

Staff Report

Presented By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer

Meeting Date: April 14, 2025

Subject: Opposition to Amendments to O.Reg. 530/22 to Strong Mayor Powers

Attachment(s): Minister's Letter to Heads of Council
Aird & Berlis LLP Eight-Minute Municipal Article Strong Mayors
Strong Mayors Letter to Province

Recommendation

That Council direct the Mayor to submit the attached correspondence Strong Mayors Letter to Province to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the Town of Saugeen Shores comments on the proposed amendments to O.Reg 530/22; and

That Council direct the Mayor, with the support of staff, to research available options to delegate Strong Mayor authority should it come into effect May 1, 2025.

Report Summary

On April 9, 2025, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced the expansion of Strong Mayor powers to 169 additional municipalities, including the Town of Saugeen Shores. This expansion, effective May 1, 2025, aims to help municipalities deliver on provincial priorities such as building homes, transit, and other infrastructure.

Background/Analysis

On April 9, 2025, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced a significant [expansion of Strong Mayor powers](#) to [169 additional municipalities](#), including Saugeen Shores, effective May 1, 2025 (attached). The Province aims to help municipalities deliver on provincial priorities as identified in the [Ontario Regulation 580/22; Provincial Priorities](#) which includes things such as building homes, transit, and other infrastructure.

The Strong Mayor legislation would enable the Mayor to:

- Appoint the municipality's Chief Administrative Officer.
- Hire certain municipal department heads and establish and re-organize departments.

- Creating committees of Council, assigning their functions and appointing chairs and vice-chairs of committees of Council.
- Propose the municipal budget, which would be subject to Council amendments and a separate head of Council veto and Council override process.
- Propose certain municipal by-laws if the mayor is of the opinion that the proposed by-law could potentially advance a provincial priority identified in regulation. Council can pass these by-laws if more than one-third of all Council members vote in favour.
- Veto certain by-laws if the head of Council is of the opinion that all or part of the by-law could potentially interfere with a provincial priority.
- Bring forward matters for Council consideration if the head of Council is of the opinion that considering the matter could potentially advance a provincial priority.

The expansion of powers builds on the initial introduction of Strong Mayor powers for Toronto and Ottawa in 2022, which has since been gradually rolled out across the province. Currently, these enhanced powers have been imposed on 47 municipalities, with the provinces intention to assist in 'cutting red tape and accelerating the delivery of key priorities'. The new expansion aims to empower mayors to take actions for their communities, supporting building homes and infrastructure faster.

Details

Strong Mayor Powers will grant heads of Council enhanced executive authority to support shared provincial-municipal priorities. The Mayor will have special powers and duties under [Part VI.1](#) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Outlined below as well as in the attached Aird & Berlis LLP Eight-Minute Municipal Article Strong Mayors, is an overview of the proposed changes that will come into effect May 1, 2025.

1. Powers and Duties for the Mayor and Council:

Several Strong Mayor powers are related to provincial priorities that are identified in the [Ontario Regulation 580/22; Provincial Priorities](#). Provincial priorities include the following:

- building 1.5 million new homes by December 31, 2031
- constructing and maintaining infrastructure to support housing, including:
 - transit
 - roads
 - utilities
 - servicing

2. Chief Administrative Officer:

One of the powers granted to the Mayor is the ability to choose to hire and appoint the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). This power may be delegated back to Council.

3. Organizational Structure:

The Mayor has the authority to hire or terminate certain municipal division heads, excluding statutory positions such as the clerk, treasurer, Integrity Commissioner, Ombudsman, Auditor General, registrar, chief building official, chief of police, fire chief, medical officer of health, and

other officers required by statute. Additionally, the Mayor can create and reorganize the structure of the municipality to improve efficiency and streamline operations. However, any changes to the organizational structure must comply with legal requirements, including existing collective agreements or contracts.

4. Local Boards and Committees:

The Mayor has the authority to appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of prescribed local boards and committees, and may establish, dissolve and assign functions to committees. The power with respect to committees may be delegated back to the Council.

5. Prescribing Provincial Priorities:

The Mayor can bring forward matters for Council consideration if they believe that considering the matter could potentially advance a provincial priority as identified in the [Ontario Regulation 580/22; Provincial Priorities](#). When doing so, the Mayor will consider any rules regarding notice and public consultation that apply to the exercise of municipal authority.

6. By-law Power Related to Provincial Priorities:

The Mayor can propose certain municipal by-laws if they believe the proposed by-law could potentially advance a prescribed provincial priority as identified in the [Ontario Regulation 580/22; Provincial Priorities](#). This power applies to by-laws made under the [Municipal Act, 2001](#), the [City of Toronto Act, 2006](#), the [Planning Act](#), and section 2 of the [Development Charges Act](#). When proposing a by-law, the Mayor must provide a copy of the proposed by-law and their reasons for the proposal to the clerk and each member of Council. The Mayor can require Council to consider and vote on the proposed by-law at a meeting, despite any rules in a local procedure by-law. By-laws proposed using this power are passed if more than one-third of all Council members vote in favor. The Mayor is also able to vote on passing the by-law.

7. Veto Power and Council Override:

The Mayor may veto certain by-laws if they believe the by-law could potentially interfere with a provincial priority as identified in the [Ontario Regulation 580/22; Provincial Priorities](#). This veto power applies to by-laws approved by Council made under the [Municipal Act, 2001](#), the [City of Toronto Act, 2006](#), the [Planning Act](#), and section 2 of the [Development Charges Act](#).

The Mayor must provide written notice to Council of their intent to consider vetoing the by-law within two days after Council voted in favor of the by-law. If the Mayor decides to use their veto within 14 days after the Council vote, they must provide a written veto document to the clerk, who then shares it with each member of Council and makes it available to the public.

Council has the ability to override the veto within 21 days after receiving the written veto document. The veto can be overridden if two-thirds of all Council members vote to do so. During this process, the Mayor remains a member of Council with one vote.

8. Directing Staff:

The Mayor may direct staff to undertake certain tasks related to their additional powers and duties. This direction must be provided in writing and can include tasks such as researching policies and programs or implementing decisions related to the Mayor's powers.

9. Delegating Certain Powers:

The Mayor may delegate certain Strong Mayor powers to Council or the municipality's CAO. These powers include appointing a CAO, creating and assigning functions to committees, hiring municipal division heads, and changing the organizational structure of the municipality.

10. Municipal Budget Process:

The Mayor is required to propose the municipal budget each year by February 1. The proposed budget must be shared with each member of Council, the municipal clerk, and made available to the public. If the Mayor does not propose the budget by February 1, Council must prepare and adopt the budget. Council can amend the proposed budget within a 30-day review period, and the Mayor has 10 days to veto any Council amendment. Council can override the veto if two-thirds of all Council members vote to do so.

The Mayor can also initiate and prepare in-year budget amendments to raise additional amounts from property tax. The process for proposing, amending, and vetoing in-year budget amendments is similar to the annual budget process. The Mayor is required to exercise these powers in writing and make them available to the public, subject to the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#).

Summary

In the view of Province, by centralizing administrative control, the Mayor can act swiftly on critical issues, reducing delays and ensuring efficient implementation of projects. The expansion of Strong Mayor powers to additional municipalities in Ontario is aimed to accelerate the delivery of provincial priorities. By empowering mayors with greater executive authority, the province intends to streamline processes, reduce obstacles, and ensure timely development of housing and infrastructure. These enhanced powers come with increased accountability for the Mayor and maintains essential checks and balances through the oversight of Councillors.

In discussion with the Mayor, he has attached the proposed correspondence in opposition to Strong Mayor Powers in Saugeen Shores. This report seeks Council's direction to authorize the Mayor to submit the attached letter as the Town's opposition on Amendments to O.Reg. 530/22 and further direct that the Mayor work with staff to research available options to delegate Strong Mayor authority should it come into effect May 1, 2025.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: CAO Business as Usual

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer