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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Municipal Affairs

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Bill Mauro
Minister of Municipal Affairs
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Mauro:

Welcome to your role as Minister of Municipal Affairs. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives.

Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- The *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act* (Bill 73) was passed by the Legislative Assembly in December 2015, and introduced reforms to the *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act* to help create more complete communities and to provide citizens a greater, more meaningful say in how their neighbourhoods grow.
- The *Municipal Elections Modernization Act* (Bill 181) was passed by the Legislative Assembly in June 2016, and introduced reforms to the *Municipal Elections Act* to give municipalities the option of using ranked ballot voting, to increase transparency and accountability for campaign financing and third-party advertising, and to ban corporate and union contributions.
- The Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program was replaced with two new disaster recovery programs for municipalities and citizens. The new programs, Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians and Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance, launched in early 2016, are faster, fairer and more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities following a natural disaster.

Your mandate is to build safe and strong urban and rural communities with dynamic local economies, abundant greenspace and a quality of life that is second to none. Your specific priorities include:

Reforming the Ontario Municipal Board

- Working with the Attorney General, lead a review of the scope and effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) by engaging municipalities, the public and all interested stakeholders, in order to recommend reforms to improve the OMB's role within the broader land use planning system and introduce legislation by spring 2017.

Reviewing Provincial Growth and Greenbelt Plans

- Finalizing the Co-ordinated Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and working with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Niagara Escarpment Plan early in winter 2017. You will ensure these plans work in harmony to manage growth, build complete communities, curb sprawl, protect our agricultural lands and natural heritage systems, protect the Greenbelt, and support economic development in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Working with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Minister of Transportation, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and stakeholders, municipalities and the public, you will recommend opportunities to grow the Greenbelt on the outer edge, improve alignment across provincial plans and transit investments, and support more complete communities across the province. This includes continuing the work to protect prime agriculture lands and natural heritage systems by supporting the work of the relevant ministries in their efforts to complete the mapping of these areas in summer 2017.

Reviewing Municipal Legislation

- Introducing legislative changes to the *Municipal Act*, *City of Toronto Act* and *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* in fall 2016.

- Working with municipal partners, you will recommend reforms to support municipal accountability and transparency and to ensure responsive and flexible municipal governments.

Addressing Municipal Fiscal Sustainability

- Building on the work of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, continue dialogue with municipalities, AMO, and the other municipal associations on improving long-term municipal fiscal sustainability, including the role of revenue tools, recognizing that municipalities are mature, accountable and responsible local governments.

Supporting Low-Carbon Communities

- Strengthening climate change policies in the municipal land use planning process.
- Supporting the work of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, you will engage with municipalities to empower them to take action to fight climate change and provide the tools to ensure land use planning proposals support greenhouse gas pollution reductions.

Updating the Building Code to Support Climate Change Action Plan

- Leading a review of the Building Code to support low-carbon standards for new buildings and to ensure that buildings continue to be safe and accessible. This includes continuing to focus on building Ontario up as a leader in energy efficiency, safety, and climate resistant and environmentally efficient construction.
- Supporting the work of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, you will work with stakeholders to recommend a new edition of the Building Code by spring 2017.

Strengthening Partnerships with Municipalities

- Continuing to facilitate the strong relationship between the province and municipalities, including the ongoing implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), as well as the Toronto-Ontario Co-operation and Consultation Agreement. You will consult with AMO, the City of Toronto and other municipal organizations on matters of mutual interest.
- Working with municipalities outside of formal agreements to ensure their perspectives are also heard. This includes meeting with municipal leaders and touring the province to help strengthen these relationships.

Improving Municipal Services

- Working with municipalities to identify opportunities to improve municipal services to make everyday life easier for Ontarians.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to apply a municipal lens to decisions made across government, ensuring the impact on municipalities is carefully considered.
- Work collaboratively with the Minister of Housing and the Minister of Finance, as well as the federal government, to explore various measures relating to housing affordability.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work

together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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