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Subject AMO Policy Update - Special Advisor Releases Community Hubs Report

August 10, 2015

## Special Advisor Releases Community Hubs Report

Today, the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs released "[Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan](#)". The report notes that there are many successful examples of community hubs in the province yet there is the potential to establish many more with the right policies in place. A community hub is a public space such as a school or neighbourhood centre that offers coordinated services such as education, healthcare, and social services. These hubs provide a myriad of benefits to the local community including increased access to a range of services in an integrated manner.

Through the mandate letters to several cabinet ministers in 2014, the Provincial Government made clear its intention to develop a cross ministerial, province-wide community hubs policy. To facilitate the development of this policy, the Premier appointed [Karen Pitre](#) as her Special Advisor. In turn, a [Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group](#) was established to provide advice to government.

The recommendations in the report touch on a number of areas of interest to municipal governments and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs). This includes ways to support integrated and longer-term local planning regardless of jurisdictional boundary. The Special Advisor has suggested a review of options to leverage municipal financial tools to support the creation of new community spaces. Examples include business incubators, development charges, and municipal capital facilities agreements. Also of interest are recommendations concerning how school properties can be re-purposed as community hubs.

AMO is analyzing the recommendations and will continue to work with the government as they move forward on this important initiative to implement a community hubs policy for Ontario.

At the annual conference next week in Niagara Falls, please join AMO for a concurrent session featuring a discussion of community hubs called "Community Hubs in Schools and Beyond" (Tuesday, August 18, 9 a.m. in the Port Colborne Room). Karen Pitre, the Premier's Special Advisor, will lead the discussion. She will be joined by a panel of experts and stakeholders in the education sector to explore how community hubs can take root in Ontario's schools and in the process help serve to avert unnecessary closures.

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