

**ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL MANAGERS
CLERKS AND TREASURERS
OF ONTARIO**



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



AMCTO
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS



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A Message from the President

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (“AMCTO” or “the Association”) is pleased to present its Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) for 2022-2026, which will guide the Association’s planning and activities over the next four years.

This Plan is the culmination of over six months of stakeholder engagement with AMCTO’s Board of Directors, staff, and members. With membership and roots that reach deep into municipalities across Ontario, we are seeing first-hand the ways in which the municipal sector is changing. As a recognized leader in the sector, AMCTO has a vital role to play in supporting municipal professionals as they navigate this increasingly complex and challenging environment.

As the municipal sector evolves, so too must AMCTO adapt to best meet the needs of our members and all those who use, and rely on, our programs and services to enhance their technical expertise, grow in their careers, and serve their municipalities.

“Evolution” is the theme underpinning our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The Plan builds upon our strong foundation and reputation and our decades of service excellence. However, it also invites us to consider new pathways to grow our membership, ensure that our programs and services remain relevant, and strengthen connections and networks among municipal professionals.

Our Strategic Plan focuses on:

- Promoting and expanding professional growth opportunities for municipal professionals;
- Retaining, supporting, and increasing our membership;
- Building a community of practice and networks for municipal practitioners; and
- Enhancing advocacy on policy and legislative issues.

I want to thank the AMCTO Board of Directors and staff for their contribution to this process and for their ongoing service to the Association. I also want to thank the members who took the time to share their perspectives on AMCTO’s current and future directions as part of this process.

With this forward-looking plan, we will ensure AMCTO is ready and able to support municipal professionals as they, in turn, serve their municipalities and communities today and in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Sandra MacDonald
AMCTO President

A Message from the Executive Director

Under the leadership of the Board of Directors, AMCTO's administration works hard to serve municipal professionals across Ontario.

Since 1938, AMCTO has been committed to delivering our services and programs with a focus on quality and customer service. We are deeply proud of our role in building and enhancing the technical, management, and leadership skills of municipal professionals and helping to build a strong and resilient municipal sector.

We view this Strategic Plan as a "living document" that will support the sustainability of the organization as it continuously evolves to meet the changing needs of members, customers, and stakeholders. AMCTO's successful migration to a virtual service delivery model for many of our programs and services during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that we can move quickly to adapt and innovate. As we chart a path ahead that is both exciting and uncertain, this flexibility and adaptability must continue to be hallmarks of our operations and planning.

This ambitious document will act as our guide for the next four years while also enabling us to address emerging opportunities and challenges as they arise. It achieves the right balance between building on AMCTO's core strengths and presenting us with new directions and opportunities to explore.

From an operational standpoint, the Strategic Plan will be linked to everything we do: it will guide our annual budgets and business plans; it will be the basis on which we track and report on progress towards AMCTO's strategic goals; and, it will ensure that the work of the Association is aligned with the priorities of our members and the sector.

At the core of this plan are our Principles, the foundation from which we will approach every action and decision and our commitment to our Board of Directors, staff, and membership.

On behalf of the AMCTO staff, I want to thank everyone who contributed to this important initiative. We look forward to the work ahead and serving you throughout your municipal career.

Sincerely,



David Arbuckle
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT AMCTO

Since 1938, AMCTO has provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management experience to municipal professionals. With more than 2,000+ members working in municipalities across Ontario, AMCTO is Ontario's largest association of local government professionals and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

AMCTO offers a breadth of expertise and knowledge through year-round education and professional development programming as well as through its members across a range of municipal functions and legislative issues. AMCTO is an established and influential voice for professionals in local government regarding key policy and legislative issues affecting the sector.

AMCTO is governed by a 16-member Board of Directors comprised of a President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, four Directors-at-Large and nine Zone Directors. The Board is supported by a professional staff under the direction of the Executive Director and by a broad range of member volunteers who apply their skills and municipal knowledge to specific areas of focus that support the delivery of Association's programs and services.





OUR PLAN FOR 2022-2026

AMCTO continues to grow and explore new opportunities to provide municipal professionals with the tools they need to succeed in today's continually evolving municipal environment. The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is designed to give “form to function” and set a clear road map for the organization in the years ahead.

A future-focused plan with a solid foundation: This Strategic Plan has been developed with a forward-looking focus to support the organization proactively prepare for, and be able to meet head on, the challenges and changes facing the municipal sector. The celebrated reputation and expertise that AMCTO has built across the sector are the building blocks of this future-oriented perspective, ensuring that the Association can evolve in a way that does not lose sight of its core identity and purpose.

A Strategic Plan for everyone: The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan places a renewed focus on inclusivity and seeks to ensure that all existing and prospective members see themselves reflected in this document. This is a plan designed to serve municipal professionals at all stages of their career, including those contemplating entering the sector and those about to retire.

A clear vision, supported by an implementation plan: This Plan puts strategy into action. It is grounded in AMCTO’s commitment to realizing its vision and will guide the Association’s leadership and staff in the day-to-day work of making progress on the priorities set out herein. The Strategic Plan is not, however, a comprehensive list of everything the organization will or should be doing over the 2022-2026 planning cycle. Instead, the document provides overall direction and identifies the key areas where the Association will focus its work.

This Strategic Plan includes:

- A vision for the Association to work towards and its ongoing mission;
- The principles of the Association that underpin and reinforce everything it does;
- Four strategic pillars critical to realizing the vision;
- Goals for each strategic pillar and the actions required to support the Association in achieving them; and
- An implementation plan to report on progress against the Plan to the Board of Directors and membership.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In fall 2021, AMCTO launched the process to update its Strategic Plan for the 2022-2026 planning horizon.

The journey to develop the new Strategic Plan included a thorough review of the AMCTO's operating landscape and engagement with key stakeholders.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with all Board members and AMCTO staff. In November 2021, a Board workshop was held to discuss the initial findings with respect to the Association's current strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities, threats, and risks that it must turn its attention to in the years ahead.

In fall 2021, the President and Vice President of the Board facilitated discussions with each Zone in order to solicit feedback from members on AMCTO's current state and future direction. Member input was also solicited through two digital member surveys: the State of the Membership survey, launched in October 2021, and the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan survey, conducted in February 2022. Approximately 500+ members responded through these surveys.

A Strategic Planning Working Group, comprised of members of the Board and staff, held three working sessions between December 2021 and January 2022 to discuss and develop the core components of the Strategic Plan outlined in the following pages.

This document summarizes the output from this important process and sets a clear path forward for AMCTO for the next four years.

AMCTO'S OPERATING LANDSCAPE

An organization's strategic plan cannot be separate from the real world. Our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is informed by a thorough understanding of both the internal realities of AMCTO as an association and the trends in the municipal sector that impact AMCTO directly and through our membership.

AMCTO is a mature and respected entity in the municipal sector: AMCTO is the leading association for municipal professionals, having built a reputation spanning 80+ years as a provider of top-tier programs and services that support excellence and expertise in the municipal sector. The organization's education and professional development programs, and particularly its widely renowned accreditation programs, are highly valued by members and sector stakeholders. AMCTO plays a pivotal role in defining the career path for municipal professionals and helping them achieve their professional goals.

In addition to promoting professional growth within the sector, AMCTO supports members in carrying out their statutory and/or other responsibilities through information sharing, advocacy, and networking opportunities. In this way, AMCTO is more than an individual member association; through its activities, it supports the creation of a "community of practice" among municipal professionals committed to ensuring excellence and expertise in the sector. The Strategic Plan in the pages below holds true to these core services but also draws attention to opportunities where AMCTO can and should evolve – both in what it does and who it serves.

Retaining, growing, and diversifying the membership must continue to be a priority: Intrinsic to its business model, AMCTO needs to continually ensure that its value proposition to prospective and existing members is clear. This means dedicating resources towards enhanced communications, marketing, and outreach activities to attract potential new members and support increased engagement of existing members. It may also mean exploring new avenues to support the diversification of the membership and encourage more municipal professionals to see a home for themselves in AMCTO.

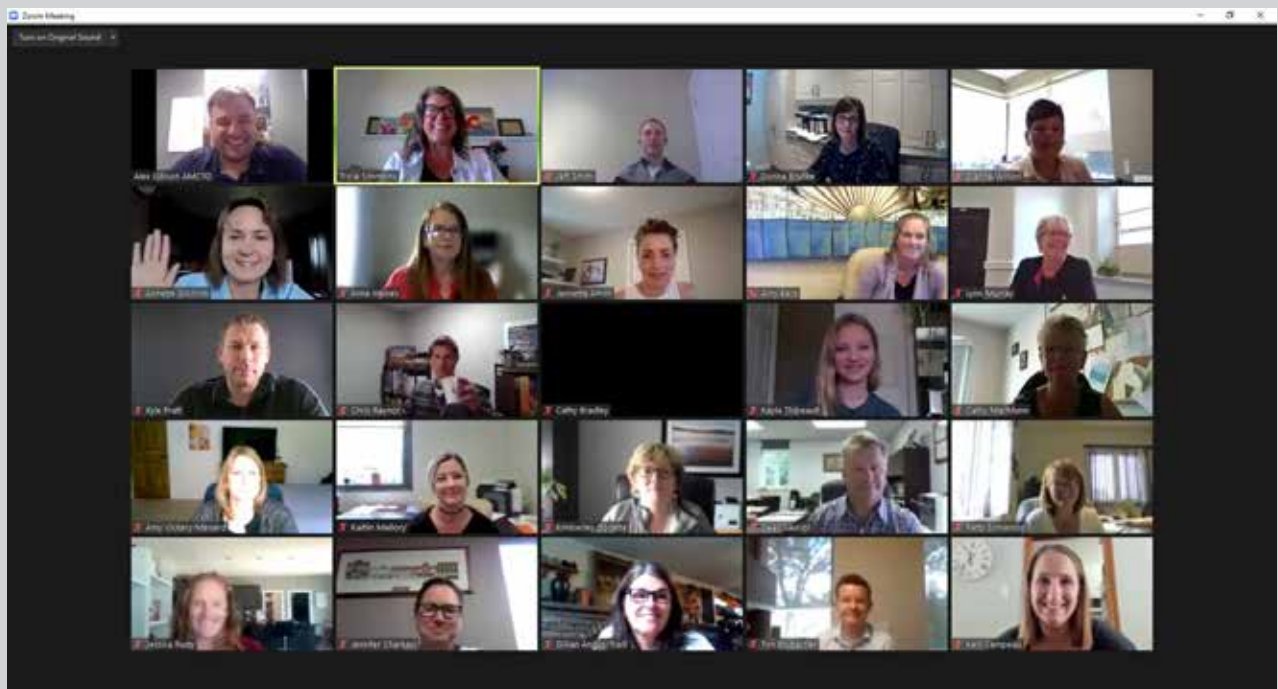
The municipal sector is changing, and AMCTO must adapt with it: In many ways, AMCTO's challenges as an association are directly related to, or mirror, those of the broader municipal sector. Municipalities are struggling to recruit and retain talent, particularly in smaller communities, while also contending with a looming retirement wave – all of which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as municipal staff have experienced record levels of burnout and stress. These human resources challenges, coupled with contracting municipal budgets and ever-increasing workloads, are realities that are having, and will continue to have, an impact on AMCTO as a member-based association. Moving forward, AMCTO will need to play an even greater role in broadly communicating the value of a career in the municipal public service to support sector capacity and growth. It must also place renewed focus on efforts on ensuring awareness and recognition of the value of AMCTO membership to key stakeholders, including municipal Councils and staff.

Programs and services need to closely align with market trends and member needs: As part of this evolution, AMCTO should continue to routinely re-evaluate its service offerings and delivery models to ensure relevancy, provide timely expertise, and fill gaps in education, training, and professional development. The COVID-19 pandemic proved that AMCTO has the capability and capacity to continuously improve and adapt; the Association's swift pivot to online service delivery for many of its core programs and services in response to the pandemic was relatively seamless and, in several cases, resulted in higher levels of member and customer participation. Looking ahead, how AMCTO stays relevant both in terms of what services it provides and how it delivers them will determine its value to the sector moving forward.

Collaboration with partners old and new is a real opportunity: AMCTO operates in an increasingly complex and competitive landscape of municipal associations, informal professional networks, and post-secondary education providers. In response to this growing marketplace, AMCTO has been agile in scrutinizing its content and programming to ensure its offerings are tailored and responsive, leveraging strategic partnerships to fill gaps and maximize value for AMCTO members, customers, and partners. These strategic partnerships and collaborations will continue to be a critical tool for AMCTO to maintain and build upon its industry standing and ensure the ongoing value of its services to members and non-members.

As the voice of municipal professionals, AMCTO can lead: Representing a breadth of municipal professionals, AMCTO can play a greater role in shaping public policy by enhancing its profile within government and aligning on where the Association can drive the most value on policy issues for members. AMCTO can also act as an advocate within the sector by demonstrating leadership on and supporting municipal professionals in addressing emerging issues in the sector, including equity, diversity, and inclusion; accessibility; Truth and Reconciliation; workplace harassment, among many others. AMCTO must continue to lead by example, rooting decision-making in its core Principles and Code of Ethics.

AMCTO's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan has been informed and shaped by all of these themes.





STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

MISSION

AMCTO delivers professional growth, networks, advocacy, and leadership to support and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of municipal professionals now and into the future.

VISION

AMCTO is the “go to” organization to foster expertise and excellence within the municipal sector.

PRINCIPLES

Service
Excellence

Sector
Engagement

Accountability
& Transparency

Accessibility
& Inclusion

Organizational
Sustainability

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. Professional Growth

Goal #1: AMCTO’s education and accreditation programs are recognized tools for career advancement and growth in the municipal sector.

Goal #2: AMCTO provides high quality, forward-thinking education and professional development programs that reflect the needs of a range of aspiring, new, and established municipal professionals.

2. Network & Community

Goal #3: AMCTO events and platforms are an essential space for municipal professionals to grow their networks within the municipal sector and the association.

Goal #4: AMCTO is a community built on the shared experiences and knowledge of municipal professionals.

3. Membership

Goal #5: AMCTO retains members throughout and beyond their careers in the municipal sector.

Goal #6: AMCTO has a growing and diversified membership base from municipal professionals across Ontario.

4. Advocacy

Goal #7: AMCTO informs and influences public policy in its capacity as the respected voice of municipal professionals.

Goal #8: AMCTO is the leading resource for municipal professionals to stay abreast and up-to-date on issues related to municipal public policy and administration.

MISSION, VISION & PRINCIPLES

MISSION AND VISION

AMCTO's 2022-2026 Mission and Vision are an evolution from the previous Strategic Plan. The Mission reinforces AMCTO's commitment to its core services and supports for municipal professionals. The updated vision gives clear direction to the organization to continue to build its status as the leading association to build municipal capacity and expertise within the sector.



Mission

AMCTO delivers professional growth, networks, advocacy, and leadership to support and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of municipal professionals now and into the future.



Vision

AMCTO is the “go to” organization to foster expertise and excellence within the municipal sector.

PRINCIPLES

These five principles, along with AMCTO's Code of Ethics, are the core tenets that govern and inform AMCTO's operations and decision-making:

Service Excellence

Deliver high quality programs and services to members and customers.

Sector Engagement

Conduct continuous engagement and collaboration with AMCTO's members, customers, and stakeholders to ensure responsiveness to sector priorities and expertise.

Accountability & Transparency

Commit to ethical, transparent, and effective governance to foster member trust and accountability among AMCTO's leadership.

Accessibility & Inclusion

Bring a lens of accessibility and inclusion to everything AMCTO does to eliminate barriers to participation at all levels of the Association.

Organizational Sustainability

Ensure the sustainability of the organization as a member-driven Association.

STRATEGIC PILLARS & GOALS

Strategic Pillar #1:

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Professional growth is at the core of AMCTO's value proposition for its members and customers. This pillar encompasses goals and actions aimed at ensuring AMCTO continues to build municipal capacity by providing recognized and respected education and professional development opportunities for municipal professionals at all points of their career.

■ Goal #1

AMCTO's education and accreditation programs are recognized tools for career advancement and growth in the municipal sector.

1. Promote the market value of AMCTO's professional accreditation programs to both municipal professionals and employers.
2. Define and develop a "career path" service offering that will provide end-to-end supports for municipal professionals as they advance through their careers.

■ Goal #2

AMCTO provides high quality, forward-thinking education and professional development programs that reflect the needs of a range of aspiring, new, and established municipal professionals.

1. Continue to develop and update AMCTO's education and professional development programs to ensure relevance and responsiveness of programming to sector trends and member needs.
2. Evaluate partnership opportunities with other professional associations and post-secondary institutions for shared service delivery.

Strategic Pillar #2:

NETWORK & COMMUNITY

A people-focused organization, AMCTO provides opportunities for municipal professionals to come together, connect, learn from, and support one another, opportunities that are highly valued by the membership. This pillar encompasses goals and actions designed to reinforce and strengthen the Association's essential role in fostering professional and interpersonal networks.

Goal #3

AMCTO events and platforms are an essential space for municipal professionals to grow their networks within the municipal sector and the association.

1. Increase supports and resources to Zones to deliver valuable and relevant content and events to members.
2. Continue to invest in and leverage technology to connect and engage members and customers.
3. Develop flexible engagement and participatory models for networking that support user choice.

Goal #4

AMCTO is a community built on the shared experiences and knowledge of municipal professionals.

1. Continue to create opportunities for municipal professionals to connect and build interpersonal relationships and a “community of practice.”
2. Review mentorship services, including opportunities for peer-to-peer mentorship, to support new and experienced professionals in the municipal sector.

Strategic Pillar #3:

MEMBERSHIP

AMCTO is a member-based association and while the organization serves many stakeholders in the municipal sector, members are core to the Association's identity and long-term sustainability. The goals and actions within this pillar are aimed at growing and sustaining a strong AMCTO membership base.

Goal #5

AMCTO retains members throughout and beyond their careers in the municipal sector.

1. Leverage data analysis to better define and understand member and customer segments and “customer journeys.”
2. Develop tailored value propositions for AMCTO member segments and customers.
3. Identify opportunities to offer more “member-only” benefits, promotions, and/or affinity programs.

Goal #6

AMCTO has a growing and diversified membership base from municipal professionals across Ontario.

1. Enhance marketing, communications, and outreach initiatives to target markets to ensure continued awareness of AMCTO and the value of membership.
2. Engage in targeted outreach in geographical areas that are underrepresented in AMCTO membership and/or engagement.
3. Explore AMCTO rebranding options to make membership more accessible and attractive to all municipal professionals.
4. Review options for AMCTO's membership model.

Strategic Pillar #4:

ADVOCACY

AMCTO represents the interests of municipal professionals and acts as an intermediary between public policy development and the professionals responsible for implementing those policies. The goals and actions within this pillar are aimed at ensuring effective two-way communication between decision-makers and municipal professionals.

Goal #7

AMCTO informs and influences public policy in its capacity as the respected voice of municipal professionals.

1. Build the advocacy capacity of AMCTO, including strengthened relationships with other municipal associations to support advocacy on areas of shared interest.
2. Identify and develop content to support key advocacy priorities.
3. Build and maintain relationships with government and sector stakeholders and grow AMCTO's profile and reputation for substantive policy expertise.
4. Empower municipal professionals to undertake their own advocacy efforts on AMCTO priorities.

Goal #8

AMCTO is the leading resource for municipal professionals to stay abreast and up-to-date on issues related to municipal public policy and administration.

1. Continue to deliver timely and relevant legislative and policy updates.
2. Expand research and data analysis capacity to develop policy content that addresses emerging and evolving issues in the municipal sector.

HOW WE WILL USE THIS PLAN

AMCTO's Strategic Plan is our road map for day-to-day operations and planning activities, and for communicating our aspirations for the future. By providing an overarching framework to achieve our vision, this Plan will:

- Support and guide the Association's decision-making;
- Integrate with budget and business planning processes;
- Ensure that programs and services are continually reviewed to ensure alignment with the needs and priorities of members and the sector at large;
- Enable consideration of new or refreshed pathways to demonstrate sector leadership and strengthen connections among municipal professionals; and
- Provide clear communication and engagement opportunities with AMCTO members, customers, and key stakeholders based on the Association's defined strategic priorities.



To remain accountable to the Strategic Plan and ensure transparency within the Association, results and outcomes related to the Plan will be reported on in two ways:


1. Every year, the Board of Directors will identify specific actions related to the Strategic Plan. Progress related to these actions will be reported at each Board meeting through the Executive Director Report.
2. An annual progress report on the Strategic Plan will be presented in November of each year.





The Association of Municipal Managers Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management and leadership. Over the past 80 years, AMCTO has provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. With 2,000+ members working in municipalities across the province, AMCTO is Ontario's largest association of local government professionals, and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

Our mission is to strengthen and support the capabilities and performance of Ontario municipal professionals by providing professional development and engagement opportunities, advocacy and leadership in the sector.

 2680 Skymark Ave., Suite 610
Mississauga, ON L4W 5L6

 905-602-4292

 www.amcto.com

 linkedin.com/company/amcto-policy/

 twitter.com/AMCTO_Policy

 facebook.com/municipal.experts/

 instagram.com/amcto_policy/