

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-Tern 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)

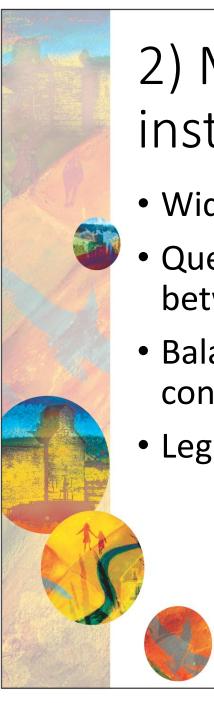
- 7 regions loosely based on major watersheds
- Plans developed by interdepartmental committee under the Land Use Secretariat
- Secretariat receives recommendations from Regional Advisory Council (RAC)
- All plans must be approved by Cabinet



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)