CITY OF VAUGHAN

REPORT NO. 3 OF THE

VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE SUB-COMMITTEE

For consideration by the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee of the City of Vaughan on November 25, 2013

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee met at 1:38 p.m. on November 13, 2013.

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

Also Present: Regional Councillor Deb Schulte

The following items were dealt with:

1 2014 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises:

1) That the 2014 Schedule of Meetings was approved.

2 URBAN AND SUBURBAN SCHOOL SITE DESIGN
FILE 15.117
WARDS 1-5

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises:

1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, dated November 13, 2013, was approved;

2) That the presentation by the Senior Policy Planner and the Manager of Policy Planning, and C1, presentation material entitled, "*Urban and Suburban School Site Design*" dated November 13, 2013, was received;

3) That the City of Vaughan request the Province of Ontario to host a stakeholders workshop with municipalities, government agencies, school boards, owners, BILD and Vaughan Public Libraries, to explore solutions to the urban school challenge; and

4) That the deputation by Ms. Paula Bustard, SmartCentres, Applewood Crescent, Vaughan, was received.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT the draft report entitled "School Site Planning Workshop, City of Vaughan" Be Received;

2. THAT a copy of this report containing staff's comments on suburban and urban school site planning be forwarded to the York Region District School Board, Catholic District School Board, Region of York, the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Infrastructure Ontario to be considered as part of future review of the Growth Plan and relevant legislation; and

3. THAT City staff continue to work toward the development of an Urban School prototype with a Public Sector stakeholder group, including but not limited to, York Region District School Board, Catholic District School Board, Region of York and the Province respecting the development of urban schools.

Contribution to Sustainability

The future development of urban schools in the City of Vaughan will support compact urban form, potentially mixed use development and the more efficient use of land as a resource.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact resulting from this report. Preparation for the presentation and workshop began in 2011 and was funded through the 2011 Departmental Budget.

Communications Plan

All stakeholders including the Region of York, York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre owners and the Province have been notified of the report being on the agenda of the November 14, 2013 Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee of Council Meeting.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the status of the January 2012 Suburban and Urban School Site Design and Buildings Workshop and the progress to date on addressing concerns raised by stakeholders on the issue of achieving urban schools in the City of Vaughan, particularly as it pertains to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

Background – Analysis and Options

1. The City of Vaughan School Site Planning Workshop

In December of 2011, recognizing concerns raised by stakeholders on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan and Intensification Areas in Vaughan preparation began for a workshop, to be hosted by the City of Vaughan, respecting suburban and urban school site and building design. The genesis of the Workshop was to provide a forum for the discussion of issues surrounding school site design and to seek advice and input from the attending participants on opportunities to improve the process and methods used when selecting and designing school sites.

The City of Vaughan retained the services of a team of consultants headed by Montgomery Sisam Architects including: Victor Ford Associates – Landscape Architects, BA Consulting Group - traffic engineering and Swerhun- facilitation and decision support. The consulting group was responsible for the following duties:

i. Conduct research on best practices for school site organization;
ii. Design, prepare, and deliver a presentation on the topic of school site organization and design;
iii. Facilitate the workshop; and,
iv. Provide a written report including graphics, an executive summary and future actions/next steps

On January 20, 2013 Policy Planning hosted the resulting workshop. In order to facilitate a well-rounded discussion, which would address all the potential issues, the list of workshop participants was diverse with representation from the urban design, planning, and transportation engineering departments of a number of municipalities across Ontario including Hamilton, Toronto, Vaughan, Brampton, Windsor, Aurora, Whitby, Markham and Oakville.

Also in attendance were representatives from the various school boards including the York Region and Toronto District School Boards, the York and Toronto Catholic District School Boards, as well as other organizations such as Metrolinx.

2. The Presentation

Participants at the Workshop were asked to consider four major themes with respect to school site design: School and Community; Best Use of Site; Health and Safety; and Economy.

i. School and Community: Four perspectives were discussed with respect to School and Community; 1) the best relationship between the programming components of a school and how they can be organized to provide benefit to the school and community; 2) how the public components of the school building programming can relate to and contribute to the community; 3) how can the exterior of the school building and site layout contribute to the public realm; and, 4) how can the image of the school building contribute to the neighbourhood and community as a source of municipal pride.

ii. Best Use of Site: Three perspectives were discussed respecting the best use of land; 1) where should the school site be located in the community and how should the building be designed on the site to increase the amount of pedestrian traffic between the school and community; 2) where should the building be located on the site to minimize the vehicular traffic needed for the school to function; and, 3) how can the building and site be designed to provide the maximum amount of landscape open space.

iii. Health and Safety: Three perspectives were considered respecting health and safety; 1) how to arrange sidewalks, driveways, drop-off/pick-up activities and building entrances to minimize the number of vehicle and pedestrian cross-overs and make it easy for pedestrians to access the site; 2) how to plan recreation activities away from parking and loading spaces; and, 3) how can the building be configured to maximize sight lines and physical connections between the open space of the school complex and public open space in order to provide the highest degree of safety and security.

iv. Economy; Three perspectives were also considered with respect to the economics of school design; 1) How to obtain the best designs while still meeting the requirements of stakeholders, while meeting the construction cost targets; 2) how to best design the building to manage on-going maintenance costs; and, 3) how can the building and site be designed to optimize best practices for sustainable design including a reduced footprint.

The workshop participants where then presented with four case studies of school site design. Two of which were considered traditional suburban designs and 2 case studies which were considered urban schools.

i. Suburban School Sites: The two suburban sites used as case studies where more traditional in the proposed site layout requiring larger parcels of land for elementary school design. The case studies were focused on the Meadowvale Sheppard School in Toronto and the second being the Lincoln Alexander Public School in York Region.

With respect to the Toronto suburban school case study the issues surrounding vehicular and pedestrian access were key considerations. The school board wanted to use the street right-of-way for drop-off/pick-up in order to maximize the area of the site available for recreation and landscape. However, the City wanted to have all drop-off/pick-up contained on the school property in order to avoid neighbourhood complaints of traffic congestion and allow for easy snow clearing unencumbered by cars parked or idling in the street right-of-way.

The second example the Lincoln Alexander Public School in York Region is an example of a site layout which contains the vehicular drop-off/pick-up activities and the associated parking on the subject lands. This example was provided for discussion purposes as the consulting team presented a number of options to achieve the desired traffic accommodation while not requiring the building to be setback from the adjacent street. The options presented by the consulting team required the public right-of-way to be utilized for drop-off/pick-up.

It should be noted that it was the opinion of the consultant that when vehicular traffic can be accommodated in the street right-of-way, the relationship between the building and the street improves, the amount of land available for the programming of outdoor activities on site increases, and if done appropriately, traffic flow would not be disrupted.

ii. Urban School Sites: The two urban school sites used as case studies were the York School, an independent school in Toronto and the School at Columbia University in New York City.

The Toronto urban school site, named The York School is located on Yonge Street in close proximity to St. Clair Avenue. The project can be considered a mixed use development as it was a conversion and addition to two adjoining office buildings. The building has prominent street frontage and is in close proximity to the public sidewalk along Yonge Street. The rear of the building which was previously used for parking is now outdoor open space. The new school is well serviced by public transit and did not require parking as the City of Toronto zoning does not require parking for staff or visitors.

Through the application review and public consultation process, discussion focused on the drop-off/pick-up activity potentially creating traffic congestion. The solution was to provide a turn-around within the rear lot of the school site that is converted to a play/recreation area during school hours between drop-off and pick-up times.

The second example of an urban school is the School at Columbia University in New York City, New York. The school at Columbia University occupies the second and third floor of a 12-storey mixed use commercial retail and residential building adjacent to the Columbia University Campus on the upper west side of Manhattan. The school is situated above the ground floor retail and below the residential floors. The school has a separate entrance and elevator and includes a full size gym/auditorium, classrooms, cafeteria and student and staff services. Two separate rooftop gardens are used as outdoor recreation areas. Similar to the Toronto example no visitor or staff parking has been provided.

The case studies were used to seek feedback from the participants at the Workshop on school site planning. Workshop participants were then placed in groups (with a representative from the various disciplines in each group) and asked to consider how to address the issues and opportunities related to the sites. Participants were asked to focus on the following questions while keeping in mind the relevant themes discussed earlier;

i. From your experience with school site design, what works? What doesn't work, and why?

ii. What suggestions or ideas do you have to address what doesn't work?

iii. Based on your discussion, are there 3-5 criteria that you feel should drive site design? If so, what are they?

iv. Do you have any other advice for the City of Vaughan as they move forward with their thinking about school site design? (e.g. Next Steps)

The outcomes of the workshop have been summarized in the report entitled, *School Site Planning Workshop – City of Vaughan*, which forms Attachment 1 to this report. Section 2.0 *Key Themes in the Feedback Received* details the breakout groups' responses to the posed questions.

3. Application of Urban School Site Model in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan addresses the need and requirements for school uses. To support the development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) to its full build out, both the York Region District School Board and the Catholic District School Board have identified the need for as many as 5 elementary schools. The ultimate number of schools will be determined based on the build out and the amount of residential development in the VMC and the resulting school age demographic. The Secondary Plan also states that the exact size, location and phasing of each school shall be determined in consultation with the school boards prior to any planning approvals. The size and configuration of each school site generally shall be consistent with the policies or requirements of the respective school boards. However, any changes from the current school board policies and requirements shall be permitted provided the necessary school boards agree. Policy 7.2.4 of the Vaughan Metropolitan Secondary Plan states the following;

> "The site size, site layout and built form of schools shall be compatible with the planned form of development in the VMC. To ensure compatibility, the School Boards shall be encouraged to develop alternative standards for new schools in high density neighbourhoods, and the City shall collaborate with the School Boards and the Region of York to ensure the alternative standards are appropriate for the VMC."

This gives all agencies involved in the required process an opportunity to consider applying urban school site layout concepts to the development of school sites in the VMC.

In addition, Policy 7.2.4 states; "The standards should optimize the use of land by promoting multi-storey school buildings and minimizing parking and pick-up/drop-off areas." And Policy 7.2.5 provides that, "Arrangements between the School Boards and developers that result in relatively compact schools and the integration of school parking requirements in adjacent developments shall be encouraged."

In planning for a compact urban downtown area, the VMC Secondary Plan encourages an alternative paradigm to the current suburban model for school sites. Such an alternative approach reflects the concepts discussed at the Workshop with respect to school site design on urban sites.

4. Obstacles to the Development of Urban Schools

Although examples of urban school site design exist, the concept of a purpose planned urban school is relatively new to the City of Vaughan in particular and York Region in general. Through on-going discussions with the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board, York Region and the representatives from the Province some of the noted obstacles are as follows:

i. The Current School Development Funding Model: Through our research and discussions with both school boards it has come to our attention that there are two components to the funding model. Firstly, Education Development Charges (EDCs) are used to pay for the

purchase of land only, and are not available to finance construction costs. The Education Act makes provision for school boards to pass by-laws to collect development charges to pay for land.

School construction is paid for by the Province of Ontario on a project by project basis. Funding for school construction is based on the number of pupils, a set area (square footage) per pupil and a set dollar cost per square foot. The Province's current funding model does not provide allocation for the construction of an urban school which contemplates factors such as underground parking, deviating from the standard 2-storey building type (for elementary schools) to a compact building design proposing more than 2-storeys as well as other premiums which may be associated with an urban school. The timing and availability of funds at the planning stage is also a limiting factor when dealing with proposals to integrate schools into mixed-use developments.

The school boards do not have a tax base, and in turn they cannot raise funds to address the additional costs. Changes to the funding model need to be addressed at the provincial level.

ii. What exactly is an Urban School: All stakeholders need to agree on a clear definition and understanding of what components go into creating an Urban School. The Workshop mandate focused on the design, site layout and site circulation of both urban and suburban schools. But through discussions with the stakeholders, design and site plan issues are just one component which need to be considered. Other matters which should be considered in the discussion include funding, curriculum requirements and school programming.

iii. Current Planning Tools Do Not Address the idea of Urban Schools: The school boards have noted that a different approach to how land is acquired may be necessary in areas such as the Urban Growth Centres, as defined by the Provincial Growth Plan, such as the VMC. The current method of acquiring land through the draft plan of subdivision process is not as efficient in Urban Growth Centres as it has been previously in other parts of the City. Much of the land holdings in the VMC desirable for school sites may not be developed by way of draft plan of subdivision as no public streets are being proposed.

5. Next Steps

Based on the outcome of the Workshop it is clear that there are alternative models available that can be adapted to areas like the VMC. However, there is institutional caution that will need to be overcome. The City is currently facing resistance, by way of private Ontario Municipal Board appeals against the VMC plan over the school site sizes and locations. In exploring other options, the school boards will have to be assured that they can still fulfill their respective mandates with smaller, more intensely developed sites.

As a follow-up, a conference call was convened by the City's Planning Commission with Provincial representatives from the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Infrastructure, representatives of the York Region Public and Catholic School Boards and York Region to explore how the concept of Urban Schools can be advanced, especially as it applies to the Urban Growth Centres under the Growth Plan. The consensus was that further work should be undertaken in identifying and developing prototypes that may be applicable to the VMC. These discussions could include consideration of shared facilities between the School Boards, the City and York Region (e.g. Joint use of park and school yard facilities and shared buildings housing schools, libraries and community facilities). This work would also identify other institutional issues that may be problematic. If this approach is successful, it would be appropriate to undertake a pilot project to test the concept on a particular site, possibly in conjunction with an affected landowner.

The following next steps are recommended:

i. Release of the School Site Planning Workshop Final Report: Subsequent to this meeting the *School Site Planning Workshop City of Vaughan Final Report* dated January 3, 2013 will be released to all the participants of the January 20th, 2013 Workshop.

ii. Create a Forum for Dialogue: Staff at the will continue to meet with the public sector stakeholders, including the Region of York, the School Boards and the Province to further discussions respecting the issue of Urban Schools, with a view to problem solving and concept development at the government/school board level.

iii. Holding a Government/School Board Workshop: Conduct a workshop focusing on the development of key principles and program elements that could be tested as a pilot project, possibly in the VMC.

iv. Conduct Public Consultation and Undertake a Pilot Project: Engage the public and consider options for undertaking a Pilot Project.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The Workshop on Suburban and Urban School Site Design and Buildings is consistent with the priorities set be Council in the Vaughan Vision 20/20 Plan.

Regional Implications

The Region of York has released a report titled *"Best Practices for Planning Centres and Corridors* dated September 26, 2013 in which Section 2.6 "Community" also discusses the challenges and approaches to developing community facilities including school sites in dense urban environments. As stakeholders, representatives from the Region of York were in attendance at the Workshop and have also participated in more recent discussions with the City and stakeholder group at large.

Conclusion

Staff has taken the information from the Suburban and Urban School Sites Workshop, conducted further research and initiated a forum for dialogue with the relevant stakeholders to begin the process of understanding the obstacles to developing urban schools, with the hope of resolving the obstacles and developing practical solutions that can be applied in areas like the VMC. Next steps include the release of the *School Site Planning Workshop City of Vaughan Final Report*, January 3, 2013 which is the last commitment made with respect to the Workshop. Moving forward staff intends to continue to meet with key stakeholders in the hopes of furthering discussions, which would ultimately allow the City to move forward with the development of school sites in the VMC creating the vision of a complete community as established through the VMC Secondary Plan.

Attachments

1. Draft School Site Planning Workshop City of Vaughan, dated January 3, 2013.

Report prepared by:

Arminé Hassakourians, Planner, ext. 8368
Roy McQuillin, Manager of Policy Planning, ext. 8211

(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.)

3 TECHNOLOGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR PROVISION OF PARKING

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises:

1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Economic Development, dated November 13, 2013, was approved;

2) That the presentation by Mr. Haim Shani, Chief Executive Officer, Unitronics Parking Solutions, Ben Gurion Airport, Israel, and C2, presentation material entitled, "*From Macro to Micro: An Overview of the Automated Vehicle Storage Characteristics*", dated November 13, 2013, was received; and

3) That the following deputations were received:

1. Mr. Len Abelman, WZMH Architects, St. Clair Avenue, Toronto; and
2. Mr. Giovanni Marcelli, Potestas Properties, Jane Street, Concord.

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Director, Office of the City Manager recommends:

THAT the presentation: *"From Macro to Micro: An Overview of the Automated Vehicle Storage Characteristics"* by Unitronics Parking Solutions Inc. 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 contribute to the sustainability of the City.

Economic Impact

There are no costs associated with the approval of this report.

Communications Plan

The presentation materials will be available in hard copy format and distributed to Mayor, Members of Council and Senior Management. Additional "hard" copies will be available upon request. Copies of the presentation will be provided to the landowners and developers of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, as well as Planning, Urban Design and Engineering staff.

Purpose

To provide the members of the VMC Sub-Committee with an insight into alternative parking solutions available to landowners and developers. The presentation will increase awareness of technologies which can serve to provide more efficient parking solutions to meet the needs of building the VMC. The automated parking systems developed by Unitronics, serves as great example of innovation and forward-thinking in addressing urban challenges faced by municipalities. These systems have multiple benefits for building owners, and property management groups, and they can assist municipalities to achieve sustainability and economic development objectives.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan's new downtown, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is an urban growth centre, a regional mobility hub, and a higher order employment centre, where head offices, the technology sector, and emerging creative and knowledge economy can thrive. It is envisioned that the VMC will be a 'complete' downtown, where a variety of uses are accommodated in a highly urbanized setting, that is also pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive. The VMC Secondary Plan policies entertains transit-supportive parking standards that include exemptions to in-force parking standards, shared public parking arrangements, as well as modified parking arrangements – more underground and parking structures, and fewer surface parking spaces.

During the City of Vaughan's 2013 Business Mission to Israel, City Staff met with Unitronics Parking Solutions Inc., a leader in process automation systems for diverse industrial sectors, based in Jerusalem. A market leader in providing Automated Parking Solutions, Unitronics is a publicly traded company listed on the European Euronext Stock Exchange (1999) and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (2004). With more than 20 years of operation, they have established an operational and sales network of 140 integrators/distributors in approximately 50 countries.

Unitronics' Automated Parking Solutions division designs and develops automation systems for the efficient storage of motor vehicles. Unitronics can provide building developers and owners with turnkey solutions that include: traffic and parking surveys, conceptual solutions and design, detailed engineering, construction, installation, implementation, operation and maintenance. GREEN solutions and LEED certification are major factors in Unitronics' Automated Parking Solutions designs.

Automated parking systems may accommodate dozens of parking spaces. Particular advantage is gained when a typical ramp-access garage will not provide adequate parking capacity due to height or depth limitations. The total required volume (footprint and height or depth) of an automated parking system is about 30 percent to 50 percent of a conventional self-park garage with the same capacity - that means two to three times more parking spaces in the same volume. Among the main benefits:

- **Increased Capacity**: an automated parking system can accommodate two to three times the amount of parking spaces within the same volume as a conventional self-park, ramp access garage. This results mainly from:
    - **Reduced Space Width** – automated parking systems utilize narrower space than self-park garages due to the precision of the computer-controlled automated vehicle conveyor
    - **Lower Ceiling Height** – ceiling height does not have to take pedestrians into consideration, saving 30-50% in height requirements
    - **Dense Parking** – density is increased by storing the cars door-to-door and bumper-to-bumper, keeping a minimal clearance between them.

- **Minimal Ventilation** – Since the storage area is not accessed by the public and cars are stored with their engines stopped, there is no need for heat or air-conditioning, saving utility costs. Minimal ventilation is required.

- **No Public Stairs or Elevators** – Since the storage area is not accessed by the public, stairs or elevators are not required and only emergency and maintenance access is provided for authorized personnel.

- **Reduced Lighting** – Lighting is required only for emergency or maintenance purposes, thus saving utility cost.

- **GREEN Parking Solution** – Reduced car emissions, reduced fuel consumption and low power consumption contribute toward a GREEN parking solution.

- **Enhanced User Experience** – Comparable to a high quality valet parking operation, replacing

valet runners with efficient automated machinery.

- **Enhanced Safety and Security** – Drivers are not required to park, reducing the risk of collision and damage to vehicles. The storage area is not accessed by the public and therefore it is totally secure.

The Context of the VMC

The first development projects in the VMC have provided some valuable insights on the physical site limitations that impact the development of underground structures. The high groundwater table beneath certain subject lands in the VMC creates some challenges, limiting the depth and cost-effectiveness of subsurface parking and increases costs for every subsequent level of parking below grade. City Staff is working with the development industry to explore a myriad of approaches to address the parking needs of VMC residents, office and retail tenants while protecting green spaces and developable lands, and thus making more efficient uses of resources.

The Automated Parking Solutions developed by Unitronics can serve as examples of innovative solutions to parking challenges faced by developers and builders in meeting municipal standards. In addition to the benefits for building owners and operators, the technologies can help municipalities achieve sustainability goals, while providing economic development benefits.

While there is no question about the value of underground and structured parking, there are significant costs to its provision. As the City competes to attract office and retail tenants, parking makes up a significant portion of the total project costs, and therefore, rents. Utilizing a solution, such as Unitronics can help to close the rent gap in the VMC.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 20|20 Strategic Plan – Goal 1: Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Vitality. The Study is also consistent with Goal 4: of the Economic Development Strategy that states “Grow Vaughan’s dynamic quality of place and creative economy”.

Regional Implications

Not applicable.

Conclusion

The development of the VMC is of critical importance to the City of Vaughan. Efficient provision of parking does have an influence on its development as a vibrant people place and employment centre, and it supports the large public investment that has gone into public transit infrastructure.

However, the physical limitations of the VMC site does present some challenges in providing underground parking, both from an Engineering standpoint as well as capital cost. To lower these and other barriers to development, and to improve the competitiveness of the VMC with other office nodes, the Economic Development Department has been proactively seeking alternate solutions and best practices. The innovative system developed by Unitronics is one such example. With a proven track record of accommodating two to three times the parking capacity, within the same volume of space as conventional self-park lots, Unitronics’ Advanced Parking Solution has the potential to address the interim parking needs of current building sites and to facilitate adjustments as future development occurs in the VMC.

These and other innovations in building development and operations will set the VMC apart. Economic Development staff will continue to work with landowners and developers to facilitate information sharing and business introductions with Unitronics and other groups.

Attachments

1. From Macro to Micro: An Overview of the Automated Vehicle Storage Characteristics Presentation
2. More Parking In Less Space, Unitronics Automated Parking Solutions Brochure

Report prepared by:

Jennifer Ladouceur, Director of Economic Development
Tim Simmonds, Executive Director, Office of the City Manager

(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.)

4 VMC BLACK CREEK RENEWAL PROJECT CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY STUDY UPDATE WARD 4

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee advises:

1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Development/Transportation Engineering, the Commissioner of Planning and the Commissioner of Community Services, dated November 13, 2013, was approved;

2) That the presentation by Ms. Nicole Swerhun, SWERHUN Facilitation & Decision Support, Bathurst Street, Toronto, and C3, presentation material entitled "Black Creek Renewal Project", dated November 13, 2013, was received; and

3) The deputation by Mr. Giovanni Marcelli, Potestas Properties, Jane Street, Concord, was received.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Development/Transportation Engineering, the Commissioner of Planning, and the Commissioner of Community Services recommend:

1. THAT this report and associated presentation be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The renewal of the existing Black Creek in the VMC will contribute to environmental sustainability through the restoration of the stream corridor and the introduction of flood protection for the surrounding area.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact associated with this report.

Communications Plan

An enhanced stakeholder and public consultation program is currently underway. Additional details are provided below.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the VMC Sub-Committee with an overview of the proposed stakeholder engagement and facilitation approach associated with the VMC Black Creek Renewal Project.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Black Creek traverses the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre along the east of Jane Street between Highway 7 and Highway 407.

In early 2012, the City completed a Black Creek Optimization Study which identified the need to improve the existing stream channel conditions in order to achieve appropriate flood control and conveyance capacity within the VMC Plan.

Improving existing Black Creek channel conditions within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan area is key to advancing development

Staff is working to advance development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC). Resolving the flooding risk at the intersection of Jane Street and Highway 7 is important to moving VMC development forward. There is general agreement among stakeholders the flooding issues need to be addressed, however, there are many different ideas on how best to achieve flood control while at the same time not impeding future development opportunities. There is some urgency to resolving these issues to ensure the City is in a position to advance city-building in anticipation of the subway extension which is expected to be complete in 2015/2016.

Accordingly, in July 2012, the City initiated the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study, which builds on the findings and recommendations of the earlier Optimization Study. An initial stakeholder meeting was held in November 2012 to present preliminary Black Creek channel concepts. Based on the outcome of this meeting, and issues raised by the majority of the stakeholders directly impacted, it became clear that an expanded consultation process was necessary to develop a plan which would be acceptable to the stakeholders.

The Study Team has been expanded to effectively facilitate a preferred strategy and consensus among all stakeholders

In June 2013, the City expanded the study consulting team to include a facilitation team led by Swerhun Inc. in collaboration with Real Estate Search Corporation (RESC). Swerhun and RESC are working with the prime engineering consultant, The Municipal Infrastructure Group (TMIG), to help resolve stakeholder issues and to ultimately propose a path forward that will be supported by the stakeholders. It is expected this consultation phase of the project will be completed in early Q1-2014.

The Study Team will focus on the opportunities to create value for key stakeholders

The objective of this phase is to develop an implementable and mutually-beneficial solution for all stakeholders. This can lead to value accruing to governments, landowners and the community as a whole. This includes:

- Determining the value of the project to the City as it strives to distinguish itself from other cities transitioning from primarily suburban/industrial development to places of urban intensification;
- Determining the value of the project to the property owners;

- Determining the value of the project to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority as it strives to provide flood control and naturalization opportunities in Vaughan; and
- Addressing Provincial, Regional and City policy objectives.

While creating value for the City, there is also an opportunity to broaden the problem-solving context. Specifically:

- It's important to recognize the City has a long history of industrial and big box development, and that to create a thriving VMC and to realize a public return on the multi-billion dollar public subway investment, the City needs to add real estate value and create regional appeal;
- The size of the land impacted by flooding is unique in the VMC both in terms of its size and location, and as a result this is one important opportunity to look at ways to add value to the VMC; and
- The solution to the flooding problem may be an opportunity to create one of the distinctive features for the VMC that helps create the kind of value that has been generated through similar initiatives in other city centres.

The Study Team's approach to doing this work is collaborative – involving the City and stakeholders. It is expected results from this phase of the project will emerge incrementally over the next several months, with implementation to occur over many years.

Discussions with key stakeholders are underway

Swerhun and RESC have started their work, and over the next several weeks will be connecting with key stakeholders to understand their perspectives and priorities regarding the project. These stakeholders include City staff, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Region of York, Province of Ontario, community interest groups such as Sustainable Vaughan and local landowners.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The conclusions and recommendations of the Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study will facilitate development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This report is therefore consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is a Regional Growth Centre. Jane Street and Highway 7 fall within York Region's jurisdiction. The intersection of Highway 7 and Jane Street is susceptible from the Black Creek. Proposed sections of the Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit system (at its intersection with Jane Street) are also susceptible to flooding based on existing channel conditions. Regional staff will be involved throughout the duration of the Study and will provide input and comment as required to ensure its successful completion.

Conclusion

In July 2012, the City initiated the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study, which builds on the findings and recommendations of the earlier Optimization Study.

A facilitated consultation process is currently underway with the stakeholders with the objective of developing an implementable and mutually-beneficial solution for the renewal of the Black Creek in the VMC.

Staff will continue to provide the VMC Sub-Committee with updates on the progress of the VMC Black Creek Renewal Project at key milestones.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Michael Frieri, Manager of Engineering Planning & Studies, Ext. 8729
Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Water / Wastewater Engineer, Ext. 8433

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, Chair