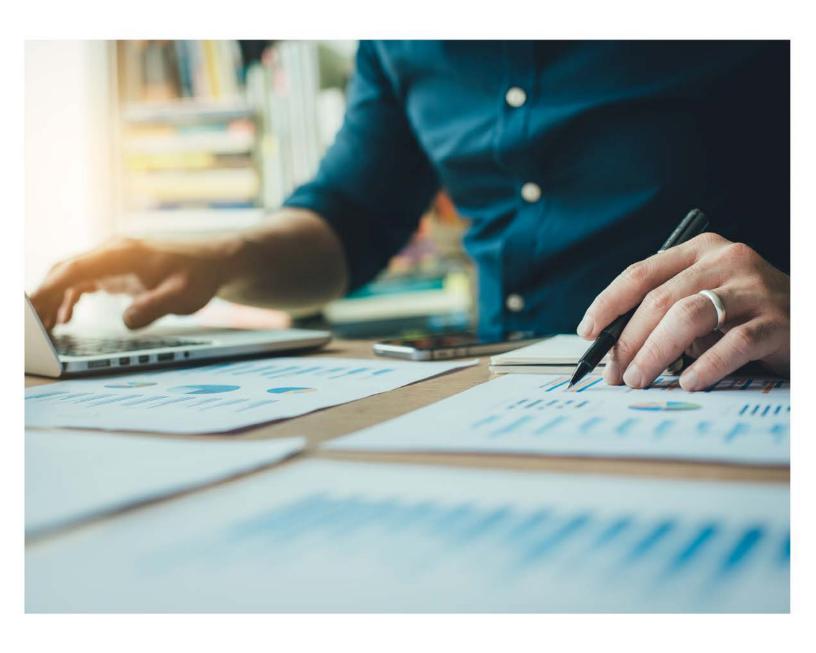
2020 Municipal indicator results



Albertan

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2 2020 Municipal Indicators

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2020 Municipal Indicator Report

Introduction

The purpose of a municipality, as defined in the *Municipal Government Act (MGA*), is to provide good government, services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, and to develop safe and viable communities.

Five years following the adoption and implementation of the Municipal Sustainability Strategy, it was recognized that a framework to evaluate the performance of municipalities must expand beyond measuring finances, assessment figures, and population change in the context of municipal viability.

During the development of the municipal indicators, the ministry consulted with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (now known as Alberta Municipalities), the Local Government Administration Association, the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators' Association, and the Association of Summer Villages of Alberta to develop a more comprehensive process to evaluate municipal performance. It was determined that the new indicators should:

- evaluate the current and long-term finances of a municipality;
- examine whether a municipality is investing in maintaining infrastructure critical to the health and safety of residents; and
- assess the ability of the municipality to provide services desired by the community.

Methodology

The thirteen municipal indicators use a broad range of data collected by Municipal Affairs, including financial, governance and community indicators that are derived from:

- Information provided by Alberta municipalities annually through audited financial statements and Financial Information Returns.
 - Financial Information Returns are a standard set of year-end reports, which capture detailed financial information for each municipality. The Financial Information Returns mirror the information contained within the municipal audited financial statements, and standardize the information into a data format.
- Municipal election results collected in accordance with the MGA and the Local Authorities Election Act.
 - For each municipal election, the municipality is required to report all candidates' information, election results and elected official information to the ministry.
- Municipal population data as published in the annual Municipal Affairs Population List (up to 2020) and population estimates prepared by Treasury Board and Finance (2021 and onwards).

- Up to the reporting year 2020, the Federal Census counts are used as a default data source for municipal population counts; however, municipalities were enabled to conduct a municipal census if they chose, provided they followed mandatory requirements as specified in the Determination of Population Regulation and the Municipal Census Manual.
- Starting with the reporting year 2021, population estimates prepared by the Treasury Board and Finance (TBF) will be used. The related indicator *Population* Change will compare the population figures generated by two approaches, federal/municipal census (before 2021) versus TBF estimation (after 2021).
- A count of instances whereby the Minister was required to intervene because a municipality was operating in contravention of the MGA.

Municipal Responses

Municipalities listed in this report were given the opportunity to provide additional context as to why they had triggered. In 2021, all the municipalities (except for three dissolved municipalities) submitted their feedback by December 1 and the responses are listed under their indicator results.

Eight municipalities - the City of Wetaskiwin, the Summer Village of Castle Island, the Summer Village of Ghost Lake, the Town of Fox Creek, the Village of Arrowwood, the Village of Cereal, the Village of Delia, and the Village of Lomond - did not submit all of the required financial documents by December 1. As such, Municipal Affairs was unable to calculate the indicators for these municipalities. For the latest information, readers are encouraged to visit the online Municipal Indicator dashboard at www.alberta.ca/municipal-indicators.aspx.

Results Summary

In 2020, 16 municipalities - 12 villages, two municipal districts, and two towns - triggered a critical indicator, or three or more non-critical indicators (<u>Appendix A</u>).

Seven municipalities have triggered for three consecutive years (2018-20) (<u>Appendix D</u>). As per ministry policy, Municipal Affairs staff will contact each of these municipalities to discuss their results and determine what if any additional support may be needed.

2020 Performance Indicator Results

Indicator 1: Audit Outcome

The MGA stipulates that a municipality's financial statements must be audited. Auditors are required to disclose any substantive concerns with the ability of the municipality to meet its financial obligations, or with any significant limitations in the audit or financial statement disclosures. These types of disclosures from the auditor are rare.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The audit report did not identify denial of opinion or a going concern issue.	The audit report identified a denial of opinion or a going concern issue.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Municipality Response
None	N/A

Indicator 2: Minister Intervention

From time to time there are circumstances where the Minister may be required to intervene in a municipality. Typically, these interventions occur when requested by a council, through a public petition, or where significant concerns are evident and the Minister decides to intervene on their own volition.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality has not been the subject of a Municipal Affairs intervention.	The municipality has been the subject of a Municipal Affairs intervention.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Ministerial Intervention
Town of Manning	MSD:078/20: Town of Manning Viability Review – Vote of Electors.
	Municipality Response:
	In 2020, the Town of Manning finalized the Viability Review. Our rate payers were requested to vote on staying a town or dissolving into the County of Northern Lights and becoming a Hamlet. The result was to remain the Town of Manning.

Municipality	Ministerial Intervention
Village of Bawlf	MSD:076/20: Village of Bawlf Viability Review – Vote of Electors.
	Municipality Response:
	A viability review was initiated through a petition of voters. The review was completed and there were no insurmountable problems found that required immediate intervention by the Minister responsible. The Minister issued 21 recommendations to the village to ensure ongoing viability and those recommendations have been implemented. The decision of whether to remain a village or to become a hamlet within Camrose County was left to a vote of electors. The result of the vote was that the majority of voters wished to remain a village.
Village of Beiseker	MSL:045/19: Accumulated Deficit - Recovery Plan - Village of Beiseker.
	Municipality Response:
	We are in receipt of a letter from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, dated October 23, 2020 that acknowledges that the Village of Beiseker's "recovery is ahead of the required timeframe of December 31, 2021". On December 31, 2020, the village was in a surplus of \$189,894.00 before TCA. It's our understanding (by virtue of the letter) that our municipality is being monitored under Ministerial Order MSL:045/19 until December 31, 2021.

Municipality	Ministerial Intervention
Village of Berwyn	MSD:028/20: Berwyn, Champion, Clyde, Hill Spring, Hussar, Innisfree, Rycroft; Blanket extension for municipal updates on Action and Capital plans associated with MOs issued on completion of Viability Reviews;
	Municipality Response:
	Amended our 20 year capital plan as required by Municipal Affairs. The amended plan was prepared and submitted.
Village of Cereal*	MSD:070/20: Village of Cereal Viability Review - Vote of Electors.
Village of Champion	MSD:028/20: Berwyn, Champion, Clyde, Hill Spring, Hussar, Innisfree, Rycroft; Blanket extension for municipal updates on Action and Capital plans associated with MOs issued on completion of Viability Reviews;
	MSD:092/20: Village of Champion Viability Review Directive 3 Extension.
	Municipality Response:
	Due to the recruitment of a new CAO in mid-August, the Minister kindly provided an extension for the 2018 Viability Review annual report from the Village of Champion. This report was completed in September and the 2021 Annual report was forwarded to Municipal Affairs.
Village of Dewberry*	MSD:083/20: Dewberry Viability Review - Vote of Electors.

Municipality	Ministerial Intervention
Village of Hill Spring	MSD:028/20: Berwyn, Champion, Clyde, Hill Spring, Hussar, Innisfree, Rycroft; Blanket extension for municipal updates on Action and Capital plans associated with MOs issued on completion of Viability Reviews.
	Municipality Response:
	The Village failed to meet the required deadline but the action and capital plan associated with the MOs was submitted very soon thereafter.
Village of Hussar	MSD:028/20: Berwyn, Champion, Clyde, Hill Spring, Hussar, Innisfree, Rycroft; Blanket extension for municipal updates on Action and Capital plans associated with MOs issued on completion of Viability Reviews.
	Municipality Response:
	The Village of Hussar submitted our Action Plan and Capital plan on September 30, 2020 as per the timeline extension.
Village of Myrnam	MSD:011/20: Village of Myrnam Financial Recovery Plan.
	Municipality Response:
	The Village of Mymam is on the road to financial recovery thanks to Ministerial Order MSD:011/20 by being able to spread the annual operating expenses required to recover its accumulated deficit over a two-year period from 2020-2121. The Village anticipates to be in a minor deficit by December 31, 2021.
Village of Wabamun*	MSD:084/20: Village of Wabamun Viability Review – Vote of Electors.

^{*} The Village of Cereal, the Village of Dewberry, and the Village of Wabamun were dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Multi-Year Ministerial Interventions:

Municipalities that have been issued a ministerial order with specific references to a multi-year corrective action are identified in the following table. These municipalities will continue to be listed until the municipality has received notification that the Ministerial directives issued have been completed to the satisfaction of the Minister.

Municipality	Ministerial Intervention
Village of Beiseker (2019 – 2021)	MSL:045/19: Accumulated Deficit - Recovery Plan - Village of Beiseker
Village of Myrnam (2020 – 2021)	MSD:011/20: Village of Myrnam Financial Recovery Plan.

Indicator 3: Tax Base

Municipalities typically strive for a modest level of diversity within their tax base, in particular ensuring that there is a reasonable amount of non-residential development within the municipality to both serve residents and provide a source of property tax revenues. Non-residential properties are typically taxed at a higher rate than residential and farm properties. This indicator measures the percentage of total tax revenue collected from residential/farmland properties.

Exceptions:

• Summer villages are excluded from this measure because the majority of their taxes come from residential properties.

Expected Result	Indicated When
Residential and farmland tax revenue accounts for no more than 95 per cent of the municipality's total tax revenue.	More than 95 per cent of the municipality's tax revenue comes from residential and farmland properties.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
None	N/A

Indicator 4: Tax Collection Rate

In order to pay for ongoing costs, municipalities must be able to collect property taxes on a timely basis. Tax Collection Rate is the percentage of the current year's property taxes that are collected by year end.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality collects at least 90 per cent of the municipal taxes (e.g. property taxes, special taxes) levied in the reporting year.	A municipality collects less than 90 per cent of the property taxes it levies in the reporting year.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
Birch Hills County	88.53%
	Municipality Response:
	Council and administration have been actively working on collections. It is fair to say that oilfield and linear tax recovery has been challenging. For 2021, we are currently at 90% and anticipate reaching 94% should all tax repayment agreements be honoured.

Municipality	Result
Woodlands County	85.21%
	Municipality Response:
	Year to date collections for 2020 have increased due in part to the County's vigilance to secure payment agreements through the courts. Additionally, some linear accounts have been written off to enable the County to apply for the PERC program. Remaining 2020 uncollected accounts before PERC application is \$1,814,358/\$25,921,529 = 7% of uncollected and 2020 uncollected after PERC write off is \$1,017,115/\$25,921,529 = 4% of uncollected.
Village of Alliance	87.29%
	Municipality Response:
	We are working with the people that continuously have struggles paying their taxes and hope to have a higher tax collection rate in the future.
Village of Beiseker	87.18%
	Municipality Response:
	We feel that this result is somewhat impacted by a few larger tax accounts that were unpaid as of the property tax due date, but were eventually caught up later in 2020 and into 2021. We are encouraging landowners to enter into the Tax Installment Payment Plan and see some growth in that area. Unfortunately, we have had a number of landowners reach out to us with concerns that the pandemic and other economic factors have left them struggling to pay property taxes, including both commercial and residential properties.

Municipality	Result
Village of Berwyn	85.36%
	Municipality Response:
	In 2020 the COVID pandemic did have a negative economic effect on our community. We extended the deadline for both residents and businesses to pay property taxes without penalty, to help people out. Staff continue to monitor tax arrears on a case by case basis. In March of 2021 we filed 11 tax caveats.
Village of Dewberry*	83.16%
Village of Hussar	76.46%
	Municipality Response:
	Every effort is being made to collect. COVID has resulted in a decrease in tax collection. We have seen an increase in the use of our Tax Installment Payment Plan and we will see an increase in tax collection in 2021.
Village of Munson	79.96%
	Municipality Response:
	The Village has recovered a couple of tax sale properties and will continue to place properties on the sale list.
Village of Myrnam	89.64%
	Municipality Response:
	The Village of Myrnam will be following through with tax recovery proceedings as laid out in the MGA in early 2022.

^{*} The Village of Dewberry was dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Indicator 5: Population Change

Municipalities are typically better able to plan and prepare for the future based on stable or growing populations. A declining population may lead to the loss of private and/or public services to residents, which could lead to further population decline, which could lead to further loss of services; such a repeating cycle can create significant challenges for the long-term viability of the municipality. Population Change is the percentage of population change in the municipality over a ten-year period.

Exceptions:

• Summer Villages are excluded from this measure because seasonal property owners are not reflected in their population.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The population has not declined by more than 20 per cent over a ten-year period.	A municipality's population declines by 20 per cent over a ten-year period.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
Town of Hardisty	(27.20%)
	Municipality Response:
	Decline in industry due to oilfield slow down.
Town of Manning	(20.76%)
	Municipality Response:
	The Town of Manning has not considerably changed in population. Considering the Town of Manning has aging residents, high property taxes, is considered as a remote area, and services are unavailable such as local dentists, optometrists or medical specialists, according to the most recent Census we have remained relatively the same.

Municipality	Result
Village of Alliance	(21.83%)
	Municipality Response:
	Our population is mostly seniors and the area is very rural, therefore we do not see an increase in population in the future.

Indicator 6: Current Ratio

Municipalities require cash or near-cash assets to be able to pay for current financial obligations. Current Ratio is the ratio of current assets to current liabilities.

Exceptions:

This indicator does not apply if the municipality's total assets exceed current assets by a
factor of two or more; these municipalities typically have significant financial resources
including long-term investments, but manage with minimal current assets. There are very
few Alberta municipalities that this applies to, specifically the City of Calgary, the City of
Edmonton, the City of Medicine Hat, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The ratio of current assets to current liabilities is greater than one.	The ratio of current assets to current liabilities is less than one.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
None	N/A

Indicator 7: Accumulated Surplus/Deficit

Municipalities typically hold surpluses and reserves from year to year to be used for future projects or to deal with unforeseen costs. Accumulated Surplus/Deficit is calculated by subtracting total liabilities from total assets, excluding capital assets and related debt.

An accumulated deficit is a violation of Section 244 of the *MGA*. Municipalities in a deficit position are required to recover the shortfall in the next year, or over a longer period if approved by the Minister.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality has a positive (above zero) surplus.	A municipality is in a deficit (below zero) position for the reporting year.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
Village of Myrnam	(77369.00)
	Municipality Response:
	The Village of Myrnam is on the road to financial recovery thanks to Ministerial Order MSD:011/20 by being able to spread the annual operating expenses required to recover its accumulated deficit over a two-year period from 2020-2021. The Village anticipates to be in a minor deficit by December 31, 2021.

Indicator 8: On-Time Financial Reporting

Financial reporting is an important aspect of municipal accountability to residents and businesses. Municipalities are required to submit year-end audited financial statements and Financial Information Returns to Municipal Affairs by May 1 of the year following the year for which the financial statements have been prepared.

Expected Result	Indicated When
Audited financial statements and Financial Information Returns for the preceding calendar year are received by Municipal Affairs no later than May 1.	Municipal Affairs did not receive the audited financial statements and Financial Information Returns by May 1.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
Town of Hardisty	September 7, 2021
	Municipality Response:
	Staff change with CAO leaving in April and current staff are taking on extra duties.
Village of Alliance	October 20, 2021
	Municipality Response:
	We have changed auditors and have been working closely with the new ones to make sure we meet the deadline.
Village of Cereal*	

Municipality	Result
Village of Munson	September 1, 2021
	Municipality Response:
	The Village received an extension to July 1. Our auditor wanted to present to Council for approval prior to filing. The way the meetings fell and completion of audit that was August.

^{*} The Village of Cereal was dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Indicator 9: Debt to Revenue Percentage

Municipalities frequently borrow to finance long term projects, but overall borrowing levels need to be manageable. The Debt to Revenue Percentage calculates total borrowing as a percentage of total revenue.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality's total borrowings represent less than 120 per cent of total annual revenue, or 160 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit.	The municipality's debt is greater than 120 per cent of total annual revenue, or 160 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Result
None	N/A

Indicator 10: Debt Service to Revenue Percentage

Like overall debt levels, annual debt repayments and interest costs need to be manageable. Debt Service to Revenue Percentage calculates the cost of annual principal and interest payments as a percentage of total revenue.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality's total costs for borrowing repayments do not exceed 20 per cent (28 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of its total revenue.	Principal and interest payments on borrowings are greater than 20 per cent (28 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of the municipality's total revenue.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Results
None	N/A

Indicator 11: Investment in Infrastructure

Most capital assets and infrastructure require replacement after a period of service, and municipalities typically carry out these replacements on an ongoing basis to spread out replacement costs. Investment in Infrastructure measures the ratio of capital spending to amortization (depreciation) over a five-year period.

Exceptions:

• This measure does not account for the effects of inflation; typically, replacement costs for new assets exceed the historic cost of existing assets.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The municipality's average capital additions exceed the average amortization (depreciation).	A municipality's capital spending is less than the depreciation of its assets, indicated by a result less than one.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Results
Birch Hills County	0.36
	Municipality Response:
	At the September 28th Regular Council meeting, Council directed administration to review expenditures for capital improvements to verify whether such expenditures meet the threshold for capital replacement versus an operating expenditure. Council recognizes the need to maintain our infrastructure within our current fiscal restraints for grant funding.

Municipality	Results
Woodlands County	0.66
	Municipality Response:
	In October 2019 Woodlands County adopted a 5-year financial recovery plan that focused on increasing financial liquidity. This plan does limit the County's ability to invest in infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement in the short-term, but recognizing the long-term importance of asset management, the County has, while in the period of financial recovery, committed resources to commence/complete an asset management plan. The plan, will provide assurance that once able to commence reinvesting in infrastructure, the dollars expended are utilized well.
Town of Manning	0.70
	Municipality Response:
	The Town of Manning infrastructure is aging and declining. The Town of Manning has taken steps to move forward with a 10-year capital plan that includes fixing our aging infrastructure. With the help of MSI funding, and more grants, we are planning to and will be executing the Capital Plan requirements.
Village of Berwyn	0.84
	Municipality Response:
	In 2021, we were able to complete several capital projects that took some time to research and plan. We have spent \$715,000 on capital upgrading this year.
Village of Dewberry*	0.61

Municipality	Results
Village of Munson	0.45
	Municipality Response:
	Major capital expense is roads. It needs compounding years of grant funding to fully cover projects.

^{*} The Village of Dewberry was dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Indicator 12: Infrastructure Age

If capital assets and infrastructure are being replaced on a regular basis and new assets or infrastructure is being added, the average age of the municipality's overall infrastructure will remain reasonably current. Infrastructure Age calculates the amortized (depreciated) cost of capital assets and infrastructure as a percentage of the original cost.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The net book value of the municipality's tangible capital assets is greater than 40 per cent of the original cost.	The net book value of the tangible capital assets is less than 40 per cent of the original cost.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Results
Birch Hills County	15.58%
	Municipality Response:
	Council and administration are actively working on a capital replacement program to improve the average age of our assets, recognizing the issue of reduced grant funding available and our current depressed economy within the agriculture sector.

Municipality	Results
Woodlands County	30.46%
	Municipality Response:
	The County's commitment to asset management and creating a long term plan and strategy for replacement of aging infrastructure will be more evident in 2022. A significant amount of data was collected on our water/wastewater infrastructure and County roads in 2021. While the cash is not readily available to upgrade our infrastructure, we are taking the necessary steps to identify and prioritize areas with the greatest need and future budget years will see the County budget monies to those areas.
Village of Berwyn	37.03%
	Municipality Response:
	As noted in our response to Indicator 11, we have increased our capital spending this year. Our Council is committed to our capital plan, often the issue is staff time and expertise needed to fund and administer large scale capital projects.

Indicator 13: Interest in Municipal Office

Strong interest from residents in local elections often means there is an active local interest in good governance. Elections are only held if there are more candidates than positions, otherwise candidates are simply acclaimed to what are intended to be elected positions. Interest in Municipal Office measures the ratio of candidates to total council positions in the most recent election.

Expected Result	Indicated When
The number of candidates exceeded the number of councillor positions.	The number of candidates are not greater than the number of available positions during a municipal general election or by-election.

2020 Results:

Municipality	Municipality Response
Woodlands County	While the 2020 by-election for one of our divisions was acclaimed, the county is seeing more interest in local politics for the 2021 Municipal election with 16 candidates vying for seven seats.
Town of Hardisty	Community residents were not engaged with the by- election.
Town of Manning	In 2020 all our councillors were acclaimed, we had one councillor resign requiring a by-election which resulted in a new councillor - as we only had one candidate step up, no election occurred. We have 6 councillors and 1 mayor.
Village of Myrnam	There were 3 candidates for 3 positions. All candidates were acclaimed.
Village of Wabamun*	

^{*} The Village of Wabamun was dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Appendix A

Municipalities that Indicated (by Municipal Type)

The following is a listing of the municipalities that indicated a critical indicator, or three or more non-critical indicators.

Municipality Type	Municipality
Municipal District	Birch Hills County Woodlands County
Town	Town of Hardisty Town of Manning
Village	Village of Alliance Village of Bawlf Village of Beiseker Village of Berwyn Village of Cereal* Village of Champion Village of Dewberry* Village of Hill Spring Village of Hussar Village of Munson Village of Myrnam Village of Wabamun*

^{*} The Village of Cereal, the Village of Dewberry, and the Village of Wabamun were dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Appendix B

Municipalities and Indicators

The following breaks down which specific indicators the 16 municipalities indicated.

Municipality	Indicator
Birch Hills County	4 - Tax Collection Rate 11 - Investment in Infrastructure 12 - Infrastructure Age
Woodlands County	4 - Tax Collection Rate 11 - Investment in Infrastructure 12 - Infrastructure Age 13 - Interest in Municipal Office
Town of Hardisty	5 - Population Change 8 - On-Time Financial Reporting 13 - Interest in Municipal Office
Town of Manning	2 - Ministry Intervention 5 - Population Change 11 - Investment in Infrastructure 13 - Interest in Municipal Office
Village of Alliance	4 - Tax Collection Rate5 - Population Change8 - On-Time Financial Reporting
Village of Bawlf	2 - Ministry Intervention
Village of Beiseker	2 - Ministry Intervention 4 - Tax Collection Rate
Village of Berwyn	2 - Ministry Intervention 4 - Tax Collection Rate 11 - Investment in Infrastructure 12 - Infrastructure Age
Village of Cereal*	2 - Ministry Intervention 8 - On-Time Financial Reporting

Municipality	Indicator
Village of Champion	2 - Ministry Intervention
Village of Dewberry*	2 - Ministry Intervention 4 - Tax Collection Rate 11 - Investment in Infrastructure
Village of Hill Spring	2 - Ministry Intervention
Village of Hussar	2 - Ministry Intervention 4 - Tax Collection Rate
Village of Munson	4 - Tax Collection Rate 8 - On-Time Financial Reporting 11 - Investment in Infrastructure
Village of Myrnam	2 - Ministry Intervention 4 - Tax Collection Rate 7 - Accumulated Surplus/Deficit 13 - Interest in Municipal Office
Village of Wabamun*	2 - Ministry Intervention 13 - Interest in Municipal Office

^{*} The Village of Cereal, the Village of Dewberry, and the Village of Wabamun were dissolved on January 1, 2021.

Appendix C

Municipalities That Have Indicated Two Consecutive Years (2019 - 2020)

Municipality Type	Municipality
Municipal District	Birch Hills County

Appendix D

Municipalities That Have Indicated Three Consecutive Years (2018 - 2020)

Municipality Type	Municipality
Municipal District	Woodlands County
Town	Town of Manning
Village	Village of Alliance Village of Beiseker Village of Berwyn Village of Dewberry* Village of Hussar

^{*} The Village of Dewberry was dissolved on January 1, 2021.