

# Municipal Affairs

## **ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT**

The Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2002 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as of February 26, 2002 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.

*[original signed]*

Guy Boutilier, *Minister of Municipal Affairs*  
February 27, 2002

## **BUSINESS PLAN SETTING**

Over the next three years Municipal Affairs will be facing a numbers of challenges - some ongoing and some new. Municipalities continue to face financial pressures from rapid growth. Stakeholders and municipalities are showing a growing interest in cooperation, partnerships, mutual aid and regional solutions as they begin to recognize the potential benefits. There is also a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all orders of government.

Rising public health and environmental concerns and the increasing awareness of the risks and threats to public safety posed by industrial growth and terrorism create new challenges for Municipal Affairs and the Government of Alberta. The Ministry business plan for the next three years addresses these issues, putting in place plans and strategies to respond to Albertans' priorities.

## **VISION**

Viable, responsive, well-managed local government and a public safety system that provides safe buildings, equipment and facilities and effective emergency response.

## **VALUES**

As a Ministry, we value and support the principles of honesty, fairness, professionalism, and collaboration, while maintaining a primary focus on exceptional service for our clients. We value our staff and their contributions of innovation, creativity, open communication and accountability. These elements are key in achieving our Ministry's vision.

## **MISSION**

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with Alberta's municipalities, other government departments, local authorities, various organizations focused on local issues, and the private sector to ensure Albertans live in safe and sustainable communities, and are served by open, effective and accountable governments.

## **LINKS TO THE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN**

The Ministry supports the government's three core businesses in these ways:

- ◆ by helping **People** to be safe and self-reliant, through the Ministry's safety and emergency preparedness services;
- ◆ by promoting Alberta's **Prosperity** and the Alberta Advantage by encouraging the development of an efficient local government sector that provides the services, facilities, and infrastructure that Albertans and businesses need;
- ◆ by **Preserving** and supporting sustainable and safe communities that are responsive to Albertans' needs and priorities.

## **CROSS-MINISTRY INITIATIVES**

Alberta Municipal Affairs supports the following cross-ministry government initiatives:

### **ABORIGINAL POLICY INITIATIVE**

The Ministry supports this initiative through specific strategies and by tailoring elements of Ministry programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and communities where appropriate. Over the business planning period, we will be working to expand the availability of these programs, establishing strong relationships with First Nation communities to foster the development of effective emergency response, fire protection, fire training and education programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal communities.

### **ALBERTA CHILDREN AND YOUTH INITIATIVE**

The Ministry contributes to the well-being of our youth and their families through proven Fire Safety education programs such as *Risk Watch* and by working to develop partnerships with industry to increase fire prevention awareness among children and youth. Over the next three years we will be working with schools and other ministries such as Alberta Learning to develop enduring partnerships for delivering these Fire Safety education programs.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Municipal Affairs contributes to the *Alberta Advantage* through numerous activities centred on local government. Through various grants and programs that encourage self-reliant communities, the Ministry contributes to the *Alberta Advantage*. A high priority is given to programs such as the Regional Partnerships Initiative. This initiative assists municipalities and stakeholders to create effective regional partnerships that attract and retain investment and offer high quality living standards in a globally competitive environment.

### **HEALTH SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE**

Ministry programs will support this new initiative by maintaining and updating emergency response plans for health-related events such as pandemic influenza and bio-terrorism that may have health consequences. Municipal Affairs will work with Alberta Emergency Preparedness Partnership and municipalities to develop and implement appropriate strategies for safeguarding the municipal water supply. In addition, the Ministry's ongoing work with codes and standards for private sewage disposal systems will contribute to this initiative.

## **CORE BUSINESSES**

The Ministry's core business activities support its vision and mission:

1. **Local Government Services** - providing support services, policies and legislation that enhance the development of a sustainable, accountable, responsive and effective local government sector
2. **Safety Services and Fire Protection** - administering a safety system that uniformly applies appropriate safety codes and standards and promotes fire protection throughout the province
3. **Disaster Services** - managing provincial disaster planning and recovery programs and supporting municipalities to ensure their preparedness to deal with major emergencies and disasters
4. **Municipal Government Board** - providing independent quasi-judicial adjudication on matters specified under the *Municipal Government Act*

## **MAJOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

The Ministry's primary clients include municipalities and their related organizations and associations, accredited organizations, and industry-based safety and emergency planning groups. The Ministry consults and works with the local government sector, with the public and industry, and with other provincial and federal departments as an integral and ongoing part of its activities.

## **MAJOR GOALS**

The Ministry's major goals are:

1. An effective, responsive, cooperative and well-managed local government sector
2. Financially sustainable and accountable municipalities
3. A well-managed and efficient assessment and property tax system in which stakeholders have confidence
4. A comprehensive safety system that provides an appropriate level of public safety
5. A disaster services program that enhances and supports local emergency preparedness for major emergencies and disasters
6. An independent appeal system that issues timely and impartial decisions of high quality

## **BUSINESS PLAN GOALS, KEY RESULTS, AND STRATEGIES**

### **CORE BUSINESS 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

#### **Goal 1: An effective, responsive, cooperative and well-managed local government sector**

**Key Result 1:** Support systems and programs that support excellence in local governance, management, and service delivery

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 1.1.1 Work with municipalities to establish effective and efficient regional partnerships that can create an atmosphere to attract and retain investment, compete globally and contribute to a high quality of life.
- 1.1.2 Encourage municipalities to cooperate with their neighbours to develop, finance and implement improved growth management and more efficient service delivery systems.
- 1.1.3 Develop and implement a program for encouraging the self-evaluation of excellence to assist municipalities and citizens in developing innovative strategies for more effective governance, administration, financial management and service delivery. Initiate a program to recognize Municipal Excellence.
- 1.1.4 Support municipalities to more effectively use technology in their operations through initiatives in partnership with other provincial government departments and other municipal stakeholders.
- 1.1.5 Develop and coordinate education and information services that include training programs, job exchanges, on-line information, and workshops for local elected officials, administrators, staff, and related professionals.
- 1.1.6 Work with municipalities on challenges of climate change initiatives, including the reduction of greenhouse gases.

- 1.1.7 Participate in efforts to enhance relations between Aboriginal governments and organizations, and municipal governments in Alberta

**Key Result 2:** Resolution of local and inter-municipal governance and management issues through responsive and effective Ministry support

**Key Strategies:**

- 1.2.1 Provide governance, administration and management, and land-use planning advice to local governments and associated local service delivery organizations.
- 1.2.2 Support inter-municipal cooperation and self-directed dispute resolution through mediation and facilitation.
- 1.2.3 Support the local dispute resolution initiative.

**Key Result 3:** A coordinated provincial government approach towards municipalities

**Key Strategies:**

- 1.3.1 Establish and support the Minister's Provincial/Municipal Council on Roles, Responsibilities and Resources in the 21st Century to clarify the government's working relationship with municipalities and support a mechanism to address major municipal-provincial issues.
- 1.3.2 Work cooperatively with the federal government, other ministries, municipalities, Metis Settlements and other organizations to improve the provision, coordination and delivery of programs, policies and services that enhance local service effectiveness and efficiency.

**Key Result 4:** A legislative framework that enables municipalities to operate successfully and meet the local needs of Albertans

**Key Strategies:**

- 1.4.1 Develop changes to provincial legislation and regulations related to municipalities that support innovative and improved approaches to local governance and service delivery that will also result in a more refined legislative framework. Develop and maintain provincial land-use policies.

**Goal 1: Performance Measure**

*Level of satisfaction with the Local Government Services Division's activities, services and programs, in enabling and promoting a cooperative and well-managed local government sector (The measure will be calculated based on the percentage of the units within Local Government Services that achieved their individual performance targets.)*

1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
N/A	75%	77%	78%	80%	80%

## Goal 2: Financially sustainable and accountable municipalities

**Key Result 1:** Appropriate Ministry services and systems are in place to contribute to financially sustainable municipalities

### Key Strategies:

- 2.1.1 Maintain the Ministry's financial monitoring systems that provide evidence of municipal financial capacity and provide continued advisory support to municipalities.
- 2.1.2 Assist municipalities to examine and pursue innovative approaches and restructuring that will address their financial sustainability.

**Key Result 2:** Financial support that enhances local government financial capability

### Key Strategies:

- 2.2.1 Encourage/facilitate cost-sharing between municipalities.
- 2.2.2 Administer the Unconditional Municipal Grant Program to provide ongoing financial assistance in support of municipal programs.
- 2.2.3 Administer the Municipal Sponsorship Program, which targets assistance to specific municipal needs, including promoting inter-municipal cooperation and innovative projects.
- 2.2.4 Administer the Grants in Place of Taxes Program to provide appropriate grants to municipalities for properties owned by the province.
- 2.2.5 Administer the Municipal Debenture Interest Rebate Program to subsidize the interest costs on certain municipal borrowings from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.

## Goal 2: Performance Measure

*Percentage of municipalities meeting Ministry's criteria of financial accountability*

The key criteria are contained in the Municipal Government Act. The measure will be calculated based on a demerit point system weighting the criteria. Municipalities exceeding a set point limit will be considered not to have met the criteria for municipal financial accountability.

1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
97%	98%	95%	95%	95%	97%

**Goal 3: A well-managed and efficient assessment and property tax system in which stakeholders have confidence**

**Key Result 1:** A property assessment system in Alberta that is accurate, understandable, predictable, transparent and timely

**Key Strategies:**

- 3.1.1 Demonstrate leadership by exhibiting a high level of professional standards and practice and clearly identifying roles and functions of all stakeholders within the system.
- 3.1.2 Enhance, develop and maintain assessment standards and procedures through timely advice, consistent assessments and audits, establishment of handbooks and professional guides and by ensuring that practices and methodologies are current.
- 3.1.3 Support the property assessment system by providing timely and accurate linear assessments.
- 3.1.4 Improve the assessment, equalization, and education requisition processes by facilitating appropriate sharing of data on assessments and building permits.
- 3.1.5 Implement improved assessment procedures in response to approved recommendations from MLA committees.
- 3.1.6 Establish a three-year cycle for reviewing all assessment procedures and guidelines.
- 3.1.7 Enhance the annual assessment audit program, using technology to improve the quality and accessibility of information.
- 3.1.8 Maintain the five-year cycle for assessment procedure audits for each municipality following the best practices guidelines published by the Assessment Services Branch.

**Goal 3: Performance Measure**

*Percentage of municipal assessment rolls which meet provincial standards for procedures, uniformity, and equity*

1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
96.5%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%

**CORE BUSINESS 2: SAFETY SERVICES AND FIRE PROTECTION**

**Goal 4: A comprehensive safety system that provides an appropriate level of public safety**

**Key Result 1:** Appropriate codes and standards

**Key Strategies:**

- 4.1.1 Maintain appropriate provincial codes and standards in consultation with the Safety Codes Council, the public, industry, and other jurisdictions.
- 4.1.2 Participate in reviews of the national and international codes and standards that are used in Alberta.

**Key Result 2:** Codes and standards are applied uniformly, effectively and efficiently

**Key Strategies:**

- 4.2.1 Conclude the Underground Petroleum Storage Tank Site Remediation Program.
- 4.2.2 Enhance the administration and application of safety codes and standards by providing support and advisory services. Part of this strategy is a project to develop, and implement in partnership with municipalities, a provincial electronic permit system.
- 4.2.3 Support municipalities and other partners to participate in partnerships such as Regional Service Commissions.
- 4.2.4 Promote public awareness and understanding of the purpose and value of codes and standards adopted under the *Safety Codes Act*.

**Key Result 3:** Reduced personal and property loss resulting from preventable fires

**Key Strategies:**

- 4.3.1 Promote public awareness of fire safety and prevention through educational programs and dissemination of fire safety information through all media.
- 4.3.2 Encourage establishment of local or regional coalitions to promote fire safety.
- 4.3.3 Develop and implement methods to effectively coordinate activities aimed at preventing and reducing fire loss.

**Key Result 4:** Access to quality training for fire departments in a format allowing for maximum participation

**Key Strategies:**

- 4.4.1 Support the Alberta Fire Training School to enhance its training programs.
- 4.4.2 Provide training for municipal fire protection officials by delivering grant programs for training by private sector resources.
- 4.4.3 Provide fire investigation upgrade training through Safety Codes Officer Training Initiative and other cooperative training programs.

**Goal 4: Performance Measures**

1. *The percentage of assessed accredited municipalities, corporations, agencies, and delegated administrative organizations administering the Safety Codes Act that achieve a satisfactory rating*

1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
92%	94%	90%	95%	95%	95%

2. *Fire Safety and Prevention Indicator*

Indicator	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
		Benchmark	Target	Target	Target
Fire deaths/100,000 population	1.36	1.30	Less than or equal to 2001-02	Less than or equal to 2002-03	Less than or equal to 2003-04



## CORE BUSINESS 3: DISASTER SERVICES

### Goal 5: A disaster services program that enhances and supports local emergency preparedness for major emergencies and disasters

**Key Result 1:** Timely and effective response to disasters and emergencies

#### Key Strategies:

- 5.1.1 Enhance the preparedness of municipalities to deal with actual emergencies by assisting them to develop and test their emergency plans.
- 5.1.2 Provide disaster financial assistance to complement local government resources, share costs at a provincial level and facilitate federal cost-sharing whenever possible.
- 5.1.3 Expand the Provincial Emergency Public Warning System.
- 5.1.4 Ensure a coordinated provincial response to major emergencies and disasters by regularly reviewing, testing, and modifying the province's emergency plans in conjunction with involved ministries.
- 5.1.5 Coordinate business resumption planning activities across the Alberta Government so that government ministries will be able to quickly resume vital services after disruption resulting from any disaster.
- 5.1.6 Enhance the work of the Alberta Emergency Preparedness Partnership by providing leadership, facilitating partnership operations and coordinating the delivery of programs.
- 5.1.7 Support First Nations and Metis Settlements with ongoing review and development of emergency preparedness resources, advice, and disaster response coordination.
- 5.1.8 Support training for provincial and municipal emergency preparedness officials by administering grant programs for training.
- 5.1.9 Ensure that federal-provincial disaster assistance arrangements are consistently and equitably applied by working with other provincial ministries, provinces and territories to facilitate meaningful negotiations with the federal government.

#### Goal 5: Performance Measures

1. *Achieve a level of 100% of claims where a member of the damage assessment team arrives on-site within 30 days of a claim being received*

1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

2. *Level of preparedness testing as measured by the cumulative percentage of municipalities, required to have emergency plans under the Disaster Services Act, that test their emergency plans through exercises within a four-year cycle*

1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target	2005-06 Target
41.7%	75.1%	87.4%	100%	40%	70%	85%	100%

## CORE BUSINESS 4: MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

### Goal 6: An independent appeal system that issues timely and impartial decisions of high quality

Key Result 1: Timely processing of appeals

#### Key Strategies:

- 6.1.1 Complete redevelopment of the board's database to achieve up-to-date recording, tracking, analyzing and managing of all appeal activity.
- 6.1.2 Implement Advanced Case Management of all appeals to ensure timeliness in hearing and deciding appeals.
- 6.1.3 Work with stakeholders to expedite the scheduling and hearing of appeals.
- 6.1.4 Schedule, monitor and track all decision-making and writing activities to ensure compliance with established procedures.

Key Result 2: High quality, independent decisions and solutions

#### Key Strategies:

- 6.2.1 Provide ongoing training to strengthen adjudication skills of board members to sustain high quality, timely, consistent and independent decision-making.
- 6.2.2 Obtain feedback from stakeholders on an annual basis to gauge board performance, areas of strength and areas requiring improvement.
- 6.2.3 Expedite appeals, explore, develop and pilot various methods such as alternate dispute resolution methods, advanced appeal management, and use of one-member panels.
- 6.2.4 Manage the recruiting program to ensure the board retains the required range of professional skills.

#### Goal 6: Performance Measures:

Hear and decide appeals within legislative time limitations.

1. Percentage of property appeals heard within 150 days of receipt of completed appeal applications

2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
New measure	91%	92%	93%

Fair, equitable, correct and transparent decisions

2. *Percentage of decisions that are successfully challenged in the courts or through section 504 of the Municipal Government Act*

2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
New measure	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%

3. *Percentage of stakeholders who feel they received fair, unbiased hearings*

2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
New measure	85%	85%	85%

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Financial and Information Technology Services:** Directs the Ministry's financial, reporting and budgetary activities, in a shared services environment, and ensures an accountability framework is in place to meet the obligations of the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Government Accountability Act*. Supports the Ministry on matters relating to information technology, and provides guidance and frameworks for IT plans and initiatives to meet the goals of the Ministry.

**Business Services:** Provides strategic leadership and guidance, and coordinates corporate activities to deliver Ministry initiatives in an effective, timely and consistent manner. This entity is responsible for business planning including environmental scanning and performance measurement; legislative planning; information access and privacy protection for the Ministry; and central administrative services.

**Communications:** Provides strategic communications advice, consulting services and communications support to the Minister, Deputy Minister, senior officials and Ministry staff to help communicate effectively with stakeholders, the media and Albertans. Through these services, the branch seeks to ensure Albertans have access to the information they need on the role, programs and initiatives of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

**Human Resource Services:** Provides support in the human resource function to management and staff in achieving Ministry priorities and the business plan. Coordinates the development and implementation of the human resource plan and the strategies for staffing, job evaluation, pay and benefits, employee recognition, learning, succession, employee relations, and health and wellness.

**Legal Services:** Provides services to the divisions and the associated boards. Major activities include participation in special projects, reviewing legislation and regulations, offering legal advice and written opinions, preparing and reviewing documents including contracts, handling certain real estate transactions, and appearing in court.

## Expense by Core Business

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Core Business</b>						
Local Government Services	122,973	116,037	110,752	113,022	113,198	113,654
Safety Services and Fire Protection	22,768	80,183	49,961	11,504	11,839	11,810
Disaster Services	12,715	4,363	6,244	4,411	4,383	4,287
Municipal Government Board	2,993	2,601	3,083	3,345	3,327	3,234
<b>MINISTRY EXPENSE</b>	161,449	203,184	170,040	132,282	132,747	132,985

## Ministry Statement of Operations

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Internal Government Transfers	12,000	12,000	12,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Transfers from Government of Canada	2,220	496	424	446	468	491
Premiums, Fees and Licences	653	376	378	376	376	376
Other Revenue	2,136	1,531	1,841	1,531	1,531	1,531
<b>MINISTRY REVENUE</b>	17,009	14,403	14,643	42,353	42,375	42,398
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Program</b>						
Ministry Support Services	10,305	10,100	9,647	10,230	10,534	10,562
Local Government Services	117,483	110,760	105,617	107,582	107,598	108,039
Public Safety	31,166	80,405	52,157	11,629	11,811	11,674
Municipal Government Board	2,285	1,919	2,419	2,641	2,604	2,510
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	210	-	200	200	200	200
<b>MINISTRY EXPENSE</b>	161,449	203,184	170,040	132,282	132,747	132,985
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	(144,440)	(188,781)	(155,397)	(89,929)	(90,372)	(90,587)

## Consolidated Net Operating Result

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	Comparable 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimates	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
Ministry Revenue	17,009	14,403	14,643	42,353	42,375	42,398
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(40,000)	(40,000)	(40,000)
<b>Consolidated Revenue</b>	5,009	2,403	2,643	2,353	2,375	2,398
Ministry Program Expense	161,449	203,184	170,040	132,282	132,747	132,985
<i>Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Consolidated Program Expense</b>	161,449	203,184	170,040	132,282	132,747	132,985
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	(156,440)	(200,781)	(167,397)	(129,929)	(130,372)	(130,587)