
SUMA Position Statement

Urban governments have unique expertise – they understand local needs and how to meet them. This expertise gives our hometowns an advantage when it comes to adapting to climate change. Saskatchewan hometowns are working to be leaders in building safe, resilient, and green communities, but they need support. SUMA is calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to partner with Saskatchewan’s hometowns by:

- **Creating a Saskatchewan municipal climate change action centre** for ongoing collaboration, funding, and resources for municipal renewable energy projects and energy efficiency initiatives.
- **Aligning the Saskatchewan climate change strategy with the solid waste management strategy**, encouraging waste diversion through programs such as a provincial compost program, and providing resources to decommission landfills and promote landfill gas energy projects.
- **Recognizing the hometown advantage** by providing planning, development, and adaptation tools and resources to promote green and resilient hometowns.

Key Messages

- Saskatchewan urban municipalities have a hometown advantage in responding to climate change and reducing emissions.
- Urban municipalities are home to nearly 80 per cent of Saskatchewan’s people. Resilient infrastructure, energy efficient facilities, renewable energy opportunities, and green planning improve resident quality of life and safety.
- While SUMA continues to oppose federal carbon pricing, the federal government has proposed that municipal facilities and waste not be included as regulated emitters, and municipalities be allowed to participate in a carbon offset market.
- SUMA calls on the province to consider these exemptions in its plan as well as:
 - The creation of a Saskatchewan municipal climate change action centre;
 - Alignment of climate change and solid waste strategies; and
 - Recognition of the hometown advantage.

Current Status

- [The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) was released by the Government of Canada December 9, 2016.
- [Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy](#) was released by the Government of Saskatchewan on December 4, 2017.

Background

In 2017, Saskatchewan hometowns resolved to show urban municipal leadership in adopting carbon reduction strategies. SUMA committed to telling the hometown story by highlighting renewable energy projects, energy efficiency initiatives, and other carbon reduction strategies undertaken by urban municipalities. Thirty-four hometowns have taken on 41 projects and counting, including:

- Landfill gas to energy projects in [the City of Regina](#) and [City of Saskatoon](#), which are reducing emissions and creating a new revenue stream;
- Solar power projects in [the Northern Village of Green Lake](#) and [Town of Lumsden](#);
- Wind powering [the Village of Hazlet](#) recreational facility;

- The City of Humboldt and SaskPower partnership on Combined Heat and Power Technology Project [to capture waste heat from electrical generation to heat recreational facilities](#);
- The Town of Carrot River, Town of Tisdale, and Village of Zenon Park [engaging with residents on environmentally friendly initiatives and reducing environmental footprints](#);
- The Town of Yellow Grass [installing energy efficient lighting and insulation in the town rink](#); and
- Twenty-four hometowns [receiving more than \\$2 million in federal gas tax funding to support 27 energy efficiency and renewable energy projects](#).

Municipal climate change adaptation is also a growing issue. According to provincial public accounts, Saskatchewan allocated nearly \$450 million in the last six reported fiscal years to disaster relief spending for damage caused by extreme weather events, such as flooding and forest fires. This spending is only a fraction of the cost, as it does not account for the financial cost of disasters borne by urban municipalities and Saskatchewan residents, or the mental and emotional toll of responding to, or recovering from, the crisis.

SUMA has gathered input from members through a climate change survey, written submissions, and discussions at meetings, such as regional meetings, sector meetings, conventions, and City Mayors' Caucus meetings. Member resolutions from convention include:

- Support for municipal renewable energy initiatives ([2018, Northern Village of Green Lake](#));
- Calling for SaskPower to convert all existing street lighting to LED as soon as possible ([2018, SUMA Northwest Region](#));
- Opposing federal carbon pricing and supporting urban municipal leadership in adopting carbon reduction strategies ([2017, City Sector](#));
- Concern about utility rate increases for recreational facilities ([2009, City of Melville](#));
- Support for a clean coal power generating facility ([2008, City of Estevan](#)); and
- Creation of a program to help communities with the capital cost of energy efficiency by a combination of grants and low interest loans ([2007, Town of Eston](#)).

Strategic Context

SUMA is clear in its opposition to federal carbon pricing. Saskatchewan's climate change strategy must also avoid placing unnecessary regulatory costs on hometowns in an effort to encourage reductions in carbon emissions. Instead of burdensome costs, Saskatchewan's hometowns require support to assume a leadership role in adopting carbon reduction strategies.

Create a Saskatchewan municipal climate change action centre

There is an opportunity to have provincial and municipal governments work in partnership to achieve climate change goals and create green, resilient hometowns. The Alberta [Municipal Climate Change Action Centre](#), started in 2009, points to a model of ongoing collaboration that could be replicated with joint work between SUMA, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Government Relations, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM). This centre could:

- Provide funding for, and information on, small scale renewable energy, carbon reduction, and efficiency projects.
- Identify planning, development, and adaptation tools and resources to promote green and resilient hometowns.

- Offer a program to measure carbon emissions.
- Engage SaskPower and SaskEnergy to promote municipal participation in renewable energy and efficiency programs.

Above all, this collaboration model could bring provincial and municipal governments together to engage directly, clarify climate change goals, and strengthen broad cooperation.

Integrate a climate change lens into the solid waste management strategy

Work on the climate change strategy must be done in alignment with solid waste management. The most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions for municipalities is their landfill. Provincial action is needed to ensure municipalities are supported in running or decommissioning landfills and reducing emissions and waste. A provincial composting program, such as [the Manitoba Composts Program](#), would help. Organic waste creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, and accounts for about 50 per cent of landfill waste. Composting one tonne of organic waste reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about one tonne carbon dioxide equivalent while creating a valuable product.

Recognize the hometown advantage

Hometowns are where we live, work, and play. It's time to use the tools available in hometowns to strengthen what is here today and build for a better future. This includes:

- Recognizing urban parks, which act as carbon sinks and promote urban resiliency, as being in the provincial interest.
- Cleaning or redeveloping contaminated sites to support green initiatives.
- Adding climate change into *The Statement of Provincial Interest Regulations* so development projects achieve carbon emission goals.

Resources for hometowns

Hometowns that want to be leaders in reducing carbon emissions can access a variety of resources, including:

- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities [Green Municipal Fund](#), [Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program](#), and [Partners for Climate Protection](#);
- City of Regina information on [Waste Plan Regina](#);
- City of Saskatoon information on [being water wise](#) and [composting](#), including the city's rebate on rain barrel and compost bin purchases;
- [SUMA's list of hometowns leading on carbon emission reduction](#);
- Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council resources on [municipal composting](#), including [the SWRC Compost Field Day 2018](#);
- [The Technical Document on Municipal Solid Waste Organics Processing by Environment Canada](#);
- and
- The SaskPower [Municipal Ice Rink Program](#) which offers support and resources, including low and no-cost ways to increase energy efficiency and lower utility rates in rinks, and tips that can apply to any municipal facility.

Contacts

Staff Contact:	Steven Dribnenki	sdribnenki@suma.org	306-525-4389
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