

URBAN*Voice*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SASKATCHEWAN URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION



Renewal and Transformation in Big River
Budget Recap
Carbon Offset
Socio-economic Profiles
Shine A Light – 5th Annual SMA
Affordable Housing Options
And much more...

“Shine a light”

5th Annual Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Bigger and Brighter Than Ever

By Dawn M. Barker

Saskatchewan municipalities took full advantage of their chance to shine May 13, during the fifth annual Saskatchewan Municipal Awards luncheon at the Ramada Inn in Regina.

Of the 41 entries received, the top 10 in five categories were present to showcase their innovation and entrepreneurship.

These included engaging youth, maintaining existing bridges, retaining seniors' housing by taking ownership of facilities, implementing municipal land use policies, opening a heritage arts and cultural centre, creating environmentally friendly improvements to rec facilities, preserving the past, banding together to create joint infrastructure projects, and seeking new ways to retain health professionals.

A selection committee including Senator Pamela Wallin, Jim Angus, Holly Hetherington, Bob Linner and Murray Mandryk had graciously reviewed the entries and chosen finalists in each category.

Senator Wallin described the event as “quite inspiring”. She noted the challenge Saskatchewan's demographic shifts from rural to urban have created for municipalities of all sizes, and commented that these have simply made the citizens of our province “try harder”, describing them as fearless, resilient, and as having an incomparable work ethic.

“It's that desire to build for the next generation, to build on what the last generation left us,” she said. Senator Wallin lauded the municipalities' sharing of their successful efforts with each other, calling it the “Saskatchewan spirit”.

“This awards ceremony shines a light on private citizens at their proudest moments,” she concluded. “Together, you are the story of who we all are.”

The 2011 winners who received awards at the annual SMA luncheon in Regina included:

Municipal Innovation and Service Excellence Award:
Village of Hazlet – Wind Powered Rink Complex

The rink complex was facing rising power costs, shorter rink seasons and was starting to increase rink fees substantially to cover the costs. The Village of Hazlet recognized the increasing power costs and importance of the rink complex to the community and came up with the idea to install an artificial ice plant powered by a wind turbine. In order to counter the extra cost of power for the plant, the village received funding from the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program and is the first of its kind in Saskatchewan.

Regional Leadership and Partnerships Award:
Towns of Rosthern, Hague, Duck Lake and Waldheim, RMs of Duck Lake No. 463, Rosthern No. 403, and Laird No. 404, and Villages of Hepburn and Laird – Doctor/Medical Professionals' Residence

In response to a request from local physicians that the community invest in living quarters for nursing, medical and lab technicians students, the nine municipalities partnered together to renovate the historic Rosthern Post Office into a residence for medical professionals.

Community Development Leadership Award:
Town of Kindersley – Kindersley Youth Council

In October 2009, the Kindersley Youth Council was established, along with the creation of a part-time Culture and Youth Coordinator position to facilitate work with the



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Big River collage courtesy Charla Hodgson,
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The Voice of Urban Saskatchewan

CEO's *Voice*: Count Me In!

May 2011 will be a crucial month for urban governments from many perspectives. This is the month Statistics Canada will be busy collecting data from all Canadian residents to establish new population figures which will be used to determine everything from provincial and federal funding programs (based on per capita formula) to the optimum capacity of your water plant expansion, the size of your next arena, and the type of leisure programs needed for your residents. It will also provide the basic denominator for your next set of crime stats, important details regarding the size of your labour force and the average size of households for your next residential subdivision.



More than ever, our province is feeling the impact of internal migration patterns and the arrival of new workers (and their families) from abroad. Many elected officials have a sense that since our last census (in 2006) their communities have changed significantly. There is a sense of anticipation and anxiety in seeing what the new numbers will reveal. Province-wide, more than 6,500 new dwellings per year are now being built. While some schools continue to struggle to maintain student population to keep their doors open, various urban centres have seen a significant increase in new student population. Recreation programs, library inventories and communities services are being impacted by newcomers with new demographic profiles. Planners are anxious to get the new data to improve their projection models.

Having said that, community planners and local officials already know that there may be some significant challenges in collecting this invaluable data in quality comparable to that obtained in the past. While the basic population count will take place as usual, with the addition of a few new questions regarding same sex marriage and official languages, other detailed data previously encompassed in the mandatory long form census will now be collected through a voluntary census form. The voluntary long form census has stemmed much discussion about the quality of its data. First, the collection of information will not occur according to sound scientific and statistical sampling principles. Only those with an interest in participating in the long form questionnaire will volunteer to supply the data. That in itself is a built-in bias with this process. Because it is voluntary, it is expected that the long form census will yield data likely underrepresenting the less fortunate, immigrants and the less

educated. Starting in 2012, it may be much more challenging to get a clear understanding of where immigrants are coming from, what the average family income may be in different parts of our community, how commuting patterns impact residents (used to plan public transit), the education levels of local and regional labour forces, and other relevant socio-demographic elements of urban centres.

By contrast, it is our understanding that data on canola crops, cattle input costs and other agricultural related operations will continue to be released with the same level of accuracy as we have known historically. Effectively, the Census of Agriculture will continue to be administered concurrently with the regular enumeration census (short form). It is expected that approximately 250,000 agricultural producers will be providing extensive data on farm related activity, including crop information and operational data. More than 200 questions are included in this year's mandatory agricultural census.

Within the first few months of the census, several reports will be released with the new numbers. At first, the data will be limited to size of communities, average family size and distribution of population among age groups. It is the next wave of data which will either prove the success or failure of the new sampling method.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurent Mougeot'.

Laurent Mougeot, Chief Executive Officer

President's *Voice*

It has been a busy few months here at SUMA, dating back to our highly successful annual convention. So much of our work is based on building, maintaining, and strengthening relationships. In particular, advocating on behalf of urban governments means having a close working relationship with the provincial government. In the four and a half years I've been SUMA President, I've held the view that we are far better off to build productive and cordial relationships than to fight against the government. I believe this approach has served us well. I want to take a few moments and highlight a few areas of particular progress in just the last three months.

In March the provincial budget, which cemented the Municipal Operating Grant as the equivalent of one full point of PST revenue, providing SUMA members with a 30% increase in their MOG allocation, passed. While the budget did not provide new provincial funding for urban infrastructure, the province is working with SUMA to put in place a long-term sustainable funding program to support urban capital costs. Minister Hickie has been instrumental in keeping this process on track, and I appreciate his leadership.

We've seen progress on health care capital levies, an issue for which SUMA has advocated change for over a decade. Minister McMorris and the government are moving us forward by reducing the local contribution rate from 35 per cent to 20 per cent. SUMA will continue to advocate for the cost of these facilities to be 100 per cent from the province, but is very pleased with the progress the government has shown on this issue.

Housing is quickly becoming the #1 public policy issue in urban Saskatchewan. Ensuring that we have a sufficient number of rental and entry-level homes for all of the people that are moving here is an ongoing challenge. I want to thank Minister Draude for her commitment to engaging with SUMA and her genuine interest in ensuring the solution brought forward will work for urban governments. I was pleased to attend the Housing Summit in Saskatoon (April 19-21) and I'm hopeful that the recommendations coming out of the province's housing strategy will work for you and for your citizens.

The environmental file is our busiest file these days, with many key issues being advanced. SUMA is working with the province and others to finalize the Saskatchewan Environmental Code and details regarding the Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP). SUMA is fortunate to have an excellent working relationship with the ministry and with Minister Duncan. Through that relationship we've secured a third year of funding under the MMRP. SUMA will continue to lobby the government to ensure that provincial legislative and regulatory changes do not result in unintended downloading of responsibilities or costs.

I hope you can see that SUMA's work within its network of relationships has resulted in good progress on many files on your behalf. We're fortunate to have great partners in the provincial government, and we've built a strong relationship through mutual trust and understanding. There are times we disagree, but we always do so with respect. As the relationship becomes more complex, and we tackle more issues, it seems to me that it may be time to formalize it somehow. For that reason SUMA will encourage the provincial government to work with us

to craft a Protocol Agreement that will define the formal ways in which the Government of Saskatchewan and our urban governments will consult and sustain our government-to-government relationship. It seems clear to me that there is a need for this type of agreement, and I am hopeful the province will concur.



Allan Earle, President



Renewal and transformation in

...when the mill industry walked out, nature's doorstep was born

By Dawn M. Barker

When the Big River Mill Company first put down stakes near Cowan Lake 108 years ago, its founders were building more than just the structure of an industry. Unwittingly, they were also building the character of a town that would not say 'die', a fact that the town of Big River's renaissance has proven out yet again.

When the Weyerhaeuser mill closure was announced in 2006, the town's economy was undercut severely. Many other communities wouldn't have been able to recover. Big River's citizens,

however, used the dire situation as a turning point to re-create the community's identity, to rebuild their home using the resources available to them, and to let people know about the area's unique and beautiful features.

"The closure hit a lot of people's morale pretty hard," said Big River's mayor, Brian Brownfield. People who had worked in the mill were able to subsist for awhile on the payout packages Weyerhaeuser offered, but that after a time, many workers had to accept positions in remote locations such as Coal Lake or Fort MacMurray, while their families remained at home in Big River.

"When you're away for three weeks and home for only one, you don't spend as much locally," Brownfield said, "so there was quite an economic impact."

The town's development from mill town to recreation destination came with the realization by local citizens and government that Big River had an irreplaceable, unique resource – the natural setting surrounding the community itself.

"We were living in a paradise, and no one (outside the community) knew about it," Brownfield said. At a time when Albertans were flocking to purchase land near Goodsoil and Pierceland, and urban Saskatchewan residents were scooping up resort properties at Christopher Lake and Emma Lake, it quickly became evident that the potential existed to develop a similar economy.

"We've got lots of room," Brownfield said. "It took a couple of years to get some of the people onside, but some of the local people took the idea to

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY PHOTOS by CHARLA



n Big River



heart, and began to create lakeshore and lakeside developments – and the response was very positive.”

Branding Big River as a destination began after a west coast company approached the Prince Albert Regional Economic Development Association (REDA) wishing to shoot a video. The REDA contacted the town, who created a feature which has been seen on SCN and Global networks. And the image of Big River as “nature’s doorstep” was born. The town’s leaders then took the town’s tourism image to tradeshow in Alberta and urban Saskatchewan, to great interest. Word of mouth was one of the most powerful tools to bring interest to the project.

The town then turned to the need to optimize the town’s aesthetic appeal. As a recreation destination, it was important that derelict properties be cleaned up.

Brownfield remembers taking the ideas of a SUMA conference presentation by a Saskatoon speaker back home. “The message was, ‘if you’re not going to enforce bylaws, why have them?’. Even if it costs money to prosecute the offenders, it’s worth it. You have to identify your priorities, and address them.

“The only people who follow bylaws are the ones who care about them. It’s the others, the ones that don’t care, who cause the problems, and those are the

ones people (visiting the community) see.”

The town sent out letters urging property owners to clean up unkempt properties, including those with boats, trailers, skidoos and junked cars, as a first step. Next, a bylaw enforcement officer from Prince Albert was engaged to pursue those who didn’t respond to letters, and to address adherence to Big River’s dog bylaws and building bylaws.

The mayor and council members took some heat for this step, but Brownfield said it was well worth it – and the town’s attractive and pristine appearance echoes that.

Renewal and transformation in



Bison on Tap Meadow Creek

Brownfield said that the town's rebirth was never in question. Having faced the Big River Mill Company's closure back in 1921, the community (including Brownfield's grandfather) refused to give up, instead setting up their own company to purchase and reinstate the industry with a new mill. From time to time, devastation occurred, including forest fires and mill fires caused setbacks, but the town wasn't willing to sit idle and powerless. Each time a setback occurred, a renewal followed.

"If we're not growing, we're going to die," Brownfield said. "You have to keep an influx of people coming in. Whether it's young families or retired people, a

town needs to have new residents. No matter what their age is, they'll have to buy groceries, gas, insurance, toys and so on. And we're going to need people to build places for those new residents, to put services in, to build roads and put infrastructure in place. Our contractors have become incredibly busy, building roads, removing trees, and all other aspects of construction."

Brownfield said seeing families return to the community has been very heartening. "We'll have the mill reopened within a year. Some of those people are planning to come back for less pay, but they feel it's worth it to be back home with their families."

He said that the RM of Big River played a big part in the reinvention of the community, through stepping forward to help cover the costs of such shared services as landfill, fire services, recreation and the lagoon.

"We'd have had to shut down some of the operations, otherwise," he said, "but the RM came forward and said they realize they rely on the infrastructure as much as we do, and it would be easier to partner with us than re-create the services."

As a result, efficiencies of scale are realized, and the town's new multipurpose facility includes a shared municipal office which houses the RM and town administrative offices.

That facility had been envisioned in the late 1990s, but fundraising came to a halt from 2002-2004 when the local hospital construction project came to the forefront.

Brownfield said that one distinctive feature of the town's fundraising effort is that only one endeavour is focused on at a time. "When we raise money for something, all other fundraisers stop, and the community throws everything into the project."

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n Big River continued...



When the focus returned to the community centre, he said, it took “no time” to raise more than a million dollars. A further loan of \$1.5 million was obtained on a 10 year amortization, and the Big River Recreation Improvement Association have continued to raise over \$100,000 a year to pay down the loan (\$80,000 per year) and continue to make improvements. The facility, attached to the existing curling and skating rinks, included a hall, full size kitchen, small hall, recreation room/gym, bar, boardroom, municipal offices and library, and

geothermal energy is being used in the rinks, which will in the long term pay for itself.

One interesting note is that during the lean rebuilding years that followed the mill closure, the town’s citizens continued to stand by the town’s various fundraising efforts as vigorously as they had during the boom times. One such example was fundraising to pay off the loan which had been used for the completion of the multipurpose community centre.

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Urban Priorities Advanced in Pr

By Mark Cooper, Director of Policy and Communications

On March 23, 2011, SUMA gave an overall “thumbs up” to the provincial budget for the current fiscal year. While the budget did not deliver on all of SUMA’s priorities, it did move urban interests forward on several key files. The budget shows that a collaborative government-to-government relationship works, and that we still have more work to do to raise the profile of critical urban issues.

In December 2010, SUMA sent a pre-budget package to all MLAs detailing

urban funding priorities for the budget. Specifically, SUMA identified eight priorities, which are detailed below along with information on what SUMA was looking for, the result, and what that means for municipalities:

Operating Funding – SUMA expected the Premier to keep his promise to move MOG funding up to the equivalent of one full point of PST. The Premier delivered on this promise, meaning almost \$154 million in operational funding for urban governments – a 30 per cent increase.

Capital Funding – SUMA expected the province to dedicate a pool of

funding to support urban infrastructure; however, the budget provided no new provincial funding. While an influx of new dollars was needed, SUMA continues to partner with the government to develop the framework for a long-term sustainable and predictable funding stream for urban capital funding.

Asset Management – SUMA requested funding to support urban governments in conducting State of Infrastructure reports and Asset Management plans. The total request for funding was \$1.625 million. No provincial funds were dedicated for this request. SUMA has taken the

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Provincial Budget 2011/2012

lead in creating a provincial Asset Management Working Group to advance this crucial file.

Health Capital Levies – SUMA requested that the province begin reducing the local contribution rate for health facilities by moving from a 35 per cent rate to a 20 per cent rate. The government delivered on this request when Minister McMorris announced this move prior to the provincial budget. SUMA is very happy with the government's responsiveness on this file.

Municipal Administrative Capacity – SUMA requested \$300,000 in funding to jointly create the Urban Municipal Administrators Internship program. The program is designed to support the recruitment and training of recent post-secondary graduates as they enter the career of urban management. This program received no funding in the budget. SUMA will work with UMAAS and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to secure funding for this program in the next budget year.

Housing – SUMA requested that the government commit resources to support the development of a comprehensive housing action plan. At the SUMA convention, Minister Draude announced that the housing action plan would be developed in the first quarter of this year. The province set aside funding to support this action plan. Following the budget, Minister Draude announced new housing programs to support the development of rental and entry-level housing. Although much work needs to be done, SUMA is pleased with the level and general direction of government leadership on this file.

Recycling – SUMA asked the government to extend the recycling



bridge funding program for another year. The government announced a third year of funding for that program shortly after the budget.

Water Strategy – SUMA requested that the government commit financial resources to support the development of a provincial comprehensive water management strategy. While no specific dollars were allocated to this goal in the provincial budget, the government is active on the file. SUMA remains engaged and is pleased with the level of government leadership on this file.

In addition to our specific requests, there are several noteworthy provincial budget highlights for urban governments:

- Continued progress on the reduction of urban education property tax rates. With this budget, the government met and exceeded its platform commitments from the last election;
- For the last year of funding, the eligibility for SIGI funding was expanded to include recreational facilities;
- A 40 per cent increase in funding for community airports;
- A 10 per cent increase in funding for the Transit Assistance for People with

Disabilities Program (first increase in many years); and

- A \$1.6 million increase in funding for insect and disease control programs such as the one for Dutch Elm Disease.

SUMA achieved provincial action on five of its eight priority items. While there were some missed opportunities, the overall budget delivers positive results for urban Saskatchewan.

The one major priority item that received no additional provincial funding this year was infrastructure. Urban governments must be sure that the importance of funding urban infrastructure is front and central in public discussion in this next year. Urban infrastructure is essential for public safety, economic development, and quality of life so we must secure a long-term, sustainable and predictable source of provincial funding dedicated to support it. SUMA is fortunate to have excellent partners in the provincial government that are also committed to this goal. SUMA will continue our work on your behalf as we move forward to budget 2012-13.

Innovative Culture and Heritage Planning Can *Benefit* Communities

Cultural engagement in Municipalities

SaskCulture has launched a new funding program, the Municipal Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant designed to support municipalities undertaking cultural engagement and planning initiatives.

Municipalities can apply for funding to assist them with cultural planning projects that explore and plan for the creative and cultural potential of a community.

For more information visit www.saskculture.sk.ca or call Dennis Garreck at 780-9265, email: dgarreck@saskculture.sk.ca or call toll-free 1-866-476-6830.

Application deadline: April 15, 2011.

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**By Ashley Bezo,
Policy Research Assistant**

Municipal culture planning as a strategy to achieve a broad range of economic and community development goals was the focus when the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport hosted the 8th Annual Culture and Heritage Forum for municipal officials February 25, 2011 in Regina. The forum was an opportunity for interested communities to learn about how this innovative planning can benefit their community.

The forum featured keynote speaker Gord Hume, the author of *Cultural Planning for Creative Communities* and the *Local Food Revolution*. He served four terms as city councillor in London, Ontario. Mr. Hume's presentation focused on the ways that culture can change a town or city, and further, how local food, creative culture, heritage preservation and municipal planning can be linked together to generate a knowledge based economy.

The forum and the discussion on culture planning fit very well with the provincial government's latest culture policy – the *Pride of Saskatchewan*. The policy recognizes the value of culture in Saskatchewan and encourages communities to incorporate arts, culture and heritage into municipal planning. Many urban municipalities already understand the importance of having a well-rounded planning process and building an environment to support creative industries. Projects have been underway and include the communities

of Yorkton, Humboldt and Saskatoon. A representative from each community gave examples of the challenges that they encountered during their projects and how they overcame them. Stories were shared on how their cultural planning progress began and how it is continuing to grow today. A group exercise integrated into the day, using a fictitious community as an example to show how cultural mapping and municipal cultural planning are essential tools to be used in the community.

To support urban governments' culture-planning opportunities, SaskCulture launched the Municipal Culture Engagement and Planning Grant (MCEPG). The grant was developed to encourage urban municipalities to explore and plan for creative and cultural potentials in their community through engagement and dialogue. The program includes support for cultural planning, development and investment as well as initiatives aimed at increasing communication, collaboration and cooperation among cultural organizations and other organizations in the community.

The MCEPG matches grant funding provided by participating urban municipalities to a maximum of \$25,000.

For more information about the MCEPG, please visit www.saskculture.sk.ca.

Climate Change *and* Performance Agreement

By Che-Wei Chung, Policy Advisor

Since 2009, the Saskatchewan government has worked to create regulations pertaining to climate change and greenhouse gas reduction. According to an article published by the Ministry of Environment, on per capital basis, Saskatchewan has one of the highest levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. This is not a surprise to anyone; Saskatchewan is home to many corporations and much industry. The new oil and gas opportunities found here have brought wealth to the people of this province; unfortunately, it also produces additional greenhouse gases.

To find a balanced approach to Saskatchewan's unique situation, at the same time, responding to demand for better managing our environment, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced the Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act in 2009. The Act is designed to provide a framework for regulated industries to reduce emissions and encourage non-regulated sectors to voluntarily reduce emissions. The Act will also set up a climate change program to support research and innovation in the development of green initiatives. The provincial target is to reduce emissions by 20 per cent from 2006 levels by 2020.

Under the Act, urban government is considered a 'non-regulated' sector. However, the research done by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities shows that partnership with local government is essential in achieving the reduction target. Through investments in environmental infrastructure such

as sustainable public transportation, energy efficient buildings, landfill gas capture technologies, urban governments can directly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

The important contribution of municipal governments is recognized in other provincial jurisdictions in Canada. In Nova Scotia, the provincial government has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. In Manitoba, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities formed a collaborative partnership with the province to encourage local governments to better manage greenhouse gases. In British Columbia, a MOU between the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the provincial government highlights the need to take action. With incentives provided by the province, some local governments have strived to become 'carbon neutral' communities.

Alberta has one of the most extensive municipal climate change programs. The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre was jointly created by the Government of Alberta, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. The program is funded by the provincial government and acts as a one-stop resource shop for Alberta municipalities looking for information about climate change, such as climate change adaptation, GHG accounting, green technologies, carbon offset, and financial resources.

In 2010 and 2011, SUMA has assisted the Ministry of Environment in developing climate change regulations as a part of the results-

based Saskatchewan Environmental Code. Using best practices from other provinces, we are helping the ministry develop guidelines for non-binding performance agreement commonly referred to as MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). The policy objective of performance agreements is to promote voluntary emission reduction through use of scientifically proven technologies and processes in lieu of mandatory legislation.

The use of carbon offset or carbon credit trading is another incentive for non-regulated industries to reduce emissions. The simplest way to explain carbon offset is that a person can reduce his or her GHG emissions and receive credits for his/her actions, which then can be sold and traded on a market. This incentive-based policy is a major component of many climate change strategies in other jurisdictions and SUMA has been helping the ministry develop a similar program in Saskatchewan.

So, why is this important to us? From our research, we have seen that provincial climate change policies have an intergovernmental dimension and involvement of local government is an integrated part of the overall reduction strategies. Furthermore, improvements made to municipal operations, such as managing landfill gas, improving energy efficiency in municipal facilities and building of fuel efficient public transit, can be traded as carbon credit and generate much needed revenue for urban governments. That is why SUMA is at the policy table, collaboratively developing a policy that will work for urban Saskatchewan.

Socio-Economic Profiles: An Important Piece of Sustainable

Submitted by: The Municipal Capacity Development Program

A key component of municipal sustainability is providing for the needs of current and future residents. To be sustainable, municipalities can begin to effectively address and respond to issues by gathering social, economical, environmental and even cultural information to understand the present and plan for the future. By compiling statistical information, municipalities are able to examine current and future trends and then create policies, programs and projects to address specific issues.

The knowledge and understanding of social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts can be obtained by establishing a baseline socio-economic profile of a municipality. Socio-economic profiles are a detailed study that includes the social and economic information of individual communities and/or communities within a region. Consideration of socio-economic factors is crucial for understanding most resource management issues and for sound municipal decision making. It is important to remember that not only do the decisions made by individual municipalities impact the quality of life at the local level, these decisions also have significant impacts on both regional and provincial quality of life. Therefore, it is important to be



ble Planning

knowledgeable about the social, economical, environmental and cultural impacts of municipal decision making before those decisions are put into action. Socio-economic profiles can include information on:

- *Population;*
- *Family Characteristics;*
- *Housing*
- *Income;*
- *Diversity;*
- *Education;*
- *Workforce;*
- *Agriculture;*
- *Geography;*
- *Health; and*
- *Recreation.*

Analyzing socio-economic factors, such as the historical, economic and demographic activity of an area can help clarify issues of housing, unemployment, land use, and water quality. The consideration of current and projected economic and demographic trends can help municipal leaders anticipate and plan for current and future activities that will impact their social, ecological and future economical environment. An understanding of the demands placed on physical resources and ecological systems can help municipal leaders effectively plan for the preservation and/or restoration of those resources/systems. As an example, if a region predicts that the population will increase by 100 in the next 10 years, the communities may need to begin to plan to accommodate this in terms of sewer and water capacity, the amount of vehicular traffic, and housing needs. Communities may consider creating policies to promote infill development or addressing where future growth areas will be.

Also important for municipal leaders are awareness and clear understanding of social conditions as this information allows them to meet social goals – to develop programs and meet the needs of their residents. If the majority of a region's population is young families, communities will need to plan for greater demands for educational and recreational services for children. Communities will also need to plan for ways to address greater demands for health care facilities and services in the next 15-20 years for aging populations. As shown in the diagram below, socio-economic profiles are an important piece of the puzzle towards building a sustainable future for communities. Not only can the information compiled within a community profile be used to create policy, programs and projects, it can also further

enhance planning for the area by using the information to create:

- *Community asset maps;*
- *Strategic/Community Action Plans;*
- *Needs assessments;*
- *Land use plans/policies; and*
- *Governance documents.*

Socio-economic profiles provide decision makers, stakeholders and planners with the background information on housing, employment, population, education and even the geographical environment. Assessing and analyzing the past and current situation allows stakeholders to be able to create options for communities to move forward by addressing current and preventing future issues. The socio-economic profile is a great starting point to plan for sustainable community development.



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Health and Environmental Effects of Burning Municipal Solid Waste



The burning of municipal waste at a waste disposal site, except for a limited number of specific materials, is prohibited under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* (EMPA 2002) and *The Clean Air Act*. The municipality and the operator of a waste disposal site shall ensure that no municipal waste is burned at the site as part of the waste disposal operation. Segregated clean wood and brush may be burned at certain sites only with permission/permit, and are subject to certain requirements. These requirements are provided in *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations, 1986* (MRMR 1986) and *The Clean Air Regulations*.

Issues

In some cases community growth has resulted in waste disposal grounds being closer to communities. Burning activities create potential adverse effects to the surrounding environment; employees and users of the waste disposal ground; local area residents; businesses; landowners and children playing outdoors.

Changes in waste composition has occurred with the introduction of products and packaging manufactured from hydrocarbon and chlorinated compounds such as plastic, solvents, or pesticides. Although regulations prohibit hazardous substances and waste dangerous goods from entering the landfill, toxic materials and packaging still make their way to landfills as components of commercial and household waste. Disposal of household cleaning products, pesticides and other materials pose a danger to public health and the environment. Incomplete combustion of waste during open burning contributes to air pollution and climate change.

Air Pollutants

Worldwide scientific research has conclusively demonstrated that burning of waste at landfills produces air toxins. Typically, burning occurs at low temperatures (250 °C to 700 °C) in oxygen starved conditions. Hydrocarbons, chlorinated materials and pesticide compounds under these conditions produce a wide range toxic gases harmful to the environment and public health. These gases contain dioxins / furans, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter (PM), hydrogen chloride (HCl), carbon monoxide (CO) and oxides of sulfur and nitrogen and liberate metals including antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead, manganese, mercury, phosphorus and titanium.

Studies have demonstrated that two to forty households burning their trash daily can produce average dioxin / furan levels equivalent to emissions from a modern municipal waste combustor equipped with high efficiency flue gas cleaning technology burning 182,000 kg/day of the same type of waste. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that mixed garbage burning is a larger source of dioxins than coal combustion, ferrous metal smelting, hazardous waste incineration or bleached pulp mill operations.

In addition, the burning of municipal waste produces large amounts of ash and debris and amounts to a 40 - 60% reduction in volume of the original waste. With proper cover and compaction similar volume reductions can be achieved. Typically, compacted waste occupies 40 - 50% of the original volume. The burning of waste produces two types of ash, bottom and fly ash. Fly ash is made of light particles which is carried out by combustion gas and is laden with toxic metals, dioxin / furan and other products of incomplete combustion. Fly ash can travel thousands of kilometers before it drops back to earth where its chemical load might enter the human food chain. In other words burning of waste is not an environmentally sound solution for extending the life of a landfill or the lack of appropriate landfill sites and management practices.

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Big River continued...

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The feedback on the facility and the area's hospitality has been gratifying. Brownfield noted comments made after an international bison conference were held there last year, which opined that the Big River facility and services were far better than previous conference locations such as Calgary and Montreal.

"It's a great facility, and people appreciate the community's warmth – that makes a difference as well," he said.

Brownfield said that regional cooperation is a key element of municipal success. He said that communities have to set old arguments aside, and realize that everyone faces shared issues, and that all communities use the same infrastructure and services. An open line of communication, he added, is essential.

When asked to provide advice to other communities facing tough economic times, Brownfield recommended that

communities take a hard look at all of the community's strengths and weaknesses, and use an innovative approach to find ways to develop those resources. He urged opening lines of communication between regional partners, finding shared objectives, and never accepting defeat. "If you're not growing, you're going to die. You have to be willing to find common goals, seek leaders in your community, and get your community onside," he said.



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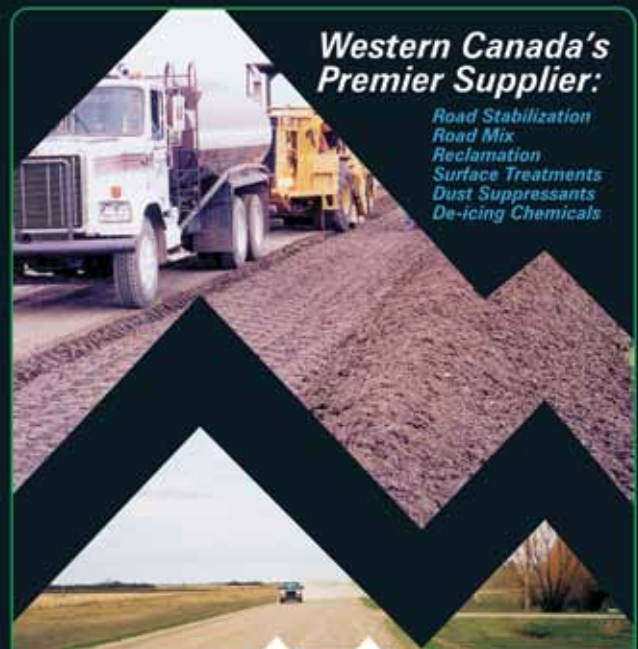
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Tools for Affordable and Entry-

By the Community Planning Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs

As municipalities grow and housing prices increase, affordable and entry-level housing becomes more important. Municipalities have the opportunity to implement a variety of existing tools to create and encourage affordable and entry-level housing in Saskatchewan communities. Increasing densities with the addition of secondary suites in areas with existing infrastructure reduces costs and benefits both residents and municipalities.

Secondary Suites

Definition: an additional living unit, including separate kitchen, sleeping and bathroom facilities, either attached or detached from the principal dwelling.

Local Benefits:

There are many benefits to providing secondary suites. Owners benefit through rental income or by providing housing for an elderly family member or adult child. Tenants benefit through affordable rental housing that is generally ground level and accessible to community amenities. The community benefits through a non-subsidized, low impact solution that utilizes existing homes to increase density while maintaining community character, enabling diversity, and increasing the stock of affordable rental housing.

Provincial Benefit:

Secondary suites allow for a mix of residential housing types in new and existing communities that meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Implementation:

Public consultation and acceptance will:

- help residents understand the benefits of allowing secondary suites;

- assist the municipality in identifying what types of suites, areas/zones of the municipality where they will be permitted, as well as what controls the Zoning Bylaw should impose to ensure the municipality maintains its existing character.

Bylaw amendments:


- Official Community Plans can recognize secondary suites either directly or more generally by promoting a variety of housing types.
- Zoning Bylaws should outline the rules for constructing secondary suites. Items to consider are:
 - type of suite –garden suites (detached), basement suites, over-garage suites, or home additions;
 - area/zone –allowed in all neighbourhoods or in certain areas/zones of the municipality;
 - principal dwelling type – types of principal dwellings that allow secondary suites (detached, duplexes, condos, etc);
 - quantity – usually only one secondary suite is allowed per dwelling unit or property;
 - size – minimum and maximum suite sizes should be identified. These can be set sizes or as a percentage of the principal dwelling. A maximum number of bedrooms can also be specified;
 - setbacks – all standard setbacks should apply to any new additions or buildings constructed on the lot; and
 - parking – off-street parking is generally required at one space per secondary suite.

Based on the feedback from the public consultation, additional requirements may need to be incorporated, including aesthetic considerations and entrances off the side or back of the principal building. For detached suites, siting on the lot, height restrictions, and distance from the principal building can also be addressed.

Building Provisions – the National Building Code must be applied to all new construction, which contains provisions for secondary suites. Specific requirements for windows, ventilation, fire protection, room heights, exiting, etc. are stipulated in the Code.

Current Financial Incentive:

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation offers incentives to homeowners and rental property owners to construct or renovate secondary suites under the Secondary Suite Program. Information can be provided to residents at the municipal level. More information on this program can be found at: www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/H12-FS.pdf

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Level Housing Series

As municipalities grow and housing prices increase, affordable and entry-level housing becomes more important. Municipalities have the opportunity to implement a variety of existing tools to create and encourage affordable and entry-level housing in Saskatchewan communities. Through small lot zoning a municipality can reduce infrastructure costs by increasing densities in new development, or in areas with existing infrastructure.

Small Lot Zoning

Purpose: Small lot zoning provides an alternative form of ground level housing that is considered suitable for family-living and more affordable than houses built on current standard lots.

Local Benefits:

There are many benefits to providing small lot zoning. Small lot zoning contributes to the densification of urban areas, uses the land and services more efficiently, increases housing choices and adds to the stock of ground level housing which remains accessible to homeowners in their elder years.

Provincial Benefits:

Small lot zoning allows for a mix of residential housing types in new and existing communities that meet the needs of existing and future residents. By allowing for the intensification of housing in developed areas where infrastructure and facilities already exist and by condensing the area of new residential developments, the municipality reduces unnecessary sprawl into resource and farm lands.

Implementation:

Public consultation and acceptance will:

- help residents understand the benefits of implementing small lot zoning;
- assist the municipality in identifying standards to maintain the quality of the residential environment in existing neighbourhoods, as well as providing aesthetic controls for new developments.

Bylaw requirements:

- Official Community Plans should recognize small lot zoning either directly or more generally by promoting a variety of housing types.
- Zoning Bylaws should outline the standards for construction on small lots. Items to consider are:
 - density – higher densities should be allowed to allow for adequate livable space on the smaller lots;
 - permitted uses – single-family in the form of either

detached or attached units should be identified to maintain area character;

- size – floor area ratios should be increased and limits should be placed on the maximum size of each dwelling. This will ensure that new dwellings are compatible with existing dwellings (larger houses on large lots) in infill areas;
- lot coverage – should be increased to allow for design flexibility;
- setbacks – front and side yard setbacks should be reduced to allow for design flexibility or one side yard may be able to be reduced to zero;
- height – building height should be increased to allow for more design flexibility;
- landscaping – should be identified to reduce the cumulative impact of impermeable surfaces on area drainage; and
- building provisions – some bylaws restrict side wall windows to increase privacy in denser neighbourhoods. The staggering of front setbacks is also an option to promote privacy and add variety to the streetscape.



*For more information,
call the Community Planning Branch,
Southern Region telephone: (306) 787-2725;
Central and Northern Region telephone:
(306) 933-6937*

...continued from page 2

junior council. Made up of seven members (six councillors and one youth mayor), the Youth Council was intended to be a means with which to expose youth to municipal governance, encourage leadership, and promote increased community participation and volunteerism.

Environmental Stewardship Award:

Town of Dundurn, RM of Dundurn No. 314, and Resort Villages of Thode and Shields – Joint Sanitary Sewer System

This project provides a sanitary sewer system jointly owned and operated by four municipalities and provides a sewer system to a Hutterite Colony and 180 acreage sites in the rural municipality.

Heritage Conservation Leadership:

City of Humboldt – Humboldt’s Heritage Values

The museum board had identified several heritage issues as a result of a community analysis conducted during its strategic planning process. Among the issues identified in the analysis was the need for a plan for overall heritage and cultural development for the city. The first step was to develop a heritage policy, which was approved in 2008 as part of the City’s Official Community Plan.



Saskatchewan Municipal Awards is a program partnership between the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, New North, the Rural Municipal Administrators’ Association of Saskatchewan (RMAA) and the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS).

To learn more about these projects, or to view the project videos, visit the SMA website at www.municipalawards.ca.

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