

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: 2023-2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW: INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE AND MILAN URBAN FOOD
POLICY PACT

FROM:

Michael Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

This report is an update about the work and initiatives undertaken by the City of Vaughan's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, which held its inaugural meeting in November 2023, and to seek Council's approval for Vaughan to join the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Report Highlights

- Advocacy with other levels of government is essential to Vaughan successfully advancing Council-approved priorities. Vaughan's Mayor leads the City's intergovernmental relations mandate, and the work is further supported through the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, whose members' efforts are further informed by the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework.
- The inaugural meeting of the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee took place on November 2, 2023. This Sub-Committee is an important forum to action on the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework's three strategic actions: identify, advocate and collaborate. The Sub-Committee has met four times over its inaugural year of operation.
- Based on the work of the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, on April 5, 2024, Mayor Steven Del Duca and Members of the Council hosted federal and provincial representatives for a breakfast roundtable discussion.

Report Highlights continued

- The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee continues to serve as a collaborative forum for external stakeholder organizations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) to engage the City about these organizations' advocacy priorities and to align potential efforts with Vaughan.
- City staff have leveraged the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to brief about City initiatives that have emerged from the City's economic and cultural development missions to key international markets, and for the Sub-Committee members to identify further opportunities to build on the success of City-led international missions.
- Looking ahead to 2025, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee will remain an important forum to understand the evolving political landscape, and to ensure Council-approved priorities are advocated to other government levels and stakeholder organizations.
- Economic Development is recommending that the City join the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact as a key IGR and Economic Development opportunity to advance trade and investment in the food industry.

Recommendations

1. THAT the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee 2023-2024 Year-In-Review report be received.
2. THAT Council delegate authority to the Mayor to submit a Milan Urban Food Policy Pact subscription form (Attachment 2) on behalf of the City of Vaughan.

Background

Advocacy with other levels of government is essential to Vaughan successfully advancing Council-approved priorities. Vaughan's Mayor leads the City's intergovernmental relations mandate, and the work is further supported through the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, whose members' efforts are further informed by the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework.

At the September 20, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) meeting, Members of Council unanimously endorsed a Member's Resolution by Deputy Mayor, Local and Regional Councillor Linda Jackson 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 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 Mayor.

The approved strategy for the City's intergovernmental relations efforts is guided by three strategic actions:

1. Identify: Identify Council-approved priorities that need strategic intergovernmental relations support for implementation. These efforts include ongoing identification of non-taxation funding sources and grant opportunities. For example, Mayor Steven Del Duca's October 5, 2023, announcement with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that Vaughan would receive \$59 million to build more housing units as part of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund.
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 coordination 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.

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, which served as an important forum to action on the Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework's three strategic actions: identify, advocate and collaborate.

The membership of the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee consists of Local and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri as Chair, Local and Regional Councillor Mario G. Racco as Vice-Chair, with further representation from Ward 3 Councillor Rosanna DeFrancesca.

The Sub-Committee's objectives include:

- To identify and inform opportunities to advocate on City priorities; and
- To provide new opportunities to advance City priorities; and
- To receive regular updates and briefings on emerging issues and advocacy effort progress, including briefings from other organizations and levels of government.

During the meeting, conversations took place 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 a 2024 MP/MPP breakfast roundtable. These priorities included:

- **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; these 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- ***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.

Based on the work of the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, on 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 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.

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee continues to serve as a collaborative forum for external stakeholder organizations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to engage the City about these organizations' advocacy priorities and to align potential efforts with Vaughan.

During the April 8, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting, City staff undertook briefings about the provincial and federal budgets. Further to these presentations, Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy Centre, AMO and Mathieu Bélanger, Executive Director, Policy and Public Affairs, FCM, presented, respectively. The timing of these presentations coincided with the provincial and federal budgets and the work undertaken by both AMO and FCM to advocate on behalf of municipal priorities. Of note both organizations raised the importance of advocacy for housing, infrastructure funding to support housing construction.

It should be noted that City staff take part in annual AMO and FCM conferences, and further report back on their participation in these conferences to the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, as was the case during the September 16, 2024, meeting. City staff welcome the opportunity to invite back AMO and FCM to future sub-committee meetings in 2025.

Furthermore, FCM is an important, consistent and long-standing grant funding partner for municipalities like Vaughan, and supports the City's alternative revenue generation efforts led through the Economic Development department's grant-writing staff. A grant update was provided by City staff during the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee's September 16, 2024, meeting.

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee has also acted as a critical community link between the City with organizations like the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) to provide airport operations updates and for members of the public to make deputations on such matters.

Vaughan City staff take part in the GTAA's many in-person and virtual engagements about airport operations. In turn, GTAA staff presented during the April 8, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting, which included information about the GTAA's Noise Management Program.

A public GTAA Open House will be taking place on Wednesday, December 11 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at City Hall. This is consistent with ongoing discussions at meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, Committee of the Whole, and a Council directive for staff from the GTAA and Nav Canada to further update the Vaughan community, Council and staff about the GTAA's ongoing efforts to mitigate noise pollution,

GTAA and Nav Canada staff will be on hand to meet with residents and address any questions or comments about ongoing operations at Toronto Pearson Airport. Council is also invited to attend. City staff have supported the GTAA in promoting awareness about this upcoming December 11 public GTAA Open House across various city corporate communications channels.

City staff have leveraged the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to brief Sub-Committee members about City initiatives that have emerged from the City's economic and cultural development missions to key international markets, and for Sub-Committee members to identify further opportunities to build on the success of City-led international missions.

During the September 16, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, City staff presented on the City's 2024 Northern and Central Italy Economic and Cultural Development Mission, highlighting specific intergovernmental relations engagements for discussion, including:

- On behalf of Mayor Del Duca, Deputy Mayor, Local and Regional Councillor Jackson, and Local and Regional Councillor Ferri took part in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing ceremony to renew Vaughan and Sora's more than 30-year international partnership. This renewed MOU commits the two cities to advance opportunities for youth, culture and tourism development, among others. The signing ceremony took place at Sora City Hall with Sora Mayor Luca Di Stefano, and Members of Sora City Council.

- Vaughan's delegation then met with City of Milan officials to learn more about the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and a potential future role for Vaughan to join this global initiative. Launched by the Milan Municipality in 2015, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement among cities from all over the world, committed "to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change."
- That evening, the delegation held a roundtable discussion at the Italian Parliament, joined by Senator Francesca La Marca and Member of the Chamber of Deputies Christian Di Sanzo, representing the Overseas Constituencies of North and Central America. This mandate means that these public officials represent the interests of Italian citizens living abroad and in communities like Vaughan, who vote in Italian elections. Intergovernmental Relations are critical to Vaughan's ability to serve the well-being of residents effectively, and this meeting provides another vital opportunity to engage better, inform, and address public inquiries City Hall receives each day about top-of-mind issues for the public.
- The City of Vaughan's delegation met with Maxime Therien, Canada's Consul to Milan, and Nicoletta D'Arcangelo, Trade Commissioner, with the Government of Canada. The Consul of Canada in Milan opened its offices in the fall of 2023 and is working to advance bilateral trade and commercial activities between Canada and the Milan region.

As a result of the July 2024 meeting with Canada's Consul General, Economic Development staff were invited to participate in the October 2024 Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) Fall 2024 Investment Roadshow in Europe. The TCS organized meetings with pre-qualified investment leads in Milan and Madrid. These companies are all in the process of international expansion and consider Canada a destination. Economic Development staff's participation in the Roadshow is consistent with the Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework, which identifies the vital role that outbound business missions play in government relations.

Economic Development staff further presented an update about their work during the TCS Fall 2024 Investment Roadshow during the November 4, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee.

Previous Reports/Authority

April 8, 2024 – C8. [Communication Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee](#) – April 8, 2024; Item No. 1

January 23, 2024, Committee of the Whole (1) Member’s Resolution from Local and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri – [Intergovernmental Relations Advocacy](#)

May 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) Report – [Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework](#)

December 12, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) Report – [Non-Statutory Committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council](#)

September 20, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) Member’s Resolution by Deputy Mayor, Local and Regional Councillor Linda Jackson – [Intergovernmental Relations Advocacy Efforts](#)

Analysis and Options

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee provides an essential environment for Members of Council, City staff, stakeholder organizations and the public to engage and advance important Council-approved city-building initiatives.

Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee is a forum for Members of Council to bring up emerging issues of importance to residents. For instance, during the April 8, 2024, meeting, City staff presented an overview of the structure and function of the Ontario Landlord Tenet Board (LTB). This presentation was in response to public inquiries Ward 3 Councillor DeFrancesca raised regarding correspondence that her Council office was receiving about LTB application backlogs. The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee advanced the following motion:

- “That approval be requested of Council for correspondence to be sent to the Ministry of the Attorney General calling for urgent action to fund the necessary resources to help clear the extensive and concerning backlog of disputes between landlords and tenants that are impacting Vaughan residents, and communities across Ontario.”

Looking ahead to 2025, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee will continue to support Council offices with similar constituent matters, among other government-level engagements.

With respect to international city initiatives that emerged from the City's economic and cultural development missions to key international markets, staff will continue to engage in activities that build on the momentum for trade, investment, and the relationships established during the mission throughout the remainder of 2024 and beyond in collaboration with regional partners.

Partnership with the City of Sora:

First formalized in 1992, the Sora-Vaughan partnership is based on a strong connection through Vaughan's Italian diaspora. Various local clubs and organizations represent Italian Canadians from the Lazio Region.

The Sora-Vaughan partnership has included a series of activities since its inception, notably highlighted by a 2007 mission from Vaughan to Italy. Vaughan was the recipient of a 17-person delegation from Sora in June 2023 where the Mayors of Vaughan and Sora reaffirmed the ongoing friendship and committed to ongoing discussions about the modernization of the bilateral relationship.

During the 2024 mission to Sora, the City of Vaughan delegation met with Sora's Mayor and Council and renewed the friendship agreement under-delegated authority from Council to the Deputy Mayor. The delegation solidified the existing partnership and crafted a list of partnership opportunities to further cement the relationship. Partnership opportunities for exploration include:

- A cultural exchange between students from local high schools to attend arts lessons in Italian language, culture and workshops with local artists in Sora. This may also include College/University exchange
- Providing virtual business seminars to Sora companies interested in conducting trade with Vaughan.
- Engaging in tourism cross-promotion through Tourism Vaughan.
- A College and University student exchange program
- An international co-working partnership to provide access for entrepreneurs to co-workspace in Sora and Vaughan.
- A recognition of Academy Award winner Vittorio de Sica at a future Vaughan Film Festival event. Vittorio de Sica was born in Sora, and was an Italian film director, actor, and leading figure in the neorealist movement.

Staff have met with officials from the City of Sora post mission and are actively working with the City of Sora to advance these partnership opportunities and formalize next steps.

City of Milan's Urban Food Policy Pact

As part of the trade mission, to explore best practices in urban food development, the delegation met with the City of Milan's Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP).

In 2014, the Mayor of Milan launched an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level, to be adopted by as many world cities as possible. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact was signed on the 15 October 2015 in Milan by more than 100 cities and it represents one of the most important legacies of Milan EXPO 2015.

The MUFPP's members work to achieve 37 actions that tackles urban food related issues through: improved governance; sustainable diets and nutrition; social and economic equity; food production; food supply and distribution; and reducing food waste

Cities of more than 100,000 residents can join the MUFPP. Canadian Cities part of the MUFPP include Montreal, Toronto, Guelph and Vancouver.

The MUFPP is an important focal point for innovators in the food industry. Membership provides the city with an opportunity to engage an important international network.

Given the importance of Northern Italy as a recruitment zone for food cluster businesses, Economic Development is recommending that the City of Vaughan join the MUFPP in 2025. Staff in Economic Development will incorporate MUFPP activities into trade and investment programming.

Joining the MUFPP would see the City of Vaughan join a prestigious group of cities who are committed to creating modern and sustainable food systems in partnership with the private sector. This would further signal Vaughan's commitment to the food sector and to being a city of choice for business, residents, and talent.

Benefits of joining the MUFPP include:

- Access to best practice research.
- Partnership opportunities to create regional and international sustainable food systems.
- International political and strategic support in the decision-making process.
- Ongoing networking with international experts in the food and sustainable food industries.

Responsibilities of MUFPP signatories include:

- Monitoring progress on the framework's 37 actions. At present staff are confident that more than 20 of the recommended actions are being advanced in the City of

Vaughan by our departments or stakeholders. Please note that there is no requirement to advance all actions.

- Participating, when appropriate, in committees and conferences.
- Designating one staff representative to handle communications with the MUFPP.

Signing the food policy pact has no membership costs.

Next steps in joining the pact are:

- Council grants the Mayor authority to sign the MUFPP Subscription Form (Attachment 2).
- Staff assess an opportunity to hold a signing ceremony in 2025 as part of an incoming or outgoing international delegation, governed by existing policies.
- Economic Development prepares appropriate trade and investment programming tactics.

City of Verona

While in the City of Verona, staff engaged Verona officials. Verona staff expressed an interest in pursuing a partnership with Vaughan as the two cities share economic characteristics.

Verona is a hub for the economy of northeastern Italy. Local businesses clusters feature strength in agriculture, industry, construction, tourism, trade and services. Furthermore, Verona is the leading province in Italy for wine, fruit, and vegetable exports, with significant contributions to the Italian clusters in the food industry, machinery and heating systems, quarrying and processing natural stone, and fashion.

Verona's geographical position makes it a key goods-movement hub between two fundamental European transport routes: the Stockholm-Palermo route; and the Barcelona-Kiev corridor. The City boasts an important logistics system for Southern Europe, which brings together services and the potential of infrastructures such as Catullo Airport, Cargo Center, Interporto Quadrante Europa, Veronamercato and Veronafiore S.p.A.

Staff have engaged with the City of Verona in exploring partnership opportunities and will report back in a future Committee of the Whole report.

Financial Impact

N/A

Operational Impact

N/A

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

As noted, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee is a forum for other government levels and stakeholder organizations, such as FCM and AMO, with mandates including but not limited to municipalities like Vaughan, to provide important information and the possibility of aligning budgets, resources and priorities. City staff's ongoing participation in domestic conferences and international missions further demonstrates the broader impact the Sub-Committee potentially has on the City's advocacy efforts.

It is worth noting that 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 across Ontario. The work of Vaughan's Sub-Committee informs participation in the MGRN, while the learnings from the MGRN can also inform City staff's efforts with the Sub-Committee.

Conclusion

Municipalities across Ontario are dedicating resources to advance intergovernmental relations efforts. In Vaughan, the Mayor leads the City's intergovernmental relations efforts, supported by Council's approval of a Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework and establishing an Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to engage other government levels and stakeholder organizations.

Looking ahead to 2025, Vaughan remains well placed to undertake its advocacy efforts to advance Council-approved priorities such as the City of Milan's Urban Food Policy Pact. Given the changing political climate and ongoing media reports of potential provincial and federal election in 2025, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee will continue to serve as an important working group for City staff to brief Members of the Council and hear from stakeholder organizations and members of the public.

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

Attachments

1. Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Policy Brief
2. Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Subscription Form

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