

Local Public Administration

Chapter Summary

The size, scope, and administration of local government or municipal management have evolved over time in Canada. The term 'local government' is not included in *The Constitution Act 1867* but all Canadian provinces have laws that govern municipalities. A municipality can be loosely defined as: "a defined territory, some autonomous decision-making authority, and some guaranteed access to their own source of funds" (p. 182), but each municipal jurisdiction differs in responsibility and scope of management. For example, in Prince Edward Island local garbage collection is a provincial responsibility. In other jurisdictions, policing is managed on a provincial basis through contracts with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or provincial police forces, such as in Ontario and Quebec, or in Newfoundland and Labrador through the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. Local government has evolved to provide its citizens with a wide variety of services, such as public libraries, community and recreation services, parks, local roads, water and sewer treatment plants, and public transit.

Most Canadian provinces have laws that provide for the general coordination and administration of municipal management. The cities of Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver are governed by provincial laws or charters specifically tailored for their own purposes. The purpose of these charters is to offer the local government more functional authority so they can respond to local issues. It is important to note that provincial governments can enact legislation that also applies to local governments in the form of provincial labour laws, which can affect the local collective bargaining process. Provincial governments also control revenue sources, such as with the allocation of grants for specific purposes, and also through legislation and regulation. There are quasi-judicial administrative tribunals in all provinces (except British Columbia) to which various types of municipal decisions – usually relating to land use – can be appealed. Over time, local governments have also undergone amalgamations of different municipalities, such as in Winnipeg and Toronto. Some municipalities have created two-tier systems of administration to respond to the

complex administration of a large municipality. This council–manager governance model responds to a growing municipal government and the creation of City Managers and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) positions.

Annotated Weblinks

- 1) <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/municipal-government/>

The role of “municipal government” is defined, explained, and discussed in detail through a brief description and examination of various aspects related to municipal government including the structure of this government, the mayor, the role of the CAO, the board of commissioners, and the relationship of the municipality to the provincial authority.

- 2) https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/ourcountryourparliament/html_booklet/three-levels-government-e.html

This federal site provides an overview of the three levels of government in Canada to facilitate an understanding of how each level of government works, both independently and with each other.

- 3) <https://lop.parl.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/bp276-e.htm>

The Library of Parliament has published an authoritative and detailed document on the role of municipalities in Canada and their relationship to the Constitution of Canada and Canada’s federal system of governance. The document relates specifically to the relationships between Canada’s provinces and their local municipalities.