



# 2009 AUMA Policy Statement on Building Communities



## INTRODUCTION

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Ensuring strong emergency services (police, ambulance, fire), improving municipal infrastructure, supporting and encouraging the arts and culture in communities are all part of the daily work of Alberta Municipalities. Affordable housing is the responsibility of provincial and federal governments, with municipal governments playing a role in facilitating affordable housing, thereby contributing to quality of life in Alberta communities. Municipal services and infrastructure (provided by municipal governments or in partnership with the Government of Alberta) are essential to **building strong communities**, and to fulfill the municipal government's purpose of developing and maintaining **safe and viable communities**.

Alberta's municipal governments are challenged by the need to upgrade current or build new municipal infrastructure, and to deal with increasing difficult issues regarding social infrastructure and emergency services provision, without the revenue streams that are available to other orders of government. Grant programs and one-time funding for infrastructure are effective only as a stop-gap measure. **AUMA's Ahead.Together proposal envisions a mature partnership between the province and municipalities with a focus on shared objectives and outcomes to provide long-term sustainable funding, and to ensure more certainty, cost-effectiveness and accountability.** The Province's 2007 Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) is a step in this direction, but still falls short of guaranteeing funding on these terms. Sustained, predictable and adequate funding of municipal and social infrastructure is needed to keep Alberta communities competitive, and maintain quality of life.

The AUMA Policy Statement on Building Communities is AUMA's position on municipal and social infrastructure, and reflects Member resolutions adopted at the 2008 AUMA Annual Convention. The 2008 AUMA resolutions presented in the Policy Statement are included in Annex 1.

### Statement of Principles

AUMA's policy development is guided by eight general principles.

#### *AUMA Guiding Principles:*

<b>Principle 1.</b>	Municipal Governments must have the fiscal capacity to fulfill their mandate through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• primary access to the property tax base; and</li><li>• sustainable, predictable, legislated, long-term sources of revenue</li></ul>
<b>Principle 2.</b>	The federal and provincial governments have sole responsibility for direct income redistribution programs and services.
<b>Principle 3.</b>	The primary focus of urban government is to provide locally oriented services to property and people.

<b>Principle 4.</b>	Each local urban council will maintain responsibility for the establishment of local standards of services to property and people
<b>Principle 5.</b>	Any new standards or requirements imposed by the provincial or federal orders of government must be fully funded by that order of government.
<b>Principle 6.</b>	Amendments and changes to legislation and regulations relating to municipal governments shall only proceed when AUMA has actively participated and agreed, through meaningful input in a review process.
<b>Principle 7.</b>	Responsible stewardship of our ecological systems is essential to the economic viability, quality of life, and sustainability of our community.
<b>Principle 8.</b>	Quality infrastructure is critical to supporting healthy, financially sustainable communities, and strengthens the quality of life for all Albertans, and is the foundation for the Alberta Advantage.

*Municipal Infrastructure:*

AUMA’s Guiding Principles 7 and 8 are especially important to any discussion of municipal infrastructure, and the following specific principles support them.

Municipal Infrastructure Principles:

1. ***Quality municipal infrastructure that allows for efficient and effective delivery of services is the responsibility of all orders of government and all users/beneficiaries of municipal infrastructure***

AUMA supports municipal autonomy in infrastructure planning/visioning, identifying priorities and selecting delivery models that are consistent with vision and priorities. The provincial and federal governments must be responsive to municipal needs by understanding the current state of infrastructure and what is needed to replace and maintain infrastructure such that our citizens continue to enjoy a high quality of life. Where possible, a strategy of aggregating customer bases should be encouraged to reduce rates and charges otherwise payable by municipalities for infrastructure services. Users of municipal infrastructure are responsible for using municipal infrastructure and services in a sustainable manner and respecting municipal infrastructure investments such that they retain or gain value over time. Funds directed into narrow areas are counter-productive. Funding should be provided to encourage greater community use of community facilities over extended hours to maximize usage. Innovative approaches to infrastructure are required, such as developing and supporting trail systems as part of an overall transportation system.

2. ***Long-term funding commitments are necessary***

Municipal governments are run in an extremely cost-efficient manner. Long-term infrastructure funding commitments are essential to long-term municipal planning for sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure. Long-term commitments to municipal infrastructure funds give governments greater flexibility in planning, thereby minimizing adverse environmental impacts and

maximizing service delivery to citizens. The Government of Alberta should allocate surplus funds to future infrastructure projects.

3. ***Municipal representatives must be "at the table"***

Decisions on infrastructure program design and implementation cannot be made without municipal participation. AUMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's recognition that municipal representation on infrastructure program decision-making bodies is essential. Co-operation and strong partnerships among all stakeholders of infrastructure enhances empowerment, promotes accountability and results in innovative, cost-effective and sustainable infrastructure projects. Boards must be balanced with representation by service providers, municipalities and users.

4. ***Infrastructure funding must be flexible and fair***

AUMA supports programs that give all member municipal governments access to funds. Small communities can be at a disadvantage when it comes to preparing project proposals. Providing all communities with a base allocation of infrastructure funds, plus a per capita allocation, empowers Alberta's communities to identify their most pressing needs, and allows many to meet those needs by initiating infrastructure projects and taking a long-term approach to planning future infrastructure expenditures.

Traditional federal infrastructure programs are tri-partite, involving financial contributions by the three orders of government. In most cases, overall municipal financial capacity to deal with these fixed capital assets for public use or benefit is low, and thus the elimination of the municipal portion is advocated.

**Strategies:**

AUMA will:

1. recognize the Government of Alberta for including municipal representatives on infrastructure program management committees, and request a decision-making role for municipal representatives on all federal and provincial committees dealing with policies and programs of importance to municipal governments;
2. encourage the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to set aside a base portion of infrastructure funds for each municipality, ensuring all Alberta communities access to some infrastructure funding;
3. request that funds for infrastructure from other orders of government include funding for technical assistance to communities who require assistance in identifying infrastructure options and writing proposals;
4. promote the use of green technologies in municipal infrastructure by continuing to support government and private efforts in the design and build of green technologies;
5. urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that other entities with infrastructure in communities be responsible for their maintenance and repair;
6. urge the Governments of Canada and Alberta to ensure all future Canada-Alberta infrastructure programs provide funding for infrastructure such that all Alberta

municipalities receive specific funding, with appropriate guidelines, rather than having to go through a competitive funding process [cf.RESN2008.C.iv.1];

7. urge the Government of Alberta to support the development of arts and culture facilities outside of major cities [cf.RESN2008.C.i.3].

### *Social Infrastructure*

Social infrastructure is defined as the fundamental facilities, organizations, services and opportunities that are essential to a well functioning person, family and community.

The following specific principles regarding social infrastructure support the following AUMA Guiding Principle:

#### **Principle 8.**

Quality infrastructure is critical to supporting healthy, financially sustainable communities, and strengthens the quality of life for all Albertans, and is the foundation for the Alberta Advantage.

Social Infrastructure Principles:

#### **1. Federal and Provincial governments have primary responsibility to fund and support social infrastructure.**

The federal government is responsible for setting national standards that are flexible enough to fit the different needs of communities and for providing financial and income support.

The provincial government must ensure that adequate federal and provincial resources are available to help effectively meet the demands for social infrastructure and must also assist municipalities in meeting locally-identified needs. The Provincial government is also responsible for ensuring funding equity between groups and municipalities, while supporting local autonomy and decision-making.

#### **2. Municipal Governments have a role in social infrastructure.**

Municipal governments facilitate collaboration between local stakeholder groups, and identify needs in communities and potential solutions. Municipal governments also have a role in advocating social infrastructure needs of their communities.

#### **3. Consultation and cooperation is essential in meeting social infrastructure needs.**

Inter-governmental - between federal, provincial and municipal governments;  
Intra-governmental - between and within federal, provincial and municipal government departments; and Inter-sectoral - between government, non-government groups, other stakeholders and citizens.

#### **4. Municipalities, in the context of available resources and Council approval, may choose to deliver social infrastructure components.**

The Alberta *Municipal Government Act* is explicit in saying that the power of the municipality is “to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable” to “maintain safe and viable communities”.

**5. Medical care and adequate police, fire and ambulance services are important components of the goal of social infrastructure to create and maintain safe and viable communities.**

Strategies:

AUMA will:

1. request that the Government of Alberta work with municipalities to develop a Framework of Outcomes that the Province expects of municipalities related to planning, implementation of plans/priorities and the delivery of police services **[cf.RESN2008.C.ii.10]**. Under the Framework of Outcomes, AUMA urges that municipalities:
  - Determine the process for meeting the Framework of Outcomes (may include a policing committee);
  - Be permitted (under the *Police Act*) the choice of appointing a policing committee or not; and
  - be allowed flexibility in the roles and responsibilities of a policing committee if they choose to appoint a committee.
2. request that the Government of Alberta include AUMA as a major stakeholder in all future consultations regarding the renewed model for patient-centered and coordinated EMS **[cf.RESN2008.EXT.01]**.
3. urge the Government of Alberta to develop additional detoxification and treatment facilities in rural areas to improve access to help for all Albertans, while providing a non-urban treatment option for those who reside outside of our major cities **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.7]**.
4. urge the Government of Alberta to adopt the recommendations made in AUMA’s 2008 Affordable Housing Paper **[cf.POLICY PAPER 2008.3]**.
5. urge the Government of Alberta to immediately increase the LAP grant to a minimum of \$9.75 per eligible resident, and that the LAP grant be increased annually to account for inflation **[cf.RESN2008.C.ii.1]**.
6. request that the Government of Alberta include in its responses to homelessness, the necessary funding and policy initiatives required to support the development and implementation of transitional psychosocial support programs **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.2]**.
7. urge the Government of Alberta to enact legislation to safeguard the assets of vulnerable adults and to facilitate the reporting and investigation of suspected financial abuse of such adults **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.4]**.
8. request that the Government of Alberta provide additional funding to school boards to support and promote after hour community use of their schools,

thereby facilitating increased recreational and community development opportunities for residents **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.5]**.

9. urge the Government of Alberta to increase access to regional post secondary education services and facilities and urge the Province to take an active lead in these facilities to advance the opportunities in rural Alberta **[cf.RESN2008.C.i.4]**.
10. request that the Government of Alberta recognize the increased cost of providing library services by doubling their annual per capita grant for libraries; make an annual increase in the per capita grant to libraries equal to the increase in the Canadian Consumer Price Index **[cf.RESN2008.C.ii.11]**.
11. with regard to regulated professions in Alberta, request that the Government of Alberta **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.1]**:
  - enact legislation and establish appropriate regulatory mechanisms to ensure that professional associations and regulatory bodies adopt registration practices that are fair, transparent and expeditious and provide an opportunity for appeal; and
  - establish a Commission to ensure that credentials are being assessed fairly and to oversee the implementation of the proposed legislation and any accompanying regulations; and
  - while proposed legislation is being drafted, that the Province review and explore integration of immigrants into the workforce by working with employers and employees to expand, develop and implement services and create tools for employers that assist in maximizing the skills of newcomers to the province.
12. request that the Province of Alberta amend the Smoke Free Places Act to require that smokers abstain from smoking in motor vehicles when children under the age of 16 are present, and develop an education program to inform parents of the hazards of second-hand smoke in enclosed areas such as a vehicle **[cf.RESN2008.C.iii.8]**.
13. notify the FCM, Alberta Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security, and the Federal Minister of Public Safety of AUMA's endorsement of the work and findings of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities May 2008 report *Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing* **[cf.RESN2008.C.v.1]**.

**2008 ADOPTED AUMA MEMBER RESOLUTIONS – Building Communities**

**Policy Paper 2008.2: 2008 Special Assignment on Affordable Housing**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association adopt the recommendations in the attached report entitled *2008 Special Assignment on Affordable Housing: Analysis and Recommendations*.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.i.3: Support for Development of Regional Arts and Culture Facilities**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association supports the development of arts and culture facilities for those who reside outside of our major cities and urges the Province to be an active partner in provision of these facilities when opportunities exist.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.i.4: Regional Post Secondary Education Services and Facilities**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the government of Alberta to increase access to regional post secondary education services and facilities and urge the Province to take an active lead in these facilities to advance the opportunities in rural Alberta.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.ii.1: Senior Citizens Lodge Program Grant**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urges the Government of Alberta to immediately increase the LAP grant to a minimum of \$9.75 per eligible resident, and that the LAP grant be increased annually to account for inflation.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED as amended**

#### **RESOLUTION 2008.C.ii.10: Policing Committees**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request the Provincial Government, through the Solicitor General's Department, to work with municipalities to develop a Framework of Outcomes that the Province expects of municipalities related to planning, implementation of plans/priorities and the delivery of police services; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** municipalities determine the appropriate process to meet those outcomes, which may include a policing committee; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the *Police Act* continues to allow municipalities the choice of appointing a policing committee or not, as a committee may be only one option in meeting the Provincial Framework of Outcomes; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** municipalities, if they choose to appoint a committee, be allowed flexibility in what roles and responsibilities a committee may have in assisting the municipality to meet the Provincial Framework of Outcomes.

#### **2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

#### **RESOLUTION 2008.C.ii.11: Library Support – Provincial Library Funding**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta recognize the increased cost of providing library services by doubling their annual per capita grant for libraries; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Government of Alberta, in subsequent years, make an annual increase in the per capita grant to libraries equal to the increase in the Canadian Consumer Price Index, to ensure that libraries can continue to meet the increased cost of providing service to Albertans in the future.

#### **2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

#### **RESOLUTION 2008.EXT.01: Impacts of Ground Ambulance Transition on Municipal Emergency Services**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the AUMA request the Alberta Government Health and Wellness Department to include the AUMA as a major stakeholder in all future consultations regarding the renewed model for patient-centered and coordinated EMS to allow input on decisions that may have a negative impact on other municipal emergency services or cause increased costs for delivering these other services.

#### **2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

#### **RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.1: Fair Access to Regulated Professions in Alberta Act**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta enact legislation and establish appropriate regulatory mechanisms to ensure that professional associations and

regulatory bodies adopt registration practices that are fair, transparent and expeditious and provide an opportunity for appeal; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** a Commission be established to ensure that credentials are being assessed fairly and to oversee the implementation of the proposed legislation and any accompanying regulations; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** while proposed legislation is being drafted, that the Province review and explore means and ways to integrate immigrants into the workforce by working together with both employers and employees to expand, develop and implement services and create tools for employers that assist in maximizing the skills of newcomers to the province.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED as amended**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.2: Transitional Supports and Services for People who are Homeless**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta include in its responses to homelessness the necessary funding and policy initiatives required to support the development and implementation of transitional psychosocial support programs.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.4: Provincial Legislation to Combat Elder Abuse**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Alberta to enact legislation to safeguard the assets of vulnerable adults and to facilitate the reporting and investigation of suspected financial abuse of such adults.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.5: Increased School Board Funding for After Hours Use of Schools**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta provide additional funding to school boards to support and promote after hour community use of their schools, thereby facilitating increased recreational and community development opportunities for residents.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.7: Provision of Detoxification and Treatment Facilities for Drug Abuse in Both Rural and Urban Areas**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Urban Municipalities Association supports the development of additional detoxification and treatment facilities in rural areas to improve access to help for all Albertans, while providing a non-urban treatment option for those who reside outside of our major cities.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iii.8: Smoke-Free Vehicles for Children**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the AUMA request that the Province of Alberta amend their *Smoke Free Places Act* to require that smokers abstain from smoking in motor vehicles when children under the age of 16 are present and to develop an education program to inform parents of the hazards of second-hand smoke in enclosed areas such as a vehicle.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.iv.1: Canada Alberta Infrastructure Program**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Municipalities Association will request of the Provincial and Federal Governments that all future Canada Alberta infrastructure funding, whether CAMRIF, the Building Canada program, or whatever specific title is attached to the program, return to the previous funding formula whereby all Alberta municipalities will be entitled to receive specific funding, with appropriate guidelines, rather than be subject to competition funding.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION 2008.C.v.1: Support for FCM Report: Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association endorse the work and findings of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in its May, 2008 report *Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing* and so notify FCM, the Alberta Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security, and the Federal Minister of Public Safety.

**2008 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED**