

## **CREDIT OPINION**

18 September 2025

# Update



#### **RATINGS**

#### Peel, Regional Municipality of

Domicile	Ontario, Canada
Long Term Rating	Aaa
Туре	Senior Unsecured - Dom Curr
Outlook	Stable

Please see the <u>ratings section</u> at the end of this report for more information. The ratings and outlook shown reflect information as of the publication date.

## Contacts

Adam Hardi, CFA +1.416.214.3636 VP-Sr Credit Officer adam.hardi@moodys.com

Max Pinto +1.647.417.6303
Sr Ratings Associate
suchith.pinto@moodys.com

Michael Yake +1.416.214.3865

Associate Managing Director
michael.yake@moodys.com

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# Regional Municipality of Peel (Canada)

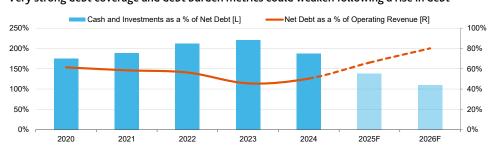
Update to credit analysis

## **Summary**

The credit profile of the <u>Regional Municipality of Peel</u> (Peel, Aaa stable) reflects a growing local economy backed by strong population growth, and predictable revenue sources from stable property taxes and utility fees. The region maintains excellent reserves balances including long-term investments, which provide significant coverage of debt and expenses. We characterize the region's debt affordability as very high, along with moderate, although rising debt levels. Key pressures include inflationary pressures on expenses and high levels of capital spending which is needed to support growth-related infrastructure. Provincial legislative changes that reduce development charge revenues and introduce legislative changes to the region's services pose additional fiscal and governance challenges.

Exhibit 1

Very strong debt coverage and debt burden metrics could weaken following a rise in debt



Year ending December 31
Sources: Regional Municipality of Peel and Moody's Ratings

# **Credit strengths**

- » Solid operating results supported by a growing economy and strong governance
- » Sizable cash and investment holdings support solid liquidity and strong expense coverage ratios
- » High debt affordability and moderate, although increasing, debt levels

# **Credit challenges**

- » Cost pressures from capital spending and wage and general cost inflation
- » Provincial legislative changes result in fiscal and governance challenges

# Rating outlook

The outlook is stable which reflects our view that predictable revenue sources and continued favourable economic fundamentals will support strong fiscal results and high levels of liquidity and long-term savings.

## Factors that could lead to a downgrade

Given its Aaa ratings, Peel's ratings cannot be upgraded. The ratings could be downgraded if the debt burden rose materially above our current projections, along with a significant decline of liquidity. A material weakening in fiscal results, leading to declining operating margins, would also put downward pressure on the region's rating.

## **Key indicators**

Exhibit 2
Regional Municipality of Peel

(Year Ending 12/31)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025F	2026F
Net Direct and Indirect Debt/Operating Revenue (%)	58.5	56.4	45.7	50.3	66.1	80.1
Primary Operating Balance/Operating Revenue (%)	16.5	14.7	13.8	12.1	12.0	11.7
Interest Payments/Operating Revenue (%)	2.6	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.5
Debt Service/Total Revenue (%)	8.8	2.9	3.8	3.2	2.5	6.4
Capital Spending/Total Expenditures (%)	16.9	21.4	23.8	26.7	23.2	22.0

Sources: Regional Municipality of Peel and Moody's Ratings

#### **Profile**

Peel is the upper tier government of a two-tier regional district located in the <u>Province of Ontario</u> (Aa3 stable), west of the <u>City of Toronto</u> (Aa1 stable), and is part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Canada's largest industrial and commercial center. The region's main responsibilities include delivering core municipal, social and emergency services, and infrastructure. The lower tier municipalities include the cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the town of Caledon. Peel is home to 1.6 million residents, with strong population growth driven by immigration. Its service-based economy is supported by transportation, warehousing, real estate, and professional services.

#### **Detailed credit considerations**

The credit profile of Peel, as expressed in its Aaa stable rating, reflects a baseline credit assessment (BCA) of aaa for the region and our assessment of a high likelihood of extraordinary support coming from Ontario in the event that the region faced acute liquidity stress.

#### **Baseline credit assessment**

## Solid operating results supported by a growing economy and strong governance

Peel has a history of solid operating performance, with an operating margin of 12.1% in 2024. Although this falls below the median of 23.6% for Aaa-rated Canadian peers, operating performance is supported by revenue streams that remain largely protected from market events. These include property taxes and user fees, which account for close to 60% of Peel's operating revenues, and reliable transfers from provincial and federal governments constituting around 25-30% of operating revenues.

Peel continues to benefit from high immigration levels and a resilient, service-oriented economy. Despite recent federal policy changes that introduced caps on immigration levels for 2025–2027, Peel's population is still projected to grow steadily, reaching approximately 2.3 million by 2051 from an estimated 1.66 million in 2024. Peel has historically outperformed Ontario on a number of economic and labor market indicators, with favourable employment statistics, strong GDP growth and high GDP per capita. However, for 2025 and part of 2026 we expect that growth will slow given macroeconomic challenges from tariffs and trade uncertainty and slower immigration.

The regional economy has a significant presence of key sectors, including transportation, logistics, real estate, and professional services. The region also benefits from its proximity to Toronto, Canada's largest commercial and financial center, its sound manufacturing base and its broad range of sectors. Although some sectors are more exposed to the negative impacts of US tariffs and trade uncertainty,

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most Canadian exports to the US remain exempt from tariffs as long as trade complies with the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

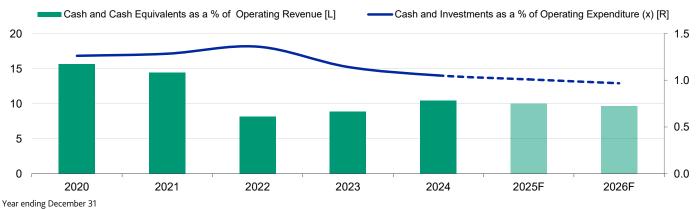
Peel's operating results are also supported by strong governance and management including transparent and timely fiscal reporting, similar to other highly rated municipalities in Ontario. In our view, Peel has significant capacity to reduce or adjust operating revenues and spending and modify capital plans as necessary.

#### Sizable cash and investment holdings support solid liquidity and strong expense coverage ratios

Peel's conservative budgeting practices and its track record of strong performance have allowed it to build up sizeable reserves which provide a large financial cushion against fiscal pressures. The region's total cash and investments grew to CAD3.3 billion in 2024, and provide substantial coverage of net direct and indirect debt (1.9x in 2024) and operating expenses (1.1x), which are in-line with Aaarated Canadian peers.

Over the last few years, the region has gradually repositioned a portion of its cash and cash equivalent securities into long-term investments to maximize returns. While this resulted in a decline in the more stringent liquidity ratio measure (total cash and cash equivalents as a % of operating revenue) to 10.4% in 2024 from 37.5% at FYE 2017), we classify the region's overall cash and investment holdings as very strong. Much of the long-term investments are held in reserves dedicated to future operating and capital outlays. We expect that Peel will be able to continue building up its long-term reserves from positive cash flows from operating surpluses.

Exhibit 3
We expect that liquidity and coverage ratios will remain near current levels over the next two years



Sources: Regional Municipality of Peel and Moody's Ratings

# High debt affordability and moderate, although increasing, debt levels

We classify debt affordability as very high, along with modest levels of debt. The region issues debt for its own purposes as well as on behalf of its lower-tier municipalities which currently must borrow long-term debt through the region. The majority of Peel's debt is issued for financing regional water and wastewater infrastructure, with approximately 85% of outstanding debt constituting regional debt, and 15% constituting debt on behalf of lower-tier municipalities.

The region maintains a prudent debt management strategy, including a low reliance on short-term debt financing and maintaining limits on debt servicing costs (provincially capped at 25% of revenue). The debt maturity profile is well distributed, with predictable and manageable debt maturities over the next 30 years. Net direct and indirect debt stood at 50.3% of operating revenue in 2024, the first increase after about a decade of consistent decline. The region also maintains significant debenture sinking funds (CAD552 million at year-end 2024, including CAD6.4 million sinking fund reserves of lower-tier municipalities), which support its capacity to repay upcoming maturities.

In recent years, the region has aimed to limit its reliance on long-term debt financing as it prioritizes other funding sources, including reserves or pay-as-you-go capital financing. However, an increased need to fund capital projects to meet the growing demand for

regional services and to maintain assets in a state of good repair, we expect that the debt burden will rise to around 70-80% over the next two years. These levels are consistent with, but at the upper end of Aaa-rated peers.

The region's debt affordability is also very strong, with interest expense measuring 1.9% of operating revenue in 2024. Although we expect an increased need for debt issuance over the next two years, controlled debt increases will maintain the interest burden below 3% over the next two years.

#### Cost pressures from capital spending and wage and general cost inflation

The region's need for increased services to support a growing population, including social and emergency services, will continue to put upward pressure on expenses. Growth remains robust driven by the region's prime location in the Greater Toronto Area and high levels of international immigration. Social expenditures (social services and housing) and emergency services (including police and paramedic) remain necessary to address social pressures, and will continue to weight on the total expenditures of the region.

The need to fund growth and maintain infrastructure will also exert pressure on capital spending. Cost escalation and rising capital needs are evidenced in the region's 10-year capital budget for 2025-2034, which includes a combined CAD23.5 billion in spending, an increase from previous 10-year plan if CAD20.4 billion for 2024-2033. The region also faces cost escalation pressures from rising salaries and benefits which currently make up approximately 40% of total expenses, and therefore represent one of the key drivers of expense increases.

#### Provincial legislative changes result in fiscal and governance challenges

Over the past several years, the province has enacted a series of legislative changes that in our view negatively impact regional finances. Most recently, Bill 17 – Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act 2025, was passed to accelerate housing development. The bill exempts development charges (DCs) for long term care homes and permits the deferral of DCs until occupancy for residential development, which would reduce / delay revenues for the region. Simultaneously, it mandates that municipalities allocate or spend 60% of DC revenues annually, creating potential cash flow constraints for the region.

These developments follow earlier legislative changes introduced in 2022 restricting local governments' ability to impose development charges on certain projects, in order to encourage multi-unit projects and affordable housing.

Additionally, since 2023 and most recently in 2025, Ontario has expanded "strong mayor" powers to municipalities across the province, including most lower-tier municipalities within the region. Although granting these powers does not meaningfully change the governance of these municipalities, it increases the risk of indirect intervention by the province in municipal affairs by restricting some of the additional powers conditional on their use to advance provincial priorities.

In May 2023, the Province of Ontario introduced legislation to dissolve the two-tier region of Peel and transition Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon into independent single-tier municipalities effective January 1, 2025. However, following a provincial review, the government reversed its decision in December 2023. Instead of the full dissolution, in 2025 Ontario introduced a phased transition of certain regional services - including waste collection and regional roads - to the lower-tier municipalities through 2027, while maintaining the overall regional structure.

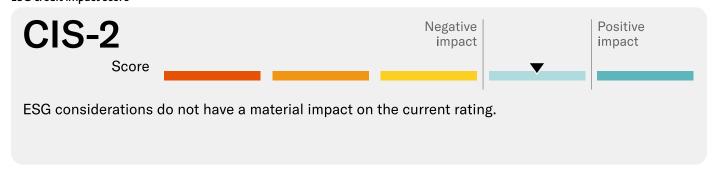
#### **Extraordinary support considerations**

While Peel's BCA of aaa already places the region in the Aaa rating bracket, Moody's assigns a high likelihood of extraordinary support based on our assessment of the risk to the province's reputation as a regulator of municipalities and incentive for the provincial government to minimize the risk of potential disruptions to capital markets if Peel, or any other municipality were allowed to default.

#### **ESG** considerations

Peel, Regional Municipality of's ESG credit impact score is CIS-2

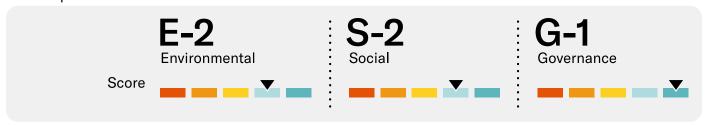
ESG credit impact score



Source: Moody's Ratings

The CIS-2 Credit Impact Score for Peel reflects a low impact of ESG considerations on the ratings.

Exhibit 5
ESG issuer profile scores



Source: Moody's Ratings

## **Environmental**

The **E-2** issuer profile score (IPS) reflects a low exposure to climate risks and neither spending nor revenue are materially impacted by environmental changes.

## Social

The **S-2** social IPS reflects mitigated risks related to the provision of public services such as public safety (police and paramedic) and environmental (water and waste collection), but these services do not face material risks given predictable demographic trends which allow for long-term forecasting of service requirements. The region's residents have high levels of education and have access to basic services.

#### Governance

The **G-1** governance IPS reflects Peel's very strong budget and fiscal management practices and strong institutional framework. The region is subject to balanced budget legislation and utilizes prudent financing planning giving a forward-looking view to potential budget challenges with the ability to adjust plans on a timely basis to mitigate any credit implications. The region provides transparent, timely financial reports including forward-looking fiscal policies, annual operating budgets and 10-year capital plans which are updated annually and adheres to strict policies on debt and investment management.

ESG Issuer Profile Scores and Credit Impact Scores for the rated entity/transaction are available on Moodys.com. In order to view the latest scores, please click <a href="here">here</a> to go to the landing page for the entity/transaction on MDC and view the ESG Scores section.

Sub-Sovereign Moody's Ratings

# Rating methodology and scorecard factors

The assigned BCA of aaa is in line with the BCA scorecard-indicated outcome of aaa. For details about our rating approach, please refer to the Regional and Local Governments methodology.

Exhibit 6 Peel, Regional Municipality of **Regional & Local Governments** 

Baseline Credit Assessment – Scorecard	Score	Value	Sub-factor Weighting	Sub-factor Score	<b>Factor Weighting</b>	Total
Factor 1: Economy					25%	0.88
Regional Income [1]	1.88	62856.10	15%	0.28		
Economic Growth	9.00	baa	5%	0.45		
Economic Diversification	3.00	aa	5%	0.15		
Factor 2: Institutional Framework and	,					
Governance					30%	0.30
Institutional Framework	1.00	aaa	15%	0.15		
Governance	1.00	aaa	15%	0.15		
Factor 3: Financial Performance				'	20%	1.48
Operating Margin [2]	6.70	12.14%	10%	0.67		
Liquidity Ratio [3]	10.25	10.42%	5%	0.51		
Ease of Access to Funding	6.00	a	5%	0.30		
Factor 4: Leverage					25%	1.15
Debt Burden [4]	3.79	50.51%	15%	0.57		
Interest Burden [5]	5.79	1.93%	10%	0.58		
Preliminary BCA Scorecard-Indicated				'		
Outcome (SIO)						(3.81) aa3
Idiosyncratic Notching	,					1.0
Preliminary BCA SIO After Idiosyncratic						
Notching						(2.81) aa2
Sovereign Rating Threshold				'		Aaa
Operating Environment Notching				•		1.5
BCA Scorecard-Indicated Outcome						(1.31) aaa
Assigned BCA						aaa

<sup>[1]</sup> Regional GDP per capita in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, in international dollars

Source: Moody's Ratings; Fiscal 2024.

## **Ratings**

Exhibit 7

Category	Moody's Rating
PEEL, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF	
Outlook	Stable
Baseline Credit Assessment	aaa
Senior Unsecured -Dom Curr	Aaa
Source: Moody's Ratings	

<sup>[2]</sup> Primary Operating Balance / Operating Revenue

<sup>[3]</sup> Cash and Cash Equivalents / Operating Revenue

<sup>[4]</sup> Net Direct and Indirect Debt / Operating Revenue

<sup>[5]</sup> Interest Payments / Operating Revenue

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