VMC will continue to increase at a rate higher than the provision of jobs and other non-residential uses. Due to the increase in population, the provision of parkland and other community services and facilities will not be able to keep pace with the number of people that new developments generate. This scenario will lead to continued increase in the imbalance and disparity between the number of residents versus non-residential uses (including jobs in the VMC), the inability of the City to provide and secure sufficient soft services such as parks, recreational and community services to serve the growing population. 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 emphasized as a priority through the VMCSPP Update.

The modelling exercise is an important step in framing an approach to the development of options to be explored through the Phase 2 work using informed projections of how the downtown could develop if current development trends persist without recalibration. The current development trend and trajectory, if continued, will lead to a downtown that may be at risk of vertical sprawl, creation of a dormitory community and loss of livability.

To achieve the Council's vision of the VMC becoming a complete community that is vibrant and diverse, the City must ensure that true transit-oriented developments are realized and that delivery of crucial elements necessary for good city building are well-balanced.

Phase 2 Approach

The VMCSPP Update will be a nuanced recalibration exercise, not a departure from the original plan. Many elements of the original vision are strong and relevant today based on policy, legislation and city building best practices. The Update will be an opportunity to adjust elements of the plan that need to be refined to rebalance delivery of a complete community into the future.

Based on the findings of the work completed to date, preliminary options developed through the Phase 2 work will take into account the key messages and concerns that have been identified by members of the public, stakeholder groups and the professionals, namely; the continued exceedance of the average density of development proposals; lack of services and infrastructure to support this growing population; the imbalanced variety of uses proposed; and the lack of variety in housing

and building types, tenure and unit sizes. All of these elements are critical to achieving a diverse and vibrant downtown.

To address these concerns, the options for areas within the existing SP area will be developed as scenarios based on application of potential constants, or fixed elements, and variables, or flexible elements, that provide a structured framework for recalibration of the plan. Potential constants may include character areas developed through the Secondary Plan and placemaking documents, road network, density, and existing park network – though there may need to be minor amendments to some of these elements as the Update is refined. Potential variables include land use mix, height, approaches to required retail and office uses, implementation tools, built form policies, potential new schools/community centre sites and the location of the future cultural arts centre to be refined through Phase 2 of the VMC Cultural Arts Centre study. By applying certain constants and exploring variables as a structured methodology and approach, the team will be able to rebalance development interest while staying true to Council's vision of creating a place of exceptional quality as a complete community.

Options for the potential boundary expansion areas A and B will follow more traditional land use scenario development, informed by the work of the related concurrent studies, particularly as regards parks, open spaces, and roads.

The City of Vaughan has achieved a great deal in creating a downtown in the VMC, guided by the 2010 Secondary Plan. This moment in time is an important opportunity to carefully examine what has been achieved so far and ensure that the original VMCSPP's trajectory is recalibrated for emerging conditions and addressing challenges to achieving the plan's complete vision.

Ongoing consultation

The VMCSPP 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.

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 options developed in Phase 2 will be reviewed in consultation with the TAC members to determine their feasibility and advance to a preferred option.

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 development projects continues to increase with new applications, a factor which must be balanced with measured delivery of both hard and soft services.

Based on the findings of the Phase 1 work, options developed through Phase 2 of the VMCSPP Update will need to take into account the key messages and comments that have been identified based on the initial downtown build-out. This includes the continued significant exceedance of the average density of development proposals, lack of services and infrastructure to support this growing population, the imbalanced variety of uses proposed and the lack of variety in housing and building types, tenure, and unit sizes.

Through Phase 2 of the study, the VMCSPP project team will generate several preliminary options which will explore different mixes and locations of uses and built form, while considering certain constants and variables that are necessary to ensure that the VMC properly achieves Council's vision. 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.

The VMCSPP Update will refresh the framework, continuing the original's trajectory recalibrated for emerging conditions and addressing challenges to achieving the Plan's complete vision.

For more information, please contact Amy Roots, Acting Director, VMC Program, ext. 8035.

Attachment

1. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Update – Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary.

Prepared by

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Approved by



Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management

Reviewed by



Jim Harnum, City Manager



Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Update

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

April 2021

Overview

VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is the City of **Vaughan's downtown core**, transforming into a transit-oriented community with unique residential, office, and mixed use areas, linked by a network of parks, public squares, open spaces, and a street grid for all types of transportation, including walking, driving, and cycling.

Due to rapid growth in the VMC and recent changes to municipal and regional legislation, the City initiated an update to the existing VMC Secondary Plan last fall and retained a multi-disciplinary team led by Gladki Planning Associates, supported by DTAH, Greenberg Consultants, and urbanMetrics.

Work is being aligned and coordinated in conjunction with parallel studies being undertaken in the VMC, City of Vaughan, and York Region. Ultimately, this update will result in a revised secondary plan that supports the City's downtown as a **complete community** to 2051 and beyond.

PROJECT PHASES AND CONSULTATION

The VMC Secondary Plan Update is a multi-year project with five phases:

1. Background and Issues
2. Options
3. Recommendations
4. Draft Secondary Plan
5. Final Implementation

A Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is guiding consultation to ensure diverse groups are involved throughout the project. Dedicated touchpoints at regular intervals will ensure work is continuously informed by their important perspectives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online tools are being used to carry out activities remotely. In-person activities (adopting physical distancing measures) will resume when it is safe to do so, based on the guidance of public health authorities.

Phase 1 focused on reviewing existing policies, initiatives, developments, and studies and developing an understanding of current conditions and the opportunities and challenges facing the VMC. A Background Study Report was completed.

The objectives for this phase of engagement were to:

- introduce the project to stakeholders and the public: purpose, process, timeline, and potential impacts;
- build capacity of stakeholders and the public to participate in planning discussions;
- gain local knowledge and technical information on existing conditions, issues, strengths, opportunities, and constraints;
- collect feedback on a renewed vision and guiding principles; and,
- generate new ideas.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Public consultation activities in Phase 1 included an online **public survey** and a month-long virtual **Public Open House**. Collectively, the feedback will inform the next phase of work, which will explore different ideas for the future of the VMC and prepare a strategy for provision of community services and facilities.

This document **summarizes public feedback received during Phase 1**.

STUDY AREA

The VMC has a total area of 190 hectares, bounded by Highway 407 to the south, Highway 400 to the west, Portage Parkway to the north, and Creditstone and Maplecrete Roads to the east. This project will also review and analyze **potential expansions to the study area**, considering

employment and commercial lands to the north of Portage Parkway and east of Maplecrete Road to Creditstone Road. The current Secondary Plan boundaries and possible expansion areas are shown in Figure 1.

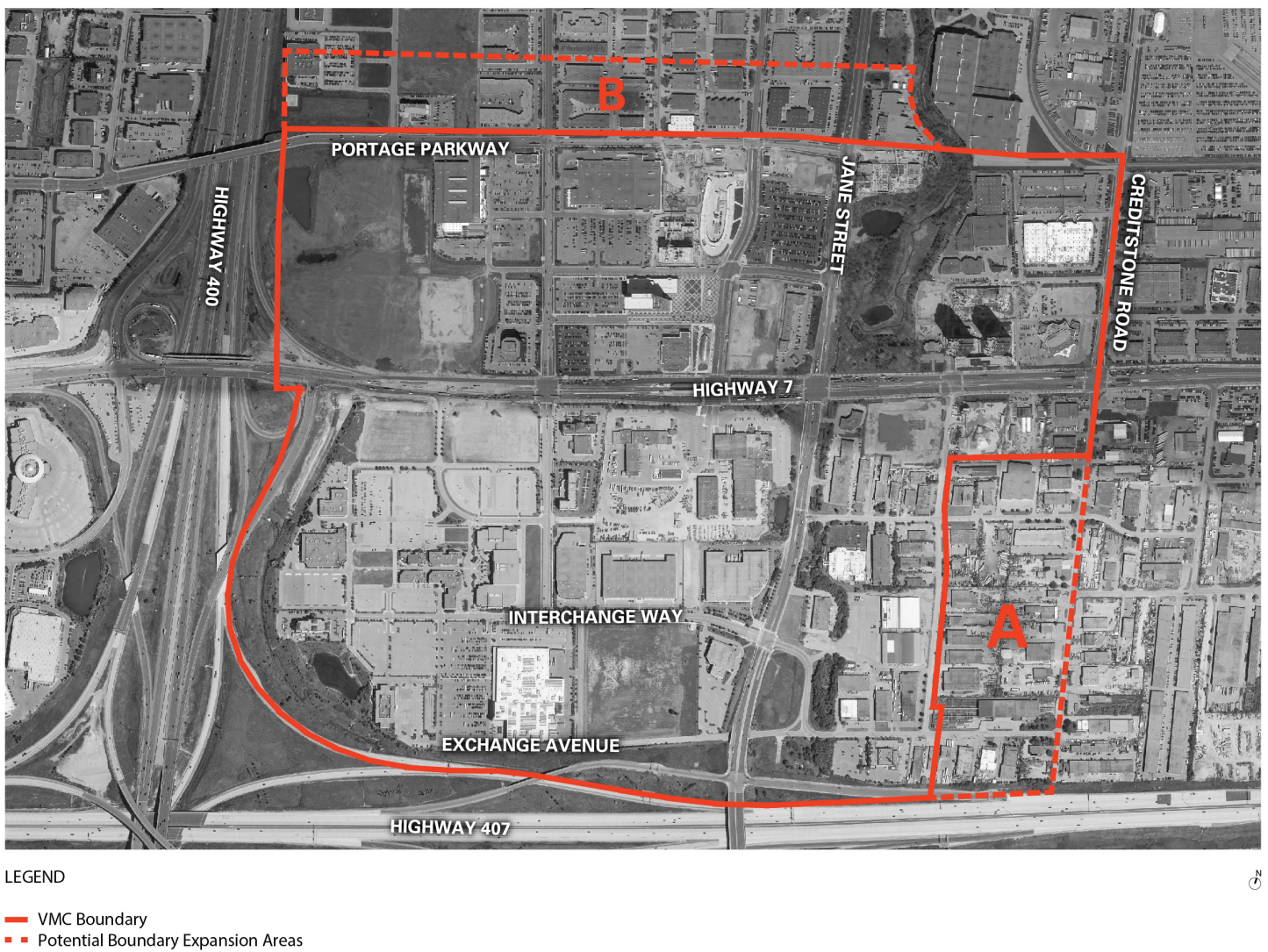


Figure 1 Vaughan Metropolitan Centre study area and potential expansion areas

Public Survey

NOVEMBER 18, 2020 - JANUARY 22, 2021

An online survey was launched on the City of Vaughan website for citizens to share their thoughts and experiences within the VMC and provide ideas about the area's future, including travel patterns to and from the VMC and uses for the places and spaces within the downtown core.

Over 350 community members shared feedback through this survey. Participants indicated they interact with the VMC in multiple ways:

- 21% live in the VMC, while 60% live elsewhere in Vaughan and 19% live outside of Vaughan
- 19% ride public transit in or through the VMC
- 19% shop, hang out, or visit family/friends in the VMC
- 12% work in or near the VMC, 5% own a business in or near the VMC, and 2% go to school in or near the VMC

Survey respondents said the **top 3 issues** to building a successful downtown core are:

1. developing **more parks and open spaces** (selected by 54%);
2. improving **community services and facilities** (selected by 41%); and,
3. ensuring **sufficient parking** (selected by 41%).

Thinking about what makes the VMC a **desirable** place to live, most survey respondents said:

1. **proximity to public transit** (selected by 87%); and,
2. **proximity to major highways** (selected by 75%).

The community is **concerned about traffic congestion** (selected by 64% of survey respondents) and **not enough parks and open spaces** in the VMC (selected by 46%) affecting the desirability of living in the VMC.

The aggregate survey results are attached in an Appendix.

"Create more retail space and entertainment in walking distance"

"Ensure the flow of traffic moves easily and quickly"

"A Culture/ Performing Arts venue is much needed in Vaughan"

"Add more community services to fit all ages"

"Less high-rise construction and more family-friendly spaces"

Survey participants shared challenges and opportunities for the VMC. A high-level summary of responses is provided, followed by a selection of direct quotes.

Entertainment and events

The VMC needs activities and public art that will attract residents and visitors. Community members feel a culture/music/performing arts venue is much needed in Vaughan.

Affordability

Numerous survey participants believe that housing in the VMC is expensive and a barrier to the creation of a complete community. The availability and cost of parking in the VMC was also voiced repeatedly, particularly for visitors to existing residential buildings.

Built form character and design

Buildings in the VMC should be unique and have character. Members of the public would like to see less high-rise construction. Human-scaled architecture with a variety of size, colour, and materials can minimize uniformity and make the area vibrant.

Traffic flow

Many respondents expressed concern about road congestion in the VMC and stressed that traffic flow be improved to move vehicles more quickly and easily. It was suggested that traffic lights be synchronized, traffic calming strategies be re-evaluated, and alternatives be explored for re-directing high truck traffic on Highway 7.

Community spaces

The VMC needs to be “more than a bedroom/investment area.” It should be a safe place for all ages and abilities and contain community services such as clinics, daycares, post offices, and schools. Respondents would like to see retail and dining options as well as outdoor spaces to socialize.

Safe active transportation facilities

Although some do not support cycling infrastructure, respondents stated that bike lanes and walking paths must be safely separated from motorists. Some respondents said that more secure lock-up options and weather-protected parking/storage are needed to support cycling. A fine-grained street pattern will promote active transportation.

Transit integration and frequency

People are open to taking transit more often if frequency of service was increased and fares were integrated. Direct bus routes from surrounding suburbs and amenities were suggested.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES THE VMC AN UNDESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE?

- “There seems to be a **lack of variety in architecture**, there is too much bland glass condos that look all the same, do something different for Vaughan, don’t copy Toronto’s glass trend and incorporate colour.”
- “The **public transit options** from the surrounding areas (especially Maple, Patterson) are exceptionally poor in the direction of VMC.”
- “**Tall building jungle** - huge wind tunnels.”
- “**Housing prices** too high.”
- “You need a car to move around in Vaughan. **Nothing is walking distance.**”
- “**Lack of separated sidewalks and cycle tracks**” . . .
“**Hard to access nearby amenities by bike** due to lack of safe lock-up options and areas.”
- “**Too industrial** with lot of trucks 24/7.”
- “**Parking too expensive.**”
- “**Lack of food variety.**”

THE VMC HAS EVOLVED QUITE A BIT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, RETAIL, AND PUBLIC SPACES. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUES TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF BUILDING VAUGHAN'S DOWNTOWN?

- "The roads are already crowded with cars and trucks. **Focus on the smooth safe flow of traffic.**"
- **"All towers look the same."**
- **"More entertainment and fun things to do** please, more events that attract people to live here (ferris wheel in city center for example)."
- "Create more **retail space, dining and entertainment that is in walking distance** from all these condos being built. Right now you have to drive to everything."
- **"Arts & Culture** is very important to a thriving community. Culture is the reason we visit cities and want to live in cities. Please invest in the arts because events are what makes cities more liveable and gives cities a soul and identity."
- "Ensure public transit options offer **direct routes from the surrounding suburbs.**"
- "Add more **community services** in the VMC like hospital, clinic, postal services, daycares etc.. to fit in all ages"
- "PLEASE ensure **parking spaces** are sufficient. Many people want to live here because they have family who live in Vaughan, who all have cars. If you're visiting VMC from the NORTH, you need to DRIVE down and park somewhere!"
- "Find alternatives for **very high truck traffic** on Hwy 7."

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR CLARIFICATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

- "The larger issue is **connectivity**. I live not far from the VMC but there are very limited or dangerous ways for me to get to the VMC that isn't in a car or public transit. It would be great if there were dedicated right-of-way (whether that's on-road or off-road) active transportation options that connect the rest of the city to the VMC. If this is supposed to be a downtown for all, **I'd like to be able to get downtown in another way than car or public transit.**"
- "One reason people don't like using buses, especially outside of TTC bus network, is the **low frequency of service**. After the pandemic, if I were getting drinks with colleagues after work around Vaughan, I absolutely would like to use buses both to get to work and come back from drinking if I didn't have to wait 30 minutes for the bus."
- "We need **places to socialize**, and more coffee shops, bakeries and smaller restaurants with outdoor social spaces where people can walk from condos like Expo City as it's still a bit far removed on foot from the main VMC. A way to connect the two with **more walking paths, eateries and open spaces/benches** would be great."
- "For current residents who live just outside the VMC area the level of **roadway congestion** is already at unbearable levels."
- "Very pleased with current development. **We are moving in the right direction.**"
- "Pedestrian and bike lanes are completely exposed to the elements with no option to seek shelter in a storm" ... "More space for pedestrians and people riding bikes in the boulevard **separated from motorists.**"
- **"Traffic lights** need to be **synchronized** well."

Public Open House

FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 25, 2021

A virtual Public Open House was launched on the City of Vaughan's online engagement platform (haveyoursay.v Vaughan.ca) to seek input from citizens and stakeholders about the issues, strengths, and opportunities in the VMC. A **series of three short videos** were posted to share more about the project and its purpose, process, timeline, and context and together received nearly **300 views**.

Community members were encouraged to use the digital engagement tools provided to share ideas, join the discussion, ask questions, and subscribe for project updates. The following questions were asked:

- How would you like to describe your downtown in the next 10-20 years? What do you think is missing from the VMC vision and principles?
- What features and/or amenities would make the VMC a great downtown?
- What do you like about the VMC today? Which amenities do you enjoy?
- What are the VMC's challenges? What ideas do you have for improving them?

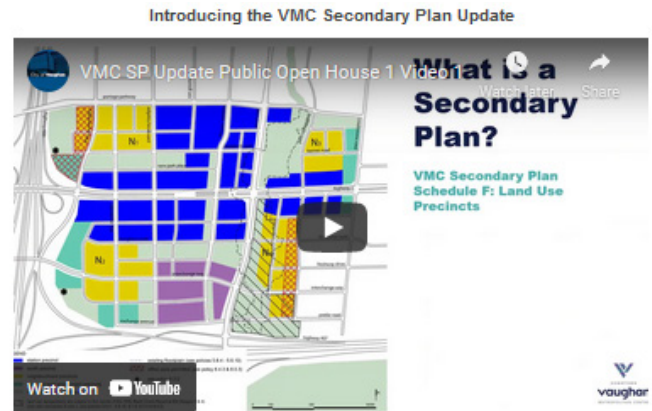
Over 350 members of the public explored the engagement page and 53 people contributed ideas and suggestions through the engagement tools. A high-level summary of responses is provided, followed by a selection of direct quotes.

Housing variety

The VMC needs housing options that are accessible to multiple demographics. Rental properties and below-market affordable housing will balance existing residential options to ensure a diversity of residents and families call the area home.

Local retail and dining

There should be dining options throughout the VMC and at-grade, small-scale retail on downtown streets. The VMC should be a place for locally-owned small businesses.



Educational videos about the VMC Secondary Plan Update are available on the project page at haveyoursay.v Vaughan.ca and on the City of Vaughan's YouTube channel

Hub for arts, culture, and entertainment

The VMC's identity should be rooted in arts, culture, and creativity. Downtown Vaughan can be an entertainment hotspot with festivals, food trucks, music venues, and outdoor events. Employment in the VMC can also focus on creative industries including digital media, visual arts, fashion, and music.

Built form variety and design

Vaughan's downtown should have a variety of built form types. Community members would like to see more than just high- and low-rise buildings, and believe colourful, attractive architecture and design should push the boundaries and be held to the highest standards.

A connected transportation network

The VMC should have a fine-grain street network that promotes walkability and lessens dependency on cars. Dedicated YRT bus lines, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian-friendly streets will create a multi-modal downtown. There are also opportunities for transit connections to Thornhill Woods, York University, and Kleinburg. Improvements can be made to pickup/dropoff at the VMC Subway Station.

Public spaces for building community

The VMC should be a safe, clean, vibrant place to interact with others in parks and open spaces. There should be diverse facilities and amenities to promote recreation such as an outdoor ice rink or cricket pitch. Markets, fairs, festivals, and arts and culture venues are important ways to foster community in Vaughan.

"Pedestrian-oriented streets with rapid BRTs & bike lanes are the way to go"

"Arts/culture/entertainment is vital to creating an attractive place to live & work"

"I hope the VMC has ample greenspace to allow for a better connection with nature"

"Rental properties are necessary in the VMC"

"We need more opportunities and spaces to get to know our neighbours"

"Redefine the suburban community into something urban"

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO DESCRIBE YOUR DOWNTOWN IN THE NEXT 10-20 YEARS?

- “Ensure that developers who want to over-build residential units don’t trump the **need for balance** among all components.”
- “Vaughan is an entertainment desert — **Arts/culture/entertainment is vital** to creating an attractive place to live and work.”
- “Students nearby want a closer **place to have fun** and unwind. Not everybody needs to go Downtown Toronto to have fun/experience anything cool. Please ensure **retail is unique and exciting** and be ensure to **invest in culture/arts**: festivals, food trucks, free outdoor/indoor events, music venues.”
- “Beautifully designed spaces/Creative community. Please stop building the same kind of repetitive condo that are seeing downtown. Ensure **designs reflect diversity, are colourful and pluralistic**.”
- “As the GTA will continue to grow, make sure Vaughan has an identity of being **creative and supportive of arts/culture . . . Rental options** that are **priced below market** and deeply affordable will bring a new kind of young community who are highly entrepreneurial and will want to flourish their trade/craft. **Culture and the arts have a way of really building the identity and collective narrative of a city**. Once the artists come, more people will be attracted to this **diversified, fun and entrepreneurial city**.”
- “Fairly **dense town centre**, good **transport links** from the surrounding local area (many more public transport options). **Plenty of green space** and thoughtful & functional **street furniture**.”
- “**Juxtaposition of high/low rise buildings needs to end**, retail+ other spaces need to increase. Overdevelopment of residential units should not occur.”
- “Please do not name the large park ‘Central Park’. This is corny and has already been done in New York (it feels like a copycat name and unoriginal).”

WHAT FEATURES AND/OR AMENITIES WOULD MAKE THE VMC A GREAT DOWNTOWN?

- “Local non-corporate store: We can go anywhere to a Loblaws, but what about a cheap vegetable or fruit market like they have in Little Portugal, Korea Town or Chinatown? It gives a more authentic downtown life feeling. Not sure how to make that happen but if you create **small enough retail spaces** this opportunity can happen with how dense VMC will become.”
- “Improve the **subway pickup and dropoff**: A formal pickup and dropoff area needs to be added to VMC with better traffic flow and proper waiting spots similar to the pickup area for Hwy 407 station. The current situation on New Park Place is a safety hazard!”
- “Make it **walkable!** Having things within walking distance, pedestrian-friendly, and **less dependent on cars!**”
- “Better **sport facilities**: Every park in Vaughan has the same mix of sport fields - soccer and basketball with occasional wastefully-large and unused baseball fields. Let’s finally get a cricket pitch and hopefully a centrepiece **outdoor rink** a la Nathan Phillips Square.”

WHAT ARE THE VMC’S CHALLENGES? WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVING THEM?

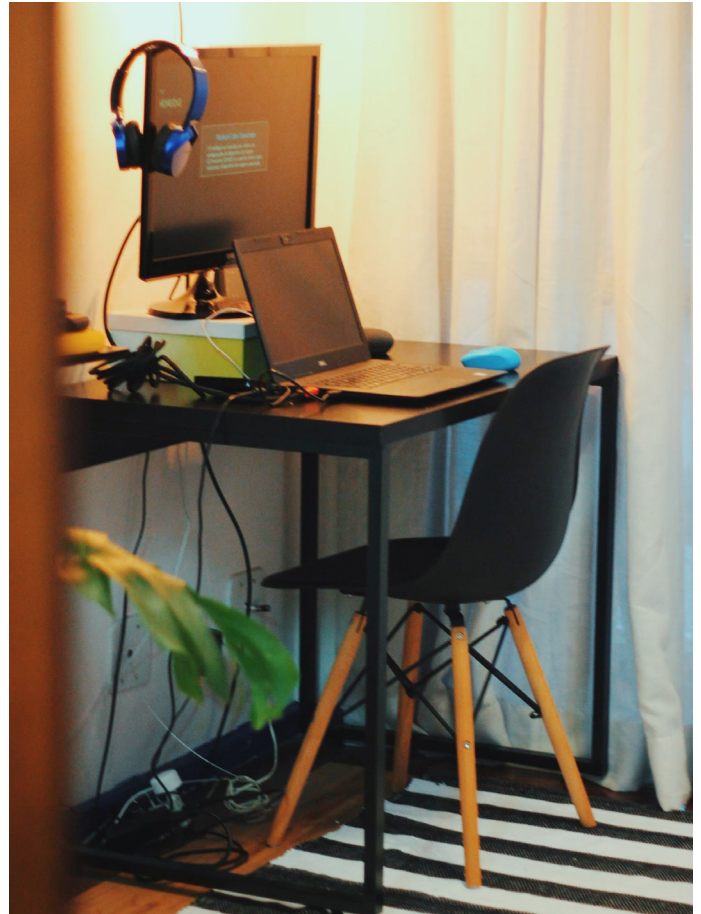
- “**Culture/arts defines a city and defines a complete community**. If Vaughan doesn’t have places to experience/enjoy or to have fun at, it will remain a sterile and suburban place to live. Vaughan needs to establish its own culture and identity and **create a unique experience in Canada/the GTA** to set it apart.”
- “See how Vaughan can attract jobs and **not just be a ‘commuter suburb’**. **Car dependence** is not the right way to look, because when the density of Vaughan’s downtown will keep expanding over the decades new forms of transportation or mobility might take shape. **Be innovative with greenspace and streets**. **Public transit is vital** and attracts residents.”

Next Steps

Public and stakeholder feedback is vital to the success of the VMC Secondary Plan Update. The project team will seek input from citizens and stakeholders throughout the multi-year timeline to ensure work is **continuously informed** by the important perspectives of all community members.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **online tools** are being used to carry out activities remotely. In-person activities (adopting physical distancing measures) will resume when it is safe to do so, based on the guidance of public health authorities.

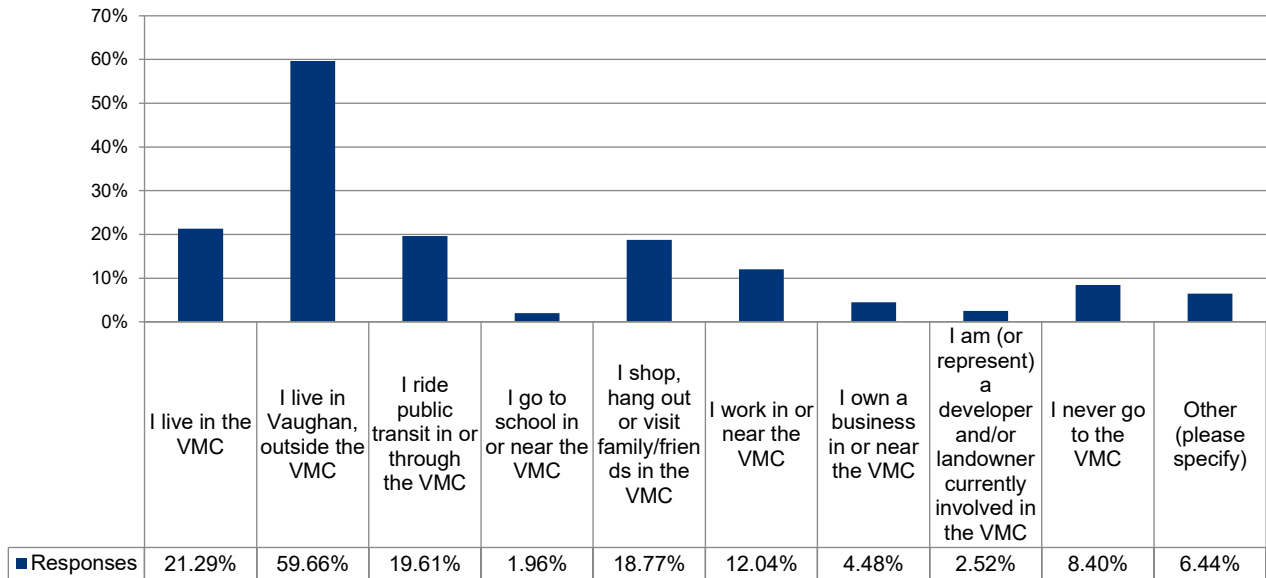
Phase 2 is the next stage of the project and will **explore different ideas for the future of the VMC**, including mixes and locations of uses, densities, and built form in the context of population and employment growth, parks and open spaces, transportation, and municipal servicing. In addition, a strategy will be prepared for provision of community services and facilities. Engagement with key stakeholders, landowners, and the public will share technical analysis, receive critiques, gather opinions and preferences on the options, and capture interests that may have previously been missed. **Stay tuned!**



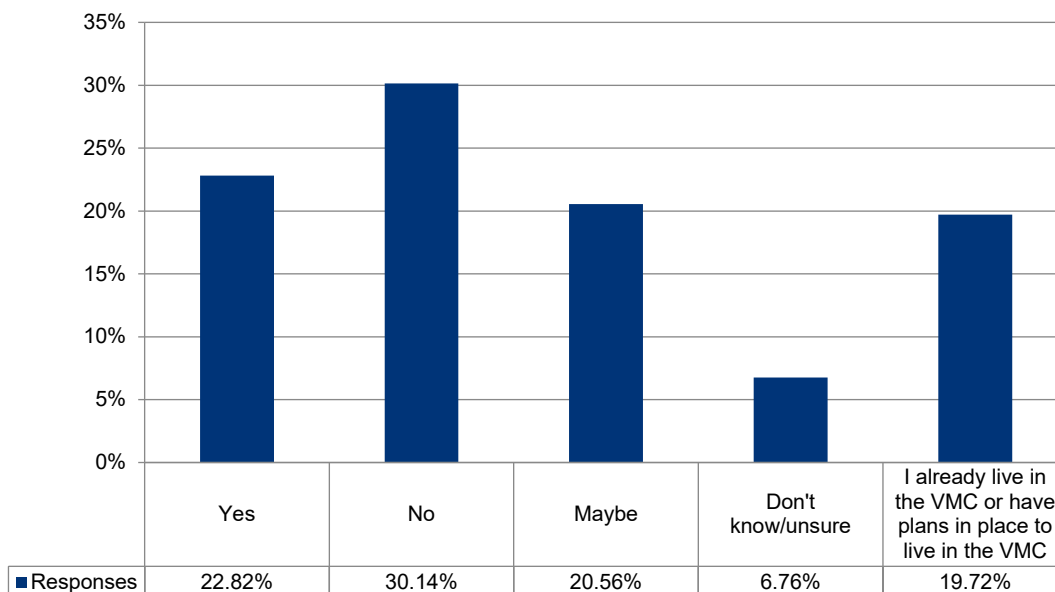
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Update

Online Survey Results

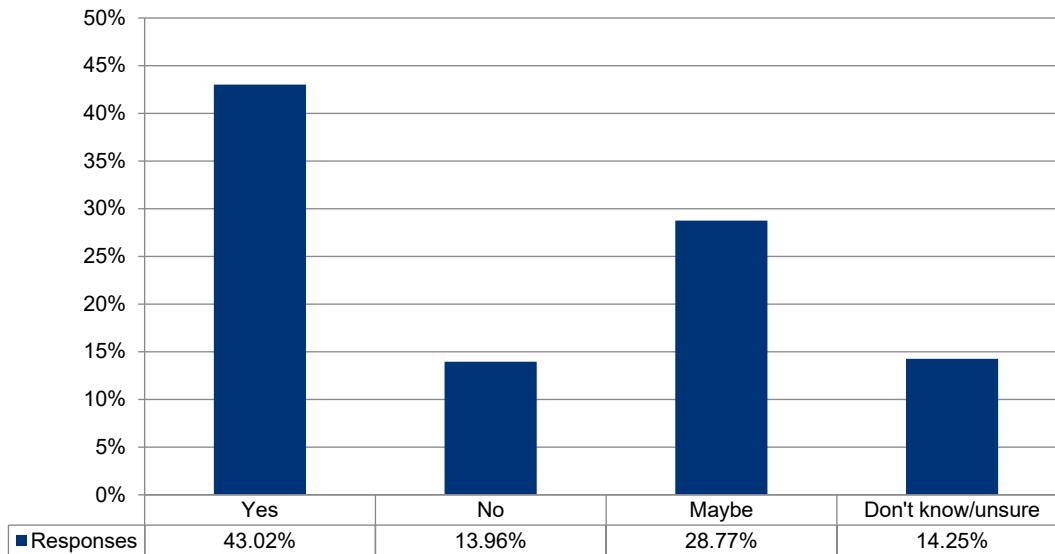
What brings you to Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)? For geographical context, a map of the VMC has been provided below. Please select all that apply.



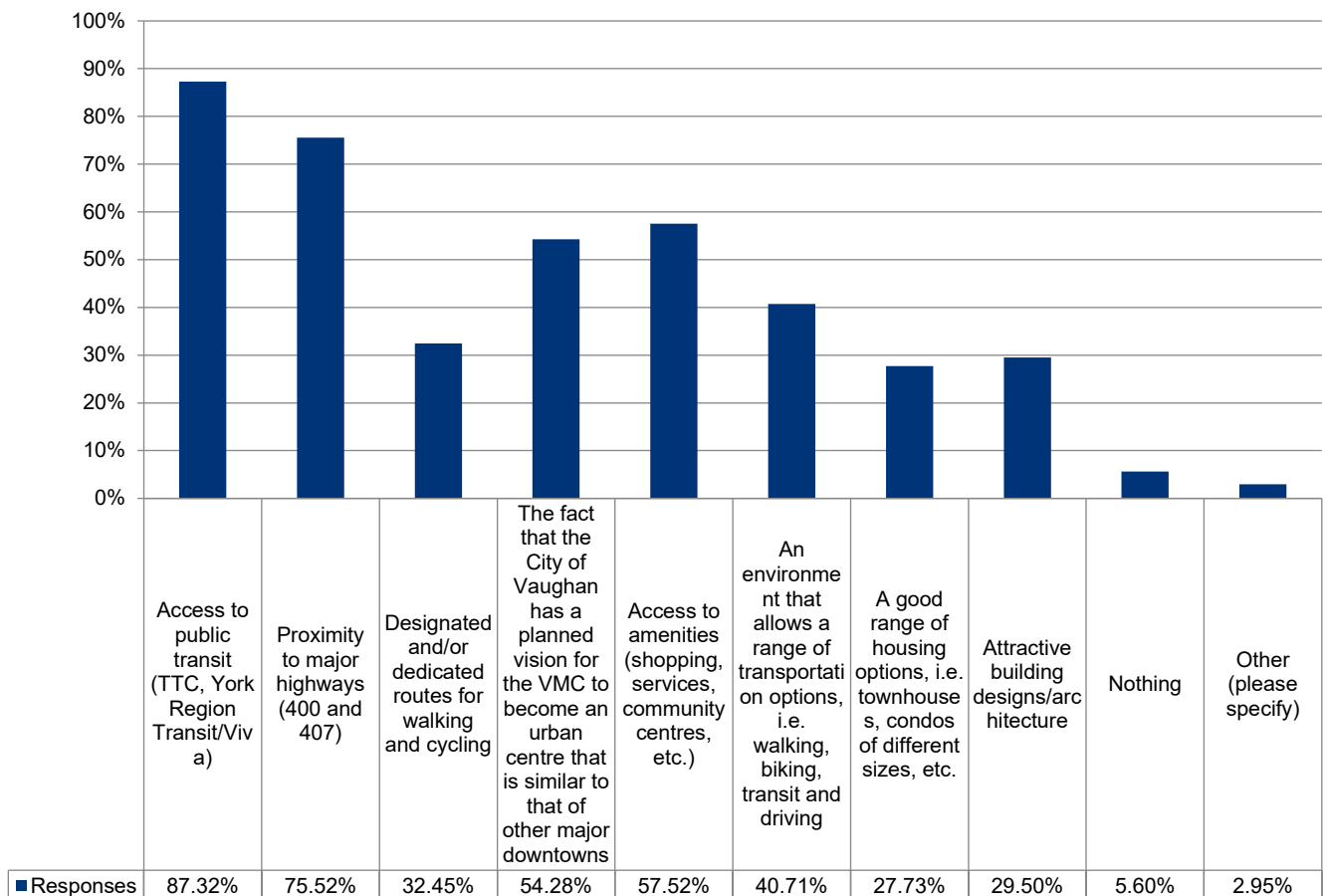
Would you ever consider living in the VMC?



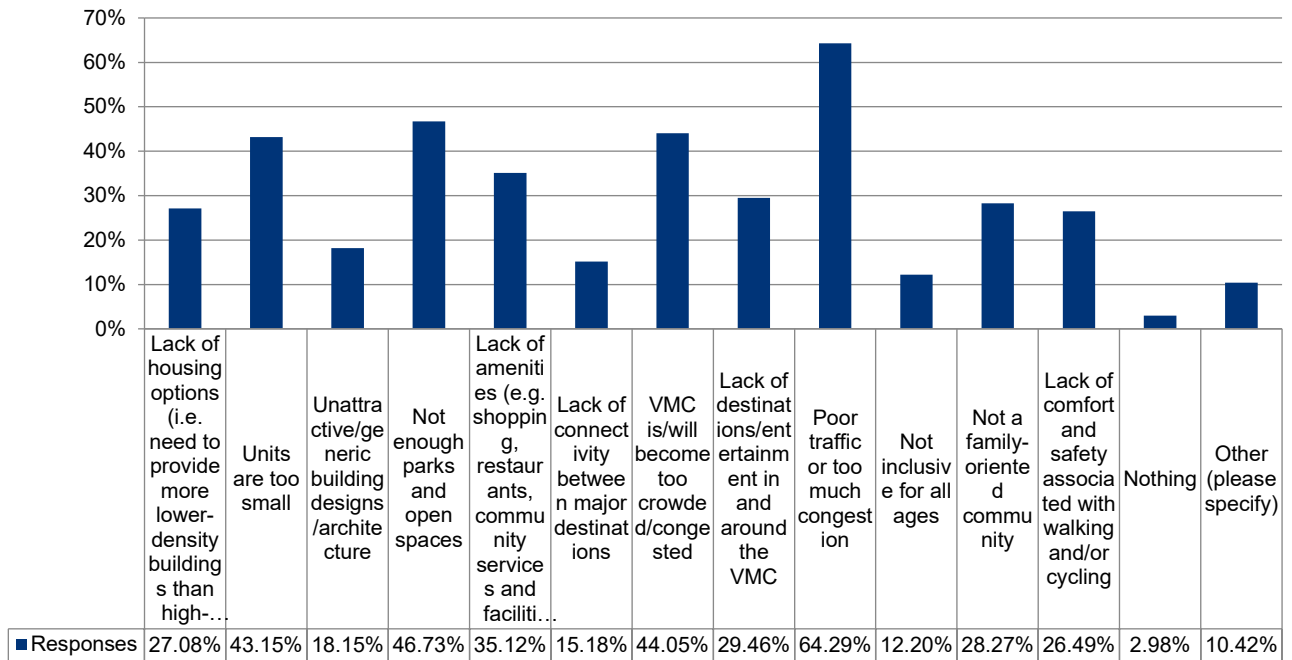
Would you recommend the VMC as a place of residence to a family member or friend?



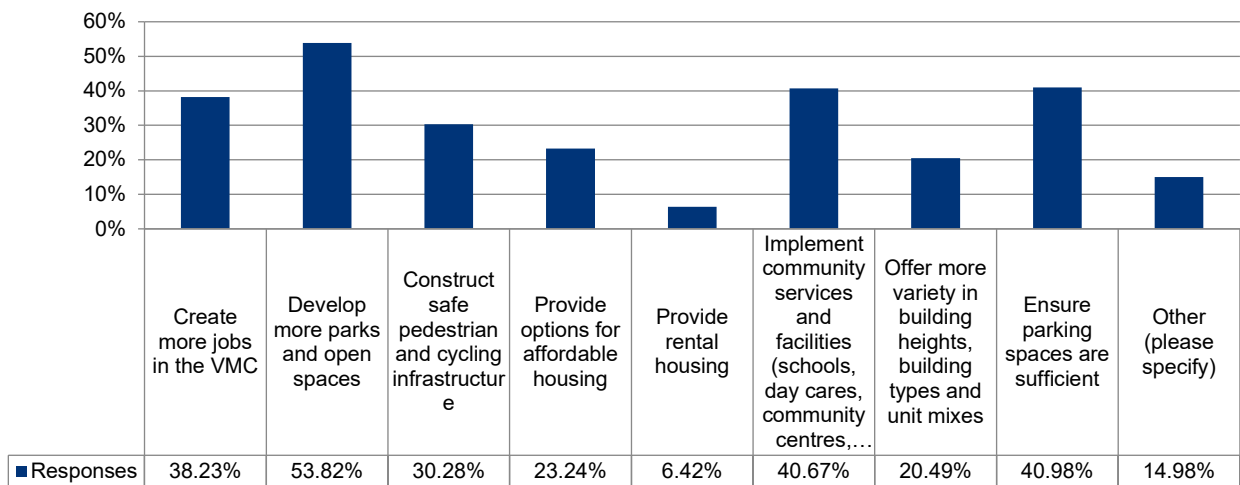
What do you think makes the VMC a desirable place to live? Please select all that apply.



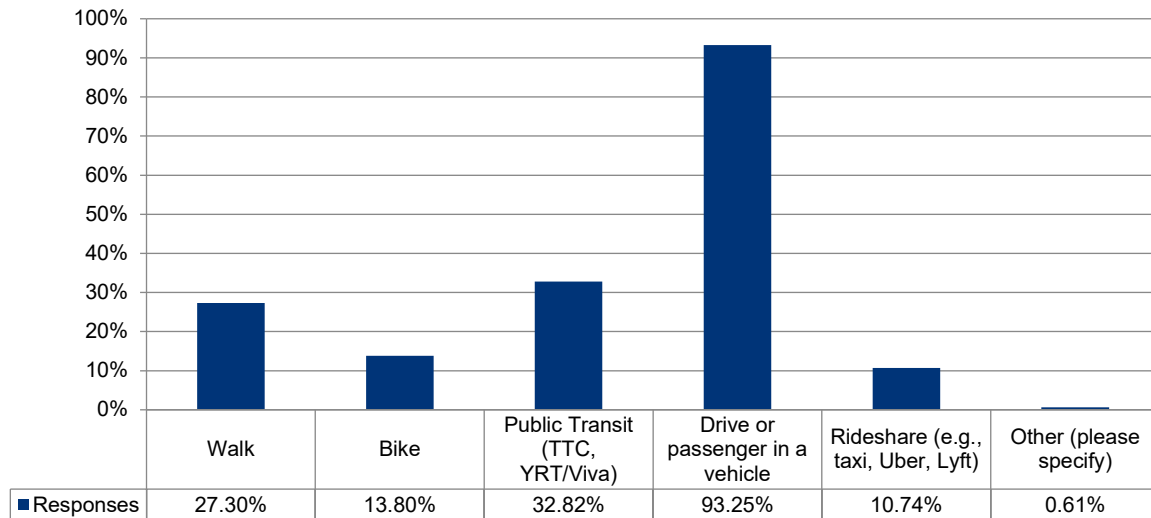
**What do you think makes the VMC an undesirable place to live?
Please select all that apply.**



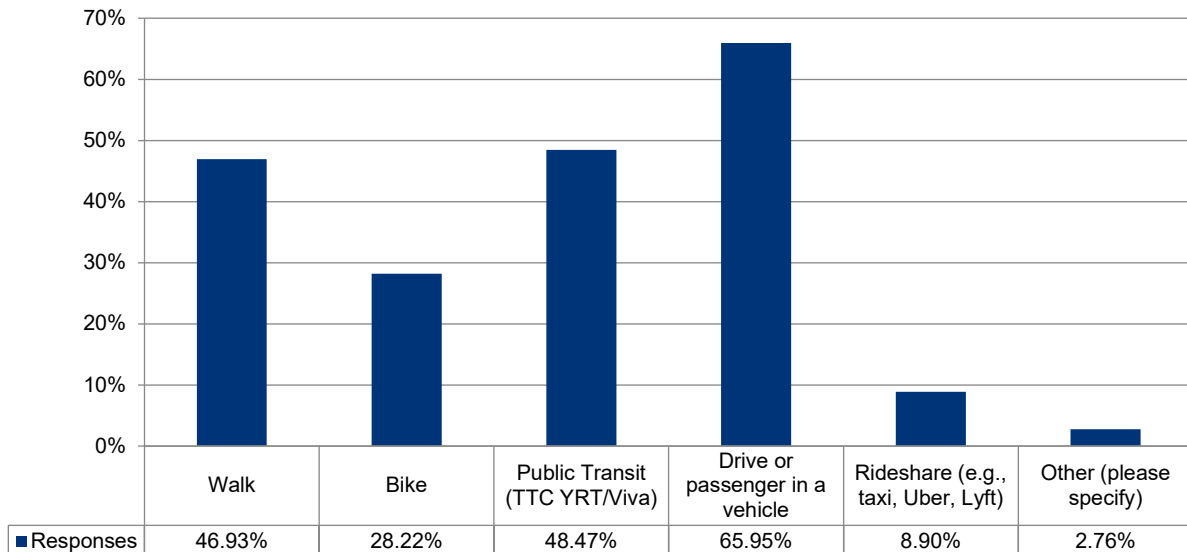
The VMC has evolved quite a bit in the last few years with the construction of several residential buildings, office buildings, retail and public spaces. What do you think are the most critical issues to ensure the success of building Vaughan's downtown?



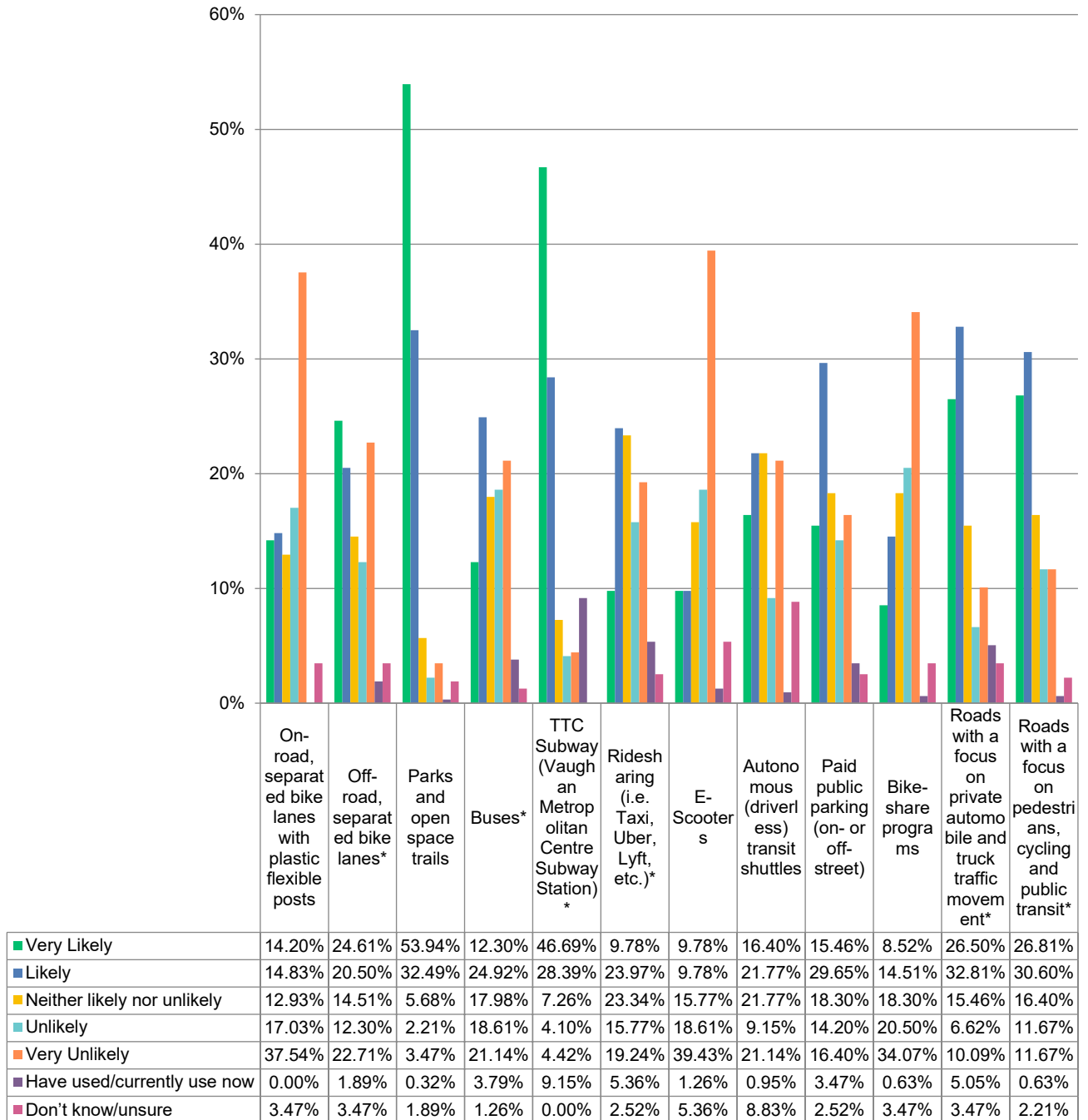
Currently, when you're generally travelling to a given destination, what are the primary modes of transportation that you use? Please select all the apply.



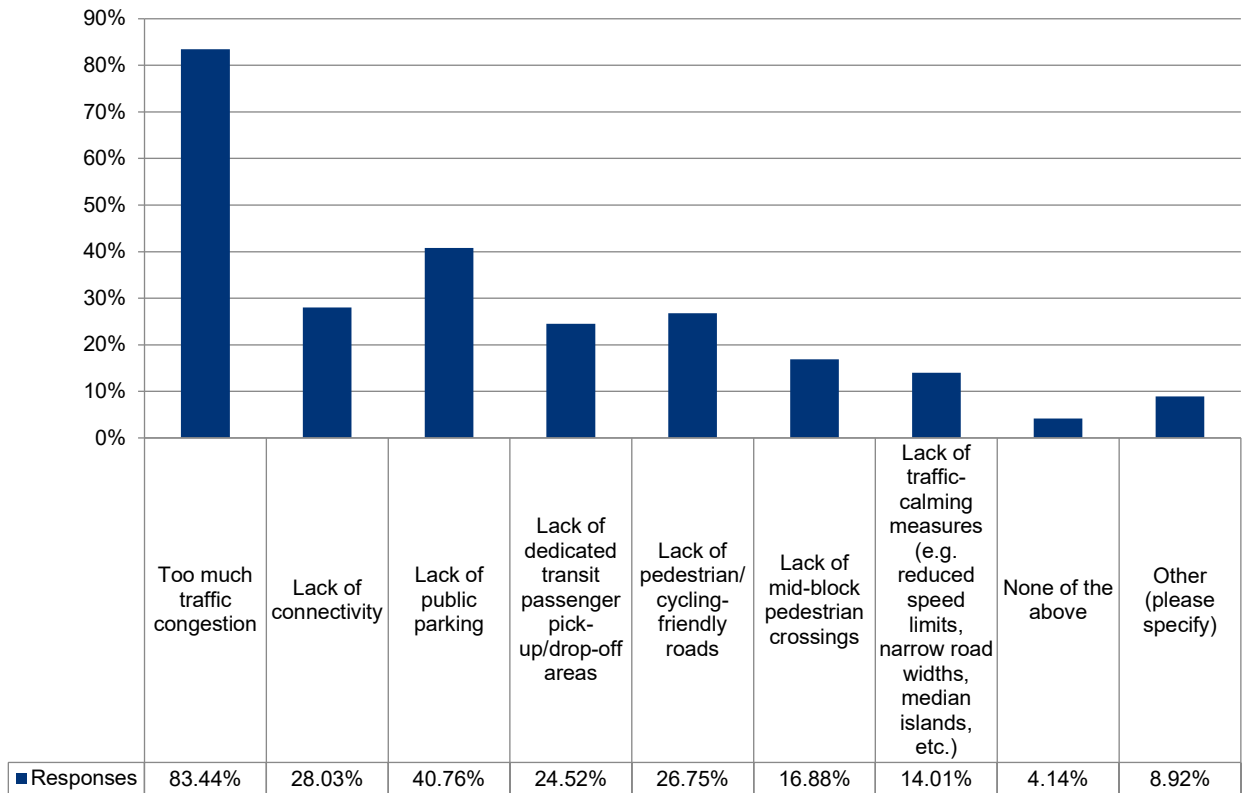
In the future, if you were to travel in, around or through the VMC, how would you prefer to do so? Please select all that apply.



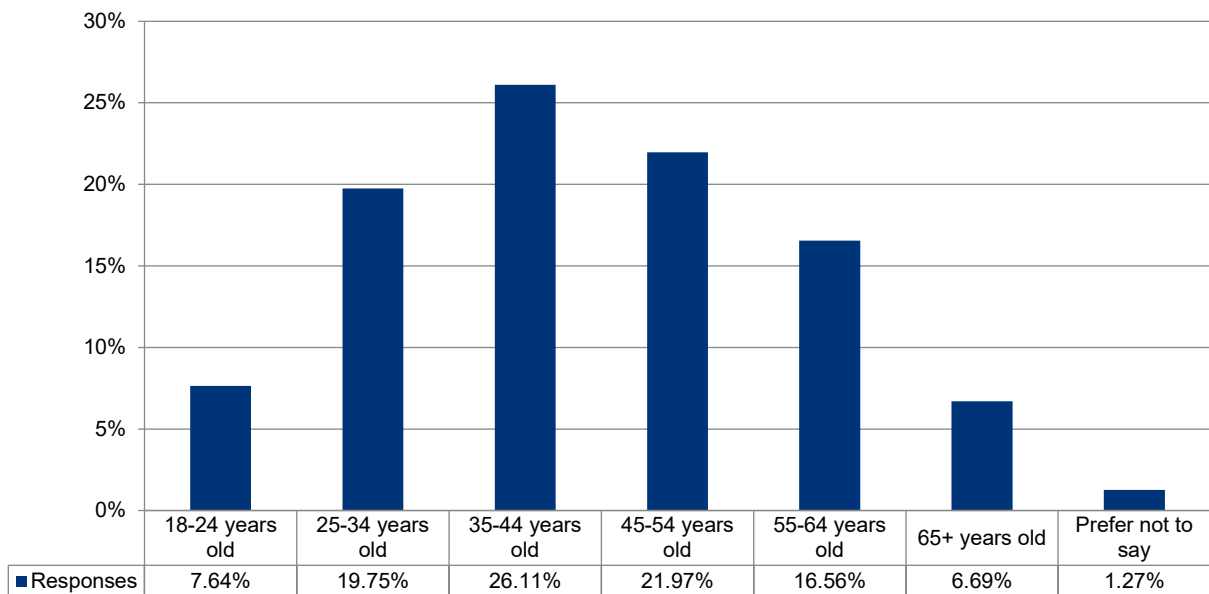
The following list of transportation options and amenities either already exist or are up for consideration to be implemented in the VMC. For each item, please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to use the option, or whether you have or currently use



Please identify the transportation challenges you may face, if any, getting to, around and/or through the VMC. Please select all that apply.



What is your age?



VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 8, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC PARKS AND WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN UPDATE –
REFINED SCENARIO

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

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 VMC PWMP has developed a refined scenario for the parks and open space network in the VMC that includes intensifying parkland within the downtown, capitalizing on parkland opportunities outside of the VMC boundary, and providing significant parkland in potential boundary expansion study areas
- The master plan will create a compact, balanced, and meaningful parks and open space network reflective of the urban context within the VMC boundary, with access to larger sporting facilities, trails, and green space nearby
- The study has developed a circulation network that provides Vaughan residents with multiple ways to travel around and through the VMC and connect with the broader community, particularly into trails and green space

Report Highlights (continued)

- Urban park facilities, including dog parks and playgrounds, are featured in the master plan, which reflects the unique needs and demographics of a dense urban population.
- The signage and wayfinding design process continues and will be reported upon at a future VMC Sub-committee meeting.
- The study has used virtual focus groups for direct engagement with the public and the City's Have Your Say platform for broader engagement, which is ongoing.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

The VMC PWMP was initiated in May 2020 with the successful proponent, Janet Rosenberg & Studio. A draft Assessment Report, with background research and an evaluation of the parks and open space in the VMC and environs, was presented to the VMC Sub-committee in November 2020.

Building on the findings of the Assessment Report and Phase 1 public engagement process, the VMC PWMP presented parks and open space scenarios to the VMC Sub-committee in March 2021, based on draft design principles and a facility fit study. Park facility requirements were based on projected populations and demographics, and scenarios were studied that looked at parkland opportunities both within and outside the existing VMC boundary.

The developed scenarios included 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 Parkway, effectively enlarging Edgeley Pond and Park, and potentially other sites
- Expanding east to create new parkland between Maplecrete Road and Creditstone Road

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 refining the master plan preferred scenarios, the consultant began the signage and wayfinding design process. The study has defined an area encompassing the Mobility Hub, part of Edgeley Pond and Park and associated 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 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 Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan Update March 2021](#)

[VMC Studies Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

Analysis and Options

There are opportunities to add active parkland and improve the public realm both within and adjacent to the VMC. Since March 2021, the VMC PWMP team has worked on refining the preferred scenario for the parks and open space network in the VMC. This scenario incorporates aspects of the previously reported options, including intensifying parkland within the VMC boundary, expanding north and south, and providing significant parkland in potential boundary expansion study areas.

The consultant has refined the master plan with respect to the distribution of urban park facilities and circulation networks. The study has layered various circulation networks over the parks and open space to analyze the connections and address gaps. Building on previous VMC studies, they have further developed a “loop” concept to include an inner “Urban Loop” and an outer “Open Space Loop” providing Vaughan residents with multiple ways to travel around and through the VMC and connect with the broader community, particularly into trails and green space to the south.

Park facilities, including well used urban facilities like dog parks and playgrounds, reflect the unique needs and demographics of a dense urban population. Parks and open space are programmed according to a hierarchy that recognizes the frequency and importance of use to ensure that facilities are appropriately located.

The master plan will create a compact, balanced, and meaningful parks and open space network within the VMC boundary with access to larger sporting facilities, trails, and green space nearby, while providing the City with options for service level delivery, and ultimately create a diverse, multi-functional, and seamlessly interconnected parks and open space network.

The study team continues to communicate with the Ministry of Transportation about the area west of the 407 subway station that the MTO has reserved for the 407 Transitway and its maintenance operations, including the timing of the next phases of the BRT project.

The study team also continues to communicate with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority about the North Lands of Black Creek Pioneer Village, including the availability of the lands, opportunities for programming and activation, and trails or other circulation routes that can safely and efficiently connect the lands to the VMC.

City Staff continues to coordinate the planning and design of the North and South Urban Parks with each landowner respectively. The first block of North Urban Park, also known conceptually as Central Park, was presented to the Vaughan Design Review Panel in March. The design of Central Park, Block 1, with any revisions resulting from the panel's comments, will be incorporated into the VMC PWMP. The design of South Urban Park continues to evolve through a workshop process with landowner, consultants, Staff, and PWMP study team.

The signage and wayfinding design process is considering issues, strategy, and design approach. Further definition of messaging, locations, and typologies is underway in schematic design and will be reported upon at a future VMC Sub-committee.

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 parks master plan is targeted for completion in Q4 2021 – Q1 2022, with prototype signage design and installation continuing to Q2 2022.

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. Some of the key results from the survey included:

- 75% of survey respondents said parks and open spaces were most important when considering where to live
- 76% of respondents said running/walking was the most popular recreational activity in their household
- Almost a quarter of respondents go to parks to walk their dogs and want off-leash dog areas
- 21% of respondents want community gardens
- 55% of respondents are willing to drive or take transit for at least 15 minutes to use a large sports field

Phase two of the consultation plan commenced in May 2021 through virtual focus groups with members of the public. These focus groups were recorded, and the presentation has been posted on Have Your Say for an ongoing, broader engagement with the public over an extended period. Significant work was done to clarify the master plan for presentation to the public. The landscape architect and engagement consultant worked together with Staff to create an engaging presentation to educate, inform, and generate valuable feedback. 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.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report. An Order of Magnitude cost estimate that captures the capital cost for developing the VMC Parks will be developed through Q2 – Q3 of 2021. This information will be used to reconcile the expected implementation capital cost and available Park DC's and identify any existing funding gaps.

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 has developed a refined 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, public agencies, residents, landowners, and other stakeholders to deliver a complete community.

For more information, please contact Amy Roots, Acting Director, VMC Program, ext. 8035.

Attachments

N/A

Prepared by

Cory Gray, Project Manager, Parks Development, VMC, Ext. 8579

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, Urban Design, VMC, Ext. 8266

Gerardo Paez Alonso, Manager, Parks & Strategic Initiatives, VMC, Ext. 8195

Amy Roots, Acting Director, VMC Program, Ext. 8035

Approved by



Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management

Reviewed by



Jim Harnum, City Manager

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 8, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: **BLACK CREEK RENEWAL AND EDGELEY POND AND PARK
PROJECT UPDATE**

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park projects in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC).

Report Highlights

- City staff continue to advance the Edgeley Pond and Park project as well as the improvements to the Black Creek channel corridor between Highway 7 and 407.
- A Technical Advisor was retained in December 2020 to undertake the preliminary design for the Black Creek Channel.
- The detailed design for the Edgeley Pond and Park is complete and has been submitted to the permitting agencies for approval.
- York Region has agreed to advance the improvements to the existing culvert under Highway 7.
- A Design-Build delivery model will be utilized to combine the three projects into a single assignment and aggressively advance the construction.

Recommendation

1. That the Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park Project Update report be received for information.

Background

As development activities continue in the VMC, staff remain focused in advancing critical infrastructure improvements to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging downtown. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are being planned for the Black Creek channel between Highway 7 and Highway 407, the construction of the Edgeley Pond and Park, as well as the replacement of the culvert under Highway 7 (at Jane Street).

Through these projects, staff continue to support the City's commitment to mitigate flooding, enhance stormwater management as well as create parks and open spaces within the VMC.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Implementation and Construction Update December 2019](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2020](#)

Analysis and Options

The Request For Proposal (RFP) to retain a Technical Advisor was awarded in December 2020, and design activities have commenced.

The Black Creek corridor between Highway 7 and Highway 407 provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. Following the approval of the Black Creek Renewal (BCR) Class Environmental Assessment in 2019, the budget to support initiation of the design was advanced.

The RFP to retain a Technical Advisor (TA) to assist in the preparation of the Owner's Statement of Requirements was awarded in December 2020. The TA will also provide technical guidance, subject matter expertise, oversight, and support during subsequent project phases. Field investigations have commenced to support the preliminary design.

The Edgeley Pond and Park detailed design is complete and will be incorporated into the Black Creek Renewal project.

At the November 2019 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) project. Since that time, a third-party peer review was finalized, and the conclusions and recommendations have been incorporated into the final design. This included additional site investigations and dam analysis, required to support the necessary agency permit applications to Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

(MNRF), Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

The EPP final design package was completed earlier this year and submitted to the permitting agencies for their review. It is anticipated that approvals will be obtained by Q1-2022.

The timing of the EPP permit approvals will coincide with the other activities being undertaken for the Black Creek channel improvements. As a result, to provide seamless delivery, the Edgeley Pond and Park construction will be incorporated into the Black Creek Renewal project. Construction is scheduled to commence in Q2-2023, as part of a Design-Build assignment.

City staff are also reviewing opportunities to include the EPP pedestrian bridge as part of the Design-Build assignment.

The Region of York and the City of Vaughan are partnering to advance the improvements of the culvert under Highway 7 in conjunction with the Black Creek Renewal project.

The 2012 Black Creek Stormwater Optimization study identified the need for improvements to the existing culvert under Highway 7 (at Jane Street) to mitigate flooding in this area. As this culvert is owned by York Region, they would ultimately be responsible for any improvements.

Following recent discussions, York Region has agreed to advance the culvert improvement works. Advancing the Highway 7 culvert improvements will mitigate flooding concerns in the area; maintain passenger and emergency vehicular access through Jane Street and Highway 7 during major storm events; protect critical infrastructure and facilitate the desired redevelopment and intensification in the downtown.

The Highway 7 culvert improvements, Edgeley Pond and Park along with the Black Creek Channel renewal will all be combined into a single project assignment.

A Design-Build delivery model is being utilized to expedite the rehabilitation of the critical infrastructure in the VMC.

A review of various project delivery models was initiated with a goal of aggressively advancing the design elements that would also provide opportunity to accelerate construction activities. Upon completion of the review, it was concluded that there are substantial benefits in utilizing a Design-Build (DB) project delivery model, in comparison to the more typical Design-Bid-Build model used on many municipal linear infrastructure projects.

The Design-Build project delivery model enables the City to quickly expedite project delivery and realize several benefits that include:

- 1) Land acquisition activities can be carried out simultaneously with detailed design
- 2) Construction can be initiated in phases to facilitate existing development activities, in parallel with the detailed design being undertaken
- 3) Risk transfer to mitigate potential constructability claims to the DB proponent for managing the detailed design and construction project teams

There are interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park, the Highway 7 culvert crossing, and the Black Creek Renewal project. Therefore, all three project components will be combined into one larger contract to gain delivery efficiencies and mitigate construction risks.

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration continues with stakeholders which is an important factor in realizing the success of the Black Creek Renewal, Edgeley Pond and Park as well as the Highway 7 culvert replacement projects.

Conclusion

City staff remain focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements along the Black Creek channel corridor 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 the VMC.

Staff will continue to work closely with TRCA, York Region, and VMC landowners to facilitate the advancement of the projects within the Black Creek channel corridor in the downtown. These catalyst projects, together with the momentum generated by development activity, are rapidly contributing to the realization of Vaughan's downtown.

For more information, please contact: Jack Graziosi, Director of Infrastructure Development, ext. 8201.

Attachment

1. Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond & Park Project Update Presentation, Infrastructure Delivery, June 8, 2021.

Prepared by

Peter Turezki, Project Manager, Infrastructure Delivery, ext. 8470.

Mohan Toor, Manager, Design and Construction (Growth), ext. 8144.

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering (VMC), ext. 8433.

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager,
Infrastructure Development

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Harnum', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Harnum, City Manager

Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond & Park

June 8, 2021



Design Vision

The Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond & Park will act as catalysts for the VMC by supporting its dynamic and fast-paced transformation through innovative ecologically-sensitive stormwater management design, creation of unique spaces, and the seamless integration of parkland amenities where VMC residents and visitors can interact, learn, play, and grow.



Design Principles

The Black Creek Design is based on the following guiding principles:

1. Re-align and Reconstruct the Black Creek Corridor
2. Minimize Flooding Impacts to Adjacent Properties
3. Create an Iconic VMC Park
4. Implement a Public Realm
5. Establish Habitat and Enhance Ecology
6. Create New Connections and Opportunities
7. Celebrate Stormwater
8. Educate and Inform

Components

1. Edgeley Pond & Park
2. Highway 7 Culvert Improvements
3. Black Creek Renewal

Edgeley Pond & Park



Looking North from future plaza north of Hwy. 7
(Post Development)



Black Creek Renewal





Project Delivery Model

The Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond & Park project will leverage the Design-Build project delivery model. Key benefits to expedite project timelines include:

1. Land Acquisition Activities in Advance of Detailed Design Completion
2. Construction Commencement in Advance of Detailed Design Completion
3. Risk Transfer to Mitigate Potential Constructability Claims to the Design-Build Contractor





Project Engagement

1. Project Management
2. Corporate Communications
3. Stakeholder Meetings
4. Public Information Centres
5. Design Workshops
6. VMC Sub-Committee/Council

Project Progress

- Edgeley Pond & Park Design Completed and Circulated for Approval Agencies Review
- Black Creek Renewal Technical Advisory Consultant Retained and Commenced Design Activities
- City of Vaughan Partnering with The Region of York to Advance the Highway 7 Culvert Improvements



Targeted Milestones

Technical
Investigation
Completion

Summer 2021

30%
Technical Design
Completion

Winter 2022

Land
Acquisition
Commencement

Spring 2022

Design-Build
Contractor
Award

Fall 2022

Construction
Commencement

Spring 2023

Thank You.

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 8, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC MARKETING UPDATE 2021

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on VMC marketing and business development activities delivered since the May 2020 VMC Subcommittee meeting.

Report Highlights

- With pandemic restrictions ongoing, Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) continues to deliver a VMC marketing program that targets business and real estate professionals with the goal of supporting the landowners' efforts to secure large anchor tenants to catalyze the development of new office buildings.
- Since we are still unable to connect with the target audience in-person, we have invested more in advertising and paid editorials than previous years. However, virtual events continue to be an important tactic for connecting with the target audience, as well as content marketing, and arts and cultural programming.
- The outcomes of the marketing program suggest that the future of Downtown Vaughan remains bright.

Recommendation

1. That Economic and Cultural Development staff continue to provide ongoing updates on the marketing, business development and cultural activities in the VMC.

Background

Since the May 2020 VMC Subcommittee meeting, Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) has been building on and delivering its marketing and business development program for the VMC.

ECD's role in VMC business development continues to be branding and awareness-building among top-level corporate executives, corporate real estate executives, commercial realtors and brokers, and site selection professionals. This approach supports the landowners' efforts to secure large anchor tenants to catalyze the development of new office buildings.

Citizens continue to be engaged through activations and City communications channels.

With pandemic restrictions ongoing, we continue to promote where possible and assess the impact of COVID-19 on the office real estate market. Programs and tactics have been adjusted based on our findings and in alignment with the City's Covid-19 response.

Previous Reports/Authority

May 2020: [VMC Marketing Update](#).

June 2019: [Vaughan Metropolitan Centre \(VMC\) Marketing Update](#).

March 2019: [VMC Marketing Update](#).

Analysis and Options

The following marketing and business development tactics are intended to drive awareness of the VMC as an attractive major commercial office and retail location choice in the Greater Toronto Area marketplace. We are targeting GTA companies with office needs that are expanding as our primary target market. The VMC is well-positioned to attract major office users looking to consolidate or expand their presence within the GTA (as was the case for our current anchor tenants, KPMG and PwC). Where funds and opportunities allow, we also promote the VMC to other domestic and international markets.

Advertising and paid editorials

Since we are still unable to connect with the target audience in-person, we have invested more in advertising and paid editorials than previous years:

- National Post and InnovatingCanada.ca Advertorial –PwC Canada and Mayor Bevilacqua contributed quotes to an advertorial that highlighted how suburban communities, especially transit-oriented nodes like the VMC, are well-positioned

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to keep and attract office tenants in the shift to hybrid workplace models. The half-page advertorial was placed in the print edition of the National Post (March 18, 2021) and online at InnovatingCanada.ca.

- RENC Ads and sponsored content – The Real Estate News Exchange (RENC) is Canada's premier online news service for the real estate industry. We purchased website and newsletter ads and a sponsored article that will be published in June.
- CoreNet Canadian Chapter Newsletter Ads – This newsletter is delivered weekly to corporate real estate executives who manage the real estate assets of large corporations. We purchased a 'Product Feature', which has an image and a text block where we can expand on the VMC's value proposition.
- Urban Toronto sponsored article – Urban Toronto is Toronto's premier website focused on condos, architecture, urban development and real estate. We purchased and informed a custom article on the evolving planning principles guiding the surging growth of the VMC.

Events

Events continue to be an important tactic for connecting with the target audience. All were delivered virtually this year:

- ULI Vaughan Rising Webinar (October 2020) – ULI Toronto is a non-profit real estate and land development organization. They invited us to develop a webinar about the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre's ongoing momentum despite the pandemic. It featured Mayor Bevilacqua as the keynote speaker and a panel discussion that included the Mayor, Christina Bruce from the VMC Program and Mary-Frances Turney from York Region Rapid Transit Corporation.
- NAIOP REX Awards (October 2020) – The REX Awards are the most prestigious standards of achievement within the commercial real estate development industry. As an event sponsor, we received brand visibility before, during and after the event; and the opportunity to present the Office Development award.
- Urban Economy Forum (October 2020) -- The Urban Economy Forum brings together a global network of city leaders, urban development organizations, financial institutes, and academics to learn and exchange best practices on urban economy and finance solutions for city management. The VMC was featured as a case study during the 'Urban Transformation: Shifting Paradigms in Urbanism' session. Christina Bruce delivered a presentation and Michelle Samson co-moderated the session.
- CoreNet REMmy Awards (November 2020) - The REMmy Awards recognize leadership excellence, innovation, sustainable design, and social responsibility in corporate real estate and workplace management. As an event sponsor, we

Item 4

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received brand visibility before and during the event and the opportunity to present the CSR Leadership Award.

- Presidents of Enterprising Organizations (PEO) Conference (November 2020) – PEO is an executive leadership organization based in Canada. For 2020, PEO expanded the guest list for their conference by partnering with two US-based executive organizations: Allied Executives and Inc. CEO Project. As an event sponsor, we received brand visibility before, during and after the event; a booth in the Platinum Partner Lounge; advertising placements in their podcasts; and exclusive sponsorship of an episode of The Way Forward Webcast.
- The Way Forward Webcast with Mitch Goldhar (February 2021) – PEO provided further value for our sponsorship money by selecting a VMC-based guest for an episode of The Way Forward Webcast: Mitchell Goldhar from SmartCentres REIT. The VMC was promoted at the beginning of the presentation, which was delivered live and posted to YouTube afterward.
- LandPRO and Post-Conference Webinar (March 2021) – LandPRO is the premier “how-to” conference for land, condo, real estate and development professionals in the Greater Toronto Area and throughout Ontario. As an event sponsor, we received brand visibility before, during and after the event; and the opportunity to contribute to a post-conference webinar. We delivered a 10 minute ‘VMC Development Update’ presentation.

Content marketing

In addition to our advertising and event program, we also promote the VMC by developing content for City of Vaughan channels and supporting the creation of content for external channels.

- VMC microsite – In December 2020 we re-launched the VMC microsite. Changes included a redesign of all graphic elements to align with the new visual identity launched in May 2020; redesign of the Studies and Plans and Media Centre pages; improvements to the site’s navigation, functionality and search engine optimization; and a refresh of the content.
- 360 Degree Virtual Tour – Also in December 2020, we re-launched this tour with the new visual identity and a complete update of the opening scene in Transit Square. It now shows the many developments that have been completed or advanced since the scene was originally filmed in 2018.
- Full Build Out Rendering – To further our ability to convey the vision of the VMC, we commissioned a rendering showing an aerial view of the VMC at full build out. Previously we relied on developer renderings that only showed parts of the VMC or individual developments.
- VMC Flyer – Updated the design and content of this two-page flyer.

- New photography – We have continued to expand and update the photography collection, a key marketing resource that supports all of our marketing and communications efforts.
- Up & Coming Neighbourhoods: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre – We partnered with Toronto Global to support a VMC profile video by realtor Raymond Wong.
- Celebrate Vaughan Magazine – Worked with Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC) to develop an article on the VMC's continued growth and investment.
- The VMC episodes of the Vaughan Rising Podcast continue to be relevant and a valuable resource for those interested in deep learning on the VMC.
- Corporate and Strategic Communications regularly produces communications products about the VMC, including media products, social media posts, City Update eNewsletters and Council eNewsletters. They also seek earned media through media pitches.

Arts and cultural programming

ECD continues to host and support a variety of activations in the VMC to engage office workers, commuters, and residents and build a sense of place in the VMC.

The following events are planned for 2021, but may be altered, postponed or cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Italian Contemporary Film Festival (ICFF) Architettura and Design (June/July 2021) – Screenings and reception for international and local industrial designers, architects and developers.
- Music in the Square (July-August 2021) – Music performances in Transit Square through the summer with each performance representing a different cultural genre: Chinese Pop, Classical music, Gypsy guitarists, Latin dance and music, Indigenous music.
- Vaughan Film Festival (September 2021) – Drive-in event showcasing local and international films.
- Next Stop Music and Food Festival (September 2021) – Two-day event featuring top headline performers, local and national breweries, and local and national chefs.
- Culture Days (September 24-October 24, 2021) – Family friendly, pet friendly, music, art activations, indigenous events scheduled throughout the month.
- Halloween Night of Lights (October 2021) – Drive-through immersive experience featuring more than 1,000,000 animated LED lights.
- Winter Wonderful (November 2021) – Ice sculptures and holiday season music.
- Holiday Night of Lights (November 2021) -- Drive-through immersive experience featuring more than 1,000,000 animated LED lights.

Outcomes

These tactics have created buzz for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, introducing Vaughan's emerging downtown to some and keeping it top-of-mind for those already familiar.

Since May 2020, they have resulted in:

- A reach of more than 1.2 million members of the business community and general public through the National Post and Innovating Canada.ca campaign.
- More than 290,000 impressions on the RENX sponsored article.
- More than 111,000 impressions on the RENX website and newsletter (Aug 2020 to March 2021).
- More than 22,000 impressions in the CoreNet Canadian Chapter Newsletter (Jan to April 2021).
- A top viewed article on Urban Toronto for November 2020 with 4,894 views, 13,938 social media impressions and 831 social media engagements.
- Exposure to 3,455 event attendees around the world.
- Positive media coverage in the Toronto Sun and Hamilton Spectator after the ULI Vaughan Rising Webinar. The success of the event inspired ULI Toronto to host similar webinars with other GTA mayors.
- Recognition of the VMC as a best practice for suburban intensification by the Urban Land Institute and United Nations.
- More than 50,000 microsite pageviews.
- 1,100 views of the new VMC 360 Degree Virtual Tour (2020).
- 3,600 views of the previous VMC 360 Degree Virtual Tour (2019).
- 1,400 views of YouTube videos by external partners.
- 1,100 podcast episode downloads.

In the same period, Corporate and Strategic Communications has issued the following communications regarding the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. Approximately:

- 14 media products (i.e. public service announcements, news releases, Mayor's statements). The media products are a combination of products where the VMC is the main topic and also where the VMC is mentioned.
- 57 social posts.
- 14 City Update eNewsletters.
- 14 media pitches.
- 14 Council eNewsletters.

Financial Impact

The business development and marketing activities highlighted in this report are funded from the Economic and Cultural Development Department's operating budget.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Successful profiling and buildout of the VMC is beneficial to our infrastructure funding and operating partners (Toronto Transit Commission, York Region, Government of Ontario, Government of Canada, Toronto Region Conservation Authority) as it drives usage of these projects and shows return on investment. The Region is regularly engaged by ECD.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has created much uncertainty for the office real estate market and for our VMC marketing program. However, our research suggested that a slowdown in office transactions would be temporary and that suburban, transit-oriented nodes would be resilient; so we changed our tactics to follow public health guidance but continued with a fulsome marketing program.

The outcomes shared above indicate that interest remains high in the VMC. VMC landowners continue to invest in new developments, further suggesting that the future of Downtown Vaughan remains bright.

For the remainder of 2021, we will be reinforcing our strongest tactics, expanding into new advertising and activation opportunities, and seeking earned media opportunities.

For more information, please contact: Raphael Costa, Director, Economic and Cultural Development.


Attachments

None

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Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Harnum", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Harnum, City Manager

Reviewed by

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Jim Harnum, City Manager