ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

ADVOCACY PRIORITIZATION

PURPOSE

1. AUMA represents over 260 urban municipalities who face a wide variety of complex issues. Its mission is to be the voice of its Members and provide visionary leadership, solutions-based advocacy, and service excellence. To fulfill its mission, AUMA must prioritize the issues it addresses.

2. This policy establishes an advocacy prioritization process that engages and serves our Members in addressing priority issues within AUMA's capacity.

3. This policy has been developed to provide a clear process for determining Policy advocacy priorities for the AUMA on behalf of its Members. Benefits of the policy include:
   a. Ensuring advocacy priorities align to AUMA's vision, mission and core values.
   b. Focusing time and resources on the most important advocacy activities, which serve the interests and needs of AUMA Members.
   c. Establishing a consistent and transparent process for determining AUMA priorities that is understood by the Board, Committees, Members and Employees.
   d. Building AUMA's credibility with key partners and decision makers.

DEFINITIONS

4. In this policy:
   a. "**Advocacy**" refers to the wide variety of actions undertaken by AUMA to address policy issues.
   b. "**AUMA**" means the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.
   c. "**Board**" means the AUMA Board of Directors.
   d. "**Board Member**" means a member of the AUMA Board of Directors.
   e. "**CEO**" means the Chief Executive Officer of AUMA.
   f. "**Committee**" means a standing committee of the Board or an ad-hoc committee established by the Board.
   g. "**Employees**" refers to AUMA employees.
   h. "**Member**" refers to regular AUMA members: cities, towns, villages, summer villages and specialized municipalities.
   i. "**Policy**" refers to declared objectives on political, managerial, financial, and administrative matters that impact AUMA members.
   j. "**Political Capital**" - refers to the goodwill, trust and influence a political figure/organization has with the public and other political figures/organizations.

POLICY

How Prioritization Is Used

5. The approach to prioritization described in this policy is used for:
   a. Allocating AUMA's resources including its budget along with Board, Committee and Employee time.
   b. Selecting strategic initiatives as part of the Board's strategic planning process.
   c. Establishing Committee work plans.

d. Screening resolutions submitted by members and determining approach to resolutions adopted by members as described in more detail in AUMA Policy AP002 - Resolutions.

e. Screening and prioritizing issues that emerge outside these planning processes and resolutions.

f. Determining which external committees and working groups AUMA Employees and members will sit on.

6. With regards to emerging issues, Employees will run the issues through the prioritization filter described in a subsequent section:

a. If there is a clear answer, Employees confirm approach with the Executive Officer, Policy and Advocacy or the CEO.

b. If there no clear answer – Employees will seek input from the relevant Committee or Board.

Initial Screening

7. AUMA focuses advocacy efforts on issues that have a significant impact on municipalities throughout Alberta. The first step in the advocacy process is to determine whether the issue is one which meets AUMA's core mandate or whether it is clearly outside our scope.

8. The AUMA will not engage in Policy issues which are:

a. Are deeply ideological, divisive and outside municipal interests.

b. Involve conflicts between individual municipalities.

c. Involve conflicts between individual municipalities and citizens, other organizations, etc.

d. Involve internal issues of a municipality.

e. Promote the interests of individual businesses.

f. Partisan in nature, i.e. could lead to AUMA being perceived as supporting a political party or candidate.

Prioritization Framework

9. AUMA will use the following questions to determine whether to act on an issue and if so, how the issue will be prioritized:

a. Does the issue align with AUMA's strategic initiatives?

b. Is the issue within municipal jurisdiction?

c. What is the impact on Members and how many Members are impacted?

d. Will engagement in this issue build or deplete political capital?

e. What is the level of effort required to address the issue? And how will advocacy relate to this issue impact other priorities?

   i. Does the issue involve the need for:
      - Information sharing?
      - Funding?
      - Policy Change?
      - Legislative/regulatory change?
      - All the above?

f. Is there an opportunity for AUMA to add value to this issue?

g. What are the timelines involved?

h. What are the chances of success?

i. Does AUMA have the capacity to respond effectively? What priorities does AUMA need to drop to response to this issue properly?

10. More detail on the considerations involved in answering these questions is included in Appendix A.

Levels of Engagement

11. Based on the answers to above questions, AUMA will determine the level of engagement required.
    a. No engagement - **Monitor** the issue for any significant changes which may impact Members.
    b. Low - **Inform** Members about the issue and any opportunities for them to engage directly.
    c. Medium - **Contribute** to the issue through developing a position and engage in some basic advocacy.
    d. High - **Lead** solutions-based advocacy development and deployment of an advocacy strategy.

12. More detail on the level of engagement is included in Appendix B.

Evaluation

13. To determine the effectiveness of the prioritization process, AUMA will conduct the following assessments:
    a. Key Performance Indicator
       i. Through its annual reporting process, AUMA will identify whether it achieved the intended outcomes of priority initiatives.
    b. Board
       i. Through the annual Board effectiveness survey, Board members will indicate whether they spent their time on the right issues.
    c. Satisfaction of Committees
       i. Through the end of year Committee survey, Committee members will indicate whether they spent their time on the right issues.
    d. Satisfaction of Members
       i. Through the annual advocacy survey, Members will indicate whether AUMA's strategic initiatives reflect their priorities
    e. Satisfaction of Employees
       i. Through the annual staff satisfaction survey, staff will indicate whether they have adequate time and resources to address high priority issues
       ii. Staff will indicate whether they understand the value of their work/or the rationale behind their work.

POLICY REVIEW

14. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any recommended changes to this policy will forwarded to the AUMA Board for approval.

APPENDICES

A. Prioritization Framework
B. Levels of Engagement Framework

ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

	Date	Minute Page Number
Approved	February 21, 2019	4
Amended		

President, Mayor Barry Morishita

Chief Executive Officer, Dan Rude

ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

Prioritization Framework

Questions	Sample considerations	Analysis
Does the issue align with AUMA's strategic initiatives?	• Will action on the issue contribute towards realizing the goals of the strategic initiative or will it lead to scope creep without adding value?	
Is the issue within municipal jurisdiction?	• Is the issue exclusive to municipalities or does it also involve federal or provincial government?	
What is the impact on members and how many members are impacted?	• Is this a significant issue to a single member or to many members? • If the issue only impacts a few members today, does it have the potential to impact more members in the future?	
Will engagement in this issue build or deplete political capital?	• Does the issue align with the priorities of the government of the day? • Or will we have to push to get it onto the agenda or actively counter their agenda?	
Does the issue involve the need for: • Information sharing? • Funding? • Policy Change? • Legislative/regulatory change? • All of the above?	• The answer to this question will influence the time, resources and chances for success. • In general, changes to legislation requires more time and effort than changes to regulations. • Requests for funding must consider federal and provincial governments face funding constraints.	
Is there an opportunity for AUMA to add value to this issue?	• Does AUMA have the expertise on staff, on the board/committees, among members to add value? • AUMA is often best positioned to provide input on higher level principles and only has the capacity to engage at a detailed technical level on a limited number of issues. • Are there other organization that have greater expertise and credibility on the issue? • Is it better for municipalities to respond directly, or is a collective response needed?	

Questions	Sample considerations	Analysis
What are timelines involved?	• Is there time to seek input from members/committees and seek approval from the board? • In other words, is there time to determine a collective response, or should AUMA just let members know about an issue and let them respond individually?	
What are the chances of success?	Given the answers to the above questions: • How likely will AUMA's advocacy on an issue result in tangible benefits for members? • Has the relevant decision maker (i.e. provincial or federal government) indicated they are open to making changes? Has a consultation process been initiated?	
Does AUMA have the capacity to respond effectively?	Given the answers to the above questions: • Would action on this issue take time and resources away from key priorities? • Does AUMA have the time and resources to conduct appropriate analysis, engage members, build partnerships, create meaningful solutions and report back to members on this issue?	
Conclusion		
Based on the analysis above, what should AUMA's level of engagement* be on this issue? **What action should be taken?** **How will the action be reported?**		

*As outlined in the levels of engagement framework

ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

Appendix B

Levels of Engagement Framework

Level of engagement	Potential Actions	Reporting
No engagement-Monitor	• Through monitoring municipal outreach and engagement with members, AUMA monitors issues for potential impact.	• None.
Low – Inform	• Article in AUMA's newsletter on issues that may be of interest to some municipalities • Informal email or phone call at the employee level on issues that can be quickly resolved • Monitoring for potential future impacts	• Information item for a committee or board • Reporting is not required for a very low priority issue

Medium – Contribute	• Briefing Note or Request for Decisions through a committee seeking direction or a recommendation to AUMA's Board. As a result, further action may be taken including:
	   o Letters
	   o Meetings
	   o Presentations to committees.
	   o Webinars
		• Motion for review and approval AUMA's Board
		• Updates through committee's status of operational plan and the CEO report.
		• Updates to members through the digest as required

High – Lead	• Develop and implement full advocacy strategy.	• Regular updates at Board and Committee meetings. • Updates to members through the newsletter, AUMA's website and events.