

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** City Council

**Report From:** Rebecca Ellerdien, Senior Advisor, External Relations and Investment Attraction

**Meeting Date:** September 8, 2025

**Report Code:** CM-25-028

**Subject:** AMO 2025 Delegation Update

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-028 respecting AMO 2025 Delegation Update, City Council receives the report for information purposes.

### Highlights:

- Owen Sound was granted all six delegations requested for the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference.
- Staff prepared issues notes and leave-behind materials for each ministry delegation, as well as a delegate briefing binder that was also shared with MPP Paul Vickers and Grey County staff.
- Provincial representatives were open and receptive to the issues and requests made by the City, and staff are following up on key priorities and action items.
- Owen Sound invited several municipal and community stakeholders to join its delegations in alignment with the core activities outlined in the Intergovernmental Relations Action Plan.

### Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Collaborative City.

The success of the 2025 AMO delegation strategy was achieved through close collaboration with external partners.

## **Climate and Environmental Implications:**

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

## **Previous Report/Authority:**

[Report CR-25-015 Re: Community and Business Development Mid-Year Update](#)

[Report CM-23-008 Re: Intergovernmental Relations - Update on Actions and Proposed Priorities for 2024-2025](#)

## **Background:**

The City's Intergovernmental Relations Action Plan was developed in 2021 and identified the core activities (advocacy, education, and collaboration) and advocacy priorities for 2022–2023. The plan was adopted by Council in December 2021, and updated in December 2023 to focus on two critical priorities for 2024-2025:

- Stable and sustainable funding
- Physician Recruitment

In May 2025, staff prepared a shortlist of delegation requests for the annual AMO Conference. The list focused on issues within the identified priorities, with the addition of a few broader economic development initiatives developed in collaboration with local partners, such as Georgian College and the Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition (SOIC).

Staff took a proactive and highly collaborative approach in preparing these delegation requests, communicating early and often with key partners.

Staff submitted delegation requests to six ministries on nine issues, and all were granted. Owen Sound delegates were also invited to participate in additional delegations led by Grey County.

The following delegates represented Owen Sound at AMO 2025:

- Mayor Ian Boddy
- Councillor Suneet Kukreja
- Councillor Melanie Middlebro'
- City Manager Tim Simmonds
- Fire Chief Phil Eagleson

## **Analysis:**

The AMO 2025 delegation meetings were considered very successful and covered a wide range of issues impacting residents of Owen Sound and community members from the surrounding region.

Ministry representatives were open and receptive during the conversations. Staff will now follow up with ministry counterparts on key action items and requests.

The City of Owen Sound led six delegations:

### **Ministry of Health**

- Issue 1: Expanding Rural Primary Care Access
- Issue 2: Eligibility for Rural Health Care Funding

Owen Sound met with Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones to request an expansion of primary and urgent care services in North Grey—including walk-in clinic access—and to review eligibility criteria for incentives intended to support physician recruitment and retention for rural communities.

In a significant demonstration of regional unity, the City's delegates were joined by Grey County Warden Andrea Matrosovs, Chief Administrative Officer Randy Scherzer, and Economic Development Director Savanna Myers; as well as representatives from neighbouring municipalities: Mayor Scott Mackey (Chatsworth), Deputy Mayor Shirley Keaveney and Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt (Meaford), and Councillor Tobin Day and Communications Manager Hailey Thomson (Georgian Bluffs).

Currently, there are no full-time walk-in clinics within 100km of Owen Sound, forcing residents and visitors in need of in-person, urgent care to rely on rural emergency departments throughout Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The delegation presentation included a map showing the location of rural emergency departments and the nearest urgent care clinics in Orangeville (111km), Waterloo (143km), Bolton (146km), and Exeter (176km).

The delegation also examined how the use of postal codes and Rurality Index of Ontario scores can inadvertently exclude small urban communities and surrounding rural regions from funding and incentives meant to support primary care expansion and proposed a review of the eligibility for these programs.

## **Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade**

- Issue: Developing Southwestern Ontario's Isotope Industry

Meeting with Parliamentary Assistant Tyler Allsopp, the City of Owen Sound was joined by Jessica Linthorne, Nuclear Innovation Institute President & CEO, and Chad MacLean, Bruce Power Senior Director of Business, to delegate on local opportunities to advance isotope research, development, and production.

The delegation shared the Review of Regional Opportunities prepared by the SOIC and extended an invitation to attend the upcoming Clean Energy Frontier 2025 Conference which will take place October 21 and 22. At the meeting, the Parliamentary Assistant requested that his calendar be booked to attend one of the two days. Owen Sound looks forward to hosting the Parliamentary Assistant and will also endeavour to arrange visits to clean energy and workforce development facilities in coordination with local partners.

As a founding member of the SOIC, the City of Owen Sound is promoting regional collaboration and taking proactive action to secure Ontario's economic resiliency as a hub for clean energy innovation, workforce development, and rural access to revolutionary radiotheranostic services.

## **Ministry of Transportation**

- Issue 1: Owen Sound Harbour Growth Opportunities
- Issue 2: Sustainable Funding for Public Transit

Meeting with Parliamentary Assistant Hardeep Singh Grewal, Owen Sound delegated on opportunities to support Ontario's Marine Transportation Strategy, joined by Georgian College Executive Director Dave Shorey to highlight the Centre for Marine Training and Research, the largest English-language marine training facility in Central Canada, serving seafarers from across the Great Lakes and inland waterways.

The delegation also thanked the province for investing in public transit and encouraged long-term, sustainable funding geared toward the needs and challenges of small urban communities. Specifically, the delegation highlighted the connection between transit options and economic sustainability and growth in Owen Sound. that extend the service each day to late evening so people can rely on getting to and from late afternoon personal appointments and jobs.

The Minister encouraged the City to make a grant request through the Ontario Transit Investment Fund (OTIF) to extend service and to connect back with the Ministry.

### **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

- Issue: Small Urban Community Housing Affordability

Meeting with Parliamentary Assistant Matthew Rae, Owen Sound amplified calls for a coordinated federal-provincial-municipal approach to align planning, funding, and delivery.

The City of Owen Sound will add 534 residential units in 2025, with a total of 3,025 new units projected over the next five years.

The delegation highlighted a recent example of successful intergovernmental cooperation, where the City of Owen Sound was given a rare opportunity to purchase forfeited provincial lands with grant support from Grey County for the purpose of affordable housing.

Council then initiated the opportunity to transfer those lands to the Owen Sound Housing Company to develop new affordable housing.

### **Ministry of the Solicitor General**

- Issue 1: Fairness in Community Police Funding
- Issue 2: Homelessness in Small Urban Communities

In a joint delegation to Ontario Solicitor General Michael Kerzner, Mayor Sue Paterson of the Town of Hanover and Mayor Boddy of the City of Owen Sound, along with Grey County Warden Andrea Matrosovs, called for a province-wide funding mechanism to provide relief for rising community policing costs.

While budget relief was announced last November for OPP-policed communities, Hanover and Owen Sound are two of 44 municipalities with dedicated municipal police forces. The Hanover Police Service represents 34 cents of each tax dollar collected by the community, and the Owen Sound Police Service accounts for 28 cents of each tax dollar.

Solicitor General Kerzner expressed his strong support for community policing and requested that his deputy minister travel to Owen Sound to further discuss the regional flow of criminality.

As regional hubs for health care and social services, small urban communities such as Owen Sound need additional resources to address

public safety concerns and enforcement issues while providing critically needed support to vulnerable residents and addressing the ongoing opioid crisis.

### **Ministry of Red Tape Reduction**

- Issue: Reducing Administrative Burden for Rural Physicians

Owen Sound and Grey County delegates met with Minister Andrea Khanjin to advocate for the needs of local physicians and health care providers. In a rural context, every action to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our health care system means more time that physicians can spend face-to-face with patients.

The delegation amplified calls to address burnout and reduce administrative burden, with research to support measures such as a centralized referral model for specialist care.

### **Financial Implications:**

Costs associated with the AMO Conference are budgeted within the annual operating budget.

### **Communication Strategy:**

A communications plan was developed in collaboration with the Communications Advisor, including:

- Proactive communication with key stakeholders
- Two media releases, issued before and after the conference
- Social media posts using real-time photos along with official graphics and the #AMO2025 hashtag
- Leave-behind materials amplifying key messages and requests
- Follow up thank you letters

### **Consultation:**

N/A

### **Attachments:**

1. AMO 2025 Delegation Recap & Photos
2. Map of Grey Bruce Hospitals and Walk-In Clinics

**Recommended by:**

Rebecca Ellerdiem, Senior Advisor, External Relations and Investment Attraction

**Submission approved by:**

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Rebecca Ellerdiem, Senior Advisor, External Relations and Investment Attraction at [rellerdiem@owensound.ca](mailto:rellerdiem@owensound.ca) or 519-376-4440 ext. 1254.