

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 15, 2015

Item 23, Report No. 44, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 15, 2015.

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**AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PLACEMAKING
FOR THE VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Clerk, on behalf of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee, dated December 1, 2015:

Recommendation

The City Clerk, on behalf of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee, forwards the following recommendation from its meeting of November 20, 2015 (Item 3, Report No.4) for Council's consideration:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Chief Corporate Initiatives & Intergovernmental Relations, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management, Director of Development Planning, Director of Economic Development & Culture Services, Director of Parks Development and Manager of Urban Design, dated November 20, 2015, be approved:

Report of the Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations, the Deputy City Manager Planning and Growth Management, the Director of Development Planning, the Director of Economic Development and Culture Services, the Director of Parks Development and the Manager of Urban Design, dated November 20, 2015

Recommendation

The Chief Corporate Initiatives & Intergovernmental Relations, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management, Director of Development Planning, Director of Economic Development & Culture Services, Director of Parks Development and Manager of Urban Design, in consultation with the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Strategic Advisory Team, recommend:

1. That the consultants' presentation titled 'An Integrated Approach to Placemaking for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre' be received;
2. That the 'Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan' (Attachment 1) be approved;
3. That the 'Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Urban Design Guidelines' (Attachment 2) be approved in principle, and that staff be directed to report back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting with recommendations at the conclusion of the study; and
4. That the 'Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Culture and Public Art Framework – Volume 1' (Attachment 3) be approved in principle, and that staff be directed to report back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting with Volume 2 Funding and the Phase 2 City-Wide Public Art Program with recommendations at the conclusion of the study.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a *Sustainability First* principle and states that sustainability means the City shall make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. Placemaking initiatives contribute to the social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, including the following:

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- A robust green infrastructure and public realm framework that support active transportation, recreation, social interaction, and the provision of ecosystem services.
- A cultural framework that celebrates the diversity of Vaughan's citizens and drives business attraction and economic investment to the new downtown.
- A built-form framework that promotes design excellence through green building standards, attention to microclimatic design and architectural quality.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from this report. All studies are within current capital budgets; DT-7065-11, DP-9538-14 and PL-9530-13.

The streetscape section of the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan corresponds to the approved City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy. Priority implementation streetscapes for the VMC tied to transit infrastructure and early development have been costed and included in the City-Wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy. The VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan identifies additional "Special Streets" that meet the criteria for Enhanced or Premium levels of service and will be budgeted through the streetscape financial model as development proceeds. Streetscapes that are not yet identified as a "Special Street" are Standard Urban level of service and will be implemented through development.

The VMC Urban Design Guidelines has no economic impact to the City, as the design and construction of the works described in the document will be implemented by the development community and by transit agencies through the development review process and review of transit infrastructure proposals.

Volume 2 of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework: Funding Model is in progress. Volumes 1 and 2 of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework will be brought to a Working Session of Committee of the Whole for approval in Q1 2016. Implementation of initiatives identified within the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework will be addressed in future budget cycles.

Communications Plan

Regular updates about these Plans have been posted on the City's website, www.vaughan.ca/vmc. For each project, a consultation strategy was developed to engage citizens and stakeholder groups in the generation of a common vision for place. City staff will continue to share future updates through a suite of communications tactics including social media, Vaughan TV, City Update, public relations and community engagement events.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan and to seek Council approval in principle of the VMC Urban Design Guidelines and VMC Culture and Public Art Framework; and to provide Council and stakeholders with an update on the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework and an opportunity for input prior to reporting back with recommendations at the conclusion of the study.

The VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan provides a landscape framework and design guidelines for the public realm. The VMC Urban Design Guidelines provide a built form framework and design guidelines for the private realm. The VMC Culture and Public Art Framework provide a platform for cultural programming and public art initiatives in the downtown. Together, these Plans augment the VMC Secondary Plan to provide an integrated placemaking framework for a vibrant, walkable, transit-oriented, mixed use urban destination that will attract people and investment.

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Background - Analysis and Options

Executive Summary

Building a new downtown is a long-term project that starts with setting up the right conditions and environments for people to collectively imagine and create a community that contributes to people's happiness, prosperity, health and well-being. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and functioning of public and private spaces with people at the centre. It includes setting up the armature for future development that will support the evolution of the VMC as it develops from a commercial and light industrial environment characterized by large scale spaces and big box retail into a pedestrian-oriented urban environment. The fine-grain scale of streets and open spaces and diversity of people, activities and experiences that happen in an urban place will emerge over time. These placemaking Plans provide a principle based framework to guide the design and implementation of architecture, streets, parks, pedestrian connections, public art and cultural programs in the VMC. Thoughtful attention to how these elements fit together from the outset is necessary to build a cohesive and sustainable city, to maximize shared investment, and to help coordinate future development with the public realm.

To implement projects, the City has to make funding decisions about investments in public infrastructure and programs. These three placemaking documents are strategically aligned to provide Council with a design framework to help prioritize public investments in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

A Placemaking Vision - The Metropolitan Experience

The story of the VMC will be one of transformation into a metropolitan community that captures a collective imagination for Vaughan's future. The opportunity exists to create a kind of sustainable urbanism that is rooted in the landscape and represents the best of our City – including entrepreneurship, creativity and inclusivity. To this end, the three placemaking Plans are about defining a shared vision for place and supporting its ongoing evolution. Great parks, public squares and walkable streets will be the stage where the social, cultural and economic life of the downtown is played out. In the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, the everyday spaces between the buildings are as important as the buildings themselves. The public realm provides democratic and social spaces that physically bring people together and foster healthier, more social, and economically viable communities.

Innovation and knowledge generation occurs where there are opportunities for a myriad of ideas, often through the meeting, interaction and collaboration between people of varied backgrounds and experiences in these urban spaces. The ability to successfully attract people will determine how economies perform. In the past, locations of raw materials, suppliers or market clusters determined regional economic success. What will define successful regions in the future will be locations with talent and human capital. Places which provide transit options, diverse housing offerings, a high quality and healthy urban life, and dynamic social and cultural amenities create a value proposition for market differentiation. To attract people, the VMC has to develop as such a place.

To realize this value proposition and achieve the placemaking vision for the VMC, the downtown must be built with a conscious paradigm shift which prioritizes investment in the public realm. The design methodology for streets, parks, mews, buildings and cultural programs allows for design innovation, responsiveness, and an incremental build-out of the VMC over time. Connecting public and private spaces together will create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts and deliver a true urban experience.

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Placemaking Priorities

The VMC's unique sense of place and success as a destination will depend in great part on the quality, character and activation of the public realm. In this early phase of development, the Plans outline design considerations for three priority areas of investment:

1. The mobility hub, including the VMC Subway Station Plaza, Transit Square and TTC Plaza, and public realm adjacent to the YRRT Bus Terminal will become the heart of civic life, during the VMC's early formation days.
2. The revitalization of Black Creek as the landscape spine of the downtown, with ecological, social, cultural and connective functions.
3. Cultural programmes and experiences, including performing arts, festivals and events that will seed the emergence and organic evolution of the VMC's social and cultural fabric.

An Evolving Placemaking Framework

Simultaneously, the placemaking Plans meet two objectives: i) provide a placemaking framework to articulate a compelling, shared long-term vision for placemaking, and, ii) be adaptable for the changing development context as it evolves over time, including small-scale, quick improvements that can immediately start to shape a public realm and people's experience of the VMC.

To balance the push and pull of these objectives, the Plans articulate a strong landscape, built form and cultural framework with design priorities, requirements, and performance metrics provided where necessary in order to implement a cohesive and coordinated urban fabric and for clarity to the development community. In other areas, the Plans have the flexibility to deal with complexity and change that characterizes contemporary city building and to promote creativity, alternate solutions, and responsive design at the site scale.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the goals of Vaughan Vision 2020 - Goals: Service Excellence and Organizational Excellence, and Strategic Objective: Plan and Manage Growth & Economic Well – Being. It is also consistent with Goal 4 of the Economic Development Strategy: *“Grow Vaughan’s dynamic quality of place and creative economy”*.

Regional Implications

The Region of York's Official Plan places tremendous importance on the Centres and Corridors within its local municipalities as the cornerstone to achieving provincial population and employment growth targets. Copies of these documents will be forwarded to the Region's Planning and Economic Strategy Branch to inform their work including the Regional Official Plan, the Economic Development Action Plan and the marketing and communications strategy for the Centres and Corridors that is currently being undertaken.

Conclusion

Cities by nature are dynamic places, constantly in change with the ebbs and flows of people, businesses and investments. These Plans are dynamic roadmaps, and they will evolve with the City and the downtown. From shared principles to detailed design guidelines and finally, action-oriented cultural programming, placemaking for the VMC is approached as a holistic, cross-disciplinary and organic endeavour. The programs and projects of the cultural framework were developed on the aspirations of the community. They have been aligned with municipal goals; and tempered with business and economic realities of those who have vested interests in the VMC. They are scalable to address development timing and funding considerations.

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Building a downtown is a multi-generational and multi-disciplinary project that requires the participation of private and public sector partners, citizens and community leaders. What is important at this critical juncture in the VMC's development is to start building a shared public realm, animating places and inviting people to engage and participate in activities within the VMC. Long term public realm investments must be made thoughtfully, going to the right places at the right time to capitalize on shared projects, inspiration and potential, and to realize a unique value proposition for Vaughan. In sum, the common placemaking vision for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is based on a people-centred approach, a commitment to the public realm, and the certainty of change.

Attachments (To be circulated under separate cover)
(Copies of the Attachments are available in the City Clerk's Office)

1. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Streetscape and Open Space Plan – [Click here](#)
2. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Urban Design Guidelines – Draft – [Click here](#)
3. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Culture and Public Art Framework Vol.1 - Draft – [Click here](#)

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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.)