

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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June 12, 2020

Dear Heads of Council / Clerks and CAOs:

Nothing is more important than protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians. Since first learning of COVID-19, Ontario has taken decisive action to stop the spread of this deadly virus, and we thank you for your support in our efforts.

We appreciate that the current situation for municipalities is not “business as usual”, and that all municipalities have had to make adjustments to adapt to new priorities and shifting ways of doing business.

When municipalities requested our help, we listened and acted quickly to legislate [changes to the Planning Act and make the necessary regulation to suspend decision-making timelines](#). These changes balanced the need to suspend the timelines that would allow a municipality to refocus time and resources on the COVID-19 outbreak, while allowing councils to continue to make decisions on planning matters as municipal capacity evolved.

As we move forward with our gradual approach that will allow Ontario to emerge from the COVID-19 outbreak, we know that getting shovels in the ground is key to moving forward on the path to economic recovery together. Many municipalities may be well on their way to a more normalized planning review process, and we want to ensure that the land use planning system is in step with a municipality’s expanding capacity during this time. As a result, we intend to end the temporary suspension of the Planning Act timelines as of June 22nd, 2020.

We understand that the safety of your constituents must remain a priority, and that there are certain provincial restrictions in place regarding public gatherings. Therefore, we encourage you to continue to use electronic and virtual channels, as appropriate, to engage and provide the public with an opportunity to make representations on planning matters, while following the advice of Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health.

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It is vital for our economic recovery from this outbreak that we work together to help move the planning approvals process forward. We need to continue the important job of creating housing and keeping infrastructure projects moving while also ensuring we maintain public health. Development has always played a key role in supporting growth in our communities, and it will play an especially important role on our road to economic recovery from COVID-19.

Let me assure you that our government is working to support you, our municipal partners, and will continue to work collaboratively to keep all Ontarians safe.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister

c. Association of Municipalities of Ontario