

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 119 – July 25, 2024**

---

The Design Review Panel (“Panel”) met virtually on Thursday, July 25, 2024. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Harim Labuschagne, BDP Quadrangle

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc

Ute Maya-Giambattista, O2 Planning + Design Inc.

Sharon Sterling, WSP Canada Inc.

##### **Absent**

Guela Solow Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

John Tassiopoulos, WSP Canada Inc.

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

#### **STAFF**

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Manager, Parks & Strategic Initiatives, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Matthew Peverini, Senior Development Planner, VMC Program

Monica Wu, Senior Development Planner, VMC Program

Shirley Marsh, Project Manager, Urban Design, Development Planning

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Designer, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Designer, Development Planning

Andrea Shotlander, Project Manager, Urban Design, VMC Program  
Anna Rosen, Project Manager, Parks Development, VMC Program  
Ashwani Kumar, Urban Designer, VMC Program  
Nicholas Trajkovski, Planner, VMC Program  
Michelle Perrone, Planner, VMC Program  
Dana Khademi, Stormwater Engineer, VMC Program  
Jillian Britto, Transportation Project Manager, VMC Program  
Temi Fashina, Development Engineering Review Coordinator, VMC Program  
Lamita Hermez, Student, Urban Design, VMC Program  
Lucy D'Acunto, Administrative Coordinator, Development Planning

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Alfredo Landaeta in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Megan Torza, DTAH

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for July 25, 2024 were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**130 Doughton Road**

**Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

**High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Planner: KLM Planning

Designer: KIRKOR Architects and Planners

Landscape Architect: Baker Turner Inc. (BTi)

## Introduction

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How successful is the overall site organization, including land use distribution, circulation, loading and servicing, and access points?
2. How well does the proposal respond to the surroundings, particularly the proposed developments to the north and future Neighbourhood Precinct to the south?
3. How effectively does the building massing address pedestrian scale, public realm and micro-climatic considerations in the surrounding context?

## Overview

- **Presentation:** The Panel thanked the applicant for a thorough presentation.
- **Site Organization, Building Massing and Orientation:** The Panel expressed concerns that the proposed three tower configuration was too ambitious for the site. Reducing the number of towers and exploring alternative massing strategies could help create a more varied and engaging architectural composition. Additionally, recommendations were made to redistribute building heights to provide a better transition to the height and scale of the future Neighbourhood precinct and school site south of the subject site.
- **Site Context, Circulation and Connectivity:** Circulation and connectivity were highlighted by the Panel as areas needing improvement, both within the site and in relation to the broader context of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The Panel stressed the importance of creating better pedestrian and bicyclist connections and future-proofing the proposed development to integrate with the surrounding context, specially to the potential future school and Neighbourhood precinct to the south.
- **Ground Floor Design and the Public Realm:** The Panel raised concerns about the ground floor program being too dense and the lack of generous, multi-purpose outdoor spaces. The need for better-defined public spaces, improved streetscapes, and more thoughtful integration of servicing and loading areas was also emphasized. Suggestions were made to consider reconfiguring podiums and towers footprints to achieve this and free up ground-level space for a plaza-like open space.
- **Sustainability:** The Panel discussed the sustainability and microclimate considerations, with recommendations to address wind conditions, access to sun, and incorporate more sustainable design features throughout the project.

## Comments

### Site Organization, Building Massing and Orientation

- The Panel considered the development proposal to be ambitious given the site's location and context. The use of three identical towers with varying heights was viewed as a simplistic and rigid approach to occupying the site. It was noted that this approach, while effective in maximizing the development potential of the site, is not pedestrian-friendly or conducive to generating high-quality spaces for residents and the broader community.
- The Panel recommended eliminating one of the proposed towers and encouraged the applicant to reshape the towers to provide more variety and architectural interest, potentially by considering a "family" of tower shapes to create a more visually engaging site.
- Recommendations were made to adjust the podium design to create more diverse ground-level pedestrian experiences and to increase the amenity space at grade. The Panel emphasized the importance of balancing service requirements with the need to establish cohesive landscape connections and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- The Panel expressed concern regarding the back-to-back relationship with the neighboring development to the East, noting that the adjacent property will likely require a duplication of the driveway leading to parking and service access. It was suggested to consolidate parking and service accesses by adjusting the podium design to create a unified space for services, loading, and ramps, while freeing up ground-level space for pedestrian areas such as a park or corner plaza.

### Site Context, Circulation and Connectivity

- The Panel strongly recommended to better integrate the ground floor design with the broader VMC context, including the planned developments in the site's vicinity and connections to transit nodes. The Panel expressed desire to see a diagram demonstrating the connectivity of the site and the proposed development to its surroundings.
- It was stressed that, while maximizing the development potential of the land is important, the project also bears the responsibility of delivering a strong public realm. Given the scale of this development, it is crucial to consider the "human factor" and create a more robust and engaging public realm through more sensible massing and design.
- The current height arrangement was questioned by the Panel, with suggestions to reverse the height progression to improve solar access and better respond to the context. This adjustment would provide a smoother transition in building heights, particularly in relation to the potential future school and the Neighbourhood precinct planned towards the south.

- The Panel expressed concern about the disconnect between the north and south portions of the site, highlighting the need to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation through the site.
- The interim cul-de-sac design for White Elm Road was seen as intrusive and problematic. The Panel suggested exploring alternative turnaround designs, such as a hammerhead configuration.
- The Panel stressed the importance of better integrating the site with future surrounding developments. Future-proofing connections to adjacent communities, as advised by the Panel, will ensure a seamless integration as the area evolves.

#### Ground Floor Design and the Public Realm

- The Panel observed that the current proposal lacks a high-quality pedestrian environment and fails to create a focal point that would energize the site and its surroundings. The ground floor layout is too dense, with insufficient pedestrian space and outdoor amenities. According to the Panel, the design needs better-defined public spaces, including "front porch" areas and corner plazas.
- The Panel emphasized the need for clearer definition of retail spaces and their relationship to the public realm, ensuring that these areas contribute positively to the pedestrian experience.
- A lack of clarity regarding main entrances was pointed out with a suggestion to create distinct entry points for residential and office components to improve the overall functionality of the ground floor.
- Panel recommended improving the streetscape along the western building edge addressing concerns regarding the lack of pick-up/drop-off areas and the potential conflicts with landscaping.

#### Sustainability

- The predominantly glazed east and west facades were identified as problematic from a sustainability perspective. The Panel recommended incorporating more purposeful sun protection strategies.
- Concerns were raised about taller towers casting shadows on lower towers and on rooftop outdoor amenity areas in the current proposal. A more thoughtful approach to building massing and orientation would be required to mitigate this issue. The Panel encouraged a more precise and purposeful integration of sustainability features into the overall design.

**END OF MINUTES**