

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Item 15, Report No. 37, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 26, 2023.

15. TOURISM VAUGHAN CORPORATION – 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendations contained in the following report of the City Manager, dated September 19, 2023:

Recommendations

1. THAT physical/digital copies of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation – 2022 Year in Review be distributed to Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, local and regional partners, including the Tourism Vaughan Corporation, the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee Members, and all other relevant organizations/individuals; and
2. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development and Tourism Vaughan Corporation be authorized to communicate the content of this report and its attachment across City channels where appropriate.

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 19, 2023

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: TOURISM VAUGHAN CORPORATION – 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 the Tourism Vaughan Corporation.

Report Highlights

- The Tourism Vaughan Corporation continues to champion Vaughan as a premier overnight destination for leisure, sport and business travelers, undertaking initiatives to assist in rebuilding Vaughan's tourism industry.
- In 2022, the Tourism Vaughan Corporation progressed on key initiatives in each of the five strategic priorities, as outlined in the Vaughan Destination Master Plan: governance and city policy framework; product development; partnerships; marketing and communications; and research and data analysis.
- Vaughan's tourism sector continues in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with the labour market shortage being a top concern for future growth. However, the demand for tourism has been increasing: strong growth in Q2 and Q3 2022 led to an annual accommodations occupancy rate of 73.8 per cent, meeting 2019's pre-pandemic level. It is expected that 2023 will perform greater than 2022.
- The Tourism Vaughan Corporation Year in Review report provides a snapshot of upcoming projects that will contribute to the city's environmental and social vitality and its overall sustainability to advance Vaughan's position within the tourism landscape in 2023.

Recommendations

1. THAT physical/digital copies of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation – 2022 Year in Review be distributed to Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, local and regional partners, including the Tourism Vaughan Corporation, the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee Members, and all other relevant organizations/individuals; and
2. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development and Tourism Vaughan Corporation 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 Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) is Vaughan’s destination marketing and development organization (DMO) with the mission to develop and promote Vaughan as a tourist destination for visitors and business travelers.

To achieve these goals, the TVC’s plan and budget utilize 50 per cent of the revenues generated by the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) pursuant to By-law 029-2019.

The TVC began operations in Q4 of 2019.

As a municipal services corporation, the TVC is operated by city staff within the City of Vaughan's Economic Development Department in the Office of Communications and Economic Development (City Manager's Office).

The TVC is guided by the following Council-approved initiatives:

- The City of Vaughan's Term of Council Strategic Plan
- The 2020-2023 Economic Development (ED) Strategic Business Plan
- The Vaughan Business Resilience Plan - an addendum to ED's existing business plan because of the COVID-19 pandemic to build readiness, resourcefulness, and resilience into Vaughan's business community, inclusive of the tourism sector.
- The Vaughan Destination Master Plan
- Advantage Vaughan – Phase 3 of the City's Economic Development response to the pandemic

The Council-approved Vaughan Destination Master Plan (VDMP) lays out a comprehensive plan for the development of Vaughan's tourism-related industry cluster and serves as the basis for the TVC Action Plan.

In October 2021, the VDMP was approved by Council. The VDMP sets out a strong organizational foundation to guide industry partners and municipal investment and to develop Vaughan as a premier destination over the next five years. It recommends specific action items to enhance visitor attraction, infrastructure, physical assets, and visitor experience programs and services.

The plan identifies five strategic priorities upon which the Tourism Vaughan Action Plan has been developed:

1. governance and city policy framework;
2. product development;
3. partnerships;
4. marketing and communications; and
5. research and data analysis.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract – Tourism Vaughan 2022 Business Plan and Budget \(March 8, 2022\)](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract - Vaughan Destination Master Plan \(October 13, 2021\)](#)

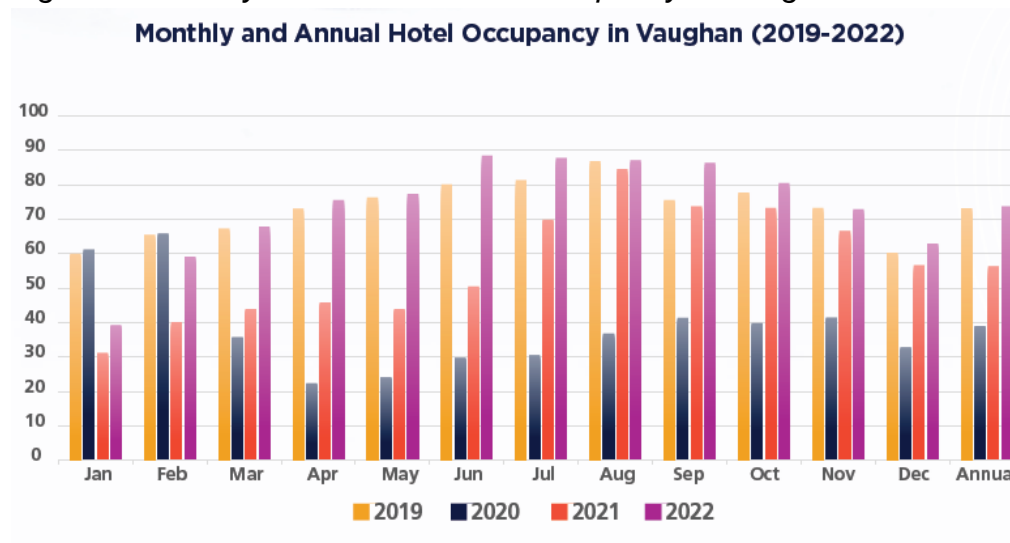
Analysis and Options

Vaughan’s tourism outlook shows solid growth since the COVID-19 pandemic. While growth trajectories vary by industry within the tourism sector, overall health is increasing.

Labour shortages and pandemic-related debt hamper the growth of new tourism attractions and offerings¹. However, with demand continuing to rise – specifically seen in Q2 and Q3 of 2022 – it is projected that Vaughan’s tourism sector will further grow in 2023.

In 2022, the annual accommodations occupancy rate was 73.8 per cent, meeting 2019’s pre-pandemic level of 73.2 per cent. For comparative purposes, this same rate was 56.4 per cent in 2021 and at 39.0 per cent in 2020 when the pandemic first hit. The equalizing of this rate from pre-pandemic to now showcases the resiliency of Vaughan’s tourism economy and shows promise for its continued growth.

Figure 1: Monthly and Annual Hotel Occupancy in Vaughan



¹ Tourism Vaughan conducted over 20 corporate calls in 2022; see labour shortage reports from Tourism HR Canada [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), and [4](#).

In 2022, the Tourism Vaughan Corporation has made progress in each of the five strategic priorities: governance and city policy framework; product development; partnerships; marketing and communications; and research and data analysis.

Some highlights from 2022 include:

- Launched the Tourism Innovation Lab in Vaughan, the first time this unique program has been offered anywhere in the Greater Toronto Area to encourage new and innovative tourism concepts through a pitch competition
- Successfully awarded \$100,000 grant from Central Counties Tourism under FedDev Ontario’s Tourism Relief Fund to deliver on the Better Your Business Tourism Diversity program
- Supported more than 70 events, activations and festivals to drive visitation, including Luminato, Road Hockey to Conquer Cancer, the Vaughan Latin Festival and the Toyota National Canada Soccer Tournament
- Supported the Vaughan opening of Canada’s first avid hotel with 119 guest rooms (IHG brand) (6800 Hwy 7), increasing Vaughan’s accommodation count to 16 and accommodation rooms to 1,955
- Hosted Canada Soccer National Championships 2022, which generated over \$430,000 in GDP for Ontario
- The 2022 year-end actual MAT collections were \$2,834,266 compared to a budgeted projection of \$2,336,000

2022 Key Accomplishments	
Governance and City Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee (TVAC) consisting of tourism operators and key stakeholders to use as a regular feedback loop for TVC, the TVC Board, and to deepen local industry connections • As directed by Council, appointed two industry representatives from the TVAC to the TVC Board • Worked with Economic Development to identify MAT opportunities • Published VDMP to guide the sector’s development
Product Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the Tourism Innovation Lab in Vaughan, the first time this unique program has been offered anywhere in the GTA to encourage new and innovative tourism concepts through a pitch competition • Successfully awarded \$100,000 grant from Central Counties Tourism under FedDev Ontario’s Tourism Relief Fund to

	<p>deliver on the Better Your Business Tourism Diversity program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported more than 70 events, activations and festivals to drive visitation, including Luminato, Road Hockey to Conquer Cancer, the Vaughan Latin Festival and the Toyota National Canada Soccer Tournament • Supported applications to FedDev Ontario's Tourism Relief Fund from the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and the City's Cultural Heritage department • Supported the Vaughan opening of Canada's first avid hotel with 119 guest rooms (IHG brand) (6800 Hwy 7), increasing Vaughan's accommodation count to 16 and accommodation rooms to 1,955. Two additional hotels are in the planning pipeline, with more to come as development finalizes • Launched Phase 2 of the Cultural Arts Centre Project • Continuation of Safe Travels and P.O.S.T. Promise in Vaughan with 200+ businesses to date (combined) • Hosted Canada Soccer National Championships 2022, which generated over \$430,000 in GDP for Ontario
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted accommodation site visits to refresh content on HostInVaughan.ca and deepen stakeholder partnerships • Partnered on key tourism-driving campaigns, showcasing the Staycation Tax Credit program in 2022 • Hosted in partnership with the Vaughan Film Festival a Familiarization Tour for film industry representatives • Supported Vaughan Chamber of Commerce's #SupportVaughanLocal campaign, which achieved over 10 million impressions from its strategic marketing plan • Secured \$100,000 Tourism Relief Fund grant from FedDev Ontario through Central Counties Tourism
Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched a new Economic Development Communications Business Unit to increase marketing and communications • Advertised with sport and meeting professionals industry associations to attract business and sports activities • Executed on seasonal visitor campaigns for Summer, Fall and Winter/shoulder season • Represented the City and TVC on the Kleinburg Business Improvement Area • VDMP identified value propositions and target markets

Research and Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed data agreement with Central Counties Tourism to understand visitation, with reports detailing 2019 and 2021 visitor profiles to leverage for greater ROI in future marketing campaigns • Assigned Economic Development Research and Intelligence Staff to support • Ongoing monitoring of occupancy data for accommodations, in which the annual occupancy percentage rose to 73.8 per cent compared to 56.4 per cent in 2021 and 39.0 per cent in 2020² • The 2022 year-end actual MAT collections were \$2,834,266 compared to a budgeted projection of \$2,336,000 • Shared and leveraged online databases like SupportVaughanLocal and yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca
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2023 Progress Update

In 2023, the Tourism Vaughan Corporation is dedicated to contributing towards Vaughan’s environmental and social vitality, and its overall sustainability through key initiatives under the outlined five strategic priorities.

Highlights include:

- Introducing a Tourism Festival and Sports Events hosting grant and partnership funding program in preparation for the 2024 Summer events season
- Supporting events, activations and festivals being hosted in Vaughan, with an expected record number of more than 80 events assisted
- Relaunching the social media channel @visitvaughan for Instagram

2023 Key Activities	
Governance and City Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board presentations starting in March from Industry Associations to educate staff, Board, and TVAC • City-Wide Events Strategy participation from TVC President and Staff including By-law and policy review
Product Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide seminars to local businesses to position them better to compete • Support marquee amateur sports events with local clubs (soccer, curling), such as the Islamic Games and the Umbro

² Central Counties Tourism, *Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data Report 2019 - 2022*

	<p>Showcase, whom Tourism Vaughan has had initial conversations with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support events, activations and festivals being hosted in Vaughan, with an expected record number of more than 80 events assisted • Introduce a Tourism Festival and Sports Events hosting grant and partnership funding program in preparation for the 2024 Summer events season • Support tourism operators creating new or enhanced inclusive (DEI-focused) product and service offerings with the Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity program • Continue to work with the Tourism Innovation Lab to create opportunity for new or startup tourism activations within the city
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Central Counties Tourism (CCT) as a Platinum Sponsor for the Annual Industry Symposium • Invite key partners including Central Counties Tourism, York Region Arts Council and the Vaughan Attractions Council to Board meetings • Support marquee amateur sports events with local clubs (soccer, curling) • Launch a Vaughan module of the CCT Ambassador Program • Attend key tourism and tourism-adjacent conferences, seminars and summits to increase Tourism Vaughan's visibility locally and nationally
Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business communications toolkits for operators, accommodations, and small businesses • Refresh HostInVaughan.ca and work to relaunch visitvaughan.ca • Relaunch the social media channel @visitvaughan for Instagram • Invite key partners including Central Counties Tourism, York Region Arts Council and the Vaughan Attractions Council to Board meetings • Explore opportunities to customize Vaughan landing pages on platforms like Expedia, TripAdvisor, etc. • Work with key regional and provincial tourism organizations to promote Vaughan as an overnight destination

<p>Research and Data Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 2021 Census to drive insight • Secure York Region Employment Survey for 2024 • Utilize 2019 to 2022 Environics research provided through Central Counties Tourism (pre-pandemic and pandemic recovery stages) • Develop and deliver ongoing insight on the industry • Continue to monitor occupancy data for accommodations, in which as of June 2023, Vaughan’s YTD occupancy rate is 76.7 per cent, compared to 68 per cent in 2022 and 43.6 per cent in 2021³ • Deliver an annual Year in Review in Q3 2023
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Financial Impact

None

Operational Impact

None

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Tourism Vaughan Corporation - 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 Central Counties Tourism (Regional Tourism Organization 6), York Region Arts Council, Destination Ontario, Destination Canada, ministries, local and regional stakeholders, and prospective tourism activation opportunities. Sharing this publication with key stakeholders will help raise Tourism Vaughan’s and the City’s profile, attract new partners and investments, and support the expansion of the local tourism community.

Conclusion

The Tourism Vaughan Corporation continues to champion Vaughan as a premier overnight destination for leisure, sport and business travelers. In 2022, TVC worked directly on initiatives to assist in rebuilding Vaughan’s tourism industry, with a focus on generating overnight visitors and collaborating with operators to enhance product and

³ Central Counties Tourism, *Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data Report June 2023*

service offerings. Staff recommend that Committee receive this TVC report outlining the achievement to date as information.

For more information, please contact Don De Los Santos, Manager, Economic Services, ext. 8874.

Attachments

1. Tourism Vaughan Corporation – 2022 Year in Review, Economic Development, Sept. 19, 2023

Prepared by

Ashley Angeloni, Tourism Development Officer, ext. 8367

Approved by

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Nick Spensieri, City Manager

Tourism Vaughan: 2022 Year in Review

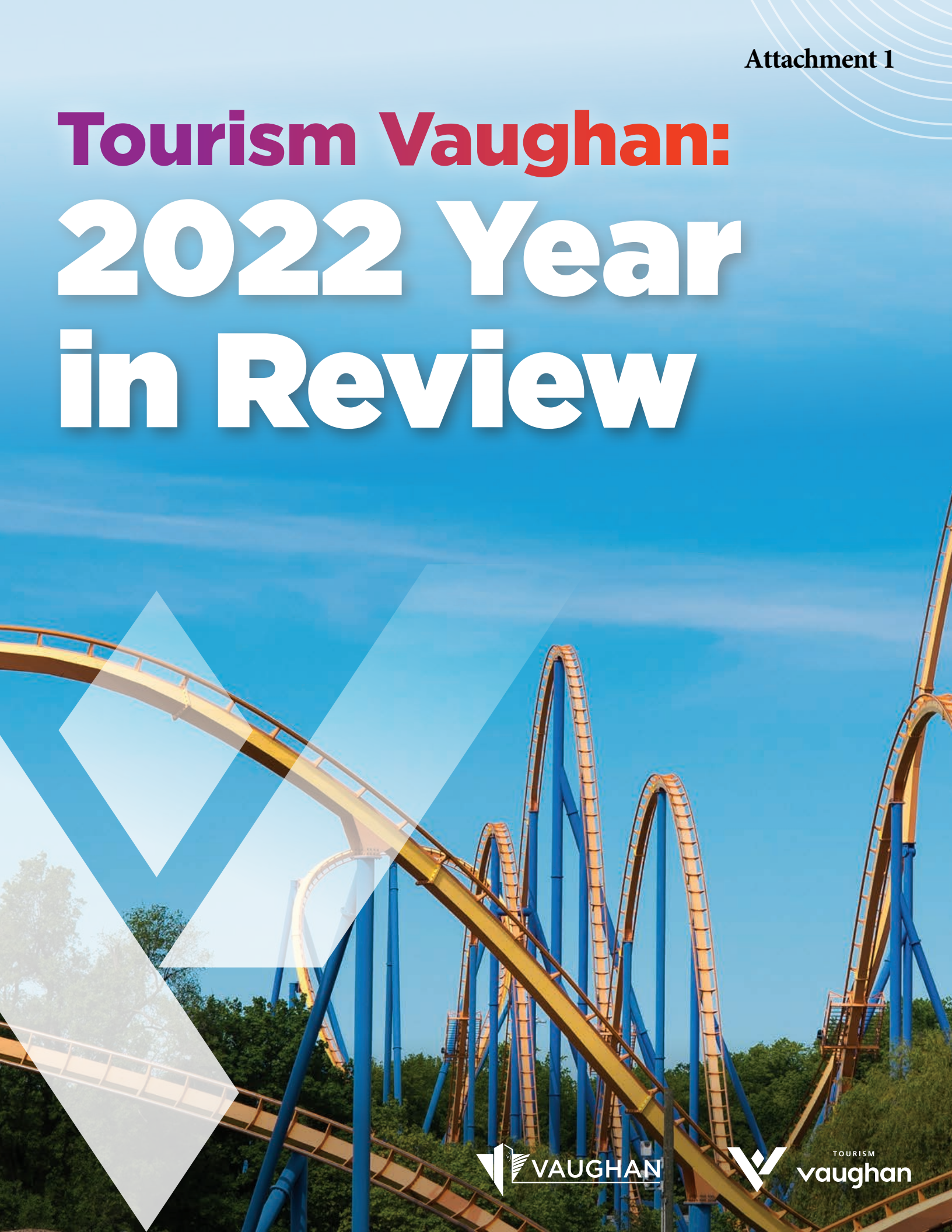




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Council	4
Message from the Mayor	6
Message from the City Manager	8
TAP into Vaughan	10
What we do	12
Governance and City policy framework	14
Product development	20
Partnerships	26
Marketing and communications	30
Research and data analysis	36
2023 look ahead	44



MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

Tourism Vaughan's mission to establish our city as a premier tourism destination is an important one. The City of Vaughan's Destination Master Plan lays out a comprehensive plan for developing a tourism-related industry cluster and City staff have achieved great progress on implementing the plan to date.

We wholeheartedly value the staff who are undertaking such fine work and are proud to recognize their accomplishments.

This report highlights the many practical ways Tourism Vaughan continues to champion and support Vaughan's tourism industry and we are grateful for their efforts.



Steven Del Duca
Mayor

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Vaughan is an exciting tourist destination. Whether visiting for leisure, sport or business, our city has options to meet almost every need.

Tourism Vaughan, with its mandate of developing our city as a tourist destination for visitors and business travellers, is vital to our city's future. The team continues to build relationships with operators to provide a better experience for residents and visitors alike; offer vital tools to enhance the experience of visiting Vaughan; and are thinking strategically to build on Vaughan's position as a premier tourism destination.

The City of Vaughan is a municipal leader because of our talented staff and their creative and unique approaches to their work. The achievements summarized in this report are the result of a dedicated team, and I look forward to their future accomplishments.

Steven Del Duca
Mayor of Vaughan





Nick Spensieri
City Manager

MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

The Tourism Vaughan team remains committed to establishing Vaughan as a premier tourism destination and, as part of the Economic Development department, directly supports the local tourism business community.

The team's work is integral to guiding industry and municipal investment in developing Vaughan as a destination – including visitor attraction infrastructure and physical assets, and services and programs related to the visitor experience. Led by the Vaughan Destination Master Plan, the team undertakes product development, partnerships, marketing and communications, and research and data analysis to develop the local tourism-related industry cluster.

On behalf of the Senior Leadership Team – Executive, I want to congratulate the Tourism Vaughan team on the initiatives and achievements outlined in this review.

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Nick Spensieri
City Manager, City of Vaughan

TAP into Vaughan

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

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

Vaughan is **P**urpose-Driven. The City is proud to lead a community dedicated to doing business with purpose. Our community works to build a vibrant and inclusive city where everyone prospers.



Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

What we do

Tourism Vaughan Corporation

The Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) is Vaughan's destination marketing and development organization (DMO) with the mission to develop and promote Vaughan as a tourist destination for visitors and business travellers. TVC undertakes key strategic projects that align with the **Vaughan Destination Master Plan (VDMP) (PDF)**, which lays out a comprehensive plan for developing Vaughan's tourism-related industry cluster.

The plan identifies five strategic priorities:

1. Governance and City policy framework
2. Product development
3. Partnerships
4. Marketing and communications
5. Research and data analysis

Tourism Vaughan's mission is to establish Vaughan as a premier tourism destination through product development, marketing and education, and strong collaboration with and in support of operators.

Governance and City policy framework

City policies and governance support the effective management of Tourism Vaughan to align with industry best practices.





TOURISM VAUGHAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In December 2022, Council approved Tourism Vaughan's Board of Directors for the 2022-2026 term to be authorized to appoint an additional two Board members from among the tourism-sector business owner/employee representatives of the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee (TVAC).

The approval for this Board structure is as per the recommendations of the VDMP, approved by Council in October 2021.

TOURISM VAUGHAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As outlined in the VDMP, an advisory committee made up of tourism industry leaders was formed to provide the Tourism Vaughan Board of Directors with tourism-related best practices, recommendations and education of the industry to ensure greater accountability, and to help build stronger relationships with local tourism stakeholders. The TVAC consists of eight members with leadership and expertise across different tourism industry sectors.



Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

VAUGHAN DESTINATION MASTER PLAN (VDMP)

The Council-approved VDMP was published on both vaughan.ca/TVC and vaughanbusiness.ca to support the sector's development. The VDMP's primary goal is to guide industry and municipal investment in developing Vaughan as a destination over the five-year plan – with a particular interest in leveraging existing strengths, supporting the future growth of tourism operators, unlocking the potential development for new tourism products and experiences, and rebuilding an industry that has been the most significantly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

McMichael Canadian Art Collection

COLLABORATIONS WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS

The tourism sector includes many different industries, such as accommodations, food and beverage, attractions and retail. Given the breadth of opportunity, Tourism Vaughan is uniquely positioned to work and collaborate with City departments. In 2022, Tourism Vaughan successfully:

- executed seasonal destination marketing campaigns with Corporate and Strategic Communications.
- collaborated with Recreation Services on various City-led events, such as the Concerts in the Park series, Vaughan Celebrates Canada Day and Canada Soccer's 2022 Toyota National Championships.
- supported Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations' streetscape and beautification projects.
- provided assistance to the Cultural Heritage department in their application for the Tourism Relief Fund.



Product development

Tourism Vaughan undertakes projects to develop and educate its product and experience clusters, focusing on enhancing visitation.



TOURISM INNOVATION LAB

Tourism Vaughan, in partnership with the Tourism Innovation Lab, launched its first-ever iteration of the Vaughan “Spark” Mentorship and Grants Program. This program supported Vaughan’s tourism community by providing:

- a three-month tourism industry mentorship.
- a \$3,000 grant for the top three pitches selected through the program.
- additional partner support and resources.
- access to a support network of tourism innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders.

The winners of the 2022 Vaughan “Spark” Mentorship and Grants Program are:

- Leila Azimian of Bio-Stat-Green Consulting for a photobioreactor prototype for microalgae decorations and installations.
- Monica Pain of York Region Arts Council for an outdoor multi-media community public art installation.
- Steve Schnier of Vujade Entertainment Inc. for a “Really Big Show” giant puppet.

Vaughan is the first city in the Greater Toronto Area to launch a “Spark” Mentorship and Grants Program with the Tourism Innovation Lab.

BETTER YOUR BUSINESS: TOURISM DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Tourism Vaughan launched the second iteration of the Better Your Business program. Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity focused on developing and/or enhancing tourism products, services and experiences for Vaughan-based businesses and activations. The purpose is to position Vaughan and its tourism operators as an inclusive, safe and welcoming place for people to visit and stay.

The Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity program received \$100,000 in funding through the Tourism Relief Fund from FedDev Ontario, as administered by Central Counties Tourism

The program will continue in 2023 with virtual and in-person seminars, in which trends, best practices and real-life examples will be provided to inspire and encourage the Vaughan business community to incorporate inclusivity into their plans for development.



VAUGHAN'S TOURISM INVESTMENT PIPELINE

To support festivals, events and activations within the city, Tourism Vaughan provides advisory and promotional assistance to further develop and enhance tourism clusters throughout the year. More than 70 events were serviced, from festivals and hiring events to business conferences and sports competitions. Notable events in 2022 included Provincial Scotties Curling Tournament, Luminato, Vaughan Celebrates Canada Day, Dance Together Festival, Canada Soccer's 2022 Toyota National Championships and Kortright Centre's Magical Christmas Forest.

Canada Soccer's 2022 Toyota National Championships

- The city of Vaughan was selected as the host municipality for the Jubilee and Challenge Trophy competitions for Canada Soccer's 2022 Toyota National Championships – the largest amateur team sport competition in Canada.
- The competitions were held from Oct. 5 to 10 and included 16 teams.
- The event contributed more than \$430,000 in Gross Domestic Product to Ontario.

2022 Event Services by the Month

Month	Numbers of Events Serviced
January	4
February	2
March	0
April	3
May	3
June	17
July	11
August	7
September	4
October	12
November	6
December	6

SUPPORTING NEW DEVELOPMENT

To advance Vaughan's various tourism clusters, Tourism Vaughan has supported new development within the city.

IHG's avid Hotel

Tourism Vaughan supported the opening of Canada's first avid hotel, located 15 minutes from Toronto Pearson Airport at Highway 7 and Highway 50. It includes 119 guest rooms and various amenities across more than 5,400 gross square metres. With the addition of this new hotel, Vaughan's accommodation facilities increased to 16, with a total of 1,955 rooms.



Cultural Heritage Centre

Led by the City's Cultural Heritage department, Tourism Vaughan provided insight and supported the department's application to FedDev Ontario's Tourism Relief Fund.

Cultural Arts Centre Project

Led by the City's Strategic Economic Initiatives unit in Economic Development, Tourism Vaughan supported the launch of Phase 2 of the Cultural Arts Centre project.

SAFE TRAVELS AND POST PROMISE

In 2022, Safe Travels and POST Promise continued to be a focus for tourism stakeholders. Safe Travels, an initiative by the World Travel and Tourism Council, recognizes businesses worldwide that have adopted global standardized protocols for health and hygiene to reduce the spread of COVID-19. POST Promise, a national and bilingual initiative that has since concluded, aimed to unite businesses to introduce a common approach to help Canadians feel safe as they began to step back into public spaces and the workplace.

Since the launch of these programs, Tourism Vaughan has actively worked to provide detailed information and assistance to its stakeholders. A combined total of more than 200 businesses have signed up for one, or both, of these initiatives.



Partnerships

Tourism Vaughan aims to create strong local, regional and provincial partnerships to aid destination development and awareness.



ACCOMMODATION SITE TOURS

Accommodations play an important part in destination development and marketing. To best understand and align Tourism Vaughan's priorities under the VDMP, site tours were scheduled to visit all 16 of Vaughan's current accommodations. Site tours and meetings with accommodation staff allowed for valuable discussion on how to enhance and attract tourism to Vaughan, and provided new context and refreshed content for [hostinvaughan.ca](https://www.hostinvaughan.ca), Tourism Vaughan's meeting- and events-focused website. The website highlights the city's accommodations, hotels with meeting space, unique venues and sporting facilities. Insights and feedback will continue to be integrated into 2023 priorities as tours are ongoing.

ONTARIO STAYCATION TAX CREDIT

Tourism Vaughan actively promoted the Ontario Staycation Tax Credit in its campaigns and public service announcements throughout the year to encourage overnight stays. The tax credit applied to leisure stays between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2022. Travellers could claim up to 20 per cent of their eligible accommodation expenses when filing their personal Income Tax and Benefit Return for 2022.

FILM FAMILIARIZATION TOUR

In June of 2022, Tourism Vaughan hosted a tour for film industry leaders at the close of the Vaughan International Film Festival's (VFF) 10th year. The purpose of this tour was to showcase the growth and development of the city of Vaughan – specifically within the film, arts and culture sector – and share insights and learnings with industry sector professionals to further progress Vaughan's positioning as a destination for film and entertainment.

#SUPPORTVAUGHANLOCAL WITH THE VAUGHAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF COMMERCE

Tourism Vaughan partnered with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce to deliver the #SupportVaughanLocal campaign between September 2021 and February 2022. The objective was to support local small businesses through awareness building and promotion across six tourism-based categories: eat and drink, shop, fun and entertainment, events, spa and wellness, and accommodations.

More than 80 businesses signed up to participate across all five of Vaughan's wards. A strategic marketing plan, led by the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, was launched, achieving more than 10 million impressions.

BETTER YOUR BUSINESS: TOURISM DIVERSITY PROGRAM

The Better Your Business program aimed to help the local business community improve their processes, practices and policies to ensure they are socially and environmentally responsible. Through the Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity Program, Tourism Vaughan paired an industry expert and consultant – with lived experience as a person from a marginalized community – with a tourism operator to help them plan and develop more inclusive and diverse tourism products, services and experiences.

Led by KLB Consulting, the program offered one-on-one consultations with established industry leaders to promote tourism to the 2SLGBTQ+ community; Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) community; and individuals with accessibility requirements. Businesses had the opportunity to work with KLB Consulting and develop a strategic diversity, equity and inclusion plan to guide their tourism operations. Alongside the strategic planning process, Tourism Vaughan organized a full-day Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) conference hosted by a team of consultants and curated specifically to address DEIA in the tourism industry. This conference was available to all local Vaughan businesses who were interested in better incorporating DEIA into their own processes and policies. Participants attended an opening and closing group plenary and had the opportunity to participate in three focused sessions from Journeys InEquity, Black in Hospitality, and Joe Baker & Co.



Marketing and communications

Tourism Vaughan works to generate awareness of Vaughan as a premier overnight tourism destination to encourage travellers to explore all the city has to offer.



HOSTINVAUGHAN.CA

A strategic marketing and communications plan targeted at marketing and event professionals was launched in 2022 to promote **hostinvaughan.ca**. As identified in the VDMP, two areas for tourism growth include sports tourism and business meetings and conferences. The campaign's objective was to attract business and sports activities to the city.

SEASONAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

To promote the destination for overnight visits, Tourism Vaughan executed three seasonal campaigns to draw visitation:

Summer in Vaughan

In peak tourism season, Vaughan has strong visitation from the leisure market. As identified in the VDMP, visiting friends and relatives is the top reason people are coming to visit Vaughan. The key message focused on utilizing the Ontario Staycation Tax Credit to stay overnight at one of Vaughan's local accommodations to explore the numerous things to do within the city. Leveraging **visitvaughan.ca** – Tourism Vaughan's consumer-facing website – local attractions, parks, festivals and events were promoted in itineraries and blog posts to encourage overnight visitation.

Vaughan's accommodation occupancy rates over the summer campaign period (May to August) averaged 85.2 per cent, up from 62.2 per cent in 2021. This percentage exceeds the pre-pandemic summertime occupancy rate of 81.2 per cent, partly due to the 'revenge travel' trend the tourism sector has experienced since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

This fall, escape to Vaughan

Vaughan is home to many picturesque locations for enjoying the seasonal beauty that fall offers. With a focus on the city's neighbourhood main streets and outdoor trails, Tourism Vaughan leveraged the current trend towards outdoor and exploratory tourism to showcase a different side of the city.

Similarly to the summer, during the fall campaign period (September to October), Vaughan accommodation occupancy rates averaged higher than the year previous at 83.5 per cent, compared to 2021's 73.6 per cent. This exceeds 2019's pre-pandemic occupancy rate of 76.7 per cent for the city.



Celebrate the winter season

To prepare for the shoulder season, Tourism Vaughan highlighted wintertime attractions, festivals, shopping and recreational activities to promote the city as an overnight destination leading up to – and during – the winter holidays.

While the winter campaign continued into 2023, Vaughan’s accommodation occupancy rate between November and December was 68 per cent, which was higher than both 2021 and pre-pandemic’s 2019 at 61.7 per cent and 66.8 per cent respectively.

KLEINBURG BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (BIA) PARTICIPATION

To streamline communication and align efforts where applicable, a representative of the City’s Vaughan Business and Entrepreneurship Centre and Tourism Vaughan attended and participated in meetings for the Kleinburg BIA.

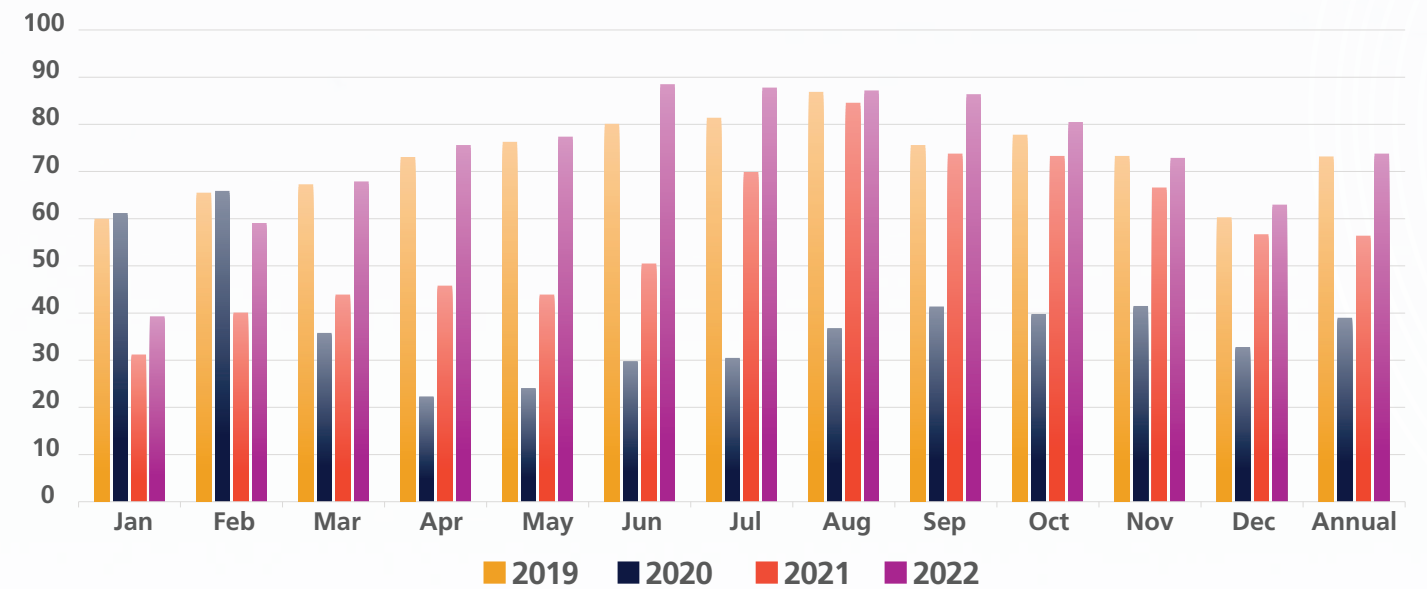


Monthly and Annual Hotel Occupancy in Vaughan (2019-2022)

Date	Occupancy percentage			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	60	61.2	31.2	39.3
February	65.5	65.9	40.1	59.1
March	67.3	35.8	43.9	67.9
April	73.1	22.3	45.8	75.6
May	76.3	24.1	43.9	77.4
June	80.1	29.8	50.5	88.5
July	81.4	30.5	69.9	87.8
August	86.9	36.8	84.6	87.2
September	75.6	41.4	73.8	86.4
October	77.8	39.8	73.3	80.5
November	73.3	41.5	66.6	72.9
December	60.3	32.8	56.7	63
Annual	73.2	39	56.4	73.8

Source: Central Counties Tourism, Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Monthly and Annual Hotel Occupancy in Vaughan (2019-2022)



Source: Central Counties Tourism, Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Research and data analysis

Evidence-based decision-making is important in guiding Tourism Vaughan's developmental and promotional work under the VDMP.



RESEARCH AND DATA WITH CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM (CCT)

Tourism Vaughan renewed its data agreement with CCT to gain a better understanding of visitors to the city. Focusing on 16 different areas, including the City's identified intensification areas, Tourism Vaughan received visitor profiles and data reports for tourist activity in 2019 and 2021. The objective is to leverage these reports and profiles for greater return on investment in future marketing campaigns.

Economic Development assigned Research and Intelligence staff to support the receipt and distribution of the data from CCT.

Accommodation occupancy data

To ensure Vaughan's destination development and marketing initiatives effectively support the tourism sector, occupancy data for Vaughan's accommodations are monitored and compared to regional and provincial rates.

After the pandemic's devastating effect on the accommodation industry, 2022 saw a significant increase in travel. In 2022, the annual occupancy rate average for Vaughan accommodations was 73.8 per cent, exceeding 2021's 56.4 per cent and 2020's 39.0 per cent. The annual occupancy rate in 2019 (pre-pandemic) was 73.2 per cent, illustrating the industry's bounce back from the significant impacts of COVID-19.

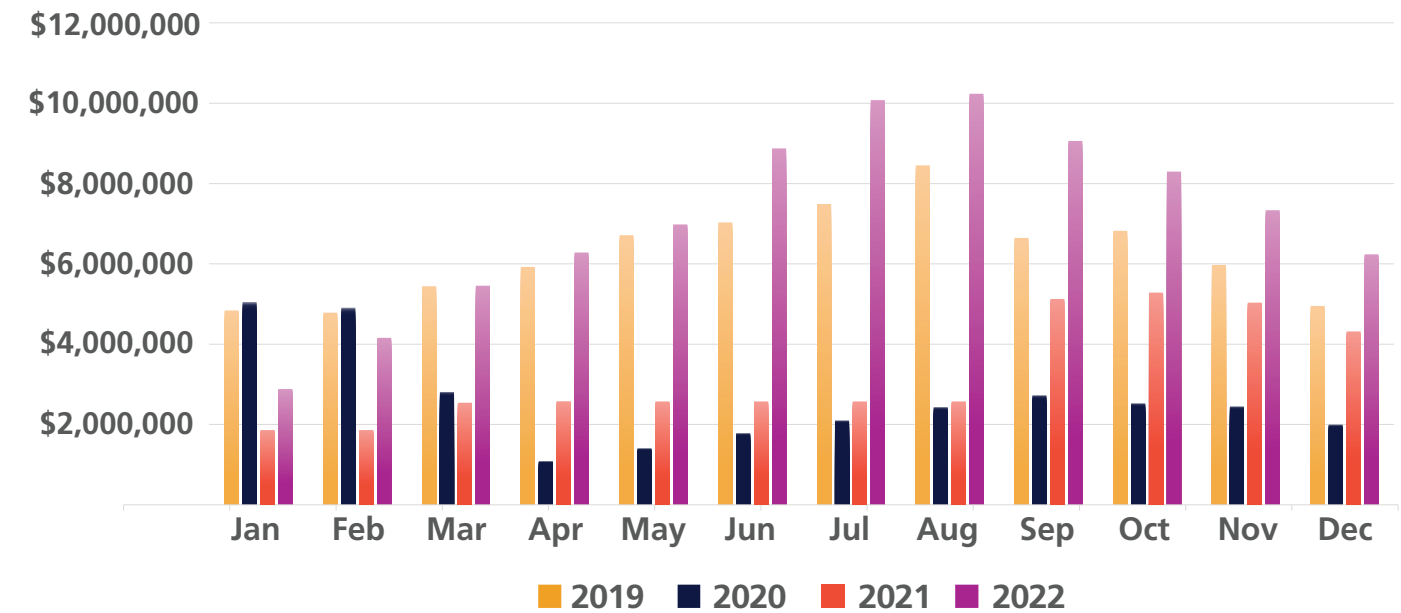
In addition, accommodation revenue has significantly increased. In 2022, Vaughan's accommodation revenues averaged \$85.9 million – an increase of \$10 million compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Accommodation Revenue in Vaughan (2019-2022)

Date	Total Revenue			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	\$4,838,813	\$5,047,985	\$1,863,320	\$2,880,914
February	\$4,786,739	\$4,907,639	\$1,863,320	\$4,160,124
March	\$5,442,955	\$2,809,489	\$2,540,565	\$5,455,602
April	\$5,925,583	\$1,086,139	\$2,576,284	\$6,284,295
May	\$6,711,798	\$1,405,353	\$2,574,793	\$6,982,553
June	\$7,030,152	\$1,784,241	\$2,574,793	\$8,872,521
July	\$7,490,541	\$2,101,364	\$2,574,793	\$10,075,089
August	\$8,452,735	\$2,431,450	\$2,574,793	\$10,234,437
September	\$6,646,186	\$2,728,763	\$5,124,692	\$9,062,504
October	\$6,821,445	\$2,529,841	\$5,284,984	\$8,297,906
November	\$5,973,356	\$2,450,895	\$5,032,935	\$7,336,047
December	\$4,954,573	\$1,996,468	\$4,317,464	\$6,238,250
Annual	\$75,074,877	\$31,279,626	\$44,405,518	\$85,880,242

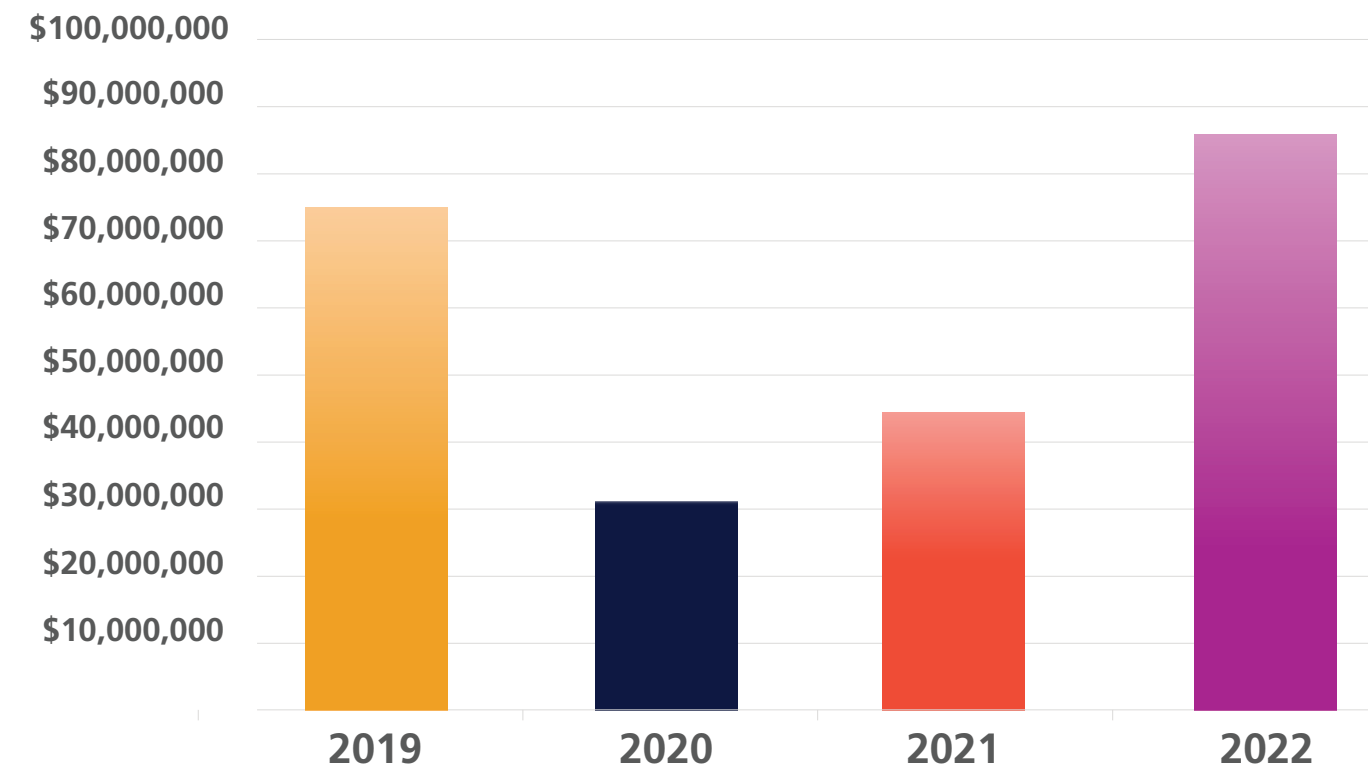
Source: Central Counties Tourism, Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Monthly Accommodation Revenue in Vaughan (2019-2022)



Source: Central Counties Tourism, Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Annual Accommodation Revenue in Vaughan (2019-2022)



Source: Central Counties Tourism, Vaughan Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

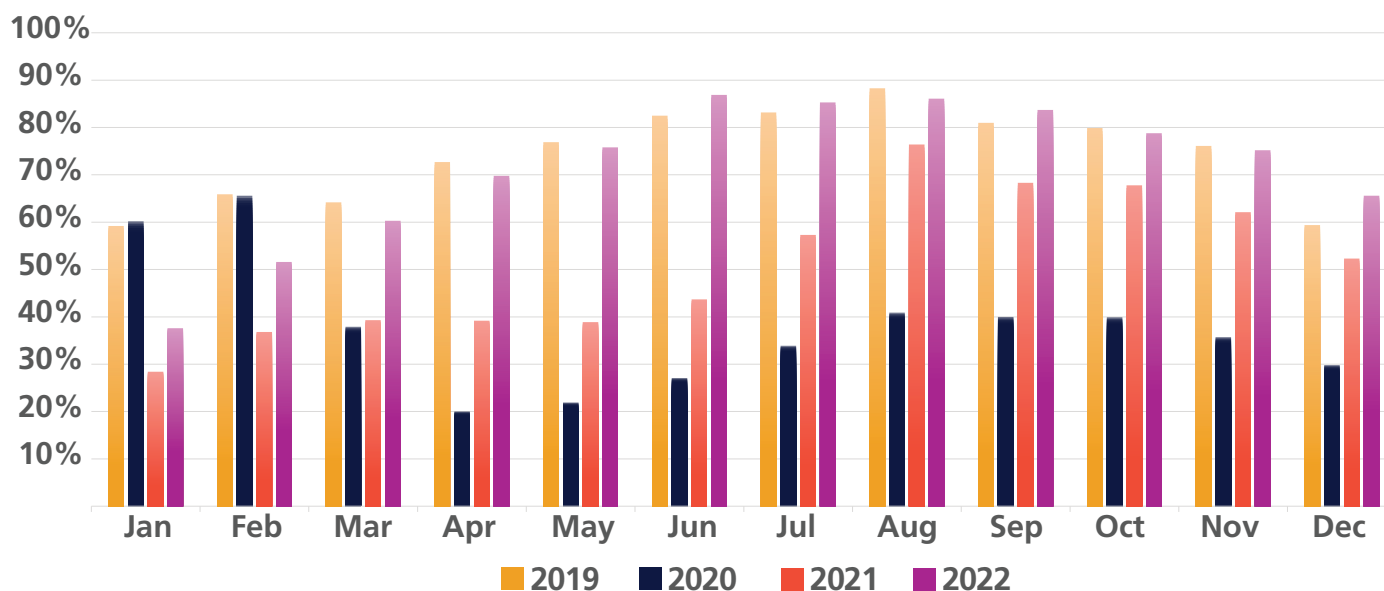
Accommodation occupancy in Vaughan is strong when compared to the 2022 average annual occupancy rate in York Region (71.3 per cent) and for the combination of York, Durham and Headwaters regions, named Region 6 (RTO6) (71.5 per cent).

Accommodation Occupancy in York Region (2019-2022)

Date	Occupancy percentage			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	59.2%	60.2%	28.4%	37.6%
February	65.9%	65.6%	36.8%	51.6%
March	64.2%	37.9%	39.3%	60.3%
April	72.7%	20.0%	39.2%	69.8%
May	76.9%	21.9%	38.9%	75.8%
June	82.5%	27.1%	43.7%	86.9%
July	83.2%	33.9%	57.3%	85.3%
August	88.3%	40.9%	76.4%	86.1%
September	81.0%	40.0%	68.3%	83.7%
October	79.9%	39.9%	67.8%	78.8%
November	76.1%	35.7%	62.1%	75.2%
December	59.4%	29.8%	52.3%	65.6%
Annual	74.2%	37.9%	51.0%	71.3%

Source: Central Counties Tourism, York Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Monthly Accommodation Occupancy in York Region (2019-2022)



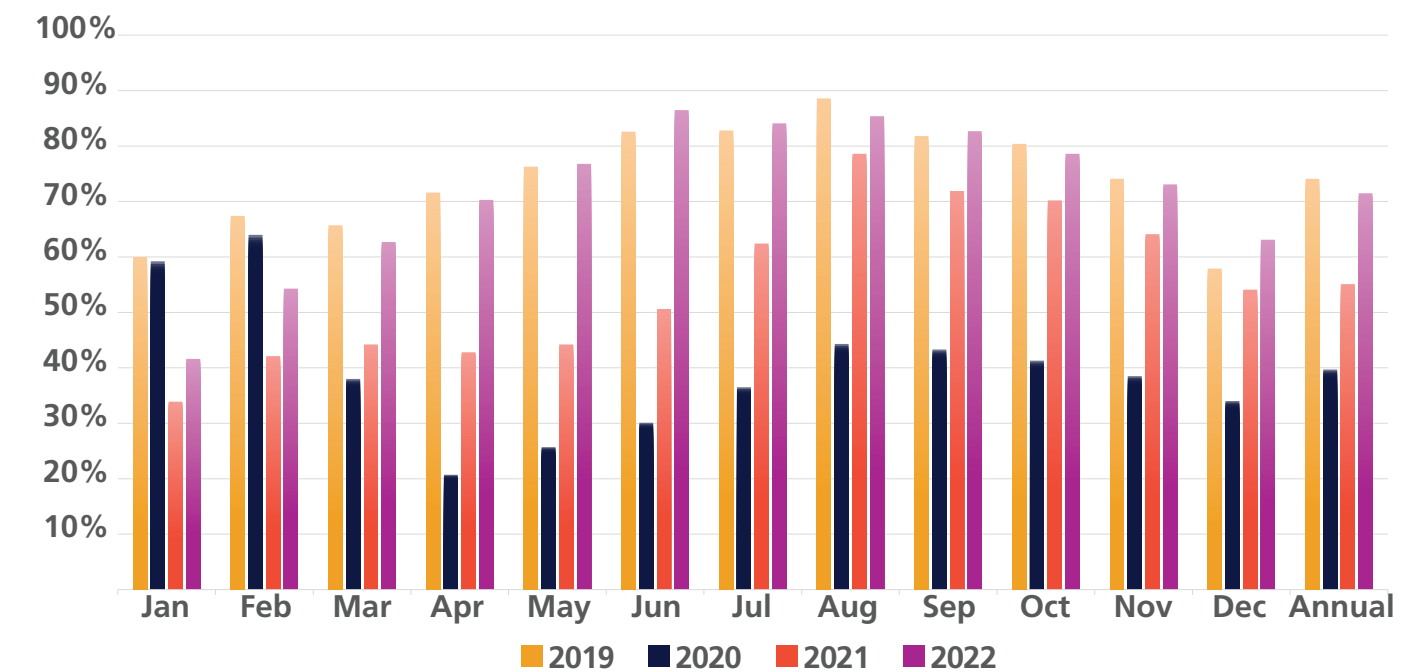
Source: Central Counties Tourism, York Monthly Hotel Data 2019-2022

Accommodation Occupancy in York, Durham and Headwaters Regions (2019-2022)

Date	Occupancy percentage			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	60.0%	59.2%	33.9%	41.6%
February	67.4%	64.0%	42.1%	54.3%
March	65.7%	38.0%	44.2%	62.7%
April	71.6%	20.7%	42.8%	70.3%
May	76.3%	25.7%	44.2%	76.8%
June	82.6%	30.1%	50.6%	86.5%
July	82.8%	36.5%	62.4%	84.1%
August	88.6%	44.3%	78.6%	85.4%
September	81.8%	43.3%	71.9%	82.7%
October	80.4%	41.3%	70.2%	78.6%
November	74.1%	38.5%	64.1%	73.1%
December	57.9%	34.0%	54.1%	63.1%
Annual	74.1%	39.7%	55.1%	71.5%

Source: Central Counties Tourism, CCT Monthly Hotel Data 2017-2022

Monthly Accommodation Occupancy in York, Durham and Headwaters Regions (2019-2022)

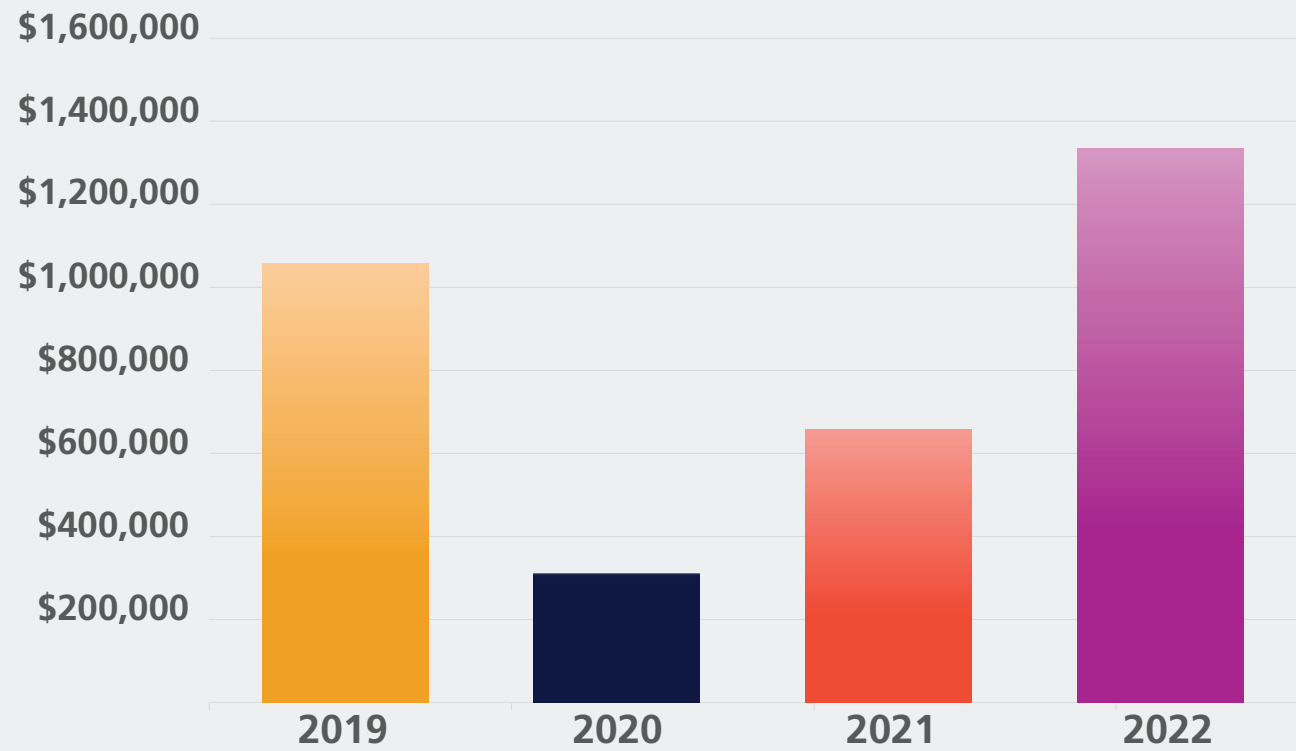


Source: Central Counties Tourism, CCT Monthly Hotel Data 2017-2022

MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATIONS TAX (MAT) COLLECTION

Actual MAT collection at year-end in 2022 was \$2,834,266. This exceeds the budgeted projection of \$2,336,000. The Tourism Vaughan portion of this revenue was 50 per cent or \$1,334,452.

Annual Municipal Accommodations Tax Collection (2019-2022)



LEVERAGE SHARED DATABASES

To align tactics and communicate effectively with local and regional partners, Tourism Vaughan leverages its database to promote and highlight the tourism businesses and events that engage with [visitvaughan.ca](https://www.visitvaughan.ca).

The website connects with [yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca](https://www.yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca) – the consumer-facing website for CCT – to ensure businesses and events are listed on both platforms to provide additional awareness and promotion of tourism drivers in the city.

In addition, Tourism Vaughan hosted the #SupportVaughanLocal campaign in partnership with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, allowing Tourism Vaughan to connect with new businesses and build stronger rapport with those already engaged.



2023 look ahead

Tourism Vaughan continues to champion Vaughan as a premier overnight destination for leisure, sport and business travellers, undertaking initiatives to assist in rebuilding Vaughan's tourism industry.



GOVERNANCE AND CITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Presentations to the Tourism Vaughan Board of Directors
 - Beginning in March 2023, industry associations and partners will present to the Board, staff and the TVAC to educate and bring awareness to industry trends and best practices for destination development.
- Participation in the City-wide events strategy
 - The President of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation and staff participated and provided insight on feedback received from festival and event organizers regarding hosting and executing within the city.
 - Feedback included insight on by-law and policy review.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Education for tourism stakeholders
 - Tourism Vaughan will continue to provide virtual and/or in-person seminars to educate local tourism businesses on how to compete better and position themselves in the current tourism climate.
- Support amateur sporting events
 - Understanding the opportunity of sports tourism as per the VDMP, support for marquee sporting events with local clubs will continue. Noted areas of opportunity include soccer, hockey, curling and pickleball.
- Tourism Hosting and Partnership Fund
 - Tourism Vaughan will introduce a hosting grant and partnership fund that assists festivals and sporting events in preparation for the 2024 summer tourism season.
- Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity program
 - Tourism Vaughan will support tourism operators launching new or enhancing their current tourism offerings to have a greater focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Tourism Innovation Lab
 - Tourism Vaughan will continue to work with the Tourism Innovation Lab for the 2023-2024 iteration of the program to create opportunities for new or startup tourism activations within the city.



PARTNERSHIPS

- Central Counties Tourism (CCT)
 - Work with CCT to be a platinum sponsor for their annual industry symposium.
 - Launch a Vaughan-focused module in alignment with their Tourism Ambassador Program.
- Tourism Vaughan Board meetings
 - Invite key tourism stakeholders and partners such as CCT, York Region Arts Council and the Vaughan Attractions Council to attend Tourism Vaughan's Board meetings.
 - Leverage partners to provide education and industry best practices to staff, the Board and the TVAC.
- Sports groups and clubs
 - Collaborate with local sports groups, clubs and organizations to drive marquee sporting events to the city.
- Conferences, seminars and summits
 - Attend tourism-focused and tourism-adjacent conferences, seminars and summits to stay current on trends and best practices that can benefit the city's tourism development.
 - Increase Vaughan's visibility at local, regional, provincial and national conferences and summits to highlight the city's attractiveness for destination development and build rapport with industry stakeholders.

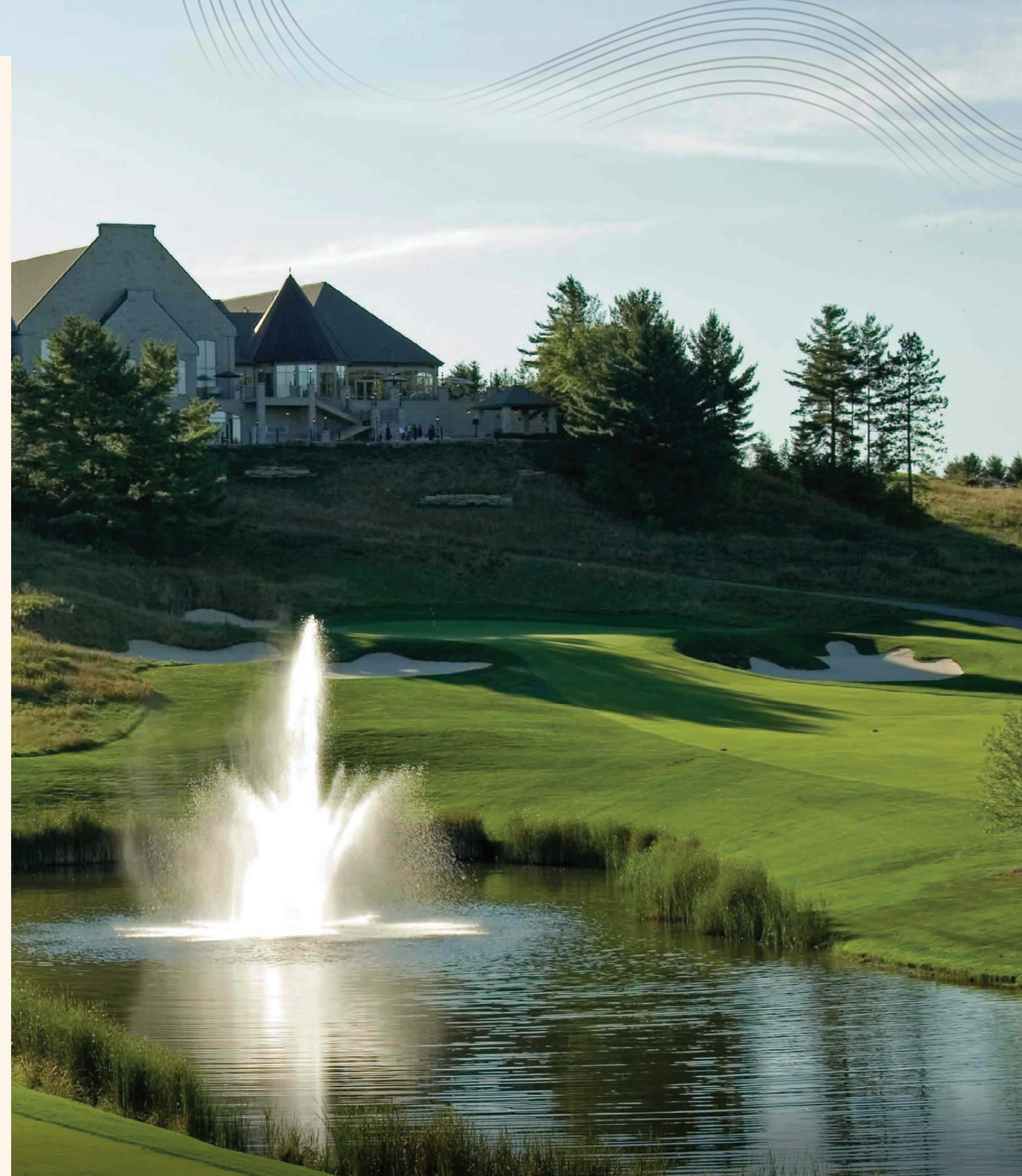


MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Business toolkits
 - Develop communication toolkits for operators, accommodations and small businesses to better equip local businesses with opportunities to benefit from the impact of tourism activations.
- Website relaunch and refresh
 - Relaunch the **visitvaughan.ca** website to elevate the customer journey and provide more opportunities to encourage overnight stays.
 - Refresh the **hostinvaughan.ca** website for 2023 sales sheets and include new venue data to provide up-to-date information for meeting and event planners considering Vaughan.
- Instagram relaunch
 - Relaunch the **@visitvaughan** Instagram page to highlight attractions, festivals, events and activations in the city that drive tourism and overnight visitation.
- Communication with key partners
 - Invite tourism organizations to engage in Tourism Vaughan Board meetings, seminars and collaborative projects to streamline communication of campaigns and programs that develop Vaughan's tourism sector.
- Vaughan's online destination presence
 - Explore opportunities to customize landing pages that focus on or feature Vaughan platforms, such as TripAdvisor and Expedia, to highlight key messages that enhance and promote the destination effectively.

RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

- Data to drive insight
 - Utilize the 2021 Census to look for opportunities that will benefit destination development.
 - Secure the York Region Employment Survey for 2024.
 - Utilize 2019-2022 Environics Analytics research and data provided through CCT (pre-pandemic and pandemic recovery stages) to monitor changes to visitor profiles and travel habits to incorporate into campaign strategies.
- Educate Vaughan's local tourism industry
 - Develop and deliver seminars and workshops virtually or in person to share best practices, trends, business development opportunities and research to aid tourism businesses in their marketing planning and offerings.
- Deliver an annual Year in Review report in Q3 2023





The City's Economic Development department works to make Vaughan a place where entrepreneurship, business, tourism, arts and culture can prosper and grow.

To connect with us or learn about our services, programs and more, visit: vaughanbusiness.ca or email: tourism@vaughan.ca

Tourism Vaughan, Economic Development

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