

REGIONAL AMA – SOUTH WEST – REQUEST FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION	Item: The Case for Regional Land Use Planning Services Date: October 2, 2019
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Background:

During regional meetings of the South West AMA committee, there was discussion around the need for planning services in response to the Province's new legislation respecting minimum planning standards. This discussion sparked a comparison of planning services amongst the municipal units in the region.

The result was mixed, many hired a contractor to do their planning work, and some recently had a retirement of a shared planner, and others have a full-time planner. The results of this work can be found in the attached document. We encourage you to read the details of the attachment at this time.

Through our connections at the AMA board and provincial subcommittees, we are aware that the Province is attempting to launch a funding stream for municipal modernization – they do not have a terms-of-reference developed yet to the best of our knowledge. The AMA regional committee saw an opportunity to request funds from the Province under this stream to engage a third party to lead, investigate and develop an intermunicipal model to deliver a regional land-use planning service – one that not only delivers a quality service to our collective municipalities, but integrates the work and planning across a region where possible.

We are confident that this model would be more successful in attracting and retaining professionals in this field, and could create a collaborative model that improves the service, and provides potential succession planning opportunities.

The cost of such a service is currently speculative. We are projecting the cost could approach \$75,000 on the higher end, which would mean the participating municipal units would be asked to inject up to \$7,500. Actual amount will differ, this is for illustration purposes based on collective CAO experience with this type of engagement. The allocation of municipal funding is being proposed as an average of uniform assessment calculation and population, as is often the case on regional sharing.

MGA considerations:

Allowable expenditure – planning services are a function of municipal delivery of service, meets the test of 65(A)

The ask:

We are collectively asking our municipal councils to respectfully consider supporting an application for funding under the “Provincial Municipal Modernization Fund” – the purpose of which would be to support a third-party recommendation on structure, staffing and other considerations to build a regional solution that suits the participating municipalities.

It should be noted that we are not making a financial request at this time, we are asking for Council’s endorsement of the application. Funding requests would follow.

Next steps – we respectfully request a response by the end of October for the municipal units willing to support this application, this way we can work on an application and submit it by late 2019 to early 2020. This is significant as the funding may expire on March 31, 2020, and we are attempting to get provincial funding before that date.

Suggested motion:

That Council support the application for provincial funding for a shared land use planning service, and that request be for 90% funding provincially, and the remaining 10% paid by participating municipalities if the application is successful.

NB – actual percentage acceptable to the Province may not be 90-10%. The participating municipalities will receive the result of the application for review.