

VMC Sub-committee Report

DATE: Tuesday, November 2, 2021

WARD: 4

TITLE: VMC TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Transportation Master Plan (VMC TMP) and two associated road Environmental Assessment (EA) studies; for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way (east-west).

Report Highlights

- The VMC TMP update is being carried out concurrently with the VMC Secondary Plan update, with an integrated and holistic approach to transportation and land use planning.
- The VMC TMP will undertake a complete mobility review for the future development scenarios and support the implementation of a public realm vision based on building complete streets.
- An implementation plan and recommendations to prioritize transportation infrastructure improvements, policies, and programs will be developed as part of the update.
- As part of the VMC TMP, two Class EA's are being advanced to Phases 3 and 4 of the MCEA process.
- A robust public and stakeholder engagement strategy has been developed that will serve as a blueprint for the engagement and communication that is undertaken to inform the development of the projects.
- A workshop meeting with the south-east quadrant landowners was conducted in August.

Recommendation

1. That the VMC Transportation Master Plan Report be received for information.

Background

The planned VMC road network was developed almost a decade ago as part of the City's [2012 Transportation Master Plan](#). Since then, the transportation context in the City and its downtown has evolved, including the opening of the VMC subway station and bus terminal, which has been a catalyst in contributing to significant residential development activity surpassing the original 2031 forecasts. In support of these growth forecasts, an update to the VMC TMP is required to confirm policies to support the transportation needs and the development of a phasing strategy to 2041 and ultimate build-out. It will focus on street connectivity, accessibility, and support for multi-modal mobility (walking, cycling, transit, ride share, etc.).

The study is coordinated with the City's Official Plan Review, and updates to the Zoning By-law and the on-going City-wide Transportation Master Plan (Vaughan Transportation Plan) to inform policies, initiatives, and infrastructure improvements. The VMC TMP is also being carried out concurrently with the VMC Secondary Plan Update and VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan, with an integrated and holistic approach to transportation and land use planning.

Previous Reports/Authority

[VMC Studies Update May 2020](#)

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

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

[Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Cycling Network Proposed Revisions March 2018](#)

Analysis and Options

A Notice of Study Commencement has been issued

In 2020, the City retained WSP Canada to undertake the VMC TMP update. To mark the commencement of the VMC TMP update, a Notice of Study Commencement was issued in November 2020. Since then, the consulting team has been focusing on Phase 1 of the study which is to identify the problems and opportunities and confirm transportation needs.

Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process will provide direction on building a refined multi-modal transportation network for the future

development scenarios of the VMC and support the implementation of a public realm vision based on building complete streets. Phases 1 and 2 will also include an assessment of existing and future conditions, confirmation of transportation needs, and an evaluation of multi-modal transportation network options, all in consultation with regulatory agencies and the public.

The VMC TMP and EA studies are both currently in Phase 1 of the MCEA process and are expected to be completed by Q3 2022.

Two Municipal Class EA's are being advanced as part of the TMP update for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way

In addition to the VMC TMP Update, two MCEA studies will be carried out concurrently, for Millway Avenue (between Highway 7 and Interchange Way east-west) and Interchange Way (between Commerce Street and Creditstone Road) as identified in Attachment 1 of this report. The advancements of these EA's will assist the planning and design for the last two remaining major collector road segments in the VMC that have yet to be planned for from the original 2012 TMP. The need and justification for the proposed extensions of these roads were identified in the 2012 TMP. Design alternatives for the proposed road extension will be developed, evaluated and a preferred alternative will be identified.

Phase 3 includes the selection of the preferred design alternative for Millway Avenue and Interchange Way, including the evaluation of the impacts on the social, cultural, and natural environments and identification of the measures to mitigate potential impacts. This is carried out in consultation with regulatory agencies and the public. to Environmental Study Reports (ESR's), which document the decision-making process, will be made available for public review in accordance with the MCEA process At the end of the studies (Phase 4).

The Project Team is currently developing a typical cross section for each roadway. The Project Team is also coordinating with the Black Creek Renewal Detailed Design, as it relates to the Interchange Way crossing of the Black Creek channel. A second Technical Agency Committee Meeting followed by the first Public Information Centre (PIC) are expected in early 2022.

A first deliverable of the TMP was presented in an Existing Conditions Assessment report

Following the completion of the 2012 Vaughan TMP Study, the City has been implementing various transportation network improvements in conjunction with York Region, Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), VIVA and York Region Transit (YRT) and local developers. As part of the VMC TMP update, the

consultants prepared an existing conditions report that assessed and documented the current transportation network and traffic conditions. The following are some of the key findings of the Existing Conditions report:

- The VMC area is well connected by provincial highways (Highway 400 on the west and Highway 407 on the south), Highway 7 VIVA rapid transit, TTC Subway and other transit services including YRT, Brampton transit and GO Transit.
- The reconstruction of Highway 7 has vastly improved pedestrian conditions along this busy corridor, by providing a boulevard between the sidewalk and vehicle lanes, that separates pedestrians and vehicles.
- Majority of segments along Jane Street, north and south of Highway 7, have several “stressors” for pedestrians - for example, the relatively narrow sidewalks and boulevards that are not wide enough in relation to the high-volume of traffic / operating speeds. Additionally, some of the collector and local roads have poor pedestrian level of service due to the absence of facilities for pedestrians.
- Overall existing environment is favourable for the cyclists within the VMC study area, as majority of the study area segments have an acceptable bicycle level of service (BLOS ‘D’ or better). This is the result of the widely available cycling infrastructure on new VMC collector roads.
- The intersections which experience the highest vehicular delay are along Highway 7; at Jane Street, Creditstone Road, Millway Avenue, Edgeley Boulevard and Applewood Crescent.

While the existing conditions are being maintained, the objective of the Study is to focus on the future transportation needs as further development evolves in the downtown.

The City facilitated a workshop meeting with the south-east quadrant landowners

Momentum is growing in the south-east quadrant area of the VMC, and staff have been receiving and reviewing new development applications. Given the fragmented ownership and complexities associated with this quadrant, the City facilitated a landowner meeting in August 2021. The objective of the meeting was to provide an update on the VMC TMP and scope of the study, and to review alignment options for the local road connecting Highway 7 to Peelar Road in consideration of the policies and principles of the approved VMC Secondary Plan.

The meeting was well attended with participation from various landowners in the area, as well as City and Regional staff. The City’s consultants demonstrated the need to maintain a public road network to protect different municipal interests such as public on-street parking, servicing, transit and emergency access.

The consultants presented three road alignment options for the north-south local road, that would respect the principles and equitable solutions in terms of property impacts.

Following the meeting, staff have continued to meet with individual landowners to address any concerns and issues pertaining to their sites. Through the feedback solicited in these meetings, the VMC TMP will be presenting the preferred road network options in a future landowner meeting before finalizing the plan.

An Innovative and Coordinated Consultation Plan is Being Undertaken

A robust public and stakeholder engagement strategy has been developed in consultation with Corporate and Strategic Communications. The strategy serves as a blueprint for the engagement and communication that is undertaken to inform the development of the projects. More specifically, the strategy follows the engagement protocols and practices outlined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), as well as the City of Vaughan and fulfills the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment requirements for Master Plans.

The strategy identified a range of primarily virtual engagement tools and tactics in response to the impacts and restrictions in place due to COVID-19. There are five (5) planned phases of engagement of which, two (2) have been completed to date. The Project Team has completed both the pre-consultation and Phase 1 engagement with the intent of:

- Identifying stakeholder preferences
- Confirming the engagement approach and milestones
- Preliminary information gathering and promotion
- Providing information on background information and opportunity for feedback
- Identifying preliminary design considerations

The following engagement activities have been completed as part of the pre-consultation and phase 1 of engagement:

- Notice of Study Commencement was issued In Fall 2020
- Online Study Survey was launched on November 18, 2020 and closed on January 22, 2021.
- A total of 357 responses were gathered on the survey and the following are key responses related to transportation:
 - Congestion and lack of public parking were the primary transportation challenges associated with travelling to or around the VMC
 - Walking, biking, and public transport in the VMC are expected to increase in the future compared to currently travel patterns
 - Access to public transport and Highways were the primary reasons that make the VMC a desirable place to live

The next round of consultation and engagement will include Technical Agencies Committee Workshop #2, second round of Landowner Meetings, followed by the first Public Information Centre tentatively scheduled for Q3/Q4 2021.

Next Steps

The VMC TMP is closely being coordinated with the VMC Secondary Plan Update. Future land-use scenarios from the VMC Secondary Plan Update are needed for the traffic modelling exercise and are anticipated by November 2021. As such, the VMC TMP will follow the schedule of the VMC SP Update. VMC TMP Team will be advancing the two road EAs with the first PIC anticipated in February 2022.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of various City departments and other government agencies has been established. Public agencies including, York Region, Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority, School Boards, Ministry of Transportation, Infrastructure Ontario, Nav Canada, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Toronto Transit Committee, Metrolinx and 407 ETR participated in the study's first TAC meeting.

The purpose of the group is to provide technical advice and insight on key aspects of the VMC TMP Update.

Conclusion

The VMC is transforming into a vibrant, modern urban centre for residents and businesses. The VMC TMP Update is well underway in reviewing the evolving transportation needs for the City's downtown, while engaging all stakeholders and coordinating with ongoing associated studies. The VMC TMP aligns with the City's commitment to improve transportation and mobility as outlined in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

The VMC Team will report back to Council at a future date with the preferred VMC Transportation Plan. The Project Team continues to collaborate across internal departments, residents, landowners, and other stakeholders to deliver a complete community.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs (ext. 8231).

Attachment

1. VMC TMP and EAs Study Area.

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