

# AMO'S HEALTHY DEMOCRACY PROJECT

2023-2026

# AMO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- In 2021, AMO's Board strategic objectives included advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in municipal governance, including the *We All Win* campaign to attract more diverse candidates to municipal office.
- *We All Win*, included a media relations and social media campaign leading up to 2022 municipal elections.
- Following the success and interest in the We All Win campaign, in November 2022, the AMO Board approved a 4 year strategy to promote and build healthy democracy in Ontario.



# WE ALL WIN

"Municipal councils have the most impact on our day to day lives. From roads to childcare to garbage pick up and parks, the impact that our municipal councils have is vast, and they are at their best when they include voices from diverse members of the community. To do that, we need to reimagine our perception of who can be an elected official. We have many community leaders already doing amazing things, so we should amplify their work and support their run."

- Amanda Kingsley Malo, Founder, PoliticsNOW



# ISSUES FACING ONTARIO'S MUNICIPALITIES

- Democratic trends
  - Decrease in voter turnout
  - Increase in acclamations
  - One and done
- Significant barriers to electoral participation for equity-deserving communities
  - Low diversity of voices/experience
  - I don't really understand municipal governance/not a place I belong
- Lack of demographic identity data related to candidates and elected municipal officials
- Decline in civility in political discourse
- Continued lack of understanding and awareness of municipal role in political landscape

# AMO'S HEALTHY DEMOCRACY PROJECT

- The AMO Board has committed to building on the success of the *We All Win* campaign by investing \$1m over 4 years in its Healthy Democracy Project.
  
- This important work includes:
  1. Continuing to encourage and support greater diversity of municipal candidates in the 2026 municipal elections
  2. Promote greater respect for democracy and political participation
  3. Improve civic education in Ontario and build greater awareness of the important role of municipal government

# HEALTHY DEMOCRACY PROJECT STREAMS

## Supporting AMO's members

### We All Win

#### Objectives:

- Increase diversity on councils
- Establish measurement and evaluation framework for AMO's municipal DEI AR work
- Expand training and resources for elected officials
- Create supportive environment for AMO members through community of practice

### Respect for Democracy

#### Objectives:

- Lead on ways to keep engagement, political dialogue civil and productive
- Gain broad municipal/partner commitment
- Develop tools and training and identify measurable steps for progress
- Establish AMO as a thought leader in participatory democracy

### Engagement & Education

#### Objectives:

- Engage AMO members/youth to support municipal DEI AR and Respect for Democracy initiatives
- Support AMO members to better engage with community
- Improve/expand civic education and awareness of the relevancy of municipal government

Healthy democratic foundation for municipal government

# PRINCIPLES

- **Transformative:** strengthen the capacity and influence of Ontario's municipal sector.
- **Equity:** direction and decisions will be made transparently in a way that respects and reflects the diversity of Ontario communities.
- **Member-focused:** we will be guided by members and focused on their long-term interests.
- **Collaborative:** we will work together with members and partners to build understanding and solutions on shared challenges.
- **Evidence based:** actions and decisions are based on evidence and information using qualitative and quantitative methods.
- **Relevant:** what we create, build, develop is meaningful and can be utilized for the economic and social sustainability of Ontario's communities.

# HEALTHY DEMOCRACY APPROACH

1. Partnerships & capacity
2. Measurement & evaluation
3. Co-developed solutions & implementation
4. Training & resource development
5. Collaborative advocacy
6. Progress & challenge reporting



# CONNECT

Petra Wolfbeiss

Director, Membership Centre

[pwolfbeiss@amo.on.ca](mailto:pwolfbeiss@amo.on.ca)

Stewart McDonough

Advisor, Municipal Engagement

[smcdonough@amo.on.ca](mailto:smcdonough@amo.on.ca)

**THANK YOU**