

VMC Sub-Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, May 27, 2020

WARD(S): 4

TITLE: VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE STUDIES UPDATE

FROM:

Bill Kiru, Acting Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on current Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) plans and studies, their purpose and implementation, and how they contribute to the creation of a complete community in the VMC.

Report Highlights

- Based on the approved and proposed residential developments to date, more than 48,300 residents in almost 24,400 units are moving into the VMC, achieving 203% of the residential units and 193% of the population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon
- In order to meet the hard and soft infrastructure needs of this growing community, staff have initiated several studies
- The VMC Secondary Plan Update, which will continue to guide the evolving urban structure of downtown, is expected to commence in Q3 2020
- The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update, which will ensure that servicing capacity can support the future growth and intensification of the VMC, is advancing with a draft expected in Q3 2020

Report Highlights Continued

- The VMC Transportation Master Plan Update, which will provide direction on improving the multi-modal transportation network in the VMC, is expected to begin in Q3 2020
- The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan, which will facilitate both the timely development of parks and open spaces, and a public realm wayfinding strategy for the VMC, began in May 2020
- The VMC Tree Planting Pilot Project, which will create a new green edge to the VMC adjacent Highways 400 and 407, is expected to begin in Q3 2020
- The various VMC plans and studies inform each other and will be closely coordinated to ensure their collective contribution to the Term of Council Strategic Priority of City Building to “Develop the VMC as a complete community, with emphasis on cultural development”
- Staff will ensure every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input

Recommendation

1. That the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Studies Update report be received for information.

Background

Based on the approved and proposed residential developments to date, close to 48,300 residents in almost 24,400 residential units are moving into the VMC, achieving 203% of the residential units and 193% of the population targets identified for the 2031 planning horizon. These numbers have been achieved far earlier than expected. Given that this growth trend is expected to continue, and in order to meet the hard and soft infrastructure needs of this growing community, staff are undertaking an update of the VMC Secondary Plan and supporting studies. This will include the VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report and VMC Transportation Master Plan, as well as undertaking the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan and VMC Tree Planting Pilot Project.

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports relating to the VMC Studies Update can be found at the following links:

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

[VMC Term of Council Priorities and Implementation Update April 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

The VMC Program comprises a multi-disciplinary and dedicated team that are working to ensure studies and plans are coordinated and delivered efficiently. The various studies, identified below, inform each other and will be closely coordinated to ensure they collectively contribute to the creation of a complete community in the VMC.

VMC Secondary Plan Update

The intent of the VMC Secondary Plan Update is to update the existing VMC Secondary Plan to reflect new policy directions with recent changes to legislation and provincial policy documents. It will also dovetail with the Region of York Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) resulting in an updated Official Plan, as well as the City of Vaughan Official Plan (OPR) Review. In addition, it will consider a potential boundary expansion to incorporate additional lands into the VMC Secondary Plan area.

The study will also consider the evolving urban structure of the emerging downtown based on recent Council approved applications and proposed developments. It will also include a robust built form exercise to determine new height and density permissions and a land use plan for the VMC Secondary Plan area. Furthermore, the Secondary Plan Update will take into consideration the provincial changes to the *Planning Act* under *Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act*.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) to undertake this study was issued on May 16, 2020 and the bidding period closed on April 29, 2020. A number of bids were received from several strong proponents. The evaluation process will take place in May 2020 with the intention of starting the study in June 2020. The study is targeted for completion in Q1-Q2 2022. The updated VMC Secondary Plan will be prepared in conformity with the Region's MCR and the City's OPR. The VMC Secondary Plan Update is intended to be adopted under the City's new OP.

VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Update

The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report will be completed consistent with the City-wide Integrated Urban Water Master Plan. It will evaluate the existing and future urban water systems and establish a long-term strategy to provide safe, reliable, and sustainable services to the existing and future population of the VMC and the City of Vaughan. The VMC Functional Servicing Strategy Report will review and update the VMC's existing Servicing Master Plan (2012) ensuring that servicing capacity can support the anticipated increase in height and density of future growth and intensification in the VMC.

The study is advancing, with a Notice of Study Commencement to be issued in May 2020, and a draft of the report expected in Q3 2020. The study will also include an assessment of Low Impact Development (LID) measures with a focus on public lands, particularly municipal right of ways. Contributions from all City departments will inform the development of an LID guide.

VMC Transportation Master Plan Update

The VMC Transportation Master Plan will be used to support the VMC Secondary Plan Update and provide direction on updating and improving the multi-modal transportation network in the VMC area.

The study will work interactively with the City's OPR, and updates to the Zoning By-law and City-Wide Transportation Master Plan (Vaughan Transportation Plan) to inform policies, initiatives, and infrastructure improvements. The study will be conducted in accordance with the Municipal Engineers Association's Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process (MCEA, October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011 and 2015).

The Study will address Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process and provide direction on building a refined multi-modal transportation network. The study will also include the completion of two Municipal Class Environmental Assessments (to Phase 4) for Interchange Way (from Highway 400 overpass to Creditstone Road) and Millway Avenue (from Highway 7 to Interchange Way) (East-West).

The release of the RFP is planned for June 2020. The study is targeted for completion in 2022.

VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan

The VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan (PWMP) is a combination of the planned VMC Parks Master Plan and Implementation Study, as well as the planned VMC Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan. Staff recognize the complimentary scope of work allows for efficiencies in administration and project delivery when combined into one study.

The intent of the VMC PWMP is to prepare a master plan and implementation strategy to facilitate the timely development of parks and open space in the VMC, as outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan and envisioned in supportive placemaking studies, together

with the development of a public realm wayfinding strategy that can be implemented incrementally to achieve a legible and cohesive public realm.

The study will build on existing groundwork and strategies to enable the implementation of a diverse, multi-functional, and seamlessly interconnected parks and open space network. It will inform how these public spaces reinforce the urban structure; how they guide, shape, and interface with development; and how they can be acquired over time. The study will define how residents, visitors, and businesses perceive the VMC and assist them in moving through it, and it will give character to the physical and social infrastructure of the VMC.

The study aligns with a key objective of the VMC Program, and with the Term of Council Strategic Priority of City Building to “Develop the VMC as a complete community, with emphasis on cultural development”, as well as the Secondary Plan objective to "Develop a generous and remarkable open space system and make natural features and functions a prominent part of development." The study goals of the VMC PWMP are to:

- 1) Assess the parks and open space proposed for the VMC;
- 2) Define the character, program, and design of the parks and open space proposed for the VMC;
- 3) Create a phasing and implementation plan for the delivery of the parks and open space proposed for the VMC; and
- 4) Develop a wayfinding strategy and design prototype, and install the first signage elements for the VMC's public realm.

The contract for the study was awarded in April 2020 to a team led by Janet Rosenberg & Studio and work began in May 2020. The study is targeted for completion in Q4 2021.

VMC Tree Planting Pilot Project

Staff have identified underutilized roadsides, verges, and medians adjacent to Highways 400 and 407 as an opportunity to create a new green edge to the VMC. This new urban forest will increase tree canopy coverage, provide enhanced ecosystem services, create a buffer to new development, and increase the legibility of the VMC.

The VMC Tree Planting Pilot Project will be an innovative framework for the City of Vaughan to analyze and restore soils, guide the planting and establishment of a new urban forest, monitor the forest, and define how the VMC is perceived and navigated. The work produced under this study will inform a forthcoming tree planting tender, anticipated in Fall 2020, including a complete soil specification.

An RFP to retain a research partner is planned for May 2020.

An Innovative and Coordinated Consultation Plan to be developed

Staff will ensure every study undergoes a robust and strategically coordinated public consultation process to optimize input. In addition to leveraging the VMC Landowner Working Group platform developed over many years, staff will work both internally and with external consultants to develop engagement processes that effectively reach Vaughan's residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. It is expected that consultation methods will evolve, possibly focusing initially on virtual connections, and moving to in person meetings over time.

Financial Impact

There are no financial 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

Building a downtown is an ambitious goal. The development of hard and soft infrastructure is as important as the development of buildings as a contributor to placemaking that will significantly enhance the quality, character, and identity in the VMC.

The VMC team continues to collaborate across internal departments and with residents, landowners, and other stakeholders to deliver a complete community.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of VMC Program, ext. 8231

Attachments

1. N/A

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