MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE NETWORK
PRACTICE COLLECTION FORM

General Information

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>May 22, 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Practice</td>
<td>Intermunicipal Collaboration Committee (ICC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Municipality</td>
<td>Clearwater County</td>
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INTRODUCTION

When completing this form, use your own words and share your practice in a story format. Please do not include any derogatory comments. Use paragraphs and bullet points to organize your practice. This is not a business case but instead is intended to be informative for your peers, showing them the processes and outcomes of your practice. Be sure to focus on what you learned so that it is helpful to the reader. Click in the white boxes to type in your answers. The boxes will expand as you type.

Abstract:
What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan’s goals, objectives and highlights.)

Clearwater County, The Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline developed an Intermunicipal Collaboration Committee (ICC) made up of two Councillors and one administrator from each of the municipalities. The goals of the ICC are to:
- Create understanding of each municipalities priorities and issues including processes for conducting business.
- Determine how to best deal with long term strategic planning and priorities for the region, for cost effective cooperation.
- Conduct productive joint meetings with representatives of all three Councils, with processes and mechanisms for decision making.
- Build a culture of collaboration within Councils and at the staff level.
Since its development in 2013, the ICC meets regularly (minimum four times/year) to discuss issues of regional significance. The ICC coined the slogan “one community, governed by three Councils,” and has become the venue for meaningful discussions regarding operating and capital partnership opportunities.

The three municipalities have demonstrated their commitment to collaborative governance and as a result the ICC has moved many initiatives forward, such as regional policing study, revenue sharing agreements and infrastructure funding agreements. The ICC also fostered the expansion of regional emergency management (originally County and Village) to include the Town and the Summer Village of Burnstick Lake.

This year, the ICC’s recommended projects list includes a regionalized approach to fiscal coordination of capital infrastructure, to gain an understanding (and inventory) of the infrastructure deficit challenges faced by each municipality. The need for regional capital infrastructure plan became apparent when the Town advanced the timeframe for an arena expansion by a few years (which the County funded 50%) into the same year the Village planned an arena expansion (County funded 60%). In order to avoid ending up with major projects that may exceed any of the partners’ financial capacity, the ICC recommended a regionalized view of the capital infrastructure needs, which the County is leading in 2015. This regional approach also allows for coordination of joint or regional projects, such as contract management (i.e. paving projects), in order to provide cost savings to the municipalities.

The ICC also recommended the development of an economic development plan for the Clearwater – Caroline – Rocky region, which the Town is leading in 2015.

**Need:**
Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. “We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with…”, or “We needed an annual forecasting tool because…”)

With the municipalities’ interrelationship as neighbours and the recognition of the successes experienced while working together, the Rocky, Caroline and Clearwater Councils felt that developing both a philosophy of collaborative governance, and the ICC to foster implementation of additional partnership opportunities, were initiatives needed to ensure the sustainability of the rural west central region.

We needed a framework for collaboration to commit the municipalities to consultation and communication on intermunicipal matters, and to clearly lay out a process to deal with differences efficiently, and in an appropriate manner to maintain a good relationship.
In the spirit of their 2013 Stronger Together Agreement, the three Council’s continue to work together and move ahead for the betterment of the community as a whole. The ICC acts to demonstrate the capacity of rural and urban municipalities to work together to develop local solutions, as local municipalities are best suited to determine the needs for their respective regions.

**CREATING YOUR PRACTICE**

**Research:**
How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g. Web site, literature, “We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area…”).

In 2012, after receiving grant funding from the province’s Collaborative Governance Initiative (CGI), the three Councils contracted a consultant to develop the collaborative governance framework, and the resulting Stronger Together agreement and ICC.

As part of the collaborative governance program design, the consultant conducted individual interviews with each Councillor (19) and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) (3) from the three municipalities. From there each Council nominated two representatives to first develop a terms of reference for the collaborative governance initiative, as well as form the committee to move forward the development of a framework document.

The committee presented the Stronger Together agreement to their respective Councils, and a joint signing ceremony took place in September 2013. The committee then transitioned to become the ICC, and following receipt of another grant from the province’s Regional Collaboration Program (RCP) the ICC officially formalized. The ICC then met with a strategic planning consultant and conducted two sessions with the Tri-Council to formulate the ICC’s strategic priorities.

The ICC now reports back to the Tri-Council twice annually on the strategic priorities and makes recommendations for new priorities. The three CAOs meet regularly, in order to set the formal agenda for the ICC meetings. The ICC’s regular consultation with Tri-Council and CAO coordination means the collaborative governance process and ICC developed is self-sustainable, and so far hasn’t required further input from consultants.

The CGI and RCP funding helped formalize process and identify mechanisms to resolve disagreement or miscommunication. The Stronger Together agreement created a foundation for maintaining positive working relationships. The ICC provides a venue for discussion and the advancement of partnership opportunities.
**Process:**
How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, or borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

A consultant (ADR Education) was hired to develop the initial collaborative governance framework and agreement, which resulted in the development of the ICC.

ADR Education developed the plan for creating collaborative governance framework, reviewed best practices with Councils, conducted interviews with Councillors and key staff members and facilitated many meetings with Council representatives (which would eventually become the ICC group) to develop a terms of reference and practices associated with the ICC.

The ICC philosophy and recommended practices were reviewed by Council’s representatives and a final framework (Stronger Together Agreement) was agreed to formally by all Councils.

Formal ICC meetings began in 2013, and the three CAOs meet regularly to discuss issues of regional significance and coordinate the meeting agendas. The ICC meets a minimum of four times per year (currently meeting six times per year).

**GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE**

**Authority:**
Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

The Councils of all three municipalities individually officially approved the Stronger Together agreement (September 13, 2013) and appointed members to the initial collaborative governance committee, which became the formal ICC thereafter.

**Reporting:**
How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?

Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

Through regular Council meetings, the three CAOs kept Councils as a whole updated on the collaborative governance process, and continue to provide formal updates to Council on activities and recommendations that flow from the ICC meetings.
As two Council member representatives were selected from each municipality to attend the ICC meetings, the decision-makers (Councillors) were kept in the loop of the framework and collaborative governance practices that were being developed.

The philosophy of the Stronger Together agreement is demonstrated in the three Council’s key message of collaboration, which is well-communicated and has resulted in a strengthened community identity. Joint news releases occur with issues of regional significance, and joint presentations from the Mayors and Reeves take place (i.e. Chamber of Commerce year end report).

**Consultation:**
Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

Councillors who were members of the ICC consulted with their respective Councils.

- Two joint Council meetings were held. One to confirm correct direction and the second to present final draft to all Council members, ensuring buy-in from all three municipal Councils.
- The Stronger Together agreement formed part of new Council orientation in 2013, to ensure continuity and buy-in from the newly elected Council.
- The ICC representatives are appointed annually at each respective Councils’ organizational meeting in October.

**IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE**

**Plan:**
Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

Following approvals from all three Councils, the collaborative governance framework was put into action, with the ICC beginning the process of meeting formally to determine the priorities of each municipality and to “test” the ICC process with several issues of regional significance (i.e. wastewater use and capital infrastructure funding). The test of the ICC resulted in the County’s funding of $2.2 million in upgrades agreement with the Town for a 10 year shared use commitment, as well as the management and funding of $800,000.00 for the Village’s multi-use facility arena expansion project.

Since 2013, the ICC has made positive steps for the community, in the nurturing of regional solutions that ensure municipal sustainability.
**Policy:**
What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?

Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

By signing the Stronger Together agreement, each of the three municipalities acknowledged their commitment to and agreement with the spirit and intent of the collaborative governance framework. The framework and resulting ICC effectively became the catalyst for regional collaboration practice implementation and programming considerations for all three municipalities.

In terms of practice changes, the Terms of Reference (ToR) developed as part of the collaborative governance process determined that the ICC, which comprised of Councillors and CAOs, is required to meet at least four times per year. As well, the CAOs of the respective municipalities are also required to meet to discuss opportunities for regional collaboration.

The Stronger Together agreement also mandates that following an election, new Councils are to be oriented on the agreement within the first three months of their term.

**When:**
When did your municipality begin to use the practice? Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

The ICC had its first formal meeting in September 2013, although the three municipalities have a long history of collaborating regionally (i.e. recreation, FCSS, culture, fire, emergency management) and cost sharing on capital projects.

The practice of developing and implementing the ICC occurred with one official step, the formalized collaborative governance framework and practices approved by all three Councils.

The ICC immediately began to discuss ongoing issues (i.e. access to Town’s wastewater facility) and have since developed many collaborative solutions that are mutually beneficial.

The process of identifying and addressing issues that impact the region and bringing forward for discussion at the ICC will be an ongoing commitment for all three municipal Councils and Administrations.
**Who:**  
Who was responsible for implementing the practice?  

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?  

The three CAOs took the lead in implementing the collaborative governance framework, its practices and coordinating the ICC and its meetings.  

The ongoing management of the ICC is coordinated by the three CAOs and the bringing forward of an item to discuss at the ICC may come from one or more Council’s direction, CAOs or at the request of a regional committee. Ultimately, the three CAOs will be required to meet regularly a minimum of four times per to discuss collaboration and develop the agenda for the ICC meetings.

**RESOURCES REQUIRED**

**Budget:**  
How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent $XX per year)?  

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?  

The research, design and implementation of the collaborative governance framework and ICC cost approximately $130,000.00 (including contracted services and in-kind staff time for research).  

$35,000.00 in Collaborative Goverance Initiative (CGI) grant funding and $30,000,000 in Regional Collaboration Program (RCP) grant funding was received from the province.  

There are no additional ongoing operational costs associated with the ICC (normal staff duties) and any capital costs that are incurred will be subject to the project’s approval by the respective Councils.

**Staff:**  
What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. “It took X staff member(s) X months on this” or “This is part of normal staff duties.”)  

The design, implementation and management of the ICC and collaborative governance practice is part of normal staff duties, principally CAOs. Dependent on workload and project priorities, senior municipal staff and/or consultants may be used to forward the ICC’s strategic goals.
**Infrastructure:**
What “capital costs” (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

Again, any capital costs are subject to regular budget processes and the project’s approval by the respective Councils.

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**EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE**

**Formal:**
If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

Tell us who was involved.

The formal evaluation involved the ICC reporting back to the Tri-Council, twice annually – in order for Councils to evaluate the ICC performance.

**Informal:**
If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

The three municipal Councils evaluate the ICC with each new Council, as well as during their respective organizational meetings in October, where members are appointed to the ICC.

**Performance measures:**
Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)

Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on…) examples include:

- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures
The forming of the ICC has improved and accelerated the opportunity for intermunicipal collaboration (i.e. expansion of regional programming, sharing of services) and partnerships in addition to improving communications and understanding between the three Councils. The ICC has acted to strengthen intermunicipal relationships.

The ICC changed the lens through which the three municipalities view issues, and broadened perspectives to “one community, governed by three Councils.” The ICC has also improved the municipalities’ capacity to respond to municipal priorities.

Since 2013, the ICC and its shift in philosophy means many strides have been made towards regional solutions that ensure municipal sustainability.

Through the ICC the County has made financial investments in infrastructure and revenue sharing agreements ($2.2 million to improve the Town’s wastewater facility, $6.5 million for the Town’s arena upgrades and $800,000.00 for the Village’s arena expansion, $750,000.00 in annual revenue sharing to the Town, and $50,000.00 to the Village) as well as the moved into regional infrastructure planning and deficit inventory, along with the regionlization of economic development.

Most notably, the County purchased 112 acres within the Village’s municipal boundaries, to accommodate the County’s facility needs, as well as to drive economic development in the region with the development of industrial and commercial properties.

Changes:
(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or would like to make, to your practice as a result. (e.g. “After implementing this practice, we decided that it would be better if…”)

- or -
(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

The ICC has met the three Council’s expectations to enhance the opportunity for collaboration and to increase planning from a regional perspective. The ICC process itself has evolved and contributes to an improved working relationship between the three Councils and their Administrations.

LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED

Benefits:
What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (e.g. Preparation of Council agenda packages now requires less time, etc.)

The ICC and collaborative governance framework have provided the three municipalities a renewed commitment to partnership and renewed commitment to existing regional services (i.e recreation, FCSS, solid waste, emergency services). The ICC has driven the desire to explore more efficient and effective ways of providing municipal programs and services.
The Councils and Administration have a better understanding of each municipality’s needs and associated challenges. Working relationships at the staff level continue to improve as joint projects unfold.

**Key Lessons:**
What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:
- designing;
- obtaining approval;
- implementing; and
- evaluating your practice?

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated benefits. (e.g. “We realized that we needed to spend more time…”)

All good things take time, commitment and a thorough effort. Defining the goals of the ICC and its role in the relationships of the three Councils up front, is of critical importance. Equally important is buy-in or commitment from all parties, as partners need to be willing and engaged, as one municipality can’t be coaxed into collaborative governance out of necessity for sustainability. All partners should feel their needs are being heard and met as part of a collaborative governance process.

**Advice to Municipal Peers:**
What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

Advice to municipal peers would include having a good pulse on the Councils involved and not to proceed where there is any uncertainty as to a Council’s commitment to collaborative governance.

Understanding that intermunicipal collaboration does take time and commitment is important. Councils and CAOs need to be honest and engage in candid, respectful conversations.

**PRACTICE UPDATES**

**New Information:**
There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:
- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.
Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

Not applicable.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

**Suggestions:**
Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

Click here to enter text.

**Documents & Attachments:**
Please list any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

* Note: Most documents can be electronically attached to your practice in the MEnet database. If only a paper version of your document is available, please send it with your completed Practice Collection Form. We will scan it and attach it.

Stronger Together framework document and signed agreement document (September 13, 2015)
Joint Town, County, Village news release example (April 14, 2015)

**Nominations:**
Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail [menet@gov.ab.ca](mailto:menet@gov.ab.ca) and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

Town of Rocky Mountain House – Development of rectangular football/soccer fields with public and private partnership. Funding was received from the Town, the County and the Rocky Coop as well as the Rocky Credit Union.
Contact: Todd Becker, CAO, Town of Rocky Mountain House, [tbecker@rockymtnhouse.com](mailto:tbecker@rockymtnhouse.com)

Village of Caroline – Caroline Community HUB, a community-driven development of a multi-use facility expansion to the Caroline arena complex. Funding was received through MCFP grant, the County, the Village and donations (monetary, volunteer labour and in-kind).
Contact: Melissa Beebe, CAO, Village of Caroline, [administrator@caroline.ca](mailto:administrator@caroline.ca)
Have we missed something; anything you’d like to add to the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not mentioned?

The Town, Village and County are proudly redefining what it means to be a rural community as they work together in a regional context.

Thank you for your contribution to the Municipal Excellence network. Please return this form as soon as you are able.