

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 10, 2024

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE – HEIGHTS AND DENSITIES
(TRANSMITTAL REPORT)

FROM:

VMC Sub-Committee

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To forward recommendations from the VMC Sub-Committee meeting of June 26, 2024, (Item 1, Report No. 4) with respect to the subject matter, for consideration by Committee of the Whole.

Report Highlights

- This is a transmittal report from the City Clerk, on behalf of the VMC Sub-Committee, forwarding recommendations for consideration by Committee of the Whole.

Recommendations

1. That staff be directed to proceed with making the required changes to the VMC Secondary Plan to set parameters for minimum heights and densities without prescribed maximums;
2. That the presentation by Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs, and C1., presentation material, titled “*VMC Secondary Plan Update: Heights and Densities*”, was received; and
3. That the following Communications were received:
 - C2. Grant Uyeyama, Principal Planner, KLM Planning Partners Inc., Jardin Drive, Concord, dated May 23, 2024;

- C3. Glen Gambell, Owner, Willpower Leasing Inc., Doughton Road, Concord, dated May 29, 2024;
- C4. Lauren Capilongo, Malone Given Parsons, Renfrew Drive, Markham, dated June 24, 2024;
- C5. Naomi Mares, Aird & Berlis LLP, Brookfield Place, Toronto, dated June 25, 2024; and
- C6. Don Given, Founding Principal, and Allyssa Hrynnyk, Associate, Malone Given Parsons, Renfrew Drive, Markham, dated June 25, 2024.

Background

The VMC Secondary Plan (VMCSP) is currently within Phase IV of the project, which involves the development of a draft updated Secondary Plan for the VMC, in consultation with landowners, stakeholders, and the public. Updated and new Secondary Plan policies will be developed to align the Plan with the land use schedules developed through Phase III, and refined through Phase IV, to address provincial and regional policy updates while responding to the area's intensive growth. In Q1 of 2024, additional scope was added to Phase IV, resulting from direction provided by VMC Sub-committee.

At the February 28, 2024, VMC Sub-committee meeting, Mayor Del Duca brought forward a motion as a New Business item, relating to the merits of permitting unlimited building heights and densities within the VMC. The motion directed staff to:

1. evaluate the merits of permitting unlimited building heights and densities through the VMC Secondary Plan Update;
2. explore potential community benefits, such as affordable housing, if permitting unlimited building height and density limits is a viable option; and
3. report back to the VMC Sub-committee at its meeting on April 24, 2024.

Following direction from the February 28, 2024, VMC Sub-committee meeting, staff undertook research and consultation on unlimited heights and densities (UHD) regimes to understand the merits of implementing a UHD regime within the VMC. Policy Planning & Special Programs (PPSP) staff met with municipalities that have implemented, or are exploring implementing, a UHD regime, which included the cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Kitchener.

As directed by the VMC Sub-committee, these findings were [presented to the VMC Sub-committee on April 24, 2024](#). The presentation summarized the benefits and challenges other municipalities have experienced while implementing UHD regimes. This presentation also included a high-level summary of key principles that should be considered should a UHD regime be implemented within the VMC. Within this

presentation, PPSP staff advised that a recommendation on UHD regimes would be brought forward to the May VMC Sub-committee meeting.

Following the April VMC Sub-committee meeting, PPSP staff, in consultation with the consultant team, undertook further analysis to understand how a UHD regime could impact the goals and vision of the VMCSPP. Through this analysis, multiple considerations were identified which illustrate how UHD regimes relate to the key priorities of the VMCSPP Update. Staff, in coordination with the Director of Policy Planning & Special Programs, prepared a presentation for the VMC Sub-committee to highlight key considerations associated with UHD regimes. As the May VMC Sub-committee meeting was cancelled, this presentation was rescheduled to June 26, 2024.

Previous Reports/Authority

The following are links to previous reports regarding the VMC Secondary Plan update:

1. [VMC Studies Update, November 10, 2020, VMC Sub-committee](#)
2. [VMC Secondary Plan Update – Phase I, March 2, 2021, VMC Sub-committee](#)
3. [VMC Secondary Plan Update – Phase II Approach, June 8, 2021, VMC Sub-committee](#)
4. [VMC Secondary Plan Update: Phase 2 - Land Use Options, June 21, 2022, VMC Sub-committee](#)
5. [VMC Studies Update – April 2023, April 11, 2023, VMC Sub-committee](#)
6. [VMC Secondary Plan Update: Phase IV – Recommendations, October 4, 2023, VMC Sub-committee](#)

Analysis and Options

At its meeting on June 26, 2024, the VMC Sub-Committee considered a presentation by the Director of Policy Planning & Special Programs on the VMC Secondary Plan Update – Heights and Densities [Attachment 1]. This presentation analyzed how a UHD regime may impact the ability to achieve the vision and key principles of the VMC Secondary Plan based on findings from other municipalities that have implemented or are in the process of implementing unlimited heights and densities, in addition to key principles that have been used to guide their programs. At this meeting, the Director of Policy Planning & Special Programs, and the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management, indicated their support of pursuing a UHD regime within the VMC.

Following the presentation, the VMC Sub-committee recommended that Council direct staff to proceed with making the required changes to the VMC Secondary Plan to set parameters for minimum heights and densities without prescribed maximums.

Financial Impact

There are no anticipated financial requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Operational Impact

There are no anticipated operational requirements associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders continues, which is an important factor in realizing the success of the VMC. Through Phase IV, additional consultation will be undertaken with internal and external TAC, including, but not limited to, York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, Ministry of Transportation, Infrastructure Ontario, York Region Transit and Toronto Transit Commission. The TAC will continue to be engaged as part of the subsequent phases of this project, and their feedback will be instrumental in advancing the VM CSP Update.

Conclusion

The VMC is continuing to transform into a vibrant, modern urban centre, encompassing all amenities required for a healthy urban lifestyle, complete with residential and office development. As the intensity of residential development continues to increase, it is imperative that this residential density be supported by hard and soft infrastructure.

The removal of height and density caps within VMC presents both opportunities and challenges. While additional height and density may result in some benefits such as increased housing stock, the ability to continue to achieve a complete and balanced community within the VMC will require strong policy that supports a unique, high-density residential, office and mixed-use downtown, structured around a transit-oriented, fine-grain street network for all modes of transportation – including walking, driving and cycling – and plans for development linked by a network of high-quality parks, public squares, and open spaces. If endorsed, Phase IV will develop the policies required to achieve this vision.

For more information, please contact: Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs, extension 8231.

Attachment

1. VMC Secondary Plan Update – Heights and Densities.

Prepared by

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In consultation with

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