

# Government Relations 2024 Year End Review and 2025 Initiatives

Committee of the Whole

March 6, 2025

# The Importance of GR

- **Niagara is one of 444 municipalities in Ontario and 3,573 in Canada** advocating for increased support from upper levels of government
- Opportunities for **direct government-to-government engagement is limited throughout the year**
- Components that support effective GR:

## Education



## Information Sharing



## Partnership



## Advocacy



# 2024 Corporate GR Initiatives



Annual Opportunities

+

Niagara-Specific

**Eleven (11)  
Corporate  
GR Initiatives**

# Annual Opportunities

Initiative	Benefit	GR Function(s) Supported
Provincial and federal pre-budget submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced 2024 priorities</li> </ul>	Advocate
Analysis of provincial and federal budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed potential impacts for Niagara</li> </ul>	Inform
AMO Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 independent and 2 joint delegations with provincial officials</li> </ul>	Advocate Partner
Analysis of provincial and federal fall economic statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed potential impacts for Niagara</li> </ul>	Inform
MARCO Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of municipal responses to common community challenges</li> </ul>	Partner Educate Advocate

# Niagara-Specific: Niagara Week



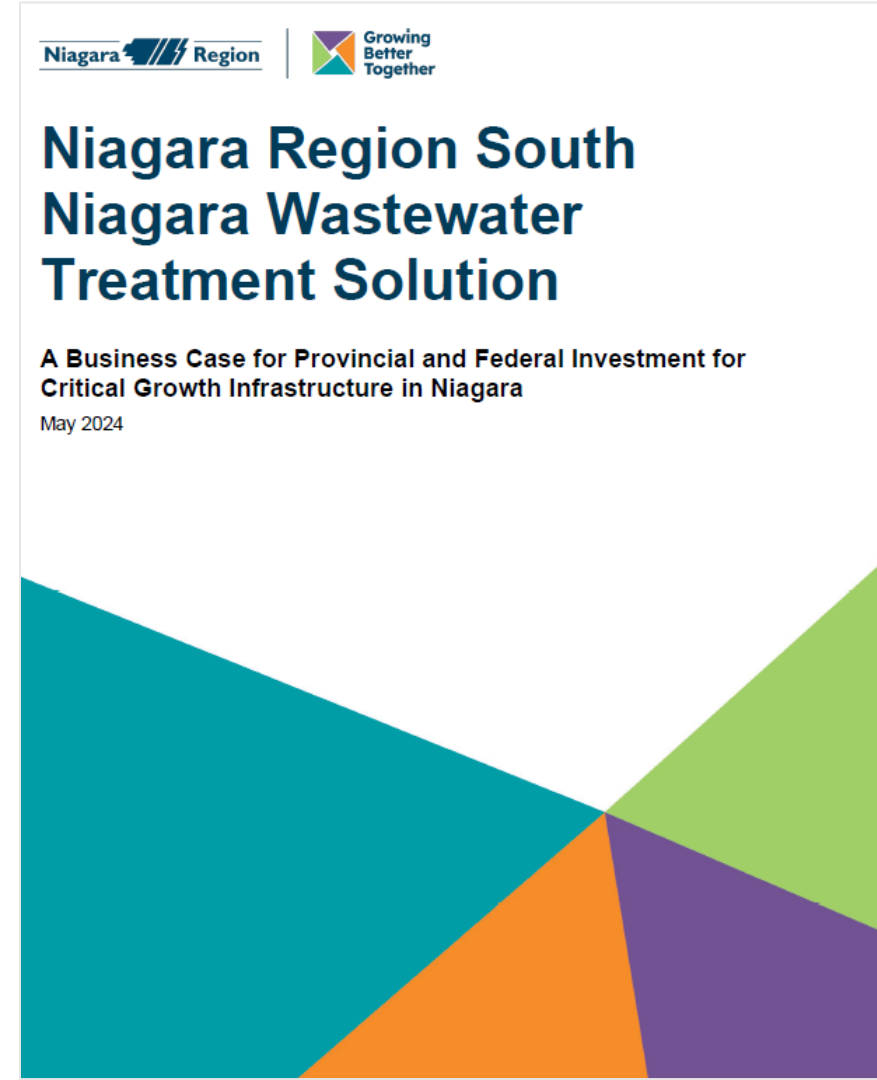
- Eight (8) in-person delegations with cabinet members.
- Meeting outcomes included:
  - Reaffirmed support for one-third funding for the South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Solution project, predicated on federal partnership.
  - Follow up discussions with ministers and senior staff regarding shared services and the expansion of GO train service.

**GR functions: advocate, partner and educate.**

# Niagara-Specific: SNWTS Project

- Business case created and shared with cabinet ministers, MPPs and MPs.
- Secured letters of support from area municipalities and community organizations.
- Project showcased in FCM's Municipal Growth Framework.
- Senior staff meetings with:
  - The Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities (federal).
  - Canada Infrastructure Bank (federal).
  - Infrastructure Ontario (provincial).

**GR functions: advocate, partner.**





# Niagara-Specific: Asahi Kasei Support



- In partnership with the City of Port Colborne, provincial and federal advocacy was undertaken to secure support for infrastructure investments required for the site.
- This included:
  - Hosting a roundtable with federal ministers on November 14, 2024.
  - 3 meetings with senior staff within Infrastructure Ontario (provincial) and the Canada Infrastructure Bank (federal).

**GR function: advocate, partner.**

# Niagara-Specific: Joint Regional Advocacy

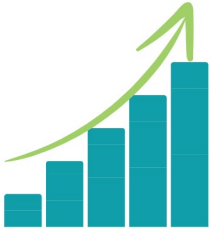
- Led joint advocacy initiatives in partnership with the Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel, Waterloo and York.
- Goal: enhance future provincial and federal program development by educating upper levels of government about two-tier municipalities.
- Accomplishments include:
  - Development of Regional Overview.
  - Meetings with senior provincial and federal staff.
  - Virtual delegations with 3 federal ministers.
  - Joint pre-budget submission drafted for 2025.

**GR functions supported: partner, educate, advocate.**





# Activities Completed 2023, 2024



- Growing Better Together unified branding
- Niagara Week
- AMO
- Increased recognition of Niagara's thought leadership: best practice sharing, communities of practice established, GR website
- Federal advocacy
- Targeted campaigns for corporate advocacy priorities
- GO Expansion: focused engagement including a GR firm secured and Mayors/Chair working group formed

# Positive Announcements



- Reaffirmed commitment for the Grimsby GO station.
- Support for housing and homelessness initiatives, such as the Lions Douglas site.
- Additional supports for mental health and addictions services, including the recent HART Hub announcement.
- Introduction of the provincial Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, which has provided support two (2) Regional infrastructure projects.
- Federal funding for Niagara Transit.

# Building on Success



## 2025 Initiatives

- ✓ Provincial and federal pre-budget submission (February)
- Provincial and federal election/post-election engagement (ongoing)
- Niagara Week (June)
- AMO participation (August)
- Federal advocacy (Q4)
- Joint advocacy with Regional peers, area municipalities and associations (ongoing)
- Advocacy for Region-specific initiatives (ongoing)

# Advocacy Focus

- Niagara's population is growing, and service demand is increasing.
- Municipalities are addressing complex challenges traditionally managed by upper levels of government.
- Local government funding models are outdated.
- Municipal infrastructure gap is growing without sustainable funding to support.



Last municipal funding framework update:

- Federal: **19th Century**
- Provincial: **2008**



In 2022, Ontarian municipalities spent **\$4 billion** subsidizing public health and social services (AMO, 2024)



Municipalities **own 60% of Canada's infrastructure** but only **collect 9% of total tax revenue**.

**Requires long-term advocacy, both independently and in partnership with municipal counterparts / associations**

# Project Specific Advocacy

- Existing funding gaps have created an **immediate need for increased partnership**
- Critical Niagara-specific projects **require provincial and federal co-investment** to move forward



**South Niagara Wastewater  
Treatment Solution Project**



**Consolidated Housing Master  
Plan Implementation**

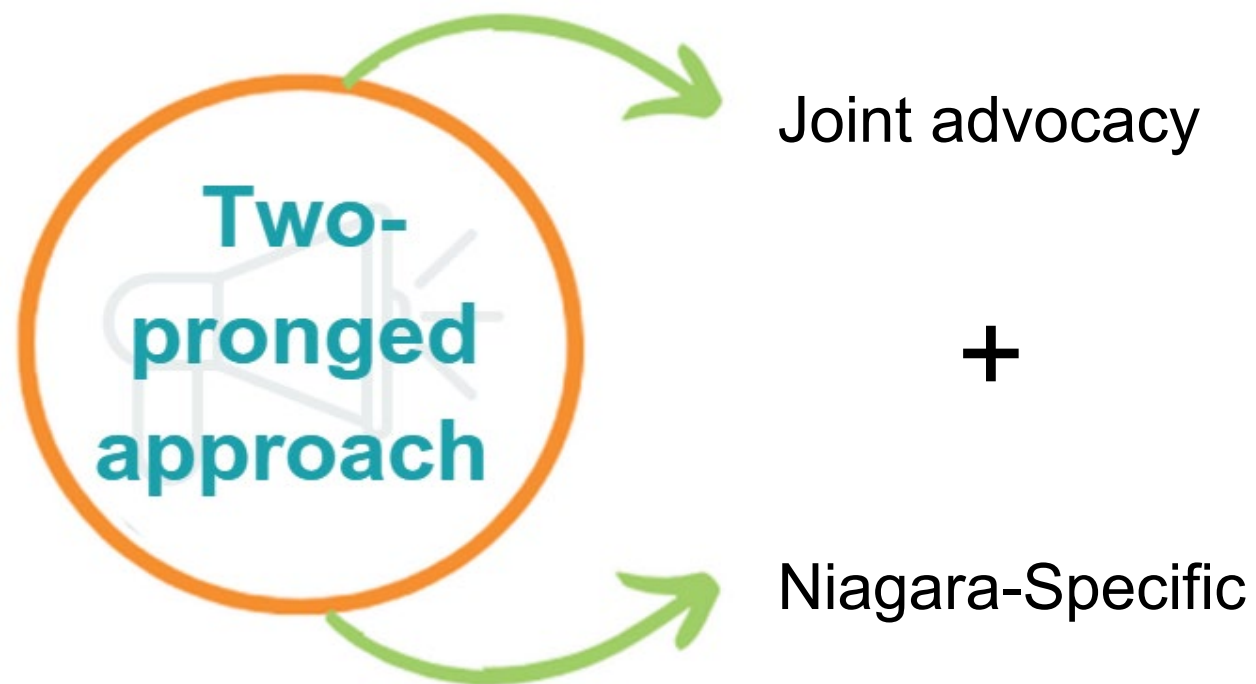


**Two-way, all day  
GO train service**



**Shared service initiatives  
with Area Municipalities**

# Niagara Week Approach



- Regional Police Service
  - Public Health and Social Services
  - Mental Health and Addictions
  - Homelessness
  - Infrastructure Funding (existing / net-new)
- +
- SNWTS Project
  - CHMP Implementation
  - TWAD GO
  - Share Services



# Thank you

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