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REPORT TITLE: **Update on Peel's Strategic Plan**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Regional Council provide their input and endorsement of Peel's Strategic Agenda, which sets out to advance Regional Council's approved 20-year Strategic Plan.**

## **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Regional Council approved Peel's 20-year Strategic Plan in 2015, which set a bold vision of *Community for Life*, where everyone has a sense of belonging and has access to the services and opportunities they need to thrive at every stage of life.
- It contained three long-term outcomes: improve people's lives in their time of need; ensure communities are integrated, safe and complete; and reflect a government that is future oriented and accountable.
- Meaningful progress has been made on Peel's Strategic Plan, including:
  - Delivering uninterrupted, core, high-quality services.
  - Achieved an overall customer satisfaction rating of 82 per cent.
  - Responding to the housing crisis by scaling up capital improvements in water and wastewater infrastructure.
  - Completed 231 continuous improvement initiatives, resulting in \$22.6 million in cost savings and \$27.8 million in cost avoidance.
  - Administered 3.3 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic.
  - Implemented Ontario's first emotion-focused Butterfly model of care.
  - Received a 100 per cent inspection report rating for all seven municipal drinking water systems in Peel.
  - Developed Ontario's first municipal Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Strategy.
- The global and local environment in which Peel operates within has dramatically shifted over the last five years. Peel has faced significant disruption, being the hardest hit community in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and experiencing ongoing governance reviews.
- Rapid population growth, ambitious provincial housing targets that accelerate forecasted growth to improve affordability, the heightened responsibility to decolonize our systems and community engagement, the obvious impacts of climate change, the sharp rise in asylum claimants, increasing homelessness and encampments, a rapidly growing aging population, the affordability crisis and the volatility of the social determinants of health, have caused unprecedented service pressures.
- Regional Council and staff have responded to these pressures and the increasing complexity of need with an unwavering commitment to our community and the promise it has.
- With a focus on addressing the complexities and risks before us and to forge ahead into the future, re-anchoring to our Strategic Plan, this report highlights our Strategic Agenda 2024-2027, outlining short-term work to achieve our long-term outcomes.

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- Peel's Strategic Agenda was informed by listening carefully to Regional Council and the insights of every Director across the corporation, reinforcing our commitment to delivering housing and social impact, sustainability, service excellence, future readiness, and fostering an environment where our employees are supported in their wellness, growth, and creativity.
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## DISCUSSION

### 1. Background

Regional Council approved Peel's 20-year Strategic Plan in November 2015, after extensive community engagement and stakeholder consultation.

The approved Strategic Plan introduced a bold vision of *Community for Life*, where everyone has a sense of belonging and has access to the services they need at every stage of life.

Peel's Strategic Plan also introduced an organizational mission of *Working with you to create a healthy, safe, and connected community* and a longer-term planning horizon, recognizing the complexities of the future.

Regional Council and Peel staff embarked on a journey to move the needle on three primary outcomes: improve people's lives in their time of need; ensure communities are integrated, safe and complete; and to reflect a government that is future oriented and accountable.

Strategies and action plans are continually developed and executed to deliver results for Peel residents, businesses, and the community. Ongoing updates have been provided to Regional Council.

### 2. Accomplishments & Recognition

Meaningful progress has been made on Peel's Strategic Plan as demonstrated by several significant accomplishments across all services, notwithstanding unprecedented disruption.

Some examples include:

- Delivering uninterrupted, core, high quality services to the community.
- Administered 3.3 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine throughout the pandemic to Peel residents aged 12 and over, managed over 180,000 COVID-19 cases and secured over \$360 million in COVID-19 funding to support the community.
- Achieved an overall organizational customer satisfaction rating of 82 per cent from January to August 2024, measured from over 55,000 real time customer surveys. This is comparable to the overall customer satisfaction rating of 83 per cent achieved in 2023, measured from over 68,000 real time surveys.
- Completed 231 Continuous Improvement Initiatives, resulting in \$22.6 million in cost savings and \$27.8 million in cost avoidance between 2017-2023.
- Received a 100 per cent inspection report rating from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks for all seven municipal drinking water systems in Peel.
- Responding to the housing crisis. Some examples include:
  - Supported growth and the housing pledges by scaling up capital improvements in water/wastewater infrastructure. Peel is now the third

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largest capital program in North America, as reported by Bluefield Research.

- Council approved a \$130 million investment to enhance wastewater flow capacity that includes a \$35 million investment from the province. The goal for the G.E. Booth Water Resources Recovery Facility is to increase capacity by an additional 40 million litres per day. These efforts aim to support the province's objective of building more homes, including up to 47,000 additional housing units in Peel Region.
  - Provided housing and related supports to 33,897 households, including 16,497 households accommodated within Peel's affordable housing system in 2023.
  - Supported more than 4,800 households in 2023 with one-time financial assistance, including funding for first and last month's rent, assistance with moving costs or help to pay off utility arrears. This represents an increase of over 1,400 households who received these funds last year when compared to 2022.
  - Opening six new housing projects in Peel in 2024, adding 381 new homes/shelter beds to the community and supportive housing system. Another 908 new homes/shelter beds are under construction in seven new housing projects in Peel.
- Implemented Ontario's first emotion-focused Butterfly model of care.
  - Developed Ontario's first municipal Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Strategy.
  - Introduced Ontario's first electric waste collection vehicle.
  - Transformed the way we work with community partners to advance health equity.

A full listing of accomplishments can be found in Appendix I.

Peel also continues to receive numerous awards and recognitions from independent third-party bodies, demonstrating Peel's reputation as a leading municipal government.

In 2024 alone:

- Excellence Canada recently recertified Peel for the Platinum Level Award for Excellence, Innovation and Wellness, recognizing organizational excellence against a set of rigorous standards, being assessed on the five drivers of leadership, planning, people, customer, and process.
- AAA credit rating achieved consecutively for 29 years, currently only one of five Canadian municipalities to be rated "AAA" by both Moody's Ratings and S&P Global Ratings.
- The Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) recognized Peel with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for transparency, accountability and demonstrating successful community outcomes; it is the highest form of recognition.
- Forbes recognized Peel as one of Canada's Best Employers under the Government Services Category.
- The National Institute for Governmental Procurement (NIGP) recognized Peel's Procurement team with its Quality Public Procurement Department Award for the sixth consecutive three-year term, for a total of 18 years.

A full listing of awards and recognitions can be found in Appendix II.

### 3. Disruption, Service Pressures and Risks

Peel has faced significant disruption, being the hardest hit community in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused massive redeployment of staff over several

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years, coupled with ongoing governance reviews, which created uncertainty, stress, and anxiety for Peel staff.

The global and local context which Peel operates within has dramatically shifted over the last five years, economically, socially, technologically, politically, legally, and environmentally. This has caused unprecedented service pressures and opportunities such as rapid population growth, ambitious provincial housing targets that accelerate all forecasted growth by 20 years to 2031 to improve affordability, the heightened responsibility to decolonize our systems and community engagement, the obvious impacts of climate change, the sharp rise in asylum claimants, increasing homelessness and encampments, a rapidly growing aging population, the affordability crisis and the volatility of the social determinants of health (factors that influence individual and population health such as income, employment, working conditions, housing, gender, race, education, food insecurity).

Details of the increasing complexities and pressures include:

- Peel is experiencing massive population growth; Peel's current population is 1.5 million and is expected to grow to 2.28 million by 2051. As one strategy to improve housing affordability, the province has introduced a mandate to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, including ambitious housing targets for Peel that accelerate the majority of growth forecasted to 2051 to occur by 2031.
- As Peel's population grows, so does the demand for affordable housing. Approximately 97,000 households in Peel are living in core housing need; this represents approximately one in five households in Peel. As the level of unmet need continues to grow, there is a greater need to invest in housing supports; this includes seeking long-term, sustainable funding from the upper levels of government.
- Peel's emergency shelters exceeded their capacity by approximately 400 per cent and at the end of 2023, asylum claimants represented more than 71 per cent of Peel's shelter population. From January 1, 2023, to June 3, 2024, 3,279 asylum claimant households or 4,045 individuals have been provided with emergency shelter in Peel. Over the same time period, asylum claimants have comprised 71 per cent of Peel's total shelter population on average, a number that has historically been closer to between four to five per cent.
- Peel is developing a sustainable, person-centred model to better support asylum claimants, featuring dedicated shelter facilities that provide culturally sensitive targeted support. Through staff management, we are making steady progress to separate our asylum claimant sites/hotels from local homeless shelters/hotels. As of September 15, 2024, 105 of 1,217 asylum claimants remain in the local homeless shelter system.
- The population of non-permanent residents, including international students, temporary workers, asylum seekers, and others, has grown significantly from 22,965 in 2016 to an estimated 216,000 in 2024, representing an 840 per cent increase.
- Ontario Works clients face systemic barriers and present with complex needs resulting in an increased demand for supports to stabilize their lives. In December 2023, there were 25,000 Peel residents (1.7 per cent of Peel's population) in receipt of Ontario Works; just in the span of a few months there were 36,696 (July 2024) Peel residents supported through Ontario Works, an increase of 46.8 per cent.
- The rates of communicable diseases have increased significantly in Peel over the past several years, increasing in complexity with confounding health and social factors. From 2018 to 2022, Peel observed a 154 per cent increase in HIV, a 61

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per cent increase in syphilis and a 17 per cent increase in gonorrhoea. Cases are expected to increase as Peel's population increases.

- The number of individuals relying on food banks in Peel has increased by 60 per cent compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- Peel Paramedics respond to approximately 140,000 emergency calls each year. As Peel's population grows and the senior demographic surges (one in four residents will be over 65 by 2041), the pressure on emergency services will reach unprecedented levels. To keep up with this rising demand, Peel will need 201 more ambulances by 2030, a 47.8 per cent increase from the 2022 fleet size.
- Peel's infrastructure portfolio is currently rated in a "Good" condition due to ongoing capital programs that replace outdated and deficient assets with modern, infrastructure. However, maintaining this "Good" state over the next decade will require an estimated investment of \$5.4 billion. The current assessment does not account for climate-related risks, such as rising temperatures and more severe extreme weather events, which could impact the condition of infrastructure and assets. Factoring in climate change will amplify funding pressures.

Staff have responded to these complex, compounded pressures with resilience and an unwavering commitment to the Peel community. However, these pressures are further exacerbated by underfunding. Chronic underfunding, especially in the field of social and health services, undermines our ability to manage these pressures.

## 4. Update on Peel's Strategic Plan

With a focus on addressing the complexities and risks before us and to forge ahead into the future, re-anchoring to our Strategic Plan, the Strategic Agenda 2024-2027 (Appendix III) outlines short-term work to achieve our long-term outcomes and advance our vision of *Community for Life* (Appendix IV).

Peel's Strategic Agenda is supported by our Regional Values that define how we work together (Care and Support, Collaboration, Leadership, Inclusion, Transparency).

Building on these values, listening carefully to Regional Council and leaning on the insights of every Director across the corporation, other inputs into the development of the Strategic Agenda include a comprehensive risk assessment, environmental scans, analysis of the external environment, leading practice reviews, organizational performance data, community data and a review of lessons learned.

Peel's Strategic Agenda is organized by five pillars with corresponding outcomes and key initiatives:

- **Housing and Social Impact:** *We will amplify collective impact, strengthen partnerships and integration to address vital, pressing community needs, including providing affordable housing options and supports to residents in need.*

Examples of actions include:

- Accelerating the delivery of housing-enabling infrastructure.
- Implementing priority actions within the Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Modernizing and transforming the G.E Booth Water Resource Recovery Facility to support housing targets.
- Developing and implementing a Long-term Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
- Refreshing Peel's Community Safety and Well-being Plan.
- Implementing a sustainable model to support asylum claimants.

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- Implementing the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan.
- Building a new paramedic reporting station - Dockstader to meet Peel's Net Zero Emission Building Standards.
- Advancing the International Students Collaborative.
- Building and opening the new Peel Manor Seniors Rental Building.
- Development of the Wilson Lands.
- Implementing the B3 Fund to support Black-led, Black-focused and Black-serving organizations.
- Developing and implementing Peel's fifth Intimate Partner Violence campaign.
- Implementing Peel's Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Program.
- Developing an Encampment Policy Framework and Joint Protocols.
- Partnering with School Boards to prioritize mental health in Peel's School Health Program.
- Investing in promoting the Homeownership program.
- Implementing a Supply Chain Diversity Pilot program.

- **Sustainability:** *We will ensure Peel delivers value for money and is environmentally and financially sustainable today and for the future.*

Examples of actions include:

- Continuing analysis and advocacy to address the provincial and federal funding shortfalls.
- Implementing and refreshing Peel's Climate Change Master Plan.
- Updating the Long-term Financial Planning Strategy.
- Exploring mixed waste processing options.
- Updating and implementing a Long-term Enterprise Asset Management Plan.
- Advancing the Vacant Homes Tax.
- Designing ten new construction projects to Net Zero Emission Building standards.
- Revitalizing heating systems in Peel Living buildings through the support of Canada Community-Building Fund.
- Partnering with conservation authorities to protect and enhance Peel's Green Infrastructure assets.

- **Service Excellence:** *We will deliver high-quality services, enhance value, and elevate organizational effectiveness.*

Examples of actions include:

- Executing the Continuous Improvement Strategy including functional reviews.
- Enabling Digital Government through technology.
- Implementing the Vendor Performance Management program.
- Implementing upgraded Regional Council technology.

- **Our People:** *We will foster an environment where employees are supported in their wellness, growth, and creativity.*

Examples of actions include:

- Implementing the Psychological and Physical Health and Safety Framework.

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- Implementing an updated, inclusive People Strategy.
  - Completing the Total Rewards review.
  - Introducing a CAO's People Leadership Forum ensuring our people leaders continue to be equipped with the skills of the future.
- **Future Ready:** *We will enable future preparedness in managing disruption, volatility, uncertainty, growth, complexity and ambiguity with resilience and foresight.*

Examples of actions include:

- Enhancing advocacy with a revitalized government relations approach.
- Enhancing emergency and business continuity planning through the development of a Future Disruption Readiness Strategy.
- Strengthening relationships and communications with Regional Council and local municipalities.
- Implementing any recommendations from the Provincial Review.
- Investing in community protection against vaccine preventable diseases.

A full listing of initiatives including descriptions can be found in Appendix V.

Ongoing performance monitoring and reporting on the advancement of Peel's Strategic Plan will continue to be brought forward to Regional Council annually.

## RISK CONSIDERATIONS

As the external and internal environment continues to shift, staff and Council will continue to monitor. As with other changes, should there be changes resulting from the Provincial Review impacting resourcing, capacity and/or direction for the future, the ability to deliver on the Strategic Agenda may be impacted. Staff will report out on those in a timely fashion, respecting our values to our dedicated staff.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council annually approves the business plans and budgets that guide all resource allocation and investments for the corporation. Strategic Agenda initiatives underway are funded through existing approved capital and operating budgets.

## CONCLUSION

Despite ongoing pressures, risks and the multiplicity of influencing factors, Peel continues to be one of Canada's fastest growing, vibrant, diverse communities, a major economic hub, and a community of choice for 1.5 million residents and over 200,000 businesses.

Peel's Strategic Agenda sets out to embrace and prepare for massive population growth, shifting legislative initiatives and tackle challenges, risks and complexities with resilience and confidence, looking ahead to the future of Peel and re-anchoring to our Strategic Plan. Staff are seeking Council's input and endorsement. Annual updates will be prepared for Council.

## Update on Peel's Strategic Plan

### APPENDICES

Appendix I: Accomplishments for Peel's Strategic Plan (2015-2024)

Appendix II: Awards and Recognitions (2015-2024)

Appendix III: Peel's Strategic Agenda (2024-2027)

Appendix IV: Peel's Strategic Plan (2015-2035)

Appendix V: Strategic Agenda Initiatives and Descriptions

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