



# Briefing Note from Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer

## Government relations activities:

### Regional

- A [Regional Advocacy](#) site was launched. Top election priorities include tariff response, a commitment to fund GO East stations, addressing homelessness, affordable housing, mental health, and addictions, and sustainable municipal finances. These priorities are echoed in the [Chair's Metroland column](#).
- A 2025 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission was sent in, outlining the need for investment in GO East, infrastructure funding programs, and a call for new funding structure. The submission also included the benefits of upper-tier regions and investments in affordable housing to solve homelessness.
- Chair Henry attended a MARCO meeting and discussed provincial and federal election priorities, responses to tariffs and the housing supply challenge.
- Several announcements were held this month:
  - MPs Turnbull and Holland announced \$52.7M from the [Canada Public Transit Fund](#) for the baseline funding for DRT over the next 10 years.
  - MP Turnbull held an echo announcement of the \$6.4 million from the [Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampment Initiative](#) funding to advance Phase 2 of 1635 Dundas Street East.
  - Durham Regional MPPs announced a [Homelessness Addiction and Recovery Treatment Hub](#) coming to Durham Region with funding to Durham Community Health Centre.
- Chair Henry sent a [letter](#) to Minister Miller to support Durham College's advocacy on the expansion of the Post Graduate Work Permit Program to include fields of study that will address Durham's labour market needs.
- Chair Henry, Elaine and Durham Mayors and CAOs met to discuss homelessness, and other issues such as healthcare, development charges and election priorities.

### Provincial and Federal

- There are changes for our local MPs and their roles on the federal Parliamentary Secretary team:
  - Jennifer O'Connell becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety (Cybersecurity)

- Ryan Turnbull becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
- The province committed \$1.4 B in new funding to [Ontario's Primary Care Action Team](#) to connect two million people to a family doctor in the next four years.
- The federal government's former high-frequency rail becomes high-speed rail as they secured a contractor to design, build, and operate the [Toronto to Quebec City line](#).

## Campaign Pledges

- The provincial election writ period began January 29 and the election is set for February 27, 2025.
- The Conservative party announced an election promise to [remove the tolls from the 407](#) in Durham Region while the NDP committed to remove tolls from the 407 entirely. The Green Party supports the creation of dedicated truck lanes and the removal of tolls on transport trucks.
- AMO is tracking [provincial election commitments](#) related to their election advocacy. These commitments align with our top GR priorities, including homelessness, reliance on municipal property taxes to fund provincial responsibilities, and local infrastructure investment.
- The three main parties have released their transit plans ([Liberal](#); [NDP](#); [PC](#)) which include a commitment to the GO Lakeshore East Extension to Bowmanville.

## Current items of interest:

- **Region of Durham's response to severe winter weather:** In mid-February, during inclement weather across the Region, staff worked hard to mitigate service disruptions and impacts. Thank you to everyone involved in keeping residents and visitors to Durham safe.
- [Ritson School Project: A vision for a vibrant community - Region of Durham](#)
- [Regional Chair and Mayors affirm support of local businesses in response to Canadian export tariffs - Region of Durham](#)
- [1635 Dundas Street East: Meeting immediate and long-term needs of Durham residents without a home - Region of Durham](#)
- ["Connected Communities. Connected to you." Durham Region releases its 2025 to 2035 Strategic Plan - Region of Durham](#)

## Road work:

- [Lane restrictions on King Street in Oshawa due to watermain break - Region of Durham](#)
- [Lane restrictions on Phillip Murray Avenue in Oshawa - Region of Durham](#)
- [Lane restrictions on Durham Regional Highway 2 in Clarington - Region of Durham](#)

## Key activities from February:

- Regional Chair statement:
  - [Regional Chair statement honours Black History Month; Regional event to spotlight community leaders - Region of Durham](#)
  - [Durham Region celebrates Lunar New Year; welcomes the Year of the Snake - Region of Durham](#)
- [Go from the classroom to CEO with BACD's Summer Company program - Region of Durham](#)

- [Supporting positive youth development: Applications open to receive funding for community projects - Region of Durham](#)
- [Share ideas for Beaverton Heights Community Hub at the virtual engagement session - Region of Durham](#)
- [Health Department releases report on solar ultraviolet radiation in Durham Region - Region of Durham](#)
- [Scugog residents: Help shape Durham's active transportation future - Region of Durham](#)
- [Automated speed enforcement improving road safety - Region of Durham](#)
- [Increasing safety on our roads with roundabouts - Region of Durham](#)
- [Heading out? Use our Traffic Watch Map to plan your route - Region of Durham](#)
- [Use our online tool for details on road construction projects in Durham - Region of Durham](#)