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COMMUNITY SERVICES, CULTURAL FACILITIES AND PUBLIC ART

The policies of this section build upon those in Section 7 and 9.1.1 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan.

Community services, such as schools, libraries, community centres, places of worship, social services and emergency services, are not expected to be included in the initial phases of downtown development in the VMC. However, it is critical to identify appropriate locations for such uses and ensure that when they are needed they are incorporated appropriately. Cultural facilities, on the other hand, may be developed as a catalyst for broader development and to establish an identity and civic role for the VMC.

The policies in this section support the objectives set out in Section 3, specifically Objectives 3.1 and 3.2. The further intent of the policies in this section is to:

- Create future residential neighbourhoods that are adequately served by schools, libraries, recreational facilities and emergency services.
- Assist public agencies, non-governmental organizations and other institutions responsible for community and social services to secure suitable sites and spaces for their facilities if and when required.
- Encourage the integration of spaces for community services and amenities with other uses in mixed-use buildings.
- Design institutional uses that contribute to the efficient use of land, complement planned neighbourhoods and support the urban design objectives for the VMC.
- Encourage the establishment of a major institution of higher learning in the VMC.
- Encourage the development of one or more major cultural facilities in the VMC.
- Ensure public art has a prominent role in the VMC's streetscapes and open spaces and contributes positively to its overall identity.

7.1 General Policies

7.1.1 The appropriate timing for most community services will be dependent on the pace and nature of development within the VMC. The City shall regularly monitor development trends and social conditions in the VMC. As population thresholds for major community facilities, including schools, community recreation centres and emergency services, are approached, the City shall work with the Region of York, the School Boards and other public agencies to assess the need for community facilities and determine or confirm the appropriate location(s), form and program for required facilities. In the case of City services, at the appropriate time, the City shall secure the land or space for required facilities through dedication, purchase, lease, expropriation or other arrangements with affected landowners.

7.1.2 An agreement among landowners in the VMC, the City and public agencies regarding community services, including schools, will be required to ensure the land costs for community facilities are equitably distributed.

7.1.3 To broaden the city's educational opportunities, support economic and cultural activity, and help ensure the VMC attracts a diverse population, the City shall seek to attract a major institution of higher learning to the VMC, such as a college or satellite university campus.

7.1.4 Schedule F identifies appropriate sites for potential institutional uses in or close to the centre of the VMC, including major cultural facilities, a community/recreation centre, a library and/or a university/college facility. As plans for any such facilities are developed, the City shall seek to secure the necessary land or space within this area through an agreement with the relevant landowner. Where a development parcel within the area for potential institutional uses has not been identified for a specific institutional use, and the owner wishes to develop or redevelop his/her property for other uses permitted by this plan, the owner shall be permitted to do so.

7.1.5 While institutional buildings in the VMC may deviate from the built form policies contained in Section 8 of this plan in order to accommodate a particular functional program and/or establish an architectural landmark, generally they should display urban characteristics. They should address and help to frame streets and open spaces, have a minimum height of 10 metres and have transparent, active ground floors.

7.2 Schools

7.2.1 It is anticipated that a minimum of two elementary schools will be required in the VMC. Schedule F identifies potential school sites. It is expected the first school will be located in the planned neighbourhood north of Highway 7 and west of Edgeley Road. The precise location, size and phasing of each school shall be determined in consultation with the School Boards prior to any planning approvals for development within the blocks surrounding an identified school site. Subject to the approval of the School Boards, the school sites identified in Schedule F may be relocated or deleted without amendment to this plan. When the appropriate timing for the schools has been determined, the School Boards shall pursue acquisition of the land required and coordinate the design and construction of the school with surrounding development.

7.2.2 The size and configuration of each school site generally shall be consistent with the policies or requirements of the respective School Board. Final site sizes and configurations shall be determined in consultation with the School Boards during the preparation of Development Concept Reports, as set out in Section 10.6, for neighbourhoods. Deviations from current School Board policies and requirements, if approved by the relevant School Board, shall be permitted without amendment to this plan.

refer to
schedule F

7.2.3 The City shall work with the School Boards to optimize the relationship between neighbourhood parks and school playgrounds, integrating them as much as possible while respecting the planned street network.

7.2.4 The School Boards shall be encouraged to develop alternative standards for new schools in high density neighbourhoods. The standards should optimize the use of land by promoting multi-storey school buildings, minimizing parking and pick-up/drop-off areas, and making appropriate use of neighbouring public parks for outdoor play space.

7.2.5 Arrangements between the School Boards and developers that result in relatively compact schools and integrate school parking requirements in adjacent development shall be encouraged. As described in Section 8.2, the City may utilize the provisions of Section 37 of the Planning Act to secure such arrangements.

7.2.6 The integration of elementary schools and daycare facilities shall be encouraged.

7.3 Library

7.3.1 To implement the facility objectives of the City's Active Together Master Plan and as a complement to other institutional uses, the VMC will include a resource library of approximately 3,300 square metres and intended to attract patrons from across the city.

7.4 Cultural Facilities and Public Art

7.4.1 The City shall undertake a Cultural Facilities and Public Art Plan for the VMC to:

- identify appropriate and feasible cultural facilities for the VMC;
- develop an implementation strategy for priority cultural facilities;
- identify sites for major public art installations in the VMC;
- inform the development of a city-wide Public Art Program.

7.4.2 Cultural facilities that shall be considered for the VMC include but are not limited to:

- a performing arts centre;
- a visual arts centre/museum;
- a civic heritage museum;
- an outdoor amphitheatre within a civic park;
- a sculpture garden within a civic park;
- a fine arts school.

7.4.3 As described in Section 4.4.8, the incorporation of public art into the design of streetscape elements shall be considered.

7.4.4 The Public Art Program called for in Policy 9.1.1.9 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan shall give special consideration to public art opportunities in the VMC.

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