

Staff Report 2023-0172

Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

Subject: Government Relations Update and 2023 AMO Conference Delegation Requests

Submitted By: Devan Lobo, Senior Business Analyst, Project Management Office, Corporate Strategy & Innovation

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed 2023 Association of Municipalities Ontario Conference delegation requests outlined in Staff Report 2023-0172, be approved.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Advocacy is any action that influences the opinions and decisions of people and organizations with respect to a specific issue or cause.
- Caledon Council advocates on behalf of citizens to influence legislative, regulatory and policy changes at all levels of government.
- This report highlights advocacy efforts and updates at the federal and provincial levels of government since December 2022.
- An upcoming advocacy opportunity is the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Conference, occurring in London, Ontario from August 20-23, 2023.
- Municipalities can request delegations with Ontario government ministries as well as opposition parties to present issues that require provincial support.
- For AMO, staff propose a focused delegation strategy, with requests made on the Town's highest priority needs only, as it is likely the more requests made, the less time and attention will be given to each.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council regarding key government relations files, 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.

Advocacy is any action that influences the opinions and decisions of people and organizations with respect to an issue or cause. Advocacy can be pursued through conferences and meetings with provincial ministers, but can also include participating in roundtables and networks, running social media campaigns, organizing and submitting petitions, among other avenues.

Where there are council-endorsed positions, the Town advocates on behalf of citizens to influence legislative, regulatory and policy changes at all levels of government. Positioning Caledon as a federal and provincial partner and collaborating on joint advocacy opportunities with neighbouring and comparable municipalities or associations where possible, continues to be an effective strategy for advancing Town priorities.

In addition, a number of legislative and policy changes as outlined below have come into effect since the last advocacy update to Council that have a direct impact on Caledon's immediate advocacy priorities.

Update on Key Town Priorities

Growth and planning challenges

- As of January 1, 2023, most of the *Planning Act* changes from Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 are in effect.
- On March 17, 2023, the federal government launched the \$4 billion Housing Accelerator Fund to 2026-27 for municipal governments to fast track the creation of 100,000 new homes across Canada. Staff are exploring any opportunities for Caledon within this funding.
- On March 21, 2023, Council unanimously approved Caledon's Housing Pledge that outlines how the Town will meet its housing target of 13,000 new residential units by 2031 as set by the Province, and the support it will need to achieve it. The pledge asks the Province to work with the Town to address the impacts and investments needed to grow in a sustainable and affordable way. Included with the pledge are joint requests for Provincial commitments with the Region of Peel, City of Brampton, Town of Caledon and City of Mississauga. The requests involve commitment from the development industry, funding and financial tools, infrastructure, facilities and healthcare to create complete communities.
- On March 28, 2023, Council approved an Aggregate Policy Study and a Community Working Group to build upon the Joint Region and Town Aggregate Policy Review and the Town's Aggregate Rehabilitation Master Plan.
- On March 29, 2023, the federal government introduced the 2023 Budget, A Made in Canada Plan committing an additional \$4 billion, over seven years, starting in 2024-25, to implement a co-developed Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.

Regional governance

- As of December 20, 2022, regulations with respect to Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022 came into effect. The Town is awaiting appointment of provincially appointed facilitator, timeline, and scope of regional governance review.

Municipal enforcement

- On April 4, 2023, 50 Caledon residents submitted a petition to Council and Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon requesting the provincial government enhance municipal enforcement capabilities against by-law infractions, e.g. illegal land uses.

Transportation planning

- On December 7, 2022, the province announced a new funding for municipal transit through Phase 4 of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement (SRA). Caledon received \$5,000 to address municipal transit system costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic between February 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022.
- The Town is continuing Caledon-Vaughan GO discussions with City of Vaughan.

- The Ministry of Transportation committed to conducting an Operational Performance Review along Highway 10.
- On April 25, 2023, Council requested that the Province and Metrolinx work with the Town and surrounding municipalities to prioritize an additional GO station on the Caledon-Vaughan GO rail line in the Bolton South Hill area.

Municipal infrastructure

- The Province confirmed [Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund](#) (OCIF), \$400 million to 425 small, rural and northern communities to renew and rehabilitate critical infrastructure including roads, bridges, water and wastewater projects. Caledon will receive \$3,615,784, which is an increase of \$471,624 from 2022.

Staff will continue to monitor federal, provincial, and regional political and policy activities and assess any implications for Caledon.

2023 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference

From May 25-28, 2023, the FCM Annual Conference will take place in Toronto. There will be workshops and panels, keynote speeches and a trade show. As in past years, while there is no opportunity to submit formal delegation requests, staff will support Caledon participants on an as required basis.

Upcoming AMO Conference

From August 20-23, 2023, the AMO Conference will occur in-person in London, Ontario. 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 municipal issues. This year's program is currently in development.

In addition, the province will accept requests for in-person 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 will be in June.

To be prepared to submit delegations before the deadline, staff are looking for Council direction on which delegation requests to submit on behalf of the Town of Caledon for AMO.

Proposed Caledon Delegation Requests

It is important that the Town takes a strategic, focused approach to conference delegations to achieve advocacy success on the most urgent priority issues. The delegations will set the stage for the Town's future advocacy, so staff recommend focusing on items that are most urgent and that the province, through previous advocacy efforts, has already identified interest in moving forward.

The following are the list of proposed delegations:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- Regional Governance
- Greenfield Growth/Local Planning
- Enhanced municipal enforcement authority for illegal land uses

Ministry of Transportation

- Caledon-Vaughan GO Rail Line Stations

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

- Aggregates

Staff recognize there are a number of other advocacy issues of interest to Council, and that the Town has on their advocacy radar, such as health care supports for seniors, affordable housing, and municipal infrastructure. It is recommended that there may be other avenues to pursue these such as collaboration with industry associations and/or the Region of Peel to best address these issues.

Should the Town's 2023-2035 Strategic Plan identify other high priority issues, staff will work with the Province to adjust delegation requests and alternative advocacy approaches as required.

Requests to meet with the opposition parties will also be submitted to discuss opportunities to further support the above matters where appropriate.

Region of Peel Priorities

Where beneficial, the Town of Caledon does collaborate with other municipalities on common issues, including the Region of Peel.

On March 23, 2023, the Region of Peel confirmed their advocacy priorities for the AMO Conference as follows:

- Addressing municipal fiscal sustainability
- Funding for infrastructure
- Building affordable housing
- Supporting community-based care
- Investing in sustainable communities

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 the Dufferin-Caledon MPP's 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 information to Council on what was requested, any follow-up action that was committed to in the meetings, and next steps to further advance the priorities discussed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

None.