



ELECTED OFFICIALS

HANDBOOK





TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO SUMA	PAGE 2
MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH SUMA PROGRAMS	PAGE 5
THE VOICE OF URBAN SASKATCHEWAN	PAGE 8
YOUR URBAN GOVERNMENT TEAM	PAGE 10
WORKING TOGETHER IN URBAN GOVERNMENT	PAGE 12
AN EFFECTIVE COUNCIL	PAGE 16
DUTY OF FAIRNESS: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FAIR DEALING	PAGE 20
DOLLARS AND SENSE	PAGE 22
PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS	PAGE 24
LEARNING THE ROPES OF URBAN GOVERNMENT	PAGE 26
WE GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP	PAGE 27



THIS HANDBOOK BROUGHT TO YOU BY



A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO SUMA

Who We Are

At the turn of the century, the city, town, and village governments of the day saw the value of strength in numbers. They wanted to collectively work with the provincial government and express their needs and desires for legislative and financial services.

The seeds of the Union of Saskatchewan Municipalities (our name would later change to the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) were sown in the same year Saskatchewan officially became a province, and we held our first convention in 1906. Mayor Peter McAra, Jr., of the City of Regina, was SUMA's first president.

The Association has been in continuous operation since that time, serving the needs of member councils by maintaining and improving the strength of local government.

In 1967, the Board of Directors wanted to strengthen and empower SUMA to better serve our members. In April of 1967, an act of the legislature incorporated the Association and gave us powers to help us meet our objectives more effectively.

Today, we represent more than 440 urban governments in Saskatchewan. "Urban" means cities to many people, but SUMA also represents our province's towns, villages, resort villages, and northern municipalities. We are the voice of Saskatchewan's hometowns, where people find and make communities and connections. We build those connections through our work.

What We Do

Recognized since 1906 as the collective voice of Saskatchewan municipalities, SUMA's work on behalf of member municipalities falls into our three core functions:

We Represent Your Interests (Advocacy)

SUMA serves as the collective unified voice of urban governments: cities, towns, villages, resort villages, and northern municipalities. We ensure your interests are represented to other orders of government (provincial and federal government), because we have the power to build relationships and lobby on your behalf while remaining independent of government. We make your issues matter by bringing them to light — and finding solutions.

SUMA was founded on advocacy work, and we continue to make it a priority. See "The Voice of Urban Saskatchewan" (page 8) for more details on how we protect, promote, and defend the interests of urban governments.

We Give You Access to Resources (Capacity Building)

SUMA provides information, connections, training, and tools to make you more effective. We understand the time, energy and effort it takes to keep an urban municipality running smoothly, and we are here to help. Your membership gives you a team of dedicated, passionate people in your corner; we focus on things so you don't have to.

We build connections and partnerships, not only with the federal and provincial governments, but also with other organizations. By engaging others, we bring strength and numbers to the side of urban Saskatchewan. We've developed partnerships with groups such as the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, and we are always working to make the list longer.

We provide information and research in lots of different ways, from traditional communication like an email newsletter (Urban Update) and printed magazine (*Urban Voice*), to an online presence that includes a website and social media accounts. We are quite proud of www.suma.org, which not only houses all our communication material, it also brings you (to name but a few):

- a classified service to find and advertise jobs and items for sale;
- details on our work and who we work with on your behalf;
- a list of grants available to municipalities;
- tools, resources, and research you can use; and
- a listing of the upcoming SUMA events where you can learn more and make connections.

Our events are another resource we are happy to offer members to help you build capacity, make connections, and take in professional development to benefit your municipality. The Events Listing on our website will show you our upcoming schedule (along with other events of note), and there are plenty of SUMA events you can look forward to. We offer regional meetings every fall, developed Canada's first Mayors Summer School, and bring the sectors together through the City Mayors' Caucus and stand-alone sector meetings for towns and villages.

And of course, we have convention. Our annual convention is the perfect chance to make connections with other people working in or with Saskatchewan urban governments, and hear speakers and take in education sessions to learn more. You'll also get a chance to meet with provincial decision makers through the Bear Pit and Dialogue with Ministers sessions, and meet vendors at the Municipal Marketplace Tradeshow. It's the time every year that our three core functions come together in one place with members.

We Help You Save Money (Group Programs)

SUMA offers group benefits, insurance services, and purchasing programs that can reduce the costs of municipal government operations. We are once again using the strength of numbers, this time to help our members get more for less. "Getting the Most Out of Your Membership with SUMA Programs" (page 5) tells the story of our group programs: what we offer members and how we save them money.



We also partner with other organizations to build projects just for Saskatchewan municipalities, including the Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP). That program offers modules to help elected officials and municipal administration strengthen local government leadership. Throughout this handbook, we'll make special note of MLDP modules that can expand on points we cover in this handbook.

The Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities workshop is a good place to start, with the basics of municipal governance.



How We Do It

SUMA's Board of Directors is made up of elected officials who govern the work of the Association. The Board represents members by regions and sectors.

There are 14 Regional Directors:

Single-city regions:

- Two City of Regina Directors
- Two City of Saskatoon Directors
- City of Prince Albert Director
- City of Moose Jaw Director

Geographical regions:

(see map to the right)

- Northern Regional Director
- Northwest Regional Director
- Northeast Regional Director
- West Central Regional Director
- Central Regional Director
- East Central Regional Director
- Southwest Regional Director
- Southeast Regional Director



WHERE WE'RE GOING

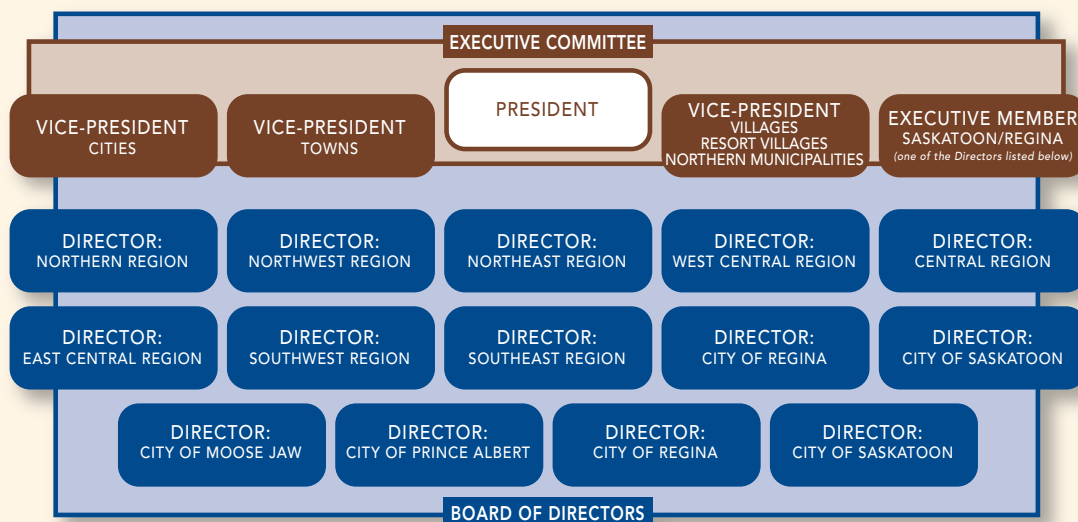
While our core functions remain steady, SUMA creates a strategic plan for each municipal term. The plan is drafted once the Board is in place following municipal elections (usually the following March), and contains priorities for work on behalf of members and within the Association. We post the plan on our website, and use it to focus our work. If there is anything you believe we should tackle in our next strategic plan, please let us know.

SUMA's legacy has continued to grow since its inception more than a century ago and we are eager to keep it growing. You can find more details on our history in two books (*The Urban Age*, and *The New Urban Age*), and keep up with what we are doing now through *Urban Update*, *Urban Voice*, on social media, and at www.suma.org.

The Executive Committee is where we incorporate representation by sector, through our Vice-Presidents:

- Vice-President of Cities
- Vice-President of Towns
- Vice-President of Villages, Resort Villages, and Northern Municipalities

The President, who is elected by the full membership, is the chair of the Board and the Executive Committee. If neither Regina nor Saskatoon are represented through the President or the Vice-President of Cities, a Director from one of those cities will also sit on the Executive Committee as the Saskatoon/Regina Executive Member.



As municipal councils provide direction to their administration, the SUMA Board provides direction to SUMA staff. Our administration is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Association that help us fulfill those three core functions (advocacy, group programs, and capacity building).

Staff and the Board are here to serve our members. If you want to be involved, or you have questions, concerns or compliments, don't hesitate to contact us.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH SUMA PROGRAMS

One of our core functions is helping our members save money. We do this by combining the purchasing power of our member governments. This allows us to bring you savings on goods and services through SUMAAdvantage, get you and your municipal employees better benefits and insurance rates with our group plans, and give you access to SUMAssure, an insurance reciprocal, for your liability and property insurance. These services also generate revenue for SUMA, which keeps membership fees low, while allowing us to do more for you.

SUMAdvantage

How do we pass savings on to our members? We leverage the collective purchasing power of member municipalities, helping you save time and money. Offered exclusively to our members, the SUMAdvantage program is based on the simple premise that buying in bulk is cheaper than paying retail.

Finding the right suppliers takes time, and can still end in frustration or disappointment. Look to SUMAdvantage to put you in touch with pre-screened vendors, and know that we are always looking for more ways to help members save.

Our members have told us it's important that we don't compete with local suppliers. With that in mind, we catered the program to goods and services you probably can't get within your community. We've partnered with vendors who provide discounts on a range of products and services:

- Finance
- Hotels
- Office supplies
- Municipal elections supplies
- Public works
- Parks and leisure

How do we pass savings on to our members?
We leverage the collective purchasing power of member municipalities, helping you save time and money.

As SUMAdvantage grows and improves, we vet our partners through our municipal procurement agent and then a member committee helps select the vendor. There are two committees: the Program Development Advisory Committee for program suggestions and the Bid Evaluation Committee for individual program selection.

The Program Development Advisory Committee puts together a list of opportunities to pursue, prioritized by urgency. We call this the Calendar of Opportunities and it can be found on the SUMAdvantage section of our website. The calendar shows you where the program is today, and where it will go in the future. We're committed to expanding the program and offering more for our members.

The next step to create the program is the request for proposal process. The Bid Evaluation Committee then evaluates the vendor proposals and chooses a supplier. This process helps us choose a supplier in the most ethical, transparent, and fair manner.

Need advice on procurement? Our municipal procurement agent provides members with free advice and expertise.

As an elected official, you can encourage your administration to join one of our committees to help improve how Saskatchewan urban municipalities purchase goods and services. Contact our SUMAdvantage team at 306-525-3727.

Worried about "not supporting the local broker"? Since it is owned and governed by subscribing municipalities, you don't get more local than SUMAssure.

Group Benefits and Insurance

SUMA Group Benefits and Insurance insures participating cities, towns, villages, resort villages, northern communities, and affiliated organizations.

We insure more than 2,700 lives, allowing us to spread the risk and pass savings on to you. SUMA's program offers an economical way to meet insurance needs. Again, the power of numbers allows us to bring you better benefits for less, and plans can be customized to your municipality's needs.

Eligible members include full-time, part-time and seasonal employees. Coverage may also be extended to elected officials and boards of directors.

Benefit offerings include:

- life insurance;
- accidental death, disease, and dismemberment insurance;
- short- and long-term disability;
- extended health care;
- dental care;
- vision care;
- employee and family assistance program (EFAP); and
- health care spending account (HCSA).

In addition to these benefits, SUMA offers a program that provides specialized insurance for emergency service providers. Coverage is available to on-duty and off-duty members. Contact our Group Benefits and Insurance team at 306-525-4390 or visit the Benefits and Insurance section of the website.

SUMAssure

SUMAssure is a subscriber-owned and subscriber-governed insurance program designed for Saskatchewan urban municipalities. Operating as a reciprocal, SUMAssure is dedicated to offering the best possible liability and property insurance at the most cost-effective prices for subscribers.

An insurance reciprocal is an alternative to traditional insurance where subscribers agree to exchange contracts of insurance among themselves and thereby achieve the desired risk pooling. SUMAssure is similar to an insurance company in that they issue insurance policies, charge premiums, and pay claims. The major difference is that they are a non-profit company; what is not paid out in losses each year stays with subscribers as equity.

The major advantages of this insurance model are ownership and control over your municipal insurance program, ability to earn equity in the program, urban municipal expertise in handling questions and claims, and access to risk-control education and tools. The core insurance coverages to subscribers include:

- general liability;
- municipal errors and omissions;
- property;
- boiler and machinery;
- crime; and
- legal advice and expenses.

Worried about "not supporting the local broker"? Since it is owned and governed by subscribing municipalities, you don't get more local than SUMAssure.

SUMAssure not only helps subscribers plan and guide their municipality's wellbeing, they invest back into the communities with profit sharing. Contact them at 1-866-450-2345 for more information or visit their website at www.sumassure.ca

SUMA programs are a win-win situation: Members save money and support SUMA so we can continue to work on your behalf. So when you're aiming to be good financial stewards, and make the most of every penny, look to SUMA first.



SUMAdvantage
Your first call for savings



SUMAssure
Protection and Ownership
for Urban Municipalities



THE VOICE OF URBAN SASKATCHEWAN

SUMA began as a way for urban governments to band together and speak with one voice. Our policy work continues that tradition more than a century later through the Policy and Communications team.

Our membership includes more than 440 municipalities, from our two largest cities to some of our smallest villages. These municipalities are home to more than 78 per cent of Saskatchewan's population, and newcomers to Saskatchewan by and large choose to live in these urban centres. There are SUMA members in every provincial constituency and federal riding in the province, and our members' locally elected councils have significant influence in their communities. Given all this, it is reasonable that SUMA should be the leading voice on the issues that matter to our members. Our members, and the residents they serve, deserve nothing less.

The principles guiding our work

The primary goal of the Policy and Communications team's work, as outlined by the Board of Directors, is to position SUMA as the leading voice on urban issues in Saskatchewan. We want provincial decision-makers to always consider what urban governments — our cities, towns, villages, and northern municipalities — will have to say about the policy options the Province is considering. Our driving force is to promote, protect, and defend the interests of our members.

To do this, we have to know our members' priorities. We do this in lots of ways and in lots of places: discussions at our own regional meetings, conventions, and sector meetings; meetings of the Saskatchewan City Mayors' Caucus and of Northern mayors; our partnership with the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS); and by soliciting member feedback through the year. Through this work we have identified three core interests of our members:

1. **Funding:** We want to ensure urban governments have a sufficient, sustainable, and predictable level of operational and capital funding support from the provincial and federal governments.
2. **Autonomy:** We work to develop a provincial legislative, regulatory, and funding environment that maximizes local autonomy. We believe a locally elected council is in the best position to make decisions and set priorities for their municipality.
3. **Capacity:** Our work assumes that we operate in a government-to-government relationship with the province. This means SUMA members must operate responsibly, and fulfill their obligations as outlined in provincial and federal legislation and regulation. The Policy and Communications team focuses on ensuring members have a sufficient, sustainable level of local or regional capacity to meet these expectations.

Focussing on our members and your interests gives us the strategic focus we need to make SUMA a leader on urban issues. That roadmap guides our work within the structure of our principles:

- **Elected officials determine our direction:** SUMA has a strong, effective, and capable Policy and Communications staff, with our elected Board of Directors directing the Association's work. When we meet with ministers, Board members lead the meeting; Policy and Communications staff are there for support.
- **Driven by members' interests:** Keeping the focus on our members is so important, it's our driving force *and* one of our principles.
- **Relationship-based work:** Our work with the provincial and federal governments and other partners is based on building relationships. We approach our work with a long-term, pragmatic, and principled approach. We are honest, and look for opportunities to work with others, while serving our members' best interests.
- **A foundation of solid research:** SUMA is a fact-based public policy organization. We use evidence and research to guide decisions, and use the evidence and research to make our points.
- **Thorough analysis:** We pride ourselves on an approach to work that looks at issues from all angles and perspectives.

The things we do

The work of the Policy and Communications team has four primary components:

1. **Research — Turning problems into solutions**
When SUMA members bring us their challenges, concerns, or priorities, we work to understand those issues and find ways to address them.
2. **Policy Development — Turning solutions into actions**
This is a core strength of the Policy and Communications team. We use research and analysis to support your interests, and make recommendations that call for action.
3. **Advocacy — Turning actions into results**
SUMA staff and the Board regularly and actively engage with provincial decision-makers, and with the federal government whenever possible. We work with other associations, partnering groups, and agencies to advance common goals. Our advocacy objective is to push forward the solutions and actions that best meet members' needs. We aim to deliver meaningful results for you.
4. **Communication — Telling the story of turning problems into results**
Keeping members informed is essential. To be timely, efficient, and cost-effective, much of our communication is available electronically. Visit www.suma.org to sign up for Urban Update (our email newsletter), find us on our various social media accounts, and get all the news and tools you can use to stay current on urban Saskatchewan issues. We also produce a quarterly magazine, *Urban Voice*, which is distributed to all our member municipalities — you can find it on the website too.



HOW OUR WORK IS ORGANIZED

The Policy and Communications team takes policy direction from the Board, and our work generally flows through four policy committees: Intergovernmental Affairs; Public Safety and Health; Environment; and Community and Economic Development

A policy advisor is assigned to work with and on behalf of each committee. We also assign the portfolio for every provincial ministry to a policy advisor and a Board member is appointed to 'shadow' each ministry. This allows SUMA staff and Board members to better understand each ministry's work and respond to it well. A strong understanding of each ministry gives SUMA a strategic advantage when responding to shifts in provincial direction.

The Advocacy section of our website is a great place to get familiar with some of the key issues SUMA is working on, what we've done in the past, and the research we've gathered for members. Watch Urban Update and our social media feeds for more opportunities to help guide the voice of urban Saskatchewan.

YOUR URBAN GOVERNMENT TEAM

As a mayor or councillor, residents chose you to be a community leader. This is an important honour, and one you share with other leaders. Effectively working with other leaders, sometimes with different opinions, can be a challenge. The first step toward effective relationships with your fellow leaders is to understand everyone's roles and responsibilities.

Council Member

You are just one member of council. You probably have a host of ideas, but you will need to work with your fellow council members to bring those ideas to life; most legal authority and responsibility rests with the entire council.

While most powers rest with council, Section 92 of *The Municipalities Act* and Section 65 of *The Cities Act* outline many individual duties for council members:

- Represent the public, and consider the wellbeing and interest of the municipality.
- Help develop and evaluate the policies, services, and programs of the municipality.
- Participate in council and committee meetings, and meetings of other bodies you are appointed to by council.
- Ensure that administrative practices and procedures are in place to put council decisions into practice.
- Keep in confidence matters discussed in private at council or committee meetings until the matter is discussed at a public meeting.
- Maintain the financial integrity of the municipality.
- Perform any other duty or function imposed on council members by provincial legislation or by council.

What does this mean for you during your term on council? These are the broad strokes to remember:

1. *You represent everyone.*

As a council member it is your responsibility to act in the best interest of your entire community, not just a particular interest group.

2. *Be fully engaged.*

Being an effective council member takes a lot of work. Get engaged with committee work, learn new things, and take the opportunity to get to know your community better. Your community and your residents will thank you.

3. *Build and sustain relationships.*

As an individual council member your power is limited, but as a member of a properly functioning council, you can do great things. Get to know your colleagues; show them that they can trust you. Show your colleagues respect, even — especially — when you disagree.

4. *Be a wise steward.*

As an order of government with the ability to levy taxes and set laws, local governments have plenty of responsibility. As a member of council, you are charged with serving the interests of your community. Consider the long-term implications of your decisions, and plan accordingly.

Mayor

First, legislation is clear: The mayor has all the same duties and responsibilities as a council member. This means that mayors are required to vote on all questions called at a council or committee meeting they attend. (Unless, of course, there is a conflict of interest, and the mayor has left chambers for the discussion and vote.)

In addition to their role as a council member, mayors:

- preside at (chair) council meetings (unless otherwise provided for by council);
- are a member of all council committees and bodies (called 'ex officio');
- sign bylaws with the administrator;
- request the calling of a special meeting; and
- call any public meetings.

An active and engaged mayor can be the most informed council member, simply because the mayor is a member of all council committees. While the mayor does not exercise much more power than a council member, public perception can be different. People look to the mayor as the face of the urban government — for citizens, and the outside world — and as the person most directly responsible for the successes and challenges.

While some councillors may struggle with the mayor getting the lion's share of attention, most councils find the relationship between mayor and council works well. Like most relationships, the mayor/council relationship functions best with effective communication and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Every organization needs a spokesperson, and every board needs a chair. Their position and the power of public perception make mayors ideally suited to serve those roles for urban governments.

**Mayors Summer School
is a SUMA event designed to boost
your confidence in your role as mayor
and fill your tool kit
with new skills and knowledge.
Watch Urban Update and the
Events Listing on our website
for details as they become available.**

Chief Administrative Officer

Councils are required by law to establish the position of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). *The Municipalities Act* refers to this position as the administrator, and *The Cities Act* refers to the City Commissioner or City Manager. To keep it simple, we'll use the term CAO here.

The CAO is expected to "perform the duties and exercise the powers and functions" assigned to them by provincial legislation, or by council. The Urban Municipal Administrators Act says that for towns, villages, and resort villages with a population above 100, the CAO must be certified. Recruiting and retaining qualified CAOs is becoming increasingly difficult. If your urban government finds itself in this position, you and your neighbouring local governments (rural or urban) can jointly hire a qualified CAO.

Council hires the CAO to manage the day-to-day operations of the urban municipality. In a healthy, functioning council/administration relationship, the CAO is the only employee of council (more on the working relationships in "Working Together in Urban Government"). All other staff report directly or indirectly to the CAO. This arrangement ensures that council remains focused on setting strategic direction, allowing administration to focus on operational execution.

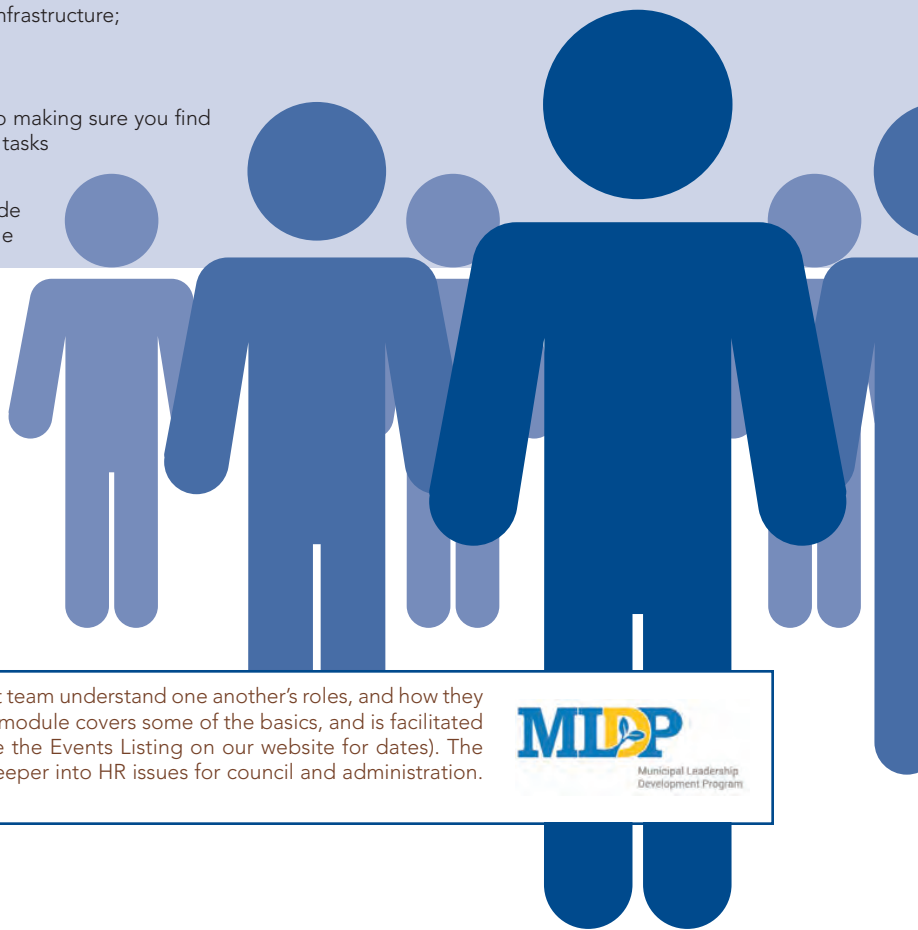
A good CAO has a diverse skill set and superb communication abilities. While larger cities and towns often have more staff to share the responsibilities, in small centres the CAO is required to be a Jack of All Trades. The most important job of the CAO is to execute council's directions, but in a small centres they also:

- know and interpret provincial legislation;
- write and enforce bylaws;
- collect taxes;
- process invoices;
- draft a budget and manage according to it;
- manage the finances of the urban government;
- interact with the public;
- respond to media inquiries;
- manage staff;
- direct and oversee recreational services and facilities;
- negotiate contracts;
- direct and oversee water and wastewater system facilities and operations;
- direct and oversee roadway and transportation operation and infrastructure;
- enforce zoning bylaws and the Official Community Plan; and
- advise council on all matters.

These are just some of the tasks your CAO may be involved in, so making sure you find and keep the best person for this job is one of the most important tasks your council has.

If your urban government needs to hire a CAO, start with the guide from the provincial Ministry of Government Relations. A link to the ministry's website is available on our website at www.suma.org.

Understanding everyone's roles and responsibilities helps you create an efficient and effective team that can work together for the benefit of all.



MLDP modules can help all members of your urban government team understand one another's roles, and how they fit together. The Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities module covers some of the basics, and is facilitated by SUMA for urban leaders following municipal elections (see the Events Listing on our website for dates). The Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace module goes deeper into HR issues for council and administration. More information on MLDP is available on pages 26 and 27.



WORKING TOGETHER IN URBAN GOVERNMENT

Now that you've reviewed the basics of everyone's role in running your urban government (you did read "Your Urban Government Team," right?), it's time to look at how all those roles work together.

Solid teamwork in an urban government involves moving together toward a common purpose, allowing for varying perspectives without breaking down into unproductive conflict. It's easiest to achieve this productive balance when there is a clear delineation of responsibility between council and the municipal administration, as led by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

The Role of Council

Teamwork begins within council. Provincial legislation says urban governments are required (unless otherwise provided for by provincial legislation) to act through council. Council is the governing body of the urban government — the "decider," if you will.

Ultimately, council is responsible for ensuring it advances the purposes of the urban government (see more on these purposes in detail in "Effective Council Meetings"). To do that, council must set the strategic direction for the urban government, establish rules about how to move in that direction, ensure the plan is on track, and adjust the direction when necessary. Success for council begins with developing a strategic plan, and overseeing the plan's execution.

Council's role as the decision-making body of the urban government includes:

- setting the strategic direction;
- passing bylaws;
- establishing taxation levels;
- setting the budget;
- determining appropriate levels of service for municipal services;
- establishing policies; and
- reviewing the outcomes of the work of the administration.

One thing most people forget is that urban governments are corporations; they are incorporated through provincial legislation. In this respect, the council is equivalent to a board of directors. The mayor is like the chair of the board, and each councillor like a board member.

As with most corporate boards, council members do not get involved in the day-to-day operations of their urban government. It is not only a conflict of interest, it would cloud their judgment and objectivity. That is why councils hire a CAO.

The Role of the CAO

If the council is like a corporate board, the CAO is a municipal equivalent of a corporate Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Like most CEOs, the CAO is the only employee hired by council and the only employee who reports directly to council. All other employees should report — directly or indirectly — to the CAO. While council sets the direction for the urban government, the CAO carries out council's direction.

The role of CAO can be divided into two main duties: advising council, and following through on council directions. You should be able to easily connect all of your CAO's work back to one of these duties. If you can, you know your relationship is working properly. If not, you may need to adjust the council/CAO relationship.

What should a council expect of its CAO?

- Council meeting agendas and briefing packages are available before a meeting.
- Access to easy-to-understand monthly financial statements that provide a snapshot of the financial health of the urban government.
- Well-researched and easily understood reports that contain multiple recommendations, including suggestions of possible problems and solutions.
- Council and the public are treated politely, and concerns are addressed in a prompt and appropriate manner.
- Timely reporting to council on emerging issues, complete with analysis and recommendations to resolve the issue.
- Someone who provides advice, but does not tell council how to operate, or coerce council into making particular decisions.
- A certified CAO who follows all legislative responsibilities.

What should the CAO expect of their council?

- Councillors who are familiar with their roles, understand council operations, and are familiar with the municipality's programs, services and operations.
- Councillors who come to meetings well prepared, knowing the issues, understanding the problems, and willing to review all options and recommendations with an open mind.
- Councillors who ask questions, and suggest changes to improve recommendations.
- Councillors who work with and support their administration, and the rest of council, when less-popular decisions are made.
- Councillors who do not interfere with the day-to-day operations of programs and staff.
- Support for ongoing training and professional development of the CAO and other staff.
- A council that gives clear direction, is transparent about its expectations, follows up consistently, and gives and accepts constructive feedback.

Advising Council

Expect your CAO to provide you with their best advice, based on their knowledge, experience, and understanding of legislation.

Every report to council should include a recommendation from the CAO. The recommendation should reflect the CAO's advice and be supported by a solid rationale. The CAO should also provide options that explore alternative possibilities (if there are any) and provide council with some choice, if they want to reject the recommendation.

The CAO should be fully aware of the legal and financial implications of all recommendations and options, and be able to brief council on these. This requirement puts a lot of pressure on the CAO, especially in smaller urban governments. In larger governments, the CAO may have a staff to help make recommendations, such as a lawyer or finance manager. In a smaller government, the CAO must provide enough of these specialized services to give council the right information.

As a council, you'll want to be sure the CAO is providing the best advice, and all the information council needs to make decisions. Again, this is easier in larger governments where the resources are available to surround the CAO with content experts, either by employing these experts on staff or contracting the services. For smaller governments, start by hiring only qualified CAOs, certified by the Urban Board of Examiners. This certification means that your CAO will have, at minimum, the basic skills, knowledge, and abilities they need to give you advice.

Following Through on Council Direction

The CAO is not bound to execute the suggestions of every councillor or even the mayor; the CAO is only expected to act on formal direction. Fortunately, there are several ways for council to give formal direction. The most common include adopting:

- a bylaw;
- a policy;
- the budget;
- a strategic plan; and
- a work plan for the CAO.

Once council has set a direction for the CAO, there are some important points still to come. Council also needs to:

- ensure the CAO has the resources needed to do the work;
- track the work to ensure it is being done; and
- measure the outcomes of the work against stated expectations.

If council gives clear formal direction, provides the necessary resources, and follows up well, it sets the CAO up for consistent success.

Working Together

Maintaining a strong CAO/council relationship is vital to the health of your urban government. The CAO is the wise conscience and right hand of your council. The relationship affects your citizens and your community, for better or worse.

Trust is the foundation of your relationship with your CAO. Competence and consistency are its walls. Effective communication is its roof.

Trust

When the relationship first begins — after an election or when you hire a new CAO — council must trust that the CAO is qualified, experienced, and able to advise and execute directions. Meanwhile, the CAO must trust that council will pursue the best interest of its community as a whole, not narrow personal or political interests. Trust must be there on both sides before the relationship can flourish.

Competence and consistency

Competent and consistent performance from both council and the CAO will build the relationship and make it more effective. Council must have a CAO that gives solid advice, and excellent follow through. Likewise, the CAO should have a council that considers all options before making decisions, supports the CAO, and gives consistent direction and feedback. When both the CAO and council operate competently and consistently, everyone benefits.

Effective Communication

Without effective communication, any relationship will fall apart over time, and the council/CAO dynamic is no exception. To communicate effectively, dialogue needs to be open, two-way, and interest-based.

Dialogue can be written or verbal. Written communication is particularly an important method for more formal matters. For instance, the CAO should produce all reports to council in writing, and council should ensure that the written minutes for meetings fully and accurately capture all decision items.

Open communication may sometimes mean discussing sensitive matters about the CAO's performance. When these items come up, they should be handled formally, but during an in camera session as part of a council meeting.

While individual council members can meet with the CAO one-on-one to discuss issues, understand that the CAO reports to council as a whole, not to individual councillors or even to the mayor. Individual council members should never provide direction or performance feedback to the CAO except through council. Protect the CAO from a perception of bias, and yourself from a perception of tampering.

The Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace module of the MLDP uses a one-day workshop to help urban municipal leaders understand the HR details to keep your municipality running. Watch for workshop dates and locations at www.mldp.ca.





Formal versus informal communication

Electronic communication such as text messages, social media, and email are used more and more frequently; many SUMA members use these tools to get feedback from citizens and to communicate with the public and staff. But they may blur the line between formal and informal communication.

There is a difference between sending a text message alerting your staff to a broken water line, and sending your staff a text message criticizing their response to that break. To maintain effective communication with your CAO, you need to know when it is appropriate to use informal or formal communication. A simple rule of thumb for elected officials: When in doubt, communicate formally.

Two-way communication

If council is committed to maintaining an effective relationship with its CAO, it must practice two-way communication.

As we've already discussed, a qualified CAO is bringing you their expertise and experience, and their recommendations should be backed up with solid rationale. Council needs to listen to the CAO and accept guidance when appropriate. This can be a challenging dynamic for both the council and the CAO. CAOs may be uncomfortable being direct with council, or providing constructive feedback on council's effectiveness. Likewise, council may not be comfortable hearing from an employee on these matters.

The CAO must use their personal judgment to decide on the most effective time, place, and way to give feedback to council. While two-way communication can be awkward and uncomfortable, council should create an environment in which this communication is acceptable and expected.

Interest-based communication

An interest-based approach to communication is another key element in maintaining an effective relationship between council and the CAO. Conflict, differing opinions, and varying positions are not bad things in the council/CAO dynamic, so long as they are resolved effectively. Taking the interest-based approach to communication makes it easier to reach a positive resolution, as you work to understand how everyone got to their varying points of view.

How important is effective communication between the CAO and council? When communication breaks down, trust will quickly follow. When trust breaks down, neither the council nor the CAO can function effectively and everyone, your residents included, will suffer. It is nearly impossible to repair the relationship after a breakdown of trust, so it's worth the initial time and effort to communicate effectively.

The rules of interest-based communication

When dealing with situations that include significant differences of opinion, an interest-based approach can be applied by following these rules:

- Remember that maintaining the relationship is important. Treat each other respectfully, and act constructively.
- Separate the people from the problems. Stay focused on the issue you're trying to resolve, not personal differences.
- Seek to understand first. Listen carefully, and ask probing questions, to find out where the other person is coming from.
- Identify points of agreement. Figure out the things you agree on, and use these to help move towards consensus.
- Look for win-win solutions. When you both understand the motivating interests behind the positions, work together to find solutions that can satisfy those interests.

Dealing with Other Staff

As mentioned, all urban staff should report, directly or indirectly, to the CAO. Only the CAO should report to council. Council directs the activities of its administration by providing direction to the CAO. The CAO may direct other staff to deliver presentations or engage with council, or the staff may do that in the course of their duties, but council should not get involved in the management or the direction of staff.

However, council members play an important role in relaying feedback from the public and have access to an ever-expanding number of communication tools, so they will likely be in contact with staff at some point. Consider these two rules when engaging with municipal staff:

1. Always keep the CAO in the loop.
2. When in doubt, go through the CAO.

By keeping the CAO engaged, you ensure that there is direct accountability, and you maintain a trusting relationship.

Parting Ways

Sometimes, despite understanding one another's roles and responsibilities while working toward trust, competence and consistency, and effective communication, council and the CAO can't work together. Council is responsible for governance, and it needs a CAO it can trust to execute its direction and provide excellent advice. What happens when the relationship doesn't function the way it should?

One option is for the council to let the CAO go, but council must fully consider what might happen before deciding to take that step. Terminating the CAO may involve significant legal expenses and affect council's ability to recruit someone new. It means council will need to start the process of trying to attract a new CAO in a very competitive job market, while coping from the loss of a leading municipal official who may have years of knowledge and experience.

Council should consult with a human resources professional, and with legal counsel, before deciding to dismiss a CAO. Ideally, the original written employment contract of the CAO lays out the steps for termination and any payments that might be required. If it doesn't, council should be sure that the next contract does.

The relationship between council and the CAO is critical to the health of your municipality. It affects you and your residents. Working together benefits everyone.

AN EFFECTIVE COUNCIL

Individual council members, with different perspectives and priorities, have to work together for the common good of your community. To be sure you're all doing the best for your residents, it's important to understand council's legal authority and responsibilities, and what's expected of you at council and committee meetings.

Council Authority

The legal authority for councils comes from provincial legislation:

- *The Cities Act* for cities;
- *The Northern Municipalities Act* for municipalities in northern Saskatchewan; and
- *The Municipalities Act* for all other local governments.

These acts and their associated regulations tell you what you must do, and what you cannot do. Take the time to read the legislation that applies to your urban government, and make sure you clearly understand what you must and cannot do. If it's still confusing, talk to your CAO, the Ministry of Government Relations' Municipal Advisory Services, or your fellow councillors.

Throughout the legislation, local governments are given specific responsibilities and powers. In general, the urban government is expected to act reasonably and legally, but they are free to do what is necessary to meet their legislated obligations. The legislation identifies five distinct (and broadly worded) purposes:

1. Provide good government.
2. Provide services and facilities that, in council's opinion, are necessary and desirable for all or a part of the municipality.
3. Develop and maintain a safe and viable community.
4. Foster economic, social, and environmental wellbeing.
5. Provide wise stewardship of public assets.

Keep these purposes in mind as your council makes plans and takes action, through bylaws or resolutions.

Besides the three main acts, there are other provincial statutes that affect local operations. To name just a few:

- *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*
- *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *The Municipal Board Act*
- *The Ombudsman Act, 2012*
- *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*
- *The Urban Municipal Administrators Act*

More applicable acts are included in "Learning the Ropes of Urban Government." To avoid council decisions being overturned by the province or the courts, it's best to get a good grip on these provincial laws.

Legal Responsibilities of Council

Urban councils have a long list of responsibilities (but provincial legislation generally won't tell you how to meet those responsibilities; see the sidebar for details on Saskatchewan's permissive legislation approach to local governments). While you'll need to check legislation to get the full picture, here are some key responsibilities for you to remember. Your council must:

- adopt an emergency plan;
- make all decisions by resolution or bylaw;
- hold meetings in public — with few exceptions (more details on this later);
- ensure that enough elected officials are present (quorum) before doing any official business;
- adopt a public notice bylaw;
- provide public notice when changing regular meeting dates;
- adopt an operating and capital budget each year;
- appoint an auditor;
- submit audited financial statements and the auditor's report to the Minister of Government Relations by a legislated date each year;
- authorize a tax on all assessed properties in the municipality;
- adopt a water rate policy; and
- appoint a Board of Revision.

Again, this is just a sample of the legislative responsibilities required of councils. Having a qualified, effective CAO will keep your council from missing any responsibilities.

An Effective Council

Once you understand the roles and responsibilities you have as part of council and as an individual councillor or mayor, how do you make council as effective as it can be?

Look at it this way: Your urban government is a corporation. Council is the corporation's board of directors. You need to provide strong governance, clear direction to employees, and appropriate results to residents — your stakeholders. To do that, council should:

- run productive council meetings;
- effectively manage finances;
- establish policies that provide guidance and direction;
- set a long-term vision, and a plan to achieve it; and
- communicate effectively.

Council Meetings

Council meetings are one of the most visible parts of being an elected official. The public sees them. Reporters cover them (and the decisions you make there). They may be how people judge your effectiveness as an elected official.

To make the most of your meetings, here are some key points:

- Meetings must be open to the public.
- Meetings should be well planned and well run.
- An administrative clerk (usually the CAO) should attend to record accurate minutes, meeting outcomes, and votes on decision items.
- Councillors should be well prepared.
- Stay on topic during discussions.
- Discuss each agenda item thoroughly, but without repetition.
- Councillors should work well together.
- Respect the established order for people to speak to an item or motion.
- Make a decision once an item has had enough discussion or debate.
- After the meeting, ensure you are effectively following up on outcomes and decision items.

Meetings Are Open to the Public

You must conduct every meeting of council and council committees in public. Council actions are not legal unless the decisions are authorized by a bylaw or resolution passed at an open meeting.

In very limited circumstances, however, you can close portions of meetings to the public (an in camera session) for council to discuss particular matters. For example, if the council discussion is strictly about long-range or strategic planning, or any of the other exemptions noted in Part 3 (III) of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, an in camera session would be appropriate.

Transparency is important in all democratically elected governments. An in camera session is meant to let elected officials discuss sensitive and confidential information, not to make a decision in secret.

When you go into an in camera session, be clear about why the subject matter requires confidentiality. You may need to explain to citizens that legislative authority allows council to discuss this in camera.

Meeting Agenda

An agenda is an ordered list of things you will deal with at a meeting. A strong, well-developed agenda will save time and make the chair's life much easier.

Agenda format is not prescribed; how to structure a council agenda is up to each council. If your agenda format isn't working well for your council, you may want to discuss it with other municipalities to see what works for them.

What Legislation Says about What Councils Are Allowed to Do

The acts mentioned on page 26, their associated regulations, and other legislation lay out the rules that control the ability of local governments to operate freely. In Saskatchewan, local governments operate under what is known as permissive legislation, as opposed to prescriptive legislation.

Under prescriptive legislation, the province would tell local governments what they can do (and often how they can do it). Prescriptive legislation comes from the idea that the province must dictate all the actions of local governments, so local governments would only be able to do what the provincial legislation said they could.

Saskatchewan's permissive legislation is based on the idea that local governments should have all of the same freedom to operate as an individual does. This is often referred to as Natural Persons Power (NPP). NPP means that provincial legislation is written to identify the limits of local government authority. Basically, as long as what your local government wants to do does not violate any provincial or federal statutes, you can do it.

Permissive legislation and NPP places most of the responsibility for decision making and governance on you and your council. You must make the decisions, understand the implications, and be prepared to live with them.

This freedom can be both very empowering and very intimidating. You can't refer to provincial legislation to answer every question. Instead you must rely on a highly capable and qualified CAO and administration to provide the necessary guidance about any legal implications of council decisions.

Council Chair

Generally, the mayor acts as council chair, but the legislation allows council to designate any member of council. The chair is responsible for keeping meetings running smoothly, making sure everyone follows procedural rules, and signing the official minutes. Being a good meeting chair takes experience, but anyone can learn.

Here are a few keys to chairing the meeting well:

- Encourage participation.
- Ensure discussions aren't dominated by one member.
- Ask questions to make sure all points are covered and understood.
- Summarize discussions, noting areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Call for votes on the issue after adequate discussion.
- As a member of council, the chair must vote on all decisions before council. (Unless, of course, there is a conflict of interest and the member has left chambers for the discussion and vote.)

Council Procedures

Legislation now requires that your council establish a council procedures bylaw to define and clarify meeting procedures. This bylaw will also ensure everyone on council has a common understanding of council procedures. Council and your CAO should consider all the procedural questions that come up at meetings and ensure that your bylaw has an answer for them. As with all bylaws, your procedural bylaw can't establish procedures that run counter to any provincial or federal legislation.

Decision Making Through Bylaws and Resolutions

Council can make decisions through bylaws or resolutions. There are times where legislation says council must take action through using bylaws, but otherwise the decision between a bylaw or a resolution is up to the council. Whether you're using a bylaw or a resolution:

- all decisions of council or its committees must be made by vote;
- all votes must be taken in public; and
- every council member in attendance must vote, including the chair.

Resolutions

Resolutions are less formal than bylaws and usually deal with the minor, administrative matters such as adjourning a meeting or appointing an auditor. Although resolutions can be used whenever a bylaw is not required, they are best suited when:

- addressing specific questions;
- dealing with a single event or issue;
- expressing council's position;
- providing direction to the CAO; or
- approving short-term planning, like special events.

Bylaws

The procedures for passing bylaws are dictated by legislation. Some examples of prescribed times for council to use bylaws:

- Adopting a public notice bylaw
- Incorporating procedural rules
- Permanently closing all or part of a road
- Changing the number of councillors on council

Your CAO should have a strong understanding of when a bylaw is required, and you can read more in the legislation. Remember that bylaws are intended for ongoing matters with general application and/or where penalties are involved.

The legislation says every proposed bylaw must have three distinct and separate readings. A bylaw should typically not have more than two readings at one meeting. However, if it is necessary or desirable, members of council may unanimously agree to three readings at a single meeting.

Council may also amend or repeal a bylaw. You must amend or repeal a bylaw in the same way as the original bylaw.

Respecting Council Decisions

Sometimes, consensus among the whole council just won't happen, no matter how much you discuss it — even if you're applying the principles of interest-based communication. This means that at some point during your term as a councillor you will probably be on the losing side of a council vote.

While discussion and debate are a healthy part of a democracy, councillors must respect the decision-making process. Even where you disagree with decisions, it is important that your residents, your council colleagues, and your administration know that you will respect and follow all council decisions.

Your residents elected your entire council; they deserve a council that works together to be effective on their behalf.



DUTY OF FAIRNESS: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FAIR DEALING

Conflicts of interest have been a concern for municipal officials for a long time, but in Saskatchewan, we are dealing with major changes compared to past rules. New municipal conflicts of interest rules came into force on November 19, 2015, within the last year of the municipal election term. These new rules expanded the duties of council members and administration to avoid conflicts, clarified requirements for council members to treat residents and other municipal officials fairly, and allowed the provincial Ombudsman to review municipal decisions and council members' activities.

Under these new rules, the most effective way to deal with conflicts of interest is by considering them part of a larger duty of fairness owed to your residents. The duty of fairness comes down, basically, to two golden rules:

1. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. Treat yourself as you would like others to be treated.

The New Rules

To understand the new conflict of interest rules and these golden rules, it is important to understand where the rules changes came from. *The Final Report of the Inspection and Inquiry Into the RM of Sherwood No 159* revealed that the reeve failed to disclose the extent of his financial interest in a development being considered by his council, influenced the development approval process outside of meetings, and attempted to conceal his involvement in moving the development forward.

The legislation changing the conflict of interest rules were a direct result of the report and its recommendations, and were designed to stop any council member from doing what the reeve did. It does so in three ways.

First, municipal legislation now contains an **expanded definition of conflict of interest**. Council members must now avoid participating in a council decision if the decision gives a chance to advance the member's "private interests" (or those of a closely connected person, such as a business partner, family member, or employer), especially if this interest could be seen to influence the member, or their action results in an advantage for the member or a closely connected person. This private advantage does not just refer to financial advantage. The restriction also applies to any action on council — such as voting or speaking on an issue at meetings, using their position to promote the issues, or conducting council duties in a way that advances that interest.

You are responsible for declaring any conflicts of interest you may have.

Second, legislation **expanded the duty to treat residents and other municipal officials fairly**, both for council members and administration. All councils must:

- have a council procedures bylaw to define and clarify meeting procedures;
 - establish an Employee Code of Conduct for administration staff; and
 - have a Code of Ethics to help council members fulfill their duties in a fair, accountable, and transparent manner.
- Council members must also file a public disclosure statement including financial and property matters that might be affected by council business.

Third, the **Provincial Ombudsman's mandate was expanded** to include municipalities. The Ombudsman now has the power to respond to complaints against council members on conflicts of interest and unfair treatment.

Duty of Fairness

The best way to avoid issues is by honouring the duty of fairness entrusted to you as an elected official. This duty is reflected in your oath of office, when you promised to truly, faithfully, and impartially perform the duties of your office. Once elected, you are a trustee for your community, obligated to serve the public above any personal or private interests.

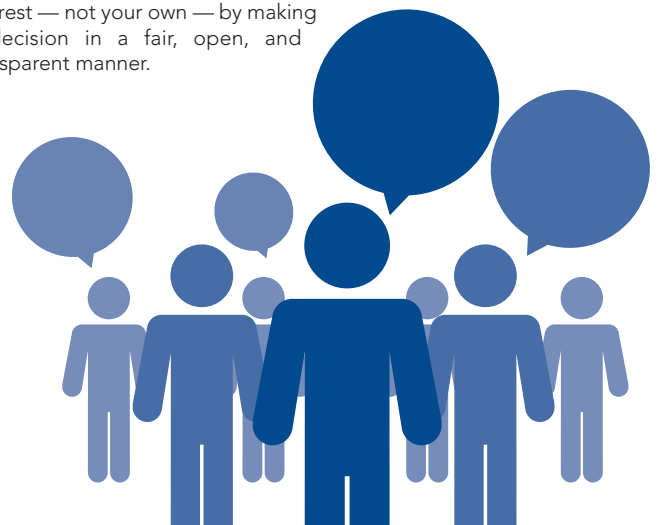
Understanding what that declaration means takes us back to the first golden rule: treat others as you would like to be treated. You need to look at issues with an open mind, free from bias and bad faith. You must make decisions in the best interests of your community — not your own interest or to the advantage of those of those close to you. When listening to residents and working with your council and administration, your first consideration should always be: If I was in their shoes, how would I want to be treated?

The best illustration for this duty is when council acts as a quasi-judicial body and decides hearings, such as on bylaw contravention appeals. A property owner can file a court application challenging a decision if they believe council has not met its duty of fairness when making that decision. If the judge finds the council failed in meeting its duty, the decision could be voided by the court. The Ombudsman can now also investigate complaints against council decisions and council members, and make recommendations on what should be done to rectify an unfair decision or conflict of interest.

So how can you ensure you are meeting your duty? When making decisions at hearings, be aware, take care, and be fair:

- **Be aware** of the rules and your obligations.
- **Take care** and follow the right process.
- **Be fair** when considering the facts and making your decision.

Your decisions may be tough, but they should never be unfair. Show you are working in your municipality's best interest — not your own — by making a decision in a fair, open, and transparent manner.



Conflicts of Interest: Declare, Disclose, and Depart

Conflicts of interest are best considered as part of the overall duty of fairness, and a critical part, at that. Conflicts of interest often provide the clearest examples of whether a council member is acting in their community's best interests. Strict rules require council members to declare any conflict and not participate in any decision when they have a conflict of interest.

You are responsible for declaring any conflicts of interest you may have. Conflicts may be financial or private interests. They may be yours or that of someone closely connected to you, such as business associates and family members. Conflicts are those things that could be seen to influence you and those where your decision could result in a private advantage. Part of your responsibility to declare your conflicts is the legal requirement to submit a conflict of interest declaration form listing these interests, such as your property holdings, employment and business dealings, and those for your immediate family.

Having a conflict is not a crime, but hiding or ignoring a conflict carries stiff penalties.

When dealing with conflicts of interest, it's best to go above and beyond technical compliance. Embrace the accountability and transparency expected in the spirit of the law. How do you do that? Here are some best practices to get you started:

Follow the second golden rule: Treat yourself as you would want others to be treated.

If you think you are in conflict — or, if others were in your position, thought they would be in conflict — then you probably are in conflict. Your reputation as a fair and trusted community leader is at risk if you do not deal with conflicts of interest appropriately. Imagine you are watching someone else do what you are considering. If you would disapprove of their actions, why do it yourself?

Apply the "three Ds" at meetings: declare, disclose, and depart.

- Declare that you have a conflict of interest before discussion on that issue begins.
- Disclose a few brief key facts about the interest.
- After declaring and disclosing your interest, depart from the council room until discussion is done.

Do not discuss the issue before, during, or after the meeting.

Your duty as a member of council follows you, wherever you may go. If you have a conflict of interest, do not bring up the issue or casually discuss it with other council members or administration — not during meeting breaks, not at dinners, not at the grocery store. Build a "conflict wall" around the issue in all of your dealings with colleagues and staff.

Be diligent.

Review the meeting agenda and let the administrator know about any issue. Ensure written minutes record your declaration and absence. Know the legislation, your oath of office, and the code of ethics. Get advice if you have questions.

Having a conflict is not a crime, but hiding or ignoring a conflict carries stiff penalties. Failure to declare a conflict or file a completed disclosure form could cost you your council seat and any money paid as a result of the conflict. You can be disqualified from holding office for up to 12 years from the date of disqualification and have to pay court costs.

Exceptions

While financial interests are always conflicts of interest, there are important exceptions to the rules. There are similarly worded lists of exceptions in *The Cities Act* at Section 115(2), *The Municipalities Act* at Section 143(2), and *The Northern Municipalities Act*, 2010 at Section 161(2). There are two exceptions that are considered the most in case law.

The "community of interest" exception arises when a council member is affected as a voter, taxpayer, or utility customer of their community. This deals with situations where a council member votes on a matter affecting the entire community or a larger group that includes the member.

The "remote and insignificant" exception considers whether the member receives a direct benefit and the amount or size of the benefit. If any amount paid provides a very indirect benefit or the amount is very small, then there is no conflict.

Another exception that may arise is on any expenses, honorarium, wages, or benefit to which a council member is entitled as a member of council. To avoid problems here, set up a policy dealing with any wages or payments so it is clear to residents and those around the council table what can be claimed at what rate. There should also be a process to ensure claims are identifiable and properly made.

Overall, it is better to err on the side of caution with conflicts of interest. If you think you might have a conflict, discuss it with your fellow council members and the administrator. If you are still not sure, talk to Municipal Advisory Services with the Ministry of Government Relations, or contact your lawyer.

Remember: Even if you determine through due diligence that no conflict applies, the public may disagree. You should be prepared to deal with these issues by having a full understanding of the rules around conflicts of interest.

Overall, it is better to err on the side of caution with conflicts of interest.

In meeting the duty of fairness and following conflict of interest rules, you are ensuring public trust in elected officials. A cornerstone of democracy is elected officials serving the people, not private, personal interests, and treating residents, staff and colleagues in a fair, transparent manner.

By treating others as you would like to be treated, you ensure you are treating others fairly. By treating yourself as you would like others treated, you maintain a high standard of transparency and accountability. These should be your goals every day you have the honour to serve on your council as a leader of your community.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Financial management is a vital council responsibility. You must act as a wise steward of resources, or you'll run out of money to pay the bills. How will you do anything then?

Council's number one role is to determine the financial management plan. All other functions are set when the financial goals and objectives are determined. Astute financial management is what allows council and their employees to operate an attractive, sustainable community.

Council is responsible for managing the big picture of finances. This may include:

- identifying priorities;
- setting goals, objectives, and standards for service delivery;
- setting fees for services like garbage collection, access to water, or using recreation facilities; and
- adopting a budget to ensure there is enough money coming in to meet local needs and priorities (where the money goes out).

Revenue: Money In

Revenue is any money earned — whether through taxes, fines, penalties, service charges, government grants, or fees.

There are several ways for your municipality to bring in revenue:

- Renting out buildings or equipment
- Interest earned on investments
- Selling goods
- User fees for programs and services, including through a utility (such as water)
- Providing services (such as fire services) to adjacent municipalities/First Nations on contract
- Property taxes

When considering fees or looking at new revenues, here are some things you may want to consider:

- Will the new revenues cover the cost of running the program/service? If not, where will the money come from?
- Are we charging enough for our utility systems and programs? Revenue should cover operation and full cost recovery for future repair and replacement.
- Can we find the money we need by cutting or reducing other programs or services?
- How long will funding from another order of government be available?
- Are there grants available? (Visit the SUMA website to check the list we have available.) What are the terms of the funding?

Expenditures: Money Going Out

Expenditures are everything the urban government pays for. This includes salaries and wages, infrastructure repair, replacement or new construction, grants paid to community groups, and much more.

Some things you may want to think about when considering new expenditures:

- Will the new expenditure meet a community need? If not, is the new program/service necessary?
- Is the suggested expenditure in response to the public? If so, how are they prepared to fund it?
- Is this most appropriately paid for by current residents, by future residents, or by both?
- How will we generate the revenue to offset this cost?
- Is this expenditure sustainable?

You can spend a full-day workshop with people in the know on these issues at MLDP's Strategic and Financial Planning for Municipalities module.

You might also want to take in the Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals and Community and Land Use Planning workshops to help round out the financial picture.

Watch for workshop dates and locations at www.mldp.ca.



Operating Versus Capital Expenditures

Operating — or current — expenditures are the goods or services the municipality needs for day-to-day operations. These tend to be ongoing expenses; think salaries to civic workers, electricity use at the community hall, and other similar expenses.

Capital expenditures pay for an asset of fixed or permanent nature such as a community hall, arena, or water treatment plant. Expenditures that improve or extend the useful life of an existing asset are also considered capital expenditures. Most capital investments have a direct impact on your operating budget. For example, a new arena will bring in revenue (rental and user fees), while also creating expenses (staff salaries, electricity).

The Budget

A budget is a multi-purpose document. It serves as a:

- financial plan, with estimates of how money will be received and spent;
- policy document, setting out priorities and goals;
- communication piece, showing important issues and trends; and
- resource planning guide, setting a framework for future financial activities.

You can find detailed direction on municipal budgeting in the legislation, but here are some of the key points:

- Every council must prepare a budget.
- The budget must show estimates of all money coming in and going out.
- Council cannot adopt a deficit budget; you cannot plan to spend more money than you bring in for that budget year.
- Any deficit at the end of a fiscal year must be paid by the end of the next fiscal year.
- Council must appoint an auditor to review the financial records and comment on management practices.

Once you've set a budget, part of your job is watching how well it's working. Pay close attention to all revenue and expenses.

You should get a monthly variance report from administration. It will show the actual expenditures and revenues to date, compared to the total budget. These reports should show revenue and expenditures for the previous month. It may also include projected revenue and expenditure information to year end. This allows you to see if your budget is still on target.

As you monitor the budget, consider these factors:

- How well are expenditures serving council priorities and community needs?
- How does council measure financial performance?
- What changes should be made to the budget?

You cannot plan to spend more money than you bring in for that budget year.

Financial Statements and Financial Reporting

Your annual financial statements summarize the whole year's operations. Council is responsible for ensuring that the Minister of Government Relations receives the urban government's audited financial statements and auditor's report every year by July 1 (September 1 for cities).

Council must appoint an independent auditor. The main role of the auditor is to ensure the financial statements are prepared correctly, and are accurate. The auditor's report will traditionally provide one of three opinions about the financial statement:

- Unqualified audit: Everything is in good order.
- Qualified audit: The auditor found a few problems.
- Adverse opinion: There are major problems.

Funding from external sources (other orders of government) often requires reports on how you spent the money. If you don't file the required reports or submit your financial statements on time, you can be denied funding, among other problems.

Looking at the Long Term – Tangible Capital Asset Reporting and Asset Management Plans

Urban governments are responsible for the management of millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure. It is vital to council's long-term planning to develop an asset management plan, and is becoming a requirement for some lines of funding available to municipalities, such as the federal Gas Tax Fund.

Maintaining a registry of all tangible capital assets (TCA) is an important part of an asset management plan. The TCA report identifies each asset, counts the number of assets, values the assets, and applies an amortization value. These are nonfinancial assets (vehicles, roads, buildings) that have an economic useful life greater than one accounting period. Once you've collected this information, it's used to develop the asset management plan.

An asset management plan is a process to ensure delivery of services from infrastructure are financially sustainable. It details information about infrastructure assets, including how to most effectively provide a defined level of service.

The asset management plan defines the services that need to be provided, how the services are provided, estimated lifetime of the asset (including yearly depreciation of the asset), replacement costs, funding requirements to provide the service at current and future service levels, and any potential risks that may be involved (providing/funding the service versus not providing/funding it).

Basically, a good asset management plan means you are spending money on infrastructure in the smartest way, aiming for the greatest impact at the lowest cost. There is a great Asset Management Getting Started Guide available on the SUMA website (see the Resources menu, and click through to the Tools page), which also includes links to other places you can find information on asset management.

If you don't have a plan in place, start now. Asset management plans just makes ~~cents~~ sense.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Life in urban government means you have to talk to a lot of people. Some you'll be happy to chat with; others may require more resolve and preparation. Here are some tips for dealing with citizens and the media as an elected official.

The Public

As a member of council, you will deal with the public every day. Most times, they want to share a complaint. Whether it's a run-in on coffee row, an upset taxpayer, a concerned resident, or even your spouse, complaints are inevitable. Here's what you can do:

- Be patient and tactful – even when someone is complaining.
- Listen. Really listen.
- Note the specifics of the complaint, and get contact information for the person making the complaint.
- Do not immediately offer solutions; offer to look into the problem and get back to them.
- Pass this information on to your administration. Have them explore the issue and report on it.
- After administration reports back, discuss what they found with your CAO and perhaps with council.
- Have council consider any actions that need to be taken (developing a new policy, or reviewing procedures).
- Stay in contact with the person who complained to you. Keep them informed through the whole process and provide them with any final information or outcomes.
- Make sure councillors and staff all follow similar procedures for fielding complaints.
- Have the CAO regularly bring a summary of citizen feedback and responses to council.

The Media

If you've never dealt with the media before, the thought of being called up for an interview might leave you hesitant, intimidated, or even frightened. Don't be; the media and your municipality can and should work together for the benefit of your residents. It's important to build a relationship with reporters and establish a sense of trust. You can help them understand the issues affecting your community; they can help you share information about programs and services. And this relationship is invaluable when you have to deliver bad news.

So what do you do when a reporter calls looking for an interview?

Be prepared

Make sure you've appointed a council spokesperson. For political issues or matters before the council, it will probably be the mayor. You should also appoint the CAO to speak on technical matters. Key council members and senior administration should take media training.

When the call comes in, get all the details before you do the interview. Find out what story the reporter is working on, who else they are talking to, what their deadline is, and what information they need from

you. Generally, they don't need to interview someone immediately (but this is where finding out the deadline is very important), so you can take the time to get the details and call them back later.

Once you have the details, you can decide who the appropriate spokesperson is for this issue, arrange the interview, and take time to prepare. Consider the questions you might expect from the reporter and be sure you can answer them as simply as possible. If you need to, do some research, review notes or reports, or check in with those who have details you need. Think about the most important points you want to convey (your key messages), so you can make sure you hit those points.

If possible, record the call or interview. Your administration can usually help, if you tell them ahead of time.

During the interview

- Speak with one voice. Once council has made a decision, respect it (even if it wasn't what you wanted).
- Keep answers short. If the reporter needs more information, they will ask follow up questions.
- Don't speculate. If you don't know the answer, tell the reporter you will have to look into it and get back to them. Be sure to follow through on the promise of getting back to them.
- Saying "No comment" makes it look like you have something to hide. Avoid that phrase. A few alternatives to bridge into what you are prepared to say:
 - I can't address that issue; what I can tell you is...
 - The real issue is...
 - That is a good question. Let me put things into context...
 - That may be your view. As far as we are concerned...
 - I don't want to speculate; what we know is...
 - I don't have the answer. What I do know is...
 - I'll need to get back to you on this. (Make sure you follow through on this promise.)
- Everything you say to a reporter should be considered "on the record." Never say anything unless you are comfortable with it being a headline.
- Never lie to a reporter. Ever.

Seeking the Story

If you have a good news story, like a special occasion or exciting initiative, issue a press release or call a reporter after preparing a statement. Reporters are interested in local stories and your residents want to hear about what you're doing.

Your relationship with citizens and the media runs both ways. You need each other to do your jobs, so be respectful, even if you are also being cautious.

The MLDP module on Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities will help you hone these skills during the full-day workshop. Watch for workshop dates and locations at www.mldp.ca.





SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat, are a bit of a blend between talking to residents and talking to media. You can get your message out, unfiltered, in a public space, and respond directly to people who might not otherwise come to you. Social media has as many upsides as it does downsides, so here are a few points to consider when using social networks.

It is a public forum. If you wouldn't say it in while standing at a microphone in front of a room full of strangers mixed with your closest friends and loved ones (including the most easily scandalized), don't say it on social media. This is the same principle as not saying anything to a reporter that you wouldn't want to be a headline. And the internet is forever — even if you delete or edit a post, someone can still find the original if they look hard enough.

As a member of council, you have access to lots of sensitive material and conversations. Don't post anything that could violate confidentiality or privacy legislation and policies, or the confidence of people who trust you.

Take the time to listen. You can't stop social media; the conversations are happening whether you are there or not. If you take the time and effort, you can hear residents' concerns, and respond in a transparent way.

Ignoring it won't make it go away. Social media makes you accessible to residents — for better or for worse. When they ask questions, they expect answers. If you need to, direct them to your administration for an answer (for example, when someone wants to know when the trees are being trimmed in the park or why their garbage wasn't picked up). You don't have to engage with everyone, but listening and responding carefully will go a long way.

Be timely. There's no perfect posting schedule or response-time guideline, but don't let your account languish for too long without checking in, posting, and responding.

See what others are doing. Lots of elected officials use social media. Some do a better job than others. Check out other accounts for guidance about what to do, and what to avoid.

Think before you post. Don't let your emotions get the best of you and respond in a way you'll regret later. It could mean typing up messages and responses in a separate document to compose your thoughts, or just taking a deep breath when you see something that upsets you, but find a system that works for you and keep the other principles in mind.

Social media can seem very scary to the uninitiated, but it can also be a wonderful tool to help you connect with residents, the media, other elected officials, and groups with similar ideas and concerns. Upset residents want to be heard. They will appreciate you listening and helping where you can. Traditional media wants to do their part to promote transparent government and share the stories of the community. As an elected official, you are going to be in the public eye for your entire term. Don't be afraid; just be careful.

LEARNING THE ROPES OF URBAN GOVERNMENT

Working in local government is an ever-evolving job. There is a lot to learn, and then you need to keep up with the current trends. To help you learn some of the ins and outs of life in urban government, we have compiled places you can turn and information you may find useful.

Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP)

MLDP is the only program developed specifically for elected and appointed local government leaders in Saskatchewan. It was designed through a partnership of the Ministry of Government Relations and the associations representing local governments (SUMA, SARM, UMAAS, the RMAA, and New North).

Mayors, councillors, and staff are invited to an innovative program designed to strengthen local government leadership. The program is built around six key modules, or workshops, usually delivered in one day each:

1. Community and Land Use Planning
2. Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace
3. Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals
4. Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities
5. Strategic and Financial Planning for Municipalities
6. Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities (offered through SUMA for urban leaders)

You receive a certificate of completion for each workshop you attend, and urban leaders who complete the full program are recognized at the SUMA convention.

To learn more about workshop topics, and see the next scheduled dates visit www.mldp.ca.

Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Local Government Authority

To become certified, administrators must complete at least the Certificate in Local Government Authority. The program is available through the University of Regina Centre for Continuing Education, and can be completed in person, through distance learning, or online. You must complete The Certificate in Local Government Authority before taking the Advanced Certificate in Local Government Authority.

More information can be found at www.uregina.ca/cce.

Legislation

The list is long, and we can't be comprehensive, but here's a list to get you started:

- The Assessment Management Agency Act
- The Cities Act
- The Controverted Municipal Elections Act
- The Emergency Planning Act
- The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010 and its associated regulations:
 - The Saskatchewan Environmental Code
 - The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations
 - The Waterworks and Sewage Works Regulations
- The Fire Safety Act
- The Government Relations Administration Act
- The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- The Local Government Election Act, 2015
- The Local Improvements Act, 1993
- The Municipal Board Act
- The Municipal Expropriation Act
- The Municipal Financing Corporation Act

"Required" Reading

We can't make you read any of these materials, but they are a valuable way to learn more on your own time (and without any tests!).

Municipal World Magazine

SUMA members have access to a discount. Contact us to arrange your subscription.

Books from George Cuff

George Cuff has been involved with local governments since the 1970s and has written several books (too many to list here), which are available through Municipal World. You could start with *Making a Difference: Cuff's Guide for Municipal Leaders Volume 1*, and work from there.

Guide to Good Municipal Governance

Good governance is essential to a high-functioning urban government. Check out this book by C. Richard Tindal and Susan Nobes Tindal. Available from Municipal World.

Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces

Available from the University of Toronto Press, or online from Amazon or Indigo, the book includes essays from experts in each of Canada's provinces.

The Urban Age and The New Urban Age

Learn about the struggles urban governments have faced in Saskatchewan, how they came together to form SUMA, and how SUMA has evolved over more than 100 years. Both books and our recurring publications are available on the SUMA website through the Resources menu.

- The Municipal Grants Act
- The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act
- The Municipalities Act
- The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010
- The Ombudsman Act, 2012
- The Pest Control Act
- The Planning and Development Act, 2007
- The Police Act, 1990
- The Regional Parks Act, 2013
- The Saskatchewan Employment Act and its associated regulations:
 - The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996
- The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code
- The Stray Animals Act
- The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990
- The Tax Enforcement Act
- The Traffic Safety Act
- The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act
- The Urban Municipal Administrators Act
- The Weed Control Act

Being familiar with these and other provincial laws should ensure that the lawful decisions made by your council are not overturned by the province or the courts. Electronic copies of all Saskatchewan statutes and regulations are available on the Queen's Printer website (www.qp.gov.sk.ca) and CanLII (www.canlii.org). You can also contact SUMA or Government Relations to help find a particular piece of legislation.

WE GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP

Your duties as an elected official can seem enormous and overwhelming. We hope this handbook will help you.

Remember, you and your urban government are probably not the first to face any particular challenge. When you're feeling lost, or just eager to learn more, here are some places you can turn for information or help.

SUMA

More information about who we are and what we do can be found in "A Member's Guide to SUMA" (page 2 of this handbook).

Web: www.suma.org
Email: suma@suma.org
Phone: 306-525-3727

SUMAdvantage

Leveraging the collective purchasing power of our municipalities, SUMAdvantage is based on the simple premise that buying in bulk is cheaper than paying retail. Visit our website for a current list of partners, and to find out how you can get involved.

SUMA Legal Services

Our legal services help keep you up to date on decisions and trends in municipal law, and provides a call-in service for member councils, administrators and city. The service does not create a solicitor-client relationship and is not intended to replace your community's solicitor. Contact our office for more information.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Ministry of Government Relations is responsible for municipal relations, public safety, and First Nations, Métis and Northern affairs. In particular, Advisory Services and Municipal Relations should find a place on your speed-dial. This unit provides advice to CAOs, council members, and members of the public on municipal matters.

Phone: 306-787-2680 (Regina)
Email: muninfo@gov.sk.ca

Northern Advisors

Phone: 1-800-663-1555 (La Ronge)
Phone: 1-866-548-4633 (Buffalo Narrows)

SUMA PARTNERS:

Municipal Leadership Development Program

MLDP is the only training program in Saskatchewan specifically for elected and appointed leaders. More information can be found in "Learning the Ropes of Urban Government" (page 26 of this handbook).

Web: www.mldp.ca
Email: mldp@sasktel.net

Saskatchewan Municipal Awards

The SMAs are a partnership of SUMA, SARM, the Ministry of Government Relations, UMAAS, the RMAA, and New North. It was created in 2006 to showcase and celebrate noteworthy practices of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

Web: www.municipalawards.ca
Email: awards@municipalawards.ca

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

The SPRA is a non-profit volunteer organization whose purpose is to promote, develop and facilitate parks and recreation opportunities throughout the province.

Web: www.spra.sk.ca
Email: office@spra.sk.ca
Phone: 306-780-9231
Toll free: 1-800-563-2555

Saskatchewan Seniors' Mechanism

The SSM is a non-profit, volunteer umbrella organization that brings together Saskatchewan seniors' organizations to contribute to a better quality of life for our province's older adults.

Web: www.skseniormechanism.ca
Email: info@skseniormechanism.ca
Phone: 306-359-9956
Toll free: 1-888-823-2211

Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan

UMAAS establishes standards and examinations to increase administrators' proficiency, knowledge, and skills as administrators. They have also established an educational program for administrators who want to become members.

Web: www.umaas.ca
Email: umaas@sasktel.net

RELATED GROUPS:

Association of Regional Waste Management Authorities of Saskatchewan

ARWMAS is a corporation made up of most of the regional waste management authorities in the province. It serves to provide a unified voice to the provincial government and the industries.

Web: www.siulongwebdesign.com/waste
Email: arwmas@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-975-0851

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The FCM represents municipalities across Canada on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction. Many SUMA members are also FCM members, and urban elected officials sit on the FCM Board of Directors.

Web: www.fcm.ca
Email: info@fcm.ca
Phone: 613-241-5221

Municipal Employees' Pension Plan

MEPP provides retirement benefits to the employees of school divisions, urban and rural municipalities, regional colleges, regional public libraries, and other local authorities within the province of Saskatchewan.

Web: www.peba.gov.sk.ca/pensions/mepp/home
Email: mepp@peba.gov.sk.ca
Phone: 306-787-2684
Toll free: 1-877-506-6377

New North SANC Services

New North, also known as the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities, is the lobbying and advocacy association for the municipalities of northern Saskatchewan. Its purpose is to advocate and negotiate with the local, provincial and federal governments on behalf of its member communities, and to implement changes to enhance the quality of life for northern people within the Northern Administration District (NAD) of Saskatchewan. Most members of New North are also members of SUMA.

Web: www.newnorthsask.org
Email: new.north@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-425-5505

Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan

PARCS is an independent association that supports and represents the interests of cottage communities of Saskatchewan. Its vision is to be the voice of action for strengthening and supporting the cottage way of life in Saskatchewan. Many PARCS members are also members of SUMA.

Web: www.skparcs.com
Email: parcs@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-630-9698

Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency

SAMA is a government agency responsible for developing, regulating and delivering a stable, cost effective assessment system that is accurate, up-to-date, universal, equitable, and understandable.

Web: www.sama.sk.ca
Email: info.request@sama.sk.ca
Phone: 1-800-667-7262
In Regina: 306-924-8070

Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks

The SACC provides an opportunity for professionals performing similar functions in municipal government to work together and offer support.

Web: www.saskcityclerks.ca

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

SARM is the independent association that represents the rural municipal governments in Saskatchewan and is the principal advocate in representing them before senior governments. SARM is a key SUMA collaborator.

Web: www.sarm.ca
Email: sarm@sarm.ca
Phone: 306-757-3577

Saskatchewan Municipal Board

The purpose of the SMB is to ensure financial credibility for municipalities and school divisions, and to ensure that appeals respecting planning, assessment, fire prevention, municipal boundaries, annexations and conservation and development are heard and a decision rendered.

Web: www.smb.gov.sk.ca
Email: info@smb.gov.sk.ca
Phone: 306-787-6221

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS:

Association of Consulting Engineering Companies - Saskatchewan

The ACEC-SK is a non-profit association representing the business interests of the majority of consulting engineering and consulting geoscience firms in Saskatchewan. Consulting engineers serve as advisors on the planning, development, and management of our natural and built environment

Web: www.acec-sk.ca
Email: info@acec-sk.ca
Phone: 306-359-3338

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan

APEGS is Saskatchewan's professional association for engineers and geoscientists.

Web: www.apegs.sk.ca
Email: apegs@apegs.ca
Phone: 1-800-500-9547
In Regina: 306-525-9547

Rural Municipal Administrators' Association

The RMAA is the professional association for administrators of rural municipalities in Saskatchewan. The RMAA is a frequent partner with SUMA in advancing municipal interests.

Web: www.rmaa.ca
Email: rmaa@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-823-4321

Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute

The SPPI provides services to benefit the professional planner, their employers, the public, and the communities and clients served by planners in Saskatchewan.

Web: www.sppi.ca
Email: info@sppi.ca
Phone: 306-584-3879

Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators

CAMA is a national, non-profit association open to all municipal employees in a management capacity in the administration of a Canadian municipality, any person who is employed in a management capacity in a national, regional, provincial, or territorial municipal organization dealing with municipal management and administration.

Web: www.camacam.ca
Phone: 1-866-771-CAMA (1-866-771-2262)

Canadian Institute of Planners

The CIP is a collaborative national federation that advances professional planning excellence through the delivery of services in Canada and abroad.

Web: www.cip-icu.ca
Phone: 1-800-207-2138

Institute of Public Administration of Canada

IPAC is a national, bilingual non-profit organization focused on the theory and practice of public management. It sponsors the publication of the handy reference book *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces*, available on Amazon. The Saskatchewan regional group boasts 150 active members.

Web: www.ipac.ca

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Canadian Urban Institute

The Canadian Urban Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in urban areas across Canada and internationally.

Web: www.canurb.org
Phone: 416-365-0816

Canadian Legal Information Institute

CanLII is a non-profit organization managed by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. CanLII's goal is to make Canadian law accessible for free on the Internet. The website provides access to court judgments, tribunal decisions, statutes and regulations from all Canadian jurisdictions.

Web: www.canlii.org

Certificate in Local Government Authority

Local government administrators in Saskatchewan receive certification by obtaining at least the Certificate in Local Government Authority. Once they have obtained the certificate, they can take the Advanced Certificate in Local Government Authority. Both are available through the University of Regina Centre for Continuing Education, and can be completed in person, through distance learning, or online.

Web: www.uregina.ca/cce/career-development/business-management/lga.html

Centre for Civic Governance

An initiative of the Columbia Institute, the centre aims to provide information to help people build strong, progressive communities throughout Canada.

Web: www.civicgovernance.ca
Email: info@columbiainstitute.ca
Phone: 604-408-2500

CivicInfoBC

CivicInfo BC is British Columbia's local government information hub. The main goal of CivicInfo BC is to facilitate the free and open exchange of local government information, which is done primarily through its website.

Web: www.civicinfo.bc.ca
Email: info@civicinfo.bc.ca
Phone: 250-383-4898

International City/County Management Association

ICMA is the professional and educational organization for chief appointed managers, administrators, and assistants in cities, towns, counties, and regional entities throughout the world. Since 1914, ICMA has provided technical and management assistance, training and information resources to its members and the local government community.

Web: www.icma.org
Email: membership@icma.org
Phone: 202-289-4262

Municipal Excellence Network

Government of Alberta website that hosts information on best practices by Alberta municipalities.

Web: www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mc_municipal_excellence
Email: menet@gov.ab.ca
Phone: 780-427-2225

The Municipal Information Network

A source for municipal information and news from across Canada.

Web: www.municipalinfonet.com
Email: info@municipalinfonet.com
Phone: 1-888-332-3749

Municipal World

Founded in 1891, the magazine is devoted to promoting effective municipal government. The website features important information about local government, details about Municipal World's products and services, and links to other local government resources. SUMA members receive a discounted subscription. Municipal World is also the publisher behind the useful reference book, Guide to Good Municipal Governance, and the three volumes of Off the Cuff, all available from the magazine's website.

Web: www.municipalworld.com
Phone: 1-888-368-6125

Muniscope

Muniscope is a Canadian resource on municipal issues, with a dedicated team of professional researchers backed by the largest circulating library of its kind in Canada. It is a source for information to support local government policies, practices, and service delivery.

Web: www.muniscope.ca

Open Government Portal

Access Government of Canada data and information, including digital records, maps, databases, apps and datasets.

Web: www.open.canada.ca
Phone: 1-877-636-0656
Email: open-ouvert@tbs-sct.gc.ca

RCMP Detachments

Find contact information for any detachment in Saskatchewan.

Web: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/detach/en/find/SK

Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics

The Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics releases the Monthly Statistical Review and the Saskatchewan Economic Review, compilations of the most asked-for Saskatchewan monthly, quarterly, and annual data. The Saskatchewan Fact Sheet provides a snap shot of important economic and social statistics on Saskatchewan for the past two years.

Web: www.stats.gov.sk.ca
Phone: 306-787-6327

Saskatchewan Queen's Printer

Queen's Printer offers free online access to current Government of Saskatchewan legislation. The office also provides original statutes, as published in the bound sessional and annual volumes, and the regulations, as published in Parts II and III of The Saskatchewan Gazette, which should be consulted for all purposes of interpretation and application of the law.

Web: www.qp.gov.sk.ca
Email: qprinter@gov.sk.ca
Phone: 306-787-6894
Toll free: 1-800-226-7302

Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada produces statistics that help Canadians better understand their country — its population, resources, economy, society and culture. In addition to conducting a census every five years, there are about 350 active surveys on virtually all aspects of Canadian life.

Web: www.statcan.gc.ca/eng
Email: STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca
Phone: 1-800-263-1136



Every municipality is unique.

Shouldn't its insurance coverage be as well?

At SUMAssure, we understand that every municipality has unique needs. Our subscribers are owners who receive outstanding customer service because we listen and customize services that help us meet municipal objectives. We are the only non-profit, subscriber-owned and governed Saskatchewan insurance program that specializes in liability and property insurance for urban municipalities.

This results in a better understanding of municipal needs, improved communication, and faster, more efficient claims resolutions. In short, we get you because we are you.

For more information, including how to subscribe,
visit sumassure.ca

SUMAssure
Protection and Ownership
for Urban Municipalities