



**SUBJECT: Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference
update, August 2019**

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Office of the Mayor

Report Number: MO-13-19

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 120-01

Date to Committee: September 9, 2019

Date to Council: September 23, 2019

Recommendation:

Receive and file Mayor's Office report MO-13-19 regarding activities undertaken at the 2019 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference held in August 2019.

Background and Discussion:

From August 18th to 21st, 2019, the Mayor, City Councillors and select staff members from the City of Burlington attended the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) annual conference and trade show. This year's event was held in Ottawa. In addition to attending the scheduled programs, sessions and learning lunches as part of the AMO Conference program, the Mayor, Councillors and Staff attended several meetings with Provincial Ministers, political party caucuses and certain stakeholders and organizations. I was also able to attend a joint meeting of the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) and Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) on August 18th.

Being present at this event affords our elected officials and leadership team the chance to meet with Ministers, who make themselves available for 15-minute meetings, and tell them what's going on in the City of Burlington, what issues we are facing, and how the Province can help.

Funding for the Mayor and Councillors to attend is provided by Halton Region and budgeted for on an annual basis. The cost of attendance by other relevant staff was charged to their area's related pre-approved travel allowance budget.

From my own point of view, getting the chance to meet with my colleagues from LUMCO and MARCO was a great opportunity to share information, discuss municipal priorities with each other and to listen, learn and work together. At that meeting I introduced the resolution that was unanimously passed at Halton Regional Council on July 10, 2019 to eliminate the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, and in the short-term, revert to the previously updated rules restricting the grounds for appeal and reducing the timeframe for hearings. I will be following up with my fellow mayors from MARCO and LUMCO to ask that they introduce a similar motion to their own councils. At a future LUMCO meeting, I will be asking my colleagues to endorse the resolution. One of the benefits of gathering together is the opportunity to speak with one voice on issues that affect all our communities.

Appendix C outlines the meetings we secured to present specific issues on behalf of Burlington residents. Present in each meeting were up to two city council members as well as Tim Commisso, City Manager, Helen Walihura, Government Relations Specialist, Kwab Ako-Adjei, Senior Manager of Government Relations and Communications, and John Bkila, Media and Digital Communications Specialist in the Office of the Mayor. Both of our local Members of Provincial Parliament, Jane McKenna and Effie Triantafilopoulos were invited to join us at the meetings with Ministers, and MPP McKenna did attend several.

A key message in all our meetings was “Partners in Public Service”. We share many of the goals the province is trying to achieve, including cutting red tape for business, ensuring efficiency in government service delivery, and getting more affordable housing, faster to market.

We provided a standard handout to all Ministers that includes the number of active development sites in the city, reinforcing that we are open for business and interested in working with developers to build the right housing in the right location. This handout also included information on the rationale for the Interim Control Bylaw to get planning in the downtown right, the location of the Mobility Hubs, particularly along the GO train line where we will direct the bulk of new residential and employment growth, as well as employment areas within Ministry of Transportation regulated areas in which we need assistance speeding approvals. The back page included a snapshot of some highlights from of our Vision to Focus (V2F) four-year plan, indicating where our goals are aligned with provincial goals. We left them with the full V2F document as well. This document can be viewed as Appendix A.

Each Minister also received a cover letter with any specific issues or concerns where we are seeking partnership to achieve results for Burlington residents. They can be viewed as Appendix D.

Though we did not have a formal meeting scheduled with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Stephen Clark, myself and Councillor Nisan did meet him during

one of the informal meet and greet receptions, and provided him a copy of our handout, with a commitment for our staff to follow up to discuss Burlington issues further.

Meeting Highlights:

Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure

I was joined by Councillors Angelo Bentivegna and Paul Sharman to reinforce the need for predictable infrastructure funding that isn't dependent on the province opening a funding intake. We've lost a year of construction getting federal infrastructure dollars because of delays in the province opening funding application streams. A similar message is being conveyed to the Federal government, as part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocacy during the upcoming federal election.

Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation

I was joined by Councillor Shawna Stolte to share with the Minister the need for speedier approvals of businesses locating or expanding within MTO controlled lands, which is most of Burlington's employment area along the 400-series highways through our city. Some businesses are facing challenges that may compromise business development. She agreed to look into specific applications while we continue to look for long term solutions, particularly through the partnership with the Burlington Economic Development Prosperity Corridor Study, an ongoing joint project of the city, Halton Region and the province to speed approvals.

Andrea Khanjin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MOECP)

I was joined by Councillor Shawna Stolte to convey our interest in speedy approvals from the MOECP, particularly for brownfield redevelopments which require a record of site condition. In one recent residential development in Burlington, approval took almost two years and nearly jeopardized the entire project.

We also asked questions and conveyed concern about the Minister's letter to Conservation Authorities (CAs) (Appendix G), released several days before AMO, announcing a review and telling CAs to focus on their core business, not increase levies and not start new initiatives. It wasn't clear from our meeting what the review means, or the reason behind it, given CAs were recently reviewed by the previous government. However, in a Q&A open forum during the conference, when the question was asked from the floor about what the review means, the Minister mentioned getting out of revenue generating endeavours (e.g. Maple Syrup festival) or turning them over to municipalities. CAs rely on revenue generation to maintain our parks, which is a core part of their mandate, and provide unique experiences. They are equipped to deliver this service on behalf of municipalities and have done so with full transparency and accountability to funding partners and the board. I fully support these initiatives,

particularly in an era of government cuts when we need self-generating revenue. The Conservation Halton board called an emergency meeting August 28 to provide a formal response, which will be circulated under separate cover

Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario

We met with the Attorney General to convey our concerns regarding the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and changes back to the old rules which will add time and costs to housing - the one thing the province and city of Burlington are trying to avoid.

Energy Roundtable with Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

I participated in a roundtable session with a number of other mayors from across Ontario. It provided an opportunity for me to ask what, if any, changes to Burlington Hydro or hydro systems in general may arise from the Regional Review. As expected, there are no definitive answers yet. I further reiterated the city's desire to maintain our revenue stream from Hydro, which funds the city's short and long-term infrastructure. The Minister committed to ensuring cities are kept whole financially if there are any changes to hydro delivery.

Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance

I was joined by Councillors Galbraith and Kearns, and we reiterated our concerns regarding escalating Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) assessments, and provided an update on our earlier meeting with MPAC at the conference (read on for further information below). We also reiterated our desire to eliminate the LPAT.

Halton Mayors

I also joined three other Halton mayors (Rick Bonnette, Halton Hills; Rob Burton, Oakville; Gord Krantz, Milton) and Regional Chair Gary Carr for several meetings with Ministers to raise Regional issues. A key takeaway from each meeting was the desire for staff to continue to connect to make progress. A standard handout (Appendix B) was also provided that, among other things, calls on the province to leave the existing Regional Government structure as is; restore the previous rules for the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and over time, eliminate the LPAT altogether; provide predictable and sufficient funding tools for growth, including via any changes to Development Charges, to support the principle that growth pays for growth; and provide timely changes to funding so municipalities can plan.

Highlights from those meetings are as follows:

Halton Mayors with Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation

Key Messages:

- Traffic congestion continues to be the number one issue for Halton residents.
- The application of provincial legislation coupled with the absence of a provincial multiyear infrastructure plan, has resulted in obstacles to increasing housing supply and economic growth.
- The reliability and frequency of GO train service throughout Halton is vital to the Region's economic prosperity.

Halton requests:

- A coordinated, multi-year, multi-ministry provincial infrastructure investment plan and funding connected to the Growth Plan for the delivery of schools, hospitals, transit, highways and housing, including:
- A commitment to timing and delivery of all day, two-way GO service to Milton and Georgetown to support significant planned population growth.
- A commitment to timing and delivery of a new GO station at Trafalgar and Highway 401 which is a key mobility hub in Halton's Mobility Plan.
- A commitment to highway improvements to the 401 and QEW, including building the missing interchanges at QEW/Royal Windsor Drive and at Highway 401/between James Snow Parkway and Trafalgar Road (5 ½ Line).
- Completion of the GTA West study. (This is not the section that runs through Burlington. Council is not in favour of a new highway through North Burlington)

Halton Mayors with Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Halton mayors conveyed concern that population growth is approved before schools are in place, and this has led to serious overcrowding in growth areas of the Region, including Milton and North Oakville, as well as part of North Burlington (Alton). Currently, there are 500 portables in Halton due to insufficient school infrastructure.

Key messages:

- In Halton the Region, Local Municipalities and the School Boards, experience a funding shortfall of approximately \$87.7 million per year as a result of limitations of the existing funding tools. This negatively impacts Halton taxpayers.
- Currently 24 short-term Halton school improvements are required, and enormous pressures are being put on our increasing school capacities.

Halton requests:

- A coordinated, multi-year, multi-ministry provincial infrastructure investment plan and funding connected to the Growth Plan for the delivery of schools, hospitals, transit,

highways and housing including the approval and development of schools in high growth areas within Halton.

Halton Mayors with Jenn Bel, Chief of Staff to Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure

Key messages:

- Halton is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and must grow to a population of 1 million by 2041, more than doubling its population since 2008, to meet the expectation of the Provincial Growth Plan.
- Halton Region has committed \$2.2B over 10 years in an infrastructure program to support growth in the Region and we look forward to the roll out and implementation of the Phase 2 Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan.
- Halton Region and its Local Municipalities have long-term infrastructure plans to ensure that municipal infrastructure is available to support planned growth.
- Municipalities need appropriate funding tools that allow us to deliver infrastructure as planned to achieve provincial growth projections while ensuring that growth pays for itself.
- The absence of a provincial multi-year, multi-ministry infrastructure plan that is focused on growing communities, including the delivery of schools, hospitals, highways, has resulted in obstacles to increasing housing supply and economic growth.
- Halton requests:
- A coordinated, multi-year, multi-ministry provincial infrastructure investment plan and funding connected to the Growth Plan for the delivery of schools, hospitals, transit, highways and housing.

Halton Mayors with Honourable Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care

I was not able to attend this meeting due to a conflict with one of the other ministerial delegations. However, the key messages delivered on behalf of Halton included:

- Halton is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and must grow to a population of 1 million by 2041, more than doubling its population since 2008, to meet the expectation of the Provincial Growth Plan.
- Halton requests:
- A coordinated, multi-year, multi-ministry provincial infrastructure investment plan and funding connected to the Growth Plan for the delivery of schools, hospitals, transit, highways and housing including:

- Additional Long-Term Care beds in Halton Region to meet the growing needs of our aging and underserved communities and to increase care, service and supports to those seniors whose needs cannot be safely or effectively managed with the current service levels.

LUMCO meeting with Stan Cho, Parliamentary Assistant, Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance

I serve on the Finance subcommittee of the Large Urban Mayors Caucus, alongside Mayor Cam Guthrie, Guelph (Chair of LUMCO); Mayor Shaun Collier, Ajax; Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, Kitchener; Mayor Bryan Paterson, Kingston; and Mayor Walter Sendzik, St. Catharines. We were also joined in our meeting by Ajax Councillor Ashmeed Khan, and Ajax Regional Councillor Marilyn Crawford. This meeting was requested to get an update on the Ministry's policy priorities, in particular municipal fiscal sustainability and the modernization of municipal taxation. We also reminded the Minister's staff that the Province had asked Mayors to forge a finance subcommittee of LUMCO mayors, but to date there has been no movement from the province to set a date for those meetings. We reiterated our desire to work together and set dates for those meetings.

We also had an opportunity to raise concerns about the changes to Development Charges calculations, and express our concern about cuts to public health. Premier Doug Ford announced at AMO that transitional funding would be provided in 2020 to bridge cuts to public health, details still to come. However, the singular message from LUMCO is that public health is not where to cut. After the announcement, LUMCO Chair Cam Guthrie released a statement on behalf of LUMCO welcoming the transitional funding but reiterating that "LUMCO mayors are concerned that we will still face significant cuts to services like public health and child care in 2021." That news release can be found as Appendix H.

Provincial Caucuses:

Myself and Councillor Rory Nisan met with provincial party leaders to outline our top issues and seek their assistance in advancing these. We met with Andrea Horwath, M.P.P., Leader of the New Democratic Party and Official Opposition, Mike Schreiner, M.P.P., Leader of the Ontario Green Party, John Fraser, M.P.P., Interim Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party and Liberal leadership candidate and M.P.P., Mitzi Hunter.

In meeting with the Liberal, NDP and Green caucuses, we discussed:

- the resolution to eliminate the LPAT, passed unanimously at Halton Regional Council (brought forward by Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward and Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette);
- concerns stemming from Bill 108, particularly the changes to development charges and the return of the antiquated rules of the OMB to the LPAT; and

- slow timing of project approvals by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation resulting in slowing down business growth in Burlington.

Letters were provided at these meetings as well and can be found as Appendix E.

Municipal Property Assessment Corporation:

Myself, along with Councillors Kelvin Galbraith and Lisa Kearns, met with staff at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to raise concerns about the impact on businesses of rapid escalation in property values and the resulting spike in taxes and cost of doing business in the Burlington Downtown Business Association area, and Aldershot Business Improvement Area (BIA). Supporting materials (Appendix F) were provided outlining the key concerns. MPAC agreed to visit Burlington in the fall at a meeting convened by councillors with our two BIAs, as well as the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, and Burlington Economic Development, to discuss options, including a phased-in assessment or new tax policies similar to what has been done in Toronto.

We also raised concerns about inaccuracies on the Municipal Voters List, which is compiled by MPAC. The city has the option to create its own list of voters or use MPAC's list. To help ensure ongoing accuracy of the list, MPAC is keeping the "voter look-up" link live, so residents can check at any time that they are on the list. That link can be found here: <https://www.voterlookup.ca/home.aspx>

Reports from Council Members:

To provide further context on the benefits of attending, the following insights from some of our city councillors have been submitted:

Councillor Kelvin Galbraith, Ward 1:

AMO was a great experience for all involved. It's very important for us as a city to have the opportunity to present our issues to our provincial partners. Building relationships with our ministers can help municipalities leverage their interests to provide the taxpayer with a coordinated governmental approach.

Councillor Lisa Kearns, Ward 2:

At AMO a key priority was to escalate the message of unintended tax consequences directly to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).

Burlington requires the support of MPAC, through the 2019 Ontario Budget – Ontario's Plan for Protecting What Matters Most, to protect the Burlington Downtown that belongs to everyone.

Alongside Ontario Minister of Finance, Hon. Rod Phillips, Hon. Jane McKenna MPP, Mayor Meed Ward, Councillor Galbraith, and staff, I set out the timely challenges as businesses address the impact of escalating property tax assessments on the commercial sector of Burlington's Downtown. Land assembly and land speculation has

led to a dangerous mix of inflated property values and associated taxes – of which MPAC is only one. Similar to the Aldershot BIA, the purpose was to mitigate the net effect of inflated MPAC assessments that have a negative impact on investment in the BIAs.

At AMO, I advocated on behalf of over 400 businesses to ensure that our vibrant downtown contributes to making Burlington the best place to live, work, and play.

I participated in an AMO workshop to ensure that amongst other Ontario municipalities, Burlington is a leader in best practice and that I have a strong knowledge of our Council Code of Conduct and Corporate Policies. It was important to highlight Council's obligation to serve their constituents and the public in a diligent manner - understanding that as leaders of the community, they are held to a higher standard of behaviour and conduct.

The AMO workshop was an opportunity to review and confirm that Burlington's Code of Conduct is consistent with principles of transparent and accountable government, and reflective of the City's core values.

Councillor Rory Nisan, Ward 3:

I was pleased to participate in numerous delegation meetings and other discussions with key players from Queen's Park, including Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Stephen Clark, with whom we talked about what makes Burlington special and how we want to work with the provincial government to get development right. We also met with Leader of the Opposition Andrea Horwath, with whom I shared my concerns about autism funding and the downstream consequences of cuts to that program. With Interim Liberal Party Leader John Fraser, we spoke at length about the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. With Green Party leader Mike Schreiner, we discussed development as well as Burlington's climate emergency declaration and climate plans.

The conference was also an opportunity to benefit from many presentations, including fast-tracking the development process, better understanding the cannabis issue and innovation in the municipal sector. Overall, a few days in the capital was well spent and I look forward to continuing to foster the relationships built at the meeting and to bring what I have learned to Burlington City Council.

Councillor Shawna Stolte, Ward 4:

I feel fortunate to have attended the 2019 AMO Conference in Ottawa. I gained a great deal of insight attending workshops on issues such as council communications, media relations and particularly a workshop focusing on innovative affordable housing strategies.

I was pleased to participate in a delegation with the Minister of Transportation with whom we discussed our mutual goal of ensuring that Burlington's developable

employment lands are freed from the bureaucracy and “red tape” that holds up economic development in our city.

As well, I delegated with the Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, with whom we discussed Burlington’s many climate action initiatives. I also had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from Enbridge Gas and spent valuable time planning a significant tree planting initiative for our community.

All in all, the AMO Conference offered great learning and networking opportunities and I look forward to building on this for the benefit of the citizens of our community.

Councillor Paul Sharman, Ward 5:

It was an extremely valuable conference. We received significant insight on broader strategies of the government to improve services and deal with economic challenges. I was pleased to receive training on how to use Narcan Naloxene nasal spray and now I carry the spray in my car. Also, it was great to learn that municipalities will have a more significant role in providing community services in support of integrated health plans. Finally, I was very pleased to learn from Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Stephen Clark that the province will fund new affordable housing proposals.

Councillor Angelo Bentivegna, Ward 6:

It was a great conference at AMO in Ottawa. I met with Minister of Seniors & Accessibility Raymond Cho over lunch with other Municipal leaders. We discussed accessibility challenges and what proactive, creative measures are being undertaken by municipalities. I mentioned what Burlington is doing to exceed accessible parking requirements. The panel was very much aware of Burlington’s “share the space” program.

I participated in discussions with Minister of Infrastructure Laurie Scott to discuss “timing” of funding for the rural broadband and energy program (natural gas).

I took in the policing strategies seminar on how to improve/better serve our communities and found many positive changes are coming to the Police Act 2019 later this year.

I learned about some improvements for how collaboration amongst multiple agencies, such as EMS, schools, hospitals, municipalities, regions, police boards, and police can proactively work together with residents to reduce crime.

Conclusion:

Overall, those who attended gained valuable insights, relationships and learnings to bring back to their roles and to our city. It was a worthy use of time to attend and meet with provincial ministers, and we look forward to participating in future years.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

905-335-7607

Appendices:

- A. AMO Presentation
- B. 2019 AMO Halton Region Advocacy one pager
- C. AMO Annual Conference 2019 Delegations-Meetings
- D. AMO 2019 Minister Letters
- E. AMO 2019 Political Party Caucus Letters
- F. MPAC Letter
- G. Letter from Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
- H. LUMCO Press Release of August 19th (to be distributed under separate cover)