

March 5, 2021

AMO Policy Update – Phase II of Vaccinations Plan, Bill 257 – *Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act*, and Firefighter Training Modernization

Vaccination Distribution Plan – Phase II

The Province has announced that [Phase Two](#) of Ontario's vaccination distribution plan will begin next month. Phase Two will focus on age and risk to prevent further death, hospitalization, and transmission. [Populations eligible for Phase Two vaccination](#) will be: older adults, between 60-75-79 years of age; individuals with specific health conditions and some primary caregivers; people who live and work in congregate care settings and some primary caregivers; people who live in hot spots with high rates of death, hospitalizations, and transmission; and certain workers who cannot work from home. These groups are expected to be vaccinated from April to July 2021.

Beginning March 15th, the Province will be launching an online booking system and a provincial customer service desk to answer questions and support appointment bookings at mass immunization clinics. In addition to mass vaccination clinics, hospitals, and mobile clinics, the Province is also working with the pharmacy sector and primary care professionals to offer vaccinations in new settings. This phase is expected to vaccinate up to nine million Ontarians.

Bill 257 – *Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act*

Yesterday, [Bill 257, Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act](#), was introduced in the Legislature by the Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure. The purpose of the Act is to reduce costs to broadband providers associated with attaching broadband wirelines to hydro utility poles and would provide timely access to poles and to municipal rights of way to install broadband on municipal land for "provincially significant" broadband projects. These proposed measures build on the Province's [Up to Speed: Ontario's Broadband and Cellular Action Plan](#).

The definition of a "provincially significant project" will be determined through regulation. If this term is added to mass projects in rural and northern areas

receiving provincial broadband funding, this Act could help to ensure projects are delivered faster to the benefit of local communities that are currently unserved or underserved.

Bill 257 also proposes amendments to the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* that could see an impact to the pole attachment process for local distribution companies (LDCs) and to the Ontario Energy Board.

There are also proposed amendments to the *Planning Act* that ministerial zoning orders made under section 47 are not required, and are deemed to never have been required, to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), except in the Greenbelt.

While this amendment, if passed, may clarify some legal matters, it raises questions as to why the Province would not want to abide by the Provincial Policy Statement which articulates provincial interests.

AMO expects to engage with the Ontario Government during the regulatory development process to ensure that the legislation improves broadband coverage to municipal governments without jeopardizing accountability for municipal rights-of-way and local autonomy. AMO has strongly supported expansion of access to broadband connectivity for Ontario communities and will work to ensure the proposed legislation helps communities achieve that while protecting local taxpayers and their investments.

Firefighter Training Modernization

Yesterday the Office of the Fire Marshal published a [Communiqué](#) on the Ontario Fire College Training Modernization. It was issued as a follow up to the January 13, 2021 [announcement](#) regarding the decommissioning of the Ontario Fire College (OFC) and the modernization of fire safety training in Ontario.

The decommissioning of the OFC campus is set for March 31, 2021. Available options for OFC training are set out in the Communiqué, as is who to contact should municipalities have any questions.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

*Disclaimer: The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is unable to provide any warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of third-party submissions. Distribution of these items does not imply an endorsement of the views, information or services mentioned.