

## **Regional Cooperation and Municipal Autonomy**

Leduc County

*Requires Simple Majority*

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Status: CARRIED

WHEREAS Alberta is experiencing unprecedented growth; and

WHEREAS municipalities have worked cooperatively to address growth pressures; and

WHEREAS solutions to these growth pressures are most sustainable when developed cooperatively and collaboratively amongst the affected regional municipal partners; and

WHEREAS it is recognized there are opportunities for improving and enhancing regional cooperation;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties fully supports Regional Governance Models that are based upon the principles of cooperation and collaboration, local autonomy and accountability, and do not create a new order of government with taxation and/or requisition powers;**

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to assume a proactive partnership role in supporting municipal efforts to create Regional Governance Models that are based upon the principles of cooperation and collaboration, local autonomy and accountability, and do not:**

- create a new order of government with taxation and/or requisition powers
- result in any legislative or regulatory authority having jurisdiction over and/or be empowered to dictate to local municipalities on issues presently a municipal responsibility

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties request the Government of Alberta to apply the aforesaid principles to the Capital Region Integrated Growth Management Plan and such further regional governance initiatives it may undertake.**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Capital Region, like many areas of the Province, is experiencing significant growth. In response, 23 of the Region's municipalities formed the Alberta Capital Region Alliance (ACRA) to address, amongst other issues, the ramifications of growth pressures. To accomplish its mandate, ACRA was based upon a cooperative and collaborative model that respected local autonomy and accountability.

In the fall of 2006, Edmonton served notice of its intention to leave ACRA and subsequently refused to participate in regional growth management strategies. This occurred despite ACRA's efforts to revise its decision-making structure by providing Edmonton with additional votes to reflect its population.

Consequently, in June 2007, the Province initiated a regional growth management strategy and consultation process by issuing Terms of Reference, which stated:

- community identities would be supported
- a new order of government would not be created

On November 16, 2007, the GoA's consultants released the draft provisions for the proposed governance framework, which included the establishment of a Board that might exclude representatives from some impacted municipalities. The draft governance framework included the following provisions:

- The Board will have legislative authority to make binding decisions concerning:
  - Regional land use planning
  - Transit
  - Information Services
  - Housing
  - Potentially: policing, EMS, social services, recreation, economic development, solid waste management, and waste water and potable water

- The GoA has reserved the right to delegate responsibilities to and remove responsibilities from the Board
- Decisions of the Board will have binding effect over all municipalities with very limited avenue of appeal
- Board representatives will have the ability to bind their Councils
- If a Board representative does not attend a meeting, he/she is deemed to have voted in favour of the items under consideration
- Board funding and voting structures have yet to be determined and will be established during the transition phase only after all municipalities are required to join the Board – funding options that are being considered include per capita charge, wealth tax or a business tax

The net effect of these proposals is a new level of government (super Board) having authority over local municipalities has been established. It may have extensive taxing powers and undermines local autonomy and accountability. There is a very strong possibility that this model will be applied elsewhere on the Province.