



Vaughan Tomorrow Vision Summary of Public Consultation

September 2008 - March 2009

Prepared by Urban Strategies Inc.

Bringing the Vision to the Public

Following an extensive public engagement process in the winter and spring of 2008, Vaughan released its *Vision for Transformation*. The Vision addresses all elements of effective, sustainable and successful city-building such as the design of beautiful places in the city, a range of housing, recreation spaces and how to move around the city by transit and bike.

The *Vision for Transformation* signals a new era for city-building in Vaughan, one that is inspired by a movement towards sustainability, place-making and urbanity. The Vision is just the beginning. Now the City of Vaughan will create an Official Plan to implement the Vision principles that will guide growth in the city over the next thirty years. To embark on this journey, the Vaughan Vision was taken out to the public for feedback.

The purpose of consultation events was to ensure that the Vaughan Tomorrow Vision adequately captures the perspectives of Vaughan residents and to seek public input into the implementation of this Vision through the Official Plan. On the first part, the overwhelming response was that yes, the Vision captures the perspective and desire of Vaughan residents for the way that Vaughan should transform into a city that is sustainable, beautiful, and diverse. Indeed, the Official Plan should be a document that guides the long-term transformation of Vaughan with a focus on sustainable city-building and place-making. For the second part, this report provides a summary of feedback on how this Vision should take root in the new Official Plan.

This report contains the following components:

- Summary of engagement materials
- Summary of public consultation activities and events
- Key themes from public events
- Key themes from the action plans
- Continued public consultation

Given that this is an ongoing process with a follow-up round of public consultation on the *Where and How to Grow* paper and final Official Plan, this report also provides an opportunity to reflect on what worked and what could use improvement in terms of public consultation methods and activities moving forward in the process. Wherever applicable, 'lessons learned' are noted throughout this report.

Summary of Engagement Materials

Vaughan Tomorrow Vision discussion paper

The Vision document summarizes the public consultation events leading up to the production of the Vision report. It outlines the various events including the speakers series and workshops and extracts some of the key points that were raised. It then sets out eight themes for transformation. The Vision was distributed to staff, council and consultants working on upcoming studies. The Vision document is also available on the Vaughan Tomorrow website for the public.

www.vaughantomorrow.ca

Vaughan Tomorrow: *Voices for Transformation* video

An 18 minute video was produced that set up the challenges that are currently facing Vaughan. The *Vaughan Tomorrow: Voices for Transformation* video gives an overview of the challenges that Vaughan is facing as a suburban municipality. The video sets up the key transformative actions that will be set out in the Official Plan. The video has been used throughout this public engagement process. The benefit of the video is that it is portable and can be set up without need for attendance or staffing. When set up unattended, comment cards are set out to allow feedback.

www.vaughantomorrow.ca/OPR/video.htm

Vision brochure

The Vision brochure is a brief take-away that outlines the Official Plan process, key upcoming events and summarizes the eight Vision themes. The Vision brochure has been made available at all public events, in public venues around the City and is downloadable from the website.

www.vaughantomorrow.ca/OPR/vision.html

High school package

The high school package consists of a Vision brochure, a video and a booklet for teachers. The booklet explains the Official Plan process and has a number of questions that relate to the video screening. The package is available on the website and advertised through a series of email blasts, including a personal letter from Councillor Peter Meffe. Phone calls were also made to high school teachers and principals to advertise the package. One high school teacher at Stephen Lewis Secondary school expressed interest in the project but, other teachers were too busy this semester. The package will be made available for the rest of the project. Student videos from the previous youth engagement project in the winter of 2008 should be posted on the website. This could provide encouragement for new participants in the project.

www.vaughantomorrow.ca/OPR/schools.html

Vaughan Tomorrow website

The Vaughan Tomorrow website was launched in October 2008. The website has updates on Official Plan events, documents and related studies, the video, high school package and previous work. The website also hosts the interactive tool VaughanQuest, which allows Vaughan residents to experiment with the relationship between their lifestyle choices and future growth in Vaughan. Since the website launch, there has been a steady increase in the number of visitors to the site. Key stats indicating the success of the website and email blasts include:

- Site visits have increased from 7 per day in October to 85 per day in January
- The majority of visitors enter the site through the vaughantomorrow.ca URL
- The most popular pages are the Vaughan Tomorrow video and VaughanQuest. Most people enter the website linking to the *Voices for Transformation* video.
- Most people visiting the website are from Vaughan, Toronto and other Ontario locations.
www.vaughantomorrow.ca

VaughanQuest

VaughanQuest is an interactive software package made available on both the Vaughan Tomorrow website and at the Public Workshop. The software package enables users to map the correlation between their lifestyle choices and how this impacts the future growth of Vaughan. As stated above it is one of the most popular features on the Vaughan Tomorrow website. A full report on Vaughanquest is being prepared separately. The most popular outcomes from the survey are as follows:

- Most popular result is “Sprawl Control” by a large margin, then the two transportation results.
- Most popular option is “multi-nodal development”, then “significant expansion” for transit.
www.vaughantomorrow.ca/OPR/vaughan_quest.htm

Comment Cards

Comment cards were distributed at public meetings for the video screenings and around City Hall so that people had the opportunity to voice their opinion. The comment cards asked “What are the three main things you would like to see happen in Vaughan by 2031?” We received approximately 70 comment cards back from distribution.

I would like to see...

... young adult (18-25) art displays. Perhaps a street art showing. My daughter goes to Ontario College of Arts and expressed an interest for this type of arts display in York region.
-Mrs. Kathy Casullo

... schools as the hub of their communities with integrated services for all ages.
-Michelle Goldberg

... walkable communities and more integrated local food systems.
-Mark Pajut

... a main downtown in the Corporate Centre with “small downtowns” around the promenade mall in Thornhill, in Maple and other places.
-Danny Jacoby

... less single family dwellings, more emphasis on intensification of townhomes, condos residential, commercial and employment uses.
-Lauren Eramb

city council & city staff want to hear from you

Summary of Public Consultation Activities and Events

The various events brought out close to 200 Vaughan residents. All workshops included a presentation summarizing the Vaughan Tomorrow Vision and the Official Plan process, a screening of the Vaughan Tomorrow video and a brainstorming session related to the eight visioning themes.

Means of advertising included:

- Regular email blasts to Vaughan Tomorrow contact list (comment cards and sign-in sheets)
- Email blasts to community groups in the City's contact lists
- Personal invites from Councillor Peter Meffe to community groups and high schools
- Regular updates on the Vaughan Tomorrow website

Lessons learned:

- Radio and television advertisements could be used leading up to the events and as a reminder the day of the event

Business and development community workshop

November 27, 2008

There were 63 representatives of the business and development community that attended a morning workshop at the Eagles Nest Golf and Country Club to hear about and discuss the Vision for Transformation. The workshop began with the Vision presentation and screening of the film followed by facilitated break-out session around the eight visioning themes. Action Plans were developed around each of the eight visioning themes.

Public Workshop at the Kortright Centre

November 29, 2008

Over 60 residents turned out for an all-day workshop at Vaughan's Kortright Centre. The workshop began with a screening of the documentary *Voices for Transformation*. This was followed by a lively discussion around the Vision principles. Groups discussed a range of topics specific to Vaughan including, the future of the Vaughan Corporate Centre as a downtown, encouraging public transit use and promotion of local agriculture. An inspiring talk by CEO of United Way, Daniele Zanotti had the crowd thinking about the "face of Vaughan," the social issues that are prevalent and growing in our communities. Finally, an interactive afternoon session using VaughanQuest enabled participants to see how their daily decisions will impact long-term growth. It seemed as though the audience was already on board with policies like increasing transit and protecting the countryside. Action Plans were created around each of the eight Visioning principles, listed in the following section.

Guided Film Screenings

The *Vaughan Tomorrow: Vision for Transformation* video was screened at three libraries (Bathurst and Clark, Dufferin and Clark, and Maple) over a period of three months. Other libraries made the video available for borrowing. The video was accompanied by comment cards and Vision brochures with more information on the Official Plan project. Library patrons stopped for a few moments to watch the video and pick up a Vision brochure; however few people stayed to watch the entire 18 minute video.

Lessons learned

- Shorter video of about 5 minutes to keep people engaged in passing
- Make it clearer on comment card boxes that they are for the Official Plan and *not* the library

Travelling Roadshows

The purpose of the Travelling Roadshow is to bring the Vaughan Tomorrow Vision to residents throughout Vaughan. By taking the Vision presentation out to community groups, the desire was to engage residents who were not able to attend the scheduled public workshops. The Roadshow presentation included a presentation of the Vaughan Tomorrow Vision, a screening of the Vaughan Tomorrow video followed by a facilitated discussion on the eight Vision themes. Travelling Roadshows were advertised on the website, through email blasts and direct emails. Travelling Roadshows took place at the following locations:

- Vaughan City Hall, Vaughan City Staff, November 21, 2008
- Dufferin-Clark Library, Ratepayers Association, Feb 9, 2009
- Vaughan City Hall, general public, March 2, 2009

Despite outreach to community groups, there was little interest in the Travelling Roadshow. As a result the expected 10 smaller meetings became 3 larger meetings. The final presentation in March was advertised to workshop participants from November who expressed a preference for information on the results of workshops already held and progress of the plan.

Key Themes from Public Events

The purpose of this round of public consultation was to solicit feedback on the Vaughan Tomorrow Vision for Transformation. Each workshop and/or screening of the film set forward the eight Vision principles and asked the public to respond to these principles. The following summary lists the most common themes and ideas generated from this exercise.

Strong and Diverse Neighbourhoods

Make communities accessible. Accessibility was defined broadly to mean that people of all different ages, lifestyles and abilities should be able to move around, live and support their daily needs within their communities. Sidewalks should be accessible to people in wheelchairs, housing should come in different forms, tenures and prices so that everyone from low-income singles to large families can live in a community. Grocery stores and community services should all be in walking distance or at least a short bus ride from the community. Where existing communities lack these characteristics, they should be retrofitted to include them.

Create more public gathering places. A distinct need for places where people can gather, celebrate festivals, support local music etc., was identified. These places are needed on both the local level, within small neighbourhoods and at the larger, city-wide scale, in the form of a downtown central park or civic space.

Robust and Prominent Countryside

Protect Vaughan's countryside. The countryside of Vaughan is seen as one of the City's most valuable assets. Protection of the countryside was suggested in a number of ways including expansion of the Greenbelt, protection for farming, conversion to crown land and special designations that would allow only low-impact development such as eco-tourism and small-scale farming operations.

Make the countryside viable economically. In order to make protection of the countryside viable in the long-term, residents noted that there needs to be an economic rationale in place. Farmers need to have incentives to keep their land and keep it productive. Supports for this type of operation should happen within Vaughan, such as farmer's markets and other types of distribution operations. Other low-impact operations like eco-tourism, demonstration projects, city-branding should also be considered as part of the countryside protection efforts.

Develop a strong countryside edge. Residents identified the countryside as both a key element for recreation and as an economic driver of the city. Defining the edge of the countryside will help to both protect the area and brand the area. Suggestions for defining the border included, situating cultural anchors along the edge of the countryside, creating better connections with the countryside through transit and trail networks, signage and branding.

Diverse Economy

Make links with new sectors. Vaughan is in an excellent position to link with a number of new economic sectors. Residents have identified educational facilities (specifically York University) and the green economy as two sectors that should be sought after to diversify Vaughan's economy.

Leverage the downtown and arterial roads for more office spaces. Creating more office space in Vaughan was seen as important both for the local economy and as a means to allow residents of Vaughan to live and work in the same city.

Vibrant and Thriving Downtown

Make downtown a place to walk around. The ultimate structure and uses that form Vaughan's city centre need to be based on the pedestrian experience. Cafes, boutique stores, offices, art galleries, public art and park spaces were all identified as key features that will make Vaughan's downtown intriguing and accessible for pedestrians. It should also be promoted and designed as a transit hub where rapid transit intersects with foot traffic and auto-sharing to make the area accessible.

Moving Around without a Car

Design streets for pedestrians and bicyclists. Walking, bicycling and taking the bus are not as easy as they should be in the City of Vaughan. Streets should be narrowed and sidewalks need to be expanded, bike paths need to be integrated into the way that we design and construct roads and bus service needs to become more frequent and convenient. It is clear that people want to start moving around without a car, but they need the means to do so.

Design Excellence and Memorable Places

Ensure better design – no more bad design. Residents of Vaughan do not want more big box store developments. It was made clear that better design of both residential and commercial buildings is needed in Vaughan. A number of suggestions were made to achieve this including, a community-based design review council, an architecture-based design review council, LEED building standards, a signature architecture building in the VCC and European-inspired architecture.

Create key memorable places to give the City an identity. A downtown, a central park, a defined countryside- these are key places people identified for the Plan to accentuate as part of Vaughan's flagship identity. They should be places to gather for significant events (downtown square, central park) and places that people from all over Vaughan, the GTA and the world will come and visit (the countryside).

Green and Sustainable City

Promote and support local production of food and farmers markets. The support and production of local food is one of the most popular themes of the visioning. Residents of Vaughan recognize the vast potential of the varying landscape in the city, both countryside and urban area. Production of local food and the local market to sell it in is found in one city. Other forms of local food production were suggested for the rest of the city including community gardens, rooftop gardens and gardens in institutional areas such as schools and the future hospital.

Directing Growth

Intensify along transit corridors. More people and jobs in Vaughan is generally accepted. Where this is going to be accommodated is also generally agreed upon. The best places for growth are along existing transportation corridors such as Steeles and Highway 7. The VCC also offers an exceptional opportunity for growth. At the same time some places need to be protected such as heritage communities, residential communities and the countryside.

Mix of uses are key to Vaughan's future development. The next phase of city-building in Vaughan will need to focus on creating developments that have a mix of uses. Residents see the key to less reliance on cars, better design, and healthier neighbourhoods in the mix of uses. This should also be considered for existing subdivisions and single-purpose commercial developments as a form of retrofitting.

Public Engagement

Listen to the public and follow-through with ideas. There was some skepticism that the ideas and suggestions made at these workshops would not find their way into the Official Plan. At the same time there were also a number of comments suggesting that it was wonderful to have this opportunity to have a platform to input into the long-term planning for the city.

Create ongoing forum for public participation. Ongoing learning about what is happening in the community, and the latest planning ideas for the city are important to Vaughan residents. Equally important is the opportunity to respond and be heard on these issues. The website was identified as a potential tool for this forum, but there needs to be more of an interactive component for feedback. Suggestions for this included, chat rooms, blogs, question and answer sections and multi-media upload opportunities.

Politicians must support and protect this plan. It is clear that people are cynical about past politics in Vaughan and the ability or desire for council to take a stand on tough issues.

Key Themes from Action Plans

The Land Industry Workshop and the Public Workshop participants developed two sets of Action Plans for each of the eight Vision themes.

Public Workshop
Kortright Centre, Vaughan
November 29, 2008

1) A Vision for Strong and Diverse Neighbourhoods

1. Promote a creative culture.
2. Provide diverse and flexible housing (e.g. second units).
3. Address the needs of an aging population (e.g. villages of four-plexes for seniors rather than apartment buildings).
4. Create vibrant, sustainable, diverse mix of uses including, retail, gathering places, and beautiful public realm in close proximity.
5. Ensure that the design of the overall environment promotes excellence in architecture, great/beautiful spaces, human-scale.
6. Everything should be within walking distance.
7. Limit “big” retail in order to encourage local retail.

2) A Vision for a Robust and Prominent Countryside

1. Support farmers markets of locally grown food, field-to-table programs, and agri-tourism.
2. Create trail network throughout the countryside.
3. Create trail network that connects across the city.
4. Preserve heritage spaces and market nodes.
5. Create a gateway to the countryside.
6. Have more local access to the countryside and public green spaces.
7. Make the countryside accessible with public transit routes.
8. Develop a land acquisition strategy to protect the countryside.

3) A Vision for a Diverse Economy

1. Attract more office space to corporate centre.
2. Focus on accessibility (create pedestrian connections and invest in transit service).
3. Build/promote cultural centre and entertainment district for Vaughan, downtown.
4. Attract businesses at street level, making communities liveable and accessible.
5. Develop relationship with York University.
6. Protect greenbelt/countryside as identified and promote related tourist and recreation attractions (McMichael and Kortright Centre).
7. Attract green technology jobs and businesses.

4) A Vision for a Vibrant and Thriving Downtown

1. Create a major civic place and performing arts/cultural centre that will attract tourism and serve residents and people working in the downtown area.
2. Strengthen transit in and to the area including, subway, buses, and pedestrian and cycling facilities.
3. Focus on good design and investigate building design guidelines.

4. Partner with York University to create a research node.
5. Create building design guidelines transit solutions, energy sources and stormwater management.
6. Connect the rest of the city to downtown.
7. Locating major investments like hospitals in the new downtown.

5) A Vision for Moving around without a Car

1. Improve transit connections and services.
2. Bring in a cultural change through HOV lanes and carpool, “the car is no longer king”.
3. Partnerships (public/private) to improve service.
4. Mixed/compact/dense developments (community design).
5. Safe, well-connected pedestrian cycling routes.
6. Redirect funding to support alternative forms of transportation (e.g. dedicated infrastructure/car pooling/ parking near transit hubs).
7. Strengthen infrastructure.

6) A Vision for Design Excellence and Memorable Places

1. Urban park/green space for residents/users and tourists to use.
2. Hierarchy for streets (servicing, vehicular, traffic, cyclists, pedestrians).
3. Design review committee.
4. Sustainable green designs.

7) A Vision for Green and Sustainable Places

1. Remove restrictions on alternative energy.
2. Require higher parkland dedications.
3. Encourage integrated/dispersed green space.
4. Provide connected trail system between different uses.
5. Create a transit first policy.
6. Design-integrated bike sharing program.
7. Establish integrated fare system on all transit.
8. Parks in every subdivision.
9. Integrate renewable energy in industrial areas (e.g. windmills on top of buildings, district energy and vacuum waste).
10. Small-scale green energy throughout the city (solar/wind).

8) A Vision for Directing Growth

1. Focus growth along higher order transit areas (Highway 7, Steeles).
2. Create natural linkages in the whitebelt.
3. Focused and sustainable whitebelt development.
4. Mix employment and residential uses with a diversity of types in new developments.
5. Leverage proximity to York University (jobs and education).
6. Create more office spaces.

Business and Development Community Workshop
Eagle Nest Golf and Country Club
November 27, 2008

1) A Vision for Strong and Diverse Neighbourhoods

1. Create communities where people can progress through life, supported by the community with different forms of housing.
2. Have all communities include public gathering places to promote cultural diversity, social interaction, gathering opportunities, critical engagement, and communication.
3. Situate public schools and recreation in places that promote cultural exchange and support.
4. Everyday needs met within the neighbourhood, convenience retail, daycare, small restaurants/cafes/religious/ other institutions.
5. Locate "Welcome to Vaughan" in an appropriate location well-supported by transit.
6. Define individual communities: promote local celebrations and create a city-wide downtown (e.g. place to celebrate New Years).
7. Create an urban edge with higher, mixed uses. Ensure less homogeneity with work and services within walking proximity (restaurants, banks, entertainment).
8. Create flexibility in existing residential areas to allow for redevelopment. Adaptive re-use of community assets (community centres) intensification with great public space; green connected communities and green spaces.
9. Housing for employees in Vaughan and zoning for mixed-use at arterial corners: different tenures, sizes, basements and granny/teen flats; other creative solutions; create balance between pedestrians and cars.
10. Encourage a "creative class" in Vaughan.

2) A Vision for a Robust and Prominent Countryside

1. Identify natural heritage system within the countryside designation.
2. Create incentives for investment in countryside features.
3. Develop and publish widely best practices for 'urban' agriculture.
4. Form working group to define 'rural-supportive' uses within the countryside.
5. Identify potential for agri-tourism and viable commercial farming in an urban area (promote field-to-table programs).
6. Identify linkage for regional trail system.
7. Identify strategy for connecting east and west of 400.
8. Minimize impact of transportation on natural heritage system.
9. Design infrastructure to promote alternative travel connections.
10. Create advisory committee to determine future of countryside lands (municipal/public uses).

3) A Vision for a Diverse Economy

1. Think like a City.
2. Improve transportation.
3. Provide opportunity for a wide-range of flexible uses.
4. Establish an identity for the city (relates to #1).
5. Provide more affordable housing to accommodate the workforce.
6. Marketing should make clear City's intention for economic development and define the employment lands.
7. Provide clear policies for accessory retail in employment areas.
8. Secure a signature event like F1.
9. Plan for ultimate development of Vaughan, not just 2031.

4) A Vision for a Vibrant and Thriving Downtown

1. Locate public facilities/public plaza/cultural facilities in VCC/ performing arts centre.
2. Consider alternatives to Highway 7 for “main street”.
3. Focus density along Highway 7 and edges of other highways.
4. Locate hospital in the downtown.
5. Create incentives for redevelopment.
6. Reduce parking standards and require structured parking.
7. Reconsider network for thru-traffic.
8. Focus on great architecture.
9. Build around a major attraction.
10. Encourage green initiatives such as a central energy facility.

5) A Vision for Moving Around without a Car

1. Increase frequency of existing transit service. Infill development can support this increase.
2. Educate youth on the benefits of using transit, make it easier, and streamline services.
3. Develop incentives through pilot projects: free passes, DC incentives for density bonusing for fewer car developments.
4. Require businesses to submit traffic mitigation strategies and smaller parking requirements that connect to the community.
5. Lifestyle/culture change (ban drive-thrus).
6. Mix uses to reduce the need to drive to retail.
7. Make cycling/walking an option, taking space away from cars.
8. Make bicycle parking mandatory (schools and employers).
9. Every new road should have bike/pedestrian paths.
10. Create better east/west connections for bicycle and transit.



6) A Vision for Design Excellence and Memorable Places

1. Create hierarchy of types/levels (community design/block, neighbourhood, city-wide, VCC).
2. Design should be less regulatory and based on *use, function, location*.
3. Design review should be voluntary.
4. Community engagement for public art such as a committee at the city.
5. Link neighbourhood with transit to reduce arterials with traffic.
6. Design guidelines need to be flexible, not restrictive.
7. School board and region should be leading by example in design.

7) A Vision for a Green and Sustainable City

1. Create more trails and incentives for local parks and connectivity (e.g. parkland dedication, DC credits etc.)
2. Invest or build social infrastructure (community centres and district park).
3. Do not allow development in greenbelt.
4. Create incentives for local farmers/developers to preserve countryside (transfer development rights).
5. Educate the public and the development community (working together to reduce costs).
6. Review approval process for high density applications (streamline quality control).
7. Concentrate development at centres to allow for a wide mix of uses.
8. Growth in whitebelt should be focused and sustainable.
9. Increase youth involvement and consideration throughout planning process.
10. Identify prime opportunities for access to and support of natural heritage assets.

8) A Vision for Directing Growth

1. Address resident opposition through proper transfer of information, education and understanding of expected growth, and public education by the city.
2. Create quality, award-winning design and showcase this.
3. Focus on mixed use developments.
4. Create quality design without shifting costs to the developers.
5. Identify and grow Vaughan's centre.
6. Create a place for office uses.
7. A full mix of uses (public spaces, living, working, playing, shopping, eating, apartment buildings).
8. Involve youth in planning.
9. Improve development approvals process.

Continued public consultation

As the Official Plan project moves from visioning to policy development, there will be a need to engage the public throughout these coming phases. Continued public consultation will happen through ongoing stakeholder meetings, public workshops, citizen's bulletins, the website and a second video.

Vaughan Tomorrow website

The Vaughan Tomorrow website will continue to make available all of the background reports and the Vision document along with the Vaughan Tomorrow video and VaughanQuest program. The high school education package will also continue to be made available through the website. Events and other updates will also be posted on the website.

Second video

The second Vaughan Tomorrow video will highlight what is working in Vaughan and how the Official Plan will build upon these aspects of the City. Production of the video will begin in April and be ready for release in the fall 2009.

Planning event

May 28, 2009

Recognizing that there will be a significant number of studies taking place over the coming months, May 28th will be an opportunity for all of these studies to present their work to the public and solicit input. The event will be set up as a series of stations where the public is invited to walk around and ask questions of the different consultants.

Public open houses

Fall/winter2009

Two major rounds of public consultation events will take place in the fall of 2009. These events will bring the draft policy directions of the Official Plan to the public in October. The second round will bring the draft Official Plan to the public in December.