

# Research Insights: Strong Mayor Authorities Scan

**Of the 46 municipalities granted strong mayor powers:**

**54%**

of mayors retained the power to appoint/dismiss the chief administrative officer (CAO), while **15%** of mayors directly changed the CAO.

**33%**

of mayors retained the power to change the organizational structure, while **7%** of mayors directly changed the structure.

**26%**

of mayors retained power over employment matters, while **15%** of mayors directly made staffing changes.

**87%**

of mayors directed municipal employees to undertake research, provide advice or carry out duties related to municipal policies, programs or strong mayor powers/duties.

**65%**

of mayors retained the power to establish/assign functions of committees.

## Key Findings

Our research indicates that mayors' retention, use and implementation of the powers afforded to them are:

- Creating operational and administrative burdens when it comes to supporting the interpretation and implementation of the legislation;
- Blurring the lines of political and administrative authority, particularly between the mayor and chief administrative officer;
- Creating inconsistencies and a lack of accountability and transparency in decision-making; and
- Leaving staff employment, well-being and effectiveness at the discretion of the mayor.

## Background

AMCTO tracks how strong mayor powers have been used across the province. Using this tracking and survey feedback of members and those from affected municipalities (up to and including July 19, 2024), our Association has analyzed data to compare strong mayor power use and practice. The goal of this research is to better understand the impacts of the legislation to municipal governance, structures and staff, and to continue to support municipalities with the implementation of strong mayor systems. We also want to encourage more open dialogue and discussion of better legislative solutions to meet local governance objectives.



We asked our members to review this scan and research findings for accuracy and with a 74% response rate, the collected data was further reviewed, updated, and analyzed to identify key findings. These key findings provide a snapshot in time overview as strong mayor practices may change and decisions may be amended, rescinded etc. at any time. We will continue to track how strong mayor powers are used along with their impacts to municipal leaders and staff.

### Opportunities for Improvement

To date, our research and key findings present a cloudy picture of legislative implementation – with gaps that require further exploration, guidance, and clarity moving forward.

AMCTO has long held the position that there remain opportunities to strengthen municipal administration through clarifying the roles and responsibilities between the chief administrative officer and mayor (or head of council) to distinguish between administrative and political responsibilities. It is with this and the data in mind, that we reaffirm our opposition to strong mayor powers related to the CAO and staff.

Municipalities need clarity in legislation and regulation that will:

- Improve accountability and transparency frameworks;
- Strengthen local relationships;
- Support effective municipal operations; and
- Reduce impacts to municipal leaders and staff



[Read our full recommendations](#) to the province regarding strong mayor powers.

For more information, please contact us at [advocacy@amcto.com](mailto:advocacy@amcto.com).

### About AMCTO

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management, and leadership. Over the past 85 years, we have provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. With 2,200+ members working in municipalities across the province, we are Ontario's largest association of local government professionals and the premier organization for professional development in the sector.

Our mission is to deliver professional growth, networks, advocacy, and leadership to support and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of municipal professionals now and into the future.

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