

## VMC Subcommittee Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, June 04, 2019

**WARD(S):** 4

**TITLE: VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE (VMC) MARKETING UPDATE**

**FROM:**

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on VMC marketing and business development activities planned and delivered since the March 2019 VMC Subcommittee meeting.

**Report Highlights**

- Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) continues to primarily target business and real estate professionals with the goal of supporting the land owners' efforts to secure large anchor tenants to catalyze the development of new office buildings.
- New marketing products have been launched, including the Vaughan Rising Podcast, VMC 360 Degree Tour and Talent Attraction Brochure.
- Existing products like the VMC micro-site and Lure Book continue to be refreshed.
- The VMC has been profiled at top business and real estate events including the NAIOP REX Awards, Meet the Tourism Investor Dragons, Collision Conference and various CoreNet events.
- A series of cultural activations are planned for residents, local businesses and commuters to enjoy in the VMC during the coming summer and fall months at Transit Square in the VMC.
- The Cultural and Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study (in the VMC) is scheduled for completion during or before the fourth quarter of 2019.

## **Recommendation**

1. THAT, Economic and Cultural Development staff continue to provide ongoing updates on the marketing, business development and cultural activities in the VMC.

## **Background**

Since the last VMC Subcommittee meeting in March 2019, Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) has been building on and delivering its marketing and business development program for the VMC.

ECD continues to primarily target top-level corporate executives, corporate real estate executives, commercial realtors and brokers, and site selection professionals with the goal of supporting the land owners' efforts to secure large anchor tenants to catalyze the development of new office buildings.

Citizens continue to be engaged through activations and City communications channels.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

March 2019: [VMC Marketing Update](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

The following marketing and business development tactics are intended to drive awareness of the VMC as an attractive major commercial office and retail location choice in the Greater Toronto Area marketplace.

### **'The Project' and 'Vaughan Rising' Podcasts**

Staff worked with the creators of 'The Project'—a U.S.-based podcast—to deliver an episode about the VMC. The episode tells the story of how KPMG decided to locate in the VMC and features interviews with Sebastian Distefano, KPMG's Managing Partner for the GTA, and Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua. The episode will reach U.S.-based site selectors and businesses.

On June 5, 2019, a new City of Vaughan podcast called 'Vaughan Rising' will be launched. The goal of the podcast is to create buzz about Vaughan among the commercial real estate community by highlighting the city's culture of ambition and its upward momentum. The podcast will highlight the VMC in multiple episodes.

### **360 Degree Tour**

A 360 degree video tour of the VMC was publicly launched in May. It is available on the City of Vaughan's YouTube channel. Immediately after this meeting, a staff pop-up

event will be held downstairs with an opportunity to view the video with a virtual reality headset. Another pop-up event will be held at the Joint Operations Centre on June 6.

### **Talent Attraction Brochure**

A VMC Talent Attraction Brochure has been developed to support office development. The purpose of the brochure is to show prospective companies and their employees that Vaughan, and particularly the VMC, is a vibrant place to work and live with opportunities for career growth; fun, health and wellness; and improved quality of life.

Print copies of the brochure were distributed at the Collision Conference in Toronto. The brochure's content will also be used in a York Region social media campaign.

### **VMC Micro-site: Signature Marketing Vehicle**

The VMC micro-site, [myVMC.ca](http://myVMC.ca), has been refreshed to refine the home page, incorporate new marketing materials and fix functionality issues.

Staff are reviewing options to promote the site to Vaughan residents in the coming months.

### **Lure Book Brochure**

The first print run of 250 VMC Lure Books is nearly gone. Demand for the brochure has been high with copies distributed to businesses, realtors and partners including VMC land owners, York Region and Toronto Global.

Before the next print run, content is being updated to incorporate the latest developments and feedback from partners.

### **Profiling at business and real estate-focused events**

Staff continue to attend and sponsor strategic business development and real estate events to reach target audiences. Since the last VMC Subcommittee meeting, Vaughan had a presence at the following events:

- NAIOP REX Awards – The Vaughan step and repeat and gallery of VMC photos and renderings were placed around the reception area of the event, which attracted 491 commercial real estate professionals.
- Meet the Tourism Investor Dragons - An opportunity to pitch the VMC to 12 land developers and hospitality investors.
- Collision Conference – North America's fastest growing technology conference attended by 25,000 people. Vaughan was part of the York Region Pavillion and showcased the VMC 360 Degree Tour.

- Various CoreNet events – An annual corporate sponsorship of CoreNet includes tickets to the organization’s professional development events. Staff have attended various sessions to learn and network with members.

### **Arts and Culture**

Arts and cultural programming in Vaughan helps to foster appreciation and support of the artistic and cultural life that is lived, created and expressed across our city. It promotes direct interaction between creators and citizens as key to increasing understanding and appreciation of art and culture. A series of activations are planned for residents, local businesses and commuters to enjoy in the VMC during the coming summer and fall months at Transit Square in the VMC.

- Creative Industry Tour (May) — in partnership with Vaughan International Film Festival for film and production industry.
- Inspirit Fest (May/June) — a series with Bollywood dance, Rangoli, yoga and tai chi.
- Music in the Square (July/Aug) — series of live music and refreshments.
- Culture Days (Sept. 26-29) launch and activations — a weekend arts piazza in Transit Square with live music, live art on site, interactive games and dance.
- Concerts in the Park kick-off concert in Transit Square (June 5) — the award-winning concert series marks its 25th anniversary at the VMC.

More activities are being planned for the upcoming winter months that could include: live music café, ice sculptures and lighting.

In addition, the Cultural and Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study in the VMC is scheduled to be completed and presented by the external professional advisory team in the fall of 2019.

### **Earned-Media Support**

With ongoing communications support from Corporate and Strategic Communications, the VMC continues to garner traction on the City’s corporate social media sites as well as in the media. Strategic outreach will continue.

### **Intended Outcomes**

So far in 2019, marketing and business development activities have resulted in 73 new connections and exposure to approximately 2,350 people in the target audience of business and real estate professionals. Note that metrics for Collision will be provided in the next VMC Marketing Update.

The Meet the Tourism Investor Dragon event yielded leads from five hotel development and management groups. These groups were introduced to VMC land owners.

These activities support the 2031 targets for commercial office space, retail space, residential units, and population tracked and reported on by the VMC Project Team.

### **Financial Impact**

The business development and marketing activities highlighted in this report are funded from the Economic and Cultural Development Department's operating budget.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Successful profiling and support of the VMC is beneficial to our infrastructure funding and operating partners (Toronto Transit Commission, York Region, Government of Ontario, Government of Canada, Toronto Region Conservation Authority) as it drives usage of these projects and shows return on investment. The Region and TTC are regularly engaged by ECD.

### **Conclusion**

The Economic and Cultural Development department is continually engaging VMC land owners, businesses, partners and other stakeholders to find new opportunities and challenges related to business development in the VMC. This information forms the foundation of ECD's business development and marketing activities and guides the development of new products.

More marketing products, events and tactics are planned throughout 2019. Plans and outcomes will be reported at future VMC Subcommittee meetings.

**For more information**, please contact: Michelle Samson, VMC Economic Development Officer.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Prepared by**

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