



Regional Government Review

Summary and Feedback from Roundtable held at the PRO Educational Forum, March 28, 2019

In January, the Ontario government announced a review of the governance of eight regional municipalities and the County of Simcoe as part of their goal to reduce redundancies and find efficiencies in all levels and orders of government. These broad goals could signal different outcomes including amalgamation or the addition of more centralized services such as transportation.

Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn are the special advisors appointed by the government to lead the review. They have already interviewed mayors and councilors in all of the 82 municipalities in these regions. In response to the government's recent launch of the public consultation, PRO held an informal roundtable of municipal representatives at the Educational Forum and Trade Show. PRO also asked Claire Tucker-Reid to provide some context and lessons-learned. You can download this discussion paper [here](#).

Some of the issues discussed at the roundtable included:

- Importance of communication
 - Internal: Keeping all staff informed
 - Internal: Key messages shared amongst senior staff and council
 - External: Keeping residents informed through Town Halls; Meet with residents' associations (leverage their voices)
- Focus on opportunities as well as challenges
 - We tend to focus on the negative, but highlight opportunities such as advancement for lower staff levels in a larger organization
- Remain citizen-focused
 - Recreation should remain a citizen-focused service, delivered at the local/neighbourhood level not the regional level
- Money is important
 - If amalgamation is in the cards, budgets – and especially development charges – will come into play. It is important to have a good “charter” that will guide decision making to benefit citizens.
- Shared experience
 - Many currently in senior leadership positions have already experienced amalgamation. We need to utilize their experience and stay connected as the review moves forward.

Next steps

PRO will take a leadership role in bringing together stakeholders in the municipalities affected by the review through:

- Conference calls/webinars
- Access to online resources
- Sharing information with all members