



— **OBCM** —
Ontario's Big City Mayors



Ontario Mayors and Regional Chairs discuss recovery with federal and provincial ministers

Guelph, Ontario, August 12, 2020 – The path to economic and social recovery from COVID-19 was the focus of the annual joint meeting of Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) and Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM), formerly known as the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario.

Chair of MARCO and Region of Waterloo Chair Karen Redman and OBCM Chair and Mayor of Guelph Cam Guthrie both expressed appreciation for the Safe Restart Agreement signed by the Governments of Canada and Ontario, which provides emergency operating funding for municipalities. For Ontario municipalities, the agreement will provide up to \$4 billion in funding from the provincial and federal governments to help local governments maintain critical services including transit.

"Municipalities across Ontario have spoken with one voice: to protect municipal services, we require immediate, flexible provincial and federal support to cover lost revenues and additional costs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are encouraged by the collaboration and leadership of the provincial and federal governments to reach this agreement," said Region of Waterloo and MARCO Chair Karen Redman. "This funding is essential as municipalities continue to deliver transit, emergency services, public health, child care, housing and social services – essential public services that contribute to the backbone of a strong economic recovery."

"I want to thank the Prime Minister and Premier for responding to municipalities' call for emergency relief during this unprecedented time," added Mayor Guthrie. "We look forward to continuing to work hand in hand with them to support medium and long term economic recovery. There can be no recovery without cities."

Mayors and Chairs of Ontario's biggest cities and regions welcomed the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Canada's Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Ontario's Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, to the meeting to discuss next steps in recovery.

Minister Hussen spoke about the Government of Canada's plans to address homelessness and support vulnerable populations, including the creation of supportive and affordable housing under the National Housing Strategy.

Minister MacLeod outlined how the Province of Ontario plans to support the recovery of the tourism and cultural sector, which was particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a five-year recovery plan that includes a short-term focus on hyper-local tourism.

The Mayors and Chairs also received updates from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) at the meeting.

In May, Ontario's Big City Mayors proposed a three-phased approach to dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, including immediate financial relief, a comprehensive recovery plan as the economy reopens, and longer-term reform of funding and service delivery responsibilities between municipalities and the federal and provincial governments.

"We are pleased that financial relief is on its way," said Mayor Guthrie, "But we know our work is not done yet. Municipalities are at the table for important discussions about economic and social recovery, and today's meeting is one more example of that."

About Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO)

Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) represents single-tier cities and regions and includes 16 heads of council representing approximately 75 per cent of Ontario's population. MARCO advocates for policy action and change on issues of importance to member municipalities, who are all Consolidated Municipal Service Managers with responsibility for core social services, child care and community housing.

About Ontario's Big City Mayors

[Ontario's Big City Mayors](#) (OBCM), formerly known as the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, includes mayors of 29 single and lower-tier cities with a population of 100,000 or more, who collectively represent nearly 70 per cent of Ontario's population. OBCM advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario's largest cities.

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