

## **FUTURE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1. Purpose**

The Research Engagement Committee (the “Committee”) is intended to support the Future of Municipal Governance project that is being undertaken by the AUMA in partnership with the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy (SPP).

#### **2. Project Description**

AUMA’s Board of Directors has identified the Future of Municipal Governance as a priority initiative, for the next several years based on concerns about municipal viability, intermunicipal conflicts and several other issues.

The purpose of the project is to explore and assess governance options that will enable municipalities to build thriving communities into the future.

The ultimate deliverables of the project include:

- a. An overview of municipal governance options.
- b. Principles/criteria that would be used to evaluate these options.
- c. Based on these criteria, recommendations on which governance options are optimal for application in Alberta.
- d. A review of what those governance structures could look like at a provincial and local level.

#### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Committee will assist AUMA’s engagement in the project by:

- a. Discussing the ideal scope of specific research papers to ensure the right questions are being asked to fulfill the purpose of the project.
- b. Identifying sources of information.
- c. Reviewing drafts of papers:
  - Review will be limited to identifying any gaps and providing editorial comments to ensure the information is provided in an accessible manner.
  - The Committee will not have any input on research findings.
- d. Developing municipal engagement plans, and amendments, as needed.
- e. Monitoring the progress of the project plan and suggesting any needed adjustments.
- f. The SPP will develop a research plan, that will guide the research process.
- g. The SPP will lead research towards those outcomes, drawing on experts from other academic institutions, as needed.

#### **4. Guiding Principles**

The Committee’s work will be based on the following principles:

- a. Academic Independence:  
The research of the SPP is independent and fact-based.
- b. Transparency:  
AUMA, the SPP and project partners will proactively share the project process and findings.

- c. Engagement:  
Municipalities and other stakeholders, as appropriate, will be given opportunities to provide input on the project and discuss the policy implications of its findings.
- d. Respect:  
The project will create the space for civil dialogue on challenging issues impacting the future of municipal governance.

## 5. Membership

The Committee will be comprised of:

- a. One member of the AUMA Municipal Governance Committee.
- b. One member of AUMA Small Communities Committee.
- c. One member at large from the AUMA Regular Membership
- d. One representative of the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, Board of Directors or Administration.
- e. One representative of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

A minimum of one of the two members from AUMA standing committees will be a municipal administrator.

## 6. Committee Chair

The Committee will be chaired by an AUMA staff member.

## 7. Timeline and Frequency of Meetings

- a. The Committee will meet for approximately 18 months starting in January 2021.
- b. Meetings will take place every second month, or as directed by the Chair.
- c. Most meetings will take place virtually, with an option for in-person meetings, when warranted.
- d. To recognize and support the academic independence that is essential to the project, SPP staff and/or researchers will attend meetings only upon invitation by the Chair.

## 8. Reporting Process

The AUMA Research Engagement Committee members will serve as liaisons between the Committee and their respective standing committees and/or the AUMA, RMA, and Municipal Affairs administrations, as applicable, by providing updates on the progress of the project and summaries of findings from papers completed by the SPP.

The standing committees will report to the Board on the project in accordance with standard AUMA policies and procedures.

## 9. Budget and Support

- a. Standard AUMA per diems and meeting support will apply for Research Engagement Committee members who are AUMA Board and/or standing committee members.
- b. AUMA staff will provide secretariat support to the Committee.