



Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study Phase Two Report - Strategic Economic Development Action Plans



**City of Vaughan
September 2019**



Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Study Process.....	3
1.2 Trends Analysis and Better Practice Research	4
1.3 Consultation and Action Planning	5
2. Building an Inspired Community	6
2.1 A City in Transition	6
2.2 Industrial and Office Space Demand Remains High	6
2.3 Diversity of Employment Areas is Integral to the Growth of Vaughan’s Economy.....	8
2.4 Employment Growth Needs to Reflect a Knowledge-Based Economy	8
2.5 Placemaking is Key to Attracting and Retaining Talent.....	9
3. Global Trends, Local Opportunities	11
3.1 Smart City Technologies	11
3.2 Digital Disruption and e-Commerce	11
3.3 FDI Patterns/Canadian Trade Policies	13
3.4 Immigration of Foreign Skilled Talent	14
4. Strategic Economic Development Action Plans	16
4.1 Strategic Initiative Enhancing the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystem	17
4.2 Strategic Initiative Growing the Tourism and Creative Economy in Vaughan.....	24
4.3 Strategic Initiative Focusing International Business Development	30
4.4 Strategic Initiative Supporting Commercial and Experiential Development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.....	34
4.5 Performance Measures	39
Appendices	41

Cover Image: <https://www.myvmc.ca/>
© 2019 MDB Insight Inc.

MDB Insight Inc. has prepared this report exclusively for the City of Vaughan. All data and information contained herein is considered confidential and proprietary and may not be reproduced, published or distributed to, or for, any third party without the express prior written consent of MDB Insight Inc.



Executive Summary

Much has changed in the City of Vaughan since the completion of the 2010 Economic Development Strategy. The city is now home to 300,000 residents and over 65,000 businesses. It is part of an evolving regional economy that has become a top destination for business across a broad range of industries and a community of choice for an increasing number of new residents looking for a different type of urban living. The city has also seen the emergence of protectionist trade policies in the US, the emergence of the sharing economy, new businesses and industry activity that supports the knowledge economy and technological disruptions that continue to impact multiple sectors from manufacturing to retail.

The city is in a unique position as it transitions from a suburban community to a major urban centre to capitalize on the strong pattern of growth that is predicted for the knowledge-based and creative class economy, particularly small and medium-sized businesses that are focused on entrepreneurship and innovation while continuing to grow and support the city's traditional industry sectors. With a strategic location in the G.T.H.A, extensive transportation infrastructure including higher-order transit, access to a significant inventory of industrial and office space options, a diverse and highly skilled workforce, the emergence of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the planned build-out of the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital Precinct lands, Vaughan has an opportunity to enable and create an urban environment that provides the services, amenities and employment that will offer the greatest appeal to future investors, workers, and visitors to the city.

In preparing to update the 2010 Economic Development Strategy consideration has been given to the needed alignment with the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan priorities of Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs, as well as the need to inform the planned update of the City's Official Plan.

Given the importance of getting community-based economic intelligence and broad support for various actions plans, the strategy also incorporates the input of business and economic development stakeholders, Mayor and Council and senior staff from across the administration.

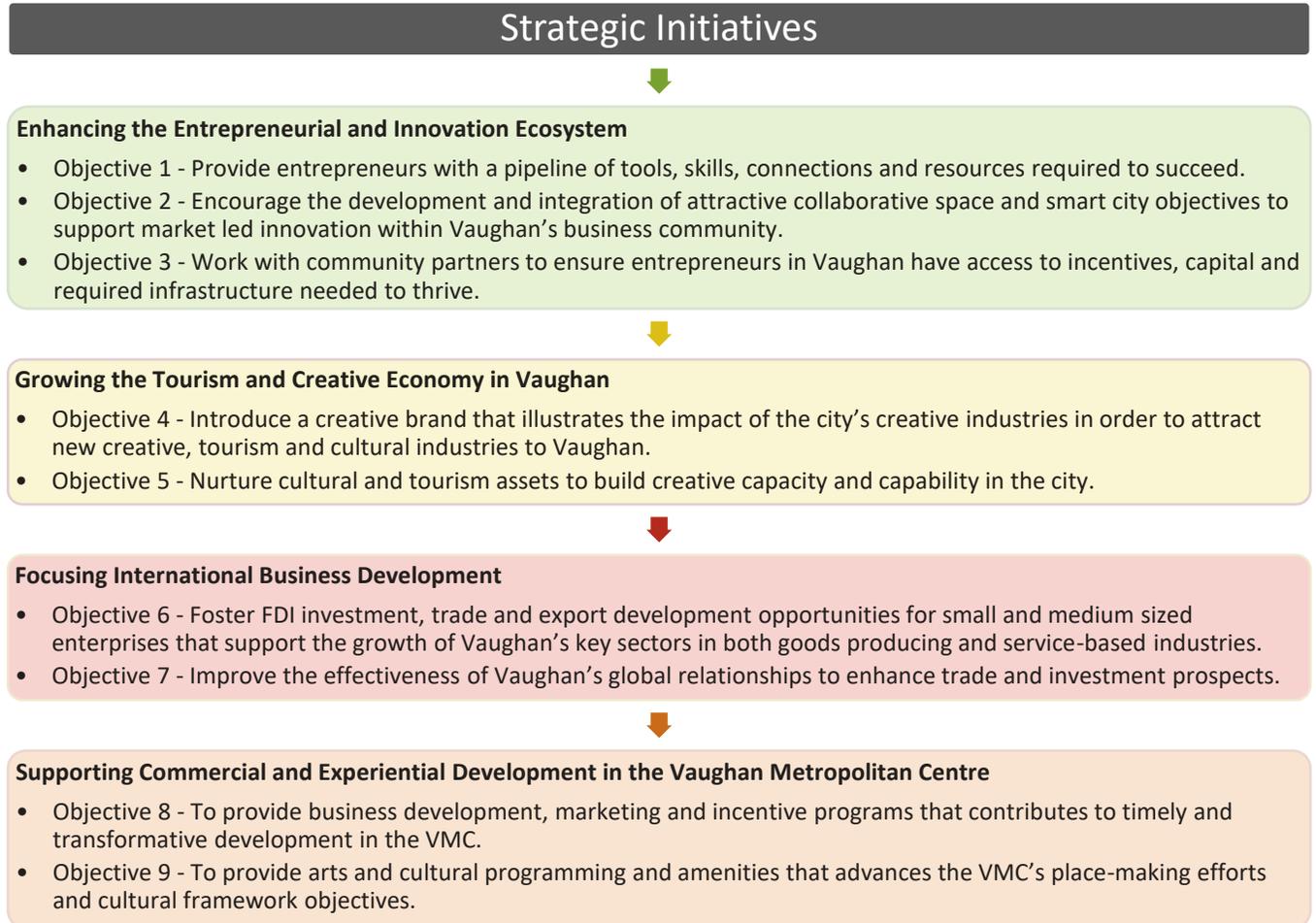
The engagement process provided important insights into the City's business community. Many of those consulted saw the need to improve and enhance the City's brand or image and raise awareness of the current economic development programming and investment that was underway in the community. Similarly, businesses raised concerns with the increasing congestion in the city and the need for improved transit infrastructure.

The resulting strategy advances a focused and proactive blueprint and action plan for the Economic Development and Culture Services Department that provides a more strategic role for the department. To achieve this, however, the City must evaluate and evolve its role and responsibilities in economic development recognizing the increased importance the city and the region have on a global stage and the expectations of businesses that would locate in the community.

A modernized economic vision for the City of Vaughan is built around four strategic initiatives and associated outcomes. The accompanying actions plans are supported by evidenced-based economic and market research and analysis, taking into consideration the input of business and community stakeholders and partners. The recommendations provide the City with a proactive economic development agenda for the next five years that will support and shape a competitive business-friendly and growth-focused environment.



Figure 1 – City of Vaughan Strategic Economic Development Action Plans





1. Introduction

The City of Vaughan in preparing an update to its 2010 Economic Development Strategy is focused on accelerating local economic growth and job creation over the next five years and providing an employment land capacity analysis that will inform the City's Official Plan Review and Growth Management Strategy. The updated strategy also advances a focused and proactive blueprint and action plan for the Economic Development and Culture Services Department that provides a more strategic role for the department and aligns with the Term of Council Priorities of Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs.

Ultimately, the goal of any economic development strategy is to improve the liveability and quality of life of a community through sustainable economic growth that includes the attraction of high-quality jobs, wealth and investment.

To achieve this, the City of Vaughan must evaluate and evolve its roles and responsibilities in economic development recognizing the increasingly important position the city and region have on the global stage and the expectations of businesses that choose to locate in the community. Communities across Canada have begun extending their traditional programming such as business attraction and retention, to include efforts that support and foster skills development, entrepreneurship, mentorship, risk financing, technology transfer, product commercialization, immigrant attraction and the integration of information and communications technology in ways that have begun to transform industry sector performance and city-building efforts.

The implications of this shifting landscape will challenge the old models of economic development and the tactics deployed by municipalities in the attraction and retention of business investment and workers. Where historically economic development was driven by market considerations - competitive tax structure, the availability of serviced employment land, buildings and an educated workforce, today's successful cities are adding new elements to their economic development strategies that seek to:

- Enhance innovation and productivity within the business community to improve competitiveness
- Leverage cultural diversity that supports connections within a city and to the rest of the world
- Create opportunities for partnerships between local government, industry, and advanced education that enable a community to flourish
- Create urban environments that provide for a high quality of place experience and a vibrant downtown core in order to attract the best and the brightest to their community

1.1 Study Process

Good economic development planning enhances urban competitiveness – that is the ability of a city to compete with other communities regionally, nationally and internationally in the attraction of investment, talent and in the development of domestic and export markets. In the case of Vaughan's Strategic Economic Development Action Plans, this process has been framed by the vision and objectives set out in the City of Vaughan's 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, as well as the mission and mandate of the Economic Development and Culture Department. The Action Plans are also informed by extensive research and analysis together with input from the City's business and



stakeholder community, Mayor and Council, and the staff of the Economic Development and Culture department.

Figure 2: Strategic Planning Process Diagram



1.2 Trends Analysis and Better Practice Research

A comprehensive background report (Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study – Phase I Report) provides the basis for Vaughan taking advantage of new and emerging economies and employment opportunities while providing some certainty around the economic performance of its traditional and established industries. The report assesses the City’s performance against a wide range of demographic and economic indicators considered relevant to the development of the Strategic Economic Development Action Plans. It provides a detailed understanding of emerging business and industry trends, forecasted employment growth and employment land needs and the changing nature of industry sector requirements that need to be reflected in any future economic development program. Consideration was also given to a wide range of local and regional reports, studies and initiatives considered to be relevant to the economic development and culture programming activities for the City of Vaughan. The results of the Phase I reporting were used to inform a series of workshops with business leaders and community stakeholders. The Phase I Report is attached as an appendix to this report.

Better practice research has also been collected on the evolving mandate of economic development across high growth communities in Ontario and the country more generally. Particular attention has been given to the approach to dealing with the economic development themes as noted in this report and as it relates to input received during the consultation process.



1.3 Consultation and Action Planning

Given the importance of gaining community-based economic intelligence and broad support for the Strategic Economic Action Plans, input from business and economic development stakeholders was essential. One on one interviews with Mayor and Council, select senior staff with the City of Vaughan and external stakeholders were conducted in early 2019. These interviews provided input as to the expectations and aspirations for economic growth in the City. This was followed up with four theme-based workshops held in early spring 2019 with participants asked to provide input on the actions and tactics required to advance:

- Entrepreneurship, innovation and the technology ecosystem
- Arts, culture and tourism development
- International business development
- Commercial and experiential development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

The engagement process provided important insights into the City's business community. Many of those consulted saw the need to improve the City's brand or image and raise awareness of the current economic development programming and services. Similarly, congestion and the need for improved transit connections was also a major theme that emerged throughout the consultation process along with the need to provide for more and better business to business networking opportunities and the consideration of enhanced financial incentives to attract target industries to the city's Employment Areas and commercial cores. A summary of the workshop discussions is provided in the appendix.

The resulting stakeholder input, together with the recent business satisfaction survey results and findings from the Phase I Report, are reflected in the recommendations contained in the Strategic Economic Development Action Plans.



2. Building an Inspired Community

Since the completion of the 2010 Economic Development Strategy: Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy, the city of Vaughan as with other cities in Canada has seen the emergence of protectionist trade, border and immigration policies in the US, growth in the sharing economy, the emergence of new clusters of business and industry activity to support a knowledge economy and the maturity of Superclusters. The continuing shift of the manufacturing sector along with technological disruptions across multiple sectors are also affecting how and where residents shop, travel and work.

Despite the economic turmoil that has resulted, the City of Vaughan is poised to seize the opportunities these challenges create. Building on the impressive array of recent infrastructure investments, which have or will be coming to fruition over the next few years, the city is well-positioned to support Vaughan based businesses compete in the national and global market through policies and actions that shape a competitive, resilient and business-friendly environment.

2.1 A City in Transition

The city of Vaughan is home to over 300,000 residents and 65,000 businesses. It is part of an evolving regional economy that has become a top destination for business across a broad range of industries led by rapid employment growth in knowledge-based and creative industries such as finance and insurance, professional, scientific and technical service, educational services and health care and social services. In many respects, Vaughan's long-term population and employment growth are tied to the success of York Region and the G.T.H.A. As the economic powerhouse of Ontario, the G.T.H.A. is comprised of a diverse mix of export-based employment clusters that make the region highly attractive on an international and national level to new businesses and investors. It also supports strong population growth levels largely driven by international and inter-provincial net migration.

The city of Vaughan however, is in a unique position as it transitions from a suburban community to a major urban centre to capitalize on the strong pattern of growth that is predicted for the knowledge-based and creative class economy, particularly for small to medium scale businesses that are focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. With a strategic location in the G.T.H.A., extensive transportation infrastructure including higher-order transit, access to diverse populations, a highly educated workforce, the emergence of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the planned build-out of Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital Precinct lands, Vaughan has the opportunity to enable and create an urban environment that that provides the services, amenities and live-work arrangements that will offer the greatest appeal to future office tenants, workers and visitors to the community.

2.2 Industrial and Office Space Demand Remains High

Industrial development activity in the G.T.H.A. has been steadily recovering since the 2008/2009 global economic recession. It is estimated that the region accounts for the third-largest industrial inventory in North America.¹ Recent industrial developments have been focused along the Highway 401 corridor in Mississauga, Brampton and Milton, and in the Highway 400/407 area of Vaughan.

¹ Source: Derived from Cushman & Wakefield Toronto Industrial Market Beat and US Industrial Market Beat Snapshot, Q3 2017 by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



Within the G.T.H.A., York Region accounts for 18% of the total inventory with an existing industrial base of 71 million sq.ft. of G.F.A. The City of Vaughan contains the largest inventory of industrial space in York Region, accounting for approximately 54% of the total industrial inventory. Over the 2011 to 2017 period, industrial development in Vaughan averaged 807,000 sq.ft. per year. In 2017, industrial development in Vaughan was particularly strong with development of approximately 1.3 million sq.ft. Coinciding with the increase in industrial development activity, vacancy rates have gradually declined to relatively low levels, and net market rents have risen, albeit at a marginal rate. The industrial availability rate in Vaughan and York Region is 1.5%, slightly lower than the G.T.H.A. average of 1.8%.

Many recent developments in the G.T.H.A. are oriented towards large-scale industrial buildings housing wholesale trade, transportation/warehousing and multi-tenant industrial condominiums consistent with the growth of the goods movement sector. In contrast, manufacturing-related industrial development has been limited, as more companies look to outsource manufacturing operations to lower-cost locations. Vaughan has started to see more speculative industrial development, whereby developers construct industrial warehouses with no formal commitment from any industrial users suggesting industrial demand for this type of space remains strong. However, as with other aspects of the economy, the nature of traditional industrial processes is also rapidly shifting becoming more capital/technology-intensive and automated with lower labour requirements. Anticipating and responding to the needs of industry will be necessary if Vaughan is to position itself for sustained growth, particularly in leading industrial sectors. Recognizing the change that is occurring there has been a shift in planning philosophy that calls for developing Employment Areas to provide for a greater range of amenities and employment supportive uses which complement the knowledge-based and traditional industrial sectors. Industrial sector employment (manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, construction and utilities) is anticipated to account for 30% of all new jobs in Vaughan from 2019 to 2024.

With respect to the office market, the G.T.H.A. has the sixth-largest office commercial development inventory in North America of approximately 183 million sq.ft. of office space.^{2, 3} While York Region has a relatively small inventory of the major office market, representing only 9% of the G.T.H.A. total building G.F.A., the majority of these office clusters are located in the southern 905 area, including the Highway 400 Corridor in Vaughan. Currently, major office availability rates in Vaughan are relatively high at 9.4%. This is comparable to the G.T.A. average but marginally lower than the York Region average of 11.0%. Major office development in Vaughan is forecasted to accommodate 4,100 jobs over the 2019-2024 period representing about 18% of the city's total employment growth.

Historically, Vaughan Employment Areas have accommodated most of the office developments. Recently, however, major office development activity has shifted away from these Employment Areas to other commercial areas in the City, such as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This is a trend across the G.T.H.A. as market prospects for conventional standalone suburban office gradually diminishes and demand shifts to more urban environments. Demand for office space in Employment Areas is increasingly single tenant and integrated with multi-purpose facilities. Lands that have been planned for employment uses are often highly desirable based on available infrastructure, visibility and cost. As the

² Source: Derived from Cushman & Wakefield Toronto Office Market Beat and US Office Market Beat Snapshot, Q3 2017 by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

³ Source: Derived from Cushman & Wakefield 2017 data, except data for the City of Hamilton which was derived from Colliers International Oakville-Burlington-Hamilton Commercial Real Estate Update Q4 2017.



regional and local economy evolves, Vaughan must consider how its Employment Areas transition from traditional industrial activity to accommodate more knowledge-based sectors likely to be attracted to this type of location.

2.3 Diversity of Employment Areas is Integral to the Growth of Vaughan's Economy

The availability and quality of Vaughan's employment lands have been an integral part of Vaughan's economic development success in the attraction of business and employment to the city. Vaughan is home to a large and diverse cluster of Employment Areas that have seen strong employment land absorption over the last decade that includes growth in major office and industrial development, particularly in the transportation and warehousing sectors. The most active Employment Area for industrial development is the Vaughan Enterprise Zone as it has the largest inventory of vacant and shovel-ready employment lands, as well as having access to a range of major highways, the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) Vaughan Intermodal Facility and Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Vaughan accounts for approximately 40% of the total vacant employment lands in York Region with a total of 2,575 net acres of land. While this represents a significant land supply, market choice of shovel ready employment lands and potential for future expansion are key factors in the industrial site selection process. Currently, only 8% of the land area has Regional and local services in place and are not constrained by capacity issues. Based on net vacant employment land supply Vaughan has approximately 687 net acres of shovel ready employment land which only accounts for near and short-term development opportunities within the city.

While Vaughan is meeting the requirement for sites with good transportation access and proximity to major highway interchanges and other major transportation infrastructure, the market choice is considered somewhat limited. There is a healthy supply of small to medium-sized parcels (< 13 acres (5ha)) but a limited number of larger sites (>13 acres (5ha)). For Vaughan to continue to be competitive and in the attraction of larger industrial employers, such as large-scale manufacturers and logistics and distribution centres, the City will need to provide a greater number of larger serviced or shovel-ready industrial sites.

2.4 Employment Growth Needs to Reflect a Knowledge-Based Economy

As the Region's economy shifts from goods-producing sectors to the services-producing sector, its employment base has also shifted. Since 2011 the fastest-growing employment sectors were primarily in the services-producing sector including real estate and rental and leasing; finance and insurance; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; and professional, scientific and technical services. Of the industrial sectors, construction, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing exhibited the strongest employment growth.

Over the same period, the fastest-growing employment sectors in Vaughan were primarily in the services-producing sector including health care and social assistance, information and cultural industries, public administration, real estate and rental and leasing, finance and insurance and professional, scientific and technical services. Of the industrial sectors, the construction and wholesale



trade sectors demonstrated strong employment growth while transportation and warehousing, as well as manufacturing, exhibited more moderate growth.

Vaughan's employment base in 2017 was approximately 233,000 jobs. Jobs in the city have grown by 44% from approximately 162,200 jobs in 2006 to 233,300 jobs in 2017. Since 2006, employment growth has averaged 3.7% annually in Vaughan, slightly higher than the growth rate in York Region.⁴ The City's employment activity rate⁵ has increased from 65% in 2006 to 75% in 2017, indicating that the local employment base is increasing at a faster rate than the local population base. As of 2017, Vaughan's employment activity rate was above that of the York Region average.⁶

Despite the employment opportunities in the city, approximately 57% of the Vaughan workforce commutes to employment outside of the city primarily in finance and insurance, educational services, health care and social assistance and professional scientific and technical service. Vaughan is a net importer of workers in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, trades, and transportation and warehousing. This suggests that Vaughan's local economy may be at odds with the talent and skills that reside within the community. A further concern is that at present knowledge workers make up only 27.7% of the city's total workforce as compared to Toronto at 44%, placing the city last among its peer communities in the G.T.H.A.

The City's population is anticipated to increase by a further 44,100 people between 2019 and 2024. Population growth will drive demand for future commercial/population-related employment growth in the City. This includes employment generated from the anticipated opening of the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital in 2020. Population-related employment growth over the 2019 to 2024 period is expected to total 11,700, representing 52% of overall employment growth in the City. Population-related employment includes employment in institutional and commercial sectors not accommodated in major office buildings or within the city's Employment Areas.

2.5 Placemaking is Key to Attracting and Retaining Talent

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is the City of Vaughan's new downtown. Provincial, regional and city planning policies and guidelines all support it as the city's downtown and as a major growth centre for the region. There is clear intent on the part of all levels of government to create a high-density mixed-use, transit-supportive city centre that is vibrant, attractive and amenity-rich that will attract residents, business and visitors. It will provide current and future residents with opportunities to work close to where they live and provide optimal conditions to support knowledge-based employment growth in the city considered key to its long-term economic growth.

The VMC is a 442-acre development, located east of Highway 400 and west of Creditstone Road, north of Highway 407 and south of Portage Parkway/ Chrislea Road. A Community Improvement Plan (CIP), currently provides financial incentives and planning tools to support office development projects greater than 7,000 square metres and since 2010, the City has issued over \$10.8 billion in building construction

⁴ Based on Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.'s estimate, 2006 to 2017 employment growth in York Region has averaged 3.6% annually.

⁵ An employment activity rate is defined as the number of local jobs in a municipality divided by the resident population.

⁶ York Region's employment activity rate was 54% in 2016, derived from Statistics Canada Labour Force data and custom order Statistics Canada Place of Work data.



permits in the VMC. The Centre has attracted the likes of KPMG, PwC, Miller Thomson, GFL Environmental and Harley Davidson Canada. The opening of the Vaughan subway station and H2 Bus Rapid Transit vivaNext rapidway will continue to spur high-density development and further investment in the Centre's public realm.

The plan for the VMC is part of a larger regional trend of creating compact urban downtown development in the G.T.A. However, by creating unique and identifiable districts; recognizing and making visible the natural heritage elements of the site; and by positioning the VMC as Vaughan's creative hub produces the type of location that should attract and cater to the younger urban, entrepreneurial class with the ability to live and invest in the community.

In addition to the VMC, the City of Vaughan is also advancing the planning for city-owned lands surrounding the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital, which is due to open in 2020. When complete the Hospital will be the first in Canada to feature fully integrated smart-technology systems and medical devices that can speak directly to one another to maximize information exchange. The 82-acre parcel, referred to as the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct (VHCP) provides opportunities to create active frontages along Jane Street and Major Mackenzie Drive, offers visual exposure to Highway 400 and is well-positioned to attract a range of healthcare-related uses that could include a long-term care facility, supportive community housing, research, education and training facilities, community health uses and related medical office space.



3. Global Trends, Local Opportunities

Changes in the global economy have always had a direct impact on the growth and life of cities. For this reason, the City's Strategic Economic Development Action Plans also needs to reflect on the larger global trends that are likely to have a lasting economic impact on the economic performance of Vaughan. As Vaughan continues to position itself as a major urban centre and as an investment destination of choice within the G.T.H.A., the City must understand the implications of international trade policies, industry trends and technological and cultural movements that will shape the trajectory of economic growth. Taking a macro-lens to those large-scale changes while looking more closely at local better practices can help the City of Vaughan position itself for the road ahead.

3.1 Smart City Technologies

'Smart City' is broadly defined as the use of digital technology, data and the internet of things to enhance the functioning and innovation of a city to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. The Smart City movement in Canada has been largely influenced by the federal government and the Smart Cities Challenge, which was a national competition aimed at encouraging Smart City planning and initiatives. While the Smart Cities Challenge was a limited duration competition, the movement of communities to adopt Smart City technologies continues to ramp up as more efficient and effective ways of delivering public services are developed. Key smart cities infrastructure investment opportunities include smart mobility and traffic management, affordable housing and rental properties, smart utilities, and renewable energy, clean energy vehicle charging stations, green buildings etc. With the creation of a Smart City Task Force, the City of Vaughan has an opportunity to drive innovation and creativity within the City administration and the local business community.

3.1.1 City of Mississauga - Virtual Campus and Planning Information Hub

- The City of Mississauga has embraced the Smart City movement through a variety of initiatives that support business investment and workforce development. Through a partnership with the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and Sheridan College, the City of Mississauga has made Eduroam available across the entirety of the City's public Wi-Fi network. Eduroam (Education Roaming) provides secure and seamless internet access to students, faculty and researchers at partner institutions across the world. The entirety of the City has become a virtual campus with access to Eduroam available throughout.
- The City of Mississauga maintains a Planning Information Hub on its municipal website. The Planning Information Hub provides a wide variety of publicly available data points on an interactive GIS platform. GIS mapped data can be found on growth forecasts, population and business data and employment data. The Planning Information Hub also provides data on land development and employment land sites including a vacant land registry, pending development applications with status and ongoing municipal infrastructure projects.

3.2 Digital Disruption and e-Commerce

Digital disruption has and will continue to have a profound effect on how residents, employees and businesses behave. The traditional business models for how companies have operated has been



disrupted by new and evolving business models that are more and more innovative and less predictable. The traditional method of establishing and investing capital in a production or commercial facility and recovering those costs over the lifetime of the asset is coming under pressure from online sales and distribution models, automation of business processes and the sharing economy which allows many businesses to operate without having a traditional business footprint in a community or even owning assets. Instead, they are providing data and connectivity services that enable others to deliver the service. The shift from traditional storefronts to online retail channels has had a significant impact on downtowns and commercial centres across all jurisdictions. While this shift to e-commerce channels has resulted in decreasing reliance on low wage retail workers, it is increasing the need for highly skilled and highly trained talent that design, operate and maintain the digital and technological infrastructure behind the online purchase and fulfilment model.

Digital disruption is fundamentally changing the way economic development is done and the tools the City of Vaughan must develop to take advantage of this shifting landscape. Programs exist at the local, provincial and federal level to help businesses innovate, commercialize new products and go digital in new ways. The continued success of traditional bricks and mortar stores will largely rely on their ability to offer products and services across multiple channels, including e-commerce and having an online presence.

3.2.1 Digital Main Street

- The Digital Main Street (DMS) Program offers an opportunity for new and existing businesses in Vaughan to take part in the digital disruption rather than being bystanders to it. Through DMS approved providers, businesses gain access to assessment, training and tools that help them take advantage of online and e-commerce opportunities. The DMS program starts with an assessment to determine a business's readiness to undertake a digital transformation. Following the assessment, the suite of tools and services available include training on increasing web presences, funding for developing an e-commerce platform and even basic online necessities such as internal business photos to help a retail store increase its profile on a basic Google search. Although the program originally started in the City of Toronto, it's success and support from the Province of Ontario has enabled its expansion into communities such as Kitchener-Waterloo, Port Hope, Hamilton, and Thunder Bay. Each of these cities has embraced the Digital Main Street model to ensure the vitalization of their commercial cores and become local leaders and advocates for the program.
- The City of Toronto's IMIT Program also provides an example of a municipality that has embraced digital disruption by creating a program to specifically target those industries most affected. This has direct application for the City of Vaughan as it looks to attract knowledge-based services and businesses to the VMC.

3.2.2 City of Toronto - Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology (IMIT) Program

- The City of Toronto has created a targeted incentive program designed to meet the needs of companies at the forefront of the digital disruption movement. The IMIT Program provides incentives of up to 77% of the increased municipal taxes over a 10-year period in the following sectors: Biomedical Operations, Creative Industries, Financial Services, Information and Communications Technology, Manufacturing and Tourist Attractions. Eligible building construction and expansion are generally in one of the following uses: Broadcasting, Call Centres, Computer



Systems Design and Services, Convergence Centres, Corporate Office, Corporate Headquarters, Film Studio Complex, Food and Beverage Wholesaling, Office Building, Incubators, Information Services and Data Processing, Scientific Research and Development, Software Development and Transformative Projects (over \$250 million). Through the IMIT Program and three Community Improvement Plans that overlay the city, Toronto has put in place a framework that incentivizes companies at the forefront of digital disruption when making decisions on where to locate or expand their business.

3.3 FDI Patterns/Canadian Trade Policies

Studying the changing trade landscape and examining Foreign Direct (FDI) Investments patterns provides valuable context for the City of Vaughan as it looks to become an investment destination of choice within the G.T.H.A. Ontario has proven itself to be a top performer in attracting capital investment with investment topping \$6.9 billion in 2017 and \$5.4 billion in 2018 respectively. The G.T.H.A. has benefitted from these FDI inflows absorbing the largest proportion of the overall Ontario inflow. 2017 saw over \$2.3 billion of FDI into the G.T.H.A. and over \$3.4 billion in 2018. This massive inflow into the G.T.H.A. was led by software and IT firms, which represented 29% of all investment. This inflow by the ICT sector is closely related to digital disruption as many of the firms investing in the G.T.H.A. are on the cutting edge and leading the development of disruptive technologies across a wide range of industries.

The top three source countries for FDI inflow were the US, Germany and France. With the establishment of recent trade agreements and trade policies, it seems reasonable to imagine that these FDI trends will continue for the most part and offer the greatest opportunity to the City of Vaughan in their investment attraction efforts. The U.S.M.C.A. (United States, Mexico, Canada) Free Trade Agreement may pose some additional challenges for Canadian industry including some higher rules of origin implications and a higher de minimis amount for tariff-free imports into Canada which some businesses fear may allow greater advantages for large online retailers like Amazon, eBay, etc. The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement will also help to reinforce the FDI patterns that exist as Germany and France will enjoy favourable trading status compared to other destinations. The City of Hamilton has been a leader in attracting high-value jobs through FDI with over 1,400 jobs created through \$288 million in investment from January 2013 – November 2018. In Oakville, over \$1 billion in FDI over the same period created just over 1,200 jobs according to fDi Intelligence reporting. The 'Soft-Landing' program created in partnership with the City of Hamilton Economic Development Office, Innovation Factory and McMaster University and McMaster Innovation Park is an example of leveraging local partners in FDI.

3.3.1 City of Hamilton – Soft Landing Program

- Hamilton's Soft-Landing Program is designed to help foreign companies locate in Hamilton. Through collaboration with McMaster University, McMaster Innovation Park, Hamilton's Economic Development Office, and Innovation Factory, Hamilton is able to offer resources to reduce the time, cost and risk of market entry and provide collaboration opportunities for companies. Each partner brings a unique set of skills and expertise to the program with the City leading overall coordination, McMaster providing access to space and research and development support and Innovation Factory providing a network of volunteer mentors with expertise in all sectors of business, including CleanTech, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG),



Advanced Manufacturing, and Life and Health Sciences. A coordinated, full suite of service enabled Hamilton to take advantage of FDI inflow and industry growth sectors.

3.4 Immigration of Foreign Skilled Talent

The changing economic and industrial landscape caused by digitalization and the increasing use of technology and data-driven enterprises will require a new type of workforce. The global shift towards a knowledge-based and service-driven economy over the traditional goods-producing economy means that talent attraction and retention will continue to be a critical factor for businesses looking to locate in the G.T.H.A. and Vaughan. This competition for talent is a global one and requires businesses to take a broad approach and look across municipal, provincial or national borders.

Looking at Vaughan's talent base through the lens of knowledge workers, educational attainment and creatives provide an indication of where Vaughan has relative strength and why foreign skilled talent is required to drive the next evolution of Vaughan's economy. Vaughan's share of the total workforce employed in occupations considered knowledge-based (27.7%) is lower than any of the comparable communities in the G.T.H.A. and the G.T.H.A. average of 39.1%. Vaughan does have a relatively high educational attainment with 70.3% of the population 25 years and older with a post-secondary degree which trailed only Oakville and Richmond Hill in the G.T.H.A. However, the extent to which those individuals with post-secondary degrees had their major field of study in a creative discipline (science and engineering fields, the art and humanities, or business) was 35.3% which put it just above the G.T.H.A. average of 34.2%.

The opportunity for skilled immigrant talent to bolster Vaughan's next phase of development is further strengthened by the fact that Vaughan has historically been a less likely destination for new immigrants than many of the neighbouring communities and the G.T.H.A. region. Vaughan's share of the population with new immigrant status was 3.5% compared to a GTHA average of 6.1% and 7.5% in Mississauga, which was the leader among individual municipalities.

Talent attraction and retention cannot be simply about employment opportunities. Skilled workers' needs extend beyond employment and include housing options, transportation, access to amenities and ultimately attachment to the community if they are to be retained. Current housing options in Vaughan are dominated by low density (73%) and owners (90%) rather than renters. This profile of housing options suggests there is some potential need for more diverse housing options to accommodate incoming talent.

3.4.1 Government of Canada Global Skills Strategy

- The Global Skills Strategy was launched in 2017 by the Government of Canada. The Strategy provides a fast and predictable process for companies in Canada to access highly skilled talent from abroad. A collaborative effort across Federal Ministries including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Global Skills Strategy promises processing times of as little as two weeks for companies looking to import highly skilled talent. Applicants for occupations in type 0 (managerial) or skill level A (professional) of the National Occupational Classification (NOC) are eligible to apply for the fast-tracked process. Spouses, common-law partners and children/dependents are also eligible for the two-week application processing turnaround. Employers making significant investments in Canada are also eligible for enhanced customer service, including a dedicated case manager to assist with the



process through the Dedicated Service Channel (DSC) system. Entry into the DSC system requires a referral from an approved referral partner which includes the Region Municipality of York. Exploring enhanced partnership with the Region on making referrals for Vaughan-based companies can provide an opportunity to enhance talent attraction with the accelerated processes that the Global Skills Strategy offers to employers.



4. Strategic Economic Development Action Plans

Where the Economic Development and Employment Study Phase I Background Report provided an understanding of Why Vaughan? This part of the study provides a modernized economic vision for the city built around 4 strategic initiatives together with objectives and desired outcomes. The resulting actions are built on evidence-based economic and market research and analysis and seek to differentiate Vaughan from competitive communities. The actions also incorporate the findings of the Business Satisfaction / Needs Survey (developed/implemented under a separate contract) and the input received from the various workshops with business and community stakeholders. Building on Phase I, it is envisioned that the following Action Plans answers the How and When questions based on the major themes articulated below.

Strategic Initiatives



Enhancing the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystem

- Objective 1 - Provide entrepreneurs with a pipeline of tools, skills, connections and resources required to succeed.
- Objective 2 - Encourage the development and integration of attractive collaborative space and smart city objectives to support market led innovation within Vaughan's business community.
- Objective 3 - Work with community partners to ensure entrepreneurs in Vaughan have access to incentives, capital and required infrastructure needed to thrive.



Growing the Tourism and Creative Economy in Vaughan

- Objective 4 - Introduce a creative brand that illustrates the impact of the city's creative industries in order to attract new creative, tourism and cultural industries to Vaughan.
- Objective 5 - Nurture cultural and tourism assets to build creative capacity and capability in the city.



Focusing International Business Development

- Objective 6 - Foster FDI investment, trade and export development opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises that support the growth of Vaughan's key sectors in both goods producing and service-based industries.
- Objective 7 - Improve the effectiveness of Vaughan's global relationships to enhance trade and investment prospects.



Supporting Commercial and Experiential Development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

- Objective 8 - To provide business development, marketing and incentive programs that contributes to timely and transformative development in the VMC.
- Objective 9 - To provide arts and cultural programming and amenities that advances the VMC's place-making efforts and cultural framework objectives.



4.1 Strategic Initiative | Enhancing the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystem

4.1.1 What Do We Mean?

Enhancing the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem means improving the current network of services and support systems available by Vaughan and its partners to reflect the business solutions being adopted by today's leading start-ups and established companies. It includes introducing new and emerging business models to entrepreneurs and established industries that focus on the use of artificial intelligence and big data systems, health and human sciences technology, sharing and e-commerce finance systems, research and development activities, and social enterprise and social innovation ideologies.

Improving the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem also requires Vaughan's business environment reflect the changes in how businesses today are moving from ideation to commercialization. This means ensuring that start-up and scale-up services offered by Vaughan and its partners reflect market trends and that current and strategically planned infrastructure investments (smart city agenda, VMC, fibre optic network, etc.) prepare and position entrepreneurs and industries to succeed in today and the future's economy.

Lastly, the enhancement of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem needs to ensure ease of access for entrepreneurs and small business, regardless of their segment of society (i.e. newcomer, youth, gender). This means expanding the City's role as a coordinator for entrepreneurs and small business operators by ensuring they are connected to the right sources, the right networks, and the right markets that give them the best opportunity at improving their business or launch a new idea.

4.1.2 Why Is It Important?

Entrepreneurial companies can come in many sizes and providing timely access to services and support programming can impact their viability in an economy. Entrepreneurial companies can be small business-focused, in which the company primarily serves local markets, have lower needs for capital investment and has modest growth expectations, or can be export-oriented focused, in which the company requires higher levels of capital investment, greater dependence on research and development processes and has high growth potential.

Both types of entrepreneurial companies provide a unique opportunity for a city like Vaughan. For example, small business owners and entrepreneurs, while providers of employment opportunities, also contribute to a community's sense of place. They can be comprised of distinctive retailers, unique restaurants, and coffee shops, adding vibrancy to a neighbourhood and helping to build unique identities. When these businesses cluster along mixed-use corridors with a concentration of residential units, hotels and other commercial uses, it helps to attract other firms – ranging from professional services firms to tech companies – often becoming a magnet to keep young talent in a community. Export-oriented entrepreneurs, while requiring more time and resources to scale-up, can add hundreds of new jobs to the local economy and with it millions of dollars of new capital investment to support the



local tax base.

Over the past decade, Vaughan and York Region has placed a high value on the connection between entrepreneurship and innovation; supporting entrepreneurs transition ideas to prototypes to commercialization. Working in tandem with its various community partners, Vaughan through its Small Business Enterprise Centre has linked entrepreneurs with innovative programs emerging from the Regional Innovation Centre (ventureLAB), linked entrepreneurs with campus-based incubators and accelerators (York Entrepreneurship Development Institute, LaunchYU, HELIX by Seneca College), provided platforms and events for entrepreneurs to network and share success stories (Business Expo, Small Business Week) and invested in creation spaces within its Civic Centre Resource Library and Pierre Burton Resource Library to provide entrepreneurs with the tools and space to test products. The Test City Program by Vaughan also provides entrepreneurs access to the City's infrastructure, data, equipment and land to test new products in real-life settings. Vaughan's well-planned employment and office development lands have also created a strong position (location-wise and connectivity throughout Vaughan and York Region) to leverage the growth of an entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem through planning policies (ex. Section 37 bonusing, adaptive re-use, incentive planning).

Notwithstanding these investments, stakeholder input noted that businesses in Vaughan are challenged in understanding how to navigate available entrepreneurial services. Some of the challenges identified included the lack of knowledge on where to access services, a lack of knowledge on the type of services that are available, a lack of an entrepreneurial brand that businesses can associate themselves with (as ambassadors of Vaughan), and a desire by businesses to increasingly seek and support co-working spaces and alternate work arrangements (telework, work from home, work online). These identified challenges are further concerning when a recent business community survey indicated that 67% of Vaughan's businesses are spending significant dollars on new and innovative solutions for their businesses.

Enhancing the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem has become a viable economic development strategy across North America. A strong ecosystem has the potential to boost local economies by tapping local talent and resources and can contribute to the diversification of an economy, making it more resilient to economic downturns. While many of the necessary ingredients are in place, Vaughan's support for entrepreneurial companies should include three vital components, including identifying and promoting the entrepreneurial tools and networking opportunities that exist in Vaughan and the surrounding region, encouraging the development and integration of attractive collaborative space - aligned with smart city objectives, and ensuring access to capital and infrastructure. Embracing a focused entrepreneurship strategy as a core component of this economic development action plan is essential to Vaughan's future prosperity.



4.1.3 Objectives, Outcomes and Action Plan

Objective 1

Provide entrepreneurs with a pipeline of tools, skills, connections and resources required to succeed.

Outcome

A strategic coverage model, mapping the full continuum of services, networks, and tools available in Vaughan to support businesses to move a product from an idea to prototype to commercialization.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Actions		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build a Smart City Task Force comprised of leaders from the business community, regional post-secondary institution accelerators and incubators, providers of collaborative spaces, and ventureLAB to provide strategic advice and direction, support and place commitment to overseeing initiatives designed to strengthen the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem in Vaughan. ▪ Connect the Task Force to the planned development of Vaughan’s Hospital Precinct to recognize the highest opportunity on the city-owned lands. ▪ In cooperation with VentureLab, launch incubator and co-working space to enhance tech entrepreneurship, attract new investment, spark innovation and create new businesses. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff Time



Objective 1

Provide entrepreneurs with a pipeline of tools, skills, connections and resources required to succeed.

Outcome

A strategic coverage model, mapping the full continuum of services, networks, and tools available in Vaughan to support businesses to move a product from an idea to prototype to commercialization.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Actions		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with local and regional innovation partners, create a central database of information for start-ups and small business operators in Vaughan. The central repository should include PDFs of current entrepreneurial and innovating programming, a listing of available entrepreneurial and innovation related partners within the community and region, a brochure on how to capture current available capital from various levels of governments and local angel investors, a brochure of any new and upcoming civic infrastructure investment, and an open RFP database of large Vaughan corporations seeking subcontracting or vendor services to provide opportunities for young and emerging companies. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an ongoing audit of the entrepreneurship support mechanisms in Vaughan. Evaluate, by surveying, how small businesses access the resources and support they need. In addition, assess whether the ability of Vaughan’s and surrounding region’s entrepreneur and innovation support providers serve the needs of local businesses. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated into future business community surveys
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map Vaughan’s high growth potential business sectors and expand economic development services to provide more effective outreach to these companies (e.g. technology-based manufacturing, creative industries, information and communications technologies, professional scientific and technical services, life sciences and health care technologies) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 1

Provide entrepreneurs with a pipeline of tools, skills, connections and resources required to succeed.

Outcome

A strategic coverage model, mapping the full continuum of services, networks, and tools available in Vaughan to support businesses to move a product from an idea to prototype to commercialization.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Actions		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain an outside firm to develop a multi-year marketing and branding strategy that communicates a strong local brand and effectively showcases Vaughan’s success stories. Communicate a strong local brand that highlights the start-up and scale-up ecosystem available to local businesses Develop the VMC brand as an emerging creative hub for business, entrepreneurs, residents and visitors to the City. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60,000 - 80,000
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand existing entrepreneur networking and industry events to enable new opportunities for face-to-face connections among Vaughan’s startup, tech communities, emerging and established sectors. These networks will help to foster mentorship, solidarity, learning and collaboration. Work with ventureLAB and the post-secondary incubators/accelerators to ensure tech entrepreneurs, young professionals, and workers are aware of networking events and activities. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A standalone industry event would require similar monetary and staff resources to running the Vaughan Business Expo Local networking events could be sponsored by hosts (coffee shops, restaurants, unique local businesses)
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a resource group with local entrepreneurs, senior business executives, human resource managers, tech workers and employability stakeholders (Employment Ontario, VPI Working Solutions, DANI Center, COSTI, Welcome Centre) to understand on an ongoing basis what are the existing and potential talent and labour issues in Vaughan and how the issues could be mitigated. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 2

Encourage the development and integration of attractive collaborative space⁷ and smart city objectives to support market-led innovation within Vaughan’s business community.

Outcome

Real estate investments that will have the highest long-term impact on business development opportunities, innovation and process efficiencies, and employment growth.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

SE: Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a collaborative space-demand analysis to assess the existing collaborative space market in the region, identify the potential capacity for new collaborative space in Vaughan and provide clear recommendations about ways the City can attract or encourage collaborative space in new and adaptive reused developments. In the request for proposal, request an evaluation and analysis of supply and demand drivers, historical trends, the regulatory environment, potential capacity, and possible locations. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 - \$70,000; explore collaboration with York Region
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to demonstrate smart city technologies through pilot projects in strategic locations around the city. These strategic locations can be branded as “Living Lab” centres where businesses are encouraged to test new technologies to improve the efficiency of delivering municipal services. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart City Funding
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize additional public investments that enhance walkability and pedestrian connectivity. Include support for broadband investments that creates a sense of extended connectivity across all devices, both wired and wireless. An example would be a free WiFi Zone. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart City Funding

⁷ Collaborative Space is generally a space that incorporates areas for small teams to freely share knowledge and ideas, balanced by places for focused work. Other terms include Makerspaces, Co-working spaces, Mashup Labs.



Objective 3

Work with community partners to ensure entrepreneurs in Vaughan have access to incentives, capital and required infrastructure needed to thrive.

Outcome

Research capacity, technology development, and the formation of new businesses driven by Vaughan’s creative incentives and capital investor network.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically convene a group of major employers, utility providers, and area real estate developers/brokers to identify gaps or deficiencies in Vaughan’s infrastructure that act as a barrier to the growth of existing employers and recruitment of new companies. Work collectively to identify and implement solutions to the most critical infrastructure challenges. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and work with venture capital firms (ex. York Angel Investors) in the region and nationally that have recently funded high-growth, innovative businesses. Additionally, sponsor and potentially host “pitch competitions”⁸ that provides a platform for entrepreneurs to capture venture capital. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time The event would require similar monetary and staff resources to running large networking events.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the City’s CIP program in the VMC to support new construction or expanded construction in targeted economic sectors and further position the VMC as a hub for innovation and creativity.⁹ 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$20,000 – \$40,000

⁸ Pitch competitions are events where entrepreneurs can showcase their idea or product to interested investors who can support their venture needs. Examples of pitch competitions include StartUp HERE Toronto and Meet the Investor Dragons events put on by Economic Developers Council of Ontario and the Province of Ontario.

⁹ Targeted sectors should include professional scientific and technical services, information and communications technologies, creative industries, life sciences and health care technologies.



4.2 Strategic Initiative | Growing the Tourism and Creative Economy in Vaughan

4.2.1 What Do We Mean?

Growing the tourism and creative economy in Vaughan focuses on increasing the local economic development services in arts, culture, tourism and creative economy industries. This includes nurturing and attracting creative, tourism and cultural industries and building creative capacity and capability through platforms and initiatives (festivals, events, public art, placemaking initiatives) for creative, tourism and cultural industries to strengthen, evolve and contribute to the uniqueness of the city.

Creative, tourism and cultural industries as defined in the Creative Together: Vaughan Cultural Plan refers to industries that have a generative process of self-expression or collective thinking which involves the generation and incubation of ideas and the illumination, confirmation and production of something new. Sub-sectors of the creative, tourism and cultural industries include digital industries (ex. film, media, gaming), tourism industries (ex. restaurants, breweries, experience providers), design industries (ex. graphics, fashion, interior, architecture), heritage-focused industries (ex. museums, galleries), arts-based industries (ex. visual arts, performing arts) and music industries (ex. sound production, broadcasting).

4.2.2 Why Is It Important?

Growing the tourism and creative economy is an important strategic focus for Vaughan and its partners because it enhances the livability of Vaughan's residents and improves Vaughan's ability to attract new talent and business. Existing strategies have laid the foundation for building a strong tourism and creative economy in Vaughan. Council's Strategic Priorities, the Cultural Plan, and the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework all emphasize the need to attract, develop and enhance events and experiences, as well as build the necessary infrastructure to advance tourism and cultural programming.

The Cultural Plan, particularly, set out directions to assist the development of creative cultural industries. This includes expanding cultural tourism through the strengthening of festival and event programming, as well as, exploring the concepts of place-branding and place-making – two concepts that look to attract talent and businesses based on a community's unique identity. Additionally, the Cultural Plan also encouraged residents to connect artistically and culturally with Vaughan's growing diverse communities; ensuring that these communities are welcomed to Vaughan to either play, live or work.

Revenue from Vaughan's Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) will be used to market the Vaughan tourism experience and brand. The funds may also be used to enhance visitor and resident experience while in Vaughan and may include wayfinding, beautification, and product and infrastructure improvements.

Although there are strategic documents addressing tourism and cultural development opportunities for Vaughan, stakeholder input has suggested that there has been a challenge in expanding and enhancing Vaughan's tourism and cultural assets. Of note is the lack of coordination between cultural and tourism



assets and the business community. Stakeholder input suggested that there is a lack of awareness of the opportunities that local creative and tourism industries can access to enhance their operations and facilities. The recent Citizen Satisfaction Survey noted that 57% of residents suggest that there is an appropriate balance of cultural and tourism experiences available to them; 27% of residents suggesting there was not enough. Community input from the Cultural and Public Art Framework also highlighted that the community wants to see Vaughan as an Art and Culture Hub, citing initiatives such as an incubator for artists and provision of studios and creative residences to support the development of young creatives and to attract related industries and institutions to Vaughan.

Investing in the tourism and creative economy has become increasingly recognized as an economic driver for a community. Aside from the economic benefits associated with tourism spending (ticket sales, goods and services provided), the importance of the growth of the tourism and creative economy provides in terms of the quality of place is as equally essential. According to the Harvard Business Review, place will eventually become more important than incentives in business expansion decisions. Growing the tourism and creative economy in Vaughan should include two distinct components: Improve the current brand and relationships associated with creativity and tourism in Vaughan in the hopes to attract creative and tourism industries; and expand, with the help of partners, the current tourism and cultural programming offerings in Vaughan.

4.2.3 Objectives, Outcomes and Action Plan

Objective 4

Introduce a creative brand that illustrates the impact of the city's creative industries in order to attract new creative, tourism and cultural industries to Vaughan.

Outcome

A recognizable brand that showcases the city's creative, tourism and cultural industries and the city's ability to support the growth of new creative talent and tourism offerings.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Active, Safe and Diverse Communities

SE: Citizen Experience | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively manage and influence the image of Vaughan portrayed through online and social media channels. As part of this action, ensure that Vaughan's entry on Wikipedia is regularly updated with accurate and positive information because this is often the first (and sometimes only) source of information people use to learn about a community. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 4

Introduce a creative brand that illustrates the impact of the city's creative industries in order to attract new creative, tourism and cultural industries to Vaughan.

Outcome

A recognizable brand that showcases the city's creative, tourism and cultural industries and the city's ability to support the growth of new creative talent and tourism offerings.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Active, Safe and Diverse Communities

SE: Citizen Experience | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local organizations to use Facebook, Twitter, and other social media tools to provide up-to-date information about local businesses, developments, upcoming events, and other relevant information 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically conduct visitor surveys and use this information to enhance marketing efforts, identify product enhancement opportunities, and gain a better understanding of who is visiting the city to inform the brand and talent recruitment and business attraction efforts. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$8,000 – \$10,000 per survey
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage Vaughan's unique locations, its diverse communities, and its proximity to Toronto to promote the region as a prime location for film production. Tactics include packaging and promoting Vaughan's unique locations for potential film sets (ex. Canada's Wonderland, Kortright Centre, Legoland, Vaughan Mills). Cultivating relationships and building networks with key stakeholders in the film industry from the Greater Toronto Area to raise the profile of Vaughan as a potential filming location. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Promotional Material Costs
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate local achievements in the form of an annual gathering, with awards or recognition of local excellence that promote local talent and skills. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Promotional Material Costs
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with recognized regional cultural industries in order to attract investment into Vaughan's existing cultural amenities and public spaces. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 5

Nurture cultural and tourism assets to build creative capacity and capability in the city.

Outcome

Generate positive recognition for Vaughan as a desirable place to set up a business, visit and live within the Greater Toronto Area.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Active, Safe and Diverse Communities

SE: Citizen Experience

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify local employers who regularly bring in visitors requiring hotels and meeting space, and secure written commitments regarding the number of monthly hotel nights and meeting space they would support to accommodate business travel to their Vaughan facilities. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with innovation and small business partners, provide specialized entrepreneurship support/business skill development for creative industries. Provide programming and support on sales development, business to business networking and business matching. Consider surveying creative and cultural sector skills needs. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$8,000 – \$10,000 (Could be part of the same survey proposed in 4-C)
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness among local retailers of tourism and cultural assets and events and encourage retailers to tailor hours and offerings to specific events. Additionally, create an opt-in email distribution list to quickly and easily communicate with retailers about specific data and events. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one-stop shopping for promoters, with advice on permits, hours, policing, licensing, media and the coordination of potentially competing festivals through the Tourism Development Officer, who would also work with venues and chamber of commerce on the marketing of a live entertainment scene in specific areas, and with creatives on educational events for career development, finding grants, networking, etc. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 5

Nurture cultural and tourism assets to build creative capacity and capability in the city.

Outcome

Generate positive recognition for Vaughan as a desirable place to set up a business, visit and live within the Greater Toronto Area.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Active, Safe and Diverse Communities

SE: Citizen Experience

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the feasibility to support the attraction and development of a new multipurpose event and creative space in the VMC. The incentives could include infrastructure improvements or a public/private model to finance and operate a type of creative hub. The Creative Hub should be a location where creatives can network, test services/products, market and create experiences for residents and visitors. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study costs (\$50,000 to \$70,000)
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove barriers to location shooting in Vaughan by aligning policies with the Toronto Film Office and increase the marketing and promotion of location shooting in Vaughan; address any perceptions regarding Vaughan as a film shooting destination and highlight the strength of Vaughan’s film supply chain potential (ex. Carpentry, lighting, animation, post-production). 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new destinations and amenities that draw additional visitors into Vaughan and make the city more attractive for talented workers. Actions include supporting feasibility studies for an arts and culture centre or the creation of a creative industries incubator and encouraging the growth of destination restaurants in key development areas. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAT investment



Objective 5

Nurture cultural and tourism assets to build creative capacity and capability in the city.

Outcome

Generate positive recognition for Vaughan as a desirable place to set up a business, visit and live within the Greater Toronto Area.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Active, Safe and Diverse Communities

SE: Citizen Experience

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the ongoing success and growth of existing events across Vaughan and develop new events that could lead to additional visitor spending and greater awareness of Vaughan among business executives and creative workers. Look to expand existing major events such as Art and Design week, Vaughan of a Kind Art and Crafts Show, Small Business Week, Business Expo and Creative Industries Summit into various day events/conferences and/or semi-annual events/conferences. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAT investment



4.3 Strategic Initiative | Focusing International Business Development

4.3.1 What Do We Mean?

Focusing international business development means devising a Vaughan first strategy that will leverage existing strategic alliances along with trade, and promotion and investment attraction activity taking place in York Region and the Greater Toronto Area. This includes collecting and analyzing market intelligence provided through a range of relationships (ex. Toronto Global, York Region, Toronto Board of Trade) and locally-based international firms to improve the understanding of the city's market position so it can support business access to emerging export markets and increase foreign direct investment in Vaughan. It also means redefining the current international development program to support targeted business attraction, retention and expansion goals. This includes understanding how Vaughan should be engaging its local businesses and supporting their export aspirations, as well as, understanding how Vaughan should approach foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction given the ongoing efforts of Toronto Global and the Province of Ontario.

The federal government and Province of Ontario currently provide strong support services and programs for companies looking to export, but these services and programs frequently go unnoticed by local firms that are either not exporting or contemplating export opportunities. While good at promoting and delivering their trade programs, without local conduits, they are unable to connect with a business interested in expanding into international markets or exporting for the first time. As a result, they rely on municipal economic development organizations to identify local SMEs that may be interested in exporting or should be ready to export but have not had the time or resources to consider the opportunity.

4.3.2 Why Is It Important?

International business development represents a significant opportunity for Vaughan. Vaughan is already home to several foreign-based firms and is now connected directly (by a short subway ride) to Canada's largest international investment centre. Additionally, Vaughan is a short drive of the most-travelled international airport in Canada, which now flies to over 150 international destinations. Vaughan's population also includes a high concentration of foreign-born residents (representing over 45% of the total population) that supports its position as a place that welcomes international residents and businesses and offers opportunities for city-to-city alliances.

In addition to its strategic position, Vaughan has also been invited to and supported strategic alliances (ex. Toronto Global / York Region's FDI team) that have encouraged international business development in the Greater Toronto Area. These strategic alliances have focused on three key activities: internationally-selling and marketing the region's value proposition and competitiveness; conducting research and analytics on emerging FDI market trends and providing business services to prospective investors to assist them in establishing a physical presence in the region including supply chain knowledge. As part of this effort, Vaughan has received requests from inbound delegations wishing to



visit City Hall and meet with staff and/or Council and been invited to participate as part of outbound delegations representing the City and the Region.

Notwithstanding the existing alliances, the recent business satisfaction survey identified a general lack of awareness with respect to programs that can assist existing businesses in entering international markets. Stakeholder input also suggested that across the Greater Toronto Area, many communities are moving towards the development of targeted export development programs. To do this, Vaughan needs to improve its existing market intelligence on emerging markets and improve its understanding of what local businesses need in terms of support to enter those markets. The likelihood of increased foreign direct investment into the Greater Toronto Area, also argues strongly that Vaughan needs a strategy to capitalize on this opportunity, particularly centred around two separate elements: fostering FDI investment and trade and export development opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises; and collecting and sharing international business market intelligence that also supports opportunities for Vaughan businesses to strategically prepare and plan for the future.

4.3.3 Objectives, Outcomes and Action Plan

Objective 6

Foster FDI investment, trade and export development opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises that support the growth of Vaughan’s key sectors in both goods-producing and service-based industries.

Outcome

Job creation and economic growth that enhances Vaughan’s performance and presence in the international marketplace.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate investment prospects from non-traditional sources. Two specific non-traditional sources include 1) Google Alerts to notify Economic Development staff about companies interested in moving into the Greater Toronto Area; and 2) lease expiration data for companies in the Greater Toronto Area. Send recruitment marketing materials to target industries whose leases are expiring within 24 months. <i>Findspace</i> is one example of a source that provides this type of commercial real estate data. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Data Purchase



Objective 6

Foster FDI investment, trade and export development opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises that support the growth of Vaughan’s key sectors in both goods-producing and service-based industries.

Outcome

Job creation and economic growth that enhances Vaughan’s performance and presence in the international marketplace.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet representatives of foreign subsidiaries located in Vaughan to learn more about their supply chain needs and encourage follow on investment in Vaughan’s economy. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a marketing campaign to emphasize FDI success stories to inform existing firms and targets outside Canada of Vaughan’s potential. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliverable of the Economic Development and Tourism Branding Study
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation of Vaughan based businesses in surrounding regional sector-based export development and market entry programs. An example includes partnering with the World Trade Centre – Toronto to host their Export Training Seminars (ex. International Trade Education Program, Canada’s Trade Accelerator Program, Market Activation Program) in Vaughan. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a champion or chief advocate for the establishment of a health-related industry cluster centred on the Mackenzie Vaughan hospital precinct. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the City’s targeted markets based on where Vaughan already has a relationship, where the Provincial and Federal Government have established representations and where export and trade opportunities align with Vaughan economy. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FDI Strategy \$60,000 - \$90,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify specialized sector-specific trade missions that give priority to Vaughan’s unique investment attraction opportunities (e.g. Automotive Parts Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Manufacturing, Food Manufacturing, Human Health Technologies). 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 7

Improve the effectiveness of Vaughan’s global relationships to enhance trade and investment prospects.

Outcome

Collect and share market intelligence on the City’s existing and emerging sectors that support opportunities for businesses to strategically plan for the future.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

SE: Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the CRM platform add information as to a company’s export readiness. Information should identify whether they are an export-oriented business, an emerging export-oriented business, or a well-established export-oriented business. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage the City’s international alliances and friendship cities, as well as bilateral business associations to establish business-oriented partnerships, develop new markets based on current FDI trends and act as a catalyst for new investment. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current international alliances policy renewal underway in 2019 budget
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and analyze foreign direct investment data as part of existing business retention and expansion activities and business community surveys. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in global ranking programs for business friendliness, smart city indicators, talent attraction, and start-up culture. Examples of credible ranking providers include Business Insider and FDI Intelligence. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



4.4 Strategic Initiative | Supporting Commercial and Experiential Development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

4.4.1 What Do We Mean?

Supporting commercial and experiential development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre means enabling the private sector to build on a dynamic urban environment that embraces and fuels high-growth businesses in the VMC and social interaction. This includes the marketing and promotion of activities in support of attracting and retaining knowledge-based and creative workers, as well as visitors and business development efforts that entice office development, unique retailers, tourism and cultural amenities to locate in the VMC. It means providing the public realm that infuses the Centre with a unique urban identity.

Additionally, supporting commercial and experiential development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre also means improving the VMC's place branding and placemaking activities. This includes working with VMC partners to make creativity and innovation visible and part of the VMC's identity; providing spaces and places that bring people together to work, to engage and to experience the city; ensuring connectivity and mobility within the VMC and between it and the rest of Vaughan; and leveraging the state of the art development that is emerging as a living lab for a new urban downtown.

4.4.2 Why Is It Important?

People are drawn to quality places. Where once people were attracted to the location of the companies they wanted to work for, today companies are attracted to the places their workforce wants to live and where they can retain the talent over the long term.

The vision for the VMC aims to create that opportunity for the city of Vaughan and is well documented and has been well communicated across Vaughan's various municipal departments. At its core, the VMC is intended to offer residents, businesses and visitors to Vaughan an attractive place that is multi-faceted and provides a variety of land uses, amenities, and activities within a tightly-knit environment. The VMC is also intended to be a modern take on a vibrant urban core concentrating high-value activity into a thriving district of the city; this includes independent shops and restaurants, office space, housing, entertainment, recreation and nightlife, infrastructure for knowledge-based employment growth in the city considered key to its long term economic growth interlaced together with attractive sidewalks, streetscapes, and public spaces.

The challenge today, however, is not with the vision for the VMC. It is in timely public investments in new and enhanced infrastructure, in the quality of private sector-driven real estate development, and in the communication of the VMC's vision to a broader audience within and outside of Vaughan. Based on stakeholder input, businesses commented that they are concerned with the cost to locate and operate in the VMC and do not have clarity around the advantages of locating their business here. Additionally, surrounding communities are also in the process of investing in the development of either new or existing commercial cores. Like Vaughan, these communities are also encouraging private sector office style development, putting added pressure on the quality of the communications and messaging that is



shared with potential residents and business owners. The one advantage that Vaughan currently holds over its neighbouring communities is the TTC subway connection, which provides mobility options for workers in the VMC and direct connections with Toronto’s financial and tech-based industries as well as the amenities on offer in Toronto for those that choose to live in the VMC.

To achieve the VMC vision, the mechanics of commercialization and experiential development in the VMC need to be flexible and imaginative. Important tools such as Public-private partnerships (P3s) and Community Improvement Plans that attract businesses and not just built form, where both government and business share development costs, risks, and financial benefits are going to be drivers in shaping the infrastructure and private sector development in the VMC at least in the short term. In addition to P3s and the CIPs, providing arts and cultural programming and amenities that advances the VMC’s place-making efforts and the VMC cultural framework objectives will also need to adapt to and support the changing VMC environment.

4.4.3 Objectives, Outcomes and Action Plan

Objective 8

To provide business development, marketing and incentive programs that contributes to timely and transformative development in the VMC.

Outcome

Vaughan’s VMC incentive program and strategic convergence model attracts business investment that includes start-ups, entrepreneurs and the relocation of businesses.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a group of local and regional developers to canvas opportunities, uncover impediments, and showcase successes related to real estate development and leasing in the VMC. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the Community Improvement Plan for the VMC, enabling a continuum of office development that supports a range of employment opportunities. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$20,000 – \$40,000 / in conjunction with Objective 3-C



Objective 8

To provide business development, marketing and incentive programs that contributes to timely and transformative development in the VMC.

Outcome

Vaughan’s VMC incentive program and strategic convergence model attracts business investment that includes start-ups, entrepreneurs and the relocation of businesses.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital | Good Governance

SE: Citizen Experience | Staff Engagement | Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a more formalized public relations campaign to ensure local stories make mainstream media in print and online. This is particularly important for the VMC and in the promotion of the local/regional innovation network. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the Economic Development and Tourism Branding Deliverable

Objective 9

To provide arts and cultural programming and amenities that advances the VMC’s place-making efforts and cultural framework objectives.

Outcome

The VMC is a place of cultural transformation, embracing experiential learning and social interactivity.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

SE: Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that placemaking initiatives/programs are accounted for as a separate line item in budgets moving forward. This will allow the City to track the return on investment associated with placemaking activities. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time



Objective 9

To provide arts and cultural programming and amenities that advances the VMC’s place-making efforts and cultural framework objectives.

Outcome

The VMC is a place of cultural transformation, embracing experiential learning and social interactivity.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

SE: Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing support to City partners to hold additional fine arts events and competitions for temporary installations of public art in the VMC throughout the year. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on VMC’s status as a creative district through creative programming such as “First Fridays”¹⁰ events, live performances and events emphasizing local food/beer, crafts, talent, etc. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Partnerships with local retailers to host events
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the use of Section 37 to support a grant program for key arts organizations to meet community arts objectives and retain them in the VMC and strengthen their capacity to attract further funding from other governments and arts and culture supporters. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time

¹⁰ First Fridays are citywide events that may take on many purposes, including art gallery openings, and social and political networking. North American cities have promoted such events to bring people to historic areas or creative centres perceived as unknown/uncharacterized, using the "safety in numbers" mentality to combat urban perception. In some cities this monthly event may occur on the first Saturday of each month instead of Friday or on "Third Thursdays"



Objective 9

To provide arts and cultural programming and amenities that advances the VMC’s place-making efforts and cultural framework objectives.

Outcome

The VMC is a place of cultural transformation, embracing experiential learning and social interactivity.

Alignment with Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CP: City Building | Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

SE: Operational Performance

Action and Tactics		Timeline (Months)			Resource Requirements
		0-12	12-36	36-60	
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the creation of a live entertainment scene in the VMC, with advice, coordination, promotion and indirect assistance for venues, promoters and festivals. Assistance should include, gaining the support of local business owners in the VMC to host live entertainment (i.e. live music, art exhibits, performing arts); opening up opportunities for themed festivals and pop-up activities in the VMC (i.e. loosening any policies limiting types of activities); advising and assisting producers and promoters with grant applications and sponsorships and partnership investments to provincial and federal bodies for the creation, recording, promotion of live entertainment in the VMC. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Time Additional Cultural Coordinator Position



4.5 Performance Measures

While it is difficult to directly connect the success of any economic development strategic plan to local-level macroeconomic statistics (for example, population increase, median household income, etc.), tracking some economic indicators provides a general understanding of the relative economic health of Vaughan.

MDB Insight recommends using the following indicators to measure program effectiveness and economic growth in the community.

Strategic Initiative	Metric	Data Source
Enhancing the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystem	Annual attendance at entrepreneurial related events and programs	In-house data collection, innovation partner data
	The number of new start-up companies per capita	In-house data collection, business interviews, employer surveys
	Annual number and dollar value of venture capital and angel investment deals	In-house data collection, innovation partner data; business interviews, business community surveys, media reports
Growing the Tourism and Creative Economy in Vaughan	Number and value of new placemaking and place branding projects over five years	In-house data collection
	Annual percentage growth of the population aged 25-34	Statistics Canada; citizen surveys
	Tourism and creative industries' growth over five years	In-house data collection, employer surveys, business counts data, business interviews
Focusing International Business Development	The number of foreign-based business openings by industry sector, investment value	In-house data collection, business interviews, business community surveys
	The number of inbound and outbound trade and investment missions and the number of Vaughan businesses participating in those missions	In-house data collection



	Number of employees of foreign-headquartered firms	In-house data collection, business interviews, business community surveys
Supporting Commercial and Experiential Development in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre	Annual growth of private capital investment in the VMC	In-house data collection, investor interviews, real estate reports
	The annual number of events taking place in the VMC	In-house data collection
	Number of new placemaking projects in the VMC over five years	In-house data collection



5. Appendices



Appendix 1: Summary of Participant Input - Theme Based Workshops

Four consultation workshops were conducted between February and March 2019 in Vaughan. Members of the business community, city staff and other interested stakeholders attended the workshops.

The purpose of these workshops was to reflect on how best to position the City of Vaughan for success in the future, provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of Vaughan's ability to retain and attract businesses operating in its key business and industry sectors and contribute to development of a framework for a new Economic Development Strategy. The workshops were conducted around four themes, namely,

- Diversify Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Ecosystem
- Arts, Culture, Tourism
- International Business Development
- Commercial and Experiential Development in the VMC

The summary of key themes from each of these discussions is presented below.

Diversify Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Ecosystem

Workshop participants were largely made of business service providers and other government stakeholders. At the beginning of the workshop, there did not seem to be consensus around the challenges faced by the business sector.

Participants indicated that Vaughan's location, proximity to markets and distribution networks, presence of York University and the concentration of tech, engineering, manufacturing and construction companies are assets or advantages that allow Vaughan to grow/attract STEM-related activities and industry.

Participants identified that Vaughan has significant vacant lands and a well-planned, intentional land use planning framework needs to be a focus. Opportunities exist for repurposing industrial land. Adaptive strategies and collaboration with not for profits might also be beneficial in order to buy/leverage provincial lands. The Hospital Precinct is also identified as an opportunity for Vaughan to promote the Health hub and Innovation Corridor. A better understanding of the hospital's vision is needed to achieve this.

Participants identified that a holistic approach to entrepreneurship is needed in order to grow/attract STEM-related activities in the city. In addition, the focus needs to be on improving the quality of life, promoting work/ life balance, including green spaces and a vibrant downtown / centre.

Participants also identified that Vaughan, in general, lacks a STEM-related focus. Labour supply shortage and workforce misalignment are challenges that need to be addressed. Although York University is identified as an asset, participants indicated that York University is not viewed as a leading engineering school (although they do have an engineering program). Vaughan needs to nurture an innovative culture; STEM should be promoted beginning at the high school level. Vaughan has the potential to support an innovation centre. This development can occur in tandem with VMC development.

When asked for 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan, some of the recurring ideas and those that gained traction among participants included:



- Better transit connections
- Define Vaughan's special niche; articulate what Vaughan has to offer. Focus on success stories
- Select a specific industry focus and zero in on that; alternatively, the focus could be on a certain stage in a company lifecycle (i.e. focus on start-ups, growth-stage companies)
- focus on strengths relative to Toronto
- Creation of an innovation centre
- Support expanded STEM education at all levels, collaboration and programming with post-secondary and other municipalities
- Develop a communications plan (Strategy) to support Vaughan's branding efforts; focus on marketing STEM opportunities in the city to both attract talent and generate an overall awareness
- Focus on the integration of tech into existing manufacturing processes
- Focus on integration of tech with entrepreneurial opportunities

Arts, Culture, Tourism

Participants identified that Vaughan needs to focus and leverage its own strengths. Assets indicated as important include Canada's Wonderland, existing public art and Culture Days. In addition, participants also indicate that Vaughan has some unique cultural and artistic neighbourhoods.

Vaughan has over 300 banquet halls and a 'gala' mindset which is preventing millennials from engaging with arts, culture and tourism. This 'gala' approach to arts and culture need to evolve into more organic forms of arts and culture activities. In addition, it is important to think about the experiences and services needed to attract millennials and the infrastructure needed to support the people in the future.

Participants identified that the City should act as an enabler of arts, culture and tourism. It should define and connect the arts. Currently, many of the stakeholders in the arts and culture space are working in silos. However, participants are optimistic that Vaughan can learn from other cities and leverage their unique identities and neighbourhood. For example, the City of Toronto has festivals that are unique to each culture. Blog TO was another example identified by participants to promote the City. Participants are interested in understanding the outcomes of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT).

The need for a cultural space or an artist hub/residency space was a common theme that participants highlighted. A discussion among participants identified that a banquet hall in Vaughan could be repurposed as a cultural centre. In addition to physical space, artists need to feel supported. A common theme that business owners indicated was that the city does not have streamlined services or programming to support growth. The lack of funding was identified as a hindrance to artists looking to pursue their passions. City staff identified that a division of Economic Development does provide funding supports, but most participants were not aware of this.

As the Hospital Precinct and development of the VMC help diversify the economy, at the same time, Vaughan needs to draw residents from Toronto and provide them with the cultural experiences that will make them stay.

Participants identified that arts, culture and tourism have evolved in the city and continue to evolve. However, a current lack of communication between the City and local businesses affects experiential



development. Tourism operators indicated that they are not aware of Vaughan's strategy for Tourism. In addition, inadequate transportation infrastructure is limiting experiences. People are not aware of the assets, and a lack of community 'buy-in' is affecting Arts, Culture and Tourism in Vaughan.

When asked for 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan, some of the recurring ideas and those that gained traction among participants included:

- Improved transportation connections
- Innovative funding examples for Vaughan. For e.g., Toronto arts gala
- Innovative communication strategy – could be the development of a blog or other unique voice for Vaughan arts and culture
- VMC could be promoted as a potential cultural centre/hub
- Activation of arts, culture and tourism, create niche identity
- Partnerships and synergies are critical, must be developed as overall experience
- Leverage the library
- The importance of arts, culture and tourism is not being seen by the community; should gain prominence as part of this strategy

International Business Development

Participants identified that businesses have not taken full advantage of free trade agreements (Canada is the only G7 country that has free trade agreements with all other G7 countries). This might be because free trade agreements are not well understood; support services are fragmented and do not necessarily complement or align with other municipalities. Canada has the potential to be the export hub for countries who don't have access to free trade agreements; need to leverage and promote this. While many businesses are focussed on exporting to the US; other international markets are not considered. In addition, companies don't know or understand the benefits and utilization of the full supply chain.

Participants identified a general lack of awareness with respect to international business development programs; programs are not clear enough. Other challenges identified include the lack of coordination, connectivity, barriers to capital and funding, employment lands shortage, lack of affordable housing and barriers to entry including language, time zone and culture.

Vaughan is generally considered as a bedroom community. Participants identified that the city should play an advocacy/enabler role in attracting FDI and driving international business. The need to promote Vaughan's assets, including manufacturing, business headquarters, and the hospital precinct as strengths. In addition, the need to explore opportunities with Toronto Global and the provincial government was identified. The focus should be on marketing the VMC and Vaughan as a Smart City and exploring opportunities for city-owned lands.

When asked for 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan, some of the recurring ideas and those that gained traction among participants included:

- Focus on developing a Smart City brand
- Focus on workforce and supporting a strong talent pipeline



- Focus on infrastructure and business-friendly environment. Build clusters in food & beverage, pharma, software, green tech
- Collaboration – Work as a team with the rest of GTHA
- Continued support for prospective investors
- Leverage success stories and recent investments

Commercial and Experiential Development in the VMC

The VMC needs to be lively 24/7; participants identified that the VMC is missing the PLAY piece (the amenities, cultural facilities and social capital needed for 'place-making').

Participants identified the need to learn from cities such as Paris and Rome – can replicate spaces such as the piazzas. The focus should be on developing high quality open public spaces in the VMC. The VMC has the advantage of a small number of landowners, this will allow for creating highly unified public spaces with synergies in architecture, urban design and tenants. Along with quality employment (professional services & creatives), the vision for the VMC is to have walkability and amenities, to promote the quality of life. SmartCentres and QuadReal are focused on building well-defined open spaces.

Along with PLAY, the VMC needs the LEARN component. The city needs to shift perception from an industrial centre towards a knowledge-based place and promote SMART city technologies similar to what the City of Toronto has done with Google's Sidewalk Lab.

Highway 7 connectivity is an issue (currently not walkable). There is a need to develop unique opportunities to connect both sides of the VMC. For example, the PATH system in Toronto provides connectivity and elevates property value. The Bridges in Calgary are another example.

The lack of awareness is identified as a hindrance to the commercial or experiential development in the VMC. People in Vaughan and the surrounding region do not understand the advantages of the VMC, including having partnerships with SmartCentres, other tenants, subway stop, ease of commute compared to Toronto and the availability of office spaces to attract businesses. To realize Vaughan's vision for the VMC, the city needs to work on marketing and branding. VMC needs to overcome the draw of millennials to downtown Toronto and also activate current residents of Vaughan. Need to think ahead to what people want, 20 years from now, and plan for it.

Incentives need to be leveraged to bring in regional offices. Vaughan has a CIP; however, it competes with Toronto's Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology (IMIT) business incentive. Incentives are currently minimal in Vaughan, and diverse incentive are needed to promote not just offices. Other opportunities to promote the VMC include leveraging BIA's, incentivizing incubators, identifying co-working spaces and developing partnerships with cultural spaces.

When asked for 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan, some of the recurring ideas and those that gained traction among participants included:

- Develop partnerships with cultural groups such as Mirvish, National Ballet, Canadian Opera Company, etc.
- Promote Smart City agenda in Vaughan and the VMC



- Collaborate between businesses such as Deloitte, PwC, KPMG and York University around technological opportunities
- Promote success stories to attract more companies
- Marketing campaign run by an arms-length organization
- Incentives like IMIT and Vancouver’s public amenity incentive programs

Workshop Notes

Diversify Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Ecosystem

1. How is technology impacting your business sector, the business landscape more generally? (e.g. advanced analytics, e-commerce, digital banking, Blockchain, AI) – LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- business service providers and other government stakeholder rely on businesses to communicate their needs
- technology has the potential impact of isolating business/people if entrepreneurs are working remotely
- Autonomous transportation will have impact on cities and business operations. Cities that aren’t embracing this tech risk being left behind.
 - Autonomous vehicles have significant planning implications
 - New issue for land planning, road repair, power infrastructure
 - “Sometimes we forget about the physicality of our infrastructure and don’t consider tangible infrastructure needs.”

Potential strategic recommendation: Work with business service providers to engage industry to better understand the impacts of emerging technologies. A potential outcome could be the development and delivery of training or a learning and capacity-building event.

2. What distinctive assets or advantages does Vaughan have to grow/attract STEM related activities in the city? (e.g. workforce, skill set, businesses, entrepreneurs, R+D community) - SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

General Asset/Advantages

- Location; proximity to markets, distribution networks, talent, York University
- Concentration of tech, engineering, manufacturing & construction companies
- Transit connections – TTC stop
- Progressive, open minded municipal economic development staff
- Forward thinking business community that embraces competition
- Links to Israel – largest concentration of Israeli ex pats and resulting link to Israeli tech hub
- Cultural assets – i.e. quality of life amenities
- Sci-net – largest, fastest supercomputer facility; academic and R&D advantages



- Strong clusters in manufacturing, logistics
- Well-positioned to attract industry that may be seeking a living lab (demonstration technologies, proving out the business case)

Land Assets/Advantages

- extensive real estate available
- Well-planned, intentional land use needs to be a focus
- Implement adaptive strategies before the City runs out room for growth
- Opportunity to repurpose industrial lands for adaptive use
- some companies may want to preserve land for future expansion
- Potential collaboration with not-for-profits to buy provincial land
 - i.e. before a school or other provincial asset is sold, investigate what else can be done

Advantages of the Hospital Precinct

- Hospital Precinct Cluster Opportunities:
 - Clustering of medical science & product development
 - Community medical outreach services and health care start-ups
 - Innovation Corridor opportunities and connection to GTHA healthcare

Advantages from Entrepreneurship

- Entrepreneurship provides skills for future business growth
- Entrepreneurs consider moving to Vaughan for quality of life
 - Looking at diversity, inclusion, community engagement
 - Hard to be productive if you're isolated
 - Giving entrepreneurs a place – literally and figuratively – to express themselves, need flexible opportunity to grow beyond existing limitations
 - Need to consider mental & physical health
- Work with Ryerson on developing the people, skills, incubation hubs that help to catalyze these other pieces

Other Considerations

- Need to have a better understanding of industry challenges. What are the problems that Vaughan can solve?
- How do we leverage the talent that we have locally to solve our problems? / How do we attract talent with a focus on solving our problems?

3. What do you see as the issues/challenges facing the growth of STEM related activities in Vaughan, in the GTHA? - SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



Challenges

- Markham is ahead in STEM related development
- No STEM institutions in Vaughan; York not considered to be a strong source of STEM talent; York University is not viewed as a leading engineering school although they do have an engineering program
- Workforce misalignment; have STEM capable people who are not working in STEM fields
- Labour supply challenges for manufacturing; What can the city do to train under employed residents?
- Access to capital
- Current focus is manufacturing-centric
- Gaps in understanding of Vaughan's competitive advantage
- Current marketing is not STEM focused, needs to be refocused locally and internationally
- Spread out community, need infill to have people connected to each other
- No world class innovation centres currently
- Weak transportation links to York University

Considerations

- STEM is being addressed in the public-school system
 - How do you establish an innovation centre? – programs that support entrepreneurship and innovation; need for a research hub that connects new talent & researchers
 - How do you plan and nurture an innovative culture? Need to think about the other amenities, Arts & Culture need to be prominent in the planning landscape
 - Need to embrace culture of risk-taking
 - Programs – that support a STEM culture – Scientists in School, First Lego lead
 - Need to align with VMC development
 - Focus on creating walkability to attract and retain the required workforce
 - Creating an identity – the growth of these STEM related activities may be linked to the existing challenges, come to Vaughan to solve the challenges
 - Need to focus on storytelling
 - Need to have 1 or 2 major anchor tenants, that would be a good citizen and create opportunity for spin offs
 - Need to focus on quality of life, work/ life balance including green spaces and a vibrant downtown / centre
- 4. What do you consider the 2 or 3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan? (e.g. specific opportunities or programs) - SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**



- Better transit connections
- Define Vaughan's niche; articulate what Vaughan has to offer
 - Creating a brand, finding the niche, create a hub for that niche opportunity
- Focus on a few select industries; focus on strengths relative to Toronto
- Focus on selling Canada, not just Vaughan
- Creation of an innovation centre
- Support expanded STEM education at all levels
- Collaboration and programming with post-secondary and other municipalities
- Develop a communications plan (Strategy) to support Vaughan's branding efforts; focus on marketing STEM opportunities in the city to both attract talent and generate overall awareness
- Focus on the integration of tech into existing manufacturing processes

Arts, Culture, Tourism

1. How would you characterize arts, culture and tourism activities in Vaughan, York Region? What role should arts, culture and tourism play in the development of the City?

- Arts and culture should define and connect the city
- Transportation infrastructure is limited which affects access to tourism experiences
- Need for a cultural centre, artist hub e.g., living arts centre
- Arts and culture are not just about physical spaces but also artists and virtual infrastructure
- Leverage own strengths. Don't replicate what goes on elsewhere
- What infrastructure is needed for the future
- Wonderland – not aware of Vaughan's strategy for Tourism.
- Lack of awareness of arts, culture and tourism assets
- Lack of programming to support arts and culture assets
 - Programming needs to grow first to support the sector's growth
- Lack of investment both individually and as a group
- Build from the bottom-up. the focus has always been on the top to bottom
- Work with local artists – 'Culture Days' is a hub – can it be leveraged?
- Arts, culture and tourism does not have the investment it needs
- How can arts, culture and tourism transform the city
- Shape the identity of Vaughan
- Solidify civic pride
- Risk of homogenization of cities: how can we make Vaughan authentic



- Canada's Wonderland is an asset
 - Specific personality is there – but it hasn't come to the forefront. We need to identify what it is
 - Different parts of the city move at different paces, for ex: VMC adds to the urbanity but other spaces don't. Thornhill, Kleinberg and other communities have their own identity.
 - VMC – Urban centre but Vaughan is still sub-urban
 - What is Vaughan now? Moving into a very strong identity, diverse communities
 - Success stories – arts, culture and tourism does not change overnight. Ten years ago, there was nothing
 - 'destination tourism' for Vaughan and how it plays in York region
 - How to leverage the inventory? People don't know what is in Vaughan
 - How can we draw from the Toronto and brand ourselves?
 - Artists in Vaughan do not self-identify with Vaughan
 - Vaughan is now where Markham was in the '90s
 - Hospital – helps diversify the economy
 - How can we leverage the cultural identity of the community? We have the culture. Toronto has culture specific festivals. We lack them
- 2. What do you see as the issues/challenges facing the growth of arts, culture and tourism activities in Vaughan, in York Region?**
- Awareness, Kleinberg in summer is great – people are not aware
 - Marketing is an issue
 - Connectivity between arts, culture and tourism
 - Infrastructure need to plan out
 - Transit is an issue
 - VMC looks like the place we need to develop. So maybe attract private investors designated place for culture at the VMC. Provide studio/arts in residence
 - What is Vaughan's culture? It is the compendium of artists working together
 - The growth of arts, culture and tourism – areas. Vaughan has obsession with a gala. 300 banquet halls.
 - Artist are not able to perform for passion
 - Arts centre – can we repurpose an expiring building if not build a new space
 - 'viral city' – how can we leverage the star power of the city
 - Recognize the content creator. As performers, we want to be seen and as we were seen can grow the city



- No buy-in from community - educational, communication missing. People don't invest because they don't see the value
 - The sense of place – fighting between priorities
 - Artist wants to build businesses – but the city does not have the services programming streamlined to support the growth
 - Who leads that conversation? Is it that the city itself, or a platform that leverages the community e.g. Blog TO; the logo is great for TO
 - How can we prioritize the city? How can we develop?
 - Public information session – happened at first but not –ongoing. Not everyone is aware of arts, culture and tourism strategy
 - What can an artist do after a certain point? Are there organizations that can be leveraged to help people?
 - Wayfinding signage/ asset mapping
 - The library does things at a smaller scale. Have exhibit space, museum spaces, passes (free passes), recording studio, and creation space.
 - Key is to have a well-defined vision. Heritage month is an example of culture and library connecting
 - Asset mapping – done ten years ago – how has it changed? Underground arts, culture and tourism – do we know?
 - Need a different communication strategy that communicates with arts, culture and tourism
 - Leverage social media to communicate relationship building
 - MAT Tax – effective April 1. Potential for \$2-4 million that can be used for sales, product and marketing development. Promotion of overnight stays
 - Creating the underlying condition. Cities can work by understanding how best they can do something and best they can do
 - Investment in arts, culture, tourism and film is needed to get results. How do we deal with development challenges in relation to arts, culture and tourism? Approvals and permitting. There is a plethora of good practices that can be leveraged to reduce the cost associated with arts, culture and tourism
 - What is available theoretically to deploy the growth? How can the city be an enabler? City can look at other cities that have done in terms of facility development
 - Priorities – who is going to be living in Vaughan in ten years? Who are we building for? Who are we talking to know? Who should be our priority? What kind of infrastructure and services needed to support the people ten years from now?
- 3. What do you consider the 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan? (e.g. specific opportunities or programs that would support the growth of arts, culture and tourism in the City)**
- Transportation – regional connection, more people are not coming to the park because of the lack of access to reach. How do we improve partnership – can we leverage Uber/Lyft



- Accommodation tax – what are the benefits, what is it and how will it look like?
- Continue investment/communication. Understand the importance of communication and investing the money
- Accommodation tax – each city has their own gap. They have their own programs defined. When are we competing with other cities, how prepared are we?
- Develop asset inventory
- Cultural centre hub in the VMC
- Have the economic stats about the impact of arts, culture and tourism better shared
- Create an arts council
- Source for funds – ‘Toronto arts gala’ is a great example
- Communication strategy – could be a blog
- Activation, create niche identity
- This conversation is a great start; the importance is not being seen
- Connecting the dots – transit is important when it comes to connecting various communities
- Connections formed with the library
- Partnerships and synergies – critical
- Arts council – from an artist’s perspective. A void in terms of funding. Thus, an arts council is seen as a vehicle to get funding and recognition. York region arts council is there but not good awareness. Do we have the resources to have the model? Artist will feel more supported if they provide leadership with volunteer support
- City has a small operation that looks at grants (divisions within EcDev). EcDev role is more of support that funding. Connect artists to progressive funding at the national/provincial level
- Financial model – understand that it is critical.

International Business Development

4. How would you characterize the international business development programs in Vaughan? In the GTHA?

- Current business development programs are not well known; programs are not clear enough
- Approach is broken into 3 categories:
 - Government – Fed, Prov, municipal
 - NGO – Chambers, International Associations, Toronto Global
 - Private business
- Over reliance on selling to US only
 - People sell to the US, but don’t think of exporting beyond,



- Companies don't necessarily understand where they fit in international business
 - Benefits are not well understood, utilized
- Free trade agreements are not well understood
- Support services are fragmented; do not necessarily complement or align with other municipalities
- Canada is the only G7 country that has free trade agreements with all other G7 countries. We are not taking full advantage of this.
 - Canada can be the export hub for countries who don't have access to those free trade agreements
 - We have benefits that are not well understood, utilized
- Perception of Vaughan as a place to live or bedroom community

Considerations

- Focus on scaling up Canadian companies to create industry clusters
- Need better data to understand which and how many companies that are exporting / importing
- More clarity on programs needed; too many programs competing with each other
- Need to have better understanding of the product USP
- Rely on upper tier government groups to get investors here, then make the specific case for Vaughan
 - Work closely with Toronto Global & Province on getting group to come to Vaughan
- Vaughan's assets, manufacturing, HQ operations, what is the sector that you want to focus on?
 - What does that sector want / need? Incubators? Talent pipeline?
- Need to recognize that international business – also includes licensing, collaboration access to export markets
- Marketing focus should be on branding the VMC and being positioned as a Smart City

5. What do you see as the issues / challenges facing the implementation of international business development programs in Vaughan? In the GTHA?

Challenges

- Lack of coordination, connectivity
- Shortage of employment lands
- Lack of affordable housing
- Risk adverse culture (– but incubators can mitigate this)
- Working collaboratively, but marketing Vaughan's specific advantages (typically this would involve positioning Vaughan relative to comparator regions and municipalities)
- Access to capital; access to funding



- Barriers to entry; language, time zone, culture

CONSIDERATIONS

- Focus on 2-3 market combinations; Get the sector right
- Look at what ecosystem in Vaughan needs (value chain gap analysis)
- Leverage GTHA as a global destination
- EDO Vaughan needs a stronger mandate

6. What role should the city play in attracting FDI and driving international business?

- Understand and articulate Vaughan's story (USP).
- Leverage the smart city project.
- Create a welcoming environment for prospective investors – i.e. enhanced site visit program
- Explore strategic opportunities around lands that city owns around the hospital (20 acres) – and other city owned lands
- Leverage the hospital and hospital precinct strengths; R&D opportunities, agri foods testing, Smart technologies, testing space, lab space
- Work collaboratively with other partners
- Value Chain analysis (supply chain gap analysis) – Look at what Vaughan ecosystem needs and go after those companies
- Advocacy (to support investment readiness and quality of life amenities)
 - Direct rail line from Vaughan to airport?
 - 2 way all day Go transit

7. What do you consider the 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan?

- Focus on Smart City brand
- Focus on infrastructure and business friendly environment
- Collaboration -Work as a team with the rest of GTHA
- Build clusters in Food & Bev, pharma, software, green tech
- Responsiveness - ensure that prospective investors can get what they need in terms of information resources with a minimum of opportunity cost
- Focus on workforce and supporting a strong talent pipeline
- Leverage success stories and recent investors; “The biggest testament to why businesses are coming is that other businesses are coming. They are better at telling the story and can articulate why they are here.” - Access to market and supply chain are important stories



Commercial and Experiential Development in the VMC

Notes 1

8. What is your vision for the VMC 10 – 15 years from now? What will success look like?

- The VMC needs to be lively 24/7
- Live, Work and Play – the PLAY piece is missing – amenities – focus on creating ‘place’
- SmartCentres: focus on developing high quality open public spaces not just the development projects. Foregone conclusion that development will happen, it’s to what level do we aspire that’s important – we need to set the bar higher e.g. architecture, urban design, tenants – but need to be careful not to rush it, but to get it right.
- What cities do you look to as examples? Paris, Rome – recognize that they developed over centuries, but there are things that you can take from them. Piazzas, great public spaces.
- Need to also add the LEARN component in
- Need to look at the quality of employment that we want
- The small number of landowners in the VMC is an advantage – they can pay attention to the areas between buildings – in downtown Toronto, the many different landowners leads to fragmented space
- Walkability and services – people aren’t just working in the VMC, they need other services and amenities outside of work
- Need to drop some of the amenities that are over in the Colossus area into the VMC
- VMC has to be a place that people want to visit and spend time
- Hwy. 7 is a barrier – Hwy. 400 is a barrier – currently not walkable
- Need to look at best practices from other areas but Vaughan has to be unique as well - opportunity to avoid some of the things that haven’t gone right in areas such as North York centre
- How do we overcome the draw of millennials to the downtown Toronto – what’s happens as the millennials age?
- How do we activate the people who are already here in Vaughan?
- BIAs working to activate the space – i.e. events like Taste of the Danforth, etc.
- What would give us a regional edge?
- People don’t see borders – we have to be able to draw from all over the GTA. We need a value proposition and for others to see a value proposition.
- ‘Toronto North’
- Tenants will pay higher rates for the office space if they see value, if they think they need to be downtown to be successful

9. How can the City support the creation of innovative commercial development in the VMC? What role does marketing play?



- Figure out how to build connectivity and walkability between places - PATH system – provides connectivity but it also elevates property values - Bridges in Calgary are another example.
- Understanding about the public spaces – Central Park – park on Quadreal property – why the roads that cross through them? Hard to have large outdoor events with roads crisscrossing.
- Embrace smart city technologies – consider a Sidewalk Lab concept – wifi, etc.
- Incentives to bring in regional offices – CIBC went south of Front, never thought it would happen, but it did
- Density of people creating opportunities
- Improved public relations - you want to draw people into the VMC, but then you ticket them
- Need to do more marketing and branding around the VMC. Not enough people in Vaughan know about it, certainly people outside Vaughan don't recognize it.
- Knowledge is limited about who the tenants are in the VMC, the subway.
- Need to think ahead to what people want, 20 years from now, and plan for it.
- Cultural facilities needed
- Need to spread the word better about new, exciting tenants in the VMC. Toronto and Ottawa do a better job.
- Downtown Toronto is full – no other large office projects are planned in the next several years. Opportunity to capitalize on that – either really old office space or wait for the new space to come onstream
- Capitalize on the painful downtown commute – help people to realize there's an alternative
- Shift perception of Vaughan as an industrial centre towards a knowledge-based place
- Increase social capital in the VMC – ping pong leagues between VMC tenants – increasing interactions between groups of people in the VMC
- Lack of awareness of what will be in the PwC/YMCA facility

10. What do you see as the issues / challenges facing the growth of commercial or experiential development in the VMC?

- Hard to keep the vision on track and alive when the VMC is a long-term project
- Changing the narrative about Vaughan and the great things we have here – existing perceptions have to be replaced/overcome
- Hard to develop and convey the values that come out of social investments
- CIP is inconsequential whereas IMIT program is shown as a line item in pro formas – incentives for more than office development to bring higher end tenants such as Buca.
- Incent incubators like in Toronto
- We're in a hot market now, but that will NOT always be the case – need to act with haste
- Co-working spaces like Regus, WeWork are enablers



- Development industry is pushing York Region to implement a CIP
- 11. What do you consider the 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan? (e.g. specific opportunities or programs that the City of Vaughan should be supporting)**
- develop partnerships with Mirvish, National Ballet, Canadian Opera Company, etc. – bring it here as a secondary market – also target sports groups to come here for training and practice
- leverage technology – Sidewalk Labs
- post-secondary institutions tied to tech – get collaboration between Deloitte, PwC, KPMG and YorkU around tech – YorkU’s engineering program is taking off
- focus on attracting 1-2 well-known companies – that will draw a host of other companies to co-locate
- Take a driver position in defining ourselves – don’t let others do it for you
- marketing campaign run by an arms-length organization
- incentives like IMIT
- look at Vancouver’s public amenity incentive programs

Notes 2

12. What is your vision for the VMC 10 – 15 years from now? What will success look like?

- success is activity, restaurants
- live-work-PLAY (missing piece), needs to be a bigger focus
- if you build residential and commercial, the civic piece will come later
 - We need to think world-class, put thought in, not rush the civic piece but plan now for what we want 20 years from now
- high quality design is important, as well as building neighborhoods with community in mind
- need to think carefully about the types of jobs we bring, class A tenants
- SmartCentres is conscious about building open spaces first, and buildings around them
 - i.e. building a purposeful and well-designed mews between bus terminal and building
- QuadReal is thinking the same way, incorporating large and small public spaces

13. What does experiential development mean to you?

- 1/3 of 30 lawyers commute from Toronto (some by subway, some car), still waiting for walkability factor. No one stop shop. Subway is opportunity for Torontonians to visit Vaughan, nothing here for them yet.
- Colossus area has theatre, tons of shopping, need to drop some of that in the VMC
- Hwy 7 is a barrier between the two halves, 400 a barrier on the west. How do we make walking a better experience across them? i.e. Calgary’s pedestrian bridge(?)
- let’s pay attention to what’s not working in other cities. We have opportunity to avoid.



14. What cities are the best models for the VMC

- I look at world cities like Paris. Evolved over hundreds of years but can still get lessons. The great piazzas of the Italy: what animates them? What could be improved. Part of this process.
- we're on the outskirts of a fabulous booming city
- activating a space is as much about the space as the people. BIAs do a lot of work to activate people
- what will put us on the map above other developing areas of the region
 - owning Toronto North is a viable option (North York didn't hit it)
 - Employees from south of Steeles are happy to go against traffic
- can we get a PATH like network not just to subway station, plan for winter activation and pedestrian comfortable pathways?
- go underground under highway 7 to get past barrier
- where else can we go Smart Cities-wise?
- roads cutting parks into pieces – how do we create pedestrian links and safety
- we need to get the developers to plan for a PATH network as they're going through the application process
- would like to see major NHL stadium or cultural centre
- incentives for companies to relocate (i.e. Toronto south of Front St)
- city can brand VMC, Smart City, tech, Sidewalk Labs type of model
- in last two years, 3 million square feet taken up in downtown TO by 905 relocations
- partly driven by incentives, a lot by transit access (but we can leverage commuting struggle for our benefit)
- profiling and awareness of VMC still a problem in recruitment
- don't know subway is open
- promote all new development, company openings, relocations
- changing from industrial to urban growth area, takes time but need awareness program to GTA
- taking a bottom up approach, talking to millennials who will work in offices and live in condos
- emphasize major parks
- when YMCA/Centre open – encourage rec leagues for VMC office tenants, build community

15. What challenges and issues do we need to address?

- Vaughan still has a very industrial and suburban reputation
- play/recreation/culture/activations – communicate what is happening in terms of building community (make sure Council and other spokespeople have clear messaging)
- Pedestrian experience, network of pathways and safe spaces



- incentives are lacking. CIP is not enough, and not for businesses. Need incentives for not just office but brands like Buca
 - you could also incentivize other desirable uses like incubators
- the office market is hot right now. Now is the time to incentivize them to come, before the faucet turns off
- market is tenant driven. Companies are paying more than they can handle to be downtown Toronto. They don't think they can thrive here
- WeWork and similar coworking space are huge downtown.
- WeWork will pay out leases, huge selling point

Priorities

- cultural partnerships
- partnerships with culture organizations like Mirvish, ballet, sport training facilities
- Smart City/tech
- integrate tech, partner with post secondary (Ottawa, Austin, San Jose, we could be a peer)
 - this could be an important differentiator, break out from industrial reputation
- how do we leverage KPMG, PwC, Mircom, to work towards this?
- make VMC synonymous with tech. Marketing.
- York's Engineering program has been rapidly building in reputation
- need to land one or two big name tenants to create buzz
- campus real estate model still attractive
- no new product coming online in 2019-2020 in downtown Toronto
- transportation
 - we need a direct link to Pearson not by car (express bus at least)
 - Union Station West planning just starting, we're looking at it and redoing our transportation master plan
- incentives, CIP – Can we redirect to tenants? Specialize to tech, professional services?
- does marketing need to be bigger than Ec Dev staff? Arm's length organization?

Notes 3

16. What is your vision for the VMC 10-15 years from now? What does success look like?

- cultural activity centre – All day traffic of people
- It is a foregone conclusion that live/work/play is coming, but it's the level that this is happening which is most valuable to Vaughan
- We should be putting buildings into open space, not the other way around



17. What can Vaughan do to support innovative commercial development?

- Marketing i.e. Education on subway being here, as well as being a subway accessible area
 - Education on VMC name
 - Knowledge within the broker community
 - Financial incentive for office development. Something more effective than a CIP

Solution(s):

- pre-condition tenants with knowledge on VMC amenities, which in return will make them more aware
- leverage the technology section in the area to show the GTA the degree of industries present
- converting industrial area to urban growth centre
- communicate with millennials – the people who these companies want to employ
 - this can be done through a bottom-up approach, discussing and offering more than just a “job” in the VMC. What is the offer package that Vaughan offers?
- Awareness campaign of exceptional activities
- Emphasize on marketing the greenspace of the VMC to promote walkability. Integrate public infrastructure such as Wi-Fi technology which can then create a sense of community/ connectivity.
- Incentive program to overtake the current CIP program (look towards the IMIT Program with City of Toronto)
- DC deferrals to spruce development

18. What do you consider the 2-3 key priorities for inclusion in the action plan? (e.g. specific opportunities or programs that the City of Vaughan should be supporting)

Incentives

- create a better program than the current CIP program
- these incentives should be applied at the regional level and be more in line with what the City of Toronto is offering
- Public amenity space incentive (look to City of Vancouver)

Marketing Campaign

- used until a satisfactory level of commercial industrial presence is reached
- Social media is primary communication amongst millennials
- determine what party is best to release educational information via social media (municipality, 3rd party, etc...)



- must differentiate between corporate communication and marketing
- emphasize the great industries we have in Vaughan, such as our food or textile industry
- utilize Vaughan influencers
- commitment to the development of public assets - Must show proof in this to gain confidence of the public in the VMC



Appendix ii: Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study Phase I Report

(under separate cover)