

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, November 10, 2020

WARD: 4

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

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

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.
- Construction of the VMC Centre of Community is nearing completion, with opening anticipated for spring 2021.
- The detailed design of Central Park Phase 1 is underway, with construction anticipated to commence in 2021.
- Final design of the Edgeley Pond and Park is expected in December 2020.
- The detailed design of the iconic pedestrian bridge within the Edgeley Park is being advanced, utilizing Section 37 community benefit contributions.
- The Black Creek Renewal detailed design Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in September 2020.
- The On-Street Pay and Display Parking Pilot will be implemented in 2020.
- The VMC's first public art installations are underway, which will contribute to the placemaking identity of the downtown.

Recommendation

1. That the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update report be received for information.

Background

As construction progresses in Vaughan's downtown, the VMC team continue 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 community. Given the complexity of the planned capital infrastructure, seamless design coordination and timing of constructed works are being carried out.

Construction has commenced for many of the priority infrastructure projects identified in Attachment No. 1, several of which are complete. In parallel with implementing these critical civil infrastructure works, the VMC team is focused on prioritizing the planning and design of parkland and social infrastructure to ensure that a complete community is developed in step with the growing population. The VMC Development Activity and VMC Plans and Studies update reports received today outline the current situation in the downtown and provide future projections for City focus moving forward. This report will concentrate on the efforts that have been undertaken, or are underway, in each of the quadrant areas to advance the initial infrastructure required to support growth.

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](#)

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

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

Analysis and Options

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

On December 4, 2019, Item 4 of the VMC Sub-Committee meeting identified critical infrastructure improvements and construction activities completed or underway in order to support redevelopment activity in the downtown.

A great deal of progress has been made through 2020 on projects captured in the VMC Implementation Plan. The following sections highlight activities that have advanced in each quadrant.

Northwest Quadrant

Road works are advancing on the widening of Portage Parkway and Buttermill Avenue extension

At the December 4, 2019 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff reported that three new roads were constructed in 2019, including Applewood Crescent from Highway 7 to Portage Parkway, Commerce Street from Highway 7 to Apple Mill Road, and Apple Mill Road from Edgeley Boulevard. The construction of these spine roads has greatly improved access and circulation in the VMC.

Further advancements to the road network are currently underway. This includes the detailed design and utility relocation coordination work related to the widening and reconstruction of Portage Parkway between Jane Street and Applewood Crescent. The road widening works are expected to be completed in late 2021.

Road works for the Buttermill Avenue extension are also advancing through design and construction and area expected to be complete by Q3 of 2021, following the demolition of the existing Walmart site.

The Transit City Towers 4 and 5 development site, situated east of Millway Avenue and south of Portage Parkway, will include the delivery of a new local road connecting Millway Avenue to Jane Street. This road has been designed with a pedestrian focus and will add to the fine grain network envisioned for the downtown. Construction of the east-west road is expected to start in 2021. This street will be seamlessly designed to connect with the adjacent large privately owned public spaces.

The VMC Centre of Community is set to open in 2021

The iconic VMC Centre of Community is nearing completion. While the COVID-19 pandemic delayed final interior fit-out and programming of the facility by a number of months, completion and opening of associated civic uses, including the YMCA, daycare and City of Vaughan library and community recreation space, is expected in Q2 2021. This facility will be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for the first residents.

The Parking Pilot Project will be implemented in step with the opening of the Centre of Community in 2021

In May 2020, Council approved a two-year pilot project for 'pay-and-display' on-street parking in the VMC Mobility Hub area. The pay-and-display on-street parking pilot will help manage current demand for short duration (2-hour maximum) on-street public

parking from various road users and, on a trial basis, would permit the City to gauge future parking demand based on development activity in the VMC. The Pilot is expected to be implemented in Q1 2021 in conjunction with the opening of the new Centre of Community. Three streets are being considered for the implementation of the pilot project; they include Apple Mill Road, Buttermill Avenue and New Park Place in the VMC Mobility Hub.

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

City staff and SmartCentres continue to work collaboratively towards advancing the design and implementation of Urban Park Block 1. The delivery of the first urban park block in the VMC will provide active and passive recreation park amenities to the growing downtown population. Future public engagement and a presentation to the Vaughan Design Review Panel is being integrated into the planning and design process, which is expected to be finalized in 2021, followed by construction. The Urban Park Block 1 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.

Northeast Quadrant

The extension of Portage Parkway east of Jane Street is complete

Construction of Portage Parkway from Jane Street to the Black Creek channel was completed in Q2 of 2020, in time to welcome the first residents of the 35-storey Met development located at the southeast corner of Jane Street and Portage Parkway. The first phase of the hydro undergrounding project along the Met frontage on Jane Street is underway. This includes the future proofing and installation of the necessary utility ducts.

The next phase of the hydro undergrounding along the Edgeley Pond and Park frontage on Jane to Highway 7 design works are underway. Once the design and approvals are in place later this year, the implementation and conversion of the overhead transmission lines along the entire stretch of Jane Street from Portage Parkway to Highway 7 will be buried underground. These works are expected to be completed in 2021.

The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design will include the pedestrian bridge and is expected in in Q1 2021

At the December 2019 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Edgeley Pond and Park project. Since then, a third-party peer review was finalized, and the conclusions and recommendations are being incorporated into the final design. This

includes additional site investigations and dam analysis, required to support the necessary agency permit applications to MNR, MEC, DFO and TRCA. The consulting team are preparing the final design package which is expected in Q1 2021.

In parallel, earlier this year, Staff started exploring the possibility of including the pedestrian bridge in Phase 1 of the Edgeley Pond and Park design and construction process. After considering all factors, it was decided that it would be better to advance the detailed design of the bridge together with the pond's first phase of construction to streamline resources and reduce implementation timelines.

It is anticipated that the Edgeley Pond and Park tendering will be released by Q2 of 2021. Construction of the pond is anticipated to begin in 2021, subject to the necessary agency approvals. The construction works will take approximately 2 years to complete.

Construction of the Expo City strata park to commence in spring of 2021

City staff have continued to work with the Cortel Group through 2020 to finalize the detailed design of Vaughan's first stratified park located within the Expo City development lands. 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 underground commercial parking facility is being constructed, with park and landscape works resuming at the end of the winter season in Q2 2021.

Southwest Quadrant

Advancements for new collector and local roads are currently underway

Development activity in the southwest quadrant has gained momentum following Council approval of the first three development proposals. Construction activity has begun on the Mobilio development, including construction of two new collector roads (Millway Avenue and Exchange Avenue) expected to be completed this year; and a pedestrian mews that will be completed next year.

Construction of the Interchange Way sanitary trunk sewer, from Highway 7 to Jane Street continues to progress and construction is expected to be completed later this year. Upsizing of this pipe and other servicing infrastructure is needed to support redevelopment in the downtown.

Block 3, known as Festival, will include delivery of a new local road, and improvements to the existing Commerce Street and parts of Interchange Way. Also, within the block interior, the pedestrian mews will connect into an animated privately owned public space. These two interconnected open spaces will be activated by retail, commercial uses and programming. Construction is expected to begin in 2021.

The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is being finalized

City staff and QuadReal's consulting team have been working through 2020 on advancing detailed design of the Millway Avenue linear park south of Interchange Way 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.

Southeast Quadrant

The Black Creek Renewal design RFP was released in September 2020

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the southeast quadrant and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development. With approval of the Black Creek Renewal (BCR) Class Environmental Assessment in 2019, initiation of detailed design for the corridor is being advanced. In September 2020, Infrastructure Development released the RFP for a technical advisor (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 TA assignment is expected to be awarded in November 2020 and the design will be initiated early in 2021.

The Black Creek Financial Strategy updates are underway

The Black Creek Financial Strategy acts as the funding model and Area Specific Development Charges (ASDC) Background Study for the Edgeley Pond and Black Creek infrastructure works in the VMC. The Financial Strategy supports three benefitting land areas that would be subject to ASDCs specific to this infrastructure along with components to be funded from the City-Wide Development Charge (DC) rates.

The Black Creek Financial Strategy was originally passed with new By-laws enacted in July 2016. As the DC Act requires an update to the DC Study every five years, staff

have begun working with external consultants to develop revised rates based on more updated cost estimates.

These works are in preliminary stages with public consultation to most likely begin in early November and the updated strategy and associated ASDC to be approved by July 2021.

Three of the VMC's first public art installations are underway

In keeping with the aspirational vision of the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program – “to create Public Art that enhances community identity, builds civic pride, orients visitors and celebrates resident and global talent by animating the public realm to foster a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, sustainable and expresses the unique character of Vaughan” – it is fitting that several of the City’s earliest Public Art installations are being realized first at the VMC.

Vaughan’s first official temporary Public Art installation, Metropolis in Motion, prominently situated along Regional Road 7, was revealed on October 15. It represents a milestone in the City’s Public Art Program as the first installed Public Art piece. The monumental 63’ wide by 10’ high City-curated installation featuring the work of Vaughan artist Frank Mazzuca was realized through a collaborative partnership between Menkes, QuadReal and the City of Vaughan. The progressive, animated three-dimensional lenticular design, aspirational key messaging and strategic siting of the work were designed to serve as a memorable gateway and recognizable landmark leading into the Mobility Hub at the VMC. The word ‘VAUGHAN’ emerging as people travel eastbound at different speeds invites constantly changing viewing experiences. The inspirational phrase, coined by the iconic urbanist, Jane Jacobs: “DESIGN IS PEOPLE.” evolving on the west-bound face of the installation is visible during the day and activated by illuminated letters at night, to enhance the viewing experience.

Construction of the expansive suspended glass curtain wall for the digital Light Gallery – the infrastructure to exhibit the curated, rotating digital art collection – is advancing with the Transit City development with SmartCentres. Light testing has commenced on the 10,000 square foot light wall utilizing LED RGB fixtures installed on the south façade of Transit City Tower 3, and commissioning of the first three dynamic works of digital art have been finalized. Over 20 meters tall at its highest point, the abstract, low-res artwork will be activated on the glass curtain at night, visible to viewers from great distances – with sightlines appreciated from the mews and Millway Avenue and at ground mainly by a captive audience of commuters waiting at the bus terminal. Importantly, this leading-edge Digital Light Gallery is the City’s first permanent Public Art work secured through the Public Art Program.

Preliminary design concepts for the public art installation to be featured in the pedestrian mews between the Centre of Community, SmartVMC Bus Terminal and Transit City development are advancing with SmartCentres. It is anticipated the work will be installed in time for the opening of the Centre of Community. Early proposals are contemplating transformative, interactive placemaking design concepts that position the installation as a significant gateway feature, accessible at both macro and more intimate levels – inviting public engagement and celebrating Vaughan’s eclectic diversity through “a moment of arrival” that encourages viewing from a distance and at close proximity.

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

The VMC team will continue to work closely with 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.

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

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Attachment

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects

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Jim Harnum, City Manager