Gatchina Could Become Leningrad Region's Capital

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Leningrad Region governor Alexander Drozdenko may announce plans at a press conference on Tuesday to move the region's capital from St. Petersburg to the town of Gatchina, a news report said Monday.

The report was confirmed by the region's deputy governor in charge of construction, Georgy Bogachev, and Dmitry Yanov, another deputy governor and head of the region's economic development committee, Vedomosti reported.

The idea to make Gatchina the region's capital first appeared after President Vladimir Putin held a meeting at the St. Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute in the town in late April, where he was presented with a project to create an international center for neutron research in Gatchina.

The new government compound in Gatchina is expected to have an area of 80,000 to 100,000

square meters. The cost of moving government facilities to Gatchina will be financed by a bank and offset by the sale of regional government property in downtown St. Petersburg.

The first steps toward moving the regional capital from St. Petersburg to Gatchina may be taken after the 2014 municipal elections, the regional government's press office said.

In the 19th century Gatchina was an official residence of Russian tzars. Its parks and palaces are included in the UNESCO world heritage list.

The town's current population is about 93,000 people.