

Best Practice

Women in Government Program

CONTACT

Municipality: RM of Edenwold No. 158

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Project Date: March 8, 2022

Project video: https://youtu.be/qmQ24ota_UY

THE PRACTICE

What was the issue?

Across Saskatchewan, women are underrepresented in municipal government. Reviewing Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) statistics, we found that only 6% of Councillors and 5% of Reeves are women. These numbers are disproportionately low compared to the percentage of women that make up the general population (50.3%). A lack of gender diversity on Council results in fewer unique perspectives. This lack of representation can create challenges for municipalities working to make balanced and innovative decisions. Having different perspectives on Council allows for more opportunities for discussions and creative problem-solving solutions.

There are many possible reasons for why women are underrepresented in government, including:

1. Social, professional, and familial obligations;
2. Limited knowledge of the municipal election process;
3. Few female-political role models;
4. Limited opportunities for leadership training;
5. Negative working environments;
6. Low self-confidence;
7. Intimidation and harassment;
8. Poor socialization as leaders; and
9. Limited practical support for women in government.

One possible reason for the low number of women in government is that they are less likely to win elections – but in fact, women are just as, if not more, likely to win elections

(43% for women compared to 37% for men). Instead, the reason for poor representation is a lack of candidacy. Women do not put their names forward for council at the same rate as men, resulting in imbalanced representation.

What was the project?

With the above factors in mind and accounting for the benefits of diversity within government, the Rural Municipality of Edenwold No. 158 adopted the Women in Government Program on March 8th, 2022 (to coincide with International Women's Day). This program aims to attract and encourage women to put their names forward for candidacy so that at least 30% of all candidates for municipal elections are women. While not representative of the overall population of 50.3%, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has identified 30% representation as the minimum ratio required to ensure government policy reflects the needs of residents of all genders.

The Women in Government Program comprises three project streams: a research stream; an internal action stream; and an external action stream. Each stream involves various components and initiatives. These include a Campaign School, a Regional Women in Government Committee, Elementary and High School Workshops, and the development of inclusive municipal policies and practices. The Women in Government program has highlighted the importance of gender inclusivity in municipal government and created avenues for engagement for residents and visitors. The program has also led to an overall shift in how the municipality sees gender equity and the role of government in supporting women candidates, councillors, and residents.

THE PROCESS

Women in Government Program development is largely divided into 3 stages:

1. **Program Document** – Focusing on improving representation amongst women in government as a policy goal, RM staff reviewed best practice documents from around the world concerning women in government. The RM compared and analysed these documents, with staff borrowing the best and most appropriate initiatives for local implementation. As such, the Women in Government Program document was not necessarily specific to the RM but instead outlined several practices and programs that were successful in other communities. The research stage allowed these practices to be contextually-selected for implementation.
2. **Research Report** – To ensure program initiatives were appropriate for the local context, RM staff organized several public engagement activities. These activities included an online survey, interviews with elected women officials, and an analysis of local electoral data. The survey was open to the public from March 8th to March 31st, 2022. There were 39 responses from across the region. Survey questions focused on demographic information, attitudes towards Council and municipal government, and the challenges women face participating in local government and elections. Survey results supported the program document's

findings, indicating that the program document was accurate in highlighting themes like education, anti-harassment and anti-bullying, 'old boys club' thinking, and exclusion.

RM staff also interviewed 7 currently elected women officials. These included councillors, reeves, and mayors from across the region. Interestingly, the interviews presented a much more positive view of women in government when compared to survey or best practice findings. Elected women were largely positive in conveying their experiences on council. While some interviewees highlighted themes similar to those in the survey and research, in general, they did not see municipal government as a particularly challenging field – instead highlighting personal characteristics of the individual as the primary challenges (compared to systemic concerns).

Lastly, RM staff reviewed local electoral data from municipalities across the region. Across the area, women are generally underrepresented in government. Representation slightly improves for urban municipalities (compared to RMs) but is still largely below the 30% program goal.

Based on the surveys, interviews, and electoral analysis, RM staff chose several initiatives to implement. These included a campaign school, a regional women in government committee, and municipal policies that promoted equity. Further, participants in the campaign school highlighted the importance of school education in supporting engagement and equity – with school workshops being added to the list of initiatives for the program. RM staff summarised research findings in a 'Research Stream Report.'

3. **Implementation** – As a result of the research findings and the program document, RM staff implemented several different initiatives, all aiming to improve the number of women candidates in the November 2022 election and strengthen municipal capacity to support women councillors and women in the community.

The most significant program was the Campaign School. This series of 4 workshops introduced participants to municipal government and gave them the tools and knowledge to succeed as candidates and councillors. These sessions focused on topics like the roles and responsibilities of Council, how to campaign and build support, public speaking, and finished with a mock council session. Overall, 15 people participated in the sessions, and 2 attendees chose to run for Council because of their involvement in Campaign School. RM staff also began offering municipal government workshops to area schools on the recommendation of a campaign school attendee. These workshops emerged through a desire to get students interested in municipal government early, with the intention being that if they are informed as youth, they are more likely to be municipally-minded as adults. These workshops focused heavily on activities that got students debating and delved into the different responsibilities of government, how

elections are organized, and the importance of respectful discussion within the governance process.

Another initiative that started because of the program was a Regional Women in Government Committee. This committee meets quarterly and aims to systematically change how residents and stakeholders see women in municipal government. While the RM can promote change within our boundaries, if women are to be represented more equally across the region, municipalities must work together to change how municipal government and women in government are seen as a whole.

This project was developed through partnership between Council and administration. Council provided municipal support and made women in government a policy priority. Administration conducted best practice research in drafting the Women in Government Program document and has played an ongoing role in designing and leading program initiatives. Administration has also secured additional project funding through the FCM's Canadian Women in Local Leadership (CanWILL) program. This funding, provided by Women and Gender Equality Canada, has allowed the program to reach more participants and improved overall program outcomes.

As the project is ongoing, Council will continue to play a role in the program, specifically in the Regional Women in Government Committee. This committee is composed of elected and staff representatives from the communities of Regina, Balgonie, Pilot Butte, White City, Grand Coulee, Lumsden, and the RMs of Edenwold, Sherwood, and Lumsden. This committee aims to encourage systemic change in how women are perceived within municipal government and encourage greater participation amongst women in elections moving forward.

Staff will similarly continue to support the various Women in Government Program initiatives. For example, staff led several workshops with elementary and high school students. These workshops introduced students to municipal government, the roles and responsibilities of Council, and used engaging activities and a field trip to the RM office to create life-long voters. Staff have also drafted new policies that improve government inclusion for women. This includes a maternity leave policy, new standards regarding public engagement, and a focus on inclusion as a policy priority.

While RM staff and council are experts on municipal government, they are not experts on women's issues. As such, the RM worked with Equal Voice to develop the Women in Government Program. Equal Voice is a national non-profit organization committed to reaching gender parity in politics. They advocate for gender representation by working with community organizations, holding national, provincial, and local events, and combating the harassment and abuse of women in politics. Equal Voice ensured all program documents and materials were accurate and relevant and supported RM staff in organizing the Campaign School sessions and the Regional Women in Government Committee. - <https://equalvoice.ca/>

In addition to Equal Voice, RM staff also worked with FCM in organizing program documents and funding. As mentioned above, CanWILL funding allowed the program to reach more participants and had an overall positive effect on project outcomes. The

CanWILL grant provided the RM with \$5,300 for advertising, project deliverables, materials and supplies, and a childcare stipend during Campaign School sessions. - <https://fcm.ca/en/programs/women-in-local-government/wilg/canadian-women-in-local-leadership>

As RM staff initially conceived of the Women in Government Program as a no-budget program, RM staff and Council used resources from various free online sources – including Equal Voice, FCM, Women and Gender Equality Canada, and other municipalities across Canada. These best practice resources allowed RM staff to meet project outcomes and be successful in program implementation. Specific resources included campaign school workbooks, equity strategies and programs, reports, studies, analyses, and other government and non-governmental documents. Based on this best-practice research, RM staff drafted the Women in Government Program Document, followed by the Research Stream Report. Both the program document and the research report are attached to this application.

THE RESULTS

As a result of the Women in Government Program, 33% of all candidates in the November 2022 election were women. The RM has begun to focus on equity and diversity as a municipal policy priority and has taken concrete steps to improve representation in future elections. The RM has developed stronger relationships with other communities and groups through the school workshops and the regional committee. The RM has also taken a leadership role in championing diversity in municipal government in the region and putting forward policies and programs that work to improve representation.

LESSONS LEARNED

We would recommend advertising initiatives before program implementation. By building support and awareness for events early, residents are more likely to attend. Even if program details are still being finalized, by advertising early, people can put events in their calendars and are more likely to attend.



October 13, 2022

RE: Saskatchewan Municipal Award - Women in Government Program

Dear Members of the Review Committee,

As the Director of Programs for Equal Voice, I am confirming our support as a collaborating partner towards the RM of Edenwold's application for a Saskatchewan Municipal Award.

Founded in 2001, Equal Voice is a national non-profit organization with regional chapters across Canada. We are Canada's only multi-partisan organization dedicated to working with all political parties to reach gender parity in politics. We advocate for gender representation by working with community organizations, holding national, regional, and local events, and combating the harassment and abuse of women in politics. We have years of experience delivering skills and training for women interested in getting civically involved and/or running for elected office through our numerous Campaign Schools. We work closely with our local Chapters to develop region specific content alongside community partners.

We are currently a collaborating partner with the RM of Edenwold, working on the Canadian Women in Local Leadership (CanWILL) program funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The program includes governance and public engagement programming, including campaign school seminars and a regional women in government committee. Equal Voice has ensured that program documents are accurate and relevant. The program has been successful in encouraging women to run for municipal government, resulting in 30% of all candidates in the November 2022 municipal election being women.

We are happy to partner on this project and support this application for the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards.

Sincerely,

Maggie Patterson, Director of Programs
Equal Voice
613-818-5402
maggie@equalvoice.ca



Women in Government Program

Approved by Resolution of Council on
February 22nd, 2022

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Introduction

Across Saskatchewan, women are underrepresented in municipal government. Reviewing Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) statistics, only 6% of Councillors and 5% of Reeves are women – disproportionately low compared to the general population (50.3%). This male-dominated imbalance means councils often lack diverse voices when making municipal decisions. This gives government a limited perspective on municipal concerns and a homogenous attitude towards potential solutions.

There are many possible reasons for why women are underrepresented in government, including:

- 1) Social, professional, and familial obligations;
- 2) Limited knowledge of the municipal election process;
- 3) Few female-political role models;
- 4) Limited opportunities for leadership training;
- 5) Negative working environments;
- 6) Low self-confidence;
- 7) Intimidation and harassment;
- 8) Poor socialization as leaders; and
- 9) Limited practical support for women in government.

One possible reason for the low number of women in government is that they are less likely to win elections – but in fact, women are just as, if not more, likely to win elections (43% for women compared to 37% for men). Instead, the reason for poor representation is a lack of candidacy. Women do not put their names forward for council at the same rate as men, resulting in imbalanced representation.


With these factors in mind and accounting for the benefits of diversity within government, the Rural Municipality of Edenwold No. 158 (the Municipality) has adopted the **Women in Government Program**. This program aims to attract and encourage women to put their names forward for candidacy so that at least 30% of all candidates for municipal elections are women. While not representative of the overall population, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has identified 30% representation as the minimum ratio required to ensure government policy reflects the needs of residents of all genders.

The **Women in Government Program** uses three project streams to reach this goal:

- a research stream;
- an internal action stream; and
- an external action stream.

Each stream strives to encourage women to run for government through various initiatives. By implementing these actions, the Municipality can support women's participation in government and give council access to a more diverse set of perspectives.

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I) Research Stream



What is the current environment for women candidates and women in government?

Before implementing any initiative or program, the Municipality must have a baseline understanding of why women choose to run for council, what challenges limit female participation in government, and what electoral data shows us about women's candidacy and representation in the region. Implementing the research-focused steps listed below will allow the Municipality to assess the current landscape and confirm (or refute) assumptions about women in government. This data will be analysed and summarized in a comprehensive 'Research Report' for Council, staff, and the public. Research Stream initiatives include:

a) Online Public Engagement Platform (Bang the Table);

b) Interviews with Elected, Candidate, and Previously Elected Women Politicians; and

c) Analysis of Municipal and Regional Election Results.

a) Online Public Engagement Platform (Bang the Table)

Municipal staff will create a project page for the Women in Government Program using the online public engagement platform Bang the Table. This project page will provide a high-level summary of the Women in Government Program, a copy of this document, and a public survey. The survey will be geared towards all women in the Municipality and include survey questions like:

What challenges do you think women face running for municipal council?

What could the RM of Edenwold do to better support women in government?

Have you ever thought about running for municipal council?

If you have thought about running for council but chose not to, what influenced you not to run?

Do you feel well-informed on the processes of municipal government and elections?

If the Municipality was to host workshops on municipal government and elections, would you attend?

The survey will be open for several weeks. It will be promoted on the municipal website, through social and traditional media, and to regional organizations (for example: White City Garden Club and the Edenwold Early Years & Youth Centre). Survey findings will help staff understand why participation in municipal elections has been low amongst women and what challenges future streams must address to increase the rate of women's candidacy.

b) Interviews with Elected, Candidate, and Previously Elected Women Politicians

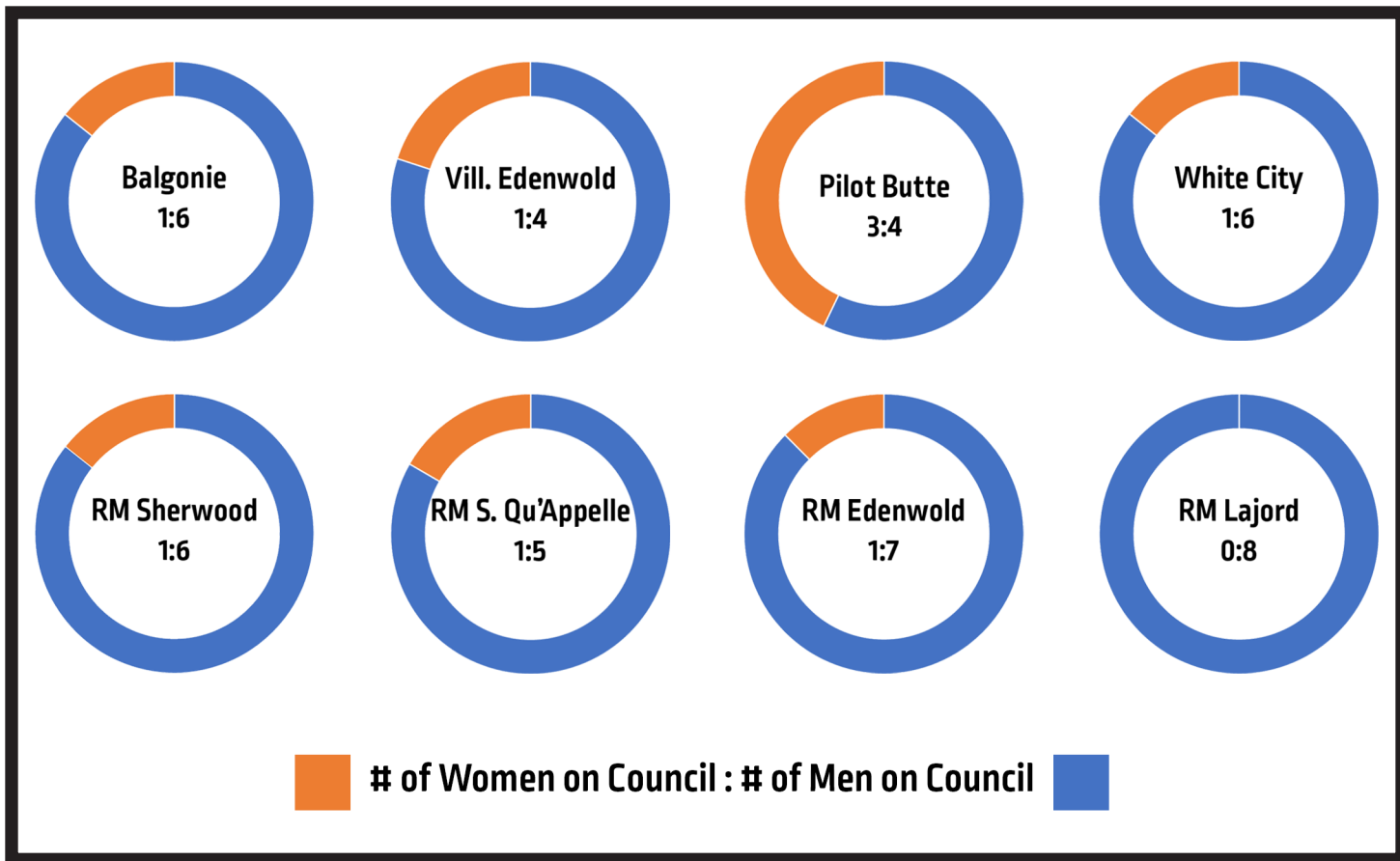
Municipal staff will organize interviews with elected, candidate, and previously elected women in municipal government. Women selected for interviews will be from the RM of Edenwold, neighbouring RMs, and other municipalities like the Town of Pilot Butte, Town of White City, Town of Balgonie, City of Regina, and the Village of Edenwold. The interviews will focus on candidate motivations, challenges faced while running for council, and 'lessons learned.' By drawing on the experiences of elected, candidate, and previously elected women, the Municipality will learn what barriers reduce participation and how to improve engagement in municipal government.

c) Analysis of Municipal and Regional Election Results

Municipal staff will collect and analyse electoral data from the RM of Edenwold and other municipalities over the last 13 years (since the 2009 municipal elections). This information may include:

- How many women ran for council?
- How many women councillors were elected?
- Did women candidates record any issues or concerns during their candidacy?

This information will be presented in the Research Report with graphics like those below. A limitation noted in many best-practice documents is a lack of disaggregated data related to women in municipal government. As such, this step mitigates this limitation by analysing municipal-specific data and will be shared with SARM, FCM, and other institutions.



II) Internal Action Stream

How can the municipality improve internal practices to encourage women to run for government?

Note: The following initiatives are based on early best-practice research. Action streams (internal and external) may be reviewed and amended to align with research findings.

Some possible reasons for limited women's participation in municipal government are linked to council policies, atmosphere, and practices. This includes inequitable council procedures, scheduling that conflicts with social or professional obligations, and negative working environments. As such, based on data collected during the research stream, the Municipality will implement several internal initiatives to mitigate institutional barriers for women in government and improve equity by supporting women once elected to council. Internal Action Stream initiatives include:

- a) Council Procedures and Policy Review;**
- b) Council Code of Conduct and Harassment Prevention Policy; and**
- c) Council Training and Education.**





a) Council Procedures and Policy Review

Municipal staff will review all council procedures, policies, and practices. This review will focus on how these documents and traditions may inadvertently create barriers to participation and what changes are required to mitigate these concerns. This review will also include proposing new policies or bylaws that support workplace accommodations and inclusivity within Council. The review and resulting changes will create an environment that allows women councillors and candidates to feel supported, safe, and free from institutional discrimination because of their gender.

b) Council Code of Conduct and Harassment Prevention Policy

Best practice research indicates that, in some municipalities, councillors can create negative working environments for women candidates and councillors. As such, municipal staff will review the Council Code of Conduct and Harassment Prevention Policy. These documents ensure that all councillors are treated equally and will be amended as required to create inclusive and transparent processes and a zero-tolerance attitude towards gender-based discrimination.

c) Council Training and Education

The final initiative in the internal action stream is to organize and conduct ongoing council training on issues of gender equity. This may include training on spotting and addressing exclusionary practices or on addressing unconscious biases and discrimination. As required, the Municipality may hire consultants to conduct this training. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure councillors receive opportunities for growth and development as they work to represent residents.

III) External Action Stream

How can the municipality encourage women to run for government?

Note: The following initiatives are based on early best-practice research. Action streams (internal and external) may be reviewed and amended to align with research findings.

No matter how supportive government is in welcoming women to council, women themselves must be supported and encouraged to put their names forward for municipal elections. This external stream presents several initiatives that will increase interest in municipal government and improve the ratio of women candidates running for council. External Action Stream initiatives include:

- a) Promote Women Role Models;**
- b) Women in Government Regional Committee;**
- c) Campaign School; and**
- d) Mentorship Program.**
- e) Municipal Relationship Building**

a) Promote Women Role Models

Municipal staff will create communication material that highlights women as municipal, provincial, and federal leaders. This strategy will celebrate successful women politicians and highlight positive examples of women leadership. Communications material will be published on the municipal website, through social media, and in a local newspaper advertisement (Quad Town News).

b) Women in Government Regional Committee

While the Municipality can support women locally, a regional shift towards gender equity requires regional support. Municipal staff will reach out to women councillors, mayors, and Reeves from nearby municipalities to create a Women in Government Regional Committee. This committee will meet 2 times a year and discuss ways municipalities can cooperate to support women in government. The committee will also include subject-matter experts who can provide professional expertise on the challenges and opportunities women face in government.

c) Campaign School

Municipal staff will organize a series of leadership-training seminars for women, collectively called 'Campaign School.' This program will provide women in-person and online opportunities to learn about municipal government and the 'electoral journey,' from candidacy to councillor responsibilities. This 'school' will combat false stereotypes surrounding government and show the real-world benefits of running and serving on council. The school will take place one night a month for 4 months before the next scheduled election. Some potential topics for discussion may include:

- Self-confidence and deciding to run
- The rules for registering as a candidate
- Responsibilities of a councillor
- Dealing with conflict as an elected leader

The goal of campaign school will be to encourage women to put their names forward for candidacy by giving them the skills, training, and self-confidence required to succeed. This initiative will be the primary 'deliverable' of the Women in Government Program, and municipal staff will design the sessions in conjunction with other initiatives.

d) Mentorship Program

For women seeking more direct support than the campaign school, municipal staff will also organize mentorship opportunities for women interested in becoming councillors. This initiative will pair women candidates with elected (or previously elected) women or men politicians. The mentorship program will be self-directed and largely independent of the Women in Government Program. Municipal staff will occasionally monitor the pairings to ensure both mentors and mentees benefit and may host in-person events (like 'speed meeting') to assess the initiative's success.

e) Municipal Relationship Building

Municipal staff will contact and develop working relationships with women's groups in the region. Groups selected for partnership will be those who empower women for leadership opportunities. This network will help draw attention to the Municipality's Women in Government Program while also giving women access to new community groups that can support them while running or serving on council.



Conclusion

The **Women in Government Program** relies on best-practice research and context-specific data to support women running for council. The program uses a three-pronged approach to encourage women to run for council by:

- ensuring the Municipality has context-specific data that is:
- applied through internal initiatives (like policies and practices); and
- applied through external initiatives (like campaign school, communications, and regional collaboration).

The goal of the **Women in Government Program** is to have 30% of all municipal candidates be women. This objective is the first step towards parity and will allow the Municipality to showcase the value of diversity on council and be regional leaders in promoting gender equity within municipal government.





Phase I: Research Stream Research Report

June 3rd, 2022

Women in Government Program approved by resolution
of Council on February 22nd, 2022

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Phase I: Research Stream - Research Report

June 3rd, 2022

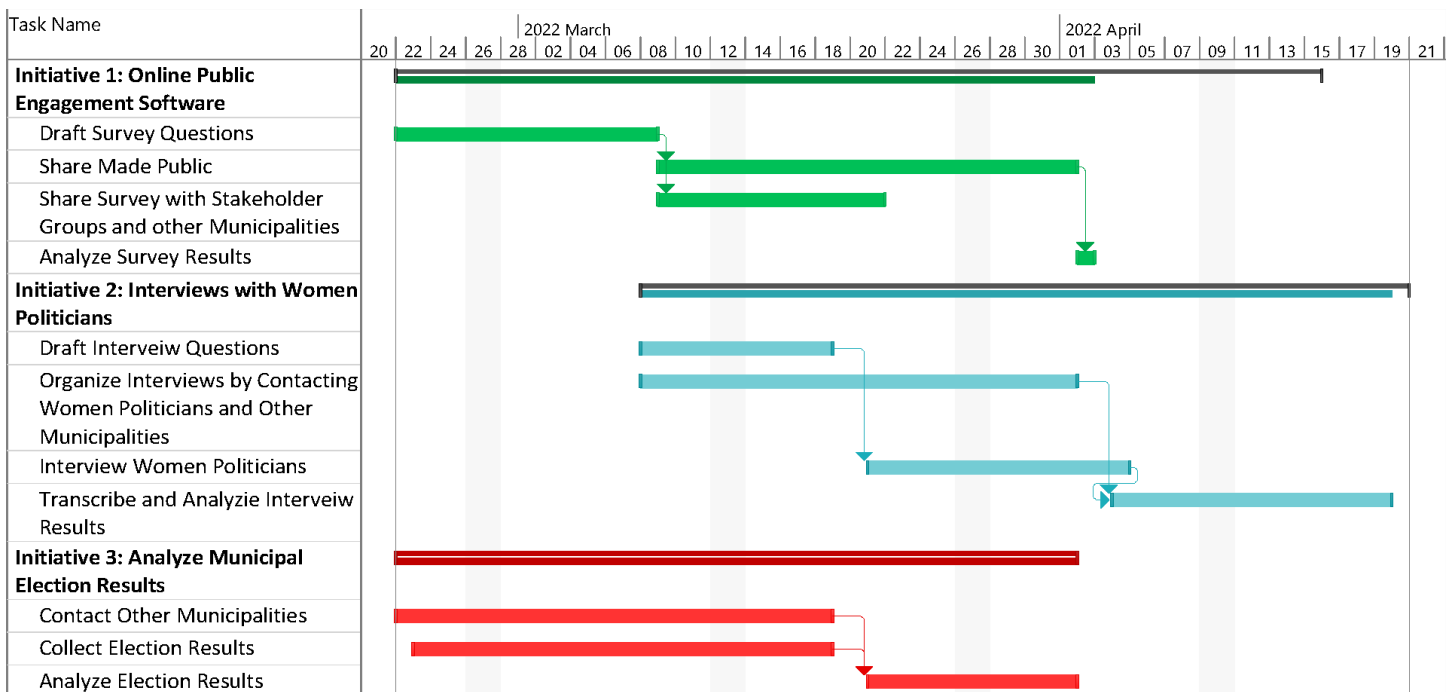
Phase I Research Stream Question:

What is the current environment for women candidates and women in government?

Purpose:

To understand why women run for council, what challenges they may face because of their gender, and why women are less likely to run for council than men.

Phase I Timeline:



Important Findings:

1. Different Perspectives between Elected and Non-Elected Women towards Council:

Comparing survey results (primarily from un-elected women) and interviews (with elected women), there is a dichotomy between how each group sees municipal council. Elected women see their councils as welcoming, while un-elected women see their councils as hostile. Future phases must breach this gap by exposing un-elected women to the realities of council while also making council more welcoming to others.

2. Municipal Education is Key to Attracting Candidates:

Speaking with elected women, unless they already had government experience, many felt unprepared for municipal council. Based on self-selection bias, education may play a role in discouraging women from running for Council. Future phases must provide in-depth education on the roles and responsibilities of council to increase participation among women.

3. Support Systems are Critical to Candidate Success:

Survey results indicate that familial obligations are a primary reason women choose not to run for municipal government. Similarly, many elected women indicated they would not have run for government unless they had a robust support system. Support systems thus motivate women to become candidates, and once elected, allow women to fully participate in municipal government. Future phases must highlight the importance of support systems (husbands, boyfriends, wives, girlfriends, parents, children, etc.) for candidates and make candidates aware of the time commitment expected by council.

Initiatives:

a) Online Public Engagement Software

Summary: Use public engagement software to create a project page that provides an overview of the program, a copy of the Women in Government program document, and a survey. This survey will be geared toward women of the RM and include questions concerning the experiences and attitudes of women interested in running for council.

Overview: The survey was largely successful in gathering information about women's attitudes towards local government, the challenges women may face when running for council, and the challenges future streams must address to increase the number of women running for local government. The initiative did not use the new public engagement software. The webpage was not ready in time for survey publication, and RM staff instead used Google Forms to design and publish the survey.

RM staff also expanded the survey's scope by including women from neighbouring municipalities, including Pilot Butte, Balgonie, White City, Village of Edenwold, RM of Lajord, RM of North Qu'Appelle, RM of South Qu'Appelle, RM of Lumsden, and RM of Sherwood. Expanding the scope allowed more women to participate from across the region.

The survey was open to the public from March 8th (to coincide with International Women's Day) to March 31st, 2022. The survey was promoted on the RM's social media and website, by other communities on their social media, in the Quad Town Forum, on CTV as part of their International Women's Day coverage, and through word-of-mouth.

Please see Appendix A - Survey Results for a more in-depth review of survey submissions.

Survey Findings:

- Based on survey results and census data, the average survey respondent is a woman between the ages of 31 and 70. She lives in an exurb community (for example, in Emerald Park, Pilot Butte, or White City), is white, is employed full-time, and has a household income over \$110,000. She has a bachelor's degree, is married, and has 1 child.

- The top 3 reasons women are discouraged from running for council are:

- a. Familial Obligations;
- b. Limited Practical Support for Women in Government; and
- c. Intimidation and Harassment (from other people or other councillors).

Each of the above-stated reasons relates to a different aspect of government – from support systems to governance, policy, and socio-cultural biases. Due to their role in discouraging women, future initiatives must take a holistic view in combating these influences and finding creative and innovative ways to mitigate concerns.

- Many respondents have considered running for local government. This high ratio may be due to self-selection bias (i.e. women already interested in government are more likely to complete a survey about government). The reasons women don't run for local government include 'Not Enough Time,' 'Old Boys Club,' and 'Historical Bias (i.e. the Rural Saskatchewan effect).' Future initiatives must showcase the importance of support systems in encouraging women to run for government (thus giving them the time to serve on council), as well as address negative gender-based socio-cultural influences. These influences mirror the challenges women face when running for government – social pressures to focus on the family, misogyny and sexism, and the 'old boys club.'

- The municipality can play an active role in encouraging women to run for government by providing training on council responsibilities (through in-person or online workshops on government and elections), by advertising elections and inviting candidates to apply, and by building a culture of communication, transparency, and accountability within council.

b) Interviews with Elected, Candidate, and Previously Elected Women Politicians

Summary: Interview elected, candidate, and previously elected municipal women politicians. Learn what motivates candidates to run, what challenges they faced running for council, and compare interviewee perspectives towards government with survey responses. These interviews provide women councillors with the opportunity to share their personal experiences running and serving on council.

Overview: RM staff interviewed 7 women from across the region (5 over the phone and 2 in person). All interviewees were current councillors as it was difficult to contact candidate or previously elected women politicians.

Each interview lasted approximately 35 mins and followed a formal set of questions. First, the RM staff member introduced the Women in Government program and its goals and objectives. Then, the staff member highlighted how interviewee responses would be kept confidential. The staff member then asked several questions focused on the personal experiences of the interviewee. Finally, the staff member asked the interviewee how they felt about different statements derived from survey findings – whether they agreed or disagreed, and why.

Some of the interviewees had been on council for a long time, while others were only recently elected. This variation provided a variety of perspectives and attitudes on municipal government. Overall, women politicians had positive experiences serving on council, though some interviewees noted that they were not always treated equally because of their gender.

Please see Appendix B - Interview Results for a more in-depth review of the interview questions and responses.

Interview Findings:

- Many elected women were comfortable putting their names forward for council because they knew what to expect, either through past work experiences with government, or because they were already leaders in their communities. Future initiatives must provide women interested in government with the opportunity to learn about municipal government. Women who are already leaders in the community should be personally invited to put their names forward for candidacy. These initiatives must also highlight the amount of time councillors are expected to put towards council so that candidates can gauge if they have the time to fully participate.

- Many councils in the region are viewed as 'old boys clubs' and are often characterised by exclusion, 'meetings before meetings' (i.e. councillors coming to council having already made up their mind), and an environment hostile to change. Future initiatives must dismantle the 'old boys club' environment by being more inclusive, reinforcing the importance of council deliberations, and being more open to change.

- Many councillors were either encouraged to run by their support systems or can continue participating because of support they receive from family or friends. Future initiatives must encourage and celebrate the role support systems have in allowing women to participate in municipal government.

- Of interviewed women, many only decided to run for council after retiring. While this is primarily due to retired women having enough time to participate in council, this also creates an older council composition. Future initiatives must encourage young women and women with families to become candidates by providing support and women-friendly policies.

- Women councillors want their council to represent their community. In some cases, this can include having more people of colour on council, and in other cases, it can mean having more women on council. Future initiatives must target a wide variety of women of different backgrounds. This will ensure that council has a diversity of views and represents the community.

c) Analysis of Municipal and Regional Election Results

Summary: Analyse electoral data from the RM of Edenwold and other municipalities over the last 13 years (since 2009). Use this data to understand regional electoral patterns and how women have participated in municipal government over time.

Overview: RM staff collected data from 7 different municipalities.

Municipalities that provided data include:

- Town of Balgonie
- Town of Pilot Butte
- Town of White City (Partial Data)
- Village of Edenwold (Partial Data)
- RM of Edenwold
- RM of Lajord (Partial Data)
- RM of Sherwood (Partial Data)

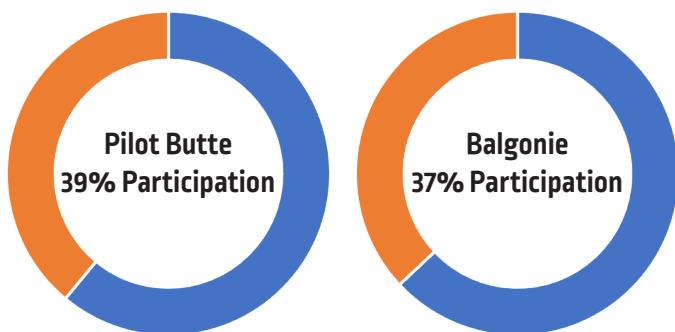
Please see Appendix C – Electoral Results for a more in-depth review of electoral data.

Electoral Findings:

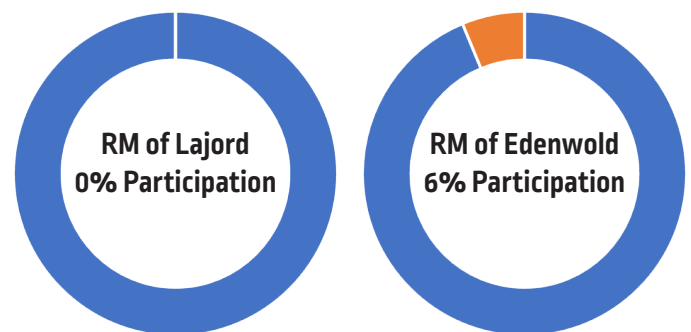
- Urban municipalities are better at attracting women candidates. Comparing urban municipalities to RMs, 2 of the 4 urban municipalities have, since 2012, had at least 30% of all candidates be women, while 0 of 3 RMs have, since 2012, had at least 30% of all candidates be women. Future initiatives must borrow tools and tactics from urban municipalities to encourage greater participation within rural areas.
- Pilot Butte has consistently had strong women representation on council and during elections. They are the only municipality with more than 1 woman on council. Future initiatives must work directly with Pilot Butte to understand why they have strong participation among women and what the RM can do to mirror these successes.
- RM of Edenwold council has historically been underrepresented by women running or sitting on council. Underrepresentation is common across the region (both for elected women and women running for council). Future initiatives must make women more comfortable and confident running for government.

Electoral Highlights:

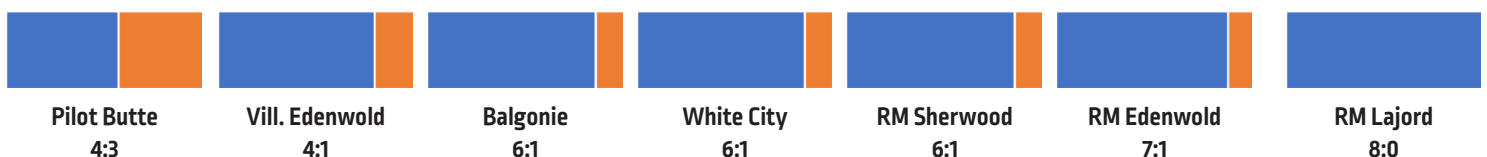
Highest Average Women Participation:



Lowest Average Women Participation:



Ratio of Men to Women Currently Serving on Council:





Phase I: Research Stream Next Steps:

Based on the results of Phase I: Research of the Women in Government Program, RM staff will move forward with implementing and proposing initiatives that mitigate concerns introduced through survey, interview, or electoral data. Rooted in the Women in Government Program’s Phase II: Internal Action Stream and Phase III: External Action Stream, these initiatives may include:

1. Council Procedures and Policies:

Explore ways of improving municipal policies and procedures to encourage women to run for Council. This may include implementing maternity leave for councillors, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for children and mothers in council, and being more flexible with meeting times and dates.

2. Promote Women Role Models:

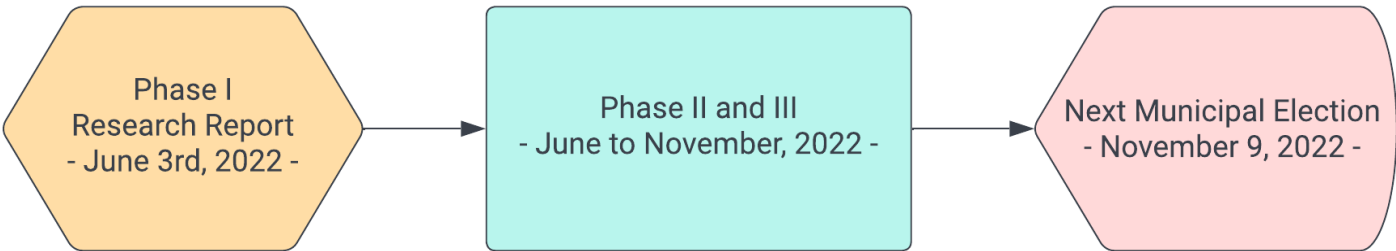
Highlight the role women play as municipal role models so that public perceptions shift to better match reality. This will involve moving away from the ‘old boys club.’

3. Campaign School:

Create a program that provides women and men the opportunity to learn about council responsibilities, conflict of interest, municipal rules and policies, and other aspects of governance. Campaign School would highlight both the positive and negative aspects of municipal government, including the time commitment, to give interested candidates a comprehensive view of what to expect if they are elected. The program will also give men and women the opportunity to experience council by inviting them to attend meetings and by creating a mock-council to provide first-hand experience.

4. Voting Improvements:

Encourage participation in municipal government by expanding voting options during elections. This may include allowing mail-in voting, increasing the number of advanced voting days, and advertising elections more broadly through traditional and social media.



Appendix A - Survey Results

Question 1: Where do you live? - 39 responses

RM of Edenwold - Inside Emerald Park	5 respondents	12.8%
RM of Edenwold - Outside Emerald Park	7 respondents	17.9%
Village of Edenwold	5 respondents	12.8%
Town of White City	4 respondents	10.3%
Town of Pilot Butte	8 respondents	20.5%
Town of Balgonie	1 respondent	2.6%
A Different RM [ex. Lajord, South Qu'Appelle, North Qu'Appelle, Sherwood, Lumdsen, etc.]	9 respondents	23.1%

Question 2: What is your self-identified gender? - 39 responses

Female	36 respondents	92.3%
Men	2 respondents	5.1%
Non-Binary	1 respondents	2.6%

Note: Only self-identified 'Female' and 'Non-Binary' were able to continue answering questions after Question 2. The RM will engage with men as supporters of women in government in future phases.

Question 3: How old are you? - 37 responses

18-30	4 respondents	10.8%
31-50	15 respondents	40.5%
51-70	17 respondents	45.9%
71 and Older	1 respondent	2.7%

Question 4: What is your ethnicity? - 37 responses

White/Caucasian	35 respondents	94.6%
Black/Afro-Canadian	1 respondent	2.7%
Prefer not to say	1 respondent	2.7%

Question 5: What is your current employment status? - 37 responses

Employed Full-Time	16 respondents	43.2%
Employed Part-Time	7 respondents	18.9%
Homemaker	3 respondents	8.1%
Seeking Employment	1 respondent	2.7%
Retired	10 respondents	27.0%

Question 6: What is your total household income? - 37 responses

Under \$10,000	1 respondent	2.7%
\$10,000 to \$29,999	0 respondent	0%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	1 respondent	2.7%
\$50,000 to \$69,999	4 respondents	10.8%
\$70,000 to \$89,999	7 respondents	19.9%
\$90,000 to \$109,999	2 respondent	5.4%
Over \$110,000	16 respondents	43.2%
Prefer not to say	6 respondents	16.2%

Question 7: What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed? - 37 responses

High School	7 respondents	18.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Diploma	19 respondents	51.3%
Master's Degree	3 respondents	8.1%
PH.D. or higher	2 respondents	5.4%
Trade School	5 respondents	13.5%
Prefer not to say	1 respondent	2.7%

Question 8: Are you married or in a long-term relationship? - 37 responses

Yes	30 respondents	81.1%
No	7 respondents	18.9%

Question 9: Do you have children? - 37 responses

Yes	30 respondents	81.1%
No	7 respondents	18.9%

Question 10: Research has shown that there are several possible reasons why women chose not to run for municipal government. In your opinion, what 3 reasons do you think have the greatest influence in discouraging women from running for municipal government? - 37 responses

Familial Obligations	26 count
Limited Practical Support for Women in Government	16 count
Intimidation and Harassment (from other people or other councillors)	13 count
Limited Knowledge of the Municipal Election Process or Municipal Government	12 count
Negative Professional Environment while in Government	10 count

Question 10: Research has shown that there are several possible reasons why women chose not to run for municipal government. In your opinion, what 3 reasons do you think have the greatest influence in discouraging women from running for municipal government? - 37 responses (cont.)

Professional or Social Obligations	9 count
Few Female Political Role Models	8 count
Negative Professional Environment while Running for Government	7 count
Low Self-Confidence	5 count
Limited Opportunities for Leadership Training	2 count
Poor Socialization as Leaders	1 count
Other - Negative Views of Municipal Council	2 count
Other - Limited Opportunities to Participate before being Elected	1 count
Other - Lack of Interest	1 count

Question 11: Have you ever considered running for municipal government? - 37 responses

Yes	19 respondents	51.3%
No	18 respondents	48.6%

Question 12: If you have considered running for municipal government, but chose not to, what influenced you not to run? (optional) - 17 responses, 45.9% of all eligible respondents

Not Enough Time	7 count
'Old Boys Club'	4 count
Historical Bias (i.e. the Rural Saskatchewan Effect)	3 count
Insufficient Training for the Position	2 count
Negative Public Perception towards Politicians	1 count
Currently Working in Government	1 count
Low Self-Confidence	1 count

Question 13: If you have run for government, what influenced you to put your name forward for candidacy? (optional) - 7 responses, 18.9% of all eligible respondents

Want to change the way things are done	4 count
Want to learn more about Government	2 count
Desire to Serve the Community	2 count

Question 14: If you were to run for municipal government, what topics would you focus on once elected? - 37 responses

Planning and New Growth	19 count
Economic Development	15 count
Public Communications and Engagement	15 count
Parks and Recreation	13 count
Policy Development	12 count
Community Events	11 count
Environmental Conservation and Protection	10 count
Heritage and Culture	9 count
Emergency Services (Fire and CSO Program)	7 count
Bylaw Enforcement	7 count
Drainage	6 count
Municipal Service Delivery	5 count
I would never run for municipal council	6 count

Question 15: What challenges do you think women face when running for municipal government? (optional) - 27 responses, 72.9% of all eligible respondents

Social Pressures to Focus on Family	12 count
Misogyny and Sexism	11 count
'Old Boys Club'	10 count
Double Standard when comparing Men and Women	8 count
Insufficient Training	5 count
Lack of Support	4 count

Question 16: Do you feel well-informed on the processes of municipal government and municipal elections? - 37 responses

Yes - I know everything there is to know	10 respondents	27.0%
Maybe - I know the basics about council responsibilities and how elections are run	16 respondents	43.2%
Maybe - I know the basics about voting and that's about it	6 respondents	16.2%
No - I don't know anything but I'm curious to learn more	5 respondents	13.5%

Question 17: What could your municipality do to encourage women to run for government? (optional) - 23 responses, 62.2% of all eligible respondents

Provide Training on Council Responsibilities	6 count
Advertise Elections and Invite Candidates to Apply	4 count
Stronger Communications and Transparency	4 count
Mentorship Program	2 count
New Policies that encourage Flexibility and Respect	2 count
Gradual Change to show Progress	1 count

Question 18: If the RM of Edenwold was to host online and in-person workshops on municipal government and elections, would you attend? - 37 responses

Yes	10 respondents	27.0%
Maybe	17 respondents	45.9%
No	10 respondents	27.0%

Question 19: Do you have any other thoughts you would like the RM of Edenwold to consider while working on the Women in Government Program? (optional) - 15 responses, 40.5% of all eligible respondents

Encourage Young Women to run for Government	3 count
Provide Council with Additional Training (Diversity, Internalized Misogyny)	1 count
Encourage Indigenous Women to run for Government	1 count
Improve Women's Participation in Non-Elected Positions	1 count
New Policies to penalize Harassment and Discrimination	1 count

Appendix B - Interview Results

Question 1: Have you completed the Women in Government survey?

- No
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No

Question 2: Why did you decide to run for municipal council?

- Opportunity to participate; wanted to see improvements in the community and saw how things could be run differently; firm believer that instead of sitting back and complaining, you should roll up your sleeves and get involved; was already involved in the community as a volunteer, so decided to be at the other table where decisions were being made; came into the position with goals in mind and have continued to pursue these goals; lots of learning required, previously worked with municipal government so was already aware of roles and responsibilities and had accurate expectations
- Previously worked for provincial government in a department relevant to municipal government and thought she had something she could contribute; had a close friend who previously served on council so knew what to expect
- Was already politically minded, in past community, acted as a chauffeur to get people to voting stations, saw the value of voting and the importance of engagement; not tied to any particular party, but instead the overall benefit of government; saw being on council as a way to give back to the community; has several focuses on council, including anti-racism, multiculturalism, history, and heritage, anything that focuses on the role the past played in developing community
- Saw deficiencies in the community and was frustrated with the way certain projects were going, wanted to get involved to fix them; already knew a bit about council, but didn't know the extent of responsibilities or time commitment, would have liked to know more information before getting involved
- Previously worked for another municipality; when an issue came up in the community, created a group of residents to provide recommendations to council, members of group recommended she run, at first she decided not to because she was still working, but once she retired, she realized she had enough time to participate and become one of the people making decisions in the municipality
- Friends encouraged her to put her name forward; community had some concerns and residents wanted to see new people step forward, there was a lack of leadership, allowing her to win election and sit on council; had a history of being in leadership positions, was from a family that valued being strong and outspoken in their convictions; previously worked for government and understood how the municipal systems functioned and how everyone could work together
- Personal reason; past councillor was a friend, and when they stepped down, the neighbourhood encouraged her to run

Question 3: While serving on council (or running for council), have you faced any challenges because of your gender?

- Absolutely, 100%; the existing council was opposed to a woman running for a position on council; 'old boys club'; mindset of the day was that it was unfathomable for a woman who works full time and is a mother to be on council; backwards ideas were verbally said to her; was asked how she would manage her household duties, her work, and government, and that her priorities would leave council and the municipality at risk because 'it simply can't be done'; these questions were not asked to men running or on council; existing councillors were thrown off-

guard by a woman stepping into the room and onto council; some councillors said she had no idea what she was doing, but since then, a previous councillor has apologized; in rural Saskatchewan, anyone who's different, who isn't a white Caucasian male, has to prove themselves, whereas others don't have to prove themselves, as being elected is proof enough

- No, have not had any negative experiences running for council; relied on friends in government to gain confidence and support

- Not treated any differently because she's a woman, but sometimes has to push harder to have her voice heard, sometimes feels unrepresented in decision-making; council is like a family, personal family is all men, so she's used to a male-dominated dynamic; council needs women of all ages to participate, and particularly younger women who are raising a family in the community, they are vested in the area for the long-term and want to see the community improve for their kids and themselves, also apply to men with children, same desires and drive to improve the area

- Not personally, has a lot of support on council from others when issues come up; if you were the only woman, however, it could be easy to be overpowered or have your voice silenced; if it's a council of men, women may not want to run because they don't want to be the only woman on council

- Not personally, but have heard stories; in some cases, she's able to use her experiences as a woman to present new perspectives or take a different stance from the men on council; generally decorum of council keeps things civil; sometimes, the men will 'tune' her out, but it's rare

- No, in her council, she doesn't see any difference between genders, but instead a difference between level of knowledge and engagement; she would rather have an engaged councillor than an unengaged councillor, no matter their gender; stepping into politics, had the full support of her friends and past councillors; as a woman, has to have a strong will to fight back and be heard, needs to be stronger than the men on council; the longer a council has been without change, the more likely it is to become an 'old boys club'

- No, not directly; council is a familial environment, and while there are sometimes disagreements, things, in general, are pretty respectful

Question 4: Why do you think women are less likely to run for council compared to men?

- 'You do what you see,' there isn't as much representation, so women don't see themselves in those positions; when you don't see other women in those positions, you don't imagine yourself in those positions, you don't think it's possible, but getting women involved shakes that assumption

- There aren't as many women running for council, and as more women run, there are more people who become interested; leads to a gradual shift in the way people see women in government; women think differently, which can bring a diversity of thought to council; women are busier than men in many ways and are pulled in lots of different directions (family, work, etc.); perception that 'politics is a man's game,' but this is changing as more women get involved, and other women become more confident in running

- Political environment is traditionally male-dominated and not inviting to women; council and government needs to build, support, and encourage women to run for government; different and diverse voices are needed around the council table, with diverse voices requiring a greater focus on invitation; should also focus on the individual stepping forward and taking the chance to run for council, it's a two way street, government can only do so much before individuals have to step forward; diverse voices have different ways of seeing the world and understanding people; was personally volunteering and invested in the community so had connections to government already; policies can also attract younger women to run for government through programs like maternity leave; time commitment for council is very high, limiting the types of people who can run (only the self-employed or managerial); all-day council meetings don't work for most people, men or women; if nothing changes, only retired women will be able to run, if we want younger women as well, you have to put policies in place that support it

- Time commitment, if you have children, work a full-time job, or manage a farm, there isn't always the time to run or serve in government; family played a large role in supporting her run for council and giving her the time

required to be in government (older children babysitting younger children, having a flexible work schedule); the larger the family, the more time spent on managing schedules and making sure everyone is at the right place at the right time; you don't understand the time commitment until you're in the position

- Politics is a traditionally male world that may drive some women away from running; older women may also not have been raised in an environment that doesn't support women in government ('traditional upbringing')
- Traditionally men have run for council; no matter what, a councillor needs to have a reason for running and shouldn't run just for the prestige or power; in the past, men have been more likely to take time away from the family to run for council, and women haven't always had the same opportunity; key elements to being successful on council include having a supportive team (whether family or friends), having a professional or personal background that can bring something new to council, or otherwise being a community champion; women see society differently, men and women playing different roles on council through their different talents; council needs to be a well-rounded team that is diverse and matches the community
- Age, either too young (so have a family) or too old (so not interested in government), people who largely run are the retired who have the time and capacity to serve in government; if you have a family, it's also impossible to make time for council while still providing time for your family; once kids are grown, then you have more time for other activities; this shift is slowly changing though as younger women find ways to make time for both family and interests, and as men become more involved in raising kids

Question 5: Within the survey answers, there are common 'themes' that emerge. Do you agree or disagree with these themes, and why?

a) The biggest reason women don't run for council is because of familial obligations to their children or spouse.

- Strange wording; Women face added challenges and assumptions that men don't have to go through, women are obligated to prioritize the family, but today women can have different priorities at different times in their lives, and just because they have a family or children doesn't mean they can't also run for council; council should be inclusive to all by creating an environment that provides access and opportunity for all to participate, for example, having night meetings allows more working people to participate, especially for women who work outside of the home, can also change dates or allow alternative meeting formats (i.e. video into a meeting)
- Children definitely play a large role in dictating which women run and have time to run; spouses have a big role in supporting women rather than taking them away
- Partially true, depends on the person; needs a supportive spouse to allow for extra time outside of the home and in the community; needs to build a support system within the family that can withstand the added stress of council or negativity from the community as a woman running for government; younger children are more involved and take up more time, further limiting opportunities for mothers to participate
- Agree
- Largely true; if they're the primary caretaker of children may not have the opportunity to participate; if you're working, your job is your primary focus, and politics comes second
- True; family time occupies a lot of a woman's personal time and leaves less time for other commitments
- 100% agree, based on personal situation, can play a larger or smaller role based on the person

b) There is limited practical support for women in government through policies, practices, and other municipal structures.

- Women can be set up for success by giving them opportunities to participate, whether through things like workshops or by filling in gaps in knowledge to make women more comfortable running for council; education is important as most women don't understand the role of council (unless they have experience); there isn't always an

eagerness to welcome women to council, so there need to be systems in place to make women more comfortable running and serving on council

- Her council has nothing but support, all men on council are supportive of her participation; turn to her for issues of emotion, following her lead on particular files
- 200%, strong support for this statement; maternity leave is a policy that could be implemented today that would get younger women participating; politicians as a whole are viewed negatively (seen as trading away their integrity) when instead they play an important role in supporting community, changing from negative to positive requires a shift in perspective among residents
- Doesn't apply to their municipality, all policies are pretty balanced in giving equal opportunity
- Flexibility is really important, especially for mothers or working women; if you have a full-time job or are a parent, your time is already split, and it can be hard to make time for council as well; time commitment may keep some people away from running for council, also has to be open to talking to ratepayers no matter what time it is; evening meetings would be a good idea, but then you have to deal with staff overtime
- Doesn't apply to her municipality; her municipality has a set night-time council meeting, and if there is additional debate, it takes place during committee
- Disagree, policies need to be written and supportive for all, men and women; personally, daytime meetings are fine, but practically, for men and women, meetings should be in the evening

c) A major reason women don't run for council is because of intimidation or harassment from other people, including other councillors.

- There is a culture of the 'old boys club' who don't want women because of stereotypes (emotional, don't understand government); these attitudes should not be tolerated, and the administrator/reeve/mayor must be active in fighting gender-based discrimination
- Personally has not experienced it but has talked to other councillors, and they have had pushback because of their gender; it could be classified as bullying through exclusion (i.e. passive bullying) versus more direct words or statements; women in council need to be tough since politics is a 'man's game'; when municipal council comes to media, it's often for bad reasons, rarely do people celebrate the good
- Politicians face harassment, and women face extra scrutiny because of their gender and aren't always given equal access to opportunities; societally, women are viewed as lesser and have to do double to be considered strong politicians; women can face extra intimidation because of gender, and that they aren't given the same level of respect compared to men, are looked down upon in many ways; this is a mindset that stifles participation and needs to be changed
- True, in some cases, in many councils there's an environment of 'old boys club' that drives women away or makes women who are elected quit because of the exclusion or harassment; the council structure needs to be positioned in such a way as to prevent harassment or negativity
- Never experienced it; if anything may be treated better in some cases because she's a woman
- Possible, based on council environment; male councillors (especially more traditional ones) need to be careful of what they say and when it comes to talking about women or other councillors; if councillors are being loud or yelling, it needs to be carefully watched as a few bad councillors can spoil the bunch by making the environment noisy and difficult; the mayor/reeve needs to be the moral leader of council and put a stop to any bad behaviour, by establishing rules and putting a line in the sand, they can build an environment of respect between everyone
- Not for her council or in general, but there are specific councils where this might apply; women need to be strong to deal with the constant back-and-forth; if you are timid or take things to heart, it won't be easy, some councillors make off-handed jokes that might be concerning, but they are just jokes and shouldn't be taken seriously; depends on the mindset of council and the people in it; women need to have a 'tough' skin to deal with it

d) Council is an 'old boys club'.

- Yes, rural councils don't always represent the present when it comes to representation, attitudes, or perspectives; people who often run for council are those who are used to the status quo, mainly made up of retired men set in their ways and unwilling to change
- Not personally experienced anything like this; in the past, it was more traditional and had habits that led to exclusion; created a culture of 'the meeting before the meeting'; in cases where council as a whole is bad or isn't working together, residents will notice and may vote them all out to bring things back into order; to get rid of the old boys club, more women need to run
- Council looks the same, old white men, it matches the general demographics, but not quite, not enough women or people of colour; councillors need to do a better job of staying current with the times, when they talk and make decisions, they represent all residents of the municipality and cannot be stuck in their ways; if you miss those perspectives, some aspects of government are simply ignored or forgotten, but by getting different people involved, different things come to light
- Old boys clubs are marked by having the same members for several years with limited turnover, this creates patterns of behaviour and voices that aren't open to change; stubborn voices make new councillors feel unheard and overpowered, that their votes wouldn't have counted since the group would be set in their ways; as communities change, residents start asking for new services, and if council hasn't changed to stay with the times, they aren't connected to the needs of the community; if council is old retired men, they don't see value in services that new residents or families need; when you're older or retired, you have more time to serve in government, when really you should be involved earlier
- Council started out as an old boys club, so that's the way it stayed; since the community is so close to the city, there's a bit more of an open mind towards change (compared to some of the more rural communities)
- The public sees it this way, though things are shifting; it isn't just about the gender of council, but also about the mentality that it brings along, of being inclusive, traditional, and fighting against change
- Very common sentiment; many people outside of council think that or believe it's the case, when in reality, it isn't the truth; there's a disconnect between the way people see things and reality; the municipality needs to do a better job of showing the true environment and showing people what it's really about; some people on council fit the stereotype of old boys club, but in a lot of cases, it just isn't the case; to get this idea across, need to start making public statements and putting in place programs that show the truth to change perceptions; there needs to be an opportunity to experience council and see what it's really like

e) Some things your municipality could do to support women in government would be to advertise elections more, to be more flexible with meeting times, and to provide childcare during council meetings.

- Childcare is critically important in getting working mothers to participate; knowledge of council is missing and could be shared through purposeful workshops or orientation sessions to attract women; campaign school is a good idea, and she would be happy to present or build attraction
- Flexible committee meeting times is important to allow more participation, council meetings are set, but you can be flexible with other aspects of governance; evening meetings are better, and new online tools (like zoom) makes participating easier for those at home; for elections, advertising is important in getting people involved and letting people know about what's going on, using the website, Facebook, community newsletter, newspaper, word of mouth, etc.; childcare shouldn't be a taxpayer expense
- Generally supports these ideas; advertising is often lackluster/the bare minimum and could be reinforced, advertise early so that people can start thinking about running, even before the beginning of election season; people know way more about provincial or federal elections and municipal elections kind of sneak by, even though they are equally important for residents; childcare would be a good area to explore, would allow more types of people to be included, and may also give people who hadn't considered it pause to think about running; could also explore opportunities to bring children into council, like what they have at the provincial level

- Flexibility is hard because council dates need to be set months in advance, instead, flexibility should be baked in from the beginning by setting times and dates that work for the most people; childcare, through personal experience, would have been beneficial, especially in allowing more engagement during evening meetings; if people are interested in government, you don't have to advertise to them, they already know, they are self-driven to run and be involved, advertising is only as good as the information they already have, they have to know what they are getting themselves into, some people may want to be involved, but don't know how (you don't know what you don't know), better to share information than to advertise for the sake of advertising
- Advertising is difficult because of a lack of media options, they only really have website, Facebook, and the local newspaper; day meetings are nice for some people, especially those who are retired, but they don't work with everyone, in some cases meetings should be changed to accommodate working councillors since retired, or former councillors have more freedom, flexibility isn't a bad thing, it just needs some sort of regularity, night meetings may allow more ratepayers to attend the meetings and hearings; should focus on parents when it comes to getting more people involved, nothing wrong with getting parents involved, if it's in the best interest of the community, you need to make the change
- Advertising can be improved across the board, not only to get more people involved in council, but also to increase voting; all of council must support any change to schedule, but in general, flexibility is good in getting different people involved and on council; childcare is a bad idea, it opens a can of worms of what council is expected to do and what benefits they get, the only way it would be acceptable is if it was directly approved by council, people should run for council because they want to be involved, not because of free or cheap childcare; if the justification is there though, it could be supported, you just need to show need and have a good argument for why it would improve representation
- Advertising needs to be done across the board, both to encourage more candidates and to encourage more voting (for both men and women), candidates can also play a role in letting people know there's an election and getting voter turn-out; mail voting might also be a good way of getting higher engagement, it may help people who wouldn't otherwise vote as well as those who don't have the time or ability to vote; flexibility with meeting times is a good thing, might not work for everyone, but in general, it's a good thing that should be encouraged; childcare is a no, if we provide it for women, should also be available to men, people already deal with childcare because of work, so how are council meetings any different

Question 6: Do you have any other comments on the Women in Government program?

- Very happy that RM is working on this project, the province did a similar program in the past (Women who Run), a 1-day workshop with the goal of advocating and recruiting women to run for government, everyone has something to offer, and everyone is needed at the table; council should reflect the community, and when it doesn't, there's a problem that needs to be fixed
 - Have never personally experienced anything negative because of being a woman; because of this, wants to encourage more women to get involved, whether it's friends, community volunteers, or others with the right skill-set; to be in government, you have to be confident and forthright; campaign school is a good idea because it fills in the 'unknown,' what is expected of council and councillors; council rules set out procedure and decorum
 - Would be interested in speaking at Campaign school, want to enlighten others and share information, municipal leadership course has a big benefit in getting people trained for the position
 - Campaign school should be open to both men and women, get more people of both sexes involved; there's a history of women leaders in the area, both in RMs and towns in the region, so the area is already ahead of the game in some aspects
 - Glad to see the RM moving in this direction; any initiative needs to highlight the responsibilities of council and how councillors need to push for better government by participating and getting involved
 - People who want to be on council should be the ones running, don't run just because, but take the initiative and put your name forward, whether they are men or women; in many cases, 10% of the people do 100% of the work,
- 16 so there just needs to be more engagement and participation across the board

Appendix C - Electoral Results

Year	Municipality Type	Municipality Name	# of Positions Open for Election	# of Men Running for Election	# of Women Running for Election	Ratio of Women to Men Running for Council
2012	Urban	Balgonie	6	9	2	22%
2012	Urban	Pilot Butte	7	9	1	11%
2014	Rural	Edenwold	3	6	0	0%
2016	Rural	Edenwold	5	9	0	0%
2016	Urban	Balgonie	6	5	2	40%
2016	Urban	Pilot Butte	7	9	5	56%
2016	Urban	V. Edenwold	5	5	0	0%
2016	Urban	White City	7	12	2	17%
2018	Rural	Edenwold	4	5	0	0%
2018	Rural	Lajord	1	2	0	0%
2020	Rural	Edenwold	6	8	2	25%
2020	Rural	Sherwood	4	5	1	20%
2020	Rural	Lajord	2	4	0	0%
2020	Urban	Balgonie	6	6	3	50%
2020	Urban	Pilot Butte	7	10	5	50%
2020	Urban	V. Edenwold	5	4	1	25%
2020	Urban	White City	7	10	1	10%