



Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-980-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-685-6243

Email: jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca

www.niagararegion.ca

Memorandum

CHR 04-2020

TO: Members of Regional Council

FROM: Jim Bradley, Regional Chair

DATE: August 13, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Financial Relief from Senior Levels of Government

Further to my email yesterday respecting COVID-19 Financial Relief from Senior Levels of Government, I am pleased to share with you that the Federal and Provincial government have formally announced the amount of funding the Niagara Region will receive as the first phase of the Safe Reopening Agreement.

As part of this much needed relief program, the Niagara Region will receive \$12.1 million in funding and an additional \$609,693 for transit. This \$12.79 million will be utilized to help the Region pay for the many unforeseen costs related to managing the pandemic.

In addition, we have also received notification from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding eligibility for additional funding under the Social Services Relief Fund in the amount of \$3,013,826.

The correspondence from the agencies with information respecting the funding announcements is attached for your reference.

Sincerely,

Jim Bradley,
Regional Chair

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 585-7000

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre
777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tél. : 416 585-7000



234-2020-3359

August 12, 2020

Regional Chair Jim Bradley
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way P.O. Box 1042
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Regional Chair Bradley:

On July 27, 2020, as part of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement, the Ontario government announced that it had secured up to \$4 billion in emergency assistance to provide Ontario's 444 municipalities with the support they need to respond to COVID-19. I am writing to you today to provide further details on this funding investment.

Municipalities play a key role in delivering critical services that Ontarians rely on and are at the frontlines of a safe reopening of the economy. This investment will provide support to municipalities and public transit operators to help them address financial pressures related to COVID-19, maintain critical services and protect vulnerable people as the province safely and gradually opens. It includes:

- Up to \$2 billion to support municipal operating pressures, and
- Up to \$2 billion to support municipal transit systems.

The Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation, will provide more information on the transit stream of this funding.

I would also like to acknowledge the Federal government in their role in this historic agreement. As Premier Ford has indicated, "by working together, we have united the country in the face of the immense challenges brought on by COVID-19 and secured a historic deal with the federal government to ensure a strong recovery for Ontario and for Canada".

Under the municipal operating stream, \$1.39 billion will be available to Ontario's municipalities to address operating pressures and local needs. This funding will be allocated in two phases: 50% allocated in Phase 1 for all municipalities, and 50% allocated in Phase 2 for municipalities that require additional funding.

The Safe Restart Agreement also includes a second phase of Social Services Relief Funding (SSRF) totalling \$362 million. This is in addition to significant investments made earlier to the SSRF and in support of public health. Details will be outlined in a letter to Service Managers in the coming days.

Municipal Operating Funding Phase 1: Immediate Funding for Municipal Pressures

Phase 1 of this funding will be allocated on a per household basis and I am pleased to share that the **Regional Municipality of Niagara will receive a payment of \$12,184,600** to support your COVID-19 operating costs and pressures.

Please note that your municipality is accountable for using this funding for the purpose of addressing your priority COVID-19 operating costs and pressures. If the amount of the funding exceeds your municipality's 2020 COVID-19 operating costs and pressures, the province's expectation is that your municipality will place the excess funding into reserves to be accessed to support COVID-19 operating costs and pressures that you may continue to incur in 2021. Your municipality will be expected to report back to the province in March 2021 with details on your 2020 COVID-19 operating costs and pressures, your overall 2020 financial position, and the use of the provincial funds in a template to be provided by the ministry. More details on this reporting will be shared in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, I am requesting that your municipal treasurer sign the acknowledgement below and return the signed copy to the ministry by email by September 11, 2020 to Municipal.Programs@ontario.ca. Please note that we must receive this acknowledgement before making a payment to your municipality. We intend to make payments to municipalities in September, subject to finalizing details.

Phase 2: Funding for Additional Municipal Pressures

I anticipate that the funding our government is providing through Phase 1 of the municipal operating stream will be sufficient to address COVID-19 costs and pressures for most municipalities. However, we recognize that some municipalities have experienced greater financial impacts arising from COVID-19 than others. As a result, we are offering a second phase of funding to those municipalities that can demonstrate that 2020 COVID-19 operating costs and pressures exceed their Phase 1 per household allocation.

To be considered for this Phase 2 funding, municipalities will be required to submit reports outlining their COVID-19 operating costs and pressures in a template to be provided by the ministry. **These reports will be due by October 30, 2020.**

Municipalities that require additional time to submit their report are asked to reach out to their Municipal Services Office contact by October 30, 2020 to request an extension to November 6, 2020. **Please note that the ministry is unable to consider municipal requests for Phase 2 funding if the municipality has not submitted its report by November 6, 2020.**

A template for this municipal report and request for consideration for Phase 2 funding will be provided shortly and will require:

1. Information about measures the municipality has undertaken to reduce financial pressures (e.g. use of reserves, cost saving measures);
2. Explanation of how the municipality applied or plans to spend Phase 1 funding towards COVID-19 operating costs and pressures;
3. A year-end forecast of COVID-19 operating costs and pressures;
4. Actual COVID-related impacts as of the end of Q3 of the municipal fiscal year (September 30, 2020);
5. Treasurer's statement as to accuracy of reporting;
6. Resolution of Council seeking additional funding.

Municipalities who are eligible and approved to receive funding under Phase 2 will be informed before the end of the calendar year and can expect to receive a payment in early 2021.

Our government will continue to be a champion for communities as we chart a path to a strong economic recovery. We thank all 444 Ontario municipal heads of council for their support through our negotiations with the federal government. Working together, we will ensure Ontario gets back on track.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c. Municipal Treasurer and Municipal CAO

By signing below, I acknowledge that the per household allocation of \$12,184,600 is provided to the Regional Municipality of Niagara for the purpose of assisting with COVID-19 costs and pressures and that the province expects any funds not required for this purpose in 2020 will be put into reserves to support potential COVID-19 costs and pressures in 2021. I further acknowledge that the Regional Municipality of Niagara is expected to report back to the province on 2020 COVID-19 costs and pressures and the use of this funding.

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

**Ministry of
Transportation**

Office of the Minister

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1Z8
416 327-9200
www.ontario.ca/transportation

**Ministère des
Transports**

Bureau de la ministre

777, rue Bay, 5^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 1Z8
416 327-9200
www.ontario.ca/transports



August 12, 2020

107-2020-3242

Regional Chair Jim Bradley
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Regional Chair Bradley:

Municipalities play a key role in delivering services that people across Ontario rely on and are the frontlines of a safe reopening of the economy. Our government recognizes that municipalities have sustained significant financial pressures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and need financial support to ensure they can continue to deliver important services while minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

On July 27, 2020, as part of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement, the Ontario government announced that it had secured up to \$4 billion in one-time emergency assistance to provide Ontario's 444 municipalities with the support they need to respond to COVID-19 and deliver the critical services people rely on every day.

This investment will provide support to municipalities and municipal transit systems to help them deal with financial pressures related to COVID-19, maintain critical services and protect vulnerable people as the province safely and gradually opens. It includes:

- Up to \$2 billion to support municipal operating pressures; and
- Up to \$2 billion to support municipal transit systems.

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, will provide more information on the funding to support municipal operating pressures.

Up to \$2 billion will be available to Ontario's municipalities to address transit pressures. Funding will be allocated in two phases: In Phase 1, \$666 million will be allocated to municipalities with transit systems to help provide immediate relief from the financial pressures of COVID-19; In Phase 2, the balance will be available for municipalities with transit systems to address the ongoing financial pressures of COVID-19 until the end of the provincial fiscal year, or March 31, 2021. A two-phased approach will provide the flexibility to address actual municipal transit pressures, including any impacts of a potential second wave of COVID-19.

Financial pressures that are eligible for reimbursement under this program include both financial pressures associated with the need to continue to operate with reduced revenue and new expenses resulting from COVID-19:

- Reduced revenue would include pressures related to, at the ministry's sole discretion, the following:
 - Farebox;
 - Advertising;
 - Parking; and
 - Contracts (e.g., school contracts)
- New expenses incurred in response to the COVID-19 outbreak would include, at the ministry's sole discretion, the following:
 - Cleaning costs [costs not claimed as part of MTO's dedicated cleaning funding program];
 - New contracts;
 - Labour costs;
 - Driver protection;
 - Passenger protection; and
 - Other capital costs.

The ministry program area will consult with transit stakeholders to continue to refine eligible program expenses.

Municipal Transit Funding Phase 1: Immediate Funding

I am pleased to share that the **Regional Municipality of Niagara** ("Recipient") will receive **\$609,693** to support your COVID-19 municipal transit pressures for Phase 1, incurred from April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020.

Please note that the Recipient is accountable for using this funding for the purpose of addressing the Recipient's COVID-19 municipal transit pressures.

The Recipient is required to report back, using a template to be provided by the ministry, to the province by October 30, 2020 with details on the use of the Phase 1 funds and a forecast of eligible expenditures to March 31, 2021.

If the amount of funding allocated in Phase 1 exceeds the Recipient's COVID-19 municipal transit pressures, the province's expectation is that the Recipient will place the excess funding into a reserve account to be accessed to support Phase 2 COVID-19 municipal transit pressures the Recipient may continue to incur up to March 31, 2021.

If the amount of funding allocated in Phase 1 is less than the Recipient's COVID-19 municipal transit pressures, the Recipient's report back will support the need for additional funding in advance of Phase 2 reporting. The additional funding is expected to be provided by December 31, 2020. The ministry will provide the Recipient with additional details on the reporting in the coming weeks; responses to information gathering questions are required.

The Recipient will be required to return any unused funds to the province where the funding from Phase 1 is in excess of the eligible expenditures incurred under both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

In the meantime, I am requesting that the municipal treasurer for the Recipient sign the acknowledgement below and return the signed copy to the ministry by email by September 11, 2020 to MTO-COVID_Transit_Funding@ontario.ca.

Please note that the ministry must receive this acknowledgement before making a payment to the Recipient. The province intends to make the Phase 1 payment to the Recipient in September 2020.

Phase 2: Ongoing Support

To be considered for Phase 2 funding, municipalities will be required to submit the reports noted above. Phase 2 funding will consider the reported actual impacts to determine the funding allocations and will be governed by a transfer payment agreement (TPA). The ministry will consult with municipalities on the TPA in Fall 2020.

MTO intends to build specific requirements into the Phase 2 agreements to achieve important transit objectives to promote ridership growth and transit sustainability. These include, for example:

- Ensuring and promoting the safety of public transit systems through the coordinated procurement of new safety materials;
- Requiring that the transit systems drive service sustainability through innovation in route planning and technology, as well as reviewing municipal transit jurisdictions where there are upper- and lower-tier systems operating in the same areas; and
- Requiring that the GTHA municipalities work with the province to make real progress on fare and service integration to provide rider benefits.

In order to achieve these objectives, municipalities will be required to demonstrate their participation and progress in different areas.

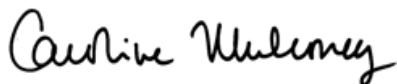
Through the Phase 2 TPAs, the **Regional Municipality of Niagara** will be required to:

- Engage in consolidated procurement opportunities leveraging Metrolinx and other provincial procurement tools (ALL MUNICIPALITIES)
- Review the lowest performing bus routes and consider whether they may be better serviced by microtransit (ALL MUNICIPALITIES)
- Work with the Province and Metrolinx where appropriate to determine the feasibility of implementing microtransit options on viable routes (ALL MUNICIPALITIES)
- Participate in discussions with the Province on advancing fare and service integration (GTHA & select municipalities)
- Participate in discussions with the Province to optimize transit through new possible governance structures (GTHA & select municipalities)

We are committed to working with municipalities, and their transit systems to refine the processes that will be required, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes as we work together through this recovery period.

Our government is committed to supporting municipal transit, and we will continue to champion the needs of our municipal partners and transit users. Through this historic agreement, municipalities will have the support and flexibility they need to address budget shortfalls related to COVID-19, help limit the spread of the virus, and chart a path to a strong recovery for their communities and for our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Mulroney'.

Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Transportation

By signing below, I acknowledge that the allocation of **\$609,693** is provided to the **Regional Municipality of Niagara** for the purpose of assisting with COVID-19 municipal transit pressures and that the province expects any funds not required for this purpose in Phase 1 will be put into reserves to support potential COVID-19 municipal transit pressures that you may continue to incur up to March 31, 2021. I further acknowledge that the **Regional Municipality of Niagara** is expected to report back to the province on COVID-19 municipal transit pressures and the use of this funding.

Name:_____

Title:_____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 585-7000

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre
777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tél. : 416 585-7000



August 12, 2020

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair, Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Jim Bradley:

I am writing to provide you with details regarding the \$150 million in new provincial funding announced by Premier Ford and myself on July 2, 2020, and the additional \$212 million of funding announced on August 12, 2020 as part of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement for a total of \$362 million.

These funds will be made available as part of a second phase of funding under the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), and increase the government's total SSRF investment for Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to \$510 million.

I would like to acknowledge the Federal government in their role in this historic agreement. As Premier Ford has indicated, "by working together, we have united the country in the face of the immense challenges brought on by COVID-19 and secured a historic deal with the federal government to ensure a strong recovery for Ontario and for Canada".

Protecting the health and well-being of all Ontarians continues to be our government's number one priority. We appreciate your efforts to assist vulnerable people in your communities throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and understand that additional assistance is needed to meet ongoing needs, including for those struggling to pay rent. Long-term housing solutions is also a priority under SSRF Phase 2, and we encourage investments in this area to allow for greater resiliency for future pandemic waves and emergencies.

To ensure SSRF Phase 2 funding is targeted to where it is needed most, the Ministry will hold back a portion of the total SSRF Phase 2 funding from funding allocations and will determine how to allocate it in the coming months based on public health needs.

I am pleased to inform you that under SSRF Phase 2 Regional Municipality of Niagara will be eligible to receive an initial planning allocation of **\$3,013,826** in 2020-21.

In addition, and in light of the increasing pressures being experienced by Service Managers, you will receive the remainder of your initial SSRF funding, upon the Ministry receiving a full copy of this letter with the sign-back section completed and signed.

Below are additional details about the SSRF Phase 2 funding.

Business Case Process

Prior to receiving SSRF Phase 2 funds, you will be required to submit a business case to the Ministry. The business case process will provide an opportunity to outline how your initial planning allocation will be used, and will assist the Ministry in ensuring that funds are being directed to communities most in need.

Business cases will be reviewed by an inter-ministerial working group, which will make recommendations on funding decisions. Your initial planning allocation could be subject to change based on COVID-19 needs and emerging public health emergencies across the province, which may result in the re-allocation of funds between service areas. Following the review process, you will be notified of your approved SSRF Phase 2 funding allocation.

The business case template is available through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system, and must be completed and submitted to the Ministry via TPON by **September 11, 2020**.

Program Details

Similar to the initial SSRF funding provided to you in April 2020, SSRF Phase 2 funding will flow through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). For funding provided under SSRF Phase 2, amendments to the CHPI Program Guidelines are set out in the attached Addendum B (SSRF Phase 2 Program Guidelines).

Please note that this funding is in addition to your base 2020-21 CHPI allocation, which the Ministry previously communicated to you on April 17, 2019, and the initial SSRF funding. There will be no change to the program administration or payment process for payments under CHPI.

SSRF Phase 2 will include an operating component and two new capital components. Please refer to the SSRF Phase 2 Program Guidelines for details on eligible use of funding and project approval process.

The objectives of the SSRF Phase 2 funding are to:

1. Mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable people, especially in congregate settings;
2. Encourage long-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19; and
3. Enhance rent assistance provided to households in rent arrears due to COVID-19.

In recognition of the costs you are facing, funding provided under SSRF Phase 2 may be used to offset eligible costs incurred on or after **July 2, 2020**. The Ministry will require Service Managers to submit an interim report in mid-December on the use of SSRF Phase 2 funds and projected spending.

Approved funding allocations may be subject to re-allocation or adjustment if funds cannot be spent this fiscal year based on the business case and reporting. Details on payment and reporting information can be found in the Program Guidelines for SSRF Phase 2, which are added as Addendum B to the CHPI Guidelines.

This amendment forms part of your Service Manager Service Agreement (“Agreement”) and any breach of any of the terms of the Guidelines shall constitute an Event of Default under the Agreement. All other provisions of the Agreement remain in full force and effect.

You are required to sign this letter and return it to the Ministry to confirm your agreement to the terms and conditions of SSRF Phase 2 and to receive the remainder of your initial SSRF funding.

You may submit your signed confirmation via e-mail to:

Jim Adams, Director of the Housing Programs Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
jim.e.adams@ontario.ca

Thank you to those who participated in confidential consultation sessions, which were organized by Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) to inform the design of the Program Guidelines and business case. I look forward to continuing our work together as we serve the people of Ontario.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister

Enclosures

c. Ron Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer
Donna Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer
Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

The undersigned agrees to the above letter and to comply with the **Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 Program Guidelines** attached as Addendum B, as the same may be amended by the Ministry from time to time. The undersigned further agrees to use funds from the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 as set out in the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines (April 2017), under the Service Manager Service Agreement, including Addendum B to this letter.

The undersigned further agrees to receive the remaining balance of its initial SSRF funding and to use the funding as set out in the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines (April 2017), under the Service Manager Service Agreement, including the Notice of Amendment set out in my letter to you dated April 1, 2020.

Service Manager: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date:

I/We have authority to bind the organization.

Addendum B – Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 Program Guidelines