

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO AND THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO

2015 JOINT ANNUAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING STATEMENT

We are pleased to present the annual joint statement for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Province of Ontario for 2015.

This past year we saw significant work undertaken on a wide range of initiatives at both the municipal and provincial level. At the AMO MOU table, we have continued to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern together through joint working groups, technical working groups, advisory committees, and staff level outreach to discuss provincial-municipal issues.

This annual statement provides an update of some of our activities and accomplishments under the MOU during 2015.

The MOU commits the province of Ontario to prior consultation with AMO on:

- proposed provincial changes to legislation and regulations that will have a significant financial impact on municipalities; and
- negotiation of agreements with the federal government on specific matters that have a direct municipal impact.

The MOU is one place where the diversity of Ontario's municipal sector is reflected in the confidential discussions and advice offered as input to the government's decision-making process. Discussion at the MOU table provides the provinces with advice on the mitigation of potential implementation challenges and misunderstandings between the province and municipal governments and creates additional opportunities for better public policy outcomes for Ontario's communities and residents. The parties understand that the municipal input and advice offered may or may not be taken and that this does not diminish the value of the MOU process.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

During the course of the year, **nine MOU meetings were held, with 43 initiatives** discussed. Many key provincial initiatives were discussed either at the AMO MOU table or by the establishment of joint working groups designed to find better outcomes to issues affecting the municipal sector.

At the start of the year the draft **Ontario Climate Change** discussion paper was presented and discussed. The paper outlined Ontario's long term vision for transforming

to a low-carbon economy and becoming more climate resilient. Public consultations and broad municipal engagement over the year helped inform the province's Climate Change Strategy – which was released last November - and included a cap and trade program. Climate change will continue to be a key municipal and provincial focus in the coming year as the provincial government develops its Climate Change Action Plan.

Another key file that was discussed at the MOU table was **Resource Recovery and Waste Reduction**. Given that most residential waste materials enter the integrated municipal waste management system, AMO and its Waste Management Task Force provided strategic input to the province.

Housing and homelessness continued to be a focus at the MOU table this past year. This item came several times for discussion, as part of the update of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS). In addition, the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness' final report, *A Place to Call Home*, was presented at the table. An update to the LTAHS occurred in March 2016.

The **Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP)** has been retired and replaced by two new programs: a Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program and a Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians program. Municipalities have been requesting changes to make the private and public components of ODRAP more clear, transparent and streamlined. Municipal governments, through several forums including AMO's ODRAP Review Task Force, participated and provided input during these consultations, in addition to coming to the AMO MOU table early 2015.

Further, there were a number of transformational initiatives that came to the table this year, such as the review of the **Best Start Child and Family Centres, and Child Care Modernization**. Early discussions on complex files are beneficial, especially where municipal governments play a key role in the program delivery at the same time being very mindful of not wanting to receive any unfunded mandates from the province.

Another transformative initiative is **Primary, Community and Home Care Reform**, a multi-faceted review of health care delivery. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care engaged with the AMO MOU table to begin informed conversations to support the goal of improving access to primary, community and home care for Ontarians. A provincial discussion paper was subsequently released for consultation and further discussions are to occur with municipal government representatives as well as at the MOU table.

The AMO table also provided a good venue for the government and the sector to work through challenges with the implementation of a new **Social Assistance Management System**. These discussions helped to inform and resolve transition issues facing our delivery partners and to monitor programs.

Finally, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing pre-consulted through the MOU table before launching the review of the **Municipal Act, Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and Municipal Elections Act**. Input to engagement approaches, and key areas of focus, helped the government in initiating the reviews in 2015. The results of the consultation and proposed provincial approaches to this suite of legislative reviews will be coming back to the MOU table.

Mandate Letters

The provincial mandate letters outlined government priorities for the four year mandate, which provided an opportunity for the province and AMO to focus discussion at the MOU table on the activities that will impact municipal governments. AMO presented its 2015 strategic objectives and outlined its policy agenda which also assisted MOU table agenda planning.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016

MMAH, on behalf of the province, and AMO continue to work on productive evidence based discussions at the MOU Table recognizing the benefits of two way discussions on key priorities affecting municipal governments and their communities.

AMO MOU training sessions with AMO and ministry staff are being scheduled for early 2016, as a way of continuously improving the collaboration process.