

Meeting of the
**Association of
Manitoba
Municipalities**



with

The Honourable Ron Lemieux

Minister of Transportation and Government
Services

January 26th, 2005

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A) Executive Summary

1. Vision 20/20

- The public consultations that occurred are a positive step to guarantee support for the initiative and to ensure that the needs of the public are being represented. The AMM is pleased to represent Manitoba municipalities on this committee.
- However, these consultations began in 2002 and a final report has yet to be completed. The Vision's ultimate success and the continued support of stakeholders are dependent on completing the blueprint and implementing its results.
- With limited funding accessible at both the Provincial and the Federal levels, it is critical that the Province develop a transportation blueprint for Manitoba to maximize available funds. The transportation infrastructure deficit that currently exists in Manitoba continues to grow and needs immediate attention.

The AMM urges the Province to move forward with Vision 20/20 by completing the implementation plan for this transportation blueprint, and taking action on the plan once in place. As well, the AMM would like an update on the progress of Vision 20/20 and when the final blueprint will be completed.

2. Reinstating the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program

- Municipal airports in Manitoba have, until recently, relied heavily upon the assistance of the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program (MACAP) and municipalities are concerned with and disappointed in the Province's decision to terminate the program.
- The intent of MACAP was to provide assistance to smaller airports that are not eligible for funding from the federal assistance program.
- Airports are a vital part of municipal economies and meet the needs of the surrounding communities. They are one component of the overall transportation system of the province. Their significance to municipal economies cannot be downplayed as they are an important link to industry, as well as a necessity to provide valuable health services.
- With the canceling of MACAP in the summer of 2004, airport owners/operators have been struggling under the financial pressures. The AMM is concerned that the unilateral decision to cancel this program is the first step in the Provincial Government's aim of devolving itself of any role in providing assistance to Manitoba's municipal airports.
- The AMM was pleased however to hear Transportation and Government Services Minister Ron Lemieux's commitment at the recent AMM Convention to revisit the removal of MACAP in light of the numerous concerns raised by municipalities.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to reinstate the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program and to continue to provide much needed assistance to municipally owned and operated airports in Manitoba.

3. Bridge Co-Operative Program

- Bridge repairs and maintenance can be expensive due to higher engineering costs, and municipalities find that maintaining, repairing and constructing bridges is difficult in light of these costs.
- These costs are further exacerbated by higher engineering costs required by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as the Provincial Government's decision to extend the retail sales tax to some engineering work.
- In light of these additional costs, municipalities require programs like the Bridge Co-Operative Program more than ever.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to reinstate the Bridge Co-Operative Program to assist municipalities with much need work.

4. Increases to the Highways Capital Budget

- Manitoba's deteriorating highway system remains one of the most important issues for all Manitoba municipalities. Manitoba's highways have continued to deteriorate as a result of inadequate funding and poor maintenance and the result is the unsafe highway conditions that currently exist.
- The current five-year, \$600 million program the Provincial Government has implemented remains insufficient to address the current needs of Manitoba's highways. Manitoba's increasing transportation infrastructure deficit has been estimated at \$3.4 billion and it continues to rise yearly. Over a ten year period, this will require an investment of \$340 million a year to address.
- An additional concern is that funding that has been allocated to the Department of Transportation and Government Services for highway construction and repair is being returned to general revenues at the end of each year if it is unused. This funding has been allocated to the department and should be used in the year allocated or held over to the followed construction season. This will allow the dollars allocated to highways to be used for highway work.
- Highways are a critical component of Manitoba's transportation system and additional funding is necessary to ensure a safe, reliable, efficient highway system for all Manitobans. The current financial commitment is not addressing the growing rate of deterioration, and there must be a renewed investment by the Province to address this deficiency.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to make a greater financial commitment to the highways capital and maintenance budgets to

address the current deficit, which is currently estimated at \$340 million annually for repair and maintenance. The AMM also urges the Department of Transportation and Government Services to use of all of the funding it has been allocated for highways for highway maintenance in that year's operating budget so that funding goes where it is intended.

5. Sufficient Funding for Highway Repairs in Urban Centres

- In recent years there has been a significant increase in vehicle and truck traffic using provincial highways in urban centres that has resulted in increasingly unacceptable road conditions, which pose a safety concern for local residents.
- Urban municipalities should not be left to maintain and upgrade these roads, as they are a Provincial responsibility.
- Municipal budgets are over-extended and municipal governments are not in the position to take on additional costs and responsibilities.
- Current available programs, such as grant-in-aid programs, are relied upon to upgrade streets and roads in urban centres, however the funding available from this program is limited at \$1.3 million, which is insufficient to address the reconstruction and upgrading needed.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to address these highway concerns by setting aside sufficient funds annually that are designated for urban highway renewal, reconstruction and upgrading in urban centres.

6. Education Funding

- Education remains the number one concern for municipalities as the current model of taxation is not sustainable and a new taxation model is needed
- While the AMM was pleased to see the Province recognize the importance of this issue with the recent commitment in the Throne Speech of an immediate reduction in education taxes on farmland, municipal property taxes should be used to fund strictly municipal services, and a complete removal of education funding from all property classes is needed.
- The AMM strongly supports the need for high quality education in all areas of the Province, yet maintains that other sources of Provincial revenue are more appropriate than property taxation to fund education. While every citizen should contribute to education funding, this does not occur under the current regressive system of property taxation.
- The AMM was pleased with the commitment of further reductions in the 2005 Budget beyond the 50% reduction on farmland and believes relief is needed on all property classes, as at present, there is an unfair reliance on property owners to fund an education system that contributes so much to the prosperity of Manitoba.

Consequently, the AMM would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the removal of education funding from property. The AMM believes a clear five-year plan is needed where the end result is the total removal of education funding from property.

7. Land Use and Water Resource Planning

- Since new water legislation is forthcoming and the Planning Act is currently under review, a municipal perspective must be represented as legislation is formulated.
- The first municipal priority for land use and water resource planning legislation is to recognize local authority.
- The need to recognize local interests pertains to the inclusion of consultation processes within land use and water resource planning legislation.
- The second municipal priority relates to the responsibilities held by the Provincial and municipal governments regarding effective land use and water resource planning.
- The AMM is concerned that municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will be expected to take on significant administrative and financial obligations in order to provide additional services.
- The Provincial Government must consider the impacts of adding new responsibilities to their own operations since requiring all municipalities and planning districts to create a development plan will increase the demand for the ministerial approval process.
- The Provincial Government must provide support for municipalities that lack the resources to meet the new legislative requirements.

The AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that legislation and regulations related to land use and water resource planning are responsive to municipal concerns, including the need for local authority and a balance between Provincial and municipal government responsibilities.

B) Departmental Issues

1. Vision 20/20

Through 2020 – Manitoba's Transportation Vision, the Province is working with the public and stakeholders to identify the needs and goals of Manitoba's transportation system. The AMM is supportive of this initiative, and is pleased to represent municipalities on the Vision 20/20 Steering Committee.

The public consultations that took place have demonstrated a positive effort to guarantee public support for the initiative, and to ensure that the needs of the public are adequately addressed. However, these consultations were initiated in September 2002, and the final blueprint is yet to be completed. The Vision's ultimate success and the continued support of stakeholders is dependent on completing the blueprint and moving forward with implementing its results.

With limited funding accessible at both the Provincial and the Federal levels, it is critical that the Province develop a transportation blueprint for Manitoba to maximize available funds.

The transportation infrastructure deficit that currently exists in Manitoba continues to grow and needs immediate attention.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to move forward with Vision 20/20 by completing the implementation plan for this transportation blueprint, and taking action on the plan once in place. As well, the AMM would like an update on the progress of Vision 20/20 and when the final blueprint will be completed.

2. Reinstating the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program (MACAP)

A trend that has caused some alarm for municipal governments has been the decision of the Provincial Government to terminate needed transportation financial assistance programs. Municipal airports have, until recently, relied heavily upon the assistance of MACAP and municipalities are disappointed in the Provincial Government's decision to terminate the program. The intent of MACAP was to provide assistance to smaller airports that are not eligible for funding from the federal assistance program. Airport services are a vital part of municipal economies and meet the needs of the surrounding communities. The AMM appreciates the variety of transportation challenges that exist across Manitoba that require increased and dedicated funds, however airports are similarly important and should be seen as one component of the overall transportation system of the province. Their significance to municipal economies cannot be downplayed as they are an important link to industry, and often a prerequisite to attract some types of industry, as well as a necessity to provide valuable health services such as Life Flight.

The Province cancelled MACAP in the summer of 2004 and without its assistance, airport owners/operators have been struggling under the financial pressures. The AMM is concerned that the unilateral decision to cancel this program is the first step in the Provincial Government's aim of devolving itself of any role in providing assistance to Manitoba's municipal airports. This is an issue that was brought forward at the 2003 AMM Convention and continues to be a concern for municipal governments. The AMM was pleased however to hear Transportation and Government Services Minister Ron Lemieux's commitment at the recent AMM Convention to revisit the removal of MACAP in light of the numerous concerns

raised by municipalities. This is a valuable program and the AMM urges the Province to reinstate MACAP immediately.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to reinstate the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program and to continue to provide much needed assistance to municipally owned and operated airports in Manitoba.

AMM Resolution Number 42 - 2004

Topic: Reinstatement of the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program

Sponsor(s): Town of Russell

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services; Manitoba Finance

WHEREAS the Manitoba Government through its Manitoba Airports Capital Assistance Program provided contributions for rural airports to ensure the safety and efficiency of rural airports;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has suspended the program effective 2004;

AND WHEREAS services such as Life Flight depends on accessing rural communities by means of local airports;

AND WHEREAS many rural airports struggle to raise sufficient funds for operating costs and have little or no capacity to raise monies for its capital improvements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to reinstate the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program immediately and ensure the continued viability for local airports.

AMM Resolution Number 39 - 2003

Topic: Retaining Provincial Ownership of Small Airports

Sponsor(s): RM of Kelsey

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services

WHEREAS the operation and maintenance of small airports is vital to rural and Northern communities;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has approached municipalities to take over the control and maintenance of rural airports;

AND WHEREAS Provincial Government funding is necessary to keep small airports operational and viable;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to retain ownership of small airports and provide more service grants to keep airports operational.

3. Bridge Co-Operative Program

A further example of the trend that appears to be developing is the Provincial Government's decision to terminate the Bridge Co-operative Program. Bridge repairs and maintenance can be expensive due to higher engineering costs, and municipalities find that maintaining, repairing and constructing bridges is difficult in light of these costs. Municipalities are faced with a number of cost escalators in doing work on municipal bridges, including higher engineering costs due to Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans requirements. This is further exacerbated by the Provincial Government's decision to extend the retail sales tax to some engineering work. With these additional costs, municipalities require programs like the Bridge Co-operative Program more than ever. Consequently the AMM would like to see a commitment to reinstating these programs to provide assistance to municipalities.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to reinstate the Bridge Co-Operative Program to assist municipalities with much need work.

AMM Resolution Number 47 - 2004

Topic: Bridge Co-Operative Program

Sponsor(s): RM of Glenwood

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services; Manitoba Finance

WHEREAS the maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of municipal bridges is very costly for municipalities;

AND WHEREAS major municipal bridge projects have in the past been costs shared on a 50:50 basis by the Province through its Rural Municipal Bridge Co-Operative Program;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has discontinued the Bridge Assistance Program thereby placing a huge increase on bridge costs for rural municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to reinstate the Rural Municipal Bridge Co-Operative Program.

4. Increases to the Highways Capital Budget

One of the most important issues for all Manitoba municipalities is the construction and maintenance of highways. An efficient highway system links small communities with larger urban centers and provides opportunities for industry, investment, travel, and tourism. The trucking industry often selects to travel through the United States because of the well-maintained Interstate System designed to meet this industry's needs. The resultant economic benefits that relate to commercial transport by vehicle, including room and board, vehicle repairs and purchase of fuel, remain in the United States.

Manitoba's highways have been deteriorating for some time and require a renewed investment from the Province. The deteriorating highway system is a result of a combination of inadequate funding and poor maintenance. The end result of this neglect is the unsafe highway conditions that currently exist. Our membership consistently expresses to our association that the deteriorating provincial roads in their municipalities pose a considerable risk to residents. A significant increase in funding for highways is needed to prevent further deterioration and to ensure Manitoba's highways system is safe.

Manitoba's increasing transportation infrastructure deficit has been estimated at \$3.4 billion and it continues to rise yearly. Over a ten year period, this will require an investment of \$340 million a year to address. The current five-year \$600 million program the Provincial Government has implemented is insufficient to address the current needs of Manitoba's highways. Manitoba will be entering into its fourth year of this highway capital program, committing \$130 million this coming year, far below the \$340 million needed annually. The deterioration of the Province's roads requires an enhanced commitment and continued

investment from the Province beyond the current rate. It is not preventing further deterioration, nor it is keeping up with the rate of deterioration. This deficit will continue to grow without a renewed funding commitment by the Province.

A further concern is with funding that has been allocated to the Department of Transportation and Government Services for highway construction and repair but is being returned to general revenues at the end of each year if it is unused. This funding has been allocated to the department and should be used in the year allocated or held over to the following construction season. This will allow the dollars allocated to highways to be used for highway work. An increase in the highways budget is meaningless unless the funding goes where it is intended.

Highways are a critical component of Manitoba's transportation system and additional funding is necessary to ensure a safe, reliable, efficient highway system for all Manitobans. The current financial commitment is not addressing the growing rate of deterioration, and there must be a renewed investment by the Province to address this deficiency.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to make a greater financial commitment to the highways capital and maintenance budgets to address the current deficit, which is currently estimated at \$340 million annually for repair and maintenance.

AMM Resolution Number 25 - 2002

Topic: Increase in the Highways Capital Budget

Sponsor(s):

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services; Manitoba Finance

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province for an increase in the highways capital budget to \$240 million for the fiscal year 2005/06.

AMM Resolution Number 83 - 2001

Topic: Maintenance of Provincial Gravel Roads

Sponsor(s):

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services

WHEREAS the Province is responsible for maintaining provincial roads;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Highways has not provided adequate maintenance to provincial roads to the point where those roads have become impassable at various times;

AND WHEREAS the provincial gravel roads are often impassable at certain times of the year;

AND WHEREAS municipal roads take added traffic because provincial roads are in such poor conditions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to maintain provincial gravel roads to a standard that would allow greater use on a year-round basis.

AMM Resolution Number 10 – 1999

Topic: Funding for Road Infrastructure

Sponsor(s): RM of Clanwilliam; Town of Erickson

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services; Transport Canada

WHEREAS Manitoba has been subjected to rail line abandonment and the construction of inland grain terminals which has resulted in an increase of heavy truck traffic;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have now experienced first hand the increased costs associated with road repairs and maintenance that is being required to keep our roads in a passable state as a result of this heavy truck traffic;

AND WHEREAS the present dollars being put into road infrastructure do not meet the demand for road upgrading;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities request the provincial and federal governments to provide increased funding for road infrastructure.

6. Sufficient Funding for Highway Repairs in Urban Centres

The provincial highway system runs through numerous urban centres across Manitoba. In recent years there has been a significant increase in vehicle and truck traffic resulting in increasingly unacceptable road conditions. These roads pose a safety concern and are in need of repair. These highways are the responsibility of the Province and their maintenance and upgrading is not being completed.

Urban municipalities should not be left to maintain and upgrade these roads, as they are a Provincial responsibility. Municipal budgets are over-extended and municipal governments are not in the position to take on additional costs and responsibilities. Current available programs, such as grant-in-aid programs, are relied upon to upgrade streets and roads in urban centres, however the funding available from this program is limited at \$1.3 million, which is insufficient to address the reconstruction and upgrading needed.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Province to address these highway concerns by setting aside sufficient funds annually that are designated for urban highway renewal, reconstruction and upgrading in urban centres.

AMM Resolution Number 39 – 2004

Topic: Sufficient Funding for Urban Highways

Sponsor(s): Town of Roblin

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services

WHEREAS Provincial highway systems pass through many urban centres in Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the maintenance and upgrading of these highways is a provincial responsibility;

AND WHEREAS the tremendous increase of vehicle and truck traffic through urban centres in recent years has created deplorable road conditions as well as safety concerns for urban municipalities;

AND WHEREAS current available programs such as “grant in aid” or the Prairie Grain Road Program do not address the issue of reconstruction and the upgrading of these provincial highways passing through urban centres;

AND WHEREAS urban municipalities cannot address these road and traffic issues on their own since it is out of their jurisdiction;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to address urban Provincial highway issues by setting aside sufficient funds annually specifically geared for urban highway renewal, reconstruction and upgrading in the smaller urban centres of Manitoba.

AMM Resolution Number 41 – 2004

Topic: Increased Funding for Grant-in-Aid

Sponsor(s): Town of Roblin

Department(s): Manitoba Transportation and Government Services

WHEREAS urban municipalities rely upon grant-in-aid programs to upgrade streets and roads in urban centres;

AND WHEREAS the funding available to municipalities for the grant-in-aid program currently at \$1.3 million is grossly inadequate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to increase the funding available for grant-in-aid programs to allow more municipalities greater access to these programs.

C) General Issues

5. Education Funding

For 2005, the AMM has identified education funding to be its top priority. The ongoing need to shift education funding away from property taxes was demonstrated when our membership passed a resolution requesting that the Province develop a new taxation model that removes school tax levies from all properties. The current model is not sustainable and further action must be taken to relieve the pressures on municipal property taxes.

The recent Throne Speech included a significant first step that was much appreciated by the AMM membership. A 33 per cent reduction in farmland property taxes will assist an agricultural community that has experienced ongoing pressure as a result of BSE and consecutive years of poor weather conditions. The prospect of a further reduction in the 2005 Budget to 50 per cent will also lessen the negative impact of past years. This commitment of \$33 million over two budget years is an appropriate beginning to the process of separating education funding from property. Municipal property taxes should be used to fund strictly municipal services, and reducing the education portion of property tax will facilitate this process.

The Province has also made reference to further education tax relief being unveiled in the next budget. In order for further action to incorporate municipal interests, education tax relief must equitably be applied to all classes of property. Phasing out the residential Education Support Levy (ESL) is an essential part of this initiative and is certainly beneficial to residential landowners. However, reductions in education tax relief should be available to all property owners since it is incongruous for education funding to be associated with

property. At the same, a shift away from property should not justify a reduced investment in the education system. The AMM strongly supports the need for high quality education in all areas of the Province, yet maintains that other sources of Provincial revenue are more appropriate than property taxation. While every citizen should contribute to education funding, this does not occur under the current regressive system of property taxation. At present, there is an unfair reliance on property owners to fund an education system that contributes so much to the prosperity of Manitoba. Consequently, the AMM would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the removal of education funding from property. The AMM believes a clear five-year plan is needed where the end result is the total removal of education funding from property. Budget 2005 should therefore build on what the Provincial Government has already accomplished to ensure that all Manitobans fund education equitably.

An important aspect of this issue is that municipalities are required to provide a wide variety of services while relying almost exclusively on property taxes as a source of revenue. Until methods of municipal financing are drastically changed, municipalities must be empowered to control the level of local property taxation without having to use this mechanism for Provincial purposes such as education. The current funding system places an unfair burden on property owners and hinders the ability of municipalities to provide property services, such as infrastructure improvements. The AMM appreciates that the Province has begun to take action to improve this situation and looks forward to working with the Provincial Government to develop a long-term plan to shift education funding away from property taxation.

Consequently, the AMM would like to see the Province take the opportunity presented by Budget 2005 and make a clear policy statement on its intended direction regarding the removal of education funding from property. The AMM believes a clear five-year plan is needed where the end result is the total removal of education funding from property.

6. Land Use and Water Resource Planning

Municipalities are highly involved in planning for both land use and water management purposes. As a main stakeholder in these processes, the AMM has appreciated the opportunity to actively participate in the consultations regarding the legislation that affects these two types of municipal planning efforts. Since new water legislation is forthcoming and the Planning Act is currently under review, a municipal perspective must be represented as legislation is formulated. There are two major municipal considerations that must be given priority in any new legislation and these are consistent for both land use and water resource planning. The first pertains to recognizing local authority regarding planning matters. The second consideration relates to the division of responsibility between municipalities and the Provincial Government.

Municipalities are in the best position to make the majority of planning decisions since they represent a local body of knowledge and expertise. For this reason, the first municipal priority for land use and water resource planning legislation is to recognize local authority. The review of the Planning Act will provide several opportunities to meet this objective, such as ensuring that municipalities have the final say in all land use planning decisions. In order to guarantee local control over land use planning, there should be no appeals process to another jurisdiction that supersedes municipal land use decisions. This is very important to AMM members as councils are elected officials with first hand knowledge of suitable land use within their jurisdiction. They also have a responsibility to objectively consider the consequences for all stakeholders and to establish a plan on that basis. An appeal process beyond this level would undermine the authority of the municipal council. Similarly, appeals to the Municipal Board should only be considered when a critical mass of ratepayers

formally objects to a land use decision. Through these policies, local interests will be upheld based on the authority of the municipal council to undertake effective long-term land use planning.

The need to recognize local interests also pertains to the inclusion of consultation processes within land use and water resource planning legislation. Meaningful consultations provide a vehicle for municipalities to express their concerns and ensure that these concerns will be taken into account. Such consultations should occur while developing the legislation and its accompanying regulations. This will be particularly important regarding water resource planning since the regulations are expected to articulate crucial details regarding the implementation of the Water Protection Act. Local expertise should also contribute to the development and implementation of watershed management plans since this type of expertise is based on historical information about the area. In addition, the review of the Planning Act should include public consultation, as it is essential that municipalities have the opportunity to express their specific views and garner a deeper understanding of the specific details of the proposed act.

New procedures within the Planning Act should also allow for public input, such as the environmental approvals processes. While the Province is well-equipped to conduct environmental assessments through the Technical Review Committees, the process would benefit from the inclusion of local input. The ongoing use of public consultation as required under the Planning Act also supports the ability of local authorities to effectively undertake land use planning. Community consultations are therefore critically important to land use

and water resource planning and the inclusion of consultation feedback will strengthen support for legislation and regulations.

The second municipal priority relates to the responsibilities held by the Provincial and municipal governments regarding effective land use and water resource planning. In particular, the extent of new municipal responsibilities remains unclear for the Water Protection Act and the Planning Act review. As a result, the AMM is concerned that municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will take on significant administrative obligations in order to provide additional services. Due to the limited resources available to these organizations, the AMM cannot support policies that unfairly burden local authorities. Therefore, minimizing the uncertainty surrounding the responsibilities of municipalities, conservation districts and planning districts will clarify the impacts of the new policies and contribute to a greater understanding of the legislation.

The Provincial Government must also consider the impacts of adding new responsibilities to their own operations. For instance, requiring all municipalities and planning districts to create a development plan will increase the demand for the ministerial approval process. Presently, municipalities view the approvals process as too lengthy and the AMM is concerned that an increased demand for development plan approvals will further delay the approvals process and plan implementation. This concern will potentially impact the public hearing process where technical staff from the Province is required to attend. The Province is most appropriately positioned to address environmental concerns, however the presence of Provincial representatives at public hearings will facilitate understanding and acceptance from communities. Development plan approvals and public hearings provide municipalities

with important tools to accomplish community planning, therefore the Province should avoid delays in completing these processes and ensure effective information sharing.

Administrative responsibilities must often be supplemented by additional technical requirements that may not be available to all municipalities. Integrating land use and water resource issues through comprehensive planning will therefore require additional financial resources. In order to undertake the type of detailed planning that is expected, mapping and other technical services will be required. For instance, the Water Protection Act refers to the identification of watershed quality management zones however, in many cases, municipalities do not have the necessary levels of expertise or financial resources to meet this requirement. A similar situation could arise if development plans become mandatory for all municipalities or if the need to map agricultural zones is part of the reviewed Planning Act. For this reason, the Provincial Government must provide support for municipalities that lack the resources to meet the new legislative requirements.

Land use and water resource planning are very important for municipalities since each has wide-ranging impacts on the way municipalities function and the development that occurs within their boundaries. Environmental considerations are very important to municipalities as they strive to balance the protection of natural resources with community development. Both types of planning ensure that municipalities are implementing a long-term approach and considering the impacts of current actions on the future of their communities. The AMM is supportive of the Provincial Government's efforts to improve land use planning and water resource management in Manitoba. Due to the strong interconnection between land use and water resource planning, municipal concerns are consistent across these two issues. The

legislation that is currently under consideration will only be effective to the extent that it incorporates the municipal concerns outlined above.

The AMM urges the Provincial Government to ensure that legislation and regulations related to land use and water resource planning are responsive to municipal concerns, including the need for local authority and a balance between Provincial and municipal government responsibilities.