

# BRIEFING

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Item # 5.2.2

Deputy City Manager's Office Briefing to  
Intergovernmental Affairs Committee  
2020 October 15

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## Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) Update – October 2020

### PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The City of Calgary (The City) is an active member within the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and this briefing memo is a monthly update to the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (IGA) on their activities and The City's work within the AUMA on provincial issues.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### **The AUMA Fall Convention & Annual General Meeting (AGM) – 2020 September 23 to 25 – Summary Overview**

The AUMA hosted a virtual convention this year, broadcasting its proceedings online from the Calgary Convention Centre, due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. The theme for this year's convention is "*Together We Can*". There were over 780 delegates attending from across Alberta including the Mayor, seven members of Council, one member of the Mayor's Office, and two members of Administration representing The City of Calgary, observing and participating. This briefing summarizes key convention activities, to fulfil Council Policy CC022, Reporting Policy of Council Members Attending FCM and AUMA Annual Conferences.

The convention was made up of several sessions taking place officially over a day and a half, but unofficially for a week, in the latter half of September. Convention activities included:

- A two-hour dialogue question and answer session with provincial Ministers;
- Two keynote speakers (Peter Mansbridge and Hayley Wickenheiser);
- Voting on 20 AUMA Resolutions (17 passed and 3 defeated);
- Voting for AUMA Board elections;
- Virtual networking events; and
- A week of education sessions and AUMA committee reports, from September 16 to 23, leading up to the formal convention start on the evening of September 23.

#### **Minister of Municipal Affairs Tracy Allard's Address**

Key highlights and messages from the Minister's speech:

- A positive address in tone overall as the Municipal Affairs Minister Tracy Allard's (Minister Allard) speech contained strong, positive language signaling a desire by the Minister for an improved, cooperative relationship between the Government of Alberta and Alberta's municipalities. However, the speech hinted at a fiscal and red tape reckoning to come for municipalities and the province as a whole; Minister Allard stated the Government of Alberta's desire to see municipalities cut red tape and improve service delivery as much as possible.
- Minister Allard shared that the Government of Alberta's priority is to deal with the 5 years of economic stagnation and revitalize the economy.
- Minister Allard went over the details of the new \$500 million Municipal Stimulus Program for municipal infrastructure and stated she has already approved several submitted projects. Repeated that she and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs wants to work together with municipalities on infrastructure.

- Minister Allard formally announced the funding agreement between the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada regarding municipal operational and transit support with funds being distributed by a simple grant program, no application needed. The Minister stated a funding agreement for municipalities is coming. Municipal Affairs will reach out soon and funds will flow in the next few weeks.

## The Premier of Alberta, the Hon. Jason Kenney's Address

Key highlights and messages from the Premier's address:

- The Premier stated the key concern for everyone [elected officials] is the moral of the Alberta public as the pandemic and the previous five-year downturn has taken a steep toll emotionally and financially on many citizens. Many unemployed and underemployed Albertans are surviving under stressful and difficult circumstances. Premier reiterated leaders must keep this in mind with all decisions they make and to focus on economic growth and job creation, needed to protect both lives and livelihoods. The Premier stated, "Our common strategy is a bold plan to build and diversify the economy, create jobs now and into the future."
- The Premier reminded listeners that the Government of Alberta's capital build changed from \$7 billion to \$10 billion this year with \$500 million for municipalities' infrastructure projects.
- Premier Kenney stated the goal "is to create the most attractive province in the country and one of the most attractive jurisdictions in North America to invest and build a business in" and "Invest Alberta wants to cooperate with your regional economic development agencies and your municipalities on investment attraction." Premier Kenney reiterated that, "We need to strip away unnecessary rules, red tape, and work together in a Team Alberta approach on this, please work with Minister Allard on this... We are all part of the Alberta Recovery Plan."
- Premier Kenney went on to discuss the collapse of Government of Alberta revenues has created a deep fiscal crisis and we must prepare ourselves for more difficult decision post-pandemic. Energy royalties dropped from \$12 billion pre-recession, to \$5 billion in 2018 to \$1 billion now, and a structural deficit estimated, post-pandemic, to be \$10 billion.
- The Premier was disappointed with the federal Throne Speech with no recognition of the fiscal contribution Alberta has made in the past to Confederation and any mention of our needs now. Premier stated it is cognizant for all of us to work with allies and raise our voices together that Alberta has been good to Canada and now Canada needs to standby right with Alberta.

## Minister Dialogue Sessions

Key highlights from the Minister Dialogue sessions:

- **New Municipal Assessment Model:** When asked about the subject, Minister Allard responded she will work with AUMA, Rural Municipalities Association (RMA), and industry on the New Assessment Model, with meetings with all stakeholders coming in early October. She stated she was cognizant that municipal budgets are coming up this fall quickly. She said probably be a very small change with assessment this year and more changes to come next year. The Minister answered that the problem [with the earlier policy process] was industry was looking only at their competitiveness and municipalities only at their viability: "Positions became polarized, we need to be concerned with everyone's viability." Minister Allard committed to working to bring everyone together for a solution that will work for everyone. This was a strong statement

that the Assessment Revenue Model is not complete and more work and more dialogue on the issue is coming over the next few months before a final decision.

- **EMS Dispatch:** Minister Shandro acknowledged meeting with the Mayors of Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Wood Buffalo the day before and stated they had common concerns about improving response times that he would look into their concerns.
- **Flood Mitigation – Changing standards for new construction from 1:100 to 1:200:** When asked about changing the flood standard for new construction, both Minister McIver and Allard were taken aback by the question and said they would look into it.
- **New Policing Model:** Minister Madu was asked if he would give communities credit if they were already paying for additional peace officers within their communities. He committed to work together to face the common problems of getting more ‘boots on the ground’.
- **Online Services:** Responding to a question about the lack of a Registry in Blackfalds and their difficulty in getting one set-up due to Government of Alberta’s red tape, Minister Glubish stated Alberta was last in the number of provincial services available online out of all provinces and pledged Service Alberta was working on bringing many services, including most of registry services, online and that would help citizens underserved in communities.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Mayor Cathy Heron of St. Albert asked Minister Nixon, “Now that AUMA had passed Resolution B11, a strong signal the municipalities intended to pass back the savings from an implemented province-wide EPR to citizens, had the ACES (Alberta Collaborative EPR Study) report regarding how to implement it, what more do you need?” Minister Nixon replied, they will move forward with the conversation. He stated that just a few days before, under the auspices of the Ministry of Natural Gas, a commitment to the circular economy in plastics was made, with more details to come next week. Paper Products however, will require more work as the Government of Alberta needs assurances to address concerns from small businesses and ensure that such a move will not create additional red tape. Minister Nixon stated they [the Government of Alberta] do intend to move forward on the issue.
- **Service Efficiency:** Minister Toews reiterated that the objective for the Government of Alberta and everyone [all municipal governments] is to provide the most cost-effective services possible. Minister stated, “There is going to be less money for a long time, we need to deal with this reality.” Minister Hunter stated his Ministry was still working on the AUMA’s submitted Cut Red Tape proposals, but already Municipal Affairs has reduced the regulatory burden on municipalities by 15 per cent.
- **COVID-Caused Property Tax Default:** Mayor Iveson asked would the Government of Alberta backstop municipalities should there be a dramatic fall in property tax revenue this fall resulting from the pandemic. Minister Toews stated that we will tackle shared problems together as they emerge.
- **McKinnon Panel Commitment to Reduce Infrastructure per Capita:** Minister Toews stated the Government’s highest priority is to get through the pandemic and stimulate the economy via infrastructure investment, so they will continue investing in infrastructure massively in the short-term, however over the long-term they do wish to reduce funding overall to be more in line with other provinces’ average investments.
- **On Adopting new Construction and Technology:** Minister McIver was asked about adopting a more outcomes-based approach to infrastructure and service delivery then the current more proscriptive way of granting that disallows innovative ways for new wastewater treatment and construction techniques. Minister McIver said they are always open to new ways but need to sort out “the snake-oil from the good but that is for the engineers to work out.” But yes, the Minister was open to new ways of doing and building things.

## Leader of the Official Opposition, Rachel Notley's Address

Key highlights and messages from MLA Rachel Notley's address:

- The Leader of the Official Opposition in the Alberta Legislature, Rachel Notley, stated in her address to the AUMA that she will, over the next few days, roll out an alternate plan for moving the Province forward in the present crisis to constructively contribute to the debate on the province's future. This will include proposals like:
  - An historic Investment in Affordable Housing: The Alberta NDP would undertake the most significant investment in affordable housing this province has ever seen. This would not only create jobs, it would help address social challenges and support Albertans devastated by COVID-19.
  - Invite Municipalities to Help Build an Economic Plan: The Alberta NDP would build an economic plan with cities, not without them, as the UCP have done. Cities all have their own economic plans. We would bring them together and build one plan for all of Alberta.
  - A few hours after the convention, Rachel Notley posted on Twitter a chain about her five shared ideas the Alberta NDP would pursue to help municipalities, Twitter posts are found at: <https://twitter.com/RachelNotley/status/1309569882846105601?s=20>

## AUMA Convention Resolution Session

There were 20 resolutions presented before the convention this year. Please see Attachment 1 for a summary of the results of the voting on the individual resolutions. The resolutions passed will now become advocacy and policy issues for AUMA Board and Administration to work on and they will be integrated into their 2020-2021 work plans and actioned.

The City of Calgary submitted resolution *B11 - Providing a Long-Term Source of Financial Relief for Albertans* regarding a commitment to pass on the savings from a Province-wide implemented EPR program to citizens was passed as was the resolution condemning Quebec's Bill 21 that Calgary seconded. Resolutions regarding a desire for new fiscal framework with the Government of Alberta, and sustainable, reliable infrastructure funding for transit, affordable housing and water-wastewater were passed along with support for increasing the 911 Cell Phone Levy. Overall, all of Council's key advocacy positions were supported by the majority of the AUMA membership. Councillor Demong acted again as Chair for the AUMA Resolutions session and Councillor Chahal spoke for two minutes seconding and in support of Resolution *B8 - Resolution Against Quebec's Bill 21*.

## AUMA Board Elections

The 2020-2021 AUMA Board is as follows:

### President and Chair

Barry Morishita, Mayor, City of Brooks

### Director, Cities over 500,000

Mohinder Banga, Councillor, City of Edmonton

Andrew Knack, Councillor, City of Edmonton

Peter Demong, Councillor, City of Calgary

Ward Sutherland, Councillor, City of Calgary

### Director, Cities up to 500,000

Tyler Gandam, Mayor, City of Wetaskiwin

Bill Given, Mayor, City of Grande Prairie

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Cathy Heron, Mayor, City of St. Albert

## Director, Towns

East: Trina Jones, Deputy Mayor, Town of Legal

West: Janet Jabush, Mayor, Town of Mayerthorpe

South: Tanya Thorn, Councillor, Town of Okotoks

## Director, Villages

East: Jocelyne Lanovaz, Councillor, Village of Mannville

West: Angela Duncan, Deputy Mayor, Village of Alberta Beach

South: Bruce McLeod, Mayor, Village of Acme

## Director, Summer Villages

Mike Pashak, Mayor, Summer Village of Half Moon Bay

AUMA's Executive Committee for 2020/21 is as follows:

- President: Barry Morishita, Mayor, City of Brooks
- Vice President, Cities up to 500,000: Cathy Heron, Mayor, City of St. Albert
- Vice President, Cities over 500,000:
  - Andrew Knack, Councillor, City of Edmonton
  - Peter Demong, Councillor, City of Calgary
- Vice President, Towns: Tanya Thorn, Councillor, Town of Okotoks
- Vice President, Villages and Summer Villages: Angela Duncan, Deputy Mayor, Village of Alberta Beach

## **Upcoming AUMA Meetings**

AUMA Executive Committee meeting is 2020 October 8

AUMA Board meeting is 2020 October 22

## **ATTACHMENT**

1. Attachment 1 – 2020 AUMA Resolutions Session Results