



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

Date: Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Subject: Proposed 2025 Approved Conferences List, and Review of the Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards Policy

Report #: 2024-1002-LCS-R31-KH

Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Report is to seek approval for the list of conferences which Members of County Council may attend in 2025 (see attached **Appendix B**), in accordance with the 2022-003 Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards Policy (the "**Conference Policy**"), as well as to seek approval for the amendments to the said Conference Policy (see attached **Appendix A**).

Background

The Conference Policy establishes a policy related to the attendance of Members of County Council and Members of Agencies, Boards and Committees ("**Committees**") at conferences, and also recognizes the need for members of Council and Committees to enhance their knowledge and keep abreast of the changing technologies, and evolving legislative requirements affecting the County. Annually, County Council reviews identified Conferences, and approves those which have historically proven to provide Members with information, resources, and experiential opportunities from which to draw upon in addressing matters of County business.

Discussion

The most recent version of the Conference Policy was approved by County Council on May 18, 2022.

During this term of Council, questions have been raised regarding the need to clarify language within the Conference Policy, as well as to reconsider the allocated amounts for meal allowances. Administration has endeavoured to remove some of the ambiguity within the Policy and has increased the meal

allocations to align with the [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) Meal Allowance](#) rate as amended from time to time. This is consistent with the practice associated with the mileage rate within the Policy, which also uses the CRA values, as amended from time to time.

A comparison of meal values are outlined in the table below:

Meal	Current Rates	Proposed CRA Rates (as of April 1, 2024)
Breakfast	\$15.00	\$24.90
Lunch	\$20.00	\$25.20
Dinner	\$40.00	\$61.85
Total	\$75.00	\$111.95

Council should be aware that the responsibility for registering Members of County Council for conferences, workshops, seminars, etc., as well as for making all related travel arrangements resides with County Administration, within the Legislative and Community Services department. Should any Member wish to attend a 2025 Conference within the parameters of the Conference Policy, it is recommended that you reach out to the Coordinator, Legislative and Community Services, Crystal Sylvestre, at your earliest possible opportunity. Further, any change of plans, or cancellation of travel arrangements shall be communicated with Administration as soon as possible.

The contact particulars for Crystal Sylvestre are as follows:

(E) csylvestre@countyofessex.ca

(T) 519-776-6441 x 1229

Proposed 2025 Conference List

The following Conferences (also attached as **Appendix B**) have been scheduled for 2025 and are proposed for approval:

ROMA - Rural Ontario Municipal Association

Date: January 19 - 21, 2025

Location: Toronto

OGRA - Ontario Good Roads Association

Date: March 30 - April 02, 2025

Location: Toronto

AMO – OSUM - Ontario Small Urban Municipalities

Date: April 30 – May 2, 2025

Location: Collingwood

GLSLCI - Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Date: May 14-16, 2025

Location: Milwaukee, WI, USA

FCM - Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Date: May 29–June 1, 2025

Location: Ottawa

AMO - Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Date: August, 2025

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

TAC–Transportation Association of Canada **Propose To Remove From List**

Usually fourth week of September. (Exact Dates and Location TBD)

(NOTE: 2024 was in Vancouver)

WOWC– Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus - **Propose To Add To List**

October 2025 (Exact Dates and Location TBD)

Administration is proposing two changes to the list of approved conferences for 2025. The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) conference, is primarily considered a conference for Administration, and it has not been attended by members of Council as far back as records indicate. It is being proposed for removal from the list.

Further, after a bit of a hiatus, the Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (WOWC) conference has been reinstated. This conference would add value in

particular for upper tier municipal representatives, and is thus being proposed for addition to the 2025 list for approval.

Committee Members (Lay persons) are subject to the approval process for attending non-listed conferences, outlined in the Policy.

Financial Implications

There are no financial impacts to the overall allocation for each Council member resulting from the increase in meal rates and adjustments to approved conferences. The policy allows each member to attend one conference per year, with travel expenses, including meals, accommodations, and conference fees, etc, not exceeding \$5,000 per member. Since this cap remains unchanged, there is no additional cost to the overall budget allocation for each member. The 2025 Council Services Budget will align with these policy parameters, proposing a \$5,000 maximum allocation per member, consistent with the approved list of conferences.

Consultations

During the review and preparation of this report, and the Policy, the following people were consulted:

- Kelly Robinson, Financial Analyst
- Crystal Sylvestre, Coordinator, Legislative and Community Services
- David Sundin, Interim Director, Legislative and Community Services/County Solicitor

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation<input type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results<input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County<input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth<input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council:

- 1) Receive and approve Report Number 2024-1002-LCS-R31-KH, Proposed 2025 Approved Conferences List, and Review of the Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards Policy; and,
- 2) Approve the proposed amendments to Policy Number 2022-003 attached hereto as Appendix A; and,
- 3) Approve the conferences identified and attached as Appendix B to this Report, in accordance with Policy Number 2022-003, as amended.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine Hebert

Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

Concurred With,

David Sundin

David Sundin, BA (Hons), LL.B., Interim Director, Legislative and Community
Services/County Solicitor

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
A	2022-003 Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards Policy (as amended)
B	Proposed 2025 Approved Conferences List