

CITY OF VAUGHAN
REPORT NO. 1 OF THE
VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE
SUB-COMMITTEE

*For consideration by the Committee of the Whole
of the City of Vaughan
on March 7, 2016*

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee met at 9:38 a.m. on February 14, 2017.

Members Present: Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, Chair
Regional Councillor Michael Di Biase
Councillor Rosanna DeFrancseca
Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco

The following items were dealt with:

1 **YORK LINK MARKETING CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises Council:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations dated February 14, 2017, was approved; and
- 2) That the presentation by Mr. Gordon Scheel, Senior Business Development Advisor, Investment & Marketing, Planning & Economic Development, Regional Municipality of York, and C1, presentation material titled: “*York Region – Where Talent and Opportunity Intersect*”, was received.

Recommendation

The Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations recommends:

1. That this report and presentation be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a Sustainability First principle and states that sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. Under this definition, activities related to economic development and business attraction for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) contribute to the sustainability of the City.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts associated with the receipt of this report.

Communications Plan

Copies of this presentation will be available on the City's website.

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the York Link marketing campaign as it relates to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and to provide background information on the attached presentation that will be delivered by the York Region Economic Strategy Department.

Background - Analysis and Options

Growth in office employment has been identified as a key pillar of the 2016-2019 York Region Economic Development Action Plan

Office employment is an important aspect of strengthening economic resilience and building complete communities across the region. In an effort to gain a better understanding of the office market dynamics evolving across York Region, a comprehensive office market study was undertaken in 2015 by York Region's Economic Strategy Department. The study identified a number of opportunities and challenges in achieving office employment growth, including strong economic and labour market fundamentals, and limited market demand in York Region.

Branded as “York Link” the Region created a new marketing strategy that would create awareness and influence behaviours regarding office location decisions in York Region

Stemming from the 2015 office market analysis, a recommendation was brought forward to develop and execute a new marketing strategy that would address the opportunities and challenges existing in the office market in order to create awareness and influence behaviours regarding office location decisions in York Region. Branded as “York Link”, the goal of the new marketing direction is to facilitate retention and attraction of quality office employers, and in turn, facilitate the demand in the local office market, primarily in growth centres along major transit corridors. This will be achieved through promoting York Region's strengths and advantages relative to office users under the execution of a collaborative office attraction marketing and communication strategy.

All municipalities in York Region were engaged during the development of the new marketing strategy, and continue to work with the York Region Economic Strategy Department as the campaign is implemented.

Officially launched in September 2016 with the tag line “where talent and opportunity intersect”, York Link has introduced a suite of digital and print marketing initiatives that promote the benefits of living, working and investing in York Region.

It is important to ensure that the City's VMC marketing efforts are aligned and leveraging those of the York Link marketing campaigns to ensure a cohesive message that provides added value to the target audience.

For Vaughan, the opportunity to collaborate with York Region on the York Link marketing campaign is of particular importance in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. Building on the VMC Community Engagement and Marketing Plan, City of Vaughan staff has shifted the focus of VMC marketing initiatives toward engaging the business community and potential investors to raise awareness of the City's new downtown. VMC marketing initiatives planned for 2017, including the VMC micro (web) site and realtor roadshow program, have been positioned to emphasize messaging that speaks to a more targeted audience of office users, to coincide with the development activity currently underway. It is important to ensure that the City's VMC marketing efforts are aligned and leveraging those of the York Link marketing campaigns to ensure a cohesive message that provides added value to the target audience.

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Relationship to Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map (2014-2018)

This report is consistent with the priorities set on the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map: facilitate the development of the VMC; and, attract investment and create jobs.

Regional Implications

The City of Vaughan will continue to work in concert with the Region of York, aligning its marketing initiatives to increase awareness of the value proposition for office users in the city's new downtown.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan and York Region share the common goal of facilitating growth in office employment in its mixed-use regional centres and along major transit corridors. The York Link branding targets knowledge-based office employers in the Greater Toronto Area using the tagline, "where talent and opportunity intersect". It speaks to leveraging the Region's highly educated and skilled population as drivers in attracting quality office employers and in turn, building complete communities.

This past Fall, York Region has had an opportunity to refine its 2017 marketing program and takes this opportunity to provide an update on its marketing and communications efforts.

Attachments

None.

Report prepared by:

Mike Launslager, Economic Development Officer, ext. 8472
Shirley Kam, Senior Manager of Economic Development, ext. 8874

2 INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MAP FOR THE VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises Council:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations dated February 14, 2017, was approved; and**
- 2) That the presentation by Mr. Spencer Rand, Founder and CEO, PUBLISIZE, Toronto was received.**

Recommendation

The Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations, in consultation with the Senior Manager of Economic Development recommends:

1. That this report and presentation be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a Sustainability First principle and states that sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. Under this definition, activities related to economic development and business attraction for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) contribute to the sustainability of the City.

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Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts associated with the receipt of this report. The marketing initiatives discussed in this report were funded from Economic Development and Culture Services' 2016 operating budget.

Communications Plan

The VMC Project Management Team provides regular updates to Council and members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), including City staff through the Moving Forward Newsletter. Regular updates about VMC related projects continue to be posted to the City's dedicated webpages at www.vaughan.ca/vmc. Staff will also undertake public outreach and engagement related activities as well as employing digital platforms to help raise the profile of the VMC and generate interest and awareness of Vaughan's new downtown.

Key Messages:

- Communication is more effective when we take into account how today's audiences continue to use social media and online sites to consume information. Tools tailored toward the visual experience are more effective in sharing a 'story' with online users.
- The development of an interactive map gives the online audience a ground-level experience through three key corridors in the VMC: Edgeley Pond, Millway Avenue and Highway 7 corridors, providing a visual narrative of the human, natural and built environment interactions that are possible in the VMC.

Purpose

This report introduces the VMC interactive digital map tool developed for the new VMC marketing micro-site as a featured online resource focused on showcasing the Mobility Hub, Edgeley Pond and Park, Highway 7 corridor priority areas within the VMC.

Background - Analysis and Options

Currently the City utilizes a number of approaches to reach its audiences, varying from promotional materials, print placements, video animations and digital media. Staff also employ a variety of communication channels ranging from one-on-one engagements, small group sessions to social media. At the core of these tactics, is a requirement for a map so that users can understand the spatial context of the VMC. Staff recognized that the creation of illustrative maps and an online interactive map tool will augment current engagement efforts.

The Interactive Map Tool builds upon key placemaking projects undertaken by the City and integrates the built form environment with the public realm experiences and human interaction to tell a story of the VMC.

The Development Planning Department requires applicants for projects within the VMC to submit a 3D rendering of proposed projects for the purpose of evaluating "fit and context" within the surrounding area. The 3D modelling is primarily a tool for technical evaluation, leaving a void from a marketing or storytelling perspective. Built upon the platform created by the City's 3D modelling environment, and informed by the Urban Design Guidelines, and VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan, the interactive map tool integrates the built form environment, with the public realm experiences and human interaction to tell a story of the VMC. The architectural massing of buildings and structures is tempered with softer elements such as landscaping, lighting, street furniture and public art, and then further humanized with people interfaces and urban activities.

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Understanding that the VMC is a multi-generational development project creates a more authentic message.

Through the interactive digital map, a strong visual identity is created for the VMC in two time horizons: 2021 and 2031. By helping stakeholders to understand that the VMC is a long-term project, it lends authenticity to the City's vision and key messages about the VMC.

The new interactive digital map will profile the following three VMC priority areas:

- The **Mobility Hub** is a collection of infrastructure, development projects and open spaces that will form the new downtown core. It is envisioned that the Mobility Hub will become the heart of civic life during the VMC's early formation days. By 2019, York Region forecasts that 20,000 transit riders will be moving through the Hub daily. It is also projected that more than 1,000 employees will occupy the first office tower and mixed-use building adjacent to the Hub.
- **Edgeley Pond and Park** is the largest publically-owned open space in the VMC flanked by early residential developments. Edgeley Pond and Park will become an anchor for the downtown and an amenity at the centre of its first neighbourhoods. It will complement the VMC's urban quality of life and serve as a major destination within the city and broader region.
- The **Highway 7 Corridor** story is about providing urban, pedestrian friendly, walkable communities within a short distance of transportation assets and other services featuring the new rapidway transit lines that connect York Region and the Greater Toronto Area.

The interactive map tool will enhance information sharing for online users on all digital platforms from mobile devices to laptops. The end user will be able to view a snapshot of the project details for active site applications, as well as points of interest. Incorporated into the City's new VMC microsite, the interactive digital map can be shared and printed. As with many of the resources developed by the City, staff encourages landowners and developers to contribute to its update and continued enhancement.

Relationship to Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map (2014-2018)

This report is consistent with the priorities set on the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map: facilitate the development of the VMC; and, attract investment and create jobs. The development of online tools that allow citizens to self-serve enhances the City's delivery of its Service Excellence mandate.

Regional Implications

The City of Vaughan will continue to work in collaboration with the Region of York aligning with its Office Market Investment Attraction Marketing Campaign Strategy, under the York Link brand.

Conclusion

As infrastructure partners such as the Toronto Transit Commission and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation complete their project builds and development partners deliver their first phase buildings, a new activation, operation and engagement phase begins. This phase is about connecting the people to the space, giving it life and establishing the VMC as 'the Place'. Through storytelling, we can help residents, businesses, stakeholders, visitors and investors to buy into this vision.

The story of the VMC is the collective experience of the built form, public and private realm spaces and opportunities for human interaction - the sum of all parts that can be absorbed by a pedestrian, motorist, resident or visitor as they move through the space. This interactive map tool helps to deliver the narrative more effectively and efficiently on digital platforms – creating a shared, dynamic vision for the downtown that excites residents, businesses and visitors alike.

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Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, Mayor, Chair