

Intermunicipal Collaboration Tools Overview:

Intermunicipal Development Plans & Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks

Introduction

Effective intermunicipal collaboration is important where municipal boundaries meet and community growth, infrastructure, and services extend beyond a single jurisdiction. Alberta's Municipal Government Act establishes two complementary tools—**Intermunicipal Development Plans** and **Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks**—to support cooperation between neighbouring municipalities and promote coordinated decision-making across shared boundaries.

Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks are both legislatively required mechanisms that promote collaboration between municipalities that share a common border. Each tool is intended to help municipalities work together in a predictable and coordinated manner, reduce conflict, and support mutually beneficial outcomes. While they share a common goal of fostering intermunicipal cooperation, they serve distinct but interconnected roles.

Intermunicipal Development Plans

Intermunicipal Development Plans are **statutory land-use policy documents** that guide how neighbouring municipalities will grow and develop near their shared boundary. They focus on coordinating land use, development patterns, transportation networks, infrastructure, services, and environmental considerations in areas where decisions by one municipality can directly affect the other. In practical terms, Intermunicipal Development Plans help ensure that road networks align, land uses are complementary, and development decisions are coordinated so that growth in one municipality does not negatively impact its neighbour.

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks, by contrast, are **service delivery and cost-sharing agreements** rather than land-use policy tools. Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks outline how two or more neighbouring municipalities will collaborate on providing and funding shared services that benefit residents across municipal boundaries, even when those services are located within only one of the participating municipalities. Under the Municipal Government Act, Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks must address roads, water, wastewater, solid waste, emergency services, and recreation – and apply to those services for which both municipalities have agreed to collaborate.

Conclusion

Together, the Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks form the foundation of intermunicipal collaboration in Alberta. Intermunicipal Development Plans establish the long-term planning and policy framework for coordinated growth, while

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks address how municipalities will work together to deliver and fund the services that support that growth. Used in tandem, these tools help ensure that land-use decisions, infrastructure investments, and service delivery are aligned across boundaries, supporting efficient, sustainable, and cooperative regional development. As work on the Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks proceeds separately but concurrently, opportunities for alignment between both projects will be sought wherever possible.