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TO: Transportation Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des transports

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SUBJECT: OGRA 2023 Annual Conference Delegate Report (Councillor Desroches)

OBJET : Le rapport du délégué du congrès annuel de OGRA 2023 (Conseiller Desroches)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to report to Committee following attendance at the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) Annual Conference.

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Council Expense Policy, Members of Council who undertake City-funded travel must submit a written report to the appropriate Standing

Committee detailing their experiences, what they learned at the conference and how the City's position or interests were advanced.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa is the fourth largest city in Canada and the second largest city in Ontario. As a leading municipality, Ottawa is a member of several municipal organizations responsible for advancing important priorities and engaging with upper levels of government. Our participation allows the City to influence policy development at the provincial and national level, while networking and learning from our peers. To this end, Members of Council are invited to attend various conferences, conventions, and meetings both within and outside the municipality, including the Ontario Good Roads Association (also known as Good Roads or OGRA).

OGRA is an organization focused on improving roads and other infrastructure in Ontario. They host an annual multi-day conference for different levels of government in Ontario to connect and discuss topics such as municipal transportation and infrastructure.

OGRA held their annual conference from April 16-19, 2023, in Toronto, Ontario. Councillor Steve Desroches attended the conference as the Council-appointed representative to OGRA, as well as Councillor Laine Johnson.

DISCUSSION

Good Roads is a municipal association committed to ensuring the quality and design of roads across the province. OGRA is unique in that it is the only provincial municipal organization that includes the City of Toronto. Every year, the Good Roads conference gathers leaders from across Ontario for an intensive conference focused on improving road policy. The conference has a strong focus on the technical aspects of road construction and road maintenance. For example, I am particularly interested in the use of recycled asphalt. This practice has several benefits to municipalities and the City of Ottawa is advancing the project.

Attending the OGRA conference provided me the opportunity to connect with leaders across the province in the government and private sectors and share best practices on city infrastructure. I received an update on the provincial 'Call Before You Dig' project that is regulated by the province in collaboration with various utilities. 'Call Before You Dig' is also promoted by the City of Ottawa. I continue to promote the service to

residents in the City of Ottawa with a goal of preventing a costly and dangerous infrastructure break such as natural gas and/or other key utilities.

Experts at the conference spoke on the importance of developing smart cities through pavement preservation and the development of smart traffic sensors. Additionally, there was important discussions about emergency preparedness and helpful strategies for municipalities when it comes to dealing with the impacts of climate change.

I had the opportunity to hear from federal, provincial, and municipal leaders on the innovations and advancements being made to infrastructure across the country. It was helpful to hear the priorities of the Premier, leader of the Official Opposition in Ontario and other political parties on municipal priorities. Now more than ever, it is important for all government jurisdictions to keep up with the growth being experienced across the country and to work collaboratively with the Province of Ontario.

At the trade show portion of the conference, I had the opportunity to observe suppliers and road network stakeholders such as improved traffic calming and signals (City Councillors are not involved in procurement decisions, but it is helpful to see some of the products and services available for road infrastructure.) Each of the groups I had the privilege of meeting with represent leaders in the industry.

I also received an update on OGRA technical courses that are available to City of Ottawa employees. Additionally, I had the opportunity to participate in the OGRA elections of a capable Board of Directors.

The City of Ottawa continues to lead on a number of program and policy areas and can benefit from the best practices of other Ontario municipalities. There are a number of OGRA programs and training that would be of benefit to City of Ottawa employees including: contracts, winter maintenance, road design and many others.

CONCLUSION

It is through the commitment of Members of Council, to attend conferences like the OGRA 2023 Annual Conference, that the City of Ottawa's interests are advanced.

Steve Desroches

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