



# MEDIA RELEASE #7

For immediate release  
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## REGIONALIZATION WORKING GROUP UPDATE

**THE WORKING GROUP ADDS A FOURTH CONSIDERATION** for the composition of the municipal council:

Bassano	Brooks	Newell	Mayor/Reeve	Total
1	4	5	1 elected at large	11
1	5	5	Internal Selection	11
1	4	5	Internal Selection	10
<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1 elected at large</b>	<b>12</b>

County representation is proposed to come from five wards versus 10, the current status quo. The Working Group requested the County provide a preferred “new” ward structure with estimated populations. Each municipality agreed to report back on their preferred choice of council composition along with any options that they will “not” support to help facilitate a model that will be acceptable to all.

**TAXATION POLICY** was discussed at length and there was unanimous support for a policy that recognizes “reduced rates” for rural residents where services are not as accessible or comparable to that in an urban setting. Each municipality will focus on what is a reasonable separation between Urban Residential and Rural Residential/Farm rates and provide recommendations for the next meeting. The Group agreed that once taxation rates are set, the rates need to be locked in for several years, subject to standard inflationary increases, to provide taxpayers with the full benefits of this proposed model. The Group further agreed that the taxation policy would set base mill rates and any specific area within the larger municipality would be able to have access to additional local capital and operational funding on a “user pay philosophy – through special taxation or local improvement levies.”

**SERVICE LEVELS** were briefly discussed with more to follow in future meetings. The Working Group was unanimous, in that, all service levels will be either kept as they are today or enhanced under the larger municipality. The Group agreed, if the decision is to proceed with full amalgamation, that a day or two be set aside to meet with key business stakeholders, non-profits, associations and other interested parties who need special consideration on dealing with potential impacts under a new model.

**ENHANCED COMMUNICATION OPTIONS** will be reviewed at the next meeting.

**SCHEDULE & TIMELINES** have been adjusted with Working Group meetings to move to twice monthly starting in July. Research and discussion on matters of electoral representation, taxation policy, financial transition, employees and labour agreements, bylaws and resolutions, and legislative exemptions will take place over the next four months, followed by public consultation and formal recommendations and decisions early next year.

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