



Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Strategic Plan

As approved by the AUMA Board of Directors August 25, 2011

AUMA's Strategic Plan: A Vision for the Right Future

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) was founded in 1905 and represents nearly 300 urban municipalities in Alberta including cities, towns, villages, summer villages, and specialized municipalities. AUMA is a dynamic and evolving Association, which advocates the interests of all members to the provincial and federal orders of government as well as other organizations and stakeholder groups. Our Association believes that municipalities need stable and predictable funding to support their social, economic, cultural, environmental, and governance objectives. Our Association also advocates that municipal governments must be respected by both the provincial and federal orders of governments as a meaningful and effective order of government as they are ultimately accountable to their citizens and are trusted to act in the best interest of their respective communities.

AUMA is committed to engaging its members and developing strategic partnerships between all orders of government to meet municipal needs. While many urban municipalities share common challenges such as the need to fund core services and maintain infrastructure, AUMA understands the diverse and complex nature of its membership and is committed to developing solutions that respect the differences. Solutions advocated may take the form of building and leveraging strategic partnerships, capacity building through the development of resources and tools, and development of business solutions that are effective and efficient.

The economic model that supports the AUMA's advocacy efforts is derived from two main sources:

1. Membership fees
2. Dividends from AUMA's business subsidiary, Alberta Municipal Services Corporation (AMSC)

Membership fees are established during the annual business planning cycle, and are set in conjunction with the planned advocacy efforts and those resulting costs. Dividend amounts are defined in the Unanimous Shareholder Agreement with AUMA and AMSC.

AUMA relies on a robust governance model that includes a Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Standing Committees on key municipal issues, and a dedicated staff. The AUMA Board measures its governance performance by ensuring that its established policies, procedures, and practices meet the criteria as defined in the TSX Governance Guidelines.

AUMA's Strategic Plan was developed by the Board of Directors, members, and staff. The plan is a roadmap that identifies desired outcomes for urban municipal challenges and articulates AUMA's role in helping members to achieve those outcomes. Ultimately, the Strategic Plan provides direction on the continued evolution of AUMA and guides the development of three-year business plans. The Business Plan is developed to ensure available resources are aligned with AUMA's Mission, Vision, and Objectives. The Business Plan contains the organization's short term goals, strategies, performance measures, and annual budget. The Business Plan is used to develop an annual Operational Plan for each AUMA Standing Committee. These Operational Plans contain the mandate and terms of reference for each committee and direct the committees' activities throughout the year.

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1. Vision

Municipal governments are a fully engaged order of government and have the capacity to build thriving communities.

2. Mission

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association empowers municipalities by providing visionary leadership, solutions-based advocacy, and service excellence.

3. Core Values

AUMA demonstrates its core values throughout all aspects of its business.

1. **Trust** – AUMA builds trusting relationships by acting with honesty and integrity.
2. **Reputation** – Through reliability and consistency, AUMA builds a strong positive reputation as a trusted advisor.
3. **Communication** – AUMA communicates appropriately and effectively with members and other stakeholders.
4. **Responsiveness** – AUMA establishes networks and partnerships through which it listens, engages, and responds to member needs and concerns.
5. **Transparency** – AUMA provides transparent and pragmatic service and direction.
6. **Equity** – All AUMA Regular members are treated independently and fairly.
7. **Unity** – AUMA values the participation of all members and strives to build consensus on key municipal issues.
8. **Accountability** – AUMA is accountable for the decisions it makes.
9. **Excellence** – AUMA is member-driven and strives for continuous improvement in the provision of services and solutions.

4. Operating Principles

AUMA is committed to leadership through:

1. Excellence in Service Delivery, Stewardship, and Governance Practices.
2. Engagement and Empowerment of Members and Accountability of the Association.
3. Establishing leveraged Strategic Partnerships.
4. Effective Branding, Transparency of Actions, and Clarity and Timeliness of Communications.
5. Effective Advocacy on behalf of Members to all Orders of Government and other Key Stakeholders.
6. Service Excellence and Ethical Fairness.
7. Setting Objectives, Measuring and Evaluating Results.
8. Continual Learning and Growth.

5. Strategic Objectives – Helping Municipalities Thrive

As a result of feedback from municipalities and municipal leaders, AUMA has identified long-term strategic objectives and desired future outcomes for each.

1. Alberta Communities are Financially Viable and Vibrant

Desired Outcome:

- ◆ Communities have the sustainable financial and human resources they need to provide affordable, cost-effective municipal public services and infrastructure
- ◆ Municipalities have the revenue-generating capacity to meet their core needs
- ◆ Communities are experiencing economic growth and population increases
- ◆ Governments have found ways to align their efforts individually and collectively, resulting in more effective and efficient public services
- ◆ Progressive planning practices have made communities attractive and satisfying places to live

2. Alberta's Diverse Municipalities are Respected and Empowered

Desired Outcome:

- ◆ Urban municipalities are able to articulate sound solutions and common priorities
- ◆ There is understanding and trust among municipalities, governments, and citizens on the core responsibilities of municipalities
- ◆ Municipal governments continue to evolve into a fully respected order of government
- ◆ Governance legislation and structures facilitate good relationships and effective partnerships among municipalities
- ◆ Relationships with other orders of government reflect municipal autonomy and self-reliance
- ◆ Governments, citizens, and businesses make effective use of information technologies

3. Alberta Communities are Safe, Healthy, and Caring

Desired Outcome:

- ◆ Communities are welcoming, inclusive and caring places where citizens realize their individual potential, and form strong bonds of mutual support
- ◆ Housing is safe and accessible for citizens of all income and age ranges, and is not a financial burden to municipalities
- ◆ Communities have the capacity to successfully address issues of crime and well being
- ◆ Citizens have access to safe water and transportation systems
- ◆ Municipalities individually, or in regional partnerships, have the capacity to effectively respond to all types of incidents impacting their communities
- ◆ Communities have the means through which citizens can express their creativity and develop their cultural well being
- ◆ Communities have the means through which citizens can enjoy and benefit from an active, healthy lifestyle

4. Alberta Communities are Environmental Stewards

Desired Outcome:

- ◆ Communities have the leadership and capacity to think and act long term in maintaining or improving the environment while addressing the needs of citizens
- ◆ Municipalities implement smart growth strategies for sustainable transportation systems and follow best practices for waste reduction, water, air and land uses
- ◆ Municipalities encourage private investments in the development and implementation of environmental strategies
- ◆ Municipalities continuously improve the efficient use of energy and continue to switch to renewable sources of energy
- ◆ Municipalities are able to anticipate and offset negative cumulative effects on the environment

5. Communities are Well Governed

Desired Outcome:

- ◆ Municipal governments are trusted and ethical
- ◆ Municipalities have the capacity to govern effectively
- ◆ Municipal governments lead an active democracy that incorporates meaningful citizen participation
- ◆ Citizens are knowledgeable about municipalities and engage their leaders in the development of positive community strategies
- ◆ Municipal leaders are well educated in their role as governors
- ◆ Well qualified citizens are interested and aspire to participate in the governance of communities

6. How will AUMA help?

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) is an empowering and transformative agent that respects the uniqueness of individual Members while seeking opportunities for consensus on significant municipal issues and opting for a solutions-based approach to municipal challenges. AUMA has identified five roles it can play and the strategies that would be taken with each role. These roles are not mutually exclusive. For example, there will always be an advocacy dimension to AUMA activities and various objectives often require AUMA to undertake multiple roles.

1. AUMA as an Advocate

Desired Strategies:

- ◆ AUMA explores and analyzes municipal issues, researches options for solutions and works with other governments and municipalities to move issues to solutions
- ◆ AUMA meets with Government representatives to lobby and/or advocate for solutions that support municipalities
- ◆ AUMA advocates municipalities work together to build common solutions to issues
- ◆ AUMA partners with other organizations that align with and support meeting the sustainability objectives facing municipalities
- ◆ AUMA keeps informed, develops trust, and is easily accessible in developing solutions for a broadly-based member advocacy efforts
- ◆ The AUMA leverages the special supportive relationship linking advocacy and business efforts, between AUMA and AMSC

2. AUMA as a Change Facilitator

Desired Strategies:

- ◆ AUMA develops, leads and supports solutions that help municipalities meet their sustainability objectives and further creates the tools necessary for the implementation of those solutions
- ◆ AUMA develops the internal resources and expertise to help municipalities meet the changing environment
- ◆ AUMA develops partnerships with other governments and the private sector to support the need for change within the municipal environment
- ◆ AUMA promotes collective positions to decision makers, members, and stakeholders
- ◆ AUMA investigates and researches future municipal sustainability objectives and how municipalities can meet those municipal sustainability objectives
- ◆ AUMA brings experts to municipalities that provide change options for municipalities to meet sustainability objectives

- ◆ Through its subsidiary AMSC, the AUMA indirectly provides a broad range of cost-effective business solutions that meet municipalities' specific and evolving needs, including sustainability
- ◆ AUMA utilizes AMSC to create added value, through synergies inherent in the AMSC – AUMA relationship

3. AUMA as a Governance Supporter

Desired Strategies:

- ◆ AUMA develops the expertise to help municipalities effectively govern
- ◆ AUMA develops education and training programs that will build governance capacity of locally-elected decision-makers.
- ◆ AUMA researches and develops solutions that improve elected officials' decision-making capabilities and builds trust in locally-elected officials
- ◆ AUMA develops legislative changes that support better governance and advocates those changes to government
- ◆ AUMA aligns the governance requirements for municipalities to meet their sustainability objectives
- ◆ AUMA develops methods and frameworks that help municipalities build good governance structures internally (including their own corporations, Boards or committees) or in regional efforts

4. AUMA as an Information Manager

Desired Strategies:

- ◆ AUMA provides useful, reliable information that is tailored to the specific needs of local government decision makers
- ◆ AUMA is the key player in the process of collecting, structuring, analyzing, and distributing the information members need to govern effectively

5. AUMA as a Well Governed Organization and Network Participant

Desired Strategies:

- ◆ AUMA is an effective and efficient organization that responds to member needs in three main ways: advocacy efforts, developing business solutions, and building member capacity
- ◆ AUMA leverages a broad range of cost-effective business solutions that meet municipalities' needs through its subsidiary AMSC
- ◆ AUMA is primarily funded through membership dues and subsidiary dividends
- ◆ AUMA creates and manages networks relevant to municipalities' interests
- ◆ AUMA is a network manager, and members trust AUMA to identify, create, or shape the networks of organizations and stakeholders needed to ensure members' interests are aggressively pursued in an informed and consistent manner

- ◆ AUMA operates in a networked environment and plays a variety of roles depending on its strategic interests
- ◆ AMSC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the AUMA, and therefore owned by members