

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 24, 2014

Item 17, Report No. 30, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 24, 2014.

17

**PROCUREMENT OF A CONSULTANT
VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES
FILE 25.5.12.3
WARD 4**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, Interim Director of Planning/Director of Development Planning and Manager of Urban Design, dated June 17, 2014:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning, Interim Director of Planning/Director of Development Planning and Manager of Urban Design recommend:

1. THAT staff be authorized to prepare and release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to retain a consultant to develop the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Urban Design Guidelines and that the project be funded from the approved Capital Project DP-9538-14.
2. THAT staff report back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting with a Recommendation for Award of Contract.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan, the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, 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. Promoting high quality and context sensitive design is a key component of achieving this vision.

The development of Urban Design Guidelines for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) has the potential to contribute to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in Green Directions Vaughan, specifically:

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
- Objective 2.3: To create a City with sustainable built form

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community where citizens, business and visitors thrive

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

Goal 5: To be leaders in advocacy and education on sustainability issues

- Objective 5.1: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community

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Economic Impact

The total project cost of \$150,000, which includes a contingency allowance, administrative recovery and applicable taxes can be accommodated within the approved capital budget DP-9538-14 VMC Urban Design Guidelines.

Communications Plan

The Request for Proposal will be advertised in accordance with current City policy.

The Urban Design Guidelines will be used as a tool by the City, development community and stakeholders to guide design development within private realm projects in the downtown, outlining the City's expectations related to built form quality in the VMC. As part of the design process, the project schedule will include several information and education sessions led by the Consultant team to generate feedback and provide instruction on the use and application of the guidelines for landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties. In addition, a Stakeholder/Landowner Advisory Group will be established to provide continued input throughout the design process and support a collaborative urban design framework for the project.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council direction to proceed with the procurement of a multi-disciplinary team to produce the VMC Urban Design Guidelines, applicable to the area shown on Attachment #1.

Background - Analysis and Options

Policy Context

The VMC is the City's new downtown which is evolving from an employment and light industrial zone into an Urban Growth Centre with a diverse mix of uses, pedestrianized and transit-supportive environments and dynamic qualities of place. To guide this transformation, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan was completed in 2010 as part of the Official Plan Review and the revised plan was adopted by City Council in December, 2012. By establishing a guiding vision, and corresponding set of principles and objectives, this plan set the framework for the VMC to develop into a sustainable, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented downtown through its application of transportation, land use and built form policies. In support of this vision, the first intensification and transit infrastructure projects are currently under construction.

Section 8.6 of the Secondary Plan outlines the City's intent to develop Urban Design Guidelines to augment the built form policies in the Secondary Plan. With development in the VMC advancing quickly, there is a need to provide more comprehensive design guidance to ensure that a unified development context is created. Each individual development is part of a larger urban structure, and ensuring integration between public and private projects is a critical component in achieving success for the area's transformation and development, and in establishing a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable urban framework.

A considerable amount of planning has gone into developing a detailed framework for public realm projects in the downtown. The draft Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan defines a connected green infrastructure framework consisting of parks, naturalized and urban open spaces, greenways, public squares and streets to create a connected pedestrian environment and support sustainable urbanism and redevelopment over the short, medium and long terms. Design guidelines and performance metrics for open spaces within the downtown have been developed to ensure that high quality and sustainable place making efforts are promoted and realized.

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Purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines

The VMC Urban Design Guidelines will serve as a comprehensive toolkit to promote and foster high quality development in Vaughan's downtown and provide the foundation for an attractive and sustainable community. A highly graphic playbook in use, this document will include best practice design standards that help structure the shape, form and layout of new development in the VMC's private realm and include performance standards to ensure that impact on the urban environment is mitigated through design.

The document will translate the urban vision and spirit of the VMC Secondary Plan into a set of comprehensive design guidelines for development parcels that support the creation of a dynamic downtown through contemporary and sustainable city building standards. The guidelines will help inform the interaction, interface and relationship of built form to adjacent streets and open spaces in a manner that complements the public realm design principles and guidelines outlined in the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan. Together, the VMC Urban Design Guidelines and VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan will serve as a complete development guide to the promotion of high quality design and place making in the downtown.

Fundamentally, the Urban Design Guidelines should provide a clear design guideline framework that is implementable and easy to use.

Process for developing the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Urban Design Guidelines

The VMC Urban Design Guidelines will embody the long-term vision for development of the new downtown as a world class city centre and provide detailed guidance, implementation and performance standards related to the design of the built environment. This document will define a strong development framework to support the dramatic transformation of the area into a major urban downtown destination and will involve the following components:

1. Background Review, Kick-off Meeting and Site Visit

A great deal of planning and design has already been completed for the VMC, with many catalyst projects currently under construction. These plans and projects are transforming the development context, and a solid knowledge and understanding of this work by the consulting team is required as a foundation for the Study.

2. Urban Design Principles and Building Typology Workshop

The consulting team will expand on the design objectives and built form policies defined in the VMC Secondary Plan, as well as undertake a building typology study which provides a classification for built form within the VMC as related to land use and urban context. The building typology study should explore mixed use, low rise, mid-rise, high rise, commercial and office forms for the VMC, and should highlight the economic value of providing market variety and differentiation in the downtown from both a development proforma and city building perspective.

3. Development of Urban Design Guidelines

The consulting team will develop a comprehensive set of detailed design guidelines that address design issues at a variety of scales, and provide performance and implementation standards for built form within the VMC as related to:

i. Site Design

- Urban structure, street and block pattern
- Neighbourhood context

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- Building orientation and site layout
- Gateway sites
- Transit oriented development

ii. Massing

- Building massing, footprint and scale
- Building height and transition
- Podium and tower principles
- Setbacks, step backs, angular planes
- View corridors
- Mixing of building types

iii. Building and Architectural Design

- Architectural expression (base, middle, top)
- Streetwall, building facades and street frontage
- Building character, architectural style and design quality
- Building materials and articulation
- Energy and sustainable building design
- Sun/shadow and microclimate
- Definition of entrances
- Balconies and projections
- Lighting
- Private amenity space and podium landscape
- Loading, access and servicing
- Parking (structured and non-structured)

iv. Public Realm Interface

- Ground floor retail and active uses at grade
- Public realm and streetscape interface
- Mid-block and public realm linkages
- Pedestrian and vehicular access
- Signage and wayfinding
- Kiosks and ancillary structures

v. Privately Owned Public Space

- Definition of qualifying spaces
- Design guidelines to promote high quality design and materiality
- Signage, wayfinding and branding
- Accessibility
- Maintenance and ownership
- Applicable planning tools and funding strategies for implementation

4. Demonstration Massing Model

The City of Vaughan is developing a 3D base model of the VMC as an accurate database of the existing and planned development and infrastructure context. This model will provide an update to the existing 3D model generated as part of the VMC Secondary Plan and will integrate digital data sets received by the City of Vaughan, York Region, Toronto Transit Commission and other stakeholders. The consulting team will be responsible for using the base model provided by the

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City as a foundation upon which to build a demonstration massing model highlighting the application of the urban design guidelines and building typologies within the VMC by neighbourhood. This demonstration model should highlight the design principles related to building height, density and transition and illustrate their interface with the public realm.

5. Development of Urban Design Checklist and Evaluation Matrix

In order to help guide the effective use and implementation of the guidelines, the consultant team will develop an urban design evaluation matrix for use by City staff in reviewing applications to ensure compliance with the urban design standards. This matrix will provide transparency for the development community in understanding the City's urban design expectations and criteria for approval.

Project Timeline and Next Steps

Upon Council approval of this report, the study is expected to begin in October 2014 and should be completed by September 2015.

Under the guidance of the Purchasing Department, City staff will proceed with issuing an RFP. The staff project team will evaluate and recommend a successful proponent, bringing a report to a Committee of Whole meeting in September 2014.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The development of detailed urban design guidelines for the VMC contributes to the goals and themes within Vaughan Vision 2020, the City of Vaughan's Strategic Plan, specifically:

Service Excellence:

- Demonstrate Excellence in Service Delivery
- Promote Community, Safety, Health & Wellness
- Lead & Promote Environmental Sustainability

Organizational Excellence

- Manage Growth & Economic Well-being

Regional Implications

The development of Urban Design Guidelines for the VMC supports the Region of York Official Plan vision of building sustainable communities that achieve the highest standard in urban design and green building, particularly the implementation of the following objective:

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.

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Conclusion

The Urban Design Guidelines will be a leading and innovative toolkit for the City of Vaughan to shape development in the new downtown, promote high quality design excellence, connectivity and place making and support the urban vision for the VMC as outlined in the Secondary Plan.

The guidelines will be structured as a highly custom and graphic playbook in use, outlining performance standards and detailed design guidelines that augment the built form policies of the VMC Secondary Plan and shape the relationship between built form, land use, and the public realm. Funding to develop the VMC Urban Design Guidelines is allocated in the approved Capital Project DP-9538-14.

Attachments

1. Location Map

Report prepared by:

Amy Roots, VMC Project Manager, ext. 8035
Rob Bayley, Manager of Urban Design, ext. 8254

(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.)