
Public Service Delivery

Meeting with Minister Mintu Sandhu

July 21, 2025



Association of
Manitoba Municipalities

Summary of Municipal Priorities

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Mintu Sandhu and representatives of Manitoba Public Service Delivery. The AMM encourages the provincial government 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 Minister Sandhu's portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

1. Timely Government Services and Staffing

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Ensure provincial departments are sufficiently staffed to provide timely and effective service and collaborate with municipalities to identify cost-effective solutions that maintain local service delivery.***

2. Infrastructure to Grow our Economy

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Advance municipal economic growth by prioritizing investments in core infrastructure and establishing a provincial connectivity strategy with clear targets and timelines to eliminate cellular and broadband service gaps.***

Timely Government Services and Staffing

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Ensure provincial departments are sufficiently staffed to provide timely and effective service and collaborate with municipalities to identify cost-effective solutions that maintain local service delivery.***

The AMM makes it a priority to meet one-one-one with municipalities across the province to better understand local priorities and concerns. Through these direct conversations, several recurring themes have emerged, including growing frustration with staffing shortages across provincial departments and the resulting delays in government services.

While the AMM acknowledges that labour shortages are a national issue influenced by multiple factors, the reduction and ongoing vacancies within provincial departments have significantly limited the government's ability to respond to municipal inquiries in a timely and consistent manner. This is particularly concerning in relation to grant programs, where municipalities often seek clarity on eligibility, application requirements, and the rationale behind funding decisions. Delays or lack of communication not only hinder access to vital resources but also compromise long-term planning at the local level.

These staffing challenges are further exacerbated by the continued centralization of public services, which is having a direct impact on the quality-of-service delivery, employment opportunities, and the overall vitality of affected communities. Over the past several years, many provincial services have been removed or relocated from municipalities to larger urban centres. This ongoing shift toward centralization undermines the growth and resilience of rural and northern communities, especially as Manitoba continues to welcome new residents, many of whom are choosing to settle outside major urban areas.

As frontline service points move farther away from the communities they serve, local governments are left with fewer opportunities for face-to-face engagement and reduced access to key programs and supports. When combined with decreased departmental capacity, this trend creates a growing disconnect between the Province and municipalities, making it more difficult to foster collaboration, ensure transparency, and deliver services equitably across Manitoba.

These concerns highlight the urgent need to strengthen provincial-municipal partnerships. Municipalities, regardless of size or location, must have reliable and timely access to the information, support, and services they need to serve their residents and drive local economic growth.

Infrastructure to Grow our Economy

Recommendation:

- ✓ ***Advance municipal economic growth by prioritizing investments in core infrastructure and establishing a provincial connectivity strategy with clear targets and timelines to eliminate cellular and broadband service gaps.***

The AMM understands that a key priority in the Minister's mandate letter is to work collaboratively with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to build the infrastructure Manitoba needs to drive economic growth. The AMM fully welcomes this commitment and strongly urges both departments to actively engage with municipalities to ensure local needs and insights are reflected in provincial infrastructure planning.

Manitoba municipalities are already leading the way with over 300 shovel-ready projects aimed at upgrading or constructing critical water and wastewater facilities across the province. These projects represent more than **\$1.6 billion** in planned investment, which is critical to protecting public health, supporting housing and economic development, and meeting growing demand. However, the total costs have escalated by **\$624 million**, a **65% increase** compared to 2023/24 projections. This is very concerning given that municipalities manage **60%** of Manitoba's public infrastructure despite receiving less than **10 cents** of every tax dollar.

While the AMM acknowledges the Province's commitment to developing a broader economic development strategy, it is important to recognize that economic development is cross-departmental. As such, the AMM continues to call on the Province to invest no less than **\$1 billion** annually in strategic infrastructure as it is imperative that infrastructure investments enable local growth while budgeted infrastructure dollars are fully maximized to benefit all municipalities. We also reiterate our call for a dedicated water and wastewater funding program at both the provincial and federal levels to support long-term, sustainable economic growth.

Connectivity is also a vital component of modern essential infrastructure. Yet many communities across Manitoba still face inadequate cellular and broadband coverage, posing challenges to economic growth, service delivery, and public safety. Recent issues raised by municipalities highlight how limited coverage can delay emergency response and hinder access to essential services. The AMM encourages the Province to work collaboratively with telecommunications providers and local governments to improve connectivity and ensure all communities are supported with reliable service.

Active AMM Resolutions

AMM Resolution #19-2023: Reduction of Staff within Provincial Departments

Sponsor(s)

Virden, Town (Western)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to ensure that all branches within the Municipal Relations Department are adequately staffed with appropriately trained personnel and to include the re-establishment of the Recreation Branch, in order to provide the services and resources necessary for municipalities to grow.

AMM Resolution #41-2023: Red Tape Reduction Initiatives

Sponsor(s)

Portage la Prairie, RM (Central)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM compile a list from municipalities on areas where excessive delay from the Province is causing a negative impact on municipalities and lobby the Province of Manitoba to examine and improve the relative legislative processes.