

## VMC Sub-committee Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, March 05, 2019

**WARD(S):** 4

**TITLE: VMC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND PRIORITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE**

**FROM:**

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**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

To provide an update on the status of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) priority infrastructure projects.

**Report Highlights**

- Development of the VMC gained great momentum over the last Term of Council with implementation of several catalyst capital and development projects in the Mobility Hub and Edgeley Pond and Park priority areas.
- As the next phase of development proceeds, the VMC team are focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the transitioning downtown.
- Implementation of these key infrastructure projects will continue to leverage key investments in transit and support early placemaking strategies for the downtown.
- Given the complexity of the infrastructure projects in the capital program, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works is critical to ensuring high quality implementation.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT this report BE RECEIVED.

## **Background**

During the last Term of Council, the Mobility Hub and Edgeley Pond and Park areas were identified as priority areas of focus to support development in the initial build out of the downtown and ensure a coordinated development interface was achieved.

As the next phase of development in the VMC proceeds, Staff are focused on advancing critical infrastructure projects in each of the four quadrants of the downtown to further facilitate development and improve functionality. To help execute a program of capital improvements, Staff have developed a phasing plan that highlights the planned coordination and implementation of projects to be delivered by the City and others over the next Term of Council (2018-2022), as identified in Attachment 1. These projects include:

- Constructing phase 1 of the Edgeley Pond and Park project;
- Completing the detailed design of the Black Creek Renewal project;
- Opening of the SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal;
- Completing the collector road network in the north-west quadrant;
- Completing the widening and reconstruction of Portage Parkway west of Jane Street;
- Updating the VMC servicing and transportation master plans in support of new population and employment projections;
- Completing the Block Plan and Master Servicing Plan for the south-west quadrant and then facilitate the necessary upgrades to the sanitary sewer system along Interchange Way followed by road improvements;
- Completing the VMC Public Parking Strategy; and
- Facilitating the design and development of several VMC parks initiatives.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

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

## **Analysis and Options**

***Edgeley Pond and Park design is completed and currently under review by public agencies***

Through the Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) project, the City is advancing the construction of essential storm water infrastructure to manage flooding risk and unlock development potential, while creating a signature public destination that captures the imagination of VMC residents and visitors.

At the April 10, 2018 VMC Sub-committee meeting, Staff reported that the detailed design of the EPP was progressing and the public tendering process for construction of Phase 1 was expected in 2018. Since that time, the detailed design has been completed, and the necessary Environmental Compliance Approval applications (ECA) were submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) at the end of April. The complete design package was subsequently circulated to the Region and the relevant environmental agencies for review including Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), Department of Fisheries Ontario (DFO) and Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

Through the review process, an issue was identified with the design water levels in the pond, which required additional analysis and ultimately modification to the design of the outlet structure to resolve the problem. In addition, a potential conflict was discovered between the proposed outlet structure and an existing high-pressure gas main, which required additional field investigation. These design issues took several months to address, which impacted the original project schedule.

Having now overcome these design issues, the consulting team is currently focusing on obtaining the necessary approvals and permits from MNR and DFO. TRCA staff have been proactively assisting the project team in scoping and facilitating the remaining environmental agency approvals. In addition, the TRCA permit for the works will be submitted to their Board Meeting for approval in May 2019. Staff continue to follow up with MECP on the status of ECA applications, which were submitted back in April 2018.

Staff understand that the MNR permit process may be a lengthy one, so the project team is currently bundling elements of the project that can be carried out as early works during the 2019 construction season and then prepare to tender the heavy civil works in summer 2019, subject to the status of the environmental permit approvals.

The Phase 2 works including the Jane Street streetscape works and associated hydro undergrounding will be advanced in 2020.

### ***Detailed design of the Black Creek Renewal project will proceed in 2020***

Downstream from the Edgeley Pond, the Black Creek corridor is positioned to become a meaningful green infrastructure that will mitigate flooding, unlock development potential, and generate a prominent open space amenity for the VMC community.

The VMC Black Creek Renewal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study was completed and filed for public review in September 2018. Following the public review period, two Part II Order requests were submitted to the MECP for review and consideration. A final resolution from MECP on the appeals is anticipated in March 2019. In anticipation of the Ministry approval, the VMC team has initiated the development of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the detailed design assignment which will be prepared in collaboration with other City departments and external

agencies, including the TRCA. Timing for release of the Request for Proposal for the design assignment is expected in fall 2019. Following successful award of contract, the detailed design assignment is anticipated to begin in 2020.

***A potential \$37M grant opportunity was submitted towards the Edgeley Pond and Park and Black Creek Renewal projects***

Disaster Mitigation & Adaptation Fund (DMAF) was created by the Government of Canada in response to the increasingly frequent significant weather-related disasters due to natural hazards. The VMC team applied to the DMAF initiative to be considered for funding up to \$37M for both Edgeley Pond and Park as well as the Black Creek Renewal (BCR). If successful, this funding can be used toward preliminary design work, including a functional design, utility relocation and other works necessary for the BCR. The VMC team first responded to an Expression of Interest after which the selection committee deemed the application successful to advance to the Full Application round. The application was submitted in January 2019 and a decision is anticipated this spring.

***The completion of the bus terminal is expected this year***

A key catalyst of the developing Mobility Hub is the SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal. Construction of the bus terminal has restarted, and it is now expected to open for service in Q3-2019.

***Key road linkages are being advanced in the north-west quadrant***

Construction of the Highway 400 off-ramp relocation at Highway 7 is underway and expected to be complete and operational this summer. Construction of these works will align with completion of the York Region Bus Rapidway Transit (YRBRT) Station on Highway 7 at Commerce Street.

In December 2018, SmartCentres committed to construct the extension of Applewood Crescent from Highway 7 to Portage Parkway to align opposite the new relocated Highway 400 off-ramp. In addition, SmartCentres will be advancing the construction of Commerce Street from Highway 7 to Apple Mill Road, Apple Mill Road from Edgeley Boulevard to Applewood Crescent at the same time. The construction of these collector roads will greatly improve access and circulation in the VMC and frame the future development blocks and central park.

These road works must be coordinated and completed in step with the Highway 7 Rapidway works and the relocation of the Highway 400 off-ramp, which is scheduled for completion in July/August 2019. To meet these critical timelines, Staff resources have been allocated to facilitate the delivery of these key road works in a timely manner. Staff are working closely with SmartCentres and their consulting team to expedite the review of the design submissions and facilitate the issuance of all the necessary permits, so construction can begin this spring.

Staff are also working with SmartCentres to advance the necessary pre-design work related to the widening and reconstruction of Portage Parkway between Jane Street and Applewood Crescent, including functional design, utility locates, and developing an overall project work plan with the objective of completing the road works by end of 2021/2022.

The detailed design for Portage Parkway extension east of Jane Street to the west limit of the Black Creek channel is complete and construction for the interim road is expected to begin this spring.

### ***VMC Master Servicing Plans need to be updated to reflect actual growth trends***

Based on the approved and proposed residential developments to date, more than 36,284 residents in 18,325 units are moving into the VMC, achieving 153% of residential units and 145% of population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon far earlier than expected. Given this growth trend is expected to continue, staff will need to undertake a scoped review of the VMC Secondary Plan and updating the supporting studies, including the master servicing strategy and transportation master plan. A work plan for the Secondary Plan review process will be developed over the next several months and presented to a future Sub-Committee meeting.

In the interim, the landowners in the south-west quadrant of the VMC are preparing a block plan and supporting servicing and transportation studies to coordinate the phasing of development and identify the staging and design of the necessary infrastructure improvements. The initial findings of the servicing studies identified the need to install a new sanitary sub-trunk along Interchange Way from Highway 7 to Jane Street to service the approved development. QuadReal and their consulting team are advancing the detailed design of the sewer improvements now with the objective of commencing construction this summer.

The Block Plan and related servicing studies for south-west quadrant are expected to be completed later this year. The information from these studies will inform the future updates to the VMC Servicing and Transportation Master Plans, which will be undertaken by the City in 2020.

### ***Phase 2 of the VMC Parking Strategy will be advanced through 2020***

In December 2017, Phase 1 of the VMC Parking Strategy was implemented in step with the opening of the subway. The initial strategy focused on addressing on-street parking in the mobility hub area and managing pick-up and drop-off activities adjacent to the bus terminal and subway entrances.

The strategy also included a messaging component designed to educate commuters on the importance of legal parking and stopping throughout the VMC. This education campaign was rolled out and information was available through several channels, from

websites to signage. The initial strategy also included issuing the appropriate warnings in lieu of more direct enforcement until motorists and pedestrians became familiar with the operation of the new facilities.

Over the last year since the opening of the subway, Staff have been monitoring the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the mobility hub and implemented additional measures and increased maintenance service levels to continually improve the citizen experience and better manage traffic. Despite these efforts, effectively managing pick-up and drop-off activities adjacent to the subway entrance has been challenging. This on-going challenge is partly attributed to the YRT Bus Terminal not being open and the designated passenger pick up and drop off (PPUDO) on Millway not being fully utilized by motorists. As a result, the majority of the PPUDO activity is taking place on New Park Place. When New Park Place is fully utilized or for convenience reasons, some motorists illegally stop on Millway Avenue in front of the subway entrance. To ensure public safety is not at risk, City staff have moved into the next phase of enforcement and are citing vehicles in clear violation of the parking/no stopping regulations. The use of the designated PPUDO on Millway and the overall traffic operations in the mobility hub is expected to improve once the bus terminal opens in Q3-2019 and the direct connection between the bus terminal and subway is available to transit users. In addition, staff continue to promote the use of the commuter parking lots at Pioneer Village Station (1,881 spaces) and 407 Station (583 spaces) for those transit users that wish to park and ride. Staff will continue to monitor the movement of all modes of travel in the mobility hub and adapt the strategy to most effectively manage traffic as the area develops and transitions into a downtown urban environment over the coming years.

The next phase of the VMC Parking Strategy will establish the long-term elements of the study and implementation plan. Some considerations for long term parking may include commercial parking, parking under parks, on street parking, shared public/private parking (partnership) and/or City owned parking lots. The second phase of the Parking Strategy is anticipated to be advanced through 2020.

### ***The VMC Parks and Open Space Framework is moving forward***

Staff are currently working on various initiatives to ensure that parks and open spaces are available in a timely manner to support the current trend of residential development in the VMC. These initiatives include the planning and design of various parks secured through the development application process, as well as development of the VMC Parks Master Plan and Implementation Strategy.

### ***The Expo City strata park is the first-of-its kind in the City of Vaughan***

Staff are currently working with The Cortel Group on design and implementation of the park located within the Expo City development lands, located in the north-west quadrant. The design process for this strata park was captured as part of the Edgeley

Pond and Park design assignment, which included a public engagement process through 2017. In 2018, the landowner submitted a development application for the third phase of their development, which included the park block. Staff and the landowner are working with their consultant team to finalize the detailed design, along with advancing the development and permit approval process. The park construction is planned to commence in 2020.

***Design of the first phase of the Urban Park will begin next year***

In June of 2016, SmartCentres and their landscape architect Claude Cormier presented to the VMC Sub-committee a vision for “Central Park,” which is slated to be Vaughan’s first Urban Park. Given the subway opening date, the landowner and the City decided to focus their attention on the TTC Plaza project to ensure that it was done in time for the subway opening in December of 2017.

Through 2017 and 2018 SmartCentres and their partner CentreCourt Developments brought forward three development applications that will transform the Mobility Hub into a consolidated close-knit community. To make sure that a diverse parks and open space system is available to this emerging community, SmartCentres and Staff will start the detailed design process of the first phase of the Urban Park through 2020, with plans to start construction in 2021.

***The Millway Avenue Linear Park is proposed to be extended***

In 2018 QuadReal brought forward two development applications in the south-west quadrant that will include the conveyance of a linear park planned along the east side of Millway Avenue between Interchange Way and Exchange Avenue. The application for Block 2 included a proposed amendment to the VMC Secondary Plan to extend the Millway Avenue Linear Park south of the urban park to Exchange Avenue. The City and the landowner are currently working collaboratively through the development application process to advance the design of the portion of the linear park south of Interchange Way, which will be composed of temporary facilities until the neighboring lands to the east are ready to be developed. The park construction is forecasted to commence in 2021 or 2022.

***The VMC Parks Master Plan and Implementation Strategy will help crystalize an exciting and inspiring vision for the downtown’s parkland network***

Staff are currently in the process of recruiting a VMC Parks Development Project Manager to help move this study forward and advance the design of the parks initiatives previously mentioned. The VMC Parks Master Plan and Implementation Strategy will review residential development trends, real estate opportunities and constraints, and provide recommendations to achieve parkland goals, provision targets and implementation guidelines.

The VMC Parks Master Plan and Implementation Strategy will be informed by the visioning exercises currently underway with SmartCentres and QuadReal for their respective quadrants. It is expected that the VMC Parks Master Plan will start later this year.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

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

Building a downtown is an ambitious goal. The Region of York's Official Plan places tremendous importance on the Centres and Corridors within its local municipalities as the cornerstone to achieving provincial population and employment growth targets. Collaboration with broader regional stakeholders continues to be an important factor in ensuring the success of the VMC.

Regional staff has participated and will continue to be involved throughout the duration of these initiatives to ensure successful implementation and coordination of these catalytic projects.

### **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.

**For more information**, please contact: Jennifer Cappola Logullo, VMC Manager, Development Engineering ext. 8433 and Gerardo Paez Alonso, VMC Manager, Parks Development, ext. 8195.

### **Attachments**

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects

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