

## Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act and the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

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Ontario has introduced legislative amendments to three key pieces of municipal legislation that would, if passed, help local governments to be more open, flexible and accountable to the people they serve, while giving the public added confidence in the rules governing local elected officials.

The [Municipal Act, 2001](#) sets out many of the roles, responsibilities and powers of Ontario's municipalities. The [City of Toronto Act, 2006](#) sets a similar framework specifically for the City of Toronto, while reflecting Toronto's status as Ontario's largest municipality. The [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#) sets out conflict of interest rules for municipal council members and members of local boards.

A public review of the three pieces of legislation took place between June and October 2015. To identify potential solutions, the review focused on the themes of accountability and transparency, municipal financial sustainability and responsive and flexible service delivery.

The proposed changes respond to concerns heard from the public, municipal councils and staff during the review. They include:

### *Accountability and transparency*

- Requiring municipalities to establish codes of conduct for members of municipal council and local boards
- Providing the public and municipal councillors with access to integrity commissioners with broadened powers to investigate complaints, provide advice and initiate investigations related to conflicts of interest and the municipality's code of conduct
- Updating the definition of "meeting" in certain cases within the legislation to help ensure that rules would be clearer for municipal officials, local board members and the public
- Enhancing justice by providing a broader range of penalties for contraventions to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

### *Municipal financial sustainability*

- Broadening municipal investment powers for municipalities that meet certain criteria, which may help better finance repairs and replacements of local infrastructure. This change will enable municipalities to invest according to the prudent investor standard, which may lead to better investment returns through more diverse investment portfolios.

## *Responsive and flexible service delivery*

- Clarifying that municipalities may pass climate change by-laws and participate in long-term planning for energy use, which could help address the impacts of climate change in their communities
- Requiring reviews of regional council composition after every second municipal election, beginning in 2018, to strengthen democratic representation at the local level
- Affirming a municipality's power to establish and determine the composition of community councils
- Strengthening democratic representation at the local level by proposing that the heads of most regional councils be elected to help ensure they are accountable to the voters they represent. This proposed change is part of the Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act (Budget Measures), 2016.

There are a number of other changes being proposed as part of the proposed Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, such as ensuring that women and parents are entitled to take time off for pregnancy or parental leave, without fear of being removed from elected office. You can find all of the proposed changes under the [Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act](#).

### **LEARN MORE**

- [Municipal Act](#)
- [City of Toronto Act](#)
- [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#)

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