

VMC Sub-Committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 05, 2019

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

FROM:

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ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the status of development activity in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre ('VMC').

Report Highlights

- The VMC Secondary Plan establishes a population target of 25,000 residents and 11,500 jobs by 2031 to achieve the critical mass of a downtown.
- Based on York Region's people per unit assumptions, the realization of approved and proposed residential developments represents more than 36,284 residents in 18,325 units moving into the VMC, achieving 153% of residential units and 145% of population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon far earlier than expected. These numbers are based on:
 - 3,889 units built or under construction
 - 2,811 units approved by Council
 - 6,679 units submitted as part of complete development applications
 - 3,300 formally submitted but inactive applications
 - 1,646 units identified in pre-application projects (proposed)
- 53,000 m² of new commercial office space has been approved, representing 2,000 jobs. This volume represents 36% of the 2031 office space target. Two of the projects are built or under construction. A recent pre-application project includes an additional 31,670 m² of proposed office uses, which would increase the volume to 59% of the 2031 office target, if realized.

Report Highlights Continued

- The City recognizes the critical mass of residents and employees moving into the downtown signals a need to focus on social infrastructure to ensure the creation of a complete community.

Recommendations

1. THAT this report BE RECEIVED.

Background

To achieve the critical mass of a downtown and meet the density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare established in the Province's *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the VMC Secondary Plan establishes a population target of approximately 17,000 residents and 6,500 jobs by 2031. The population target for the larger VMC area, including the Urban Growth Centre, is 25,000 residents and 11,500 jobs by 2031.

Previous Reports/Authority

https://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/0410_18_VMC_2.pdf

Analysis and Options

Residential activity in the VMC continues to far exceed expectations

On April 10, 2018, Item 2 of the VMC Sub-Committee meeting identified approved and proposed residential developments that had been received to date represented more than 19,224 residents in 9,700 units moving into the VMC, achieving 81% of residential units and 77% of population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon far earlier than expected.

The residential market has continued to flourish in the downtown since that time with receipt of new development applications, as shown on Attachment 1. Several of the proposed projects that were reported at the April 10, 2018 Sub-Committee meeting have solidified as formal and complete development applications and are under review.

Based on York Region's people per unit assumptions, realization of potential residential development currently represent more than 36,284 residents in 18,325 units moving into the VMC, achieving 153% of residential units and 145% of population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon. These numbers are based on a summation of units categorized into the following and identified in Table 1:

- a) those that are built or under construction
- b) those that are approved by Council
- c) those that have been formally submitted as part of complete development applications
- d) those that have been formally submitted but are inactive files
- e) those that are proposed pre-application projects.

Table 1:

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Residential Units - Under Construction/Built, Approved, In-Progress, and Proposed						
Developments that are Under Construction or Built	Under Construction or Built Projects	Apartment Units	Townhouse Units	Total Units Under Construction or Built	Population	% 2031 target
	Expo Tower 1	353	0	3,889	7,700	32%
	Expo Tower 2	351	0			
	Expo Tower 3	446	0			
	Expo Tower 4	415	0			
	VMC Residences ("Transit City 1 and 2")	1,110	11			
	Berkley Development ("The Met")	510	62			
	VMC Residences ("Transit City 3")	631	0			
Total Units Under Construction or Built	3,816	73				
Approved Development Applications	Approved Projects	Apartment Units	Townhouse Units	Total Approved Residential Units	Population	% 2031 target
	Liberty Maplecreek Phase 1 ("Cosmos")	1,162	0	2,811	5,566	23%
	Icona	1,633	16			
Total Units	2,795	16				
Formally Submitted Development Applications In-Progress	In-Progress Projects	Apartment Units	Townhouse Units	Total Residential Units In-Progress	Population	% 2031 target
	Liberty Cement Plant	935	0	6,679	13,224	110% 56%
	Expo City Tower 5	554	0			
	Quadreal Block 2	574	419			
	Quadreal Block 3	1,800	0			
	SmartCentres East Block	1,560	0			
	Goldpark	420	0			
	Zzen	417	0			
Total Units	6,260	419				
Formally Submitted but Inactive Applications	Inactive Projects	Apartment Units	Townhouse Units	Total Residential Unit Proposed	Population	% 2031 target
	Pandolfo	3,300	0	3,300	6,534	54% 28%
Total Units	3,300	0				
Pre-Application (Proposed) Projects	Proposed Projects	Apartment Units	Townhouse Units	Total Residential Unit Proposed	Population	% 2031 target
	2851 Highway 7	652	0	1,646	3,259	27% 14%
	Royal Centre, 3300 Highway 7	994	0			
Total Units	1,646	0				
Total Units Approved, In-Progress, Proposed, Under Construction and Built				18,325	36,284	153%

Updated February 20, 2019

Should the inactive development application listed above not materialize, the metrics would still represent 125% realization of the 2031 residential unit target. Many of these development projects are expected to be completed within the next 5 years, and approximately 1,400 people are already living in the downtown. Given the pace of development, the City is discussing the timing to advance a future scoped review of the VMC Secondary Plan with York Region to update the policies and supporting studies.

Through the facilitation of the Vaughan Design Review Panel and partnerships with the development community, high quality architecture is being realized. Over 20 development applications within the VMC have been reviewed by the Design Review Panel, several for multiple iterations. In addition, city studies and capital projects have been reviewed by the Design Review Panel, including the Edgeley Pond and Park

design, the VMC Urban Design Guidelines and the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan.

A changing landscape is emerging

The landscape of the downtown is rapidly transforming as new developments and high-rise towers reach unprecedented heights, defining a new skyline for Vaughan. To date, the predominant form of development continues to be tower and podium. Council has approved five 55-storey residential towers, three of which are under construction. A 60-storey residential tower is also proposed, which would represent a new landmark for the downtown as the tallest building, if approved by Council. A sizeable amount of Section 37 contributions has been secured for community benefits in exchange for increased building heights and densities that are being applied to deliver underfunded public amenities in the downtown, including enhancements to the Edgeley Park, the iconic pedestrian bridge spanning Edgeley Pond, and public art installations.

Recent development applications have introduced a wider range of building typologies, including mid-rise and urban townhouse blocks, which reflect the urban design vision for the downtown to provide diversity in housing choice, massing form and architectural character. Staff continue to encourage the integration of more mid-rise housing forms as the “missing middle” building typology in the City.

Previous reports to the VMC Sub-Committee communicated a focus on the Mobility Hub and Edgeley Pond and Park as priority areas for development based on the significant public infrastructure investments that had been delivered in these areas and the pattern of development activity that had been unfolding. Over the last year, the City received development applications spread across all quadrants of the VMC, signaling that momentum has grown throughout the downtown. Staff have begun to facilitate coordination workshops amongst landowners organized by quadrant to comprehensively plan and implement development projects with necessary capital infrastructure improvements.

As part of every development review and approval, Staff have been working closely with the development community and their design teams to ensure the creation of a high-quality public realm and pedestrian-focused urban centre by integrating features such as enhanced pedestrian news, privately-owned publicly accessible spaces (‘POPS’) and flexible streets.

The Emerging Downtown continues to successfully attract new office, retail and institutional tenants

Currently, there are three approved office projects in the VMC, as shown in Table 2, with 53,000 m² of new commercial office space, representing 36% of the 2031 target

and an estimated 2,000 new jobs. Two of the projects are built or under construction. The third is currently uncertain.

A recent pre-application project includes an additional 31,670 m² of proposed office uses, which would increase the volume to 59% of the 2031 office target if realized.

The KPMG office building is now fully occupied. Marc Anthony Cosmetics secured the last remaining floor, joining KPMG, GFL Environmental, Miller Thomson, Harley-Davidson Canada, FM Global, and BMO Wealth Management. The tower has also attracted its first retail tenants. A TD Bank branch and INS convenience store are now open. A Pumpnickel's restaurant will open soon.

The PwC-YMCA mixed-use building is under construction and scheduled to open in early 2020. PwC will occupy the 7,432 m² of available office space. The building will also be home to a new 7,153 m² YMCA with not-for-profit child care services, fitness and aquatic facilities plus a 2,973 m² City of Vaughan public library and recreation space.

The VMC also has an exciting new institutional tenant: Niagara University. The school has moved into a 1,115 m² space in the Expo City podium and will serve 300 students in the Bachelor of Professional Studies in education and Master of Science in education programs.

Table 2:

Office Built or Under Construction	Project	m ²	f ²	%2031 target
	KPMG	26,675	287,134	19%
	PwC	9,829	105,798	7%
	Total	36,504	392,932	26%
Office Approved by Council	Project	m ²	f ²	%2031 target
	Cosmos	13,549	145,840	10%
	Total	13,549	145,840	10%
Proposed Office	Project	m ²	f ²	%2031 target
	Royal Centre, 3300 Highway 7	31,670	340,904	23%
	Total	31,670	340,904	23%
Total Area Approved, Under Construction and Built		81,723	879,676	59%

A complete community in emergence

The City recognizes the critical mass of residents and employees moving into the downtown signals a need to focus on social infrastructure to ensure a complete community is created.

Delivery of the new flagship YMCA and community hub in 2019, will further transform the VMC. The amenities, services and gathering spaces offered by this project creates a sense of community for residents and workers. Public open spaces, such as TTC

Plaza and Transit Square, offer future programming opportunities for food vendors, farmers markets, small concerts and other seasonal events to draw visitors from across Vaughan and beyond.

As the downtown continues to be built out, a focus on the need to advance the planning and implementation of schools, parks, emergency services, places of worship and other social infrastructure is required to ensure that the community is well supported by these necessary amenities and facilities.

With the City's Public Art Program and VMC Culture and Public Art Framework in place, several public art pieces are anticipated to be integrated with development over the next several years. These investments will contribute to the realization that public art has tangible economic and social benefits that enhances and enriches quality of life in the VMC for residents and visitors. As well, the City is currently undertaking a Feasibility Study for Performing and Cultural Arts Centre in the VMC. An update on this project will be brought forward to a future VMC Sub-Committee meeting.

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Building a downtown is an ambitious goal. York Region'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 have participated and will continue to be involved throughout the duration of these initiatives to provide input and comment as required to ensure the successful implementation and coordination of these catalytic projects.

Conclusion

The largest and most significant development project in Vaughan's history is transforming more quickly than expected. Based on York Region's people per unit assumptions, realization of potential residential development currently represent more than 38,284 residents in 18,325 units moving into the VMC, achieving 153% of residential units and 145% of population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon.

Office development and tenancy continues to move forward. Staff are actively working with developers to profile the VMC to a business audience and attract anchor tenants for future office projects.

The development of social infrastructure is as important as the development of buildings as a contributor to placemaking that will significantly enhance the character and identity in the VMC.

Attachments

1. VMC Development Activity Map

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