

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023      **WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION 2022:  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT YEAR IN REVIEW

**FROM:**  
Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** DECISION

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### **Purpose**

The Economic Development Department (ED) supports businesses to remain in, expand in, or relocate to Vaughan. This report provides an update on key learnings and activities undertaken by Economic Development in its business retention, expansion, and attraction activities.

### **Report Highlights**

- In 2022, ED advanced and expanded knowledge and insights delivery, business facilitation and municipal development facilitation services. These services aim to promote the growth of the City's business community and attract businesses and talent to Vaughan.
- ED completed 47 corporate calls in 2022 in advanced manufacturing, professional services, construction, and food and beverage among other key sectors.
- Vaughan had nearly 5.2 million sq. ft. of office space and more than 97.5 million sq. ft. of industrial space at the end of 2022
- The City is the largest economic and employment centre in York Region, contributing 37.5 per cent of all economic output and 38.6 per cent of all employment in the region.
- In 2022, the City issued \$1.752 billion in building construction value.
- Staff will finalize a designed Annual Report for public distribution and marketing purposes.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT the Business, Retention, Expansion, and Attraction 2022 Year in Review be received for information;
2. THAT staff distribute a designed Annual Report to Council and Senior Leadership in June, 2023;
3. THAT the physical/digital copies of the designed Annual Report be distributed to Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, local and regional partners, and all other relevant organizations/individuals; and
4. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development be directed to communicate the information in this report across the City's channels where appropriate.

## **Background**

***Economic Development supports 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 reports 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 four products:

- Strategic Economic Initiatives – Q1 2023
- Business Retention, Expansion and Investment – Q3 2023
- Tourism Vaughan Corporation – Q3 2023
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre – Q4 2023

Each annual report highlights key projects, initiatives, programs and accomplishments for the past year. They recognize ED 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 Economic Development unit within ED provides services to develop and support Vaughan's established, growing and emerging clusters.***

- ED staff provide services and expertise through the following services:

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ED staff provide services and expertise through the following services:

### **Corporate Calling Program**

- Through the corporate calling program, staff engage with business owners to better understand their needs, offer business advisory services, and address any business challenges they may have. This program:
  1. Offers business advisory support through the dissemination of information that can help the business grow. This information includes relevant funding or financing programs, advisory services and value-added introductions, or advocacy and government relations toolkits.
  2. Fosters engagement and build relationships with our business community, stakeholders, and others to support current economic activities and foster future growth in the longer term. Corporate calls are a key mechanism in gathering information on our local economy.
  3. Introduces businesses to partnership and business development opportunities.
  4. Provide a 'pulse check' to the City and its stakeholders on key industry clusters to support meaningful insights or programs that address micro and macro trends in Vaughan's economy. These insights inform ED's recommendations to Council and senior staff.

### **Site Location Assistance**

ED supports businesses that are looking to expand or relocate in Vaughan by offering one-on-one site-location assistance. This service includes providing:

- Information about the community and relevant properties
- An inventory of vacant land for opportunities
- Arranging site visits
- Providing custom research
- Introductions to local businesses
- Introductions to business support organizations
- Information about relevant government programs that can help the business grow

## **Data Analysis and Provision**

ED provides Vaughan's business community with research on national, provincial, regional and local economic trends and offers business intelligence through key activities such as including data analysis, market research, and the provision of data to support business operations, expansion and workforce development.

To enhance ED's position as a thought leader and knowledge broker ED publishes timely and relevant insights for the business community at [www.vaughabusiness.ca/insights](http://www.vaughabusiness.ca/insights) which also supplement business advisory activities

## **Business Events (Networking and B2B)**

ED plays a vital role in facilitating meaningful business connections for the local business community.

- A key function in providing business advisory and intelligence provision to our business community is the facilitation of connections between businesses. Networking events such as the Business After Five provide an opportunity for companies to develop effective relationships with one another by sharing industry information and best practices and connecting to potential customers, suppliers, and business partners.
- ED works with key industry stakeholders like local and regional chambers, business associations, and other levels of government to host conferences and networking events in Vaughan

## **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

[Strategic Economic Initiatives: Economic Development 2022 Year in Review AND Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report](#), February 14, 2023.

[Economic Development – Insights & News](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

Vaughan remains a catalyst for local, regional, provincial, and national economic growth. The City's economy is growing, and is supported by best-in-class, award-winning economic development services.

***Vaughan is a city on the rise. Extraordinary building activity continued in 2022, which saw the City issue \$1.752 billion in building construction value – a significant investment into the community.***

Vaughan ranked tenth nationally by the value of non-residential permits issued, ranking fourth by the value of industrial permits in Canada, respectively. In 2022, the City issued 521 non-residential building permits representing more than \$785 million in construction value.

***ED takes a strategic approach to sector and cluster development. What follows is a breakdown of sectors leading Vaughan's economy.***

### **Vaughan's Established Key Sectors**

**Advanced Manufacturing** will continue to be a significant part of the city's economic base. Vaughan is one of Canada's advanced manufacturing hubs that comprises a diverse business environment of plastic, rubber, paper, textile, metal, automotive, food, and electronics manufacturing. The sector accounts for 19% of Vaughan's real GDP and contributes nearly \$4.7 billion in economic output and employs 42,000 people. Leading companies within the sector include Hanon Systems, Concord Confections, Toro Aluminum, Magna International and Royal Building Products.

Advanced Manufacturing subsectors include:

- Vaughan's agri-food and food processing sub-sector is comprised of more than 500 companies that employ 21,700 people – nearly 10 per cent of Vaughan's employment base. Vaughan is in the heart of the Toronto Region's Food & Beverage sector, the largest in North America, with annual food and beverage sales in the Toronto Region exceeding \$21 billion.
- Vaughan's automotive sector includes more than 650 businesses that employ more than 13,600 people. Vaughan is a part of York Region's largest independent automotive parts and electronics manufacturing cluster, with Vaughan being home to many globally recognized tier 1 suppliers, such as Magna International, Martinrea, Multimatic, Hanon Systems, Litens Automotive, IAC, and Woodbridge Foam Corporation as well as numerous tier 2 and tier 3 suppliers. A wide range of automotive products are made in Vaughan including

driveline systems, fluid pressure and controls, hinges, brakes, seats, transmissions and many more.

**Transportation and Logistics** is a thriving sector within Vaughan and co-located to several significant goods movement assets including direct access to Highways 427, 400 and 407 and is minutes away from Highways 401, 404 and 410, connections to rail service via the Canadian National (CN) MacMillan Yard, and the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway Vaughan Intermodal Terminal. In 2021 the transportation and logistics sector contributes \$2.9 billion in economic output and employs 30,000 people. Leading companies within the sector include United Parcel Service Canada, FedEx Canada, Tokmakjian Metro Logistics, Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific Railway

The **Construction** sector in Vaughan is home to several leading builders, developers, and building materials suppliers. The sector directly supports growth within the City and throughout municipalities across Ontario. The construction sector contributes \$3.9 billion in economic output and currently employs 33,000 people. Leading companies within the sector include Bondfield Construction, NP Canada, Condrain Company, BVGlazing Systems and Empire Communities.

### **Vaughan's Growing Key Sectors**

**Finance and Insurance** is a growing sector within the city and plays an important part in the knowledge-based and creative economy. Finance and insurance-based businesses are clustered within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) and form the core of office-based employment in the city. Vaughan's finance and insurance industries contribute \$1.4 billion in economic output and 21,500 people. Leading companies in the sector include Primerica, FM Global, RDA Inc., Fundex Investments and WFG Securities Canada.

**Tourism and Creative Industries** are an emerging focus for the city. Key tourism and creative industry assets in Vaughan include Canada's Wonderland, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre Toronto, Kortright Centre and Vaughan Mills. Tourism in Vaughan is made up of more than 950 businesses that employ more than 16,500 employees. Vaughan has more than 2,500 firms across its creative industries employing more than 42,500 people.

Vaughan is at the heart of York Region's **Innovation Economy**, linking Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital (Canada's first smart hospital) and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) to Toronto's renowned research hospitals and some of Canada's top universities. Technology and innovation support growing industries in Vaughan like, Digital media and information and communications technology (ICT), Digital health and devices, Fintech, and Advanced Manufacturing. Leading companies include Mircom, Teledyne Optech, and Sciex.

## **Vaughan's Emerging Key Sectors**

Building on the strengths of the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct (VHCP) Vaughan is positioning itself to develop robust **Health, Healthcare Tech and Life Sciences** sector centred around health, healthcare, research, education, healthcare, and training. The sector currently comprises 1,142 businesses that employ more than 14,000 people. Leading life sciences in the sector include Sterling Industries, AB Sciex, Kohl and Frisch, Agta Home Healthcare, Cardinal Health Canada, and Toronto Research Chemicals.

**Education** is an emerging sector in Vaughan. The City is home to 346 educational services organizations employing more than 9,500 individuals, that are committed to providing students with access to quality educational opportunities that are relevant to industry needs.

The College of Carpenters and Allied Trades Inc. (CCAT) and Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183 operate three state-of-the-art training centres that offer comprehensive training programs in a simulated construction setting. These centres are equipped with the latest technology and equipment to ensure that students receive hands-on training.

In addition to these training centres, Vaughan is also home to 15 technical and trades schools. These schools offer training programs in a variety of fields such as beauty and cosmetology, electrical, plumbing, drywall acoustic mechanic and lather, logistics, Niagara University located in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre was the first-ever university to be established in the City of Vaughan and York Region. The university initially offered Bachelor of Professional Studies and Master of Science in Educational Leadership programs and has since expanded its course offerings to include Master's degree programs in business administration, finance, and information security and digital forensics.

Vaughan's commitment to education is reflected in the fact that 73% of its population over 25 has a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, surpassing both the provincial (68%) and national (67%) average. This is a testament to the city's robust education sector that provides quality educational opportunities, making it an ideal location for those seeking to further their education and professional development.

### ***Vaughan's ED Service Highlights Include the Following:***

#### **Corporate Calling: Staff completed 47 corporate calls in 2022.**

- Staff completed 47 corporate calls in 2022 in advanced manufacturing, professional services, construction, and food and beverage among other key sectors.

- Labour shortages and skills gaps remain some of the most prevalent challenges experienced by businesses across all sectors. Although this is a challenge that requires a comprehensive array of policies and programs on a national and global scale, economic development staff continues to work with each business to gain a better understanding of their unique hiring needs and connect them to provincially-funded employment agencies and provide information on hiring and training-related programs. In addition, staff:
  - Launched the Talent City Vaughan program was launched to help residents and Vaughan-based businesses access and undertake opportunities to enhance workforce skills.
  - Launched a Government Relations toolkit in collaboration with Public Affairs to help businesses develop government relations strategies to effectively identify issues with key policymakers.
- Large manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing businesses situated in the Vaughan Enterprise Zone (VEZ) have expressed concerns over the lack of public transportation in the area causing difficulties in hiring new workers. Most businesses in this area employ a considerable number of general laborers who rely on public transportation to commute to work and access other essential services. To address this issue, staff has been working in close collaboration with businesses, transit agencies, and mobility solution providers to identify potential transit solutions. The following highlights the key activities undertaken by the team.
  - Conducted comprehensive surveys to collect feedback from employers on their public transit and labour force needs, as well as their work shift schedules
  - Presented the key findings of these surveys to York Region Transit (YRT) to request a new transit service that aligns with the employers' needs
  - Explored the feasibility of the YRT's bus charter service as a potential transportation solution
  - Worked with an external consulting firm to facilitate a transit problem statement workshop with the goal of launching a last-mile transportation pilot project
  - Facilitated pitching sessions from three mobility solution providers and conducted a thorough review of their proposals with the employers
  - Participated in the Queen Street-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to address the ongoing transit challenge in the VEZ

Although jurisdictional challenges and budget constraints exist, some improvements have been made. Brampton Transit recently established a new bus stop for Route 50 at the northeast corner of Highway 50 and Gibraltar Road, which has improved the labour force issue for a nearby Vaughan-based business. Moreover, based on the labour force and transit needs data gathered from the businesses, YRT is planning to pilot an



express bus service that will operate in the VEZ starting in September 2023. The final schedules, routes and bus stop locations are still to be determined.

The VEZ is a crucial economic hub that generates substantial employment opportunities and contributes to the overall economic growth of the City of Vaughan. The Economic Development unit is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to identify and implement sustainable transportation solutions that meet the needs of employers and their workforce in the VEZ.

- Businesses in the trade area surrounding VMC have also expressed a need for better transit solutions that service the area around the transit terminal
- ED staff have also heard from other businesses that fare integration would be of considerable benefit in particular for the movement of general labour coming in from Toronto to the trade area around Rutherford GO station, as well as improved GO service times to accommodate a variety of shifts

## **Business Events**

- B2B Facilities Tour Event - On Wednesday, June 15th, 2022, the City of Vaughan's Economic Development department successfully hosted its first Vaughan Business-to-Business (B2B) Industrial Tour. The purpose of this event was to provide learning and networking opportunities for Vaughan-based companies by matching two companies with similar interests and needs. The event was attended by 53 individuals comprised of business leaders, industry partners and city staff. A total of 18 businesses representing over 2,800 employees were matched and participated in the plant tours
- Business After Five – Hanon Systems. Economic Development also launched the first Business After Five, a new networking event, engaging eight companies and one regional support organization on November 30. Business After Five is the next iteration of networking opportunities provided by ED for Vaughan's local business community, which provides an opportunity for businesses to network, learn and promote their products and services in a casual environment. The inaugural Business After Five was hosted by Hanon Systems, a leader in innovative thermal and energy management solutions for the automotive industry, at their Concord-based manufacturing and R&D facility. The event featured a presentation from Toronto Global's Supply Chain Onshoring, Resilience, and Expansion (SCORE) program to facilitate discussion on supply chain issues and highlight opportunities for reshoring of manufacturing operations in Ontario and the City of Vaughan. Event highlights included new potential business contracts between attendees, networking, and further engagement opportunities for Economic Development with these companies.

## **Site Selection Assistance: ED supported 34 pre-qualified site selection inquiries in 2022**

- ED facilitated a total of 34 pre-qualified site selection inquiries and secured seven new investments in 2022 resulting in 100 new jobs, eight retained jobs and more than 114,000 sq.ft. of leased or purchased spaces.
  - Four (57%) from existing Vaughan businesses and three (43%) from businesses new to Vaughan. The majority of these investments, four (57%), were for Industrial properties, followed by 2 (29%) for Retail and one (14%) for Office properties.
- Out of the 34 inquiries handled in 2022:
  - 24 (70.5 per cent) are in the prospect stages of the investment cycle.
  - Eight (23.5 per cent) were Unqualified
  - Two (6 per cent) inquiries were Closed/Confirmed as new investments.
- Most inquiries, 25 (73 per cent), were for industrial properties, followed by four (12 per cent) for office, two (6 per cent) for retail, two (6 per cent) for Institutional, and one (3 per cent) for hospitality.
- In terms of the source of the inquiries, 15 (44%) were directly from companies, 6 (17.6%) from Toronto Global, 5 (14.7%) from the Government of Ontario, 2 (6%) from Real Estate Agents, Site Selectors, Developers, 1 (3%) from York Region, and 5 (14.7%) from other partners.
- Many inquiries were from Canada, with 15 (44%), followed by 8 (23.5%) from unknown countries, 6 (17.5%) from the U.S., and 1 (3%) each from China, Germany, Italy, South Korea, and Taiwan.
- In Q4 2022, Vaughan had an industrial availability rate of only 0.4%, making the limited supply of employment lands and buildings a significant challenge for companies looking for a new location in Vaughan. To tackle this issue, ED has launched a digital and interactive Vacant Employment Land Directory which will assist in identifying development opportunities within Vaughan's employment areas. Additionally, staff are actively building strong relationships with the real estate community to identify and keep track of significant off-market real estate opportunities that may not be publicly available.
- A total of 57 site selection opportunities and vacant land directory requests with the potential to create more than 3,400 new jobs remain open in the investment pipeline. Staff continue to take a client-centric approach to follow-up on these opportunities and are providing clients with the highest levels of site selection service.

## **Economic Intelligence**

- ED continues to act as knowledge brokers and the go-to source for insight into Vaughan's economy. The insights page launched on June 14, 2022, on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) and acts as a hub for important news and insights developed by ED staff. The webpage features a variety of products, including blog posts, local investment stories, data, research and analysis, and featured insights from across all business units. Insights cover a variety of industries and topics. General themes include business resilience, innovation, people and talent, operations, productivity, competitiveness and growth, catalyzing economic opportunity, and business climate and trends ([vaughanbusiness.ca/insights](http://vaughanbusiness.ca/insights))
- The aim of the insights page is to empower businesses and business community stakeholders in their decision-making efforts, by providing the local and timely knowledge and insights they need to make more informed decisions and identify opportunities. This development reiterates ED staff's role as knowledge brokers

## **Economic Intelligence: ED Launched an Insights webpage in 2022 with nearly 30 Knowledge Products Published**

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- The aim of the insights page is to empower businesses and business community stakeholders in their decision-making efforts, by providing the local and timely knowledge and insights they need to make more informed decisions and identify opportunities. This development reiterates ED staff's role as knowledge brokers and opportunity advisors who facilitate economic capacity, resilience, and opportunity for our business community.
- In 2022, the insights page featured nearly 30 posts with 850 web page visited
  - Insights topics include 2021 census highlights macroeconomic economic trends, local investment highlights, building resilience, vertical farming, and cybersecurity

## **Talent City Vaughan Supported the Upskilling of more than 140 Vaughan Residents in 2022**

- Talent City Vaughan supports workforce development throughout the City of Vaughan. The program prioritized organizations supporting marginalized groups for equitable recovery and offered micro-grants of up to \$10,000 to deliver re-skilling, upskilling and other job training programs for Vaughan residents.
- In 2022, Talent City Vaughan disbursed \$61,000 in funding to seven social and community service organizations that hosted training programs for more than 140 Vaughan residents.

## **2022 Economic Development Highlights by Ward**

### **Ward 1**

- [Walmart Canada](#) is building a 750,000 sq. ft. highly automated distribution centre. This significant investment is anticipated to create 2,000 new jobs. The combined investment in land, building construction, automation systems and employee training is estimated to be more than \$500 million.
- Canada's Wonderland opened its largest and newest dining facility. It's the largest capital investment they have ever made in a dining facility with a maximum seating capacity of 500.

### **Ward 2**

- [FGF Brands](#) is currently working with the City of Vaughan to build additional food processing facilities in Vaughan by the end of 2024. This is a \$750 million investment project, creating up to 1,200 new jobs in addition to 700 existing employees in Vaughan.
- [Microsoft](#) is currently working with Alectra Utilities and the City of Vaughan to establish one of Canada's largest data centres by 2023.
- [LGC](#), a leading global life science tools company, has chosen to locate its Toronto Research Chemicals subsidiary in Vaughan. Construction work has commenced on a new facility of more than 200,000 square feet, which will bring more than 400 highly skilled jobs to the area when it opens in 2024.
- [Aritzia](#) is a Canadian women's fashion brand with over 100 retail stores in North America. They recently moved into a 540,000 sq. ft. distribution centre/office, creating 600 new jobs.
- [City Electric Supply](#) is a leading worldwide electrical distributor serving Electrical Contractors in trade and industry across all market sectors with over 1,000 branch locations around the world operating in 8 countries. The company is in the process of moving into a 160,000 sq. ft. distribution centre by August 2022. This investment is expected to create 200 new jobs.

- [Fastfrate Group](#) is one of Canada's largest privately held intermodal LTL carriers offering coast-to-coast facilities and industry-best LTL & FTL intermodal transit times. To accommodate growth, they currently have an active site plan application to build an additional 133,303 sq. ft. warehouse facility. This expansion is expected to create at least 200 new jobs.
- [IHG Hotels & Resorts \(IHG\)](#), one of the world's leading hotel companies with more than 6,000 destinations and 17 brands, announced the opening of its first Canadian avid hotels property in Vaughan

#### Ward 3

- [Rivian Automotive](#), a new electric pickup truck manufacturer and automotive technology company from the United States invested \$14 million to set up a new dealership in Vaughan, creating more than 45 new jobs. This investment is among the first Canadian location to sell Rivian-branded vehicles.

#### Ward 4

- VMC
  - Approved residential development currently accounts for over 20,020 units and approximately 39,640 residents; representing 160% of the residential unit target and 159% of the population target established for the 2031 planning horizon.
  - Built and approved the development in the VMC as of 2022 representing approximately 6,530 office jobs and more than 1,000 retail jobs.
  - More than 783,500 square feet of new office space have been built and approved in the VMC, representing 52 percent of the 2031 office space target.
  - More than 425,000 square feet of retail uses in VMC have been approved, representing 57 percent of the 2031 retail target.
  - While Weston and Highway 7 continue to go through the secondary plan study process, initial projections show approximately 1,650 additional jobs across office, retail and institutional uses.
- In 2022, ventureLAB and Sterling Industries announced plans to expand ventureLAB's Hardware Catalyst Initiative to establish a \$2.5 million MedTech lab and incubator for hardware and semiconductor companies in Vaughan with plans to open in 2023.
- [Chick-fil-A](#), one of the largest American fast-food restaurant chains opened its new location in Vaughan employing approximately 120 full and part-time staff.
- U.S.-based [Taylor Farms](#) opened its first production facility in Canada in Vaughan in 2022 after acquiring Freshpoint Toronto in 2021, which is focused on its retail product portfolio. This \$50 million investment represents 300 employees (150 of which were retained during the acquisition).

#### Ward 5

- [AWIN Group of Companies](#) added 52,000 sq ft of new retail space increasing the complement of retail available to the mature residential area within Ward 5.

## 2023 Look Ahead

ED is focusing its efforts on development of Vaughan's established and growing automotive and auto-tech sectors as well as its food and beverage sectors through foreign direct investment, cross-border trade and learnings around industry best practices.

The ED unit has several standout projects and initiatives scheduled for 2023. These include:

- **Website Refresh VaughanBusiness.ca**

Economic Development staff will complete a website refresh to ensure that residents, businesses and visitors have access to the most relevant data. The last website refresh was conducted in 2018 and given the new term of Council and a new City-wide strategic plan, a website refresh will serve as another updated tool of knowledge.

- **Key Opportunity Areas and Sector Profile Marketing**

Vaughan's key sector pamphlets and webpages are important tools used to highlight the Vaughan advantage to new or existing businesses, talent, and the wider business community/ecosystem. Our key sectors represent the economic base of Vaughan, and a revamp of key sector materials aims to refresh the content and design of these tools to reflect changes in the workforce, types of businesses and number of businesses operating within Vaughan. Vaughan's key sector pamphlets and webpages are important tools used to highlight Vaughan's advantage to new or existing businesses, talent, and the wider business community/ecosystem. Our key sectors represent the economic base of Vaughan, and the proposed revamp aims to refresh the content and design of these economic development tools.

Key Opportunity - To further promote the Vaughan advantage and highlight areas of growth throughout the city Economic Development will be developing content for key opportunity areas. Like the web and print content for key sectors, key opportunity areas will primarily focus on areas in Vaughan where our client groups can live work and play. Opportunity areas will highlight important locations throughout the city and focus on the immediate cluster predominant within that area i.e., VMC= urban intensification, VEZ= industrial development. AutoTech, Collision

- **Automotive Sector Development**

Vaughan has more than 50 automotive parts manufacturing businesses that employ over 6,800 people, and more than 190 motor vehicle and parts dealers that employ over 3,700 people according to the latest York Region Employment Survey.

The manufacturing industry which automotive is a huge part of contributes \$4.6 billion or 19% to Vaughan's total GDP.

To continue to develop the Weston Rd and Highway 7 corridor and further strengthen Vaughan as a destination for next-generation automotive technology, Economic Development will prioritize the automotive/EV sector in 2023 and beyond by promoting Vaughan as an ideal destination for next-generation automotive technology, Economic Development will prioritize the automotive/EV sector in 2023 and beyond by promoting Vaughan as an ideal destination for automotive/EV investments at AutoTech Detroit in June 2023

In January 2023, Vaughan also became the newest municipality to join the Ontario Auto Mayors Caucus to continue advocacy at a provincial and federal level for the automotive sector in Ontario.

- **Agri-food and Food and Beverage Processing Sector Development**

Vaughan is at the heart of Toronto Region's Food & Beverage sector, the largest in North America, boasting more than 500 companies in the City's own food and beverage supply chain and employing 21,700 workers – nearly 10 per cent of Vaughan's employment base.

To capitalize on the city's thriving food and beverage sector, Economic Development staff will attend the Anuga FoodTech Conference with York Region and conduct a trade mission to Northern Italy's food industry. This initiative aims to promote cross-border trade, raise Vaughan's profile, learn industry best practices, and investment attraction activities.

Recognizing the crucial role of talent in the growth of the food sector, staff will continue to work with post-secondary institutions such as George Brown and other key regional employment stakeholders to support the development and availability of talent for the food sector.

In addition, staff will be organizing a Mayor's roundtable discussion to:

- Identify opportunity areas within the industry to position Vaughan as a Centre of Excellence

- Assess regulation and policy impact to explore ways to provide support and overcome any barriers hindering the industry's development
- Provide a platform for participants to share and examine best practices from other regions that have successfully promoted growth in the food and beverage sector
- Explore collaboration and partnership opportunities to drive the growth and sustainability of the sector
- **Construction Sector Development**

The Province of Ontario aims to construct 1.5 million homes across Ontario by 2031. This represents a significant opportunity for the established construction industry in Vaughan.

Staff will undertake several actions in 2023 to help the local construction cluster seize the opportunity. For example, to fully comprehend the advantages of prefabricated homes for the residents of Vaughan, as well as to explore the potential for the city's construction industry to emerge as a hub for innovative home-building techniques, the Economic Development will be organizing a Mayor's Roundtable. This collaborative event will bring together local and regional industry experts with the primary objective of evaluating the practicality and effectiveness of modular housing as a commercial solution to address Ontario's housing crisis.

- **Business Development Events**

Building on the success of the Business-to-Business (B2B) Industrial Tour, the City of Vaughan's Economic Development team will be hosting Business After Five 2-4 times annually. This interactive event is an opportunity for businesses to build connections, learn and promote their products and services with other businesses that share the same passion for manufacturing.

- **Talent City Vaughan**

The Economic Development unit will continue Talent City Vaughan hoping to attract more participants and not-for-profit organizations to train and develop talent in Vaughan.

- **Vaughan Business LinkedIn**

The Economic Development LinkedIn page will allow for increased communication and engagement with our three core client groups (1) SME's (2) local talent (3) business community/ecosystem. The page will allow our department to profile and support Vaughan's transformative, ambitious, and purpose-driven economy with the goal to make Vaughan a place where entrepreneurship, business, tourism, and art can prosper and grow.



The City's ED team is the go-to source for insight into Vaughan's economy. ED staff act as knowledge brokers and opportunity advisors who facilitate local economic capacity, resilience, and opportunity. Economic Development will be responsible for the development, planning, and release of content on the platform and will manage interactions such as InMail, content resharing from other organizations.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

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

The Business Retention, Expansion + Attraction - 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](http://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 ED unit enhanced existing services and added new services to help build Vaughan's economic resilience. Staff recommend that Committee receive this first annual BRE+A report outlining the achievements to date as information.

**For more information**, please contact: Rajbir Sian, Manager, Economic Development, ext. 8472

### **Attachments**

None.

### **Prepared by**

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**Approved by**

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

Nick Spensieri, City Manager