
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CLE-14-2024 AMCTO Submission to the Province of Ontario – Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act

For Consideration by Council in Committee on September 17, 2024



OBJECTIVE:

To support a submission by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) to the Province of Ontario requesting amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* entitled “*Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century*”.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CLE-14-2024 AMCTO Submission to the Province of Ontario – Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century be received;
2. AND THAT Haldimand County support the submission by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) entitled “Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century”;
3. AND THAT a request be sent to the Province of Ontario to update the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by: Chad Curtis, Municipal Clerk

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

AMCTO has sent a submission to the Province of Ontario entitled “Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century” which outlines requested updates to the Municipal Elections Act (MEA). The submission works to review and re-write the MEA and includes priority amendments with a suggested completion date of summer 2025, and additional longer-term recommendations to be implemented ahead of the 2030 municipal election.

BACKGROUND:

AMCTO is the largest voluntary municipal association in Ontario, and serves municipal professionals including managers, clerks and treasurers. In addition to providing professional development, certification and training opportunities for its members, the AMCTO advocates for policies and practices that benefit municipal management and local government. It is their position that, through modernized legislation, municipalities have the obligation to continuously improve on core issues of local governance such as transparency and accountability. One aspect of this advocacy work is an involvement with the ongoing improvement of processes relating to the modernization of the municipal election legislation and elections processes.

The MEA governs the conduct of municipal elections in Ontario. It provides election administrators with a framework to run efficient municipal elections and provide voters, candidates and third party advertisers with guidance on participating in municipal elections. The MEA was first passed in 1996 and, although there have been multiple amendments and updates since that time, much of the legislation is out-dated. As part of its advocacy work, the AMCTO has recently made a submission to the Province of Ontario entitled "[Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century](#)" requesting a review and significant updates to the MEA. The submission is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

ANALYSIS:

In its submission to the provincial government, the AMCTO states that Municipal administrators require legislation that:

- Strengthens public trust and electoral integrity;
- Enhances accountability and transparency while making compliance and enforcement easier; and
- Ensures permissive legislation that reduces administrative complexity.

The goal of the submission is to have the Province make priority updates to the MEA in consultation with municipal professionals involved in local government administration. The recommendation is for a full review and rewrite of the MEA, with both short term priorities, and longer term goals. The AMCTO's "Issue at a Glance", attached as Attachment 2 to this report, summarizes the key issues highlighted in the document. The AMCTO will be engaging the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the coming month regarding the requested updates.

There are 48 recommendations included in the submission; 3 general recommendations, 21 priority items and 12 secondary items recommended for change prior to 2026, and 12 long-term recommendations for change prior to 2028.

Staff are in support of these recommendations, particularly those relating to the protection of personal privacy, the reduction of administrative burden and increasing clarity for voters, candidates, and third-party advertisers.

Staff recommends that Council support the submission by AMCTO entitled "Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century" and that a request be sent to the Province of Ontario to update the MEA with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommended support of the submission by AMCTO.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. AMCTO Submission to the Province of Ontario – Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century
2. Issue at a Glance