

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

**JOINT ANNUAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
STATEMENT**

**December 2011**

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 2011.

This is an opportunity to highlight our strong provincial-municipal partnership and record of accomplishments, and to promote how the province and municipal sector have proactively worked together to protect and enhance services.

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 Province of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) first signed the MOU in 2001. Over the past decade, it has become a cornerstone in fostering partnership and collaboration in the provincial – municipal relationship.

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 has enhanced the policy development process and discussions that provincial and municipal 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.

### Highlights of the 2011 Discussions

In 2011, the MOU partners also brought joint update reports on the progress of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) implementation activities to the table demonstrating the partners' ongoing commitment to the agreement.

Over the year, the MOU table dealt with approximately 30 items including:

- ***Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS)***

Through the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, Ontario is working to improve access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing, so that families have a solid foundation on which to secure employment, raise their children and build strong communities.

In 2011, working together with municipal partners and other stakeholders, the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) was passed, regulations for the HSA were made, and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement (OHPS) was finalized. The HSA and OHPS took effect on January 1, 2012, providing for the effective delivery of community-based programs and a more efficient, accountable and client-focused system. Engagement with municipal partners continues on LTAHS initiatives such as program consolidation. In addition, a Provincial-Municipal Housing Partnership Table has been established and regular meetings are underway, providing a forum for senior officials from provincial and municipal governments to discuss the delivery of housing services in Ontario.

AMO and municipal housing representatives continue to contribute extensively to the implementation of the LTAHS, participating on technical working group

tables, engaging in discussions at the Partnership Table, and providing guidance at the MOU table.

- ***Best Start Child Family Centres***

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is working with Dr. Charles Pascal, Special Advisor on Early Learning, to develop a provincial framework for Best Start Child and Family Centres (BSCFCs). This framework will provide more accessible, timely and better coordinated services to support the needs of children and their families.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services provided an update on the development of a provincial framework for Best Start Child and Family Centres including key findings from community engagement tables. AMO worked with the Ministry on key elements that are included in the framework. The Ministry and AMO continue to work to engage municipalities on the framework beyond the technical groups and committees.

- ***Long Term Infrastructure Plan***

AMO provided input to the plan and was updated on the ten year Long-Term Infrastructure Plan (LTIP) by the Ministry of Infrastructure. The Ten Year Infrastructure Plan notes the infrastructure priorities for investments which helps municipalities align their projects and priorities. Municipalities will be engaged in municipal long-term asset management planning.

- ***Northern Growth Plan***

*The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011* is intended to stimulate economic growth; it is substantially different from the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* in terms of its focus.

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines engaged AMO on the plan and implementation approach and the potential role of municipalities across policy areas. The plan outlines policies with respect to municipalities that align with existing planning requirements while encouraging communities to participate in strategic planning at a community, multi-community and regional level.

- ***Green Energy Act implementation***

- ***Broader Public Sector energy conservation plans and programs***

Ministry of Energy developed a regulation that requires broader public sector (BPS) agencies, including municipalities, to develop and implement energy management plans. Under the proposed regulation, municipalities and other broader public sector organizations would develop and implement energy conservation plans. Recognizing that municipal

governments are the highest consumers of energy, AMO provided input to the regulation, including the designation of municipal facilities

- ***Municipal Guide***

The Ministry of Energy has developed a renewable energy guide for municipalities. The Municipal Guide will help municipalities understand their role in the renewable energy development process.

The Ministry also worked with AMO on locations and content for outreach sessions for the Municipal Guide.

- ***MicroFIT and Capacity Allocation Exempt connection Challenges***

The Ministry of Energy developed MicroFIT and FIT program for Capacity Allocation Exempt (CAE) projects. These projects have faced constraints affecting the ability of small projects to be connected.

AMO and the Ministry explored ways to ameliorate connection challenges for microFIT and FIT programs for Capacity Allocation Exempt (CAE) projects. AMO remains supportive of this initiative if municipal concerns are addressed substantially.

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have had a high degree of engagement on the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR), in developing guidelines for implementation. The Minister of Community and Social Services discussed the go-forward strategy for the Integrated Accessibility Regulation.

- **Species at Risk**

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) consulted with AMO on the habitat protections for 4 species under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA):

- Ogden's pondweed (Southern Ontario)
- Eastern Flowering Dogwood (Southern Ontario)
- Redside Dace (Southern Ontario)
- Woodland Caribou (Northern Ontario)

Advice and input were sought and provided on protection measures for the habitat of these species. MNR continues to work with municipalities on the protection measures.

In 2011, three MOU meetings were conducted via teleconference. It was recognized that on occasion the effective use of technology enables timely consultation including members from across Ontario.

## Looking forward to 2012

How we jointly manage our way through the current economic challenges will be a priority for 2012. Collaboration at the MOU table will be key for the success of all our communities.

In August 2011, the Premier committed to working with AMO on several priority issues, including:

- promised PMFSDR uploads;
- promotion of personal/producer responsibility for waste;
- consolidation of housing programs with more funding;
- making the provincial gas tax transfer permanent
- no download of costs or added new ones to the property tax base;
- creating a new, permanent fund for municipal roads and bridges, inviting federal government involvement;
- addressing concerns relating to joint and several liability;
- working with you to better collect unpaid provincial fines; and,
- maintain program requiring energy project proponents to satisfy municipal concerns while respecting provincial policy.

The MOU table will provide the venue for further discussions on these and other matters of mutual interest.

## Education and Training

An “e –learning” approach to AMO - Ontario MOU training will be available for provincial staff in 2012. This will provide an efficient way to reach staff so they can learn more about the expectations and goals for consultation under the MOU. The on-line training modules are being developed by MMAH staff.

## Conclusion

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

We are committed to continue working together – when we work together, the results benefit the people of Ontario wherever they may live in municipalities throughout the province. In tough economic times the strong partnership between AMO and the Province is even more critical.

We look forward to another successful year ahead and to reporting back in 2012 on our shared progress.