

Power and Purpose: The Quiet Evolution of Canadian Municipal Law

By: Zack Taylor, Craig Mutter, Joseph Lyons, and Alex Dobson

Over the past four decades, the role of municipalities in Canada has evolved significantly. This paper provides an accessible and systematic overview of municipal authority and responsibilities across all ten provinces and three territories. The authors find that while the general trend has been toward more permissive authority and the recognition of municipalities as democratic and accountable governments, significant variation persists in both law and practice across - and within - provinces and territories.

Read the full report: bit.ly/4p0u9kL

Key Takeaways:

Provinces and territories increasingly recognize municipalities as accountable, democratic governments in law.

Municipal grants of authority are increasingly expansive and permissive., significantly broadening the scope of municipal action and discretion.

The courts have increasingly demonstrated a generous interpretation of municipalities' permissive authority.

- The governance landscape is becoming increasingly complex, the costs and benefits of which are unclear.
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- The trend toward municipal empowerment co-exists with provincial intervention.

Fiscal innovation has lagged legal innovation, increasing the risk of insufficient resources and unfunded mandates.