

## 8 Marketing Vaughan

### 8.1 Economic Development Marketing and Place Branding

Major new investments in a community, be it a large new business facility or the major expansion of an existing facility, are critical for the development of the local economy, creating jobs and direct and indirect economic spinoffs for other industries and the community. In part, this has been the focus of economic development marketing efforts for some time; to primarily market the area as “business friendly” to companies looking for a new location, or those deciding on expansions.

With the emergence of the new knowledge-based economy and recognition of some non-traditional economic development targets as major economic drivers, i.e. place-building, people (whether existing or potential residents, or tourists) rather than companies are increasingly the focus of economic development marketing efforts. The attraction and retention of a diverse range of residents and tourists has explicit implications on the local economy, including the expansion of the skills or human capital in the local workforce, demographic and cultural diversification of the local population, and a continued circulation of external tourism dollars in the local economy.

Broadly speaking, communities engage in economic development marketing for a variety of reasons, including:

- Attraction, retention, or expansion of businesses
- Attraction and retention of new talent, new residents and tourists
- Improvement or enhancement of the community’s international, national, or local profile

- Promotion of unique policies or programs that differentiate the community from international, national, or local competition

The scope and focus of economic development marketing varies from community to community. Strategies can be at the macro or community/regional level, down to the neighbourhood or even site level. Similarly, communities may be engaged in high-profile international marketing activities, while others will have more of a domestic or regional focus on their efforts. Some communities may be focused on a key set of economic or industrial sectors, while other communities may be engaged in the attraction of a key set of demographics or occupations and skilled individuals. Structurally, some communities will market themselves alone, while other communities will be engaged in more regional external marketing organizations that have the advantage of pooled resources.

It is clear that from community to community, there is no “one-size” strategy for marketing efforts. The efforts will be focused on the unique set of challenges and opportunities that each community faces towards achieving its economic development goals.

Place branding also plays a primary role in economic development marketing. It is the actual brand or identity of the community that will contribute to the all important differentiation of the area from other places.

Effective place branding requires a strategic approach to public relations, as well as the realization that the formation and management of an image or brand for an area is an ongoing, interactive and community-wide process. Place branding is much more than the development of a logo, tagline or slogan. It requires brand identity with community-traction and buy-in, a strong steward that will ensure the place brand is communicated consistently on a long-term basis, and a commitment from stakeholders community-

wide to stay engaged in the process and promote and deliver on the core messages of the brand.

Contrary to popular belief, branding and market development is not always entirely focused on communications strategies. In place branding, an important component is the co-ordination of resources and experiences to maintain consistency with an established brand. It is a strategic process for developing and maintaining a place identity that is compelling and relevant to all key audiences.

Overall place branding should be considered an exercise in communication, coordination and organization of all of the variables that influence a city's image. However, it is easier said than done to create a brand for the city that can survive over the long term.

Underlying marketing and branding principles is the network of individuals and organizations that can contribute to marketing and branding of a community. Just a sampling of some of these players includes provincial, regional and local governments; chambers of commerce; regional marketing or tourism organizations; community development corporations; economic development agencies and departments; property developers; universities and colleges; as well as individual business and the local residents of the community. Given the number of potential influencers on a community's image, the critical element of marketing and branding success is the degree to which these numerous players coordinate and align their activities with the over-arching vision for the community.

## 8.2 Key Marketing and Branding Considerations

### 8.2.1 Web Presence and Social Media

Many marketing specialists say that if you are not online, you do not exist. But it is not enough to just be online; what matters is how websites and web presence are managed and utilized.

For any business, a well-thought-out Web page can be a critical component to the marketing of the products and services of that company. Customers need to find information quickly and efficiently, and that information needs to be at a standard that leaves the customer informed about the business, and pleased with the experience. In a municipal economic development context, the web presence of a municipality should consider those same principles. Municipalities should take the perspective of a time-pressed site selector or business owner, and ensure that websites consider the following key factors: speed, ease of navigation, interactivity, and provision of useful, complete, and current data.

Above all else, this requires keeping the basics of design in mind when considering web presence. The webpage should load quickly, with minimal interruptions between accessing the site and accessing the data the user wants to see. Purely from a speed perspective, municipalities should consider limiting the number of 'clicks' it takes to reach desired information. The standard rule for economic development websites is under three 'clicks.'

In addition to timeliness and speed, there are several things that need to be noted with regards to website design:

**Contact Information:** The website should provide contact information like names, phone numbers and name-specific email addresses on every page. If applicable, staff members that deal with specific economic development tasks or industries should be identified.

**Data availability and uniqueness:** Many site selectors suggest including data that is not available anywhere else, on the website, an example being a news feed that highlights recent company expansions or developments and brings together information that would otherwise be dispersed in different outlets. Data that is available somewhere else (i.e. Statistics Canada) can be provided in

a more streamlined format than would be found elsewhere, but more specific data like the top employers, a list of unions operating in the community, local education or management anecdotes, testimonials, local incentives, development regulations, and specific building and site information can be very useful and more custom additions to a website. At the least, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) suggests that the following key data elements should be included in the website:

- Leading employers
- New companies and developments in the area
- Average salary by occupation
- Workers compensation and unemployment insurance
- Percent of workforce organized
- Real and personal property tax
- Average cost of sites
- Utilities
- Quality of life data for urban and suburban areas

**Visibility:** To ensure that the site is easily found and accessible by search engine, municipalities should employ a range of search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, such as the use of key terms and phrases (commerce, economic development, industrial land, building permits, business expansion etc.). If a business types the community name and any of those key terms, the economic development website, or at least the community website, should be at the top of the search results.

**Benchmarking and analytics:** Presently there are a range of tools that allow for the benchmarking of a website against itself, or similar sized sites. Analyzing the number of hits, return visitors, and time spent on the site alone, gives an indication of the types of information your visitors are looking for, and if your messages are reaching the audience. Google provides a range of free tools to accomplish some of these tasks. In addition, Google tools can provide an indication of

the types of terms being used to search out economic development; information that can be used to ensure that there is an appropriate keyword density in the website to optimize visibility on search engines.

**Mobile Web and Devices:** Formatting and design of a website becomes more of an issue as mobile devices or smart phones are increasingly integrated into the market. Their continued expansion into both business and consumer markets, as well as the growing use of Web 2.0 tools like Twitter and Facebook which have been heavily integrated into mobile devices, there will likely be more pressure to assure that websites are compatible with mobile web standards. To ensure accessibility to a range of devices, regard should be given to the site's formatting in different window sizes, the availability of text-only information, and the speed with which the website loads.

**Maps, Location and GIS:** Websites can include a range of location-specific or context data, but the one basic element that must always be present is a map. Municipalities should not assume that international investors and site selectors know where the community is located, so a map highlighting the location of the municipality, especially in relation to the major centres around it, should be provided.

Many communities have integrated web-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portals to their websites, in order to convey a range of development and demographic information about the community. These site selection portals often include information about vacant lands or buildings, utilities, community facilities, lease rates, sale prices, and servicing information, as well as integrate a range of search functionality to allow users to filter information quickly. Demographic and labour force information is also often included, either for the community or potentially even at the site level.

More sophisticated tools add in analytical functions – proximity searches, buffering, distance measurement, drive time – to the mapping elements to give the user more opportunities to customize the information they are looking for. Through these sites, users often also have access to customizable, downloadable content or reports that can be generated from the web-based portal.

**Social Media:** Direct outreach, communication and relationship building is changing with the advent of user-centred Web 2.0 information sharing tools like wikis, blogs, mobile applications, and RSS feeds. More specific social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn, to name a few, are further changing social interaction. These tools allow economic development organizations to reach out to the wider community and potential investors or visitors easily through the internet, and as such, represent a major opportunity within the marketing and branding fields. Though many communities are implementing these tools well into their economic development activities, effective use of these tools still remains somewhat open.

Several experts suggest a number of steps in social media integration to ensure that the initiative has the highest potential for success. Social media, whether business or personal, thrives on the principles of quality, quantity, and authenticity with regards to content, so ensuring that the social media strategy of a community adheres to those principles is paramount. Generally speaking the launch and operation of social media initiatives in a community should be a multi-step process:

1. Align the use of the tools with the overall economic development strategy, and define goals for the integration of social media tools towards the broader economic development goals. As well, generate internal of organizational sponsorship and commitment to the use of the tools and the time required to use them

2. Understand the intended audience and the channel through which they will be reached, including the language and culture of the tool. Understand the tools that can be used to measure or enhance social media use
3. Start small with integration of a few tools at first and prioritize to keep the initiative on track, but primarily join in on the conversation – engage stakeholders, solicit feedback, remain active in the conversation
4. Measure the results of the initiative against the original goals of the program

Overall, economic development agencies need to understand that the pay-offs from the integration of social media tools into economic development marketing will likely not be immediate. However, over time the adherence to the principles of quality, quantity, and authenticity of content, as well as genuine connection with community stakeholders and virtual networks, will ensure that the community stays top of mind.

### 8.2.2 Publications

Despite the growing influence of the web and social media tools in economic development marketing, print publications and marketing materials still form an important part of economic development marketing. This is especially important with regards to tradeshow attendance, trade missions, and direct mail campaigns. As such, regard should be given to producing some print materials and publications that can be sent to or left with potential investors or visitors, existing businesses, or the residents of the community. Potential publications include sector-specific profiles, community profiles, business directories, site-specific brochures, or information about unique programs and policies in the local area.

With that being said, trends are suggesting that the majority of information is now being accessed from the internet or other forms of new media. As such, consideration needs to be given to having all of these marketing materials in electronic format as well, allowing for transmission over email. As noted previously, much of the content of more traditional print profiles is being integrated into websites through GIS portals, in more customizable formats, as well.

### 8.2.3 Partnerships and Relationships

Economic development marketing does not have to be done solely by the community alone. There is incentive to build partnerships for economic development for various reasons, but the pooling of resources alone presents a major opportunity. At the least, economic developers should be building relationships with as many important stakeholders, organizations and decision makers to ensure that the community is visible.

Economic development marketing-focused partnerships can take a variety of forms, and involve a variety of partners. For example, it may make sense for adjacent communities within the same region that have the same investment targets to pool resources in order to market the strengths of the region to potential investors. In doing so, the larger pool of resources provides the opportunity to reach a larger potential market. Investment leads that are generated are then dispersed among the member communities. A range of examples of regional marketing organizations exist in Ontario, such as the Greater Toronto Area Marketing Alliance (GTMA), the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA), and the Ontario East Economic Development Commission (OEEDC). The formation of the Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) in Ontario also demonstrates regional economic development marketing.

A community may also partner with other organizations within the same community for the purposes of economic development marketing, especially in some specific target areas. For example, for

some communities that do not have a tourism marketing function, the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) may prove to be valuable partners in marketing the community as a destination. Since their members have an interest in supporting the local business community, it is a logical activity for them to partner in. Further, partnership with ethnic or cultural organizations in a city may lead to the development of Friendship or Twin city relationships, international trade or business development opportunities, or the attraction of new residents or visitors to a community.

A community may also partner or build a close relationship with higher levels of government for the purposes of economic development marketing, especially based on alignment of target sectors with those of the higher level of government. Federal governments have resources devoted to the attraction of foreign investment, and a community's partnership with those functions, and distribution of marketing content and materials to them, ensures that when business development leads are generated they are on the list of potential investment locations.

Overall, there are a range of partnership and relationship opportunities for communities to explore with regards to economic development marketing activities. Primarily though, the community should let their economic development strategy dictate the types and focus of these partnerships.

### 8.2.4 Memberships

Memberships represent an excellent means for a community to both market the area and ensure that they are up-to-date on trends that could potentially affect economic opportunities for their local economies. Memberships maintained by an economic development entity could include economic development organizations, such as the International Economic Development Commission (IEDC); sector-specific organizations, like the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME); project-specific organizations, like the North



America's SuperCorridor Coalition (NASCO); or community organizations, like the local chamber of commerce.

Primarily, economic development entities should seek out opportunities where networking and professional development are readily available. As part of their membership, they will have exclusive access to other members and organizational resources in highly targeted areas, providing both marketing and relationship building opportunities.

### 8.2.5 Business and Community Engagement

Engagement with the existing business community is an often overlooked area of opportunity with regards to economic development marketing. Much of the traditional marketing efforts have been focused on the external market and attracting investment, with little regard for the investment that could come from the existing business community.

In an economic development marketing context, it is important to consider all local businesses potential ambassadors for the community. Some local business owners have potentially large business and personal networks, and thus potentially large audiences should they have the desire to market the local community. That is why business engagement and outreach is paramount to economic development marketing. A community must make sure that it responds quickly to the needs of the local business community, and that the local business community has a generally positive view of doing business in the community. If there is a message to be shared by these individuals, it will likely be influenced primarily by their continued experience with the local community government and administration.

But this informal creation of ambassadors stretches beyond just the business community. Local residents of a community have a major part to play in the development and propagation of community image, which can have profound effects on the community's

economic development potential. One market where local residents have an especially large influence is tourism, where the perceptions of those residents have the potential to affect the number of visitors attracted to the area through the "visiting friends and relatives" (VFR) segment of the market.

Continued engagement of the business community and local residents can take a variety of forms and utilize several different avenues. In terms of business community engagement, an economic development entity can undertake a comprehensive business visitation or business retention and expansion program. The idea is to keep informed of the opportunities and challenges that local businesses are facing, and address them quickly. Each visit represents an opportunity to build a better relationship with the local business community, as well as inform businesses about successes and opportunities in the city, or promote connections with other businesses, organizations, or academia.

Beyond that, the community can engage in any number of other outreach activities with the local business community in order to shape opinions of the community. For example, a semi-regular publication with a high-level report on business activity in the community may be an effective way to reach the audience. In addition, the city can facilitate business networking opportunities, whether virtual (i.e. LinkedIn) or through workshops, focus groups, or business forums. Again, these efforts promote a positive engagement with the local business community, and represent opportunities to shape the opinions of local business people.

Reaching the residents of the local community can be slightly more difficult, as economic development personnel do not characteristically connect with the general population. The primary messages should be focused on the community's strengths, such as diverse employment opportunities, excellent quality of life, tourism or entertainment amenities, and community services. Since the audience is wider and more diverse than the business community,

the messages should be clear, logical, and concise to reach everyone. Overall the focus of wider community outreach should be information transfer, but also inspirational testimonials and local success stories.

A wider variety of channels is also available with regards to community outreach, including:

- Local media and advertising
- Information booths at community events
- Print publications and information packages
- Social media groups or events
- Community summits

Business and community outreach is an important part of economic development marketing. Both parties have a major part to play in the formation of the community’s image, and both could potentially have an impact on both internal and external investments in the community. Therefore, paired with all externally-focused marketing efforts, there should be an internally-focused component as well.

### 8.3 Vaughan’s Core Activity Areas

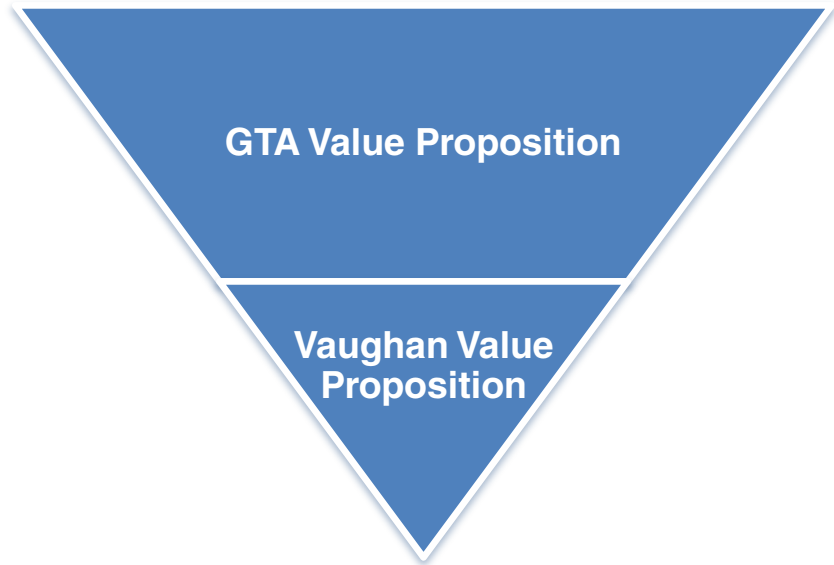
Economic development marketing in Vaughan should be a multi-segment approach based on several core activity areas, including:

- Brand Integration
- Sector-specific marketing
- Area-specific marketing
- Partnership and relationship building

What underlies all economic development marketing in the City of Vaughan is clear communication of the city’s value proposition. As part of the Greater Toronto Area, Vaughan shares in the same strong general value proposition that is true of the entire GTA: access to a highly educated labour force, strong transportation links, excellent

quality of life, and access to research and post-secondary institutions. Articulation of the value proposition that differentiates Vaughan from the rest of the GTA will be paramount for the attraction of both businesses and people, especially in the international context, where Vaughan may be closely associated with Toronto by people and businesses outside of Canada.

Figure 26: Focusing on Vaughan's Value Proposition



The City must take the broad regional value proposition and focus it on the specific strengths found in the city. What are the competitive advantages that the city has, that cannot be found elsewhere in the GTA, Ontario, and potentially even Canada? Some of these unique qualities, which begin to drive the formulation of the city’s value proposition include:

- Direct intermodal connections to the Asia-Pacific Region via the CPR intermodal facility and the Port of Metro Vancouver (Deltaport)
- Access to the provincial network of highways, but primarily Highways 407 and 427
- World-class entertainment (Canada's Wonderland) and cultural facilities (McMichael Canadian Art Collection), as well as nationally recognized recreation and conservation areas (Kortright Centre) and by unique historic village core areas
- Strong building component cluster and the head office location of many major developers in the GTA
- Enviable supply of employment lands with prestige and general industrial designations, and available industrial buildings, all strengthened by lower business costs than elsewhere in the GTA
- A new downtown area at the northern-most termination of one of the busiest subway lines in Canada
- Planned home to one of the newest Hospitals in the GTA, offering excellent local health care and opportunities for development of a health-centred campus
- Reputation as the "Banquet Hall Capital of Canada", with a concentrated supporting network of specialized wedding/event-related culinary services
- Strongly concentrated industrial workforce in a range of manufacturing, transportation, and distribution sectors
- Unique entrepreneurial, business attraction and business retention opportunities in "innovative research, development, and design" and "Advanced goods production and movement" industrial convergence areas

Few of these unique qualities alone are likely a 'tipping point' for companies considering a location. Each builds a specific strength into the final unique value proposition, which is an assessment of all

of these factors combined. The City should draft marketing materials with these unique factors in mind.

### 8.3.1 Brand Integration and Place Branding

The City of Vaughan has long been identified as "The City Above Toronto" in all City communications, including economic development marketing materials. However, stakeholder consultation leading to the development of the City's new brand suggested that while this branding did explicitly differentiate the City from Toronto and the GTA, it was starting to become a little stale and may have been affecting the external perception of the city. The City has now developed a new brand and logo for all city activities.

The new logo design captures the essence of Vaughan's history and reflects its continued transformation into a vibrant urban area, while conveying a modern, progressive and welcoming brand and messaging. These are all core principles that should be conveyed through economic development marketing activities, reflecting the development of the City since the creation and adoption of the previous branding. However, the finished branding and logo will have enough flexibility and adaptability to allow each business unit to develop unique messaging consistent with the brand.

As one of the most prominent departments engaged in marketing and communications at the city, it will in part be the job of the Economic Development Department to promote the new branding for the city, with customized key messages to replace those currently consistent with the old logo and slogan. This includes integration of the new logo and design features into all economic development marketing materials, as well as the formulation of messages that are consistent with the modern, progressive, and welcoming qualities of the brand.

As a steward of the brand, it will also be the Department's responsibility to distribute the new brand throughout the business community. Presently, many of the businesses within the city still



identify with the previous tag-line and logo, as well as the connotations that come with it.

There is only so much influence the City (as a corporation) can have over the true branding or imaging of the city (as a community), but through consistent use of the new logo and dissemination of the key messages to support it, the Economic Development Department can at least inform local businesses and residents of the direction the city is heading with the new brand.

Each of the city’s seven target sectors, as well as the two convergent sectors, require knowledge or intellectual capital as an industrial input. Thus, marketing the city to attract a broad range of creative and innovative people will benefit all areas of the local economy. It is here that the place-branding of the city takes on a greater importance – differentiating the city from others in the competition for people and talent. The place-brand must clearly articulate the advantages to living in or visiting the area, as well as appeal to businesses and developers looking to invest in the area.

As noted previously, place-branding is a comprehensive process requiring input from a broad range of stakeholders. This strategy can only go as far as suggesting major themes that should be reflected in that branding. The resulting place-brand must be a “made in Vaughan” solution, and should ensure that it can gain the buy-in of the City, the local business community, local community organizations, and city residents.

In recommending a new place-branding for the community, the strategy recognizes that slogans and mottos are now viewed as outdated in the local community and administration. So the brand will be more than a tag-line to be placed on banners and brochures. It should be integrated into all aspects of marketing materials and methods. It should reflect existing policies and be compatible with achieving the visions in Vaughan Vision 2020. This strategy puts

forth several ideas that could form the basis of a place-branding activity:

- Vaughan as a city on the edge of the economic region; an important regional economic gateway and partner
- Vaughan as a city-wide incubator of business and creative ventures, innovation, design and development

Overall, the Cultural Plan implicates the Economic Development Department in the development of a place-brand, considering the diverse range of cultural amenities. This strategy recommends building on all of the City’s assets and amenities, in line with these two key themes. Primarily though, the branding will have to be compatible with the city’s new logo.

### 8.3.2 Sector-specific Marketing

Although the City of Vaughan has identified seven target sectors to guide economic development activity over the next 10 years, the strategy has justified in several places that this is still too much. As noted in the value proposition chapter of the report, devoting activities to seven target sectors suggests that there may not be sufficient “targeting” of activities at all. There are several areas of convergence between those sectors that may represent economic development opportunities, or a means of further targeting marketing activities for the benefit of the other target sectors. Therefore, a high priority marketing area for the city is within each of the convergence sector areas: innovative research, development, and design, and advanced goods production and movement.

This does not replace marketing within the seven other target sectors, but instead enhances it by providing the framework for a more targeted approach. By targeting marketing messages to support the convergence sectors, the City will also be articulating the value propositions for each of the target sectors. For example, a prime concern of businesses within the advanced goods production

and movement sector is access to transportation systems. This is a concern of each of the three component sectors as well. The same can be said for innovative research, development, and design. Value proposition elements like proximity to York University, transit connectivity, and a highly skilled population are elements that will appeal to each of its component sectors as well. Thus instead of focusing on undertaking sector-specific marketing in nine discrete areas, the new marketing approach in this strategy recommends activities in two sectors.

The City of Vaughan should develop sector-specific marketing materials similar to the brochures that have already been produced, such as the “Vaughan. Open for Business” investment profile, in line with information and services that support the development of businesses in the convergent areas. Each one of these materials would identify the key marketing messages for the sector, outline the broad business case for the city of Vaughan, identify resources in support of the sector, highlight the success stories of local businesses, and use testimonials from local business leaders to support the sector-specific business case. Having these brochures in print and electronic format allows for distribution in a variety of means, but each should primarily be posted to the City’s website.

The Economic Development Department section of the City’s website may also need to be revised to reflect these changes. Presently, there is an “industry sectors” section of the website, but it is primarily concerned with the city’s strengths in manufacturing, transportation, retail trade, tourism and hospitality. The website should be re-organized to direct the user more easily to industry-specific parts of the website. With regards to website reconfiguration, the rule of three “clicks” should provide the overall direction.

In addition to the brochures, publications, and website reorganization, the City will need to engage with both the local businesses in the sector, and larger organizations within each sector. As part of the marketing strategy, the city may want to investigate

attendance at industry specific tradeshows and conferences, perhaps as an exhibitor, to engage with external investors and promote Vaughan as a potential business location. The focus should be both international and domestic events, and potential examples include the National Urban Freight Conference in the U.S., the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Show (AMTS) in Dayton, the Composite Expo in Russia, or the Green Building Festival in Toronto.

Though there are specific niche areas within each sector, as outlined in the sector profiles and the value proposition, some of the key messages, or value propositions, to consider for the development of marketing messages in each target sector include:

#### **Advanced Manufacturing**

- Stable manufacturing work force and well established industrial base
- Enviaible supply of industrial lands and buildings to accommodate expansion, with competitive rates
- Excellent transportation infrastructure, complemented by major rail facilities and close proximity to the airport
- Proximity to post-secondary institutions and home to the NRC-Magna Composite Centre of Excellence

#### **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (PSTS)**

- Strong PSTS sector growth by employment, stronger than any other jurisdiction in the GTA between 2001 and 2006
- Significant opportunities to employ highly-skilled individuals that live in Vaughan and work in Toronto
- Strong land use policies to support the location of major office developments in mixed use areas with high transit-connectivity

### **Transportation, Logistics, Warehousing and Distribution**

- Access to major rail transportation infrastructure such as the CN marshalling yard and the CPR intermodal facility which is Canada's largest intermodal facility
- Opportunities for facility location along the extended Highway 427, providing quick access to Pearson International Airport
- Quick access to Highway 407 for time-sensitive deliveries
- Large contiguous parcels of land to accommodate land-intensive distribution facilities, complementary strengths in trucking and freight arrangement

### **Corporate Headquarters**

- Excellent access to transportation infrastructure such as Highways 400, 407 and 427, Pearson International Airport, and the Spadina-York subway extension
- Currently the city is home to 107 headquarter operations employing 11,700 people
- Proximity to Downtown Toronto, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest financial centre in North America
- Major office and prestige employment areas in the city; opportunities around the future subway station in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

### **Building Products Cluster**

- Land use policies supportive of green building and energy efficient construction
- Proximity to significant transportation infrastructure
- Green construction demonstration projects at the Kortright Centre

- City is home to many of the GTA's largest residential developers

### **Cultural Industries**

- Major destination retail development (Vaughan Mills) and Canada's largest theme park in the city
- Niche strengths in specialized food services and wedding-related industries
- Home to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Kortright Centre, both major cultural facilities
- New opportunities for tourism, hospitality, and cultural industry development in the high-density Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

### **Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance**

- Close proximity to York University
- Health care and educational opportunities surrounding the development of a new hospital campus
- Capacity for a downtown, satellite post-secondary educational institution
- Ethnically diverse population base and culturally welcoming community

The exact value propositions for each of the target sectors and associated areas of convergence will need to be developed further based on the type of activities being undertaken. For example, within the educational service, health care and social assistance sector, development will largely be based on quality of life enhancements and marketing to attract new health care workers to live in the city. In some cases, this may require attraction of skilled immigrants to fill the opportunities coming from the new hospital. That will require a

different value proposition than that of the manufacturing sector, which can play off of the existing strengths in labour and physical infrastructure to attract businesses or promote local expansions.

In summary, sector-specific marketing activities, whatever form they finally take, should be organized in the following three priority “sectors”:

- Innovative research, development, and design – focusing on building the Vaughan case for professional services, education, headquarters, and health care
- Advanced goods production and movement – focusing on building the Vaughan case for manufacturing, transportation, logistics, warehousing, and distribution, and building products
- Business and creative Incubation – focusing on building the case for Vaughan in cultural industries, and small business within all sectors

### 8.3.3 Location-specific Marketing

In addition to industry sector-based marketing, the City of Vaughan has significant marketing opportunities tied to specific areas of the city, most notably the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the Vaughan Enterprise Zone. Despite the City’s other employment lands and development opportunities, such as the Highway 400 North lands and the Hospital Site, these two areas have been prioritized for location-specific marketing as they represent some of the most significant areas of location-specific economic opportunities in the city. Much of the marketing of the other areas will be covered through Vaughan’s other areas of activity.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre has the potential to be the economic, social, and cultural hub of the City. It is the area of the city that will accommodate the highest density developments, offering opportunities for mid- to high-density residential, major office

development, and major tourism and cultural investments. As a blank canvas, the city has an opportunity to identify a discrete set of opportunities based on the larger vision, and pursue specific developments within the target sectors. Overall, marketing materials and messages should be shaped to convey that message for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre – that it will be an important economic, cultural, and tourism hub for both the city and York Region.

Development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will take a variety of forms, and may require some innovative partnerships to fully realize the vision. Public-Private Partnerships (P3) often represent good ways for both the private sector and public sector to benefit from development, and should perhaps be investigated for the purposes of developing specific facilities in the area. To facilitate those partnerships, the economic development marketing focus can be on the major developers in the GTA, and real estate investment firms, as well as specific types of appropriate businesses.

Some of the opportunities which are appropriate or preferable to advance the economic development vision for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as an economic and cultural hub include:

- Major office and regional/national/international headquarter operations in PSTS, public administration, education, and health care
- Mid- to high-density residential development in a variety of configurations
- A major conference or trade show facility
- A multi-use performing arts centre
- High-quality open spaces and public art installations
- A post-secondary institution
- Destination retail uses
- High-density hotel developments
- Unique live-work or co-work opportunities to appeal to small entrepreneurs and businesses in the cultural industries

The first phase of VMC marketing will need to focus on developers and major companies to initially build-up the area. Once the area is established and opportunities become more tangible, marketing should be focused externally, to new businesses that could locate in the area, and internally, to smaller entrepreneurs or large commercial/office that may wish to relocate based on the advantages in the area. Like the industry specific marketing, there will be several key messages that should be considered when marketing the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as an investment location:

- Termination point for the extended York-Spadina Subway
- Major node for TTC and YRT/VIVA Transit routes
- Existing and unique entertainment cluster already in the area
- Only a few landowners in the area; each is committed to the vision for the VMC

As the VMC develops, it may become a major differentiator for the City and define the City's quality of life. If developed according to the vision, the VMC will provide the right type of entertainment, housing, transit-connectivity, open space and employment opportunities that appeal to highly-skilled and young professionals, as well as members of the "Creative Class". As such, the VMC should be a major component of any initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining the highly-skilled individuals that can support the cultural, PSTS, health care, education, and headquarter target sectors.

The Vaughan Enterprise Zone offers a different set of potential location- and industry-specific opportunities for the City of Vaughan. There is an undeniable inherent identity for the area owed to the location of the CPR intermodal facility within the zone, and that is of a transportation and logistics hub. As such, that imaging and informal branding for the area should be pursued. The image is further enhanced by the present highway infrastructure, proximity to Pearson International Airport, and the planned expansion of Highway

427 through the Enterprise Zone. Like the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, the vision for the area has already been defined through land-use policies, and economic development marketing activities will need to support that vision.

As a logistical hub with excellent international transportation connections, in a city with strengths in several goods producing and goods movement areas, some of the opportunities which are appropriate or preferable for the Enterprise Zone, and should thus be pursued for the area, include:

- Integrated manufacturing/office operations
- Land-intensive distribution facilities
- Light manufacturing of semi-processed goods for the GTA market
- Prestige employment uses in manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, and distribution
- Retail and commercial businesses that service the employment in the area

Again, marketing should be focused both externally and internally. A prominent opportunity for Vaughan may be the relocation of existing industrial businesses that are looking to expand, or looking to capitalize on the advantages of the Vaughan Enterprise Zone.

Overall, the Vaughan Enterprise Zone will be an appropriate location for a range of industrial and some commercial opportunities. What is of primary importance is that the following key messages are articulated when marketing the Enterprise Zone:

- Large contiguous parcels of employment land with both general and prestige employment designations
- Transportation and logistics hub with international connections through the CPR intermodal facility, and quick access to Pearson International Airport

As part of the marketing of the area as a logistics and transportation hub in North America, the City may want to investigate membership in key organizations concerned with economic gateways and goods movement, in order to market the area along with the work of those organizations. A key example is the North America SuperCorridor Coalition (NASCO); of which the City of Brampton and Province of Ontario are members. The city might also want to get involved in the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway and Trade Corridor, which covers the international trade and intermodal infrastructure between the Atlantic economic gateway and the Asia-Pacific gateway.

### 8.3.4 Partnership and Relationship Building

As noted previously, partnerships and relationships are an important component of economic development marketing. The pooling of resources and building of relationships with trade partners and organizations can open a number of new opportunities. For Vaughan, there should be two key areas of focus for partnership and relationship building: international (including Friendship and Twin) and regional.

Marketing to the international community should focus primarily on two areas: aligning with international partners and building relationships with Vaughan's ethnic communities and organizations. To align with international partners, the city should give some regard to making sure the Friendship and Twin cities have both introductory and industry/location specific data about Vaughan. Looking at the proposed international partners, the city may want to produce all marketing materials in Russian, Hindi, Mandarin, and Indonesian, as well as any other region-specific dialects. To assist further with communicating the message to the international community, the City's website, or at least key areas of the economic development component of the site, should be easily translatable into the above languages. As the Friendship and Twin cities disseminate information about Vaughan, the potential investment leads can be directed to a more comprehensive web-based resource.

Beyond Friendship and Twin city relationships, the city should look to market opportunities internationally through Vaughan's various ethnic organizations. The Vaughan Chinese Business Association and the Greater Toronto Chinese Business Associations, for example, specialize in building relationships between Canadian and Chinese businesses and promoting trade between the two countries.

By building a relationship with the organization, Vaughan can stay informed of emerging opportunities, and assist in facilitating inward investments from China, or assist Canadian companies with market entry and investment in China. If there are similar organizations in Vaughan or across the GTA in the other ethnic groups concentrated in Vaughan, such as Russian, Indian, South Korean, Filipino, Pakistani or Sri Lankan, the Economic Development Department should engage them as well to further assess any other partnerships for trade promotion that could be undertaken.

Partnership and relationship building in economic development marketing does not have to be entirely business-focused either. By building the relationships with the international Friendship and Twin cities, and the ethnic organizations in the area, the City can begin to craft a marketing strategy to attract new residents to the city of Vaughan. Canada is facing a labour shortage, and many experts are citing increased attraction of skilled immigrants to mitigate the problem. By aligning with these international partners and ethnic organizations, the city may have an avenue to reach these skilled immigrants.

In terms of regional partnership and relationship building, Vaughan is fortunate enough to be part of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA) and the Toronto Region Research Alliance (TRRA), both of which are engaged in external economic development marketing for the Toronto Region. As well, York Region has a business development function concerned with advancing the Regional economy, of which Vaughan's target sectors form a significant part of. Primarily, Vaughan should be focused on better



utilizing the connections with these organizations to pool resources, and reach the wider international markets that these organizations are engaged with.

Lastly, the City should investigate opportunities to partner with some of the major transportation operators in the area, including CP Rail, CN Rail, and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, in joint marketing efforts. The focus should be developing the idea that Vaughan is one of the region's primary gateways, and a significant component of goods movement in and out of the economic region, especially the GTA.

## 8.4 Marketing Action Plan

The themes and the actions below relate back to Vaughan's four economic development marketing activity areas.

### 8.4.1 Brand Integration and Place Branding

With the development of a new logo and branding for the city, there is an opportunity to change the image of the city and revise marketing messages to reflect that new identity. As well, the City should capitalize on the new branding to craft a unique place-brand that differentiates it from other areas of the GTA, Ontario, and Canada.

Actions:

- a. Coordinate a brand development summit that meets every three years – stakeholders reconvene to reaffirm that the City's brand and value propositions are relevant and resonate with targeted audiences.
- b. Develop the overall value proposition for the City focused on engaging potential residents and visitors, consistent with the new brand (modern, progressive and welcoming) to be used as the guiding principles in all marketing efforts.

- c. Assess media opportunities (e.g. print, social media, radio) for delivering marketing and promotional programs that enhance the overall brand recognition of the City.
- d. Develop public relations activities.
- e. Seek opportunities for co-branding and cross-promotion.
- f. Integrate the new logo and styles into all of the economic development marketing materials

### 8.4.2 Sector-specific Marketing

Based on the areas on convergence between the City's target sectors, as well as aligning with the city as an incubator theme, the Economic Development Department should engage in target sector and sector convergence specific marketing activities.

Actions:

- a. Reorganize the industry sectors section of the economic development website into the following thematic areas:
  - o Innovative research, development, and design
  - o Advanced goods movement and production
  - o Business and creative incubation
- b. Develop an inventory of local, regional, provincial, and national resources that can support the core areas of activity in each of those thematic areas
- c. Cross references the industrial groupings in the areas of convergence, the seven primary sectors, and the pyramids of support with third party business directories to identify a list of target companies for investment attraction marketing
- d. Focus inward marketing on entrepreneurs and businesses within the areas of convergence

### 8.4.3 Location-specific Marketing

As significant areas of economic opportunity for the City, the Economic Development Department should focus location-specific marketing efforts on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the Vaughan Enterprise Zone.

Actions:

- a. Update the Vaughan Enterprise Zone section on the City's website outlining potential industrial and commercial opportunities, phasing of the business park, servicing availability, and key land use policies aimed at regional and national industrial developers, manufacturers, transportation companies – update information on an ongoing basis
- b. Brand communications and publications about the Vaughan Enterprise zone with the “transportation and logistics hub” vision
- c. Investigate membership in North America SuperCorridor Coalition (NASCO) as a means for targeted marketing initiatives in transportation and logistics
- d. Market the strengths of the Enterprise Zone inwardly to existing companies and entrepreneurs that are either looking to expand or relocate, or those that could benefit from the transportation advantages in the Enterprise Zone
- e. Update the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre section of the City's website outlining potential office, residential, and commercial opportunities in the VMC, development status, as well as more information about the economic vision for the area as it develops
- f. Market the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as the economic, social, and cultural hub of the city, and rebrand marketing materials to reflect the “hub” idea – as a significant quality of life advantage, targeting young professionals and highly-skilled individuals – where possible use Web 2.0 and social media tools to engage with the intended audience
- g. Undertake a prioritization exercise to identify preferred cultural, accommodations, hospitality, and entertainment facilities for development in the VMC – target marketing of the area towards those uses
- h. Investigate the use of P3 partnerships to develop strategic infrastructure in the VMC. To facilitate partnerships,

economic development marketing targets should be major developers in the GTA, and real estate investment firms, as well as specific types of appropriate businesses.

#### 8.4.4 Partnership and Relationship Building

Vaughan is in an area rich with economic opportunity and strong business development entities. In order to build the city's international and regional profile, the Economic Development Department should seek to build partnerships and pursue relationships with community and ethnic organizations, industry-based organizations, and area stakeholders.

Actions:

- a. Engage York Region, the GTMA and the TRRA more fully in regional marketing initiatives and trade show/trade mission attendance – ensure the opportunities in Vaughan are clearly articulated to them on a regular basis, and they are informed of the city's new branding and messaging.
- b. Work closer with the Federal and Provincial government on international business development activities.
- c. Work closer with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce in delivering coordinated key messages and brand to existing and incoming businesses.
- d. Investigate the feasibility of joint projects or partnerships with CP Rail, CN Rail, and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority to further promote the city as a goods movement hub and gateway to the GTA.