

Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

Over the past three years, the Region of Peel's residents, businesses and staff have been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. At the peak of Peel's response, about 1,800 temporary staff and 500 permanent staff were needed. While Public Health was certainly at the forefront of Peel's pandemic response and mass vaccination program, many staff from across the organization were redeployed to provide critical support too.



In 2022, after the COVID-19 state of emergency was lifted, the community started to resume more normal activities. At the same time, the demand for regional services, which slowed down or paused during the pandemic, started to pick up and, for many services, the demands have increased to beyond pre-COVID levels.

As the community is recovering and transitioning to this new post-pandemic environment, Regional services and staff are also recovering and transitioning. The increased service demands create a challenge for an organization that's still fatigued.

In addition to the direct service demand pressures, the Region of Peel is facing a volatile economic environment with rising interest rates and heightened inflation creating yet more uncertainty and affordability challenges for Peel's most vulnerable population.

And in late 2022, the Province introduced two significant pieces of legislation, the *More Homes Built Faster Act* and the *Better Municipal Governance Act*. The exact impacts from both a financial and service delivery perspective were not known at the time of the development of the 2023 Budget. Therefore, no adjustments have been made to the proposed budget. As additional details and clarity are received, staff will assess and report back to Council on potential implications to Peel.

Looking ahead to 2023, the proposed Budget ensures core services can be maintained, with additional investments in key areas such as affordable housing, paramedic response time, and seniors' services including strategic capital investments to address the climate change emergency and state of good repair for housing.

As we stabilize public health and restart services, we are transitioning our mass vaccination program into a new immunization services division that will manage and co-ordinate all immunization programs for the residents of Peel.

In addition, the budget submitted by the Police Services Board also includes a significant investment to increase community safety and wellbeing through the addition of 70 uniformed officers and 50 civilian staff.

The Region is very mindful of the economic challenges that both residents and businesses are facing which is why Peel implements a continuous improvement program focused on achieving cost savings and cost avoidance to ensure that taxpayers get value for their money. I'm optimistic that with our new Council's support, our great dedicated team of staff and with the help of the community, we'll continue our journey in building a strong Community for Life.

Sincerely,



**Janice Baker. FCPA FCA (she/her)
Chief Administrative Officer
Region of Peel**