

SCHEDULE E
Form of Completion Report for Plans

Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy

GMF Number:	15163
Name of the Recipient:	City of Regina
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<p>The preparation of this Strategy was carried out with assistance from the Green Municipal Fund, a Fund financed by the Government of Canada and administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Notwithstanding this support, the views expressed are the personal views of the authors, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Government of Canada accept no responsibility for them.</p>	

1. Summary of the Initiative

a. Please briefly describe the Plan that was prepared as part this planning exercise.

The project started with an Underutilized Land Study that was used to develop the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy, which is considered our Community Brownfield Action Plan.

The Study identified regulatory, environmental and economic barriers to development of vacant lots, parking lots, and vacant buildings. A consultant was retained to conduct this Study which involved:

- Engagement with the Business Improvement Districts and the development industry to determine barriers and ideas for addressing them;
- Development of proformas that compared development potential of vacant sites within existing areas versus their development in greenfield areas;
- Creation of a vacant lot inventory; and
- Recommendations for the City.

This Study informed the development of an Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy (ULIS; i.e. the Action Plan) to outline the course of action the City of Regina will take to meet the broader sustainability goals in the community by meeting the following outcomes:

- Reinvestment in vacant and underutilized sites and revitalize neighbourhoods;
- Improvements towards meeting the Official Community Plan (OCP) intensification target of 30% (i.e. 30% of new population growth is located within the existing parts of the city); and
- Progress on the OCP Community Priorities through development on underutilized sites that:
 - Support development of complete neighbourhoods;

- Support the availability of diverse housing options;
- Achieve long-term financial viability; and
- Foster economic prosperity.

The Study was endorsed by City Council in December 2018 and the Strategy was approved by City Council in July 2019 with the addition of actions that have subsequently been added. Implementation of the Strategy is underway.

b. What was the objective in preparing the Plan (i.e. what was the Recipient trying to achieve, and why)?

The primary objective of this work was to determine what the City should do to foster opportunities for redevelopment on underutilized sites and meet broader community goals.

Important first steps in this regard were to better understand the barriers challenging the development industry to advance redevelopment of vacant sites today, determine what the City can do to address those barriers, and how that effort would be undertaken through the development of a Strategy.

c. If the lead applicant is not a municipality, please briefly explain why the lead applicant undertook this initiative.

N/A

d. Please summarize the activities completed as part of this Initiative, as per Schedule A.

NOTE: Your summary should build on the information you included in your previous Progress Report(s). Please ensure to briefly (four to five sentences) explain how the Plan was prepared – that is, what was the approach, or methodology, that was taken to meet the community's objectives. If applicable, please describe any public consultation process that was used in developing the Plan (e.g. describe items such as how stakeholders were identified and engaged in the preparation of the Plan; the visioning process that was used; any community surveying techniques that were used and so forth).

Determining what the City should do to foster opportunities for redevelopment was approached as a two-step process. The first was through the completion of an Underutilized Land Study (the Study; ULS) that was led by V3 Companies of Canada, supported by Praxis Consulting and Trace Associates Inc. The Study resulted in key deliverables that informed the development of the Strategy, including:

- Barriers to reinvestment in vacant and underutilized sites
- Vacant lot inventory within established areas of the city
- Comparison proformas for three developments, each in greenfield and brownfield areas;
- Recommendations for the Strategy to address barriers.

Stakeholder engagement was an important element of the overall project. The Study included two facilitated workshops as well as three Open House events. Stakeholders for the workshop

were identified through the local home-builder association, members of the downtown and warehouse Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), as well as a review of development community members that have recently submitted development applications for locations within the established city. Invitations to the Open Houses were broader and were shared with the realtor associations, local home-builder association and its members. As well, invitation letters to all landowners of underutilized sites were sent for the Open Houses.

Questions considered in the facilitated workshop mirrored those provided to attendees of the Open Houses who were provided with a workbook to share their thoughts and ideas. This material was consolidated and grouped into themes and shared with a cross-departmental group of staff to consider; this also presented an opportunity to consider other solutions for addressing the concerns.

These conversations resulted in the identification of barriers in six main categories:

- Regulatory
- Approval Process
- Brownfields
- Financial
- Infrastructure
- Social
- Market

The Study was endorsed by City Council in December 2018 and was a key input for the second step which was to develop the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy (the Strategy; ULIS).

As such, to inform the development of the Strategy, stakeholders involved in the Study's facilitated workshops were invited to continue to conversation and review and provide feedback on the draft goals and strategic actions identified to meet them. Feedback was received through a workshop as well as in written form following the workshop. This feedback was reflected upon and used to refine the Strategy. Administrations' response was provided to stakeholders that described how the feedback was used, including the changes that were made as a result. It was also included in the City Council report seeking approval of the Strategy.

The draft Strategy was finalized, tested internally through a review with multiple department and the Steering Committee, refined based on feedback, and taken forward for approval. The Strategy outlines the implementation plan for addressing the barriers to redevelopment and was approved by City Council in July 2019.

- e. Were there any significant changes to the scope or costs of the Project as described in the Agreement or in a previously submitted Project Progress Report (if applicable)? If so, please briefly explain why.**

There were no significant changes; the work proceeded as was planned.

f. How much did the preparation of the Plan cost, and how was it paid for?

Approximately \$100,000 in direct project costs was spent using capital City budget that was allocated to this project. These costs were largely for the consultant and associated costs for engagement to conduct the preliminary Study used to develop Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy. These costs were budgeted by City Council with recognition that up to 50% of those costs could be reimbursed through FCM's GMF program.

As well, full-time City staff contributed time in-kind to work with the consultant to develop the Underutilized Land Study as well as prepare the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy. Also, two staff sessions were held where representatives from multiple departments attended to feed into the overall consultation process for the Study. As a result, overall, staff in-kind contributions exceeded the 10% requirement and were aligned with what was originally projected (see the letter sent July 19, 2016) confirming in-kind support for the project.

g. Roughly how long (in months) did it take to prepare the Plan?

Approximately two and a half years (February 2017-December 2019: 36 months). The time was mostly dedicated to completing the Study. This work was completed in December 2018; using the Study as a key input, the Strategy was started in December 2018, approved by City Council in July with the addition of three actions, updated and fully completed in December 2019.

h. How is the Plan related to existing plans, practices, guidelines, or policies within the municipality and how does it contribute to achieving the municipality's sustainability goals?

The Plan, the Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy (ULIS) is part of a broader work plan to encourage growth through intensification (as per the Official Community Plan). As such efforts involve seeking opportunities to align and coordinate efforts with other projects and initiatives.

It was found through the Study and development of the Strategy that there were several projects already underway at the City that, when completed, will begin to address the barriers that had been identified by stakeholders. These projects included the implementation of a new building and development permit software system, completion of a new Zoning Bylaw, and advancement of a Neighbourhood Planning Program. As such, development of underutilized sites is expected to be better supported as these projects are implemented.

Upon completion of the OCP (a framework to guide the sustainable development of the community) and approval of targets associated with intensification in 2014, the City created an Intensification Work Plan to facilitate coordination within the organization of efforts that support intensification. This ensured actions being undertaken considered one another's timing, content and intent and the overall direction of fostering intensification of existing areas. Opportunities for intensification are also potential sites identified as underutilized in the Underutilized Land Study. As such, many initiatives that the City had initiated or planned to

initiate also supported the advancement of this Strategy; as such, this Strategy helps bring them together under a common umbrella and purpose.

2. Community Context

a. Please provide a brief (5-6 sentences) profile of the community that is the object of this Plan, including population, geographic area, demographics, and general economic conditions.

(NOTE: This information is readily available from the Community Profiles section of the Statistics Canada website at www.statscan.gc.ca.)

Regina is the capital of Saskatchewan and the 16th largest city in Canada with a population of 230,725 (Source: Statistics Canada, 2017).

Regina is located in the southcentral area of the province and covers an area of 118.4 square kilometers. It is in the middle of the Prairie Provinces with Alberta to the west, and Manitoba to the east. It borders the American states of Montana and North Dakota.

Following a period of slow growth from the 1990's to the mid 2000's, in 2007, the City began to experience a significant population increase due to a booming economy, primarily in the resource and agricultural sectors and the subsequent arrival of both international and interprovincial residents. By 2017, the economy experienced a slow-down.

In the first 6 months of 2019, there were significant increases in year-to-date employment and drops in both the number of unemployed and the unemployment rate. However, despite strong job numbers, all other monthly indicators declined in May 2019. The construction sector was particularly weak with steep declines in both housing starts and building permits.

In 2013, the Regina City Council adopted Design Regina; the Official Community Plan (OCP) providing a comprehensive policy framework to guide the physical, economic, social and cultural development of the City for 300,000 people. In developing the OCP, the City was successful in receiving a Green Municipal Fund (GMF) grant under the sustainable community plans category. Recognizing the economic, social and environmental benefits of intensification, the OCP's goal is to direct at least 30 percent of the population growth to the existing urban areas by approximately 2040 when the overall population of the city is expected to be 300,000. This target is an important backdrop for the development and implementation of this Action Plan.

b. Briefly (2-3 sentences) indicate the size and structure of the municipal government, and the approximate number of full-time municipal employees.

The City of Regina employs approximately 2000 full-time staff made up four main Divisions:

- Citizen Experience, Innovation and Performance
 - o This area includes:
 - Citizen Experience (Communications)
 - Corporate Strategy and Performance
 - People and Organizational Culture (Human Resources)
 - Technology and Digital Innovation (IT)

- Citizen Services
 - o This area includes:
 - Fire and Protective Services
 - Roadways and Transportation (Operations)
 - Transit and Fleet
 - Water, Waste and Environmental Services
- City Planning and Community Development
 - o This area includes:
 - Sustainable Infrastructure
 - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
 - Planning and Development Services
 - Facilities Services
- Financial Strategy and Sustainability
 - o This area includes:
 - Financial Services
 - Assessment, Taxation and Utility Billing
 - Land and Real Estate

3. The Team: Who was involved?

- a. Briefly (4-5 sentences) indicate who was involved in developing this Plan and their affiliations. Include both municipal staff and officials who managed the preparation of the Plan, and any consultants who works on the Plan.**

The first phase, the development of the Study, was led by the Planning Department, with support from other areas, including Geospatial, Current Planning, Real Estate, Tax and Assessment, and Development Engineering. A Senior City Planner and City Planner II were most involved in the day to day management of the project. They also worked most directly with the lead consultant, V3 Consultants of Canada who had brought on Praxis to lead the engagement activities and Trace and Associates to lead the vacant lot inventory. During the Study, this team was supported by a Steering Committee, which included the Manager of Urban Planning, Director of Planning, Manager of Environmental Services, and Director of Tax and Assessment. The Executive Director of City Planning and Community Development also acted as the Executive Lead for the project and provided feedback and advice through the project, particularly in terms of how to consider impacts to other City departments.

Upon completion of the Study, it was taken forward to Executive Committee and City Council for endorsement and provided an opportunity for the consultant to speak to Council directly about the findings of the study and provide advice from their experience on how to address the barriers to achieve broader City sustainability goals.

The next step to develop the Strategy was done with internal resources, led by Planning and supported by the aforementioned Steering Committee and Executive Lead. It also had a Project Team comprised of staff from Current Planning, Building Standards, Development Engineering, and Tax and Assessment to provide ideas, advice and feedback on how to use the Study to

develop Strategy that could be readily implemented and corporately supported. The Strategy was taken forward to City Council for approval.

b. Was there a Project champion, who was instrumental to the completion of the Plan? If so, please include his or her name, title and contact information and describe his or her role in the preparation of the Plan.

Diana Hawryluk: Executive Director, City Planning and Community Development Division
P: 306-777-7758
E: dhawryluk@regina.ca

Diana was the Executive Lead involved in the development of both the Study and the Strategy. As such, she provided executive guidance in the development of tools to address barriers to redevelopment of underutilized sites and to advance progress on intensification, championed the project with her leadership colleagues, and supported the Study and Strategy's advancement for approval by City Council. Her division also will lead coordination of the Strategy's implementation and annual reporting.

4. Environmental, Economic, and Social Benefits of the Initiative

The Strategy is a foundational step required to address barriers that are challenging the development community from advancing intensification and development on underutilized sites.

The Strategy as a whole is intended to address environmental, economic and social aspects of underutilized lands and the opportunity that they present to improve the sustainability of the community and meet the OCP Community Priorities, including:

- Developing complete neighbourhoods;
- Supporting the availability of diverse housing options;
- Achieving long term financial viability; and
- Fostering economic prosperity.

In that vein, the Study, a primary input for the development of the Strategy, broke the feedback down into categories including brownfields, market and social categories (among others) and the resulting recommendations were similarly presented.

Strategy goals were developed to more directly respond to stakeholder concerns and feedback provided in the Study which were focused on regulations, processes, financial, promotion and monitoring. The environmental, economic and social strategic actions are woven into these goals, recognizing that they are related and influence one another.

A primary objective of the Strategy, the Action Plan, is to improve the redevelopment potential of underutilized sites to foster achievement of environmental, economic and social benefits. The Strategy is not developed to meet each of those areas separately, but rather recognizes that when

efforts are focused on making development within established areas more achievable, there are multiple benefits. The monitoring and evaluation section will be used to track progress on actions.

a. What environmental goals/objectives and targets were established in the Plan?

Meeting environment objectives is woven into the goals of the overall strategy and to be monitored through the overall monitoring and evaluation goal.

More specifically, the Study identified Brownfields and sites with potential soil contamination as a challenge, largely due to a general lack of knowledge of the availability of these sites as well as the risks, remediation efforts that are involved, incentive programs and liability transfer laws.

Actions to address these barriers are identified in the Strategy within the RULES and PROMOTION goals.

Action: 1-9 is for City Council to work with our provincial municipal association, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities' Association), to lobby the provincial government to support addressing the environmental liability around how titles are taken on potentially contaminated sites where taxes are in arrears. An option proposed was to allow, but not require municipalities to enter a land for the purpose of conducting an environmental assessment within having to take title of the property. Advancing in this direction would allow cities to determine the state of potentially contaminated sites and design programs for addressing them.

Action 4-8 involves how to better promote and market available underutilized sites, including brownfields that may be contaminated, to ensure prospective buyers are aware of options. This lack of awareness was identified as a barrier to the redevelopment of these sites.

Action 4-9 involves working with others, including the Province of Saskatchewan, to make information on the remediation of contaminated sites more available and accessible.

Advancing these actions will support cleaning the sites and enabling them to be used to support achievement of the City's intensification target which will further support achievement of overall environmental goals.

In terms of monitoring and evaluating progress over time, initial measures and targets have been identified within the Strategy with recognition that they will evolve and become more specific over time as initiatives are advanced. For instance, meeting the timeframes for implementing actions for each goal, including the actions noted above, will be reviewed and included within the Annual Report.

b. What social goals/objectives and targets were established in the Plan?

Meeting social objectives is woven into the goals of the overall strategy. However, specific actions within the FINANCIAL goal advance social objectives are as follows.

Action 3-2 involves linking the existing program that incentivizes development of affordable housing with underutilized sites.

Action 3-12 involves developing a neighbourhood clean-up campaign to improve existing areas and associated perceptions that may exist.

Action 3-13 involves investing in innovative transit to foster improved convenience of amenities to development on these sites.

In terms of monitoring and evaluating progress over time, initial measures and targets have been identified within the Strategy with recognition that they will evolve and become more specific over time as initiatives are advanced. For instance, meeting the timeframes for implementing actions for each goal, including the actions noted above, will be reviewed and included within the Annual Report.

c. What economic goals/objectives and targets were established in the Plan?

Meeting economic objectives is woven into the goals of the overall strategy. However, the economic directions are the most directly identified.

Regulatory and Approval Process concerns were raised through the development of the Study given their impact on the overall financial viability of development projects on underutilized sites. As a result, a Financial theme emerged to help address these and other concerns as well as one around Promotion to improve community demand for development within existing areas.

More specifically, the Strategy goals include:

1. **RULES:** The regulatory frameworks support redevelopment of underutilized lands.
2. **PROCESS:** Information for redevelopment applications is readily available and the process to apply is coordinated.
3. **FINANCE:** Private investment in the redevelopment of underutilized properties is fostered through strategic public investment.
4. **PROMOTION** Collaboration with others is fostered and development opportunities within existing communities is fostered.

In terms of monitoring and evaluating progress over time, initial measures and targets have been identified within the Strategy with recognition that they will evolve and become more specific over time as initiatives are advanced. For instance, meeting the timeframes for implementing actions for each goal, including the actions noted above, will be reviewed and included within the Annual Report.

5. Outcomes and Next Steps

a. How will your community be using the Plan (i.e. what happens now that the Plan is finished?)

Led by the City Planning and Community Development Division, the actions in the Strategy will be implemented by different departments guided by the timeline outlined in the Strategy. Annually, a report will be consolidated and provided to City Council, and as such, the community, to describe progress on actions, effectiveness in meeting goals, and the ongoing review and updating of specific targets and outcomes will be undertaken as initiatives become increasingly defined. The intention is to be able to review progress in a direct manner over time to understand how actions undertaken are ultimately resulting in the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites. The Strategy is also intentioned to be open to amend as opportunities arise; as such, updates to the actions are anticipated to occur as the Strategy is implemented.

Implementation will involve a continuation of the conversation with the development community. The 'Promotion' goal in particular recognizes that others are needed, beyond the municipality, to improve the interest and desire for development on vacant sites within established areas. So, work with the industry will continue both to seek feedback on whether the actions the City are taking are having the intended impact as well as to continue to explore how to work together to support infill development on vacant and otherwise underutilized sites.

b. How will the Plan be implemented?

With the Strategy approved by Council, immediate-term actions that are planned for this year or already underway will continue. Capturing them within this Strategy helps build understanding of how the actions that are being taken are addressing barriers to redevelopment that have been felt by stakeholders. They are also important momentum-creating actions to kick start the Strategy so it can hit the ground running.

Efforts to advance short-term actions will also get underway shortly as Business Planning across the organization gets started for 2020-2021.

c. Do you anticipate any changes to municipal operations, policies or programs as a result of having prepared this Plan? If so, please describe these changes.

Generally, the purpose of the Strategy is to indeed impact operations, policies, and/or programs. There are specific actions identified in the Strategy that direct changes to bylaws and policies.

At the same time, some initiatives were already underway prior to the approval of the Strategy and therefore are not a direct result of this Strategy (e.g. Action 1-1: Updated Zoning Bylaw). However, their inclusion in the Strategy reinforces how initiatives are linked and collectively a part of addressing barriers. It also is a signal to monitor their impact on underutilized sites as they are implemented.

Other actions recognize the need for further review and research to be undertaken prior to directing a change in operations, policies or programs. An example of this is (Action 2-6 Explore opportunities to improve the internal process to support redevelopment on underutilized sites specific to the Downtown). As such, these actions are anticipated to direct the development of more specific initiatives as the Strategy is implemented.

6. Lessons Learned and Knowledge Sharing

In answering the questions in this section, please consider all aspects of the preparation of the Plan – from the initial planning through each of the essential tasks until the Plan was completed.

a. If your municipality was planning to undertake the preparation of this kind of a plan again, what (if anything) would you do *differently* (based on your experience with the preparation of this Plan), and why?

It seemed that “the problem” from a stakeholder perspective changed over the course of the Study and then the Strategy. Initially the feedback seemed to focus the issues being most focused on the City’s processes and the associated uncertainty, and then as consultation continued on the Strategy, the concerns shifted more heavily towards the “costs” of development on vacant sites within the existing community (and less concerns about process).

If we were to do this type of a project again, it would be important to consider whether there are better ways of getting to the root of the issue within “study” portions of the project to ensure the implementation strategy can be effective in addressing concerns raised by stakeholders.

b. If your municipality was planning to undertake the preparation of this kind of plan again, what (if anything) would you want to do *in the same way* (based on your experience with the preparation of this Plan), and why?

The two-step process of conducting the Study, working with our consultant to present it to Council to build understanding and seek their endorsement and then developing the Strategy for Council’s approval worked well. It helped generate interest and build support.

Also having a cross-departmental team involved as the Steering Committee, helped work through the diverse feedback received from stakeholders and determine how it could be applied.

The streamlined approach that focused solely on getting the framework for action in place (i.e. the Strategy) versus trying to also develop the detail associated with individual actions (e.g. developing a brownfield incentive program) is felt to be positive. This was in response to stakeholder feedback that felt that the issues had long been discussed and that our processes were too long. This effectively moved the “Study” into a document that the City Administration can use in Business Planning for implementation.

c. What barriers/challenges (if any) did your municipality encounter in undertaking the preparation of this Plan, and how were they overcome?

When developing the overall plan for the Strategy, two in-person stakeholder sessions were planned to ensure they were informed about what was being proposed and that there was an understanding of what was being recommended prior to the report going forward to committee and council. However, stakeholder interest was more limited than anticipated. As such, rather than trying to force participation while responding to the preferred stakeholder action (which was to start implementing the Strategy versus continuing to discuss challenges), the second session was changed to from an in-person meeting to an email with an invitation to contact City staff with any questions or concerns.

d. Aside from the Final Plan, has your work resulted in anything else that could be of use to another municipality (for example, a new policy for sustainable community development, a series of model bylaws, the design of a new operating practice, a public consultation manual, check-lists, a measurement tool to assess progress in moving towards greater sustainability, etc.)? If so, please describe the item(s) briefly here and include a copy of the item(s) when submitting this report, so that it can be shared with other communities.

No, the Plan is the primary deliverable of the project.

e. Would you like to showcase your Plan through an FCM webinar or workshop?

Sure. It may be worthwhile for municipalities in similar stages of their brownfield redevelopment journey to also hear about it and glean ideas on how they can start their own action plan.

7. Publicity and Outreach

a. Has the Initiative received any recognition, media coverage, or notable public support? If so, please describe briefly (3-4 sentences)

Yes, our local newspaper, the Leader Post published articles as follows:

- September 22, 2018 – Comments on the Study’s finding about the number of vacant lots and why development is financially challenging in existing areas.
- November 22, 2018 – Comments on how to develop a critical mass of residential development in and around the downtown core, referencing recommendations from the Study.
- July 31, 2019 – Comments on the approval of the Strategy to encourage more infill development by addressing barriers to investing in underutilized sites.
- September 2019 – The development of the Study received an Excellence in Planning Award from the Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute (SPPI).

- b. Is there a website where more information about the Initiative can be found? If so, please provide the web address with links to the relevant sections.**

<https://www.regina.ca/business-development/land-property-development/planning/>

- NOTE: Scroll to the Intensification section.

8. Contacts

- a. Please provide the name and coordinates (title, full address, phone, fax, email) of someone who can be contacted for more information on the Plan.**

Kim Sare
Senior City Planner
Planning and Development Services Department
City Planning and Community Development Division
2476 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 3C8
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- b. In the event the contact is no longer available, please provide general contact information for the lead applicant, such as the administrative office of the municipal department that coordinated the Project or some other general contact for the Recipient/lead applicant.**

Planning and Development Services Department
Administrative Services
2476 Victoria Avenue
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