

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2023**

Item 13, Report No. 52, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 12, 2023.

#### **13. DIGITAL BILLBOARD REVENUE PROGRAM – PHASE 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND PHASE 3 PROPOSAL**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendations contained in the following report of the City Manager, dated December 5, 2023:**

##### **Recommendations**

1. THAT Council receives the feedback from the stakeholder and public consultation, and authorizes the City to proceed to RFP and subsequently enter into a land-lease agreement for the following four (4) sites in Phase 2, in a form satisfactory to Legal Services, to permit the proposed installation of the digital billboards:
  - a. Maple Reservoir Park, 10670 Keele St (Ward 1)
  - b. Al Palladini Community Centre, 9201 Islington Ave (Ward 2)
  - c. Rainbow Creek Park, 5450 Highway 7 (Ward 2)
  - d. Jean Augustine District Park, 101 Westmount Ave (Ward 5).
2. THAT in addition, Council authorizes the City to proceed to RFP and subsequently enter into a land-lease agreement for the following four (4) sites identified by the industry via RFI, in a form satisfactory to Legal Services, to permit the proposed installation of the digital billboards:
  - a. Sonoma Heights Community Park, 100 Sunset Ridge (Ward 2)
  - b. Woodbridge Yard, 4630 Langstaff Rd (Ward 2)
  - c. Vaughan Grove Sports Park, 7401 Martin Grove Rd (Ward 2)
  - d. Maple Nature Reserve, 10401 Dufferin St (Ward 4).
3. THAT staff be authorized to negotiate terms and conditions of the land-lease agreement(s) with the successful vendor(s) of the City's request for proposals procurement process, with respect to the eight (8) sites identified in Recommendations 1 and 2 herein, and that the billboards must comply to the City's Sign By-law 140-2018, as amended, with the following exemptions from Section 15:
  - a. Locations not in the Employment Area
  - b. Locations not zoned Industrial or Commercial, or in a Utility Corridor

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2023**

#### Item 13, CW Report 52 – Page 2

- c. Jean Augustine District Park only – within 100m of lands zoned residential and more than 2 ground signs on the Bathurst St frontage.
- 4. THAT Council delegate signing authority to the City Manager to award a term of Contract that exceeds ten (10) years, execute the land-lease agreements referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2, and any amendments related to those land-lease agreements, as the City Manager deems necessary, and to the satisfaction of Legal Services.
- 5. THAT Council directs staff to renegotiate, where possible, the current RCC Media Inc. Dynamic Digital Sign Network Agreement, and the Market Lane Holdings Inc. License Agreement and corresponding TRCA land management agreement, to update and monetize the existing billboards, and to report back to Council with the results of the renegotiation and to request further direction no later than the end of Q2 2024.

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** **DIGITAL BILLBOARD REVENUE PROGRAM – PHASE 2  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND PHASE 3  
PROPOSAL**

**FROM:**

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** DECISION

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### **Purpose**

To report back on the results of the industry and public consultation regarding the four locations identified to proceed to Phase 2 of the Digital Billboard Program, and to present the results of the Phase 3 RFI to develop a short list of additional locations and the potential to monetize existing inventory.

### **Report Highlights**

- The stakeholder engagement and public consultation processes are complete, and the findings are attached.
- Due to the positive response of the four (4) sites identified in Phase 2 of the Digital Billboard Program staff are ready to proceed to RFP.
- An additional four (4) large-format digital billboard locations have been identified as part of Phase 3 and have been evaluated by the internal working group as recommended by the industry for consideration.
- There is potential to revitalize and/or monetize existing billboards via contractual amendments to both RCC Media Inc. and Market Lane Holdings Inc. /TRCA current agreements.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT Council receives the feedback from the stakeholder and public consultation, and authorizes the City to proceed to RFP and subsequently enter into a land-lease agreement for the following four (4) sites in Phase 2, in a form satisfactory to Legal Services, to permit the proposed installation of the digital billboards:
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  - a. Locations not in the Employment Area
  - b. Locations not zoned Industrial or Commercial, or in a Utility Corridor
  - c. Jean Augustine District Park only – within 100m of lands zoned residential and more than 2 ground signs on the Bathurst St frontage.
4. THAT Council delegate signing authority to the City Manager to award a term of Contract that exceeds ten (10) years, execute the land-lease agreements referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2, and any amendments related to those land-lease agreements, as the City Manager deems necessary, and to the satisfaction of Legal Services.
5. THAT Council directs staff to renegotiate, where possible, the current RCC Media Inc. Dynamic Digital Sign Network Agreement, and the Market Lane Holdings Inc. License Agreement and corresponding TRCA land management agreement, to update and monetize the existing billboards, and to report back to Council with the results of the renegotiation and to request further direction no later than the end of Q2 2024.



## **Background**

### ***Economic Development supports City-Wide alternative revenue generation.***

The Alternative Revenue-Generating program within the Strategic Economic Initiatives business unit in Economic Development focuses on three priority areas: city-wide grant support, revenue-generating asset development, and internal program development.

### ***Phase 1: Council approved three (3) Digital Billboards that went live on January 1, 2022, with a minimum of \$6,075,000 cumulative revenue over 15 years.***

The three sites that began operation in January 2022 are as follows:

1. Joint Operations Centre, 2800 Rutherford Road
2. Highway 7 and Keele Street
3. Bathurst Street and Queen Filomena Drive

### ***Phase 2: Staff obtained conditional approval on four (4) additional sites subject to proceed after Phase 1 is complete and pending public consultation.***

Public engagement was conducted on the following four sites:

1. Maple Reservoir Park, 10588 Keele St
2. Al Palladini Community Centre, 9201 Islington Ave
3. Rainbow Creek Park, 5450 Highway 7
4. Bathurst District Park, 101 Westmount Blvd

Economic Development in partnership with the City's Stakeholder and Community Engagement team selected Maximum City, through a competitive process through the City's Vendor of Record for engagement consultants, to facilitate and report back on a stakeholder and public engagement process in support of the Phase 2 digital billboard sites.

The approach to public consultation was based on thorough stakeholder mapping for each location and included outreach to Members of Council, internal City departments, local residents, other stakeholders (including York Region and York Regional Police, among others), technical/industry experts, and local ratepayer associations. The project team's objective throughout the consultation process was to ensure the final research and recommendations considered all factors, thereby aligning with and reflecting the

communities' needs while thoughtfully weighing expert analysis, environmental considerations, economic benefits, and industry trends.

Public consultation tactics included one-on-one interviews and discussions, site visits, four in-person open houses, a public online Q and A forum, and a comprehensive direct-mail notice to selected postal codes surrounding each billboard location and covering a generous radius to ensure comprehensive outreach to the community.

Crafting a compelling and fulsome narrative was also a pivotal piece of the consultation strategy, extending beyond an immediate focus on digital billboards to offer residents a comprehensive understanding of alternative revenue generation. Recognizing the importance of context, educational efforts also included the City's budget and narrowed in on the various alternative revenue streams already activated. By weaving a narrative that extends beyond billboards, the project team sought to enlighten residents about the broader spectrum of initiatives contributing to the City's fiscal resilience. This narrative not only detailed the process of implementing digital billboards but also underscored the tangible benefits derived from these diversified revenue streams, illustrating the positive impact on the community, and reinforcing the City's commitment to financial innovation and maintaining one of the lowest property tax rates in the GTA.

A detailed engagement summary report detailing the input and insights collected can be found in Attachment 2.

### ***Phase 3a: Additional revenue-generating digital billboard locations.***

Simultaneously, as staff worked with the public consultation consultant on Phase 2, Phase 3 was initiated by issuing a Request for Information (RFI) for new locations as part of the industry consultation process. The RFI was issued in March 2023 and there were six responses from industry representatives. The purpose of the request for information was to allow the industry to not only share information and feedback on the four sites going to public consultation but also asked the industry if there were any additional site locations within the parameters of the City's Sign By-Law on city-owned land that we should take into further consideration. Overall, the responses were positive citing minor concerns regarding utility connections and tree removal which will be taken into consideration during the RFP process and mitigated accordingly.

### ***Phase 3b: Updating and potentially monetizing the City's existing inventory.***

In 2015, the City of Vaughan entered into a fifteen-year Dynamic Digital Sign Network Agreement with RCC Media Inc. (2015-2030) that includes ten (10) 4x7 digital signs that

were provided to the City for community messaging, eight (8) CN railway overpasses with Vaughan's corporate logo beside a digital screen for third-party advertising, and seven (7) double-sided large format digital billboards that also include city messaging and third-party advertising.

Currently, none of the sign locations within the RCC Media Inc. Agreement generate revenue for the City of Vaughan. The digital signs were provided to the City and the bridges and digital billboards are on private property therefore provide in-kind value for city messaging but no additional revenue.

Previous Council direction (June 16, 2020, Committee of the Whole) has been given to staff to increase the size of the digital signs and at the time, the work was quoted at upwards of one million dollars. With the authority to explore monetizing the existing inventory by permitting RCC Media Inc. to sell third-party advertising, the charge to the City will be nil and the revenue generated will allow RCC Media Inc. to recuperate their capital investment while benefiting the City via revenue-share agreement with the city.

### **Previous Reports/Authority**

[Digital Billboard Revenue Program, CW \(1\) Feb 7, 2023](#)

[Billboard Revenue Update, CW \(2\) June 8, 2021](#)

[Dynamic Digital Signs at City Facilities, CW \(Working Session\), May 21, 2014](#)

### **Analysis and Options**

***Phase 2: Using Phase 1 as a precedent, the four sites that recently went to public consultation have the potential to generate approximately \$8 million in unencumbered revenue over the next 15 years.***

The industry and stakeholder feedback were overall positive with each of the four sites evaluated for suitability for a digital billboard. Through the industry consultation process, some challenges were identified related to tree removal to clear sight lines, access to power from nearby utilities and low traffic in certain areas that will impact revenue potential. Through the RFP procurement process, staff will address those concerns and the awarded vendor will be responsible for mitigating the impact on the city's property and seek all necessary approvals to begin construction.

***Phase 3a could see an additional four (4) locations.***

The RFI not only asked digital sign companies to provide technical feedback on various elements of Phase 2, per site but also to identify additional sites for construction to inform Phase 3a.

As a result, staff created an internal Digital Billboard Working Group made up of various departments that meet quarterly and play a key role in selecting the potential sites that are ultimately put forward for recommendation to Council. Their institutional knowledge, technical expertise and review of potential sites ensure the best areas within the City are identified for ideal placement that will not interfere with current and future City operations. The feedback they provide along with the information collected in the RFI will provide a framework for the RFP to ensure the successful sign vendor is aware of any special considerations for each site as well as the necessity to work and consult with City staff during the planning and implementation stages of each phase of the project.

The Working Group has completed their review of Phase 3a and staff are seeking Council approval to proceed to engage Legal, Procurement and Financial Services to issue an RFP for the following four (4) additional sites:

- Sonoma Heights Community Park, 100 Sunset Ridge (Ward 2)
- Woodbridge Yard, 4630 Langstaff Rd (Ward 2)
- Vaughan Grove Sports Park, 7401 Martin Grove Rd (Ward 2)
- Maple Nature Reserve, 10401 Dufferin St (Ward 1)

Given that a third party will be constructing the digital billboards and projecting the content, any exemptions to the sign by-law will be subject to conditions set out by the City in the proposed agreement that will be entered into with the successful vendor to the City's request for proposal. Staff are of the opinion that the agreement should keep with the purpose and intent of the sign by-law with certain exemptions as per recommendation #4 to Council and Council direction.

***Phase 3b examines the possibility of monetizing existing inventory.***

There were ten (10) blue signs provided to the City in our existing agreement along with eight bridge locations of which only five (5) are installed and seven billboard locations of which six (6) are in place. This leaves unused inventory promised to RCC media at the onset of our agreement and outdated existing inventory therefore the need to improve the visibility and functionality of the signage is critical at this time. Staff recommend that Council give authority to renegotiate the existing agreement and explore ways to upgrade and monetize the partnership.

## **Financial Impact**

Phase 1 revenue has been allocated to reimburse the Innovation Reserve from which the office was founded in Economic Development, less the annual operating costs of one full-time employee (FTE). If approved, the eight new locations in Phase 2 and 3a have the potential to generate approximately \$16 million in unencumbered revenue over the next 15 years through the annual budget process.

## **Operational Impact**

Various departments have been consulted given the impact this project has on the corporation. After the success of Phase 1, Economic Development formed a Digital Billboard Working Group made up of the following departments to vet potential future locations, provide their technical expertise and identify challenges and opportunities for each potential new location recommended by the industry for consideration:

- Buildings Standards – to review proposed locations to meet the Sign Bylaw
- Bylaw and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services – to review locations as they pertain to Sign Bylaw
- Real Estate – to identify site ownership, future development, and regional implications.
- Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development – to identify the potential impact on surrounding areas and future development.
- Parks, Forestry, and Horticulture Operations – to identify the impact on operations and advise on tree removal procedures if required.
- Development Planning – to advise on urban design process and approvals as well as future planning and development.
- Corporate and Strategic Communications – to be informed regarding the expansion of the digital sign network as an additional communication channel and advised on technical matters, display and programming issues.
- Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management – to be consulted on matters of transportation, safety, and road allowances.
- Recreation Services – to inform the city-messaging and advertising content.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

York Region has jurisdiction over regional roads and was consulted during the industry consultation phase of this project as it relates to the location of the four sites in Phase 2 (see Attachment 2, Maximum City). In addition to the Region, other key stakeholders such as Alectra, York Regional Police, York Region Catholic and Public-School Boards, the TRCA and partners in the digital billboard industry were consulted for their feedback which is captured in the consultant's report attached. Of note, all road construction requirements shall be part of the approval process during the implementation phase of the work however the Region of York respects local municipal decisions to place

advertising signs on City property.

## **Conclusion**

Digital billboards represent a viable, unencumbered revenue stream for the City of Vaughan that alleviates the burden on the tax base. With the approval of an additional eight locations, more than \$16 million may be allocated to City programs and services over the next 15 years through the annual budget process.

**For more information**, please contact Cristina Prinzo at [Cristina.prinzo@vaughan.ca](mailto:Cristina.prinzo@vaughan.ca) or Raphael Costa [Raphael.costa@vaughan.ca](mailto:Raphael.costa@vaughan.ca).

## **Attachments**

1. Public Q&A Summary, *Stakeholder and Community Engagement*, October 2023
2. Stakeholder and Public Engagement Report, *Maximum City*, November 2023
3. Digital Billboard Presentation, *Economic Development*, November 2023

## **Prepared by**

Cristina Prinzo, Program Manager, Municipal Partnerships and Corporate Initiatives

## **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

# Attachment 1

Public Q and A forum on the City's online citizen engagement platform

## Summary

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In an effort to foster transparency and public engagement, the City of Vaughan established a dedicated Q and A forum to provide residents with an open platform to pose questions and receive public responses from the City project team. The Q and A forum was a key component of the digital billboards public consultation process, aiming to address inquiries, offer clarifications and ensure residents had access to comprehensive information, including maps of the potential sites. From Oct. 1 to Nov. 1, a total of 14 questions were submitted. A comprehensive direct-mail notice was distributed to selected postal codes surrounding each billboard location and covering a generous radius. This outreach not only aimed to inform residents about the project, but also to encourage active community participation through a couple feedback channels, including this online Q and A platform, where everyone could conveniently post their questions.

The following report provides a consolidated overview of the key themes of the questions received, as well as a list of the questions themselves and the responses provided. The diverse inquiries reflect the community's interest not only in the proposed digital billboards but also in broader discussions around alternative revenue generation and community involvement.

## Key themes

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The Q and A forum on the City's online citizen engagement platform, [Have Your Say](#), was predominantly set up to receive question about the proposed digital billboards; however, feedback was overwhelmingly constructive and demonstrated public interest in alternative revenue generation strategies. Overall, the questions and feedback received showcase the public's willingness to explore alternative revenue sources, suggesting a general receptiveness to innovative financial solutions beyond the immediate topic of digital billboards. Notably, the following themes emerged:

- 1. Interest in alternative revenue streams:** The majority of questions expressed curiosity and interest in diverse revenue-generation ideas beyond digital billboards.

2. **Creative revenue proposals:** Suggestions included naming rights, retail spaces in community centres, lotteries, auctions and user fees, showcasing the public's creative idea range when it comes to revenue-generating possibilities.
3. **Memorial contributions and naming opportunities:** Residents proposed innovative ways to contribute, such as memorial items, naming streets, and planting trees (some of which the City is already doing), reflecting a desire for community involvement.
4. **Concerns about visual impact:** While a minimal number of questions (one) expressed concerns about visual pollution of the proposed digital billboards, the majority of feedback focused on broader revenue strategies.
5. **Diverse perspectives:** The questions and feedback received reflect diverse perspectives, highlighting that residents are open to discussions on various revenue initiatives and not singularly fixated on the specifics of digital billboards.

## Questions and answers

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**Q: Does the City have any land that they could develop for commercial leasing?**

A: No. At this time, all the City's holdings have been acquired for future public use. No commercial leasing opportunities are being explored.

**Q: Has the City given any thought to including some retail spaces within our community centres/ other public buildings (Tim Hortons, Starbucks, etc.) to help off-set operating/other costs?**

A: Yes. The City currently has facilities that include retail spaces that generate revenue, such as City Hall and Sports Village. Future opportunities that complement City programming and user experience can be explored. Businesses are encouraged to register as vendors on the City's [Bids and Tenders page](#) to be notified of future opportunity listings. Alternatively, you can submit proposals anytime by emailing [procurement@vaughan.ca](mailto:procurement@vaughan.ca).

**Q: How about a City of Vaughan lottery?**

A: Although the City of Vaughan is a qualified donee according to the Canadian Revenue Agency (an organization/municipality that can issue official donation receipts for gifts it receives from individuals and corporations), the City is not permitted to conduct charitable gaming events, including lotteries, to generate revenue from the public for City events, programs or services, under the regulations of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.



**Q: What about a City of Vaughan Auction where businesses/ services can be donated to the City and people could bid on them? You could set the minimum starting price. Could be a new espresso machine to a new condo or house?**

A: Any in-kind donations made to the City – whether solicited or unsolicited – in support of food banks, toy drives or animal shelter donations, for example, are accepted when appropriate and allocated to a specific program, event or charity.

**Q: Create a memorial items list for residents who would like to plant a tree(s), a bench, donate to civic art/ streetscaping, donate to a capital project (put a brick on the wall in a community centre - this is similar to what they did at Pier 1 in Halifax). etc. in memory of someone.**

A: In addition to the Incoming Sponsorship and Donation Policy that outlines programs and events available for sponsorship or accepting donations, the City also has a Naming of [City Parks, Open Spaces, Community Facilities and other Municipal Buildings and Properties Policy](#) (PDF) that outlines how residents can submit a name designation in honour of an individual or group for a bench, public park, street, facility, building or property. Through the City's Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations department's [Green Guardians](#) environmental stewardship program, [Corporate Tree Planting](#) events and [Tree and Bench Dedications](#) generate alternative revenue for the City.

Donations of public art or art inventoried in the City's Corporate Art Collection, along with donations of cultural property, including, but not limited to, Vaughan Archives, fall outside of the scope of revenue generation and within an arts and heritage mandate of the City.

**Q: I am opposed to adding any more sign pollution to our already visually polluted neighborhoods - especially digital billboards. They are visually distracting, create light pollution, add to greenhouse gas emissions (unnecessary waste of electricity). On top of that it does not seem like they generate all that much revenue (\$133k/yr/sign). I would rather pay \$2 more on my property taxes than be bombarded with more visual pollution when I leave my house! How can I voice my displeasure with this idea besides having to attend the community center meeting? Suggest you set up an on-line voting option where residents can vote on the idea.**

A: The City's [Sign By-law 140-2018](#) (PDF) has requirements that regulate how signs like digital billboards can operate and includes restrictions to deter visual distraction. Per the by-law, the digital billboards the City has in operation display static copy (content that remains still as a fixed image for a set period of time). Each message is displayed

for 10 seconds at a time, allowing for passing traffic to see only one at a time, on average, with seamless transitions.

The City's Sign By-law also includes measures to reduce light pollution. The digital billboards currently in operation are equipped with LED technology, including modern brightness controls and configured with dual redundant photocells, which are capable of sensing ambient light and intuitively managing the output brightness even in the event of a hardware failure. The current digital billboards, and any future ones, must strictly conform to all relevant codes and regulations. For more information, read the [Digital Billboard FAQ document](#) (PDF).

We can assure you that your comment will be included in the public record alongside feedback collected at the Open Houses. The City of Vaughan is working with an external engagement consultant to collect all the feedback received during the public consultation phase. Public feedback will be captured in a report to Council with suggested recommendations on how to proceed. Vaughan Council will make the final decision informed by this report. If you wish to remain updated on the progress of the program, you can also sign up to receive [email updates](#).

**Q: Create more commercial opportunities within larger parks to allow specific retail/ services to operate and generate revenue for the City.**

A: The City doesn't currently have commercial retail services in our parks and open spaces. However, staff are exploring commercial opportunities, where space allows, to generate revenue in larger parks. The City will post these opportunities on the [Bids and Tenders page](#) when available. Businesses are encouraged to register as vendors to be notified when such opportunities arise. Alternatively, you can submit proposals anytime by emailing [procurement@vaughan.ca](mailto:procurement@vaughan.ca).

**Q: Is the discussion specifically on the proposed digital billboards or are you also seeking public opinion on additional alternative funding ideas?**

A: Both! We are seeking public feedback on alternative revenue generation initiatives, including the proposed digital billboards, and welcome additional alternative funding ideas.

**Q: What about giving residents/ businesses the ability to name a new street for a set fee?**

The City has a [Street Naming Policy](#) (PDF), which includes Street Naming Procedures outlining how new streets are named. Per the policy, "the gifting or auctioning of a street name is permitted, provided the proposed street name satisfies the Street Naming

Procedures for approval.” The policy doesn’t outline a set fee or provide specific guidance on how the money collected may be used to generate alternative revenue for City programs and services.

**Q: Does the City have a dedicated full time grant specialist whose is responsible to search and apply for every available grant for all of the Departments in order to increase City funding? Many non-profit companies have this position.**

A: Yes, the City has a dedicated full-time program manager working within the Economic Development department’s Strategic Economic Initiatives unit, who actively searches and applies for available grant, donation and sponsorship opportunities to support various City departments. This program manager plays a crucial role in identifying and pursuing alternative revenue generation initiatives that align with Vaughan’s objectives and priorities, helping to secure additional resources to support the community's needs. The program manager also oversees the City’s innovative digital billboard advertising contracts.

**Q: Could we allow businesses to paint ugly bridge structures for a period of time with their log. Woodbridge Avenue has that ugly rail bridge?**

A: The City is currently in a few outdoor advertising agreements that provide in-kind City messaging on railway overpasses throughout Vaughan. Through these agreements, these railway bridges are refurbished, and a digital billboard is installed on both faces to provide the City with free advertising space for City-related messaging. Although these bridge projects do not generate alternative revenue, they do beautify the neighbourhood and provide the City with additional communications channels.

Painting bridge structures would require additional costs to the City and would fall under the commissioning protocols of the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program. Per the City’s protocols, business logos do not qualify as public art. Opportunities are being explored to expand mural installations under the jurisdiction of the Public Art Program to creatively enhance the sightlines of bridge infrastructure where feasible, however this would not be an alternative revenue generation program.

**Q: Consider user fees for defined individuals/ groups using city's facilities to help offset future buildings and parks rehabilitation.**

A: User fees and service charges are paid by residents and businesses when accessing certain services, such as recreation programs or the issuance of permits. This includes programs and camps the City’s Recreation Services department offers each year and facilities and rental spaces available for permits. Growth-related infrastructure and services, including future building and park rehabilitation, are supported by growth planning and development-related fees.

The 2023 budget includes total revenues of \$355 million, of which \$236.2 million are from taxation. The remaining \$118.8 million of the City's revenues come from user fees, reserve (i.e. savings) transfers, investments, grants and other sources. The City continues to review user fees regularly to ensure they cover the cost of providing services while being comparable to neighbouring municipalities.

**Q: Would selling the naming rights to city buildings for a specified period of time bring in any monies?**

A: Yes. Naming City buildings and assets is part of the alternative revenue model the City has developed to help alleviate pressures off the tax base. In fact, the City of Vaughan secured a \$50,000 sponsorship from Saputo to help offset the costs of refurbishing tennis courts located at Torii Park – now known as Saputo Tennis Courts.

The City of Vaughan is currently working on an update to its Incoming Sponsorship and Donation Policy that includes naming rights to City buildings and the spaces within them. All naming of City facilities and the terms upon which that naming occurs will be presented to Council for approval, and final agreements are negotiated with the City Manager and City Solicitor.

**Q: Would it be possible for some land close to or in the conservation area near Kortright to be available for monthly/annually rent (as is in Montreal in a park near the stadium) -a win-win situation where the city makes money without increasing the taxes and some citizens could experiment with a little organic farming-so necessary and relevant for all of us-as families (an opportunity to teach the little ones how to grow from scratch), to socialize, to spend time in air virtually free of pollution, as seniors-to prevent isolation and provide the chance to improve and preserve mobility and flexibility with an aim to lead a healthier life (think reducing the costs with medication, hospitalization, the burden on the caregivers). Of course, this is just an example of a location-it can be replicated wherever fertile land could be offered for renting.**

A: The City of Vaughan currently has a [Community Gardens program](#) and there is one location where residents can rent a plot of their own - Sugarbush in Thornhill. At the moment, there is only that one location with that governance structure and no fee to rent so this program is not a revenue source for Vaughan. We are currently working to expand the number of community gardens in each Ward and are open to the potential to fundraise as part of this beloved municipal offering. Thank you for providing an example of how this is done in Montreal we will pass that along to the appropriate staff to investigate further.





# City of Vaughan

## Digital Billboard Program Phase 2

Final Engagement Report  
November 2023

Prepared by Maximum City

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## Executive Summary

This report captures the results of the stakeholder and community engagement process conducted for the City of Vaughan's Phase 2 Digital Billboard Program. Eight (8) different stakeholder groups and the general public were consulted both in person and online, reaching approximately 85 participants in the summer and fall of 2023. The consultation approach focused on best practices of meeting people where they are through various methods and using an evidence-based approach to inform and listen.

In summary, stakeholders and the public expressed the following:

- Appreciation for being consulted early in the process through the various modes offered.
- Support for alternative revenue-generating tools that do not raise taxes, including the expansion of the Digital Billboard Program.
- Faith in the City's existing by-laws and processes to mitigate public safety or nuisance concerns regarding the billboards' size, location, and content.
- Some concern around site-specific issues, which are addressed in the individual site summaries and Mitigation Methods below.

Table 1: Concerns and Mitigation Methods

Concern		Mitigation
1.	Content of advertising (primarily a school board concern due to proximity to minors)	The City of Vaughan has an advertisement content policy in place along with procedures for staff to follow when a complaint of content of third-party ads on City property is brought forward. All City messaging is approved by staff before going live.
2.	Size, sightline obstruction (primarily a resident concern)	The City of Vaughan has a Sign By-law that limits size, height, and placement to ensure public safety and integration of the asset into its natural surroundings.
3.	Brightness and variation (primarily a Councillor and resident concern)	The City of Vaughan has a Sign By-law that dictates the levels of brightness and speed of each rotation to minimize driver distraction based on industry best practices.

4.	Cyber hacking (primarily a Risk, Insurance and YRP concern)	The City of Vaughan will include Cyber Liability Insurance as a requirement of the vendor agreement to mitigate hacking.
5.	Tree obstruction and removal (primarily a TRCA concern)	The City of Vaughan has a Tree Removal Policy and will work with the stakeholders on obtaining an arborist report for all four sites in order to obtain all necessary permits and follow proper protocol for tree removal where necessary.
6.	Staying informed (primarily a resident concern)	City staff will email those who subscribed to receive updates when the installation begins.

## Engagement Methods

In May and June, City Staff and the Maximum City team conducted eight (8) stakeholder consultations. It was especially important to hear from the impacted regional and ward Councillors (Ward 1, 2 and 5). To record that, in June Maximum City facilitated walking site tours at the four (4) sites and noted feedback from six (6) City Council members. In October, Maximum City supported the delivery of four (4) public open houses with City staff, conducting them at local community centres adjacent to the sites. The following table lists the stakeholders consulted alphabetically, and the summaries to follow share what we heard during the sessions, survey and open houses.

Table 2: List of Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholder Group	Role/Designation	Format
<b>Alectra Utilities (AU)</b>	Government & Stakeholder Relations	Via Zoom & followed up via email
	Design Supervisor, Distribution Design - ICI & Layouts	
<b>Beverley Glen Ratepayers' Association (BGRA)</b>	President of BGRA - Ward 5	Attempted contact via phone, email and direct mail with no response
<b>Carrying Place &amp; Sonoma Ratepayers' Association (CPSRA)</b>	President of CPSRA - Ward 2	Attempted contact via phone, email and direct mail with no response



<b>Flamingo Ratepayers' Association (FRA)</b>	President of FRA - Ward 5	Via Zoom
<b>Greater Woodbridge Registered Ratepayers' Association (GWRA)</b>	President of GWRA - Ward 2	Via Zoom
<b>Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)</b>	Planner, Infrastructure Planning & Permits	Via Zoom & followed up via email
	Planning Ecologist	
	Technologist, Water Resources Engineering	
<b>West Woodbridge Homeowners Registered Ratepayers' Association (W/WHRA)</b>	President of W/WHRA - Ward 2	Attempted contact via phone, email and direct mail with no response
<b>York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB)</b>	Services Manager	Via email
<b>York Region (YR)</b>	Program Manager, Traffic Safety	Via Zoom
	Project Manager Note: determined not relevant for consultation for this project	
	YR Staff	Google form survey
<b>York Region District School Board (YRDSB)</b>	Senior Planner	Via email
<b>York Regional Police (YRP)</b>	Superintendent - 4 District Headquarters	Via Zoom



Image 1: Reservoir Park site visit with Councillors.

Site 1:  
**Maple Reservoir Park**  
**(Ward 1)**

## Site 1: Maple Reservoir Park (Ward 1)

### 1.1 Stakeholder Consultations

#### 1.1a Alectra Utilities (AU)

AU staff shared the following details pertaining to the Maple Reservoir Park site:

- The existing pole line is located on the east side of Keele Street while billboard location is shown to be on the west side of Keele Street. Therefore, supply would be underground from the opposite side of the street.
- Proposed metered pedestal to be installed closer to the Alectra pole and electrical demarcation would be on the line side of the meter.
- All infrastructure downstream of the demarcation point would be publicly owned.
- A high-level cost estimate for the Maple Reservoir Park site is \$2,000. It must be noted that AU provides \$2,000 service credit for small commercial metered services which would apply to this site.
- A tri-party agreement may be required between the billboard vendor, registered property owner and AU. The purpose of this agreement is to allow AU access to the property to repair, maintain and operate its equipment on private property.

The Design Supervisor suggested applying for a service request with AU for a layout for the Maple Reservoir Park site when the precise location is determined, and the project is looking to move forward. The application process could take two to four weeks to reconcile. A layout will be issued with the utility design and also to identify Alectra's scope of work, customer's scope of work, AU standards, conditions such as payment, ESA (Environmental Site Assessment) required, and other details. Once all conditions have been met, AU New Connections department will coordinate with Lines, Civil Contractor (if required) and Metering to schedule work. The construction timelines may vary based on the scope of work, locations and resources available at that time. AU staff pointed out that a design layout would be valid for six months, after which it would require revision. Overall, AU staff were very willing to respond to design queries and advise on utility concerns of the billboards.

#### 1.1b Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

The TRCA staff confirmed the Maple Reservoir Park site may not require a permit process with the TRCA, since it is not located within their regulation lands. TRCA staff clarified that their purview covered changes to soil, ground and water course integrity, though not specifically trees or power supply issues. However, TRCA would require more specific information about the exact locations of the proposed billboards to comment any further. TRCA staff appreciated being consulted early in the process and looked forward to working collaboratively with the City of Vaughan as needed in future phases of the project.

### 1.1c York District School Boards (YCDSB & YRDSB)

As Maple Reservoir Park is not within close proximity to a school, YCDSB and YRDSB had no concerns of this particular location.

### 1.1d York Region (YR)

YR staff raised the potential concerns of driver distraction, sightline obstructions, traffic safety and tree removal regarding the digital billboards. For the Maple Reservoir Park site, they suggested considering the future Keele Street expansion and the overpass plans that will split the grading of the site, as those changes will affect the height of the billboard and visibility in the long term. The Program Manager of Traffic Safety noted that the existing Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He expressed that while it is difficult to accurately assess the link between billboards and traffic collisions, having the information on intersection and road segments performance will help to identify trends in any existing traffic or collision patterns. Hence, he suggested referring to collision reports to see if they provided any insight into the Maple Reservoir Park site. Furthermore, YR staff suggested considering the existing York Region tree locations so that no YR tree is removed under the Digital Billboard Program.

### 1.1e York Regional Police (YRP)

The Superintendent was already aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program and digital billboards in general. When asked about concerns, he did not anticipate any major concerns from a policing or public safety perspective and was generally supportive of the expansion to the Maple Reservoir Park site. He pointed out that although the traffic at this location was currently lower than the other three sites, he suspected the development in this area in the short term would bring a lot more visitors (North Maple Regional Park, Go Train, residential communities, sports and recreation teams, businesses, tourists and others). When prompted, he did raise some cautions such as the potential for vandalism or people climbing the structures, he noted that the existing City Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He signalled the importance of having a clear policy and accessible process in place at the City for how to deal with complaints when they arise, which the City already has in place and can work to improve. Overall, the expansion of digital billboards to the Maple Reservoir Park site does not present any concerns from a policing or public safety perspective.

## 1.2 Site Visit with Local and Regional Councillors

At the Maple Reservoir Park site, the local and regional councillors expressed some concern for the few nearby residents who raised objections to the lighting installed at the adjacent

soccer field. To mitigate this concern, the councillors suggested maintaining the same timings as the soccer fields' operational timings or dimming the billboards after 11 pm. The southwest corner of Teston Road and Keele Street was mentioned as a preferable alternative location however after further investigation, staff concluded that it is not an appropriate site due to the existing trees, as it is a heavily forested area, therefore the entrance to the parking lot is the chosen location. The councillors suggested exploring alternate nearby locations further away from residents as follows:

1. Vaughan Water Station North as it was further away from residents.
2. Keele Street road segment along Maple Reservoir Park as it would require some tree clearance but was located further away from residents.
3. Keele Street road segment by the park entrance and sports storage room as it was already clear of trees.

The councillors also suggested presenting clear information at the open houses to be conducted in the fall. Overall, the councillors were supportive of the Digital Billboard Program as a low-impact revenue generating tool for the City of Vaughan.

### 1.3 Public Open House

The Ward 1 public open house was conducted on Friday, October 26th at Maple Community Centre, south of the Maple Reservoir Park site. Eight (8) residents of the neighbourhood and one (1) business owner/vendor engaged with the content shared. The feedback was generally driven by curiosity and was positive regarding the billboards as an alternative tax revenue generation tool. Some residents inquired about revenue generated and spent from the various tax collection sources, and tax dollars breakup. Some residents were familiar with Phase 1 billboards in the city, and asked about the new locations, billboard ownership, content that they would display, and technical details of the billboards including direction and lighting.





Image 2: Public Open House at Maple Community Centre.

## 1.4 Site Specific Mitigation

- Due to future road expansion, it will be recommended to the vendor that the setback as indicated in the Sign By-law of 5m from the roadway be increased.
- During procurement, if other elements of the Sign By-law require minor variances such as increasing the 35-foot height specification, staff will take that into consideration.
- Reasons why the site location is recommended include: NE corner of Keele Street and Teston Road not possible to be installed at the Vaughan Water Pump Station due to underground infrastructure (cannot dig), SW corner of Keele Street and Teston Road is heavily sloped and forested, therefore Maple Reservoir Park is recommended.



Image 3: Board at the Public Open House for "Where do your tax dollars go?"

## 1.5 Quotes

*"From a road safety perspective, the City has pretty much addressed everything through the enforcement of the Sign By-law. From a traffic safety perspective, the collision report should be key information for the City." - YR Staff*

*"We at TRCA truly encourage it when municipalities come to us early on, so we can catch the required site considerations early in the process and take it forward as a team." - TRCA Staff*

*"I learnt about community programs for my kid due to the existing billboard, Why is this program not expanding? There should be more of these across Vaughan, they're really helpful." - Resident*





Image 4: Al Palladini Community Centre site visit with Ward 2 Councillor Adriano Volpentesta.

Site 2:

## **Al Palladini Community Centre Site (Ward 2)**



## Site 2: Al Palladini Community Centre Site (Ward 2)

### 2.1 Stakeholder Consultations

#### 2.1a Alectra Utilities (AU)

AU staff shared the following details pertaining to the Al Palladini Community Centre site:

- The existing pole line is on the same side of Rutherford Road where the billboard is marked on the drawings. Therefore, this site can be an overhead connection and an electrical demarcation would be at the top of the service mast.
- A high-level cost estimate for the Al Palladini Community Centre site is likely negligible or \$0 after applying the service credit. It must be noted that AU provides a \$2,000 service credit for small commercial metered services which would apply to this site.
- A tri-party agreement may be required between the billboard vendor, registered property owner and AU. The purpose of this agreement is to allow AU access to the property to repair, maintain and operate its equipment on private property.

The Design Supervisor suggested applying for a service request with AU for a layout for the Al Palladini Community Centre site when the precise location is determined, and the project is looking to move forward. The application process could take two to four weeks to reconcile. A layout will be issued with the utility design and to identify Alectra's scope of work, customer's scope of work, Alectra's standards, conditions such as payment, ESA required, and other details. Once all conditions have been met, AU New Connections department will coordinate with Lines, Civil Contractor (if required) and Metering to schedule work. The construction timelines may vary based on the scope of work, locations, and resources available at that time. AU staff pointed out that a design layout would be valid for six months, after which it would require revision. Overall, AU staff were very willing to respond to design queries and advise on utility concerns of the billboards.

#### 2.1b Carrying Place & Sonoma Ratepayers' Association

The ratepayer's association was contacted via email and telephone and invited to the open house via direct mail, however, neither Maximum City nor the City of Vaughan received any response.

#### 2.1c Greater Woodbridge Ratepayers' Association (GWRA)

President of GWRA was not that aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program, or digital billboards in general, beyond seeing a few around the city. On learning of the details of the proposed expansion, he expressed his support given that the process was prompted by elected officials and included a review of the locations and sought input from stakeholders. He had not heard any concerns from his organization's members regarding the City's digital

billboard program, or billboards in general. When asked about his potential concerns regarding the Al Palladini Community Centre site, he spoke primarily of the size and design of the billboards, and mitigating driver distraction and any potential threat to public safety. He suggested studying traffic patterns near the site to help choose the best possible location for the structure. Overall, the President of GWRA was supportive of the project and appreciated being consulted early.

#### 2.1d Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

The TRCA staff confirmed Al Palladini Community Centre may not require a permit process with the TRCA, since it is not located within their regulation lands. They clarified that their purview covered changes to soil, ground and water course integrity, though not specifically trees or power supply issues. However, TRCA would require more specific information about the exact locations of the proposed billboards to comment any further. TRCA representatives appreciated being consulted early in the process and looked forward to working collaboratively with the City of Vaughan as needed in future phases of the project.

#### 2.1e York District School Boards (YCDSB & YRDSB)

Due to the close proximity to Emily Carr Secondary School, as part of an email exchange, the YCDSB Manager shared general concerns regarding the size and locations of the billboards, sightline integrity, safety measures incorporated in its design to prevent climbing or signs coming down in storms, ensuring digital billboards could not be hacked, and age-appropriate advertising content on the billboards. They wanted consideration given to advertising content that was suitable and age appropriate for their students, including avoiding advertisements related to vaping, cannabis, cigarettes, gambling, sexual content, or paraphernalia. Furthermore, the school boards requested a better understanding of the controls the City of Vaughan would have in place over the content displayed, and a process to file complaints or concerns, should there be any. The YRDSB Senior Planner echoed the same concerns on behalf of the school board. City staff shared the Review of Advertising Content on City Property Policy with them.

#### 2.1f York Region (YR)

YR staff had no specific concerns with the Al Palladini Community Centre location however did echo the general concerns of driver distraction, sightline obstructions, traffic safety and tree removal regarding the digital billboards. The Program Manager of Traffic Safety noted that the existing Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He expressed that while it is difficult to accurately assess the link between billboards and traffic collisions, having the information on intersection and road segments performance will help to identify trends in any existing traffic or collision patterns. Hence, he suggested referring to collision reports to see if they provided any insight into the Al Palladini Community Centre site. Furthermore, YR staff suggested considering the existing York Region tree locations so that

no YR tree is removed under the Digital Billboard Program.

#### 2.1g York Regional Police (YRP)

The Superintendent was already aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program and digital billboards in general. When asked about concerns, he did not anticipate any major concerns from a policing or public safety perspective and was generally supportive of the expansion to the Al Palladini Community Centre site. While he did raise some cautions such as the potential for vandalism or people climbing the structures, he noted that the existing City Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He signalled the importance of having a clear policy and accessible process in place at the City for how to deal with complaints when they arise, which the City already has in place and can work to improve. Overall, the expansion of digital billboards to the Al Palladini Community Centre site does not present any concerns from a policing or public safety perspective.

### 2.2 Site Visit with Ward 2 Councillor

The local councillor noted the open space and low number of residences located around this site, and suggested consulting with Pierre Berton Resource Library and Al Palladini Community Centre in the immediate peripheries. The local councillor requested that clear maps and renderings be presented to the public at the open houses planned for the fall. Additionally, he suggested incorporating the City of Vaughan's corporate colours on the sign where possible, along with the community centre's name for easy wayfinding. Overall, the local councillor was supportive of the Digital Billboard Program.

### 2.3 Public Open House

The first Ward 2 public open house was conducted on Thursday, October 25th at Al Palladini Community Centre, immediately adjacent to the proposed site. Approximately 14 residents and business owners of the neighbourhood engaged with the content shared. The feedback was generally driven by curiosity and was positive regarding the billboards as an alternative tax revenue generation tool. The residents' questions were generally regarding the City of Vaughan's total tax generation, the tax averages, property taxes compared to other municipalities, the City's population totals, donations, and public health and walk-in clinic expenditures. Some residents were familiar with other billboards in the city and asked about the new locations, future expansion of the program, billboard ownership, the content that they would display, and the process for a local business owner to use the billboard for their advertisements. The residents suggested considering more malls or community centres rather than parks as billboard locations as parks remain underused, particularly in the winter months. Other suggestions included conducting open houses in schools to

engage youth in municipal government, sharing billboard screen time to promote local businesses, and sharing performance reports with the public regarding all new revenue generator streams.



Image 5: Public Open House at Al Palladini Community Centre.

## 2.4 Site Specific Mitigation

- Due to the proximity to minors, the City will ensure that the awarded vendor will be made aware of the restrictions at this location with regard to third-party advertising.
- Staff will investigate putting the community centre name on the sign and consider the relationship between the billboard on Rutherford Road and digital sign on Islington Avenue at the same property.

## 2.5 Quotes

*"The Digital Billboard Program is not an unreasonable thing to put forward, if it's done with sincerity and our elected officials support it, I can be behind it too."* - President GWRA

*"Size, layout, and design will matter. Some residents may consider that."* - President GWRA

*"I love this idea, especially circulating that money back into the community."* - Resident

*"Try to figure out more visible versus more hidden locations; Maybe place the billboards on main roads, community centres, malls - not parks. Winter will be hard for people to see them."* - Resident



Image 6-8: Boards at the Public Open House for "Donations," "Sponsorships," "Grants in Action" & "Putting revenue to work."





Image 9: Rainbow Creek Park site visit with Ward 2 Councillor Adriano Volpentesta.

## Site 3:

# Rainbow Creek Park (Ward 2)

## Site 3: Rainbow Creek Park (Ward 2)

### 3.1 Stakeholder Consultations

#### 3.1a Alectra Utilities (AU)

AU staff shared the following details pertaining to the Rainbow Creek Park site:

- The existing pole line is located on the south side of Highway 7. AU records indicate there is already a 347/600V secondary service to this property. They inquired if the City could sub feed the billboard from the existing service.
- A high-level cost estimate for the Rainbow Creek Park site is \$3,000, as it may require extending an overhead secondary connection by one or two spans to a pole directly opposite the billboard connection. This would be an underground connection similar to the one for the Maple Reservoir Park site, with a metered pedestal to be located closer to AU pole on the opposite side of Highway 7.
- It must be noted that AU provides \$2,000 service credit for small commercial metered services which would apply to this site.
- A tri-party agreement may be required between the billboard vendor, registered property owner and AU. The purpose of this agreement is to allow AU access to the property to repair, maintain and operate its equipment on private property.

The Design Supervisor suggested applying for a service request with AU for a layout for the Rainbow Creek Park site when the precise location is determined, and the project is looking to move forward. The application process could take two to four weeks to reconcile. A layout will be issued with the utility design and to identify Alectra's scope of work, customer's scope of work, Alectra's standards, conditions such as payment, ESA required, and other details. Once all conditions have been met, AU New Connections department will coordinate with Lines, Civil Contractor (if required) and Metering to schedule work. The construction timelines may vary based on the scope of work, locations, and resources available at that time. AU staff pointed out that a design layout would be valid for six months, after which it would require revision. Overall, AU staff were very willing to respond to design queries and advise on utility concerns of the billboards.

#### 3.1b West Woodbridge Homeowners Registered Ratepayers' Association

This ratepayer's association was contacted via email and telephone and invited to the open house via direct mail, however, neither Maximum City nor the City of Vaughan received any response.

#### 3.1c West Woodbridge Homeowners Registered Ratepayers' Association (W/WHRA)

The ratepayer's association was contacted via email, telephone and invited to the open

house via direct mail, however, neither Maximum City nor the City of Vaughan received any response.

### 3.1d Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

The TRCA staff confirmed that the Rainbow Creek Park site is within their purview and would likely require a permit with the TRCA. When asked about their concerns, they spoke specifically about erosion, stability of the structure, and proximity to the water course for the Rainbow Creek Park site. They recommended an engineer's report and erosion and control measures for mitigation.

With regard to floodplain and erosion concerns for Rainbow Creek Park site, TRCA shared the required details, and suggested that a professional engineer can be engaged to verify the stability of the billboard structure, particularly during a regional storm event. They recommended the vendor submit a structural engineer's letter to verify the strength of the post or structure. In addition, it was recommended the billboard should be set back at least 10 metres from the water bank. They added TRCA will likely also require erosion and control measure reports before the billboards are constructed.

### 3.1e York District School Boards (YCDSB & YRDSB)

As Rainbow Creek Park is not within close proximity to a school, YCDSB and YRDSB had no concerns about this particular location. There is a Catholic elementary school, St. Peters, behind the park however it is several hundred metres away from the proposed location facing Highway 7.

### 3.1f York Region (YR)

Although YR staff had no specific concerns regarding the Rainbow Creek Park site, they raised the potential concerns of driver distraction, sightline obstructions, traffic safety and tree removal regarding the digital billboards in general. The Program Manager of Traffic Safety noted that the existing Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He expressed that while it is difficult to accurately assess the link between billboards and traffic collisions, having the information on intersection and road segments performance will help to identify trends in any existing traffic or collision patterns. Hence, he suggested referring to collision reports to see if they provided any insight into Rainbow Creek Park site, located off Highway 7. Furthermore, YR staff suggested considering the existing York Region tree locations so that no YR tree is removed under the Digital Billboard Program.

### 3.1g York Regional Police (YRP)



The expansion of digital billboards to the Rainbow Creek Park site does not present any concerns from a policing or public safety perspective. The Superintendent was already aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program and digital billboards in general. When asked about concerns, he did not anticipate any major concerns from a policing or public safety perspective and was generally supportive of the expansion to the Rainbow Creek Park site. He noted that the existing City Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He signalled the importance of having a clear policy and accessible process in place at the City for how to deal with complaints when they arise, which the City already has in place and can work to improve.

### 3.2 Site Visit with Ward 2 Councillor

The local councillor noted that the Rainbow Creek Park location was far from residents but highlighted the importance of keeping residents, including the ratepayer association, informed of opportunities to learn more about the billboards, such as the public open house planned for the fall. He was satisfied in learning that the City's existing by-laws mitigated potential concerns regarding the design and display of the billboard. He also supported the possibility of including the name of the park on the billboard for easy wayfinding. Overall, the local councillor was supportive of the expansion of a digital billboard to the Rainbow Creek Park site.

### 3.3 Public Open House

The second Ward 2 public open house was conducted on Monday, October 30th at Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre. Approximately 18 residents of the neighbourhood engaged with the content shared. The feedback was generally driven by curiosity and was positive regarding the billboards as an alternative tax revenue generation tool. Some residents expressed concern about the cost of living, good governance, and effective management of resources in Vaughan. Some residents were familiar with the billboards in the city, and interested to learn about the billboard program expansion, the new locations selection process, technological details of the design of the billboard, costs and profits associated with the billboards. Some residents suggested that the City privilege local business advertisement over others, and that the profit sharing ratio between the billboard company and City be more advantageous for the City.



Image 10: Public Open House at Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre.

### 3.4 Site Specific Mitigation

- Request collision reports from YRP for Highway 7 between Islington Avenue and Kipling Avenue for review by City staff and the awarded vendor to ensure size and placement of digital billboard doesn't interfere with traffic and impact the safety of pedestrians and drivers alike.
- Ensure that the vendor obtains a structural engineer letter with erosion control measures for the TRCA's review during the permitting process.
- Due to the potential road expansion along Highway 7 in the future, the placement of the billboard will be recommended to be set back further than the by-law indicates, more than 10m away from the watercourse of the Humber River as well as 100m+ away from residential homes to the east and west of the location.
- As Highway 7 is a regional road, the Region may need to be consulted for any underground work required to bring electrical access to the site.



Image 11: Boards at the Public Open House for "Proposed Digital Billboard Locations".

### 3.5 Quotes

*"At the end of the day, people may bring up a negative association with billboards but given the by-laws and the mitigating measures, the impact is minimal."* - YRP Superintendent

*"We saw a few billboards recently - they are hideous but a necessary evil."* - Resident/Business Owner

*"I'm okay with billboards, as long as they're not everywhere."* - Resident/Business Owner

*"This makes sense. As long as there are no obscene advertisements to distract drivers and cause traffic issues, it's a good idea. My only thing would be using the billboards for private and public information."* - Resident/Business Owner



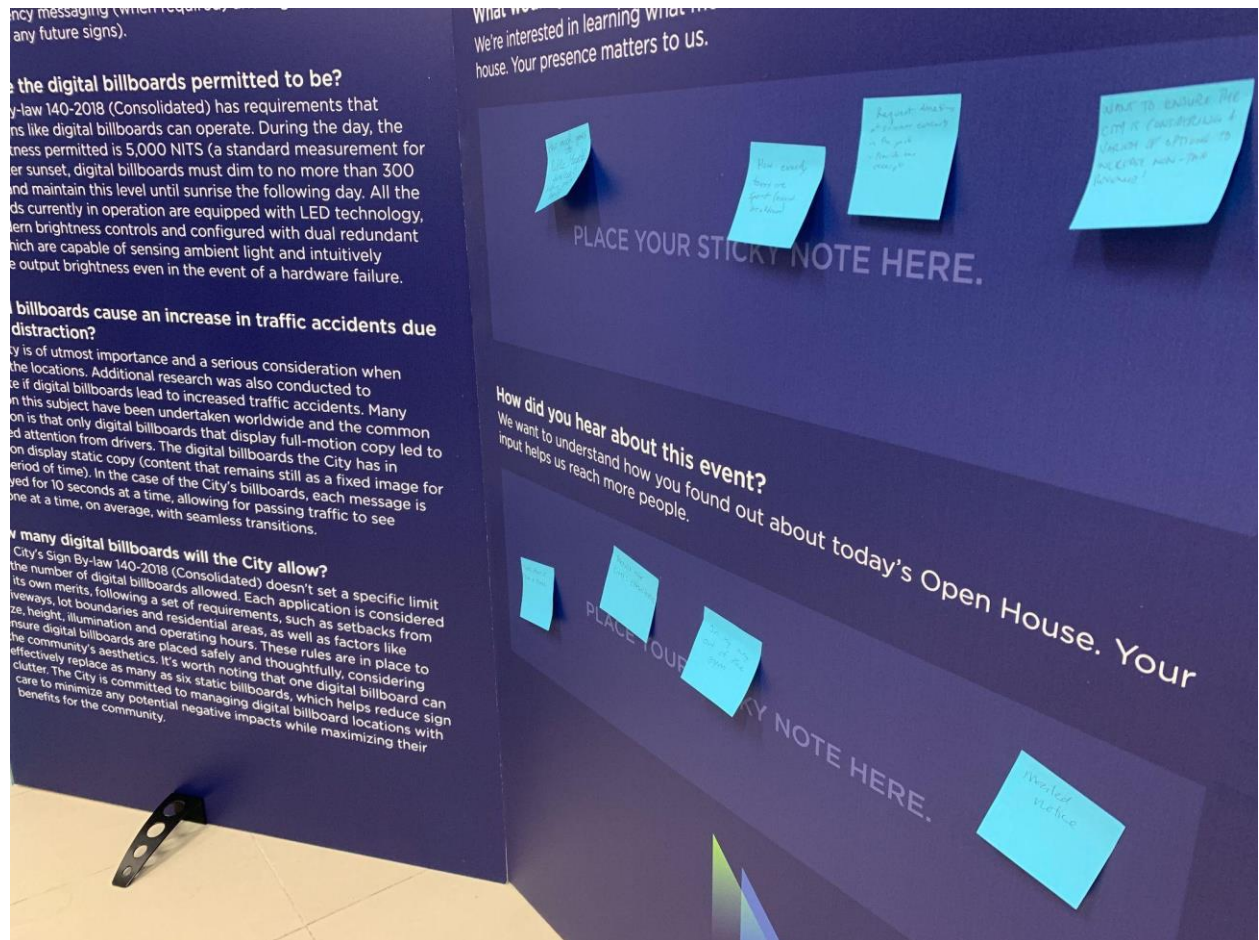


Image 12: Board at the Public Open House for "Stay Informed".



Image 13: Jean Augustine District Park site visit with local and regional Councillors.

Site 4:

## Jean Augustine District Park (Ward 5)



## Site 4: Jean Augustine District Park (Ward 5)

### 4.1 Stakeholder Consultation Summaries

#### 4.1a Alectra Utilities (AU)

AU staff shared the following details pertaining to the Jean Augustine District Park site:

- The existing pole line is located on the west side of Bathurst Street where the billboard is shown. Therefore, this can be an overhead connection and electrical demarcation would be at the top of the customer's service mast.
- A high-level cost estimate for the Jean Augustine District Park site is likely negligible or \$0 after applying the service credit. It must be noted that AU provides \$2,000 service credit for small commercial metered services which would apply to this site.
- A tri-party agreement may be required between the billboard vendor, registered property owner and AU. The purpose of this agreement is to allow AU access to the property to repair, maintain and operate its equipment on private property.

The Design Supervisor suggested applying for a service request with AU for a layout for the Jean Augustine District Park site when the precise location is determined, and the project is looking to move forward. The application process could take two to four weeks to reconcile. A layout will be issued with the utility design and to identify Alectra's scope of work, customer's scope of work, Alectra's standards, conditions such as payment, ESA required, and other details. Once all conditions have been met, AU New Connections department will coordinate with Lines, Civil Contractor (if required) and Metering to schedule work. The construction timelines may vary based on the scope of work, locations, and resources available at that time. AU staff pointed out that a design layout would be valid for six months, after which it would require revision. Overall, AU staff were very willing to respond to design queries and advise on utility concerns of the billboards.

#### 4.1b Beverley Glen Ratepayers' Association

The ratepayer's association was contacted via email, telephone and invited to the open house via direct mail, however, neither Maximum City nor the City of Vaughan received any response.

#### 4.1c Flamingo Ratepayers' Association (FRA)

The President of FRA was already aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program and digital billboards in general from his experience around the city. As a nearby resident, he was very well acquainted with the neighbourhood around the Jean Augustine District Park site. He had not heard any concerns from his neighbours or the organization's members regarding digital billboards. When asked about his potential concerns regarding the Jean Augustine District Park site, he spoke about the height, design and illumination levels of the billboard,

particularly in the winter months with the reduction of the tree cover. This would particularly be of importance to a few houses located around Miranda Court, as these residents currently live with the park as their backyard. He further expressed some concern for a few properties fronting Trafalgar Square, as some of them are elevated and may be able to see the billboard from rooms within their residences. The President of FRA pointed out that the evergreen trees and the fence separating Bathurst Street and Trafalgar Square might help to mitigate the concern.

In addition, he expressed concern for the disturbances that may be caused during the period of construction for the residents. In general, he did not object to the expansion of the Digital Billboard Program and anticipated little to no concerns from the residents in the Flamingo Ratepayer Associations catchment area which borders the site. He was also supportive in assisting in sharing the information with their members throughout the process to keep them informed and answer any questions they may have. Overall, he was very supportive of the initiative.

#### 4.1d Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

The TRCA staff confirmed the Jean Augustine District Park site may not require a permit process with the TRCA, since it is not located within their regulation lands. They clarified that their purview covered changes to soil, ground and water course integrity, though not specifically trees or power supply issues. However, TRCA would require more specific information about the exact locations of the proposed billboards to comment any further. TRCA staff appreciated being consulted early in the process and looked forward to working collaboratively with the City of Vaughan as needed in future phases of the project.

#### 4.1e York District School Boards (YCDSB & YRDSB)

As part of an email exchange, the YCDSB Manager shared general concerns regarding the size and locations of the billboards, sightline integrity, safety measures incorporated in its design to prevent climbing or signs coming down in storms, ensuring digital billboards could not be hacked, and age-appropriate advertising content on the billboards. They wanted consideration given to advertising content that was suitable and age appropriate for their students, including avoiding advertisements related to vaping, cannabis, cigarettes, gambling, sexual content, or paraphernalia. Furthermore, the school boards requested a better understanding of the controls the City would have in place over the content displayed, and a process to file complaints or concerns, should there be any. The YRDSB Senior Planner echoed the same concerns on behalf of the school board as the location is within close proximity to Westmount Collegiate.

#### 4.1f York Region (YR)

YR staff raised general concerns of driver distraction, sightline obstructions, traffic safety and tree removal regarding the digital billboards. The Program Manager of Traffic Safety



noted that the existing Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He expressed that while it is difficult to accurately assess the link between billboards and traffic collisions, having the information on intersection and road segments performance will help to identify trends in any existing traffic or collision patterns. Hence, he suggested referring to collision reports to see if they provided any insight into the Jean Augustine District Park site. It must be noted that Bathurst Street is a regional road and the widening and streetscaping work is complete. As the Region is done with their road work, the billboard can be positioned with appropriate setbacks with minimal impact. Furthermore, YR staff suggested considering the existing York Region tree locations so that no York Region tree is removed under the Digital Billboard Program.

#### 4.1g York Regional Police (YRP)

The Superintendent was already aware of Vaughan's Digital Billboard program and digital billboards in general. When asked about concerns at Jean Augustine District Park, he noted the proximity to Westmount Collegiate, Rosemount Community Centre and the City Playhouse Theatre, however, he did not anticipate any major concerns from a policing or public safety perspective and was generally supportive of the expansion to the Jean Augustine District Park site. While he did raise some cautions such as the potential for vandalism or people climbing the structures, he noted that the existing City Sign By-law does a good job of mitigating concerns around driver distraction through size, sightline obstruction and image variation restrictions. He signalled the importance of having a clear policy and accessible process in place at the City for how to deal with complaints when they arise, which the City already has in place and can work to improve. Overall, the expansion of digital billboards to the Jean Augustine District Park site does not present any concerns from a policing or public safety perspective.

## 4.2 Site Visit with Local and Regional Councillors

The local and regional councillors in attendance expressed faith in City staff to be mindful, responsible, and responsive with the billboards and their content. They suggested keeping residents informed and presenting accurate, to-scale renderings of the billboard at the planned public open house in the fall. At the Jean Augustine District Park site, councillors raised concerns about the brightness of the billboard for the nearby residents and the potential for distraction for passing drivers, particularly seniors. To mitigate, they suggested an arborist report and maintaining tree coverage along Bathurst Street and dimming the billboard lights after 11pm. Additionally, the councillors suggested offering community groups some advertising time on the billboards to promote community events. Overall, the councillors were supportive of the expansion of the Digital Billboard Program to the Jean Augustine District Park site as a revenue generating tool to help keep property taxes low.

### 4.3 Public Open House

The Ward 5 public open house was conducted on Wednesday, October 24th at Rosemount Community Centre, adjacent to the Jean Augustine District Park site. Five (5) residents and business owners of the neighbourhood engaged with the content shared. One resident inquired and raised a concern about the brightness and operational timings of the billboard and the exact location on the site. They were satisfied to learn about the City by-laws that mitigate the residents' concerns, and the engagement process being followed for the Digital Billboard Program.



Image 14: Public Open House at Rosemount Community Centre.

### 4.4 Mitigation Strategies

- Due to the proximity of the sign to neighbouring residents across Bathurst Street the angle of the billboard should be tested and compliant with the Sign By-law with respect to brightness and dimming/shut-off times.
- Staff will consider the relationship between the other billboards along Bathurst Street at the same property.

## 4.5 Quotes

*"I don't see much objection from the neighbours, it will simply be a question of the height and the design. Bathurst is so wide, with bus lanes even. Northbound vehicles will not see the proposed billboard very well, and southbound vehicles will see it clearly. The open space there will add as well."* - President of FRA

*"This digital technology makes sense, it's easier to change than paper. Modern, future. I see that."* - YRP Superintendent

*"I want to ensure the City is considering a variety of options to increase non-tax revenue!"* - Resident/Business Owner

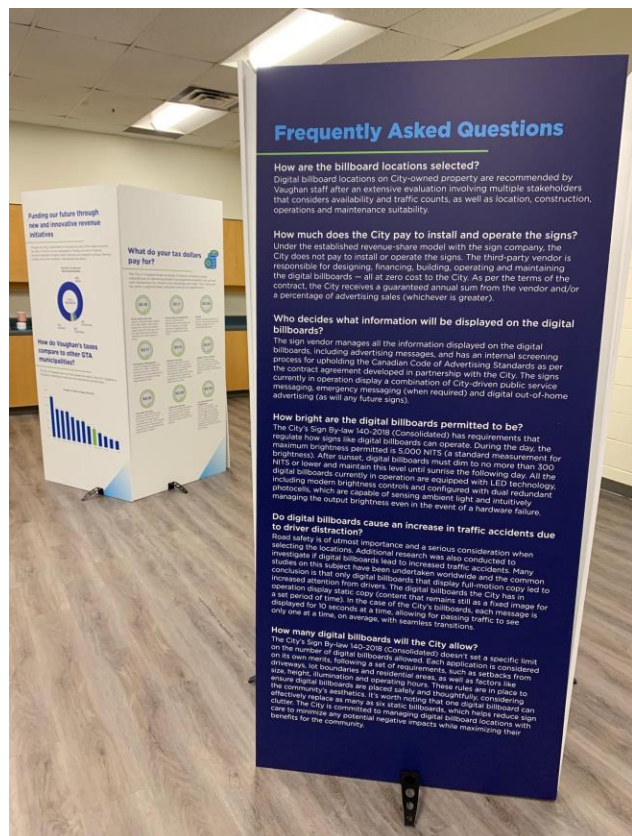
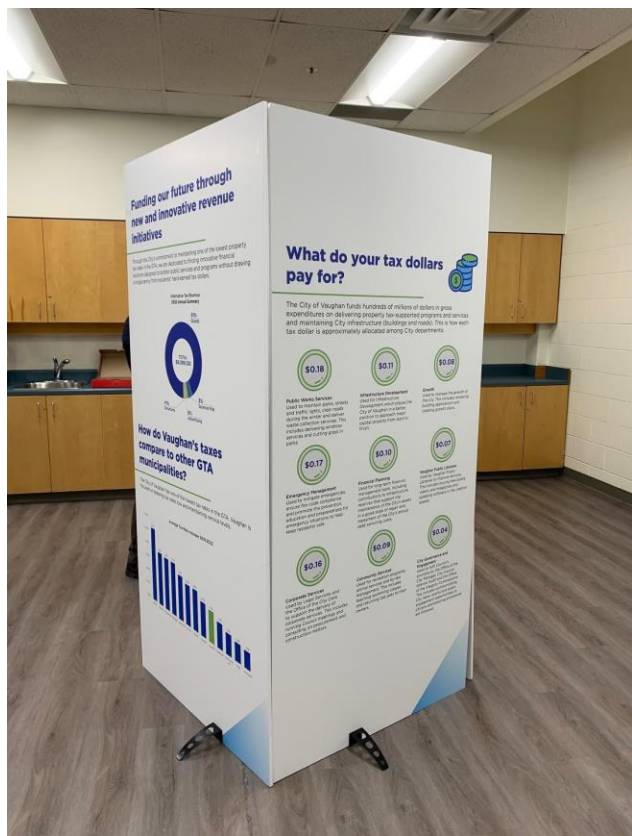


Image 15-16: Boards at the Public Open House for "What do your tax dollars pay for?" & "Frequently Asked Questions."





# **DIGITAL BILLBOARD PROJECT**

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*Economic Development, November 2023*





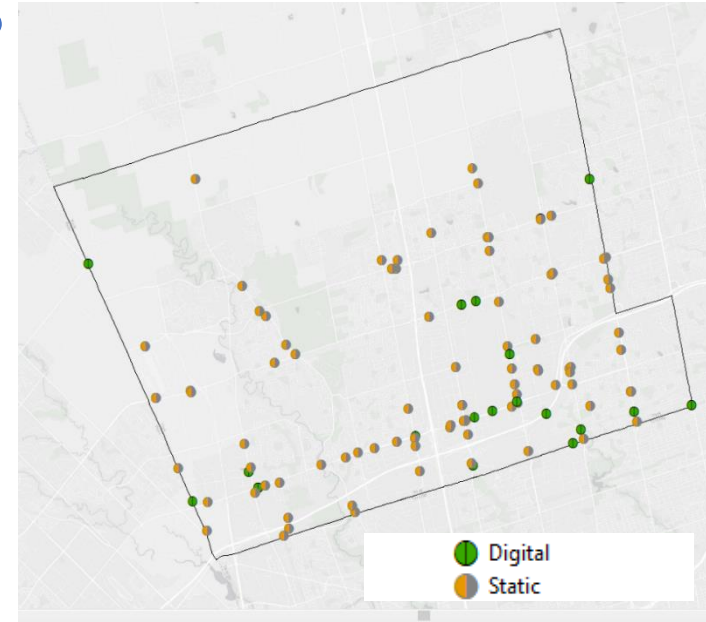
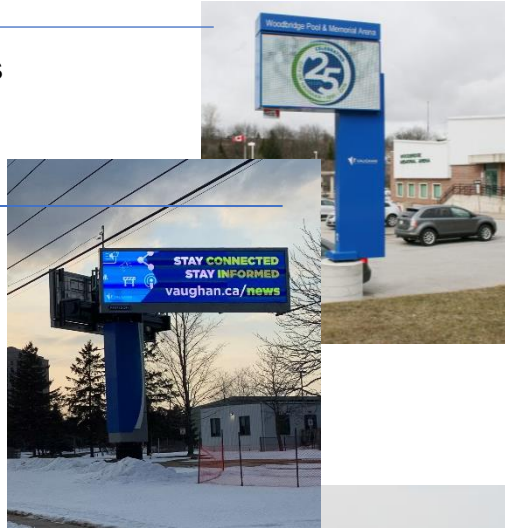
# What are Digital Billboards?

## 1. City Digital Signs

- Community Messaging at 10 locations on city property (no advertising)

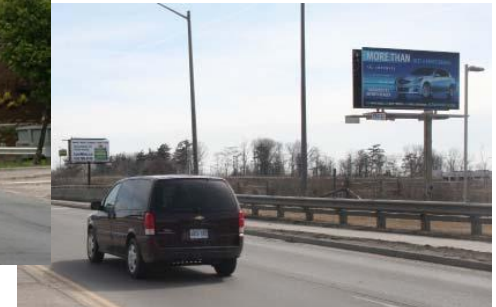
## 2. City Digital Billboards

- Advertising boards
  - 3 locations- Phase One
- Lease of city property
  - **min. \$6M over 15 years**  
(min. \$405,000/year)
- City messaging in-kind
  - 10 seconds per minute

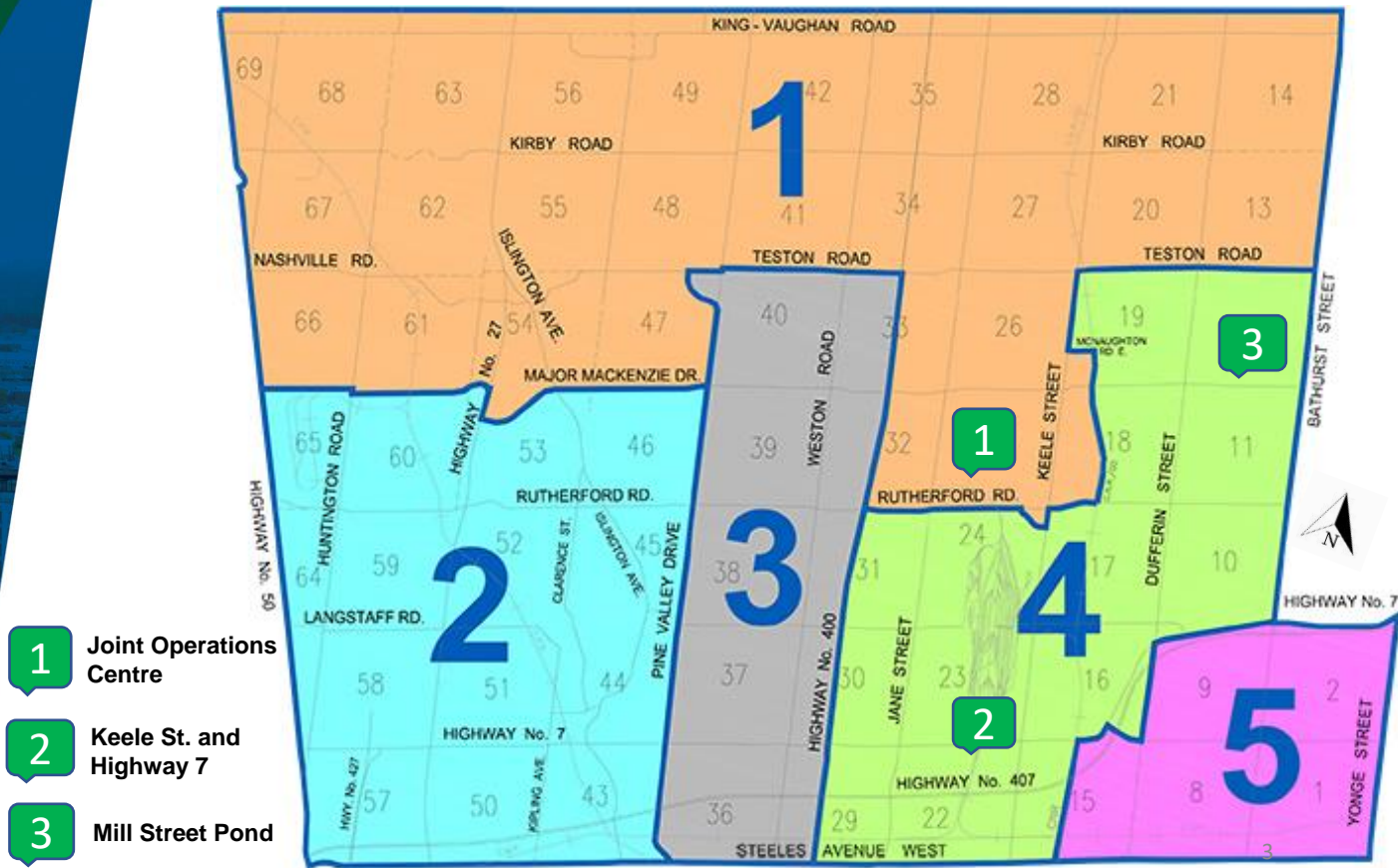


## 3. Private activity (total 234 facings)

- 2 CP Rail bridge signs (4 facings)
- 8 CN Rail bridge signs (16 facings)
- 20 Digital Billboards (36 facings)
- 90 Static Billboards (178 facings)



# Phase One - Complete



# **Current State – Billboard Revenue Project**

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## **Phase 1 – COMPLETE**

- Three (3) City-owned site locations

## **Phase 2 – Current**

- Four (4) additional site locations identified
- Public consultation complete
- Report findings to Council
- Staff to proceed to RFP subject to approval

## **Phase 3 - Current**

- An additional four (4) locations presented for approval
- Staff to proceed to RFP with Phase 2 subject to approval



# Current Inventory

**City Blue  
Digital Signs**



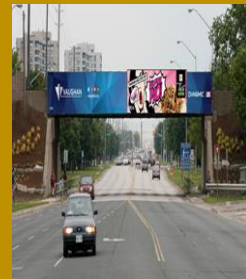
**Digital Billboards  
Revenue-Generating**



**Digital/Static  
Billboards - Private**

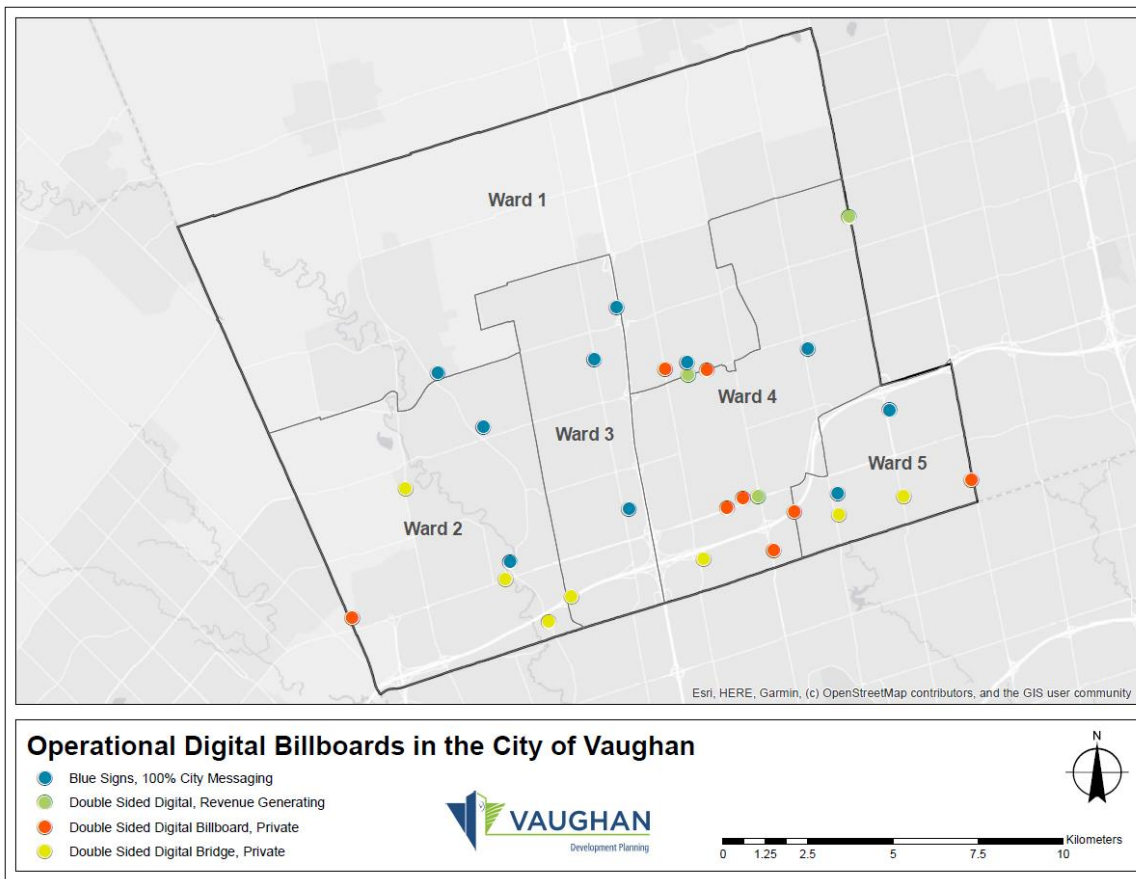


**Digital Bridge -  
Private**



Quantity and Size	10 (4' x 7')	2 (10' x 35') 1 (10' x 20')	20 digital (various) 90 static (various)	2 CPKC (8' x 29') 5 CN (7.10' x 28.4')
Future Planned	5 more (one per community centre)	7 via RFP (pending Council approval)	4 applications pending	1 application pending
Operational Model	100% City Messaging	5-10% City Messaging + Third Party Advertising	8 with 5-10% City messaging, the others 100% Private third-party	Vaughan Logo and 5-10% City Messaging + Third Party Advertising
Revenue Generated	\$0	\$405,000/year	\$0	\$0

# City-wide Messaging

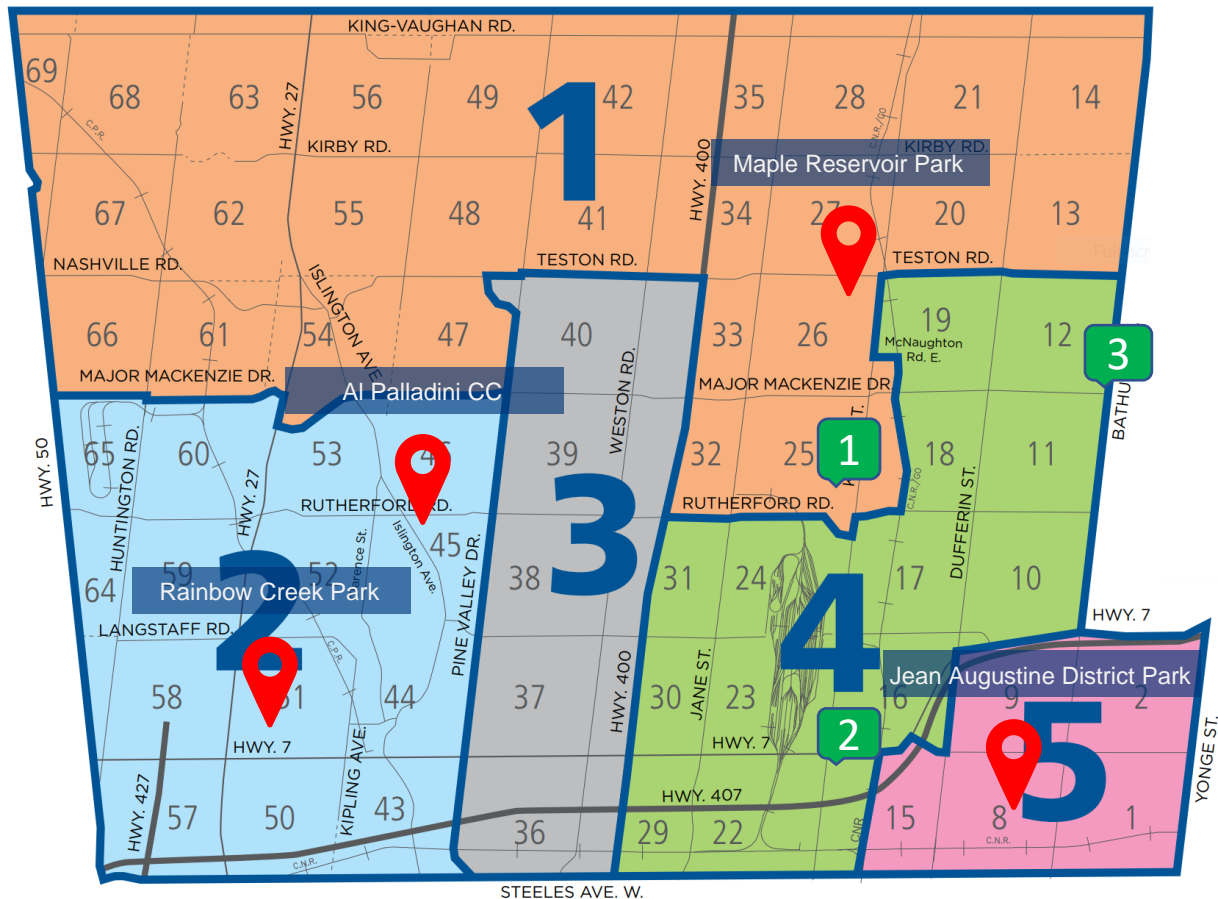




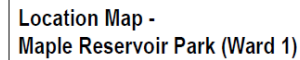


# Future Locations

# Phase 2 – 4 Locations







**VAUGHAN**  
Office of Communications and  
Economic Development (OCED)

Appendix A

DATE:  
February 14, 2023

# **Al Palladini Community Centre**



## **Location Map - Al Palladini Community Centre (Ward 2)**

LOCATION: 9201 Islington Avenue  
Part of Lot 15, Concession 7



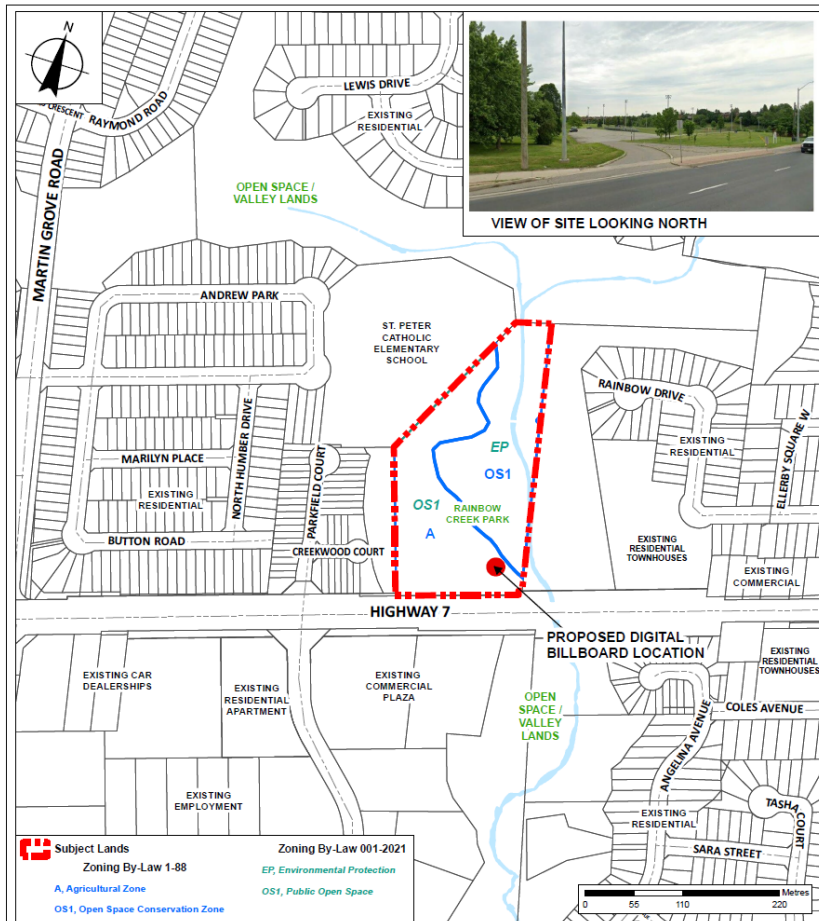
## **Appendix**

DATE:  
February 14, 2023

# B



# Rainbow Creek Park



## Location Map - Rainbow Creek Park (Ward 2)

LOCATION: 5450 Highway 7  
Part of Lot 6, Concession 8



## Appendix

DATE:  
February 14, 2023

# C





# Jean Augustine District Park



## Location Map - Bathurst District Park (Ward 5)

LOCATION: 101 Westmount Boulevard  
Part of Lot 8, Concession 2

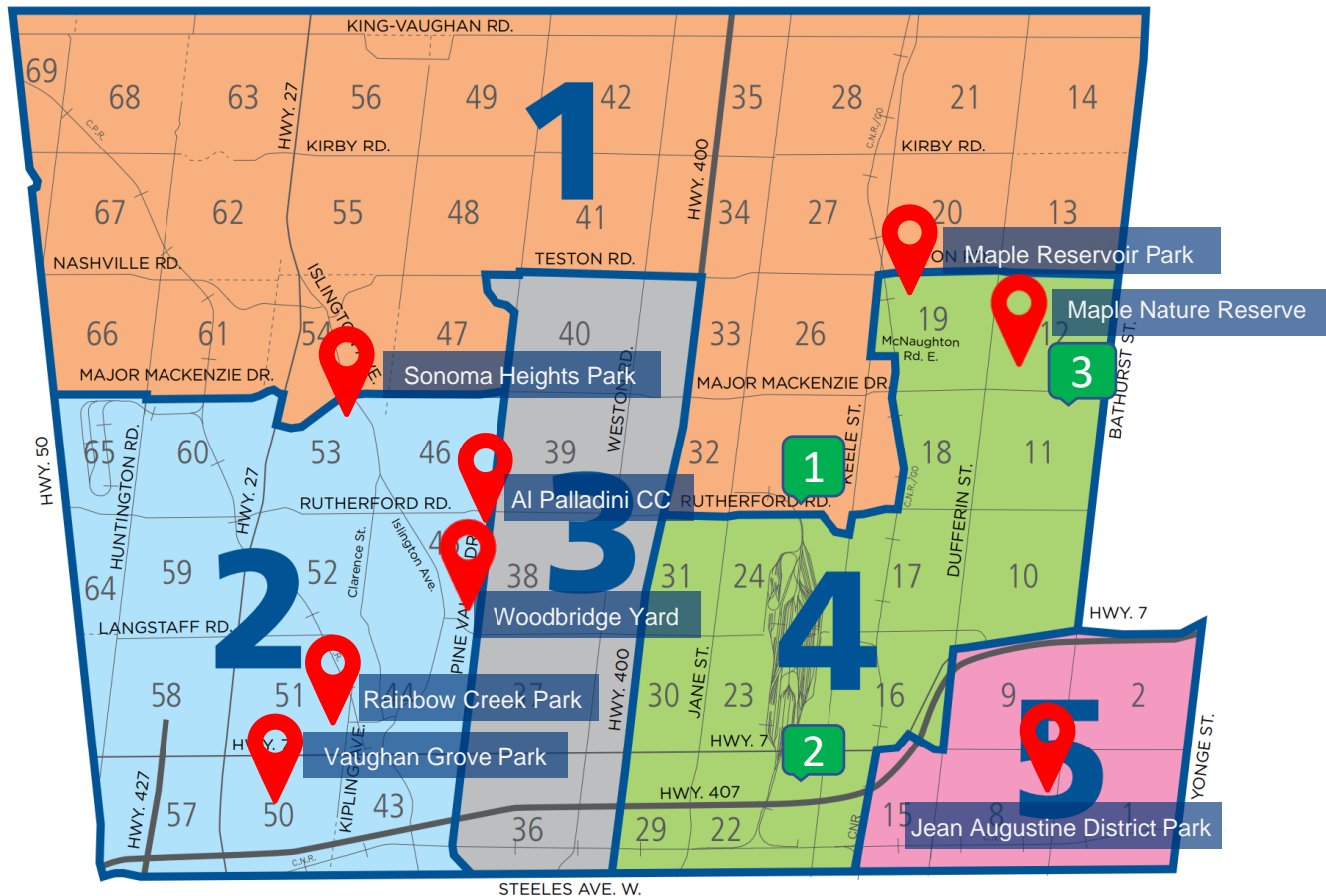


## Appendix

DATE: February 14, 2023

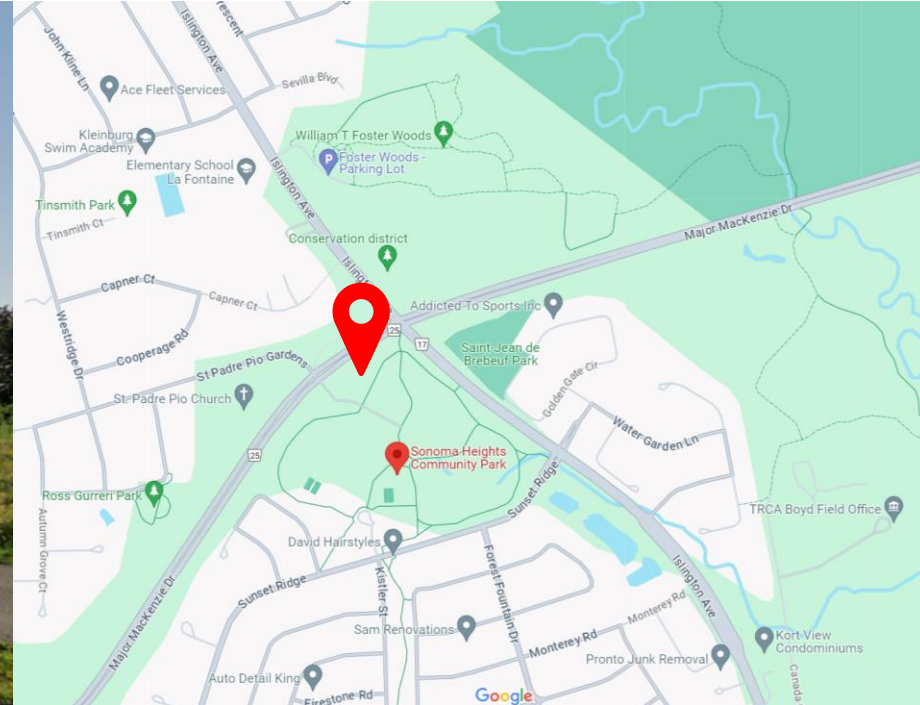
D

# Phase 3a – 4 Locations





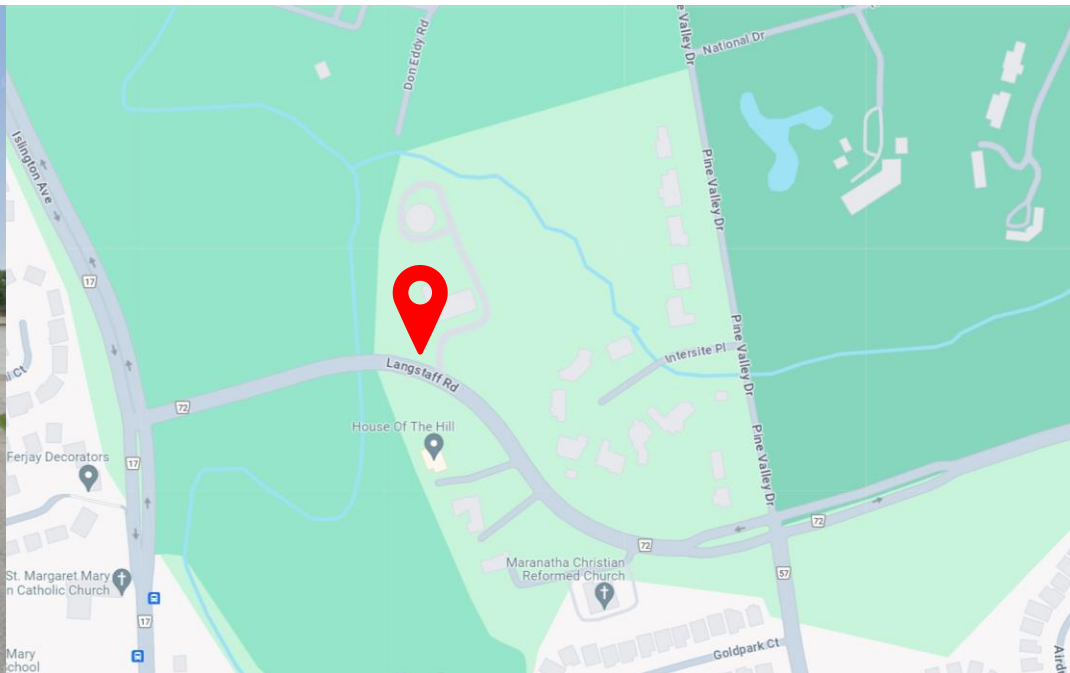
# Sonoma Heights Community Park







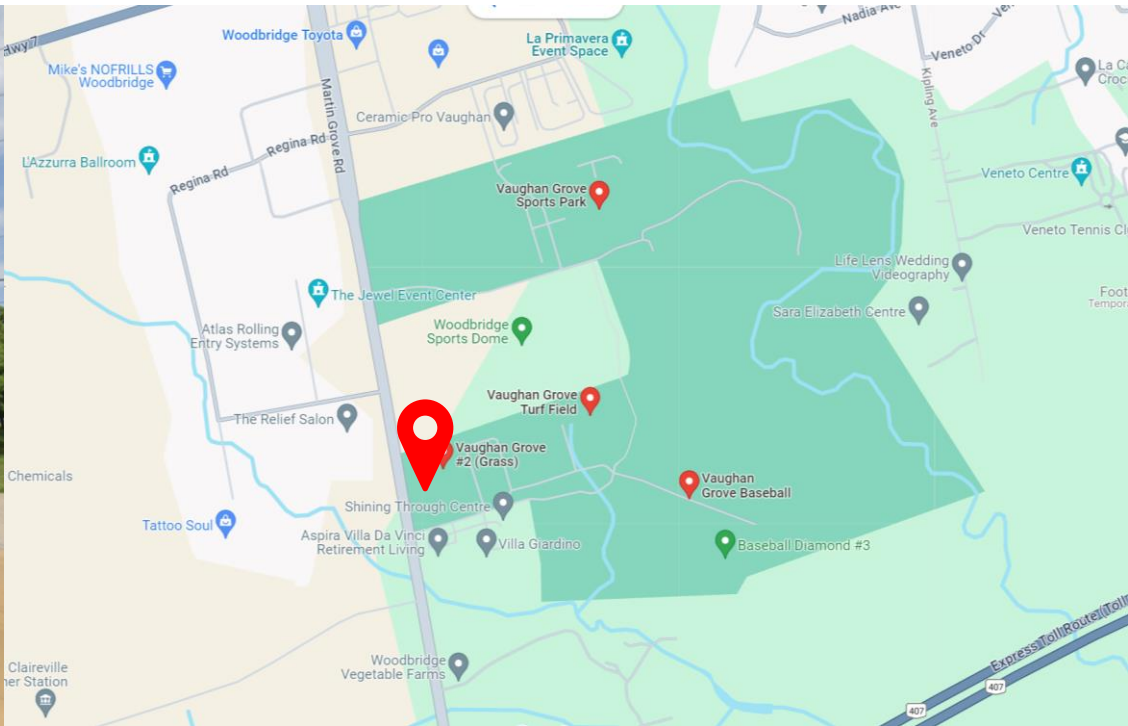
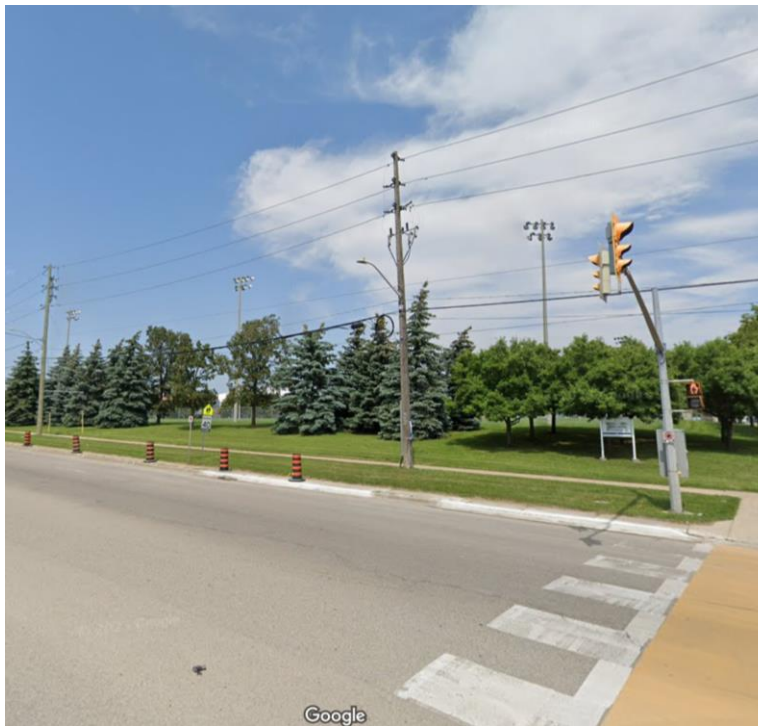
# Woodbridge Yard





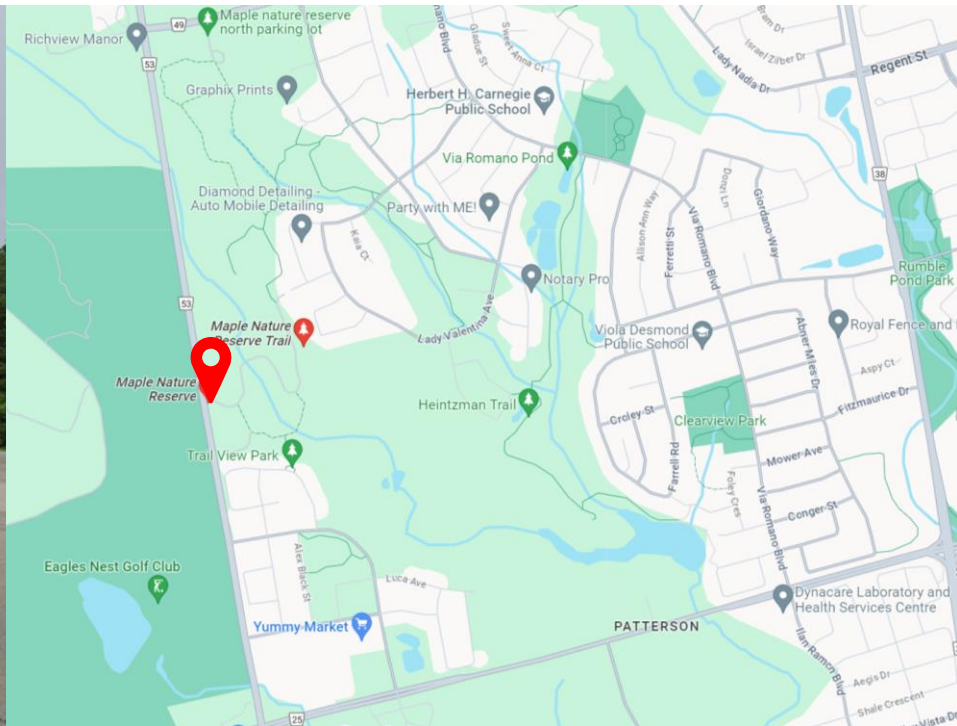


# Vaughan Grove Sports Park





# Maple Nature Reserve



# Project Timeline

**Q4 2023**



- Council Report presenting the outcome of the industry, stakeholder and public consultation process
- Seek authority to proceed to RFP for Phase 2 and 3a
- Renegotiate terms of existing agreement for Phase 3b

**Q1 2024**



- Draft RFP for Council-approved digital billboards
- Issue date no later than March 2024

**Q2 2024**



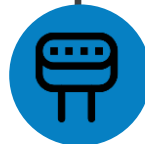
- Award vendor contract via land-lease agreement (15-year term plus two 5-year renewal options)
- Execute the land lease agreement to the satisfaction of the City Manager and City Solicitor.

**Q3/4 2024**



- Awarded vendor designs, permits, constructs, and connects digital billboards.

**2025**



- Substantial Completion (2025-2040 Term)