



Trails Strategy Public Engagement Plan

Parkland County

DRAFT – FOR CLIENT REVIEW

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Project Overview

EDS Group Inc. (EDS) and Y Station have been contracted by the Parkland County to engage with stakeholders and residents to create a Trails Strategy for Parkland County. Y Station and EDS will share responsibility in delivering aspects of the engagement program. The scope of this project includes quantitative and qualitative engagement activities. The following schedule indicates the activities outlined in the proposal and the approximate schedule for each task:

Parkland County Trails Strategy Plan		Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
2.3 Core Work Program										
A. General Administration										
A.1	Project Management & Communications									
A.2	Subconsultant Meetings & Oversight									
A.3	Safety & Quality Assurance Program									
B. Phase One: Analysis & Review										
B.1	Background Document Review									
B.2	Base Mapping									
B.3	Technical Coordination with County									
B.4	Review Committee Directives, Council Minutes									
B.5	Initial Stakeholder Engagement Strategy									
B.6	Field Assessments & Ground Truthing									
B.7	Internal Administrative Workshop									
B.8	Initial Stakeholder Interviews									
B.9	Project Website & Survey Forum									
B.10	Engagement Strategy Refinement									
B.11	Initial Findings Report									
B.12	Council Presentation									
C. Phase Two: Community Engagement										
C.1	Initial Public Open House Sessions (4)									
C.1b	Online Survey									
C.2	Development Industry Interviews									
C.3	Adjacent Municipalities: Workshop									
C.4	Secondary Public Open House Sessions (4)									
C.5	Inline Survey									
C.6	Stakeholder Follow-up Sessions									
C.7	Council Committee Presentations (3)									
D. Phase 3: Key Findings & Strategic Directions										
D.1	What We Heard Report									
D.2	Strategic Direction Plan									
D.3	County Committee Presentations (3)									
D.4	Council Presentation									
E. Phase Four: Trails Strategy Master Plan										
E.1	50% Draft Report									
E.2	County Committee Workshop									
E.3	Senior Leadership & Council Presentations									
E.4	90% Draft Report									
E.5	County Committee Follow-Up									
E.6	Plan Finalization									
E.7	Public Promotion: Website Promotion									
E.8	Final Council Endorsement									

In summary, the engagement process for this project will include:

- **B.8 Initial Stakeholder interviews/focus group** - With identified stakeholders;
- **C.1 Initial Public Open House Sessions** - Includes four in-person public open house sessions and three virtual sessions. Also includes, an available online survey opportunity for participants.
- **C.2 Development Industry Interviews** - Interviews with a representative sample of industrial, residential and commercial developers.
- **C.3 Adjacent Municipalities: Workshop** - Interviews with listed municipalities, but also a workshop session with municipalities.
- **C.4 Secondary Public Open House Sessions** - Open house sessions in a similar format to C.1. Hosted at locations not used in the first round. Includes an online survey.
- **C.5 Stakeholder Follow-up** - Direct follow-up with any project stakeholder where closure is required.
- **C.6 Student Engagement Series** - Classroom sessions coordinated and conducted by EDS.
- **Optional:** Statistically valid and representative telephone survey. Confirmation on this potential engagement option is expected to be promptly decided in consultation with Parkland County.

Definitions

Client Team - Parkland County staff responsible for oversight of the project. Will be required to sign-off on project deliverables at various stages of the project.

Consulting Team - includes staff from EDS Group Inc., and Y Station.

Project Team - Consulting team (Y Station and EDS), plus representatives from the Client Team.

EDS - EDS Group Inc., under the management of John Buchko.

Engagement - the process by which interaction takes place with stakeholders or the public, where information is exchanged and ideas are recorded.

Stakeholders - inclusive of local and non-local interest groups with direct or indirect interest in trails and recreation facilities, programs, amenities and all other aspects of service delivery, as well as neighbouring municipalities.

Purpose of this Engagement Plan

This engagement plan will help determine who our target audiences are, how information concerning these public engagement opportunities will be communicated, and how these audiences will be engaged. The Client Team will approve this engagement plan prior to engagement activities being initiated.

The objectives of this engagement plan include:

- Obtain approval of the proposed engagement program for this project.
- Outline a robust communications plan to ensure stakeholders and the public are aware of this project, when and how we will engage with them, and how that engagement will inform the project decisions.
- Detail the engagement activities that will be used, including how we will engage, who we will engage, and where we will do these engagements.
- Comply with Parkland County's engagement policies, practices, and procedures.

Policy Context

There are existing documents which will be reviewed as part of our understanding of the policy context for this project. These include, but are not limited to:

- Parkland County's C-AD51 Public Engagement Policy
- Parks, Recreational and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP)
- Transportation Master Plan
- River Valley Alliance Plan
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan
- Social Development Plan
- Municipal Development Plan
- Wabamun Area Vision Planning 2022
- Lois Hole Provincial Park Management Plan

Purpose of Public Engagement

Public engagement provides a mechanism for including the public's values, interests, needs and desires in decisions that affect their lives. Public Engagement provides the public with the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to decision processes. Effective public engagement results in public understanding of decisions and improves the decisions made. A key component of improving decisions made through public engagement is through ensuring all perspectives have been heard and explored. Given this is engagement for a trails strategy, location specific information will also be captured so that areas of high potential conflict are identified.

Identified Stakeholders

The following groups have been identified as key stakeholders that would inform the Trails Strategy. We will be flexible in our approach as we recognize that there may be other groups or organizations that become apparent as communication and public engagement events take place:

- Enoch Cree Nation
- Paul First Nation
- Parkland County Residents
- Parkland County Staff and Council
- Parkland County Community Sustainability Committee
- Parkland County Agricultural Service Board
- Parkland County Economic Diversification Committee
- Not-for-profit organizations related to trail usage or stewardship such as the River Valley Alliance
- Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Museum
- Heritage Agricultural Society/Multicultural Centre
- Parkland Municipal Library Board
- Community Leagues
- Parkland County Municipal Partners, various departments - Town of Stony Plain, City of Spruce Grove, Town of Devon, Town of Drayton Valley, Brazeau County, Yellowhead County, Leduc County, Sturgeon County, Lac Ste. Anne County, City of St. Albert, City of Edmonton
- Summer Villages

- Lake Management Associations such as: Wabamun Watershed Management Council, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance – Pembina River Watershed Shorelines Project), and Lake Isle & Lac Ste Anne Water Quality Management Society
- Big Lake and Lois Hole Provincial Park Area (Alberta Parks and management plan stakeholders)
- Outdoor recreation and trail use groups such as: Lac Ste. Anne ATV Club
- Parkland School Division

Engagement Strategy

Levels of Involvement

Critical to successful public engagement is identifying the level of involvement the public will have in the decision-making process. Identifying the levels of engagement will result in clear goals and an understanding of the commitment being made to the public.

This public engagement will have varying levels of involvement depending on the phase and step of the project. It will include at least four out of the five levels of involvement identified by IAP2: inform, consult, involve, and collaborate. The level of involvement, empower, is not part of this project as the final decision-making authority will not be in the hands of the public.

Early in the project key stakeholders and the public will be engaged at the involve to collaborate levels where they will work with the project team to develop potential solutions and options. The project team will also ensure public concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.

As the project evolves, as direction and decisions are made, the public’s level of involvement will shift to consult and inform levels. The project team will collect feedback on what was heard at earlier engagements and on decisions made. In the final stages of the project, the team will continue to keep the public informed of the solutions and decisions. The table below shows where the proposed tasks fit within the levels of involvement.

Task	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Phase 1				
Internal Admin Interviews/workshops				_____
Initial Stakeholder Interviews				_____
Phase 2				
Initial Public Open House Sessions			_____	
First Survey		_____		
Developer Industry Interviews			_____	
Adjacent Municipality Workshops			_____	
Secondary Open House Sessions		_____		
Second Survey	_____			
Follow up Stakeholder Interviews		_____		

Engagement Program

Communications

Y Station will be supporting Parkland County with the communications for this public engagement project. Upon kick off and meeting with the Client Team, Y station will develop a formalized communications plan to support the county and meet the specific objectives of this project based on stakeholder/public needs.

Here are some of the ways that Y Station could assist Parkland County in its communications efforts:

Social Media: We have the capability, in-house, to assist Parkland County with social media efforts in several ways:

- Y Station could write and design a series of Social Media messages for posting on the county's channels;
- We could create a response matrix that would include pre-approved responses to difficult questions that could be used in response to comments on the county's social media channels;
- Y Station can actively monitor social media during the active engagement to ensure comments, concerns and other activities are accounted for - responded to where appropriate; and/or
- Through a series of targeted social media ads, we can recruit qualified participants for online surveys and public meetings. The targeting parameters would include geo-targeting of the catchment specified by the Client Team in our kick-off meeting.

Mailouts (postcard, letter, newsletter, etc.): Y Station could develop content and design mailout(s) to create awareness around the various public engagement opportunities. We could consider postcards or a stakeholder letter mailout, depending on how much information needs to be conveyed to stakeholders on the various issues and opportunities. Y Station could also plan or support deployment and coordinate the mail drop with Canada Post.

Newspaper Ad: Local publications such as newspapers or community newsletters are an excellent way to drive awareness in rural communities. We could develop content for ads that detail engagement opportunities and stagger ad releases to ensure multiple touchpoints in local publications.

Radio: Y Station could develop radio ad content and coordinate the production of a radio ad specific to engagement opportunities for this project. Radio continues to be a preferred source of information in rural areas. Y Station would work with the Client Team to determine the timing and frequency should radio be a direction we move forward with.

Information Video: Videos can be a great way to share project history and the issues being addressed with your stakeholders. If desired at an additional fee, Y Station can work with Parkland County to create a video script that would detail the general background of the issues that are being addressed in each of the two phases of the engagement. From there, a storybook-style video presentation could be designed and developed for use on identified the county's channels that are best suited for this type of informative media.

In-bound Telephone Line: We recognize that some populations, especially older demographics and businesses, may prefer to provide their thoughts and comments over the phone, as opposed to accessing the survey online or attending an open house. As an additional avenue to provide feedback, interested respondents can phone our main office number, leave their feedback, or request a call back. We would then complete the survey with them over the phone and/or collect any other qualitative feedback they may have. We also recommend an approach utilizing an in-bound telephone line. Each of the data collection methods mentioned in this proposal would include Y Station's main office number.

Other communications options to be considered upon kick-off are posters at local publicly frequented locations and signage (placed and anchored in pre-determined areas).

The communications opportunities above will require initial discussion and planning with the Client Team to determine timeline and budget, as well as to create roles and responsibilities of Y Station's support of the county within the communications development.

Engagement

The sections below outline the sequential steps we'll take to prepare and initiate public engagement

activities. This includes a rough timeline as well as who will be involved and how many engagement activities are planned.

Phase 1

0) Project Startup & Public Engagement Plan Approved *(November 2022)*

Y Station and EDS will meet with the Client Team to establish priorities, understand communication support needs and expectations, discuss timelines, and answer any questions regarding the public engagement plan. Parkland County will approve the public engagement plan proposed before any public engagement activities are initiated.

1) Receive and Update a Stakeholder Contact List *(November 2022- Ongoing)*

Establish an initial stakeholder list, from Parkland County, and update that list with additional stakeholders and contact information that Parkland County does not have on file. Throughout the course of this project, update this stakeholder list as new stakeholders identify themselves and/or want to be updated about the project.

2) Internal Admin. Interviews/Workshop *(November 2022) (Y STATION + EDS)*

The information we seek to establish in these interviews are perceptions of current trail usage, issues and/or challenges of those using trails as well as those maintaining/monitoring trail use, and opportunities with the current trail system. Overall, these interviews will help establish internal vision, values, and priorities as it pertains to Parkland County trails. Will also include how they would like to be involved going forward and how they would like to be updated about the project. We expect these interviews to be 45 minutes to 1 hour in length and include internal staff, neighbouring municipalities.

Where: Over the phone/virtually. Workshop in person

3) Initial Stakeholder Interviews *(November - December 2022) (Y STATION + EDS)*

The information we seek to establish in these interviews are: current trail usage, current issues and/or challenges when using trails, and opportunities with the current trail system. Overall, these interviews will help establish stakeholder vision, values, and priorities as it pertains to Parkland County trails. Will also include how they would like to be involved going forward and how they would like to be updated about the project. We expect these interviews to be 45 minutes to 1 hour in length.

Who: Up to 15 stakeholder interviews will be conducted by Y Station with stakeholders on the stakeholder list.

Where: Over the phone/virtually.

How: Stakeholders will be contacted by telephone or email to participate in an interview at a time and date of their convenience. These interviews will be conducted either via phone or virtually (Zoom or Teams) depending on the preferences of the participant. For participants who give consent, these interviews will be recorded to facilitate notetaking.

Client Role: The in-depth interview guide and interview invites will be created by the Consulting Team and reviewed/approved by the Client Team.

Deliverables: A 'What we Heard' (WWH) report summarizing the main findings of these interviews. The WWH report will be templated based on guidelines established by the Client Team and the Consulting Team.

Phase 2

4) Initial Public Open House Sessions *(December 2022 – January 2023) (Y STATION + EDS)*

The project team will host in-person and virtual open house sessions with the public to identify their

concerns, their values, and opportunities and challenges that they identify as pertaining to Parkland County trails.

Who: 4 open houses and up to three virtual sessions with the public.

Where: In-person sessions will be at public venues that are well known to residents across the County. Virtual sessions will be conducted over Zoom.

How: Opportunities for the in-person sessions will be communicated to the public (see above communication section). At these in-person sessions the Project Team will set-up presentations materials. There will be a sign-in sheet to record the number of participants. There will also be notetakers to capture the feedback received during these in-person sessions. For the virtual sessions, an online sign-up form will be made available on the project website. Y Station will then send a Zoom invitation to these virtual sign-ups along with a reminder email closer to the session date. During the virtual session, there will be an assigned facilitator, note-taker, Zoom technical support, and someone who manages the presentation deck. These roles will be established before these sessions commence and we suggest having a 'run-through' session with the project team prior to the start of these public sessions so that everything runs smoothly. After each session, we will also have a quick debrief with the project team to discuss what worked well and what (if anything) needs to be tailored.

Client Role: The presentation deck and facilitator's guide will be created by the Consulting Team and approved by the Client Team. Select members of the Client Team to attend these sessions to answer any specific questions relating to County by-laws or policies.

Deliverables: Findings are summarized in a What We Heard report.

5) First Online Survey (December 2022) (HOSTED BY EDS)

An online survey will be deployed on the project website to gather quantitative data to supplement the qualitative data gathered in the open houses. This will give survey participants the opportunity to provide spatial feedback on the current state of the trails system and their vision for its future. For example, feedback provided may include noted areas of user conflict, areas of concern, accessibility concerns, desired future connections and expansion of the existing trail system to list a few. This survey will be hosted on the project website using ESRI's Survey 123 platform.

Who: Stakeholders and the public who have online access to the survey link.

Where: Once finalized, the open survey link will be posted to the project website.

How: The Consulting Team will develop a draft questionnaire. The Client Team will review. After review, the Consulting Team will make any necessary edits and adjustments and post to the project website. We recommend this survey be open for a minimum of two weeks in order to gather feedback.

Client Role: Review and sign-off on survey questionnaire.

Deliverables: After data collection has ended, analysis of the findings will begin, and results will be included in a What We Heard report.

6) Development Industry Interviews (December 2022 - January 2023)

The development industry provides a unique perspective when undertaking trail construction. Understanding the potential challenges, opportunities, and threats that a trail strategy poses to developers will be useful when creating a trail strategy.

Who: Up to 6 interviews with industrial, residential, and commercial developers.

Where: Over the phone/virtually.

How: Similar to the prior stakeholder interviews, individuals in the development industry will be contacted by telephone or email to participate in an interview at a time and date of their convenience. These interviews will be conducted either via phone or virtually (Zoom or Teams) depending on the preferences of the participant. For participants who give consent, these interviews will be recorded to facilitate notetaking.

Client Role: A moderator guide will be created by the Consulting Team and approved by the Client Team.

Deliverables: Findings will be included in a What We Heard report.

7) Adjacent Municipalities: *Workshop (February 2023) (EDS Supported by Y STATION)*

The purpose of these interviews and workshop is to gather feedback from municipal officials. This will be fruitful to determine any potential conflicts, by-laws, or recreational plans that may inform the trail strategy. As the strategy may involve crossing municipal borders it is important to inform and engage these municipalities to avoid currently unknown or unattended consequences. These meetings will help establish and maintain involvement by municipalities throughout the project (soliciting feedback from these individuals at various future stages).

Who: Up to five interviews and a 2–3-hour workshop with staff members in relevant municipalities that surround Parkland County.

How: These interviews will be conducted either via phone or virtually (Zoom or Teams) depending on the preferences of the participant. For participants who give consent, these interviews will be recorded to facilitate notetaking. Along with these interviews the Project Team will host one online workshop. Invites will be sent by Y Station to all relevant staff members of surrounding municipalities concerning the details, date and time of the online session, and the Zoom link. During the virtual workshop, there will be an assigned facilitator, note-taker, zoom technical support, and someone who manages the presentation deck.

Client Role: Like the public sessions, a presentation deck and facilitator's guide will be created by the Consulting Team and approved by the Client Team. A few select members of the Client Team are expected to attend this session to answer any specific questions regarding County by-laws or policies.

Deliverables: Findings will be included in a What We Heard report.

8) Secondary Public Open House Sessions (*March 2023*)

The purpose of these secondary open house sessions is to present a Draft Trails Strategy, based on the findings in the previous phases. These sessions will gather feedback about the draft strategy and determine if any minor adjustments are still needed.

Who: 4 open houses and up to three virtual sessions with the public.

Where: In-person sessions will be at public venues that are well known to residents across the County. Virtual sessions will be conducted over Zoom.

How: Opportunities for the in-person sessions will be communicated to the public (see above communication section). At these in-person sessions the Project Team will set-up presentations materials. There will be a sign-in sheet to record the number of participants. There will also be notetakers to capture the feedback received during these in-person sessions. For the virtual sessions, an online sign-up form will be made available on the project website. Y Station will then send a Zoom invitation to these virtual sign-ups along with a reminder email closer to the session date. During the virtual session, there will be an

assigned facilitator, note-taker, zoom technical support, and someone who manages the presentation deck. These roles will be established before these sessions commence and we suggest having a 'run-through' session with the project team prior to the start of these public sessions so that everything runs smoothly. After each session, we will also have a quick debrief with the project team to discuss what worked well and what (if anything) needs to be tailored.

Client Role: The presentation deck and facilitator's guide will be created by the Consulting Team and approved by the Client Team. Select members of the Client Team to attend these sessions to answer any specific questions relating to County by-laws or policies.

Deliverables: Findings are summarized in a What We Heard report.

9) Second Online Survey (March 2023)

An online survey will be deployed on the project website to gather quantitative data to supplement the qualitative data gathered in the open houses. We will gather feedback on the developed draft strategy. This survey will be hosted on the project website using the Survey 123 platform by ESRI.

Who: Stakeholders and the public who have online access to the survey link.

Where: Once finalized, the open survey link will be posted to the project website.

How: The Consulting Team will develop a draft questionnaire. The Client Team will review. After review, the Consulting Team will make any necessary edits and adjustments. Once finalized, the open survey link will be posted to the project website. We recommend this survey be open for a minimum of two weeks in order to gather feedback.

Client Role: Review and sign-off on survey questionnaire.

Deliverables: After data collection has ended, analysis of the findings will begin, and results will be included in a What We Heard report.

10) Stakeholder Follow-up (March 2023)

A final round of interviews will be conducted with stakeholders to determine their perceptions about the draft strategy, provide information about next-steps, and if they had any further information they would like to provide.

Who: Up to 20 stakeholder interviews will be conducted by Y Station with stakeholders on the stakeholder list.

Where: Over the phone/virtually.

How: Stakeholders will be contacted by telephone or email to participate in an interview at a time and date of their convenience. These interviews will be conducted either via phone or virtually (Zoom or Teams) depending on the preferences of the participant. For participants who give consent, these interviews will be recorded to facilitate notetaking.

Client Role: The in-depth interview guide and interview invites will be created by the Consulting Team and approved by the Client Team.

Deliverables: A 'What we Heard' (WWH) report summarizing the main findings of these interviews.

12.) Student Engagement Series

Details to be determined and confirmed in consultation with Parkland County and school staff.

TBD: Statistically Valid, Telephone Survey

Details to be determined and confirmed in consultation with Parkland County.

Who: Random sample of residents in the County.

Where: Over the phone supplemented by targeted social media by age, gender and location.

How: The Consulting Team will develop a draft questionnaire. The Client Team will review. After review, the Consulting Team will make any necessary edits and adjustments. Once finalized, Y Station will utilize their in-house call centre to call a random, representative sample of the County.

Client Role: Review and sign-off on survey questionnaire.

Deliverables: After data collection has ended, analysis of the findings will begin, and results will be included in a What We Heard report.

Client Requirements

- Identify potential locations for engagements in Wabamun, Entwistle, Spruce Grove/Stony Plain,
- Provide an initial contact list (emails, telephone numbers, etc.) of any stakeholder identified that Parkland County has on file.
- Provide list of internal stakeholders to be engaged.
- Prepare a 'What We Heard' report template and applicable County infographics/materials for reporting purposes.
- Sign-off on open-house presentation materials.
- Sign-off on open-house facilitator guides.
- Sign-off on municipality workshop facilitator guide and presentation materials.
- Sign-off on in-depth interview guides and interview invite materials.
- Cover the costs of venues and snack/refreshments for all in-person events.
- Post all advertisements on County social media outlets, send out press releases and radio advertisements.
- Review deliverables and provide written feedback as required.
- Prepare Council reports and memos for Council during the project.