

Diamond Schmitt Architects design Transit Terminal for Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

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by Canadian Architect

An inter-regional transit terminal has broken ground at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, playing a key role in the intermodal transit hub to support this burgeoning urban community adjacent to Toronto.

The transit terminal, designed by **Diamond Schmitt Architects**, will serve York Region Rapid Transit's extensive bus network and have pedestrian connection to the Viva Bus Rapid Transit as well as the new terminus of the Toronto Transit Commission's extension of the Spadina subway line. Both the bus terminal and subway are slated to open at the end of 2017.

"The conventional hierarchy of the bus terminal was inverted here, with pedestrians playing the central role in defining circulation and the spaces around the terminal," said Mike Szabo, principal, Diamond Schmitt Architects. The wood-lined SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal is located within a pedestrian plaza and has a large, 4,000 m² (43,000 sq ft) horseshoe-shaped roof over two open platforms and a 910 m² (close to 10,000 sq ft) glazed pavilion.

"Bus traffic is separated from pedestrian circulation by a permeable wooden canopy structure and bus entry," said Szabo. "The buses enter and exit from a single entry at the north end of the site away from the primary pedestrian area, creating a seamless transition between plaza and pedestrian entry to the bus terminal."



VMC Transit Terminal. Photo courtesy of Diamond Schmitt Architects.



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The pavilion houses the main waiting area, staff and service areas, and access to the underground connection to the adjacent TTC subway station. “We employ an exposed heavy timber structure, both because it is a sustainable material with a low carbon footprint as well as to provide a warm and inviting environment,” said Szabo. “Glass windscreens and warming shelters at the platforms protect passengers from the elements while maintaining a sense of openness, allowing patrons to approach from all sides.”

The terminal will have nine bus bays with a central island enhanced by drought-tolerant landscaping and a decorative screen over the relief shaft from the subway track below. “The new bus terminal is an important part of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre transportation hub – the final stop for the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension,” said Toronto City Councillor Josh Colle and TTC Chair.

The \$32.1 million facility is funded by various levels of government and SmartCentres, the developer of Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, which will welcome thousands of commuters and residents. The City of Vaughan foresees VMC housing 25,000 residents and 11,000 jobs, of which at least 5,000 will be new office jobs.

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is the largest urban mixed-use development in Canada. In addition to the Master Plan for VMC, Diamond Schmitt Architects designed the newly opened KPMG office tower there and a mixed-use facility now under construction to house offices, a library, a YMCA and retail.