



— *PARKLAND COUNTY* —

# **TOURISM ACTION PLAN**

*2018 - 2020*





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## INTRODUCTION

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**Parkland County has identified economic diversification as a key strategic priority. As part of Parkland County's larger economic diversification efforts, tourism has been recognized to have substantial opportunities.**

Due to Parkland County's size, location and many natural spaces, rivers and lakes, we have significant opportunity to grow economic diversification through tourism. Parkland County acknowledges that a Tourism Action Plan is required in 2017 to grow attraction programs for tourism business, increase support for current tourism businesses and enhance visitor experiences. The Plan works towards providing support and resources to further enable tourism operators to be successful in creating experiences that will give visitors an emotional relationship with our destination. The holistic approach taken in creating this action plan will aid Parkland County in becoming a leader in local government for rural tourism.







## — ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT —

Although a strong tourism sector supports many areas within the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Economic Diversification Pillar specifically identifies tourism development in one of its Guiding Principles (2.2).

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2.2

**“We are a region that supports the local economy, including the agricultural, tourism, entrepreneurial, and industrial sectors.”**

To enhance the tourism sector within Parkland County, key tourism stakeholders must come together to fulfill the Guiding Principle’s broad objective of:

*“Enhancing business support services to our local business community to foster innovation, promote entrepreneurship, and manage risk”.*

MDP  
ICSP  
5-YEAR CORPORATE  
PLAN  
BUDGET  
TOURISM  
ASSET MAP  
PRC MASTER  
PLAN  
FUTURE OF AG  
STUDY  
ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION  
STRATEGIC DIRECTION

TRI-REGION TOURISM  
STATISTICS

COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

INFORMATION CAPTURED THROUGH  
BUSINESS VISITATIONS

INDUSTRY & STAKEHOLDER  
THINK TANK

TRAVEL ALBERTA  
COLLABORATION

# TOURISM ACTION PLAN

INDUSTRY TRENDS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT





**Figure 1:**  
*Action Plan Inputs*

## — ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT —

In 2015, Council identified tourism growth as a key strategic priority for Parkland County. As a result, the process of creating the Tourism Action Plan began.

The Action Plan is the result of:

- Extensive input from key stakeholders through business visitations, a Parkland County Tourism Think Tank, information gathering at events, collaboration with Travel Alberta and utilizing information gathered through the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan
- Collaboration with internal departments to ensure the cohesiveness of the Tourism Action Plan with other key County documents, including Council's Long-Term Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and the Future of Agriculture Study.

**ACTION PLAN PILLARS**



**BUSINESS & EXPERIENCE  
DEVELOPMENT**

We actively attract new tourism business to Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas outlined in the Municipal Development Plan and support the retention and expansion of our current tourism sector



**ADVOCACY &  
COLLABORATION**

We build, maintain and advocate for strong partnerships with key tourism stakeholders to support Parkland County's shared vision of One Parkland: Powerfully Connected.



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## ***PROGRAMMING & EVENTS***

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We support the development of tourism related events and programs that provide opportunities for residents and visitors to explore Parkland County



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## ***MARKETING***

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We recognize the importance of creating a consistent regional identity and increasing the awareness of Parkland County tourism experiences





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## **BUSINESS & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

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We actively attract new tourism business to prime recreation and tourism areas outlined in the Municipal Development Plan and support the retention and expansion of our current tourism sector

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1.1**

***Increase the number and diversity of tourism businesses in Parkland County***

#### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.1 Complete a Gap Analysis to determine the types of businesses we should aim to attract***

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.2 Support a cluster development initiative to identify current and future opportunities***

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.3 Develop a tourism business attraction program based on results of the Gap Analysis***

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1.2**

***Create an environment that supports the retention and expansion of tourism businesses while focusing on multi-seasonal experiences***

### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.1*** Compile and distribute a list of resources available for tourism businesses

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.2*** Determine the need for business training through our business visitation program and work to fulfill those needs by partnering with certified training organizations

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.3*** Research grant opportunities through both external partners and an internal business grant program (this will include links to the Hamlet Revitalization Strategy)

### ***What are we already doing?***

- *Completion of a Tourism Asset Map with 2500 maps distributed through businesses and events*
- *Training provided in collaboration with Tri-Region Tourism and Travel Alberta*
- *Clear Think agri-tourism business consulting for Open Farm Days participants funded by the Government of Alberta*





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## ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

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We build, maintain and advocate for strong partnerships with key tourism stakeholders to support Parkland County's shared vision of One Parkland: Powerfully Connected.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2.1

***Cultivate and nurture partnerships between key tourism stakeholders and related industries***

#### RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.1 Determine opportunities for partnerships with post-secondary institutions***

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.2 Maintain partnerships with local and provincial tourism bodies***

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.3 Work with Indigenous Communities to determine additional tourism opportunities***

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.4 Continually explore partnership opportunities that will aid in growing Parkland County's tourism sector***



## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2.2**

***Advocate and promote on behalf of the local industry to all levels of tourism business development***

### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.1*** Continually look for opportunities to streamline the process for opening and expanding a tourism businesses in Parkland County

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.2*** Act as a conduit for information between businesses and leading tourism organizations

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.3*** Leverage additional funding opportunities from external stakeholders

### ***What are we already doing?***

- *Tri-Region Tourism partnership with the City of Spruce Grove and the Town of Stony Plain that was created in 2014*
- *Working with Parks, Recreation and Culture to have a shared intern student*
- *The new land use "Cottage Industry" now allows discretionary approval for innovative business development throughout the County*
- *Teaming up with Smart Parkland to bring GPS units into our libraries to support the Parkland County GeoTour 2017*
- *Virtual tour of Chickakoo Lake Recreational Area in collaboration with Smart Parkland*



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## PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

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We support the development of tourism related events and programs that provide opportunities for residents and visitors to explore Parkland County

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3.1**

*Support and encourage individuals and organizations looking to organize programs and events that align with Parkland County Council's strategic priorities relating to tourism*

#### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.1** *Create a Parkland County Event Planning Toolkit*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.2** *Provide support for the creation of a special events policy*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.3** *Promote Parkland County events that align with Council's strategic priorities*

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3.2**

**Work with local businesses to develop and build on programs and events that will attract visitors and residents out to Parkland County**

### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.1** *Expand on agri-tourism opportunities to introduce the rural lifestyle to visitors*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.2** *Create a Parkland County Passport to promote local travel*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.3** *Develop and expand programs and events in Parkland County*

### **What are we already doing?**

- *Parkland County Winter Warm Up with over 600 attendees in 2017*
- *Tour attraction (Edmonton – Jasper Culinary Tour)*
- *Event support for Alberta Open Farm Days, City Slickers, Parkland Daycation, and Kids Can Catch*
- *Shopping Circle Tour*
- *Parkland County GeoTour 2017*





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## MARKETING

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We recognize the importance of creating a consistent regional identity and increasing the awareness of Parkland County tourism experiences

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4.1**

***Increase the number of tourists visiting Parkland County***

#### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVES*

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 4.1.1*** Complete a Tourism Marketing Plan that will act as a roadmap for all future communications

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 4.1.2*** Celebrate Parkland County's history, agriculture and natural beauty through supporting culturally immersive experiences

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4.2**

**Increase awareness of all Parkland County tourism experiences by leveraging external tourism marketing organizations**

### *RECOMMENDED BROAD OBJECTIVE*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 4.2.1** *Work with businesses to create packaged experiences that can be marketed nationally and internationally through Tri-Region Tourism, Edmonton Tourism, Travel Alberta, and Destination Canada*

### **What are we already doing?**

- *Completed visitors map and event listing*
- *Mobile Visitor Kiosk – summer pilot project with the Town of Stony Plain and Stony Plain & District Chamber of Commerce*
- *Tourism Specific Instagram (@ExploreParkland) and hashtag (#ExploreParkland)*
- *Tri-Region Tourism social media, website and marketing campaigns*

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

For the Implementation of the Tourism Action Plan, Parkland County will carry forward 2017 budget of \$65,000 to restricted surplus. These dollars will be used over the next 2 – 3 years as shown on the following pages.

### BUSINESS & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1.1** Increase the number and diversity of tourism businesses in Parkland County

*BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.1 Complete a Gap Analysis to determine the types of businesses we should aim to attract*

*BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.2 Support a cluster development initiative to identify current and future opportunities*

*BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.1.3 Develop a tourism business attraction program based on the results of the Gap Analysis*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

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Economic Diversification

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Travel Alberta, Government of Alberta, Economic Diversification Committee, Planning & Development, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Agricultural Services

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Government of Alberta, Travel Alberta, Clear Think Consulting, Planning & Development, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Agricultural Services

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Site Locators, Government of Alberta, Economic Diversification Committee, Planning & Development, Agricultural Services

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**FUNDING:**  
Implementation Plan Carry Forward

**FUNDING:**  
Implementation Plan Carry Forward

**TIMELINE:**  
2018

**TIMELINE:**  
2018 - 2019

**TIMELINE:**  
2019 - 2020





## BUSINESS & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1.2** *Create an environment that supports the retention and expansion of tourism businesses while focusing on multi-seasonal experiences*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.1** *Compile and distribute a list of resources available for tourism businesses*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Government of Alberta, Travel Alberta, Parks Recreation & Culture, Planning & Development

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
2018

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.2** *Determine the need for business training through our business visitation program and work to fulfill those needs by partnering with certified training organizations*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Edmonton Tourism, Travel Alberta, Government of Alberta, Strong Coffee Marketing

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 1.2.3** *Research grant opportunities through both external partners and an internal business grant program (this will include links to the Hamlet Revitalization Strategy)*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Government of Alberta, Travel Alberta, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Planning & Development

**FUNDING:**  
Implementation Plan Carry Forward

**TIMELINE:**  
2018 - 2019



## ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2.1** *Cultivate and nurture partnerships between key tourism stakeholders and related industries*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.1** *Determine opportunities for partnerships with post-secondary institutions*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
NAIT, U of A, Grant Macewan, Athabasca University, Norquest

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.2** *Maintain partnerships with local and provincial tourism bodies*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Tri-Region Tourism, Travel Alberta, Alberta Culture and Tourism, Alberta Culinary Tourism Alliance, Edmonton Geocaching, River Valley Alliance, local visitor centers, etc.

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.3** *Work with Indigenous Communities to determine additional tourism opportunities*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Enoch Cree Nation, Paul First Nation, Gunn Metis Local 55

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

***BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.1.4** Continually explore partnership opportunities that will aid in growing Parkland County's tourism sector*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
TBD

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing







## ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2.2** *Advocate and promote on behalf of the local industry to all levels of tourism business development*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.1** *Continually look for opportunities to streamline process for opening or expanding tourism businesses in Parkland County*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Planning & Development, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Agricultural Services

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.2** *Act as a conduit for information between businesses and leading tourism organizations*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Local Tourism Businesses, Travel Alberta, Edmonton Tourism, Tri-Region Tourism

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 2.2.3** *Leverage additional funding opportunities from external stakeholders*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Travel Alberta, Government of Alberta, Federal Government

**FUNDING:**  
N/A

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing



## PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3.1** Support and encourage individuals and organizations looking to organize programs and events that align with Parkland County Council's strategic priorities relating to tourism

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.1** Create a Parkland County Event Planning Toolkit

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.2** Provide support for the creation of a special events policy

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.1.3** Promote Parkland County events that align with Council's strategic priorities

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Parks, Recreation & Culture, Public Works, Communications, Enforcement Services, Community Sustainability

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
2018

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Economic Diversification, Public Works, Communications, Enforcement Services, Community Sustainability, Event Organizers

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
2018

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Communications, Parks, Recreation & Culture

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing



## PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3.2** *Work with local businesses to develop and build on programs and events that will attract visitors and residents out to Parkland County*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.1** *Expand on agri-tourism opportunities to introduce the rural lifestyle to visitors*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.2** *Create a Parkland County Passport to promote local travel*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 3.2.3** *Develop and expand programs and events in Parkland County*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Agricultural Services, Travel Alberta, Government of Alberta, West Central Forage, Local Agriculture Societies, 4-H

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Local Tourism Businesses, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Communications

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Local Tourism Businesses, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Agricultural Services, Communications

**FUNDING:**  
Implementation Plan Carry Forward

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**FUNDING:**  
Existing Operating Budget

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing

**TIMELINE:**  
2018

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing



 **MARKETING**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4.1** *Increase the number of tourists visiting Parkland County*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 4.1.1** *Complete a Tourism Marketing Plan that will act as a roadmap for all future communications*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Communications, Tri-Region Tourism, Travel Alberta, Edmonton Tourism

**FUNDING:**  
Implementation Plan Carry Forward

**TIMELINE:**  
2018 development, 2019 implementation

 **MARKETING**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4.2** *Increase awareness of all Parkland County tourism experiences by leveraging external tourism marketing organizations*

**BROAD OBJECTIVE 4.2.1** *Work with businesses to create packaged experiences that can be marketed nationally and internationally through tourism partners*

**RECOMMENDED LEAD:**  
Economic Diversification

**STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Local Tourism Businesses, Tri-Region Tourism, Travel Alberta, Edmonton Tourism, Destination Canada

**FUNDING:**  
N/A

**TIMELINE:**  
Ongoing









— **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** —

Parkland County currently tracks a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) in our corporate balanced scorecard. The KPI chosen for this plan is outcome focused and measures the tourism business growth in Parkland County.

**INDICATOR:**

Business Diversity Index

**FREQUENCY:**

Annually

**LINK TO TOURISM ACTION PLAN:**

Using this measurement, we will be able to compare the percentage of tourism businesses to other industries in Parkland County. In addition, we will be able to compare numbers year-to-year to determine increase in tourism businesses.







TOURISM | ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

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