



ONTARIO MUNICIPAL
Knowledge Network

Sharing information to improve services

2013 Annual Report

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ONTARIO MUNICIPAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (OMKN) 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

THE OMKN, “SHARING INFORMATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES”

The **Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network (OMKN)** is a web based portal that documents and promotes approaches and practices to improve municipal service delivery and operation. These practices, from across Ontario and other jurisdictions, have been successfully implemented to provide better value to taxpayers. By celebrating municipal successes and recognizing excellence in service delivery models, the OMKN seeks to promote a culture of innovation and to lead in communicating approaches to assist municipalities in decision making that improves service delivery. The Network is a partnership funded by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and administered by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

The OMKN is focused on providing increased utility for users by broadening website content, expanding website linkages to a wide range of jurisdictions and partnering with other key municipal associations, Provincial Government ministries and other organizations interested in sustainable local government.

ABOUT THE OMKN

1. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The OMKN resides within AMO as part of its operational and management structure. The OMKN is supported by AMO’s administrative and technical staff. AMO enters into all contracts related to the OMKN. The work and oversight of the OMKN respects the 2010-2013 Funding Agreement between AMO and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and is guided by the OMKN Terms of Reference and annual Work Plans.

The OMKN Oversight Committee (OC), which is comprised of members from the principal partners (AMO and MMAH), oversees and monitors the OMKN Funding Agreement in relation to mandate, activities and resources of the Network.

The OMKN prepares an Annual Report that is submitted to the MMAH. The Annual Report articulates the Network’s goals, activities, achievements/outcomes and performance and includes an annual financial statement for its fiscal year.

An Associations Advisory Committee (AAC) [HSC, AMCTO, WDO, MFOA, OGRA, OMAA, OMBI, University of Toronto, MMAH] is available for consultation and advice regarding the OMKN

work plan, the development and coordination of practice projects and the identification of approaches and available data bases for both best and beneficial practices.

The Oversight and Associations Advisory Committees meet as needed, to provide input regarding the OMKN Work Plan, priorities and future directions and feedback on how the Network is meeting its Terms of Reference.

2. OMKN BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

LOCATION

The Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network (OMKN) is located at the AMO Offices at 200 University Avenue, Suite 801, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3C6.

MISSION STATEMENT

To operate a forum that develops linkages and dialogue among municipal officials and to be a state-of-the-art web enabled portal that will provide Ontario municipalities with coordinated one window access to leading edge performance management information products and tools, increasing their capacity to make informed service delivery decisions.

VISION

Sharing information to improve services

GOALS

The Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network exists to:

- Undertake and publish research on municipal best/beneficial practices
- Share knowledge and information to support continuous improvement of municipal service delivery
- Celebrate municipal successes and recognize excellent service delivery models, to promote a culture of innovation

STRATEGIES

In order to meet these key goals, the OMKN:

- Fosters dialogue with and among municipalities
- Produces “best practice” reports based on effectiveness and efficiency data

- Documents beneficial practices and other innovations that may not be based on the rigorous efficiency and effectiveness analysis that is used to produce best practice reports
- Articulates the value of applied performance techniques and investments
- Conducts inter-jurisdictional environmental scans and identifies useful resources for municipalities
- Collaborates with an Associations Advisory Committee (AAC) and links to other organizations and program areas
- Ensures sustainability through maintaining existing partnerships and seeking new partnership opportunities
- Continues to evaluate its purpose and make necessary adjustments to reflect the needs of municipalities

3. MANAGEMENT TEAM

OMKN Coordinator – Bruce McLeod

Responsible for Business and Work Planning, Budget development/management, the Annual Report, ongoing reporting and liaison with the OMKN Advisory and Oversight Committees, preparation of summaries of beneficial practices/innovations and OMKN promotion.

AMO Manager Information Services – Snezana Vukelic

Provides information technology support for OMKN.

Team Lead, Intergovernmental Relations and Partnerships Branch (MMAH) – Chris VanDooren

Acts as liaison with OMKN staff and consultants for initiatives/partnerships with the Provincial Government and provides advice on OMKN operation

4. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Key factors in the OMKN operational environment are monitored and assessed to ensure that the Network remains current and robust. These include developments on comparable websites that could be adapted to OMKN operation; information sources/contacts/partnerships for production of appropriate website content; technological support capacity for ongoing website development; promotional opportunities; working relations with OMKN and partners; and feedback from website users and social network followers.

The 2010 – 2013 OMKN Funding Agreement between AMO and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provided stable, financial support to enable certainty in OMKN planning and operation. The MMAH has decided that new OMKN project funding will not be provided after the expiry of the current Funding Agreement. Consequently, other funding partners or other partnership arrangements (e.g. municipal associations, Provincial Ministries, consultants) are actively being pursued on a project basis, to support ongoing operation and practice development projects which meet joint objectives or interests.

The focus on best/beneficial practice development continued in 2013 with the completion or undertaking of key new practice reports on Leading Municipal Practices in Local Food and the impacts of social housing agreement end dates on Affordable Seniors Housing in Ontario.

The weekly AMO Watch File (AWF) continues to be used extensively to promote OMKN initiatives, including practice development, workshops that the OMKN sponsored at key 2013 municipal association conferences and key OMKN postings.

The continuing effective use of social media provides an opportunity to improve the strength and influence of the Network. The OMKN Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts have provided timely access to a broad range of information and innovations of value to municipal councilors, staff and others interested in local government. Social media has provided the opportunity to expand the OMKN client base, for dialogue among municipal website followers and for increasing the utility of the website in connecting to a broad range of expanding information sources.

5. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Best/beneficial practices continue to be developed in conjunction with funding partners for posting on the OMKN. A wide range of leading practices and innovations are being captured through summaries, with contact information and important new websites are being assessed and linked to the OMKN. Information on new Ontario Ministry programs or major developments that apply to Ontario municipalities is featured on the OMKN homepage and media articles and publications on new local government developments are reviewed and recommended.

Criteria for postings include: 1) relevance to Ontario municipalities, i.e. large and small, urban and rural, north and south; 2) transferable practices/innovations from Ontario municipalities, Canadian municipalities and from local governments in other jurisdictions that are based on effectiveness and efficiency measures, that have significant community/customer service impacts or that have been implemented successfully in other jurisdictions; 3) content to focus on a broad range of topic areas including: infrastructure development and management,

alternative energy technology and conservation, municipal service delivery approaches, housing, economic development, municipal governance/operation, municipal finance, legislative frameworks, municipal partnerships, environment/greening and intergovernmental relations; 4) major new developments/events e.g. open data/apps development, social networking and civic engagement, new water and waste water technology, and 5) current local government themes, e.g. alternative energy, economic development/recovery approaches, fiscal accountability. All postings contain links and directions for obtaining further information from the source identified, specific contact information and often, an introduction to a new website or information source.

Social media communications include a range of daily and weekly publications posted by Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts, e.g. “The Economic Development Daily,” “The Knowledge Hub,” “The Urbanism Daily,” “Thinking Cities,” “City Planning News Update” that consolidate information from a variety of sources. These publications relate to municipal governance, economic development, land use planning, environmental issues, green buildings/communities, social media/citizen engagement and urban issues more generally. The daily and weekly publications regularly include OMKN postings and information tweeted.

To ensure success in meeting OMKN project objectives and sustainability, the OMKN maintains existing partnerships and actively pursues new partnerships and joint ventures with other municipal associations, Federal and Ontario Government ministries and consultants. These partnerships can result in resources in kind, new government funding, cost sharing arrangements and new revenue sources to sustain the development and operation of the OMKN. New partnerships have also led to joint promotional opportunities on a wide range of initiatives.

Ongoing MMAH support has been critical to the “best practices” project evolution, which has led to the OMKN. In recognition of this continuing level of support, MMAH assistance is acknowledged on the OMKN website, in all OMKN promotional material and in all OMKN publications.

6. OMKN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2013

The following outlines 2013 Work Plan component activities that have been completed.

Component 1

Capture and document the development/implementation of beneficial practices, municipal innovations and major current developments in Ontario and beyond, for website posting, and report on new best practices.

- The *Best Practices in Local Food – a guide for municipalities* project report was completed in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and posted on the OMKN website. A joint project on the impact of the end of social housing agreements on Affordable Housing for Seniors in Ontario was undertaken with the Housing Services Corporation. A draft practices report was produced in early December 2013, with a final report to be completed in early 2014.
- Proposals for new practice projects in 2014 have been developed or are under discussion with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation on municipal infrastructure asset management and municipal cycling strategies. A funding application on municipal cycling strategies has been submitted to the Ministry for consideration. Discussions are underway with other municipal associations who share interests in municipal infrastructure asset management planning in order to finalize a collaborative project proposal to develop a framework that supports and advances comprehensive municipal asset management, for consideration by the Ministries of Infrastructure and Transportation and Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The major limitation in pursuing the development of best/beneficial practices continues to be budgetary. In this regard, every effort continues to be made to both maximize the OMKN allocation to the development of best/beneficial practices and to find partners to assist in project funding.

- A broad range of municipal association websites in Ontario and beyond are being regularly scanned to identify beneficial practices and innovations for website postings and social media communications. In addition, the OMKN uses a system of regular Google alerts and has subscribed to various municipal association websites and publications to capture and document innovation in both service delivery and municipal operation. OMKN social media followers and accounts being followed are increasingly important sources of information, as these sources grow through time. Website postings continue to be updated two to three times per week on developments from Ontario, Canada, the U.S. and International jurisdictions, in over 30 topic areas and information is tweeted at least twice daily to Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook followers.
- The OMKN homepage is updated regularly to report on new major developments that have application to Ontario municipalities. The OMKN worked with OMAF staff in 2013 to profile innovative practices and strategies for municipal support to local food activities, on rural municipal immigrant settlement and with MMAH staff and Ontario CAOs Leadership Excellency Advancement Project staff on municipal recruitment challenges and succession planning. Other key 2013 postings profiled new trends in civic engagement and Government 2.0, smart cities, predictive data analytics, transit initiatives and energy efficient infrastructure projects.

Component 2

Move beyond website cataloguing of information, to foster dialogue with and among municipalities and to provide opportunities for users to interact and network to obtain service delivery information and obtain advice in resolving related issues.

- The weekly AMO Watch File promotes OMKN postings/initiatives to a wide range of municipal councilors, staff and other recipients and the OMKN social media accounts also enable greater interaction among website followers.
- The OMKN sponsored workshops at key municipal association conferences in 2013 included: a session at the ROMA/OGRA Conference on strategies to sustain municipal leadership and succession planning and a workshop session at the AMO Conference on the guide developed on Municipal Best Practices to Support Local Food. Both conference sessions were very well received by delegates and sessions were at capacity.

Component 3

Increase OMKN utility and user friendliness.

- The OMKN search engine enables website users to conduct key word searches that will produce custom Google reports summarizing related OMKN website information and information from over 30 local government association websites worldwide.
- Research and review of key publications, discussion papers, films/videos continues in order to post summaries and new links have been assessed and added to the OMKN.
- The AWF is issued regularly to advise of new postings and major developments and the OMKN implementation of social media communications provides regular access to timely information and linkages to a wide variety of other information sources.

Component 4

Seek and conclude formal partnerships with other key associations on joint website development.

- Partnerships continued with Ontario Government Ministries to promote new programs for the municipal sector and with Ontario Ministries on new developments and publications.
- Preliminary discussions have been undertaken with other municipal associations on the municipal infrastructure asset management project initiative that would result in a new focus for OMKN information sharing.

Component 5

Ensure ongoing OMKN sustainability and effective operation.

- 2013 marked the final year of OMKN operation under 2010-2013 MMAH/AMO OMKN Funding Agreement. No new operational funding will be provided by MMAH; however, funding from budgeted reserves and carry over from the 2013 Budget is being used to continue a rescaled OMKN project in 2014. Consequently 2014 will be a transition year to identify interest and opportunities to continue some level of OMKN operation.
- Traffic on the OMKN is being monitored regularly, using a Google Analytics Reporting System and the following on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts are being monitored by account analytics.
- The OMKN continues to operate in the context of its Terms of Reference, Annual Work Plan and Budget and the MMAH/AMO Funding Agreement.

Component 6

Preparation of a Communications Strategy for new development.

- There is ongoing assessment of communications opportunities and tools to promote OMKN developments, including the AMO Watch file, the OMKN Conference Workshop Program and social media accounts.

7. OMKN USE ASSESSMENT/PERFORMANCE

Weekly Google Analytics Reports have shown that site visits for 2013 totaled 5475 or about 100 on a weekly basis. OMKN website traffic has not recovered to the higher levels that existed prior to the AMO website redesign/platform upgrade in 2012. Another explanation for the lower level of traffic is there a preference for OMKN clients to receive information directly via social media. Google analytics standard reports no longer track the origins of website traffic; however, it is estimated that the greatest amount of website traffic continues to originate in Canada (and largely from Ontario), followed by visitors from the U.S. and international visitors from Western European countries and others in Asia and the Middle East. Top content accessed included Municipal Innovation News followed closely by Best/Beneficial Practices Reports.

In 2013 there were over 700 Municipal Innovation News postings in over 30 topic areas. New website links were added and a number of publications were reviewed. Major developments, including the activities of Ontario Ministry programs and other municipal association initiatives have been profiled as have major developments in smart cities technology, social media, open

government and civic engagement, municipal climate change initiatives, smart growth, economic development and green building initiatives.

As at December, 2013 the OMKN has 781 Twitter Followers and is following about 1000 other accounts. The number of OMKN tweets in 2013 totaled over 3500, of which about 30% were retweeted. LinkedIn and Facebook connections total 629. Total social media following has increased 21% increase over 2012, to 1410 followers. OMKN social media followers have provided 142 endorsements of the OMKN in categories of expertise including public administration, policy analysis, local government, community engagement, land use planning, legislation and economic development. Top social media followers come from 16 countries, led by Canada, the U.S. and the UK and from 110 cities worldwide.

In conclusion, OMKN social media following continue to show a steady year over year increase. The social media following has enabled the Network to obtain continuous access to relevant, timely information from a wide range of sources related to local government operation and to communicate this information regularly. Efforts will continue to expand social media followers and sources of information on key local government developments.

8. 2013 UNAUDITED OMKN FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Please refer to Appendix A

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Statement of Revenue & Expenses - OMKN
For the Twelve Months Ending December 31, 2013
Preliminary - Unaudited**

	<u>2013 Actual YTD</u>	<u>2013 Budget</u>	<u>2012 Actual</u>
Revenue:			
Grant/Reserve Carryover	<u>\$127,836.69</u>	<u>\$160,000.00</u>	<u>\$177,475.21</u>
Expense:			
Best Practice Reports	30,630.30	52,000.00	72,192.86
Salary & Benefits	64,350.43	64,103.00	65,098.55
Professional Development	0.00	0.00	0.00
Communications	0.00	0.00	0.00
Consulting Fees	1,829.32	8,000.00	7,410.44
Travel & workshops	1,273.44	1,500.00	1,216.49
Meeting Expense	39.93	500.00	686.02
Promotions Expense	9,250.00	12,000.00	11,250.00
Technology Support	1,007.90	500.00	650.59
Website Hosting	5,400.00	5,400.00	5,400.00
Website Upgrade	114.53	0.00	395.10
Telephone	400.00	400.00	400.00
Audit Fees	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,205.00
Legal	0.00	500.00	0.00
Subscriptions/Publications	1,045.25	800.00	565.00
Courier	90.71	0.00	0.00
Postage	4.88	0.00	5.16
Admin Fee - AMO	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Total Expenses	<u>127,836.69</u>	<u>158,103.00</u>	<u>177,475.21</u>
Excess of revenue over expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,897.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Reserve Fund Balance			
Reserve - OMKN	94,182.41	0.00	72,019.10
Reserve - Local Food Strategy	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>

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	<u>2013 Actual YTD</u>	<u>2013 Budget</u>	<u>2012 Actual</u>
Revenue:			
Grant/Reserve Carryover: 45000-5000-000 Rev: OMKN Grant/Reserve Carryover	127,836.69	160,000.00	177,475.21
Total Grant/Reserve Carryover	<u>127,836.69</u>	<u>160,000.00</u>	<u>177,475.21</u>
Expense:			
Best Practice Reports: 55000-5000-000 Best Practice Reports-OMKN	30,630.30	52,000.00	72,192.86
Total Best Practice Reports	<u>30,630.30</u>	<u>52,000.00</u>	<u>72,192.86</u>
Salary & Benefits: 60000-5000-000 Salary & Benefits- OMKN	64,350.43	64,103.00	65,098.55
Total Salary & Benefits	<u>64,350.43</u>	<u>64,103.00</u>	<u>65,098.55</u>
Consulting Fees: 63000-5000-000 Consulting Fees-OMKN	1,829.32	8,000.00	7,410.44
Total Consulting Fees	<u>1,829.32</u>	<u>8,000.00</u>	<u>7,410.44</u>
Travel & workshops: 65000-5000-000 Travel expense-OMKN	1,273.44	1,500.00	1,216.49
Total Travel & workshops	<u>1,273.44</u>	<u>1,500.00</u>	<u>1,216.49</u>
Meeting Expense: 65100-5000-000 Meeting expense-OMKN	39.93	500.00	686.02
Total Meeting Expense	<u>39.93</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>686.02</u>
Promotions Expense: 68000-5000-000 Promotions expense-OMKN	9,250.00	12,000.00	11,250.00
Total Promotions Expense	<u>9,250.00</u>	<u>12,000.00</u>	<u>11,250.00</u>
Technology Support: 70000-5000-000 Technology support-OMKN	1,007.90	500.00	650.59
Total Technology Support	<u>1,007.90</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>650.59</u>
Website Hosting: 70020-5000-000 Web hosting-OMKN	5,400.00	5,400.00	5,400.00
Total Website Hosting	<u>5,400.00</u>	<u>5,400.00</u>	<u>5,400.00</u>
Website Upgrade: 70050-5000-000 Website upgrade-OMKN	114.53	0.00	395.10
Total Website Upgrade	<u>114.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>395.10</u>
Telephone:			

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	2013 Actual YTD	2013 Budget	2012 Actual
Telephone (continued):			
71000-5000-000 Telephone-OMKN	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00
Total Telephone	400.00	400.00	400.00
Audit Fees:			
75000-5000-000 Audit Fees - External & Compliance - OMKN	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,205.00
Total Audit Fees	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,205.00
Legal:			
75100-5000-000 Legal Fees-OMKM	0.00	500.00	0.00
Total Legal	0.00	500.00	0.00
Subscriptions/Publications:			
78020-5000-000 Subscriptions - OMKN	1,045.25	800.00	565.00
Total Subscriptions/Publications	1,045.25	800.00	565.00
Courier:			
81000-5000-000 Courier -OMKN	90.71	0.00	0.00
Total Courier	90.71	0.00	0.00
Postage:			
82000-5000-000 Postage -OMKN	4.88	0.00	5.16
Total Postage	4.88	0.00	5.16
Admin Fee - AMO:			
87030-5000-000 Admin fees - AMO-OMKN	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Total Admin Fee - AMO	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Total Expenses	127,836.69	158,103.00	177,475.21
Excess of revenue over expense	0.00	1,897.00	0.00
Reserve Fund Balance			
Reserve - OMKN:			
26800-5000-000 Reserve - OMKN	94,182.41	0.00	72,019.10
Total Reserve - OMKN	94,182.41	0.00	72,019.10