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## Committee of the Whole Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, May 08, 2018

**WARDS:** ALL

**TITLE: FINAL REPORT ON THE TESTING STAGE OF THE  
SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE METRICS PROGRAM  
FILE NO. 22.24.3**

**FROM:**

Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

To provide Council with the findings and progress made during the testing stage of the Sustainability Performance Metrics (SPM) Program. During the testing stage, staff identified areas of improvement, integrated the SPM Program into the development application review process through education and training sessions for Development Planning Department staff, and developed the SPM Program Threshold Scores.

**Report Highlights**

- Staff has completed the testing stage for the Sustainability Performance Metrics Program.
- Improvements to the Sustainability Performance Metrics Program have been implemented through consultation and training sessions with staff involved in the development application review process.
- Staff has established Sustainability Performance Metrics Threshold Scores to set sustainability goals for development applications.
- Action items have been identified for further process improvements and include training sessions with internal and external stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT the results of the testing stage and recommended improvements to the City of Vaughan's Sustainability Performance Metrics Program, including its integration into the development application review process, BE RECEIVED;
2. THAT the Sustainability Performance Metrics Threshold Scores for Block Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan development applications, included in Table 1 of this report, BE ENDORSED;
3. THAT the Implementation and Monitoring Strategy for the Sustainability Performance Metrics Program, BE ENDORSED; and
4. THAT staff be directed to review and update the Sustainability Performance Metrics Program periodically to address any new best management practices.

## **Background**

### ***The SPM Program advances the City's Term of Council Priorities***

The SPM Program implements the policies of the York Region Official Plan (2010), the City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010), and new Provincial policy direction of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) to achieve complete communities. The SPM Program also advances the following Term of Council Priorities: to continue to develop transit, cycling and pedestrian options to get around the City; to re-establish the urban tree canopy; and to continue to cultivate an environmentally sustainable City.

The SPM Program implements Action Item 2.3.1 of Green Directions Vaughan that states the following:

“Develop sustainable development evaluation criteria, supported by provisions in Bill 51 and Places to Grow, that can be applied from neighbourhoods to sites and include these five areas: (1) development form/sustainable sites; (2) resource efficiency; (3) transportation; (4) public realm; and (5) greenspace and wildlife.”

### ***The SPM Program began as a collaboration with the City of Vaughan, City of Brampton and Town of Richmond Hill***

“Measuring Sustainability Performance of New Development in Brampton, Richmond Hill and Vaughan”, known as the SPM Program, began as a collaboration between the City of Vaughan, the City of Brampton and the Town of Richmond Hill. The City's environmental partners, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Clean Air Partnership, also assisted in the collaboration process.

The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) was consulted throughout the development phase of the SPM Program from 2011 to 2013. Phase 1 of

the SPM Program began in 2011, and was led by the City of Brampton with a focus on developing Brampton's Sustainability Community Development Guidelines. These Guidelines would act as a basis to inform the next phase. Phase 2 was led by the City of Vaughan and Halsall Associates to develop quantitative sustainability metrics in collaboration with the City's municipal partners.

***The SPM Program is comprised of a series of metrics, associated Minimum and Aspirational Targets, and supportive materials***

The SPM Program is based on a series of Metrics that are categorized as Built Environment, Natural Environment and Open Space, Infrastructure and Buildings, and Mobility. Each Metric has associated Targets that are identified as either Minimum or Aspirational and set sustainability standards for that particular Metric. A certain number of points are awarded for meeting each Minimum or Aspirational Target. The SPM Program Metric Tables outline the Metric structure and identify the number of available points per Target. The SPM Program Guidebook provides additional information on the Metrics and Targets.

The SPM Program Scoring Tool is an Excel based spreadsheet that provides the specific Metrics and Targets using a series of "Yes", "No" and "Not Applicable" questions. The applicant enters information about their development application into the SPM Program Scoring Tool to produce an Application Score and a Community Score. The Application Score considers the design elements of a development proposal that the applicant has control over and can implement as part of the proposed project. The Community Score includes the Application Score, along with Metrics which are typically controlled or influenced by the City or the Regional Municipality of York (York Region) such as proximity to schools, transit, and cycling networks. The intent of the Community Score is to monitor the implementation of the SPM Program to inform future policies or implementation projects. The applicant submits these Scores as part of the development application submission.

***The SPM Program has received two prestigious awards and has been presented at numerous events***

The SPM Program received the Ontario Professional Planners Institute's "Excellence in Planning" award in 2014 and the 2016 American Planning Association award in the Sustainability category. Since Council's approval in December 2013 to begin the SPM Program testing stage, the SPM Program has been featured as an article in the Ontario Planning Journal (November/December 2014, Vol. 29, No. 6). In addition, staff has presented the SPM Program at the following workshops and forums:

- York Chapter of BILD in May 2014 and April 2018;
- OPPI District event hosted by the City of Brampton in May 2015;
- Canada Green Building Council-Greater Toronto Chapter “Green Homes Summit” in January 2016;
- York Region “Built Environment and Health” strategy workshop in April 2016; and
- Green Development Standards workshops hosted by the Clean Air Partnership in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

### **Previous Reports/Authority**

An update report on the SPM Program was delivered to the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee in March 2013 and was adopted by Council in April 2013. The update report included presentations by the York Region and Peel Region health agencies. A link to the Council Meeting Minutes is provided below:

[http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes\\_agendas/AgendaItems/Priorities0318\\_13\\_1.pdf](http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/Priorities0318_13_1.pdf)

In April 2013, staff presented the draft SPM Program and accompanying consultant’s report for public comment to the Committee of the Whole. In May 2013, Council adopted the April 2013 Committee of the Whole recommendation directing staff to prepare a report on recommendations for the phased implementation of the SPM Program. A link to the Council Meeting Minutes is provided below:

[http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes\\_agendas/AgendaItems/CW0430\\_13\\_22.pdf](http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/CW0430_13_22.pdf)

The November 2013 Committee of the Whole report was adopted by Council in December 2013, which initiated the SPM Program testing stage for the City. Council directed that the completion of the testing stage be documented through a report to Council that identifies:

- the findings of the testing stage;
- financial considerations to refine the program;
- changes to the development application review process;
- amendments to policy and implementation documents; and
- further educational programs to improve stakeholder and staff knowledge.

A link to the Council Meeting Minutes is provided below:

[http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes\\_agendas/AgendaItems/CW1126\\_13\\_11.pdf](http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/CW1126_13_11.pdf)

## **Analysis and Options**

### ***The testing stage of the SPM Program was formally launched in January 2015***

January 2015 marked the formal launch of the testing stage when the Pre-Application Consultation Form was amended to require the SPM Program submission materials as part of a complete application. A SPM Program webpage was created to provide the development community with resources and information on the SPM Program. The website can be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.vaughan.ca/sustainabilitymetrics>

An interdepartmental team (Project Team) was established for the testing stage and was comprised of staff from the Financial Planning and Development Finance, Building Standards, Development Planning, Development Engineering, Parks Development, and Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability Departments. During the testing stage, a sub-group of the larger Project Team (Sub-Group) undertook the following tasks:

- tracked SPM Program Scores using an Excel spreadsheet to inform the development of Threshold Scores and to monitor industry uptake;
- consolidated feedback from applicants and staff on the SPM Program Tables, SPM Program Guidebook, SPM Program Scoring Tool (Attachment 1 Sustainability Performance Metrics Program Scoring Tool) and other supporting documents to identify changes and/or customization in preparation of the formal roll out;
- gathered input from staff to enhance the integration of the SPM Program into the development application review process;
- provided training for staff, external planning consultants, and commenting agencies in group settings or one-on-one sessions;
- assessed the need for amendments to the City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010), the Site Plan Control By-law, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan Agreements; and
- described the scope of work and financial resources required to prepare alternative engineering standards, if necessary.

The Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Brampton both approved the implementation of the SPM Program and SPM Program Threshold Scores in February 2014 and in March 2015 respectively. The City of Vaughan has taken the opportunity to observe and implement the lessons learned from the partner municipalities' progress during our testing stage. The City continues to collaborate with our municipal partners, including through the Clean Air Council's promotion of green development standards.

### ***Staff implemented numerous improvements during the Testing Stage***

During the testing stage, the Sub-Group completed the following improvements to the SPM Program:

- created criteria to clarify which applications are applicable to the SPM Program;
- revised the existing SPM Program Scoring Tool to increase scoring accuracy, provide additional clarity, increase user-friendliness, and increase specificity to Vaughan;
- replaced the existing SPM Program Summary Table with the SPM Program Summary Letter to be submitted by the applicant (Attachment 2 SPM Program Summary Letter Terms of Reference). The SPM Program Summary Letter streamlines the SPM Program Score verification process by indicating which specific Targets are achieved, and where in the supporting application studies satisfaction of the Targets can be verified;
- determined the feasibility and cost of replacing the Excel-based SPM Program Scoring Tool with a web-based scoring tool based on the online tool developed by the City of Brampton;
- developed verification forms for Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan development applications to delineate interdepartmental roles and responsibilities, and streamline the SPM Program verification process;
- updated the Pre-Application Consultation Form and development guidance documents to support implementation of the SPM Program; and
- integrated the SPM Program into the Urban Design Guidelines.

### ***SPM Program Threshold Scores were established to set sustainability goals and to recognize sustainable development***

Staff has established SPM Program Threshold Scores for Block Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision, and Site Plan development applications, which are outlined in Table 1 below. The SPM Program Threshold Scores apply only to the Application Scores, and do not apply to the Community Scores. The Community Scores are not applicable as they include Metrics that are generally outside of the applicants' control. The Threshold Scores set achievable goals to encourage and recognize sustainable development practices.

Table 1: Sustainability Performance Metrics Program Threshold Scores

Performance Level	Threshold Score		
	Block Plan	Draft Plan of Subdivision	Site Plan
Bronze	31 to 40 points	21 to 30 points	31 to 45 points
Silver	41 to 50 points	31 to 40 points	46 to 60 points
Gold	51 or more points	41 or more points	61 or more points

All applicable development applications are expected to meet or exceed the Bronze Threshold Score. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is a provincially designated Urban Growth Centre and the location of the Toronto Transit Commission VMC subway station. The VMC will be developed at higher densities that are conducive to sustainable development. As such, applicable development applications in the VMC are expected to meet or exceed the Silver Threshold Score.

Development Planning staff will include the SPM Program Threshold Score and Performance Level achieved in the recommendation report to Council for each individual applicable Block Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan development proposal. Staff is currently examining awards-based and marketable incentives to recognize higher-scoring development applications.

Staff will monitor the SPM Program Scores and Performance Levels achieved for a period of one year and conduct further analysis to determine which building types, and development areas within certain Secondary Plans, Area Plans, and Site-Specific Plans should warrant a higher Performance Level expectation for applicable development applications. Staff will report on the findings of this analysis in a report to Council in Q3 2019.

Attachment 3 provides details on the development of the SPM Program Threshold Scores.

***An Implementation and Monitoring Strategy for the next stage of the SPM Program is comprised of one-time and ongoing action items***

The Implementation and Monitoring Strategy below outlines the one-time action items to be completed, and ongoing action items for continuous monitoring and program improvements.

One-time action items include the following:

- include SPM Program requirements in both Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan Agreements;

- conduct analysis to determine which building types, and development areas within certain Secondary Plans, Area Plans, and Site-Specific Plans should warrant a higher Performance Level expectation for applicable development applications;
- update the Site Plan Control By-law to support the SPM Program;
- update the City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010), specifically the policies of Section 9.1.3 - Sustainable Development through the Official Plan Review process to better support the SPM Program;
- develop an automated tracking tool to monitor progress of the SPM Program;
- replace the Excel-based SPM Program Scoring Tool with a web-based scoring tool, subject to a future budget request and approval;
- monitor the SPM Program for a one-year period to evaluate the need for additional financial resources for refinement and implementation;
- develop a marketing strategy and campaign to promote the SPM Program; and
- develop awards-based and marketable incentives for higher-scoring applications.

Ongoing action items include the following:

- include the SPM Program Threshold Score and Performance Level achieved in the recommendation report to Council for each individual applicable development proposal;
- perform refinements to the SPM Program Scoring Tool, Guidebook, Metric Tables and SPM Program web page, as needed, to address legislative and Provincial policy changes;
- develop additional educational and training resources;
- provide additional guidance, support, and training to City staff and external stakeholders; and
- continue to deliver webinars to municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond to promote consistent green development standards, in collaboration with the Clean Air Council.

### **Financial Impact**

The integration of the SPM Program into the development application review process and the development of the SPM Program Threshold Scores have not incurred additional financial resources to date. However, further improvements and updates that require financial resources will be necessary during the implementation and monitoring stage. These improvements will include the refinement of a web-based scoring tool developed by and currently in use by the City of Brampton, the development of an automated tracking and monitoring tool, and ongoing updates and improvements to the SPM Program materials (i.e. SPM Program Metrics Tables, SPM Program Scoring Tool,

SPM Program Guidebook, etc.) to align with changing policies and legislation, and to raise sustainability Targets. There is an opportunity to coordinate these updates and improvements to the SPM Program and to share costs with our partner municipalities. Staff will provide an update report to Council in Q3 2019 on the SPM Program including an evaluation of financial implications.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

The SPM Program is consistent with numerous action items of the York Region Sustainability Strategy (2007), particularly Section 2 regarding healthy communities and Section 4 regarding a sustainable natural environment. The SPM Program is also consistent with Section 5.2 Sustainable Cities, Sustainable Communities of the York Region Official Plan (2010).

The SPM Program demonstrates the City's readiness to implement aspects of Ontario's Five Year Climate Change Action Plan (2016-2020), particularly the Provincial direction to "set green development standards" in support of the Climate Action Area entitled "Land-Use Planning: Support Low Carbon Communities". As per Section 2.2.1 Managing Growth within the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017), municipalities are required to implement provincial policies to achieve complete communities. The SPM Program addresses the following aspects of this Provincial direction:

- create a range of transportation options, a diversity in mix of land uses while considering access to local amenities and services;
- provide a publicly-accessible open spaces, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities;
- expand convenient access to healthy, local, and affordable food options, including urban agriculture;
- ensure the development of high quality compact built form, an attractive and vibrant public realm, including public open spaces, through site design and urban design standards;
- mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, build resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute towards the achievement of low-carbon communities; and
- integrate green infrastructure and low impact development.

As the City of Vaughan moves forward with the implementation of the SPM Program, the City will set an example for other municipalities within York Region to implement sustainable development practices.

## **Conclusion**

The testing stage of the SPM Program has been completed. Staff is now seeking Council endorsement to advance to the implementation stage. Several improvements were made during the testing stage, including:

- improved integration of the SPM Program into the development application review process through consultation across multiple departments;
- development of the SPM Program Threshold Scores for Block Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision, and Site Plan development applications; and
- revision of the Excel-based SPM Program Scoring Tool to increase accuracy, clarity, and user-friendliness.

Council's endorsement of the finalization of the testing stage will support the following Term of Council Priorities: to continue to develop transit, cycling and pedestrian options to get around the City; to re-establish the urban tree canopy; and to continue to cultivate an environmentally sustainable City. Together with the City Wide Urban Design Guidelines, the Sustainability Performance Metrics Program is an important tool to increase the sustainability performance of new development City-wide and implements Provincial policy direction to achieve complete communities.

**For more information**, please contact: Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability by phone at 905-832-8585, ext. 8104 or by email at [ruth.rendon@vaughan.ca](mailto:ruth.rendon@vaughan.ca).

## **Attachments**

1. Sustainability Performance Metrics Program Scoring Tool, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, February 2018
2. Sustainability Performance Metrics Program Summary Letter Terms of Reference, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, February 2018
3. Sustainability Performance Metrics Program Threshold Score Evaluation, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, February 2018

## **Prepared by**

Ashley Faulkner, Planner 1, ext. 8733

Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner, ext. 8104

Tony Iacobelli, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8630

Mauro Peverini, Director of Development Planning, ext. 8407

Bill Kiru, Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8633