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County of Dufferin lobby?s province for help with housing, environmental issues

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The County of Dufferin is lobbying for the provincial government to help address housing and environmental priorities in the County.

Members of Dufferin County Council and staff attended the 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference in London, Ont. from Aug. 20 to Aug. 23, where they met with government ministers, officials, and other municipal leaders.

The priorities brought forward by the County included balancing new housing and preserving farmland, advancing climate objectives, and increasing the housing supply.

?Dufferin County's natural environment is its strongest asset. With a mix of small urban centres and rural agricultural communities, the County is dedicated to embracing growth while preserving and protecting Dufferin's unique natural landscape and advancing a more sustainable and resilient community for all,? said Wade Mills, Warden of Dufferin County. ?We appreciated the opportunity to build meaningful relationships and strengthen existing ones at this year's AMO conference, and will continue to advance County priorities as we work towards our vision of being a community that grows together.?

Balancing new housing and preserving farmland:

The County met with Lisa Thompson, the province's minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs, to discuss addressing the housing crisis while protecting agricultural lands.

The County noted that they've continued to experience pressure to convert greenfield land to residential and to provide approvals for residential lots.

According to the County of Dufferin, 45 per cent of the land base within the area is prime agricultural land, and farm receipts from 2021 totalled almost $184 million, making up a significant portion of the total local economy.

At its delegation, the County requested further consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders on rural lot creation policies, that rural severances be limited to ensure the preservation of farmland for future generations, and additional residential units be recognized as permitted uses on existing rural residential lots and farms.

Advancing climate objective and increasing housing supply:

County representatives also met with Parliamentary assistant Matthew Rae, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to discuss advancing climate objectives and increasing housing supply.

The County has requested that the Ontario Building Code be updated to include:

?Every new single detached, semi-detached and row townhouse be provided with a rough-in for future electric vehicle supply equipment (charging station);

?The rough-in shall include a minimum 200-amp panel board, a conduit that is not less than 1-1/16? (27mm) trade size and a square 4-11/16? (119mm) trade size electrical box;

? The electrical box shall be installed in the garage, carport, or adjacent to the driveway and shall be fume-proofed from the house.

According to the County of Dufferin, 49 per cent of local greenhouse gas emissions in Dufferin come from the transportation sector.

The electric vehicle charging network in Dufferin is made up of 22 Level-2 charging stations and two Level-3 fast chargers at various municipal offices and recreation and cultural centers across the County.

To learn more about the County's strategic priorities for the next four years, visit www.dufferincounty.ca.