

# CITY OF VAUGHAN

## **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2018**

Item 1, Report No. 8, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 21, 2018.

### **1 VAUGHAN CITY-WIDE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:**

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management, dated February 12, 2018, be approved; and**
- 2) That the presentation and Communication C2, presentation material entitled, “*City-Wide Design Guidelines*”, be received.**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval on the Vaughan City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines (hereafter referred to as the “Guidelines”), enabling staff and the development industry to use this as a tool in the design and review of development applications.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1. THAT the City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines Volumes 1 and 2 (Attachment 1) BE APPROVED.**

#### **Report Highlights**

- The Guidelines articulate objectives for placemaking throughout Vaughan, to help realize the vision in the VOP 2010.
- The Guidelines are founded on a vision to promote a consistent level of high quality urban design that builds on the City’s core structuring elements to establish a recognizable character for the City’s built environment and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- The Guidelines will be used as a tool for staff in the review of development applications and by the development community to guide design development within the private realm to streamline the development review process.
- The Guidelines will be used to inform the City's Official Plan Review and Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Review by providing recommendations for policy updates or new development standards for consideration.

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#### **Background**

***The Guidelines were developed in phases and included a comprehensive communication and engagement plan.***

The Guidelines commenced in August 2016 and were developed in three phases of work, including:

- Phase 1: Background Review & Urban Design Frameworks (August – October 2016)
- Phase 2: Draft Design Guidelines, Volume 1 and 2 (November 2016 – August 2017)
- Phase 3: Final Design Guidelines, Volume 1 and 2 (September – December 2017)

As part of each phase of the project, a comprehensive communication and engagement plan was followed to ensure the appropriate input and feedback was received. At each phase, a workshop was held with the Vaughan Design Review Panel, partnering agencies including York Region, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Ratepayers Associations and members of the development community, including the York Chapter of BILD.

Throughout the project, extensive consultation was held with the internal Technical Advisory Committee established to provide broad feedback from the various related departments, including Urban Design and Cultural Heritage, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, Development Planning, Development Engineering, Building Standards, Parks Development, and Public Works.

In addition, a dedicated project website was created to provide regular updates on the study.

#### **Previous Reports/Authority**

[https://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes\\_agendas/AgendaItems/CW0621\\_16\\_23.pdf](https://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/CW0621_16_23.pdf)

#### **Analysis and Options**

***The Guidelines will serve as a comprehensive toolkit to promote and foster high quality and context sensitive development throughout the City, to provide the foundation for building attractive, healthy and sustainable communities.***

The Guidelines augment the urban design policies of the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 (VOP 2010) to provide performance based directions for building and site design that establish a consistent level of design excellence for new intensification and infill

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development throughout the City to create well scaled places for people. To reflect the significant wealth of natural heritage and green space in the City, an approach to extending and integrating important green networks has been developed to direct the character of the private realm interface fronting City streets and public spaces across the many communities throughout Vaughan.

The Guidelines support the City's transition from more traditional suburban forms of development into contemporary compact urban forms by providing implementation strategies to guide the built form transition and phasing of developments within existing and planned contexts. The Guidelines implement transit oriented development principles to support transit investment and intensification efforts, and create safe, vibrant, pedestrian oriented environments that provide for a high level of connection and walkability.

The intent is that the Guidelines will provide a clear and common set of design expectations about how buildings and sites should be developed for use by Staff, the public, and members of the development community, including architects and landscape architects.

#### ***The Guidelines include 2 Volumes.***

Volume 1 is structured as a highly custom and graphic toolkit, outlining the urban design vision and design priorities for the City, and is accompanied by detailed guidelines that augment the urban design and built form policies of the VOP 2010 to shape the relationship between built form, land use, and the public realm in a context sensitive manner. A collection of demonstration plans are included that illustrate how the vision and design priorities could be realized in various development scenarios and land use conditions throughout the City.

As articulated in Volume 1, development in the City will be guided by the following principles:

- Reflect Vaughan's unique context by promoting a green City development approach and contextual analysis that responds to sense of place
- Promote mid-rise development as the 'missing middle' to connect nodes including historic settlement areas and employment areas
- Encourage creativity and variety through context specific guidelines that respond to adjacent land uses, built form conditions and natural and cultural heritage
- Frame and activate the public realm through appropriate design
- Create a balance between built form and open space
- Address interim development and changing conditions
- Promote active transportation and healthy environments

Volume 1 is organized as a series of performance standards for a range of building

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typologies, as well as key site, landscape, building design, and public realm elements. Each performance standard contains an overall objective, along with detailed guidance to assist designers in achieving that objective. It is intended that creativity and sensitivity to context should be encouraged to achieve the intent of each performance standard, with consideration of alternative approaches on a case-by-case basis where it can be demonstrated that the objective is being met. The Guidelines also provide design guidance for the creation of privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPs).

Volume 2 is an online Reference Manual that contains relevant design details, standards, guidelines and Terms of Reference for reports and studies that are required as part of a complete development application. Included in this Manual are new design standards for urban tree planting in public and private spaces that supports the growth of a mature urban tree canopy.

Fundamentally, Volumes 1 and 2 provide a clear design guideline framework that is implementable and easy to use. The Guidelines complement and support the City's existing policies and guidelines, including the following:

- City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010)
- Urban Design Guidelines for Infill Development in Established Low-Rise Residential Neighbourhoods (2016)
- Heritage Conservation District Plans and Guidelines for Thornhill, Kleinburg-Nashville, Woodbridge and Maple
- Secondary Plans, Area-Specific Plans and Site-Specific Plans and Guidelines
- Sustainability Performance Metrics
- City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy (2014)
- City-Wide Public Art Program (2016)

#### **Financial Impact**

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report. The City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines Study is within the current capital budget DP-9528-14.

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

The development of City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines supports York Region's Official Plan vision of building sustainable communities that achieve the highest standard in urban design and green building. In support of growth management, new community areas are planned to a higher standard in urban design, sustainable buildings, mobility and sense of place, including the following objectives:

- 3.1.3 To require high-quality urban design and pedestrian-friendly communities that provide safety, comfort and mobility so that residents can walk to meet their daily needs.

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- 3.4.8 To encourage local municipalities to consider urban design standards in core historic areas that reflect the areas' heritage, character and streetscape.
- 4.4.1 To require that retail be designed to be walkable, transit-supportive, and integrated into communities and pedestrian and cycling networks, with high-quality urban design.
- 5.2.8 To employ the highest standard of urban design, which:
  - a. provides pedestrian scale, safety, comfort, accessibility and connectivity;
  - b. complements the character of existing areas and fosters each community's unique sense of place;
  - c. promotes sustainable and attractive buildings that minimize energy use;
  - d. promotes landscaping, public spaces and streetscapes;
  - e. ensures compatibility with and transition to surrounding land uses;
  - f. emphasizes walkability and accessibility through strategic building placement and orientation;
  - g. follows the York Region Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines; and,
  - h. creates well-defined, centrally-located urban public spaces.

York Region was consulted as a key stakeholder, development partner and commenting agency throughout the development of the Guidelines.

### **Conclusion**

The City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines will reinforce the City's VOP 2010 policies, providing a clear vision and supporting directions for high quality and context-sensitive development within intensification areas while protecting stable areas through thoughtful transitions and compatible infill that respects the character of established neighbourhoods. The Guidelines will ensure intensification supports compelling, mixed-use communities, active transportation, innovation in sustainability, social/cultural vibrancy, and a high-quality of life for Vaughan residents.

Upon approval by Council, the Guidelines will be placed on the City's website and cited as a resource at pre-application consultation meetings, which will allow future development proponents to reference this guiding document prior to the submission of a development proposal. The required Urban Design Brief will demonstrate how the intent of the guidelines are being met through each application.

**For more information**, please contact: Amy Roots, VMC Project Manager - Planning, ext. 8035.

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#### **Attachments**

1. Vaughan City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines Volumes 1 and 2, Development Planning Department, December 2017 – accessed at:  
[https://www.vaughan.ca/services/business/urban\\_design/Pages/City-Wide-Urban-Design-Guidelines.aspx](https://www.vaughan.ca/services/business/urban_design/Pages/City-Wide-Urban-Design-Guidelines.aspx)

#### **Prepared by**

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)