

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 2023

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
UPDATE

FROM:

Haqing 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 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 design is underway.
- The On-Street Paid Parking Pilot is in its second year of a two-year pilot project.
- Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC.

Recommendation

1. That the VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report be received for information.

Background

As construction progresses in Vaughan's downtown, the VMC team continues 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 is 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 Update – April 2023 report and VMC Studies Update – April 2023 report received today outline the current situation in the downtown and provide projections to inform the City’s 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 Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update September 2022](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[VMC Development Activity Update March 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

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

At the September 2022 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff identified critical infrastructure improvements and construction activities completed or underway to support redevelopment activity in the downtown.

Significant progress has been made through 2022 and early 2023 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 and opening of Bent Tree Drive

Since the opening of three spine 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 Portage Parkway widening detail design is expected to be finalized in Q2 2023. The road widening works are expected to be initiated in Q3 2023 and completed by Q2 2026. Utility relocation is part of the first phase of construction and is anticipated to last 13 months.

Construction of Bent Tree Drive, a new local road connecting Millway Avenue to Jane Street, is underway and is expected to be completed in Q1 2023 and open to the public in Q2 2023.

David Braley VMC Centre of Community is approaching its one-year anniversary

The iconic David Braley VMC Centre of Community will be celebrating its first-year anniversary in June 2023. The state-of-the-art facility located at 200 Apple Mill Road includes a YMCA, daycare and City of Vaughan library and community recreation space (Vaughan Studios & Event Space). This facility is proving to be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for downtown residents and businesses and was recently recognized with a Vaughan Urban Design Award of Excellence.

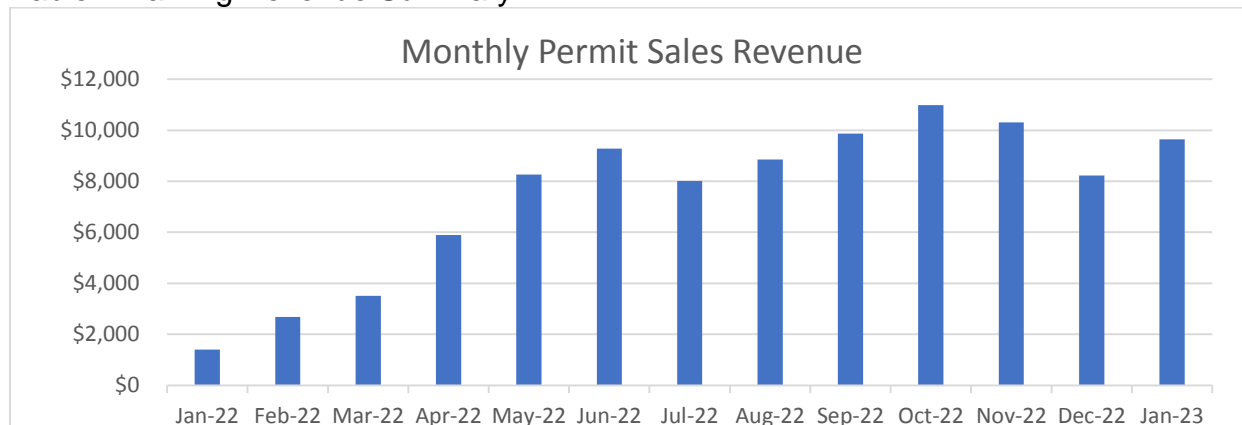
The Parking Pilot Project is in its second year of a two-year pilot project

In October 2021, the City launched its first paid on-street public parking initiative in the VMC Mobility Hub area. The pilot accommodates demand for short-term (3-hour maximum) public parking from various road users such as local residents, businesses and visitors on three downtown streets including, Apple Mill Road, New Park Place and Buttermill Avenue. Special provisions are in place for the segment on Buttermill Avenue adjacent to the Centre of Community to facilitate the ease-of-use for parents to accommodate the YMCA day-care. Parents do not have to register their vehicle at a parking meter, they can simply scan a QR code at the YMCA day-care front desk or scan a QR code on a business card.

Accommodation for persons with accessibility needs is also provided at preferred, designated locations free of cost.

Through the first year of implementation, sales revenue continues to be promising. In the first 13 months since the launch, a steady increase has been observed in monthly revenues. See Table 1 below.

Table 1 Parking Revenue Summary



The pilot is going through its second winter season (2022-2023) where snow clearance adjacent to the parking meters is being provided in a partnership between the City (on public right-of-way) and SmartCentres (on unassumed road sections).

A Communications Plan was developed with various stakeholders at the onset of the pilot and is 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 such as City and Vendor contact information and answers to [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 in October 2023.

Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance

The City has completed the acquisition of the remaining blocks of the future North Urban Park from the landowner. Staff continue to coordinate the planning and design of the park and work collaboratively toward 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 conceptual park master plan has been incorporated into the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan. Staff continue to evaluate delivery options targeting a solution that will deliver maximum benefit to the City.

The delivery of the North Urban Park will provide needed active and passive park amenities and recreation options to the growing downtown population.

Northeast Quadrant

The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design is complete with most agency approvals obtained

The Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) is an existing pond block located northeast of the Jane Street and Highway 7 intersection and within the Black Creek corridor. The EPP will be retrofitted with landscape enhancements including trails to create an iconic park within the City of Vaughan's emerging downtown while treating local drainage to current stormwater management standards.

The September 2022 VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan report provided an update on the Edgeley Pond and Park project. At that time, permits and approvals were obtained from most of the approval agencies. A resubmission was made to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and their approval is pending. 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 along and downstream of Highway 7. To provide a seamless delivery, the Edgeley Pond and Park construction will be incorporated with the single Design-Build assignment known as the (expanded) Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project. The (expanded) BCR project also includes the detailed design and implementation of the Highway 7 culvert improvements at Jane Street.

Jane Street Streetscape & Plaza + Plateau detailed designs are complete and the Jane Street Hydro Underground work was initiated

The detailed design for both the Jane Street streetscape and Plaza & Plateau are completed. The construction of these VMC projects will also be completed as part of the expanded Black Creek Renewal project.

The hydro undergrounding project includes the conversion of the overhead transmission lines to below grade infrastructure fronting the Edgeley Pond and Park, along Jane Street from Portage Parkway to north of Highway 7. City of Vaughan is coordinating with Alectra to undertake this work, which will commence by Q4 2023 and will be completed prior to the construction of the Edgeley Pond retrofit and Jane Street streetscape works. It should be noted that the hydro undergrounding along the frontage of the Met development along the east side of Jane Street and south of Portage Parkway is complete, which includes the future proofing and installation of the necessary utility ducts.

Construction of the Expo City continues

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. 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.

The pavilion building construction is at 80% completion and the park works are 50% complete, with the remaining landscape work to be completed in Q2 and Q3 2023.

Southeast Quadrant

Works for Black Creek Renewal expanded project scope are underway

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the northeast and southeast quadrants of the VMC and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. The [September 2022 Black Creek Renewal – Project Update](#) provided a summary of the expanded project. The BCR project remains a high priority and supports the City's commitment to mitigate flooding, enhance stormwater management, and create parks and open spaces within the VMC.

Given the interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park (northeast quadrant), the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and the Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project (southeast quadrant), all three project components are combined into one design-build delivery model, known as the (expanded) Black Creek Renewal project. Commenced in 2021, the BCR project allows for a seamless delivery, to incorporate the implementation of the Edgeley Pond retrofit, detailed design and implementation of the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and detail design and implementation of the Black Creek renewal south of Highway 7. The expanded BCR project will allow for delivery efficiencies and mitigate construction risks of the critical infrastructure in the VMC.

While the design-build delivery model accommodates advancing certain design elements, property acquisitions for the Black Creek Renewal project are essential to ensure that the Project's delivery schedule is achieved. The project team is moving forward with property acquisitions required to facilitate construction and has commenced negotiations for those properties. The timely completion of this task will aid in advancing the Project.

To date, the City has completed property acquisitions for private lands and York Region owned public lands. City staff are advancing negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation, that are expected to conclude in 2023. The need for the remaining lands along the corridor continues to be assessed as they are private properties.

The feasibility of implementing the potential interim measures and the associated impacts to existing businesses is currently being analyzed by the Technical Advisor. The analysis is scheduled to conclude in early 2023.

Staff remain focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements along the Black Creek channel corridor north, south and through Highway 7 to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging downtown. Implementation of key infrastructure projects will continue to leverage investments in the VMC.

Staff will continue to work closely with internal (City of Vaughan departments) and external (TRCA, York Region, and VMC landowners) stakeholders to facilitate the advancement of the BCR project.

Southwest Quadrant

Construction of new local roads are underway

Development activity in the southwest quadrant continues to advance and construction is near completion on the Mobilio development which includes the delivery of significant municipal infrastructure. The construction of the new Millway Avenue is complete; widening of Interchange Way east-west is underway, servicing of Autumn Harvest Road and Mable Smith Way are in progress, and the roads are expected to be completed this year, including the provision of north-south and east-west publicly accessible private 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. 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 2023/2024.

Block 3S includes the delivery of the Commerce Street realignment based on the VMC Secondary Plan objective to create a fine-grain grid network of streets. The old curvilinear Commerce Street has been 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. Both realigned Commerce Street and Doughton Road extension are now open to the public.

The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is complete

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 landowner undertook an initial tender in Q4 2022. The first phase of the park, including lawns and significant tree planting, will be constructed in Q2 and Q3 2023.

The second phase will have facilities suitable for the new Mobilio community, including a playground, active play equipment, basketball half-courts, a shade structure, and social gathering spaces flanked by perennial planting beds and a flexible lawn. This phase will be delivered in Q2 and Q3 2024.

Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC

Public Art continues to contribute to downtown's identity as a distinctive cultural destination. Notable advancements in several Public Art projects are bolstering creative placemaking at the VMC.

In the north-east quadrant, design development is nearing completion for Cortel Group's 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 in 2024, 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 the EPP'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 the south-east quadrant, 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 space, featuring the work of a roster of resident and GTA artists, is anchored by the strategic layout of 13 shipping containers displaying a series of multi-disciplinary and site-specific artworks on their

facades, 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. Assembly Park received a Vaughan Urban Design Award of Merit.

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 in Q2 2023, 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.

Operational Impact

Consultation and collaboration continues across various City operations to solicit feedback and identify potential impacts spanning different departments (Infrastructure Delivery, Economic Development, Transportation and Fleet Management Services, By-Law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services).

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.

Prepared by

Musa Deo, Manager, Development Engineering (VMC), ext. 8295.

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