

Regional Planning Handbook

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Introduction

This guide provides comprehensive information regarding intermunicipal cooperation and examines the regional planning tools under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* (PDA). Decision makers, municipal administrators and members of district planning commissions can use this guide to understand the role of regional planning in municipal operations and the potential benefits that can be achieved through collaborative approaches.

This guide also contains procedural recommendations for district planning commissions and best practices for maintaining strong intermunicipal partnerships.

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What is Regional Planning?

Intermunicipal Cooperation

Intermunicipal cooperation refers to any collaborative initiative or partnership between two or more communities for mutual benefit. Regional planning is an all-encompassing term used to describe any formal process of intermunicipal cooperation. Communities may engage in a partnership for different reasons, but the results typically include increased capacity and higher levels of service. Regional planning allows communities to maintain municipal autonomy while recognizing the benefits of shared resources.

Benefits

Intermunicipal cooperation and regional planning frameworks have many benefits depending on the partnership. Some partnerships may be limited to collaboration on specific items, while others may take a more broad and integrated approach to coordinating resources. The list below outlines some of the most frequently observed benefits of regional planning:

Municipal Capacity

Attracting and retaining qualified professionals continues to be a challenge for many Saskatchewan communities. Regional partnerships can help increase capacity through sharing resources and services such as administration, bylaw enforcement, appeals boards, emergency management, engineering, land use planning, etc. The more services shared among the partners, the greater the capacity generated, along with a higher level of service provided to residents in a region.

Reducing Redundancy

In addition to increasing municipal capacity, regional planning is a cost-saving activity that reduces redundancy in an area. Instead of each municipality duplicating key services and infrastructure such as landfills, water treatment, or recreation facilities, these services can be jointly planned for and funded to serve a larger region. Communication and collaboration on key municipal investments helps to avoid a siloed response to issues likely felt by many municipalities in an area.

Advocacy and Funding

As a regional entity, advocacy of municipal issues becomes stronger when communicating with other orders of government and businesses. This approach can also potentially better leverage funding programs as investments can be used more efficiently for a region, rather than a single community.

Economic Development

It is common for site selectors and investors to scan municipal planning bylaws prior to choosing a location for their business or operation. Planning bylaws create a level of certainty for investors, since they outline a general framework for how the community will guide future development. Regional partnerships are viewed favourably by investors since this principle is expanded to a larger area. Regional planning can help develop a critical mass that acts as a business attraction and retention tool for the area.

Consistency

Regional planning can help reduce municipal competition by applying consistent development standards to a region. Regardless of where in the region an organization wishes to develop, they will be expected to meet the same development standards. Consistent standards are also more effective at addressing issues such as watershed protection, since there is a common approach being taken by all partners.

Identifying Partners

Identifying issues affecting a municipality's geographic area often helps determine who the regional partners should be. Consideration may be given to:

- Important topographic and natural features of the area
 - Who are the partners interested in these features?
- The management of watersheds and source water protection
 - Who utilizes this water source? Who may be affected by its management?
- The protection of ecologically sensitive areas
 - What naturalized areas require long term protection? Who can help protect those areas?
- Existing development patterns and anticipated future development patterns
 - Where is development occurring in the region? Where should development locate to maximize benefits for the region? Who regulates development in these areas?
- The provision of services in the region
 - Where are the major services? What services will be needed for future development? Who could benefit from these services? Who could help pay for and manage these services?

Once a list of potential partners is identified, it recommended opportunities and support systems be identified. The following table contains sample questions to guide discussions:

Name of community or partner you would like to work with?	Potential support(s) can the community offer us?	Potential opportunities we could offer the community?	What engagement strategy(s) are we going to use in sharing our perspective?	Who could help us build this relationship?

First Nations

Municipalities and First Nations are responsible for providing many of the same services to their residents. For example:

- Emergency services.
- Recreation facilities.
- Land use planning.
- Service provision (such as water, solid/liquid waste disposal, etc.).

Collaboration on these responsibilities benefits everyone in the same way as intermunicipal partnerships. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has created several resources to assist with this type of partnership. The tool kits contain information on:

- Joint working groups.
- Economic development partnerships.
- Land use planning.
- Funding resources.

Visit the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](http://www.fcm.ca) website for further details.

Regional Planning Frameworks

[The Planning and Development Act, 2007](#) (PDA) contains several framework options for municipalities interested in formalizing an intermunicipal partnership. The framework may include all or any portion of an affiliated municipality.

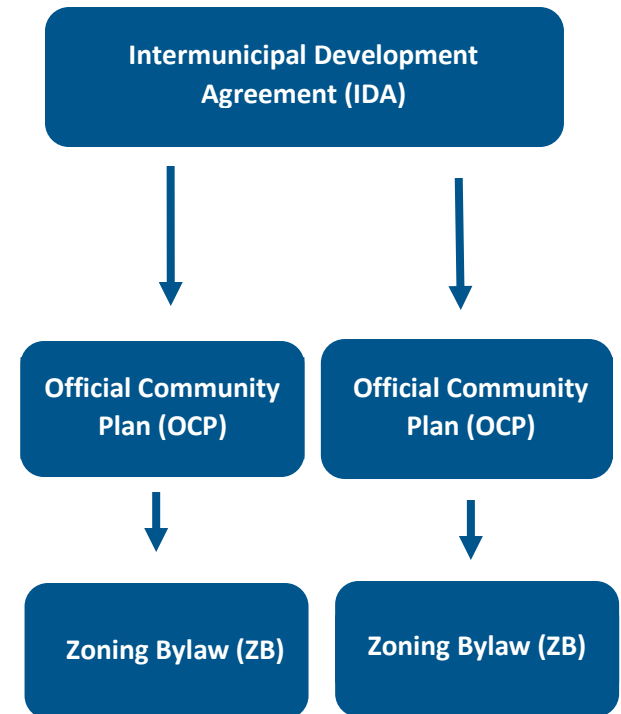
Intermunicipal Development Agreements (IDA)

Intermunicipal Development Agreements (IDA) are a tool for municipalities to collaborate on specific items. IDAs establish a more simplified framework of regional planning, focused on individual issues such as development in fringe areas, or shared infrastructure and servicing. Section 32.1 of the PDA contains the process for creating an IDA, which provides flexibility for its content. The agreement may provide for:

- Joint land use planning and development matters;
- Mechanisms for resolving disputes between the municipalities;
- The services, infrastructure or facilities that are covered by the agreement;
- The proportion of any funds that each affiliated municipality is required to contribute to meet the expenses of constructing and operating the services, infrastructure or facilities that are covered by the agreement;
- A process and procedure for:
 - Amending the agreement; and
 - Terminating the agreement;
- Any other matters related to economic, physical, social, or cultural development that the councils of the municipalities consider necessary.

If an IDA contains provisions that limit or control land development, the municipalities shall amend their planning bylaws to reflect those provisions.

IDAs must be adopted by bylaw and filed with the Director of Community Planning within 30 days of passing.



Planning Districts (PD)

Planning Districts (PD) are the most common form of regional planning in Saskatchewan. PDs are initiated by municipalities who wish to establish a framework of intermunicipal cooperation that covers a diverse range of elements without substantially impacting municipal autonomy. Two or more communities may enter into a district agreement to create a named planning district guiding land use and service provision across jurisdictions. The PD may cover all or any part of an affiliated municipality.

Establishing a PD requires the creation of an advisory body known as a District Planning Commission (DPC), composed of representatives from the affiliated municipalities of the planning district. It may also include jointly appointed representatives from the community, a government agency, neighbouring First Nation or Métis communities, or other interest groups.

Sections 97 to 107 of the PDA cover the procedures and requirements for the creation and operation of a planning district. The DPC is responsible for managing the PD, including procuring a District Plan to guide development within the district boundary. The DPC has the power to:

- Make rules of procedure for the purpose of conducting business, the governing of its proceedings, the calling of meetings and how quorum is determined at them;
- Establish procedures for the affiliated municipalities that permit the holding of joint public hearings respecting adoption, amendment, or repeal of an official community plan, district plan, or zoning bylaw;
- Appoint any consultants or employees that may be necessary for the exercise of any of its powers or the performance of any of its duties and fix their remuneration;
- Appoint advisory committees consisting of one or more members of the DPA or any other person, and fix their remuneration; and
- With the consent of any affiliated municipality, avail itself of the services of any officer or employee of that municipality.

Commission members are responsible for reporting back to their municipal councils after each meeting of the DPC.

District Planning Authorities (DPA)

A District Planning Authority (DPA) is a similar framework to a Planning District with additional powers granted to the board. Instead of a district planning commission with an advisory role, the district planning authority board can make planning decisions by the participating municipalities. For example, a DPA board may function like a recreational board, which has delegated authorities. Sections 108 and 109 of the PDA covers the procedures and requirements for the creation and operation of a DPA. The powers of the DPA may include the ability to:

- Exercise any powers vested in a council by the PDA with respect to the preparation, adoption, administration, and enforcement of official community plans, district plans, regional plans, and zoning bylaws for the area contained in the district;
- Exercise any of the powers granted to a district planning commission through sections 100(a) to (e) and 104(a) to (e);
- Employ or engage the services of any person that it considers necessary and fix their remuneration;
- Make any arrangements that it considers advisable to obtain suitable accommodation for its purposes;

- Enter into an agreement with one or more DPAs described in section 108 for the creation of a board which is to be a body corporate, the sole function of which is to make arrangements to carry out the powers described in clauses (c) and (d) on behalf of the parties to the agreement that the parties agree to;
- By bylaw, provide municipal services either to the affiliated municipalities or directly to persons within the planning district and, by agreement, outside the boundaries of the planning district to another municipality, organization, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, government, or indigenous community according to the terms and conditions set by the DPA;
- Expend funds, charge fees for its services and, by bylaw, set terms and conditions respecting any charges, fees, discounts or penalties associated with providing municipal service;
- Enter into development levy and servicing agreements pursuant to Part VIII of the PDA; and
- Do all other things it considers necessary, incidental or conducive to exercising its powers, fulfilling its functions, or providing municipal services it is authorized to provide.

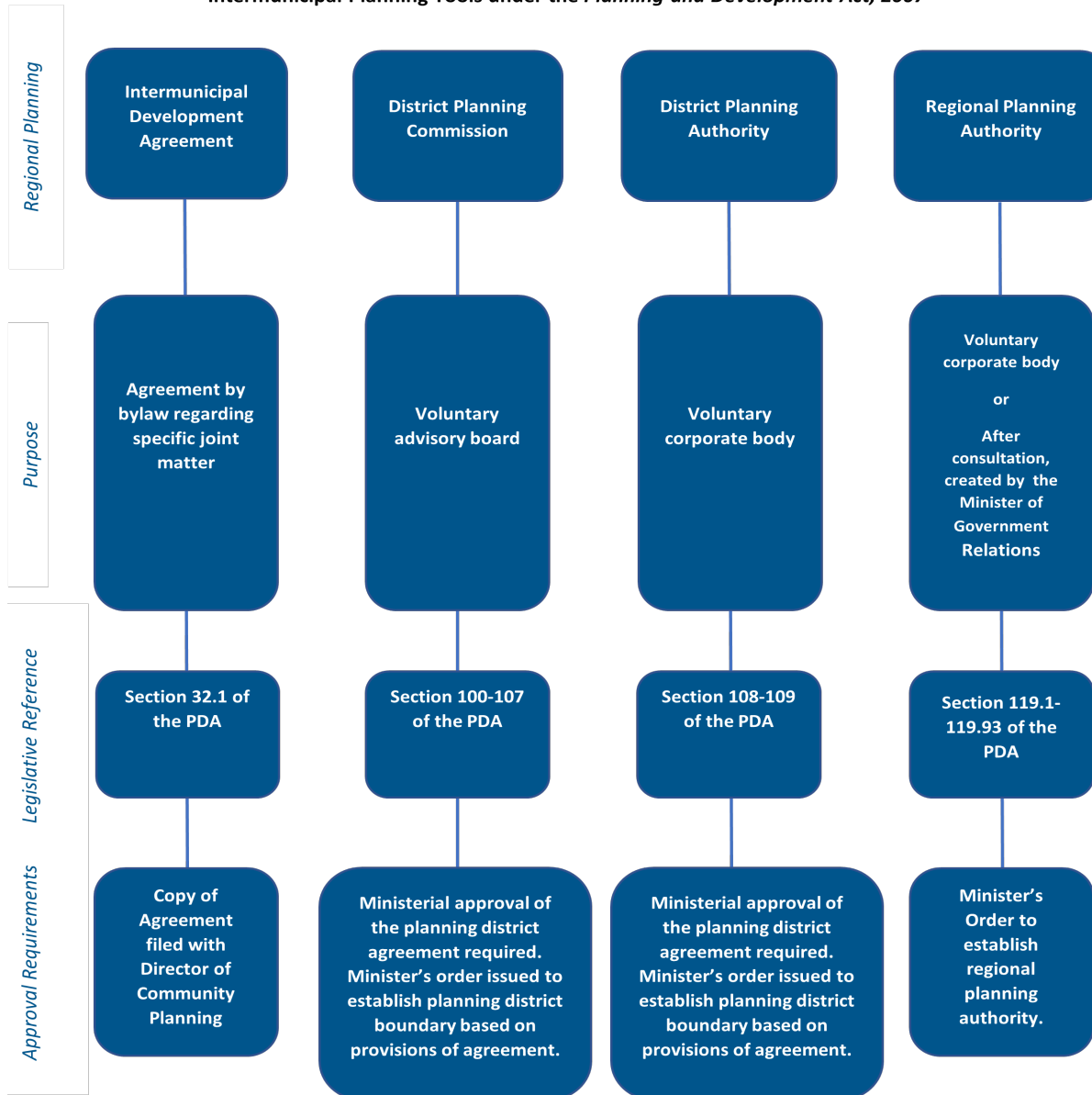
Any additional authorities granted to a DPA are outlined in a Minister's order and associated agreement establishing the DPA.

Regional Planning Authorities (RPA)

A Regional Planning Authority (RPA) is a similar framework to a DPA, with a governing board exercising decision-making powers by the participating municipalities. An RPA may be established by partnering municipalities or at the Minister's direction to address regional issues of provincial importance. The Minister's order may specify the powers granted to the board, which can include any of the same powers granted to a district planning authority.

The main difference between a DPA and an RPA is the board's structure. The Minister's order establishing the RPA may include appointing provincial government representatives to the board or any other persons that the Minister is satisfied has an interest or expertise in community planning. Sections 119.1 to 119.93 of the PDA covers the procedures and requirements for the creation and operation of an RPA.

Intermunicipal Planning Tools under the *Planning and Development Act, 2007*



Establishing a Planning District

Agreements

If two or more municipalities or communities are interested in creating a planning district, they may enter a district agreement. Sections 97 and 98 of the PDA discuss the procedures for establishing a planning district, including the content that must be contained in a district agreement. District agreements are adopted by bylaw and must be submitted to the Community Planning Branch for ministerial approval.

Minimum Content

A district agreement must contain:

- The name of the new planning district.
- A description or map of the boundaries of the planning district, regarding:
 - a) Topographic features;
 - b) Watershed management;
 - c) Environmental management;
 - d) The extent of existing or probable development;
 - e) The existence of important agricultural, resource, conservation, recreational, or other urban or rural planning related matters including those that may be of a sector specific nature;
 - f) The existence of planning issues common to the municipalities concerned; or
 - g) The provision of joint services.
- The establishment of a district planning commission consisting of:
 - a) At least one person who is a council member, to be appointed by each affiliated municipality;
 - b) Representatives of any Indigenous community affected by the establishment of the planning district or any government agency that affiliated municipalities agree should be represented on the commission; and
 - c) Any other persons appointed jointly by the affiliated municipalities interested in community planning in the district on matters such as environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability.
- Respecting the function of the district planning commission:
 - a) The eligibility for appointment or reappointment of members to the commission;
 - b) The tenure of office of members of the commission;
 - c) The manner of filling vacancies;
 - d) The remuneration and expenses, if any, payable to members of the commission; and
 - e) The way the chairperson and acting chairperson are designated among the commission members.

- The proportion of any funds that each affiliated municipality is required to contribute to meet the expenses of the planning district, and describe how office space and facilities are to be provided to the planning district by any of those municipalities.
- Mechanisms for resolving disputes between affiliated municipalities.
- A process and procedure for:
 - a) Amending the agreement;
 - b) Adding the affiliation of a municipality;
 - c) Withdrawing the affiliation of a municipality; and
 - d) Distributing any assets and liabilities of the district planning commission.

Examples of Optional Content

The PDA is flexible in allowing district agreements to contain any other matter the affiliated municipalities consider necessary to meet their objectives. Some examples of additional content that the municipalities may find beneficial include:

- A high-level outline of why the municipalities have chosen to form a district.
- Timelines for reviewing the district agreement and plan.
- A process for passing district plan amendments that affect land only within one municipality.
- The types of applications or planning related matters that must be referred to the commission for comment.
- A process for referring other matters to the commission for comment.

District Plans

Once a planning district and district planning commission are established through an agreement, the commission must produce a district plan to guide land use and development within the boundaries. A district plan must contain policy relating to matters the affiliated municipalities consider:

- To be of intermunicipal or regional significance in the planning district;
- To be necessary to co-ordinate community and land use planning and services within the district;
- To ensure the district plan is consistent with any provincial land use policy or statement of provincial interest.

A district plan may also contain statements of policy relating to:

- Any matter mentioned in Section 32 of the PDA;
- Sector-specific planning;
- District public works;
- District service delivery;
- District public facilities, including the development and maintenance of educational, cultural, recreational, and health care facilities;
- District economic development;

- The co-ordination of approaches for stewardship of environmentally sensitive lands;
- Matters dealing with significant transportation and municipal infrastructure in the district;
- District settlement patterns; and
- Any other matter considered by the DPC or DPA to be of regional or interjurisdictional significance, or necessary to co-ordinate community and land use planning services between municipalities and with an Indigenous community.

A District Plan (DP) is a statutory document which must be created in consultation with a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) per Section 102(1) of the PDA. DPCs often use a request for proposals (RFP) format to acquire a qualified consultant to create the DP. In cases, where the DPC has received approval to do so, the DPC may request quotes directly from a consulting firm(s). Planning consulting firms operating in Saskatchewan can be found on the Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute website: www.sppi.ca.

Outlining Joint Goals and Visions

When initiating regional planning or creating a district plan, the affiliated municipalities should identify what they hope to accomplish through the partnership. It is important to identify common visions and goals at the beginning of the process, to guide policies and activities that take place throughout the partnership. Common visions and goals include:

- Economic development – identify the important industries or opportunities in the region and developing a joint strategy to attract investment in those industries;
- Recreation and tourism – identify the important attractions within the area and developing a joint branding strategy to increase public awareness of the region;
- Conservation/environmental initiatives – identify sensitive natural areas, watersheds, or important features of the area that require protection from encroaching development and create a long-term strategy for management;
- Infrastructure/Service Provision – identify weaknesses or redundancies in current services; and
- Create a joint asset management plan.

Soft Infrastructure	Hard Infrastructure
Regional professional services	Regional
Administrator/Chief Administrative Officer	Landfills
Building Official	Transfer stations
Engineer	Roads
Community Planner	Potable water lines/wells
Bylaw Enforcement Operator	Sewage lagoons
Emergency Management Operations Coordinator	Treatment plants
Fire and Protective Services Agreements and Services	Parks
Water/Sewer/Recreational Plan Operators	Recreation facilities

Official Community Plans

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a statutory planning document guiding growth and development within a community. The OCP provides a comprehensive policy framework to guide the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the municipality or any part of it. A community plan is a growth management strategy for a municipality and enables it to set development goals, objectives and policies that council can use to manage land use, subdivision, municipal services and public utilities. An OCP must also incorporate any applicable provincial land use policies and *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*.

When adopting a district plan, Section 102 of the PDA allows for two different options with respect to a municipal OCP:

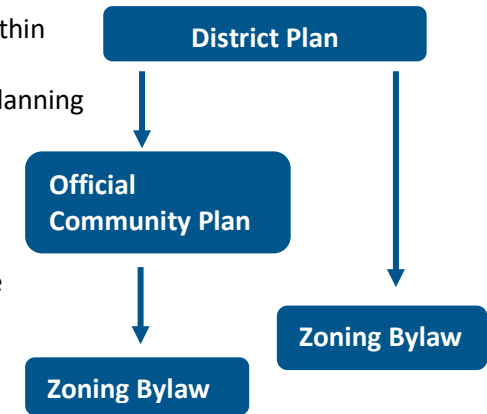
District Plan as an OCP

If a municipality does not have an OCP when adopting a DP, the plan is deemed to be the municipality's OCP if it contains the minimum policy requirements in the PDA. To function as an OCP, the DP must contain:

- Sustainable current and future land use and development in the municipality;
- Current and future economic development;
- The general provision of public works;
- The management of lands that are subject to natural hazards including flooding, slumping and slope instability;
- The management of environmentally sensitive lands;
- Source water protection;
- The means of implementing the official community plan;
- The coordination of land use, future growth patterns and public works with adjacent municipalities;
- If the municipality has entered an intermunicipal development agreement, the implementation of the agreement;
- The provision of municipal reserve for school purposes including policies that:
 - Ensure the creation of municipal reserve sites suitable in size to be used for school purposes;
 - Designate the locations of municipal reserve sites to be used for school purposes; and
 - Provide for the dedication of land or money-in-lieu of land through the subdivision process that supports equity for all subdivision applicants and municipalities within the region.
- The management of lands that are in proximity to existing or proposed railway operations.

District Plan Relationship to an Existing OCP

In some cases, it may be beneficial for a municipality to maintain a separate OCP to guide development within the municipal boundaries. If a municipality chooses to keep a separate OCP, it must ensure the OCP is consistent with the provisions of the DP. The DP becomes the highest-level document by which all other planning documents must confirm. For example, if the DP designates a certain area as a conservation area, the OCP future land use map must also show that area as protected from development.



Adopting a District Plan

Once a satisfactory district plan is created by the district planning commission, it must be submitted to the affiliated municipalities for adoption. The process for adopting a district plan is identical to the process for adopting a new official community plan or zoning bylaw.

Public Notice

Similar to other community documents, the process of creating a district plan should contain ongoing public engagement. The municipal councils, Indigenous groups, interest groups, and the communities within the district will all bring valuable perspectives to the process and final policy statements in the DP. In addition to any engagement undertaken throughout the process, public notice must also be undertaken through the formal adoption process. District plans are required to meet the minimum public notice requirements of Part X of the PDA.

Regardless of whether the DP will be adopted as an OCP or not, it must be advertised using the same process as adoption of a new OCP. After first reading of the adoption bylaw and before second reading, the municipal councils must hold a public hearing. The district plan and the public hearing must be advertised once each week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating within the municipality. The first notice must be published at least four (4) clear weeks before the public hearing, as shown below:

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Newspaper Advertisement

Public Hearing

Copies of the district plan and adopting bylaw must be publicly available before the public hearing.

Ministerial Approval

Once the bylaw adopting the DP has been approved by the municipal councils, it must be submitted to the Community Planning Branch to receive ministerial approval. The submission for approval must include:

- Two certified copies of the district plan;
- Two copies of the bylaw adopting the district plan;
- Copies of the newspaper ad or public notice used;
- A copy of the public hearing minutes and all representations at the hearing and submitted in writing; and
- Proof of compliance with the requirements of Part X in the form of statutory declaration of the municipal administrator.

As part of the review of new district plans, the plan may be referred to other provincial government branches and agencies to review the diversity of policy statements included. This process is typically completed within 90 days of submission. However, in some cases, additional time may be required to complete the review.

District Planning Commissions

Code of Conduct

While district planning commissions operate in an advisory capacity, it is important for decision makers and the public to trust the commission's recommendations. One way to build trust in the commission is through adopting a code of conduct. A code of conduct for a district planning commission may be similar to those for a council, district planning authorities (DPA), regional planning authorities (RPA), or other boards and commissions. The benefits of identifying the expectations for commission members ahead of time includes:

- All parties understand the standards of conduct that are expected;
- Enables members to act honestly, ethically, and responsibly;
- Enables members to exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence; and
- Members will act in a way that enhances public confidence in the integrity of the role of the planning district and the planning process.

A code of conduct outlines the standards of conduct expected of commission members. Each member is responsible for complying with any code of conduct adopted by the commission. It is good practice to update and/or review the code of conduct from time to time to reflect the operation of a DPC. The following sections contain recommendations and examples for creating a code of conduct:

General Conduct

- Act lawfully, honestly, and exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out functions as a member.
- A member cannot conduct themselves in a manner that is likely to compromise the integrity of the district planning commission such as acting in a way that:
 - Contravenes legislation (e.g. the PDA);
 - Is improper or unethical;
 - Is an abuse of power;
 - Causes, comprises, or involves intimidation, harassment, or verbal abuse; or
 - Causes, comprises, or involves discrimination, disadvantage, or adverse treatment.
- Attend all meetings if possible and allow the necessary time to prepare.

Fairness and Equity

- Consider issues consistently, promptly, conscientiously and fairly.
- Take all relevant, known facts into consideration and have regard to the merits of each case.
- Do not take irrelevant matters or circumstances into consideration when making decisions.

Conflict of Interest

- A conflict of interest exists where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that a member could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out their duties.
- Avoid or manage conflicts of interests. The onus is on the members to identify a conflict of interest and take appropriate action. Any conflict of interest must be managed to uphold the district's decision-making integrity. When considering a conflict of interest, the member should consider how others would view the situation.
- If a member is in doubt as to whether a conflict exists, they may wish to seek a legal opinion to ensure that the applicable legislation and common law is carefully considered.
- If in doubt regarding a potential conflict, an individual may wish to declare an interest to avoid the potential consequences of violating conflict of interest laws.

Disclosure of a Conflict of Interest

- A member must disclose their interest each time the matter in which an interest is held is brought before the DPC, DPA or RPA. Disclosure of an interest at one meeting does not carry over to other meetings or last for their full term.
- If a member is absent from a meeting where a matter they have an interest in is discussed, they must disclose the interest at the next meeting.
- At any point where the subject of potential conflict arises, even outside of a meeting format, legislation requires the member to abstain from voting and not participate in discussion, be it formally or informally. Informal presentation extends to being present in the room as influence can be exerted through body language as much as verbal or written communication.
- A declaration of a conflict of interest, including the general nature, material details and abstention/withdrawal, are recorded in the meeting minutes.
- A full list of situations where the need to declare a conflict of interest does not apply is in subsection 143(2) of *The Municipalities Act*, subsection 115(2) of *The Cities Act*, and subsection 161(2) of *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*.
- Members should refer to the detailed conflict of interest provisions in *The Municipalities Act, The Cities Act, The Northern Municipalities Act, and The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.

Personal Dealings with Council

- A member may have reason to have private dealings with a municipal council that is part of a commission where they are a member (for example, as a ratepayer). A member must not expect or request preferential treatment in relation to any matter in which they have a private interest because of their role as a member. A member must avoid any action that could lead the public to believe they are seeking preferential treatment.

Gifts and Benefits

- A member must not:
 - Seek or accept a bribe or other improper inducement;
 - Seek gifts or benefits of any kind;
 - Accept any gift or benefit that may create a sense of obligation on their part or may be perceived to be intended or likely to influence carrying out a member's public duty;
 - Accept any gift or benefit of more than token value; or
 - Accept an offer of money, regardless of the amount.

- Generally speaking, token gifts and benefits include:
 - Free or subsidized meals, beverages or refreshments provided in conjunction with:
 - The discussion of matters before a DPC, DPA or RPA;
 - Conferences; and
 - Social functions organized by groups.
 - Invitations to and attendance at local social, cultural and sporting events;
 - Gifts of single bottles or reasonably priced alcohol at end of year functions and public occasions; and
 - Ties, scarves, coasters, tie pins, diaries, chocolates or flowers.
- Gifts and tokens that have more than a token value include but are not limited to, tickets to major sporting events; corporate hospitality at a corporate facility at major sporting events; discounted products for personal use; the frequent use of facilities such as gyms; use of holiday homes and free or discounted travel.
- Generally, any gift from an applicant, objector or associate of an applicant or objector in relation to a matter determined by a planning district should be considered inappropriate and therefore not accepted.

Inappropriate Interactions

- A member should not engage in inappropriate interactions with a municipal council or council members. In relation to municipal staff, do not:
 - Approach, make requests of, make inquiries or issue instructions to the administration other than through official channels;
 - Be overbearing or threatening to the administration;
 - Make personal attacks on the administration in a public forum;
 - Direct or pressure administration in the performance of its work or recommendations it makes; or
 - Influence or attempt to influence staff in preparing reports or other information to be submitted to the planning district.
- It is the responsibility of the member to:
 - Protect confidential information;
 - Only release confidential information if they have authority to do so;
 - Only use confidential information for the purpose it is intended to be used;
 - Not use confidential information gained through their position as a member for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or for any other person;
 - Not use confidential information with the intention to cause harm or detriment to the planning district, or any other person or body; and
 - Not disclose any information discussed during a confidential planning district session.

Rules of Procedure

It may be beneficial for a district planning commission (DPC) to adopt a rules of procedure document to outline the commission's detailed operations. A DPC that established rules of procedure to guide its operation is better positioned to achieve positive and consistent outcomes. A reliable and transparent set of rules assists members in carrying out their duties and enables them to:

- a) Better understand the function and operation of the commission;
- b) Better exercise professionalism and diligence; and
- c) Act in a way that enhances public confidence in the integrity of the commission's role and the planning process.

It is good practice to update and review the rules of procedure regularly to reflect current commission operations. The following sections contain recommendations and examples for creating a Rules of Procedure document:

Authority

Section 100 of the PDA provides authority to DPCs to establish its own rules of procedure to guide their operation and help conduct their business.

Meetings

One of the first decisions a DPC must make is how meetings will be conducted and how often they will occur. To allow greater flexibility, the PDA does not address how a DPC should conduct its meetings.

A DPC may speak to any or all the following items within its rules of procedure:

- Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. monthly, day, time etc.);
- Special meetings (e.g. called by the chair or by a majority of members);
- Recorded (protocol on recorded meetings and any applicable costs associated with recordings); and
- Minutes (preparation of minutes, pertinent information, motions, decisions made, actions, voting).

Appointments

At least one member of the affiliated municipal council(s) should be appointed to the DPC. The planning district agreement should contain provisions respecting the manner in which a chair and vice chair are to be appointed by the members of the DPC and the terms of all officers. Staggering member terms is important, so all terms do not end at the same time (e.g. staggering one- to three-year terms). The DPC may, by majority vote, approve and appoint any other officer it considers necessary for its function.

Duties of Officers

- Chair – the chair is selected from among the commission members as outlined in the district agreement.
 - Providing leadership to the commission;
 - Ensuring the commission functions effectively and efficiently;
 - Providing support to the commission’s secretary, employees, and consultants;
 - Being a champion for the commission;
 - Serving as the spokesperson for the commission;
 - Calling meetings and setting agenda items;
 - Presiding over commission meetings;
 - Encouraging discussions and ensuring all participants have an opportunity to be heard; and
 - Signing documents on behalf of the commission.

- Vice Chair – the vice or acting chair is selected from among the members as outlined in the district agreement.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the chair in their absence; and
 - Any other role as assigned by the chair.

- District Planning Commission Member – commission members are appointed as outlined in the district agreement.
 - Sharing information and representing the interests of their councils and community;
 - Balancing information to represent interests of all affiliated communities;
 - Providing support to the commission’s secretary, employees, and consultants as needed;
 - Attending and contributing to commission meetings; and
 - Encouraging discussion and ensuring all parties have an opportunity to be heard.

- Secretary – the secretary is the administrator or executive director of the commission, and manages all administrative and operational matters of the commission.
 - Working with the chair to set the agenda for all commission meetings;
 - Taking minutes and recording motions and declarations of conflict of interest at commission meetings;
 - Advertising commission business as necessary;
 - Receiving and presenting applications to the commission for consideration;
 - Providing commission comments on applications to approving authorities or affiliated municipalities;
 - Providing clarification and advice to commission members on commission policies and procedures;
 - Preparing documents for signature by the chair;
 - Preparing reports on commission activities; and
 - Hiring and managing commission personnel.

Order of Business

An established order of business will provide consistency between and improve the function of DPC meetings, which typically follow this format:

- Call meeting to order.
- Announcement of agenda.
- Additions to the agenda.
- Approval of previous meetings minutes.
- Business arising from the minutes.
- New business.
- Hearings.
- Unfinished business.
- Comments from the audience.
- Adjournment.

The order of business may be altered during the meeting by the chair with the consent of a majority of the members present.

Quorum

A majority of the appointed members constitutes a quorum. A DPC should determine the acceptable means of obtaining quorum such as attendance virtually or via teleconference. Every motion by a DPC requires approval of a majority of the commission members in attendance to pass.

Voting

Each commission member present at meetings including the chair, has a duty to vote and must cast one vote on each motion unless a member has declared a conflict of interest. The DPC should establish acceptable voting procedures such as voice call or roll call.

Vacancies

The planning district agreement should contain provisions on how vacancies on the commission should be filled.

Conduct of Meetings

The chair is generally regarded as the leader or head of the commission and has authority regarding the conduct of meetings as set out in the rules of procedure, which may include:

- Presentation of information and discussion;
- The orderly and timely completion of commission business;
- Introducing the agenda topics;
- Provide for staff presentations;
- Allow questions from the commission and call for discussion among commission members;
- Ensure that all members have an opportunity to speak;
- Expedite the discussion in a timely manner and summarize the recommendation or direction from the commission as appropriate; and
- Allow audience comments as appropriate (e.g. after staff presentation and/or the completion of the commission's discussion on the agenda topic).

DPCs may follow commonly used rules of order as a guide for conducting meetings and making decisions as a group. Examples may include Robert's Rules of Order or relaxed parliamentary procedure rules. Additional information can be found online.

Rules of Procedure for Public Meetings

All meetings of a DPC should be open to the public. Where additional attention is needed by the commission to consider a particular item, the commission may decide to advertise and hold a public meeting on this item (e.g. bylaw amendments or discretionary use applications). The DPC's rules of procedure may include provisions guiding the conduct of these meetings. Considerations may include:

- Presentations at public meetings.
- Nature of presentations, such as:
 - Written comments;
 - Verbal comments;
 - Questions from the commission; and
 - Questions from the speaker.
- Commission deliberation such as the:
 - Information submitted;
 - Written comments received;
 - Presentation and discussion made at the hearing; and
 - Staff reports.
- Commission recommendation

Comments during a public meeting are critical feedback but must be managed to ensure proper order. A DPC should consider creating rules for written comments, verbal comments, questions from the commission and questions from the speaker.

Referral of Applications

If not addressed in the district agreement, the commission must outline in its rules and procedure the process for referring applications to the commission. Specifically, the types of applications or other planning matters which must be referred by the affiliated municipalities to the commission for comment. It may also include a process for referring other matters to the commission for comment at the discretion of the affiliated municipalities.

Commission Recommendations

DPCs are an advisory body and provide important considerations to municipal council(s). The rules of procedure should outline who should present the commission's recommendation to the affiliated municipalities (e.g. chair, planner, administrator, etc.).

Representing the Commission

The commission should act as a unified body. A member, when representing the commission, should speak or act in accordance with the recommendation or direction taken by the commission. The chair or chair's designate should be the commission's official spokesperson. Individual commission members may speak as an individual, clearly specifying they are speaking as an individual articulating their own views and concerns (i.e. I am speaking as an individual, not representing the commission).

Amending the Rules of Procedure

Rules of procedure may be amended at any commission meeting by a majority vote of the appointed members.

Dispute Resolution

Relationship Building

Intermunicipal partnerships, like any relationship, require consistent effort from all parties. A change in elected officials, evolving municipal priorities, or changing perspectives on the partnership can impact its effectiveness or jeopardize the entire framework. It is important for the affiliated municipalities to have clearly outlined the partnership's benefits and common goals which can be reflected on in times of dispute.

The municipalities may find it beneficial to reflect on the following questions in times of difficulty:

- Why was the intermunicipal partnership established? Is this reason still valid?
- What goals and values do the communities share?
- What support systems are in place to help achieve those goals?
- What is the current format for intermunicipal communication? Is it effective?
- What successes has the partnership achieved?

By focusing on why the partnership was formed at the beginning and what went well in it, the municipalities may work through disputes by considering the bigger picture.

A district may find it beneficial to create an action plan to keep focus on achieving the partnership's goals. A sample action plan template is in Appendix A.

Dispute Resolution Procedures

The PDA requires all district agreements to contain mechanisms for resolving disputes among affiliated municipalities. If relationship-building techniques have not been successful in resolving the dispute, any of the parties may initiate more formal procedures under the agreement. Below is an example of a dispute resolution procedure in a district agreement:

The planning commission members agree to keep each other informed of any disagreement or contentious issue related to the planning district activities or items addressed under this agreement. In the event of a dispute over any issues related to or addressed under this agreement should occur, the chairperson will register the dispute with the commission and the following will occur:

- a) In the event a dispute occurs between two or more members within the planning district:
 - i. A neutral member will evaluate and mediate the dispute. The evaluator will have no vested interest and be non-binding.*
 - ii. If the dispute cannot be resolved, the next step will be to seek third-party mediation.**

- b) In the event a dispute occurs between all members:
 - i. The commission will meet and attempt to resolve the dispute. All members will have equal say.*
 - ii. If the dispute cannot be resolved, the next step will be to seek the assistance of third-party mediation.**

- c) In the event a dispute cannot be resolved, through the processes outlined above, parties may appoint an arbitrator whose decision shall be final and binding upon both parties. The Arbitration Act of Saskatchewan is in force and shall apply to arbitration proceedings commenced pursuant to this agreement.*
- d) Expenses during dispute resolution will be paid equally among the conflicted members and not by the commission.*
- e) The parties shall resolve disputes within 30 days of being registered by the chairperson.*

Section 233 of the PDA also allows municipalities to request mediation on planning matters through the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB). If the mediation is unsuccessful, the municipalities may request the SMB hold a hearing to decide on the dispute. This is typically a final step if other measures have not been successful as a decision of the SMB is binding.

The district may include any dispute-resolution procedures in the district agreement it considers necessary. This may include arbitration, mediation, or any other means. The PDA allows flexibility in the district agreement for the municipality to determine the processes and procedures best for their partnership.

Appendix A – Action Plan Template

Purpose: Outlines why you want to build a relationship with another community and how it will impact your results.

Roles and responsibilities: Identify tasks for each role involved in building a relationship with another community.

What? (our objective)	Who? (who is doing what)	How? (how will we do it)	When? (When will we do it)	Resources (templates)
We need a part-time community building official.	Administrator/public works staff determines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many buildings require inspection? • Do we have enough funds to hire? 	Town of [nearby town] is similar size to us. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have an official or need one? • Can we do a shared service with shared cost? 	New building code is in effect mm/dd/yy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to begin planning now to have a building official on staff by mm/dd/yy. 	Building and Technical Standards – saskatchewan.ca
We need to upgrade our sewage lagoon.	Administrator/public works staff to champion. They will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to [nearby community.] • If interested, identify a champion from their community. 	Does [nearby community] want to do shared community facility?	Old lagoon will no longer meet needs by mm/dd/yy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New lagoon needed by mm/dd/yy – avoid service disruption and enable community growth. • Start partnership, planning and financing in a month. 	Water Security Agency Municipal funding – saskatchewan.ca

Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities

District Planning Commissions (DPCs)	District Planning Authorities (DPAs)	Regional Planning Authorities (RPAs)	Regional Planning Authorities (RPAs)
<p>Voluntary inter-municipal agreement.</p> <p>These are voluntarily formed advisory boards, which advise participating councils on planning and development matters.</p>	<p>Voluntary inter-municipal agreement.</p> <p>These are voluntarily corporate bodies, which perform the planning and development permit duties delegated by the member municipalities.</p>	<p>Voluntary inter-municipal agreement</p> <p>The municipalities request an RPA to prepare a regional plan.</p>	<p>Mandated</p> <p>By Minister’s order, the municipalities form a regional body.</p>
Advisory	Decision Maker	Decision Maker	Decision Maker
At the request of the municipalities, a Minister’s order ratifies inter-municipal agreement and establish commission.	At the request of the municipalities, a Minister’s order ratifies inter-municipal agreement and establish authority.	At the request of the municipalities, a Minister’s order ratifies inter-municipal agreement to establish RPA.	Minister’s order sets out RPA responsibilities .
<p>Responsibilities depend on the Minister’s order. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a district plan. • Undertake studies. • Advisory body to its members. • Collaborate between members to establish regional goals. 	<p>Responsibilities depend on the Minister’s order. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass bylaws for the district area. • Service delivery within the district. • Expend funds and set fees for service. • Decision-makers on developments/proposals. 	<p>Responsibilities depend on the Minister’s order. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass bylaws for the district area. • Service delivery within the district. • Expend funds and set fees for service. • Decision-makers on developments/proposals. 	<p>Responsibilities depend on the Minister’s order. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass bylaws for the district area. • Service delivery within the district. • Expend funds and set fees for service. • Decision-makers on developments/proposals.