

# Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

## Legal and Legislative Services

### Legislative Services



**To:** Mayor & Members of Council

**From:** Brianna Coughlin, Division Leader – Legislative Services

**Date:** April 8, 2024

**Subject:** AMCTO Submission to the Province of Ontario – Modernizing the *Municipal Elections Act* for the 21st Century

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### Recommendation

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”; and

Request that the Province of Ontario 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, all as presented at the April 30, 2024 Council meeting.

### Strategic Objectives

3c) Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Functions - Continue investment in modernized services, including the integration of current best practices and automation, by engaging in service transformation and process mapping

5c) Modernize Citizen-Centered Services - Setting policy and standard operating procedures for resident communication and follow-ups

### Background

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) is an organization that provides professional development, engagement opportunities, advocacy and leadership in the Ontario municipal sector.

As part of its advocacy work, AMCTO is involved in the ongoing improvement of processes relating to the modernization of the municipal election legislation and elections processes. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* provides election administrators with a framework to run efficient municipal elections, and provides voters, candidates and third-party advertisers with guidance on participating in municipal elections.

AMCTO has recently made a submission to the Province of Ontario entitled “Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. The submission is attached as Appendix A to this report.

## Comments

AMCTO has been a consistent partner advocating for reform to the Municipal Elections Act, including a submission to the Province in 2015 (referenced in Appendix A) and subsequent working papers.

Council has also provided support for election reform, most recently at the November 30, 2021 Council with the following two resolutions:

### Resolution #401-11-2021

Endorse the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) Local Government Priorities for the 2022 Provincial Election, as presented at the November 30, 2021 Council meeting; and

Direct the Clerk to send a letter to AMCTO confirming support of the guidebook.

### Resolution #402-11-2021

Support the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)’s request for school boards to establish a Professional Development or Activity Day on Monday, October 24, 2022 to facilitate the conduct of the Municipal and School Board Election; and

Request that school boards establish a Professional Development or Activity Day for all regular Election Days for Municipal and School Board Elections in the future, as presented at the November 30, 2021 Council meeting; and

Direct the Clerk to send a letter of support to AMCTO and all local school boards.

AMCTO’s most recent submission includes priority, secondary and long-term recommendations for changes to the *Municipal Elections Act* based on the following 3 themes:

1. Strengthening Public Trust and Electoral Integrity
2. Enhancing Accountability and Transparency while Making Compliance and Enforcement Easier
3. Permissive Legislation that Reduces Administrative Complexity

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.

Administration is generally 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.

Administration recommends that Council support the submission by AMCTO to the Province of Ontario entitled “Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. This is consistent with Council’s strategic objectives of Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Function (modernizing services) and Modernizing Resident-Centered Service (setting policy and standard operating procedures for resident communications).

### **Financial Impacts**

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

### **Attachments**

Appendix A – Submission paper by AMCTO – Modernizing the *Municipal Elections Act* for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### **Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	AMCTO Submission to the Province of Ontario – Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century.docx
Attachments:	- AMCTO Position Paper - Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century Submission.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 18, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Prepared by Brianna Coughlin

Submitted by Susan Hirota

Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team