

PLANNING FOR GROWTH - Frequently Asked Questions**Q. What is Planning for Growth?**

A. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MA), the federal Gas Tax Program, Enterprise Saskatchewan (ES), Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) have developed a joint Planning for Growth program with federal, provincial and municipal funding.

Q. What is the goal of the program?

A. The goal of *Planning for Growth* is to enhance regional planning capacity and establish best practices to facilitate sustainable growth and development across the province.

Q. What does the initiative hope to achieve?

A. The objective is to fund cost share projects to:

- Facilitate regional planning to support the coordination of infrastructure and land use for growth;
- Demonstrate best practices for planning;
- Build municipal and professional planning capacity in municipalities and regions; and
- Build and enhance relationships required to support regional planning initiatives.

Q. Why is this initiative required?

A. Saskatchewan has been experiencing significant growth around cities and areas associated with resorts and resource development. Urban and rural municipalities have expressed concern about urgent risks associated with the lack of municipal planning capacity. When municipalities are unable to respond to the demands of growth there is a risk that economic development may be compromised. Urban and rural municipalities have indicated a strong desire to work together to plan effectively and find new ways of doing business to facilitate growth.

Q. How will municipalities benefit from the initiative?

A. The initiatives will provide an opportunity for groups of communities to demonstrate the value of: partnerships and collaboration; the economic, social, and environmental opportunities across a region; the benefit of developing and implementing a strategy, agreement or plan for growth; and the value of developing professional planning capacity in support of short and long term objectives for economic growth. Information and experience gained through the demonstration projects will facilitate growth and development in the province.

Q. Will this initiative apply to northern municipalities?

A. The Ministry identified unique planning needs in the North and is working on developing a separate stream of funding under this program called the Planning for Growth Northern Program." Details on this stream of funding will be announced in the near future.

Q. Who is managing the program?

A. The New Deal Secretariat will be managing the program.

Q. How much funding is available?

- A. This one time funding program includes:
- \$600,000 from the federal Gas Tax Fund; and
 - \$500,000 from Enterprise Saskatchewan.

Applicants will be required to provide a minimum of 50% of project funding and will only be eligible to receive one grant from the program.

Q. What is the application deadline?

- A. Applications for Intake 1 must be submitted by September 30, 2010 to:

New Deal Secretariat
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
410 – 1855 Victoria Ave
Regina SK S4P 3T2
Phone: (306) 787-8912
Fax: (306) 787-3641
E-mail: gastaxprogram@gov.sk.ca

Q. Will there be more than one intake?

- A. The program will nominally split funds between two intakes. Intake 1 is open from June 18 to September 30, 2010.

Intake 2 will be open from November 15 to December 31, 2010.

If there are any funds remaining after Intake 2, a third and final intake will be open.

Q. Who will be able to apply for funding?

- A. Groups of municipalities will be eligible for funding based on the following criteria:

Category 1	Category 2
Groups of two or more municipalities: experiencing rapid growth; and , with a combined population of at least 5,000.	Groups of two or more municipalities: endorsed by an Enterprise Region(s) (ER) as defined by Enterprise Saskatchewan, who: wish to align or develop regional policies around a shared significant environmental, tourism or resource feature; or have identified a lack of planning as a factor limiting growth in the ER or a portion of the ER; or wish to build on work initiated under the Municipal Capacity Development Program, or a comparable initiative, to move to the next stage of planning to enhance their regional competitiveness.

Q. What kinds of activities will be eligible for funding?

A. Eligible initiatives will include:

Regional studies - to determine partnerships and assets for future growth;
Relationship building - to facilitate the preparation of agreements, plans or strategies;
Planning Capacity - activities that build local or regional capacity and facilitate the preparation of agreements, or statutory plans; or
Other - projects related to the economic, social or physical development of a region.

Q. How long is this program?

A. Beginning in 2010, the program will be delivered over three years.

Are funds allocated for the second intake or could they all be allocated with the first intake?

The program will have two application intakes. In order to maintain flexibility, a specific amount has not been dedicated to each intake however funding will be nominally divided between the two.

Q. Can infrastructure be funded?

A. Infrastructure is not an eligible project category. Please visit the [Eligible Projects](#) section of the Planning for Growth website for examples of projects eligible under each project category.

Q. What if we need a district plan and individual plans – can both be funded?

A. Under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007 (PDA)*, a Planning District must have a District Official Community (DOCP) Plan. The DOCP is required to contain both regional and local policies and it serves as the Districts' regional policy document and the Official Community Plan (OCP) for each affiliated municipality. Groups of municipalities are able to apply for funding to create a district plan.

Changes are proposed to the PDA which will provide for a broader regional plan, called a District Plan. The District Plan must contain regional policies, but may also address local policy. Where it does not address local policy, affiliated municipalities would also require a local OCP. If the legislation is adopted funding received for the preparation of a district plan could include updating or creating local OCPs as part of the district planning process.

Q. Is there a higher rating (or preference) for those areas who have already done some regional level planning?

A. Although preference is not being given to areas which have done some regional level planning, previous planning commitment and activities, described in Section E(8) of the application, may result in a higher rating for that question which may affect the overall score on an application.

Q. Are there other funds for planning in the works?

A. At this time, funding for the Planning for Growth Program is only available for two intakes. Municipalities may also use their Gas Tax Fund allocation for planning projects, under the Municipal Capacity project category.

Q. Will approved projects, funding amounts and best practices be available?

A. A list of approved projects will be provided on the Planning for Growth website. The website will also provide information on the results of projects as they are completed. All municipalities will be able to read about the best practices and lessons learned from municipalities undertaking projects. Participants are also encouraged to share information on their experience at municipal sector events.

Q. Is there a minimum amount that can be applied for?

A. There is no minimum amount of funding that can be applied for. There is only a limit on the maximum amount of funding that will be provided by the program. Applicants may receive up to 50% of total project costs to a maximum of \$50,000 for Category 1 and \$100,000 for Category 2.

Q. Where can we find planners?

A. A list of Community Planners offering services in Saskatchewan is posted at:
<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/Zoning/CommunityPlanners>

Other consultants may offer similar services, but municipalities should ensure their Planner is registered with the Association of Professional Community Planners of Saskatchewan.

Q. Who is on the management committee?

A. The Management Committee is made up of representation from the federal and provincial governments and the municipal associations.

Q. How are project applications rated?

A. Project applications are rated based on the information provided in Section E of the application form. Using the application guide to answer each question in Section E will help to ensure applicant provide the information required.

Q. Can a municipality apply for two different projects? Can they get funds twice?

A. Municipalities may only apply for funding for one project. In special circumstances, where a municipality belongs to two separate regional groups, both groups may be eligible to receive funding. In this situation, a municipality may only be the Sponsoring Municipality one time.

If we don't get approved in the first intake, does the application automatically get considered in the second intake?

Upon notification that the application was unsuccessful, applicants will have the option to review and resubmit the application or request that it be automatically moved to the second intake.

- Q. Will there be feedback for unsuccessful applicants?**
- A. Unsuccessful applicant will be notified. If requested, program staff will be available to provide feedback to the applicant.
- Q. Can other program funding be used to make up the municipal portion of the project costs?**
- A. Yes, municipalities may obtain their share of the project funding using other programs. When using other programs, the stacking limits of those programs will apply.
- Q. What happens if outcomes are not achieved, as addressed in the application? What if the outcomes change during the process but a regional planning project output or outcome is still achieved?**
- A. The Ministry must be notified immediately of any changes to the scope, participants, outcomes, outputs or timing of the project. Officials will review the proposed changes with the PFG Management Committee and inform the municipality whether these changes will be approved.
- Q. When will successful applicants receive notice?**
- Successful applicants will be notified within 30 days of the intake closing date.
- Q. What is considered a group of municipalities? What is considered a partner?**
- A. To meet eligibility requirements, the application requires a minimum of two municipalities. Larger groups will receive a higher point rating in the area of cooperation, so applicants are encouraged to include more than two municipalities as well as additional partners such as regional parks, first nations, Métis locals, recreation groups, community futures groups, etc.
- Q. How do we start to develop our vision for the region? How do we overcome the simple barriers (ie. not talking to each other because of something that happened 50 years ago)?**
- A. Hiring a facilitator may help a group to identify their interests and needs and to discuss challenges and opportunities they face individually and as a group. This exercise is the first step in establishing partnerships and relationships necessary for moving forward and developing a vision for the region.
- Q. How do we plan with first nation communities if we aren't subject to the same regulations?**
- A. Working successfully with First Nation or Métis communities begins with building a relationship. Groups are encouraged to invite Aboriginal communities into the planning process. Personal contact with the First Nation Chief or Métis local President by an elected leader (Mayor, Reeve) is a first step. Over a couple of meetings, the group can share information about the process and the opportunities and ask the First Nation or Métis community if they would like to participate and if so how. If a First Nation or Métis community agrees to participate, it will be helpful to appoint an Aboriginal Liaison to act as a point of contact throughout the project.