

City of Belleville

Report No: CAO-2023-08

Meeting Date: September 25, 2023



To: Mayor and Members of Council

Department: CAO's Office

Staff Contact: Rod Bovay, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: Strong Mayors Legislation – Impact on the City of Belleville

Recommendation:

“THAT the CAO’s Report No. CAO-2023-09, Strong Mayors Legislation – Impact on the City of Belleville, be received.”

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The City of Belleville’s Strategic Plan identifies nine strategic themes. This report aligns with each of the City’s nine strategic themes and the City’s mission statement by providing innovative and efficient services in support of our community’s vision.

Background:

In August at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference the Premier announced that further changes were being made to Bill 3, including Regulation 530/22, to expand the strong mayor powers beyond the municipalities currently included in the legislation, to 21 additional municipalities (who agreed to sign on to the provincial housing pledge), including the City of Belleville.

These changes, if the provincial housing targets were committed to in writing are to be implemented by the end of October. This would bring the total number of Ontario municipalities with access to strong mayor powers to 49 (of 444 total municipalities in Ontario).

The powers would permit the Mayor to exercise certain powers if it could potentially advance prescribed provincial priorities which include:

- Building 3,100 new residential units by December 31, 2031
- Constructing and maintaining infrastructure to support housing, including:
 - 1)transit,

- 2)roads,
- 3)utilities,
- 4)servicing

Strong Mayor Powers and Duties – General

Strong mayor powers and duties include:

The following include those powers that the Mayor may delegate:

- Power to hire, dismiss, or exercise any other prescribed employment powers of various senior managers, including the CAO and various heads of any part of the organizational structure.
- Power to determine the organizational structure of the municipality.
- Power to establish or dissolve prescribed committees.
- Power to appoint chairs and vice-chairs of prescribed committees and local boards.

The following include those powers that the Mayor cannot delegate:

- Proposing and adopting the municipality's annual budget subject to Council amendments, a Mayoral veto, and a Council override process.
- Ability to veto certain by-laws passed by Council.
- Ability to require Council to consider a matter at a meeting.
- Ability to require Council to consider and vote on a by-law at a meeting.
- Authority to direct employees to undertake research and provide advice to the Mayor and the municipality, in certain circumstances, and to carry out duties to implement those decisions (The Mayor is required to exercise these powers in writing and give notice to the Clerk and/or Chief Administrative Officer).

Council has the ability to override the mayor's veto of by-laws or budget amendments with a two thirds majority vote and the Mayor is permitted to vote.

Acting\Deputy Mayor's do not inherit the Special Powers and Duties contained in the Legislation.

Any decision made, or power exercised, by the Mayor cannot be quashed or judicially reviewed for unreasonableness if made legally and in good faith.

Financial/Analysis:

The Building Faster Fund has a three (3) year commitment of \$400 million per year, to funding municipalities in achieving their overall 2031 housing targets. Based on the City's total municipal housing target of 3,100 homes by 2031 we would be eligible to receive \$826,667 each year, amounting to \$2,480,001 over the funding period. This funding allocation assumes we are reaching 100% of our housing targets through each year. Bonuses for achieving more than our targets are in place, as well as reductions for not hitting targets. Municipalities must reach at least 80% of their annual targets or will not receive any funding allocation for that year.

Preparation of the Budget - General

The powers and duties of the municipality, with respect to proposing and adopting a budget are assigned to the Mayor.

The Mayor cannot delegate the duty to prepare the budget and the budget must be provided, by the Mayor, prior to February 1st each year. Failing that, Council is responsible for preparing and adopting a budget with Council retaining the powers to pass the budget.

Attached is an illustration of the steps of a “budget scenario” under the strong mayor system, which includes the following key timelines;

- Budget to be provided prior by February 1 each year
- Council can amend within 30 days
- Mayor can veto amendments (in writing) within 10 days after the 30-day period above
- Council can override the Mayor’s veto with a 2/3 vote within 15 days of the expiry of the veto

After the expiry of the time period for council to override the Mayor’s veto, the proposed budget is deemed to be adopted by the municipality and does not require a vote of Council.

Conclusion:

Management recommends that Council receive the report for information.

Attachments:

[Attachment 1 - Minister Clark's Letter Dated August 22, 2023](#)

[Attachment 2 - Budget Scenario](#)

Approved by:

Rod Bovay, Chief Administrative Officer

Status:

None

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

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234-2023-4155

August 22, 2023

Your Worship
Mayor Neil Ellis
City of Belleville
mayor.ellis@belleville.ca

Dear Mayor Ellis,

Subject: Municipal Housing Pledges and Targets, Strong Mayor Powers and Building Faster Fund

City of Belleville: 3,100 Homes

All levels of government play an important role in solving Ontario's housing crisis. That is why, on June 16th of this year, I asked the City of Belleville, along with 20 other municipalities, to demonstrate its commitment to accelerate housing supply by identifying a locally appropriate housing target (i.e., new housing units) to meet current and future housing needs to 2031; and to develop a Municipal Housing Pledge to increase and accelerate housing supply.

Further to my letter in June, the Ministry has now set a specific housing target for the City of Belleville of 3,100 new homes constructed in your community by 2031. I am asking you, as head of council, to respond in writing by October 15, 2023 confirming your commitment to meet this target.

To further support municipalities in delivering much-needed housing, the government will also extend **Strong Mayor** powers to the 21 municipalities with newly assigned housing targets, provided that the head of council has committed in writing to meet their provincially assigned target.

To be clear, I am still requesting that your Municipality prepare and submit to the Ministry a **Housing Pledge** by December 15, 2023 that showcases the strategies and actions that it will take in order to achieve the above housing target. I encourage you to

complete this critical work without delay to help build the homes Ontarians need and deserve.

To demonstrate the government's support as you work toward this goal, on August 21, 2023, Premier Ford announced the new Building Faster Fund, a new three-year-\$1.2 billion program to help municipalities meet or exceed the provincially assigned housing targets they have committed to achieve by 2031 as described in their housing pledge. The Building Faster Fund will provide up to \$400 million over three years of financial support for municipalities that can be directed toward housing-enabling infrastructure and related costs that support community growth.

Funding under the program will be based on two key criteria. First, each municipalities' potential share of the \$400 million annual allocation will be based on their target's share of the overall goal of 1.5 million homes in Ontario by 2031. Second, each municipalities' actual funding will be based on whether their annual housing performance is on track to meet its 2031 target. Municipalities on track to exceed their target based on annual housing performance will receive additional funding.

Ontario will be consulting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team, and the City of Toronto on the program design details of the Building Faster Fund, including eligible expenses and ways to track the progress of municipalities. Funding is anticipated to start in 2024-25 based on performance in 2023. I look forward to sharing more details in the near future.

Our government remains committed to addressing the policy and implementation barriers you may encounter as you develop your pledges. I encourage you to send any questions to Christina Thomas, the Ministry's Manager of Growth Planning, Data and Analysis, Christina.Thomas@ontario.ca.

As Ontario grows, we need to build more homes. I look forward to your support in ensuring that everyone – newcomers, young families and seniors – can afford a place to call home.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

C: Hon. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Housing
The Honourable Todd Smith, MPP Bay of Quinte
Ric Bresee, MPP Hastings—Lennox and Addington

Kirstin Jensen, Deputy Chief of Staff, Minister's Office

Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister

Sean Fraser, Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Growth Division

Joshua Paul, Assistant Deputy Minister, Market Housing Division

Caspar Hall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division

Matt MacDonald, Clerk, City of Belleville

Rod Bovay, CAO, City of Belleville

Info Sheet: Considerations in Developing Municipal Housing Pledge

The pledge is not intended to be a land-use planning document, and its development should not require external technical expertise. The format and language used in the pledge should be accessible to the general public. The pledge is intended to be approved by municipal councils and should help codify Council's commitment to meeting their municipal housing target.

Municipalities can leverage new and existing policy tools as they develop housing pledges and work towards their housing targets.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of potential strategies and actions that municipalities may include in developing their housing pledges. There may be additional opportunities based on local circumstances and the Province is interested in hearing about those ideas and creative solutions.

- Strategies to encourage and promote gentle intensification to enable and expedite additional residential units in existing residential areas
- Outline ways in which funding under provincial programs, such as the Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) or Municipal Modernization Program (MMP), has been used to streamline existing municipal development approval processes
- Information on municipal development approval timelines and whether municipalities are being appealed for non-decisions
- Identify potential measures where current lack of infrastructure capacity (e.g., water/wastewater servicing) may limit future housing development
- Strategies to use municipal surplus lands
- Commitment to plan for, fund, and approve (where applicable) specific critical municipal infrastructure to support growth and new housing (e.g., water, wastewater, transit etc.), which may include expanded capacity as well as fully new facilities/assets
- Priorities for strategic and site-specific planning decisions to expedite housing in priority areas (e.g., around transit stations and in transit-serviced areas)
- Update zoning by-laws to permit a greater range of housing to be built without the need for costly and lengthy rezoning applications
- Municipalities may also consider existing tools such as the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator, Community Planning Permit System, Major Transit Station Areas, and Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

Below are some of the potential components of a municipal housing pledge. Municipalities are free to choose, alter, or add any new components that seem reasonable. Pledges can be represented in the form of plain text, tables, charts, maps, or a combination of them.

- Municipal Housing Target
- Planned and proposed Municipal Initiatives
- Initiative Owner and Additional Stakeholders

- Context and Description of How Initiative Accelerates Housing
- Number of units per initiative and housing type
- Considerations (Barriers, Implementation, Risks, etc.)
- Potential Mitigation Strategies and Proposal to Accelerate Housing
- Potential Reporting and Monitoring Measures

Municipal housing pledges are intended to be public documents and it's anticipated that municipalities will post them online.

Municipalities can contact Ministry staff with any questions and for clarification.

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Strong Mayors Powers – Budget Scenario

