

Should legislation provide municipalities with broad powers, enabling more flexibility and autonomy at the local level? Why or why not?

Responses

Liability is a consideration as well.

No one should have the control to the extent that there is no answerability.

If legislation is not going to be applied then it's useless.

Less restrictive legislation means government is allowing towns to do more which comes with more accountability. Towns could end up with more lawsuits, they will be less protected.

If a municipality acts outside its authority, what could be done? Participants were unsure. Perhaps a tribunal? Could complaint go to MAE?

You need checks and balances to ensure laws are followed

If town is acting outside broad authority MAE should investigate and takes steps based on investigation. (i.e. get rid of council - could be council picking on somebody)

Everyone needs a babysitter at the end of the day.

Must have accountability with more broad powers.

Checks and balance should be in place based on the level of local governance.

No appeal board available - causing grief for towns

Appeal board needs to be up and in place.

An appeal system should be in place to protect citizens.

If a community oversteps, the people need an appeal process.

Have an appeal process in place just to make sure. There also needs to be consequences.

Citizens should be protected and they are protected by civil law, and minister can step-in. Acting outside authority will need to be just as restrictive to protect citizens. Go to the appeal board or the minister to get information resolved.

Need effective and timely appeal board.

Hope council would be ethical enough to not take advantage.

Hard to clean up the town.

Given more autonomy, they will push boundaries and it will increase expectations.

Cost to municipality for all bylaws can get expensive, too much red tape

Too much authority has the potential to be misused.

Additional power and autonomy will put more pressure on staff.

In some ways, enabling municipalities is just downloading provincial government problems onto municipalities.

Opening authority feels like downloading responsibility.

Expertise in small communities are not there. Also lots of aged councillors.

Could revisit the concept of community councils.

More say in what we can do within town boundaries (i.e. crown land).

Decisions are not made at local level and are restrictive to economic development.
Some communities do not have the expertise to make some of these decisions.
Many people don't know the Act- municipal councillors.

Councillors may not be qualified or have the knowledge to be able to make sound decisions,

Time effective.

If more autonomy, MAE should provide more support to make sure it's followed.

Small communities cannot handle more power and autonomy.

More autonomy in some areas may work.

Currently, because there's such a variance of size, they're all given the same rights, but a bigger community/group could use more power.

A smaller town may not have capacity to have more responsibility.

Larger towns need certain regulations and clauses that smaller municipalities may not need.

A new Act that takes into account the size of the community (one Act for smaller communities and another for larger - different levels of power)

All depends on the town or the city- capable staff can have more power.

In some areas it is and some it is not.

Legislation for cities and towns should remain different.

Have different levels of broad powers based on classification of area (LSDs less power).

Larger communities should have more autonomy.

Should not be more power.

Prescriptive legislation protects citizens who may be at risk with council members with personal agendas or vendettas.

Prescriptive legislation mostly works.

Nice to have more power, but not worth it.

Should stay as is.

Works good as is.

Most towns should be treated the same under the same legislation. I don't see anything wrong with the Act the way it applies now.

Councillors at the table like the status quo right now.

Legislation currently protects towns from going outside their authority.

LSD's don't want more authority to deal with issues.

More power is not necessarily a good thing.

The current legislation is not too restrictive.

Dangerous to have too much power as there wouldn't be enough checks and balances - especially in smaller towns.

Yes - people should have more authority.

Yes, currently it is too restrictive (the Act is too prescriptive and not enabling enough).

Provincial government should not have a role in controlling - municipalities should have all control and they will protect their citizens.

More trust in municipalities and encourage good people to be involved in council and they will look out for their community.

Provide more authority in legislation, but use the word "may enforce" so the municipality has some flexibility. (i.e. animal control)

There are some areas we could make broader, but others more definitive.

Legislation is too constrictive

For municipalities there are multiple legislations that restricts power (ex. difficulty with Crown Lands acquisition and development - need to go through so many people)

We should provide town/municipality with broader powers and authority regardless of whether it is a town, city, etc.

All towns and cities should be treated the same

A lot of people would like black and white restrictive legislation, but there are towns that need more control and flexibility - likely those that are more sustainable.

Yes, the current legislation is too restrictive.

Inability to make decisions promptly can be an issue.

Yes, too restrictive now.

Such legislation might better endow personnel to act without requiring motions from council.

Going through levels of government is restrictive,

All towns should have same broad powers/authority as all other towns regardless of size and other criteria.

Authority depending on capacity is related to enforcement- so yes, authority should relate to capacity or size.

Yes, and should be easier to get government on side.

Too restrictive now.

If towns had those broad powers, you can prevent people from coming into your town doing such things.

Everyone should have the same power regardless of classification.

Yes it should, the reason why is that it allows for safer and better communities. If some changes are needed to be made, the municipality can do so without going to any higher levels of government. x4

Throw out the old and get something brand new with regards to legislation.

Yes they should have more authority - no one treated differently.

Out with the old in with the new.

Not too restrictive.

Need enabling legislation because it allows communities to adapt it to suit their own identity. All communities are different one size does not fit all.

Enabling legislation will allow municipalities to make decisions that are in the best interest of the community.

If legislation is broader it is less restrictive and open to interpretation.

Broad powers should be available

Current legislation is too restrictive - towns cannot be innovative.

Wait is too long for provincial government to get things done and we have professionals who can do the work.

Need to reduce red tape.

Too restrictive.

Towns should have more power.

Towns can move quicker on issues that matter to them.

Different powers should be provided evenly to every community - and they can determine what they use.

Table supports enabling legislation.

Capacity is important.

Shouldn't have to go to government with development regulations (give municipalities more power).

Need education to ensure that towns don't enact things they cannot enforce.

Regulations should not be the same for LSDs and larger towns.

No, too much flexibility isn't good.

Too much autonomy not a good thing.

LSD - more regulations and responsibility

More power needed.

Legislation is too restrictive.

LSDs are limited and should have more power depending on the area.

Town can't do anything and go to provincial government, but they won't, or can't, do anything because of municipal authority.

At least if authority is given to towns they can do something.

Impossible to deal with some situations now (i.e. derelict property).

Yes, legislation is too restrictive - can have broad power and be aware of operational deficits.

Provides protection for the communities with the current legislation.

Should authority depend on meeting some level of criteria? Not sure. Could include a lot of "mays" in the legislation language. But then you are not cleaning up the language.

Regulations are too difficult - too much red tape

Acts should set out certain and consistent guidelines (a con of having broad powers - some template).

Authority to enact regulations is too prescriptive and inflexible.

Too much flexibility needed for reinforcement - don't create too much flexibility.

Draft by laws around a template/guideline.

If we give communities more autonomy, how do we police it? Should the legislation be worded in a certain way to help with this?
(i.e. animal control)

Cities have more capacity to enforce it's authority.

Broad powers may be good but need to be able to enforce them.

Many towns have same issues with enforcement of powers.

When it comes to authority, small towns have no capacity to enforce anything.

RCMP presence in small areas is gone. They do not have enough manpower. Now councils are covering the shortfalls to best of their ability but they have no authority. No RCMP presence is detrimental to small towns. Why can't towns have authority to enforce minor infractions? Even ability to issue a warning then step up as need be. Legislation should include these things and provide standards for small towns to enforce.

Ticketing and enforcement is too restrictive, including setting fines.

Certain spheres that municipalities should not be engaged in – traffic, criminal, etc.

If instituting by-laws you need to be able to support it and enforce it.

Must be able to enforce bylaws.

Enforcement can be a challenge for many communities, especially with how the current Act limits powers to enforce by-laws.

Need support from Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment. Things would have to be enforced. Would like to see provincial government come in to enforce. Not just sending letters, need to impose penalties. Even with more authority no way to enforce it. No capacity.

Enforcement is the issue - no authority to enforce things, such as animal control.

Should not have to go to municipal affairs to enact and enforce by laws.

More power needs enforcement.

Re-enforcement of traffic laws (ex. Municipalities can issue tickets for speeding but need RCMP if driver is drunk, on cell phone - without RCMP would have to let them go)

Penalties - council should be disbanded (depending on severity - progressive discipline).

If the penalty is to withhold funds, should the entire town suffer because of the acts of one councillor?

There should be ability to refuse permits on account of taxation arrears.

Arbitrator should be available

If broader powers are given to towns, there should be an ombudsman to provide support on rules/legislation

Ombudsmen required to provide direction

Province should give up enforcement in favour of towns and regions.

Don't have capability to enforce.

We're jumping the gun - going to be nobody left beyond Come by Chance. We're all going to be one town/city.

Look at CBS - we're here in this area with a bridge separating communities, but we've all got our own empires we want to control.
Foolishness.

Number of citizens should determine the enforcement towns can have.

It's difficult to get volunteers to go for council. Would this deter?

LSDs should be able to name roads/streets.

LSDs should have the power to deal with properties (i.e. garbage, car wrecks).

Anything deemed a service should be available to both LSDs and towns (i.e. recreation facilities, trails, tourism related).

Applies to derelict house as well.

Faster way to deal with land (no legal process for expropriation).

Restrictions with land within town boundaries. Land is the foundation tied into economic and environmental development.

Control over crown land needs to be provided to towns. They should have control over what they put on crown land.

Botwood had a vacant building and demolished it, now new legislation forces towns to advertise land for sale so all residents have an opportunity. The bureaucracy involved makes it brutal to deal with, too much red tape.

The town should be able sell crown land to residents

Crown lands process is too restrictive (need Minister's approval and is impeding economic development)

Land sales and acquisitions municipalities have no power and should have more.

Need more power with regards to land use – crown lands process is cumbersome and takes too long. Would be much more efficient if handled locally. Residents end up doing what they want to do anyways because it takes so long.

Animal control - feel they do not have any power but should.

More power needed for certain things (i.e. building control, animal control).

Example: person in town has a dilapidated building. Only option town has now is to force owner to tear it down or tear down ourselves and send him the bill.

If town tore down the property we would have to go to court. Would like more powers to increase town taxes or other such options including leveling a fine for unsightly area.

Too restrictive in taxation.

More autonomy may cost more money.

Need resources to enforce power.

Need resources (have authority but need power).

More power and autonomy is more costly.

It's not necessarily about more autonomy but being provided the resources to act on the autonomy. If give more authority, need more resources to enforce that authority.

In some cases, if you don't have the financial ability, more autonomy does not help.

Only way to enforce some broader powers is to go to court. There are costs associated with this.

Once decisions are made based on legislation in any form, the resources need to be available within the municipality to carry out the actions involved.

The broad powers ought to be reflective of the resources the community has - the criteria for designation should be reflective of this.

Town needs more things from council than spending money to knock down houses.

LSDs need access to funding/grants to offer some services (i.e. museum, recreation).

Need more resources and support to enforce some by laws (more power and autonomy may not help - need more money and resources).

Why? Towns would not have resources that cities have - so they need accountability from a government or quasi government.

Councils are not trained to be able to accept more autonomy.

Mandatory training for councillors would be a good support if broad powers are implemented.

We can't talk to employees about things that need to be done, it has to go through the office (i.e. a repair needs to be done, Councillors can't just ask employees to do things).

Some towns have more authority than they should and a higher power should be making more decisions.

If you need a professional (i.e. engineer) - should need government approval.

Have to wait too long on MAE for things.

Need to have oversight to make sure towns don't overstep.

Third party review/input would help communities in interpreting how broader legislation can be applied.

Should be a combo of both - give them the leeway to do more than they can now, but with CLEARER guidelines from government.

Another agreement with the statement that we should have more responsibility but with more oversight/assistance from government.

Municipalities with lower capacity should not be given too much authority without some oversight from provincial government.

Should be more consultation from government departments.

More oversight from provincial government.

MAE needs to be able to provide more advice to communities.

More flexibility may not make a difference if communities do not have more support and resources from government (and quicker responses from government).

Government should have more power.

Municipal Affairs and Environment have too much say in what towns do, elected officials should have more say

Other pieces of provincial legislation fetters municipal authority.

City of St. John's is controlling everything when it comes to garbage collection.

Shared services.

If your town is sustainable, all rules should apply to you.

Higher percentage of council to agree on issues.

Must be prepared to follow through.

Need to have guideline.

Leave it up to municipalities to figure out what they want.