



Keeping you informed

President's Update



October 2, 2013

Notes From the Board Meeting

The SUMA Board of Directors once again gathered in Regina last month.

Our various committees are doing excellent work (read more about it below), and the biggest piece of news was that the Board adopted the **2013-2016 SUMA Strategic Plan**.

In the plan, we identify the **core functions** for the Association:

Advocacy

SUMA is the collective voice of all urban governments.

Group Benefits/Purchasing Programs

SUMA will continue to offer services that can reduce the costs of municipal government operations.

Capacity Building

SUMA will strive to provide information, connections, training and tools to make members more effective.

We also established the **member priorities** over the length of the strategic plan:

Infrastructure Funding

Continue to pursue funding from the federal and provincial governments to address infrastructure needs.

Regional Collaboration

Urge the adoption of an effective process for solving disputes on land use planning in urban fringe areas.

Growth Agenda

Develop tools and resources to help urban governments with growth planning.

Group Procurement

Initiate a group purchasing program as a service to members.

The **2013-2014 budget** was also reviewed and approved by

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the Board. As part of the budget, we agreed to hold membership fees steady.

We received updates on the policy work flowing through our four policy committees as well. Here are some of the highlights.

Environment Committee

- We heard about the committee's meeting with the Ministry of Environment staff on the upcoming Saskatchewan Environmental Code. The Ministry is making several changes to the proposed landfill and transfer stations chapters. SUMA is pleased to see these changes and we will send more detailed information in an upcoming Environmental Issues email.
- The Board discussed the Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP) Program Plan. The plan was submitted to Minister Cheveldayoff for approval on August 6. Though we have reservations about the plan developed by the industry association, Multi-Material Stewardship Western, we are working with industry to adjust the program plan to fit our members' needs.

CED Committee

- Policy staff are organizing a town forum for the 42 towns affected by the Town Urban Highway Policy on October 23 in Davidson.
- The Board endorsed the Recreation Policy Position Statement.

Public Safety and Health Committee:

- Our recommendation to the Special Committee on Traffic Safety has been accepted, and the implementation of photo radar will be one of the recommendations to the provincial government.
- There was an update on the progress of the Alternative Enforcement Options Committee, which has tentatively identified a suitable model for special constables. The next meeting will be in October.
- We heard an update on the activities of the National Railway Safety Technical Advisory Committee, which was created following the Lac-Mégantic disaster in Quebec. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has already vetted the Technical Committee's recommendations through its broader advisory committee and developed draft principals for railway safety, which are available on their website.

Intergovernmental Affairs Committee

- We heard that the committee reviewed the province's proposed changes to property tax tools used by municipalities, including potential restrictions to base taxes, minimum taxes, and tax refunds, deferrals, and exemptions.
- We also discussed proposed amendments to *The Municipalities Act*. The amendments include some previously reviewed by SUMA, such as municipal districts, but also now include additional provisions for bylaw quashing, the restrictions on property tax tools mentioned above, and penalties for municipalities who do not follow tax tool restrictions. SUMA will support the amendments, provided we can help draft the regulations.
- The Board heard about the possible redistribution of traffic safety fine revenue. The proposed model would distribute fine revenue to municipalities at the same percentage they pay toward the province's policing costs. Talks are ongoing with the Ministry of Justice, and may move forward to Cabinet later this year.