

## VMC Sub-committee Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021

**WARD:** 4

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

**FROM:**

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**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 in 2022.
- The detailed design of Central Park Phase 1 continues to advance.
- Final design of the Edgeley Pond and Park is complete and submitted to agencies for approval.
- The Black Creek Renewal preliminary design is underway.
- The On-Street Pay and Display Parking Pilot was launched in October 2021.
- Public Art debuting in the VMC is animating the urban character of Vaughan's 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, VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan and VMC Transportation Master Plan 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](#)

[VMC Capital Projects and Implementation Plan Update November 2020](#)

[Black Creek Renewal and Edgeley Pond and Park Project Update June 2021](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

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

At the November 2020 VMC Sub-Committee meeting, staff 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 2021 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, Buttermill Avenue extension and Bent Tree Drive***

The construction of three new roads 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 has greatly improved access and circulation in the VMC.

Since then, 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 2022.

Road works for the Buttermill Avenue extension are also advancing through design and construction and are expected to be complete in late 2021.

The Transit City Towers 4 and 5 development site, situated east of Millway Avenue and south of Portage Parkway, includes the delivery of a new local road Bent Tree Drive, which will connect Millway Avenue to Jane Street. Construction of Bent Tree Drive is underway and expected to be complete in spring 2022.

Design of the sanitary trunk sewer along Edgeley Boulevard north of Highway 7 are also being advanced. This pipe will cross Highway 7 and connect south to the upgraded sewer at the intersection of Interchange Way.

### ***The VMC Centre of Community is set to open in 2022***

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 Q1 2022. This facility will be transformational to the downtown, providing important social infrastructure and community space for the first residents.

### ***The Parking Pilot Project was launched in October 2021***

In October 2021, City staff brought forward recommendations to Council in support of the implementation for the two-year pilot project for paid on-street public parking in the VMC Mobility Hub area. This included amendments to the City's parking and traffic bylaws. The pilot will help manage current demand for short duration (3-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 will be launched in fall of 2021 in preparation for the opening of the new Centre of Community and is contemplated on Apple Mill Road, Buttermill Avenue and New Park Place.

### ***Phase 1 of Vaughan's first Urban Park continues to advance***

City Staff continue to coordinate the planning and design of the Urban Park with the landowner and work collaboratively towards the implementation of Urban Park Block 1. The Block 1 was presented to the Vaughan Design Review Panel in March and the overall park master plan has been incorporated into the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan. City Staff continue to evaluate alternative delivery options targeting a solution that will deliver maximum benefit to the City.

The delivery of the first urban park block in the VMC will provide active and passive recreation park amenities to the growing downtown population. 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 next phase of the hydro undergrounding along Jane Street is underway***

The first phase of the hydro undergrounding project along the Met frontage on Jane Street is complete. 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 complete pending agency approval. Once the 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 2022.

#### ***The Edgeley Pond and Park final detailed design is complete and pending agency approval***

At the November 2020 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Edgeley Pond and Park project. Since then, the consulting team prepared the final design

package and submitted to the permitting agencies for approval. The timing for the Edgeley Pond and Park permit approvals will coincide with the other activities being undertaken for the Black Creek channel improvements downstream of Highway 7. Therefore, to provide a seamless delivery, the Edgeley Pond and Park construction will be incorporated with the Black Creek Renewal project. Construction is scheduled to commence in Q2 2023, under a single Design-Build assignment.

### ***Construction of the Expo City strata park continues***

Construction is underway on 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, also known as Edgeley 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 pavilion building construction is at 60% completion while the park works schedule is being coordinated with other site development staging activities related to CG Tower (Expo tower 5). It is expected that park facilities and landscape work will be finished in Q2-Q3 2022 for a Summer opening.

### **Southeast Quadrant**

#### ***Preliminary design work for the Black Creek Renewal is underway***

The Black Creek corridor defines the westerly edge of the southeast quadrant and provides a unique frontage opportunity for development.

In December 2020, the Technical Advisory Services assignment to undertake the preliminary design for the Black Creek Channel was awarded and the design activities are underway. At the June 2021 VMC Subcommittee, staff provided an update on the Black Creek Renewal design.

Given the interdependencies between the Edgeley Pond and Park, the Highway 7 culvert improvements, and the Black Creek Renewal project, all three project components will be combined into one larger design-build delivery model to gain delivery efficiencies and mitigate construction risks of the critical infrastructure in the VMC. To allow for a seamless delivery, the current Technical Advisor assignment will be expanded to incorporate the administration and design for the additional scope. In addition, staff is continuing to assess feasible options to mitigate risks from the proposed works to the existing business along the corridor until such time the lands are developed.

### ***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 undertook an update beginning in 2020. Staff sought Council approval in June 2021 but Council requested that staff maintain existing rates in order to allow additional consultation over the summer. A new by-law was passed in June maintaining existing rate with the understanding that rates more in line with the Background Study would be brought forward in the fall for Council's consideration. A subsequent public statutory meeting was held in September 2021 where Council requested a further deferral to December 2021. Staff continue to engage with the development industry and Council and continue to work towards an approval of new rates in December 2021.

### **Southwest Quadrant**

#### ***Construction of Millway Avenue is complete including the sanitary trunk sewer along Interchange Way***

Development activity in the southwest quadrant continues to gain momentum and construction is well underway on the Mobilio development. The construction of a new collector road, Millway Avenue is complete; the servicing of Autumn Harvest Road and Mable Smith Way are in progress, and the roads are expected to be completed early next year, including a pedestrian mews.

Construction of the Interchange Way sanitary trunk sewer, from Highway 7 to Jane Street is now complete. As noted above, advancements for the design of the sanitary trunk sewer north of Highway 7 along Edgeley Boulevard are now underway. Upsizing of this major trunk sewer and other servicing infrastructure is needed to support redevelopment in the downtown.

Block 3N, known as Festival, will include delivery of a new local road Celebration Avenue, 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 servicing is underway and the roads are expected to be completed in 2022.

### ***The Millway Avenue Linear Park detailed design is complete***

City Staff and the landowner have finalized the 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 flexible lawn. The park construction is forecast to commence as early as 2022.

### ***Public Art debuting in the VMC is animating the urban character of Vaughan's downtown***

Public Art is helping shape the VMC's metropolitan personality. Vibrant new installations are contributing significantly to the formation of an engaging public realm with a strong sense of place that reflects the City's transformative growth and emergence as a creative urban centre.

Two highly innovative, large-scale Public Art installations featuring a roster of acclaimed international and GTA artists were recently unveiled at SmartVMC, launching the first of several major works of art planned for this creative district. ArtWalk located in the heart of future redevelopment south of Portage Parkway, between Edgeley Boulevard and Buttermilk Avenue exhibits four bold street art-inspired murals, painted over the entire 30,000 square foot façade of a vacant retail building, infusing a dynamic liveliness that encourages placemaking experiences and anchors the complement of nearby site activations. The theatrical PXL Gallery, a monumental 10,000 square foot LED light wall installed on the south façade of Transit City Tower 3 on the west side of Millway Avenue between Portage Parkway and Apple Mill Road, reveals an ingenious fusion of high-tech, low-resolution digital media activated nightly through rotating exhibits of curated moving artwork by renowned digital artists. These progressive art installations position Vaughan at the forefront of Public Art for monumental contributions to the contemporary Canadian art scene.

Complementing the City's first temporary Public Art installation revealed in VMC South last year, Metropolis in Motion by local artist Frank Mazzuca, realized through a collaborative partnership between Menkes, QuadReal and the City of Vaughan, QuadReal demonstrated on-going support for resident artists again this fall, commissioning Andre Kan to paint a series of temporary murals wrapping around the Studio building façade at Assembly Park. The abstract design concept adopted for Kan's Futura alludes to the diverse, emerging future of the development community.

Public Art Plans are advancing for several major permanent installations slated for the VMC in the near future, reflecting the growing movement of creative placemaking leveraged through Public Art. Cortel Group's EXPO City – CG Tower installation to be located on the development site adjacent to and overlooking the new Edgeley Park and Pond, envisions a storyline concept of transformation paying homage to the landscape, history of the land and the story of Black Creek. SmartCentres' VMC East Block North prominent gateway feature planned for the corner of Jane Street and Portage Parkway coupled with a memorable installation located in the pedestrian mews near the VMC Centre of Community will resonate with viewers as iconic landmarks.

### **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.

**For more information**, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning and Special Programs, ext. 8231.

### **Attachment**

1. VMC Priority Infrastructure Projects



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