

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, January 21, 2020

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM IDENTITY MARKS

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To present a set of identity marks under one conceptual umbrella for economic development and tourism and seek approval from Council to adopt the identity marks for investment marketing and the Tourism Vaughan Corporation targeted to external audiences.

A foundational component of brand creation is its “mark” or identity logo. As the City continues to enhance the business and tourism sectors through the City’s Economic Development team and the newly formed Tourism Vaughan Corporation it was identified that a unique and bold visual identity with signature marks is necessary to stand out from our peers in today’s marketplace.

Report Highlights

- The purpose of a place-brand is to ignite economic prosperity in Vaughan by communicating our value proposition more clearly to economic development and tourism audiences.
- The creative concept is designed to help Vaughan stand out from peers in these arenas by being distinct, authentic, memorable, co-created, and supportive of placemaking.
- A rigorous discovery, consultation, and feedback process has led to the development of identity marks that have been positively received by a focus group of economic development and tourism stakeholders.
- These identity marks will not replace the current City of Vaughan corporate brand.

Recommendations

1. That the new economic development and tourism identity marks, as substantially presented in this report, created by Cinnamon Toast New Media, be approved; and
2. That, staff be authorized to protect the new Economic and Cultural Development and Tourism Vaughan Corporation identity marks by filing applications, as required, with the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) to trademark letters, words and designs (or any combination thereof) the official marks of The Corporation of the City of Vaughan; and
3. That, the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute one or more Trademark Licensing Agreements between The Corporation of the City of Vaughan (the Licensor) and the Tourism Vaughan Corporation (the Licensee) on the restricted and royalty-free usage of official trademarks registered by The Corporation of the City of Vaughan; and that the form and content of such agreements be prepared to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor (or designate).

Background

In 2019, the City of Vaughan commissioned the marketing agency Cinnamon Toast New Media (Cinnamon Toast) to deliver an Economic Development and Tourism Brand Strategy (Strategy). The purpose of the Strategy is to ignite economic prosperity in Vaughan by communicating our value proposition more clearly to economic development and tourism audiences. The Strategy is also in alignment with best brand practices for economic development and tourism across the region including Hamilton and Mississauga.

Cinnamon Toast developed a dynamic set of identity marks under one conceptual umbrella for economic development and tourism that reflect Vaughan's transition from a small suburban city to an ambitious, up-and-coming urban center

These identity marks will not replace the current City of Vaughan corporate brand or logo. They are intended for external economic development and tourism audiences and are designed to help Vaughan stand out from peers in these arenas by being distinct, authentic, memorable, co-created, and supportive of placemaking.

The objectives for the identity marks and creative concept are to:

- Capture and share what sets Vaughan apart;
- Establish Vaughan as an economic development and tourism hot spot;

- Guide the expectations of what the business community, prospective investors, site selectors, prospective residents, and visitors will experience in Vaughan;
- Increase participation in visitor experiences and events; and
- Build on the strength of Vaughan’s existing brand and marketing materials.

The proposed identity marks are grounded in Vaughan’s history, uniqueness and aspirations

Before beginning the design process, Cinnamon Toast completed a discovery process that included an audit of current and past communications materials and strategies; a scan of Vaughan’s web presence; research on Vaughan’s history, demographics, and uniqueness from neighbouring and peer cities; and benchmarking of best practices in city branding.

Cinnamon Toast also completed an assessment of our perceived brand via consultation with Council, staff, local business owners, major developers, tourism stakeholders, and other important economic development and tourism partner organizations. This exercise unlocked a better understanding of each groups’ goals, interests, and priorities for external place-branding.

The results—summarized below and in the attached Findings Report and Presentation documents—informed the design of three visual identity concepts. An internal committee of Economic and Cultural Development and Corporate and Strategic Communications staff eliminated one concept. Consulted parties were then invited to provide feedback on the two remaining concepts and all unanimously selected the concept presented today.

Previous Reports/Authority

N/A

Analysis and Options

Attached are a Findings Report and a Presentation supporting the staff recommendations in this report.

The essential inspiration and direction for the proposed design concepts originated from the discovery and engagement phase of this project

A word association activity with the consulted parties revealed that Vaughan is known for being polished, calculated, ambitious, safe, and evolving.

Cinnamon Toast recommends that the identity marks develop and trigger associations with these words among the following strategic audiences:

- Businesses in Vaughan's key sectors: Advanced Manufacturing; Construction; Food & Beverage; Professional & Business Services; Technology; Tourism, Art & Culture; Transportation & Warehousing; and Wholesale Trade.
- New, small, large and international businesses.
- Families and business travelers (short term).
- Meeting & Convention and Sports Tourism organizers (medium term).

The selected concept was designed to convey the following identification statement to these audiences:

"This concept, full of vibrancy and movement, is meant to mirror Vaughan's constant, fast-paced—yet deeply purposeful—evolution. Its energetic colour palette celebrates continuous improvement and forward-thinking growth and ongoing commitment to attracting new and invigorating industries. Combined with sharp 'V' shaped icons, the mark is both an appropriate and flexible solution for representing the municipality's vibrant energy."

The identity marks inspired a strong and positive response from stakeholders

When the concept was presented to a focus group of 23 economic development and tourism stakeholders, the majority said it was very polished, memorable, and unique. All agreed that it expresses a brand character, affinity, style and personality. This strong and positive result suggests that the identity marks will perform well with the target audiences.

A trademark scan is underway to confirm that the identity marks are eligible for trademarking.

Financial Impact

The Economic Development and Tourism Brand Strategy was funded by the 2019 Economic and Cultural Development department operating budget utilizing revenue from the new municipal accommodation tax (MAT-tourism promotion portion).

Looking ahead, the applications of the new economic development and tourism identity marks will be rolled-out incrementally utilizing Council approved budgets in 2020 and beyond. Moreover, the Tourism Vaughan Corporation shall be responsible to fund the roll-out of the identity marks related to the delivery of its mandate and business plan.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

These identity marks will elevate the City of Vaughan's economic development and tourism promotion efforts, which will in turn support regional promotion efforts. Partner organizations including York Region Economic Development, Toronto Global, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, ventureLAB, Central Counties Tourism, and the York Region Arts Council provided input into the identity marks and showed support for the selected concept.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan does not currently have a place-making brand that directly speaks to external economic development and tourism audiences. The identity marks presented here will help address this need and more clearly communicate our value proposition to these audiences.

The rigorous discovery, consultation, and feedback process has led to the development of strong and positively received identity marks that reflects Vaughan's transition from a small suburban city to an ambitious, up-and-coming urban centre.

If approved, the identity marks will elevate the City of Vaughan's economic development and tourism promotion efforts, with the goal of igniting economic prosperity.

For more information, please contact: Michelle Samson, Economic Development Officer, ext. 8367

Attachments

1. City of Vaughan Report of Findings: Brand Consultations, Cinnamon Toast New Media, October 2019.
2. Economic & Cultural Development and Tourism Branding Council Presentation, Cinnamon Toast New Media, December 2019

Prepared by

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