



# Municipal Planning Within the Land Use Framework

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# Context: Observations based on 4 different projects

1. Sustainability Planning in Rural Canada (UofA Press)
2. “Municipal Governance Reform and Land Use Planning in Alberta” Alberta Land Institute. w/ N. Finseth & R. Summers. Nov. 2013-14
3. “Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops: Priorities and Scenarios For Long-Term Sustainability” Alberta Agricultural and Rural Development (April 2015-March 2016)
4. “Boom Bust – A Citizen’s Guide” w/ K. van Assche et al. (2016)

# 1) Emphasis upon planning in smaller/rural communities

- 300/305 communities in Alberta are “rural”
- Wide range of population and location
- Long-standing patterns of devolution, competition and capacity challenges (especially for small communities)
- 1 size-fits-all approach to legislation (MGA – still pending Phase 2 review)
- Variable approaches to planning/development/ “community”

# Land-Use Framework (LUF)

- 7 regions – loosely based on major watersheds
- Plans developed by interdepartmental committee under the Land Use Secretariat
- Secretariat receives recommendations from Regional Advisory Council (RAC)
- All plans must be approved by Cabinet



Source:  
<http://www.albertacanada.com/business/statistics/land-use.aspx>





## 2) Mis-alignment of scale, regions and institutions?

- Wide variation in distribution of communities:region
- Questions of proportionality/representation/accountability between regional plans, RACs and Cabinet
- Balance between economic development and environmental concerns (cumulative effects)
- Legislated vs. operational realities

### 3) Issues of capacity and compliance

- Capacity: to decide AND to act (Kulig, Beckley, Hallstrom etc.)
- Small/rural communities face “double” or “triple” bind
  - Resources – taxes, grants, businesses
  - Planning/planners/HR
  - Administration/Compliance (ALSA)
    - Eg. Biodiversity Monitoring

## 4) Uncertainty and accountability

There are “democratic deficits” within the current structure:

- Strategic
- Institutional
- Participatory (asymmetries of regions)

There are uncertainties as to the future:

- Compliance
- Regionalization (What does THAT look like in Alberta?)
- Decision-making (Cabinet)