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VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The City of Vaughan plans to create a downtown—an intense, dynamic community that in time will become the heart of the city, economically, culturally and physically. Downtowns take many forms and evolve in many different ways. Successful contemporary city centres share these basic traits:

- They contain a range of uses and activities, providing diverse opportunities for working, living, learning, shopping, recreation and culture.
- They can be fully experienced on foot.
- They are highly accessible by all other modes of urban transportation, including transit, bicycle and automobile, and are hubs for local transit.
- They have the greatest density of buildings and people in the city.
- Their public realms are rich and generous, are built to a high standard, and comprise a variety of spaces and institutions, including places for civic gatherings and celebrations.

Increasingly, downtowns are also the focus for a range of sustainability initiatives supported by their density and form, such as district energy systems, green roofs, and bike share and auto share programs.

The long-term vision for the VMC that underlies this secondary plan was developed in consultation with Vaughan citizens. The vision is described below under seven general principles that summarize what the VMC should strive to be. It is also illustrated by the model images in Appendix D. The illustrations are generally consistent with the framework and policies of this plan; however, they are not intended to be in any way prescriptive.

The following principles describe the long-term vision for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre:

Transit-oriented

- The highest development densities will be concentrated around the future subway station, VIVA stations and regional bus station.
- Transit stations will be attractive and contain passenger amenities.
- Direct connections to the subway station will be provided from adjacent development.
- A regional bus station will be linked to the subway station and integrated with transit-oriented development.

Walkable

- A fine-grain network of streets and pathways will minimize walking distances and provide route options for vehicular traffic.
- A broad mix of uses will be provided within short walking distance of homes and workplaces.
- Buildings that frame the street and streetscape elements will support a safe, comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment.
- A diversity of interconnected parks and open spaces will further contribute to enjoyable walking experiences.

Accessible

- The road network and transit system will facilitate easy access to and from the downtown by transit, car, bicycle and other modes of active transportation.
- A network of bicycle lanes and paths, linked to the city-wide bicycle network, will be established.
- The VMC will remain accessible to and from Highways 400 and 407.
- Strategic public parking structures will provide convenient parking for workers, shoppers and visitors.
- New planned and long-term road connections will better link the downtown to Woodbridge.

Diverse

- The VMC will accommodate a variety of housing forms and display a diversity of architecture.
- A range of jobs will be accommodated.
- Housing will be provided for families at all income levels, and more than a third of new housing units will satisfy criteria for affordability.
- There will be a variety of open space types offering a range of amenities and experiences.

Vibrant

- Key streets and open spaces will be lined with commercial and other active ground-floor uses to enliven the downtown.
- Civic and cultural facilities, and other destinations, will attract people from across the city and region.
- Institutional uses and community centres will provide focal points for social interaction and civic life.

Green

- Downtown will be a model of sustainable development.
- Existing significant natural features will be maintained, and the natural functions of the Black Creek corridor will be enhanced.
- Areas containing stormwater management facilities will be naturalized and may also contain park amenities where appropriate.
- Efficient energy systems, including district energy, will be explored and developed, and a Community Energy Plan will be prepared.
- The local hydrological system will be designed to minimize waste and run-off and maximize positive impacts on the natural environment.
- Civic buildings will demonstrate the highest green building standards, and private development will be encouraged to do the same.

Beautiful

- The architecture of buildings will be of a high standard and complement their planned surroundings.
- Naturalized open spaces will frame downtown, major parks will define neighbourhoods, and plazas and intimate green spaces will be found throughout the area.
- Civic buildings and parks will be held to the highest standards of design.
- Public art will be prominent in all civic spaces and along key streets.
- Trees will line all streets and in time become a defining feature of the downtown.