

What does being a 'sustainable' local government mean?

Under a new local governance system, actions will be taken to assist communities in determining their current state of sustainability and to support the strengthening of communities wherever there is local interest. Here are some of the factors and circumstances which affect the ability of communities to develop and sustain themselves effectively over time.

A sustainable local government:

- governs and democratically represents the interests of the community it serves with significant community support and involvement.
- carries out administrative, service and infrastructure responsibilities in accordance with provincial legislation and local by-laws.
- provides necessary services and related infrastructure, facilities and equipment at reasonable costs.
- funds services from local resources and through partnerships.
- contributes actively to the demographic, social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the community it serves.

A local government is less sustainable when, for example, it has:

- a small, or declining tax base that is increasingly insufficient to pay for necessary services or cope with unexpected expenditures.
- a small and/or declining population to sustain and support the community and council.
- Continuing council conflicts, or a lack of interest in the community and/or its council.
- a lack of adequate staff.
- a lack of cooperation with other incorporated or unincorporated communities.

By coming together to create a larger local government, communities are able to achieve the following benefits:

- increase the pool of residents interested in serving on council.
- attract administrative and technical staff who are able to effectively advise council, and capable of implementing and enforcing council's decisions.
- increase the pool of volunteers to serve on volunteer fire brigades, to assist with various recreation programs and to serve on various local and regional boards and commissions.
- provide basic services, such as water, wastewater and fire protection, that are in line with today's standards.
- reduce costs by avoiding duplication of services and/or achieving economies of scale.
- strengthen financial capacity through increased size of tax base.