

VMC Secondary Plan Update

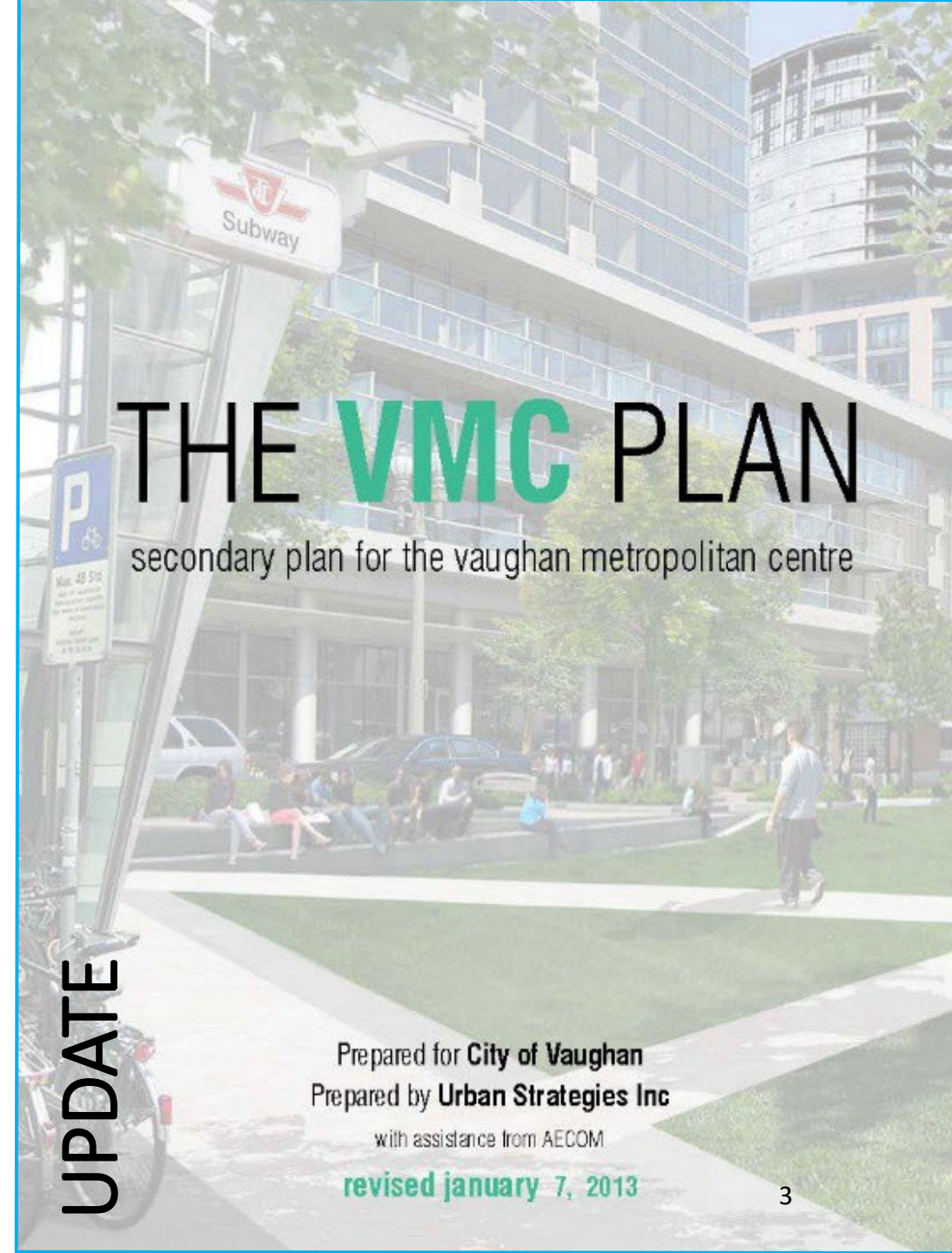
VMC Sub-committee
April 24, 2024

City Staff continue to be committed in ensuring that the downtown develops as a **complete and balanced community** with high-density mixed uses that are transit supportive and pedestrian friendly, with a **vibrant sense of place**, a **high-quality public realm** and **environmentally sustainable** design approaches.

VMC Secondary Plan Update

Policy Updates to Support a Complete Community

- The VMC Secondary Plan (VMCSP) Update continues to address provincial and regional policy updates, in response to the **intensive growth** that is putting pressure on realizing Council's vision for a **vibrant** and **balanced** downtown.
- The VMCSP Update continues to focus on a **renewed policy framework** that supports the completion of a downtown and central business district as a **complete and balanced community** that is well **supported by municipal services** and **social infrastructure** to 2051 and beyond.
- On-going consultation continues to ensure that the plan is **equitable** while following the vision to deliver a **successful downtown**.

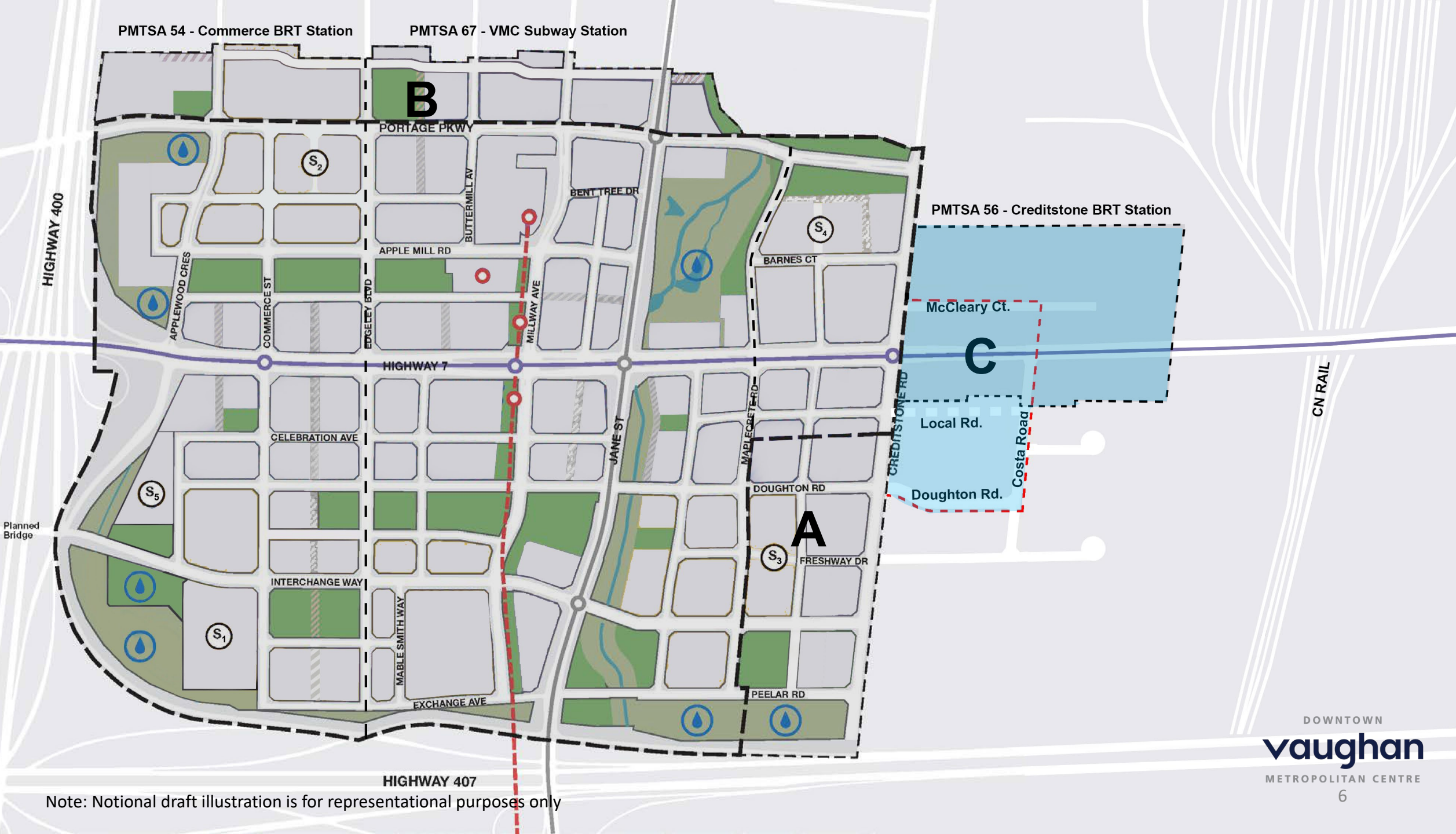


February 2024 VMC Sub-committee

Direction to Staff

- Include **Expansion Area C** as part of the boundary expansion areas, conduct local consultation with key stakeholders and work to develop a preferred option to update the schedules accordingly and seek Sub-Committee endorsement in a future VMC Sub-Committee meeting.
- Explore the possibility of **Unlimited Heights and Densities (UHD)** in the VMC and report back with findings and a recommendation in a future VMC Sub-Committee meeting.

Work on **Expansion Area C** is on-going, with the aim of developing a preferred option to be presented to the VMC Sub-Committee in **May 2024**.



Note: Notional draft illustration is for representational purposes only

Work on exploring the possibility of **Unlimited Heights and Densities (UHD)** in the VMC is on-going, with the aim of reporting back with findings and a recommendation to the VMC Sub-Committee in **June 2024**.

UHD Preliminary Findings

Staff have been investigating and have had conversations with other GTA Municipalities that have enacted, or are currently exploring implementing, Unlimited Heights and Densities:

- **Brampton**
- **Mississauga**
- **Toronto**
- **Kitchener**



UHD Preliminary Findings

Brampton

- City staff were directed by Council to bring forward a recommendation on UHD. In **June 2022**, a Staff Report was brought forward on UHD.
- Staff's initial preference was to include maximum heights & densities, however staff recommended that if UHD was to be implemented, it should be subject to the approval of several technical studies (e.g. servicing, traffic, growth management, urban design, shadowing)
- Following staff's recommendations, it was determined that UHD would be reviewed further through an MTSA Study
- In **November 2022**, Provincial modifications removed the discretion of lower-tier municipalities to set maximum heights and densities within MTSA's.
- In **November 2023**, the Brampton OP was approved with UHD, based on provincial modifications, with the understanding that the City was unable to impose any height or density restrictions.



UHD Preliminary Findings

Brampton (continued)

- The UHD incentive program was proposed to be offered in a small geographic area adjacent to a GO Station, in exchange for a percentage of units above 25-storeys to be set aside for affordable housing. The exact percentage of affordable housing was to be determined through a future Inclusionary Zoning consultation process.
- UHD were prescribed to areas closest to the MTSA area station with decreasing height permissions for lands closer to low-rise development
- The UHD incentive program was proposed to be in effect for a period of 5 years, after which time its effectiveness would be reviewed by Council and a decision made as to whether or not it should be cancelled or extended.
- Projects taking advantage of the UHD incentive program are required to have a building permit issued, and break ground, within three (3) years of site plan approval.



UHD Preliminary Findings

Brampton (continued)

- In **December 2023**, Bill 150 reinstated the Regional Council adopted policy language for MTSAs, which permits that “maximum heights and densities may be established at the discretion of the local municipality”.
- In **April 2024**, a Staff Report was brought forward recommending amendments to the UHD OP policies, to re-implement maximum height & densities.

Specifically, this report advised that:

“Brampton is requesting the Region to modify the MTSA policies included in Brampton Plan to permit the implementation of maximum building heights and maximum densities for Brampton’s Primary MTSA, as appropriate.”



UHD Preliminary Findings

Brampton (continued)

In summary:

- The UHD has only been in place since November 2023, and is now being considered for amendment
- Concerns have been noted with the UHD program, including:
 - Difficulties with infrastructure planning. Needing to plan for 'worst case' infrastructure scenario
 - Limits City's leverage for receiving additional community benefits through the development process (parks, community facilities etc.)
 - UHD emphasizes height and density and does not seek to achieve balanced community planning objectives.
 - No noticeable increase in development applications since implementation.



UHD Preliminary Findings

Mississauga

- In the 1990's Mississauga had a very regimented and structured plan, which set out prescriptive development standards for parcel blocks
- City had issues attracting residential development to the downtown. This prompted the discussion on potential UHD frameworks for the downtown to incentivize residential development within the downtown.
- In the late 1990's and early 2000's Mississauga developed an UHD framework to incentivize residential development within the downtown.
- First step was to get the road network finalized and acquire land for parks, then create a mixed-use planning regime for all parcels of land



UHD Preliminary Findings

Mississauga (continued)

- Wanted to create a downtown skyline that was dictated by market demand, but had to ensure the public realm and design was right (i.e. commercial/retail at grade, separation distances between buildings, concrete approach to design)
- Focused on delivering a successful public realm through development that delivered architectural and urban design excellence that translated to a comfortable pedestrian-scale experience
- Mix of land use designations to determine where transition needed to happen to low-rise residential
- All lands in the downtown area were pre-zoned with Holding provisions even if the sites were already built out. This ensured that any new development/re-development would require the developer to enter into servicing agreements, agreements to build out the road network etc.



UHD Preliminary Findings

Mississauga (continued)

In summary:

- Mississauga staff have found that the program has been successful in attracting/incentivizing residential development
- Have had issues securing a balance of uses and achieving complete community, majority of development is residential
- Found that UHD inflated the market/land values in the downtown area
- Experience difficulties acquiring land for parks, majority of new parkland is POPS (Privately-Owned Public Space)



UHD Preliminary Findings

Kitchener

- In January 2024, a Staff Report was brought forward recommending approval of OPA and ZBLA that would remove maximum density requirements (FSI) for 7 of Kitchener's PMTSAs.
- Council deferred decision and directed staff to have further consultation with development industry and community.
- In March 2024, a Supplemental Staff Report outlining engagement outcomes and recommending approval of the proposed amendments was approved by Kitchener Council



UHD Preliminary Findings

Kitchener (continued)

- The approved OPA & ZBA amendments remove maximum densities (FSI) from Strategic Growth Areas surrounding MTSA's
- The approved OPA & ZBA amendments include four new zones, one of which has no maximum height (Strategic Growth Area 4 SGA-4)
- The approved policies move away from a 'height and density' approach and focus on a 'built form' approach
- Built form policies focus on building separation, tower length, tower separation distances, floor plate requirements etc.



UHD Preliminary Findings

Kitchener (continued)

In summary:

- Approved program moves towards an approach focused on built form opposed to maximum heights and densities for MTSA areas
- Was approved by Council in March 2024, preliminary to understand the outcomes of the program



UHD Preliminary Findings

Toronto

- Toronto's Downtown Plan was updated in 2018 and covers the majority of downtown Toronto, extending east-west from Bathurst to the DVP, and north-south from Lakeshore to midtown
- Plan uses a 'performance-based' approach, focusing on policies that support a vibrant public realm and urban design – opposed to a prescriptive approach
- The Downtown Plan includes multiple land use designations, including the "Mixed Use Areas 1" designation, which has no prescribed maximum height or density, and is centered around high-order transit areas
- In lieu of prescribing maximum height and densities, the policies within the plan created a gradient of mixed-use designations, with different scales of growth outlined for each



UHD Preliminary Findings

Toronto (continued)

- Infrastructure strategies were developed to determine the maximum built-out of the plan area and support UHD policies in “Mixed Use Areas 1” (community services and facilities, water, energy, mobility, and parks and public realm)
- Policy language emphasizes the street relationship and the built form
- Policies within the plan are intentionally intended to be flexible and open to interpretation by Community Planning Staff



UHD Preliminary Findings

Toronto (continued)

In summary:

- The UHD program is still fairly new, only being in place since 2018
- Have seen issues with acquiring a variety of built-form, majority of development has been high-rise on podiums
- Many development applications have gone to the OLT
The flexible/general policy framework up for interpretation by Development Planners is a large part of the reason for this



Key Priorities of the VMC Secondary Plan Update

Create a complete and balanced community by:

- Managing **Intensity of Development** and its trajectory
- Achieving **Built Form** Variety, Including **Mid-Rise** Built Form
- Finding a **Balance** of Uses
- Serving the Population with **Public Amenities**
- Realizing the **Housing Variety** Necessary for an Inclusive Community
- Establishing **Transitions** at the VMC's Boundaries



Principles to meet Key Priorities

Principles to consider to meet key priorities of the VMC Secondary Plan Update:

- Limit geographic area to areas surrounding higher-order transit
- Include a gradient of mixed-use designations with different scales of growth
- Inclusion of transition policies for areas abutting lower density
- Inclusion of 'sunset clauses', with opportunities for extension
- Incorporation of incentives, including incentives for affordable housing



Principles to meet Key Priorities

Principles to consider to meet key priorities of the VMC Secondary Plan Update:

- Requirements for non-residential uses
- Comprehensive infrastructure and community services studies and plans based on the full built out
- Use of Holding provisions
- Inclusion of timeframes for projects taking advantage of the UHD incentive program. Require having building permit issued, and break ground, within a set number of years following site plan approval.
- Robust policy that strengthens architectural and urban design best practices through built form that delivers a unique, successful and vibrant public realm.



Next Steps

Update the VMC Sub-Committee

- Staff will bring forward a recommendation on Expansion Area C at the **May** VMC Sub-Committee meeting, including updated schedules
- Staff will bring forward a recommendation on Unlimited Heights & Densities with considerations for implementation at the **June** VMC Sub-Committee
- Respond to any comments received at today's VMC Sub-Committee meeting

Develop Draft Secondary Plan Policies

- Currently working with our consultant to develop the draft updated Secondary Plan policies

Future VMC-wide Secondary Plan Update Consultation

- TAC Meetings with Internal Departments and External Agencies (Q2 / Q3) 2024
- Landowner Meetings (Q2 / Q3) 2024
- Public Open House (Q3) 2024
- Statutory Public Meeting (Q4) 2024 or (Q1) 2025



DOWNTOWN

vaughan

METROPOLITAN CENTRE

Thank you.