

Advocacy Update

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Winter 2021

Message from the Chair



Peel has been among the hardest hit communities by the second wave of COVID-19. It has taken a heavy toll on some of our most vulnerable residents, frontline workers and those already coping with challenges.

The current crisis has also given urgency to our shared priorities of protecting public

health and supporting both our residents and businesses through the crisis and with economic recovery. Fighting the pandemic has been a team effort and I look forward to carrying this momentum forward as we build back an even stronger, inclusive community.

Collaboration and cooperation have formed the foundation of our response to these unprecedented times, and with that in mind, I am pleased to share with you the latest edition of our Advocacy Update, in which we highlight ongoing regional initiatives and some of our key advocacy priorities, including:

- COVID-19 response support
- The Region's Seniors Health and Wellness Village
- Peel's Community Safety and Well-being Plan

This newsletter is one of several platforms the Region uses to engage with you to ensure we are well-positioned to best serve our communities. Maintaining strong

relationships with senior levels of government has never been more important than now. Helping our residents and businesses requires an all-of-government approach and we look forward to strengthening these relationships through continued engagement.

As part of the Region's efforts to meaningfully engage with Peel MPs and MPPs, efforts will be made to host quarterly meetings on an ongoing basis. The Region appreciates the opportunity to discuss and raise awareness of key priorities that are critical to the well-being of Peel residents and businesses; while identifying areas of alignment and opportunities for collaboration.

Municipalities are responsible for many of the critical frontline services that Peel residents depend on and we are especially appreciative of the many provincial and federal investments recently announced for municipalities, including Peel's \$20.5 million allocation of Phase 2 Safe Restart funding. Ongoing investments in infrastructure, public health and long-term care will have a meaningful impact in the diverse communities we proudly serve. We look forward to the continuation of our positive working relationship as we prioritize the health and safety of our residents and gradually shift our focus to our post-pandemic recovery.

Sincerely,

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Regional Council

Nando Iannicca
*Regional Chair and
Chief Executive Officer*

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 **Region
of Peel**
working with you

Support for Peel During COVID-19

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Region of Peel has prioritized safeguarding the public health, safety and well-being of our residents. These efforts are supported through ongoing cooperation and collaboration between Regional Council, local municipalities, Peel Public Health, our provincial and federal partners and numerous health sector and community stakeholders.

Disease control measures, along with financial and economic supports, that have been put in place by all levels of government are essential to supporting the pandemic response. The Region welcomes provincial and federal supports, many of which are reaching our residents, our businesses and our local health system, including funding for the voluntary isolation and recovery program in Peel and additional case and contact management resources. Financial and economic supports need to continue and need to be accessible and timely for the duration of the pandemic.

Based on available data and evidence, we know those with underlying health conditions, the elderly, South Asian, Black and Latino residents and essential workers in Peel have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The Region is requesting that the federal and provincial governments implement and fund policies and programs to reduce barriers to disease control measures and support our residents to get tested, self-isolate and get vaccinated to reduce virus transmission.

Immediate areas requiring action include:

- **Paid sick days for workers** – The Region of Peel agrees with the various municipal leaders and advocates calling for paid sick leave for those who are required to work during the current pandemic. Ensuring access to paid sick days would remove barriers to COVID-19 public health measures, such as testing and self-isolation. Without the public policy support, workers are burdened with lost income and employment uncertainty when faced with COVID-19 and employers face the prospect of workplace COVID-19 exposure and outbreak.
- **Supports for essential workers** – Paid sick leave and income supports should be implemented in conjunction with a combination of supports that ensure workers are protected, including rapid testing in higher-risk workplaces, adequate PPE, free emergency childcare and transit subsidies.
- **Increase COVID-19 testing capacity in Peel** – The Region continues its dialogue with Ontario Health partners on how the provincial laboratory system can enhance access to testing in our community and increase testing capacity to support our response. Federal and provincial supports for this enhanced capacity are key.
- **Allocation of vaccines to Peel** – Decisions about the allocation of limited doses of vaccines available in Ontario should support the Region of Peel and its 1.54 million residents, to receive an amount that is appropriate and proportional to our needs and considers the devastating and disproportionate impacts COVID-19 is having on our communities. Along with appropriate supply allocation, federal and provincial supports are needed to ensure sufficient capacity to administer vaccines and ensure access to vaccines for priority groups.

There is an immediate need to protect Peel residents disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As our federal and provincial elected representatives, we are asking for your continued collaboration on additional measures to help turn the tide of COVID-19 and ultimately save lives.

Areas requiring immediate action:

- Paid sick days for workers
- Supports for essential workers
- Increase COVID-19 testing capacity
- Allocation of vaccines



Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor

Every senior residing in long-term care deserves a safe, healthy and quality care experience to support their overall well-being and individual care needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on pre-existing challenges of the long-term care sector and the need to act quickly to create new beds and redevelop existing ones, to improve infection prevention and control measures and quality of care.

The redevelopment of Peel Manor into a Seniors Health and Wellness Village will help address challenges related to infection prevention and control (IPAC). It is also in direct alignment with the provincial government’s efforts to end hallway health care and improve long-term care integration in the health system and broader community through the campus of care model.

For several years, the Region has been calling on the Ontario government to support the Seniors Health and Wellness Village initiative. Most recently, the Region applied for funding through the Long-Term Care Home redevelopment program and we look forward to the Province’s response.

The Seniors Health and Wellness Village is an opportunity to meet the changing needs of people living in long-term



care homes and transform care to address the diverse needs of seniors in our community. As a true campus of care, it will include enhanced community support services, such as an expanded Adult Day Service program, respite beds and a Peel Integrated Care centre. These types of supports will enable seniors in the community to age in place by bringing care as close to home as possible.

The momentum across all levels of government to address critical gaps in seniors’ care is encouraging. The Region commends the federal government for its commitment to develop national standards for long-term care to protect seniors and enable quality care.

Story continues on the next page

Collaborating on Peel’s Community Safety and Well-being Plan

The Region was pleased to share with you the recently approved Peel Community Safety and Well-being Plan. The 2020-2024 Plan is the product of two years of collaborative, community effort with over 25 community partners.

Peel’s Community Safety and Well-being Plan includes three areas of focus:

- Mental health and addictions
- Family violence
- Systemic discrimination

The Region is encouraged by the ongoing commitment by the federal and provincial governments to address mental health challenges through longer-term plans, such as the Roadmap to Wellness and ongoing supports for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, a commitment to address systemic racism, included in the throne speech, aligns with the ongoing leadership of the Region’s Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee, as well as Peel’s vision of a Community for Life.

The Region’s plan recognizes that no organization could tackle these issues alone and the six goals and strategies for each area of focus require that we work collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes.

Equitable policies and continued resources will be required to support the long-term sustainability of the plan and facilitate implementation of priorities under each of our areas of focus. Our action tables are in the early stages of identifying which resources will be needed and we look forward to sharing with you our implementation plans in the near future.

The challenges we endured throughout 2020, demonstrated more than ever, that community safety and well-being is a community effort. We are stronger working together and we will require the continued partnership of the federal and provincial governments to provide ongoing financial and policy supports to implement the plan, and its three key priorities, throughout our communities.

Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor continued

Additionally, recent provincial redevelopment funding and accelerated build projects, which includes Trillium Health Partners, will certainly help in addressing demand for long-term care beds and meet modern IPAC standards. However, Peel is a large and quickly growing region requiring additional support. While it is challenging and costly to create additional long-term care spaces to meet increasing demand, the Seniors Health and Wellness Village, in partnership with local system stakeholders, will offer care options at home comparable to long-term care homes, potentially delaying or eliminating the need for long-term care placement and future long-term care bed demand.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Ontario's seniors, particularly people living in long-term care homes. All levels of government have a vested interest in addressing critical gaps in the long-term care system. The time to act is now. Work is well underway to complete the Seniors Health and Wellness



Village. Without provincial support, the transformation poses a financial challenge and puts our ability to achieve the full vision of the project at risk. We need your support to continue advancing this critical project for the Peel community.

Peel's Recent Advocacy Initiatives

Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission submission

The Region of Peel commends the Commission for its leadership and efforts to influence much needed improvements across the long-term care sector. There is strong alignment between the Commission's recent interim recommendations for the Province and recommendations included in Peel's submission.

In particular, there is alignment related to staffing needs, funding and support to maintain and enhance quality of care, improved infection prevention and control and the need to support the mental well-being of seniors and their caregivers, including long-term care staff.

The Region of Peel continues to prioritize safeguarding the people living and working in our long-term care homes during the pandemic, while maintaining a focus on providing high quality, compassionate and person-centred care.

Ongoing commitment to end human sex trafficking

As the rate of human trafficking incidents in Peel have grown to become among the highest in Canada, the Region appreciates the ongoing support of the provincial government on this issue, including \$3.1 million received in December through Ontario's Community Supports Fund.

This funding will support Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin with the integrated services hub for children and youth (aged 12 and up) providing on-site health care, trauma counselling, addictions support, legal aid, education and employment services.

The Region continues implementation of a three-year pilot project to bridge service gaps and provide wrap-around services for victims and survivors. Progress continues on a Transitional House, one of three dedicated supports, and we look forward to sharing more information with you about this vitally important program.

Chair Iannicca responding to the Province's consultation on Bill 215

On November 10, Chair Iannicca presented, on behalf of Regional Council, to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in response to the recently approved Bill 215, Main Street Recovery Act. The Region supports these changes to municipal noise bylaw-making powers that will allow businesses to deliver goods any time of the day, which will result in more timely and consistent movement of essential goods and supplies.

An estimated \$2 billion worth of goods travels to and from and through Peel every day. The industry is a significant job creator, accounting for 43 per cent of jobs in Peel and contributes billions to the province's and the country's gross domestic product.

The Region looks forward to working with the Province on the implementation of this legislation and associated regulations.



Government Relations Committee

- Nando Iannicca
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Mayor, Town of Caledon
- Bonnie Crombie
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Brampton (Wards 9 and 10)
- Johanna Downey
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- Rowena Santos
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- Paul Vicente
Brampton (Wards 1 and 5)

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Chief Administrative Officer
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Acting Commissioner of Corporate Services
- Sean Baird,
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- Nancy Polsinelli,
Commissioner of Health Services
- Janice Sheehy,
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- Andrea Warren,
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