



COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

Friday, October 25, 2024

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Welland City Council

FROM: Elizabeth Pankoff, CPA, CMA
City Treasurer

DATE: October 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) 2025 Allocation Notice.

The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) provides annual funding to small, rural, and northern municipalities to repair roads, bridges, water, and wastewater infrastructure. The amount received by each municipality is determined by the core infrastructure owned by the municipality and its economic conditions.

This memorandum is to inform Council that staff have received notification of the City's 2025 allocation. The City will receive \$3,035,395, reflecting an increase of approximately \$390,000 over the budget year 2024. These funds are crucial as they will be utilized toward financing the City's capital budgets for the upcoming year.



Northumberland County Council Resolution

SENT VIA EMAIL

October 21, 2024

Hon. Doug Ford (Premier of Ontario)
Hon. Paul Calandra (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing)
Hon. David Piccini (Minister of Labour Immigration, Training and Skills Development and
MPP for Northumberland-Peterborough South)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities

Re: Correspondence, Township of Stirling-Rawdon 'Public Sector Salary Disclosure

At a meeting held on October 16, 2024 Northumberland County Council approved Council Resolution # 2024-10-16-717, adopting the below recommendation from the October 1, 2024 Corporate Support Committee meeting:

Moved by: Councillor John Logel

Seconded by: Council Alternate Michael Metcalf

"**That** the Corporate Support Committee, having considered the correspondence from the Township of Stirling-Rawdon regarding 'Public Sector Salary Disclosure', recommend that County Council support the correspondence and direct staff to send a copy of this resolution to the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier of Ontario), the Honourable Paul Calandra (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing), the Honourable David Piccini (Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and MPP for Northumberland- Peterborough South), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and all Ontario Municipalities."

Council Resolution # 2024-10-16-717

Carried

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at matherm@northumberland.ca or by telephone at 905-372-3329 ext. 2238.

Sincerely,
Maddison Mather



Manager of Legislative Services / Clerk
Northumberland County

Council Resolution

Moved By J. Logel Agenda Item 10 Resolution Number 2024-10-16- 717
 Seconded By M. Metcalf

Council Date: October 16, 2024

"That Council adopt all recommendations from the four Standing Committees, as contained within the Committee Minutes (meetings held September 30, 2024 and October 1 and 2, 2024), with the exception of the following items (referenced from the Standing Committee Minutes), that will be held for discussion:

Committee Name	Item #	Description	Held By
- Economic Development, Tourism and Land Use Planning Committee, Item 9.b, Correspondence, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 'Request to Repeal Official Plan Amendments Adopting By-law' – Held by Councillor Logel - Public Works Committee, Item 9.a, Report 2024-122, 'Transfer of Thompson Bridge from Northumberland County to the Municipality of Trent Hills' – Held by Council Alternate Michael Metcalf. - Social Services Committee, Item 5.a, Delegation, James Bisson 'Homelessness and Encampment Response Report' – Held by Deputy Warden Hankivsky - Social Services Committee, Item 8.a(1), Delegation, Vivian Vanden Hazel 'Encampment Response and Progress on 310 Division Street, Cobourg Update – Presentation' – Held by Councillor Cleveland - Social Services Committee, Item 8.a(2), Encampment Response and Progress on 310 Division Street, Cobourg Update - Presentation – Held by Councillor Cleveland			

And Further That the items listed above and held for separate discussion each require a separate resolution."

Recorded Vote
Requested by _____
Councillor's Name

Carried 
Warden's Signature

Deferred _____
Warden's Signature

Defeated _____
Warden's Signature

Corporate Support Committee Resolution

Committee Meeting Date: October 1, 2024

Agenda Item: 7.a

Resolution Number: 2024-10-01- 615

Moved by: S. Dibb

Seconded by: B. Ostrander

Council Meeting Date: October 16, 2024

"**That** the Corporate Support Committee, having considered the correspondence from the Township of Stirling-Rawdon regarding 'Public Sector Salary Disclosure', recommend that County Council support the correspondence and direct staff to send a copy of this resolution to the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier of Ontario), the Honourable Paul Calandra (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing), the Honourable David Piccini (Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and MPP for Northumberland- Peterborough South), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and all Ontario Municipalities."

Carried 
Committee Chair's Signature

Defeated _____
Committee Chair's Signature

Deferred _____
Committee Chair's Signature



2529 Stirling-Marmora Road
Box 40
Stirling, ON K0K 3E0
Phone: 613-395-3380 Fax: 613-395-0864

August 21, 2024

Premier's Office
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Hon. Ford,

Re: Public Sector Salary Disclosure

At the August 6, 2024 Standing Committees meeting, Committee made the following recommendation:

Moved by Councillor Dean Graff

Seconded by Councillor Don Stewart

That the report from the CAO-Treasurer entitled, "Public Sector Salary Disclosure" be received; and

That Committee recommends to Council the following resolution be adopted and forwarded to the Province of Ontario Premier's Office, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Ontario Municipalities;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act be updated to reflect the inflation rates since 1996; and further

That the Act be further updated so that the inflation rate is applied each year to the requirement to report public salaries.

Carried.

This resolution was subsequently ratified and confirmed by Council at their meeting of August 19, 2024.

Sincerely,

Sydney Dodson
Deputy Clerk

/sd

Cc: Roxanne Hearn - CAO/Treasurer, Premier Doug Ford, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, AMO, all Ontario Municipalities



Legal and Legislative Services

October 22, 2024

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Chair
Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM)
602400 Dundas Street West
Mississauga, ON L5K 2R8
chair@obcm.ca

Dear Ms. Ward

Re: SolvetheCrisis.ca

The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its meeting of October 21, 2024 received and supported the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) correspondence dated October 10, 2024 regarding its initiative of SolvetheCrisis.ca to address homelessness, mental health and addictions.

A copy of which is attached.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Peter Todd,
Manager, Legislative Services / Town Clerk
ptodd@forterie.ca

PT:dlk
Attach

c.c: Michelle Baker, Executive Director michelle@obcm.ca
Niagara Region Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca
Local Area Municipalities

From: "OBCM Chair Marianne Meed Ward" <chair@obcm.ca>
To: info@obcm.ca
Cc: "Michelle Baker (michelle@obcm.ca)" <michelle@obcm.ca>, solvethecrisis@obcm.ca
Date: 2024-10-10 07:44 AM
Subject: Support for Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) Solve the Crisis Campaign

Good Morning,

On behalf of the entire Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) Caucus, I am reaching out today to ask you to share with your Council our request that your municipality joins us in our campaign to end the Humanitarian Crisis facing this province.

This past August OBCM launched our [SolveTheCrisis.ca](https://www.solve-the-crisis.ca) campaign to address the homelessness, mental health, and addictions crisis happening in municipalities big and small across the entire province. It is already having a significant impact with community partners, businesses, first responders, private sector, and the members of the public who have jumped on board.

We have seen hundreds of media hits, thousands of emails sent to both levels of government and Heads of Councils in every corner of Ontario. We are especially thrilled to see the growing number of municipal councils passing motions of support and hope that we can add your municipality to that list!

I am asking you to join us and help keep this issue at the forefront of discussions taking place at the province and within the federal government.

Attached you will find 3 documents.

They include a list of how you can help, a draft motion that you can use as is or you are more than welcome to make it your own, background information, regional information, funding facts, and what you can ask your residents and community partners to do to help support the SolveTheCrisis campaign.

These materials address why we are doing this, why we are doing it now, and what we are asking for in order to meet the needs of our local communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to having you onboard.

For any questions or to discuss this further, you can reply to me here, or please feel free to reach out to Michelle Baker, OBCM's Executive Director, at michelle@obcm.ca or 647-308-6602.

Sincerely,
Marianne Meed Ward
Chair of Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM)
chair@obcm.ca www.obcm.ca

solvethecrisis@obcm.ca @solvethecrisis on X

RECEIVED

OCT 21 2024

BY COUNCIL

MOTION : *[insert name of your municipality or organization here]* supports the SolveTheCrisis.ca Campaign and requests that the Provincial and Federal Governments take Action to Address the Growing Mental Health, Addictions and Homelessness Crisis in Ontario

Whereas there is a humanitarian crisis unfolding on the streets in our cities, large and small, urban and rural, across Ontario. The time for words is over, we need immediate action at all levels of government, starting with the Province of Ontario

Whereas the homelessness, mental health and addictions crisis continues to grow with 3432 drug related deaths in Ontario in 2023¹ and over 1400 homeless encampments across Ontario communities in 2023²; and

Whereas the province has provided additional funding and supports, such as the recent investment of \$378 million for HART Hubs and approximately 375 beds with wraparound supports, it does not adequately address the growing crisis and the financial and social impact on municipalities and regions across the province; and

Whereas municipalities and regions are stepping up and working with community partners to put in place community-specific solutions to address this crisis, but municipalities and regions lack the expertise, capacity, or resources to address these increasingly complex health care and housing issues alone; and

Whereas this is primarily a health issue that falls under provincial jurisdiction and municipalities and regions should not be using the property tax base to fund these programs; and

Whereas there is no provincial lead focused on this crisis leading to unanswered questions that span over a dozen ministries, and a lack of support to manage the increasing needs of those who are unhoused.

Therefore, be it resolved that *[insert name of your municipality here]* supports the SolveTheCrisis.ca Campaign;

And calls on provincial and federal governments to commit to immediate action to solve the Humanitarian Crisis that Ontario is facing as the numbers of unhoused individuals and those suffering with mental health & addictions grows exponentially;

AND that the province officially makes Homelessness a Health Priority;

AND appoints a responsible Minister and Ministry with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions and wrap around supports;

AND that the provincial government strike a task force with broad sector representatives including municipalities, regions, healthcare, first responders, community services, the business community and the tourism industry to develop a *Made in Ontario Action Plan*;

¹ Office of the Chief Coroner, Ontario (2024). OCC Opioid Mortality Summary Q4 2023. [PDF] <https://odprn.ca/occ-opioid-and-suspect-drug-related-death-data/>

² Homeless Encampments in Ontario, A Municipal Perspective, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, July 2024 -

AND that this provincial task force reviews current programs developed by municipalities, regions and community partners that have proven successful in our communities, to ensure that solutions can be implemented quickly and effectively to tackle this crisis.

AND that the federal government is included in these conversations.

AND that both levels of government provide adequate, sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure that municipalities have the tools and resources to support individuals suffering with mental health and addictions, including unhoused people and those from vulnerable populations that may be disproportionately impacted;

And that this **[Council or Board]** calls on the residents of **[insert name of your municipality, region or organization here]** to join us in appealing to the provincial and federal governments for support by visiting SolveTheCrisis.ca and showing your support;

AND further that a copy of this motion be sent to:

- The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
- The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada
- The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
- The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
- The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
- Local MPs
- Local MPP's and
- Ontario's Big City Mayors



Background - SolveTheCrisis.ca Campaign

Key Asks of the Province

- Appoint a responsible ministry and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions and wrap around supports.
- Have this Minister strike a task force with broad sector representatives including municipalities, healthcare, first responders, community services, the business community and the tourism industry to develop a *Made in Ontario Action Plan*.
- Provide municipalities with the tools and resources to transition those in encampments to more appropriate supports, when deemed necessary
- Commit to funding the appropriate services these individuals need, community by community where there are gaps in the system. Including an immediate increase in detox and rehabilitation beds for those looking to get the health support they need, on their own.
- Invest in 24/7 Community Hubs / Crisis Centres across the province to relieve pressure on emergency centres and first responders

Background Information on the Crisis

OBCM Advocacy

- The 'Solve the Crisis' campaign is a culmination of years of advocacy from Ontario's Big City Mayors on the mental health, addictions and homelessness crisis across Ontario, including our white paper released in 2021, most recently developing our health and homelessness strategy in 2023 and an update to that strategy included in this campaign (see OBCM advocacy timeline below)

A Growing Crisis

- Over the years we have seen this crisis develop to include a growing number of unhoused residents and encampments in many of our communities:
 - Of 72 communities surveyed, 68 reported encampments with an estimated 14-23% of the homeless population staying in encampments - [Infrastructure Canada National Survey on Homeless Encampments](#)
 - In 2023 there were at least 1,400 homeless encampments in communities across the province. Many of the residents of these encampments suffer from mental health or substance abuse challenges. - [The Association of Municipalities \(AMO\)](#)



- **London** - as of March 31, 2024 1758 individuals experiencing homelessness and there were 56 active encampments - [Housing and Homelessness Snapshot, City of London](#)
- **Kingston** - 1,924 clients received some type of service in relation to Homelessness in 2023 this includes (outreach, shelter, housing support services, such as housing loss prevention and housing application assistance) - [Housing and Homelessness Report, City of Kingston](#)
- **Region of Waterloo** - current estimates are that 1,000 people are experiencing homelessness across the region including 450 people experiencing Chronic homelessness - [Encampments Report - City of Waterloo](#)
- **Hamilton** - As of January 31 2024, 1,592 Homeless people, with 585 having been homeless for more than 6 months and, 1007 for less than 6 months - [City of Hamilton](#)
- **Windsor** - 468 Individuals experienced chronic homelessness in 2023 up 19% from 2022 - [Housing and Homelessness Report - City of Windsor](#)
- Ontario residents are frustrated with the impact of this crisis on their communities and want to see the government take action. In a recent survey conducted by [CMHA Ontario](#)
 - More than 8 in 10 Ontarians would prefer solutions for the ongoing opioid and drug poisoning crisis which focus on healthcare and social services support rather than punishments
 - 73% percent of Ontarians are concerned the opioid crisis is getting worse
 - 56% report that opioid addiction is an issue of concern in their community
 - 71% believe government should prioritize addressing the crisis

There Are Solutions

- Municipalities along with community partners have developed programs and spaces that are providing effective solutions to this crisis including:
 - **London** - from October 2023 - March 2024, as part of a partnership between London Cares and LHSC, the House of Hope has been operating 25 highly supportive units at 362 Dundas Street.
 - Residents have seen significant health improvements including a 74% reduction in emergency department visit volumes in the first three months compared with the same time period and the same cohort in 2022 - [City of London](#)
 - **Toronto** - the city's Street to Homes (S2H) and its outreach partners helped transition 654 people to permanent housing throughout the pandemic - [City of Toronto](#)
 - **Kingston** - the affordable rental housing capital funding program has provided financial assistance from municipal, provincial and federal sources to create over 510 units to get people housed and off the streets



- These include - Addiction Mental Health Housing Stabilization Program-18 beds, Supportive/ Transitional Youth Housing - 48 units, Transitional housing for vulnerable women - 17 beds and more - [City of Kingston](#)
- **Oshawa** recently introduced **Mission United**, a collaborative social service and primary health care HUB for those experiencing homelessness.
 - This program seeks to assist those with high acuity and tri morbidity achieve long term stabilization by providing low barrier, wrap-around supports with a point in time model.
 - Through partnerships with various community agencies, they provide specialized person-centred services through a singular access point.
- **Windsor-Essex** - funded by the city and community organizations the Homelessness & Housing Help Hub (H4) is a “one-stop” multidisciplinary service hub. The H4 works towards the community’s goals to reduce homelessness by delivering housing focused, homelessness resolution programs that provide a variety of wrap-around supports for persons experiencing homelessness.
 - 133 people have been housed through supports provided at H4, 93 people were assisted by a family physician and 180 by a nurse practitioner through the Shelter Health Initiative
 - The Essex County Homelessness Hub has also housed 47 people through their support program - [Home Together Annual Report - Windsor Essex](#)

Timeline of OBCM Advocacy Work on Health and Homelessness

- **June 2021** - OBCM released a white paper entitled - *Working Together to Improve our Wellness: Recommendations from Ontario's Big City Mayors to improve mental health and addiction services in Ontario* - including recommendations for:
 - Structural recommendations to ensure more Ontarians get the help they need, when they need it, and where they need it.
 - Support that helps improve and connect municipal services with community mental health services
 - Legislative and regulatory changes that reduce the harm of substance use and support system change
 - Municipal leadership opportunities
 - Full paper found on our website here - [OBCM White Paper 2021](#)
- **June 2022** - OBCM Calls for an Emergency Meeting with Province to Address the Chronic Homelessness, Mental Health, Safety and Addictions Crisis Overwhelming Our Communities
 - This meeting to accelerate solutions to address chronic homelessness, mental health, safety, and addictions issues in our communities as our most



marginalized and vulnerable populations have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic

- Working alongside the Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA) we emphasized the impact this crisis was having on downtowns and small and medium sized businesses who were still struggling from the impact of the pandemic
- [OBCM Call for Emergency Meeting](#)
- **August 2022** - at a joint meeting with the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) OBCM reiterated our call for an emergency meeting on this issue with the support of key stakeholders who signed on to attend, these groups include the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Association of Business Improvement Areas, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, AMO, Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario and the Ontario Tourism Industry Association.
 - [OBCM Reiterates Call for Emergency Meeting with Stakeholders](#)
- **February 2023** - OBCM adopts our Health and Homelessness Strategy including five recommendations for the Ontario government to make an immediate impact on the mental health, addictions and homelessness crisis. These recommendations were developed using information gathered through consultation with local health partners to identify services required to ensure there is a health care continuum and appropriate response to this crisis affecting our cities.
 1. Centralized and integrated intake and dispatch process
 2. More provincial investment in low barrier hubs
 3. More stabilization and treatment beds with experienced staff to support those in their treatment journey
 4. More flexible and predictable funding for supportive housing
 5. More provincial ministry and agency collaboration to reduce red tape and duplication
- Full motion and strategy can be found here - [OBCM Health and Homelessness Strategy 2023](#)
- **April 2023** - OBCM meets with Minister Jones and staff, along with partners from the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Kingston Health Sciences Centre and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.
 - Discussed the new funding recently announced in the budget of \$202 million each year to the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and Indigenous Supportive Housing Program, and over half a billion dollars to support mental health and addictions.
 - Presented our Health and Homelessness Strategy, including recommendations to address the growing crisis in Ontario's cities
 - [OBCM Meets with Minister Jones](#)
- **August 2023** - OBCM representatives have a special "Multi Minister Meeting" on our Health and Homelessness Strategy at the AMO Conference with Minister Parsa (Children, Community and Social Services), Associate Minister Nina Tangri (Housing), Associate Minister Tibollo (Mental Health), Associate Minister Charamine Williams (Women's Social and Economic Opportunity)



- OBCM representatives present our Health and Homelessness plan as well as various programs and facilities that are making a difference in our communities
- **June 2024** - at the OBCM June meeting in Chatham-Kent, members discuss updating the Health and Homelessness Strategy to push for various additional supports/asks from the province, especially as the issue of encampments has now grown and approves a communication campaign leading into the 2024 AMO Conference
 - [OBCM Updated Health and Homelessness Strategy, 2024](#)

Overview of Ontario's Investments in Mental Health and Addictions **(from CMHA)**

- Through the [Roadmap to Wellness](#), Ontario is investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to fill gaps in mental health and addictions care, create new services and expand programs.
- The government invested \$396 million over three years to improve access and expand existing mental health and addictions services and programs as part of Budget 2024.
- This investment includes:
 - \$124 million over three years to support the continuation of the Addictions Recovery Fund. The fund supports:
 - Maintaining 383 addictions treatment beds for adults who need intensive supports, helping to stabilize and provide care for approximately 7,000 clients each year;
 - Three Mobile Mental Health Clinics to provide a suite of mental health and addictions services to individuals living in remote, rural and underserved communities; and
 - Three police-partnered Mobile Crisis Response Teams to support individuals in a mental health or addictions crisis.
- Ongoing support for the [Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program](#)
- Between 2020 and 2023, Ontario established a provincial network of 22 [Youth Wellness Hubs](#) which have connected 43,000 youth and their families to mental health, substance use, and wellness services, accounting for over 168,000 visits.
- As part of Budget 2024, Ontario committed \$152 million over the next three years to support individuals facing unstable housing conditions and dealing with mental health and addictions challenges.



Regional Data Points

- **Durham Region:** As of May 31, 2024 The Region of Durham Has at least 757 people experiencing homelessness with 326 having experienced homelessness for 6 months or more.
 - Inflow into shelter system: 35 individuals became chronically homeless, 36 made contact after no contact for 60 days or more and 6 people lost housing.
 - Outflow from Shelter system: 10 people moved from shelters into housing, 6 people lost housing.
 - Durham Municipal Breakdown of active homeless population as of May 2024:
 - Ajax: 241
 - Clarington: 19
 - North Durham: 17
 - Oshawa: 362
 - Pickering: 25
 - Whitby: 58
 - Other/Unknown: 35 - [Durham Region, Built for Zero Report Card](#)
- **Halton Region** - As of October 1st 2023, 172 individuals were receiving emergency shelter from the region
 - 270 additional individuals were residing in transitional housing awaiting offers of permanent housing
 - Between 10-25 individuals sleep outside in Halton on any given night, with most actively working with the street outreach team - [Halton Region](#)
 - In 2023, 28% of all shelter placements required the use of hotels for overflow due to increased demand on services
 - Halton Region's Shelter Capacity 2023(by number of individuals): 148, overflow hotel placements required to meet demand and 99 permanent placement beds.
 - As of 2022, 2,127 emergency housing situations were resolved through outreach and funding through the housing stability fund
 - 884 residents assisted with finding affordable rental housing, and 514 clients received intensive customised supports
 - 56 chronically homeless households were assisted with permanent housing, with intensive wrap around individualized support services
 - Halton Region provided rent geared income to 3,091 households from the Halton Access to Community Housing (HATCH) - [Halton Region 2022 State of Housing](#)
- **Niagara Region** - As of March 2021, at least 665 people in the Niagara Region were experiencing homelessness in 2021
 - 121 were children aged 0-15, 76 were youth aged 16-24,
 - 47 reported staying in unsheltered locations
 - Of the 439 surveys reported in 2021:



- Almost 1 in 4 (22.6%) identified as indigenous Compared to Indigenous making up 2.8% of Niagara's Population.
 - 42 percent had been experiencing homelessness for more than 6 months
 - (Data Recording Paused During Pandemic Point In Time Counts begin again Fall 2024)
 - [Niagara Region - Point in Time Count](#)
-
- **Peel Region** - In 2023 4,800 households received one time financial assistance to prevent homelessness
 - 351 households were placed from peels centralized waiting list into subsidized community housing units
 - 16, 497 households currently using the Affordable Housing System - [Peel Region](#)
 - As of October 2023 Peels emergency shelter system was operating above 270% occupancy
 - Overflow expenses have grown significantly projected \$26.9 million for 2023 and \$42 million in 2024 exceeding approved budgets and funding - [Peel Region Report](#)
-
- **Region of Waterloo** - According to the Youth impact survey youth experiencing homelessness has increased from 8% in 2021 to 13% in 2023 - [Region of Waterloo](#)
 - As of September 21, 2021 the Region of Waterloo had 1,085 individuals experiencing homelessness
 - 412 of those are living rough (in encampments, on the street or in vehicle)
 - 335 experiencing hidden homelessness
 - 191 in emergency shelter, 84 in transitional housing, and 63 in institutions.
 - 75% of survey respondents experiencing chronic homelessness - [Region of Waterloo Point in Time Count](#)
-
- **York Region** - Housed 978 households from the 2023 subsidized housing waitlist
 - Transitioned 1,294 from emergency housing to safe housing over 5 years
 - As of 2023 15,716 households remain on the subsidized housing waitlist Net change of plus 849
 - Opened two new transitional housing sites adding 28 new units to the emergency and transitional housing system
 - Significant increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness projected, with estimates ranging from 2,100 to 2,300 individuals in the next five years.
 - Unique individuals accessing emergency housing increased 5% from 2019 - 2023



- The total number of unique people who experienced chronic homelessness during the year increased by approximately 120% from 2019 to 2023, from 124 to 473.
- 1496 unique persons experiencing homelessness in 2023 - [York Region](#)
- **District of Muskoka Lakes** - As of July, 2022 650 households are on the social housing waitlist with 357 of those waiting for a one bedroom unit and a wait time up to 8 years.
 - Median Employment income for individuals is 21% lower than the rest of the province
 - 13% of Muskoka Residents living in poverty
 - 50% of rental households spend more than 30% of their total income on shelter costs.
 - 11 unique households moved from emergency shelters into longer-term housing solutions (i.e. transitional or supportive housing)
 - 15 households were moved from unsheltered/provisionally accommodated to transitional or long-term housing
 - 6 households were supported to move from transitional to long-term housing
 - 973 requests for assistance in obtaining housing from households experiencing homelessness
 - 19,518 requests for assistance from households experiencing homelessness received supports and services (not related to accommodation)
 - 1,209 requests for assistance from households at risk of homelessness received supports and services (not related to accommodation) to support housing loss prevention, retention, or re-housing - [Muskoka 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan Annual Report](#)
- **South Eastern Ontario**
 - **Kingston** - As of December 2023, Approximately 127 people slept rough meaning makeshift accommodations, sleeping in street, park or vehicle an increase of 12 from august - december of 2023
 - 1,924 clients received some type of service in relation to Homelessness in 2023 this includes (outreach, shelter, housing support services, such as housing loss prevention and housing application assistance) - [City of Kingston](#)
 - **Ottawa** - As of December 31, 2023 Ottawa had 12,447 households on the centralized waitlist with 1,186 households housed from the waitlist
 - 49 New Affordable units and 57 New Supportive units were completed
 - 301 households were housed through the housing first program
 - 1,129 households housed from the shelter system
 - 988 people Chronically homeless, with 382 individuals with a history of chronic homelessness being housed
 - 13% increase in people using the shelter system



— **OBCM** —
Ontario's Big City Mayors

- 3% decrease in the average length of stay in shelter system, 25% increase in newcomer inflow into shelter system - [City of Ottawa](#)
- **South Western Ontario**
 - **Windsor** - In 2023, 715 households experiencing homelessness were housed
 - 95 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were housed with supports
 - Youth Homelessness: 25 youth experiencing homelessness housed with supports
 - 1105 households assisted with rent assistance. - [City of Windsor](#)



— **OBCM** —
Ontario's Big City Mayors

How You Can Help SolveTheCrisis.ca **A Request to Ontario Municipalities From Ontario's Big City Mayors**

What is the SolveTheCrisis.ca Campaign?

Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) launched the [SolveTheCrisis.ca](https://www.solvethecrisis.ca) campaign in August 2024 to address the homelessness, mental health and addictions crisis happening across Ontario.

After years of advocacy we are at a turning point, the time to act is now. This crisis is growing in municipalities and regions of every size across Ontario, and we need help more than ever!

Ontario municipalities of all sizes have stepped up, putting in place programs and housing options along with community partners and other stakeholders, advocating for funding that might be provided from other levels of government but is never consistent and never enough. We cannot tackle this alone, the federal and provincial governments' must come to the table.

We launched the [SolveTheCrisis.ca](https://www.solvethecrisis.ca) Campaign with a press conference at Queen's Park including a video that can be shared and found here: [OBCM You Tube Channel](#), a social media campaign that is still underway, and a website www.solvethecrisis.ca where your residents/networks/councils & staff can watch our video, join our call to action by filling out a letter to the Premier, various Ministers, local MPPs and MPs.

How Can You Help?

There are so many ways!

- Follow us on our socials & like and reshare our posts:
 - X (formerly Twitter) [@SolveTheCrisis](#), and [@ONBigCityMayors](#),
 - LinkedIn [Ontario's Big City Mayors \(OBCM\)](#) and
 - Facebook [Ontario's Big City Mayors](#)
- Pass the draft motion attached, a more personalized version of the attached motion, or create one of your own!
- Share this call to action with your Council, Board of Directors, Membership, Networks and the public
- Share your motion and support of the SolveTheCrisis.ca campaign on social media and tag our accounts:
 - X (formerly Twitter) [@SolveTheCrisis](#), and [@ONBigCityMayors](#),
 - LinkedIn [Ontario's Big City Mayors \(OBCM\)](#) and



— **OBCM** —
Ontario's Big City Mayors

- Facebook [Ontario's Big City Mayors](#)
- Use the hashtags #solvethecrisis and tag Solve the Crisis and OBCM's socials if you can to help us track and report on engagement
- Ask residents, staff, councillors, supporters, members and even your Mayor / Warden / Chair / Head of Council to visit www.solvethecrisis.ca fill out the letter to send the message to their local representatives stating that they want action now.
 - Encourage them to share it with their networks as well.
- Read through our attached backgrounders and key messages and include them in any advocacy efforts you may undertaking on this issue
- Draft an op-ed or article specific to your municipality or region to push out to your local media (see OBCM Chair Meed Ward's Op-Ed here - [Toronto Star - August 17th](#))
- Contact us at solvethecrisis@obcm.ca for more information

Legal and Legislative Services

October 22, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1
premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones,
Minister of Health
5th floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org

Honourable and Dear Sir and Madam:

Re: Request Provincial Funding Remain Available to Support Fort Erie's Primary Care Initiative

The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its Council meeting of October 21, 2024 unanimously passed the following resolution:

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Hospital was built primarily with funds left by the estate of William Douglas on his death in 1929; and

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Hospital ("the Hospital") opened for operation in 1931; and

Whereas the Hospital operated in the black during all of its years of operation (1931- 1998) as a full-service hospital under the management and guidance of its own Board of Trustees; and

Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission ("HSRC") recommended in 1998 that Douglas Memorial continue operation as a hospital within the new Niagara Health System ("NHS"), with acute and chronic care beds, emergency and ambulatory services and a range of diagnostics; and

Whereas despite the creation of a standing committee of the NHS Board for Fort Erie, pursuant to recommendation of the HSRC, to assure local input into Board decision making and that no decision to eliminate any inpatient or emergency services would be made unless approved by such standing committee, the NHS embarked on a systematic reduction or elimination of various services at the Hospital until the adoption by the NHS of its "Hospital Improvement Plan" ("HIP") in 2008; and

Whereas pursuant to the HIP the NHS eliminated emergency and all other health care services at the Hospital in 2009, with the exception of a 24-hour Urgent Care Centre ("UCC"), chronic care beds, palliative care beds and some diagnostics, without the approval of the Hospital standing committee; and

../2

Mailing Address:

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

Office Hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: (905) 871-1600 FAX: (905) 871-4022

Web-site: www.forterie.ca

Whereas in July 2023 Niagara Health (“NH”), as it is now designated, reduced the hours of operation of the Hospital UCC to 12 hours, although the public only has access to the UCC from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily; and

Whereas NH has recently adopted a 3 hospital model for the future of hospital services in Niagara that intends to completely close the Hospital, resulting in no urgent, chronic or palliative or diagnostic services in Fort Erie once the new South Niagara Hospital is opened in or about 2028; and

Whereas the most recent population data available indicates that Fort Erie’s current population is 36,200, far greater than projected during deliberations with respect to Niagara Region’s new Official Plan, adopted in July 2022; and

Whereas the Niagara Region’s population is growing at a rate far greater than anticipated by the Province or NH, particularly when projections were being made for the hospital needs of South Niagara when planning for the new South Niagara Hospital; and

Whereas there are over 7,000 Fort Erie residents unattached to a primary care physician, necessitating a primary care “safety net”, such as a UCC or alternative to avoid first point of health care contact at local emergency departments; and

Whereas the UCC at Douglas Memorial forms that primary health care “safety net” in the absence of sufficient primary care physicians or service providers in Fort Erie; and
Whereas the removal of UCC services, chronic care beds, palliative care beds and diagnostics from the Hospital will result in an unreasonable and unnecessary hardship for current and future residents of Fort Erie and will foreclose the use of the Hospital as a safety valve for NH patients anywhere in Niagara in the event the new South Niagara Hospital is unable to meet the demands that the increasing population of Niagara will place on it; and
Whereas a prudent approach to managing the hospital and health care needs of Niagara, particularly South Niagara and Fort Erie, would recognize the value of retaining a fully-operational UCC, with diagnostics and clinics, as well as chronic care and palliative care beds at the Hospital; and

Whereas there is no indication that NH has any intention of changing course on its 3 hospital model for Niagara despite requests by the Town of Fort Erie to continue the services available at the Hospital; and

Whereas the residents of Fort Erie need and deserve equitable primary health care services, including 24-hour Urgent Care and associated services;

Now therefore be it resolved,

1. **That** the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health commit to funding all necessary services at the new South Niagara hospital without the removal or reallocation of operational funding from the Douglas Memorial for the UCC and other current health services, and further

.../3

2. **That** the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health direct any and all funding from the Province of Ontario for the operation of the UCC (primary care), chronic care beds and palliative care beds, and all diagnostic and associated services at Douglas Memorial remain in Fort Erie for use by Niagara Health as part of a revised hospital model for Niagara or an alternative model operated by a qualified designated health care services entity working in collaboration with the Town of Fort Erie should NH close Douglas Memorial as a hospital site, either before or following the completion and opening of the new South Niagara Hospital, and further
3. **That:** the Mayor and Town of Fort Erie staff enter into discussions with the Minister of Health and Niagara Health and such other health care providers as deemed appropriate to ensure the continued operation of primary care and other current services at Douglas Memorial, with or without the involvement of NH, and further
4. **That:** the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford, be requested to support this initiative, and further
5. **That:** a copy of this Resolution be provided to the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford; the Ontario Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones; the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Justin Trudeau; the federal Minister of Health, Mark Holland; the four MPPs and MPs who represent Niagara; the Niagara Region and the other 11 local area municipalities in Niagara for support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Peter Todd,
Manager, Legislative Services / Town Clerk

ptodd@forterie.ca

PT:dlk

cc: The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Premier of Ontario Justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Mark Holland, Federal Minister of Health mark.holland@parl.gc.ca
Lynn Guerriero, President and CEO, Niagara Health, Lynn.Guerriero@niagarahealth.on.ca
Niagara Region MPP's wgates-co@ndp.on.ca; JStevens-CO@ndp.on.ca; JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca;
sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org
Niagara Region MP's Vance.Badawey@parl.gc.ca; tony.baldinelli@parl.gc.ca; Chris.Bittle@parl.gc.ca;
dean.allison@parl.gc.ca
Niagara Region
Local Area Municipalities

The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.9.

Resolution Number 2024-370

Title: Resolution Stemming from September 18, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1 - Correspondence #17

Date: October 16, 2024

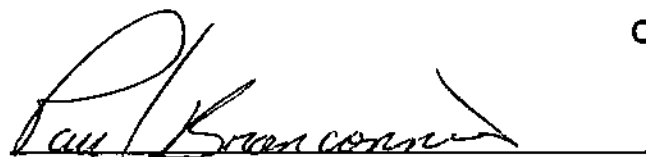
Moved by: Councillor Laframboise

Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles heraby supports Resolution 2024-EM1-2 passed by the Township of Naim and Hyman and the Township of Baldwin, regarding concerns with the transport and deposition of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) at the Agnew Lake Tailings Management Area;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford; the Minister of Mines, George Pirie; the Minister of Transportation, Prabmeet Sarkaria; the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Andrea Khanjin; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR



August 21, 2024

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office, Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

**RE: Concerns with the Transport and Deposition of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM)
at the Agnew Lake Tailings Management Area (ALTMA)**

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Township of Baldwin to formally submit the attached resolution passed jointly by the two Councils at a Joint Emergency Council Meeting on August 19, 2024.

Our two Townships very recently learned of the decision to transport naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) from the former Beaucage Mine Site and Nipissing First Nation reserve lands and deposit it at the Agnew Lake Tailings Management Area in the Township of Nairn and Hyman. The decision to transport and deposit NORM has far-reaching implications for the environment, public health, and safety of our communities, and this significant decision was made without any consultation with our municipalities and the other municipalities located near Agnew Lake or along the Highway 17 corridor.

In addition to the participation of our municipalities in this Emergency Council Meeting, many representatives from surrounding First Nations attended the meeting, underscoring the widespread concern across our region about this impending project. The planned transportation of NORM is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks, therefore we respectfully request your attention to this urgent matter.

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION: 2024-EM1-2

DATE: August 19, 2024

MOVED BY: Councillor McVey

SECONDED BY: Councillor Cote

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Baldwin have been informed of the decision to transport naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) from the former Beaucage Mine and Nipissing First Nation reserve land, and deposit it at the Agnew Lake Tailings Management Area (ALTMA) in the Township of Nairn and Hyman; and

WHEREAS this decision has significant implications for the environment, public health, and safety of the surrounding communities, including those within the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Township of Baldwin; and

WHEREAS the decision to transport and deposit NORM to the ALTMA site was made without any consultation with the Township of Nairn and Hyman or the other municipalities bordering Agnew Lake, resulting in the exclusion of local municipalities from the decision-making process; and

WHEREAS the exclusion of local municipalities from this process represents a serious breach of trust and a disregard for the well-being of the residents of these communities; and

WHEREAS there are significant concerns among residents regarding the potential contamination of drinking water sources, particularly Agnew Lake, which many residents rely on for safe drinking water; and

WHEREAS the risks associated with NORM are well-documented, and the proximity of the ALTMA to Agnew Lake heightens the concerns regarding the potential contamination of this vital water source; and

WHEREAS according to information received from the Ministry of Mines, there are already some areas of the ALTMA site where dose estimates exceed the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's regulatory limit for casual site users; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Baldwin held a joint Emergency Council Meeting on August 19, 2024;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Baldwin respectfully demands that the Province of Ontario, the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Transportation immediately halt the project involving the transportation and deposition of NORM at the ALTMA site until a clear line of communication is established with local municipalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Baldwin respectfully demands full disclosure of all pertinent details regarding the proposed future NORM transportation and deposition plan, including specific transportation routes, emergency response plans, safety protocols, and the future management plan for the ALTMA site; and

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman and the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Baldwin insists that environmental and health impact assessments be conducted with input from independent experts, and that these assessments include opportunities for public hearings to ensure transparency and community involvement; and

THAT the Province of Ontario enact legislation that consultation with municipalities is a requirement of any projects that include the transportation or deposition of NORM; and

THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable George Pirie, the Minister of Mines; the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, the Minister of Transportation; the Honourable Andrea Khanjin, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Chief Toulouse and Sagamok Anishnawbek Council Members; Chief Nootchtai and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Council Members; the Ontario Ombudsman; the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission; the Canadian Environmental Law Association; MP Carol Hughes; MPP Michael Mantha; the Association of Ontario Municipalities and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

For more information regarding this matter, please contact our municipal office by email at belindaketchabaw@nairncentre.ca or by phone at (705) 869-4232.

Yours truly,



Belinda Ketchabaw
CAO Clerk Treasurer
Township of Nairn and Hyman

Cc:

Honourable George Pirie, the Minister of Mines
Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, the Minister of Transportation
Honourable Andrea Khanjin, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Chief Toulouse and Sagamok Anishnawbek Council Members
Chief Nootchtai and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Council Members
Ontario Ombudsman
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
Canadian Environmental Law Association
MP Carol Hughes
MPP Michael Mantha
Association of Ontario Municipalities
All Ontario Municipalities

**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.8.

Resolution Number 2024-369

Title: Resolution Stemming from September 18, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1 - Correspondence #11

Date: October 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Laframboise

Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports Motion No. 24-366 passed by the City of Quinte West, regarding the Canada Community-Building Fund;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau; the Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland; the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Sean Fraser; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Parliament (MP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR

P.O. Box 490
7 Creswell Drive
Trenton, Ontario K8V 5R6
www.quintewest.ca



A Natural Attraction

Tel: 613-392-2841
Toll Free: 1-866-485-2841
virginial@quintewest.ca
clerk@quintewest.ca

Virginia LaTour, Deputy City Clerk

August 15, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Via Email - justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

RE: Notice of Motion – Councillor Stedall – The Canada Community-Building Fund

Dear Prime Minister:

This letter will serve to advise that at a meeting of City of Quinte West Council held on August 14, 2024 Council passed the following resolution:

Motion No 24-366 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Stedall - The Canada Community-Building Fund

Moved by Councillor Stedall

Seconded by Councillor McCue

Whereas the City of Quinte West is entering into an agreement to receive Canada Community-Building Funds, which is administered by the Association of Ontario Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) on behalf of the Federal government;

And whereas the funding allocations are less than 2% year over year for the next 5 years;

And whereas the amounts allocated in the past 5 years were less than 2% year over year;

And whereas non-residential construction price inflation has risen by 29% since the end of 2020 and municipalities are facing soaring costs for infrastructure projects without a corresponding growth in revenue;

And whereas there is a requirement for municipalities to complete an asset management plan and a housing needs analysis;

And whereas both of these plans show the large funding gap between infrastructure and housing needs and funds available from property taxation;

And whereas The City of Quinte West has over \$1.5 billion in core infrastructure assets and, like other municipalities, its infrastructure is aging and in need of upgrades and replacement;

And whereas The City's Asset Management Plan requires \$37 million annually to maintain existing assets which, based on current available funding, is resulting in an annual infrastructure deficit of over \$17.1 million;

And whereas municipalities are facing a gap in federal infrastructure funding as the 10-year Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program has come to an end;

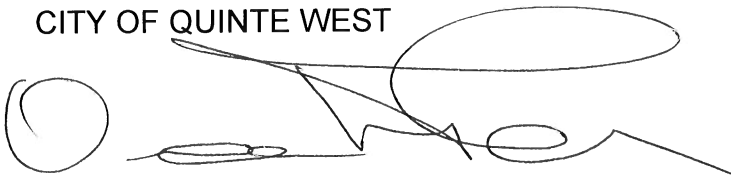
Now therefore be it resolved that the City of Quinte West calls on the Federal Government to provide a supplement to the allocations provided to municipalities under the AMO CBBF agreement for 2024 - 2028 for the same amount that was allocated, effectively doubling the allocation for those years;

And further that this resolution be forwarded to MFOA, AMO, MP Ryan Williams, and Federal Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, and all Municipalities in Ontario.
Carried

We trust that you will give favourable consideration to this request.

Yours Truly,

CITY OF QUINTE WEST

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Virginia LaTour', written over a horizontal line.

Virginia LaTour,
Deputy City Clerk

cc: Donna Herridge, Executive Director, MFOA
Colin Best, President, AMO
Ryan Williams, MP, Bay of Quinte
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
All Municipalities of Ontario

**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.7.

Resolution Number 2024-368

Title: Resolution Stemming from August 14, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1
- Correspondence #19

Date: October 16, 2024

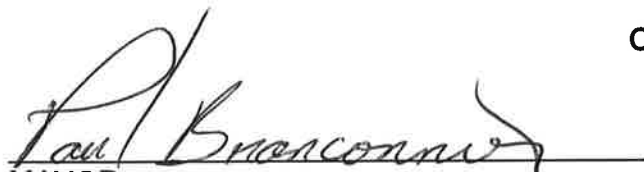
Moved by: Councillor Laframboise

Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports Resolution #2024-08-07-10 passed by the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch & Raglan, urging the Government to promptly resume the assessment cycle;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Premier Doug Ford; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR



TOWNSHIP OF BRUDENELL, LYNDOKH AND RAGLAN

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

August 7, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: Urging the Government to Promptly Resume Assessment Cycle

Please be advised that at their last Regular Meeting of Council on Wednesday August 7th, 2024, the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan supported the following resolution:

Resolution # 2024-08-07-10
Moved By: Councillor Quade
Seconded by: Councillor Keller

"Be It resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan hereby supports the resolution from the Municipality of Callander urging the Government to promptly resume the assessment cycle.

And further that Council directs staff to provide a copy of this resolution to the Premier, the relevant provincial authorities, the Association of Municipalities in Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, and all municipalities in Ontario for their consideration, to make proper changes as quickly and efficiently as possible."

CARRIED.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk

31 May 2024

Premier Doug Ford premier@ontario.ca

RE: Urging the Government to Promptly Resume Assessment Cycle

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Callander passed the following resolution at its Regular Meeting of Council held Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

Resolution No. 2024/05/184:

7.4(c) WHEREAS the assessment cycle is an essential process for maintaining the fairness and predictability of property taxes in our province;

AND WHEREAS the pause in the reassessment cycle has created uncertainty and instability in property taxation, impacting both residential and commercial property owners;

AND WHEREAS the government has delayed an assessment update again in 2024, resulting in Ontario's municipalities continuing to calculate property taxes using 2016 property values;

AND WHEREAS both current and outdated assessments are inaccurate, increase volatility, and are not transparent;

AND WHEREAS frequent and accurate reassessments are necessary to stabilize property taxes and provide predictability for property owners, residents, and businesses alike;

AND WHEREAS the staff at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation would benefit from further skills enhancement and training in assessments, recognizing the importance of ensuring accurate evaluations for 100% of our municipality;

AND WHEREAS the Government has announced a review of the property assessment and taxation system with a focus on fairness, equity, and economic competitiveness, and therefore further deferring new property assessment;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality of Callander hereby calls upon the Premier to promptly resume the assessment cycle to ensure the stability and predictability of property taxes while the Government conducts its review of the property assessment and taxation system, or respond with an alternative method for every municipality in Ontario to achieve fair taxation;

AND THAT all Municipalities in Ontario and their constituents are encouraged to apply pressure to the Premier, daily, weekly, and monthly, to resolve the situation before it causes undo stress to everyone in the Municipality;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, the relevant provincial authorities, the Association of Municipality in Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, and all municipalities in Ontario for their consideration, to make proper changes as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Thank you,



**Cindy Pigeau
Municipal Clerk**

**Copy to: Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Rural Ontario Municipalities Association
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
All Ontario Municipalities**

**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.6.

Resolution Number 2024-367

Title: Resolution Stemming from August 14, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1
- Correspondence #10

Date: October 16, 2024

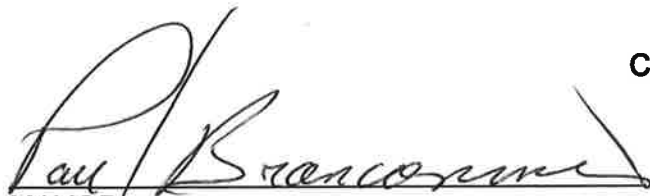
Moved by: Councillor Pothier

Seconded by: Councillor Laframboise

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports Resolution #RC24168 passed by the Municipality of Wawa, regarding Immediate Action Needed to Support Ontario's Forest Sector;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Premier Doug Ford; the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Graydon Smith; the Minister of Northern Development, Greg Rickford; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR



The Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLUTION

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

Resolution # RC24168	Meeting Order: 11
Moved by: <i>M Hatfield</i>	Seconded by: <i>Cathy Cannon</i>

WHEREAS Council of the Municipality of Wawa received correspondence from the Ontario Forest Industries Association dated June 19, 2024 regarding Immediate Action Needed to Support Ontario's Forest Sector;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa does hereby receive and support the correspondence dated June 19, 2024 from the Ontario Forest Industries Association and urges the Ontario government support all measures targeting the immediate challenges the Ontario Forest sector faces.

RESOLUTION RESULT		RECORDED VOTE		
☒ CARRIED		MAYOR AND COUNCIL	YES	NO
☐ DEFEATED		Mitch Hatfield		
☐ TABLED		Cathy Cannon		
☐ RECORDED VOTE (SEE RIGHT)		Melanie Pilon		
☐ PECUNIARY INTEREST DECLARED		Jim Hoffmann		
☐ WITHDRAWN		Joseph Opato		

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the general nature thereof.

☐ Disclosed the pecuniary interest and general name thereof and abstained from the discussion, vote and influence.

Clerk: _____

MAYOR – MELANIE PILON	CLERK – MAURY O'NEILL
<i>M. Pilon</i>	<i>Maury O'Neill</i>



June 19, 2024

The Hon. Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources
Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1W3

The Hon. Nolan Quinn
Associate Minister of Forestry
Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1W3

Submitted via email.

Re: Immediate Action Needed To Support Ontario's Forest Sector

Minister Graydon Smith and Associate Minister Nolan Quinn,

Congratulations on your recent appointments within Premier Doug Ford's Cabinet. The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) looks forward to our productive and continued work together.

Over the last six months, three of Ontario's six pulp and paper mills have permanently closed or idled. Adding to the issue was the closure of a critical softwood pulp market in Quebec. As you know, these facilities served as important consumers of solid-wood byproducts from Ontario sawmills.

The OFIA appreciates the many opportunities we have had to speak with you and senior leadership within Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Premier's Office. This includes in-person meetings with members of OFIA's Board Executive Committee on January 19th, March 19th, and May 28th, 2024. During these meetings, the OFIA presented short and long-term actions Ontario could take to address the regional chip and pulpwood market crisis endorsed by the OFIA membership (incl.).

The industry eagerly anticipates government action on this matter, as operating conditions for many have continued to worsen over the past six months. Combined with weak markets for some finished products, many companies struggle to continue their operations. We are now facing an unprecedented challenge in the sector, which could have negative and long-lasting implications for northern and rural communities across Ontario.

Without immediate action in response to OFIA recommendations and, critically, the vetting of potential solutions through the industry to ensure programs truly meet the sector's needs, we fear Ontario could face further curtailments, job losses, and lost economic opportunity.

The OFIA is ready to work with the Ontario government to set the forest products sector on a long-term and stable path towards economic development and prosperity. This includes our

vision of a *Forest Energy Directive* to develop bioheat, district heating, liquid fuels, renewable gases, biocarbon, and electricity generation projects, supporting Ontario's massive forecasted growth in non-emitting energy demands.

We urge you and your colleagues to continue supporting all measures targeting the immediate challenges the Ontario forest sector faces and look forward to future discussions with you.

Sincerely,



Ian Dunn, R.P.F.
President & CEO
Ontario Forest Industries Association
Cell: 647-297-3827

Incl. March 19th, 2024 Slide Deck – Summary of Input from the Membership – OFIA Meeting with the Hon. Graydon Smith

May 28th, 2024 Slide Deck – Ontario Forest Energy Directive

CC The Hon. Caroline Mulroney, President of the Treasury Board
The Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
The Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
The Hon. Greg Rickford, Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs
The Hon. George Pirie, Minister of Mines
The Hon. Steven Lecce, Minister of Energy and Electrification
The Hon. Sam Oosterhoff, Associate Minister of Energy Intensive Industries
The Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Education
The Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
MPP John Yakabuski, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Energy
MPP Kevin Holland, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Mines
Deputy Minister Drew Vanderduim, Ministry of Natural Resources
OFIA Membership



Legal and Legislative Services

October 22, 2024

Niagara Transit Commission
2012 First Street Louth
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3V9
Attention: Mat Siscoe, Chair
Mathew.siscoe@niagararegion.ca
mayor@stcatharines.ca

Dear Chair Siscoe:

Re: Accessibility Advisory Committee Niagara Transit Issues

The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie at its meeting of October 21, 2024 received minutes from the Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee dated September 24, 2024 and contained within was the following resolution:

Whereas the Accessibility Advisory Committee has been made aware of many service concerns since Niagara Region Transit took over service provision in Fort Erie; and

Whereas there are no longer dedicated vehicles in Town to provide transit services, both OnDemand and Specialized; and

Whereas the service hours only allow booking until 10:00 p.m., rather than the advertised 11:00 p.m. like other areas in the Region; and

Whereas the Transit service provision does not seem to support the service needs of the community; and

Now therefore be it resolved,

That: Council be requested to invite the Niagara Region Transit and service provider, Voyago, to attend a future Council meeting to explain:

- the service provisions for Fort Erie including:
 - how many spots per day are available to be booked in Fort Erie and if this is a fixed number; and
 - how bookings in general are allocated; and
 - how many vehicles are available for OnDemand and Specialized and if there is a fixed number for Fort Erie,

../2

Mailing Address:

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie
1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

Office Hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: (905) 871-1600 FAX: (905) 871-4022

Web-site: www.forterie.ca

- performance standards and policies for abandoned ridership;
- complaints received specific to Fort Erie riders and how they have been addressed;
- ridership numbers for Fort Erie including the number of bookings that were attempted but no rides were available;
- and address concerns shared by the Accessibility Advisory Committee related to dedicated vehicles, booking times and hours of service.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your request to attend an upcoming Council Meeting to address these matters.

Sincerely,



Peter Todd,
Manager, Legislative Services / Town Clerk

ptodd@forterie.ca

PT:dlk

c.c: Carla Stout, General Manager, Niagara Transit Commission Carla.stout@nrtransit.ca
Edward Zahra, Deputy General Manager, Customer Experience, Niagara Transit Commission
Edward.zahra@nrtransit.ca
Jordan Hambleton, Office Manager, Corporate Administration, Niagara Transit Commission
Jordan.hambleton@nrtransit.ca
B. Bradnam, Staff Liaison, AAC
Niagara Region Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca
Local Area Municipalities



October 17, 2024

Honourable Premier Doug Ford
Legislative Building
Queen's Park, Room 281
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

SENT VIA E MAIL
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford :

RE: AMCTO RECOMMENDATIONS TO UPDATE THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT (MEA)

At its regular meeting held on October 15 2024, Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing passed the following resolution.

<< Resolution: **2024/285**

Moved By: Councillor R. Larabie

Seconded By: Councillor G. Pharand

WHEREAS at the meeting of October 15, 2024, Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing received and supports resolution no. 2024-152 from the Town of Parry Sound;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing calls on the Province of Ontario to update the *Municipal Elections Act* (MEA) with the priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with long-term recommendations ahead of the upcoming elections;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support and that each endorsement be then forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (minister.mah@ontario.ca), the Minister of Education (minister.edu@ontario.ca), the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery (todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca), the Minister of Finance (minister.fin@ontario.ca), the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontario.ca), John Vanthof (MPP) and AMCTO (advocacy@amcto.com)

CARRIED >>

In accordance with Council's direction, the resolution is being forwarded for your reference.

Respectfully,

Janice Dupuis
Deputy Clerk
Municipality of West Nipissing



Council - Committee of the Whole

Resolution # 2024/285
Title: Authorize support of Parry Sound resolution re: AMCTO recommendations to update Municipal Elections Act
Date: October 15, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Roland Larabie
Seconded by: Councillor Georges Pharand

WHEREAS at the meeting of October 15, 2024, Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing received and supports resolution no. 2024-152 from the Town of Parry Sound;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Municipality of West Nipissing calls on the Province of Ontario to update the *Municipal Elections Act* (MEA) with the priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with long-term recommendations ahead of the upcoming elections;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support and that each endorsement be then forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (minister.mah@ontario.ca), the Minister of Education (minister.edu@ontario.ca), the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery (todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca), the Minister of Finance (minister.fin@ontario.ca), the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontari.ca), John Vanthof (MPP) and AMCTO (advocacy@amcto.com)

CARRIED



Council - Committee of the Whole

Résolution #

2024/285

Titre:

Autoriser le soutien de la résolution de Parry Sound concernant les recommandations de l'AMCTO pour la mise à jour de la loi sur les élections municipales

Date:

le 15 octobre 2024

Proposé par:

Councillor Roland Larabie

Appuyé par:

Councillor Georges Pharand

ATTENDU QUE lors de la réunion du 15 octobre 2024, le conseil de la municipalité de Nipissing Ovest a reçu et appuie la résolution no 2024-152 de la ville de Parry Sound ;

IL EST RÉSOLU QUE le conseil de la municipalité de Nipissing Ovest demande à la province de l'Ontario de mettre à jour la Loi sur les élections municipales (LEM) avec les amendements prioritaires tels que décrits par l'AMCTO et de commencer le travail de révision et de réécriture de la LEM avec des recommandations à long terme avant les prochaines élections ;

IL EST EN OUTRE RÉSOLU QU'une copie de cette résolution soit transmise à toutes les municipalités de l'Ontario pour obtenir leur soutien et que chaque appui soit ensuite transmis au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (minister.mah@ontario.ca), au ministre de l'Éducation (minister.edu@ontario.ca), au ministre de la Prestation des services publics et commerciaux (todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca), au ministre des Finances (minister.fin@ontario.ca), au premier ministre de l'Ontario (premier@ontario.ca), à John Vanthof (député provincial) et à l'AMCTO (advocacy@amcto.com).

ADOPTÉ



52 Seguin Street, Parry Sound, Ontario P2A 1B4
Tel: (705) 746-2101 • Fax: (705) 746-7461 • www.parrysound.ca

October 2, 2024

Minister Paul Calandra
Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street
College Park 17th Floor,
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Via e-mail: minister.mah@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Calandra,

I am writing to you as the Municipal Clerk at the Town of Parry Sound and as the municipal officer responsible for the administration of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* in support of [AMCTO's recommendations](#) calling for the comprehensive changes to *MEA*.

AMCTO members, as municipal leaders, support the interests and well-being of 235,000 municipal employees across all municipalities in this Province.

Local election administrators care about running fair and accessible elections. We care about ensuring that candidates, voters, and third-party advertisers understand their responsibilities. We care that those that may knowingly break the rules are held to account. We care that the *MEA* and the accompanying *Education Act* and *Assessment Act* are complicated pieces of legislation on their own, and more so read together.

That is why AMCTO reviews the *Act* after every local election and why the Province should be making the necessary changes to make election administration easier and the *Act* clearer to follow for candidates and voters within the timelines AMCTO has set out.

Never has there been a more important moment to ensure the *Act* is working well, closes gaps and provides the right enforcement tools and mechanisms to safeguard our local electoral processes from threats of foreign interference, misinformation and bad actors. Local clerks need support and guidance on how to manage these threats and deal with potential events especially considering the federal government's recent legislation on foreign interference (Bill C-70).

AMCTO convened a group of municipal staff with experience and expertise in administering local elections to present you with several recommendations for making improvements to *MEA* and calling for an overhaul of the *Act* in the long-term.

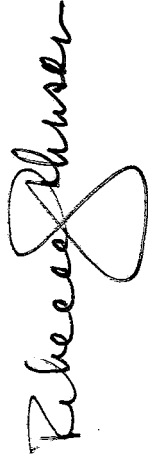
I support AMCTO's recommendations and call on you to update the *MEA* with priority and secondary recommendations by mid 2025 ahead of the 2026 election so that I can make the necessary adjustments for planning and implementation well ahead of statutory timelines imposed upon me to administer an election.

There is a provincial interest in ensuring the health of local democracy and the time to act is now – proactively instead of reactively. Election administrators face several uncertainties as we look ahead to 2026. We observe that in other jurisdictions with elections there is an increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technology to spread misinformation. There are increased levels of electoral interference. Even in Canada, we are seeing reports of more candidates and elected officials stepping back from public life because of concerns for their safety and reputations.

There also is a provincial interest for reducing administrative and operational burdens to help free up staff time to focus on other critical statutory and operational tasks such as those related to planning and development processes, municipal governance, as well as service innovation, in support of provincial priorities.

I look forward to seeing legislation introduced to update the *MEA* in the coming months to address current challenges, streamline processes, and make legislation easier to understand and administer.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Johnson
Clerk

/rj
Encl.

cc: Paul Shipway, President, AMCTO president@amcto.com
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and
Housing martha.greenberg@ontario.ca
Jill Dunlop, Minister of Education minister.edu@ontario.ca
Todd McCarthy, Minister of Public & Business Service Delivery &
Procurement todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca
Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance Minister.fin@ontario.ca
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario premier@ontario.ca
Graydon Smith, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka Graydon.Smith@pc.ola.org
Ontario Municipal Clerks



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF PARRY SOUND
RESOLUTION IN COUNCIL

NO. 2024 – 152

DIVISION LIST

YES NO

DATE: October 1, 2024

Councillor **G. ASHFORD**
Councillor **J. BELESKEY**
Councillor **P. BORNEMAN**
Councillor **B. KEITH**
Councillor **D. McCANN**
Councillor **C. McDONALD**
Mayor **J. McGARVEY**

MOVED BY:

P. Borneman

SECONDED BY:

[Signature]

CARRIED: ☒ DEFEATED: _____ Postponed to: _____

WHEREAS election rules need to be clear, supporting candidates and voters in their electoral participation and election administrators in running elections.

WHEREAS legislation needs to strike the right balance between providing clear rules and frameworks to ensure the integrity of the electoral process,

WHEREAS the legislation must also reduce administrative and operational burden for municipal staff ensuring that local election administrators can run elections in a way that responds to the unique circumstances of their local communities.

WHEREAS the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) will be 30 years old by the next municipal and school board elections in 2026.

WHEREAS the MEA sets out the rules for local elections, the Assessment Act, 1990 and the Education Act, 1990 also contain provisions impacting local elections adding more places for voters, candidates, and administrators to look for the rules that bind the local democratic process in Ontario.

WHEREAS with rules across three pieces of legislation, and the MEA containing a patchwork of clauses, there are interpretation challenges, inconsistencies, and gaps to fill.

WHEREAS the Act can pose difficulties for voters, candidates, contributors and thirdparty advertisers to read, to interpret, to comply with and for election administrators to enforce.

WHEREAS while local elections are run as efficiently and effectively as can be within the current legislative framework, modernization and continuous improvement is needed to ensure the Act is responsive to today's needs and tomorrow's challenges.

WHEREAS to keep public trust and improve safeguards the Act should be reviewed considering the ever-changing landscape which impacts elections administration including privacy, the threats of foreign interference, increased spread of mis/disinformation and the increased use of technologies like artificial intelligence and use of digital identities.

WHEREAS the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) reviewed the Act and has provided several recommendations including modernizing the legislation, harmonizing rules, and streamlining and simplifying administration.

AND WHEREAS AMCTO put forward recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2026 elections and longer-term recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2030 elections.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Parry Sound calls for the Province to update the MEA with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support and that each endorsement be then forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (minister.mah@ontario.ca), the Minister of Education (minister.edu@ontario.ca), the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery (todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca), Minister of Finance (Minister.fin@ontario.ca) the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontario.ca), Parry Sound Muskoka MPP Graydon Smith and AMCTO (advocacy@amcto.com).


Deputy Mayor Chris McDonald



AMCTO
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS

**Modernizing the
Municipal Elections Act
for the 21st Century**



Introduction

The *Municipal Elections Act* (MEA) legislates the processes for how local elections operate in Ontario. It provides municipal staff who are also local election administrators with the framework in which to organize and run efficient municipal elections. It provides voters, candidates and third-party advertisers with guidance on qualifications for participating in local democracy. The Act serves as an important tool for local election accountability, ensuring smooth democratic processes for citizens across Ontario, and is key to voter and public trust in local governments.

While public trust has always been [front and centre to democratic processes](#)¹, since the COVID-19 pandemic there has been [commentary, concern and cautions raised](#) about the state of trust in public institutions at all levels of government and the state of the democratic process that empowers those institutions². Applying a continuous improvement mindset to the rules and framework that support local democracy ensures democratic processes are modernized, reflect current circumstances and technology, meet citizen expectations, and continue to be reliable.

As the largest voluntary municipal association in Ontario with members working across the province, the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) takes the position that local governments serve as the most transparent level of government with openness and accountability at the core of operations. To continuously improve public trust, a comprehensive review of the MEA is needed in consultation with the sector. By reviewing and re-writing the MEA to reflect today's challenges in bolstering public trust, improving voter turnout, and improving overall election administration; voters, residents, candidates, third parties, interest groups and election administrators can rely on a modern act that is clear and consistent, while ensuring that processes are accountable and transparent.

To keep public trust and improve safeguards, a review should apply a lens considering the ever-changing landscape that impacts election administration. This includes [threats of foreign interference](#)³,

¹ AMCTO. 2015, *Submission on the Municipal Elections Act*. <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/AMCTO-MEA-Submission.pdf>

² Bridgman, A., et al. Mis- and Disinformation During the 2021 Canadian Federal Election. Media Ecosystem Observatory. March 2022. https://www.mcgill.ca/maxbellschool/files/maxbellschool/meo_election_2021_report.pdf

³ For instance, Ball, Stewart. "China tried to influence last two federal elections, says report released by CSIS." *Global News*. 31, Jan. 2024. <https://globalnews.ca/news/10264872/canada-china-foreign-interference-elections-csis-report/>



increased spread of misinformation⁴ and the increased use of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) that presents both [opportunities](#)⁵ and [challenges](#)⁶ for election administration and for supporting candidates and voters in their electoral participation. A fulsome review should also contemplate how to ensure the continued health of our local democracies, something the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is looking at currently through their [Healthy Democracy Project](#)⁷.

While we know this is easier said than done and recognize that the legislation contains a patchwork of provisions which attempts to fill in gaps, this approach has made the overall MEA in its current form, more challenging to read, interpret, comply with, and enforce. With the upcoming 2026 municipal elections, municipalities will be planning earnestly early next year, and a focus on renewing the election frameworks has never been timelier.

This submission has been prepared by AMCTO with a goal to improve and modernize the MEA and its regulations. It highlights the need for revisions as conducted on a line-by-line basis and considers how the proposed amendments would impact other acts such as the *Education Act, 1990* and the *Assessment Act, 1990*. Our recommendations focus on outcomes-based solutions across three broad themes:

1. **Strengthening Public Trust and Electoral Integrity**
2. **Enhancing Accountability and Transparency while Making Compliance and Enforcement Easier**
3. **Permissive Legislation that Reduces Administrative Complexity**

Through this submission, we also identify a proposed timeline to assist the Province in planning for continuous improvements to the *Act*. These recommendations are labelled as:

- **Priority:** those we believe must be implemented through legislative updates ahead of 2026
- **Secondary:** those we believe can and should be implemented through legislative updates ahead of 2026
- **Long-term:** those that may require further investigation, analysis, and collaboration between the Province, AMCTO, municipalities, and other affected stakeholders to get right.*

**It should be noted that these are no less important to AMCTO members and we would encourage the Province to initiate work on them as soon as possible.*

This submission is the result of continuous work by our MEA Working Group, ongoing conversations with members, as well as feedback from clerks following the 2022 municipal elections. Through this submission, we hope to inspire the Province to take action in reviewing the MEA and to inform a broader dialogue around local election administration, the importance of openness and accountability in local government.

⁴ For instance, Thompson, Elizabeth. "Disinformation, foreign interference threatening Canada's electoral system, elections watchdog warns." *CBC News*. 22, June 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-elections-watchdog-cote-1.6497875>; Bridgman, A., et al. Mis- and Disinformation During the 2021 Canadian Federal Election. Media Ecosystem Observatory. Mar. 2022. https://www.mcgill.ca/maxbellschool/files/maxbellschool/meo_election_2021_report.pdf

⁵ Deepack P et al. *AI Magazine*. "AI and core electoral processes: Mapping the horizons." V. 44.3 Fall 2023. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/aaai.12105>

⁶ Leaders. "How worried should you be about AI disrupting elections?" *The Economist*. 31 Aug. 2023. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/08/31/how-artificial-intelligence-will-affect-the-elections-of-2024>

⁷ See <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/healthy-democracy-project>





Background

Elections occur in 414 cities, towns, and villages[†] across Ontario to ensure that [2,842](#)⁸ municipal offices and [676](#)⁹ school board trustees are elected through processes that run as efficiently and effectively as possible within the current legislative framework.

While the MEA sets out the rules for local elections, the [Assessment Act, 1990](#) and the [Education Act, 1990](#) also contain provisions impacting local elections; adding more places for voters, candidates, and administrators to look for the rules that bind the local democratic process in Ontario.

*quality assurance testing
compliance audit post-election reporting
staff training committee recruitment
ward boundary candidate support
election monitoring financial statement reviews
representation reviews overseeing prosecutions
new council orientation stakeholder relationships
vendor procurement supply chain management
voters list updates local scouting
volunteer recruitment*

Election administration is a complex endeavour that municipal staff lead and oversee. This includes a multi-year planning and implementation journey that continues up to a year or more past election day. As election administrators, municipal clerks support candidates, third-party advertisers, election workers, and voters by overseeing ballot and technology preparation; coordinating supply chain management and vendor selection;

performing security reviews; preparing election reports; revising voters' lists; overseeing compliance audit committees (CACs); and responding to possible prosecutions. In many Ontario municipalities, this work may be done by one or two people.

Election administrators take pride in executing fair, accountable, transparent, accessible, and reliable local elections and are always looking for ways to continuously improve the delivery of these important services. An updated MEA would allow election administrators to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively while providing needed clarity to local candidates, third-party advertisers, voters and the general public.

To ensure administrators can pivot and implement legislative changes without impacting planning for the 2026 municipal elections, we urge the Province to act swiftly to consult on, then enact the following recommendations and updates to the MEA.

[†] While there are 444 municipalities in Ontario, 414 hold elections. The other municipalities are upper tiers, representatives for which are elected or appointed through lower tiers locally.

⁸ Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). "Analysis of 2022 Municipal Post Election Data", 14 Nov. 2022. <https://www.amo.on.ca/policy/municipal-governance-indigenous-relations/analysis-2022-municipal-post-election-data>

⁹ Ontario Education Services Corporation. "Post Election Data," 1 Nov. 2022. <https://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/Resources/pdf/2022Data/Post-Election%20Data%20-%20All%20School%20Boards.pdf>





Overview of the Issues

Strengthening
Public Trust &
Electoral Integrity

As outlined in the introduction, the *MEA* in its current form needs to be comprehensively reviewed in consultation with the sector and re-written. Processes can be streamlined, rules improved, provisions re-ordered, and clarity brought forward to ensure that voters, residents, candidates, third-parties, interest groups and election administrators have a modern act that is clear and consistent, while ensuring that processes are accountable and transparent.

Enhancing
Accountability
& Transparency
while Making
Compliance &
Enforcement
Easier

Some of the top concerns identified by AMCTO members include the current legislation containing a patchwork of amendments, repealed sections, and transitional provisions that are no longer relevant. On top of this, there are other structural issues in the way the Act is laid out, that make it difficult for voters, candidates, and organizations to understand and manage. Often a clause in one section must be read with a clause in another section, or within another act, which makes reading and complying with the rules difficult to do.

Permissive
Legislation
that Reduces
Administrative
Complexity

Another significant issue has been the lack of harmonization of local election rules across the three Acts (*MEA*, *Assessment Act*, *Education Act*) that set out the complex rules for municipal and school board elections. School board trustee candidates and voters must interpret three pieces of legislation to understand their qualifications. Moreover, because school support has two purposes under legislation – election and assessment – outdated legislative requirements make it difficult to match school support to voters which can mean delays at the polling station.

Rules on campaign finance and third-party advertising are also complex and difficult to oversee and enforce. There needs to be a thorough review of both frameworks to streamline rules and introduce mechanisms to make enforcement more efficient. This must include examining enforcement such as the compliance audit process, offences, and penalties.





Recommendations

The *MEA* will be 30 years old when the next scheduled municipal and school board elections take place in October 2026. While there have been a few changes to the *Act* since the last formal review, the current mix of political, environmental, social, technological, and legal factors make this an opportune moment to modernize the *Act*.

A review and re-write of the *Act* should also include a concurrent review of relevant sections of the *Education Act* and *Assessment Act* which contain provisions that add further complexity to the local election picture.

General Recommendations

- 1. Overhaul and update the *Act* to ensure that it is future-proof, addresses current gaps, streamlines rules, and brings added clarity well ahead of the 2030 election.**

While it may not be possible to complete a top-to-bottom re-write and re-design of the *Act* ahead of 2026, AMCTO is calling on the Province to launch consultations and engage our members to begin the process as soon as possible. The goal is to bring forward brand new legislation by 2028 at the latest, ahead of the 2030 municipal elections. The project planning for this endeavour should begin now, informed by discussions with AMCTO, Elections Ontario, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

A new *Act* would breathe new life into local government elections by rebuilding a fulsome statute instead of relying on the current patchwork of fixes that make the legislation more complicated than necessary. A new *Act* would make it easier for voters, candidates, and third-party advertisers to understand, comply with and participate in democratic processes. A review also provides an opportunity to bring innovation to election administration so that Ontario is looked to as a leader in the local democratic process in Canada.



2. Include a legislative requirement to review the Act after every scheduled municipal and school board election year.

While a comprehensive review should ensure the Act does not become quickly outdated, with the pace of technological and societal change, the MEA will continue to need regular review and updating. We are suggesting that the Act be substantially reviewed at least every four years with a specific legislative requirement to do so.

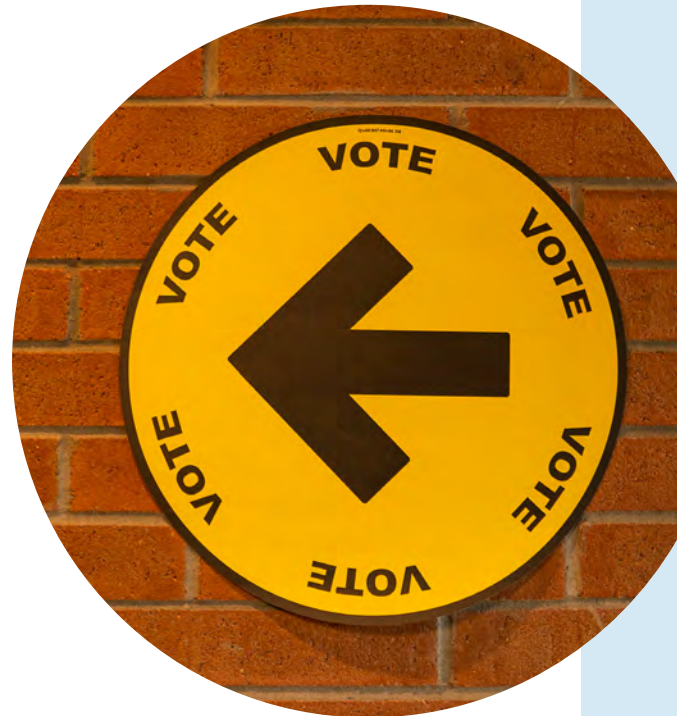
3. Review how the current legislation, regulations, and prescribed forms treat personal information, considering a digital privacy lens.

In the past few years, privacy protection has become increasingly important. With increased vitriol both in-person and in digital public spaces, members of the public, candidates for elected office, and other officials have expressed concern about the protection of personal information. Furthermore, as personal safety concerns have become increasingly alarming, it is essential that steps are taken to protect the privacy of individuals while balancing the need for increased transparency in local elections.

For instance, [several municipalities have passed resolutions](#) calling on the Province to remove requirements to post personal information online including candidate and contributor home addresses¹⁰. Anecdotally, several clerks have noted that they have received requests from those who experienced harassment or violence and consequentially, they do not want their information appearing on the voters' list.

Unlike provincial election legislation, the MEA does not explicitly allow for the redaction of certain information when posting documents online. Section 4.7 of the [Elections Act, 1990](#) gives Elections Ontario, upon request, the authority to redact certain personal information if the Chief Electoral Officer reasonably believes posting the information would endanger the person's life, health, or security. Further, section 4.8 of the *Elections Act* restricts the sharing of names, addresses, and unique identifiers of electors to certain persons.

For municipal election legislation, consider allowing for redaction of personal information or removing the requirement for municipalities to post personal information online while ensuring information is still available to clerks or to any other body to review qualifying addresses for contributions.



¹⁰ See for instance, <https://kitchener.citynews.ca/2023/04/26/region-of-waterloo-asks-province-to-keep-home-addresses-of-local-candidates-donors-private/>



Recommendations to Strengthen Public Trust and Electoral Integrity

Electoral integrity is a core focus of election administration and critical to ensuring public trust. While all recommendations are built on the foundation of electoral integrity, recommendations listed under this theme speak to the need to provide support to electors, residents, and administrators in this endeavour.

Priority Recommendations

- 1. Amend the Act to include a preamble that captures the principles of elections recognized by the court and the intended outcomes of the Act.**

One way to enhance the clarity of the *MEA* is to ensure that the text matches core guiding principles of elections.

As we noted in our [2015 submission](#)¹¹, in *DiBiase v. Vaughan (City)*, 2007, the Honourable Justice Peter Howden of the Ontario Superior Court wrote that in making its finding, the court relied upon the principles articulated in a previous Supreme Court of Canada ruling (*Haig v. Canada*, 1993), specifically that:

- The secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount;
- The election shall be fair and non-biased;
- The election shall be accessible to the voters;
- The integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election;
- There is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
- Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently; and
- The proper majority vote governs by ensuring that valid votes be counted, and invalid votes be rejected so far as is reasonably possible.

These principles are fundamental to the administration and exercise of elections at all orders of government in Canada. They are in fact, central to the *MEA* itself, and should be embedded in the Act.

- 2. Establish a mechanism that permits the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in consultation with affected communities, to alter municipal and school board election day if it falls on a day of cultural or religious significance.**

The 2022 municipal and school board election day fell during Diwali, an important festival observed by many communities across the province. In future years, it could be the case that election day falls on another culturally or religiously significant festival or event.

While many municipalities provide advance voting opportunities, local elections rely on volunteers as well as municipal staff to support election day activities including running voting locations.

¹¹ See <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/AMCTO-MEA-Submission.pdf>



Candidates for office may also be impacted as they may wish to be with family and friends during these special occasions. For residents and staff of the impacted communities it can be a difficult decision to choose between missing personal celebratory commitments or missing an important democratic process. This could be a contributing factor to lower voter turnout and election staffing resources.

Section 9.1 (6) of the [Ontario Election Act, 1990](#)¹² contains a mechanism through which an alternative day can be chosen for provincial elections. A mechanism for selecting an alternative day is needed for local elections, however the selection of a suitable alternate day should not be left to individual clerks as there is a policy imperative that municipal and school board elections must be held on the same day across the province.

Moreover, as clerks need ample time to ensure that they can plan and execute elections, the selection and communication of an alternate date would need to be done well in advance, at least by the January in the year prior to the year of the election, if not earlier.

3. Amend the Act so that, if requested, schools and institutions must allow space for advance polls and voting day free of charge.

To facilitate in-person voting, municipal clerks and their staff require large, central, and accessible locations to host voters on advance voting and election days. Often, the best facilities are local schools. While the MEA allows clerks to use certain buildings, including schools, as voting locations ([section 45\(4\)](#)), health and safety concerns often cited by school administrators make the location selection process less seamless than it should be.

While school boards are required to provide space on election day, clerks often face administrative difficulties in securing these spaces. For example, we have heard from members that some school administrators request that municipalities hire security personnel or may not provide access to facilities such as washrooms, or access to school staff during election day, and some refuse access altogether. This leaves clerks with challenges confirming voting locations and without the enforcement tools to secure these spaces.

Additionally, all electors should have access to voting in multiple locations on all voting days. As per the [definition in section 5 the MEA](#)¹³, “voting day in a regular election is the fourth Monday in October” which does not specifically include advance voting opportunities. For instance, schools can currently say no to advance polls, or can charge a permit fee. The Act should be changed so that schools must allow advance polls if requested, and free of charge.

On election day, institutions like long-term care homes become polling locations for the Province's most vulnerable electors. However, there may be issues with accessing these locations because of outbreaks or other circumstances, which can make casting votes more difficult. Explicitly allowing voting to take place in institutions and schools on advance voting days allows clerks to provide more electors more choice in when and where to cast their ballots.

¹² See the *Election Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6

¹³ See section 5 in the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996



4. Require school boards to schedule one of the provincially required Professional Activity (PA) days on municipal and school board election day.

Further to the above, enhancing safe schools on voting day is a priority for everyone. This goal can be achieved by reducing the number of people in schools. To do this, one of the mandatory PA days should fall on election day and while some school boards practice this, there remains inconsistency across the province.

AMCTO previously shared an analysis of locally scheduled PA days that showed that moving PA days every four years to coincide with municipal election days is unlikely to be a significant burden for school boards as there is a pattern of October PA days. School boards should be required to schedule one of the provincially mandated PA days on municipal and school board election day to facilitate the election of their own representatives and so that election administrators can focus on providing safe electoral services.

Ahead of the 2022 municipal elections our Association [made formal requests of school boards](#) to schedule one of the mandatory PA days on election day¹⁴. We also asked that these dates be included every four years as part of the annual school year calendar development.

Following this advocacy push, we were pleased to see an increase in the number of school boards that scheduled a PA day in 2022, with [encouragement from the Ministry of Education](#)¹⁵. However, this remains an issue for future elections, requiring a permanent, reoccurring solution.



Secondary Recommendations

5. Remove the requirement for employees of a municipality or local board to provide notice of their intention to stand for election to council.

There are areas where the rules and guidance within the Act should provide more certainty to candidates and to electors to facilitate their participation in local democracy. Potential candidates for municipal office, who happen to work for a municipality or a local board, should be provided the same, equal opportunity as other candidates who are not required to declare their intentions until they submit their paperwork. Municipal staff are responsible to their employer and so should follow established HR protocols for taking leave. By removing the requirement for municipal employees to provide council with notice of their intention to stand for election, all candidates can be treated fairly.

¹⁴ See AMCTO letter, September 2021, to School Board Directors of Education & Board Chairs re PD Days <https://www.amcto.com/letter-to-school-boards-re-PD-days>

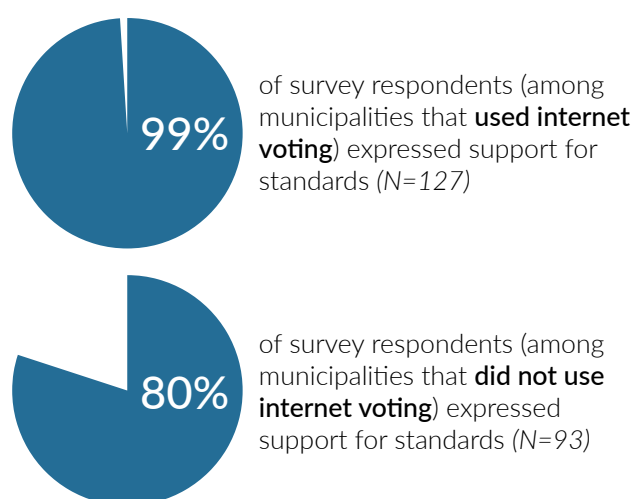
¹⁵ See AMCTO Advocacy Update, September 2022, re Progress on Professional Development (PD) Days on Municipal and School Board Election Day <https://amcto.informz.net/informzdataservice/onlineversion/pub/bWFpbGluZ0luc3RhbmNISWQ9MTA3NTYwODQ=>



6. Clarify the Act to reflect that a voter's absence from work may be on any day voting is available (i.e. advance voting days).

Like the issue noted above about the definition of voting day in [section 5](#) of the MEA, it should be made explicit that any elector can be absent from work to exercise their right to vote on any day voting is available. The current definition of voting day is limited to election day only and could be read to exclude advance voting days, days that may be more convenient to voters for casting their ballots and participating in the democratic process.

7. In consultation with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders, consider how the work by the [Digital Governance Standards Institute](#)¹⁶ related to electronic voting may be formalized to support election administration in Ontario.



Survey data collected through AMCTO's 2022 Post-Election Survey

Work is already underway to develop voluntary standards on [voting technology](#)¹⁷ and [electronic voting](#)¹⁸. Municipal professionals from across Ontario have engaged with the committee undertaking this work. With an increasing number of municipalities considering e-voting methods for ease of meeting voters 'where they are', there should be a provincial interest in adopting voting standards.

Overwhelmingly, respondents to our 2022 Post-Election Survey support internet voting standards. The responses also suggest more municipalities would consider this method of voting if there were standards in place. The right training and supports would need to be

What our Members are Saying:

"Standards would ensure consistency in format, security, etc. across vendors."

"[Voting standards] would ensure a province-wide standard for security and operational experience."

"There are standards set out for paper voting in the MEA. There should also be a standard for electronic voting as it is now left to the municipality and vendors. It may provide further confidence in these systems."

¹⁶ See <https://dgc-cgn.org/>

¹⁷ See <https://dgc-cgn.org/standards/find-a-standard/voting-technologies/>

¹⁸ See <https://dgc-cgn.org/can-dgsi-111-public-review-for-online-voting-standard-now-open/>



in place to ensure that municipalities, vendors, and other interested parties fully understand the standards and their responsibilities.

Moreover, decisions about voting methods should always be left to the municipality to decide. Whereas online voting may be beneficial in some regions of the province, it may not be the best method for others given costs, technological support and access to broadband.

Ultimately, voting standards would empower municipalities to select the best voting method(s) for them and their communities. Consider how these standards may be formalized to support election administration in Ontario.

Long-Term Recommendations

- 8. Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders to inform the development of a regulation for electoral definitions of “tenant”, “spouse of a non-resident” and “occupancy”.**

Municipal elections have unique eligibility rules tied to property and tenancy status that make these terms important and unique. The current definitions provided in the *Act* are not sufficiently clear, and create potential confusion for electors, candidates, and administrators. We raised this [concern in 2015](#)¹⁹ and legislative changes in [2016](#)²⁰ brought forward regulation-making authority to consider a definition of tenant for electoral purposes. However, regulations are not yet in place.

The lack of definition about occupancy, control, possession and tenancy remains a significant gap municipal clerks must deal with related to voter qualification with many claiming to be eligible based on a lease of “properties” such as parking spots, sheds on land, as well as various seasonal properties such as RV parks and leased cottages. Providing a clearer definition of “occupancy”, “control”, “possession”, “tenancy”, and “spouse of a non-resident” is important to all municipalities, but more so in communities where qualifications based on residency and property are muddled such as in cottage country and rural Ontario. There are unique eligibility rules at the municipal level that make clear terminology important.

¹⁹ See <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/AMCTO-MEA-Submission.pdf>

²⁰ See <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-1/bill-181/debates>



For example, Wollaston Township experienced issues with lack of clarity on qualifications and in 2020 called for the Province to close loopholes on property qualifications and leases in what they called “pay for play schemes”²¹. The resulting council resolution received support from several other municipalities.

Providing this clarification for electoral purposes will help clerks ensure that tenants entitled to vote can do so, and those who believe they may be entitled to vote (but are not under law) can obtain needed clarity. Our Association can be a willing partner to assist in developing these regulations.

Recommendations to Enhance Accountability and Transparency While Making Compliance and Enforcement Easier

This section contains recommendations that speak to fairness, accountability, transparency, and key principles to ensuring the integrity of elections. This section contemplates making compliance with electoral rules easier to follow for candidates and where these rules are deliberately broken, suggests recommendations that allow efficient enforcement of remedies and penalties. As the local “Chief Electoral Officer”, the clerk should have the authority to make decisions about administrative and operational matters. This will ensure that there is no real or apparent conflict for council members who may be standing for election while making decisions about the electoral process. This may also help to improve overall municipal staff-council relations.

Priority Recommendations

1. Remove the 25-signature endorsement requirement.

Everyone has the right to stand as a candidate for election if they meet the qualifications set out in the relevant Acts. However, particularly in larger urban municipalities, candidates often run for office without any intention of campaigning, without setting out policy proposals, or legitimately participating in the democratic process.

The [original intent behind this provision](#) of obtaining a 25-signature endorsement was to try to reduce frivolous candidates from ending up on the ballot which could result in split votes²². Ultimately, requirements for 25 signatures in medium and large municipalities have not addressed this issue as signatures are easy to collect with a declaration that signees are eligible electors. This does not dissuade people from launching non-serious campaigns and adds an administrative burden for election administrators who must review and attempt to check required information on candidate forms and eligibility.

²¹ Wollaston Township. Letter to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with Council Resolution. Dated September 16, 2020.

²² Ontario. Legislative Assembly, *Hansard*, 41st Leg, 1st Sess, No 158 (11, April 2016) at 1440. <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/house-documents/parliament-41/session-1/2016-04-11/hansard#para577:~:text=Some%20people%20have,than%20100%20votes.>



2. Investigate incentives to support genuine candidacy while addressing frivolous campaigns, including the nomination filing fee refund.

Instead of the 25-signature requirement, the Province should look at other ways to support serious candidates while disincentivizing non-serious candidates. The current process of refunding anyone who files a financial statement is ineffective at dissuading frivolous candidates and there may be better mechanisms to ensure compliance with campaign finance rules.

Potential areas to explore are nomination fee refund eligibility to candidates who receive a certain vote share or removing the right to receive a refund of the nomination filing fee if the financial statement is not filed on time. Consideration should be given to whether certain rules favour incumbents as opposed to their challengers. Overall, there must be a balance between supporting genuine candidacy, reducing administrative burden, and applying penalties to those who deliberately skirt electoral rules.

3. Amend the Act so that no candidate shall accept a contribution over \$1,200 from a single resident.

While we recommend reviewing the campaign finance framework in its entirety (see long-term recommendations in this section), the Province should immediately review the Act to identify and close loopholes in campaign finance rules.

For example, [subsection 88.9](#)²³ prohibits individuals from contributing over \$1,200 to a single candidate, however there is no complementary provision that explicitly prohibits a candidate from accepting such a contribution. Contributors are not necessarily familiar with the Act in the same way candidates are, and with the Act in its current form, the rules around contributions are not easy for residents to understand.

4. Clarify that any resident of Ontario may submit a compliance audit application, consistent with contribution rules.

There is confusion among candidates and the public about who can submit a compliance audit application. Currently, [subsection 88.33](#)²⁴ states that an elector who is entitled to vote may make an application, but it is not clear whether an elector must reside in the municipality in which they are making an application. This has been [raised and challenged most recently](#)²⁵ in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, where an Oakville candidate appealed an elector's request for an audit of their finances, stating that the elector resides in a different ward than them, and is therefore ineligible to file a compliance audit request.

As contributions are open to residents of Ontario (i.e. not limited to electors), there should be a mechanism by which electors as residents of Ontario may seek remedy from the compliance

²³ See ss.88.9 in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*

²⁴ See ss.88.33 in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*

²⁵ See <https://www.oakvillenews.org/local-news/ward-7-councillor-nav-nanda-appeals-decision-to-audit-her-campaign-finances-8482086>



audit process regardless of where they reside. If applications are not frivolous and vexatious, any resident of Ontario with the means of seeing through an application should be able to bring one forward to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

5. Consider setting one 90-day period for compliance audit applications for initial and supplementary financial statements to simplify the process.

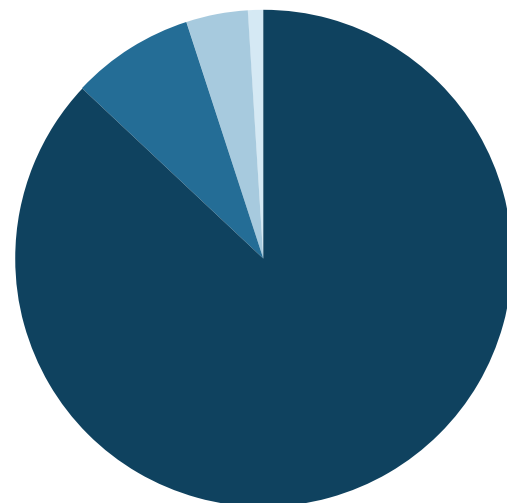
The current structure creates many overlapping deadlines which is challenging to communicate to electors, the public, and for municipalities and school boards to track. This becomes more challenging in larger municipalities with hundreds of candidates. Streamlining application deadlines will make communication, administration, and compliance easier.

6. Roll the review of contributions and over-contributions to candidates and third-party advertisers into the Compliance Audit Committee (CAC) process and permit the committee to decide whether to commence a legal proceeding against a candidate or third-party advertiser for an apparent contravention.

Consistent with our recommendations on [Bill 181 to Standing Committee](#)²⁶ in 2016, having municipal clerks review contributions to candidates and third-party advertisers is problematic for a number of reasons:

- The CAC already exists to review financial statements
- The current process jeopardizes the independence and the impartiality of clerks during elections
- The current process places clerks in potential conflict with members of council
- Most municipalities do not have mature electronic filing systems for candidate and third-party advertiser financial statements
- The current process imposes additional administrative and resource burden on clerks who are already busy running local elections

Rolling the review of contributions into the established mandates of CACs would also allow an elector to make an application and is a more effective way to ensure candidate and contributor accountability.



How does your municipality determine whether any contributors exceed the maximum allowable amount? (N=220)

- Clerk's office fulfilling it (192)
- Finance department fulfilling it (17)
- Other (8)
- Using an external consultant (3)

Survey data collected through AMCTO's 2022 Post-Election Survey

²⁶ See <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/AMCTO-Bill-181-Committee-Presentation-Deck.pdf>



The CAC process has traditionally not received much attention. However, the process is an important element of accountability in local elections and is [starting to receive more public discussion](#)²⁷.

Providing the CAC with explicit authority to decide whether to commence a legal proceeding against a candidate or third-party advertiser could reduce applications made to the courts for review of CAC decisions.

Consider improving the CAC process with accountability, transparency, and operations in mind as countless hours are spent on delivering important post-election processes, which can contribute to overall increased audit costs and continue for years after the election with prosecutions and court reviews.

7. Expand decision timelines for CACs in Subsection (8) from 30 days to 45 days.

Further, in the interest of supporting applicants, election administrators and CAC members with carrying out their responsibilities, the decision-timelines for CACs should be expanded from 30 days to 45 days. This additional time is especially helpful where the CAC process may fall around a holiday (especially in cases of by-elections). 45 days would remain a reasonable decision timeframe consistent with references in other statutes for required meetings.

8. Clarify roles with respect to CACs wherein council is responsible for establishing the committee and the clerk is responsible for making appointments.

The MEA assigns responsibility of administering elections, including establishing necessary policies and procedures, to the clerk. However, there are several sections throughout the Act where the responsibility for what are, in effect, administrative decisions, is vaguely distributed between both council and staff. Administrative responsibilities for elections should rest with the clerk.

For instance, section [88.37\(1\)](#)²⁸ gives council responsibility for “establishing” a compliance audit committee to review potential campaign finance violations. In practice, however, this section has been interpreted broadly, giving council a more expansive mandate that includes appointing committee members. It is not appropriate for council to appoint members of a committee that is created to review the election finances of candidates, some of whom may end up filing as candidates and sitting as councillors. To maintain clarity and objectivity, all administrative responsibilities related to CACs should reside with the clerk.



²⁷ Coyne, Andrea and Andrew Lawlor. “Building voter confidence in the municipal electoral process,” *Policy Options*. 21, Feb. 2024. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/february-2024/municipal-elections-safeguards/>

²⁸ See section 88.37(1) in the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996



Secondary Recommendations

- 9. Clarify the role of scrutineers where alternative (unsupervised or remote) voting is in place and collaborate with AMCTO and others on the definition of scrutineer and what they may or may not do.**

The process of scrutineering is changing in every municipality that incorporates the use of internet voting into their election. As voting in the digital age is no longer neatly contained to recreation centres, school auditoriums or church basements, the rules are not as clear as they once were. The Act provides significant attention to the role of scrutineers during an election, ensuring that candidates are permitted to appoint a scrutineer for each ballot box and voting place. But what happens when there are thousands of polling places and no formal ballot box? There is currently no clarity about how election results can be scrutineered in jurisdictions that use online or alternative voting methods. This is a gap in the current process that needs to be addressed.

- 10. Review the scope of election offences and related penalties to address gaps. Consider providing support and guidance to clerks on best practices for implementation and enforcement of serious offences.**

Offences and related penalties should be reviewed. More specifically, for the coercion or intimidation of an elector, preventing or impeding an elector from voting, and from false representation or aiding a person in committing offences. A review needs to address these gaps - many of which are a result of changes to technology.

In consideration of new offences and related penalties, the Province must of course consider the burden of proof and enforceability of penalties for such offences. The Province should also provide more support and guidance to clerks on best practices for implementation and engaging law enforcement for the more serious offences.

Long-Term Recommendations

Due to gaps in rules and penalties, the lack of standardization of compliance audits, and the [increased use of the courts](#) to review compliance audit committee decisions²⁹, there has been increased frustration among administrators and an inconsistent approach to post-election activities meant to ensure transparency and accountability. As an Association, we have highlighted several of these member concerns about role clarity, conflict of interest and capacity issues.

Not only is the current process frustrating for municipal staff but for candidates who are not clear on their responsibilities. This can also be frustrating for residents and electors who are doing their due diligence in holding candidates accountable for improper activities. If the rules are not clear, and the process becomes convoluted, why would anyone participate in the electoral process?

²⁹ Coyne and Lawlor.



11. Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal partners to review and improve the campaign finance framework, including rules, guidance, forms, processes, and penalties.

While we have put forward several recommendations as interim measures to address financial issues, there remain underlying concerns that only a full review of the campaign finance framework can properly address.

Whether it is on the campaign finance framework or the below noted third-party advertising framework, there needs to be a balance struck: any new rules should avoid making it difficult for people to participate in local democracy. Making compliance easier while also ensuring that there is proper accountability, makes the rules and processes easier to enforce and to prosecute where rules have been broken.

Given the complexity of administration, compliance, and enforcement, a wider conversation about these frameworks is needed with our members and other stakeholders to understand the issues, challenges, and opportunities from varying perspectives. Together, we can co-design a framework that benefits everyone.

12. Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders to review and improve the third-party advertiser regime for ease of compliance and enforcement.

Similarly, the third-party advertiser framework needs to be updated and improved. The [current measures were introduced](#) to regulate third-party advertising, which includes contribution and spending limits, and to help create flexibility for groups doing advocacy work throughout the campaign period³⁰. However, there remains room for improvement, including better defining qualifications for third-party advertisers. Improvements should ensure the regime is less cumbersome and easier for advertisers, administrators, and compliance audit committees to comply with and enforce.

13. Within the campaign finance and third-party advertiser frameworks, review the mechanisms for enforcement, and related penalties to address gaps in accountability and transparency measures.

Related to our secondary recommendation in this section, there are gaps in penalties related to overcontributing to a candidate's own campaign and accepting overcontributions from residents. There are nuances within the legislation that must be considered as well. For instance, there should be assurances that changes to campaign finance rules and penalties are balanced with the ability of candidates to pay off campaign debts.

Ultimately, a review of the campaign finance and third-party advertising frameworks, along with the compliance audit, offences, penalties, and enforcement processes must be looked at holistically as these are intertwined with changes to one section or subsection potentially requiring subsequent changes elsewhere in the Act.

³⁰ Ontario Newsroom. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Backgrounder. June 7, 2016. "Changes to the Municipal Elections Act," Accessed: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/backgrounder/39111/changes-to-the-municipal-elections-act>.



14. Consider increasing maximum campaign spending limits and its related formula to consider inflation outlined in O Reg 101/97.

The Province should consider revising the spending limit formula in [Ontario Regulation 101/97](#)³¹ which has been stagnant since 2018 and does not consider inflationary pressures on campaign costs.

15. Explore establishing an independent office to manage investigation and prosecution of offences under the Act.

Local election administration enforcement is nuanced and often differs municipality to municipality as does capacity and resourcing, whereas federal and provincial elections are administered by one centralized body. In reviewing the campaign finance, third-party advertising and enforcement frameworks in the MEA, the Province should also consider promising practices from election administrators at other levels of government, such as an independent office like the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

Municipalities face challenges proceeding with prosecutions under the MEA. For instance, the conflicting nature of local police governance is responsible for the investigation of criminal activity, and municipal elected officials sit on these police boards. Anecdotally, in instances where local forces are engaged, they have recused themselves and referred matters to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) who may or may not involve themselves in local matters. Barring a provincially appointed official, more clarity around MEA offences being investigated by the OPP would help address existing concerns.

Similarly, prosecution through the courts is a time-consuming process that can take multiple years to get to trial, the process for which takes up staff time and resources to prepare for, prosecute, and await judgement before applying penalties.

A separate body could allow for an alternative dispute resolution mechanism with procedures that are applied consistently across municipalities. This would remove potential conflicts and friction between municipal staff as election administrators, candidates, and members of council who may have contravened the Act, leading to quicker resolutions. At the provincial-level for instance, the [Election Finances Act, 1990](#)³² includes mechanisms such as referrals to the Ministry of the Attorney General for prosecution and the use of administrative monetary penalties.



³¹ See section 5 of O.Reg 101/97 under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*

³² See the *Elections Finances Act, 1990* <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e07>



Recommendations to Reduce Administrative Complexity

AMCTO supports modernizing legislative and regulatory environments that enable the work of municipal public servants, while allowing innovation with policies and practices that reflect current needs and focuses on outcomes.

Legislation needs to strike the right balance between providing clear rules and frameworks to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, while also reducing administrative and operational burden for municipal staff. Local election administrators need to be able to run elections in a way that responds to the unique circumstances of their local communities. Thereby, providing the right rules and frameworks for administrators will result in benefits for electors, candidates, advertisers, and others involved in local elections.



Priority Recommendations

- 1. Bring the language of the Act and regulations into the 21st century by removing gendered references and including references to encompass all voting methods.**

To ensure more inclusive language within the Act, the Province should remove gendered references. Clerks receive complaints from non-binary persons about the use of language in the Act which they feel is exclusionary. Moreover, as more municipalities are turning to alternative voting methods to reach voters and run efficient elections, language in the Act across numerous sections and within regulations should encompass all voting methods rather than referring to traditional paper ballots or in-person voting. Changes are required in sections 43, 47, 48, 49, 52, and 89, among others.

- 2. Ensure all definitions that appear in the Act are captured in and limited to Section 1 and update definitions to add clarity.**

One way to improve clarity and interpretation is to ensure that all key terms are captured in the definition section of the Act. There are several instances wherein a definition appears later in the legislation while others are captured in the definition section. Definitions for several terms also require clarity. For instance, municipalities are left to define "retirement homes" resulting in inconsistencies across municipalities. As we have noted elsewhere in this submission, definitions of "tenants" and "occupancy" also lack clarity.

It is also important that language clarifies the definition of "municipality" so that it consistently applies to operational and administrative tasks undertaken by municipal administration, whether by the clerk or other municipal staff.



3. Clarify references to municipal business hours as well as dates that constitute a weekend or holiday as defined pursuant to the *Legislation Act, 2006*.

Candidates, voters, and other interested parties are not familiar with the traditions and nuances of legislation and regulations. Without a reference to other legislation, voters and candidates are unlikely to know that they should refer to the *Legislation Act* for definitions. Moreover, it should be clarified that references to specific deadlines within the *Act* are to reflect regular municipal business hours especially where these hours may fall on weekends and holidays.

4. Move nomination day to July, shortening the campaign period to be more consistent with federal and provincial nomination periods.

As noted previously, local elections are complex multi-year projects often undertaken by a handful of municipal staff who are also responsible for numerous other statutory and operational responsibilities. In 2020, the [nomination period was extended to August from July](#)³³. Extending this period runs contrary to the changes the Province made in 2016 [shortening the nomination period](#)³⁴. Furthermore, the municipal nomination period is longer than those at the provincial and federal levels where this process is managed by agencies whose sole focus is election administration.

Shortening the length of the nomination period would give municipalities more time to prepare ahead of the election. There is significant strain on municipal staff and resources with longer nomination periods, with legislative and business deadlines for printing ballots, quality assurance, security, and testing, among other activities. While this may sound straightforward, municipalities are often working with tight, limited supply chains and vendors, and in larger municipalities, staff are often dealing with multiple ballot types, and in many cases, managing hundreds of candidates. A longer nomination period means there is less time between the close of nominations and the first day of voting to finish the nuanced tasks and activities required of local elections.

Longer elections are more expensive for candidates, harder to run for administrators, and can be a potential cause of fatigue from an already disengaged electorate. Moving the nomination period back to at least July would make the nomination period shorter, while also giving candidates in smaller municipalities—who may still be working full-time jobs with less sophisticated campaign infrastructure—enough time to campaign.

5. Enable clerks to determine what voting method is best as the local chief electoral officer and align timelines related to clerk's procedures.

[Building on the updates made in 2016](#)³⁵ which began to untangle council's role in election administration, the *Act* should be updated to authorize the clerk to choose what voting method is best. Requiring council to pass bylaws on voting methods in section 42 gives council members and the public the impression that council is responsible for election administration issues.

³³ See <https://www.amcto.com/network-community/blog/advocacy-update-bill-218>

³⁴ See <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/39113/ontario-passes-legislation-to-allow-ranked-ballot-option-for-municipal-elections>

³⁵ See section 41(4) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.



[Section 42](#)³⁶ should further be amended to resolve the conflict in timelines between when procedures need to be completed and when they must be provided to candidates. For instance, June 1st is the deadline for the procedures in a regular election year, but 42(3)(b) requires these must be provided when a candidate files their papers, which could be as early as May 1st.

6. Change the timeline for proxy appointment to begin September 1st for a regular election.

A similar timeline alignment issue occurs between making the voters' list available to voters to confirm if they are on the list and/or update their information and the appointment of proxies. In the 2022 election, the first day for proxy appointment was August 22nd. However, the voters' list was not available until September 1st. In this scenario, staff were not able to necessarily confirm whether an individual appeared on the voters' list as a qualified elector until September 1st. Thus, allowing proxy voters to be appointed earlier than receipt of the voters' list is problematic.

In the case of a by-election, consider changing the timing for proxy appointments to when the clerk has made corrections.

7. Expand the timeline for reporting on accessible elections from 90 days to 120 days.

[Section 12.1 \(3\)](#)³⁷ requires the public posting of a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities within 90 days of voting day. We recommend that this be extended to 120 days. Providing additional time to municipalities would allow them to look at reporting on the election holistically in one comprehensive post-election report that includes factors impacting accessibility.

8. Consider aligning the spending limit certificate requirements and timelines between candidates and third-party advertisers for consistency.

The Act states that candidates are to receive the certificate of permitted amounts of their own expenses and contributions to their campaigns upon the filing of their nomination forms. The MEA does not require the certificate for maximum amount for parties, etc., after voting day to be issued until or before September 30th along with all final certificates. In comparison, third-party advertisers are to receive the certificate of maximum amount for parties, etc., after voting day upon filing their Notice of Registration. Providing consistent timelines across various participants in the electoral process makes it easier for municipal staff to adhere to legislative requirements and ensure that candidates and parties are adhering to timelines.



³⁶ See section 42 of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996.

³⁷ See section 12.1(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996.



9. Update existing provincial guides and forms and provide additional guidance to voters, candidates, third-party advertisers, and election administrators.

The following points outline areas where we believe further clarification can be provided to ensure continued progress, transparency, and accountability in local election administration.

Voters' Guide

- Include more details on voter identification (ID) requirements to provide clearer information about acceptable ID.

Candidate and Third-Party Advertiser Guides

- Specify the documentation that can be accepted as proof an individual is authorized to act on behalf of a trade union for third-party advertising purposes.
- Clarify whether promoted social media posts count as third-party advertising.
- Provide clarification on whether contributions can be sought via platforms such as GoFundMe that process online payments.
- Add further clarity in candidate guides on how to interpret the Act from a campaign finance perspective (i.e. using personal credit cards to reimburse campaign expenses, setting up and managing banking accounts) and where to seek advice for filling out the required forms.
- Add content to guides related to individuals who are supported by their corporations/organizations and stipulate that in these cases, campaign volunteers could be perceived as 'in-kind' contributions. Any stipends provided to volunteers should be captured in financial documents.



Forms

- Ensure clarity and consistency regarding the use of a single name on the ballot under [section 41 \(2\)](#)³⁸. Nomination forms allow the use of a single name on the ballot while section 41 does not provide guidance on how names should be listed on the ballot.
- Conduct extensive external-to-government systems testing of provincial government forms to ensure they are accessible and useable. Our members advised of candidate challenges with downloading and filling in prescribed forms as they were in a format that was not supported by their computer system. We understand that several municipalities raised this issue with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), but no remedy was applied.
- Update Declaration of Identity - Form 9 so that it can be used to serve voters who have no identification (e.g. those who may be homeless, seniors who have not updated their government-issued identification, etc.)

³⁸ See section 41(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996.



Secondary Recommendations

10. Extend the timeline to submit final changes to the voters' list from 30 days to 60 days.

[Section 27\(2\)](#)³⁹ requires that the final changes clerks make to the voters' list be submitted 30 days following election day. In the post-election period, it can be challenging for clerks to meet this deadline given that they are busy managing orientation and onboarding of councillors as well as handling compliance activities. In larger municipalities where thousands of revisions are processed during the election period, it is very challenging to meet the current 30-day timeline. It has never been clear from an operational perspective why this must be done in 30 days. 60 days would provide clerks with a more reasonable post-election timeline to account for and submit final changes.

11. Consider extending discretion to remove a name from the voters' list and the correction of errors to voting day.

The Act should be clear that if the clerk is satisfied, a correction can be made regardless of when that is. A similar mechanism should be included regarding school board support especially where an elector has completed a declaration. This would facilitate a smoother experience on election day for electors whose information may not be correct.

AMCTO's advocacy efforts⁴⁰ to fix the voters' list resulted in Elections Ontario taking over responsibility for a single register of electors, consolidating elector information across the province and removing overall responsibility from MPAC, which retains responsibility for school support data. We are hopeful that in 2026, the first election in which voters' lists will be compiled using Election Ontario's information, there will be a significant improvement in data quality of the voters' list.

Clerks should be extended the authority to make changes to elector information beyond what is currently allowed under [section 22](#)⁴¹ to update voter information, including school support, on election day, if they are satisfied that the information provided by an elector is correct. Without this authority and as the legislation stands currently, an elector may be unable to exercise their right to vote.

Permitting changes to the voters' list on election day should not prevent any improvement to processes for accepting revisions at the single register or at MPAC's level related to school board support. The end goal should always be to have corrections addressed adequately at all levels to ensure voters have a seamless, quick, and overall positive experience on election day.

³⁹ See section 27(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

⁴⁰ See <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/local-govt-association-applauds-elections-ontario-report-887387112.html>

⁴¹ See section 22 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.



12. Establish a province-wide registry for MEA offenders, maintained by the MMAH or another provincial body, and provide this registry to election administrators.

The *Act* makes it clear that candidates, contributors, and third-party advertisers are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the *Act*. While the *Act* also requires clerks to certify nomination papers and registrations, clerks do not have the tools or resources such as public and centralized information about electoral histories and sanctions imposed on candidates, contributors, or third-party advertisers. How is a clerk from southwestern Ontario to know whether a candidate or third-party registering in their municipality has been disqualified in northern Ontario?

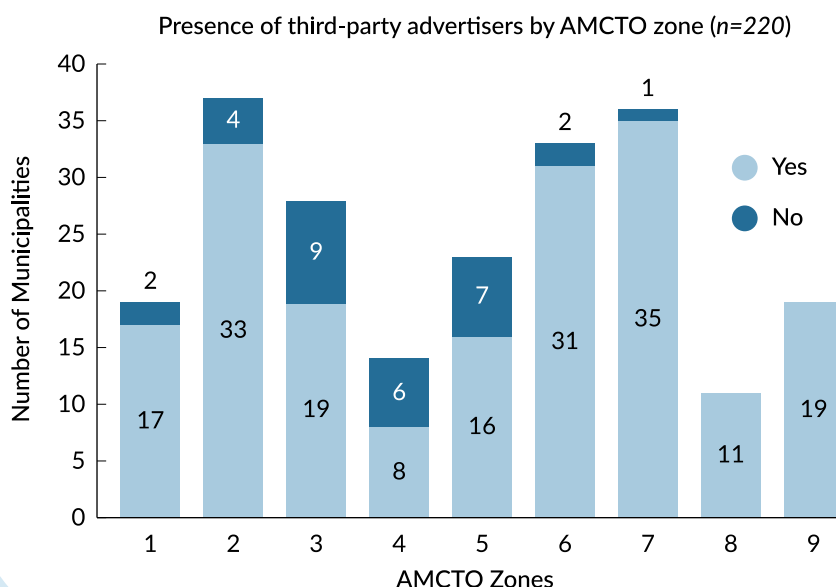
To assist municipalities in completing reviews, there should be a province-wide registry of MEA offenders. Such a central repository kept and maintained by a separate body would include information about qualifications, records of compliance audit and court decisions. Information should be available to ensure clerks, compliance audit committees, and others have access to information about those who have contravened the *Act*.

13. Amend the *Act* to consolidate rules between regular elections and by-elections specifying what must be different.

The *Act* provides that by-elections should be conducted “as far as possible in the same way as regular elections”. However, it does not provide further guidance. Are there ways in which by-elections should not run like regular elections? This is an area where the *Act* can be streamlined to clarify, where necessary, what activities may be different in a by-election. This would ensure municipalities are conducting by-elections consistently across the province.

14. Consider a threshold amount for registering as a third-party advertiser that is in line with provincial and federal thresholds.

Third-party advertiser registration primarily occurs in medium to larger municipalities and few, if any, are registered in smaller municipalities.



The entire process from registration to compliance is cumbersome and may prevent smaller actors from engaging in the political process for fear of being labelled third-party advertisers. If the intent is to retain the current framework, amendments need to be made so that there is a line in the sand for who and when someone becomes a third-party advertiser. For instance, is a 'mom and pop restaurant' a third-party advertiser because they hand out flyers for a



candidate at their restaurant? A threshold amount for registering as a third-party advertiser that is in line with provincial and federal thresholds would help ensure local voices without resources can participate without unnecessarily triggering ad status.

Moreover, calculations for third-party spending limits are cumbersome and lack clarity especially for by-elections. The current wording of section 88.21⁴² suggests that the number of electors in the entire municipality, instead of the ward that is the subject of the by-election, is used to calculate spending limits for third-party advertisers. This gives third-party advertisers a disproportionately higher spending limit than candidates in a by-election.

15. Consider amending the deadline for third-party advertiser registration to be more reasonably in advance of an election.

There are also timeline issues with third-party advertising registration. Allowing third-party advertisers to register up to the Friday before election day is problematic from an operations perspective. At this time, municipal staff's attention should be focused on the successful execution of voting and the electoral process, rather than additional paperwork.

16. Require those who file a Notice of Extension of Campaign Period - Form 6 to also file a Supplementary Financial Statement.

Often candidates and third-party advertisers believe that because they did not campaign, raise or spend money in the extended period, they are not required to file a supplementary financial statement even though they filed a notice of extension. This is the interpretation which inevitably causes confusion. Stronger language should be applied to those who file a Form 6 to specify that a Supplementary Financial Statement is required.



Long-Term Recommendations

17. Clarify the process for removing a name from the voters' list by a relative.

Providing the clerk with more flexibility to determine procedures on how a family member may request to remove someone from the municipality's voters' list (provided the clerk is satisfied that the individual should be removed) would assist in the clean-up of municipal voters' lists.

However, we are hopeful that the single register of electors managed by Elections Ontario will improve the quality of the voters' list given that there is one register and duplications should be reduced. The Province could re-evaluate this post-2026 to determine whether any legislative changes are necessary.

⁴² See section 88.21 of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996.



18. Decouple school board support for electoral purposes from school support for assessment purposes.

Despite Elections Ontario taking responsibility for a single register of electors, under the *Assessment Act*, MPAC remains responsible for collecting information about school board support. This may be attributed to the leading legislative interpretation that school support may have dual purposes: electoral and assessment. However, as the Ombudsman noted in [the 2021-2022 Annual Report](#)⁴³, this data from MPAC is no longer used to determine school board funding but rather who can run and vote in school board elections.

Currently, the single register of electors is not expected to resolve this issue as MPAC remains responsible for collection of school support information. As a result, there are two separate portals through which voters must check and update their information: one from Elections Ontario for qualification and one from MPAC for school support. This dual process will cause confusion for the voter without resolving issues related to incorrect assignment of school support.

Municipalities receive school support information, relying on this data to develop their voters' lists. The problem resides in processes that assume an elector to be an English Public supporter unless a supporter has submitted forms or updated information on an online portal to declare otherwise. This particularly impacts French-language rights holders and separate school supporters who may have moved between wards or between municipalities but did not fill out a form.

This issue continues to blur the electoral picture for candidates, electors, and administrators when it comes to linking electors and the school boards for which they are entitled to cast their ballots. This blurring sometimes results in an elector being assigned an incorrect school board ballot which slows the voting process, frustrates the elector, and means more work for election officials. Making school support for electoral purposes distinctive in legislation and providing Elections Ontario with the authority to collect this information would improve the quality of school support data.

The Province should update candidate and voter guides to make it clear that school support amendments cannot be made by municipalities as a result of Provincial legislative barriers. It is important that candidates and voters are able to direct their concerns to the Province rather than to municipal staff who do not control these processes.

19. Amend the *Education Act* to clarify who is a French-language rights holder and who is a separate school rights holder.

As we noted previously, local elections are complex endeavours, and not only do clerks run municipal elections, but they are also required to run the election for trustees across five school boards. Increasingly, candidates who may not be qualified to run for school trustee (i.e. do not hold the language or religious rights to qualify) are submitting papers to run. This has resulted in

⁴³ Ontario Ombudsman. 2022, *Annual Report 2021-2022*, <https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/resources/reports,-cases-and-submissions/annual-reports/2021-2022-annual-report> p 43



void school board trustee elections. It is no wonder why there is confusion when the *Education Act*, *Assessment Act* and the *MEA* must be read to figure out the nuances of qualification. Clearer rules around language rights qualifications would help people understand whether they qualify as a candidate.

20. Clarify that school board trustee candidates must file their nomination papers in the municipality in which they reside.

Given that school board boundaries cross municipal boundaries, when trustee candidates do not submit their nomination papers in the municipality in which they reside, it complicates the situation. Clerks are left trying to figure out residential qualification in addition to general candidate qualification. This is burdensome for candidates and municipal staff and must be addressed.



21. Consider readjusting school board boundaries to align with municipal boundaries.

Given the complications between jurisdictional boundaries, one consideration may be to better align school board boundaries with municipal boundaries.

22. Conduct a review of identification requirements in the regulation and consider the availability of digital and hard copy identification as well as identification challenges for segments of Ontario voters.

Voters and administrators require more guidance and clarity on what types and forms of acceptable identification can be used in local elections. It is a persistent challenge for municipalities educating members of the public about what can be used, particularly because accepted identification is different than provincial and federal elections due to residency requirements. Moreover, certain voters also lack identification and documentation to be able to exercise their right to vote.

As part of the Province's work on [Digital Identity](#)⁴⁴ under the Ontario Onwards Action Plan, there should be collaboration and consultation with the municipal sector, including AMCTO, on the specific needs of identification for electoral and other local service provision purposes.

⁴⁴ See <https://www.ontario.ca/page/digital-id-ontario>





Trends AMCTO Continues to Monitor

Our Working Group also discussed several trends that may impact electoral administration. While there are no specific recommendations at this time, we want to highlight some of what the group identified to inspire continued conversations about the tools, resources and supports local election administrators may require in the future.

Electoral Participation

Declining voter turnout has been discussed as an indicator of democratic health. Our 2022 Post-Election Survey, which included data from [MMAH's municipal election survey](#), found a 4% decline in overall voter turnout between 2018 and 2022⁴⁵. In 2018 and 2022, electors also voted in a provincial election, and in the fall of 2021, voted in a federal election as well.

[Our 2014 Post-Election Survey](#) found the average turnout was approximately 43%⁴⁶. [As we noted in previous submissions](#), there may be some element of voter fatigue⁴⁷ which is also why we recommend shortening the election period.

While voter turnout has decreased, the number of acclamations has increased. [As AMO noted](#):

with fewer candidates, there are also more positions being acclaimed, especially in smaller, rural municipalities. This year, 548 council positions were acclaimed, including 139 mayors and reeves. Compared to 2018, total acclamations are up 15% over 2018 and up 16% for mayors and reeves (heads of council). A total of 32 councils will be entirely acclaimed this year, 3% more than 2018, when 26 councils were acclaimed. All of [sic] the fully acclaimed municipalities in 2022 have populations of 10,000 residents or less.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ AMCTO. February 2024, 2022 Post Election Survey, <https://www.amcto.com/about-amcto/news-announcements/2022-municipal-elections-survey-key-findings>

⁴⁶ AMCTO. August 2015, 2014 Post Election Survey <https://amctopolicy.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/amcto-2014-post-election-survey-results.pdf>

⁴⁷ AMCTO. July 2015, AMCTO Submission on the Municipal Elections Act <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/AMCTO-MEA-Submission.pdf>

⁴⁸ Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). News Release. September 27 2022, "Municipal elections data available on AMO website" Accessed: <https://www.amo.on.ca/policy/municipal-governance-indigenous-relations/municipal-election-data-available-amo-website>



It is understood that in making voting easier and more accessible, it is possible to increase participation in local democratic processes which is why municipalities have looked at implementing alternative voting methods in their communities.

Digital Identity

As an Association, we continue to be interested in the Province's [Digital Identity](#) project⁴⁹ given the operational implications to local service delivery. Photo identification is used for recreation programming registration, paying property tax, resolving parking offenses, and confirming residency for local elections. The degree to which Ontario follows other jurisdictions in implementing digital identities will determine how local service delivery, including elections*, may benefit or be challenged by such an initiative. Any introduction of digital identities will need to work for elections and be reflected in the MEA.



Misinformation

We are also keeping an eye on more subversive and potentially harmful trends including the spread of misinformation that threatens democratic institutions. This is an increasing concern for election administrators at all orders of government.

For instance, a report from the [Canadian Election Misinformation Project](#)⁵⁰ documents and evaluates misinformation during the 2021 Canada federal election. While there was widespread misinformation during this election, the overall impact was minimal as the campaign period and results were not driven by misinformation. However, there was a rise in misinformation through groups who hold conspiratorial beliefs about various topics. The report also highlights certain vulnerabilities that need to be addressed including the increasing difficulty in detecting what qualifies as misinformation and the continued distrust of democratic institutions by increasing segments of Canadians.

There has also been reporting on distrust and misinformation, among other threats outlined by the [Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force](#)⁵¹ that are a cause for concern.

While there are tools and resources offered by organizations like the [Canadian Centre for Cybersecurity](#)⁵² to help the public and others identify this pervasive information, decentralized elections such as those run by municipalities, could benefit from more specific resources and supports for managing these threats.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.ontario.ca/page/digital-id-ontario>

* There are a range of identification requirements outlined in regulation that may be accepted as proof of identity.

⁵⁰ See https://www.mcgill.ca/maxbellschool/files/maxbellschool/meo_election_2021_report.pdf

⁵¹ See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/threats-of-violence-canada-elections-1.7153960>

⁵² See <https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/how-identify-misinformation-disinformation-and-malinformation-itsap00300>



Foreign Interference

Misinformation created and distributed by domestic actors is concerning enough but with the threat of foreign interference, the scale of risk is at a magnitude that must be dealt with at a national level. [The Government of Canada](#) consulted with Canadians on foreign interference and potential government action starting in late 2023⁵³. As an Association and to represent our members' interests, [we wrote to the Ministers of Justice Canada and Public Safety](#)⁵⁴ to advise that changes made at the federal level will require complementary provincial legislation. Local election administrators will require support in managing threats and potential incidents.

We also continue to watch with interest the [Public Inquiry](#) into *Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions*⁵⁵ for findings and recommendations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

While governments are beginning to take measures that provide frameworks and rules around the development and use of AI, there are few sources that deal specifically with elections. Administrators need the right legislative tools and guidance to ensure they can manage the impacts of AI on local democratic processes and ensure there is the right support to enforce such provisions. The Act must provide the rules and frameworks to support election administrators who may choose to leverage these technologies to improve electoral services.



⁵³ CSIS. 2021. *Foreign Interference: Threats to Canada's Democratic Process*. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2021/foreign-interference-threats-to-canada%27s-democratic-process.pdf>; Government of Canada. Public and Emergency Preparedness Canada. News Release. November 24, 2023. "Government of Canada launches consultation on legislative amendments to counter foreign interference in Canada" <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-launches-consultation-on-legislative-amendments-to-counter-foreign-interference-in-canada-868566675.html>

⁵⁴ See AMCTO letter, January 2024 re: AMCTO Letter to Ministers of Justice Canada and Public Safety re Foreign Interference <https://www.amcto.com/letter-to-ministers-re-foreign-interference>

⁵⁵ See <https://foreigninterferencecommission.ca/>





Conclusion

For many reasons, election administrators at all orders of government face several heightened challenges and our clerk members are no different. [Increasing distrust in public institutions](#)⁵⁶ beyond just healthy skepticism⁵⁷ means that democratic processes delivered through election administration are more important than ever. There are decreasing rates of democratic participation reflected in low voter turnout, electoral support, and an increased number of acclamations that [impact the efficacy of elections](#)⁵⁸.

The good news is that there are opportunities as well: voting methods can reach more qualified electors which may result in increased rates of voter participation. Improvements to technology can result in more automated and quicker service delivery if balanced with the necessary security precautions. Clarifying rules can make compliance and enforcement more straightforward, paving the way for more diverse pools of candidates.

The Act should reflect the digital challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow, and discussions should occur via legislated four-year reviews to ensure clarity, consistency, accountability, transparency, and trust remain top of mind. The legislation should be more enabling while providing important guidance, standards, and support with the right mix of tools to make compliance and enforcement streamlined.

The Province should build on the [MEA modernization work from 2016](#)⁵⁹ by rewriting and restructuring the Act to address existing and new challenges and opportunities. The issues weighing most on the minds of election administrators would be served by transformational change to the Act to provide a better overall framework for local elections. This requires bringing a 21st century mindset to improving service delivery to voters, candidates, and the public, while providing election administrators with more flexibility, certainty, and clarity to do the important work of delivering fair, accountable, and transparent municipal and school board elections.

AMCTO looks forward to discussing our recommendations with the Province and collaborating on priority legislative and regulatory improvements.

⁵⁶ Edelman Canada. May 2023. “2023 Edelman Trust Barometer,” <https://www.edelman.ca/sites/g/files/aatuss376/files/202303/2023%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20EN.pdf>

⁵⁷ Norris, Pippa. *In Praise of Skepticism: Trust but Verify*. Oxford University Press, 2022.

⁵⁸ See <https://www.amo.on.ca/policy/municipal-governance-indigenous-relations/analysis-2022-municipal-post-election-data>

⁵⁹ See <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-1/bill-181/debates>



AMCTO MEA Working Group

AMCTO formed the MEA Working Group in 2023 to review, analyze, and discuss a suite of reforms to the *Municipal Elections Act* (MEA). Together, the Group brought forward best practices and lessons learned from municipal and school board elections administration to identify challenges and opportunities for solution-orientated improvements to existing election rules and regulations. Their work informed this submission and continues to support our members and municipal professionals in local election administration.

AMCTO would like to thank the following individuals for their time, contributions, and expertise as part of our MEA Working Group:

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For more information about this Working Group, the submission and AMCTO advocacy initiatives, please contact advocacy@amcto.com.

The following appendix includes a line-by-line breakdown of our recommendations and the corresponding section of the MEA in its current form. We invite the Province to consult with us, our members and other sector organizations on reviewing and updating the current legislation to better serve local elections administration now and into the future.



Appendix: Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Overhaul and update the Act to ensure that it is future-proof, addresses current gaps, streamlines rules, and brings added clarity well ahead of the 2030 election.	Act and regulations	The MEA contains a patchwork of amendments, sections, provisions and other structural issues that make it difficult for people to understand and manage.
Include a legislative requirement to review the Act after every scheduled municipal and school board election year.	New section	The Act should be updated on a regular cycle to ensure that it is responsive to new and emerging technology and trends.
Review how the current legislation, regulations, and prescribed forms treat personal information, considering a digital privacy lens.	Act and regulations	Protection of privacy is becoming an increasing concern and is central to ensuring public trust.
Amend the Act to include a preamble that captures the principles of elections recognized by the court and the intended outcomes of the Act.	New preamble	A preamble inclusive of these principles should set out the intended outcomes of the legislation and provide foundational understanding of elections.
Establish a mechanism that permits the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in consultation with affected communities, to alter municipal and school board election day if it falls on a day of cultural or religious significance.	Section 4 Regular elections	In future years, it could be the case that election day falls on another culturally or religiously significant festival or event impacting voter turnout and staffing resources.
Require school boards to schedule one of the provincially required Professional Activity (PA) days on municipal and school board election day.	New sub/section	Confirming availability of school facilities for election day is one less thing for clerks to have to determine and provides voters with a large, central, accessible facility to cast their ballots. Ensures that election administrators can focus on providing electoral services to residents and municipal and school trustee candidates.
Amend the Act so that, if requested, schools and institutions must allow space for advance polls and voting day free of charge.	Section 45 Number and location of voting places	Clerks require a legislative basis to work with heads of institutions to address resident voting requirements providing more opportunities for the most vulnerable to cast their vote.

Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Remove the requirement for employees of a municipality or local board to provide notice of their intention to stand for election to council.	Section 30 Employee of a municipality	Potential candidates for municipal office, who happen to work for a municipality or a local board, should be provided the same, equal opportunity as other candidates who are not required to declare their intentions until they submit their paperwork.
Clarify the Act to reflect that a voter's absence from work may be on any day voting is available (i.e. advance voting days).	Section 50 Electors' absence from work	The current definition of voting day is limited to Election Day only and could be interpreted to not include advance voting days.
In consultation with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders, consider how the work by the Digital Governance Standards Institute related to electronic voting may be formalized to support election administration in Ontario.	New section	With an increasing number of municipalities considering e-voting methods to make voting easier and be "where the voters are" there should be a provincial interest in adopting some standards.
Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders to inform the development of a regulation for electoral definitions of "tenant", "spouse of a non-resident" and "occupancy".	Section 17 Qualification of electors (with possible implications for Section 2 Residence)	The current definitions provided in the Act are not sufficiently clear, and create potential confusion for electors, candidates, and administrators.
Remove the 25-signature endorsement requirement.	Section 33 Filing Nomination	Signature requirements in medium and large cities has not addressed its stated intent as signatures are easy to collect with a declaration that signees are eligible electors and adds an administrative burden.
Investigate incentives to support genuine candidacy while addressing frivolous campaigns, including the nomination filing fee refund.	Section 34 Refund	The current process of refunding anyone who files a financial statement does not dissuade frivolous candidacies. Other mechanisms should be investigated.
Amend the Act so that no candidate shall accept a contribution over \$1,200 from a single resident.	Section 88.9 Maximum contributions to candidates	Fill the gap that does not specifically prohibit candidates from accepting a contribution.
Clarify that any resident of Ontario may submit a compliance audit application, consistent with contribution rules.	Section 88.33 Compliance audit of candidate finances	Clarify that any resident in Ontario can file a compliance audit application consistent with rules on contributions.



Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Consider setting one 90-day period for compliance audit applications for initial and supplementary financial statements to simplify the process.	Section 88.33(3)	The current structure creates many overlapping deadlines that is challenging to communicate to electors and candidates and for purposes of tracking.
Roll the review of contributions and over-contributions to candidates and third-party advertisers into the Compliance Audit Committee (CAC) process and permit the committee to decide whether to commence a legal proceeding against a candidate or third-party advertiser for an apparent contravention.	Section 88.34 Review of contributions to candidates	This provision jeopardizes the independence and impartiality of the clerk, places the clerk in conflict with members of council and there already exists a process on the Compliance Audit Committee to review statements.
Expand decision timelines for CACs in Subsection (8) from 30 days to 45 days.	Section 88.34 Review of contributions to candidates	To support applicants, election administrators and CAC members with carrying out an application, moving the decision-timelines from 30 days to 45 days may be more reasonable especially where the CAC process may fall around the holidays and is consistent with references in other statutes for required meetings.
Clarify roles with respect to CACs wherein council is responsible for establishing the committee and the clerk is responsible for making appointments.	Section 88.37 Compliance Audit Committees	The MEA gives the responsibility for administering elections, including establishing necessary policies and procedures, to the clerk. However, there are several sections throughout the Act where the responsibility for what are, in effect, administrative decisions is unclearly distributed between both Council and staff. This is one area where there is a clear conflict in members of council who may be subject to an application are involved in the administration of the committee reviewing that application.
Clarify the role of scrutineers where alternative (unsupervised or remote) voting is in place and collaborate with AMCTO and others on the definition of scrutineer and what they may or may not do.	Section 16 Scrutineers	Qualifications of scrutineers continues to be challenged. Moreover, as alternative voting methods are increasingly used, the role of scrutineering is less understood and should be addressed.
Review the scope of election offences and related penalties to address gaps. Consider providing support and guidance to clerks on best practices for implementation and enforcement of serious offences.	Section 89 Offences	Fill existing and new gaps because of changes to technology. Any changes to offences and penalties would require additional guidance and support for election administrators on how to enforce these matters.



Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal partners to review and improve the campaign finance framework, including rules, guidance, forms, processes, and penalties.	Section 88.8 Campaign Contributions to Section 94.2 Limitation Period	The campaign finance framework is complex to administer and comply with and should be reviewed to make it easier to follow while ensuring accountability.
Establish a working group with AMCTO and other municipal stakeholders to review and improve the third-party advertiser regime for ease of compliance and enforcement.	Section 88.4 Third Party Advertisers	The third-party advertising framework is complex to administer and comply with and should be reviewed to make it easier to follow and comply with.
Within the campaign finance and third-party advertiser frameworks, review the mechanisms for enforcement, and related penalties to address gaps in accountability and transparency measures.	Section 89- Section 94.2	A holistic review needs to consider enforcement mechanisms, penalties and the prosecution process for candidates and contributors.
Consider increasing maximum campaign spending limits and its related formula to consider inflation outlined in O Reg 101/97.	O Reg 101/97	The Province should consider reviewing and updating the spending limit formula in regulation which has been stagnant and does not consider inflationary pressures on campaign costs.
Explore establishing an independent office to manage investigation and prosecution of offences under the Act.	New section	Municipalities have faced challenges proceeding with investigations and prosecutions due to capacity, resourcing and time-consuming processes through the courts. A separate body would allow for alternate dispute resolution that avoids placing municipal staff in conflict with candidates and members of council.
Bring the language of the Act and regulations into the 21 st century by removing gendered references and including references to encompass all voting methods.	Act and regulations	To ensure more inclusive language within the Act, remove gendered references. Moreover, as more municipalities are turning to voting methods to reach voters and run efficiency elections, language in the Act across numerous sections and within regulations should contain language that encompasses all voting methods rather than referring to paper ballots.
Ensure all definitions that appear in the Act are captured in and limited to Section 1 and update definitions to add clarity.	Section 1	One way to improve clarity and improve interpretation in the Act is to ensure that key terms within the Act are captured in the definition section. There are several areas wherein a definition appears later in the Act and others are captured in the definition section.



Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Clarify references to municipal business hours as well as dates that constitute a weekend or holiday as defined pursuant to the <i>Legislation Act, 2006</i> .	Section 10 Saturdays and Holidays and other sections dealing with filing deadlines.	Inconsistency between business hours and the legislation can lead to frustration for candidates, administrators and others engaging in local democratic processes.
Move nomination day to July, shortening the campaign period to be more consistent with federal and provincial campaign periods.	Section 31 Nomination Day	The municipal nomination period is longer than those at the provincial and federal levels which are run by agencies whose sole focus is election administration while municipal staff are managing day-to-day operations while running elections simultaneously. Revert back to the 2016 nomination deadline of July or earlier.
Enable clerks to determine what voting method is best as the local chief electoral officer and align timelines related to clerk's procedures.	Section 42 Bylaws re voting and vote counting equipment	Clarify areas of responsibility between the clerk as the administrator of elections and council as overseers of the municipality.
Change the timeline for proxy appointment to begin September 1 st for a regular election.	Section 44 Appointment of Proxy	Fix the disconnect between voters' list availability and appointment of proxies, qualifications for which cannot be confirmed as electors until the list is available.
Expand the timeline for reporting on accessible elections from 90 days to 120 days.	Section 12.1 (3)	Extending the timeline would allow more time to compile a comprehensive post-election report which is typical practice.
Consider aligning the spending limit certificate requirements and timelines between candidates and third-party advertisers for consistency.	Section 88.20 Candidate Expenses and s 88.1 Registered Third parties' expenses	Providing consistent timelines across various participants in the electoral process makes it easier for municipal staff to adhere to legislative requirements and ensure that candidates and parties are adhering to timelines.
Update existing provincial guides and forms and provide additional guidance to voters, candidates, third-party advertisers, and election administrators.	Voters' Guide; Third Party Advertisers Guide; Candidate's Guide	There are several opportunities to update and provide more information to support voters, third party advertisers and candidates in Provincial guidance materials. There have also been several challenges with usability of provincial forms and inconsistencies between the legislation and forms that should be addressed.
Extend the timeline to submit final changes to the voters' list from 30 days to 60 days.	Section 27 List of changes	Provide more time for clerks to provide final changes after the election period given the number of activities and tasks required to be completed post-election.



Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Consider extending discretion to remove a name from the voters' list and the correction of errors to voting day.	Section 22 Correction of Errors	Electors who move must fill out forms or go to a portal to update their residency and school support information, and despite improvements made to make this process easier, there will be electors who do not do this. Permitting clerks to remove names to voting day would allow for a cleaner voters' list.
Establish a province-wide registry for <i>MEA</i> offenders, maintained by the MMAH or another provincial body, and provide this registry to election administrators.	Section 35 Examination of nominations	While candidates are ultimately responsible for declaring their eligibility, clerks are required to certify nominations. Providing centrally available information about qualifications of candidates, and of those who may have contravened the <i>MEA</i> available to clerks will support this process.
Amend the <i>Act</i> to consolidate rules between regular elections and by-elections specifying what must be different.	Section 65 By-elections	Should the <i>Act</i> continue to distinguish between regular and by-elections, then there must be more guidance and information on how these elections are run to ensure more consistency in how by-elections are run across the province.
Consider a threshold amount for registering as a third-party advertiser that is in line with provincial and federal thresholds.	Section 88.4 Third Party Advertisers	The process is cumbersome and may prevent smaller actors from engaging in the political process for fear of being labelled as a third-party advertiser.
Consider amending the deadline for third-party advertiser registration to be more reasonably in advance of an election.	Section 88.4 Third Party Advertisers	There are also timeline issues with registration. Allowing third-parties to register up to election day is problematic from an operations perspective when municipal staff's attention has shifted from paperwork to execution of voting.
Clarify the process for removing a name from the voters' list by a relative.	Section 24 Application for Name Change	Electors who move must fill out forms or go to a portal to update their residency and school support information, and despite improvements made to make this process easier, there will be electors who do not do this. Permitting clerks to remove names to voting day would allow for a cleaner voters' list.
Decouple school board support for electoral purposes from school support for assessment purposes.	<i>Education Act, 1990</i> and <i>Assessment Act, 1990</i>	Cumbersome rules across multiple acts can result in an elector being assigned an incorrect school board ballot which slows the voting process, frustrates the elector, and means more work for election officials.
Amend the <i>Education Act</i> to clarify who is a French-language rights holder and who is a separate school rights holder.	<i>Education Act, 1990</i> and <i>Assessment Act, 1990</i>	Clearer language around qualifications would help people understand whether or not they qualify as a candidate.



Recommendation	Legislative Reference(s) if applicable	Rationale
Clarify that school board trustee candidates must file their nomination papers in the municipality in which they reside.	<i>Education Act, 1990 and Municipal Elections Act</i>	School board boundaries cross municipal boundaries, and trustee candidates do not always submit their nomination papers within the municipality in which they reside, meaning clerks are left trying to figure out residential qualification as well. The complexity is burdensome for candidates and for municipal staff and must be addressed. Rules for elections need to be clear and straightforward.
Consider readjusting school board boundaries to align with municipal boundaries.	<i>Education Act, 1990 and Municipal Act</i>	Given the complications between jurisdictional boundaries, one consideration may be to better align school board boundaries with municipal boundaries.
Conduct a review of identification requirements in the regulation and consider the availability of digital and hard copy identification as well as identification challenges for segments of Ontario voters.	O Reg. 304/13 Voter Identification	There are numerous ways people carry identification requirements and there are segments of the population without proper identification. The Province has also been working on digital identity which needs to be accounted for.





The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management and leadership. Over the past 85 years, AMCTO has provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. With 2,200+ members working in municipalities across the province, AMCTO is Ontario's largest association of local government professionals, and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

Our mission is to deliver professional growth, networks, advocacy, and leadership to support and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of municipal professionals now and into the future.

2680 Skymark Avenue, Suite 610
Mississauga, ON L4W 5L6

Telephone: (905) 602-4294
Email: amcto@amcto.com

www.amcto.com





CLEARVIEW
TOWNSHIP

Clerk's Department
Township of Clearview
Box 200, 217 Gideon Street
Stayner, Ontario L0M 1S0
clerks@clearview.ca | www.clearview.ca
Phone: 705-428-6230

October 22, 2024

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Hon. Rob Flack

Sent by Email: Rob.Flack@pc.ola.org

RE: Request for Support – Increase Tile Drain Loan Limit

Please be advised at its meeting held on October 21, 2024, Council of the Township of Clearview passed the following resolution supporting the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe's request that the Province consider increasing the maximum annual Tile Drain Loan Limit:

Moved by Councillor Beelen, Seconded by Councillor McArthur, Be It Resolved that Council of the Township of Clearview hereby support the motion from the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe requesting that the Province, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, consider increasing the maximum annual Tile Drain Loan Limit to a minimum of \$100,000; and,

That Council direct staff to send this support motion to the Honourable Rob Flack - Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), and all Ontario municipalities. Motion Carried.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Sasha Helmkey-Playter, B.A., Dipl. M.A., AOMC
Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

cc: Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
All Ontario Municipalities



March 22nd, 2024

The Honourable Lisa Thompson
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor
77 Grenville St.
Toronto, ON M5S 1B3

RE: Township of Adelaide Metcalfe – Request to Increase Tile Drain Loan Limit

Dear Minister Thompson,

On March 18, 2024, the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe Council approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS farm drainage is of paramount importance in Ontario due to its significant impact on agricultural productivity and sustainability. Effective drainage systems help mitigate waterlogging, control soil moisture levels, and enhance soil structure, thereby optimizing growing conditions for crops;

WHEREAS improved drainage also facilitates timely field operations, reduces erosion, and minimizes nutrient runoff, contributing to environmental conservation efforts;

WHEREAS Ontario's diverse agricultural landscape, where weather variability is common, well-maintained drainage systems play a crucial role in ensuring stable yields, economic viability, and long-term resilience for farmers across the Province;

WHEREAS the Tile Loan Drainage Act, R.S.O 1990, c. T.8 allows for the borrowing of money for the purpose of constructing drainage works;

WHEREAS the maximum annual limit for these loans, unchanged since 2004, is currently set at \$50,000.

WHEREAS costs for Tile Drainage has increased markedly since 2004;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe requests that the Province through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) consider increasing the maximum annual Tile Loan limit to a minimum of \$100,000.

AND THAT this resolution be circulated the Honourable Lisa Thompson – Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), and all Ontario municipalities.

**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.2.

Resolution Number 2024-363

Title: Resolution Stemming from July 17, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.0 - Correspondence #5

Date: October 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Laframboise

Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports Resolution No. 2024-125 passed by the Corporation of the Town of Cobalt, regarding a PS3280 accounting standard covering asset retirement obligations;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); the Federation of Ontario Municipalities (FONOM); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBALT

June 26, 2024

The Corporation of the Township of Harley
903303 Hanbury Rd
New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0

Please be advised that at the Regular Meeting of Council on June 25, 2024, the Town of Cobalt adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 2024-125

MOVED BY: Councillor Wilcox
SECONDED BY: Councillor Starchuk

WHEREAS the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) establishes accounting standards for the public sector which must be followed by all Ontario municipalities;

AND WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001, section 294.1 states that a municipality shall, for each fiscal year, prepare annual financial statements for the municipality in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for local governments as recommended, from time to time, by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada;

AND WHEREAS PS3280 is a new accounting standard covering asset retirement obligations (ARO) that was approved by PSAB in March 2018;

AND WHEREAS the standard must be applied by all public sector entities who prepare their financial statements under PSAB, including all Canadian municipalities;

AND WHEREAS many small municipalities do not have accountants or engineers on staff to complete the ARO obligations and this major accounting changes will force small municipalities to hire consultants to complete this work and cause a significant financial burden to municipalities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Cobalt supports the resolutions from the Township of Harley, Coleman Township, Township of Larder Lake, Township of Casey, Township of Hudson & Township of Kerns and hereby calls upon the province of Ontario to provide financial assistance to municipalities to complete the ARO;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), the Timiskaming Municipal Association (TMA), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and all municipalities within the District of Timiskaming.

CARRIED

Kind Regards,

Steven Dalley
Town Manager, Clerk/Treasurer
Email: sdalley@cobalt.ca

The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.3.

Resolution Number 2024-364

Title: Resolution Stemming from July 17, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1 - Correspondence #6

Date: October 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Pothier

Seconded by: Councillor Laframboise

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports the Resolution dated June 27, 2024 passed by the Town of Petrolia supporting the Resolution dated May 13, 2024 passed by the City of Belleville, regarding family doctors;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Premier Doug Ford; Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR

June 27, 2024

City of Belleville
Attn: Clerks Department

Via email: nhenderson@belleville.ca

RE: Family Doctors Resolution

During the June 24, 2024, regular meeting of council, the request submitted by the City of Belleville regarding the Family Doctors was brought forward and discussed, the following resolution was passed:

Moved: Debb Pitel Seconded: Liz Welsh

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Petrolia support the City of Belleville's resolution dated May 13, 2024;
AND THAT confirmation of the Town's support resolution be forwarded to Premier Doug Ford, MPP Bob Bailey, the City of Belleville and all municipalities in Ontario.

Carried

Kind regards,

Original Signed

Mandi Pearson
Director of Legislative Services | Deputy Operations | Clerk

cc: file
Premier Doug Ford
MPP Bob Bailey, Sarnia-Lambton
Ontario Municipalities

Encl.

Phone: (519)882-2350 • Fax: (519)882-3373 • Theatre: (800)717-7694

411 Greenfield Street, Petrolia, ON, N0N 1R0

www.petrolia150.com www.town.petrolia.on.ca





CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
TELEPHONE 613-968-6481
FAX 613-967-3206

City of Belleville

169 FRONT STREET
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO
K8N 2Y8

May 16, 2024

Todd Smith, MPP
Prince Edward Hastings
5503 Hwy 62 S., Phase 1, Unit #4
Belleville, ON K8N 4Z7

via e-mail: Todd.Smithco@pc.ola.org

Ric Bresee, MPP
Hastings-Lennox & Addington
8 Dundas St. W.
Napane, ON K7R 1Z4

via e-mail: Ric.Bresee@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Smith and Minister Bresee:

**RE: City of Belleville Healthcare Resolution in Support of Family
Doctors
New Business
10. Belleville City Council Meeting, May 13, 2024**

This is to advise you that at the Council Meeting of May 13, 2024, the following resolution was approved.

"WHEREAS, the Province of Ontario is responsible for providing quality health care to all residents of Ontario;

AND WHEREAS, Family medicine is the backbone of the healthcare system and providing timely access to a primary health care provider for everyone in the Province is essential and should be the Provincial Government's highest priority;

AND WHEREAS, the shortage of family physicians across the province has reached a crisis point where millions of Ontario residents do not have a family doctor and hospitals, emergency rooms and clinics are overloaded by the health care needs of Ontario residents;

..J2

10. New Business
Belleville City Council Meeting
May 13, 2024

Page 2

AND WHEREAS, studies have shown that without access to a primary care provider, patients end up with poorer health outcomes and it costs the health care system more;

AND WHEREAS, the Province of Ontario could address this issue quickly and efficiently by increasing wages paid to family physicians and lessening the administrative burden all family doctors face with managing practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Province of Ontario take immediate action to ensure family physicians are properly compensated with immediate fee increases and that the administrative burden now being experienced by family doctors be reduced so they have more time to see their patients;

AND FURTHER THAT, the City Clerk forward Council's resolutions resulting from Council's approval of these recommendations to premier Doug Ford, Health Minister Sylvia Jones, MPP Todd Smith, MPP Ric Bresee, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and to the municipal Clerks of Ontario's municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT Council request a direct response from the MPPs within 30 days."

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

Matt MacDonald
Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk

Phone: (519)882-2350 • Fax: (519)882-2351

411 G

www.petr.ca

MMacD/nh
Pc: Premier Doug Ford
Health Minister Sylvia Jones
AMO
Municipal Clerks of Ontario



**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.4.

Resolution Number 2024-365

Title: Resolution Stemming from July 17, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1 - Correspondence #7

Date: October 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Laframboise

Seconded by: Councillor Pothier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports the Resolution dated June 24, 2024 passed by the City of St. Catharines, regarding the Green Roads Pilot Project;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR

June 27, 2024

Association of Municipalities of Ontario
155 University Ave | Suite 800
Toronto, ON M5H 3B7

Sent via email: resolutions@amo.on.ca

**Re: Green Roads Pilot Project
Our File 35.72.3**

To Whom it May Concern,

At its meeting held on June 24, 2024, St. Catharines City Council approved the following motion:

WHEREAS St. Catharines has declared a climate emergency, recognizing the urgent need to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change on our community and environment; and

WHEREAS alternatives to traditional road surfacing materials exist, including green roads technologies that are more sustainable and environmentally friendly; and

WHEREAS bioresin is a natural alternative that can be used to support road surfacing, providing a more sustainable option that reduces our reliance on petrochemical-based products; and

WHEREAS many secondary roads in St. Catharines require resurfacing, presenting an opportunity to explore and implement innovative and sustainable road surfacing solutions; and

WHEREAS Good Roads, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) have presented alternatives for municipal road restoration that include sustainable and environmentally friendly materials and methods; and

WHEREAS other municipalities, such as Centre Wellington, have entered into a similar pilot project using bioresin and other sustainable materials, demonstrating a commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS implementing pilot projects using bioresin on city roads can provide valuable data and insights into the feasibility, performance, and environmental benefits of this alternative material; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has established the Green Municipal Fund which includes new funding for pilot projects to test innovative and ambitious technologies to improve environmental outcomes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that St. Catharines City Council directs staff to investigate the feasibility and potential benefits of using bioresin on City road works; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff investigate other alternative construction materials and methods for road works that minimizes the City's carbon footprint and are more environmentally sustainable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff prepare a report on the findings, no later than Q3 2024, including potential costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of using bioresin or other sustainable construction materials or methods for road works, and if feasible, a list of City streets where a pilot project may be considered in accordance with the City's procurement policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to all Ontario municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the FCM to encourage the exploration and adoption of sustainable road surfacing alternatives.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at extension 1524.



Donna Delvecchio, Acting City Clerk
Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
:sm

cc: all Ontario Municipalities

**The Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
RESOLUTION PAGE**



Regular Meeting of Council

Agenda Number: 8.5.

Resolution Number 2024-366

Title: Resolution Stemming from July 17, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council - Item 7.1 - Correspondence #22

Date: October 16, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Pothier

Seconded by: Councillor Laframboise

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles hereby supports Resolution 207-2024 passed by the Township of Terrace Bay, regarding sustainable funding for OPP in small rural municipalities;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Premier Doug Ford; the Solicitor General of Ontario, Michael Kerzner; the Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); our local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED


MAYOR



The Corporation of the Township of Terrace Bay

P.O. Box 40, 1 Selkirk Avenue, Terrace Bay, ON, P0T 2W0
Phone: (807) 825-3315 Fax: (807) 825-9576

July 10, 2024

Municipality of Tweed
255 Metcalf St
Tweed, Ontario
K0K 3J0

At the Township of Terrace Bay Regular Council Meeting held on Tuesday July 2, 2024, the following resolution was passed.

Re: Sustainable Funding for OPP small rural municipalities

Resolution: 207-2024

Moved by: Councillor Gary Adduono

Seconded by: Councillor Rick St. Louis

WHEREAS it is apparent that the Ontario Government has overlooked the needs of small rural Ontario; AND

WHEREAS Ontario's small rural municipalities face insurmountable challenges to fund both upfront investments and ongoing maintenance of their capital assets including roads, bridges, water/wastewater and municipally owned buildings including recreational facilities, libraries and other tangible capital assets:

AND WHEREAS small rural Ontario's operating needs consume the majority of property tax revenue sources; AND WHEREAS small rural municipalities (of 10,000 people or less) are facing monumental infrastructure deficits that cannot be adequately addressed through property tax revenue alone; *AND

WHEREAS in 2015 the provincial government moved to standardized billing for all non-contract D.P.P. (5.1) locations; AND WHEREAS the Ontario Government has committed \$9.1 billion to Toronto alone to assist with operating deficits and the repatriation of the Don Valley and Gardner Expressway; and \$534 million to Ottawa for the repatriation of Hwy 174; AND WHEREAS the annual cost of the Ontario Provincial Police, Municipal Policing Bureau for small rural non-contract (5.1) municipalities is approximately \$428 million;

AND WHEREAS this annual cost is significantly less than the repatriation costs of the Gardiner Express Way, the Don Valley Parkway and Highway 174 (Ottawa Region) but provides a greater impact to the residents of the Province overall; AND WHEREAS this will afford relief to small rural municipalities for both infrastructure and operating needs while having a minimal impact on the provincial budget; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Municipality of Tweed call on the Ontario Government to immediately implement sustainable funding for small rural municipalities by reabsorbing the cost of the Ontario Provincial Police Force back into the provincial budget with no cost recovery to municipalities:



The Corporation of the Township of Terrace Bay

P.O. Box 40, 1 Selkirk Avenue, Terrace Bay, ON, P0T 2W0

Phone: (807) 825-3315 Fax: (807) 825-9576

AND FURTHER, that Council direct staff to circulate this resolution to Premier Doug Ford (premier@ontario.ca). Minister of Solicitor General, Minister of Finance, MPP for Thunder bay-Superior North, Lise Vaugeois and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (amo@amo.on.ca) and at Municipalities of Ontario.

Sincerely,

J. Hall
Chief Administration Officer/Clerk



The Town of The Blue Mountains Council Meeting

Title: Scott R. Butler, Executive Director, Ontario Good Roads Association and Antoine Boucher, President, Ontario Good Roads Board of Directors

Date: Monday, October 21, 2024

Moved by: Councillor McKinlay

Seconded by: Councillor Maxwell

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains receives for information the correspondence of Scott R. Butler, Executive Director, Ontario Good Roads Association and Antoine Boucher, President, Ontario Good Roads Board of Directors Re: Request for Council Consideration of Support for Resolution regarding the Establishment of an Ontario Rural Road Safety Program;
WHEREAS official statistics from the Government of Ontario confirm that rural roads are inherently more dangerous than other roads;
AND WHEREAS, despite only having 17% of the population, 55% of the road fatalities occur on rural roads;
AND WHEREAS, rural, northern, and remote municipalities are fiscally strained by maintaining extensive road networks on a smaller tax base;
AND WHEREAS, preventing crashes reduces the burden on Ontario's already strained rural strained health care system;
AND WHEREAS, roadway collisions and associated lawsuits are significant factors in runaway municipal insurance premiums. Preventing crashes can have a significant impact in improving municipal risk profiles;
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of The Blue Mountains requests that the Government of Ontario take action to implement the rural road safety program that Good Roads has committed to lead. It will allow Ontario's rural municipalities to make the critical investments needed to reduce the high number of people being killed and seriously injured on Ontario's rural roads; and
FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Premier Doug Ford, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation, Hon. King Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs, Hon. Trevor Jones, Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, and Good Roads; and
FURTHER THAT this resolution be circulated to all municipalities in Ontario requesting their support.

YES: 6

NO: 0

CONFLICT: 0

ABSENT: 1

The motion is Carried

YES: 6

Mayor Matrosovs
Councillor McKinlay

Councillor Ardiel
Councillor Porter

Councillor Hope

Councillor Maxwell

NO: 0

CONFLICT: 0

ABSENT: 1

Deputy Mayor Bordignon

From: Scott Butler <scott@goodroads.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 12:07 PM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Establishment of an Ontario Rural Road Safety Program

Good Roads

Wednesday, October 09, 2024

To: Town of The Blue Mountains Head of Council and Council Members

Sent via email to: townclerk@thebluemountains.ca

Subject: Establishment of an Ontario Rural Road Safety Program

Too many Ontarians are being seriously injured or killed on our roads.

In 2023, there were 616 people killed and 36,090 people injured. The number of fatalities is up nearly 20% in the last ten years.

In 2021, the most recent year of complete data from MTO's *Ontario Road Safety Annual Report* (ORSAR), there were 561 fatalities – 426 of which occurred on municipal roads. While rural Ontario only represents 17% of the province's population, 55% of these deaths occurred on rural roads. By any measure, Ontario's rural roads are disproportionately more dangerous.

At the same time, municipal insurance premiums continue to increase. With no plausible reform being considered for joint and several liability, municipalities need to find innovative means for managing risk, particularly on their roadways,

To deal with this crisis, Good Roads has designed a multifaceted rural road safety program and have been in discussions with the Ministry of Transportation to fund it. The program would target a municipality's most dangerous roads, perform road safety audits, and install modern safety infrastructure that prevents serious injuries and save lives. This program is designed to be cost effective while also providing rural municipalities with a direct means for addressing risk associated with their roadways.

Good Roads has proposed leading a five-year \$183 million program that leverages our 131 years of municipal road expertise and our industry partnerships to quickly put in place the solutions that will address some of Ontario's most dangerous roads.

Good Roads is seeking support to address these preventable tragedies.

If the Town of The Blue Mountains would be interested in pursuing this, a Council resolution similar to the example below should be adopted and sent to the Premier and the Minister of Transportation:

WHEREAS official statistics from the Government of Ontario confirm that rural roads are inherently more dangerous than other roads;

AND WHEREAS, despite only having 17% of the population, 55% of the road fatalities occur on rural roads;

AND WHEREAS, rural, northern, and remote municipalities are fiscally strained by maintaining extensive road networks on a smaller tax base;

AND WHEREAS, preventing crashes reduces the burden on Ontario's already strained rural strained health care system;

AND WHEREAS, roadway collisions and associated lawsuits are significant factors in runaway municipal insurance premiums. Preventing crashes can have a significant impact in improving municipal risk profiles;

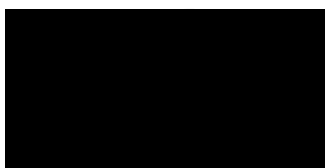
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of The Blue Mountains requests that the Government of Ontario take action to implement the rural road safety program that Good Roads has committed to lead. It will allow Ontario's rural municipalities to make the critical investments needed to reduce the high number of people being killed and seriously injured on Ontario's rural roads; and

FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Premier Doug Ford, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation, Hon. King Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs, Hon. Trevor Jones, Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, and Good Roads; and

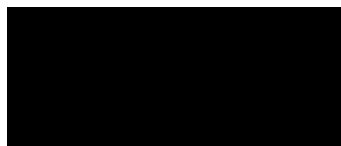
FURTHER THAT this resolution be circulated to all municipalities in Ontario requesting their support.

If you have any questions regarding this initiative please contact Thomas Barakat, Good Roads' Manager of Public Policy & Government Relations, at thomas@goodroads.ca at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Butler
Executive Director



Antoine Boucher
President
Good Roads Board of Directors