

Rethinking Municipal Governance for a Changing Alberta: Future of Local Governance Communications Package

Talking Points

Municipal Government in Alberta needs a rethink:

There is general and widespread uncertainty about the sustainability of municipalities in Alberta. Municipal government is at a crossroads and AUMA is leading the search for a solution. Provincial officials talk about sustainability of municipalities, and have stated publicly that there are too many municipalities in Alberta. However, they have been slow to release official criteria on what they believe defines a sustainable municipality. This lack of clarity creates uncertainty for municipal elected officials, for municipal administrators and for community members.

In the past five to ten years, for a variety of reasons, several urban governments have attempted to dissolve into neighbouring Municipal Districts, but not all attempts have resulted in dissolution studies. In fact, since 1990, 55 dissolution studies have been initiated, representing almost 20 per cent of all urban councils.

The goal of the AUMA's work on the Future of Local Governance is healthy municipalities:

There is a need for democratic, healthy municipalities with the ability to meet citizens' demands, with the ability to meet legislative requirements both now and in the future, and with the capacity to work with neighbouring municipalities and regions.

Through the Future of Local Governance Initiative AUMA is leading the search for a broad-based solution.

When it comes to local government, AUMA has a long history of leading change. *The Future of Local Governance* is AUMA's framework for the review and discussion of municipal governance in Alberta which is especially important now as municipal governments are at a crossroads.

The Task Force on the Future of Local Governance (FOLG) was struck in 2009 to assist AUMA in developing a Policy Paper on the topic of the future of local governance in Alberta. AUMA's Standing Committee on Municipal Governance and the AUMA Board of Directors provide the final direction on the Initiative.

The FOLG process has included a rigorous review of the current state of local governance in this province as well as examples of existing restructuring options from outside Alberta. This has resulted in several Task Force papers, and a Convention Policy Paper currently in draft format. Direct consultation was done via a membership survey and a two-day President's Summit, which included all stakeholders, on the Future of Local Governance.

The FOLG process will enable us to understand the criteria that define an effective municipality. These measurements are one of the key FOLG goals.

AUMA will use the final Policy Paper recommendations to initiate further dialogue on change with municipal partners and the Provincial Government:

AUMA developed a Draft Policy Paper that was available broadly for member and stakeholder feedback. The Final Policy Paper will be released in September and presented at Convention 2009 in November.

For complete information see the Future of Local Governance page of the AUMA website:

http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Future_of_Local_Governance