

Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

DATE: Wednesday, November 3, 2021

WARD(S): 3 4

TITLE: VAUGHAN MILLS CENTRE PUBLIC REALM AND
STREETSCAPE PLAN

FROM:

Haiping Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval on the Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm and Streetscape Plan (hereafter referred to as the “Study”), enabling staff and the development industry to use this as a toolkit in the design and review of applications and capital projects within the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan area.

Report Highlights

- The Study will serve as a comprehensive toolkit to provide design guidance for public realm and streetscapes within Vaughan Mills Centre based on the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan policy framework.
- The Study provides a design framework to inform and coordinate public realm investment and to guide future development proposals.
- The Study provides preliminary construction costing that will be considered as part of the upcoming Development Charge Background Study update

Recommendations

1. THAT the Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm and Streetscape Plan BE APPROVED.

Background

The Study was developed in phases and included a comprehensive communication and engagement plan

The Study commenced in February 2020 and was developed in four phases of work, including:

- Phase 1: Background Review and Analysis (March-July 2020)
- Phases 2 & 3: Design Guidelines and Public Realm Framework/Streetscape Plan (August 2020-March 2021)
- Phase 4: Implementation and Phasing Strategy (April-August 2021)

As part of the project, a comprehensive communication and engagement plan was followed to ensure the appropriate input and feedback was received, including:

- Two workshops were held with the Vaughan Design Review Panel
- Four meetings were held with the Technical Advisory Committee, including internal departments, such as Transportation Planning and Engineering, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development, Parks Forestry and Horticulture Operations, Roads Operations, as well as the partnering agencies such as York Region, York Region Transit, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and Ministry of Transportation Ontario
- Three meetings were held with the Stakeholders Group, including Weston Downs Ratepayers' Association, and various landowners within the area
- Three virtual public open houses were held in July 2020, February 2021 and June 2021.

The following is a summary of some of the key concerns and feedback received from Stakeholders' meetings and public open houses.

- While overall, many participants identified that the proposed changes to the street design make it more likely for them to walk and cycle, some concerns were raised about the large parking lots of the mall that are difficult to navigate and unpleasant to walk through; members of the public wanted these parking areas to be addressed as part of this study even though the Vaughan Mills Mall is excluded from the Secondary Plan and is subject to a separate Tertiary Plan; as a result the Study recommends connectivity improvements within the Vaughan Mills malls parking subject to future coordination with the Ivanhoe Cambridge (landowner).

- Another concern that was raised by stakeholders was narrowing the Fishermen's Way from 4-lane to 2-lane (proposed by the Secondary Plan) and potential traffic congestion; as a result the Study proposes an alternative 3-lane option subject to further transportation detail design and analysis at the Tertiary Plan.

In addition to the above meetings, a dedicated project website was created to provide regular updates on the Study:

https://www.vaughan.ca/projects/policy_planning_projects/VMC-Public-Realm-and-Streetscape-Plan/Pages/default.aspx

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

The Study will serve as a comprehensive toolkit to guide the public realm and streetscapes within Vaughan Mills Centre based on the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan policy framework

Building upon the vision and policies of the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan, the Study supports the transition of Vaughan Mills Centre from an auto-oriented area into a greener, walkable, multi modal, urban center. It provides implementation strategies to guide the transition of parks, open spaces, and the streets within the context. The Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm and Streetscape Plan implements design principles to create a safe, vibrant, and pedestrian/cyclist-oriented environment that provides a high level of active transportation and walkability. Also, the Study provides a complete street design framework for future engineering, and urban design capital projects.

The Study provides an integrated design solution to enhance the pedestrian/cyclist experience and to achieve the larger vision and objectives of the Secondary Plan. City departments will reference the Streetscape Plan chapter of the document to inform and coordinate their future respective capital projects for streets within Vaughan Mills Center and for future applications to the regional partnership funding program for Rutherford Road, Jane Street and Weston Road design and construction.

City departments and the development industry will reference the Public Realm Guidelines chapter to inform the design of parks and open spaces and design and location of privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS) within the context.

Implementation, phasing and ongoing operations and maintenance have also been considered throughout the design process to deliver a design and phasing strategy that captures both short term opportunities and longer-term strategic investments to facilitate social, environmental, and economic prosperity.

The Study has three main components: The Public Realm Guidelines, the Streetscape Plan and the Implementation and Phasing Strategy

The Public Realm Guidelines is structured to be a high-level illustrative tool, outlining the urban design vision for each of the public realm elements to supplement the existing policies of the Vaughan Mills Secondary Plan. The Public Realm Framework is a long-term vision for the Vaughan Mills Centre; it is intended to provide a coherent structure for the incremental build out of the Centre over many years and with many stakeholders involved.

The Streetscape Plan provides vision and schematic design for the streetscape with the broad objective of developing exemplary sustainable streets in Vaughan Mills Centre. The Streetscape Plan is developed with the Complete Street Approach (streets for movement, streets as destinations, and streets as green infrastructure) in mind and expands upon the proposed street hierarchy, street rights-of-ways (ROWs) and transportation plans in the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan.

The Implementation and Phasing Strategy builds upon the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan, the City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy and other key reports that speak to the quality and the character of the parks and streets in Vaughan Mills specifically and Vaughan in general.

The Implementation Strategy prioritizes the projects and actions based on the following principles: Focus Funding and Improvements on Concentrated Areas, Build Synergies with Parallel Initiatives, Work in an Interdisciplinary Way, and Consider Life-Cycle Cost Benefit Analysis. Based on the above principles, a priority project matrix is included for the City to use identifying short/medium-term and long-term initiatives. The identified short/medium-term projects will be considered as part of the upcoming Development Charge Background Study update.

Financial Impact

The total preliminary construction cost per linear meter of the streets within Vaughan Mills Centre are outlined in the following table. The table is developed based on the construction cost of Bass Pro Mills extension to Jane Street, the Construction Assumption Matrix within 2014 Council approved City-wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy document and inflation rates since 2014.

Street Type	Boulevard LOS	Boulevard Cost (\$/m)	ROW Width (m)	Total Cost (\$/m)
Local Street, 22 m ROW	Standard Urban	\$1,198	22	\$5,299
Neighbourhood Connector, 23 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	23	\$6,612
Neighbourhood Connector, 23 m ROW w/o Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	23	\$6,003
Minor Employment Connector, 23 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	23	\$6,612
Minor Employment Connector, 23 m ROW w/o Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	23	\$6,003
Major Employment Connector, 26 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	26	\$7,310
Major Employment Connector, 30 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$1,198	30	\$8,955
Emerald Necklace, 26 m ROW, 2 lanes + parking w/ Active Trans.	Enhanced	\$2,283	26	\$8,238
Emerald Necklace, 26 m ROW, 3 lanes w/ Active Trans.	Enhanced	\$2,283	26	\$8,829
Emerald Necklace, Black Creek Interface	Enhanced	\$2,283	30	\$8,238
Bass Pro Mills Major Collector, 30 m ROW	Enhanced	\$2,283	30	\$11,051
Adaptable / Flex Corridor	Premium	\$2,860	20	\$6,517

The following table summarizes the future Operating Budget impact based on the preliminary costed streetscape works. Funds for annual repair, maintenance and operations are included in the total cost, and are consistent with the Operations and Maintenance Assumption Matrix within the 2014 Council approved City-wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy document and inflation rates since 2014.

Street Type	Boulevard LOS	Boulevard Cost (\$/m)	ROW Width (m)	Total Cost (\$/m)
Local Street, 22 m ROW	Standard Urban	\$123	22	\$231
Neighbourhood Connector, 23 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	23	\$266
Neighbourhood Connector, 23 m ROW w/o Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	23	\$249
Minor Employment Connector, 23 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	23	\$266

Minor Employment Connector, 23 m ROW w/o Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	23	\$249
Major Employment Connector, 26 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	26	\$285
Major Employment Connector, 30 m ROW w/ Active Trans.	Standard Urban	\$123	30	\$328
Emerald Necklace, 26 m ROW, 2 lanes + parking w/ Active Trans.	Enhanced	\$187	26	\$345
Emerald Necklace, 26 m ROW, 3 lanes w/ Active Trans.	Enhanced	\$187	26	\$361
Emerald Necklace, Black Creek Interface	Enhanced	\$187	30	\$345
Bass Pro Mills Major Collector, 30 m ROW	Enhanced	\$187	30	\$418
Adaptable / Flex Corridor	Premium	\$206	20	\$303

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

York Region has participated as a stakeholder throughout the Study process, providing design review of Rutherford Road, Jane Street and Weston Road Streetscape Design. Further consultation with the Region will be required for implementation of the Streetscape Design through the detailed design process.

Through the Study, City staff also consulted with York Region Transit (YRT) to coordinate improvements to Vaughan Mills bus terminal; however, YRT has indicated that they only have an operation agreement with Ivanhoe Cambridge (landowner) and any improvement to the Vaughan Mills bus terminal should be discussed and coordinated with the landowner.

Conclusion

The Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm and Streetscape Plan provides schematic design guidance for the public realm within the Study area to help achieve the policies of the Vaughan Mills Center Secondary Plan.

The success of the public realm and the unique character of place are important for the long-term social, cultural, and economic prosperity of the Vaughan Mills Centre. As one of the City's primary centers, the Study's ambition is to transform Vaughan Mills into a pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal center with a coherent public realm identity that showcases sustainability and distinct character with well-designed public spaces, connections and amenities that enhance daily life. The Streetscape Design is a long-term framework to coordinate public realm improvements and capital projects, and to inform future private development along the street.

For more information, please contact: Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager of Urban Design and Cultural Heritage, ext. 8653

Attachments

1. The Vaughan Mills Centre Public Realm and Streetscape Master Plan, November 2021, Final Report.

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