



What are the benefits of forming a Planning District with other municipalities?

A planning district is a collaborative model where 2 or more municipalities can develop plans to guide local and regional growth. The planning district model provides the same municipal authority to manage development, splits the expense among several partners, and is a proven way to implement regional strategies for activities like economic development, watershed management, or housing. The planning district provides an opportunity for regular interaction between members on local and regional initiatives. This often creates better outcomes for all the municipalities.

What do our municipalities need to do to form a Planning District?

When a group of municipalities agree to establish a planning district they will need to:

- Enter into a planning district agreement to set out powers and the area of the district;
- Establish a joint District Planning Commission (DPC); and
- Prepare a District Official Community Plan (DOCP), which becomes the local Official Community Plan for the area of the planning district as defined in the agreement.

Does a DOCP provide the same level of authority as a local OCP?

Yes. A DOCP is only different from a local OCP in that it is a joint bylaw of two or more municipalities. It has the same general requirements and statutory effect as a local OCP, but is managed by

all the partnering municipalities through the DPC.

Why would my municipality want to have a DOCP?

A DOCP is developed in cooperation with all partners. It reflects the regional vision and provides local land use policy. It is a cost effective way for municipalities with similar planning interests to control development in their communities.

Can we prepare the DOCP, but not establish a DPC or enter into a planning district agreement?

No. *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* (PDA) requires that municipalities establish a formal planning district with a DPC in order to prepare, adopt, and maintain a DCOP. As a joint bylaw it requires joint management which is a core function of the planning district. Changes to a DOCP are not common, typically seen only once every couple of years, but they do require the agreement of all partners.

Do we also require a joint zoning bylaw?

No, each municipality will have their own local zoning bylaw, which they can manage independently and change as often as needed, providing it is consistent with the DOCP.

Can we align our bylaws and not form a district?

Yes. Municipalities have the ability to align bylaws, hold regular discussions regarding municipal issues and enter into many different kinds of staffing, servicing or cost sharing agreements outside of the district planning model.

Can we have a “district plan” and an individual OCP?

No, ‘district plans’ with individual OCPs are not an option at this time. **Under the PDA, a planning district must have a DOCP.** The DOCP is required to contain both regional and local policies and it serves as the Districts’ regional policy document and the OCP for each affiliated municipality.

Glossary of Common Planning Terms

- 1. Planning District** – is the organization created by a Minister’s Order approving the district planning agreement of the partnering municipalities. The planning district manages the DOCP; they may also under the terms of the agreement, advise the municipalities on planning matters, make planning decisions, hire joint staff (such as planners, building officials, or engineers) and provide other services.
- 2. District Planning Commission (DPC)** - is the board established under a planning district agreement, made up of councilors from each partnering municipality, which review and discuss planning related issues for the planning district and provide advice to their respective councils on these matters.
- 3. District Official Community Plan (DOCP)** –is a community plan jointly prepared, adopted and managed by the members of a planning district. The DOCP becomes the local plans for all areas defined by the district agreement. It provides policy guidance for the growth of the community and region

and is required to prepare a zoning bylaw to manage development.

- 4. Official Community Plan (OCP)** – is a community plan prepared, adopted and managed by an individual municipality. It provides policy guidance for the growth of the community and is required to prepare a zoning bylaw to manage development.
- 5. Zoning Bylaw** – is the bylaw that implements the OCP. It allows Council to establish criteria, standards and regulations for development occurring in their jurisdiction.

Contact Information

For information on district planning see www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/Programs-Services/Community-Planning/District-Intermunicipal-Planning or contact the Community Planning Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

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