



Association of Manitoba Municipalities

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
INVESTMENT, TRADE AND
NATURAL RESOURCES**

MAY 24

2024

SUMMARY OF MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Jamie Moses and representatives of Manitoba Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources. 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, Trade and Natural Resources portfolio. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.



Economic Development Strategy

- **Implement a comprehensive province-wide economic development strategy in collaboration with municipalities to ensure new job opportunities meet community needs and address staffing shortages and boost funding for water infrastructure to spur economic growth.**

Crown Land Acquisition

- **Support economic growth in municipalities by streamlining processes for acquiring Crown Land within their boundaries, thereby creating jobs and fostering development.**



Connectivity

- **Leverage federal funding programs like the Universal Broadband Fund to collaboratively expand both broadband and cellular services across Manitoba.**

Aquatic Invasive Species

- **Increase financial resources and enhance public awareness to effectively prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, including Zebra Mussels.**



Economic Development Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ **Implement a comprehensive province-wide economic development strategy in collaboration with municipalities to ensure new job opportunities meet community needs and address staffing shortages; and**
- ✔ **Boost funding for water and wastewater infrastructure to spur economic growth.**

The AMM believes that implementing a comprehensive province-wide economic development strategy in collaboration with local communities is now more crucial than ever. As the Province creates new job opportunities to stimulate economic growth, it's vital for municipalities to be actively involved in the decision-making process. This partnership will ensure that new jobs meet the evolving needs of communities and address current staffing shortages across Manitoba.

Moreover, the strategy must prioritize attracting and retaining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in local communities. As municipalities are on the front lines of economic activity, they must be equipped and supported to attract FDI. Foreign investment can help address local infrastructure deficits, as many projects require improved roads and utilities. This not only enhances local infrastructure but also attracts further investment, stimulates job creation, and boosts the overall Manitoba economy.

Municipalities own **60 per cent** of public infrastructure supporting the economy, yet the shortfall in infrastructure investments remains a significant barrier to economic development. For example, in one municipality alone, there are **678 shovel-ready homes** waiting to be constructed, representing a substantial opportunity for economic growth. However, progress is stalled due to shortages in local and regional water capacity. An estimated investment of **\$107,000** in associated infrastructure is required to adequately facilitate the construction of a single house. Investing in the appropriate infrastructure will not only enhance the economic resilience and competitiveness of municipalities but will also contribute to the economic growth of the entire province.

Lastly, the AMM has long advocated for strong partnerships in northern Manitoba, emphasizing that northern economic development should be led by northern communities and stakeholders. Collaboration between all relevant provincial government departments and northern municipalities is crucial for developing Churchill and Centreport as transportation and supply chain hubs. This collaboration is key to unlocking the economic potential of the north and positioning it as a critical hub with a strong supply chain.

Crown Land Acquisition

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ ***Support economic growth in municipalities by streamlining processes for acquiring Crown Land within their boundaries, thereby creating jobs and fostering development.***

As the AMM prioritizes travelling across the province and meeting one-on-one with municipalities, provincial red tape related to Crown Land acquisition is a recurring theme. Many municipalities have provincial Crown Lands within their boundaries, with some municipalities having a significant portion of their borders comprised of Crown Land, while others have Crown Land situated within the heart of their municipality.

Municipalities often face challenges in securing Crown Land within their boundaries for essential purposes like community development projects and infrastructure expansion. Moreover, some municipalities have identified undeveloped Crown Land areas presenting wildfire and public safety risks as well as drainage issues to communities. Rather than leaving this land unmaintained, municipalities would like the opportunity to develop parcels to enhance their communities and mitigate these abovementioned risks.

However, municipalities must navigate through cumbersome application procedures and requirements, involving multiple government departments in order to obtain Crown Land. As Crown Land within municipal boundaries can contribute to strengthening economic development in these communities, and for the province overall, we urge the Manitoba government to simplify and streamline processes for municipalities wishing to obtain Crown Land to help grow their communities.

Connectivity

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✔ **Leverage federal funding programs like the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) to collaboratively expand both broadband and cellular services across Manitoba.**

Insufficient cellular network and broadband coverage persists in numerous areas, presenting a substantial challenge to our competitiveness, economic growth, and public safety.

Recent findings from a 2023 poll conducted by Probe Research revealed that, outside of Winnipeg, only **one-third (34%)** of rural and Northern Manitobans perceive their cell service as completely reliable. In contrast, **64 per cent** expressed dissatisfaction, deeming their service either unreliable or only somewhat reliable. This is particularly concerning as the transition to Next Generation 911 is underway while widespread cellular service coverage gaps persist across Manitoba. The AMM supports improvements to 911 services, however it is crucial for the Province to actively collaborate with cellular carriers and other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive connectivity across all communities, thereby enhancing public safety and reducing risks to the general public.

Further, in November 2022, the federal government announced a **\$475 million top-up** to the UBF that now totals \$3.225 billion. Despite this substantial increase, the selected UBF projects webpage indicates that **only \$9.6 million** has been allocated to Manitoba since the fund's inception. This disparity underscores a concerning trend where broadband connectivity in our province lags behind other regions in the country, which hinders our competitiveness and potential for growth.

The AMM understands that UBF projects are being prioritized with MoU signatory provinces with targeted federal-provincial funds, yet Manitoba is one of two provinces that is not a signatory. It is crucial for all orders of government collaborate, ensuring that available funds, including those available under the UBF are fully utilized and maximized at the local level to enhance connectivity.

Aquatic Invasive Species

RECOMMENDATIONS



Increase financial resources and enhance public awareness to effectively prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, including Zebra Mussels.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have become increasingly prevalent across Manitoba's beaches and water bodies in recent years. In particular, zebra mussels are highly invasive and cause significant ecological, social, and economic damage in the water bodies they infest. That is why municipalities have been ringing the alarm about AIS given their ability to spread rapidly and severely block water intake structures, increasing maintenance costs for water supplies and associated infrastructure. The presence of these species also disrupts aquatic ecosystems and is negatively impacting tourism in many parts of the province.

The AMM understands that the AIS program is operated and funded through the Department of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources, while legislative authority for AIS is under The Water Protection Act, managed by the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Under Budget 2024, the AMM welcomed the allocation of \$500,000 for the AIS program, although effectively preventing and slowing the spread of AIS requires increased financial resources and better enforcement coordination between government departments and agencies. Currently, the government lacks sufficient resources to effectively implement preventative measures to stop the spread of AIS in Manitoba.

Further, public knowledge and understanding of the AIS is limited, potentially contributing to their spread. Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to ramp up public awareness campaigns and education on the detrimental impacts of AIS. The AMM also strongly encourages the Province to establish more decontamination and inspection sites across Manitoba to cover all regions effectively and protect local water bodies.

Active AMM 2023 Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources Resolutions

AMM Resolution #46-2023: Endangered Species

Sponsor(s)

Stuartburn, RM (Eastern)	Brokenhead, RM (Eastern)
Ste. Anne, RM (Eastern)	Reynolds, RM (Eastern)
Beausejour, Town (Eastern)	Alexander, RM (Eastern)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to review both Acts and implement amendments for a more harmonious relationship for all affected; and the AMM be included in that review and amendments; and that once a review and recommendations has been completed that it goes back to all municipalities for consideration.

AMM Resolution #12-2023: Funding Formula

Sponsor(s)

Pipestone, RM (Western)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba for a funding formula whereby a percentage of natural resource extraction revenue returned to affected Manitoba municipalities whose infrastructure is impacted by the traffic generated by natural resource extraction.

AMM Resolution #14-2020: Zebra Mussels

AMM Resolution #28-2016: Simplifying Crown Land Processes

**** For further information on any resolution, please contact the AMM office.**