



C8.
Communication
Intergovernmental Relations
Sub-Committee – April 8, 2024
Item No. 1

DATE: April 8, 2024

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
City of Vaughan Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee

FROM: Nick Spensieri, City Manager
Michael Genova, Chief, Communications and Economic
Development

RE: Communication: April 5, 2024, MP/MPP Breakfast Roundtable

Purpose

This Communication provides information about the April 5, 2024, MP/MPP Breakfast Roundtable at Vaughan City Hall with federal and provincial representatives.

Background

The City of Vaughan continues undertaking critical steps to enhance its intergovernmental relations efforts with open, accountable, and ongoing advocacy initiatives.

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 the Council approved the establishment of authorized non-statutory committees for the 2022-2026 Term of the Council, including Intergovernmental Relations.

During the May 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Members of the Council endorsed a [Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework report](#) that identifies a framework for 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. The approved 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. Second, that report further outlined a draft Mandate and Terms of Reference for establishing an Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to support these efforts by further engaging Members of the Council and key stakeholders.

The inaugural meeting of the City's [Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee took place on November 2, 2023](#). During the meeting, conversations began about holding a roundtable discussion with Vaughan's provincial and federal representatives in 2024, an event which is in keeping with the strategic actions to identify, advocate and collaborate on shared intergovernmental priorities. During the [January 23, 2024 Committee of the Whole \(1\) meeting, a Member's Resolution](#) by Local and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri was endorsed by Councillors establishing advocacy priorities for the 2024 MP/MPP breakfast roundtable. These priorities included:

- a. Highway 7/Concord GO Station and Kirby GO Station
- b. community safety and well-being initiatives
 - i. bail reform
 - ii. Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) export inspections
 - iii. proposed Home and Vehicle Security Tax Credit
- c. financial support for the settlement of asylum seekers
- d. financial support for McMichael Canadian Art Collection's capital campaign and future expansion efforts

Analysis

On Friday, April 5, 2024, Mayor Steven Del Duca and Members of the Council hosted federal and provincial representatives for a [breakfast roundtable discussion](#). This networking information session marked the latest intergovernmental relations initiative by the City of Vaughan to advocate for and discuss issues of importance with other governments.

Mayor Del Duca emphasized the importance of collaboration across all orders of government, exemplified by the provincial government's decision to allocate \$9 million to launching York University Medical School in Vaughan and the federal government's decision to provide Vaughan with \$59 million from the Housing Accelerator Fund to help build more homes rapidly.

Consistent with the Council-approved agenda, what follows is a further analysis of the advocacy priorities raised during the breakfast roundtable discussions:

Establishing a Highway 7/Concord GO station and Kirby GO station

The City of Vaughan proposes establishing two new stations along the Barrie Line as part of the GO Expansion program. They are the Highway 7/Concord GO station and Kirby GO station. The Highway 7/Concord GO Station would be located between the Rutherford GO and Downsview Park GO stations. The Kirby GO station would be located between the King City GO and Maple GO stations.

Vaughan's communities are constantly growing and changing. Vaughan is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, with a current population of more than 344,412 people and 240,100 jobs. Now through 2051, Vaughan will become home to 228,800 more people, bringing the total expected population to 570,400 people.

Additionally, businesses in the city will also offer 111,400 more jobs, bringing the total employment figure to approximately 351,500 jobs. This expected growth will account for almost one-third of York Region's growth over the next three decades. Therefore, additional regional public transit service is needed in the city to connect commuters to jobs, tourism attractions, healthcare, and other civic amenities and improve the quality of life in local communities.

The GO Expansion will bring faster, more frequent train service to the region by adding more trains, stations, options, and convenience to support population growth, alleviate traffic congestion, and create economic opportunities.

The GO Expansion program will see 80 per cent of residents living within two kilometres of rapid transit. Two-way, all-day service to the Barrie line, delivered every 15 minutes, seven days a week, will result in 10,000 train trips per week, giving commuters the flexibility to hop on the next train that will be just around the corner. As part of this project, major upgrades (such as grade separation) have been completed at the Rutherford GO station, and construction to upgrade the Maple GO station is currently underway.

Metrolinx released an Initial Business Case on March 4, 2023, that studies the feasibility of the proposed Highway 7/Concord GO station. This station would be located north of Highway 7, south of Langstaff Road, east of Keele Street, and west of Dufferin Street, between the Rutherford GO station and Downsview Park GO station along the Barrie Line. The proposed site of the Highway 7/Concord GO station is a potential multi-modal transit hub under the City of Vaughan's Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan area is estimated to accommodate up to 19,500 people by 2051 and beyond and approximately 3,000 jobs once fully built. The Highway 7/Concord GO station is planned to be located within a Major Transit Station Area with several existing and planned transit services, which include the Barrie GO line, the VIVA Bus Rapid Transit line, the future 407 Transitway and the GO Bus Service.

The Kirby GO station would be located between the King City GO and Maple GO stations along the Barrie Line in Block 27 (north Vaughan). Block 27 is located between Kirby Road to the north, Keele Street to the east, Teston Road to the south and Jane Street to the west. It has an area of approximately 400 hectares (990 acres). The Block 27 New Community Area has been designed to be transit-oriented, compact, vibrant, inclusive, healthy, sustainable, and diverse. It includes a mix of uses, such as commercial, low- and mid-rise residential housing, and community facilities, such as schools and parks. The Block Plan application and Collector Street Environmental Assessment (EA) in the Block 27 Secondary Plan area are currently underway. The EA for the Collector Street Network and Block Plan application in the Block 27 Secondary Plan area will support the establishment of the proposed Kirby GO station. Ridership forecasts suggest the Kirby GO station will attract approximately 10,600 daily riders by 2031.

Community Safety Initiatives

- ***Bail Reform: The City of Vaughan urges the federal government to modernize bail reform to keep dangerous offenders off the streets by working more closely with local government stakeholders, including front-line first responders, among others.***
- ***Canadian Border Services: The City of Vaughan encourages the federal government to review and enhance protocols by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) for the screening and/or inspection of exports leaving Canada. Reviews should be done in consultation with Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) police services and other law enforcement partners to ensure Canada's approach is consistent with established best practices adopted by peer countries.***
- ***Home and Vehicle Safety Tax Credit: The City of Vaughan calls on both orders of governments to establish a Home and Vehicle Security Tax Credit that individuals could claim for a partial refund of the purchase of upgrades and devices relevant to home and vehicle security. Eligible devices could include, but need not be limited to, household alarm systems, anti-theft devices for vehicles, locks, smart doorbell devices, and Faraday bags.***

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, safeguarding Vaughan's quality of life by stopping reckless, illegal behaviour and the spread of creeping lawlessness remains a critical city-building priority for Vaughan Council and municipalities across Canada and requires a renewed call to action of ideas, initiatives, and plans rooted in the principles of safety, alertness, focus, and effectiveness.

The City of Vaughan's 2022 Citizen Satisfaction Survey identifies public safety as a leading issue for residents (a jump to 14 per cent of respondents from only 5 per cent in 2018). Vaughan Council knows community safety is fundamental to city-building and has made this issue a pillar of the 2022-2026 Term of Council Strategic Plan.

During York Regional Police's (YRP) 2024 operating budget deliberations, Vaughan's Regional Councillors called for increased funding to support front-line officers so they have the equipment, training, support, and resources they need to keep communities safe and tackle crime. This advocacy is consistent with their support of an increase of 3.9 per cent to YRP's 2023 operating budget.

Throughout 2023, a series of community safety meetings and town halls were held to provide safety updates and hear from the community. These meetings included presentations by YRP, the City's By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services team, Members of the Council, and other key stakeholders.

Ongoing public feedback includes incidents ranging from reckless activities, like illegal auto meet-ups, to car thefts and desecration of property. These crimes include the recent alarming rise in antisemitism and the targeting of Jewish individuals and Jewish-owned businesses ignited in large part by the events of October 2023 and the ongoing, egregious acts of violence from Hamas against the people of Israel.

Theft of vehicles is a growing concern in Vaughan and York Region. In January 2023, Mayor Del Duca also wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau calling on the federal government to urgently modernize Canada's bail system to ensure dangerous offenders remain off the streets from committing crimes ranging from gun violence to home break-ins and auto thefts. In the same month, the Mayor also wrote to Canada's then Public Safety Minister on auto thefts asking what protocols the CBSA uses for the screening and/or inspection of exports leaving the country. The Mayor's letter urged the federal government to consider reviewing their processes, in collaboration with the GTHA police services and other law enforcement partners, to ensure Canada's approach is consistent with established best practices. In March 2023, Prime Minister Trudeau responded to this correspondence echoing these concerns. In spring 2023, the Federal Ministry of Justice announced efforts to create targeted reforms to the Criminal Code to update Canada's bail system. In April 2023, Vaughan Council endorsed a pilot program to distribute key fob protective bags to residents to help deter auto theft criminals. Since the program launched in August 2023, more than 5,000 key fob protective bags have been provided to residents city-wide. Since September 2023, YRP recovered 158 stolen vehicles with a value of more than \$10.4 million and charged 73 people with over 350 offences.

The provincial government announced an investment of \$51 million over three years to fight auto theft by helping police identify and dismantle organized crime networks. Nearly 600 stolen vehicles were recovered earlier this month by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) along with the CBSA after inspecting 390 shipping containers at the port of Montreal as part of "Project Vector," which found that around 75 per cent of the recovered cars were reported stolen in Ontario.

The federal government hosted a National Summit on Combatting Auto Theft on February 8, 2024, in Ottawa. They are providing police services in Ontario with \$121 million to tackle gun and gang violence and the surge in auto thefts and carjackings. Another \$28 million is being delivered to the CBSA to prevent the export of stolen vehicles. In Vaughan, 551 auto theft incidents were reported to YRP between January 1 to March 31, 2023. Since the beginning of this year, 428 auto thefts have been reported, demonstrating an approximately 22 per cent decline in auto theft. The collective effort made by all three orders of government has started to show some progress, but more work needs to be done.

Support for asylum seekers in York Region

- ***The City of Vaughan requests that the federal government fund and implement a regional response that will coordinate asylum seekers' access to adequate shelter and support. The City does not have direct jurisdiction over immigration and refugee policies. Vaughan remains dedicated to working closely with all levels of government to ensure individuals seeking refuge in this city receive the necessary support and assistance.***
- ***The City recognizes the invaluable contributions of local organizations. Collaborative efforts between these organizations and the City, along with York Region, provincial and federal governments, are crucial in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all residents, including refugee claimants and asylum seekers.***

Municipalities across Ontario are experiencing an influx of asylum seekers, resulting in unprecedented demand exceeding the capacity of the emergency and transitional housing system and straining other social services and supports. York Region and the City of Vaughan are in a similar situation. York Region's Emergency Housing System is already operating at total capacity and cannot accommodate influxes of asylum seekers. In addition, minimal affordable housing is available in the York Region, which limits market housing options for asylum seekers.

Approximately 50 asylum seekers are sheltering at a site not intended for safe and suitable occupancy in Vaughan while waiting for other housing solutions. The federal government is responsible for planned immigration (economic and sponsored migrants and refugees designated for resettlement). Since asylum seekers are only considered planned or permanent residents once their refugee claim is approved, settlement support for this group falls to the provincial government.

York Region is working with partners to provide critical support and services, including:

- **Canadian Red Cross:** They provide primary site reception and registration services and site client access to food, transportation, laundry, and other urgent services, including health and wellness, psychosocial support, and related service navigation.
- **COSTI Immigrant Services and their partners:** They provide asylum claimants settlement services and support, including language training, employment, housing, and connections to other community supports and services.
- **ANCHOR Canada:** The work of the Canadian Red Cross and COSTI Immigrant Services is complemented by services and supports provided by York Region and other key partners, on- and off-site. ANCHOR Canada continues to provide social and cultural support to clients.

In October 2023, the York Regional Council approved \$4.3 million to support asylum seekers in the York Region with interim housing solutions and other wrap-around supports. Additionally, York Region is working with other community partners to provide wrap-around services to help asylum seekers settle, achieve stability, and find employment.

York Regional Council will continue to advocate for federal funding through the Interim Housing Assistance Program to offset upfront municipal costs fully. This effort includes requesting that the federal government fund and implement a regional response that will coordinate access to adequate shelter and support for asylum seekers.

McMichael Canadian Art Collection – Revitalization and Capital Campaign

- ***The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is expected to publicly announce a capital campaign for private donations once the Province confirms support for the capital renewal. The target for private contributions is \$50 million. To back the federal and provincial funding applications, it is recommended the Mayor of Vaughan provides his support for the funding requests via conversations with local MP/MPPs.***

The McMichael is a premier cultural destination that generates significant social and economic benefits for the local community and attracts visitors from around the globe. Located in Kleinburg, the art gallery building was originally constructed in 1954 and lies adjacent to 100 acres of forested land along the Humber River. This land includes a network of outdoor paths, hiking trails and the McMichael Cemetery, where six Group of Seven members and the McMichael founders have been laid to rest.

As stewards of a rich collection of Canadian art and more than 100 acres of river valley and woodlands, the McMichael makes a unique social and cultural contribution to the province and—through its vibrant touring exhibition program—to Canada. This is in addition to the pre-pandemic economic contribution of an estimated \$6.1 million toward Ontario's Gross Domestic Product. Before the pandemic, in 2019, McMichael's total attendance was 119,211 with self-generated revenue of \$5.4 million.

The McMichael is facing many infrastructure challenges related to the restrictions of the physical building, aging mechanical systems, and the impacts of climate change on the surrounding lands.

The McMichael recently undertook a Fit to Function and Landscape Study to assess the current state of its infrastructure. The results indicate capital renewal of the building and landscape is urgently needed to prevent the failure of aging building components and to ensure the protection of \$700 million in provincial assets. This is also necessary for the gallery to retain Class A status, which is required for hosting traveling exhibitions and obtaining loans from other institutions. The loss of Class A status would put the McMichael's exhibition program and principal revenue-generating activity at risk.

While piecemeal additions have been made to the core gallery building over the last 35 years, these adaptations do not meet the accessibility, curatorial, or security standards of a 21st-century cultural institution. The built form of the gallery also does not provide the necessary spaces to accommodate world-class installations, educational programs, or events. There is also an urgent need for a major capital investment to replace aging mechanical systems such as electrical, HVAC, fire suppression, and water to preserve the integrity of the collection. Finally, many of the trees planted by the McMichaels have been impacted by climate change and have also reached the end of their lives. There is a need to revitalize the property and a desire to reanimate the Carrying Place Trail, an ancestral trading route between Georgian Bay and the Lake Ontario waterfront, in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

The McMichael is revitalizing and expanding the gallery and surrounding lands to keep pace with the growth of Vaughan's tourism sector and continue serving as a world-class cultural anchor and premier destination for art, culture, and wellness. This revitalization would enable growth in McMichael's revenue-generating functions across all business lines. McMichael's proposed future state would improve art gallery functions, workspaces and revenue-generation spaces through expansion and renovation of the existing building. The McMichael anticipates that based on the future state, attendance projections could increase by 150 per cent for a total of roughly 290,000 visitors per year. Revitalization would also enable revenue growth from the current \$2.4 million per year to at least \$4.5 million per year within five years of completion. This growth would derive from increased revenue across all business lines, including exhibition attendance, the gallery shop, the restaurant, weddings, tours, and programs.

Based on a report provided by the Osborne Group, the future state will generate an increase in Gross Domestic Product within the province of up to \$18.8 million annually. The total cost of the revitalization project is estimated to be \$150 million. The McMichael anticipates funding will be collected equally from the Province, the federal government and private donors.

The McMichael plans to launch a capital campaign to raise \$50 million in private support over the next three to five years, to be matched by provincial and federal support. In addition, short-term expansion of programs and exhibitions is projected to increase revenue from admissions and programs by 42 per cent, which will further contribute to the cost of the revitalization project.

The McMichael is also exploring two open sources of federal funding:

- The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund supports the improvement of physical conditions for arts, heritage, and culture. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis with a maximum contribution of \$15 million.
- The Infrastructure Canada—Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program supports improving the condition of community buildings in Canadian communities, including retrofits and construction of new buildings. The McMichael applied to this program in spring 2023.

Over the past two years, the McMichael has worked closely with Hariri Pontarini Architects and the City of Vaughan's Public Works department on detailed renderings, a budget and landscape plan for the revitalization.

The McMichael has been in discussions with the provincial government regarding the expansion project since 2019 and is awaiting instructions for the next steps. During this time, the McMichael has submitted a Case for Support, a Business Plan, and, more recently, detailed financial projections. The Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sport is reviewing the proposal and will advise the McMichael if it can proceed with a Stage One Planning application. The Treasury Board would review this application to determine whether the McMichael can proceed with a full capital renewal or only the repair and rehabilitation of the current facility and systems. Through a capital renewal project, the McMichael is requesting a \$50 million contribution from the Province. Additionally, the McMichael is pursuing federal funding through existing programs and other federal sources to support the capital renewal. The McMichael has applied for \$25 million through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings programs with Infrastructure Canada. Infrastructure Canada is currently assessing whether an Environmental Assessment or Indigenous consultation process would be required before awarding funds. Lastly, the McMichael will also need to identify other federal funding sources to raise an additional \$25 million for a total contribution of \$50 million from the federal government.

Next Steps

The breakfast roundtable discussion was highly productive, and all government representatives appreciated the opportunity to engage with one another further. Moving forward, the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee can serve as a critical forum for further and more frequent opportunities to advance the roundtable advocacy priorities and other city-building initiatives. City staff will continue to monitor for government announcements that present opportunities to secure funding.

For more information, please contact Maria Papadopoulos, Program Manager, Strategic Economic Relations at maria.papadopoulos@vaughan.ca.

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Nick Spensieri
City Manager