

Advocacy Update

10 Peel Centre Dr., Brampton, ON L6T 4B9 | 905-791-7800 | peelregion.ca

May 2020

Message from the Regional Chair



I am happy to share this update with you, our federal and provincial partners, as we continue working in close collaboration to meet the challenges associated with COVID-19.

The depth of this crisis has led all orders of government to focus the full weight of our resources on this unprecedented public health emergency. Our

citizens depend on their elected leaders in times of crisis to protect health and safety, provide financial support and to develop responsive and innovative solutions quickly. This critical work is ongoing and will continue across our region wherever needs may arise. COVID-19 has created very difficult challenges, but it has also fueled a spirit of cooperation that continues resonating throughout our communities.

In this update, I am proud to highlight the many ways in which the Region of Peel and our team of dedicated and compassionate staff are supporting local, national and indeed global efforts to flatten the curve and chart a path to recovery and normalcy. In the face of this challenge, Peel Public Health, essential workers and local leaders are stepping up together as champions for their communities.

The Region declared an emergency on March 18 and our Emergency Operations Centre remains fully operational, safeguarding and coordinating essential services. As we have seen worldwide, technology has been a lifeline, helping us remain connected, at a time that demands we stay apart. Regional Council continues meeting regularly

online and business continuity plans are being implemented, including redeployment of staff to priority areas requiring additional resources.

We appreciate the various programs and supports, introduced by the provincial and federal governments, from which families and businesses here in Peel have benefitted during these unprecedented times. We look forward to working with you on continued supports for those impacted by COVID-19.

These are of course, trying times for municipalities as well. The Region shares your flexible approach, however, as you know, municipalities have limited revenue streams to fund our core responsibilities. As we begin charting a path to recovery, we look forward to starting a dialogue about how the provincial and federal governments can provide the much-needed supports that municipalities will need.

While the focus of our collective efforts have turned to combatting the pandemic, we continue making strides in other areas that contribute to the exceptional quality of life here, including progress on the Region's ongoing anti-human sex trafficking advocacy.

The Region of Peel will continue to work in partnership with you and together we look forward to a future where the threat of COVID-19 has been contained.

Sincerely,

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED ☒

Regional Council

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair and
Chief Executive Officer

City of Brampton

Patrick Brown
Mayor

Gurpreet Dhillon

Pat Fortini

Martin Medeiros

Michael Palleschi

Rowena Santos

Paul Vicente

Town of Caledon

Allan Thompson

Mayor

Johanna Downey

Annette Groves

Jennifer Innis

Ian Sinclair 7.1-1

City of Mississauga

Bonnie Crombie

Mayor

George Carlson

Dipika Damerla

Stephen Dasko

Chris Fonseca

John Kovac

Matt Mahoney

Sue McFadden

Carolyn Parrish

Karen Ras

Pat Saito

Ron Starr

 **Region
of Peel**
working with you

Protecting our most vulnerable

Seniors

Protecting our most vulnerable, including those who live in the Region's five long-term care homes and 23 additional homes within Peel, is our foremost responsibility. The Region welcomes initiatives, such as the Province's recently announced COVID-19 Action Plan for Vulnerable People and federal guidelines and supports for the long-term care sector.

Through an Integrated Response Table, the Region has adopted a multi-agency approach, which includes representation from the Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs, Peel Region Public Health, Peel Region Paramedic Services and local hospitals (Trillium Health Partners and William Osler Health System). This group continues collaborating on the development and execution of a rapid response COVID-19 testing strategy in congregate settings, including long-term care homes, retirement homes and shelters in the Region of Peel. The group meets virtually daily to identify and respond to needs in many critical areas.

Staff in the Region's five long-term care homes have also been directed to only work in one location until further notice in order to reduce the risk of exposure and spread and part-time staff have been offered full-time hours.

Communication and outreach have never been more important and long-term care staff at regional facilities are helping to keep families up to date and connected with their loved ones. That includes regular phone calls, emails, virtual visits and virtual town halls.

The Region joins the global recognition of frontline health care staff, including those working in Peel long-term care homes on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19 and they are to be commended for the care they continue to provide.



Peel Region Long Term Care superheroes

Community response

Through the Community Response Table, the Region is supporting local agencies responding to the emerging needs of vulnerable and at-risk populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This forum brings together more than 90 organization representatives, including our local municipalities in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga as well as a broad range of community stakeholders to discuss shared challenges, emerging needs, opportunities and solutions. It convenes several times each week for the foreseeable future as the Region

works to prioritize and respond to urgent community agency and community needs.

To better enable action and co-develop solutions for the community, the group has further self-organized into five sub-tables: Family Violence, Seniors, Volunteers, Systemic Discrimination and Municipal Partners. Through the Community Response Table, community agencies have already received over \$1 million in funding to date to support community needs. This is an excellent example of innovation and partnership.

Housing and homeless support

We know that our seniors are particularly vulnerable at this time and the same is true of the homeless population. In response, the Region has mobilized to develop an innovative wrap-around program that pulls together Regional Health and Human Services, as well as other health care providers to address the social, housing and medical needs of the homeless population. The three-step program includes prevention and control, screening and triage, as well as isolation and recovery with physician and nurse practitioner care on premises.

While positive cases in the homeless population remain low, the Region is enhancing shelter capacity with the use of hotels to ensure appropriate physical distancing and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Region has

planned for anyone who is homeless and needs to self-isolate, including anyone who presents at a hospital or COVID-19 Assessment Centre. A recovery program is also in place for anyone who is recovering from the virus.

The Region continues to help people who are currently in the shelter system to find permanent housing.



Providing financial relief



Deferring the water and wastewater rate increase scheduled for April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020.



Waiving fares for TransHelp passengers.



91-day grace period for water bills due from April 1 to June 30. During this time, no late payment charges will be applied.



A more than \$2-million increase to the Community Investment Program to provide emergency funding for more than 60 community agencies and non-profit organizations to date and further support is anticipated.

Peel's recovery efforts

The Region estimates an impact of over \$30 million to operations as a result of COVID-19 (March to August). This could seriously impact the critical services residents of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon rely on. As Canada enters a recession, Peel is forecasting a Development Charge revenue shortfall of more than \$400 million over the next three years, putting at risk our investments in growth infrastructure. Financial assistance from the federal and provincial governments will be essential to the management of the current emergency and the recovery afterwards. Both upper levels of government have the fiscal capacity to backstop municipal operations through this crisis and to help with the longer-term financial sustainability of Peel's diverse communities.



Once it is safe to do so, the Region will ramp up its services, based on advice from public health professionals. However, the Region agrees with the cautious approach taken by Premier Ford and Prime Minister Trudeau to ensure the road to recovery will be done in a measured and deliberate way.

The Region would welcome stimulus funding, delivered through an allocation-based model to support local infrastructure, and to once again underpin economic activity and growth. Past infrastructure cost-share programs between all three levels of government have been effective for municipalities and the Region looks forward to working collectively to rebuild our economy from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safe house for victims of human sex trafficking opens

Amidst efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the Region has continued advancing other important work, including key developments aimed at curbing human sex trafficking in Peel and expanding support for victims.

With the April 15 opening of a safe house, the Region reached a key milestone as part of its Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Strategy.

The Region also congratulates the Ontario government on its new Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy and was proud to have regional representatives among the invited guests and stakeholders at the Province's March 6 announcement.

The rate of human trafficking incidents in Peel have grown to become among the highest in Canada and the Region is implementing a three-year pilot program to address the impacts of this troubling crime. The safe house is the first of three dedicated supports established to address this growing problem and bridge the identified service gaps for survivors.

The concept of a safe house in Peel has been in the works since 2017 and its opening is the result of a collaborative approach with several key stakeholders, including the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton, the Peel Human Trafficking Service Providers Committee and Regional Council.

The Pilot will also provide one transitional house to help victims and survivors who are starting to rebuild their lives, and one service hub that will provide customized services for individuals at-risk, engaged in or transitioning out of sex trafficking.

Currently, the pilot program is being funded through Regional reserves. However, without funding supports from the upper levels of government, the ability to address the needs of sex trafficking victims and survivors will be put at risk at the end of the pilot. The Region was encouraged to see included in the recent Economic and Fiscal Update the provincial strategy, as well as a commitment to provide additional resources to combat this crime. The Region looks forward to building on its positive and productive relationship with the provincial and federal governments to advance this important work to help eradicate human sex trafficking.



Premier Doug Ford at an event to announce the new Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy.



Samantha MacNeill, Region of Peel (second from left); Deepy Sur, CEO, Ontario Association of Social Workers (third from left); Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General and Dufferin-Caledon MPP (centre front); Regional Councillor Johanna Downey (second from right) with others to announce the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy.

Government Relations Committee

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair (ex-officio)
Patrick Brown
Mayor, City of Brampton
Allan Thompson
Mayor, Town of Caledon
Bonnie Crombie
Mayor, City of Mississauga
Stephen Dasko
Mississauga (Ward 1)
Gurpreet Singh Dhillon
Brampton (Wards 9 and 10)
Johanna Downey
Caledon (Ward 2)
Annette Groves
Caledon (Ward 5)
Jennifer Innis (Chair)
Caledon (Ward 4)
Michael Palleschi
Brampton (Ward 2)
Karen Ras (Vice-Chair)
Mississauga (Ward 2)
Rowena Santos
Brampton (Wards 1 and 5)
Paul Vicente
Brampton (Wards 1 and 5)

Regional Executive Leadership Team

Nancy Polsinelli,
Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Kathryn Lockyer,
Interim Commissioner of Corporate Services
Sean Baird,
Commissioner of Digital and Information Services
Cathy Granger,
Acting Commissioner of Health Services
Janice Sheehy,
Commissioner of Human Services
Andrew Farr,
Interim Commissioner of Public Works
Stephen VanOfwegen,
Commissioner of Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Committee Support Staff

Ava Macintyre,
Deputy Regional Clerk
905-791-7800, ext. 4325
ava.macintyre@peelregion.ca
Keith Medenblik,
Manager,
Strategic Public Policy and External Relations
905-791-7800, ext. 4777
keith.medenblik@peelregion.ca