

# VMC Sub-committee Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, September 20, 2022

**WARD:** 4

**TITLE:** VMC STUDIES UPDATE - 2022

**FROM:**

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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## **Purpose**

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

## **Report Highlights**

- Efforts are being undertaken to maintain a healthy balance between current population density trends and available hard and soft infrastructure, including community services and parks and open spaces.
- The VMC Secondary Plan Update is initiating Phase III will develop a preferred land use framework that best achieves Council's vision of a world class downtown and complete community.
- VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan has developed and refined a master plan and cost estimate and is now working on an implementation strategy while also preparing to install prototype signage as part of its wayfinding pilot project, with a final report expected in Q2 2023.
- The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update is advancing with a final draft expected by Q4 2022, and the final report completed in conjunction with the city-wide IUWP study.
- VMC Transportation Master Plan Update is advancing with results and recommendations planned for Q4 2023.

### **Report Highlights (Continued)**

- The various VMC plans and studies inform each other and are being closely coordinated to ensure their collective contribution to the Term of Council Strategic Priority of City Building to “Develop the VMC as a complete community, with emphasis on cultural development”.
- Staff continue to ensure every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input.

### **Recommendation**

1. That the VMC Studies Update – 2022 report be received for information.

### **Background**

As outlined in the VMC Development Activity Update Report being received today, realization of developments that are occupied, under construction, and approved currently represents more than 39,640 residents in over 20,000 units moving into the VMC. This represents 167% of the residential unit and 159% of the population target established for the 2031 planning horizon. These numbers have been achieved far earlier than expected. Given that this growth trend is expected to continue, staff have reassessed and refocused the priorities of the VMC.

To meet the hard and soft infrastructure needs of this growing community, staff are undertaking an update of the VMC Secondary Plan, VMC Transportation Master Plan, and the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report and are also undertaking the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan.

The VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report, also received today, outlines activities that have been undertaken, or are underway, to provide the infrastructure to support development and growth in the emerging downtown.

### **Previous Reports/Authority**

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

[VMC Studies Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

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

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

## **Analysis and Options**

The VMC Program comprises a multi-disciplinary, dedicated team working to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of infrastructure and services to the current and future residents, workers, and users of the VMC. The VMC Program's broad scope of work includes the coordination and delivery of the various studies identified below so that they inform each other and collectively contribute to the creation of a complete community in the VMC.

### **VMC Secondary Plan Update**

The VMC Secondary Plan (VMCSP) Update was initiated in August 2020. The successful consulting team for this study consists of Gladki Planning Associates with Ken Greenberg, DTAH, and Parcel Economics. It is being undertaken to address provincial and regional policy updates, and to respond to the rapid growth that is putting pressure on realizing Council's vision for a vibrant and balanced downtown. The VMCSP Update will result in a renewed policy framework that supports the completion of a downtown and central business district as a complete community that is well supported by municipal services and social infrastructure to 2051 and beyond.

The VMCSP Update is being undertaken in five phases and has recently concluded Phase II – *Prepare and Develop Land Use Options* which utilized the priority issues identified from Phase I – *Background and Issues* to develop preliminary land use options for consideration. Phase II included a robust and comprehensive public consultation component, which will be instrumental in informing the next phase of the project.

As Phase III – *Elaborate a Preferred Framework* is initiated, the project team will assess and balance the feedback that was received as part of the Phase II consultation and will develop a preferred land use framework that best achieves Council's vision of a world class downtown and complete community. Once the preferred approach is developed, additional consultation and stakeholder engagement will be conducted.

As part of Phase III, the project team will ensure hard infrastructure is available to deliver a renewed VMCSP vision. This work includes collaborating with the VMC's TMP team to run traffic models on the land use options; as well as working with the City's Development Engineering Department and York Region to confirm servicing capacity.

The VMCSP Update is targeted for completion in 2023 and will be brought forward as the first secondary plan under the City's new official plan.

### **VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan**

The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan (PWMP) was initiated in May 2020 with the successful proponent, Janet Rosenberg & Studio. The challenges of COVID-19

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

Growth trends in the VMC are outpacing the provision of social infrastructure, with parkland an area of particular concern. In this context, the study has identified opportunities to add active parkland and improve the public realm, both within and adjacent to the VMC.

### ***Developing a Master Plan and Implementation Strategy***

Building on the findings of the Assessment Report and public engagement process, draft design principles and facility fit study, the study has developed and refined a master plan and cost estimate and is now working on an implementation strategy.

The master plan identifies 22.0 hectares of Public Squares, Neighbourhood Parks, and Urban Parks within the VMC, and up to 54.7 hectares outside of it, some of which may be shared with other intensification areas. This parkland can be implemented over time in a measured response to development and will provide the City with options for service level delivery.

The master plan will create compact, balanced, and meaningful parks and open spaces within the VMC boundary, while recognizing a need, shared with Vaughan's other intensification areas, to access larger sporting facilities, trails, and green space outside of its boundary. It has identified the need for a robust active transportation network, in order to seamlessly connect parks and open space, within the VMC and across the City. A final report is expected in Q2 2023.

### ***Developing a Signage Pilot***

As part of the strategy to promote the implementation of an interconnected parks and open space network in the downtown, a signage and wayfinding masterplan and strategy is being developed to help define how residents, visitors, and businesses perceive the VMC and assist them in moving through it.

The consultant has developed and refined potential options for VMC signs, with significant input and evaluation by various City departments. The second part of this study involves the creation of a series of prototypes to test the design ideas on site through a pilot project. The study is working with a fabricator to ensure that these prototype signs are installed in early Q4 2022.

### **VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update**

The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report (VMC FSSR), is one of several study areas of IPCAM's Integrated Urban Water Plan (IUWP), which is led by Civica Infrastructure Inc. The IUWP is a strategic level study providing a roadmap for water, wastewater and stormwater servicing needs to meet future, planned and community growth. Public Information Centre (PIC) 1 was held in February 2021 and provided the purpose of the study, background information, servicing considerations and concepts. [PIC 2](#) was held on July 31, 2022, which provided alternative servicing options, evaluation and draft preferred alternatives and preferred recommendations for water, wastewater and stormwater.

A final draft VMC FSSR document is expected by Q4 2022, and the final report will be completed in conjunction with the city-wide IUWP study. The FSSR assesses water, wastewater, and stormwater systems performances under existing and ultimate buildout scenarios, based on updated population targets and trends, and will establish a long-term strategy to provide safe, reliable, and sustainable services to the existing and future population of the VMC. The VMC FSSR is an update of the current VMC Municipal Servicing Master Plan (2012), ensuring that servicing capacity can support the anticipated increase in height and density of future growth and intensification in the VMC.

### **VMC Transportation Master Plan Update**

The VMC Transportation Master Plan Update (VMC TMP), as well as the Millway Avenue and Interchange Way Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) studies, are being conducted concurrently with the VMC Secondary Plan Update. To date, Phase 1 (identification of problems, opportunities and confirmation of transportation needs) has been prepared for both the VMC TMP and road EAs. The studies are currently in Phase 2 where transportation solutions will be developed and assessed based on the future population and jobs projections. The VMC TMP Team is conducting the traffic modelling for land-use Options 1 and 2 developed by the VMC Secondary Plan Team.

Preliminary road alignments and cross-sections are being developed for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way in conjunction with the completion of technical environmental assessment studies such as archaeological assessment, contamination overview study, cultural heritage report, hydrogeological report, geotechnical report and traffic impact assessment. The VMC TMP will present problems and opportunities at an upcoming Public Information Centre (PIC) #1 in Q4 2022 and transportation solutions at future PIC anticipated in Q2/Q3 2023. The TMP and EA studies are expected to be concluded in conjunction with the VMC Secondary Plan Update, tentatively by Q4 2023.

As part of the VMC TMP, the Highway 400 Colossus Overpass corridor protection area is being coordinated in conjunction with the ongoing Weston 7 Secondary Plan and TMP.

### **An Innovative and Coordinated Consultation Plan is Being Developed**

Staff are ensuring every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input to the work. In addition to leveraging the VMC Landowner Working Group platform developed over many years, staff are working both internally and with external consultants to develop engagement processes that effectively reach Vaughan's residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. Current consultation methods are focusing on virtual connections and will be evaluated over time.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

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

### **Conclusion**

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

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

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

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

### **Attachments**

N/A

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