



Report to Council

Department: Office of the CAO
Division: Legal and Legislative Services
Date: October 6, 2025
Prepared by: Joe Malandruccolo, Director, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk
Report Number: Legal and Legislative Services-2025-19
Subject: Strong Mayor Powers Update
Number of Pages: 7

Recommendation(s)

That Legal and Legislative Services Report 2025-19 entitled Strong Mayor Powers Update prepared by Joe Malandruccolo, Director, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk dated October 6, 2025, be received.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Strong Mayor Powers in Part VI.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, enacted May 1, 2025.

Background and Discussion

The Province of Ontario granted the Town of Essex with Strong Mayor Powers, effective May 1, 2025. On April 22, 2025, Administration, through Report 2025-04, presented to Council the requirements of and effects on the Town of Essex as

a result of the granting of Strong Mayor Powers. At that time, Administration promised a follow-up report on the status of the Town's compliance with the Strong Mayor Powers requirements and their ongoing effects on the Town.

By way of history, in the Fall of 2022, the heads of council of the City of Toronto and the City of Ottawa were the first to receive strong mayor powers. The strong mayor framework has since been expanded to 216 municipalities (including Toronto and Ottawa). Of the 216 municipalities, 46 received strong mayor powers in 2023 and 170 (including the Town of Essex) received strong mayor powers effective May 1, 2025.

On May 1, 2025, Mayor Sherry Bondy signed two Mayoral Decisions under the Municipal Act, 2001, effectively delegating two of her strong mayor powers, resulting in the following functions being performed as they were prior to the strong mayor powers coming into effect. The delegations of authority continue to operate and are as follows:

- *SMP-25-01: The Mayor delegated to the CAO the powers to determine the organizational structure of the Town and the powers to make decisions regarding employment matters of the Town.*
- *SMP-25-02: The Mayor has delegated back to Council the authority to appoint or dismiss the CAO, establish, dissolve, appoint chairs/vice-chairs, and assign functions to Committees of Council - Committees where the members are only Council members.*

Additionally on May 1, 2025, Mayor Bondy signed two Mayoral Directions under the Municipal Act, 2001, related to the 2026 Budget, resulting in the following Budget functions being performed as they were prior to the strong mayor powers coming into effect. The directions continue to operate and are as follows:

- *SMP-25-003: The Mayor directed staff to prepare a proposed 2026 Budget and present an operating and capital budget to Council in December 2025.*
- *SMP-25-004: The Mayor directed that the 10-day mayoral budget veto period for the 2026 budget be shortened to zero days, effectively waiving the mayoral veto period.*

The following updates are being provided for Council's reference:

Delegation and Waiver of Strong Mayor Powers in the Town of Essex

Since May 1st, 2025, Mayor Bondy has continued to effectively waive her strong mayor powers by issuing 10 Mayoral Directions, each with the effect of approving all by-laws passed by Council.

Since May 1st, 2025, through regular meetings and other methods of communication, the Province, municipal associations and the other municipalities in Ontario have assisted with providing further clarity to the Town with regard to its requirements and the effect on the Town as a result of Strong Mayor Powers.

Strong Mayor Power Opposition

The Town has received well over one hundred pieces of communication from Ontario municipalities in opposition to the Province's Expansion of Strong Mayor

Powers. The Town also sent a letter of opposition to the Province. To date, the Province has not issued an official response to the opposition received. It can be assumed that Strong Mayor Powers will proceed in Ontario for the foreseeable future.

2026 Budget Process

Strong Mayor Powers legislation includes provisions pertaining to the municipal budget. The 2026 Budget process is well underway. As a result of the Mayor's Budget directions noted above, Administration expects that the process will mirror the Town's historical practice.

The 2026 Budget process under the Strong Mayor Power framework includes various deliverables and timelines.

The head of council is required to propose the budget each year by February 1. The head of council must share the proposed budget with each member of council and the municipal clerk and make it available to the public. After receiving the proposed budget from the head of council, council can amend the proposed budget by passing a resolution within a 30-day review period. The head of council then has 10 days from the end of the council review period to veto any council amendment. To veto a council amendment, the head of council must provide written documentation of the veto and rationale to each member of council and the municipal clerk on the day of the veto. Within 15 days of such head of council veto, Council may override the head of council's veto of a council amendment if two-thirds of all council members vote to override the veto. If the head of council

does not propose the budget by February 1, council must prepare and adopt the budget.

In accordance with the Mayor's *SMP-25-003* direction, the Mayor will not be proposing the 2026 Budget. Instead the Budget is being prepared by Town Staff for Council's consideration. On June 2nd, Council received a Budget Initiation Memo outlining the budget process for the 2026 Budget. Some key dates included:

- Public Consultation session to be held on September 23, 2025 (Essex Centre), and October 2, 2025 (Harrow)
- November 24, 2025, Budget Introduction and Walkthrough with Council
- December 8, 2025, Budget Deliberation Meeting with Council

Upon the earlier of the:

- i. Council and Mayoral adopted veto period, and
- ii. Waiver by the Mayor and Council of their veto rights;

the Mayor and all of Council will sign a declaration approving the 2026 Budget under the Strong Mayor Power framework.

Lame Duck Council

In accordance with Section 275 of the Municipal Act, 2001, during the year of a municipal election there is a legislated time period in which certain actions of Council (including the Mayor) may be restricted. This is commonly referred to as a "Lame Duck Council" period. There have been many questions since the

enactment of Strong Mayor Powers, some of which are still unclear. At this time, it is unclear whether or not Town of Essex Council will be deemed a Lame Duck Council prior to the 2026 election and, if so, how the Strong Mayor powers will be affected during a lame duck period. Administration will return to Council with legal advice should the outgoing Council be deemed a Lame Duck Council.

To support municipalities with implementation, the Ministry provides updated guidance via the [Ontario Municipal Councilor's Guide](#).

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

Consultations

Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer

Shelley Brown, Deputy Clerk

Link to Strategic Priorities

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town's competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex "home".
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Strong Mayor Powers Update - Legal and Legislative Services-2025-19.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Oct 1, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Giurissevich". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Oct 1, 2025 - 2:53 PM