



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

POLICY BRIEF – APRIL 14, 2022

| Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade |
| Cliff Cullen |

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Cliff Cullen and representatives of Manitoba Economic Development, Investment and Trade. The AMM encourages the Province to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process. This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to the Economic Development, Investment and Trade portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

TOP POLICY IMPLICATIONS



- While the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant economic challenges, the AMM believes it is important now more than ever to develop and implement a comprehensive province-wide economic development strategy as well as a northern economic development strategy.
- In direct response to the 2016 Rural Economic Development Strategy Report, we welcomed the provincial commitment to open a new Economic Development Office (EDO) in Brandon.
- We urge the Province to continue to support EDOs as well as collaborate with the new Regional Development Agency for the Prairies to promote synergies where possible.
- Moreover, the potential of Manitoba's north is limitless, but it also requires sustained and innovative solutions to ensure communities are ready for investment.
- The pandemic continues to heighten the digital divide between communities and the need for better broadband access, so all residents have equal access to high-quality Internet.
- While we welcomed several broadband announcements over the last year, it will be vital to pursue partnerships with municipalities and the private sector to expand cellular coverage and broadband connectivity.

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

1. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
2. **ESSENTIAL CELL SERVICE AND BROADBAND**

Manitoba continues to experience some of the slowest Internet download speeds in the country and only 29 per cent of rural residents have access to Internet download speeds between 16 and 25 mbps, compared to near universal access in medium and large urban centres. Reliable broadband will be key to future productivity growth and economic development.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Promote synergies with economic development offices and agencies to ensure economic development is responsive to municipal needs; and*
- ❖ *Consult with the AMM and municipalities during the development of a provincial broadband strategy to ensure all Manitobans have access to high-quality Internet.*

ACTIVE AMM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT AND TRADE

AMM Resolution #41-2019: Essential Cell Service *Standing Policy

AMM Resolution #35-2017: Strategy to Increase Physical and Electronic Connectivity

AMM Resolution #38-2015: Improve Cellular Reception Services *Standing Policy

AMM Resolution #50-2012: High Speed Internet and Cell Service for Rural Manitoba