
Subject: Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2020 Annual Conference

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, June 25, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the advocacy issues identified in CHR 3-2020 titled Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2020 Annual Conference **BE ENDORSED** as delegation requests at the 2020 AMO Conference;
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to request meetings with cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, senior ministry staff, and party leaders to discuss regional advocacy issues during the AMO Conference.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview on the preliminary details of the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference and seek endorsement on the regional advocacy issues requested to be addressed during the delegation meetings with senior provincial leaders
- AMO has decided to condense its annual conference to three days from August 17-19 and provide it virtually with all the same benefits and features it offers at its regular conference
- The virtual conference will continue to provide the opportunity for municipalities to meet with ministers, parliamentary assistants and senior ministry staff
- Proposed ministry delegation issues consider the current provincial interest in economic recovery solutions, issues previously identified as regional priorities, probability of successfully securing a meeting with the appropriate ministry, and other opportunities to delegate to Ministers on Regional matters (LUMCO/MARCO meeting)
- Regional staff continue to work in coordination with the local area municipalities to ensure consistency and avoid overlap in delegation requests

Financial Considerations

As a result of the AMO Conference moving from a physical conference, the virtual conference offers significant costs savings. Full cost recovery has been received for

accommodations reserved in January 2020. In addition, AMO is providing a reduced registration rate, which saves registrants almost 20% on the original registration fee.

Members of regional council who wish to be removed or added to the list of AMO Conference registrants are advised to contact the CAO's Office before Wednesday, July 1.

Analysis

The Association of Municipalities' of Ontario Conference will be proceeding from August 17-19, 2020. Preliminary conference program details, including the merits of on-demand concurrent sessions and plenary programming are provided in Appendix 1.

Attendance at Municipal Delegations with Ministers

Once scheduling information is available, staff will communicate meeting logistics to conference-registered councillors that have expressed an interest in one or more of the select advocacy issues. The Regional Chair's office will invite expressions of interest to participate in delegations in mid-July.

Regional councillors and staff attending delegations will receive a package containing briefing notes and other communications materials to prepare them for the meeting. Participants will also be invited to attend a webinar in the week prior to the conference (August 10-14) to review the delegation materials and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

Factors for determining the recommended AMO delegation issues

Members of Provincial Parliament have expressed an interest in municipalities sharing information regarding data and ideas on how the province can work with municipal leaders toward economic recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the recommended regional issues take into consideration these factors and how they support the region's economic recovery and managing the COVID-19 pandemic (operations/services).

Potential advocacy issues that were considered by council in February were also revisited. A number of the issues remain relevant in the management and recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic, while other regional issues may be actively pursued once relatively normal business operations resume.

Summary of Proposed Delegations Issues

The following list of suggested advocacy topics include:

Suggested Advocacy Topics	Description
Mobile Integrated Health Model	Recommend partnering with the Niagara Region in the transformation of the provincial delivery of ambulance communications and paramedic services by applying the Niagara-based model
Long-term Care Facilities	Provide the Minister with an update on the two redevelopment projects, identify any process delays that may impact timely completion and request additional capital funding dollars to support redevelopment projects impacted by potential increased costs resulting from COVID pandemic
South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Plant	Requesting the Province dedicate funding to the development of this infrastructure to ensure the safe and responsible growth of South Niagara
Canada Summer Games	As a result of COVID-19, seeking additional provincial support to offset the shortfall in fundraising dollars
Financial Impact on Niagara area municipalities as a result of COVID-19 (Joint with area municipalities)	Appealing to the Province to provide municipalities with immediate emergency operating funding that is essential to help offset lost revenues and incremental service costs in order to fund current municipal operations in addition to funding reforms to public health, EMS, and infrastructure grants
Housing and homelessness	Request provincial support to partner on a proposed affordable housing project
Reduction of energy rates for Niagara Businesses	Encourage the province to provide permanent electricity rates that are equivalent to American rates (across the border) to attract more businesses

Suggested Advocacy Topics	Description
	to Niagara and facilitate the economic recovery of local businesses
Increase base funding for social assistance/Ontario Works	Requesting that the base operating funding to Social Assistance (Ontario Works), currently frozen at 2018 actuals, be increased to support the anticipated rise in caseloads due to the pandemic in Niagara, recognizing the longer term impact on the local economy (particularly on the hospitality and tourism industry)

Alternatives Reviewed

Advocacy related to the expansion of GO transit services and related infrastructure is an ongoing process, in which considerable success has been achieved for Niagara. At this time, the GO Implementation Office is involved in active conversations with Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation that is expected to result in additional traction on the project, as authorized by Council in confidential report CSD 17-2019. As a result of the ongoing movement on this file, an audience with the Minister of Transportation is not required at this time.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The recommendations contained in this report support numerous components of Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities. However, in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff are recommending flexibility to address the urgent priorities that have presented themselves.

Other Pertinent Reports

- [CAO 6-2020 Niagara Area Advocacy Priorities 2020-2022](#)

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This report was prepared in consultation with Gina Van den Burg, Government & Stakeholder Relations Specialist; Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner of Community and Social Services; Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Acting Commissioner of Public Health/ Medical Officer of Health; Todd Harrison, Regional Treasurer/Commissioner of Corporate Services; Valerie Kuhns, Acting Director of Economic Development; Bruce Zvaniga, Acting Commissioner of Public Works; and Rino Mostacci, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services

Appendices

Appendix 1 Virtual AMO Conference and AGM Preliminary Conference Program