

**PROVINCE of ONTARIO
and the
ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES of ONTARIO**

**JOINT ANNUAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
STATEMENT
December 2010**

We are pleased to present the annual joint statement regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the Province of Ontario for 2010.

While there is always work to do, together we have made significant progress in numerous areas and welcome this opportunity to provide an update of our activities and accomplishments under the MOU.

The principles of consultation, collaboration and respect embodied in the MOU are the very foundation upon which the Province and municipalities have built a strong partnership. Ontario and the municipalities share a common goal of ensuring a clear understanding of responsibilities and accountability.

The Memorandum of Understanding commits the Province to prior consultation with municipalities on:

- proposed provincial changes to legislation and regulations that will have a significant financial impact on the current municipal budget year or planning cycle, and
- negotiation of agreements with the federal government on specific matters that have a direct municipal impact.

The Memorandum of Understanding

The MOU is one of several consultation tools available to the Province and AMO when consulting on matters of shared, province-wide interest.

The MOU is not intended to replace the many formal and informal ways that the Province, the Association and individual municipalities consult with each other on a regular basis. Rather, it enhances the policy development process and discussions that we, as partners engage in throughout the year.

The MOU leads to results by:

- creating opportunity for information sharing between ministers and a broadly representative group of municipal government leaders on local, provincial, and national issues;
- enhancing the decision-making process by ensuring the municipal perspective is clearly represented so that provincial government ministries can accurately assess policy proposals;

- allowing the Province and municipalities to engage in comprehensive analysis of issues, as part of the decision-making process that could have an impact on municipalities;
- strengthening the provincial-municipal relationship and facilitating greater cooperation on public policy for the benefit of all Ontarians;
- promoting horizontal working relationships between orders of government on shared issues, and
- serving as a catalyst for additional discussions and side tables that could be launched.

Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding

In August 2010, the Memorandum of Understanding was renewed for another three year term. Changes were made in two areas:

- Addition of “economic development” to paragraph 2.1 (a) of Schedule C, widening the scope of issues for Ontario to consult with AMO on Canada-Ontario agreements; and
- Inclusion of Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) implementation information sharing in Schedule B.

The MOU will provide a constructive framework and forum for municipal and provincial officials as we continue to collaborate on many areas of shared interest.

Memorandum of Understanding Education and Training Sessions

As another example of the strong partnership, in 2010, the Province AMO, and the City of Toronto held four training events designed to provide provincial government staff with:

- a better understanding of the municipal policy and finance landscape;
- an enhanced ability to identify impacts of provincial policy on municipalities, and
- an improved familiarity with what is expected regarding consultation under the AMO-Ontario MOU and the Toronto-Ontario Cooperation and Consultation Agreement (TOCCA).

Through the sessions over 250 attendees representing over 20 ministries were trained on the MOU and its process.

Highlights of the 2010 Discussions

Over the past year, over 30 items were brought forward to the MOU table. Some highlights include:

- **Canada-U.S procurement negotiations**

This item exemplifies the benefits of working together on a federal-provincial-municipal issue as it required cooperation of the partners to arrive at good outcomes for municipalities - the very order of government that was instrumental in raising issues in this matter. This was an open procurement agreement between Canada and the U.S. to address the “Buy American” restrictions in the U.S. economic stimulus package. Large municipalities (population over 50,000) were committed to open, non-discriminatory procurement for construction contracts exceeding \$8.5 million from February 16, 2010 to September 30, 2011, with some exceptions.

- **Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy**

The Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) and proposed new legislation, the *Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, 2010*, provide a new framework for housing in Ontario that is intended to improve outcomes for people in housing need, achieve more with current resources, and increase system accountability. This new system clarifies roles and shifts from a prescriptive to an enabling model that would assist municipalities to deliver results tailored to their local circumstances and needs. AMO and municipal housing representatives contributed extensively throughout the LTAHS policy development process, participating on the many technical working group tables, and providing formal guidance at the MOU table throughout 2010.

- **Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review implementation**

There were regular reports to the MOU table on implementation. This information sharing is important so that partners are aware of progress to full implementation. The latest update shows that everything is moving forward. In 2010, the Province began uploading Ontario Works benefits which will reduce municipal expenditures by \$425 million by 2018. The Court Security, Human Services, and Roads and Bridges steering committees will finalize recommendations or advance strategic directions to stay on track for completing their mandates by 2012. Implementation of the Review’s recommendations will result in a net benefit to municipalities of \$1.5 billion per year by 2018.

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR)**

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have had a high degree of engagement on the proposed requirements for information and communications, employment and transportation to be regulated under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. A working group was established in 2009 under the AMO MOU to advise policy and implementation processes for accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act including the need for integration of standards. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario discussed the go-forward strategy for the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. The Integrated Accessibility Regulation was posted on the Regulatory Registry from September 2, 2010 to October 16, 2010

for public review and comment. Further consultation on results and implementation is expected.

There were also items brought to the table which exemplified changes made through the timely raising of issues -

• Land Ambulance Services Response Time Reporting

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario raised the issue of land ambulance response times with respect to the municipal reporting requirement. A proposed regulation would have been based on less than twelve months of data. AMO noted that the Land Ambulance Committee agreed that the standards were to be based on 18 months of data, and less than 12 months of data would not have been sufficient. The Association and the ministry worked together to develop the new response time standards and take a more of community-based approach. The Association suggested an extension for the implementation, so that sufficient data could be gathered. This was agreed to, and the Regulation was amended.

AMO also brought to the table the joint and several liability issue, making the case for the reform of joint and several liability in Ontario. A report on joint and several liability reform was presented by the AMO Municipal Liability Reform Working Group. The work on this item is ongoing, and includes the engagement of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Looking forward into 2011

Over the coming year we are looking forward to working through the MOU table to advance the municipal-provincial dialogue on many issues, including the following:

1. implementation of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review
2. moving forward on the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy
3. continued engagement on Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act standard development process
4. the 10 year Infrastructure Plan
5. Early Learning implementation
6. Trade Agreements
7. Joint and Several Liability reform

Conclusion

A respectful and meaningful partnership gets results. The evolution of the municipal-provincial relationship demonstrates the value and priority both parties place on this partnership.

We look forward to another successful year ahead and to reporting back in 2011 on our shared progress.