

**VMC BLACK CREEK RENEWAL PROJECT
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY
STUDY UPDATE
WARD 4**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Development / Transportation Engineering and the Executive Director, Office of the City Manager recommend:

1. THAT this report and associated presentation be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The renewal of the existing Black Creek in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) will contribute to environmental sustainability through the restoration of the stream corridor and the improvements to flood protection for the surrounding area.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact associated with this report.

Communications Plan

An enhanced stakeholder and public consultation program is being undertaken in conjunction with the Class EA study as outlined below.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the VMC Sub-Committee with an update on the stakeholder engagement and facilitation activities associated with the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Project.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Black Creek is a tributary of the Humber River and is included in the Natural Heritage Network identified within the City of Vaughan Official Plan 2010. The Black Creek traverses the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) east of Jane Street between Highway 7 and Highway 407.

Through the VMC Secondary Plan, the Black Creek corridor is positioned as a signature feature that will create identity for the new downtown, attract investment along its frontage, support urban growth, and add value as the prominent open space amenity and natural heritage feature for the VMC community.

The VMC Secondary Plan as well as the draft VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan aim to help ensure that the revitalized Black Creek becomes an integral part of the green public infrastructure within the VMC in its design concept and through the provision of design guidelines. As part of the larger connected network of public spaces, the Black Creek corridor acts as a central linkage and destination point for the new downtown.

In early 2012, the City completed a Black Creek Optimization Study which identified the need to improve the existing stream channel conditions in order to achieve appropriate flood control and conveyance capacity within the VMC Plan. There is general agreement among stakeholders the flooding issues need to be addressed, however, there are many different ideas on how best to achieve flood control while at the same time not impeding future development opportunities.

Subsequently, in July 2012, the City initiated the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study, which builds on the findings and recommendations of the Optimization Study. An initial stakeholder meeting was held in November 2012 to present preliminary Black Creek Channel concepts as shown in Attachment 1. Based on the outcome of the meeting, and issues raised by the majority of stakeholders directly impacted, it became clear that an expanded/enhanced consultation process was necessary to develop a plan for the Black Creek which would be supportable by the majority of the stakeholders.

Improving the existing condition of the Black Creek channel within the VMC Secondary Plan area is key to advancing development

In June 2013, the City expanded the Class EA study consulting team to include a facilitation team led by Swerhun Inc. in collaboration with Real Estate Search Corporation (RESC), TMIG, Schollen and Public Work. Over the last several months, this facilitation team has engaged the key stakeholders to understand their perspectives and priorities regarding the project and to ultimately propose a path forward for the Black Creek that will be supported by the majority of the stakeholders.

A summary/chronology of the group and individual stakeholder meetings that have occurred since November 2013 is included as Attachment 2 to this report.

The City facilitated an initial group working session in January 2014 that provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to work collaboratively towards identifying physical design and alignment alternatives

On January 7, 2014, the City facilitated a Black Creek Design Charette / Working Session. Participants included landowners, consultants, the TRCA, Regional and City staff. The objective of the working session was to identify and discuss a list of potential physical channel alignment and design options for a mutually beneficial Black Creek stormwater management solution and the criteria for evaluating these options.

The alignment options that were identified by all participants included:

- A. *Do nothing*
- B. *Maintain option identified through the Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study (November 2012)*
- C. *Modify Option B to occupy more public land*
- D. *Maintain existing alignment with improvements to the existing culverts*

In addition, the participants identified 19 criteria to evaluate the alignment options. After a collective discussion about how the options perform against the criteria, Option C emerged as the most favorable option from the perspective of the participants. Option D was also identified as requiring further investigation as part of a phased solution.

The design options identified by all participants included:

- A. *Naturalized open channel*
- B. *Trough (hard surface, open channel)*
- C. *Large pipe (closed box culvert)*
- D. *Combination of options 1, 2, and 3*
- E. *Synergy (combination of options 1 and 2)*

The participants identified 23 criteria to evaluate the design options, and 11 of these were identified as key considerations. After a collective discussion about how the options perform against the criteria, Option D emerged as the most favorable.

A continued and open dialogue with VMC landowners and stakeholders was maintained throughout the facilitation process in order to identify needs, desires and areas of concern related to the channel.

A series of working sessions and one-on-one meetings occurred between January and April 2014 to identify site specific issues and opportunities along the corridor for consideration in developing an overall integrated solution for the Black Creek. This series of meetings also provided the stakeholders with an opportunity to share their design concepts for their stretch of the creek which would accommodate all the criteria identified during the January working session. Through these discussions, five sections ('reaches') were identified along the proposed channel alignment, as shown in Attachment 3. Each reach identifies a preferred design solution for the channel (i.e. piped; combination of pipe, trough, and open channel) envisioned by the landowners' directly impacted by that reach of channel. The design solutions were evaluated against the key considerations identified in the January 2014 working session. The design concepts were assessed and considered in developing an overall channel concept for the Black Creek.

An integrated overall concept plan for the Black Creek channel renewal was presented to the stakeholders on April 28, 2014

Based on the input from the group working sessions and individual stakeholder meetings, the consultant team prepared an integrated overall concept plan for the Black Creek corridor, which was presented to stakeholders at a working session on April 28, 2014.

Further refinements were made to the concept plans to reflect further stakeholder input

Based on the feedback from the April 28, 2014 working session and subsequent meetings with interested landowners, the consulting team prepared updated concept plans. The updated plans were circulated to all participants on May 26, 2014. The updated interim and ultimate concept plans are included in Attachments 4 and 5 respectively and described below.

Interim Channel Concept Plan

The 'Interim' scenario (Attachment 4) represents an initial strategy that implements components of the ultimate scheme and alleviates some of the constraints to development imposed by the existing flooding characteristics of the Black Creek channel. The intent of the plan is to begin to unlock the immediate potential for redevelopment of some parcels of land adjacent to the creek corridor. The plan respects certain existing buildings and businesses that are not expected to redevelop in the near term.

Ultimate Channel Concept Plan

The 'Ultimate' scenario (Attachment 5) illustrates the proposed configuration of the creek corridor, open space system, streetscape, public realm and urban form based upon the overall vision for the VMC.

Both the interim and ultimate concept plans attempt to address each stakeholders' interests while not losing sight of the overall comprehensive vision for the channel. As well, they integrate and amalgamate the ideas provided by the various landowners within a cohesive framework that responds to urban context and compliments the overall urban design vision established for the VMC.

The facilitation process has now concluded and further dialog on the integrated overall concept plan will take place in conjunction with the ongoing VMC OMB appeals process

The overall goal of the facilitation team was to achieve a majority consensus on a preferred channel alignment concept(s). Given the outcome of the April 28th working session and the high degree of support by the participants on the preliminary channel concept plans, the facilitation process has now concluded and further discussions to assist in achieving consensus on the

integrated overall concept plans will now take place in conjunction with the VMC Secondary Plan OMB appeals process through the mediation process on a confidential and without prejudice basis.

The scope of the facilitation team's work does not include the formulation of financing strategies for the channel works as this is one of the issues to be addressed through the OMB appeals and the subsequent Special Area Development Charge By-law consultations.

Once the VMC Secondary Plan appeals process has sufficiently progressed, the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA study will resume.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The conclusions and recommendations of the Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study will facilitate development of the VMC. This report is therefore consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

Regional Implications

The VMC is a Regional Growth Centre. Jane Street and Highway 7 fall within York Region's jurisdiction. The intersection of Highway 7 and Jane Street is susceptible to flooding from the Black Creek. Segments of the Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit system (at its intersection with Jane Street) are also susceptible to flooding based on existing channel conditions. Regional staff has participated to date and will continue to be invited to participate throughout the duration of the Study to provide input and comment as required to ensure its successful completion.

Conclusion

In July 2012, the City initiated the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Study, which builds on the findings and recommendations of the Black Creek Optimization Study.

Over the last several months, the City has engaged the stakeholders in a facilitated dialog on alignment and design options related to the Black Creek renew project. This facilitation process has resulted in the development of a preliminary interim and ultimate overall concept plan for the renewal of the Black Creek. The facilitation process has now come to fruition. The concept plans have been referred to the OMB appeal process related to the VMC Secondary Plan for further discussion and consideration.

Staff will continue to provide the VMC Sub-Committee with updates on the progress of the VMC Black Creek Renewal Class EA Project at key milestones.

Attachments

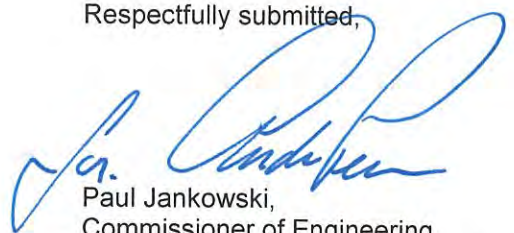
1. Black Creek Renewal EA , November 2012 - Initial Overall Concept Plan
2. Chronology of Events
3. Reach Plan
4. Interim Channel Concept, May 2014
5. Ultimate Channel Concept, May 2014

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Respectfully submitted,



Paul Jankowski,
Commissioner of Engineering
And Public Works



Andrew Pearce,
Director of Development /
Transportation Engineering



Tim Simmonds,
Executive Director, Office of the City Manager

ATTACHMENT 1

BLACK CREEK RENEWAL CLASS EA – NOVEMBER 2012

INITIAL OVERALL CONCEPT PLAN



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ATTACHMENT 2 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

November 2013 – One-on-one interviews with stakeholders to discuss specific concerns and objectives

The facilitators have engaged in an interview process with key stakeholders to understand their perspectives and priorities regarding the project. These stakeholders include City of Vaughan staff, TRCA, York Region, Province of Ontario, community interest groups such as Sustainable Vaughan and local landowners.

December 16, 2013 - Presented Draft Situational Analysis to the Stakeholder Group

After the interview process was completed with all interested stakeholders, a joint working session took place on December 16, 2013 to present a Draft Situational Analysis which includes an aggregate summary of what was learned from the one-on-one interviews.

January 7, 2014 - Design Charette/Working Session No. 1

The City facilitated a Black Creek Design Charette / Working Session. Participants included landowners, consultants, the TRCA, Regional and City staff. The objective of the working session was to identify and discuss a list of potential physical channel alignment and design options for a mutually beneficial Black Creek stormwater management solution and the criteria for evaluating these options. This process offered all stakeholders the opportunity to work collaboratively towards identifying physical alternatives.

January 16, 2014 - OMB VMC Mediation Update – to inform mediation process

February-March 2014 - One-on-One discussions with interested landowners

The consultant facilitation team continued to work with interested landowners to understand their site specific physical design vision and how their vision can form a coherent overall solution for Black Creek. The purpose of these meetings was to provide landowners the opportunity to share their design vision/ideas for their stretch of the creek, as well as any ideas they have regarding an overall vision for the Black Creek renewal.

March 5, 2014 – OMB VMC Mediation Update – to inform mediation process

March 28, 2014 - Design Charette/Working Session No. 2

A second working session with the entire group was held to discuss site-specific design visions and how they may be integrated into an overall proposal for the Black Creek channel. This meeting was used to review all options considered for each section of the creek (i.e. pipe, trough, and natural channel) and to review the results of evaluating the options for each section.

March 31, 2014 – York Region and City Update Meeting

On March 31, 2014, City staff met with York Region Planning and Rapid Transit to provide an update on the VMC Black Creek Renewal project.

April 1, 2014 – OMB VMC Mediation Update – to inform mediation process

April 23, 2014 – City consulting team prepared and circulated to all stakeholders draft integrated channel design concept(s) based on input from the Stakeholders at the March 28th Workshop and with consideration for City parks, urban design and TRCA objectives;

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April 28, 2014 – A follow up working session with the Stakeholders to review the integrated design concept(s).

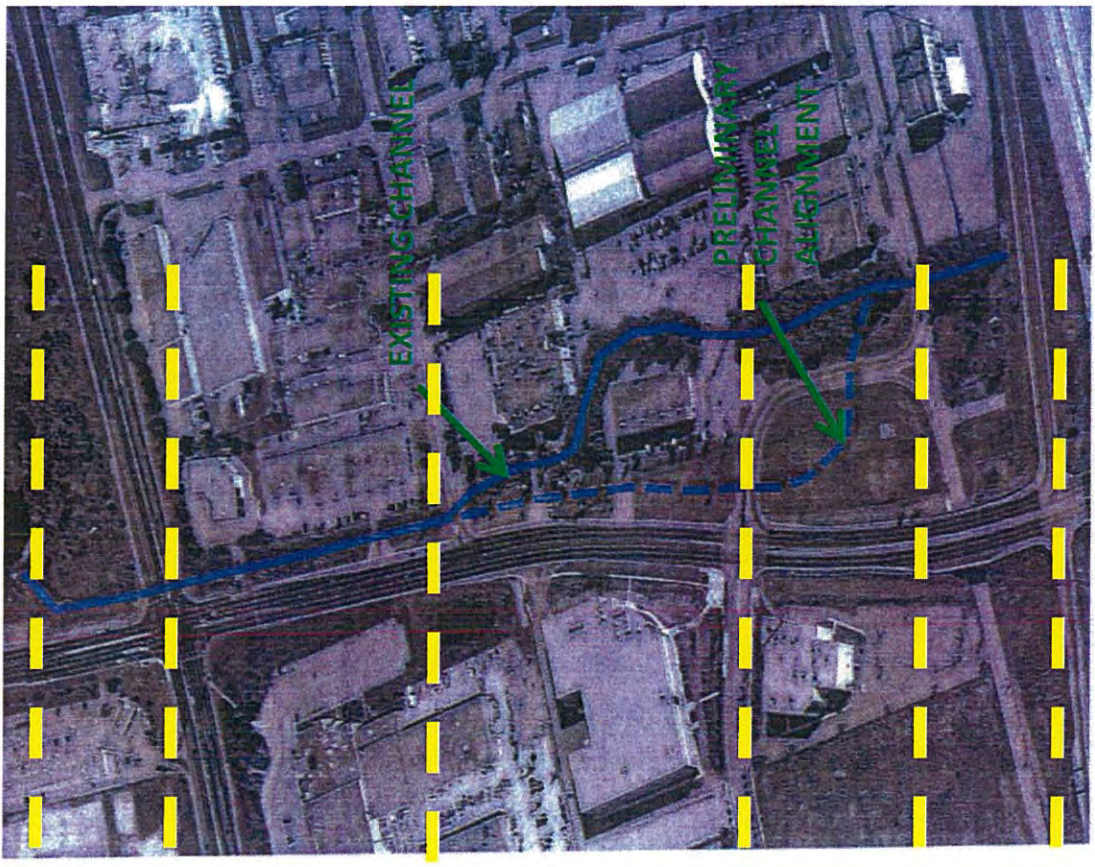
May 2014 – Additional one-on-one meetings with landowners to discuss integrated channel design concept(s)

May 26, 2014 – Updated channel design concepts circulated to all stakeholders

May 28, 2014 – **OMB Pre-Mediation Meeting**

**ATTACHMENT 3 -
Proposed Design solutions for each reach of the channel**

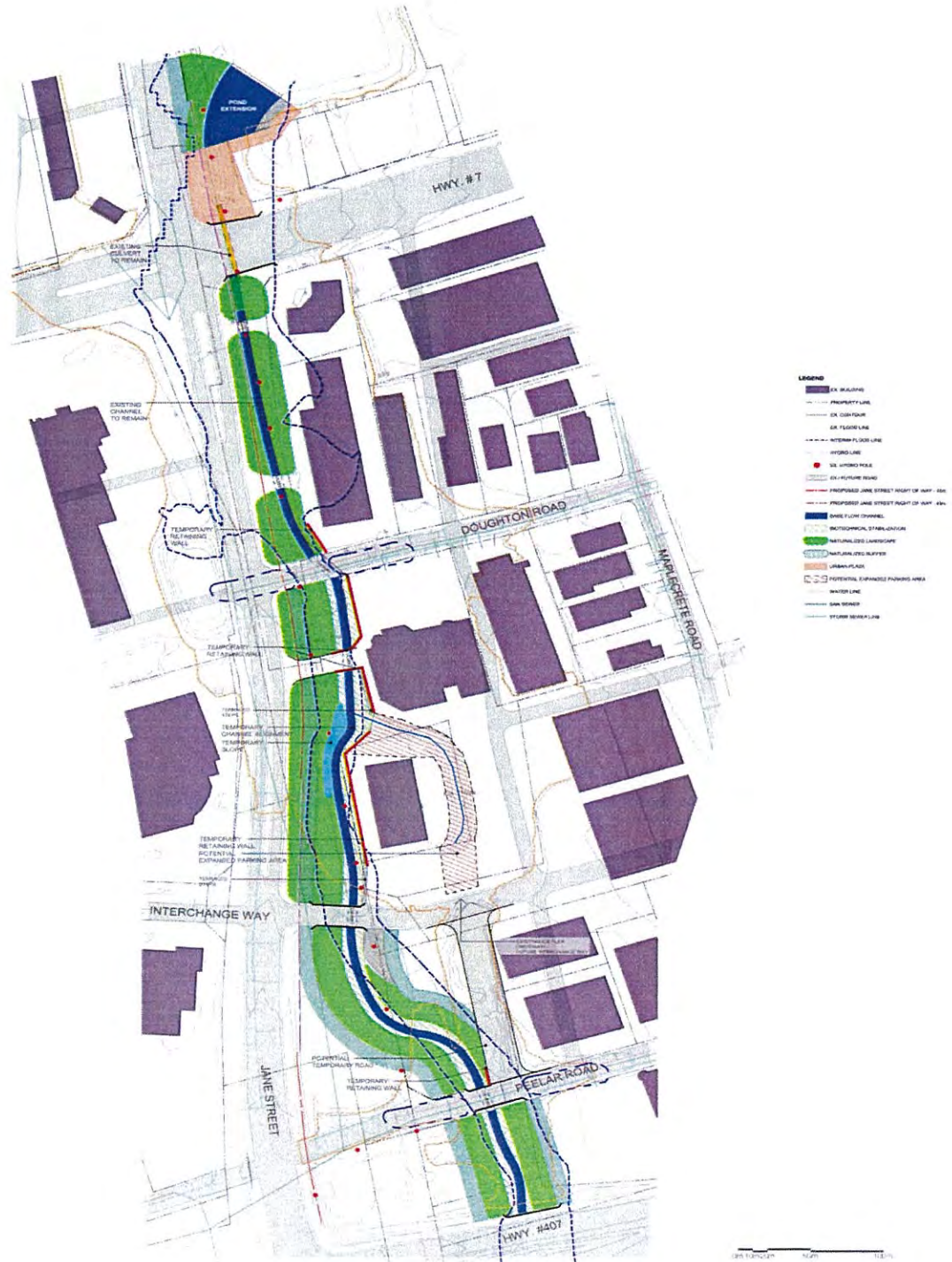
| Reach | Alignment Option | Design solution |
|---------|------------------------------------|---|
| Reach 1 | Follows existing channel alignment | Piped & Piazza |
| Reach 2 | Follows existing channel alignment | Combination Pipe, Piazza, Trough & Open Channel |
| Reach 3 | Alignment to be refined | Open Channel |
| Reach 4 | Alignment to be refined | Open Channel |
| Reach 5 | Follows existing channel alignment | Open Channel |



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ATTACHMENT 4 – INTERIM CHANNEL CONCEPT

MAY 2014



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ATTACHMENT 5 – ULTIMATE CHANNEL CONCEPT

MAY 2014

