



## Information Memo

To: Council-In-Committee Meeting  
Date: September 09, 2025  
Division: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer  
Department: Administration  
Ward: All Wards  
Subject: Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2025 Annual Meeting and Conference Update.

### Recommendation(s):

That the information Memo regarding the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2025 Annual General Meeting and Conference be received as information: and

That going forward, Norfolk identify backup delegates to be on call, should scheduled participants (elected officials and staff) be unable to attend both the AMO and ROMA conferences.

### Background

AMO held its annual in-person conference in Ottawa, Ontario from August 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. Over 3,000 municipal leaders, government officials, public servants, sponsors, exhibitors, and media gathered to be part of information sharing sessions and deputations. AMO launched its first-ever Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan at the AMO Conference which represents AMO's next major concrete step toward reconciliation and listening, learning and honoring Indigenous People's Rights.

The annual event is one of the most important conferences for Ontario municipalities, providing opportunities for local government representatives to speak directly to Provincial Ministers, meet and learn from each other, listen to recent successes of local governments from across Ontario, and see what the future holds based on recent and long-term trends.

The Norfolk County Delegation to this year's conference included Councilor Adam Veri and Chief Administrative Officer Al Meneses.

The team met with multiple Ministers on behalf of Norfolk County. Further to this, Norfolk County also participated in delegations in collaboration with South Central

Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation (SCOR EDC) and delegations with Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC) as members of these organizations.

Staff from the communications department created an online video and information page about Norfolk County for all AMO attendees to watch and read. Individuals scanned a QR code and were directed to Norfolk's information page. Based on the data tracking received from the QR code, the page was visited over 200 times with an average engagement time of over 1 minute per person. The page was most viewed between the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> of August and had steady viewing up to August 26<sup>th</sup>. Staff will continue to monitor this data.

Link: <http://www.norfolkcounty.ca/amo>

The Norfolk team formally met with:

- Ministry of Attorney General
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Ministry of Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
- Ministry of Indigenous Affairs
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ministry of Sport
- Ministry of Infrastructure
- Ministry of Public and Business Procurement
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Labor, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
- Ministry of Red Tape Reduction

Each of the meetings allowed Norfolk to highlight local priorities, present compelling cases for Provincial support, continue to foster positive and professional relations, set the stage for additional face to face meetings both at Queen's Park and in Norfolk, and promote a regional approach to Southwest Ontario issues.

It should be noted that the in-person conference setting further allowed the Norfolk team to informally meet with many other Provincial representatives and other local government representatives (elected and staff) and make important connections, exchange numbers and emails, and speak firsthand about Norfolk and common issues.

### **Discussion:**

Highlights included:

- ✓ Meeting with Attorney General of Ontario, Doug Downey.
  - Asks for expedited legislative changes to Section 441.1 of the Municipal Act to improve recovery of defaulted POA fines, and for transitional and

ongoing financial support to address the costs of downloaded POA responsibilities, including Part III prosecutions.

- Norfolk highlighted that POA operations continue to run at a deficit (\$572,800 in 2024), with over \$8.4 million in outstanding fines, and emphasized that provincial assistance is necessary to avoid increased residential tax bills and ensure sustainable court operations.
  - Innovative ideas were explored to assist collection efforts including involvement from C.R.A.
- ✓ Meeting with Minister of Health, Minister Sylvia Jones
- Dr. Jason Malenfant, the new medical officer of health of Grand Erie Public Health, joined the meeting.
  - Asked for coordinated multi-ministry approach to seek a solution to the health risks associated with abandoned gas wells.
  - Norfolk also asked for support in physician recruitment through rural clinical education hubs, incentives, and licensing reform, and requested clarity on Norfolk's role and results to date in the Primary Care Action Team strategy.
  - There was also discussion about the recent health unit merger and a new hospital.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister Rob Flack
- Asks for coordination on infrastructure investment to align Norfolk's possible Boundary Expansion Plan with capacity in health care, education, childcare, transportation, and utilities.
  - Norfolk also asked for greater flexibility in implementing the 4-unit-as-of-right zoning policy, noting that a zoning review is not scheduled until 2028 and that rural municipalities like Norfolk required tailored solutions.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Rural Affairs, Deputy Minister Martha Greenberg
- Raised concerns that strict provincial farm severance policies hinder farm succession, family support, and rural housing availability in prime agriculture areas.
  - Asking the Province for greater flexibility on farm-related severances and policy amendments or exemptions for rural municipalities to balance farmland protection with agricultural sustainability.
  - Requesting collaboration on expanding Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permissions and targeted infrastructure funding and support for zoning modernization to address housing and growth barriers.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, Minister Trevor James
- Asked for provincial support to expedite Norfolk's approved Urban Boundary Expansion, enabling residential and commercial growth, including the expansion plans of local employer Scotts Canada Ltd. In Delhi.

- Discussed the challenges that businesses face with expansion when they are adjacent to agricultural land.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, Minister Greg Rickford
  - The Minister of Indigenous Affairs was familiar with Norfolk's Duty to Consult challenges and took the time to provide an update.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Minister Mike Harris
  - Norfolk's delegates focused on the Forestry Farm Road gas wells for this meeting.
  - Dr. Malenfant joined the delegates to address the health risks associated with the leaks.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Sport, Deputy Minister Keith Palmer
  - Recognize the role of business organizations contributing to community development through tourism and cultural events. To support these organizations, create new funding streams within existing programs—or develop a new program entirely.
  - Discussed the issue of aging sport infrastructure in Norfolk County.
  - Explore opportunities to divest certain municipal buildings to local partners for revitalization and community use.
  - Support partnerships that improve downtown infrastructure and deliver community-level resources.
  - Align funding and collaboration efforts with Norfolk's economic development, tourism, and cultural priorities.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Infrastructure, Deputy Minister Ali Veshkini
  - Asked for support and guidance on how to break down the application for the inter-urban water supply project, which is cross-jurisdictional with Haldimand County, and where neither county is confident in success.
  - Norfolk is seeking strategic infrastructure investment to support urban boundary expansion, as existing independent water systems in Port Dover, Simcoe, Waterford, Delhi, and Courtland cannot accommodate the projected population growth.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Business Service Delivery Procurement, Minister Stephen Crawford
  - Norfolk raised concerns over aging privately owned natural gas infrastructure with unclear ownership and responsibility for inspections, maintenance, upgrades, and liability.
  - Asking the Province to work with TSSA to clarify ownership responsibilities, resolve disputed cases quickly, and support municipalities facing financial or liability risks.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Tourism, and Gaming, Deputy Minister Nancy Kennedy

- Seeking expanded, dedicated funding for repair and replacement of aging recreation infrastructure and retrofitting facilities to improve accessibility for seniors, differently-abled individuals, and families.
  - We provided an update on the county's Recreation Master Plan.
  - Asking Ministry to recognize and support business organizations that contribute to community development through tourism and cultural events, potentially through new or adapted funding streams.
  - Proposed the exploration of partnerships or divestment of municipal buildings to support infrastructure improvements and enhance community resources aligned with economic development and cultural properties.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Finance, Deputy Minister Jason Fitzsimmons
    - Asked for a new revenue-sharing agreement to provide sustainable funding to municipalities, particularly rural areas like Norfolk, where lower population density drives up service delivery costs. Options explored included reallocating 1% of sales or income taxes, which could generate \$23M – \$26.5M annually for Norfolk.
    - Norfolk also asked the province to work with MPAC to review farmland assessment methodologies and implement tools to mitigate sudden spikes in property taxes, which disproportionately impact local farmers and threaten long-term agricultural viability. Meeting with Ministry of Labour, Immigration, and Skills Development, Minister David Piccini
    - Asked for support in addressing agriculture's labour shortage through improved immigration pathways, skills training, and support for agricultural employers.
    - Norfolk proposed a multi-pronged approach including awareness campaigns, apprenticeship-style programs, wage subsidies, and streamlined access to labour market programs for small and medium-sized farm operations.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, Minister Andrea Khanjin
    - Raised concerns over delays in planning applications due to complex regulations, overlapping review, and limited staff capacity.
    - Asking Province to streamline approval times, reduce duplication, and pilot fast-track approvals for rural municipalities.
- ✓ Meeting with Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development
    - Requested ministry support for apprenticeship and training programs for skilled farm work and trades, and expansion to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to make skilled labour available to other sectors.
    - Concerns were raised about the challenge to find employees and the limitations insufficient transportation and housing create for businesses.

WOWC Meeting Agenda Included:

- WOWC Delegation with Ontario Liberal Party

- WOWC Delegation with Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development with Hon. David Piccini
- WOWC Delegation with Ministry of Rural Affairs with Hon. Lisa Thompson
- WOWC Delegation with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing with Hon. Rob Flack
- WOWC Delegation with Ontario NDP
- WOWC Delegation with Green Party of Ontario

**SCOR Meeting Agenda Included:**

- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Rural Affairs with Minister Thompson
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness with Minister Trevor Jones
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence & Security with Minister Quinn
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Transportation – Southwest Community Transit (SCT) with Parliamentary Assistant, Hardeep Singh Grewal
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Transportation – HWY 24 with Parliamentary Assistant, Hardeep Singh Grewal
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Transportation – Permitting with Parliamentary Assistant, Hardeep Singh Grewal
- SCOR meeting with Green Party of Ontario
- SCOR meeting with Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade with Parliamentary Assistant Brian Saunderson
- SCOR meeting with Liberal Party of Ontario

**Finance Comments:**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this update report.

**Attachment(s):**

- Attachment A: AMO 2025 Schedule
- Attachment B: SCOR AMO 2025 Schedule
- Attachment C: WOWC AMO 2025 Schedule
- Attachment D: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – GPO
- Attachment E: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – MLITSD
- Attachment F: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – NMAH
- Attachment G: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – MRA
- Attachment H: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – NDP
- Attachment I: WOWC AMO 2025 Speaking Notes – OLP
- Attachment J: MAFA – One Page Briefing
- Attachment K: MAG – One Page Briefing
- Attachment L: MEDJCST - One Page Briefing
- Attachment M: MINDA – One Page Briefing
- Attachment N: MLITS – One Page Briefing

- Attachment O: MMAH – One Page Briefing
- Attachment P: MNR – One Page Briefing
- Attachment Q: MOF – One Page Briefing
- Attachment R: MOH – One Page Briefing
- Attachment S: MOI – One Page Briefing
- Attachment T: MOSPORT – One Page Briefing
- Attachment U: MPBSDP – One Page Briefing
- Attachment V: MRA – One Page Briefing
- Attachment W: MRTR – One Page Briefing
- Attachment X: MTCG – One Page Briefing
- Attachment Y: Thank you letter Hon. Jill Dunlop
- Attachment Z: Emergency Preparedness Response of Ontario

### **Conclusion:**

The conference was well attended and organized. Attending multiple delegations with various Ministers was very impactful and will benefit Norfolk as we continue to advocate for additional resources and funding.

Norfolk County was well represented by Councilor Adam Veri and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Al Meneses, as they presented well-developed business cases, made impassioned requests for Norfolk, networked with fellow peers and Provincial contacts, and continued the advocacy efforts that will pay off over time.

Attendance at the conference brought Norfolk County together with municipal peers with common interests and provided a forum to share ideas, opportunities, challenges, successes and make connections for the future benefit of the County.

Going forward, Norfolk will have backup elected officials and staff ready to attend should scheduled delegates be unable to attend the AMO and ROMA conferences.

### **Approval:**

Approved By:  
Al Meneses, CAO

Reviewed and Prepared By:  
Sydney Stortini, Division Coordinator Assistant, Summer Student.