

Environment

Governance
& Planning

Social

Economic

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Interconnections

Sustaining Saskatchewan's Future

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Don't wait. The time will never be just right.
– Napoleon Hill

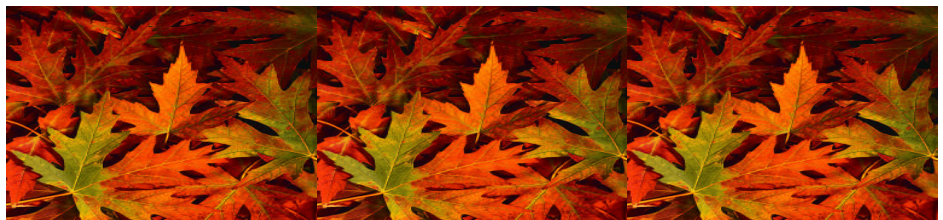
Taking Action for a Sustainable Future

Welcome to Interconnections! Nothing makes the importance of 'taking action' more obvious than hindsight. I thank my recent computer virus for this valuable lesson. When we put off for tomorrow what we could do today, we run the risk of the possibility that unforeseen happenstance might carry us in a less desirable direction. For someone who likes to fly by the seat of her pants, I often encounter situations where it becomes obvious that 'these pants don't fly.' Some valuable advice I was given recently was, "Live each day like it's your last because one day you'll be right." How true. (Especially if you are a computer).

It often takes a crisis to inspire better practices. So be honest. Are you teetering on the precipice of a potential crisis? If so, transform any fear into a cause for pre-meditated action. Start by talking about it. Share your fears. Gather support. Take your eyes off the dangers and the obstacles around you and start seeking a way to move forward. When I was 15 years old and learning to drive, my instructor took me out on a winding highway. When showing some apprehension about keeping the car on the road and staying in the right lane, he said to me, "Keep your eye far ahead on the centre line and the car will follow." By golly, it works! In highway driving and crises alike, all you need to do is keep your focus on where you'd like to go and the rest will straighten itself out eventually.

This issue of Interconnections is all about getting started and taking action towards a sustainable future. I hope this issue challenges communities to take that first baby step - right now. You'll feel great about it tomorrow - and deferred gratification feels fantastic when you've eagerly embraced the possibilities of now. Flying by the seat of one's pants and planning for the future both involve dancing with the unknown, but a little dose of perspective can sort it out. So now, after my recent computer crisis, I've got a new bit of advice to impart: "Do the work now; finish early; and strategize for peace of mind." Oh, and maybe I'll sew a few feathers on my pants just in case. ☼

Tayah



A Natural Step Forward: Sustainability in Action

Town of Canmore, AB's Sustainability Screening Process

The Town of Canmore, AB has adopted a new approach to planning and development, posing the far-reaching question of 'Is this sustainable?' to all potential development projects. As outlined on their website, "the Town committed to [The Natural Step](#) (TNS) for a Sustainable Canmore in 2004. The Natural Step provides a framework to help communities make smart economic decisions to move them step-by-step towards a successful and sustainable future." Interconnections posted an article in our April 2011 edition from the Natural Step CEO..... and this is an example of how they can support municipalities focus on sustainable action.

In 2007, the Town of Canmore put into practice the [Sustainability Screening Report \(SSR\) process](#). According to their website, "the SSR process asks the development community to present a report to Council outlining the net environmental, social, and economic benefits of their project as it relates to community sustainability." All project reports must be submitted to the Town Council for approval before any application for development is made. Public participation is a key part of the process as well. Potential projects are presented by the developer and open for discussion and questions from local citizens. The main focus of the initial request for approval is the net benefit to the overall community, and how the project contributes to the future sustainability of the community. The community website indicates that "while this may appear at first glance to be a simple question to answer it does require a substantial change of thought and innovative and unique solutions to be able to clearly demonstrate 'benefit.'"

Since the adoption of this process, the community reports that developers are open and committed to the process. The Town of Canmore states "We are fortunate to have several developers in Canmore that are industry leaders. They have been investigating and demonstrating sustainable building practices for years. For others, the SSR process is asking them new questions and many of their answers have been impressive. By working together, the Town of Canmore and the development industry are moving Canmore towards a more sustainable future." ☀

For more information on the Town of Canmore's initiative, visit: <http://www.canmore.ca/Municipal-Sustainability/Sustainability-Screening-Reports/>

Did you Know?

The Natural Step Canada is a dynamic, non-profit organization with more than a decade of experience helping communities of all sizes take meaningful steps towards sustainability. They believe that communities must perform an essential role in addressing the challenge of sustainability. (<http://www.naturalstep.org/en/canada>) The Natural Step is best known for its promotion of a scientific framework that defines sustainability, and they have been leading transformative change and engagement programs to help municipal government and community leaders advance the practice of integrated community sustainability planning for almost a decade in Canada.





Communic-Action!

Municipal Capacity Development Program

Communication is the key to the successful implementation of community action strategies. As an intermunicipal group, how, what, and when you communicate amongst your committee is important to keeping everyone well informed and involved. As well, communicating your committee's work to your stakeholders and your community's successes to the general public also play a part in an overall communication strategy. Here's what you need to know.

Internal Communication. If you operate under a Memorandum of Understanding, you may have already outlined an internal communication process. Otherwise, you will want to ensure you have a main point of contact for the group. Methods of internal communication may include phone, email, fax, and written correspondence. What and how often you communicate depends on the level of involvement your committee members expect. For example, important policy changes, information that may affect group priorities; important deadlines; and other issues of importance regarding committee members, upcoming meetings, minutes, agendas, financial statements, etc; these should be discussed to by the committee to ensure communication levels, methods, and content are agreed upon. Establishing a dispute resolution strategy is also recommended early in the process of group formation.

Communicating with Stakeholders.

Providing the right information to the right people can prove challenging, especially with a diverse audience of stakeholders. First of all, determine whether or not your stakeholders have requirements about what they need to know and how often they require committee reporting. This is most often the case when they have provided project funding.

Raising Public Awareness. As your group begins to meet objectives and create tangible results, or if you need to promote the work being done, create a plan of action for communicating with the public. Some methods might include sending out a targeted newsletter, developing radio ads, or doing interviews, submitting local newspaper articles, or contributing to regional organizational promotional material, etc.

Develop a strategy for public and stakeholder communication by answering these simple questions:

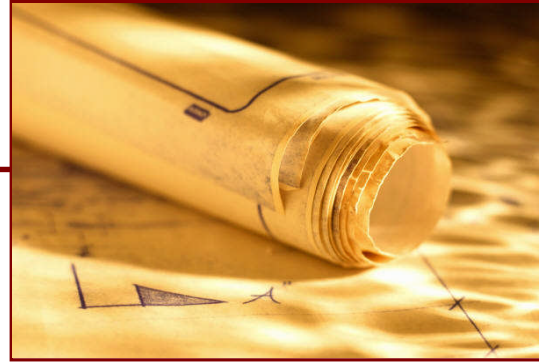
1. Who is your target audience?
2. What information will you be sharing?
3. What method(s) of communication are appropriate (consider the audience, the message, the cost)
4. How often will you communicate with stakeholders? With the public? (consider stakeholder requirements, cost, public's need to know, etc).

NEED HELP?

MCDP can assist intermunicipal groups in developing and implementing a communication plan.

Visit our website for more information. www.municipalcapacity.ca. For more information on intermunicipal partnerships, also see MCDP's **A Guide to Municipal Cooperation: Succeeding in Regional Partnerships**, also available on the website.

Q's & A's



Q: What is a “Feasibility Study?”

A: Generally speaking, a Feasibility Study is developed to measure the costs and impact of a given project. There are many different kinds of feasibility studies; they can focus on environment, markets, systems, resources, real estate, culture, or finances. The feasibility study may assess the technological requirements, financial needs, operations and maintenance, land use, available infrastructure, and/or project timeframes. If you think you have a great idea for a project, a feasibility study can help you iron out the kinks and lend credence to your business plan. It may also support a grant application - if you can demonstrate feasibility or that the value of end result exceeds the effort, funders are more likely to say ‘yes.’ Depending on the type of study you require, a knowledgeable consultant or industry professional will be able to guide you through the process.

A Feasibility Study may include:

- Background and detailed description of the project (what is the problem needing solution?)
- An environmental scan and/or SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)
- Scientific data
- Key components of the project (i.e. may include building blueprints, cost breakdown, projected maintenance planning and operations, land, resources, project timelines, etc.)
- Projected human, economic and/or cultural value
- Existing assets and resources (i.e. people, funds, materials, infrastructure, etc.)

EXAMPLES OF FEASIBILITY STUDIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

MAIS Feasibility Study Report – Ministry of Municipal Affairs:

<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=0a3fc21e-3e1b-4467-9ab0-f>

Shore Gold’s Economic Viability of Diamond Mine in Saskatchewan:

<http://www.diamondintelligence.com/magazine/magazine.aspx?id=9714>

Art/Business Feasibility – Inner Circle Management, Regina, SK:

www.innercirclemanagement.ca/.../Feasibility_Study_Final_Version.pdf

North Sask River Water Supply Feasibility Study:

<http://nsrwrc.ca/>



The Regional Socio-Economic Profile

The Municipal Capacity Development Program

The Regional Socio Economic Profile is an excellent tool providing a ‘birds-eye view’ of a group of communities. It can assist municipalities in identifying unique and shared characteristics for the purpose of implementing growth strategies, development planning, and supporting and growing local services. It displays combined and comparable statistical snapshots of the communities in your region, such as housing stock, demographics, average annual income, cost of housing, mobility in and out of the region, cultural and generational markers, languages, child population, etc.

What is the Socio-Economic Profile used for?

- Backing up your funding applications, providing evidence of why something is needed
- Marketing your region and enhance tourism and economic development
- Identifying underused services (or opportunities for shared services)
- Forecasting problem areas (i.e. aging housing stock, employment rates)
- Identifying potential solutions at the municipal level (i.e. where to direct funding/strategic focus)
- Completing needs assessments
- Compiling Community Resource Inventories/Asset Management
- Better land use planning
- Developing local community profiles
- Preparing and enhancing governance documents

DID YOU KNOW? *The MCDP recently launched the **Municipal Guide to the Regional Socio-Economic Profile** on their website. The guide is now available to municipalities wishing to complete a socio-economic profile on their own, providing tips on how to construct the document, what to include, and how to interpret statistical data.*

Creating a Regional Profile is a big job! Want help? Contact MCDP for our service pricing and view some of profiles we've already completed by visiting www.municipalcapacity.ca.



The Spotlight is on You!

Here's an opportunity for your committee to 'toot its own horn!' We are looking for municipalities willing to showcase local and area-wide projects demonstrating sustainability. Send us a description of your project up to two pages in length, answering the following questions:

1. When was the project initiated, and by whom?
2. Were there any regulatory obstacles? If so, how were they overcome?
3. How did you achieve buy-in from council and/or the community?
4. What external funding, if any, did you receive?
5. What lessons were learned?

Don't forget to include a photo!

Examples of sustainable projects can include: town beautification projects, housing projects, waste water improvements, water distribution systems, community and economic development leadership initiatives, collection and recycling programs, bicycle network plans, protective services programs, health programs, community engagement processes and the list goes on and on... Sharing your project experiences helps expand upon best project management practices in the province. If you would like us to showcase your sustainable project, please forward your information to MCDP at info@municipalcapacity.ca or any of the newsletter editors no later than the 20th of each distribution month. ☀



Thought is the blossom; language the bud; action the fruit behind it.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Recommended Reads

Online

Become fair trade, locally <http://fairtrade.ca/>

See what Manitoba is doing: <http://fairtrade.ca/en/news-views/editorials/how-manitoba-became-a-leader-fair-trade>

Town of Olds, AB Sustainability Plan

<http://www.olds.ca/sustain.html>

Municipal Sustainable Purchasing Program

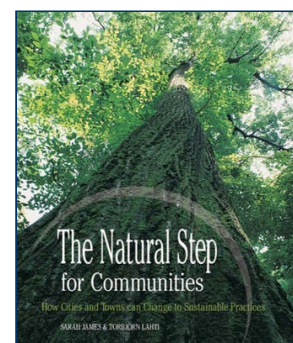
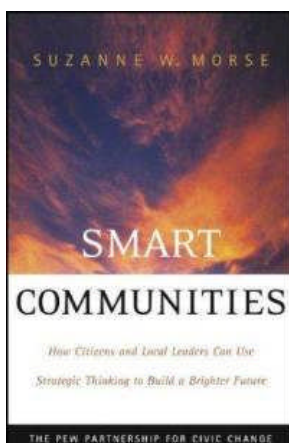
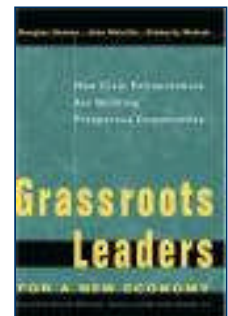
<http://www.globe-net.com/articles/2011/may/18/report-reveals-trends-in-canadian-municipal-sustainable-purchasing.aspx>

Municipal Sustainability Office – Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

<http://www.sustainability-unsm.ca/home.html>

On the Bookshelf

- Henton, Melville & Walesh (1997) *Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy: How Local Entrepreneurs are Building Prosperous Communities.*
- Edwards (2009) *Sustainability Revolution.*
- James & Lahti (2009). *The Natural Step for Communities: How Cities and Towns can Change to Sustainable Practices.*
- Morse. (2004). *Smart Communities.*



Grants & Funding Opportunities

Communities in Transition has a new website:

<http://www.cifsask.org/>

Museums Association of Saskatchewan:

http://www.saskmuseums.org/funding_opportunities

South Saskatchewan Community Foundation Inc.

<http://www.sscf.ca/grants.php>

Sask Sport Inc. – Find your district for workshops & funding opportunities in your area!

<http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/districts.php>

Saskatchewan Arts Board

<http://www.artsboard.sk.ca/grants/grant-programs>

FCM's Green Municipal Fund - *Accepting New Applications December 1, 2011!*

<http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/green-municipal-fund.htm>

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Send us your submissions! We are always looking for contributors to our e-newsletter.



Sustainability

Would you like to receive our quarterly e-newsletter direct to your inbox?

Email us at info@municipalcapacity.ca to get your name on our distribution list!