

Ontario's big city mayors await details on transitional funding

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August 19, 2019 – Ontario's big city mayors are cautiously optimistic that transitional funding will soften the blow of Provincial funding cuts for 2020, but are again asking for a seat at the table to work with the Province over the longer term.

Premier Doug Ford announced the transitional funding in his remarks at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference, saying it will ensure municipalities can continue to fund critical services like public health and child care.

"I am encouraged by Premier Ford's comments that he wants to work hand in hand with municipalities, and put cities back in the driver's seat when it comes to local services," said LUMCO Chair and Mayor of Guelph, Cam Guthrie. "We have said all along that we understand the fiscal challenges the Province is facing, and we want to work together to meet those challenges while protecting the services our residents depend on. I look forward to more details on the transitional funding, and more concrete plans to consult with municipalities, as we develop our 2020 municipal budgets this fall."

The Premier did not provide details on the amount or timing of the transitional funding for 2020. Cities have already begun to develop their 2020 budgets and are trying to account for potential provincial funding cuts.

In the spirit of forging a more collaborative and consultative relationship, in June Mayor Guthrie offered a subcommittee of LUMCO Mayors to meet with the Province in advance of 2020 municipal budgets. To date, the Premier's office has not responded to the offer.

"We appreciate that transitional funding will soften the blow for 2020, but LUMCO mayors are concerned that we will still face significant cuts to services like public health and child care in 2021," said Guthrie.

In his remarks, the Premier also announced that land ambulance funding will increase by an average of nearly four per cent for 2019, and that the Community, Culture and Recreation stream of the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program will be open for applications on September 3, 2019. He also noted that 90 per cent of eligible municipalities took up the Province's offer of funding to help pay for line-by-line reviews of their municipal finances.

"Municipalities are the only level of government required by law to balance our budgets annually, and we are always committed to finding savings and delivering value for tax dollars. Today, the Premier committed to giving municipalities the tools we need, and we plan to hold him to that pledge," said Guthrie.

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