

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 2023

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC STUDIES UPDATE – APRIL 2023

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

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 trends and available hard and soft infrastructure, including community services, parks, open spaces and facilities.
- The VMC Secondary Plan Update initiated Phase III, which involves developing a preferred land use framework to best achieve Council's vision of a world class downtown and complete community.
- The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan has completed a master plan and cost estimate and devised an implementation strategy outlining priorities and strategies for parkland delivery, while also preparing to install prototype signage as part of its wayfinding pilot project, with a final report expected in Q3 2023.
- The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update is advancing with a final draft expected by Q3 2023, and the final report completed in conjunction with the city-wide Integrated Urban Water Plan study.
- The 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 – April 2023 report be received for information.

Background

As outlined in the VMC Development Activity Update – April 2023 Report being received today, 3,900 residential units are built and are home to 7,722 residents; 5,649 residential units are under construction bringing an additional population of 11,185 residents; and 10,666 residential units have been approved by council and will house 21,119 future residents. The realization of developments that are occupied, under construction, or approved represents more than 40,026 residents in over 20,215 units, greatly exceeding the population target established for the 2031 planning horizon. Given that this growth trend is expected to continue, staff have 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, the VMC Transportation Master Plan, and the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report. They are also undertaking the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan.

The VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update April 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 September 2022](#)

[VMC Studies Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

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

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 and is being led by Gladki Planning Associates in association with Greenberg Consultants, 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 is instrumental in informing the next phase of the project.

The project team has initiated Phase III – *Elaborate a Preferred Framework*, which 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 land use framework is developed, additional consultation and stakeholder engagement will be conducted.

As part of Phase III, the project team will ensure hard and soft 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 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 PWMP outlines a master plan scheme and establishes an 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.

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 PWMP has developed an ultimate VMC master plan supported by a costing and implementation strategy outlining short-to-long term parkland targets for the VMC. The master plan identifies up to 20.9 hectares of Public Squares, Neighbourhood Parks, and Urban Parks within the VMC, and up to 55.8 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 creates 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 Q3 2023.

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 was 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 and transit authorities. The second part of this study involves the creation of a series of prototypes which are being fabricated and installed in key areas of the VMC in Q2 2023. Prototype installation will be followed by an analysis of sign durability and effectiveness achieved through an engagement strategy aimed at residents and visitors to the VMC. Feedback received from the engagement strategy will be used to guide the future refinement and expansion of the VMC wayfinding system.

VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update

The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report (VMC FSSR), is one of several study areas of the Integrated Urban Water Plan (IUWP) led by Infrastructure Planning & Corporate Asset Management (IPCAM), and awarded to Civica Infrastructure Inc.

The IUWP is a strategic level planning document that provides a roadmap for long-term servicing requirements to meet the City's intensification and future growth needs. This Study documents existing issues and opportunities, considers and evaluates solutions, and identifies preferred water, wastewater, and stormwater servicing strategies. This Study is being conducted in accordance with the Master Planning process outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class EA guidelines. This approach involves the preparation of a Master Plan document at the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2 of the Class EA process.

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 in July 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 Q3 2023, and the final report will be completed in conjunction with the city-wide IUWP study. The FSSR assesses water, wastewater, and stormwater systems performance under existing and ultimate buildout scenarios, based on projected 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), including Municipal Class Environmental Assessments (MCEA) for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way, is being led by WSP, and is being conducted concurrently with, and informing, the VMC Secondary Plan Update.

To date, and following Notice of Commencement in November 2020, Phase 1 has been completed for the VMC TMP Update and Millway Avenue and Interchange Way projects. Key elements of the work plan included identification of problems and opportunities, confirmation of the need to continue to build from the VMC Secondary Plan transportation network, and corroboration of the need to advance planning, design and implementation of the collector road network including the Millway Avenue and Interchange Way projects.

Consultation and engagement with stakeholders, the public, and Indigenous Communities is key component of the process. An in-person Public Information Centre (PIC) 1 was held on Feb 16, 2023, and online virtual PIC remained open for public viewing and commenting (including through a survey) until March 24, 2023, seeking feedback and input on the information presented on:

- VMC TMP Update challenges and opportunities, and identification of potential solutions in supporting the Secondary Plan update
- Millway Avenue and Interchange Way preliminary road alignments and a preliminary cross-section option in conjunction and informed by findings from technical supporting reports such as an archaeological assessment, contamination overview study, cultural heritage report, hydrogeological report, and traffic impact assessment.

With input and feedback from the first round of consultation, the VMC TMP Update and MCEAs are progressing into Phase 2 where transportation solutions are being developed and assessed based on the future population and jobs projections from VMC Secondary Plan Update land-use Options 1 and 2.

Preferred transportation solutions for the VMC TMP Update and preferred preliminary designs for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way will be presented at a future and final formal round of consultation as part of the study process. PIC 2 is anticipated in Q2/Q3 2023. The VMC TMP and MCEA studies are expected to be concluded in conjunction with the VMC Secondary Plan Update, targeting Q1 2024.

As part of the VMC TMP, the Highway 400 Colossus Overpass corridor protection area continues to be coordinated in conjunction with the ongoing Weston 7 Secondary Plan and Weston 7 Transportation Master Plan.

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.

Operational Impact

The studies staff are undertaking have been robustly coordinated across City departments and with external agencies and other stakeholders, through regular Technical Advisory Committee meetings and other engagement touchpoints. The various VMC plans and studies inform each other and are being closely managed 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”.

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

Prepared by

Anna Rosen, Project Manager, Parks Development, VMC, Ext. 3637.

Cory Gray, Manager, Parks & Strategic Initiatives, VMC, Ext. 8579.

Musa Deo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC, Ext. 8295.

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, Planning & Urban Design, VMC, Ext. 8266.

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs, Ext. 8231.

Approved by



Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager
Planning and Growth Management

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager