

**Section 2.1**

**Municipal Calendar  
for  
CAOs, Municipal Clerks and Treasurers**

This calendar includes dates specified in various statutes that are of interest to Municipal Clerks and Treasurers. Although every effort has been made to identify the dates that would be important to most Municipal Clerks and Treasurers, the user is cautioned that not all situations have been covered. In addition, the user is cautioned that the preparation of this guide must necessarily involve interpretation of legislation as it applies in general situations. Specific situations may require careful legal analysis. Therefore, reference should be made to the appropriate Nova Scotia statutes and to legal advisors.

<b>January</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
January	Fourth instalment of equalization grants to municipalities paid by the Province.	19, 20(4) Municipal Grants Act
January	Property Assessment notices to be sent by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to property owners. The date on the notice starts the 21 day appeal period.	53(1), Assessment Act
January	Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations sends out summary of previous years assessment activity to municipal units	N/A
January 15	A district planning commission shall submit to the clerk of each of the participating municipalities an estimate of revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year.	258(1), Municipal Government Act
January 31	The Library Council on or before January 31 shall forward its recommendations respecting maintenance grants to the municipality.	13(1), Libraries Act

<b>February</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
February 1	On or before February 1 or such date as may be set by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB), the balance sheets of the public utilities shall be filed with the UARB.	50(2) Act to Regulate Public Utilities
February 1	Not later than the first day of February of each year, each non-profit housing corporation wholly owned by the municipality shall submit to the council of each municipality that executed the instrument of incorporation or consented to an amendment to the instrument a report covering the activities of the corporation in the preceding year, together with a financial statement of the corporation for that year.	16, Municipal Housing Corporations Act
February 15	If the council of a county or district municipality decides to have a mayor elected at large, the decision may not be reversed after February 15 in the year in which the first mayor is to be elected.	12(9), Municipal Government Act
February (last day)	The T4 and the T4 Summary forms must be filed with the Income Tax Division of Revenue Canada and the information slips distributed to the municipal employees.	205, 206, Canadian Income Tax Act

<b>March</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
March 31	The end of the fiscal year for the municipality.	64, Municipal Government Act 2110, Accounting Manual

<b>March</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
March 31	A participating municipality may withdraw from a district planning commission effective April 1 without the agreement of the remaining participating municipalities, provided notice was given to the participating municipalities before March 31 of the preceding year.	253(3), Municipal Government Act
March 31	On or before December 31 in each year the Director of Assessment shall complete the roll and forward it to the Municipal Clerk, unless the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on or before December 31 extends the time to no later than the following March 31.	52(3), Assessment Act
March 31	The school fiscal year ends on March 31.	71(2) Education Act

<b>April</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
April	First instalment of equalization grants to municipalities are paid by the province (dependent upon timing of the Provincial Budget).	19, 20(4) Municipal Grants Act
April	In April the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations sends out 3 forms to the municipalities for completion (Statement of Estimates, General Return and the Three Year Capital Budget). Within two weeks of when the municipality sets its tax rates, these forms should be completed and returned to the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to facilitate the determination of grants and approval of loans.	35, Municipal Grants Act 451, MGA
April 1	The beginning of the fiscal year for the municipality.	64, Municipal Government Act

<b>April</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
April 1	A participating municipality may withdraw from a district planning commission effective April 1 without the agreement of the remaining participating municipalities, provided notice was given to the participating municipalities before March 31 of the preceding year.	253(3), Municipal Government Act
April 1	The school fiscal year begins on April 1.	71(2) Education Act
April 1	Every municipal council shall prepare and submit to the Minister of Education before the first day of April in each year a statement of all revenues and expenditures relating to the capital program for school buildings for the last fiscal year.	6(4), Education Assistance Act
April 1, 2003	After April 1, 2003, property shall be put up for tax sale if the taxes are in arrears for the preceding three years (Section 134(2)) and council may defer a tax sale proceedings for a property for up to two years (Section 134(3)).	584(2), Municipal Government Act

<b>May</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
May	Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations sends proposed Assessment Rolls to Municipal Units for budgetary purposes. Assessment notices are sent to property owners with over a 3% increase in assessment. No appeals	N/A
May (first Tuesday)	The Annual meeting of the Fire Protection District will be held for the ratepayers.	27(1), Rural Fire District Act
May 10	The Commissioners of the Fire Protection District shall provide the clerk of the municipality the estimates to be collected by the municipality as an area rate.	46(2), Rural Fire District Act

<b>June</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
June 15	The auditor of the Library shall submit to the municipality a financial report of the operations of the library for the financial year.	14(2), Libraries Act
June 30	Property may be sold for taxes if the taxes with respect to the property are not paid in full for the taxation year immediately preceding the year in which the tax sale proceedings are commenced, but the proceedings shall not commence before June 30 <sup>th</sup> in the year immediately following that taxation year.	134, Municipal Government Act
June 30	A District Planning Commission shall provide the councils of the participating municipalities with a financial report for the preceding year signed by the commission's auditor.	256, Municipal Government Act
June 30	A District Planning Commission shall make an annual report to the councils of the participating municipalities setting out its activities for the preceding year.	257, Municipal Government Act
June 30	An application for registration as a municipal auditor shall be filed with the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on or before June 30 in each year. The Minister may accept an application after June 30, but it must be received prior to December 31, and an additional fee will be charged.	457(4), (6) Municipal Government Act

<b>July</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
July	Second instalment of equalization grants to municipalities paid by the Province.	19, 20(4) Municipal Grants Act
July 1	The annual public meeting of the electors of the Village shall be held on or before the first day of July in each fiscal year.	413, Municipal Government Act
July 1	Every school board for each fiscal year shall prepare financial statements in the form prescribed by the Minister of Education and submit the statements to each municipality in the school district before July 1 of the ensuing fiscal year.	83, Education Act
July 31	The municipal auditor's report shall be filed with the council and the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs by July 31.	42(4), Municipal Government Act 5020, Accounting Manual
July 31	The registration as a Municipal Auditor expires on July 31 in each year.	457(8), Municipal Government Act
July 31	The school academic year ends on July 31.	71(1) Education Act

<b>August</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
August 1	The school academic year begins on August 1.	71(1) Education Act

<b>October</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
October	Third instalment of equalization grants to municipalities paid by the Province.	19, 20(4) Municipal Grants Act

<b>November</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
November 1	Every municipal council shall for each fiscal year prepare a budget for the capital program for the construction, improvement and alteration of school buildings and submit the budget to the Minister of Education before the first day of November preceding the fiscal year.	6(1), Education Assistance Act
November 15	Municipal Units should forward all address changes to their Assessment Offices so that they may be reflected in the filed assessment roll.	N/A

<b>December</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
December 1	The filed assessment roll shall reflect the state of the property as it existed on the first day of December immediately preceding the filing of the roll.	52(2), Assessment Act
1 <sup>st</sup> week of December	Assessment Office deadline for entering data for the assessment roll.	N/A
December	Proposed Uniform Assessment to be used for the following fiscal year is sent out by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, municipalities have a 60 day appeal period.	14, Municipal Grants Act
December 31	Last day for late filing of the Municipal Auditor.	457(6) Municipal Government Act
December 31	On or before December 31 in each year the Director of Assessment shall complete the roll and forward it to the Municipal Clerk (unless the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on or before December 31 extends the time to no later than the following March 31, Section 52(3)).	52(1), Assessment Act

<b>December</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
December 31	Before the end of every year, in 2006 and every year thereafter, the council shall conduct a survey of the polling districts and number of councillors and apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to confirm or alter the polling districts or number of councillors	369, Municipal Government Act
December 31	Before the end of the year in 2007 and every eighth year thereafter, every school board shall apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to confirm or alter the electoral districts.	43, Education Act
December 31	Unless otherwise ordered by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, all accounts kept by a public utility shall be closed on December 31 in each year and a balance sheet of that date shall be completed.	50(1) Act to Regulate Public Utilities

**Miscellaneous activities  
for the Chief Administrative Officer, Municipal Clerk and Treasurer  
(except those listed in the Municipal Government Act  
and the Municipal Elections Act)**

This listing of activities would be of interest to most Chief Administrative Officers, Municipal Clerks and Treasurers. It does not include those listed in the Municipal Government Act or the Municipal Elections Act. Primarily, the MGA Resource Binder provides the details required for the CAO, Municipal Clerk and Treasurer and the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations provides the guide to Municipal Elections for each year when there is Municipal and School Board Elections.

The items listed includes those activities specified in other statutes that would be of interest. Although every effort has been made to identify the major or generic activities that would be important to most CAOs, Municipal Clerks and Treasures, the user is cautioned that not all situations have been covered. In addition, the preparation of this guide must necessarily involve interpretation of legislation as it applies in general situations. Specific situations may require careful legal analysis. Therefore, reference should be made to the appropriate Nova Scotia statutes and to legal advisors.

<b>Miscellaneous activities for the Municipal Clerk (except the Municipal Government Act and the Municipal Elections Act)</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Act</b>
Assessment Appeal Court	The clerk on behalf of the municipality may appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board any decision of the assessment appeal court.	85, Assessment Act
Assessment Appeal Court	The court shall cause notice of the date, hour and place of its sittings to be given to the Director and to the clerk of the municipality whose assessments are being appealed not later than twelve days before the date of the sitting.	60(3), Assessment Act

**Miscellaneous activities  
for the Municipal Clerk  
(except the Municipal Government Act  
and the Municipal Elections Act)**

Topic	Item	Act
Assessment Exemption to property taxes for fire fighting	The following property is exempt from taxes, where the building or part thereof in which equipment not owned by a municipality, used or to be used exclusively for fighting fires, is kept and the land in connection with such building, but only if and while a written undertaking by the owners is in force and is on file in the office of the clerk of the municipality, undertaking that it will be so used, which undertaking may be subject to cancellation on six months notice in writing.	5(1)(i), Assessment Act
Assessment: notice of appeal	The clerk, on behalf of the municipality, may appeal by serving notice of appeal, within thirty days from the day when notice of the decision was received, on the person in whose name the property is assessed, the person who appealed the assessment if he is not that person and the Director, and by filing a copy of the notice of appeal with the Clerk of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.	86(2), Assessment Act
Assessment: property location	Property shall be assessed in the municipality in which it is located on the day of forwarding the assessment roll to the clerk.	30(1), Assessment Act
Assessment: report to Council	When the assessment roll has been passed by the court and certified by the clerk, he or she shall report these facts to the council at its next regular meeting.	92, Assessment Act
Assessment: Subpoenas and witnesses	Subpoenas may be issued for the attendance of witnesses before the court and they shall be in Form D in the Schedule and may be signed by the clerk of any municipal unit the assessment of which is under appeal or by any member of the regional assessment appeal court or the recorder.	67(1), Assessment Act

<b>Miscellaneous activities for the Municipal Clerk (except the Municipal Government Act and the Municipal Elections Act)</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Act</b>
Education: financial statement	The Minister of Education and school board shall in each fiscal year provide each municipality with the amount of payments it is to make to the school board.	73 to 76, Education Act
Education: payment by Minister of Education to municipality	The Minister of Education shall pay annually to each municipality the sums required by the municipality in that fiscal year to pay interest and repay the principal of sums borrowed by the municipality for the purposes of erecting, acquiring, purchasing, altering, adding to, improving, furnishing or equipping buildings for public schools or acquiring land therefor.	78, Education Act
Emergency Measures	A municipality shall establish and maintain a municipal emergency by-law and municipal emergency measures organization.	10, Emergency Measures Act
Jury Committee	Each municipal council shall appoint a person to represent the municipal unit on the jury committee for the jury district in which the municipal unit is located.	6(2), Juries Act
Shopping Centre Development: approval	When a municipal planning strategy is not in effect, a shopping centre may not be constructed without a hearing and approval from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. All clerks of every municipality within a radius of fifty miles of the proposed shopping centre shall receive a notice of the application and the public hearing. (This does not apply to shopping centres located in the Halifax Regional Municipality.)	3, 5, 10 and 11, Shopping Centre Development Act

**Miscellaneous activities  
for the Municipal Clerk  
(except the Municipal Government Act  
and the Municipal Elections Act)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Act</b>
Shopping Centre Development: appeals	A municipality, within the fifty mile radius of the proposed shopping centre, may within thirty days of the publication of the notice of the decision appeal the decision to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. Except where the shopping centre is to be located in the Halifax Regional Municipality.	10 and 11(4), Shopping Centre Development Act
Utilities: placement of utilities	A public utility shall make an application to the clerk for council's consent to erect or place in, upon, along, under or across any street, road or highway, any pole, wire, conduit or pipe.	78, Public Utilities Act

Section 2.2

Records Management

Records Management is an integral component to a municipality's operation.

In section 34 of the *Municipal Government Act*, there is a provision for council to adopt a policy regarding the management and destruction of records. As municipalities increase in size and the complexity of services they provide increases, a proper records management system becomes an integral part of the municipal operation. Quite simply, a municipality's ability to effectively conduct business may be compromised without: a systematic approach to the cataloguing, filing and retrieval of files; the protection of files from premature destruction; the safe and secure storage of files; and a system for the destruction of files once their value ceases.

Why Records Management is important.

Generally there are a variety of reasons for the implementation of a records management program, including:

- **Administrative Value:** Records serve the municipality as the "official memory" of past decisions and the factors considered to reach a decision. They have value to the municipality if they assist in the performance of current or future activities.
- **Legal Value:** Some documents are required by legislation, for example by-laws, policies, minutes of meetings, land transactions, and development agreements. The value of these types of documents usually does not diminish over a period of time
- **Fiscal Value:** Some records relate to financial transactions, such as financial ledgers, debenture records, audit files, budget files, expenditure files, taxes etc.
- **Research/Historical Value:** Records which contain information on persons, places and events as they relate to major milestones and history and development of the municipality and its citizens. These documents provide information on how a municipality made decisions and provide the background to making future informed decisions on any municipal matter.

- **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP):** Part XX of the *Municipal Government Act*, requires that certain municipal information be available within 30 days of a request. Therefore, there must be a system in place to be able to locate these files in the allotted time.

Therefore a Records Management system has become more of a necessity for a municipality rather than a luxury.

### **AMA Records Management Manual**

In 1997, the Association of Municipal Administrators produced the *Records Management Manual*, which combines a standard classification system and records retention and disposal schedule for municipal records. This 669 page manual provides a standard for the identification and management of administrative and operational records regardless of the physical storage format, including executive and legislative records. Accordingly, any municipality considering a records management system should review the *AMA Records Management Manual*.

### **Introduction to Records Management**

This review on records management should be considered as an adjunct to the AMA manual, and provides:

- A. a review of the MGA provisions on records management;
- B. a step by step approach to records management;
- C. a model policy for records management; and
- D. a reprint of the *AMA Records & Information Guide*, which provides guidance on how to implement the *Records Management Manual*.

### **Schools in Library studies.**

A number of municipalities have hired students and graduates from recognized schools in library studies to assist them in the planning and implementation of a records management program. The following provides a listing of the schools in Nova Scotia and contacts for recent graduates or summer students.

Nova Scotia Community College  
Library Technician Program  
Marlene Mortimore  
Phone: 902-491-4660  
E-mail: mortimmj@nsccl.ns.ca  
College  
Web site: <http://www.nsccl.ns.ca>

Mount Saint Vincent University  
Co-operative Education Program  
Bachelor of Applied Arts - Information Technology  
Sonya Horsburgh  
Phone: 902-457-6429  
E-mail: sonya.horsburgh@msvu.ca  
University  
Web site: <http://www.msvu.ca/coop/index.htm>

Dalhousie University  
School of Library and Information Studies  
Judy Dunn, Graduate Co-ordinator  
Phone: 902-494-2471  
E-mail: dunn@is.dal.ca  
University  
Web site: <http://www.mgmt.dal.ca/slis/>

**Part A**

**Municipal Government Act**

Section 34 of the MGA states:

**MGA Provision on  
Records  
Management**

- 34 (1) *The council may adopt a policy for the management and destruction of records.*
- (2) *Records that are required by an enactment to be kept and minutes, by-laws, policies and resolutions of the council shall not be destroyed.*
- (3) *The council may, by policy, specify further classes of records that are not to be destroyed or that are to be kept for specified time periods.*
- (4) *Where*
- (a) *a municipal record is destroyed; or*
  - (b) *an original municipal record is not produced in court, and*
  - (c) *the clerk certifies that a reproduction is part of the records of the municipality and is a true reproduction of the original municipal record,*
- a photographic, photostatic or electronic reproduction of the record is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original municipal record and is, in the absence of proof to the contrary, proof of the record.*

This provision in the MGA enables councils to adopt the necessary policy for records management and the destruction of records once their value ceases. It also prevents certain records from being destroyed (34(2)) as does 483(4) of the MGA:

*483(4) Where a municipality uses an individual's personal information to make a decision that directly affects the individual, the municipality shall retain that information for at least one year after using it so the individual has a reasonable opportunity to access it.*

## Part B

### Step-By-Step Approach to Records Management

If a municipality wishes to proceed with implementing a records management system, the following provides the eight steps to implementing a records management program in a municipal unit.

#### Step 1

##### Develop Records Management Plan and Policy

- ◆ Develop a plan, determine goals, and set objectives for the establishment of a records management program
- ◆ Use sample policy provided
- ◆ Policy helps ensure senior management support (seek council approval)

#### Step 2

##### Establish Authority and Responsibility

- ◆ Seek approval to establish program
- ◆ Determine legislative, legal, and policy requirements (regarding record retention)
- ◆ Announce the establishment of the program

#### Step 3

##### Conduct a Records Inventory

- ◆ Use provided sample form or something similar that will work for your municipal unit (there is also a sample form in the *AMA Records Management Manual* on page 459)
- ◆ Collect all forms together for Records Management Designate to then determine records series, record values, and recommended retention

## Step 4

### Develop a Classification System and Retention Schedule

the steps for developing a classification system and retention schedule are listed below, but the AMA Records Management Manual already provides this for municipal unit use — you may want to establish a committee or working group to ensure that retentions meet your municipal unit's needs

- ◆ Establish a committee/work group to develop classification system and retention schedule
- ◆ Consider record values (transitory, administrative, operational, legal, audit/fiscal/ historical/archival, long-term operational needs, etc...) and when to determine retention periods
- ◆ Ensure compliance with legislation (Municipal Government Act - Part XX, Revenue Canada Act, etc.), and municipal unit policies
- ◆ Submit schedule for approval

## Step 5

### Ensure Efficient Information Retrieval

- ◆ Determine best arrangement for records in each location or area
- ◆ Create electronic file lists
- ◆ Develop an indexing system

## Step 6

### Implement file Controls

(there are file arrangement guidelines on pages 469 to 494 of the *AMA Records Management Manual*)

- ◆ Cross reference related files to one another
- ◆ Use file charge out cards/guides

**Step 7**

- ◆ Establish a file tracking system
- ◆ Split large files into volumes
- ◆ Keep track of what is destroyed and when it was destroyed and what authority

**Commence Records Disposition**

- ◆ Ensure authority for disposal by using a disposal authorization form, and attaining sign-off from appropriate municipal unit officials (sample form on page 589 of the *AMA Records Management Manual*)
- ◆ Follow retention schedule and destroy only when retention period expires
- ◆ Provide for permanent preservation of historical, archival, or long-term records

**Step 8**

**Future Program Goals**

- ◆ Establish records disposal and other companion guidelines, procedures, and instruction to complete the program
- ◆ Ongoing training of staff
- ◆ Promote and communicate the program
- ◆ Determine essential/vital records and develop a disaster recovery plan
- ◆ Update procedures, policies, schedule as required

## Records Inventory Form

**Record Type**

**File or System Name:**

**Accountable Staff:**

**Department/Office:**

**Specific Location:**

**Copy in Another Location  
(Yes/No):**

**Administrative or Operational:**

**Record Value:**

**Recommended Retention Period:**

**Related Legislation or Policy:  
(If known)**

**Medium/Formats(s):**

**Date Range:**

**Physical Condition:**

**Ease of Accessibility:**

**Estimated Volume:**

**Personal Information:  
(If known)**

**Security in Place:**

**Security Required:**

**Inventoried By:**

**Date Inventoried:**

Part C

**DRAFT RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR MUNICIPAL UNITS**

The following draft policy may be adopted as provided, or it can provide a starting point for a municipality to craft a records management policy which best suits their needs.

Policy should include a **SCOPE** note:

1. **SCOPE**

- 1.1 This policy is applicable throughout the municipal unit, including all departments in the municipal unit falling under the authority of the (Municipal Clerk/CAO), and throughout all of the municipal unit’s agencies, boards and commissions.

**Which municipal departments are affected by this policy?**

Policy should include a **PURPOSE** statement:

2. **PURPOSE**

- 2.1 To establish effective management control and administration over the receipt, creation, use, maintenance, storage, and ultimate disposition of all information, regardless of format, and to do so in a flexible manner that is user-friendly and tailored to meet user needs.
- 2.2 To support compliance with the *Municipal Government Act, Part XX Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* and the *Revenue Canada Act*, and any other relevant legislation.
- 2.3 To designate responsibilities and accountability for the management of municipal information, regardless of format.

**Management and Control of records**

**FOIPOP**

**Responsibilities and Accountability**

Policy should include a **POLICY STATEMENT**:

**AMA Records  
Management Manual**

**3. POLICY STATEMENT**

3.1 It is the policy of the municipal unit to create, classify, maintain, access, retrieve, store, destroy, and preserve information resources throughout their life cycle according to the standards and procedures prescribed under the Association of Municipal Administrators Records Management Manual.

**Purpose of policy**

3.2 It is the policy of the municipal unit to manage information resources as a valuable asset for the following purposes:

3.2.1 supporting effective decision making;

3.2.2 meeting operational requirements;

3.2.3 ensuring the widest possible use of information resources within the municipal unit;

3.2.4 protecting the legal, financial, and other interests of the municipal unit, and the public; and

3.2.5 restricting access according to the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*, and other relevant policies and legislation.

**Identify and Preserve  
Information**

3.3 It is the policy of the municipal unit to identify and preserve information resources that serve to reconstruct the evolution of policy and program decisions or that have archival value. It is also the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that such information is organized in a manner to be readily available for the study of decision making in the municipal unit and for other research purposes which help explain the historical role of the municipal unit.

**Current and Future  
Information  
Technology**

3.4 It is the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that records management functions are incorporated into existing and future information technology applications.

**FOIPOP**

3.5 To facilitate an efficient records management and retrieval system, it is the policy of the municipality to eliminate the unnecessary collection of information by maintaining only records which are pertinent to the operational requirements of the municipality, coordinating information collection to avoid duplication, and to ensure that the collection of personal information is in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*.

3.6 It is the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that all information resources, regardless of format, are subject to timely public access according to the provisions and limitations of the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*.

**4. ADOPTION OF CLASSIFICATION AND RETENTION SCHEDULE**

**Approved System**

4.1 The municipal unit in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act* adopts the Association of Municipal Administrators Records Management Manual as its approved classification system and records retention schedule.

**5. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

**Minutes, By-laws, Policies and Resolutions**

5.1 The Municipal Unit will not destroy minutes, by-laws, policies and resolutions of council in accordance with Section 34 of the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act*.

**Records Management**



**Part D**

**AMA Records & Information Guide**

The **AMA Records Management Manual** was developed in 1997. It is a 669 page manual providing the details necessary to implement a standard classification and records management system across Nova Scotia. A copy of this manual was distributed to all municipal units. If additional copies are required, please contact:

Association of Municipal Administrators  
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3K8

Tel: (902) 423-2215  
Fax: (902) 425-5592  
E-mail: amans@istar.ca

*The following guide was produced by the 1997 Records Management Committee as an introduction to records management and how to implement the **AMA Records Management Manual**. The contents of this report are still relevant and are provided in its entirety.*

**Association of Municipal Administrators  
Nova Scotia**

**Records and Information Management Guide  
for Nova Scotia Municipal Units**

*(Note: The following document was prepared by the AMA Records Management Committee in 1997 and it been reprinted by permission from the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia)*

**Introduction**

The AMA Records Management Committee was established to give municipal officers direction and assistance in the management of records. Its terms of reference were to establish:

- guidelines for records management

- a standard records classification system for municipal unit records
- a records retention and disposition schedule for municipal unit records

The AMA members have access to the Records Management Manual which combines a standard records classification system and a records retention and disposition schedule for municipal unit records. The RM manual is a standard for the identification and management of administrative and operational records regardless of physical storage format, including executive and legislative records.

Training sessions for the introduction of the basic concepts of a records management program and to the RM manual have been offered to the municipal units of Nova Scotia.

At this point municipal units are asking questions about the practical steps to implement an effective records management program. The task to identify, classify, organize, and maintain information holdings through its disposition is not simple and should not be underestimated.

The following information is intended as a practical guide to assist municipal units to have an understanding of the various aspects of the implementation of a sound records management program.

It is important to understand that a records management program is more than a filing project. A project has a specific start and finish date with a short-term achievable goal. A records management program is a process which must contain a plan of action describing various phases of development and implementation, includes a number of projects, and is ongoing as long as the municipal unit actively fulfills its mandate.

A records management program ensures the care and preservation of important records and the destruction of unnecessary records. It is the systematic control of records from creation to final disposition. This systematic approach to the control of all phases of a record's life is essential if a municipal unit is to:

- reduce paperwork proliferation
- have access to requested information

- dispose of obsolete records
- provide documentation of compliance with municipal, provincial and federal regulations, and
- maintain archival records

Inadequate records management may lead to obsolete records being retained which would create an unnecessary and costly storage burden.

Many municipal units with no records management are forced to move older records from crowded offices into storage in attics, basements, and storage rooms where no list of records is kept and, after a while, no one knows what records are there. In addition, extreme fluctuations in temperature and humidity and dust may break down the records stored in these storage areas.

In essence, poor records management results in a loss to tax payers and loss of the corporate memory of the municipal unit.

### **Records and Information Management (RIM) Guide**

How to begin a records management program?

Municipal units without a records management (RM) program face space shortages, loss of information and inability to retrieve documents. When the decision to establish a RM program is made, it is important to identify records management priorities and to determine which elements of a program to undertake first.

This guide lists important elements to be considered when developing a records management program which will utilize the RM manual developed by AMA.

### **Records Manager and Support Staff**

Identification of a records management coordinator or records manager to take responsibility to plan and lead the program. Adequate support staff provides assistance to all municipal unit staff in the various facets of a comprehensive program.

## **Users Group**

AMA has already established a forum for network for its members with specific activities which are important to use as a means for discussion and exchange of experiences related to records management:

- AMA conference (organized twice a year)
- a published newsletter
- regional meetings

It is recommended that each municipal unit establish an internal communication strategy with identified assignment of responsibilities. Each municipal unit is unique and shares a set of common issues and routine administrative tasks. The records management program should establish a management network with the participation of:

- a legal advisor
- a senior financial officer
- the municipal / town clerk

## **Development of Records Management Policy**

The RM policy should be easy to read and include information about the scope of the records management program. It should be established by bylaw or administrative order and be communicated to the office managers and employees. The policy is not a static document and should be reviewed at least every two years.

- approved policy reinforces the principle that the records management program applies to all types of records regardless of form
- policy is a complement to the RM manual and documents the decision to adopt the use of the RM manual as a records classification system and as a retention schedule

- the policy should focus on:
  - identification of relevant main groups and primaries
  - grouping information into categories by function and office
  - classifying information from the general to the specific
  - assigning accountability for records custodians and office of primary responsibility (OPR)
  - if the system will be centralized or decentralized or a combination of both
  - including the control of:
    - e-mail
    - correspondence tracking
    - reports management
    - forms management
    - filing system
    - access and privacy considerations
    - essential / vital records
    - disaster and recovery plan

### **Records Management Plan**

Municipal units without an existing RM program will have a variety of records management issues to resolve and a plan is needed to determine the municipal unit's information priorities. Continuous monitoring and maintenance of all phases will ensure that the right information is provided to the right individual at the right time in the right format at the lowest possible cost. The RM plan should list:

- phases of program implementation;
- give time frame and dates expected for completion of tasks including the time expected to develop and approve the RM policy;

- describe ongoing activities and progress to-date;
- pilot project;
- training;
- network;
- specific projects (like clean up of 'fat' files);
- strategy for conversion from the old system into the new system

### **Legislative and Legal Requirements**

Acts, regulations, and bylaws make reference to primary functions of the programs and services they establish and sometimes describe specific requirements. It is important to review any legal and legislative requirements with the municipal unit's solicitor, financial officer and municipal / town clerk at the time of:

- drafting the RM policy;
- planning for the implementation;
- customizing the classification and retention / disposition plans for the municipal unit.

### **Use of the RM Manual**

The RM manual was developed as a tool for any type or size of municipal unit. With the broad perspective in mind when reviewing the descriptions of administrative and operational functions, it might be necessary to add records series which are absent from the manual.

- The RM manual is intended as a standard template covering records description and classification from the general to the specific.
- It is recommended that each municipal unit focus on

relevant main groups and primaries needed as opposed to making the entire manual available to everyone.

- The size of the manual may intimidate some of the users who only need specific primaries.
- It is recommended to try to group the municipal unit's functions and offices into categories first and then review the main groups which describe those categories.
- Users who only deal with a specific group of records might only receive a copy of the main groups which are directly related to their specific office. However, they should understand that different functions would also be described in the manual as a whole. This is primarily important with workers that do not have a good understanding of the classification system and are not interested in the complete picture.
- The system should be used with flexibility.

### **Pilot Project**

Before implementing any new system, a pilot project is always recommended. A RM program is no exception and a small office should be chosen for a pilot project of the new records system. The pilot would be used to fully learn the implications, test the planned strategy, write a report of results before full implementation is carried to the rest of the municipal unit.

*The choosing of the office for a pilot is very important. Some factors to look for are:*

- willingness of staff involved in carrying out the task;
- agreement to test a new system and a full understanding of the implications of that;
- commitment from management and support from staff;
- an office of influence in decision making is preferred;

- commitment to the program implementation as a whole as the pilot will be first to carry on;
- willingness to provide feedback and support for the entire program;
- whether the office has an existing inventory of their files (if a willing office has a file list under the present system this would reduce the time for the inventory and allow a quicker review of the present system)

*A review of the present system in the municipal unit as a whole is recommended.* This would give an idea of:

- how many offices there are;
- whether all the offices follow one common system;
- whether each office or staff have their own system;
- whether the present system is centralized or decentralized;
- good/ positive points of the present system which should be maintained;
- problem areas which need review need to be analysed in detail;
- whether the office has a manual system or an electronic system or a combination of both;
- whether there is microfilming being done;
- what is the quality of the film and what information does it cover;
- whether there are records stored offsite, in an organized manner or just piles of boxes

*A plan should be developed for the pilot project containing:*

- the starting date of the pilot;
- the time for the pilot to take place;
- the office or division which the pilot should cover and the records or information to be covered;
- who is involved directly and indirectly at what phase of the pilot;
- how can the old system (or no system) be converted into the new system;
- electronic information if used in the office;
- all the software packages available to staff for the day-to-day activities;
- a list of procedures being used in the office;
- whether a new set of procedures (or updates to the old one) shall be developed during the pilot;
- who will be responsible for the procedures, and other aspects of the pilot project

#### *Staff meetings*

All staff of the municipal unit should be briefed on how the RM program is planned and how it will be implemented, including general information about how the pilot project fits the whole activity. If staff is not involved at the early stages of the program, many problems occur as a result -- some feel threatened, intimidated, skeptical of their job security, that they will be given increased workload, etc. Good communication is fundamental for the full implementation success at all times, within the municipal unit as well as, within the smaller pilot areas involved.

### *Updates*

A bulletin might be issued at regular intervals updating the staff of the plan, how it has been followed, etc. Training in-house should be coordinated with the pilot office/s.

### **Training**

A coordinated approach to training is recommended. The staff directly involved in the pilot and with hands-on in the implementation process should receive introductory training session about the new system and be trained on delivering and supporting internal subsequent sessions, tailored to the environment of the municipal unit.

There is a need to provide different types of training:

- introductory sessions with overview of the new system;
- training on the hands-on aspects of the new system (a new filing system);
- how to classify records;
- a new software that needs to be learned;
- how to write procedures;
- review and reinforcement training;
- updating sessions;
- ongoing support training sessions;
- review sessions;
- customization to each type of environment but also at several levels of need depending on the level of involvement of staff.

Other aspects to be considered about training include:

- who is delivering the initial sessions;

- who will be responsible to review and update the text and exercises delivered;
- how much money is available for training;
- location factor;
- supplies needed;
- evaluation of training

### **Conversion of old system (or no system) into new system**

Conversion requires careful planning:

- which areas will implement;
- will it be phased as opposed to changing everything at once and its implications should be analysed. It is recommended to move from office to office in a phased approach;
- establish phases and evaluation at the completion of every phase with recommendations before proceeding;
- learn the system by using it for new information as it is created (e.g. starting in the new calendar year or fiscal year every record created or received by the office will be classified and filed in the new system);
- old records/files should be incorporated into the new system as they are retrieved and accessed for the daily running of the office;
- the new information should be classified and filed under the new system then a plan would be developed for the semi-active records store in the office;
- an evaluation and decision is needed for who and how will the conversion be done to semi-active records

stored offsite;

- two systems will need to run simultaneously for a period of time therefore it is fundamental to be able to have the two systems working together (for example, if records are stored at a records centre using the old classification numbers, the lists will need the old number converted to the new number so that retrieval can be done using both systems until the old system is totally discontinued.);
- records eligible for destruction under the old system and their destruction should be documented;
- existing files need to be reviewed to determine whether they should be handled according to existing system or classified under the new system and decisions should be documented;
- whether some of the material classified under the old system might require to be broken down into several new numbers or several old numbers might be grouped into one single new number.
- The semi-active and active records maintained in the office kept under the old system may:
  1. be converted into the new system as access and retrieval occurs if required for long term use;
  2. be disposed of under the old system if possible avoiding the conversion altogether whenever possible.
- The use of students and casual / contract workers may be feasible for the conversion of existing records.
- Proper training and supervision of new staff is required.
- The use of a new system requires the acceptance of its implementation by everyone in the office (there are a number of staff who will accept the new system up-front and there are those who will not accept to convert to the

unfamiliar system.) This is why open communication and the approval of policy are required.

### **Management of Inactive Records**

The conversion of inactive records is an area which may be done by contract or students with records management training under a co-op program from a local university. Summer students may be used for this phase of the process under proper coordination and supervision. The disposition of inactive records should be addressed as a separate phase of the implementation process:

- Records with archival value need to be appraised by and transferred to the municipal unit's designated archival repository;
- inactive records with long term value need to be converted into the new system and kept for the time specified under the new retention schedule;
- inactive records due for destruction should be destroyed under the old system whenever possible or converted into the new retention schedule and properly disposed of

### **Essential vital records**

Municipal units are advised to identify their essential records during the development of their RM program.

For information about essential / vital records see page 607, glossary in appendix H of the RM manual.

### **Disaster and Recovery Plan**

If the municipal unit has a disaster and recovery plan, it is a good idea to review how it is set up and what changes are required to make it valid under the new RM system. If there is not previous plan, then a plan needs to be drafted covering the information evaluated as

essential, with procedures developed for urgent situations. This usually contains a list of people names, addresses, locations, sensitive issues and information will be handled in special ways and by specific people and this should be listed, what alternative location for work during the disaster, numbers of emergency organizations to be contacted for help, etc.

Federal, provincial and local governments usually have designated offices that are trained to handle emergency situations and they should be contacted. Procedures would already be in place for these emergency organizations and they should be consulted as much as possible. Many of these emergency agencies have home pages available through the Internet for initial review.

### **Sharing and Networking**

It makes sense to share experience among municipal units and also gain from sharing of already established services whenever possible, like using standing offers already in place by other levels of government in purchasing new equipment, supplies, software, etc.

### **Destruction of Inactive or Obsolete Information**

Consideration is needed for issues relating to the recycling of paper or other media containing private or confidential information. The review of methods of destruction and factors also require consideration (e.g. unauthorized destruction versus secure shredding.)

### **Software and Electronic Document / Records Management Systems**

System integration and compatibility is fundamental for long-term planning. Before the purchase of any system it is important to consider its compatibility with other systems already in use by other municipal units, provincial and other levels of government and local organizations. It provides the opportunity to improve communication and network of electronic systems whenever possible (specially in this day and age of amalgamations and re-structuring).

## Resources

Networking and sharing expertise and experience in developing RM program is fundamental among the Nova Scotia municipal units for a greater success of the proposed program. It is important to make use of available resources outside the municipal unit and to review ways to allow for sharing of resources.

The Municipality of the District of East Hants has hired a consultant to establish a RM program. The project will be completed by mid May 1997 and the results of their pilot will be made available as reference to other units.

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is developing their RM program and have agreed to share their experience and expertise with the members of the RM Committee.

There are a number of universities and community colleges in Nova Scotia which teach records management and have students that may be used in various projects during co-op programs, summer jobs, and other endeavours. These students have a theoretical view of the RM field and need the practical experience; the municipal units need the hands-on assistance.

Professional Associations is another form of resources which municipal units should use:

- IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks);
- Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario;
- Association for Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) has a local chapter (Halifax Chapter of ARMA) offering a number of events and program sessions which may assist the training of staff;
- CLARA (Canadian Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee of ARMA);
- ACA (Association of Canadian Archivists);
- CNSA (Council of Nova Scotia Archives);

- CIPS (Canadian Information Processing Society)

These organizations also hold conferences and seminars, publish newsletters, provide forum for network and sharing, and for professional development.

The use of Internet is another way to share information. HRM and Cape Breton municipal units already have home pages and use the www to search for information around the world. This together with e-mail, listserv, electronic bulletin boards, are just some examples of what may be explored as another way to improve communications and network among municipal units.

### **Development of specific procedures and guidelines**

The RM manual is just one of the tools available during the implementation of a sound RM program. Each municipal unit is responsible to document details of procedures and have written guidelines for their users to consult and follow.

The documentation of the process of implementation is important for any municipal unit. Evaluation of each aspect and phase of implementation is also important to assist the review of the program as is established and for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

### **Promotion and Communications Plan**

The promotion of RM program is ongoing and may be achieved by communicating the benefits and opportunities which the RM program may bring to the municipal unit.

### **List of Check-points**

The AMA RM Committee plans to develop a series of check lists to assist municipal units in implementing and reviewing their RM system.

**Section 2.3**

**Inter-Municipal Partnerships**

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**Definition and Legal Considerations of Partnership ..... 3**

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**Inter-municipal cooperation in Nova Scotia is extensive**

**Introduction**

This handbook is an initiative brought about during the November 2002 annual conference of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM). The UNSM and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations joined together in an effort to promote greater voluntary cooperation between municipalities. The goals of both organizations in this initiative are to maximize resources and enhance service delivery in municipal government.

Research carried out in support of this project included administration of an on-line Inter-Municipal Cooperation survey for which there was almost 100% response.

The willingness of municipal government decision makers to take time to complete the survey questionnaire demonstrated a high level of commitment to the concept of cooperation. Information collected through the survey indicates the extent of cooperation between municipalities throughout Nova Scotia is significant. Cooperative initiatives include: the sharing of water supply systems; sewage collection and maintenance; solid waste management; emergency services; electricity provision; public transit; property inspections; personal and property protection; equipment sharing; road maintenance and the sharing of technical expertise.

**Definition and legal considerations of partnership:**

The term “cooperative agreement” or “inter-municipal partnership”, may be broadly defined as a relationship based upon mutual understanding and trust that is entered into between municipalities. The *Municipal Government Act* describes an inter-municipal agreement in Sections 60, and 61.

**What is an inter-municipal partnership?**

“A municipality or a village may agree with one or more municipalities, villages, service commissions, the Government of the Province or of Canada or a department or agency of either of them or a band council pursuant to the *Indian Act (Canada)* to provide or administer municipal or village services.”

Depending on how it is structured, a cooperative agreement may involve one or more government, private sector, or community groups. The concept of inter-municipal partnerships involving organizations

**Inter-Municipal agreements arise out of a desire to maximize efficiency with limited resources**

other than municipalities should also be considered when reviewing the possibilities of cooperative agreements for the delivery or receipt of services.

Agreements may be formal or informal, and most often evolve from a need to maximize resources in order to meet complimentary or compatible objectives. The result, whatever the nature of the service being provided or secured, can be a win-win arrangement for each of the participants.

Use of the term "partnership" presupposes the existence of a formal or contractual agreement. It is important to be aware that in a legal partnership the partners jointly assume certain legal responsibilities. As a general rule, if one of the partners cannot meet its commitments (including financial commitments) the other partners may be required to make up the shortfall. If one of the partners incurs debts related to the undertaking, the other partners are jointly accountable. If legal action is taken against one or all of the partners, each is jointly liable. The term partnership, then, needs to be used with caution in verbal and written communications when establishing cooperative arrangements. In some situations it may be better for municipalities to use terms such as cooperation, collaboration or networking.

### **Benefits**

**What can a municipality gain from such agreements?**

Whatever the form of cooperative arrangement or partnership that exists, normally the venture will involve the following four main components:

1. A sharing of roles and responsibilities,
2. Contributions from each participant of human, financial, technological, or material and structural resources,
3. A sharing of risk, control and benefits,
4. Added value in products and/or services.

Most often cooperative arrangements result in actual dollar savings, improved or sustained delivery of services or programs, and an enhanced ability to share costs and skills.

The process of partnership encourages compromise, consultation,

**How to begin the process**

evaluation, strategic planning, and goal setting. It optimizes use of knowledge and know-how of the partnering municipalities, helps to eliminate duplication of effort, and promotes a culture of organizational co-operation. Cooperative arrangements are a natural offshoot of the benchmarking and best practices process. *For further information on benchmarking and best practices refer to the Strategic Management Section of this handbook and in particular Section 6.5 Benchmarking.*

**Guidelines for Inter-Municipal Agreements**

When investigating the potential of inter-municipal agreements for service delivery, there are a number of steps that should be followed during the preliminary and planning stages.

**Preparation**

- Step 1.** Prepare a list of current or previous inter-municipal cooperative arrangements that your municipality has been involved in. Review each item in detail and note positive and negative aspects of each situation in order to determine how that arrangement could have been improved. Determine if establishing a partnership for service delivery is in fact the most efficient and cost-effective way for your municipality to solve the problem.
  
- Step 2.** Develop an inventory of resources that your municipality might share with another municipality. Such a list might include human resources, facilities, equipment or programs. Are there services that your municipality currently provides that are working exceptionally well in your community that you may be in a position to offer to share with a neighbour?
  
- Step 3.** Determine which of your neighbouring municipalities might be potential partners in a cooperative or partnership arrangement. For example, your municipality needs new snow clearing equipment, and one of your neighbouring communities has already acquired the equipment you need. If the other community has the capacity to provide this service to your municipality in addition to servicing their own area a cooperative arrangement might improve efficiency and maximize resources for both communities. Potential conflicts arising from such an arrangement might

include the increased time involved for having the streets cleaned, but the priority for which streets to be done in what order can be negotiated in advance so that such issues are addressed to the satisfaction of all parties involved and minimize any potential conflicts over scheduling.

If more than one of your neighbouring municipalities are in a position to be potential partners, list the pros and cons and possible issues involved in establishing a cooperative arrangement with each, then determine the most preferable arrangement based on individual circumstances.

Ensure that potential partners have the political authority, motivation, and resources to contribute to a successful cooperative arrangement.

**Step 4.** Do the background and preliminary research. Be prepared before you approach a potential partner by doing extensive research prior to making any commitment. Find out what similar arrangements may have been made in other areas - locally, nationally, and internationally, and take advantage of the experience gained by others who have entered into similar agreements. Consider the statutory authority for agreements for municipal services. Section 60 of the MGA can be used as a checklist when considering inter-municipal or inter-governmental agreements and section 61 provides authority for agreements with private parties.

As a part of advance planning, prepare a proposal outlining the anticipated benefits for each potential participant. Approach potential partners to arrange a meeting to discuss the opportunities for cooperative arrangements, and provide potential partners with the proposal in advance in order to provide an opportunity to consider the options.

## **Ensuring a good working arrangement**

### **Identifying the essentials**

**Step 5.** The background research has been completed, potential partners have been selected and there is an agreement to enter into a cooperative arrangement. There are a number of things that can be done at this point to ensure a good working arrangement:

✓ **Define the problem, need, or opportunity**

When working out the details of the agreement articulate clearly what each participants expectations are. Include a definition of the problem, need or opportunity using clear plain language.

✓ **Identify all the stakeholders**

Identify all the stakeholders who might be affected by such an agreement, and indicate what is expected of each participant so that there is no confusion or lack of clarity later.

Ensure that the decision makers in each municipality are aware of the implications both positive and negative of entering into the agreement, and are clear on the costs and obligations for each partner in terms of financial, material, equipment, infrastructure, or human resource commitments. Ensure all potential partners share the same view of the situation and that the partnership agreement will meet the needs of all concerned.

✓ **Communication**

Communications are essential in any working relationship. In the early stages of negotiating an agreement, it is helpful to identify how information will be exchanged or disseminated. All of the stakeholders should be able to rely on prompt, efficient communications. New technologies provide a variety of methods for ensuring effective and efficient communications including e-mail, discussion lists, newsletters, telephone conferencing etc. When delegating responsibility for different aspects of the agreement, be sure that there is a designated person responsible for timely and accurate communications. For further information on communications techniques refer to Strategic Management Section 6.6 Strategic Communications in this handbook.

✓ **Contingency planning**

Cover all foreseeable situations. Don't assume that things will be handled in a particular manner if a crisis should arise. Have a contingency plan and be prepared to deal with unexpected events. Contingency plans should clearly indicate who "has ownership", and who will have the ultimate decision making authority in order to deal with a crisis quickly and efficiently.

✓ **Negotiations**

Perhaps most important, negotiate honestly, openly and fairly.

**Establishing a process for decision making is key to success**

Know your own position well, and be aware of what you can and cannot bring to the arrangement. Be sure your partner is aware of these things as well. At the same time, be prepared to be flexible, as a little give and take on both sides can result in a more satisfactory arrangement for all involved.

Decisions should not be made in isolation. Approach potential partners with options, not decisions, and be prepared to listen to the other's perspective. Each potential partner should remain open to suggestions from those who might have a slightly different take on the situation and may have innovative suggestions.

### **Project Administration**

**Step 6.** There are many administrative matters that require attention when considering, or entering into, an inter-municipal agreement. Careful attention to detail at this stage can prevent potential problems later on.

Outline what needs to be done in order to achieve the objectives that each stakeholder has identified in the earlier stages. This process should involve identifying and recording all of the tasks, sub-tasks and other activities that must be carried out in order to fulfill the terms of the anticipated partnership. Again, it should be clearly stated who will be responsible for each item on the list.

It is important that each partner understands its own decision-making authority and that roles and responsibilities are assigned on the basis of knowledge and capability (not according to financial capacity or power). The roles and responsibilities should be assigned equitably among the partners so that no one partner is, or appears to be, able to exercise control over the others. It is important to have an established chain of authority that each participants agrees upon at the outset. Specify the areas of autonomy and interdependence for each. This should include defining the limits of what each partner can do without the approval or knowledge of the other partners. A conscious effort to consult each other on issues that require all partner agreement, such as budget, timetable, and replacement of key personnel will help to ensure a successful venture.

In the area of multi-partner partnerships, it is even more important to decide in advance the way in which decisions are to be made, whether by consensus, majority vote, open or secret balloting, or in some other manner. There are different decision making processes for different situations. For example, do financial decisions have to go back to each partner for approval? In the case of disagreement or conflict between the individual partners it may be helpful to include a conciliation or conflict resolution process.

Included in the communications plan should be a prearranged schedule of meetings which accommodates the schedules of each stakeholder. Additionally, each of the partners should have mechanisms established within their own organizations to keep decision makers informed of issues or developments that may have an impact on the partnership.

Determine the rights of ownership, use, distribution and visibility, of any technology or services that may be delivered by means of the partnership. Depending on the type of product or service that will result, some consideration will need to be given to who will retain ownership of each asset. These ownership issues should be clearly defined in the formal agreement. Seek expert or legal opinion when necessary.

Specify the conditions governing the admission or withdrawal of a partner. The procedure that is to be followed when a potential new partner is admitted to the arrangement, or the appropriate compensation that is to be paid if one of the partners withdraws, should be clearly defined in the agreement so that all stakeholders are aware of the arrangements and their obligations.

Ensure that the municipality's finance experts and legal advisors, review draft agreements and are satisfied that the arrangements will meet the needs of the municipality prior to formalizing agreements. Good communications are key in this area as well. Municipal advisors should be aware of what the municipality's goals and concerns are and what the expectations are from the arrangement. The timetable for the project should be compatible with the needs of each partner.

Financial obligations concerning any commitments should be in line with the strategic and financial plans for the municipality. Cost benefit and risk analysis should be carried out and reviewed to ensure the project is in line with projected costs and benefits, and that each partner has sufficient resources to meet their obligations.

Copies of the draft agreement should be circulated to each participating municipal council to ensure that all expectations have been addressed and that council members are fully versed on the project and its ramifications. When finalized, obtain each council's endorsement of the agreement vis a vis a formally adopted motion.

In order to maximize the return on investment, it is essential that resources are managed carefully. In an inter-municipal cooperative project it becomes even more essential to do the appropriate preliminary work, and to maintain careful oversight on the project as it progresses.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation is a critical phase of any project or partnership. There are a number of ways to approach this part of the process and the actual evaluation process may differ depending upon the circumstances. There are three main areas to consider in any post project evaluation.

### **Conceptually:**

Review the overall partnership to assess the way that the partnership has been working for you.

- Were the objectives realistic, relevant, and have they been met to each participants satisfaction?
- Are there aspects that did not meet each partners expectations?
- What could have been done differently to improve the overall effectiveness of the initiative?
- What might be done at this point to improve efficiency and effectiveness?
- What might be some lessons learned for the next time?

- Did the partnership enhance the activities, programs, services or products of each partner?

**Financially:**

Review the cost benefit and risk analysis.

- Were there surprises that could have been more effectively and efficiently dealt with?
- Did the project meet financial expectations?
- Did the partnership provide the expected benefits within the budget?
- If there were budget overruns identify why this occurred, and how they could have been avoided.
- Will each partner realize the expected return on their investment?

**Administratively:**

Review the project administration to ensure that the project has been effectively managed.

- Was the work plan accurate in view of the estimated timetable, budget, implementation etc?
- Did each partner meet their obligations?
- Were the control measures appropriate and sufficient?
- Was the communication plan effective and were all participants satisfied with the information provided?
- Have steps been taken to communicate and convey the know-how and practices that proved successful?

**Conclusion**

Despite the most careful planning, unexpected events can occur in any undertaking. With good communications, cooperation and flexibility most issues can be addressed with a minimum of disruption to the schedule and a minor impact on the projected budget. Conscientious attention to details in the planning and negotiation phases of a project,

**Recognize  
accomplishment!  
Report on best  
practices, successes  
and expertise  
gained.**

dedication and enthusiasm can contribute immensely to the successful outcome of inter-municipal cooperative projects. It is hoped that the contents of this guide on inter-municipal cooperation and partnership will prove helpful to municipalities planning to embark on such an effort. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations may be able to provide advice and assistance in the planning stages of inter-municipal cooperative agreements, please contact the Department for further information.

### **Focus Group**

The Focus Group workshop sponsored by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations provided a wealth of information on inter-municipal cooperation in the province. Workshop participants stressed the significant level of cooperation, formal and informal, that currently occurs in Nova Scotia municipal government.

It should be noted that while intermunicipal agreements may be the best solution in some circumstances, in other situations it may not be the only, or even the best option for a municipality to pursue.

- Individual municipalities regularly engage in the development of policies, by-laws, job descriptions and other documentation necessary for effective management and administration. While surveys are sometimes carried out to ascertain what may be the practice in other municipalities throughout the region, municipal decision makers seldom consider undertaking the work on a regional basis.
- Frequently municipalities receive requests from the Province, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, as well as other organizations, to review and comment on existing or proposed legislation, and a variety of other issues. Municipalities often cannot respond to these requests in as timely a manner as they would like due to time constraints and a lack of resources. It was suggested that more attention should be placed on providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to become involved in a meaningful way in the discussion and consideration of emerging issues affecting municipalities.
- Governance and control were identified as significant issues in inter-municipal cooperation. When partners undertake a project jointly, some loss of control over expenditures and service level can be expected. There is a real tendency that the partner contributing

the most financially may underestimate the contributions, financial or otherwise, of the other partner.

- Significant benefits may be achieved from municipalities pooling financial and human resources to harmonize policies, job descriptions, and salary scales.
- Recreation programming and delivery, web site development and maintenance, human resource management and purchasing are areas inter-municipal cooperation may prove beneficial and can be utilized to enhance existing programs.
- Water quality testing was noted as another potential cooperative initiative that could prove beneficial to the private sector as well as municipalities.
- Focus Group participants identified potential areas where both municipalities and the Province could benefit from cooperative arrangements for service delivery. For example snow plowing.
- It was stressed by focus group participants that cooperative initiatives that are undertaken voluntarily are preferable to forced or legislated initiatives.
- Participants suggested the development of a continually updated inventory of intermunicipal cooperation examples in the province would be helpful in benchmarking and best practices. Such an inventory would ideally provide sufficient detail to illustrate what approaches work well, and what other approaches had less than satisfactory results and why.
- Shared or joint management services through the use of one management team has been a successful initiative for some municipalities in the province. Municipalities considering this option should keep in mind that there is a substantial increase in workload on senior management. Individual councils continue to meet and require agendas, minutes etc, which contribute to the workload of the management team. Potential problems may arise when partnering councils' have competing needs and priorities.

The workshop participants emphasised that a number of different models for cooperation exist, and one that may work well in one situation may not be appropriate elsewhere. Many such successful formalized arrangements for inter-municipal cooperation currently

exist in Nova Scotia. It was also emphasised that cooperation often works well without formal agreements or contracts, and such informal cooperation between municipalities should be encouraged whenever possible.

Flexibility was identified as a contributing factor, and can often be the key to a successful undertaking. Caution was expressed that legislation governing municipal government should not be overly prescriptive so that flexibility can allow for innovative approaches to intermunicipal cooperation. Participants suggested that greater liaison between the Province and municipal government is essential.

Focus group discussions with municipal leaders - senior management and councillors - identified a number of areas where cooperation between municipalities has worked well, and emphasized the need for concise, easy to read basic information that can help navigate successful cooperative undertakings from concept through to reality. Several additional areas were outlined as having potential for future cooperative initiatives.

**Focus Group suggestions for municipal cooperation and joint management initiatives**

<p><b>Council and Policy Making Operations</b>          Legislative review          Common by-laws, policies and job descriptions          Governance structures          Training and professional development initiatives          Information technology - research, systems development, etc.          Lobbying and advocacy</p>	<p><b>Economic Development and Planning</b>          RDA's/chambers of commerce/boards of trade          Industrial parks          Planning and economic development staff          Marketing/promotion/sales/ and revenue sharing          Development and/or sharing of infrastructure</p>	<p><b>Protection and Enforcement</b>          Inspection services          By-law enforcement          Policing          Fire protection          Emergency services          Dispatch services          Civic addressing          Detention facilities          Equipment sharing          Training</p>
<p><b>Overall Management</b>          Management functions - i.e. CAO or joint directors          Financial systems          Procurement practices and policies          Purchase and or sale of services          Use of assets          Human resource management and benefit packages</p>	<p><b>Recreation, Culture and Tourism</b>          Staff training initiatives          Equipment purchase and sharing          Municipal recreation facilities          School board facilities for municipal recreation purposes          Tourism associations          Recreation programming          Trails development          Community events and festivals          Marketing/promotion and revenue generation          On-line scheduling of courses, registration and revenue collection          Information sharing and links to web sites</p>	<p><b>Information Technology and E-Commerce</b>          Web site development and maintenance          Systems and software review, development and maintenance          Records management          Technical expertise          Alternate service delivery - private sector</p>
<p><b>Public Works, Transportation and Environment</b>          Water testing facilities          Water utilities and water supply          Equipment          Technical expertise          Sewer collection and treatment          Street paving          Crosswalk painting          Snow clearing          Solid waste management          Electric utilities          Public transit          Watershed protection plans</p>		<p><b>Training and Professional Development</b>          Needs identification and delivery          Open enrolment training          Program and research development fund</p>

## **Appendix "A"**

### **Inter-Municipal Survey Questions**

The survey was administered on-line to all municipalities and villages in Nova Scotia. Questions asked, included:

Does your municipality provide services, under contract or by agreement, to other municipalities?

Does your municipality receive services, under contract or by agreement, from other municipalities?

Does your municipality share or provide any of its staff resources to regularly assist another municipality with service delivery functions?

Does your municipality share or make available its equipment or facilities for use in the delivery of services to another municipality?  
(Examples - recreation facilities, office equipment, meeting rooms, ...)

Does your municipality have inter-municipal arrangements or agreements in place which provide for the shared delivery of one or more areas of municipal government services?

**Appendix "B"****Sample Listing of Best Practices Web Sites and Related Information**

The Internet provides access to literally hundreds of thousands of web sites containing information that can be of assistance to municipal government decision makers. The following are a few that have been selected as a starting point when looking for information on best practices in municipal government.

The Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) web site contains links to third-party web sites, which are not under the control of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. SNSMR makes no representations whatsoever about any other web site to which you may have access through this web site. When you access a non SNSMR web site, you do so at your own risk and SNSMR is not nor will be responsible for the accuracy or reliability of any information, data, opinions, advice, or statements made on these sites. SNSMR provides these links merely as a convenience and the inclusion of such links does not imply that SNSMR endorses or accepts any responsibility for the content or uses of such web sites.

NOTE: Web site URL's are accurate at the time of this Handbook's preparation.

**Government of Alberta Web Site**

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/ma/ms/RegParShip/success.cfm>

Contains information on successful Regional Partnerships in Alberta. Example: The Calgary Regional Partnership: A group of 13 partners in the Calgary region wish to develop a regional identity, vision, and organizational structure. This exercise will review a spectrum of options from casual cooperation to a more structured regional forum. The partnership will select the model that best meets its regional goals. This partnership is also developing regional projects in the areas of transportation, emergency services, environmental management, and economic development. These projects, or regional priorities, have been selected to benefit residents and businesses in the Calgary region by protecting those qualities about the region that are cherished, while planning a bold new future.

**Municipal Research and Services Centre of Washington**

<http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Management/bestpractices.aspx>

Contains a collection of information relating to best practices in local government programs and management. The site also contains success stories, and links to several local government awards programs. Example: Alternative (Non-Tax) Revenue Sources MILL CREEK - In response to projected decline of revenue in the next 5 years, the City began to examine alternative (non-tax) revenue sources in early 1996. For purposes of identifying alternative revenue sources, each department determined how services would be provided if they had to operate without tax dollars (what

would the City have to sell, and who would purchase our services, etc.). Although it was recognized that there may be legal, operational, and political problems associated with new non-tax revenue sources, these barriers were not considered as a limitation to generating new ideas. From this activity, a laundry list of alternatives was created. The process of examining for their practicability and cost effectiveness continues.

United Nations - Habitat Best Practices Database

<http://www.bestpractices.org>

Contains a searchable database from more than 140 countries with over 1600 proven solutions to the common social, economic and environmental problems of an urbanizing world. It demonstrates practical ways in which public, private and civil society sectors are working together to improve governance, eradicate poverty, provide access to shelter, land and basic services, protect the environment and support economic development.

Example: The Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) - This is Greater Vancouver's official regional growth strategy. It provides the framework for making regional land use and transportation decisions in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Regional Development's 21 member municipalities, the provincial government and other agencies. The purpose of the plan is to manage population growth, protect and enhance environmental health and quality, create livable and complete communities linked by effective transportation systems through a shared vision and coordinated actions.

Web Site of the City of Winston-Salem

<http://www.ci.winston-salem.nc.us/ooe/leaders.htm>

Contains a thought-provoking article on Innovative Leadership in Performance Management.

Introduction: Public Sector Organizations - Today's Innovative Leaders in Performance Management by Dick Grote : This article originally appeared in the Spring 2000 issue of Public Personnel Management, published by the International Personnel Management Association. Who's coming up with the best new ideas for managing people's performance on the job? Surprisingly, some of the most innovative work in developing new approaches to performance management is being done these days by organizations in the public sector. When executives look for breakthrough thinking and best practices, their best sources frequently turn out to be state agencies and city governments, and federal bureaucracies.

PennState

[http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/cd\\_toolbox\\_2/tools/intermunicipal\\_coop.cfm](http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/cd_toolbox_2/tools/intermunicipal_coop.cfm)

Contains case studies, Community and Economic Development Toolbox and links to information on inter-municipal cooperation and related resources.

There's a place in just about every county in New York State where one can step from one jurisdiction to another by crossing the road. Yet, the same services and equipment are maintained by each municipality. Shared service agreements offer opportunities for both local and state road agencies to maximize their resources and save money.

Example of Purchasing Case Study - In 1994 three municipalities in Tompkins County jointly purchased a shoulder machine. The Towns of Lansing and Dryden and Tompkins County purchased the machine after a written agreement was in place. Neither of the towns could afford to purchase the machine alone. The agreement is written in plain English, and all of the municipal attorneys approved it. There is provision for percentage of ownership based on miles of road, maintenance and repairs, scheduling and availability, insurance, settling of disputes, and termination of the agreement.

Michigan's Local Government Web sites: Best Practices

[http://www.cyber-state.org/1\\_0/govt2001/mi\\_bestpractices.html](http://www.cyber-state.org/1_0/govt2001/mi_bestpractices.html)

Contains best practices reviews of web sites for counties, townships, cities and villages, and uses a binary, 45-point analysis for each site.

Example of Best Practices Web Site Review: - A one-stop-shop site for the e-citizens of Royal Oak, the front page organizes all links in an immediate access format. Also provides a "user survey" to self-assess their services and to get a better understanding of their citizens' requirements for "quality life."

Best Practices Page for City of Vienna

[http://www.bestpractices.at/4hub\\_engl/E4wohnbau\\_stadterneuerung2.htm](http://www.bestpractices.at/4hub_engl/E4wohnbau_stadterneuerung2.htm)

Contains information about best practices in the City of Vienna covering issues such as: Housing and Urban Development, Environmental and Infrastructure, the Economy, Employment, Transparent Administration, Participation and Empowerment.

Example of Vienna Housing Development Solution - In Vienna, as in many cities, the greatest urban problems are concentrated in those city districts which are most in need of modernization: a high percentage of families with low incomes, deficient infrastructure and high levels of environmental pollution. The City of Vienna decided both against demolition and construction of new urban areas, and against the displacement or compulsory re-housing of those living in such areas. The areas in need of renovation were, instead, improved by applying the methodology of "user-friendly housing redevelopment". The programme was begun in 1984 and is still being pursued today.

Small Cities Best Practices for Managers Web Site

<http://www.smallcities.us/>

Contains best practices information for Managers, Mayors and Councils in Cities Under 50,000. A best practice newsletter specifically created for growing, small cities. This site provides a bridge between the worlds of part-time elected officials and full-time professional administrators with easy-to-read, up-to-the minute information, strategies, and advice on the pressing issues and challenges that face local government today. Also provides Best Practice InfoPaks on 18 different topics, ranging from downtown development to council process. InfoPaks come in sets of 5 to 7 articles or case studies on a particular topic, such as: Downtown Development, Council Process, Personnel, Law Enforcement, Historic Preservation, Elected Officials, Citizen Involvement, Development, Budgeting and Technology.

United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Web Site

[http://www.usmayors.org/USCM/best\\_practices/search.asp](http://www.usmayors.org/USCM/best_practices/search.asp)

Contains a search tool to enable searches of the USCM Best Practices Database. The goal is to help municipal government decision makers find the Best Practices information that is needed quickly and accurately. A search of the words "Council Policies" results in links to 281 web sites containing related information.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/ecd/par\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/ecd/par_e.html)

Contains information on partnerships with the Aboriginal community and an Aboriginal Economic Development Success Story Database

Examples: Discovery Harbour Centre - The Jewel in First Nations Commercial Ventures - The Campbell River Indian Band (CRIB) in British Columbia has only 600 members. Yet in the past few years, it has managed to make a major

impact on the commercial core of Campbell River. The Discovery Harbour Centre, a 37,000-square-metre (400,000-square-foot) open-storefront shopping centre, is the jewel in the crown of the First Nations growing number of commercial ventures. Built on reserve land, this \$60-million project is a joint venture between the First Nation and Northwest Real Estate Developments Ltd.

University of Victoria's Local Government Institute

[http://web.uvic.ca/lgi/reports/lgi\\_pub.htm](http://web.uvic.ca/lgi/reports/lgi_pub.htm)

Contains information on the Local Government Institute and provides access to a wealth of information aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments and in assisting local officials by identifying management practices and production alternatives that have resulted in improved service delivery to local governments in Canada. Provides links to extensive bibliographies.

Examples of articles:

- [Local Government Organization in the Capital Region](#)
- [The Cost of Municipal Elected Officials in the Capital Region of British Columbia](#)
- [The Efficiency of Residential Recycling Services in Canadian Local Governments: National Survey Report](#)
- [Building Organizational Capacity for Performance Measurement: Mile Posts, Toll Booths, and Construction Zones on the Yellow Brick Road](#)
- [Benchmarking Local Government Services in Canadian Municipalities Public Sector Performance and Accountability from a Manager's Perspective](#)
- [Amalgamation: Is it the Solution?](#)

Best Practices Reviews of Local Government

<http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/wha-bpr.htm>

Contains information on studies of local government best practices that are available on-line and from the Office of the Legislative Auditor of the Minnesota State Government. Topics include: Snow and Ice Control, 911 Dispatching, Fire Services, Preventative Maintenance for Local government Buildings, Local E-Government, Managing Local government Computer Systems, and Preserving Housing.

National Governors Association (NGA)

<http://www.nga.org/center/managingforresults/>

Contains information on the NGA Center for Best Practices' products and projects related to results-based management across policy areas as well as summaries of selected state activities, links to relevant web sites and references to useful materials produced by other organizations.

Example: Implementing Results-Based Decision-making: Advice from the Field - This is one of two papers that draw on state and community experiences to share lessons learned in bringing a results orientation to community mobilization, strategic planning, budgeting, management and accountability processes. Although the focus of these papers is on child and family policy, the lessons learned and advice given are just as relevant to other policy areas.

Oakvillegreen Web Site

<http://www.oakvillegreen.com/>

Contains information on conservation and environment-related initiatives.

Examples: Some Communities are beginning to realize that preserving countryside saves taxpayers money! The Town of Pittsfield, New York, purchased 486 hectares of farmland to preserve it from development by floating

a \$10-million bond issue. Town planners calculated that providing services and schools for subdivisions on the farmland would cost each taxpayer an additional \$200 per year indefinitely, while paying of the bond issue would cost only \$67 per year for 20 years. Not only did they save the taxpayers a ton of money, they gained ownership of the farmland! Another example of a community deciding that preservation was worth the money is Barrie, Ontario.

National Partnership for Reinventing Government

<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/bkgrd/balmeasure.html>

Contains valuable information on best practices in performance management. "Through the establishment of a Community of Practice consortium, local governments learn from each other and can compare outcomes against those of other local governments." This Community of Practice provides a central point for gathering and sharing information on a particular topic.

Association for Conflict Resolution

<http://www.acresolution.org/research.nsf/key/EPPbestpractices>

Contains information on best practices for government agencies:

Example: Guidelines for Using Collaborative Agreement-Seeking Processes - The guidelines for best practice are proposed by the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution for government-sponsored collaborative approaches that seek agreement on issues of public policy. The processes these guidelines address have the following attributes: participants represent stakeholder groups or interests, and not simply themselves; all necessary interests are represented or at least supportive of the discussions; participants share responsibility for both process and outcome; an impartial facilitator; accountable to all participants; manages the process, and the intent is to make decisions through consensus...

City Connections

<http://www.cityconnections.com/govr/munresor.html>

Contains ideas, innovations and links to best practices information, magazines, and associations.

State of Texas Department of Information Resources

[www.dir.state.tx.us/TIC/it\\_info/bench.htm](http://www.dir.state.tx.us/TIC/it_info/bench.htm)

Contains links to information on Benchmarking and Best Practices

UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Programme

<http://www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm>

Contains information on successful projects related to poverty and social exclusion and provides an extensive best practices database. The idea of a Best Practices Database is based on the observation that carefully documented case histories can provide excellent guidelines for policy making and planning of new projects. The goal of a database on Best Practices is to present and promote creative, successful and sustainable solutions to social problems arising from poverty and social exclusion in order to build a bridge between empirical solutions, research and policy. Best Practices in the database are model projects or policies aimed at improving the quality of life of individuals or groups suffering from poverty or social exclusion. They are typically based on the cooperation between national or local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities, the private sector, and academic communities. They include a variety of activities in all parts of the world.

The Public Sector Network of the American Society for Quality

<http://deming.eng.clemson.edu/pub/psci/psn/best.htm>

Contains information on best practices.

Example: Linking Quality to Business Planning and Performance Goals in Local Government By Robert W. Robertson and Paul Gill, District of Maple Ridge, British Columbia - The purpose of this article is two-fold: first, the article presents and discusses data from recent surveys of local governments in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. This component of the article will describe the specific challenges that must be addressed in the implementation of TQM at the local government level; and, key components of successful TQM systems. Further, this component will assist in the identification of a series of best practice concepts that may be instructive for other local governments or public sector organizations considering TQM. Second, the article describes in some detail the use of business planning and quality initiatives in the District of Maple Ridge, British Columbia. This case study discusses some of the challenges and opportunities related to the use of business planning and quality at an applied level.

Change Communications Web Site

<http://www.change.org/21.htm>

Contains links to sites that offer case studies and best practices stories about organizations, initiatives, and methods.

Examples of links to web sites:

- [Alliance for Redesigning Government](#),
- [Best Practices Of City Governments](#)
- [Best Practices Database](#)
- [Civic Practices Network](#)
- [Enterprise Foundation: Best Practices Database](#)
- [John J. Gunther Blue Ribbon Practices in Community Development](#)
- [National Rural Development Partnership "Success Stories" and "Works in Progress"](#)

Smart Communities Network

<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/management/sstoc.shtml>

Contains a large number of sustainable development success stories from communities across the United States--efforts that represent people working to make their communities more livable and their quality of life more enjoyable. Read about a comprehensive plan in Denver that aims to enhance the economy and environment; a grassroots effort in Chicago that saved a transit line and is revitalizing neighborhoods; or a model open-space preservation plan in Philadelphia. The site is a gateway to case studies across the World Wide Web.

Examples: The Vail Environmental Strategic Plan - Describes a program that was adopted to maintain and improve environmental quality in the Vail Valley and to ensure the prolonged economic health of the region. Efforts include monitoring and improving air and water quality, preserving open space, and protecting the areas natural wildlife. Haymount Town Development - Explains a new development that focuses on New Urbanism, a form of planning that puts pedestrians first and focuses on "recapturing the street as a part of the public realm." Only one-third of the 1,650-acre site will be developed; the rest will remain as forested lands, wetlands, and farming areas.

**Chadwick Bay Champion Community Strategic Plan**

<http://www.fredonia.edu/crrdg/chibay.htm>

Contains an excellent example of an inter-municipal “community strategic plan” developed by the City of Dunkirk, Towns of Dunkirk, Hanover, Pomfret, Portland and Sheridan, and Villages of Brocton, Fredonia, and Silver Creek through a regional partnership to guide the northern Chautauqua County area into the new millennium.

**Muniscope**

<http://www.muniscope.ca/default.aspx>

Contains a collection of more than 9,000 items pulled together to meet the needs of local government officials, provincial policy planners, urban and regional planners, and other professionals interested in municipal issues. It is billed as Canada’s finest circulating collection of books, reports, conference proceedings, and articles in a wide range of fields: local economic development, municipal legislation, housing, environment, rural development, transportation studies and initiatives, and urban planning and regulations. Many of Muniscope’s documents are difficult to find elsewhere. The focus of the collection is predominantly on Canada and to a lesser extent, the United States. Portions of the site are available only to members and guests. More than a library, this site offers an extensive networking service across Canada.

**MUNISOURCE**

<http://www.munisource.org>

Contains links to municipalities and municipal associations throughout the world; access to information on many areas of interest to municipal decision makers; a Local Government Discussion Forum for networking; on-line Certificate Program in Basic HTML originally established to help train municipal employees in web site development; and other municipal government related resources.

**The International Council for Local Environmental Issues**

<http://www.iclei.org/infoch.htm#bestpractice>

Contains information on the ICLEI organization that was launched in 1990 at the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future. More than 430 cities, towns, counties, and their associations worldwide comprise ICLEI’s growing membership. They and hundreds of other local governments are engaged in ICLEI’s regional projects and international campaigns. Its mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental and sustainable development conditions through cooperative, cumulative local actions.

Examples: - Case studies are provided on such areas as: Hazardous Waste, Land Use-Transport, Solid Waste Management, Energy Conservation-Finance, Housing Construction, Environmental Auditing, Transportation Management, Waste Water Management, Electronic Conferencing, Water Conservation, Housing Rehabilitation, and many, many other topics of interest to municipal government.