

SUMMARY REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

SUMMIT PURPOSE...to bring together regional participants to consider and discuss the opportunities to shape and define the future of the Saskatoon Region from a cooperative value added base for sustained, orderly and collective economic growth and prosperity

SUMMIT FORMAT:

.. a series of sessions to investigate the issues, opportunities and challenges with presentations by experienced practitioners from a variety of regional planning models (from a totally voluntary body in Calgary to a provincially legislated and prescriptive model in Niagara and others in between) outlining what they have achieved, how they have evolved and are governed, lessons learned and critical factors for success. They examined how they were formed and by whom, how they defined their region, various tiers of participation by function or distinctive area, dispute resolution, challenging issues, maintaining autonomy, balance and community identity in the region.

..technical sessions on economic growth, infrastructure delivery and financing in a regional model

..facilitated workshops for stakeholders to investigate and discuss the findings and apply their perspectives to the Saskatoon Region addressing four key questions:

1. What is the Saskatoon Region?
2. What are the principles upon which a Regional Plan should be based?
3. What are the Terms of Reference to use going forward to help form a Saskatoon Region Growth and Development Plan?
4. What are the expectations for Deliverables, Outcomes and timeframes for a draft Regional Plan?

These Workshops were the core of the Summit, the learning and sharing forum for the participants...the determining venue to gauge the desire to proceed in principle and identify the issues, challenges and opportunities to form the foundation of an action plan, planning body and regional principles. The prevailing context overriding the discussion was:

- The time is right, urgent and should not be missed
- The communities must lead this
- Act incrementally, with purpose, resolve and common value
- Set milestones and communicate

This Summary Report and Recommended Actions is prepared for the consideration of the Organizing Committee for circulation along with the detailed workshop output to all participants as a means of advocating an active, sustained set of deliverable milestone actions to build on the momentum and progress towards a Regional Planning framework and structure for the Saskatoon Region.

It must be emphasized that the following comments on the presentations and workshop represent the perspectives of the author and are not intended to be conclusive or decision based. They do represent a professional set of observations followed by recommendations for action based on the thoughtful and thorough input from the Summit and recognizing that there is as much benefit from consideration of the differences and minority opinion as the evolving consensus to promote an inclusive path and process.

DOMINANT THEMES

From both the presentations and workshops there were clear evolving themes of common thoughts and aspiration. The following represent those that offer the basis for pursuit towards a Regional Plan and structure. They are not necessarily presented in any order of priority but generally as they arose and under the 4 Key Questions, much of which understandably overlapped.

As a heading comment it would be fair to observe that there was enthusiastic interest and support for a stronger Regional Plan and cooperation from a strong base of expectation and opportunity to present the larger whole as a more viable and competitive scale capturing a growing slice of the growing Saskatchewan economy in an increasingly competitive global context. This was balanced by both healthy curiosity and caution centered on the unknown elements and desire for preservation of community identity and autonomy that have characterized the past and remain prevalent.

URGENCY TO SEIZE THE MOMENTUM... all of the right factors are aligning, there is substantial projected growth, momentum is positive, interest is high...the opportunity should be captured and led by the stakeholder communities ...failure to act puts orderly growth and regional scale at risk and reduces the ability to influence public and private investment

PROCEED INCREMENTALLY AND VOLUNTARILY...work for quick and inclusive wins on truly regional interests to establish the trust basis for proceeding to more articulated and specific regional plans and structures...grow the regional participant base through tangible achievement of common purposes and values

CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY AND MAPPING...one distinguishing characteristic of an homogenous region is common language, mapping and process that enables advocacy and communication

BE INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL...engage all regional participants in open and thorough dialogue including First Nations, commercial and industrial investors and residents...recognize each has a proud and autonomous position based on values but equal common interest in sharing and shaping the growth region potential and opportunity...embrace both commonalities and differences

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER...the data and information base will provide a very effective starting point to determine and visualize common values and interests...start by mapping land use, future growth areas, sensitive transition interfaces, transportation, natural features, infrastructure, agricultural areas, watershed, other institutional boundaries..each participant should lay out its ambitions and vision...assemble commonalities and differences.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY...the regional area has a diverse base and expectations but are very interdependent on the collective growth and orderly, efficient and incremental investment in infrastructure...diversity is a strength not a deterrent

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE...the regional planning initiative starts with a base position then focuses on the future growth and diverse population as it will evolve over the planning period to a much different balance of interests competing within a growing global sector...the collective scale and influence of the region will drive its positioning

ENABLING READINESS...to continue to capture and accelerate investment in the region it must have consistent documented and predictable planning, enabling and timely decision making, infrastructure capacity...a well organized and orderly regional plan supports investment choices and must recognize regional diversity and interests

ENGAGE THE PROVINCE...the province has laid out a Regional Planning framework in Bill 90..it contains a good basis for both regional planning and governance structure...it is in the Province's interest to support active regional initiatives to achieve their Growth Plan and build strong regional foundations with global scale to compete with an orderly and efficient infrastructure and investment climate...they should be engaged as the process proceeds and support it actively with funding and resources to advance the objectives and give them a placement in the outcomes...Bill 90 (setting aside the potential mandatory provisions) lays out a strong foundation to guide the purpose, functions, authorities and governance of a regional planning authority

COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE...trust and respect arise from experience and process...all participants must feel current and in the loop of discussion and process...ensure all interests are entertained and considered with respect and openly

DEFINING THE REGION...this subject provided both diversity and common thought ranging from the retail trading area and commuter shed, watershed, other institutional boundaries, infrastructure spheres...the NB and clear path of thought was the region was much broader than the traditional Corman Park-Saskatoon Planning District and could include the regional towns up to 50 miles distant who would see the common value and contribute...considerable input spoke to tiers of a region by distinct area or for various functions and interests, ie a large region of common collective vision but engagement and participation at different levels for different functions

THE REGIONAL PLANNING BODY...consistent with the themes of incrementality and maintaining momentum the P4G group was seen as the best and "ready to mobilize group" to take the lead to advance and grow the regional theme and participation..a process for voluntary engagement and participation must be developed for the larger area...the P4G should have a stronger political and communication direction..it is the right base and with the consistent purpose of regional planning to move this forward, enlarge the participation base and establish documented Terms of Reference, engage the elected bodies and province, provide regional communication...it must be seen to be fully representative and regionally focused

THE REGION AS A CONCEPT AND AREA...the region foundation rests with the concept of togetherness and collective value added, common vision...it must first embrace the value of that collective benefit...defining the area is much more an art of community and regional determinism and purpose than drawing a line

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Regional Summit fulfilled and achieved its espoused mandate, to engage the regional participants, increase the awareness and understanding, identify the critical issues, principles and opportunities...and mostly to determine collective interest in pursuing this objective with an active agenda. The experience of others illuminated the understanding and assisted the participants to focus on the critical 4 questions that would form the basis of the go forward agenda.

It was the intent of the organizers to gauge and build a base foundation of understanding and flag the critical principles and framework for a regional plan and planning body.... that was achieved with strong resolve and order of magnitude consensus. It was the beginning of the path that would only succeed if clear actions were adopted to move forward and establish a timetable for delivery of outcomes through a collaborative process. Accordingly the following recommendations are presented to further that outcome:

1. Circulate this report and the summary of workshop input to all participants, their Councils, the Ministers of Government Relations and The Economy and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Regional area...create a web site to post this material and regular updates of ongoing activity and invite feedback....adopt and implement an active regional community engagement process and conversation to broaden the inertia and understanding
2. Identify P4G as the core planning group to pursue and facilitate this initiative and direct their mandate to:
 - Invite and promote enlargement of the participation base and determine the terms of engagement through documentation of common purpose, scope and intent
 - Revise their structure to provide for a Policy body of elected officials to lead and oversee the process and give it much higher profile and governance commitment...the current Technical Committee will continue its work plan and report through the policy body
 - Appoint an independent non-voting Chair (ie not from any of the participating bodies)
3. The participating Councils jointly approach the Province through the Minister of Government Relations to support and facilitate the regional planning process with shared funding and collaborative resources, including liaison members to the P4G to exhibit provincial support and ensure regional interests are collectively acknowledged and aligned with provincial interests.
4. P4G develop a 1 and 2 year work plan that will include a funding plan, project milestones, deliverables, Governance Principles and Terms of Reference, participant MOU documentation through the use of Ad Hoc or Standing Committees to expedite results and encourage regional engagement
5. An early technical priority for the Technical Planning Group is the collation of base data and mapping, land use, projected growth, transportation, infrastructure, natural features, other institutional boundaries and functions and any other related base data

Attachment 1

6. That the regional concept comprise both a broad planning horizon with common values and vision but also acknowledge and sanction sub regions or tiers based on function, significant planning issues, eg Corman Park / Saskatoon, Warman/Martensville urban region, major industrial or resource development areas...this will add depth to the network and facilitate building blocks of success within more manageable parameters, but always as an integral part of the mother region.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

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