

Province introduces legislation to establish standardized municipal Code of Conduct

By **ZACHARY ROMAN**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Province has introduced new legislation that will impact Peel municipalities.

On December 12, the Ontario Government proposed changes to the Municipal Accountability Act that would create a standardized municipal Code of Conduct for all Ontario municipalities. It also would create a consistent integrity commissioner inquiry process and mandatory code of conduct training for municipal councillors and "certain local boards".

Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra said the process will support consistent accountability across all Ontario's municipalities.

"We had to make sure we got this right, which is why we worked with Ontario's Integrity Commissioner to find the best path forward to create a standardized code of conduct process across the province," he said.

Under the new legislation, municipal councillors could be removed from office if they seriously violate the proposed code.

A news release from the Province notes, "removal and disqualification could only occur upon the recommendation of the municipal integrity commissioner, a concurring report from the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario, and a unanimous vote of Council, with the exception of the member who is the subject of the report, members whose absence is approved by council or members who have a financial conflict of interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act."

The Province has also advanced the Peel Transition Implementation Act which if passed will transfer certain public works services from the Region of Peel to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. The Province said the transfer would provide municipalities with "greater independence to meet the needs of their growing communities."

Beginning July 1, 2026, the following changes would be implemented:

Regional roads and associated stormwater infrastructure, including ownership and maintenance responsibilities, from the Region of Peel to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon; and waste collection services and two community recycling centres located in Mississauga from the Region of Peel to the City of Mississauga.

The changes add on to the already-enacted transfer of land-use planning responsibilities from the Region of Peel to Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon that took effect on July 1, 2024.

The Province said Ontario's Provincial Land and Development Facilitator advisory agency will work with Peel's municipalities to facilitate the service transfer process at the cost of the Province.

According to the Province, transfer of waste collection services from the Region of Peel to Brampton and Caledon remains open for future consideration. The Province said it's also considering exploring options for the transfer of water and wastewater services from the Region of Peel to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

The Peel Region Transition Board, a body created to make recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the transfer of key public works services from the Region of Peel to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, will be dissolved on December 31.

Robin Jones, Mayor of Westport and the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), commended Calandra and the Province for the recently-introduced legislation.

“Municipal councils in Ontario have asked for legislation that holds elected officials to a higher standard of accountability. If passed, this bill would deliver on ensuring that, as members of council, we are living up to the trust that residents put in us,” said Jones.