



# 2022-2026 Issue Profile



## Introduction

The 2022-2026 Issue Profile is the set of objectives and policy statements on areas of interest for Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) members and approved by the Board of Directors, that specify the ideal solutions AMCTO would like to see from a public policy and advocacy perspective. AMCTO staff will commit time and resources over a four-year period to addressing issues identified by the Issue Profile with annual plans to execute on these advocacy efforts and to review outcomes.

### The Issue Profile:

- Scopes subject areas that AMCTO will respond to – either proactively or reactively while providing flexibility for the Association to fill gaps and articulate new positions on emerging issues
- Directs AMCTO staff in evaluating advocacy and policy opportunities within the municipal landscape
- Catalogues for the record, AMCTO’s existing policy positions at both a broad and more technical level to assist with continued strategy development, knowledge transfer and succession planning

Policy statements and the overall profile will be reviewed at least every four years or earlier if recommended by the AMCTO Legislative and Policy Advisory Committee (LPAC) and directed by the Board to ensure AMCTO’s policy positions remain relevant and responsive to member needs and the current political environment.

## Advocacy Principles

In support of members and Ontario municipal staff, the Association has defined four broad advocacy categories with clear principles on which to focus over the next four years. Each issue area falls under one of the following categories.



### 1. PEOPLE & GOVERNANCE:

Promote strong, stable and sustainable municipal administration that supports accountable and transparent local government, through clear roles and responsibilities as well as effective guidance for implementation and operationalization of federal and provincial mandates.



### 2. SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION:

Streamline and simplify administrative and reporting requirements so that municipal public servants can spend time and resources on delivering better, more efficient services while ensuring accountability to the Province and the communities they serve.



### 3. FINANCIAL PLANNING & RESILIENCE:

Ensure municipal public servants can secure resilient futures for their communities through access to financial planning tools and resources, through the reduction of costs, and appropriate funding opportunities.



### 4. LEGISLATION & REGULATIONS:

Modernize the legislative and regulatory environment to support and enable the work of municipal public servants, making it easier to understand, enforce and be innovative while ensuring policies and practices reflect current needs and situations and focus on outcomes.

## Issue Areas

Issue areas fall under each overarching advocacy principle and have been vetted by the Legislative and Policy Advisory Committee (LPAC) and approved by the AMCTO Board of Directors. Issue areas are based on Board-endorsed positions from the past several years of AMCTO comments, submissions, and recommendations. Each issue area contains policy statements and key activities to support and direct the policy, advocacy, and government relations work to be undertaken to address the issue.



### People & Governance

#### **Issue: Accountability and transparency frameworks must be improved to operate effectively and manage local relationships.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *A broader range of penalties on a progressive hierarchy or range of penalties should be introduced to manage egregious council member conduct and a model code should be developed in consultation with the sector to ensure consistency across the Province.*

The roles of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and head of council as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must be clarified to distinguish between administrative and political responsibilities. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of staff and council should be clarified to distinguish between providing strategic oversight and implementing administration/operations.

#### **Key Activities:**

- Continue to monitor trends and issues across the Province
- Advocate to the Province for amendments to the *Municipal Act* to make changes regarding managing egregious conduct, supported by the findings of successive municipal judicial inquiries

#### **Issue: Career pathways to the municipal sector are needed to recruit qualified candidates to replace retiring administrators, especially in small, rural and northern communities.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *The Province should support the next generation of municipal leaders, providing graduating students with valuable work experience by reinvesting in an expanded Municipal Management Internship Program (MMIP) delivered by AMCTO.*

#### **Key Activities:**

- Monitor data on recruitment, retention, and retirement of municipal administrators in Ontario
- Continue to make the case for reinvestment of Provincial dollars to supporting the MMIP including the return on investment
- Investigate other opportunities to fund the program, and models of program administration to best suit the needs of the municipal sector

**Issue: Pension Plan decision-makers at OMERS must be representative of those that they serve.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *To ensure adequate representation of the Management/Non-union group of pension-holders, OMERS must appoint an additional representative on the OMERS Sponsorship Corporation (SC) and the Administration Corporation (AC) to look after Management/Non-union interests.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to monitor Sponsorship Corporation and Administrative Corporation initiatives
- Plan for the next triennial review of SC/AC Board composition to ensure OMERS understands the necessity of including management/non-union representation on its governing bodies



## **Service & Administration**

**Issue: Provincially mandated, locally delivered services are impacted by outdated provincially directed processes.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *The Province should prioritize the modernization of municipal services that are provided on behalf of the Province, such as marriage licenses and death registration, and review the necessity of keeping municipal staff as the ‘middle person’ in provincial and federal data collection.*

**Key Activities:**

- Advocate to apply lean and agile methodologies to reduce the impact of provincial processes on municipalities
- Advocate to remove the municipal role in death registration with proposed new Electronic Death Registration System
- Advocate for improved user-centred design by engaging AMCTO and its members to understand assumptions that inform scoping of digital-first projects impacting municipalities

**Issue: Administrative and reporting burdens established by the Ontario and federal governments impose costs on municipalities requiring significant administrative capacity. There is a need to simplify and streamline application processes, agreements, templates, and reporting requirements.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *Continuously reduce municipal administrative and operational burden, including in municipal reporting requirements, by working with AMCTO and other municipal associations on solutions to support municipal staff.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to solicit feedback from membership regarding particularly burdensome reporting requirements
- Advocate for the following with the Federal and provincial governments:
  - Work with AMCTO and other municipal associations through an iterative process to simplify, reduce, and condense various application and reporting requirements on municipalities while ensuring accountability and transparency

- Maintain an updated listing of municipal reporting requirements and make it publicly available as open data – this list should include opt-in and grant programs
- Apply lean, agile, and user-centred design principles to the review of reporting and application requirements
- Identify opportunities to comment on initiatives that reduce or expand municipal reporting burden, continuing to educate other orders of government on impacts to municipal staff

**Issue: Continuously improving the accuracy of voter data through established provincial data gathering systems is critical to effective local election delivery.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *Continue to ensure that the Voters List is modernized to address issues related to inaccuracies, accessibility, and cost, among others.*

**Key Activities:**

- Work with Elections Ontario to support the transition to a single register of electors and support the development of tools and resources to support municipal and school board elections looking ahead to 2024
- Work with Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) on improvements to collect accurate school support information
- Monitor the effectiveness of the single register of electors in 2023 for producing the Preliminary List of Electors during by-elections starting in 2024 and during the 2026 municipal and school board elections



**Financial Planning & Resilience**

**Issue: Municipalities face an infrastructure funding gap that requires additional financial investment, resources and supports.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *Protect and expand existing funding sources and investigate additional funding sources that appropriately address the infrastructure gap.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to advocate for stable and predictable funding sources to assist municipalities with building, maintaining, and upgrading local infrastructure
- Impress upon the importance of federal and provincial investments in accessible local building and facility projects to ensure local assets can be welcoming and usable spaces for all
- Amplify the advocacy of municipal association partners and the voices of their subject matter experts on infrastructure issues

**Issue: Municipalities face increased operational budget pressures as a result of increased citizen expectations and the transfer of responsibilities from the Province.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *Continue to provide existing Provincial grants, transfer payments and cost-sharing for locally delivered services and programs with stable and predictable funding sources, and respond to service and program delivery needs of municipalities of all sizes.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to advocate for stable and predictable funding sources to assist municipalities with delivering local programs and services, including the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF), emphasizing the importance that the fund keep pace with inflationary and other consequential costs to municipalities
- Continue to press the importance that the release of grant opportunities, additional funds, and transfer payment monies consider and respect local decision-making timelines, recognizing that municipal budgetary planning is different from the Provincial year-end
- Continue to monitor challenges and trends with assessment processes and Provincial management of property tax assessment

**Issue: Increasing costs related to municipal insurance premiums means challenging budgetary planning with decisions impacting local services.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *Work with the sector to investigate increasing costs to municipal insurance rates and find equitable solutions.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to advocate for systemic change to joint and several liability with other municipal partners that reflect the recommendations made by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- Amplify the voices of other municipal associations and subject matter experts advocating for municipal insurance reforms

## **Legislation & Regulations**

**Issue: Municipal administrators require legislation that is responsive to current municipal governance, administrative and operational needs and that is focused on outcomes.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *The Province should review and update the Municipal Act with a focus on modernization, accountability and transparency, financial fairness, good governance and continued enabling provisions.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to monitor issues and challenges with the Act and seek input and advice from members
- Continue to track innovations and trends in municipal governance and administration nationally and internationally to inform future submissions to government
- Advocate to the Province to ensure the Act is kept up-to-date to meet changes in practice, enable innovations in governance, and continue modernization

**Issue: Local elections should continue to be conducted in a safe, secure, and responsive manner.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *The Province should review and continue to modernize and clarify provisions within the Municipal Elections Act.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to advocate to the Province about the benefits of a mandatory Province-wide Professional Activity (PA) Day on municipal and school board election day to facilitate smooth, accessible voting in local schools
- Continue to advocate for the modernization of the *Act* through post-municipal and school board election review and submission development

**Issue: Municipal administrators need legislation that supports effective local program delivery, is responsive to current technology and reflects its original intent of open and accountable governance.**

**Policy Statement 1:** *The Province should comprehensively review the 30-year-old *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* as it has not been comprehensively reviewed to keep pace with societal and technological changes and poses a number of operational and administrative challenges.*

**Key Activities:**

- Continue to advocate to the Province about the need for comprehensive review and update of the legislation
- With the AMCTO *MFIPPA* Working Group, develop a submission to provide recommended amendments to the Province
- Seek the endorsement and support of other municipal associations for AMCTO's submission

## Other Areas of Interest

There are several other areas of interest that AMCTO members have identified to explore for future advocacy. The Association will need to conduct additional work beyond the scope of the current 2022-2026 Strategic Plan to support these other potential issue areas.

### Safety and Well-Being of Municipal Staff

#### Key Activities:

- Continue to monitor challenges and trends across Ontario and look for promising practices from other jurisdictions
- Advocate to the Province for support mechanisms for municipal staff when faced with complex council-staff matters
- Investigate promising practices for improving local service delivery as a way to relieve pressures on municipal staff

### Provincial Offences Act (POA) Modernization

#### Key Activities:

- Review issues and challenges with the legislation with LPAC and other AMCTO members who work directly with legislation
- Collaborate with other municipal associations to amplify voices on modernizing *POA* processes and legislation

## Conclusion

In establishing this 2022-2026 Issue Profile, AMCTO can ensure its broader policy and advocacy objectives are achieved and reviewed successfully. When it comes to establishing a new position and/or policy statement, staff will refer to the policy as outlined within the Association's larger policy and advocacy framework, and continue to work with the Board, LPAC and other key stakeholders to develop, refine and implement new ideas and initiatives.



## About AMCTO

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management and leadership. Over the past 80 years, AMCTO has provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. With 2,000+ members working in municipalities across the province, AMCTO is Ontario's largest association of local government professionals, and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

Our mission is to strengthen and support the capabilities and performance of Ontario municipal professionals by providing professional development and engagement opportunities, advocacy and leadership in the sector.

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