

Legislative Updates

Upcoming Provincial Legislation on Human Trafficking

Recommendation

That the October 21, 2020, Communications and Engagement report CE00028, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the September 18, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare a report on upcoming Provincial legislation on Human Trafficking.

Executive Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this report provides a delayed summary and analysis of *Bill 8: Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act* that has already come into force in response to the Community and Public Services Committee September 18, 2019 motion. The report also provides an update on the implementation of the *Municipal Government Act* amendments and the *City of Edmonton Charter, 2018 Regulation* and an overview of other recent and anticipated legislative changes that may be of heightened municipal interest.

Report

***Municipal Government Act* Implementation Status Update**

On January 23, 2018, City Council approved Administration's work plan for implementing the *Municipal Government Act's* mandatory and enabling provisions as provided in Communications and Engagement report CR_5344. An update on the related work from January 2020 onward is provided as Attachment 1.

As noted in the Communications and Engagement report CE0029, Municipal Affairs is currently undertaking a red tape review of Part 17 (Planning and Development) of the *Municipal Government Act*. Depending on the outcome of this review, Administration's work plan for implementation of the *Municipal Government Act* provisions might need to be evaluated and updated.

City of Edmonton Charter Regulation Implementation Status Update

On June 13, 2018, and May 15, 2019, City Council approved Administration's work plan for implementing provisions included in the Charter Regulation and Charter Amendment Regulation as provided in Communications and Engagement reports CR_5799 and CR_7024, respectively. An update on the related work from January 2020 onward is provided as Attachment 2.

Other Legislative Updates

Following the Government of Alberta's Speech from the Throne (February 25, 2020), the Alberta Legislative Assembly passed 34 new Bills in line with the Government's election platform commitments and in response to needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Legislative Assembly now stands adjourned until October 20, 2020, when a new Speech from the Throne will be delivered which will outline the Government's plans and priorities for the upcoming Fall legislative session.

Recent Provincial Legislation

Given the speed at which new legislation has been introduced this year, and to enhance corporate awareness of the scope of the legislative changes, a consolidated table has been prepared (see Attachment 3) that highlights relevant new Bills that have received Royal Assent. It is important to acknowledge that while many new pieces of legislation have been approved, the Government of Alberta's implementation and any resulting impacts for many of these legislative changes are still to come.

Bill 8: Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act

On April 7, 2020, Minister Schweitzer introduced *Bill 8: Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act* in support of the nine-point plan to combat human trafficking as outlined in the United Conservative Party's election platform, and as reflected in multiple Ministry business plans. While the election platform committed to passing the *Saving the Girl Next Door Act* modelled on legislation that had been contemplated in Ontario, Bill 8 supports the commitment under a new title. Bill 8 came into force on May 12, 2020, with the exception of Part 2, which came into force on July 1, 2020.

Bill 8 introduces new measures to help address human trafficking and better protect and empower survivors of crimes of human exploitation in general, including sexual exploitation, forced labour trafficking, and trafficking in human organs or tissues. Key changes in Bill 8 are as follows:

- Creating a standard provincial definition of human trafficking and sexual exploitation;
- Extending the definition of sexual exploitation to persons of all ages;
- Making it easier for survivors to get protection orders against their traffickers;
- Enabling police to take quicker action to rescue survivors and permitting police officer entry;

- Allowing survivors to sue their traffickers;
- Permitting courts to keep certain information confidential, and the option to order that any information identifying a victim or witness shall be under publication ban;
- Allowing violence or threats of violence against pets or other persons to be considered when determining whether the threshold of human trafficking has been met;
- Including the return of pets and personal property to a survivor as a condition of a human trafficking protection order; and
- Proclaiming February 22 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

The Province's commitment to introducing new measures to combat human trafficking is generally consistent with efforts made by other orders of government that are largely guided by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This includes recent efforts by the Government of Canada, through their five-year National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking (2019-2024) aimed at helping protect Canada and individuals from all forms of human trafficking and the harms associated with the crime.

On May 19, 2020 the Government of Alberta established a new Human Trafficking Task Force to provide further guidance and recommendations on how to best implement the government's nine-point action plan to combat human trafficking. Edmonton Police Service Chief of Police and the Executive Director of REACH Edmonton have been appointed as members of the seven-member task force.

Emerging Provincial Legislative and Policy Directions

Following the adjournment of the Provincial Legislative Assembly on July 29, 2020, the Government of Alberta announced they had implemented or have advanced 255 of the 375 commitments included in their election platform. This signals that the Government intends to continue advancing many other changes prior to the end of their four-year mandate. The following provides a high-level scan of some provincial initiatives - currently underway or anticipated - which may have a direct bearing on municipalities:

- Red Tape Review
 - In June 2019, the *Red Tape Reduction Act* received Royal Assent reinforcing the province's commitment to advance strategies and initiatives to eliminate and prevent unnecessary regulatory and administrative requirements. Government efforts continue on that front, and the province's Cut the Red Tape website shares over 130 actions taken to date across a broad range of government programs and legislation, including the *Municipal Government Act*. The website continues to invite ideas for further red tape reduction.
 - Administration is continuously reviewing its processes and enabling legislation for opportunities to make suggestions about how to reduce red

tape. One example is a recent review of the *Expropriation Act* procedures in comparison to other jurisdictions, which will result in recommendations being made to the province for future legislative change.

- Fair Deal Panel
 - In June 2020, the Government of Alberta's Fair Deal Panel released 25 recommendations. Some of the recommendations identified a need for further Government of Alberta analysis, which could have an impact on municipalities if implemented, such as creating an Alberta Pension Plan and creating an Alberta Police Service to replace the RCMP.
- Alberta's Recovery Plan
 - Released in June 2020, Alberta's Recovery Plan announced a number of new actions to get people back to work, create new jobs, invest in core infrastructure (including new funding for municipalities) and accelerate economic diversification in response to COVID-19. The province indicated that they would allocate further funding as they sought to better understand the best way to fuel economic recovery, and they would be working on finalizing further strategies for some key economic sectors.
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) Performance Review Implementation Plan
 - On October 13, 2020, the Government of Alberta released the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Performance Review Proposed Implementation Plan that identifies up to \$1.2 billion in net annualized savings following full implementation. However, due to the pandemic, the Government of Alberta has directed that only a portion of the actions identified in the implementation plan proceed at this time; those are estimated to yield up to \$600 million in annual savings that will be achieved over several years. The majority of these savings are expected to occur through labour cost savings through compensation review and by proceeding with contracting out work in community lab, laundry, housekeeping and food preparation services that are expected to shift approximately 10,000 positions to private sector delivery. Approximately 100 management positions are also expected to be eliminated through attrition. This announcement follows the Government of Alberta's acceptance of the AHS Review report in February 2020 that initially identified 57 recommendations to reduce costs and improve health services and could save approximately \$1.9 billion each year.
- Assessment Model Review
 - The Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2019-23 Business Plan identified modernizing the assessment models for regulated properties as one of their key objectives, and the Province began work to identify potential changes to the model that could significantly alter how oil and gas properties are assessed and education property taxes are collected. Municipal Affairs engaged the two municipal associations and industry over the summer, which resulted in significant concerns being raised publicly about the potential for lost municipal tax revenues and unfair tax subsidies if the model was

implemented. It is anticipated that Municipal Affairs will continue their review and undertake further engagement over the coming months.

- Supervised Consumption Services Review
 - In the spring of 2019, the Government of Alberta announced a freeze on funding new supervised consumption services sites pending a review of impacts. In March 2020, the review committee released their final report, which included various concerns and recommendations. The Province is reviewing the panel's recommendation, which could have impacts on sites located in Edmonton and other municipalities.
- Affordable Housing Review
 - Launched in July 2020, a panel was commissioned by the province to conduct a review to identify ways to improve the affordable housing system as well as make more efficient use of taxpayer dollars. From July to August 2020, the panel sought the perspectives of stakeholder organizations including housing providers, private companies and civil society organizations. The Panel has since submitted its report to the Government, which is considering the recommendations before making it public.
- Municipal Measurement Index
 - The Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2019-23 Business Plan identified creating a new annual Alberta Municipalities Measurement Index as one of their key objectives. This follows the government's election platform commitment to evaluate the comparative performance of municipalities on key fiscal indicators such as property tax burden, revenues, spending, and debt.
- New Recall Legislation
 - Launched in September 2020, 12 members of the Legislative Assembly were appointed to the Select Special Democratic Accountability Committee. The committee's mandate is to submit a report pertaining to recall and citizens' initiatives within four months after commencing its review, and a report pertaining to its review of the *Election Act* and *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*, within six months after commencing its review. This follows the 2020 Speech from the Throne (and one of the UCP election platform commitments) stating that Alberta would table "A recall act, allowing constituents to remove their MLAs, municipal councillors, mayors, and school board trustees from office between elections".

Next Steps

City Administration will continue to monitor progress on these and any other new legislative changes to identify potential fiscal and policy impacts on the City, and report back to Council as required. City Administration will also explore opportunities to share input as the province works to analyze or implement any future policy changes.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Conditions of Success			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
A fully informed City Council.	Number of focused Intergovernmental discussions at Non-Regular Council Meetings.	1 Non-Regular Council Intergovernmental updates provided in January 2020.	No target

Attachments

1. Municipal Government Act Implementation Status Report - September 2020
2. City Charter Regulation Implementation Status Report - September 2020
3. New Provincial Legislation of Interest Summary Table

Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Persson, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, Financial and Corporate Services
- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- J. Meliefste, Acting Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- K. Armstrong, Deputy City Manager, Employee Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor