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**Subject:** RE: Economic Prosperity Task Force - October 19, 2021  
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**Attachments:** [EPTF Opportunity Statements Summary.pdf](#)

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Hello everyone,

Please see attached for a summary of all the opportunity statements created by the Economic Prosperity Task Force members to date. We will kick off our discussion tomorrow by reviewing these statements.

Regards,  
Kitty

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### **Covid-19 Impact Opportunity Statement**

Recent challenges have demonstrated that an economy needs to be adaptable, flexible, and the inter-dependencies of sectors need to be acknowledged and fostered in order to drive resilience and success. Furthermore, the physical and program infrastructure needs to be in place to help organizations be flexible and adapt to challenges.

### **City of Vaughan Identity Opportunity Statement**

The City of Vaughan is a leader in the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) economy. Our location has made Vaughan a catalyst for innovation and transformation while providing opportunity for businesses and talent to thrive.

The City of Vaughan stands out amongst its neighbours. Fueled by an innovative approach to city building, a subway, and major projects like the new downtown and healthcare centre precinct, Vaughan's massive transformation allows businesses and talent to capitalize on the excitement, opportunity and culture of urban centres with the comfort of the suburbs. Vaughan's population is diverse, providing unparalleled access to talent with the technical and business skills that has driven Vaughan's economy to a growth rate that outpaces the national and provincial averages.

Economic and Cultural Development has an opportunity to shift Vaughan's narrative as an edge-city in the GTA to capture the reality that ours is a world-class city with fast-moving, transformational projects and opportunities.

#### **How can we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

- Engage, educate, and empower business leaders in a variety of sectors
- Use stories from current business owners - why are you here? What were you able to accomplish by being in this local economy?
- Communications campaign with key messages related to Vaughan's transformative growth
- Campaign focus could include: Healthcare Centre Precinct - world-class health and safety; VMC - a downtown rising - only city outside Toronto with subway access (intersection with talent), life-style projects like the North Maple Regional park and super trail system; all of these speak to a city that leads with innovation

### **City of Vaughan Built-Form Opportunity Statement**

Vaughan is a leader in the manufacturing, construction, and supply-chain/logistics sectors in Ontario. With growing financial, insurance, and professional service industries, as well as an emerging healthcare cluster, and innovation as the backbone of multiple sectors, Vaughan has an opportunity to create an environment for prosperity.

These industries require flexible commercial, industrial, office, and institutional spaces to adapt to, and prosper in the post-COVID economy, as well as community development to establish a connection between residents and businesses to support their growth.

**How can we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

- Review of by-laws/policies (like Official Plan, etc., and infrastructure) to allow for multiple businesses in one space, multi-use areas that may combine business, retail and office
- Encourage the use of technology to enable the transformation and adaptability of space
- Enrich our communities around our existing commercial areas by investing in public art and cultural activations
- Support strategic clustering of businesses and housing to facilitate opportunities for collaboration, growth and consumption
- Activate our public spaces to encourage customer and citizen engagement in the public sphere and create unique experiences through artistic and cultural facilities to drive interest and support of surrounding businesses

**City of Vaughan International Business Development Opportunity Statement**

The City of Vaughan is an international city. Our diversity means that the world is woven into our cultural and commercial fabric. As an international city, Vaughan is a thought leader and can elevate its global standing to the benefit of its businesses and residents by participating in global activities and discussions of best practices.

As a global leader and participant in international discussions, the City of Vaughan can further leverage its unparalleled market access, low cost of doing business, highly skilled and diverse workforce, multi-modal mobility, economic and political stability, and urban amenities. By adopting an international approach to talent, commercial, and cultural development, the City's economy and community can be enriched making Vaughan the world's gateway to Ontario and Canada.

By focusing on our key industry sectors like advanced manufacturing, logistics and supply-chain, healthcare, and arts and culture, Vaughan's international approach can show the world that science, innovation, enriched culture, and prosperity are linked with diversity.

**How can we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

- Incorporate international as an approach in city building and citizen experience initiatives (e.g. planning, culture, events)
- Continue to work with partners to develop and promote sector focused opportunities such as hardware, health tech, construction, manufacturing and supply chain.
- Partner with academia institutions to help attract companies through their student and faculty and R&D areas
- Encourage and assist local SME for international business development by leveraging provincial and federal governments' tools and programs.
- Expand the business retention and expansion project to identify the areas of support for businesses with their international expansion (e.g. export support for SMEs, Mike Yorke's Trentino trade skill exchange program to engage with CoV's EcDev team)

- Explore alternative models of trade missions – Linking it with sector focused virtual trade shows, connecting with global trade commissioners for B2B introductions.
- Continue and develop marketing campaign? Including the new city-building projects, quality of life, cost of living.

### City of Vaughan Talent Opportunity Statement

The City of Vaughan has an educated and diverse talent pool. Businesses in sectors from healthcare, the knowledge industries, and professional services, to manufacturing, the trades, hospitality and retail, and supply-chain logistics can find an effective and innovative workforce in Vaughan.

To continue to be an economy that is the envy of the Province and Canada, Vaughan has an opportunity to further engage its talent. Mobilizing Vaughan's diverse residents, its experienced late-stage career professionals, and its entrepreneurs from all walks of life, particularly in growth segments like women, newcomers, and youth, is key to Vaughan's economic development.

A primary opportunity in helping Vaughan's residents is in helping them understand how to use their talent: where are opportunities in all sectors at all stages of career development; who can help unlock opportunities; and, how can they be better positioned to grow their skills to fit emerging opportunities?

#### **How do we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

##### **Talent Attraction**

- Connecting schools with hidden professionals as they have a high retainment of knowledge – e.g. COSTI senior and student program, ability for students to ask realistic questions for different sectors
- Mentorship and networking opportunities between students, recent grads and industry – e.g. CoV and York U networking events
- Hands-on experiences with industry
- Opportunities to see what the work environment is like. Engage with schools for specialty, experimentation to specify what skills students need to learn to work in their industry
- Centralized contact system for connecting students with potential employers and colleges

##### **Talent Development and Retention**

- Connect businesses to training programs and professional development opportunities to help develop employees and company capacity
- Work with employers to provide talent with opportunities to serve a more diverse function in the workplace
- Work with employers to develop entry level talent, and recognize the skills developed in various industries

- Support entrepreneurs from segments of the population who are under-represented in business startup, particularly supporting women to start and grow businesses.

### City of Vaughan Arts, Culture and Tourism Opportunity Statement

Vaughan is a vibrant urban city where art is accessible to all and valued as a placemaking catalyst, and diversity is celebrated by highlighting our diverse cultural traditions. In addition, Vaughan is home to a cluster of premiere attractions that brings millions of visitors annually. The people and places that make Vaughan an incredible place to visit also make a community that is a great place to live, work and play.

This sector holds an important place in Vaughan's economy as a job creator and for its role in attracting businesses, residents, and visitors. The City should continue partnering with community organizations and businesses to foster cultural programs and events as they contribute to a strong identity and sense of place.

A primary opportunity is to raise awareness of Vaughan's arts, culture and tourism assets and to connect economic drivers to engage with these placemaking opportunities.

#### **How can we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

- Focus on signature events that are great placemaking for the resident community and can attract visitors
- Develop arts and culture asset map and package to understand connections better and facilitate introductions and opportunities
- Educating assets to companies in Vaughan (e.g. experience Vaughan)
- Highlight and promote Vaughan's strengths to residents and visitors (e.g. food tours)
- Explore partnership with Vaughan Public Libraries and education institutions to develop and showcase Vaughan's vibrant art and culture sector
- Review bylaws and look for ways to make it easier for art, culture and tourism initiatives to flourish
- Event planning through the lens of a resident and visitor
- Consider infrastructure to accommodate visitors (e.g. path, active transportation)

### City of Vaughan Small Business and Entrepreneurship Opportunity Statement

Small business is the backbone of Vaughan's economy with more than 85% of its businesses employing fewer than 20 people. To ensure that our economy remains vibrant in all sectors, the City of Vaughan's Economic and Cultural Development (ECD) Department has invested in this segment of our economy by building a supportive community of business people, by reducing barriers to business startup and growth, and working with various stakeholders to ensure that the resources needed for business success are available.

To continue to build Vaughan's economy in a post-pandemic world, the entrepreneurial skillset will be even more valuable as companies adapt to the new normal. As such, ECD will focus on reducing barriers to business ownership and expansion and connecting businesses with various partners in the entrepreneurship support ecosystem. This will help both high-potential job creators AND those with higher barriers to business ownership caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

These efforts must, however, be amplified by a concerted effort to identify and promote Vaughan as an entrepreneurial hub for specific emerging and growing clusters.

**How will we do this? Initial thoughts include:**

- By including startup programs targeting those groups with traditionally the highest barriers to business startup
  - Youth, women, newcomers, etc.
  - Support sectors hardest-hit by COVID-19 to transition into a more resilient operating model and encourage new revenue streams
  - Encouraging side-hustle (and legitimizing grey-market activity) as a means for those who cannot afford to give-up a steady income and in fact, even as a means for existing businesses to diversify their own offerings
  - Advocate for adjustment of program eligibility/intake criteria to allow for alternate entrepreneurship opportunities
- Provide predictability and clarity for those commercializing talents/ideas
  - Create an information package containing key contacts and organizations such as building, utilities, taxes, permits etc.
  - providing self-serve information virtually – e.g. How to Start or Own a Business infographic
- Focus on building the entrepreneurial skillset in Vaughan through workforce development initiatives
  - Identifying and filling mentorship gaps
  - Connecting small businesses to hiring incentives and training/co-op placement opportunities
  - Encourage student consulting opportunities to infuse new ideas into traditional business models (and as a means to showcase local talent)
- Vaughan to identify how to make our mark, what is Vaughan about?
  - Communications – e.g. sharing Vaughan news, key sectors and resources to target audiences
  - Become thought leaders to increase Vaughan's visibility – e.g. sharing specialized knowledge, expertise, and best practice.
- Identify and encourage anchor organizations to act as “first customers” interested in piloting innovative ideas
  - Focus on procurement practices in large organizations (including even within the City)
  - Hospital/healthcare solutions