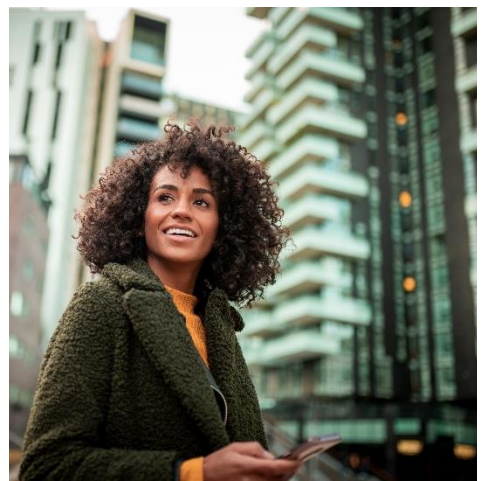


2022 Resolutions Book



Version 2 – September 15, 2022
Resolutions for discussion at the 2022 Annual Convention
September 21-23, 2022 | Calgary, AB

Resolutions Session - Thursday, September 22

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About Resolutions

Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) conducts an annual resolutions process that enables member municipalities to identify and prioritize common issues and solutions while also empowering Alberta Municipalities Board of Directors to advocate to the federal and provincial governments on members' behalf. This process includes a Resolutions Session at the Alberta Municipalities Convention where members vote on the resolutions submitted.

As set out in ABmunis' [Resolutions Policy](#), a resolution must address a topic of concern affecting municipalities on a regional or provincial level, and must be approved by the council of the sponsoring municipality and seconded by an additional municipal council. A resolution must not direct one or more municipalities to adopt a particular course of action or policy but must be worded as a request for consideration of an issue, including a call for action by Alberta Municipalities.

Resolutions adopted by members annually at Convention are typically active for three years. Alberta Municipalities administration, standing committees and the Board take action to develop and implement advocacy strategies for each resolution. Given the scope, complexity, and volume of issues facing municipalities, ABmunis uses a framework to prioritize where it invests our collective efforts.

All resolutions from the current year and the thirteen previous years, including those that are both active and expired, are posted in the [Resolutions Library on ABmunis' website](#).

How to participate in the Resolutions Session

The resolutions session will take place on Thursday, September 22 as part of [ABmunis 2022 Convention and Tradeshow](#). The session will follow our [Resolutions Policy](#), which outlines the process for the Resolutions Session at Convention in sections 32 to 57.

Who can speak to a resolution?

As outlined in the Resolutions Policy, elected representatives of Regular Members can speak to resolutions. In addition, upon a motion from the floor, or at the discretion of the Resolutions Chair, a representative of an Associate Member, which are municipal districts and counties, may also speak to a resolution.

How to speak to a resolution

After each resolution is introduced, and the mover has been given the chance to speak for two minutes, the Chair will call for a speaker in opposition, seeking clarification or proposing an amendment.

In person attendees wishing to speak to a resolution will be invited to go to microphones clearly marked for those wishing to speak in favour or in opposition. Please state your name, municipality, and position. You will have two minutes to speak, at which time the microphone will be turned off in fairness to all.

Virtual attendees can use the Q&A function of Zoom to enter your questions or comments, which will be read out by a staff member in turn. Please enter your name, municipality, whether your statement is in opposition or in favour of the resolution along with a statement that can be read out by a staff member in no more than 2 minutes.

Aside from the sponsor, a speaker cannot speak more than once on each resolution.

How to propose an amendment

To propose an amendment, please send it to resolutions@abmunis.ca as soon as possible ahead of the Resolutions Session.

Once the resolution session starts, those attending in person are asked to provide proposed amendments in writing to both the ABmunis staff person sitting in the audio booth at the back of the room and to the Resolutions Chair. Those attending virtually can enter amendments through the Zoom Q&A function.

Regardless of how you propose the amendment, please ensure you include your name, title, municipality, and the resolution title, along with the exact wording of the proposed amendment.

Note that all amendments must be moved and seconded.

How to vote

In September, registered elected officials from Regular Member municipalities will receive voting credentials from Simply Voting. Elected officials who are eligible for voting credentials can vote on all resolutions.

The email from Simply Voting will look like this:

You are registered to vote during the ABmunis Convention taking place September 21-23. Below, you will find your login credentials for the vote.

There is a test vote that is open now. Please check your credentials and cast a vote on the test question as soon as possible so that we can be sure you received your credentials.

If you need any assistance, please contact: xxx@dataonthespot.com

To vote, please visit: <https://xxxx.com/>

Then enter:

Elector ID - *****

Password - *****

Or follow this link to access the ballot directly: [xxxx](#)

Please note that these are only the voting credentials. Further information will be sent out by Alberta Municipalities in the coming days.

Regards,
Alberta Municipalities

When you receive this email from Simply Voting, we ask that you **complete the test vote as soon as possible** to ensure that your credentials are activated. The same login information will be used during the Board of Director elections.

Please bring to convention a laptop, phone or other device that is internet enabled. Once we get to the resolutions portion of our event, you will be asked to log in to the Simply Voting website. Once a resolution is called to vote, you will hit the “next vote” button at the top of the page to see the current resolution available to vote on. After you have cast your vote, you will receive confirmation that your vote has been counted. Once the final vote result is posted, we will move onto the next resolution.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact resolutions@abmunis.ca.

2022 RESOLUTIONS

CATEGORY B – ISSUES RELATED TO ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

B1: Provincial-Municipal Revenue Sharing

Moved by: City of St. Albert

Seconded by: City of Airdrie

WHEREAS municipalities, their residents and businesses benefit from long-term, stable, and adequate financial commitments from other orders of government;

WHEREAS municipalities receive approximately 8 cents of every tax dollar generated by all orders of government, yet are responsible for over 60 per cent of public infrastructure and are limited in their ability to raise needed revenue other than through property taxes;

WHEREAS Provincial GDP grew by an estimated 5.8 per cent in 2021, and the provincial economy is expected to recover to 2014 levels in 2022, yet infrastructure funding for municipalities is nearly 40 per cent lower than the annual average prior to the 2015 recession in Alberta;

WHEREAS Alberta municipalities have worked with the province to absorb funding cuts and downloading from the Government of Alberta over the past several years, whilst maintaining core services and infrastructure through times of economic hardship;

WHEREAS notable examples of provincial funding reductions and downloading to municipalities include: a 50 per cent reduction to the Grants in Place of Taxes (GIPOT), the province is taking a greater share of revenue from municipally-issued fines, downloading DNA/Case Biology costs to municipalities, year-over-year reductions in the Municipal Sustainability Initiative, and downloading disaster recovery costs to municipalities;

WHEREAS the current total funding pot for the Local Government Fiscal Framework is inadequate, and will be 37 per cent less than the annual average of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) and BMTG programs over the past decade starting in 2024;

WHEREAS the Local Government Fiscal Framework's total funding pot is legislated to grow at a rate of 50 per cent of provincial revenue growth, which would mean a 0.5 per cent growth in funding based on current provincial government projections, much lower than inflationary increases;

WHEREAS to reinstate historical funding levels of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative under the Local Government Fiscal Framework represents approximately 0.7 per cent of the province's total budget;

WHEREAS the Local Government Fiscal Framework provides a predictable foundation for provincial revenue-sharing with local governments, building upon the long-term tradition of doing so within Alberta, that can eliminate red-tape by providing a single, streamlined source of revenue-sharing with municipalities; and

WHEREAS municipalities are economic drivers across the Province, and are partners with the Government of Alberta through times of hardship and prosperity.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to increase the size of the funding pot of the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) starting in 2024, and to grow it at a 1:1 ratio linked to provincial revenue as partners in economic prosperity and the provision of public services and infrastructure to Albertans.

BACKGROUND:

Most municipalities rely on federal and provincial revenue transfers to address their infrastructure deficit. As complex organizations delivering meaningful services to citizens, all municipalities in Alberta rely on stable, predictable, and adequate revenue-sharing. Funding of this nature has been leveraged in the past to successfully

build and rehabilitate critical community infrastructure, support Albertans, and plan for the future. The projects, enabled by revenue-sharing mechanisms with the province, have had significant positive community impacts.

The 2022 Government of Alberta Budget was an important milestone, and it is commendable that the Government of Alberta was able to balance their books. This marks the transition from economic recovery to economic growth. Municipalities have been integral partners in helping to enable this milestone, by absorbing provincial funding reductions and downloading of services over the past several years.

Within a City of St. Albert context, since Budget 2020/21 this has included, annual recurring cost-reductions/downloading of the following:

- Government of Alberta taking greater share of municipal fine revenue (Loss of \$620,000 in revenue);
- Grants in Place of Taxes (GIPOT) 50 per cent reduction (loss of \$75,000 in revenue);
- DNA/Biology Caseworks billed to municipalities instead of Government of Alberta (additional \$25,000 cost); and
- Municipal Sustainability Initiative 25 per cent reduction (loss of \$4 million in revenue).

In total, this is equivalent to a 0.6 per cent property tax increase (excluding the MSI capital reduction) and means needed capital projects could be deferred and additional efficiencies sought to limit tax increases to ratepayers.

Many other Alberta municipalities have done the same.

The Local Government Fiscal Framework is critical to achieve long-term municipal sustainability and presents the opportunity to be a streamlined mechanism for provincial-municipal revenue sharing. It is positive in that it provides increased predictability, stability, and transparency for municipalities across Alberta. However, it is currently inadequately funded to meet the current and future infrastructure needs of Albertans, and to ensure appropriate asset management.

As partners with the Government of Alberta in achieving positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes, municipalities should share in economic growth and prosperity, as we have shared in reducing costs, red tape, and delaying projects to limit property tax increases to our shared residents.

This resolution aligns with a 2021 Alberta Municipalities member-adopted Request for Decision (RFD) on the Local Government Fiscal Framework Implementation, sponsored by the Village of Forestburg which called for removal of the 50 per cent limitation in the revenue index factor calculation so that annual changes in LGFF funding is equivalent to annual changes in the Government of Alberta's revenue and that the starting amount be increased.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

As noted, this resolution aligns with a 2021 RFD and the ongoing advocacy by ABmunis to seek improvements to the Local Government Fiscal Framework. If this resolution is adopted, ABmunis will approach this issue with a high level of engagement.

B2: Transportation Infrastructure Funding

Moved by: City of Airdrie

Seconded by: City of St. Albert

WHEREAS municipalities develop Transportation Master Plans that align municipal policies and planning documents with a complementary transportation network planning strategy;

WHEREAS Transportation Master Plans (municipal, inter-municipal, sub-regional and regional) act as high-level planning documents allowing municipalities to better plan for major transportation infrastructure investments to ensure vital networks are both built and maintained;

WHEREAS safe, connected and resilient transportation networks allow both people and goods to move freely and efficiently across Alberta, supporting economic growth and prosperity;

WHEREAS municipal strategic transportation infrastructure projects connecting to provincially owned road networks improve both access and safety to key transportation routes;

WHEREAS provincial funding for strategic municipal transportation infrastructure projects that improve performance of network systems is not certain nor is the formula predictable;

WHEREAS *Building Forward: Alberta's 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan*, released in 2021, provides a transparent and strategic direction for how the Government of Alberta invests in planning, constructing, renewing and maintaining infrastructure over the long term;

WHEREAS the province needs to close the gap to define a clear process to elevate municipal transportation infrastructure projects that are in alignment with the province's strategic objectives and principles of the Building Forward Plan; and

WHEREAS the Building Forward Plan (page 91) outlines the importance of cost-sharing agreements with municipalities, but does not include details or principles on a cost-sharing formula.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Government of Alberta for the establishment of both a clear process to elevate and equitably fund municipal transportation infrastructure projects that are in alignment with the Building Forward Plan objectives and principles.

BACKGROUND:

"In addition to supporting our everyday lives, infrastructure is also a key driver of the economy and government finances. Alberta's infrastructure powers businesses, enables trade, attracts tourism, creates jobs, supports learning, research and innovation, attracts a talented workforce, and increases quality of life for Albertans. Provincial infrastructure assets boost productivity and competitiveness, and form the networks that allow businesses to grow and expand. Infrastructure also makes up our trade corridors and supports critical supply chains. Infrastructure is a key factor in determining where families and businesses settle and grow, and is essential to accessing key resources."

Source: Building Forward: Alberta's 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan, Plan at a Glance, page 4

In the Building Forward Plan, the Government of Alberta acknowledges that they need to work in partnership with municipalities to support the efficient, effective, safe movement of both people and goods. This need has been captured in the Maximizing Partnerships guiding strategy:

"The concept of "going it alone" on major capital projects is no longer desirable or financially sustainable. Leveraging the wide range of expertise, knowledge, and infrastructure from partners across sectors encourages

innovation and appropriate risk sharing, ultimately leading to better outcomes. Partnerships may involve building on existing collaborations and securing financial fairness and involvement with other orders of government. Key partners will include municipal governments, other provincial and territorial governments, the federal government, the private sector, Indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations.”

Source: Building Forward: Alberta’s 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan, Plan at a Glance, page 13

The importance of strategic transportation projects impacts the lives of Albertans in all types of municipalities - urban, rural, remote, small or large. Almost 80% of Albertan’s are expected to live in the Edmonton-Calgary Corridor by 2040. Further, rural, remote and northern Alberta communities depend on transportation networks to move goods, connect people and support economic activity. Access to an efficient transportation network system is a deciding factor for where businesses decide to locate and invest in our Province. In addition, residential growth in and around larger urban centres depends on the efficient movement of people to employment, commercial and lifestyle amenities.

Despite the importance of transportation infrastructure, there is presently no clear process to add projects to the provincial capital list. Nor when projects are funded, is there a transparent funding formula ensuring contribution equity from the province and municipalities across projects. Certainty in planning is extremely important for municipalities given that the *Municipal Government Act* requires the creation of five-year capital plans, at minimum. Most municipalities create ten-year plans. Many other municipal planning documents, like economic development strategies, rely on information from capital plans.

Both a clear process and transparent funding formula would go a long way to ensuring that Albertans are being treated equally from municipality to municipality.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ABmunis’ submission to the Government of Alberta during the consultation period for the development of *Building Forward: Alberta’s 20-year Strategic Capital Plan*. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis’ Board by the Infrastructure Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

B3: Operational Transit Funding for Small to Medium Sized Municipalities

Moved by: Town of Olds

Seconded by: Town of Didsbury

WHEREAS one in five Canadians live in rural communities. Rural¹ communities in Canada account for nearly 30% of the nation's gross domestic product;²

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta has communicated, “As Alberta’s economy and population grows, public transportation provides safe, accessible, affordable and environmentally sustainable transportation options to connect Albertans to work, recreation, services and each other;³”

WHEREAS eighteen (18) Alberta municipalities, out of approximately 350, have the ability to provide transit services through established infrastructure;

WHEREAS a majority of capital transit funding opportunities have been designed only for those established systems, and conversely, small to medium sized municipalities do not have the financial resources to take advantage of funding opportunities; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has communicated, “For Canadians living in rural, remote and small communities, improving the way people access goods and services, get to and from work to medical appointments, and to various destinations, presents unique challenges that require unique solutions.”⁴ Inter-community travel is necessary for areas outside of major travel routes for many of the vulnerable population.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to ensure sustainable and predictable operating funding opportunities be expanded under the new Rural Transit Fund for small to medium sized municipalities to begin their transit planning journey.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to ensure the new Rural Transit Fund be expanded to include further operational funding, outside of the Active Transportation Fund and the Zero Transmission Fund for small to medium sized municipalities.

BACKGROUND:

History shows that advocacy for a national transportation strategy has come to fruition by way of the first Permanent Public Transit Fund, announced in February 2021. The \$14.9 billion will be provided at \$3 billion per year, for the next eight years to larger municipalities. This new fund will provide cities and communities with predictable transit funding. Subsequent to that, the federal government announced a new Rural Transit Fund in March 2021. The \$250 million Rural Transit Fund is dedicated to “support unique transportation solutions”⁵ in rural, remote and small

¹ <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/pcrac/2016/definitions>

² Rural Opportunity, National Prosperity, an Economic Development Strategy for Rural Canada, Infrastructure Canada, June 2019, Page 5

³ <https://www.alberta.ca/provincial-transit-engagement.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2021/03/government-of-canada-announces-first-federal-fund-dedicated-to-rural-transit-solutions.html>

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2021/03/government-of-canada-announces-first-federal-fund-dedicated-to-rural-transit-solutions.html#:~:text=The%20new%20Rural%20Transit%20Fund%20will%20provide%20%24250,deployment%20of%20innovative%20mobility%20solutions%20in%20rural%20communities.>

[solutions.html#:~:text=The%20new%20Rural%20Transit%20Fund%20will%20provide%20%24250,deployment%20of%20innovative%20mobility%20solutions%20in%20rural%20communities.](https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2021/03/government-of-canada-announces-first-federal-fund-dedicated-to-rural-transit-solutions.html#:~:text=The%20new%20Rural%20Transit%20Fund%20will%20provide%20%24250,deployment%20of%20innovative%20mobility%20solutions%20in%20rural%20communities.)

communities, as there is no one size fits all solution. As part of the *Investing in Canada* plan, this fund will support the planning and deployment of innovative mobility solutions in rural communities.

*“The first ever Rural Transit Fund recognizes that Canadians living in rural and remote areas and in small communities have unique transportation challenges that require flexible, tailored solutions. We’ll work with communities to find the best transit solutions and provide the support to make them a reality, creating local jobs and growth, helping to tackle climate change, and building more inclusive communities.”*⁶

- Catherine McKenna, former Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

On January 27, 2022, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities called for applications under three programs offered through the Rural Transit Fund. All three speak to capital funding parameters, however, two offer an operational funding component, the Zero Emission Transit Fund, and the Active Transportation Fund.⁷ While this opportunity is welcomed, it is one, a very small amount, and two, the funding is limited to trails, pathways, and most especially, geared towards established systems and infrastructure.

Further transit strategy advocacy:

- There was a national call from FCM by way of an adopted resolution, Rural Intercity Transit Strategy⁸, speaking to the coordination of a national strategy through all levels of government in 2018. From that, the FCM in their “Building better lives with Budget 2020”⁹ and “Building Back Better Together 2021”¹⁰ budget recommendation submission to the federal government supported a range of rural mobility and transportation solutions.
- Delegates at the 2021 FCM’s annual conference adopted a resolution on Emergency Federal Support for Inter-Community Passenger Bus Service, which reinforces “the need for distinct and targeted solutions to address the unique capital and operating needs for long-distance routes.”¹¹
- Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) President and CEO, Marco D’Angelo, in a letter to then Minister of Transport stated: “Transit builds and empowers Canadian communities of all sizes from coast to coast. Rural inter-city bus services connect Canadians across the country to each other and to basic social services, like healthcare and education. Connected communities help to foster social equity and inclusion and give rise to economic opportunities for Canadians. In a country as vast as our own, rural inter-city bus services provide a lifeline that may be difficult to quantify, though invaluable to those who rely on it.”¹²
- The Government of Alberta completed extensive engagement to create a provincial public transportation strategy in 2014. The draft strategy, “Connecting Albertans with Each Other and the World: A Long-Term Transportation Strategy for Alberta”¹³ outlined seven goals, of which recommended Goal 3, speaks the strongest to inter-community transit.

⁶ Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rural-transit-funding-mckenna-1.5967875>

⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2022/01/government-of-canada-calls-for-applications-for-funding-to-expand-public-transit.html>

⁸ <https://data.fcm.ca/home/fcm-resolutions.htm?lang=en-CA&resolution=ea2984c0-5c2c-e811-adbf-005056bc2614&srch=%&iss=&filt=false>

⁹ <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/building-better-lives-budget-2020>

¹⁰ <https://data.fcm.ca/documents/COVID-19/fcm-building-back-better-together.pdf>

¹¹ <https://data.fcm.ca/home/fcm-resolutions.htm?lang=en-CA&resolution=b7856f48-3ec5-eb11-85b0-005056bc2614&srch=%&iss=&filt=false>

¹² https://cutaactu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/letter_-_transport_minister_marc_gameau_-_rural_inter-city_bus_services_in_western_canada_-_august_2018-1.pdf

¹³ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/0a906f69-00e1-418a-aeef-78e948239103/resource/3cd7b7d6-5649-4ce7-8927-57c287a99774/download/2014-transportation-strategy-alberta-draft-2014-04.pdf>

This resolution builds upon the City of Edmonton’s approved 2020 AUMA resolution on Permanent Transit Funding, and association’s advocacy for stable and predictable funding for all municipalities, by highlighting the importance of small to medium municipalities having a voice in the development of the new rural transit fund and for this fund to provide operational support. The challenges for small to medium sized municipalities are very real. Just in the last few years, many provincial areas have become municipal responsibilities, without accompanying operating dollars and the inability to generate revenue as an offset to the operations of these new responsibilities.

For many of these smaller municipalities, the challenge to be able to provide forms of transit for their residents, especially the vulnerable populations is threefold: the ability to provide potential dollars towards capital projects; grant writing resources and cumbersome application processes; and finally, finding additional dollars to operate.

As seen by the table below, all municipalities over the 12,500 population have the ability for inter-community travel, where a majority of the 7,500-12,500 populations do not.

Out of 16 municipalities, a majority have some form of transportation, and at least half of all municipalities listed, already subsidize their intra-community transit in some form or another to ensure their residents can tend their daily needs. Of these municipalities, a majority of these offerings are available to seniors and residents with mobility or intellectual disabilities. And of those, the larger municipalities have one or more busses in service, and others with vans.

Transportation Availabilities Overview¹⁴

	Population (2020)	Intra-community	Inter-community	Subsidized	Users
Blackfalds	11,974	Yes	Yes	Yes - Part of property tax, \$4.59/month	Public
Morinville	10,571	No*	No*	n/a	n/a
Hinton	10,308	Yes	Yes	Yes - 2 out of 3 services at \$350,000 annually and one at 81%	Public Physical or intellectual disability Seniors/disabled
Whitecourt	10,229	Yes	No*	Yes - 1 out of 2 services	Public Seniors and disabled
Olds	9,753	Yes	No*	Yes	50+ / Mobility issues
Taber	9,105	No*	No*	n/a	n/a
Coaldale	8,933	No*	No*	No longer in service	n/a
Edson	8,524	Yes	No*	No	Seniors Mobility issues/disabilities
Drumheller	8,223	Yes	Yes	No	Ages 50+ Mobility issues/disabilities
Innisfail	7,957	No*	No*	Rural Transportation Pilot Program – discontinued	
Ponoka	7,525	Yes	Yes	Yes - \$10,000	Handicap
Camrose	19,333	Yes	Yes	1 is \$28/household 3 rd no longer in service	Public
Sylvan Lake	16,351	No*	Yes	No	

¹⁴Community Transportation Briefing Note, prepared by Maria Lemon, Summer Student Intern, Town of Olds, May 10, 2021

				Community donors	
Brooks	15,805	Yes	Yes	In town yes/ regional no Regional: Government of Alberta Regional Collaboration Grant Brooks and District Health Foundation \$10,000	Seniors Intellectual and physical disabilities Public (Medical bookings take priority)
Lacombe	14,109	Yes	Yes	Yes	Seniors/Mobility issues/Illness
Wetaskiwin	12,996	Yes	Yes		Seniors/Mobility issues

*Does not include taxi service.

"Lack of transportation in rural areas compounds the effects of aging and poverty by limiting access to medical and essential life needs. The problem is complex because of the vast area to be served and the reality that rarely are two or more people travelling to the same location at the same time." ¹⁵

Mayors indicate that: "In some of these communities, if you don't have good transit, it's a real disadvantage.". They say it's a disadvantage to attract investment because people want to go where you have good public transit, [where] you're able to get around."¹⁶

In order to become part of the transit solution, while small to medium sized municipalities have the opportunity to apply for capital funding, the operational funding mechanism is the greatest barrier to overcome. Including municipalities in the development of this fund is imperative and all municipalities should have a voice in the creation of programs that can complement local solutions.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ongoing advocacy for improvements to transit funding, including increasing dedicated operational funding for municipalities. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Infrastructure Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

¹⁵ Kelly Taylor, Executive Manager, Rural Rides <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-announces-first-federal-fund-dedicated-to-rural-transit-solutions-865678376.html>

¹⁶ Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rural-transit-funding-mckenna-1.5967875>

B4: Grant Alignment with Provincial Regulatory Requirements

Moved by: Town of Okotoks

Seconded by: Town of High River

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta provides public funding through grant programs for municipal government initiatives of importance to all Albertans;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta sets out rules that municipalities must follow through legislation and regulations;

WHEREAS the provisions for grant programs and regulations may not align and/or the decision making authority for the awarding of funding and regulatory requirements conflict or hinder the completion of either projects and/or regulatory compliance or grant funding of same; and

WHEREAS the misalignment of grants and regulatory requirements can restrict growth of initiatives or programs and unnecessarily create barriers for municipalities.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to align grant funding and regulatory provisions through creating a one window approach for municipalities to remove barriers, reduce red tape, and improve the delivery of government services at the municipal level across the province for all municipalities.

BACKGROUND:

The Government of Alberta has stated that:

“Red tape reduction is a key part of Alberta’s Recovery Plan to create jobs, encourage investment and strengthen the economy. By keeping taxes low, cutting red tape and acting on Alberta’s Recovery Plan, the government is reducing needless regulations and processes to further enhance Alberta’s competitiveness, which will drive new investment and growth across the economy.”

By aligning grant funding with regulatory provisions and authority in a one-window approach, needless red tape will be removed such as redundant processes and rules that do not provide any extra protections. This includes all information relative to a single project, in a single application, to a single authority and ensures that grant approvers and permit approvals have all the information applicable to the project. An example of this is with the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership that provides funding for infrastructure upgrades and is administered under Alberta Transportation. However, the projects themselves are regulated under Alberta Environment and Parks, and therefore any project requiring funding must go through both ministries.

A similar situation existed with the 2019 Municipal Community Generation Challenge that awarded funding for municipal renewable energy generation projects but did not verify or provide a strategy to ensure that projects that received grant funding through this initiative would receive Ministerial approval to then sell the energy produced through these projects. The projects that were approved did receive funding and approval, however, the complexity and uncertainty that came with the conflict impacted project design.

Reducing red tape and aligning funding and permit approvals will save time, money, and resources for both applicants and approving authorities, while still providing the same protections and upholding fiscal accountability. This will make it easier for municipalities to access grant funding while reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens. The alignment of regulatory requirements and decision-making for the same grants will further allow municipalities to invest back into our communities and grow in a timely and efficient manner.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with Alberta Municipalities' ongoing advocacy on red tape reduction and streamlining regulations. Should members adopt this resolution, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Sustainability and Environment Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

B5: Incentivizing Comprehensive Flood Management

Moved by: City of Airdrie

Seconded by: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

WHEREAS floods are an extreme weather event causing substantial loss in Alberta, with a particularly devastating effect on urban municipalities;

WHEREAS floods in urban municipalities require recovery time, during which their economic power and contributions to the Province are severely reduced;

WHEREAS the provincial government has also historically provided disaster relief funds to aid in the physical and economic recovery of urban municipalities at tremendous expense;

WHEREAS effective, integrated stormwater management is highly correlated with reduction in flood frequency and severity;

WHEREAS the largest and most stable source of revenue for almost all urban municipalities comes from property assessment values; and

WHEREAS the pursuit of such revenue sources can run counter to municipal or intermunicipal decisions that would allow for more effective or integrated stormwater management.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for provincial incentives to better integrate stormwater management within and between municipalities.

BACKGROUND:

There is a rising cost from flood damage throughout Canada, including Alberta. Public Safety Canada reports a dramatic increase in the number of disasters for which provinces required and obtained federal assistance under the *Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) program* from 1970 to 2015. The final six years of that term cost more than the previous 39 years combined, with flooding accounting for 75% of all weather-related expense. The DFAA is expected to cost over \$900M annually.

Similar cost increases are seen for insurance payouts from extreme weather events. Since the 1980s, property and casualty payouts have more than doubled every 5-10 years. Payouts averaged \$405M per year from 1983 to 2008, and then exceeded \$1B for 11 of the 12 years between 2009 and 2020. A report from the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo suggests that for every dollar of loss borne by Canadian insurers, three to four dollars are borne by government, homeowners, and business owners. The top five highest loss years on record are all flood related.

To reduce the costs and impacts of extreme events, municipalities or regional boards often look to develop at a greater distance from riparian areas. However, the stable and substantial revenues from property assessment run counter to these aims by incentivizing municipalities to maximize their land development opportunities – and lands next to rivers and streams often have premium assessment potential.

The high cost of payouts from provincial and federal governments for flood events provides economic rationale to incentivize municipalities to look at comprehensive or integrated stormwater management practices across an entire watershed. Such integrated practices can involve things like:

- mandating more permeable surface areas as part of developments;
- using stormwater catchment areas (i.e., trap lows) to slow transfer to stormwater ponds;

- reducing acceptable stormwater release rates and enhancing stormwater ponds for capacity beyond 1:100-year events;
- naturalizing riparian banks and avoiding riparian channelization; and
- requiring intermunicipal watershed management bodies.

Such measures may reduce the amount of net developable land, causing concern for developers and municipalities that rely on maximum yield. Alberta Municipalities recognizes that when a municipality agrees to reduce standards, it gains a competitive advantage. Moves by one municipality will often be countered by others within the watershed to remain competitive for property tax revenue, especially non-residential development.

Leadership is required to incentivize municipalities to collaborate on flood resiliency and reduce the long-term expense of extreme weather events, especially floods, for all Albertans.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ongoing advocacy for stormwater management and urban flooding prevention. Should members adopt this resolution, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Sustainability and Environment Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

B6: Exemption of Stormwater Reuse from Licensing Requirements

Moved by: Town of Okotoks

Seconded by: Town of High River

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta are in need of additional water sources for non-potable water-use activities such as irrigation, dust control, and landscape maintenance;

WHEREAS the current regulations pertaining to stormwater make it very difficult for municipalities to use stormwater for outdoor non-potable water-use activities;

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks is proposing to change how stormwater is made available for municipalities and is requesting feedback on exempting a certain volume of stormwater from the Water (Ministerial) Regulation license requirements; and

WHEREAS municipalities in Alberta would support the exemption of stormwater from the Water Regulation license requirements thus reducing the burden on water licensing in Alberta.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities urge Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to exempt stormwater use from licensing requirements provided that the stormwater use does not exceed the difference between pre and post development volumes.

BACKGROUND:

Stormwater use is interpreted as a diversion requiring authorization from the province under the *Water Act*. In the current changing climate, the impact of drier summers puts pressure on the water systems in Alberta to keep up with the demand of a growing population, especially in basins with a moratorium on new water diversion licenses. Drier conditions increase the need for the irrigation of landscaping, both commercially and residentially. Municipalities end up using potable water to irrigate sports fields, control road dust, and to maintain municipal landscaping and tree canopies. Treatment of water to render it potable uses a large amount of energy, which not only increases costs but also contributes greenhouse gas emissions through the use of fossil fuels in the Alberta energy grid.

Through development, additional stormwater volume is diverted from hard surfaces to receiving watersheds which results in a difference between pre and post development release volumes. The release volume calculations are based on rates of evaporation, annual rainfall, transpiration, and percolation. Post-development volumes of stormwater run-off are greater than pre-development volumes due to a significant increase in impervious surface areas that prevent the water from seeping into the ground. In allowing reuse of the excess stormwater, municipalities would save money and resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by no longer having to treat water for irrigating sports fields and road dust control, or for transporting potable water for landscape maintenance. Through stormwater capture and reuse, municipalities would be proactive in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change in Alberta.

AEP has conducted hydrological modeling showing that municipalities would have specific amounts of stormwater available for use without having a negative impact downstream or on the surrounding ecosystem.¹

In spring 2022, AEP engaged stakeholders to learn about the current desire or need for stormwater reuse in regions of the Province.² Changes to how stormwater reuse is accessed are being proposed by the government in order to lessen the barriers to its use.

¹ <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/ep-stormwater-management-engagement-factsheet.pdf>

² https://your.alberta.ca/stormwater-use/survey_tools/stormwater-wmr-amendments-survey

In 2014, Alberta Municipalities urged the Government of Alberta to review and make changes to the *Water Act* to provide a regulatory framework that made it easier to pursue stormwater reuse projects, including streamlining the project implementation process.³

The proposed action would support the possible changes that are being put forward by the Alberta Government to remove barriers for the reuse of stormwater by municipalities in Alberta.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with existing positions on stormwater management and reuse. Should members adopt this resolution, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Sustainability and Environment Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

³ https://www.abmunis.ca/sites/default/files/Advocacy/Document_library/80676_stormwater_policy_paper.pdf

B7: Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks

Moved by: Town of Mayerthorpe

Seconded by: City of St. Albert

WHEREAS Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) were introduced through Bill 21, Modernized Municipal Government Act, 2016, and the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Regulation, which were proclaimed on October 26, 2017. In 2019, Bill 25, Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act made additional changes to the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework legislation;

WHEREAS Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks have the following purposes: to provide for the integrated and strategic planning, delivery and funding of intermunicipal services; to steward scarce resources efficiently in providing local services; and, to ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit their residents;

WHEREAS municipalities that share a common boundary must have created an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework with each other by April 1, 2022 with a minimum five year renewal term;

WHEREAS Growth Management Board members were initially mandated to complete Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks, but Bill 25, 2019 removed this, and inadvertently introduced additional red tape for the completion of intermunicipal agreements;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta and municipalities expended substantial taxpayer money through the Alberta Municipal Affairs Municipal Dispute Resolution Service and the Alberta Community Partnership Program funding facilitators and mediators to deal with Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework conflicts, through countless municipal meetings, through many hours of municipal administrative time, and through costs of arbitration processes;

WHEREAS 344 municipalities completed Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks, including 257 urban municipalities (19 cities, 106 towns, 81 villages and 51 summer villages), 6 specialized municipalities, 73 rural municipalities (63 municipal districts, 7 improvement districts and 3 special areas) and 8 Metis settlements. 442 ICFs were required in total across Alberta; 7 of these proceeded to arbitration. All of these municipalities could benefit from clearer legislation guiding the content of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks; and

WHEREAS findings and decisions of arbitrators based on expert reports have established precedents in defining core funding formulas, establishing eligible costs, and determining eligible services.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) advocate on behalf of its member municipalities, including those who belong to a Growth Management Board, that the Government of Alberta enact legislation, and develop best practices, that provide clear guidance for Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs), and ensure reduced red tape and costs during the process to renew ICFs. This guidance should:

- Provide minimum core funding formulas to support fair and equitable frameworks;
- Define core minimum eligible costs, thereby reducing red tape and costs in facilitation, mediation and arbitration processes; and
- Define eligible services within transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste, emergency services, recreation, libraries and other services that benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities that are party to an ICF.

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED THAT ABmunis request the Government of Alberta amend the *Municipal Government Act* to mandate ICFs for municipalities that share a common boundary within Growth Management Boards, to foster intermunicipal and sub-regional collaboration and reduce red tape with respect to intermunicipal collaboration that is currently voluntary.

BACKGROUND:

Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework legislation is new and innovative legislation that aligns with the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), s. 3 Municipal purposes:

“The purposes of a municipality are:

- (a) to provide good government,
- (a.1) to foster the well-being of the environment,
- (b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of a municipality,
- (c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities, and
- (d) to work collaboratively with neighboring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services.”

Municipalities during the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework process may not have adequate staff resources and/or financial capacity to proceed with lengthy and costly facilitation, mediation, and arbitration processes.

By codifying requirements for funding formulas and establishing the types of funding formulas to use, municipalities across the province will be able to realize a more even playing field.

By codifying arbitration precedents or best practices into existing legislation, municipalities will be in a better position to re-negotiate and streamline subsequent renewals of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks providing for consistency throughout the Province.

Thousands of hours of time for municipal administrations and elected officials, untold provincial resources and countless dollars in grant funding have been expended in the process of negotiating, mediating and arbitrating ICFs across the Province. Legal precedents have been established at the expense of the taxpayer with local governments shouldering the burden. We are calling on the province to enact key amendments to legislation that remove the ambiguity and set the stage for less red tape and productive negotiations when obligatory renewal of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks begins.

ICFs were introduced in recognition that while some municipalities have a strong history of collaboration, others were unable to persuade their neighbours to think regionally. ICFs have the potential to improve the quality and efficiency of the delivery of infrastructure and services which positively contribute to the well-being of Albertans and the resiliency of our economy. This resolution is presented with the conviction that there is an opportunity to learn from the experience of municipalities over the past several years in order to strengthen ICF related legislation and processes.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ongoing advocacy and change management related to reviews of the *Municipal Government Act*, with the most current review being focused on red tape reduction. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Municipal Governance Committee.

B8: Provincial Indigenous Awareness Training & Support

Moved by: Town of Strathmore

Seconded by: Village of Rockyford

WHEREAS Canada has a history of residential schools which were created for the purposes of separating indigenous children from their families, weakening family ties and cultural linkages and indoctrinating children into a new culture;

WHEREAS residential schools were in existence for well over 100 years and many successive generations of children from multiple communities and families endured the horrific experience of them;

WHEREAS the experience of those who endured residential schools was hidden until survivors of the system found the strength, courage and support to bring their experiences to light; and

WHEREAS it is vital that Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers be able to share their lived experiences directly with students and teachers in order to create greater awareness and support for these individuals and to continue implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action report and ensure alignment with the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Government of Alberta to provide financial support to every school jurisdiction to enable all students (including homeschooled students) and teachers to learn about the lived experience of residential schools directly from Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers for the purposes of allowing those affected to heal and to ensure that the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People are fulfilled upon.

BACKGROUND:

Alberta has one of the largest and fastest growing Indigenous populations in the country. The First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities play an important role in the social, cultural and economic fabric of the Province.

However, the relationship and history between Indigenous communities and the Government of Canada is complicated and troublesome. Residential schools operated in Canada for over 100 years, with the last school closing in 1997. It is estimated that 150,000 children attended residential schools in Canada for the purposes of indoctrinating them into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living and assimilating them into mainstream Canadian society. The residential school system forcibly separated children from their families for extended periods of time and forbade them to acknowledge their Indigenous heritage and culture or to speak their own languages. Children were severely punished if these, among other, strict rules were broken. Former students of residential schools have spoken of horrendous abuse at the hands of residential school staff: physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement came into effect in 2007. One of the components of the agreement was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission's purpose was to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities, and all Canadians. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defines reconciliation as:

“An ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.”

Alberta Municipalities has advocated for “Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.” A necessary component of an inclusive community is the engagement of Indigenous communities.

The Truth and Reconciliation's 43rd Call to Action states, "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation." Reconciliation is a responsibility of all levels of government.

The proposal before Alberta Municipalities' members is to advocate that the Government of Alberta provide financial support and resources for the purposes of allowing Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers to share their lived experiences directly with students and teachers in Alberta's education system. It is imperative that survivors of the residential schools and their families are able to share their stories directly to allow opportunities for them to heal and to ensure that history is not repeated in the future.

The proposed action would be in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation's 62nd Call to Action, which calls upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to "[m]ake age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students."

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not have a specific position on the content of curriculum for Alberta schools; however, ABmunis does work to provide training on Indigenous history and culture to its staff and support its members in building relationships with Indigenous communities and peoples through its Organizational Readiness Framework to Build Respectful Relations with Indigenous Communities. This Framework is part of the organization's Municipal-Indigenous Relations initiative. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Municipal Governance Committee.

B9: Policing Fines and Penalties Revenue Sharing

Moved by: Town of Mundare

Seconded by: Town of Bruderheim, Village of Chipman, Town of Lamont

WHEREAS section 162(2) of the *Traffic Safety Act* states: “Fines and penalties imposed under this Act in respect of offences occurring in a municipality for which policing services are required to be provided under section 4(5) or (6) of the *Police Act* belong to the municipality that is required to provide the policing services”;

WHEREAS as of April 1, 2020, municipalities receiving policing services under the Provincial Police Services Agreement (PPSA) are required to pay a portion of their policing costs;

WHEREAS these municipalities will be paying 30% of their policing costs by 2023/2024;

WHEREAS the intent of Section 162 of the *Traffic Safety Act* is that fines should be distributed on the basis of who pays for the policing; and

WHEREAS despite the intent of the Act, those municipalities receiving policing under the PPSA do not receive a share of the fines and penalties.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to amend section 162 of the *Traffic Safety Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter T-6 to distribute fines and penalties under the Act to those municipalities receiving policing services under the Provincial Police Services Agreement at the same percentage that these municipalities pay for policing.

BACKGROUND

Prior to October 31, 2005, Section 162 of the *Traffic Safety Act* stated:

Disposition of fines and penalties (in effect prior to October 31, 2005)

162 (1) Subject to subsection (2), any fine or penalty imposed under this Act belongs to the Crown in right of Alberta.

(2) Any fine or penalty imposed under this Act in respect of an offence occurring in

(a) a municipality that is an urban area, belongs to that municipality,

(b) a municipal district or Metis settlement, other than on a highway designated as a primary highway pursuant to the *Public Highways Development Act*, belongs to the municipal district or Metis settlement, and

(c) an Indian reserve, other than on a highway designated as a primary highway or a highway designated as a secondary road pursuant to the *Public Highways Development Act*, belongs to the band.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(c), “band” and “reserve” mean a band and reserve as defined in the *Indian Act* (Canada).

After October 31, 2005, the *Traffic Safety Act* was changed so that traffic fines were distributed based on the “who pays for policing model”.

Municipalities required to pay their policing costs under sections 4(5) or 6 of the *Police Act* and municipalities that pay for a Peace Officer receive 60% of the specified fine or penalties.

291 municipalities and municipal districts/counties are covered under the Provincial Police Services Agreement and do not currently receive any portion of fine or penalty revenue.

As per the resolution, as of 2023/2024, PPSA Municipalities would receive 18% of the fines and penalties (30% of 60%)

The Town of Mundare, population 852, will pay \$47,740 in 2023/2024 for policing.

This resolution relates to ABmunis Policing and Justice strategy.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific issue; however, past advocacy on police funding has emphasized the need to treat municipalities equitably. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

B10: Advancing Action on Alberta's Drug Poisoning Crisis

Moved by: City of Edmonton

Seconded by: City of Wetaskiwin

WHEREAS 2021 was Alberta's deadliest year on record for drug poisonings with 1,758 deaths;

WHEREAS the devastating impacts are being felt across all communities, from big cities and suburbs to smaller remote communities, cutting across all ages, all genders, and all social strata who are at risk both in their homes and within Alberta's most vulnerable populations;

WHEREAS the pandemic exacerbated the drug poisoning crisis in our Province with social isolation, unemployment, and mental health challenges combined with an increasingly toxic illicit drug supply and reduced capacity of services, causing drug use to be even more risky;

WHEREAS municipalities across the province are facing the impacts of the drug poisoning crisis with added pressures on their first responders, frontline agencies, policing, and the provincial justice and healthcare systems, including increased pressure on Emergency Medical Services' (EMS) ability to provide timely response to other ongoing emergency needs;

WHEREAS research has shown that a full spectrum of supports is required, from prevention and education, to harm reduction (including naloxone access and training, supervised consumption sites, and safer supply programs), to treatment and recovery, along with ongoing mental health and addictions support to reverse the devastating impacts of this crisis; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has committed to responding to the drug poisoning crisis through increased investments in recovery-oriented care for people struggling with addiction and mental health issues, which is one tool among many that must be deployed.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to:

- Engage municipalities, people with lived and living experience, front-line agencies, and other partners as part of a comprehensive drug poisoning prevention strategy that includes harm reduction and recovery approaches and offers increased investments to address the urgent needs;
- Increase its investments into affordable housing with ongoing wraparound services as part of an integrated approach for responding to the drug poisoning crisis for homeless populations with complex challenges; and
- Immediately reinstate the inclusion of neighborhood-level data in the Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System reporting to inform a data-driven response in providing resources to sustainably implement a comprehensive drug strategy.

BACKGROUND:

2019 Alberta Municipalities Resolution

A [resolution](#) was approved at the Fall 2019 Alberta Municipalities Annual Convention, identifying a need for provincial action to address the drug poisoning crisis, including additional strategic efforts towards supporting prevention, treatment, harm reduction and community safety.

While the province has committed to providing increased support for treatment related services, there has been little advancement on the other required interventions such as harm reduction. As this resolution is expiring this year, a new resolution will provide Alberta Municipalities with the direction to continue advocating, particularly given the increasing deaths across Alberta.

Government of Alberta Focused Efforts

The Government of Alberta’s initial response to the 2019 Alberta Municipalities’ resolution referenced previous provincial budget commitments and signaled the appointment of a Mental Health and Addictions Council that would inform the government’s future actions.

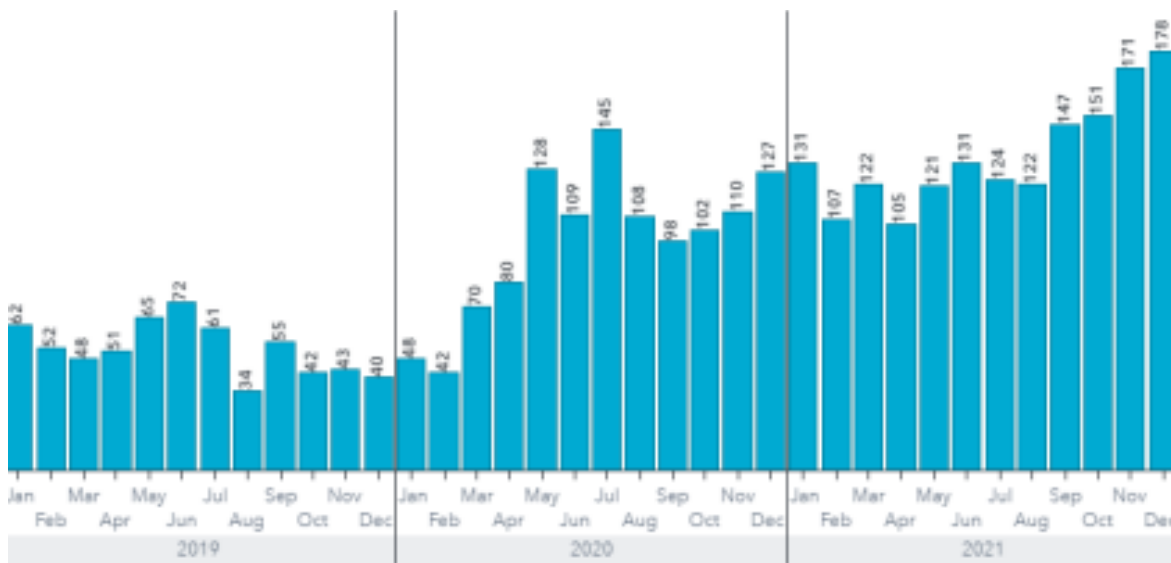
In March 2022, the recommendations from the Advisory Council were released, and the [report](#) acknowledged the ongoing opioid crisis and the impact it was having on various populations including children and youth, and further highlighted the important role that housing with wrap-around services can play in responding to homeless populations with addictions or mental health issues. An overarching recommendation from the report highlighted the need to:

“Create a coordinated network providing a continuum of supports (prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery) for people at risk of or suffering from addiction and mental health challenges.”

The Government’s [response](#) following the release of the report centered on their efforts to build a recovery-oriented system of care through increased investments but provided no other details on new funding or initiatives in support of prevention, harm reduction or supportive housing.

Provincial Drug Poisoning Deaths Data

The following graph shows a continued increase in monthly drug poisoning deaths from across the Province from 2019 to 2021, as taken from the [Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System](#):



ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ongoing advocacy for improvements to Alberta’s mental health and addictions system, including action to address the opioid crisis. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis’ Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

WITHDRAWN B11: Expansion of the Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit

Moved by: City of St. Albert

Seconded by: City of Airdrie

WHEREAS the Governments of Canada and Alberta proclaimed that every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home and committed to providing \$444 million in rent support to low-income Albertans in need through the Canada-Alberta Housing Benefit from 2019 to 2028;

WHEREAS the Stronger Foundations Alberta Affordable Housing Strategy identifies the goal to simplify processes and regulations for eligibility, prioritization, and rent setting, creating a more transparent and fair system for Albertans who need housing supports, while protecting the most vulnerable, and ensuring housing eligibility is fair, clear, and equitable;

WHEREAS the Final Report of the Alberta Affordable Housing Review Panel states that “Albertans need safe, suitable, and affordable housing to participate successfully in the economy and society” and this should apply to all Albertans, regardless of geographic location;

WHEREAS Albertans across the province are facing increased financial pressures and there are 11.4 per cent of all Albertans in core housing need, which is not limited to the boundaries of specific municipalities; and

WHEREAS the Temporary Rent Assistance Benefit Program is intended to assist lower income Albertan households to afford their rent in housing of their choice and access to the two-year benefit program is currently restricted to residents living in seven Alberta communities and is not available in other Alberta municipalities;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to expand the current Temporary Rent Assistance Benefit beyond the current eligibility of the identified seven municipalities, and commensurately increase the amount of funding available to enable all low-income Albertans to potentially access this funding to support appropriate housing on a temporary basis, which would assist Albertans to stabilize and improve their situation during the economic recovery.

BACKGROUND:

On July 6, 2021, the Governments of Canada and Alberta announced the Canadian-Alberta Housing Benefit, which would provide \$444 million in rent relief over a ten-year period, until 2028. One component of this funding was the introduction of the new Temporary Rent Assistance Benefit (TRAB), intended to provide a modest subsidy for working Albertan households with low income or those between jobs for a period of up to two years. Program funding is only available to Albertans who reside within the cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer, as well as the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Albertans living outside the borders of these jurisdictions are not eligible for TRAB, despite meeting other program criteria, and may be paying the same or higher average market rents identified within the seven municipalities where the benefit is available.

This program is part of the provincial response to the joint funding agreement by the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta. The program addressed some of the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Review Panel (final report, October 5, 2020). The report outlines that in 2016 there were 164,275 (11.4 per cent) Albertans in core housing need. A household in core housing need is defined as one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not find alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community. The report also identified that without action the number of Albertans in core housing need would continue to grow.

The program criteria for TRAB are not directed towards ending homelessness, but rather to bridge the gap for low-income working households who are paying in excess of 30 percent of their income towards housing costs, or who

are temporarily out work. Albertans are eligible if they earn incomes at or below the provincially published income thresholds for the community they live in, based on the number of bedrooms required for the household size. The two-year fixed rate subsidy is re-assessed after the first year and is reduced in the second year, however households can reapply for rent assistance at the end of two years. Households are prioritized on a first come, first served basis and the benefit is paid directly to tenants, with a minimum of \$100 per month. The full rate schedule can be found here <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d0e76201-ba35-48d3-88c6-53ad54c43e51/resource/07833782-f819-4ace-bcb3-96182e5ab1ca/download/sh-temporary-rent-assistance-benefit-rates-2021.pdf>

The Rental Assistance Benefit Program is available to low income Albertans through most housing management bodies across the province. Prioritization for this long term program is based on need, meaning that only the lowest income thresholds are eligible. This ongoing program has long waiting lists, which creates a significant risk for Albertans to become homeless, as they wait for availability. For example, as of February 2020 nearly 10,000 people were on the waitlist with Capital Region Housing (now Cvida) to receive rental assistance.¹

The TRAB supports Albertans who are not eligible to access deeper subsidy programs, with the goal of supporting tenants who are between jobs or are working with low income. This program also allows Albertans to exercise more choice in their housing, which creates direct economic benefits for housing providers, while ensuring families find suitable accommodations near their place of employment and/or supports. TRAB can help to bridge a gap for Albertans to prevent the requirement for greater, long term subsidies in the future.

The past several years have created significant financial pressures on Albertans across the province, beginning with an economic downturn in 2015/16, unstable oil and gas prices, followed by economic uncertainty as a result of a worldwide pandemic. As Alberta enters into a recovery phase from the pandemic, substantial inflation, not seen in 30 years, is adding additional financial stress on Albertan households.

Although the overall consumer price index has increased by 6.5 per cent in Alberta, some goods and services have seen higher increase in costs. Food prices (6.8 per cent), transportation costs (13.8 per cent), and energy costs for utilities (30.7 per cent) all represent inflation costs above the overall average, with both transportation and utility inflation rates higher in Alberta than the national average increase.² “Despite a strong recovery, average incomes in Alberta have decreased 4 per cent, since the start of the pandemic, and Albertans are falling behind their peers.”³ The Alberta economy has not yet recovered from the impact of COVID, and while oil prices have improved, economic uncertainty and lower availability of permanent full time work prevails.

One of the key principles identified during the Affordable Housing Review, whose recommendations formed the foundation of the TRAB program, is that a fair, equitable, and inclusive affordable housing system is essential. However, this principle was not put into practice when the TRAB criteria was established, limiting the accessibility of the benefit to residents only within select municipalities.

The latest available population numbers indicate that the population of Alberta is 4,271,759, while the total population for the seven municipalities eligible for the TRAB is 2,704,453.⁴ Therefore, approximately half of Albertans are ineligible to access this benefit, due to their geography, despite potentially meeting other eligibility requirements. Overwhelmingly, most municipalities in Alberta, and therefore their residents, are ineligible to access this funding. 21.2 per cent of all core housing need is outside of the seven municipalities currently eligible for the TRAB.⁵

Certainly, the identified seven municipalities for the TRAB program do represent major urban centres in Alberta; however socio-economic issues do not end at municipal boundaries. These municipalities are also receiving specific funding from the Provincial and Federal governments to prevent and reduce homelessness.

¹ The High Cost of Waiting. Edmonton Social Planning Council Report. February 2020.

² Consumer Price Index, Canada and Alberta. Alberta Official Statistics. April 20, 2022.

³ Alberta Snapshot. Business Council of Alberta. April 2022.

⁴ 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List. Government of Alberta. December 2019.

⁵ Statistics Canada, CMHC. Household Type—in Core Housing Need. 2016.

Data does not substantiate that only these seven municipalities have housing pressures. For example, in 2021 the overall vacancy rate was lower for most Edmonton Census Metropolitan area communities than the City of Edmonton, as identified in the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Market Survey. This survey also identified increasing average rental rates for all categories, highlighting the increasing housing costs for Albertans.

Program limitations may force Albertans who would be eligible for the TRAB to relocate to one of the seven centres to access program funding. Alternatively, if residents chose to remain in their current community of choice, the benefits intended to reduce housing instability and homelessness will not be available, and these communities may face higher incidences of housing instability and homelessness without the resources to address them fully. Increased instances of housing instability and homelessness can create additional pressures on municipalities, who have to respond to the societal issues caused by homelessness.

The existing limitations of the Temporary Rental Assistance Benefit will result in long term implications to Alberta communities whose residents deserve the same consideration for core housing need support regardless of where they reside in Alberta.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific issue; however, past advocacy on affordable housing has emphasized the need to improve access to affordable housing for all Albertans. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

B12: Municipal Identified Unique Housing Priorities

Moved by: City of Fort Saskatchewan

Seconded by: Strathcona County

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is developing a Standardized Template for an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment as a key action item outlined in Stronger Foundations: *Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing*;

WHEREAS the Needs Assessment is intended to offer a standardized and comprehensive approach for evidence-based decision-making and is intended to support municipalities to identify and prioritize their housing needs;

WHEREAS each Alberta municipality has a unique household, geographic, and demographic context that informs their corresponding housing need;

WHEREAS while Federal Census Profile data is a valuable resource in identifying the overall housing need, additional local context is necessary to effectively maximize the efficiency, efficacy, and sustainability, of affordable housing investments;

WHEREAS data stories help make complex data clear and understandable through visuals and narrative and can provide municipalities opportunity to contextualize municipally identified priorities; and

WHEREAS smaller communities may need support in the form of access to funding and expertise to carry out the assessments.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to engage municipalities and housing management bodies regarding the Standardized Template for an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment to ensure data collected and used in the Template meaningfully captures each municipality's unique local context for housing needs, challenges, and barriers.

BACKGROUND:

Stronger Foundations is Alberta's 10-year strategy to improve and expand affordable housing. It maps out the bold and thoughtful changes needed to provide safe, stable, affordable housing for an additional 25,000 households to increase the total number of households served to 82,000 – an increase of more than 40 per cent.

Albertans should have access to safe, affordable housing that meets their needs and promotes quality of life. The housing system should deliver innovative and sustainable affordable housing options to Albertans in need through partnerships with other orders of government, non-profit and private housing providers, and communities. The housing system will serve Albertans now and into the future

This resolution seeks to encourage the provincial government to work with municipalities to ensure that unique attributes and nuances of communities are understood and can be built into this body of work.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific issue; however, past advocacy on affordable housing has emphasized the need to improve access to affordable housing for all Albertans and consider local house needs and priorities. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further

advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

2022 RESOLUTIONS

CATEGORY C – OTHER ISSUES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES

C1: Cannabis Plant Limits (Medical Certificate) for Residential Properties

Moved by: Village of Duchess

Seconded by: The City of Brooks

WHEREAS Government of Canada regulations (Cannabis Regulations SOR/2018-144) allow for the use of a property in a residential neighbourhood for the sole purpose of cultivating marijuana plants with a legal Medical Certificate;

WHEREAS the number of plants that can be legally grown can exceed 500 located in one single residence with no restrictions placed on the number of plants per square foot of home and no consideration given to the health and safety of the residents in the community;

WHEREAS while the health and safety of municipal residents is directly affected by the potential for criminal activity and by the unsafe use of utilities, current regulations do not allow municipalities to ensure that the growing activities are in accordance with safety codes;

WHEREAS it is challenging for municipalities to protect the health and safety of first responders who may be called upon to enter an unsafe situation; and

WHEREAS the potential purchasing of smaller homes or the conversion of current rental property for medical cannabis production could negatively impact affordable housing in many communities.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities collaborate with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to advocate for the Government of Canada to amend medical marijuana regulations to place a reasonable limit on the number of plants that can be grown in a residential property or within property in a residential zoned district to preserve the health and safety of our communities.

BACKGROUND:

All municipalities across Alberta, and Canada, are directly impacted by the current regulations that allow a person to purchase a property in a residential area and use it solely as a location for the growing of marijuana plants as defined by that persons' medical license as the owner is not required by the regulations to reside in the property. The number of plants can also be increased by the property owner holding the medical growing certificate of another person with their permission.

A person holding a medical certificate allowing them to grow their own marijuana can also grow these plants in their place of residence and could also potentially have over 500 plants. These residences are not subject to any Safety Code inspections or regulations. The owner and resident are not obligated to notify the municipality, which creates a significant barrier to ensuring safety standards are met through conducting Safety Code inspections.

Any of these residences can be located next to playgrounds, recreation centres, parks, and schools. There are limited regulations to restrict these potentially large indoor "Medical Grow Ops" to be located a reasonable distance from any place that provides facilities for children.

The Government of Canada has created a loophole in the regulations that puts the health and safety of our communities at risk. The risk is not limited to potential criminal activity but also includes the unsafe use of utilities in the property and the potential for damage to neighbouring properties in the event of a fire or explosion. The inability of municipalities to control these activities puts the safety of residents at risk and puts the health and safety of First Responders at risk if they are unaware of the situation in the property whilst responding to an emergency call.

The “loophole” in the Government of Canada regulations could also negatively impact the availability of affordable housing in communities. Affordable housing options have been targeted for lower cost purchases to provide owners with a location to grow their plants outside of their own residence. The Village of Duchess has already experienced the loss of a rental property to use of the residence (800sq ft) as a location to grow medical legal plants. We are unable to verify the utility safety of the property or the safety of the neighbouring homes. A neighbouring municipality with a population of about 350 people already has over three rental properties converted to production of medical cannabis for personal use.

Research undertaken informally has provided evidence that a medical prescription for marijuana can be anything from 10mg to 100mg per day. According to the Government of Canada [calculator](#), this means that a person can legally grow anywhere from 49 to 487 plants for their own use. This number can increase as a person may also grow for another person who is in possession of a [current medical certificate](#).

A [petition](#) was tabled in the House in 2021. The Government of Canada’s response states:

“With each registration issued, Health Canada reminds registered individuals and designated producers that they need to comply with all relevant provincial/territorial and municipal laws, including local bylaws about zoning, noise, odour, electrical and fire safety, as well as all related inspection and remediation requirements.

Health Canada encourages all provinces, territories, and municipalities to use the tools at their disposal to confirm that individuals meet all standards and by-laws. This includes implementing any limitations on zoning, location, and nuisances, such as odour, that they feel are appropriate in their jurisdictions. Municipalities could, for example, require building permits and inspections of electrical work at personal production sites.”

This response has three critical flaws:

- It is difficult for any municipality to limit permissions granted by the federal government.
- Health Canada does **not** share information with municipalities regarding registrations granted to residents to grow their own medical marijuana making it challenging for municipalities to know where plants are grown.
- And, most importantly, responsibility for managing the impact of federal legislative loopholes should **not be downloaded** to municipalities with limited resources to address them.

The Village of Duchess is not opposed to the ability for a person to grow their own medicine but insist that this activity be in accordance with municipal health and safety practices when undertaken in a residential neighbourhood. Restrictions are in place within municipalities with respect to any activity that can negatively impact the quality of life of a neighbourhood. The Village of Duchess is not opposed to excess medical plants being grown in a light industrial zoned area.

FCM and RMA have active resolutions related to this issue and the Village of Duchess would urge Alberta Municipalities to increase the voice for change by working together with FCM and RMA to advocate for urgent and immediate change.

MP Martin Shields from the Bow River Constituency is also advocating for change along with MPs from Northern Ontario and Manitoba where this issue is already impacting community health and safety.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis’ Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

C2: Equitable Provincial Charitable Gaming Model

Moved by: City of St. Albert

Seconded by: City of Airdrie

WHEREAS charitable organizations provide a valuable service across Alberta and their sustainability is of upmost importance to Alberta society;

WHEREAS the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) helps to ensure the sustainability of charitable organizations through revenue generation made possible by volunteer charitable casino events;

WHEREAS an inequitable model for the disbursement of casino revenues to charities currently exists, and the frequency of revenue generating opportunities varies greatly based on location in the Province;

WHEREAS previous reviews of the charitable gaming model have articulated the inequities that exist across Alberta, yet decades of inaction have perpetuated these inequities; and

WHEREAS the AGLC initiated a charitable gaming review in 2019-2021, and are in the process of completing the review, to examine how the model is meeting the needs of Albertans and to look for opportunities to improve it,

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities request that the Ministry of Treasury Board and Finance, and AGLC expeditiously act on the findings of the Charitable Gaming Review and 2021 What We Heard report by implementing a more equitable provincial charitable gaming model to promote the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of charitable organizations across Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

In 2010, after significant stakeholder consultation, a Provincial MLA Advisory Committee provided a report to the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security on “Eligible Organizations’ Access to and Distribution of Proceeds from Licensed Casino Events.” The Committee recommended the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) consider several changes to casino region boundaries and how proceeds are distributed amongst eligible charities.

Under Alberta’s current model, adopted in 2003, charitable groups that meet certain criteria may be licensed by the AGLC to conduct charity casinos, in coordination with licensed private casino facilities, as a revenue generating opportunity. These revenues are critical for charitable organizations’ sustainability and ability to provide services to communities across Alberta.

There are 19 casino facilities located throughout Alberta, each of which belongs to a ‘casino region.’ Charities are generally assigned to their nearest casino facility. Only charities located within Edmonton and Calgary, or who provide province-wide services are permitted to receive a license for a casino event in Edmonton or Calgary casinos.

In the 2010 MLA Advisory Report, it was identified that inequities exist because:

- There is a long waiting period to hold casino events across the province because there are more charitable organizations than there are possible casino events.
- The waiting period for charities to hold casino events varies, from 16 months in Fort McMurray to 34.5 months in Lethbridge.
- Amongst casino regions, charitable proceeds can vary, from an average high of \$77,486 in the Edmonton region to \$18,011 in the St. Albert/Camrose region.

Despite this report, inequities have continued to persist and grow over the last twelve years. The AGLC has recently reported that the waiting period for charities to hold casino events varies from 17 months in Fort McMurray to 41 months in Camrose. This is a notable increase from the MLA Advisory report.

Alberta Municipalities had a resolution on this topic approved by over 88 per cent of members in 2018, which provided the association’s position throughout the AGLC’s consultation, but the resolution recently expired in 2021. The intent of bringing this forward is to ensure that action is taken by the AGLC and/or Ministry of Finance and Treasury Board to implement a more equitable model, consistent with historical asks and recommendations, spanning over a decade.

In 2019, the AGLC surveyed over 3,800 organizations as part of the Charitable Gaming Review. The AGLC also conducted stakeholder engagement in 2021, which engaged 90 charitable organizations and representatives from casinos. Feedback from the engagement included:

- Casino revenues should be pooled provincially and distributed equally to charitable organizations; alternatives included pooling rural casinos revenue, pooling a portion of all revenue and distributing it equally and using a sliding scale to distribute based on need;
- Eliminate/re-draw casino boundaries so that charitable groups can choose any casino in the province; and
- Allow organizations outside the Edmonton and Calgary boundaries to have access to casino events, where revenue generation is greater.

A final report has not been received by Alberta Municipalities and relevant stakeholder groups to outline final recommendations. Given the nature of engagement that has occurred and the initial findings, it is important that recommendations are developed and actioned to benefit charities across Alberta, whose services are more important than ever.

The City of St. Albert believes that given the increased emphasis placed on this topic in recent months, and the AGLC’s communicated intent to provide recommendations on the topic and finalize their review of the charitable gaming model, Alberta Municipalities can help ensure that the AGLC completes this initiative, by adding its voice to this topic. A more equitable model will benefit the charitable organizations that support Alberta’s cities, towns, and villages.

The following table outlines the wait times and revenues each casino-region received in 2019.

Casino Region	2019 Wait Time for Key Events (Months)	2019 Annualized Return (product of wait times and proceeds)
Calgary	20	\$42,000
Calgary-Rural	36	\$16,000
Camrose	41	\$6,100
Edmonton	23	\$39,000
Fort McMurray	17	\$32,000
Grande Prairie	31	\$14,100
Lethbridge	33	\$12,000
Medicine Hat	19	\$10,000
Red Deer	36	\$8,500
St. Albert	31	\$8,100

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

Visit the [Resolutions Library](#) to see the status of ABmunis work on the 2018 resolution “Equitable Provincial Charitable Gaming Model”. If this 2022 resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis’ Board by the Economic Strategy Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

C3: A Proposal to Review the Processes and Policies of the Natural Resources Conservation Board Concerning Confined Feeding Operations

Moved by: Summer Village of Grandview

Seconded by: Summer Village of Silver Beach

WHEREAS the province has taken away the right of municipalities to approve Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) under their Land Use Bylaws and has delegated this responsibility to the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB);

WHEREAS the *Agricultural Operations Practices Act* (AOPA) specifies conditions that must be considered in the approval process;

WHEREAS the NRCB has established policies that diminish the diligence the Approval Officer must apply in reviewing the compliance of an application for a CFO;

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks does not always provide meaningful input into the approval process when there is a possibility of significant environmental impact; and

WHEREAS significant social, economic, and environmental consequences can result from an approval of a CFO if the Board's policies are applied without due consideration of the specific requirements of AOPA.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to complete review through a public hearing of the policies and processes used by the NRCB in the approval of CFOs in order to enhance the transparency and fairness of the process and give all municipalities impacted by the approval a greater voice in the decision-making process.

BACKGROUND:

The locations of Confined Feeding Operations have long been a contentious issue because of the social and environmental problems caused by concentrating an abundance of animals in an unnatural setting. As a result, municipal Land Use Bylaws have set a variety of standards with respect to setbacks and exclusion zones. In 2002, the province took away the right of municipalities to regulate CFOs and delegated that responsibility to the Natural Resources Conservation Board, which administers the *Agricultural Operations Practice Act*. The stated purpose of AOPA is to “ensure that the province’s livestock industry can grow to meet the opportunities presented by local and world markets in an environmentally sustainable manner” (emphasis added).

Under AOPA, the specific responsibility for evaluating CFO applications is delegated to an Approval Officer who is guided by the NRCB policies. If the officer can “tick all the boxes,” i.e., if the prescribed setbacks and other requirements are met, then the project is deemed to be environmentally sound, and it is approved. Other than the local municipality, only “directly affected parties” have a right to present arguments for consideration, and that status is determined by setback distances without consideration for local geographical or environmental conditions. There is no consideration for adjoining municipalities to be considered “directly affected” unless they were successful in getting the issue included in their Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). And even though the Approval Officer must deny approval if an application contravenes an affected municipality’s Development Plan, that denial can be overruled by the Board.

This issue could affect any Alberta municipality adjacent to an agribusiness operation, but it is of particular concern to municipalities near a lake fed by a watershed where agricultural operations are carried out.

The NRCB's Annual Report for 2020-2021 indicates that one of its initiatives was to reduce "red tape" and to speed up the process. The NRCB entered into an agreement with Alberta Environment and Parks whereby NRCB staff would then conduct wetland assessments at proposed confined feeding operations.

It is an admirable goal to advance the growth of the livestock industry, but as with the coal industry, there are many factors that must be considered beyond the "one size fits all" approach the NRCB takes when it considers an application. For example, in southern Alberta, the amount of precipitation is significantly less than that in central and northern Alberta. This means the concern regarding environmental impacts from nutrient runoff is much different between the two locations. Also, the size of watersheds varies greatly across the province, which causes differing environmental consequences. While the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is now in force with specific requirements for environmental concerns, the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan is still not complete. In its absence, special attention must be paid to environmental impacts in this region. The basic question is why should one business be allowed to have consequential impacts on so many affected parties without their ability to provide input?

At Pigeon Lake, a CFO application is currently under evaluation. Through the public involvement process, the weaknesses in the AOPA Regulations are being exposed at every turn. The AOPA requires a setback of manure storage facilities of only 30 metres from a watercourse, which includes lakes and streams. High levels of nutrients from an existing Intensive Livestock Operation have been measured in adjacent streams, which flow into Pigeon Lake. It appears from other decisions that cumulative effects are not considered.

Whenever a Statement of Concern addressing significant environmental concerns is filed, Alberta Environment and Parks should be required to submit an environmental assessment as the first step in the review process. In the case of the application in the Pigeon Lake watershed, the harmful effects on the lake, which is currently at a tipping point, pose a serious threat to the health of the lake and the economy of the region. A review by the scientists at Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is not sufficient in that it is not a true arm's length investigation.

Adjacent municipalities also should have a greater voice in the decision-making process. Currently the only input they would have been through an IDP with the local county, but only if they have agreed to include exclusion zones. If the county is reluctant to include an exclusion zone or if the issue of CFOs is missed when the IDP is prepared, a CFOs in close proximity to an urban centre could meet all NRCB requirements while threatening disastrous effects on the local economy through a crashing real estate market and deteriorating quality of life. The quality of life for the residents due to persistent odours will suffer, but again, the Board does not consider odours a valid reason for denying approval.

The *Municipal Government Act* states that one of the five fundamental purposes of municipalities is to foster the well-being of the environment. Improperly situated CFOs can have dire and long-lasting consequences on many environmental features, especially lakes where nutrient loads can result in harmful algal blooms. Another of these stated purposes is to "*develop and maintain safe and viable communities*" (MGA s3). An odiferous feedlot in the vicinity of a neighboring residential area is in direct opposition to the legislated purpose of a municipality. Therefore, municipalities must have a voice in determining how these business enterprises are approved. This issue could impact each and every municipality in the province.

It is recommended that Alberta Municipalities lobby the province for a public review of this issue with specific attention to how the policies established by the Board have diminished the legislated requirements under AOPA. The overall objective is to adjust the NRCBs policies and procedures, and legislation, if need be, to consider local geographic and environmental factors with the goal of better aligning them with the long-term environmental and

economic needs of municipalities and not just the short-term interests of agribusiness. The review must include Municipal Affairs, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, and municipalities, as well as public input.

Respectfully submitted by the Summer Village of Grandview

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific topic. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Sustainability and Environment Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

C4: Disparity in Electricity Distribution and Transmission Rates

Moved by: City of Grande Prairie
Seconded by: Town of Drumheller

WHEREAS the cost of transmission and distribution of electricity to customers is causing a disparity in prices across Alberta;

WHEREAS electricity prices, which are becoming extraordinarily high in some service areas, are regulated by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) for residential, farm and commercial customers in rural and urban areas;

WHEREAS in 2021, annual transmission charges paid by the average residential customer with 7200 kWh of consumption ranged from \$239.28 (in Enmax's service area) to \$339.72 (in ATCO's service area) ¹;

WHEREAS in 2021, annual distribution charges paid by the average residential customer with 7200 kWh of consumption ranged from \$308.40 (in ENMAX's service area) to \$1,007.16 (in ATCO's service area) ²; and

WHEREAS the cost of transmission and distribution do not just impact purchased energy but also sold energy, with high costs making micro-generation economically challenging in much of the Province.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to eliminate the disparity in electricity pricing for transmission and distribution charges across the Province by adopting a model similar to British Columbia or Saskatchewan.

BACKGROUND:

Because electricity delivery is a fully regulated service, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) reviews the costs in detail and approves the rates to ensure all the charges are fair and reasonable. However there seems to be a disparity in these charges depending on where you live in Alberta. Energy delivery charges include two components: transmission and distribution (in addition to rate riders).

Transmission charges cover the cost of moving electric energy from generating facilities through transmission lines to distribution utility substation transformers. The transmission charge on an electricity bill is based on how much electricity the customer has used and on average is between 14% and 20% of a customer's total bill.

Distribution costs vary with location and consumption. Distribution charges cover the cost of moving electric energy from substation transformers through local lines that carry electricity to the customers' meters. If the service area is large and sparsely populated, one kilometer of distribution line may only serve a few customers whereas in an urban centre, one kilometer of line serves a larger number of customers. Distribution charges are between 22% and 47% of a customer's total bill.

In some parts of the Province, energy delivery charges compose nearly 70% of a customer's total bill for the sum of the two components: transmission and distribution charges.

In large geographical portions of the Province, both businesses and residential endure economic penalties based on geographical and population density disadvantages. This disadvantage can be as high as a 3 to 1 ratio of as seen in

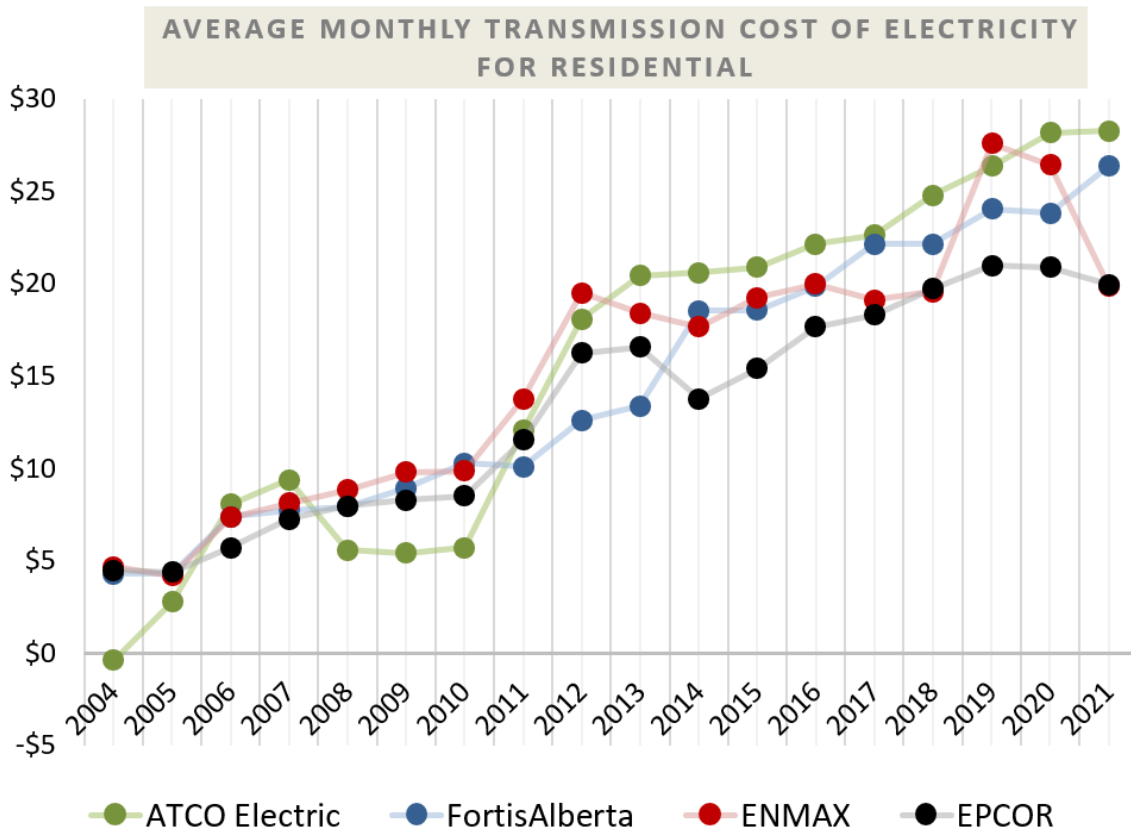
¹ Utilities Consumer Advocate: Electricity Transmission and Distribution Charges
<https://ucahelps.alberta.ca/electricity-transmission-and-distribution-charges.aspx>

² Utilities Consumer Advocate: Electricity Transmission and Distribution Charges
<https://ucahelps.alberta.ca/electricity-transmission-and-distribution-charges.aspx>

chart comparisons below. In comparison, British Columbia and Saskatchewan have succeeded in building and operating transmission and distribution systems where landed costs of electricity are much more evenly distributed amongst the entire system.

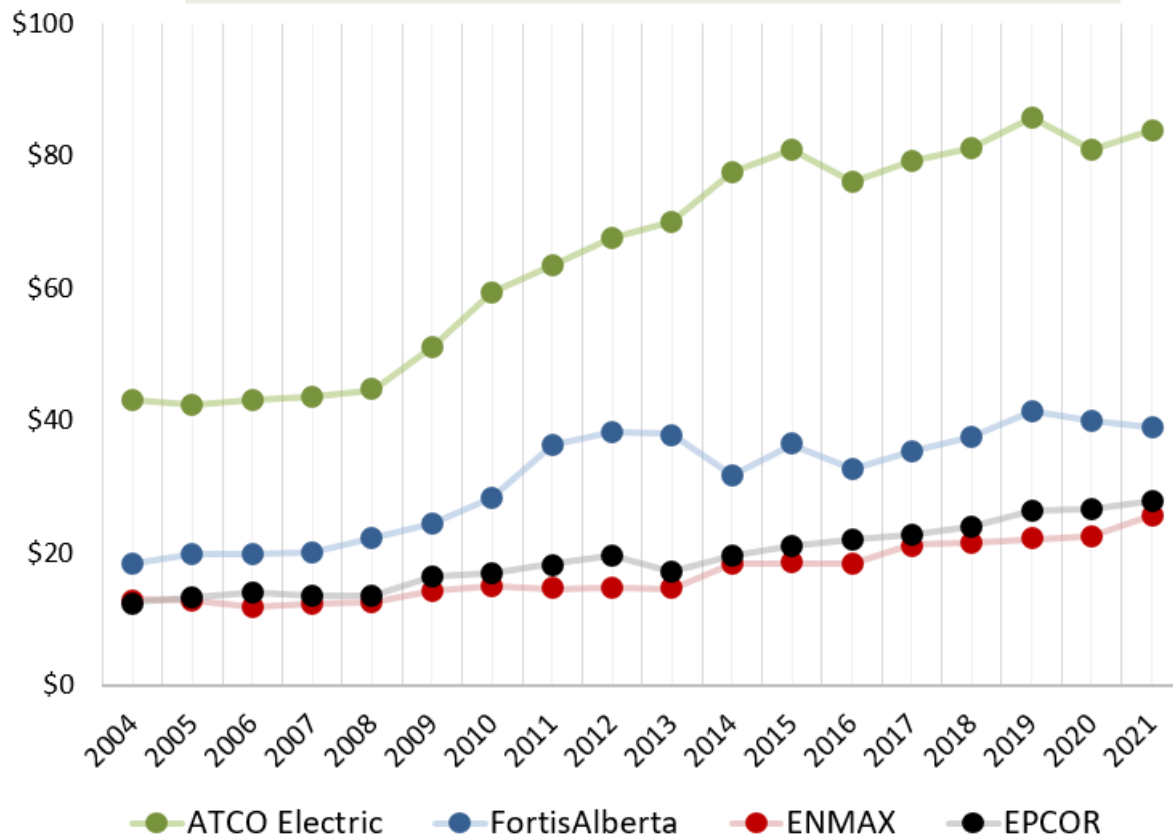
In Saskatchewan, all cities, towns and villages pay one rate that includes transmission and distribution costs regardless of geographic location and all rural areas pay a marginally higher rate. There is only a 1.4 to 1 ratio between the two rates. In British Columbia, all electricity costs including transmission and distribution are equalized across the entire Province.

As the electrical grid for Alberta ultimately operates as a single entity, it is reasonable to distribute those costs equally across the Province. The current system unfairly penalizes communities that are on the border between providers. Competitiveness to attract businesses to Alberta or outside of major urban centers within Alberta is stunted by disparities in the Alberta model. Continual increases of transmission and distribution rates, especially in areas that are already realizing significant cost disparity, results in an increase in energy poverty for many Alberta families and seniors.



Source: Compiled by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate based on data provided by the Alberta Utilities Commission and Alberta Electric System Operator

**AVERAGE MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION COST OF ELECTRICITY
FOR RESIDENTIAL**



Source: Compiled by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate based on data provided by the Alberta Utilities Commission and Alberta Electric System Operator

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with ongoing advocacy to address disparity in distribution and transmission rates across Alberta. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Infrastructure Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

C5: Traffic Safety Act Exemption for Angle Parking in Cul-de-Sacs

Moved by: City of Airdrie

Seconded by: City of Calgary

WHEREAS all municipalities, towns villages are required to follow the *Traffic Safety Act* and Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation (UHRRR), Division 10, section 46(2);

WHEREAS the Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation, Division 10, Parking and Stationary Vehicles, section 46(2) does not allow for angled parking in cul-de-sacs;

WHEREAS in many cities, towns and villages cul-de-sacs are a popular residential configuration and the vast majority of municipalities do not enforce this section of the *Traffic Safety Act's* UHRRR;

WHEREAS a few municipalities have spent a considerable amount of time and resources to develop processes that allow for their residents to angle park in cul-de-sacs within the confines of the *Traffic Safety Act* and UHRRR; and

WHEREAS the *Traffic Safety Act* and UHRRR were not developed with cul-de sacs in mind and therefore do not conform with the vast majority of community and enforcement practices.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to amend the *Traffic Safety Act* and Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation, Division 10, section 46(2) to allow for angle parking in cul-de-sacs in municipalities that pass bylaws allowing this practice.

BACKGROUND:

Traffic Safety Act, Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation Excerpt:

***Traffic Safety Act, Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation
Division 10, Parking and Stationary Vehicles, Section 46 (2), Angle Parking states the following:***

“When:

- a) A sign indicates that angle parking is permitted or required, and*
- b) No parking guide lines are visible on the roadway, a person may only park a vehicle with the vehicle’s sides at an angle of between 30 and 60 degrees to the curb or edge of the roadway and*
- c) In the case of a vehicle, other than a motorcycle, with one front wheel not more than 500 millimeters from the curb or edge of the roadway...”*

The *Traffic Safety Act* was developed to ensure all Albertans are governed by one standard when it comes to traffic safety on Alberta roads. It is an effective tool that all Police Officers, Sheriffs and many Community Peace Officer Level 1’s can use to ensure a standard and consistent approach to enforcement.

Despite the importance of a standard approach to traffic safety the regulations regarding angle parking do not allow municipalities to reasonably apply the principle in cul-de-sacs. Several municipalities, examples listed below, have spent a considerable amount of time and resources to implement procedures through a permitting process to ensure they follow the regulations as set out in the *Traffic Safety Act*.

Many Alberta communities continue to take the approach of ignoring the issue or managing it on a complaint basis in an effort to not appear heavy handed in their approach to enforcement as many residents have been parking “nose in” or at an angle for years in front of their residences in cul-de sacs.

This resolution calls on the Government of Alberta to change the *Traffic Safety Act* and accompanying Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation to allow for angle parking in cul-de-sacs as long as the vehicle is not

causing an obstruction or a hazard. Municipalities may need to introduce or amend existing bylaws to accommodate garbage, recycling and organics collection.

Current Municipal Practices

Calgary

The City of Calgary has implemented a lengthy process to address the need for angle parking in cul-de-sacs. Each cul-de-sac is unique. Before The City of Calgary can authorize cul-de-sac angle parking at a particular location, it must be determined if:

- Minimum clearance for emergency responders to operate will be maintained;
- Minimum clearance for the safe and efficient collection of waste will be maintained;
- The number of available on-street parking spots will increase or stay the same; and
- The location in question is a residential cul-de-sac, not an elbow or corner.

Waste and recycling pick-up, as well as access and maneuverability for large vehicles may still be impacted in locations where angle parking is approved. Delivery trucks, Calgary Transit, and Emergency Services still require access.

Calgary charges a non-refundable \$70 administrative fee to start the process and the average estimated fee to residents in the cul-de-sac for installation is \$2300.00. Despite having developed this lengthy process to accommodate angle parking in cul-de-sacs, residents in Calgary continue to angle park in cul-de-sacs without going through this process.

Edmonton

Angle parking is not permitted in cul-de-sacs with less than a 15-meter radius as there is insufficient road space for vehicles to turn around. Guidelines have been established that permit angle parking for residents who live in a 15 meter or greater radius cul-de-sac. Residents must complete a petition with majority agreement. If the petition meets established guidelines, angle parking signs are installed, and angle parking is then required.

Medicine Hat

The City of Medicine Hat in Alberta has instituted a bylaw that allows for cul-de sac parking except on waste and recycling days. In essence, this becomes a policy and not the rule of law as a municipal bylaw cannot supersede a provincial Act.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

Although ABmunis does not have a current position on this specific issue, we do engage in ongoing advocacy to reduce red tape for the benefit of municipalities. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Infrastructure Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

C6: Attraction and Retention of Veterinarians to Small/Mid-sized Urban Municipalities Veterinary Practice

Moved by: Town of Didsbury

Seconded by: City of Brooks

WHEREAS over the past 30 years increasing demand in Alberta's rural regions and small/mid-sized urban municipalities that serve these rural regions for veterinary medical professionals (veterinarians and veterinary technologists) combined with veterinary students more commonly choosing major urban centered careers, have created a labor shortage that has reached a crisis level;

WHEREAS veterinary medicine is critical to the economy, community sustainability, and quality of life in small/mid-sized urban municipalities via its contributions to agriculture, food safety, animal health and welfare;

WHEREAS many veterinary practices are located outside of the major urban centers and provide services to four common domestic species (Bovine, Equine, Canine and Feline);

WHEREAS students choosing to locate and remain in veterinary practice in small/mid-sized urban municipalities are more likely to be those originating from and living in small/mid-sized urban municipalities and/or in the rural regions in Alberta;

WHEREAS in 2020, veterinary medicine in Alberta generated 10,211 full time employees who contributed over \$206 million in federal, provincial and municipal taxes; and

WHEREAS small/mid-sized urban municipalities have a considerable role in attracting and retaining a local and regional workforce including veterinary medical professionals.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to endorse University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) programs that will help alleviate the veterinarian shortage crisis.

FURHTER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities support UCVM by serving as a conduit for information on what municipalities can do to support attraction and retention efforts including participating in recruitment committees as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

Definitions

ABVMA – Alberta Veterinary Medical Association

GOA – Government of Alberta

GPA – Grade Point Average

MCAT- Medical College Admissions Test

MMI – Multiple Mini Interview

UCVM – University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

There is a crisis level global shortage of veterinarians and veterinary technologists, affecting Alberta. It is estimated that there are currently at minimum 864 veterinary professional vacancies in Alberta (377 veterinarians and 487 veterinary technologists). The job vacancy rates for veterinarians (16.7%) and veterinary technologists (18.8%) far exceeds the provincial average of 2.6%. In the April 2021 ABVMA/ABVTA Veterinary Professional Workforce Study, it was projected that due to increasing expansion demand (demand for service increases due to pet ownership, increased disposable income and increasing livestock numbers) and due to replacement demand, the shortage of

professionals will increase more than 3.5 times by 2040. Using current trends, in eighteen years, the shortage of veterinary professionals is estimated to be more than 3371 people (1331 veterinarians and 2407 technologists). While the labor shortage is an issue throughout Alberta, practices in small/mid-sized urban municipalities that also serve rural regions are particularly impacted by staff shortages due partly to recruitment and admissions challenges. Further, our communities are impacted acutely in the current environment and face restricted economic growth post-Covid without targeted and immediate actions to address the shortages. Attraction and retention of veterinary medical professionals based in small/mid-sized urban municipalities that also serve rural regions has not been keeping pace with increasing demand.

Alberta Municipalities is requesting the GOA officially endorse a UCVM initiative for the implementation of admissions and curriculum changes that would benefit a significant need in small/mid-sized urban municipalities that also serve rural regions in Alberta.

UCVM is one of five veterinary schools in Canada and was the last Canadian veterinarian program to begin operations. It was developed to meet Alberta's need for highly skilled veterinary graduates to support rural Alberta, production animal and equine industries, animal and human health research, and public health. In the 15 years since inception, UCVM has become one of the top 40 veterinary schools in the world.

Established in 2005, UCVM commenced with a class of thirty (30) students which was augmented by the transfer of the twenty (20) funded Alberta students at Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). In 2017, Alberta's government reduced funding for the twenty WCVM seats and transferred the funding to UCVM. These 50 seats for veterinary education of Alberta students have remained unchanged despite shifting demand pressures. Today, UCVM needs the support of Alberta Municipalities to expand its capacity and to adapt its programming.

Currently, UCVM selects 50 Alberta students per year to enter the four-year veterinary medicine program. Recent funding announcements will increase that number to 100 starting in 2025. In August 2021, there were 5.4 qualified applicants for every educational seat at UCVM. Alberta students are demanding veterinary education be available at home rather than pursuing their education and career in other jurisdictions.

Starting with the incoming class for 2022, all applicants must write the MCAT. A pre-determined minimum MCAT score is required to advance to the interview stage of the application process. This minimum score is to ensure that successful applicants can handle the academic requirements of the curriculum. Applicants who successfully meet the pre-determined MCAT score then enter an interview process that involves Multiple Mini Interview scenarios. The MMI is designed to gauge a successful applicant's knowledge of a career in veterinary medicine and their likelihood to succeed in such a career. It would be advantageous for Alberta Municipalities to establish a strong relationship with UCVM, which would provide opportunity for Alberta Municipalities to be part of the recruitment, selection and retention of UCVM graduates.

The long-standing shortage of veterinary practitioners in small/mid-sized urban municipalities that serve rural regions in Alberta is well known. It has been shown that the likelihood of someone entering and succeeding in a veterinary practice in small/mid-sized urban municipalities that serve rural regions is much higher (39%) if they have significant knowledge and experience in a practice within and lifestyle of small/mid-sized urban municipalities. UCVM partnerships with Alberta Municipalities will assist with identifying suitable candidates for the DVM program. Members of these communities are in the ideal position to judge "best fit". The "grow your own vet" model will increase the likelihood that veterinary students will go back to their home community after graduation.

In 2020, there were 1832 registered veterinarians in Alberta and 1852 registered veterinary technologists, working in 554 veterinary practices, employing over 6600 full time equivalent employees. The total output of Alberta veterinary practices was estimated to be \$2.021 billion. This does not include the contributions made by veterinarians to Alberta's agriculture sector, which contributed \$9.68 billion in GDP and employed 69,800 Albertans. As such, access to local veterinary services for farmers and livestock producers is essential for the sustainability of the primary agriculture industry as well as Alberta's overall economy. Further, sustainability and growth of our

small/mid-sized urban communities is dependent on access to veterinary services both today and in the foreseeable future.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

ABmunis does not currently have a position on this specific issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Economic Strategy Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

2022 RESOLUTIONS

CATEGORY E - EMERGENT RESOLUTIONS

About Emergent Resolutions

Criteria

The criteria for an emergent resolution, as set in section 16 the [Resolutions Policy](#), are that it **must**:

- a. Deal with an issue of concern to Alberta municipalities which has arisen after the resolution deadline, or just prior to the resolution deadline, such that Members could not submit it as a resolution in time;
- b. Have a critical aspect that needs to be addressed before the next Convention; and
- c. Comply with the guidelines for resolutions set out in the policy.

Submission

If your municipality is considering an emergent resolution, please contact resolutions@abmunis.ca as soon as possible. ABmunis administration can help your municipality determine if the proposed resolution may meet the criteria and help your municipality work through the submission process. Any proposed emergent resolutions will be reviewed by either Alberta Municipalities Board or Executive Committee, depending on timing, to determine if they meet the criteria and can go forward for consideration at the 2022 Convention.

Seconding

The policy also stipulates that, if the Alberta Municipalities Board or Executive Committee determines the resolution meets the criteria of an emergent resolution, the Board will second the resolution.

Notification

Should Alberta Municipalities receive emergent resolutions, an updated version of this Resolutions Book will be distributed to Members through email and The Weekly newsletter.

More Information

For more information on emergent resolutions, see sections 15 through 22 of the [Resolutions Policy](#) or contact resolutions@abmunis.ca.

E1: Victim Services Redesign

Moved by: Town of Canmore

Seconded by: Town of Tofield

WHEREAS the province has announced a redesign to the current victim services program based on a recently released “Recommendations on Victims Services” report;

WHEREAS there has been no meaningful consultation with municipalities during the MLA led review of Victim Services but yet the report proposes a new zonal model for police-based victim services program delivery that will create 4 zones throughout the province and end locally run boards OR have municipalities take over the service delivery, a form of provincial downloading, (see recommendation #3 of the final report);

WHEREAS the during the engagement that did occur, stakeholders were presented with three concepts for service delivery (zone, government employer, and municipal employer) but did not include the option of maintaining the current service delivery model as an option (and again, municipalities were not consulted, but municipal employer was provided as an option without our input);

WHEREAS support for victims of tragedy (sudden death, car accidents, and potentially even victims of non-violent crime) will not be provided, (see recommendation #5 of the final report). For context, in the Bow Valley, over 2,400 individuals who received support between 2015-2020 would not be eligible for support under this new model; and

WHEREAS the report advises that stakeholders were concerned “that smaller communities would be ‘swallowed up’ by bigger communities and victims would lose access to local services”, yet the recommendations do nothing to address this concern. No detailed information is available on implementation of the new model and the Government of Alberta has called for another phase of stakeholder engagement to determine rollout details.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to halt the rollout of the new victim services model and initiate a new engagement process that fully involves municipalities of all sizes, ensures downloading to municipalities does not occur, explores how the current model could be maintained and adapted, and includes support for victims of tragedy.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, Alberta Municipalities passed a resolution that called for the Government of Alberta to use the Victims of Crime Fund to adequately fund provincial Victim Services Units (VSUs) so they can provide the staffing levels required to assist victims of crime after a 2016 Auditor General’s Report which indicated the need for improved fund management and funding of VSU programs.

Alberta Municipalities submitted the following key recommendations in 2019 to the provincial government during its short consultation period:

- The needs, concerns, and diversity of victims of crime should be centered in the development and delivery of programs and services, as well as in related education and training.
- Programs and services for victims of crime need to be better advertised and coordinated at both the local and provincial level.
- The province can assist victims of crime in accessing services by supporting rural transportation initiatives and leveraging technology to promote equitable access.
- VSUs should receive adequate funding so that they can provide general information, needs assessment/service planning, and emotional support to victims, with mental health services for victims being prioritized.
- The Victims of Crime Fund must be maintained as a distinct fund in order to fulfill its legislated purpose, and not be put into general provincial revenues.

Almost all police-based VSUs in Alberta must fundraise so they can fund basic services to victims of crime – services that are guaranteed to all Canadians under the federal Victims’ Bill of Rights. Some programs must fundraise as much as 50% of their total operational expenses to continue operating from one year to the next.

This issue was highlighted in the 2016 Alberta Auditor General’s report, which stated that without improved management of the Victims of Crime Fund, “programs for victims of crime that are run by police-based VSUs and community organizations may not receive sufficient grant funding to deliver on the intent set out in the *Victims of Crime Act*.”

Two years ago, the Government of Alberta passed legislation that expanded the scope of the Victims of Crime Fund to include public safety initiatives, making Alberta the only province that did not restrict the use of its Victims of Crime fund to supporting victims. Two MLAs (Nathan Neudorf and Angela Pitt, both from urban areas) were tasked with leading a working group to review gaps in VSU service. The Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) also replaced financial benefits for victims with an interim program while a new victims’ assistance model was developed. According to the Ministry’s 2021-22 annual report, 59% of the \$64.7 million spent from the Victims of Crime fund went toward public safety initiatives. About one-third, or \$21 million, was allocated to victim services organizations. Only 8.5%, or \$5.5 million, went directly to victims. In 2018/19, before these changes were made, \$19.4 million was spent directly assisting victims.

- Alberta Municipalities strongly opposed these changes and worked with the Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association to launch an MLA letter writing campaign, calling on the province to reverse its changes to the Victims of Crime Fund and provide ongoing, sustainable funding to victim services programs.
- On July 19, 2022, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General released a recommendations report after a limited consultation process and announced that the Victims of Crime Fund will again be used entirely for helping victims recover from their physical and psychological injuries and supporting them through the court process (but has yet to advise how the Act will be amended to reflect this change). The province is also expanding supports and providing emergency assistance when required.

The new victim assistance program launched September 1, 2022 will:

- Give victims quick access to emergency financial assistance, such as emergency support for domestic violence victims and relocation assistance for human trafficking victims.
- Increase the 45-day limit on applications to two years.
- Increase financial support for counselling services to \$12,000.
- Provide extended medical health benefits to victims with serious injuries.
- Provide additional financial supports to victims with severe injuries.
- Provide victims with court attendance reimbursement.
- Reimburse families of homicide victims for funeral expenses.

Alberta Municipalities published a newsletter article titled “Advocacy win: Province reverses changes to Victims of Crime Fund and supports” that celebrated the success of the advocacy to reverse the changes to the Victims of Crime Fund. While there is some good news worth celebrating, there is also cause for concern. Because of the nature of how the information was released, it is likely that Alberta Municipalities and its members may have missed the implications of additional elements of the July 19 announcement. The “Recommendations on Victims Services” report contains 19 recommendations, one of which is to dissolve 62 local board operated VSUs across Alberta and shift to a zone model or to have municipalities take over service provision. Another removes all support for victims of tragedy (i.e. sudden death, car accidents, and potentially even victims of non-violent crime).

Multiple concerns exist with the current proposal and information shared to date including:

- This change was recommended despite a lack of consultation with municipalities.
- If municipalities were to take over service provision, there is no information on how long-term funding for municipalities would be guaranteed, so a likely result is another form of provincial downloading.
- Nowhere in this report does it document any problems with the current service delivery model, nor does it consider keeping the current model as an option. This, despite the fact that MLAs Neudorf and Pitt advise in the report that “organizations and people go above and beyond every single day to ensure victims are not

alone. Your passion, commitment and dedication are an inspiration to all of us and truly make a difference in our communities.”

- This consultation was not conducted by an independent consultant and as such, did not include gaps in provincial services created by the government’s closure of multiple VSU programs, prior to and during the consultation.
- The report advises “victims’ needs should be the number one priority,” yet at no time during this three-year process were victims given the opportunity to provide input as to what their needs were. This is in contradiction to the provincial government’s own rights and protections afforded to victims under the *Victims of Crime and Public Safety Act* that states the “needs, concerns and diversity [of victims] should be considered in the development and delivery of programs, education and training.”
- An August 26, 2022, letter from Minister Shandro to Mayor Dueck (Town of Tofield) states that Alberta Municipalities attended engagements on the proposed changes and by all indications were comfortable with this approach.
- The recommendations outline several program elements of concern because it is not clear if supports will be provided for the following:
 - support for those who have to flee and require assistance;
 - injury benefits for survivors with chronic issues or traumatic injuries;
 - financial compensation for transportation to access health or legal services; and
 - financial assistance for Indigenous cultural practices.
- There is inadequate information on the transition, timing, or new program details.
- Funding has been guaranteed for current programs until March 2023. The redesign committee has asked for an extension to March 31, 2024, but that has not yet been granted.
- The local paid VSU staff will be invited to apply to see what positions they could fill within the new model but there are no guarantees they will be hired.
- If there is a reduction in the number of VSU staff (as the item above) or current, local VSU staff are not hired, there is a loss of community relationship and local expertise.
- The funding model appears to be improved, but it also appears that new high paid positions are being created.
- it is unclear if the new structure model could change the identity and function of local VSUs.
- The zonal approach adds another layer of bureaucracy, but also further removes the funder from the victim. The proposal indicates that an Area Manager is allotted dollars based on reportable data and community size from regional bodies (zones), which is allocated from JSG. In the existing model, dollars were provided to municipal police through JSG directly.
- Currently VSU not only supports victims of tragedy but also connects these individuals with the Red Cross. This new model, which does not include victims of tragedy, also does not provide funding for this connection to other services. This will be a form of provincial downloading.

For perspective, 2019/2020 was the last pre-COVID operational year for Bow Valley Victims Services, which supports Canmore and surrounding communities. Under the new model, out of the 669 people assisted in that year, the following people would have received no help at all:

- Sudden death - 106 people
- Suicide and attempts - 62 people
- Motor Vehicle Collisions - 47 people
- Fatal Motor Vehicle Collisions - 2 people
- Serious Accident/Illness - 13 people
- Fire - 10 people
- Mischief - 13 people
- Break and Enter - 5 people
- Theft/Fraud - 56 people
- Mental Health /Public Assistance - 25 people

This resolution is being brought forward as an emergent issue because the announcement was just made by the province on July 19, 2022, and it has taken some time for local victim services organizations to understand the extent and impact of the proposed changes and for them to alert their local boards and municipalities. Information

shared by the province to date indicates that current Victims Services Units are guaranteed current funding (until end of March 2023) with the potential for a one-year extension if necessary and budget approval is granted. It is possible that implementation of these changes could be rolled out within six months and the new structure would begin with the April 2023 budget cycle. To ensure timely advocacy, Alberta Municipalities is being asked to consider this resolution as an emergent issue.

ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES COMMENTS:

This resolution aligns with previous ABmunis advocacy on the Victims of Crime Fund and victim services. If this resolution is adopted, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to ABmunis' Board by the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee.



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