

From: Jean-François Obregón [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 6:57 AM
To: Clerks@vaughan.ca
Cc: Council@vaughan.ca
Subject: [External] Communication - Direction for Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review 2023

Dear City of Vaughan Council and Staff,

I am concerned by the lack of local representation on regional issues. This can be solved by changing how Local and Regional Councillors get elected. I favour Option 2 in the Staff Report (pg. 5). Given that the province has intervened in a number of municipal matters, I suggest that Council re-affirm its authority to change its composition and how members are elected by updating its By-law. I understand this step has not been taken since 1970.

Improving the local responsibilities of Local and Regional Councillors would improve their accountability to citizens. Regional matters like transit, regional roads, and housing can better reflect local needs. For instance, the impending re-paving of Dufferin St. is a missed opportunity for integrating local concerns. I have raised issues with pedestrian and cyclist safety on Dufferin St. between Glen Shields Ave. and Steeles Ave. soon after its re-design and re-construction in 2009. When I drive, I have not noticed the pavement's present conditions to have an immediate necessity for replacing. Pausing the re-surfacing for a year would allow time for needed road design improvements to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. I have highlighted the need for improved pedestrian and cyclist already on the map and public board as part of the consultation for York Region's Traveller Safety Plan 2023-2027. Making this section of Dufferin St. safer for pedestrians, commuters who walk, and cyclists would encourage further reduction in car trips over time. This would also align with Vaughan's active transportation and sustainability priorities. Thus, electing Local and Regional Councillors on a ward basis could lead to better representation of the local electorate's needs.

Electing Local and Regional Councillors at a ward-level has been done before in the City of Toronto, which most Council members would remember. When Metro Toronto existed, Metro Councillors (upper-tier) were elected at the ward level as of the 1988 municipal election. (1) If the City of Vaughan implemented this approach for the 2026 municipal election, it needs to look at Metro Toronto as an example. It was well-regarded by urbanists and there have been recent calls for improving representation in this way in Toronto. (2)

The province's interventions into municipal matters since 2018 has eroded the strength of local democracy. It is worrying that the Regional Chair of York Region continues to be appointed by the

province. Electing Local and Regional Councillors at a ward-level would improve local representation at York Regional Council and offer a useful counterbalance to provincial intervention on these matters. To be clear, I do not support adding a sixth Local Councillor for the 2026 municipal election.

In summary, I ask that the City of Vaughan Council and Staff take my ideas seriously. Municipal politics is on the front lines of public health, housing and climate change. Having effective local representation and accountability for Local and Regional Councillors would help to address these issues. The City must use its authority to do this.

Thank you.

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(1) Toronto Aldermen gearing up for first direct Metro election". *Toronto Star*, July 16, 1985 via Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1985_Toronto_municipal_election#cite_ref-gearing_2-1
(2) <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2022/11/10/toronto-was-created-by-a-premier-forcing-his-will-on-us-so-whats-changed-in-25-years.html>