

Caledon calls on Province to increase funding for social services in Peel

By Zachary Roman, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Caledon Councillors would like to see Peel residents get their 'fair' share of provincial funding for social services.

On July 9, Councillors passed a motion from Mayor Annette Groves calling on the Government of Ontario to work with Caledon on addressing provincial underfunding of municipal and social services.

Groves' motion came in response to a study commissioned by a group of Peel non-profits.

In May, the Metamorphosis Network, which represents over 100 Peel non-profits in the health and community service sectors, said there's an \$868 million annual shortfall in funding for Peel non-profits.

'The staggering, ongoing annual funding shortfall' equates to an annual gap of \$578

for every person in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon,' said Metamorphosis Network coordinator Sean Meagher in a May 23 statement.

In a July 9 news release, Groves said residents of Caledon, and Peel as a whole, deserve a fair deal from the Provincial Government.

'The current underfunding places an unfair burden on property taxpayers. We need sustainable funding solutions to ensure reliable access to social services and to equip our municipalities with the necessary revenue tools to meet the needs of our rapidly growing population,' said Groves.

Groves' motion said timely collaboration on sustainable funding solutions is important to ensure reliable access to social services in Peel like child care, senior care, public health, and housing services.

According to the study commissioned by the Metamorphosis Network, Peel municipalities have to charge taxpayers \$138 per year on their property taxes to compensate for the funding shortfall.

The study was done by a firm called Blueprint ADE and it compares Peel to seven other municipalities in Ontario with populations over 500,000: Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, York, Durham, Waterloo and Halton.

'Funding in Peel is persistently low,' the report reads. 'In the most recent year of data available, Peel finishes dead last among comparators for municipal social service funding, non-profit community service funding, and Local Health Integration Network community health funding. In 2023-24, it ranked below average for school board funding.'

The report found that non-profits in Peel grew less financially stable between 2021 and 2023.

'Over the same time period, fewer of them were able to rely on provincial support as their primary source of funding,' the report reads. 'The available data suggest that the gap in provincial support for social services in Peel Region Municipalities is having negative consequences for the organizations that provide those services, and that the burden borne by

municipal taxpayers in the Region is increasing.'