



SUBJECT: Government relations annual report
TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.
FROM: Corporate Strategy

Report Number: CS-07-22

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: June 6, 2022

Date to Council: June 21, 2022

Recommendation:

Receive and file corporate strategy report CS-07-22, providing an update on the funding, advocacy, monitoring and reporting work of government relations (GR) at the City of Burlington.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

The purpose of this report is to provide the members of the Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee with an annual updated on the City's GR efforts. As committee is aware GR at the City includes the following areas of responsibility:

- Identifying and helping secure funding for identified strategic priorities and projects;
- Advocating to senior levels of government to help advance identified City priorities, strategic goals and issues impacting residents, businesses and City operations;

- Monitoring and reporting on changes to legislation and issues that impact City's strategic goals and operations.

Strategy/process

Funding

While we have continued to operate within the pandemic environment since the last GR update, direct funding to support the financial implications experienced by municipalities because of the COVID-19 has decreased. The City continued to advocate for additional Safe Restart Funding (SRA) to support municipal operating pressures to date none has been provided. Municipalities including the City of Burlington did receive additional SRA funding to support transit operations and investments for public infrastructure projects through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure (ICIP) Program – COVID-19 Resilience Stream. Appendix A details the funding the City received for both programs.

Approved Funding

The City's applications for several non-COVID related projects were successful. These programs were funded by both the Federal and Provincial governments. Applications were approved for the following:

- **Great Lakes Protection Initiative - Areas of Concern Funding (Federal)**
 - Grindstone Creek Erosion Control
- **FCM Green Municipal Fund – Zero Carbon Feasibility Studies (Federal)**
 - Appleby Ice Centre,
 - Brant Hills Community Centre and
 - Fire Stations 2 and 7
- **Audit and Accountability Fund – Phase 3 (Provincial)**
 - Land Management Technology Review
 - Web Architecture Modernization
- **Municipal Energy Plan Program (Provincial)**
 - Preparation of an Electric Mobility Plan
- **Seniors Active Living Centres Program (Provincial)**
- **2022 Celebrate Canada Grant (Federal)**

In January 2022, as part of the Provincial Housing Summit with big city mayors and regional chairs, Premier Doug Ford announced the launch of the \$45 million Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) Initiative. Ontario's 39 largest municipalities each received an allocation from the province to help modernize, streamline and accelerate

processes for managing and approving housing applications. The City of Burlington's allocation from this program is \$1 million in funding.

It is important to note, that while the funding has been approved, the City may not have received the funds. Regular project progress reporting is required for these programs and funds will not be dispersed to the City until key project milestones have been achieved.

Pending Applications

Funding decisions are still pending for the City's applications to several programs. An overview of the various funding programs and City projects there were submitted for funding is provided here.

Canada Green and Inclusive Community Fund (Federal) - This five-year \$1.5 billion program will support green and accessible retrofits, repairs or upgrades of existing public community buildings and the construction of new publicly-accessible community buildings that serve high-needs, underserved communities across Canada.

City Project: Skyway Community Centre

Active Transportation Fund (Federal) - The Active Transportation Fund will provide \$400 million over five years to support the expansion and enhancement of active transportation infrastructure and a modal shift away from cars and toward active transportation.

There are two streams of projects eligible for funding: capital projects and planning projects. Planning and design projects refer to the development or enhancement of formal active transportation strategic planning documents or stakeholder engagement. Capital projects refer to new infrastructure construction, enhancement of existing infrastructure, and fixed design and safety features that encourage increased active transportation.

Planning projects will be funded up to 100 percent, up to a maximum of \$50,000. For capital projects the maximum program contribution is up to 60 per cent of project costs for municipal projects, up to a maximum contribution of \$50,000,000. All projects must be completed by March 31, 2026.

City Project: Prospect Street Bike Lanes

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility Inclusive Community Grants (ICG) Program 2022-23 (Annual Provincial) - The purpose of the ICG Program is to help communities become inclusive by ensuring that the needs of Ontarians of all ages and abilities are considered at every stage of community planning and development. The program will

support existing and create new Age-Friendly Communities in Ontario. The maximum funding available is \$60,000 per project and projects must take place between September 2022 and March 2023.

City Project: Mobi-Mats for Beachway Park

The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) (Federal) – TAF through an agreement with the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources, receives funding from Canada’s Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program and administers the GTHA EV Charging Fund.

City Project: EV Charging Stations at Nelson Community Centre, Mountainside Community Centre, Haber/Norton Park, Mainway Ice Centre, Appleby Ice Centre, Tansley Woods Community Centre

Looking ahead there are a number of funding programs that staff are actively considering for other important City projects the Low Carbon Economy Challenge - Champions stream: 2022 Intake is one of them.

This federal program supports projects that reduce Canada’s GHG emissions in 2030 and beyond. Eligible projects must have GHG emissions reductions that are material, cost-effective, and incremental. The reductions must be of sources of emissions controlled by the applicant and are beyond what is required by existing regulations, standards or codes and ongoing work by project proponents. Projects can receive between \$1 million and \$25 million in funding. Municipal projects can receive a maximum of 40 percent contribution towards eligible expenditures. Projects must be completed by March 31, 2025 to be eligible. The program has a two-stage application process:

1. Submission of an Expression of Interest to screen projects for eligibility by March 25, 2022
2. Submission of a Formal Proposal to evaluate projects for merit.

Only applicants with eligible projects will be invited to submit a Formal Proposal. The City submitted two Expressions of Interest, which have led to invitations to submit formal proposals for funding for the following two projects:

Robert Bateman High School Revitalization

Project elements: Solar PV System, partial load geothermal system, upgrade of HVAC infrastructure to accommodate integration with a geothermal system, Controls system upgrade from pneumatic to digital control, and several building envelope upgrades (roof, windows etc.).

Brant Hills Community Centre – Deep Energy Retrofit

Project elements: The main elements of the project will be roof replacement including insulation, air tightness upgrades, and changeover of the current gas fired rooftop unit HVAC system to a low carbon solution. Although the final type of system is yet to be determined it is expected that it will be either a geexchange system or air source heat pump system or a combination of the two. To support the HVAC replacement, replacement of the main components of the electrical infrastructure in the facility is also included. The City has also undertaken a preliminary study of solar feasibility at the facility and it has been established that the facility itself can accommodate a 130kW system on the roof and possibly a 75kW system that is ground mounted.

The application deadline for these two projects is July 15, 2022 with funding decisions expected in the fall of 2022. Projects must be completed no later than March 2025 to be eligible for this program.

Senior government funding is an extremely important source of funding for City projects and initiatives. In an effort to make the process of completing applications easier and to provide clarity on who is responsible for what, GR staff with input from finance, legal, corporate communications and engagement and departments seeking funding, is developing a funding process map and “who does what” checklist. Once completed these resources will be shared with department managers, directors and executive directors.

Advocacy

As committee is aware advocacy helps ensure the City’s voice is heard on issues of importance to our community, as well as issues that impact City priorities and operations. GR coordinates and assists in the preparation of the tactics used to advance our interests with senior government decision makers. These tactics include:

- City and Regional Council resolutions
- Letter writing
- Delegation meetings
- Provincial and Federal pre-budgets submissions
- Comments on proposed legislation and regulations
- Meetings with local MPs and MPPS
- Membership and participation in key municipal and industry associations i.e. Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Federation of Canadian

Municipalities (FCM), Ontario Big City Mayor's Caucus (OBCM), Ontario Public Transit Association, Canadian Urban Transit Association, etc.

As mentioned earlier the global pandemic continued to negatively impact City and local business operations over the last year and for this reason continued to influence our advocacy efforts. We called on both the Provincial and Federal government to support local economies and the hardest hit sectors through our pre-budget submissions and resolutions from City Council and the Burlington Economic Recovery Network.

We urged both levels of government to continue to work with us to be build stronger communities together. The details of our Federal and Provincial pre-budget submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

The City's advocacy efforts were not all related to COVID. The City joined other Ontario municipalities calling on the Provincial government to support the Association of Ontario's (AMO) recommendations regarding joint and several liability reform. Municipal governments cannot afford to be the insurer of last resort. The principle of joint and several liability is costing municipalities and taxpayers dearly, in the form of rising insurance premiums, service reductions and fewer choices.

The City also called on the Federal government to protect women and children from domestic violence and homicide through a resolution to support Member of Parliament Anju Dhillon's Private Member's Bill C-233, "Keira's Law." Bill C-233 will raise the level of education on domestic violence and coercive control for federally appointed Judges. This legislation was named after four-year-old Keira Kagan, who was killed while in the custody of her father, in 2020.

Providing comments on proposed changes to legislation is another form of advocacy used by the City. On March 30, 2022 the Provincial government introduced the *More Homes for Everyone Act*, Bill 109. This legislation is considered the first step in responding to the extensive changes recommended by Ontario's Housing Affordability Task Force. The Task Force's final report contained 55 recommendations. The City provided comments on the Task Force's report through both a joint submission by the GTHA Mayor's and Chairs and a Community Planning Department Staff report. The City also submitted comments on six consultations regarding the regulations and policies related to Bill 109.

Appendix B contains a listing of the various issues and advocacy tactics the City used to comment on them.

Conference Delegations

A City delegation led by the Mayor once again attended the annual AMO conference. At the 2021 conference, six delegation meetings took place. Please refer to Appendix D for a listing of delegation meetings that were attended.

The 2022 AMO Annual Conference in August will be an opportunity to meet with the newly formed provincial government. Delegation meetings at this conference will be used to as introductions to new Ministers and Parliamentary Assistants and an opportunity to discuss the City's key advocacy priorities:

- A long-term, stable, allocation-based, infrastructure funding framework, supported by both the Provincial and Federal governments, that provides municipalities with a steady flow of infrastructure dollars for municipally identified priority projects including infrastructure renewal, transit and active transportation.
- A commitment to working together with municipalities and the federal government on innovative solutions and partnerships to increase attainable housing options for residents at every stage of life.
- Continued investments in broadband and high-speed internet services to expand opportunity, access and economic participation.
- Acknowledgment and support of municipal governments as key partners in Ontario's economic recovery and future prosperity.
- Financial support of municipal efforts towards creating carbon neutral communities through community tax incentives/grants for deep home energy retrofit programs, funding to support alternative fueling infrastructure for municipal fleets (EV/Hydrogen) and community tax incentives/grants to support EV vehicle purchase and charging infrastructure.
- Continued supports for businesses and industries hardest hit by the pandemic.

Rural Advocacy

In CS-07-21, Government Relations Update, the topic of rural advocacy was raised. As noted Burlington is a unique community, in that it is not predominantly rural, yet its rural area faces issues that are not likely to be discussed at AMO. It was determined that the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference would provide an excellent opportunity to begin to discuss the unique challenges facing rural areas within urban municipalities. Two very productive delegation meetings were held with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. GR staff recommends that the City continue to attend ROMA as an opportunity to advance our rural priorities and issues.

Monitoring and Reporting

Over the last year COVID-19 continued to impact City services, including GR, but to a somewhat lesser extent. GR updates were no longer daily. They will continue to be used to provide Council and senior staff with details on provincial and federal announcements, new legislation and other relevant news items or reports.

Financial Matters:

The City's government relations efforts including conference registration fees are all within the Council approved budget for government relations.

Climate Implications

n/a

Engagement Matters:

Our advocacy efforts are intended to influence decision-makers and to help advance the City's strategic priorities, which are an outcome of extensive community consultation. Advocacy is also used to advance the issues identified by residents, businesses and community organizations.

Conclusion:

Government relations will continue to build and maintain positive relationships with senior levels of government to advance the City of Burlington's strategic priorities and initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Senior Government Funding
- B. Advocacy Issues
- C. Provincial and Federal Pre-Budget Submissions
- D. Conference Delegation Meetings

Report Approval:

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