

School of Public Policy and Administration

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies



4th Annual Municipalities of the Future Symposium March 3, 2021 Virtual event

*Municipalities on the frontlines:
New realities and mandates in a post-pandemic world*

Keynote address by Dino Basso Commissioner of Corporate Services for The Regional Municipality of York



Dino Basso is the Commissioner of Corporate Services for The Regional Municipality of York, an upper tier municipality comprised of nearly 1.2 million residents. Since March 2020, York Region has been at the forefront of the pandemic response.

Together with his team, Dino has tackled significant – and sometimes unrelenting – challenges to support the organization’s response to COVID-19. His high-performing team of leaders and approximately 400 staff deliver critical internal and external support in the areas of: Planning and Economic Development; Corporate Communications; Human Resources, Property Services; Data, Analytics and Visualization Services; the Office of the Regional Clerk; and Business Services. He is also the Vice President of YorkNet, a York Region owned municipal services corporation that installs and manages an extensive dark fiber network. With the demand for high-speed internet at an all-time high, delivering on YorkNet’s mandate to better connect underserved communities all across York Region has never been more important.

A Registered Professional Engineer (P. Eng), Dino has spent the majority of his 31-year career – 27 in fact – as a public servant. Prior to assuming the Commissioner role in 2014, Dino was the Executive Director for the Region’s Corporate and Strategic Planning department; Director of Capital Delivery, Transportation and Works; and Manager of Corporate Policy and Special Projects in the Office of the CAO. His leadership style is based on a commitment to operating with integrity, empowering trusted employees, seeking first to understand and leading from behind.

Shanon Kalra-Ramjoo, Manager, Enterprise Project and Change Management Office / Strategic Innovation, City of Vaughan, Office of Transformation and Strategy



Shanon Kalra-Ramjoo brings approximately two decades of experience in provincial and municipal levels of government. Shanon is currently Senior Manager, Enterprise Project and Change Management / Strategic Innovation Office at the City of Vaughan in the Office of Transformation and Strategy. Shanon has previously held management positions at the Region of Peel in health services strategy and performance as well as Public Health leading health promotion policies and programs, including regional coordination of cannabis legalization. Prior to this Shanon spent over a decade in strategic policy positions in various ministries at the Ontario Public Service. Shanon has an undergraduate degree in Public Policy and Administration from York University, Master of Public Administration from the University of Toronto and has completed an executive education program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Shanon is currently Past Chair of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's (IPAC) Toronto Regional Board of Directors and previously served on board committees for the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC).

Asare Kester-Akrofi, Program Manager, Business Licensing & Regulatory Services, Municipal Licensing & Standards Division, City of Toronto



Asare Kester-Akrofi entered the public service in 2015 after working in the private sector as a successful team lead with a strong track-record of customer service. He held the position of Executive Coordinator to the Chief Administrative Officer, City of Markham between 2015 and 2019, and in 2018 joined the Master of Public Policy, Administration and Law (MPPAL) program at York University. In 2019 Asare secured a promotion to Program Manager, Business Licensing & Regulatory Services, Municipal Licensing & Standards Division with the City of Toronto. Balancing MPPAL studies with the supervision of a large number of staff and responsibility for major projects and modernization initiatives, Asare graduated from the MPPAL program in 2020. During the unfolding pandemic, he demonstrated leadership by re-focusing his work to provide administrative support to front-line workers and homeless shelters. Asare has a long-standing relationship with United Way and has actively sought out roles in which he can provide support to the organization and its social justice objectives. He is also part of the United Way GenNext Cabinet, which encourages young people in their 20's and 30's to become involved with the organization and its fundraising campaigns. In 2020 Asare was recognized with the Emerging Leader Award by the School of Public Policy and Administration at York University.

Stephen O'Brien, General Manager, City Clerk's Office, Corporate Services, City of Guelph



Stephen is the General Manager of the City Clerk's Office and City Clerk at the City of Guelph. In this capacity, Stephen's role is diverse – Council secretariat and legislative support services, corporate customer service, access and privacy, corporate records and information management, and election administration all fall under his area of responsibility. Prior to arriving at the City of Guelph in May 2014, Stephen served in the City Clerk's Office at the City of Richmond Hill as Manager of Projects and Support Services where some of his responsibilities included managing staff who supported the City's elected officials, providing records management services along with corporate mail and print-house functions. He was also responsible for managing all activities related the City of Richmond Hill's corporate accessibility and election portfolios. Stephen is a proud graduate of the University of Guelph where he completed a

Master of Arts degree in Public Policy and Administration through a joint program offered by the University of Guelph and McMaster University. He has also completed a Diploma in Public Administration from the University of Western Ontario's Local Government Program as well as executive course work from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is a member of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), serves as a member on their Board of Directors and is currently Chair of their Legislative and Policy Advisory Committee. He is also a member of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). He is a proud graduate of the AMCTO Municipal Management Internship Program. During his internship rotation, Stephen worked at the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula.

Keddone Dias, Executive Director, LAMP Community Health Centre



Keddone Dias' commitment to building healthy communities has fuelled her passion to work in the not-for-profit sector for over 20 years. In her current role as Executive Director at LAMP Community Health Centre, Keddone leads a multi-disciplinary team in the delivery of primary health care services and health promotion programs that address the needs of the whole person. With special emphasis on areas including health equity, youth development and education, Keddone has worked to improve access to the resources needed to help communities grow and thrive. Keddone holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Finance from Ryerson University and a Master of Public Policy, Administration and Law from York University, as well as certificates in Community Health Leadership from the Rotman School of Management, and Leading Sustainable Strategic

Change from the Schulich School of Business. Keddone volunteers as Chair of the Board of Visions of Science Network for Learning, an organization that engages children and youth from under-represented communities in education focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. She enjoys spending time with family, especially her two school aged children, who always keep her on her toes.

John Riches, Deputy Chief, Regulatory Compliance & Administration, Region of Durham Paramedic Services, Durham Region Health Department



John Riches is a Deputy Chief with the Region of Durham Paramedic Services which is a division of the Durham Region Health Department. His portfolio includes Regulatory Compliance, Professional Standards, and Community Program Initiatives. In addition to acting as the lead Regional representative for OHT engagement, John leads the Paramedic Service's Mobile COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Program, The Primary Care Outreach Program partnership with Social Services – Family Services Durham, and a new Community Paramedic Program Pilot. A 25-year Paramedic Services veteran, John brings a passion for collaboration and integration across health and social service sectors to ensure patients and residents receive the right care and support from the right providers via the right care pathways.

Lisa Duarte, Director of Communications and Marketing, Region of Peel



Lisa Duarte is the Director of Marketing and Communications at the Region of Peel, responsible for leading a diverse and talented staff of communicators, who help tell the story for the Region of Peel and build out digital and social content. Lisa has held various leadership positions over the past 12 years, where she demonstrates a strong passion and commitment to finding innovative solutions to improve municipal service delivery. Lisa prides herself on her ability to challenge the status quo and apply creative solutions focused thinking to achieve public sector excellence. Prior to joining Corporate Services, Lisa worked in the Human Services field for over 20 years. Lisa joined Peel in 2002, and previously worked in bordering municipalities, Halton and Hamilton. She has a degree in Psychology and completed a graduate program in Government Law.

Michael Genova, Director, Corporate and Strategic Communications, City of Vaughan



Michael Genova is Director, Corporate and Strategic Communications with the City of Vaughan. Michael has over ten years of communications, intergovernmental relations and public policy experience. Prior to joining the municipal public service, he worked as a political advisor. Michael graduated from the University of Toronto with a joint specialist degree in political science and history. He holds a Master of Arts in Elections and Campaign Management from Fordham University in New York City and a Master of Public Administration from Western University. Michael is a 2019 recipient of the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) Scholarship Program.

Antoinette Sarpong, Change Management Lead, Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services



Antoinette Sarpong is a Change Management Analyst with the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, where she uses behavioural insights and strategic communications to help employees navigate organizational change. Change is something Antoinette knows a thing or two about, having worked as a journalist, ESL teacher and NGO project leader on four continents. She is passionate about human rights, civic engagement, personal development, and the use of storytelling to communicate creative and memorable messages to diverse audiences. Antoinette is a graduate of York's Master of Public Policy, Admin and Law (MPPAL) program, and also holds a Bachelor of Journalism from Ryerson University, as well as a Graduate Certificate in Corporate Communications and Public Relations from Centennial College.

Gary Kent, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer, City of Mississauga



Gary is the Commissioner of Corporate Services and CFO for Canada's 6th largest City, Mississauga. He leads a team of Directors who provide innovative, strategic and integrated services to the public, staff and Council. A diverse portfolio, they are focused on delivering strong Customer Service, Value for Money and ensuring the Corporation has the right Talent and Technology available to achieve its vision. He is a Board Member of The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) for 2020-2021 term and he is also the CEO of Enersource Corporation, a strategic partnership between the City and Borealis Inc. Enersource currently owns 30% of the shares of Alectra Inc., the second largest municipally-owned electricity utility in North America. He has recently completed the Bloomberg / Harvard Cities Leadership course and the Directors Education Program from Rotman. Boards and Committees experience include ACCA's Public Sector Global Forum, The One Investment Board and Sheridan College's Professional Advisory Council. A graduate of Glasgow Caledonian University, he is a professional accountant with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and a CPA, CGA. He holds the ICD.D designation, having graduated from the Directors Education Program from the Institute of Corporate Directors, Rotman School of Management, and University of Toronto. Through progressively senior roles, his experience includes co-chairing the update of the City's Strategic Plan, engaging 100,000 citizens and overseeing the development and implementation of continuous improvement projects including Lean, multiple policies and strategies including a Long Range Financial Plan, People Strategy, IT Master Plan and Strategic Communications Master Plan. He has also led community projects to advance world class waterfront, downtown and education initiatives. Gary previously worked in the UK as the Finance Manager for a large private sector transit company experiencing deregulation, privatization, flotation and mergers. Involved in coaching hockey and soccer in Canada for many years, he has lived with his family in Mississauga all his Canadian life.

Laura Mirabella, Commissioner of Finance, Regional Municipality of York



Laura Mirabella, FCPA, FCA, is the Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer for the Regional Municipality of York. Previously, she was the Chief Financial Officer and City Treasurer for the City of Vaughan, spent 11 years in progressively senior positions with the Ontario Public Service, and another 10 years in the private sector providing professional services to organizations in a variety of industries. Over more than 25 years, Laura's career has covered strategic and fiscal planning, organizational and program governance, integrated performance measurement and reporting, and risk management. She has a passion for public service, for making sure that strategic and fiscal planning issues are considered together by governments, and that financial information is communicated to decision-makers, and the public, in ways that can be easily understood and contributes to democratic discourse.

Sarah Klein, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Town of Whitby



Sarah Klein has worked with the Town of Whitby for 27 years and has had an active role in the transformation of the community and Corporation. Sarah is currently the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Town of Whitby. In this role, Sarah oversees Inter-Government Relations, Corporate Strategic Planning, is the Staff Advisor to the Mayor's Community Development fund and leads key strategic projects under the direction of the CAO. The Strategic Initiatives Division also includes Economic Development, Sponsorship and Advertising, Sustainability, Culture, Tourism, Events and Downtowns. Sarah completed an Honours Biochemistry degree at Trent University and a Bachelor of Education degree at Queen's University. Sarah has previously served as the staff liaison to the Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee and has worked in various areas of the Community and Marketing Services Department over the past 20 years. Sarah was the founder of the Whitby Youth Council and has played a role in the development of a number of after school and summer programs for at risk youth in the Town of Whitby. Sarah served on the Town of Whitby's Accessibility Working Committee which provided her with an increased knowledge of the AODA legislation, the requirement of the municipality to provide residents and employees accessible programs, services and facilities. Sarah has also developed the Town of Whitby's subsidization program and served as the Chair of the Advancing Access to Affordable Recreation in Durham.

Victor J. Severino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Office of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, Regulatory Modernization and Business Relief Division



Victor has had a long career in the Ontario Public Service, spanning more than 33 years. He is currently the ADM of the regulatory modernization and business relief division in the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT). Previously, Victor was ADM of business climate and funding administration and also ADM of policy and strategy at MEDJCT. He has also served as ADM of the Ontario Growth Secretariat at the Ministry of Infrastructure. For 15 years prior to being appointed an assistant deputy minister, Victor worked at the Ministry of Finance, including stints as director of communications and director of fiscal planning. Victor was born in Portugal and moved with his family to Toronto in 1972. He is a graduate of York University's Public Policy and Administration program.

Silvia Fraser, Director of Transformation, Workplace Strategies, City of Toronto



Purpose driven, inspires organizational growth and drives to empower people to embrace change. An innovative and strategic leader with over 20 years of progressive experience, Silvia drives positive change through engagement across both government and the private sector. Silvia has a proven track record specializing in largescale and complex program and portfolio management, risk management and critical infrastructure planning and delivery. An award winning thoughtful and energetic leader, Silvia is currently the Director of Workplace Strategies, ModernTO Workplace Modernization with the City of Toronto. In this role, Silvia leads the creation of the workplace of the future, modernizing the City of Toronto and the workplace experience, reimaging how people work, where people work and when they work. Through purposeful focus and inspirational vision of what is possible, Silvia evolves from ideas to transformation with great impact. Previously, Silvia was Head of Security for the City of Mississauga, overseeing both municipal and transit security for the city of 800,000; Earlier in her career Silvia led the City of Toronto's Tower & Neighbourhood Revitalization Unit, improving the quality of life for 549,000 residents in Toronto's tower communities; and was Manager of Business Operations and Change Initiatives as part of the City of Toronto City-wide Real Estate Review Program, in addition, Silvia led the City of Toronto's Corporate Security Infrastructure including the security transformation of City's largest transit hub, Toronto Union Station. Silvia Fraser (PMP, CRM, CPP)

immigrated to Canada in 1995 and started working for the City of Toronto in 2001 as a security guard, progressively achieving leadership positions. Silvia is also the founder and organizer of the City of Toronto Civic Run and City of Mississauga Civic Walk, annuals event centred around staff engagement. Silvia was awarded the 2018 Security Director of the Year Award, Community Leader Award and selected as a Global Influencer by IFSEC in 2019. Most recently, Silvia was awarded the City of Mississauga City Managers Award in 2019.

Alena Kimakova, Director, School of Public Policy & Administration, York University



Alena Kimakova has been serving as the Director of the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) since 2016. She is an Associate Professor at York University who is cross-appointed between the Department of Economics and SPPA, and teaches courses in economic development, political economy, international economics and research methods, including program evaluation. She has supervised numerous program evaluation projects in the Ontario Public Service and with not-for-profit organizations including the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of the Attorney General, United Way Toronto, Canadian Red Cross (York Region), Ontario Non-Profit Network, DeafBlind Ontario, Black Creek Community Health Centre and others. Alena's primary research focus is the analysis of political and economic determinants of public policy. Her research on the political economy of exchange rate regimes, the implications of globalization for macroeconomic stabilization, and the economics of regulation has been published in both economics and interdisciplinary academic journals. She received her Ph.D. in International Economics and Finance from Brandeis University in Massachusetts, USA, and has previously worked as an economist for Commerzbank Capital Markets in Europe.

This event is co-sponsored by IPAC TRG.



For more information, please contact:

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