



THE SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC POLICY

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES

**LOCAL GOVERNANCE
IN ALBERTA:
PRINCIPLES,
OPTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Future of Municipal Government

Alberta Municipalities President's Summit
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Project Aim and Objectives



Aim

- To assess the current state of Alberta's local governance model
- To investigate if changes to government structure might offer some remedy to the deficiencies uncovered in our assessment.



Why?

- Local and regional challenges such as slow growth, financial constraints
- Local governance might offer some solutions



Objectives

- Design a conceptual framework and a set of principles
- Evaluate regional governance options in Alberta.
- Offer recommendations



how

- 100+ pieces of academic and non-academic literature
- Consultations with the ABMunis research committee & Leaders' Caucus
- Key informant interviews

For local governments to succeed

Viable

A condition in which the local government can provide desired local services to its population.

legitimate

means how 'rightful' is the government system by its citizens.

Concept #1

Viable local governments provide

Critical mass

Effective service
provision

Political
representation

Concept #2

A local
government
is legitimate
if it is

legal

takes justifiable actions

credible

supported by its citizens

Good Governance Principles

Efficiency

- Cost efficiency, economies of scale, reducing externalities

Capacity

- Effectiveness, competence, collaboration, autonomy, sustainability, equitable outcomes, sound policy making

Accountability

- Integrity, transparency, independent oversight, openness

Accessibility

- Direct democracy and representation, public participation, civil society, local expression, identity

Responsiveness

- Meeting citizens' service needs in a non-discriminatory way; subsidiarity

Concept #3

Fragmentation vs consolidation

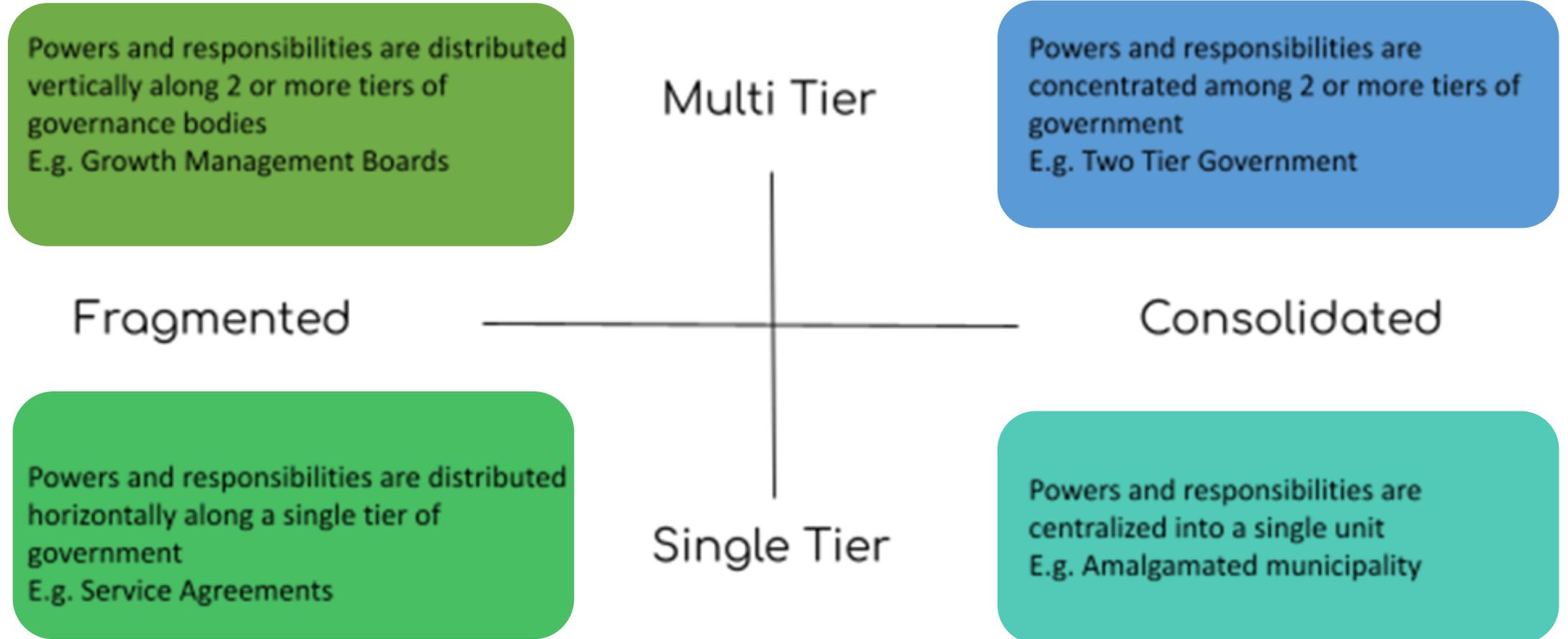
Fragmentation

- Fragmentation refers to the number of separate units in a local government system.
- A fragmented structure is composed of many units within a geographic area.
 - horizontal fragmentation
 - refers to the number of units within a tier.
 - Vertical fragmentation
 - concerns the number of separate tiers

Consolidation

- Consolidation means fewer governmental units within a geographic area.
 - horizontal consolidation
 - addresses the dispersal of people, functions, and funds between different units in the same tier.
 - Vertical consolidation
 - concerns the division of responsibilities between different tiers

Fragmentation vs Consolidation



Governance Options

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks

Amalgamated Municipalities

Specialized Municipalities

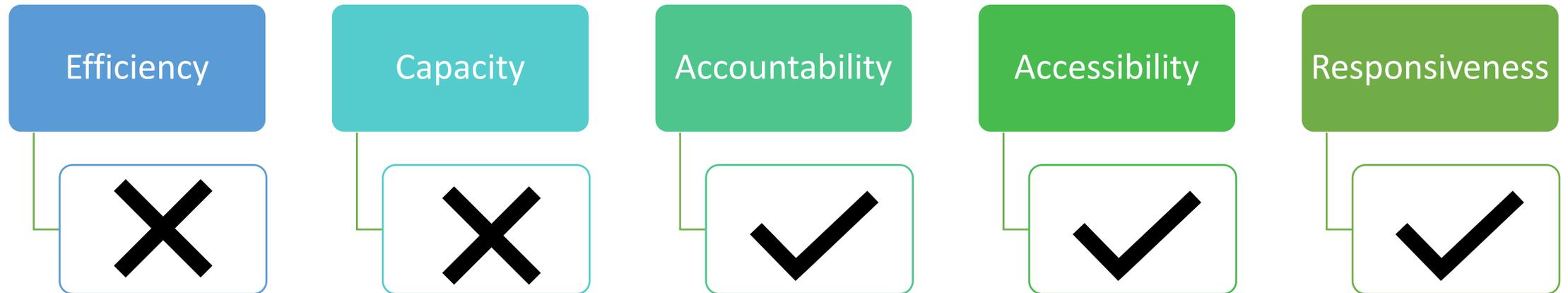
Growth Management Boards

Regional Service Commissions

Regional Districts (British Columbia)

Two-Tiered Government (Ontario)

Alberta's Governance Model



Governance principles

		Efficiency	Capacity	Accountability	Accessibility	Responsiveness
Governance options	Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF)	↑	↑	●	●	↑
	Amalgamated Municipalities	↕	↑	↕	↓	↓
	Specialized Municipalities	●	↑	↕	↓	↓
	Growth Management Boards	↑	↑	●	↓	●
	Regional Service Commissions	↕	↑	↓	↓	↑
	BC's Regional Districts	↕	↑	↓	↓	↑
	Ontario's Two-tiered Government	↕	↑	●	●	↑
		↕ Mixed Impact	↑ Positive Impact	↓ Negative Impact		

● Negligible impact or generally not in the mandate

↕ Mixed Impact

↑ Positive Impact

↓ Negative Impact

Alberta's options

Disruptive and Risky

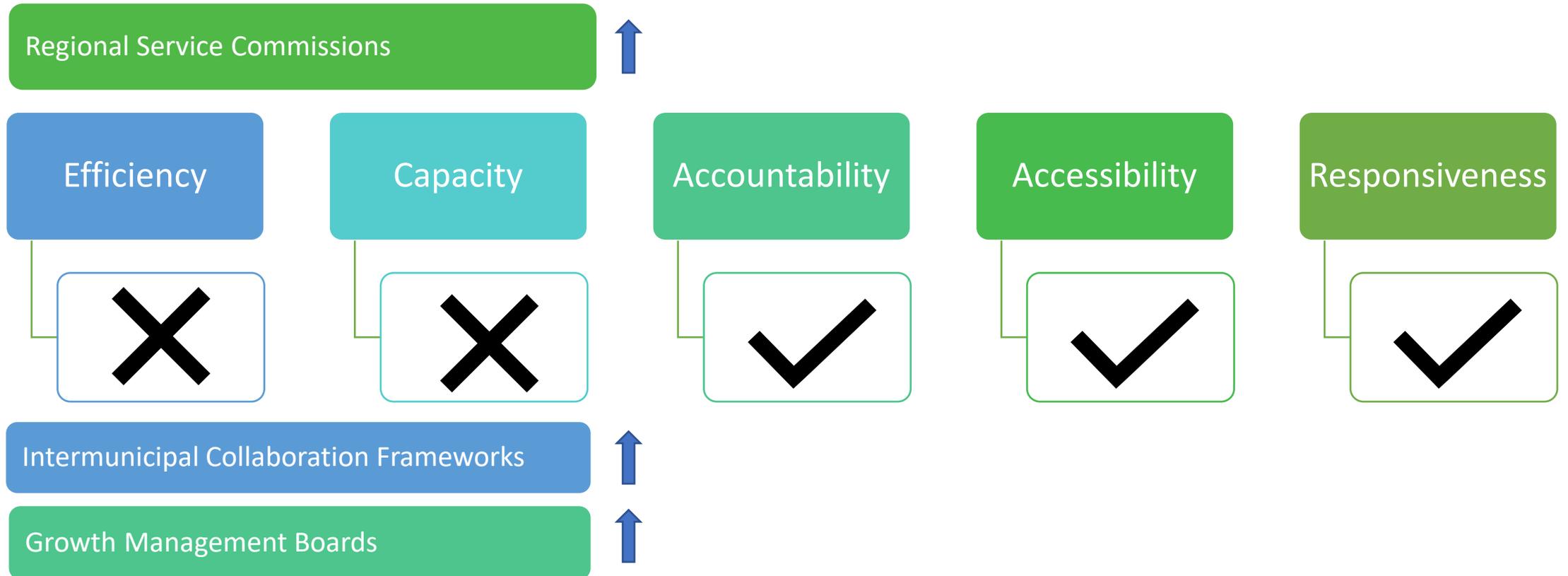
- Regional Districts
- Two-tier Government

Amalgamation

Complementary and Incremental

- Incremental Collaboration Frameworks
- Growth Management Boards
- Regional Service Commissions

Alberta's Governance Model



Main Assertions



No one-size-fits-all model will work for Alberta



Strengthen the currently existing governance model in Alberta through ICFs, growth management boards and regional service commissions.



Strengthen and expand the currently available dispute resolution mechanisms



Abundance mindset towards cooperation and collaboration

Thank you!

- <https://www.policyschool.ca/publications/>

- **Contacts**

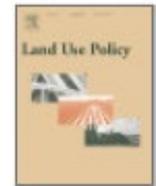
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Hot Off The Press:

Trends, motivations, and land use outcomes of municipal annexation: A case of Alberta, Canada



Land Use Policy
Volume 112, January 2022, 105775



Forthcoming book:

Municipal Boundary battles