

Update: Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

Initiative Title: Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

City Council Lead(s):

- **Councillor A. Knack:**
 - Board of Directors, Vice-President and Director, Cities over 500,000
 - Executive Committee, Vice-President
 - Infrastructure and Energy Committee Chair
 - **Councillor M. Banga:**
 - Board of Directors, Director, Cities over 500,000
 - **Councillor T. Caterina:**
 - Municipal Governance Committee
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Objective:

The City of Edmonton and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) have a long standing working relationship. The AUMA provides a forum for the City to raise key priority issues and gain support of other municipalities across the province. Furthermore, the AUMA has close connections within the province and can help to augment City issues in provincial engagement.

Shared Priorities and Advocacy Areas:

Some of the shared advocacy priorities of the AUMA and the City of Edmonton include provincial Budget implications (including cuts to Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding and delay of the Local Government Fiscal Framework); policing (*Police Act* review and potential Alberta Provincial Police force); review of the governance sections of the *Municipal Government Act*; and preparing to transition to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation in the fall.

Key outcomes, projects or activities and their status as of June 2021:

2020 AUMA Annual Convention

- At the October 2020 AUMA Convention, the City of Edmonton brought forward four resolutions, all of which were passed with the support of AUMA members.
- As part of the AUMA's follow-up process, each of these items have been addressed through different mechanisms, including letters to provincial Ministers and advocacy in government meetings and engagement sessions, both by AUMA leadership and at the Committee level. The resolutions have

been an effective tool in keeping these key Edmonton priorities on the radar of the AUMA, other members, and the provincial government.

- The four resolutions are on the following key priorities: fiscal framework, permanent transit funding, affordable housing and homelessness and anti-racism (specifically, against Quebec's Bill 21).

Municipal Finance

- As noted above, the City of Edmonton put forward a resolution on municipal fiscal tools at last year's AUMA Convention. Administration understands that AUMA shares the City's concerns with the ongoing historical provincial cuts to capital and operating funding to municipalities.
- On June 7, 2021 City Council approved an Administration report on the historical provincial cuts to capital and operating funding. Interest in this report was reinforced by this year's provincial budget, which included cuts to MSI funding as well as a delay of the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF). City Council passed a motion to share this information with municipal partners such as the AUMA, RMA and the City of Calgary to be used in ongoing and future advocacy material.
- The AUMA has established a new working group to look at some of the longstanding issues in municipal finances, including some of the myths around municipal reserves which may be raised for awareness by AUMA officials. City Administrative is supportive of the proposed working group, which will be a useful exercise in changing the narrative around municipal finances, particularly in discussions with the province.

Standing Committee on Economic Recovery

- The AUMA Economic Resiliency and Recovery Task Force report, released in Spring 2021, included a recommendation to create a standing committee to deal with economic development issues and resolutions on behalf of AUMA members.
- This will be a platform to advance advocacy issues that relate to economic development, as well as enabling information sharing between members on successful initiatives and programs.
- Work is underway to establish the committee, which will be guided by the plan included in the task force report.

President's Policing Summit

- The President's Summit on Policing was held on February 4 and 17, 2021.
- Minister Madu provided comments at the February 17 session, including commentary on the *Police Act* review as well as insight into the province's intentions to transition to a provincial police force.
- The session was well-attended and a useful briefing leading up to the expected changes coming later in 2021.

Municipal Leader's Spring Caucus

- The Spring Caucus included a number of working sessions on priority topics such as red tape reduction, economic recovery, and municipal finances.
- There was excellent attendance from provincial Cabinet Ministers, including Premier Kenney.
- A number of advocacy areas were raised with relevant Ministers including MSI funding, coal policy, and policing.

Municipal Government Act (MGA) Review

- AUMA has been a partner in preparing for and engaging in various MGA review sessions with the province including on red tape review of the planning and development and governance sections of the MGA.

Local Democracy Pledge

- The AUMA is promoting a voluntary “Local Democracy Pledge” for municipal candidates to take in advance of the fall election. The four commitments of the pledge include: keep local elections local; maintain independence and non-partisanship; demonstrate transparency (including from a financial perspective); and engage in respectful behaviour.
- There has been some uptake of the pledge by municipal candidates across the province, including Edmonton City Council candidates, particularly following the Ryan Jespersen show appearance by AUMA Board members including Councillor Knack.

AUMA Meeting with the Executive Committee

- In accordance with the Protocol Agreement between the AUMA and the City of Edmonton, the AUMA Executive met with our Executive Committee on June 14, 2020 to provide updates on our shared advocacy efforts.
- City Administration and AUMA staff also meet and exchange information and perspectives on a regular basis on policy and legislative priorities.

Upcoming AUMA Event:

- The AUMA Annual Convention will take place in Edmonton on November 15-19, 2021. Early planning discussions are taking place between City Administration and the AUMA.

Evaluation and Recommendation:

- The City will continue to work with the AUMA in advancing municipal priorities and areas of shared interest including how to advocate for the City's interests.