



Meeting Date: April 23, 2025

Prepared By: Michael Di Lullo, CAO

Submitted by:

Report No: CAO-10-2025

Subject: Strong Mayor Powers

Recommendation:

THAT Report CAO-10-2025, re: Strong Mayor Powers be received for information.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about legislation that is proposed to be enacted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs to expand on Strong Mayor Powers.

Background:

On April 9, 2025, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs issued a memorandum that the Strong Mayor Powers legislation will be expanded to an additional 169 municipalities effective May 1, 2025 (see attachment). The Province has listed this proposed amendment on Ontario's Regulatory Registry which is open for comment until April 16, 2025.

Analysis:

Legislation was first put forward in 2022 to grant Strong Mayor Powers to the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa. In 2023, these powers were extended to 26 additional municipalities – generally larger municipalities with a population of more than 100,000. A further expansion brought the list of municipalities with strong mayor powers to 47 as of the time of writing this report. The rationale behind the Strong Mayor Powers is to provide tools to help heads of council cut red tape and speed up the delivery of key shared municipal-provincial priorities such as housing, transit and infrastructure in their municipalities.

With this recent announcement, a further 169 municipalities will be granted Strong Mayor Powers, including the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. The Province's rationale for some municipalities not being included in the list of 169 additional municipalities is due to the size of Council – the Strong Mayor Powers applies to Council's of 6 members and more.

As noted in the memorandum, 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.

In particular, 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.

In respect of the above, these enhanced powers come with increased accountability for heads of council and maintain essential checks and balances through the oversight of councillors.

Section 226 of the Municipal Act

These new powers mark a shift from those currently afforded to heads of council under the Municipal Act (Section 226), which are focused on their role as chief executive officer for their municipality. The Act says that the head of council shall:

- a. Uphold and promote the purposes of the municipality;
- b. Promote public involvement in the municipality's activities;
- c. Act as the representative of the municipality both within and outside the municipality, and promote the municipality locally, nationally and internationally; and,
- d. Participate in and foster activities that enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and its residents.

The Municipality continues to move forward with proper systems and processes in place such as many of our master plan documents and budget processes, including our Strategic Plan, which guides all of council to move the Middlesex Centre forward

Financial Implications:

N/A

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government

The Strong Mayor Powers represent a significant governance change, which will require effective communication and cooperation among the council to ensure that democracy is preserved.

Attachments:

Attachment – Correspondence from Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs, dated April 9, 2025