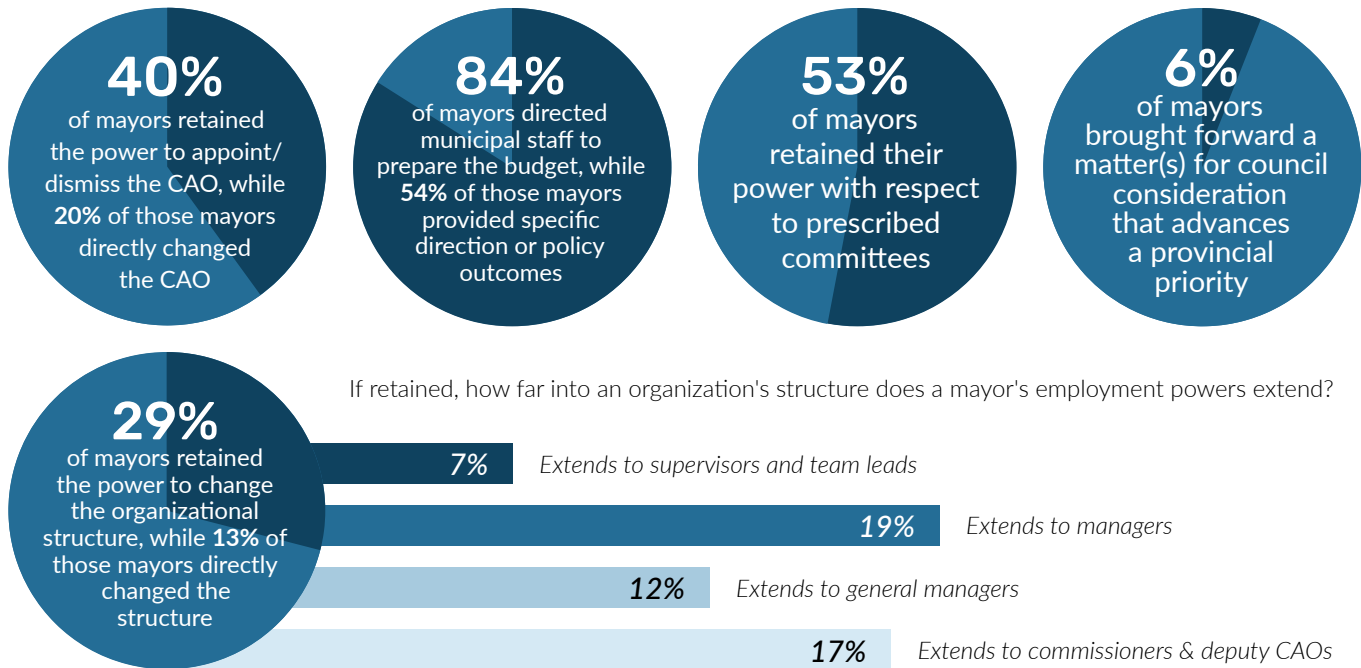


Strong Mayor Authorities Scan Research Insights: 2nd Edition

Of the 201 municipalities that responded to the survey:



Key Findings

Our research continues to indicate that mayors' retention, use and implementation of the powers results in:

- Continued creation of operational and administrative burdens when it comes to supporting the interpretation and implementation of the legislation;
- Continued blurred lines of political and administrative authority;
- Inconsistent, unclear decision-making with a lack of transparency and accountability; and
- Staff employment, well-being and effectiveness left at the discretion of the mayor.

Furthermore, the lack of definition of employment matters, heads of division and organizational structure has led to inconsistent applications of powers across municipalities.

Background

Since our initial scan released in fall 2024, strong mayor powers have been extended to a total of 216 municipalities across Ontario. This scan examines outcomes from municipalities surveyed between November 2025 and February 2026 to better understand the impacts of the legislation on municipal governance, structures and staff. The goal of this ongoing research is to support our members and municipal staff with the implementation of strong mayor systems.

With a 93% response rate from municipalities listed in strong mayor regulations, the collected data was 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key findings provide a snapshot in time overview as strong mayor practices may change and decisions may be amended or rescinded at any time.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. Continued review and study of these powers is critical given the operational and administrative impacts these powers are having on municipalities and their administrators.

This scan shows uses of the powers ahead of the 2026 municipal elections. We anticipate that use of the powers may continue to shift post-elections, as this is the first election cycle that mayoral candidates are seeking office knowing they can use these powers. Moreover, the Province has expanded these powers to Provincially-appointed regional chairs, and we expect that new issues and challenges will arise in the coming year.

In addition, while councils in the past have decided to change chief administrative officers (CAOs) to 'go in a different direction', we are concerned that there will be significantly more leadership turnover at the senior levels, and this turnover will be felt deeper into organizations should heads of council decide to retain their powers over the CAO, employment matters, and organizational structure.

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, our **[ongoing advocacy on this topic](#)** and **[strong chair powers](#)**.

For more information, please contact us at **advocacy@amcto.com**.



About AMCTO

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management, and leadership. Since 1938, 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.

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