

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

Mid Sask Municipal Alliance

CONTACT

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Project Date: 2012 (projected completion)

THE PRACTICE

BHP Billiton and the possibility of a new mine in the area were the main reason for the creation of this Alliance. The former CEO of the CTREDA, Edie Spagrud organized the first meeting in Jansen with nearby communities that had the potential to be affected by the activity in the area and to discuss possible opportunities. Several issues were revealed, including housing and business development. After further discussion, the communities realized that a number of bylaws needed to be changed in order to facilitate the potential development.

There are eleven Municipalities who have set aside personal agendas to engage their constituents in a process to update their local Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws, and develop a regional plan. A consultant has been hired whose responsibility will be to engage the MSMA and any stakeholder (business, service groups, churches, schools etc) who wishes to be involved in the process.

THE PROCESS

The Rural Municipalities and the CTREDA saw the possible advantages to having more consistent bylaws that might affect the new BHP Billiton mine investment. An invitation went out to surrounding municipalities and a meeting was held in Jansen in March, 2009. Several presenters including SARM and MCDP helped to inform the group. Following the inaugural meeting and the discussion that arose, the group came to the realization that this was a much larger project than what was initially thought.

The group continues to meet on almost a monthly basis, which is critical for progress. The group eventually developed a Community Action Plan with the help of MCDP, and SARM. Although it took a great deal of time, it moved the group closer to being able to submit the project for funds from the 'Planning for Growth Program'.

The project was selected for funding assistance in the fall of 2010 and the group has since hired a consultant (Stantec). Community Planning Meetings have been scheduled for April to engage the stakeholders for feedback. The group has also developed a web site to promote the region and its growth strategy.

THE RESULTS

There has been some progress, but there is still a great deal of work to complete the updated OCP, Zoning Bylaws and District Planning Agreement. Ensuring local stakeholder's involvement is important in order to deem the process a success.

There are currently 11 Municipalities who are involved with this initiative. The most measurable outcome will be in 2012 when all communities are scheduled to adopt their individual OCP and Bylaw updates. All municipalities will also adopt the regional Growth Management Strategy.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned is that there needs to be a tremendous amount of patience in the process. Meeting regularly and rotating the meetings through the member communities also gives everyone a sense of ownership.