



REPORT

Council

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Bruce Garrod, Regional Councillor
DATE: January 27, 2025
REPORT: BG-01/25 **FILE NO.**

SUBJECT: Participation at ROMA Conference 2025

BACKGROUND:

ROMA (Rural Ontario Municipalities of Ontario) hosts a conference each year. The 2.5-day conference was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Toronto Jan 19-21st 2025 and Mayor Barton, Regional Councillor Garrod and Ward 5 Councillor/ Deputy Mayor Snooks and Ward 4 Councillor Popp attended.

DISCUSSION:

The conference is a combination of breakout rooms that create learning opportunities, plenary sessions where all delegates gather to hear speakers that are often of interest to most attendees, an active trade-floor where service providers make their offerings known, and various networking events. It provides delegates with lessons learned, innovative ideas, and solutions from other rural municipalities and service providers, that can be brought back to council and township staff for consideration. Most importantly, the conference is an opportunity for scheduled delegations with various Provincial Ministries.

Provincial Delegations

The Uxbridge representatives attended a record eight Ministerial delegations. The list includes;

Ministry of Natural Resources

Minister Graydon Smith

Reviewed long-term planning of integrating exhausted pits into the Uxbridge Urban Park as well as the need for the Township to control fill applications.

Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Minister Todd McCarthy

Presented a status updated excellent progress of the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park as well as other related Township initiatives including trail integration and active transportation initiatives.

Ministry of Transportation

Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria

Discussed future use of Metrolinx rail lines and the need to enhance GO bus services to Uxbridge to support economic development activities including the building of the new hospital and LTC home,

Ministry of Infrastructure

Parliamentary Assistant Amarjot Sandhu

Discussed the complexities, in a near zero-growth environment, of managing the ongoing financial challenge of infrastructure maintenance.

Ministry of Rural Affairs

Minister Lisa Thompson

Reviewed downtown revitalization efforts and significant positive impact of past RED grants

Ministry of Energy and Electrification

Parliamentary Assistant Rudy Cuzzetto

Recognized and provided thanks for phase 2 natural gas expansion and discussed the need to look to extend service to northern rural communities to serve Uxbridge farmers, businesses and home owners.

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Minister Paul Calandra and PA Tyler Allsopp

Elena Pacheco, COO Oak Valley Health, and Joseph Gulizia, CEO Universal Care joined to present the plans to integrate the 192-bed LTC home and 50 transition beds into the Uxbridge Hospital build project and the critical approvals necessary to begin work as planned in 2025

Ministry of Health

Parliamentary Assistant, Anthony Leardi

CEO Mark Fam and COO Elena Pacheco both of Oak Valley Health, joined to review the integrated health care hub, and the progress being made toward starting construction of the new hospital, including the early works in spring 2025.

Special thanks to Township staff for the many hours scheduling the delegations and the significant iterative effort creating quality presentation material.

Learning sessions that were available included but not limited to

- Alternative wastewater management in rural environments
- Rural Responses to Mental Health and Addictions
- Provincial offences enforcement through the enhanced use of ASE's
- Alternative Infrastructure Delivery and Partnership Opportunities
- Many more

Plenary Discussions included,

- Honourable Doug Ford regarding economic growth in Ontario, moving forward with More Homes Faster, American trade challenges, and working in partnership with municipalities on related matters;
- Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs who announced expansion of the RED grant program;
- Marit Stiles, Leader of the Official Opposition regarding the vision of supporting rural Ontario
- Bonnie Crombie regarding her party working to address ROMA priorities
- Ministers' Forum; 20+ Provincial Ministers taking live questions from delegates for 60 minutes.

Exhibitors

Delegates visited with exhibitors created opportunities to discuss Uxbridge-specific issues including automatic speed enforcement, and mental health support for agricultural workers and their families.

Networking Opportunities.

Seemingly endless opportunities arise to speak directly with private sector partners, as well as establish, and rekindle, relationships with municipal leaders Uxbridge representatives also leveraged many ad hoc opportunities to meet with members of the Provincial Ministers

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This report aligns with Good Governance

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report BG-01/25 submitted by Bruce Garrod, Regional Councillor re Participation at ROMA Conference 2025 be received for information.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of Mayor Barton, Deputy Mayor Snooks and Councillor Popp by Bruce Garrod Regional Councillor

Bruce Garrod
Regional Councillor