
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Update on Region of Peel Advocacy Priorities**

FROM: Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner
of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide Government Relations Committee members with a high-level overview on the status of advocacy priorities, as outlined in Appendix I of this report.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- This report highlights advocacy efforts undertaken since the last meeting of the Government Relations Committee (GRC), held on March 3, 2022.
 - This report also provides a high-level overview of the 2022 federal and provincial budgets, in alignment with the Region of Peel pre-budget submissions.
 - This report also provides an overview of the June 2, 2022, provincial election, including alignment of the Region's priorities to the major party's election platforms.
 - As the GRC moves forward to leverage upcoming opportunities, staff will continue to be nimble and flexible in its approach to advocacy.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic, and throughout the current term of Council, the Government Relations Committee (GRC) has worked to fulfill its mandate, which includes developing, coordinating, implementing and monitoring government relations strategies to help advance Regional Council endorsed advocacy priorities at the provincial and federal levels of government.

This report provides an update on the advocacy initiatives brought forward to the GRC on March 3, 2022 and approved by Regional Council on March 24, 2022. It also describes the various advocacy opportunities that the Region has leveraged over the past several months. In addition, this report also includes notable progress (Appendix I) on key Regional priorities and potential next steps where appropriate.

a) 2022 Federal and Provincial Budgets

The federal budget was released on April 7, 2022, followed by the 2022 provincial budget on April 28. The Region leveraged the opportunity to highlight Peel's financial advocacy priorities by providing submissions to this year's federal and provincial pre-budget consultations. Regional submissions outlined several policy solutions to address the financial challenges facing Peel residents and businesses and to prepare for the post-

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pandemic economic recovery. As part of the Region's ongoing commitment to fostering intergovernmental cooperation among all levels of government and advancing key advocacy priorities, the Region's pre-budget submissions were shared with elected representatives for Peel, and other key stakeholders.

The themes of the federal budget were anchored by economic growth and affordability – marking a shift from recent pandemic-response focused budgets. The federal budget also included several commitments that align with key Regional focus areas, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Additional funding commitments for housing to help address the Region's need for sustainable capital and operating support
- Funding for mental health and addictions services that align with Regional advocacy for increased funding in Peel and are also supportive of system integration and planning
- In alignment with the Region's shift to resource recovery, and a low-carbon circular economy, the federal government committed to five-year funding for the development and implementation of regulatory measures to reduce plastic waste

The provincial budget released on April 28 underlined economic growth, highlighting a focus on infrastructure investments and other key investments in alignment with several of the Region's provincial election priorities, including:

- Continued support for pandemic response
- Federal-provincial collaboration for infrastructure funding
- Support for mental health and seniors

While the budget document was tabled in the legislature, it was not passed in advance of the dissolution of provincial parliament. However, the provisions of the budget signalled a number of the key policy priorities of the Progressive Conservative party's election platform.

b) 2022 Ontario Election

On June 2, 2022, the provincial election was held, resulting in a second consecutive majority for Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservative Party, who increased their seat count at Queen's Park to 83, an additional 7 seats from their electoral win in 2018. The NDP retained their role as Official Opposition, with 31 seats, down 9 from 2018, and the Liberal Party increased their seat count from 7 to 8, however, Liberal Leader Steven Del Duca failed to secure victory in his riding of Vaughan-Woodbridge. Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner retained his seat in Guelph, maintaining the status quo for his party at Queen's Park.

Following their electoral defeat, both Del Duca, and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath resigned their positions of leader of their respective parties.

In Peel Region, voters chose to elect Progressive Conservative candidates in all 12 ridings, re-electing 9 incumbents and turning over the three ridings previously held by the NDP to the governing party. The new MPPs representing Peel are:

- **Graham McGregor** (Brampton North) replaces former NDP MPP Kevin Yarde. Mr. McGregor has previously worked with former MPP for Brampton-Springdale Parm Gill and Brampton West MPP Amarjot Sandhu. Through his career, McGregor has held

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various roles and responsibilities with the Ontario Government at the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

- **Charmaine Williams** (Brampton Centre) replaces NDP Deputy Leader Sara Singh. Before her successful campaign, Williams served as on Brampton City Council as local councillor in Wards 7 & 8. Prior to entering politics, Williams had a 19-year career as a certified Multi-Systemic Therapist, Behavioural Consultant and Counsellor. Williams has also worked with several therapeutic programs and organizations like Associated Youth Services of Peel, Youth Substance Abuse Program, Peel Children's Center and the Reach Out Center for Kids in Peel and the Halton Region.
- **Hardeep Grewal** (Brampton East) –replaces NDP MPP Gurratan Singh. Grewal has been an active community member within Brampton, working with the Guru Gobind Singh Children Foundation and C-SASIL (Canadian South Asians Supporting Independent Living). His involvement in provincial politics started at the age of 18, being elected as one of the youngest local riding presidents in the party's history for Etobicoke North, and later served as the regional director of the Ontario PC Fund.

As part of Peel's pre-election activities, the Region produced the Region of Peel – 2022 Provincial Election Priorities document, which was shared widely, including to local Peel candidates, party leaders, and other Peel stakeholders. The document called on the next provincial government to consider Peel's unique challenges and to address Council endorsed advocacy positions related to three over-arching policy themes. Under each of these three themes, the Region compiled the following key policy priorities and recommendations for local candidates, from all major provincial parties, to consider and advance to meet the needs of the Peel community:

Continue support for pandemic response

- Support essential services for Peel residents and businesses
- Stimulate economy through infrastructure funding
- Collaborate to build a strong, stable child care sector

Partner with municipalities

- Fair share for municipalities
- Support new hospital development
- Focus on affordable housing solutions
- Enhance the transportation network

Community for life

- Safeguard quality of life for seniors
- Prioritize investment in mental health and addiction services

Also of note, to provide insight on where each of the major provincial parties stand on the advocacy priorities included in the Region's provincial election document, staff have produced a high-level analysis of the major party platforms. This analysis is attached to this report as Appendix II.

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Post Provincial Election Activities

Following the June 2 election, the Chair sent out congratulatory correspondence to the newly elected Peel representatives and will begin efforts to renew engagement with local MPPs and, once the government has named its cabinet, with ministers with portfolios that closely align with key Regional priorities. Engagement opportunities include, but are not limited to, the upcoming annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference, quarterly meetings and delegation opportunities at GRC meetings.

c) Progress on Region of Peel Priorities

By engaging with elected and departmental officials from the provincial and federal levels of government and other stakeholders as appropriate, the GRC has implemented a variety of advocacy initiatives that have led to demonstrated progress on key Region of Peel strategic priorities, which are referenced in Appendix I of this report – Update on the Region's Advocacy Priorities Table.

Affordable housing solutions

Staff remained engaged on the Region's various housing priorities, including advocating for legislative and policy changes to improve affordability outcomes in Peel. Recognizing housing will be a top-of-mind issue, staff reviewed and provided comments to the Province on Bill 109, *More Homes for Everyone Act*. Additionally, Regional staff provided responses to several other housing-related consultations, which included the following focus areas:

- Challenges and barriers faced by not-for-profit housing providers in accessing capital
- How to diversify housing choices in existing neighbourhoods
- Proposed changes to the *Planning Act* as part of the More Homes for Everyone Plan

Road Safety Roundtable

On April 14, 2022, representatives from the Region and the lower tier municipalities met with then Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Minister Caroline Mulroney and MTO staff to advance road safety initiatives.

The discussion focused on several key issues, including:

- Implementation of a provincewide Vision Zero strategy
- Administrative Monetary Penalties regulatory framework
- Excessive vehicle noise
- Vulnerable road users

Staff continue to leverage advocacy opportunities, including as part of the recent Provincial Election Priorities document and the upcoming AMO conference in August, to advance shared road safety priorities and will provide updates to the GRC and Members of Council accordingly.

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CONCLUSION

This report is intended to provide an update on the Region's efforts to advance Peel's interests at the federal and provincial levels of government and to provide an overview of recent and upcoming activities. Moving forward, following the recent provincial election, staff will continue to advance the Region's key advocacy positions with a coordinated and collaborative approach.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Update on the Region's Advocacy Priorities Table

Appendix II - 2022 Provincial Election Platform Analysis – Region of Peel Priorities

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Kent." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services