



**SUBJECT:** Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2020 virtual conference highlights

**TO:** Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

**FROM:** Office of the Mayor

Report Number: MO-08-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 115-01

Date to Committee: September 17, 2020

Date to Council: September 28, 2020

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**Recommendation:**

Receive and file office of the mayor's report MO-08-20 providing an update on the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference.

**PURPOSE:**

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

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**Background and Discussion:**

The annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference is an opportunity to connect with municipal peers across the province, hear from leaders about pressing issues and innovative projects, and meet with the Province's ministers to speak about our city's priorities and how we can collaborate in addressing them.

Even though this year the conference went virtual (running from Monday, Aug. 17- Wednesday, Aug. 19), we still had the opportunity to meet with ministers via Zoom. We also watched presentations from the Premier, ministers and political party leaders, as well as attended sessions and forums on a various of municipal issues (such as a municipality's role in climate change, building meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples in our communities and early lessons learned in the initial response to COVID-19).

Right before the conference, Mayor Meed Ward was acclaimed as a Board Member for the Large Urban Caucus for the next two years and will serve as a representative for the City of Burlington with the support of City Council, bringing local issues to the table and collaborating with peers on matters of shared importance.

In attendance at all delegation meetings with provincial ministers were Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, City Manager Tim Commisso, Government Relations Manager Helen Walihura, Mayor's Chief of Staff Victoria Al-Samadi, and Mayor's Media and Digital Communications Specialist John Bkila. In addition, Burlington MPP Jane McKenna and Oakville North Burlington MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos attended all meetings they could accommodate.

Unlike previous years when in-person meetings were held, the virtual nature of this year's event allowed us the opportunity to create and share presentations during each meeting that provided additional visual detail and impact.

The following is a summary of the meetings that were held with provincial ministers, with additional participants noted where applicable and links to the individual presentations that were shared at each meeting.

**Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Jeff Yurek** (Additional participants: Councillor Rory Nisan) -- Presentation: [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - Minister Yurek](#)

**Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, MPP Mike Harris** --Presentation: [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - MPP Harris](#)

While the above two meetings took place separately, similar content was shared with each:

- Updated them on our Nelson Quarry (proposed new expansion) and Meridian Quarry (existing license close to residential).
- Shared the staff directions for both quarries.
- ACTION: Both agreed to participate in a multi-stakeholder meeting called by the mayor to discuss the conditions of the site plan and their oversight and due diligence in ongoing monitoring and studies conducted on the air quality impacts of the quarry activities to ensure the quarry is operating within provincial

regulations. (This meeting is referenced in Report MO-17-19: Meridian Brick/Aldershot Quarry Study Review, which was put on hold due to COVID-19).

**Attorney General Doug Downey, Ministry of the Attorney General -- Presentation:**  
[AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - Minister Downey](#)

- Shared our initiatives around anti-racism.
- Shared our concerns/questions around cancelling the court house project; asked for an update on timelines to get information on the digital transformation as well as renovations to Milton and Burlington court houses; No timelines yet.
- ACTION: he agreed to a follow up meeting with the four mayors, chair and chief of police to discuss the court house project. Plans for renovations are underway and they will share them when ready (could not provide a timeline).
- ACTION: he agreed to a follow up meeting called by the mayor with police chief (and others as needed) to discuss options around lesser provincial offences to capture racist behavior, that don't meet threshold of a federal hate crime but deserve some judicial response.

**Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark (Additional participants: Councillor Rory Nisan) -- Presentation:** [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - Minister Clark](#)

- We thanked him for municipal funding, the ability to hold electronic council and committee meetings after a state of emergency is lifted, and clarity on our ability to remove the MTSA downtown.
- Also thanked him for ability to piece out the Municipal Comprehensive Review approvals and bring some matters forward separately, earlier in the process.
- Provided an update on the progress related to our Official Plan, and the staff direction/unanimous vote at committee regarding lifting the MTSA and shifting boundaries of UGC through the Region's MCR process.

**Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney + Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA), Kinga Surma -- Presentation:** [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - Minister Mulroney + Associate Minister Surma](#)

- We thanked her for her assistance in speeding approvals for development of lands within MTO jurisdiction (action item from last year's meeting) and for her clarity on our ability to remove the MTSA downtown.
- Provided her an update on the progress related to our Official Plan, and the staff direction/unanimous vote at committee regarding lifting the MTSA and shifting boundaries of UGC. Highlighted that future growth will be accommodated around the GO station MTSA/higher order transit.
- Provided an overview of Burlington transit, the increase of 16% pre COVID and the steep decline in revenues and ridership during COVID.

- Minister Surma on the call also, who has point on MTSA planning.
- ACTION: Minister is open to discussing - in the next round of funding - that criteria include increases in transit ridership to factor into formula, taking into account the pre-COVID increase in transit ridership seen here in Burlington for which we may not yet have a full year of data.

**Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Infrastructure, MPP Minister Stephen Crawford** (Additional participants: Councillor Angelo Bentivegna) -- Presentation: [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - MPP Crawford](#)

- Asked for suggestions re: including Skyway Arena revitalization project in funding; he suggested exploring whether an Infrastructure Ontario loan would give us favourable terms.
- The Community, Culture and Recreation (CCR) fund was oversubscribed: \$10B in requests for \$1b in funding. He suggested advocating to federal and provincial governments for a new round of funding under the CCR and perhaps Skyway could be included in that.
- Raised issues around rural broadband
- ACTION: perhaps a resolution at city/region/OBCM re new intake and funding for CCR
- ACTION: he suggested we look into the ICON Program for rural broadband, funding closed Aug. 21, next round of funding opens in spring 2021.

**Liberal Leader Steven Del Duca** (hosted by Councillor Rory Nisan, due to Mayor's scheduling conflict – Mayor attended the first half of the meeting) -- Presentation: [AMO 2020 City of Burlington Presentation - Steven Del Duca - Liberal Party of Ontario](#)

Provided updates on:

- Business support and attraction – Red Tape Red Carpet Task Force / COVID-19 response / Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN).
- Environment – Climate emergency declaration / Urban Private Tree Bylaw / Funding for tree-planting / protecting the Greenbelt.
- Diversity & Inclusion – Black Lives Matter Solidarity March & temporary sidewalk art / Rainbow sidewalk / Culture Days & One Burlington festival.
- Growth & Development – Right Place Right Scale / Protect the character of our downtown / Focus growth around mass transit / 50 current projects, with 7,000 units / Burlington's density targets to be reached based on applications currently under consideration as of 2019 / MTSA and UGC designations downtown.

Follow-up letters were sent to each minister the week after the conference, thanking them for their engagement and outlining any actionable next steps that were agreed to. The individual letters can be found as Appendices A through F of this report.

Additional meetings held between the Region of Halton and provincial ministers were also attended by Mayor Meed Ward. A summary of those meetings and accompanying handout material can be found here: <https://mariannemeedward.ca/fcm-amc/amo-2020-virtual-conference-halton-region-delegation-meets-with-ministers/> .

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### **Financial Matters:**

Attendance at the event was a conference fee of \$610.56 per person. The Mayor's attendance was paid for from the Halton Region budget. Councillors who attended did so from their annual budget. Fees for city staff who attended were paid for out of department budgets for professional development. Fees were considerably lower this year as there were no associated travel costs and the admission fee itself was also lower than in previous years.

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### **Climate Implications**

The virtual nature of this year's event had a positive environmental impact as it was able to be attended from home for all participants rather than via flights to the previously-scheduled destination of Ottawa, Ontario.

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### **Conclusion:**

This year's event resulted in many positive and actionable outcomes with our provincial partners, all at a lower cost than previous events.

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Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

### **Appendices:**

A-F: Follow up letters for each of the meetings held with ministers and Liberal Leader Steven del Duca.

### **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council.