



Zone Structure and Mandate Review

Project Objective and Context

Objective:

Ensure that the Zone structure, mandate and purpose is relevant, current and reflective of changing trends in the municipal sector and among the membership.

Why now?

This review is timely, given that the last review was completed in 2010:

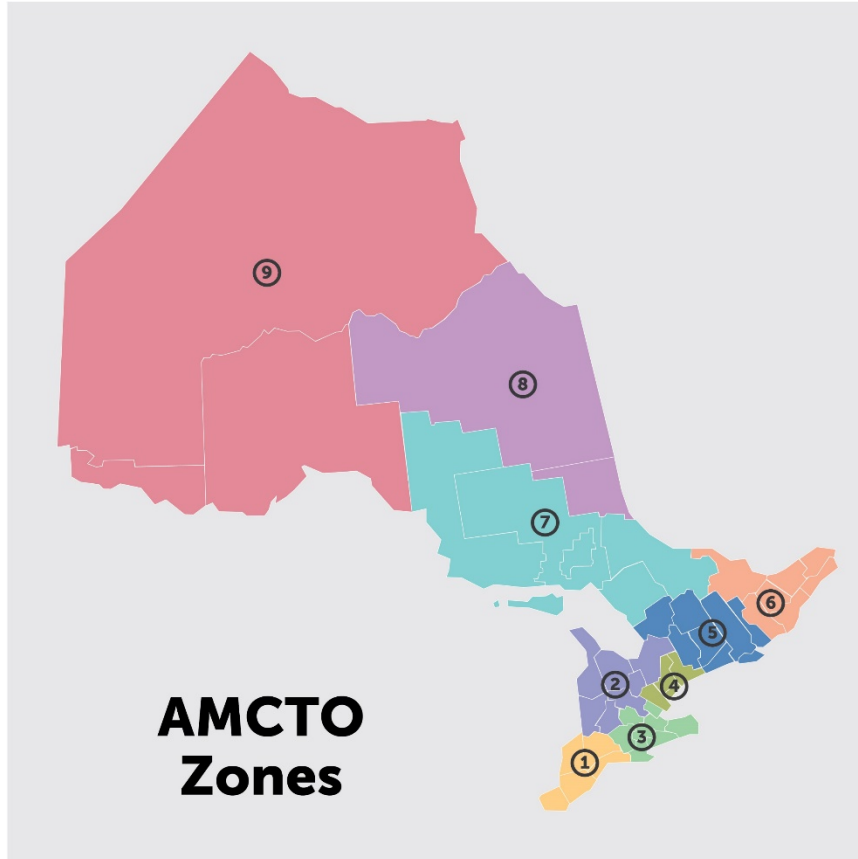
- AMCTO's membership demographics are changing as new professionals enter the sector and seasoned public servants retire
- Municipal operating environments are constrained to do more with less
- Some Zones are facing declining participation

Listening to Members:

This review puts engagement of members front and centre, seeking to:

- Engage members who are active in the Zones and those who are not
- Engage members across demographics and geographies

Existing Zone Structure



- Zone 1** - The Counties of Elgin, Essex, Lambton and Middlesex, and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Zone 2** - The Counties of Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, Huron, Perth, Simcoe and Wellington
- Zone 3** - The Counties of Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk and Oxford, the Regional Municipalities of Halton, Niagara and Waterloo, and the City of Hamilton
- Zone 4** - The City of Toronto and the Regional Municipalities of Durham, Peel and York
- Zone 5** - The Counties of Haliburton, Hastings, Lennox and Addington, Northumberland, Peterborough, and Prince Edward, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Zone 6** - The Counties of Frontenac, Lanark and Renfrew, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Prescott and Russell, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, and the City of Ottawa
- Zone 7** - The Districts of Algoma, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound and Sudbury and the City of Greater Sudbury
- Zone 8** - The Districts of Cochrane and Timiskaming
- Zone 9** - The Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay

Functions of Zones

Per the **AMCTO Zone Terms of References (2010)**, the mandate of the Zones is to:

1. Provide a forum for networking and idea exchange among members;
2. Provide training opportunities for Zone members that address issues specific to the Zone;
3. Engage in outreach towards existing, new and potential members; and
4. Serve as a point of access between the Association and members.

Zones do do networking/idea exchange...but the other 3...not so much

We don't do zone specific training, outreach ...maybe we are an access point...but folks often call staff, not the zone

Sometimes we feel like party planners... AMCTO might be able to run a better meeting than us...

The zones have been around a long time... Now we got blog posts...

Done anyone stay overnight?

Initial SWOT Analysis: PRE-COVID INTERRUPTION

Strengths

- Zone structure is a known, well-established entity
- Provides geographic representation of membership on Board of Directors
- Acts as point of access between local members and Association
- Enables tailoring of events/training to local issues
- Supports relationship-building among local members

Weaknesses

- Decreasing participation in urban zones (i.e. Zone 4)
- Role of AMCTO differs in north and south (e.g. in south, local groups network on own; in north, AMCTO events provide networking opportunities)
- Tendency to fit services to structure, rather than vice versa
- Time and cost investment for members
- Difficult to attract new people to Zone Exec and Board

Opportunities

- Changing demographics and infusion of new professionals into the sector with different approaches
- Leveraging technology to support zone engagement and activities
- New events or formats to revitalize the Zone structure and member uptake
- Tapping into existing county and regional meetings
- Potential sublayer by caucus type (urban, rural) to reflect differentiation of staff responsibilities depending on size of municipality

Threats

- New professionals in the sector without history of AMCTO and understanding of proposition of Zones
- Relentless focus on efficiencies in the municipal sector, making it hard to justify attending meetings, training sessions, etc.
- Relevance of traditional Zone meeting structure given technological options to communication/information sharing
- Retirement of executives in coming years
- Competition from other associations (e.g. MFOA is traveling further north)

Discussion Questions

1. Besides the Zone functions earlier identified, are there other “unofficial” functions of the Zones? If so, what are they?
2. What works well within the Zones and should be continued if not enhanced? How do you know what’s working well? Conversely, what doesn’t work well and should either be revised or discontinued?
3. Are there any challenges or issues with the current Zone structure? If yes, what are they and how would you address them?

*What works well?
Benefit of the networking component*

It is a good way to get involved...but we may not attract younger people

Education programs do not necessarily get out to the zones

AMCTO website is good—so we skirt the zone effectively...

Zone meetings are more affordable than other AMCTO events...

It is not well promoted in the community; so many people we could attract who we don't

- FOI
- Leg
- Legal
- Committee coordinators

Failure to do outreach to university students....

If one of the goals of the zone, Guelph has more in common with more urban areas than Zone 2; things have changed...

Discussion Questions

4. Are there any lessons or opportunities arising from the pandemic experience?

People want the choice... Nice to go and see the people...but nice to avoid the roads too

We should use a hybrid...keep the best of the online, but meet in person with all that it offers...

Always appreciated the zone meetings as a way to link the staff to the membership

5. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the working of the Zones?

Hybrid meetings would optional; probably critical mass to do it as hybrid;

For new folks, the networking is really important for peer support...so hybrid

We know we do a better job on young members in urban centres; but many of them wont pay for membership/grant access

6. Do the boundaries and size of the Zones have an impact on how well the Zones function?

Incentives: Could there be a change in fee structure for new members to allow them easier access while they learn the benefits

We are working on this with a discounted rate and voucher applicable to programming

We have done surveys in the past...try our best to accommodate the mix

7. Do you have any other questions or comments we should discuss?

Zones have to deal with the reality of geography; but, could we achieve the same thing with a smaller footprint...

What are we trying to achieve through the zones? Could they be enhanced with a smaller footprint...

Propensity of councils to treat amcto membership as a thing for "senior" staff

There is not a big role for the zone executive ...feel a bit like party planners...should there be more training about role of execs

County related meetings vs. zones

*Do we need zone executives?
Could AMCTO staff do more?*

The Exec does not have a whole lot of say...



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