

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 04, 2019

WARD(S): 4

**TITLE: VMC NORTH-WEST AND SOUTH-WEST QUADRANT VISION,
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

FROM:

Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) north-west and south-west quadrant vision, planning and project implementation.

Report Highlights

- Development of the VMC gained great momentum over the last Term of Council with implementation of several catalyst capital and development projects in the Mobility Hub priority area.
- As the next phase of development proceeds, the VMC team are focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the transitioning downtown.
- VMC landowners in the north-west and south-west quadrant areas are working closely with the City to ramp up construction activity this summer to advance critical new infrastructure to provide the necessary foundation to support the transitioning downtown.
- Given the complexity of the infrastructure projects in the capital program, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works is critical to ensuring high quality implementation.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

At the March 5, 2019 VMC Sub-committee meeting, Staff provided an update on the status of the VMC Implementation Plan and highlighted priority projects for delivery during the next Term of Council (2018-2022) to further facilitate development and improve functionality.

To help execute a program of capital improvements, Staff have developed a phasing plan that highlights the planned coordination and implementation of projects to be delivered by the City and others over the next Term of Council. In support of this plan, landowners in the north-west and south-west quadrants have been working closely with the City to design and deliver several of the infrastructure improvements required to support development, while providing updates to the comprehensively planned vision and activation of their respective quadrants.

Summer 2019 will be an exciting season in the VMC as construction is ramping up on the implementation of new roads that will add to the collector road network in the north-west quadrant. In addition, the design and construction of servicing improvements in the south-west quadrant will proceed through the year, and construction will conclude with the opening of the much anticipated SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal. In support of building community engagement and activation in the downtown, several exciting events are planned in the VMC this year, including the launch of the 2019 Concerts in the Park series which will be held in Transit Square for the first time.

This report will focus on the north-west and south-west quadrant areas by providing an update on the overall master planning vision and development activity. Staff are working collaboratively with the landowners in the north-west and south-west quadrants (SmartCentres and QuadReal respectively) to coordinate these projects and works.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Implementation Plan and Priority Infrastructure Project Update March 2019](#)
[Member's Resolution - Re-affirmation of Request from SC for Minister's Zoning Order Dec 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

Construction of new roads and infrastructure improvements are being advanced in the north-west quadrant area which will provide better connectivity and support new development.

In the north-west quadrant area, construction is ongoing as both the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC) continue major works such as the relocation and reconstruction of the Highway 400 off-ramp at

Highway 7 (expected to be operational this summer) and completion of the York Region Bus Rapidway Transit Station on Highway 7 at Commerce Street.

SmartCentres has committed to advancing the construction of critical infrastructure to facilitate development, improve access and the movement of goods. This includes new roads such as Commerce Street from Highway 7 to Apple Mill Road, Apple Mill Road from Edgeley Boulevard to Applewood Crescent and the extension of Applewood Crescent from Highway 7 to Portage Parkway. The Applewood extension will align with the relocated Highway 400 off-ramp and further aid with circulation in the VMC. The roads are anticipated to be completed summer 2019 to coincide with both the MTO and YRRTC works.

Concurrently, SmartCentres is advancing construction of the iconic Transit City Towers 1, 2 and 3, and working with their consultant team to advance the development for the VMC East Block, marketed as Transit City Towers 4 and 5, at the north-east corner of the quadrant. This development includes three additional high-rise residential towers, one of which will be the first purpose built rental building in the downtown, supported by an enhanced public realm and series of privately-owned public spaces. As a condition of approval, improvements to existing roads such as Portage Parkway, Millway Avenue, and Jane Street will be implemented.

On April 29, 2019, the Province issued a Minister's Zoning Order to permit the relocation of the existing Walmart in the VMC. This approval will enable the construction of Buttermill Road and integrated townhouse units along the west elevation of the Transit City development upon demolition of the store.

The PwC-YMCA mixed-use building is under construction and nearing completion. Professional services firm PwC will anchor a new 220,000 square foot mixed use building opening in 2019. The building will also be home to the VMC Centre of Community opening in 2020 with a 77,000 square foot YMCA with not-for-profit child care services, fitness and aquatic facilities, a 26,000 square foot creative expression and learning hub, and a 10,000 square foot public library.

Through development approvals, the City has also worked with SmartCentres to secure several community benefits that will help provide critical social infrastructure to support the early build-out of the downtown. Community benefits include the City's first piece of public art secured through the City-wide Public Art Program, contributions to the Edgeley Pond and Park pedestrian bridge and Centre of Community, gateway signage, privately-owned public spaces, streetscape improvements and enhancements to the public realm through screening of transit related servicing structures.

The City's Recreation Services and Economic Development and Cultural Services teams have developed strategic engagement and event plans in the VMC through 2019 to activate the Mobility Hub and help generate community excitement for development of the downtown.

Design and construction of critical infrastructure are also being advanced in the southwest quadrant area

In the south-west quadrant, a trunk sanitary sewer along Interchange Way, from Highway 7 to Jane Street, is currently in detailed design to support several active development applications. These works are being led by QuadReal and their consulting team, in collaboration with the City's project team. Construction of the sewer is expected to begin this summer, with completion slated for the fall 2019. Concurrently, modelling for the block plan and supporting servicing studies has commenced and will continue to inform infrastructure upgrades in the quadrant.

QuadReal is also working with their consultant teams to advance development applications for both Block 2 and Block 3, collectively consisting of a mix of high-rise residential towers, mid-rise buildings and low-rise urban townhouse blocks, each activated with retail, pedestrian mews and high-quality open spaces. The draft plan of subdivision for Block 2 includes the construction of two collector roads (Millway Avenue and Exchange Avenue), road widening along Interchange Way, a new local road with urbanized streetscape, cycling facilities, the extension of the Millway Avenue Linear Park and stormwater management low-impact development infrastructure.

Block 3 will include delivery of a new local road and improvements to the existing Commerce Street and parts of Interchange Way.

Quadrant visioning is being updated and creative marketing strategies are being explored

SmartCentres and QuadReal are both working with the City and their consultant teams on updating the vision and comprehensive plans for their respective quadrants. As part of the planning exercise, creative tactics are being explored to market the area, engage the imagination of the community and message the story of the emerging downtown under construction.

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration continues with regional stakeholders which is an important factor in realizing the success of the VMC.

Conclusion

As the next phase of development proceeds, the VMC team are focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the transitioning downtown. The VMC team will continue to work closely with York Region, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, VMC Landowners, and internal departments to facilitate the advancement of these projects in the downtown, particularly in the north-west and south-west quadrants where construction activity is ramping up this year.

Implementation of these key infrastructure projects will continue to leverage key investments in transit and support early placemaking strategies for the downtown.

Updates on the on-going progress of the north-east and south-east quadrant areas vision, capital projects and development activity will be provided at a future VMC Sub-committee meeting in the fall 2019.

For more information, please contact: Amy Roots, VMC Senior Manager, Development Planning, ext. 8035, Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, VMC Manager, Development Engineering ext. 8433 and Gerardo Paez Alonso, VMC Manager, Parks Development, ext. 8195.

Attachments

There are no attachments associated with this report.

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