

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023      **WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** STRATEGIC INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS  
FRAMEWORK

**FROM:**

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose:**

First, this report identifies a framework to strategic intergovernmental relations support provided by City staff to advance Council-approved initiatives, including advocacy efforts with other government levels led by the Head of Council. Second, it outlines a draft Mandate and Terms of Reference for establishing an Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to support these efforts by further engaging Members of Council and key stakeholders.

### **Report Highlights:**

- At the September 20, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Council directed staff from the Office of Communications and Economic Development (OCED) to prepare a report outlining a government relations strategy to advance Council-approved initiatives.
- The proposed strategy for the City's intergovernmental relations efforts is guided by three strategic actions: identify, advocate and collaborate on opportunities to help implement Council directives.
- The proposed approach aligns with past Council directives, corporate policies and legislation which demonstrate a critical role for the Head of Council in leading intergovernmental relations advocacy efforts on behalf of Vaughan Council and the corporation.
- At the December 12, 2022 Council Meeting, Members of Council approved non-statutory committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council, including an Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee; this report includes recommendations for its proposed Mandate and Terms of Reference. The Sub-Committee provides a critical opportunity to further engage Members of Council.

### **Recommendations:**

1. THAT the framework to supporting intergovernmental relations outlined in this staff report be approved;
2. THAT the Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee of Council is re-established as a Sub-Committee; and
3. THAT the draft Mandate and Terms of Reference for the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee of Council be approved.

### **Background:**

***Municipalities across Ontario are dedicating resources to advance intergovernmental relations efforts. Vaughan is well placed to undertake its own advocacy with other government levels co-ordinated largely by the departments within the Office of Communications and Economic Development (OCED).***

At the September 20, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Members of Council unanimously endorsed a [Member's Resolution](#) requesting a report outlining intergovernmental relations strategic support to advocate for and advance Council-approved initiatives. Furthermore, at the [December 12, 2022](#) Council Meeting, Members of Council approved the establishment of authorized non-statutory committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council, including Intergovernmental Relations. Accordingly, this report includes recommendations for its associated Mandate and Terms of Reference.

The OCED is positioned to advance this work. In December 2021, Council approved a corporate reorganization that brought the Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC) and Economic Development (ED) departments together under the umbrella of the OCED, along with Service Vaughan (formerly named Access Vaughan). The shift has further aligned and utilized staff institutional knowledge, budget resources and synergies between CSC and ED. Consequently, this allows for more effective intergovernmental relations support through strategic communications, policy research and grant application development and submissions for Council-approved priorities. In addition, the departments can leverage communications, economic development and engagement staff to develop compelling narratives to advance City business, with resources such as the findings from the 2022 Citizen and Business Surveys.

### **Previous Reports/Authority:**

[Intergovernmental Relations Advocacy Efforts – Member's Resolution](#)

September 22, 2022

[Non-Statutory Committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council](#)

December 12, 2022

[Cultural and Economic Partnerships](#)

Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report. May 8, 2019.

[CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION - BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES](#)

Resolution of Regional Councillor Gino Rosati, Committee of the Whole (2), December 12, 2022

[Web Summit 2022 and International Economic Relations Program, 2023](#)

Committee of the Whole (2) Report, December 12, 2022

## **Analysis and Options:**

***The City's intergovernmental relations efforts continue to be guided by an integrated framework of three strategic actions: identify, advocate, and collaborate on opportunities to advance Council-approved priorities and initiatives.***



- 1. Identify:** Identify Council-approved priorities that need strategic intergovernmental relations support for implementation. For example, advancing the 2022-2026 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, North Maple Regional Park, and the Nine Point Action Plan to Fight Traffic Gridlock in Vaughan are examples of initiatives that form the basis of successful intergovernmental efforts. These efforts include ongoing identification of non-taxation funding sources and grant opportunities.
- 2. Advocate:** Advocacy requires the development of effective external and internal communications and briefing material to raise awareness and interest in Vaughan's city-building projects. Advocacy is further undertaken by corporate-wide project co-ordination of government and stakeholder application funding opportunities.
- 3. Collaborate:** Given Vaughan's strategic location in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, the City's rapidly growing population, access to critical transportation networks and vital community infrastructure like hospitals and post-secondary institutions, Vaughan is well placed to collaborate and align its Council-approved priorities with that of other government priorities to deliver win-win outcomes. Furthermore, collaboration comes in the form of enterprise-wide efforts by City staff (working with external agencies) to collaborate, often in the form of cross-functional working groups to advance projects, including intergovernmental relations efforts.

***City staff's work to deliver intergovernmental relations support by integrating the three above-mentioned strategic actions is further outlined below.***

**1. IDENTIFY**

***Staff reports, Member's Resolutions and overall business conducted at committee meetings present critical opportunities to identify initiatives for advocacy.***

Meetings of Members of Council are essential to the municipality's governance structure, where Council business is approved and where staff receive direction to begin implementing Council-approved priorities. As part of the project management processes following Council endorsement, staff will proactively identify external funding opportunities from other government levels.

**2. ADVOCATE AND COLLABORATE**

***Meetings with and correspondence to other government representatives help raise awareness and identify potential funding opportunities for Council-approved priorities.***

The Head of Council's office often receives requests to meet with elected officials at other government levels or initiate meetings to discuss at length Council positions. A recent example includes an April 2023 meeting between the Mayor, the Federal Transportation Minister and the Vaughan-Woodbridge Member of Parliament to discuss funding opportunities for anti-gridlock infrastructure projects supported by Council. Economic Development, CSC and Infrastructure Development staff helped develop presentation material for the briefing. Furthermore, these kinds of engagements are essential to advocate for Council-approved priorities such as the 2022-2026 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, and OCED staff will co-ordinate briefing notes and presentations with other staff.

It is also common for the Head of Council to issue correspondence, stating Council's position, to other elected officials. For example, this took place in April 2023 when Council approved a staff report on correspondence to the Prime Minister and Federal Attorney General and to the Premier and the Provincial Attorney General on issues pertaining to public safety.

Intergovernmental relations work, including the *Media Relations for City Staff* corporate policy, continues to be informed by section 226.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, which reads:

**Head of Council as chief executive officer**

**226.1** As chief executive officer of a municipality, the head of Council shall,

- a) uphold and promote the purposes of the municipality;
- b) promote public involvement in the municipality's activities;

- c) act as the representative of the municipality both within and outside the municipality, and promote the municipality locally, nationally and internationally; and
- d) participate in and foster activities that enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and its residents.

***Timely, effective and constructive strategic communications support for the Head of Council, conveying Council-approved positions, is critical to intergovernmental relations advocacy efforts.***

CSC staff work closely with other departments to proactively or reactively provide communications support for the Mayor, including, but not limited to, meeting and media briefing notes, speaking remarks, media quotes and public statements. This support is consistent with the City's *Media Relations for City Staff* corporate policy, which identifies the Mayor as the primary spokesperson for the municipality. Members of Council are often provided with Council Communications Packages that include this information to share on their own social media channels and in their eNewsletters.

### **3. COLLABORATE**

***Meetings with senior elected officials and stakeholders and media monitoring all present vital opportunities for staff to identify, develop and submit applications for government funding. In turn, City grant applications provide the basis for further advocacy and collaboration with other governments.***

OCED staff collaborate in the completion of funding applications by liaising with other departments across the corporation. Grants secure non-taxation revenue to deliver city infrastructure, programs and services. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, grant activity has increased with support from all governments. In 2022, 20 grants were successfully awarded to the City, representing a combined value of \$8,589,880. There are currently 12 grants pending decision, valued at \$16,569,270.

### **4. IDENTIFY, ADVOCATE, COLLABORATE**

***OCED provides additional support for the Mayor, Council and administration members using the three strategic actions to ensure ongoing awareness about other government businesses and opportunities to move Council initiatives forward.***

- **Issues Monitoring and Analysis** – OCED staff monitor government announcements (e.g. Throne Speech), legislation and media reports related to the City. With support from other departments, memorandums are prepared that identify the relevance of new legislation or announcements and how it relates to Vaughan's Council-approved priorities, as required. The recent briefing notes issued to Council about the 2023 provincial and federal budgets are examples of issues monitoring and analysis.

- **Stakeholder Relations Engagement and Management** – OCED staff work closely with crucial municipal stakeholder organizations, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ontario Big City Mayors’ Caucus (OBCM) and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) on issues of importance to Vaughan. For example, OCED staff, with support from Planning and Growth Management, continue to liaise with GTAA staff on flight paths. OCED staff have participated in GTAA community meetings and prepared staff communications and memorandums regarding this particular issue.
  - Vaughan is a member of the Municipal Government Relations Network (MGRN), a working group of Ontario municipal intergovernmental affairs bureaucrats. This group shares best practices and strengthens community networks to deal more effectively with constantly changing political environments. In-person meetings typically occur twice a year. Vaughan hosted the MGRN in 2019, welcoming 14 municipalities and four regions from across Ontario.
- **Government Event Announcements** - In collaboration with the Mayor's Office, OCED staff provide communications support for when the Head of Council takes part in announcements made by either provincial or federal government representatives in Vaughan.
- **FCM and AMO Conference Participation** – OCED staff take part in the annual FCM and AMO conferences. Given that 50 per cent of Vaughan Council for the 2022-2026 Term of Council are new, OCED staff are exploring ways to further increase awareness and Council participation in such opportunities as the FCM and AMO conferences.
- **Inbound International Delegations** - OCED staff arrange formal meetings with international delegations and dignitaries (including, but not limited to, consuls general, ambassadors and other public and private-sector leaders) from identified target markets. For example, the Mayor and Members of Council welcomed a delegation from Baguio City, Philippines, to Vaughan City Hall in November 2022 to mark the 25th anniversary of the twinning agreement between the two cities. OCED staff assisted in coordinating this visit, and they continue to plan the City’s May 2023 Economic and Cultural Mission to the Philippines.
- **Outbound Business Mission Support** – International missions are key tools in government relations and economic development. In 2023, Council directed staff to undertake two missions: the previously mentioned mission to the Philippines and an agri-food industry mission to Italy and Germany. Such missions can be cultural and economic oriented.

- **Cultural and Economic Partnerships** – in 2019, Council approved Policy 02.C.01, to govern Cultural and Economic Partnerships with international communities. The renewed policy set in motion the modernization of existing Friendship and Twin City Agreements. It also set the standards for future Cultural, Economic, Cultural and Economic, or letters/memorandum of understanding with international communities.
  - Cultural, Economic, and Cultural and Economic Partnerships are formal long-term agreements to achieve specified goals and outcomes. Partnerships require Council approval.
  - Letters of Agreement and/or Memoranda of Understanding are symbolic or ceremonial expressions of mutual interest. These *“may be executed by the Mayor (or a designated member of Council by the Mayor), the City Manager, or Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations (or Director-level designate) without Council approval.”*
  - There are three partnerships and letters of agreement in process at present: Ramla, Israel; Baguio City, Philippines; Sora, Italy.
  - The 2019 policy was first put into practice in November 2019, during the Israel Business Mission, when the City entered an MOU with Ramla, Israel, to advance shared cultural opportunities and experiences between both cities. On November 23, 2021, a virtual summit between Vaughan and Ramla took place. The summit discussion included developing ideas, objectives and deliverables that will make up the Cultural Partnership Action Plan. City staff are working towards a new four-year Vaughan-Ramla Cultural Partnership Action Plan for presentation to Council in 2023 for approval.
  
- **Economic Development and Government Relations Business Service** – OCED staff continue to develop resources for businesses about different levels of government, their roles and responsibilities, and the programs and services available. These resources inform corporate calls and business engagements led by the ED department.
  
- **Economic Development Stakeholder Relations** – ED works with various non-governmental organization (NGO) stakeholders to create opportunities for business and job growth. These include local, regional, provincial, and national organizations like chambers of commerce, business associations, Universities and Colleges, trade unions, and crown corporations. These are vital channels for the City to learn about emerging issues at other levels of government, policy directions, and program and service opportunities.



- **York Region Committee of the Whole Briefing Note** - Before each York Region Committee of the Whole meeting, OCED staff provide a briefing note to Regional Councillors based on comments provided by the appropriate Vaughan City staff subject matter experts. This briefing material helps to align priorities between the lower and upper-tier municipalities and improve collaboration between Vaughan and York Region.

***The intergovernmental relations framework strategic actions will be further enhanced with the establishment of the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, further supporting the Head of Council's advocacy engagements with greater Council involvement.***

As noted, at the [December 12, 2022](#) Council Meeting, Members of Council approved the establishment of non-statutory committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council, including an ad hoc Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee. Ad hoc and sub-committees operate under the same procedural by-law, however, the main difference is the composition. Sub-committees only consist of Members of Council, whereas ad hoc committees have external members from the public. Consistent with municipalities that operate committees, including [Peel Region](#), staff recommend an Intergovernmental Relations Sub-committee.

Staff recommend this sub-committee meet up to once a quarter, with meeting dates selected to align with critical government relations milestones, including, but not limited to, federal and provincial budget statements and the annual AMO and FCM conferences, among others (Attachment 1: Mandate and Terms of Reference - Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee).

The proposed overall mandate of the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee is to advance Council-approved priorities and be further directed by the framework's strategic actions to identify, advocate and collaborate.

This Sub-Committee and its mandate will be supported by OCED staff.

### **Financial Impact:**

None.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations:**

Intergovernmental relations means Vaughan works closely with all governments. As the City continues to undertake its advocacy efforts, ensuring the appropriate elected representatives and members of the bureaucracy are aware is critical. Again, this effort will be done through engagements principally led by the Head of Council, including correspondence, meetings and public statements and engagements on Council-approved priorities and other top-of-mind emerging matters of importance to Vaughan.

**Conclusion:**

As noted, intergovernmental relations efforts continue to shape the work of Ontario municipalities, and advocacy with other government levels is essential to Vaughan successfully advancing Council-approved priorities. Accordingly, the City's intergovernmental relations efforts continue to be guided by three strategic actions: identify, advocate and collaborate on opportunities to advance Council-approved priorities and initiatives.

As the report notes, past Council directives, corporate policies and legislation continue to demonstrate a critical role for the Head of Council in leading advocacy efforts on behalf of Vaughan Council. Establishing the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee will further help inform the City's advocacy efforts by strengthening the above-mentioned strategic actions. Finally, intergovernmental relations will continue to inform the work of the Office of Communications and Economic Development, and OCED will continue to serve as a principal coordinator with other departments throughout the corporation.

**For more information**, contact Michael Genova, Chief, Office of Communications and Economic Development

**Attachment:**

1. Mandate and Terms of Reference - Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee.

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