

## **Staff Report 2021-0123**

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Meeting Date: May 18, 2021

Subject: Government Relations Update and 2021 AMO Conference Delegation Requests

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the proposed 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference delegation requests outlined in Staff Report 2021-0123, be approved.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- This report highlights major advocacy efforts and updates at the federal and provincial levels of government since November 2020.
- Positioning Caledon as a federal and provincial partner, as well as collaborating on joint advocacy opportunities has been important for advancing Town priorities.
- One of the upcoming opportunities for advocacy is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference, which will occur virtually from August 15-18, 2021.
- Municipalities can request delegations with Ontario government ministries as well as representatives of the opposition parties to present issues and challenges that require provincial support.
- The deadline to submit delegation requests to the Province is June 4, 2021.
- For AMO, staff propose a targeted delegation strategy, focused on requesting meetings with Ministers related to key Council Work Plan priorities related to growth.
- Requests should also be submitted to meet with the New Democratic Party Caucus, Liberal Caucus and Green Party.

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to council regarding key government relations files and recent federal and provincial policy and legislation activities, as well as outline proposed next steps including AMO Conference advocacy. Staff are seeking direction from Council on which delegation requests to submit on behalf of the Town of Caledon for AMO.

Government relations and engagement is as critical as ever as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and Caledon prepares for substantial population growth. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town of Caledon has been working with all orders of government to ensure public health and safety as well as social and economic response and recovery. As focus shifts towards post-pandemic recovery and the imminent growth of Caledon, it is recommended that Caledon continue a collaborative approach to government relations, in support of growth-related advocacy positions.

## **Update on Town Priorities**

There have been significant advances in terms of Caledon's key priorities. A list of open advocacy files in 2021 is provided in Schedule A for Council's information. Major progress, impacts and opportunities for key Caledon priorities are outlined below.

### **Affordable Housing**

- On November 13, 2020 the Region of Peel provided an Affordable Housing presentation to Peel MPPs as part of the Region's advocacy for housing investments in Peel.

### **Broadband**

- The Mayor and staff continue to advocate for broadband connectivity solutions through participation in the AMO Broadband Committee.
- The Town has supported and, in some instances, collaborated with various Internet Service Providers to submit applications to the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) and Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) opportunity.
- The Province recently passed Bill 257, Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act. This Act aims to expediate the installation of broadband in Ontario.

### **Planning Matters**

- Earlier in 2021, the Town wrote a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting local planning equity for Caledon within the Region of Peel. Throughout 2021, the Town has been working with the Region of Peel, City of Brampton and City of Mississauga to bring forward a clear outline of proposal, including key principles with respect to Local Planning Equity.
- The Province continues to consult on growing the size of the Greenbelt. Staff will submit comments on behalf of the Town prior to the April 19, 2021 deadline.
- Caledon submitted comments opposing Schedule 3 of Bill 257 regarding increased powers for Minister Zoning Orders (MZOs) under section 47 the *Planning Act*.

### **Provincial Offences**

- Following the January 2021 Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) conference delegation regarding provincial court modernization, staff have been preparing a detailed list of fiscal impacts for further discussion with the Ministry of the Attorney General.
- Caledon continues discussion and advocacy for administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) through participation on AMO's Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Municipal Administration Advisory Group. The Province is expected to have an AMPs regime for red-light and Automated Speed Enforcement technology infractions in place by July 1, 2022.

### **Transportation**

- On March 5, 2021 the Province issued an MZO to designate the lands at Humber Station Road and King Street for a future Caledon GO Rail site. Immediate action is still required as the Province develops a long-term transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes Caledon. The plan will determine the future transportation system until 2051.

- Specific to exploring enhancements to road safety, the Town of Caledon continues to meet with the Ministry of Transportation to discuss concerns regarding the speed and operation of Highway 10 from Olde Base Line Road southerly to Highway 410. The ministry has installed 13 public education signs along the Highway 10 corridor that remind drivers to observe the posted speed limit and provide the Highway Traffic Act fines for speeding. The ministry will conduct additional speed studies at various locations along the Highway 10 corridor in April 2021 and an operation review of the intersection. The Minister expects to be able to share the analysis of highway operations by the end of April/early May.

### **Other Recent Federal and Provincial Political and Policy Activities**

Both the federal and provincial governments have been focused on pandemic response, providing support to individuals and businesses. Investments in infrastructure have also been introduced in support of economic recovery and community resilience. Some opportunities that staff are monitoring include:

- Intake 2 of the Province's Municipal Modernization Program was announced in January 2021. The Town of Caledon submitted two projects under the implementation stream for funding to undertake and expedite the modernization of key processes such as Planning, Finance and Human Resources Management. Results will be announced in May 2021.
- The Town has also applied for several funding opportunities and is awaiting the announcement of results. These include:
  - The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative to transform public spaces in response to COVID-19, will be announced late April 2021.
  - The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) – COVID-19 Resilience Stream which funds quick-start, short-term projects that respond to COVID-19 impacts, will be announced Spring 2021.
- The most recent Provincial budget includes support for municipal finances and operations, transit, health and social services.
  - The budget included employment supports for women, small business grants in affected sectors such as hospitality and tourism, tax credits and training grants.
  - The budget stabilizes the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, included \$28.5 billion investment for GTHA transit projects and \$2.8 billion towards broadband infrastructure for Ontario to have access to reliable broadband by 2025.
- On March 25, 2021, the federal government doubled a one-time federal gas tax fund transfer to municipalities to strengthen municipal infrastructure and renamed it Canada Community Building Fund.
- On April 19, 2021, the federal government tabled its 2021 budget, the first in over two years. Within the budget, the government has included support for affordable childcare and housing, broadband internet expansion, support for the tourism sector, and climate change, greenhouse gas reduction and the circular economy.
  - The budget extends the wage subsidy, rent subsidy and lockdown support, Employment Insurance sickness benefits and proposes a new hiring program.
  - The budget provides an investment of \$2.5 billion and a reallocation of existing \$1.3 billion towards affordable housing units, \$1 billion for the Universal

Broadband Fund, \$1 billion for tourism sector businesses, events and festivals, reconfirmed \$15 billion for permanent infrastructure funding for transit, and \$1.4 billion for climate adaptation and disaster mitigation projects.

Looking down the road, the next provincial election is scheduled for October 2022 and the next federal election for 2023. However, as a minority liberal federal government, confidence of the House must be maintained, specifically on the federal budget, or an election could be called as soon as this Spring.

Staff will continue monitoring federal and provincial political and policy activities and assess any implications for Caledon.

### Upcoming AMO Conference

From August 15-18, 2021, the AMO Conference will occur virtually. This year's conference will include keynote speakers and expert panels, breakout sessions and engagement with provincial representatives, among other opportunities to discuss and debate rural municipal issues.

This year, the following topics have been listed on the program:

- Ontario Health Teams
- Housing
- Community Paramedicine
- Long-Term Care
- Child and Youth Welfare
- Conservation Authorities
- E-Permitting
- Energy
- Broadband
- Medical Cannabis
- Community Benefits Agreements
- Climate Change
- Waste

In addition, the Province is accepting requests for virtual delegation meetings with provincial ministers. Meetings are usually no longer than 15 minutes in length, so it is important to have a focused agenda for each. Municipalities can request delegations with Ontario government ministries as well as representatives of the opposition parties to present issues and challenges that require provincial support. The deadline to submit delegation requests to the Province is June 4, 2021.

### Proposed Caledon Delegation Requests

In order to focus Caledon's 2021 AMO delegation requests, staff recommend Caledon delegate on Council Work Plan priority issues that are critical to Caledon's growth and modernization and post-pandemic recovery. With population growth comes increasing demand for infrastructure and services. The following are the list of proposed delegations:

#### Ministry of Infrastructure

##### Broadband Connectivity

- Changes to policy to ensure that dark fibre is made accessible to providers willing to service the residents that it passes.

Infrastructure Management

- Establish measures or strategies to address increasing infrastructure deficit such as long-term infrastructure funding to maintain costly capital assets and infrastructure systems, support climate adaptation and disaster mitigation projects that protect people and communities from climate change impacts.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Bolton Special Policy Area

- Finalize the Town's Bolton Special Policy Area (SPA) working with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Local Planning Equity

- Support local planning equity for the Town of Caledon, within the Region of Peel to protect the integrity of Caledon's local planning process.

Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry

Aggregate Site Rehabilitation

- Amend the Aggregate Resources Act and regulations to require site plans in an area with a rehabilitated master plan (RMP) to conform to the Council adopted RMP, as well as planning policies to allow for more innovative reuses.

Ministry of Transportation

Transportation Planning

- Re-establish Caledon GO Rail service as a priority project in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan before 2041.

**Region of Peel Priorities**

The Town of Caledon does seek to collaborate where beneficial with other municipalities on common issues, including the Region of Peel. On April 1, 2021, Region of Peel confirmed their advocacy priority themes for the AMO Conference as follows:

- COVID-19 Response Support
- Infrastructure
- Housing and homelessness
- Enhanced supports for seniors
- Mental health and addiction services
- Early Years and Child Care
- Waste management
- Climate change
- Transportation

## **Next Steps**

Throughout June and July, staff will work with the Mayor and Council Office as well as Caledon delegates to prepare and review conference briefing materials. Staff will coordinate scheduling and materials with Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones office and the Region of Peel.

Ministries will confirm the Town's delegation requests approximately one week before the beginning of the conference. Following the conference, staff will provide further information to Council with a summary of what was requested, any follow-up action that was committed to in the meetings, and next steps to further advance the above priorities.

While staff recommend aligning the Town's advocacy for AMO with growth-related topics, it is important to note that advocacy on other council-endorsed positions will continue through various advocacy tools.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

## **COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

### **Sustainable Growth:**

- Continue the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan including traffic calming
- Advance policies to the Government of Ontario that aid the repurposing of future decommissioned aggregate land
- Advance proactive infrastructure development solutions for growth management
- Pursue intensification in concert with accessibility and public transit, Bolton GO Station and other transit hubs

### **Connected Community:**

- Enhance high-speed internet connectivity

### **Good Governance**

- Balance financial planning for both operating and capital budgets
  - Capital budget - balance aging infrastructure with growth-related infrastructure needs

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule A: Town of Caledon Active Advocacy Files