

Caledon to allocate \$550,000 for Peel dissolution work

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Caledon is setting aside more money to manage the impacts of the Region of Peel dissolving.

At a special council meeting held on November 14, Caledon Council approved the creation of a new \$550,000 capital project to support Peel dissolution work and the retention of experts in the legal, finance, and analysis fields.

On June 9, the Hazel McCallion Act was passed, mandating that Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga become independent single-tier municipalities by January 1, 2025.

On July 5, 2023, the Provincial Government appointed a five-person transition board to oversee the dissolution of the Region of Peel.

Rebecca Carvalho, Manager of Strategic Initiatives for the Town of Caledon, said Caledon has established its own team of staff to work with the transition board.

"Discussions on dissolution have only been initiated recently, and will require significant work and effort to ensure appropriate advocacy for positions that best suit Caledon's long-term financial sustainability and service continuity," wrote Carvalho in a report.

She explained the transition board spent its summer orienting itself with the Region of Peel. On October 17, it held a meeting where initial discussions on the transition process were held. The board intends to make recommendations that will be endorsed by the councils of each of Peel's three municipalities. The board also promises service continuity for all Peel residents.

Carvalho said the transition board will make recommendations on the services to be transferred to each municipality (or an alternative delivery model); the governance model required for each service; the people, assets, and liabilities required for delivering services; and the estimated cost and source of funding for services.

Peel currently manages many vital services for Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga residents, such as water and wastewater, waste management, and public health.

Carvalho said Peel's dissolution will be done in three stages.

The first involves research on redistributing regional services and is in progress from now until January 2024.

"The work involved in Stage One will require significant effort on behalf of the Region and local municipalities to turn around analysis relatively quickly," wrote Carvalho in her report. "The request for funding in this report is directly linked to ensuring Caledon has the capacity to provide thorough and prompt input in this critical time."

Stage two of the process will be "detailed analysis and distribution of Regional assets and liabilities" and the preparation of a report for the Province. This process is projected to be complete next summer.

Stage three is the implementation of the transition board's recommendations, to be determined by the Province.

Carvalho said more information about stages two and three will be brought to Council as soon as it's available.

?We do very much intend to keep Council up to date at those critical milestone points,? said Carvalho.

Caledon previously earmarked \$200,000 for Peel transition work at a July 11, 2023, general committee meeting. Then-CAO Carey Herd said significant data collection and careful analysis would be required to protect the interests of Caledon.

?This is a significant and complicated task and there is an immediate need to access specialized expertise for this once in a generation change to how the community is governed and services delivered,? said Herd at the time.

Ward 1 Councillor Lynn Kiernan, at the November 14 meeting, asked where that \$200,000 went so far.

Carvalho said \$20,000 of it has been spent, with commitments on another \$120,000 of it. She said about half of the new \$550,000 will be needed for legal costs. She said staff are committed to ensuring the accountability of any money spent hiring help for Peel dissolution work.

Caledon residents looking to get involved in the dissolution process and share their opinions can start by visiting the Town's community engagement website at this link: haveyoursaycaledon.ca/peel-dissolution.

Residents can also provide feedback to the Province at the following link: ontario.ca/page/peel-region-transition-board.