

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 20, 2022

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
UPDATE

FROM:

Haiping Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

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

Report Highlights

- Construction of several critical infrastructure projects, including roads and parks, required to support development in the emerging downtown are underway or complete.
- The VMC Centre of Community is now open.
- The development of Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance.
- Final design of the Edgeley Pond and Park is complete, and most agencies have provided approvals.
- The Black Creek Renewal preliminary design is underway.
- The On-Street Pay and Display Parking Pilot completed its first year of a two year pilot project.
- Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC.

Recommendation

1. That the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report be received for information.

Background

As construction progresses in Vaughan's downtown, the VMC team continue to focus on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging community. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are being carried out.

Construction has commenced for many of the priority infrastructure projects identified in Attachment No. 1, several of which are complete. In parallel with implementing these critical civil infrastructure works, the VMC team is focused on prioritizing the planning and design of parkland and social infrastructure to ensure that a complete community is developed in step with the growing population. The VMC Development Activity and VMC Studies Update received today outline the current situation in the downtown and provide future projections for City focus moving forward. This report will concentrate on the efforts that have been undertaken, or are underway, in each of the quadrant areas to advance the initial infrastructure required to support growth.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Development Activity Update March 2019](#)

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

[VMC NW and SW Quadrants Implementation Update June 2019](#)

[VMC Parking Conditions and Management Strategy June 2019](#)

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

[VMC Pay-and-Display On-Street Parking Pilot Project May 2020](#)

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

[Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park Project Update June 2021](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2021](#)

Analysis and Options

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

At the November 2021 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff identified critical infrastructure improvements and construction activities completed or underway in order to support redevelopment activity in the downtown.

A great deal of progress has been made through 2022 on projects captured in the VMC Implementation Plan. The following sections highlight activities that have advanced in each quadrant.

Northwest Quadrant

Road works are advancing on the widening of Portage Parkway, Buttermill Avenue extension and Bent Tree Drive

The construction of three new roads in 2019 has greatly improved access and circulation in the VMC.

Since the opening of three new roads in 2019, including Applewood Crescent from Highway 7 to Portage Parkway, Commerce Street from Highway 7 to Apple Mill Road, and Apple Mill Road from Applewood Crescent to Edgeley Boulevard, further advancements to the road network are currently underway. This includes the detailed design and utility relocation coordination work related to the widening and reconstruction of Portage Parkway between Jane Street and Applewood Crescent. The road widening works are expected to begin later this year.

Construction of the Buttermill Avenue extension are complete and the road was opened in May this year.

Construction of Bent Tree Drive, a new local road which will connect Millway Avenue to Jane Street is underway and expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

The VMC Centre of Community is now open

The iconic VMC Centre of Community is officially open to the public, including the YMCA, daycare and City of Vaughan library and community recreation space. This facility will be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for the first residents.

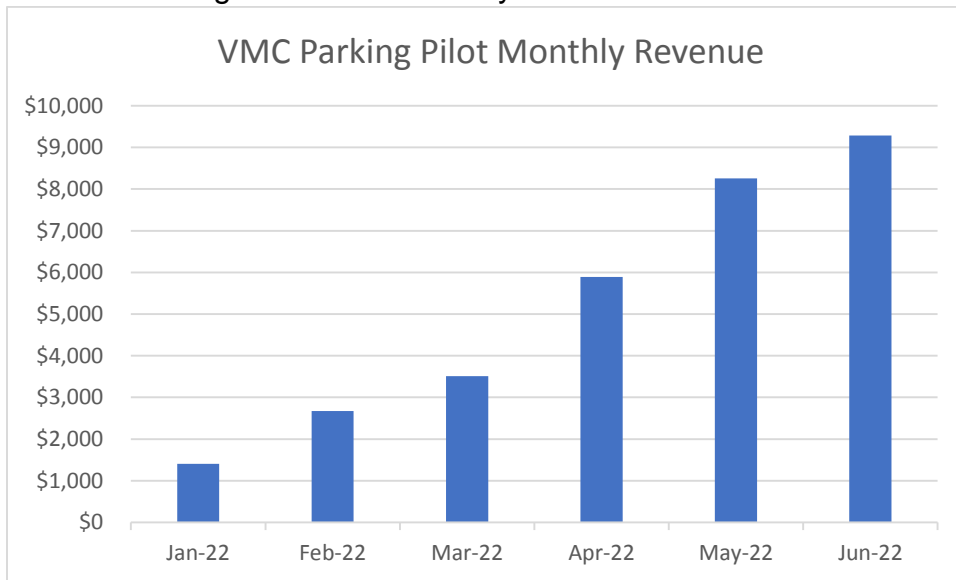
The Parking Pilot Project is nearing its first year of a two-year pilot project

In October 2021, the City launched its first paid on-street public parking in the VMC Mobility Hub area. The pilot manages current demand for short-term (3-hour maximum) on-street public parking from various road users. The pilot is managing parking demand from local residents, businesses and visitors on three downtown streets: Apple Mill Road, New Park Place and Buttermill Avenue. Special provisions are in place on for the segment of Buttermill Avenue adjacent to the Centre of Community to accommodate the needs of the YMCA day-care pick-up/drop-off activity. VMC staff worked with the Vendor to implement a solution for the YMCA day-care pick-up/drop-off whereby parents do not have to register their vehicle at parking meter, they can simply scan a QR code through a smart device at the YMCA day-care front desk or scan a QR code

on a business card. Accommodation for persons with accessibility is also provided, as preferred location accessible parking spaces are provided free of charge.

Throughout the early implementation of the pilot, sales revenue appears to be promising. In the first 6-7 months since the launch, City staff have observed a steady increase in revenue from month-to-month, as identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Parking Revenue Summary



The pilot also went through its first full winter season (2021-2022) where snow maintenance was provided in a partnership between the City and SmartCentres on public and private property adjacent to the parking meters.

A Communications Plan was developed with various stakeholders at the onset of the pilot and is currently being implemented in consultation with City's Corporate and Strategic Communication department; with both internal and external websites live to the public providing guidance to valuable information, City and Vendor contact information and answer frequently asked questions.

The parking pilot continues to be closely monitored by various stakeholders/departments such as Bylaws, Public Works, Corporate and Strategic Communications, Financial Services and Policy Planning and Special Programs.

City staff will provide further updates as the pilot completes its full two-year term.

Phase 1 of Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance

City Staff continue to coordinate the planning and design of the Urban Park with the landowner and work collaboratively towards the acquisition of the various park blocks and the implementation of the first phase. Block 1 (between Edgeley Boulevard to the west and KPMG Tower to the east) was presented to the Vaughan Design Review Panel in March 2021 and the overall park master plan has been incorporated into the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan. City Staff continue to evaluate delivery options targeting a solution that will deliver maximum benefit to the City.

The delivery of the first Urban Park block in the VMC will provide active and passive park amenities and recreation options to the growing downtown population.

Northeast Quadrant

The next phase of the hydro undergrounding along Jane Street is underway including the implementation of a multi-use pathway

The first phase of the hydro undergrounding project along the Met frontage on Jane Street is complete. This includes the future proofing and installation of the necessary utility ducts.

The next phase of the hydro undergrounding along the Edgeley Pond and Park frontage on Jane to Highway 7 design works and approvals are in place. VMC staff are now coordinating the construction works with Alectra and other telecommunications for the implementation and conversion of the overhead transmission lines along the entire stretch of Jane Street from Portage Parkway to Highway 7. These works are expected to begin later this year.

Jane Street active transportation facilities are currently being designed and are anticipated to be delivered through either; the City's capital projects or development applications in the near-term future (1-5 year horizon). Once completed, this state-of-the-art active transportation facilities will provide a safe, convenient, and direct connection on many destinations along this 8 KM stretch such as the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital, Canada's Wonderland, Vaughan Mills Mall, Downtown Vaughan, and its rapid transit facilities (VMC TTC Subway Station, SmartVMC Bus Terminal and Hwy 7 BRT service). The segment through the VMC will connect from Portage Parkway to Highway 7.

The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design is complete and pending agency approval

At the November 2021 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Edgeley Pond and Park project. Since then, the consulting team prepared the final design package and submitted to the permitting agencies for approval. The timing for the Edgeley Pond and Park permit approvals will coincide with the other City activities being undertaken for the Black Creek channel improvements and downstream of Highway 7. Therefore, to provide a seamless delivery, the Edgeley Pond and Park construction will be incorporated with the Highway 7 culvert improvements (in partnership with York Region) and Black Creek Renewal project. Construction of the Edgeley Pond and Park is scheduled to commence in Q2 2023, under a single Design-Build assignment with the Highway 7 culvert improvements and Black Creek Renewal.

Construction of the Expo City strata park continues

Construction is underway on Vaughan's first stratified park located within the Expo City development lands. Building upon the park vision and program set through the Edgeley Pond and Park public consultation, this parkland is a crucial component of the overall Edgeley Pond and Park open space system. The strata park, also known as Edgeley Park, will provide active recreation facilities including a natural playground, an ice-skating loop, a splash pad, and a pavilion with programmable community space and washrooms where private and public events can be hosted throughout the year. Currently, the pavilion building construction is at 80% completion while the park works schedule is being coordinated with other site development staging activities related to CG Tower (Expo tower 5). It is expected that park facilities and landscape work will be finished in Q4 2022.

Southeast Quadrant

Preliminary design work for the Black Creek Renewal is underway

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the southeast quadrant and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development.

In December 2020, the Technical Advisory Services assignment to undertake the preliminary design for the Black Creek Channel was awarded and the design activities are underway. At the June 2021 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Black Creek Renewal design.

Given the interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park, the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and the Black Creek Renewal project, all three project components will be combined into one larger design-build delivery model to gain delivery efficiencies and mitigate construction risks of the critical infrastructure in the VMC. To allow for a seamless delivery, the current Technical Advisor assignment will be expanded to incorporate the administration and design for the additional scope. In addition, staff is continuing to assess feasible options to mitigate risks from the proposed works to the existing business along the corridor until such time the lands are developed.

The Black Creek Financial Strategy updates are underway

The Black Creek Financial Strategy acts as the funding model and Area Specific Development Charges (ASDC) Background Study for the Edgeley Pond and Black Creek infrastructure works in the VMC. The Financial Strategy supports three benefitting land areas that would be subject to ASDCs specific to this infrastructure along with components to be funded from the City-Wide Development Charge (DC) rates.

The Black Creek Financial Strategy was originally passed with new By-laws enacted in July 2016. As the DC Act required an update to the DC Study every five years, staff undertook an update beginning in 2020. Staff sought Council approval in June 2021 but Council requested that staff maintain existing rates in order to allow additional consultation over the summer. A new by-law was passed in June maintaining existing rate with the understanding that rates more in line with the Background Study would be brought forward in the fall for Council's consideration. A subsequent public statutory meeting was held in September 2021 where Council requested a further deferral to December 2021. Staff continue to engage with the development industry and Council and were able to receive approval of new rates in December 2021.

Southwest Quadrant

Construction of new local roads are underway

Development activity in the southwest quadrant continues to gain momentum and construction is well underway on the Mobilio development. The construction of a new collector road, Millway Avenue is complete; the servicing of Autumn Harvest Road and Mable Smith Way are in progress, and the roads are expected to be completed early next year, including a pedestrian mews.

Block 3N, known as Festival, will include delivery of a new local road named Celebration Avenue, and improvements to the existing Commerce Street and widening of Interchange Way. Also, within the block interior, the pedestrian mews will connect into an animated privately owned public space. These two interconnected open spaces will be activated by retail, commercial uses and programming. Construction servicing is underway and the roads are expected to be completed in 2022.

Block 3S will include delivery of the Commerce Street realignment based on the VMC Secondary Plan objective to create a fine-grain grid network of streets. The existing Commerce Street must be realigned and extended south to create a north-south minor collector road (Commerce Street) and traversing east to extend the minor collector road (Doughton Road) to Interchange Way.

The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is complete

City Staff and the landowner have finalized the detailed design of the Millway Avenue linear park south of Interchange Way in the southeast quadrant and the consultant is finalizing the construction documents for tender in Q4 2022. Phase 1 of this park will have facilities suitable for the new Mobilio community, including a senior playground, active play equipment, shade structure and social gathering spaces flanked by perennial planting beds and a flexible lawn. Park construction is forecast to commence as early as 2022.

Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC

Public art continues to leverage the creative potential inherent in an emerging VMC, helping to cultivate the downtown's authentic metropolitan identity as a distinctive cultural destination. Notable advancements in several Public Art projects are bolstering creative placemaking at the VMC.

In VMC North, design development is nearing completion for Cortel Group's prominent EXPO City CG Tower Public Art installation overlooking Edgeley Pond and Park, near the northeastern corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street. The monumental, three-dimensional multi-media sculptural piece, *Edgeley Pond Fathom* (working title) by artist team Alan Tregebov and Joanne Heinen, slated for installation next summer, alludes to the previous industrial life of the area through a transformation-themed storyline paying homage to the landscape, history of the land and the story of Black Creek. Interpretively aligned with Edgeley Pond(s) design to store heavy rainfall or snow melt in the landscape, the artwork will respond in a similar manner to the change of climate, measuring and transmitting the response of the floodplain to an indicator visible to viewers along Highway 7.

In VMC South, QuadReal's Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program launched this summer with the inaugural curated exhibition, *Transitions*, honouring the journey of Assembly Park and its current passage into the creation of a future community. Located west of 80 Interchange Way, this Public Art Outdoor Gallery featuring the work of a roster of resident and GTA artists, is anchored by the strategic configuration of 13 shipping containers – displaying a series of multi-disciplinary and site-specific artworks on their structural facades that blur the boundaries of time, referencing the past and future while celebrating the present – complemented by plantings and garden beds to define the spatial footprint. Coupled with a robust activation plan, the Gallery space provides meaningful opportunities to advance placemaking aspirations for the VMC by creatively animating the existing urban design context through the narrative of transformation and community connection.

Public Art planning is advancing for several new installations slated soon for the VMC. The Public Art Plan for SmartCentres' VMC East Block North major gateway feature sited at the corner of Jane Street and Portage Parkway is in the design concept phase. A substantial on-site contribution of \$2,185,000 was secured through the Metrus (Terra) Property Inc. development for a future gateway Public Art installation at Highway 7 and Jane Street. The City-led *ARTonBOXES* program will launch through its *Group of Seven REMIXED* pilot phase next spring, debuting original art on designated traffic signal boxes in high-profile, publicly accessible locations across all five wards of the City – including the VMC.

Financial Impact

There are no economic 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.

Conclusion

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

The VMC team is focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the transitioning downtown. Implementation of key

infrastructure projects will continue to leverage investments in transit and support early placemaking strategies for the downtown.

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

Attachment

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects 2022

Prepared by

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

Cory Gray, Manager, Parks & Strategic Initiatives (VMC), ext. 8579.

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning and Special Programs, ext. 8231.

Approved by



Haiqing Xu,
Deputy City Manager
Planning and Growth Management

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager