

**VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE STREETScape + OPEN SPACE PLAN  
PRESENTATION OF DRAFT DESIGN CONCEPT  
FILE 25.5.12.1.2  
WARD 4**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the presentation entitled 'Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan: Design Concept' BE RECEIVED.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

The proposed "Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan" contributes to the goals and objectives within *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, specifically:

Goal 1: To significantly reduce our use of natural resources and the amount of waste we generate.

*Objective 1.3 "To support enhanced standards of stormwater management at the City and work with others to care for Vaughan's watersheds"*

Goal 2: To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment.

*Objective 2.2 "To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum greenspace and an urban form that supports our expected population growth"*

Goal 3: To ensure that getting around in Vaughan is easy and has a low environmental impact.

*Objective 3.1 "To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation"*

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community for citizens, businesses and visitors.

*Objective 4.1 "To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage"*

*Objective 4.2 "To ensure that the City of Vaughan attracts businesses and investment that will result in well-paying jobs for Vaughan citizens, a sustainable tax base, and continuing prosperity into the 21<sup>st</sup> century"*

Goal 5: To be a leader on sustainability issues.

**Economic Impact**

There are no costs associated with the approval of this report. "Phasing and Implementation Strategies" are a key deliverable outlined in the scope of work for this Study, and will be included as part of the final report. In addition, more information to inform Phasing and Implementation will be provided through the "City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy" Study that will be brought forward for Committee consideration later in 2013.

## **Communications Plan**

There is no communications plan associated with this report. Notifications of the public meeting for this Study will occur in local media and on the City of Vaughan website, and through communication by mail to stakeholders.

## **Purpose**

To provide the members of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee with a presentation of the working draft Design Concept for the “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan”, for information and input.

## **Background - Analysis and Options**

The “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” is a revision to the Vaughan Corporate Centre Streetscape and Open Space Master Plan Study (2007), which must be revisited to build upon and coordinate with the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan (2010), approved as part of the City’s new Official Plan.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre's sense of place and success as a global city will depend in great part on the activation of the public realm. The “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” focuses on “Place Making” as a framework that brings together individual development projects into a sum greater than the parts. Implementation will be accomplished through a partnership between public and private sectors - therefore a common vision of how the new downtown comes together is required. The “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” will help define and support neighbourhoods, social gathering places, shopping streets, recreational links and facilities. The Plan recognizes the important role of small scale private spaces such as courtyards and squares that have the potential to enrich the variety and richness of experience for residents and visitors. The design process asks questions such as: “What can be done to facilitate early-wins to help initiate the place making process and provide some unique identity from day one?”, and “How can the City and stakeholders work together to create momentum and vibrancy?”

The City’s current level of service on streetscapes and parks does not address the urban requirements for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The City of Vaughan is in the process of producing a “City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy” to identify streetscape maintenance standards and costs for intensification areas, including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” strategizes a hierarchy of parks, open spaces, greenways, streets, mews and urban squares to respond to the unique situation of the new downtown. The proposed park and streetscape designs for this area will need to be multi-layered in function and program, and could include, for example, urban squares and associated hardscapes, storm water catchment, rooftop parks and potentially strata parking in strategic locations. Therefore, it will be important to have applicable maintenance costs identified prior to detailed design approval.

## **STUDY GOALS:**

The study goals for the “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” are to:

- Define and communicate a strong visual identity for the new downtown's public realm;
- Define catalytic public realm design strategies and tactics to promote cultural, social, commercial and active lifestyle activities in the new downtown;
- Support the sustainability goals of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan and Green Directions Vaughan;
- Reconnect the urban fabric with a renewed Black Creek;

- Enhance the pedestrian and cycling experience to encourage alternate modes of mobility;
- Incorporate public art into the public realm;
- Promote design excellence in the public and private realms;
- Identify phasing and implementation strategies for the public realm.

#### WORK SCHEDULE:

The Design Concept is part of the Phase Three deliverable within the “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” Study, as follows:

Phase 1	Research, Site Inventory and Analysis (Completed)
Phase 2	Vision, Principles and Objectives (Completed)
<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Conceptual Plan and Guidelines (In Progress)</b>
Phase 4	Early Deliverables: Highway 7 Streetscape Design Concept (Completed)
Phase 5	Final Plan and Design Components
Phase 6	Phasing and Implementation
Phase 7	Final Documentation

#### DRAFT DESIGN CONCEPT:

The Phase Three Conceptual Plan should incorporate the following components:

- Develop a Public Realm Idea, Framework, and Landscape Strategies that have the ability to give coherence and add value to immediate and future urban (re)development
- Landscape Experience: Quality of Place
- Landscape Performance: Operations

Key elements of the draft Design Concept include:

- Create a fine grained, integrated and connected overall system of green spaces - including parks, streets, mews, bikeways and other related open spaces - to facilitate multi-modal access into the downtown, and to create pedestrian-scale connectivity within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
- The idea of a multi-layered, multi-functional “Linked Green System”, including the Black Creek spine and lateral blue-green fingers (streets, mews, parks) extending into all neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood is built around a central green that is similar in function to that of a town square. Each central green is connected, and located within walking distance to the next central green as a linked system.

- The definition of “Landscape Character Typologies” as a flexible but distinctive landscape character framework that can be applied to public and private lands at various scales, and over various development intervals, to incrementally and collectively build a sense of place - with urban program added and synthesized as intensification occurs.
- Addressing the important role of surface and subsurface water in the new downtown (aquifers, perched groundwater, Black Creek) by making water a major feature in the character of the landscape, and by designing urban landscapes to collect, store and harvest surface water as part of the landscape program.
- Forested Highway Buffers to create clear boundaries and a distinctive visual edge to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, to build a strong landscape character, and to mitigate environmental factors (wind, noise, vibration, air quality) in order to improve quality of life within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
- The opportunity for small landscape interventions, temporary or permanent, that have the potential for a great immediate effect on the image and experience of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
- The idea of integrated sustainable systems (green links, water management etc.) that work across boundaries to capitalize on the current opportunity to implement larger, innovative sustainable networks as part of the infrastructure framework of the downtown.
- Investigating sustainable planting strategies and cultivated ecologies – adaptive and native plantings, emergent species, low maintenance vegetation – to manage operating costs, and to reinforce a programmatic idea of flexibility to respond to changing needs and opportunities.

#### CONSULTATION TO DATE:

The draft Design Concept was presented to City of Vaughan Design Review Panel on January 31, 2013. The preliminary input received from the Design Review Panel is summarized in Attachment 3.

#### PLANNED CONSULTATION:

A Stakeholder Consultation Meeting, to receive input into the draft Design Concept, is scheduled for the evening of March 4, 2013.

A Public Information Session will also be held to present the final Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

City of Vaughan’s “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan” is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020 Strategic plan, specifically:

#### Service Excellence:

- Lead & Promote Environmental Sustainability
- Preserve our Heritage & Support Diversity, Arts & Culture

Organizational Excellence:

- Manage Corporate Assets
- Ensure Financial Sustainability
- Manage Growth & Economic Well-being

**Regional Implications**

York Region, VIVA Next, York Region Rapid Transit, and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority are involved as stakeholders in this project.

The Study supports key elements of the Region of York Official Plan, adopted by Regional Council on December 16, 2009, including: "City building, focusing on Regional Centres and Corridors and including innovation in urban design and green building".

**Conclusion**

The draft Design Concept for the "Vaughan Metropolitan Streetscape and Open Space Plan" follows the Vision and Principles, Objectives, and policy framework set out in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan.

City staff is presenting the working draft Design Concept in order to provide an update on the progress of the Study, and to receive input on the draft Design Concept from the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee of Council.

**Attachments**

1. Landscape Character Typologies: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan (draft)
2. Integrated Streets/Public Realm and Open Space Network: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan (draft)
3. City staff summary of City of Vaughan Design Review Panel preliminary comments on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan: Design Concept
4. Schedule D: Major Parks and Open Spaces, VMC Secondary Plan, Council Approved December 11, 2012

**Report prepared by:**

John MacKenzie, Commissioner of Planning  
Moira Wilson, Urban Designer, Development Planning Department

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE  
Commissioner of Planning

/CM

VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPOLOGIES

CONCEPT



VMC Landscape  
Character Typologies



Attachment

1

LOCATION:  
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

N:\DFT\Planner\Mora\lhc.dwg

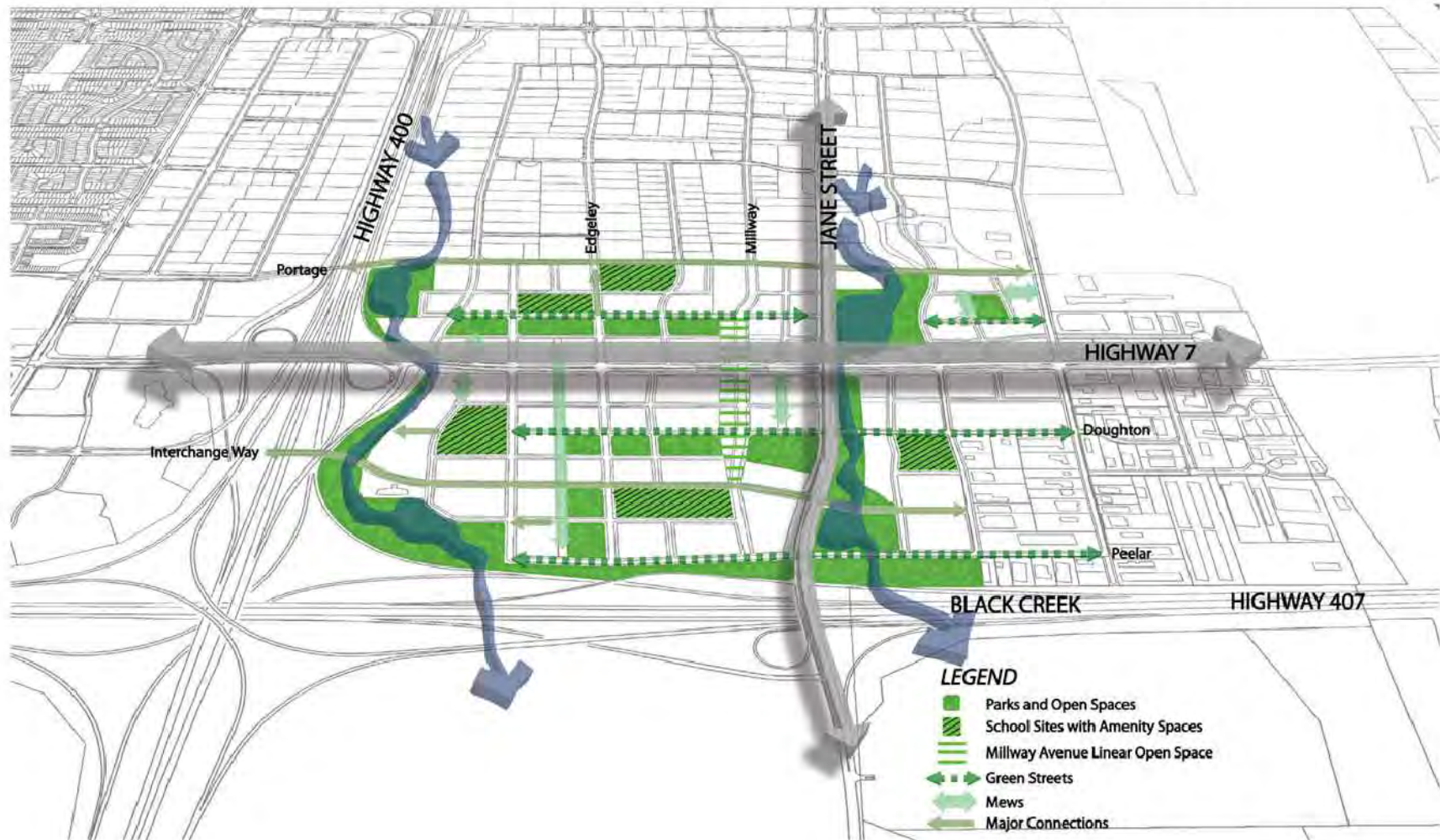
DATE:  
February 06, 2013



## VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE

### INTEGRATED STREETS / PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE NETWORK

# CONCEPT



## VMC Integrated Streets/Public Realm and Open Space Network

LOCATION:  
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

N:\DFT\Planner\Mora\ltc.dwg



Attachment  
**2**

DATE:  
February 06, 2013

## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### VMC Streetscape + Open Space Plan: Design Concept

On January 31, 2013, City staff presented the draft Design Concept for the “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape + Open Space Plan” to the City of Vaughan Design Review Panel.

The following is a staff summary of preliminary comments received from the Design Review Panel:

- The landscape concept is based on a strong concept of connectivity. The connection between different developments will be important, given the scenario of separate pockets of development over separate phases.
- The design concept is beginning to establish an interesting hierarchy with a thoughtful integration of storm water management. The opportunity for community gardens and other fine grain landscape typologies could be added to further develop and enrich the landscape system/ hierarchy.
- Vaughan’s local food network could also inform the Plan with an overlay onto the proposed Landscape Character Typologies.
- Finer grain urban systems, such as parking and green roofs, could be included in the provided landscape framework for storm water management.
- Larger scale, regional systems (watershed, transportation and other systems, movements and processes) should be diagrammed to understand and communicate how they connect with and influence the site.
- Panel encouraged further development of the sense of identity for the green-blue streets, including how they look and function in winter conditions. The context of development on one side of the street and parkland on the other allows for creative storm water management, including the relationship between built form and water.
- The success in realizing the vision for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will depend on partnerships and collaboration. In order for the public realm/ open space system to be realized, private partners need to be consulted, understand, and buy into the vision. Therefore, this Plan should elaborate on the role that private development must play to make a successful place, including adding frontage, land use, and how development interface (including buildings, rooftops, parking) can contribute to the success of the public realm system.



- Panel members encouraged the project to articulate the interfaces between the public and private realms, outlining potential connections and landscape systems between them, to aggregate and capitalize upon opportunities at the outset of development.
- Panel raised a general concern that beyond the VMC Secondary Plan, there is no detailed plan that guides developers as to where loading should be located, what local streets should focus on retail, etc. The project documents for the revitalization of Regent Park were raised as a good precedent.
- Panel felt that a level of detail is missing in the Plan that relates the architecture to streetscapes and how they interface with each other. This is especially important for retail streets.
- Panel members flagged a concern about the success of retail along the length of very wide arterials, such as Highway 7 and Millway Avenue. The width of these streets creates an essentially one-sided retail condition in which is extremely difficult to create a vibrant, active pedestrian activity.
- Panel members advised that the downtown would be better served by focusing retail in areas that can function at a pedestrian scale.
- Panel advised the City on the importance of engaging stakeholders and a wide variety of retail and leasing experts in the development of the retail strategy for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
- An overlay of the cycling and pedestrian network is required to elucidate the functions of parks and open spaces, and how bicycle use will be integrated into the transportation system.
- The proposed pedestrian bridge or land bridge is an important element to create strong pedestrian connectivity across Jane Street.
- The graphic for the “Black Creek” Landscape Typology does not address the special condition at the corners of Highway 7 and Jane Street and how this area should be treated in the future.
- The graphic of the “Black Creek” Landscape Typology looks like a single entity rather than how it could potentially relate to what is around it. More pedestrian crossings should be shown on the Plan to increase connectivity. The Plan should emphasize not only north-south connectivity but also east to west connectivity.
- The landscape function(s) of “Neighbourhood Parks” should be further developed and integrated into the larger landscape system of the new downtown.
- The idea of a Design Competition was raised to promote design excellence within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

## SCHEDULE D > MAJOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

### LEGEND

- environmental open spaces
- neighbourhood parks
- Millway Avenue linear open space
- Black Creek greenway
- mews or local street
- urban squares (see Policies 6.2.3-6.2.4)
- parkland associated with environmental open spaces
- Black Creek remediation area



VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN CREATING A NEW DOWNTOWN

89