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NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Proposing to Expand Strong Mayor Powers to 169 Additional Municipalities

Expansion will help municipalities deliver on provincial priorities like building homes and infrastructure

April 09, 2025

[Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing](#)

TORONTO — Ontario is proposing to expand strong mayor powers to the heads of council in [169 additional municipalities](#) effective May 1, 2025 to help deliver on provincial priorities, such as building more homes, transit and other infrastructure across Ontario.

This significant expansion reflects Ontario's commitment to streamline local governance and help ensure municipalities have the tools they need to reduce obstacles that can stand in the way of new housing and infrastructure development. The powers would allow heads of council of single- and lower-tier municipalities with councils of six members or more to support shared provincial-municipal priorities, such as encouraging the approval of new housing and constructing and maintaining infrastructure to support housing, including roads and transit.

"Heads of Council are key partners in our efforts to build homes and infrastructure across the province," said Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "By extending strong mayor powers to these additional municipalities, we are providing mayors every tool at our disposal to empower them to get homes and infrastructure built faster. Mayors know their municipalities best, and we support them in taking bold actions for

their communities.”

Ontario's strong mayor powers, initially introduced for Toronto and Ottawa in 2022, have been gradually rolled out across the province. The province currently has 47 municipalities with these enhanced powers, which have helped to cut red tape and accelerate the delivery of key priorities in their communities. These enhanced powers come with increased accountability for heads of council and maintain essential checks and balances through the oversight of councillors.

Strong mayor powers and duties include:

- Choosing to appoint the municipality’s chief administrative officer.
- Hiring certain municipal department heads and establishing and re-organizing departments.
- Creating committees of council, assigning their functions and appointing the chairs and vice-chairs of committees of council.
- Proposing the municipal budget, which would be subject to council amendments and a separate head of council veto and council override process.
- Proposing certain municipal by-laws if the mayor is of the opinion that the proposed by-law could potentially advance a provincial priority identified in regulation. Council can pass these by-laws if more than one-third of all council members vote in favour.
- Vetoing certain by-laws if the head of council is of the opinion that all or part of the by-law could potentially interfere with a provincial priority.
- Bringing forward matters for council consideration if the head of council is of the opinion that considering the matter could potentially advance a provincial priority.

Quick Facts

- Strong mayor powers have been used across the province to support the building of more homes. For example, they have been used to facilitate a new housing complex near transit in Ajax and to direct staff in St. Catharines to prioritize housing developments.

- Certain strong mayor powers can only be used to support [prescribed provincial priorities](#), which include building new homes and constructing and maintaining infrastructure like roads that support new and existing housing developments.
- This tool complements historic and [ongoing investments in housing-enabling infrastructure](#) and the new [Provincial Planning Statement](#) that helps municipalities support growth by reducing and streamlining planning rules.
- The proposal will be posted on Ontario's Regulatory Registry until April 16, 2025.

Quotes

"Increasing housing supply is a top priority for municipalities in every part of Ontario. Strong mayor powers can provide an additional tool to help municipalities play their important role in getting houses built. As the most trusted order of government, municipalities can be counted on to exercise new powers accountably and in the best interests of the public and the communities they serve."

- Robin Jones

AMO President, Mayor of Westport

"Windsor is experiencing unprecedented growth driven by large-scale infrastructure projects that are transforming our economy and community. With strong mayor powers, I've been able to support key initiatives in housing, transit and infrastructure, aligning with provincial priorities. With the province's support, we've streamlined processes, reduced barriers and launched initiatives like Housing Solutions Made for Windsor and the Strengthen the Core Downtown Windsor plan, driving further growth and development."

- Drew Dilkens

Mayor of Windsor

"As one of Canada's fastest growing cities, Pickering is proud to have received over \$5.2M in funding from Ontario's Building Faster Fund for exceeding its provincial housing target. We have a collective responsibility

in addressing this housing crisis, and I thank the Ford government for introducing strong mayor powers, which provides municipalities the autonomy and ability to streamline and accelerate the home building process."

- Kevin Ashe

Mayor of Pickering

Additional Resources

- [Ontario Expanding Strong Mayor Powers](#)
- [Ontario Providing New Tools to Municipalities to Build More Homes Sooner](#)
- [Strong Mayor Powers Expanded to Mayors in 26 Municipalities](#)

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