

Transportation Infrastructure Funding

For Consideration - Alberta Municipalities 2022 Resolution Process

Moved by: City of Airdrie

Seconded by: To Be Determined

WHEREAS municipalities develop Transportation Master Plans that align municipal policies and planning documents with a complementary transportation network planning strategy;

WHEREAS Transportation Master Plans (municipal, inter-municipal, sub-regional and regional) act as high-level planning documents allowing municipalities to better plan for major transportation infrastructure investments to ensure vital networks are both built and maintained;

WHEREAS safe, connected and resilient transportation networks allow both people and goods to move freely and efficiently across Alberta, supporting economic growth and prosperity;

WHEREAS municipal strategic transportation infrastructure projects connecting to provincially owned road networks improve both access and safety to key transportation routes;

WHEREAS provincial funding for strategic municipal transportation infrastructure projects that improve performance of network systems is not certain nor is the formula predictable;

WHEREAS *Building Forward: Alberta's 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan* released in 2021 provides a transparent and strategic direction for how the Government of Alberta invests in planning, constructing, renewing and maintaining infrastructure over the long term;

WHEREAS the Province needs to close the gap to define a clear process to elevate municipal transportation infrastructure projects that are in alignment with the Province's strategic objectives and principles of the Building Forward Plan;

WHEREAS the Building Forward Plan (page 91) outlines the importance of cost-sharing agreements with municipalities, but does not include details or principles on a cost-sharing formula;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate to the Government of Alberta for the establishment of both a clear process to elevate and equitably fund municipal transportation infrastructure projects that are in alignment with the Building Forward Plan objectives and principles.

BACKGROUND:

"In addition to supporting our everyday lives, infrastructure is also a key driver of the economy and government finances. Alberta's infrastructure powers businesses, enables trade, attracts

tourism, creates jobs, supports learning, research and innovation, attracts a talented workforce, and increases quality of life for Albertans. Provincial infrastructure assets boost productivity and competitiveness, and form the networks that allow businesses to grow and expand. Infrastructure also makes up our trade corridors and supports critical supply chains. Infrastructure is a key factor in determining where families and businesses settle and grow, and is essential to accessing key resources.”

Source: Building Forward: Alberta’s 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan, Plan at a Glance, page 4)

In the *Building Forward Plan* the Government of Alberta acknowledges that they need to work in partnership with municipalities to support the efficient, effective, safe movement of both people and goods. This need has been captured in the Maximizing Partnerships guiding strategy:

“The concept of “going it alone” on major capital projects is no longer desirable or financially sustainable. Leveraging the wide range of expertise, knowledge, and infrastructure from partners across sectors encourages innovation and appropriate risk sharing, ultimately leading to better outcomes. Partnerships may involve building on existing collaborations and securing financial fairness and involvement with other orders of government. Key partners will include municipal governments, other provincial and territorial governments, the federal government, the private sector, Indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations.”

Source: Building Forward: Alberta’s 20-Year Strategic Capital Plan, Plan at a Glance, page 13

The importance of strategic transportation projects impacts the lives of Albertans in all types of municipalities - urban, rural, remote, small or large. Almost 80% of Albertan’s are expected to live in the Edmonton-Calgary Corridor by 2040. And rural, remote and northern Alberta communities depend on transportation networks to move goods, connect people and support economic activity. Access to an efficient transportation network system is a deciding factor for where businesses decide to locate and invest in our Province. In addition, residential growth in and around larger urban centres depends on the efficient movement of people to employment, commercial and lifestyle amenities.

Despite the importance of transportation infrastructure there is presently no clear process to add projects to the provincial capital list. Nor when projects are funded, is there a transparent funding formula ensuring contribution equity from the province and municipalities across projects. Certainty in planning is extremely important for municipalities given that the Municipal Government Act requires the creation of five-year capital plans, at minimum. Most municipalities create ten-year plans. Many other municipal planning documents, like economic development strategies, rely on information from capital plans.

Both a clear process and transparent funding formula would go a long way to ensuring that Albertans are being treated equally from municipality to municipality.