

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 04, 2019

WARD(S): 4

TITLE: VMC CURRENT PARKING CONDITIONS AND STRATEGY FOR MANAGEMENT

FROM:

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

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an overview of the current parking conditions within the VMC and strategies for management.

Report Highlights

- The VMC is a multi-modal centre unique in that the way we travel and move is changing from driver-centric to more of a focus on pedestrian and cyclist movements
- Anticipating the subway opening, staff conducted a study to review immediate parking needs and options
- Parking regulations were studied and a by-law amendment was passed for VMC parking restrictions
- Feedback from residents and businesses highlights a communication process improvement opportunity
- Staff are conducting concurrent studies to research and implement long-term parking solutions

Recommendation

1. THAT this report be received for information.

Background

The City is looking to the future and recognizing the way we live and move in Vaughan is changing. The vision for the VMC is an emerging, downtown, multi-modal, urban centre and was designed to promote cycling, walking and transit. The VMC is a destination for residents, businesses and visitors. Commuters looking to travel on the subway are encouraged to use the dedicated lots at Highway 407 and Pioneer Village stations with a combined total of 2431 spaces.

The VMC Secondary Plan identifies “strategic public parking” as a goal in creating an accessible downtown, with the expectation that a range of parking options will be available “to support the land uses”. The role of parking is unique in every municipality with a mix of publicly and privately-operated parking facilities, planning policies and regulations related to land use. It is therefore important to understand the City’s vision, direction, and priorities to respond appropriately to the parking needs of the VMC.

Policy 4.2.2 in the VMC Secondary Plan also states, “...unlike planned stations at Highway 407 and Steeles Avenue to the south, the VMC station will not include a public commuter parking lot associated with transit facilities.” It is the City’s intention that commuter parking be limited within and around the VMC to encourage travellers to use transit. Parking over-supply has been avoided through lower required parking rates for the new developments to discourage auto-oriented land use planning and reduce auto dependency. In an effort to achieve this desired outcome, this expectation will be implemented during the next stages of development of the VMC.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Implementation Plan and Priority Infrastructure Project Update March 2019](#)

[Mobility Hub Construction Update April 2018](#)

[VMC Term of Council Priorities and Implementation Update April 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

Parking regulations and immediate parking needs were reviewed in a study conducted in anticipation of subway opening

The VMC is transitioning from an industrial and commercial landscape with abundant on-site parking (both on-street and lots) that was built according to previous car-dependent zoning by-law parking standards. Early development in the VMC is reflecting the City’s vision of transitioning into an urban downtown where development will be well served by transit.

As the VMC began developing into a dense, mixed-use, transit-oriented community, the City anticipated the impacts of all modes of travel that needed be considered. To that end, the City realized developing a long-term parking strategy for the VMC area would

encourage development, manage short-term issues, identify challenges and opportunities, and support the ultimate vision.

In 2016, to coincide with the opening of the subway extension to Vaughan, the City conducted a parking study intended to help manage the expected parking impacts as the VMC transformed.

The study measured pre-subway parking supply and demand, reviewed existing parking regulations, forecasted commuter parking demand, estimated required public parking and identified and evaluated parking options.

These options included on-street paid parking, paid parking below future public parks, private commercial parking, and a portion of parking from future developments as public parking. The shared parking options promote a more efficient use of land and responsible parking management.

A financial assessment for implementing these options was included along with consideration for capital and operating costs, a payback period and future revenue streams. The study recommended short-term next steps such as on-street parking restrictions on selected streets, an enhanced communication plan to advise of parking regulations and increased enforcement.

Parking by-law enacted is the first step in implementing the VMC parking vision

Moving forward from the study, staff reviewed the existing city-wide parking regulations and considered how it could be amended to fit with the idea of a new downtown. Thus, on June 27, 2017, By-law 097-2017 was enacted to introduce parking restrictions within the VMC.

The parking restrictions are intended to limit commuter parking within and around the VMC to encourage citizens to use sustainable transportation (walking, cycling and transit) to travel to the subway to manage traffic. Commuters are encouraged to use the commuter parking lots at the Highway 407 and Pioneer Village Stations. To facilitate the efficient flow of traffic and to manage parking, on-street parking is prohibited throughout most of the VMC Secondary Plan area. This requires a shift in driver behaviour as parking restrictions like these are new to Vaughan.

While these parking restrictions apply to on-street parking, drivers still have parking opportunities. For example, both Millway Avenue and New Park Place have paid public parking lots with surface and underground options as well as short-term passenger pick-up and drop-off (PPUDO) areas.

Staff highlight communication improvement opportunities to educate drivers post by-law introduction

By-law and enforcement have been monitoring the parking conditions and have increased the presence of by-law enforcement officers in the VMC. As these parking restrictions are new to Vaughan, drivers and other users seem to require assistance to comply. For example, taxi drivers remain in the designated passenger pick-up and drop-off areas for longer than the permitted ten minutes thereby eliminating space for a resident to use the PPUDO the way it was intended.

Staff have also been receiving questions and comments from businesses regarding non-customers parking in their private lots all day. Staff have been engaging with concerned residents and businesses to gather information and consider next steps. Another short-term solution highlighted in the study was developing a communication plan. This was expanded by staff to include education on the unique parking by-laws. The VMC sub-website (www.myvmc.ca) was updated with a transportation section and a new infographic to pictorially demonstrate the parking restrictions on a map.

Staff are researching and studying long-term parking solutions for dealing with evolving development in the downtown

Staff are working together across portfolios and departments to study and analyze the way we move and park in the VMC. For example, staff are updating the Transportation Master Plan (last issued in 2013) to reflect the increased presence of transit, development, and traffic. It will also review parking in the downtown. This will be developed over the next year. Related to that, staff are developing the Traffic Management Strategy to improve road safety, efficiency and reliability of the transportation system, and develop efficient data management. Concurrently, the Parking Strategy will be updated with the analysis and principles from those activities.

One of the effects of building a new downtown is the continuing presence of many contractors and their workers and where they will park. It has been brought to staff's attention that there are contractors parking on adjacent streets longer than the maximum time allowed. Staff are also engaging with landowners and businesses and brainstorming ideas such as exploring temporary parking lots for contractors on the VMC West Lands, providing contractor parking as a condition to be met through development approvals, reviewing a timing maximum on adjacent streets. Lastly there are techniques that private businesses can take to manage on-site parking. For example, one landowner has engaged a parking management firm to operate their lots.

Furthermore, staff are researching and reviewing long-term parking solutions including increasing signage and wayfinding, building municipal lots, creating public-private parking partnerships, working with York Region and developers to review shuttle

opportunities, leveraging private commercial parking (such as a new development application for a temporary commercial parking lot on the east side of Millway Ave) and exploring other parking management opportunities.

Financial Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Collaboration with broader Regional stakeholders continues to be an important factor in ensuring the success of the VMC transit providers.

Conclusion

Building a downtown is an ambitious goal. It requires a paradigm shift in driver and user behaviour. The VMC team will continue to collaborate across internal departments to deliver the parking vision.

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Attachment

1. VMC Parking Strategy Map 2019-2021

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