

# Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee

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**DATE:** Monday, April 13, 2026

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE: 2022-2026 TERM IN REVIEW: INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**FROM:**

Michael Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

To provide an update about the work undertaken by the City of Vaughan's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee throughout the 2022 to 2026 Council term. Vaughan's Mayor leads the City's intergovernmental relations mandate, and the work is informed by the Sub-Committee and the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework. The final Sub-Committee meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2026.

**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, which held its first meeting in November 2023, and whose members' efforts are further informed by the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework.
- An important advocacy initiative that emerged from the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee was the hosting of two separate MP/MPP roundtable discussions between Mayor Steven Del Duca, Members of Council and Vaughan's provincial and federal representatives. The roundtables were chaired by Local and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri and focused on strengthening dialogue. The first roundtable took place on April 5, 2024, and the second on November 14, 2025.

## **Report Highlights continued**

- The Mayor's intergovernmental relations leadership contributed to significant funding outcomes for the City, \$35 million through the provincial Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund, as well as the provincial government's \$9-million allocation to launch York University Medical School in Vaughan.
- 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 Sub-Committee members about City initiatives that have emerged from the City's economic and cultural development missions to key international markets, including the 2024 Northern and Central Italy mission, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, and the City of Grand Rapids Sister City initiative.
- In 2025, the City was awarded over \$34.7 million in grant funding across 43 applications, and the City will host the 2026 Municipal Government Relations Network meeting on Friday, May 22, 2026, welcoming approximately 40 municipal government relations professionals from across Ontario.
- Looking ahead, the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee will remain an important forum to understand the evolving political landscape and to ensure Council-approved priorities are advocacy priorities with other levels of government and stakeholder organizations.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the 2022-2026 Term in Review: Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee staff report be received.

## **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, which held its first meeting in November 2023, and whose members' efforts are further informed by the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework.***

During 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, during the December 12, 2022, Council meeting, Members of Council approved the establishment of authorized non-statutory committees for the 2022-2026 Term of the Council, including the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee. At 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.
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 those 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 through 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 Council and key stakeholders.

***The inaugural meeting of the City's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee took place on November 2, 2023. Subsequent meetings took place throughout 2024, 2025 and 2026, with the final meeting of the term taking place on April 13, 2026.***

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 strengthen dialogue; and
- To receive regular updates and briefings on emerging issues and advocacy effort progress, including briefings from other organizations and levels of government.

***An important advocacy initiative that emerged from the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee was the hosting of two separate MP/MPP roundtable discussions between Mayor Del Duca, Members of Council and Vaughan's provincial and federal representatives. The roundtables were chaired by Local and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri and focused on strengthening dialogue across multiple levels of government. The first roundtable took place on April 5, 2024, and the second on November 14, 2025.***

During the January 23, 2024, Committee of the Whole (1) meeting, a Member's Resolution by Local and Regional Councillor 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
- Community safety initiatives
- Support for asylum seekers in York Region
- McMichael Canadian Art Collection — Revitalization and Capital Campaign

The roundtable breakfast took place on April 5, 2024, and a staff communication was presented at the April 8, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting that provided information about the discussions with the roundtable participants.

***Building on the success of the first roundtable discussion, during the September 9, 2025, Committee of the Whole (1) meeting, a Member's Resolution by Mayor Del Duca and Local and Regional Councillor Ferri was endorsed by Council, establishing advocacy priorities for a second MP/MPP roundtable to be held following the 2025 provincial and federal elections.***

A second roundtable discussion took place on November 14, 2025. Since provincial and federal elections were held in February and April 2025, respectively, and both the Ontario and Canadian governments were early into their new mandates, the post-election environment presented an important opportunity to strengthen intergovernmental relations, collaboration and advocacy for the remainder of the 2022-2026 Council term. The roundtable took place at Vaughan City Hall on Friday,

November 14, 2025, with the advocacy priorities identified as:

- Community safety and well-being of residents
- Housing accessibility and affordability, especially for first-time home buyers
- Transportation and mobility, in particular, the Council-approved Nine-Point Action Plan to Fight Traffic Gridlock

A staff communication was presented at the December 1, 2025, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting summarizing the discussions from the roundtable.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[2025 Annual Grant Report](#) March 4, 2026, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 6, Report No. 3)

[Communication C2: City of Vaughan MP/MPP Policy Roundtable: Update to the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee – December 1, 2025](#) December 1, 2025, Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee (Item No. 1)

[Strengthening Intergovernmental Relations, Collaboration and Advocacy 2025-2026](#) September 22, 2025, Council (Item 19, Report No. 28)

[2023-2024 Year-in-Review: Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) December 10, 2024, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 16)

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

[Intergovernmental Relations Advocacy](#) January 23, 2024, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 21)

[Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework](#) May 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 12)

[Non-Statutory Committees for the 2022-2026 Term of Council](#) December 13, 2022, Council (Item 23, Report No. 46)

[Intergovernmental Relations Advocacy Efforts](#) September 20, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 32, Report No. 32)

## **Analysis and Options**

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee has served as an essential forum throughout the 2022-2026 Council term for Members of Council, City staff, stakeholder organizations and the public to engage and advance important Council-approved city-building initiatives. Guided by the Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework's three strategic actions — identify, advocate and collaborate — the Sub-Committee has helped support the Mayor's advocacy mandate and delivered tangible outcomes for the residents of Vaughan. What follows is an overview of key initiatives and achievements from the Sub-Committee's term of operation.

### ***Advocacy and the Mayor's Intergovernmental Relations Mandate***

The Mayor's leadership on intergovernmental relations has been a defining feature of the 2022-2026 Council term. The Sub-Committee's work has directly supported and informed a series of advocacy efforts led by the Mayor, contributing to significant funding outcomes for Vaughan's city-building priorities.

On September 10, 2024, the Province of Ontario announced a \$35-million investment through the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund for vital city-building water infrastructure in Vaughan, enabling the construction of more than 20,000 new homes. Mayor Del Duca was joined by Thornhill MPP Laura Smith and Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure, Kinga Surma, for the announcement.

These announcements built on earlier intergovernmental collaborations, including the provincial government's decision to allocate \$9 million to launch York University Medical School in Vaughan and Council's decision to reduce the City's development charges by 50 per cent to address the housing affordability crisis. Together, these funding achievements represent the tangible results of a coordinated advocacy approach — rooted in the identify, advocate and collaborate framework — and reflect the importance of the Sub-Committee's work in supporting the Mayor's intergovernmental relations mandate.

### ***Stakeholder Engagement: AMO, FCM and GTAA***

***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. Presentations from all three organizations took place during the April 8, 2024, Sub-Committee meeting.***

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 and infrastructure funding to support housing construction.

City staff participate in the annual AMO and FCM conferences, and report back on their participation in these conferences to the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, as was the case during the September 16, 2024, meeting.

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 and organizations like the GTAA to provide airport operations updates and for members of the public to make deputations on such matters. A public GTAA Open House was held on December 11, 2024, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at City Hall. This collaboration between City and GTAA staff 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.

### ***Constituent Advocacy***

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee has also served as a forum for Members of Council to raise emerging issues important to residents. During the April 8, 2024, meeting, City staff presented an overview of the structure and function of the Ontario Landlord and Tenant 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.”

This motion demonstrated the Sub-Committee's ability to translate resident concerns into formal advocacy actions directed at other levels of government — a clear example of the identify, advocate and collaborate framework in practice.

### ***International Missions and Economic Partnerships***

***City staff have leveraged the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee to brief Sub-Committee members on 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.***

#### *2024 Northern and Central Italy Economic and Cultural Development Mission*

During the September 16, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting, City staff presented on the City's 2024 Northern and Central Italy Economic and Cultural Development Mission, highlighting specific intergovernmental relations engagements. In addition to the Sora partnership renewal described below, 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. These public officials represent the interests of Italian citizens living abroad and in communities like Vaughan, who vote in Italian elections, and the meeting provided a vital opportunity to engage, inform and address top-of-mind issues for residents.

The delegation also met with Maxime Therien, Canada's Consul to Milan, and Nicoletta D'Arcangelo, Trade Commissioner, with the Government of Canada. As a result of this engagement, Economic Development staff were subsequently invited to participate in Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) Fall 2024 Investment Roadshow in Europe, where staff met with pre-qualified investment leads in Milan and Madrid. Economic Development staff presented an update about the TCS Roadshow during the November 4, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meeting. Staff 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.

#### *City of Sora Partnership*

During the 2024 Northern and Central Italy Economic and Cultural Development Mission, the City of Vaughan delegation met with Sora's Mayor and Council and renewed the friendship agreement, first formalized in 1992, under delegated authority from Council to the Deputy Mayor. The renewed memorandum of understanding (MOU) commits the two cities to advance opportunities for youth, culture and tourism

development, among others. Staff have met with officials from the City of Sora following the mission and are actively working to advance partnership opportunities, including cultural exchanges between local high schools, virtual business seminars for Sora companies interested in conducting trade with Vaughan, tourism cross-promotion and a college and university student exchange program.

#### *Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*

The Economic Development team participated in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact conference in October 2025 as part of a broader trade mission to Italy focused on advancing trade and investment opportunities in the agrifood processing sector. The engagement provided an opportunity to exchange best practices with international cities on integrating resilient food systems into urban planning and procurement while highlighting local initiatives, such as the Reena program, food forests at Marina Payne Park and the food incubator at York University. Local and Regional Councillor Racco joined representatives from 29 municipalities at a signing ceremony during the conference, marking an initial step toward deeper collaboration under the pact and the development of future urban food policy initiatives.

#### *City of Grand Rapids Sister City Initiative*

On the advice of Ontario's Agent-General in Chicago, the City of Grand Rapids was identified as a strategic partner with strong cultural and economic alignment to the City of Vaughan. As part of this strategic initiative, staff have been actively advancing discussions with the City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Sister Cities International toward establishing a formal sister city relationship, in alignment with the City of Vaughan's Economic and Cultural Partnership policy. Positioned within the highly industrialized Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region, an \$8 trillion economic corridor, Grand Rapids offers a strategic gateway for local Vaughan-based companies to integrate into global supply chains, diversify export markets, and access the U.S. through a coordinated city-to-city collaboration framework.

Since the last update to the Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee in October 2025, key progress has included a presentation by Grand Rapids Sister Cities International leadership to the Grand Rapids City Commission and Mayor outlining next steps, followed by a formal vote approving the expansion of the sister city program to include the City of Vaughan as its seventh partner and first Canadian municipality. This was further advanced through a recent delegation visit led by Vaughan's Deputy City Manager, Michael Genova, to Grand Rapids in February 2026.

Next steps in the Grand Rapids Sister City agreement process include:

- April 14, 2026: Presentation by representatives from the City of Grand Rapids to Vaughan Council at the Committee of the Whole (2) meeting.
- May 7, 2026: Signing ceremony to formalize the partnership, subject to Council approval.
- Development of a work plan focused on advancing cross-border economic and cultural collaboration opportunities to support sustainable bilateral engagement.

### *City of Verona*

During the 2024 mission, staff also engaged with City of Verona officials, who expressed interest in pursuing a partnership with Vaughan. Verona is a hub for the economy of northeastern Italy, with strengths in agriculture, industry, construction, tourism, trade and services, and is the leading province in Italy for wine, fruit and vegetable exports. Staff have engaged with the City of Verona in exploring partnership opportunities and will report back in a future Committee of the Whole report.

### ***Alternative Revenue Generation: Grant Funding***

***To support internal collaboration, updates on grant funding activities are a standing agenda item for Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee meetings.***

Grant funding provides the City with an alternative revenue stream to meet the municipality's critical capital and operating needs without relying on traditional sources such as taxation, development charges and service fees. Economic Development helps coordinate grant activity across the corporation, working closely with other departments to pursue grant opportunities from provincial, federal and private sources. Grant funding enhances the City's capacity to continue delivering Service Excellence and advancing the Term of Council Strategic Priorities.

In 2025, the City was awarded over \$34.7 million in grant funding for initiatives aligned with the following Council-approved priority areas: Transportation and Mobility, City Building, Environmental Sustainability, Active, Engaged and Inclusive Communities, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Economic Prosperity, and Job Creation. The 43 applications submitted in 2025 demonstrate the effectiveness of the City's centralized Grant Funding Policy coordinated by Economic Development and the strong collaboration between departmental staff.

## ***Leadership in Municipal Government Relations***

The City is a member of the Municipal Government Relations Network (MGRN), a working group of Ontario municipal intergovernmental affairs professionals. This group shares best practices and strengthens community networks to deal more effectively with constantly changing political environments. In-person meetings typically occur once a year, and Vaughan hosted the MGRN in 2019, welcoming 14 municipalities and four regions from across Ontario.

Building on the success of the 2019 meeting, the City will host the 2026 Municipal Government Relations Network meeting on Friday, May 22, 2026, welcoming approximately 40 municipal government relations professionals at Vaughan City Hall. This all-day learning session is being planned and coordinated by the City's Strategic Initiatives team. It will include guest speaker presentations on Canada-U.S. relations, their impacts on municipalities and what local governments can do in response to the evolving international trade environment. The meeting will also include discussions on best practices for municipal elections and lessons learned from the transition period between Election Day and the inaugural meeting of a new Council term. These learning opportunities will be led by City staff and will highlight the important work of Vaughan's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee, while incorporating lessons from MGRN colleagues to inform City staff's efforts with the Sub-Committee.

## **Financial Impact**

N/A

## **Operational Impact**

N/A

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

The Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee has served as an important forum for other government levels and stakeholder organizations, such as FCM and AMO, with mandates that include, but are not limited to, municipalities like Vaughan, to provide vital information and explore the alignment of budgets, resources and priorities. City staff's ongoing participation in domestic conferences and international missions further demonstrates the broader impact that the Sub-Committee has had on the City's advocacy efforts.

Vaughan's growing capacity to secure non-taxation revenue through grants — over \$34.7 million in 2025 — reduces fiscal pressure at both the municipal and regional levels by offsetting costs that might otherwise require upper-tier support or regional

service coordination. This strengthens intermunicipal alignment, supports regional policy objectives and reinforces York Region's long-term sustainability and prosperity while delivering high levels of service to residents.

Additionally, the City will host the 2026 Municipal Government Relations Network meeting on May 22, 2026, at Vaughan City Hall. This event will welcome approximately 40 municipal government relations professionals from across Ontario and will highlight the work of Vaughan's Intergovernmental Relations Sub-Committee as a model for peer municipalities.

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of the 2022-2026 Council term, the City of Vaughan has established a structured, strategic approach to intergovernmental relations that has delivered meaningful results for residents. Beginning with the Council-approved Strategic Intergovernmental Relations Framework in May 2023 and the inaugural Sub-Committee meeting in November 2023, the City has built a foundation for advocacy with other levels of government rooted in three strategic actions: identify, advocate and collaborate.

The Mayor's leadership in intergovernmental relations has been central to this work. Examples such as securing \$35 million in provincial Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund investments, and the \$9-million provincial commitment for York University Medical School, are outcomes demonstrating the power of coordinated advocacy across all orders of government. The two MP/MPP roundtables, chaired by Local and Regional Councillor Ferri, strengthened dialogue between Vaughan's elected leaders and their provincial and federal counterparts on critical city-building priorities.

The Sub-Committee has served as a vital working group for City staff to brief Members of Council, hear from stakeholder organizations like AMO, FCM and the GTAA, and for members of the public to engage in matters of importance. The City's international missions and partnership initiatives — including the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, the City of Sora MOU renewal, the City of Grand Rapids Sister City initiative, and exploratory discussions with the City of Verona — reflect the global dimension of Vaughan's intergovernmental relations efforts.

Looking ahead, the evolving national and international political landscape, including the impacts of changing Canada-U.S. trade dynamics on municipalities, underscores the continued importance of robust intergovernmental relations. The City is well-positioned to carry forward the advocacy infrastructure built during this Council term into the next, ensuring Council-approved priorities continue to be advanced effectively with other levels of government.

**For more information**, please contact: Ian Hall, Manager, Public Policy and Strategic Corporate Initiatives ([Ian.Hall@vaughan.ca](mailto:Ian.Hall@vaughan.ca)) or Maria Papadopoulos, Program Manager, Intergovernmental Relations ([Maria.Papadopoulos@vaughan.ca](mailto:Maria.Papadopoulos@vaughan.ca)).

### **Attachments**

N/A

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