

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ECONOMIC
INITIATIVES – 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

FROM:
Nick Spensieri, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

This report provides an update on key accomplishments from the programs and initiatives undertaken this past year by Economic Development's Strategic Economic Initiatives unit.

Report Highlights

- The Economic Development Department's Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI) unit undertakes key strategic projects that establish economic assets upon which our businesses and talent grow.
- In 2022, the SEI unit advanced and expanded the scope of key projects in four areas: Smart Cities Development, Public Art and Art Development, Municipal Partnerships and Economic Asset Development (i.e., Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct). These projects aim to promote the growth of the City's business community and attract businesses and talent to Vaughan.
- The SEI Year in Review report provides a snapshot of upcoming transformative, ambitious, and sustainable and purpose-driven projects that will catalyze stakeholders, talent and assets to drive creative placemaking in 2023.

Recommendations

1. THAT the Economic Development Strategic Economic Initiatives - 2022 Year in Review be received for information.

2. THAT physical/digital copies be distributed to Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, local and regional partners, and all other relevant organizations/individuals.
3. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development be authorized to communicate the content of this report and its attachment across City channels where appropriate.

Background

Economic Development works to profile and support Vaughan's transformative, ambitious and purpose-driven economy to make Vaughan a place where entrepreneurship, business, tourism, and art can prosper and grow.

Vaughan is **Transformative**. Our economy and business community continue to change the way business is done. The Economic Development department enables transformative projects.

Vaughan is **Ambitious**. The City of Vaughan undertakes world-class projects that elevate opportunities for our talent and businesses that strive to lead their industries.

Vaughan is **Purpose-Driven**. The City of Vaughan is proud to lead a community that is dedicated to doing business with purpose. Our community works to build Vaughan as a vibrant and inclusive community where all can prosper.

The Economic Development department is committed to producing annual reporting on Vaughan's economic climate and business support activities.

To better align Economic Development's ability to provide timely updates, this year's Economic Development annual report will be presented in five separate products:

- Strategic Economic Initiatives – Q1 2023
- Business Retention, Expansion and Investment – Q1 2023
- Tourism Vaughan Corporation – Q1 2023
- Economic Snapshot – Q2 2023
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre – Q3 2023

Each annual report will highlight key projects, initiatives, programs and accomplishments for the past year. It recognizes all Economic Development staff, partners, and community stakeholders for their vital role in advancing economic opportunities, attracting new investments and enabling a climate for businesses to grow, prosper and create jobs.

The Strategic Economic Initiatives unit within Economic Development catalyzes stakeholders, talent, and assets to drive creative placemaking.

The Economic Development department’s Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI) unit undertakes key strategic projects that establish economic assets. These projects aim to promote the growth of the City’s business community and attract businesses and talent to Vaughan. The SEI unit strives to transform placemaking by developing ambitious, sustainable and purpose-driven projects that better the community.

Within the SEI unit, staff are undertaking projects in the following areas:

- 1. Smart Cities development
- 2. Public Art and Art development
- 3. Municipal Partnerships
- 4. Economic asset development (i.e., Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct)

Previous Reports/Authority

[STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN FOR ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, 2020-2023](#), Committee of the Whole (2), September 24, 2019

[2020 YEAR IN REVIEW – ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM VAUGHAN](#), Committee of the Whole (2) Report, June 8, 2021

[2021 YEAR IN REVIEW – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT](#), Committee of the Whole (2) Report, June 21, 2022

Analysis and Options

In 2022, Economic Development has made progress in Smart Cities Development, Public Art and Art Development, Municipal Partnerships, and Economic Asset Development.

Some highlights from 2022 include:

2022 Key Accomplishments	
Smart Cities Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vaughan Council approved a findings and recommendations report, including an approved Smart City vision, guiding principles, strategic objectives, a framework, and project prioritization for the 2022-2026 Term of Council.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City achieved the Smart Cities Early Adopter International Organization of Standardization (ISO) 37122 certifications from the World Council on City Data. • Activate!Vaughan Smart City Challenge won a Gold Award from the Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO).
Public Art and Art Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In VMC South, QuadReal’s Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Public Art Gallery launched in the summer with the inaugural curated exhibition, “Transitions”, which featured the work of resident and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) artists. • In VMC North, design development is nearing completion for Cortel Group’s EXPO City CG Tower Public Art installation overlooking Edgeley Pond and Park. The monumental, sculptural piece, “Edgeley Pond Fathom”, is slated for installation in late 2023.
Municipal Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured \$9.1 million in total advertising, sponsorship, and grant revenue that offsets the tax base. • Three digital billboards were activated on City property to generate a minimum of \$6,075,000 in revenue for the City over the next fifteen years. • Provided advisory support to internal city departments generating alternative sources of revenue (e.g., Corporate Tree Planting Program, sponsorships for Toyota national Championships and Vaughan Urban Design Awards).
Economic Asset Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approved recommendations to enter a ground-lease amending agreement with Mackenzie Health, enabling: expansion of the hospital; the development of a long-term care facility; and, the establishment of a ventureLAB MedTech lab in Mackenzie Health’s future facilities. • VMC Sub-committee endorsed the pursuit of a hub-and-spoke model for developing a cultural arts district in the VMC.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the Collision Conference and Web Summit to raise the profile of Vaughan’s economy among global audiences and generate trade opportunities and investment leads across the city’s key sectors.
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2023 Look Ahead

The SEI unit is dedicated to advancing economic opportunities, creating a climate for job creation, and increasing local investments through key projects and initiatives. SEI unit has several standout projects and initiatives scheduled for 2023.

2023 Key Activities	
Smart Cities Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management department and seeking Council’s endorsement to launch an innovation program focusing on testing smart mobility innovation. • Modernizing and enhancing the visitor experience on our main streets by bringing a business case to Council to install smart kiosks in Vaughan’s key commercial neighbourhoods. • Working with the Office of the Chief Human Resource Officer and Facility Management to deploy a two-year accessibility technology pilot to help the visually impaired or blind navigate independently in select City facilities.
Public Art and Art Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a dozen prominent Public Art projects are advancing in the VMC and City-wide during the 2022-2026 Term of Council. • The City-led ARTonBOXES Program will launch through its Group of Seven REMIXED pilot phase in spring 2023, debuting original art on designated traffic signal boxes in high-profile, publicly accessible locations across all five wards of the city.
Municipal Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing phase 2 of the Digital Billboard Revenue program. • Continue to identify, circulate, and apply for eligible grant opportunities city-wide.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore alternative revenue-generating opportunities through sponsorships, advertising and grants.
<p>Economic Asset Development</p>	<p>2023 International Missions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development staff participation in Smart Cities Connect Conference and Expo in Denver, Colorado, in May 2023 to raise the profile of Vaughan’s economy and to promote Vaughan’s strategic city-building projects (Smart City and Next Generation Health and Healthcare delivery) on a world stage. ○ Economic Development will attend the AutoTech Detroit conference in partnership with York Region and continue developing the Weston Road and Highway 7 corridor, further strengthening Vaughan as a destination for next-generation automotive technology. ○ To advance Vaughan’s globally-competitive farm-to-fork food and beverage industry cluster, Economic Development, will attend the international Anuga FoodTec Conference in Cologne, Germany in October 2023, in addition to engagements with northern Italy’s food industry cluster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development department to support ongoing work to develop North Maple Regional Park into a world-class destination for mixed-use sport, recreation, wellness, education and culture. • Formalizing a partnership with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Vaughan International Film Festival to advance a Creative Industries Centre of Excellence in Vaughan.

Financial Impact

None.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Economic Development Strategic Economic Initiatives - 2022 Year in Review complements communications and outreach strategies to help raise the profile of Vaughan's economy.

A copy of the publication will be uploaded on vaughanbusiness.ca and distributed to critical local/regional partners and stakeholders, such as York Region Economic Development, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, other Chambers of Commerce, consuls in the Ontario and Canadian marketplaces, ministries, local and regional stakeholders, and prospective business relocation opportunities. Sharing this publication with key stakeholders will help raise the City's profile, attract new partners and investments, and support the expansion of the local business community.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan continues to be a city in demand for both residents and businesses to invest in and grow. In 2022, the SEI unit accelerated and expanded the scope of key projects to help build Vaughan's economic resilience. Staff recommend that Committee receive this first annual SEI report outlining the achievements to date as information.

For more information, please contact Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development, ext. 8891.

Attachment

1. Economic Development Strategic Economic Initiatives - 2022 Year in Review

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Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager