

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, October 13, 2021

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: VAUGHAN DESTINATION MASTER PLAN

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

On behalf of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) Board of Directors (TVC Board), this report seeks to obtain Council ratification of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan (VDMP), as approved by the TVC Board on Sept 10, 2021.

Report Highlights

- On Sept 10, 2021, the TVC Board adopted the VDMP, subject to the approval of the sole shareholder and voting member of the TVC, being Vaughan City Council.
- In November 2020, the consulting team of CBRE Tourism & Leisure Group Ltd. was engaged to work with staff from Tourism Vaughan to develop a destination master plan for Vaughan. The study was fully funded by TVC.
- The primary goal of the VDMP is to provide TVC with a solid foundation to guide industry and municipal investment in developing Vaughan as a destination over the next five years.
- The consultants interviewed both internal and external stakeholders, staff from TVC and the City, City Council, hotel operators to partners like Regional Tourism Organization 6 (RTO 6 known as Central Counties Tourism [CCT]), Experience York Region, and conducted surveys of locals, visitors, and meeting & event planners.

Report Highlights continued

- The plan identifies five strategic priority clusters, upon which the recommended actions have been developed: governance and city policy framework; product development; partnerships; marketing & communications; and research and data analysis.
- TVC staff will prioritize the recommendations and engage stakeholders in the implementation through a newly formed Tourism Advisory Board and TVC Board.

Recommendations

1. That the recommendations contained in the Vaughan Destination Master Plan, attached as Appendix 1, be approved by Council, as sole shareholder and voting member of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation, and be referred to staff and the Tourism Vaughan Board of Directors to implement, where appropriate, with the Tourism Advisory Committee.

Background

TVC is the City's official destination marketing organization (DMO) that began operations in January of 2020. On March 10, 2021, the 2021 Tourism Vaughan Business Plan and Budget was ratified by TVC's sole shareholder and voting member, being Vaughan City Council, directing the development of a Vaughan destination master plan.

In November 2020, the consulting team of CBRE Tourism & Leisure Group Ltd. was engaged to work with staff from TVC to develop the VDMP with a Project Advisory Group of industry stakeholders. The study was fully funded by TVC's 2021 Budget, obtained through 50% of the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) pursuant to By-law 029-2019.

On September 10, 2021, CBRE presented the VDMP (Attachment 1) to the Tourism TVC Board. The Board passed a motion to adopt the plan subject to approval from its sole shareholder and voting member, Vaughan Council. This report seeks such approval from Council.

The primary goal of the VDMP is to guide industry and municipal investment in developing Vaughan as a destination over the next five years – with a particular interest leveraging existing strengths, supporting future growth of tourism operators, unlocking the potential development for new tourism products and experiences, and rebuilding an industry that has been the most negatively impacted by COVID-19.

The VDMP will also ensure TVC has a strong organizational foundation to guide both industry partners and municipal investment, to develop Vaughan as a premier destination over the next five years, with specific action items relative to visitor attraction, infrastructure, physical assets, and visitor experience programs and services.

The plan identifies five strategic priority clusters, upon which the recommended actions have been developed:

1. governance and city policy framework;
2. product development;
3. partnerships;
4. marketing & communications; and
5. research and data analysis.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report – Tourism Vaughan 2021 Business Plan and Budget \(March 8, 2021\)](#)

[City of Vaughan By-Law 029-2019 - Municipal Accommodation Tax](#)

Analysis and Options

The CBRE consulting team undertook an interactive strategic planning process with TVC and the Project Advisory Group comprised of industry stakeholders, to move forward with S.M.A.R.T. objectives in the short-term, (1-3 years), mid-term (3-5 years), and long-term (beyond 5 years), based on strong consultation and data analysis.

The consultants interviewed both internal and external stakeholders, from TVC, City staff and Council, hotel operators, RTO 6/CCT, Experience York Region, and conducted surveys of residents, visitors, and meeting & event planners.

The attached VDMP Executive Summary (Attachment 1) outlines key findings and recommendations of the plan, including alignment with the City on tourism related initiatives.

Financial Impact

Recommendations of the VDMP will be funded through collections of the Vaughan MAT pursuant to By-law 029-2019 – inclusive of the encumbered 50% provided to TVC for destination promotions and development, and the City's unencumbered 50% designated for City building initiatives.

Budget requests will be brought forward to Council for approval through the City's annual budget process and TVC's annual budget and business plan process (as sole shareholder and voting member), or otherwise as needed. At this time, no new funding is being requested in the TVC or City budget for the implementation of this plan.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The VDMP will not only support tourism stakeholders in Vaughan, and enhance the experience for local and visitors alike, but it will also support that of York Region, RTO 6/CCT, Ontario and Canada. As home to some of Canada's most notable attractions (i.e. Canada's Wonderland, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Toronto, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Vaughan Mills and more), Vaughan's growth as premier destination will enhance economic outputs for its immediate neighbouring areas and beyond.

To ensure that this success is achieved, the VDMP was developed through a Project Advisory Group consisting of representatives from these neighbouring areas including the Ministry of Tourism, Heritage, Culture and Sport Industries, along with industry stakeholders with first-hand knowledge and expertise in the tourism sector (hotels, restaurants, BIAs, event organizers, sports facilities etc.).

Implementation of the plan will be brought forward by TVC staff through the TVC Board and in collaboration with the newly created Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee comprised of industry stakeholders. (Please note that approval for the establishment of the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee is sought via separate report to Committee of the Whole).

Conclusion

As the sole shareholder and voting member of the TVC, Council has the responsibility to approve the corporation's master plan, as discussed in this report. The VDMP provides a framework and recommended areas of focus for TVC and the City, in partnership with external stakeholders, to develop and promote Vaughan as a premier destination.

Support of this plan by Council will support recovery of Vaughan's and neighbouring regions' tourism industries and enhance the Vaughan experience for locals and visitors alike. With a common vision and roadmap, industry and local government can unite around a single plan for destination development that is supported by clear strategies and governance systems for optimal implementation.

For more information, please contact: Ashley Travassos, Executive Director, Tourism Vaughan / Manager, Tourism, Arts & Culture

Attachments

1. Vaughan Destination Master Plan – Executive Summary

Prepared by

Ashley Travassos, Executive Director, Tourism Vaughan / Manager, Tourism, Arts & Culture

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager