

Developing Your Regional Context Statements

What are Regional Context Statements?

Regional Context Statements are the policy tools that link Municipal Development Plans (MDP's) to the Calgary Metropolitan Plan (CMP). After the adoption of the CMP, municipalities have a three-year period in which to prepare a Member Context Statement. The Context Statement is then submitted to the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) Board for consideration. The Context Statements identify how the MDP works toward achieving the principles set out in the CMP.

Our principles represent the foundation of what our region needs to be successful and sustainable for decades to come; they are what we live by and what cannot be compromised if we are to succeed. The region is working together to build complete communities that respect the environment. This requires deliberate integration between the land and water, the people, the economy and governance. Context statements are a declaration by our members on how they intend to integrate action on achieving the regional principles, locally.

How do you develop your own Regional Context Statement?



Timeline Estimates

Municipalities should estimate 1-2 months from the initial CRP staff review to the letter of support from the CRP Executive Committee (Steps 5 to 7). Meeting dates are available from CRP staff.

CRP staff initial review (5 – 10 working days).

CMP Implementation and Regional Servicing Steering Committee meets once every other month.

The CRP Executive Committee meets every month.

The following steps provide a guide for developing your municipality's RCS. **Steps 5 to 9 have been adopted by the CRP Board** to establish a consistent CRP review process. This process encourages peer to peer learning and voluntary implementation of the Calgary Metropolitan Plan.

Step 1: Get your team together and notify CRP staff

Given that the CMP covers environment, economy, growth patterns, infrastructure and governance, it is likely that your municipality will be best served by a cross-departmental team. Getting a group together with day-to-day expertise in these areas will ensure that you have the best information and that the process will make the best use of everyone's time.

Make sure that everyone is aware of the CMP by providing them a link: <http://calgaryregion.ca/cmp/bin1/pdf/CMP.pdf>.

Step 2: Assign a lead for each section

The Regional Context Statements can be guided by filling out the Regional Context Statements Form, which has been provided by the CRP. There are seven sections within the form.

As mentioned, it is likely more efficient and effective to have experts from various municipal departments involved in the process. It is recommended that responsibilities be divided up amongst your team.

Examples of departments that could be assigned responsibility for answering the survey questions for each respective section are:

- Overview of your municipality and Statement of Local Context in the Region (Two sections in the form) – Planning Department
- *Principle 1:* Protecting the natural environment and watershed – Environmental Services Department
- *Principle 2:* Fostering the region's economic vitality – Economic Development Department

- *Principle 3:* Accommodating growth in more compact settlement patterns – Planning Department
- *Principle 4:* Integrating efficient regional infrastructure systems – Public Works/Engineering and/or Transportation Department
- *Principle 5:* Supported through a regional governance approach – Government/Legislative Services

Step 3: Each lead reviews and responds

Each individual that is assigned a section will review the CMP and respond to the questions in the form accordingly. This allows flexibility for this group of individuals to work this into their schedules and to use the expertise that they each have in their respective fields.

Once each individual has responded, the project lead will compile the responses and send them to everyone on the team.

Step 4: Team review session and informing senior management

Once everyone has completed their section and reviewed the responses, the team should get together for a review session (estimated time for this session is 2 hours). The team will run through the responses, asking:

- Is there anything missing?
- Is this as accurate as possible?

When having this discussion, remember that while certain departments were given leading roles for various sections, other departments have an important role to play. For example, the planning and public works departments have a strong relationship to the natural environment (the focus of Principle 1), not just the environmental services department.

As a team, you need to come up with an agreed-upon set of responses for each section. As a recommendation for achieving consensus, the "thumb voting" approach is an option that your team can use.

When a decision is to be made, a proposal is put on the table:

- Thumbs up – you completely agree with the decision.
- Thumbs sideways – you don't agree with everything about the decision, but can live with it.
- Thumbs down – you want to block this decision as it stands. In doing so, you are required to explain your objections but also need to provide a recommended alternative for the group to consider.

In order to proceed with the discussion, all members of the team need to be at the thumbs sideways or thumbs up level. Once an agreed-upon set of responses is created, ensure that these are accurately captured – either online or in a Word document.

Alternative Approach: Depending on the time demands and dynamics of your particular municipality, an alternative option is to execute steps 2 through 4 in a team workshop environment. Through piloting this process with Cochrane and Airdrie, it was determined that this would take much more time to deliver entirely in a team workshop format.

At this time, you may choose to send your completed form to senior management for review and approval, following the processes for your municipality. Additionally, a municipality may choose to engage Council to inform them of what is in the municipal context statement and to receive Council feedback (prior to public hearing).

Step 5: Forward to CRP staff lead

Once your RCS is ready, send it to CRP staff for review. CRP staff will ask any clarifying questions and possibly make some suggestions prior to preparing a report and request for feedback to the CMP Implementation and Regional Servicing Steering Committee.

Step 6: Presentation to CMP Steering Committee

The municipality's RCS is presented to the CMP Implementation and Regional Servicing Steering Committee for recommendation to the CRP Executive Committee. If clarity is needed or changes suggested, the municipality has the following options:

- a. Municipality revises RCS based on feedback from Steering Committee and proceeds to step 7.
- b. Municipality has the option to present a revised RCS to the CMP Implementation and Servicing Steering Committee. This will depend on how substantial the feedback was from the initial Committee review and is up to the discretion of the Municipality.

Step 7: CRP Executive Committee review and response

Executive Committee reviews RCS and provides additional feedback (if needed) for municipality to consider prior to the municipality's public hearing for the Context Statement/Municipal Development Plan amendment. It is at this point the Executive Committee would issue a letter of support.

Step 8: Amend your MDP to include your RCS

Your Regional Context Statement is now ready to be included as part of your Municipal Development Plan. You will need to amend your MDP and follow your municipality's process to make an MDP amendment.

Step 9: Send notification to the CRP

Once your MDP has been amended to include your Regional Context Statement, send notification of this, along with a digital copy of your amended MDP to the Calgary Regional Partnership.

Congratulations! Your municipality has declared how it is implementing the Calgary Metropolitan Plan, a plan for long-term, sustainable, regional growth - locally!