

January 2021: Policy and Government Relation Roundup

As part of our biannual roundup, the OAA is pleased to report that despite disruptions due to COVID-19, the PACT and SBEC committees as well as the OAA's Policy & Government Relations (PGR) team had a busy year. Looking at the end of 2020 and working backwards, the OAA had an extremely successful launch of the [2020 Queen's Park Picks](#). The newly launched landing page was well received, social media outreach was broad and dynamic, and the media coverage greatly surpassed previous years reaching a potential audience of nearly 1.5 million.

The OAA issued various letters during the last six months on key files including the Ontario Building Code and national harmonization as well as long-term care facilities (following up on an earlier letter in the spring). On the municipal front, the OAA issued letters to Toronto City Council on REimagining Yonge and housing as a human right, as well as endorsing Whitby's proposed Green Standard. Various other calls and meetings occurred about such issues as standard contracts and Qualifications-based Selection (QBS), in collaboration with Practice Advisory Services. The OAA also participated in consultations related to Building Regulatory Service Transformation and the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. These letters can be viewed in the [Government Relations Portal](#).

Collaboration with municipalities continued, assisted by staff from Practice Advisory Services. The OAA worked with the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa on various files including procurement and vendor performance. After a kickoff meeting in the spring, two very successful roundtables were held between the City of Toronto's Chief Building Official and OAA firms. These meetings are envisioned to continue throughout 2021 and to be expanded to include meetings with the Chief Planner.

While the OAA has not developed original research since the February 2019 release of [Housing Affordability in Growing Urban Areas](#), the OAA did sign on to help fund a Canadian research component within an updated version of a [groundbreaking QBS research study](#) originated by the American Public Works Association and American Council of Engineering Companies. This study is expected to be released in the first half of 2021. Work continued on the CDAO/Ryerson University research project on quality of documents, and these findings are also expected to be released in early 2021 with the aim of improving procurement processes in the province.

PGR monitored a slate of ongoing and emerging files for the OAA, providing ongoing support around COVID-19 and related matters. A whirlwind of legislative changes kept PGR on its feet, including the [COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act](#) (encompassing a number of changes to the *Planning Act*) as well as the [2020 mini-budget](#).

Meanwhile, the OAA joined [Workforce 2030](#) and appointed new members as part of our ongoing participation with the [Toronto 2030 District](#) and [EnergyCompass tool](#). The OAA continued its membership with the [Construction Design Alliance of Ontario \(CDAO\)](#), and OAA Executive Director Kristi Doyle was re-elected to the board. The OAA's OMB/LPAT appeal of the City of Toronto's harmonized zoning bylaw also continued and—while plagued by repeated delays on the city and tribunal side—the OAA expects this file to finally wrap up in 2021.

To top it all off, the Total Energy Usage Intensity (TEUI) Calculator is expected to launch in February 2021, following significant development work throughout the fall of 2020.

For future updates, watch the OAA News and the [Government Relations Portal](#). And if you're curious, the rollout from the first half of 2020 can be viewed [here](#).