

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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

**WARD(S):** 4

**TITLE:** VMC 7800 JANE STREET PUBLIC ART PLAN UPDATE

**FROM:**

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

To provide an update on the status of the 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan to develop Public Art on private land located at the north-west corner of Jane Street and Highway 7 in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (“VMC”), following Council approval of the Site Development Application File DA.20.041 on June 28, 2022.

**Report Highlights**

- Vaughan leverages Public Art as a creative placemaking catalyst to reflect the City’s unique identity and economic vitality at the VMC by delivering signature, high-profile expressions of contemporary art.
- Recommendations 16 and 19 of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework are to support the urban design objectives for the VMC, enhance the pedestrian experience, to create memorable environments and enhance wayfinding, and to establish a strong place identity that embodies the values and aspirations of the VMC; and further, as a Site 10 priority, all private developments within the VMC in publicly accessible spaces are appropriate for Public Art consideration.
- As part of their Section 37 Density Bonus Agreement and contribution to the City for the additional density and building height, the Owner has provided the City with a \$2,185,000 Letter of Credit towards public art and developed a Public Art Plan that includes a gateway installation along Highway 7 and Jane Street.

## **Report Highlights continued**

- The 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan details the vision and process for realizing a meaningful, multilayered, and accessible Public Art program of contemporary art expression installed harmoniously in three key onsite locations to animate the urban design context and advance creative placemaking at the VMC.
- The natural forms of Edgeley Pond and Park and the Black Creek, the pre-colonial histories of Indigenous Peoples, the early days of agriculture and industry, and the post-war boom in population growth and diversity present several potential concepts for artists to explore in developing art concepts.
- The Public Art Plan includes a mentorship opportunity to be offered to an emerging artist to facilitate learning in the process of Public Art planning, competition, fabrication, and coordination under the guidance of the Public Art consultant team.
- On May 25, 2023, the VMC 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan was presented to the Vaughan Design Review Panel, which serves as the City's Public Art Advisory Committee providing input on site and artist commissioning processes; and the Panel endorsed the direction of the Plan and its alignment with the vision of the VMC Secondary Plan which informs the provision of "public art as an important element of the VMC's public realm, adding culture, beauty and interest to streetscapes (Policy 4.4.8, VMC Secondary Plan).

## **Recommendations**

1. That this report be received for information.

## **Background**

***Vaughan leverages Public Art as a creative placemaking catalyst to reflect the City's unique identity and economic vitality at the VMC by delivering signature, high-profile, expressions of contemporary art.***

Vaughan is a creative urban city committed to integrating art into its public realm – a city where Public Art is accessible to all people and valued as a powerful placemaking catalyst for animating neighborhoods and districts. The role and value of Public Art as a vital vehicle for transforming the VMC through the creative use of art and design strategies recurs as a fundamental theme in several Council-endorsed documents, including the VMC Secondary Plan, VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan, VMC Urban Design Guidelines, Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

On June 7, 2016, Item 6, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), was adopted without amendment by Council, which included recommendations that staff work with the development community to integrate Public Art into development proposals where possible or appropriate; and that staff pursue and seek partnerships for integrating Public Art installations in the VMC's Mobility Hub vicinity as viable placemaking opportunities.

***As part of their Section 37 Density Bonusing Agreement and contribution to the City for the additional density and building height, the Owner provided the City with a \$2,185,000 Letter of Credit towards on-site Public Art and developed a Public Art Plan that includes a gateway installation at Highway 7 and Jane Street.***

In accordance with the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework and Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program, the Owner developed a comprehensive Public Art Plan outlining the framework for the commissioning of the art and its locational strategy. Upon finalizing the Public Art Plan, the Owner will enter into a Public Art Agreement to detail the commissioning process and installation of the on-site Public Art installations, including a landmark gateway feature at the corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street. The Owner will own and maintain the Public Art.

Recognizing the catalytic role Public Art plays in placemaking, the Owner's Public Art Plan proposes a multilayered series of Public Art components designed to complement the development site in the heart of the new downtown and advance placemaking aspirations for the VMC by animating the uniqueness of the existing urban design context. The Plan outlines commissioning three separate artists/artist teams for three respective sites to achieve cohesive but distinct contemporary public art expressions, including a landmark sculptural installation focus at the corner of Jane St. and Highway 7. The form and scale of the future artworks will create a harmonious expression of contemporary art in prominent, highly visible, publicly accessible locations that serve as impactful features of the development.

The Public Art Plan envisions artists drawing upon a variety of sources for inspiration in developing their concept for the site. The natural forms of Edgeley Pond and Park and the Black Creek, the pre-colonial histories of Indigenous Peoples (where appropriate and with the necessary permissions), the early days of agriculture and industry, and the post-war boom in population growth and diversity present several potential concepts for artists to explore.

***The Public Art commissioning and artist selection process will involve a two-stage invitational competition in keeping with best practices and in alignment with the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program.***

The Owner commissioned Ben Mills, Public Art Management to develop the Public Art Plan and oversee its implementation. The art commissioning process will employ a two-stage invitational Public Art competition to select artists. Stage one will involve the circulation of an open and invitational call for professional credentials to assist the consultant and Owner team in advancing a shortlist of artists to create art concepts (with special attention made towards engaging BIPOC artists and community/arts organizations working with these various communities). Stage two will task the finalists with developing detailed art concepts in response to a contextual artist brief. A balanced five-member adjudication panel comprising a member of the Owner team and the outside art expertise of a pool of relevant artists, curators, educators, and art administrators will select the preferred concept for the commission.

Conforming to the guiding principles identified in the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and the recommendations outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework, the 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan is subject to ongoing evaluation by Staff and the Vaughan Design Review Panel for its appropriateness for display in the public realm. City Staff will continue to liaise with the Owner team and their Public Art consultant to facilitate the execution of their Public Art Plan.

***The Public Art Plan includes a mentorship opportunity to be offered to an emerging artist to facilitate learning in the process of Public Art planning, competition, fabrication, and coordination under the guidance of the Public Art consultant team.***

The mentored artist will be selected by the Public Art consultant and Owner team through an Open and Invitational Call for Credentials, providing an opportunity for less-experienced artists, with specific consideration afforded to artists who live and work in Ontario. An honorarium of \$25,000.00 will be paid to the mentored artist, drawn from the Public Art contribution.

***Public Art Project Schedule:***

- May 18, 2023 – 7800 Jane Street Public Art Plan draft submitted to City of Vaughan
- May 25, 2023 – Design Review Panel Presentation and Assessment
- July 14, 2023 – Final Public Art Plan Submission
- September 19, 2023 – Committee of the Whole (2) Report
- TBD – Public Art Agreement (aligned with development planning trigger)

- TBD – Artist Competition Commences (based on construction commencement)
- TBD – Artist Selection
- TBD – Artwork Fabrication
- TBD - Artwork Installation (Substantial Completion-Building Construction)

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program \(June 2016\)](#)

[Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Culture and Public Art Framework \(November 2015\)](#)

[Extract from the Council Meeting of June 28 2022 for OP.20.003 and Z.20.008 and 19T-20V002 and DA.20.041 \(Item 16, Report No. 30 of the Committee of the Whole\)](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

***Realizing the vision of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework contributes to Vaughan’s identity and the VMC’s sense of place.***

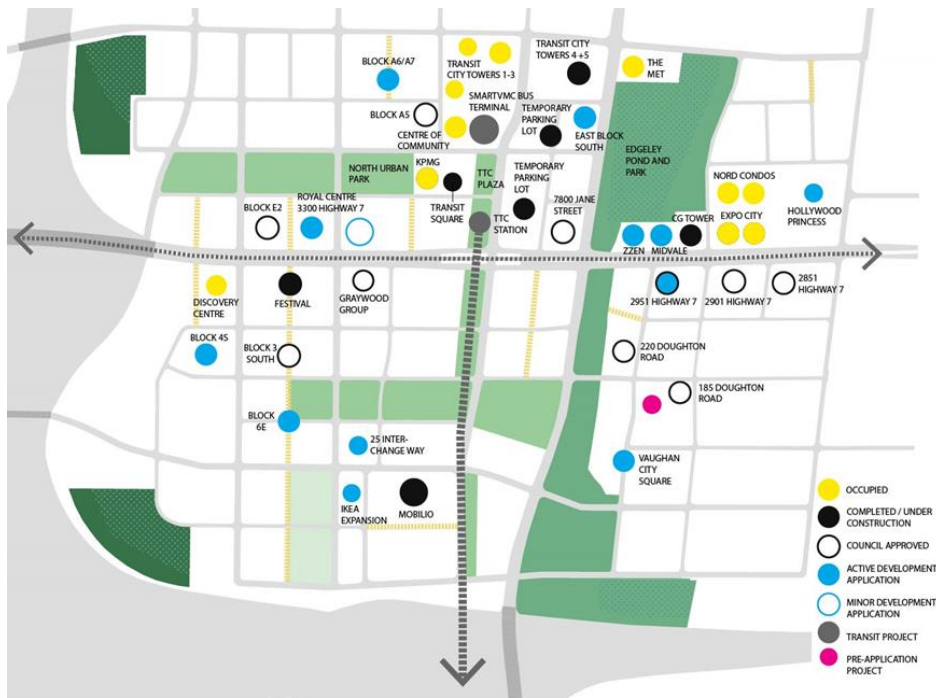
The realization of the VMC’s vision as a vibrant downtown with exciting activities, social capital, and cultural events is predicated on collective efforts in creating a sense of ‘place’. Culture and Public Art initiatives contribute to that sense of place, by creating memories and experiences that draw people to use and frequent the VMC on a 24/7 basis versus just passing through the space.

Public Art plays many roles in the urban context. As outlined in the City-Wide Public Art Program, some of its key roles include:

- Placemaking - creating and enhancing public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being
- Gateway Marker - entrance feature signifying a boundary, assists with wayfinding
- Landmark - easily recognized feature aiding placemaking and orientation
- Local Focal Point - a centre for activity or attention
- Wayfinding - visuals used to convey location and directions
- Interpretation - a work of art that illuminates the character or history of its context
- Functional Element - a work of art that also serves a utilitarian purpose
- Activation and Animation - a work of art that energizes a space, can be interacted with and/or can move independently

***Aligned with the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework recommendation of prioritizing artistic gateways for placemaking purposes, three unique locational***

**opportunities have been identified for installing Public Art in the prominent development site located on the northwest corner of Jane Street and Highway 7.**



7800 Jane Street Development Site in Context



7800 Jane Street Development Site in Context

The Public Art Plan proposes three potential art zones based on several factors to complement the City's guiding principles for siting Public Art:

- High visibility
- Public accessibility
- High pedestrian traffic
- Sufficient space for impactful public art installations
- Locations are within private property
- Will not impede pedestrian traffic along Jane Street
- Create way-finding opportunities at important intersections across the site
- Equitably distribute public art throughout the site in publicly accessible areas
- Highlight major transit routes within the VMC

The three art proposed locations provide unique, prominent site opportunities for up to three separate artists/artist teams to integrate their Public Art concepts:

- 1) A landmark public art installation at the corner of Jane St. and Highway 7 to serve as the primary art location where a larger portion of the public art budget will be expended given it is the most prominent and active location on the development site. A singular large-scale sculptural work of art or a series of sculptural works is being considered for the corner as the "front door" and "welcoming beacon" to the overall development.
- 2) A "bookend" complementary public art installation to the north at the intersection of Jane Street and Apple Mill Road. This secondary location also provides an opportunity for contemporary sculptural or integrated installations of significant scale and visibility to be commissioned. Other potential artistic interventions in this area may also include permeable panels, canopy features, seating features, artist-designed way-finding elements, paving or landscape elements, and artwork integrated into the built form.
- 3) The pedestrian galleria space located along the center of the site, allowing access to the retail spaces and other site amenities presents an opportunity for an immersive experience. This location will not allow for a substantial sculptural installation of any sort due to pedestrian/public accessibility. Artwork in the galleria space may take the form of artist-designed lighting, integrated sculptural interventions, 2D artwork, artist-designed building features, artist-designed paving, artist-designed functional elements, and other forms of expression.

Site Plan with Proposed Public Art Locations:

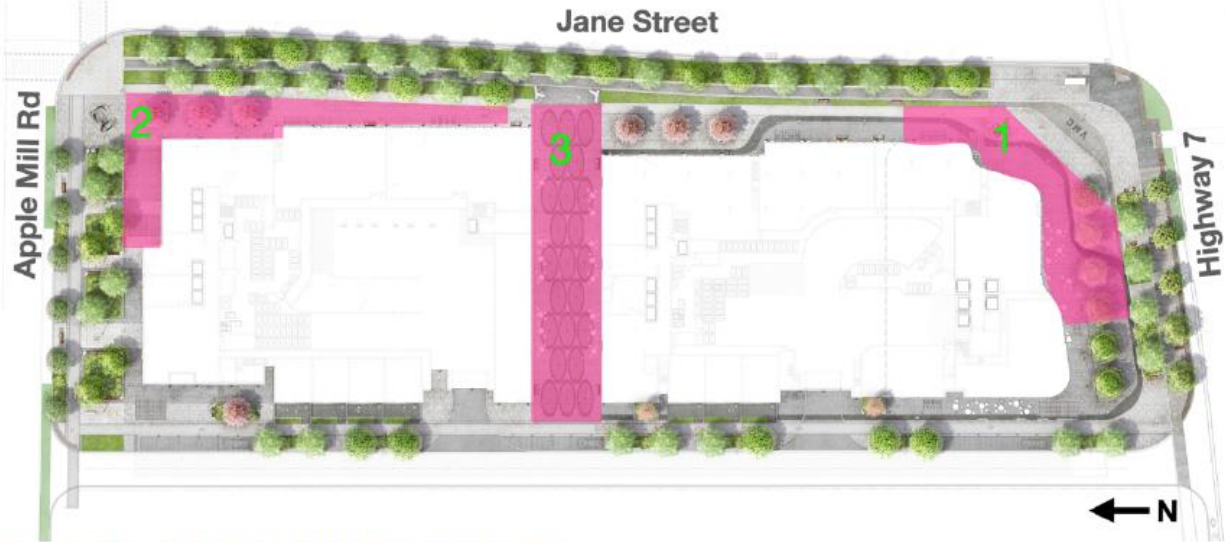


Figure 6: Site Plan with Art Locations Noted in Pink and Numbered in Green

***The Design Review Panel assessed the Public Art Plan’s overall vision and objectives for achieving successful public art expression and viewer experiences through the proposed strategy of integrating three distinct public art installations.***

The Vaughan Design Review Panel is supportive of the direction adopted for this Public Art Plan uniquely anchored by its three-tiered program of Public Art installations. The Panel shared insightful feedback for the Owner team’s consideration focusing on the hierarchical prioritization and relevance of each of the three locations, highlighting the merits of assigning location one as the primary installation site in terms of development context, prominent scale, and distribution of budget as the gateway Public Art feature. The Owner team respectfully incorporated the Design Review Panel’s constructive recommendations by finessing the final version of their Public Art Plan to reflect the Panel’s suggested priorities.

The Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program is supported by the vision of the VMC Secondary Plan which informs the provision of “public art as an important element of the VMC’s public realm, adding culture, beauty and interest to streetscapes (Policy 4.4.8, VMC Secondary Plan). Recommendations 16 and 19 of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework are to support the urban design objectives for the VMC, enhance the pedestrian experience, to create memorable environments and enhance wayfinding, and to establish a strong place identity that embodies the values and aspirations of the VMC; and as a Site 10 priority, all private developments within the VMC in publicly accessible spaces are appropriate for Public Art consideration.



This Public Art Plan contributes to public awareness of the role and value of Public Art and Vaughan's City-Wide Public Art Program in creative placemaking and City building as a catalyst for shaping the City's authentic urban character and economic vitality in a key priority location for Public Art in the VMC. It reinforces the expansive movement of Public Art now populating downtown Vaughan, designed to captivate the interest of a diverse viewing audience travelling through the public realm of the VMC at the same time as featuring signature Public Art opportunities for emerging and established Vaughan and GTA artists.

### **Financial Impact**

The Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program provides the framework for acquiring public art from development projects through Section 37 policies, deriving community benefits for the City that would otherwise be unachievable through property taxation. There are no economic impacts resulting from this report, as this project is fully offset by Section 37 funding and owned and maintained by the Owner. A \$2,185,000 Letter of Credit has been posted to secure the works.

### **Operational Impact**

Public Art Plans are administered under the auspices of the broader Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program. Public Art projects located at the VMC must align with the priorities established by the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

Advising the Owner team and facilitating their submission of a comprehensive Public Art Plan for 7800 Jane Street Inc for endorsement by the Design Review Panel involved extensive cross-departmental consultation between Economic Development and VMC Planning and Urban Design staff. City staff will oversee the Owner Team's implementation of the Public Art Plan to ensure it conforms to the guiding principles identified in the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and the recommendations outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

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

***The Region's policy for Economic Vitality recognizes culture as an important element in making the Region a place to work, live and play. Vibrant and healthy communities will attract and retain a skilled labour force.***

The policies for An Urbanizing Region direct Regional Centres to recognize the importance of creating a sense of place and high-quality open spaces "that include Item

5 Page 7 of 8 meeting places and urban squares that incorporate art, culture and heritage” (s. 5.3.7).

The Region also sets the requirements for Regional Centre secondary plans to include policies addressing the need for Public Art to be incorporated into major Regional and City buildings and to encourage the inclusion of public art in significant private sector developments.

## **Conclusion**

The 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan for implementing a signature program of Public Art expression located at the prominent VMC development site at the northwest corner of Jane Street and Highway 7 aligns with the principles identified in the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and the recommendations outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework. It respects the urban design objectives for the VMC, to enhance the pedestrian experience, create memorable environments, enhance wayfinding, and establish a strong place identity that embodies the values and aspirations of the VMC. Supported by staff and the Vaughan Design Review Panel, the Plan complements the 7800 Jane Street development site and advances creative placemaking aspirations for the VMC by proposing the infusion of an ambitious program of contemporary works of art to animate and distinguish the urban design context.

Conforming to the guiding principles identified in the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and the recommendations outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework, the 7800 Jane Street Inc. Public Art Plan is subject to ongoing evaluation by staff and the recommendations of the Vaughan Design Review Panel for its appropriateness for display in the public realm. City staff will continue to liaise with the Owner team and Public Art consultant to facilitate the execution of their Public Art Plan.

**For more information**, please contact: Sharon Gaum-Kuchar, Senior Art Curator, ext. 8088

## **Attachments**

1. 7800 Jane Street Public Art Plan

## **Prepared by**

Sharon Gaum-Kuchar, Senior Art Curator, ext. 8088

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, Planning and Urban Design, ext. 8266

**Approved by**

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

Nick Spensieri, City Manager