

AMO Annual Conference 2017

Ottawa, Ontario

Conference Highlights

Session Summaries

Further Learning



CONFERENCE REVIEW

PUBLIC SECTOR DIGEST

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PSD's Asset Management Roadmap is an organization-wide process that consists of a multi-year phased approach delivered through consecutive workshops. Our consultants work alongside staff and department heads in finance, public works and other members of the senior management team to develop a holistic asset management program. There are several steps involved in this process, which can be customized to each organization's specific needs. PSD can also help a community link its climate change strategy with its asset management program for improved sustainability planning.

8 CORE ROADMAP DELIVERABLES:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 State of Maturity Report | 5 Lifecycle Activity Models |
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| 4 Risk & Criticality Models | 8 Asset Management Plan |

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Asset Management Roadmap



ntario's 444 municipalities are diverse, vibrant and resourceful. In order to continue to grow as prosperous and engaging communities, it is imperative that municipalities work together in unison with fellow cities and towns, residents, and public-sector officials. Each year, the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) holds a conference to engage stakeholders in conversation surrounding issues facing municipalities across the province. Funding, infrastructure, housing, and sustainability were among the topics discussed this year. In a series of panels, seminars and keynotes, stakeholders shared ideas, issues, and innovative solutions pertaining to the future growth of communities. Innovation is critical to the economic and social health of municipalities; the increasing complexity of issues demands that all organizations, especially municipalities, adapt to changing trends in digital technology, retirement of senior officials, and evolving legislation, among others. The sharing of best practices and tools to overcome present-day challenges is imperative for effective policy development planning and, through collaborative efforts, Ontario's municipalities will continue to excel in service delivery and economic development.

AMO CONFERENCE

The Association of Municipalities Ontario Annual Conference convened in Ottawa from August 13th to August 16th, 2017. The event, themed "Main Street Meets Globalization", brought together Provincial Ministers, municipal and provincial leaders, public sector practitioners, and industry exhibitors across Ontario to discuss, deliberate and propose solutions for current municipal issues.

OTTAWA BY THE NUMBERS

Population (2011): **883,390**

Demographics:

- Aboriginal: 20,590 (2011)
- Francophone: 15.1% (2006)
- Immigrants: 22.3% (Ottawa has the second largest percentage of immigrants in Ontario)

Rideau Canal: **202 km**

Number of city councillors: **24**



DAY ONE: MONDAY, AUGUST 14TH

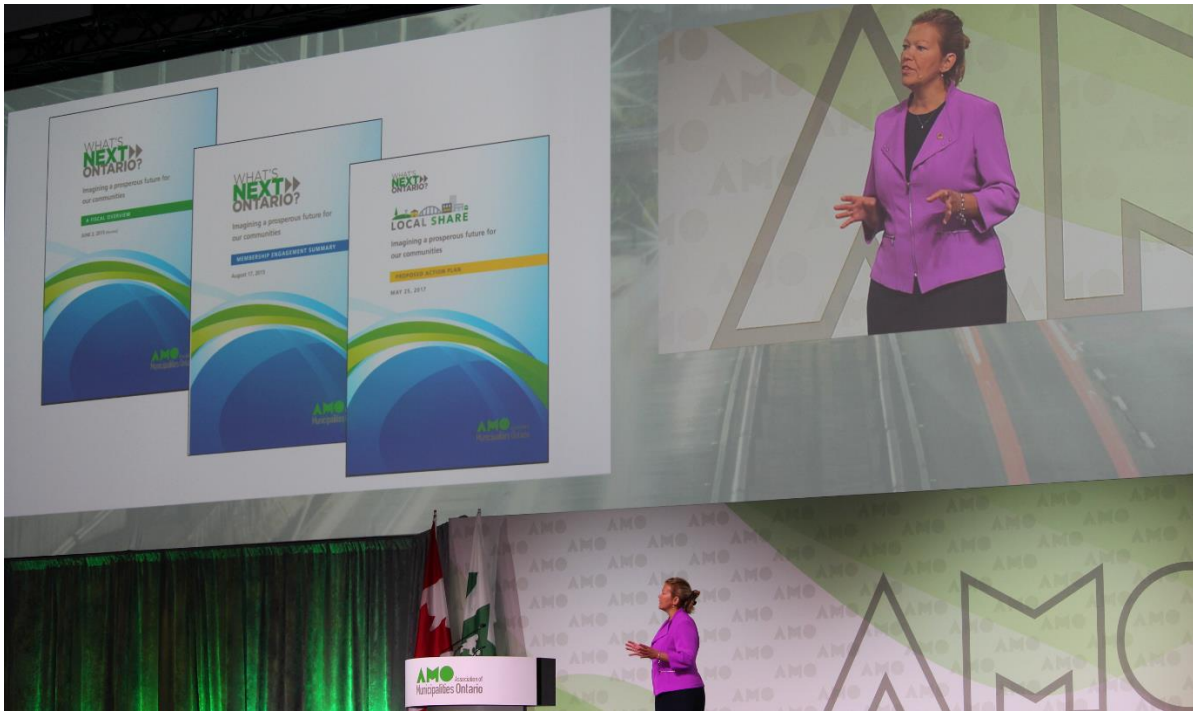
PERSPECTIVES AND OPINIONS OF ONTARIANS

Nik Nanos of Nanos Research took to the AMO stage to present recent citizen polling data. He began by presenting a small analysis of the current mood of voters across the globe, pointing to current trends in voting in parties that are anti-establishment. From Macron, to Le Pen, to Trudeau, voters are more prone to vote against the current regime in hopes of a better future. Afterwards, Nanos presented significant trends found across Ontario. Overall, a majority of Ontario citizens view infrastructure and transportation as the number one challenge facing Ontario municipalities. Interestingly, most are not in favour of alternative forms of taxation like increases in property taxes or rates to buoy these projects. However, and perhaps most interestingly, Nanos found that if voters were pressed to choose a form of taxation to shore up the infrastructure gap, most would accept a 1% HST increase *provided* that money would be spent directly on infrastructure. He urged that if municipalities are to proceed with this type of decision, that framing the discussion neutrally in terms of choices was key, such as: “Based on the choices people have, this is what they probably would like the most.” Attendees left this discussion with statistical information that may assist in resolving one of their most pressing policy and financial challenges.

AMO REPORTS OUT: WHERE WE’VE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

Following Nik Nanos’ overview of targeted polling in Ontario, AMO President and Deputy Mayor of the Town of Innisfil, Lynn Dollin, reported on the advocacy achievements of AMO to date and the next “ask” that the association will bring to the province. At last year’s AMO Conference in Windsor, AMO asked Premier Wynne to consider introducing a modern revenue tool that would help municipal governments fund the broad range of services that they are expected to deliver. The Premier responded, “if community representatives come to an agreement [about preferred revenue tools], she would listen.”

AMO got busy reaching out to its members for feedback and analyzing options for the introduction of a new revenue generating mechanism. “We have risen to the challenge” said Dollin. “Tomorrow, we’ll be asking provincial leaders whether they support our plan and if they don’t, we need to know what their alternative solution is.” AMO’s newly launched plan, entitled “The Local Share”, asks for the province to consider sharing a new 1 percent sales tax added to the HST with



Ontario's municipalities specifically earmarked for critical infrastructure projects. The dedicated sales tax revenue would provide local governments with a much needed additional revenue source that would take pressure off of increasing property tax rates.

Dollin emphasized the fiscal predicament for Ontario's local governments: Municipalities own two-thirds of all public infrastructure (after major infrastructure assets were downloaded to communities from senior levels of government), but collect just nine percent of every tax dollar. Limited revenue options has meant that most communities in Ontario have deferred infrastructure projects contributing to a massive infrastructure backlog. Combined with the rising cost of service delivery, Ontario municipalities will now face a \$4.9 billion annual funding gap for the next ten years. According to Dollin, property taxes would have to double to meet these needs – a leap that few property owners would be able to manage.

Supported by Nanos' polling, it appears that Ontarians may accept an increase to the HST if that meant that their community's infrastructure would be directly benefited. Furthermore, Dollin supported her case by pointing to other jurisdictions outside of Canada that have already set a precedent for providing local government with an additional revenue tool in the form of a dedicated sales tax. Finally, Dollin reiterated that any direct investment in infrastructure has proven to pay off in an additional boost to the GDP – a compelling argument for a provincial government that has made record investments in public infrastructure. See DAY TWO for the responses from Ontario's party leaders to AMO's Local Share plan.

CONCURRENT SESSION – INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO OPTIMIZE MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

The panel discussion featured municipal financial strategies from both municipal and banking perspectives. Belleville CAO Rick Kester and Acting CAO Nandini Syed of North Middlesex addressed the importance of long-term financial planning and that borrowing should not be looked upon as a bad option to finance capital infrastructure projects. Current interest rates,

despite slowly rising, are historically low and can be taken advantage of. CIBC representatives Steve Kuwahara, Lisa Presley and David Black spoke to delegates regarding other innovative aspects of finance that may be of help to municipal organizations. Kuwahara pointed out potential alternative financing mechanisms that are available to municipalities, such as internal taxation, grants, borrowing, and public-private partnerships. He also reinforced that it would be prudent to borrow in the current economic climate. David Black introduced investment policy statements and how municipalities may soon have the opportunity to invest in a wider array of securities to receive a higher return down the road. Afterwards, Lisa Presley spoke about the other side of financial interactions in municipal government: how to collect and process payments. She suggested ways to innovate and make these processes more efficient, such as having the ability to process transactions by phone or through PayPal.

CONCURRENT SESSION – MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP AND THE DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Public sector leaders can no longer defer to their colleagues and staff to field questions regarding digital government and technological change. Digital service delivery is becoming central to municipal governance, and local government leaders must learn the language and start planning for the future. In this concurrent session, sector leaders explored best practices, case studies and challenges in implementing digital government strategies.

Ron Shaw, formerly the CAO of Stratford Ontario and now a Senior Advisor with StrategyCorp, provided a sample of innovative digital government projects underway across the province. From the City of Waterloo's [PickupHub](#), addressing a community gap in recreation service delivery, to Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services use of [Smart Glasses](#), experimenting with real-time data transfer to hospital staff, communities across Ontario are going big experimenting with digital government projects.

According to John Matheson, Principal with StrategyCorp, municipalities will need to demonstrate their efforts in improving efficiency in order for their argument for more provincial funding to carry weight. One effective way for communities to find new efficiencies is through the implementation of digital government strategies. However, these strategies must be actionable, well thought out and ideally, leveraging partnerships with other communities or industry leaders. The results of StrategyCorp's [2017 CAO Report](#) survey clearly demonstrate the swelling concern among municipal administrators with the growing influence of social media in municipal affairs. CAOs feel ill-equipped to stay on top of digital communications challenges, especially with the rise of "combative" political representatives using social media to push agendas.

The Town of Oakville's Director of Digital Strategy, Ian Barker, closed out the panel discussing his community's [Digital Strategy](#). According to Ian, "seismic changes are coming to government" and developing a Digital Strategy will be paramount for municipal adaptation to digital transformation.

Town of Oakville Digital Strategy

- 1) Citizen-centered design
- 2) Data analytics & decision-making (smart city)
- 3) Culture
- 4) Partnerships

North Huron Municipality

A Lightning Fast Implementation Attributed to the Right Attitude Towards Change in Meeting Management



Challenges

- A growing town, longer agendas, reams of paper required for meetings and overburdened administration staff.
- A looming merger of services with Morris-Turnberry was about to add real complexity to the delivery of public works, building services, drainage services and administration services.

A solution that would reduce the manual, paper-based processes that were hampering the ability to get things done quickly and efficiently was needed.

Solutions

Although Clerk and Manager of Information Technology Richard Al suspected that the inevitable change in some business processes would be initially challenging for Council, he knew that not changing would be fatal for the Municipality.

Most impressive during this implementation was the attitude adopted by Council. They moved forward enthusiastically, knowing they were doing the right thing for their constituency.

Their two-week implementation of software and training was unprecedented. But because they possessed the right attitude, what would often take six weeks was fully functional in only fourteen days.

"We embraced the change because we saw the writing on the wall of what would happen if we didn't automate our meetings, and grew excited with what eSCRIBE's technology could do for us," Al noted.

Results

Since implementation of the eSCRIBE solution, North Huron Municipality has realized:

- Less time spent copying and collating meeting agendas and minutes
- More time for staff to spend on higher value activities
- Greater flexibility for making last-minute changes to agendas and documentation
- Efficient processes for quick, clear communications
- Cost savings and a smaller carbon footprint due to a dramatic decrease in paper usage

"We discovered that endless conversation about change was a barrier," Al concludes. "Actually committing to doing something and then acting is what was required. Once we embraced the solution, the problem disappeared."

For the full case study, visit <https://escribemeetings.com/casestudy-northhuronmunicipality/>

CONCURRENT SESSION – RURAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Social infrastructure is critical for rural communities, offering gathering spaces, opportunities to build relationships, and create initiatives and resiliency. Providing convenient and accessible community hubs that provide a diverse array of services and multi-purpose space remains a significant challenge for many communities.

Shannon Geraghty, CAO/Treasurer for the Municipality of South Dundas, discussed the development of The South Dundas Municipal Centre. This repurposed space was revitalized to include a medical clinic, library, municipal offices and recreational spaces for use by members of the community. By bringing all of these services together, South Dundas was able to provide convenient, one-stop access to vital services and offer a gathering space to bring together community members from across the municipality.

After finding out that their school board had decided to close 75 percent of the schools in his community, Rob Hunter, Economic Development Officer, Municipality of South Dundas, developed a well-organized campaign to persuade the board to reconsider. This required a detailed look at the expected economic and social impacts of these school closures and strategic partnerships with local industry and educational institutions. As a result, all of the community's schools were preserved and continue to play a vital role in the economic and social health of the municipality.

Grant Opportunity: [Rural Economic Development Program](#) (application deadline: September 29, 2017)



“Research shows that for every \$100 million invested in public infrastructure, GDP is boosted by \$114 million – that’s the multiplying effect of infrastructure investments.”

– Bill Mauro, Minister of Municipal Affairs

GLOBALIZATION MEETS MAIN STREET

Embodying the main theme of the conference, the “Globalization Meets Main Street” panel spotlighted leaders of Canada’s main industries, and how they will be able to withstand the forces of globalization. President of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association Dennis Darby noted the importance of NAFTA, especially with regard to policy development in the United States. He argued that although many of the manufacturing companies he has spoken to are fearful of the future, we must embrace the change and see this as an opportunity. Ontario Forest Industry Association leader Jamie Lim asserted that forestry remains an important underpinning of the Canadian economy, and that municipalities must work together with forest industry magnates to work collaboratively on policy. Lastly, University of Guelph Research Chair in Global Food Security spoke to the increasing importance of Canada’s agricultural economy, emphasizing that agriculture will only grow in importance and that the industry is on the cusp of massive technological changes. The panel concluded with a guided debate on automation, skilled labour, and how municipalities can assist these industries in competitiveness.

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Public Sector Conference

October 23-24, 2017 | Shaw Centre
Ottawa, ON or attend virtually

14 CPD hours

Connect with senior financial leaders, public sector accountants, auditors, analysts and other civil servants at this year's event.

The conference agenda features a fantastic lineup of speakers, including executives Claude Rochette, National Defence; Roch Huppé, CRA; Arun Thangaraj, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and Michael Ferguson, Auditor General of Canada.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Don Drummond
Stauffer-Dunning Fellow
Global Public Policy
Queen's University



Jesse Hirsh
Futurist and
Digital Strategist

cpacanada.ca/2017PSC

INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA UPDATE – THE HONOURABLE AMARJEET SOHI

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, delivered an update on the work Infrastructure Canada is doing to ensure that municipalities have the capacity to build stronger, more prosperous and more inclusive communities. He stressed the importance of investing in green and sustainable infrastructure, in addition to adequate social infrastructure such as affordable housing.

Over the next 11 years Infrastructure Canada plans to invest \$12 billion to help meet widespread infrastructure needs. This includes a commitment of \$2 billion designed to meet the unique and specific needs of small and rural communities. Minister Sohi closed his presentation by stating, “we will continue to work diligently with our partners as we assemble the building blocks of our plan. We have achieved a lot, but we still have much more work to do.”

MINISTER’S FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

Q: How much of the new infrastructure funding will be set aside for municipalities?

A: *Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Public Infrastructure and Renewal* – A significant portion of infrastructure money will go to hospitals, transit, water projects and the announced increase to OCIF funding.

Q: How will marijuana legalization impact municipalities?

A: *Yasir Naqvi, Attorney General* – We need to keep our roads safe and emphasize public health/harm reduction. Consultations will continue with municipalities to ensure that the impact is minimized as much as possible.

Q: Will you exempt fire services from the proposed on-call scheduling provisions in Bill 148 so we can maintain adequate services?

A: *Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour* – We realize that we are proposing far-reaching changes. We are very prepared to take these concerns into consideration and work with municipalities to find a solution that works for everyone.

Q: School closures are a concern for many communities. What will the government do to save schools slated for closure?

A: *Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education* – We recognize that school boards make decisions based on knowledge of their local communities, so we have to work closely with school boards to ensure that this process is functioning adequately and effectively.



DAY TWO: TUESDAY, AUGUST 15TH

CONCURRENT SESSION – AGING IN ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES: FACILITATING COMMUNITY RESPONSES



Ontario's senior population is on the rise, and with it comes new challenges in providing municipal services that are accessible to all members of a community. Age friendly community planning is a strategy being employed by proactive municipalities around the world looking to adapt to changing demographics. But age friendly communities are not just built to be accessible for seniors – or for 'older adults' as some municipalities are now referring to their elder population – they are planned to support all ages and abilities. In addition to the extensive benefits of age friendly planning for the individuals of the community, Dr. John Puxty outlined the following benefits for the municipality at large:

- 1) Stimulates the economy (seniors tend to have more assets and fewer debts)
- 2) Workforce enhancements (seniors contribute to the education, training and mentoring of a workforce)
- 3) Expanded tax base
- 4) Increase in social capital (seniors are major contributors to volunteerism, charitable donations, providing family support/daycare, lending money, and promoting intergenerational connectivity)
- 5) Continuity of housing (seniors provide housing support to family members and supplementary income to landlords as renters of 'granny flats')
- 6) Accessible infrastructure – age friendly planning promotes physical environments that work for all
- 7) Improved health – supportive communities promote better health across generations

Lucy Marco, President of the Grand River Council on Aging, operating in the Brantford Ontario area, explained that age shouldn't be the determining factor behind age friendly planning – it should be mobility. Marco described three types of community members according to their mobility levels, arguing that community planning should keep these distinct groups in mind: "Go-go" people are the mobile members of the community; "Slow-go" people may need a walker or have hearing aids, requiring accessibility considerations; and "No-go" people may have a short or long term disability that limits their mobility entirely – municipal services will have to come to them.

Alexandra Graham, Community Development Coordinator with the City of Brantford, outlined several measures the City has taken to make Brantford more age friendly, including installing benches with arms allowing older adults to use them, building new seniors housing that includes scooter charging stations, upgrading all buses with landing pads and audio/visual assistance for greater accessibility, and establishing community hubs to bring municipal services to neighbourhoods across the city. One of the most well-received initiatives launched by Alexandra's team has been the introduction of a live operator on Brantford's main line with automatic answering services often tripping up community members of all types and abilities trying to get through to an actual human. The result of these significant age friendly planning efforts in Brantford: the City has now officially been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an age friendly community.

CONCURRENT SESSION – CANNABIS LEGALIZATION: MUNICIPAL IMPACTS OF PROHIBITION REPEAL

With the expectation that by July 2018 cannabis will be a legal substance across Canada, municipalities need to start thinking about the impact that this legislation will have on the services that they provide. The resulting municipal approach needs to be designed in a way that allows industry to prosper, while accounting for the issues raised by concerned citizens.

At the level of municipal enforcement there are a number of challenges facing communities with the prospect of cannabis legalization. Shayne Tuner, Director of Municipal Enforcement Services from the City of Waterloo, talked about the need for a discussion on how to approach the zoning and licensing of both storefront operations and the production of cannabis. Furthermore, he emphasized that there will be a significant financial cost to regulating and enforcement at the municipal level, making it critical that planning begin as soon as possible.

Nicole Stewart from the Ontario Ministry of Finance expressed some concern at the short timeline allowed for the legalization process. As the Executive Lead of the Cannabis Retail Implementation Project she stressed four key objectives that will guide the province's approach:

1. Prevent youth access
2. Promote responsible use
3. Limiting commercialization
4. Minimizing participation of illegal market players

Further reading: ["The Downloading of Legal Marijuana Responsibility"](#), Aleks Dzintars, PSD Research

CONCURRENT SESSION –TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS IN RURAL AND NORTHERN AREAS

Rural and northern municipalities are familiar with transportation challenges, but resolve them in different ways to suit their situation. First on the panel, Shuniah Mayor Wendy Landry highlighted the transportation issues present in northwestern Ontario. She remarked on how underserved most of the road networks are, and shed light on the difficulty navigating the region, noting that four and five-hour drives are the norm to travel from one community to another.

Nicole Halasz, Community Service Manager, also from the northwestern Ontario region and the Municipality of Atikokan, expressed similar challenges in commuting and underservicing, but primarily because a majority of the population is of retirement age or older. She commented on the enduring success of the handi-van program, and how the community will continue to invest in this service to continue to serve their older population.

Lastly, Tim Cane, Manager of Land Use Planning from the Municipality of Innisfil spoke about his community's innovative decision to use Uber as their public transit provider. As a sparse community with little population density, most fixed transit routes in Innisfil have been underused. In order to maximize public money, Tim and his team used funds allocated to transit to subsidize Uber trips to get their citizens effectively from A to B.

Further reading: ["Public Transit Isn't a Catch-All Solution for Every Community"](#), Stefanie Fisher, PSD Research

A full-page background image showing a person in a red shirt and black shorts riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail through a forest. The rider is wearing a red helmet and black gloves. The trail is uneven and appears to be a natural path. The forest has tall, thin trees and green foliage. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning, with long shadows.

CHOOSE TO MAKE YOUR TRAILS SAFER

A safe and well-run trail system contributes to the health of a vibrant community. But, with no provincial best practices or minimum trail standards, cities are at risk for claims.

We've heard your concerns and have taken a proactive approach to help you mitigate risk. This means physically walking your trails to inspect, document and report areas of improvement. Consultation is quick, customized and offered at no additional cost.

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CONCURRENT SESSION – AFFORDABLE HOUSING: UTILIZING THE MUNICIPAL TOOLKIT

Lack of affordable housing remains one of the most significant challenges for municipalities across the province. Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister with Ontario's Ministry of Housing provided an update on Ontario's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy. In April of this year, the province released its new [Fair Housing Plan](#), which not only includes measures to increase affordable housing stock in the province, but also focuses on helping Ontarians that previously could afford housing yet are now being squeezed out of the hot market. Hope pointed to innovative housing solutions that work to provide housing options for all types of community members. The [Artscape Weston Community Hub](#) in Toronto is an example of a local community neighbourhood approach to housing. Located in the northwest corner of Toronto, the Weston neighbourhood has had a traditionally 'challenging' community dynamic according to Hope. The Community Cultural Hub project is a partnership between a private developer, a non-profit, and the community itself, working together to establish a new apartment building and artist live/work units to bring cultural vibrancy to the area.



Artscape Weston Community Hub, Toronto

Kate Manson-Smith, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government and Planning Policy, with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, provided an update on the Ontario Government's new [inclusionary zoning legislation](#) (Bill 7) which received royal assent in December 2016. Inclusionary zoning is a discretionary tool – meaning that municipalities may choose whether to employ it or not in their respective communities – requiring developers to include affordable housing in developments. Inclusionary zoning is currently used in California, New York and Massachusetts, and the planning tool has been proven to work better in communities with higher growth areas as the right market conditions are needed to encourage development.

The province is now working on establishing regulations through an Inclusionary Zoning Framework, with early consultations on the Framework having already occurred. According to the proposed Framework, Ontario's municipalities would need to prepare a Municipal Assessment Report to be made public and reviewed every five years if they choose to introduce inclusionary zoning in their respective community. In early consultations, some participants asked about including a provision for cash-in-lieu – allowing developers to pay an equivalent charge instead of building the required affordable housing units – but the province has chosen to not include that provision as there is a concern that the collected cash would not be spent expeditiously to fund new affordable housing. The province plans on continuing to consult with municipalities on the proposed regulations in the coming months.

CONCURRENT SESSION – BUILDING STRENGTH: THE STORIES OF RURAL AND SMALL URBAN COMMUNITIES

Kick-starting community and economic development can require innovation in rural and small urban areas. In this session, the panelists shared success stories in cultural and economic development within their communities. Taso Christopher, Mayor of the City of Belleville, discussed his community's economic and cultural development strategy to combat an emerging labour shortage. A number of key programs were introduced to encourage immigration and provide access to job opportunities including the Belleville Inclusion Committee, the development of an immigration portal and the development of strategic regional partnerships. Bruce County's, Kara Van Myall, Manager of Corporate Policy and Economic Development, shared details on their Economic Development Strategic Plan, including the introduction of a one-stop website built to stimulate economic development. In an effort to reduce the number of vacant storefronts in Huron East, Jan Hawley, Economic Development Officer, put together an innovative and pro-active business recruitment initiative. *Win This Space* asked members of the community to submit their idea for a local business for a chance to win 12 months of free rent in a downtown storefront location. The 24 applicants were also provided with business training workshops, encouraging many to take the next steps towards becoming small business owners.

CONCURRENT SESSION – SHARING IN PRACTICE

One of the upcoming challenges soon faced by every Ontario municipality will be that of the sharing economy. This panel addressed specifically how communities can best plan for the onset of these companies. Cathie Kennedy and Sam Laban from the City of Guelph spoke about their community's development of the [Navigating the sharing economy: A 6-decision guide for municipalities](#). A recently published document, this guidebook examines how municipalities should and can prepare for the sharing economy. Both Kennedy and Laban remarked that this document is less about recommendations and more to serve as a framework to follow when making important decisions. What approach is the most effective? What kind of policy actions or tools are needed? The guidebook examines each of these aspects. Second to present was Airbnb Canada's Alex Dagg, who provided a presentation on the growing popularity and scope of home-sharing. Subsequently, she pointed specifically to the benefits of her firm, emphasizing that their services provide the opportunity to both 'democratize' capitalism and revenue: more people now have access to privately-owned rented space while others have the opportunity to generate added revenue by periodically renting out their own spaces. The sharing economy is here – municipalities must now decide how to approach its impact.

LOCAL PLANNING APPEAL TRIBUNAL: GOODBYE OMB

In response to the often-criticized role of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in the land-use planning and appeal process, the Government of Ontario has introduced a bill containing transformative changes that are designed to address the concerns of municipalities. There are five key changes that will be introduced to streamline the land-use planning process in the province:

1. Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) will be replaced with the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)
2. Establishment of Local Planning Appeal Support Centre
3. Limit on Tribunal's ability to overturn municipal decisions
4. Protection of major planning decisions from appeal
5. Improving the hearing process

The expected outcome of these reforms will be greater predictability, a stronger voice for communities, a faster appeal process and the provision of free legal and planning support for Ontarians.



PROVINCIAL SPOTLIGHT

THE HONOURABLE KATHLEEN WYNNE, PREMIER OF ONTARIO

In her opening remarks, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne emphasized the importance of having an opportunity to engage with municipal leaders to develop solutions to the challenges that we all face. Addressing the elephant in the room, she decisively stated that they are not going to increase the HST, as AMO has suggested. Instead, Wynne committed to her goal of trying to reduce the costs of the monthly bills that Ontarians face.

The Premier was then interviewed by Richard Brennan, former Queen's Park and Parliament Hill reporter. Brennan was quick to criticize Wynne for her outright dismissal of the 1 percent HST increase proposal after apparently just hearing about the proposal over the past few days. She emphasized that while the proposal by AMO is unworkable, the government is still open to discussing what revenue tools may be available to municipalities. However, this will first require a more detailed understanding of what specifically municipalities need this money for. One approach may involve the uploading of further assets or responsibilities to the Province. Premier Wynne faced a bevy of questions on [Bill 148](#), most notably on the impact it would have on the ability of municipalities to use volunteer firefighters. While she stated that Bill 148 would not be "trashed", as one delegate suggested, she committed to working with communities to find a solution that doesn't affect their ability to provide fire protection services.

ANDREA HORWATH, LEADER OF THE ONTARIO NDP PARTY

In response to AMO's pitch for a 1 percent increase to the HST for municipal infrastructure, Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath stated, "I'm sympathetic to AMO's position, but we know that people are struggling to pay their pills." Horwath argued that now is not the time to increase taxes on Ontarians. "We know that municipalities have to make difficult decisions about their services and infrastructure, like deciding to close an arena because they can't afford to pay for electricity" said Horwath. When asked whether she thinks Ontarians can afford an increase to property taxes, the likely alternative to an increase in other taxes, Horwath stated that Ontarians cannot afford any tax increase. Of particular concern for the NDP is an increase to the sales tax as it is a regressive tax (unlike income tax), hitting low-income earners the hardest. Richard Brennan then asked Horwath if she plans to increase income taxes in Ontario, to which she replied "we're looking at several options. The richer are getting richer and the poorer are getting poorer. Ontario has so much opportunity – we should be working to close that gap." Horwath reiterated that the Ontario NDP election platform is still forthcoming, which will include greater detail on her plan to assist Ontario's municipalities. "We know tax bases are shrinking for some small communities" concluded Horwath. "These are municipalities we can't simply ignore."

PATRICK BROWN, LEADER OF THE ONTARIO PC PARTY

Patrick Brown, Leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, took to the stage to address AMO delegates and to inform them of the reasons to vote for his party in the upcoming 2018 election. He focused on topics of specific importance to municipalities including infrastructure, infrastructure funding practices, Bill 148, OMPF and natural gas expansion among others. Brown also took specific aim at the issue of joint and several liability, claiming that as a party, “we will reform it because action is long overdue.” The session concluded with a lively Q&A between Brown and former Toronto Star columnist Richard Brennan.



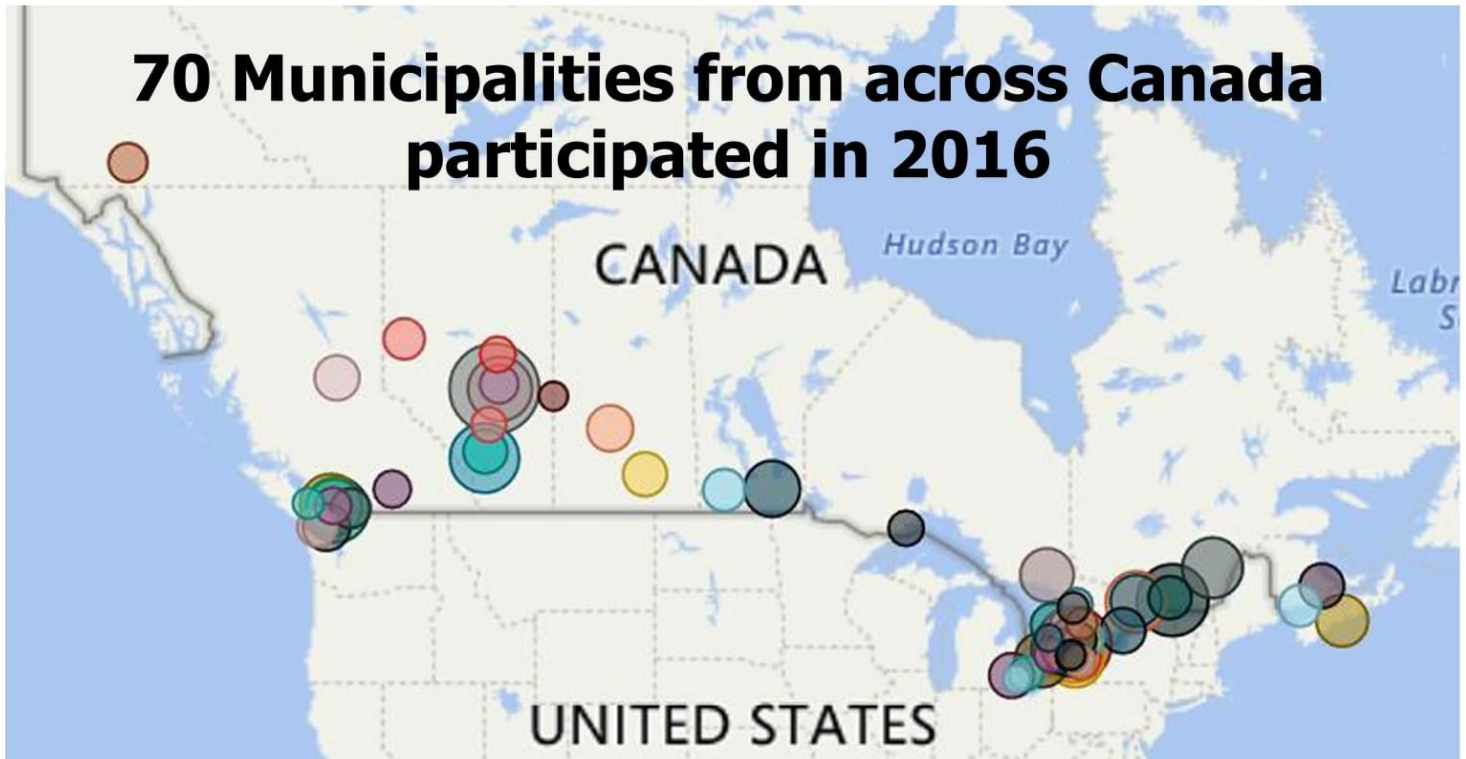
Municipal Innovators Pre-Conference Workshop September 26 - Guelph, ON

PUBLIC SECTOR DIGEST INTELLIGENCE FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

Municipal innovators will present case studies via rapid-fire “TED talks”, followed by break-out sessions where registrants will work closely with presenters and PSD’s policy team to discuss the application of concepts to their respective communities. Following the workshop, PSD’s policy team will draft a synopsis of the discussion for participants, including actionable insights and suggested resources for further learning.

[Register Now](#)

The 2017 Open Cities Index has officially launched!



What is the Open Cities Index?

The Open Cities Index (OCI) serves as a supplementary guide for cities looking to initiate or advance their open data programs, while effectively ranking their open data initiative against other municipalities across the country

In 2017, PSD and ODX worked with participating Canadian Municipalities and the private sector to improve the standardization of municipal open data benchmarking, as well as facilitate national discussion around emerging trends and challenges within municipal open data

Important Dates:

September 8th, 2017 Deadline (5PM Pacific Standard Time) for the 2017 Open Cities Index Survey
October 2nd, 2017 Launch of the 2017 Open Cities Index Results

PSD will Recognize: Canada's Top 20 Open Cities

Awards will be presented to:

- The top 3 Open Cities and "Most Improved" Open City
- The top "Upper Tier" (that includes multiple municipalities)
- Open Data Champions
- The top community in 4 population buckets: 0-50K 50-100K 100-250K 250K+

For your efforts, once the survey is completed, PSD will provide each participating municipality with a complimentary individual report of their open data initiative in comparison to the national average

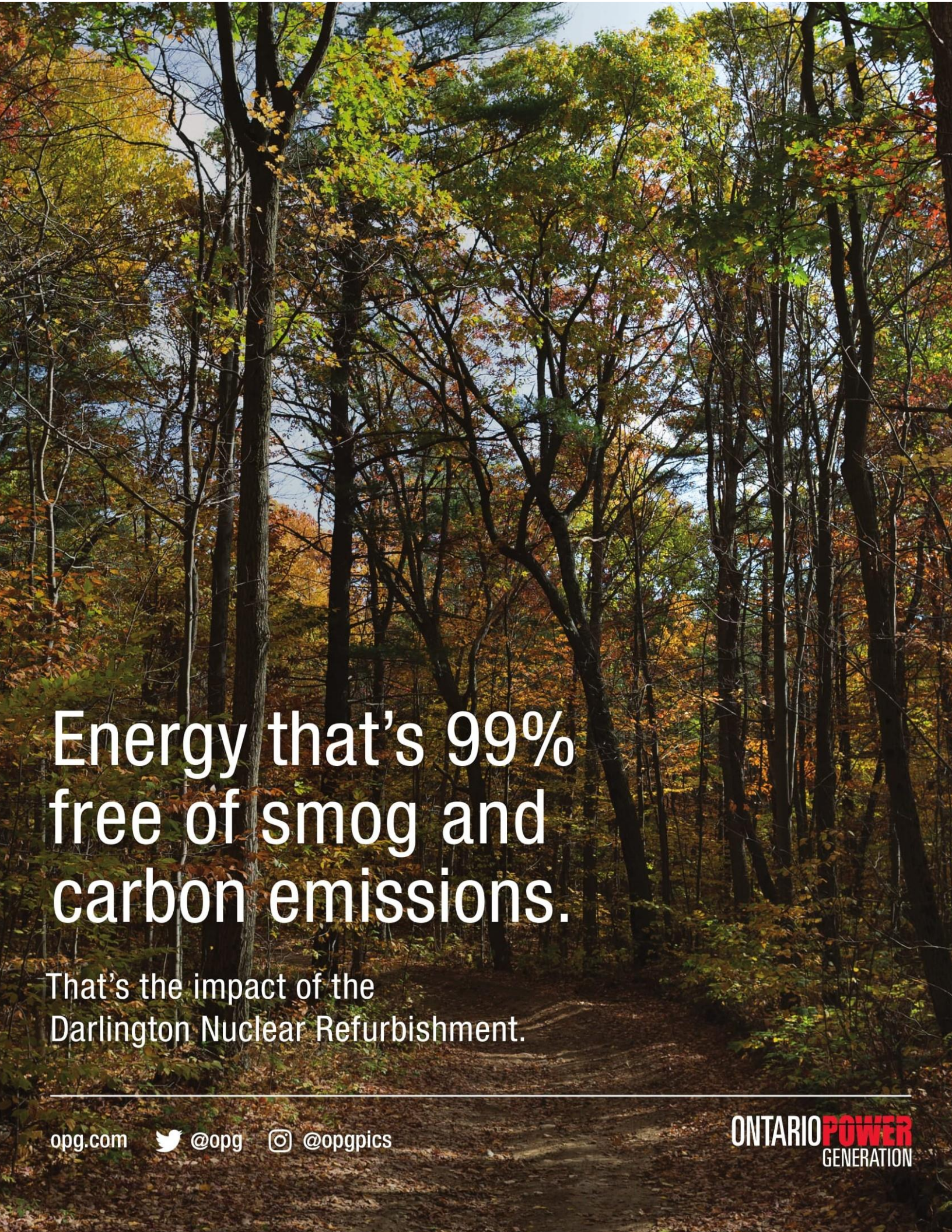
Please contact us to discuss how your community can participate in the

2017 survey in-take

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