

6 Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

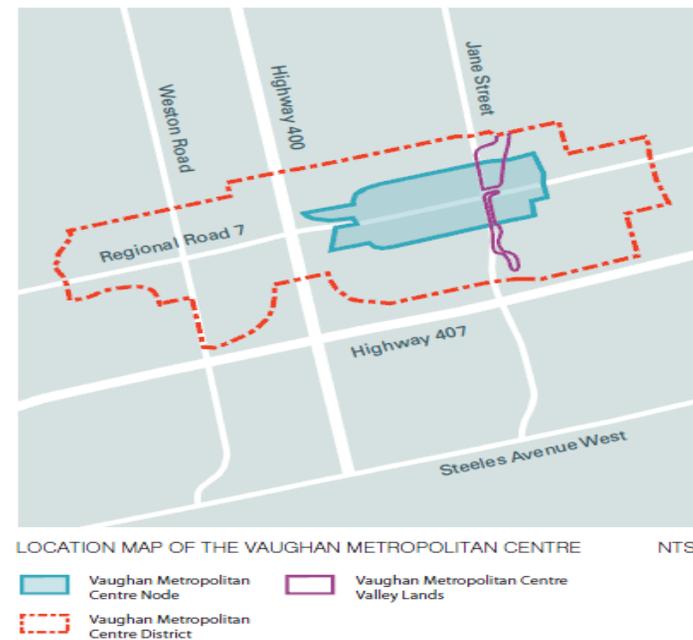
The City of Vaughan is undergoing significant growth, and has completed a considerable amount of planning to ensure that future development will be sustainable. The amalgamation of several communities originally created the City of Vaughan, but beyond those unique village core areas, a central focal point with a coordinated and unique downtown identity is still missing. To answer this concern, and the realities of growth planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the City of Vaughan created a plan to construct a creative, cultural, and economic core area to service the growing needs of the city.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) includes the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre District, which is the broader surrounding area and permits a wide range of commercial and employment uses; and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Node, the provincially-designated Urban Growth Centre located along the Highway 7 corridor. The Urban Growth Centre will include similar uses at higher densities.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre has the potential to be the focal point of Vaughan and an example in best practices for the development of a 21st century urban core. The VMC will showcase Vaughan's leadership in incubating culture, design, and sustainable building practices to create a place of vibrancy and culture.

It will encourage a sense of community, and will adhere to the overall vision that the City has imagined. A city that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible, and sustainable represents the vision in Vaughan 20/20.

Figure 17: Location of Vaughan Metropolitan Centre



Source: City of Vaughan, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Brochure, 2009

The draft secondary plan for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre includes the following general objectives for the development of the area:²²

- Create of a distinct downtown containing a mix of uses, civic attractions, and a critical mass of people by 2031
- Create complete neighbourhoods, including a range of distinct and transit-oriented mid- to high-density residential options

²² City of Vaughan. (2010). VMC Objectives, April 19th, 2010 community meeting. Retrieved from <http://www.vaughantomorrow.ca>

- Attract and accommodate of a variety of employment uses characteristic of a regional central business district (government offices, retail, and business services of all sizes)
- Attract a University or College to the downtown area
- Optimize the existing and planned investments in rapid transit, including higher densities at strategic nodes and high regard for walkability
- Create a hierarchical grid network of streets and pathways logically linked to the larger system
- Develop a rich and generous open space system tied primarily to the Black Creek natural system
- Position natural features and functions prominently in the development
- Ensure development incorporates green building materials and technologies
- Employ high-quality standards on the urbanity, materials, and design of the development, ensuring design excellence

One of the key elements of the new VMC will be the planned subway terminal at Highway 7 and Millway Avenue which will link the city to downtown Toronto and York University. This linkage will open up transportation routes for millions of residents, employees, and visitors to Vaughan. The station for the subway will also be the focus of height and density in the area, with heights of 6-35 storeys prescribed for the mix of office and retail uses in close proximity to the terminal, by the draft VMC secondary plan.

Overall, the VMC represents a very interesting opportunity for the City of Vaughan. The opportunity to develop a downtown area basically from a vacant land concept to full plan realization, offers a unique opportunity in downtown development, especially since many areas in North America are struggling with downtown re-development. Development is proactive and anticipating the function of the downtown, rather than reactive and trying to recover the past

cultural value of the downtown. As such, the city has an opportunity to set the vision for the area and create economic and land use policies that exclusively support that vision.

It is the vision that is still in question, especially from an economic development perspective. Based on draft policies it is clear that the area is to be mixed use, containing a diverse range of commercial, major office, retail, and residential uses, with regard to transit supportiveness and excellent urban design. Looking at the City's target clusters, a number fit into those parameters, including headquarters, the PSTS sector, educational services, and cultural industries. The VMC offers an opportunity for the clustering of all of those sectors, but in a cultural context, perhaps it presents an opportunity to localize or concentrate a sector of activity which is currently dispersed in smaller pockets around the city.

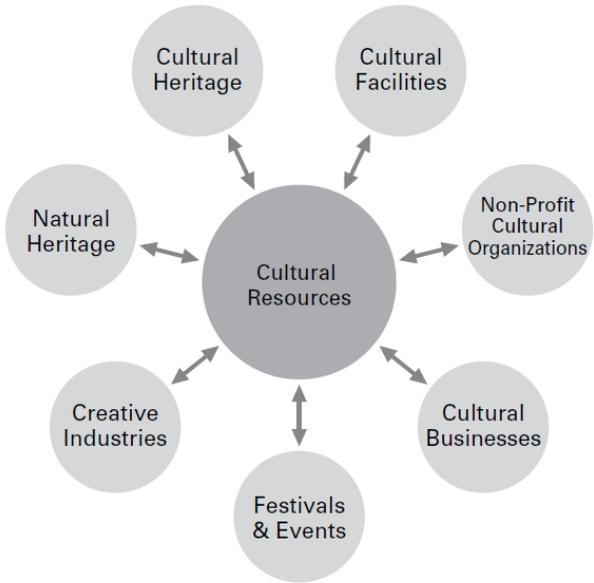
The cultural industries are presently spread out across the city, and there is no clear cluster or district, like the ones that many other cities enjoy based on those industries. In a tourism context, many of these industries are cultural draws for the area, and their disbursement across the city presents some barriers to visitors that wish to package several of those amenities into one visit.

As was discussed in the PSTS industry profile (See page 10 in the Background Economic Analysis and Appendices Report), the VMC should be a location that is attractive for the professional, scientific, and technical services sector. This sector tends to be characterized by small, home-based businesses. In order to accommodate growth in this sector the VMC should offer a diverse range of office spaces at different sizes and configurations for these types of businesses, equipped with IT and co-working capabilities.

The VMC can be the cultural and tourism hub for the city, in addition to its other proposed economic and social functions. As was discussed previously, the quality of public services, arts, entertainment venues, and outdoor activities play a major role in

encouraging corporate headquarters to locate and attract employees within the VMC. A major driver for corporate headquarters is finding a diversified and educated pool of labour in their chosen location, however in attracting these highly skilled people, the quality of living becomes a very attractive 'selling' feature. Professionals need to know that if they are going to relocate their family for work that they will have the amenities needed to sustain or improve their quality of life. The VMC can be the central focal point, or “hub”, with “spokes” that radiate out to the various other cultural industries in the city. In some cases, the VMC can even provide the centrally-located spaces to benefit those industries, such as a performing arts centre to support local artists, educational opportunities, or some live-work studio space that can act as a natural point of interaction for the creative and cultural industries around the city.

Figure 18: Cultural Resources



Source: Authenticity, 2008

Figure 18 further displays that there are many avenues where culture can flourish in the VMC. When looking at the larger 'cultural resources' industries such as the natural heritage, and non-profit organizations become a part of the overall culture in the VMC. In focusing those cultural industries within the VMC, the city in turn starts to develop a tourism hub as well, with supporting accommodations, restaurants, and retail, given the “attraction” potential that some cultural industries have as a destination.

In order to support the VMC as a destination, there are opportunities for enhancement of the existing entertainment amenities that are currently found in the area. Overall, the City has a number of creative and cultural industry strengths disbursed across the city, making it difficult for residents and tourists to package these amenities into coordinated Vaughan “experiences”. By creating stronger virtual and physical connections radiating out from the VMC, the city can enhance the overall quality of its cultural and tourism industries.

The key, however, remains in how the City both shapes the vision of the VMC for connectivity with local residents, employees, and visitors, but also how it designs streetscapes and public areas that promote the VMC as a suitable area for a range of different types of business and development investments. The recent changes in Ontario's tourism regions will play a significant role in the marketing and management of tourism opportunities for Vaughan. It will be important that Vaughan be an active member in the new Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) that is formed, as this new tourism region takes shape. Strong collaboration, partnerships, and communications will be necessary to ensure opportunities are realized.

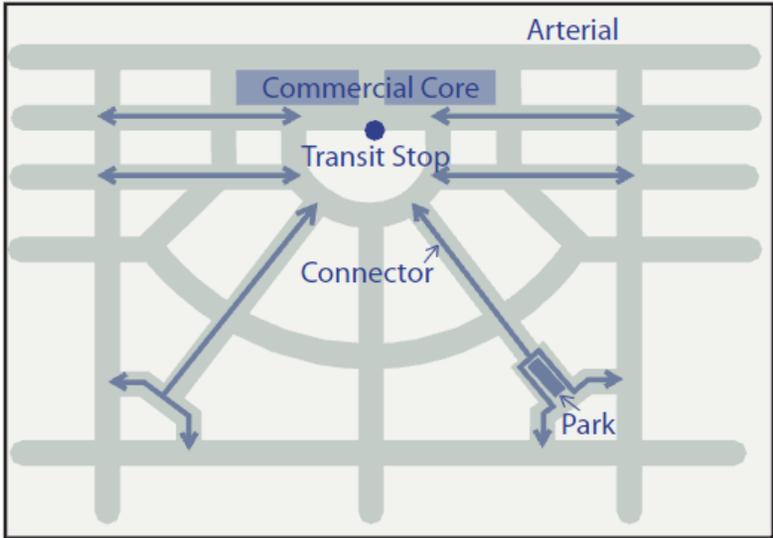
6.1 Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has become very popular in recent years, especially as cities begin to accommodate larger populations, more jobs, and increased movement of goods. This

concept is becoming increasingly important for the city of Vaughan, as currently a number of industries such as manufacturing are experiencing in-commuters of up to 20,000 employees according to the Vaughan ESS Report. Overall Vaughan experiences a net gain of workers of more than 25,000 people according to 2006 Statistics Canada labour flow patterns. However residents employed in Education Services, Finance and Insurance, PSTS and Information and Cultural Industries are commuting out of Vaughan for work. The VMC should continue to help Vaughan retain the labour force. Transit-oriented development should be kept at the top of mind in Vaughan as proximity to the workplace, and ease of getting there are major factors in an individual's choice of where to live/work.

According to EMBARQ²³, the WRI Center for Sustainable Transport, TOD is strongly associated with mixed-use and pedestrian friendly design, as is the case with Vaughan's plan for the VMC. This means there will be residential and commercial uses near the transit station, supported by appropriate employment and residential densities to maintain the effective connection of the VMC to the larger regional transit system. The dense neighbourhoods of older cities are proof that neighbourhoods organically developed and clustered around avenues with streetcars, horse-drawn carts, and walking pathways and it is this urban form that many areas are struggling to recreate in new developments, in recognition of the vibrancy it can create for a neighbourhood.

Figure 19: Transit-oriented Development of Cluster Buildings



Source: City of Calgary (2004). *Transit Oriented Development Best Practices Handbook*²⁴

As is shown above, buildings are grouped together or clustered around the transportation node or along strategic corridors, offering a "one-stop" opportunity to conveniently access a variety of destination on foot. These buildings can aid in framing a distinct character of the area, while creating an easily accessible and walkable environment. The proposed VMC will be developed in a similar fashion, in that it will include a wider range of commercial, employment, and residential uses at more medium to high densities.

²³ EMBARQ. (2010). *Transit-Oriented Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.embarq.org/en/solution/transit-oriented-development>

²⁴ City of Calgary. (2004). *Transit Oriented Development Best Practices Handbook*. Retrieved from http://www.calgarytransit.com/.../transit_oriented_development_guide_lines.pdf

The following case studies will outline several examples of cities that have grown largely due the establishment of transit-oriented development.

Washington, DC

In Washington, DC, neighbourhoods were largely torn apart following the 1968 riots which devastated Washington's inner city economy, through the burning of some 1200 buildings, which accounted in part for an overall loss of jobs and a major increase in insurance rates. On some blocks only rubble remained for decades. It was in 1991 and 1999, when the U St/Cardozo and the Columbia Heights Metro Stations (respectively) were built that the economy began to recover²⁵. The subway line (now called the Green Line) brought transit access to residents that desperately needed it. Presently, land values in the neighbourhood are suggested to be between 12 and 20 percent higher within 300 feet of a Metro station.

This example demonstrates how the extension of an existing subway line can substantially help to improve the economic conditions in an area. In Vaughan’s context, what should be noted is the potential for the subway to be a significant driver of economic investment.

Mockingbird Station, Dallas, Texas

Located on Mockingbird Lane and North Central Expressway in Dallas, TX, this light rail station is served by the North Central segment of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). This line opened in January 1997 and services the Mockingbird Station residential and retail development, as well as nearby Southern Methodist University. This cluster around the station includes offices, loft-style residential development, Angelika Film Center & Cafe, and a number of well known retail stores.

²⁵ Wikipedia, 2010. *1968 Washington, D.C Riots*. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Washington,_D.C._riots

Figure 20: Mockingbird DART Station, Dallas, TX²⁶



Mockingbird Station has the highest density population within three miles of any mass transit station in Texas. It is also the northernmost DART station serving two lines along the transit system. The area is undergoing transition, as dozens of residential conversions and new high rise condos are bringing more permanent residents to the downtown area, which is a long-term goal for Vaughan as well in the VMC. Redevelopment on Main Street has turned the downtown into a bustling place for restaurants, hotels, and residential towers.

The City of Dallas contributed \$160 million in public funds which attracted \$650 million in private investment including one arts plaza, a mixed use office, residential development in the Arts District, and the new home of the 7-Eleven headquarters. This example demonstrates the major developments that tend to take place in areas where major transportation linkages have been made. While it

²⁶ Mockingbird Station. (n.d). <http://www.mockingbirdstation.com/thestation.aspx?link=stat>

can be a question of what came first-development or transportation- in this case a coordinated approach was taken to ensure that development would be sustainable and take full advantage of transportation investments.

Montreal, Quebec

The city of Montreal has seen continued growth, and with this growth came the need for an expanded transportation system. Being highly dependent on cars, the city established a metropolitan Transportation Agency (AMT) in 1995 to promote public transit use, improve existing services in the system, and plan for new facilities as the system expands. Figure 21 (to right) displays the transit system (subway and train) in Montreal, Quebec.

Figure 21: Montreal, Quebec's Transit System



In 2000, a commuter line servicing the south shore, the area located directly across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, was constructed. In 2002 service was extended to Mont-Saint-Hilaire, home to approximately 14,000 persons and located 40km east of downtown Montreal.²⁷

After the commuter train linking Mont-Saint-Hilaire to downtown Montreal began operating, the town of Mont-Saint-Hilaire decided to create a residential development around the station called Village de la Gare, based on transit-oriented development (TOD) concepts. The objective of the project was to create a multifunctional district around public transit systems, but also to preserve the town's natural character. By installing a range of services close at hand the development was meant to encourage people to bicycle or walk, and thereby reduce the use of cars and preserve the quality of life in the area²⁸. This approach is similar to Vaughan, in that encouraging a vibrant, walkable city is a major goal for the VMC.

The project began in 2002 and is expected to be completed in 2012. Much progress has been made, including:

- Construction of 100 of the 1,000 housing units
- Completion of the station
- Amendment to the Town's by-law to accommodate the new types of construction in this area
- Completion of road and landscaping improvements in the village

²⁷ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2010). *Transit-oriented development case study: Village De La Gare, Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Quebec*. Retrieved from http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/sucopl_007.cfm

²⁸ Transport Canada. (2010). *Village de la Gare: Transit Oriented Residential Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-utsp-villagedelagare-1092.htm>

The project was made possible by collaboration between the municipality, the metropolitan transit authority, and a private developer. At completion, it will include 1,000 residential units, approximately 2,300 m² (24,750 sq. ft.) of commercial space, a primary school, public open space and landscaping, bicycle routes and pedestrian pathways, all within 750 metres of the train station. Nearly 15 per cent of the land area will be used for parks and public open space.

To date, nearly one-third of the residential area has been built and occupied. Development will progress at the pace of about 100 residential units a year plus the adjoining green space, landscaping and pathways. The developers of this project held a belief that transit-oriented development should not rely exclusively on the existence of public transit, rather, it should incorporate transit use within a living environment that is well-planned and attractive to its residents and users.

Another example from Montreal is the extension of the subway line to the nearby community of Laval. The Montmorency Station was built in 2007 and is the last stop on the Orange line, linking downtown Montreal to Laval. Development around this station includes College Montmorency, Laval House of Arts, and two shopping centres. When it was built it was expected that this line would carry approximately 35,000 passengers a day, but is now requiring expansion as almost 60,000 passengers a day are using the line²⁹.

This station serves a sprawling community college, provides a direct link to a new regional bus terminal, and features broad, well-lit stairways and a colourful approach to finishes showcasing suburban architecture which is said to offer a clear expression of the cultural

identity of the city. Parking spaces in the generous park-and-ride are offered free of charge as a public transit incentive.

Similar to Vaughan's situation, these examples demonstrate the development that takes place when a new transit system is introduced. It also exemplifies a city proactively increasing transit accessibility in order to reduce road congestion and promote a walkable, thriving downtown while protecting green spaces; all are goals in the development of the VMC.

Symphony Park, Las Vegas, Nevada

Symphony Park is a blend of diverse developments which will make up the first modern-day city neighbourhood in Las Vegas. Community design and guiding principles of sustainability have allowed the development to achieve gold certification stage 2 status through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Development (LEED-ND) rating system of the U.S Green Building Council.

This development stems from two key projects: The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, Las Vegas' first performing arts center, and the renowned Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. Upon completion, it is planned that Symphony park will include a variety of uses, such as office/medical, residential, 2 hotels, 1 hotel/retail complex, and other retail stores.

The City donated the 4.75-acre site for The Smith Center, a planned multi-theatre complex. The main theatre in the complex would have a capacity 2,050 seat capacity. The center, now under construction, will offer a blend of performances by local arts groups as well as first-run touring attractions. It will feature music, theatre and dance companies from all over the world and will be home to the Las Vegas Philharmonic and Nevada Ballet Theatre. Upon its planned opening in early 2012, this facility will be the first regional performing arts center in the Las Vegas Valley.

²⁹ CBC News. (2008). *MTC a victim of its own success*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2008/04/15/qc-mtccomplaints0415.html?ref=rss>

Also planned for Symphony Park is the World Jewellery Center. The center will be an important, centralized marketplace for international gem and jewellery manufacturers and distributors, and a distinctive jewellery shopping destination for the public. Proposed amenities feature gem grading labs, secure shipping and receiving, exhibition space, restaurants, and a Foreign Trade Zone³⁰.

While this example does not support transit development centered on rail or subway, it does support the development that takes place when cities are walkable, and sustainable. While the visitor numbers are much higher in Las Vegas than Vaughan, it does emphasize the importance of creating a downtown that supports the arts and culture in attracting people, especially with unique amenities, but also creating liveable spaces.

6.2 Opportunities and Assets

The case studies discussed above show examples of transportation improvements that have taken place due to a need for greater accessibility and accommodation of a growing population in a sustainable manner. These case studies also highlight best practices in development around an expanded transit system, or an important transit system node. As noted above, many times a development is created primarily because there is an existing transit system in place, and an effective transit system can often be a driver for new investment, such as a post-secondary satellite campus development. Vaughan's Official Plan sets out a 'vision for transformation' built on eight key themes. While connections to cultural planning and development exist across all eight themes, particularly strong connections are found in the themes shown in figure 22.

The development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre brings about a tremendous amount of opportunity to continue to grow the existing tourism and creative/cultural industries. Physical connections will be

made to the other areas of the city, as well as the greater region and Toronto, providing logical connections to downtown Toronto and York University. With a cohesive cultural and tourism focus in the Centre, complementing its economic importance, it should also become a destination for tourists, but also the residents of Vaughan, York Region, and Toronto.

Figure 22: Key Themes in Vaughan's Official Plan

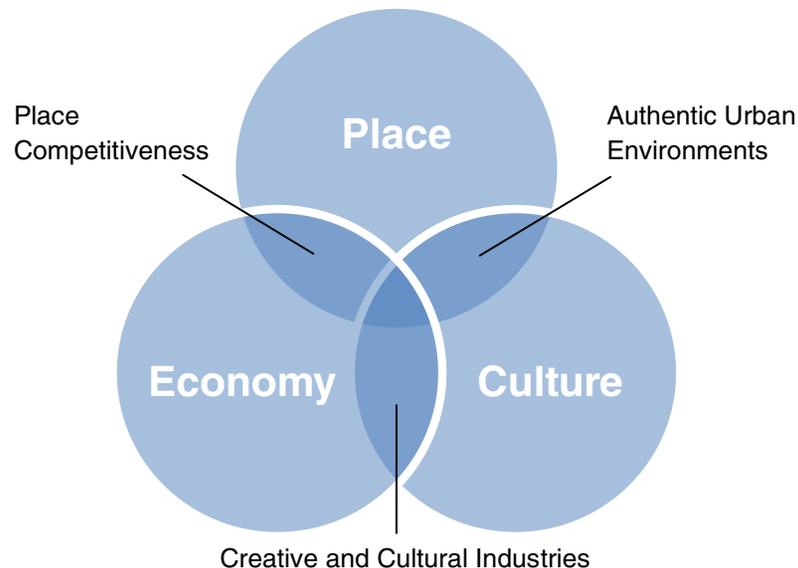


The vision for Vaughan, as cited in the Cultural Plan, suggests that there are strong linkages between the economy, place, and culture. The economy in Vaughan is strong, however growth can occur in making stronger connections between the economy and the sense of place and between the sense of place and culture in the city. It is when connections are made between the economy and culture that the creative and cultural industries can grow. In realizing the areas of convergence the city is creating place competitiveness, growing the creative industry and growing an authentic urban environment which sets it apart from other urban centres. The VMC should be the logical place where these three factors can come together, offering an

³⁰ City of Las Vegas. (2010). *Symphony Park*. Retrieved from <http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Government/7598.htm>

attractive location for those professionals (i.e. PSTS) who place high value in living in an area that not only offers them the amenities they require, but also offers them a feeling of belonging, and the vibrancy that the cultural industry has to offer. Vaughan needs to take steps to ensure that these types of people are attracted to the city, as these individuals attract employers who are seeking highly skilled and creative professionals. In today's world, it must be realized that just offering jobs is not enough- a strong sense of place is vital for attracting and growing the overall economy in Vaughan.

Figure 23: Creative City Vision for Vaughan



Source: Adapted from Authenticity, 2008 by Miller Dickinson Blais

The VMC will have a broader focus on cohesive place-making, not individual projects. A key element of that vision is a green sustainable downtown area. According to the Vaughan Official Plan, 50% of residents will be within 200 metres of transit service (less

than a 5-minute walk) and 90% will be within 500 metres of transit service (10 minute walk). The new downtown is expected to include streetscapes, parks, open spaces, and urban squares. It will include a design review process for major projects and significant buildings, with public art being a major focus. The VMC will include a diverse mix of housing opportunities, which will help to keep the downtown thriving and affordable for a range of demographic groups.

The City of Vaughan needs to ensure that the VMC reflects other growth and vibrant centres around the world; a centre where the arts, culture, entertainment, and community life can grow. Keeping in mind the goals of the Vaughan Official Plan several opportunities should be noted:

- As discussed in the cultural sector profile, wedding tourism may hold some potential for Vaughan. Weddings bring together a range of businesses, including food and drink, hall rentals, transportation services, and entertainment (DJ's, musicians) to name a few. With an area focused on nurturing these cultural industries, as well as the potential for new or higher profile banquet and hospitality facilities, a stronger cluster may form in Vaughan and there may be incentive to try to target wedding tourism. This includes targeting receptions of weddings held elsewhere in the GTA, by providing world-class accommodations and facilities; having a unique and strong cluster of wedding-support industries, as noted above; or targeting opportunities for local businesses to showcase their strengths, primarily through trade or bridal shows.
- Cultural tourism is a subset of tourism that explores a region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in the area, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that shape their community. As noted before, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre could be the place that brings together the creative industries of the city. The subway station will include local art and architecture but should also build on the

city's strengths in showcasing local talent through art exhibitions, buskers, galleries, etc. Transportation connections to local cultural attractions such as the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the historic Village of Kleinburg should be easily accessible so that logical connections can be made between those attractions, and the complementary features of the VMC. Joint marketing throughout the York Region and Toronto area should emphasize the options for celebrating art and culture that exist in Vaughan, and the ease of reaching these destinations.

Creative industries thrive when people are able to use their knowledge and share information. According to Landry & Bianchini, authors of *The Creative City* the industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation". In building the cultural industry in Vaughan, the city should use the creative talents that currently exist to conduct further spatial analysis with a Geographical Information Systems (GIS). This tool can expand on the present cultural mapping initiatives in the city completed through the Cultural Plan, and further aid planners in designing an appropriate planning process and facilitating community decision based on the present geographic concentrations and clustering of cultural industries in the city. The study may inform local planners about the types of flexibility in policies or regulations that may be needed in the VMC to accommodate potential relocations of industries or entrepreneurs to the area.

'Economic Gardening' refers to community economic development activities focused on increasing the competitive capabilities of local business owners, especially those with specialized skills and high potential goods and services³¹. Stakeholder interviews revealed that some of this is already happening in Vaughan, such as the

activities done by the Enterprise Promotion and Investment Centre (EPIC)-a business incubator which assists prospective entrepreneurs from marginalized communities by providing various forms of support for business initiatives. This is being completed by a non profit organization called Human Endeavours. By mobilizing the community and promoting self reliance, as well as setting up model socially responsible businesses and integrating economic and social development it is the hope of Human Endeavour that partnering with socially conscious businesses, non-profit organizations, and governments will aid in reducing inequalities and vulnerability in the community and surrounding area. Many of the clients that visit Human Endeavour are individuals of various cultural backgrounds who have immigrated to Canada for a better life. Allowing these individuals an opportunity to realize their business endeavours in Vaughan could create a new wave of entrepreneurial activity with strong cultural and tourism emphasis.

Economic Gardening can also be used in the future in combination with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as it will allow the city to target its business retention and expansion activities on specific geographic or economic clusters in the cultural industries throughout the city. As part of the economic gardening process, the city can begin to articulate the strengths of the VMC as a cultural industry business location.

The City of Vaughan has become very well known for its high number of banquet hall facilities. However, what it lacks is a facility to host large scale conferences and conventions that can accommodate large business functions (trade shows, conventions). The Toronto Congress Center includes 33 meetings rooms and 500,000 square feet of space for conferences. While this may be larger than what Vaughan requires, the city is currently missing opportunities to host large-scale events such as tradeshow, exhibits, conferences, etc, below the level where the larger conference markets (Toronto, Ottawa, and Niagara Falls) are

³¹ Economic Gardening Canada. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.economicgardening.ca>.

competing. This would include more national or regional types of shows, but could still attract volumes of visitors above where Vaughan has capacity to presently accommodate them.

The example of Symphony Park, Las Vegas describes a downtown centre which includes a mixture of businesses, but primarily in a trade or conference context, the World Jewellery Center (WJC). The WJC includes manufacturing, distribution and retail sales of gems and jewellery, with potential to attract business investment, but also tourism investment through wholesale and retail operations, as well as the capacity to host industry shows. Recently, in downtown Toronto Ontario-grown diamonds which came from the DeBeers Canada Victor Mine in northern Ontario were put up for sale. After May 1, 2010 the gems were transported around Canada to be exhibited in other major cities³². This represents the type of activity that a conference centre in Vaughan could be well positioned to attract. As the economic and cultural centre of the city, with a range of proposed complementary businesses concerned with entertainment, hospitality, and accommodations, and transportation connections to the greater region, the VMC may represent the most logical place for such a facility.

Through the facilities developed in the VMC, Vaughan could offer more support to cultural festivals and events. Cities with a strong and vibrant cultural sector routinely experience outstanding economic growth because:

- Economic benefits of a strong cultural sector include increasing innovation, productivity, and returns on the city's brand

³² Fort Francis Times Online. (2010). *Say it with a home grown gem: First Ontario-made diamonds go up for sale*. Retrieved from <http://www.ftimes.com/node/232945>

- Exports from the region increase in terms of both volume and monetary value
- The inclusion of more people in arts and culture, along with the development of a participatory, "Live Culture" environment, helps to spread the positive economic externalities associated with culture³³

Vaughan encompasses five distinct communities (Kleinburg, Maple, Concord, Woodbridge and Thornhill), each with its unique history and character. A number of festivals are currently held in Vaughan such as the Woodbridge Fall Fair, and the Binder Twine Festival.

The city's demographic profile exhibits a large number of ethnicities in Vaughan, each bringing to the community a different culture and different set of experiences. Most recent immigrants to Vaughan by selected place of birth include; Russian Federation, India, Ukraine, Israel, Philippines, South Korea, Pakistan, Romania, and the Peoples Republic of China. Businesses from finance to manufacturing will prosper as they are able to attract the best talent in the world with ease, and a primary concern for new immigrants is their ability to integrate quickly into their new communities. Celebrating the cultural differences in Vaughan, especially through the development of the VMC, but also through the promotion of festivals, parades, and activities, reflects the openness of the community and its ability to welcome newcomers and their new traditions. As the cultural centre of the city, the VMC represents a logical place to anchor cultural festivals and activities.

Culinary Tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences of all kinds, often while traveling but also at "home".³⁴ Canada is renowned all over the world for its exceptional

³³ Martin Prosperity Institute. (2008). Funding to arts and cultural organizations by the City of Toronto 1990-2008. Retrieved from <http://www.martinprosperity.org>

³⁴<http://www.Culinarytourism.org>.

quality of life, distinctive and diverse landscapes, fascinating history and an incredibly rich cultural heritage, all of which make it a unique and topnotch destination for culinary tourism. Cities such as Vaughan that are home to a range of cultures are at an advantage as today many tourists as well as local residents are looking for something new and authentic.

- Vaughan has a wide variety of restaurants featuring Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Indian, Vietnamese and Korean cuisines and outstanding Italian restaurants. Stakeholder interviews revealed that Vaughan is well known for their authentic cuisine, and this should be expanded upon. Based on the existing strengths in the area, but also the vision to expand the entertainment and hospitality uses in the VMC, it may be a logical place to concentrate the expansion of culinary tourism.
- An example of culinary tourism tied to a theme park setting is Disney World's Epcot Centre, where tourists can visit the 'World Showcase'. The centre includes pavilions, shops, attractions, and restaurants that represent the culture and cuisine of 11 countries³⁵. While Canada's Wonderland may not have any plans to develop this kind of attraction, it could be worth developing a similar style attraction either in partnership with Canada's Wonderland, or in close proximity to the park in the VMC. A major concern amongst stakeholders was that tourists come to Vaughan and visit Wonderland and then head home, missing out on the other opportunities within the area. A culinary attraction could offer theme-park lovers an exceptional dining experience after an adventure-packed day.

³⁵ Walt Disney World. (2010). Retrieved from <http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/parks/epcot/>

As part of the initiative, the city will need to determine the type of approach it will take on culinary tourism. The figure below suggests an approach that the city might take to develop their culinary industry.

Figure 24: The three steps to Culinary Tourism



Source: <http://www.Culinarytourism.org>, 2010

1. **Learn:** Vaughan needs to learn what constitutes best practices in culinary tourism product development and marketing.
2. **Develop:** Vaughan will need to define what the culinary product is. Will it be a tour company? Restaurant? Winery? Destination? A culinary tourism brand will be established to reflect the range of ethnicities of the area.

3. **Promote:** Once the background work has been completed (such as a culinary tourism portfolio) a plan will need to be established on how it will best be promoted.

The VMC has the potential to be a highly attractive area for highly-skilled individuals and the knowledge-based industries that employ them. The design of the VMC should consider the types of high-quality urban spaces that these professionals are looking for, in order to attract new residents and creative industries.

- The VMC will have a mix of major office, unique retail, entertainment, open space, and transit-connectivity. Regard should be given to maintaining the vision for the area as a true urban, mixed-use node that can support a range of individuals and industries. Established policies for high quality urban design should be adhered to, to make sure that the VMC develops as envisioned and remains a unique and interesting place.
- Most importantly, the VMC must be differentiated from other areas in the GTA based on its design.
- Vaughan's new official plan (2010) positions the city as a leader in environmental protection and sustainable building. Green building practices are encouraged, which will be an attractive feature in the VMC for professional, scientific, technical services (PSTS) industry workers in choosing where to live, work, and do business. A VMC with innovative architectural and engineering design, and sustainable building practices, will ensure that the City of Vaughan is utilizing the areas of convergence that set it apart from other cities.

6.3 Considerations for Vaughan

There are several examples in North America where transit centres have attracted cultural industries, educational institutions and corporate head quarters. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre offers incredible opportunity to attract skilled and creative workers and industry to the area.

The VMC can become a centre where arts, culture, entertainment and community life can grow, or the centre of a hub and spoke model for creative and design industries, educational institutions, and corporate headquarters.

Considerations need to be given to flexible, mixed use, live and work space to accommodate creative and design workers that maybe combining their home with their office.