

September 20, 2021

Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

RE: Report on 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference

UPDATE:

The 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference took place virtually from August 15-18th, with London serving as the “host” city. This note provides a review of London’s participation in the conference, including the City’s ministerial delegations.

Showcasing London at the 2021 AMO Conference

London’s presence at the conference was evident throughout the program, starting with the conference platform itself. Conference activities were accessed through a virtual lobby that featured interactive 360-degree views of RBC Place London, while the virtual exhibit hall was laid out over the same 360-degree-style images of Covent Garden Market.

London video presentations kicked off the opening of the conference, including welcome messages from the Mayor and the Chiefs of Chiefs of Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Munsee-Delaware Nation, and Oneida Nation of the Thames; a performance of O Canada by London-based vocal quartet The McAuley Boys; and an opening prayer provided by Ron Hill (N’Amerind Friendship Centre).

Conference attendees were able to access London “study tour” videos through an interactive virtual map of London. These videos provided a behind-the-scenes look at City initiatives and tourism attractions, including Bostwick Community Centre, Greenway Wastewater Treatment Centre, and 100 Kellogg Lane. In total, the study tour videos were viewed over 750 times.

A major highlight of the virtual conference was the London Music Office’s “Catch-up Concert”, which invited conference participants to listen to London musical talent following the end of the first day of the program. The stream peaked at over 500 simultaneous viewers, meaning it’s likely more than one third of all conference registrants listened in during the hour. AMO received a lot of positive feedback on the concert, and post-conference survey participants scored it 4.88/5 on average.

London also contributed to conference learning opportunities, including through a session on “Innovative Housing Solutions”. London’s Director of Housing Stability Services, Craig Cooper walked participants through London’s work on ending veterans’ homelessness and using artificial intelligence to identify at-risk residents.

Rounding out London's presence were all the background elements, including social media promotion, a dedicated Tourism London webpage, a City of London exhibition booth, and frequent mentions throughout the conference program.

Overall, there was a lot of positive feedback on London's presence at the conference. While it would have been everyone's preference to host the conference in-person, we were able to make the most of every opportunity to promote our city.

Ministerial Delegations

The AMO annual conference is an important annual event for municipal intergovernmental advocacy due in large part to the opportunity for delegation meetings with a variety of provincial ministers.

London was very well represented in our delegation meetings, and sincere thanks to all the Council colleagues who made exceptional use of the time we had with the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Economic Development, Health, Mental Health, Education, and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment.

As the conference host, our delegations this year had to balance welcoming the ministers, highlighting the unique solutions and expertise that London offers, as well as underscoring community needs and opportunities for future collaboration between our governments. The London delegation more than rose to the challenge, and all our meetings were exceptional. We've already started to see the benefits of our conversations at AMO, including having the Minister of Education in London for the opening of the Nshwaasnangong Indigenous Child Care and Family Centre last week.

CONCLUSION:

I want to thank all the members of Council, City staff, and community members who worked hard to make London's presence as host city so memorable. I have no doubt that we made a positive impression on conference participants this year, and that London will more than live up to the expectations we set when we host the conference again in 2023.

I appreciate your support as I continue to serve as Chair of the Large Urban Caucus, representing London at the AMO Board, Executive Committee, and at meetings of the Provincial Memorandum of Understanding Table, and I look forward to providing additional updates on AMOs advocacy on behalf of Ontario municipalities.

Respectfully submitted by:

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