



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: November 25, 2024

Title: 2025 ROMA Conference Ministerial Meeting Requests

Prepared By: Roger Nesbitt, CAO

Department: Administration

Report Number: Administration-2024-027

Recommendation:

That report number Administration-2024-027 be received as information.

Background:

The Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) holds an annual conference in January. The conference provides an opportunity for municipal officials to request and potentially participate in Provincial Ministerial delegation meetings meant to discuss local concerns.

Mayor Harrison, Councillor Tardiff, and the City's CAO will be attending the 202R ROMA conference.

Discussion:

Municipal staff are recommending that the City of Dryden request the following delegation meetings during the ROMA Conference.

- **The Ministry of the Solicitor General:** To continue discussions regarding Dryden's extraordinarily high policing costs and the lack of financial reimbursement for assisting neighboring fire services in the unincorporated areas.
- **The Ministry of Finance & the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing:** To again request that the province implement Provincial Land Tax reform aimed at providing funding to hub municipalities impacted by large populations in neighboring (fringe) unincorporated territories.

- **The Ministry of Long-Term Care:** To make our repeated request to the Provincial Government to have the unincorporated territories in the Kenora District included in the long-term care municipal levy apportionment.
- **The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing:** To discuss Dryden's critical housing shortage, our growing infrastructure deficit, and the need for adequate and predictable infrastructure funding such as larger municipalities are seeing from programs like the Building Faster Fund.
- **The Ministry of Infrastructure & the Ministry of Natural Resources:** To continue discussing surplus provincial lands in the City of Dryden which could be better used for housing development.
- **The Ministry of Transportation:** To discuss the importance of the Connecting Links program for Dryden and to raise awareness of Dryden's latest funding application to this program. To also discuss the requirement for airport capital funding and to convey the need for passenger air service at the Dryden Regional Airport.
- **The Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Northern Development, & the Ministry of Mines:** To continue discussions around Dryden's strategic importance to development in the Kenora District and to discuss mitigation measures required to ensure Dryden is not negatively impacted by growth and more specifically, growth in the outlying areas who rely on Dryden as the regional hub.

Dryden's high policing costs and the financial pressures that our community faces from serving as a hub community in our region and the fact that these pressures are posing a significant financial challenge for the municipal rate payers is a dominating theme with ROMA delegation meeting requests. Considering potential projects such as the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's Deep Geological Repository project, Waasigan Transmission Line project, and some of the more advanced mining sector projects, the municipality's financial wellbeing will be negatively impacted by the growth these, and other projects, will generate unless adequate mitigation measures are provided by project proponents and senior levels of government.

"Growth pays for growth", a phrase that describes the idea that development charges can be used to pay for the infrastructure and services needed to support growth, does not apply in northern Ontario. Northern municipalities in Ontario primarily rely on existing property tax revenue and service fees to fund growth as development charges are not the norm. Without help in the form of financial mitigation measures, this approach is not sustainable.