

3.0 > OBJECTIVES

In keeping with the vision and principles for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, this Secondary Plan shall seek to achieve the following primary objectives. The elements and policies in subsequent sections of the plan articulate how these objectives are intended to be satisfied.

A DOWNTOWN

3.1 Establish a distinct downtown for Vaughan by 2031 containing a mix of uses, civic attractions and a critical mass of people.

The creation of a downtown in the VMC will require the cooperation and coordinated actions of many parties, including the City of Vaughan, York Region, transit authorities, other public bodies, and private landowners and developers. This plan is intended to result in orderly, rational development that achieves the critical mass of a downtown. To establish the built fabric, open space amenities and high population density befitting a downtown for a city the size of Vaughan, by 2031, it will be critical to concentrate development around the defined centre of the downtown.

The future subway station at Highway 7 and Millway Avenue, together with the planned civic space adjacent to the station entrance, will be the geographic centre of the downtown. High density employment and residential uses, and new retail and entertainment establishments, will be strongly encouraged in the area within a 5-minute walk of the station. Furthermore, this area will also be a focus for public infrastructure and public realm improvements intended to attract and support private development. The density and built form policies of the plan reinforce this area as the core of downtown. These policies also recognize that high density development is appropriate in other areas of the VMC and that the downtown will continue to grow and evolve well beyond 2031.

Successful downtowns have a strong identity, sense of place and civic attractions. To these ends, it is an objective of this plan to establish civic uses and spaces in the VMC that serve residents from across the city and to realize a high quality of development and public realm initiatives. To reinforce the VMC's and the city's identity, the plan anticipates one or more major civic facilities, including a landmark cultural facility.

To achieve the critical mass of a downtown and meet the density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare established in the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, a population of approximately 17,000 residents and 6,500 jobs by 2031 are planned for the Urban Growth Centre within the VMC, as identified in Schedule A. The population target for the larger VMC area, including the Urban Growth Centre, is 25,000 residents and 11,500 jobs by 2031.

see Sections
4 - 8 for
supporting
policies

**GROWTH
TARGETS**
refer to
schedule A

NEIGHBOURHOODS

3.2 Establish complete neighbourhoods containing a variety of housing.

Residential neighbourhoods play an important role in the vibrancy of a downtown by augmenting the population in the core. It is an objective of this plan to establish distinct, transit-oriented neighbourhoods providing a range of housing forms intended to attract a variety of household types at varying income levels. While condominium and rental apartments will be the dominant unit type, each neighbourhood shall contain a significant proportion of grade-related housing, principally townhouses. To accommodate households with children, a significant proportion of all housing units should be designed to accommodate families, and, in keeping with York Region's target, a minimum of 35% of housing units will satisfy the definition of affordable.

To be attractive and complete, neighbourhoods should contain substantial parkland and have easy access to a full range of community amenities supported by the population, including schools, daycare facilities, a library, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and basic commercial amenities.

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

3.3 Attract and accommodate a variety of employment uses.

In time, the VMC should fulfill the role of a central business district containing a range of employment types, including corporate and government offices, retail and services, and businesses of all sizes. Offices for departments of the Federal, Provincial, Regional and municipal governments will be encouraged to locate in the VMC. To ensure housing is complemented by employment uses, office space should be included in initial phases of intensification. The industrial and highway surroundings also create the opportunity to accommodate a mix of innovative businesses with varying space requirements.

see Sections
6 - 8 for
supporting
policies

see Section
8 for
supporting
policies

see Section 8 for supporting policies

UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE PRESENCE

3.4 Attract a major institution of higher learning.

The presence of a university, college or other institution of higher learning can be extremely beneficial to the vitality and sustainability of a downtown. The innovation, creativity and youthfulness captured by an institution, and the resulting economic spin-offs, give a downtown a competitive and cultural advantage. The plan can accommodate a significant educational institution in the VMC and anticipates that the City, in partnership with others, will seek to attract one.

HIGH TRANSIT USAGE

3.5 Optimize existing and planned investments in rapid transit.

The extension of the Spadina Subway Line and the VIVA rapid transit system, complemented by the Region's bus network, make the creation of a high-density downtown possible. If the VMC is to realize its full potential, transit and walking will need to be the preferred modes of daily travel for most people living and working there. Development densities within short walking distances from VIVA stations should be high, and at the subway station, where two rapid transit lines will intersect and many bus routes will terminate, densities should be highest. Transit facilities should be inviting, comfortable and integrated as seamlessly as possible with development and the overall network of streets and open spaces.

see Sections 4 and 8 for supporting policies

GRID OF STREETS

3.6 Establish a hierarchical, fine-grain grid network of streets and pathways linked rationally to the larger road system.

The role of streets in the success of a downtown cannot be underestimated. They not only facilitate movement by walking, cycling, transit, car and truck; they also provide valuable frontage for development and the setting for the range of activities that define a downtown. A fine-grain grid of streets in the VMC will be fundamental to encouraging walking, which in turn promotes transit use.

A hierarchy of interconnected arterial, collector and local streets will disperse traffic and help ensure it moves to, through and around the VMC without having an adverse impact on land uses. Trucks and other vehicles moving through the VMC should have alternatives to Highway 7 and Jane Street. Road linkages to Highway 400 should encourage the use of Portage Parkway for through movements.

Over time, Highway 7 should become an urbanized avenue that balances the movement of transit vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and cars—a beautiful, green street framed by commercial, residential and mixed use buildings. Millway Avenue should be a special street—the VMC’s principal north-south civic spine and central retail street. All streets in the VMC should be designed to be safe, attractive and pedestrian-friendly.

see Section
4 for
supporting
policies

see Section 6 for supporting policies

GENEROUS OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

3.7 Develop a generous and remarkable open space system.

A diversity of open spaces will be just as important as vibrant streets and beautiful buildings in defining and distinguishing the VMC and ensuring it is attractive and livable. These spaces should include civic gathering places, neighbourhood parks, naturalized spaces, public squares and private amenity spaces. A linked system of parks along Millway Avenue will provide the setting for civic events, public art and commercial activity. Black Creek should form a central open space corridor and be enhanced as a natural feature. Everyone who lives in the VMC should be within a 5-minute walk of a park. Squares, gardens and other smaller open spaces should provide intimate spaces for passive enjoyment. Parks and open spaces should be accessible by people of all ages and abilities.

NATURAL FEATURES

3.8 Make natural features and functions a prominent part of development.

Cities exist within nature, and nature should be prominent within cities. As the VMC becomes more dense and urban with development, natural features, systems and functions should become more apparent. Stormwater features should be heavily vegetated and water courses should be visible and accessible. Trees, so essential to the health, comfort and beauty of urban places, should line both sides of every street and be clustered in parks and other open spaces.

GREEN DEVELOPMENT

3.9 Ensure development incorporates green infrastructure and green building technologies.

Building cities for energy efficiency and to help reduce impacts on climate change is the right thing to do both environmentally and economically. Cities at the leading edge of green policies, practices and development attract people and investments. To distinguish itself and reduce operating and maintenance costs, the VMC should become a showcase for sustainable development. Individual buildings, sites, precincts and the entire VMC should employ high-efficiency, low-impact systems for energy, water and waste. District energy should provide economic and environmental benefits to all participating users.

see Sections 5 - 6 for supporting policies

see Section 5 for supporting policies

DESIGN EXCELLENCE

3.10 Ensure all development exhibits a high quality of urbanity, materials and design.

The most interesting and attractive downtowns contain a variety of building types and architecture. They are the place for a city's finest buildings, and the overall quality of the built environment should be outstanding. First and foremost, development in the VMC should be urban: buildings should frame and address streets and open spaces; streets should encourage walking and social interaction; public open spaces should be accessible and inviting. Buildings, streets and open spaces should be designed and built for permanence and elegance. Public art should be integrated into the planning and design of infrastructure and public spaces.

see Sections
4 and 6 - 8
for supporting
policies