

MunicipalMonitor

The Official Publication of AMCTO – *The Municipal Experts* | Municipal Management & Leadership



**A GROWING CRISIS OF
WORKPLACE CONDUCT**
Municipal Staff Speak Out on
Incivility and Harassment

ONTARIO CITIES PLUG IN
Municipal Fleets Are Going Electric

MANAGE LIKE IT'S 2026!
Lessons From the Frontlines of
Leadership

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Affordable Housing Multi-Residential Program

For social and municipal housing, co-ops, non-profits and shelters

Save energy.¹
Improve comfort.
Earn incentives.²

The Enbridge Gas **Affordable Housing Multi-Residential Program** provides incentives² up to 100 percent for energy-saving upgrades. One effective energy-saving upgrade is controls technology, which optimizes the performance of the heating and ventilation systems. By adjusting settings automatically based on occupancy or environmental conditions, these systems reduce wasted energy to enhance building efficiency.

Ask the experts:

How controls unlock savings



Find out why Senior Energy Solutions Advisor Eduardo Romero recommends this energy efficiency upgrade for affordable housing customers.

What are controls?

Controls are used to manage, monitor and optimize the performance of building systems. This involves a combination of sensors, controllers and actuators to ensure that building performance is optimized through a single user-friendly interface. Some common examples include building automation systems (BAS), ventilation controls and boiler controls.

Can you share any recent success stories?

There was a three-storey co-op that I worked with in the Greater Toronto Area. They had a 25-year-old control system that hadn't been functioning for years. When I did an on-site building assessment, all their boilers were switched to manual control.

I walked them through various options that were right for them and their budget. They also had their make-up air units put on the BAS and were able to schedule them more efficiently.

The superintendent is much happier now, because he knows he doesn't have to react when the outdoor air temperatures drop suddenly.

What are the benefits of controls technology?

Controls improve comfort, lower your operating costs and have the potential of extending the lifetime of your equipment. Controls are also easy to implement, with minimal shutdown during commissioning.

Why participate in the program?

You can receive incentives up to 100 percent of project costs for controls and other upgrades that save energy.

Depending on project timing, your building may qualify for one of the incentive options below:

Year-round incentives

\$2.50/m³ Up to **85%** of upgrade costs covered³
natural gas saved Install, commission and submit by Oct. 31, 2026

Limited-time offer⁴

\$3.00/m³ Up to **85%** of upgrade costs covered³
natural gas saved **Book by June 30, 2026**
Install, commission and submit by Oct. 31, 2026

Early install bonus⁵

\$3.00/m³ Up to **100%** of upgrade costs covered³
natural gas saved Book by June 30, 2026
Install, commission and submit by Aug. 31, 2026

Our Energy Solutions Advisors will work with you to identify and recommend energy-saving opportunities.



How to get started

Reach out to an Enbridge Gas Energy Solutions Advisor for upgrade recommendations to qualify your project for incentives.



Contact us to assess your energy-saving opportunities



energyservices@enbridge.com



1-866-844-9994



enbridgegas.com/affordable

¹ Any references to energy savings are based on the assumption that participation in the Affordable Housing Multi-Residential Program results in reduced natural gas consumption. Enbridge Gas does not make any claims regarding the specific amount of savings achieved.

² HST is not applicable and will not be added to incentive payments. Incentives are available to Enbridge Gas customers. Contact your Energy Solutions Advisor to confirm eligibility. To qualify for year-round incentives, and receive \$2.50/m³, up to 85 percent of energy efficiency upgrade costs, to a maximum of \$200,000 per project, equipment must be installed, commissioned and submitted by Oct. 31, 2026. Incentive offers are subject to change based on budget availability. Terms and conditions apply. Visit enbridgegas.com/affordable for details.

³ Upgrade costs refer to the difference between the equipment and implementation costs of the energy-efficient option and those of the alternate option considered.

⁴ Limited-time offer is available to Enbridge Gas customers. Contact your Energy Solutions Advisor to confirm eligibility. To qualify for limited-time incentives, and receive \$3.00/m³, up to 85 percent of energy efficiency upgrade costs, to a maximum of \$200,000 per project, a purchase order must be provided by June 30, 2026 with an Energy Solutions Advisor and equipment must be installed, commissioned and submitted by Oct. 31, 2026.

⁵ To qualify for the early install bonus offer, and receive \$3.00/m³, up to 100 percent of energy efficiency upgrade costs, to a maximum of \$200,000 per project, projects must be booked by June 30, 2026 with an Energy Solutions Advisor and installed, commissioned and submitted by Aug. 31, 2026. Please contact an Energy Solutions Advisor for details.

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A Mentor's Greatest Lessons

I ran into a past mentee recently and recalled how much I valued them. In the short time we had together, we shared raw and real events and got to the heart of how we were doing. This made me reflect on how much the AMCTO Mentorship Program means to me, the various mentors I have had and how they have shaped my career and my outlook in ways that still guide me today.

In a municipal setting, we work within a dense framework of legislation, policies and council direction. The work is high-pressured with limited resources and big expectations. Whether you are in customer service and at the front counter, a seasoned operator in public works, a planner navigating competing interests or a senior leader supporting staff and council, no one works in isolation.

Mentorship is often misunderstood as something reserved for early-career professionals or through formal leadership development programs, but it is most powerful when it is inclusive, informal and a shared responsibility. While legislation, policies and procedures are the backbone of our structures, a municipality thrives because of its staff's lived experiences which contribute to organizational knowledge.

A career in municipal government fosters the ability to navigate complex subjects through formal education and everyday encounters. Employees learn essential skills, such as de-escalating tense interactions with residents, preparing staff for challenging council meetings and promoting collaboration to break down silos. Mentorship prevents institutional knowledge from being lost through turnover or burnout.



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It builds employees' confidence, reduces errors and shortens learning curves while giving newer staff a safe space to ask questions they may hesitate to raise in formal settings.

Municipal staff increasingly face incivility, scrutiny and emotional labour, often because of frustrated, anxious or angry members of the public. Mentorship helps employees process these experiences, develop resilience and learn strategies for managing stress and conflict. It allows us to pass ideas that have worked in one organization on to another, and it ensures that the individual doesn't feel helpless and alone. If someone doesn't feel supported in their municipality, another's perspective can reinforce personal power to help navigate those challenges. Often, a mentor's most valuable contribution is simply listening, validating experiences and reminding someone they are not alone.

Peer mentorship and reverse mentorship, in which staff learn from colleagues with different skills, backgrounds or perspectives, are as important as top-down mentorship. Newer employees may bring fresh ideas, technological fluency or evolving community expectations that benefit more experienced staff. Seasoned professionals offer perspective, judgment and historical context. When mentorship flows in multiple directions, it strengthens corporate ethos and reinforces the idea that learning continues at every career stage.

Mentorship can also establish a succession plan by preparing future leaders before formal opportunities come up. It helps staff understand how decisions are made, how to navigate tough conversations, how an organization's values are applied and how to hold on to integrity when the going gets tough. It also helps others see themselves differently by fostering someone's confidence or changing the direction they were headed.

Here are the three best pieces of advice I have received in my career:

- 1) When you don't have the leadership you need, become the leader you wish you had. Step up and offer advice to change how others see you and create new opportunities for yourself.
- 2) When you feel unchallenged, volunteer! By engaging in various activities and teams, you gain broader organizational knowledge and allow others to see you in different lights.
- 3) Find ways to say yes. When requests go unmet because of resources, legislation, etc., look for ways to accomplish something related, fostering creativity and responsiveness.

AMCTO's Mentorship Program has gifted me with friendships I cherish and people with whom I can be my authentic self. Consider applying when the next AMCTO Mentorship Program intake opens in June. If you have questions, please reach out to staff or ask to speak with a past mentee or mentor.

In a sector facing increasing complexities and pressures, mentorship is a cornerstone of sustainable, effective municipal organizations and it belongs to all of us. 🏘️

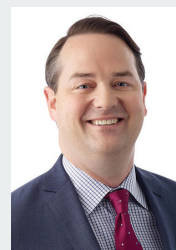


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The Municipal Innovation Internship Program is Back

Time to Step Up!



David Arbuckle, MPA
Executive Director,
AMCTO

On Jan. 17, 2025, AMCTO took an important step toward strengthening the future of Ontario's municipal workforce by entering a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mitacs. Together, we launched the AMCTO–Mitacs Municipal Innovation Internship Program (MIIP), an initiative designed to connect students with meaningful municipal work while helping municipalities advance innovation and research projects.

As a result of this program, there are five MIIP interns working right now in Ontario municipalities big and

small: Ottawa, Oakville, North Perth, Terrace Bay and Middlesex-London Paramedic Service. These interns are getting invaluable experience within the municipal sector while helping those municipalities respond to growing pressure to modernize services, respond to complex challenges and do more with limited resources.

We're pleased to share that AMCTO and Mitacs have renewed our MOU for 2026, continuing our shared commitment to innovation and talent development in the municipal sector. Through the renewed MIIP, we will support up to 15 paid, part-time student






internships, each lasting eight months. These internships will run from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2027, giving students meaningful, hands-on experience while helping municipalities advance important projects.

New for the 2026–2027 program year, we’re especially excited to welcome the University of Waterloo’s Future Cities Institute, founded by CAIVAN, as a partner. Through this collaboration, the Institute will help identify five municipal projects and match them with interns whose skills and interests align with MIIP’s goals and objectives. This partnership strengthens the connection between academic expertise and real-world municipal challenges, ensuring students — and municipalities — gain maximum value from the program.

Everyone reading this article, especially those in small and medium-sized municipalities, knows the challenges municipalities have with attracting talent. Making an investment in an internship position is an excellent way to develop the next generation of municipal leaders while getting an extra set of hands (and an extra brain) to help move an important project forward. The MIIP also creates more connections between your organization and the academic community, a relationship that could be mutually beneficial today and in the future.

Programs like the MIIP only continue to exist when they are used. Last year, AMCTO received 10 times more student intern applications than we received qualified municipal project applications. That shows us that post-secondary students have a real desire to come and learn about life in municipal government. That is why it is essential that municipalities step up and submit projects. The application portal for municipalities to submit their MIIP project proposals is open now and will be open for an extended number of weeks this year — until May 8 — providing ample time for you to talk to your colleagues and council about submitting a project.

You can find all the details on this year’s MIIP on the AMCTO website. I encourage you to have a look and to spread the word through your municipality about this amazing opportunity for you, your organization and future municipal professionals! 📱



What should municipal staff do to get their ducks in a row before “lame duck” arrives? Need help navigating this election year?

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A GROWING CRISIS OF WORKPLACE CONDUCT

Municipal Staff Speak Out on Incivility and Harassment

By Charlotte Caza

We know from conversations with AMCTO members and municipal staff across the province that incivility and harassment in municipal workplaces are on the rise. Despite this, staff continue to express pride and enthusiasm for their work, showing up every day under increasing pressure and public demands to serve their communities.

To better support our Association members and municipal professionals, last fall AMCTO launched a survey to collect data about the instances and

circumstances around incivility and harassment that municipal staff experience at work. The survey included questions about municipal staff's experiences with incivility and harassment from the public and members of council.

The survey defined harassment as: "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome" (Guide to *Occupational Health and Safety Act*). The comments or conduct typically happen more than

once. However, there may be a situation where conduct happens only once, such as an unwelcome sexual solicitation from a manager or employer. Harassment could include:

- Unwelcome and/or repeated words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning to a worker or group of workers;
- Behaviour that intimidates, isolates or even discriminates against a worker or group of workers in the workplace that is unwelcome;

- Psychological harassment (under the Ontario Human Rights Code); and
- Personal harassment (under the Ontario Human Rights Code).

“

I think the public has forgotten that we are people, and most of us work tirelessly to try and improve our communities.

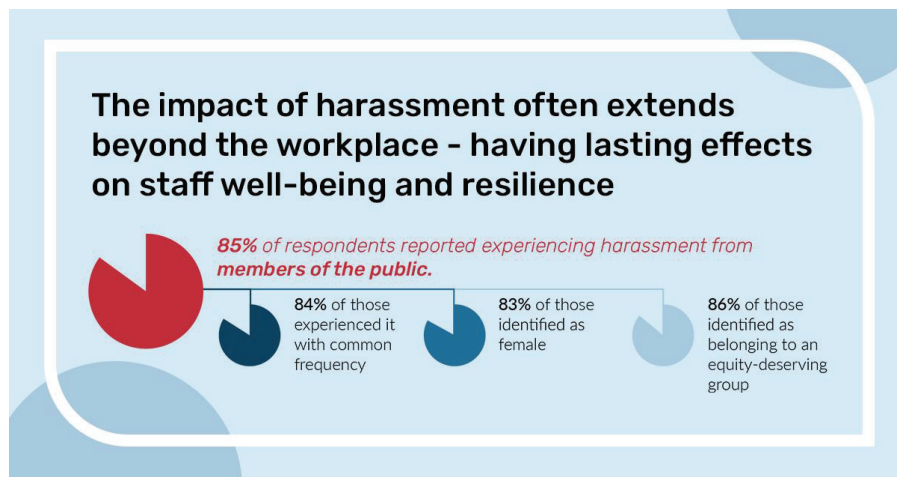
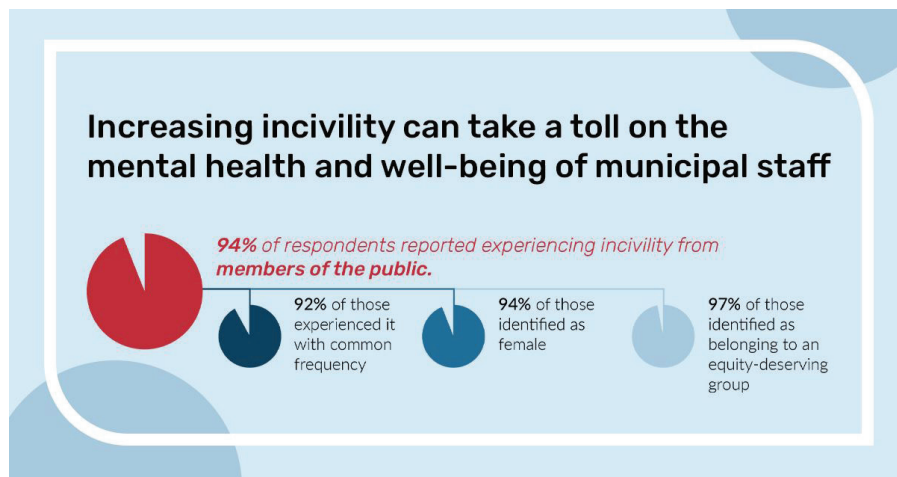
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Workplace harassment does not include a reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace.

For the purposes of the survey, incivility was defined as: “low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others.”¹ Examples include:

- Talking down to employees
- Rudeness
- Impatience
- Ignoring or not listening to others
- Gossiping
- Negative gestures and general discourteous conduct

Such incivility could be from members of the public, clients/customers



or decision-makers and may be “lesser forms of mistreatment.”

The survey results, while perhaps not surprising, were very telling. Key findings showed that:

- 66 per cent of respondents reported experiencing harassment from members of council. Of those who reported harassment, 78 per cent experienced it with common frequency;
- 77 per cent of respondents reported experiencing incivility from members of council. Of those who reported incivility, 86 per cent experienced it with common frequency;
- 85 per cent of respondents reported experiencing harassment from members of the public. Of those who reported harassment, 84 per

cent experienced it with common frequency; and

- 94 per cent of respondents reported experiencing incivility from members of the public. Of those who reported incivility, 92 per cent experienced it with common frequency.

Unfortunately, the numbers are even more staggering when looking at respondents who identified as belonging to an equity-deserving group.

We found that results were similar regardless of tenure working in the municipal sector, frequency of interaction with council or members of the public, and results did not differ greatly across the province. In summary, the data show that presently, municipal workplaces are having an overall negative impact on the health and well-being of municipal professionals.

¹ L. M. Andersson and C. M. Pearson, “Tit for Tat? The Spiraling Effect of Incivility in the Workplace,” *Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 452–471, 1999. <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/amr.1999.2202131>.

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Beyond the Numbers

Through our survey, we also had the opportunity to hear candid feedback through open-ended questions, further illustrating that not only is there a problem now, but if situations do not improve, there could be even bigger problems later. For example, qualitative feedback reveals that instances of harassment and incivility are shaping individual biases and public perception, contributing to an overall lack of trust in transparent and effective policies and processes among municipal staff, elected officials and members of the public.

“Valuing staff for their professional advice and opinions is becoming a thing of the past and the more intense members of council and heads of council appear to want ‘yes men’ rather than legitimate advice,” notes a respondent, adding “the addition of pervasive strong mayor powers is making the phenomenon worse, not better.”

Another respondent notes: “There is increasing polarization of politics and ‘anti-government’ politicians ... it is interesting to see the confluence of poverty, pressure on our political systems from internal and external actors, and the decline of legacy media, and how these forces [come together] to create a very negative field for public servants in Ontario.”

Policies and Processes Are Not Enough

While our survey told us that most municipalities have a council-staff relations policy as required under s. 270 of the *Municipal Act*, and that the number of municipalities with public conduct policies are increasing, the data show that these measures do not go far enough in protecting staff.

There remain challenges for staff reporting harassment or incivility and trusting that change will be made. As one respondent said: “Reporting



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“
The workplace well-being of staff is deteriorating to the point that I believe it will become harder to find good people to take on senior municipal roles.
”

harassment or incivility is career suicide. There are no real repercussions on members of council or the public. Staff have no powers, and they know it.”

This is further exacerbated by strong mayor powers, which may put senior staff further at risk of professional repercussions: “The strong mayor powers have all but eliminated senior staff’s

ability to file complaints against the mayor without fear of firing.”

These shortcomings are why AMCTO has called on the province to create an independent mechanism to investigate instances of harassment and incivility and apply sanctions as appropriate.²

Effects of Social Media

Municipalities are not immune to the broader effects of social media, which is particularly an issue when it comes to harassment and incivility from members of the public.

Harassment or incivility on social media can be worse than what is experienced face to face, with one survey respondent stating: “The public seems quick to take out their frustration online and say things they would never say to our face; civil servants and government agencies, are easy targets. I think the public has forgotten that we are people, and most of us work tirelessly to try and improve our communities.”

Social media comments can go beyond the screen, potentially leading to conflict between council and members of staff. As one respondent put it: “With the increasing use of social media, the

² Danielle Manton, Submission to Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, “Bill 9, *Municipal Accountability Act*, 2025,” August 13, 2025, https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2025-08/AMCTO%20Standing%20Committee%20Submission%20Bill%209%20Municipal%20Accountability%20Act_final_distr.pdf.



“

Unfortunately, some discussions gain momentum, and some councillors put a lot of stock into unfounded public comment leaving staff in a defensive position.

”

public have found a new avenue for shouting out accusations at or about municipal departments and staff specifically. Unfortunately, some discussions gain momentum, and some councillors put a lot of stock into unfounded public comment leaving staff in a defensive position.”

Morale, Retention and Recruitment

Unfortunately, experiencing and observing incivility and harassment have an impact on staff morale, which can in turn affect municipal staff retention and recruitment. As one respondent stated: “It is challenging on staff morale to be frequently exposed to harassment and incivility from the public, both in and outside of work hours.”

Low morale among teams can lead to challenges retaining talent and ultimately with recruitment. “The workplace well-being of staff is deteriorating to the point that I believe it will become harder to find good people to take on senior municipal roles,” another respondent notes.

With the broader big-picture challenges that municipalities are facing to serve their residents with increasingly limited resources, we know that it is more important than ever that positive, collaborative leaders fill senior roles. To foster a strong culture of workplace recruitment and retention, it is important that issues of incivility and harassment impacting staff morale are resolved.

Looking Ahead

There is an opportunity to come together as an Association and as a sector to support one another and continue to advocate to the province for better protections for municipal staff, something AMCTO has continuously done through our advocacy. We have specifically called on the province to remove strong mayor powers related to employment matters and have asked for better mechanisms to support municipal staff through Bill 9, the *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*.

AMCTO also held a specialty professional development forum in February on incivility and municipalities to provide a safe space for members and municipal staff to discuss these challenges and share approaches for strengthening respectful dialogue and community trust. Our team presented the survey results at the forum and hope these important conversations will foster better municipal workplaces.

As we continue to advocate on behalf of our members and municipal staff, we also remain committed to providing members with a range of programs, services, support tools and resources that help address municipal staff harassment and incivility.

While the data indicate there are challenges, it’s clear that not all interactions between municipal staff, councils and residents are problematic. Across our communities, many examples of meaningful and productive collaboration take place. We look forward to celebrating these successes and the important work of our members and municipal staff, and to amplifying the positive impact civility has on our communities, municipal workplace cultures and the municipal profession.

Charlotte Caza is a policy advisor with AMCTO. ■■■

AMCTO members can access the full report, support tools and resources on the AMCTO website at <https://www.amcto.com/harassment-incivility>.



Lakeside Leadership

**2026 CONFERENCE
HUNTSVILLE, ONTARIO**

CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Lakeside Leadership

 **AMCTO**
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS
2026 CONFERENCE
HUNTSVILLE, ONTARIO

Camp is Calling...

On behalf of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), we cordially invite you to register for our 88th annual conference taking place June 7-10, 2026.

As the sector's premier networking event for municipal professionals, our 2026 conference – *Lakeside Leadership* – invites you to come to camp to build new connections and impactful relationships, learn, and grow together as municipal professionals. Through 3.5 days of team-building activities, networking, and practical professional development with sessions focused on top sector issues, the conference has something for everyone.

Our 2026 conference will be hosted at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville – the perfect setting to immerse yourself in nature and explore fresh perspectives. We're thrilled to be back in Zone 5 and look forward to reconnecting and recharging together as a community!

Thanks to your insights, we're introducing a number of new elements to this year's event with the goal of elevating your overall AMCTO Conference experience. This year's event features three different Sunday Fun-Day options, a bonfire beach party for our Monday night excursion, an all-new Awards Gala after-party (AMCTO After Dark), and more.

As we're all aware, 2026 is a busy year in the sector with the upcoming Ontario municipal elections in the fall. This year's conference will feature several opportunities to learn and share best practices related to election administration, including dedicated elections networking and information sessions. We encourage all attendees to take advantage of these peer learning opportunities to help prepare you for October.

We want to thank our 2026 Conference Planning Committee for their hard work in helping us put together an excellent conference program that includes sessions from local government professionals with knowledgeable, first-hand experience and subject matter expertise across a wide variety of topics. We also want to thank our on-site venue staff and accommodation teams for their support in helping us to deliver what is sure to be a high-quality and memorable overall delegate experience.

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For those who are unable to join us in person in Huntsville, we are proud to once again offer a virtual livestream registration option. This will allow you to take part in the conference from the comfort of your home or office and give you the opportunity to revisit session recordings and materials within our learning management system, AMCTO Connect, following the event.

We encourage you to explore all that this year's conference has to offer on our website and check back to stay up-to-date on the latest event news and updates. For further information or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our conference planning team.

On behalf of the AMCTO Board of Directors and staff, we thank you in advance for your ongoing support of our Association, for your continued commitment to professional development and municipal excellence.

See you at camp!



Danielle Manton, AOMC, Dipl.M.M.
2025-2026 President
General Manager, Corporate Services, City of
Cambridge



David Arbuckle, MPA
Executive Director, AMCTO

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Keynote Speakers

Peter Katz

Juno-Nominated Singer-Songwriter, Keynote Speaker & Facilitator

Peter is an expert in helping teams recognize, value, and celebrate their individual and collective impacts. His interactive keynote concerts feature songs and stories of resiliency, authenticity, and unexpected joy that guide audiences through challenging transitions and prime them for transformational change that endures.

After a serious injury and a global pandemic interrupted his plans, he discovered that the skills he had honed through a life on the road — like creating space for deep communication and communal joy — were applicable to people from any industry and any walk of life. His in-person events have been praised as transformational, and he is recognized as a pioneer in creating highly engaging virtual experiences.



Hal Johnson & Joanne McLeod

Healthy Living Experts & Hosts of BodyBreak



Hal and Joanne bring their passionate and energetic approach to healthy living to all their presentations! To celebrate 25 years of healthy living, teamwork, and positivity, they appeared on CTV's The Amazing Race Canada as Team BodyBreak. They were one of nine teams being challenged physically and mentally as they competed and travelled across Canada.

In his youth Hal represented Canada at the Baseball World Championships in Japan before working in business across Canada and the US. Joanne was a member of the Canadian Track & Field Team and a four-time national and seven-time provincial hurdle champion, representing Canada at the World Cup, Commonwealth, and Pacific Conference Games.

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2026 CONFERENCE
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Schedule At a Glance

For the most up-to-date program and to learn more about each of our workshop sessions and speakers, please visit our conference website.

**Indicates activities that require an additional ticket to be purchased.*

Sunday, June 7

12:00pm - 9:00pm	Conference Registration Open
3:00pm - 5:30pm	Sunday Fun-Day Activities*
	Brews & Views*
	City Scenes & Creative Streets*
	Take a Hike*
5:45pm - 6:45pm	New Conference Attendees & Scholarship Recipients Networking Session
5:45pm - 6:45pm	AMCTO Board, Zone Executive & Volunteer Appreciation Mixer (Private Event)
6:30pm - 10:00pm	Exhibitor Tradeshow Reception & Opening Night Party

Monday, June 8

7:00am - 7:30am	Morning Yoga
	Guided Canoe Tour
7:15am - 4:00pm	Registration/Help Desk Open
7:30am - 4:30pm	Exhibit Hall Open
8:00am - 9:00am	Elections Ontario: Your Voters List Partner – Ximena Morris <i>Sponsored by Elections Ontario</i>
9:00am - 9:30am	Break
9:30am - 11:00am	AMCTO 2026 Conference Opening Ceremonies
11:00am - 12:00pm	Opening Keynote Presentation - Showing Up Wholeheartedly – Peter Katz
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch Break & Exhibitor Challenge - Battleship
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Municipal Association Heads Meet & Greet (Private Event)

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1:00pm - 2:00pm	The State of Municipal Accountability in Ontario 2026 – Laura Dean & John Mascarin
	The Challenges & Opportunities of AI Governance – Alfred Fung & Christopher Parsons
	Digital Debt for Municipal Borrowing – Andrei Poliakov & Jason Reynar
	Unlocking Potential: The Power of Transferable Skills in Municipal Recruitment – Aaron Gullins & Lesley Sterling
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Break
2:15 - 3:00pm	AMCTO Zone Networking Sessions
3:00pm - 3:15pm	Break
	Exhibitor Challenge - Battleship Winner Announcement
3:15pm - 4:15pm	They're Ba-a-a-ck: Charter Challenges & Council – Rick O'Connor
	When Harassment Comes from the Community: Protecting Staff & Council – Natasha Savoline
	Strengthening Indigenous-Municipal Relations: A Case Study of the Muskoka Area Indigenous Leadership Table – Tina Kilbourne & Ted Williams
	The Future is Aging: Planning for 80+ in Community Development – Devan Lobo & Sharon Ranalli
6:00pm - 8:00pm	Dinner with Friends & Colleagues*
6:30pm - 10:00pm	Evening Excursion: Beach Bonfire Bash* <i>Presented by the Hobson Chahal Advisory Group at CIBC Wood Gundy</i>

Tuesday, June 9

7:00am - 7:30am	Morning Yoga
	Guided Canoe Tour
7:15am - 4:00pm	Registration/Help Desk Open
7:30am - 1:00pm	Exhibit Hall Open
8:00am - 9:00am	How One Clerk Modernized Governance (and How You Can Too) – Francyne Coates & Gwen Dombroski <i>Sponsored by Diligent Corporation</i>
	Plot Twist: Turning Cemetery Risk into Financial Recovery – Katelyn Johns, Pamela Nicholson & Sasha Helmkey Playter <i>Sponsored by Government Frameworks</i>

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	Navigating Strong Mayor Powers: Legal and Practical Considerations – Denitza Koev <i>Sponsored by Thomson Rogers LLP</i>
8:00am - 4:00pm	Professional Headshots Charity Photo Studio Open
9:00am - 9:15am	Break
9:10am - 10:10am	Hot Topics in Intergovernmental Affairs - Stacy Hushion, Olivia Lahaie & Sabine Matheson
	Is this Really My Job? The Many Roles of Rural Clerks - Jennifer Lawrie & Jennifer White
	Turning Theory into Impact: A Case Study in Municipal Budget Engagement - Marina Fung
	Experience The Rainforest Game – Jeff Friesen & Gary MacDonald
10:15am - 10:30am	Break
10:15am - 10:45am	AMCTO Accreditation: Journey to Achieving Municipal Excellence
	AMCTO Policy & Government Relations: New Developments in Municipal Accountability
	AMCTO Education: Education Programs & Career Development Packages Drop-in
	AMCTO Professional Development: Elections Over, Now What? Staff-Council Relations Training
10:45am - 11:00am	Break
11:00am - 12:00pm	2026 Municipal Case Law Update - Tom Halinski & John Mascarin
	Tackling Burnout in Public Service: Strategies for Municipal Teams – Mandy Lee & Sally Litchfield
	Managing Frivolous & Vexatious or Voluminous Access Requests - Stephanie Haly, Suzy Hodge, & Stephan Luciw
	The Politics of Property Tax: Strategies for Briefing Candidates, Councils, and Stakeholders - Peter Frise
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch Break & Exhibitor Challenge - Scavenger Hunt
	Municipal Elections: Worst Case Scenarios Aren't that Scary
12:00pm - 1:15pm	AMCTO Past Presidents Luncheon & Social (Private Event)
1:00pm - 2:00pm	New Procedural Bylaw, Who Dis? - Krista Power
	Navigating and Managing Conflict in a Diverse Workplace - Maureen Brown
	How to Execute Your Asset Management Plan - Brian Kavanagh
	Confronting Incivility & Thriving Through Uncertainty - Ken Chan
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Break

Lakeside Leadership



2026 CONFERENCE
HUNTSVILLE, ONTARIO

2:15pm - 3:00pm	2026 Municipal Elections Networking & Activity Session
3:00pm - 3:15pm	Break
	Exhibitor Challenge - Scavenger Hunt Winner Announcement
3:10pm - 4:10pm	Gravenhurst: A Case Study for Emergency Response & Partnership - Teresa Alonzi, Todd Clapp, Hon. Jill Dunlop, Diane Ploss & Kayla Thibeault
	Organizational Culture in Practice: Leading with Intention - Jamie Boyle
	Case Closed? Not Yet: Using KPIs, Service Standards & Customer Satisfaction Data to Unlock Organizational Performance - Nicole Cooper & Jaclyn Grossi
	Naming Rights as a Funding Solution for Municipal Projects - Jody Haber
6:30pm - 7:30pm	AMCTO Board of Directors & Past Presidents Pre-Gala Reception (Private Event) <i>Sponsored by Aird & Berlis LLP</i>
6:30pm - 7:30pm	Pre-Gala Cocktail Reception <i>Sponsored by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.</i>
7:00pm - 7:30pm	Award Recipients' Walk-through Session (Private Event)
7:30pm - 12:00am	AMCTO 2026 Awards Gala Dinner & AMCTO After Dark* <i>AMCTO After Dark presented by Mosey & Mosey Benefit Plan Consultants</i>

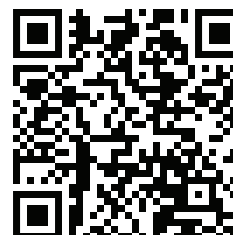
Wednesday, June 10

7:15am - 11:30am	Registration/Help Desk Open
7:30am - 9:15am	Breakfast & AMCTO Annual General Meeting (AGM)
9:30am - 10:30am	Closing Keynote Presentation: Life is a Series of U-Turns - Hal Johnson & Joanne McLeod
10:30am - 10:45am	Exhibitor Multi-Day Challenge & Zone Challenge Prize Announcements
10:45am - 11:00am	AMCTO 2026 Conference Closing Ceremonies

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ONTARIO CITIES PLUG IN

Municipal Fleets Are Going Electric

By Linda Slobodian

Ontario municipalities committed to switching their fleets to electric vehicles (EVs) are charging on. However, this is being executed through a phasing strategy, so only a limited number of vehicles are on the road to date. The EVs include light-duty trucks, SUVs, cargo vans, buses and ice resurfacers for arenas.

The transition from fuel-powered vehicles to zero-emission alternatives

requires innovative solutions to address challenges including evolving federal EV mandates, infrastructure costs, available electric-based technology, procurement and supply chain issues, vehicle accessibility and high upfront purchase costs. At the same time, municipalities must ensure the prudent use of stretched taxpayer dollars.

Transportation is a major focus of the City of Barrie's 2022 Greenhouse

Gas Reduction (GHG) Plan. As the city works to transition to low carbon, net zero by 2050, electrifying its fleet will help reduce GHG emissions.

"The City of Barrie has action plans they've put in place but there are also federal mandates that all vehicle sales be electric by 2035," says Adam Wicks, Barrie's fleet strategy supervisor. "It's going pretty good right now. We're on target for where we expected to be in 2026."

The city has 10 electric half-tonne pickup trucks and one older SUV used for maintenance. All its arenas are electric now that 10 EV ice resurfacers have replaced gas-powered models. The ice resurfacers alone are expected to reap \$25,000 in annual energy cost savings through a 440,000 kW/h energy reduction. The City also anticipates a 40-per-cent reduction in ice resurfacer maintenance costs.

Municipalities are banking on the higher upfront costs to purchase EVs being offset by lower maintenance and fuel savings throughout the cycles of the assets.

“We’re planning for all vehicles at some point to go electric. That all depends on the technological advancements, which models go electric and when, and what the larger manufacturers are making,” says Wicks.

Replacing the fleet of about 150 light-duty vehicles with EVs is expected to take more than a decade, and longer for heavy-duty vehicles and equipment. Precisely how much longer is uncertain. Due to necessary range and performance, some vehicles and equipment may not be converted until technology advances.

“When you start talking about the heavy-duty fleet, when you get into snowplows, dump trucks and fire apparatus, that is really unknown right now where the market will land, what happens with those vehicles if it goes to an alternative fuel. There are some electric options out there. They’re very far away from meeting our operational requirements at this point,” says Wicks.

A tremendous amount of work goes into planning these long-term targets.

“It involves planning infrastructure across various buildings, trying to find efficiency with other projects, aligning vehicle lifecycles with the infrastructure project,” he says.

“Then there are also infrastructure costs that have been incorporated with larger capital projects. When work is being done at buildings, we try to install chargers when we can. There are obstacles in shifting to a new fuel



source. There’s a lot of planning and infrastructure requirements that go into doing a large-scale conversion. We’re trying to plan our infrastructure requirements around the end of the lifecycle for our assets.”

Barrie has an energy management team to measure EV performance, ensure that what’s being done makes sense, is good for the city and is fiscally responsible.

“We’re running pilots across the organization and starting to collect the data on how the vehicles are working and trying different types of vehicles and equipment,” says Wicks.

Departments affected by EV adoption are included in planning meetings. “If they don’t meet their needs, we don’t force an EV on someone,” Wicks says. “Our main goal is to make sure we’re not limiting what our departments can do and what services they can provide.



Adam Wicks
Fleet Strategy Supervisor,
City of Barrie

We plan it with them to try to help ease some of the worries about going electric.”

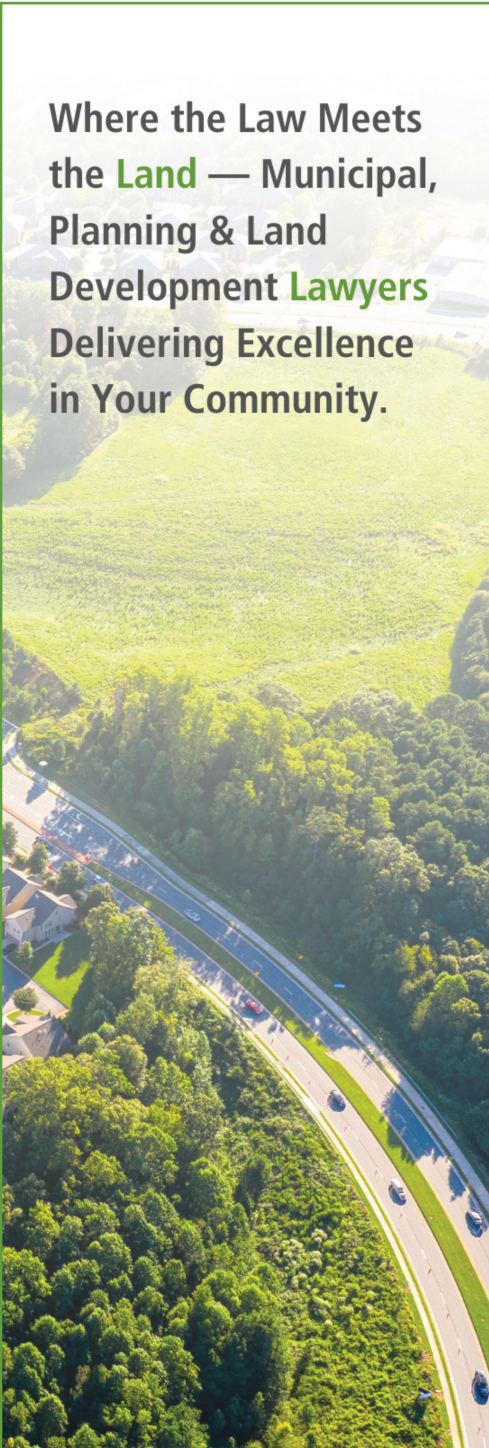
Meanwhile, Barrie continues to explore other options to reduce GHG emissions.

“It’s not all on electric vehicles. The city has also done alternative fuel studies for compressed natural

gas and hydrogen for our heavy-duty vehicles,” Wicks says. “We’re also waiting for the market to decide which way heavy-duty vehicles go. The market determines the pace at which we can convert our fleet.”

Immense pressure led Prime Minister Mark Carney to pause the EV mandate requiring 20 per cent of vehicle sales to be electric by 2026. Carney said the government would review regulations after the presidents of automakers General Motors, Ford and Stellantis in Canada warned their companies would “face extraordinary and

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Trenton Johnson

unnecessary compliance costs” because the Liberal government failed to clarify its EV sales rules.

Carney, who inherited former prime minister Justin Trudeau’s EV mandate, indicated that the increase to 60 per cent in 2030 and 100 per cent in 2035 may stand. Then on Feb. 5, cabinet scrapped the entire Electric Vehicle Accessibility Standard mandate. Carney said cabinet would bring back the \$5,000 EV rebate for car buyers that was suspended last year, but it won’t apply to Chinese-made EVs.

It’s difficult for municipalities to plan around uncertainty and change. “There have been shifts in EV mandates, which is affecting how many units are being produced. Generally, there’s a sense of cooling in the EV market. Canada is reviewing their EV mandates for selling vehicles by 2035. All that affects the widespread adoption and how many vehicles are being made and maybe even converting,” says Wicks.

“Right now, it’s half-tonne pickups and SUVs, smaller cargo vans. It’s hard for us to plan when our full fleet will go electric without the auto industry continuing to push forward the adoption of electric vehicles.”



The market determines the pace at which we can convert our fleet.



St. Catharines implemented the Environmental Stewardship and Organizational Excellence pillars in a 2023–2027 City of St. Catharines Strategic Plan.

“Environmental stewardship is a key pillar in the City’s strategic plan, and we strive to be a leader in environmental sustainability and resilient in the face of escalating climate-change events,” David Oakes, the city’s chief administrative officer, said last April. That’s when the city’s bylaw services division was the first to fully convert its fleet to all-electric cars.

Besides helping to reduce GHG emissions, the seven 2025 Chevrolet Equinox EVs were customized to improve daily operations for bylaw officers. The EVs are outfitted with laptop mounts, internet access and other specialized equipment enabling them to perform as remote workstations. Residents benefit from a stronger, more immediate connection to officers because they no longer have to call City Hall and leave messages, officials said.

St. Catharines has 13 light-duty EVs and 10 light-duty hybrids in its fleet. Vehicles are divided between bylaw, fire prevention, municipal works and engineering.

Officials continue to assess EV compatibility when some vehicles are due to be replaced. However, that doesn’t apply



to medium and heavy-duty vehicles which aren't suitable for EV transition because significant infrastructure upgrades would be required.

"The City plans to add more EVs to our fleet, but we recognize the need for more infrastructure to support that," Oakes told *Municipal Monitor* in a written statement.

"We're proud of partnerships with companies like Alectra Energy Solutions to make it more accessible at our facilities and for the public, but we require additional charging stations to allow us to keep moving in the right direction. City staff continue to plan accordingly, however, and if we have the charging availability and the vehicle or equipment with the capacity to provide for a full shift, then we will consider the purchase," says Oakes.

Meanwhile, several Ontario municipalities opted to go ahead with transitioning from fuel-based public transit vehicles to zero-emission electric buses. The City of Oakville's switch to electric buses started in 2023 with the introduction of smaller buses, then added larger ones in 2025. The city aims to have 74 electric buses, half of its fleet, in service in 2026. The \$13-million switch is jointly funded by the province and the federal government.

Kingston's 2014 Climate Action Plan commits to reducing GHG emissions 30 per cent from municipal operations and fleets by 2030. Like many municipalities grappling with competing budget priorities, Kingston, although committed to shifting some of its light-duty fleet vehicles to EVs and hybrids, was challenged with securing funds for the ambitious plan.

Staff investigated the possibility of leasing several EVs. The advantage of the leasing policy, as opposed to the outright purchase of hybrid pickups or EV vans, resulted in savings of thousands of dollars for each vehicle. Also, maintenance



David Oakes
Chief Administrative
Officer,
City of St. Catharines

expenses were lowered due to the turnover of vehicles every four to five years.

Transitioning municipal fleets to EVs is a massive, complex undertaking with many unknowns that create considerable pressure to get things done effectively and economically. A relatively uncomplicated strategy proves to work well for municipalities that have begun to venture into this uncharted territory. It includes effective communication, fostering innovation, acknowledging limitations and going slowly when necessary, be it for a fleet of buses or one vehicle at a time. ■■■



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MANAGE LIKE IT'S 2026!

Lessons From the Frontlines of Leadership

By Parm Chohan

In 2025, I had the opportunity to coach leaders across the public and non-profit sector — chief administrative officers, executive directors, city managers, senior vice-presidents, managers and frontline staff. I've realized that we're all trying to figure it out; myself included. As much as we think the challenges we face are unique, we're a lot more similar than different.

That's why I pulled together the most common coaching themes to

carry forward into 2026. These are real patterns I saw repeatedly across leaders, teams and the public/non-profit sector. They highlight what people are navigating right now and what's actually helping them grow, lead and show up more effectively.

Challenge: Pick one. Identify action items. Start small. Each theme includes one simple action you can put into practice this week.

Confidence, Identity and Imposter Syndrome

Insight: After a certain point, most people don't need more skill. They need evidence. Confidence grows with small reps and by proving to yourself that you belong.

Municipal example: This might show up when you or someone on your team is asked to explain a service

issue, respond to a resident's concern or offer recommendations during a council prep meeting. Doubt might come from questioning whether your voice matters, not from a lack of understanding the work. Just make sure you've built the right competence and expertise.

One action: Track one daily win for 30 days. Your brain believes what you repeatedly show it.

Leadership Identity and Executive Presence

Insight: Leaders don't always struggle with tasks. They struggle with how they want to be experienced and how they show up. Presence sharpens when you get clear about the leader you're becoming.

Municipal example: This shows up when you're working across departments or representing your team in conversations where reporting lines aren't clear. Executive presence improves when you're intentional about how you want to be experienced, not just what you want to say. This can be as simple as adjusting how you communicate by varying your pitch, pace and pause.

One action: Write one sentence: "I will show up as a leader who ____." Use it as your weekly filter.

Communication, Assertiveness and Boundaries

Insight: Most people aren't bad communicators. They just aren't clear and aren't familiar with what better communication could look like. Assertiveness becomes easier when you reframe it as kindness and clarity, not conflict.

Municipal example: This shows up when expectations aren't aligned between teams or when follow-ups feel uncomfortable. Instead of being unclear to keep the peace, assertiveness becomes easier when the goal



is clarity and respect for everyone involved. Keep in mind that you can always dial your level of assertiveness up or down depending on the situation.

One action: Before any conversation, ask: "What's the one thing they must understand by the end?"

Time, Focus and Workload Management

Insight: Overwhelm doesn't come from volume. It comes from weak systems. When you use a framework such as the 4D method (Do, Delegate, Defer, Delete), stress drops quickly.

Municipal example: This often shows up during busy periods when inboxes are full, meetings stack up, service demands keep coming and community members are standing in front of you with questions. The pressure isn't the number of tasks alone. It's not having a clear way to decide what to do now, what can

wait and what shouldn't be on your plate at all.

One action: Spend 10 minutes each morning sorting your tasks using the 4D framework. You'll get back hours every week.

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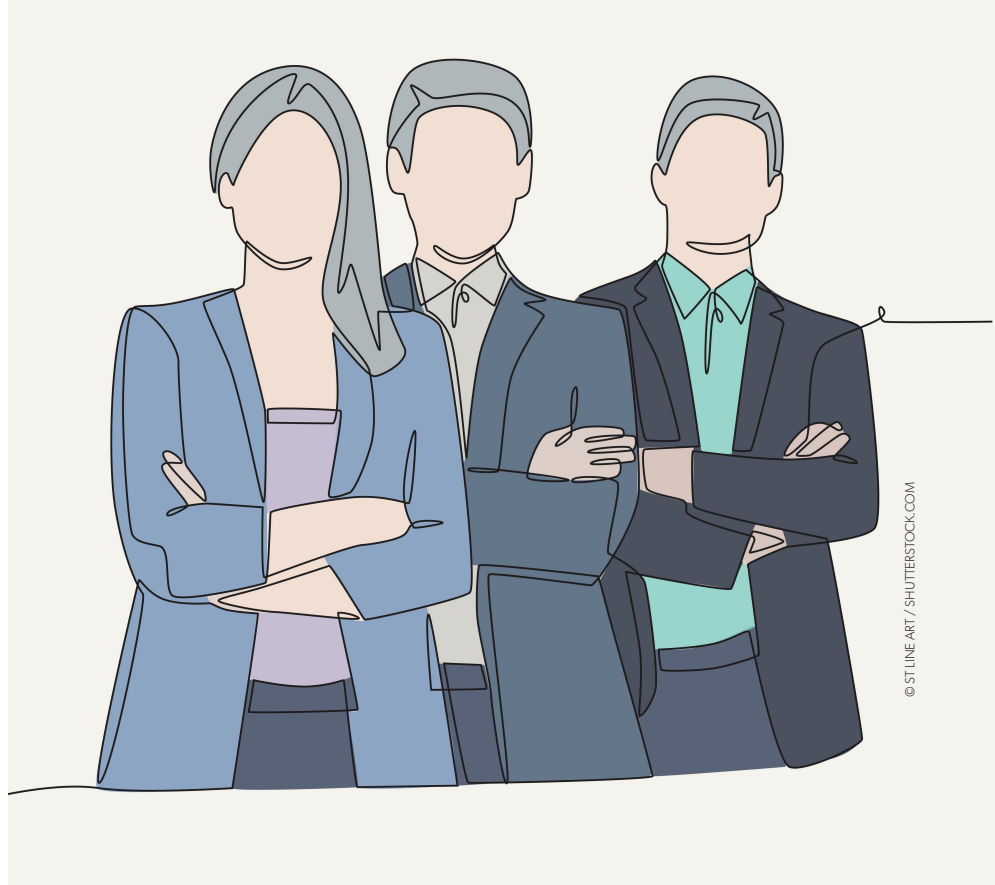


Career Clarity and Narrative Ownership

Insight: Clarity grows when you reframe your past struggles through the lens of the lessons and growth that came from it.

Municipal example: This often shows up when you're asked about your career path during a performance conversation or development discussion. Instead of seeing twists and challenges as missteps, clarity increases when you connect those experiences to the strengths and insights you hold, especially highlighting the adaptability often needed to manage ambiguity.

One action: Write your past-present-future declaration and share it with one trusted person for feedback.



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“
Assertiveness becomes easier when you reframe it as kindness and clarity, not conflict.
”

Visibility and Follow-Through

Insight: Leaders don't get overlooked because they lack skill. They get overlooked because their work isn't visible. Visibility builds trust, credibility and opportunity. Make sure that you're good at your craft. Mediocre work doesn't get rewarded.

Municipal example: This shows up when you're contributing to a project,

managing service requests or co-ordinating across departments, but others only hear about the work when something goes wrong. Visibility improves trust and credibility when progress, decisions and next steps are shared before issues arise. Visibility also doesn't need to sound like “me, me, me.”

One action: Share one concise update each week with your leader or team: what you completed, including goals achieved, what you're working on and what's next.

Strengths, Values and Decision Alignment

Insight: When you make decisions through the lens of your strengths and values, alignment increases and anxiety drops.

Municipal example: This often shows up when you have to balance urgency, stakeholder expectations and long-term impact. Anxiety



Parm Chohan, MCM
Founder/Leadership
Trainer & Coach,
Conquer Leadership

decreases when decisions align with how you do your best work and the values that guide how you serve the community.

One action: At the end of each week, ask: “Did I live my top three values this week?” Score yourself one to 10.

As we move through 2026, resist the urge to fix

everything at once. Pick one item from the above list. Apply it with intention. Build momentum through action. Leadership progress doesn't come from doing more. It comes from doing what matters, consistently. Conquer 2026!

Parm Chohan works with aspiring and established leaders to optimize peak performance through leadership development, team building and coaching. When embraced, this changes behaviour, increases collaboration, improves engagement and builds stronger culture. Reach out to Parm directly or via the AMCTO Leadership Hub. Subscribe to the Conquer Your Potential email list: <https://conquerleadership.ca>. 📧



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STRENGTHENING CYBER RISK RESILIENCE

Why Cybersecurity Is Now a Board-Level Imperative

By Kevin Auger and Sean Duggan

The cyber risk environment has become immeasurably more complicated and significant for organizations. Ever-changing and increasingly costly cybersecurity threats have elevated this issue from an IT department concern to a critical agenda item at board meetings.

This shift underscores the vital importance of preparing now to secure our future. Cyber risks can disrupt business operations anywhere

in the supply chain — even several layers down. While there is no silver bullet to managing these risks, implementing basic cybersecurity controls and best practices — and maintaining them — can markedly improve our cyber resilience.

Tip #1: Focus on the Basics — Cybersecurity Controls

Progress in cyber risk resilience is largely due to organizations prioritizing and implementing

effective cybersecurity controls. These include:

- Strong access controls
- Regular software updates
- Encryption of sensitive data
- Multi-factor authentication

Incremental improvements like these add up quickly and can significantly reduce the risk of cyberattacks, even from sophisticated adversaries.

Tip #2: Understand Evolving Cyber Opportunities and Threats

Cyber threats evolve as new technologies emerge and attackers adapt their tactics. Currently, artificial intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and concerns:

- AI tools can help filter alerts, directing the most urgent to human analysts; and
- Conversely, attackers may use AI to identify vulnerabilities or create malicious code.

“

Cyber threats evolve as new technologies emerge and attackers adapt their tactics.

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Supply chain and third-party risks are also climbing the agenda. Even organizations with secure systems often lack visibility into the security of their third, fourth or further downstream parties. A compromised third party can disrupt supply chains and open pathways for attackers.

Supply chain risk also extends to privacy concerns. Third parties often handle sensitive data and exposure can lead to reputational damage and regulatory sanctions, such as those under the European GDPR.



Tip #3: Build Toward Greater Cyber Resilience

To deepen resilience, assess and measure your organization's cyber risk appetite by asking:

- Which assets and services are mission-critical and must be protected?
- What would be the cost in money, time and reputation if these were exposed or disrupted?

With these insights, you can:

- Decide reasonable steps to protect your digital footprint;
- Plan for efficient and effective recovery, focusing on mission-critical operations;
- Use tabletop exercises, vendor assessments and case studies to refine defence and recovery measures; and
- Establish clear processes and policies so everyone knows their roles daily and during crises.

Finally, build these into a tested incident recovery plan.

Tip #4: Leverage Key Resources for Improvements

Security improvements don't have to be costly. Consider:

- Engaging internal experts in planning cybersecurity platforms and risk responses;
- Partnering with knowledgeable external teams offering advisory services, risk modelling and cyber risk databases that translate into actionable insights and solutions; and
- Using government and international resources, such as standards and checklists, to cost-effectively secure your environment.

For Canadian organizations, valuable resources include:

- The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security — guidance on cyber risks and safety; and
- The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) — resources on protecting personal data and privacy.



“

Even organizations with secure systems often lack visibility into the security of their third, fourth or further downstream parties.

”

Also, informal networks such as peer organizations and trade bodies can help share best practices and warn of emerging risks.

Tip #5: Maintain Best Practices All Year Long

In the ever-changing cyber threat landscape, there is no finish line. It is essential to maintain best practices continuously and leverage threat intelligence to stay ahead of potential risks.

Bonus Tip: Consider Cyber Insurance and Policy Resources:

Cyber insurance can help transfer risk and protect your organization, key stakeholders and supply chain partners from both direct (first-party) and indirect (third-party) cyber threats.

It typically requires additional due diligence, such as vulnerability scanning and benchmarking protection levels, which enhances your overall cyber resilience and

incident-response planning. Many cyber-crime insurance policies also provide valuable pre- and post-breach resources designed to minimize disruption and downtime while maximizing recovery from cyber incidents affecting both private and public sectors.

Maintaining awareness and proactively managing cyber risks allows individuals and organizations to detect potential issues early, respond effectively and protect sensitive information.

In a world where digital systems are deeply interconnected, consistent vigilance is a critical part of maintaining trust, resilience and long-term stability.

Kevin Auger is a managing director leading the special risk department at Victor Canada, specializing in specialty products within errors and omissions, technology and cyber insurance. With 26 years of experience in the industry, he possesses extensive expertise in developing tailored, innovative cyber solutions, including for the municipal sector.

Sean Duggan is the chief privacy officer at KRG and leads the specialty and claims practice groups, focusing on innovative insurance solutions including cyber, directors & officers liability, M&A transactional risk and global placements. He brings nearly 25 years of experience and is a former president of the Toronto Insurance Council. He holds key certifications, including Accredited Director (Chartered Governance Institute of Canada), Cyber Risk (CCIC & CCIS), Commercial Insurance (CIP) and Risk Management (CRM). ■■



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ACCESSIBILITY IS GOOD BUSINESS

Building Accessible Communities Builds Stronger Local Economies

By Sharon Saunders

Consider the numbers: An estimated 3.8 million people in Ontario over the age of 15 have at least one disability. As well, in 2024, over 740,000 working-age adults with disabilities were unemployed but had the potential and desire to work.¹ And as the population ages, these numbers will grow.

Businesses of all sizes and in all sectors can implement and enhance straightforward accessibility practices to attract customers with disabilities, as well as their families and friends. This could include doing simple things such as bringing products outside your business if customers are not able

to physically enter your premises, or training staff to communicate via pen and paper with anyone who has a hearing disability. You could also read a menu out loud and describe the items to customers with a visual disability.

Making businesses more accessible² is generally easier and less costly than most people realize. Reducing barriers for people with disabilities can increase market share, give businesses access to a broader pool of talent when they are recruiting employees and boost a business's brand and reputation among customers. Both individual businesses and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) can leverage increased

accessibility to achieve economic benefits.

One example is the Collingwood Downtown BIA, which executed an award-winning project in partnership with private property owners. As a result, approximately 80 per cent of downtown Collingwood's businesses are now accessible. The BIA considered available federal and provincial funding options to assist with construction or renovation projects. They were also aware of how the built environment around a business can impact customer access and they developed affordable solutions to remove barriers. Most importantly, they took a collaborative

¹ Noor Al-Azary, Vanessa Sinclair, Rachel Bath and Melissa Pagliaro, "Shaping Tomorrow," CCRW Trends Report 2024, https://ccrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Shaping-Tomorrow_CCRW_Trends-Report-2024.pdf.

² Accessibility in Ontario: Information for Businesses, 2025, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-information-businesses#foot-1>.

Did You Know?

Businesses with 20 or more employees are required to submit accessible compliance reports to the province by Dec. 31, 2026. The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility offers webinars, presentations and supports via their website and digital newsletter. For more information or questions, contact accessibility@ontario.ca

Tips to Stay Accessible for Customers

- Place hand sanitizers and other disinfectant stations at a height that everyone can access, including people using mobility devices.
- Ensure policies that restrict the number of people in an establishment (for example, a restaurant or store) take into account the needs of people with disabilities who rely on support persons. Allow a support person to accompany a person with a disability or ensure that staff provide comparable support.
- Do not require customers to show product barcodes, which is impossible for those who are blind or have low vision.
- Offer and post menus, signs, warnings and requirements in alternative formats, in addition to a Quick Response (QR) code.
- Use large font on signs to ensure that people with low vision can view the information.
- Ensure your website meets accessibility requirements. See the Accessibility in Ontario website for details.
- Let people with disabilities know that they can ask for appropriate accommodations.
- Set aside enough space in waiting areas (including public transit areas) for someone using a mobility device, assistive devices or a service animal.
- Maintain areas used for line-ups so they do not have obstacles or poor sidewalk conditions.
- Use wayfinding directional arrows to direct foot traffic, where possible. Use tactile indicators, for example, on paths and stairs to guide blind and low-vision customers.

approach where businesses worked together with property owners to plan ways to remove accessibility barriers and promote the enhanced accessibility features of an individual business or BIA to attract a potentially new group of customers.

Municipalities across the province are key accessibility partners of the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. We regularly collaborate with accessibility advisory committees (AACs) across Ontario in communities with 10,000 or more residents. The committees play a role as accessibility champions, bringing the voices and experiences of people with disabilities to decision-makers at the municipal level. We want to collaborate with more municipal partners, such as economic development officers, to reach Ontario businesses and help them better understand the benefits of accessibility so they can become accessibility champions.

Are you part of an economic development team building the capacity of your local business owners? We encourage you to share accessibility resources with your business clients.³ This includes information about how to implement accessibility practices, hire people with disabilities and meet AODA legal requirements.

When your team offers learning opportunities, such as webinars or training sessions, it can have a ripple effect of building more understanding relationships between individuals and teams while working to positively transform communities for all to access and benefit from local services.

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility looks forward to developing new municipal connections to champion accessibility across local communities, reducing barriers for people living with disabilities and building business success.

Sharon Saunders is a senior program advisor in the Outreach and Education Unit of the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. 🇺🇸

³ Government of Ontario, "Accessibility in Ontario," <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario#section2>.

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