



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 7, 2019

Report Number: SRCM.19.03

Department: Office of the City Manager
Division: Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services

Subject: **SRCM.19.03 - Update on the Province's
Regional Government Review**

Purpose:

This report is intended to provide Council with an update on the Provincial Regional Government Review.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That SRCM.19.03 be received for information.

Contact Person:

Lise Conde, Manager, Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Meeta Gandhi, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services

Approved by: Neil Garbe, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Page 2

Background:

On January 15, 2019, the Province of Ontario appointed two special advisors, Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn, to review Regional Government in Halton, York, Durham, Waterloo, Niagara and Peel Regions, Muskoka District, Oxford County, the County of Simcoe, and their lower tier municipalities. The news release indicated that the advisors will explore: Opportunities to make it easier for residents and businesses to access municipal services; Processes to deliver efficient and effective local services that respects taxpayers' money; Methods to make municipalities open for business; and, Possibilities to cut red tape and duplication, and save costs. The role of the advisors is to provide advice to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing based on their expertise and assessment of the feedback received through a consultation process. The advisors conducted interviews with all Heads of Council from the regional and local municipalities noted above earlier this year.

On March 13, 2019, the Provincial Government began consultation with all stakeholders of the Regional Governments under review through an online survey. This includes all residents, business owners, people who work or invest in, or work for the municipalities that are part of the review. Feedback was initially invited until April 23, but this was extended to May 21 when the Provincial Government announced that the special advisors will also be holding sessions to hear from the public in each of the regions or counties under review. A session at York Region Administrative Headquarters is scheduled for May 6 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The deadline to register delegations was April 9, however the meeting is open to the public and anyone can attend, space permitting.

The special advisors are expected to complete their work and submit recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Fall 2019.

York Region Governance Task Force

In response to this initiative, on February 28, 2019, Regional Council struck a Governance Task Force comprised of the Mayors of all of the local municipalities and the Regional Chair. The mandate of the Governance Task Force is to receive information and provide advice to Regional Council relative to Regional Governance changes and to recommend responses to the Provincial review of Regional Governments currently underway to be submitted to the special advisors. The terms of reference indicate that the Task Force will do so by:

- Reviewing current and recently proposed representation, representation in similar jurisdictions and consider optimal sizing of Regional Council along with any necessary procedural recommendations;

Page 3

- Reviewing current service delivery and variations across other Regional municipalities and any other applicable jurisdictions – and making recommendations concerning any proposed changes;
- Reflecting on recent experiences in infrastructure and service delivery; and
- Making recommendations regarding changes that would most likely bring about efficiencies.

The Task Force has met twice as of the writing of this report – on March 21 and April 18. Topics for discussion have included experiences meeting with the special advisors; past governance discussions and decisions at the Region (including recent discussions on the composition of Regional Council); the successes of the partnerships the Region has with its local municipalities; opportunities for improvement, with or without legislative changes; and the content of a potential submission from the Regional Chair and/or Regional Council to the special advisors. Highlights of this discussion have included partnerships in service delivery between the Region and local municipalities, which for Richmond Hill include audit services, the municipal elections compliance auditor, shared data analytics, the supply and delivery of office supplies, procurement of health benefits, among others. It was also noted that Richmond Hill's current work with Markham and Vaughan on the potential for collaboration between Fire and Emergency Services demonstrates that continuous improvement is a goal among all York Region municipalities.

Other Regional Responses to the Regional Government Review

Other Regions impacted by the Regional Government Review have indicated their support for existing governance structures and arrangements in public statements, resolutions and in correspondence to the special advisors that they have made public.

Durham Region released a joint statement noting that “all local-tier governments, and the Region, include continuous improvement as part of their core business. [...] This focus on effectiveness allows the Region and local-tier municipalities to align services where it makes the most sense.” The statement specifically noted that as recently as 2016, Durham Regional Council proactively redistributed its 28 seats to reflect population changes.

Halton Regional Council endorsed a resolution in support of the existing two-tier municipal governance structure, highlighting that they have worked together in an “efficient and responsible manner” and noting that “at no time has anyone run or been elected to change the two-tier structure of municipal government in Halton Region.” Milton Council unanimously endorsed Halton's current two-tier municipal government system. Likewise, Oakville Council stated that it does not favour any structural change in governance because “there is already established and effective cooperation with its neighbour municipalities and the Regional government.”

Page 4

Waterloo's Regional Chair and local municipal Mayors issues a joint statement encouraging residents and businesses to provide input into the Regional Government Review consultation process as "this review of regional governments has the potential to affect how municipal services are delivered in our communities." The Mayor of Cambridge issued a release saying that amalgamation of Waterloo Region into one city was not acceptable and that "any changes mandated by the Provincial Government should be designed and driven by the local municipalities." Burlington City Council endorsed "the current effectiveness of our two-tier municipal government as it has evolved based on mutual agreement with the Region of Halton and our partner Halton lower-tier municipalities since its inception in 1974."

In contrast, the Council of the City of Mississauga in the Region of Peel requested that "the Government of Ontario pass legislation to make the City of Mississauga a single tier municipality, independent of the Region of Peel, maintaining the current municipal borders of the City of Mississauga." The City of Brampton is convening public meetings to gather feedback from their residents in late April. Caledon's Mayor issued a statement that "while there is always room for improvement, Caledon has worked effectively within the Regional government structure."

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no financial implications to the recommendation contained in this report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Given the relationship between the Province of Ontario and its municipalities, the Regional Government Review has potential impacts on all of Richmond Hill's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. More specifically, Richmond Hill's consideration of governance structures and arrangements is intended to demonstrate the wise management of resources in working toward a City with stronger connections, better choice and more vibrancy.

Conclusion:

The Province's Regional Government Review is underway and expected to be complete by the fall of 2019. York Region, through its Governance Task Force is currently working toward a potential response highlighting the past and ongoing successes of the work of the Region and its local municipalities to provide efficient and effective services to its residents. Richmond Hill is represented on the Task Force by Mayor Barrow.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call contact person listed in this document.

- None

Page 5

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Update on the Province's Regional Government Review - draft report as of April 24 clean.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 24, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Meeta Gandhi - Apr 24, 2019 - 3:04 PM

Neil Garbe - Apr 24, 2019 - 3:06 PM