



2010 AUMA Policy Statement on Building Communities



Introduction

Municipal governments provide Alberta citizens with its most responsive and transparent form of government. Mayors and Councillors are elected to represent local views and to enhance the quality of life for their communities. Municipal governments work towards achieving the goals of their citizens and communities.

Ensuring strong emergency services, 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 fulfilling 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 increasingly 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. The Province's 2007 Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) is a step in the right direction, but still falls short of guaranteeing long-term funding. 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 2009 AUMA Annual Convention, as well as the policy and advocacy priorities of the AUMA Standing Committee on Building Communities. The 2009 AUMA resolutions are included in Annex 1.

AUMA 2010 Standing Committee on Building Communities Strategies:

AUMA will build policy and advocate in the following areas:

1. Safe Communities (Police, Fire, Disaster, Ambulance)
2. Housing
3. Community Economic Development
4. Infrastructure

5. Parks, Recreation, Culture, Library and the Arts
6. Social Dimension of Sustainability
 - Municipal Services
 - Advocating for Improvements in provincial services
7. Employment and Immigration in Communities

Statement of Principles

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

AUMA Guiding Principles:

Principle 1.	Municipal Governments must have the fiscal capacity to fulfill their mandate through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary access to the property tax base; and • sustainable, predictable, legislated, long-term sources of revenue
Principle 2.	The federal and provincial governments have sole responsibility for direct income redistribution programs and services.
Principle 3.	The primary focus of urban government is to provide locally oriented services to property and people.
Principle 4.	Each local urban council will maintain responsibility for the establishment of local standards of services to property and people
Principle 5.	Any new standards or requirements imposed by the provincial or federal orders of government must be fully funded by that order of government.
Principle 6.	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.
Principle 7.	Responsible stewardship of our ecological systems is essential to the economic viability, quality of life, and sustainability of our

	community.
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.

AUMA carries out major initiatives to assist municipalities in becoming more sustainable. The Municipal Sustainability Planning (MSP) initiative and the Future of Local Governance (FOLG) initiative have provided forums for action and learning about municipal sustainability. AUMA believes that enhanced local autonomy will result in greater success in all five dimensions of municipal sustainability: social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance. An important part of Building Communities includes planning, developing and implementing both physical buildings, and social infrastructure – social engagement and social interaction - resulting in a strong sense of community and a strong sense of place.

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.

- 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 maximizing service delivery to citizens.

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.

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.

AUMA requests responses on the following resolutions:

1. request that the Government of Alberta continue to fund the Major Community Facilities Program **[RESN2009.C.ii.3]**; and
2. request that the Government of Alberta work with AUMA to further develop, maintain, enhance and promote Urban and Regional Countryside Parks, and establish a new Urban and Regional Countryside Parks Program **[RESN2009.C.ii.1]**

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. Principle 8 of AUMA’s Guiding Principles supports AUMA’s work in this area: 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. Engagement, cooperation and flexibility to ensure local priorities are met are 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.

Examples of where engagement and cooperation are necessary are: ambulance services, policing and affordable housing.

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. Access to 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.

AUMA requests responses on the following resolutions:

1. advocate for the AUMA recommendations in the Policy Paper on Policing in Alberta **[Policy Paper 2009.2]**;
2. request that the Government of Alberta develop a model that ensures resources are in place for the recruitment and retention of medical physicians and professionals in rural communities, particularly those with specialized practices **[RESN 2009.C.ii.2]**;
3. seek increased provincial investment in social capital, social infrastructure and prevention and intervention services to address family violence and the abuse of seniors and to protect vulnerable citizens **[RESN 2009.C.ii.4]**;
4. advocate for block funding for housing under a multi-year plan that will follow the expiration of the current commitment ending in 2010 **[RESN 2009.C.ii.5]**;
5. request funding from the Government of Alberta for “age friendly” pilot sites and initiatives throughout Alberta **[RESN 2009.C.ii.7]**;
6. advocate for the development of more designated assisted living care accommodations in Alberta **[RESN 2009.C.ii.11]**;
7. request the Government of Alberta to adopt and implement the recommendations for safe re-occupancy of dwellings and buildings formerly used as marijuana grow operations, as outlined by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health and to include the creation of an appropriate Registry **[RESN 2009.C.iii.3]**;
8. request the restoration of provincial funding to nonprofit/voluntary organizations, and acknowledge that municipal governments are not expected to make up for provincial funding cutbacks to the nonprofit/voluntary sector **[RESN 2009.C.v.1]**.

ANNEX 1

Policy Paper 2009.2: Policing in Alberta

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AUMA 2009 General Assembly adopt the 2009 Policy Paper on Policing, and urge the Province of Alberta to work with AUMA to further review the principles, proposals and alternate recommendations therein.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.1: Urban Parks

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AUMA encourage the Government of Alberta to include Urban and Regional Countryside Parks as an important part of the parks network in Alberta, and to work with AUMA to ensure that Urban and Regional Countryside Parks are further developed, maintained, enhanced and promoted in Alberta; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Government of Alberta commit to establishing a new Urban and Countryside Parks Program that would support municipalities in parks planning, parkland acquisition, park development, conservation, operations and promotions.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.2: Medical Recruitment

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association requests that the Province of Alberta develop a model to encourage that resources are in place for the recruitment and retention of medical physicians and professionals particularly those in specialized practices such as Anesthetists', Obstetricians', etc... to ensure that residents in rural Alberta have access to such services.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED as amended

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.3: Continued Funding for the Major Community Facilities Program

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Alberta to continue to fund the Major Community Facilities Program on an ongoing basis to allow for the proper planning to occur to see these projects completed for the benefit of Albertans.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.4: Increasing Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association seek increased provincial investment in social capital, social infrastructure and prevention and intervention services to address family violence and the abuse of seniors, and to protect vulnerable citizens.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.5: Multi-Year Provincial Block Funding for Affordable Housing

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Government of Alberta renew its commitment to provide Block Funding for Housing to jurisdictions under a multi-year plan that will follow the expiration of the current commitment ending in early 2010.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED as amended

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.7: Provincial Support for Age Friendly Pilot Sites and Community Initiatives

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Alberta to establish a specific ongoing fund for provincial “age friendly” pilot sites and initiatives throughout Alberta.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.ii.11: Availability of Designated Assisted Living Care in Local Communities

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Alberta to facilitate the development of more Designated Assisted Living Care accommodations in Alberta communities, reducing the demand for long term beds and providing the right level of care in the right place for many people.

2009 Convention: Resolution ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2009.C.iii.3: Marijuana Grow Operation Registry and Remediation

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request the Government of Alberta to adopt and implement the recommendations for safe re-occupancy of dwellings and buildings formerly used as marijuana grow operations, as outlined by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health and to include the creation of an appropriate Registry.

2009 Convention: Resolution REFERRED, then ADOPTED as amended

RESOLUTION 2009.C.v.1: Impact of Economic Downturn on Alberta's NonProfit/Voluntary Sector

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Government of Alberta restore provincial funding to nonprofit/voluntary organizations, and acknowledge that municipal governments are not expected to make up for provincial funding cutbacks to the nonprofit/voluntary sector.

2009 Convention: Resolution REFERRED, then ADOPTED