



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

AMM Lobby Days  
April 21-22, 2009

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## Executive Summary

### 1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure Investment

- Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants.
- The message the AMM is hoping to convey to all MLAs as part of this year's Lobby Days is that it is not that the provincial or federal government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite their efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.
- A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year.
- In 2009, the Saskatchewan Government has allocated \$100 million for municipal infrastructure to be distributed on a per capita basis, as well as \$167 million for municipalities from the Provincial Sales Tax.
- What should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.
- A study by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms.
- Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived.
- Providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address the growing infrastructure deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.
- For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

**Therefore the AMM is asking the Province to undertake a serious review of the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government in Manitoba and in the short term provide municipalities with one percent of the current PST to help address the growing municipal infrastructure deficit.**

## **Alternate Revenue for Municipalities and Infrastructure Investment**

The lack of revenue is not a new problem for municipalities. In fact a strong argument can be made that from its inception municipal government has not had the resources required. You need only look back to the resolutions from the founding meeting of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities in 1905 to see municipal revenues were front and centre.

But now more than ever municipalities need new tools to deal with new responsibilities and new expectations. Municipalities are playing an ever greater role in the lives of Manitobans, as the days of simply collecting garbage and plowing roads are long gone. Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants. This has left many municipalities to question whether the current system is tenable any longer.

It is because of the importance of this issue that we are bringing it to every Cabinet Minister we meet this year. And it is also the only issue we are bringing to every MLA we meet with this year as part of our Lobby Days. We believe it is essential that every elected official and decision maker in the province understands the importance of this issue.

Currently, Manitoba municipalities are more reliant on provincial and federal grants than any other province in Canada. While in some cases these types of programs are necessary (for example large-scale infrastructure projects), it leaves municipalities having to compete against one another for limited dollars and restricts a municipality's ability to properly plan for much needed investment. The amount in grant programs like the recent Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is nowhere near the total demand, meaning there is no guarantee much needed projects will ever see funding.

Overreliance on grants and transfers leaves municipalities without the tools required to meet demands. Many issues raised by municipalities are really issues of access to revenue when stripped down to their core. For example, the need to remove education tax from property is

really a municipal revenue issue, as municipalities see education tax as eroding the property tax, which is the single greatest source of municipal revenue. Over the last number of years we have seen more and more municipalities speaking out on the need for greater municipal revenue sources.

It is important that the federal and provincial governments' contribution to municipalities are not forgotten. Federally, municipalities have benefited from a GST rebate, the sharing of the federal gas tax and the new Building Canada Fund. The recent Federal Budget has made an unprecedented investment in infrastructure, which will benefit municipalities. Provincially, municipalities have benefited from the sharing of provincial income tax, the Building Manitoba Fund, and supports in several other areas. The message the AMM is hoping to convey is not that either order of government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite these efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.

Municipalities must have access to new revenue sources. A greater reliance on property taxes and provincial and federal grants has created an ever-widening chasm between municipal revenues and needs, leaving future generations with what is quickly becoming an insurmountable infrastructure deficit.

A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year. For a community of 1,000 people, this means an investment of roughly \$185,000 in their local infrastructure, or \$370,000 for a community of 2,000 people. A community such as Thompson could see close to \$2.5 million while Winnipeg would expect to see over \$117 million. Although these amounts alone will not erase the infrastructure deficit in Manitoba, it would be a positive first step.

Other provinces have recently made significant strides to address municipal infrastructure needs, notably in Saskatchewan. In their 2009 Provincial Budget, the Saskatchewan Government made an impressive commitment in establishing the new Municipal Operating Grants program through consultations with Saskatchewan's two municipal associations. The program provides \$167

million, including \$107 million to urban municipalities, \$48 million to rural municipalities, and \$12 million to northern communities. This is equivalent to 90 percent of one point of PST (from 2007-08 Public Accounts). In 2010-11 and subsequent years, the Saskatchewan Government has committed to allocating the equivalent of 100 percent of one point of PST to municipalities. This funding is in addition to January's announcement of the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program that provides funding to Saskatchewan municipalities to strengthen the provincial economy. This program allocates \$100 million on a per capita basis to assist municipalities in making much-needed infrastructure investments. This type of commitment stands in stark contrast to the additional \$4 million Manitoba municipalities received in the 2009 Provincial Budget.

The AMM understands that providing additional revenues to municipalities may become more difficult as the economy continues to fluctuate. While economic projections can never be taken as absolute fact, they are often a prophetic divining rod on economic times. However what should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has investigated this principle in depth and has found in their 2008 study "Municipal Infrastructure- Macroeconomic impacts of spending and level-of government financing" that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent, or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms. While this would erode slightly over time with consistent investment, over a four year period it would still result in meaningful gains to the economy, dropping to a 0.6 percent increase in the final year.

The resulting investment would be felt in the employment sector as well, since a great number of industries would benefit. A \$1 billion investment in 2008 would add 11,500 new jobs, in industries from labour and material suppliers through to architects and engineers.

Giving municipalities access to additional revenues, will translate to stronger investment in our communities. The Institute for Research on Public Policy has shown that providing adequate

infrastructure has both direct and indirect benefits for private-sector manufacturing.

Infrastructure is an intermediate input into the production process, with businesses locating where they have access to water, hydro and transportation. New roads reduce fuel costs and haul times. Access to high quality (and adequate) water reduces input costs. There is also evidence that increased investments in public infrastructure allow private companies to use labour inputs more intensively, translating into more jobs.

Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived. The national municipal infrastructure deficit is in excess of \$123 billion for current infrastructure with another \$115 billion needed for new infrastructure to keep pace with other developed nations. Left to deal with this ballooning deficit alone armed only with property taxes and grants, it will continue to grow exponentially. Alternatively, providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address this growing deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.

The time has come for a new approach to municipal funding. The expectations of today's municipalities are greater than any time in history. Regrettably so are the financial challenges facing municipalities. For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

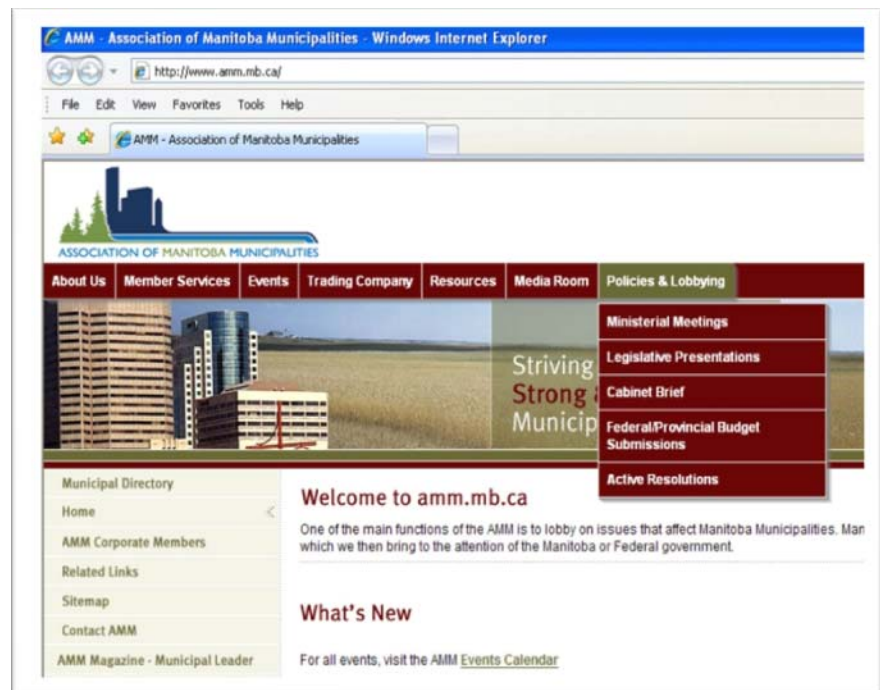
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## AMM Website

The AMM website is located at [www.amm.mb.ca](http://www.amm.mb.ca).

It features a comprehensive **Policy & Lobbying** Section including:

- **Ministerial Meetings**—all AMM position papers presented during our meetings with Provincial Cabinet Ministers are available here.
- **Legislative Presentations**—bill presentations and written submissions are included in this section.
- **Cabinet Brief**—our annual brief to the Premier and Cabinet includes a snapshot of all current AMM issues.
- **Budget Submissions**—both our Federal and Provincial budget submissions are highlighted.
- **Active Resolutions**—this searchable online database includes each of the AMM's almost 200 active resolutions.



Other areas of interest include AMM news releases, bi-weekly news bulletins, the Municipal Leader quarterly magazine, annual report and AMM event calendar.

The AMM website is updated daily and receives between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors each month.

 <http://www.amm.mb.ca/>