

# Section 4

## 4. Participate

The teaching and learning activities in **Section 4: Participate** encourage students to develop skills and strategies for taking action. Students explore the meaning of participation and social action and create an action plan to respond to a local issue. They then construct a planning statement that describes their ideas and predictions for the future of their municipality.

Select, modify and adapt the activities that follow to best meet the needs of your students and to build understandings and skills related to opportunities for participation with communities and municipal government.

### Preparing for Learning

This section encourages students to take action and participate within the school and municipality. Students should have completed research on a local issue in preparation for developing an action plan. Section 3: Make Connections provides activities for this research.

There are three critical issues in this section.

**What does it mean to participate?**

1 to 2 class periods\*

**How can kids participate as citizens?**

3 to 4 class periods\*

**To what extent should people and organizations work together to build a vision for the future?**

3 to 4 class periods\*

\* Based on 50-minute class periods

*Action*

*Action*

*Action*

## WHAT YOU NEED

### Student Resources

- ☐ Student Resource 4-1: Plan to Participate (pp. 192-193)
- ☐ Student Resource 4-2: Building a Vision for the Future (pp. 194-196)

### Graphic Organizers

- ☐ Storyboard (p. 210)
- ☐ Flow Chart (p. 211)
- ☐ Cause and Effect Chart (p. 212)

### Materials and Sources

- ☐ File folders
- ☐ Information about the community
- ☐ Community photographs
- ☐ Local newspapers and magazines

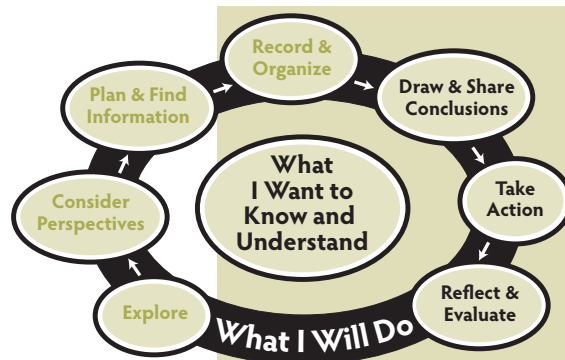
### Teacher Backgrounder

- ☐ Municipal and Provincial Governments (pp. 197-198)

**This teacher backgrounder** provides a description of the relationship between provincial and municipal levels of government and a brief historical context for the development of municipalities.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND INQUIRY

Section 4: Participate encourages students to develop understandings and processes involved in a number of stages of the inquiry process. The three critical issues in this section include a performance assessment task.



Inquiry Steps and Processes	Questions that Guide the Inquiry	Critical Issues that Emphasize the Inquiry Focus
<b>Draw and Share Conclusions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the information</li> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> <li>• Assess information</li> <li>• Consider solutions, perspectives, alternatives and predictions</li> <li>• Make decisions</li> </ul>	How will we share our information? What would happen if...? What conclusions can we make? What evidence supports our conclusions?	What does it mean to participate?
<b>Take Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify actions</li> <li>• Implement actions</li> </ul>	What will we do with what we have learned? What would happen if...? How can we contribute? How can we make a difference? What should we do next?	How can kids participate as citizens?
<b>Reflect and Evaluate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on actions</li> <li>• Consider effectiveness</li> <li>• Assess learning</li> <li>• Identify further research</li> <li>• Start the inquiry process again</li> </ul>	How effective were our actions? What should we change? What should we do next? What do we need to find out about?	To what extent should people and organizations work together to build a vision for the future?

## Social Studies Learning Outcomes

### General Outcome 6.1

#### Citizens Participating in Decision-Making

Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the dynamic relationship between governments and citizens as they engage in the democratic process.

#### Local and Current Affairs

In order to allow opportunities for students to engage in current affairs, issues and concerns of a local nature, the program of studies provides the flexibility to include these topics within the time allotted for social studies.

## Specific Learning Outcomes Supported and Developed in Section 4: Participate

### Values and Attitudes

#### 6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:

- (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I)
- (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C)
- (5) value the contributions of elected representatives in the democratic process (PADM)

### Knowledge and Understandings

#### 6.1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- (3) What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in a representative democracy? (C, PADM)

#### 6.1.4 analyze the structure and functions of local governments in Alberta by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- (1) How are representatives chosen to form a local government (i.e., electoral process)? (PADM)
- (2) What are the responsibilities of local governments (i.e., bylaws, taxes, services)? (PADM)

#### 6.1.6 analyze how individuals, groups and associations within a community impact decision-making of local and provincial governments by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- (1) How can individuals, groups and associations within a community participate in the decision-making process regarding current events or issues (i.e., lobbying, petitioning, organizing and attending local meetings and rallies, contacting elected representatives)? (C, PADM)
- (3) In what ways do elected officials demonstrate their accountability to the electorate (e.g., respond to constituents, participate in local events, represent and express in government meetings the concerns of constituents)? (C, PADM)

## Skills and Processes

### 6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- (2) critically evaluate ideas, information and positions
- (3) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- (4) generate original ideas and strategies in individual and group activities
- (5) seek responses to inquiries from various authorities through electronic media

### 6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision-making and problem solving:

- (1) propose and apply new ideas, strategies and options to contribute to decision-making and problem solving, supported with facts and reasons
- (2) consider multiple perspectives when dealing with issues, decision making and problem solving
- (3) collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues
- (5) use data gathered from a variety of electronic sources to address identified problems
- (6) use graphic organizers, such as mind mapping/webbing, flow charting and outlining, to present connections among ideas and information in a problem solving environment
- (7) solve issue-related problems, using such communication tools as a word processor or e-mail to involve others in the process

### 6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- (1) demonstrate the skills of compromise to reach group consensus
- (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal
- (4) extend the scope of a project beyond classroom collaboration, using communication technologies such as the telephone and e-mail

### 6.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:

- (1) demonstrate commitment to the well-being of their community by drawing attention to situations of injustice where action is needed

### 6.S.7 apply the research process:

- (4) draw and support conclusions based on information gathered to answer a research question
- (11) reflect on and describe the processes involved in completing a project

**6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:**

- (1) express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms such as oral or written presentations, speeches or debates
- (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form
- (3) use skills of informal debate to persuasively express differing viewpoints regarding an issue
- (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives
- (7) communicate effectively through appropriate forms, such as speeches, reports and multimedia presentations, applying information technologies that serve particular audiences and purposes

## ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

### Ongoing Assessment

Choices can be made about assessing student work in this section. The criteria checklist provided in this section can be used to:

- Observe student work in group and classroom settings
- Develop checklists for assessment of student work in the activities in this section.

### Performance Assessment Task

The performance assessment task, *Building a Vision for the Future*, builds on a previous performance task, *All in a Day's Work*, from Section 2: A Good Place to Live. Students continue in a real-life scenario where they participate as student interns in a municipal government department to create a vision statement that outlines their vision for the future of their municipality. As they consider how citizens and municipal government work together to contribute to the quality of life in the municipality, students will demonstrate what they value about citizen participation in a democratic society.

Although students are working in groups for this task, it is recommended that the work be divided so that teachers will be able to collect evidence of individual student attainment of the outcomes. Students will complete a self-reflection on their contribution to the both the group process as well as the product. Teachers use their observations of individual student work combined with data from the student self-reflection when determining student scores on the rubric. The final product is the vehicle through which students demonstrate their understanding, but it is not marked.

#### Criteria for Evaluation

**Students provide evidence of their learning in this performance assessment task as they:**

- value citizen participation (6.1.1.1, 6.1.1.4)
- identify roles and responsibilities of:\*
  - o citizens (6.1.1.1, 6.1.6.1, 6.1.2.3)
  - o local government (6.1.4.2)
  - o elected officials (6.1.1.5, 6.1.6.3)
- collaborate with others (6.S.5.1, 6.S.5.2).

*\*Will vary depending on individual assignments within the group*



### Assessment Tip: Values and Attitudes Outcomes!

Values and attitudes outcomes in social studies focus on the affective domain. They provide support and bring balance to the knowledge and understanding outcomes. During previous lessons, students have learned about the roles and responsibilities of local government. In this task, the companion values and attitudes ask students to value the role of citizen participation in a democratic society. As students contribute to a plan for their municipal government department, they reflect on how citizens work together with municipal governments and elected officials to improve quality of life. Students demonstrate what they value through the use of respectful language along with the level of insight they bring to the task.



### Assessment Tip: Reminders!

Assessment must always be based on individual contributions, even within group projects. In this task, students are assigned discrete portions of the task so it will be possible to look at individual student work within the group task. The final product is not part of the evaluation but rather is the vehicle through which students share their information. For more information see the *Assessment Tip* in Section 2: A Good Place to Live (p. 74).

Even though the product is not part of the marking criteria, students should be encouraged to consider the qualities of an effective product relative to their selected presentation format. *The Checklist for Differentiated Products* from Section 1: Get Personal (p. 28) could be used any time students work to communicate information to an audience.

This involves students in the discussion of what quality looks like and helps them evaluate their work in progress and make adjustments to improve the quality. For more information see the *Assessment Tip* in Section 1: Get Personal (p. 26).

Student use of the rating scale provides a perspective on their contribution to both the content of the task as well as their role as a group member. Teachers use the student self-reflection as well as their own observations to determine student placement within the rubric descriptors. For more information, see the *Assessment Tip* in Section 2: A Good Place to Live.



## Section 4: Participate Checklist

Criteria Students provide evidence of their learning as they:	Yes	Almost	Not Yet
Listen and respond respectfully to understand democratic principles (6.1.1.1)			
Value citizen participation (6.1.1.1, 6.1.1.4)			
Identify roles and responsibilities of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• citizens (6.1.1.1, 6.1.6.1, 6.1.2.3)</li> <li>• local government (6.1.4.2)</li> <li>• elected officials (6.1.1.5, 6.1.6.3)</li> </ul>			
Demonstrate understandings of the electoral process (6.1.1.5, 6.1.4.1, 6.1.6.3)			
Examine, evaluate and assess sources of information (6.S.1.2)			
Access and organize information from different sources (6.S.1.5, 6.S.4.5)			
Discuss and share original ideas, strategies and options with others (6.S.1.4, 6.S.4.1)			
Express and support opinion (6.S.1.3, 6.S.8.2)			
Participate in problem solving and decision-making processes (6.S.4.1, 6.S.7.4)			
Identify different points of view and perspectives (6.S.4.2, 6.S.8.5)			
Use graphic organizers to make connections between ideas (6.S.4.6)			
Communicate with others to discuss and solve issue-related problems (6.S.4.7, 6.S.8.3)			
Communicate information (6.S.8.1, 6.S.5.4, 6.S.8.7)			
Collaborate with others (6.S.5.1, 6.S.5.2, 6.S.4.3)			
Demonstrate commitment to participate with community issues (6.S.6.1)			
Contribute to group processes (6.S.5.1, 6.S.5.2)			
Reflect on processes used (6.S.7.11)			

## Section 4: Participate Building a Vision for the Future

Level Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Proficient	2 Adequate	1 Limited *	Insufficient / Blank *
<b>Values citizen participation</b> (6.1.1.1, 6.1.1.4)	Describes <b>purposeful</b> ways that citizens can work together with municipal governments and elected officials to improve quality of life.	Describes <b>meaningful</b> ways that citizens can work together with municipal governments and elected officials to improve quality of life.	Describes <b>appropriate</b> ways that citizens can work together with municipal governments and elected officials to improve quality of life.	Describes <b>trivial</b> ways that citizens can work together with municipal governments and elected officials to improve quality of life.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
<b>Identifies roles and responsibilities</b> (6.1.1.1, 6.1.6.1, 6.1.2.3, 6.1.4.2, 6.1.1.5, 6.1.6.3)	Provides a <b>comprehensive</b> description of roles and responsibilities of citizens, municipal government and elected officials.	Provides a <b>thorough</b> description of roles and responsibilities of citizens, municipal government and elected officials.	Provides a <b>partial</b> description of roles and responsibilities of citizens, municipal government and elected officials.	Provides a <b>superficial</b> description of roles and responsibilities of citizens, municipal government and elected officials.	
<b>Collaborates with others</b> (6.S.5.1, 6.S.5.2, 6.S.4.3)	Makes a <b>skillful</b> contribution to final product and <b>consistently</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Makes an <b>effective</b> contribution to final product and <b>frequently</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Makes a <b>reasonable</b> contribution to final product and <b>occasionally</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Makes a <b>haphazard</b> contribution to final product and <b>seldom, if ever,</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	

\* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## GLOSSARY

The following terms and concepts are developed in the activities and student resources of Section 4: Participate. Although they are grouped under the critical issue in which they are introduced, many recur and are used throughout the entire section. Definitions and explanations are presented in the context in which they appear in the teacher and student information.

### **Critical Issue 1: What does it mean to participate?**

An **analogy** is a comparison that is made between two ideas to show a similarity.

### **Critical Issue 3: To what extent should people and organizations work together to build a vision for the future?**

A **vision** or **mission statement** can be described as a vision, guidelines, recommendations, rules and principles that can be used to guide decisions for the future.

A **strategic plan** is used to set the direction for the future of the municipality. It is a statement of beliefs, principles or guidelines that guide the work of an organization. It considers the roles and responsibilities of the people involved.

## Critical Issues and Activities

### What does it mean to participate?

2 to 5 class periods

1 There are many ways to describe attitudes toward government. One way to think of government is to ask “What will government do for me?” However, for effective participation to take place, many believe citizens should consider the question “What can we do to support our government?”

Invite students to create an **analogy**, a comparison between two ideas to show a similarity, for the concept of participation by following this process:

- Present the analogy of a vending machine and a barn-raising to students by writing each term on the board and asking students to visualize each, or by displaying a picture of each.
- Ask students how a vending machine works – putting money in to get something in return.
- Ask students what they learned in previous grades about how barns were built in the past – everyone in the community worked together to build the barn. Alternatively, students could compare this process to that used by Habitat for Humanity, with a number of people working together to build a home.
- Discuss how each model compares to the ways that individuals can choose to participate with municipal government and their communities.
- Have students brainstorm other ideas or concepts that could be considered similar to participating with municipal government. *(Students can be provided with examples such as teamwork on a sports team, a partnership, or working together to harvest a crop to start their thinking about participation and the model of working together. Students can also be provided with examples of things such as a bus or train, a recipe or a playground to use to create their analogy. The picture book Stone Soup (August House Publishers) also provides a story that students can use to discuss analogies and comparisons to participation with municipal government. An online version is available at <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g4s21.html>.)*



#### DIFFERENTIATE

Illustrate analogies to communicate a positive message about participation with municipal government in one of the following products:

- Poster
- Web blog
- Advertisement
- Story
- Poem
- Role play or freeze-frame theatre presentation.



#### INTEGRATE: Language Arts: 2.2 Respond to Texts

Have students revisit the meaning of similes and metaphors to help them develop their analogies.



## WEBSITE

The *Building Communities Through Local Government* website addresses social participation skills through the **Participate** feature. Students have the opportunity to explore different perspectives on an issue and vote on a decision, similar to the ways that residents in a municipality may be asked to vote on a bylaw or a question posed by council. Students can access the **Express Your Opinion** interactive activity through the **Participate** feature. The issue applies to each of the three different municipalities on the website.

In this interactive activity, students follow a decision-making process.

- **Get the Facts:** A summary overview of the facts involved in the issue.
- **Consider the Issue:** A discussion of the different choices involved with making a decision on the issue.
- **Explore the Opinions:** Excerpts from letters to the editor on the issue that present different perspectives on the issue.
- **What Do You Think:** An opportunity for students to register their own opinion on the issue.

Information and instructions for the activity are provided when students click on the ☹ icon beside the student character with the sign, *All for One and One for All*. When students vote, their votes will be added to a running tally for the day, and the result will be displayed daily. Students can see their vote added to the running tally for today's results.

**2** Invite students to discuss how sharing opinions and making decisions on community issues is part of the process of many strategies for action – including talking with municipal officials, using the media and attending community meetings. Consider questions such as the following to focus discussion:

- Why is it important to find out as much as possible about the different perspectives and opinions involved in making a decision on an issue?
- What do you think are some of the most effective strategies for participating in an informed way?
- What might happen if people in a democratic society do not participate or get involved with local government decision-making?

**3** Ask students to develop an overview of an issue facing a municipality in Alberta, using the decision-making process in the website feature that is described above. Apply the inquiry model in developing the issue.



## DIFFERENTIATE

Have students work individually, with a small group or as a class to develop the issue and decision.



## INTERACT

The class may choose to work together on one issue facing the municipality and share it with the community by posting it on the classroom or school website. If the website has the capability, a running tally of Yes-No votes can be displayed.

### How can kids participate as citizens?

*3 to 4 class periods*

**1** Have students group themselves according to the local issues they have researched and/or their opinions on the issue. Ask each group to select and prepare a plan for taking action on this issue.

Invite groups to review the various strategies that individuals can use to influence the decisions of local government. Ask students to discuss reasons why getting involved with an issue while a decision is being made can be more effective than getting involved after the decision is made. *(Brainstorm a class list of various ways to take action, such as:*

- *Attend a local, community or municipal meeting*
- *Invite a councillor to the school or a community gathering to talk about the issue*
- *Attend council meetings when the issue is under discussion or consideration*
- *Visit the municipal office to talk to municipal officials and staff about the issue*
- *Provide input when the municipality is making a decision, for example by participating in an opinion survey or attending an open house*
- *Volunteer to sit on a municipal committee that has the job of providing a recommendation to council*
- *Write a letter to a municipal representative or the editor of a local newspaper*
- *Have discussions with community members*
- *Organize a public awareness campaign to inform others about the issue*
- *Join or form your own community or interest group*
- *Make a presentation to the council, a committee or community members*
- *Organize a petition*
- *Create a press release or public service announcement*
- *Create displays for the community or municipality.*

*Invite students to discuss examples of strategies they have seen in action in their municipality. Discuss how involvement in issues after a decision is made can sometimes result in confrontational rather than cooperative strategies for participation. Invite students to consider this when judging the effectiveness of their proposed action plans.)*

**2** Provide each group with **Student Resource 4-1: Plan to Participate (pp. 192-193)** and a file folder with which to create their plan. Have groups discuss their opinions and list the supporting evidence. Revisit the difference between fact and opinion with students. Discuss examples of the types of recommendations that students may include in their file folder action plans, depending on the issues they select. (*Consider exploring examples such as ways to increase safety in the community, initiating new youth activities or ways to provide input on bylaws.*)

This student resource provides:

- An outline for planning group responsibilities for the project
- A format for creating the file folder action plan:
  - A cover design on the front of the file folder that states and explains the issue
  - Supporting evidence on the inside of the file folder such as:
    - Position statements that provide their stand on the issue
    - Visuals or photographs that support their opinion
    - Statements or quotations from other individuals or media that supports their opinion
    - Related facts and information from their research that supports their opinion or counters opposing viewpoints
  - Options for action on the back cover of the file folder
- Criteria for reflecting on the effectiveness of their action plan.



## DIFFERENTIATE

As students work on their file folder action plans, have them reflect on the process they use to develop their action plans. Provide each group with the option to:

- Map the process they use with a graphic organizer
- Complete a group reflection at the end of the process, with group comments and feedback on how effectively they worked to develop their action plans and how they could have improved.



## ASSESS





Look for evidence that students can apply and use the inquiry process in the development of their file folder action plans.



## WEBSITE

The *Building Communities Through Local Government* website provides students with the opportunity to explore the decision-making process with three “virtual” students who live in each of the municipalities. Each decision-making storyline:

- Introduces a challenge
- Follows the students as they visit various places in the municipality to act on the challenge
- Provides an opportunity for your students to input their opinion on what the “virtual” student should do
- Models a decision-making and inquiry process – each action the “virtual” student takes illustrates a step in the inquiry process
- Randomizes the decision, with weighted choices, so that your students’ input has an effect on the final decision
- Allows your students to add a visual to the Scrapbook for each step and print the results.

Students can access this interactive storyline by clicking on the  icon in a location in each of the three municipalities. Students can then **ENTER** the storyline. Students use the  and  arrows to read all the information in the window that appears. They follow the clues in the text to find the next location to visit. These places are indicated with the  icon.

### The Field

What can happen when everyone does not agree with a decision made about land use? This story encourages you to think about the importance of gathering perspectives and information when making a decision that involves diverse opinions.

### The Old Pawluk House

What can happen when residents have different perspectives about the importance and use of a place in the community? This story asks you to explore how community members can participate with municipal officials to consider the choices and effects involved in making a decision.

### Speed Zone

What can students do to take action on an issue that concerns them? This story shares an example of ways that students can participate in the decision-making process in a municipality.

Have students use a graphic organizer, such as a **Flow Chart** or **Cause and Effect Chart** (**Appendix A: p. 211 and p. 212**), to analyze the process that each “virtual” student used to get involved and become part of a decision-making process in their municipality. Have students consider the similarities and differences in each process. Compare the process used by the “virtual” students in each municipality to the process being used in their action plans. Alternatively, use this website interactive activity to introduce the file folder action plans to students.





## **PARTICIPATE: Get Involved**

Have students consider ways that they can act on their position on a local issue. Consider a variety of options and have students select one to address. Options can include the following strategies.

### **Establish a Student Participation Centre**

Have students set up a Student Participation Centre in the school to collect students' ideas, initiatives and actions for improving the school. The Student Participation Centre can be a box and bulletin board in the classroom or school that is used to collect opinions, perspectives and questions. Responses and ideas can be posted, brought to the attention of the school community or used to establish projects and initiatives.

Discuss and clear this project with the school's administration before implementing it. Consider having students write a persuasive letter to the school's administration and staff, outlining the reasons for establishing the Participation Centre.

Have students develop a plan for establishing and maintaining the Participation Centre. Establish clear guidelines and criteria with students around ideas such as:

- Constructive suggestions and ideas for strengthening and building the school community
- Questions that pose appropriate and realistic options or possibilities
- Ideas and questions that focus on positive options or possibilities for change in the school.

### **Form an Interest Group**

Have students research and prepare a presentation and present their opinions on the local issue. Discuss with students how each group could form an interest group to influence the municipal government's decision about the issue.

### **Attend a Public Meeting**

If possible, have students attend a public meeting to watch how issues are dealt with in this type of setting. Have students use a graphic organizer, such as a **Flow Chart (Appendix A: p. 211)** to map the process used in these meetings.



## **INTERACT**

Investigate options for having students share some of their file folder action plans with the municipal office:

- Have the class work together to select one or two of the file folder action plans to share with the municipal office.
- Invite someone who works in the municipal office to visit the classroom and work with students as they construct their file folders or listen to group presentations of their action plans.  
See **Appendix B (pp. 214-216)** for ideas on contacting a municipal office.



## INTERACT

### Attend a Town Hall, Council or Community Meeting

If possible and realistic in your municipality, consider checking with the municipal office for dates and times of town hall, community or council meetings. The different types of meetings that the class may attend could include:

- Committee meeting (those open to the public)
- Council meeting
- Community or town hall meeting
- Public information session
- Public input session.

Some municipalities also request public input on their municipal website. This may also provide an opportunity for students to share their opinions with municipal officials.

You may also be able to obtain a video or audio tape of a meeting. Check with your local cable channel if you cannot arrange to have students attend in person. You may also check your municipality's website. Some municipal councils may post council meeting packages on their websites.

After students attend or view the meeting, invite a municipal official into the class to discuss it with them. Use questions such as the following to help students compare the meeting to the one they held in the classroom:

- What was the purpose of the meeting? Are these types of meetings held on a regular basis?
- Did this meeting deal with a specific concern or issue? What was this issue?
- Who was present at this meeting? What were their roles?
- How were decisions made at this meeting?
- What was the outcome of the decisions made at the meeting?
- Are there any opportunities to have further input? What might these be?

Ask the municipal official to take part in the discussion, both answering and asking questions. After the meeting, have the class write a letter to their municipal government office, expressing their thanks and talking about what they have learned about local government.

## To what extent should people and organizations work together to build a vision for the future?

3 to 4 class periods

**1** Many people who work with and for municipalities look to the future when they are planning the work of their department or area. They establish a vision and goals for the future of the municipality and develop projects and initiatives that further that vision.

Invite students to develop a vision for the future of their municipality:

- Have students rejoin the local government department groups they worked with in Section 2: A Good Place to Live activities and revisit the community murals they created.
- Discuss and brainstorm ways that citizens' involvement with local government in their municipality can be strengthened.
- Introduce students to the concept of a **vision** or **mission statement**, which can be described as a vision, guidelines, recommendations, rules and principles that can be used to guide decisions for the future. Use the concept of a vision or mission statement to discuss the types of planning principles that a municipality might use to guide future decisions and actions.

Discuss how municipalities can use a **strategic plan** to consider and plan what they would like to work towards for the future of the municipality. Tell students that they will be working again as municipal government student interns to help develop a strategic plan that describes their vision for the future of the municipality.

**2** Have each group revisit the different types of places on their community murals and in their own municipality:

- Places where people live
- Places where people buy goods and obtain services
- Places where people work
- Places where people play
- Places where community activities happen
- Places where natural areas are protected.

Encourage students to also review the results of the community scan they completed in Section 2: A Good Place to Live. Discuss what these results indicated about conditions, challenges and issues in the municipality.



## DIFFERENTIATE

Students can be provided with different options for creating their strategic plans:

- Developing a website by creating a series of HTML web pages
- Creating a videotape that presents the strategic plan and enacts examples
- Creating a series of public service announcements that outline the vision for the strategic plan (textual, visual and audio)
- Constructing a poster.



## THINK ABOUT

Students can also be introduced to, or revisit, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Use the core textbook resources to provide an overview of the purpose of the *Charter*.

3 Consider how municipal government influences and shapes quality of life by reviewing the responsibilities of municipalities that they have learned about. Provide students with **Student Resource 4-2: Building a Vision for the Future (pp. 194-196)**. This student resource asks each group to create a strategic plan that provides:

- A vision for the future in their municipality
- What is important in the municipality and why – the values and attitudes that the department wants to encourage and strengthen
- What can be changed to improve quality of life in the municipality
- Suggestions and recommendations for ways that citizens can be encouraged to support and be involved with decision-making in the municipality.



## ASSESS

This student resource provides the performance assessment task for this section. A rubric is provided in the assessment notes and should be shared and discussed with students prior to beginning the task. The student resource also provides students with an opportunity to reflect on their contributions to the process.

Encourage groups to include drawings, photographs, graphs and charts to support their vision and recommendations. Have students use a visual organizer such as a **Storyboard (Appendix A: p. 210)** to develop their strategic plans.

Students can create their strategic plan as a brochure or poster. Encourage students to share their strategic plans in different settings and contexts:

- Brochures can be combined into a class binder that presents the whole vision for the community's future. The binder should include an overview of the school and students who created it. The binder can be sent to community facilities, such as the local seniors' centre or recreation centre, with a comment sheet inviting feedback and responses.
- Brochures can be laminated and shared with parents, school staff, other students, neighbours or community-based organizations in the municipality.
- Other student projects can be placed online with a visitor's page for comments and responses.



### INTERACT

Students can be asked to investigate whether their municipality has a vision and mission statement, slogans or guiding principles by exploring the municipality's website. Look for evidence of principles that guide the governance of the municipality in the messages and information on the website. If appropriate and available, students may be asked to look at the strategic plans of their municipal government.

Invite students to work in groups to create a poster that reflects their learning about local government in their municipality, focused on the question:

- To what extent should people and organizations work together to build a vision for the future?

Students can be encouraged to revisit some of the products they created during their study of local government, including:

- Community murals
- Community scans
- File folder action plans.

Submit posters to your municipality or plan to display them in the school or community facilities. If the timing is appropriate, check with your municipal office to find out if there is an opportunity for students to participate in Municipal Week in October.

- 4 Have students revisit the KWLH Charts that they completed at the beginning of their study of local government. Provide time to discuss and reflect on what has been learned and how students' understandings and perspectives on local government have changed and been informed by what they have done.



### THINK ABOUT

If your municipality does not have a vision or mission statement, slogans or guiding principles, consider having students submit their ideas for developing them to the municipal office.



#### Student Resource 4-1

## Plan to Participate

### Make It Happen

How will your group work together to create your action plan? Organize your responsibilities.

What is the issue?

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What do we want to accomplish in our plan for action?

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How will we accomplish it? *(Consider actions and jobs such as watching the news, reading newspapers and magazine articles, consulting the Internet, taking or finding pictures, conducting interviews, making advertisements or posters, talking to council members or setting up meetings to create your action plan.)*

Jobs We Have to Do	Who Will Do Each Job	When Each Job Will be Done

### Back

Describe the action that you want to take:  
What do you recommend doing about this issue, dilemma or decision?

### Front

Identify and explain the issue:  
What is the issue, dilemma or decision?

### Inside

provide supporting evidences on the perspectives and opinion.

provide supporting evidences on the perspectives and opinion.

perspectives and opinion.

issue, dilemma or decision.

Consider statements that

position stand on the issue

your stand on the issue

your stand on the issue

Visuals or photographs from

support your quotations that

support your quotations that

statements or media that

other individuals or media

other individuals or media

support your opinion

support your opinion

support facts and information

support facts and information

Related facts and information

from your research that supporting

from your research that supporting

from your opinion or counter opposing

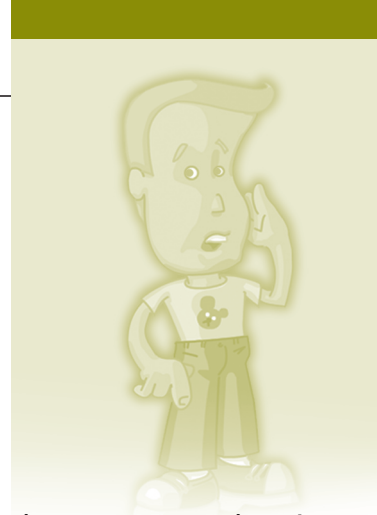
from your opinion or counter opposing

your opinion or counter opposing

viewpoints.

## Student Resource 4-2

# Building a Vision for the Future



You are now in the final portion of your municipal government department student intern program. Your Chief Administrative Officer has asked each department to help develop a strategic plan for your municipal government. A **strategic plan** is a statement of beliefs, principles or guidelines that guide the work of an organization. It considers the roles and responsibilities of the people involved.

Your strategic plan should include:

- A vision for the future in your municipality
- What should be important in your municipality and why – the values and attitudes that your department wants to encourage and strengthen
- What can be changed to improve quality of life in your municipality
- Suggestions and recommendations for ways that citizens can be encouraged to support and be involved with decision-making in your municipality.

As you create your **strategic plan**, consider the ways that citizens, municipal government departments and elected officials work together to contribute to the quality of life in your municipality. What should their roles and responsibilities be? Think about the questions below. Ask your teacher for a graphic organizer to record your ideas.

### Citizens

- What do citizens value in your municipality?
- What rights do citizens have in your municipality? How does municipal government support those rights?
- What responsibilities do citizens have in your municipality? How can citizens become more involved with decision-making in your municipality?

### Municipal Government Departments

- How does your department contribute to the quality of life in your municipality?
- What concerns do citizens have that relate to your department?
- How can your department help improve quality of life in your municipality?
- What should the department plan for in the future?

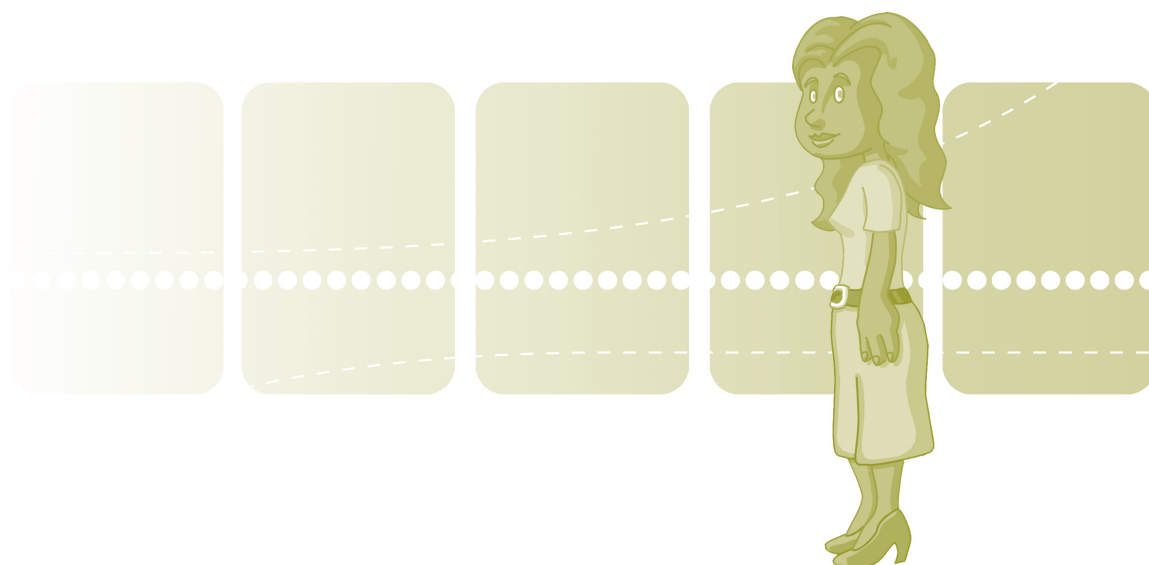


## Elected Officials

- Why are elected officials an important part of the democratic process?
- How do elected officials demonstrate their accountability to the citizens in your municipality? What else could they do?
- How can elected officials encourage citizens to be more involved in your municipality?

Meet with your fellow interns to brainstorm, make a plan, divide the work and collaborate to create a finished product. Think about how you want to present your strategic plan: a brochure, poster, public service announcement or website page.

Above all, your strategic plan should show what you value about citizen participation in a democratic society. Thank you for helping to **Build a Vision for the Future!**



## Reflecting on My Contribution to Our Department Strategic Plan

	A great job!	A good start	Not there yet	I know this because
How well did I do in providing information for our department strategic plan?				
	Most of the time	Some of the time	Not very often	I showed this when:
How consistently did I use collaboration and compromise to help our group complete our project?				

Municipalities are delegated their powers by the provincial government. In Alberta, the provincial government supports local government through Alberta Municipal Affairs. The ministry is responsible for:

- The province is run by elected officials that are known as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). MLAs have constituency offices within their ridings, where residents can meet with their provincial representatives. MLAs also meet with local municipal councils in both formal and informal environments. The MLA and council can obtain details about specific policy decisions and actions from each other and therefore communicate government information that is affecting the area for which they share responsibility. In some cases, one MLA may have multiple municipal councils in his or her constituency. In other cases, usually in larger urban centres, there is a need for a number of MLAs to represent the constituents in one municipality.

The first local government election in what is now Alberta was held in 1883 under the Northwest Municipal Ordinance. Rural local government began with herd districts in 1883, fire districts in 1886, and statute districts in 1887, all of which were combined into local improvement districts in 1897. Urban local government began with unincorporated town ordinances in 1888. The village ordinance followed in 1895.

In 1995, a major consolidation of municipal legislation took place that established a more permissive style of governance. The current *Municipal Government Act* gives municipalities greater autonomy in local decision-making and is the primary statute governing the affairs of your municipality. The *Municipal Government Act* also incorporates the provisions of the former *Planning Act*. The *Municipal Government Act* is subject to amendment to meet new needs and demands.



## NOTES

[illegible]



## THINK ABOUT

Since the adoption of the *Municipal Government Act*, all rural and urban municipalities are treated the same.

## NOTES

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Source:

Walchuk, Walter. (1987)  
*Alberta's Local Governments:  
People in Community Seeking  
Goodness*. Edmonton, AB:  
Alberta Municipal Affairs.

## European Influences

The form of local government we have in Alberta today reflects our ties with Britain. Canada was governed as a colony and our early immigrants from England and Scotland brought with them customs and forms of local governance that remain here today. The French system of government tended to have considerable power in the central government, with field administrators supervising local government. All forms of local government – small or large, rural or urban – were treated alike. The British system, however, distinguished between rural and urban. It gave the urban more freedom and power. Elected officials acting as local councils had the power to govern as compared to the strong mayoral approach of the French. In the late 1800s, pressure started to build for some form of locally elected councils. It was eventually decided that the responsibility of establishing local governments would best be left to the legislatures that were about to be created in what are now the provinces.