



## NEWS RELEASE

September 1, 2022

**EDMONTON** – *The following statement is issued on behalf of Alberta Municipalities' Board of Directors:*

On August 25, the Alberta Municipalities' Board of Directors had a constructive meeting with Alberta's Minister of Justice and Solicitor General Tyler Shandro about the future of policing and public safety in Alberta. The board thanks Minister Shandro for outlining his government's rationale and vision for a provincial police service and hearing our association's concerns.

During the 90-minute meeting, discussion focused on the proposed provincial police service model, the current RCMP model and several other topics including the idea of creating a provincial public safety task force, the provincial relationship with RCMP and recruitment challenges.

While the task force's mandate was neither presented nor discussed in detail, ABmunis believes the idea has merit. We believe that if the ministry wants to improve policing and public safety, it needs to stop planning and designing a policing model in a silo or vacuum. The ministry needs to bring all stakeholders to the table to develop a public safety model for today and tomorrow. An effective task force must include Alberta Health Services, Community and Social Services, municipalities, the federal government and the RCMP themselves.

Accordingly, our association's future participation in such a task force hinges on its stated mandate or purpose. If the task forces' mandate is to develop models and solutions to improve public safety in our communities and throughout the province, ***regardless of who delivers community policing in Alberta***, then we are ready to take part. If, however, its mandate is to continue with the model as currently proposed and/or how to transition to an Alberta Provincial Police Service, then our member municipalities have been clear that they do not support this direction and they would need to be consulted to determine our Associations further involvement.

We hope Minister Shandro will have more to say about the possible creation of a provincial public safety task force in the coming days.

Over the last 10 months, Alberta Municipalities has consistently encouraged the provincial government to focus on the fundamental question Albertans want answered: how can we enhance public safety for all Albertans? Instead, the Government of Alberta has chosen to focus on how the province can distance itself from Ottawa.

The provincial government provides input on the hiring of the provincial leadership of the RCMP, sets the RCMP's budget, sets policing priorities and can integrate mental health and social supports when faced with the complex policing challenges that Alberta's communities face.

We know that the recommendations from Alberta's communities are being heard by RCMP, and that adjustments to the way it delivers contract policing are being made. ABmunis is confident that the RCMP are adapting and making great strides in community policing.

The Government of Alberta needs to be realistic about the recruiting challenges a provincial police service would face. It seems improbable that the Government of Alberta would succeed in filling the 275 new police officer positions it currently envisions at a time when police services around the world are struggling to attract new officers. In fact, the uncertainty of policing in Alberta is now negatively affecting the recruitment of RCMP members and staff to our province.

It is clear the dialogue must continue, as too many questions remain unanswered. Our board encourages the Government of Alberta to look past political differences and agendas and do what is right for **all Albertans**. Our province's future public safety depends on it.

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*From the smallest village to the largest city, across every region of the province, Alberta Municipalities (ABmunis) represents the communities where over 85% of Albertans live. Previously known as the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), ABmunis was founded in 1905 to provide urban and rural-region communities a united voice. Alberta Municipalities now serves and represents 275 of Alberta's 334 municipalities.*

*We work with elected and administrative leaders of Alberta's summer villages, villages, town, cities, and specialized municipalities to advocate for solutions to their common issues, which we categorize as economic, environment, governance, infrastructure, or social.*

*And we help them build resilient and thriving communities by providing valuable services. We use our members' combined purchasing power to negotiate the best possible value and competitive pricing on employee benefits, insurance, energy, and other services needed to run an effective and efficient municipality.*