

## VMC Sub-committee Report

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**DATE:** Wednesday, November 27, 2024

**WARD:** 4

**TITLE:** VMC CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN -  
2024 UPDATE

**FROM:**

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning, Growth Management and Housing Delivery

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

To provide an update on the capital projects and implementation plan within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC).

**Report Highlights**

- Construction of several critical infrastructure projects, including roads and parks, required to support development in the emerging downtown, are underway or complete.
- The development of Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance.
- VMC's first Public Square – Cortellucci Square - was completed and opened to the public.
- Edgeley Pond and Park detailed design approval is awaiting the remaining approval agency, Ministry of Natural Resources. All other agencies have approved the detailed design.
- Jane Street Hydro Undergrounding construction began this year in September 2024 and is estimated to be completed by end of summer 2025.
- Black Creek Renewal detailed design is underway.
- On-Street Paid Parking Pilot was recommended to be transitioned to a permanent initiative after a successful three-year trial period.
- Public Art continues to advance creative placemaking in the VMC.

## **Recommendation**

1. THAT the VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report be received for information.

## **Background**

As construction progresses in Vaughan's downtown, staff continue to focus on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants in the VMC. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are well-aligned.

Construction has commenced for many of the priority infrastructure projects identified in Attachment No. 1 and several are now complete. In parallel with implementing these critical civil infrastructure works, staff focused on prioritizing the planning and design of parkland and social infrastructure to ensure that a complete community is developed aligned with the growing population. The VMC Development Activity Update Report (November 2024) and the VMC Studies Update Report (November 2024) outline the current situation in the downtown and provide projections to inform the City's focus going forward. This report presents the capital project efforts that have been undertaken, or are underway, in each of the quadrant areas to advance the infrastructure required to support growth.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update April 2023](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update September 2022](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2021](#)

[Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park Project Update June 2021](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2020](#)

[VMC Pay-and-Display On-Street Parking Pilot Project May 2020](#)

[VMC Implementation and Construction Update December 2019](#)

[VMC Parking Conditions and Management Strategy June 2019](#)

[VMC NW and SW Quadrants Implementation Update June 2019](#)

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

[VMC Development Activity Update March 2019](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

***Design and Construction activity is advancing in each quadrant of the VMC***

At the April 2023 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff identified critical infrastructure improvements and construction activities completed or underway to support redevelopment activity in the downtown. Significant progress has been made through

2023 and 2024 on projects captured in the VMC Implementation Plan. The following sections highlight activities that have advanced in each quadrant of the VMC. Attachment 1, VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects Map, provides a geographical overview of the projects and initiatives currently underway (or completed) in the City's downtown.

For reference the VMC is broken down into four distinct quadrants, as shown in Attachment 1, with Jane Street providing the east-west split, and Highway 7 providing the north-south split.

### Northwest Quadrant

#### ***Update on the Portage Parkway widening (Applewood Cres. to Jane St.)***

Staff continue coordinated efforts with SmartCentres for the design and delivery of the Portage Parkway widening from Applewood Crescent to Jane Street. The detailed design of the road widening is nearly completed; however, to align with the recent VMC Secondary Plan update, a scope change is required to include the additional servicing upgrade to support the VMC Sub-committee endorsed expansion area (north of Portage Parkway).

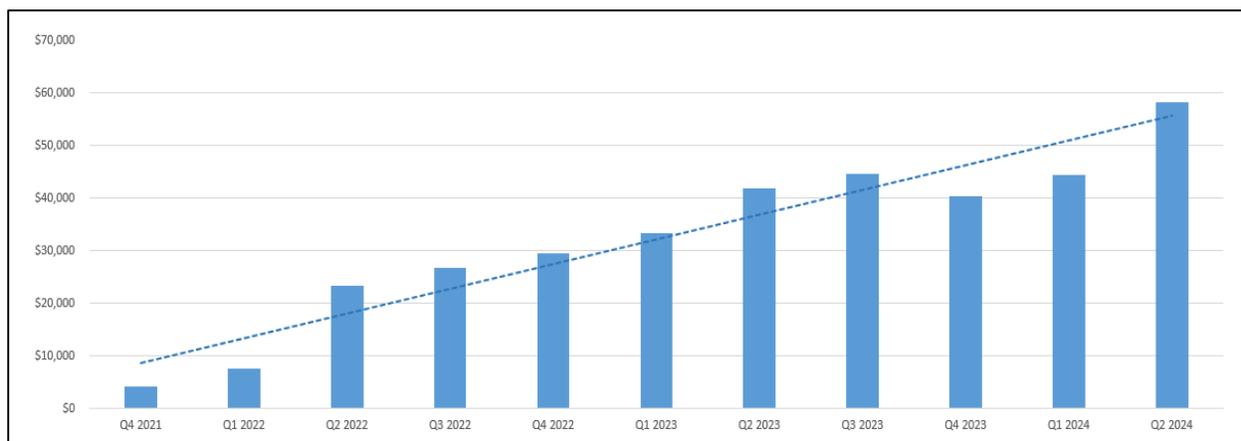
The ongoing collaboration between the City and SmartCentres includes the finalization of design and confirming fee simple and construction easement lands required for the road widening project. The relocation of existing utilities will be scheduled as part of the initial phase of construction activity to ensure road traffic is maintained while accommodating access to existing businesses and properties. The current implementation plan provides for the design of the Portage Parkway widening to be finalized in Q4 2024, followed by the release and award of a construction contract by Q2 2025. Timing for the road widening is expected to be initiated in Q2 2026, following the completion of the utility relocations in Q2 2025. The Portage Widening is expected to be completed by the end of Q2 2027.

#### ***Parking Pilot Project is in its third year of a five-year extended pilot project***

In 2021, the City launched a two-year parking pilot project to implement pay-and-display on-street parking in the VMC. The Pilot was implemented in the VMC Mobility Hub area on sections of New Park Place, Apple Mill Road and Buttermill Avenue.

Since its launch, the pilot has demonstrated consistent growth and success. In 2023, Council approved the optional three-year extension of the pilot project and expanded the pilot to new streets within the VMC.

The graph below illustrates the quarterly revenue generated from permit sales. The upward trajectory indicates an increasing demand for parking in the City’s downtown area. This trend emphasizes the successful achievement of the pilot’s primary objective: to verify the viability of implementing paid on-street parking within the VMC.



Quarterly permit sales revenue from Q4 2021 to Q2 2024

Given the overall success and the positive impact of the parking pilot, the VMC Sub-Committee at its meeting on October 30, 2024, recommended that council approve the permanent implementation of the Pilot Project. As such, staff will be transitioning the pilot to a permanent initiative within the VMC following the conclusion of the pilot period in December 2026.

***Vaughan’s first Urban Park continues to advance with Phase 1 construction starting in Q2 2025***

The North Urban Park (NUP) represents a significant urban development within the VMC, encompassing 3.18 hectares of city-owned land across three distinct blocks. City staff are undertaking two concurrent initiatives: updating the NUP Master Plan to align with the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan and advancing the detailed design of the park's first block.

The development of the NUP will proceed in phases, beginning with Block 1, located between Edgeley Boulevard and the KPMG Tower. This initial phase is scheduled to commence construction in Q2 2025.

Blocks 2 and 3 of the NUP present unique challenges that affect their development timeline, including a lease on Block 2 that expires in 2027. Staff are actively evaluating various detailed design and delivery options for these blocks to maximize benefits for the City. Construction on these blocks cannot begin before Q1 2027, with the lease expiration.

Upon completion, the NUP will serve as a vital community asset, offering both active and passive recreational amenities to meet the needs of the growing downtown population.

### ***David Braley VMC Centre of Community celebrates its second-year anniversary***

The iconic David Braley VMC Centre of Community celebrated its second-year anniversary in June 2024. The state-of-the-art facility located at 200 Apple Mill Road includes a YMCA, daycare, City of Vaughan library, and community recreation space. This facility is proving to be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for downtown residents and businesses and has been recognized with a Vaughan Urban Design Award of Excellence.

The Vaughan Studios and Events Space (VSES) has been open for just over two years and is continuing to increase its rentals of the event spaces, gourmet event and teaching kitchen as well as the professional recording studio. In addition, VSES offers a wide variety of recreational programming and camps for the community which too have seen an increase in participation since opening.

### ***Jane Street Active Transportation Facility initiated construction***

The Jane Street Uptown Link aims to connect the VMC to the north area of Vaughan. This also includes improving pedestrian/cyclist safety along Jane Street through building a new cycle track, connecting missing links of sidewalks, implementing new streetlighting, and traffic signal improvements between Highway 7 and Teston Road. Construction began for Phase 1 of the project (Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive) in July 2024 and is estimated to be completed by end of 2025.

Currently a new multi-use pathway has been constructed from Highway 7 to Bent Tree Drive and is expected to open by the end of the year.

### **Northeast Quadrant**

***The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design is complete and awaiting approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources***

Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) is the largest open space, City-owned piece of land in the VMC and is located at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street.

The vision is to build a sustainable open space at the centre of the VMC that will function as a hybrid of vital stormwater management infrastructure and an innovative public space. In order to unlock future development potential, the EPP will be retrofitted with landscape enhancements including trails to create the iconic environmental open space and park while treating local drainage to achieve current and future stormwater management requirements.

The April 2023 VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan report provided an update on the EPP project. At that time, approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) was outstanding. Permits and approvals from the other approval agencies including Toronto Region and Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), York Region were previously obtained. A final resubmission will be made to MNR to address their concerns. The timing for the EPP approvals from MNR will continue to coincide with the other City activities for the Black Creek channel improvements from Highway 7 to Highway 407.

The EPP construction will be incorporated with the single Design-Build assignment known as the expanded Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project currently being managed by the City's Infrastructure Delivery Department. The expanded BCR project also includes detailed design and implementation of the Highway 7 culvert improvements at Jane Street.

***Jane Street Streetscape & Plaza + Plateau detailed designs are complete***

The detailed design for both the Jane Street streetscape and Plaza & Plateau are completed. The construction of these VMC projects will also be completed as part of the expanded Black Creek Renewal project.

***Jane Street Hydro Underground construction has initiated***

The hydro undergrounding project includes the conversion of the overhead transmission lines to below grade infrastructure fronting the Edgeley Pond and Park, along Jane Street from north of Portage Parkway to north of Highway 7. The City of Vaughan coordinated with Alectra to undertake this work. Utility companies were engaged in Q2 2023 to begin the design work for moving overhead wiring on the east side of Jane

Street between just north of Highway 7 to north of Portage Parkway. Designs were completed in June 2024 and permits were issued by external agencies by September 2024.

Construction began on September 30, 2024, and trenching for new utility ducts is expected to be completed by the end of the year and operational by summer 2025. The undergrounding work will be completed prior to the construction of the Edgeley Pond retrofit and Jane Street streetscape works. It should be noted that the hydro undergrounding along the frontage of The Met development (currently occupied residential development) along the east side of Jane Street and south of Portage Parkway is complete, which included the future proofing and installation of the necessary utility ducts.

### ***Construction of Cortellucci Square is Complete***

The opening of Cortellucci Square (formerly known as Phase 1 of Edgeley Park) represents a significant milestone in the VMC as both Vaughan's first stratified park and the VMC's first public park. Initially designed in 2016 by DTAH as part of the Edgeley Pond and Park Conceptual Design, the park officially opened to the public on June 12, 2024.

This innovative space is built atop a private parking garage structure with several access portals integrated into the pavilion and landscape. The park features an array of recreational amenities, including a winter skating loop with supporting Zamboni garage, a splash pad, and unique natural junior and senior play structures. These features are enhanced by thoughtful site furnishings and robust planting. The park's pavilion includes a community-use room and accessible restrooms, enabling year-round events and activities.

As a pioneering project in the VMC, Cortellucci Square serves as a vital public space that emerged from extensive community consultation through the Edgeley Pond and Park planning process. The park is a crucial component of the broader Edgeley Pond and Park open space system.

### ***Portage Parkway Extension (Black Creek to Creditstone Road)***

The City of Vaughan 2012 Transportation Master Plan, A New Path, identified Portage Parkway Widening and the Easterly Extension to Creditstone Road as a strategic improvement and key element in support of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and subsequently, the Environmental Assessment for this project was completed in 2016.

The proposed 4-lane extension of Portage Parkway from West of Black Creek to Creditstone Road will provide much needed east-west connection and capacity between Highway 7 and Langstaff Drive. A budget request has been submitted as part of the 2025 City budget to initiate design activities.

### ***Creditstone Municipal Class Environmental Assessment identified***

The Creditstone Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) includes a study of the existing corridor between Peelar Road to the south and Rutherford Road to the north. The study will assess the addition of Active Transportation facilities and the potential widening for additional traffic lanes between Peelar Road and MacIntosh Blvd. The anticipated start for the EA study is in 2025.

### **Southeast Quadrant**

#### ***Works for expanded Black Creek Renewal project scope are underway***

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the northeast and southeast quadrants of the VMC and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. The Black Creek Renewal (BCR) project remains a high priority and supports the City's commitment to mitigate flooding, enhance stormwater management, and continue to grow the parks and open spaces network in the VMC.

Given the interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park retrofit (northeast quadrant), the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and the BCR project (southeast quadrant), all three project components are combined into one design-build delivery model, known as the expanded Black Creek Renewal project. The expanded BCR project commenced in 2021.

The project team is moving forward with property acquisitions required to facilitate construction. To date, the City has completed property acquisitions for private lands and York Region owned public lands. City staff are advancing negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation. Staff continue to advance negotiations with private property owners for property and easement acquisition that are expected to conclude in 2025.

The preliminary design of the Black Creek corridor is completed, and staff continue to work on the procurement to secure a Design-Build Contract.

Staff remain focused on advancing critical infrastructure improvements along the Black Creek channel corridor north, south and through Highway 7 to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging downtown.

### Southwest Quadrant

#### ***Construction of new local roads are underway***

Development activity in the southwest quadrant continues to advance and construction is near completion on the Mobilio development which includes the delivery of significant municipal infrastructure. Underground infrastructure along the new Millway Avenue, Mable Smith Way and the widened Autumn Harvest Road (formerly known as Exchange Ave) are complete with final roadworks expected to be completed Spring 2025. This work includes the provision of a north-south and an east-west publicly accessible private pedestrian mews.

Block 3N, known as Festival, will include the delivery of a new local road named Celebration Avenue, and improvements to the existing Commerce Street and widening of Edgeley Boulevard (formerly known as Interchange Way). Completion of boulevard works on Edgely Boulevard are expected to be completed by the end of year.

Block 3S, known as Bravo, includes the delivery of the Commerce Street realignment based on the VMC Secondary Plan objective to create a fine-grain grid network of streets. The old curvilinear Commerce Street has been realigned and extended south to create a north-south minor collector road (Commerce Street) and traversing east to extend the minor collector road (Doughton Road) to Edgeley Boulevard. Both realigned Commerce Street and Doughton Road extension are now open to the public.

Block 4S, will include the delivery of the new Doughton Road extension, complete the widening of celebration avenue, and the future Street E. Construction servicing and roadworks are to be delivered as part of the QuadReal Draft Plan of Subdivision.

QuadReal Property Group has submitted a Draft Plan of Subdivision for the southwest quadrant to deliver vital servicing upgrades and expand the road network. Included with the draft plan of subdivision is the delineation for the first school blocks within the VMC.

Toromont Industries Ltd. has recently submitted a Draft Plan of Subdivision for the 3131 Highway 7 lands which will complete both the Millway Avenue and Doughton Road extensions. Proposed servicing in this area will enable further northern intensification within the newly endorsed expansion B limits of the VMC.

Completion of these draft plan of subdivision roads within the southwest quadrant will mark a major milestone for the road network as outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan.

### ***The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is being optimized***

The Millway Avenue Linear Park, delivered by QuadReal and Menkes through a Draft Plan of Subdivision, represents a significant addition to the VMC's parkland network and is expected to be the second VMC park to be open to the public.

The park is being delivered through the Developer Build Parks Policy and will include both passive and active elements. The design features flexible lawn spaces and extensive tree planting, along with active facilities such as a playground, basketball half courts, a shade structure, and social gathering spaces complemented by perennial planting beds.

The design is currently being optimized through collaborative efforts between the development team, landscape architect, contractor, and various vendors, with construction expected to commence in Q2 2025.

### ***Public Art advances creative placemaking in the VMC***

Public art continues to contribute to the downtown's identity as a distinctive cultural destination. Several public art projects are animating the urban landscape to bolster creative placemaking at the VMC.

#### a) Expo City CG Tower:

The first large-scale sculptural work, *Fathom*, poised to become a landmark feature at the VMC, has been installed and overlooks Edgeley Pond and Park near the northeastern corner of Highway 7 and Jane Street.

#### b) 7800 Jane Street Inc.

As part of their Section 37 Density Bonus Agreement, 7800 Jane Street Inc. provided the City with a substantial \$2,185,000 Letter of Credit towards public art. A Public Art Plan was endorsed by the Design Review Panel, and includes a major gateway feature along Highway 7 and Jane Street.

#### c) ARTonBOXES program

The recently adopted ARTonBOXES Program 10-Year Implementation Strategy (2025-2034) earmarks the transformation of up to 10 municipal and regional traffic signal boxes into works of art. Marni Pellicane's inspired Canadian landscape, *Beauty of Banff*,

was installed on the box located at the VMC's prominent intersection of Apple Mill Parkway and Millway Avenue.

### VMC wide initiatives

#### ***As part of the first cohort of the OVIN Demonstration Zone program, two companies will showcase their innovative mobility solutions in the VMC***

The OVIN Demonstration Zone is phase 1 of the Council-approved Transportation Innovation program, which provides companies with short-term access to City space and infrastructure to demonstrate their innovative solutions in a real-world setting prior to broader implementation.

The following two technology demonstrations projects will be conducted within the VMC in Fall 2024:

- Monitoring vehicle parking violations
- Optimizing traffic flow and management

#### ***Micromobility pilot coming to the VMC***

At its meeting on September 26, 2023, Council approved micromobility devices be permitted on designated cycling facilities and endorsed staff's recommendation to begin a shared e-bike/e-scooter pilot in the City. The VMC has been recommended to be included in the piloting area based on its high pace of growth, projected densities of employment and residential, and the presence of the TTC subway and VIVA services.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report.

### **Operational Impact**

Consultation and collaboration is essential across various City operations to solicit feedback and identify potential impacts spanning different departments. Input and collaboration has been received and continues with Infrastructure Delivery, Economic Development, Transportation and Fleet Management Services and By-Law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services.

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

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

## **Conclusion**

Staff will continue to work closely with other City of Vaughan Departments, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, and VMC landowners to facilitate the advancement of priority projects in the downtown. These catalyst projects, together with the momentum generated by development activity, are rapidly contributing to the realization of Vaughan's downtown.

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

**For more information**, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning and Special Programs, ext. 8231.

## **Attachment**

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects Map.

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