

Introducing MTO's new Technical Consultation Portal

A streamlined approach for stakeholder feedback on emerging MTO technical design standards and specifications

In September 2021, Ontario's Ministry of Transportation (MTO) launched the new [Technical Consultation Portal](#) (TCP), an open and transparent consultation tool used to acquire stakeholder and public feedback on MTO's technical documents.

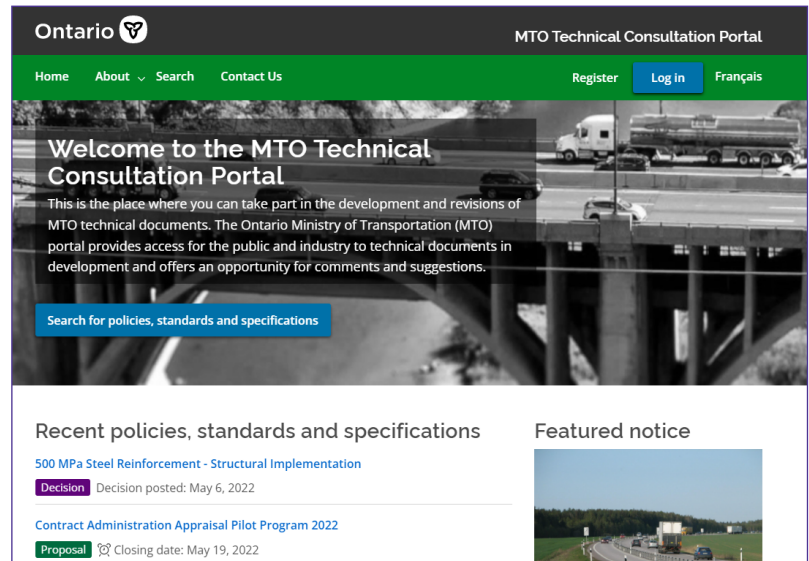
The new TCP makes it easier and more efficient for stakeholders and others to share feedback on emerging MTO standards, specifications, special provisions, standard drawings, technical policies, and design guidance (such as engineering memos or design manual revisions).

Traditionally, MTO consults with stakeholders directly through industry associations, and through established committees. MTO will continue to consult with stakeholders through established committee processes, however the new portal is intended to supplement those existing processes. Reviewers are asked to start providing feedback through the new portal which provides equal opportunity for providing input regardless of the stakeholder.

The document staging process

MTO technical documents, posted to the TCP site, move through a staged process:

1. **Proposal stage:** Document postings start as a proposal, then for a period that generally lasts for 21-days, stakeholders or members of the public may enter comments and suggestions about the document into the TCP system.
2. **Review stage:** At the end of the proposal stage, postings move to the review stage. During the review stage, TCP's custodial office reviews comments and pursues approvals for any associated decisions.
3. **Decision stage:** Once a decision has been approved during the review period, a posting moves to the decision stage. Decisions on notices are posted along with responses to the publicly received comments.



[MTO's Technical Consultation Portal home screen.](#)

The TCP also provides a provision for exception notices during the entire staged process. Exceptions are generally reserved for matters of public safety where expedience is required, or for instances where alternate consultation was completed.

Portal features

The TCP includes access to the [MTO Technical Publications page](#), where final MTO technical documents are housed, including:

- Ontario Provincial Standard Specifications
- MTO Standard Drawings
- Structural Standard Drawings
- Special Provisions
- Provincial Engineering Memorandums
- Design Manuals
- Technical Reports

Technical Consultation Portal, *continued*

The MTO Technical Publications page also provides:

- A link to MTO construction and engineering contracts
- Links to training and education seminars; and,
- A future link to stakeholder committee information

This streamlined, one-window approach, supports Ontario's digital strategy while facilitating broader public consultation. The new portal provides a more open and transparent framework allowing a full cross-section of stakeholders, partners, and public input.

TCP offers personalized user options, including the ability to:

- customize preferences
- search for information
- access frequently visited topics for faster reviewing of new information; and
- register for alerts about notices of interest in real-time

Portal development

Invaluable ministry stakeholder input was considered during every phase of portal development, including feedback from roundtable discussions, surveys and working prototypes.

Ultimately, the portal design was modelled on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) website, to meet the needs of stakeholders and committee members who provide comments and feedback on Ontario's technical processes and standards.

The site is fully accessible, in keeping with the current Ontario Public Service's Information Technology accessibility policies and is available in English and French.

Who's using the new portal?

Presently, eight MTO consulting offices may post proposed new or changes to existing technical documents. Those offices include the Contract, Corridor, and Maintenance Management Offices, as well as Geomatics, Highway Design, Traffic, Engineering Materials and Structures Offices.

If other MTO offices wish to contribute relevant feedback using the TCP, their proposed posts may be sponsored by one of the consulting offices listed above.

Since the portal's launch in September 2021, several stakeholder contributions were made, and the ministry has received positive feedback from stakeholders regarding the ease of use and accessibility of the new portal.

Keeping it technical

It is very important that the postings to the TCP are technical in nature, and don't relate to environmental issues. Environmental issues must be posted on the [Environmental Registry of Ontario](#). Also, notices related to broader government policy consultation shall be publicly posted via the Ontario Regulatory Registry (OR) site (<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/>) or another location as appropriate.

Many thanks to the team including Project Manager, Paula Berketo, of the Highway Design Office, for modernizing how MTO seeks stakeholder consultation for our many technical documents.

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Road Talk publications can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Transportation website:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-transportation-planners#section-3>

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