



# Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Vaughan, Ontario

Reconnaissance & Strategic Assessment  
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# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

## Project Context

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (“VMC”) represents the City of Vaughan’s (“COVs”) movement towards the much larger regional trend of creating compact urban downtown developments within Toronto’s suburbs, transforming them into their own self-sustaining urban places. Building upon the planning framework established by the VMC Secondary Plan, which emanates from the earlier Vaughan Corporate Centre (“VCC”) plan and leverages the \$1.2 billion investment into mobility infrastructure (presently underway), the COV is presently moving towards the stage of physical development and implementation of the VMC vision.

## Statement of Mandate

The COV is at a turning point with the VMC, requiring a shift of focus towards the physical implementation of the new downtown by generating development and making the vision a reality. To this end, in 2014, the City hired Live Work Learn Play Inc. (“LWLP”) as its “Development Facilitator” – a team to support Vaughan’s city-building efforts in the VMC, acting as strategic real estate advisor, leading a robust engagement process with area landowners, and producing a business plan to guide the long-term implementation of the VMC. Beginning work in October 2014, and as the first part of its mandate, LWLP has developed this Reconnaissance and Strategic Assessment report in order to establish a baseline of consensus and direction from which to move forward.

While the VMC is slated to become Vaughan’s “downtown”, divergent opinions exist today, among both the public and private spheres, about what exactly that high-level vision truly means and entails, as well as how it should be achieved. As such, there is limited consensus on what constitute successful outcomes from the implementation of the VMC Secondary Plan. This report provides the necessary direction, including initial strategic advice on (and the associated rationale for) COV corporate policy and funding priorities, citizen education and engagement efforts, and articulates a more detailed, accessible and consensus-based vision of the future VMC.

## VMC SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

The VMC has many positive attributes to build upon. First, its regional accessibility is enviable, located at the nexus of Ontario’s two largest commuter corridors: east-west along Highway 407, which connects to Pearson International Airport, and north-south along Highway 400. Second, Vaughan is undergoing a significant population boom and is expected to grow by some 100,000 people in the next 15 years (of which the VMC is to house 25,000). As well, the \$1.2 billion mobility infrastructure investment underway is already seeing spin-offs with more than 2,000 residential units, as well as the new KPMG office development, in the VMC short-term development pipeline.

### Weaknesses

There are a number of challenges that both the City and development community will need to work to overcome. First, the City does not own any developable lands or have a corporate presence in the VMC, having to rely on multiple, divergent landowners to implement the downtown vision. Second, the City does not have a dedicated reserve available to fund future infrastructure or priority projects as they come-up. Finally, water table and geotechnical issues encumber much of the VMC area and make redevelopment with underground parking a cost-prohibitive undertaking under current market conditions in many cases.

### Opportunities

Key opportunities must be leveraged to their fullest potential. First, the VMC landowner community has proved itself a motivated stakeholder open to collaboration and moving the implementation forward as expediently as possible if economically viable. Second, the VMC presents an opportunity to create a unified civic identity for both old and new residents of an amalgamated city with natural affiliations to its five historic towns. Finally, between the City and the VMC landowner group, there is a significant opportunity to undertake numerous joint economic development and marketing initiatives to set the VMC apart within the 905 region.

### Threats

Several factors present risks that need to be mitigated against. First, if mediation of the VMC Secondary Plan is prolonged it prevents the new planning regime for the VMC area from coming into force-and-effect, potentially allowing development to proceed that is not VMC-conducive. Second, Vaughan residents have very limited awareness of the VMC, its vision, and its importance to the Vaughan community at large, and as such they cannot be supportive advocates and users, which also risks softening political will. Additionally, there has been inconsistent messaging around the VMC’s vision, goals, rationale and impact that has resulted in false starts in taking the VMC to market – this risks continued market confusion and creates difficulty in positioning the VMC as a place for significant investment.



## Critical Initiatives: Downtown Enhancement Strategies

To realize successful outcomes, and to set up the VMC to achieve its ultimate success over its development and eventual build-out, three critical interrelated initiatives have been identified that need to be undertaken, adopted and adhered to as key corporate priorities by the City moving forward (including the VMC becoming the COV's true downtown).

### 1: Continue to Prioritize the VMC

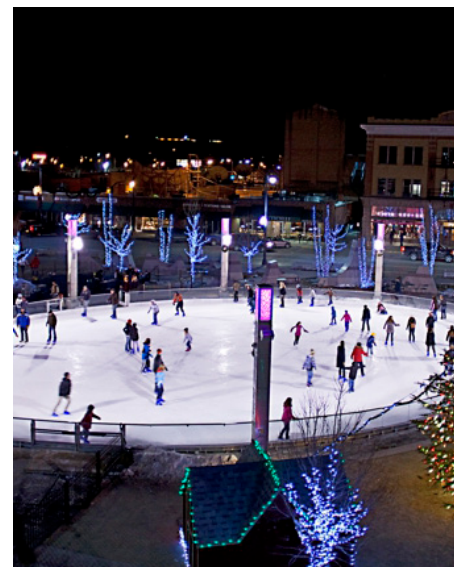
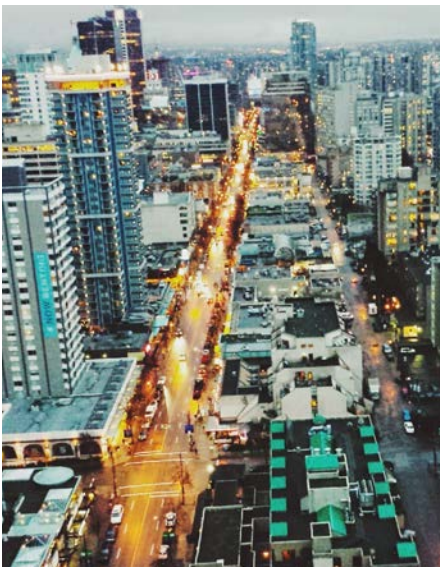
The aspiration of creating a downtown is one of the most important initiatives in Vaughan today and must continue to be a top corporate priority for the City and a focus of municipal policies, programs, funding, investment and resources. Major ongoing infrastructure investments, combined with rare market conditions and growth currently underway in the City and region, must be maximized and leveraged to their fullest potential. Far from a site-specific series of developments and investments, the VMC will have positive impacts with exponential benefits to be reaped by the City at large and all of its citizens over the short and long term. Investing in the VMC is an investment in the future of the whole City.

### 2: Engage the Vaughan Community & Build Popular Support

In order to achieve true success at the VMC, the City needs to capture the attention and imagination of the Vaughan community through a robust, focused engagement strategy that gives its residents a sense of ownership, and turns them into adopters and advocates of the downtown vision. While the VMC is set to become the City's new downtown, at present, Vaughan residents have limited awareness of the VMC and no real understanding of its vision, rationale and potential benefits. Strong community awareness and support is essential to ensure political support for VMC funding and investment decisions and to build a foundation of committed and vested users of the downtown.

### 3: Establish a Refined Vision & Stay Committed to It

Finally, the City needs to articulate a more specific and accessible picture of the VMC's future, (established with input and buy-in from key stakeholders) that distils the macro 442-acre "downtown" into a more easily understandable place and provides a clear framework for shaping the character and nature of appropriate and acceptable development in the VMC. Further, the City needs to stay committed to this vision over the long term. A downtown will not appear overnight, and as the VMC has a higher-order purpose for the future of the City than development elsewhere in Vaughan, higher standards must be demanded and adhered to. The City must learn to turn down proposals and applications that do not conform to or could permanently inhibit the broader goal of downtown place-creation.



# Executive Summary (cont'd)

## A Refined Vision

While the VMC Secondary Plan set out a macro vision for the VMC, it did not articulate sufficient detail to elicit broad-based consensus and understanding of the VMC's future. To that end, this report builds upon that foundation in proposing a more detailed and accessible vision, guiding principles and district strategy for the VMC.

*The City of Vaughan continues to undergo a foundational transformation from a suburban, sometimes rural, bedroom community of Toronto, into an independent, self-sustaining place. Facilitated by the Provincial growth management requirements of Places to Grow, the development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will embody the physical manifestation of this transformation and catalyze the City's continued growth and evolution.*

*The VMC will create a true downtown for Vaughan – an intense, dynamic community that will become the heart of the City – economically, culturally and physically – for all of the residents and historic communities that compose Vaughan today and the future generations of residents, employees and visitors. The VMC will be the human-scaled, urban, walkable, multi-modal, civic, cultural, institutional, educational, and entertainment hub of Vaughan, in every season and time of day, with all the grit and polish of a modern city centre.*

## Guiding Principles

The VMC's guiding principles are intended to inform the personality and programming of uses and experiences within the downtown, as well as the desired nature of future development and investment. Based on City, community and landowner development objectives, the following principles will help position and differentiate the downtown effort within its regional market context, and form the cornerstones of the VMC's future brand identity:



1. Vaughan's Urban Core

2. The GTA Standard for Transit & Mobility

3. Where Vaughan Does Businesses



4. A Place for Civic Gathering & Cultural Celebration

5. A Centre for Learning & Innovation

6. Sustainability & Urban Recreation

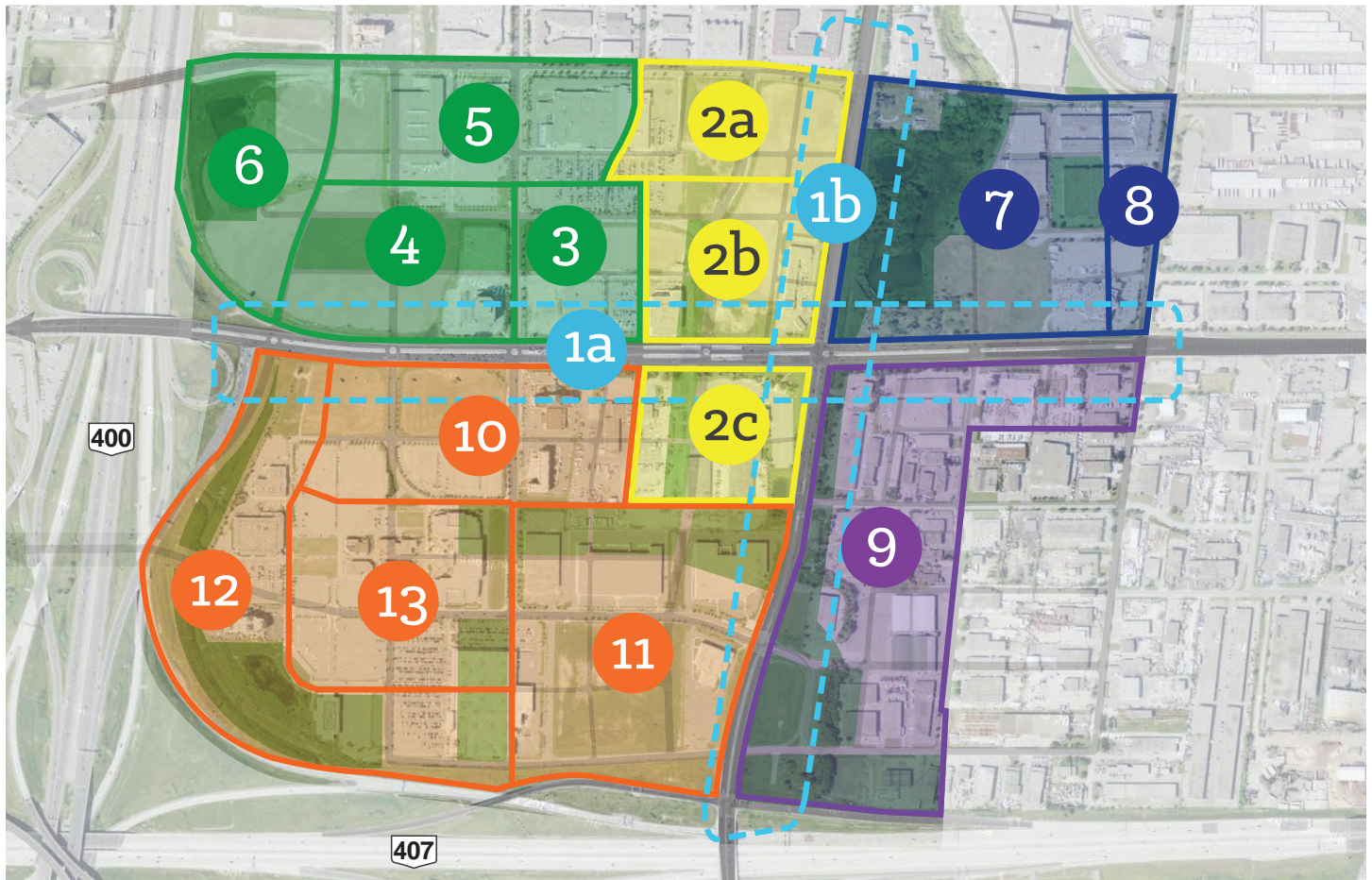


## District Strategy

The segmentation of the VMC into unique and identifiable districts is necessary for the successful realization of the City's goals for the downtown. A district strategy will help differentiate distinct areas of the VMC from the larger narrative of the downtown, reinforcing and growing the unique competitive advantages for each, and allowing the development process to leverage the natural programming, marketing and physical connections of each unique neighbourhood as they emerge. The detailed strategies and potential programming for each of these districts are generally supported by the land use allowances and initial direction of the VMC Secondary Plan.



Although the districts are illustrated within defined geographies, these borders between districts should thus not be viewed as hard lines, but rather as informative with overlapping programming and experiences expected as districts transition from one to the other. Even within districts there is expected to be considerable evolution as existing uses and built-form are adaptively reused or eventually redeveloped. Furthermore, the numbering of these districts is not reflective of their potential development phasing, but simply for organization and narrative purposes.



#### Gateway Corridors

1a. Avenue 7

1b. Jane Street

#### The Mobility Hub

2a. Bus Terminal District

2b. Subway District

2c. South Millway District

3. The Core

4. Central Park

5. Central Park North

6. Entertainment District

7. Edgeley Pond

8. Creditstone Corporate

9. South Black Creek

10. Avenue Seven South

11. Business Enterprise Park

12. Corporate Innovation Corridor

13. South Community

# Executive Summary (cont'd)

## Next Steps

Using this initial Reconnaissance and Strategic Assessment report as a foundation, LWLP's focuses (over the course of 2015 and into 2016) will be multipronged in advancing several parallel but interrelated work streams.

### 1. The VMC Working Group

Chaired by Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, with support from LWLP, this Working Group will become the vehicle for consistent engagement, and education on pertinent VMC issues with VMC landowners, and other key internal and external stakeholders. Further, this Working Group will become the key coordinating body to facilitate the completion of the necessary City studies to finish setting up the VMC for its long-term implementation and success.



### 2. Mixed-Use Assessment, Business Plan & VMC Financial Modeling

LWLP will undertake a detailed assessment of the office, retail, and residential markets and submarkets of Vaughan and competing regions, to establish a baseline understanding of the current market realities and develop a business plan for the downtown initiative. This analysis will be critical to informing decision making regarding how to incent development and catalyze implementation of the VMC as an urban-styled downtown within its suburban regional marketplace.

### 3. VMC Implementation Strategy

The business plan will inform the implementation strategy by providing an understanding of the opportunity and role the City can play in unlocking private sector development opportunities through City-sponsored investment or other initiatives, creative deal structures with landowners, and economic development strategies. A key component of the implementation strategy will be a framework of workable milestones and achievable goals and expectations for the phasing of the VMC in 5-year increments, until 2031.

### 4. Continued Strategic Advisory to the City on Pertinent VMC Issues

LWLP will remain a committed third-party support resource to the City of Vaughan as a strategic real estate and city-building advisor on all things related to the downtown initiative in order to help position the VMC's development for success.









# Introduction







# Project Introduction

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (“VMC”) is planned to become the City of Vaughan’s (“COV”) downtown – an intense, dynamic community that will become the heart of the city, economically, culturally and physically for all of the residents and historic communities that compose Vaughan today and the future generations of residents, employees and visitors. To this end, the City has undertaken a great deal of work in recent years. More than 95 per cent of the original VMC Implementation Plan tasks identified to set the stage for the first major development have either been completed, or are currently underway. Transit infrastructure, new office development, and the first residential projects are under construction. Mediation on the VMC Secondary Plan with area landowners at the Ontario Municipal Board (“OMB”) is now significantly advanced. Having completed the majority of the planning of the VMC, the City identified that it was necessary to transition efforts towards a new stage focused on the physical implementation of the new downtown. Namely, seeing development happen and the vision become a reality.

To facilitate this change in corporate focus, the City in 2014 undertook (among others) two important actions.

1. Moved the corporate responsibility of the VMC to the Executive Director in the Office of the City Manager, who is specifically responsible and accountable for oversight and execution of all VMC-related matters, and who in turn has rolled-out a refreshed City governance model for managing the VMC.
2. Hired a “Development Facilitator” – a team to support Vaughan’s city-building efforts in the VMC, acting as strategic real estate advisor, leading a robust engagement process with area landowners, and producing a financial business plan to guide the long-term implementation of the VMC. Live Work Learn Play Inc. (“LWLP”) was selected, through a competitive, public RFP procurement process, to act in this role and began work in October 2014.

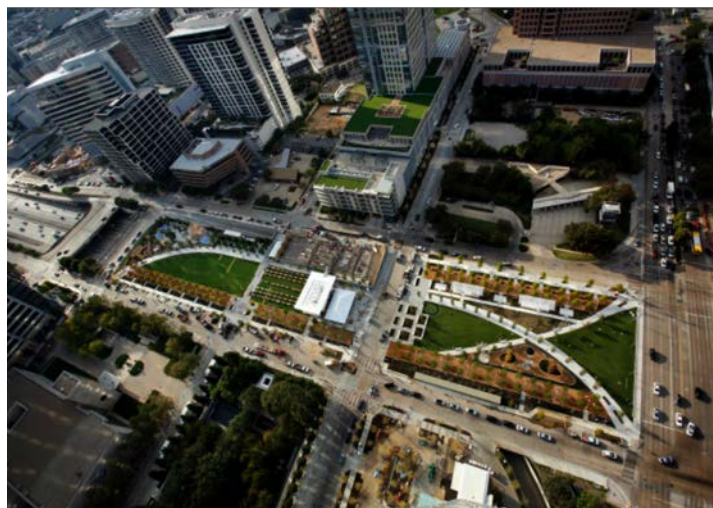


# Statement of Mandate

## VMC Development Facilitator

Working under the direction of the Executive Director, City Manager's Office, LWLP's role over its 18-24 month mandate, is: (1) to help ensure that the City and the VMC stakeholders define and achieve their short-term (0-10 year) development and place-making goals and objectives in a reasonable timeframe, and (2) to create an implementation framework to catalyze and guide the VMC's medium-term (10-20 year) and long term (20+ years) development and phasing, and associated economic and experiential success over time. These strategies are to be developed by working collaboratively with, and facilitating dialogue between, City officials and VMC stakeholders, including landowners, throughout the work process. Specifically, LWLP's mandate falls into four categories as articulated in the successful RFP response:

- A. Stakeholder Engagement:** Leading an effective stakeholder engagement process that facilitates constructive ongoing dialogue with City representatives, other stakeholders as necessary, and VMC landowners to inform and foster consensus building around City and government decision-making.
- B. Strategic Direction and Background Analysis:** Producing a high-level strategic assessment of the VMC today based on a review of baseline materials, an analysis of existing conditions, and preliminary internal outreach.
- C. Business Plan and Financial Modeling:** Evaluate and provide strategic direction on the market potential for retail, residential, and office development in the VMC, as well as potential parkland and civic acquisitions, development and operations of public spaces, and provide relevant financial model(s) to inform decision-making, and determination of priority projects.
- D. Implementation Strategies:** Outline strategies related to municipal investment, VMC phasing, potential development deal structures, and economic development and business attraction, while shaping priority projects and setting a development framework and approach to ensure accountability and continuity.





## Reconnaissance & Strategic Assessment Report

LWLP began work on October 1, 2014 and pursuant category “B” of the core mandate, and consistent with the initial critical path set out, the Reconnaissance and Strategic Assessment report represents an essential and necessary first step in setting a baseline of consensus and direction from which to move forward with the more detailed work and outreach that is to follow. The VMC is slated to become Vaughan’s “downtown”, per the work undertaken to date to develop the VMC Secondary Plan and the ongoing mediation process at the OMB to have it approved. However, **divergent opinions exist today, in and amongst both the public and private spheres, about what exactly that high-level vision truly means and entails, as well as how it should be achieved. Furthermore, there is limited general awareness of the very existence of the VMC among Vaughan residents.**

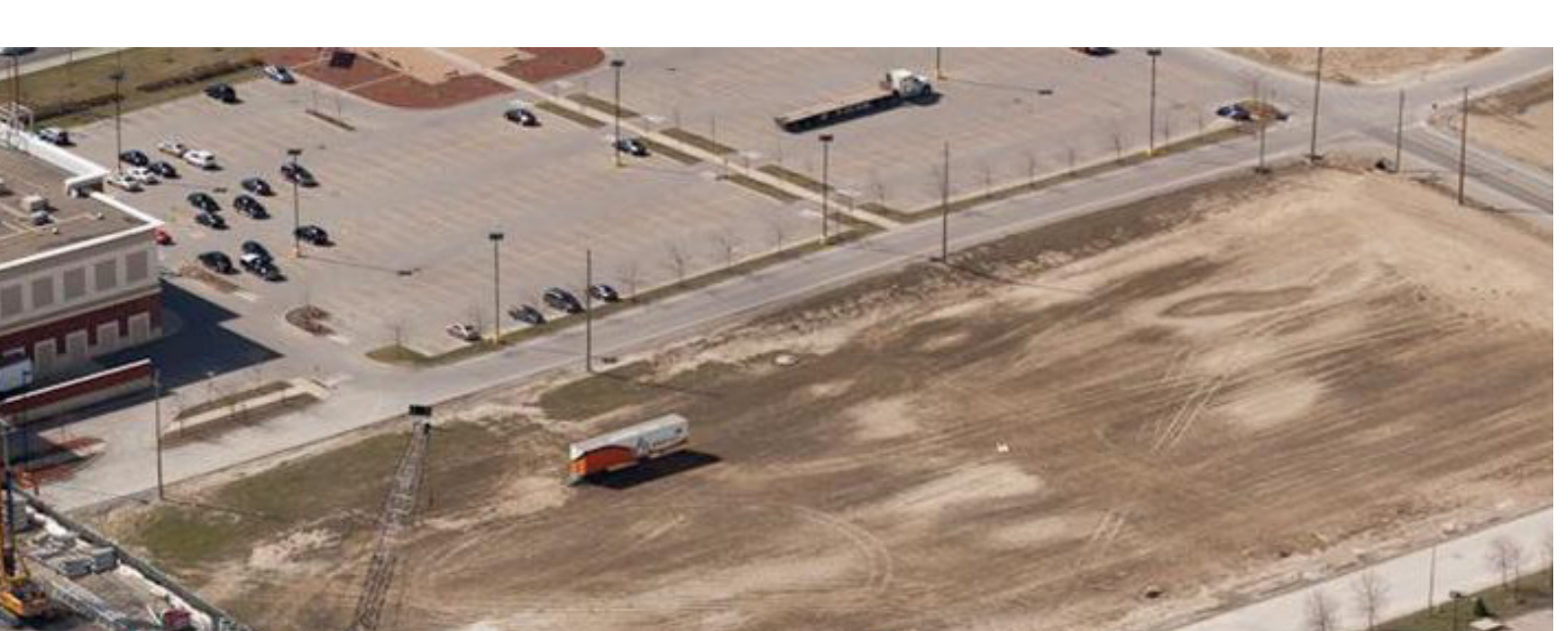
This initial report is intended to provide a preliminary evaluation of the VMC today and provide the City with initial strategic direction to begin addressing those issues. Based on an assessment of existing context, and previous and ongoing VMC work, it offers some high-level observations and recommendations on key issues and initiatives that may impact the long-term success of the VMC, including, but not limited to: corporate policy, funding priorities, and citizen education and engagement efforts. Based on stakeholder consensus, it also begins articulating a more detailed vision, guiding principles and a district strategy (a suggested framework for new neighbourhood areas that will make up the VMC, each with its own vision and potential programming strategies). All of this work builds upon and refines the preliminary vision originally set out in the Secondary Plan. Informed by public and private sector input, and with their buy-in, this report can serve as a tool for aligning stakeholders, guiding and informing collective and individual efforts by improving coordination both within and between City departments and between the City and VMC landowners. It can also provide a basis for marketing and raising awareness of the VMC to the broader public, founded on a clear message. This can help ensure that priorities are set and decisions made in a coordinated manner that supports the VMC’s long-term strategic vision and goals.











# Context & Overview





# VMC Context

The City of Vaughan is a part of a much larger urban region – the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”) – that has been experiencing a consistent population boom over the past decade (see *Figure 1*). This growth, combined with a broader North American movement towards walkable urbanism and development densification, has led to many of Toronto’s suburbs and satellite cities pursuing the creation of compact urban downtown development to serve their citizenry. This is occurring all in areas that are, today, primarily characterized by low-density suburban growth patterns. Through the goals and objectives of the City’s Secondary Plan, the VMC represents Vaughan’s movement towards this end. Understanding Vaughan’s larger regional context, its history as a city, as well as the history and evolution behind the creation of the VMC itself, is an essential base upon which to found appropriate strategies that are contextually relevant and thus can ensure that the VMC becomes the competitive downtown desired – a place that sets itself apart.

## The City of Vaughan in York Region

Over the past decade, the Region of York, and particularly the City of Vaughan, has experienced a staggering swell in population due to favourable Provincial immigration and economic conditions – trends expected to continue well into the future and planned for through the Province of Ontario’s growth management strategy, *The Places to Grow Act* (2006).



*Figure 1: Regional Map of the Greater Toronto Area. The City of Vaughan: — — The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre: ●*

Between 2006 and 2010, Vaughan grew by approximately 50,000 people (from 238,865 to 288,301 residents) which represents a growth rate of 20.7 per cent – the second fastest in Canada during this time period.

As a part of this strategy, the Region of York is expected to grow by more than 575,000 people and 318,000 jobs by 2031. According to the Region’s Official Plan, the City of Vaughan is expected to accommodate 29 per cent of the regional population growth and 33 per cent of the region’s employment growth, resulting in approximately 167,300 new residents and 103,900 new jobs. Growth of this nature is anticipated, and is currently being experienced, across the entirety of the GTA’s suburban “905” area, with Vaughan and the neighbouring municipality of Brampton (within the bordering Region of Peel) representing, respectively, the second fastest and fastest growing municipalities in Canada between 2006 and 2011 (see *Figure 2*). **A market study aimed at understanding this competitive regional environment from a development standpoint will form an important part of the VMC business plan to follow.**



Between 2006 and 2011 many suburban Toronto municipalities experienced tremendous residential growth. Brampton grew by 20.8 per cent, Richmond Hill by 14.0 per cent, Markham by 15.3 per cent and Newmarket by 9.33 per cent.



#### Map Legend:

- ① Vaughan Metropolitan Centre;
- ② Newmarket Centre;
- ③ Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway;
- ④ Markham Centre;
- ⑤ Scarborough Centre;
- ⑥ Downtown Pickering;
- ⑦ North York Centre;
- ⑧ Yonge-Eglinton Centre;
- ⑨ Downtown Toronto;
- ⑩ Etobicoke Centre;
- ⑪ Mississauga City Centre;
- ⑫ Downtown Brampton;
- ⑬ Downtown Milton;
- ⑭ Downtown Guelph

Figure 2: Regional Map “905” and Toronto Urban Growth Centres.

## An Amalgamated City

Vaughan was incorporated as a lower-tier municipality of the Region of York in 1991 through the amalgamation of five historic towns (Kleinberg, Woodbridge, Maple, Thornhill and Concord) under one city council (see Figure 3). Since incorporation, Vaughan has boomed as a rural-suburban city, however many residents still view their historic town not just as a neighbourhood of Vaughan, but as their town centre and municipal identity. This cultural context is important because breaking down these walls, building a unified civic identity, and getting Vaughan residents to view and use the VMC as their downtown will be critical to the VMC’s ultimate success.

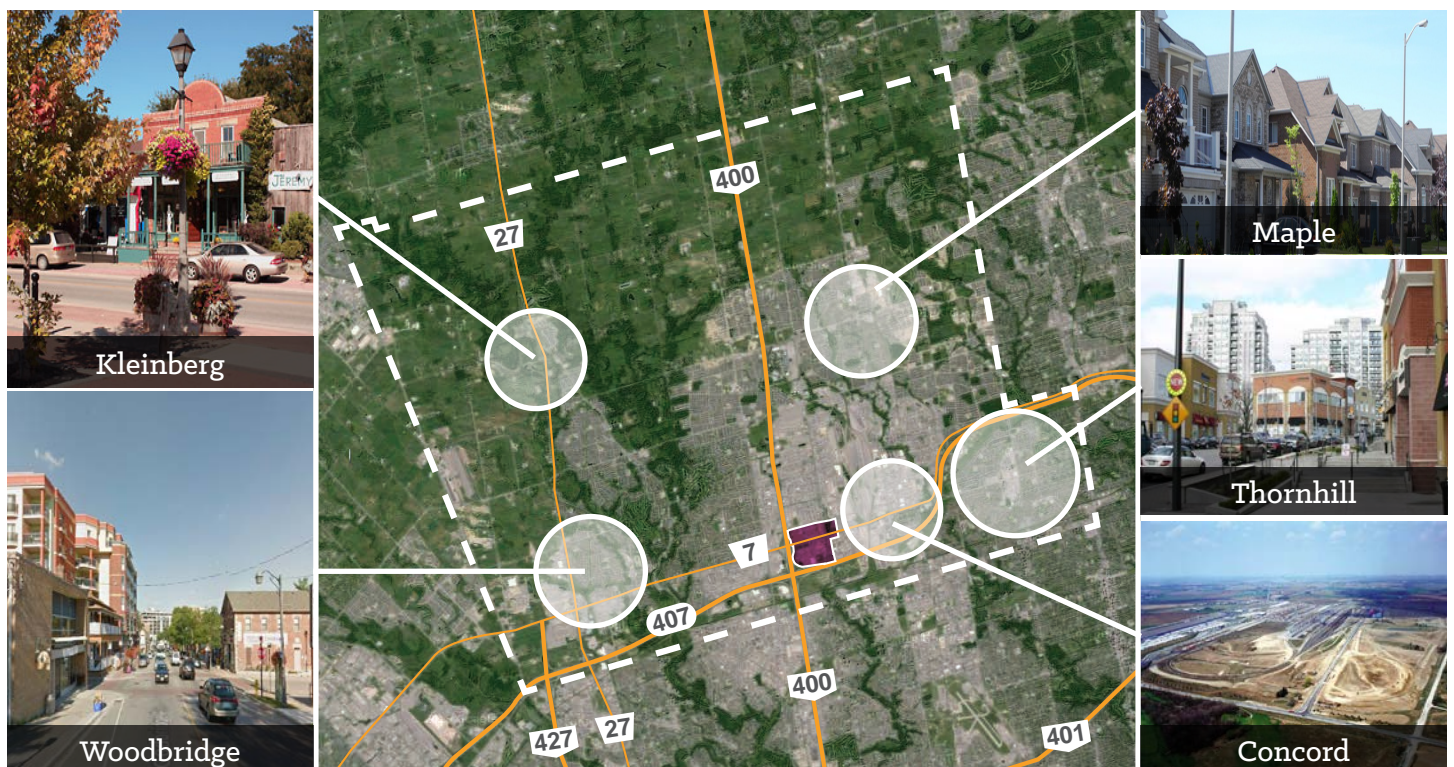


Figure 3: The Five Historic Towns that form the City of Vaughan. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre: ●

# VMC Context (cont'd)

## TTC Subway Extension

Since 1989, Vaughan has been involved in the subway politics of Metropolitan Toronto, advocating for, and ultimately securing, a station stop on a Toronto Transit Commission (“TTC”) subway line in 1999. As a part of a new six-station subway extension of the University-Spadina line, the City will host the new terminus station of the line at the VMC (see *Figure 4*).. This subway extension was the impetus to targeting this area for intensification and spawned a desire to broadly leverage this major infrastructure investment to its fullest potential. **The presence of a subway station alone, however, will not naturally give rise to a downtown. Focused effort, commitment and continued investment over time are required to harness the subway’s potential and shape the realization of an urban core for Vaughan.**

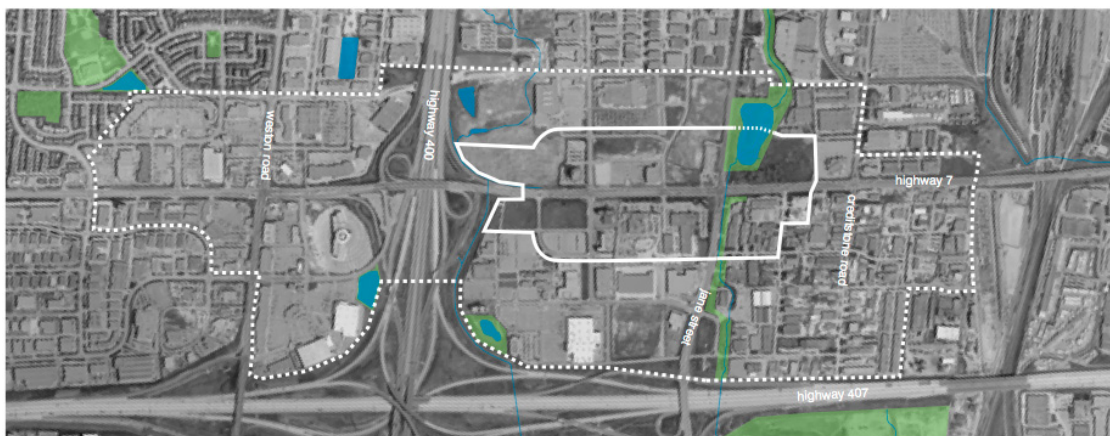


*Figure 4: The Current TTC Subway System. The Yonge-University Spadina Line: —*

*Note: The stations between and including “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre” & “Sheppard West” are a part of the current subway expansion and will open for use in 2017.*

## The Vaughan Corporate Centre

To plan for, and maximize, related benefits from the development expected to occur around this new subway stop, the City of Vaughan developed a 1998 Official Plan Amendment in the area around the station and Regional Highways 400 and 407 (an express-toll route). Entitled the *Vaughan Corporate Centre* (“VCC”), the plan, undertaken with the City by Ontario firm EDA Collaborative, called for more intense uses of land, increases in height and density, and a mix of live-work development to create a residential-employment core for Vaughan (see *Figure 5* and *Figure 6*).



AERIAL OF THE STUDY AREA · VCC DISTRICT [----] VCC NODE [—]

*Figure 5: The Initial Study Area of the VCC with the Provincially Defined Urban Growth Centre (“VCC Node”).*



## Places to Grow & The Rise of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

In June 2006, when the Provincial growth management strategy *Places to Grow* was brought into force-and-effect for the GTA, Vaughan revisited the VCC, which had become stalled with limited implementation. The City initiated a Focus Area Study in November 2008 which lasted until June 2010, with the help of Ontario firm Urban Strategies, to produce a refined Secondary Plan for the area (see Figure 7). The parameters of this study were to set the planning framework necessary to accommodate the growth in population and jobs forecast for the area as a part of the City's new 2010 Official Plan, and meet the provincially mandated density target of 200 persons plus jobs per hectare. The result of this work was the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan, an updated Official Plan Amendment to guide the growth and development of approximately 442 acres of land at the northeast nexus of Regional Highways 400 and 407 into becoming the City's new downtown (see *Appendix A* for a review of the Ontario Planning hierarchy and the Secondary Plan's position within it).



Figure 6: A Rendering of the VCC at Full Build-Out.



Figure 7: An Early Rendering of the VMC at Full Build-Out.

Vaughan Council adopted the VMC Secondary Plan on September 7, 2010, and subsequently charged the Commissioner of Planning to begin the necessary planning and infrastructure work to facilitate future implementation – along with the necessary legal work to finalize the plan's approval through mediation with area landowners at the OMB. While some public and citizen education, as required by the Ontario Planning Act, was done in development of the VMC Secondary Plan, broad-based public awareness of the process, specific goals and vision for the VMC were never generated and as such the general Vaughan population, today, has a limited understanding of the VMC's existence, rationale and potential benefits.

**To achieve the proscribed Provincial intensification target of 200 persons plus jobs per hectare in the Urban Growth Centre, the VMC has been planned to accommodate at minimum by 2031:**

- 12,000 residential units to be home to approximately 25,000 new residents
- 11,500 jobs of which 5,000 will be new office jobs
- 1.5 million square feet of office space (a minimum)
- 750,000 square feet of retail space

# The Importance of a Downtown

Research across North America suggests that a thriving downtown, or urban core, is a critical contributor to a variety of desirable social and economic outcomes for any city. Typically, a downtown is a city's most valuable land, most economically productive area, and its most important social and cultural environment. Building upon existing momentum, leveraging upcoming development and the soon-to-be completed Mobility Hub, and beginning the complex process of implementing the VMC Secondary Plan to create a downtown for Vaughan will:

1. Foster a stronger sense of community and pride in Vaughan by creating a central place of gathering and unified civic identity that enables social cohesion
2. Produce the greatest return on municipal investment by growing the City's tax base on its highest valued land, generating long-term revenues to invest in the broader Vaughan community
3. Contribute to the diversification of the local Vaughan economy and job creation by:
  - Attracting office employment uses, including large institutions and corporations
  - Promoting local entrepreneurship and small business development
4. Provide an improved quality of life for area residents and employees and offer Vaughan's first true live-work urban environment
5. Decrease 'leakage' of economic activity (in the form of skilled workers and commercial spending) to neighbouring GTA communities and downtown Toronto by making Vaughan a more competitive place
6. Increase tourism frequency, duration, and economic impact by creating a place around the major transit infrastructure already in existence or under development

Unique to Vaughan, given its roots as an amalgamated city, a true downtown is primed to serve an important civic function by creating, for the first time, a single environment in the City that bears no allegiance to one of its five historic towns and truly belongs to all citizens of Vaughan, creating a new world-class centre of gravity for the City and region.





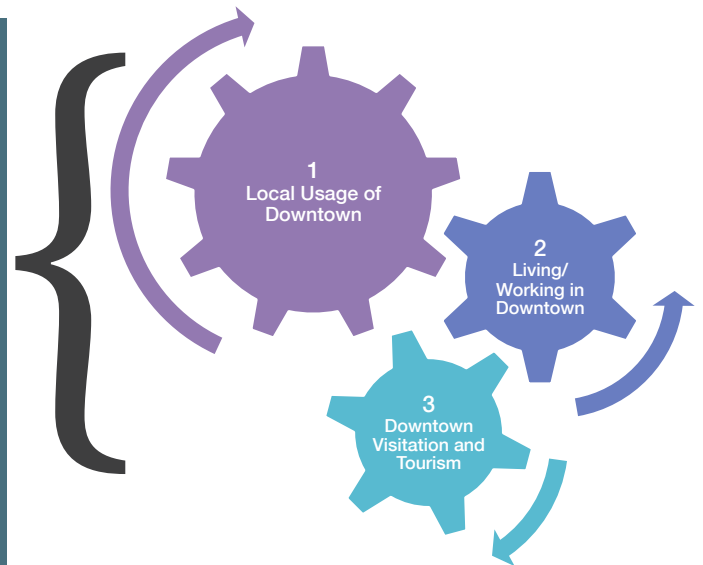
# Fundamentals of Downtown Success

The following overarching framework informs the general goal of creating a true downtown for Vaughan and the process of establishing a diverse program of appropriate uses and experiences to achieve that outcome. Building on the goals articulated in the VMC Secondary Plan, these fundamentals should guide decision-making surrounding its implementation. They are designed to set off a chain reaction of positive evolution, sustained throughout the VMC's development, and ultimately create an ecosystem that stays true to the overall vision of the future downtown as a robust, thriving, dynamic place that is distinctly Vaughan.

## **Foundation: A Conducive Physical Place**

These fundamentals, however, cannot be pursued or manifested in a vacuum – they must live and evolve in a conducive physical place. An essential foundation to their successful realization is thus the creation of a physical environment that fosters, cultivates and supports these activities and behaviours, and their related uses. To that end, policies contained within the following documents guiding the VMC's built-form and cultural character, are critical to setting the stage for successful and sustainable place creation and associated economic prosperity:

- VMC Secondary Plan
- VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan
- VMC Urban Design Guidelines (in progress)
- VMC Cultural Framework and Public Art Plan (in progress)



## Step 1: Local Usage of the Downtown

Getting residents to love and frequent their downtown is the first step to driving the successful development and implementation of the VMC. The existing local population represents people with the highest natural propensity and inclination to frequent the VMC, if given reasons to come. The City of Vaughan must encourage the use of the VMC by its local residents and employees by cultivating its image and function as the central gathering place for the City. This must involve and include properly scaled and frequent cultural activities and rituals, the development of a broad mix of retail, entertainment and amenity offerings, and the right civic institutions, as well as directing appropriate future investment and development opportunities to the area.

## Step 2: Living & Working in the Downtown

Growing a significant base and diverse mix of residential and more employment opportunities within the VMC will take time, but is essential to building the stability of a permanent downtown population which will animate the area 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The VMC needs to provide multiple opportunities for a variety of people to live and work in the VMC in varying culturally and geographically defined districts and in a diversity of formats to accommodate a range of housing demands and office users.

## Step 3: Downtown Visitation & Tourism

The City of Vaughan should endeavour to develop a tourist and visitor-based economy in the VMC over time, rooted in strong anchor institutions, entertainment destinations and regional events that build destination appeal, and underpinned by a compelling quilt of unique districts that support its urban context. Given the VMC's location at the centre of a broader region that is experiencing exponential growth, the VMC can emerge as a true regional destination gathering place in its own right, as well as encourage existing visitors to Vaughan to extend their stays and experience the excitement that the VMC has to offer.

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is an important tool that lists the overarching factors affecting the VMC's future development and functionality as Vaughan's downtown. Strengths and Weaknesses are not meant to be either endorsements or indictments, respectively, but rather brief candid assessments based on our research and interviews.

## Strengths

- The VMC's favourable location and connectivity, at the geographic centre of the GTA commuter corridor, east-west along Highway 401 and Highway 407 and north-south along Highway 400, with proximity to Pearson Airport
- The City is forecast to continue experiencing substantial demographic growth, with 100,000 or more new residents forecast over the next 15 years, with significant growth also forecast for surrounding municipalities
- Strong civic leadership, including a unified Council, popular mayor and many new director-level employees with fresh perspectives and ideas
- A committed \$1.2 billion investment into mobility infrastructure, including regional subway and bus facilities and internal bike and walking connections
- The VMC's high-visibility and vehicular accessibility at the intersection of Highways 400 and 407, and Highway 7
- The new KPGM office tower currently under construction will bring 400-600 new employees to the VMC, coinciding with the planned opening of the TTC subway station, and be a strong signal for future office development in the downtown core
- There are 8 new residential condominium projects currently proposed (with 2 towers under construction) in the VMC, which will accommodate approximately 2,000 new residential units (17 per cent of the VMC's 2031 target)
- An extensive 20-hectare park system planned with a mix of urban and natural spaces making the VMC one of Canada's greenest downtowns
- The VMC Secondary Plan is nearing a stage of finalization through OMB mediation, but remains open for slight modification and adaptation where necessary

## Weaknesses

- The City does not control any assets (developable land) or have a corporate presence in the VMC, aside from the Edgeley storm water pond along the Black Creek corridor north of Highway 7
- The VMC is bisected by the major arterial roads Jane Street and Highway 7 (both are 6+ lanes wide) which impacts future pedestrian connectivity and comfort, as well as overall downtown integration and cohesiveness
- The presence of multiple, small landowners east of Jane Street and south of Highway 7 may impact the coordination and implementation of the Secondary Plan vision for the area as land assembly arrangements to create appropriately sized development parcels may prove challenging
- A vast portion of the VMC area is beset with water table and geotechnical issues that raise the cost of developing urban-format office and residential well above the typical suburban market's price ceiling
- An agreed-upon parking policy in the VMC has not been resolved given the cost-prohibitive (in most areas) nature of underground options to the development community and the City's desire to avoid above-grade structures where possible
- Some future parks and roadways planned for in the Secondary Plan are overlaid on existing assets (e.g. a 330,000 square foot IKEA valued at \$25M) that are unlikely to redevelop in the short- or midmedium-term
- The City currently does not have a strategy or dedicated revenue stream to fund special projects in the VMC that may arise in the short term
- The VMC Secondary Plan has large city blocks and few service streets at present, potentially necessitating curb-cuts for servicing, loading and parking access to buildings which would disrupt the pedestrian experience and ground floor activation
- To date, there is no clear strategy in place for how to meet the VMC parkland target of 20 Ha and the foreseen costs attributed to acquisition and development of the parkland and open space network
- The necessary infrastructure work to renew Black Creek to remediate the flood line has initially been estimated at \$54M, but will require the City to revisit its Development Charge By-Law for funding options



Opportunities are not necessarily recommendations, but areas that deserve attention because they represent space to make progress. Finally, Threats are not warnings or prophecies, but merely potential external factors that might inhibit the proper development of the VMC as Vaughan's downtown, and thus need to be addressed and mitigated.

## Opportunities

- To create a cohesive identity and sense of unity for the entire City of Vaughan that brings together its five historic communities and their residents to one common downtown space
- To invest in public infrastructure to set the stage for and enable private development, maximizing impact by prioritizing investments that build from of existing development momentum and catalyze place creation
- To ensure that the significant influx of new residents to Vaughan identify and utilize the VMC as their downtown upon arrival
- To focus on the satisfaction of VMC early-adopters (the initial wave of VMC residents and employees) and turn them into VMC ambassadors
- To date, the VMC landowner group continues to positively engage with the City in a collaborative process to resolve the mediation and planning of the VMC in order to have development move forward
- The VMC Secondary Plan allows for a range of heights, densities and approved land uses that creates great flexibility for area landowners to respond to market realities with a diversity of development options
- To leverage the City's forthcoming Community Improvement Plan to incent office development, coupled with a targeted economic development and business attraction strategy, to create traction in attracting new office tenants and build from the profile and success of the KPMG tower
- The VMC is part of an existing economic cluster of design and construction industries that exist along Jane Street that are prime for leveraging into a larger regional creative cluster centred on the VMC
- The VMC as a terminus station of the Yonge-University-Spadina subway line, is a part of Canada's premier educational (York University, University of Toronto, Ryerson University) and cultural (Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts) corridor
- To centralize the distribution of communication and information regarding the VMC with consistent messaging, and educate and inform frontline City employees, in order to build awareness and enable advocates for the VMC that are in daily interaction with Vaughan's citizens

## Threats

- The VMC is not universally understood to be of paramount importance to the future of the City and prioritized as such
- To date, no single, clearly established vision for the VMC exists to guide and direct internal and external efforts towards agreed-upon common goals
- Limited awareness and understanding of the VMC within the City of Vaughan itself, as well as among residents at large, can impact support and funding for VMC initiatives as well as the VMC's future usage and acceptance by the community
- Viewing the VMC as a single, large neighbourhood instead of a series of smaller, integrated neighbourhoods, each with unique programming, end-users and experiences that make up a diverse and exciting downtown area
- Prolonged mediation of the VMC Secondary Plan threatens to slow and adversely impact implementation as, while the plan is at the OMB, it is not considered in-force-and-effect, leaving some land-owners idle awaiting its finalization, with others pursuing development applications that can move forward under the existing regime
- Competing intensification areas – including the Vaughan Mills area, Jane Street, and the Highway 400 corridor – create competition with the VMC as the City's priority project and driver of economic growth and investment, and may impact the VMC's development timeline

**This SWOT analysis is meant to provide important context to where the VMC sits today and forms the foundation from which the strategies and initiatives, beginning with this report, will be developed to guide the City's actions and achieve measureable results.**

# Critical Initiatives: Downtown Enhancement Strategies

To realize these outcomes and to set up the VMC to achieve its potential over its development horizon, three critical interrelated initiatives are highlighted here that need to be undertaken and adopted as corporate priorities by the City moving forward. Adherence will set the stage to catalyze the VMC's short-term evolution and set the foundation for enduring success over time. Failing to do so could both inhibit the speed of the VMC's development as well as prevent it from coming to fruition in the manner conceived as a true downtown for all of Vaughan.

## 1: Continue to Prioritize the VMC

The aspiration of creating a downtown is one of the most important initiatives in the City of Vaughan today. Far from a site-specific series of developments and investments, the VMC will have positive impacts with exponential benefits to be reaped by the City at large and all of its citizens. Investing in the VMC is an investment in the future of the whole City. However, for the City to achieve its goals for the VMC, supporting the downtown's development must continue to be a top corporate priority for the City and a focus of municipal policies, programs, funding, investment and resources. While other important parts of the City inevitably require attention and growth and investment as well, the VMC should remain one of Council's top focuses given its potential long-term benefits to the City as a whole. A \$1.2B infrastructure investment into transit is already under construction and this needs to be leveraged and capitalized upon to maximize impact and take advantage of the rare market conditions and growth currently underway in the City and region.

**This top prioritization of the VMC is consistent with a series of steps and initiatives the City of Vaughan has already undertaken in recent years, which include:**

- Identifying the VMC as Vaugahn 2020 Strategic Initiative #1
- Creating the VMC Subcommittee of Vaughan City Council's Priorities and Key Initatives Committee
- Hiring the VMC Development Facilitator to assist the COV with the implementation of the VMC with area landowners

In keeping with this Council priority, the City must keep in mind that despite its commitment to a new downtown, Vaughan has dispersed investments throughout the City, rather than centring them on the new downtown. This has led to important people movers and economic drivers (including City Hall and the upcoming regional hospital), that should traditionally anchor an urban core, to be diffusely located far outside the VMC (Figure 8). These decisions have forestalled catalyzing spin-off development on some of the City's most valuable land targeted for intensification, associated land value appreciation and property taxes from that development, and the added economic activity and place-creation benefits that these major people-drivers can produce. Moving forward, **the economic tools at the City's disposal should be focused on generating investment, development and activity within the VMC, with an immediate focus on areas with existing development momentum to be leveraged and/or ones with important immediate place-making value. Additionally, the City should work to connect and pull end-users from Vaughan's major surrounding people-drivers, into the VMC.**



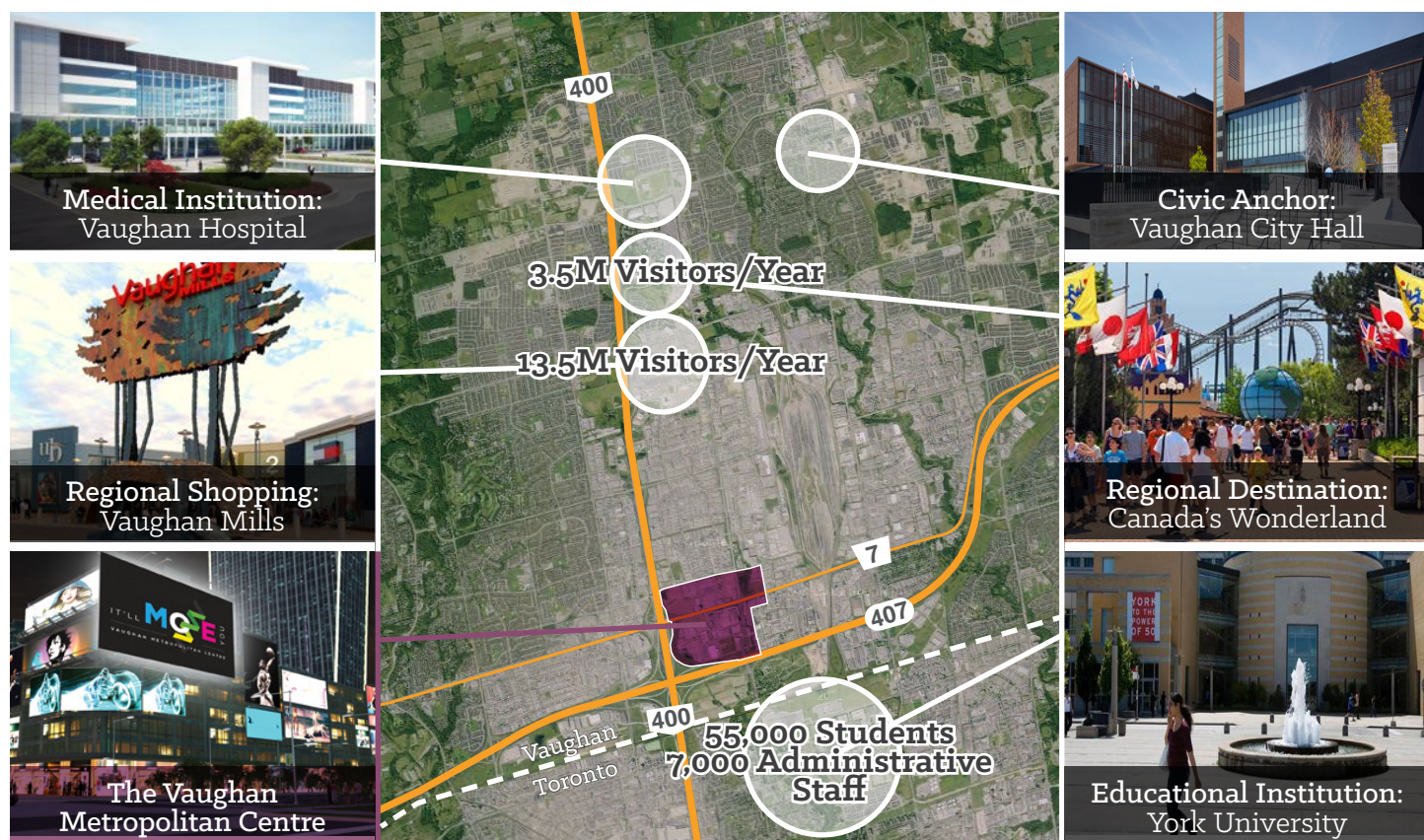


Figure 8: Major People-Drivers in Close Proximity to the New Downtown of Vaughan ("The VMC").

## 2: Engage the Vaughan Community & Build Popular Support

The VMC is slated to become Vaughan's downtown, yet the residents of greater Vaughan are not vested in its success today. To date, Vaughan residents have not been significantly engaged, so they have limited awareness of the VMC or a real understanding of its vision, rationale and potential benefits. As the historic villages of Kleinburg, Woodbridge and Maple each have their own established main streets, Thornhill has developed a new "Main Street"-styled project, and Concord is in such close proximity to the City of Toronto boundary, Vaughan residents tend to service their daily needs locally, while still often heading to downtown Toronto for destination experiences. This is evidence of the fact that while Vaughan's smaller commercial areas are places for neighbourhood congregation, they do not have the same vibrancy, completeness or magnetism of a true downtown.

**In 2014 the City of Vaughan undertook an Ipsos Reid telephone survey of its residents, finding that while 91 per cent of respondents knew that a subway was coming to Vaughan, only 13 per cent knew "a great deal" and 35 per cent "knew a little" about the downtown under development.**

To overcome this, and to unlock any form of lasting success for the VMC, the City needs to capture the attention and imagination of the Vaughan community. Without strong community awareness and support, political support for VMC funding and investment decisions will prove more challenging. Furthermore, **Vaughan residents are the very end-users who need to be excited about, attracted to, and desire to use and spend time and money in the VMC.** Educational outreach through traditional planning means (pamphlets, front-line service worker briefings and community meetings) need to be coupled with alternative forms of engagement (leveraging online, social media, and other means) to fully bring the majority of Vaughan residents, in all wards of the City, into the process of downtown city-building. The goal is to create a groundswell of engaged and, most importantly, informed stakeholders with a sense of ownership of what their downtown is planned to be, and an understanding of the steps being taken towards implementing that vision.



# Critical Initiatives (cont'd)

## 3: Establish a Refined Vision & Stay Committed To It

Finally, the City needs to establish a refined vision of the VMC that articulates a more specific and accessible picture of the VMC's future, and one that has been informed by input from all three key stakeholder groups (the City, community and land-owners). This vision will provide a clear framework for shaping the character and nature of appropriate and acceptable development in the VMC.

This report provides a foundation for this effort. But a vision is only as good as the commitment to its realization. While stakeholder education and consensus-building will increase the potential for VMC development to reflect and reinforce the vision and principles articulated, a firm commitment on behalf of the City to safeguard that vision over an extended period of time is essential to achieving the strategic outcomes desired for the VMC.

A downtown will not appear overnight. Patience will be required to allow initiatives to take hold and succeed and for development to move forward in certain parts of the VMC. Some divergences from any institutionalized vision are inevitable, especially given the time horizon for the build-out of the VMC. Opportunities may arise over time that were not conceived of and need to be taken advantage of. However, it is important to have a stable civic leadership, and the people and organizations in place at the City responsible and accountable for shepherding the vision and initiatives forward in line with that established stakeholder consensus. Change can happen faster than expected, and the wave of growth Vaughan is experiencing today is a rare occurrence that must be capitalized upon. But projects that do not conform to the vision without sufficient justification, or that could inhibit the broader goal of downtown place-creation, must be modified or rejected. **The VMC is different. It has a higher-order purpose for the future of the City than development elsewhere in Vaughan, and higher standards must be demanded and adhered to, all founded on a shared understanding of the economic and market realities of the development and implementation of the VMC over time. The City must learn to say “No” when appropriate, but both the City and landowners share a role in working together to bring the vision of the downtown to life.**



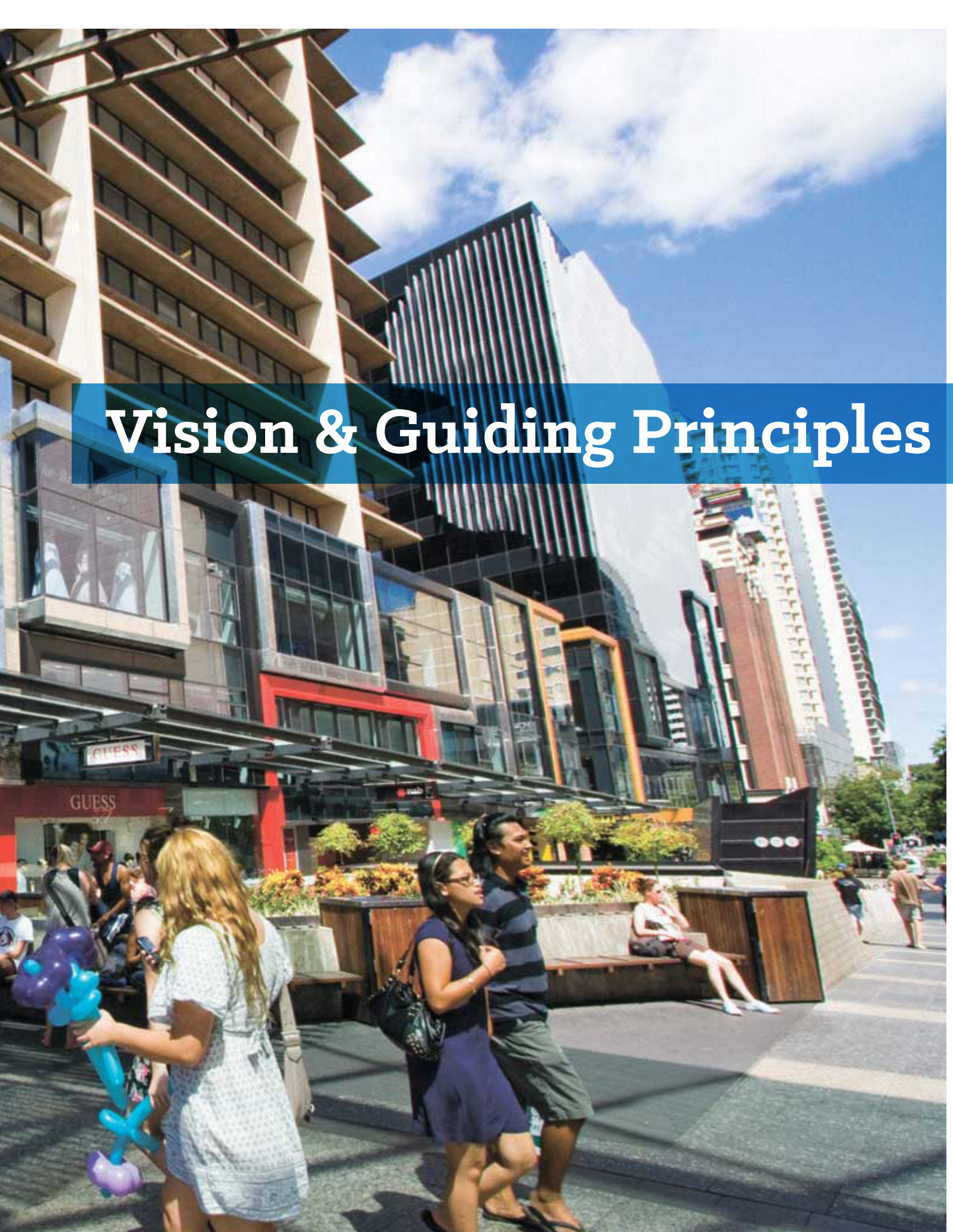








# Vision & Guiding Principles









# A Refined Vision for the VMC

The VMC Secondary Plan set out a vision statement for the VMC focused on seven high-level guiding principles: Transit-Oriented, Walkable, Accessible, Diverse, Vibrant, Green and Beautiful. While these principles capture the spirit, at a macro level, of what the downtown is meant to become, collectively they do not offer the necessary detail or focus to provide the City and its stakeholders with a complete understanding of the unique and diverse characteristics that will define this downtown. The following sections of this report propose a more detailed vision, guiding principles and district strategy for the VMC, building upon and refining the preliminary vision originally set out in the VMC Secondary Plan.

*The City of Vaughan continues to undergo a foundational transformation from a suburban, sometimes rural, bedroom community of Toronto, into an independent, self-sustaining place. Facilitated by the Provincial growth management requirements of Places to Grow, the development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will embody the physical manifestation of this transformation and catalyze the City's continued growth and evolution.*

*The VMC will create a true downtown for Vaughan – an intense, dynamic community that will become the heart of the City – economically, culturally and physically – for all of the residents and historic communities that compose Vaughan today and the future generations of residents, employees and visitors. The VMC will be the human-scaled, urban, walkable, multi-modal, civic, cultural, institutional, educational, and entertainment hub of Vaughan, in every season and time of day, with all the grit and polish of a modern city centre.*



# Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are the targeted themes that are expected to guide the planning, policy decisions and implementation strategies impacting the City's downtown, respecting the results of the ongoing mediation of the VMC Secondary Plan at the Ontario Municipal Board. Reinforcing and expanding on the VMC's vision, they are intended to inform the personality and programming of uses and experiences within the VMC, as well as the desired nature of future development and investment.

## Vaughan's Urban Core

As the future downtown of the City of Vaughan, the VMC will be the area of greatest development heights and densities. Former suburban practice of building single uses will be traded in for development that intermingles residential, retail, office, hospitality, entertainment, recreation, education and other uses in an integrated, mixed-use environment. All new developments will be held to VMC specific design and planning standards, to ensure that each adds to the vision of the VMC as Vaughan's dynamic urban core that is an activated and animated place, day or night, all year long. These elements will combine to create a place that drives quality of life for residents, employees, and visitors, where all their needs can be met within walkable convenience.



## The GTA Standard for Transit & Mobility

The VMC naturally benefits from unparalleled regional connectivity, sitting at the confluence of Highway 400 and 407, and has been the focal point of an unprecedented magnitude of new transit infrastructure. With subway, BRT and regional bus transit, the VMC will become the GTA's premiere mobility hub by seamlessly integrating this transit infrastructure into a dynamic walkable, urban environment. The VMC will leverage this transit investment and mixed-use integration to both draw traffic and users into the VMC from the surrounding region, while providing VMC residents, employees, and visitors with the flexibility to connect to local neighbourhoods, Toronto, and the wider GTA with ease and simplicity.



## Where Vaughan Does Businesses

Vaughan is a city of entrepreneurial small business and the VMC will continue to support and grow this vibrant economic base. Existing VMC businesses will be welcomed into this new era, while expanded space will be available for entrepreneurship in the creative-economy and a new wave of catalytic small business uses. The VMC will become the centre of Vaughan's diverse office development and offerings, marrying opportunities for Class A high-rise and campus office, with Class B, boutique office with live-work opportunities, developed in stand-alone or mixed-use formats. Additionally, the VMC will attract the headquarters of major industries and other businesses to establish primary or satellite offices, based the VMC's unparalleled commuter connectivity to the wider region and as a result of the high-quality, urban lifestyle afforded to local employees – comparable to the best urban work environments in Ontario.





These refined principles, based on City, community and landowner development objectives and, moving out of the planning realm, are designed to shape the physical implementation of the VMC. They help position and differentiate the downtown effort within its regional market context, and form the cornerstones of the VMC's future brand identity. By strongly adhering policy decisions to these Guiding Principles, the City of Vaughan can ensure it remains focused on the goal of achieving its outcomes for the downtown city-building effort.

## A Place for Civic Gathering & Cultural Celebration

The VMC will be the central gathering place for, and nexus of, Vaughan's unified civic identity, offering all residents, families and communities within Vaughan a place and platform for self-expression, creating a true sense of ownership of their downtown. With the parks, public spaces, flexible streets, and cultural and community facilities providing the staging for creative activation, the VMC will be the spot where Vaughan's diverse cultures and personalities come together through festivals and food, the back drop to public art showcasing the history of the City, the confluence of great streets of retail and things-to-do, and the City's major entertainment destination.



## A Centre for Learning & Innovation

Educational uses have been planned to permeate throughout the entire VMC, bringing with them students, staff and potential business synergies that will catalyze and activate the urban environment as a dynamic place throughout the year. Primary through to post-secondary, vocational, artistic or technical education will harness potential partnerships between the public and private sectors to deliver and integrate high-quality institutions in an urban format. Synergies and spin-offs born out of these partnerships, and the intellectual capital generated, will establish the VMC as an innovation hub, while home-grown expertise in the design, building and construction industry will congregate in the VMC to create a centre for cutting-edge, best practices in design and development for the GTA.



## Sustainability & Urban Recreation

Setting the standard for North American downtowns, each of the VMC's 20 hectares of planned parkland and numerous new streets will be created as completely open, accessible amenities. Embracing industry best practices of facilitating community health through access to green space and recreational offerings, VMC parks will be programmed to best fit their urban context and function: local neighbourhood parks for residents and family amenities; city-wide destination parks that protect Vaughan's natural heritage; and urban promenades and squares that create a diversity of active and passive gathering places in the urban fabric. New and old streets, with a wide network of designated bicycle lanes, will create a walkable and bikeable grid that lets residents live and work in the VMC without the necessity of a car.











# District Strategy & Programming



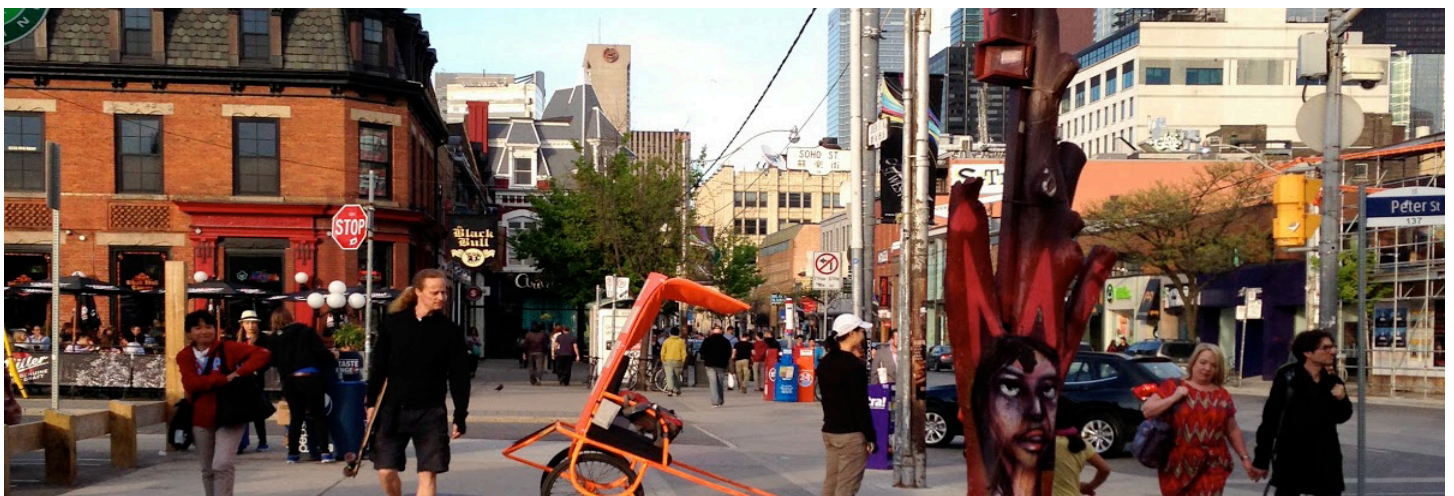
# District Strategy Overview

The segmentation of the VMC into unique and identifiable districts will assist the City in realizing their goals for the downtown. Great downtowns are often best understood and defined by the smaller neighbourhoods or districts that have evolved over time. Districts such as the Entertainment District of Downtown Toronto, SOHO in Manhattan, and SOMA in San Francisco, and their relationships to others surrounding them, give life, character, diversity and accessibility to their city's larger urban core. While districts will ultimately emerge over time, a district strategy will help differentiate distinct areas of the VMC from the larger narrative of the downtown, reinforcing and growing the unique competitive advantages for each. By starting to define districts, this strategy will further help to ensure that the components of an integrated "downtown" experience are achieved across the VMC, the sum of which will collectively help create a special identity or "sense of place" for Vaughan residents, employees and visitors. Finally, **by beginning to identify the VMC's districts based on existing or future advantages, assets and/or behaviours, it will allow the downtown development process to leverage the natural programming, marketing and physical connections that will emerge.**

**In focusing efforts and establishing alignment on this more detailed vision for the VMC, these districts can help to:**

- Inform and support marketing and economic development initiatives
- Create market demand
- Influence development patterns to align with the VMC's vision
- Guide short-term and long-term planning efforts (including the long-term transition of some existing land uses)
- Provide a common language with which to discuss the VMC

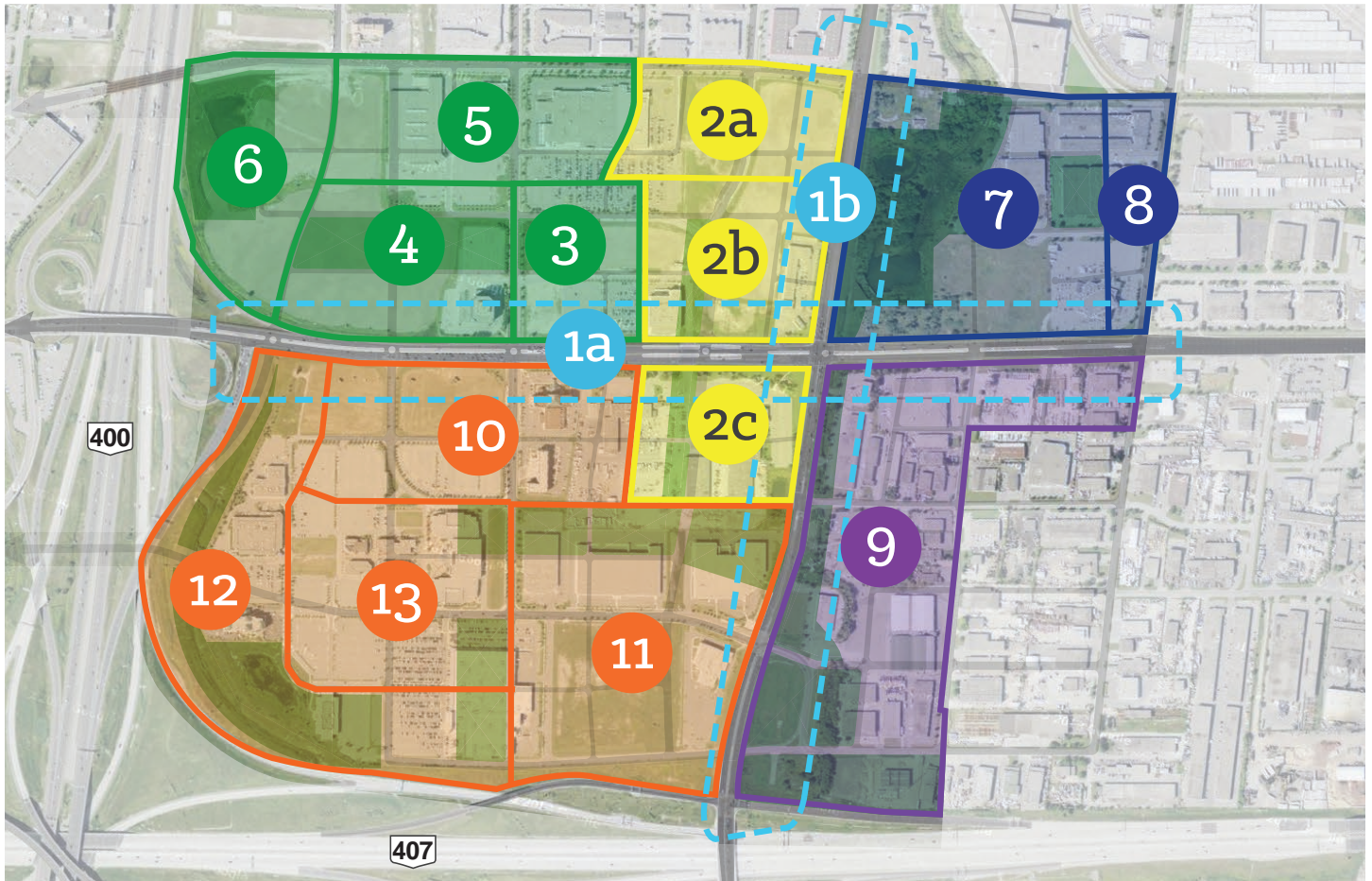
The strategy of reinforcing the concept of "Downtown Vaughan" to mean the entire 442 acres of the VMC, and including all of these interconnected districts within it, will ultimately make the VMC a stronger, more diverse, accessible, and compelling idea. The proposed districts for the VMC have been conceived, in coordination with the forthcoming "Character Areas" to be set out in the VMC Urban Design Guidelines, as complementary and integrated places, each with its unique personality and story, and positioned to maximize the development potential of the VMC. Detailed strategies and potential programming for each of these districts are explored in this section of this report. The vision for each district is, generally, supported by and not in conflict with the land use allowances and direction of the VMC Secondary Plan. Additionally, the location of districts are guided by the strategy of synergistically locating anchors of development activity ("dumbbells") in key areas in order to facilitate pedestrian flow between these activity centres, enabling and encouraging longer stays in the VMC. The names associated with each district are merely descriptive suggestions for ease of identification – they have not been adopted.





# VMC District Map

Although the districts are illustrated within defined geographies, these borders between districts should thus not be viewed as hard lines, but rather as informative with overlapping programming and experiences expected as districts transition from one to the other. Even within districts there is expected to be considerable evolution as existing uses and built-form are adaptively reused or eventually redeveloped. Furthermore, the numbering of these districts is not reflective of their potential development phasing, but simply for organization and narrative purposes.



## Gateway Corridors

1a. Avenue 7

1b. Jane Street

## The Mobility Hub

2a. Bus Terminal District

2b. Subway District

2c. South Millway District

3. The Core

4. Central Park

5. Central Park North

6. Entertainment District

7. Edgeley Pond

8. Creditstone Corporate

9. South Black Creek

10. Avenue Seven South

11. Business Enterprise Park

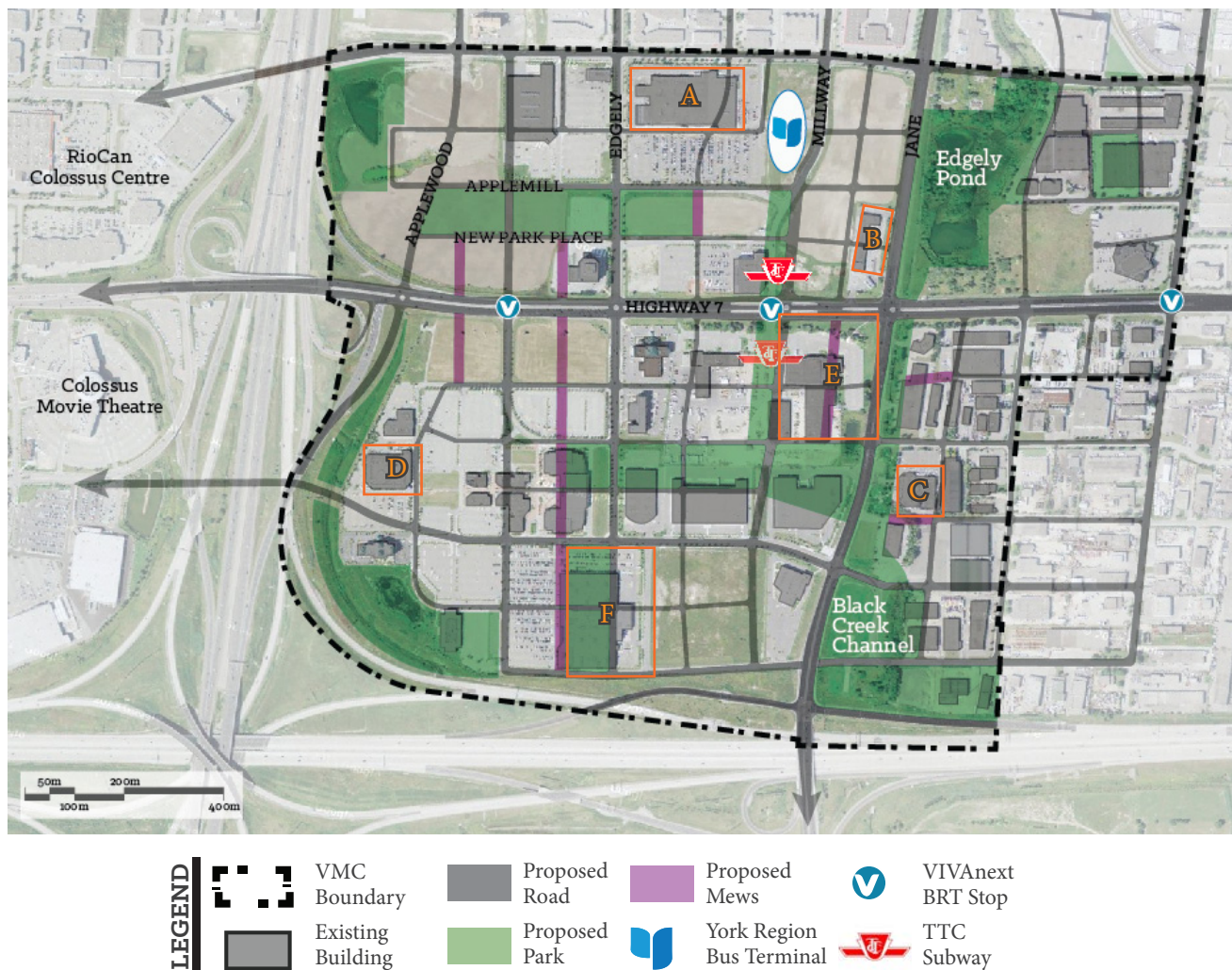
12. Corporate Innovation Corridor

13. South Community



# Existing Conditions and District Evolution

This District Strategy, while offering a vision of and framework for the VMC's future over its long-term development horizon, should not be seen as ignoring the very real conditions of the site at present. While some areas of the VMC have begun to redevelop in accordance with the plan set by the VMC Secondary Plan (evidenced in the new development that is currently occurring around the Mobility Hub and along Highway 7), others areas have not started at all. This is to be expected given the existence, in some cases, of revenue producing commercial assets (some of which are relatively new,) which will likely maintain their current form for the foreseeable future. As such, **underlying this vision for Vaughan's new downtown is the understanding that the VMC and each of these proposed districts will undergo significant transitional periods on differing timelines, as existing conditions and current development assets evolve towards redevelopment and new uses come online over time in accordance with market demands and changes.**

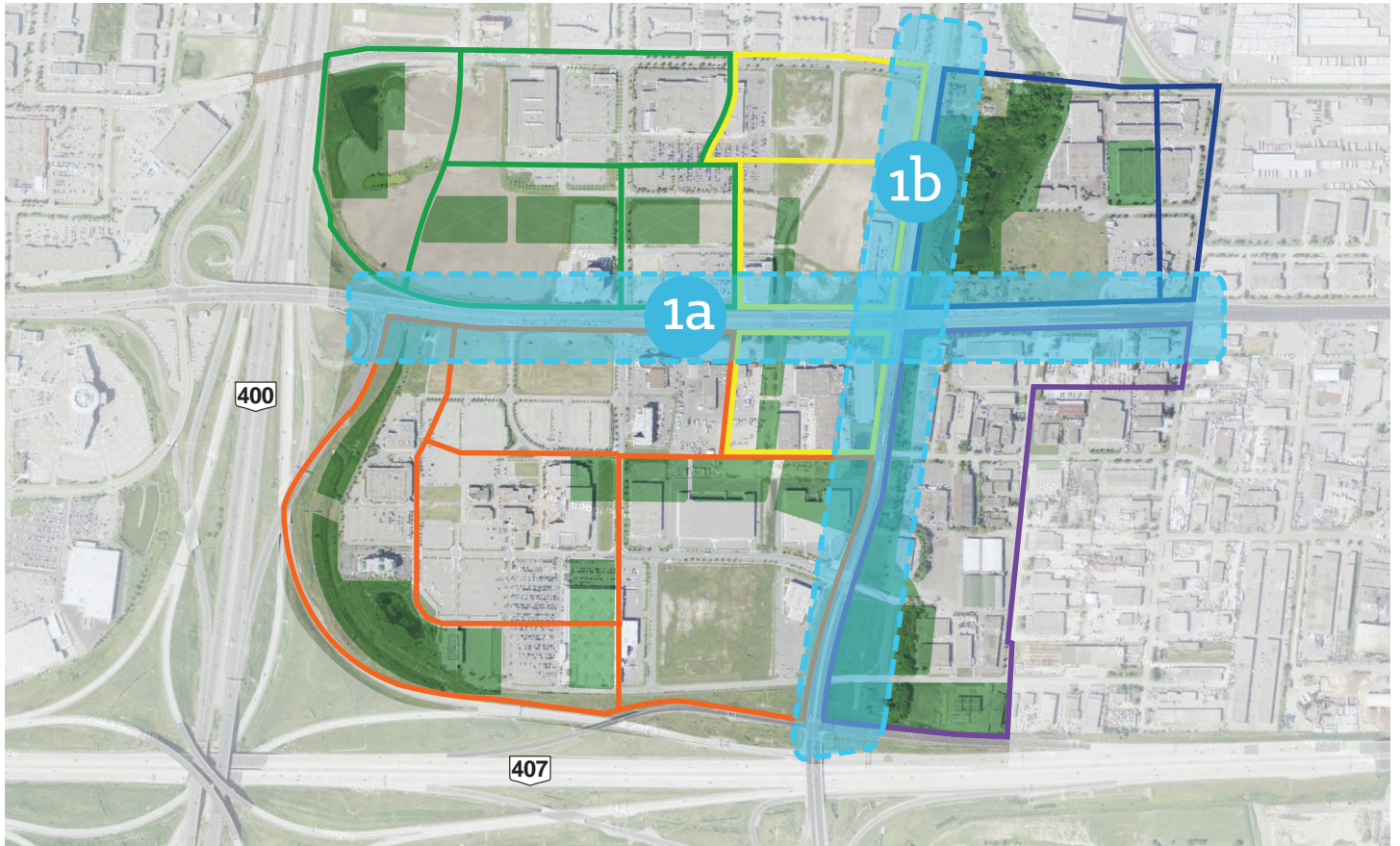


## Select Existing Major Developments





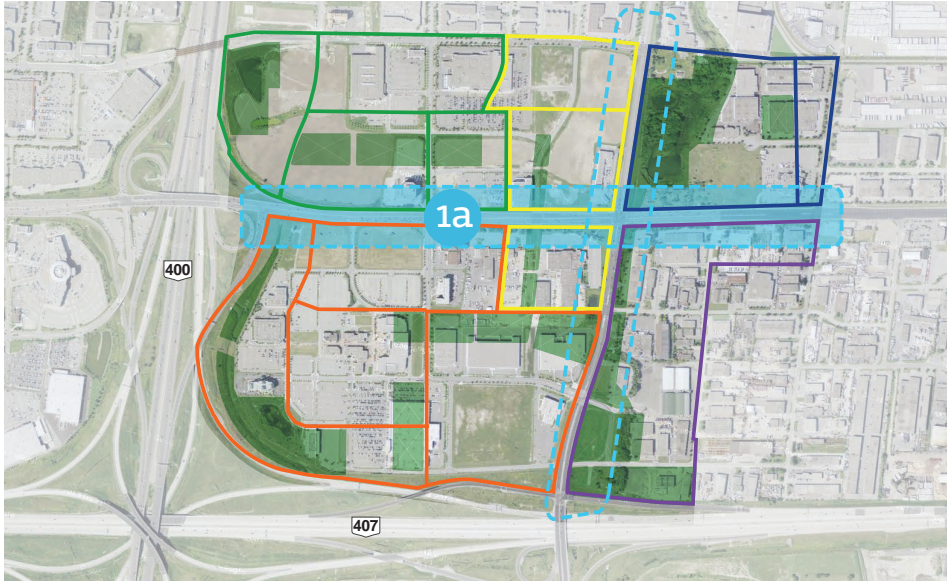
# Gateway Corridors



The Gateway Corridors, encompassing Avenue 7 (a stretch of the regional Highway 7) and Jane Street, represent the primary east-west and north-south thoroughfares bisecting the VMC. They represent the key points of arrival and departure for car, bus and truck traffic, and serve as the physical and experiential gateways to the VMC. They also serve an important role in ensuring strong connections between the VMC's quadrants by facilitating convenient crossings. While these corridors will be transitional in nature, unique wayfinding, cornerstone public art and installation pieces, and iconic buildings will be used to distinguish these corridors and serve the important function of inviting and pulling users into the excitement, experience and urban fabric of Vaughan's new downtown.

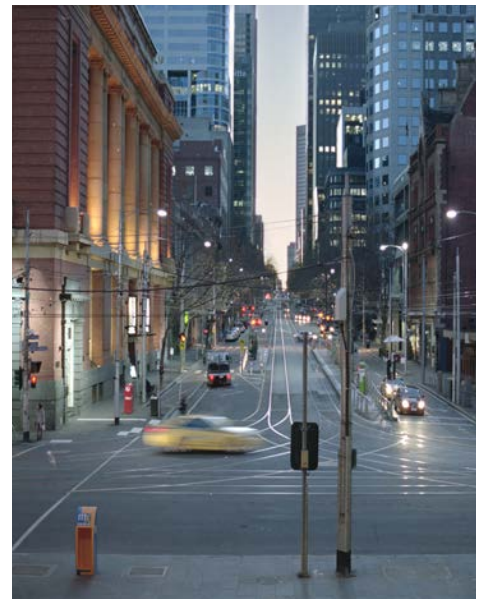


# Avenue 7



Avenue 7 is planned to become the central urban boulevard and east-west vehicular thoroughfare in the VMC, balancing destination higher order rapid transit and vehicular traffic with a pedestrian-friendly street, signalling to everyone that they have arrived in downtown Vaughan. Interesting lights, landscaping including a planned double row of street trees, roadwork and signage will differentiate the VMC stretch of this regional highway and make it clear that visitors are entering a dynamic and exciting place.

Avenue 7 will be flanked on both sides by mid-rise buildings and taller towers, housing a mix of uses including: hospitality, institutional, office, residential and large format national retailers, all benefiting from easy access to the regional highway networks and high-visibility locations. The VIVAnext Bus Rapid Transit line will move pedestrians along the length of the highway, facilitating their travel to/from the VMC, or to their connection points within the Mobility Hub. Given the role of the regional Highway 7 as a regional corridor for the movement of goods and services from the VMC, the Avenue 7 district will not be a prime social or gathering place, but rather, as illustrated below, an announcement and front door to draw people into all great things in the VMC.





## Potential Programming

Wayfinding / Welcome to VMC



Mixed-Use & Residential Development



VIVA BRT Station Stops



Hotel & Hospitality



Activated Streetscape

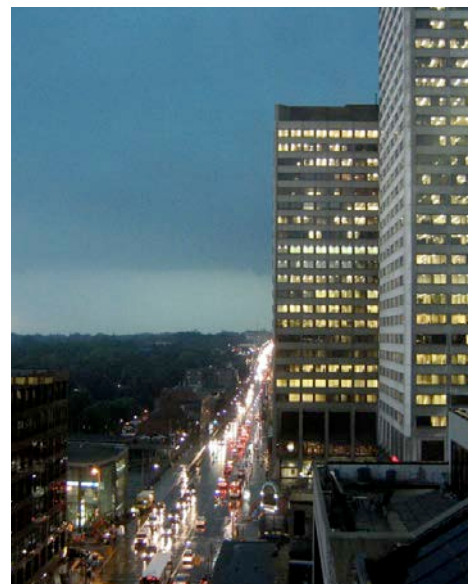
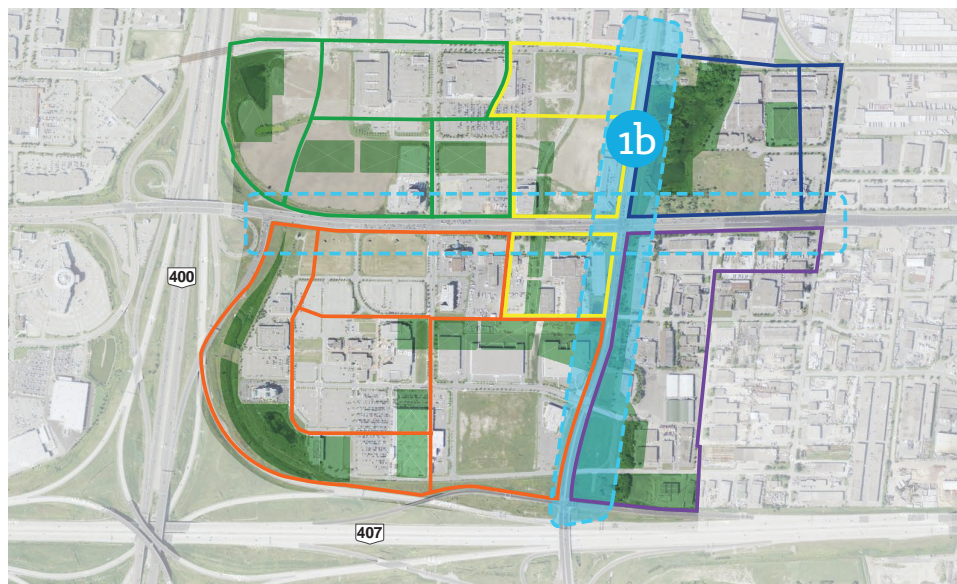


National Tenant Retail





# Jane Street



Jane Street is a vital north-south vehicular spine, gateway to the VMC, and transitional district. North of Avenue 7, this district plays an essential role, as illustrated below, in drawing people from Jane Street into the Mobility Hub, Core and northwest quadrant of the VMC, as well as connecting and facilitating the flow of people between those areas and the quieter, natural amenities and residential development within the Edgeley Pond district to the east. Larger, urban-format retail, institutional and entertainment uses will have great presence on the ground floor along the west side of the street, benefitting from the high-visibility and accessibility from Jane Street, regional Highway 7, and many transit anchors. Office and residential users on the upper floors will enjoy views of the bustling Mobility Hub to the west and wetland park to the east. South of Avenue 7, this district plays an essential role of providing access to the bustling employment corridor along Highways 400 and 407 and the new residential neighbourhood of South Black Creek. To facilitate all of this, Jane Street will be rebuilt to accommodate new mobility stops – such as future BRT or other regional bus systems. The linear park space of South Black Creek will act as a natural buffer and greenway into the neighbourhood.

A large number of students, employees, residents, and other users will utilize this corridor, keeping the district busy and animated over the course of the day. Jane Street will offer a comfortable walking and cycling experience, with safe and easy east-west crossings to allow people to flow through the VMC.





## Potential Programming

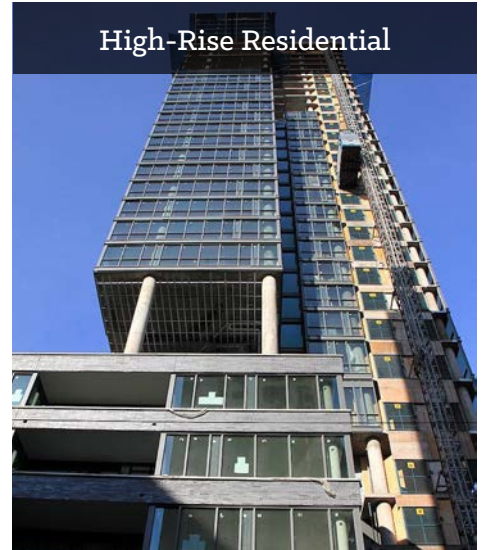
Connections to Black Creek



Class A Office Space



High-Rise Residential



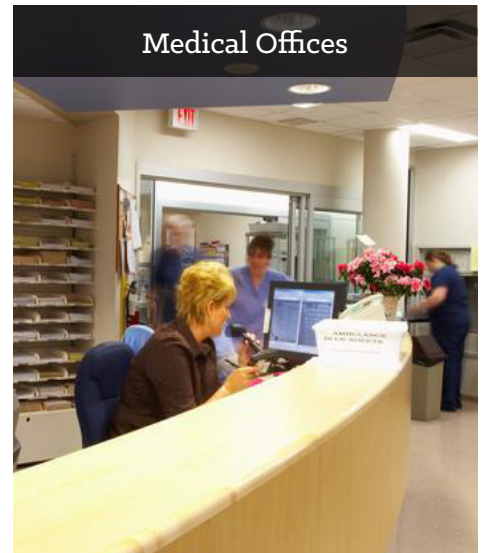
Activated Ground Floors



Student Housing



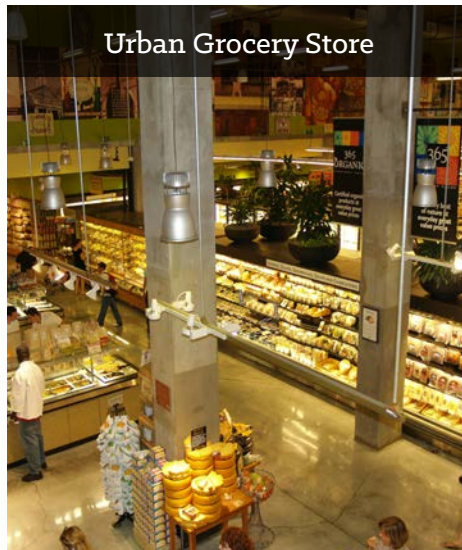
Medical Offices



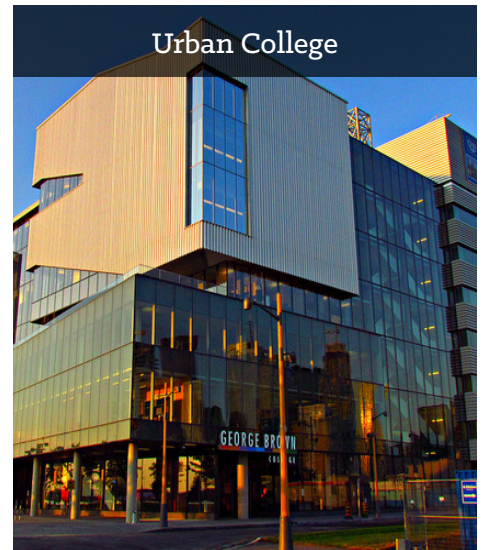
Large-Format Retail



Urban Grocery Store

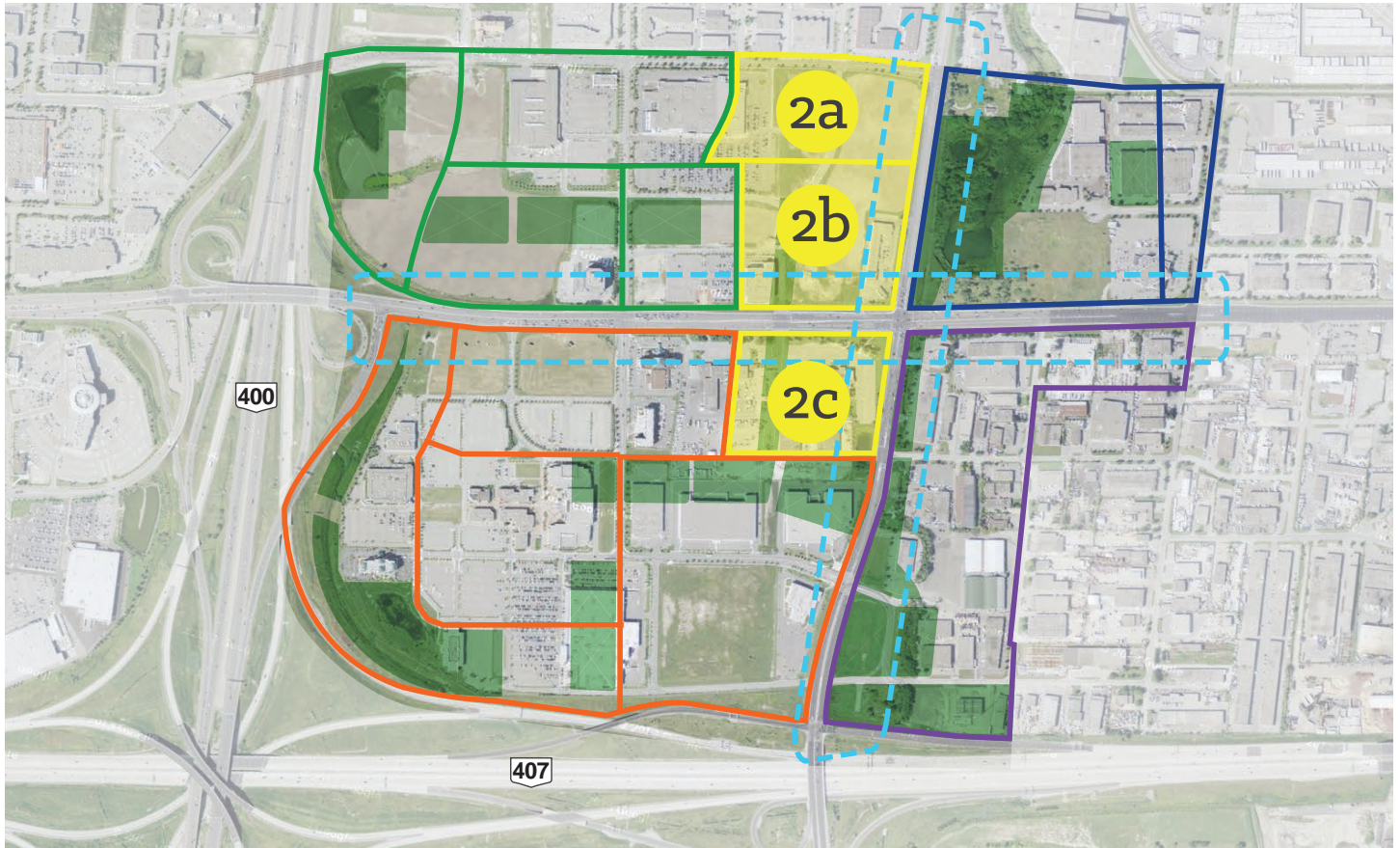


Urban College







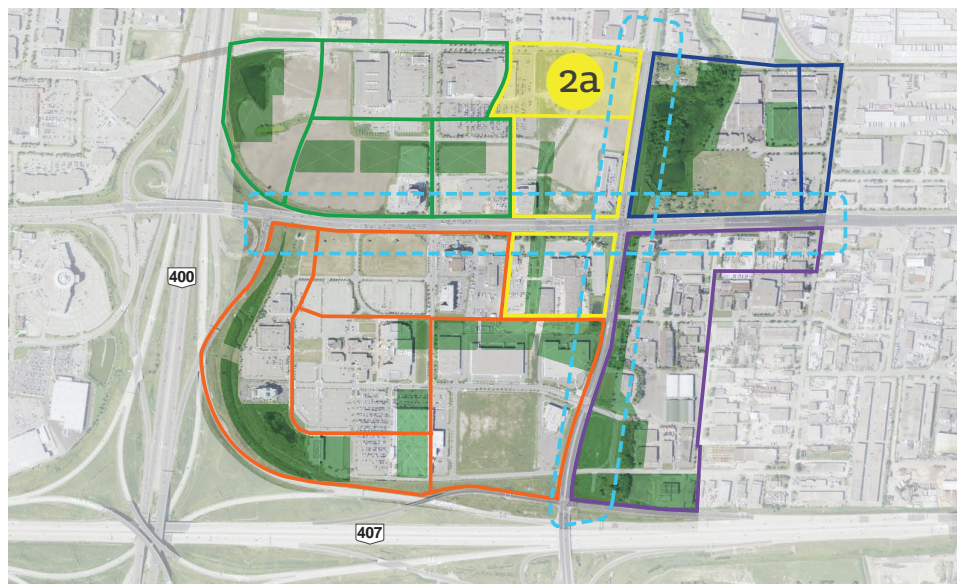


The Mobility Hub is the VMC's primary point of arrivals and departures for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips (via subway, regional bus and VIVA BRT). The district will see enormous people traffic at all times of the day, from the early morning, as people arrive or depart for work, at the end of the workday, and well into the evening hours when friends and families visit the VMC to frequent the many restaurants, catch a show, shop its destination offerings or simply visit with family and friends. It will be a key connector, feeding and drawing users seamlessly to, from, and within the VMC. As the area that welcomes people to and from the VMC, the Mobility Hub has the potential to become a world-class transit experience, and the memorable launching point from which visitors can begin to explore the entire downtown area and beyond.

With its creative wayfinding programs, public art, retail uses, and interactive public space animation, the Mobility Hub will not only be a place to pass through, but offer a truly unique sense of arrival. The Mobility Hub is further subdivided into the Bus Terminal, Subway Station, and South Millway sub-districts based on the unique characteristics associated with each.



# Bus Terminal District



Anchored by the York Region Bus Terminal, the Bus Terminal District is envisioned as a heavily travelled commuter area with people flowing in and out of the facility over the course of the day. Those passing through this sub-district will take note of the seamless transit interconnectivity, convenient amenities, and overall pleasant transit experience with seamless connections and access to other transit modes including a taxi stand, bike share and the subway. Retail uses such as banks, and key grab'n go necessities will further enhance the commuter experience. The dual option of a direct underground tunnel to/from the subway station, as well as more active street-level connections, will appeal to all – including those transitioning quickly through and those with longer connections that may stay awhile.

Proximity to this bustling bus terminal district will be ideal for uses such as office, institutional, a police substation and potential community space, which do not need to be located in The Core, and can leverage the convenience of direct transit access.



York Region Bus Terminal





## Potential Programming

Activated Transit Connections



Signage & Wayfinding



Bike Share



Community Centre



Emergency Services



Taxi Stand



Civic Offices



Urban Format National Retail



Bank



Grab 'n' Go Food



Daily Conveniences

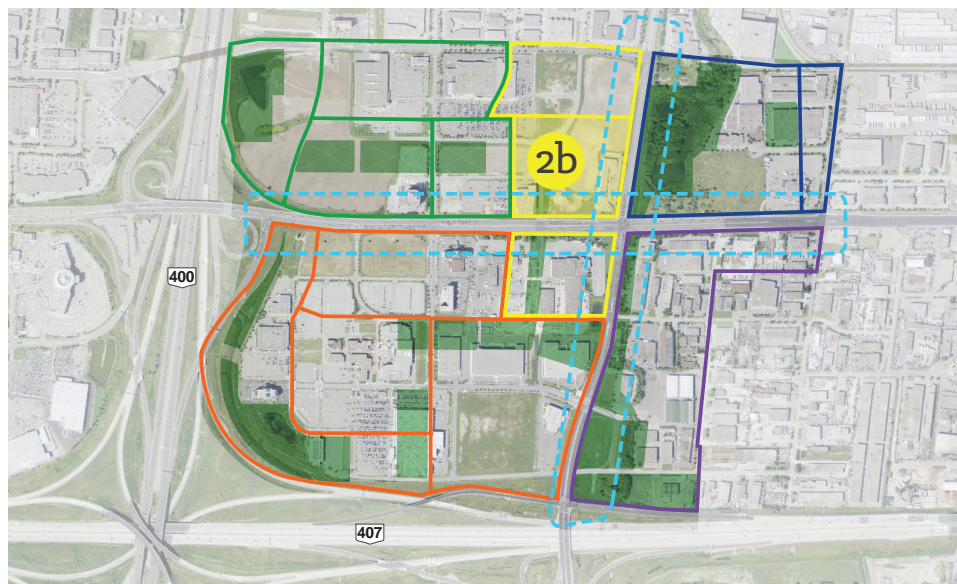


Daily Services





# Subway District

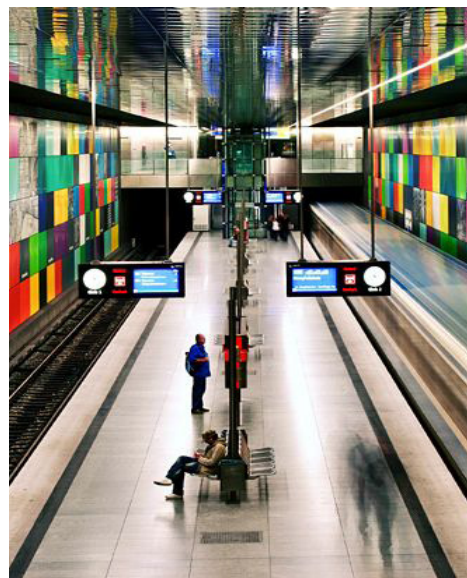
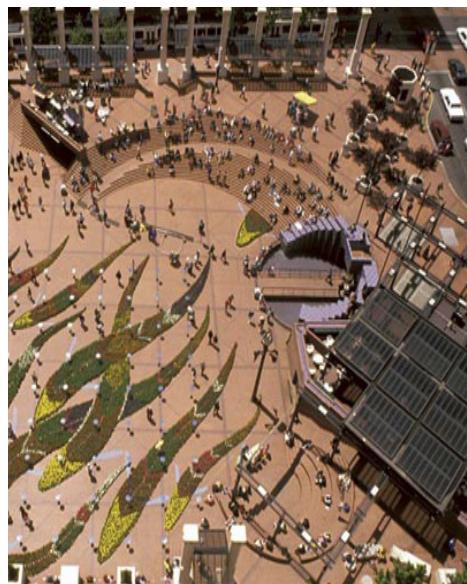
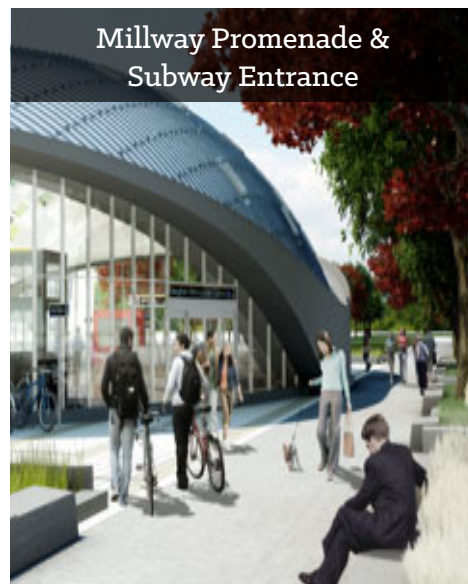


The two major anchors and centres of energy – the TTC subway station and the active plaza at Transit Square, largely define the Subway District, both connected to and activating this stretch of the Millway Promenade. The presence of, and behaviours associated with, the terminal VMC subway station are envisioned to create a dynamic, lively, pedestrian-priority urban environment.

Despite this district's role as a primary people-mover, individuals will also be encouraged to slow down and spend some time – shop or dine at the inviting stores and restaurants, enjoy a pop-up performance, or visit a gourmet coffee cart in Transit Square. Residents and visitors alike will flow to and from this area enjoying the sights and sounds of Millway Avenue – the VMC's exciting urban boulevard and promenade.

Transit Square will become an iconic central gathering place within the region. The highly animated plaza will always be buzzing with activity, hosting countless events and programs, from music and multicultural festivities to holiday markets. Beyond regular event programming, it will also allow for flexible use and expressions of urban spontaneity. Uniquely designed benches, steps, and eclectic seating offer just a few of the outdoor furniture features that invite and welcome all users into this exciting urban park.

Overlooking Transit Square will be the new, signature KPMG office development, with employees who spill out into the public space throughout the day, at lunch, and after work to visit the carts and kiosks or take a break and relax. Lining the Millway Promenade will be high-profile largely national retail and restaurant tenants that covet the visibility and traffic flow of being located directly adjacent to transit and highly utilized, animated areas.





## Potential Programming

### Subway - Below Grade



### Millway Promenade

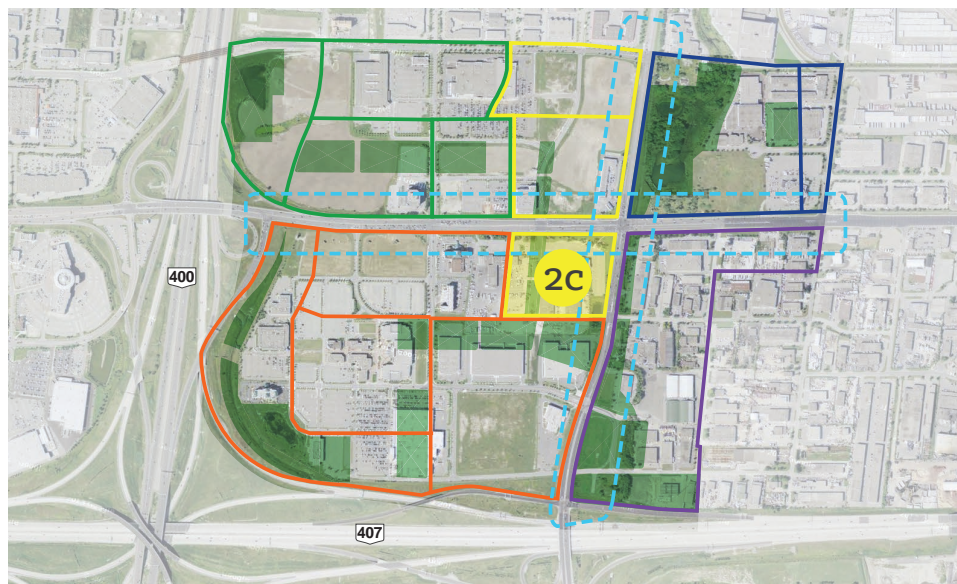


### Transit Square



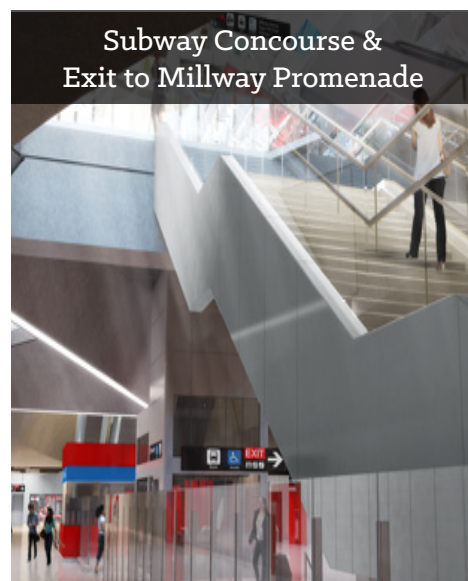


# South Millway District



The South Millway District will become the third node of the VMC's Mobility Hub, tied to the eventual opening of the second subway station entrance south of Highway 7 when the market conditions favour the redevelopment of the surrounding area. This district is envisioned to mirror its northern half, centring on the cultural spine of Millway Avenue that will primarily be a bustling people-mover connecting residents to transit and employees to the central business hub of The Core or the campus office spaces of the Innovation Corridor. Millway Avenue will continue as a double-sided retail and restaurant corridor, with street-level space for impromptu performances or civic gatherings, giving the area a 24-7 character of activity and life.

At the southern terminus of this district, and fanning out from Jane Street well into the South Village District, the major park space of the southern VMC is planned, an impressive 4.5-hectare greenway envisioned to be defined by its more meadow-like character than the northern Central Park. Meandering foot and bike trails will create space for office employees to come to relax on their lunch hour, or residents to take a more passive approach to journeying to other neighbourhoods of their downtown.





## Potential Programming

### Subway - Below Grade

Grab 'n' Go Convenience Retail

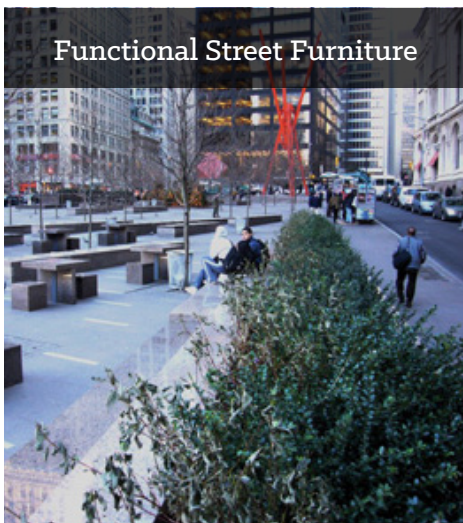


Activated Transit Connections



### Millway Promenade

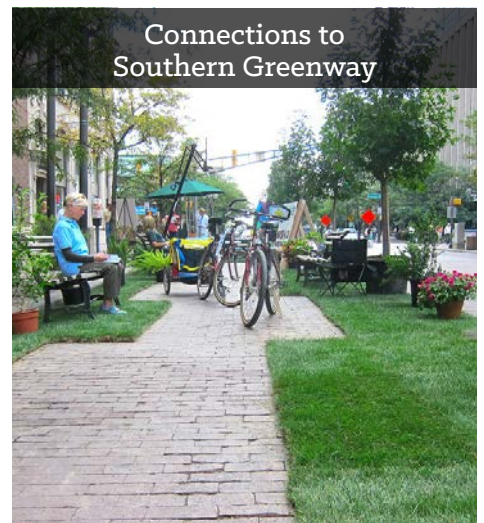
Functional Street Furniture



Art & Exhibition Space



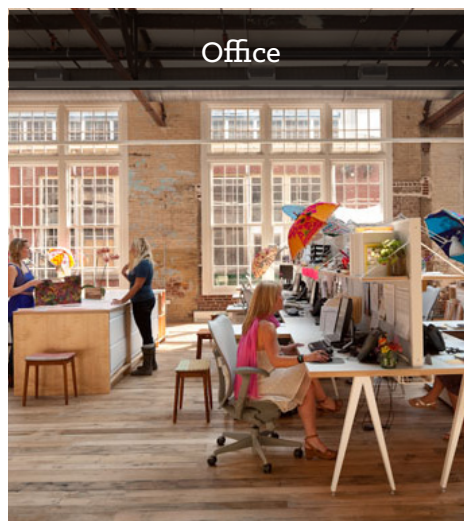
Connections to Southern Greenway



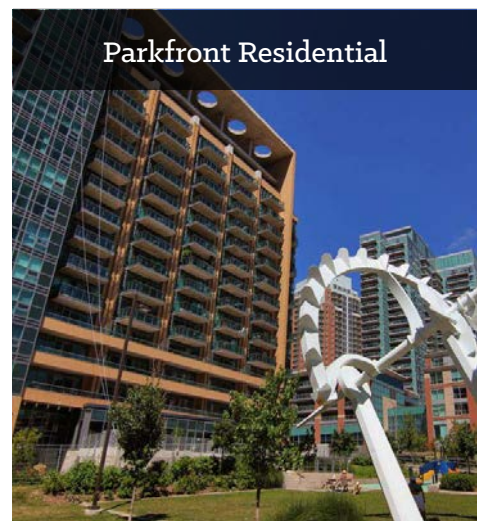
Urban Format National Retail



Office

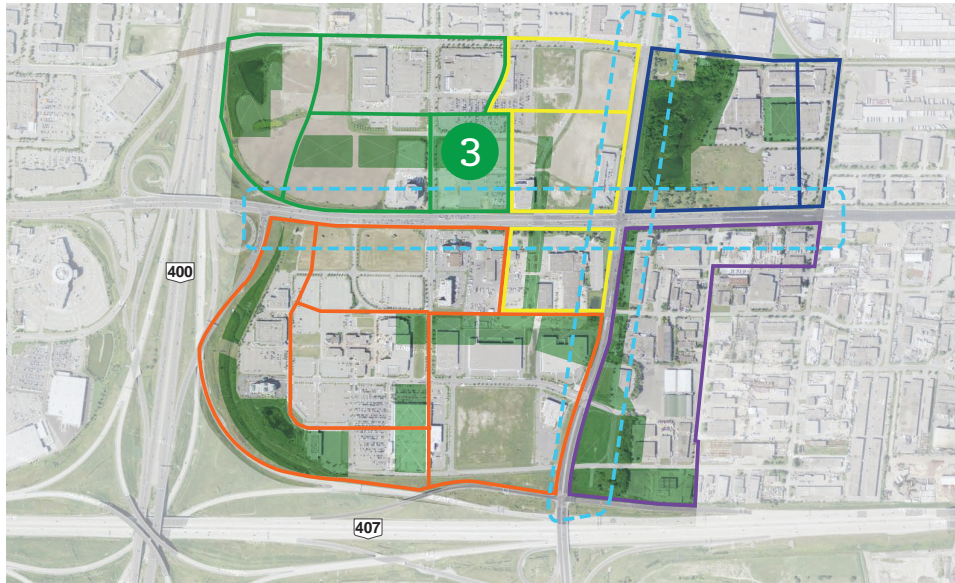


Parkfront Residential





# The Core



As the beating “heart” and epicentre of the VMC, the Core is the experience that defines the urban character and personality of Vaughan’s emerging downtown. The district’s special mixed-use environment will draw visitors from across the region with its best-in-class local, independent restaurants, cafés and retailers. More than a single Main Street or thoroughfare, The Core will be a district of interconnected, human-scale mixed-use streets where a collection of quality retail experiences that reflect the best of the Vaughan community, meet intimate urban laneways, pedestrian mews, courtyards, and, together, form a mixed-use urban village.

Human-scale buildings with active ground floors will characterize the district, with incubator and boutique office space, studios and loft-style apartments above grade, offering cool, creative class living and working opportunities in the heart of the action.

The welcoming streets with wide sidewalks, activated retail laneways, and spill-out restaurants with dueling patio spaces will offer an ideal, human-scale strolling environment – a destination place to stop, spend time and enjoy rather than pass through. A combination of engaging window displays, shops and restaurants that spill out onto the sidewalks and create seamless indoor/outdoor environments, activity-filled pedestrian-only spaces, and an inviting urban streetscape will draw residents, employees and visitors from throughout the City of Vaughan and wider region, and encourage them to linger, and explore. This menu of programming and distinctive energy will make the Core the centre of activity to eat, shop, be seen and be entertained in a unique urban setting that will become synonymous with the image of the VMC.



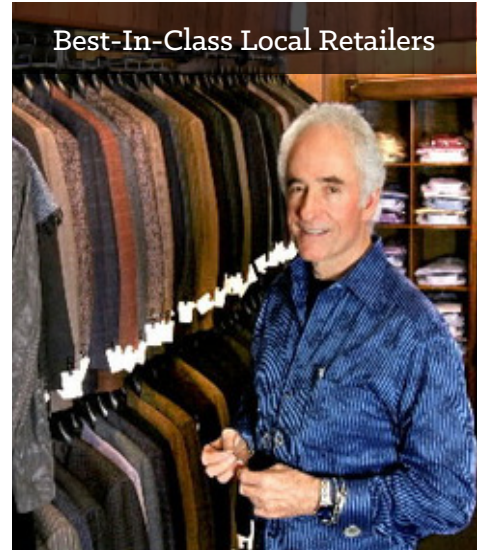


## Potential Programming

Restaurants with Dueling Patios



Best-In-Class Local Retailers



Loft / Office Space



Shared Streets / Festival Streets



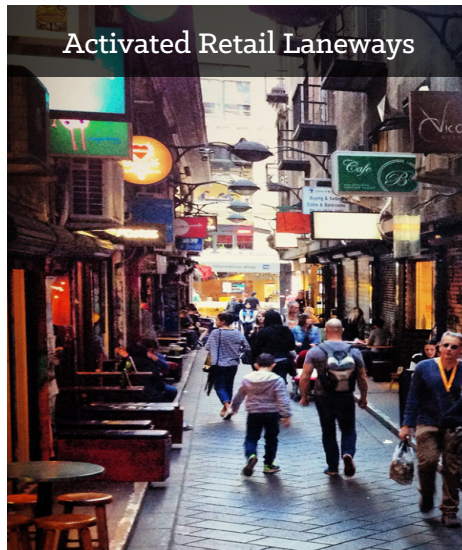
Traditional Market Shop



Independent Cafe & Treats



Activated Retail Laneways

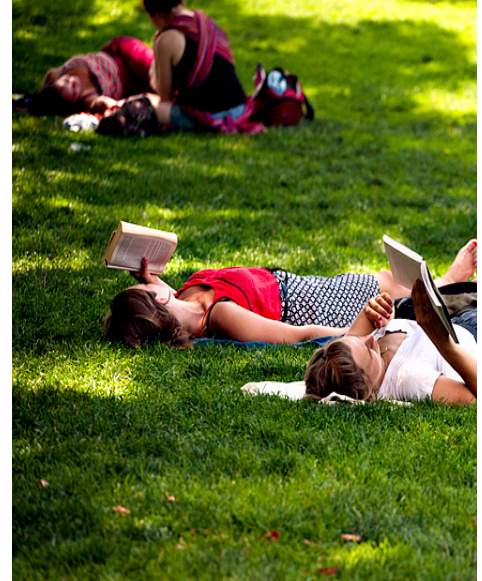
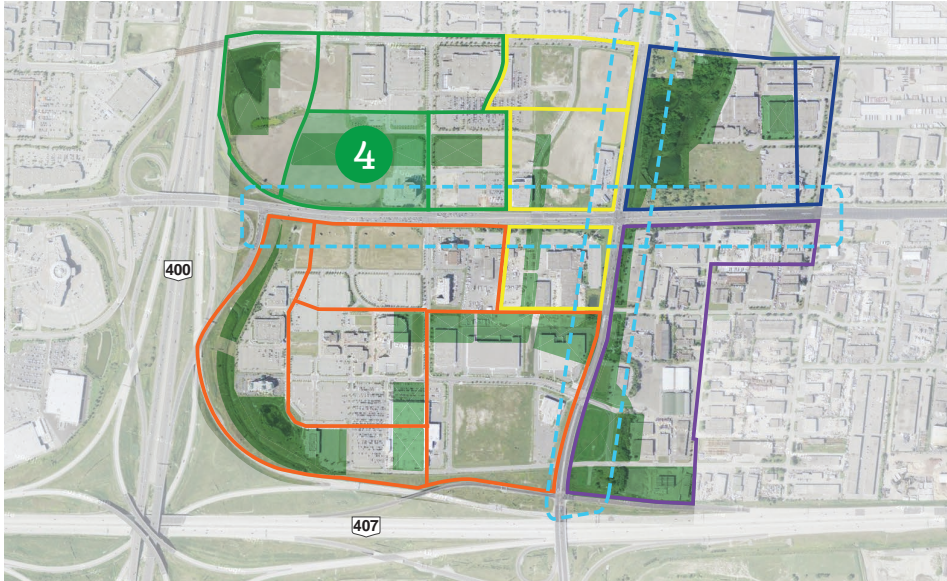


Four Season Streetscape





# Central Park



Central Park is conceived as the VMC's iconic urban park, a lively and distinct public destination unlike any other in York Region. Brilliantly designed to accommodate and encourage a countless range of passive and active programming opportunities spread over the park span of multiple city blocks, Central Park will attract millions of annual visitors, locally and beyond.

Built-in community infrastructure, such as water features and a potential amphitheatre, together with a full calendar of events and opportunities for entrepreneurial activities, will ensure that the park facilitates social exchange, and is alive at most times of the day and evening. At the same time, Central Park's intelligent design will create beautifully landscaped, special enclaves and spaces for those looking for a place to escape, unwind and unplug.



The highly programmed eastern portion of the park, directly adjacent to The Core, will have running trails that congregate on a centralized meeting place, a splash pad and "urban" playground for kids, as well as staging for a temporary or seasonal farmers market. These amenities will be the draw for residents and employees of the VMC: a space to take a walk and escape the indoors, but remain connected to the energy and activity of the downtown.



Large flexible green spaces on the western portion of the park will provide the setting for pick-up soccer games, Frisbee and other sports, as well as school gym classes, summertime sunbathing/lazing, picnics, and cross-country skiing, skating and snowshoeing in the winter. Neighbourhood children and families will visit to play sports, splash around or just hang-out.

As the centre of the VMC, the area surrounding the park will be extremely desirable and sought-after as a place to live. High- and mid-rise residential development framing the park will offer unparalleled park-front living and access for residents, with the potential for some specialty ground-floor retail uses. Central Park will be the strongest east-west connector of downtown activity, linking together all districts in the northwest quadrant of the VMC, including creating a strong link between the Entertainment District to the west, and The Core to the east.





## Potential Programming

### Facing Central Park

Residential Development



Corner Cafe & Sandwich Shop



Destination Restaurant



### Within Central Park

Outdoor Recreation Classes



Urban Playground



Passive & Active Spaces



Flexible Use Space



Walking/Running Trails



Social Interaction



Gaming Tables



Central Water Feature

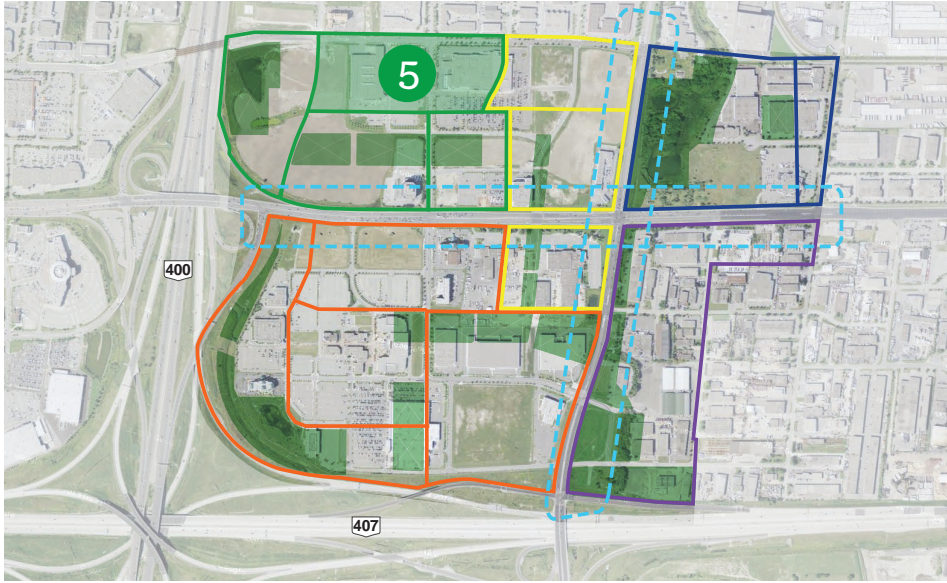


Four Season Programming



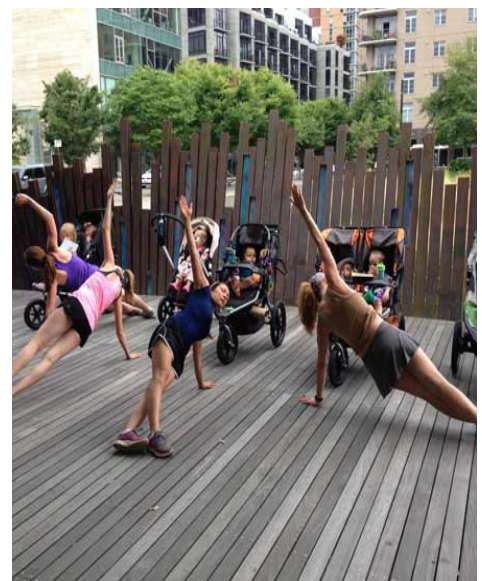
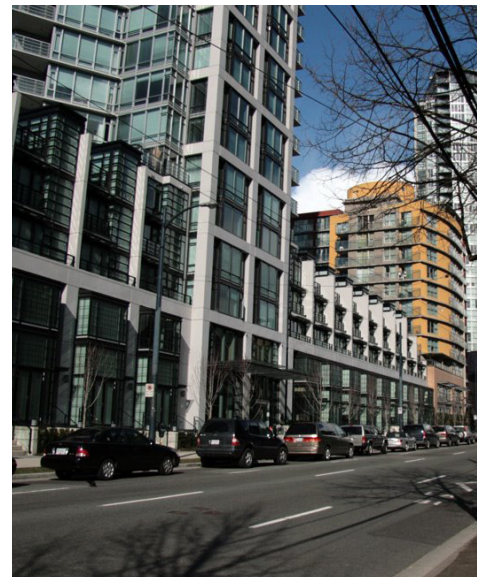


# Central Park North



Central Park North is envisioned as a primary residential area in the VMC, offering true community living for a diversity of residents, with a mix of high-rise, mid-rise and semi-detached town home options. The diversity of demographics of residents, reflective of the broader City of Vaughan, will contribute to, and enrich, the social mix of this community. The neighbourhood will intermingle singles and couples (young urban professionals) who want to be downtown but stay close to their parents; young families; older Vaughan residents who are looking to downsize; new immigrants with families accustomed to living in high-rise buildings; and new residents to Ontario who enjoy more urban forms of residential living.

As a complete urban neighbourhood, Central Park North will offer residents the best of all worlds, from everyday living amenities within the district, to enjoying the benefits of being just minutes by foot from the recreational offerings of Central Park, the shops, restaurants and activity of the VMC Core, and the transit option of the Mobility Hub. Parents will be able to walk their children to the elementary school just down the street, and older youth will benefit from the proximity to secondary schools and potentially co-located community uses. These community spaces will act as hubs, bringing district residents together. Community members will see familiar faces and make new friends at the many community events, or at the intimate pocket parks, coffee shops, and dog run. For those seeking reprieve from the activity at Central Park, residents can escape to more passive green spaces within the community for quieter moments. Surrounding urban schools will leverage the district's neighbourhood parks, using them as their outdoor gym and recreational spaces.



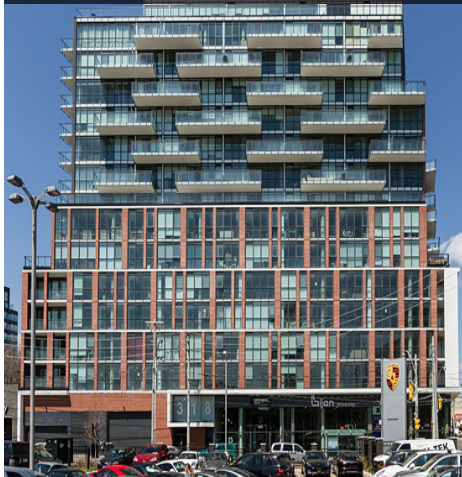


## Potential Programming

High-Rise Residential



Mid-Rise Residential



Semi-Detached Townhouses



Neighbourhood Conveniences



Urban Elementary/  
Secondary School



Mult-Generational



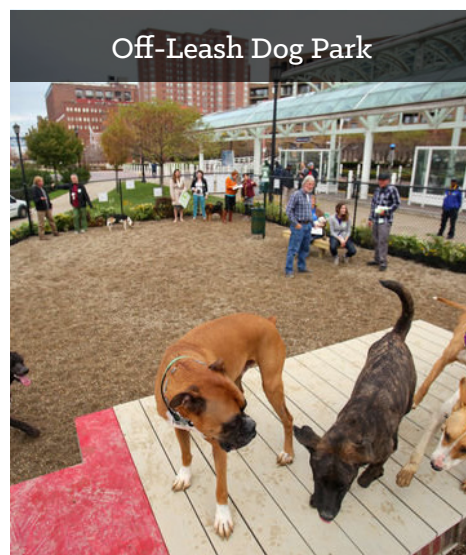
Community Centre



Pocket Parks

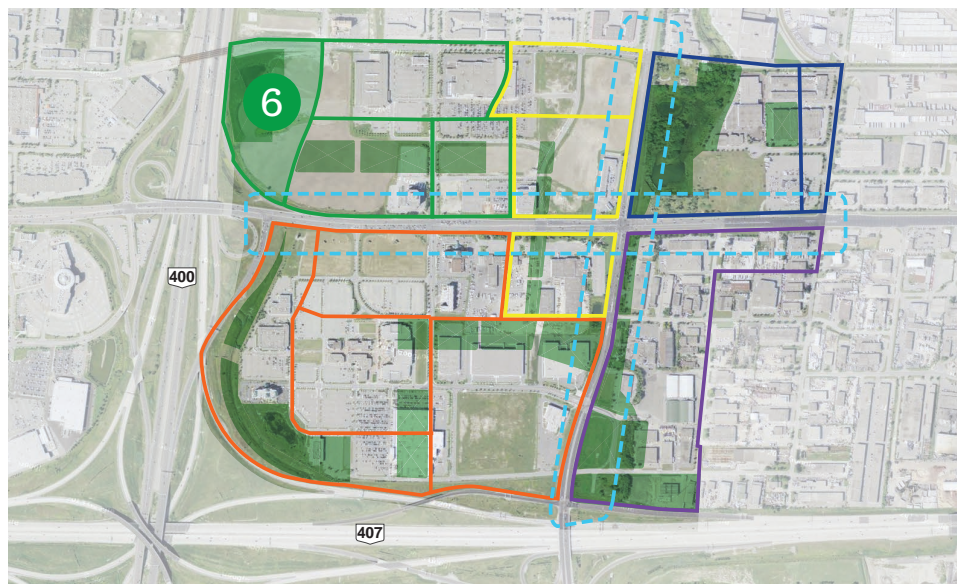


Off-Leash Dog Park





# Entertainment District



The VMC Entertainment District is envisioned to become home to an exciting concentration of larger-format theatres, nightlife, restaurants, and even recreational uses, making it a place to see and be seen in the downtown. Dueling patios, live music venues, black box and larger theatre venues, regional sports bars and more, will give this district the cache as being the place that people of all ages know to come on any night of the week to celebrate, or find interesting, engaging, educational, or stimulating activities. Given this, it is also likely that some forms of residential development may prove viable, catering predominantly to those young professional types that want to live close to the late-night action. The convenience, accessibility and visibility of the Entertainment District directly off Highway 400 and Highway 7 will allow these larger format uses to add vibrancy and activity to the VMC, without impacting the urban form of the Core.

The Entertainment District will not only attract a younger crowd, but will also be the place to entertain business guests and a family destination to come to watch a matinée show or where grandparents can take a grandchild on a rainy day. Major entertainment anchors such as cultural facilities, museums, and regional sports-entertainment venues will make the district a place that is active and animated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For business and leisure travellers visiting the VMC and York Region, the full-service hotel in the Entertainment District will be the ideal place to stay with its multi-functional centre providing a top location for conferences, weddings and other events. Hotel guests will thoroughly enjoy the full VMC experience with rooms overlooking Central Park and the VMC, conveniently located in the centre of the action.





## Potential Programming

Live and Alternative Theatre Space



Interactive Museum



Late Night Entertainment



Large Scale Live Music & Event Venue



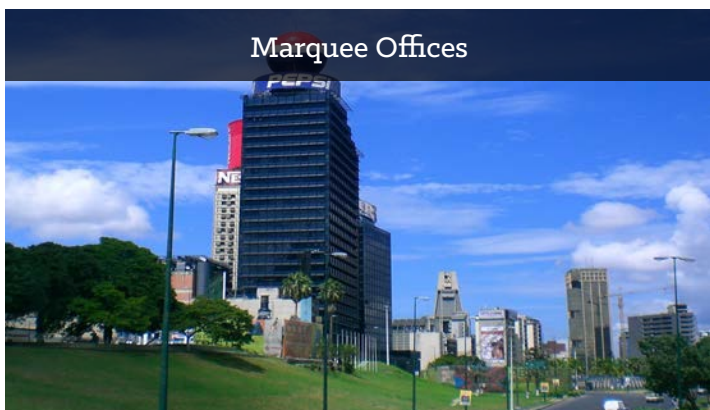
Local & Destination Dining



Regional Sports Bar



Marquee Offices

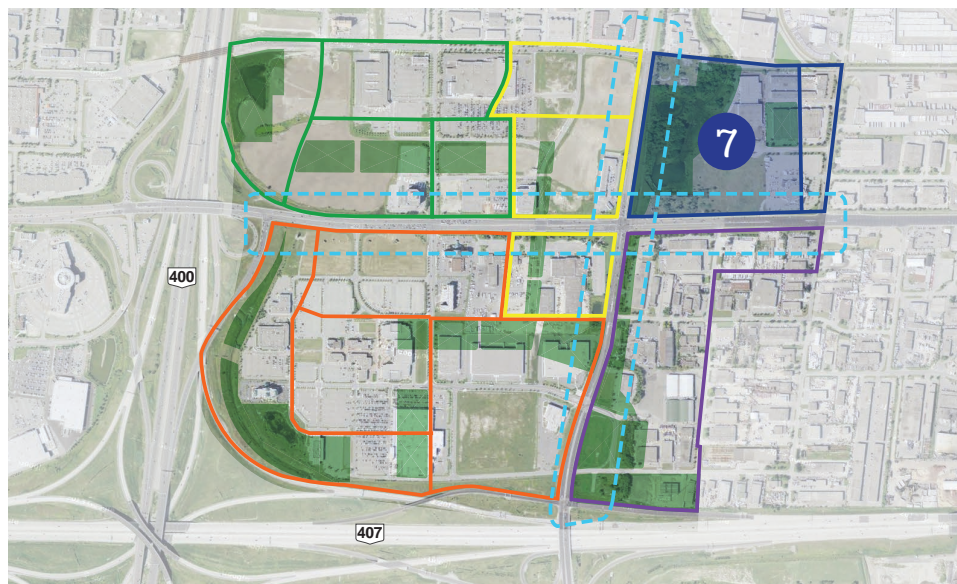


Hotel. Hospitality & Multi-Function Space





# Edgeley Pond

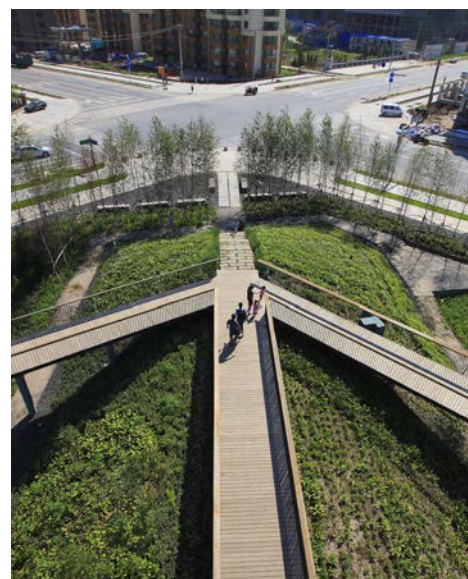


Edgeley Pond is envisioned as Vaughan's green, ecologically-friendly district. Anchored by a large residential population and the VMC's primary naturalized green environment, Edgeley Pond will have a unique identity and appeal within the downtown area.

The Edgeley Pond district will be heavily populated and frequented by residents from the substantial adjacent condominium developments – approximately 4,000 residents are expected to call this district home. Walkability and proximity to work, transit, natural areas, and an exciting urban core will make this district an attractive place to live for years to come.

As the northern component of the VMC's "green spine", Edgeley Pond will represent the VMC's commitment to urban sustainability, embracing its heritage as a natural feature. The park will provide a place for residents and visitors to escape the hustle and bustle of the downtown, and surround themselves with rich environmentally sensitive open space. Complementary to Central Park, Edgeley Pond will be limited in formal activity space and will act more as a passive green space. Through its ecological landscape design, water views, trail system and subtle programming strategy, Edgeley Pond and its adjacent park will function as an extended backyard for the residential developments that surround and connect directly to it, as well as a destination for others within walking or biking distance: a place of respite and recreation, a place to go for a run, sit and enjoy a coffee in the morning, or take their dog for a walk.

Given its unique design and positioning, Edgeley Pond will also draw some visitors from outside of the immediate VMC area. The preserved and enhanced Edgeley Pond will provide for environmental educational and stewardship opportunities in partnership with the local school system, cementing the park's status as a jewel for area residents and visitors to the VMC.





## Potential Programming

### Within Edgeley Pond Park

Passive Recreation & Trails



Environmental Education



Carts & Kiosk Retail



### Surrounding Edgeley Pond Park

High-Rise Residential Development

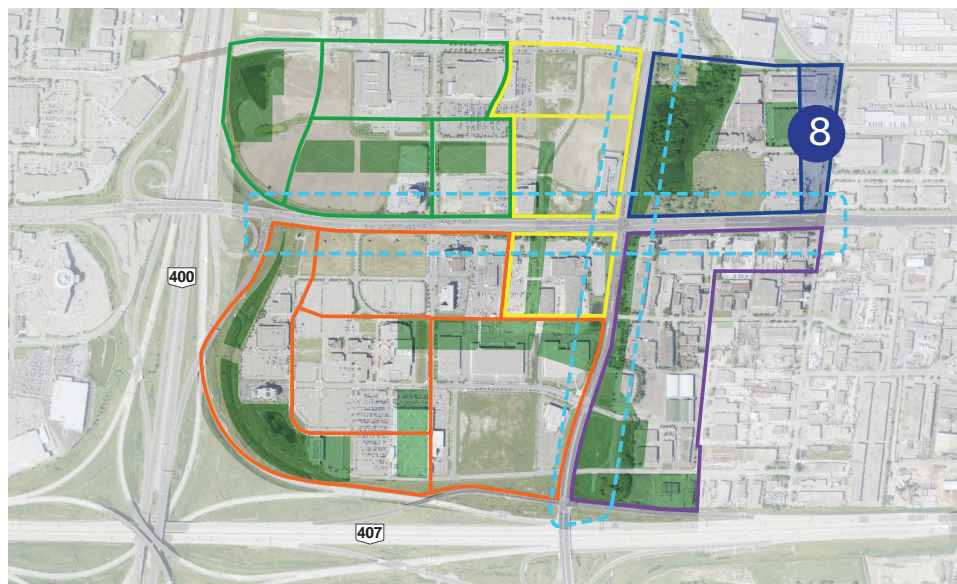


Four Season Programming





# Creditstone Corporate



Creditstone Corporate is envisioned to become an office and commercial node in the eastern VMC, working cohesively with other VMC employment areas in offering predominantly Class B office space, potential medical office and hospitality uses in lower-rise office format, but still delivered to the VMC's high-quality built-form standards. This node of premium Vaughan employment land will act as the eastern gateway to the VMC: welcoming visitors through quality design, streetscapes and urban offices.

Employers within the Creditstone Corporate district will be able to offer their employees the amenities and benefits of an urban area, without being located directly in the core. Office tenants will be drawn to this area due to its "Gateway" status and prominence (high-visibility from Highway 7), proximity to Jane Street, and the district's orientation towards the renewed North and South Black Creek, which can serve as an amenity and attractive residential base for their employees, offering the chance to live, work and recreate within an easy 5–10 minute walk.



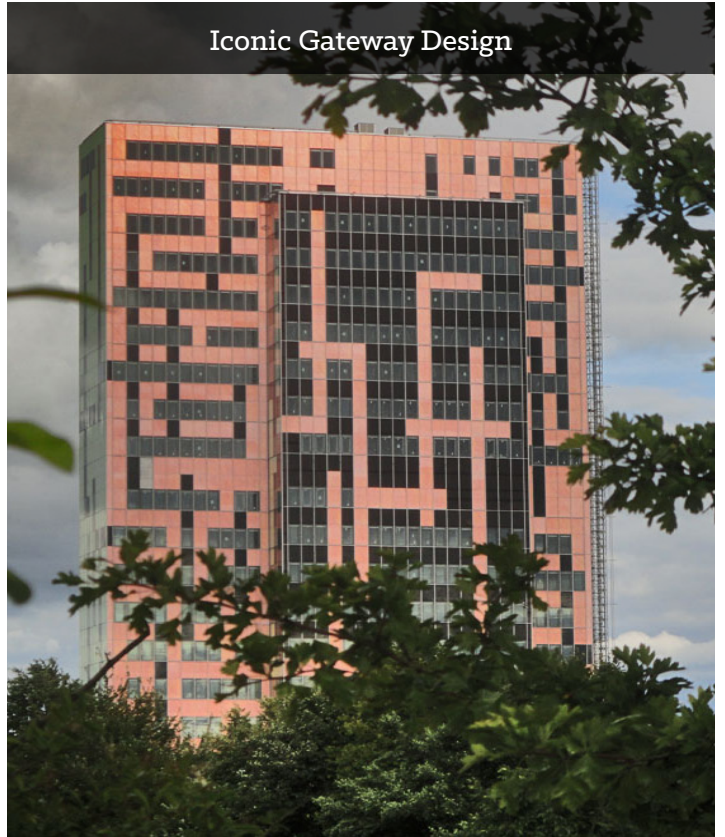


## Potential Programming

Class B Office



Iconic Gateway Design



Connections to Black Creek

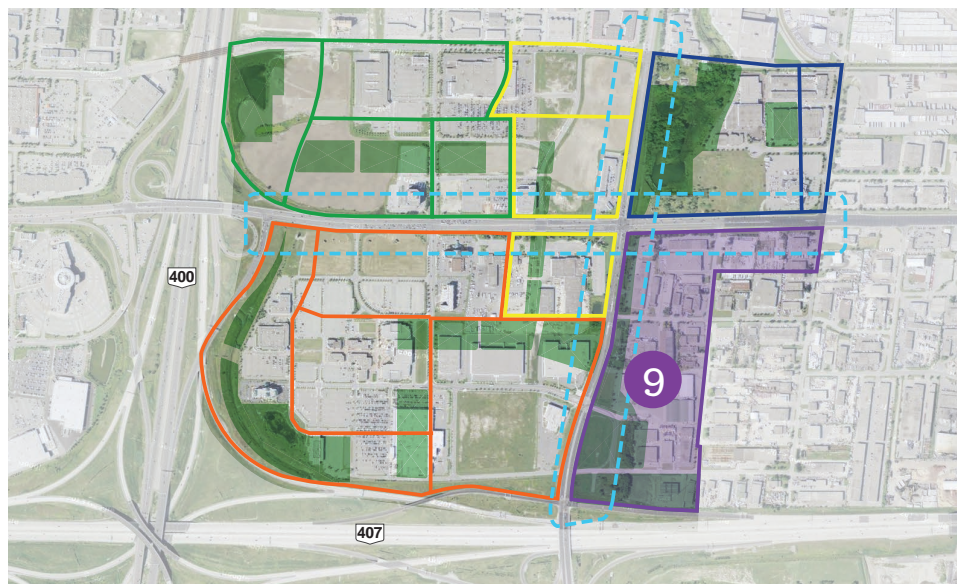


Hotel & Hospitality





# South Black Creek



South Black Creek is envisioned to become Vaughan’s eclectic and creative “maker” mecca, marrying the natural environment and existing district assets with new vibrant urban development. South Black Creek will connect the significant natural features and public park spaces planned with new-build high-rise mixed-use development incorporating a mix of retail, residential and offices uses as it evolves from a largely industrial-commercial environment into a district that integrates adaptively reused warehouse space and existing hospitality uses. Because of this, the district will soon be one of the VMC’s trendiest addresses, becoming a meeting place for residents and daytime professionals to take in nature on café patios on the renewed Black Creek channel, experience a creative performance, or shop in a destination market.

Design and the idea of “making” will permeate this entire district making it the heart of the Vaughan artisan movement. Existing industrial uses that are slow to transition to redevelopment, will gradually evolve to make space for new artist studios, live/work residential spaces, modern workshops and even some forms of reused industrial office space that would not be well suited elsewhere in the VMC.

The renewed Black Creek Channel, an emblematic linear open space network running the length of Jane Street, will form the southern end of the VMC’s “green spine” and will add a key green element to this district. This green spine will continue the urban sustainability theme from Edgeley Pond, establishing a series of promenades, plazas and parks to allow access to the environmental open space and the water’s edge, where visitors can interact with the natural setting. This naturalized experience will be pulled into the district’s interior through various urban squares and pocket parks bounded by new urban development.

As the renewed Black Creek Channel is completed and becomes a complementary greenspace jewel to Edgeley Pond, unique typologies of residential development catering to the younger urban, entrepreneurial class are likely to develop given the attractive features of the district as a cultural focal point in the VMC and wider Vaughan community, and whose green integration will create a distinctive living experience within the VMC.





## Potential Programming

Linear Wetland Park



Residential Development Integrated w/ Urban Parks



Mixed Use Office & Residential



Iconic Design



Regional Food Hall & Public Market



Craft Breweries w/ Destination Brew Pubs



Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Buildings

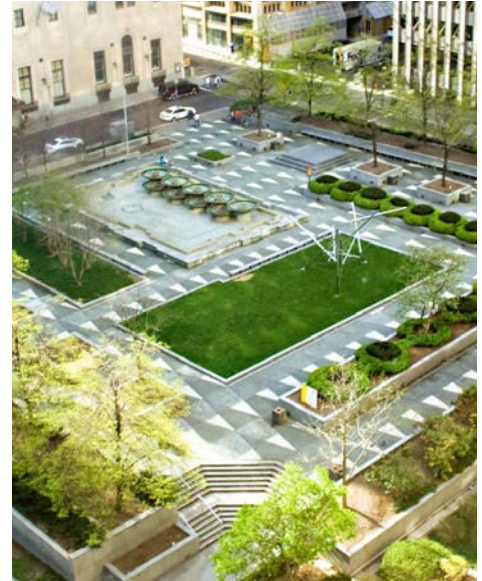
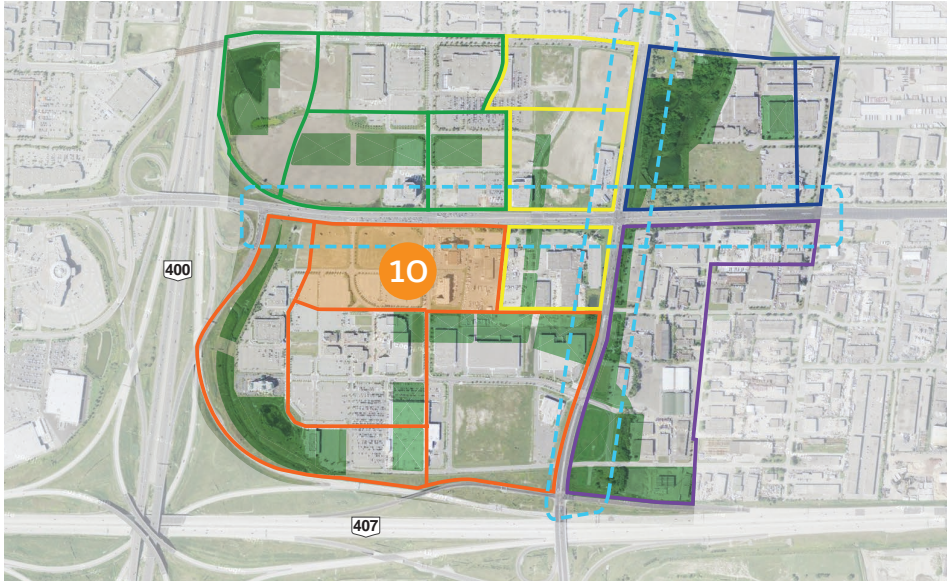


Artist Space & Non-Traditional Workshop Spaces





# Avenue Seven South



Building-off this district's relationship to Avenue Seven and proximity to the Mobility Hub, the Avenue Seven South district is envisioned to become a mixed-use district integrating office, residential, service retail with the existing and proposed hospitality and entertainment uses. The Avenue Seven South district will be a physically and functionally integrated community that caters to both businesses and the leisure visitors that are coming to Vaughan's downtown for corporate matters or tourism, or for people choosing the VMC as a base for broader travel given its regional accessibility and local subway access. As such, the Avenue Seven South district may mix short and long-term stay residences, corporate apartments, potential condo-hotel development, along with traditional high rise residential and office development for residents and employers who desire to benefit from proximity to the regional highway network and excellent subway access.

In helping define the overall vision for Highway 7 the Avenue Seven South district will evolve into a fully integrated mixed-use area with various retail, restaurant and entertainment uses occupying the ground and second floors of new developments. With its proximity to the planned residents of the South Community district, and the employment centers in the Corporate Innovation Corridor and the Business Enterprise Park, the Avenue Seven South district will provide a convenient place for a bite to eat, access to daily goods and services, or to connect with friends and colleagues all within a short walk of home or the office.





## Potential Programming

Hotels of Various Service Levels



High-Rise Residential



High-Rise Office



Corporate Apartments



Restaurants & Entertainment

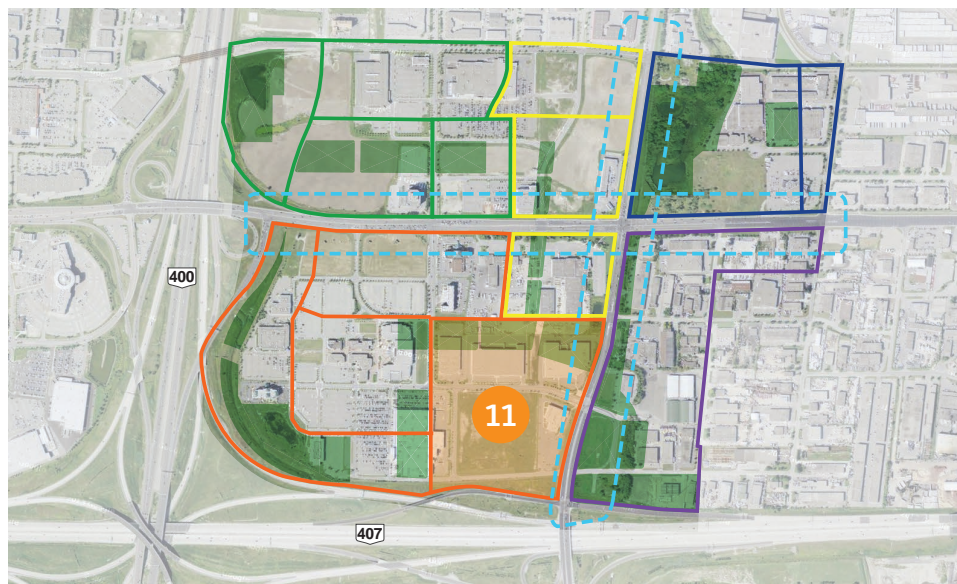


Anchor Tenant Retail





# Business Enterprise Park

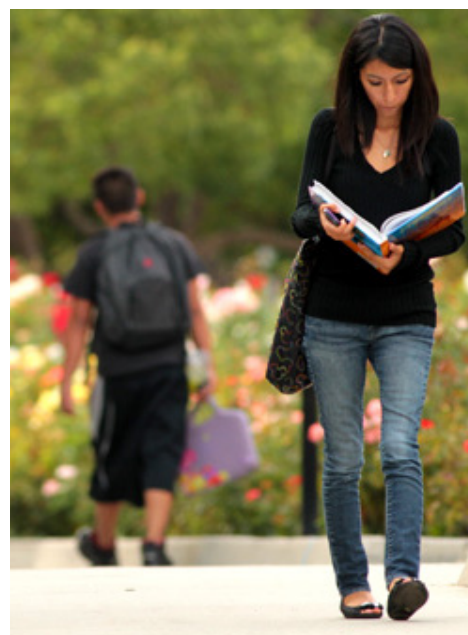


Due to larger land parcels and the high profile visibility from, and easy access to, the regional express Highways 400 and 407, the Business Enterprise Park is envisioned to become a center of the VMC's corporate and business community. To that end, this district may become home to low and mid-rise Class-A campus-style office development that is both efficient and economical, as well as potentially an education campus. Developments will showcase high levels of design excellence in predominantly mid-rise style buildings that create a comfortable pedestrian-oriented character in the long-term, while at the same time accommodating significant vehicular movement and parking to support the business community.

Due to the weekly Monday to Friday rhythm of businesses, a strong pedestrian and bicycling linkage to the VMC's Mobility Hub will be developed through the greenway connections of the district's major urban park space. Year-round programming that ties in with the surrounding districts, including institutional events and festivals, sports uses, and quiet areas will work to animate this green space and offer something to do and somewhere to be for all.

Given the Business Enterprise Park's unencumbered access to Highway 400 and 407, and the wider Greater Toronto Region as a result, commuter behaviour will be a reality over the long-term. To manage this, innovative parking strategies, including interim surface parking, leading to underground and/or above-grade structured garages in the long-term with at-grade cultural, institutional and retail service uses, will be developed so that design and functional excellence leads in the VMC.

Potential live-work units, student residences and residential buildings may develop within this district based on growing demand for integrated mixed-use campuses. In support of an educational campus in the VMC or at nearby York University, this district provides ready access for student wishing to be close to where they study.





## Potential Programming

Campus Style Office



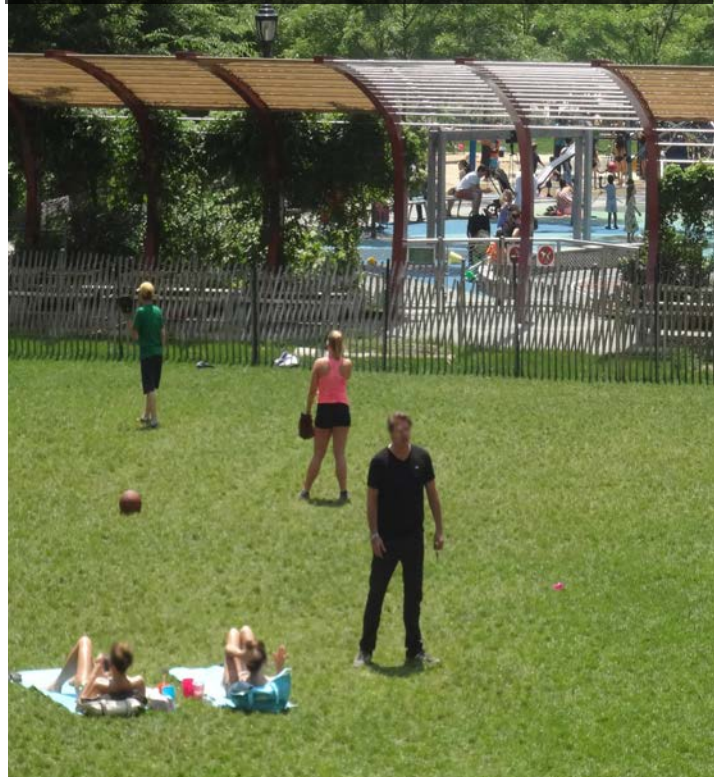
Multi Use Parking Structures



Potential Education Campus

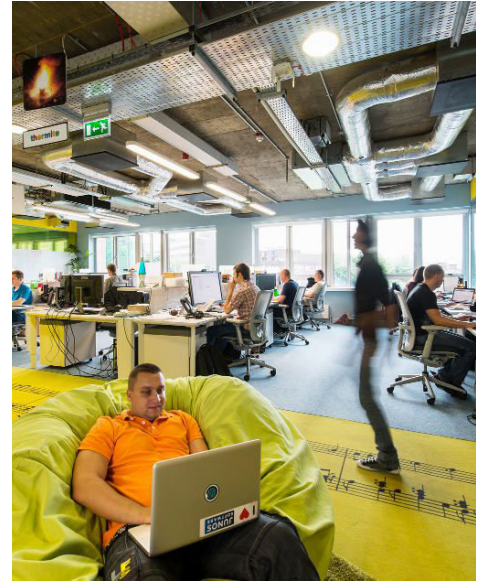
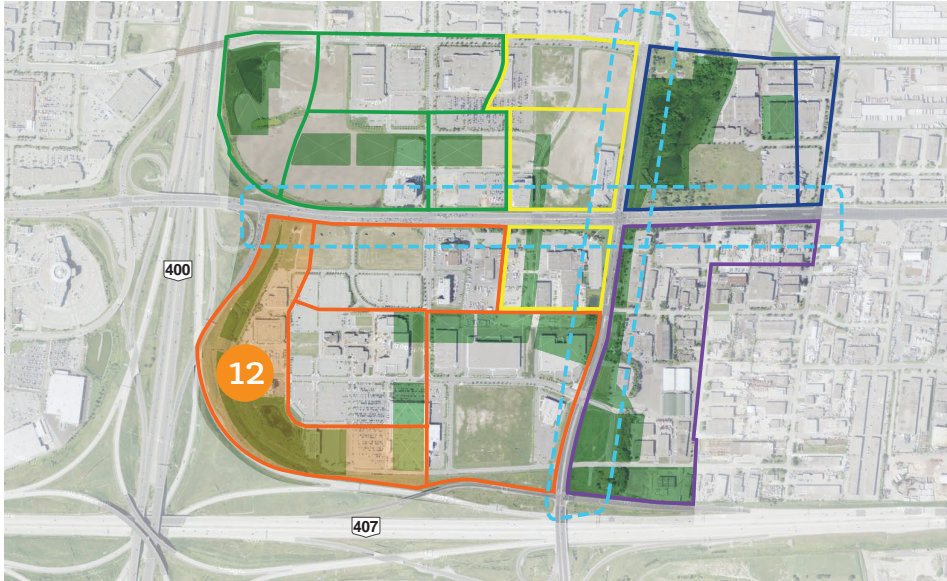


Programmed Park Space



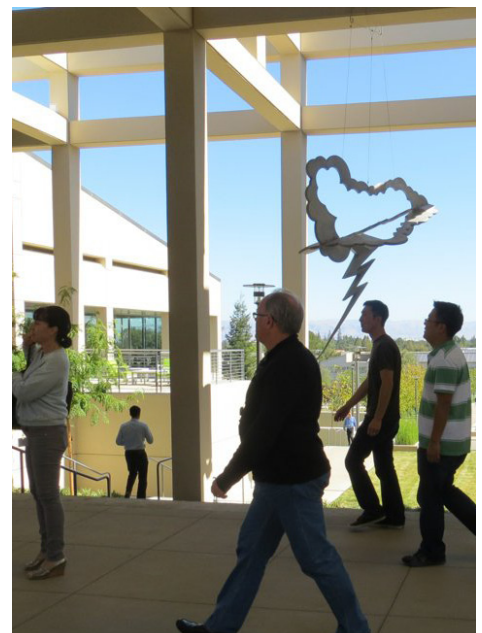


# Corporate Innovation Corridor



Unlike other employment areas within the VMC, which offer a mix of smaller or urban footprint high- and mid-rise office opportunities, or the Business Enterprise Park which lends itself to campus-style development, the Corporate Innovation Corridor will be home to a cluster of world-class, marquee office development, with innovative employers attracted to the district's Highways 400 and 407 visibility, flexible larger, efficient and economic buildings, all with land parcels and space for high capacity parking programs. These purpose-built, flagship offices will leverage their high-visibility and direct access off Highways 400 and 407, some of Ontario's busiest regional thoroughfares, to become beacons for the VMC's, signalling to passing motorists that this is Vaughan's downtown and a place to pull-off and explore.

These developments will showcase a high commitment to environmental stewardship through innovative, environmentally sustainable designed buildings and supporting infrastructure. Its proximity to the Avenue Seven South and South Community districts offer employees and visitors a wealth of convenient ways to explore urban opportunities and experiences, all within an easy walk.



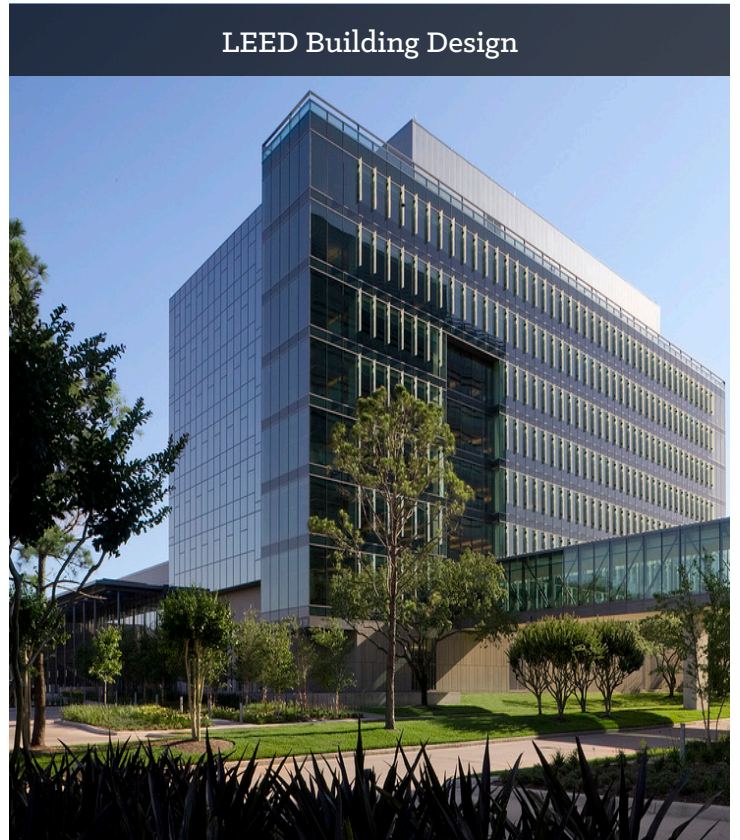


## Potential Programming

Flagship Office Development



LEED Building Design



Innovative Public Art

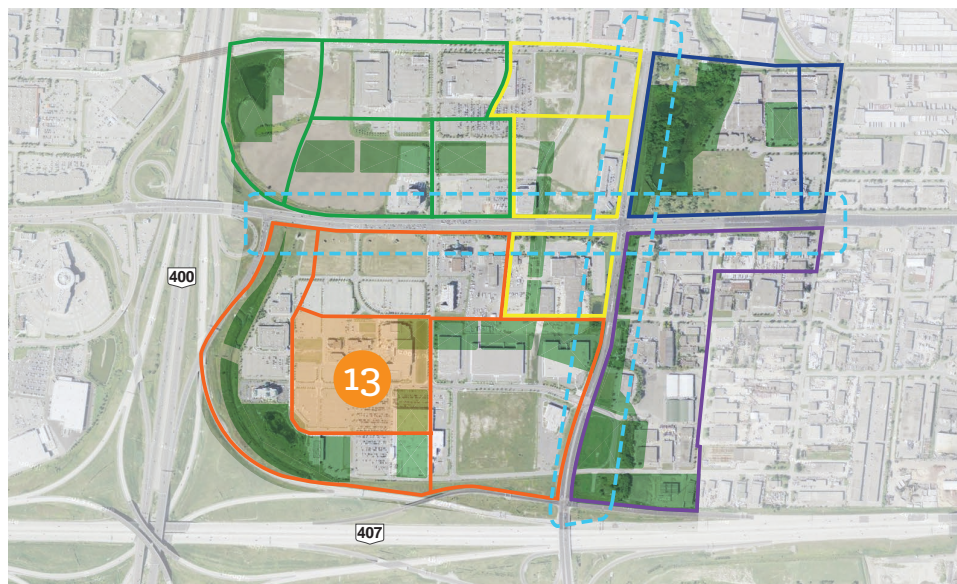


Existing Anchor Uses





# South Community



The South Community district is planned to become a mixed-use community with a stronger residential feel at the centre of the VMC's southwest quadrant. This district is anchored on a neighbourhood park and school campus at its core. While the existing IKEA development dominates this community at the moment, the district is expected to evolve. A united community of low to mid-rise development that may include residential, professional office and neighbourhood retail service businesses is expected to emerge over time. Residents of this neighbourhood will be drawn here largely out of want to find a lower-scale neighbourhood and community in the downtown that is still within walking distance of the vibrant, bustling urban core and Mobility Hub. Employees and others users of the adjacent Corporate Innovation Corridor and Business Enterprise Park may also choose to live here given its convenient, walkable proximity to work. Small-scale, neighbourhood service retail will provide residents with daily amenities while limited neighbourhood dining/café options will provide employees of the adjacent employment areas lunch and evening dining options.

To accommodate the residential population expected to settle in the South Community, including professional singles, young couples, or families, a complete range of urban housing types will be developed including mid-rise (with family sized units) and low-rise with some potential for live/work or professional office opportunities. Residential buildings will likely be oriented towards the future neighbourhood park/school core, creating a wonderful park-living atmosphere making it a place of central gathering and neighbourhood identity.





## Potential Programming

High-Rise Residential



Mid-Rise Residential



Cultural Hub



Daily Conveniences & Amenities



Large Neighbourhood Park



Urban School





# Vaughan Metropolitan Centre





An architectural rendering of a modern transit station at night. The building features a curved facade with large glass windows and a dark, metallic-looking upper section. A blue horizontal band runs across the middle of the building. The ground floor has large glass entrances, and the interior is brightly lit. People are walking on the sidewalk in front of the station. A traffic light and a 'TRANSIT SIGNAL' sign are visible on the left. A small sign in the foreground reads 'Vaughan Metro Station'.

# e Next

## Next Steps

 **METROLINX** | **VIVAnext**

A Metrolinx vivaNext Project



# Next Steps

Throughout the course of 2015, LWLP's focuses will be multipronged in advancing several parallel but interrelated work streams flowing from the foundation of this initial Reconnaissance and Strategic Assessment Report.

## 1. The VMC Working Group

Chaired by Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, with support from LWLP, this Working Group will become the vehicle for orderly and consistent engagement, discussion, input and feedback from VMC landowners on pertinent VMC issues and workflow; ensuring that any relevant concerns are known and adequately woven into the forthcoming strategy for development of the VMC. This Working Group will become the forum for all necessary stakeholder outreach in order to complete important City studies (namely, the Urban Design Guidelines and the Arts and Cultural Plan) to finish setting up the VMC for implementation, its long-term build-out and success.

This Working Group will be established in a collaborative fashion with the City and VMC landowners, setting an agreed-upon timing and structure to guide the process, and planning of future meetings. It will involve regular touch-points on predetermined days, scheduled with an agreed-upon frequency and organized on a tightly structured agenda to deal with VMC-related issues – whether City, LWLP or consultant requirements, or requests from the VMC landowners. In this fashion, City communications and stakeholder engagement processes will be streamlined, helping to mitigate engagement fatigue amongst landowners. Furthermore, the VMC Working Group will also serve to create an open channel for landowners to dialogue with the City, its Departments and third-party consultants, to hear their comments or concerns, and to help establish the type of positive working relationship required to enable both sides to work collaboratively and negotiate with each other from a place of common understanding.





Over the course of 2015, LWLP will undertake a detailed assessment of the office, retail, and residential markets and sub-markets of Vaughan, and the competing regional downtown areas to the VMC, coupled with an assessment of potential parkland financing and operations models. The purpose of this market assessment will be to help the City establish a baseline understanding of the current market realities and context relevant to the VMC in informing decision-making and achieving its goal of constructing an urban-styled downtown within a suburban marketplace.

## Office Competitive Set

An overview of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) office market environment was positive, and improving, market outlook across most segments. To address the breadth of the geographic region encompassed within the GTA, and to consider that might conceivably compete with the office product envisioned for the VM include only suburban office nodes with Class A office space available. A quality was provided for each location.

	Inventory (SFF)	Vacancy (%)	Net Absorption (SFF - Q1 - Q2)	Arg Rent (SFF)	Additional Rent (SFF)	
Airports Corporate Centre	4,903,000	15.7%	268,562	\$12.16	\$1.97	\$
Mississauga City Centre	3,563,313	12.4%	-1,263	\$15.89	\$15.40	\$
Markham City Centre	2,466,000	—	—	—	—	\$
Markham City Centre	3,927,945	9.0%	-11,446	\$15.72	\$12.60	\$
Markham City Centre	6,527,811	7.3%	-31,297	\$15.14	\$12.16	\$
Markham City Centre	3,400,000	—	—	—	—	\$
Markham City Centre	6,494,845	4.3%	-70,228	\$17.78	\$19.93	\$
Markham City Centre	2,840,483	10.3%	-69,404	\$15.04	\$14.40	\$
Markham City Centre	2,915,876	16.8%	1,475	\$17.00	\$10.01	\$
Markham City Centre	1,980,375	—	—	—	—	\$
<b>TOTAL/AVG</b>	<b>32,645,426</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>36,997</b>	<b>\$15.53</b>	<b>\$12.22</b>	<b>\$</b>
City of Vaughan	2,586,424	10.7%	-44,353	\$16.28	\$17.40	\$
City of York	2,586,424	10.7%	-44,353	\$16.28	\$17.40	\$

Source: Commercial Real Estate Research, Greater Toronto Area Market Research Report, Q4 2012  
 DTZ Services, Q4 2012 Office Report, Greater Toronto Area  
 All CCR and vacancy figures taken from multiple websites.

An analysis of the universe of Class A office nodes within the '905' region suggests that the proposed VMC office program will primarily compete with the following locations:

- **Airport Corporate Centre** – one of the GTA's most prestigious office parks, offering proximity to the airport and major highways. The area has successfully attracted a number of leading tenant developments have been planned with a focus on lifestyle amenities.
- **Downtown Markham** – envisioned as the mixed-use satellite city centre with a high build out in downtown Markham is well underway. The development has already started, and due to its development status, has been described as a top of mind.
- **North York Centre** – with its urban form, Toronto address and development the ground floor area, this node has substantial appeal for some potential tenants as it is close proximity to downtown Toronto.

Within the competitive set, the VMC has the potential to offer a truly differentiated product within the GTA. Key differentiating factors include:

- **Superior transit connectivity**
- **Central location within the GTA**
- **Proximity to Pearson International Airport**
- **A vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment**
- **Prominent signage opportunities and highway visibility for office tenants**
- **Easy vehicle access**

## Key Opportunities and Challenges

### Opportunities

- **Geographic location** – the VMC has arguably the best site in the '905' for office – subway connection
- **Create a downtown for the COV** – the VMC has the potential to become the core leader community
- **Develop a dense, differentiated office node** – office tenants seek a prestigious address co-tenancy. Looking behind the LMSI square feet currently envisioned for the VMC
- **Create economic value** – driving office development and density within the VMC zone and reduce costs over time
- **Build a case for TOD within the GTA** – the VMC is a net case for extending transit, careful realization of the VMC vision will spur future transit investment across

### Challenges

- **Existing conditions** – there is a gap between the proposed vision for the VMC, and the existing conditions and land ownership patterns present today
- **Infrastructure** – uncertainty and lack of a binding framework for infrastructure may impact office space within the VMC
- **Regulatory framework** – lack of clarity and consensus regarding the plan for the VMC development of office space within the VMC
- **Differing business models** – there is not always clear alignment between the urbanity sought for the VMC and the established business models of the VMC land owners
- **Market dynamics** – the proposed requirements for office development within the VMC structure that is not compatible with market comparable rents in other suburban office

## Office Economics

Required VMC Class A Rents

Office development in the significant cost disadvantage and new-construction Class A '905' Although office the VMC may well be able to acquire rents between the two areas will limit the cost

Note: Diagram is based on gross rent/fees

### Existing Conditions

There are several strategies available to facilitate and accelerate office development within the VMC. Broadly speaking, these strategies either lower the cost of office development, thereby lowering the required rents, or increase the net or perceived value of locating within the VMC, thereby increasing tenants' willingness to pay higher rents. Employing both strategies will bridge the gap between the VMC's rental rates and rates in competing existing and future office buildings.

### Lower Costs

STRONG OFFICE NODE

Higher Value

Higher Value

### Cost Mitigation Strategies

- Reduced parking requirements
- Infrastructure formwork and materials
- Development charges and fees

### Increasing the VMC Value

- Achieving higher rents through superior product and value offering
- Achieving higher rents through close, compelling marketing

## Fiscal Impact

A preliminary scenario analysis, based on figures for similar office deals within Vaughan, revealed significant positive revenue impact for the City of Vaughan and York Region with the development of urban forest, high-density, Class A office space.

Financial considerations of the scenario analysis included:

- **Public benefits** – urbanized development produced tax and Development Charge revenue per acre fourteen times greater than existing suburban development
- **Revenue realization** – Development charges are paid by the developers up front and are earmarked for specific investments into infrastructure, whereas property tax payments are largely a pass-through expense borne by the office tenants and occur over time
- **Regional and provincial partnership** – given the revenue potential for upper-tier government, and the significant investments made into the subway connection, close collaboration should be pursued for the planning and development of the VMC
- **Investment flexibility** – the analysis suggests the examination of different investment tactics, to determine which will be most appropriate for the VMC
- **The "not for" test** – the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and other infrastructure investment, should only be employed to fund development that will generate tax revenue that would not occur but for the investment being made

The Implementation Strategy is intended to become a tool and a living blueprint for the City in informing an implementation-oriented roadmap to be developed collaboratively between LWLP and the City, as it will provide an understanding of the opportunity and role the City can play in unlocking private sector development opportunities. This may be achieved through City-sponsored investment or other initiatives, creative deal structures with landowners, as well as economic development strategies. A key component of the implementation strategy will involve setting a framework of workable milestones and achievable goals and expectations for the phasing of the VMC in 5-year increments, until 2031.

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# Next Steps (cont'd)

## 4. Continued Strategic Advisory to the City on Pertinent VMC Issues

LWLP will remain a committed third-party resource to the City of Vaughan as a strategic real estate and city-building advisor, available to provide feedback, comments, research and informed advice on pertinent issues to the VMC. Areas of LWLP support to the City may include evaluating real estate business cases and deal structuring, advising on City land acquisition processes, peer reviewing City projects and plans, and more. To date, LWLP has made itself available, (and will continue to do so,) to any and all City departments that are currently engaged with the VMC, working through VMC-related initiatives, and requiring outside real estate advice in order to address questions and issues and properly position the VMC's development for success.







## LWLP Revised Critical Path for VMC Facilitation (1, 2)

	2014			
	October	November	December	January
<b>A. Stakeholder Management</b>				
A1 – Define, Assemble & Coordinate the VMC Working Group				
A2 – Organize & Facilitate Key Stakeholder Meetings (Ongoing)				
A3 – Establish a Process for Continuity (Ongoing)				
<b>B. Project Introduction, Reconnaissance and Assessment</b>				
B1 – Project Introduction				
B2 – VMC Development Assessment				
B3 – SWOTS				
B4 – Mixed-Use Vision				
B5 – Regional & Local History & Other Advantages				
B6 – Preliminary Asset Maximization & Downtown Enhancement Strategies				
Stakeholder Review and Comment Integration				
<b>C. Mixed-Use Assessment, Business Plan &amp; Financial Modeling</b>				
C1 – Retail Market Assessment				
C1.1 – Vaughan Regional Retail Marketplace & Competitive Landscape				
C1.2 – Retail Demand & Strategic Recommendations for the VMC				
C1.3 – Recommendations to Inform Retail Policy				
C1.4 – Optimize Retail Phasing & Physicality				
C2 – Residential Market Assessment				
C2.1 – Vaughan Regional Residential Marketplace & Competitive Landscape				
C2.2 – Residential Demand & Strategic Recommendations				
C3 – Office Market Assessment				
C4 – Parkland Acquisition, Development and Operations				
C5 – VMC Mixed-use Development Financial Model				
C6 – Priority Project Strategy				
<b>D. Implementation Strategy</b>				
D1 – Investment Strategy				
D2 – VMC Structured Development Deals				
D3 – Development Phasing				
D4 – Economic Development and Business Attraction				
D5 – Priority Project Implementation				
D6 – A Development Framework				

### Note:

- (1) Recognizing the COV's stated projected timeline of 24 months, LWLP believes that our dedicated in-house team can complete all required tasks within the timeline.
- (2) LWLP will remain dedicated to the project with all required resources beyond the timeline as set above should the project require additional resources.
- (3) LWLP has allotted 1 additional month to ensure stakeholder management is effectively transitioned to COV and the VMC Working Group.



ired work and deliverables within an 18 month period.  
ditional support/time.  
roup after the deliverables and scope of work is completed (*if required*).







An aerial photograph of a modern building complex. The building features a large glass facade on the left and two massive murals on the adjacent wall. The murals depict historical scenes, including a church interior and a street scene. The building is situated on a city street with a sidewalk, a red car, and a black car visible. A blue banner with the word "Appendices" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

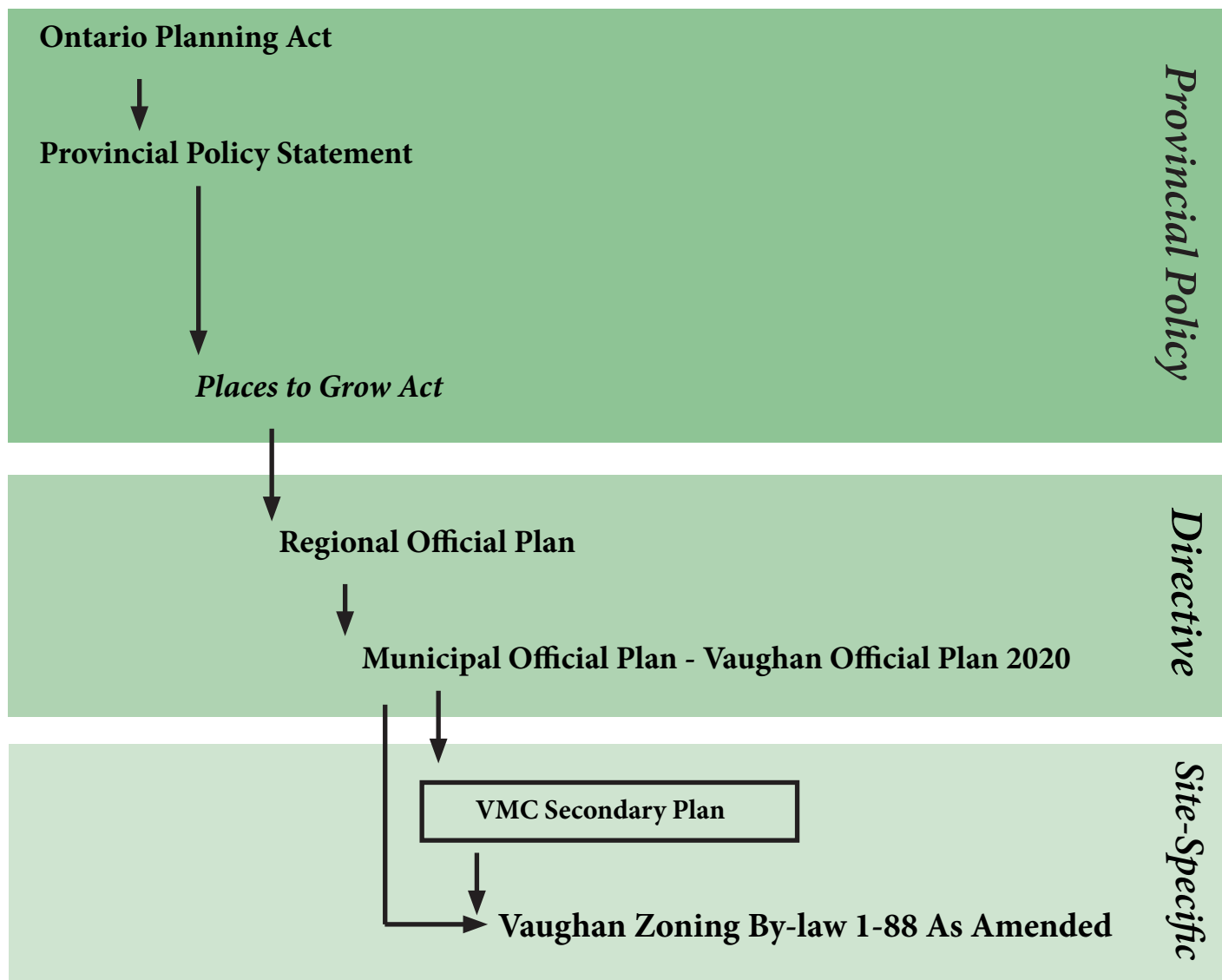
# Appendices



# Appendix A

## Planning Framework of the VMC

Within Ontario, Planning is a policy-led system where direction flows down from the Province through a chain of command that tasks individual municipalities with on-the-ground implementation.



The VMC Secondary Plan sits at the level of Site-Specific Secondary Plan within the Ontario planning policy regime. As such, it must conform to the goals and directions of the higher levels of planning policy, while providing a greater level of detail on how the lands within its defined policy boundary will be developed carrying forward. In addition, a number of Provincial plans and regulations help to provide guidance for development in the VMC including the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and Mobility Hub Guidelines, and the Region's Centres and Corridors Guidelines.



## List of Internal Stakeholder Meetings

Name	Title / Department
Barbara Cribbett	Interim City Manager, COV
John MacKenzie	Commissioner of Planning, COV
Paul Jankowski	Commissioner of Engineering & Public Works, COV
Joe Pittari	Commissioner of Strategic & Corporate Communications, COV
MaryLee Farrugia	Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services, COV
John Henry	Commissioner of Finance & City Treasurer, COV
Lloyd Norohana	Director of Development Finance & Investments, COV
Terry Liuni	Development Finance Supervisor, COV
Brianne Clace	Senior Analyst, COV
Heather Wilson	Director of Legal Services, COV
Paul Salerno	Manager of Real Estate, COV
Claudia Storto	Legal Council, COV
Leo Grellette	Director of Building Services, COV
Grant Uyeyama	Director of Development Planning, COV
Roy McQuillin	Manager of Policy Planning
Anna Sicilia	Senior Policy Planner, COV
Steven Dixon	Senior Policy Planner - OMB, COV
Rob Bayley	Manager of Urban Design, COV
Moir Wilson	Senior Urban Designer, COV
Jennifer Ladouceur	Director of Economic Development, COV
Shirely Kam	Senior Manager of Economic Development, COV
Mary Reali	Director of Recreation and Culture, COV
Angela Palermo	Manager of Cultural Services, COV

Name	Title / Department
Andrew Pearce	Director of Development / Transportation Engineering, COV
Jamie Bronsema	Director of Parks Development, COV
Martin Tavares	Acting Manager of Parks Development and Construction, COV
Gary Williams	Director of Corporate Communications, COV
Margie Singleton	Chief Economic Officer, Vaughan Public Libraries
Chris Wolnik	Manager of Environmental Sustainability, COV
Amy Roots	Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Project Manager, COV
Gerardo Paez Alonso	Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Project Manager, COV
Jennifer Cappola-Logullo	Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Project Manager, COV

Initial Internal Stakeholder Meetings conducted:

- October 28, 2014
- November 11, 2014
- December 9, 2014
- December 15, 2014
- December 16, 2014

*With ongoing feedback and input elicited, as required, throughout content development.*





**LiveWork**  
**LearnPlay**









# Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Vaughan, Ontario

Reconnaissance & Strategic Assessment  
May 2015

