



Eastern Ontario Leadership Council Communications Update September 2017

This communications update is the first in a series of quarterly updates that will be prepared for the benefit of the board members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, the Ontario East Economic Development Commission, and Community Futures Ontario East.

1. History and Background

Following the completion and adoption in 2014 of the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy by both the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus (EOMC), a key action item of the strategy was the creation of a regional economic governance model, tasked with coordinating strategic economic development in Eastern Ontario.

As a result, the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council was formed in late 2015, and has developed into a partnership between the five aforementioned organizations. The board's mandate is to lead the implementation of the regional economic development strategy, namely through three working groups, being:

- Integrated, Intelligent Transportation System
- Workforce Development and Deployment
- Technology Integration and Innovation

Through the working groups, the EOLC also serves as a conduit for information and policy positions with various stakeholders, including the Province of Ontario; tracks and reports on the performance of the Eastern Ontario economy, as it relates to the priorities of the Economic Development Strategy; undertakes advocacy on key issues; and identifies resources and provides recommendations on funding opportunities.

2. Composition of the EOLC Board

The board of the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council consists of:

Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

- Mayor Robert Quaiff (**EOLC Co-Chair**)
- Kelly Pender, CAO, County of Frontenac
- Andy Brown, CAO, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus

- Mayor Leslie O'Shaughnessy (**EOLC Co-Chair**)
- Gerard Hunt, CAO, City of Kingston
- Maureen Adams, CAO, City of Cornwall

Eastern Ontario Regional Network

- David Fell, CEO
- Lisa Severson

Ontario East Economic Development Commission

- Bonnie O'Neill, Executive Director
- Dan Borowec

Community Futures Ontario East

- Andrew Wallen, GM & CEO, Kawartha Lakes CFDC
- Bruce Smith, Chair, Eastern Ontario CFDC Network

The following staff also provide resource and administrative assistance:

- Craig Desjardins
- Kathryn Wood
- Justin Bromberg

3. Discussions with the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth

In January 2017, the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth (MEDG) advised the EOLC that the Province of Ontario – through the Premier's Office – was planning for the preparation and eventual implementation of seven regional economic development plans across the Province. Due to Eastern Ontario's extensive experience in researching and preparing a regional strategy, this region was selected as a potential pilot region and MEDG staff were requested to work

with the EOLC to determine the most appropriate method of implementation. Over subsequent months, the EOLC provided input to the MEDG on the plan's terms of reference and emphasized the importance of provincial funding.

In early July, MEDG staff informed the EOLC board that the Province's decision was to make the official announcement for regional plans in Northern Ontario, while simultaneously moving forward with Eastern Ontario. It was proposed that the EOLC be used as a mechanism to institute a stakeholder advisory committee to implement the work. Ministry staff informed the EOLC board that the bulk of MEDG's resources would focus on Eastern Ontario, due to existing resources for Northern Ontario through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. A steering committee was formed between both parties to examine opportunities and advance the process. This committee met for the first time in late August.

During the steering committee meeting, EOLC members reiterated to MEDG staff that the Ministry must commit funding if it wishes to move forward with the implementation of a regional economic development plan for Eastern Ontario. Given this region's readiness to move forward, it is estimated that the process would take four months and that Eastern Ontario would be the first region to have a formal plan produced. MEDG staff explained that financial and in-kind resources would be provided to this end. While specific details have yet to be announced, MEDG has advised that implementation funding would be in the 2018 provincial budget. Discussions ensued on the basis for this regional plan, and many emphasized that the Economic Development Strategy of 2014 should be a foundational document in this process. A decision will be made at the EOLC board meeting of September 22, in order to provide feedback to MEDG.

4. Funding Application to the Rural Economic Development Program

In mid-April 2017, the EOLC submitted a funding grant application to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), requesting \$100,000 through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program. The EOLC received notice in late July 2017 that the application did not receive approval, in large part because the Ministry felt it was too research intensive and not outcome-specific. In late August, EOLC staff met with various representatives of OMAFRA – including a Senior Advisor to the Minister – to discuss the changes required to be successful during the next round of funding applications. OMAFRA staff offered assistance to the EOLC staff in preparing the revised application. The goal of the revised application will be to collect two or three components from the working

groups, which will be provided as specific outcomes. The EOLC board agreed that staff should prepare a revised application ahead of the September 29 deadline. Ministry staff confirmed that the EOLC could simultaneously receive funding for research from OMAFRA, as well as funding for the regional plan from MEDG.

5. Presentation at Ontario East Municipal Conference (OEMC)

Co-Chairs Robert Quaiff and Leslie O’Shaughnessy, with the support of Kathryn Wood and Andrew Wallen, provided a joint presentation on the EOLC’s activities on September 14 during the Ontario East Municipal Conference in Kingston. The session was well attended, and the participants were engaged with questions.

6. Updates from the EOLC Working Groups

The EOLC employs a “working group” model to guide the board’s deliberations and offer recommendations on implementation priorities and directions. These three working groups also build broader collaborations across the region; draw on widespread expertise; provide opportunities for participation from across the region and across various sectors (e.g. private sector, post-secondary education).

Multiple EOLC members sit on the three working groups, and each one is chaired by an EOLC member or designate. They are as follows:

- Integrated, Intelligent Transportation System (I2TS) – Andrew Wallen
- Workforce Development and Deployment (WD&D) – Craig Desjardins
- Technology Integration and Innovation (TI&I) – David Fell

The WD&D working group met for the first time in 2016, while the I2TS and TI&I groups met for the first time in June. Each has adopted its own terms of reference. Two of the groups met again in July and August, both at Innovation Park in Kingston. Other meetings are forthcoming throughout the fall. **N.B.:** The three working groups’ latest initiatives and updates are included on the attached PowerPoint presentation, which was prepared for the OEMC Conference.

7. Next EOLC Meeting

Friday, November 17