June 30, 2006

Dear All Heads of Council:

I am writing to bring you up-to-date on our plans following the decision by Finance Minister Greg Sorbara to cancel province-wide assessment updates for 2006 and 2007 to allow for the implementation of the Ombudsman’s recommendations.

This will give us the time we need to consult our municipal stakeholders before we implement all of the recommendations in the Ombudsman’s report that fall under our jurisdiction. When the Ombudsman’s report was released last March, we said some recommendations could be implemented at relatively low cost, while others would take time and require significant resources. After a detailed internal review over the past three months, we have confirmed our initial assessment.

We have been able to move ahead with some of the changes recommended by the Ombudsman. In part, this is because we had previously recognized that some of the changes were required and had already begun working on them. However, we found that many of the key recommendations were closely related to each other and could not be cost effectively implemented in isolation.

As you know, we welcomed the Ombudsman’s review of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. We fully support the recommendations he made for improving the system. We believe that all 20 of the recommendations that fall under our jurisdiction should be implemented.

We also strongly believe that, because of the additional resources required and the cost implications, all Ontario municipalities should be consulted before we implement all of the recommendations. We will develop a process and a framework that will ensure that you are consulted before any final decisions are made regarding full implementation. In the meantime, we are proceeding with work on several fronts. The enumeration is well underway. Work to implement our new computer system continues. We continue to inspect properties and update rolls and values. This year, we expect to add about 80,000 new properties to the assessment rolls and we will mail out approximately one million assessment notices that will reflect changes such as Request for Reconsideration or Assessment Review Board adjustments, classification, or physical changes that affect a property’s value.

Office of the Chair c/o Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
1305 Pickering Parkway, Pickering, Ontario L1V 3P2
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We believe that accurate assessments are the cornerstone of the property tax system in Ontario. Our role is to make sure that assessments are accurate. We believe that the Ombudsman’s recommendations will help improve the accuracy of assessments, make the process more open, transparent and understandable, and build trust in the system.

We look forward to hearing the views of your municipality on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Debbie Zimmerman
Chair, MPAC Board of Directors

Copy  Carl Isenburg, President and Chief Administrative Officer, MPAC

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