

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday 3 May 2007



Town of Olds and Olds Institute for Community & Regional Development Partner in Sustainability Project

Olds is one of five urban municipalities working closely with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) over the next year to help chart a course for achieving municipal sustainability. The five communities involved were selected based on their responses to a list of questions sent out by AUMA to its members. The following communities are working with the AUMA to pilot sustainability planning tools and resources:

- ♦ The Village of Chauvin
- ♦ The Town of Claresholm
- ♦ The Town of Olds
- ♦ The Town of Pincher Creek
- ♦ The Village of Thorhild

As a Pilot Community the Town of Olds went through the following process:

Council and Administration met to discuss organizing all the exciting and fast-moving sustainability initiatives happening in and around Olds. Municipal sustainability planning requires communities to embark on initiatives that promote increased community engagement and involvement.

Administration introduced the pilot initiative to the Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development (OICRD) which was extremely responsive to the idea and immediately committed to being involved.

An Open House was held on March 5, 2007 with David Laing, our designated Community Development Officer from Municipal Affairs and Housing. The meeting was open to anyone who was interested in municipal sustainability planning. The *Olds MSP Development Process Timelines and Resources Available for MSP Process* were generated from this meeting. It was then recommended to Council that the OICRD be given the responsibility of leading the MSP process and for appointing a citizens' advisory committee. The OICRD has worked hard to create a sustainable community, and has a strong relationship with the community members who will be participating in the project.

At its meeting March 26, 2007 Town Council passed the following motion:

That Council approves assigning Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development the authority and responsibility for creating a Municipal Sustainability Plan following the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Municipal Sustainability Planning Guidebook; and that OICRD be requested to submit a recommendation to Council on the implementation and follow-up of the plan.

Since that time, the Town of Olds and the OICRD have been working together to develop a public engagement strategy, based on a generational approach to municipal sustainability planning. Full-day public input sessions are planned for the following dates and age groups:

DATE	GROUP & LOCATION	
May 12, 2007	Ages: 30-45	Olds College DMP Room 205
May 17, 2007	High School Students Grades 8-12	
May 26, 2007	Ages: 46-59	Olds Legion
May 31, 2007	Ages: 60 Plus	Olds Legion
June 2, 2007	Ages: 16-29	Olds College

All sessions run from 9.00 to 4.30 pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Citizens interested in attending one of these sessions should call Nina Gales at 556-6981 by one week prior to the session they plan to attend.

The Municipal Sustainability Project will conclude in January 2008.

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For more information on the Olds Sustainability Project, contact:

Nina Gales
Manager, Corporate Affairs
Town of Olds
4512 46 St
Olds AB T4H 1R5
Ph (403) 556-6981 ext. 121

Backgrounder – Municipal Sustainability Planning (MSP) Pilot Communities

What is Municipal Sustainability Planning?

Municipal Sustainability Planning is an opportunity for municipalities to look long-term at the communities they want and take proactive steps to move there.

It is an opportunity to engage citizens in a dialogue about what they value about their communities and what they want them to look like in the future.

It is an opportunity to provide an outlet for the wisdom and expertise of community members to discover innovative solutions that address social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governance challenges today while leaving a positive legacy for future generations.

Why would a community want to do a Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP)?

The AUMA's go forward strategy and interpretation of sustainability is based on the premise that municipalities should only invest in initiatives that make **economic** sense today and that move the community in a step-by-step manner towards a future where a strong **social** fabric weaves through communities ensuring that basic human needs are met, a vibrant **cultural** scene breeds creativity to drive innovation, and **environment** issues are resolved.

What is the Municipal Sustainability Planning Initiative?

AUMA's Municipal Sustainability Planning initiative focuses on providing municipalities with the tools and resources they need to effectively develop and implement municipal sustainability plans.

Phase I of the initiative involved the 2005 President's Summit on Community Sustainability and the development of a comprehensive Guide and Tools for sustainability planning.

Phase II of the initiative included a refinement of the comprehensive Guide, and publication of the MSP website. Sustainability learning modules and events were also hosted by AUMA.

Phase III of the project includes working with pilot communities to implement and evaluate the use and effectiveness of resources developed in earlier phases.

What is the purpose of the working with pilot communities?

AUMA recognizes that there can be a gap between communities having access to tools and resources, and taking action to utilize those tools. This is especially a concern when the issues and processes are relatively new and people are unsure how to successfully implement them. The pilot project allows us to provide additional support so that municipalities can bridge the gap and hopefully have a successful experience with the tools. Additionally, the successes, challenges and lessons learned by these communities will be shared with AUMA members to build a greater understanding of how Alberta municipalities can successfully move forward with sustainability planning.

What are the benefits to communities participating in the pilot?

Access to a range of tools and resources to guide them through the structure and process of preparing an MSP.

Support in making applications to funding programs.

Access to Alberta Community Development Officers through an AUMA partnership with Municipal Affairs and Housing. Community Development Officers are trained to provide effective facilitation of workshops during the planning process.

Invitations to workshops in 2007 that will provide an in-depth understanding of the 5 dimensions of sustainability.

Participation in a Municipal Sustainability Conference to share learnings and results with municipalities across Alberta.

Access to The Natural Step's Sustainability eLearning module for Council members, municipal staff and citizens engaged in the MSP process.

Access to regular phone and on-line advice.