
REPORT TITLE: 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the approach outlined in the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services, listed on the March 2, 2023 Government Relations Committee agenda titled "2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference", be endorsed.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2023 AMO Conference will take place August 20-23 in London, Ontario.
- The Conference provides an opportunity to continue to engage with provincial ministers, parliamentary assistants, and senior provincial staff.
- Peel staff will request delegation meetings with relevant provincial ministries to advance Regional Council's key advocacy priorities.
- This report includes proposed high level advocacy themes that will be advanced with the provincial decision-makers at the Conference.
- Staff is proposing that an AMO Conference Preparation Workshop be held in mid-July to allow Government Relations Committee (GRC) members the opportunity to provide feedback into the advocacy approach and supporting materials.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The AMO Annual Conference provides an opportunity for Regional Councillors and staff to come together with other municipal leaders from across the province to work together on solutions to challenges facing communities and connect with provincial decision makers on issues that are important to municipal governments. The next Conference is scheduled to take place in person from August 20 - 23, 2023 in London, Ontario.

While the program for this year's Conference has not yet been confirmed, it is expected that there will be a number of keynote addresses by provincial party leaders, cabinet ministers as well as subject matter experts. In addition, previous Conferences have included 'Ministers' Forums' where cabinet ministers will answer questions from elected municipal officials.

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2. Ministerial Delegations

One of the key elements of the Conference is the opportunity to take part in delegation meetings with provincial cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, and senior department staff to build and strengthen relationships and promote Peel Region as a trusted partner to support key provincial initiatives, while advancing Peel's advocacy priorities.

It is proposed that Peel use the advocacy opportunities available at this year's Conference to focus on the current concerns with municipal fiscal sustainability and immediate and long-term challenges related to financial support for essential infrastructure and important provincially-mandated services to support Peel's under-funded, yet growing community.

a) 2023 Peel Region Proposed Advocacy Priority Themes

The advocacy priorities that are proposed to be advanced at delegation meetings during this year's Conference fall under the following key policy themes:

- Addressing municipal fiscal sustainability
- Funding for infrastructure
- Building affordable housing
- Supporting community-based care
- Investing in sustainable communities

These themes are recommended based on current advocacy priorities that are in line with Regional Council-endorsed positions and related to the provincial government's mandate and key policy initiatives. Please note that, given the shifting nature of the provincial political environment, the priorities related to these proposed themes will be further developed in advance of the Conference and may have to be refocused, should circumstances change.

When the delegation request portal on the Conference website is opened in the coming weeks, Peel staff will submit delegation requests based on approved themes and will also lead the coordination and development of materials to support discussions with relevant ministries.

b) AMO Conference Preparation Workshop

In preparation for delegation meetings that may be confirmed to take place during the Conference, Peel staff recommend that a workshop be held on July 13, 2023 to provide GRC members with the opportunity to review the proposed advocacy priorities and draft materials. This will allow staff to solicit and incorporate Councillor feedback into the final briefing materials to support advocacy efforts during the Conference. Subject matter experts from relevant departments will also be in attendance to answer questions that may arise regarding the advocacy priorities.

c) Coordination with Local Municipalities

Generally, Peel staff are notified by Ministers' offices whether delegation requests have been accepted a few weeks prior the start of the Conference. As delegation meetings are confirmed, Peel staff will coordinate attendee's participation in the specific meetings with local municipal staff from Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga to solicit interest and availability, to ensure sufficient Councillor representation and minimize scheduling conflicts.

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If the opportunities exist, the Peel staff will also work with local staff to seek joint delegations, where appropriate.

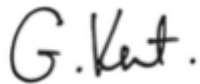
3. Additional Initiatives

At previous in-person AMO Conferences, Peel's delegation has hosted a breakfast meeting with all Peel Ministers/MPPs as well as local municipal councillors in attendance at the conference to discuss Peel-specific issues and raise awareness of the Peel Region's advocacy priorities. These events have proven successful, with strong attendance from Peel's provincial and municipal attendees, and it is recommended that this practice continue at this year's Conference.

CONCLUSION

Peel Region has traditionally been an active participant in all aspects of the AMO Conference. The 2023 AMO Conference will again present opportunities for Peel Region to advance its advocacy priorities and strengthen relationships with provincial leaders as well as local Peel MPPs.

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



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