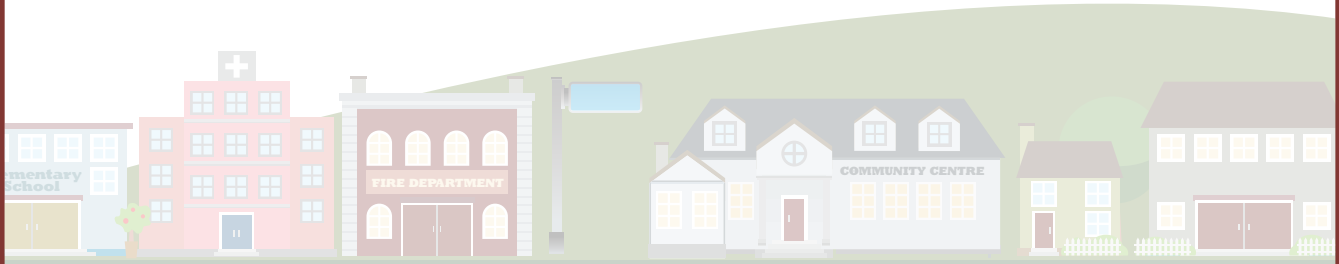


SECTION 1

INFORMATION GATHERING FOR CHANGE DISCUSSION



SECTION 1

INFORMATION GATHERING FOR CHANGE DISCUSSION

In this section you and your Council can step through a process of considering your municipality's current circumstances and what key factors you want to address.

There are many potential challenges and opportunities facing all Island communities. Many are similar between communities but it is important that you determine what is important to you and your residents.

This is an important step in the change process. As you move forward you will be asked "why". Sometimes the questions will come from within your own municipal council or community. You need to be ready to explain why change is needed and what is most important.

This process and the information you gather will form the answer to the ongoing question – why change?

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the following chart and consider each question with regard to your current circumstances. You may do this first individually and then as a group. In the end, you should discuss each question as a group and determine one answer for your municipality.

For each item, even if you don't know the answers or have all the information, you can determine if:

- it is not important to your municipality - and continue to the next item,
- it is important and you'd like more information before moving forward - so identify how or where you will get the information, or
- it is important but it is information you can gather later in the process - possibly through a growth management study¹.

OUTCOME

The results of this process will form the basis of your own understanding of why you are working towards change. The results can also be used for future communications with other stakeholders and the public.

¹A "growth management study" can help a municipality look at the possible impacts of change and determine the appropriate size and scope to consider for any restructuring alternatives. Funding support for a study is available through the provincial government department responsible for municipalities.



SECTION 1

Questions to consider and information needed before a decision is made

Note: Appendix C – "Resources - Where to find answers for your questions." - may help you find the information you need.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
<p>We need to consider what our residents want for their own future. We also need to consider whether our current Council can keep up with the increasing demands being placed on municipal governments? Consider these questions:</p>			
<p>1. Do we have enough residents involved in our municipality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have more volunteers than needed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have enough volunteers for now <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have enough volunteers for now but not for an increase in demands <input type="checkbox"/> No, volunteers are hard to find 		
<p>2. Do we have enough people offering to run for Council (<i>candidates</i>) so that there is a healthy turnover?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have more than needed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have enough for now <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we have enough for now but not for an increase in demands <input type="checkbox"/> No, candidates are hard to find 		
<p>3. Is our municipality's "voice" being heard at a provincial level?</p> <p>Ex: do we have a say in proposed changes and priorities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, our municipality's issues are represented <input type="checkbox"/> No 		



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
<p>4. Do we need to work with other municipalities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better economies of scale (<i>buying power</i>), • better support services, or • shared resources between municipalities? <p>Ex: work with neighbouring municipalities to deal with water quality; protection of our natural areas; regional economic development; professional staff support?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all of these <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, some of these (<i>note which ones</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know but would like to investigate 		
<p>5. Do residents want us to increase our economic development efforts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know, but would like to ask 		
<p>6. Do we have enough say in protecting our water supply?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 		
<p>7. Do we have enough say in protecting our natural environment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 		



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
<p>8. Do we have enough say in protecting our local heritage?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>		
<p>9. Do we need access to more supports for local initiatives (<i>economic & social</i>)? Ex: access to provincial and federal funds</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know but would like to investigate.</p>		
<p>10. Do we know if we can sustain what we already do?</p> <p>"Viability" is another word used that refers to the ability of municipal governments to meet the current and future demands of the local community - the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing now and into the future.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know but would like to investigate.</p>		
<p>11. Do we need to grow?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know but would like to investigate.</p>		
<p>12. Will residents expect more services in the near future?</p> <p>Ex: community hall upgrades, age friendly public places, recreation for youth, or services for seniors</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know but would like to ask <input type="checkbox"/> Don't need to know</p>		



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
Potential Gaps – requirements under the Municipal Government Act			
<p>13. Do we currently meet the minimum population (4000 people) and total assessment of real property (\$200 million) criteria as outlined in the Act?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know our population or real property assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet criteria 		
<p>14. Do we have an office location that is accessible and open to the public at least 20 hours per week?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Can meet the requirement now but not if there is an increase in demand <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		
<p>15. Do we have a financial audit that meets the requirements each year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
<p>16. Are we prepared to run a full election process?</p> <p>- This includes an official notice period, a candidate process, holding early polls, full election day polling hours, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		
<p>17. Do we have Bylaws that meet the requirements of the legislation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		
<p>18. Are we able to provide adequate fire protection for our municipality?</p> <p>- Does not mean we have to provide direct service but we need to ensure that we have adequate coverage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Have coverage but more work needs to be done 		
<p>19. Do we have a land use plan and is it up to date?</p> <p>Can we handle complex proposals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	CHECKLIST	WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?	WHO WILL GET THE INFORMATION? FROM WHERE?
<p>20. Are we able to adequately enforce a land use plan (<i>Official Plan</i>)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		
<p>21. Do we have a municipal emergency preparedness plan?</p> <p>If we have a plan, is it up-to-date?</p> <p>Do we test our plan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Already meet or exceed requirement <input type="checkbox"/> Close to meeting requirement but need specific work to be done <input type="checkbox"/> Do not meet requirement 		



OTHER CONCERNS TO INVESTIGATE

Community members facing change may worry about the impact that change will have on them personally. Although you may not be able to find all of the answers you need at this stage, you will likely be able to respond to these concerns during a growth management study.

POSSIBLE CONCERN: <i>IDENTIFY THE CONCERNS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO LOOK INTO.</i>	CONCERN WE SHOULD TRACK?	
	YES	NO
<p>22. Community Identity List the most important and/or unique things about your municipality that you would like to preserve.</p> <p><i>Examples: rural lifestyle, control over community hall, agriculture, etc.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		
<p>23. Impact of Municipal Tax changes – Given that the new Municipal Government Act will mean at least some changes for our municipality, how will we address the costs?</p> <p>Examples of costs to consider: Our municipality has a population of 1,150 and raises about \$175,000 – in property tax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ We just did an official plan – approx cost \$50,000 (mostly funded from the Gas Tax) ◦ We have a part-time Administrator but need to up the minimum hours to 24 hrs/week (office hours and evening meeting) – total cost approximately \$31,000 ◦ We need to have a part-time Development Officer – annual salary approx. \$15,000; ◦ Office rent \$5,400 ◦ Legal fees (related to land use enforcement – vary annually – sometimes nothing – 8 months into this year = \$14,000) ◦ Audit costs \$4,000 		
<p>24. Will we need to increase our revenue? (Tax Rate, Fees)</p> <p>What would be the real financial changes for residents if municipal taxes/fees changed?</p>		



POSSIBLE CONCERN: <i>IDENTIFY THE CONCERNS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO LOOK INTO.</i>	CONCERN WE SHOULD TRACK?	
	YES	NO
25. Do we have the policies and resources (<i>human and financial</i>) to protect and maintain these valuable elements (<i>as defined above</i>)?		
26. Other concerns (<i>add other concerns to track here</i>):		

DISCUSSION ABOUT RESEARCH RESULTS

Following your discussion of your research results, you will need to decide on what your next steps will be. The following examples are the most likely decisions and some recommended next steps.

1. We can't decide and need more information.

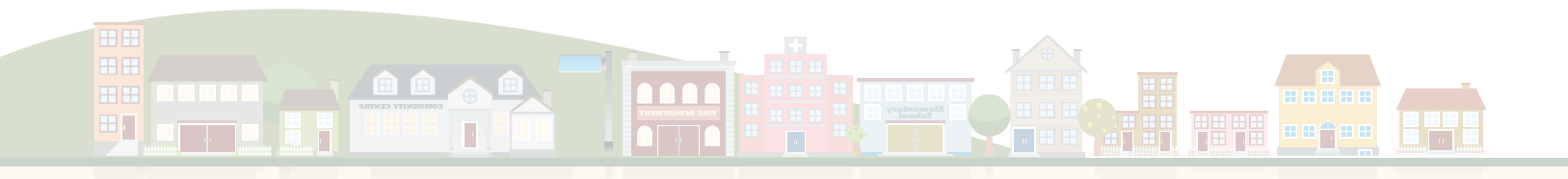
- a. Create a list of information needed and assign someone to bring information to your group.
- b. Set a timeline to review the information and come back to this decision.

2. We are confident in our current resources and ability to meet future needs. Therefore, we're not interested in discussions with other municipalities at this time.

- a. Record your answers to the questions and decision for future reference.
- b. Discuss how you will respond if approached by other municipalities.
- c. Set a timeline to review this checklist and decision again, since circumstances are constantly changing.

3. We know we need to change and why we need to change. Now, we want to explore working with other municipalities.

- a. Complete the Section 1: Reasons for Change Template.
- b. Proceed to Section 2 of this Toolkit.



SECTION 1

REASONS FOR CHANGE STATEMENT *TEMPLATE*

You have decided to move forward with exploring change. As this process unfolds you will be asked to explain why. The answer to this and other future questions are exactly what you just discussed as a Council – you just need to put it all in one place.

Using the answers within your checklist and your Council discussion, complete the following template. Share this with everyone on your Council and use it to talk to your residents, other municipalities and to form future communication materials.

Also update and refine this document as you go through the change process and as new information and circumstances arise. Keeping the answers to these questions fresh and updated will help everyone involved in the process communicate effectively.

CREATING YOUR REASONS FOR CHANGE STATEMENTS

- i. Our municipality is strong and we're proud to be able to provide a number of services (*list the items from the charts above where you identified that you have what you need*):

- ii. Yet, given our size and resources we know we need to plan to address these items going forward (*list the items, from the charts, that you don't have but need*):

- iii. We also have information we need to gather; things we don't know but want to find more about such as (*insert the items you identified you need more information about*):

Therefore, our next steps are to (*insert what information you're going to gather*) and discuss our results with other municipalities to see if there are any similarities with their needs and directions. We will continue to keep residents informed as we proceed down this path."



SECTION 1

COMMUNICATIONS

At this stage in the process it is recommended that you focus on your own discussions and understanding rather than outreach. That being said, it is anticipated that you could be asked about what is happening. The following information is provided to assist when this happens.

DEALING WITH QUESTIONS

General Statements

As a Council we know that changes are happening in our municipality and in municipalities around us. We decided to be proactive in managing this for our municipality. We're using a toolkit created by the Federation of PEI Municipalities to support municipalities and we have completed the first step in the process – which was looking at our own needs.

During this process we identified a few things *(insert some information from your template)*.

So at this point we've decided *(insert your decision)* and our next steps are to *(insert your decided next steps)*. We're committed to keeping residents informed and will do so at each step so you know what is happening.

SAMPLE Q & A

1. Does this mean we're merging with other municipalities?

At this time, all we've decided to do is to talk to other municipalities, let them know what we've found out, hear their priorities and concerns and

Throughout this process you will be asked questions by residents, the media and other interested stakeholders.

The answers will vary by situation and municipality but we have provided a few typical questions and possible answers for municipalities at the section 1 stage.

see if there is a possibility for cooperation. Next we'll be doing more research and possibly a study. But until we talk to other municipalities, we don't have any of those answers.

2. What municipalities will we be merging with? Who will you be talking to? How did you decide on these municipalities? What about municipalities _____?

At this time, all we've decided is to talk to other communities, let them know what we've found out, hear their priorities and concerns and see if there is a match.

Our next step is to look at what other communities might make sense to talk to. This will look at geography, similarities, where our residents go for services and other things. If you have suggestions we'd love to hear them – we're still in the investigation stage.

3. So what happens next?

We've decided to talk to other municipalities, let them know what we've found out, hear their priorities and concerns and see if there is a match. From there, we'll be doing more research and possibly a study. But until we talk to other municipalities, we don't have any of those answers. We will be keeping residents informed as we go through this whole process.

