
REPORT TITLE: **2021 Virtual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference**

FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Interim Commissioner of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the approach outlined in the report listed on the April 1, 2021 Government Relations Committee agenda entitled "2021 Virtual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference," be endorsed.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference will once again be held virtually from August 15 – 18, 2021
- The virtual AMO Annual Conference provides an opportunity to continue to engage with provincial ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition party leaders and senior provincial staff.
- Regional staff will request delegations with provincial ministers with the goal of advancing Regional Council's advocacy priorities related to the Region's COVID-19 response as well as long-term economic recovery.
- This report includes proposed Region of Peel policy themes related to the advocacy priorities that will be advanced with the provincial decision-makers, including ministers, senior staff and opposition party leaders at the virtual 2021 AMO Conference.
- Staff is proposing that an AMO Conference preparation workshop be held in mid-July to ensure the feedback of Government Relations Committee (GRC) members can be incorporated into the briefing notes and other supporting material.

DISCUSSION

The 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference ("the Conference") will take place virtually from August 15 - 18, 2021. The Conference will include several virtual keynote addresses by subject matter experts, provincial party leaders and cabinet ministers. In addition, AMO has indicated Ministers' Forums will be held where Ministers will answer questions submitted in advance of the Conference.

Similar to the 2020 Virtual AMO Conference, a key feature of this year's conference is the opportunity for municipal delegations to meet with provincial decisionmakers, including ministers and senior staff, as well as opposition party leaders. These delegation meetings provide an opportunity for the Region to strengthen relationships and advance the Region's advocacy priorities. Staff will lead the coordination and development of materials to support discussions with relevant ministries and opposition leaders.

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2. Virtual Ministerial Delegations

In line with advocacy efforts undertaken over the course of the pandemic, it is proposed that the Region of Peel (“the Region”) use advocacy opportunities available throughout the 2021 AMO Virtual Conference to highlight the current and ongoing impacts COVID-19 has had on Regional programs and services. In addition, it is also proposed that the Region advance priorities which highlight how the Province can work to strengthen municipalities so that they can be effective partners as Ontario moves to reopen its economy.

It is important to note that any position advanced related to specific service areas has been endorsed by Regional Council. As the Region’s response to COVID-19 is constantly evolving, the approach outlined above may need to be amended to reflect emerging priorities resulting from the impacts of the pandemic. AMO is expected to confirm the deadline to submit requests for delegation meetings in the coming weeks.

a) 2021 Region of Peel Proposed Advocacy Priority Themes

The advocacy priorities that are proposed to be advanced at this year’s Conference relate to the following policy themes:

- COVID-19 Response Support
- Infrastructure
- Housing & Homelessness
- Enhanced Seniors Support
- Mental Health & Addiction Services
- Early Years & Child Care
- Waste Management
- Climate Change
- Transportation

b) AMO Conference Preparation Workshop

To prepare for the virtual Conference, staff recommends holding a workshop in July (tentatively scheduled for July 15). As the Region and the Province’s response to COVID-19 continues to rapidly evolve, this workshop will be used to confirm messaging and allow staff to incorporate any input received from Government Relations Committee (GRC) members into the briefing materials and other documents being prepared.

c) Coordination with Local Municipalities

The Region is usually notified by Ministers’ offices whether the delegation request has been accepted approximately one to two weeks prior the start of the AMO Conference. As meeting delegations are confirmed, to avoid scheduling conflicts, Region of Peel staff will coordinate Mayor/Councillor participation in the specific meetings with staff from Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. This will also provide an opportunity to coordinate appropriate representation at delegation meetings based on conference participants’ interest and availability.

The Region will also work with local municipal staff to seek joint delegations, where appropriate.

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3. Additional Initiatives

It is also proposed that the Region pursue additional advocacy opportunities including:

- Hosting a virtual briefing session with Peel MPPs prior to the conference to help raise awareness of the Region's priorities. If physical distancing conditions are lifted by the time the conference takes place, there may be an opportunity to host this meeting in person.
- Requesting virtual delegation meetings with leaders of the opposition parties and other key officials.

CONCLUSION

The 2021 virtual AMO Conference presents a valuable opportunity to advance Peel's priorities in response to COVID-19 and to demonstrate how the Region can collaborate with the Province as it implements its economic recovery efforts.

Following the conference, the Chair of the GRC and staff will provide the Committee with an update on conference activities, follow up action items and future opportunities to advance Regional priorities.

For further information regarding this report, please contact Keith Medenblik, Manager, Strategic Public Policy & External Relations, Ext.4777, Keith.Medenblik@peelregion.ca.

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