



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  
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

Date: April 23, 2026

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Chair and Executive Committee

Re: Report on Deputy Mayor Ainslie's Participation in Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) Meetings  
April 16-17, 2026, and Advocacy Day, April 22, 2026.

### Recommendation:

1. Toronto City Council receive the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) Meetings April 16-17, 2026, and Advocacy Day, April 22, 2026, updates for information.

### Background

This letter is for information regarding my participation in meetings of the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) held between April 16 and April 22, 2026, including meetings with provincial ministers, federal housing officials, and Members of Provincial Parliament as part of OBCM Advocacy Day at Queen's Park.

On Thursday, April 16, 2026, I attended a OBCM meeting with the Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, chaired by Mayor Marianne Meed Ward. The meeting focused on municipal priorities related to housing delivery and the proposed Canada–Ontario Partnership to Build.

On Friday, April 17, 2026, I attended the OBCM Mayor's Caucus meeting, which included discussions with Build Canada Homes (BCH) leadership and deliberations among mayors on shared challenges related to housing, development charges, municipal finance, and service sustainability.

On Wednesday, April 22, 2026, I participated in OBCM Advocacy Day at Queen's Park, alongside Mayors and Deputy Mayors from several large Ontario municipalities. Advocacy Day included meetings with Cabinet Ministers and Opposition critics.

Discussion took place on the Canada–Ontario Partnership to Build, During the meeting with Minister Flack and throughout subsequent discussions. OBCM Mayors raised concerns regarding the financial and implementation impacts of the proposed Canada–Ontario Partnership to Build, including:

- Risks to municipal fiscal sustainability if development charge (DC) reductions are not fully or timely compensated
- Cash-flow and timing challenges, where DC reductions may precede replacement funding
- Existing DC-funded debt exposure, particularly for growth-related infrastructure
- Potential cost shifting to property taxpayers and utility ratepayers
- Equity considerations, including impacts on municipalities that have already reduced DCs or do not levy DCs
- Market uncertainty affecting development decisions
- Administrative complexity associated with project-by-project funding models

I along with the Mayors and Deputy Mayors emphasized the importance of predictable, upfront funding and meaningful municipal involvement in program design.

## **Build Canada Homes and Housing Delivery**

Discussions with federal housing officials highlighted that while Build Canada Homes capital funding is welcomed, it must be paired with predictable, long-term provincial operating funding—particularly for supportive housing—to ensure projects can proceed at scale. A portfolio-based, multi-year funding approach was identified as the preferred model to accelerate housing delivery.

## **Development Charges**

We discussed ongoing federal and provincial program design related to development charges. It was noted that municipalities, including Toronto, have already taken significant steps to incentivize housing development through DC waivers, exemptions, and freezes. Mayors cautioned that further reductions without guaranteed compensation could undermine municipal financial stability.

## **911 Levy and Public Safety**

We discussed municipal options to implement a 911 levy to fund Next Generation 911 services, noting that Ontario remains one of the few provinces without a provincially legislated surcharge. The conversation emphasized sustainable funding for emergency communications without increasing reliance on the property tax base, alongside broader concerns regarding policing costs and public safety funding inequities.

## **Homelessness, Mental Health, and Addictions**

During Advocacy Day meetings with ministers and opposition members, I participated in discussions on the escalating homelessness, mental health, and addictions crisis. Mayors reinforced the need for a whole-of-government response, long-term operating funding for supportive housing, and coordinated health and social service investments.

## **Scarborough East Rapid Transit Line**

During the April 22, 2026, Advocacy Day meetings, I took the opportunity to advocate for the Scarborough East Rapid Transit (SERT) Line. The importance of sustained provincial partnership and investment in rapid transit infrastructure was highlighted as critical to supporting housing growth, improving mobility, and connecting residents in Scarborough to economic and employment opportunities across the city and region.

Across all meetings, OBCM Mayors and Deputy Mayors consistently emphasized:

- The need for predictable and upfront funding
- Avoiding cost uploading to municipalities and property taxpayers
- Ensuring equitable treatment of municipalities with varying growth pressures and fiscal capacities
- Aligning housing, transit, and infrastructure investments with municipal fiscal sustainability and service delivery needs

My participation in the April 2026 OBCM meetings and Advocacy Day supported continued City and OBCM advocacy for sustainable housing delivery, reliable transit and infrastructure funding, and stable investment in essential public services.

The discussions underscored the importance of coordinated action across orders of government to advance complete, connected, and livable communities.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Ainslie  
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