

**PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**  
**and the**  
**ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO**  
**JOINT ANNUAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING STATEMENT**  
**March 2014**

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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 2013.

The 2013 Throne Speech committed to giving Ontarians a voice by “working with every municipal leader in every region of this province...because when we work together, Ontario is a place of endless possibilities”. Acting on this mandate, 2013 has seen consultations of all forms, not just at the MOU table. Regional sessions, focus groups, reference groups and workshops have been held on a variety of municipal policy issues across the province.

This report provides an update of our activities and accomplishments under the MOU.

The Province of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) re-signed the MOU in August 2013. The MOU commits the province to prior consultation with AMO on:

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

The MOU is a cornerstone in the sharing of information about current and emerging issues, the government’s potential policy initiatives and about identifying areas for collaboration on policy development and implementation.

The MOU is the one place where the diversity of Ontario's municipal governments is reflected in the discussion and advice offered as input to the government’s decision-making process. The parties understand that the municipal input and advice offered through the MOU may or may not be taken and that this does not diminish the value of the MOU process.

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2013**

In 2013, we continued to find new ways to effectively work together, including through joint working groups, technical working groups and advisory committees, and through the MOU table discussions.

### **Joint Working Groups, Technical Working Groups and Advisory Committees:**

#### *Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee*

A key joint working group that was formed in 2013 is the Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee. The Ministry of Community and Social Services, the AMO and the City of Toronto formed this staff-level committee to support confidential discussions related to social assistance reform and related provincial initiatives.

Throughout the year, the Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee has shared information on the development of a long-term plan for social assistance reform and fostered discussion with municipal and provincial partners to gain input and advice on policy and program design options and key implementation considerations.

#### *Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund*

Throughout 2013, the Ministry of Finance, working jointly with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, held a series of consultations with the AMO and municipal representatives about how to best redesign the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund. The input received from municipalities was very valuable and helped inform the redesign of the program for 2014.

#### *Special Purpose Business Property Assessment Review*

Several technical groups were formed over the summer and fall to tackle inequities and difficulties in certain special purpose property assessment fields. Working with AMO and the municipal sector greatly informed the review by providing local perspectives in these areas. This resulted in a provincial report with recommendations ranging from broader operations, to the need for greater transparency in how specific classes of properties are assessed.

#### *AMO's Economic Development Task Force*

The government has regularly presented items to AMO's Economic Development Task Force to obtain the municipal perspective. The government's Youth Strategy in particular benefited from the discussion. The strategy focuses on jobs, entrepreneurship and innovation for youth in Ontario through four key initiatives: The Youth Employment Fund, Youth Entrepreneurship Fund, Youth Innovation Fund, and Youth Skills Connections.

### *Other municipal engagements*

Over the year, the government consulted extensively with the municipal sector on a large number of policy initiatives including land use planning, waste diversion, policing services, energy conservation and energy planning. AMO's Energy Task Force in particular was instrumental in providing the municipal perspective on the government's Long Term Energy Plan.

### **MOU Table Discussions:**

In addition to hearing from the above groups on their activities, there were over 35 policy initiatives discussed at ten meetings, some of which came to the MOU table more than once to continue to inform the policy development process.

#### *Fiscal*

Fiscal issues were very much at the centre of discussions this year with discussions on the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund review, property assessment, the sustainability of policing costs, including the Ontario Provincial Police Billing Model, and coordinated bargaining.

#### *Infrastructure*

The MOU table has provided multiple opportunities to discuss infrastructure funding programs and asset management. These include the \$100 million Small, Rural and Northern Municipal Infrastructure Fund, the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative (MIII), and the Ontario context for the New Building Canada Plan which includes the negotiation of the Canada-Ontario –AMO-Toronto permanent federal gas tax agreement.

#### *Interest Arbitration*

AMO made strong presentations to the Province outlining municipal experiences and the fiscal impact of interest arbitration. AMO advocated for improvements to be made to Ontario's interest arbitration system to make it "efficient, transparent, and accountable to the fiscal capacity of a municipality". In the fall, the Province asked that AMO and the employee associations for fire and police use a facilitator to discuss their concerns regarding interest arbitration and see if consensus could be achieved.

#### *Social Services and Health*

Topics of extensive discussion at this table have included social service transformation projects, employment and training services integration, and child care modernization. Also, the table discussed several initiatives on health and well-being including the living longer, living well Dr. Sinha report, and how best to manage the fire safety of vulnerable Ontarians.

### *Land Use Planning and Building Code*

In the area of planning, the Provincial Policy Statement saw an engaging and conclusive discussion of key review issues, as well as progressive dialogue on the AMO land use planning paper. Ontario's revised Building Code also benefited from several discussions at the MOU table. The new Code will help ensure public safety, increase energy efficiency and contribute to the competitiveness of the building sector.

### *Waste Diversion*

AMO was well engaged in the development of a new waste diversion framework and key elements of the proposed new Waste Diversion Act, which was introduced in June 2013. AMO's contribution included: the importance of municipal roles and responsibilities in waste diversion, that reasonable costs be established through negotiation by the parties and continuous improvement, and that accessibility and convenience service standards for residents are supported.

### *Engagement with the Federal Government*

The municipal sector and the provincial government agreed to work together on strategies for engagement with the federal government on a Federal Long-Term Infrastructure Plan, Great Lakes Canada Ontario Agreement, Federal Engagement in Housing, and Labour Market Funding Negotiations.

### **Education and Training**

New ministers' offices and Ontario Public Service staff were briefed on the MOU process to bring more awareness of the responsibility and benefits of on-going dialogue and consultation, and partnerships and collaboration with the municipal sector in generally, and specifically at the MOU table.

Staff conducted six AMO MOU / TOCCA training sessions for more than 90 participants from 18 ministries. The training provided staff with an understanding of the benefits and obligations of the Province's commitment to consult with municipalities.

### **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2014**

Continued consultation and collaboration at the MOU table will be important for the success of our communities as we move forward in 2014.