

AMO

Association of Municipalities
of Ontario

Annual Conference

Peel Region's Advocacy Priorities

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Addressing Peel Region's Funding Shortfall

Increased funding required for provincially mandated services

Policy opportunity

Peel Region has faced longstanding underfunding for its provincially mandated health and human services. To fulfill its responsibilities and adequately serve its residents, Peel Region has relied on reserves and increased taxes to compensate for this provincial funding shortfall.

Addressing these funding gaps is critical to ensuring that vital health and human services can meet the growing needs of the community.

Funding solutions

A sustainable and equitable application of funding formulas to address the current and continuing shortfall is essential for Peel Region to meet the needs of its underserved and growing community. Additional provincial resources are critical for providing fair support, ensuring that services are accessible and responsive to the population's evolving requirements.

Background

Peel Region is known for its effective services, financial stability, and strong community partnerships. However, more than a decade of provincial funding shortfalls for health and human services have critically impacted both Peel Region and community health and social service agencies.

Given Peel's growing population and complex needs, it is crucial that it receives funding on par with, or exceeding, other Ontario municipalities.

Metamorphosis Network Analysis

The Metamorphosis Network, a coalition of non-profit agencies, independently analyzed Peel's provincial funding and found that Peel's health and social services ecosystem faces an **annual shortfall of \$868 million**, receiving about **\$145 less per resident compared to other municipalities**.



Filling the gap

With funding not keeping pace with Peel's growth pressures, Regional Council has had to use municipal revenues to offset the provincial shortfall, including:

- **\$78.3 million** from property taxes used over 5 years to cover provincial funding shortfalls.
- **A projected \$36.9 million** annual shortfall for operating costs and **\$86.3 million** for capital expenses in 2025.
- **\$863 million** needed over 10 years for housing state of good repairs, which reflects \$9 million from the Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative.

Municipal Fiscal Sustainability

With limited revenue sources, it is unsustainable for Peel Region to make up the difference left by the provincial funding shortfall. The Province should:

- Retroactively address historic underfunding for Peel’s provincially mandated services.
- Adjust funding for inflation through 2024/2025 to maintain real spending levels.
- Engage municipalities and the federal government, to modernize revenue sources and collection tools. i.e., explore income-based tax revenues to municipalities for fairer distribution.
- Enhance grant program design to ensure adequate funding.

Key Facts about Peel

- Population: 1.5 million, expected to grow significantly over the next 10 years
- Diversity: 69% racialized, highest in the GTA.
- Income: Second-lowest median household after-tax income in the GTA.
- Non-Permanent Residents: Increased from 22,965 (2016) to 216,000 (2024).

Funding shortfalls for Peel Region’s mandated health and human services

Service	Shortfall	Risks if shortfalls are not addressed
Public Health	Annual for 2025: \$23.5 million	Reduced staff and services limit ability to meet community needs, mandates, and capacity to address both short-term (e.g., manage increasing rates of communicable diseases) and long-term (e.g., diabetes prevention) priorities)
Paramedic Services	Annual for 2025: \$2.2 million	Inadequate resources to handle call volumes, increased health and safety risks, longer wait times for patients
Long Term Care	Annual for 2025: \$7.2 million	Challenges in maintaining legislative compliance, decreased care quality, insufficient service capacity to meet the increasing care needs and complexity of residents
Early Years and Child Care	Annual for 2025: \$4 million	Reduced administration funding, potential waitlists for essential programs, loss of access for vulnerable children and families
Housing Support	Annual for 2025: \$86.3 million	Assets used beyond their useful life, decreased tenant attraction, higher long-term repair costs

Significant pressures on Peel’s cash and liquidity

To ensure that Peel Region can continue to proceed with critical housing-enabling infrastructure projects, legislative or regulatory changes to the Hazel McCallion Act are needed to remove the authority of the Transition Board and Minister to modify, prohibit or terminate any financial commitment of Peel Region by way of a direction or order.

Alternatively, an arrangement of interim financial support by October in the amount of \$450 million for Peel Region is required until such time that Peel can return to the capital markets efficiently.

Affordable Housing

Partnering to meet Peel's Housing Needs

Policy Opportunity

To address Peel's housing crisis, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of service managers and the community housing sector to meet rapidly growing needs. Multi-level government collaboration is required to increase new affordable housing in complete communities and to ensure the longevity of existing affordable housing.

Funding Solutions

- Increased allocation-based funding to support the Peel Community Housing Development Program will create affordable rental housing and shelters.
- Provincial funding is needed for state of good repair costs to maintain existing affordable housing.
- Funding for wrap-around supports and expanded social programs is required to enhance housing stability and manage high housing costs.

Background

Peel's housing crisis is affecting all income levels, with middle-income earners struggling with high prices and rents, and insufficient deeply affordable housing for low-income residents:

- A middle-income family needs over 20 years, and a minimum wage family over 40 years, to save a large enough downpayment for an affordable mortgage.
- Only one in five of the 97,000 families in core housing needs can be assisted.
- Nearly all households in core housing needs are renters, with close to 77,000 households earning \$57,000 or less; 40% need additional supports for stability.
- As Peel's population grows, the number of households in core housing needs is expected to reach 114,000 in the next ten years.



Addressing the gap

To address the housing gap and community needs, provincial and federal governments must provide sustainable and allocation-based funding for Peel's affordable housing system. This funding is required to maintain today's scarce community housing, expand housing supply, and supporting clients.

To further improve housing affordability, the Province should:

- Implement a legislative framework that encourages the use of housing for homes, ensuring that new and existing housing serves primarily residential purposes and are affordable.
- Focus on making new units affordable for low- and moderate-income families and maintaining existing ones.
- Expand social support to help families manage high housing cost by lowering other costs of living.

Enhancing Service Manager Capacity

Enhancing service manager capacity by improving local autonomy and increasing funding would help achieve provincial housing priorities such as expanding affordable housing options and support to low- and middle-income households. These enhancements would support implementation of key measures from the Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan, which focuses on:

- Transforming service
- Building more community housing
- Maximizing planning tools and incentives
- Optimizing existing stock
- Increasing supportive housing

These actions will create a supportive and integrated housing system, ultimately contributing to broader provincial goals of economic stability and social well-being.

Meeting core housing needs in Peel

Partnership across all levels of government will be critical to meeting core housing needs in Peel:

- An investment of **\$4 billion** is needed over the next 10 years to simply continue to meet only 19% of our community's needs.
- To meet 100% of core housing needs in Peel, it would require up to **\$50 billion** over the next 10 years.
- Relying solely on for-profit market supply to solve the housing crisis requires **quintupling current provincial targets.**



Infrastructure Program Funding & Design

Collaborating to ensure safe, efficient, and adequate infrastructure

Policy Opportunity

To support provincial housing targets for Peel Region’s municipalities, a **municipal compensation fund** is required to address the significant development charges (DC) shortfall resulting from recent legislative changes, and to ensure that necessary infrastructure projects are funded to meet growing community needs.

Funding Solutions

In collaboration with the federal government, sustainable infrastructure funding programs should be developed using an **allocation-based funding model**. This approach will ensure timely and effective investments, and support long-term infrastructure planning, aligning with Peel Region’s commitment to meet provincial housing targets.

Background

Peel Region is committed to supporting housing targets established for Brampton (113,000 units), Caledon (13,000 units), and Mississauga (120,000 units). This commitment requires support from both federal and provincial government in the form of sustainable and adequate funding for key housing-enabling infrastructure projects, such as water/wastewater and road construction projects.

State of Good Repair Funding

Peel Region is facing a \$4.2 billion capital infrastructure deficit over the next 20 years, just to maintain existing infrastructure. To cover this gap, property tax levies, and utility rate increases have been instituted.

Changes to the DC Act through Bill 23 have further widened the funding gap by reducing growth related DCs revenue. Recognizing that Bill 185 reversed some changes, Peel Region still anticipates a **\$1.2 billion shortfall over the next 10 years.**



Without a compensation fund, making municipalities financially whole, lost growth revenues **will place added pressure on property taxpayers.**

Accelerated Spending for Housing Targets

Accelerating the new infrastructure required to support new housing targets is straining Peel Region's cash flow. This can affect how much, and the timing of, when housing enabling infrastructure spending takes place.

Without stable and predictable funding, capital infrastructure development will be delayed. To align with the Province's housing goals and support local commitments, Peel Region requires:

- \$1.2 billion over 10 years to compensate the DC revenue shortfall.
- An additional \$5.9 billion in 10-year Capital Plan (2023-2032) funding that Peel Region needs to add over the previous year's 10-year plan, in order to support the new local housing targets.
- Funding to help manage the pace of tax and utility levy increases due to a \$4.2 billion state of good repair deficit.
- Support to address rising needs for affordable housing, police, public health, shelters, and climate change as a result of advanced growth targets.

Allocation vs. Application-based funding

To ensure efficient infrastructure funding, the provincial and federal governments should use allocation-based models aligned with municipal asset management plans. This reduces costs by avoiding price fluctuations and contractor shortages linked to application-based funding. Moving forward, new infrastructure programs should include:

- Fund infrastructure costs for municipalities without direct transit operations (e.g., water, wastewater, transportation and active transportation) to support planned transit services.
- Align funding programs to prevent delays when infrastructure projects depend on one another.
- Provide operating funding for projects that increase service costs.
- Reduce time for funding transfers, monitoring, and reporting.
- Offer allocation-based funding with realistic timelines, avoiding single-year spending obligations.

These priorities should guide the development and implementation of new infrastructure funding programs by federal and provincial governments.



Investing in Sustainable Communities

Collaborating on Climate Change Priorities

Policy Opportunity

As Peel and its communities grow, so will the demand for Regional services and infrastructure. However, as climate events become more extreme and occur more frequently, damage and disruption to Peel's infrastructure and services are also likely to increase, driving up costs to deliver services and maintain a state of good repair. Support from the Province can help to mitigate these challenges in the following ways:

- Set a legislative and policy framework to phase-out fossil fuel natural gas-fired electricity generation while meeting Ontario's growing electricity needs.

Funding Solutions

- Invest in sustainable energy generation to ensure decarbonization is prioritized for economic expansion and growth.
- Provide sustained funding to ensure Peel's services and assets are more resilient to climate change.

Background

Municipalities are on the frontlines of climate change and are largely responsible for long-term resiliency planning and responding to weather events.

Despite ongoing challenges, Peel Region remains committed to its climate response and a pathway to decarbonization as a result of various targeted and innovative investments being made. However, coordination, alignment and collaboration across communities and with the provincial and federal governments will be essential.

Natural gas phase-out

The switch from fossil fuel energy to clean electricity can act as a catalyst for pursuing dynamic opportunities in Peel Region that will contribute to and enhance Ontario's prosperity.



- Ontario's electricity grid has not maintained its transmission capacity to service growing demand.
- Provincial investments in resiliency demonstrate support for maintaining business continuity amid increasing extreme weather events.
- Peel Region needs long-term sustainable funding for municipal mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

The phase-out of coal was an encouraging step and the Province should now prioritize more clean electricity generation. Ontario's electricity grid has not maintained its transmission capacity to service growing demand, even as more industries and sectors, such as transportation, are trending toward electrification.

Sustainable energy generation

As Ontario continues to position itself as a premier location for businesses, securing clean electricity, that is not limited by grid capacity and invests in resilient infrastructure, is a key strategic opportunity for the Province and Peel Region. This will provide a competitive advantage for Ontario to secure greater investments from businesses. Provincial investments in resiliency demonstrate support for maintaining business continuity amid increasing extreme weather events and will also contribute to economic development in communities across the province, including Peel. The announcement in May by the provincial government of additional energy capacity, including 1,784 MW of clean energy storage from 10 projects, is encouraging and Peel Region is supportive of similar investments in the future.

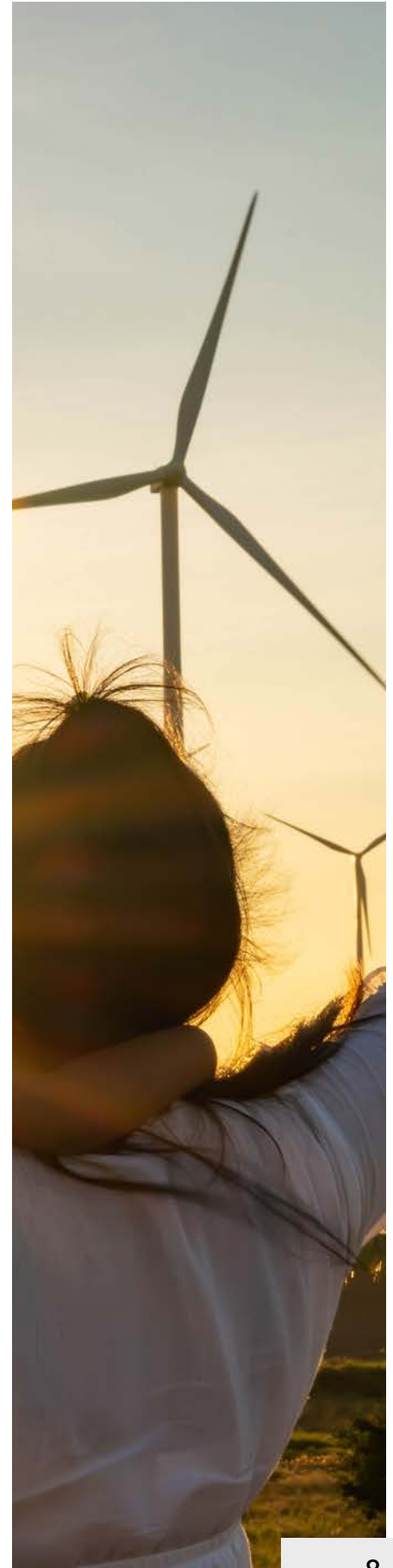
Reaching Peel's targets, of reducing GHG emissions by 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030 and future ambitions of net zero emissions by 2050, will require a significant switch from reliance on fossil fuel energy and production of more clean electricity to power homes, vehicles, businesses and industries.

Sustained funding

There is a need for long-term sustainable funding for municipal mitigation and adaptation initiatives to maintain effective and resilient services for communities in Peel, and across Ontario.

Peel Region will require sustained provincial funding to build municipal resiliency, support the implementation of the Climate Change Master Plan and plan for future climate emergencies, all of which will require significant financial investment.

In the spirit of collaboration, Peel Region is interested in working with the Province to pilot innovative solutions to decarbonization and climate change priorities.



Asylum Claimant Response

Support for Peel Region’s Asylum Claimant Proposal

Policy Opportunity

In response to the significant increase in asylum claimants in Peel and throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), there is urgent need for the federal and provincial governments to work together to provide immediate and sustainable financial support to address current and ongoing funding shortfalls for much-needed supports.

Peel Region, along with Toronto and other GTHA municipalities, is actively working with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada on a model that includes dedicated shelters and a Regional Reception Centre, as well as housing subsidies and other settlement supports to independently house asylum claimants in communities.

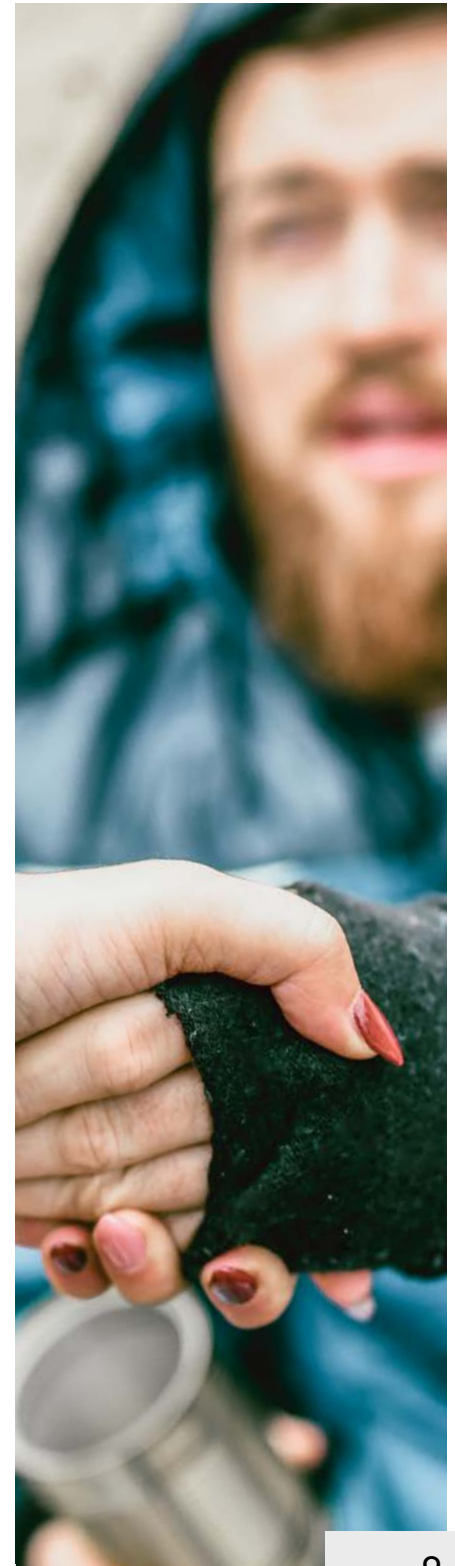
Funding Solutions

To alleviate the current pressure in Peel’s emergency shelter system and support the proposed model to successfully integrate asylum claimants into communities, sustainable funding for housing and settlement services from the provincial government is required.

Background

Peel Region, along with other GTHA communities, has experienced a sharp increase in asylum claimants. In January 2022, Peel’s shelter system had 30 asylum claimants per night. By January 2023, this number surged to at least 1,400, excluding those potentially turned away. In all, from January 1, 2023, to June 3, 2024, 3,279 asylum claimant households or 4,045 individuals have been provided with emergency shelter in Peel. Over the same time period, asylum claimants have comprised 71 per cent of Peel’s total shelter population on average, a number that has historically been closer to 4-5 per cent. The substantial rise has overwhelmed local homelessness systems:

- Peel’s shelter system has exceeded 400% capacity, necessitating high-cost emergency hotel accommodations.



- Two deaths have been associated with the asylum claimant surge in Peel.
- Up to 1,300 new claimants are estimated to arrive monthly requiring emergency supports, including housing.

All of Government Response is Required

Peel Region cannot serve as the sole destination for asylum claimants due to the current housing crisis. To effectively settle asylum claimants, it is crucial to involve communities beyond Peel. To that end, Peel Region has partnered with Toronto and other GTHA municipalities on a proposed system that will implement a coordinated approach to transition claimants to other areas with the necessary support services while they await Immigration and Refugee Board decisions. This approach includes:

- **Regional Reception Centre:** Assesses needs, provides basic necessities, and offers up to five days of respite for 200 individuals.
- **Discharge Planning:** The reception centre provides transition plans for asylum claimants moving to other municipalities.
- **Receiving Municipalities:** Provide services such as temporary shelter, Ontario Works, housing subsidies, and additional support services with provincial and federal funding.

Coordination among all levels of government is essential to support asylum claimants effectively and prevent the current bottleneck in Peel's emergency shelter system. Successful discharge into receiving municipalities depends on upfront, sustainable funding for housing and settlement services.

Proposal for a Sustainable Model

A total funding request of **\$157.5M** has been made to address both one-time capital 2024 operating, and asylum claimant housing support costs.

- \$12.0M in capital funding for the Reception Centre and an additional shelter facility.
- \$61.3M operating funding (Reception Centre - \$4.5M, Shelter facility- \$6.5M, and Hotels -\$50.3M).
- \$84.2M for housing supports for 15,600 claimants (annualized).

To date, the federal government has committed **\$22M towards the capital and operating costs** of the proposed model; continued discussions are required on funding the total on-going costs.

This model will allow asylum claimants to settle within a year but can only be implemented with dedicated federal and provincial funding. Negotiations are currently underway with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada officials however, **the provincial government needs to be at the negotiating table so that a sustainable solution involving all three levels of government can be developed.**

In particular, provincial funding is needed to support housing subsidies required to move claimants out of the shelter system and into independent housing in the community.



Paramedic Service Delivery Modernization

Supporting community-based care

Policy Opportunities

Peel Region and the Province have a shared priority to ensure frontline care is accessible and efficient to support the innovations needed to meet the needs of growing communities and protect the capacity in Ontario's health system. The provincial government can advance innovations supporting paramedic services through the following:

- Move forward with a legislative and policy framework, supported by sustainable funding for community paramedicine (CP) programs.
- Improve the performance of ambulance communications and dispatch at the Mississauga Central Ambulance Communication Centre (CACC), through potential changes in governance, oversight, and operations of the Mississauga CACC.

Community Paramedicine

Peel Region continues to leverage the unique skillset of paramedics to provide upstream preventative care through Community Paramedicine (CP) programs.

Provincial support has been critical in the delivery of CP in Peel, particularly base funding from the Ministry of Long-Term Care for CP for Long Term Care. However, this vital community-based resource is not supported through provisions under the Ambulance Act, raising risks for municipalities and for paramedics who are delivering CP.

The provincial government should ensure **all Community Paramedicine programs become base funded** in the future.



Peel Region is actively seeking opportunities to work with Ontario Health and both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care as part of any future sector engagement leading to a legislative framework for CP. To allow for expansion to meet growing demands, the provincial government should ensure all CP programs become base funded in the future. Without sustainable funding the critical role of these programs in our community would be jeopardized.

Opportunities to Enhance Ambulance Communications

Peel Region is committed to continued collaboration with the Ministry of Health to achieve improvements to the performance and accountability of the Mississauga CACC.

Leadership from the Ministry of Health leading to expedited implementation of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) patient triaging tool at the CACC is greatly appreciated. This single measure by the Ministry of Health has been critical, as it allows Peel Paramedics to better prioritize resources to the most critical and urgent calls. The Mississauga CACC has achieved a high level of compliance with MPDS, since going live in December 2022, and **Peel Region is looking ahead to explore additional ways to enhance ambulance dispatch at the CACC.**

In collaboration with Halton Region, Peel Region is currently considering options to improve efficiency optimize integration across paramedic and CACC operations. Peel Region will engage with the Ministry of Health on these options and initiate discussions on possible approaches and solutions.



Support for Seniors

Supporting community-based care

Policy opportunity

Create a policy and measurement framework to enable emotion-based care across Long-Term Care (LTC) homes to foster high-quality and person-centred dementia care.

Funding solutions

Provide adequate funding where there are provincial funding shortfalls for mandated requirements to ensure Long-Term Care providers can implement and comply with requirements under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act*.

Provide operational funding for the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor to sustainably implement wrap-around integrated care and supports for seniors living in the community and their caregivers.

Background

As a provider of both Long-Term Care and community support services, Peel Region is committed to innovating and improving the delivery of care and supports to seniors and their caregivers that reduces pressure on the broader health system. **Partnerships across levels of government and the health system are foundational to the success of needed improvement and innovations.** Peel Region appreciates the significant provincial investment across the LTC sector, as well as funding for the new Transitional Behavioural Support Unit at Peel Manor. Despite this progress, there is a growing funding gap for mandated and critical programs for seniors in Peel.

Emotion-based care

Peel Region continues to deliver emotion-based care through the Butterfly model, creating a home-like environment with dementia-friendly design. Delivering emotion-based care in Peel has seen positive outcomes, including a decrease in falls and improved social engagement.



Priorities for an Emotion-based Care Framework:

- Re-evaluating the funding model
- Exploring additional research and measurement tools
- Funding for training and allied health staff
- Embedding emotion-based care into specialized behavioural support units

Fixing Long-Term Care Act compliance and implementation

Additional provincial resources are needed to comply with mandated requirements of the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act (FLTCA)*. Peel Region has needed to increasingly rely on property taxes to make significant staffing investments to ensure compliance with the FLTCA and its accompanying regulations.

In 2023, Peel Region experienced a \$1.1 million funding shortfall across its five Long-Term Care homes related to new requirements that were mandated, but not funded. To meet new quality management, infection prevention and control measures, and ongoing training requirements under the legislation, Peel requires increased permanent provincial funding.

Base funding increases for Long-Term Care have been lower than the rate of inflation and have not kept pace with the rising complexity of resident care needs. The projected increase required to address the combined operating shortfall (FLTCA compliance and base funding) for Peel's five homes in 2025 totals \$7.2 million, while the cumulative five-year funding shortfall (2020-2024) for Peel Long-Term Care is \$15.7 million.

Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor

Construction of Peel's innovative Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor (SHWV) is now complete. Opening this fall, the SHWV is a new LTC home that includes a range of services and community supports to meet the complex needs of people living with a diagnosis of dementia and their caregivers. This facility will reduce pressure on LTC placements and on hospital visits that often lead to alternate level of care admission.

To fully realize the value of this integrated care centre, Peel Region is seeking sustainable operational funding for the following:

- An Integrated Care Clinic delivering primary care through an interdisciplinary team
- An expanded adult day services, and
- An eight-bed overnight Respite Care Centre

Municipalities have the fewest revenue sources of all levels of government. Provincial investments are necessary to support the innovations required to meet the complex care needs of seniors and ensure a high quality of care for seniors across the care continuum, in Peel and throughout Ontario.



Mental Health and Addictions

Supporting community-based care

Policy opportunity

To ensure a responsive mental health and addictions system for Peel residents, policy solutions that provide population needs-based funding are needed for mental health and addictions services that considers population and demographic factors, including high growth and culturally diverse communities, and reflects community needs.

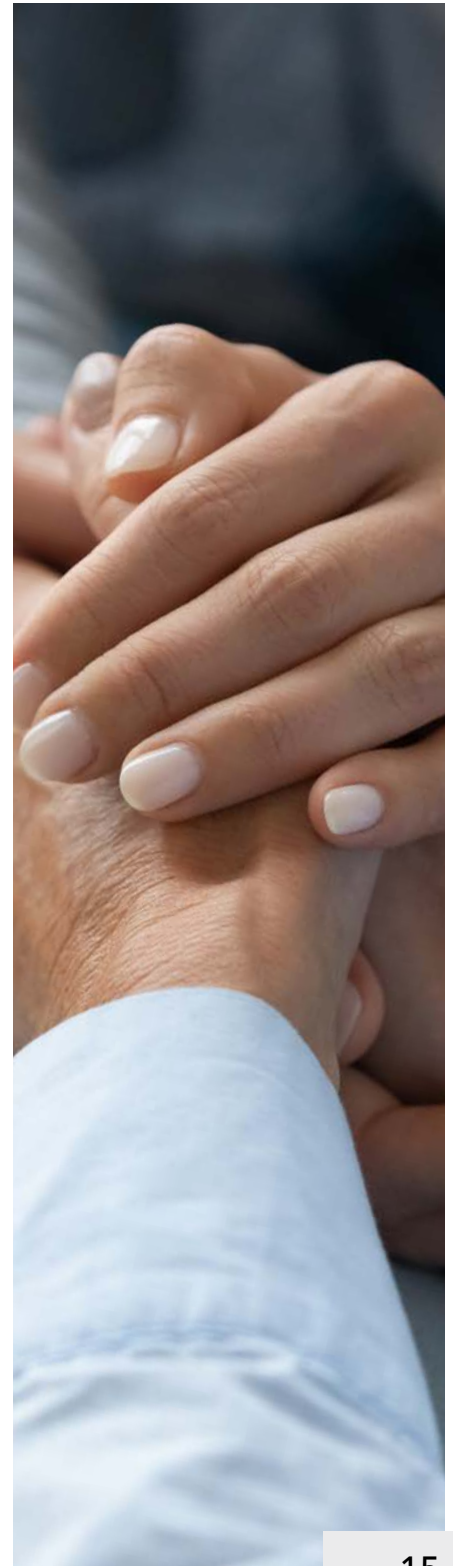
Funding opportunities

- **Provide funding allocations that address historical underfunding** so that community mental health and addictions services can expand capacity, bridge critical service gaps and reduce wait times and waitlists for essential supports.
- **Provide targeted, specific and sustainable operational funding** to meet the growing demand for mental health and addiction services and to address growing waitlists.

Background

Peel Region is facing a mental health and addictions crisis. Despite being one of Ontario's fastest growing communities, Peel residents have fewer community mental health and addictions services available to them.

- In 2021, adult mental health and addictions (MHA) service providers in the Central West and Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network (LHINs) received per capita funding of \$51.35 and \$35.94, respectively. **This is well below Ontario's average of \$88.10 per capita.**
- From 2017 to 2022, Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs' average per capita community mental health and addictions (CMHA) funding was **\$47.11 and \$35.93, respectively; both of which were lower than Ontario's average per capita CMHA funding (\$81.98).**



- In 2022-23, child and youth MHA providers in Peel received average per capita funding of **\$91.25 compared to the Ontario average at \$179.68.**

The impact of this underfunding has translated into concerning service pressures and challenges in Peel, including unsustainable emergency department capacity and long waitlists for children and youth.

Achieving a sustainable, population-based funding approach

Peel Region applauds provincial investments towards an improved and integrated mental health and addictions system. The Province's engagement with community partners and service providers in Peel through forums, such as the recent discussion during a tour of a Peel Paramedics station, as well as investments in local services such as the Youth Wellness Hub in Brampton, are welcomed. However, sustainable, and consistent funding for the sector, as well as other targeted investments, are necessary to bridge existing and historical service gaps for Peel.

Population-based funding

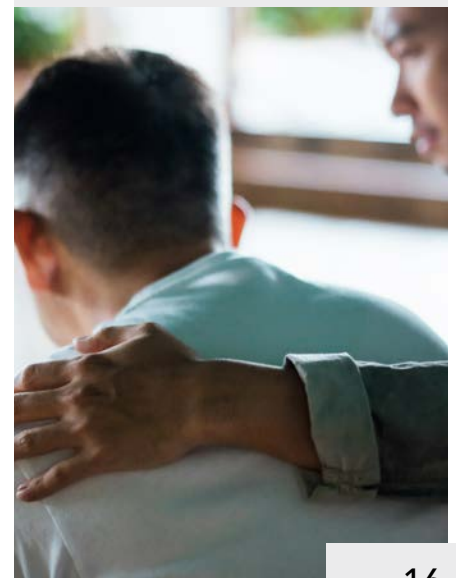
A population-based funding approach will ensure that the Province's Roadmap to Wellness can achieve greater impact within Peel's community. Formulating funding allocation based on population size and demographics, will reduce wait times and waitlists, improve care options, and reduce the burden on the acute care system. This approach will also improve the capacity of the community-based mental health and addictions sector in supporting the Province's vision for greater integration and wrap-around supports for all residents.

Targeted, sustainable investments

As the rates of depression, anxiety, substance use-related harms, and opioid toxicity have increased in Peel, there has been urgency for responsive funding. There are immediate and targeted opportunities to help to reduce current waitlists and capacity challenges in Peel, including the points listed in the right hand column.

Investment Opportunities

- **A 24/7 crisis walk-in service model:** to reduce the burden on emergency departments while ensuring wrap-around services for residents.
- **Stabilizing health human resources:** to build recruitment and retention of workforce talent.
- **Building capacity for high-demand, low-availability services:** so that there is increased availability of programs and services.
- **Supports to prevent harms from opioid toxicity and substance use:** through evidence-based harm reduction best practices.



Family, Gender-Based and Intimate Partner Violence

Supporting Pathways to Safety for Victims

Policy Opportunities

Family violence (FV), gender-based violence (GBV), and intimate partner violence (IPV) is a critical issue in Peel. The Province should move forward with declaring FV/GBV/IPV an epidemic in Ontario. Comprehensive legislation at the provincial level is required to help integrate the current fragmented system to better support the needs of residents.

Funding Solutions

Effective support to victims and families impacted by FV/GBV/IPV requires enhanced sector capacity and stable operational funding for programs and services that support victims' pathways to safety. This includes emergency housing and transitional supports for victims and their families as they escape from abusive or unsafe environments. Additional funding, provided to the sector in a streamlined and sustainable manner, is critical to reduce the fragmentation of existing services, address urgent needs and prevent tragic outcomes.

Background

In Peel, FV/GBV/IPV are increasing, leading to health, social and criminal justice concerns for victims and impacted communities. In the most severe instances, FV/GBV/IPV can result in traumatic outcomes such as homicides. While police data offers some insight, many incidents remain unreported, masking the true extent of this problem. However, available data for Peel does highlight troubling trends.

Fragmented and underfunded system

Addressing FV/GBV/IPV is a key focus of Peel's Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB). Despite collaborative efforts with local partners to enhance safety pathways and address system integration challenges, fragmented and insufficient funding hampers efforts to address urgent and growing needs in Peel.



Mississauga and Brampton (Peel Regional Police Data):

- 617 IPV strangulation charges in 2023
- 6 family and intimate partner homicides in 2023
- Highest number of priority service calls were FV/IPV-related in 2023
- Nearly 80% of victims in 2022 were women

Caledon (Ontario Provincial Police Data):

- 76% of IPV and FV dispute victims in 2023 were women
- 11 intimate partner sexual assaults reported in 2022
- 29.9% increase in IPV and FV disputes from 2020 to 2023

To stabilize and strengthen FV/GBV/IPV services, provincial funding must be accessible and sustainable. Increased funding is needed for service integration and capacity building, particularly in healthcare, housing, and legal services.

Provincial Legislation and Support

While Peel Region is encouraged by recent progress to enact legislation declaring FV/GBV/IPV an epidemic, a provincial policy framework is required to address challenges across the FV/GBV/IPV sector and support community agencies and service providers. A framework should:

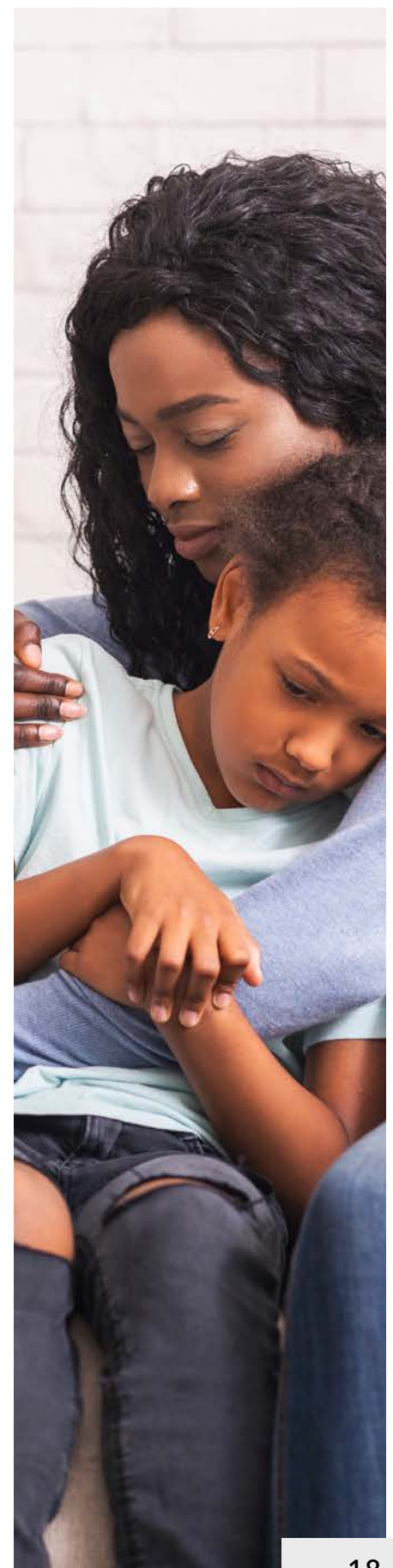
- Facilitate intra- and inter-sectoral as well as intergovernmental collaboration.
- Enhance service integration at the local level.
- Enable consistent navigation of referral pathways and resources.
- Enable enhanced and predictable funding for service delivery and supports.

Investing in Emergency and Transitional Housing

Access to emergency and transitional housing is critical for victims escaping FV/GBV/IPV and human sex trafficking. Peel's shelter system operates at substantially over capacity, highlighting the urgent need for more resources. The recent opening of Armagh House, Brampton's first transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence, quickly reached capacity, underscoring the need for further investment. This can be accomplished through increased provincial funding for emergency and transitional housing to ensure safety and support for victims.

Partnering with Peel Region

Peel Region is committed to collaborating on targeted provincial legislation to address the FV/GBV/IPV crisis. Initiatives such as OntarioSTANDS are promising, supporting comprehensive efforts, including the CSWB Family Violence Action Table and the Break the Silence campaign. Securing stable provincial funding and improving service integration will enhance the sector's capacity, ensuring consistent support for victims and their families in Peel's communities.



Anti-Human Sex Trafficking

Addressing Funding Gaps & Enhancing Ontario's Response

Policy Opportunities

To address the growing rates of human sex trafficking in Peel and Ontario, the Ontario Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy: 2020-2025 should be reaffirmed and expanded, including increased funding to address disparities in Peel, enhanced emergency/first stage housing options and services, and comprehensive education in schools to raise awareness and increase prevention.

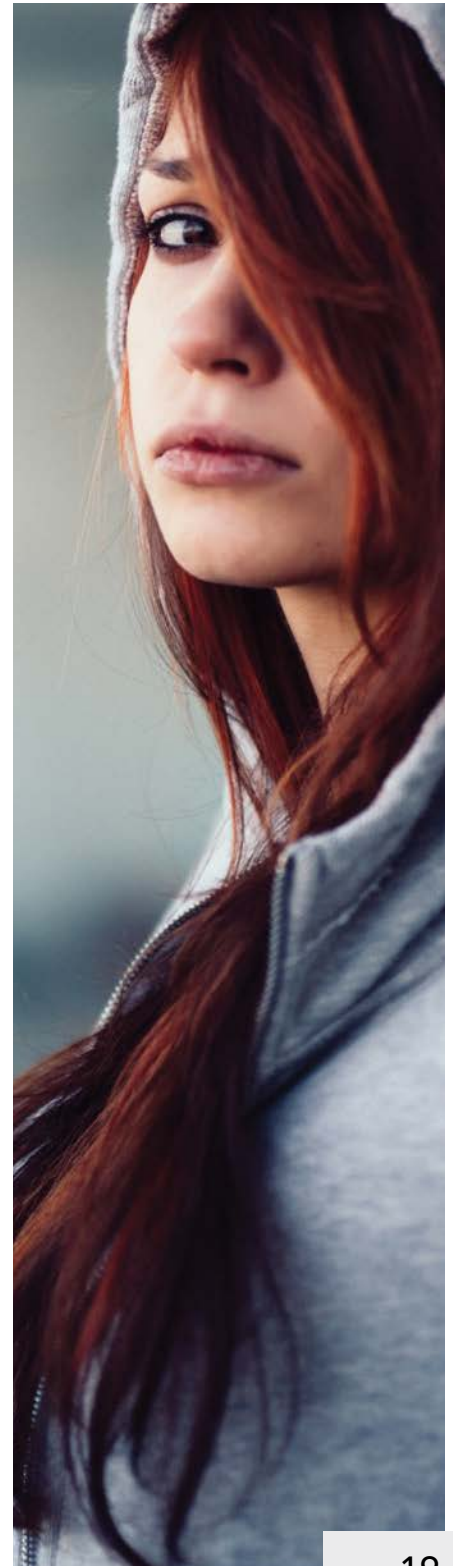
Funding Solutions

- Increased provincial funding is needed to support Peel's anti-human trafficking services, including housing, prevention, and intervention initiatives, to meet rising demand and complex needs.
- Specific grants should be allocated to consistently deliver human trafficking education and awareness programs in schools, focusing on student engagement.
- Capital and operational funding are required for infrastructure improvements and to expand emergency/first-stage housing for victims and survivors in Peel.

Background

Since 2022, the Peel Anti-Human Sex Trafficking (AHST) Strategy has been implementing initiatives based on three pillars:

- **Prevention:** Increasing awareness of human sex trafficking in Peel through coordinated prevention and education programming.
- **Intervention:** Improving access to dedicated and reliable services for victims, survivors, and those at risk through wrap-around services at the integrated services hub, nCourage.
- **Exits/Housing:** Providing dedicated safe and supportive housing for victims and survivors through the Bonnie McPhee Safe House and the Peel Transition House.



System Gaps and Opportunities

Peel's shelter system operates at 162% capacity, leaving victims without immediate access to emergency shelters and forcing many to stay with their traffickers. Despite progress, the AHST Program, now in its fourth year, faces increased demand and more complex cases, highlighting gaps and areas for improvement in service delivery.

- **Integrated Services Hub:** A 116% increase in clients served year-over-year, with a significant portion of clients identifying as female and from racialized communities. Key services accessed include client navigation/outreach, case management, and counselling.
- **Bonnie McPhee Safe House:** A 73% increase in housed victims and survivors, with a focus on life skills, safety planning, and housing supports.
- **Peel Transition House:** A 33% increase in service plans completed, highlighting the acute needs of clients.

Funding Disparities

Peel has independently funded housing services for trafficking victims and survivors. To expand dedicated emergency shelter spaces, provincial funding for the Exits/Housing pillar would enhance support, consistent with the funding already provided to the City of Toronto.

In addition, provincial support is required for:

- **Emergency/First-Stage Housing:** Fund renovations and operations for four beds at Embrave and one bed at Our Place Peel (OPP) Youth Shelter to provide safe housing for trafficking survivors, including trans-females, mothers with children, individuals over 25, and youth aged 16-24.
- **Prevention Initiatives:** Allocate funding for awareness and training, modeled after Toronto's successful programs.
- **Human Trafficking Education:** Ensure consistent anti-trafficking education across all school boards to protect vulnerable youth.
- **Lived Experience Remuneration Framework:** Adopt the Peel AHST Program's framework for ethical and equitable engagement with individuals with lived experience, ensuring fair compensation and reducing stigma.

The Peel AHST Strategy requires provincial support to effectively address the increasing demand for services and the complex needs of human trafficking victims and survivors. Funding for emergency housing, prevention, education, and support services is essential for improving outcomes and providing necessary care.

Provincial support required:

- **\$70,000** for renovations (Embrave) and **\$80,000** for shelter worker salaries, benefits, supplies, and safe bed programming.
- **\$1 million** to support community capacity building and an annual social marketing campaign.
- **\$200,000** for staff support to facilitate prevention education in schools.
- Projected **\$20,000 per year** for remuneration of survivor members and additional consultations.



Early Years and Child Care

Enhancing Support for Human Services

Policy Opportunities

Peel Region can further address challenges facing the workforce to ensure this sector in Peel continues to thrive and deliver high quality programs for children and their families with the following provincial support:

- Implement a compensation framework for early and child care staff that acknowledges both years of service and qualifications, and is comparable to Designated Early Childhood Educators in the school board sector.
- Work with Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to prioritize work and studies in Early Childhood Education (ECE) for immigration pathways that incentivize Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) to remain in Ontario.

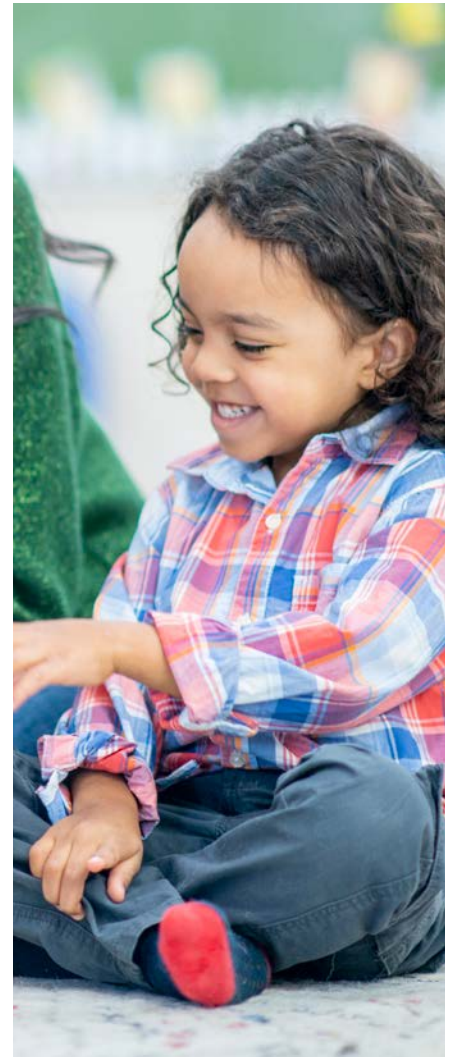
Funding Solutions

- Fund and support accelerated learning and credential pathways for individuals currently working in the sector to become RECEs.
- Provide adequate, flexible, multi-year funding to implement high impact initiatives to attract and retain the Early Years and Child Care workforce.

Background

The shared goal of expanding child care spaces in Ontario can only be achieved through workforce policy reforms aimed at ensuring there is sufficient, qualified staff.

An expansion target of nearly 12,000 new licensed child care spaces by the end of 2026 will bring a much-needed relief to families in Peel who pay some of the highest child care fees in Ontario. However, it is estimated that 1,625 additional early years and child care staff will be needed to support these new spaces.



- **12,000** Peel target for new licensed child care spaces by 2026
- **1,625** estimated additional child care staff needed in Peel

Safeguarding the momentum of the transformative Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program can be achieved by eliminating barriers, combined with provincial investments, and policy changes.

Fair and Competitive Wages

In order to ensure Ontario remains competitive, while also meeting child care demand in Peel and communities throughout the province, the provincial government can address the following challenges:

- A wage cost differential between experienced RECE and those newly entering the workforce is causing wage costs pressures for providers and inequities amongst staff.
- The current RECE wage floor (\$23.86 per hour in 2024) is low compared to the GTA living wage of \$25.05, and to Designated Early Childhood Educators employed by school boards.
- The Provincial Workforce Strategy excludes support for additional benefits that would increase job satisfaction and incentivize individuals to work in the child care sector.

Recruitment and Retention of Newcomers

This can be achieved through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to prioritize work and studies in ECE for immigration pathways that incentivize RECEs to remain in Ontario. Ontario's immigration policies currently limit this opportunity.

Accelerated Credential Pathways

The Province's workforce strategy should focus on accelerating education pathways for individuals to become qualified. Barriers such as financial constraints hinder the ability of aspiring child care staff to enroll in ECE diploma programs while continuing to work in the sector.

Further, the Province should fund and support accelerated learning and credential pathways for individuals currently working in the sector to become RECEs, which would increase the supply of RECEs.

Adequate Multi-Year Funding

While the Provincial commitment to innovation funding in 2024 is encouraging, details regarding this funding, including Peel's allocation, remains unknown. Multi-year flexible funding is needed to ensure Peel Region can implement responsive and innovative initiatives to grow the workforce to support child care expansion and meet community need.



Community Safety

Expanding Automated Speed Enforcement

Policy opportunity

Changes to the *Highway Traffic Act*, that would permit installation of Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras outside of Community Safety Zones and School Zones would allow Peel Region to target high-risk areas, known to have poor speed compliance.

Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) continues to be a key component of Peel's Vision Zero initiative. Building on this success, **Peel Region is seeking provincial support to expand use of ASE beyond School Zones and Community Safety Zones to make this safety tool available to more locations.**

Currently, the scope and scale of ASE in Peel is constrained by the current provincial legislation, as it can only be deployed in Community Safety Zones and School Zones with a posted speed limit of less than 80 km/h.

ASE expansion is consistent with other ongoing road safety initiatives, including red-light cameras, which already exist outside of community safety zones. In cooperation with Peel Regional Police, an additional 30 high-resolution cameras will be installed by Peel Region at Brampton intersections (for a total of 50) as well as an additional 135 Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) cameras (for a total of 185) on local roads, to further complement traffic calming measures already in place, such as speed cushions.

The *Safer Roads and Communities Act*, along with permitting the municipal use of Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) for ASE will help yield fewer collisions and severity of collisions for our most vulnerable road users, including school children.

Peel Region looks forward to working closely with its provincial partners on expanded use of ASE, and other community safety initiatives.



Pilot results show that ASE cameras, when paired with public education, are an **effective way to encourage drivers to slow down, resulting in measurably safer driving practices.**

Peel Region • AMO Conference • August 2024

