



TOM MRAKAS
MAYOR

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GTHA CITIES AND REGIONS READY TO IMPLEMENT REGIONAL PLAN TO SUPPORT UKRAINIAN REFUGEES ARRIVING IN CANADA

"Today, Mayors and Chairs from the 11 largest municipal governments across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area met to discuss a number of current issues of concern.

During the meeting, the Mayors and Chairs discussed how they continue to see a decline in COVID-19 activity across the GTHA. This is good news and it comes at an important time as we see the return of so many spring and summer events and traditions.

There continues to be a concern about some of the directly COVID-19 related financial shortfalls experienced by our municipalities. We are heartened by the commitment made by the newly elected Government of Ontario to allocate additional COVID-19 relief funds if they can renew a partnership with the Government of Canada. Discussions with the Government of Canada continue but have thus far been inconclusive.

We believe it is time for a tri-government meeting to discuss this matter as the combination of the calendar, the inability of municipalities to incur a deficit and our limited revenue raising capabilities make dealing with these large emergency related expenses almost impossible.

We also discussed work underway to support the arrival of Ukrainians fleeing their homeland. Today's discussion largely focused on the work underway to support the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. The Mayors and Chairs are all committed to working together – with the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and many other organizations including the Canadian Red Cross – to help people coming to our region from Ukraine.

The GTHA regional plan proposes to provide temporary accommodation in a managed and coordinated way for up to 200 arrivals in each municipality, or 1,200 individuals at a time across the six municipalities. We expect to see the number of Ukrainian refugees increase steadily in the next two to three weeks and will likely have to begin implementing the regional program.

We have been in close touch with the Government of Canada about their agreement with this regional plan and their financial support for it and we hope their commitment will be forthcoming shortly.

The Mayors and Chairs also discussed the challenges being experienced at Pearson Airport. The airport is a huge driver of investment and tourism and is also the front door to our Region. We have offered our help to the Government of Canada in resolving these issues as soon as possible.

Finally, we as a group of Mayors and Chairs extend our congratulations to the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, Premier Doug Ford and his colleagues on their election victory. We look forward to continuing our work with them on many important files. We also extend our thanks to Andrea Horwath and Steven Del Duca for their public service."