

Province gives Peel Region Transition Board new mandate

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Peel's three municipalities may soon be tasked with providing more services.

The Province has given the Peel Region Transition Board a new mandate. The mandate is outlined in a January 24 letter from Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra to John Livey, Peel Region Transition Board Chair.

Instead of leading the dissolution of Peel as originally planned, the Board will now make recommendations on transferring the following Region-provided services to Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga to manage themselves: land-use planning, water and wastewater, regional roads, and waste management.

All other Region of Peel services are not within the transition board's scope at this time.

Peel's dissolution was cancelled in December 2023 and it was then that a new mandate for the Transition Board was first announced.

Calandra's letter provided some clarity on the mandate, which the Province claims will make local government in Peel more efficient.

Calandra said the goals of the new mandate include accelerating the building of homes in Peel, reducing "duplication" and "layers of bureaucracy", and ensuring continuity of services.

The Transition Board is being asked to "move expeditiously" to ensure Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga are equipped with necessary resources and personnel to undertake the transfer of planning authorities.

With regards to water and wastewater, the Board is being told to ensure recommendations brought forward will maintain public ownership and control of the services. Calandra also mentioned the Transition Board could look at creation of a municipal services corporation or services board.

"On all services listed above, any options or recommendations put forward by the Transition Board must ensure service continuity for residents without disruption," said Calandra.

He said all options or recommendations from the Board must take into account labour relations, back office support, and include a detailed financial analysis on local impacts.

"The Transition Board should continue to prioritize the preservation of frontline workers," said Calandra.

Calandra said he would like to see recommendations from the Transition Board this spring, and said his staff will be available to provide support to the board.

Calandra's letter, and a Region of Peel staff report on the Transition Board's new mandate, were presented to Regional Council for information at its February 8 meeting.

The staff report was authored by Sherona Hollman, Peel's Director of Strategy and Transformation, and submitted to Council by Peel's CAO Gary Kent.

The report explains that the new mandate impacts approximately 25 per cent of the Region's staff. It also said it remains unclear if the Transition Board's recommendations, when ready, will be made public.

The Transition Board has hired the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Hemson Consulting to work with Peel staff on creating evidence-based options and recommendations.

On the Region's part, it said it's committed to working with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff, the Transition Board, local municipalities, and third-party consultants to develop recommendations and options for Calandra by spring.

Peel staff have provided over 700 documents (translating to over 10,000 pages) to support the Transition Board, Ministry staff and the local municipalities, reads the staff report. Peel staff have also participated in over 40 meetings with the Transition Board and local municipalities through service working group meetings and critical milestone meetings.

Peel staff will continue to meet with the transition board bi-weekly until the end of April.

The staff report says financial impacts of the new mandate are unknown at this time, and that staff will continue to assess financial implications on an ongoing basis.