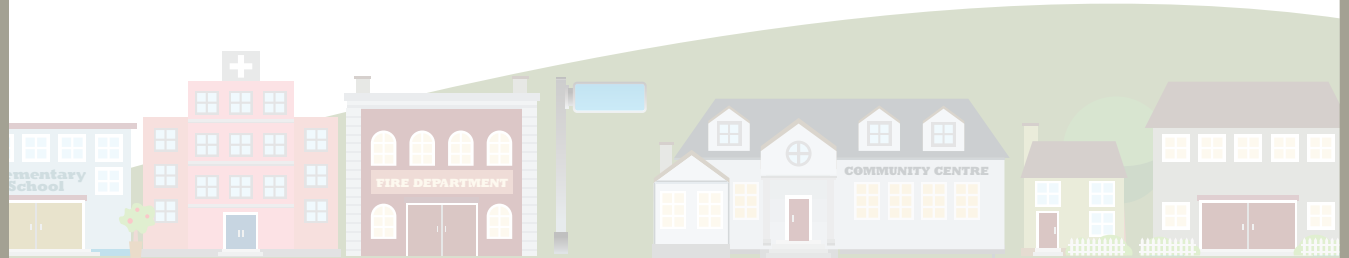# SECTION 2

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION
AND OUTREACH

SECTION 2

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

In this section you will walk through the process of identifying potential municipal partners and reaching out to them. Specifically, this section will guide you through the following steps:

1. How to identify which municipalities you have the most in common with or connections to.

2. How to approach and begin discussions with other municipalities.

INSTRUCTIONS

To begin, use the following charts to help you identify the potential partners for your municipality. These are the other municipalities that you are currently connected to, formally or informally. Some may be obvious choices and some may not be so obvious, but they are all possible partners during this change.

Once you have the list, use the recommendations on how to reach out to municipal leaders and bring them together for an initial discussion.

Whether you are leading the process or have been approached by another municipality, *you can use this toolkit to support your own decision-making process.*

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this section are that you will have identified the other municipalities you'd like to reach out to. Be prepared to ask them to participate in a larger meeting or series of meetings to discuss working together. Applying for funding for a growth management study could follow.

Once you have a sufficient number of municipalities willing to meet and discuss working together, you are ready to move onto Section 3 – *Getting Started and Working Together.*

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION:

You may already know some of the municipalities that you will approach. To help identify all of the possible and most appropriate municipalities that you could meet with for further conversations, you should identify what resources you already have and what you need now or in the future. This will also help you talk about what you might be able to offer other municipalities of interest.

Use this process to help identify all possibilities and understand how you and your residents are connected to each municipality and unincorporated community around you.

SERVICES TO CONSIDER[1] You can fill in information under more than one column	Need it/ Want it or want more? — yes, no, maybe	Provided by our municipality	Have it and provide to other communities — [name community]	Purchase /access it from another municipality — [name municipality]	Residents access it themselves in another community — [name community]	Province provides and controls it
1. Public Safety						
• police services						
• fire and rescue services						
• emergency planning/ management services						
• street lighting						
2. Recreation and Culture						
• recreation facilities and/or programs (for children, youth, adults, older adults)						
• parks, sport fields, marinas, and/or playgrounds						

[1]List used is a modified version of the list from the **Viability Toolkit** – "Analyzing the Situation - reviewing your municipalities features - Part 3 - Service Delivery".

SERVICES TO CONSIDER[1] You can fill in information under more than one column	Need it/ Want it or want more? – yes, no, maybe	Provided by our municipality	Have it and provide to other communities – [name community]	Purchase /access it from another municipality – [name municipality]	Residents access it themselves in another community – [name community]	Province provides and controls it
• cultural programs and/or facilities						
• library						
• museums and interpretive centres						
• special events – recreational and/or cultural						
3. Tourism and Economic Development						
• economic development services (including a plan)						
• major events and/or tourism features						
• tourism promotion						
• infrastructure to support development and/or tourism						

SERVICES TO CONSIDER[1] You can fill in information under more than one column	Need it/ Want it or want more? — yes, no, maybe	Provided by our municipality	Have it and provide to other communities — [name community]	Purchase /access it from another municipality — [name municipality]	Residents access it themselves in another community — [name community]	Province provides and controls it
4. Public Works and Utilities						
• street construction and maintenance						
• parking management and facilities						
• stormwater management and infrastructure						
• active transportation infrastructure and maintenance (sidewalks, trails and bike paths)						
• landscaping/ beautification						
• municipal water supply and distribution						
• municipal sewer collection and treatment						

SERVICES TO CONSIDER[1] You can fill in information under more than one column	Need it/ Want it or want more? – yes, no, maybe	Provided by our municipality	Have it and provide to other communities – [name community]	Purchase /access it from another municipality – [name municipality]	Residents access it themselves in another community – [name community]	Province provides and controls it
• electricity supply and distribution services						
• property acquisition, leasing and management						
5. Planning and Development Control						
• land use planning						
• development control, subdivision approval						
• building standards and inspection						
• heritage promotion/ preservation						
6. Other Services						
• administrative support to manage all municipal requirements and services						

SERVICES TO CONSIDER[1] You can fill in information under more than one column	Need it/ Want it or want more? – yes, no, maybe	Provided by our municipality	Have it and provide to other communities – *[name community]*	Purchase /access it from another municipality – *[name municipality]*	Residents access it themselves in another community – *[name community]*	Province provides and controls it
• animal control services						
• bylaw enforcement and control						
• public transit (buses, taxis)						
• public housing						
• business licenses, street vendor licensing						
7. Other Services - *add your own*						

It is also helpful, when identifying potential municipal partners to look at other groups and organizations that are working across communities as well as provincial services. Use the following chart to identify if any groups from your municipality are connected to other municipalities and communities. *Use the space provided to add in additional groups or organizations that are relevant to your municipality.*

SERVICE GROUP OR ORGANIZATION	Operates in our municipality and connects to others – [name community]	Operates in a neighbouring community and connects to us – [name community]
Business groups – Chambers of Commerce Regional Tourism Association		
Sports Teams (hockey, soccer, baseball, etc.)		
Churches / Places of worship		
Schools		
Community Service groups (i.e. Y's men, Lions Clubs, Women's Institutes, Rotary, etc.)		
Art or Culture groups		
Health Services (walk in clinics, hospital, nursing homes, dental office, pharmacy, etc.)		
Other:		
Other:		

SECTION 2

COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Using the information gathered in the charts above, answer the following questions.

1. List the communities/municipalities where you currently access services *(paid and unpaid)*.

2. List the communities/municipalities that currently use your services *(paid and unpaid)*.

3. List the communities/municipalities that have services or infrastructure that you might want to access in the future *(consider the needs identified in Toolkit - Section 1)*.

4. List any other communities/municipalities where you share common interests.
   – organizations, sports teams, churches, schools, etc.

When looking at the lists above, determine which **municipalities** come up the most? These are the people you should consider talking to first. They are the ones you already have the greatest connection to and if you move forward with municipal changes it will make sense for your municipality.

SECTION 2

SELECTING YOUR FIRST POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Now that you have identified the municipalities that are connected to you, you can consider which ones to contact. This will be a process of looking at the services you each have to offer, where you have common interests and connections and also considering existing relationships.

This outreach can happen in a phased approach by beginning with the most 'connected' municipalities and then moving onto others as you become more comfortable and build some connections.

It is recommended that you identify your first 3-5 municipalities to speak with and begin that process *(described below)*.

Keep in mind that the province is looking for a minimum of 4,000 residents within new municipalities. Municipal Affairs can assist you if necessary. A rough estimate is all you need at this point.

If you move ahead with a study, the consultants will gather detailed information about the area, and resources including population.

For more information, see Section 4 – *Resources.*

WHAT ABOUT UNINCORPORATED AREAS?

At this stage in the process, it is not recommended that you reach out to unincorporated areas to discuss options. Successful experience to date has shown that it is best to connect between existing municipalities to start and then, during the study process, consider and engage the unincorporated areas. This applies even if you have to go past unincorporated areas to reach the nearest municipality.

> **Remember, your goal right now is to bring together an interested group of municipalities to commission a growth management study for your area.**

SECTION 2

OUTREACH: *GETTING STARTED ON THE RIGHT FOOT*

Now that you have identified potential partners, the next step is working on how to approach them and begin the discussion.

WHAT IS THE ASK?

The biggest challenge when approaching another municipality is being clear about what you are asking of them. Quite often groups are invited to meet or come to a stakeholder meeting but the purpose and outcome is not clear. Be clear about your reasons for wanting to meet.

At this stage ask other municipalities:

To consider whether they are interested in meeting with other municipalities to discuss working together to commission a growth management study about the area.

The most important things to remember:

- Each municipality is at a different stage of the process. It may take them some time to catch up with where you are.

- When approaching another municipality, it makes sense to assume they have not done the research you have.

- The focus at this point is why to come together for change – what challenges you are facing.

  ◦ What a new municipality would look like or how it would function is not a focus at this time – that will come later as part of the study.

- Be open about your process and what you learned. This will build trust and help other participants to see similarities between your municipalities.

- Deciding to come to a meeting does not mean they will definitely join the project or become a new municipality. It is just an agreement to hear from others, to talk about a study, and to find answers to questions.

Recognize that this process can and should take time. Some municipalities might be ready to move forward immediately but others will need time to understand their situation and come to their own conclusions. Be patient and plan for this.

With these thoughts in mind, we recommend the following steps for reaching out to other municipalities.

1. If possible, assign a person from your Council that has a friendly connection to someone from the other Council to make the initial contact. This will hopefully make the approach more comfortable.

2. When approaching other municipalities:

   a. Reach out by phone or email first to explain, *"I am with the _____ Council and I was asked to contact you. We've been going through a process of looking at our future community needs and potential partnering ideas, and your municipality came up. I'm wondering if you have time to meet with us and chat about what we've found."*

SECTION 2

b. In the face-to-face meeting, be prepared to share your municipal assessment results from Section 1 of the Toolkit *(Communication Template)* and your communities of interest charts. This will help them understand why you're looking for change and how you selected the municipalities you did.

Explain how it helped your municipality and strongly recommend they go through a similar process to clarify their own thinking. You can let them know that it is important for each municipality to be clear on why they want to participate in change.

It is not your role to tell other municipalities why they need to change, but share your experience and what you have learned. Encourage them to share any initial thoughts and experiences about their municipality.

At this meeting your goal is to **encourage them to go through the same analysis process you have** *(Toolkit Sections 1 & 2)* and then consider coming to a meeting of all the approached **municipalities to discuss the possibility of working together on a study.**

RESPONDING TO RESISTANCE FROM POTENTIAL PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES

It is very likely that you will meet resistance when you reach out to other municipalities. Remember this may not be about you or your municipality, often it's about their own circumstances and where they are in the process.

If you meet resistance:

*   Don't push your own opinion or circumstances – this is usually not taken well by other municipalities.

*   Tell them about your experience in completing the assessment – encourage them to try it. Particularly if it helped change or support your Council's thinking.

*   Explain that you're not looking for full commitment at this point, but would like their municipality to consider being part of the initial discussion.

If they are not interested at this point, don't push it.

Thank them for their time. Tell them you can keep them informed of what's happening with the other municipalities. Let them know that if their municipality wishes to contact you later, to potentially get involved, you'd be happy to hear from them.

> **Once you have a group of municipalities interested in meeting to talk about possibilities you are ready for *Section 3.***

SECTION 2

COMMUNICATIONS

This stage in the process is when the most public discussion and 'gossip' will start. As you begin to speak with other municipalities, others in the area will begin asking questions about what is happening. It is important that your Council members have a consistent message to share at this point.

> **Be open and transparent about what you're doing and use it as an opportunity to educate others about why you feel change needs to be explored.**

If asked about what is happening, here is an example of how you can respond openly and educate at the same time.

Q: I heard the Council is talking to (*insert Municipality name here*). Are we going to amalgamate with them? / I heard you're out talking to other municipalities, what's going on? / I heard there's a meeting of municipalities happening. Are we going? What's going on?

A: You're right, we have been talking to other municipalities. As a Council, we've been going through a process of reviewing our own municipality's needs and looking at how we can meet the requirements of the new Municipal Government Act. We know there are a number of things our municipality could benefit from but we're not able to provide – for example *(insert items from your Section 1 template).*

We completed an exercise to look at who we have the most in common with – who we already share resources with, where residents get other services and other connections such as *(give specific examples to your municipality).*

From that list, we started contacting those municipalities to see if they are experiencing the same challenges and if they'd like to meet and talk further.

That's what we have done so far. We're planning a meeting with the interested municipalities to talk about our challenges. We want to see if there are similarities in other municipalities and find out if there is interest in jointly applying to the provincial government for funding to explore what could happen in our region.

We don't know yet if the study will go ahead, who will be involved and we certainly aren't committing to any changes. We just know there have been changes over the years and more are on the way. We want to be proactive in managing what happens in our municipality.

Do you have any thoughts or concerns about what we are doing? We'd like to hear them because we're still very early in this process and need to know what residents are thinking.