

## VMC Sub-committee Report

---

**DATE:** Wednesday, December 04, 2019

**WARD(S):** 4

**TITLE: VMC IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

**FROM:**

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

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

---

**Purpose**

To provide an update on the priority infrastructure projects, development activity and construction updates within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC).

**Report Highlights**

- Vaughan's skyline is rapidly transforming as new developments and high-rise towers reach unprecedented heights in the VMC Mobility Hub and Edgeley Pond and Park priority areas.
- Vaughan Council has approved development applications in all four quadrants of the VMC, and construction activity for new developments is expected to take place across the VMC in 2020.
- Construction of several critical infrastructure projects required to support early redevelopment activity in the downtown is underway or complete, including the SmartCentres Place bus terminal which opened for service on November 3, 2019
- The Black Creek Renewal Class Environmental Assessment received Ministry approval in August 2019
- Several new planning and design studies are advancing through 2020 to support the next phase of development
- The VMC team is 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.

## **Recommendation**

1. That this report be received for information.

## **Background**

Construction activity is currently underway for approved developments located in the Mobility Hub area of the northwest quadrant, as well as the area surrounding the Edgeley Pond and Park in the northeast quadrant. More development will occur across the VMC through 2020 based on Council approved applications. Refer to Attachment 1, VMC Development Activity.

As construction continues, the VMC team continues to focus on advancing critical infrastructure improvements in each of the four quadrants to keep pace with development and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the emerging downtown. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are being carried out.

Construction commenced for many of the priority infrastructure projects outlined in the VMC Implementation Plan, several of which are complete. The major and minor collector roads within the northwest quadrant, known as the west lands spine roads, were opened in August and October 2019 to deliver on Council's Members Resolution related to the Minister's Zoning Order for the relocation of a large format retail store in the VMC.

Construction was recently initiated for the Portage Parkway Extension east of Jane Street to Black Creek, as well for the Interchange Way sanitary trunk from Highway 7 south and east to Jane Street.

The City received notice that the landmark Black Creek Renewal Class Environmental Assessment Study (BCR EA) was approved by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) in August 2019.

Additional assessments, approvals and permits are being completed for the Edgeley Pond and Park project. Design and construction of critical infrastructure is being advanced in the southwest quadrant area.

In parallel to implementing these critical civil infrastructure works, the VMC team is advancing the planning and design of parkland to ensure that a complete community is developed for the growing population.

Refer to Attachment 2, VMC Infrastructure Projects for the location and extent of the above noted infrastructure.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[VMC Development Activity Update March 2019](#)

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

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

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

## **Analysis and Options**

### ***Development activity is advancing in each quadrant of the VMC***

#### **Northwest Quadrant**

The construction of catalyst projects in the VMC Mobility Hub continue to propel the transformation of Vaughan's downtown, supported by the early successes of the first completed projects at the heart of the VMC. These catalyst projects include the KPMG office building, VMC Subway and Highway 7 vivaNext Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations, and Transit Square and TTC Plaza where a strategic investment in architectural excellence and high-quality public realm is defining a new identity for Vaughan.

Completion of the next comprehensive development block continues to advance with the construction of the iconic VMC Centre of Community, Transit City development and SmartCentres Place bus terminal. This mixed use block will feature an enhanced pedestrian mews and public art installations, and capture the vision for integrated design and placemaking envisioned for the VMC.

Construction of the Centre of Community is nearing completion. Interior fit-out of the office floors is progressing as scheduled. PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) will be taking occupancy by end of November, with Scotia Bank to follow by the end of the year. Completion of the associated civic uses, including the YMCA, daycare and City of Vaughan library and community recreation space is expected by end of Q2 2020. Topping off of the first two iconic 55-storey Transit City towers will be celebrated by the end of 2019 and construction of the third tower is progressing as scheduled, with completion of the entire project within 2021.

Following Council approval in May, construction activity has mobilized for Transit City Towers 4 and 5 (45 and 50 storeys) on the east side of Millway Avenue at Portage Parkway. Currently, underground works for all three towers have commenced, including the first purpose-built rental building in the downtown. This development will include a large privately-owned public space, which will augment the parks network in

the VMC and provide additional gathering space for residents and visitors, as well as a pedestrian oriented flexible street. Construction is expected to continue through 2023.

Portions of the temporary surface parking lot at Apple Mill Road have been relocated to the vacant lands across from the VMC Subway Station to enable construction of the second phase of the Transit City development.

Projects within this quadrant showcase high quality architecture with well-articulated building massing, complemented by public art, ground-related commercial activity and investment in public realm design to prioritize pedestrian activity and wayfinding within the Mobility Hub.

### Northeast Quadrant

The northeast quadrant is shaping up to be the VMC's first residential community centred around the Edgeley Pond and Park, a signature amenity and open space destination. The first and only occupied residential towers in the VMC to date are the Expo City towers 1 and 2, each at 37-storeys, which also feature the Region's first post-secondary education facility (Niagara University) within the podium of Tower 2. Topping off of the 39-storey Nord Condos (Expo City towers 3 and 4) was celebrated in August, with occupancy expected to commence by Q4 2019/Q1 2020.

The distinctive 60-storey CG Tower (Expo City tower 5) was approved by Council in June and will set the record as the tallest tower in York Region. Construction of this first masonry tower in the emerging downtown is expected to commence in this last phase of Expo City in 2020.

The 35-storey Met development located at the southeast corner of Jane Street and Portage Parkway is currently under construction with anticipated occupancy in early 2020. This development will feature the first urban townhouse blocks constructed in the VMC to support a wider variety in building type in the downtown.

### Southwest Quadrant

Development activity in the southwest quadrant has gained momentum following Council approval of the first two development proposals (Icona and Block 2/Mobilio), with additional mixed-use development applications under review. Construction is set to begin in early 2020 on the Mobilio development which will feature the VMC's first mid-rise buildings, urban townhouse blocks and extension of the Millway Avenue Linear Park as a family-oriented neighbourhood.

Given the development interest and infrastructure improvements needed to comprehensively plan this quadrant, staff have begun to facilitate coordination workshops amongst landowners in order to plan and implement necessary capital infrastructure and public realm improvements to support and advance development.

### Southeast Quadrant

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the southeast quadrant and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. With the approval of the Black Creek Renewal EA in August and forthcoming initiation of detailed design for the corridor, development interest within this quadrant has peaked with new development inquiries, pre-application consultations and a new formal development application. While construction has not yet taken place in this quadrant, the recent Council approved Liberty Cement Site application is advancing through the agreements process. This development will feature two residential towers (34 and 40 storeys) and a 7-storey mid-rise residential building with retail uses and outdoor amenity space at-grade to activate the public realm along Maplecrete Road.

### **Construction of the Edgeley Pond and Park is pending finalization of third party review and agency approval**

The Edgeley Pond and Park (EPP) retrofit is one of the most complex and multi-faceted projects that the City has undertaken. The project has considered a wide range of stakeholder needs while resolving challenging technical requirements. The existing on-line pond and future park block combination is the largest uninterrupted open space and City-owned land in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC). The main purpose of the EPP project is to retrofit the existing pond to achieve the required stormwater management function to manage flooding risk and unlock development potential, while creating a signature public destination that captures the imagination of VMC residents and visitors. This central destination was planned and timed to provide the first park and open space amenities for the some 14,000 estimated new residents moving into the VMC in the next 5 years. The EPP will be a key part of creating a complete community for the first residents of the downtown

The design for the EPP project was initiated in October 2016. Timing for implementation of the pond works has been delayed as a result of several factors including the Ministry of Resources and Forestry (MNR) staff identifying the Edgeley Pond as a potential dam during the preparation of the 90% detailed design in June 2018 and pond water level concerns during major storm events, which would result in surcharging of the drainage network west of the pond. The pond water level concern was identified in September 2018 and resolved by end of Q1 2019.

The Project team recently retained a third party, peer review engineering consulting firm to assess the EPP retrofit detailed design and associated models to ensure the design

of the pond retrofit conforms to all approval agencies' standards such that approval and permits will be attained seamlessly. The peer review engineering firm will also confirm whether the existing and retrofit Edgeley on-line pond would be considered a dam as per MNRF definition and will also identify the necessary studies required for MNRF approval to attain a the MNRF Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act (LRIA) permit for a dam.

Results and recommendations from the peer review of the Edgeley Pond is expected in mid-December 2019. At that time, the project team will initiate the required assessments for a dam, should Edgeley pond be identified as a dam and will finalize the construction drawings and finalize permit applications to MNRF, MECP, DFO and TRCA. An update on the status of the Edgeley Pond and Park project will be provided at the first VMC Sub-committee in 2020.

***The Black Creek Renewal Class EA is approved by the Ministry and the detailed design assignment is being advanced***

The Black Creek Renewal (BCR) Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed and filed for public review in September 2018. On August 16, 2019, the City received confirmation from the MECP that both Part II Order requests for the BCR EA were denied and the City of Vaughan was approved to move forward with the next phase of the project.

The BCR is a highly complex, multi-disciplinary project that, coupled with a high estimated capital cost, led the VMC team to consider alternative project delivery models. Through successful consultation with Infrastructure Development, the VMC team have chosen a multi-phase modified design-build format. It will be a pilot project for this innovative project delivery model and new to the City.

Furthermore, also new to the City of Vaughan, is the retention of a technical advisor (TA). It is common on design-build projects for the owner to first retain a TA to assist in the preparation of the Owner's Statement of Requirements. The TA will also provide technical guidance, subject matter expertise, oversight and support during the subsequent project phases. The VMC team is developing a Terms of Reference (TOR) for TA services, which will be released as a competitive Request for Proposal in early 2020.

The TOR is a joint effort between the VMC team and Infrastructure Development, with input from various City departments and external agencies, including the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority (TRCA). Award of the project is anticipated in Q2 2020.

***The Transportation Master Plan is undergoing a fulsome update for the VMC due to increased transit service, densities and population***

The City will be undertaking an update to the transportation planning and design study focused on the VMC. The VMC Transportation Planning and Design Study will be used to provide direction on developing a refined multi-modal transportation network for the VMC area, supporting innovative mobility strategies and a strategic implementation plan. The study scope will be aligned with the on-going city-wide Transportation Master Plan (TMP) update and include completion of multiple Municipal Class Environmental Assessments up to Phase 4 for Schedule C activities for VMC roads as required. The outputs of the study will be used to inform transportation policies, initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and the preparation of upcoming VMC Secondary Plan and City of Vaughan Official Plan updates.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the VMC Transportation Planning and Design Study is anticipated to be released by end of Q1 2020.

***The SmartCentres Place bus terminal is now open***

A key catalyst for the developing Mobility Hub is the SmartCentres Place bus terminal which opened for service on November 3, 2019.

The terminal contains 9 bus bays with connections to both the VMC Subway Station and vivaNext Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station at Highway 7 through both the above grade linear park along Millway Avenue and an underground tunnel. The terminal features modern, open architecture and provides convenient access from all directions to pedestrians, cyclists and transit users, including a passenger pick-up and drop-off area on Millway Avenue.

***Three new roads have been opened in the northwest quadrant to provide better connectivity and support new development***

The VMC team worked effectively with SmartCentres, York Region and TRCA to meet the opening deadline for delivery of major spine roads within the VMC northwest quadrant. Completion of the spine roads realizes Council's Members Resolution related to the Minister's Zoning Order for the relocation of a large format retail store in the VMC.

Applewood Crescent from Highway 7 to Portage Parkway was opened in conjunction with the opening of the relocated Highway 400 northbound offramp in August 2019. Commerce Street from Highway 7 to Apple Mill Road, and Apple Mill Road from Edgeley Boulevard to Applewood Crescent opened to the public on October 22, 2019. The construction of these spine roads has greatly improved access and circulation in the VMC and have framed the future development blocks and urban park.

***Works are advancing on the widening and extension of Portage Parkway, west and east of Jane Street***

Staff are currently working with SmartCentres to advance the detailed design work related to the widening and reconstruction of Portage Parkway between Jane Street and Applewood Crescent, including functional design, utility locates, and developing an overall project work plan with the objective of completing the road works in Q4 of 2021.

The detailed design for Portage Parkway extension east of Jane Street to the west limit of the Black Creek channel is under review and anticipated to be approved by the City and TRCA by the end of 2019. Construction of Portage Parkway from Jane Street to the Black Creek channel will begin in Q1 2020.

***Construction of critical infrastructure on Interchange Way has started in the southwest quadrant***

Improvements to the sanitary trunk sewer along Interchange Way, from Highway 7 to Jane Street required to facilitate development, is currently under construction. These works are being led by QuadReal and their consulting team, in collaboration with the City's project team. Construction is expected to be completed in summer 2020. Concurrently, modelling for the overall block plan and supporting servicing studies has commenced and will continue to inform infrastructure upgrades in the southwest quadrant area.

***Construction of the Expo City strata park to commence in the second half of 2020***

Through 2019, City staff have worked with the Cortel Group to advance the detailed design of Vaughan's first stratified park located within the Expo City development lands (VMC northwest quadrant). Building upon the park vision and program set through the Edgeley Pond and Park public consultation, this parkland is a crucial component of the overall Edgeley Pond and Park open space system. The strata park will provide active recreation facilities, including a natural playground, an ice-skating loop, a splash pad, and a pavilion with programmable community space and washrooms where private and public events can be hosted throughout the year. Currently, the site is being excavated to accommodate an underground commercial parking facility.

***Phase 1 of Vaughan's first Urban Park to commence next year***

City staff and SmartCentres are working collaboratively to develop a work plan to advance the Urban Park Phase 1 detailed design through 2020. The delivery of the first urban park block in the VMC will provide active and passive recreation park amenities to the growing downtown population. More importantly, this park block will provide service to the approximately 6,200 new residents expected to move into the six residential towers that SmartCentres is currently building within the Mobility Hub. The Urban Park phase one block is located within the northwest quadrant, between Edgeley Boulevard to the west and KPMG Tower to the east and seamlessly integrated with the KPMG and Transit Square landscape design.



***The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is ongoing***

City staff and QuadReal’s consulting team have been working through 2019 on the vision for the extension of the Millway Avenue linear park south of Interchange Way to Exchange Avenue in the southeast quadrant. Phase 1 of this park will have facilities suitable for the new Mobilio community, including a senior playground, active play equipment, shade structure and social gathering spaces flanked by perennial planting beds and a linear flexible lawn. The park construction is forecasted to commence as early as 2022.

***The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan to start in 2020***

The VMC team anticipates the release of the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan RFP by the end of 2019, with the commencement of the study in Q1 of 2020. The development of a Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan will help the City to ensure that the parks and open spaces located within the downtown have complementary programs and facilities that provide a variety of uses, services and experiential qualities.

Through this study, the City of Vaughan will be able to identify unique opportunities for innovative design that may allow for an incremental and phased development of parkland, to study different park management strategies that may help the City of Vaughan to operate and maintain an adequate level of service in all VMC parks and open space, and to set up a strategy to develop an intuitive and robust wayfinding system that will help VMC visitors and residents to navigate through the various distinctive precincts and downtown areas.

This study will review and adapt any current park design framework and parameters already prepared for some of the VMC parks and open spaces, such as SmartCentres vision for Central Park and the Edgeley Pond and Park detailed design among others, and inform updates to the upcoming VMC Secondary Plan review.

**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, other external agencies and internal departments to facilitate the advancement of these projects in the 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, VMC Program Director, ext. 8231

### **Attachments**

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects
2. VMC Development Activity

### **Prepared by**

Dana Khademi, Storm Drainage Engineer, (VMC), ext. 8251

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, Planning and Urban Design (VMC), ext. 8035

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering (VMC), ext. 8433

Gerardo Paez-Alonso, Manager, Parks Development (VMC), ext. 8195

Christina Bruce, VMC Program Director, ext. 8231