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Memorandum

CHR 3-2025

Subject: Report on Niagara Week 2025 Activities

Date: Nov. 20, 2025

To: Regional Council

From: Andrew Korchok, Chief of Staff, Office of the Regional Chair

This memo provides a brief summary of the advocacy events undertaken with the Provincial Government during Niagara Week at Queen's Park, hosted from October 27-29. Niagara Week provides members of Council a unique opportunity to meet one-on-one with provincial cabinet members and senior staff in order to advance core Regional priorities.

Niagara Week 2025 Priorities

While past iterations of Niagara Week have typically taken place in the spring, this year's event was moved to the fall to better position Niagara's advocacy items in the wake of the recent Provincial and Federal elections. The Region focused on several key priorities in meetings with government, emphasizing each priority's connection to the relevant ministry. Niagara's delegations pursued commitments that the Province:

1. Create an inter-ministerial working group to explore innovative and effective funding models to build a new **South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Solutions (SNWTS) project** in order to unlock new housing, jobs and protect our environment.
2. Purchase the rail corridor between Hamilton and Niagara, currently owned by CN, to enable **two-way, all-day GO Train** service between Niagara and Union Station.
3. Contribute \$150,000 per unit to jump-start one of Niagara's six shovel-ready projects included in its **Consolidated Housing Master Plan**.
4. Explore options to invest in **Highly Supportive Housing**, which would help address the housing, social and medical needs of Niagara's most vulnerable residents and reduce costs in policing, acute hospital costs and other social services.
5. Recognize concerns about **rising police costs** across the province raised by the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario, the Ontario Big City Mayors, and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and ask the province compensate municipalities for those costs, which are often caused by Provincial decisions.

Results

In total, the Region held nine meetings with Provincial ministers, associate ministers and parliamentary assistants. Regional staff also met with senior Provincial staff, including with six Associate Deputy Ministers across three Ministries, to move Niagara's advocacy priorities forward at the staff level.

On the whole, Niagara Week meetings were extremely productive, with the Region securing commitments from the Province to move forward on some of Niagara's key asks. There was strong support across Ministries for the expansion of GO Train service and for the creation of an inter-ministerial working group to explore funding opportunities for the SNWTS project. Several ministries signaled an interest in investing in Niagara's six shovel-ready housing projects, as well as its proposal for Highly Supportive Housing.

Meeting	Advocacy Focus	Meeting Outcomes
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Ministry of Infrastructure Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister	• SNWTS project • Grimsby GO Station development	Continue to engage MOI senior staff re: options for GO corridor development and availability of provincially held lands Minister confirmed support for a SNWTS-focused working group. Region will send follow up letter for the Minister to circulate to other ministries
Ministry of Health Ministry of Long-Term Care Hon. John Jordon, Parliamentary Assistant	• Investing in Niagara's Consolidated Housing Master Plan • Niagara's proposal for investment in Highly Supportive Housing	Region will share a placemat demonstrating the ROI across Ministries when investing in supportive housing (impact on homelessness system, acute care, policing, justice system) Region to share outcomes of a recent initiative being funded through a grant to help identify and address homelessness prevention and re-housing efforts specifically focused on seniors.
Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) Hon. Vic Fideli, Minister	• Two-way, all-day GO Train service • SNWTS project	Minister confirmed the relationship with CN is positive, given the recent Kitchener Corridor purchased by the Province for GO expansion, and recognized the impact of the SNWTS on large-lot employment lands.

Meeting	Advocacy Focus	Meeting Outcomes
Ministry of the Attorney General Hon. Michael Tibollo, Attorney General	• Sustainable police funding for municipalities who are served by independent police services • Highly Supportive Housing	Minister requested more information on police equipment costs and current gaps to better understand the investment required to make Niagara whole. Staff will follow up. Minister also showed support for Highly Supportive Housing and committed to working collaboratively with other Ministries to explore opportunities.
Ministry of Finance Hon. Dave Smith, Parliamentary Assistant	• SNWTS Project	PA affirmed support for an inter-ministerial working group, and encouraged Niagara to explore phased funding possibilities.
Ministry of the Solicitor General Hon. Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General	• Sustainable police funding for municipalities who are served by independent police services	Solicitor General recognized the budget pressures that municipalities are facing and committed to further examining Niagara's funding gap.
Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security Hon. Deepak Anand, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister	• Achieving two-way, all-day GO Train service	PA expressed support for Niagara's proposal that the Province purchase the CN corridor, and recommended Niagara further demonstrate the benefits to tourism, and explore federal investment opportunities

Meeting	Advocacy Focus	Meeting Outcomes
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Hon. Graydon Smith, Associate Minister	- Investing in Niagara's Consolidated Housing Master Plan - Niagara's proposal for investment in Highly Supportive Housing	Associate Minister showed interest in Niagara's CHMP shovel-ready sites, and requested more information on Niagara's need for Highly Supportive Housing. Staff will share a placemat demonstrating the ROI across Ministries when investing in supportive housing (impact on homelessness system, acute care, policing, justice system)
Ministry of Transportation Senior staff from the Minister's Office	Achieving two-way, all-day GO Train service	Minister's staff reaffirmed that Niagara is a priority for the Minister and the Premier under the Province's GO 2.0 strategy, and committed to working with Metrolinx to accelerate progress on the new Grimsby station

Niagara Week Reception

As part of the three-day advocacy event, the Region also partnered with the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce to host a networking reception with Members of Provincial Parliament, highlighting why Niagara is the best place for provincial investment and partnership. The reception profiled local businesses and institutions, and was catered by Niagara College's culinary students. The reception was very well attended by MPPs, Ministers and senior political staff, and featured remarks from Niagara's local MPPs and leaders from all four provincial parties.

The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) also supported the event by hosting meetings with ministerial representatives during the latter half of the week.

Niagara's overall Government Relations and Advocacy Strategy

Niagara Week is a key part of the region's overall work to build productive relationships with other levels of government in order to ensure Niagara's priorities are reflected in Federal and Provincial policy.

As part of Niagara Week, the Region's [Government Relations and Advocacy webpage](https://niagararegion.ca/government/advocacy/default.aspx?shorturl=1) (https://niagararegion.ca/government/advocacy/default.aspx?shorturl=1) was updated to

further promote how senior levels of government can co-invest and partner in large-scale Regional projects.

Having a web presence for Regional advocacy work ensures senior levels of government have access to information pertinent to key requests. It also provides residents with information on ongoing efforts to enhance program and service delivery.

Sincerely,

Andrew Korchok
Chief of Staff to the Regional Chair
Niagara Region