



# A GUIDE TO VAUGHAN'S PLANNING PROCESS

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The City of Vaughan's communities are constantly growing and changing. In fact, Vaughan is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada with a population of more than 335,000! To ensure Vaughan continues to be a great place to live, work and play, our city must grow in ways that are smart and any change must meet the needs and values of

current and future residents and businesses. This is why all developments undergo a careful review by City staff, Council, public agencies, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region and provincial ministries where appropriate, and why the City asks for feedback from residents before the shovels hit the ground.

This guide provides an overview of the planning process and how you can get involved.

If you'd like to know more about land-use planning, the process around it and how you can get involved, visit [vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess](http://vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess).



# WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION?

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**Development** is a broad term referring to any activity that results in a change of land use, construction of a new building(s) or the creation of a parcel(s) of land. **Development applications** are proposals put forward by a landowner that must be carefully considered and reviewed to ensure they are consistent with Provincial, Regional and City plans and policies.

There are six types of development applications reviewed by City staff and Vaughan Council, which are governed by the *Planning Act*:

- Official Plan Amendments (OPAs)
- Zoning By-law Amendments (ZBAs)
- Draft Plan of Subdivisions
- Site Development Applications
- Draft Plan of Condominiums
- Part-lot Control Exemptions

In some cases, the landowner may submit one or more of these applications at the same time for consideration by the City.

More about these applications can be found at [vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess](http://vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess).

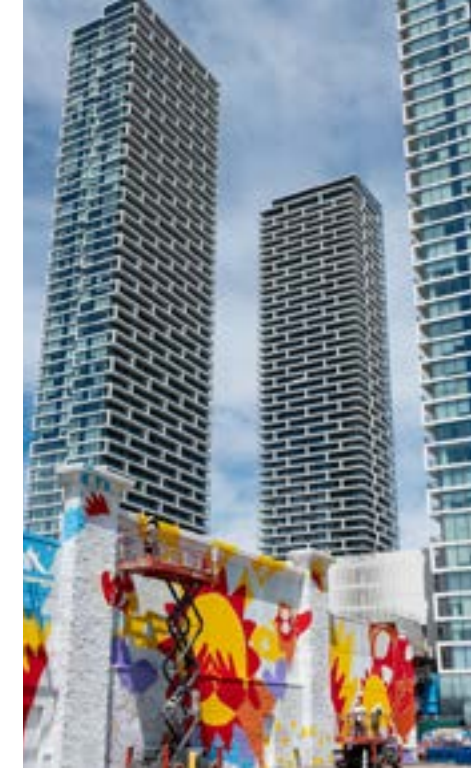




## HOW WE PLAN

### **Provincial and regional plans and policies**

The Province of Ontario regulates land use through plans and policies, including the Growth Plan and Provincial Policy Statement, which establish the vision for communities in Ontario and set targets for the number of new residents and jobs York Region must accommodate by 2051.



Based on these targets, the York Region Official Plan sets the vision and plan for where and how this growth and development will be accommodated within each of its nine municipalities, including the city of Vaughan.

All Council decisions regarding a planning application must conform to and be consistent with Provincial plans and policy.

## Vaughan's Official Plan

Vaughan's Official Plan serves as Council's roadmap for growth and land use within the city and must conform with the Province and York Region's policies and plans. It establishes the City's long-term vision and values, stated through goals and policies that help guide decision-making on land development, economic growth, urban design, the environment and more. Ultimately, the Official Plan guides where different types of land uses and developments should be located.



## Secondary Plans

Secondary Plans build on the City's Official Plan by providing policy guidance and direction for smaller and focused geographic areas. In some cases, they can also provide more prescriptive policies to reflect the uniqueness of the area they cover. A Secondary Plan defines all the elements needed for successful development, including new roads, land uses and active transportation routes, open spaces and parks, policies to establish land uses and key infrastructure requirements.



## Zoning By-laws

A Zoning By-law is a more detailed planning tool used to implement the Official Plan policies in order to regulate how land is used. They provide specific standards for how development and construction can occur on a property. A Zoning By-law ensures that what is built meets the vision of the Official Plan and any land use plans. Learn more about Zoning By-laws at [zonevaughan.ca](http://zonevaughan.ca)





# HOW DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS ARE MADE

Before the shovels hit the ground, development proposals must go through the following **four-step review and decision-making process:**

## **1** Pre-application

In advance of submitting an application, the landowner must consult with the City's Development Planning department. They may also meet with the local Councillor, residents, ratepayer's associations and other interested community members to share and discuss the

plan they want to put forward. Once the application has been submitted to the City, a sign is posted on the site to let the community know what is being proposed. The sign is only posted for Official Plan, Zoning By-laws or draft Plans of Subdivisions, but not site plans or part-lot control.

## 2 Public meeting

It's vital that Council hears from the community to inform their decision-making. Interested community members are invited to provide input to Council at a Committee of the Whole Public Meeting. A written notice is sent a minimum of 20 days before the public meeting to all residents living within 150

metres (sometimes more) of the site in question. At the public meeting, the landowner will present their plans, Councillors may comment or ask questions and members of the public may share their feedback if they have pre-registered to speak at the meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to **inform** and solicit feedback from Council and the community, including residents, businesses and interest groups

– **no decision is made at this time.** Public meetings are not held for site plan applications or certain types of condominium applications.

More information about speaking live during a public meeting can be found at [vaughan.ca/HaveYourSay](http://vaughan.ca/HaveYourSay).

## 3 Review of the application

Following the public meeting, City staff review the application, including supporting materials and all comments made at the meeting or submitted in writing. Applications may also be reviewed by external parties, including York Region, neighbouring municipalities, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

and the Province, depending on the nature of the application. The landowner may be required to provide additional information if necessary. Once all issues have been resolved to the satisfaction of City staff, a comprehensive report is prepared for Council to review at a Committee of the Whole meeting.

**If outstanding issues are not resolved, staff can recommend the refusal of the application.**



## 4 Council makes a decision

After receiving the report, Vaughan Council may discuss the merits at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Interested community members have an opportunity to share their thoughts with Council live during this meeting, or they can submit a written response to provide their feedback on the application.

At the Committee of the Whole meeting, a recommendation on the application will be made and forwarded to Council for final approval. At the following Council meeting, Vaughan Council will ratify the decision to approve, amend or refuse the application.

**This is when the decision is ratified by Council.**



## What if I don't agree with Council's decision?

Those who made oral submissions at a public meeting, or made written submissions to Council prior to Council's decision, can appeal decisions regarding Official Plan Amendments or Zoning By-law Amendments to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) within 20 days of the formal notice of decision. The decision of the OLT is final. Third parties are not permitted to appeal decisions made on Site Development Applications. Appeal rights regarding decisions made on Plans of Subdivision and Condominiums are limited to specific parties and a limited group of third parties, which do not include local residents.





# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Vaughan Council is committed to ensuring a fulsome and transparent public consultation process while safeguarding the health and safety of all staff and citizens. As part of the City of Vaughan's commitment to open and accessible government, Council encourages citizens to get involved in the decision-making process.

**Here are four ways to get involved and share thoughts about a land development application in your community:**

## **1 Learn more about the application**

Review the public notice and learn more about the development application on PLANit, the City's development application tracking platform, which can be found at [vaughan.ca/maps](http://vaughan.ca/maps). Additional information on development applications and the planning process can be found at [vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess](http://vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess).

## 2 Speaking to Council during a Committee of the Whole Meeting

While Vaughan City Hall remains closed to the public, citizens can participate in meetings and have their say by:

- Submitting a **written communication** for review by Members of Council as part of an agenda item. All written communications can be emailed to the Office of the City Clerk at [clerks@vaughan.ca](mailto:clerks@vaughan.ca).
- Requesting to **speak via teleconference** (through a computer, app or by phone)

live during the meeting. Pre-registration is required. Complete a Request to Speak form at [vaughan.ca/HaveYourSay](https://vaughan.ca/HaveYourSay) to [clerks@vaughan.ca](mailto:clerks@vaughan.ca) or call Access Vaughan at 905-832-2281. You must provide a valid email and/or phone number to participate in this way.

Requests to speak must be received by noon on the last business day before the meeting.

## 3 Speak directly with your local Councillor

Speaking at a Committee of the Whole Meeting isn't the only way to reach Vaughan Council. Citizens may telephone or email comments directly to their Member of Council of choice. For details on how to contact a Member of Council, visit [vaughan.ca/council](https://vaughan.ca/council).

## 4 Contact the City planner directly

All citizens may contact the planner on file directly by phone, email or letter. Questions and contact details for the City's planners can be found on the public meeting notice sent by mail, or by contacting Access Vaughan, the City's contact centre, at 905-832-2281 or [accessvaughan@vaughan.ca](mailto:accessvaughan@vaughan.ca).



## Development Planning

Planning and Growth  
Management



2141 Major Mackenzie Dr.  
Vaughan, ON  
L6A 1T1

905-832-2281

[developmentplanning@vaughan.ca](mailto:developmentplanning@vaughan.ca)

[vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess](http://vaughan.ca/PlanningProcess)