

Request for Decision

Title	Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Advocacy Letter
Proposed Motion	That Council direct the Mayor to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding Sturgeon County's input on Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework legislation.
Administrative Recommendation	Administration recommends that Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, specifically addressing the need to maintain the Growth Management Board exemption related to Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) within the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> (MGA).
Previous Council / Committee Direction	None.
Report	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of Alberta is conducting stakeholder engagement on ICF legislation. This legislation is in the MGA under Part 17.2. ICFs are legal agreements between neighbouring municipalities that specify what and how services are funded and delivered between communities. These agreements are mandatory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities who are members of the same growth management board (GMB) are exempt from having to form ICFs. Sturgeon County is a member of a GMB (the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board), and therefore is exempt from forming ICFs with five of its municipal neighbours— City of Edmonton, City of St. Albert, City of Fort Saskatchewan, Town of Morinville, Parkland County, and Strathcona County. Sturgeon County has ten ICFs actively in place—five with urban neighbours and five with rural neighbours. Both provincial municipal associations (Rural Municipalities Association (RMA) and Alberta Municipalities (AB Munis) are advocating for updates and improvements to the ICF process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AB Munis (the association representing Alberta's urban municipalities) is advocating for the removal of the GMB exemption.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GMB exemption currently exists in legislation because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Province removed the requirement under red tape reduction; and ○ The provisions covered through the ICF process are already managed by GMBs. • Removing the GMB exemption could lead to significant resource requirements (human and financial impact) by rural municipalities, (largely due to the creation of new service agreements). • Sturgeon County is a member of the GMB Rural Caucus (a committee structured within the RMA environment). During the 2024 RMA Spring Convention, the committee voted in favour of each municipal member sending an advocacy letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs related to maintaining the GMB exemption (see Attachment 1). • In addition to the letter noted above, Sturgeon County has also submitted this feedback to the Government of Alberta via a survey submission. • RMA continues to monitor the situation, and has two active resolutions related to ICFs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ER1-23F: limiting of third-party services and funding demands by urban municipalities, particularly when these demands arise from their independent decisions and are based on an assumption that rural municipalities will subsidize a portion of their costs or shortages. ○ 7-22F: amend the MGA to define “core municipal services” for the purpose of ICFs and mandate that municipalities present verifiable costs to justify cost sharing for the aforementioned defined core municipal services; ensure that members of a growth management board are not required to enter into an intermunicipal collaboration framework with each other. <p><u>External Communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed letter forms part of Council’s public agenda package for April 23, 2024. <p><u>Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 17.2 of the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> (Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks) • Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation • Bill 25, <i>Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act</i> (2019)
Implication of Administrative Recommendation	<p><u>Strategic Alignment</u></p> <p>Collaborative Governance – Endorsing this letter reinforces Council’s commitment to ongoing collaboration with rural municipalities, especially with GMB Rural Caucus members.</p> <p>Planned Growth / Thriving Communities – Endorsing this letter enables joint advocacy to ensure rural municipalities are not paying more than their fair share.</p>

	<p>Operational Excellence – Allows for a future focused approach to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges with potential ICF/service delivery amendments.</p> <p><u>Organizational</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully advocating for maintaining the GMB exemption: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helps limit additional demands on Council and Administration that would otherwise be required for the development of new agreements and/or consideration of new services that would see additional funding requests to the County. ○ Combats potential duplication of work conducted by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board and its members. GMBs continue to work with members to develop growth and servicing plans that provide guidance on intermunicipal planning and service delivery for their respective regions. <p><u>Financial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the GMB exemption were removed, it is anticipated there would be a significant financial impact to Sturgeon County.
Alternatives Considered	Council could choose not to direct the Mayor to send an ICF advocacy letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
Implications of Alternatives	<p><u>Organizational</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Council does not send the advocacy letter, it would conflict with the GMB Rural Caucus vote and could potentially impact relationships and current and future advocacy efforts with the Caucus members. <p><u>Financial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Council does not send the advocacy letter, it could weaken the overall advocacy strategy and contribute to the GMB exemption being removed from legislation. This will have an unknown financial impact on Sturgeon County.
Follow up Action	1. Submit the ICF Advocacy Letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mayor's Office, April 2024).
Attachment(s)	1. Proposed ICF Advocacy Letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs
Report Reviewed by:	<p>Jennifer Lavallee, Director, Communications & Strategic Services</p> <p>Reegan McCullough, County Commissioner – CAO</p>

Strategic Alignment Checklist

Vision: *Offering a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and natural experiences, Sturgeon County is a municipality that honours its rural roots and cultivates desirable communities. Uniquely situated to provide world-class agricultural, energy, and business investment opportunities, the County prioritizes responsible stewardship and dreaming big.*

Guiding Principles: Collaboration | Accountability | Flexibility | Excellence | Safety | Future Readiness | Affordability | Innovation

Community Outcome	Not consistent	Consistent	N/A
Planned Growth			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally competitive to attract, grow and sustain diverse businesses; tenacious focus on new growth and innovation 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern broadband and digital capabilities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost, minimal red-tape regulations 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable and effective infrastructure planning; comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thriving Communities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces & trail systems; healthy and resilient 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging cultural, historical, and civic amenities; strong community identity and pride 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, welcoming, and diverse communities; small community feel and personal connection; commitment to high quality of life 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Stewardship			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air, land, and water; Carbon neutral municipal practices; circular economy opportunities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands; enhanced greening and biodiversity; safekeeping ecosystems 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development; partnerships with industry and others to drive emission reductions 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predictable and stable external relationships; volunteer partnerships 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful connections with Indigenous communities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing community consultation and engagement; transparent and action-oriented decision making based on sound rationale 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and informed debate; clear and supportive governance processes 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational Excellence			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and effective people – Council, Admin and Volunteers; continuous learning and improvement mindset; nimble and bold, with strong leadership 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality cost-effective service delivery; robust procurement and operational practices and policies; asset management and performance measurement; careful debt and reserve stewardship; long-term financial planning and sustainability 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future focused thinking to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative revenue generation and service delivery models integrated strategic and business planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>