



2009 AUMA Policy Statement on Sustainability and Environment



INTRODUCTION

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) provides value and leadership in advocating local government interests. The Sustainability and Environment Standing Policy Committee works to identify and recommend advocacy responses to areas of municipal interest related to water, energy, climate change and air quality, land use planning and building standards, waste management and municipal sustainability.

The AUMA Policy Statement on Environment and Sustainability is AUMA's position on sustainability and environment issues, as compiled from member resolutions adopted at the 2008 AUMA Annual Convention (Annex 1).

Statement of Principles

AUMA Guiding Principle

Principle 7.	Responsible stewardship of our ecological systems is essential to the economic viability, quality of life, and sustainability of our community.
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As responsible municipal stewards the need to understand the environment is essential, as it is the foundation for a sustainable economy, and its social and cultural networks. The environment must be proactively managed, as it impacts our viability and social fabric.

This guiding principle permits municipalities to be flexible and responsive to individual circumstances, supporting the development of local strategies without restricting autonomy. To achieve results we must recognize and define our position on the environment. We need to think globally and act locally.

Sustainability and Environment Principles for Policy Development

The AUMA clarifies its Sustainability and Environment Principles for Policy Development into five broad categories: water, energy, climate change and air quality, land use planning, waste management and municipal sustainability planning. Under each category, a general policy statement and principles is followed by more specific statements, and finally a list of any pertinent supporting resolution action items adopted at AUMA's 2008 Convention.

The Sustainability and Environment Committee will make advocacy recommendations to the AUMA Board of Directors based on these broad categories and principles, and on specific resolutions from members. The Committee will recommend direct action or request coordinated action with the Government of Alberta, other relevant organizations, and member municipalities to address action items in each category.

Water

Alberta's quality of life, and life itself, depends on having a healthy and sustainable water supply for the environment, for our communities and for our economic well-being. Safe and healthy drinking water is critical to the sustainability of communities. Improvements to technology or processes required to ensure the physical well-being of citizens must be supported by funding and resources from the legislating body.

AUMA will:

Advocate for active Municipal participation in decision-making regarding water management and use to protect this crucial natural resource for future generations;

1. Continue to encourage conservation, re-use, and effective wastewater treatment as core policy and compliance roles for Alberta's municipalities;
2. Advocate for a moratorium on new water licenses for deep well flooding with fresh groundwater, in settled areas of the province where groundwater is and may be required for human consumption;
3. Support the expansion of Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership with more funding to improve the septage receiving capability at new and existing facilities;
4. Urge the Government of Alberta to amend the Water for Life funding initiative to provide for equity in the ability to develop for both urban and rural municipal governments; and
5. Urge the Government of Alberta to bring forth legislation in the Building/Plumbing Code Regulations, requiring installation of mandatory water saving devices for all buildings.

Energy

Energy is a key component of Alberta's economy, and communities are important in the continued innovation, responsible development, and efficient use of these resources.

AUMA will:

1. Support energy efficiency and conservation initiatives and the continued development of Alberta's renewable energy;
2. Advocate for energy policy and utility agreements that will deliver efficiencies for municipal governments;
3. Engage the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) in a dialogue with Alberta municipalities to establish effective procedures for their involvement in ERCB Hearings that deal with resource extraction within or adjacent to their communities;

4. Request the Government of Alberta provide financial assistance to the MUSH sector (municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals) in Alberta to intervene in proceedings before the EUB in respect of proposed energy resource projects which may impact them, either through special grant funding or through changes to the cost recovery provisions of the relevant legislation; and
5. Urge the Government of Alberta, through the Energy Minister, to encourage development and use of alternatively sourced electric generation through tax credits or other incentives that will make power generated from renewable sources competitive with power generated from traditional sources.

Climate Change and Air Quality

Climate Change and air quality affects all Albertans, and practical solutions are needed to reduce the emission of air contaminants, greenhouse gases, and to address the risks of climate change.

AUMA will:

1. Continue working with Alberta Environment and agencies like the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) and Climate Change Central to develop strategies that monitor, improve, and protect air quality;
2. Encourage Alberta municipalities to participate in the FCM's Partners for Climate Change Program (PCP) and to establish emission baselines and reduction targets for their communities;
3. Pursue practical, economic, and proven practices that assist municipalities to reduce energy consumption and associated GHG and air pollutant emissions;
4. Pursue provincial and federal government funding to support municipalities that have developed local action plans to address climate change or are taking other measures effective in reducing municipal energy use and emissions;
5. In cooperation with CASA, FCM, and others, support the development of training programs and technical exchanges for political leaders and key administrative staff to learn from the direct experience of municipalities in other jurisdictions; and
6. Contribute to the development and implementation of province-wide standards to regulate gross polluting vehicles and visible vehicle emissions.

Land Use Planning and Building Standards

Effective land use planning is essential to the long-term viability and sustainability of Alberta. How we plan, grow, and manage land within municipal boundaries affects all municipal citizens and their regional neighbours.

AUMA will:



1. Monitor, consult, and advocate for programs relative to remediation and reuse of brownfields and contaminated sites;
2. Ensure fair and effective regulation of all businesses that store and handle petroleum and petrochemical products in Alberta;
3. Promote provincial accountability for municipal responsibilities within urban boundaries;
4. Support responsible urban development planning and design in order to contribute to a reduction of the ecological footprint and the overall sustainability of communities; and
5. Advocate that the Alberta Government to amend applicable building codes to the equivalency of Built Green Alberta standards for new homebuilders, to ensure the future reduction of energy, water, waste, GHGs, and the health and wellness of new home occupants are met.

RESOLUTION 2008.C.iv.3: Timely Clean-Up of Contaminated Sites

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that Alberta Environment:

1. Use its existing powers to designate long-standing brownfields as Contaminated Sites under Part 5, Division 2 of *EPEA* and further utilize its powers by issuing environmental protection orders under Section 129 of *EPEA* to force the expedient clean-up of these designated Contaminated Sites.
2. Implement a reporting mechanism that will ensure that information provided to Alberta Environment on substances that have migrated from both private and public lands at concentrations that exceed acceptable guidelines is provided to impacted third parties in a timely manner.

RESOLUTION 2008.C.ii.8: Request to Reinstate the Alberta Municipal Erosion Control Program

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urges the Government of Alberta to reinstate the Alberta Municipal erosion control program.

Waste Management

Solid waste disposal and the methane emissions from new and existing landfills are significant and growing challenges for all Alberta municipalities. All communities can contribute to addressing and improving solid waste management so that Alberta is recognized as a world-class leader in solid waste management.

AUMA will:

1. Encourage responsible procurement and consumption practices by municipalities, other orders of government, and the private sector, with a focus on waste reduction and recycling;
2. Advocate that new technologies and regulations supporting waste avoidance be given the utmost priority as they are most effective in reducing the volume of community waste streams;
3. Support municipalities' participation in meeting provincial waste reduction targets as an effective means to reduce our ecological footprint, and recognize the need for provincial and federal financial and technology support in these efforts;
4. Promote innovative approaches to waste avoidance, recycling, and re-use including: developing bio-diesel producing plants, drywall recycling, gasification, and lifecycle management; and
5. Advocate that the Government of Alberta extend Alberta's product stewardship programs to include high volume municipal waste streams (i.e. packaging, cardboard, paper products) and that any funding derived from such programs is redirected to municipalities to sustain and expand local recycling programs.

Municipal Sustainability Planning

AUMA initiated a Municipal Sustainability Planning project in July 2005, and has built a substantial set of resources and tools that are used as a guide to sustainability planning for municipalities (www.msp.auma.ca).

AUMA takes a broad view of sustainability, suggesting that a municipal government should plan for sustainability by investigating and developing actions, integrating the five dimensions of sustainability (culture, society, environment, economy and governance) to provide a comprehensive and long-term plan for sustainable communities.

As we continue with the Municipal Sustainability Planning initiative, AUMA will:

1. Maintain and add to the resources/tools on the MSP website (www.msp.auma.ca);
2. Build partnerships with other governments and other organizations in encouraging and assisting municipal sustainability planning; and
3. Work with the Government of Alberta on its cumulative effects initiative to ensure a policy and regulatory framework is developed which factors the cumulative economic, social, environmental and health impacts of multiple developments in the approval process.

Transportation



Improving the efficiency and environmental performance of transportation systems is key to a number of aspects of municipal sustainability. Reducing the use of automobiles and increasing the use of public transit, walking and bicycling can reduce costs for individuals and municipalities, improve air quality, reduce GHG emissions, and improve the accessibility of recreational and labour activities.

AUMA will:

1. Pursue the recommendations contained in the Policy Paper Towards a Light Rail Transit Program: Analysis and Recommendations

Policy Paper 2008.4: Towards a Provincial Transit Strategy

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT AUMA advocate the Government of Alberta engage the Association and its members in developing a Provincial Transit Strategy as outlined in AUMA's Policy Paper: *Towards a Provincial Transit Strategy*.

Link to adopted paper:

http://www.auma.ca/live/digitalAssets/21/21293_Towards_a_Provincial_Transit_Strategy_1008.pdf

2008 ADOPTED MEMBER RESOLUTIONS – Environment and Sustainability

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