



Economic Development

# 2021 Year in Review

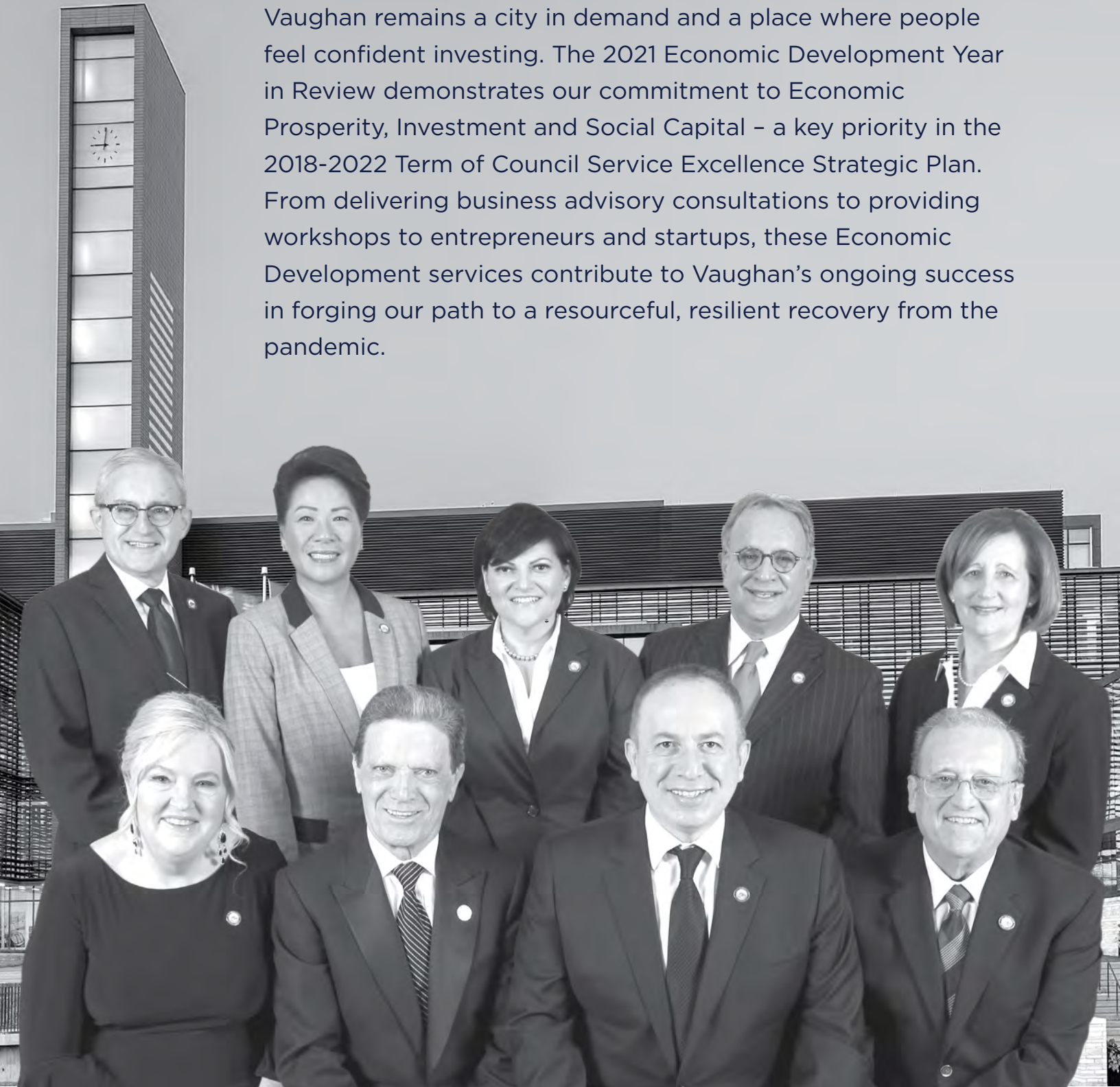




# Members of COUNCIL

2018-2022  
CITY OF VAUGHAN

Vaughan remains a city in demand and a place where people feel confident investing. The 2021 Economic Development Year in Review demonstrates our commitment to Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital – a key priority in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan. From delivering business advisory consultations to providing workshops to entrepreneurs and startups, these Economic Development services contribute to Vaughan’s ongoing success in forging our path to a resourceful, resilient recovery from the pandemic.



FRANK MAZZUCA, Metropolis in Motion, Lenticular Mural, 2020

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# Message from the **MAYOR**



The City of Vaughan is committed to business excellence and is an economic leader in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, we have remained steadfast in our shared commitment to deliver Service Excellence by ensuring City business not only continued but flourishes.

Driven by the dedication and professionalism of the Economic Development team, the City of Vaughan provides targeted and effective support and services to our local business community. We remain committed to supporting small businesses because we understand our strength lies in their

success. Creating the right environment to help professionals unleash their full potential is a top priority as we work to ensure Vaughan emerges stronger than ever.

Building a world-class city is a team effort, and since 2010, we have made enormous strides. More than 70,000 new jobs have been created, we have issued more than \$15 billion in building permits, and have had an average annual economic growth rate of 3.4 per cent. Small businesses remain the backbone of Vaughan's thriving economy — representing more than 85 per cent of all local job creators. As home to nearly 19,000 businesses and more than 236,000 employees, Vaughan has the talent, resources, networks and transportation connections to help businesses of all sizes scale and expand. We believe in providing entrepreneurs with the tools required to drive innovation and achieve the ultimate goal of creating a successful and environmentally sustainable business.

Vaughan's exceptional quality of life is a testament to our talented, diverse and robust business community, which sets us apart as a destination of choice. I want to extend my warmest and sincerest gratitude to the City's Economic Development department for providing professional and expert advice to local entrepreneurs and business owners. The Vaughan spirit is ready, resilient and resourceful. I am confident that if we keep working together and supporting each other, we will ensure Vaughan's continued success.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Maurizio Bevilacqua".

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, P.C.  
Mayor, City of Vaughan



CITY HALL, Aerial View, 2018 | City of Vaughan



# Message from the **CITY MANAGER**



Throughout 2021, the City of Vaughan’s Economic Development team remained committed to working with all levels of government to support entrepreneurs and small business owners, with a focus on maintaining the competitiveness of the local economy despite the challenges created by the global pandemic.

From providing advisory consultations, to supporting local and rising entrepreneurial talent through City programs – such as the Activate!Vaughan challenge series, Starter Company Plus and Summer Company, to developing the **Advantage Vaughan (PDF) plan**, this team is working hard to ensure Vaughan’s economic success.

Approved by Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and Members of Council in February 2022, Advantage Vaughan is the next phase of the City’s economic development response to COVID-19 with additional support, programs and resources now in place for local small businesses and entrepreneurs, residents and organizations. It reflects Vaughan’s commitment to economic prosperity, investment and social capital – a key priority of the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan.

On behalf of the Senior Leadership Team – Executive, I want to congratulate the entire Economic Development team for the wide range of initiatives, awards and recognitions outlined in this Year in Review.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Nick Spensieri.

Nick Spensieri  
City Manager, City of Vaughan



SHARP FAMILY ATRIUM,  
2012 | City of Vaughan



# Who we ARE

## Who we are

The City of Vaughan’s Economic Development (ED) department works to make Vaughan a place where entrepreneurship, business, tourism and art can prosper and grow. The department’s objectives, as outlined in the 2020 -2023 Strategic Business Plan, are to:

- enable a climate for businesses to grow, prosper and create jobs.
- advance economic opportunities and attract new investment.
- enrich Vaughan’s communities and economy through public art development.
- effectively pursue Service Excellence.

In 2021, a Council-approved corporate restructuring saw Economic Development, Access Vaughan and Corporate and Strategic Communications become the Office of Communications and Economic Development (OCED) under the City Manager’s Portfolio.

### Economic Development services for businesses

The City’s Economic Development team is the go-to source for insight into Vaughan’s economic community. Economic Development staff are knowledge brokers and opportunity advisors who facilitate local economic capacity, resilience and opportunity.

#### Service mandate

- Promote Vaughan’s economic advantages and key projects in target markets
- Engage businesses and regional partners
- Develop and implement economic development strategies, programs and initiatives
- Counsel, mentor and train business leaders and provide access to resources
- Collect, analyze and share economic, market, real estate, demographic and competitive business data with clients and partners
- Plan and curate public art spaces and installations
- Facilitate corporate partnerships and sponsorships for the City of Vaughan
- Provide customer relations support that exemplifies the City’s dedication to Service Excellence
- Provide guidance to businesses by understanding the overall landscape of Vaughan’s business industry



## Services offered:

### Economic Development

- Business planning support, including marketing strategies, financial forecast and cash flow, and general business development
- Entrepreneurship programs, including training, mentorship and opportunities to apply for provincial funding
- Group seminars and workshops
- End-to-end site-selection assistance
- Self-serve Vacant Employment Land Directory
- Referrals to grants, funding and business support programs
- Referrals to professionals, business organizations and various levels of government
- Business engagement and outreach
- Development process, Zoning By-law and permitted use, business licensing and building permit information
- Research and business intelligence

### Tourism Vaughan

- Marketing and communications support
- Partnership support
- Business development opportunities



## Vaughan's Economic Development department is award-winning

The Economic Development department is proud to have been awarded and recognized for its work in 2021. The City has been recognized with the following awards:

- International Economic Development Council Gold Award: vaughanbuisness.ca (nominated best in show)
- International Economic Development Council Gold Award: Activate!Vaughan Innovation program (nominated best in show)
- International Economic Development Council Bronze Award: Breaking News Tourism Vaughan Familiarization Tour
- International Economic Development Council Bronze Award: Vaughan Rising Podcast
- Economic Development Council of Ontario Winner: Fav Spot campaign
- Ontario Tourism Resiliency Award: Familiarization Tour
- Economic Development Association of Canada Marketing Award: vaughanbusiness.ca





# Tools and Resources

## Business Advisory Consultation

Complimentary advisory consultations are available to entrepreneurs and businesses of all stages and sizes to help them start, expand or relocate a business in Vaughan.

## COVID-19 Resource page

Stakeholders can stay up to date on COVID-19 updates and funding on the [vaughanbusiness.ca](#) resource page.

## Events

Vaughan’s Economic Development department hosts an array of events, workshops and information sessions for residents and businesses.

## Host in Vaughan

A meeting and event planning website that provides planners with easy-to-use tools to host their next event in Vaughan. The platform provides a venue finder that is sortable by venue type, capacity and more; RFP inquiry booking; familiarization tour registration and a compelling case for why Vaughan is the best place to host any meeting or event.

## MyVMC

Showcasing the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) – an emerging downtown poised to be the new financial, innovation and cultural centre of the city of Vaughan.

## News

Users can stay up to date on important economic development news from Vaughan and beyond and [subscribe to Economic Development’s e-newsletter](#).



## Online Permit Portal

A digital portal that allows users to apply, track and pay for building or engineering permits online.

## Online Licensing Portal

A digital portal that allows users to apply for or renew licences and by-law permits.

## Open for Business Online Directory

The City of Vaughan is committed to supporting businesses, consumers and all citizens and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, developed an online list of open local businesses.

## Vaughan Business Directories

Vaughan is home to a diverse industrial base of nearly 19,000 businesses, making the city one of the largest markets in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The business directory resources allows users to explore the city of Vaughan’s globally competitive businesses.

## Vaughan Business Café

Diverse connections are at the core of innovation and company growth. The Vaughan Business Café provides meaningful connections to entrepreneurs, small business owners and corporate partners.

## Vacant Employment Land Directory

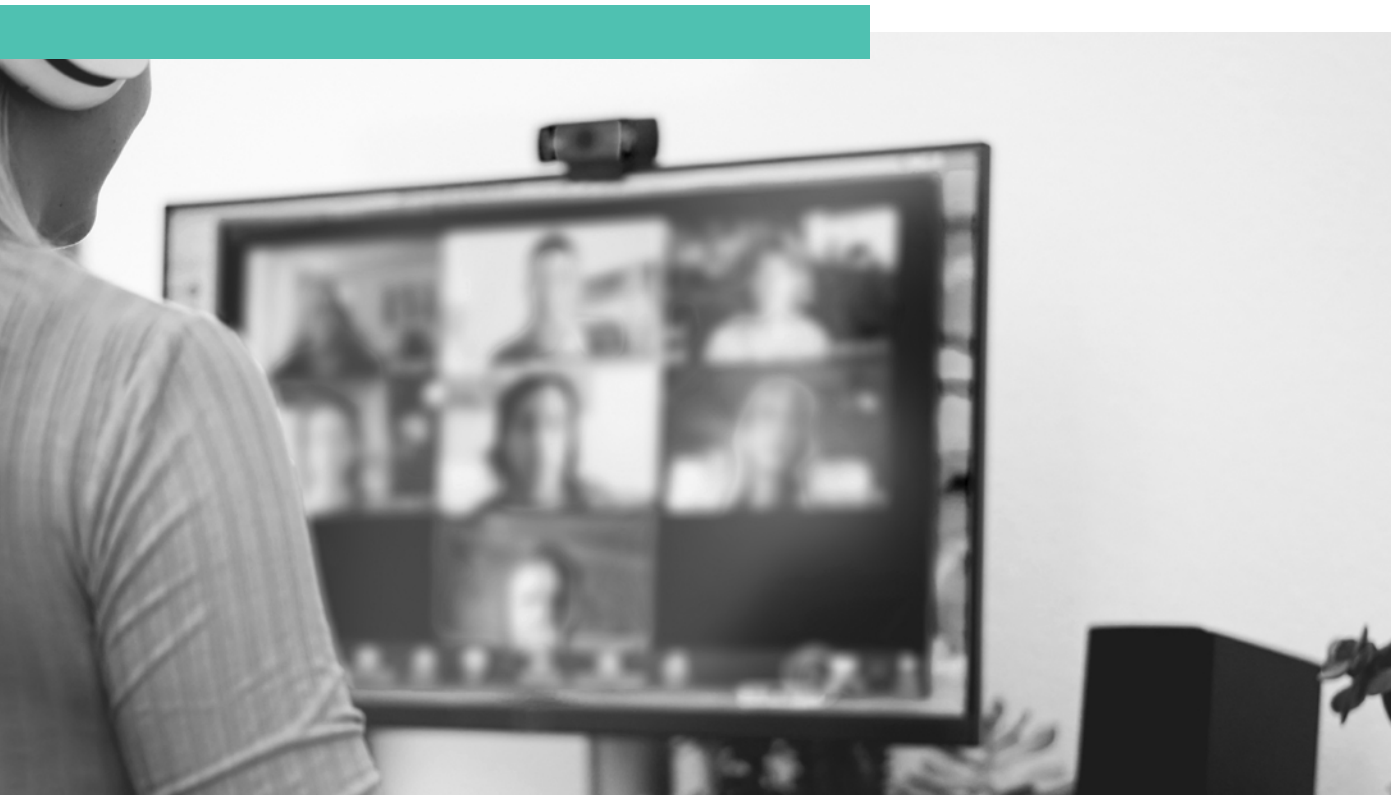
The City of Vaughan’s online Vacant Employment Land Directory identifies and supports development opportunities for relevant third parties and facilitates the construction of industrial and commercial buildings.

## Vaughan Bid and Tender Opportunities

For those interested in doing business with the City, Vaughan’s online bid and tender system allows easy access to open bid opportunities.







**Vaughan Enterprise Zone**

Users can learn more about the advantages the Vaughan Enterprise Zone (VEZ) has to offer, with a powerful value proposition for head offices, national logistics and distribution centres, manufacturing operations and other users needing large, new spaces. The VEZ has a vast business area with significant goods-movement infrastructure in Vaughan’s west end. It borders Toronto, Brampton and Caledon, covering a total area of 1,668 hectares (4,122 acres). More than a third of the land is developed, offering one of the largest supplies of vacant employment lands in the Greater Toronto Area.

**Vaughan Data**

Explore **Vaughan at a Glance** to learn key information on Vaughan’s economy, demographics and building activity and view profiles of Vaughan’s key sectors:

- [Advanced Manufacturing](#)
- [Arts and Culture](#)
- [Construction](#)
- [Food and Beverage](#)
- [Professional Business Services](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Tourism](#)
- [Transportation and Warehousing](#)
- [Wholesale](#)

**Shared Office and Co-Location Spaces**

Whether working for oneself, building a startup or running an established business, sometimes business owners need a space to work or host meetings. These Vaughan facilities offer professional co-working spaces with a variety of amenities.

**Business Associations**

Users can browse a list of business associations, trade organizations, chambers of commerce and general business councils that are active in Vaughan.



**Connect with us**

To connect or learn more about services, programs and more, please visit:

**Vaughan Economic Development**  
vaughanbusiness.ca | ed@vaughan.ca

**Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)**  
myVMC.ca

**Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC)**  
visitvaughan.ca | tourism@vaughan.ca

RAFAËL ROZENDAAL,  
Silence: PXL Gallery, Digital  
Art, 2021 | SmartVMC (image  
courtesy of SmartCentres)



# Investing today in Vaughan's **TOMORROW**

**Vaughan continues to be a city on the rise.  
A number of ambitious city-building initiatives  
made impressive progress in 2021.**

VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE, AERIAL VIEW,  
2021 | CITY OF VAUGHAN

## **Providing world-class healthcare at Canada's first smart hospital**

Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital, Vaughan's first hospital, opened its doors as a full-service community hospital on June 7, 2021. The \$1.7-billion project is the first **net-new** hospital built in Ontario in more than 30 years. Generating more than 1,800 jobs in the community, this 1.2-million-square-foot facility has a capacity for up to 350 beds. Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital is the first smart hospital in Canada, and features fully integrated smart-technology systems and medical devices that can speak directly to one another to maximize information exchange.



CORTELLUCCI VAUGHAN HOSPITAL, 2021 |  
City of Vaughan

## **Building a destination for healthcare excellence and innovation**

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Vaughan, the City is leading a collaboration to transform an 82-acre parcel of land at Jane Street and Major Mackenzie Drive into the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct. As part of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between York Region, Mackenzie Health and ventureLAB, a feasibility study was undertaken to identify how best to utilize the 82-acre parcel of land surrounding Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital. The feasibility study has completed two major components: the **existing conditions assessment** and the **opportunities assessment**. In July 2021, the Vaughan Healthcare Precinct Advisory Task Force was formed to set the direction and priorities to realize the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct as a destination for health and healthcare delivery, education, research, innovation and commercialization. This transformative project has the potential to add more than \$750 million to the Canadian economy and contribute more than \$350 million annually.



# Vaughan continues to be a Smart City leader

Vaughan is a Smart City leader that seeks new and meaningful ways to incorporate innovative solutions into ongoing city-building efforts. Vaughan’s Smart City achievements include:

- being the first municipality in Canada to use **artificial intelligence technology for winter maintenance** to better allocate resources and reduce salt usage. Using sensors, the tool considers weather models, Vaughan’s micro-climates, traffic volumes and road conditions to best inform winter maintenance decisions for the City’s roads and sidewalks.
- **implementing digitized catch basins**, providing access to data, improving responsiveness to customer concerns and better tracking of asset conditions.
- installing five **Smart Hydrant** kits to identify potential leaks within City infrastructure and their locations while generating alerts to operations staff for follow-up actions in the field. This pilot project used devices to provide the City with useful insights into the water system, such as drops in pressure and temperature information.



- piloting **garbage bin sensors**, a new sensor-based approach for public waste bin collection. Sensors are placed under the lids of select waste bins allowing Parks staff to monitor the fill-levels remotely and receive notifications when they need to be emptied.
- completing the installation of approximately 24,000 new lights through the city-wide LED **Streetlight Retrofit Program**, including smart technology upgrades, such as installing a web-enabled lighting control system that will allow remote monitoring, operation and maintenance of all LED lights. This provides accurate energy metering per streetlight, integrated GPS for real-time streetlight performance reporting, and the ability to turn on, dim or turn off streetlights remotely.
- the Council-approved **MoveSmart** Mobility Management Strategy, delivering a safe, sustainable, and efficient transportation system. At the core of the strategy is the Traffic Data Management Program and the City is in the process of procuring this solution. The tool will interface with data collection devices and will have the ability to assess and analyze the data so that the City can make evidence-based decisions.
- collaborating with industry leaders to launch the **Activate!Vaughan Smart City Challenge** in four challenge areas.
- receiving two **2021 Smart 50 Awards** for the Winter Maintenance Artificial Intelligence System and the LED Streetlight Retrofit Program.





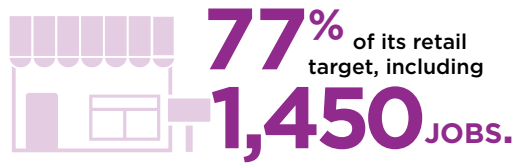
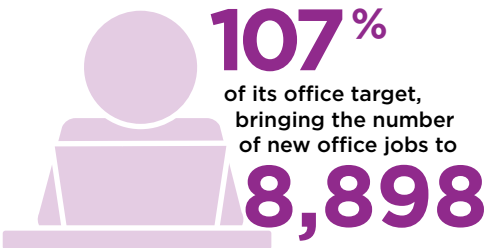


VMC SUBWAY, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre | City of Vaughan

### Downtown Vaughan is rising

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is an emerging downtown poised to be the financial, innovation and cultural centre of Vaughan. It offers unprecedented access to talent, Class A office space, multi-modal transit and urban amenities. The VMC is the largest and most ambitious project in the City’s history. In 2021, the VMC was home to 538,770 square feet of new commercial office space built and approved, representing 4,490 jobs.

In 2021, the City initiated an update to the existing VMC Secondary Plan due to the rapid residential growth and recent municipal and regional legislation changes. If the current development pipeline proceeds to approval, the VMC will reach:



### Vaughan in the headlines

- [Kontrol BioCloud receives \\$2 million from Ontario Together Fund](#)
- [Provincial government invests more than \\$868,000 in support for Vaughan-based festival and event organizers](#)
  - 2021 Vaughan Latin Festival
  - 90’s Nostalgia Presents: Canada Rocks
  - Halloween Nights of Lights
  - Pizza in the Park
  - Toronto Garlic Festival
  - VFF 2021 Drive-In
- [General Assembly Pizza and S&S Activewear invest in Vaughan locations](#)
- [FedDev Ontario invests 1.9 million in York Metal Products](#)
- [McMichael Canadian Art Collection receives provincial funding](#)
- [Vaughan based Sterling Industries announces additional manufacturing facility, adding 35,000 square feet](#)
- [Vaughan-based home builder acquires another U.S. firm in one of the fastest growing cities in America](#)
- [Lumon completes nearly \\$1.5 million investment in Vaughan production facility](#)
- [Vaughan based Steadiwear raises \\$1.1 Million CAD to fuel launch of glove designed to combat hand tremors](#)
- [Kontrol Technologies acquires global HVAC in bid to lead smart building market and announces \\$155 million order book](#)
- [Former Vaughan Starter Company Plus participant raises \\$3.1 million in seed funding](#)





## Vaughan as a place to live, work and play

In 2021, 20 grants were awarded totalling more than \$19.3 million for city programs and services. This funding continues to promote local economic capacity, resilience and opportunity for City of Vaughan businesses and residents in the following ways:

- Developing natural asset inventory in the Greenbelt Infrastructure improvements to City buildings, such as Vaughan Public Libraries and community centres, including indoor and outdoor spaces
- Support for Vaughan Celebrates, including Canada Day, Winterfest and Concerts in the Park
- Research and planning grants to improve the development application process
- Parks and greenspace funding to plant trees, create community gardens and deliver educational programs
- Wage subsidies for youth to obtain summer employment
- Tourism funding to attract visitors to Vaughan through event attraction and destination development
- Mainstreet activation funding to support local businesses
- Fire safety and education funding
- Safety retrofits, such as UV HVACs and social distancing measures due to COVID-19



Maple Nature Reserve Trail, 2021 | City of Vaughan



AMANDA LARGE & YOUNES BOUNHAR, VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES, 2016 | CITY OF VAUGHAN



# Economic SNAPSHOT

In 2021, the City of Vaughan's  
Economic Development team:



Delivered  
**814**  
BUSINESS  
advisory  
consultations



Answered  
**3,150**  
INQUIRIES

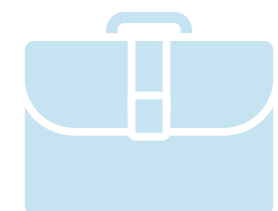
Secured **EIGHT** new investments  
resulting in nearly

**700**  
NEW JOBS  
and more than  
**240,000**  
SQUARE FEET  
of leased or purchased spaces

Facilitated a total of

**32**   
PRE-QUALIFIED  
site-selection inquiries

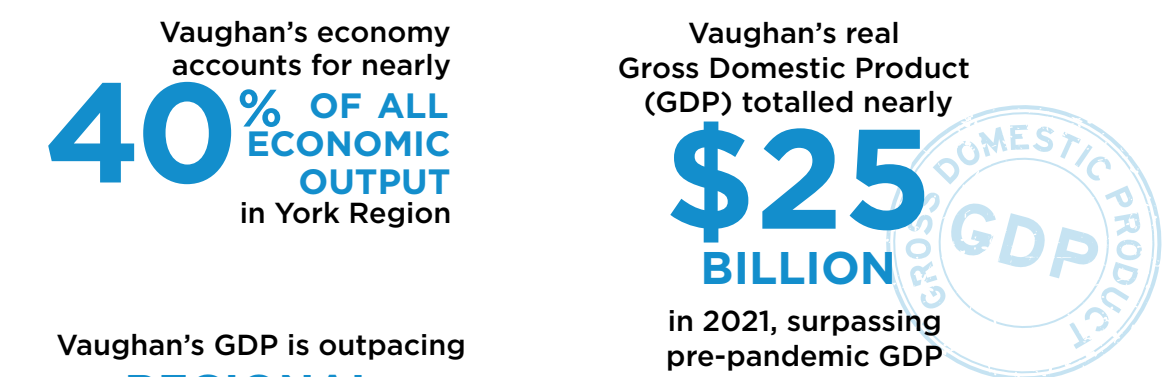
Provided  
**78**  
WEBINARS  
to  
**1,568**  
PARTICIPANTS



Assisted the start or growth of  
**239**  
BUSINESSES



# Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

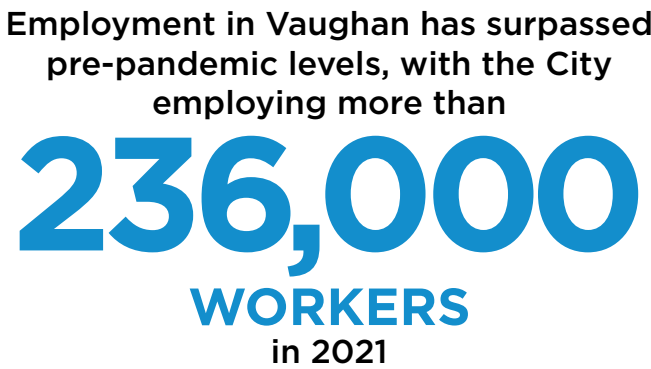


Vaughan's GDP is outpacing **REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL and NATIONAL GROWTH**



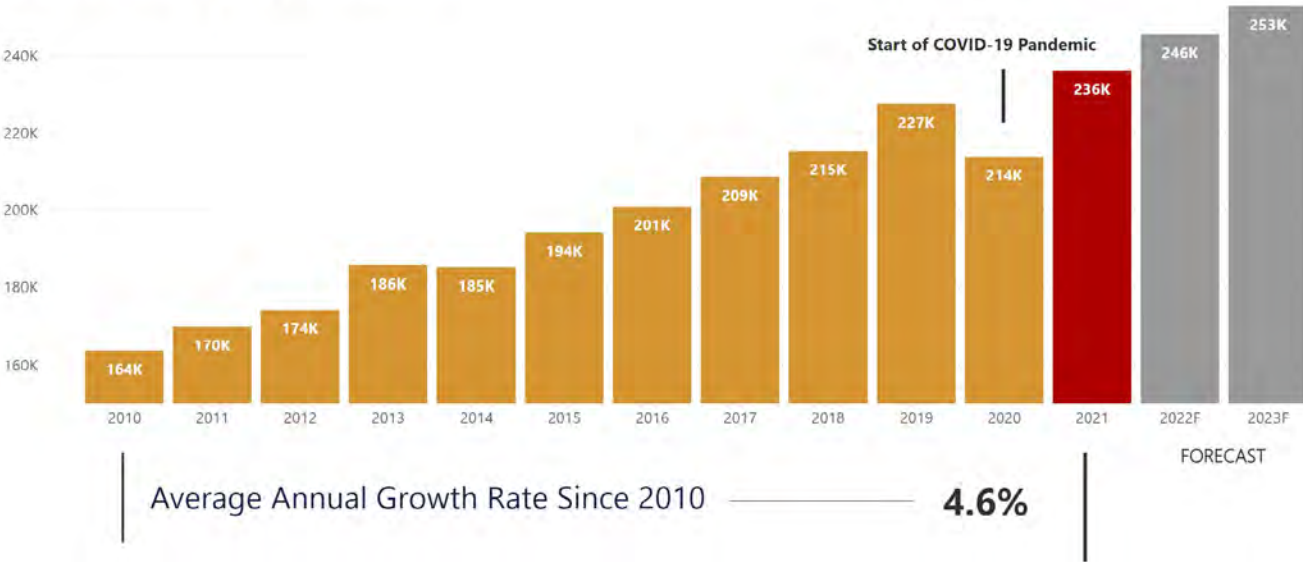
Source: The Conference Board of Canada. 2022. Regional Municipality of York Economic Forecast, 2009-2022.

# Employment



- Vaughan is home to a **DIVERSE, EDUCATED** pool of local talent that is **READY, WILLING, AND ABLE** to work:
- Unemployment Rate of **7.8%** in 2021, lower than regional and provincial rates.
  - Labour force participation rate of **74%** in 2021, higher than national, regional and provincial rates.
  - Highly Educated Workforce: **70%** post-secondary educated, ages 25 to 64

## Total Employment



Source: The Conference Board of Canada. 2021. Regional Municipality of York Economic Forecast, 2009-2020

Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Vaughan, CY and Canada. Census, 2016



# Business Counts

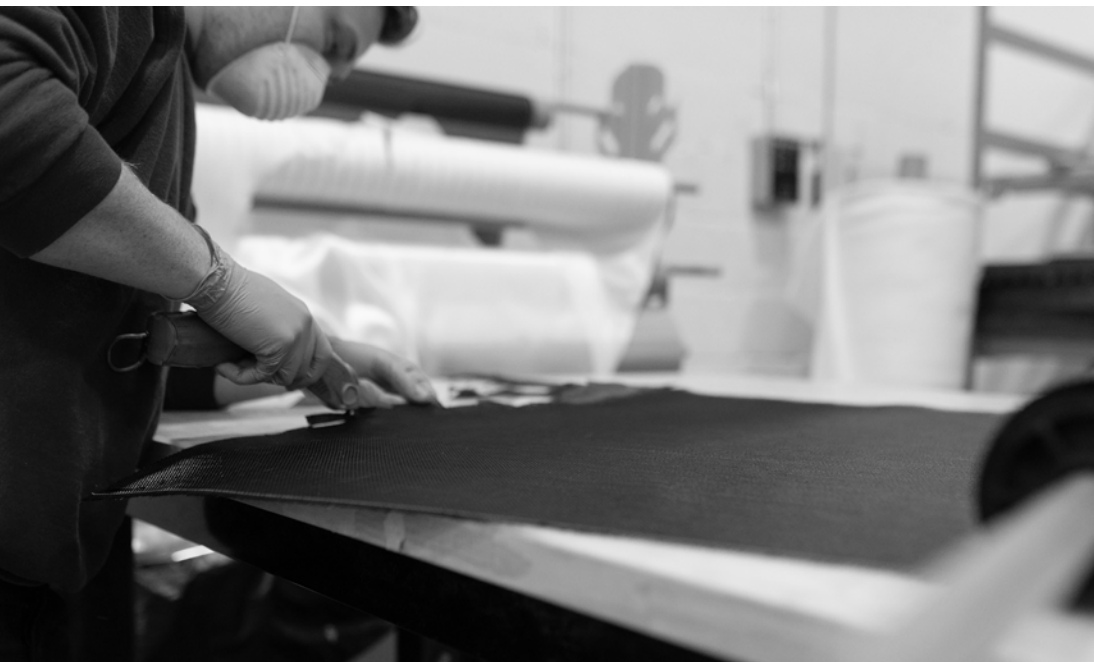
Vaughan’s diverse economy continues to drive economic growth throughout the City.

## 2021 Business Count Employment Range:

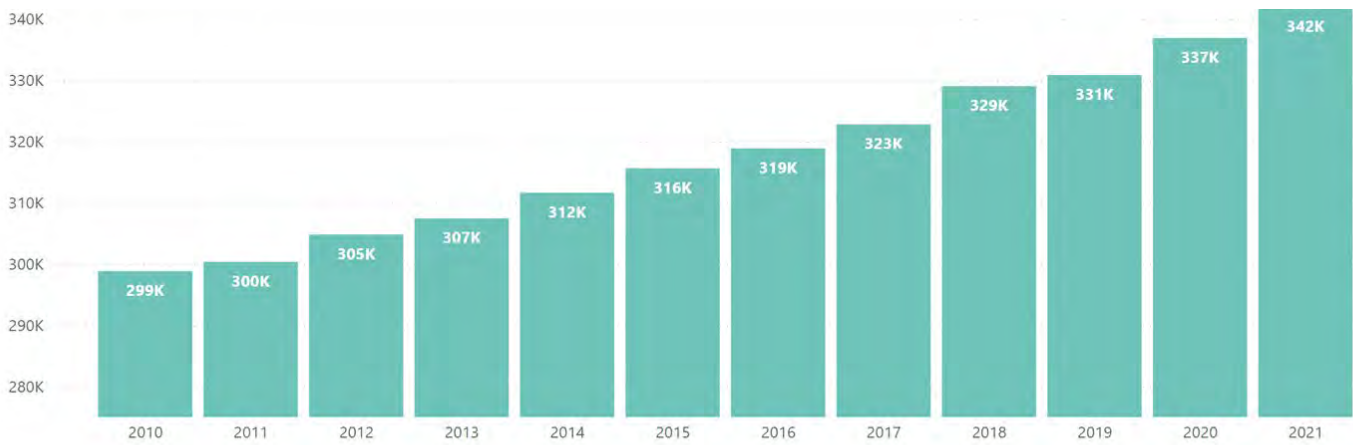
- Small Business (1-19): **88 per cent**
- Medium (20-99): **10 per cent**
- Large (100-499): **2 per cent**
- Very Large (500): **0.2 per cent**



Source: Statistics Canada 2022, Canadian Business Counts December 2021

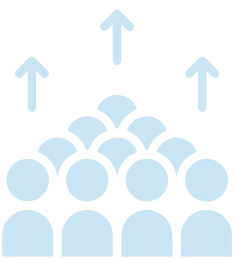


# Population



Average Annual Growth Rate **1.70%**

2021 Population **342.0K**



A fast-growing population with a **97% CITIZEN SATISFACTION RATE**

Population growth is **HIGHER** than the provincial and national rates

Source: Regional Municipality of York, 2021. Population Estimates December 2021

Source: Statistics Canada, 2020. Annual Demographic Estimates, July 2009-2020





# Value of building permits

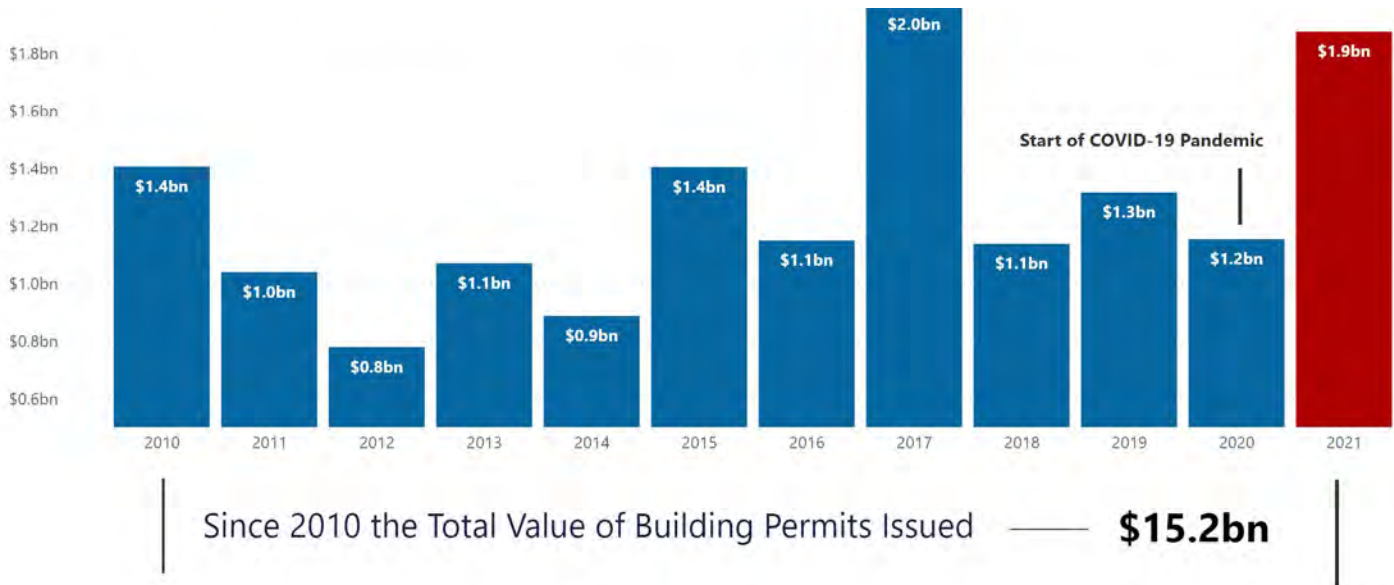
Vaughan remains a city on the rise.

Since 2010, Vaughan has issued more than

**55,400**  
BUILDING PERMITS  
totalling more than  
**\$15.2**  
BILLION

In 2021, the City issued

**\$1.875**  
BILLION  
in building construction value -  
a significant investment into  
the community



Source: City of Vaughan, Building Standards, 2022. Construction Activity, 2021

Source: Statistics Canada 2022, Value and Number of permits for the New Top 30 CSDs Residential and Non-Residential Buildings 2021



## Commercial Rankings

- 01 | Toronto
- 02 | Calgary
- 03 | Montreal
- 04 | Vancouver
- 05 | Hamilton
- 06 | **Vaughan**
- 07 | Edmonton
- 08 | Ottawa
- 09 | Winnipeg
- 10 | Brampton

## Industrial Rankings

- 01 | Toronto
- 02 | Montreal
- 03 | Ottawa
- 04 | Edmonton
- 05 | Lévis
- 06 | Calgary
- 07 | **Vaughan**
- 08 | Laval
- 09 | Longueuil
- 10 | Brampton



# Supporting Vaughan's BUSINESSES

The City's Economic Development department is here to support small-and medium-sized businesses prospering in Vaughan. In 2021, Economic Development delivered a number of programs, initiatives and services that seek to strengthen entrepreneurship and business success throughout the city.

RICARDO CAVOLO, Here Comes the Sun: ArtWalk, Mural, 2021 | SmartVMC (image courtesy of SmartCentres)

## Helping businesses build strong foundations and accelerate growth

Virtual consultations have continued to be offered throughout 2021 in light of changing restrictions due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship team has continued to offer services in a digital format while still maintaining the same level of service quality and capacity. In 2021, the **Small Business and Entrepreneurship** team delivered **790 business consultations**, responded to **3,133 inquiries** and assisted with the start and expansion of **239 businesses**.

Vaughan Starter Company Plus is a training and mentorship program designed to help small businesses start, grow or expand. Regardless of the type of small business – a design firm, a technology startup, a personal service provider, a professional or medical service enterprise or otherwise – the program provides entrepreneurs with tools for success. In 2021, Starter Company Plus had **144 program participants** and selected 30 small businesses to receive a provincial grant of **\$5,000**.



RICARDO CAVOLO, Here Comes the Sun: ArtWalk, Mural, 2021 | SmartVMC (image courtesy of SmartCentres)



Connecting innovation and opportunity for startups and scaleups

The City of Vaughan is committed to catalyzing innovation by supporting entrepreneurs to become leaders in their fields. Economic Development continues to work with key partners to build local capacity for innovation, job creation and talent development in the city of Vaughan.

Activate!Vaughan

Activate!Vaughan is an innovation program connecting high-potential startups and scaleups to market-driven entrepreneurship opportunities and mentorship from industry leaders and multinationals. In 2021, the [Activate!Vaughan Smart City Challenge](#) began in search of groundbreaking smart city solutions. This challenge marks an important step forward to build on the City’s focused efforts to be a smart city leader. Five winners were selected from the 24 participating ventures. Through the challenge, City departments, industry partners, startups and scaleups were brought together to address the challenges of today and the future. By leveraging data and innovative emerging connected technology, the City and program partners are taking a smart city approach to achieve meaningful outcomes and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

- CHALLENGE

01

Electric Mobility Innovation: SWTCH Energy
- CHALLENGE

02

Municipal Services Route Optimization:  
IRIS R&D Group
- CHALLENGE

03

Age-friendly Communities (Part 1) –  
Access to Healthcare: uCareNet
- CHALLENGE

03

Age-friendly Communities (Part 2) –  
Social Isolation: Treasured
- CHALLENGE

04

Intelligent Placemaking: EAIGLE



AMANDA LARGE & YOUNES BOUNHAR, Vaughan Public Libraries, 2016 | City of Vaughan

Vaughan Public Libraries and ventureLAB

The City of Vaughan partnered with Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) and ventureLAB to establish a [new innovation space in Vaughan](#). Launched in the Pierre Berton Resource Library, ventureLAB will leverage this space to further support Vaughan-based entrepreneurs with technology-driven programs and services. The space reflects economic development’s role in creating an environment for entrepreneurs and small businesses to flourish and grow.





SERTA SIMMONS, 2019 | City of Vaughan

### Promoting Vaughan as a destination of choice

**Save and spend** was a new incentive program created in partnership with Central Counties Tourism in 2021 that aimed to increase regional tourism activity by providing tourists with \$100 when they booked a consecutive two-night stay at one of eight participating hotels.

**HostinVaughan.ca** launched in the summer of 2021 – a meeting and event planning website that provides planners with easy-to-use tools to host their next event in Vaughan. The website features a handy venue finder that is sortable by venue type, capacity and more; RFP inquiry booking; familiarization tour registration and a compelling case for why Vaughan is the best place to host any meeting or event. In 2021, Host in Vaughan had 20,221 website views.

In partnership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance, Tourism Vaughan participated in the Great Taste of Ontario Roadtrip to showcase some of the best in food and beverage in Vaughan. To create the ultimate culinary experience, Tourism Vaughan created a passport of local food and beverage businesses as part of several itineraries to eat and explore locally.

**Your Spot. Your Community.** Residents were asked to share their #FavSpot in Vaughan with a photo of their favourite places in the city. The campaign saw more than 500 #FavSpotVaughan posts. Businesses that received the most shares in each of the six eligible categories were awarded the title Vaughan Fav Spot 2021. 2021 Fav Spot winners included:

- Accommodations – Novotel, Springhill Suites
- Attractions – Canada’s Wonderland
- Food and Beverage – Giro D’Italia Ristorante
- Gardens, Parks and Trails – North Maple Regional Park
- Museums and Galleries – McMichael Canadian Art Collection
- Theatre, Entertainment and Events – Vaughan Pizza Fest

**Building supply chain resilience across York Region**

In 2020, Vaughan’s Economic Development team brought together Supply Chain Canada, York Region, and the Cities of Markham and Richmond Hill to study the impact of COVID-19 on manufacturing supply chains and gather best practices to prepare for future supply chain disruptions. Supply chain management consulting firm Supply Chain Alliance conducted interviews over several months with CEOs and supply chain and procurement leaders. Completed in spring 2021, the report’s key findings include:

- focusing efforts on business continuity planning and supply chain residency measures.
- accelerating supply chain digitization.
- developing a cyber-attack strategy to secure data and systems.
- continuing to strengthen relationships with local manufacturers at the municipal level.
- developing a national early warning system to flag and handle impending supply chain disruptions at the provincial and federal levels.

Read the full report at [Vaughan Advanced Manufacturing](#).

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**HostinVaughan.ca** launched in the summer of 2021 – a meeting and event planning website that provides planners with easy-to-use tools to host their next event in Vaughan. The website features a handy venue finder that is sortable by venue type, capacity and more; RFP inquiry booking; familiarization tour registration and a compelling case for why Vaughan is the best place to host any meeting or event. In 2021, Host in Vaughan had 20,221 website views.

In partnership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance, Tourism Vaughan participated in the Great Taste of Ontario Roadtrip to showcase some of the best in food and beverage in Vaughan. To create the ultimate culinary experience, Tourism Vaughan created a passport of local food and beverage businesses as part of several itineraries to eat and explore locally.

**Your Spot. Your Community.** Residents were asked to share their #FavSpot in Vaughan with a photo of their favourite places in the city. The campaign saw more than 500 #FavSpotVaughan posts. Businesses that received the most shares in each of the six eligible categories were awarded the title Vaughan Fav Spot 2021. 2021 Fav Spot winners included:

- Accommodations – Novotel, Springhill Suites
- Attractions – Canada’s Wonderland
- Food and Beverage – Giro D’Italia Ristorante
- Gardens, Parks and Trails – North Maple Regional Park
- Museums and Galleries – McMichael Canadian Art Collection
- Theatre, Entertainment and Events – Vaughan Pizza Fest



Economic Development

2021 Year in Review



## Increasing consumer confidence in Vaughan’s tourism industry

Since 2020, Tourism Vaughan has worked with the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) to adopt the Safe Travels Stamp to support local businesses and rebuild consumer confidence. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Safe Travels Stamp has helped travellers recognize the businesses and destinations following standard industry and government safety best practices, saving travellers the hassle and worry of whether a certain company is doing enough to keep guests safe. In 2021, the Safe Travels Stamp was used by more than 80 businesses in Vaughan.

POST Promise is a self-declaration for any business signifying its commitment to implement and practise five key steps to workplace safety and helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In 2021, POST Promise continued to be a core aspect of increasing consumer confidence for Vaughan residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 250 businesses have committed to implementing a POST Promise.



## Continued support for the business community during the pandemic

The City’s Economic Development team has continued to monitor the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2021. Through the online resource page on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca), the department collected, curated and showcased COVID-19-related business information, programs and grants. The resource page allowed nearly 2,000 users in 2021 to access up-to-date information on changing restrictions, funding opportunities and changing developments occurring due to COVID-19.

Created with the By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services team, the voluntary [Open for Business online directory](#) includes services and Vaughan-based businesses that are open or providing modified operations by phone, online, takeout or delivery in compliance with provincial and municipal regulations. In 2021, there were more than 130 businesses listed in the Open for Business directory.





Support Vaughan Local showcases the businesses that make Vaughan shine. The online business directory, hosted on [visitvaughan.ca](http://visitvaughan.ca) and supported by Tourism Vaughan and the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, provides residents with a complete listing of accommodations, food and drink, event planning, fun and entertainment, and more. To date, there are more than **100 businesses** that have been added to the Support Vaughan Local business directory.

Launched in 2020 as part of Tourism Vaughan’s Instagram page release, **#ShopVaughanLocal** was utilized again in 2021 to support the business community, providing relief to help ease the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Developing Vaughan as a tourism destination

Tourism Vaughan updated its Destination Master Plan with the goal of providing a solid foundation to guide industry and municipal investment in developing Vaughan as a destination over the next five years – with a particular interest in leveraging existing strengths, supporting future growth of tourism operators, unlocking the potential development for new tourism products and experiences and rebuilding an industry that has been the most impacted by COVID-19. The plan identifies five strategic priority clusters, upon which the following recommended actions have been developed:

- Governance and city policy framework
- Product development
- Partnerships
- Marketing and communications
- Research and data analysis

At the end of 2021, Tourism Vaughan put out a call to interested applicants looking to join the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee. The mandate of the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee is to provide the Tourism Vaughan Corporation Board of Directors with guidance and expertise related to the development and implementation of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan.



VAUGHAN MILLS, 2018 | City of Vaughan





# Developing LOCAL TALENT

A thriving and dynamic community positions Vaughan as a destination of choice for residents, visitors and businesses alike, while local talent shapes and defines Vaughan's economy. The City's Economic Development team works to provide the resources, amenities, employment opportunities and training necessary to advance Vaughan's economy, and aims to advance public art installations that bring vibrancy to the city's public realm, inspiring civic pride and conveying the identity and cultural image of the city.

FRANK MAZZUCA, Rapid | Transit 299: Transit Collection, Photography, 2016

## Building up the next generation of talent

Vaughan's Summer Company program provides students with the tools and resources to start their own companies. Program participants receive training and coaching from local business leaders and a provincial grant of up to \$3,000 to help with startup costs. In 2021, Summer Company saw:

**209**  
APPLICANTS

**41**  
STUDENTS  
interviewed

**10**  
STUDENTS  
selected to receive  
Summer Company  
training and funding

In 2021, Summer Company training was led by Niagara University. Faculty-led training and mentorship were provided to program participants, focusing on customer relationship building, growth marketing and the fundamentals of business finance. Summer Company participants were presented with a Certificate of Completion from Niagara University in recognition of their accomplishments over the summer.

The City of Vaughan was successful in securing **70 summer youth job positions** through the 2021 Canada Summer Job program. The program supports youth ages 15 to 29 in developing skills and gaining paid work experience to successfully transition into the labour market. Departments with internships include Recreation Services, Economic Development, Tourism Vaughan, Parks and Infrastructure Planning and Development, Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations, Transportation and Fleet Management Services and Environmental Services.





## Connecting local talent with mentorship opportunities

The City’s Economic Development department launched a mentorship webpage on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) that provides various professional mentorship programs available to both Vaughan residents and workers. The webpage lists a total of 23 pre-qualified programs, including seven general and 16 sector- and occupation-specific programs. Successful mentorship programs provide tremendous benefits to everyone involved. Mentees can develop new skills and knowledge, receive valuable advice on professional development and build self-confidence. Mentors can further develop leadership and communication skills, gain new perspectives and reflect on their own goals and practices.



RAFAËL ROZENDAAL, Silence: PXL Gallery, Digital Art, 2021 | SmartVMC (image courtesy of SmartCentres)

RICARDO CAVOLO, Here Comes the Sun and JEREMY SHANZ, An exploration of our timespace - a reverberation of our endless transformation: ArtWalk, Mural, 2021 | SmartVMC



## Animating the urban character of Vaughan to build a vibrant community

Public art is helping shape the VMC’s personality. Vibrant new installations are contributing to an engaging public realm with a strong sense of place that reflects the city’s transformative growth and emergence as a creative urban centre.

Two innovative, large-scale public art installations featuring a roster of acclaimed international and GTA artists were unveiled at SmartVMC, launching the first of several major works planned for this creative district. **ArtWalk**, located in the heart of future redevelopment south of Portage Parkway, between Edgeley Boulevard and Buttermill Avenue, exhibits four bold street art-inspired murals painted over the entire 30,000 square-foot façade of a vacant retail building, infusing a dynamic liveliness. The theatrical **PXL Gallery** is a monumental 10,000 square-foot LED light wall installed on the south façade of Transit City Tower 3 on the west side of Millway Avenue between Portage Parkway and Apple Mill Road. It reveals a fusion of high-tech, low-resolution digital media by renowned digital artists, activated nightly through rotating exhibits of curated moving artwork. Both progressive art installations position Vaughan at the forefront of public art for monumental contributions to the contemporary Canadian art scene.

QuadReal demonstrated ongoing support for resident artists again this fall, commissioning Andre Kan to paint a series of temporary murals wrapping around the Studio building façade at Assembly Park. The abstract design concept adopted for Kan’s **Futura** alludes to the diverse, emerging future of the development community. Kan’s work complements the City’s first temporary public art installation revealed in VMC South last year – **Metropolis in Motion** by local artist Frank Mazzuca.



# STRENGTHENING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ECOSYSTEM

A strong and connected business community is integral in driving innovation throughout Vaughan. The City's Economic Development team shares successes and provides value-add connections within and across key sectors throughout the city.

## Forging meaningful connections in a virtual world

The City's Economic Development team hosted four roundtables in 2021 focused on spurring industry collaboration and engagement. Topics for roundtable discussion included cybersecurity awareness, tech talent development, fintech innovation and smart city technologies. These roundtables continue to utilize and connect local knowledge and talent to develop Vaughan's future economy and workforce.

The 19th Annual Vaughan Business Expo presented by Allstate Canada was the City's first virtual expo, drawing in 150 industry leaders, entrepreneurs and business experts. The event's purpose is to help businesses grow by providing them with an opportunity to make connections across the city and region and provide a chance to hear from industry leaders and experts across different areas.

### Program highlights included:

- The importance of going global: Tapping into international markets in the growing digital economy
- Your business grows here: How to do business with the government
- Your business tomorrow: The future of fulfillment
- Transformative technology: Trends and opportunities shaping our smart cities





## Celebrating and recognizing Vaughan's small business community

Small Business Week is a nationally recognized celebration of the contributions small businesses make to local economies. Every October, the Vaughan Small Business and Entrepreneurship team hosts Vaughan Small Business Week to provide local entrepreneurs access to the latest programs, best practices and networking opportunities. The 2021 theme focused on seizing the opportunity to build the way forward, exploring how to overcome current challenges, identifying opportunities for growth and highlighting the local supports available to entrepreneurs and small business owners. Programming was delivered virtually in collaboration with local business support organizations, including Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, ventureLAB, YSpace/York University, COSTI and York Regional Police.



## Leveraging community expertise through Council-led task forces

The City of Vaughan's 2018-2022 Term of Council task forces aim to address specific matters of importance to the public, such as key policies and city-building. The Economic Development team works closely with the City's Economic Prosperity Task Force, Smart City Task Force and the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct Advisory Task Force to advance economic opportunities and attract new investments.

- The Economic Prosperity Task Force leverages industry knowledge to support sustainable economic growth, leading to more jobs, higher incomes, less poverty, higher living standards and a healthier municipality. Its mandate is to advise how the City can best deliver on commitments made in the Council-approved Economic Development Strategic Business Plan, 2020-2023.
- The Smart City Task Force's mandate is to advance a culture of knowledge, pursuing continuous improvement; provide advice to Council and City administration; include high-level political and community perspectives in developing a smart city initiative; and endorse smart city technologies. Discussion topics have included Vaughan's smart city vision, core values, goals and objectives, and data and privacy considerations.
- The Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct Advisory Task Force is advancing transformational opportunities for the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct. The mandate is to oversee the development of the vision and priorities for making Vaughan a globally recognized example of a healthy city.





### Businesses bloom in Vaughan

Grow with Vaughan is the City’s horticulture sponsorship program that provides businesses with the opportunity to build brand awareness, reach their target markets and invest in their community. 2021 marked the program’s second year with the addition of pollinator gardens and flowerpots. The program supports small businesses through a cost-effective and highly visible partnership. Grow with Vaughan is a partnership between the City’s Economic Development and Parks, Forestry and Horticulture departments. In 2021, Grow with Vaughan realized:

**23**  
sponsored locations

**\$72,800**  
in sponsorship

### Showcasing manufacturers driving Vaughan’s economy

Economic Development has partnered with the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing to promote Vaughan’s manufacturing industry by profiling local companies. Trillium is a provincially-funded non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of Ontario’s advanced manufacturing ecosystem. In 2021, the following Vaughan advanced manufacturers were profiled:

- QTK Fine Cabinetry
- Northern Transformer
- Crystal Fountains
- Cutler Group
- Ozery Bakery
- Proto3000
- Mircom Group
- Futurecom Systems Group
- Sartrex Power Control Systems Inc.

### Networking made easy

Vaughan Business Café provides the Vaughan business community with diverse connections that drive innovation and company growth. The Business Café provides a digital platform for entrepreneurs, small business owners and corporate partners to connect and ask questions. In 2021, **1,343 introductions** were made through the Vaughan Business Café.





# 2022

## LOOK FORWARD

Vaughan's Economic Development department is dedicated to advancing economic opportunities, creating a climate for businesses to create jobs and increasing investments in economic development through key projects and initiatives. Stay tuned for more information on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) regarding upcoming programs, initiatives and funding opportunities!

### Advantage Vaughan

The City of Vaughan remains committed to maintaining the competitiveness of the local economy throughout the global pandemic and beyond. On Feb. 15, 2022, Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and Members of Council took the next step in supporting the business community by endorsing [Advantage Vaughan](#), Phase 3 of the City's economic development response to COVID-19.

The plan builds off the momentum of the [Vaughan Business Action Plan](#), approved in March 2020 as the first phase in the response efforts, and the [Vaughan Business Resilience Plan](#), which began in June 2020.

Advantage Vaughan proposes a series of programs to support four strategic pillars of the economy, including:

- local small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Vaughan's residents who make up the city's talent base.
- Vaughan's local organizations which animate our community and foster local destination development opportunities.
- community branding and marketing to demonstrate the advantages of doing business in Vaughan.

This will entail enhancing programs, led by the Vaughan Business and Entrepreneurship Centre, to deliver training and mentorship to local small business owners; creating a new Talent City Vaughan program to support organizations providing opportunities for residents and vulnerable groups to enhance their skillsets; and providing additional resources to Recreation Services' Fairs and Festivals Support Program to help strengthen in-person events when it is safe to hold them.





## Revitalizing Vaughan’s main streets

The My Main Street Local Business Accelerator is a data-driven community economic development program focused on revitalizing main streets with a healthy retail mix, while providing residents, new entrepreneurs and existing businesses with economic opportunities in their main street community. Vaughan’s Small Business and Entrepreneurship team successfully obtained funding to hire two Main Street Ambassadors who will provide wrap-around community economic development support for both new and existing small, independent, for-profit, consumer-serving (B2C) brick-and-mortar business operators. This includes retail, restaurants, recreational and personal services. Ambassadors will deliver services right to local business locations on main streets within Thornhill and the VMC.

## Investing in local talent

Talent City Vaughan is a new program under Advantage Vaughan, offering support to community and social service organizations to provide Vaughan residents with workforce-ready training opportunities. The program will provide up to \$10,000 for eligible non-profit community and social service organizations to host skills development and training programs that support Vaughan residents. Programs can involve a wide range of tactics to achieve this, including offering micro-credentials and opportunities to learn new skills or enhance existing ones, with the goal of empowering Vaughan residents to meet the needs of its growing economy.

## Guiding Vaughan’s Destination Master Plan

The Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee will provide the Tourism Vaughan Corporation Board of Directors with guidance and expertise related to the development and implementation of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan.

## visitvaughan.ca relaunch

Tourism Vaughan will be relaunching the visitvaughan.ca website in 2022, furthering the mission to market and develop Vaughan as a destination for tourists and business travellers.

## Vaughan Business and Entrepreneurship Centre (VBEC) relaunch

As part of the City’s Economic Development team’s efforts, a renewed mandate, brand and strategic communications campaign for the Vaughan Business and Entrepreneurship Centre (VBEC) – formerly the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre – will be developed to reach and inform local entrepreneurs and residents about the front-line services offered by VBEC staff to support the community more effectively. VBEC will continue its mandate of overseeing small business programs funded by other levels of government and stakeholder groups.

## Hosting Canada Soccer’s 2022 Toyota National Championships

In 2020, the City of Vaughan was selected to host the Canada Soccer Toyota National Championship’s Jubilee and Challenge Trophy competition that will take place from Oct. 5 to Oct. 10, 2022. The city of Vaughan will be host to over 500 athletes, officials and volunteers from all across Canada, resulting in bringing approximately 800 room nights to local accommodations and an estimated economic impact of \$700,000 to local tourism industry sectors, such as food and beverage, retail and attractions.

## Animating public spaces

Public art plans are advancing for several major permanent installations slated for the VMC in the near future. Cortel Group’s EXPO City – CG Tower sculptural installation, to be located on the development site adjacent to and overlooking the new Edgeley Park and Pond, envisions a storyline concept of transformation, paying homage to the landscape and history of the land and the story of Black Creek. SmartCentres’ VMC East Block North prominent gateway feature, planned for the corner of Jane Street and Portage Parkway, coupled with a memorable installation located near the VMC Centre of Community, will resonate with viewers as iconic landmarks. Plans are also proceeding to develop City-Wide Public Art District Strategies and a number of upcoming site-specific installations in the near future.



Exploring innovative transit solutions for the VEZ

In May 2022, the City’s Economic Development department plans to host a roundtable discussion with employers in the Vaughan Enterprise Zone (VEZ). The roundtable discussion aims to explore and establish innovative and cost-effective transportation solutions in the VEZ that will assist employers with their labour force needs.

Enhancing industry networking through business-to-business plant tours

In June 2022, the City’s Economic Development department is set to host a business-to-business plant tour, called Vaughan B2B: Industrial Tour. Vaughan B2B will provide learning and networking opportunities for Vaughan-based companies by matching two companies with similar interests and needs. The matched companies will take turns to host and tour each other’s facilities with the goal of sharing operational best practices, policies and business challenges. Companies will also be encouraged to discuss any potential pilot projects, business or partnership opportunities.



THE HUB, 2019 | City of Vaughan



MACRODYNE TECHNOLOGIES, 2019 | City of Vaughan





# CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM

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## Connect with us

To connect or learn more about services, programs and more, please visit:

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**Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)**

[myVMC.ca](http://myVMC.ca)

**Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC)**

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