



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 26, 2025
To: Mayor & Council
From: André Morin, Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: COU25-129
Attachments: Appendix A: OSUM Annual Conference Host Municipality Criteria, Roles and Responsibilities

Title: Ontario Small Urban Municipalities Conference 2027

Objective: To seek Council approval for the City of Stratford to pursue hosting the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) Conference in 2027.

Background: The Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) Conference, presented annually by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) at the end of April, is the principal gathering for approximately 200+ elected officials and staff from Ontario's small and mid-sized municipalities. The program provides opportunities for policy dialogue, professional development, and inter-municipal collaboration. Hosting OSUM would provide Stratford with an opportunity to:

- Showcase the City's cultural, economic, and hospitality assets
- Strengthen Stratford's profile as a leader among Ontario's small urban municipalities
- Support local businesses and tourism through increased visitation and delegate spending

As a vibrant small urban centre with strong cultural and manufacturing sectors, and nationally recognized amenities, Stratford reflects the very qualities OSUM exists to celebrate and support. Hosting the conference would allow Stratford to demonstrate both its successes and the shared opportunities and challenges faced by small urban municipalities across Ontario.

Analysis:

Strategic Relevance & Capacity

Hosting the OSUM Conference would highlight Stratford's strengths as a collaborative, innovative, and forward-looking community. It reinforces the City's reputation as a

partner among municipalities, showcases Stratford's remarkable downtown, and positions the City as a leader in the conversations shaping the future of small urban centres across Ontario. Stratford also has the venues, accommodations, and organizational capacity to successfully deliver the event.

Host Responsibilities and Costs

As the host municipality, the City of Stratford would be responsible for:

- Organizing and hosting an OSUM Executive dinner and site tour the fall prior to the conference
- Hosting and financing the Welcome Reception (local sponsorships may be pursued, though AMO sponsors cannot be used)
- Providing a local planning committee and main contact to coordinate logistics with AMO
- Providing shuttle buses if accommodations are not within walking distance of the venue
- Providing civic greetings from the Mayor and ensuring local tourism promotion
- Encouraging local media coverage

Host costs are anticipated to be in the range of \$20,000–\$25,000, covering the Executive dinner, Welcome Reception, transportation (if required), and associated logistics. If Stratford is confirmed as host, staff would explore opportunities for local sponsorships and partnerships to help offset costs. A specific funding source has not yet been identified.

If Council supports pursuing the 2027 OSUM Conference, Stratford's interest will be formally submitted to OSUM for consideration. Should Stratford be selected, staff will bring forward a subsequent management report outlining the detailed planning, development requirements, and confirmed financial implications.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There are no financial implications at this time. If Stratford is selected as host, a contribution of up to \$25,000 will be required to be committed prior to the 2027 operating budget. Sponsorships and in-kind contributions will be explored to offset costs.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as hosting OSUM strengthening partnerships with municipalities and provincial leaders.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority by positioning Stratford as a leader in provincial conversations on the future of small urban municipalities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council support the City's pursuit of the opportunity to host the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) Conference in 2027;

AND THAT staff be directed to work with OSUM to fulfill hosting requirements should Stratford be selected.

Prepared by: Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead
Recommended by: André Morin, CPA, Chief Administrative Officer