

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, March 19, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: FIRST ANNUAL UPDATE - 2023 VAUGHAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FROM:

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ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To highlight 2023 advancements of building a multi-modal transportation system in the City of Vaughan and the current efforts in improving Vaughan's transportation system in support of the 2022-2026 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan. This is the first update since the completion of the 2023 Vaughan Transportation Plan.

Report Highlights

- The VTP prioritizes strategic investments in key infrastructure improvements while bolstering these investments with robust policy measures.
- The goal is to encourage residents, businesses and visitors to opt for more sustainable travel more often. Through three key objectives, the VTP is a plan that will Build Infrastructure, Empower Choice and Think Forward.
- This report provides a summary of the 2023 VTP implementation priorities The Mobility Action Plan, the Transportation Planning Data Management Strategy, and the draft 10-Year Roads Capital map serve as invaluable tools. They collectively steer us toward a sustainable transportation system.

Recommendations

1. THAT the 2023 accomplishments in advancing a multi-modal transportation system, as outlined in this report, be received for information.

Background

The Service Excellence Strategic Plan has identified Transportation and Mobility as a strategic priority area for the 2022-2026 Term of Council. To meet the objectives of this priority area, the Vaughan Transportation Plan (VTP) provides steps towards improving Vaughan's road/street network, advocating for improved public transit and improving active and emerging modes of transportation.

The Vaughan Transportation Plan provides directions for future transportation related studies, projects, initiatives, and policies and will guide transportation decision-making in the City to establish a network supportive of all users.

By 2051, Vaughan's population is projected to exceed 570,000, with over 350,000 people employed within the city. However, the current reliance on private vehicles for travel poses significant challenges. Many destinations, including workplaces, schools and grocery stores are situated too far from most homes to walk or cycle. The distance between destinations also makes providing frequent and convenient transit services increasingly difficult.

Traffic congestion during peak hours, especially on major roads, is also a common problem in Vaughan. The lack of accessible alternatives to private cars exacerbates the issue. To address this, strategic urban planning is essential. We must prioritize infrastructure that enables all forms of travel - walking, cycling, transit and driving. Compact, mixed-use neighbourhoods that encourage proximity to essential services can help alleviate long car commutes and traffic congestion.

In May 2023, Council endorsed the 2023 Vaughan Transportation Plan (VTP). This comprehensive long-range study Transportation Master Plan for the city builds upon the foundation of the 2012 Vaughan Transportation Master Plan. However, it also acknowledges the need to adapt to new trends and travel patterns that have emerged since 2012.

The VTP prioritizes strategic investments in key infrastructure improvements while bolstering these investments with robust policy measures. The goal is to encourage residents, businesses and visitors to opt for more sustainable travel more often. By doing so, the VTP also aims to address pressing issues such as climate change and foster sustainable urban development.

Simultaneously, the VTP positions Vaughan to harness the potential of emerging technologies that will revolutionize the transportation system. The innovations will

enhance the resilience of our communities and improve overall mobility.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Item 2, Report No. 22, of the Committee of the Whole \(Working Session\), which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 16, 2023.](#)

Analysis and Options

The VTP acknowledges the limitations inherent in today's approaches to meet future mobility needs. It serves as a strategic blueprint for infrastructure investments, while also balancing policy actions and forward-thinking planning. By addressing today's transportation challenges head-on, the VTP transforms them into opportunities that exemplify excellence in delivering an integrated transportation system. Investing in accessible, safe, and efficient infrastructure stands as a cornerstone of the VTP. By doing so, Vaughan opens a wide array of mobility choices for residents, visitors, and businesses alike. Whether walking, cycling, riding a bus, or driving, all users reap the benefits of a cost-effective and environmentally friendly transportation system. This well-crafted strategy effectively manages congestion and accommodates the anticipated growth within the city's transportation network.

Through three key objectives, the VTP is a plan that will Build Infrastructure, Empower Choice and Think Forward. The following provides a summary of the VTP implementation priorities in 2023

In 2023, the Build Infrastructure objective focused on the following priorities:

[Mayor Del Duca's comprehensive 10-year Action Plan to Fight Traffic Gridlock](#) in Vaughan meticulously outlines several Council-approved city-building projects. These initiatives, currently in progress or planned, hold the promise of significantly enhancing residents' quality of life and fortifying the City's economic competitiveness.

A draft 10-Year Roads Growth Program map has been developed to serve as a valuable tool for internal planning, budgeting, and strategic alignment of road infrastructure investments within the City.

- **The draft 10-Year Roads Growth Program map can be reviewed as Attachment 1.**
 - The purpose of this map is to outline the proposed road infrastructure projects over the next decade.
 - The map represents a forecast of transportation infrastructure investment for 2024-2034 and incorporates the City's most recent approved and

recognized budget. Timing beyond 2026, reflects timing identified in the 2023 VTP.

- **The draft 10-Year Roads Growth Program map is similar to what is produced by York Region.**
 - Following a similar format and structure, plus the inclusion of York Region projects, ensures consistency and allows for effective comparison and analysis.
- **The draft 10-Year Roads Growth Program map will be used internally by staff to inform the annual budget review process.**
 - This information enables decision-makers to allocate resources (such as funding, personnel, and materials) effectively.
 - It also facilitates budget planning by prioritizing projects based on need and impact.
 - The map helps ensure that road infrastructure investments are in line with the strategic goals of the City. Strategic goals may include factors like economic development, sustainability, safety and connectivity.

Class Environmental Assessments:

An environmental assessment is a planning and decision-making process used to promote environmentally responsible decision-making. In Ontario, this process is defined and finds its authority in the Environmental Assessment Act. Recently, the Province has proposed significant changes to the Environmental Assessment Act in an effort to streamline and simplify the 50-year-old environmental assessment processes for what are considered “low-risk” municipal infrastructure projects. Under the proposed new regime, the City remains committed to ensuring effective consultation, design and completion of any environmental studies in order to support the construction of roads infrastructure. A more in-depth assessment of Bill 162 – Ontario’s Get it Done Act, 2024 will come to Council under a separate report.

2023 Completed Class Environmental Assessments:

- Teston Road Improvements between Pine Valley Drive and Kleinburg Summit Way
- [Bass Pro Mills Drive Extension](#), with revisions to ESR in 2023 – *supports #6 of Mayor’s 10-Year Action Plan*

On-going Class Environmental Assessments:

- [McNaughton Road West](#)
- [Yonge Steeles Corridor Collector Roads](#) - *supports #7 of Mayor’s 10-Year Action Plan*

Area Transportation Master Plans:

Area specific Transportation Master Plans provide that second layer of transportation analysis from the Vaughan Transportation Plan. These plans provide specific recommendations and policies for those areas of the city where context specific infrastructure, transportation, environment, urban design or similar matters are required beyond the general framework provided by the Official Plan and VTP. It is the City's practice to complete an area specific Transportation Master Plan as part of the Secondary Planning process.

Ongoing Transportation Master Plans:

- [Weston 7](#)
- Update to Concord Transportation Master Plan
- Update to [Vaughan Metropolitan Centre](#) Transportation Master Plan (being undertaken by VMC team)

Active and Sustainable Transportation:

- In 2023, more than 11 km of new cycle tracks and in-boulevard multi-use pathways were opened and 29 km of existing multi-use pathways and trails were updated with new pavement markings and signage.
- In 2024, residents and visitors can expect the construction of even more cycle tracks, in-boulevard multi-use pathways and sidewalks most notably the Jane Street (Active Transportation) Uptown Link will begin construction.
- New developments continue to be planned to provide a balanced transportation system providing options for all modes of travel by implementing fine-grained street and active transportation networks. To complement the transportation network, new, sustainable mobility technologies such as micro-mobility (shared electric scooters and bikes) are also being accommodated in new Secondary Plans.

Supporting #8 of Mayor's 10-Year Action Plan, Vaughan continues to work effectively with our partners at York Region, Ontario's Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx and national railway carriers to advocate for the following:

- Enhanced transit and GO rail service;
- Upgrades to essential links in the road network; and
- Urbanization of Regional roads to support active transportation.

Another key objective of the VTP is to raise awareness among individuals about alternative modes of travel. By doing so, people are empowered to make informed choices and opt for non-auto travel if they align with their needs. This approach aims to reduce reliance on cars, ultimately leading to a decrease in traffic congestion. As a result, there will be less demand for expensive new road

construction and expansions, while also contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

In 2023, the Empower Choice objective focused on the following priorities:

Initiate the City’s Mobility Action Plan (MAP) which will provide the strategic lens to inform the City on how to jump start changes to make the transportation system more sustainable, better anticipate and mitigate potential negative impacts on vulnerable communities and expand access to new technology and mobility options.

- The MAP is intended to propose the implementation and monitoring strategy to achieve and report back on the goals and objectives of the 2023 Vaughan Transportation Plan. Key deliverables planned for 2024 includes:
 - Draft Communications and Outreach Strategy;
 - Launch micromobility pilot;
 - Draft EV Charging Station Strategy; and
 - Draft Community Mobility Hubs Strategy.

The third objective of the VTP is to think forward, encompassing a multifaceted approach. It involves rigorous research into emergent trends, such as climate change, and the impact it has on transportation. Simultaneously, the VTP delves into the realm of cutting-edge technologies, including autonomous and connected vehicles. These innovations are rapidly reshaping the transportation landscape, with automated, electric, and shared vehicles becoming integral components.

Moreover, ubiquitous use of smartphones and other connected devices are revolutionizing how travelers perceive and utilize roadways, public transit, and other transportation services. As this technological ecosystem continues to expand, a substantial opportunity exists to better communicate and understand the preferences of citizens, by establishing robust a process and framework to best house and utilize the variety of data available, to ultimately make better transportation planning decisions. Taking a proactive approach allows for the thorough testing of novel travel modes or services before they are widely adopted. By evaluating their effectiveness, safety, accessibility, and privacy, the City can make informed decisions before widespread implementation.

In 2023, the Thinking Forward objective focused on the following priorities:

Initiate the City’s Transportation Data Management Strategy or “Roadmap” which will identify the actions needed to establish a comprehensive and high-quality multi-modal

database upon which the City will be able to support the implementation progress of the 2023 VTP and the MoveSmart Mobility Management Strategy.

By investing funds and resources in specific, purposeful steps that enable early adoption, measurement, refinement and expansion of projects, the Transportation Planning Data Management Roadmap will improve the City's ability to help staff define and measure the health of the transportation system and build the digital intelligence to guide decision-makers in future transportation infrastructure and operations investments

The Transportation Innovation Program (TIP) was approved by Vaughan Council in June 2023 and the associated council report can be found [here](#). The TIP is an initiative that will position the city as a testbed for smart mobility innovations. The TIP is a transparent, streamlined and fair process established to partner with companies who wish to test their innovative and/or emerging transportation technologies that align with the City's VTP objectives. The application portal and calls for application launched in the Winter 2023.

Key deliverables planned for 2024 includes:

- Multiple transportation innovation demonstrations through the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) program.
- Draft framework of Transportation Planning Data Management Strategy.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts as a result of the report. All initiatives described in the report have been or will need to be approved through the annual budget process.

Operational Impact

The seamless execution of the VTP recommendations hinges on close collaboration with the City's MoveSmart program. Although these two program areas function independently, their synergy ensures that the City effectively addresses its strategic priorities in the realm of Transportation and Mobility for the 2022-2026 Term of Council.

As we progress through the implementation phase, on-going consultation with internal stakeholders is paramount. These stakeholders encompass diverse parties within the City, all contributing to the iterative process of shaping and refining the recommendations from the 2023 VTP. These departments include:

- Transportation and Fleet Management Services
- Development Engineering

- Policy Planning and Special Programs
- Infrastructure Delivery
- Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development
- Development Planning
- Economic and Cultural Development
- Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The implementation strategies of the VTP recommendations are consistent with the 2022 York Region Transportation Master Plan. Staff will continue to collaborate with York Region and York Region Transit to enable a seamless and connection transportation system for all users.

Conclusion

The ongoing implementation of the recommendations from the Vaughan Transportation Plan stands at a critical juncture. As we navigate this pivotal phase, it becomes evident that the next wave of growth will be markedly different, necessitating fresh and innovative investments in our transportation infrastructure. The rapid expansion of our city demands substantial commitments to transportation infrastructure, including enhancements to roadways, the establishment of an extensive sidewalk and cycle track network, and the introduction of upgraded transit services. These collective efforts will contribute to an accessible and convenient transportation ecosystem.

In parallel, we witness the emergence of new facets of modern life – remote work arrangements, e-commerce, adjustments in work-life balance, and the gig economy. These shifts impact our travel patterns, prompting us to adapt and learn. Safeguarding and enhancing the freedom to move within our city hinges on providing diverse mobility options. Our future investments must strike a delicate balance: managing congestion while empowering individuals with a wide array of travel choices. By making these investments today, we lay the groundwork for a comprehensive and modern transportation system that aligns with the City's strategic goals.

The Mobility Action Plan (MAP), the Transportation Planning Data Management Strategy, and the draft 10-Year Roads Growth Capital Program map serve as invaluable tools. They collectively steer us toward a sustainable transportation system, one that offers high-quality, attractive, competitive, and environmentally responsible mobility choices for every resident, business, and visitor in Vaughan.

For more information, please contact Selma Hubjer, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8674.

Attachments

1. 10-Year Roads Growth Capital Program Map

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