

2024 Peel Region

Provincial Pre-Budget Submission



Introduction

With Peel's rapidly growing population projected to reach more than 2 million by 2051, it is critical for partners at all levels of government to work together to address the priorities and challenges associated with this growth and ensure that the necessary investments are made to support our thriving community.

Peel Region has a strong track record of working with the Ontario government to find solutions for our shared challenges and remains committed to working with its local municipalities and the Province to meet the needs of Peel's residents and businesses.

Peel Region recognizes and appreciates continued provincial support for many of our shared priorities. This includes investments in important areas of community need, such as homelessness prevention, which received an additional \$16 million in 2023, a 38 per cent increase over 2022, received through the Province's Homelessness Prevention Program. Peel also received much-needed provincial support through the Start-up Grant and Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Expansion Plan, which will help ensure Peel residents have access to quality, affordable child care, and support the creation of more net new spaces in our community.

The welcomed decision to not move forward with dissolution provides clarity to taxpayers and helps re-focus ongoing efforts in Peel to support the anticipated growth, find efficiencies and optimize an integrated service model that support a shared commitment to build more homes.

Peel Region's 2024 Pre-budget submission includes several policy solutions outlining a collaborative approach to address the needs of Peel's residents that respects taxpayers while providing support to the community in a way that is compassionate and culturally appropriate. Included in this submission are solutions that focus on:

- Long term municipal fiscal sustainability
- Peel's infrastructure shortfall
- Affordable housing solutions
- Support for asylum claimants
- Supports for seniors
- Mental health and addictions services
- Support for sustainable communities

Summary of recommendations

Municipal fiscal sustainability

- Increased funding for provincially-mandated programs is required to adequately keep pace with inflationary pressures and to **address existing funding deficits** as a result of chronic provincial underfunding and increased service demands of Peel's growing population.
- The cumulative impact on services, such as public health, paramedic services, housing subsidies, income support and seniors services, translates into **\$16 million being unfairly put on the property taxpayer** instead of being funded by the provincial tax revenues.
- The Province should work with the federal government to develop **more appropriate funding solutions through income-based revenue sources**, including grant programs, that are appropriately designed and enhanced to provide adequate levels of funding.
- To address the systemic chronic funding challenges, the Province should engage with municipalities to **update municipal revenue sources and collection tools** to address the changing needs of local communities.

Addressing Peel's infrastructure funding shortfall

- To ensure infrastructure is in place to meet provincial housing targets, the Province should **create a municipal compensation fund** to make Peel Region and the local municipalities financially whole to **mitigate the significant development charges shortfall as a result of Bill 23**, which are estimated to be approximately **\$1.5 billion over a 10-year period**.
- As new infrastructure funding programs are developed, the Province should partner with the federal government to **ensure sustainable and timely infrastructure investments**, that use an **allocation based funding model** and address challenges related to **inflationary pressures and long-term planning**.

Peel's affordable housing challenges

- Sustainable and predictable funding is required to support the Peel Community Housing Development Program to **create the much-needed affordable rental housing and shelter facilities**.
- Peel Region will require **\$50 billion over the next 10 years** to eliminate core housing need, while creating significant economic and employment returns.
- To support housing system managers, the Province should **provide state of good repair funding** to prevent loss of existing affordable housing and adapting to climate breakdown.

- To maximize housing stability, **increased funding for wrap-around supports and expanded income and social programs** are needed to help with high housing carrying costs.

Supports for asylum claimants

- An influx of asylum claimants continue to arrive in Peel, overwhelming the Region's support system and exceeding shelter capacity. Supports such as housing, emergency financial assistance and other social service supports, **cost Peel Region approximately \$3.5 million per month in 2023.**
- Additional support from the Province is needed to address these unbudgeted, unsustainable costs to Peel, which are expected to accelerate in 2024, **resulting in an expected budget shortfall of approximately \$45 to 55 million** for the Region.

Supports for seniors

- To advance innovative and efficient initiatives for seniors care, the Province should provide funding and stronger regulatory requirements and measurement to **support emotion-focused care and enable dementia friendly design** in Long-Term Care.
- To reduce long-term care pressures in Peel, the Province should **provide additional funding to close the \$1.1 million gap**, resulting from new regulatory requirements under the Fixing Long-Term Act.
- Current provincial funding for the development of Long Term Care homes is inadequate. **More capital funding and a new funding formula for LTC capital development is required** to accurately reflect rising construction and financing costs, due to high inflation.
- To fully realize the benefits of the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor, the Province should **provide \$6 million in operational funding to expand community support services and wraparound care** to help ensure a high quality of care for seniors across the care continuum.

Supports for mental health and addictions services

- Service providers in **Peel receive 50 per cent less funding per capita** for adult mental health and addictions supports compared to the rest of Ontario. The Province should **implement a population-based approach to close this funding gap** in Peel and safeguard access to mental health and addictions services for residents, while decreasing the burden on the acute care system.
- Further, additional **targeted, specific and sustainable investments in Peel's community-based mental health and addictions services** is required to address growing waitlists and crisis-level demands.

Support for Sustainable Communities

- To address the challenges of climate change, the Province should **invest in sustainable energy generation** to ensure decarbonization is prioritized as part of plans for economic expansion and growth.
- Further, provincial investments of **more than \$40 million in identified projects** are required to support Peel's commitment to resiliency and sustainability.
- While increases to Peel's population and employment growth lead to pressures on waste management, the Province can support efforts to implement innovative, efficient and sustainable practices by **providing funding to ensure waste management infrastructure keeps pace with anticipated growth.**

Municipal fiscal sustainability

Peel Region, like many other municipalities, is facing significant fiscal challenges due to outdated funding models that no longer support community needs, limited revenue sources, and historic under-funding for provincially mandated services.

Provincial funding for services such as public health, housing, paramedic, and seniors' supports must keep pace with inflation. However, for many years, Peel has faced chronic underfunding for these services. For the last three years alone, this funding shortfall from the Province has totalled \$16 million (\$ 5.5 million in 2021, \$2.9 million in 2022 and \$1.9 million in 2023), which has resulted in \$16 million being unfairly borne by Peel's property taxpayers.

Peel Public Health

The current provincial-municipal cost shared ratio of 70:30 for the majority of mandatory public health programs has not been a reality for Peel Public Health for several years. Peel Public Health is currently at a provincial-municipal ratio of 60:40, resulting in a \$9.5 million budgeted shortfall, excluding COVID-19 funding, for 2023.

While Peel Region welcomes the one per cent increase (\$500,000/year) over the next three years, this funding does not address Public Health's ongoing funding shortfall or account for inflation, cost-of-living increases, and population growth needs.

Peel Public Health continuously implements efficiencies to address inadequate funding; however, long-term predictable and sustainable funding is needed to deliver mandated public health services, reduce need for healthcare due to preventable illness, and adequately support the community's health.

Housing subsidies

Housing subsidies in Peel have faced a significant decrease over the past several years, with federal and provincial funding dropping by 20 per cent between 2017 and 2021. The unfunded gap in housing subsidies stands at a substantial \$678 million.

This underfunding puts significant strain on housing services, making it challenging to address the housing needs of the community adequately.

Paramedic Services

Paramedic services face challenges due to the Province's 50:50 cost-sharing model, which is based on the previous year's approved budget. This funding model creates a lag that fails to consider current inflation and service pressures.

Peel Region covers the Province's share of increased costs each new budget year until the provincial funding is made available in the following year. To cover the lag, Peel's 2023 Budget included a reserve draw of \$3.6 million to address the expected 50 per cent funding shortfall for one year.

Seniors Services

An increasing proportion of Peel's Long-Term Care and Adult Day Services operating budget is being funded through property taxes. In 2023, the total expenditures for Seniors Services were budgeted at \$129.5 million and the portion funded from property taxes is \$47 million or 36 per cent.

Provincial funding for mandated programs will need to keep pace with elevated inflation rates. Over the last five years this funding gap has increased from \$36.7 million in 2018 to \$47 million in 2023 (net tax levies in respective years). This growing gap of \$10.3 million is due to inflation and other service improvements.

In 2023, the requirements of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act created a funding gap of \$1.1 million. This additional funding was required to cover mandated requirements related to quality management, IPAC education and nursing staff.

Income Supports

The 50:50 administrative cost-sharing agreement with the Province includes a cap that will hinder Peel Region's ability to hire the necessary number of caseworkers, should caseloads increase beyond a certain point.

Continuing to finance income redistribution programs through the property tax base places an increasing burden on residents, some of whom are facing heightened unaffordability challenges due to higher inflation and rising interest rates.

Policy opportunity and solutions

To address these challenges, the Province should develop more appropriate funding solutions through income-based, provincial revenue sources, including:

- **Grant Programs:** To support adequate funding, the Province should work with the municipal sector to ensure that these grant programs are appropriately designed and enhanced to provide adequate levels of funding.
- **Increased Revenue Sharing:** To ensure fair distribution of tax revenues between different levels of government, the Province should allocate an increased portion of tax revenues to municipalities to support their service delivery.

In addition, the Province should:

- Ensure funding is commensurate with expected high inflation through 2023/2024 to maintain real spending levels.
- Address historic underfunding for provincially mandated services in Peel.
- Engage with municipalities in discussion on the need for updated municipal revenue sources and collection tools to address the changing needs of local communities.

Addressing Peel's infrastructure funding shortfall

Delivering for Peel residents and businesses requires an infrastructure plan to support the Province's ambitious housing targets, including the municipal housing pledges for Brampton (113,000 units), Caledon (13,000 units) and Mississauga (120,000 units). Peel's residential unit target of 246,000 units between 2022-2031 set through Bill 23 is close to the 273,000 units planned to 2051 in the Region's Official Plan.

Peel Region has pivoted its processes and techniques to accommodate this new target and is ready with plans to build the water and wastewater (W/WW) infrastructure required to build more homes faster.

However, planning work is not enough for Peel Region to help the local municipalities meet the provincial housing targets. There are significant infrastructure requirements to meet current and forecasted growth. The majority of this infrastructure must be in place before the development of housing units.

Accelerated growth targets, compounded by the impacts of Bill 23 and further by uncertainty around regional governance creates challenges with financing and implementing the necessary infrastructure to support provincial housing targets.

Meeting new housing targets

To meet the Province's new targets, the Region would need to leapfrog infrastructure investments that were originally planned for outer years of its previously established plan to be advanced and in place over the next 10 years. The magnitude of this pressure and the resulting impacts should be understood and analyzed through comprehensive growth management and infrastructure servicing review and consideration.

The infrastructure to support provincial housing targets is estimated to cost an additional \$11.5 billion, on top of the \$8.9 billion needed to service infrastructure for the 10-year capital plan 2023-2032. This does not include land acquisition costs, debt servicing costs, and do not reflect the impact of inflation.

Estimate growth infrastructure cost (W/WW and Roads)	Amount
Before Bill 23 –10-year Capital Plan 2023-2032	\$8.9 Billion
After Bill 23 – Estimated cost to achieve housing targets by 2031	\$20.4 Billion
Gap (assuming all expenditures in the approved budget are funded)	\$11.5 Billion

Note: The Master Servicing Plans must be updated to align with the current 2051 Regional Official Plan growth before full cost can be determined.

In addition, these accelerated housing targets will result in higher debt and debt servicing costs to finance the higher spending that will be required, as revenues are not expected to increase at the same pace. Further, there will be less revenue per dollar of infrastructure spending due to development charge exemptions under Bill 23.

Funding Requirements

Peel Region requires funding certainty as it updates its master plans for water/wastewater and transportation services to accommodate advanced growth targets. The introduction of Bill 23 and the Province's 2031 growth targets are expected to put significant pressure on the Region's finances. There are limited municipal financial tools that can be used to address the anticipated large revenue shortfall or forecasted gap between DC revenues and expenditures.

Absence of funding from senior levels of government will result in deferral of capital projects and/or increased borrowing to support the increased capital requirements. In alignment with the Province's commitment to make municipalities "whole," funding is required to:

- Compensate for DC revenue shortfall – a high-level estimate is approximately \$1.5 billion shortfall over a 10-year period.
- Address additional growth infrastructure gap from infrastructure advancement – a preliminary cost estimate indicates a gap at the level of \$11.5 billion to 2031. Actual cost is expected to be higher after adding other costing factors, such as land acquisition, cost escalation, financing and others.
- Help manage tax and utility levy increase pace – preliminary analysis shows potential significant financial pressures in order to manage and operate those assets being advanced.
- Address financial pressures associated with increased demand for social services resulting from advanced growth – these include services such as housing, police, public health, shelters for homelessness, climate change, etc.

In addition, for infrastructure investment to be effectively utilized, the timing of infrastructure must be prioritized and phased accordingly. If infrastructure does

not align to priorities and phasing, either necessary infrastructure is not in place to meet the growth timing, or infrastructure investments are underutilized.

Peel Region's 2024 Budget includes a focus on priority growth areas and specific development applications. There are several new projects aimed at addressing short-term development needs, including substantial enhancements to local servicing in Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon to support growth priority areas.

Allocation vs. Application-based funding

To also support efficient use of infrastructure funding, the Province should support the implementation of an allocation-based model, aligned with each municipality's asset management plan. This approach can reduce costs by avoiding price fluctuations and contractor shortages associated with application-based funding.

The allocation funding model used for the COVID-19 Infrastructure Resiliency Stream serves as a positive example. Moving forward, developing and implementing similarly structured funding programs in collaboration with the federal government will benefit residents in Peel, and across Ontario.

Policy opportunity and solutions

Peel Region is committed to working with the Province on shared infrastructure and housing priorities. However, achieving these objectives requires additional supports, and as such, the Province should:

- Create a municipal compensation fund to make Peel Region and the local municipalities financially whole to mitigate the significant impacts of Bill 23.
- Partner with the federal government to ensure Peel Region receives sustainable and timely infrastructure investments.
- Ensure funding is commensurate with expected elevated inflation through 2023/2024 to maintain real spending levels.
- Implement funding programs using an allocation model to distribute stimulus funds expeditiously.

Peel's affordable housing challenges

Peel is facing an unprecedented housing crisis that is affecting residents from all walks of life. Middle income earners can't afford high housing prices and rents and there is not enough deeply affordable and supportive housing for people with low incomes. These statistics underscore the extent of the crisis:

- An average household needs to save for about 30 years for an affordable 25-year mortgage.
- Peel Region can only help one in five of the current 91,000 families who are in core housing need.
- Investing \$50 billion over the next 10 years would eliminate core housing need while creating significant economic and employment returns.
- It would take five times as much housing supply as proposed by the provincial housing targets to create affordable housing conditions for all households. A for-profit, trickle-down supply-only approach will not alone address the housing affordability crisis.

Investing \$50 billion over the next 10 years would eliminate core housing need while creating significant economic and employment returns.

To advance effective solutions on the housing affordability crisis, Peel Region has developed the "HOME framework", with the following four principles:

- 1. Homes are for living** so we must eliminate speculation and hoarding through policy tools.
- 2. Offer more funding** for wrap-around supports because housing stability is not just about supply.
- 3. Maximize affordable supply** by maintaining existing and building new not-for-profit community, and supportive housing because for-profit market supply alone will not solve the housing affordability crisis.
- 4. Expand income and social supports** because individuals shouldn't have to choose between their home and other basic necessities.

The HOME framework is a tool to help focus governments' discussions and decisions around housing affordability interventions among the hundreds of plans that have been proposed. HOME is intended to help focus government efforts on the most meaningful policies, programs, and funding interventions based on decades of experience and expertise.

Policy opportunity and solutions

Addressing housing challenges in Peel will require increased provincial and federal investments for affordable housing and adopting measures to improve housing affordability as highlighted below:

- Encourage the use of housing for home
 - Increase taxes on each additional home that someone owns.
 - Regulate or restrict short-stay rentals
 - Implement a publicly-accessible, beneficial ownership registry of homes
- Increase the supply of new affordable housing in complete communities and ensure the longevity of existing affordable housing.
 - Prioritizing non-profit, co-operative, and social housing through a public housing builder.
- Providing state of good repair funding to prevent loss of existing affordable housing and adapting to climate breakdown.
- Offer more funding for wrap-around supports to maximize housing stability.
 - Operating funding to provide daily living supports including health supports.
 - Providing predictable allocation-based funding.
- Expand income and social programs to help with high housing carrying costs.
 - True universal healthcare including pharmacare, mental healthcare, dentalcare.
 - National school food program.
 - Livable social assistance and disability benefit levels.
- Provide funding to support the implementation of the Peel Community Housing Development Program to create the much-needed affordable rental housing and shelter facilities.

Supports for asylum claimants

Peel continues to experience an influx of asylum claimants arriving at our shelters. Peel Region has supported asylum claimants seeking refuge by providing housing, emergency financial assistance and other social service supports, but this situation is exceeding our capacity:

- As of January 14, 2024, 1,574 asylum claimants are residing in Peel's emergency shelter system, accounting for 74 per cent of the shelter population and shelter capacity sitting at 370 per cent.
- Costs to Peel Region total approximately \$3.5 million per month in 2023.

As the challenge persists into 2024, these unbudgeted, unsustainable costs to Peel are expected to accelerate, resulting in additional pressures on Peel housing resources, as well as a significant expected budget shortfall for the Region. While Peel Region appreciates the \$2.1 million allocated Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), it is not proportional to the high number of asylum claimants being served in Peel relative to other GTHA municipalities (excluding Toronto) and this funding has been fully spent. Therefore, an increased COHB allocation for 2024 to support the asylum claimants is essential.

Policy opportunity and solutions

To help address the current asylum claimant crisis in Peel, the Province should:

- Work with the federal government, provide immediate financial support to address current and ongoing funding shortfalls for asylum claimant supports in Peel.

Supports for seniors

As Peel's population continues to grow and age, protecting vulnerable seniors and ensuring an exceptional quality of life for our long-term care residents is a key priority. This will require ongoing collaboration and increased support from the provincial government. One in four residents in Peel are expected to be over the age of 65 by 2041 and the proportion of residents 85 years and older is expected to increase from 1.3 per cent to 4.2 per cent between 2016 and 2041. Peel Region remains committed to finding innovative and efficient ways to care for seniors and ensure that they receive the high-quality of care they deserve in our long-term care homes and in the community – including aging in place, which can delay or eliminate their need for long-term care and reducing demands on the health system.

Support emotion-focused care and implementation of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act

Peel Region appreciates provincial funding to operationalize the Transitional Behaviour Support Unit at Peel Manor. This specialized unit will leverage emotion-focused care to improve the lives of individuals living with dementia and experiencing expressive behaviours that cannot be managed safely in traditional long-term care settings.

While this funding is appreciated, additional provincial resources are required to meet increasingly complex needs and deliver on mandated requirements of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act (FLTCA) intended to ensure resident safety and well-being.

Additional funding to enhance emotion-focused care can help to alleviate demand for these specialized units, and ensure residents receive the personalized, quality care they deserve. Further, implementation of the FLTCA is placing additional pressures on LTC homes. In 2023, new regulatory requirements related to quality management, infection prevention and control measures and nursing created a funding gap of \$1.1 million across Peel Region's five LTC homes.

Provincial Capital Financing of Long Term Care Homes

Many LTC operators face financial challenges in building new LTC homes, in part due to the fact that they must pay development charges, costing them upwards of millions of dollars per home. While DCs are an eligible cost under the Province's Long-Term Care Home Capital Development Funding Policy, analysis suggests that provincial funding for LTC development continues to be outpaced by inflation, growth, and service demand pressures. Further, many LTC projects face delays across Ontario due to significant cost escalation. Private LTC home

operators are facing challenges in financing their projects and operations due to mortgage and/or refinancing problems because of higher inflation and interest rates.

While Peel Region has a LTC financial incentive program that provides some DC relief, continued reliance on this program will put more pressure on Peel Region's finances, which are already stretched given increased service pressures due to a growing and aging population, as well as current economic conditions.

Current provincial funding for the development of LTC homes across Ontario and in Peel is simply inadequate. The Province should provide more capital funding for LTCs and review and revise the current funding formula for LTC capital development to more accurately reflect the rising construction and financing costs to build a LTC home due to high inflation.

The Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor

The Seniors Health and Wellness Village (SHWW) at Peel Manor is an innovative project that aligns with the provincial government's efforts to end hallway health care and improve long-term care integration within the health system and larger community. Construction is approximately 98 per cent complete on this innovative new building with a Spring 2024 targeted move-in date for residents.

The facility will accommodate a spectrum of services to enable seniors in the community to age in place, delaying or eliminating their need for long-term care and reducing demands on hospitals. However, this project has yet to receive any significant provincial financial support. To fully realize the benefits of this innovative centre for seniors, Peel Region is seeking \$6 million in operational funding for the expansion of community support services and an integrated care program.

Municipalities have the fewest revenue sources of all levels of government and provincial investments will help ensure a high quality of care for seniors across the care continuum in Peel, and in communities throughout Ontario.

Policy opportunity and solutions

In order to ensure seniors have access to the services they need, the Province should:

- Provide funding, stronger regulatory requirements and measurement to support emotion-focused care and enable dementia friendly design in Long-Term Care.
- Provide adequate provincial funding and increased financing for public and private non-profit long-term care homes, as well as a review the existing funding formula.
- Provide sustainable operational funding to support the expansion of community support services and wrap-around care at the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor.

Supports for mental health and addictions

While the Province has announced several key investments and policy changes in the last year, ongoing funding disparities continue to compound the effect of longstanding, historical funding inequities, which impact Peel residents already struggling to access available supports in a timely manner. As Peel's population continues to grow, the prevalence of mental health and addictions (MHA) needs continues to increase:

- It is estimated that only 1 in 3 Peel residents are receiving the MHA treatment that they need, resulting in approximately 184,000 Peel residents, including 60,000 children and youth, that are without necessary supports.
- Peel residents make approximately 20,000 emergency department visits per year for mental health related disorders.
- Peel is growing and becoming more diverse. In the last 20 years, Peel's population has increased by 38 per cent. More than 69 per cent of Peel's population is racialized, and more than 104,000 newcomers call Peel home.

Population-based funding

The current mental health and addictions crisis cannot be addressed solely with coordination and expertise at the local level; it requires support from all levels of government for increased funding and additional resources. Service providers in Peel receive 50 percent less funding per capita for adult mental health and addictions supports compared to the rest of Ontario. This funding inequity amplifies existing disparities for those seeking mental health supports, including children and youth. Peel's average per capita funding for child and youth mental health is significantly lower at \$76.38, while average per capita funding in Ontario is \$152.48.

A population-based funding approach that considers funding needs based on population size and demographics, with adjustments for socioeconomic and geographic factors is required. With these investments, Peel's community mental health and addictions system will be able to reduce wait times and waitlists, improve care options, and reduce the burden on the acute care system.

Targeted, sustainable investments

Despite ongoing advocacy, existing disparities for those facing mental health or addictions challenges are amplified in Peel, where the rates of depression, anxiety, substance-related harms, and opioid-related deaths have increased. These challenges emphasize the urgency and need for continued collaboration and sustainable funding from the provincial government.

There are several opportunities for increased provincial investment in evidence-based community-based programming, including:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy for children and youth (ages up to 24 years old)
- Rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinics to provide clinical supports and mobile crisis rapid response teams (MCRRT)
- 24/7 crisis walk-in services
- Stepped care programs, which provide a system to deliver and monitor treatments based on intensity of need and reduce wait times for psychiatric supports
- Supportive housing, as a key determinant of both mental health and well-being
- Culturally inclusive peer programs and services – especially for youth, adults and caregivers

Policy opportunity and solutions

To ensure that provincial investments and ongoing support for MHA match service needs, the Province should:

- Implement a funding formula for mental health and addictions services that considers population and demographic factors, as well as community need.
- Provide targeted, specific and sustainable investments to Peel's community-based mental health and addictions services to address growing waitlists and crisis-level demands.

Support for sustainable communities

As Peel and its communities grow, public reliance on vital infrastructure grows. However, as climate events become more extreme and occur more frequently, damage and disruption to Peel Region's infrastructure and services will likely increase, driving up costs to deliver services and maintain a state of good repair of infrastructure assets. As the Province moves forward with investments in infrastructure, a climate change lens should be applied, consistent with federal climate change objectives.

Prioritize decarbonization as part of economic expansion

As the provincial government continues to position Ontario as a premier location for businesses, it is important that clean electricity is not limited by grid capacity and that investments are made in resilient infrastructure. This will provide a competitive advantage as these investments demonstrate support for maintaining business continuity amid increasing extreme weather events. It will also contribute to economic development in communities across the province, including Peel.

As part of Peel Region's commitment to resiliency and sustainability, provincial support would be welcome for the following efforts:

- \$26 million into new affordable housing in progress and projects that will undergo substantial redevelopment and expansion.
- A \$12.2 million in the Peel Housing Corporation State of Good Repair and Low Carbon Project Support.
- \$2.2 million into two key projects: The Zero Emission Waste Collection Vehicle Pilot and EV Charging Infrastructure to advance the greening of the Peel fleet.
- A joint investment with the provincial and federal governments of \$1 million to fund Peel TransHelp's battery electric bus pilot, which will lead to the transition of Peel's fleet of specialized gas vehicles to zero-emission buses.

Policy opportunity and solutions

To address the challenges of climate change in Peel, the Province should:

- Invest in sustainable energy generation to ensure decarbonization is prioritized as part of plans for economic expansion and growth.

Waste Management

Peel Region is committed to ensuring that its waste management system can handle expected and continuous growth while also ensuring the Regional target of 75 per cent diversion is met by 2034. Provincial support for municipalities that implement innovative, efficient and sustainable waste management practices, including the use of advanced recycling and mixed waste processing technologies, means municipalities can invest with confidence in long-term, reliable and durable solutions. In Peel, the Province can support these efforts by provide funding to ensure waste management infrastructure keeps pace with anticipated growth.

Peel Region generates approximately 570,000 tonnes of residential waste each year and diverts 50 per cent of it from landfill. The pressure to manage the growing amount of waste, while meeting diversion targets is expected to intensify. This will require both community participation and development of new waste processing infrastructure and technologies to ensure existing program materials, such as blue box recyclables, green bin organics, yard waste, electronics, hazardous waste and upcoming designated extended producer responsibility materials are managed properly and diverted from landfills.

With further provincial support in waste management infrastructure, the shift from disposal to resource recovery, given dwindling disposal capacity, can be accelerated. This is essential to support healthy, prosperous communities and move toward a low-carbon circular economy.

Policy opportunity and solutions

To ensure that Peel Region meets its waste diversion targets, the Province should:

- Provide funding to ensure waste management infrastructure keeps pace with anticipated growth in Peel.

