

Illegal land use, highways safety, and transit top Caledon's AMO agenda

By **Riley Murphy**

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The Town of Caledon recently attended the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference, held from August 17 to 19 in Ottawa.

During the conference, members of Council and senior Town staff met with more than a dozen provincial Ministers, Parliamentary Assistants, opposition leaders, and key agencies to champion Caledon's most pressing priorities, read the Town's media release.

Topics discussed included road safety improvements on Highway 10 and key truck routes, protecting neighbourhoods from illegal land use, climate change adaptation through stormwater upgrades, and more.

"Caledon is growing rapidly, and we need proactive, collaborative solutions to make sure that growth benefits everyone," said Mayor Annette Groves. "At AMO, we were able to have meaningful, solutions-focused conversations advocating for action that protects residents' safety, supports our local economy, invests in our infrastructure, and plans for a sustainable future."

Local Councillors were able to lead delegations pertaining to important issues in the community.

"I was honoured to be tasked by the Mayor to lead the delegation to the New Democratic Party of Ontario and leader of the Official Opposition, Marit Stiles. Ms. Stiles and her caucus members were supportive of Caledon's efforts to deal with illegal land uses and Council's opposition to Bill 212, Bill 5 and Bill 17," shared Councillor Doug Maskell for Ward 3.

He shared that with 444 municipalities in Ontario, AMO is an opportunity to meet with and liaise with municipal representatives from across the Province.

At this year's AMO Conference, Regional Councillor Early for Wards 1, 2, and 3 participated as both a ROMA board member and as part of Caledon's regional and local delegations.

She said discussions covered road safety, transit expansion, local business supports, stronger enforcement against illegal land use, sustainable growth planning, new energy and infrastructure needs, climate resilience, reducing the impacts of aggregate operations, age-friendly community planning, and expanding broadband access.

"These conversations were constructive and productive and I am optimistic about the progress made especially on solutions to address the challenges posed by illegal trucking operations and land use in our community," said Early.

Councillor Tony Rosa for Ward 5 shared that joining Mayor Groves and Council colleagues at this year's AMO conference was a great opportunity to engage directly with provincial leaders.

"We brought forward Caledon's pressing priorities, from long-term infrastructure planning to managing growth responsibly, and emphasized the urgent need for stronger support in addressing illegal trucking operations in our Town. The conversations were thoughtful and solution-focused. It was clear that our concerns resonated, and I'm hopeful about the collaboration and progress that can come from these discussions," said Rosa.

Councillor Cosimo Napoli for Ward 6 also said it was a very productive and engaging experience.

"A key highlight for me was leading the Green Party discussion delegation. During that conversation, we emphasized the urgent

need for improved transit options, advocating for the two GO Train services - Bolton and Macville. We also raised one of our most pressing local issues: controlling illegal trucking yards in Caledon, and asked the Province to provide us with more tools to effectively combat this issue. The ministers not only expressed their support but also shared our concerns, recognizing the impact this issue is having on our community. We're encouraged by their response and look forward to continuing those conversations," shared Napoli.

"I'm optimistic about the direction we're heading in and confident that the relationships built at AMO will help us continue advocating effectively for Caledon's future."

Similar to other Councillors, Councillor Dave Sheen for Ward 2 shared he was glad that they were able to raise the issue of illegal land uses repeatedly during every relevant delegation

"I appreciated joining our smaller delegation with Ontario Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner - having a focused setting made the conversation even more effective, and we were able to highlight the unbelievable environmental damage caused by illegal truck yards," said Sheen.

"Some of these operators have hauled in hundreds of truckloads of unknown fill to build parking lots on what was once productive farmland, affecting creeks, streams, ponds and entire watersheds in the process. It's not just about the number of heavy trucks on our roads; it's also the significant and lasting environmental damage that will eventually have to be addressed. Our request to the Province was clear: municipalities need stronger enforcement tools and tougher penalties to combat these illegal land uses more quickly and more effectively," he said.

Regional Councillor Mario Russo for Wards 4, 5, and 6, added "we recognize that with growth comes greater needs, and with the mandated growth coming to Caledon of 300,000 residents and 120,000 jobs, we need our Provincial and Federal partners to step up. Personally, having had over a dozen delegations between the Town and Region with our Ministers, I'm confident we were heard, and we'll keep on knocking until those key priorities are delivered."