

# City Status Exploration: Pros vs Cons

**Thank you to the Taberites who requested a pros and cons document! In response to your feedback, we have created this overview.**

As the Town of Taber explores the possibility of transitioning to city status, it's important to consider both the potential benefits and drawbacks. This document provides a simple comparison of the pros and cons of becoming a city, helping residents understand how the change might impact our community. With public feedback being a key factor in this decision, we hope this overview will help inform your opinions and encourage thoughtful discussion as we move forward.

\*This document is not meant to be comprehensive. More answers to frequently asked questions are available at [www.taber.ca/city](http://www.taber.ca/city)

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## Pros of Taber Becoming a City:

### 1. Economic Growth:

- **Attracting Businesses:** City status may draw new businesses and investors, creating jobs and expanding the economy. New businesses also reduce the tax burden on property owners, as it spreads out the taxes amongst more businesses instead of just relying on property owners. Cities are typically the first choice for companies looking to establish operations, while towns are often considered after larger urban centers. By becoming a city, Taber is more likely to attract attention as a prime location for business development and investment opportunities.
- **Boost in Tourism:** Becoming a city can help boost tourism, leading to more visitors and revenue for local businesses. As the Highway 3 Twinning is expected to increase traffic in our corridor, it is a prime opportunity to capitalize on this traffic to boost our local tourism opportunities.
- **Improved Recognition and Visibility:** City status often brings greater recognition in media, maps, and government rankings. This visibility can help Taber stand out as a key location between larger urban centers and help attract more business, residents, and tourists, thereby increasing our economic growth.

### 2. Infrastructure Development:

- **Enhanced Infrastructure:** The change may lead to increased funding for local infrastructure projects like roads and public utilities.

- **More Housing Development:** City status could attract more developers, potentially creating a wider range of housing options (including affordable and rental units) and stimulating real estate growth.

### 3. **Potential for Public Services Improvement:**

- **Potentially Improved Public Services:** Transitioning to a city could strengthen the ability to advocate for better healthcare and education services with the Province. While it is true the municipality cannot offer those services ourselves as they are Provincial jurisdiction, we would be able to have a louder voice at the provincial level if we were to have city status. A city is also more likely to be more involved in decision-making processes at higher levels, giving Taber residents a more significant role in regional planning and policy.
- **Expanded Opportunities for Youth:** As Taber grows, it could offer more programs and activities for young people, which might make it easier to retain families and young professionals in the community.

### 4. **Stronger Regional Influence:**

- **Increased Voice in Regional Decisions:** As a city, Taber could have more influence in regional planning and development, allowing for stronger collaborations with neighboring cities.

### 5. **No Major Budgetary Impact:**

- **Minimal Impact on Municipal Budget:** The transition is expected to have little effect on the town's budget, and most importantly, on taxpayers. Taxes would not be raised just because we might become a city.

In fact, our goal is to reduce the tax burden on residents by making Taber more attractive to businesses. By increasing our business tax base, we can reduce our reliance on residential taxes, ensuring a more balanced and sustainable financial approach for the community.

We are also not considering rebranding. Our existing brand/logo works well (and isn't that old), and we can make any minor changes to the word "town" on the logo in-house. Only a few signs would need to be replaced (not the new highway welcome signs, but the granite one in front of the Town Office and a few smaller ones along the highway), and we would use up any supplies with the "Town" logo on it before we ordered new supplies (letterhead, promo items, etc.).

### 6. **Enhanced Civic Identity:**

- **Pride for our New Status:** Achieving city status is a monumental milestone for any community- it shows a history of hard work, community pride, and confidence in the growth of the community. Taber would have the unique opportunity to become the 20<sup>th</sup> Albertan city in our 120<sup>th</sup> year- a milestone no other Albertan city could achieve! But beyond that, city status also can boost community pride and enhance our civic identity, positioning Taber as a growing and thriving community. This change can attract more people and businesses, reinforcing the community's image as a desirable place to live and work.

## Cons of Taber Becoming a City:

### 1. Perceived Loss of Small-Town Feel or Rural Identity:

- **Perception of Losing the Small-Town Atmosphere:** Some residents feel that becoming a city could lead to a shift away from the close-knit, small-town community that Taber is known for. And we understand that an adjustment to a new identity could be difficult. We're rightfully proud of our small town and everything it represents!

That being said, we would reason that our "small town feel" is a direct result of the kindness and caring exhibited by Taberites- and all the little things that show our hospitality and hearts. Whether it's helping a neighbour shovel their sidewalk in winter, buying a coffee for the person behind you, or rallying together when a family is having a hard time- we believe that is inside the hearts of Taberites, and what we call our community doesn't change that. The "small town friendliness" is about being involved in your community, and we don't believe that the hearts of Taberites will change if we call ourselves a city versus a town.

### 2. Perceived City Problems:

- **Bigger Centre, Different Problems:** Some residents may associate becoming a city with common urban issues, such as higher drug use, increased crime rates, or reduced social disorder. These concerns can create resistance to the idea of pursuing city status.

### 3. Uncertain Real Estate Impact:

- **Possibility of Rising Property Prices:** City status could make Taber more attractive, potentially increasing property values, which may be a concern for current residents. We understand this concern- affordable housing is already a priority for the municipality, so regardless of our status, we have and will continue to work on making more affordable housing available in our community through working with developers, our Residential Tax Incentive for secondary suites, and our Meadows Subdivision (which was purpose-built for affordable housing).

### 4. Minimal Immediate Changes:

- **Limited Immediate Improvements:** Many public services and infrastructure improvements would not automatically occur with city status and would require further budget considerations in order to remain fiscally responsible.

### 5. No Immediate Changes to Healthcare and Education:

- **Limited Direct Control Over Key Services:** Since healthcare and education are provincially controlled, becoming a city may not lead to immediate improvements in these areas. We know these services are critical for Taberites, so we would use our potential city status to lobby harder and louder for an increase in these services such as they have in other cities.

## 6. Community Division:

- **Opposing Views:** The decision to become a city could create divisions within the community between those in favor and those against the change, potentially leading to a longer-term debate as we continue to grow.

The municipality would ask all Taberites this: no matter your opinion, and no matter whether we become a city or stay a town, we will always be Taberites. Let's have an informed and constructive debate, but whatever the final decision becomes, this can also be an opportunity to discuss where we want Taber to be in the future and how all of us can get there- **together**.