



TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 26, 2016
FROM:	KATE GRAHAM, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC INNOVATION
SUBJECT:	SOUTHWEST ONTARIO URBAN MAYORS CAUCUS (SOUMC) - UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Community & Economic Innovation, the following actions be taken with respect to the Southwest Ontario Urban Mayors Caucus (SOUMC):

- a) That Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to support the administration of the Southwest Ontario Urban Mayors Caucus (SOUMC), led by Government and External Relations in partnership with the Mayor’s Office; and,
- b) That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

None.

BACKGROUND

The City of London’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan provides direction to build strategic and collaborative partnerships with neighbouring municipalities that will raise the City’s regional, national and international profile. The City’s vision outlines a clear vision to establishing London as “a leader in commerce, culture, and innovation – our region’s connection to the world.” City Council has prioritized collaboration regional to “work better together for economic growth [with] community partners.” Furthermore, the Strategic Plan also identifies working with our municipal neighbours to “create stronger industry clusters and raise our international profile and attractiveness.”

In June 2015, Mayor and Wardens from Southwest Ontario met with Premier Wynne in London to discuss several shared priorities for municipalities in the region, including economic development, transit/transportation and infrastructure. The Premier urged the Mayors and Wardens to come together and develop a common voice for the region. Shared messaging across the region would help speed the consultation process along. In response, the regional urban Mayors agreed to establish Southwest Ontario Urban Mayors Caucus (SOUMC).

SOUMC brings together the Mayors of the 11 largest urban municipalities in Southwest Ontario to share information and ideas, and to build consensus around key regional priorities. The mandate of this group is to provide a voice of the region to advocate on issue of shared concern including High-Speed Rail and intercity transportation. It also serves as an important vehicle for broader discussions around other regional priorities.

SOUMC has representation from London, Sarnia, Woodstock, Cambridge, Windsor, Brantford, Guelph, Waterloo, Stratford, Kitchener, and St. Thomas. Mayor Matt Brown was elected Chair of the group. As a leader and active member of SOUMC, London has an important opportunity to work with the region together and focus on the most significant challenges and opportunities that face Southwest Ontario.

At its inaugural meeting on January 6, 2016, the Mayors agreed that SOUMC must be strategic in its scope and focus on a small number of issues that are shared across the region. To this end, the Mayors identified the following four priorities:

1. Core Infrastructure (roads, bridges, water systems)
2. Public Transit and Regional Transportation
3. Social Housing
4. Economic Development

Urban municipalities face unique economic, social and environmental challenges. The 2.5 million Ontarians that live in the region expect that all governments will work together to develop solutions and ensure that our cities are dynamic, vibrant, and economically competitive. SOUMC presents an opportunity to build the profile of Southwest Ontario at Queen’s Park and Parliament Hill in

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recognition that many of the issues facing our communities are ones that we are facing together as a region.

A second meeting of SOUMC took place on March 3, 2016. The Mayors resolved to prepare two letters, one provincial and one federal, the primary purpose of which will be to introduce SOUMC to the other levels of government. Provincially the SOUMC will also ask for an update from the Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation on the status of regional bus deregulation. Federally, SOUMC will submit a list of important regional issues in advance of the federal budget, namely, developing solutions to Southwest Ontario’s social housing challenges as well as communicating regional support for London’s Rapid Transit Initiative.

At this meeting the Mayors agreed that many investments into Southwest Ontario benefit every community in the region. These investments, whether from other levels of government, private sector or civil society can help to bring Southwest Ontarians together, improve their quality of life and connect them with urban centres as well as national or international markets. To this end, the Mayors committed to recognizing significant investments that will increase the connectivity of the region. This includes the Government of Ontario’s recent commitment to strengthen regional links across Canada’s Innovation SuperCorridor, spanning Southwest Ontario to Ottawa.

Mayor’s Office is currently exploring timing for the next meeting, which may occur in late May. The next meeting will include the following components:

1. A panel discussion from leading voices around the four priority areas listed above. These discussions will serve to sharpen the focus of the work of the Caucus and aid in identifying specific advocacy positions;
2. A discussion of how SOUMC will work with other regional municipal associations such as the Western Ontario Warden’s Caucus (WOWC), the Large Urban Mayor’s Caucus (LUMCO), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);
3. The development of an event plan for a future meeting of SOUMC along the margins of the AMO Annual Conference in August. Central to this plan will be a request to provincial Ministers to meet with the Caucus to discuss agreed upon priorities.
4. An exploration of a modest cost-shared financing mechanism for SOUMC to ensure SOUMC receives event and logistics support in the future.

This report has been prepared in consultation with Nick Steinburg from the Mayor’s Office.

PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
ADAM THOMPSON MANAGER, GOVERNMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS	KATE GRAHAM DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC INNOVATION