

# VAUGHAN DESTINATION MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | SEPTEMBER 2021



TOURISM

vaughan

CBRE



mellor murray  
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AMPLIFY  
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



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Image: North Maple Regional Park

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# THE DESTINATION MASTER PLAN PROCESS

In the Fall of 2020, Tourism Vaughan retained CBRE Tourism & Leisure Group, in association with Mellor Murray Consulting and Amplify Communications (the “Consulting Team”), to create a 5-year Destination Master Plan for the City of Vaughan.

As the city already has many strong tourism players and partnerships in place, this Plan will leverage existing strengths, support future growth of tourism operators, and unlock the potential development for new tourism products and experiences. The Plan will also ensure Tourism Vaughan has a strong organizational foundation to guide both industry partners and municipal investment, in order to develop Vaughan as a premier destination over the next five years, with specific action items relative to visitor attraction, infrastructure, physical assets, and visitor experience programs and services.

The Consulting Team undertook an interactive strategic planning process with Tourism Vaughan and its partners to move forward with S.M.A.R.T. objectives in the short-term, (1-3 years), mid-term (3-5 years), and long-term (beyond 5 years), based on strong consultation and data analysis. This process involved the following four phases:

- **PHASE 1:** Environmental Scan – Destination Analysis
- **PHASE 2:** Vision and Focus
- **PHASE 3:** Strategy Development and Action Plan
- **PHASE 4:** Final Tourism Destination Master Plan and Presentations



The development of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan at this time is an opportunity to rebuild an industry that has been rocked by COVID-19. The City of Vaughan has an obligation to ensure that the MAT revenues are directed to initiatives that will rebuild the tourism industry with a focus on generating overnight visitors.



Image: Balzac's Coffee Roasters, Kleingburg Village



## TOURISM IN VAUGHAN

The city of Vaughan is the most southern municipality in the region of York, and it is bordered by the city of Toronto to the south, the town of King to the north, the city of Markham to the east, and the city of Brampton to the west. Vaughan, Markham, King, Whitchurch-Stouffville, among other towns together form the region of York, one of the five regions that make up the GTA.

Vaughan is home to Canada's Wonderland, Canada's largest theme park, and Vaughan Mills, and Vaughan Mills, one of Canada's largest indoor shopping complexes. Many internationally recognized corporations have located their head office in Vaughan, including Adidas Canada, Recipe Unlimited, and many others. Located just outside the south border of Vaughan in the north end of Toronto, is the main campus of York University, Canada's third-largest university by student body. Due to the many leisure attractions in Vaughan,

Food and Accommodation, and Retail services make up a large portion of the workforce; however, Vaughan has realized substantial economic expansion in recent years.

Vaughan's top tourism market is **VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES (VFR)**. This market is driven by friends and relatives travelling from outside of Vaughan to visit friends and relatives within Vaughan. With the strong family attraction assets (Canada's Wonderland, Vaughan Mills, Reptilia, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Toronto) located within Vaughan, this market is well positioned to continue driving tourism for the city.

**SPORT TOURISM** also plays a part in Vaughan's tourism market and has room to grow further. The city has a number of professional sports facilities and clubs for soccer, golf, tennis, football, hockey, gymnastics, and more. These facilities already host out-of-town visitors for tournaments

**TOURISM IS THE LARGEST SERVICE EXPORT IN CANADA. AS A REVENUE GENERATING INDUSTRY, TOURISM ACCOUNTS FOR 2% OF CANADA'S GDP, MORE THAN AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND FISHING AND HUNTING COMBINED.**





Image: Black Creek Pioneer Village

and sporting events, however there is room to expand Vaughan as a regional sport hub. In 2019, the city hosted 62 tournaments with an estimated 12,115 attendees. Furthermore, Vaughan offers visitors a number of cycling and hiking trails in addition to several conservation areas (Boyd Conservation Area, Kortright Centre for Conservation, North Maple Regional Park). Plans to expand North Maple Regional Park into a large outdoor sports complex are currently being considered, which would further aid in growing Vaughan's sport tourism.

**MEETINGS AND CONFERENCE** visitor demand includes corporate groups,

associations and SMERF (social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal) groups. While there is no shortage of mid-sized and unique event facilities, there is no large or central event facilities within the city, which limits the number of conferences and events that the city can currently host. A survey of Meeting Planners revealed that Vaughan had not occurred to over 40% of planners as a destination to host events, while 18% indicated that available venues were not large enough. With the addition of a Convention Centre in Vaughan, large conferences could be a huge benefit with significant economic spinoff for hotels, restaurants, etc., especially with the subway connection

to Toronto.

Vaughan has an emerging **CULTURAL TOURISM** market. According to the UNWTO, cultural tourism implies the following:

“A type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions”.

Vaughan's cultural tourism currently revolves around two key assets—the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and Black Creek Pioneer Village—and its large festivals and events such as the Vaughan International Film Festival, Vaughan Pizza Fest, 90s Nostalgia, Vaughan Latina Festival, and the Italian Contemporary Film Festival, which attract visitors to the city. In recent years, additional art installations have been incorporated throughout the city, such as in the Vaughan Metropolitan

Centre (VMC); however, while these do add to Vaughan's arts and culture, they do not draw out-of-town visitors to Vaughan. The city is currently undertaking studies for a Cultural Arts Centre at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, which could be a significant asset for Vaughan's cultural tourism.



Image: Ay Caramba Eh!

**THE CITY IS CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING STUDIES FOR A CULTURAL ARTS CENTRE AT THE VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE, WHICH COULD BE A SIGNIFICANT ASSET FOR VAUGHAN'S CULTURAL TOURISM.**





## 5 DESTINATION MASTER PLAN PILLARS

A wealth of excellent ideas was generated through the stakeholder consultation for the short-term, particularly around supporting businesses to re-open and providing unified messaging for the destination. Strong opportunities exist for operators to build upon the positive changes that were made in response to COVID-19 (i.e., expanding outdoor patios), but a plan is required to ensure changes remain sustainable. Helping to form partnerships, encouraging cross-promotion and engaging with operators were seen as key objectives for Tourism Vaughan. Developing product and experience clusters that match why people choose to visit Vaughan, and

then using these clusters to better inform product development and marketing efforts for Tourism Vaughan is also seen as a short-term initiative.

In the longer-term, Tourism Vaughan's efforts to work with the City to develop better transportation options for visitors and select appropriate tourism infrastructure projects (i.e., developing the cultural hub at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre). Making Vaughan an overnight destination— instead of just for day-trips—and building a strong identity as a tourist destination with a vibrant Downtown were also seen as core long-term planning goals.

Based on stakeholder consultation, the following 5 strategic priority clusters will have the most significant impact on Tourism Vaughan and the future growth of Vaughan's tourism sector. These priority pillars form the foundation Vaughan's Destination Master Plan:



**1. GOVERNANCE AND CITY POLICY FRAMEWORK**



**2. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**



**3. PARTNERSHIPS**



**4. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**



**5. RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS**

**MAKING VAUGHAN AN OVERNIGHT DESTINATION, WITH A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN, IS A LONG-TERM PLANNING GOAL.**



Image: Vaughan Mills



**TOURISM VAUGHAN'S  
ACTIONS CONTRIBUTE  
TO VAUGHAN'S  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
SOCIAL VITALITY,  
AND ITS OVERALL  
SUSTAINABILITY.**



## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

### VISION STATEMENT:

Vaughan is embraced as a premier overnight destination for leisure, sport and business visitors.

### MISSION STATEMENT:

To champion Vaughan as a premier tourism destination through product development, marketing and education, and strong collaboration with and support of operators.

### VALUES:

- **Evidence Based Decision Making:** Our actions are grounded in solid research and analysis.
- **Authenticity:** We reflect and honour the authentic experiences and culture of the people and places in Vaughan.
- **Collaboration / Partnership:** We foster and strengthen relationships with tourism stakeholders and visitors and build capacity in the tourism business community.
- **Effective Communication:** We communicate clearly, honestly and openly.
- **Regenerative Community and Economic Impact:** We contribute to the triple bottom line for the city of Vaughan.
- **Sustainability:** Our actions contribute to Vaughan's environmental and social vitality, and its overall sustainability.



# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOALS

Building on the Destination Master Plan Pillars and strategic priorities, the following Goals provide direction for the master plan, and represent an end-state that links to Tourism Vaughan's Vision.

PILLARS	GOALS
<b>Governance and City Policy Framework</b>	City policies and governance support the effective management of Tourism Vaughan in line with industry best practices.
<b>Product Development</b>	Product & experience clusters enhance visitation
<b>Partnerships</b>	Strong local, regional and provincial tourism partnerships
<b>Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	Prevalent awareness of Vaughan as a premier tourism destination
<b>Research &amp; Data Analysis</b>	Evidence-based decision making



Image: Vaughan Mills

**WE AIM TO CREATE STRONG LOCAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS FOR VAUGHAN.**

## OBJECTIVES

The following objectives will guide the Strategic Actions to reach those goals.

#	GOALS	OBJECTIVES
1	<b>City policies and governance support the effective management of Tourism Vaughan in line with industry best practices.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Tourism Vaughan's governance model is aligned with industry best practices and City's tourism-related policies support the city's growing tourism industry.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Product &amp; experience clusters enhance visitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on product &amp; experience clusters that will drive visitation in the short-term.</li> <li>Ensure Vaughan businesses have support for product &amp; experience building</li> <li>Focus product &amp; experience development initiatives on target markets that extend length of stay in the long-term.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Strong local, regional and provincial tourism partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local, regional and provincial stakeholders to grow and support the tourism industry.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Widespread awareness of Vaughan as a premier tourism destination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position Tourism Vaughan as a catalyst in creating a vibrant tourism industry.</li> <li>Generate awareness of Vaughan as a desirable tourism destination.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Evidence-based decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the foundation for evidence-based decision making through established performance benchmarks.</li> </ul>



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The specific actions that will move Tourism Vaughan forward toward its vision of Vaughan as a premier tourism destination are highlighted herein. Within each objective, the actions have been placed in priority order and may overlap in terms of timing.

### 1. GOVERNANCE & CITY POLICY PILLAR

#### Staff Resources

Tourism Vaughan Staff operate as part of the City of Vaughan Economic and Cultural Development Department. Tourism Vaughan consists of three staff: Executive Director/Manager of Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development (who reports to the Director of Economic and Cultural Development), Tourism Development Officer, and Tourism Development Coordinator (who is currently under a one-year contract). Also reporting to the Executive Director/Manager of Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development are two City staff with responsibilities for Vaughan Arts & Culture. The Manager of Tourism,

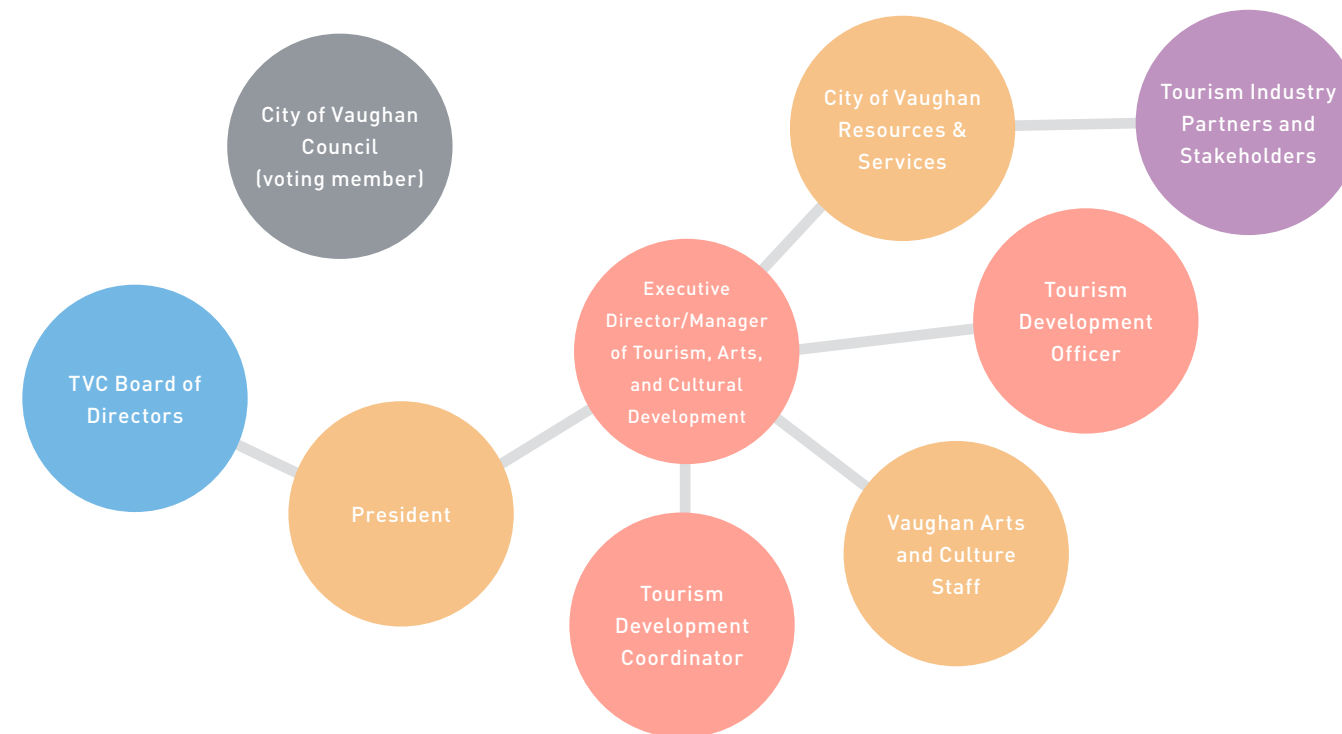
1-Destination NEXT 2021 Futures Study, Trend Ranking

Arts and Cultural Development is responsible for leading and managing staff, strategies and operations related to the operation, planning, delivery and evaluation of relevant programs/ services to support the department and the mandate of the Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development business unit. As the Manager of Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development, this position performs the duty of Executive Director of Tourism Vaughan. The City established the Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development business unit to extract economic value from the synergies of these two areas. Industry trends suggest that governments are approaching tourism from an integrated, multi-departmental perspective that is focused on economic development.<sup>1</sup>

The Manager/Executive Director is responsible for:

- overseeing the development and implementation of plans to attract and sustain tourism and business in

## TOURISM VAUGHAN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



the City of Vaughan in support of the strategic vision;

- managing the day-to-day operations of Tourism Vaughan and the implementation of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan (VDMP);
- overseeing the City's creative and cultural industries program; and
- encouraging the establishment, retention and expansion of new and existing businesses in tourism, creative and cultural industries.

Additional staffing resources will be required to deliver on the Destination Master Plan. It will be important that

there is a clear distinction between internally-focused arts and culture programming (for residents) and tourism-related arts and culture (attracting visitors). As such, CBRE recommends ensuring that the mandate of Tourism Vaughan is well understood, and staffing resources and budget are put in place to realize the successful implementation of the Destination Master Plan.

A typical DMO structure includes three complimentary functions: product development, marketing and communications, and market intelligence / research. Tourism organizations with





Image: Vaughan Mills

budgets similar to Tourism Vaughan’s would typically expect to have 5 tourism staff responsible for the three functional areas. The City’s arts and culture mandate is an additional functional area which should require a distinct staffing plan.

**Current Tourism Vaughan Board**

The Tourism Vaughan Board is currently comprised of 4 board members, including 1 Regional Councillor serving as Vice-Chair (currently Acting-Chair as the seat is vacant) and 3 staff: President (currently vacant), Treasurer (CFO) and Secretary (Clerk’s representative). The sole voting member of the Tourism Vaughan Board is Vaughan City Council.

The board members are all new to tourism, and will require initial training and ongoing orientation on the tourism industry and relevant practices of destination marketing organizations.

**TYPICAL DMO STRUCTURES INCLUDE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND MARKET RESEARCH.**

**Tourism-Related Policies, Procedures and Governance Model**

The City of Vaughan’s policies, procedures and governance model all play a role in Tourism Vaughan’s successful implementation of the Destination Master Plan.

Through the development of the Destination Master Plan, some key initiatives that would support greater tourism activity, social and economic benefit have been identified. They include a review of bylaws, policies, procedures that currently limit the duration and number of tourism-focused special events and restrictions to entertainment of restaurant patios. Addressing these and other issues with tourism operators will further support

the economic and social benefits of the tourism sector.

The Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) legislation established by the Province of Ontario was officially approved by the City of Vaughan in 2019 and provides Vaughan with funds earmarked to support tourism product and destination development.

**WE ARE AIMING FOR TOURISM VAUGHAN TO BECOME A LEADING DMO ORGANIZATION, THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING.**

**VAUGHAN’S CURRENT TOURISM ASSETS**





This Strategy outlines some key opportunities for Tourism Vaughan to make the best use of their share of the revenue generated by overnight visitors and collected through Vaughan’s 15 (previously 16) hotels and motels, but also provides suggestions for the City’s share for tourism-related infrastructure.

This strategic planning exercise also highlighted the importance of communication and alignment with the City on tourism related initiatives, as well as the need to educate City of Vaughan Council and staff on the tourism sector, industry best practices, economic impact and potential. For example, in the short-term, the City can ensure greater accountability to the tourism industry through the establishment of an Advisory Committee consisting of industry stakeholders with first-hand knowledge and expertise in the tourism sector. Including these industry leaders through a Tourism Advisory Committee reporting to the Board will provide a balance between Tourism Vaughan’s vision and oversight and industry

representation and experience. In the longer term, CBRE in consultation with the Project Advisory Group is recommending the integration of industry representatives onto the Tourism Vaughan Board, together with City of Vaughan Councillors. In order for Tourism Vaughan to become a leading DMO organization, best practices call for an adequate governance structure with the integration of different stakeholders operating in the destination under common goals, with a commitment to transparency, accountability and responsibility.

**TOURISM IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT IS AN ACTIVITY, BUT IT IS ALSO AN INDUSTRY AND AN IMPORTANT GROWTH DRIVER FOR A DESTINATION, ITS ECONOMY, AND ITS SOCIAL PROGRESS.**

<b>CITY POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE SUPPORT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM VAUGHAN IN LINE WITH INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES.</b>	
<b>GOAL # 1</b>	
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Ensure Tourism Vaughan’s governance model is aligned with industry best practices and City’s tourism-related policies support the city’s growing tourism industry.</b>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Tourism Vaughan’s organization structure to ensure budget and staff allocations align with recommended policies, Tourism Vaughan’s MAT obligations, and typical DMO roles &amp; responsibilities.</li> <li>2. Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee consisting of tourism operators and key stakeholders to provide the Tourism Vaughan Board and City of Vaughan Council with their first-hand knowledge and observations of tourism practices and trends (in conjunction with Goal 3, Objective 1, Strategic Action 1).</li> <li>3. Provide regular updates to Tourism Vaughan Board and City of Vaughan Council on the economic and social impact of tourism in Vaughan.</li> <li>4. Develop a tourism education and awareness plan for Tourism Vaughan Board members, other interested City of Vaughan Council members and key staff to facilitate evidence-based decisions.</li> <li>5. Develop an onboarding/orientation kit for Tourism Vaughan Board members and Advisory Committee members.</li> <li>6. Recommend tourism aligned infrastructure and program funding that would be candidates for the municipal portion of MAT spending with City of Vaughan’s Economic Culture Department.</li> <li>7. Summarize analysis of existing By-laws and policies related to tourism and making the case for changes to better support tourism businesses, including Fairs &amp; Festivals Support Program, Special Events by-law, and establishing criteria to define tourism related events, businesses and activities.</li> <li>8. Develop a Tourism Vaughan Board succession plan that introduces tourism industry representatives onto the Board as per industry best practices.</li> </ol>



## 2. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PILLAR

The need to develop and build product and experience clusters that match visitor demand has been a key theme during the Destination Master Plan process. Identifying product and experience clusters, creating inventories, and filling existing gaps are essential elements of product development that need to be completed before any further marketing efforts are undertaken.

One of the primary gaps identified during the Destination Analysis was the predominance of same-day visitation to the city and greater York Region, and the fact that over 50% of visitors come to visit friends and relatives, with a high proportion of demand coming from the GTA and other nearby Ontario locations. With respect to demographics, Vaughan's primary target markets are families, sport groups, and social event groups. With the added concerns around COVID-19 recovery in the short-term, it is important for Tourism Vaughan to drive product development

on the needs and wants of core markets that are willing and able to travel to Vaughan.

From an investment perspective, there is opportunity for Tourism Vaughan to work with the City's Parks Department on assessing the need for new wayfinding/signage infrastructure, along with other public sector initiatives in Vaughan's Cultural Arts Centre and the potential for additional recreational facility clusters.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR VAUGHAN TO ATTRACT ADDITIONAL OVERNIGHT MARKETS ARE MORE DEPENDENT ON HIGHER-BUDGET TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Opportunities for Vaughan to attract additional overnight markets, including social groups, sport groups from more distant locations and meeting/conventions delegates are more dependent on higher-budget tourism infrastructure initiatives with assistance from the public sector. Tourism Vaughan may consider undertaking third party assessments to more accurately determine Vaughan's need for more unique accommodations (e.g., boutique hotels) and attractions, and then implement a strategy to attract private sector developer interest in those developments.

Meanwhile, it will be imperative for Tourism Vaughan to continue to support the existing operators that form the foundation of Vaughan's tourism industry.

<b>GOAL # 2 PRODUCT &amp; EXPERIENCE CLUSTERS ENHANCE VISITATION</b>	
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Build on product &amp; experience clusters that will drive visitation in the short-term</b>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Vaughan's tourism asset inventory and categorize businesses under recommended Tourism Product / Experience Clusters.</li> <li>2. Continue to update the inventory with business closures, openings and expansions and advise operators.</li> <li>3. Review destination sentiment analysis and Environics Analytics data, and update Vaughan's market segmentation to reflect target markets for the short-term (i.e., families, drive-to markets within 40km).</li> <li>4. Undertake exercise to match product/experience clusters with key target markets, identifying differences between short-term and long-term potential.</li> <li>5. Through a transparent process, develop digital itineraries that match product short-term visitor and operator needs (i.e., focus on safety, same-day trips, nature &amp; outdoors experiences, local/regional markets, etc.)</li> <li>6. Participate in the wayfinding/signage infrastructure strategy that is currently being undertaken by Vaughan's Parks Department and others.</li> <li>7. Continue to work with the City to review their role in Vaughan's Cultural Arts Centre and its potential as a hub for community events.</li> </ol>



<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Ensure Vaughan businesses have support for product &amp; experience building</b>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Host an industry event to review results of the Vaughan Destination Master Plan with operators and other stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Identify operators looking to enhance their offerings and develop a plan to assist where possible.</li> <li>3. Work with operators to clearly define products &amp; experiences that meet the needs of short-term target markets, and what may be longer-term initiatives.</li> <li>4. Develop a plan to assist incoming tourism operators looking to start new businesses in Vaughan (short-term vs. long-term needs).</li> <li>5. Ensure local operators continually build product development related skills (i.e., host workshops on packaging, marketing and technology).</li> <li>6. Continually monitor changes in the marketplace and integrate new tourism product and experience trends and best practices.</li> <li>7. Continue to adapt tools and resources to support operators and grow visitation and tourism revenue in the community.</li> <li>8. Conduct regular visitor surveys and track product development/ experience development efforts, and incorporate results into marketing initiatives.</li> <li>9. Develop a Digital Tourism Product &amp; Experience Toolkit for businesses to enhance or develop new products and experiences in line with the core clusters.</li> <li>10. Continue to make tourism businesses aware of available resources through the Tourism Vaughan websites and relevant newsletters.</li> </ol>

<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Focus product &amp; experience development initiatives on target markets that extend length of stay in the long-term</b>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Through a transparent process, develop digital itineraries based on products &amp; experience clusters for key target markets that extend length of stay (i.e., culinary tourists, family adventures, sport tourism groups, meeting/conference delegates, etc.)</li> <li>2. Develop KPIs to track use of all itineraries and adjust itineraries accordingly on an annual basis (i.e., satisfaction surveys for both visitors and operators).</li> <li>3. Review the Infrastructure Investment Considerations of the subject Destination Master Plan process and build on tourism investment initiatives.</li> <li>4. Develop a long-term tourism investment attraction action plan to attract private sector for the development of boutique hotels and further attractions that fit Vaughan's product &amp; experience clusters (e.g., Sport village at North Maple Regional Park).</li> <li>5. Undertake a study to assess Vaughan's need for a Convention Centre.</li> <li>6. Work with the VMC Subcommittee to ensure tourism uses are considered in the development of public spaces within the VMC site.</li> </ol>



Image: Courtyard by Marriott Toronto Vaughan



### 3. PARTNERSHIPS PILLAR

While Tourism Vaughan will be the champion driving tourism from within the city, working with local stakeholders inside Vaughan as well as regional and provincial stakeholders will be vital to Tourism Vaughan's success. Tourism Vaughan and local stakeholders have a symbiotic relationship; each need the other to succeed in order to thrive. For example, without flourishing tourism businesses, Tourism Vaughan would not have products and experiences to promote. Furthermore, partnerships with organizations outside of Vaughan are also essential.

These partnerships include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Regional tourism stakeholders: Experience York Region
- Regional destination marketing organizations: Central Counties Tourism / RT06
- Provincial destination marketing organizations: Destination Ontario

- Provincial Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries

Many of these partnerships are already in place. By continuing to work alongside regional and provincial tourism organizations, Tourism Vaughan can multiply their efforts and gain access to additional resources and opportunities to support Vaughan's tourism industry.

**TOURISM VAUGHAN AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP; EACH NEED THE OTHER TO SUCCEED IN ORDER TO THRIVE.**

GOAL # 3 STRONG LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS	
Objective #1	Work with local, regional, and provincial stakeholders to grow and support the tourism industry
Strategic Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a formal Advisory Committee of tourism operators and stakeholders to provide a regular feedback loop for Tourism Vaughan, provide recommendations to the Tourism Vaughan Board, deepen local industry connections, receive updates from Tourism Vaughan and stakeholders, and access training and other industry resources. (In conjunction with Goal 1, Objective 1, Strategic Action 2).</li> <li>2. Host an annual or biennial tourism summit to inform local and regional stakeholders of the Destination Master Plan and engage them in its implementation.</li> <li>3. Continue to foster strong relationships with Experience York Region, Central Counties Tourism, Destination Ontario, and other industry associations and organizations in order to promote Vaughan and access available external resources and marketing/promotion opportunities.</li> <li>4. Encourage tourism operators to submit information about tourism related offerings, events and experiences for inclusion in Tourism Vaughan's product development and marketing initiatives.</li> <li>5. Host workshops for local tourism operators to support their product development, website and digital media strategies. (In conjunction with Goal 2, Objective 2, Strategic Action 5).</li> <li>6. Seek opportunities to leverage regional and provincial tourism initiatives aligned with Tourism Vaughan's strategies.</li> <li>7. Continue to support Vaughan's group event business by building and maintaining relationships with regional, provincial and national event planners and associations (both sport and business).</li> <li>8. Build on successful partnership initiatives to extend length of stay for leisure groups in Vaughan (i.e., international tours coming to the McMichael Art Collection).</li> </ol>



## 4. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS PILLAR

Tourism Vaughan has an exciting new brand that needs to get out there and be seen, recognized, supported, and celebrated by their strategic partners, stakeholders, residents, and visitors. It will be important for Tourism Vaughan to ensure the brand positioning aligns with the newly developed Vision, Mission and Values.

The brand positioning initiative should build on Vaughan’s product & experience clusters, and should involve developing value propositions for each target market when Tourism Vaughan defines:

- What product or service Tourism Vaughan is offering/selling to each

individual target market

- What the individual target market is buying or truly values
- Why the individual target market believes in Tourism Vaughan
- What the individual target market audience has a fundamental need for from Tourism Vaughan

Tourism Vaughan will develop a brand strategy and key factors influencing the brand development that reflect the Vision, Mission, Values and Pillars of the Destination Marketing Plan. A brand, like a person, is uniquely individual, projecting a distinctive look, core beliefs and its own personality. Tourism Vaughan will need to continue to build an authentic brand that clearly

**TOURISM VAUGHAN  
MUST CONTINUE TO  
BUILD AN AUTHENTIC  
BRAND THAT CLEARLY  
COMMUNICATES ITS  
REASON FOR BEING.**



communicates its reason for being, what it aspires to be, who it needs to speak to and why.

In addition to digital, social and content marketing, and brand positioning, it will be important for Tourism Vaughan to clearly communicate and to build awareness of the importance of tourism to the city. This awareness needs to cover two key stakeholder groups – those external to Vaughan (i.e. visitors, regional and provincial industry organizations, etc.) and those internal to Vaughan (i.e., residents, operators, City of Vaughan staff and Council). Messaging for external stakeholder groups needs to be focused on all the benefits of Vaughan as a premier tourism destination, while messaging for internal stakeholders should be geared towards the importance of tourism as an economic generator and place-making benefits.

GOAL # 4 WIDESPREAD AWARENESS OF VAUGHAN AS A PREMIER TOURISM DESTINATION	
Objective #1	Generate awareness of Vaughan as a desirable tourism destination
Strategic Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy and Plan that further develops the tourism brand to attract new tourism businesses and visitors to Vaughan.</li> <li>2. Build on product &amp; experience development initiatives in the short-term, including product/market match and digital itinerary development.</li> <li>3. Develop value proposition specific to each target market in conjunction with the product/market match initiative.</li> <li>4. Identify and profile specific experiences or businesses that are emblematic of the “Vaughan” tourism experience.</li> <li>5. Through a transparent process, create and promote itineraries that exemplify best of “Vaughan” experiences.</li> <li>6. Create marketing campaigns to specifically target visitors during the current COVID recovery period.</li> </ol>



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Develop materials and messages that operators can incorporate into their marketing efforts in the short-term.</li> <li>8. Develop messaging that capitalizes on Vaughan’s strengths and differentiators (i.e. multicultural events, etc.)</li> <li>9. Create marketing campaign to increase longer stays directly to identified target markets (i.e., culinary tourists, family adventures, sport tourism groups, meetings &amp; conference delegates).</li> <li>10. Create marketing campaigns to directly attract new tourism operators in the product/experience clusters identified.</li> <li>11. Continue to develop a strong, cohesive brand for Tourism Vaughan.</li> </ol>
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Communicate the value proposition of Vaughan’s tourism industry to internal stakeholders (i.e., residents, operators and City staff and Council)</b>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create awareness of tourism as a strong, economic driver for the City of Vaughan.</li> <li>2. Provide regular communication on the initiatives and achievements of Tourism Vaughan to internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Continue to regularly communicate with operators relative to tourism industry achievements, policy updates, and business changes (i.e., openings, closures and expansions).</li> <li>4. Continue to communicate with operators about available resources through existing communication channels (i.e., Visit Vaughan website, newsletters, etc.)</li> </ol>

**TOURISM VAUGHAN  
HAS AN EXCITING  
NEW BRAND THAT  
NEEDS TO BE SEEN,  
RECOGNIZED,  
SUPPORTED, AND  
CELEBRATED BY THEIR  
STRATEGIC PARTNERS,  
STAKEHOLDERS,  
RESIDENTS, AND  
VISITORS.**



## 5. RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS PILLAR

One of the primary gaps identified during the Destination Analysis process was current limitations with access to research and data analytics, making it difficult for Tourism Vaughan to measure and monitor the performance of Vaughan as a destination.

Tracking and reporting on performance will be a critical component to measuring the effectiveness of the Destination Master Plan. Both Tourism Vaughan and operators will need to have access to timely market research, analytics and insights to:

- Monitor and measure the performance of the industry;
- Better identify and understand target markets;
- Identify tourism and business travel opportunities;
- Make evidence-based business decisions on product/experience initiatives, the use of the Tourism Vaughan portion of the MAT,

marketing initiatives, etc. based on sound research; and

- Accurately measure the economic value of the tourism sector to the City of Vaughan.

Evidence-based decision making will form a feedback loop by providing the baseline data for Tourism Vaughan to inform strategic actions, measure the outcomes, and make any necessary adjustments based on the results. As such, the need for Research and Data Analysis to support the Plan should be viewed as an iterative and interactive process.

**EVIDENCE-BASED  
DECISION MAKING  
WILL FORM A  
FEEDBACK LOOP,  
GIVING BASELINE  
DATA FOR TOURISM  
VAUGHAN TO INFORM  
STRATEGIC ACTIONS.**

For example, destination sentiment research and trends will inform the development of product and experience clusters matched to target markets, and established KPIs will measure the outcome of the initiatives implemented.

By developing and implementing a robust research plan, Tourism Vaughan

will provide a strong foundation to inform its current business planning process and guide future planning, including: product/experience strategy, governance policies, infrastructure requirements, marketing strategy, timing and performance.

GOAL # 5 EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING	
<b>Objective #1</b>	Provide the foundation for evidence-based decision making
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to partner with Central Counties Tourism on the following data research initiatives, including: Event Survey Program, Visitor Research Program, and Geofencing Research Tool and use data to support new City/MAT event funding, product development and marketing initiatives.</li> <li>2. Continue to measure the impact of any major conventions, signature tourism and sports events utilizing industry-recognized models, such as Ontario's TREIM and STEAM and room nights generated in Vaughan.</li> <li>3. Continue to maintain an online database of venues, activities, and suppliers available to meeting planners, tour operators, teams and spectators visiting Vaughan for a meeting/conference, tour or tournament.</li> <li>4. Continue to source and provide industry partners with links to third party tourism research through Destination Canada, Destination Ontario, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism &amp; Culture Industries – i.e., sentiment research, trends, regional tourism profiles, best practices, etc.</li> </ol>



**BY DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A ROBUST RESEARCH PLAN, TOURISM VAUGHAN WILL PROVIDE A STRONG FOUNDATION TO INFORM ITS CURRENT BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS AND GUIDE FUTURE PLANNING.**

5. Continue to track monthly hotel performance statistics for Vaughan (occupancy, ADR and RevPAR) as a measure of overnight volumes and potential MAT revenues to fund tactics of Tourism Vaughan's annual Business Plan.
6. Annually survey participating hotels on market segmentation, as a gauge of overnight corporate, leisure, sport and meeting volumes within Vaughan.
7. Consider implementing annual visitor surveys to profile visitor origin, visitor type, purpose of trip, party size, length of stay, type of overnight accommodation, attractions visited, activities and satisfaction with products/experiences, trip planning resources, etc. to incorporate into marketing initiatives and product/experience itineraries, etc.
8. Undertake an annual survey with tourism operators to understand what is working and what is not – as an extension of the Business Satisfaction and Needs Survey on Vaughan firms.
9. Develop a robust analytics dashboard customized to destination master plan pillar initiatives with Economic and Cultural Development department (i.e., # of product development initiatives, referrals to operators, content engagement, trends and general insights.)

**VAUGHAN'S OVERNIGHT TOURISM WILL BE DRIVEN BY:**



## APPENDIX A – RELATED CITY INITIATIVES

### 1. CULTURAL ARTS CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

In 2018, the City of Vaughan commissioned the firms of Hariri Pontarini Architects, AMS Planning and Research, and FDA to conduct a Feasibility Study for a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The study assessed market demand, community need supported by extensive engagement, best-practices, development concepts, management and operating models, and financial analysis. The Study has its roots in the objectives established under the VMC Secondary Plan. It articulates, in order to reinforce the VMC and the City's identity, the Secondary Plan anticipates one or more major civic facilities, including a landmark cultural facility.

### 2. BLACK CREEK RENEWAL PROJECT

The City of Vaughan previously completed the Black Creek Storm Water Optimization Study Master Plan Class Environmental Assessment (EA). The study identified a range of alternative

solutions to reduce flooding and flood damages, improve water quality and limit stream bank erosion in Black Creek. The preferred solution to address flooding was determined to be the reconstruction and renewal of Black Creek between the Edgeley Pond (north of Highway 7) and Highway 407.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Black Creek Renewal Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study will consider different potential alignments and physical forms for Black Creek within the study area and establish a plan for the renewal of Black Creek that will be compatible with the proposed land uses within the study area.

### 3. NORTH MAPLE REGIONAL PARK

In April 2018, Council endorsed the vision for the 900-acre NMRP to create a nationally significant public sports, recreation and cultural venue as a legacy project for Vaughan residents and visitors. In September 2018, Phase 1A

park development (artificial turf fields, driveway, parking and pathways) was completed and the park officially opened for use. Phase 1B park development (washrooms, changerooms, shade shelters and event preparations) was completed in 2019 with the first Canada Day event held at NMRP on July 1, 2019 with over 18,000 visitors attending. In April 2020, Council authorized staff to initiate procurement for Phase 2 development and report back with an update on the results of the first RFP process to secure a technical advisor and consultant team.

Advancing the 900-acre vision for NMRP is a Term of Council priority project.

With completion of Phase 1, NMRP has become a popular destination for Vaughan residents and visitors with many eagerly awaiting the start of Phase 2 park development.

### 4. EVENTS STRATEGY

An Events Strategy & Implementation Plan that will guide the City's role for events and festivals and align financial and staff resources with the identified priorities, mission, objectives and the interests of the Vaughan community.

### 5. VMC PARKS AND WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) is Vaughan's emerging downtown. The

City is undertaking the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan to guide the timely development of parks and open space in the VMC and create a world-class public realm. It includes the creation of a signage strategy to make it easier to navigate this area. The study presents a rare opportunity to think boldly about the city, the way people understand and move through it, and the role of parks and open space in modern urban life.

### 6. VMC SUPER TRAIL WAYFINDING STRATEGY

Produce a signage and information system for the Vaughan Super Trail (a 100km City wide loop) that is consistent, accessible and predictable. It is an opportunity to reduce visual clutter in parks, and encourage the use and discovery of parks and ravines by residents and visitors.

### 7. VMC TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

With more people living, working and travelling through the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) – Vaughan's downtown – the City of Vaughan recognizes that the existing VMC Transportation Plan needs to be updated. The revised master plan will confirm community transportation needs and support a strategy that focuses on street connectivity, accessibility and



support for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and vehicles well into 2041.

## 8. VMC SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), the City's downtown, is transforming into a transit-oriented community with unique residential, office and mixed-use areas linked by a network of parks, public squares, open spaces and a street grid that allows for all types of transportation, including walking, driving and cycling. Due to rapid growth in the VMC and recent changes to municipal and regional legislation, the City initiated an update to the existing VMC Secondary Plan last fall. A secondary plan defines all the elements needed for successful growth, including new roads, bike paths and pedestrian walkways, new open spaces and parks, policies to establish land uses, height and density permissions, and key infrastructure requirements, such as what elements need to be added to the VMC and where.

## 9. 2018-2022 TERM OF COUNCIL SERVICE EXCELLENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan serves as a map to guide the City through the next four years.

Each four-year Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan incrementally contributes toward the achievement of the Vaughan Vision. This plan builds off the 2014-2018 plan, continuing the alignment of people, priorities, processes and technology. It outlines Vaughan's Vision, Mission and Values and identifies the strategic key activities that staff will focus on to enable the execution and implementation of projects related to Council's commitments to the citizens of Vaughan.

## 10. VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN 2010

The City of Vaughan undertook an ambitious three-year project to create a new Official Plan as part of the City's integrated Growth Management Strategy. On September 7, 2010, Council adopted a new Official Plan, it addresses all

elements of effective, sustainable and successful city-building, while managing projected growth to 2031.

## 11. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

In 2017, the City of Vaughan began a study to update the 2007 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The 2017 plan was progressive for its time, setting the City on a path to become a more walkable and bikeable community. It was the first active transportation focused master plan in York Region and one of only a few in the Province. The original plan was visionary, long-term and included a wide range of innovative recommendations. However, the implementation of the plan faced challenges and updates were required. The updates were focused on:

1. Building community and internal understanding and support
2. Understanding community priorities while also updating technical content to reflect current state practice

The updated plan is evolutionary, building on the original plan, the 2010 Vaughan Official Plan and the 2012 Transportation Master Plan, creating a path forward that is flexible, medium-term and focused on community needs.

## 12. YONGE NORTH SUBWAY EXTENSION

The Yonge North Subway Extension will transform the commute in York Region, North York and beyond by extending the TTC's Line 1 service north from Finch Station to Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill. The latest plans propose four stations along an extension of roughly 8 kilometres.

## 13. SMART CITY

With the population expected to surpass 400,000 in the next 10 years, Vaughan has identified Smart City as a strategic priority in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan. The City has established a Smart City business unit and a Smart City Task Force to develop a strategic roadmap for smart city initiatives and to advance a culture of knowledge and pursue continuous improvement. For more information, visit [vaughan.ca/SmartCity](http://vaughan.ca/SmartCity).

## 14. VAUGHAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Vaughan is a dynamic city and is growing quickly. This means people will need more options to travel from one place to another. To meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, the City of Vaughan is working to develop a new Vaughan Transportation Plan. The City's first plan was completed in 2012 and since then, so much has changed with

respect to traffic and transportation.

The new plan will take a 20-year outlook to identify and highlight projects that will help meet transportation needs as Vaughan grows. This will include innovative, accessible and functional options that will guide change and support transit investments. To achieve this vision, the study is seeking input from residents, businesses and experts, who, together, will develop the future of transportation in Vaughan.

### **15. VAUGHAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2010**

The Economic Development Strategy is the starting point of a process that will provide the catalyst for economic transformation until 2021, and yield long-term prosperity for the community. It's a powerful statement of purpose — setting out bold action steps that will require the participation of the business community, institutions and citizens. While there have been significant successes in the past, the challenging realities of today's economy call for new directions, new ideas and new approaches to enhancing economic growth.

### **16. KLEINBURG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

To address Kleinburg's economic challenges, the City of Vaughan undertook and completed an area-focused Kleinburg Economic Development Strategy (KEDS) intending to create a vision and guidelines for the long-term economic revitalization of the Kleinburg downtown and commercial core area.

### **17. PROMENADE CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN**

The City has started developing a secondary plan study for the Promenade Mall and surrounding area — known as the Promenade Centre. The study will establish a vision, key principles and a complete land-use plan to guide the future evolution and development.

### **18. VAUGHAN MILLS CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN**

The Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan will provide a planning framework for an important intensification area in the City of Vaughan. Vaughan Mills Centre is subject to development applications that propose primarily mixed use developments with heights

and densities generally higher than what is provided for along Primary Intensification Corridors.

### **19. KLEINBURG PARKING STRATEGY**

The City of Vaughan is working to develop a parking management strategy that will help address parking needs in the Kleinburg Village. Kleinburg is one of Vaughan's premier commercial neighbourhoods with a charming residential community at its core and a rich and varied history. It is also a destination for thousands of visitors. Limited public parking is recognized as a significant challenge.

### **20. GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN**

Green Directions Vaughan is the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan. The plan establishes the principles of sustainability to achieve a healthy natural environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

### **21. CONCORD/GO CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN**

The Secondary Plan will provide a master plan for a critical intensification area in the City of Vaughan related to the Concord/GO Station, the VIVA Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit Line and the 407 Highway Transitway.

### **22. CITY WIDE PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAM**

The City-Wide Public Art Program is the first of its kind for Vaughan and is intended to establish a vision and framework to maximize opportunities for public art

for decades to come. The first phase of the Public Art Program includes a 5-year implementation plan, to be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis.

### **23. VMC CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK**

To achieve objectives identified in the Official Plan, VMC Secondary Plan, Creative Together Cultural Plan and the Economic Development Strategy, the VMC Cultural Framework Plan will explore the potential development of creative industries, cultural hubs, arts and programming in the City's new downtown. The Cultural Framework Plan will foster creativity and innovation in shaping an authentic downtown for Vaughan that builds a sense of pride for the City and its people.



## APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY OF INDUSTRY TERMS

### TOURISM

According to Statistics Canada, tourism is defined as: “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.”<sup>2</sup> It includes travel for business, leisure and other personal reasons, such as visiting friends and relatives, religious purposes, or medical treatment. The term “usual environment” is defined as the place where an individual lives and works, or studies, and includes any other places frequented. Canada has defined the concept of “outside the usual environment” as greater than 80 kilometres one way from home. Crossing an international or provincial border, is considered tourism no matter the distance travelled.

### TOURIST/VISITOR

In Canada, the term “tourist” is used to denote all visitors, whether they are same-day or overnight visitors. As such, the two are used interchangeably in this Strategy. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that residents can also benefit from tourism offerings, with some Vaughan operators actively promoting local experiences (i.e. “staycations”).

### TOURISM ASSET/PRODUCT

According to the UNWTO, a Tourism product is “a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers.

## COMMUNITY VS. TOURISM EVENTS

The term “event” is used to describe a wide range of activities. Events vary from local community-based events (e.g. Folk Festivals) to major events (e.g. The Olympics). Events help to capture attention and promote attractions and infrastructure in smaller communities. Community events and festivals can attract tourists and visitors at regional, provincial, national and international levels, but need to be promoted beyond the community in order to do so. A “tourism” event is an event that brings people from outside their usual environment to a place. The following list distinguishing events that typically draw tourism demand and revenue sources:

EVENT TYPE	TIME FRAME	TOURIST DEMAND	VALUE	EXAMPLE
<b>Mega Events</b>	Occasional	High	High	Olympics Pan American Games
<b>Hallmark Events</b>	Recurring	High	High	Mardi Gras, New Orleans Calgary Stampede Oktoberfest, Munich
<b>Regional Tourism Events</b>	Recurring & One-Time	Medium	Medium	Regional Sport Tournament Large Music Festivals
<b>Local Events</b>	Occasional	Low	Low	Local celebrations (Canada Day) Barbeques Local Fairs

### TOURISM-RELATED EXPERIENCE

A tourism-related experience is a set of activities in which individuals engage in while travelling for tourism purposes. Each tourist builds his or her own tourism-related experiences that satisfy a wide range of needs and interests, from pleasure to a search for meaning. A tourism-related experience

typically involves events, activities and interactions that people engage in outside their permanent residence with organizations, environments, and other people, that enable them to create, develop and enjoy personal narrative and memories.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>-Statistics Canada, Canadian Tourism Satellite Account – Appendix A: Concepts and Definitions, Source: D. Getz, 1997, 2005, 2008

<sup>3</sup>-IGI-Global, “Experience Economy Domains in Tourism: Extending the Knowledge and Understanding of Experiences”

## DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (DMO) ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A destination marketing organization (DMO) focuses on promoting a destination, in order to make it more attractive to tourists, businesses and other potential travellers. A DMO may use a wide range of marketing techniques, including display advertising, content marketing, social media promotion, offline advertising and experiential marketing, for the benefit of attracting visitors to the destination that it represents.

According to Destination Analysts 2020 Survey of Tourism/Destination Marketing Organizations, "The Future of Tourism Funding: DMO Data & Perspectives," Canadian DMOs are most commonly funded by partnerships/ sponsorships (85.7%), membership fees (71.4%), city/municipal (57.1%) or provincial (35.7%) government funding, and Municipal Accommodations Tax (42.9%). Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Canadian organizations reported an expected 2020 annual budget of

\$7.7 million CAD and 26.6 employees on average.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, pre-COVID, the average Canadian DMO was responsible for approximately 8.2 functions, and those with budgets under \$5 million were more likely to be responsible for economic development and bids to bring in sports, cultural and other public events, as compared to DMOs with larger budgets. In terms of staffing for DMOs with a budget below \$5 million, the average staff level was of 13.6 full-time equivalents (FTEs) pre-COVID. This suggests that a DMO with a mid-range budget of \$2 million would have an average staffing complement of at least 5 FTEs. Over 90% of Canadian DMOs that are reviewing their primary functions are looking to increase their role in destination management in the future.

Industry governance best practices show that DMO boards that include a mix of sector-level representation and experience that reflect the destination's growing tourism industry. In addition to key tourism industry representation,

these governance models also include both the political and senior staff levels as the most effective way for the board to be accountable to the residents, visitors, and businesses of the destination.

## MAT SPENDING

Tourism Vaughan is funded through the collection of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). The City approved a four percent MAT on 16 hotels and motels effective April 1, 2019. A proposed amendment to expand the MAT to home-sharing platforms was delayed due to COVID-19.

Tourism Vaughan receives 50% of the MAT to promote Vaughan's transient accommodation and tourism industry. As outlined on the City of Vaughan website "Revenue from MAT will be used for marketing the tourism experience in this growing and thriving municipality. Working with Tourism Vaughan Corporation, Vaughan accommodation providers will offer valuable advice on how to enhance and attract tourism to the city."

The City has indicated the MAT revenue will enhance visitor and resident experience while in the City, and may include wayfinding and beautification, infrastructure improvements and communications." It also notes that

"Vaughan must focus on its business development efforts to capture and increase overnight visits and provide memorable and authentic experiences to all people as a destination of choice."

Potential opportunities for use of the City's share of MAT revenue include, but are not limited to: evaluation and implementation of a wayfinding/signage strategy, development of infrastructure for event space on Vaughan's portion of Black Creek Pioneer Village, beautification and activation of the VMC / Transit City area, encouraging Parks & Recreation Division staff to activate sport tourism programming and events at related venues (e.g., North Maple Regional Park, etc.)



Image: Giro D'Italia Ristorante

<sup>4</sup>-Destination Analysts, "The Future of Tourism Funding: DMO Data & Perspectives," (August 2020).



## OUR VISION

Vaughan is embraced as a premier overnight destination for leisure, sport and business visitors.

## OUR MISSION

To champion Vaughan as a premier tourism destination through product development, marketing and education, and strong collaboration with and support of operators.

