



Deputy Mayor

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CHAIR, GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
CHAIR, SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE TORONTO ZOO
CHAIR, FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES
CHAIR, TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

Date: November 20, 2025

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Chair and Executive Committee

Re: Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Annual General Meeting August 16 – 20th, 2025

Recommendation:

1. Toronto City Council receive the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Annual General Meeting (AGM) August 16 – 20th, 2025 update to Council for information.

Background

I am providing an update on my participation in the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) AGM held August 16–18, 2025, and related advocacy efforts.

The Key Highlights at the AGM were the following: **1.** The Province announced \$1.6 billion for the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program to support housing growth and economic development. **2.** AMO launched its first Indigenous Relations Action Plan. **3.** Member engagement sessions gathered feedback on policy priorities. [2025 AMO Conference Highlights and Highway Advocacy | AMO](#)

The Priority Key Messages were the following: **1.** Modernize the municipal-provincial fiscal relationship and provide long-term, predictable infrastructure funding. **2.** Invest in solutions addressing homelessness, mental health, and deeply affordable housing. **3.** Reassess Ontario's property tax system to ensure fairness and predictability. **4.** Support Bill 9 for improved accountability and respectful civic engagement. **5.** Highway Advocacy was high on the agenda as well with the AMO endorsing a 2+1 highway solution for Highways 11 and 17 to improve safety, reliability, and trade connectivity.

This year Ontario Big City Mayors OBCM participated in the AMO Conference in Ottawa, advocating for urgent municipal priorities including housing, homelessness, mental health, public safety, and sustainable funding. Discussions with provincial and federal leaders emphasized the need for predictable infrastructure investment and relief from \$5 billion in downloaded service costs. Key outcomes included five motions on housing, safety, and civility—**with Toronto leading by successfully adopting a motion requesting the federal government reverse recent changes to the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) to ensure municipalities can continue providing shelter supports to refugee claimant arrivals**—and a provincial announcement of \$1.6 billion for housing-related infrastructure. OBCM stressed that municipalities cannot address complex challenges on property taxes alone and called for collaborative action across all levels of government. <https://www.ontariobigcitymayors.ca/reports-submissions/>

I attended the following meetings during the AGM: Board of Directors meetings, spoke at the special joint meeting of Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) and Mayors and regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO), Opening Ceremonies, Plenary Programs, Concurrent Sessions, Trade Show, Chaired and moderated the session on Libraries for Community impact and Childhood Development, Learning Lunches, Insight Breakfast as well as meeting with Hon. MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, Hon. MPP Minister Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Hon. MPP Minister Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure as part of the OBCM AMO Conference Delegation.

For more information, visit www.amo.on.ca

Sincerely,

Paul W. Ainslie
City of Toronto, Councillor
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Attached: <https://www.ontariobigcitymayors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/OBCM-Motion-Requesting-Federal-Government-Reverse-Changes-to-IHAP-August-17-2025.pdf>

Motion Requesting that the Federal Government immediately reverse the recent changes to the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) to ensure municipalities can continue providing shelter supports to refugee claimant arrivals.
August 17, 2025

<https://www.ontariobigcitymayors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/OBCM-Motion-Requesting-Federal-Government-Reverse-Changes-to-IHAP-August-17-2025.pdf>

WHEREAS refugee claimants experiencing homelessness deserve dignified shelter and housing. No one should be forced to sleep on the street or in unsafe conditions.

WHEREAS in the last few years, cities across Ontario have seen a significant increase in the number of refugee claimant arrivals seeking emergency shelter, amidst a growing homelessness crisis. This unprecedented, rapid growth has put tremendous strain on municipal service systems, which are not designed to respond to international migration but rather to support the local homeless population.

WHEREAS the recent changes to the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) including, reduced funding levels, changes in eligible activities, and new cost-share requirements pose significant financial and operational risks for municipalities.

WHEREAS the federal government has previously made commitments to municipalities under IHAP and municipalities have incurred costs to deliver shelter services under the expectation of those funding commitments being fulfilled.

WHEREAS new IHAP cost-share requirements gradually shifts responsibility onto municipalities, creating an unsustainable burden for local governments, despite the federal government having the overall authority over immigration.

WHEREAS IHAP changes undermine the ability of municipalities to transition to more sustainable and cost-effective shelter solutions, and without stable, predictable funding, these new shelter models cannot be maintained.

WHEREAS these federal funding changes fail to recognize the vital role municipalities play in ensuring that emergency shelter needs of those that arrive to Canada for safety and protection are met.

WHEREAS national coordinated refugee response system is critical to alleviate pressures on local governments and to ensure a compassionate, and efficient response to large- scale arrivals of refugee claimants.

Therefore, be it resolved that Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) requests

1. The Federal Government to maintain its commitment under IHAP to reimburse municipalities at 95% for costs incurred, instead of providing grant funding.
2. The Federal Government restore the 95% federal cost-share of IHAP funding for eligible expenses, enabling municipalities to continue providing shelter and housing supports to refugee claimants.
3. The Federal Government to establish a nationally coordinated refugee response system, ensuring access to available capacity across all IHAP-funded programs, and to provide municipalities information about programs funded in Ontario as soon as possible so that their coordination can start.
4. The Federal Government expand the federal definition of the term "refugee protection claimant" as eligible for IHAP-funded services to include those who have initiated a refugee claim and haven't completed it yet, and those who arrive to Canada with the intention to make a refugee claim and are preparing to make it.
5. The Federal Government remove the expectation of 90-day maximum length-of-stay for all IHAP-funded interim accommodations, ensuring equitable treatment for all individuals seeking emergency shelter support.
6. The Federal Government process refugee claims within the legislated timelines of sixty days, noting that the current wait time for a first-level decision is 29 months.