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**For Information**

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

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

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide Government Relations Committee members with a high-level overview on the status of the Region's key advocacy priorities.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- One of the key roles of the Government Relations Committee is to advance the Regional Council's endorsed advocacy positions with the federal and provincial governments.
  - This report outlines the various advocacy opportunities that the Region has leveraged over the past several months and highlights major provincial legislation and government initiatives that will potentially impact the Region and its residents in a significant way.
  - This report provides an update on key provincial legislative and policy developments affecting the Region (Bills 23 and 39, review of regional government, plan for tackling surgical backlogs).
  - Regional Council approved a motion calling on the Province to create a fund to compensate the Region for the impacts of Bill 23 on municipal growth funding revenues and expenditures.
  - In an effort to advance the Region's key advocacy priorities, pre-budget submissions were provided to the provincial and federal governments in early February.
  - Appendix I details the progress on the Region's priority advocacy positions and highlights next steps and potential opportunities related to these positions.
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**DISCUSSION**

One of the key roles of the Government Relations Committee (GRC) is to advance Regional Council's endorsed advocacy positions with the federal and provincial governments. Focused and consistent advocacy have been key to Regional efforts to date and Regional Council and staff will continue advancing key priority issues by seeking opportunities, engaging with elected officials and through ongoing efforts to strengthen intergovernmental relations.

This report outlines the various advocacy opportunities that the Region has leveraged over the past several months and highlights major provincial legislation and government initiatives that will potentially impact the Region and its residents in a significant way. It also provides an update on the recent activities the Region has undertaken to advance its key advocacy priorities, including provincial and federal pre-budget submissions. An update on the latest developments on the Region's key advocacy priorities is also provided.

## Update on Region of Peel Advocacy Priorities

### 1. Progress on Region of Peel Priorities

By engaging with elected and ministry 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.

### 2. Update on the Provincial legislative and policy environment

#### a) **Bill 23, *The More Homes Built Faster Act***

As reported to Regional Council in December 2022, *Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* will have significant financial, housing and planning impacts on the Region and its local municipalities. Bill 23 amended the *Development Charges Act*, which, once fully implemented could amount to a \$2 billion revenue shortfall or more over the next 10 years for the Region, including a \$200 million reduction in DC funding for housing services.

On December 8, 2022, Regional Council approved a motion calling on the Province to create a fund to compensate the Region for the impacts of Bill 23 on municipal growth funding revenues and expenditures. Both the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) have indicated that the Province will make municipalities “whole” should they experience a revenue shortfall, although no details have been provided regarding the fund’s eligibility and parameters.

Also at the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, Regional Council endorsed staff comments to numerous provincial consultations and postings related to Bill 23 and related proposed regulations and policies. Staff also participated collaboratively in cross-municipal working groups to identify and assess the impacts of Bill 23, and to support the advocacy efforts being undertaken by the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO). MARCO presented a unified municipal voice to the Province in response to the legislation by providing a written submission to the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing.

#### b) **Bill 39, *the Better Municipal Governance Act***

On November 16, 2022, the Province introduced a second bill on the Strong Mayor powers. *Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act*, would provide Toronto and Ottawa city councils with power to pass a by-law regarding a provincial priority with the support of one-third of council. The Bill also authorized the MMAH Minister to appoint Regional Chairs in the regions of Niagara, Peel and York for the 2022-26 term. While Strong Mayor legislative powers and its regulations are only available to the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, the Premier and Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing have stated that they are considering the extension of these powers to more municipalities.

#### c) **Assessment of Regional Governments**

On the same day Bill 39 was introduced, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing also announced that the Province would be launching a review of regional governance, which will include the appointment of facilitators to assess the regional governments in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo, and York. These facilitators will work with municipal governments in these Regions to assess the best mix of roles and responsibilities between upper and lower-tier municipalities and ensure they are equipped to deliver on the government’s pledge to tackle the housing supply crisis.

## Update on Region of Peel Advocacy Priorities

Both Bill 23 and Bill 39 received Royal Assent on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Staff continue to closely monitor the implementation of these bills and associated activities (e.g., appointment of facilitators) to better assess and understand the impacts on the Region and how Bill 23 municipal compensation may be determined.

### **d) Province's Plan to eliminate surgical backlogs and reduce wait times**

In mid-January, the Ontario government unveiled a three-step plan to address the COVID-19 pandemic related surgical and procedure backlogs and reduce wait times by expanding the number of community surgical and diagnostic centres. The surgical procedures backlog is currently estimated at 206,000 people.

As part of its plan, the Province said it will implement measures to protect the stability of health staffing resources at public hospitals, including requiring new facilities to provide detailed staffing plans as part of their application and requiring a number of doctors at these centres to have active privileges at their local hospital. Surgeries and procedures performed at these centres will be publicly-funded and covered using an OHIP card.

The initial stages of the provincial government's plan will address the current cataract surgeries backlog. Further steps are expected to expand the scope of these centres to include MRI and CT imaging and colonoscopy and endoscopy procedures. The Province will introduce legislation in February that will allow current community diagnostic centres to conduct more MRI and CT scans, strengthen oversight of community surgical settings and give the provincial government with more flexibility to expand access to surgeries and further reduce wait times. In 2024, the Province will expand hip and knee replacements.

This plan could reduce surgical backlog and wait times for Peel residents. For the critics of private sector involvement in the publicly funded health care system, the Province's plan represents a significant shift in health care service delivery. Staff will continue to monitor implementation of the plan and keep Council informed if there are significant developments.

## **3. Recent Advocacy Activities – Pre-Budget Submissions**

The annual federal and provincial pre-budget consultations provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of and advocate for the needs of Peel residents and businesses. As it has done in the past, the Region participated in the 2023 pre-budget consultations by providing written submissions to the federal and provincial governments in the lead up to the release of their respective budgets, which are expected to be presented in March/April.

The Provincial pre-budget submission advanced several of the Region's key advocacy priorities, including the need for provincial support for mental health and municipal finances, and for increased investment in infrastructure. The submission underscored that Bill 23 will further exacerbate municipalities' fiscal challenges and asked the Province to implement a municipal fund to compensate the Region and its local municipalities to mitigate the significant impacts of Bill 23 on municipal growth funding revenues and expenditures.

The Region's federal pre-budget submission proposed housing solutions and needed investments in climate change mitigation. It also called on the federal government to adopt permanent public transit fund recommendations and to partner on infrastructure.

## **Update on Region of Peel Advocacy Priorities**

The Region's submissions to the provincial and federal pre-budget consultations can be found in Appendix II and Appendix III respectively. Regional staff will prepare analyses and summaries of both budgets and circulate to Regional Council for their information.

## **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 activities and highlight forthcoming advocacy work and opportunities. Staff will continue to monitor emerging trends and key policy developments and provide updates to Regional Council and the GRC as well as continue to advance the Region's key advocacy positions in a coordinated and collaborative fashion.

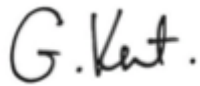
## **APPENDICES**

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

Appendix II – 2023 Region of Peel Provincial Pre-budget Submission

Appendix III – 2023 Region of Peel Federal Pre-budget Submission

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