

2021 Resolutions Book

VERSION 1 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Resolutions for discussion at the 2021 Annual Convention

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

2021 Convention

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Resolutions Session

Thursday, November 18

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About Resolutions

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (“AUMA”) represents over 260 municipalities that face a wide variety of complex issues. AUMA’s vision is to be a change agent that enables municipalities to be a fully engaged order of government with the capacity to build thriving communities. AUMA’s mission is to be the voice of our member municipalities and provide visionary leadership, solutions-based advocacy and service excellence.

As part of fulfilling our vision and mission, AUMA conducts an annual resolutions process that enables member municipalities to identify and prioritize common issues and solutions and empower AUMA’s Board of Directors to advocate to the federal and provincial governments on members’ behalf. This process includes a Resolutions Session at AUMA’s Convention where members vote on the resolutions submitted.

As set out in AUMA’s [Resolutions Policy](#), a resolution must address a topic of concern affecting municipalities on a regional or provincial level, and must be approved by the council of the sponsoring municipality and seconded by an additional municipal council. A resolution must not direct one or more municipalities to adopt a particular course of action or policy but must be worded as a request for consideration of an issue, including a call for action, by the AUMA.

Resolutions adopted by members annually at Convention are typically active for three years. AUMA administration, standing committees and the Board take action to develop and implement advocacy strategies for each resolution. Given the scope, complexity and volume of issues facing municipalities, AUMA uses a [framework](#) to prioritize where it invests our collective efforts.

All resolutions from the current year and the six previous years, including those that are both active and expired, are posted in the [Resolutions Library](#) on AUMA’s website. Resolutions are categorized under [five advocacy subject areas](#):

- Economic
- Environment
- Governance
- Infrastructure
- Social

AUMA Resolutions Policy

POLICY NO. AP002 – Revised December 2020

PURPOSE

1. AUMA represents over 260 municipalities that face a wide variety of complex issues. AUMA’s vision is to be a change agent that enables municipalities to be a fully engaged order of government with the capacity to build thriving communities. AUMA’s mission is to be the voice of urban municipalities and provide visionary leadership, solutions-based advocacy and service excellence.
2. As part of fulfilling our vision and mission, AUMA conducts a resolutions process that enables Member municipalities to identify and prioritize common issues and solutions that empower AUMA’s Board of Directors to advocate to the federal and provincial governments on Members’ behalf.
3. The purpose of the Resolutions policy (“the Policy”) is to establish a clear and consistent process for resolutions that aligns with AUMA’s broader advocacy initiatives.

DEFINITIONS

4. In this Policy:
 - a. **“Advocacy”** means the wide variety of actions undertaken by AUMA to address municipal issues.
 - b. **“AUMA”** means the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.
 - c. **“AUMA Administration”** means AUMA employees.
 - d. **“Board”** means the AUMA Board of Directors.
 - e. **“Board Member”** refers to a Member of the AUMA Board of Directors.
 - f. **“CEO”** means the Chief Executive Officer of AUMA.
 - g. **“Committee”** means a standing Committee of the Board or an ad-hoc Committee established by the Board.
 - h. **“Convention”** means the annual Convention held by AUMA to conduct the business of the Association, consider resolutions, and provide opportunities for education and networking.
 - i. **“Elected Representative”** refers to an elected representative of a Member of AUMA.
 - j. **“Member”** refers to a Regular Member of AUMA.
 - k. **“Political Capital”** refers to the goodwill, trust and influence a political figure/organization has with the public and other political figures/organizations.
 - l. **“Regular Member”** means any city, town, village, summer village, and specialized municipality that has been classified as a Regular Member in accordance with Article IV of the AUMA Bylaws.

- m. **Resolutions Book**” means the electronic document that includes resolutions to be considered at Convention.

POLICY

Call for Resolutions

- 5. No later than January 31 of each year, AUMA issues a call for resolutions to be considered at AUMA’s Convention during the Resolutions Session.
- 6. The call includes information on:
 - a. AUMA’s resolutions policy and process, including a resolution writing guide and template;
 - b. AUMA’s prioritization policy and process, so that Members understand how AUMA identifies the level of engagement it invests in various issues;
 - c. Strategic initiatives approved by the Board, so Members are aware of where AUMA is focusing its attention and resources; and
 - d. The Resolutions Library, so Members are aware of past resolutions and AUMA activities, as well as resolutions that are due to expire at that year’s Convention as per Section 61 of this policy.

Movers and Seconders

- 7. Resolutions may be sponsored by:
 - a. A single Member’s council. Resolutions sponsored by a single Member must be seconded by another Member’s council;
 - b. The councils of a group of Members. All group-sponsored resolutions are deemed to be seconded; or
 - c. The Board.
- 8. The sponsor of a resolution is deemed to have moved the resolution and is referred to as the “mover”.

Research and Writing

- 9. As outlined by the template in Appendix A, each resolution shall be written in the following format:
 - a. A concise title, which specifies the issue in the resolution;
 - b. A preamble of “WHEREAS” clauses, which provide a clear, brief, and factual context for the operative clause;
 - c. An operative clause, which clearly sets out what the resolution is meant to achieve and the proposal for action; and
 - d. Background information, which provides further context as to why the issue is important to Alberta municipalities.

10. The mover has primary responsibility for researching and drafting the resolution.
11. Members are encouraged to seek initial advice from AUMA Administration on resolution topics and sources of information, as well as feedback on the format, accuracy, and clarity of draft resolutions.

Submission

12. Resolutions must be submitted to AUMA Administration no later than May 31 of each year.
13. AUMA's CEO may grant an extension of the deadline if:
 - a. Convention is scheduled later than Thanksgiving Day in any year; or
 - b. Conditions prevent Members from submitting resolutions by the deadline (e.g. emergency events.)
14. Resolutions must be submitted:
 - a. Electronically, as specified in the call for resolutions;
 - b. In the format specified by the template in Appendix A;
 - c. With minutes that show proof of the moving and seconding councils' approvals as required in Section 7; and
 - d. In adherence to the guidelines presented in this policy.

Emergent Resolutions

15. A resolution related to a matter of an urgent nature arising after the resolution deadline may be considered as "emergent" on a case-by-case basis.
16. The criteria of an emergent resolution are that it **must**:
 - a. Deal with an issue of concern to Alberta municipalities that has arisen after the resolution deadline, or just prior to the resolution deadline, such that Members could not submit it as a regular resolution;
 - b. Have a critical aspect that needs to be addressed before the next Convention; and
 - c. Comply with the guidelines for resolutions set out in this policy.
17. Members wishing to move emergent resolutions shall provide notice to AUMA Administration as soon as possible with a deadline of the first day of Convention.
18. Emergent resolutions must be submitted:
 - a. Electronically, as specified in the call for resolutions;
 - b. In the format specified by the template in Appendix A;
 - c. Along with minutes that show proof of the moving council's approval and
 - d. In adherence to the guidelines presented in this policy.

19. The proposed resolution will be deemed to have met the criteria of an emergent resolution by either:
 - a. AUMA's Board, if the proposed emergent resolution is submitted before the final Board meeting prior to Convention; or
 - b. AUMA's Executive Committee, if the proposed emergent resolution is submitted after the final Board meeting prior to Convention.

20. If the Board or Executive Committee determines the resolution meets the criteria of an emergent resolution, the Board or Executive Committee will second the resolution.

21. If the resolution receives approval for consideration after the Convention Guide is sent to be published, the mover will provide AUMA with 1,000 printed copies of the resolution.

22. Emergent resolutions accepted by the AUMA Board or Executive Committee shall be added to the Resolution Session Agenda following the Category C resolutions as defined in Section 24(a).

AUMA Review

23. AUMA Administration will review resolutions as they are submitted and advise movers if a resolution:
 - a. Could trigger any of the criteria set out in Section 27;
 - b. Addresses a topic covered by an already active resolution;
 - c. Contradicts existing AUMA policy;
 - d. Should be combined with a similar resolution being moved by another municipality;
or
 - e. Has any further deficiencies such as:
 - i. Absence of any indication of the resolution being endorsed by the council of the moving and seconding municipality;
 - ii. Unclear, contradictory, incorrect, or misleading statements;
 - iii. Lack of enough background information to justify the action being proposed;
or
 - iv. Incorrect formatting.

24. AUMA Administration will compile resolutions into a draft Resolutions Book that:
 - a. Categorizes resolutions as follows:
 - i. Category A – position papers moved by the Board;
 - ii. Category B – issues that relate to AUMA's strategic initiatives; or
 - iii. Category C – other issues of potential interest to Alberta municipalities.

Resolutions within these categories may be grouped by theme. (e.g. governance, infrastructure, safe and healthy communities)

- b. Proposes AUMA comments on each resolution relating to:
 - i. Whether and how the resolution relates to an existing AUMA position or strategic initiative; and
 - ii. Other considerations that may affect AUMA's ability to act on the resolution.
 - c. Identifies resolutions that potentially trigger the criteria set out in Section 28.
25. AUMA's Municipal Governance Committee will review and recommend any amendments to the draft Resolutions Book as required, including proposed comments and any Section 28 concerns.
26. The draft Resolutions Book will then be forwarded to the Board for consideration.
27. To preserve AUMA's credibility, the Board reserves the right to ensure issues raised by resolutions to be considered at Convention are related to municipal interests and do not:
- a. Involve conflicts between individual municipalities;
 - b. Involve conflicts between individual municipalities and citizens, other organizations, etc.;
 - c. Involve internal issues of a municipality;
 - d. Promote the interests of individual businesses;
 - e. Direct a municipality to take a course of action;
 - f. Result in the perception that AUMA is partisan and supports a political party or candidate; or
 - g. Lack the clarity required to determine the issue and/or what is being asked of the AUMA.
28. If Section 27 conditions exist, the Board may reject the proposed resolution and notify the mover with an explanation of why the resolution will not appear in the Resolutions Book.
29. The mover of a rejected resolution may appeal the decision by bringing forward a motion at the Resolutions Session for the resolution to be considered, and the decision can be reversed by 2/3 majority of votes cast.
30. The AUMA will electronically publish and distribute the Resolutions Book to Members at least eight (8) weeks prior to Convention to give councils enough time to review and discuss the resolutions.
31. Resolutions are also published in the Resolutions Library on AUMA's website and distributed at Convention.

Resolutions Session

32. All procedures at the Resolutions Session will be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as modified by this policy.
33. As provided in AUMA's Bylaws, quorum for all proceedings at a Resolutions Session will be comprised of Elected Representatives of 25% of AUMA's Regular Members.
34. Prior to the beginning of the Resolutions Session, the Resolutions Session Chair will ask for a motion from the floor to adopt the Resolutions Session Agenda as presented in the Convention Guide, with the addition of any emergent resolutions submitted after the guide was published.
35. Amendments from the floor to the Resolutions Session Agenda will be accepted when duly moved and seconded.
36. The motion to approve the Resolutions Session Agenda will be passed by a simple majority of votes cast. A 2/3 majority of the votes cast will be required to approve amendments to the Resolutions Session Agenda.
37. If there are no amendments to the Resolutions Session Agenda, resolutions will be debated in the order they are presented in the Convention Guide. No further amendments to the approved Agenda will be accepted.
38. So long as there is quorum (Section 33), the Resolutions Session shall not be closed until all resolutions listed in the agenda are debated and voted upon, or the allotted time for the Resolutions Session has expired, unless the majority of delegates present vote to extend the allotted time.
39. Resolutions which are not debated at a Resolutions Session because of insufficient time or lack of quorum will be considered by the Board following the Convention.

Adoption

40. The Resolutions Session Chair will introduce each proposed resolution by indicating its number, title, the names of the mover and seconder, and the operative clause.
41. A mover may withdraw a proposed resolution when the resolution is introduced. In this event, the Resolutions Session Chair shall declare the resolution withdrawn and no further debate or comments will be allowed.
42. Resolutions that are moved by the Board must be seconded from the floor by an Elected Representative of a Member.

43. A spokesperson from the mover will then have up to two (2) minutes to speak to the resolution.
44. Next, AUMA comments on member-moved resolutions may be presented by a Board Member.
45. These comments must be approved in advance by the Board.
46. The Resolutions Session Chair will then open debate by calling for a speaker in opposition, seeking clarification or proposing an amendment.
47. Speakers will have a two (2) minute time limit and shall not speak more than once on any one question.
48. If no one rises to speak in opposition, for clarification, or to propose an amendment to a resolution, the question will be immediately called.
49. As provided in the AUMA Bylaws, the persons entitled to speak to a resolution during the Resolutions Session are:
 - a. Elected Representatives in attendance whose municipalities are Regular Members of AUMA in good standing.
 - b. In the event a Regular Member is unable to be represented at the Resolutions Session by an Elected Representative, an official appointed by motion of the Council to represent it, if notice of such appointment is submitted in writing to AUMA's CEO at least three (3) days prior to the date of the Resolutions Session.
 - c. Upon a motion from the floor, or at the discretion of the Resolution Session Chair, a representative of an Associate Member as defined in AUMA's bylaws.
50. No debate on accompanying background material and information for resolutions is allowed.
51. When no opposing position speaker is available, the Resolutions Session Chair will declare the end of the debate and the spokesperson from the mover will be allowed one (1) minute for the closing of debate.
52. Amendments, including "minor amendments" should be submitted in writing to the Resolutions Session Chair prior to the amendment being introduced, but verbal amendments will also be accepted from the floor.
53. Amendments must be seconded from the floor or they do not proceed.
54. Debate procedures for an amendment shall be the same as for a resolution as set out in Sections 43 to 51.

55. The conflict of interest guidelines for council votes, as outlined in the *Municipal Government Act*, shall also apply to Convention resolution votes for all delegates. It is incumbent upon each delegate to adhere to these guidelines.
56. Voting may, at the discretion of the Resolutions Session Chair, be by:
 - a. electronic device;
 - b. a show of hands of eligible voters; or
 - c. paper ballot.
57. The number of votes necessary for any resolution to pass is a simple majority of votes cast for that resolution (50% plus one vote).

Action on Adopted Resolutions

58. All adopted resolutions will be sent to the relevant provincial and/or federal ministry or organization for response.
59. Further advocacy on resolutions will be recommended to the Board by the relevant Committee based on analysis completed using the Prioritization and Levels of Engagement Frameworks in Appendix B.
60. Category A resolutions are considered active until the Board deems them to be complete or inactive.
61. Category B and C resolutions have an active life of up to three (3) years if not completed before then, following which they are deemed inactive.
62. Members or the Board may sponsor renewal of a resolution that is going to expire.

POLICY REVIEW

63. This Policy will be reviewed annually. Any required changes will be presented to the AUMA Board for approval.

APPENDICES

- A. Resolution Template
- B. Prioritization and Levels of Engagement Frameworks

APPENDIX A Resolution Template

Title of resolution:

Moved by:

Seconded by:

WHEREAS *the purpose of the “Whereas” clauses is to clearly and succinctly describe the issue or opportunity that the resolution is bringing forward, and identify why the subject is relevant to Alberta municipalities;*

WHEREAS *the clauses should identify whether the issue involves the need for information sharing, policy changes, legislative/regulatory change or a combination thereof, and refer to specific documents and sections whenever possible;*

WHEREAS *depending on the complexity of the issue, including roughly five “Whereas” clauses is ideal;*

WHEREAS *further information can be included in the background; and*

WHEREAS *these clauses should lead logically to the operative clause.*

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT *the AUMA advocate forThis operative clause is the call to action. It usually includes a request for the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada or another organization to act. This is the most important part of the resolution and should be written clearly, so there is no doubt as to what action is being requested.*

BACKGROUND:

No preamble can be comprehensive enough to give a full account of the situation that gave rise to the resolution. In all cases, supplementary or background information (1 to 2 pages max.) is necessary.

The background should answer the following questions:

- *What is the impact of the issue on Alberta municipalities and how many municipalities are impacted? (Provide examples and/or statistics where possible.)*
- *What priority should the resolution be given?*
- *Does the issue and call to action relate to one of AUMA’s strategic initiatives?*
- *Has the issue been addressed by AUMA in response to a resolution or otherwise in the past and what was the outcome?*
- *Have other associations or groups acted on this issue, or are they considering action? (e.g. Is a similar resolution being considered by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta?)*
- *What other considerations are involved? (e.g. Does the proposed action align with goals of the provincial or federal government, or other organizations?)*

APPENDIX B

Prioritization Framework

Questions	Sample considerations	Analysis
Does the issue relate to AUMA's strategic initiatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will action on the issue contribute towards realizing the goals of the strategic initiative or will it lead to scope creep without adding value? 	
Is the issue within municipal jurisdiction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the issue exclusive to municipalities or does it also involve federal or provincial government? 	
What is the impact on Members and how many Members are impacted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a significant issue to a single Member or to many Members? • If the issue only impacts a few Members today, does it have the potential to impact more Members in the future? 	
Will engagement in this issue build or deplete political capital?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the issue align with the priorities of the government of the day? • Or, will we have to push to get it onto the agenda or actively counter their agenda? 	
Does the issue involve the need for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing? • Funding? • Policy Change? • Legislative/regulatory change? • All of the above? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer to this question will influence the time, resources and chances for success. • In general, changes to legislation requires more time and effort than changes to regulations. • Requests for funding must consider that federal and provincial governments face funding constraints. 	
Is there an opportunity for AUMA to add value to this issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does AUMA have the expertise on staff, on the Board/Committees, among Members to add value? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUMA is often best positioned to provide input on higher level principles and only has the capacity to engage at a detailed technical level on a limited number of issues. • Are there other organizations that have greater expertise and credibility on the issue? • Is it better for municipalities to respond directly, or is a collective response needed? 	
What are timelines involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there time to seek input from Members/Committees and seek approval from the Board? • In other words, is there time to determine a collective response, or should AUMA just let Members know about an issue and let them respond individually? 	
What are the chances of success?	<p>Given the answers to the above questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How likely will AUMA's advocacy on an issue result in tangible benefits for Members? • Has the relevant decision maker (i.e. provincial or federal government) indicated they are open to making changes? Has a consultation process been initiated? 	
Does AUMA have the capacity to respond effectively?	<p>Given the answers to the above questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would action on this issue take time and resources away from key priorities? • Does AUMA have the time and resources to conduct appropriate analysis, engage Members, build partnerships, create meaningful solutions and report back to Members on this issue? 	

<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Based on the analysis above, what should AUMA’s level of engagement* be on this issue?</p> <p>What action should be taken?</p> <p>How will the action be reported?</p>

*As outlined in the Levels of Engagement Framework

Levels of Engagement Framework

Level of Engagement	Potential Actions	Reporting
Low – Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article in AUMA’s newsletter. • Informal email or phone call at the administrative level on issues that can be quickly resolved. • Monitoring for potential future impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information item for a Committee or Board • Update to AUMA’s Resolutions Library
Medium – Contribute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing Note or Request for Decision through a Committee seeking direction or a recommendation to AUMA’s Board. As a result, further action may be taken including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letters ○ Meetings ○ Presentations to Committees ○ Webinars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to the relevant AUMA Committee. • Updates to Members through the AUMA’s newsletter and Resolutions Library.
High – Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an advocacy strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates at to Board and relevant AUMA Committee. • Updates to Members through AUMA’s newsletter, website and events.

2021 Resolutions

Category B - Issues related to
AUMA's strategic initiatives

AUMA Resolution 2021.B1: Creating Jobs Through Remediating and Redeveloping Brownfields

Moved by: Town of Calmar

Seconded by: City of Medicine Hat

WHEREAS the Alberta government has not provided support and funding to local governments to remediate brownfields;

WHEREAS the current process to discover, investigate, remediate, and redevelop brownfields is onerous, costly, and frustrating for local governments and does not encourage and incentivize the private sector to redevelop brownfields;

WHEREAS Alberta's *Municipal Government Act* enables local government to cancel, defer, or reduce the municipal taxes on brownfields through a property tax bylaw. However, the province portion of education taxes remain on property; and

WHEREAS Legislation and regulations for remediation and reclamation changes over time. Old reclamation certificates are deemed null and void because they do not meet the current requirements. The change of standards creates significant barriers for brownfield redevelopment.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA call on the Government of Alberta to immediately implement all recommendations from the 2011 Brownfield Redevelopment Working Group. The first priority is to provide financial incentives to support municipalities in conducting environmental site assessments.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AUMA ask the Government of Alberta create a red tape reduction task force making recommendations on removing barriers for local government and the private sector to discover, investigate, remediate, and redevelop brownfields.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate the Government of Alberta develop a policy to manage old reclamation certificates deemed null and void and re-define the Orphan Well Association mandate to support legacy sites.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AUMA call for a provincial brownfield tax incentive program that matches the province's education tax with municipal property tax to encourage eligible property owners to clean up brownfield properties.

BACKGROUND:

More than 1,700 brownfields sit abandoned on main streets and in neighbourhoods in almost every municipality across Alberta. The cost to remediate brownfields is quite onerous, often costing more than the property's value, resulting in private property owners choosing to leave brownfields vacant/dormant to avoid these costs, leaving brownfields and contaminated

sites a detriment to business development, community growth and aesthetics in many communities.

At a time of economic uncertainty and increased concern about the state of the environment and our economy, brownfield redevelopment provides a business opportunity for Alberta. Municipalities, the province, and the private sector need to collaborate on solutions that promote economic development, protect the environment, and improve Alberta's reputation as a responsible steward of natural resources.

In 2011, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) established a working group to identify required actions to encourage brownfield redevelopment. AUMA participated in this working group along with Municipal Affairs, the Cities of Edmonton and Calgary, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and industry stakeholders such as the Canadian Fuels Association and BILD. The group's final report, which included recommendations relating to financial tools, liability closure and educational programs, was submitted to responsible Ministers in April 2012.

Since the final report, AEP has implemented several recommendations but not all of them. A successful example coming from the report is enabling *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to grant municipalities to offer multi-year property tax exemptions for brownfields. However, the province's education tax portion remains despite that municipal property tax exemption, and municipalities will continue to collect the education tax on behalf of the provincial government.

The provincial government also has not enacted several important recommendations, including, recommendations on providing financial offsets to support local government for environmental site assessment or financial incentive for the private sector to redevelop brownfields.

Financial incentive and support are especially important for smaller rural communities, who do not have the knowledge, engineering expertise and resources to investigate, reclaim and reuse contaminated sites. An example of this is Calmar, a small rural community home to 2,300 people, 100 local businesses and a robust oil and gas industry. There are 13 oil sites defined as legacy sites in Calmar. Many of the recertified sites have certificates from the 1950s-1970s, which according to the Alberta Energy Regulator, these certificates are not valid today.

Calmar has been working with a business looking to relocate to the town. According to the business plan, the company plans to relocate and create upwards of 300 jobs and several of their subsidiary companies to the community. The business is experiencing challenges through this process because the land it is interested in has six legacy oil wellsites. This parcel of land has direct access to highway and rail, and it is suitable for highway commercial and light industrial development.

Many years ago, these six oil wells were abandoned, and the property eventually went into receivership due to tax forfeiture for years. Through exhausting and frustrating two-year-long research, it was discovered that three of six oil sites are in the final remediation phase. The other three have unknown liabilities, and they would require a Phase 1 and 2 Environmental Site Assessment. The estimated cost of both assessments is approximately \$25,000 - \$50,000 per site not including reclamation costs. An amount that many communities cannot afford.

Alberta needs a better system to allow local governments and businesses to discover, investigate, remediate, and redevelop brownfields, and we need the provincial government to be a partner in this. Brownfields are barriers to job creation, local investment, tax revenue generation, sustainability of communities, and entrepreneurs to start new businesses. Today's regulatory system is burdensome, red-tape-ridden, slow and confusing. Streamlining the system is equally important as having financial incentives for local government and businesses to redevelop brownfields. Reclaim brownfields are more than just about protecting our environment. It is also about job creation and viability of our communities.

AUMA Comments:

As noted, this resolution builds on AUMA's previous work and advocacy on brownfield redevelopment, further background can be found on its [Brownfield Redevelopment Hub](#). Should this resolution be adopted, AUMA will pursue implementation of its recommendations within the context of our red tape reduction, economic development and assessment and taxation related initiatives.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B2: Provincial Commitment to Transition to an Extended Producer Responsibility for Household Hazardous Waste Program

Moved by: AUMA Board of Directors

Seconded by: N/A

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program has provided funding to encourage municipalities to separate household hazardous waste from the overall municipal waste stream since 1998;

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) launched a public engagement seeking stakeholder input to enable an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy on packaging and paper products, and HHW;

WHEREAS Alberta Infrastructure (AI) decided to end its financial support to the Swan Hills Treatment Centre effective June 1, 2021, and in doing so it ended 30 years of support for helping properly dispose of HHW materials in Alberta; and

WHEREAS municipalities are concerned that AI's cancellation of financial support is leaving municipalities to make up for an approximately \$2 million shortfall to continue this service at the exact time the province is transitioning to a permanent EPR HHW Program.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA request the Government of Alberta provide bridge funding to support the HHW collection until a permanent EPR household hazardous waste program is in place.

BACKGROUND:

The HHW Program has traditionally been funded by three entities:

- AEP provides funding for two aspects of the program:
 - Approximately \$1.5 million (2016-17¹) for material consolidation from municipalities and transportation to the Swan Hills Treatment Centre (The Centre),
 - Approximately \$480,000 (2016-17) for material disposal at the Centre.
- AI has subsidized (about \$1.5 million in 2016-17) the cost of material disposal at the Centre by waiving the disposal fees.
- Municipalities fund a significant portion of HHW collection and are often a part of material transportation.

On June 1, 2021, AI reduced funding to the Centre. The decision led to layoffs impacting all local communities in the area. Prior to the layoffs, the Centre employed around 100 employees, with the majority living in Swan Hills. AI's decision also affected the province-wide collection of HHW

¹ Available data published by the Government of Alberta: <https://www.alberta.ca/household-hazardous-waste-program.aspx>

materials. The cut has resulted in downloading approximately \$2 million per year to municipalities. Municipalities already contributing are now expected to carry an additional financial burden to transport the materials out of the province. In the past, the HHW created in Alberta was treated properly here and was not directed to local landfills and transfer stations.

The Government of Alberta is sending contradictory policy directions to Albertans. One ministry is creating EPR policies to expand recycling while another is putting up barriers to Albertans wanting to do the right thing by recycling their HHW.

Municipalities support an EPR HHW program, but a program could be a few years away. Local governments are already one of the funding partners of the HHW Program. They need the provincial government to partner to encourage Albertans not to dispose of HHW in their garbage during this transition period and develop a transition plan to ensure an EPR program can be launched as soon as possible.

AUMA Comments:

Should members adopt this resolution, AUMA will advocate for a bridge funding program to support the existing HHW Program within the context of our EPR initiative. For more context on this priority initiative, visit [AUMA's Waste Management Hub](#).

AUMA Resolution 2021.B3: Advocacy on Financial Measures

Moved by: City of Calgary

Seconded by: Town of Okotoks

WHEREAS Alberta's municipalities have long advocated for long-term, stable, predictable and appropriate funding in order to remain financially viable and continue to provide the services and infrastructure needed by our citizens;

WHEREAS the AUMA in 2020 passed a resolution, submitted by the City of Edmonton, advocating for the Government of Alberta to reshape municipal finance for a new time and provide municipalities with reasonable measures and tools, and the responsibility that goes with them, to enable cities, towns, and villages to sustainably meet their operating and capital budget needs;

WHEREAS to support Calgary's economic recovery and financial resiliency, Calgary City Council identified the need for a Financial Task Force with a mandate to identify and assess innovative solutions for short-term economic mitigation, long-term economic recovery, and revenue options to improve the City of Calgary's financial resilience;

WHEREAS several of the Financial Task Force's recommendations are of interest to all of Alberta's municipalities in our on-going advocacy with the Government of Alberta on municipal financial reform;

WHEREAS the Financial Task Force recommended working with the Government of Alberta on municipal financial reform such as:

- Expansion of revenue tools;
- Property tax flexibility;
- Taxation of non-property related activity; and
- Non-residential sub-classes;

WHEREAS without changes to legislation, there is limited opportunity for change in these areas;

WHEREAS research and analysis are needed that documents the extent of the decline in bricks and mortar retail and the current transition to new models of goods and services delivery to demonstrate that municipalities' traditional real estate tax revenues cannot capture the transition to e-commerce transactions;

WHEREAS research and analysis identifying a comprehensive list of services and associated costs redirected to municipalities is required to support AUMA and Alberta municipalities advocacy and dialogue with the Government of Alberta in determining the fiscal tools necessary to allow effective delivery of those services by the municipality; and

WHEREAS incorporating some of the Financial Taskforce recommendations can focus and improve AUMA's ongoing advocacy and work.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association continue to advocate to the Government of Alberta for municipal finance reform, including:

- The expansion of revenue tools to reduce reliance on property taxes as opportunities allow;
- The expansion of property tax flexibility as opportunities allow;
- The expansion of revenue tools to non-property related activities as opportunities allow;
- The development of non-residential property sub-classes that are efficient and easily administered to allow municipalities a tool for targeted financial relief;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT to support our advocacy, the AUMA, in collaboration with Alberta's municipalities, and if possible, the Government of Alberta undertake research studies and/or collect information on:

- The impact of e-commerce and the new models of goods and services delivery on municipal economies and finances; and
- Identifying a comprehensive list of services and associated costs redirected to municipalities.

BACKGROUND:

To support Calgary's economic recovery and financial resiliency, Calgary City Council identified the need for a Financial Task Force (FTF) with the mandate to identify and assess innovative solutions for short-term economic mitigation, long-term economic recovery, and revenue options for The City of Calgary's financial resiliency. The FTF worked for nine months over 2019-2020 and made 35 recommendations, all of which were adopted by Calgary City Council in June 2020.

The City of Calgary sees alignment with AUMA's advocacy on municipal finance reform, a policy that was adopted at the 2020 AUMA Convention, and several of the FTF's recommendations. The proposed resolution directs the AUMA incorporate several of the FTF's recommendations into AUMA municipal finance reform policy to help support our collective municipal advocacy towards the Government of Alberta. The resolution asks that the AUMA to include specific policies such as:

- Expansion of revenue tools – The revenue sources available to municipalities are restricted by provincial legislation and AUMA and Alberta's municipalities have long advocated for the ability to use alternate revenue tools – if municipalities could improve the diversity and reliance on other, non-property tax revenue sources this would help create long-term,

stable, predictable municipal funding and lessen the reliance of municipalities on property tax and the need for sustained property tax increases;

- Property tax flexibility – The ability to differentiate taxation for businesses and organizations that make significant contributions to the character and fabric of a municipality including organizations like Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), non-profit organizations and owner-operated small businesses with limited financial means;
- Taxation of non-property related activity – Our economy is everchanging with the rapidly growing e-commerce activity that is transforming behaviours within society and municipalities need the capacity to adjust and adapt to changing demands and uses on municipal infrastructure and on municipal economies;
- Non-residential sub-classes – Work with the Government of Alberta to expand the tools available for responses when tax circumstances that are unique to certain nonresidential taxpayer groups emerge and provide the capacity for targeted property tax relief because the current sub-class definition makes for a blunt tool for property tax relief; and
- Calls for the AUMA and municipalities to either do further research and analysis and/or collection information to document:
 - The extent of the decline in bricks and mortar retail and the current transition to new models of goods and services delivery to demonstrate that municipalities’ traditional real estate tax revenues cannot capture the transition to e-commerce transactions; and
 - A comprehensive list of services and associated costs redirected to municipalities by the Government of Alberta.

Adding these polices into AUMA’s advocacy on municipal finance reform would help support and focus AUMA’s and Alberta’s municipalities in their on-going advocacy and dialogue with the Government of Alberta. It would assist in helping our collective advocacy for the fiscal tools necessary to allow municipalities to continue to provide effective delivery of services into the future, and help Alberta’s municipalities towards meeting the challenges of a rapidly evolving economy and society.

AUMA Comments:

As noted, this resolution aligns with an existing 2020 resolution and ongoing work of AUMA to advocate to the Government of Alberta for municipalities to have an expanded suite of revenue tools to address the current and future scope of services that municipalities will be responsible for. The continual change in expectations of local public services along with changes in demand for non-residential property, and the downloading of public services by other levels of government, highlight the importance of municipal governments having the appropriate fiscal tools to sustainably serve Alberta communities into the future.

If this resolution is adopted, given the complexity of this issue and its linkages to other AUMA positions, AUMA would approach this issue with a high level of engagement with members to define priority financial tools, measures, and targeted outcomes and then engage the Government of Alberta on members’ recommendations.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B4: Online Voting for Municipal Elections

Moved by: City of Lethbridge

Seconded by: City of St. Albert

WHEREAS online voting, as an option, could be deemed as a convenience by many voters, with the potential to increase voter participation;

WHEREAS the technology now exists to provide secure and auditable online voting processes;

WHEREAS the general population is increasingly embracing the use of technology for a wide variety of uses;

WHEREAS the use of online voting would provide opportunities for efficiencies and lower costs for municipalities by reducing the number of polling stations and associated staffing; and

WHEREAS voters could participate in a barrier-free election process, unimpeded by mobility challenges, parking issues, traffic jams, line-ups to vote, ballot shortages or adverse weather.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association enter into discussions with the Government of Alberta and advocate for the necessary legislative changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* to permit secure online voting.

BACKGROUND:

Online voting has long been considered high risk because internet systems and databases can be hacked. As technology advances and the need for online voting becomes more appealing, exploring online voting for Alberta could increase voter turnout and enable voters who are not living within their riding or close to a polling station to vote. Online voting would allow for military and overseas residents, Indigenous voters, students studying outside of their riding, the elderly and those with disabilities to easily vote. In addition, with the COVID-19 pandemic as a prime example of potential scenarios that prohibit the ability to gather in large groups, those who do not wish to leave their homes and be in a public space would be enabled to vote. This would also be very appealing to the younger generations or those with a busy life-work schedule to vote from the comfort of their computers. The issue of online voting has been discussed extensively around the world and tried in a few jurisdictions in Canada and various other countries. Although the option of online voting is fairly new, we believe there are now companies that have developed safe technologies that would support effective and transparent elections in Alberta.

Advantages of online voting include but are not limited to:

- Convenience and accessibility for all voters. Voters do not need to travel to polling stations within defined periods or line up to register and vote;
- Those with health or mobility restrictions can participate,

- Lower cost of voting than traditional methods;
- Potential to increase voter turnout;
- Decreases the time spent tallying votes when automated electronically;
- Instant absentee ballot; and,
- Avoids issue of a limited number of printed ballots (ballot shortages).

Disadvantages of online voting include but are not limited to:

- Hacks or viruses being used to corrupt the results;
- Potential to open the election process to cyber-terrorism,
- Identity theft or misrepresentation;
- Technical difficulties such as server crashes;
- Difficulty verifying voter identification;
- Internet connectivity in rural areas or limited access to the internet; and,
- Limited understanding of how to online vote or distrust of the system.

We encourage the Alberta government to review and analyze the technology and tech companies that have been working diligently to address cybersecurity concerns for the implementation of the 2025 Alberta election. For example, some companies have developed blockchain as a security mechanism to ward off hackers online and decrease the risk of manual manipulation. Blockchain distributes data to several servers; therefore, if one server is hacked, it will signal the other servers that there has been a change. This significantly enhances the cybersecurity of online voting and protects voter personal information. There are fingerprint and facial recognition options that could be implemented as an additional security feature.

We encourage and advocate for the support of Albertan companies that are developing technologies for online voting. Alberta could be a leading example for other jurisdictions of successful online voting. The ability to access online voting on home computers and mobile devices is now an available option and could be tested over the next four years to make it available for the 2025 Alberta municipal elections. In addition, there would need to be amendments to the *Local Authorities Election Act* to permit online voting. Online voting is currently precluded by Alberta legislation.

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association would need to begin early discussions with the Alberta government to receive verification processes and begin changes to legislation for potential implementation of October 2025.

AUMA Comments:

If this resolution is adopted, AUMA would advocate for online voting within the context of the broader review of the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) which the province typically does after each municipal election.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B5: Expansion of Authority to Support Affordable Housing

Moved by: Town of Okotoks

Seconded by: Town of Canmore

WHEREAS the cost of housing has been consistently increasing across Alberta and Canadian municipalities, and lower income Albertans seem to be disproportionately affected especially with economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS affordable housing for families, seniors and individuals is defined as housing that costs not more than 30% of a household's total annual income, including heat, water and sewer expenses;

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a housing advocacy program which states "housing is the bedrock of livable and prosperous communities. We advocate for action on social and affordable housing, so all Canadians have a decent place to call home. Housing is more than just a roof over your head. Safe, affordable housing makes our cities and communities welcoming places to live, work and start a business. It's also key to retaining workers and attracting newcomers to enrich our neighbourhoods and drive economic growth";

WHEREAS section 264(2) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) prescribes the authorities for all municipalities under which loans may be provided to non-profit organizations for affordable housing initiatives and limits this authority to provides these types of loans; and

WHEREAS the local improvement tax process under Section 390.1-390.9 of the MGA was expanded to create additional authorities to make loans to individual homeowners for the purposes of encouraging environmental improvements under the Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP).

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to make amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* to provide additional financial tools, through expansion of the local improvement tax process, that enable individuals to increase affordable housing options, such as secondary suites and accessory buildings.

BACKGROUND:

In support of providing safe and affordable housing for all residents of Alberta, tools under the MGA need to be expanded to provide homeowners similar local improvement tax options that were provided for the purposes of environmental improvements. The CEIP program was accomplished with amendments to the MGA and the development of a corresponding regulation to provide municipalities with the discretionary authority to cover all or part of the costs for homeowners of environmental improvements. This municipal authority could be expanded to include providing similar financial supports to implement affordable housing initiatives, like secondary suites or accessory buildings. Affordable housing options, especially

for lower income individuals and families, are key for the health and economic development of all municipalities.

Secondary suites (including basement suites, granny suites, and lane housing) can provide additional rental product in a community. Homeowners are often not aware of the opportunity that this type of housing provides in assisting with their mortgage and may be motivated through this type of support or loan program to spend money to do so.

Municipalities are able to create the environment to enable the availability of this type of rental product through regulatory approaches but are not able to “loan” money to residents to introduce this housing into the community. Some municipalities have introduced limited grant programs to legalize existing illegal secondary suites or allow for new suites. This approach also requires cash contributions from the tax base to allow for the construction of these types of housing, rather than being directly costed to the homeowner.

The proposed program would work in a similar fashion to the CEIP where property owners could finance suites using competitive interest rates and repayment terms of up to 20-25 years and have the option to pay the project off at any time. Repayment would be made through their regular property tax bill. The Town of Okotoks is not aware of any other province that currently has this type of program to encourage affordable housing options.

AUMA Comments:

Municipal Affairs will be completing its red tape reduction review of Parts 9 and 10 of the MGA on Assessment and Taxation in 2022. Should this resolution be adopted, AUMA will include the proposal in this resolution as part of its input during the stakeholder engagement process.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B6: Police Funding Model Accountability & Transparency

Moved by: Village of Stirling

Seconded by: Town of Magrath

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta began issuing annual invoices in March 2021 to municipalities for the purposes of collecting the municipal cost share under the new Police Funding Model Regulation;

WHEREAS the Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2021-2024 Business Plan (February 2021) notes that Key Objective 2.2 is to “encourage municipal accountability and transparency”;

WHEREAS key Objective 2.3 of the Municipal Affairs Business Plan clearly delineates the role of the Ministry to “oversee the property tax and assessment system”;

WHEREAS the requisition by the province under the Police Funding Model Regulation is neither transparent or accountable to individual property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS a [request for decision](#) sponsored by the Town of Forestburg was adopted at the Spring 2021 Municipal Leaders’ Caucus that proposes AUMA lobby the provincial government to make the necessary amendment to section 382(1) of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* to allow municipalities the ability to pass a special tax bylaw to raise revenues for police service costs should they deem it appropriate to do so.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA also advocate for the Government of Alberta to treat the Police Funding Model requisition to municipalities like the education and housing authority requisitions by mandating their inclusion on assessment and tax notices provided to property owners.

BACKGROUND:

A minor legislative change to the definition of “requisition” in section s. 326(1)(a) of the MGA would permit municipalities to clearly communicate the costs associated with policing to residents. Unlike other municipal expenses, the cost share portion of the Police Funding Model is outside of the municipality’s control.

The Police Funding Model is in effect an external requisition that does not take into account other related expenses like shared regional peace officer programs, and it is important to ensure transparency of policing costs being imposed on municipalities.

The Police Funding Model also will not result in additional front-line resources being deployed to many communities. Adding a line for the Police Funding Model requisition to the tax assessment notice would ensure a clear line of sight for residents on this additional cost.

It is unclear if the Government of Alberta will act on the recommendation from the Spring 2021 Municipal Leaders' Caucus request enabling the mechanism for a special tax bylaw and even if approved, some communities may choose not to adopt such a bylaw but may wish to be able to directly communicate the impact of the Police Funding Model to local rate payers.

AUMA Comments:

Municipal Affairs will conduct a red tape reduction review of Parts 9 and 10 of the MGA on Assessment and Taxation in 2022. Should the resolution be adopted, AUMA will include the proposal in this resolution as part of its input during the stakeholder engagement process.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B7: Regional Centre Funding

Moved by: City of Grande Prairie

Seconded by: City of Lethbridge

WHEREAS some municipalities serve as regional service centre hubs for commerce, recreation, health care, social services, and provincial amenities;

WHEREAS there are unique challenges that are disproportionately faced by regional centres;

WHEREAS these unique challenges result in a disproportionate tax burden being placed on residents of these communities; and

WHEREAS the Alberta government's 50% reduction in GIPOT funding disproportionately impacts regional centres which typically have more provincial facilities such as court houses, hospitals, schools, etc.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate for a dedicated funding stream for municipalities who serve as regional service centres.

BACKGROUND:

Some municipalities in the Province serve as regional centres where a variety of services are located. As a regional service centre, a municipality has increased costs due to the variety of municipal services it must provide while not receiving offsetting revenue for these costs.

For example, regional service centres are typically where community halls, churches, non-profits, and social housing projects are located. None of these facilities generate property tax, yet the municipality still has to provide snow removal, fire services, storm drainage, etc. to these properties.

These services are also provided to provincial properties such as court houses and health facilities. While some funding for these services are provided by the Province through GIPOT, in recent years this funding has been cut by 50%.

Additionally, regional service centres attract a greater number of street engaged and at-risk individuals. This increases the demand for the social services provided by these municipalities. While the Province does support many of the direct costs of providing services to this population, there are many indirect costs that are borne by the municipalities such as increased policing/enforcement costs and funding to non-profits operating in the sector.

Having a dedicated funding stream for regional centres would address the disproportionate burden that is placed on their taxpayers.

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this specific issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Municipal Governance Committee within the context of other priorities and positions related to funding and intermunicipal collaboration.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B8: National Flood Insurance Strategy and Community Resiliency Advocacy

Moved by: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Seconded by: Lac La Biche County

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has created a National Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation, including representation from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments and the insurance industry;

WHEREAS the Task Force will look at options to protect homeowners who are at high risk of flooding and do not have adequate insurance protection and examine the viability of a low-cost national flood insurance program, among other goals;

WHEREAS at the same time, Indigenous Services Canada will work with First Nations partners on a dedicated Steering Committee on First Nations Home Flood Insurance Needs to examine the unique context on reserves;

WHEREAS flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster in Canada, causing over \$1B in direct damage to residential property and impacting thousands of Canadians every year; and

WHEREAS according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, only 39 percent of residential property owners had access in 2019 to overland flood insurance with these property owners in high-risk flood areas being increasingly unable to access flood insurance, affordable or otherwise.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to participate in and contribute to the work of the National Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation, with the goal of developing a national high-risk residential flood insurance program and to secure sustainable, long-term funding for provinces, Indigenous communities and municipalities for flood mitigation programs, projects and initiatives that increase overall community resiliency.

BACKGROUND:

Government of Canada Creates Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation From: Public Safety Canada news release (November 23, 2020)

“The cost of climate change is undeniable. Flooding continues to be the most frequent and costly natural disaster in Canada. Water damage goes beyond the destruction of property; it also places an emotional toll on individuals as their homes are destroyed and families are displaced. Each year, too many Canadians, including Indigenous communities, are exposed to the worst effects of climate change. To help people get ready for climate risks and realities, the Government of Canada is taking action to create a more resilient and sustainable approach to

floods in Canada.

Today, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Honourable Bill Blair, and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, announced the creation of an interdisciplinary Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation. As a first step in creating a National High Risk Residential Flood Insurance Program, the Task Force will look at options to protect homeowners who are at high risk of flooding and don't have adequate insurance protection and examine the viability of a low-cost national flood insurance program. The Task Force will also consider options for potential relocation for residents of areas at the highest risk of recurrent flooding.

The Task Force will be composed of representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments and the insurance industry. At the same time, Indigenous Services Canada will work with First Nations partners on a dedicated Steering Committee on First Nations Home Flood Insurance Needs to examine the unique context on reserves.

The Government of Canada is also committed to ensuring that broad Indigenous perspectives are included in flood risk management in Canada. The Task Force and Steering Committee will share information with one another, and work closely together to engage with various partners, including with First Nations off-reserve, Inuit, and Métis communities and organizations. Both entities will begin their work by January 2021 and will report on their findings by Spring 2022.

We will continue to help people whose jobs and livelihoods are affected when disasters strike and help people and communities deal with the realities of increased climate related risks and disasters and ultimately, increase the country's resiliency to natural disasters. To further support communities in effectively managing, mitigating, preparing, and responding to all sorts of hazardous events, including flooding, Public Safety Canada will also be undertaking a review of the Disaster Financial Assistance arrangements, in order to assess and improve the sustainability of this program.

Further, as committed in the July 2020 Economic Update, the National Disaster Mitigation Program will be extended through to 2022, to cost-share flood mitigation projects with provinces and territories. A call for proposals will soon be launched to continue this important work."

Quick Facts:

Flooding is the most common and costly occurring natural hazard in Canada, causing over \$1 billion in direct damage to households, property and infrastructure and affecting thousands of Canadians each year.

As announced in the Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada is investing in reducing the impact of climate-related disasters, like floods and wildfires, to make communities safer and more resilient.

The Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation is tasked with examining a national residential flood insurance program for homeowners living in areas of high-risk flooding and measures for a national action plan to assist high-risk homeowners with potential relocation to safer areas.

In the event of a large-scale natural disaster, the Government of Canada provides financial assistance for recovery to provincial and territorial governments through Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA). In order to assess the sustainability of the DFAA, Public Safety Canada is undertaking a review of its terms and conditions.

According to an estimate by the Insurance Bureau of Canada, approximately 39 per cent of homeowners had access in 2019 to overland flood insurance. While the availability of flood insurance in Canada has grown since the insurance industry introduced it in 2015, it is mostly homes in low and medium risk areas that have been insured against flood damages. Homeowners in high-risk flood areas cannot access flood insurance because the high costs make it challenging for the industry to offer insurance at an affordable rate for homeowners.

According to Canadian Voices on Flood Risk 2020, a report by Partners for Action, only 6% of respondents knew that they live in a designated flood risk area.

AUMA Comments:

This resolution aligns with previous AUMA advocacy on flood mitigation. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Infrastructure and Energy Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B9: Improved Provincial-Municipal Emergency Collaboration and Communications

Moved by: The City of Calgary

Seconded by: Town of Okotoks

WHEREAS Alberta and its municipalities have been recognized nationally and internationally in the past for their collaborative, inter-governmental and inter-agency approach to emergency response;

WHEREAS Alberta's traditional emergency management processes involve the Government of Alberta (through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)) providing support in a collaborative and timely manner to Alberta's municipalities who play an essential leadership role within their jurisdiction in responding to the emergency event occurring in their community;

WHEREAS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a lack of proactive communication and meaningful engagement and collaboration from the Government of Alberta towards Alberta's municipalities, and this has resulted in negative outcomes for municipalities and their citizens;

WHEREAS during the COVID-19 pandemic there has been very little opportunity for Alberta's municipalities to provide advanced input on public health measures or decisions, even though these have significant consequences at the local level and local advice, in many cases, could have improved the effectiveness of provincial measures;

WHEREAS during the COVID-19 pandemic, Alberta's municipalities rarely received formal advance notice of the details and timing of public health measures before they were announced and had to find out details of measures through press conferences at the same time as the public;

WHEREAS official Public Health Orders and Ministerial Orders were typically not published until often several days after the restrictions were implemented; and

WHEREAS this lack of collaboration has been the source of major challenges for implementation of public health measures for municipal services, communications and public engagement, and enforcement of public health measures by local enforcement agencies. The result has been confusion, reputational impacts, financial loss, and impacts to service delivery.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Government of Alberta to:

- Work collaboratively with municipalities and their emergency management organizations on conducting a comprehensive lessons-learned review of the COVID-19 pandemic response and incorporate those lessons in an improved Provincial emergency response and communications plan;
- Commit that going forward Alberta’s municipalities and their emergency management organizations will be treated as trusted and valued partners in Provincial emergency response; and
- Establish an advisory group of municipal emergency management organizations and other key stakeholders to better advise and support the Government of Alberta’s decision making and emergency order drafting and to improve emergency communications, coordination and collaboration.

BACKGROUND:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a lack of proactive communication and meaningful engagement from the Government of Alberta towards Alberta municipalities and their emergency management organizations. This has resulted in negative outcomes for Albertans.

Alberta’s municipalities and their emergency management agencies have positive working relationships with their operational counterparts within the Government of Alberta, however, the decision-making process that was adopted by the Government of Alberta for the pandemic limited the ability of both orders of government to effectively collaborate. In traditional emergency management processes, local authorities play a leadership role within their jurisdiction and are provided support by the Government of Alberta (through the AEMA) in a collaborative manner through a well-established framework. During the pandemic, there has been very little opportunity for municipalities to provide advance input on public health measures, Ministerial Orders and provincial decisions even though these have had significant consequences at the local level and Alberta’s municipalities are required to implement and enforce them.

There have been several occasions over the past 15 months where if municipalities had been given either the opportunity to provide input into the drafting of orders, or advance notice of their issuing, confusion would have been prevented and the efficiency of implementation of orders improved.

Alberta’s municipalities recognize the Government of Alberta’s mandate to lead on public health issues and pandemic response, and that protracted engagement with every municipality in Alberta would be a challenge. Despite this challenge, communication flow and coordination needs to be improved for future emergency events.

The pandemic response did not just include issues requiring the timely communication between different orders of government, the drafting and execution of public health orders, and public communications. The wider pandemic response also included supports and financial aid for individuals, businesses and municipalities to meet immediate short-term challenges and

support long-term post-pandemic recovery. During the pandemic, both location-specific and province-wide orders and measures were enacted (in urban, rural, and Indigenous settings) and their utility and effectiveness must be understood to improve future responses in similar emergency situations.

The wider pandemic response also required Alberta's municipalities to make difficult decisions regarding their own local pandemic response. Municipal councils and administrations had to determine, under difficult financial and health circumstances, which services should be prioritized and at what level of service (i.e. continued or reduced). During the pandemic, municipal governments worked hard to find innovative solutions to support the welfare and safety of their citizens and businesses while advocating to the Government of Alberta for financial support and stimulus investments.

As the pandemic ends, it is important for organizations to review their emergency response, to proactively conduct a lessons learned review to identify issues and deficiencies and look towards improving their plans and best practices, in order to be better prepared when a similar emergency occurs in the future. In the municipal emergency management context this includes, but is not exclusive to, reviewing issues of emergency response, the drafting and issuing of health orders, improved communication between orders of government, business supports, clarification of essential services, review of financial aid programs, value of municipal stimulus program, consideration of multiple scales of response and recovery (urban, rural, Indigenous) and review of vaccination and mass casualty planning.

This resolution is proposing to AUMA members that the Government of Alberta and Alberta's municipalities conduct a comprehensive review of the pandemic response together to find solutions to these issues, improve provincial-municipal cooperation and collaboration, and improve emergency communications and coordination going forward into any similar emergency event. A permanent advisory group is needed, made up of members from Alberta's emergency management organizations and other key municipal stakeholders, which could provide a resource to aid the Government of Alberta's decision making and improve municipal-provincial collaboration, coordination and communications.

AUMA Comments:

This resolution aligns with previous AUMA advocacy on emergency management. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Infrastructure and Energy Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B10: Provincial Broadband Strategy

Moved by: AUMA Board of Directors

Seconded by: N/A

WHEREAS the digital divide is increasingly limiting access to economic, health, social, and educational opportunities across Alberta;

WHEREAS the availability of high-speed, reliable internet is key to attracting business and residents and this has an impact on economic development and viability of municipalities;

WHEREAS there exists provincially a piecemeal approach with municipalities, non-profits and private sector individually trying to solve this issue with a lack of resources and coordination, and limited opportunities to share lessons learned; and

WHEREAS development of a broadband strategy has been listed as a provincial business plan initiative since 2019.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT AUMA advocate for the Government of Alberta to immediately engage municipalities and other stakeholders in developing a provincial broadband strategy with measurable goals, concrete actions and a dedicated budget that recognizes broadband as an essential utility.

BACKGROUND:

Broadband is an essential service that provides communities access to education, healthcare, government, and the marketplace. In the 20th century, provincial governments directly invested in expanding access to telephone. A similar effort is required to bridge the digital divide in the 21st century.

The federal government aims to have 98 per cent of Canadian households connected with 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download speeds and 10 Mbps upload speeds (commonly referred to as the 50/10 threshold). According to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), only 45.6% of small towns, villages and other areas defined as rural in Canada can access these speeds¹. Yet even this low number is likely overinflated as the current method of capturing Broadband access is based on one connection in an area meeting the 50/10 threshold.

The federal government provides funding through programs like the Universal Broadband Fund to attempt to address this divide, however the fund is \$1.75 billion Canada-wide, of which Alberta expects around \$200 million. Service Alberta estimates it would cost \$1 billion to connect all Albertans to the target internet speed.² Municipalities are also limited in applying for

¹ <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internet.htm>

² From: [Alberta broadband strategy unclear despite push from province, feds for connectivity, www.cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/alberta-broadband-strategy-unclear-despite-push-from-province-feds-for-connectivity-1.5988888), March 30, 2021

this funding because the maps that determine eligibility are often inaccurate due to the issues mentioned above.

Even newer technology, such as 5G may have limited success at narrowing the digital divide, if it is deployed using existing infrastructure which leaves gaps in both cellular and internet coverage. While other technologies, such as satellite, are currently cost prohibitive for many users.

Municipalities can be stymied when they try to drive their own solutions for broadband. Telecommunications companies require significant financial contributions to upgrade infrastructure ahead of their internal schedules. Some municipalities look to establish their own community Internet Service Provider (ISP). However, municipalities often lack the capacity to source infrastructure and gather the information to build a business case. In addition, there is a great deal of risk associated with municipal investments in broadband, including that local infrastructure will be taken advantage of by ISP providers without adequate compensation.

There are successful examples of community broadband in Alberta. Communities like Olds, Delburne, and Kainai (Blood) First Nation have managed to develop successful ISPs, and a provincial broadband strategy would help municipalities to emulate these successes. A strategy is needed from the provincial government to provide coordination among municipalities, non-profits and telecommunications companies to support broadband access across the province for the benefit of all communities. A strategy will also provide the data needed to confirm the essential nature of broadband in Alberta. A provincial strategy would provide utility to municipalities that are wanting to pursue a broadband project by establishing resources for financial analysis, mapping of existing infrastructure, and metrics for developing business cases.

In 2015, AUMA members passed a resolution co-sponsored by 14 towns and villages emphasizing the importance of affordable internet access and advocating for the province to advocate for a broadband policy. In 2016, the City of St. Albert sponsored requesting the province include municipalities as key stakeholders in the development of broadband programs and provide funding for municipalities to increase access to high-speed internet. Municipalities small and large from across Alberta continue to emphasize the essential nature of broadband infrastructure in supporting the economic and social wellbeing of communities.

Since 2019, the Government of Alberta's business plans have indicated that Service Alberta will develop a broadband framework or strategy, but to date there has been no concrete engagement of municipalities or other stakeholders in its development.

It is essential that the strategy be completed in advance of the next provincial election so that progress can be made to measurably improving broadband access without further delays.

Business Plan Excerpts:

- [Service Alberta Business Plan 2021-24](#)
The ministry is committed to building a framework to support widespread access to high-speed broadband across the province to ensure that all Albertans can take advantage of online services and remote learning. Making connectivity a foundational part of the province will encourage investment, job creation and economic diversification.
- [Service Alberta Business Plan 2020-23](#)
Improve connectivity services to public sector facilities, and collaborate with business and partners to develop a framework to support widespread access to high-speed broadband.
- [Service Alberta Business Plan 2019-2022](#)
Develop a strategy to support widespread access to high-speed broadband and realize the opportunities for innovation and efficiency inherent in digital service delivery

AUMA Comments:

Advocating for increased access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet is a high priority for AUMA and closely related to our work on municipal viability as well as economic recovery and resiliency.

AUMA Resolution 2021.B11: Mental Health and Wellness for Public Safety Personnel

Moved by: City of Fort Saskatchewan

Seconded by: Wetaskiwin

WHEREAS public safety personnel are defined as those professionals who work in a field that, due to the nature of their operational duties to protect the safety of others, are necessarily exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events with exceptional frequency (*Carleton et al., 2019*);

WHEREAS public safety personnel appear to be at an increased risk for developing a psychological injury due to their nature of their work (*Carleton et al., 2019, 2020*) and 44.5% meet the criteria for one or more mental disorders (*Carleton, 2018a*);

WHEREAS posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a potentially disabling condition that is now a widely recognized public health issue, particularly among public safety personnel. A recent study conducted by Carleton et al. (2018) investigated the proportion of Canadian public safety personnel reporting symptom clusters consistent with various mental disorders. The results indicated that 23.2% of the total sample screened positive for PTSD (in contrast, estimates of the prevalence of PTSD among the general population range from 1.1 to 3.5%);

WHEREAS public safety personnel report suicidal behaviours at rates up to three times the rates for the general population (*Carleton, 2018b*);

WHEREAS significant stigmas associated with mental health remain, despite relatively recent improvements (Krakauer et al., 2020; McCall et al., in press; Ricciardelli et al., 2020). Public safety personnel require resources that are confidential and career specific; policies and procedures that normalize mental health disorder as a job hazard, not a personal failure; effective education to increase awareness and buy-in (beginning with leadership); social support from peers and leaders; and integrative return-to-work policies; and

WHEREAS Municipalities are the employers of public safety personnel and derive community safety benefits from an engaged mentally healthy and resilient workforce, which requires coordinated evidence-based solutions to support the best interests of these jurisdictions.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta work cooperatively with public safety personnel organizations and allied stakeholders to research, develop and implement evidence-based solutions to address mental health and wellness of public safety personnel in the Province of Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

***They run in when everyone else runs out.**

Public safety personnel are people who respond to the scenes of emergencies, and include police, firefighters, and paramedics, among other emergency personnel. Public safety personnel work by definition involves frequent exposures to potentially psychologically traumatic events, such as witnessing deaths and injuries, including the deaths or major injuries of children and mass casualty events; as such, the number of exposures public safety persons can have in one week may be more than what members of the general public experience in a lifetime! Public safety personnel report having varied responses to the events depending on numerous dynamic factors, Public safety personnel have typically worked in a “suck it up” culture – for themselves and for others – often facing problematic and punitive comments for the public, such as “you knew what you signed up for”. Thus, various types of stress reactions, including posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, can gradually and progressively build up over time. Increasing exposures can result in *cumulative trauma*. The stigma associated with being a “helper” who then asks for help has been and remains unacceptably prevalent in public safety personnel organizations, and can be a significant barrier to seeking much needed help.

Other factors can impact the mental health of public safety personnel, including shift work, disruptions to family and social lives, and perceived levels of organizational support.

Public safety personnel have often continued to work for a long time after becoming injured, despite reduced ability to cope and continued subsequent exposures to potentially psychologically traumatic events. Eventually, public safety personnel may reach a “breaking point”, even after what may appear to be a relatively common place exposure, as a result of the cumulative stressors. A comparison can be made to injuring one’s ankle. If one continues to walk on the ankle without allowing time for healing, the ankle may become increasingly vulnerable to re-injury.

Historically, public safety personnel have, at times, experienced difficulty having the cumulative impact of exposures and stress be recognized by employers and worker’s compensation boards. Some have even had compensation claims denied due to difficulty identifying a singular work-related event that could be considered “uncommon enough” relative to their other work experiences to “explain” or “justify” a mental health diagnosis, such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

In a 2016 study, the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) found that 75% of public safety organizations who reported having a mental health program in place failed to meet the basic standards of the program’s model (Authors, 2016). Another study warned against such variations from a model’s validated protocols with the potential of such unfounded variations causing iatrogenic harm (Fikretoglu et al., 2019). In another 2019 study, CIPSRT found that most programs overlook the type of help public safety personnel are most willing to access (Carleton et al., 2019b). Thus, with the current research, we have never been more informed to improve the mental health and wellness programming we provide to our public safety personnel - those persons whose every workday is responding to the worst days of the public’s lives.

*Canadian Mental Health Association

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this specific issue, but the topic generally aligns with AUMA advocacy on the need for enhanced mental health supports. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

SOURCES:

Authors et al., (2016). Peer Support and Crisis-Focused Psychological Intervention Programs in Canadian First Responders: Blue Paper. University of Regina. Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment.

Bikos, L.J. (2020) "It's all window dressing:" Canadian police officers' perceptions of mental health stigma in their workplace. Policing: An International Journal, 44(1), 63-76. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-07-2020-0126>

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Krakauer, R. L. et al. (2020). Examining mental health knowledge, stigma, and service use intentions among public safety personnel. Front Psychol, 11, 949. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00949>

McCall, H. C. et al. (in press). Stakeholder perspectives on Internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy for public safety personnel: A qualitative analysis. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science. doi: 10.1037/cbs0000242

Ricciardelli, R. et al. (2020). "Playing the system": Structural factors potentiating mental health stigma, challenging awareness, and creating barriers to care for Canadian public safety personnel. Health, 24(3), 259-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459318800167>

Summary prepared by E. Kossick Reviewed & edited by B. Barootes and Bikos, L.J

AUMA Resolution 2021.B12: Alberta Health Services Emergency Ambulance Dispatch – Independent Review

Moved by: The City of Red Deer

Seconded by: Town of McGrath

WHEREAS on January 12, 2021, emergency ambulance dispatch was fully consolidated into the Alberta Health Services (AHS) provincial dispatch system. This removed it from the four integrated satellite centers, which were used to assist in providing this vital health service. Since the move to a total provincial dispatch system, there have been several cases of increased response times and technical errors, which put Albertans' lives at risk¹;

WHEREAS the Alberta integrated satellite centres dispatch approach is proven to be an effective system in delivering prompt, efficient, and accurate emergency dispatch to the residents of Alberta;

WHEREAS past centralizations have degraded emergency response, but as this is the final consolidation, the real consequences have yet to be fully experienced by Albertans; and

WHEREAS many municipalities have experienced numerous errors and delays that affected emergency response times, these errors would not have occurred under the integrated satellite model. It is clear that AHS alone cannot meet the emergency dispatch demands for Alberta, thus putting lives at risk.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate to the Government of Alberta and the Minister of Health to undertake an independent third-party review of the AHS emergency ambulance dispatch system and to investigate the increase in response times and the technical outages that have occurred since January 12, 2021.

BACKGROUND:

AHS Emergency Ambulance Dispatch is an issue that impacts all municipalities across the province. Red Deer, Lethbridge, Calgary and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo have been at the forefront in attempting to convince the Government of Alberta to reverse its decision to fully centralized ambulance emergency dispatch services.

The AUMA issued a statement on this matter back in August 2020. Key issues that were raised included that more information about the impact of consolidation on response times was required and that municipalities are totally frustrated regarding the lack of consultation on the

¹ <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/i-was-completely-shocked-dispatch-nightmare-operator-hangs-up-as-parents-call-to-save-dying-southern-alberta-teen-1.5409960>

matter. This new resolution speaks directly to the performance issues that AHS is experiencing with the centralized service model, and that an independent review of performance measures is required.

AHS officials have stated that dispatch centralization will not result in a degradation of service. This commitment was also made in previous consolidations, but to date 39 Alberta communities have gone on record that their communities experienced a degradation of service, both in timing and coordination of emergency dispatch, and in the number of ambulances available in their communities. In the words of a fellow Alberta Mayor whose community dispatch was consolidated into the provincial system in 2014, "We should have fought with you harder in 2013". In other words, had they known what was going to happen, instead of believing the appeasing assurances that emergency ambulance service would not degrade for their community, they would have done more to stop it.

Past centralizations have degraded emergency response, but as this is the final consolidation, the real consequences, intended and unintended, have yet to be fully experienced by Albertans. May we learn from other provinces' life and death experiences, instead of being forced to learn through the consequences that are on the horizon for Albertans.

This is an important municipal issue. It speaks to the safety and wellbeing of our residents, and the fact that municipalities were providing this dispatch service at a much higher standard before it was centralized.

Further background on the benefits of an integrated dispatch approach:

- Integrated dispatch services allow fire, EMS, and for Lethbridge and Calgary (and in the future for Red Deer), police communications operators to be in the same room.
- When a dispatcher learns a critical piece of information, the other dispatcher is immediately made aware through verbal communication within the room.
- When fire and EMS communicate in the same room, they provide for a faster response.
- Integrated dispatch services allow emergency response units to leave the station earlier in critical situations where seconds matter, or as often occurs, in advance of an ambulance.
- Integrated approach in emergency services means that individuals are cross-trained in both firefighting and emergency medical services response, providing a seamless response to any emergency by any and every member. Integration between fire and ambulance is critical for patient outcomes.
- Municipal dispatch staff are cross-trained 911 call takers, and both fire and medical dispatchers.
- The cross-training provides the most efficient and effective services to patients in need. This is imperative for patient outcomes.
- Integrated service allows fire units to be dispatched simultaneously as ambulances.

AUMA Comments:

This resolution aligns with previous AUMA advocacy on emergency medical services and response times. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

2021 Resolutions

Category C – Other issues of potential
interest to Alberta Municipalities

AUMA Resolution 2021.C1: Advocacy for a National Early Learning and Care Program

Moved by: City of Lethbridge

Seconded by: City of Spruce Grove

WHEREAS a well-designed, National Early Learning and Care Program, that is affordable, high-quality, inclusive, and accessible, will support families economically and support more women in joining and staying in the workforce; and

WHEREAS the COVID pandemic has shown how communities and families are negatively impacted when early learning and care is not accessible, inclusive or affordable and should make us strive to fix this problem on behalf of parents, families and communities.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate to the Provincial Government for a National Early Learning and Care Program that will be high-quality, inclusive, affordable and accessible, developed with significant long-term sustained funding and which will create a Canada-wide early-learning and child-care system.

BACKGROUND:

Families and children across Canada have been impacted by insufficient childcare and learning during these uncertain times. This is further compounding poverty impacts, wage gaps and employment implications. While these concerns are being particularly felt during the pandemic, they will not disappear in the years ahead. It is vital for all orders of government to advocate on behalf of our residents for the programs that will best support families, our communities and our country. Provincial support and allocation of the funds from the federal "*A Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan*" starts with the fundamental idea that early learning and care programs are essential for families and municipalities at large. Communities and residents across Alberta and Canada will benefit both economically and socially because of such a program.

Economically there are many reasons to support such a program. According to the Alberta Child Services Annual Report 2020-2021, there are 143,469 licensed and approved childcare cases for a total Albertan population of 4,444,277. The provincial government is incrementally increasing these spaces, however availability and affordability continue to be an issue for Alberta. First, without such a program, employers in Alberta and Canada could face low productivity due to parents missing work. There are also the lost wages to parents and sometimes a complete inability for parents to join the workforce. This results in a loss of income tax to governments, and from a municipal perspective could impact the ability of the low income to pay their property taxes. A parent should not be forced to choose between employment and childcare; employed parents contribute to the economy and early-educated children contribute to the future success of our economy. Second, local businesses cannot

recover without workers and some workers cannot return to work because they cannot afford childcare. The local restaurants rely heavily on these individuals and were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring all have access to affordable childcare will help boost the productivity of the local economy. If families are supported by such a program, they will have more disposable income which can be used to support local businesses, to save for the future, to create educational opportunities for the parents and their children. Third, childcare is a municipal issue because every city, town, village, or rural area has different needs. A “one-size-fits-all” approach without advocacy and consultation with municipalities may result in the exclusion of key economic contributors such as Indigenous workers, shift workers, and rural/agriculture workers, all of whom are increasingly important for today’s economy and arguably are now supporting Alberta’s economy as the energy industry economic influence is strained. We also believe that pandemic times have demonstrated childcare is necessary for essential workers (the leading cohort of the Lethbridge economy) to continue effectively working as we navigate battling COVID-19 and maintaining access to all other healthcare. Finally, in Alberta, the average daily fee for centre-based child care businesses is higher than the national average:

	Alberta 2021				Canada 2021			
<i>Child care businesses by type</i>	Less than 18 months old children enrolled	18 months to less than 36 months old children enrolled	3 years to less than 5 years old children enrolled	5 years and older children enrolled	Less than 18 months old children enrolled	18 months to less than 36 months old children enrolled	3 years to less than 5 years old children enrolled	5 years and older children enrolled
	<i>Dollars</i>				<i>Dollars</i>			
Centre-based child care businesses	50.0A	46.0A	41.0B	33.0B	46.0A	41.0A	37.0A	29.0A
Licensed home-based child care businesses	33.0D	35.0B	37.0B	27.0D	37.0A	34.0A	33.0A	28.0B
Unlicensed home-based child care businesses	35.0C	35.0B	36.0B	27.0C	37.0A	38.0A	36.0A	30.0B

Statistics Canada. Table 42-10-0019-01 Average daily fee per child by child care business type and age group, January 2020 and January 2021

From a social perspective, such a program will support families during these uncertain times and into the future and will help with poverty reduction. For example: according to Statistic Canada, in 2015, 14% of Lethbridge households were low-income, compared to 11% in Alberta and other cities of the same size (Grande Prairie and Red Deer). These rates were higher for single persons (27%), lone parents (26%), new immigrants (18%), Indigenous people (27%), and children (16%). Although childcare is provincially legislated jurisdiction, every municipality, including our own, has specific early learning and childcare needs. Ensuring high-quality, affordable programs would help us combat financial and social inequality. The

early years of a child's life are instrumental in their development. Children who attend high-quality early learning and care programs are more likely to succeed in future educational endeavours, attain employment, and develop the social and emotional skills required to help them be successful. Additionally, obtaining childcare for low-income earners is now not only a considerable burden to residents in Alberta but also a crisis to those who simply cannot afford childcare or do not have alternate options while navigating the current economic crisis. At a municipal level, this is a community development issue as much as it is a family issue; childcare contributes to community development plans. For example, a municipality would consider including childcare businesses in community plans; the same a municipality would consider location and need for schools. Communities largely impacted by low income, shift workers, etc., would be considered for specific childcare centres to support the families and economy as required.

A national program such as this is supported by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as they realize that a lack of good childcare is holding back entrepreneurs and without childcare, businesses cannot be opened, which is holding back the economy and the economic recovery that our province and country are needing. A National Early Learning and Care Program that is high-quality, inclusive, affordable, and accessible, created with long-term, sustained funding, will provide solutions to many economic and social issues we face locally and nationally and is a fundamental next step to permanently pivoting our economy today and for generations to come.

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

AUMA Resolution 2021.C2: Elder Care Model

Moved by: Town of Strathmore

Seconded by: Town of Okotoks

WHEREAS it is the role of the government to provide for the safety, health, and welfare of people;

WHEREAS in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic the Government of Alberta has identified a growing crisis to maintain an acceptable level of care for our aging population;

WHEREAS changing demographics in the population growth of Alberta Seniors significantly influence the demand for and provision of aged care;

WHEREAS people seeking aged care should have the right to equitable access to services, the right to exercise choice between available services, the right to freedom from degrading treatment, or any form of abuse, the right to liberty, the right of autonomy and the right to make decisions about their care, the right to fair and non-discriminatory treatment and the right to offer opinions and make complaints; and

WHEREAS seniors in Alberta are demanding enhanced choices in the care and services they received.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association encourage the Government of Alberta to create and develop an elder care model in our Province that will offer client directed services focused on standards of care.

BACKGROUND:

Demographics

- In 2046, Alberta's population is expected to:
 - Reach over 6.3 million people, an increase of roughly 2.0 million people from 2019, and
 - Become older, with an average age of 41.5 years, up from 38.3 years in 2019.
- Albertans are expected to live longer on average, a girl born in Alberta in 2019 could expect to live to 83.6 years of age, while a boy could reach 79.0 years. Under the medium growth scenario, life expectancy at birth for females is projected to rise to 87.0 years by 2046, while for males it is expected to reach 83.7 years.
- In 2019, people aged 65 and older represented about 13% of the population. Under the medium growth scenario one in five, or 20%, is expected to be 65 years or older by 2046. The number of seniors is expected to exceed 1.2 million by 2046

[Alberta Population Projections - Alberta and Census Divisions, 2020-2046 \(August 28, 2020\)](#)

Health Issues/Pandemics and the Impact on Age Care

“The coronavirus pandemic, which particularly affects seniors, could prove to be a great opportunity to rethink the relationship our societies have with them”, notes Martine Lagacé, a professor in the Department of Communication of the Faculty of Arts. “If, as a society, we learn the lessons from this health and social crisis, this pandemic could act as a trigger for developing public policies that further the social inclusion of seniors and fight ageism,” says Lagacé, who specializes in social gerontology.

The large numbers of seniors who died in age care facilities during this COVID crisis has served to highlight issues for aged care in Alberta. The reported figures have inadvertently stigmatized Seniors who were already associated with fragility, end of life and other vulnerabilities. What value do we place on Seniors in our society? The hashtag, “Boomer-remover” widely utilized on social media to highlight the horrific rates of mortality among Seniors, is an example of ageism that we need to address overtly and systemically.

The evidence-based research regarding the isolation of Seniors has emphasized the extraordinary hardship experienced by Seniors during forced lockdowns; measures that were broadly applied because buildings were not sufficiently equipped for sectional isolation. New measures are needed to address the social, mental/emotional, financial, and technological inequities that have impacted Alberta’s Seniors.

[The impact of COVID-19 on seniors: Lessons to be learned | Research | University of Ottawa \(uottawa.ca\)](#)

Standards of Care

Under a Ministry responsible for Seniors, specific responsibilities for the important functions should be assigned to a Senior’s Advocate or Commissioner whose duty would be to oversee and ensure:

- quality, safety, and prudential regulation
- system management functions and funding administration
- ensuring that appropriate aged care services are widely available for BIPOC populations
- planning and development of the aged care workforce
- investigation and resolution of complaints

Systemic problems are serious and recurrent issues that stem from problems inherent in the design and operation of the aged care system. They may be funding, policy, cultural or operational issues. These systemic problems are interconnected. None of them exist in isolation and they often have a compounding effect on the quality and accessibility of aged care.

[Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report: Summary](#) (Australian example of a widely applied standard of care)

[Aged care residents’ prioritization of care: A mixed-methods study - Ludlow - 2021 - Health Expectations - Wiley Online Library](#)

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

AUMA Resolution 2021.C3: Long Term Care

Moved by: Town of Strathmore

Seconded by: Town of Okotoks

WHEREAS hospital and physician care are covered by Medicare, long-term care and home care are not, there are long wait lists for subsidized care and inequity in our system where those who can pay more get better access;

WHEREAS costs borne by both the province and by the families of Alberta in caring for aging parents continue to increase and are unsustainable in the long-term; and

WHEREAS the aging demographic and chronic lack of adequate housing and care solutions for seniors demands innovative solutions and the development of creative alternatives.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge our provincial government to petition the Government of Canada to make long term care and home care “medically necessary” services under the terms of the *Canada Health Act*.

BACKGROUND:

- The aging population in Alberta represents a growing need and concern for the care of seniors. There is an ongoing shortage of living facilities for seniors who require assisted living and support, and the private opportunities can be financially out of reach for many Albertan families. Families placing their aging parents into assisted living facilities can find their resources significantly stretched by the enormous associated costs.
- Evidence-based research indicated that the fundamental causes of inferior or deficient care in aged care, particularly residential aged care, is that individuals do not reliably get the health care they deserve and need. The causes for substandard access to health care encompass lack of funding for proactive health care services provided to people at their place of residence, and an unwillingness by some health care providers to attend a person at their residence. A lack of clarity, and inconsistencies around the responsibilities of aged care and health care providers exists. These systemic issues are partly a result of the split in responsibilities for health care and aged care between federal and provincial governments.

[S0144686X19001806jra 1145.1162 \(cambridge.org\)](#) “In conclusion, we believe that the evidence presented here of life course trajectories of family care provides a foundation for understanding better patterns of care work across the life course”.

[Delivering, funding, and rating safe staffing levels and skills mix in aged care - ScienceDirect](#)
[Care workers' perspectives of factors affecting a sustainable aged care workforce - Xiao - 2021 - International Nursing Review - Wiley Online Library](#)
[Our Aging Population: Statistics \(comfortlife.ca\)](#)

[Infographic: Canada's seniors population outlook: Uncharted territory | CIHI](#)

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

AUMA Resolution 2021.C4: Tobacco Industry Health Cost Recovery Fee

Moved by: City of Airdrie

Seconded by: City of St. Albert

WHEREAS tobacco use results in 4,000 premature deaths and 80,000 residents suffering with Related illnesses each year in Alberta;

WHEREAS the cost of tobacco use in Alberta exceeds \$1 billion annually including health care costs, reduced productivity, fire and environmental damage;

WHEREAS a substantial portion of these costs are a direct result of the harmful health impacts from the use of tobacco and tobacco products;

WHEREAS tobacco companies are not required to pay any compensation to Alberta taxpayers beyond general corporate and payroll taxes; and

WHEREAS many Alberta industries are required to compensate Alberta taxpayers for negligence and third party damages including automobile insurers; transportation companies; oil, gas and mining operators; and agricultural producers (i.e., polluter pays principle).

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the AUMA advocate to the Alberta government to use the [Crown's Right of Recovery Act](#) to establish a five percent (5%) levy on all Alberta revenues collected by major tobacco manufacturers and importers. Funds collected would be redirected to support effective programs and strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use in Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

Tobacco use affects every Alberta municipality and their residents from a clean-up, environmental and health perspective. Taxes collected on tobacco products in Alberta raises approximately \$750 million annually. As the cost of tobacco use exceeds \$1 billion annually, all Albertans pay for the negative consequences of tobacco use.

Despite the enormous burden that tobacco places on society and our healthcare system, tobacco companies are presently not required to pay any compensation for harm beyond general corporate and payroll taxes. These companies are located outside of Alberta so consequently the provincial taxes that they do pay are negligible. The vast majority of tobacco taxes are paid for by consumers, not tobacco companies.

The Government of Alberta's \$10 billion lawsuit filed against fourteen Canadian and international tobacco firms in 2012 outlines the harmful activities conducted by the tobacco industry. The lawsuit is an attempt by the Government of Alberta to recover decades worth of public harm and the resulting healthcare costs.

Many Alberta businesses are required to pay for the provincial clean-up costs resulting from their harmful and negligent activities, whether the damage is deliberate or not. Examples include:

- Oil and gas companies – are required to pay for the mitigation of environmental damage and emissions resulting from mining, extraction and refining.
- Trucking and rail companies – are required to pay for the clean-up costs resulting from collisions, derailments, and chemical spills.
- Utility companies – are required to mitigate air pollution including CO₂ and SO₂ emissions resulting from power production.
- Auto insurance carriers – are required to pay for the healthcare costs resulting from motor vehicle collisions. ⁽¹⁾

This same “polluter pays” principal can be applied to tobacco companies. Like the examples provided above the Government of Alberta can recover the cost of health services caused or contributed to by a tobacco-related wrong under the *Crown’s Right of Recovery Act*. It is under this Act that the Government of Alberta sued the tobacco companies in 2012. The *Crown’s Right of Recovery Act* can also be used to recoup current health care costs and the annual cost of implementing initiatives outlined in the [Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy \(ATRS\)](#).

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH Canada) has determined that a tax of 5% on tobacco industry revenues (\$573 million in 2018⁽²⁾) would cover the \$28 million annual cost of implementing the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy. This strategy outlines steps to:

- help Albertans to quit using tobacco
- reduce second-hand smoke exposure
- make tobacco products less attractive to youth
- educate youth on the dangers of tobacco use

ATRS focusses on reducing the number of Albertans who use tobacco. The original 2002 strategy is credited with significantly decreasing the number of people who start to use tobacco and helping people who use tobacco to quit. The goal of the strategy is to create a smoke-free Alberta. Funding for the ATRS is no longer included in the provincial budget. When the strategy was first introduced it was funded at a level of \$12 million annually. Since 2008 approximately \$4 million, or one dollar per capita, is spent on anti-smoking efforts in the province.

The ATRS expires in 2022. The Government of Alberta should begin consultations on next steps to develop a new strategy in late 2021 that will potentially also address vaping and vaping products.

AUMA Comments:

AUMA does not currently have a position on this specific issue. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA’s Board by AUMA’s Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions.

Notes:

- (1) Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta, Tobacco Industry Health Cost Recovery Fee, August 2020
- (2) Health Canada, August 2019

2021 Resolutions

Emergent Resolutions

Criteria

The criteria of an emergent resolution, as set in the Resolutions Policy is that it must:

- a. Deal with an issue of concern to Alberta municipalities which has arisen after the resolution deadline, or just prior to the resolution deadline, such that Members could not submit it as a resolution in time;
- b. Have a critical aspect that needs to be addressed before the next Convention; and
- c. Comply with the guidelines for resolutions set out in this policy.

Seconding

The policy also stipulates that, if the AUMA Board determines the resolution meets the criteria of an emergent resolution, the Board will second the resolution.

AUMA Resolution 2021.Emergent 1: Responsibility of Ambulance Service Delivery

Moved by: City of Airdrie
City of Chestermere
Town of Okotoks
Town of Strathmore
Town of Turner Valley

Seconded by: N/A

WHEREAS the Province of Alberta took responsibility for the delivery of ambulance service as it was a provincial health responsibility;

WHEREAS at the time the ambulance service transitioned from a municipal responsibility to a provincial responsibility there was a commitment that there would be no degradation of service to citizens;

WHEREAS the entire provincial health system has been operating on overdrive because of the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS the number of code reds, where no ambulances are available in the Province is impacting the ability of Albertans, especially rural Albertans, to access emergency medical care;

WHEREAS municipalities continue to provide support to the provincial health care system with the operation of our fire departments;

WHEREAS the health and safety of citizens continues to be a priority for municipalities as we arrive on scene as first responders to medical calls approximately 40% of the time;

WHEREAS the length of time, fire is on scene until an ambulance arrives is trending upwards exponentially, in some areas up over 50% and some rural areas as much as a 200% increase in wait time for fire services over the last year or 2 years;

WHEREAS municipalities are acting as a stop gap in the provincial health system with no compensation, and it is impacting the ability of municipalities to meet their own operational requirements; and

WHEREAS everyday Albertans' access to health is being compromised due to a lack of emergency health care.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of Alberta, immediately consult with municipalities, to develop a plan to make urgently needed improvements to the delivery and performance of the ambulance system where municipalities are recognized and compensated for the role they play in support of the provincial health care system.

BACKGROUND:

When the province transitioned ambulance service from a municipal responsibility to a provincial responsibility there was a commitment that there would be no degradation in the capacity of these services. Since that transition and especially over the last several months the impact on municipal fire services include:

- o Increasing need for fire services to be the first response and first to arrive on the scene;
- o Increasing need for co-response when EMS are more than 10 minutes out;
- o Municipal fire crews are tied up at incidents longer and are required to stay until they can pass the patient to someone with at least the same level of qualification or higher which means fire crews once on scene cannot leave until EMS arrives;
- o Increasing number of concurrent calls, which is affected by increased response times for lower level incidents (more than 10 minutes) and results in fire being dispatched; and
- o Increasing need for call outs to protect the municipality from other occurrences which increases staffing costs for over time and relies on the availability of off duty staff. There is no contractual requirement for staff to attend call outs outside of their scheduled hours.

The effects on municipal staff include:

- o Increasing stress on staff being exposed to more medical incidents;
- o Dealing with patients and families concerned about delayed EMS transportation;
- o Not being able to deliver the scope of practice of an Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP);
- o Reduction of availability for other incidents, impacts capability, staffing and safety.
- o Not being able to respond to other emergency situations.
- o Experiencing delayed response of care for family members when seconds in response can affect long-term health outcomes;
- o Potential increase in mental health issues; and
- o Burn out.

Every citizen experiencing a medical crisis across Alberta is impacted, as the time of EMS response increases the survival rate of patient's decreases. EMS are usually staffed with an ACP with a higher scope of practice than Firefighters Primary Care Paramedic (PCP), this restricts the care provided which could prove critical.

Ambulance service levels have become an urgent, emergent issue. As an example, in Okotoks, within the space of four days, July 28 – 31, two incidents required the use of the STARS helicopter. On one of these occasions, Okotoks did not have a ground ambulance available. On another occasion, August 3, dispatch informed the Incident Commander that EMS was 45 minutes out, eventually arriving from Strathmore. This is an unacceptable level of service provided by AHS and has shifted the burden substantially to municipalities across Alberta with dire health outcomes for citizens.

AUMA Comments:

This resolution aligns with previous AUMA advocacy on emergency medical services and response times. If this resolution is passed, it would be forwarded to the Government of Alberta for response and further advocacy would be recommended to AUMA's Board by AUMA's Safe and Healthy Communities Committee within the context of related priorities and positions, and in coordination with any other related resolutions that are adopted.