PROMOTING **KNOWLEDGE**. PURSUING **EXCELLENCE**

AORS STRATEGIC PLAN, 2026 - 2030:

The Future Is Bright For AORS

Approved by the Board of Directors, September 12, 2025

VISION STATEMENT

We are Ontario's Public Works Professionals, who construct, maintain and operate the essential infrastructure Ontarians rely upon each day.
Empowered by Provincial legislation, AORS upholds the highest standards of governance and accountability, granting our members the exclusive right to the "Certified Road Supervisor (CRS)" designation.
Our members are leaders in delivering services in the most effective, efficient and safe manner – embracing innovative technologies, educational opportunities and environmental stewardship.

MISSION STATEMENT

AORS supports and promotes our local associations and the public works industry through

- Communication
- Education
- Certification
- Networking
- Advocacy
- Sharing and promoting best practices
- Continuous improvement and innovation

AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

At the 2025 Strategic Planning Workshop, the AORS Board of Directors and representatives from several Local Associations agreed on the following six areas of strategic focus for the 2026-2030 AORS Strategic Plan, which were subsequently approved by the Board of Directors on September 12, 2025:

A. Membership Support
B. Innovation and Technology
C. Societal Shifts
D. Marketing, Communication and Advocacy
E. Training & Certification
F. Strategic Partnerships

BACKGROUND

Following is some contextual information for the Areas of Strategic Focus to better understand why each was identified as a priority:

A. Membership Support

AORS exists to support our members, both individually and collectively, municipal and supplier, and by extension the larger public works community. We do this through training and certification so members and their staff are able to fulfil their duties competently; providing opportunities for them to engage with their peers and other subject matter experts to share best practices and learn about the latest developments in public works; to offer other resources that will provide the information they need; and to advocate on their behalf to different levels of government or other organizations. While much of that support is delivered directly to the individual members, or to their municipalities, a large portion is delivered through the Local Associations to which most members belong.

While most Local Associations have rebounded from the pause in activities during covid, a few have yet to fully recover. Some are still struggling to attract new members in the face of mass retirements, or get their members to actively participate. Even more so when it comes to serving on the Local Association executive. AORS will continue to support our Local Associations, and many of the initiatives that will flow from this plan are specifically aimed at providing them with the tools and resources to grow and thrive.

B. Innovation and Technology

AORS has increased staff, added competencies, and relocated our head office. Workload has also increased with strong growth in training volumes, and a much larger emphasis on advocacy. AORS remains a lean organization that relies heavily on our volunteers and contractors to deliver many of the services our members expect. Like many organizations, AORS was forced to pivot during covid and implement new methods so it could continue to operate in a virtual world. While that was highly successful, it has since become apparent that AORS had fallen behind when it comes to innovating and adopting new technologies in other areas. The small staff complement and no in-house IT expertise has hampered our ability to adapt quickly, but the pace of change is only increasing. AORS needs to embrace new technologies, not only to improve the efficiency of our internal operations, but also to improve the quality and timeliness of the services we offer our members, clients, and even our staff. We also need to support our Local Associations in the use of technology so they can better serve their members. This plan will drive several initiatives to achieve these objectives.

C. Societal Shifts

In the last AORS strategic plan, there was a focus on addressing the demographic shift that was unfolding, where a significant proportion of the baby boomer workforce would be retiring, leaving many vacancies to be filled and a shortage of skilled workers to fill them. While this continues to be a priority in this plan, a number of other shifts are taking place in society today, many of which will have an impact on public works and our members. These include climate change; new

technologies, such as AI; changing attitudes towards employment (e.g. working from home, job-hopping); diversity, equity and inclusion; economic headwinds; regulatory and policy changes; the migration of many urban dwellers to rural municipalities; and overall the different expectations when it comes to service levels; etc. This plan will drive initiatives that will prepare AORS to support its members through these transitions.

D. Marketing, Communications and Advocacy

AORS expanded its capacity in this area with the addition of a Marketing & Communications Specialist, and executed several successful advocacy campaigns. Several other advocacy initiatives are already in progress, and others will no doubt surface over time. It is important to continue engaging with our members, elected officials and other stakeholders, identifying their needs and concerns, communicating with them on the initiatives underway and the progress being made. The communications landscape is evolving as new apps are launched and others diminish in relevance. AORS will continue to adapt our communication and marketing strategies to ensure we are connecting with our members, stakeholders and clients wherever they are active, growing the business and raising awareness of the AORS brand.

E. Training & Certification

AORS has seen record demand for its training and certification in recent years. Nonetheless, there are many opportunities to improve and grow further as members tell us they want more options. AORS will look to develop more programs in-house, partner with additional training organizations to expand our offerings both geographically and by subject matter, and to modernize how we manage our training and certification programs. We will also ensure our current education and certification programs remain current, relevant and accessible.

F. Strategic Partnerships

AORS is a relatively small organization with limited resources, but committed to delivering the best possible service to its members, and expanding into new offerings where appropriate. There are several other organizations that serve the same constituency, but offer different services; others that offer similar services but to a different market; and in some cases there is overlap with AORS, where we both offer similar services to at least some of the same individuals. Some are non-profit organizations like AORS, others are private sector for-profit organizations, and others are government ministries or agencies. The objective is to build partnerships with key organizations to raise awareness and extend the reach of AORS; to expand or improve the services we offer our members, directly or indirectly, in the most cost-effective manner with minimal duplication; and to leverage our respective strengths and amplify our voices when it comes to advocacy.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This section includes various initiatives intended to address the needs of our members and the Association in the strategic areas of focus. These were compiled from the previous strategic plan where initiatives were either ongoing or incomplete, and from the discussions at the Strategic Planning Workshop held in June 2025. This is intended to be a living document, where each year, near year-end, the Strategic Planning Committee will review the accomplishments of the past year, refresh the list of strategic initiatives considering progress made and any changes in the environment, and identify specific initiatives to be prioritized for the coming year. It is not intended that all these initiatives will be advanced at the same time, but rather over the life of the strategic plan, depending on priorities and resources. Many of these will be ongoing, year over year, while others will be short-term initiatives.

Many of these initiatives fall under more than one area of strategic focus. Rather than group them by strategic area, the area(s) of focus they align with are identified by letter (A through F) after each one, where:

- A = Membership Support
- B = Innovation and Technology
- C = Societal Shifts
- D = Marketing, Communication and Advocacy
- E = Training & Certification
- F = Strategic Partnerships

1. Continue to promote the benefits of membership and participation in the Local Associations, targeting Councilors and senior municipal managers; Potential members, in particular younger employees; and Supplier members. (A, D)
2. Develop, update and promote training, templates, guidelines and other tools to support members serving on LA executives, in particular Secretaries and Treasurers. (A, B)
3. Support LAs in the use of technology, including options for collecting payments. (A, B)
4. Support Local Associations in their efforts to attract Supplier members who will provide their municipal members with relevant information and support. (A)
5. Explore, and where viable and supported, develop a process where Supplier members can apply and pay for LA membership and other services directly through AORS. (A, B)
6. Develop a platform where LA executives can share best practices with their peers in other LAs. (A, B)
7. Monitor trends and technological advances, and proactively adopt those that enhance member service, efficiency and productivity, and ensure AORS remains relevant and up-to-date in the eyes of our members and stakeholders. Examples include online / automated financial transactions and reporting, online applications, the use of Artificial Intelligence, etc. (B)
8. Develop and execute a staff training program with an emphasis on improving technical skills. (B)
9. Continue to address the demographic shift in the workforce by promoting Public Works as a career option among college and high school students, their parents and educators. (C, D)
10. Continue to seek and develop sustainable training opportunities for young people to equip them with the essential skills to pursue Public Works careers. (A, C, E)

11. Promote the adoption of new technologies in Public Works, and develop corresponding training programs, to improve the appeal of careers in PW to youth. (A, B, C, E)
12. Continue to raise awareness of the importance of Public Works to society; build respect among the general public, elected officials, and other stakeholders for the important work AORS members do; and set reasonable expectations. (A, C, D)
13. Monitor shifts in society, (such as technological, demographic, regulatory, policy, legal, public expectations and service demands, climate change, diversity/equity/inclusion, etc.), assess their impact on our members, and equip them with the tools and skills to address or adapt to these changes. (A, B, C, E, F)
14. Adapt our use of new or evolving communication channels to connect with different target audiences and remain current and relevant. (B, C, D)
15. Continue to monitor media reports and canvas our members and stakeholders to identify emerging issues where AORS could support our members' positions and priorities through communications or advocacy. (A, D)
16. Deploy multiple communication strategies to ensure our members are aware of initiatives being advanced on their behalf, and provide them with synopses they can share with their councils, staff, and residents. (A, D)
17. Improve our capabilities to deliver marketing, communications and advocacy initiatives in French, where appropriate. (A, D)
18. Further develop marketing strategies to continue to expand business opportunities and expand the AORS brand with new and existing clients and stakeholders. (D)
19. Enhance, modernize and expand services designed to connect municipal members with the goods and services they need to deliver excellent public works. (A, B, C, D)
20. Develop partnerships with new training providers to expand our capabilities, both geographically and by subject area, to better meet the needs of our members. (A, E, F)
21. Explore opportunities to partner with Supplier members who deliver training specific to the products or services they provide. (A, E, F)
22. Explore emerging training needs for our members, and where practical, develop training programs in-house. (A, E)
23. Explore the need for and viability of training and/or certification programs for other PW specialties. (A, E)
24. Explore opportunities to develop and deliver training for supplier members and other private sector companies that provide services to municipalities. (A, E)
25. Implement a Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance training delivery and maintain training records. (B, E)
26. Continue to promote the value of the CRS program to municipal leaders and public works employees as a provincially recognized system for professional development and workforce planning, with equivalency to other qualifications and requirements. (D, E)
27. Evaluate the CRS educational and supervisory requirements to ensure they are not creating unnecessary barriers to certification, and are relevant to the evolving responsibilities of road supervisors and managers in both urban and rural municipalities, as well as the private sector. (E)
28. Expand AORS' recognition, brand awareness and potential markets by leveraging the communications channels of other organizations. (D, F)
29. Partner with different entities, including other associations, elected officials, government ministries and agencies, and private sector organizations, to identify and deliver additional

services and benefits for AORS members, leverage and amplify our advocacy efforts, expand markets and grow the AORS Brand. (D, F)

30. Partner with other organizations with specific areas of expertise that may enhance AORS' competencies, both in terms of our own operations and in support of our members. (A, F)
31. Seek mutual recognition agreements with other organizations that will allow AORS training or certification to be recognized for continuing education or other credits. (E, F)
32. Partner with third party service providers to offer enhanced member benefits. (A, F)
33. Assist Local Associations in cultivating relationships with other organizations or individuals at the regional level, such as the MTO, OPP, First Nations, MP/MPPs, etc. (A, F)