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POLICY UPDATE

March 13, 2020

Queen's Park Update – Much Activity and New Legislation of Municipal Interest

COVID-19 Update

The COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve in Ontario and globally. It is a dynamic situation and the Ontario government is updating its coronavirus website twice daily.

For the most up-to-date and accurate information about coronavirus in Ontario, please use this [Government of Ontario site](#) and work with your local public health unit for best available information and required local action. AMO will continue to monitor the situation as we can (see [COVID-19 Resources](#)) and may provide updates to municipal governments if requested by the Province.

Extension of Public Health Mitigation Funding to 2021

Linked with yesterday's provincial announcement on enhanced COVID-19 measures, was notice that Ontario is extending the one-time 2020 mitigation funding of 10% to 2021. This is in recognition of the resources need of public health units to be able to respond to COVID-19 and to keep the 2021 funding at the same level of 2020 funding. This funding is in addition to yesterday's announcement of up to a \$100M COVID-19 Contingency Fund. Further details on this public health funding are expected.

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2019-20 Ontario Gas Tax for Transit Allocations Announced

On Thursday, March 12, 2020 the Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation [announced](#) the 2019-20 Ontario Gas Tax for Transit Fund Allocations. The Fund will provide \$365.3 million to 111 municipal governments. Last year, the Ontario Gas Tax for Transit provided \$364 million to 107 municipal governments. Along with the announcement of the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) allocation of \$200 million for municipal infrastructure on January 17, 2020, Ontario has provided \$565 million in provincial infrastructure funding to municipalities this year.

The Ontario Gas Tax for Transit supports investments in municipal transit capital and operations, providing 2 cents/litre of gas sold in Ontario. In addition to the funding allocations, the Minister announced adjustments to the program including the elimination of the minimum spend threshold to allow smaller municipalities with transit

to access funds; acceptance of scanned documents; and access of regional governments to funding unused by lower-tier municipalities in their region to ensure the funding does not go unspent. Municipal council members should contact their transit managers for more information on their allocations and priorities.

AMO Contact: Craig Reid, Senior Advisor, creid@amo.on.ca.

Bill 184, *Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020*

Status: First Reading Carried

This Act amends three pieces of legislation related to the Ontario Building Code, community housing, and landlord-tenant relations. It also introduces legislation to repeal an existing act maintaining the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation (OMHC).

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* would be amended. A new legislative framework is timely and necessary. Further analysis will determine how the changes will ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the community housing system. AMO will continue to work with the government to propose to find solutions that make sense for families, local communities, and the Province.

As well, the Act would amend the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* in various ways. AMO's position is that the government needs to balance interests to both encourage landlords to create new rental housing supply and also to protect tenants at the same time.

Further, the *Ontario Mortgage Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020* is enacted. It would dissolve the Ontario Mortgage Housing Corporation and transfer its assets, liabilities, rights, and obligations to the Crown. An analysis of the impact of this transfer of functions from the OMHC to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is underway.

The proposed amendments to the *Building Code Act, 1992* would allow the government to establish a not-for-profit corporation as a future administrative authority (AA) which would streamline and modernize building delivery services. At this time, the Province has not identified the services that the AA may provide in the future and has clarified that they will not be moving forward with the use of certified professionals. The Province will consult with partners and stakeholders, including AMO, to further define the AA's accountability and governance requirements, the AA's funding model, and the services that they may be responsible for delivering.

More information about the proposed Bill 184 [legislation](#) is found on the government website including the Ontario Newsroom [release](#).

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AMO Contact on Building Code:

Masi Naserie, Policy Advisor, mnaserie@amo.on.ca.

Bill 175, *Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, 2020*

Legislative Status: Passed Second Reading, referred to Standing Committee on Social Policy

The Ministry is seeking to modernize home and community care through new legislation and regulations. If passed, the legislation will allow Ontario Health Teams to deliver new models of home and community care. Regulations have been posted concurrently for public comment until April 14. AMO is planning to make a submission to the Standing Committee and respond to the regulatory posting based on the advice of AMO's Health Task Force and with approval from the Board at its March meeting. More information about the proposed [legislation](#) and [regulations](#) is found on the government website including the Ontario Newsroom [release](#).

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