

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, September 19, 2023

**WARD(S):** 2 4

**TITLE:** EXPANSION OF BRIDGE ENHANCEMENT AND DIGITAL SIGN MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

**FROM:**

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** DECISION

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### **Purpose**

To seek approval to execute an amendment to the existing 2020 Master Outdoor Agreement with *Van Horne Outdoor (VHO)* to include two additional double-sided digital billboards on CPKC property in Woodbridge (Ward 2), and to seek approval to enter into an agreement with *Allvision (AV)* to modernize one Metrolinx bridge overpass on Highway 7 in the community of Concord, Ward 4.

### **Report Highlights**

- Metrolinx and CPKC are expanding their sign network in Vaughan as part of their federal and provincially mandated assets. As part of this expansion, the City of Vaughan is being offered screen time to promote Council-approved initiatives.
- Owned by CPKC, the first two sign locations in Woodbridge installed by VHO will bring community messaging to the 407 and 427 Highways (Ward 2).
- Owned by Metrolinx, the bridge sign installed by AV will beautify, modernize, and enhance the existing rail overpass bridge located at Highway 7 east of Keele in Concord (Ward 4).
- Digital outdoor signs increase the City's inventory of communication channels, thereby improving City and community communications with commuters, residents, community groups and businesses.

## **Report Highlights continued**

- The proposed agreement provides an opportunity to leverage exposure and profile on key corridors to address community needs for promotion, marketing awareness and communications of local events, happenings, safety alerts, etc. in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
- The City would receive 10% of guaranteed screen time throughout the year and up to an additional 5% of screen time for two four-week periods during the year for community use.
- Other than the staff time required to prepare City content, this project shall be delivered by AV/VHO respectively and their agents at no cost to the City.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the City Clerk be authorized to enter into an advertising agreement with **Allvision Canada** on matters of mutual interest related to the following digital bridge sign on **Metrolinx property** in Vaughan, subject to having received all required permits, the content of this agreement being satisfactory to the City Manager (or designate), and the form being satisfactory to the City Solicitor (or designate):

One double-sided digital **bridge** location:

- (i) Hwy 7 east of Keele St. (43.80278333, -79.48827222)

2. That the City Clerk be authorized to enter into an amending agreement to the existing advertising agreement with **Van Horne Outdoor** (a limited partnership between CP and Allvision) on matters of mutual interest related to the following two digital signs on **CPKC property** in Vaughan, subject to having received all required permits, the content of this agreement being satisfactory to the City Manager (or designate), and the form being satisfactory to the City Solicitor (or designate):

Two double-sided digital **billboard** locations:

- (ii) Highway 407 approx. 180m west of Islington Rd.
- (iii) Highway 427 approx. 50m north of McGillvray Rd.

3. That staff of the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be authorized to manage content related to the City allocation on the subject digital signs.

## **Background**

Van Horne Outdoor (VHO) is a joint-venture partnership between Allvision and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC, formerly CP Rail prior to the recent merger with Kansas City Southern railway) giving Allvision exclusive rights to develop digital signs on CPKC's federally regulated land.

As one of the preeminent developers/operators of digital signs in Canada, Allvision (AV) is a digital out-of-home media company that partners with public agencies such as Metrolinx, municipalities, and private entities with large land holdings such as the City of Vaughan.

***On June 16, 2020, the City entered into a Master Advertising Agreement with VHO on two bridge locations in Woodbridge, Ward 2***

Those locations are Highway 7 west of Islington and Highway 427 south of Royalpark Way. That agreement included the following benefits to the City of Vaughan:

- VHO is responsible for paying for all the upfront and ongoing cost to install and maintain the signs at no cost to the City.
- The agreement also provides the City with a minimum of 10% of total aggregate annual advertising time on signs, plus additional 5% during two four week periods for city messaging.
- The design of the overpass bridges also includes city branding by affixing our corporate logo to the metal cladding.
- Local businesses and community groups are to book advertisements with VHO/AV directly and supply their own artwork preferred advertising rates for local businesses.

The digital bridge signs became operational in the summer of 2022, and in 2023 thus far the estimated free space has an advertising value of \$186,326.97 with over 31M impressions.

***On April 6, 2023, the City executed another agreement with Allvision on Metrolinx property granting them the right to place a digital billboard on Highway 407 for the display of third-party advertising.***

The proposed advertising agreement outlines the same conditions as the bridge locations including dedicated time for city messaging. This brings the total count of signs in the City of Vaughan prior to this current proposal through Allvision/Van Horne Outdoor to three (3).

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[CP Bridge Enhancement and Digital Sign Modernization Proposal, 2020](#)

(Item 5, Report No. 11 of the Committee of the Whole, March 11, 2020)

## **Analysis and Options**

***Increasing the city's communication network to alert, inform, educate and engage the public is a priority of the City.***

Notwithstanding the city's recent digital billboards program on city property, the city's digital bridge signs and billboards that display third-party advertising on private property throughout Vaughan provide additional communication channels in high traffic areas of the city where city messaging is lacking. Through corporate branding on the railway overpasses and 5-10% of in-kind city messaging on the digital billboards, this proposal increases the city's digital sign network and modernizes the dilapidated infrastructure.

***The expansion of the digital sign network will improve the appearance of and include the city's corporate branding on one Metrolinx rail overpass in Ward 4 as well as bring additional messaging into Ward 2.***

Under its modernization program, Allvision proposes to modernize one of their Metrolinx overpasses on Highway 7 east of Keele with City of Vaughan corporate branding and one digital sign on each side of the bridge. To be consistent with the size and visual identity of the current inventory, the bridge will be designed with a similar aesthetic with aluminum cladding and white lettering for the Vaughan logo to the left and one 10'x24' digital face on either side.

***The vendor will be obligated to comply with all City By-laws and follow the appropriate permitting processes.***

In addition to the bridge signage, VHO through its joint venture partnership with CPKC will be erecting two double-sided digital billboards in Ward 2. One on Highway 407 and one at Highway 427. Both the bridge sign as well as these digital billboards must be permitted through the Building Standards Department. Signs being developed in partnership with the City must abide by the provisions of the Sign By-law 140-2018, as amended. VHO/AV will be required to obtain all necessary approvals prior to commencement of work.

Also of note, all city messaging content deployed on digital screens throughout the city on private property still must abide by the [Vaughan Digital Sign Network Policy 17.C.04.](#)

## **Financial Impact**

There are no financial or budget implications as the project will be funded entirely by Allvision/Van Horne Outdoor except for staff time to prepare city content for display. Currently, the existing digital signs in Vaughan that are already operational through VHO/AV generate an in-kind value of approximately \$185,000 in free advertising space for the city with over 30M impressions. The proposed new digital signs would increase these figures by \$577,427 in free advertising space and 96,237,840 annual impressions.

## **Operational Impact**

The vendor has consulted with Economic Development and after Council approval will seek all necessary approvals. Once the permits are issued and the vendor has satisfied all the requirements of the City, Corporate Communications will be engaged to program the signage with city messaging.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

As some of the proposed signs will span regional roadways, the vendor will circulate a copy of this report to York Region.

## **Conclusion**

The VHO proposal aims to expand the city's communication network and improve the appearance of one additional rail overpass providing branding and engagement opportunities for Vaughan in three high-traffic areas (Highways 407, 427 and 7).

The provision of digital signage at no additional cost to the City provides opportunities for communicating city and emergency messaging.

**For more information**, please contact: Raphael Costa, Director Economic Development [Raphael.costa@vaughan.ca](mailto:Raphael.costa@vaughan.ca), x8891.

## **Attachments**

1. Vaughan CP Bridge Enhancement & Digital Sign Program Proposal, 2023

## **Prepared by**

Cristina Prinzo, Program Manager Municipal Partnerships and Corporate Initiatives, [Cristina.prinzo@vaughan.ca](mailto:Cristina.prinzo@vaughan.ca), ext. 8187.

**Approved by**

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

Nick Spensieri, City Manager