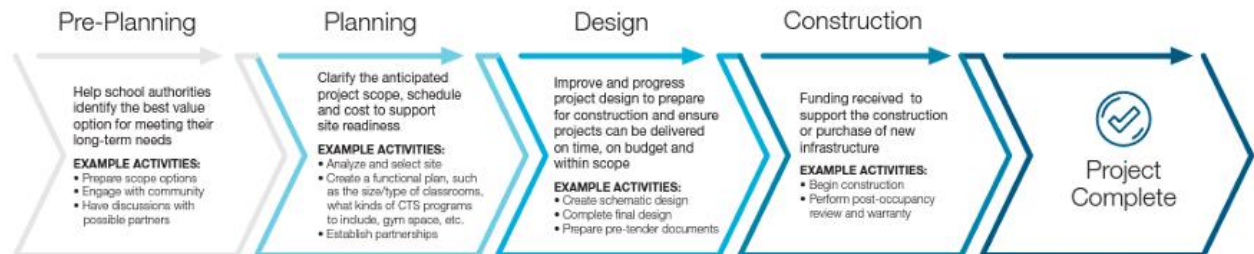


# Municipalities' Guide to School Capital Planning

The [School Capital Manual](#) is a resource for municipalities and school authorities (not including independent, private Early Childhood Service [ECS] operators, and federal schools) that outlines roles and responsibilities in the provincial capital planning process. Municipalities play a key role in preparing a school authority's project proposal for funding consideration at all stages of development.



## School Project Preparedness

Municipalities play an essential role in preparing sites for a potential school priority project. It is important that all parties work collaboratively to ensure municipal permitting, zoning, and servicing are secured in a timely fashion to allow projects to advance to subsequent stages of development.

Entities work together to assign and plan for future potential school sites to support the school capital planning process. This includes:

- communicating current approved projects and timelines, with regular check-ins;
- conducting pre-application meetings and engage early on-site requirements;
- identifying expected application dates and required by dates, and timelines, with regular check-ins; and
- where a municipality has multiple projects, assigning a municipal lead to coordinate municipal processes.

## Site Readiness

School authorities are required to submit a signed and complete [Site Readiness Checklist](#) with supporting documentation for each capital project submission to assess site suitability. Municipalities provide key inputs to the Site Readiness Checklist and are required to provide school authorities with a serviced site. Improper documentation, zoning issues, or a lack of suitable site may preclude the school authority's project from moving forward to approval.

A serviced site means that all municipal utilities are installed up to the property line. If a serviced site is not available, municipalities must provide written confirmation that services will be available before the scheduled start of construction to support the proposed project.

To ensure that projects progress in a timely manner, the school site subdivision should be complete, and the property owned by the municipality and/or the school authority.

If the site has not been transferred to the school authority, municipalities must provide a letter authorizing the school authority or its agents to access the site to perform the required testing. It is appropriate for the municipality to outline any concerns regarding that access in the letter, such as safety restrictions, environmental sensitivities, or limitations due to adjacent municipal infrastructure work.

## Municipalities are responsible for providing:

- proper zoning to allow for a school facility;
- temporary roadway access for school construction if required;
- permanent roadway access and transportation connections;
- safety provisions;
- street frontage requirements; and
- services and offsite improvements required to serve the school site.

## Schools Now Program

The [Schools Now](#) initiative (also known as the School Construction Accelerator Program) will invest in up to 90 new schools and up to 24 modernizations and replacement schools. The final year for school authorities to submit projects under this program is 2027.

The intent of the program is to add more capacity (more than 200,000 student spaces) to the education system, including new schools, updating or replacing existing schools, creating additional charter school facilities, and supplying modular classrooms.

Municipalities play an important role in this program by removing obstacles at the early stages of a project. Please see sections on Site Readiness and the Modular Classroom Program for more information.

## Modular Classroom Program

The Modular Classroom Program provides relief to school authorities with urgent space needs.

Municipalities play a critical role by facilitating timely installation of approved modular classrooms. Once a school authority receives approval, municipalities should expedite development, building, electrical, plumbing, gas, and occupancy permits while ensuring compliance with municipal bylaws and the Alberta Building Code.

Under the *Municipal Government Act*, municipalities are required to establish how land or buildings will be used, including through the use of permits. Because modular classrooms are often required for occupancy as soon as possible, school authorities and students are best served by a process that prioritizes efficiency without compromising regulatory standards.

## Joint Use and Planning

### Agreements (JUPA)

JUPAs establish how municipalities and school boards collaborate on planning school sites and are a legislated requirement under the *Municipal Government Act* and *Education Act*. Key aspects addressed in a JUPA include shared use of school sites and municipal facilities, management of municipal and school reserves, coordination on long term planning and service provisions, and formation of committees for ongoing collaboration.

Municipalities have until June 10, 2026, to enter into an agreement with all school boards that are currently

operating, or will be operating, within the municipal boundary.

## Real Property Governance School Ownership Model

Real Property Governance (RPG) refers to the way real property assets are managed, with the intent of improving asset management. The objective of RPG is to strengthen program delivery to Albertans.

### New School Construction

The *Municipal Government Act* and *Education Act* enable Alberta's government to own all new Kindergarten to Grade 12 school real property including sites, buildings, playgrounds, sports fields, and parking lots.

Beginning in 2025/26, the transfer of ownership will occur once provincial design or construction funding is approved, and written notice is provided. The change in ownership will not be applied retroactively.

### Existing Schools and Declaring Surplus Real Property

For consolidated entities, including school authorities, the Offer to Transfer (OTT) process under s.7 of the *Real Property Governance Act* applies when real property is no longer used for a specific program or is determined to be surplus and is intended for disposal. The OTT process is as follows:

1. School authority determines property is surplus to its program needs and offers the property to Infrastructure at its net book value. This may include fee simple lands and buildings, and lands held as municipal or school reserve.
2. Infrastructure assesses the OTT to determine if the property should be retained or repurposed for other uses.
3. If the OTT is accepted, the property is transferred to Infrastructure.
4. If the OTT is declined, the school authority is notified and may proceed with disposal of the property in accordance with the *Education Act* and *Disposition of Property Regulation*.