

Saskatchewan Municipal Best Practice

Economic Development Leadership

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The RM of Paddockwood sought to resolve the issue of decreasing population and a stagnant assessment base to remain sustainable and to provide necessary municipal services by hiring a planning consultant to explore economic development opportunities by taking advantage of the RMs strategic location.

THE PROCESS

Over the past few years, the RM experienced a decline in population, resulting in a reduced assessment base, which presented challenges to the RM in providing and funding core municipal services. Through letters to council and ratepayers visiting the RM office, it became clear that residents wanted council to take a more aggressive approach towards attracting new residents to the area.

The RM of Paddockwood realized the proximity of the municipality to the city of Prince Albert for commercial, health and educational services, and to the resort villages of Candle Lake and Emma Lake for recreational purposes provided an excellent opportunity for council to market the RM of Paddockwood as an attractive location for new residential and commercial development.

In the past, the RM had been reluctant to allow any large scale subdivision development. Recent demands from local businesses and residents forced the RM to reconsider this position and council decided to allow such developments. The RM hired an experienced planning consultant to assist the municipality with subdivision development and to assist developers in the approval process. This proactive approach ensures the long-term sustainability of developments and the associated communities. The municipality has also reviewed the basic planning statement and zoning bylaw and is working towards a new long-term development plan for the municipality.

The RM encourages developers to present their draft subdivision plan to council. The councillor of the division where the proposed subdivision is located conducts a site assessment and reports to council. The developer is advised of the subdivision process and approval authorities by council and the planning consultant. Council also meets with adjoining municipalities to discuss the potential effects of subdivision development. Council is currently in the process of meeting with adjoining municipalities to discuss the formation of a joint planning district.

THE RESULTS

The RM projects an increase in the tax base for the new subdivision developments, along with an increase in population. Several new zoning bylaws have been implemented to ensure that existing residents concerns are addressed with new proposed subdivisions.

LESSONS LEARNED

The RM of Paddockwood learned that trusting outside expertise from a planning professional allowed the municipality to take an effective approach towards subdivision development. The RM studied other subdivisions in other municipalities to avoid problems that continue to surface due to incomplete or inadequate service agreements. The RM has created a bylaw that restricts the number of large scale applications to be in process at any given time. This bylaw ensures that proper infrastructure and funding is in place before more developments are approved.