

**From:** [Bellisario, Adelina](#)  
**To:** [Bellisario, Adelina](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Ward Boundary Review, Effective Local and Regional Representation Agenda item 5(2)  
**Date:** May-05-21 8:59:26 AM  
**Attachments:** [Request to Speak Form for Electronic Meetings.docx](#)  
[May 5 21 WardBoundryReviewLetter.docx](#)

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**Subject:** [External] Ward Boundary Review, Effective Local and Regional Representation Agenda item 5(2)

Patricia Pedari (Zeppieri)

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The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.

Vaughan City Council  
City of Vaughan  
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May , 2021

Mayor Bevilacqua, and Councillors,

**Re: May 5, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda Item 5(2)  
Ward Boundary Review, Effective Local and Regional Representation**

Mayor and Councillors,

The purpose of this letter is to ask Vaughan Council to consider a course of action that will ensure effective local and regional representation is achieved with the addition of a new regional councillor next term. No analysis or studies has been completed considering how this change to Council's composition will alter local representation and decision making. Presently the Ward Boundary Review is scoped to exclude regional councillors.

In 1971 when the Town of Vaughan was incorporated the population was 15,000. Vaughan Council consisted of seven (7) members; a mayor, a regional councillor and five (5) local councillors<sup>1,2</sup>. New regional councillors were added in 1989 and 2003. In 1991 when the City of Vaughan was incorporated the population was 115,000. Today our population has risen to over 335,000. Our population has grown by 310,000 people, a two thousand (2,000) per cent increase, yet Vaughan Council's local representation has not changed in fifty years.

In May, 2020 staff presented a report entitled: "*Direction for Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review*"<sup>3</sup>. Without any public consultation and during a global pandemic Vaughan Council eliminated options to consider a council composition review, to increase the number of wards, local councillors or further direction to understand how the new regional councillor will affect citizen representation. Vaughan Council decided upon a fundamentally flawed Ward Boundary Review. The scope excludes regional council members; the portion of Vaughan Council changing next term. As a result, the Ward Boundary Review focuses on balancing population growth and per capita local councillor representation by altering the existing geographic ward boundaries. It is impossible to determine if Vaughan citizens have effective and fair representation unless all voting members of Vaughan Council are included in the scope. The addition of another regional councillor will erode local representation. Citizen representation will

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<sup>1</sup> Vaughan 2010 Official Plan, Pg. 22, see:

[https://www.vaughan.ca/projects/policy\\_planning\\_projects/General%20Documents/Official%20Plan%20Vol%201/VOP%202010%20Vol%201%20Updates%202021/VOP%20Volume%201%20-%202020%20Header%20Update%20Feb%202%202021.pdf](https://www.vaughan.ca/projects/policy_planning_projects/General%20Documents/Official%20Plan%20Vol%201/VOP%202010%20Vol%201%20Updates%202021/VOP%20Volume%201%20-%202020%20Header%20Update%20Feb%202%202021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Past Members of Council, see: <https://www.vaughan.ca/council/Pages/Past-Council-Members.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pub-v Vaughan.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=e0a2a95d-6799-4815-aed2-8fd3cb3528b2&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=12>

be skewed to represent the broader public interest and local concerns underrepresented. *Vaughan does not have effective local representation and moving lines on a map will change nothing.*

Recent decisions surrounding the proposed Highway 413/GTA West Corridor (the Highway) highlighted Vaughan's problematic regional representation. All of Vaughan's local Councillors responded to public concern and felt the need to be accountable to their constituents and wards. They argued for their citizens and voted to withdraw support of the Highway. The Mayor and Regional Councillors remained entrenched in their Regional position to support the Highway at Vaughan Council. As per York Region's Code of Conduct regional Council members are not required to act in their "Official capacity...when executing their duties as a member of a council for a local municipality"<sup>4</sup>. At the Regional Council meeting on March 18 Vaughan citizens learned their regional Council members have no legal obligation to uphold Vaughan Council decisions. York Region's and Vaughan's Code of Conduct both set out that members of Council are expected to represent their constituents<sup>5</sup>. Vaughan's Regional Council members maintained their support for the Highway at both lower and upper tier councils in the absence of publicly documented support. Vaughan citizens were forced to reach out to other municipal regional Council members for representation at York Region.

This decision proved what many Vaughan residents have believed for some time; Vaughan has no representation of local interests at the Region; we have four members, soon to be five, who sit on Vaughan Council, vote on local issues, but represent and act in the interests of the Region. **It was a watershed moment for Vaughan citizens because it documented that our Regional Council members: uphold regional interests above local interests; and, have no legal obligation to uphold and represent local Vaughan Council decisions.**

Part of democracy is having transparency, accountability and understanding how elected officials represent citizens. Vaughan's regional councillors have no clear division of responsibility, they are elected at large with little accountability to any community or area of Vaughan. They often support controversial decisions in the presence of strong public opposition. A fourth regional councillor has been added during a global pandemic without any public consultation. Vaughan taxpayers will pay for another regional councillor but were never consulted or asked. When an opportunity came before Vaughan Council to provide direction to staff regional representation was excluded.

Vaughan's Council composition is always compared to Markham who has five regional Council members. Why do we never compare our local council representation to Markham? Markham has eight local councilors representing 350,000 residents, whereas Vaughan has only five local councillors representing 335,000 residents.

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<sup>4</sup> The Regional Municipality of York, Code of Conduct for Council Members. Section B.1, Pg. 2, see: <https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/70c4d0c7-0196-4e6e-9819-2fc97319f327/Code+of+Conduct+Council+Members.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mLVV0xf>

<sup>5</sup> Vaughan's Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards, City of Vaughan. [https://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/integrity\\_commissioner/General%20Documents/Code%20of%20Ethical%20Conduct%20for%20Members%20of%20Council%20and%20Local%20Boards.pdf](https://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/integrity_commissioner/General%20Documents/Code%20of%20Ethical%20Conduct%20for%20Members%20of%20Council%20and%20Local%20Boards.pdf)

**To restore balance between local and regional representation that does not include the addition of another local councillor there may be two options.**

- 1. regional councillors are eliminated from Vaughan Council, thereby reducing Vaughan Council to six (6) members the Mayor and five (5) local councillors; or,**
- 2. regional councillors are elected by ward and accountable to wards, they would no longer be elected at large.**

There is clearly frustration among residents with regional representation as documented in the consultant's report<sup>6</sup>. Excluding regional councillors from the ongoing review has only aggravated this sentiment, combined with the recent upper and lower tier council decisions surrounding the Highway. Vaughan residents have always been told we need another Regional Councillor to increase Vaughan's regional representation but the reality is that each time an additional regional councillor has been added Vaughan's local representation has eroded. There is no optimal solution to achieve effective representation but it certainly will never be achieved if only half of Council's voting members are included in the scope of the Ward Boundary Review. **Vaughan Council's composition is changing, regional representation has increased at the expense of local representation and the public was only consulted about moving lines on a map. This is not democratic or fair to Vaughan Citizens.**

Please take the time to consider what is in the best interests of Vaughan citizens to ensure local and regional representation is balanced, effective and accountable.

Thank you.

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<sup>6</sup> Vaughan Council Agenda Item 5(2), Attachment 1: Ward Boundry Review, pg 40. See: <https://pub-vaughan.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=67003>