

## MEMO

**To:** Town of Saugeen Shores

**Prepared by:** Wellington Dupont Public Affairs

**Subject:** WD's Work with the Town of Saugeen Shores

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### **WD's Past and Current Work**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This briefing describes the government relations work that Wellington Dupont Public Affairs (WD) has undertaken and provided to the Town of Saugeen Shores (the Client) from May 2024 to the present.

The Client's priorities include:

- Securing federal and provincial funding for various projects, such as
  - the Aquatic and Wellness Centre (AWC),
  - the construction of more residential units, and
  - the relocation and restoration of graves from the Pioneer Cemetery that have been affected by erosion.
- Extending the lease agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for the Chantry Island Lighthouse.
- Advocating for fiber optics to be made available throughout the Town.
- Seeking clarity on the changes that have been made to the Town's Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) allocation.
- Advocating for improved safety of the Rail Trail Crossing at Highway 21.
- Establishing the Client's standing as a host community with Bruce Power.
- Clarifying the Exclusionary Zoning and Tax Incremental Financing issue.
- Engaging with DFO about removing the Just N Time tugboat stranded in Southampton Harbour.

In order to accomplish the Client's priorities, WD has made use of its extensive networks inside political and bureaucratic circles and knowledge of relevant processes and pressures at all levels of government to target key stakeholders and decision-makers. As a result, WD has facilitated meetings with the Client and key government department officials and senior political staff at the federal and provincial levels as well as meetings between WD advisors and government officials.

WD has assisted the Client with their applications to provincial and federal funding programs by arranging meetings with the appropriate officials to gather intel, providing revisions to application materials based on the acquired intel, and continually following up with decision-makers on the status of the applications once submitted. WD has also developed briefing notes, completed ongoing intelligence gathering, and held preparatory meetings with both the Client and political staff to ensure the best outcomes.

### **SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES**

- WD secured \$3.2 million for the Client from the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF).
- WD obtained additional annual funding of \$80,000 from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) for the Client to help fund the restoration and removal of graves from the Pioneer Cemetery.
- WD secured \$1.9 million for the Client from the Ontario Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program through the Housing-Enabling Core Servicing Stream (HECS).
- Through extensive government relations work, WD assisted the Client in securing a 5-year lease extension with DFO for the Chantry Island Lighthouse.
- Secured \$4.3 million from the Ministry of Transportation for the 2025-26 Connecting Links Program.

### **OUTSTANDING FUNDS**

- Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program (GICB) Round 2
- Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF)
- Active Transportation Fund (ATF)
  - Sidewalk Program 2026-2029
  - Shoreline Trail Repairs 2026-2027
  - Rail Trail & Highway 21 Crossing Improvements
  - Bruce Street and Victoria Street Bike Lanes Construction
- Community Emergency Preparedness Grant (CEGP)
- Community Sport and Recreation Fund (CSRIF)
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation – Capital Grant
- Experience Ontario
  - Pumpkinfest

- Marine Heritage Festival

## **AQUATIC AND WELLNESS CENTRE**

WD facilitated multiple meetings with the federal Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities to discuss the Green and Inclusive Communities Building (GICB) fund rejection and future application. These meetings with the key government officials working in the Minister's office provided the Client with valuable advice about the GICB Fund in relation to the Client's application. WD has also been in close communication with the Regional Affairs Advisor in the Office of the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities and has sent a copy of the Client's latest GICB Fund application for their review.

### Federal meetings WD arranged for the Client

#### **1. Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities**

Meetings arranged with:

- Lindsay Basinger, Regional Advisor to the Minister.
  - The Client highlighted their latest application to the GICB and received valuable advice about the GICB Fund in relation to the Client's application, which allowed the Client to improve their application.

#### **2. Office of the Prime Minister of Canada (PMO)**

Meetings arranged with:

- Zachary Nixon, Regional Advisor to the Prime Minister.
  - The Client discussed the new GICB Fund application they had prepared.

#### **3. Office of the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario (FedDev)**

Meeting arranged with:

- Owen McAdams, Senior Regional and Parliamentary Affairs Advisor to the Minister.
  - The Client discussed the AWC and during the meeting, the Senior Regional and Parliamentary Affairs Advisor suggested the Client apply for the Tourism Growth Program (TGP). WD sent a copy of the Client's completed application to their contact and followed up on the application status.

WD also connected the Client with the Director of the GICB Fund to clarify why their 2023 application was unsuccessful. The director's feedback enabled the Client to improve their application for the 2024 intake to the GICB Fund.

Provincial meetings WD arranged for the Client

**1. Office of the Minister of Infrastructure Ontario**

Meeting arranged with:

- The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure Ontario, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2024 Conference.
  - The Client discussed their GICB Fund application rejection and requested provincial support from the Minister.

**2. Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility**

Meetings held with:

- Mathew Varsava, Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships.
  - The Client discussed the accessibility features that are being installed in the AWC and sought advice on securing provincial funding.
- Nicholas Stacey, Senior Manager of Legislative Affairs and Stakeholder Relations.

WD assisted the Client with their applications to the GIBC, TGP, and the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF), by reviewing the applications, rewriting and restructuring sections to ensure they reflect the priorities and advice from federal and provincial contacts, and holding additional meetings to review the applications before submission.

The application to the TGP was unsuccessful. WD received feedback from federal contacts indicating that this was due to the program being oversubscribed. Additionally, the data submitted did not sufficiently demonstrate an increase in tourism compared to other applications.

Contacts in the corresponding federal and provincial ministries for the GICB and the CSRIF have confirmed that these new applications are currently under review.

WD also assisted the Client with their application for the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Capital Grant, which is currently under review.

## **RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION**

WD facilitated multiple meetings with the Office of the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities to discuss the Client's application to the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). WD arranged virtual and in-person meetings with the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss their innovative housing strategy and to seek advice on how to improve their application. WD has also ensured that the Client remains in good standing with the government through WD's federal contacts.

### Federal meetings WD arranged for the Client

#### **1. Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities**

Meetings arranged with:

- Lindsay Basinger, Regional Advisor to the Minister.
  - The Client discussed their HAF application with the Regional Advisor and received helpful feedback, which allowed the Client to improve their application.

#### **2. Office of the Prime Minister of Canada**

Meetings held with:

- Zachary Nixon, Regional Advisor to the Prime Minister.
  - The Client visited the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa and discussed the HAF application. The Regional Advisor agreed to review the Client's latest HAF application.

### Provincial meetings WD arranged for the Client

#### **Office of the Minister of Infrastructure Ontario**

Meeting arranged with:

- The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure Ontario, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2024 Conference.
  - The Client discussed their housing strategy with the Minister.

WD assisted the Client with their recent applications to the HAF, the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF), the Housing-Enabling Water Systems (HEWS) Fund, and the Housing-Enabling Core Servicing Stream (HECS) from the Ontario Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program. WD reviewed the applications, rewrote and restructured

sections that did not previously meet criteria, and offered key revisions to improve the clarity of their answers, ensuring that key funding priorities were addressed.

Through their extensive government relations work, **WD was able to secure \$3.2 million for the Client from the HAF.** WD was also able to secure **\$1.9 million** for the Client from the **HECS funding stream.**

### **CHANTRY ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE LEASE**

WD facilitated an in-person meeting with the Regional Advisor in the Office of the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to discuss the lease for the Chantry Island Lighthouse. WD has followed up with their contacts in the office, who have said a review is currently underway at DFO regarding the possibility of extending the term of lease agreements.

Following several inquiries and conversations with their contacts at DFO, WD assisted the Client in **securing a 5-year lease extension with DFO.**

### **PIONEER CEMETERY**

WD had several conversations with political staff in the provincial government about the possibility of securing funding for the Pioneer Cemetery. WD has spoken to the Chiefs of Staff and Ministers of:

- Citizenship and Multiculturalism (*for Heritage policy*);
- Municipal Affairs and Housing;
- Tourism, Culture and Gaming (*for Culture policy*);
- Public and Business Service Delivery;
- Environment, Conservation and Parks;
- Children, Community and Social Services;
- Rural Affairs;
- Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation (*for Metis relevance*);
- Infrastructure;
- Finance; and
- the Office of the Premier.

WD also arranged meetings with the Client and officials in the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the Office of the Premier.

Provincial meetings WD arranged for the Client

**1. Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism**

Meeting arranged with:

- Mark Pelayo, Director of Stakeholder and Caucus Relations to the Minister.
  - The Client discussed the importance of restoring and relocating graves from the cemetery and sought funding options.

**2. Office of the Premier of Ontario**

Meeting arranged with:

- Catherine Clasadonte Bianchi, Director of Policy in the Office of the Premier.
  - The Client outlined the Town's unique situation with regard to the cemetery and sought advice on potential funding options.

**3. Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery**

Meeting arranged with:

- Alex Piccini, Director of Stakeholder Relations
  - Reviewed potential ways to find funding.

After extensive government relations work, WD was able to secure additional annual funding of **\$80,000 from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF)** for the Client to help fund the restoration and removal of graves from the Pioneer Cemetery.

**OCIF ALLOCATION**

WD has been investigating the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) funding formula change and advising the Client on communicating with government officials on the new amount. WD has raised awareness of this issue to the Office of the Minister of Infrastructure to apply pressure on the department's response to the Client's questions regarding the funding formula change and its outcomes.

WD assisted in preparing the Client for their meeting with Infrastructure Ontario during the ROMA delegations in January on the topic of OCIF. WD is continuing conversations with Infrastructure Ontario to discuss the potential for the Ministry to consider them an outlier regarding OCIF.

## **FIBER OPTICS**

WD facilitated a meeting with Mike Smith, Director of Broadband Implementation and Accountability at the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure to discuss the installation of fiber optics throughout the Town.

### Provincial meetings WD arranged for the Client

#### **Ministry of Infrastructure Ontario**

Meetings arranged with:

- Mike Smith, Director of Broadband Implementation and Accountability.
  - The Client emphasized the importance of having fiber optics installed throughout the Town.
  
- The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure Ontario, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2024 Conference.
  - The Client sought support from the minister on having fiber optics installed throughout the Town.

After several discussions with provincial officials, **WD has confirmed that the Client will be included under a new agreement the Ontario government has established with Eh!Tel Networks for fibre service.** Installation is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

## **RAIL TRAIL CROSSING**

As raised by the Client on November 14th, with background information provided on November 21st, WD has communicated with contacts in the Office of the Minister of Transportation in Ontario to discuss the rail crossing and the need for improved safety. WD confirmed with the MTO that staff will continue discussions with the municipality and the Trail Association to explore various options and solutions.

It was confirmed that MTO has agreed to a small amount of paving on the shoulder, and the Client will need to apply for an encroachment permit.

### **CLIENT'S STANDING WITH BRUCE POWER**

WD is strategically positioning the Client to facilitate access to potential government funding. This action aims to ensure the Town's needs are addressed comprehensively throughout the Bruce C expansion process, covering both the impact study and subsequent downstream effects.

As part of its ongoing support, WD has held a series of meetings with the Client to develop the Bruce Power outreach strategy. WD will engage with provincial and federal governments to ensure the Client's needs are considered at all levels.

### **INCLUSIONARY ZONING AND TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCING**

The Client must obtain approval from the province to proceed with the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) changes required for the Client's project, which was approved for funding under the federal Housing Accelerator Fund.

WD has been in contact with the Office of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to discuss this request. WD is also in contact with the Office of the Minister of Finance in Ontario to discuss the Client's inquiry on the incremental tax financing component for this project.

#### Provincial meetings WD arranged for the Client

#### **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

Meeting held with:

- Stephanie DeSousa, Manager (Acting) of the Planning Innovation Unit
  - The Client sought more information on the Inclusionary Zoning requirements, specifically those related to the assessment report and economic analysis.
  
- Lara Nelson, Senior Planner (Acting) of the Planning Innovation Unit

The next steps include further discussions with political contacts in the Office of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and with the Minister directly.

### **JUST N TIME TUGBOAT**

Brought to WD's attention on April 9, 2025, the Client is seeking to remove the Just N Time tugboat from the dock at Southampton Harbour. WD has initiated discussions with contacts at the DFO, specifically the Regional Director and the Client Services Manager of Small Craft Harbours. Annette Winter, Client Services Manager at Small Craft Harbours, suggested the Client apply to the Small Craft Harbours Abandoned and Wrecked Vessels Removal Program.

**WD secured a deadline extension** to give the Client additional time to submit an application. WD continues to inquire about this program, as it may be relevant to the First Nation.

### **OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

WD has been monitoring all federal and provincial funding opportunities that might be relevant to the Client and has provided the Client with detailed memos outlining each funding opportunity. The following is a list of the federal and provincial funding opportunities that WD has recommended to the Client:

- Health and Safety Water Stream
- The Great Lakes Local Action Fund
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Capital Grant
- The OTF Grow Grant
- The Rural Economic Development Program
- The Seniors Active Living Centres Program Expansion
- The Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund
- Experience Ontario 2024
- Skills Development Fund (SDF): Capital Stream
- EnAbling Change Program
- Regional Development Program (Southwestern Ontario Development Fund)
- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund
- The 2024-25 New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHFS) - call for proposals

WD assisted the Client with their application to the Community Emergency Preparedness Grant (CEGP) by reviewing the application and rewriting and restructuring sections to improve the clarity of their answers. WD has confirmed that the application is still being reviewed.

WD supported the Client with their recent applications to the Active Transportation Fund (ATF), which included four proposals: the Sidewalk Program 2026-2029, the Shoreline Trail Repairs 2026-2027, the Rail Trail & Highway 21 Crossing Improvements, and the Bruce Street and Victoria Street Bike Lanes Construction. WD reviewed the applications, provided suggested edits to enhance clarity, and held follow-up meetings to discuss and refine the proposed revisions.

WD informed its contacts at the Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities that the ATF applications have been submitted and will follow up with their contacts on the status of the applications.

WD has also followed up with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming on the Client's application with Marine Heritage Festival and Pumpkifest, to the Experience Ontario 2025 fund. The decision is expected to be communicated soon.

WD invited the Client to the Canadian Nuclear Isotopes Council Awards Ceremony in Ottawa. The attendees included the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Mines and Energy, the Honourable Mary Ng, Former Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development of Canada, and Pam Damoff, former Member of Parliament for Oakville North-Burlington.