PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN

MAY 2017

One Parkland: Powerfully Connected.

parkland county

Parkland Alive 2025

Acknowledgements

Prepared for

parkland county

Prepared by

Stantec

McElhanney

MDB INSIGHT

Preparation of Parkland County Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan was a collaborative effort that could not have been completed without the help of everyone who contributed to the project along the way. The project team would like to specifically thank the community members, key stakeholders, Parkland County staff, community associations, cost-share partners and everyone else who shared their input, all of which was vital for the development of this document.

We look forward to implementing this Master Plan and using it as a tool to continually improve the parks, recreation and cultural opportunities available to residents and visitors of Parkland County.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan has been prepared by Stantec, McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. and MDB Insight.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary I

Purpose Of The Plan I

Planning Process I

Engaging Our Residents & Partners Ii

What We Heard Iv

Parks, Recreation & Culture Needs Assessment Vi

The Way Forward Xix

1.0 Introduction 1

1.1 Purpose Of The Plan 1

1.2 Planning Process 2

1.3 Benefits Of Parks, Recreation & Culture 2

1.4 Trends 4

1.5 Decision Making 7

2.0 Planning Foundations 9

2.1 Our Communities 9

2.2 Population And Demographics 9

2.3 Policy, Plans And Strategies 15

2.4 Our Nature 16

3.0 Engaging Our Residents & Partners 21

3.1 What We Heard 24

4.0 Parks, Recreation & Culture Today 33

4.1 Parks, Open Spaces & Trails 33

4.2 Recreation 60

4.3 Culture 69

4.4 Resourcing & Capacity For Parks, Recreation & Culture 80

5.0 Moving Forward: The Future Of Parks, Recreation & Culture 83

5.1 Vision 83

5.2 Desired Outcomes 84

5.3 Our Role In Parks, Recreation & Culture 86

6.0 Overarching Strategies & Actions 95

6.1 Grow Volunteer Capacity & Commitment 96

6.2 Enhance The Not For Profit Grant Program 96

6.3 Continue Cost Sharing 97

6.4 Minimize Barriers To Participation Through Leisure Education 98

6.5 Apply Consistent Classification Systems 98

6.6 Grow Capacity & Improve Data 99

6.7 Strengthen Communications & Engagement 100

6.8 Grow Nature-Based & Cultural Tourism 101

7.0 The Plan For Parks, Conservation & Outdoor Activities 103

7.1 Protect Our Nature 104

7.2 Expand, Diversify & Connect Our Parks & Trails 106

7.3 Enhance & Upgrade Our Existing Parks & Trails 110

7.4 Actively Manage Our Parks & Trails 113

7.5 Enhance Water-Based Recreation Opportunities 117

7.6 Enhance Outdoor Sport Facilities 117

8.0 The Plan For Recreation 119

8.1 Collaborate For Recreation 120

8.2 Enable Easy Access To Quality & Diverse Recreation Facilities 120

8.3 Enhance Recreation Programs 121

9.0 The Plan For Culture 123

9.1 Organize For Culture 124

9.2 Enhance The Municipal Art Program 125

9.3 Create Outdoor Cultural Spaces 125

9.4 Community Halls For The Future 126

9.5 Grow A Creative Rural Economy 126

9.6 Focus Attention On Placemaking 127

10.0 Timelines For Recommendations 129

11.0 Measuring Our Progress 145

12.0 References 149

Appendix A–Parks & Recreation Classification Systems A.1

A.1 Parks Classification A.2

A.2 Trail Classification Descriptions A.7

A.3 Staging Areas A.13

A.4 Water Access A.15

A.5 Outdoor Sport Facilities A.20

A.6 Indoor Recreation Facilities A.22

Appendix B—Cultural Resource Framework B.1

Appendix C–Cultural Roundtables Terms Of Reference C.1

Appendix D–Demographic Maps D.1

Appendix E–Recreation Facility Service Areas E.1

Executive Summary

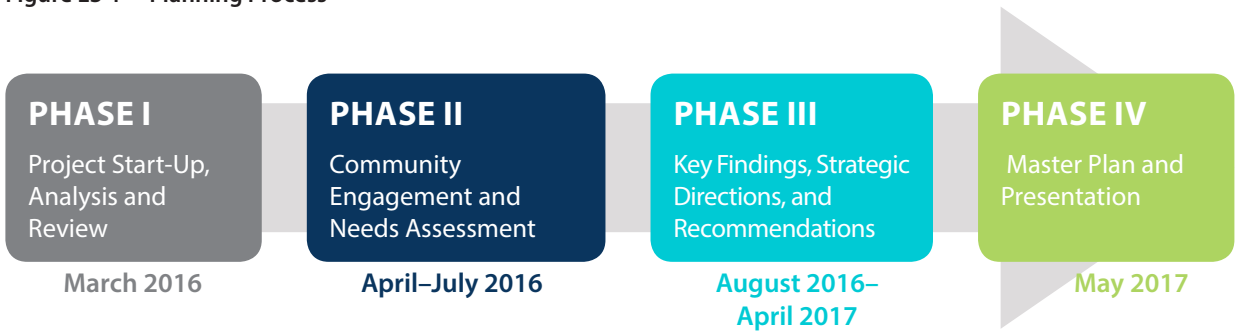
PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Parks, recreation and culture are a foundation of our resident's quality of life, support healthy lifestyles and protect our environmentally significant areas and our heritage and culture. Working collaboratively with our residents and partners, the County has prepared this master plan to provide long term direction to our parks, recreation and culture services for the next 10 years. This plan represents our commitment to the future of parks, recreation and culture and reaffirms the role the County will play in providing and facilitating parks, recreation and culture services.

PLANNING PROCESS

Co-created together with our residents and partners, the preparation of this plan has been no small undertaking. Spanning over 18 months, the planning process consisted of four key phases (see Figure ES-1).

Figure ES-1 Planning Process



"PARTICIPANTS"

included:

- General public
- Parks, Recreation and Cultural organizations
- Community Associations
- Cost Share Partners

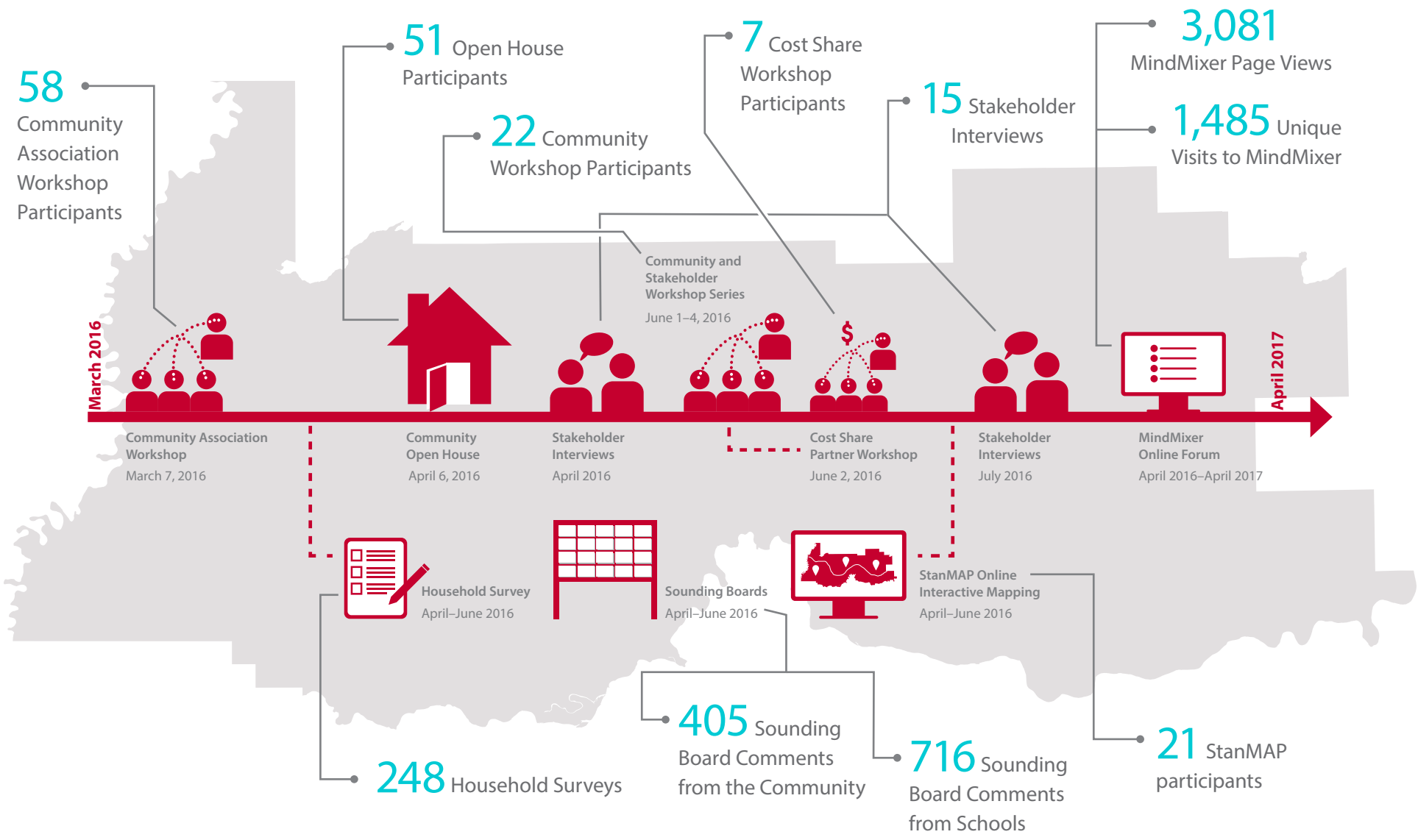
ENGAGING OUR RESIDENTS & PARTNERS

Meeting the parks, recreation and culture opportunities our residents need, and desire, is a team effort. We cannot do it alone. We will need to move forward together with the support and help of residents, stakeholders, other municipal departments, other jurisdictions and our partner agencies in the health and education sectors. Development of this plan worked to provide anyone with an interest in parks, recreation and culture a meaningful opportunity to help co-create its future.

As shown in Figure ES-2, engagement occurred in two phases:

1. **Phase 1: Awareness, Visioning, Issues and Opportunities**
   Purpose: To understand the observed issues and aspirations related to the County's parks, recreation, and cultural system.
2. **Phase 2: Draft Master Plan**
   Purpose: To present the draft plan and ask, "did we get it right?". This included feedback on how to improve the plan, which guided preparation of the final plan.

Figure ES-2 Public Engagement



WHAT WE HEARD

Participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities is strong though it is clear that our residents participate more frequently in outdoor activities (88%) and recreation (71%) activities than cultural activities (47%). The participation trends also reflect our resident's prioritization for investment. Residents indicated that they would allocate $100 across parks, recreation and culture services as follows:

- Parks, Water Bodies & Trails - **$50.20**
- Rec/Leisure Facilities - **$33.70**
- Cultural Facilities - **$16.10**

Residents utilize, and are generally satisfied[a] with, the quality of parks, recreation and culture facilities and opportunities that are provided by the County or cost shared with other municipalities.

Residents were most satisfied with:

Outdoor Facilities

- Day Use Parks
- Provincial Parks & Natural Areas
- Parks & Trails in Spruce Grove & Stony Plain

Indoor Recreation Facilities

- Meridian Sportsplex
- Devon Arena
- Facilities in Spruce Grove & Stony Plan

Cultural Facilities

- Horizon Stage
- Libraries

Residents are least satisfied with:

Outdoor Facilities

- Quality of motorized trails
- Outdoor Rinks
- Opportunities on the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers

Indoor Recreation Facilities

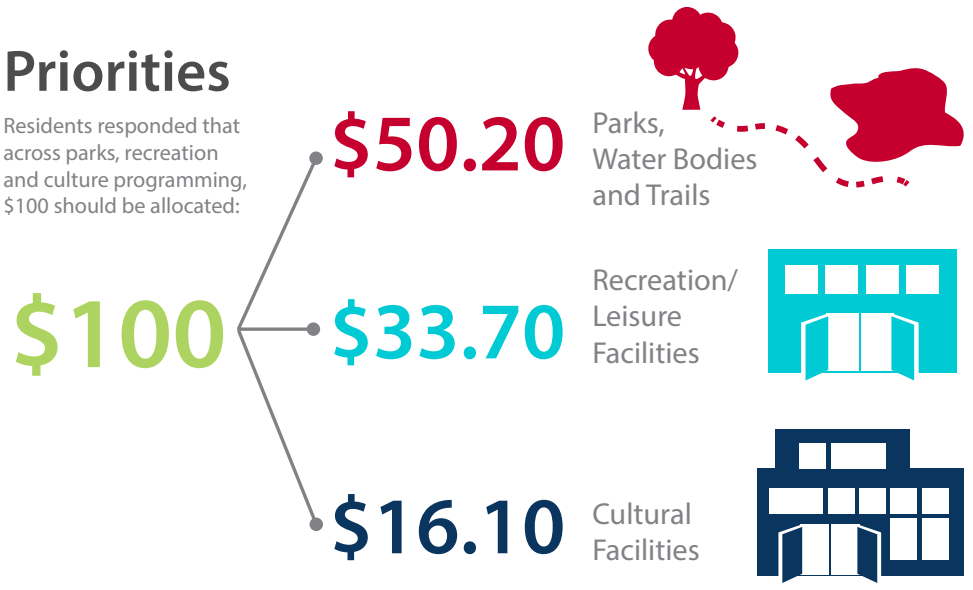
- Wabamun Arena
- Entwistle Outdoor Pool

Cultural Facilities

- Banquet facilities
- Community halls
- Festival grounds

Priorities

Residents responded that across parks, recreation and culture programming, $100 should be allocated:



a Satisfaction was determined through a statistically valid survey. All facilities provided directly by Parkland County or cost shared with another municipality were included in the survey and the inventory.

Household Participation

88% participate in **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

71% participate in **RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

47% participate in **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

Residents were least satisfied with:

Outdoor Facilities

- Quality of motorized trails
- Opportunities on the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers

Recreation/Leisure Facilities

- Wabamun Arena
- Entwistle Outdoor Pool

Cultural Facilities

- Banquet facilities
- Community halls
- Festival grounds

Key Barriers To Participation

- Lack of specific facility
- Distance to travel to activities
- Limited Services Available
- Lack of information about what services are available
- Cost

Parks and Outdoor Activities

- Develop an interconnected network for non-motorized and motorized trails.
- Develop more parks, including a new destination park(s), and ensure the equitable distribution of parks across the County.
- Designate new parks to enhance the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Enhance signage and amenities (garbage, site furnishing) in parks and along trails.
- Enhance water based recreational opportunities and recreational access to the County's rivers and lakes.
- Provide more education and interpretive programming in natural areas.
- Improve existing and expand capacity for field and diamond based activities.
- Improve the management and maintenance in day use parks, environmental reserve and municipal reserve.

Recreation

- Provide more equitable access to recreation facilities for residents, including the west end of the County.
- Enhance capacity for indoor ice opportunities.
- Enhance the quality, capacity and diversity of outdoor sport fields and diamonds and outdoor workout spaces.
- Ensure equitable access to recreation opportunities regardless of age, mobility or income.

Culture

- Strengthen the County focus on culture.
- Ensure better coordination and collaboration of cultural activities between municipalities and the various cultural groups in the County/tri-region.
- County should focus on providing and enabling smaller cultural facilities and amenities (e.g., arts incubator, shared archival storage, outdoor festival space and amphitheatre, flexible programming space to support pop up activities) rather than large capital initiatives.
- Work with the tri-region partners to develop a joint major cultural facility for the region.
- Expand the municipal art program throughout the community with strong emphasis on both visual and performing arts.
- Expand efforts to protect the heritage of the County.
- Support and facilitate the expansion, and equitable distribution, of cultural programming in the County. Including:
  - Festivals and arts and cultural events
  - Live music/concerts
  - Live theatre and performing arts
- Improve communication and collaboration with Aboriginal communities in the County and explore programming opportunities.
- Further support and leverage the role of Community Association's to provide consistent level of culture programming. Formalize service agreements with the Community Associations.

General

- Increase County capacity to deliver its parks, recreation and culture services.
- Strengthen cross departmental collaboration and communications regarding parks, recreation and culture as well as tourism.
- Improve the county's role in leisure education including providing better information about the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in the County and through cost share partners.

We also learned that many households travel outside the County to access indoor facilities for swimming, hockey, concerts, and museums.

Participants in the engagement process identified a number of priorities for improving parks, recreation and culture opportunities in the County:

Parks, Trails & Outdoor Recreation

- More destination parks and conservation parks.
- More trails and better connectivity across the County.
- Improve parks & trail signage and visitor amenities.
- Enhance water based opportunities and access to the rivers.
- Enhance the quality, capacity and diversity of outdoor sport facilities in the County.
- Provide more education and interpretive programming in parks and along trails.
- Improve management (e.g., enforcement) and maintenance in parks and along trails.

Indoor Recreation

- Provide a better a more equitable distribution of recreation facilities throughout the County with a focus on enhancing recreation opportunities in west end.
- Increase indoor ice capacity in the region.
- Provide for equitable access to recreation opportunities regardless of age, mobility or income.
- Improve leisure education of residents and help those who face barriers to participation to overcome those barriers.

Culture

- Strengthen the County's focus on culture.
- Better coordination and collaboration between municipalities and cultural groups
- Enhance the supply of smaller cultural facilities and amenities.
- Consider development of a joint major cultural facility in tri-region
- Expand cultural programming.
- Expand municipal art program.
- Explore protection of heritage.

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Before beginning to identify a new future direction for our parks, recreation & culture services, we first needed to understand the existing situation and how well it we are serving the needs of our residents and visitors. We worked to find answers to the following questions:

- What and how do we offer parks, recreation and culture opportunities to our residents and visitors?
- Do we have enough parks, recreation and culture opportunities?
- Do our residents have easy access to quality and diverse parks, recreation and culture experiences?
- Are we protecting our ecologically sensitive areas and the County's heritage?
- Is our parks, recreation & culture program effectively resourced?

Park Supply by the Numbers:

11 County parks totalling **215** ha

Less than 1% of the County is designated as day use park

7 ha of County park land per 1,000 residents

2,415 ha, or **1%**, of the County is in Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

Detailed inventories, spatial analysis and reviews of visitation were undertaken to generate answers to the above questions. Through this analysis, we discovered the following.

Parks, Open Space, Playgrounds & Trails

Parks, Municipal Reserve & Environmental Reserve

Compared to more urban jurisdictions, County residents live on relatively large lots which provide residents with a good deal of open space at home. However, we heard clearly that, even with the size of residential lots in the County, our residents highly value easy access to parks, natural areas and the experiences those provide our residents.

We offer residents and visitors 11 County owned Day Use Parks. The majority of the County park space is contained in Chickakoo and Hasse Lake Day Use Parks. Day use parks are just one part of a larger network of parks and protected areas in the County. In addition to day use parks, the County is responsible for:

- 197 Environmental Reserve (ER) sites totalling 411 ha (0.001% of the County land base) and
- 1,244 Municipal Reserve (MR) sites totalling 2,658 ha (0.01% of the County land base).

Though public access is permitted, unless designated as a day use park, County MR and ER is unprogrammed and passively managed. The County also contains 2,415 ha of park space managed by Alberta Parks and private conservation lands (e.g., Nature Conservancy of Canada).

To evaluate needs, we assessed the supply of parks space, access to parks space and the quality and diversity of parks spaces. Our analysis shows that:

- When we consider the total amount of parks space our residents have access to (County day use parks, Provincial Parks, private conservation lands), we are well supplied with parks space (see Figure ES-3).
- As our population reaches 40,000 in 2026, we will remain well supplied with park space (see Figure ES-4).
- However, distribution of our park space is important and analysis shows that parks are not equally distributed throughout the County. We found that:
  - Divisions 1, 2 and 6 are significantly under supplied with Day Use Parks despite Division 1 and 2 being two of the most populated divisions in the County (see Figure ES-3 and Figure ES-4).
  - Access to County Day Use Parks is limited with only 49% of residential parcels being within 8km of a day use park.
  - When we consider access to parks of all types (County, Provincial, Private), 68% of residential parcels are within 8 km.

HOW WE MEASURE UP

Comparing our services to similar communities provides insights on how well we are doing. Through the Yardstick program, AB is attempting to create a formalized benchmarking tool for communities. At the time of this plan, the tool had not yet been populated. As such, statistics from the National Recreation and Park's Association's Field Report were used to provide insights on how we compare to communities of similar population size and density throughout the United States.

DISTANCE MATTERS

Residents were clear, distance is a barrier to visiting parks, trails and recreation facilities. As such, we worked to identify what proportion of residential parcels are within a short driving distance to parks. In urban environments, science suggests that residents should be within 400m from a park. Recognizing our rural nature we increased the 400m walking to a reasonable driving distance. To do so, we determined how far a resident could typically drive in a rural area in the same length of time it would take a resident to walk 400m. Analysis suggested approximately 8km which has been used in our analyses.

Ninety-four percent of residential parcels are within 8 km of an ER parcel while 98% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a MR parcel indicating that there are opportunities to enhance access to County parks space.

94% of residential parcels are within 8 km of Environmental Reserve

98% of residential parcels are within 8 km of Municipal Reserve

17% of environmentally significant areas should be protected according to the Convention on Biological Diversity

4.3% of Environmentally Significant Areas in the County are contained within provincial parks and protected areas or private conservation lands

Figure ES-3 Total Park Supply by Division Compared to NRPA Quartiles

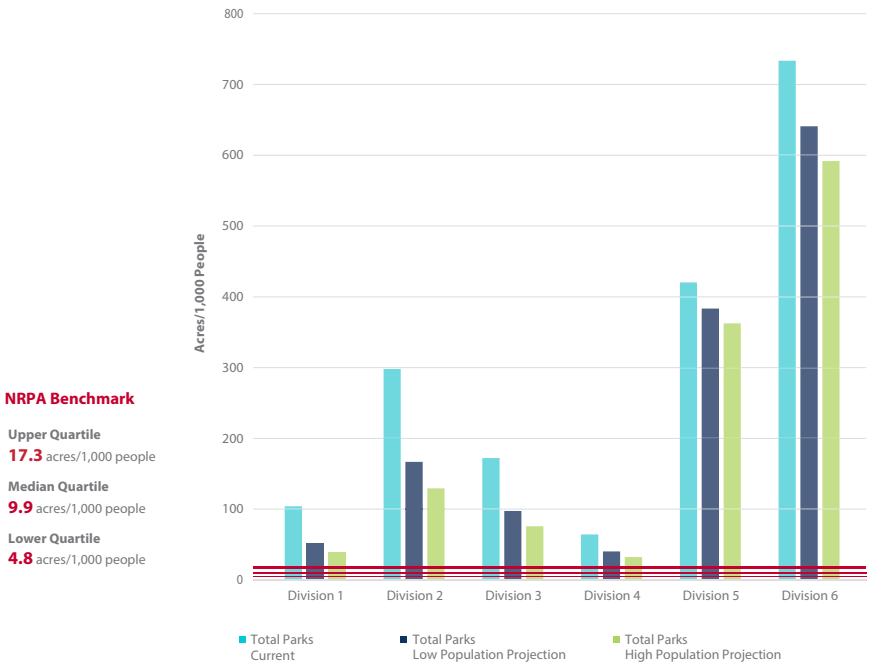
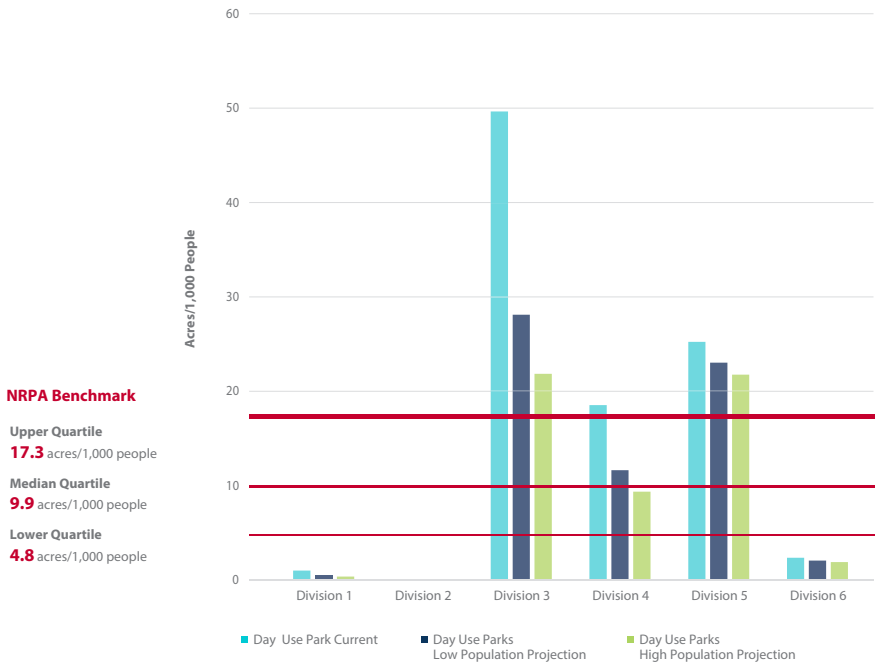


Figure ES-4 Day Use Park Supply by Division Compared to NRPA Quartiles



Our residents value our natural spaces and want increased protection of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA's). We learned that:

- Our current systems of day use parks, Provincial Parks and County environmental reserve protects a limited supply of the County's ESA's
  - 0.3% of ESA's are protected by County Day Use Parks.
  - Only 0.3% of ESA's are protected through dedicated Environmental Reserve.
  - 4.3% of ESA's are protected by provincial parks and protected areas, County Day Use Parks and Environmental Reserve.

To determine the areas of greatest need for County park development or redevelopment, we used a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis tool that took into account numerous science based criteria that are recognized for their importance in siting new parks. These criteria have been taken from published parks and recreation literature that promotes promising practices for sound parks planning.

Each of the park need criteria is important for determining where parks are needed most. For example, population density varies widely in Parkland County, so its important we are siting parks where people live. Youth may have demand for playgrounds and active recreational facilities to support their physical activity needs. Our senior population has different needs; they may desire passive recreation parks with opportunities for benches for sitting, certain types of games, and gatherings. Importantly, parks must be located close to homes so access is possible. No "weighting" or prioritization has been applied to any of the criteria.

Park Need Criteria

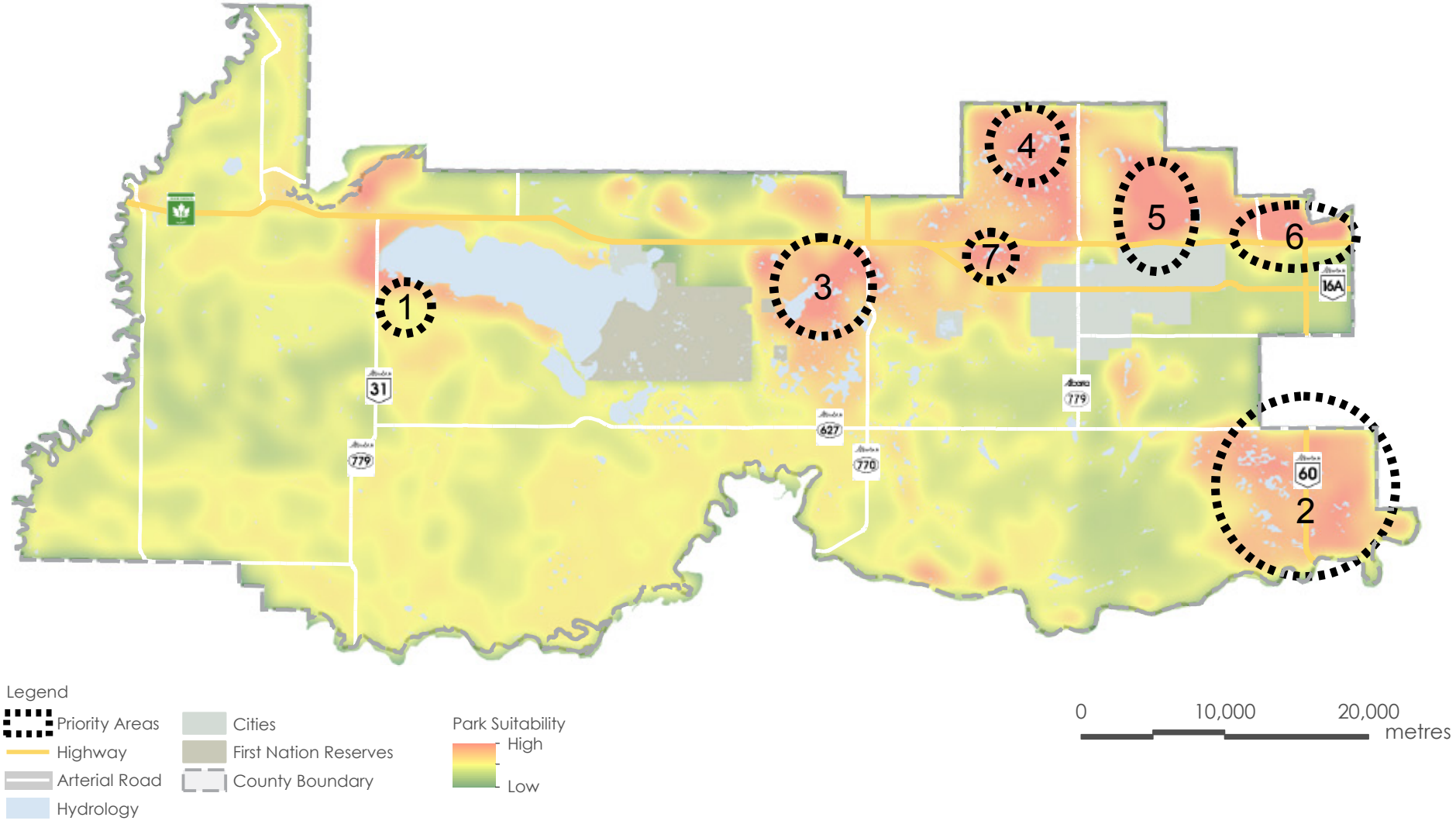
- Youth Population
- Senior Population
- Levels of Education
- Median Household Income
- Population Density
- Intercultural Population
- Parks Quality & Condition Access (clipped to residential areas)
- Trails Standard Access (clipped to residential areas)
- Hydrology (with small buffer)
- Environmentally Significant Areas
- Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zones
- Wetlands

As illustrated in Figure ES-5, the priority areas for new parkland expansion, include[b]:

1. Southwest shore of Wabamun Lake within the Highvale Area Structure Plan.
2. Extreme Southeast corner of the County around highway 60. This area is within the Devon Dunes landscape unit and contains numerous ESA's.
3. Johnny's Lake/Mink Lake Complex ESA west of Carvel and HWY 770.
4. Area around highway 540 encompassing Glory Hills ESA.
5. Area north of highway 16 encompassing Parkland Village and Atim Creek ESA.
6. Northeast corner of the County around highway 16 in proximity to the Big Lake/Lois Hole ESA.
7. Hubbles Lake and surrounding area, between highways 16 and 16A.

b Numbering is used simply for cross-referencing. The number does not indicate an order of priority.

Figure ES-5 Areas of Highest Suitability for Park Expansion or Redevelopment



Trail Supply by the Numbers:

39 km formally designated non-motorized trails (all agencies).

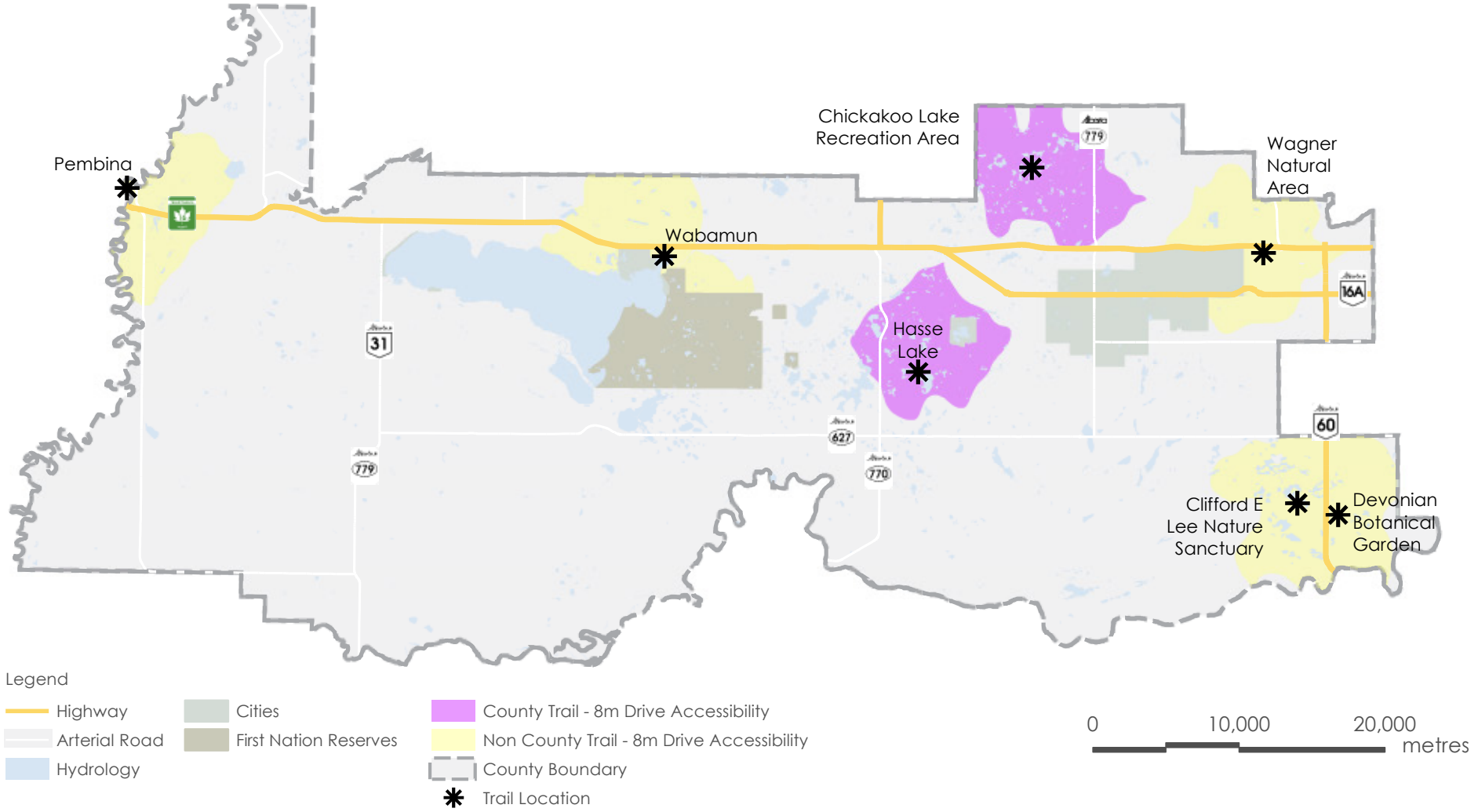
13 km formally designated non-motorized trails (Parkland County trails only)

Trails

We offer residents and visitors 14 formally designated non-motorized trails totalling 39 km. This includes both County trails and those managed by other agencies. We found that:

- Most of the designated trails in Parkland County are managed by agencies other than the County.
- The County lacks a designated, coordinated and well connected motorized and non-motorized trail system.
- Access to trails is limited as two-thirds of all residents are not within an 8km drive to a trailhead.
- A lack of purpose designed, constructed and maintained motorized trail system and motorized park is leading to growing environmental damage, trail user and landowner conflicts and missed tourism opportunities.

Figure ES-6 Access to County & Non-County Trailheads



Playgrounds

Visiting a playground is one of the most commonly participated in outdoor activities (46.3% of residents) in the County and there was a clear desire to see the play value of existing playgrounds enhance and modernized. . In our analysis, we learned that:

- Community Associations and School Districts provide residents with most of their playground opportunities.

Because of Community Association and School District playgrounds, the County is well-supplied with one exception. There is opportunity to improve playground access in the Jackfish Lake/Star Lake area.

72% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a playground.

Outdoor Sport Facilities

Outdoor sport is popular in the County. Resident's and stakeholders raised concerns about the ability of existing outdoor sports facilities to accommodate growing demands. Analysis shows that:

- Utilization of the Meridian Sports Park has risen, on average, by 1% per year since 2011. On average, the MSP is booked for 1,586.5 hours total annually. 33% of the bookings are for youth activities while the remaining 66% are made for adult activities. Softball diamonds are booked, on average, 1,374 hours per season while soccer fields are booked, on average, 211 hours per season.
- There is not enough primetime supply to meet current booking demands for diamonds at MSP (137% of capacity). These shortages will increase as population grows.
- Soccer fields at MSP are underutilized both in terms of the total hours (15% of capacity) and primetime hours (43% of capacity).
- Outdoor sports fields supplied by the school district and community associations are fundamental to providing residents with reasonable access to outdoor sport opportunity.

Access to Waterbodies

Access to our recreational water bodies (lakes and rivers) is highly desired by residents. When we studied the current access to recreational water bodies, we found that:

- 50% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a formal water access point provided by the County or another agency (e.g., Village, Alberta Parks).
- The County's smaller lakes are generally well-supplied with access facilities.
- The south shore of Wabamun Lake has limited water access.
- Access to the Pembina River and to the western reaches of the North Saskatchewan River is limited.

50% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a formalized water access point.

"Recreation"

The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Recreation

Indoor Recreation Facilities

Our residents have access to a diversity of indoor recreation facilities and the recreation opportunities they provide. For the most part, we provide funding through cost share agreements to our partners who build and operate indoor facilities in neighbouring municipalities though the County is a co-owner of the Tri-Leisure Center. Our residents can access multi-purpose programming spaces, ice arenas, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, curling arenas, fitness centres, sport courts, running tracks and 25 community halls. Supplementing County provided or supported recreation facilities, the school districts, private sector, not-for-profit organizations, religious organizations and other adjacent municipalities also provide residents with access to many other indoor recreation facilities that enable fitness and yoga classes, boxing and martial arts, gymnastics, gymnasiums and equestrian riding to name a few.

We know that the accessibility of recreational facilities can be an important determinant of use and distance to a facility is an important concern for our residents. Our residents were willing to travel between 21–30 km to access an indoor recreation facility. Analysis shows that:

- Indoor recreation facilities are reasonably well distributed throughout the County (see Table ES-1) though most of our residents will need to travel close to 30 km to access their facility of choice.
- Residents in the west end of the County have limited access to indoor recreational facilities.
- Most residents have to travel the furthest to reach an outdoor swimming pool, indoor field house, sport court, running track and curling facilities.

Table ES-1 Residential Parcel Access to Recreation Facilities

	15 km	30 km
Multi-Purpose Programmable Spaces (includes Community Halls)	97.3%	100.0%
Hockey Arenas	62.8%	99.9%
Indoor Swimming Pool	45.6%	80.1%
Fitness Centre	31.0%	83.7%
Curling	27.9%	75.4%
Indoor Fieldhouses, Sport Courts, & Running Tracks	28.2%	75.4%
Outdoor Swimming Pool	20.3%	39.4%

Recreation Programs

We strongly rely on the efforts of many dedicated volunteer organization's and their members to deliver the right quantity, type and quality of recreation programs for our residents. According to the Tri-Region Leisure Guide, there are over 97 organizations offering residents of the region access to recreation related programs. The inventory of programs indicates that all Divisions in the County have access to multiple recreational programs. Programs available to our residents range from general fitness, arts, clubs, camps, recreational sport and highly competitive sports. Recreational programming in the County is delivered by:

- Community Associations
- Family and Community Support Services
- Villages
- Town of Stony Plain
- City of Spruce Grove
- Other Volunteer Organizations
- Private Businesses

Through conversations with recreation program providers and our residents, we learned that:

- Distance matters and programs need to be equitably distributed throughout the County and close to our resident's home.
- Leisure education is critical to addressing the barriers to participation in recreation programs (e.g., distance, cost, equipment, knowledge).
- Facilities designed with flexibility will enable the greatest diversity of recreational programs.

Most Needed Programs–Sounding Board Input

- Sports teams
- Yoga and dance classes
- Year-round youth group
- Fun events at the hall for all ages, Club gatherings for dancing, gymnastics, and sports.

Recreation program delivery through a Community Development Model continues to be effective though declining volunteerism rates need to be considered and addressed.

- Community Associations and Community Halls have tremendous variation in how they organize programming and their facilities ability to support programs.
- Relationships can be effectively developed and strengthened with local First Nation communities to extend the reach and benefit of recreational programming.
- It is OK to focus limited resources on supporting the provision of fewer high quality programs versus many lower quality programs.

Culture

In addressing culture in the context of the PRCMP two perspectives are needed. The first relates to establishing a service delivery framework that defines our involvement in direct, collaborative, or partnered services, facilities and programs, together with a strategic agenda to enhance cultural activities and opportunities for residents and visitors to the County. It also represents a set of organizations and activities in the County that can be seen to be directly impacted and supported by the County.

The second perspective embraces a broader *cultural planning* view of cultural issues and opportunities. Here culture and cultural resources represent fundamental economic and community assets contributing directly to economic prosperity and quality of life in the County. From this perspective, cultural planning and development is not the sole concern of any one department but rather connects with a range of County plans and priorities across departments. Cultural Master Plans developed in Stony Plain and Spruce Grove also embrace this larger vision of culture and its contribution to wider planning agendas. The second perspective does not reject the first but rather encompasses it in wider frame of reference.

While we have been involved in a range of cultural programs and activities to date, culture has received less attention from County than has parks and recreation. The PRCMP provides an opportunity to rectify this situation and establish a clear service delivery framework and strategic agenda to guide our future commitments to culture and cultural development in the years ahead.

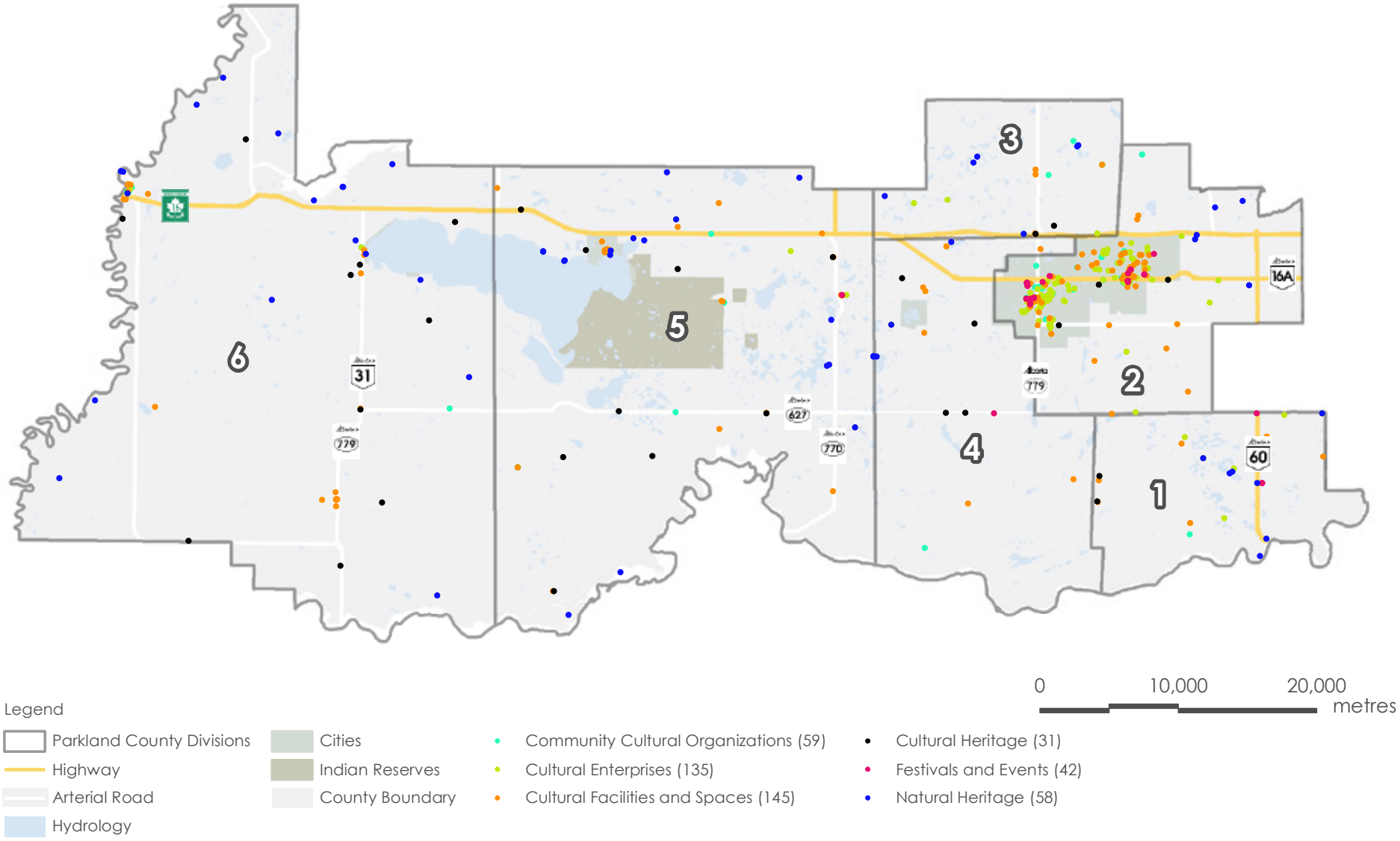
"Culture"

The expression and celebration of the values and aspirations of a community or social group. This is expressed through all manner of human activities that characterize a community and its people and shape its unique sense of place. It includes the sharing of ideas; learning through expression in the fine, visual, literary, media, material and performing arts; heritage; and the shared experiences of history.

The County is home to a rich array of cultural resources (see Figure ES-7 for the groupings of cultural resources) that are both non-profit and for-profit organizations and enterprises, as well as place-based assets such as natural and cultural heritage assets. Through our cultural resources inventory and cultural mapping we found that residents have access to the following cultural assets in the county:

- 39 Community Cultural Organizations
- 40 Cultural Enterprises
- 29 Cultural Heritage Assets
- 58 Natural Heritage Assets
- 11 Cultural Festivals & Events
- 32 Cultural Facilities and Spaces including Community Halls, Libraries and Museums

Figure ES-7 County Cultural Resources

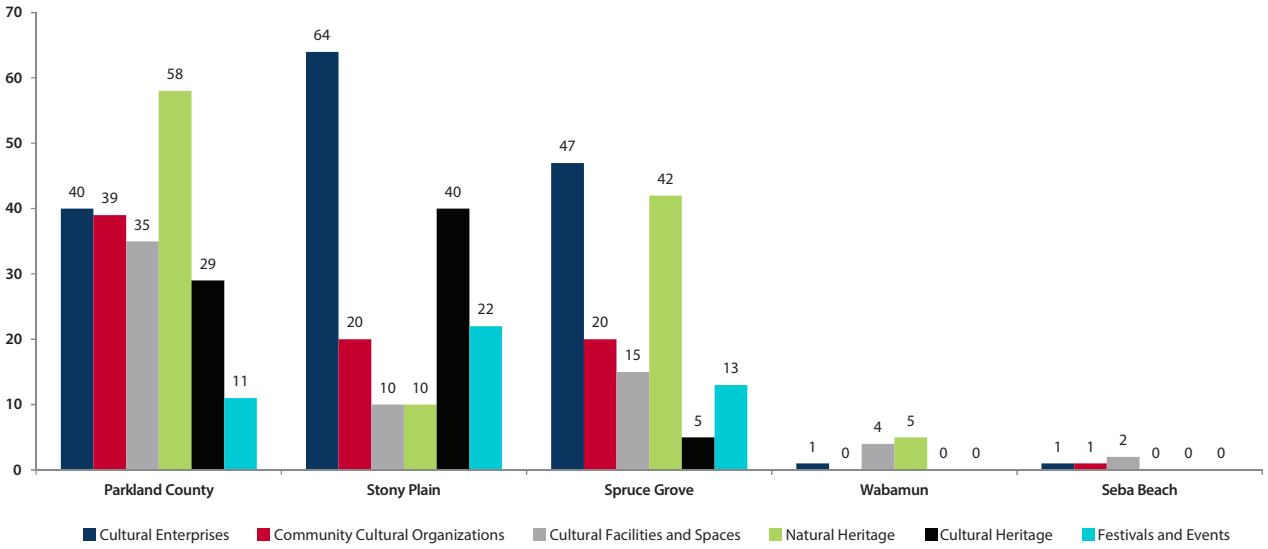


Through the Municipal Arts Program, the County has also built a significant visual art collection that is on display at the Parkland County Centre. Recognizing that the County can't meet the cultural interests of our residents alone, we also provide cost share support to Horizon Stage (with the City of Spruce Grove), Pioneer Museum (with the City of Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Society) and the Multicultural Heritage Centre (with the Heritage Agricultural Society).

Figure ES-8 Cultural Resources Framework

When we considered our supply of cultural resources relative to nearby communities (see Figure ES-9), we discovered that the supply of cultural assets in the County is relatively balanced across each of the cultural resource categories compared with those in Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. Given their smaller size, it is not surprising that the number of resources in Wabamun and Seba Beach are smaller but nevertheless resources that are important to those communities. Compared to Stony Plain and Spruce Grove there is opportunity to improve our supply of cultural enterprises, festivals and events and to leverage our significant natural heritage and cultural heritage resources as we move forward on strengthening the benefits culture can bring to the County.

Figure ES-9 Cultural Resources and Nearby Communities



THE WAY FORWARD

To guide our decisions and priorities into the future, we worked collaboratively with our residents and partners to develop the following shared vision:

In 2026…

Parkland County has become known for our impressive system of connected and accessible park lands, recreation opportunities and cultural experiences. Our residents and our families have become happier, healthier and stronger as they spend more time taking part in parks, recreation and cultural experiences. We have reconnected with and celebrate our nature and our heritage and are active stewards of our ecological network and our cultural resources. We are working collaboratively with our partners to further the protection of both our environmentally significant areas and our cultural resources. Our parks, recreation and culture opportunities are helping to attract, and retain, businesses, investment and residents to the County, while strengthening and diversifying our tourism industry. With a commitment to partnerships, we are working collaboratively with our municipal partners, our community partners and parks, recreation and cultural organizations to deliver the highest quality services to our residents.

This is a ten-year plan that is clearly focused on achieving the following outcomes:

Individual & Community Health & Well-being

- Residents are healthier—physically and mentally.
- Community identity, spirit and creativity is strengthened.

Accessible, Diverse & Inclusive

- Every resident has easy access to a diversity of parks, recreation and culture opportunities regardless of where they live.
- Parks, recreation and culture opportunities are inclusive for all.

Connected to Nature & Our Heritage

- Residents' connection to and appreciation of nature and our heritage is deepened.

Conserved & Restored

- Environmentally significant areas and the ecosystem services they provide are conserved and, where needed, restored.
- Heritage and cultural sites are conserved and, where needed, restored.

Economic Growth & Diversification

- Our reputation as a destination for memorable nature based and cultural tourism experiences is elevated.
- Support the attraction of new and retention of existing residents, workers and businesses.

Shared Stewardship

- Residents and stakeholders are actively engaged as volunteers, partners and shared stewards and have the capacity needed to succeed.

To achieve these outcomes, we have identified 23 strategies that will be our focus over the next ten years (see Figure ES-10). Each strategy contains several prioritized actions.

Overarching Strategies

- Grow volunteer capacity and commitment
- Enhance the not for profit grant program
- Continue cost sharing
- Minimize barriers to participation through leisure education
- Apply consistent classification systems
- Grow capacity and improve data
- Strengthen communications and engagement
- Grow nature-based and cultural tourism

The Plan for Parks, Conservation & Outdoor Activities

- Protect our nature
- Expand, diversify and connect our parks and trails
- Enhance and upgrade our existing parks and trails
- Actively manage parks and trails
- Enhance water-based opportunities
- Enhance outdoor sport facilities

The Plan for Recreation

- Collaborate for recreation
- Enable easy access to quality and diverse recreation facilities
- Enhance recreation programs

The Plan for Culture

- Organize for culture
- Enhance the municipal art program
- Create outdoor cultural spaces
- Community halls for the future
- Grow a creative rural economy
- Focus attention on placemaking

ACCESS is a determinant of participation. Access is a holistic term and includes:

- Physical access
- Financial access
- Equitable spatial distribution of opportunities

PLACEMAKING is a planning practice focused on improvements to the public spaces in the community through interventions including landscaping, urban design, public art, among others.

Figure ES-10 Plan At A Glance

PLAN AT A GLANCE

THE FUTURE OF PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

VISION

In **2026**…

Parkland County has become known for our impressive system of connected and accessible park lands, recreation opportunities and cultural experiences. Our residents and our families have become happier, healthier and stronger as they spend more time taking part in parks, recreation and cultural experiences. We have reconnected with and celebrate our nature and our heritage and are active stewards of our ecological network and our cultural resources. We are working collaboratively with our partners to further the protection of both our environmentally significant areas and our cultural resources. Our parks, recreation and culture opportunities are helping to attract, and retain, businesses, investment and residents to the County, while strengthening and diversifying our tourism industry. With a commitment to partnerships, we are working collaboratively with our municipal partners, our community partners and parks, recreation and cultural organizations to deliver the highest quality services to our residents.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Individual & Community Health & Well-being
- Conserved & Restored
- Economic Growth & Diversification
- Accessible, Diverse & Inclusive
- Connected to Nature & Our Heritage
- Shared Stewardship

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

- Grow volunteer capacity & commitment
- Continue cost sharing
- Apply consistent classification systems
- Enhance the not for profit grant program
- Grow capacity & improve data
- Grow nature-based & cultural tourism
- Minimize barriers to participation through leisure education
- Strengthen communications & engagement

STRATEGIES

PARKS, CONSERVATION & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Protect our nature
- Expand, diversify & connect our parks & trails
- Enhance and upgrade our existing parks & trails
- Actively manage our parks & trails
- Enhance water-based opportunities
- Enhance outdoor sport facilities

RECREATION

- Collaborate for recreation
- Enable easy access to quality & diverse recreation facilities
- Enhance recreation programs

CULTURE

- Organize for culture
- Enhance the municipal art program
- Create outdoor cultural spaces
- Community halls for the future
- Grow a Creative Rural Economy
- Focus attention on placemaking

1.0 Introduction

Our County's Vision is to be home to:

- Creative Communities
- Dynamic Connections
- Cherished Ecosystems
- Resilient Economies

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Parkland County is a vibrant municipality that offers country charm and rural living with easy access to city amenities. Parks, recreation and culture are a foundation of our resident's quality of life, support healthy lifestyles and protect our environmentally significant areas and our heritage and culture. Recognizing the importance of parks, recreation and culture to our community, the County has prepared this master plan to provide long term direction to our parks, recreation and culture services over the next 20 years. This plan represents our commitment to the future of parks, recreation and cultural services and reaffirms the important role parks, recreation and culture play in making Parkland County home to creative communities, dynamic connections, cherished ecosystems and resilient economies.

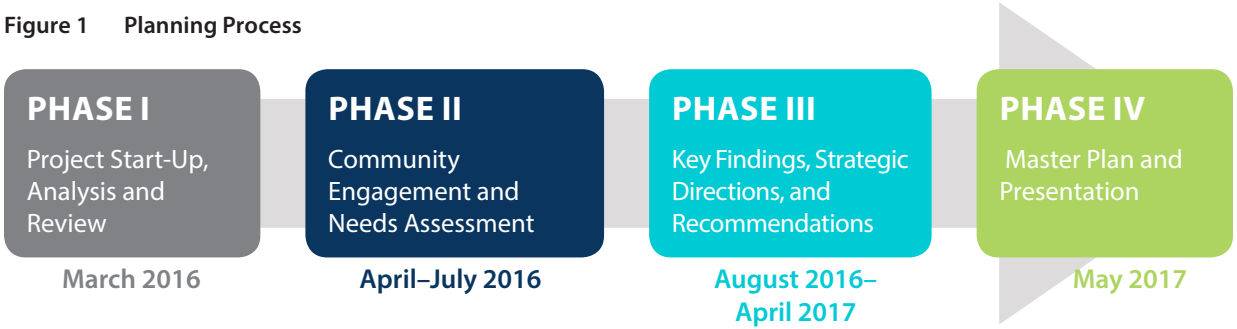
This plan focuses on:

- **Parks—**the provision and management of a parks and trails system that meets the current and future needs of our residents and protects our environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Recreation**—the provision of a recreation system that meets the current and future recreation needs of our residents through direct, collaborative or partnered services, facilities and programs.
- **Culture**—the provision of a cultural system that meets the current and future cultural needs of its residents and protects the County's unique culture and heritage through direct, collaborative or partnered services, facilities and programs.
- **Service Delivery and Leisure Education—**the definition of a leisure (parks, recreation and culture) service delivery framework that clearly articulates the County's role in the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

Preparation of this plan has been no small undertaking. The journey to develop the plan began in July of 2015 and has been co-created with many residents, stakeholders and partners. The planning process occurred in four Phases (See Figure 1).

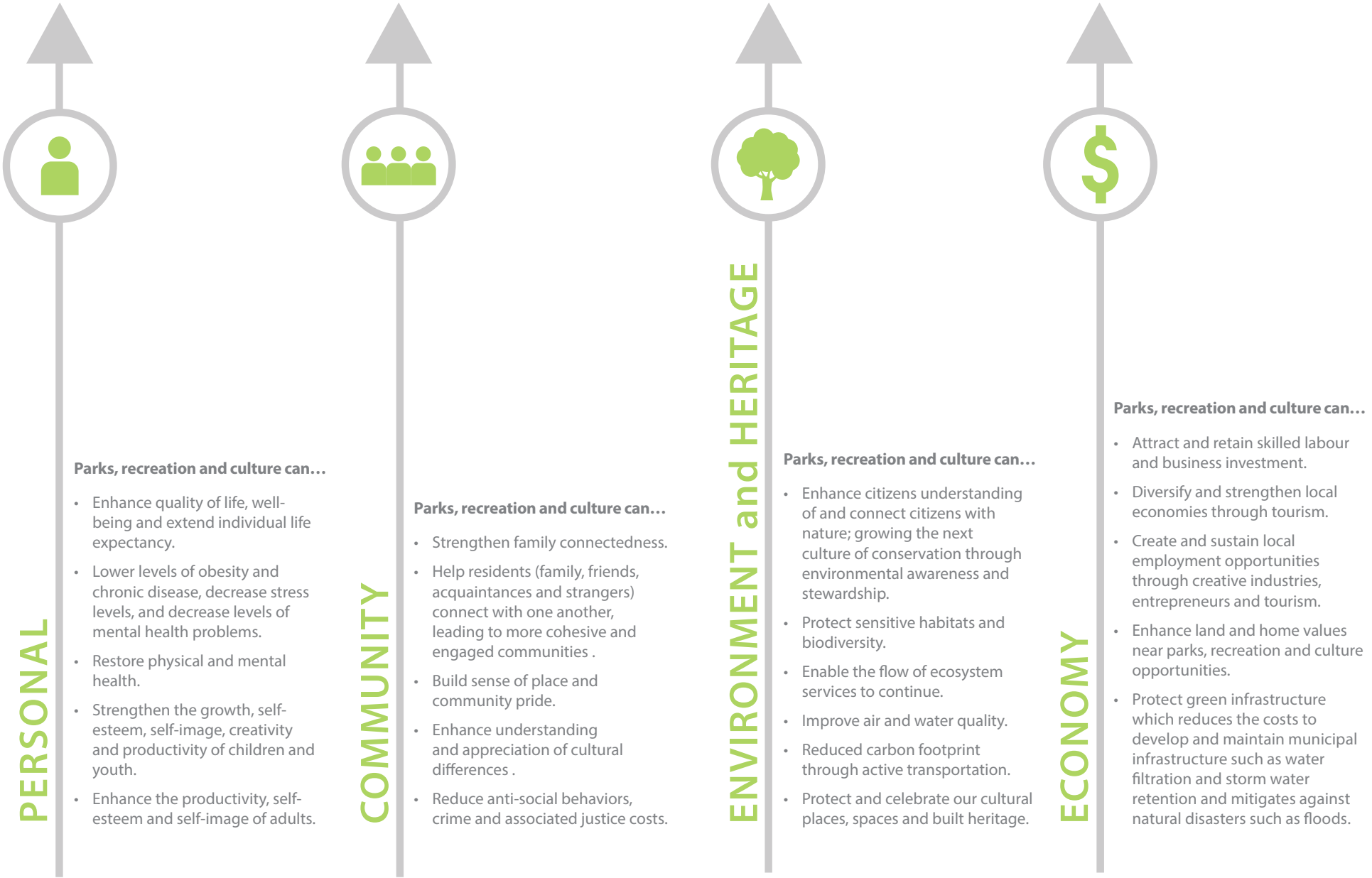
Figure 1 Planning Process



1.3 BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

Parks, recreation and culture services can bring many diverse benefits to our residents, our community, our environment and our economy. However, these benefits don't "just happen". To realize these benefits, we need to take a purposeful approach to the planning, design and delivery of parks, recreation and culture services throughout the County. When we do this, our residents, environment and economy will begin to realize the true benefits of parks, recreation and culture. As illustrated in Figure 2, parks, recreation and culture bring many benefits to our residents, our community and our economy.

Figure 2 Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Culture



Trend…

An observable pattern in which something is developing or changing. They impact the way we design and deliver parks, recreation and culture facilities, programs and services.

1.4 TRENDS

As we plan for the future of parks, recreation and culture, we need to be identify and recognize the prominent trends that are influencing leisure choices across Alberta and Canada. Understanding these trends and how they could influence parks, recreation and culture in the County into the future allows us better plan today for the needs of tomorrow.

Demographic Trends

- **Retiring, Affluent Baby Boomers**: One third of the Country's population is approaching retirement age. The retiring Baby Boomers are the largest, most-educated and affluent demographic in history with more disposable income and more time than ever before.
- **The Widening Income Gap:** The gaps between the haves and have nots continue to grow.
- **Increasing Diversity:** Our populations are becoming more ethnically diverse.

Behavioural Trends

- **Physical Inactivity and Personal Health:** Physical inactivity, especially in youth, is on the rise. Most children and youth are not achieving the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines (see Figure 3) and spend much less time outdoors today than in the past.[1] Obesity is on the rise as are associated health conditions.
- **Toward the Spontaneous:** we are shifting toward individual and spontaneous unstructured parks and recreation activities as our busy schedules are forcing us to squeeze in activities at convenient times, closer to home or work.
- **Seeking Experiences:** People are seeking personal growth, personal benefits and a deeper meaning from the leisure activities they choose. Expectations regarding quality of instruction, customer service, facilities and facility cleanliness are on the rise.
- **Nature Deficit**: Technology and urbanization is providing citizens, and particularly youth, with other leisure opportunities that have greatly reduced the time we spend in nature and our connection to it.
- **Cultural Resources:** Municipalities are embracing a broadened and integrated definition of what constitutes the cultural resources. The contribution of culture to individual and societal well-being and economic diversification are growing.
- **Volunteerism:** Volunteerism continues to decline in general. Volunteers are now more likely to volunteer for shorter term projects and tasks as opposed to long-term commitments.

Ecological Trends

- **Declining Biodiversity**: The province's and Country's biodiversity and ecosystem services continues to decline as environmentally significant areas are converted and lost.

Only 9% of Canadian kids age 5–17achieve the 60 minutes of heat-pumping physical activity they need each day.

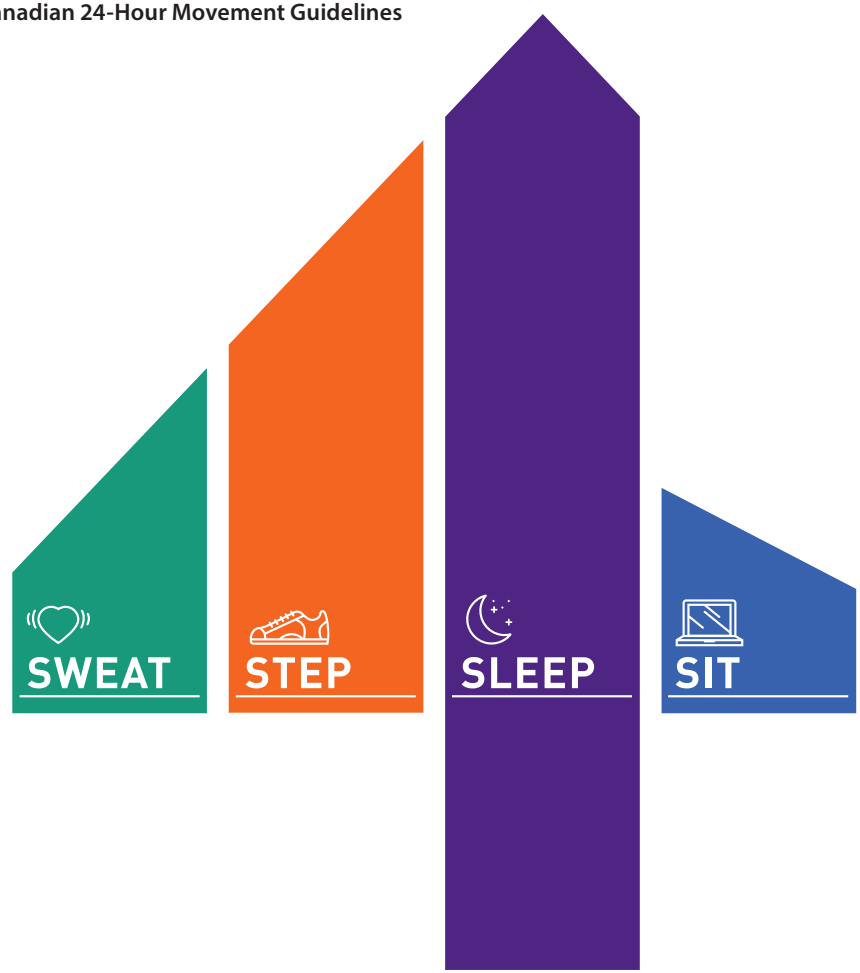
Only 24% of Canadian kids age 5–17 meet the recommendations of no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day.

Children are spending 50% less time outdoors today as they did 25 years ago.

Facilities and Infrastructure

- **Aging Infrastructure and Declining Conditions:** The Country's leisure infrastructure is aging and the maintenance back-log is growing rapidly. Leisure infrastructure is at risk or rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment in our infrastructure.[2]
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** New and upgraded facilities are now expected to be designed, constructed and retrofitted to minimize the facility's ecological footprint.
- **Multipurpose vs Single Use:** There has been a clear shift away from single use facilities and towards multipurpose, multi-generational facilities that provide healthy social gathering places that combine a number of users, for people of varying generations

Figure 3 **Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines**



SWEAT

MODERATE TO VIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

An accumulation of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity involving a variety of aerobic activities. Vigorous physical activities, and muscle and bone strengthening activities should each be incorporated at least 3 days per week;

STEP

LIGHT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Several hours of a variety of structured and unstructured light physical activities;

SLEEP

SLEEP

Uninterrupted 9 to 11 hours of sleep per night for those aged 5–13 years and 8 to 10 hours per night for those aged 14–17 years, with consistent bed and wake-up times;

SIT

SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

No more than 2 hours per day of recreational screen time;

Limited sitting for extended periods.

Source: ParticipACTION Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Service Delivery

- **Funding and Cost Recovery: P**arks, recreation and cultural organizations are working to find new or extended revenue sources to substitute for constrained government funding.
- **Partnerships and Service Delivery:** Embracing inter-municipal cooperation and community development approach, Municipalities are establishing more cost sharing and cooperative agreements with adjacent municipalities, non-profit groups and other institutions.
- **Tourism and Traveller Demands:** Parks, recreation and culture programs and facilities are increasingly playing a role in attracting tourism and economic development. Nature based, cultural and sport tourism provide compelling positive economic impacts for host communities.

Trend Implications for Parks, Recreation and Culture:

- Retirees will remain more active for much longer and will have the income, time and health to frequently participate in parks, recreation and cultural activities. Boomers will be major users of County parks, recreation and culture services.
- A widening income gap will drive the need to ensure parks, recreation and culture opportunities remain affordable and that programs are put in place to deliver leisure education.
- To remain relevant, the design of parks, facilities and programs will need to change to meet the interests of a diversifying population. In addition, efforts will be needed to connect a diversifying population to nature and the outdoors.
- There is a need to embrace a shift away from programmed parks, recreation and culture services to more spontaneous opportunities and prepare for gradual declines and organized sport enrolment.
- The role of municipal conservation parks will grow as Alberta and Canada work to meet conservation targets and halt the decline of biodiversity.
- As reflected in the AB Recreation Survey, cultural activities continue to be two of the top five activities for Albertan's.
- With volunteering declining, new ways will need to be found to inspire the next generation of volunteers, adjust the expectation on volunteers and focus substantial attention on volunteer recognition and ensuring a high-quality volunteer experience.
- As our parks, recreation and culture assets near the end of their lifespans we need to identify opportunities to co-locate sustainably designed facilities to attract multiple users to one area creating servicing and operational efficiencies.
- Strong asset management and capital lifecycle planning will become essential as we work to provide access to the quality and diversity of parks and facilities expected by residents.
- The importance and need for strong inter-municipal partnerships and other partnerships will only grow into the future.

1.5 DECISION MAKING

In planning for the future of parks, recreation and culture, we need to make difficult decisions about our priorities and how we will apply our resources to best meet the needs of our community in a way that derives the greatest public good. It is reality that we don't have the resources to deliver or facilitate the delivery of the many diverse **demands** we face. It is essential that we evaluate demands and determine the true **"needs"** of our community.

To inform our decisions and priorities in this plan, and going forward into the future, we have and will continue to apply a transparent decision support framework (see Figure 4). Each potential initiative has and will be evaluated against these principles as a way to evaluate the overall need to pursue the initiative. Each principle is defined as follows:

Vision and Outcomes Alignment—The proposed initiative is aligned with the vision and outcomes set in this plan.

Public Benefit—the degree to which all citizens in the County will benefit directly or indirectly, regardless of their use of parks recreation and culture services.

Demographic Trends—the extent to which demographic trends in the County suggest the need for the initiative.

Parks, Recreation, and Culture Trends—the extent to which the parks, recreation and culture trends suggest the need for the initiative will continue.

Resident, Stakeholder and User Demands –the extent to which the residents, stakeholders and partners identified the initiative as a priority during community engagements.

Facility Capacity– the extent to which capacity analysis of existing parks, recreation and culture facilities identify the need for additional capacity.

Conditions and Functionality—where relevant, the extent to which facility conditions and functionality assessment indicate the need for the initiative.

Innovation—the extent to which the proposal is or supports a new parks, recreation of cultural experience or process.

Figure 4 Decision Support Framework

GUIDE

2.0 Planning Foundations

Where a community has been (history), who its people are (demographics), and where it wants to go (vision, policies and plans) are all important in providing a foundation for planning the future of parks, recreation, and culture. In preparing this master plan, we needed to be mindful of this planning context.

2.1 OUR COMMUNITIES

At 242,595 hectares and spanning 82.5 km from east to west and 33 km from north to south, we are a very large County. Within our borders, we have 18 different cities, towns, villages, summer villages, hamlets and First Nation reserves. In addition to the communities within our borders, we share borders with six other municipalities including the City of Edmonton, Leduc County, Brazeau County, Yellowhead County, Lac Ste. Anne and Sturgeon County.

Given the many communities within and adjacent to the County, our borders are permeable and our residents frequently travel within and outside of the County's boundaries to participate in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Similarly, residents from neighbouring municipalities frequently come to our County to enjoy our parks, recreation and culture offerings.

2.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

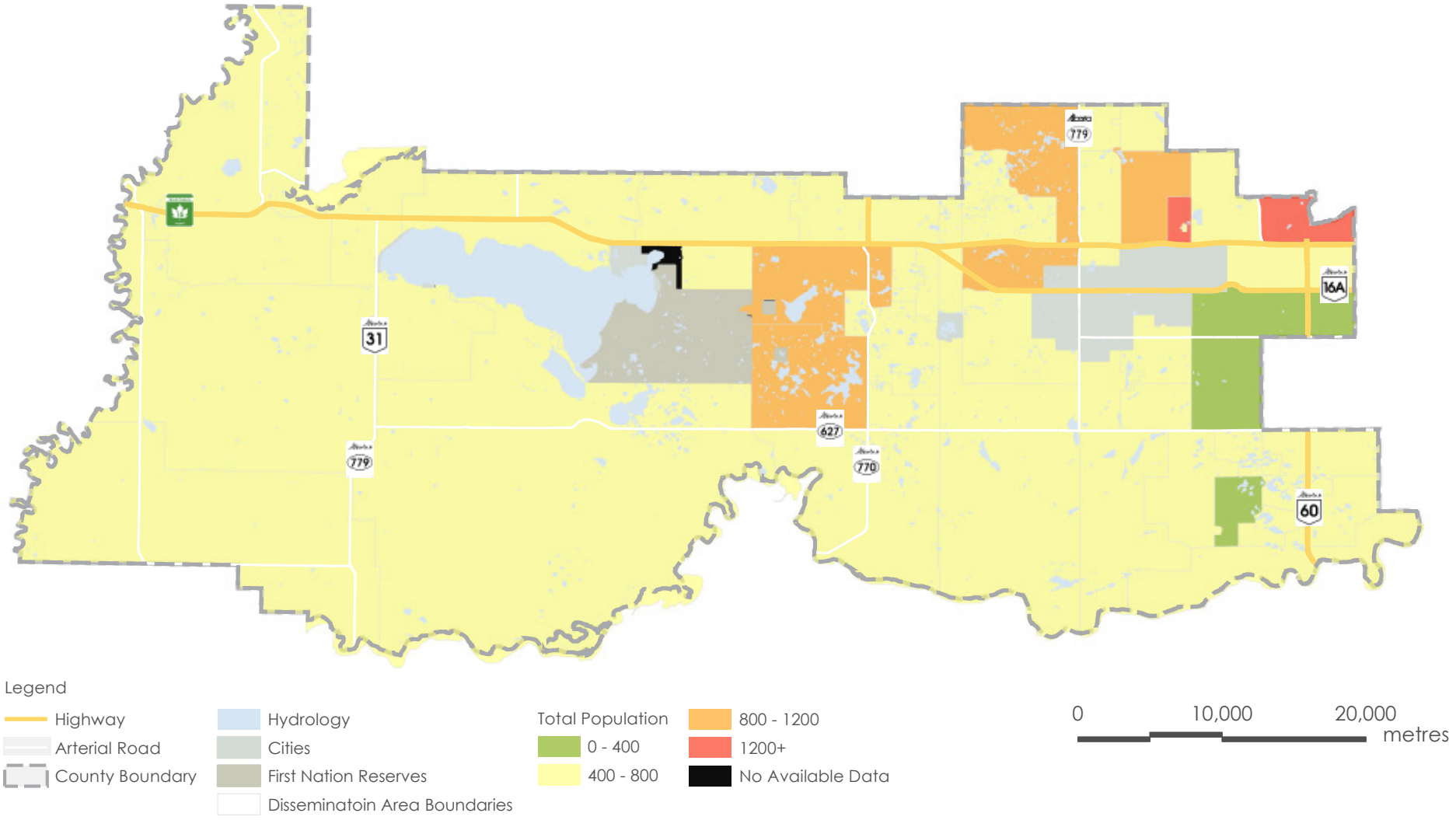
Our County is home to approximately 30,568 residents who live in approximately 12,150 different dwellings. Though the population grew by 4.6% from 2006 to 2011, it is growing below the provincial average of 10.8% and the national average of 5.9%. As this is a 10 year plan, it is also important to consider how our population might change over the next 10 years plus years. Analysis suggests that the population could grow to approximately 40,000 people.

As shown in Figure 5, our population is not uniformly spread throughout the County. In fact, the eastern portions of the County contain over 70% of our population. As a large municipality, we also have a relatively low population density. Over 90% of the County's land area has a population density of less than 50 persons/sqkm with the highest concentration of population existing in the eastern portions of the County (See Figure 6).

30,568 County population

74,427 total population of all communities within County

Figure 5 Population by Census Area



Recognizing that regional residents are also interested in and have implications on our parks, recreation and culture services, it is important that we consider the populations of those communities (see Figure 6). When population is considered holistically, the population of all communities within the County boundary swells to over 75,000. As a result, County parks, recreation and culture programs and facilities can potentially serve over 75,000 residents, not to mention those that come to visit friends and/or family and participate in the many parks, recreation, and culture opportunities afforded throughout the County.

Figure 6 Population Density

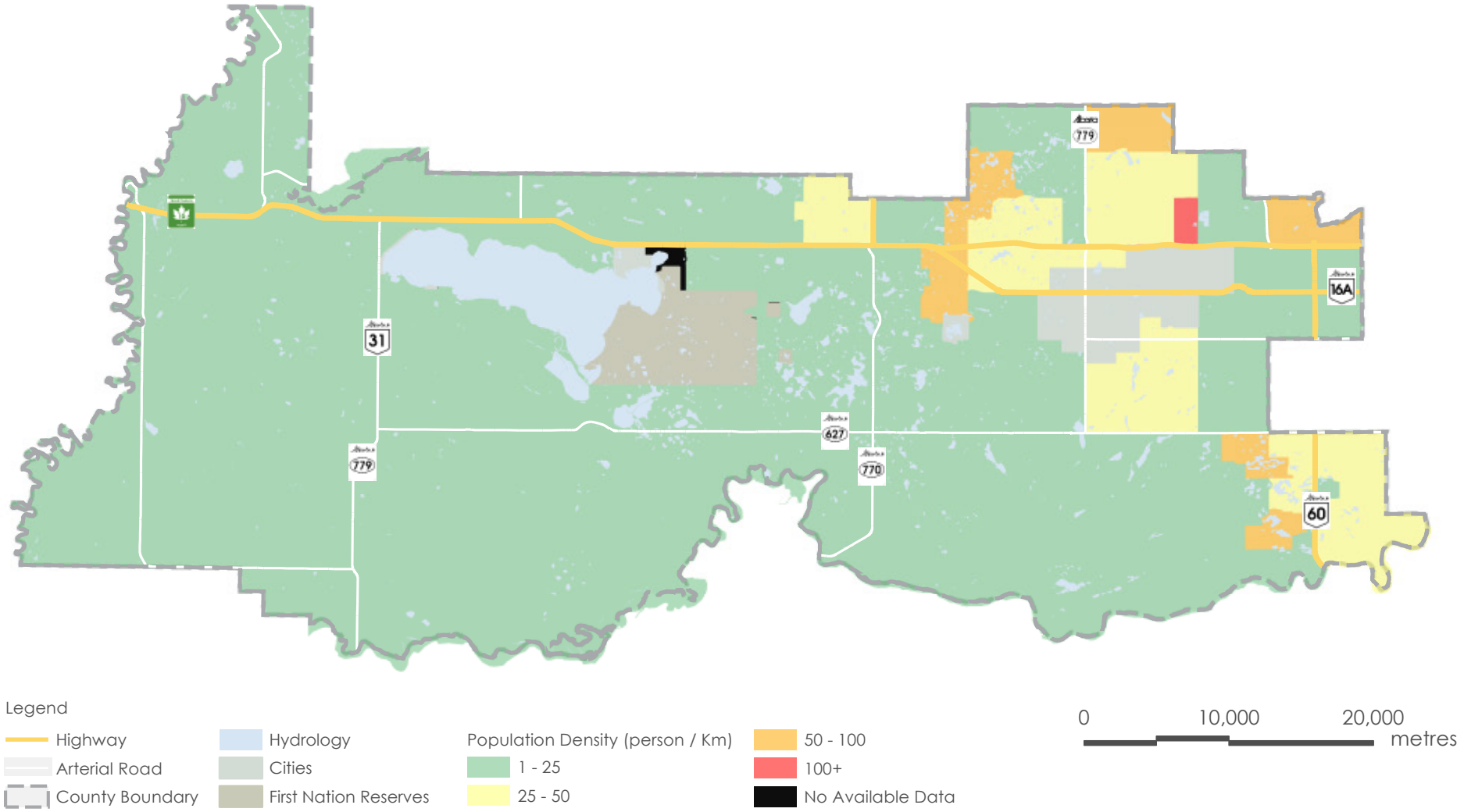
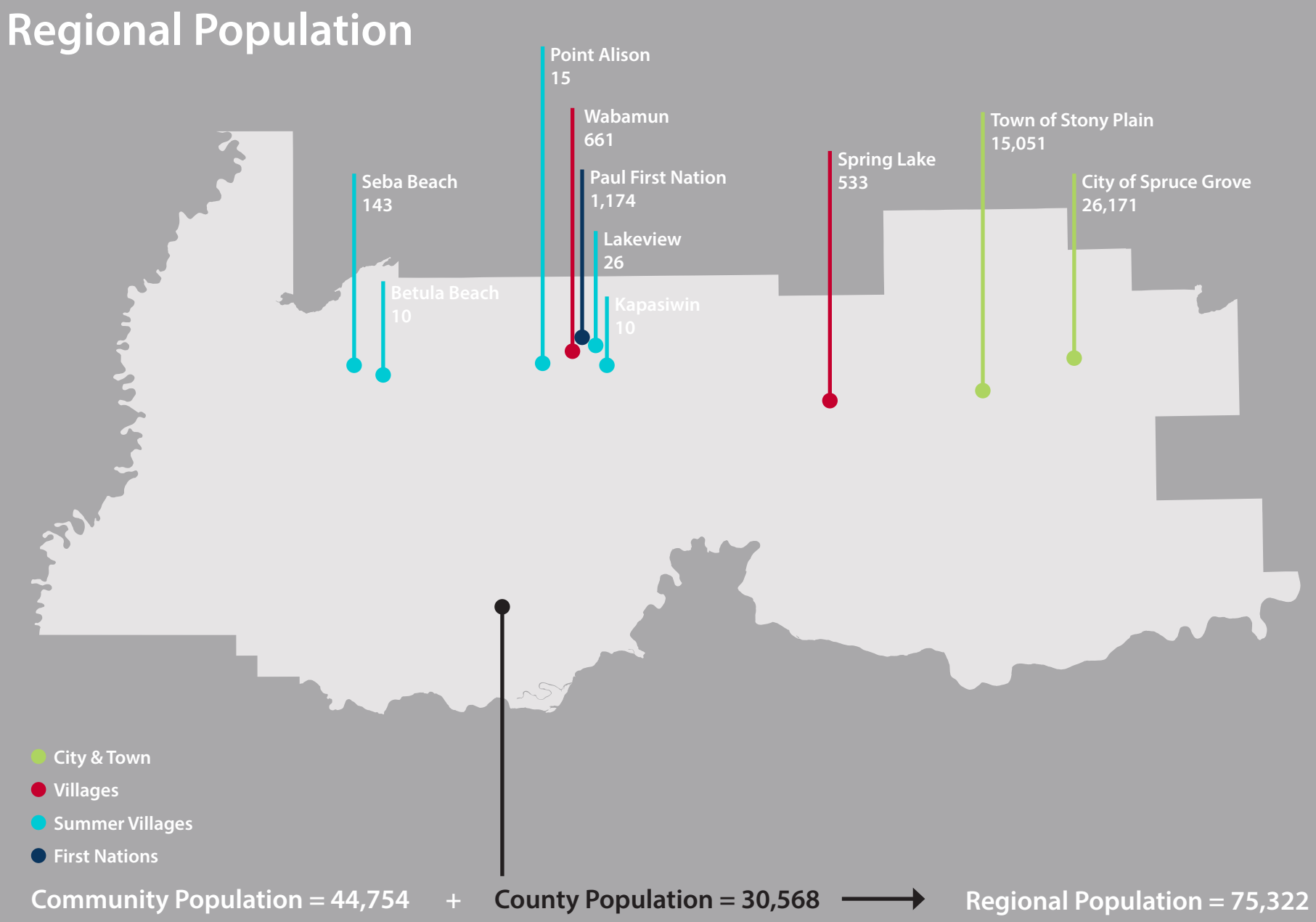


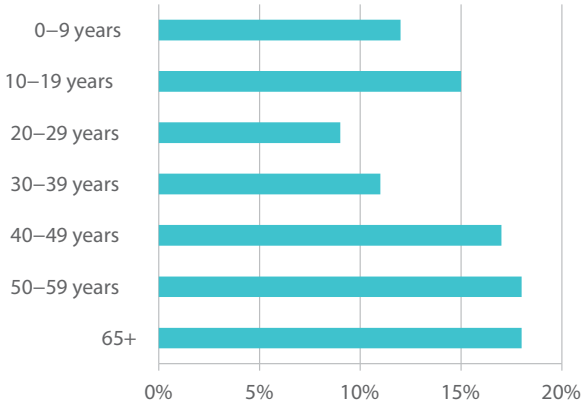
Figure 7 Regional Population (2011 Census)[3]



As shown in Figure 8, we are an older community and are continuing to age. In fact, over half (53%) of Parkland County's population is over the age of 40.

When we consider geographic distribution of our population, we can see that our seniors population is distributed across the County while our youth populations are concentrated in the eastern portions of the region near the urban centers of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain (See Appendix D).

Figure 8 Population Age Distribution



It is also important to have an understanding of education and income levels and distribution throughout our County as research shows that those with lower incomes and typically foundational levels of education tend to face greater barriers to participation in parks, recreation, and culture activities. The distribution of education and income levels are important when thinking about the equitable siting of facilities and programming. Education levels in the County are similar to Alberta except for "apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma" which has approximately 7% higher attainment. However, the eastern section of our County has the highest number of residents without a certificate, diploma or degree.

As of 2011, the median household income in the County was $102,023, which was greater than the provincial median. There is less prevalence of low income across all age categories in the County than the province. Generally, the prevalence of lower income households in the County is focused more in the western portions of the region than the east.

In 2011, 6.2% of the County population (1,900 people) had an aboriginal identify. Meanwhile, 6.7% of the County population was immigrants (2,050 people). 225 of the County's immigrant population came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. The County has a relatively low population of visible minorities. Approximately 2.7% of the County's population belonged to a visible minority (835 people) compared to 18.4% of Alberta. The largest visible minorities groups in the County include Filipino and South Asian. Further analysis into our demographic profile can be found in Appendix D.

What Do our Demographics Mean for Parks, Recreation and Culture?

- We have a low density population. This significantly increases the importance of collaborative approaches to service delivery as the County does not have a dense enough population to justify independent facility development.
- Our population isn't all that matters. The total population of all communities within the County increases demands on the County's parks, recreation and culture services.
- The more residents that are in an area, the more people to support facilities and programs and the more residents there are that want and need essential recreational and cultural facilities and programs.
- Our population is older. Our services should reflect this. The type of activities they choose the frequency with which they take part and even the time of day they can participate can vary with age.
- The eastern part of our County contains the highest number of youth which aligns with the distribution of youth related services. Distribution of services should continue to reflect the location of youth. Though our population is older, we can't ignore the importance of early engagement of youth in parks, recreation and culture as its critical to a child's positive social, physical and mental development.
- Parks, recreation and culture facilities, services and programs should be equitably distributed throughout the County and should reflect the demographics (age, income, and ethnicity) of those areas.
- Higher incomes and education have been associated with healthier and more active individuals. Generally, higher income and education results in more control and discretion to act in a healthy way. In our County, most of the lower income households are located in the west and efforts should be made to minimize barriers to parks, recreation and culture services in those areas.
- Ethnicity has a significant influence on the parks, recreational and cultural choices. Services should continue to be planned to provide equitable access to culturally appropriate parks, recreation, and culture opportunities

2.3 POLICY, PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The delivery of parks, recreation and culture services at the local level are impacted by broader initiatives at the National, Provincial, Regional and local levels. Efforts have been made to ensure this plan aligns with the following policies, plans and strategies:

NATIONAL	**NATIONAL POLICIES**	
	Pathways to Well-Being Convention on Biological Diversity and Parks for All (draft)	Long Term Athlete Development Model
PROVINCIAL	**PROVINCIAL POLICIES**	
	The Spirit of Alberta (A Cultural Policy for Alberta) Active Alberta	Alberta Sport Plan Land Use Framework
REGIONAL	**REGIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**	
	Capital Regional Plan	
MUNICIPAL	**MUNICIPAL POLICIES**	
	Strategic Plan Integrated Community Sustainability Plan	Municipal Development Plan Environmental Conservation Plan
LOCAL	**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE PLANS**	
	Tri-Municipal Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan Stony Plain Cultural Master Plan	City of Spruce Grove Cultural Master Plan City of Spruce Grove Outdoor Sport Facility Strategy

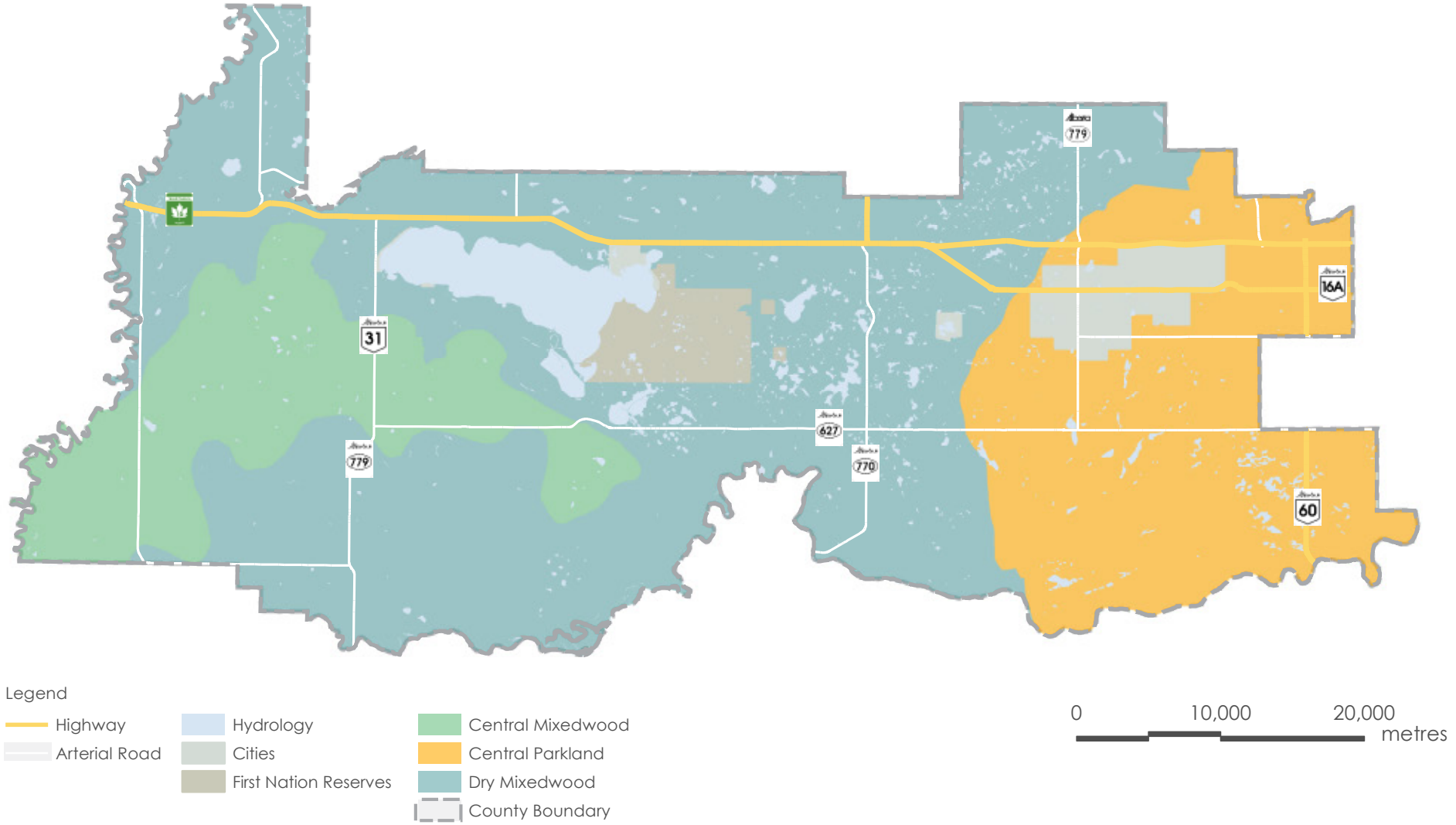
2.4 OUR NATURE

Our parks and open space system is part of something much bigger. In addition to providing outdoor recreation opportunities and maintaining the visual appeal of the County, our parks system is part of a larger ecological network. Our system plays a role in conserving local and regional biodiversity, providing critical ecological connections between larger regional and provincial protected areas and continuing the flow of vital ecosystem services. It's important that, as we plan for the future of our County parks system, we understand the diverse ecological resources in the County and how future parks can help to protect them.

As identified in the Parkland County Environmental Conservation Master Plan (2014), our County is home to a wide range of vegetation communities, fish and wildlife species, wetlands and aquatic resources as well as several unique landforms and historic resources. The foundation of our natural diversity is our natural sub-regions. Located within the Parkland Natural Region, the County contains three unique natural sub-regions 1) central parkland, 2) dry mixedwood and 3) central mixedwood (Figure 9). The County contains two major river corridors (North Saskatchewan and Pembina), many creek systems, riparian areas, lakes of varying shapes and sizes, wetland of various types and sizes and ground water resources. Though much of the County's vegetation has been converted or lost through development, we still maintain varying parcels of native vegetation including aspen, balsam popular, jack pine, white spruce, black spruce as well as 85 species of rare plant species many of which are found in peatlands and wetlands.

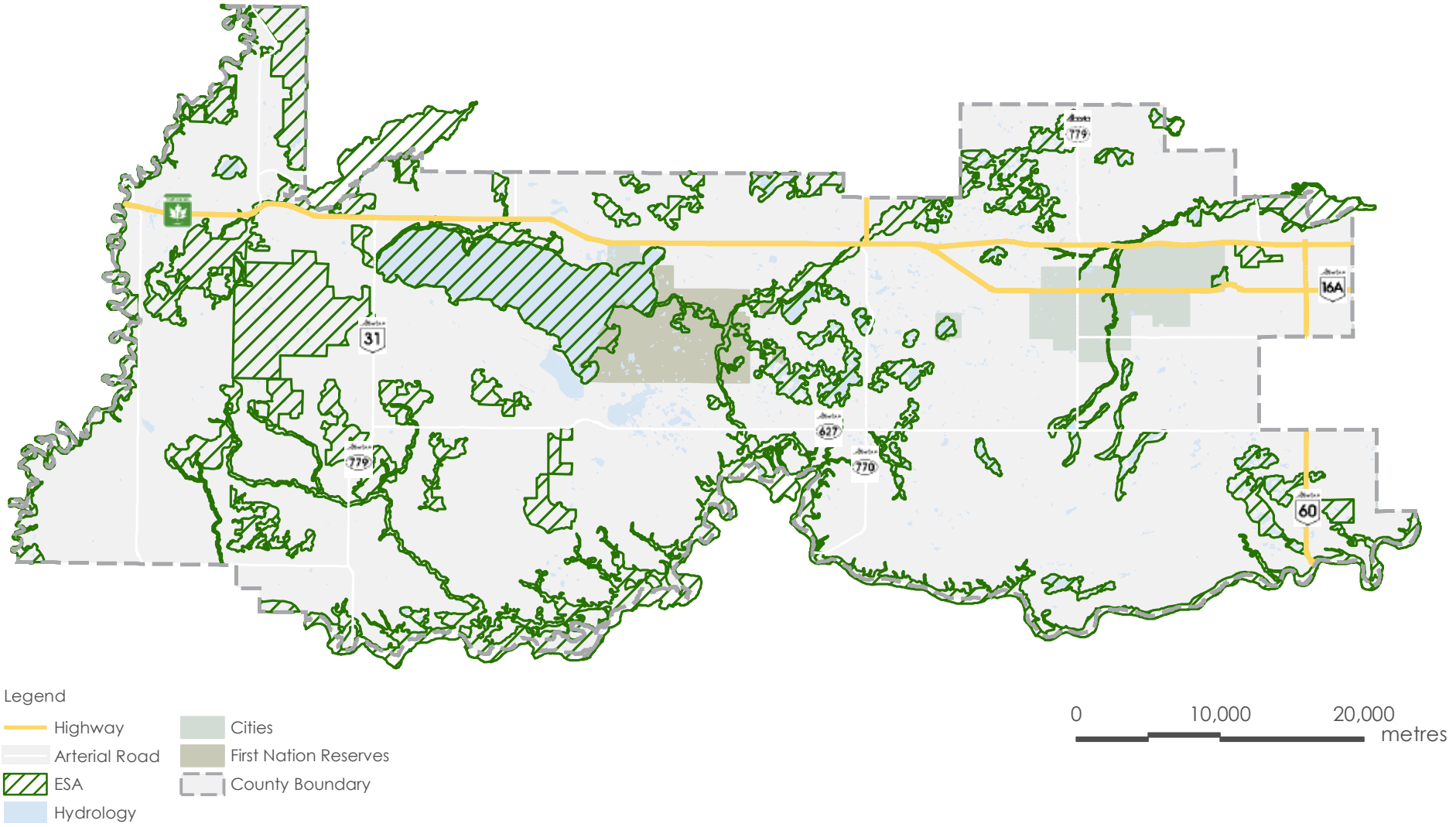
We have a wide variety of habitats that are home to a diversity of fish and wildlife species. Lakes and rivers support 35 species of fish including many common sport fish species such as northern pike, walleye, arctic grayling, rainbow trout, sturgeon. A wide variety of ungulates, carnivores, fur-bearers, small mammals and a smaller number of amphibians and reptiles can be found in Parkland County. Over 200 bird species, including 25 water bird species inhabit our forests, grasslands, wetlands, lakes and rivers throughout county. Approximately 11 species are listed as sensitive or at risk in the County.

Figure 9 Parkland County's Natural Subregions



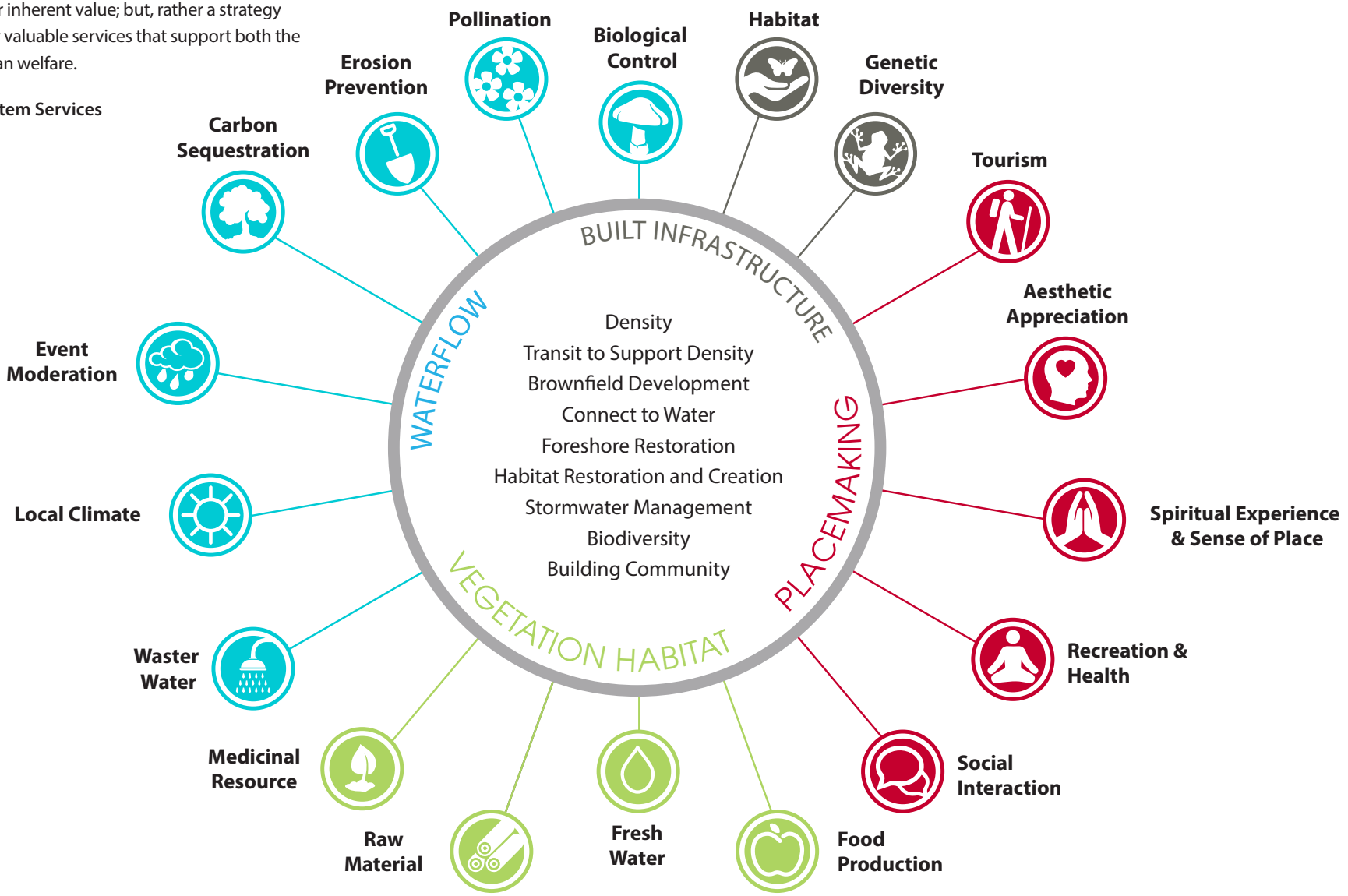
There are 61 identified Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) that make up 24% of the total area of our County (Figure 10).[4] An ESA is an area that contains rare and/or unique elements that have specific conservation needs. ESA's often require special management attention and, in some cases, protection to ensure their ecological values remain intact and the ecosystem services they provide continue.

Figure 10 Environmentally Significant Areas



Collectively, our ecological network combines to provide and sustain a steady flow of ecosystem services (Figure 11) for our residents and those in adjacent communities. Ecosystem services include all of the direct and indirect benefits that people obtain from nature and natural processes. When we think of ecosystem services, we quickly realize that conservation is not just a matter of maintaining species and ecosystems for their inherent value; but, rather a strategy for sustaining many valuable services that support both the economy and human welfare.

Figure 11 Ecosystem Services



3.0 Engaging Our Residents & Partners

Meeting the parks, recreation and culture opportunities our residents need, and desire, is a team effort. We cannot do it alone. We will need to move forward together with the help of residents, stakeholders, other municipal departments, other jurisdictions and our partner agencies in the health and education sectors. As such, it was important that this plan provide anyone with an interest in parks, recreation and culture a meaningful opportunity to help co-create its future.

Meeting the parks, recreation and culture opportunities our residents need and desire is a team effort.

Using many innovative engagement approaches, and guided by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum of participation, our residents, stakeholders and partners were engaged in two stages:

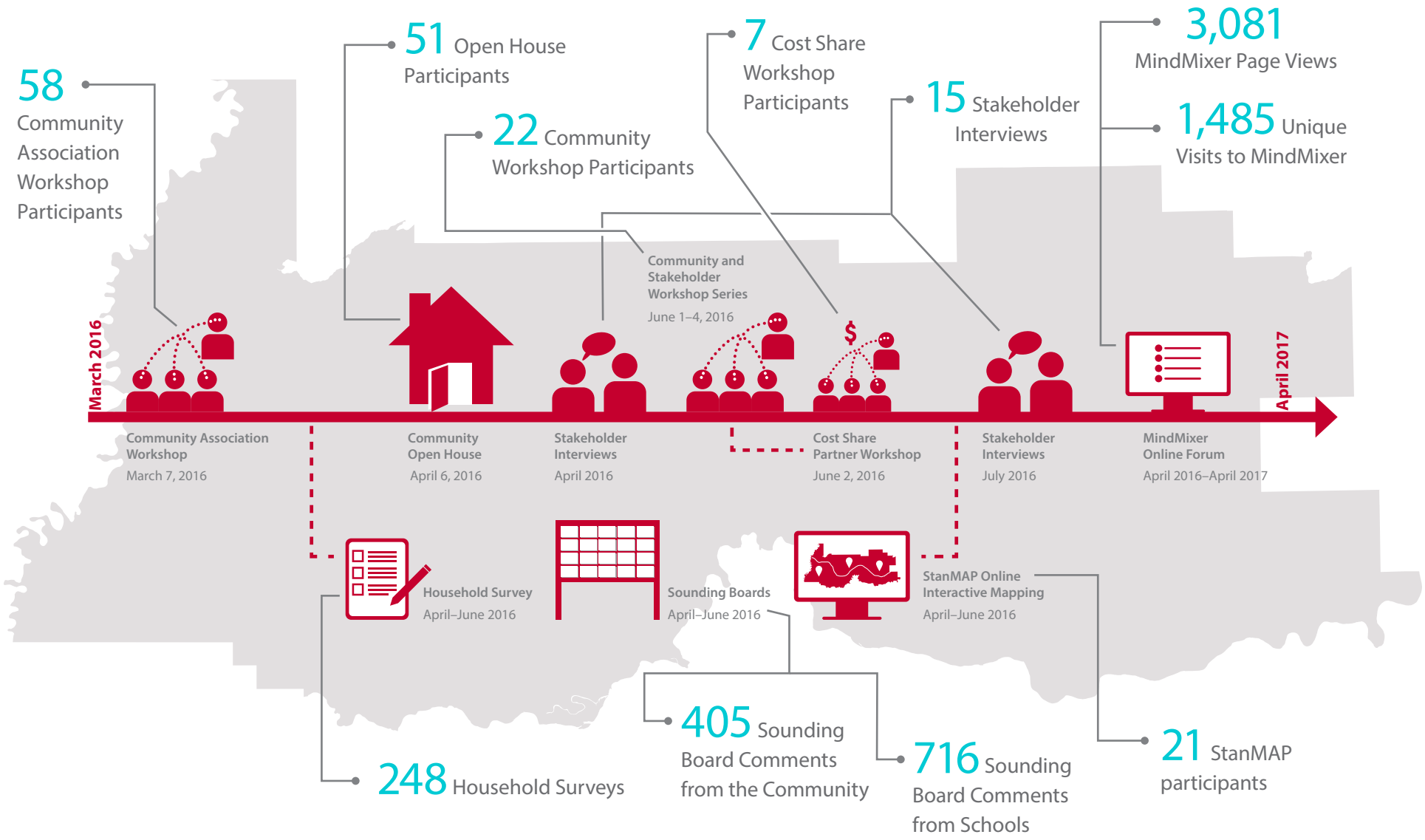
1. **Awareness, Visioning, Issues & Opportunities**

We set out to raise awareness about the project and opportunities to engage. Our focus was on understanding the perceived issues facing the County's parks, recreation and culture system, opportunities to enhance the system and garnering insights into a future vision.

2. **Draft Master Plan**

Our focus was on asking "did we get it right"? The draft master plan was released and our residents, stakeholders and partners provided ideas on how the plan could be improved.

Figure 12 Public Engagement



3. Communications

Key to enabling meaningful engagement by our residents, stakeholders and partners was effective communication. We implemented a robust communication's strategy that worked to enable all those interested in the parks, recreation and culture had the opportunity to influence the plan.

How Did We Communicate?

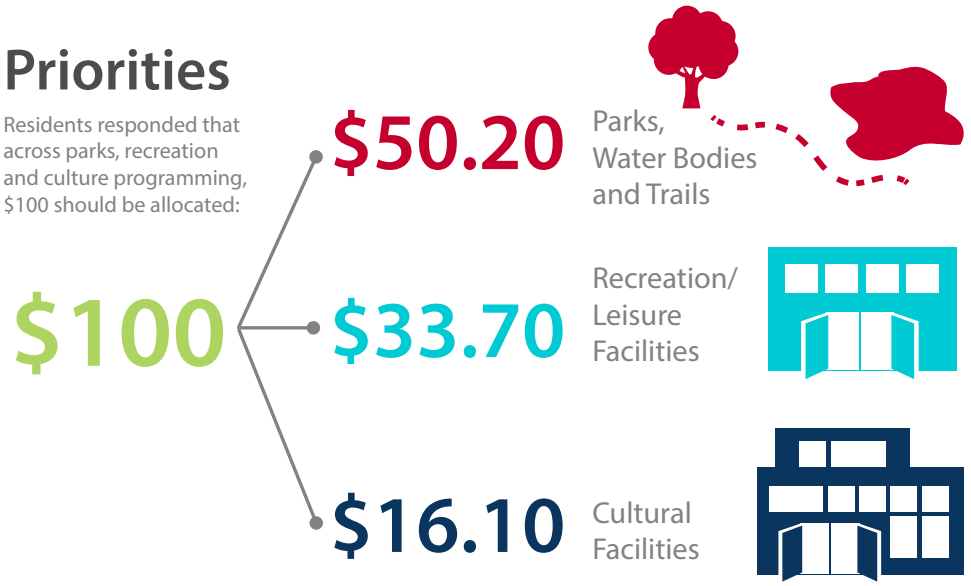
- Posters at recreation centres, community halls, libraries
- Community bulletin boards
- Word of mouth via local leaders and participants
- Email distribution/listserve
- Local radio (88.1 FM), CFWE, CBC Radio
- Local newspaper
- Community hall signs
- Roadside signs
- Postcards and direct mail-outs
- County Facebook and Twitter feeds
- Community newsletters
- County website
- Stakeholder group websites
- Information disseminated at community events
- Distribution through school division networks

3.1 WHAT WE HEARD

3.1.1 Participation

Parks, recreation and cultural opportunities are highly important to our residents. Participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities is strong. However, it is clear that our residents participate more frequently in outdoor activities (88%) and recreation (71%) activities than cultural activities (47%). The participation trends also reflect our resident's prioritization for investment. When asked how they feel $100 should be allocate across parks, recreation and culture programming, residents clearly responded:

- Parks, Water Bodies & Trails - **$50.2**
- Rec/Leisure Facilities - **$33.7**
- Cultural Facilities - **$16.1**



Key Barriers To Participation

- Lack of specific facility
- Distance to travel to activities
- Limited Services Available
- Lack of information about what services are available
- Cost

Residents were least satisfied with:

Outdoor Facilities

- Quality of motorized trails
- Opportunities on the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers

Recreation/Leisure Facilities

- Wabamun Arena
- Entwistle Outdoor Pool

Cultural Facilities

- Banquet facilities
- Community halls
- Festival grounds

Parks and Outdoor Activities

- Develop an interconnected network for non-motorized and motorized trails.
- Develop more parks, including a new destination park(s), and ensure the equitable distribution of parks across the County.
- Designate new parks to enhance the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Enhance signage and amenities (garbage, site furnishing) in parks and along trails.
- Enhance water based recreational opportunities and recreational access to the County's rivers and lakes.
- Provide more education and interpretive programming in natural areas.
- Improve existing and expand capacity for field and diamond based activities.
- Improve the management and maintenance in day use parks, environmental reserve and municipal reserve.

Recreation

- Provide more equitable access to recreation facilities for residents, including the west end of the County.
- Enhance capacity for indoor ice opportunities.
- Enhance the quality, capacity and diversity of outdoor sport fields and diamonds and outdoor workout spaces.
- Ensure equitable access to recreation opportunities regardless of age, mobility or income.

Culture

- Strengthen the County focus on culture.
- Ensure better coordination and collaboration of cultural activities between municipalities and the various cultural groups in the County/tri-region.
- County should focus on providing and enabling smaller cultural facilities and amenities (e.g., arts incubator, shared archival storage, outdoor festival space and amphitheatre, flexible programming space to support pop up activities) rather than large capital initiatives.
- Work with the tri-region partners to develop a joint major cultural facility for the region.
- Expand the municipal art program throughout the community with strong emphasis on both visual and performing arts.
- Expand efforts to protect the heritage of the County.
- Support and facilitate the expansion, and equitable distribution, of cultural programming in the County. Including:
  - Festivals and arts and cultural events
  - Live music/concerts
  - Live theatre and performing arts
- Improve communication and collaboration with Aboriginal communities in the County and explore programming opportunities.
- Further support and leverage the role of Community Association's to provide consistent level of culture programming. Formalize service agreements with the Community Associations.

General

- Increase County capacity to deliver its parks, recreation and culture services.
- Strengthen cross departmental collaboration and communications regarding parks, recreation and culture as well as tourism.
- Improve the county's role in leisure education including providing better information about the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in the County and through cost share partners.

Our residents have definite preferences. The top 10 most popular parks, recreation and cultural activities include:

Outdoor Activities	Recreation	Culture
1. Walking/jogging/running (70.4%)	1. Recreational Fitness/Swim (60.1%)	1. Visited a museum or heritage site (77.7%)
2. Day hiking (51.9%)	2. Fitness Classes (Yoga, Pilates, Zumba®) (39.4%)	2. Visited a library (73.0%)
3. Swimming (50.6%)	3. Swim Lessons (31.0%)	3. Attended a live music performance (71.2%)
4. Visited a Playground (46.3%)	4. Golf (26.7%)	4. Attended a live theatre performance (58.1%)
5. Boating (41.0%)	5. Weight Training (25.1%)	5. Attended a festival, rodeo or event (68.8%)
6. Birdwatching (40.9%)	6. Running/Jogging (24.7%)	6. Attended a visual arts or crafts display (45.1%)
7. Dog walking (38.1%)	7. Outdoor Soccer (24.5%)	7. Attended a community heritage activity (35.3%)
8. Overnight Camping (35.9%)	8. Hockey (23.0%)	8. Attended a community arts activity (28.1%)
9. Kayaking/Canoeing/ Stand Up Paddleboarding (35.0%)	9. Indoor Soccer (15.1%)	9. Attended a dance performance (14.6%)
10. Fishing (33.7%)	10. Leisure Skating (12.0%)	10. Participated in a community arts activity (13.4%)
	11. Basketball (12.0%)	

Though our residents participate in a wide array of parks, recreation and cultural activities already, residents indicated that they would like to become more active in the following activities:

Outdoor Activities	Recreation	Culture
1. Walking/hiking/cycling trail systems	1. Swimming/swimming pool activities	1. Live theatre/performing arts/plays
2. Cross country skiing	2. Cross-country skiing	2. Live music/concerts
3. Downhill skiing/snowboarding	3. ATV/off-road vehicle riding	3. Dancing programs/classes
4. Swimming/swimming pool activities	4. Yoga classes	4. Arts and crafts classes
5. Playgrounds	5. Downhill skiing/snowboarding	5. Library programs/services

TOP 10
Most Popular Outdoor Activities

TOP 10
Most Popular Recreation Activities

TOP 10
Most Popular Culture Activities

Residents would like to become more active in…

More ACTIVE in Outdoor Activities

More ACTIVE in Culture Activities

More ACTIVE in Recreation Activities

3.1.2 Facility Use & Satisfaction

Our residents make use of many parks, recreation and cultural facilities throughout the County and our neighbouring municipalities (see Figure 13, Figure 14, and Figure 15) and are relatively satisfied with the quality of those facilities. We learned that residents were least satisfied with:

Outdoor Facilities

- Quality of motorized trails
- Opportunities on and access to the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers

Recreation Facilities

- Wabamun Arena
- Entwistle Outdoor Pool

Cultural Facilities

- Banquet facilities
- Community halls
- Festival grounds

We also learned that many households travel outside the County to access indoor facilities including for swimming, hockey, concerts, and museums.

Figure 13 Recreation Facility Usage

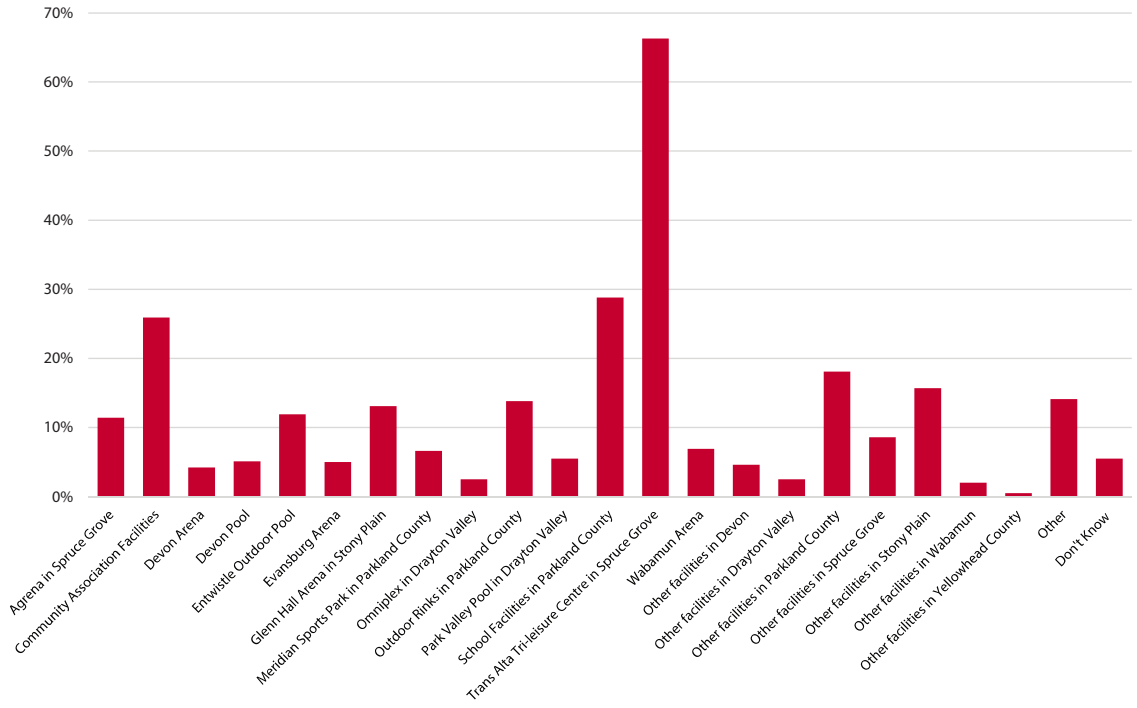


Figure 14 Outdoor Facility Usage

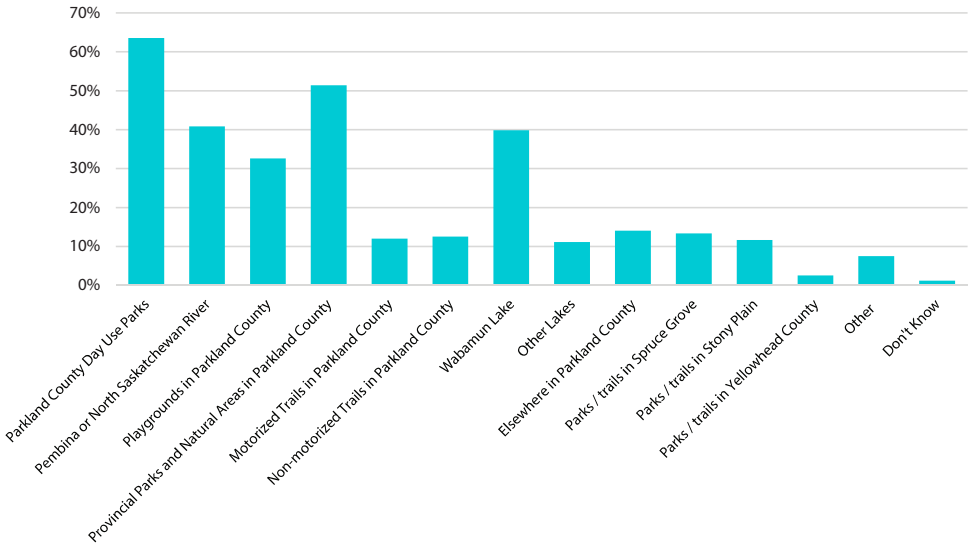
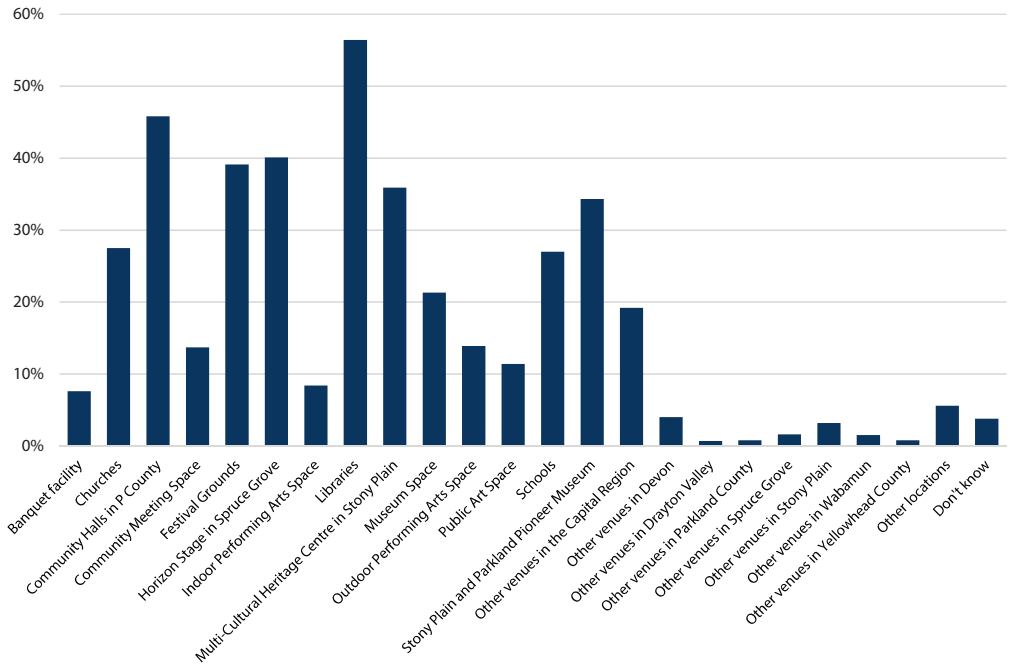


Figure 15 Cultural Facility Usage



3.1.3 Barriers to Participation

Though our residents are active in parks, recreation and culture, we learned that there are a number of key barriers to participation, including:

- Lack of specific facility
- Distance to travel to activities
- Limited Services Available
- Lack of information about what services are available
- Cost

3.1.4 Opportunities to Improve

When we considered the input from our residents, stakeholders and partners gathered through the various engagement approaches, several clear priorities for improvement emerged. The following summarizes the key themes we heard:

Parks & Outdoor Activities

- Develop an interconnected network for non-motorized and motorized trails.
- Develop more parks, including a new destination park(s), and ensure the equitable distribution of parks across the County.
- Designate new conservation parks to enhance the protection of environmentally significant areas.
- Provide more, and better, playgrounds near where children live.
- Enhance the quality, capacity and diversity of outdoor sport fields and diamonds and outdoor workout spaces.
- Enhance signage and amenities (garbage, site furnishing) in parks and along trails.
- Enhance water based recreational opportunities and recreational access to the County's rivers and lakes.
- Provide more education and interpretive programming in natural areas.
- Improve the management and maintenance in day use parks, environmental reserve and municipal reserve.

Recreation

- Provide more equitable access to recreation facilities for residents, including the west end of the County.
- Enhance capacity for indoor ice opportunities.
- Ensure equitable access to recreation opportunities regardless of age, mobility or income.

Culture

- Strengthen the County focus on culture.
- Ensure better coordination and collaboration of cultural activities between municipalities and the various cultural groups in the County/tri-region.
- Provide and enable smaller cultural facilities and amenities (e.g., arts incubator, shared archival storage, outdoor festival space and amphitheatre, flexible programming space to support pop up activities) rather than large capital initiatives.
- Work with the tri-region partners to develop a joint major cultural facility for the region.
- Expand the municipal art program throughout the community with strong continued emphasis on the visual for internal display while broadening out to public art in the community.
- Expand efforts to protect the heritage of the County.
- Support and facilitate the expansion, and equitable distribution, of cultural programming in the County. Including:
  - Festivals and arts and cultural events
  - Live music/concerts
  - Live theatre and performing arts
- Improve communication and collaboration with Aboriginal communities in the County and explore programming opportunities.
- Further support and leverage the role of Community Association's to provide consistent level of culture programming.
- Formalize service agreements with the Community Associations.

General

- Increase County capacity to deliver its parks, recreation and culture services.
- Strengthen cross departmental collaboration and communications regarding parks, recreation and culture as well as tourism.
- Improve the county's role in leisure education including providing better information about the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in the County and through cost share partners.

4.0 Parks, Recreation & Culture Today

4.1 PARKS, OPEN SPACES & TRAILS

Before beginning to identify a new future direction for our parks and trails system, we first needed to understand our current supply of parks and trails and how well our current system is serving the needs of our residents. In line with recent trends in parks, open space and trails planning, we worked to answer the following questions:

- Are there enough parks, open space and trails?
- Do our parks protect the County's most environmentally significant areas?
- Do our residents have easy access to quality parks, open space and trails?
- Do our residents and visitors have access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences?
- How well are our hamlets and subdivisions connected to the community's and the region's key destinations via trails?
- Is our parks, open space and trail program effectively resourced?

The following sections provide answers to the above questions.

Park Supply by the Numbers:

11 County parks totalling **215** ha

Less than 1% of the County is designated as day use park

7 ha of County park land per 1,000 residents

2,415 ha, or **1%**, of the County is in Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

4.1.1 Parkland Supply

Compared to more urban jurisdictions, County residents live on relatively large lots which provide residents good deal of open space at home. However, we heard clearly that, even with the large size of residential lots in the County, our residents highly value access to parks, natural areas and the experiences those provide our residents. Our residents also value the role parks play in conserving the County's biodiversity and ecosystem services. As of 2015, we offer residents and visitors 11 County owned parks known as Day Use Parks:

DAY USE PARKS

1. Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area
2. Const. Chelsey Robinson Day Use Park
3. Hasse Lake Recreation Area
4. Jackfish Lake Day Use Park
5. Muir Lake Day Use Park
6. Kokomoko Day Use Park
7. Ascot Beach Day Use Park
8. Rich's Point Day Use Park
9. Gainford Day Use Park
10. Prospectors Point Day Use Park
11. Meridian Sports Park

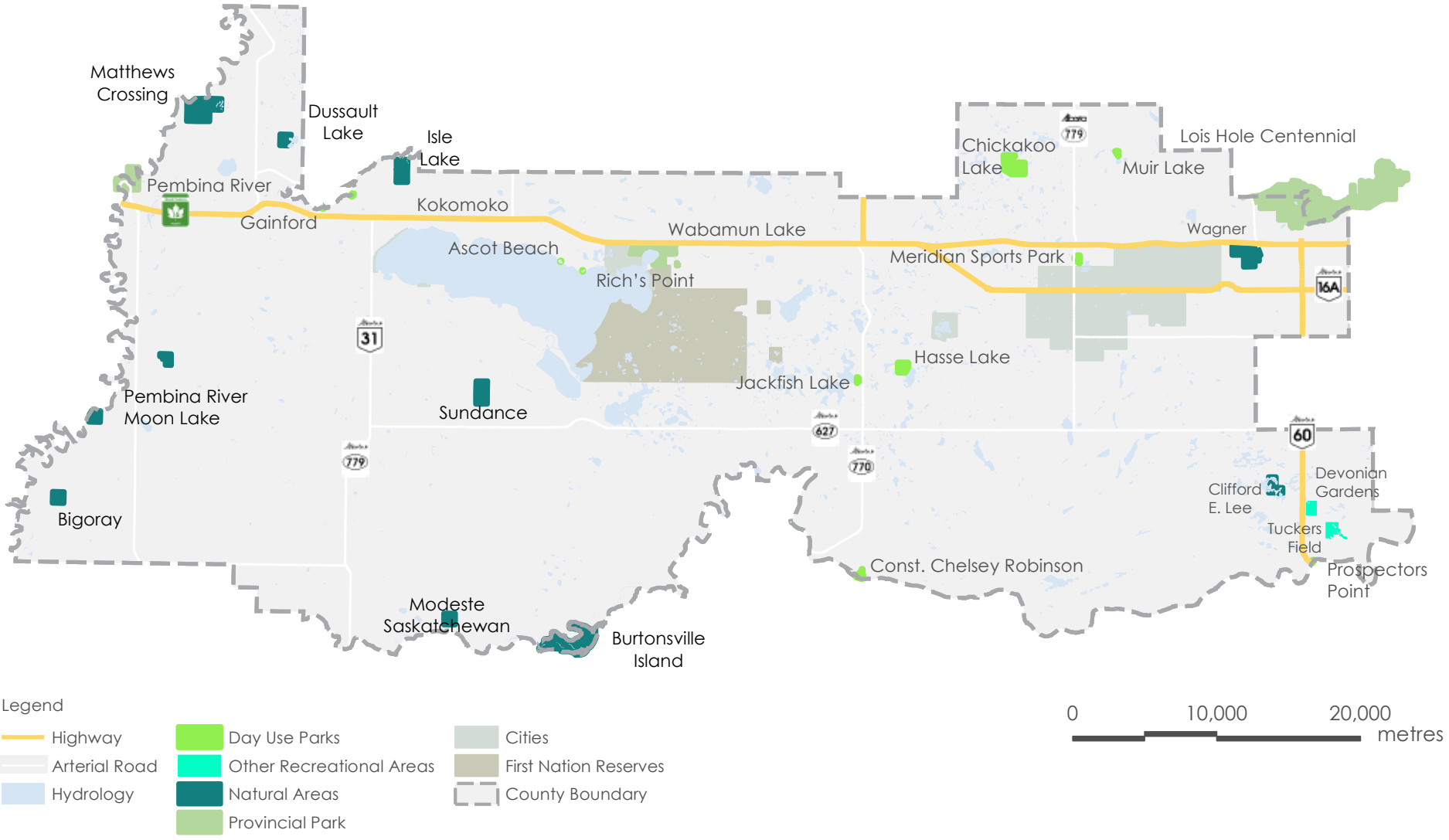
In addition, there is a recreation site at Tucker's Field that is under lease with the province. This site is open for public recreation access but currently does not offer the kind of amenities found at other day use parks.

Collectively, these parks represent 215 hectares or less than 1% of the County land base. The vast majority of the total County day use park space is contained within 2 parks—Chickakoo and Hasse Lake.

We recognize that our County parks are part of a larger network of protected areas. Provincial Parks and Protected Areas (including Provincial Parks, Provincial Recreation Areas and Natural Areas), as well as privately held conservations lands, also work to protect the County biodiversity, ecosystem services while providing recreation opportunities to residents. As shown on Figure 16, some of the most popular Provincial Parks and Protected Areas and private conservation lands include:

- Pembina River Provincial Park.
- Wabamun Lake Provincial Park
- Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park
- Clifford E. Lee Natural Area
- Wagner Natural Area
- Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area

Figure 16 Park Supply



Comparing our current supply of parks with other parks systems in similar sized communities provides an effective benchmark to understand how well we are doing. When we consider the County as a whole, we have 16.3 acres of day use park space per 1,000 residents. When we compare our current park area with similar jurisdictions contained in the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA's) 2015 Field Report, we can see that our current supply is above the median, but slightly below the upper quartile for communities with similar population density to ours.

HOW WE MEASURE UP

Comparing our services to similar communities provides insights on how well we are doing. Through the Yardstick program, AB is attempting to create a formalized benchmarking tool for communities. At the time of this plan, the tool had not yet been populated. As such, statistics from the National Recreation and Park's Association's Field Report were used to provide insights on how we compare to communities of similar population size and density throughout the United States.

Parkland Supply by Division

Our residents are not distributed equally across the County. As such, it was important to investigate how our parks were distributed throughout the County in relation to the populations they are intended to serve. In addition, our population is projected to grow to approximately 40,000 by 2026. It is important that we ask ourselves how well our parks supply is serving our residents and whether our current supply is likely to meet our needs into the future as our population changes. To do this, we evaluated the distribution of park land within each of the County's six divisions and contrasted that supply with similar communities in the NRPA's field report. We found that:

- Day use park space per 1000 residents will drop from the existing 16.3 acres to 13.3 in 2026 if the population reaches 40,000 which remains above the median for benchmarked communities.
- Divisions 1, 2 and 6 are significantly below the lower quartile when day use park supply is evaluated despite divisions 1 and 2 being two of the most populated divisions in the County. Discrepancies in the equitable distribution of park space will continue as the population continues to increase in these divisions that are under supplied with parks.
- The remainder of the divisions (3–5) exceed the upper quartile when day use park is evaluated and are expected to continue even with population growth.
- All divisions significantly exceed the upper quartile when provincial parks and protected areas are evaluated. Provincial parks and protected areas play a very significant role in providing accessible park space for our residents.

NRPA Benchmark

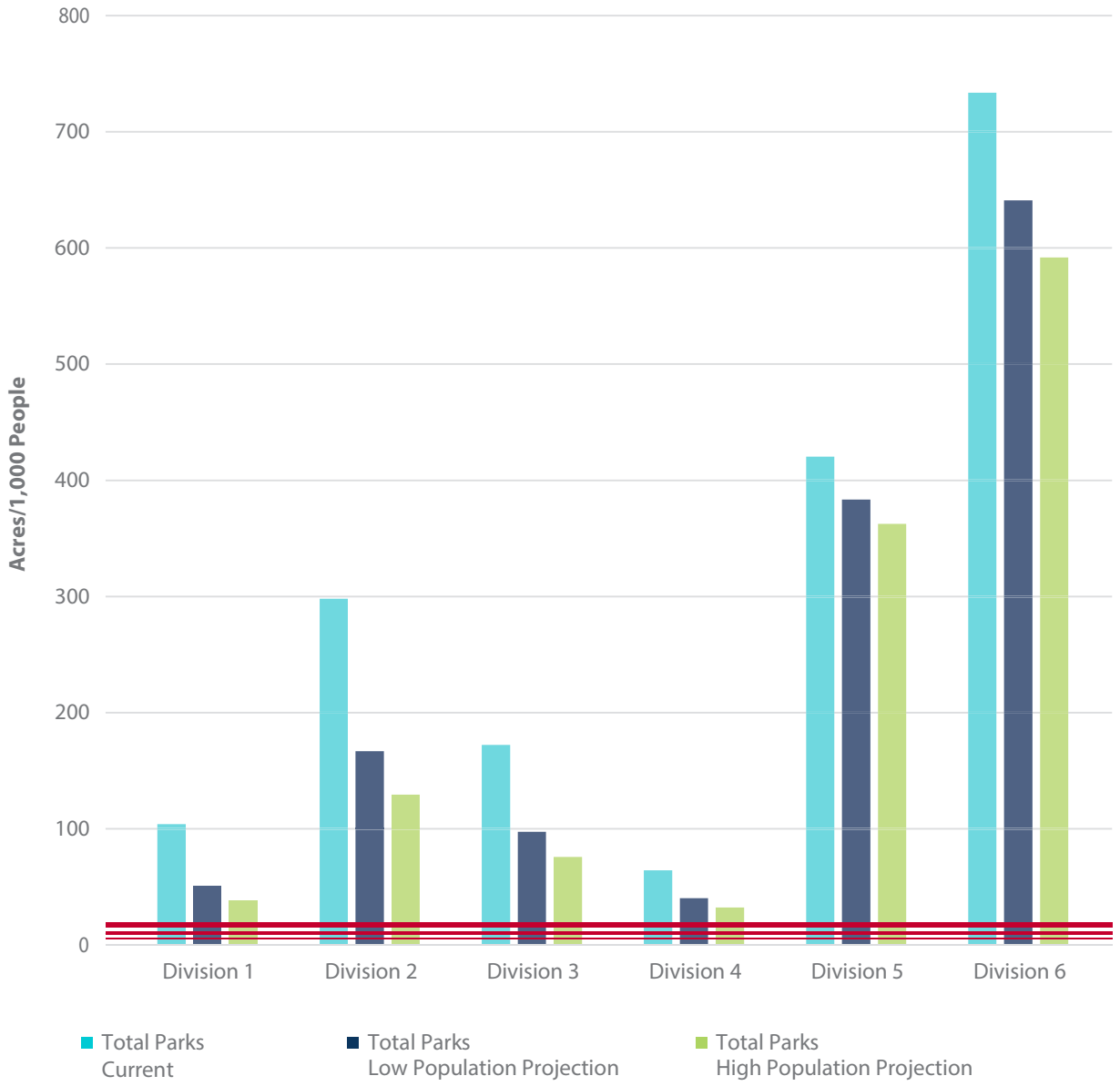
Upper Quartile: 17.3 acres/1000 people

Median Quartile: 9.9 acres/1000 people

Lower Quartile: 4.8 acres/1000 people

Provincial Parks and Protected areas play a very significant role in providing accessible park space for our residents.

Figure 17 Total Park Supply by Division Compared to NRPA Quartiles



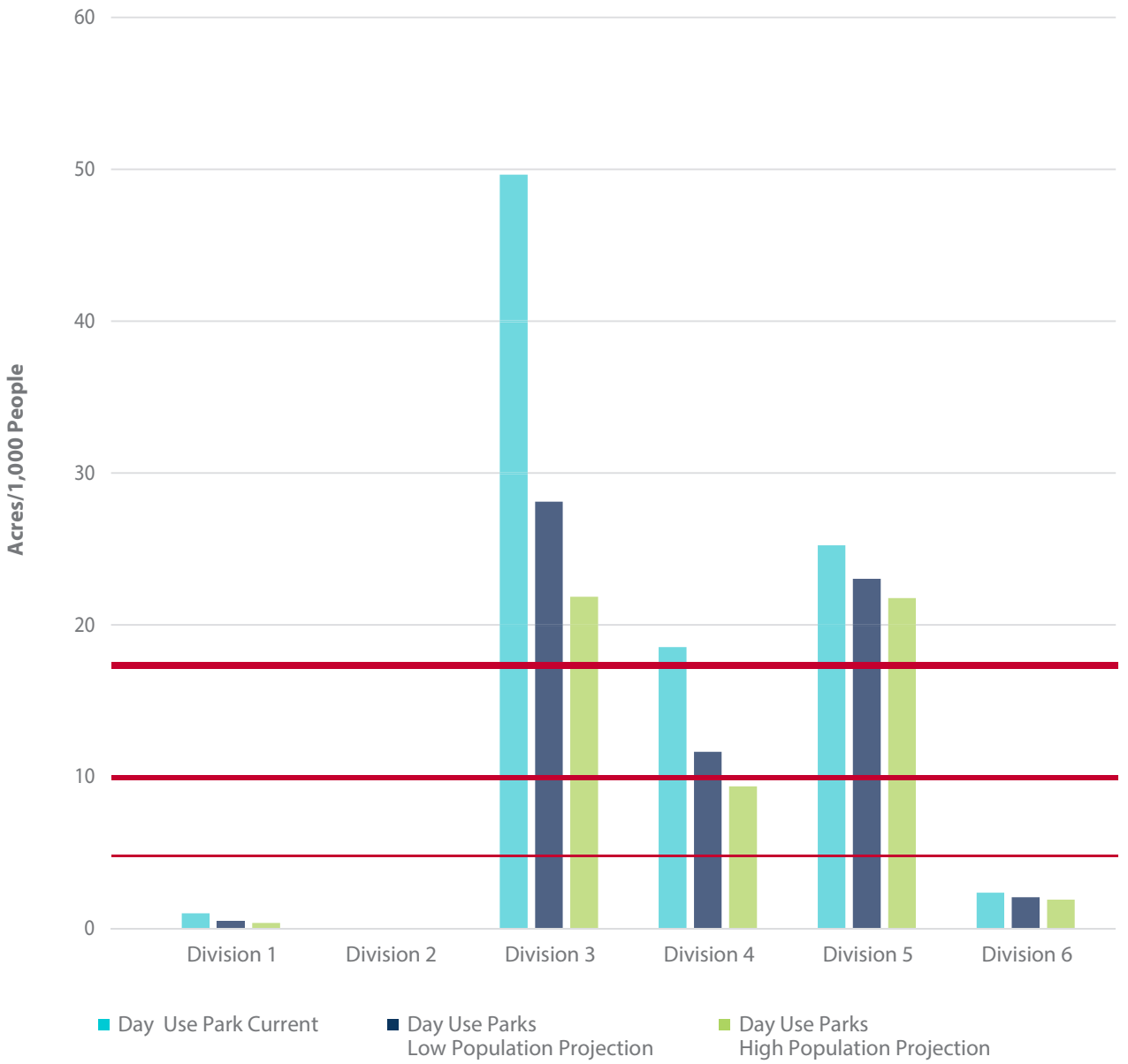
NRPA Benchmark

Upper Quartile
17.3 acres/1,000 people

Median Quartile
9.9 acres/1,000 people

Lower Quartile
4.8 acres/1,000 people

Figure 18 Day Use Park Supply by Division Compared to NRPA Quartiles



NRPA Benchmark

Upper Quartile
17.3 acres/1,000 people

Median Quartile
9.9 acres/1,000 people

Lower Quartile
4.8 acres/1,000 people

Park Quality Criteria:

- Condition
- Comfort and Convenience Amenities
- Design & Ambiance
- Park Inclusivity
- Location & Access
- Intended Purpose
- Naturalness & Low Impact Design

4.1.2 Access & Parkland Quality

Parkland supply alone does not tell us the full story. Next, we looked at the condition and quality of our parks. Through the engagements, residents and stakeholders were clear that the quality and condition of parks is an important consideration and priority. A rapid on site condition assessment was undertaken to evaluate the quality of each park. The assessment scored each park according to criteria and categorized it into one of the following quality classes:

1. Below expectations
2. Meets expectations
3. Exceeds expectations

The park quality and condition scores ranged from below expectations to exceeding expectations. The analysis showed that:

- 3 parks were below expectations
- 5 parks met expectations
- 3 parks exceeded expectations

Access to Quality Parks

We learned in community discussions that the second-most frequently cited barrier to participating more often in outdoor activities was the distance to travel to facilities. We know that proximity to, and quality of parks, are determinants of use. As such, we worked to identify what proportion of residential parcels (a proxy for residents' homes) are within a short driving distance to parks. Recognizing our rural nature and that many of our residents have large country residential lots, it made sense to increase the analysis from 400m walking distance typically used in urban environments to a reasonable driving distance. To do so, we determined how far a resident could typically drive in a rural area in the same length of time it would take a resident to walk 400m. Analysis suggested approximately 8km which has been used in our analysis. As park quality and condition are important considerations, we also assessed what proportion of residential parcels are within a short driving distance to parks that meet or exceed quality expectations.

51% of residential parcels are **not** within 8km of a County day use park.

83% of residential parcels are **not** within 8 km of a County day use park that meets or exceeds quality expectations

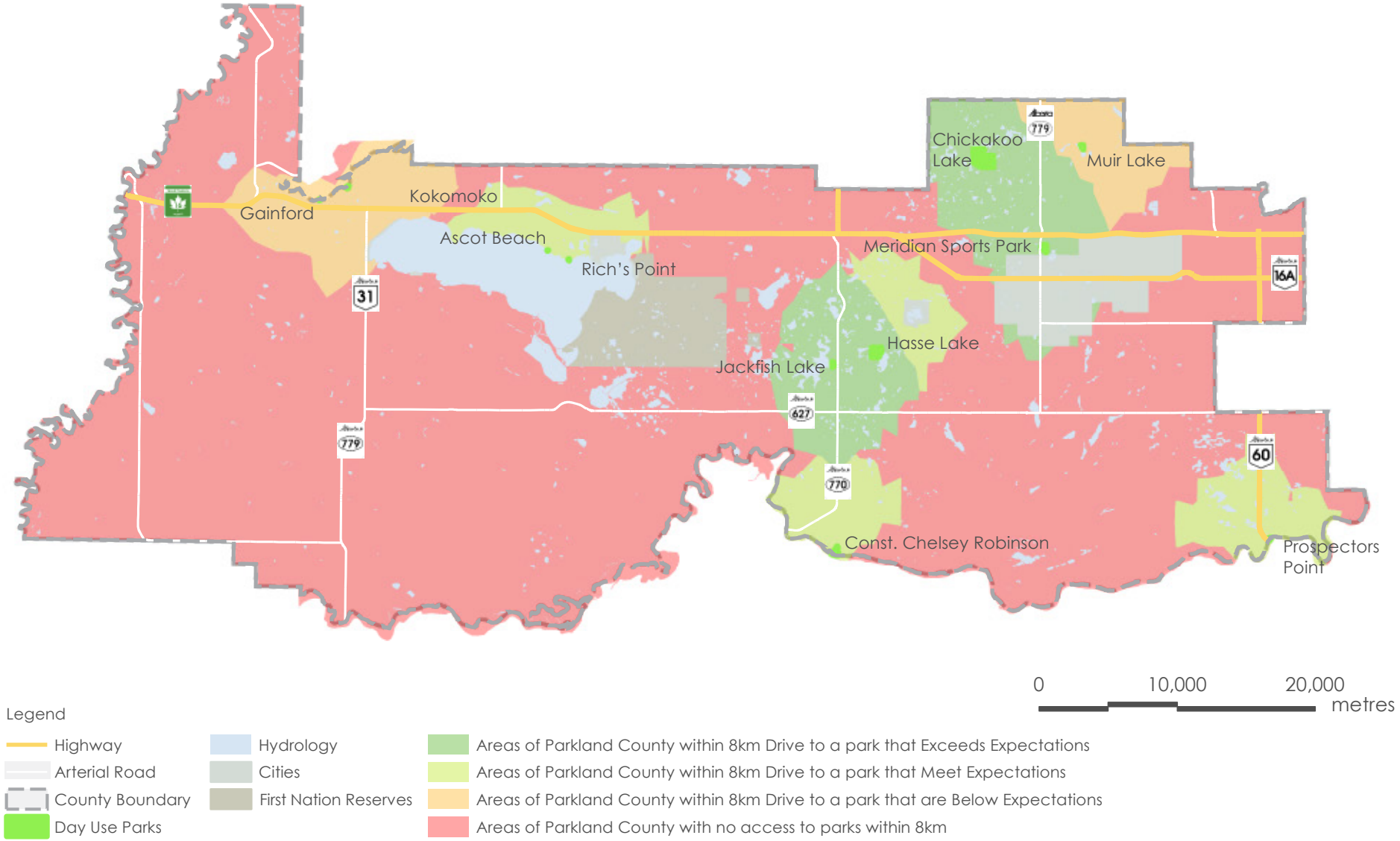
32% of residential parcels are **not** within 8km of any park in the County

As shown in 4.1.3, 49% of residential parcels are within 8km of a County-owned day use park; meaning 51% are not. When we considered the quality of our existing parks to which residents have access to, we found that: (see Figure 19):

- 35% of all residential parcels have access to county parks within 8 km that meet or exceed quality expectations, and
- 14% of all residential parcels are within 8 km of parks that do not meet quality expectations.

Recognizing the important role Provincial Parks and Protected Areas play in our system, we also considered these sites in our analysis. We found that 68% of residential parcels are within 8km of a park of any type (day use park, provincial park or protected area).

Figure 19 Access to County Day Use Parks by Quality Ranking



4.1.3 Municipal Reserve & Environment Reserve

In addition to designating day use parks, the County can designate land as Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve. Municipal Reserve can be designated for a public park, recreation area, school board purposes, or to separate lands that are used for different purposes. Environmental Reserve is to remain in its natural state or be used as a public park and can be designated if it is a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee, a natural drainage course, unstable or subject to flooding, or adjacent to the bed and shore of any water body. The recently updated *Modernized Municipal Government Act* now provides municipalities the ability to designate "Conservation Reserves" which are lands intended to protect environmentally significant areas. At the time of this plan, the County does not have any lands designated as Conservation Reserve.

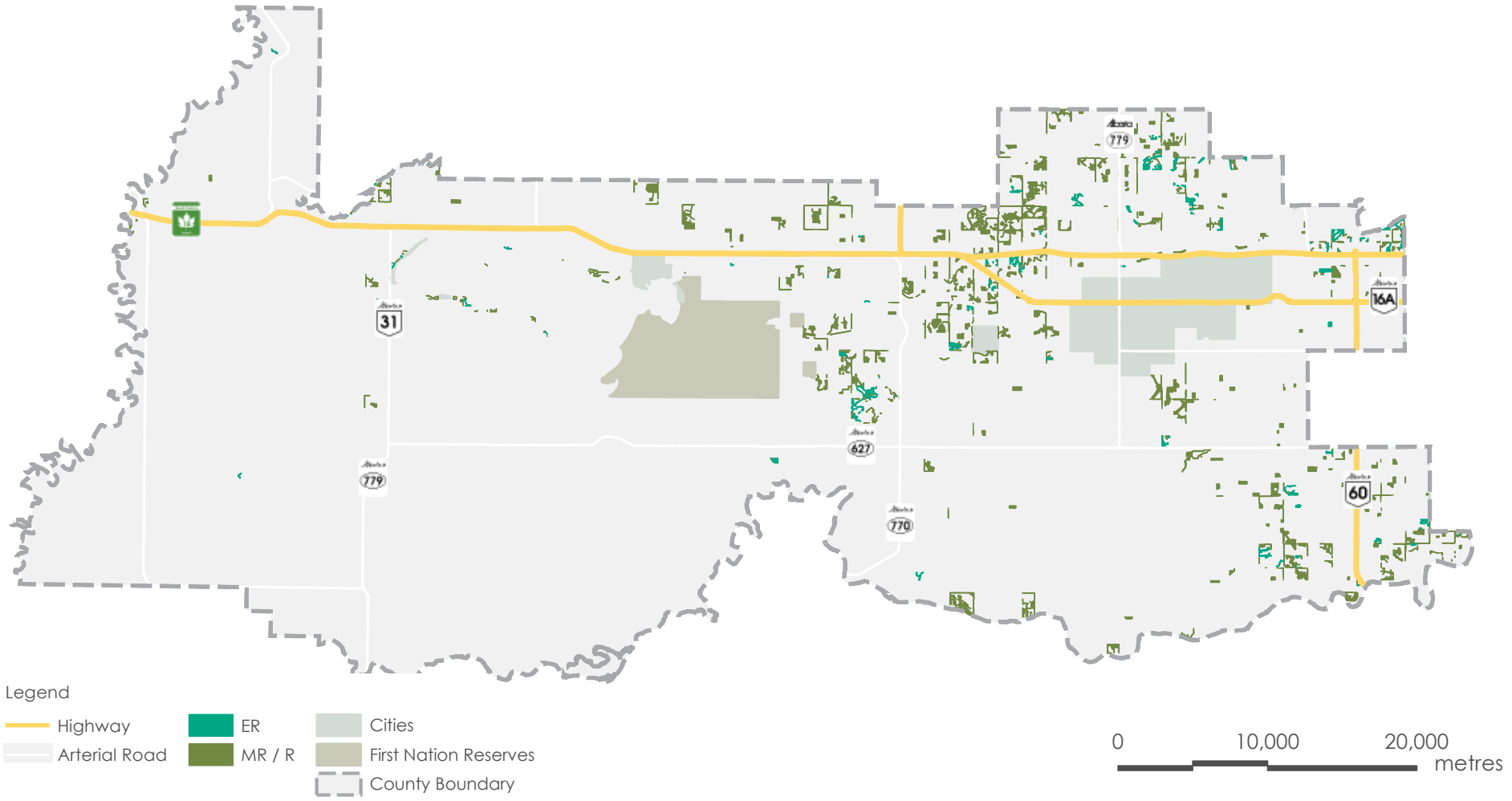
The County manages197 Environmental Reserve sites totalling 411ha (0.001% of the County land base) and 1,244 Municipal Reserve sites totalling 2,658 ha (0.01% of the County land base). Though typically small, these sites are numerous and, reflecting the County's settlement pattern, mostly concentrated in the eastern portion of the County where there are numerous subdivisions (See Figure 20).

411 number of hectares of dedicated Environmental Reserve

2,658 number of hectares of dedicated Municipal Reserve

1% of the County is designated as Environmental and Municipal Reserve

Figure 20 Distribution of Environmental and Municipal Reserve

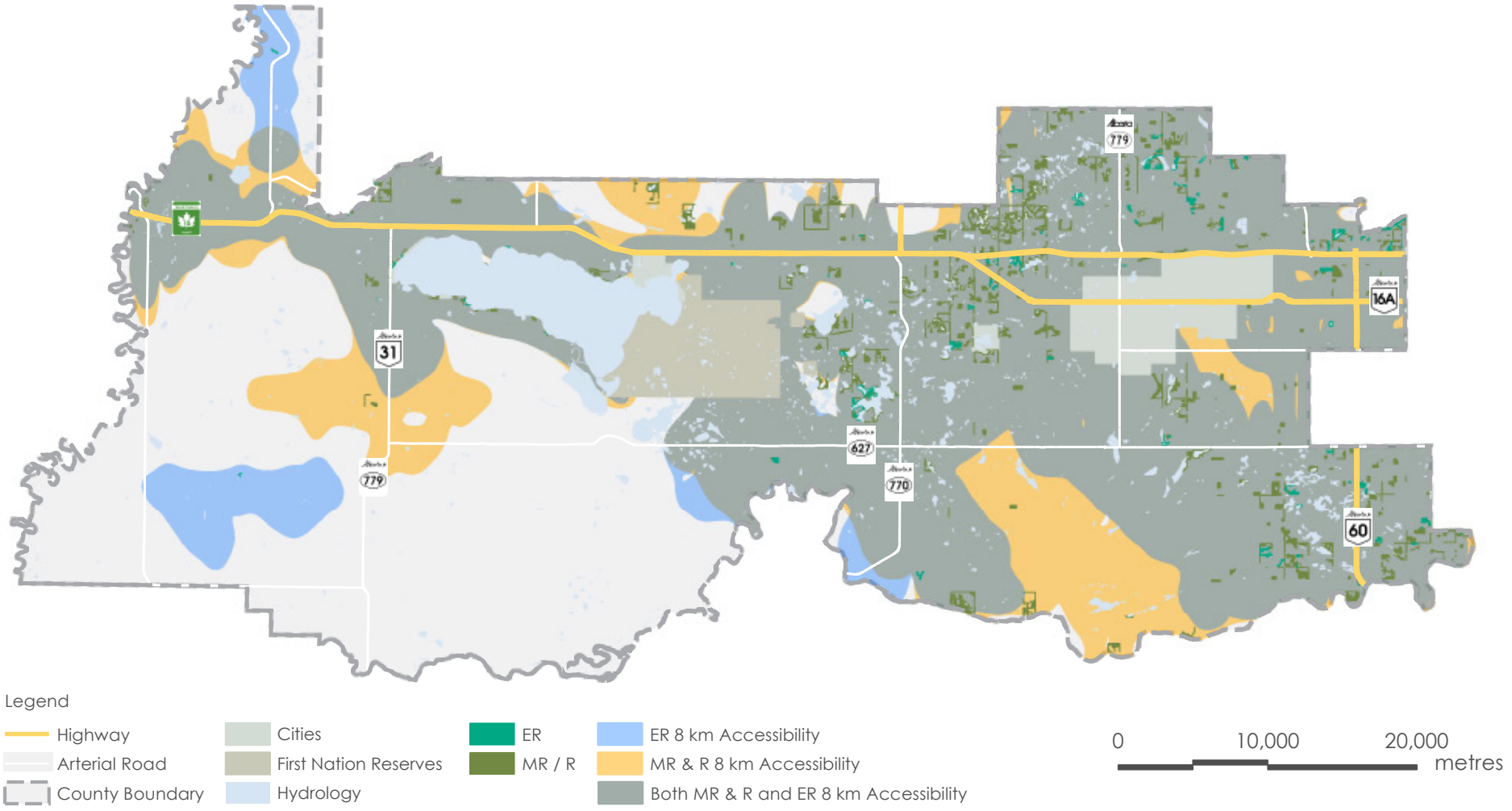


Existing environmental and municipal reserves, and future conservation reserves, represent potential future County park dedications. As such, it was important to consider how well these reserves protect the County's environmentally significant areas (see Section 4.1.4) and how accessible these reserves are to residents in relation to our current day use parks. Like our parks analysis, we identified what proportion of residential parcels are within driving distance to reserve sites. The results (Figure 21) indicate that 94% of residential parcels are within 8km of an Environmental Reserve parcel while 98% of residential parcels are within 8km of a Municipal Reserve parcel. The major area that is not within 8km access typically of these sites is the majority of the Tomahawk Uplands Mixedwood Landscape Unit.

94% of residential parcels are within 8km of Environmental Reserve

98% of residential parcels are within 8km of Municipal Reserve

Figure 21 Access to Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve



4.1.4 Protection of Environmentally Significant Areas

Biodiversity and the supply of ecosystem services are declining rapidly across the Country including Alberta. In accordance with Target 11 of the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada and Alberta have committed to protecting 17% of our terrestrial lands and 10% of marine areas through a network of protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures by 2020. In community discussions, we heard that our residents value our environmentally significant areas and want increased protection. As such, we worked to understand how well existing day use parks and reserves protect the ESA's in the County and how well they are connected in a functioning ecological network. We learned that:

- Day use parks protect a total of 190 ha of the County's 63,132 ha of ESA's. Only 0.3% of ESA's are protected by County Day Use Parks.
- Only 0.3% of ESA's are protected through dedicated Environmental Reserve.
- 4.3% of ESA's are protected by provincial parks and protected areas.
- In total, only 4.3% of the County's ESA's have been legally protected by through County day use park, Environmental Reserve or provincial parks and protected areas designation.
- Physical connectivity between county parks, provincial parks and protected areas and environmental reserve lands is limited.

We recognize our opportunity to ensure Alberta and Canada become a leader in the conservation of biodiversity and meeting our Convention on Biological Diversity targets. From our analysis, it is clear that the opportunity exists to do more for our environmentally significant areas and how we purposefully connect these areas together into an interconnected functioning network.

17% of environmentally significant areas should be protected according to the Convention on Biological Diversity

0.03% of Environmentally Significant Areas in the County are contained within County day use parks.

0.3% of Environmentally Significant Areas in the County are contained within dedicated Environmental Reserve

4.3% of Environmentally Significant Areas in the County are contained within provincial parks and protected areas or private conservation lands

4.1.5 Areas of Greatest Park Need

To determine the areas of greatest need for County park development or redevelopment, we built a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis tool that took into account the following science based criteria:

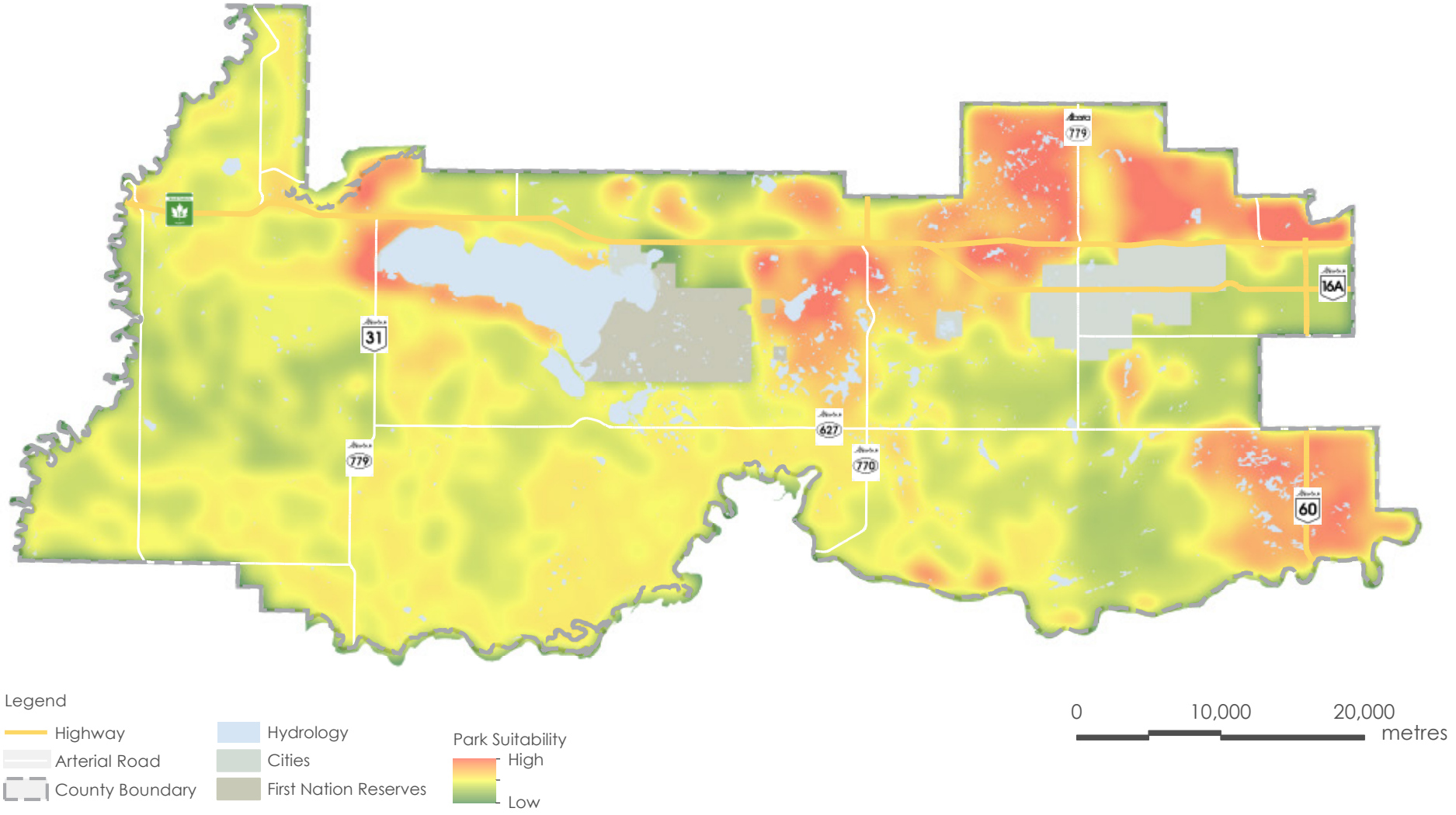
- Youth Population
- Senior Population
- Levels of Education
- Median Household Income
- Population Density
- Intercultural Population
- Parks Quality & Condition Access (clipped to residential areas)
- Trails Standard Access (clipped to residential areas)
- Hydrology (with small buffer)
- Environmentally Significant Areas
- Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zones
- Wetlands

Each of the criteria above is important for determining where parks are needed most. For example, population density varies widely in Parkland County, so its important to ensure parks are located near people. Youth may have demand for playgrounds and active recreational facilities to support their physical activity needs. Our senior population has different needs; they may desire passive recreation parks with opportunities for benches for sitting, certain types of games, and gatherings. Importantly, parks must be located close to homes so access is possible. No "weighting" or prioritization has been applied to any of the criteria.

Median household income and levels of education are two other socio-economic variables that represent "higher need" areas as these populations may face social and economic barriers to participating in outdoor recreation. Areas with greater residential density are suitable for park investments because of the larger number of residents the parks can serve. Finally, the park needs assessment incorporated and prioritized areas with poor access to parks, or access to parks that are below expectations. The combination of these criteria resulted in the areas of greatest need for park acquisition and/or redevelopment.

Figure 22 shows the high need areas as identified by the combination of criteria in the suitability model.

Figure 22 Areas of Highest Suitability for Park Expansion or Redevelopment



As illustrated in Figure 23, the priority areas for new parkland expansion, include:

1. Southwest shore of Wabamun Lake within the Highvale Area Structure Plan.
2. Extreme Southeast corner of the County around highway 60. This area is within the Devon Dunes landscape unit and contains numerous ESA's.
3. Johnny's Lake/Mink Lake Complex ESA west of Carvel and HWY 770.
4. Area around highway 540 encompassing Glory Hills ESA.
5. Area north of highway 16 encompassing Parkland Village and Atim Creek ESA.
6. Northeast corner of the County around highway 16 in proximity to the Big Lake/Lois Hole ESA.
7. Hubbles Lake and surrounding area, between highways 16 and 16A.
8. In addition to the areas identified above through the objective modelling process, staff and residents have identified the need to enhance access to parks space in the western portion of the County near Entwistle. This will be particularly important if Entwistle evolves into the County's western growth node.

Figure 23 Areas of Greatest Park Need

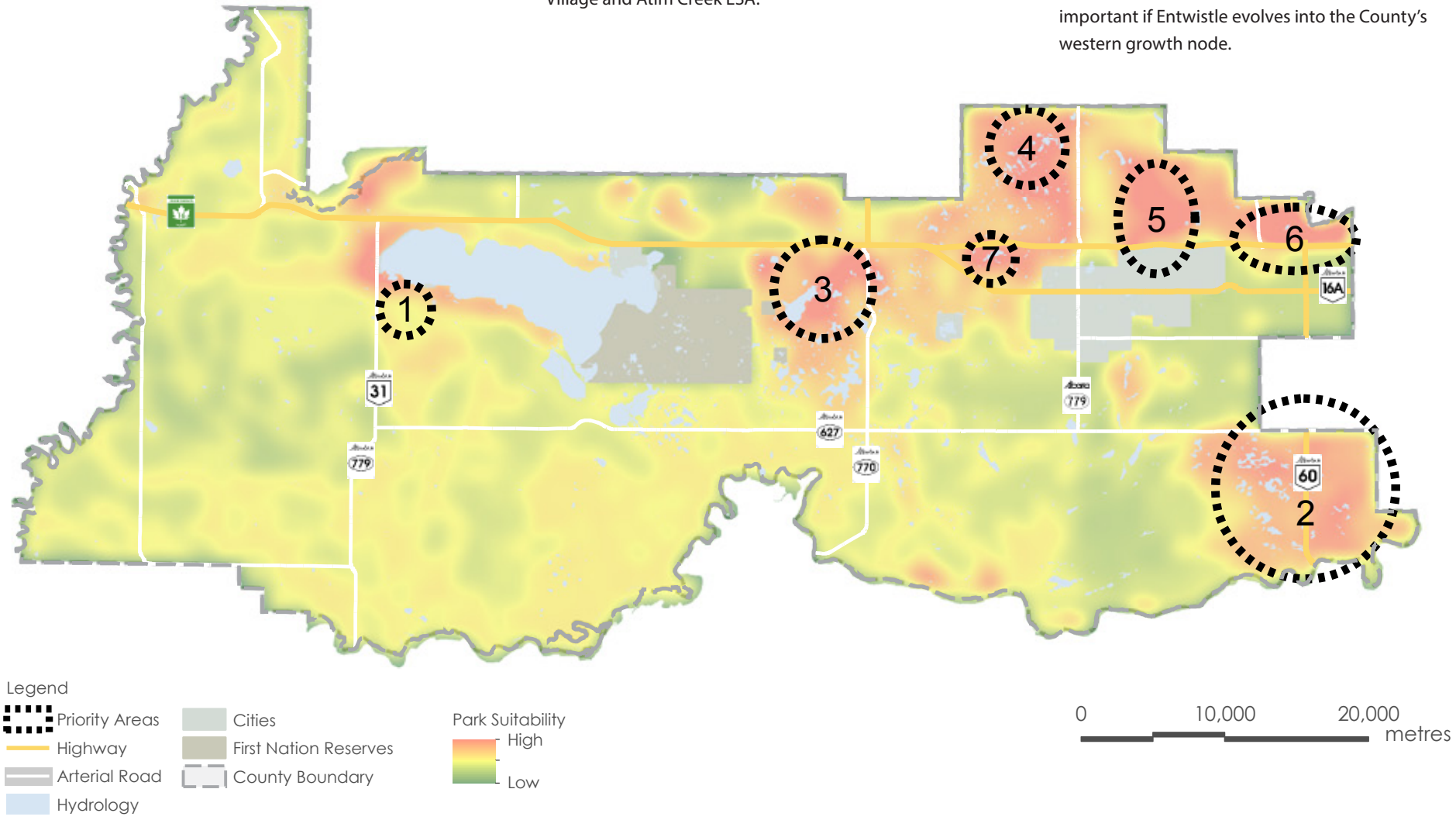


Table 1 Priority Area Criteria Evaluation

		Priority Areas						
	Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Population Demographics	**Intercultural Population**	High	Medium	Max	High	High	Max	High
	Population Density	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High	High	Medium
	Levels of Education	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	High	High
	Income Levels	Max	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
	Median Household Income	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
	Senior Population	Max	High	Max	Max	High	Max	Max
	Youth Population	Low	High	Max	Max	Max	High	Max
Environmental	**Near Hydrology**	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High
	ESA Within Hotspot	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Key Biodiversity Area Within Hotspot	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	Wetland Within Hotspot	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Access	**Trail Access**	High	Low	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Park Quality and Condition Access	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High

As shown in Table 1, each priority area meets the assessment criteria as follows:

72% of residential parcels are within 8km of a playground.

25% of residential parcels are within 8km of a County owned playground.

52% of residential parcels are within 8km of School District owned playgrounds.

55% of residential parcels are within 8km of Community Association owned playgrounds.

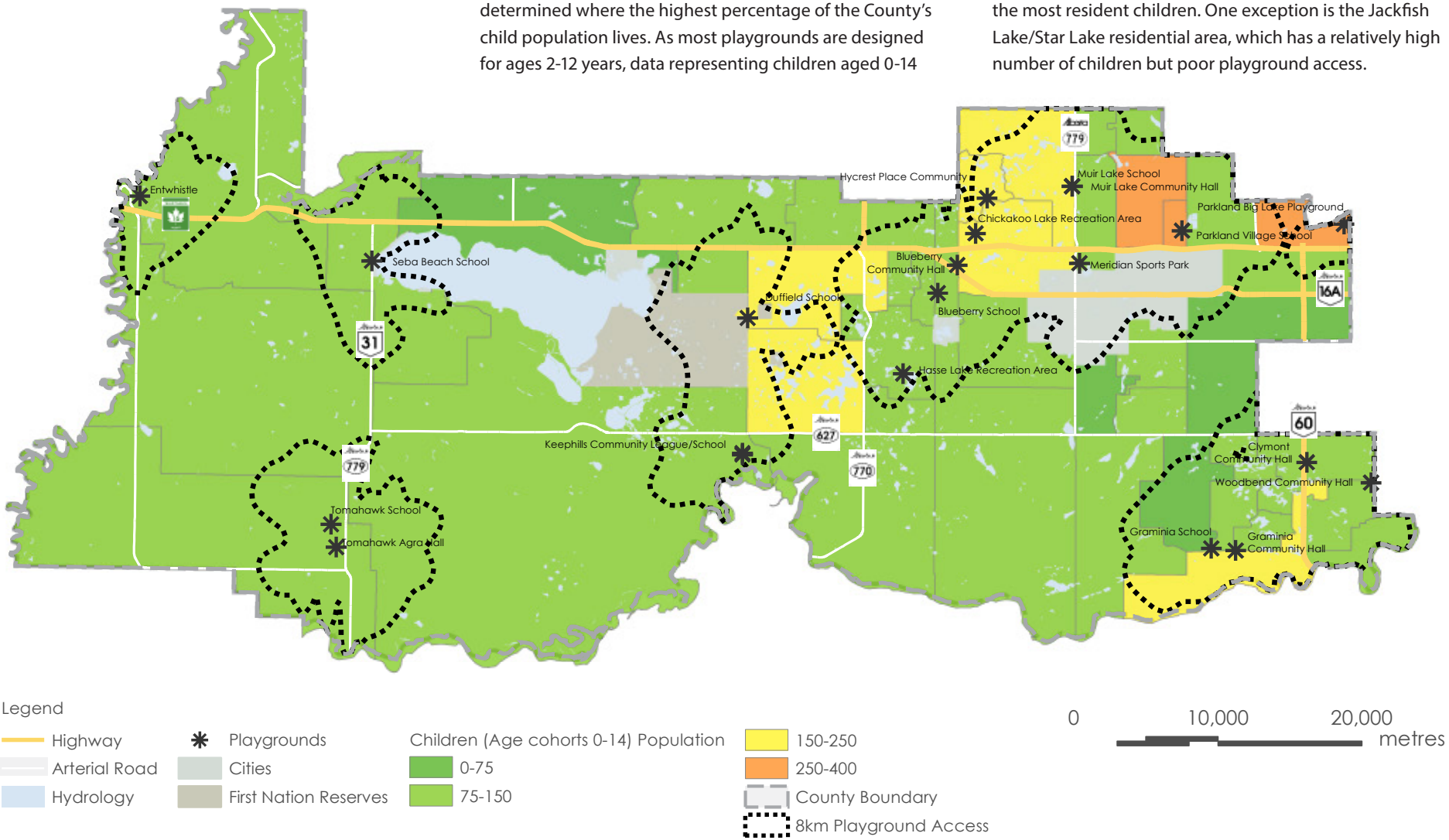
4.1.6 Playgrounds

Residents told us that visiting a playground is one of the most commonly participated in outdoor activities (46.3%). Numerous comments during engagement also expressed a wish for more playgrounds and a desire to see the play value of existing playgrounds improved and modernized playgrounds.

Quality, interesting and appropriately designed playgrounds need to be located near our children. In order to determine priority areas for new playgrounds, we determined where the highest percentage of the County's child population lives. As most playgrounds are designed for ages 2-12 years, data representing children aged 0-14 years were reviewed and summarized by census area. An 8km buffer, a reasonable driving distance, was placed around each playground to identify which residential parcels are within reasonable access to a playground.

4.1.7 shows the analysis results. Parkland County appears to be well-supplied with playgrounds in the areas with the most resident children. One exception is the Jackfish Lake/Star Lake residential area, which has a relatively high number of children but poor playground access.

Figure 24 Residential Parcels within 8km of Playgrounds and Youth Population

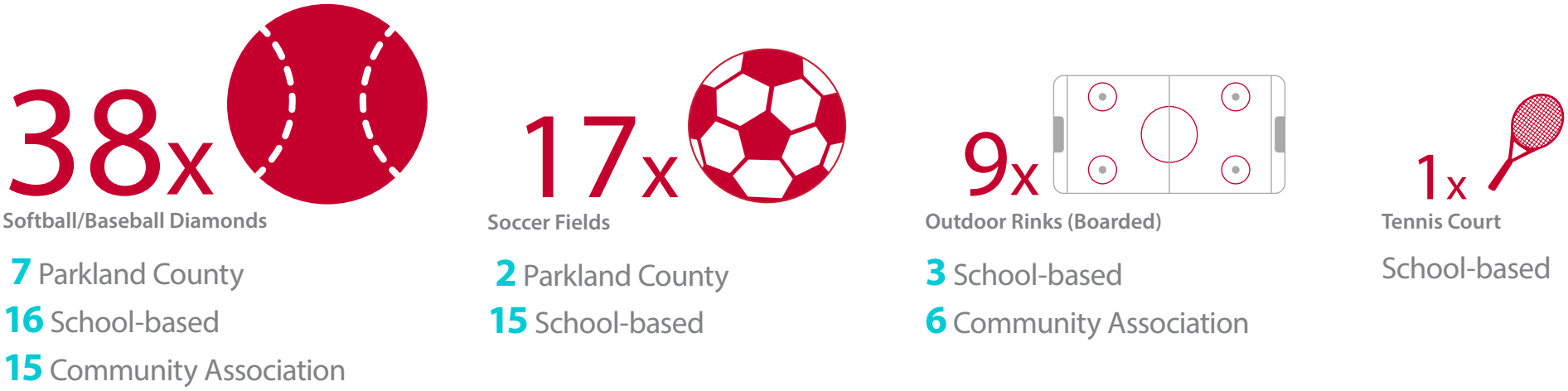


4.1.7 Outdoor Sport Facilities

As a County, we own and operate the Meridian Sports Park (MSP). The park provides residents and sports groups from beyond the County with access to four bantam level softball diamonds and two bantam level soccer fields. In addition to the facilities at MSP, residents and sports groups also have access to numerous diamonds, soccer fields and outdoor ice rinks provided by various community associations and the school district (see).

The outdoor sports facilities supplied by the school district and community associations are fundamental to providing residents with reasonable access to outdoor sport opportunity.

Figure 25 Outdoor Sports Facility Inventory

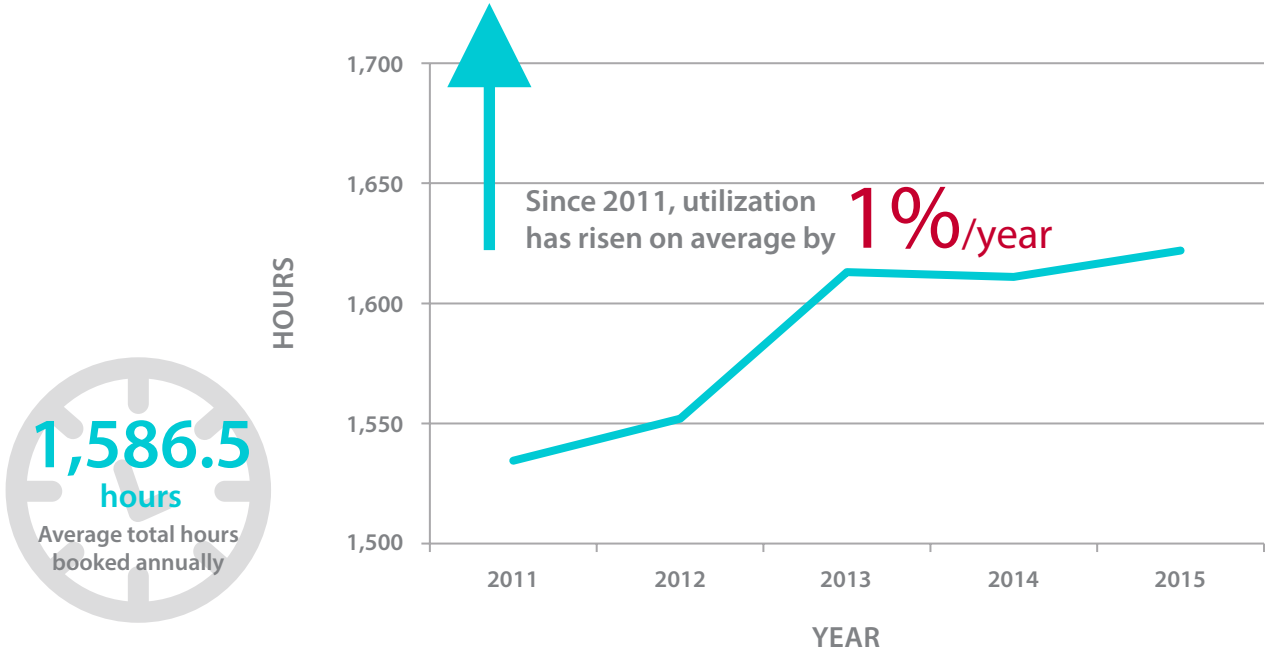


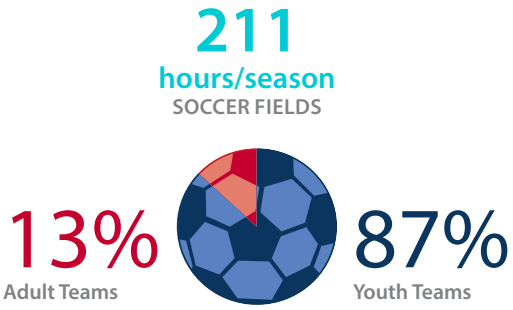
Meridian Sports Park Utilization & Capacity

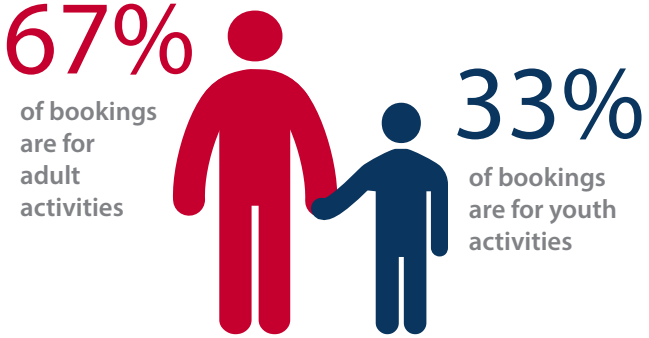
We also heard from residents and stakeholders that the capacity of outdoor sports facilities to accommodate growing demands was a concern. As such, we examined the utilization of the MSP over the past five years.

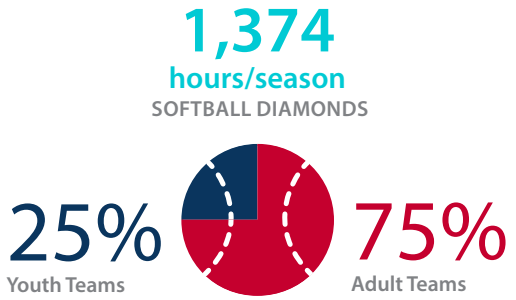
As shown in Figure 26, utilization of the MSP has risen, on average, by 1% per year since 2011. On average, the MSP is booked for 1,586.5 hours total annually. 33% of the bookings are for youth activities while the remaining 67% are made for adult activities.

Figure 26 Meridian Sports Park Bookings









When utilization is considered by sport, we found that softball diamonds are booked, on average, for 1,374 hours per season. 75% of these bookings are made for adult teams while the remaining 25% are made for youth teams. Soccer fields at MSP are booked, on average, for 211 hours per season. 87% of the hours booked are for youth teams while the remaining 13% are for adult teams.

Outdoor facilities experience both scheduled and spontaneous use and need to be managed carefully to avoid over or under use of any one facility. To inform decisions about future outdoor sport facilities, we needed to understand the capacity and utilization of each facility. Capacity for outdoor sport facilities is determined and influenced by the following factors:

- Growing conditions and weather patterns;
- Type & intensity of activities;
- Quality, design and degree of design/engineering/ planning put into the facility's development;
- Ratio of time the facility is in use versus being rested/maintained;
- Length of operational season;
- Availability of lighting to extend use;
- Operational hours as determined in local bylaws (as well as their location in relation to residential neighbourhoods); and,
- Lifestyle limitations that determine demand for prime-time use.

Capacity is determined by the number of acceptable hours that a facility can realistically accommodate use with the above factors taken into consideration. Planning for future needs requires an understanding of the capacity of the existing facilities in relation to their current levels of use as well as predicting use into the future. The following criteria were examined in conjunction with the facility capacity factors (listed above) to estimate the capacity of each of the sport fields:

- **Potential Hours in a Season Modifier**—The potential hours includes a calculation of the total number of hours a facility could be used in a season, multiplied by the number of facilities in each class. Seasons are assumed to run May through August at hours of operation from 8am–11pm with actual playing hours running from 9am–10pm. Prime-time/peak hours would include Monday–Friday: 6pm–10pm and weekends and holidays: 9am–10pm[a].
- **Weather & Maintenance Modifier**—Regular maintenance, rest and rehabilitation are necessary to minimize the effects of play on the surfaces/ turf. In addition, there may be cases where the field use will be restricted due to inclement weather to avoid damage. As such, capacity estimates need be adjusted to accommodate periods of restricted use.
- **Lighting Modifier**—Lighting has the ability to increase the capacity of the facility and need to be accommodated within the capacity estimates. Meridian Sports Park does not have lighting, therefore, capacity of the field has been adjusted accordingly.

a As bookings data is not collected in a way that enables primetime hours to be determined, it has been assumed that 80% of the total bookings occur during prime-time hours.

CAPACITY

Maximum usage an outdoor facility can support.

As shown in Table 2, use of the ball diamonds at MSP is occupying 21% of the total hours available for use. However, when primetimes usage is considered, we see that primetime supply is inadequate as the diamonds are being utilized at 137% of capacity.

We can also see that the soccer fields at MSP are underutilized both in terms of the total hours and primetime hours of use. Only 15% of total available hours are being booked while 43% of primetime hours are being booked.

Table 2 Current Utilization by Facility Type

FACILITY	TOTAL CAPACITY (hrs/season)	PRIME-TIME CAPACITY (hrs/season)	TOTAL CAPACITY UTILIZATION	PRIME-TIME CAPACITY UTILIZATION
2016				
Ball Diamonds	6,396	804	**21%**	**137%**
Soccer Fields	1,391	396	**15%**	**43%**

Recognizing that our population continues to grow, we undertook a number of future utilization projections using County accepted population growth forecasts. Based on this analysis, and as shown in Table 3, it is estimated that:

- Primetime shortages will be further exacerbated for ball diamonds though total capacity will remain under-utilized.
- Existing supply of soccer fields will remain sufficient to address growth in County population.

Table 3 Utilization Projections

FACILITY	PROJECTED UTILIZATION (hrs)	TOTAL CAPACITY (hrs/season)	PRIME-TIME CAPACITY (hrs/season)	TOTAL CAPACITY UTILIZATION	PRIME-TIME CAPACITY UTILIZATION
Projections for 2026					
Ball Diamonds	1541	6,396	804	24%	192%
Soccer Fields	238	1,391	396	17%	60%

Based on this population projection and the corresponding prime-time capacity utilization figures, planning for additional capacity is required for ball diamonds. This aligns with what we heard during the public engagement process. Additional capacity is not expected to be required for soccer fields over the planning horizon.

4.1.8 Access to Outdoor Sport Facilities

Like our parks and trails, residents told us that distance to our outdoor sport facilities matters. As such, we assessed the extent to which residential parcels are within easy driving access to an outdoor sport facility in the County, regardless of ownership (See Figure 27). Our analysis shows that 70% of residential parcels are within 8km access to an outdoor sport facility. However, when we consider those facilities provided by the County, only 4% of residential parcels would have access. It is clear that the outdoor sport facilities supplied by the school district and community associations are fundamental to providing residents with reasonable access to outdoor sport opportunity.

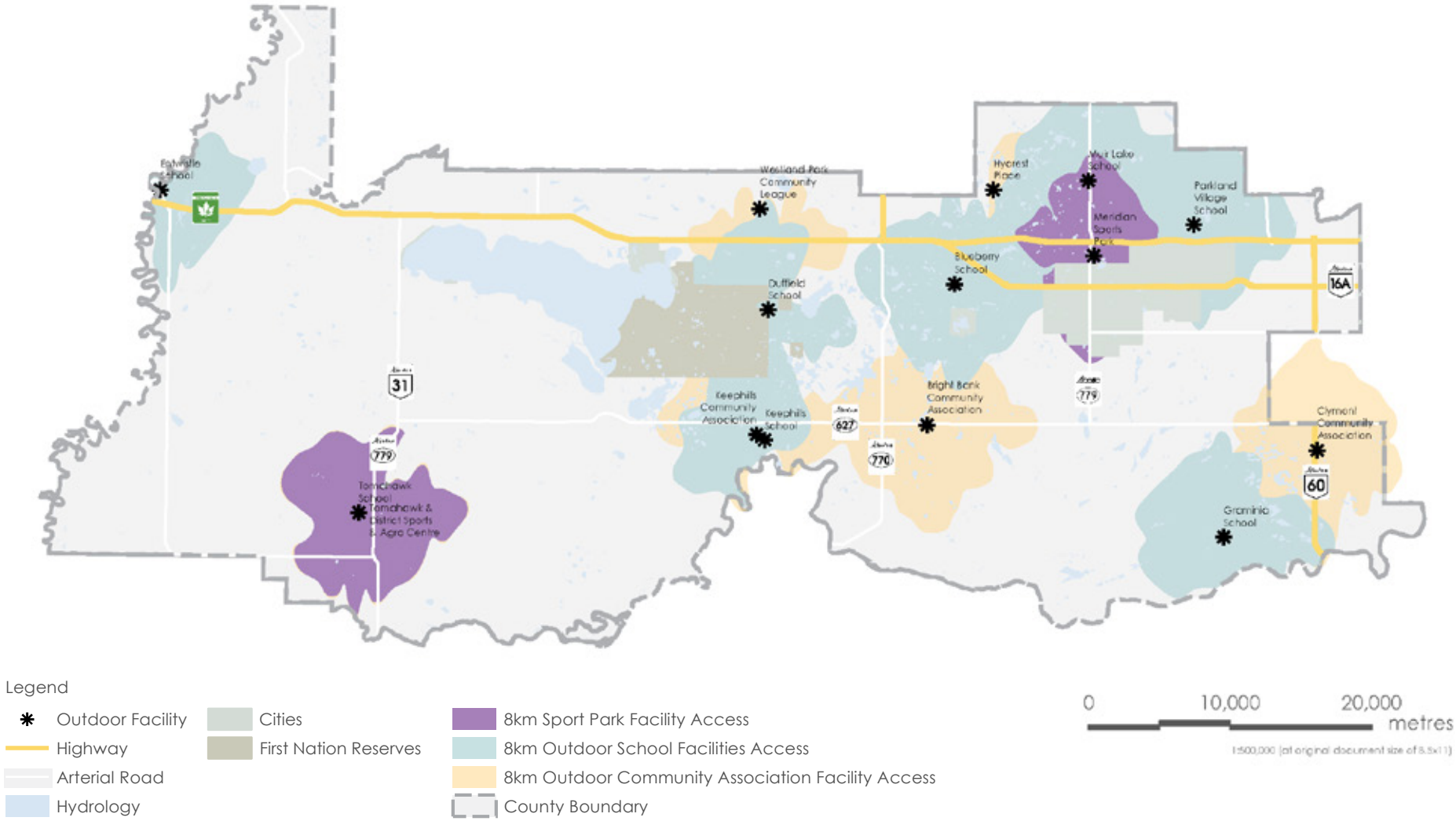
70% of residential parcels are within 8 km of an outdoor sport facility.

50% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a school-owned outdoor sport facility

45% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a Community Association owned outdoor sport facility

4% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a County-owned outdoor sport facility

Figure 27 Access to Outdoor Sport Facilities



4.1.9 Trails & Trail Access

Residents and visitors can explore to 13 km of formally designated County trails. The 13 km is contained in 14 trails.

- Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area (10.6 km) and consists of four separately named (yet connected) trails:
  1. Indian Ridge—hiking, cross country skiing, and cycling.
  2. Nature's Way—hiking, cross country skiing, cycling and horseback riding.
  3. Woodland Lookout—hiking, cross country skiing, cycling and horseback riding.
  4. Cranberry Corner—hiking, cross country skiing, cycling and horseback riding.
- Prospectors Point Trails– part of the River Valley Alliance.
  - Hiking, cycling and panning for gold.
  - Trails have been recently upgraded.
- Devonian Trail (6.2 km)
  - Hiking, cross country skiing, and cycling.
  - The Devonian Trail is being constructed along the south side of Banksiana road to Prospectors Point Day Use Park. Completion is expected in 2017.
- Hasse Lake (summer 2.2 km loop) and consists of two separately named (yet connected) trails:
  1. Beaver Pond Trail—hiking, cross country skiing, and cycling.
  2. Lakeshore Loop Trail—hiking, cross country skiing, and cycling.

Like our parks system, our trails are part of a larger network. In addition to County provided trails, residents have access to and utilize trails provided in Alberta's provincial parks, private conservation lands and trails within municipalities such as Wagner Natural Area, Wabamun Trail and Pembina Trail and trails in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain.

Proximity to trails can have a direct influence on trail use. Trails that connect our neighbourhoods to key community destinations and assets tend to be used more frequently. We determined what proportion of residential parcels (a proxy for residents' homes) are within an 8km drive to a trailhead which provides access to a designated trail. We found that only 39% of residential parcels are within 8km of a designated trail. (4.1.10)

Most of the designated trails in Parkland County are managed by agencies other than the County. Only 13 km of the trails in our assessment are County trails; these are located in day use parks. In addition to existing trails, the County is currently developing the 6.2km long Devonian Trail which will connect Prospectors Point Day Use Park to the Devonian Gardens. Non-County trails account for 26 km of the 39km included in our current supply.

The community was clear that trail quality, maintenance and connectivity are important priorities. Given the size of the County, the popularity of trails and that two-thirds of all residents are not within an 8km drive to a trailhead, expanding the county's trail system is a priority. Moreover, the relatively few existing trails are in isolated groups that are not connected to a County wide network.

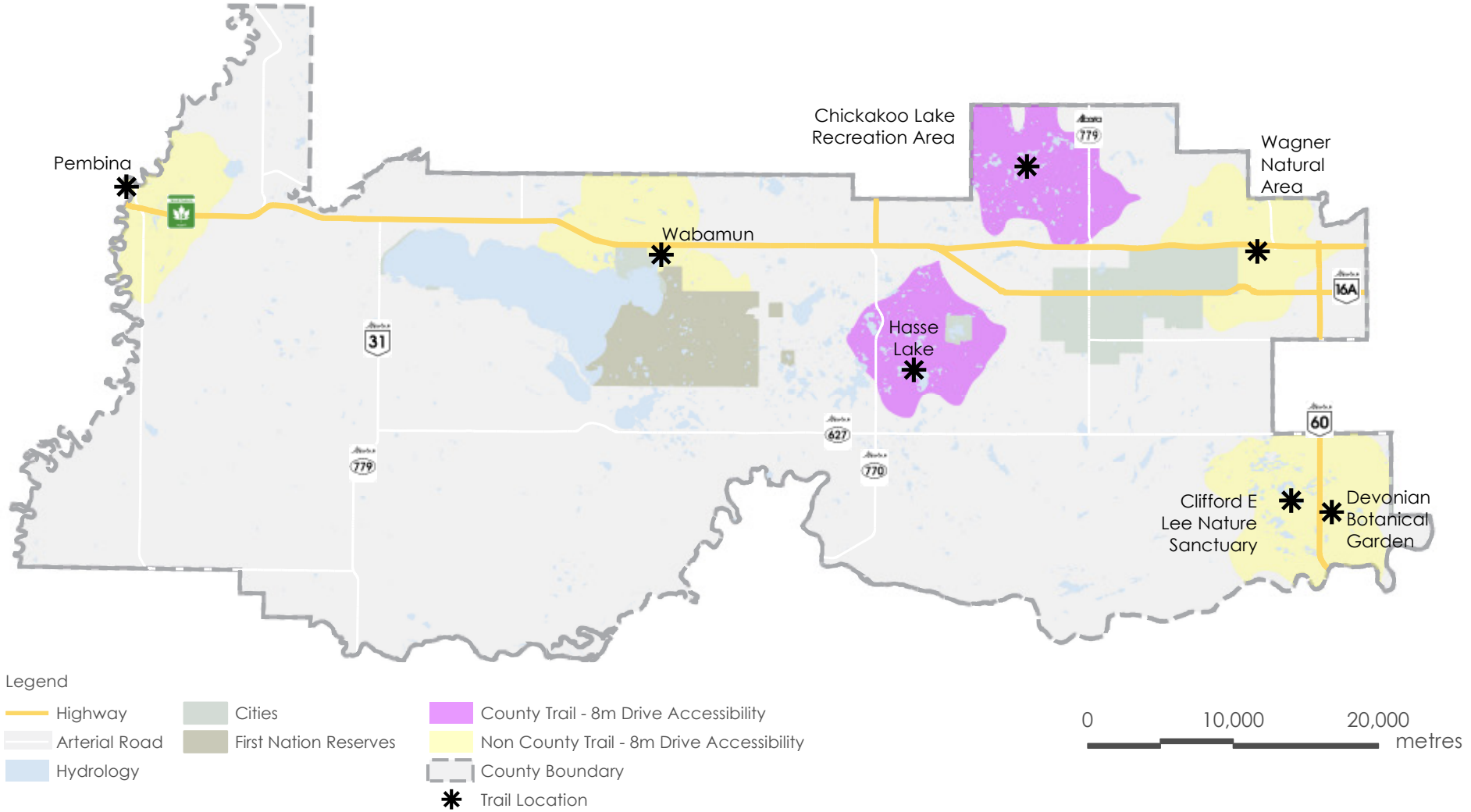
Trails Supply by the Numbers:

39% of residential parcels are within 8km drive of a designated trail.

39 km formally designated non-motorized trails (all agencies).

13 km formally designated non-motorized trails (Parkland County trails only)

Figure 28 Residential Parcels within 8 km Access of Trails



4.1.10 Access to Recreational Water Bodies

Water access exists in the following parks and recreation areas (see Figure 29):

- Jackfish Lake
- Rich's Point
- Ascot Beach
- Kokomoko
- Gainford
- Muir Lake
- Star Lake
- East Pit Lake
- Hasse Lake
- Chickakoo
- Prospector's Point providing access to the North Saskatchewan River
- Residents can also access the Pembina River at the Pembina River Recreation Area

Some water access points are formalized while other access is informal with no provided amenities or active management.

50% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a formal water access point

We heard clearly through the engagements that access to our recreation water bodies was an important consideration. As such, we investigated how easily residents could reach a water access point. We found that:

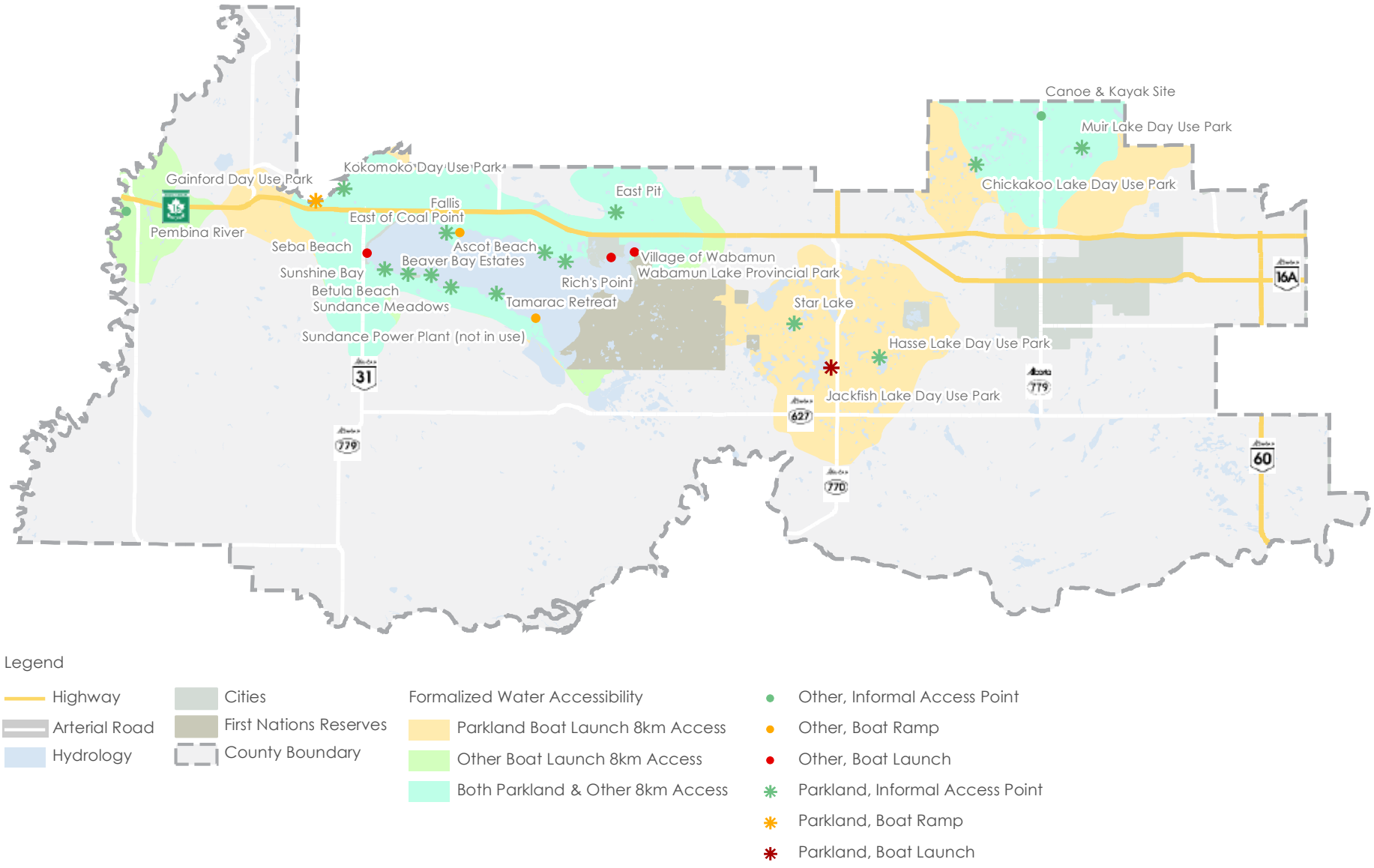
- 50% of residential parcels are within 8 km of a formal water access point provided by the County or another agency (e.g., Village, Alberta Parks)

The results show that the County's smaller lakes are generally well-supplied with access facilities. For typical small lakes, one access facility per lake appears to be adequate; these lakes are commonly within ESA's, have associated water quality concerns, and limited space for parking.

At Wabamun Lake, the desire for additional access facilities was identified in community engagement. In particular, the community noted that more formalized water access is desired on the shore of Wabamun Lake where ownership of access facilities is exclusively by others. The need for a new access in this area was also identified in The Lake Wabamun Boat Launch Study.[5]

As of 2015, there were no County-owned water access facilities on the Pembina or North Saskatchewan rivers.

Figure 29 Formalized Water Access



4.2 RECREATION

Planning the future recreation in the County was based on a sound understanding of what we do today to provide recreation for our residents. An overview of existing recreation facilities and programs provide a basis on which to compare where we are today with the demands of our community and sector trends to paint a picture of where needs may lie for residents and visitors alike. We set out to answer the following questions:

- How many indoor recreation facilities and programs are there in the County and how many is the County directly responsible for operating?
- What type of recreation facilities and programs do our residents have access to?
- Where are the facilities and programs located relative to our residents?
- Are the facilities (and subsequent programs) accessible?
- How does the County support other organizations in the delivery of recreation to our residents?
- How are well are we currently serving our residents and stakeholders and what can we do to serve our residents better?

Recreation

The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

4.2.1 Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation facilities are provided to our residents through a variety of ways. Some facilities are directly owned and operated solely by the County (e.g., Entwistle Pool), the County co-owns the regional Tri-Leisure Center while most of the facilities are offered through cost share arrangements set in place with other neighbouring municipalities. There are also volunteers and other stakeholder groups such as our community associations that receive operating grants to help offset the costs of operating facilities such as our community halls. Recognizing the diverse ownership structures and approaches to providing recreation facilities, our current supply includes (See Figure 30):

Multi-purpose Spaces

- 25 Community Halls
- Pembina Rec-Plex
- Omniplex
- TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre (TLC)

Recreation Resource

The facilities, assets, amenities and programs developed to facilitate recreation opportunities.

Ice Arenas

- Dale Fisher Arena
- Glenn Hall Arena
- Wabamun
- TLC
- Spruce Grove Arena
- Omniplex
- Pembina Rec-Plex

Indoor Swimming Pools

- TLC
- Drayton Valley—Park Valley Pool

Outdoor Swimming Pool

- Devon
- Entwistle

Curling

- Omniplex
- Lakeside Curling Club (provided Not-For-Profit (NFP) Grant funding in the past)

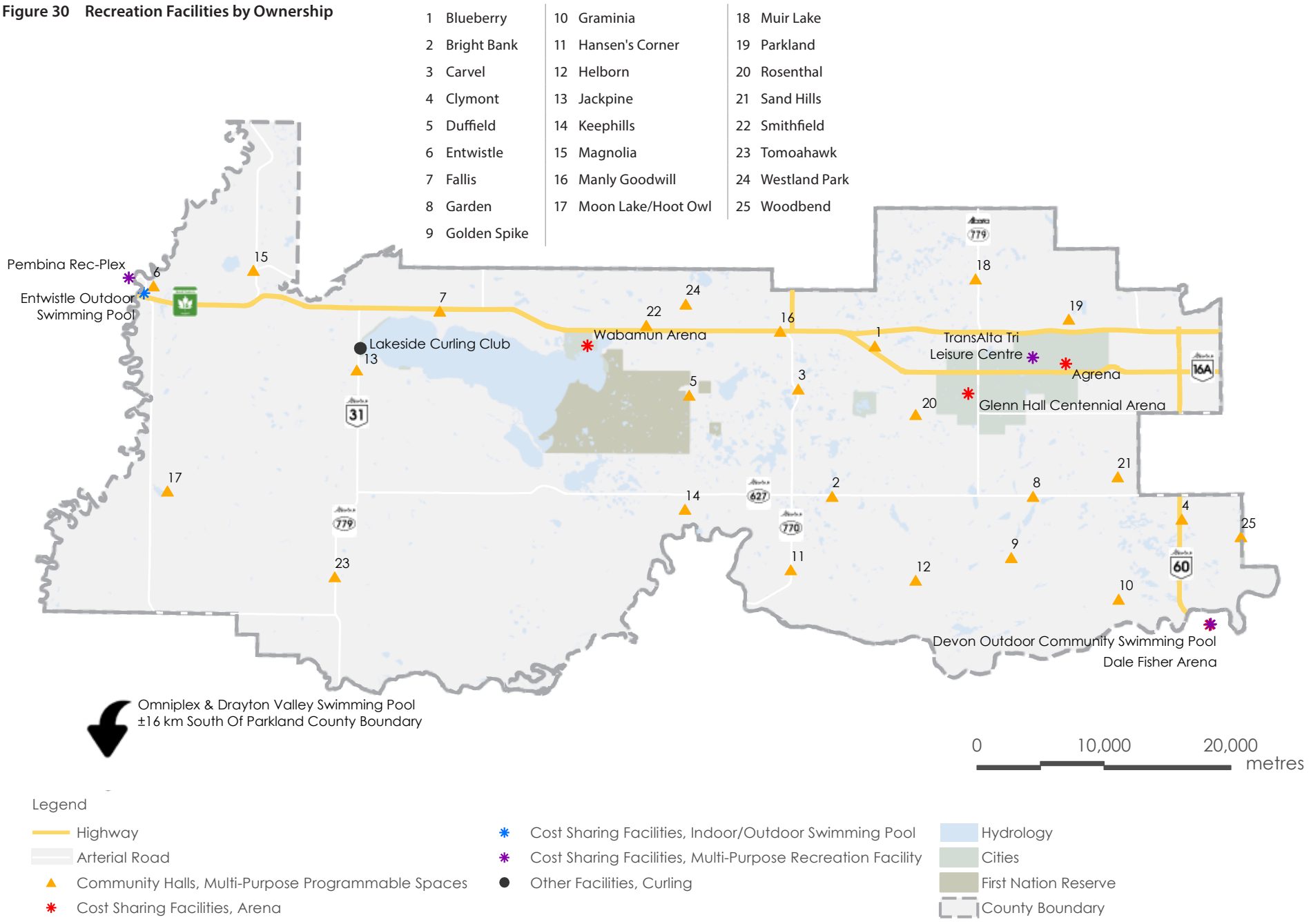
Fitness Centres

- TLC
- Omniplex
- Pembina Rec-Plex

Court Sports & Running Tracks

- TLC
- Omniplex

Figure 30 Recreation Facilities by Ownership



It is not possible for our County to directly provide or cost share in all of the facilities and programs desired by our residents. Meeting our residents' recreational needs is achieved through a system of County, not-for-profit, adjacent municipality, religious and private sector recreation providers. Recognizing the role and benefits these partners offer our residents, it was important that we acknowledge their contribution to the greater recreation system but detailed study of their services was not undertaken for this plan. Examples of other players in the County's recreation system include:

- 1 Boxing Club (Spruce Grove)
- Churches
- 2 Curling Rinks (Westridge Curling Rink (SP) and Spruce Grove Curling Club)
- 7 Equine Facilities
- 3 Gymnastics Facilities (Aerials Gymnastics, Parkland Rhythmic Gymnastics, etc.)
- 2 Indoor Riding Arenas
- 12 Martial Arts Studios
- 22 Schools (Parkland School Division)
- 7 Seniors Centres
- 17 Yoga/Fitness Facilities

Access to Indoor Recreation Facilities

Just because a facility exists, doesn't mean it is easy to access for our residents. Residents were clear that distance and quality of the facility are partial determinants of whether residents take part in recreation activities. An equitable distribution of the facilities (preferably a distribution that is in alignment with the social characteristics of the residents such as population density and distribution, age-gender profiles, income, and levels of education) is paramount to meeting resident's needs. We know that the more equitably recreation facilities are distributed throughout the County, the greater the probability that residents will participate in the facilities and programs that are offered; providing our residents the social, environmental, economic, and physical benefits that these facilities and programs are intended to provide. Survey results indicated that respondents were most willing to drive between 21–30 km to access a recreation facility. Therefore, we assessed the extent to which residential parcels had access to County provided or cost shared recreation facilities within a 15–30 km driving distance.

Recreational Activities Most Desired but Not Currently Participated In:

1. Walking/hiking/cycling trail systems
2. Swimming/swimming pool activities
3. Cross-country skiing
4. ATV/off-road vehicle riding
5. Yoga classes
6. Downhill skiing/snowboarding

Research showed that:

- Residents are generally satisfied with the quality of recreation facilities the County provides or cost shares in providing.
- As shown in Table 4, Most residential parcels in the county are within 30km of a recreation facility. The notable exceptions include curling arenas (15.8%) and outdoor swimming pools (8.5%). When we look at a shorter distance of 15 km, most residential parcels are not within 15 km of a recreation facility. The notable exception is multi-purpose programmable spaces where 97.3% of parcels are within 15 km largely due to the distribution of community halls.
- Many residents noted that they leave the County to participate in swimming/swimming pool activities and ice hockey.

Please see Appendix E for more mapping and further analysis on access to facilities.

Table 4 Residential Parcel Access to Recreation Facilities

	15 km	30 km
Multi-Purpose Programmable Spaces (includes Community Halls)	97.3%	100.0%
Hockey Arenas	62.8%	99.9%
Indoor Swimming Pool	45.6%	80.1%
Fitness Centre	31.0%	83.7%
Curling	27.9%	75.4%
Indoor Fieldhouses, Sport Courts, & Running Tracks	28.2%	75.4%
Outdoor Swimming Pool	20.3%	39.4%

Recreation Facility Service Areas

Access to…

MULTI-PURPOSE PROGRAMMABLE SPACE

- The County is well served in terms of multi-purpose programmable space:
- **97.3%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of a multi-purpose programmable space.
- **100%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of a multi-purpose programmable space.

ARENAS

- County residents are well-served by Hockey Arenas in terms of distance:
- **62.8%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of an arena.
- **99.9%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of an arena.

INDOOR POOLS

- Access to indoor pools is strongest in the eastern and western portions of the County.
- **28.2%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of an indoor swimming pool.
- **80.1%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of an indoor swimming pool.

CURLING RINKS

- County supported curling opportunities are available in the western portion of the County.
- **27.9%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of a Curling Club.
- **75.4%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of a Curling Club.

FITNESS CENTRES

- Residents in the eastern and western portions of the County have access to Fitness Centres which are often co-located with the indoor swimming pools in the multi-purpose facilities:
- **31.0%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of a fitness centre.
- **83.7%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of a fitness centre.

INDOOR FIELDHOUSES, SPORT COURTS AND RUNNING TRACKS

- Indoor Fieldhouses, Court Sports, and Running Tracks are located at the far ends of the County with:
- **28.2%** of residential parcels are located within **15km** of Sport Courts and Indoor Fieldhouses.
- **75.4%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of Sport Courts and Indoor Fieldhouses.

OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOLS

- Outdoor swimming pools service the least number of residential parcels with:
- **20.3%** of residential parcels being within **15km** of an outdoor swimming pool.
- **39.4%** of residential parcels are located within **30km** of an outdoor pool.

4.2.2 Recreation Programs

For the most part, the County partners with other organizations to deliver recreational programming. We strongly rely on the efforts of many dedicated volunteer organization's and their members to deliver the right quantity, type and quality of recreation programs for our residents. Recreational programs available to our residents range from general fitness to cultural programs to highly competitive sports and are provided by the following organizations:

- Community Associations
- FCSS
- Villages
- Town of Stony Plain
- City of Spruce Grove
- Other Volunteer Organizations
- Private Businesses

Community Associations

Community associations (CA) are a major provider of programs and services throughout our County. They are primarily run by volunteers who are invested in their community and have an idea of what our residents need and want in terms of recreation programs and facilities.

The programs listed in the table below paint a picture of the type and quantity of programs offered throughout the County to our residents. The list below includes the typical programs and events offered in the facility, regardless of the provider (e.g., facility renter or CA). There are a total of 27 Community Associations in the County, but only 25 of them have Community Halls.

Facility	Programs/Events
Division 1	
Clymont Community League	Funball, T-ball, Volunteer Appreciation Night, Spring Craft Sale, Spring BBQ & Funball Bones Tournament, Fall Pig Roast Fundraiser, Halloween Party, Ukrainian Night, Christmas Craft Sale, and New Year's Eve Celebration.
Graminia Community League & Social Society	Guitar and Piano lessons, Summer Day Camps, and River Valley Players Summer Drama Camp.
Woodbend Community Association	Country Fair, Easter Pancake Breakfast, Family Games Night, and Chili Cookoff.
Division 2	
Garden Valley Community Centre	Community Garage Sale.
Parkland Big Lake Community Association	Community Yard Sale, Family Skate Day Event, Bottle Drives, Skating Parties on the pond, and Community BBQ's.
Parkland Village Community Centre	Breakfast Socials, Ballroom Dance Classes, Youth Group, Parent and Tots Drop-in Classes, Seniors Dance, and Navy League Cadets.
Sand Hills Community League	Community Garage Sale, Steak and Rib Bingo.
Division 3	
Hycrest Place Community Association	Ball diamonds, horseshoe pits, skating rink, playground, fire pit area, and washrooms.
Muir Lake Community League	Mother's Day Brunch, Community Garage Sale, Comedy Nights, Family Ham and Turkey Bingo, New Year's Eve Party, and Winter Paint Sessions.
Division 4	
Blueberry Community League	Cabin Fever Family Outdoor Event, Easter Breakfast, Blueberry Shake, Halloween Dance, and Ladies Night.
Golden Spike Community League	Community Garage Sale, Family Movie Night, Ham and Turkey Bingo, and Annual Whist Drive.
Holborn Community Hall Association	Outdoor Spring Market and Garage Sale, Mother's Day Tea/Craft Party, Volunteer Appreciation Supper, and Family Dance.
Rosenthal Community Association	Family BBQ, Silent Auction, and Home Based Christmas Shopping Event.

Facility	Programs/Events
Division 5	
Bright Bank Community Centre	Fitness Classes, Pancake Supper, Fall Supper, Card Making with Susan, New Year's Celebration, Family Day Skating, Psychic Cowgirl, Community Garage Sale, and Spring Supper.
Carvel Ukrainian Cultural Society	Spring Dinner & Dance, Spring Perogy Supper, Baba Claus Christmas Sale, Fall Perogy Supper, ACUA Folk Art Retreat & Art Market, Tech Fest Carvel, Fall BBQ and Dance, Spring Dinner and Dance, and St Nicholas' Party and Christmas Celebration.
Duffield Community Hall Association	Family Dance, Pig Roast, Summer Fun Activities, Jamboree, Kids Christmas Party, and Ladies Night Out.
Hansen's Corner Community Society	Spring Family BBQ, Community Garage Sale, Annual Christmas Market, and Fall Supper.
Keephills Community Association	Community Garage Sale, KCA Monthly Meeting, and Spring Family Dance.
Manly Goodwill Community Association	Malenka, Family Christmas Potluck, and Oktoberfest.
Smithfield Community Hall Society	Undetermined
Westland Park Community League	Casino Fundraisers, Halloween Party, Ladies Night Shop and Social
Division 6	
Entwistle Community League	Community Bingo, Community League Jamboree, and Wednesday Night Bingo.
Fallis Community Association	Weekly Bingo, Old Time Music Jamboree.
Magnolia Community Club (1978)	Volunteer Appreciation Night, Cemetery AGM, Artisan Market & Garage Sale, Grant Information Night, Jamboree Wind-up Dinner, Slo-Pitch Tournament, Harvest Supper, Jamborees, and Christmas Potluck.
Moon Lake (Hoot Owl) Community League	Slo-Pitch Tournament, 50's/60's Dance, 70th Anniversary Pig Roast Dinner and Dance, Drop-in Ball Games, Kids Carnival, Community Garage Sale, St. Patrick's Day Family Dance, Kids Easter Celebration, Pi-Yo Classes, New Year's Eve Family Dance, and Line Dance Lessons.
Tomahawk & District Sports Agra Society	Bingo, Yoga, Weekly Seniors Recreation, Monthly Jamboree, Book Club, Crafting, Seasonal Events (e.g., Easter Egg Hunt, Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast), Monthly Agra Meetings, Slo-Pitch, Farm Days.
Jackpine Corner Hall	No programs offered

FCSS

The mandate of Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) is to provide locally-driven, preventative, social initiatives to enhance the well-being of our residents and encourage them to adopt and improve or maintain their quality of life.

Our County has partnerships with Drayton Valley FCSS, Yellowhead County FCSS, Stony Plain FCSS, Leduc County FCSS, and Spruce Grove FCSS to ensure that our residents can access FCSS services close to their community and not necessarily just with the communities within our boundaries.

In relation to recreation, different FCSS organizations offer different types of services. In general, each group offers the recreation related services listed below:

- **Drayton Valley FCSS:** funding for special events
- **Yellowhead County FCSS:** grants to community groups, operational grants for programs, special project grants
- **Stony Plain FCSS:** provides programs for adults, youth and community development
- **Spruce Grove FCSS:** provides programs for families, seniors and youth
- **Leduc County FCSS:** Leduc County offers support services to Parkland County residents, but does not provide any recreation specific programs or funding

Villages

Recreation programs tend to be located in communities that have a sufficient market area of people to participate. The programs and amenities offered by the Villages within Parkland County range from dancing, to competitive sports, leisure and spontaneous activities, and personal development programs. These programs are offered through the respective communities' libraries, community halls, churches, and other village facilities.

Town of Stony Plain

The Town of Stony Plain offers many programs to its residents through the Tri-Region. There are also a number of initiatives the Town has provided to open the doors to recreation opportunities to as many residents as possible. Programs such as:

- Lifelong Recreation—badminton, skating, soccer, volleyball, public skating, pickleball, and basketball. These programs take advantage of the Joint-Use Agreement to use the school facilities.
- Community Initiatives Grant Program—funding opportunities to groups and organizations that provide benefit to Stony Plain residents.
- Recreation without Barriers—Recreation assistance programs are available to give the opportunity for all to experience the benefits of organized sports.
- Children's Summer Programs—Offered by Community and Protective Services to deliver safe, quality summer programs for children.
- Adult Ballroom Dancing—Learn to foxtrot, jive, waltz, and rumba.
- Seniors' Dance and Jamboree—afternoon of dance, snacks, friendship and camaraderie for those 65 or older.
- Tri-Region Community Leisure Guide—Provides an overview of Recreation and Leisure opportunities within the Tri-Region Area (Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and Parkland County).
- Achievement Recognition—Established to recognize achievements in athletics, fine arts and cultural achievements.
- Community Garden—Opportunity for locals to plant and grow their own organic gardens within a community environment.[6]

The Town also has a joint use agreement in place with the Parkland School Division, Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional School Division, and St. Matthew's Lutheran School (private school). This agreement permits community groups and organizations with access to school facilities (classrooms and gymnasiums) on weekday evenings at no cost.

City of Spruce Grove

The City of Spruce Grove has a significant density to offer a diverse array of programs to City and County residents. These programs include:

- Lifelong Recreation—also offers programs that encourage lifelong recreation such as: badminton, skating, soccer, volleyball, public skating, pickleball, and basketball. These programs take advantage of the Joint-Use Agreement to use the school facilities.
- FCSS Programs—programs for seniors, youth, adults, and families.
- Other Programs—Block Party, Capsule for Life, Community Service Partnership Program, Disaster Recovery Program, and Footlights Summer Drama Camps.
- Community Awards—Awards of Excellence, Community Spirit Awards, and Outstanding Achievement Recognition Program.
- Support Programs—Adopt-a-Driveway, Counselling, Home Support, Income Tax Clinic, Information and Referral, Log Cabin Youth Mentorship, Meals on Wheels, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Resource Centre, and Support Groups.
- Drop-In Recreation Programs—recreation services with the City organizes year-round drop-in programs that encourage life-long recreation such as: badminton, skating, soccer, volleyball, public skating, pickleball, and basketball. It is these programs that take advantage of the Joint-Use Agreement to use the school facilities.

It is these programs that provide opportunities for the programs to contribute to a higher quality of life for our residents that take part in the programs offered in the City.

Other Volunteer Organizations—Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland County

Spruce Grove and Stony Plain are the organizational and/or facility base for many volunteer organizations that offer both participatory and spectator leisure activities. A sampling of these include; Parkland Potters Guild, BMX biking, Golden Age Club, Parkland Pickleheads, Stony Plain Minor Football, Stony Plain Sharks, The Boxing Club, Cowboy Poetry Festival, Parkland Racers Ski Club, all which are available to Parkland County residents.

Parkland County is also home base for volunteer organizations offering outdoor activities or local cultural opportunities, examples would include: Devonshire Pony Club, Northern Alberta Sailing Club, Trail Seekers Snowmobile Club, Seba Beach Quilters, Glory Hills Junior Forest Wardens, all of which are open membership.

Private Businesses

Private businesses have the opportunity to offer programs and facilities that may be financially out of reach for municipalities and volunteer organizations. Valuable recreation services are offered by many for-profit organizations such as health and fitness clubs. In order to fulfill the objective of parks, recreation, and culture within our County, we need to rely on private business to supplement the diverse number of facilities and programs already delivered through the public system. Parkland County is home to many private recreation assets that supplement our existing facilities and programs.

4.2.3 Parkland County Support to Volunteer Organizations

The County provides critical financial support annually to a variety of organizations for recreational programming through the Not-for-profit grant program. Funding is available for operations, minor capital and by project. Each application and level of funding is reviewed annually based on the consistency of funding, expressed need, and benefit to the community. The following are a list of the recipients of funding in 2015/2016:

- Parkland Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Spruce Grove Ringette Association
- Tri-Area Skating Club

Community Organization and Playschool Assistance

We also support community organizations and playschools with:

- Insurance Coverage and Information
- Grant Funding and Fundraising Initiatives
- Various Forums and Workshops
- Facility Development and Assessment
- Information Referral—Local Issues and Concerns
- Program and Special Event Consultation
- Communities On-Line Newsletter, Community Event Posting
- Board Development and Facilitation

Tri-Region Community Leisure Guide

The Leisure Guide is an excellent resource that articles recreation opportunities available in the County and Tri-Region. It provides a platform for organizations to promote their programs and resources. A detailed catalogue of programs available to residents as well as parks, recreation and cultural facilities is provided, which helps to make residents and visitors aware of the opportunities available to them. In terms of programs, the Guide shows programs offered by a non-profits groups, municipalities and local businesses. Below is a high-level inventory of the number of groups offering programs, divided by program type. It must be noted that the below list is only of those listed in the Tri-Region Leisure Guide and should not be considered exhaustive. Rather, the inventory gives a snapshot of the various groups offering programs, and the types of programs offered throughout the County and the Tri-Region.

Overall, sports has the largest offering in the Tri-Region, which is common across municipalities. Culture represents only 16% of the groups/organizations represented, which highlights the need to increase the focus on culture.

GROUPS OFFERING PROGRAMS	NUMBER OF GROUPS
Arts Groups	
Music	12
Performing Arts	14
Visual Arts	6
Aviation	3
Camp	4
Total Arts Groups/Organizations	**39**
Clubs	
Ag. Society	1
Cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides, etc.	15
4-H	2
Fish & Game	2
Youth Groups	2
Misc.	1
Total Clubs	**23**
Community Based Organizations	
Community Associations/Hall Operators	29
Libraries	8
Early Years	16
Fitness	17
Health	5
Seniors	6
Total Community Based Organizations	**81**
Sports	
Archery	2
Baseball/Softball	6
Basketball	2
Boxing	1
Curling	3
Cycling	1
Golf	15
Equestrian	9
Football	2
Gymnastics	3
Hockey	10
Martial Arts	12
Outdoor Adventure	9
Pickleball	1
Ringette	1
Rugby	1
Sailing	5
Skating	1
Skiing	1
Soccer	3
Swimming	3
Volleyball	3
Waterpolo	3
Total Sports Groups/Organizations	**97**

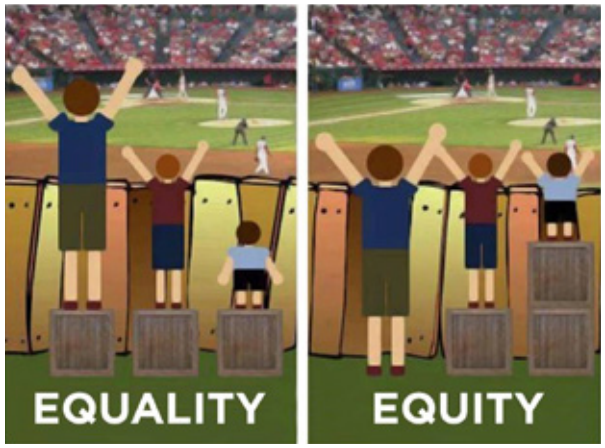
4.2.4 Key Learnings About the County's Recreation Programs

- Residents should have equitable access to programs as close to where they live as possible.
- Barriers to participation in recreation programs (e.g., distance, lack of programs, lack of information, cost, equipment, knowledge) should be addressed through more effective leisure education programs.
- Provide facilities, multi-use indoor/outdoor to support the widest diversity of recreation programs.
- Continue to deliver recreation programs through a partnership community development model.
- Community Associations and Community Halls have tremendous variation in how they organized programming. Programs offered were more likely to be recreational than cultural.
- Work to build relationships First Nations communities to explore collaborative programming.
- Focus priorities and limited resources on providing fewer high-quality programs vs. many lower-quality programs.
- Costs associated with regional recreation programs should be eligible for cost-sharing.
- Decreasing volunteerism poses a threat to the quantity and quality of existing programs and threatens any growth for new and innovative programming. While this delivery system is effective in providing the appropriate programs to area residents and creates community ownership over the programs, it is heavily reliant on the volunteers.
- Re-examine the funding for community associations. Examine funding distribution on a bi-annual basis. New funding model considered.

Most Needed Programs

(from sounding board input)

- Sports teams
- Yoga and dance classes
- Year-round youth group
- Fun events at the hall for all ages, Club gatherings for dancing, gymnastics, and sports.



Source: https://outfront.org/strategicplan (August 2016)

4.2.5 Areas of Higher Need

It is imperative that with the inventory of facilities and the understanding of their accessibility, that we have an understanding of the distribution of our recreation facilities throughout Parkland County and how that relates to the social characteristics of our residents. What we found are that the bulk of community halls are located in areas of the County that have higher:

- Total population;
- Youth population; and,
- Intercultural populations.

That said, the locations of the facilities are not prevalent in the areas that have the lowest levels of income and education. In terms of needs, it is commonly promoted that these social indicators demonstrate areas that should be of highest priority for the allocation of recreation facilities and programs to increase the health of the people who are known to face the greatest barriers to accessing recreation opportunities.

The locations of the County's current supported facilities are not prevalent in the areas that have the lowest levels of income and education

4.3 CULTURE

In addressing culture in the context of the PRCMP two perspectives are needed. The first relates to establishing a service delivery framework that defines our involvement in direct, collaborative, or partnered services, facilities and programs, together with a strategic agenda to enhance cultural activities and opportunities for residents and visitors to the County. It also represents a set of organizations and activities in the County that can be seen to be directly impacted and supported by the County. An inventory of this municipal system of cultural assets is set out below.

The second perspective embraces a broader *cultural planning* view of cultural issues and opportunities. Here culture and cultural resources represent fundamental economic and community assets contributing directly to economic prosperity and quality of life in the County. From this perspective, cultural planning and development is not the sole concern of any one department but rather connects with a range of County plans and priorities across departments. Cultural Master Plans developed in Stony Plain and Spruce Grove also embrace this larger vision of culture and its contribution to wider planning agendas. The second perspective does not reject the first but rather encompasses it in wider frame of reference.

While we have been involved in a range of cultural programs and activities (described below) to date, culture has received less attention from County than has parks and recreation. The PRCMP provides an opportunity to rectify this situation and establish a clear service delivery framework and strategic agenda to guide our future commitments to culture and cultural development in the years ahead.

The Cultural Master Plans in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain also offer opportunities to connect cultural agendas and investment across the three municipalities of benefit to all. This goal is consistent with the larger commitment to tri-municipal collaboration across all planning and service delivery areas.

As noted earlier, the demographic profile of Parkland County supports the growth in demand for cultural programs and services. The county has an aging population with higher than average income and equal levels of education compared to the province as a whole. We know that cultural consumers have higher than average incomes and education. The question becomes whether the cultural programs or activities offered in the County are ones that will appeal to residents with higher incomes and education or whether these residents will feel their cultural interests will only be met in a larger urban centre such as Edmonton. Findings from the household survey appear to confirm this pattern of participation which found that households with higher incomes are more likely to participate in local cultural activities. New or expanded programs responding to this demographic profile has potential to attract more of this segment of the population.

Parkland County has a higher than national average youth population raising the need for relevant and engaging programs and services aimed at meeting the interests and needs of young people in our community. The absence of youth programming in the county was a theme to emerge from the engagement process. Success will require direct engagement with youth in identifying their cultural interests and needs.

4.3.1 Cultural Inventory

The county is home to a rich and diverse array of cultural resources that are both non-profit and for-profit organizations and enterprises, as well as place-based assets such as natural and cultural heritage assets. Here we identify those cultural assets that the County plays a direct role in supporting. They are categorized as organizations, facilities and events. Additional information on many of these assets follows in this report.

Organizations

- 27 Community Associations

While they vary in the level of cultural programming delivered, community associations and their halls are essential elements of the county's cultural infrastructure.

The County provides funding to the Parkland County Library Board (PCLB). The PCLB directly funds 4 libraries:

- Duffield Library
- Tomahawk Library
- Keephills Library
- Entwistle Library

The PCLB provides indirect funding to 6 libraries:

- Devon Public Library
- Drayton Valley Municipal Library
- Seba Beach Public Library
- Spruce Grove Public Library
- Stony Plain Public Library
- Wabamun Public Library

The County also provides funding to Yellowhead County on a per capita basis to support libraries.

The County provides funding to a range of community groups through not-for-profit grant program. Among those cultural organizations recommended for funding in the 2016 not-for-profit grant program were the following:

- Allied Arts Council
- Horizon Players
- Parkland Ukrainian Dancers
- Pembina Lobstick Historical Society

Facilities

- 25 Community Halls

Cost Sharing Facilities

- *Horizon Stage*—this performing arts venue located in Spruce Grove provide county residents with ready access to a wide range of performances.
- *Pioneer Museum*—this important museum and heritage site located in Stony Plain provides changing programming and is extending the current facility with new facilities and amenities
- *Multicultural Heritage Society* - this multi-functional cultural facility is located in Stony Plain. It offers a museum, archives (with holdings relevant to Parkland County as well as Spruce Grove and Stony Plain), library and art gallery. It also features a General Store, restaurant and Artisan's Market

Events

- The County plays an active role in organizing National Aboriginal Day, Love Where You Live Block Party, Mini-Monster Bash and Info Fairs

The County also delivers a number of programs that support cultural development and are described in Section 4.3.4 below.

4.3.2 Cultural Planning Framework

There is growing recognition across Canada of the importance of creativity, culture, and quality of place in growing local economies and enhancing quality of life. In response municipalities have sought new, more integrated approaches to leveraging cultural resources in their communities. Cultural planning frameworks and methods have been a response to these needs.

Cultural planning is guided by the following five characteristics:

1. Cultural planning embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries and occupations, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events, community cultural organizations and intangible cultural resources
2. Cultural planning is grounded in cultural mapping—a process that identifies records, classifies and analyzes cultural resources in a community
3. Cultural planning involves adopting a 'cultural lens' or taking into account the impact of decision-making across a wide range of planning issues will have on cultural resources and the cultural vitality of a community
4. Cultural planning requires cross-sectoral strategies and partnership models to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its cultural, community, business and associated partners
5. Cultural planning involves sustained community engagement across all facets of the cultural sector together with its partners and the broader community

4.3.3 Definition of Culture & Cultural Resources

Culture means different things to different people. Simply put it is what defines the unique identity or social group. However, a fuller definition is as follows:

> *Culture is the expression and celebration of the values and aspirations of a community or social group. This is expressed through all manner of human activities that characterize a community and its people and shape its unique sense of place. It includes the sharing of ideas; learning through expression in the fine, visual, literary, media, material and performing arts; heritage; and the shared experiences of history.*

While this larger definition of culture is a necessary part of advancing a cultural agenda in the county, a more focused definition is provided through a focus on *cultural resources*.

The first characteristic of a broader cultural planning perspective and approach is adopting a broad definition of cultural resources. In this cultural planning perspective cultural resources become significant assets linked to important economic and broader community agendas and municipal priorities. Figure 31 illustrates the six broad categories of cultural resources, with examples of sub-categories in each.

Figure 31 Cultural Resource Framework

One component of the planning process for the Culture component of the PRCMP was developing a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources in the county using a process called cultural mapping. This mapping was based on a Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) which is a consistent set of categories used to collect and organize cultural resources. The core CRF used in Parkland County is the same that is in use in use in a growing number of Canadian municipalities of widely ranging populations and circumstances. The core CRF is grounded in Statistics Canada's *Canadian Framework of Cultural Statistics* which defines the cultural sector in Canada. It is then extended to include a range of community cultural resources that fall outside Statistics Canada's formal Framework.

The CRF is not intended as a rigid or prescriptive set of categories but rather as a place to begin a discussion in a community about the categories of assets needed to reflect that community's unique culture and identity. The full CRF for Parkland County is set out in Appendix B. In Parkland County it was important for County staff to review the categories to identify new or unique resources reflecting the culture and identity of the County. One addition was the inclusion of horticultural groups or societies and businesses which were added to acknowledge the county's rich agricultural history and identity. The CRF used in Parkland County mirrors with small variations those used in Stony Plain and Spruce Grove.

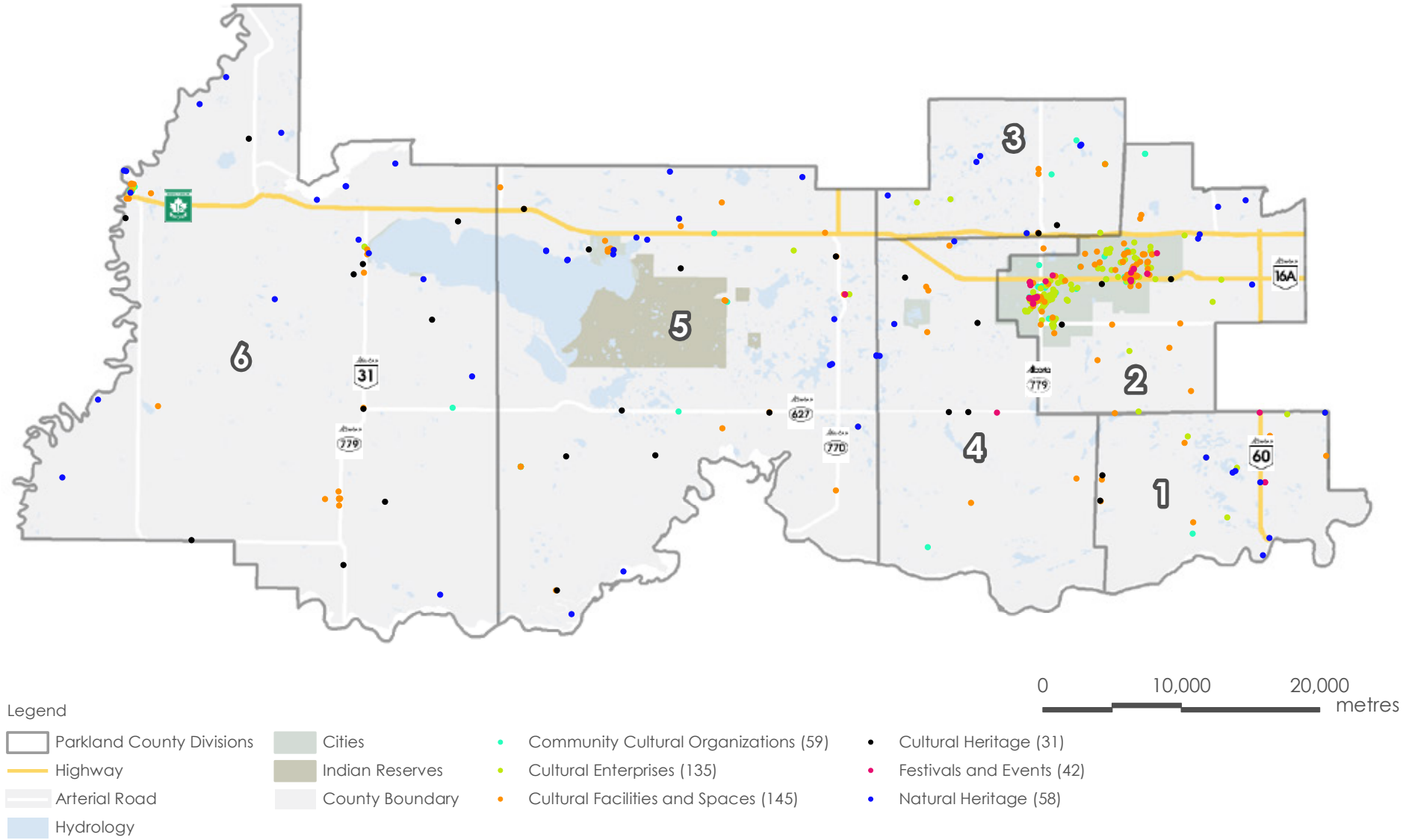
The following provides an overview of cultural resources in the county. Section 10 provides additional detail on each of categories of resources as well as an analysis of Parkland County's cultural resources compared to those of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain.

CULTURAL RESOURCE	DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES
Community Cultural Organizations	Community-based groups that rely entirely on volunteers. Examples include historical or genealogical societies, quilters groups, horticultural associations, among others.
Cultural Enterprises	Both not-for-profit and for-profit cultural organizations or enterprises such as museums, libraries, performing arts centres. The commercial or for-profit enterprises include music and dance schools, farmer's markets, commercial art galleries, sound recording studios, digital media companies, among others.
Cultural Facilities	These include both indoor and outdoor space where diverse cultural activities can take place. Formal cultural facilities include libraries, museums, community halls, and performance venues, among others. Non-formal or more community- based examples of facilities and spaces include outdoor public spaces for festivals and events, and other cultural activity.
Festivals and Events	A wide range of recurring events (usually annually) including music festivals, celebrations such as Canada Day, seasonal celebrations such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, among others. These vary significantly based on the history, culture and identity of individual communities.
Cultural Heritage	Different forms of physical heritage in a community including heritage buildings or districts, historical monuments, historic sites, cemeteries, among others.
Natural Heritage	Important natural spaces in the community including significant parks, Provincial or National Parks, trails, lakes and rivers, protected areas, among others.

4.3.4 County Cultural Resources & Programs

To date, we offer our residents and visitors a number of core cultural resources and programs. Using the Cultural Resources Framework (CRF), we collected information on cultural resources in the county falling into the CRF categories. Cultural mapping (see Figure 32) shows that cultural resources are distributed widely throughout the County. The following presents the distribution of cultural resource by resource category.

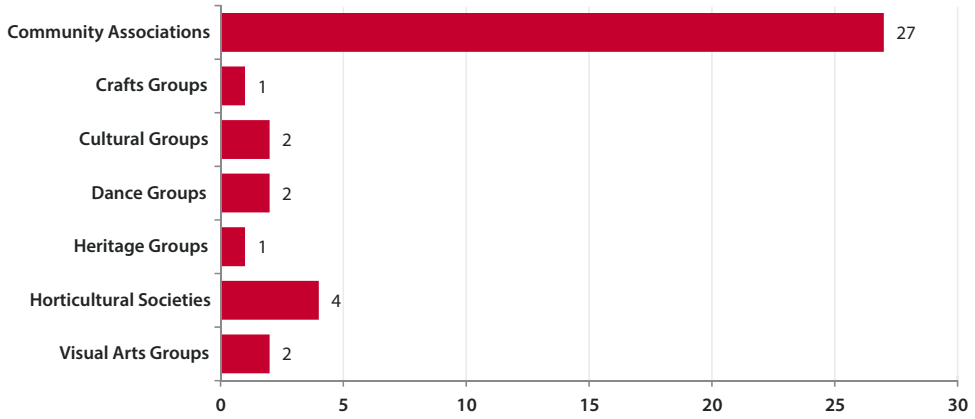
Figure 32 County Cultural Resources



Community Cultural Organizations

Parkland is home to 27 community associations located across the county. Community associations support the delivery of cultural programs either directly or by making community halls available for use by other groups in delivering programs. Examples of other community cultural organizations include the Seba Beach Quilters and Fibre Artists and Hills of Hope Historical Society.

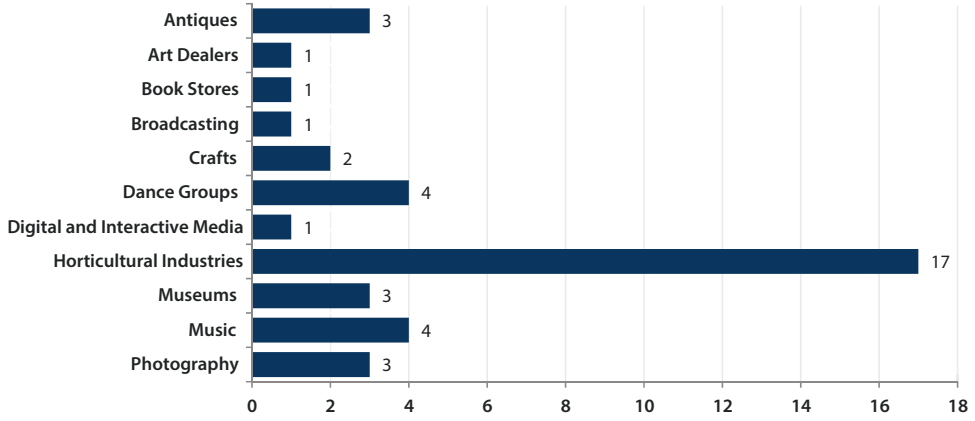
Figure 33 Community Cultural Organizations



Cultural Enterprises

Parkland County has 23 cultural enterprises and 17 Horticultural Industries. The high number of Horticultural Industries is a direct reflection of Parkland County's agricultural economy and heritage. Another notable finding from the asset mapping process is the County's strength in music and dance groups really stands outs. Many of the music and dance groups are small studios offering instruction. These groups are a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit organizations or enterprises. A sample of other groups that fall in this category includes Courtenay's Dance Company, Blackgold Broadcasting, Music for Young Children, and the Pembina Lobstick Historical Society Museum. The county is also well served by its library system (see Cultural Spaces and Facilities below).

Figure 34 Cultural Enterprises

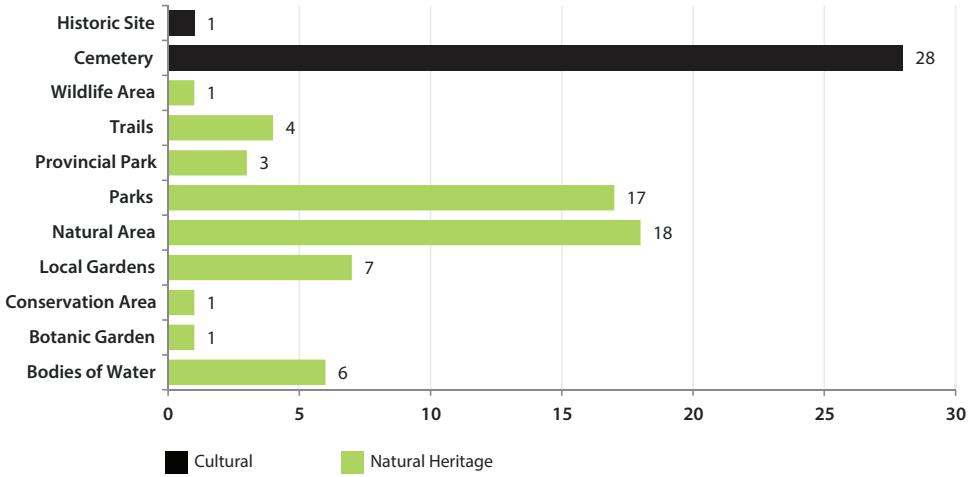


Cultural & Natural Heritage

The mapping process revealed 29 cultural heritage assets and 58 natural heritage assets. Important cultural heritage resources exist in Parkland County mostly in the form of historic cemeteries. The Hills of Hope Historical Society is captured in Community Cultural Organizations. The interpretive signage program established by the Society is an important achievement. The County has no formal mandate related to built heritage. An important documentary heritage collection exists in the form of archives held by the Multicultural Heritage Society. These archival collections address the history of the County, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove.

Natural heritage resources are abundant and a defining feature of Parkland County. Parks, natural areas and local gardens lead the list of natural heritage features. Examples include Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area, Devonian Botanic Garden, Wabamun Lake Provincial Park, and Manly Corner Crown Reserve. Many of these natural heritage resources serve as areas for recreation.

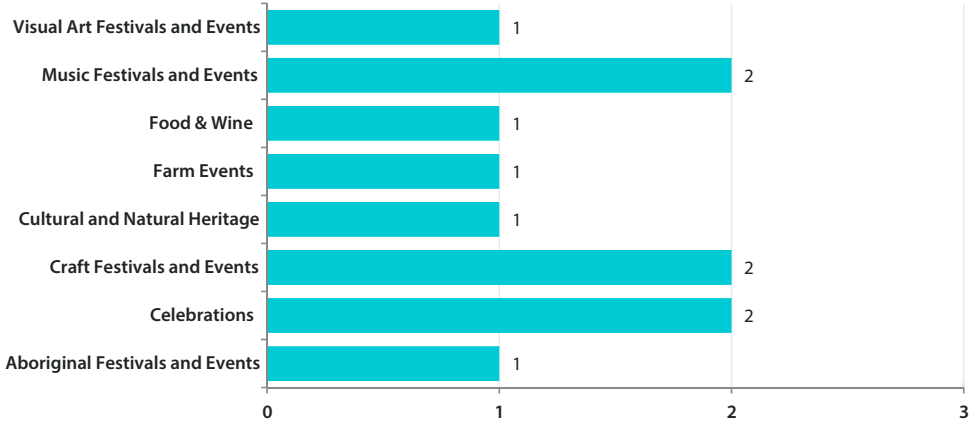
Figure 35 Cultural & Natural Heritage



Festivals & Events

Festivals and events are defined as recurring events (usually annually) that usually occur on the same day and in the same place. Based on this criterion the area has 11 festivals and events. The highest category is celebrations events are tied to a particular season such as the Christmas Craft Fair or Harvest Fest. The County is also home to a range of Jamborees where local communities host music jams/open mic sessions. The County has played an active role in the delivery of activities connected to National Aboriginal Day as well as Mini Monster Bash and Info Fair.

Figure 36 Festivals & Events

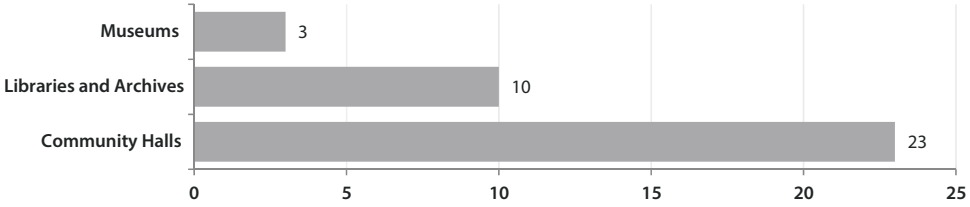


Facilities & Spaces

Community halls provide a venue for cultural programs and activities delivered either by community associations or community groups making use of the facility. The region is well-served by the County library system. The Multicultural Heritage Centre maintains a significant archival collection related to the history of Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. Two other community archives were identified.

Some communities decide to include all religious institutions and schools as cultural facilities. While it is true that some of these community facilities do open their doors for community cultural activity it was felt to include them all would significantly distort the picture of dedicated cultural facilities in the county. However, those institutions that do support culture in the county are to be thanked and commended.

Figure 37 Facilities& Spaces Overview



4.3.5 Municipal Cultural Programs

The Municipal Art Program

The Policy Statement mandating the Program states:

Parkland County shall encourage local artists to submit original works and coordinate the display of art in County-owned facilities and other locations. Parkland County shall develop, manage and preserve an art collection for display in Parkland County-owned facilities and other locations as determined by the Art Advisory Committee, and shall advise Council on matters of the Arts and assist in the acquisition of art for special projects.

Since its establishment, the County has built a significant visual art collection that is currently on display at the Parkland County Centre. The Arts Advisory Committee has worked closely with staff in managing the program. The Policy Statement guiding the program envisioned the collection being exhibited in other County-owned facilities and in other locations in the county deemed. To date exhibition of the collection has been restricted to interior spaces including the Parkland County Centre, the CSB and the SMS in Acheson. The longer-term vision is to expand the commissioning of work to include public art in the community. A high-quality catalogue of the collection has been produced by the program. The program has also been successful in engaging the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal artists.

The Non-Profit Organization Grant Program

As noted above, The County plays an active role in the delivery of activities connected to National Aboriginal Day as well as Mini Monster Bash and Info Fair. The County's primary means of supporting cultural programming is through its Non-Profit Organization Grant Program which supports non-profit arts, culture and heritage groups in delivering programs and activities.

Organizational Development Program/Service

Consistent with its focus on building the capacity of arts, culture and heritage groups to deliver community cultural programming, County staff offer organizational development services to community associations and a range of other non-profit organizations.

Cost Sharing Agreements

The cost sharing agreements have been highly successful in providing financial support to the region's major cultural facilities (below) which in turn provide a level of programs and activities to the region that would otherwise not be possible. The County maintains cost sharing agreements with the cities of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain to support organizations that deliver programming accessible by county residents. These agreements include:

- Horizon Stage (with the City of Spruce Grove)
- Pioneer Museum (with the City of Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Society)
- Multicultural Heritage Centre (with the Heritage Agricultural Society)

These agreements commit each municipality to provide annual operating funding and also contain provisions to share capital costs related to maintenance or facility upgrades.

Community Associations and Community Halls

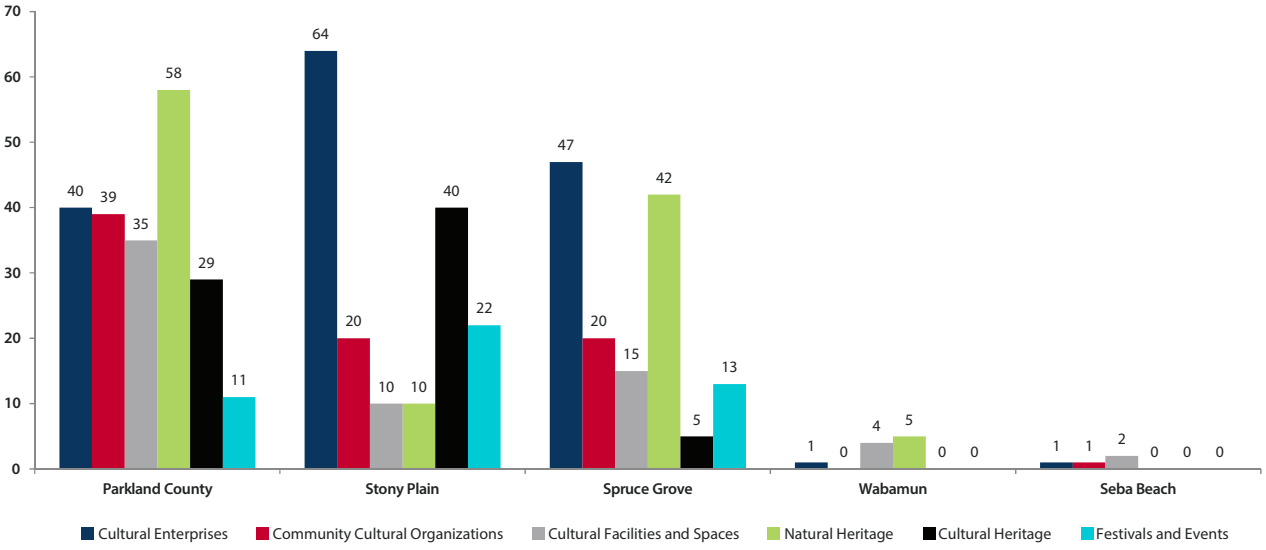
Community associations as well as community halls have a long history in the county serving as community hubs and venues for community activities. The County has long provided financial support to community associations. The level of financial support to community associations increased significantly as a result of recommendations in the Parkland County Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan from 2009**.**

The level of programming offered by the community associations varies significantly across the county ranging from simple rental of community halls to residents or community groups, to active community programming. The exact nature and frequency of cultural programming is not known but is believed to be less than recreation. Community cultural groups make use of community halls as venues for their own programs.

4.3.6 Comparative Analysis of Cultural Resources

Communities frequently ask how their mapping findings compare to other communities. Comparisons are difficult to make because all communities differ in their history, patterns of development, historical and current demographics, among others. Notwithstanding these differences, below we have compared Parkland County cultural resources to those in Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, Wabamun and Seba Beach. Identifying cultural resources in these communities is also important in acknowledging that residents of the County have access to cultural activities and experiences in the immediate region that enrich their lives. Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain in particular have shown their strong commitment to cultural development through the development of cultural master plan. These plans have placed an emphasis on establishing collaborative regional approaches to cultural planning and development. Cultural resources elsewhere in the Capital Region are in Edmonton, Leduc County, Lac Ste. Anne and Yellowhead County to name a few. Given the size of the communities it is not surprising that Wabamun and Seba Beach have fewer cultural resources across the board, albeit resources that are important to those communities

Figure 38 Number of Cultural Resources by Category



In terms of **Cultural Enterprises,** Parkland County has significantly fewer assets than Stony Plain but only 7 less than Spruce Grove. Evidence in many jurisdictions point to a growing numbers of creative individuals and enterprises are locating themselves in rural settings, often the result of lower costs of living than in urban settings. An emerging *creative rural economy* reflecting these trends is discussed below. Spruce Grove has industry strengths in design and photography. Parkland County and Stony Plain have more traditional enterprises such as art dealers and museums.

In terms of **Community Cultural Organizations**, Parkland County excels with significantly more cultural resources falling into this category than are found in the other communities. The number of these resources is directly connected to the County's longstanding support for community associations as well as community halls. The physical size of the county made it necessary to establish a significant number of these assets to serve the full population of the county.

The supply of cultural resources in the County is relatively balanced across each of the cultural resource categories. The County has the opportunity to improve our supply of cultural enterprises, festivals and events and leverage our significant natural heritage and cultural heritage resources as we move forward on strengthening the benefits culture can bring to the County.

Consistent with the rationale for the large number of Community Cultural Organizations, Parkland County also enjoys a larger number of **Cultural Spaces and Facilities,** than in other communities due primarily to the number of community halls. This category of cultural resources does not include religious institutions and schools in the county, some of which do open their doors for use by cultural groups and activities. These assets were excluded because it was not possible to determine which religious institutions or schools did serve as cultural facilities; a blanket inclusion of these facilities it was felt would distort the picture of cultural facilities in the county.

In the category of **Cultural Heritage** Stony Plain with its historic downtown, Pioneer Museum, Multicultural Heritage Centre, and popular murals program telling the stories of the community's history all contribute to it having the greatest number of assets in this category. Parkland County Hills of Hope Historical Society has published local history and erected a number of signs and cairns of historical interest recalling early fur trading posts, early settlers who helped develop the communities of the area, and the many school districts which dotted the area. As noted earlier, Parkland County's strength in cultural heritage is linked to the number of cemeteries.

In the category of **Natural Heritage** Parkland County's resources far exceed the other two municipalities. The county's rural geography sets the context for a range of natural heritage features and assets. Along with natural heritage assets comes a significant offering of recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and boating.

In the category of **Festivals and Events** Stony Plain ranked highest. A significant number of these events are rooted in the town's heritage. Parkland County had comparable numbers of festivals and events to Spruce Grove.

4.3.7 Cultural Development in Small Towns & Rural Areas

In embracing a broader vision of cultural planning and development in a rural environment, guidance can be found in *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture*[7] prepared by the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC). CCNC is an organization serving individuals working in culture in Canadian municipalities. The report found that cultural activities support capacity building, empowerment, collaboration, expanded networking opportunities, and transformation.

Opportunities for cultural development in small towns and rural areas lie with youth, artists and creative entrepreneurs, and urban-to-rural migrants. Youth engagement is fundamental to population retention (see 10.1.6 above). Efforts include skill-building programs to support a workforce capable of attracting new creative industries and conversely allowing youth to remain in their own community in lieu of moving away for employment reasons. The report indicates that the artists and creative entrepreneurs in the community and urban-to-rural migrants act as a bulwark for growth as they tend to have established networks and businesses and often take a leadership role in community initiatives. Additionally, the report highlights that a critical factor in the success of cultural development in a rural context is the availability of broadband internet. While the County has made significant strides in expanding broadband, there is still work to be done. This digital connectivity helps attract and connect individuals working within the creative industries, supports the sharing of cultural practices, and allows for enhanced marketing tools and opportunities.

The report maintains that recurring ingredients for cultural-led regeneration and development in rural or small town settings include:

- The need for an underlying appreciation and attitude of acceptance toward local culture, history, people and assets, and a community's sense of place
- The valuing of the arts in everyday life, and an inclusive encouragement of broad-based participation
- The requirement of key leaders representing the broad community, and a community-based coalition willing to work towards a common goal
- The use of social networks as a key to gather volunteers and arts supporters who work on exhibitions, festivals, community cultural development projects; support artists in their community-regeneration efforts; and inclusively encourage cultural vibrancy throughout the community
- The need to develop cultural facilities and infrastructure as essential gathering places - functioning as a cornerstone of community cohesion and community building. Support for this infrastructure, either as part of new developments or as maintenance of existing facilities, is essential to create a visible focus of efforts and to offer a physical point of contact for diverse community groups
- The report advocates for a capacity building approach to cultural development focusing on facilitating development rather than doing projects or tasks

4.4 RESOURCING & CAPACITY FOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

Parkland County, like all municipalities, faces difficult decisions about how we expend our limited resources. The 2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card noted that Canada's parks, recreation, sport facilities are at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment made to address maintenance deferrals and backlogs. In 2015, our operational budget for our Parks, Recreation and Culture services (excluding Family and Community Support Services budgets) was $5,584,100 with a five-year average operational expenditure of $3,939,766. Between 2009 and 2015, operational expenditures on parks, recreation and culture increased by 41% from a low of $3,302,883.

The distribution of operational expenditures varies significantly between parks, recreation and culture service areas. Analysis shows that, on average, we invest:

- 46% of total annual expenditures on recreation ($1,797,803),
- 21% of total annual expenditures on culture ($817,245), including approximately $562,250 allocated to libraries with the remainder allocated to cultural cost share partners, and
- 17% of total annual expenditures on parks and trails ($687,940) which is opposite to how residents indicated they wished County resources would be prioritized.

$3,939,766 average annual expenditure on parks, recreation & culture

13% average annual cost recovery rate (2009–2015)

40% of annual revenues are generated by parks though a considerable proportion is attributed to cash-in-lieu

Our parks, recreation and culture service generate revenues. Since 2009, we have generated, on average, $478,872 in revenues annually. Our total revenue generation fluctuated considerably from a low $307,542 in 2011 to a high of $736,537 in 2009. Parks generates, on average, 40% of our revenues with recreation and culture generating 27% and 30% respectively. However, it is important to recognize that parks' revenues include cash-in-lieu contributions which typically account for 36% of total park revenues. Between 2009-2013, annual cash-in-lieu contributions ranged from a low of $46,953 to a high of $1,504,011. The average annual cash-in-lieu contribution was $70,374. As such, parks' average revenues, excluding average cash-in-lieu contributions, is approximately $122,782 annually.

Our distribution of expenditures on parks, recreation and culture does not align with the priorities residents identified through the household survey. Residents prioritized expenditures on parks over recreation and culture. However, we currently expend the least on parks.

Contrasting our expenditures and revenues shows us that we recover, on average, 13% of our operational expenditures on parks, recreation and culture. Or, in other words, County tax dollars subsidize 87% of the costs associated with enabling parks, recreation and culture opportunities for our residents. However, cost recovery is not equal across service areas. Parks recovers, on average, 35% of its expenditures followed by culture at 18% and recreation at 8%. As noted above, the parks recovery rate is greatly influenced by the size of annual cash-in-lieu contributions.

10.66 staff in 2015

51% of staff time is dedicated to recreation and culture.

49% of staff time is dedicate to parks and trails

In 2015, there were10.66 full time equivalents (FTE) staff delivering our parks, recreation and culture program. Since 2009, we have increased the number of staff by 1.32 FTE's. Currently, 51% of our staff capacity is dedicated to delivering our recreation and culture program with the remaining 49% focused on parks and trails delivery.

4.4.1 Comparing Our Parks Capacity

To evaluate how well we are doing, we compare our parks capacity and resourcing to similar communities. A review of key performance metrics in the NRPA 2015 field report for communities with a similar population density to ours (see Table 5), shows us that Parkland County is:

- Investing less per acre in our parks system.
- Investing slightly more per person in our parks than the lower quartile of benchmarked communities but less than the media quartile.
- Generating slightly more per acre of park space than the lower quartile of benchmarked communities.
- Has significantly fewer staff per acre than the lower quartile of benchmarked communities.

Table 5 Benchmarking Parks Resourcing & Capacity

Measure	Parkland County	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Expenditure per acre	$ 1,294.88	$ 1,712.17	$4,534.27	$8,796.17
Expenditure per capita	$ 22.51	$17.31	$43.45	$107.75
Revenue per capita	$ 4.02	$3.46	$14.16	$37.51
FTE per acre	Less than 1	5.40	12.80	24.10

* Note, the Bank of Canada Average US exchange rate in 2015 was 1.2787 which was used to convert the US dollar figures to Canadian.

5.0 Moving Forward: The Future of Parks, Recreation & Culture

5.1 VISION

Step ahead 10 years to 2026, and now imagine parks, recreation and culture in Parkland County.

In 2026…

Parkland County has become known for our impressive system of connected and accessible park lands, recreation opportunities and cultural experiences. Our residents and our families have become happier, healthier and stronger as they spend more time taking part in parks, recreation and cultural experiences. We have reconnected with and celebrate our nature and our heritage and are active stewards of our ecological network and our cultural resources. We are working collaboratively with our partners to further the protection of both our environmentally significant areas and our cultural resources. Our parks, recreation and culture opportunities are helping to attract, and retain, businesses, investment and residents to the County, while strengthening and diversifying our tourism industry. With a commitment to partnerships, we are working collaboratively with our municipal partners, our community partners and parks, recreation and cultural organizations to deliver the highest quality services to our residents.

5.2 DESIRED OUTCOMES

Our plan is focused on the future of our parks, recreation and culture system. Simply providing a better system is not the objective. Parks, Recreation and Culture are a means to an end. They are purposeful tools used to address a variety of individual, social, ecological, and economic issues. By providing a quality parks, recreation and culture system, the County is working to achieve the following outcomes.

Individual & Community Health & Well-being

- Residents are healthier—physically and mentally.
- Community identity, spirit and creativity is strengthened.

Accessible, Diverse & Inclusive

- Every resident has easy access to a diversity of parks, recreation and culture opportunities regardless of where they live.
- Parks, recreation and culture opportunities are inclusive for all.

Connected to Nature & Our Heritage

- Residents' connection to and appreciation of nature and our heritage is deepened.

Conserved & Restored

- Environmentally significant areas and the ecosystem services they provide are conserved and, where needed, restored.
- Heritage and cultural sites are conserved and, where needed, restored.

Economic Growth & Diversification

- Our reputation as a destination for memorable nature based and cultural tourism experiences is elevated.
- Support the attraction of new and retention of existing residents, workers and businesses.

Shared Stewardship

- Residents and stakeholders are actively engaged as volunteers, partners and shared stewards and have the capacity needed to succeed.

Figure 39 Plan At A Glance

PLAN AT A GLANCE

THE FUTURE OF PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

VISION

In **2026**…

Parkland County has become known for our impressive system of connected and accessible park lands, recreation opportunities and cultural experiences. Our residents and our families have become happier, healthier and stronger as they spend more time taking part in parks, recreation and cultural experiences. We have reconnected with and celebrate our nature and our heritage and are active stewards of our ecological network and our cultural resources. We are working collaboratively with our partners to further the protection of both our environmentally significant areas and our cultural resources. Our parks, recreation and culture opportunities are helping to attract, and retain, businesses, investment and residents to the County, while strengthening and diversifying our tourism industry. With a commitment to partnerships, we are working collaboratively with our municipal partners, our community partners and parks, recreation and cultural organizations to deliver the highest quality services to our residents.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Individual & Community Health & Well-being
- Conserved & Restored
- Economic Growth & Diversification
- Accessible, Diverse & Inclusive
- Connected to Nature & Our Heritage
- Shared Stewardship

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

- Grow volunteer capacity & commitment
- Continue cost sharing
- Apply consistent classification systems
- Enhance the not for profit grant program
- Grow capacity & improve data
- Grow nature-based & cultural tourism
- Minimize barriers to participation through leisure education
- Strengthen communications & engagement

STRATEGIES

PARKS, CONSERVATION & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Protect our nature
- Expand, diversify & connect our parks & trails
- Enhance and upgrade our existing parks & trails
- Actively manage our parks & trails
- Enhance water-based opportunities
- Enhance outdoor sport facilities

RECREATION

- Collaborate for recreation
- Enable easy access to quality & diverse recreation facilities
- Enhance recreation programs

CULTURE

- Organize for culture
- Enhance the municipal art program
- Create outdoor cultural spaces
- Community halls for the future
- Grow a Creative Rural Economy
- Focus attention on placemaking

5.3 OUR ROLE IN PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

Parks, recreation and culture services are provided through an interconnected "leisure system". The leisure system is comprised of three core service providers:

- Public service providers (e.g., municipal, provincial and federal governments and school districts),
- Not-for profit providers (e.g., recreation and sport clubs, cultural organizations, environmental organizations),
- Commercial providers (e.g., for profit businesses).

Each of these service providers plays an important role in meeting the needs of our residents. In fact, this systems approach is essential as no one provider can, or should attempt, to solely deliver the diversity of services needed, or expected, by our residents. It is vitally important that the parks, recreation and cultural needs are understood and that, as a leisure system, we work collaboratively to service our residents.

With a commitment to providing quality service through efficient and effective practices as outlined in the County's Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020, it is imperative that we choose our role in the provision of parks, recreation and cultural services deliberately. In addition, forces such as competing municipal budgets, community concerns regarding taxation and efficient use of tax dollars, population growth, evolving user demands and aging infrastructure further necessitate a prioritized approach to parks, recreation and culture servicing.

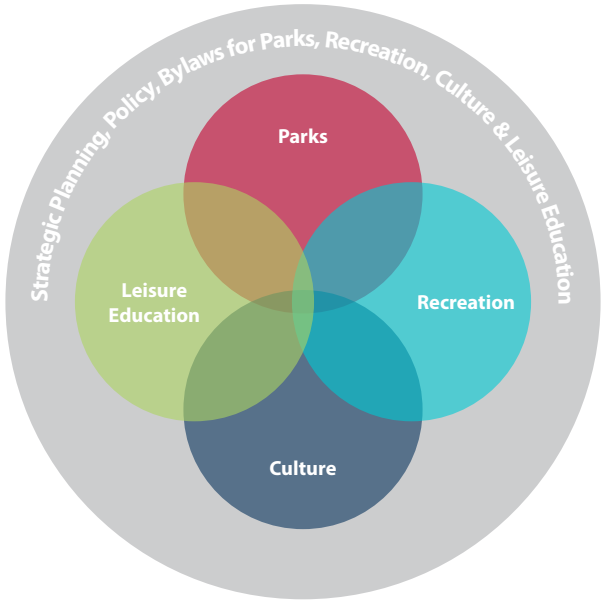
Moving forward, the County will work collaboratively with the entire "leisure system" to meet the need of our residents. However, we will move forward with clear focus on delivering services that align with our role in the system. To articulate our role in the leisure system, we have established the following service delivery framework.

5.3.1 Service Areas

Moving forward, the County is going to continue to deliver, facilitate or support the delivery of the following service areas (see Figure 40):

- Parks, Trails & Open Space
- Recreation & Sport
- Culture
- Leisure Education

Figure 40 The County's Service Areas



Leisure Education

Is the process through which individuals obtain the knowledge skills, confidence, and values to engage in their desired leisure pursuits (Robertson, 2000)

Leisure Literacy

Leisure literacy is the degree of skills, confidence, knowledge, resources and awareness of the value of leisure that supports one's engagement in a variety of leisure activities across their lifespan

Leisure Repertoire

The collection of all activities that one may choose to engage in as leisure to satisfy a need.

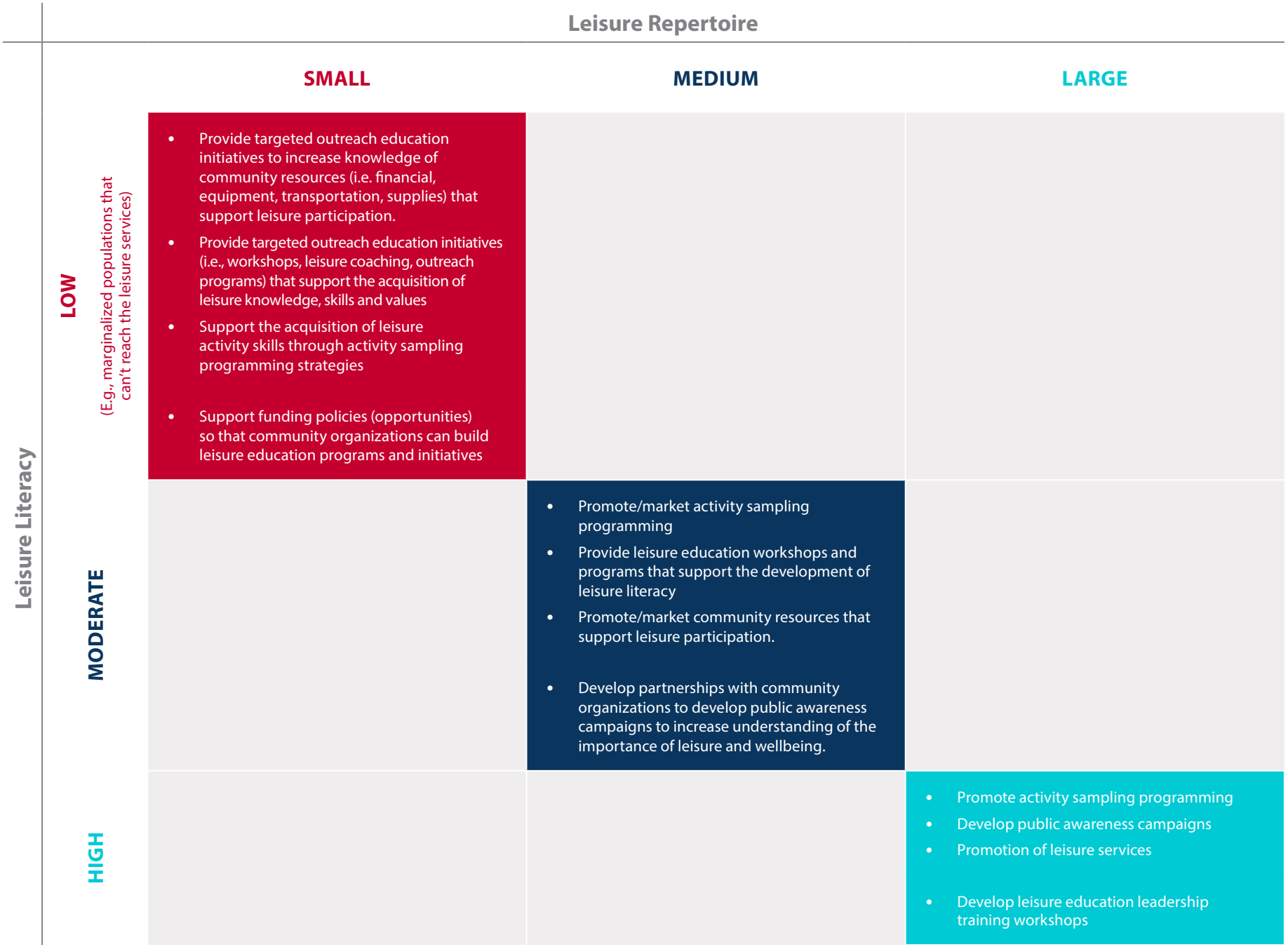
Leisure Education

It is known that many people who could benefit from leisure (parks, recreation and culture) are unable to do so because they may lack the skills, confidence, knowledge, resources, and values (known as leisure literacy) that are necessary to engage in a leisure activity. The less leisure literate residents are, the smaller their leisure repertoire and the less likely they are to experience the benefits of leisure. We recognize that, as public sector providers, we have a responsibility to extend our focus beyond the provision of programs and facilities and that we have a significant role to play in developing the leisure literacy of our residents.

To improve the leisure literacy of our residents, we plan to take a strategic approach to providing leisure education. The approach, as conceptually illustrated in Figure 41, will apply varying strategies to educate our residents about the leisure opportunities available to them and to help them overcome barriers to participation. The strategies applied will be responsive to the level of leisure literacy and leisure repertoire. For example, for residents who are relatively leisure literate and already have a large leisure repertoire, our focus would be largely on the promotion and marketing of opportunities. Meanwhile, for those residents who face many more barriers to participation and have a small leisure repertoire, we will work with our partners to apply more comprehensive leisure education strategies that go far beyond promotion and marketing.

> "Leisure education is a total developmental process through which individuals develop an understanding of leisure, of self in relation to leisure, and of the relationships among leisure, their own lifestyle and society" (Mundy, 1998)

Figure 41 Leisure Education Framework, Oncescu & Ellis, 2016



5.3.2 Service Delivery

Public service providers can play a diversity of roles in the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services. These most typically include:

- **Direct Provider—**Municipality identifies/perceives community needs and plans, develops, constructs and operates facilities, programs and services through public funding.
- **Enabler: Indirect Provision—Partnerships (aka Community Development)—**Municipality initiates and enters into mutually beneficial and collaborative partnerships and alliances to provide the services and may provide various supports such as capacity building, leadership, facilitation and finances to community groups, organizations and agencies that then plan and deliver the services.
- **Cost Share (Patron)—**Municipality provides financial support through cost share agreements to an existing agency or entity such as an adjacent municipal government who already offers the services desired.

In addition, the municipal government may play the role of legislator/regulator through the creation and implementation of relevant bylaws and policies.

Given the diverse nature of the County's Parks, Recreation and Culture program, it is unreasonable to believe that a single service delivery approach would be applied in each service area. The question then becomes, which service delivery role will we apply in each of the parks, recreation and culture service areas into the future? As illustrated in Figure 42, moving forward, the County will play the following role in the delivery of parks, recreation, culture and leisure education services:

Figure 42 County Role in the Delivery of Parks, Recreation, Culture and Leisure Education Services

Activity Sampling

A strategy in leisure education where participants learn about leisure through introductory participation in a variety of activities.

More specifically, for each service area, the County will be responsible for:

Parks, Trails & Open Space

- Planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of:
  - Conservation, Destination & Community Parks
  - Municipal Trails and Pathways
  - Environmental and Municipal Reserve
  - Municipal Playgrounds
  - Community Outdoor Sport Facilities
  - Cemeteries
- Protection of environmentally significant areas through Conservation Park and Conservation Reserve designations and bylaw compliance.
- Administer leases of Environmental and Municipal Reserve.
- Cost sharing for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of regional level outdoor sport facilities.
- Plan, policy and bylaw development and enforcement relating to parks, trails and open spaces.

Recreation & Sport

- Facilitating, enabling and supporting the provision of recreation and sport programming.
- Providing leadership and support to recreation and sport clubs and organizations.
- Cost sharing for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of regional level indoor recreation and sport facilities.
- Plan, policy and bylaw development relating to recreation and sport.

Culture

- Facilitating, enabling and supporting the provision of cultural programming, public art and cultural events.
- Cost sharing for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of regional level cultural facilities.
- Providing leadership and support to Community Associations.
- Facilitating, enabling and supporting volunteerism.
- Plan, policy and bylaw development relating to culture.

Leisure Education

- Planning, design and delivery of leisure education strategies to increase resident's leisure literacy and leisure repertoires.
- Providing training and support to partners develop leadership in leisure education.
- Develop funding opportunities that support leisure education.

5.3.3 Priority Markets: Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

The County can't be all things, to all people, all the time so we need to prioritize how and where the County's finite resources are expended. Prioritizing requires us to be deliberate about what programs or facilities are offered as well as the market segments we are focused on.

Moving forward, emphasis will be made on ensuring decisions about parks, recreation and cultural will directly and indirectly benefit the greatest number of residents in the following priority markets:

- **Children & Youth**—we know that an early start at a healthy lifestyle is likely to last a lifetime but that leisure education and developing a strong leisure repertoire at a young age is critical to enabling life-long participation.
- **Isolated, Vulnerable & Special Needs Populations**—we know that these populations tend to face barriers that can reduce or prevent participation which leads to growing individual and social issues.
- **Inactive Adults**—we know that physical inactivity is leading to significant individual and social costs.

In addition to thinking about who we will target with our services, we also need to be purposeful on the "level of play" that we will target. In accordance with the Long-Term Athlete Development Model (Figure 43), our priority will be to provide, facilitate and/or support parks, recreation and culture opportunities that:

- Introduce participants to the activity,
- Allow participants to learn the activity, and
- Facilitate participants remaining active for life in the activity.

Participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities declines as the level of play, competition and specialization increases. By focusing our efforts where we can reach the most number of participants, we are better positioning ourselves to deliver the greatest public good.

Allocation of municipal funding into the future will target the priorities outlined above. As indicated in Figure 44, facilities, programs and services to which the entire community can benefit will be funded through public taxes. As the facilities, programs and services become more specialized and; therefore, less accessible and likely to be enjoyed by the entire community, funding will come more from private sector investments, specialty group investments and user fees. The County may work as a partner in such facilities, programs and services but typically won't lead these facilities, programs and services.

Figure 44 County Funding Framework

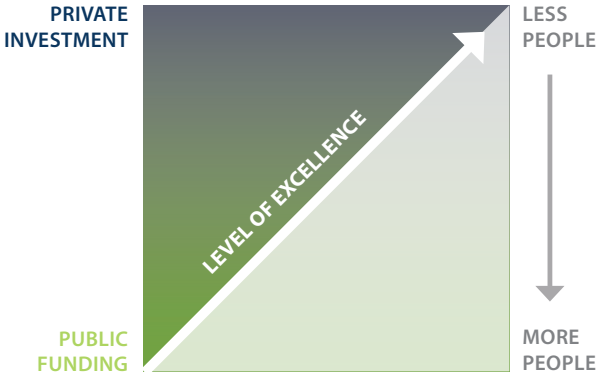
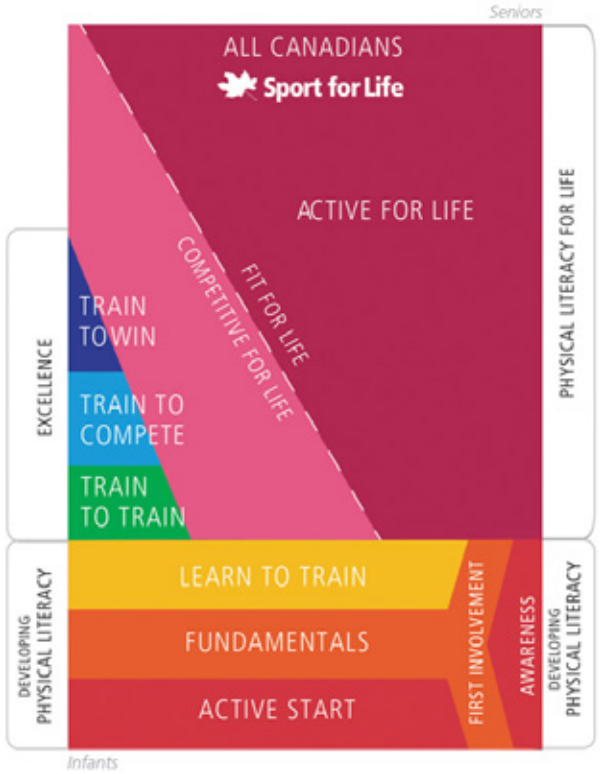


Figure 43 Long-Term Athlete Development Model



6.0 Overarching Strategies & Actions

Planning our parks, recreation and culture future required that we looked individually at the priorities in each program area. However, we know that parks, recreation and culture are interrelated and recognized the need to identify strategies and actions that transcend across the County's parks, recreation and culture programs. As we strive to provide the best leisure services that we can to our residents and visitors, it is important to find efficiencies where we can and provide benefit across parks, recreation and culture. For many items it is also more beneficial to view them across the entire leisure system as there are overlaps in both facilities and services. For example, a community hall can be used for recreation or cultural purposes—separating items such as grant funding may create a duplication of efforts, or may result in all available opportunities not being realized.

6.1 GROW VOLUNTEER CAPACITY & COMMITMENT

Promoting and developing capacity in our volunteers is a key to delivering successful parks, recreation and cultural facilities and programs. Meeting the needs of our residents can not be done alone—we need to support volunteers in delivering the excellent services that they do. Moving forward, making more resources available to those who are donating their time will allow for their personal growth and satisfaction, while ensuring that the County has set up its volunteers for success.

Actions:

1. Continue to support not-for-profit organizations and volunteers who are providing parks, recreation and culture opportunities to our target markets, Support may include items such as:
    a. Training
    b. Grant funding and fundraising
    c. Information referral
    d. Board development
    e. Insurance
    f. Marketing and communications
    g. Shared registration management software
    h. One-stop registration,
    i. Shared customer data (in accordance with relevant legislation) and data management
2. Work collaboratively with community associations to:
    a. Identify performance and level of service guidelines for the community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds as part of County grants,
    b. Evaluate the life cycle stage of community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds,
    c. Identify opportunities to enhance community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds to better meet needs, and
    d. Prepare implementation plans and funding strategies to achieve the upgrades.
3. Undertake and inventory and strategic review of the County's current parks, recreation and/or culture related partnerships. Evaluated the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of each partnership and identify any areas for growth/improvement. Prepare a partnership maintenance plan to respond to opportunities to strengthen each partnership.
4. Based on the inventory of partnerships, identify key partnership gaps that ought to be filled in order to deliver on the priorities established in this plan. Work to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with those organizations.

6.2 ENHANCE THE NOT FOR PROFIT GRANT PROGRAM

There is strong demand in the County for support from the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program. In 2015 and many previous years, the Program had more than three times the amount of requests for funding than is available in the Program covering three topic areas: Operational, Minor Sustainability and Project/Program.

Actions:

1. Recognizing the critical role of not-for-profit organizations and volunteers in meeting the County's parks, recreation and cultural needs, the County will continue to provide, and as able enhance, the Not-for-Profit Grant program. The grant will continue to offer operations, minor capital and project funds to successful organizations.
2. Provide incentive through the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program to encourage collaboration among arts, culture or heritage organizations that in turn will support undertaking more ambitious programs or initiatives.

6.3 CONTINUE COST SHARING

We rely on partners such as adjacent municipalities, school districts and not-for profits to support the delivery of leisure services for our residents. In turn, we compensate these partners for our residents use of their facilities through cost-sharing arrangements. , This collaborative approach ensures we avoid duplication of services throughout the broader region. It is important that we maintain positive relationships with our cost share partners and that we work with these partners to ensure quality services are available to our residents. Review of existing cost sharing agreements showed inconsistencies across cost sharing agreements. Moving forward, the following recommendations will ensure that we establish cost sharing frameworks that are efficient, consistent and equitable for all.

Actions:

1. In accordance with the cost share policy outlined in this plan, the County will continue to support partners in the planning, development and operation of parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs through Cost Share agreements on eligible initiatives.
2. Proactively pursue new cost share partnerships that will enable the County to address eligible parks, recreation and culture facility gaps identified in this plan.
3. Work collaboratively with cost share partners to undertake a review of the facility charges, allocation policies and definitions of prime time and non-prime time hours to ensure consistency throughout the region, identify incentives to maximize utilization of non-primetime capacity and to ensure prime time capacity is fairly allocated by age group and facility use.
4. Work with partners to prepare and implement a long-term preventative facility asset management program for County provided or cost shared facilities.

6.4 MINIMIZE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION THROUGH LEISURE EDUCATION

Different people face different barriers to participating in parks, recreation and culture. Throughout the engagement participants were clear that parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs should be available to everyone regardless of age, income, ethnicity or physical ability. Common barriers include distance, lack of awareness and information, lack of skill, finances, availability of equipment among many others. Addressing barriers to participation is a complex undertaking; but, is one of the most important strategies our County can apply as, often, it is those populations who face the most barriers that stand to gain the most from participation in parks, recreation and culture. Taking a strategic approach to improving leisure literacy begins with leisure education. Strong leisure education will help all of our residents, no matter where they land on the leisure literacy spectrum, to engage in leisure education and overcome barriers to participation that they currently face.

Actions:

1. In alignment with the Leisure Education framework presented in this plan, the County will work with partners in the education, health, justice, social services and others to develop and implement a comprehensive leisure education strategy to address the barriers to participation faced by those residents who have low leisure literacy and a small leisure repertoire.

6.5 APPLY CONSISTENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

There is value in classifying parks, trails, outdoor sport and indoor recreation facilities based on common characteristics and establishing high level design, development and management guidance to ensure a consistent level of service while being careful not to homogenize our parks, trails, outdoor sport and indoor recreation facilities and future design processes. Parks, trails, outdoor sport facility and indoor recreation facility classification systems enable consistent and appropriate planning, design, programming and maintenance can occur. These also enable a better understanding of what assets it may or may not be appropriate for the County to enter into or pursue cost share agreements. This plan establishes clear parks and recreation asset classifications which will be used to guide future planning, design and development as well as cost sharing. To achieve greater consistency and quality, we will implement the following actions:

Actions:

1. Adopt and apply the parks classification system defined in Appendix A.1.
2. Adopt and apply the trails classification system defined in Appendix A.2.
3. Adopt and apply the staging area classification system defined in Appendix A.3.
4. Adopt and apply the water access classification system defined in Appendix A.4.
5. Adopt and apply the outdoor sport facility classification system defined in Appendix A.5.
6. Adopt and apply the indoor recreation facility classification system defined in Appendix A.6.

6.6 GROW CAPACITY & IMPROVE DATA

To enable the delivery of quality parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs requires capacity. The right capacity, both in terms of staffing levels and staff training and expertise, is critical to us achieving the goals we have set in this plan. Our staff have had significant success to date but, as demands increase, their capacity to meet growing and changing expectations are constrained.

Good decisions need to be based on good data and information. Accurate data is critical to making well-informed decisions about our supply of facilities and programs and we know we have opportunity to improve the data we collect to inform management decisions. To grow the County's capacity for recreation and to improve our ability to make informed decisions, we will implement the following actions:

Actions:

1. Undertake a RecExcel assessment to evaluate the County's service delivery strengths and areas for improvement.
2. Consider increasing the number of staff dedicated to supporting implementation of the recreation program to focus on developing and maintaining relationships with partners, supporting partners and supporting any County led recreation programming.
3. Consider the creation of either a new part-time cultural staff position or assigning an existing staff person with clear responsibilities in culture. Responsibilities could include:
    a. Supporting the work of the Municipal Arts Program, in particular moving the collection out into other community venues and in establishing a public art policy and program
    b. Acting as the champion and lead staff position responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Culture component of the PRCMP (including a Cultural Leadership Group, regular Cultural Summit and possible Cultural Report Card)
    c. Taking stock of cultural groups and activities in the county (beginning with findings from the cultural mapping process)
    d. Working with Economic Development in supporting in tourism development in the county, including the development of packages or itineraries drawing on cultural resources, and marketing programs leveraging these resources
    e. Supporting new arts, culture and heritage initiatives as they arise
    f. Playing a leadership role in the delivery of a major "signature" event that draws attention to the cultural life and cultural resources in the county; work in collaboration with interested cultural groups, business and community leaders in the county
    g. Working with staff in the Planning and Development Department to establish and implement a heritage mandate for the County
4. Continue Staff training and capacity development in parks, conservation, recreation and culture planning, management, facility operations, asset management, volunteer leadership and other key areas as identified in the Rec Excel program evaluation.
5. Work with municipal, not-for-profit and other partners to align and enhance data collection regarding parks, recreation and culture participation in the region including program registration, facility usage, capital and operation expense and revenue tracking and other data critical to informed planning and management.
6. Work with municipal, not-for-profit, private sector and other partners to maintain inventory of parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs in the region and to complete and ongoing analysis of priority gaps in the supply of facilities and programs.

RecExcel

An analytical data service that measures the competencies of municipalities and organizations and suggests relevant parks and recreation best practices, helping them pursue excellence and achieve their strategic goals

6.7 STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

With such a diverse network of parks, recreation and cultural providers and partners, communications within the delivery system is critical as is meaningful engagement. Just as importantly, it is vital that we ensure good external communications with and engagement of our residents so they are aware of the parks, recreation and culture opportunities available to them, can help influence decisions and to ensure they know how parks, recreation and culture are benefiting the County. Participants in the engagement process were clear, there is opportunity for us to do a better job with communications within and engagement of the delivery system and with residents and visitors. Lack of access to information was the second most prominent barrier to participation in parks, recreation and culture. To improve our communications, we will implement the following actions:

Action:

1. Hold a County Parks, Recreation and Culture Roundtable with stakeholders and the public each year to:
   a. Review progress on implementing the master plan,
   b. Raise and receive input on issues affecting parks, recreation and culture,
   c. Receive input on priorities for implementing the master plan.
2. Continue to work with regional partners to provide integrated communications tools that promote and provide residents with the information they need to take part in parks, recreation and culture programs and utilize parks, recreation and culture facilities.
3. Work with communications to develop a communications campaign to promote the benefits or parks, recreation and culture to County residents and the outcomes that parks, recreation and culture programs are achieving.
4. Apply modern communications tools and approaches (e.g., social media, youtube channel, blogs) to create a "connected community" of parks, recreation and culture champions in the County and to share information about the importance and benefits of parks, recreation and culture to residents; County progress toward enhancing parks, recreation and culture and upcoming parks, recreation and culture opportunities.
5. Develop, maintain and promote a comprehensive and integrated calendar of parks, recreation and culture events and programs. Promote the calendar through proven communication channels.
6. Develop interactive webpages/apps that allow residents and visitors to easily plan their desired parks, trails, recreation and culture experiences.
7. Investigate the creation of a Parkland County Cultural Portal based on an examination of best practices in other municipalities. Explore the potential of a regional portal serving all three municipalities.

6.8 GROW NATURE-BASED & CULTURAL TOURISM

By highlighting what makes our community distinctive, authentic, and memorable, tourism can be utilized to diversify and expand the local economy. For Parkland, our strong offering of nature-based recreation and cultural opportunities can be leveraged as tourism assets. Given the close proximity of our County to population centres in and around the Capital Region, we are well positioned geographically to bring local visitors to parks/open spaces and cultural amenities. Travel surveys conducted in Canada and United States demonstrate that nearly two-third of adult travelers include a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity or event while on a trip of 50 miles (80 kilometres) or more.

Nature based tourism utilizes the natural features of an area to attract visitors, and our parks do just that by offering people unique and immersive ways to connect with nature. The size of Chickakoo Lake and Hasse Lake Recreation Areas, for example, allow people to enjoy natural settings while participating in a wide range of outdoor activities, which can span from passive recreation opportunities such as having a picnic to physical activities like mountain biking or trail running.

Numerous markets can be marketed to nature-based tourism because of the range of opportunities that people enjoy from outdoor recreation pursuits. We have a strong offering of parks and open spaces, and as more destination parks are developed, they can be utilized for the enjoyment of both our residents and visitors to the County. Overall, nature-based tourism is a form of sustainable economic development that increases emphasis on protection of natural areas while encouraging people to enjoy them.

In terms of cultural tourism, while specific events and attractions form part of the motivation for travel, research confirms that travelers are selecting destinations based or "place-based" offerings and experiences. Place-based cultural tourism assumes that people travel to do more than simply attend an event or attraction but also to experience the destination's history and heritage, its narratives and stories, its landscape, its people.

One observation made during the consultation process was that the County should be responsible for connecting diverse cultural resources and developing packages or itineraries as a guide to experiencing the diverse cultural life of the county. Another was that one thing the county had not done well was "telling our stories." At the moment it is revealing that cultural resources are no-where to be found on the tourism map of the county.

In short, place-based cultural tourism draws on an integrated understanding of all of a community's cultural resources and turns them into revenue generating opportunities and itineraries. In communities, such as Parkland County, that do not possess major cultural facilities or attractions, this perspective and approach to tourism development holds greater potential. The County could consider developing an overall interpretation strategy that identifies important stories and themes that express important aspects of the county's unique history and culture and connects them to cultural resources places.

Actions:

1. Work with economic development to create a Tourism Master Plan that:
   - **a.** Identifies target markets and market expectations;
   - **b.** Inventories existing nature based, sport and cultural tourism experiences;
   - **c.** Identify the County's competitive advantages for nature based and cultural tourism;
   - **d.** Identifies gaps between market expectations and the current opportunities;
   - **e.** Proposes strategies to improve existing and develop new visitor experiences; and
   - **f.** Proposes strategies to improve marketing.

7.0 The Plan for Parks, Conservation & Outdoor Activities

7.1 PROTECT OUR NATURE

An interconnected network of protected areas is the single most effective means of protecting native biodiversity and the supply of ecosystem services on which we depend. Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures occur at all scales including municipal parks and can be recognized as contributing to Canada's targets as long as each area has an expressed objective to conserve nature, is long-term, generates effective nature conservation outcomes, and has governance regimes in place that ensure effective management. Through this plan, the County is committing to playing a role in helping Alberta and Canada achieve its protected area targets through the designation and effective management of conservation focused parks and, where appropriate, conservation reserves which will be managed in accordance with the internationally accepted definition of a Protected Area[8] and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Category II which is a protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.

Target 1:

"By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures." (Pathway to Canada Target 1)

Analysis showed that our ESA's have received limited protection, to date, and that the physical connectivity between the ESA's is limited. To enhance the protection of our nature, we will implement the following actions:

Actions:

1. Designate additional Conservation Parks to expand the protection of the County's environmentally significant areas. Though not exhaustive, some key areas of focus include:
   a. Devon Dunes Landscape Unit
   b. Kilini Creek Corridor ESA (Provincial Significance) from Johnny's Lake northeast to Eden Lake. (Kilini Creek Crown Reserve covers some of this corridor).
   c. County-owned lands on the northeast portion of Cottage Lake (Provincially Significant ESA).
   d. North Saskatchewan and Pembina River Corridors.
2. Create ecological connections between the County's existing and future network of Conservation Parks, Conservation Reserves, Provincial Parks, Natural Areas, private conservation lands and environmentally significant areas.
3. Work with conservation partners to identify and prioritize areas for restoration within existing and future Conservation Parks. Develop and implement restoration plans.
4. Actively manage recreational use (see Section 7.3) within all County parks and environmentally significant areas to avoid or mitigate visitor impacts on ecological values.
5. Educate County operational staff about the ecological values in County parks and natural areas and appropriate management practices to sustain and/or restore those values.

A Protected Area is…

a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values''

6. Encourage the design and construction of new park, recreation and culture facilities to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency. Work towards achieving a program standard such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.

Conservation Network Design

In keeping with the principles of conservation network planning and the Environmental Conservation Master Plan (2014), we will work to establish new conservation parks to protect:

- Large patches of native vegetation.
- Wide corridors or clusters of smaller patches of native vegetation.
- Stepping stones of smaller patches of native vegetation through more disturbed landscapes.

Hasse Lake Day Use Park

7.2 EXPAND, DIVERSIFY & CONNECT OUR PARKS & TRAILS

Acquisition of new parkland would help us ensure a more equitable distribution of parks throughout the County, providing for better access to our most prized outdoor recreation opportunities. Additional parkland supply affords us the opportunity to provide a greater diversity of visitor experiences; while expanding the network in key areas will improve protection for sensitive ecosystems and enhance habitat connectivity.

7.2.1 Expand & Diversify Our Parks Supply

Actions:

1. Adopt and apply the following parks planning principles to guide the planning and design of the County's park system. Fulfilling these criteria is seen to create the highest and best use for parks. Five principles are presented below and are followed by criteria for each. The criteria establish measurable targets that allow for objective evaluation of how and where the principles are being satisfied for individual parks.

Access

All residents have access to barrier-free park space within a reasonable distance from home.

We believe that parks should provide inclusion and access to all people regardless of age, mobility range or ethnic background. Access means that people should have parks close to home and also face no physical or social barriers to participation within parks space. Under the umbrella of access the following criteria should be satisfied to allow all people the same enjoyment of parks:

- **Proximity:** All residential parcels should be within 8 kilometres of park space.
- **Universal Design:** There are opportunities for all people to engage in park activities with no physical barriers preventing access or participation.
- **Wayfinding and Informational Signage:** Ensure that information is readily available and easy to read so that lack of information does not become a barrier to participation in our parks.

Parkland Identity

All parks are designed as community hubs and social spaces that add to our identity and sense of community.

Our parks and open space are a reflection of Parkland's natural and social character. They play an important role in bringing the community together and providing a unique visual character for the area. This helps in placemaking and bolstering community pride.

- **Community Hubs:** Parks should have spaces that allow for social interaction. These can be large community gathering spaces or areas that allow "bump-in" styles of interaction.
- **Aesthetic Consistency:** Park, building and signage design should clearly communicate the Parkland brand and contribute to placemaking and identity-building of our County.
- **History and Story Telling:** Parks and open spaces should be seen as places to tell stories of our history and culture. It is important that park design allow our history and culture to be openly communicated.

Connection

Parks, pathways and open space are viewed as an interconnected system, and future parks planning should work to further the connectivity of the system.

All parks should be planned and designed to be part of a larger system that provides connection for both human-use and the maintenance of ecological integrity. Parks and trails should form a network throughout our open spaces to expand both the quality and type of recreation opportunities offered.

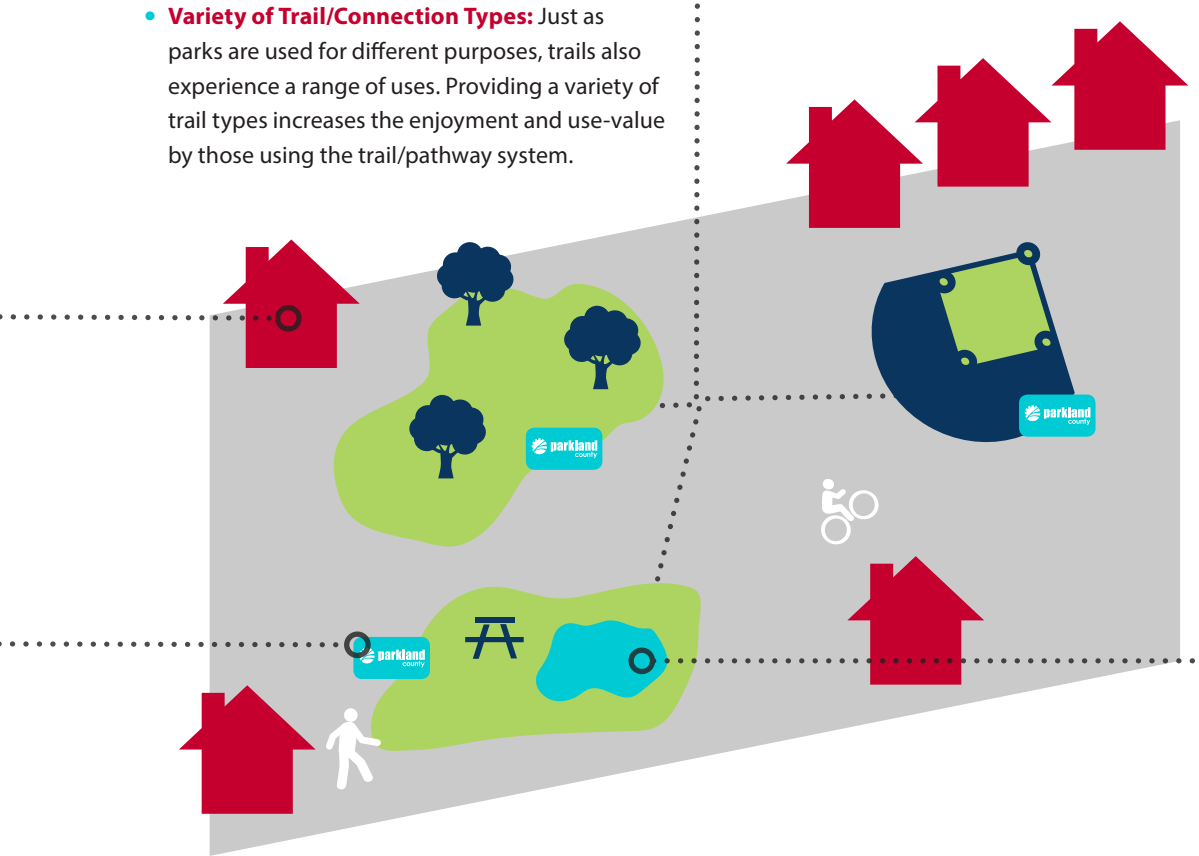
- **Pedestrian and Cyclist Connectivity:** Connections should be maximized between parks and community hubs to allow movement and ease of access to parks and open space.
- **Variety of Trail/Connection Types:** Just as parks are used for different purposes, trails also experience a range of uses. Providing a variety of trail types increases the enjoyment and use-value by those using the trail/pathway system.

Diversity and Flexibility of Park Types

Parks and programs allow for diverse uses, adaptability and flexibility of uses within parks.

Creating a robust park system means offering a diverse offering of park types and programs. Everyone is different and will want to enjoy parks in different ways—addressing the needs of all residents means providing an eclectic mix of parks and activities within them.

- **Variety:** Ensure that there is a range of park classification types throughout the County. Strive to have a park of each classification type easily accessible from all residential parcels.
- **Flexibility:** Park design should include flexible spaces that allow a range of programming and uses.



Sustainable

All parks follow sustainability design practices for the wellbeing of the environment and our residents.

Current and future enjoyment of park space relies on their sustainability. Providing sustainable parks and open spaces also promotes a culture of environmental awareness that fosters greater respect for our parks, reinforcing behavioural expectations and promoting a culture shift towards sustainable thinking.

- **Financially Sustainable:** Parks should be designed in ways that minimize ongoing maintenance. Use of native plants and resilient design will allow long-term enjoyment of parks with while reducing costs for maintenance and/or upgrades.
- **Ecologically Sustainable:** Parks provide ecological function through the provision of wildlife habitat, stormwater retention/filtration and carbon storage. Techniques should be employed such as Light Impact Design (LID) and environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques that allow parks to play key roles in ecosystem services.
- **Reduced Environmental Footprint:** All human uses of park space should reduce their footprint through using renewable energy, conserving water and using sustainable material palettes for buildings.

2. Establish new Community Parks to enhance access to recreational opportunities within the areas of greatest need as identified in Figure 23 and in the western reaches of the County to service the current population and potential growth that may occur in Entwistle.

Area of Need	Recommended Park Type
Area 1	Community Park
Area 2	Conservation Park
Area 3	Community Park
Area 4	Community Park
Area 5	Community Park
Area 6	Community Park
Area 7	Conservation Park

3. In response to the ever-growing popularity of motorized recreation and the potential tourism benefits, lead the planning, design, development and management of a regional motorized recreation destination park. The park should be sited, designed and managed to mitigate impacts related to noise, user conflicts and environmental impacts. Consider opportunities to collaborate with TransAlta at gravel pit areas South of Wabamun Lake, for potential motorized recreation use.
4. Explore, and if feasible, pursue opportunities to collaborate with TransAlta to establish new parks and trails on their reclaimed lands; including:
    a. Destination Park on the reclaimed Whitewood Mine site.
    b. Establish a Destination Park with trails on the southwest side of Lake Wabamun, in accordance within the Highvale End Area Structure Plan Figure 23).
5. Work to assemble park land through the land development process, rather than cash-in-lieu, when one or more of the following conditions exist:
    a. There is a gap in parks and/or trails supply in the area under development as identified in this plan.
    b. There is an opportunity to protect, or contribute to the protection, of one or more of the County's Environmentally Significant Areas or to improve ecological connectivity.
    c. The existing supply of park land in the area is unsuitable to meet the contemporary parks, or recreation needs of the community.
    d. The quality and condition of the existing supply of park land, trails or recreation opportunities does not meet the contemporary needs of the community.
    e. Residents are not currently within a reasonable proximity to an existing park or trail.

When considering the nature of the land to be assembled, the County will prefer parcels of land that meet one or more of the following:

f. Contains an environmentally significant area.
g. Is suitable and cost effective for the development of recreational opportunities.
h. Contains unique and/or desirable recreational resources.
i. Enables completion of gaps in the County's parks and/or trail system.
j. Is within reasonable proximity to and/or would provide better park access to the populations it is intended to serve.
k. Contains proven cultural resources of importance to local heritage of the County.

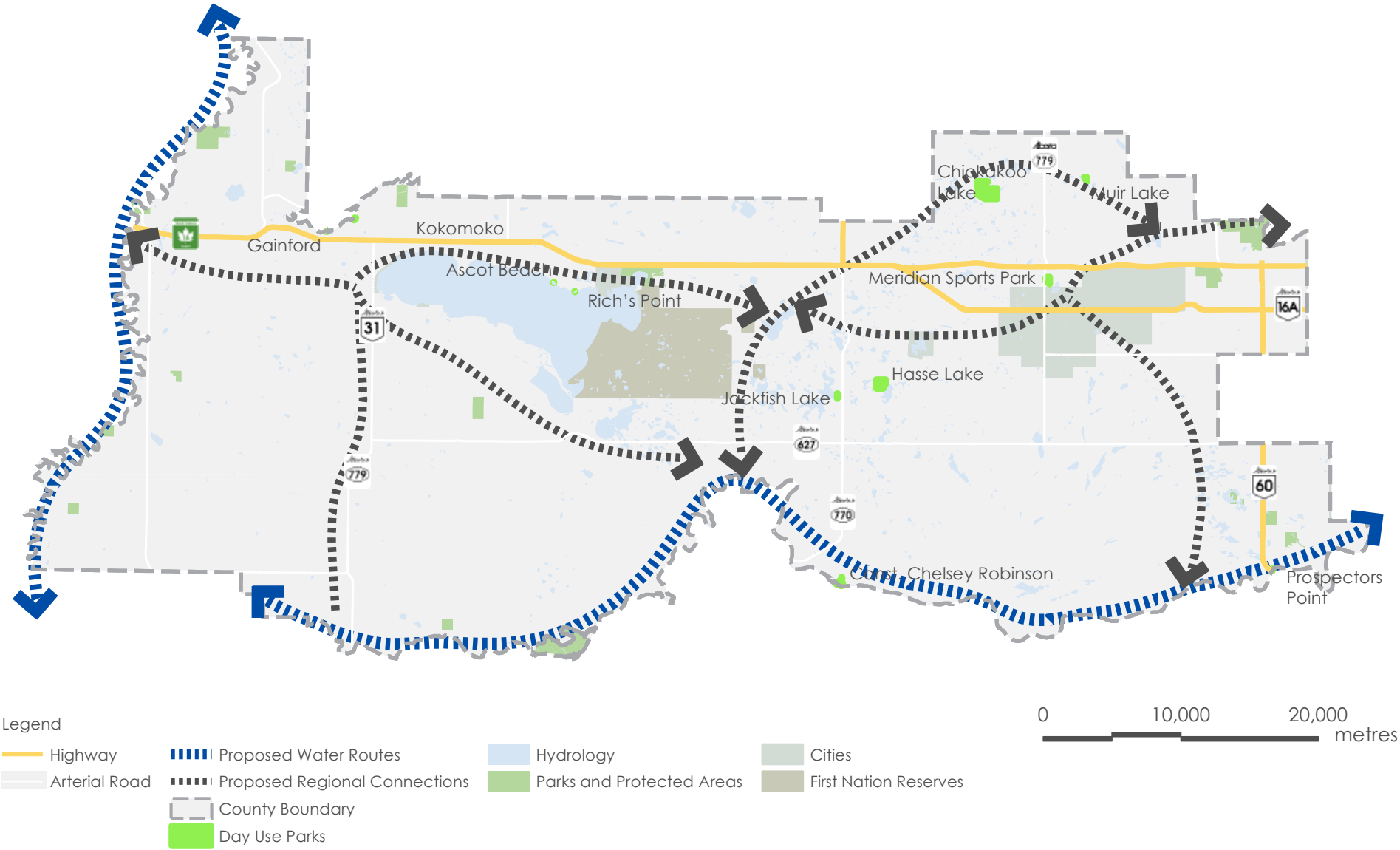
7.2.2 Expand, Diversify & Connect our Trail Network

We heard clearly during the community engagement that while residents value the County's trails, they desire greater connectivity. As of 2015, there was no county-wide network of motorized and non-motorized trails. Larger day use parks feature internal trail systems, but these systems are typically not connected to residential areas or other key destinations.

Actions:

1. As illustrated in the conceptual trail network shown in Figure 45, work with partners to develop a Trails Master Plan to establish a County-wide, all-season, multi-use land and water trail network for both non-motorized and motorized recreation. Opportunities should be sought to integrate historic wagon, indigenous, pioneer and other historic transportation routes into the County trail system.
2. As necessary, work with private landowners to develop access agreements to enable the development of trail corridors to connect Parkland County's multi-use trail network.

Figure 45 Conceptual Trail Network



7.3 ENHANCE & UPGRADE OUR EXISTING PARKS & TRAILS

7.3.1 Parks Enhancements

Actions:

1. Invest in improving the quality of parks that are below expectations; upgrade these parks to ensure they are meeting the contemporary year-round expectations of visitors and the design direction identified in the parks classification system (Appendix A). Emphasis should be placed on:
   a. Improving basic comfort and convenience amenities in all parks including washrooms, benches, wayfinding, signage, garbage and recycling receptacles, fish cleaning stations, picnic areas and clearly delineated parking areas and vehicle circulation.
   b. Enhancing the quality and sustainability designated trail systems within the parks.
   c. Spaces for social and cultural gatherings (e.g., picnics and concerts) and inclusion of infrastructure to support these gatherings.
   d. Diversifying the recreational amenities available to respond to the community's need and desire for spontaneous recreation (e.g., trails, beaches, beach access, day use areas, fire pits, cooking shelters)
2. Implement the remaining concept plans for Kokomoko, Ascot Beach, Rich's Point, and Gainford parks.
3. Upgrade the following parks to Destination Parks:
   a. Hasse Lake Park - work with partners and the community to develop a master plan to establish a renewed vision and redevelopment plan for the site.
   b. Tucker's Field - Recognizing the efforts of the Nature Conservancy of Canada to enhance the Bunchberry site and the current development of the Devonian Trail, the combination of sites have the potential to become a destination park.
   c. Evaluate the potential to further enhance the destination appeal of Prospectors Point with the goal of making it a significant western anchor in the Capital Region River Valley Park system and connecting it to Devon's Voyageur Park.
4. Examine the feasibility of developing an adventure park for youth including a mountain bike skills park and skate park. Development should occur in areas of higher youth and population density.
5. Work with Community Associations to undertake a playground revitalization program to enhance the appeal, play value and quality of playgrounds in areas with moderate to high densities of children.
6. As new playgrounds are planned and existing playgrounds are redeveloped, encourage community associations and the school district to gradually shift toward the provision of natural playgrounds. Best Practices such as the Seven C's of Early Child Outdoor Play Spaces should be incorporated into play space upgrades. Pursue the development of a natural playground pilot project in the County.
7. In alignment with the park classification, continue to design, develop and manage parks to provide and enhance universal access to the extent practicable.

Play Space Classification

Type A: 'Door-step' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation

A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.

Type B: 'Local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation

A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.

Type C: 'Neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal Recreation.

A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.

8. Develop a sustainable maintenance schedule and plan for each park to ensure adequate time for mowing, cleaning of washrooms and guidance on pruning and other plant management, as well as aeration of grass. Ensure adequate tools and equipment to meet established landscape maintenance standards.
9. Work with conservation organizations, historical/ cultural organizations, local First Nations and other partners to develop and deliver a visitor experience programming strategy for the County's Destination Parks. Content could focus on educating visitors about:
    a. Nature ecosystems, habitats and species at risk
    b. Ecosystem services
    c. Ecological restoration initiatives
    d. First Nations history, cultural practices and stories
    e. Archaeological sites
    f. History of Parkland County

7 C's of outdoor child play space design:

- Character
- Context
- Connectivity
- Change
- Chance
- Clarity
- Challenge[9]

7.3.2 Trail Enhancements

Actions:

1. Upgrade existing trails to meet the design guidelines provided in the revised trail classification system (see Appendix A.2).
2. Where appropriate, continue to design, develop and manage trails to provide universal access to the extent practicable.
3. Classify each trailhead in the County in accordance with the Staging Area Classification System (Appendix A.3) and enhance the staging to provide the intended visitor comfort and convenience amenities.
4. Conduct Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits of exiting parks and trails to identify opportunities to enhance safety and mitigate vandalism and nuisance behaviours.
5. Encourage local stewardship, trail activity based businesses and groups to undertake education based events on the trails and to participate in trail promotion activities:
    a. Adopt-A-Trail Partnerships
    b. Trail Stewardship Teams
    c. Interactive Trail Inventory
    d. Public Volunteer Trail Events
    e. Sponsored Events
    f. Public campaign initiatives and trail etiquette education

The Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP)

The UTAP is a tool that may be used to monitor, improve, and document any outdoor path of travel. Data collected during an assessment should be provided to trail users on signage and trip planning tools to communicate grade, tread width, technical features, obstacles, and trail surface.

The Five UTAP Access Characteristic to be included on all trailhead signage includes:

- Grade
- Cross Slope
- Width
- Surface
- Trail Length

7.4 ACTIVELY MANAGE OUR PARKS & TRAILS

Our parks and trails attract thousands of visitors each year. We are committed to providing safe and memorable visitor experiences but we are also committed to balancing those opportunities the need to protect the plants, animals and ecosystems that we have within on community. Visitation can, at times, lead to undesirable environmental impacts, visitor conflicts and effects on the visitor experience. The community has expressed concern about the potential environmental damage that can occur with growing visitation. The community was clear that visitor use of our parks and trails needs to be actively managed to ensure a quality visitor experience and minimal negative impacts to environmental values.

The most effective approach to managing visitor impacts is through the application of a comprehensive visitor management program consisting of:

- Effective engineering and design;
- Proactive educational programs;
- Timely and targeted enforcement in problem areas; and
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Good planning and management decisions require good data and information. Understanding visitation to and within our parks and trails is vital to a sound visitor management program. We know that we need to better understand who is using our parks and trails, when, where, how and how often. In addition, tracking our current resourcing and budgets and projecting needs for future resourcing and budgets is essential to maintaining an effective level of service for our residents.

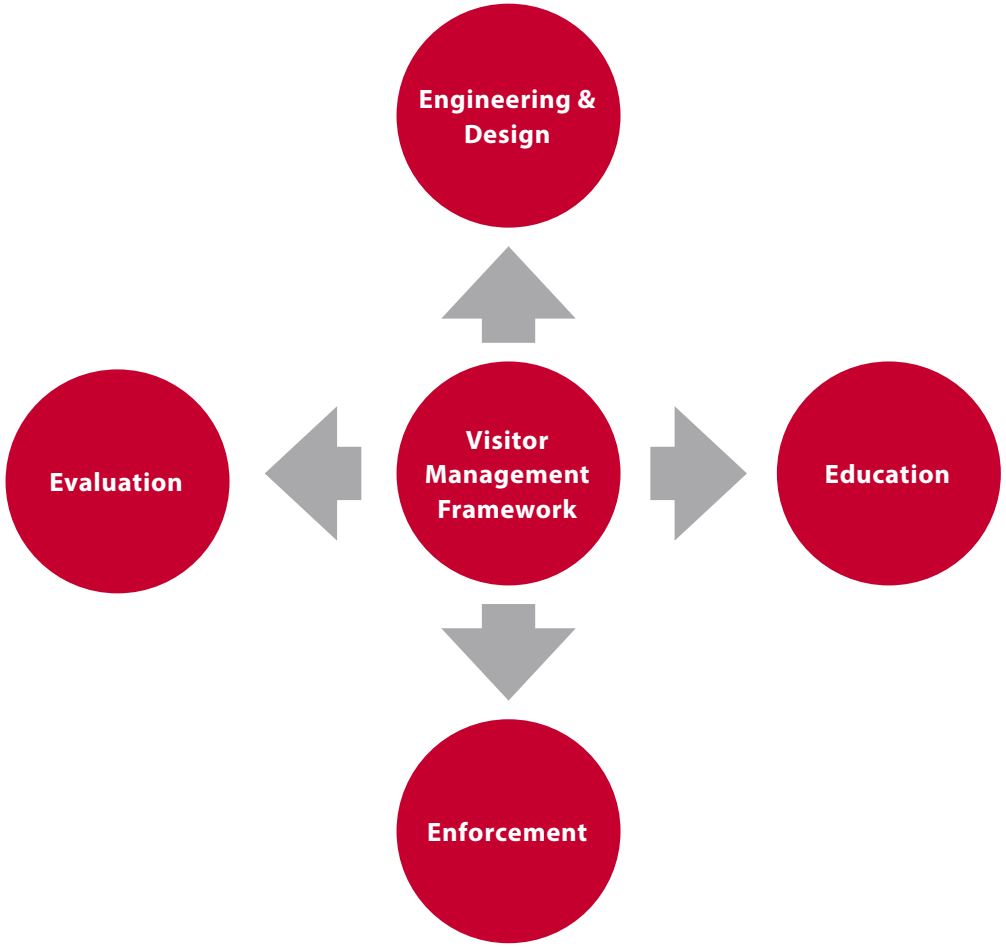


Figure 46 Visitor Management Framework

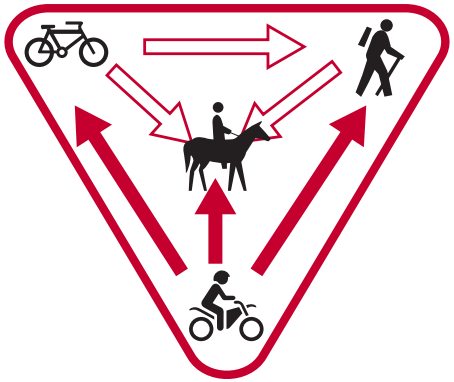
7.4.1 Visitor Management

Actions:

1. As necessary, the County will apply the full range of direct and indirect visitor management strategies to proactively avoid and/or manage environmental and social impacts in park and trails.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation and respect for our parks and natural areas.
www.leavenotrace.ca



Trail Courtesy: Yielding Guidelines

DIRECT STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
• Rationing use based on carrying capacities	• Infrastructure design and/or alterations
• Activity restrictions/ prohibitions	• Visitor information & education programming through the Leave No Trace program
• Site closures—temporary and/or permanent	• ParkWatch/Steward Program
• Enforcement officer presence	
• Enforcement	

2. Develop and promote a means for parks and trail users to report maintenance and safety issues and accidents to operations staff. Document all reports and maintenance actions taken to respond to the reports.
3. Develop a maintenance guideline manual for parks, trails and sport fields. The manual should identify the inspection and documentation procedures and maintenance procedures for each park, trail and outdoor sport facility class.
4. Maintain an up to date spatial inventory of parks and trails assets. Consider the acquisition or development and deployment of a GIS based mobile asset management program that is capable of tracking the supply of assets and their condition, characteristics, maintenance backlogs and maintenance reports.
5. Design and implement a visitor monitoring/ counting program for parks and trails using TrafX or other similar visitor counter tools. The purpose of the program is to identify trends in use, collect comparative data over the long-term, support and direct compliance efforts and to assist in measuring the success of future capital projects as they are implemented.
6. Adopt the Leave No Trace program and integrate the program's educational materials into all visitor information, signage and other communication tactics.
7. Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette program to clearly educate trail users about respectful use of trails and the yield hierarchy for multi-use trails and other trail use best practices.
8. Review the financial procedures and coding processes related to tracking parks and trails maintenance expenditures and revenue generation. Ensure expenditures and revenues are accurately tracked and can be easily analyzed by parks and trail facility.
9. Consider the implementation of a regular visitor survey to maintain an understanding of residents' and visitors' changing demands for and satisfaction with parks and trails services.

7.4.2 Signage & Wayfinding

Effective signage and wayfinding systems are essential to providing memorable visitor experiences and effective trail and park management. They provide valuable information to visitors, allowing them to make informed decisions, enhance their experience and help them stay safe. However, having too many signs can detract from the visitor experience. Signage should be used sparingly and should be appropriate for the service level and setting of the park or trail. For example, signage in backcountry areas should be limited to the most essential notices, while signage in front-country areas should be concentrated in the parking areas, trail entrances and the access points and to interpret points of interest.

Sign Typology

A successful signage system, based on a standardized typology of signs, typefaces and graphics not only helps to ensure the successful communication of parks and trails information to our residents and visitors, it will also build on the County's unique identity and brand. The consistent use of our County's logo, colours and typefaces will increase visitor awareness of the County's role in providing memorable visitor experiences.

At a minimum, all such signage:

- Must use simple, direct and clear language;
- Should consist of wording, symbols or a combination, and
- Should be the only sign on a post where possible.

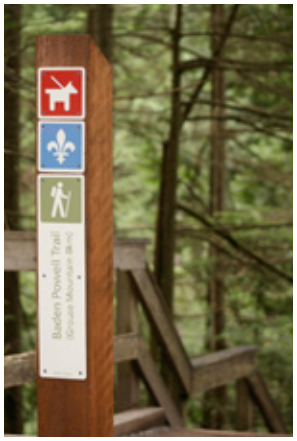
Text for all trailhead/park entrance and wayfinding signage should have high visual contrast with the background in order to assist with visual recognition and should include solid characters and appropriate use of fonts.

Trailhead signage should include contact information, addresses for emergencies, code of conduct, applicable bylaws, orientation maps and QR codes linked to online maps and information. Standard symbols, as provided in this plan, should be used to indicate the level of trail difficulty, risks should be clearly communicated as well as ways visitors can minimize risk to themselves. Other information such as that specified in the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) should also be included to provide information for users with mobility constraints.

Park Sign In Need of Updating

Actions:

1. Undertake the development of a signage manual to identify a compelling brand for the County's parks and trails and to ensure the consistent application of signage within the system and appropriate language to help manage and mitigate risk and liability.
2. Enhance staging area, trailhead and wayfinding signage within and between parks and trails to make using the parks and trails system as easy as possible.
3. Install branded and consistent highway signage to help residents and visitors access County parks.
4. Develop a park and trails interpretation strategy to identify the strategic locations for interpretive signage and messaging in the County's parks and trails. Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the park and trail system to interpret the region's rich First Nations history, unique ecosystems and biodiversity, and local culture and history.

	Park/Trailhead Entrance Signage/Kiosk	Trail Wayfinding Markers	Regulatory/Responsible Use Signage	Informational Signage (Safety/Hazard/ Conservation)	Interpretive Signage
Recommended Location	Near main entrance(s)/parking/ staging area(s)	At trailhead and all intersections	Near main entrance/parking lot	Where there are specific hazards or conservation concerns to visitors	Near main entrance, along trails at rest areas where unique natural and cultural heritage is present
Precedent Image #1					
Precedent Image #2					

7.5 ENHANCE WATER-BASED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

We heard from the community that water-based activities like kayaking and canoeing are among the ten most popular types of outdoor activities in the County. We also heard a strong desire for more access to the County's Lakes and Rivers. Parkland County boasts many lakes and rivers that support water-based outdoor recreation such as swimming, sailing, water skiing, wind surfing, boating, river tubing, and fishing.

Actions:

1. Work with County partners to develop seamless and themed water trails on the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers. Undertake the development of a Water Trail Master Plan for each river to identify key river water access and egress locations and types (see Appendix A), amenities and interpretive opportunities.

Interpretive water trails are routes on navigable waterways such as rivers and lakes that foster an interactive recreation and education experience. Signage posted on land or on bridge crossings highlight themes related to the waterway. A companion guide may provide a more detailed presentation of the material in addition to acting as a more conventional water trail guide with maps, put-in points, take-out points, rest stop locations, paddling conditions, etc.

2. Develop amenities to support paddling experiences at day use parks on County lakes, including enhanced public access and amenities to support access (e.g., kayak launch ramps). Refer to the Boat Launch design categories below.

In alignment with the Lake Wabamun Boat Launch Study, identify a suitable and large enough parcel for development of a new Type 1 boat launch (See Appendix A) on the South Shore of Wabamun Lake.

3. Encourage Alberta Parks and the Village of Wabamun to maintain the quality of, and pursue upgrades, to Type 1 boat launch sites at Wabamun Lake Provincial Park and in the Village of Wabamun.

4. Ensure that all formalized County-owned water access points are designed in accordance with the water access classification in Appendix A.

5. Develop and install branded signage and recognizable gateway features identifying formalized public water access points, as well as signage on the local roads with direction to formalized water access points.

7.6 ENHANCE OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Actions:

1. Invest in upgrading Meridian Sports Park into the region's "A" class softball facility. Emphasis should be placed on:
   - **a.** Examining the feasibility of replacing existing soccer field with an addition softball diamond to address current and projected utilization.
   - **b.** Improving basic comfort and convenience amenities including washrooms, benches, signage.
   - **c.** Add floodlighting to increase usage capacity.
   - **d.** Replace fencing where deterioration has become a safety issue.
   - **e.** Spaces for social and cultural gatherings (e.g., picnics and concerts) and inclusion of infrastructure to support these gatherings (e.g., power, potable water).
   - **f.** Diversifying the supporting recreational amenities for spontaneous use (e.g., outdoor exercise equipment/circuit, natural playground).

Boat Mooring

8.0 The Plan for Recreation

8.1 COLLABORATE FOR RECREATION

Meeting the recreational needs of our residents is a collaborative effort. As identified earlier, the County's recreation system includes the County, adjacent municipalities, not-for-profit partners, School Districts, private sector and many other partners. Partnerships and volunteers are the backbone of our recreation system and it is critical that we maintain strong relationships with our partners and volunteers into the future. However, we heard clearly during engagement was clear that volunteerism is in decline and these organizations require ongoing and enhanced supports from the County. It was also clear that there is a need to ensure coordination across the players in the County recreation system and formalize partnership agreements. To continue to support our partners and volunteers, the County will undertake the following actions:

Actions:

1. The County will work with the School District to prepare joint use agreements for joint use sites. The agreements will enable the County to influence the future design and development of joint use sites during site upgrades and new developments to ensure the sites support implementation of this plan.
2. Develop positive relationships with local Indigenous leaders in the County and explore opportunities to partner on the development and implementation of recreational programs and services targeted to the County's indigenous communities.

8.2 ENABLE EASY ACCESS TO QUALITY & DIVERSE RECREATION FACILITIES

Though we provide, or support the provision of, a wide diversity of indoor recreation facilities, we heard clearly that convenient access to them is essential. Analysis showed that residents in the western reaches of the County are faced with notably less access to facilities than those in the east. At the same time, demographic analysis showed that we have a much smaller population density in the west which challenges the ability for the County to recover much of the investments made in recreational facility development. Residents indicated that the quality of facilities provided or supported by the County were generally good, though satisfaction with two key facilities in the west, Wabamun Arena and the Entwistle Outdoor Pool, was poor. We also heard that, for some user groups, the available supply of facilities (e.g., prime time hockey ice slots) is not sufficient to meet current or future needs. In the east, the County works in partnership with the Tri-Regional partners to ensure recreational facility development and operations are coordinated. Community Halls in the County serve as important flexible programming spaces for residents. However, we did here that the level of service varies greatly across community halls and there is a desire for the County to work with Community Associations to identify consistent service levels and help support upgrades to these facilities. To improve access to quality and diverse recreation facilities, the County will implement the following actions:

Actions

1. Continue to support Tri-Region partners in the implementation of the Tri-Region Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy to guide facility development and operations decisions in the east.
2. There is clear local interest in the development of an Entwistle Aquatic Facility & Community Hub by residents in the west. However, analysis suggests the ability to recover the development and operational costs of a new indoor aquatic and community hub facility would very challenging given the small catchment population. The County will undertake further study to evaluate the political and financial feasibility and broader regional partnership opportunities to develop a modest outdoor aquatic facility and community hub that would provide residents access to aquatic, flexible programming space, fitness and gymnasium.
3. The Wabamun Arena serves to meet some of the indoor ice surface (e.g., hockey and recreational skating) demands from residents in the west. The County will support the Village of Wabamun in the completion of the Wabamun Arena Needs Assessment Study and work with the Village to implement, if appropriate, the findings from the study. Given the life cycle stage of the Wabamun Arena, should a new indoor ice facility be considered, the County will work to ensure the facility be sited in a location that takes advantage of the benefits of multipurpose hub that is centrally located.

8.3 ENHANCE RECREATION PROGRAMS

Like recreation facilities, much of the recreation programming in the County is delivered by partner organizations and volunteers. The County plays a community development role in facilitating the delivery of recreational programs providing support and expertise to help organizations plan and launch their programs. We heard that the access to and diversity of programming were priorities as was the need to ensure the recreation facilities could support the broadest range of programs.

It is recommended that the County modify its approach to program delivery to one that is a hybrid of County administrative leadership and direct community investment that leads to direct and/or indirect program delivery.

Actions:

1. The County will continue to encourage and enable the development and delivery of quality parks, recreation and culture programs. However, the County will take a more strategic role in identifying priority program gaps and, where there is no partner to fill the gap, the County will consider direct delivery of the program.
2. The County will work with partners to analyse the current supply of recreation programs to identify overlaps and redundancies in programming. Plans to address identified redundancies will be put in place with a focus on ensuring limited County and volunteer resources are allocated efficiently.
3. The County will work with partners to undertake regular evaluations of recreational programs that are supported by the County to ensure a high level of user satisfaction.

9.0 The Plan for Culture

Earlier a distinction was drawn between culture interpreted in the context of programs, services and facilities delivered or supported by the County, and a broader cultural planning perspective characterized by a broad definition of cultural resources and the contributions these resources play in contributing to prosperous local economies and enhancing quality of life. We will speak to these in turn.

9.1 ORGANIZE FOR CULTURE

We have been active in providing direct support to cultural organizations, facilities and events. However, throughout consultations and discussion it was felt that the County's primary focus in culture has been playing a community development role supporting and helping to build the capacity of cultural groups to deliver their own arts, culture and heritage programs for residents and visitors to the county.

To support collective action, some municipalities in Canada have moved to put in place cultural leadership groups (sometimes called Cultural Roundtables) drawing membership from the municipality, the cultural sector, and community and business leaders. The purpose and mandate of the group is sustaining dialogue, formulating strategies and partnerships, and supporting peer-to-peer learning among members. The Town of Stony Plain Cultural Master Plan established a Cultural Roundtable that has proven highly successful in strengthening coordination and collaboration among cultural groups.

The Master Plan also recommended convening regular Cultural Summits and preparing regular "Culture Report Cards." The purpose of the Report Card is to track progress in implementing the Master Plan and reporting on other cultural achievements in the town. The purpose of the Summit is to bring a wide cross-section of people together to review progress in on the Master Plan, to undertake new "opportunity citing" for issues not addressed by the Plan and providing an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and professional development. Some municipalities organize and produce annual Cultural Summits and annual Culture Report Cards. Others undertake these activities on a regular but less frequent basis (e.g., every two years) to save on administrative time and expense.

The recently adopted City of Spruce Grove Cultural Master Plan also recommends establishing a Cultural Leadership Group, Summit and Report Card. The Master Plan also recommended that a Cultural Leadership Group or Roundtable and Cultural Summit be considered on a Tri-Municipal level.

Actions:

1. Establish a Cultural Leadership Group, a regular Cultural Summit and Culture Report Card (frequency to be determined acknowledging staff time required to organize).
2. Call on the Cultural Leadership Group to recruit additional community support and assist the cultural staff resource in the organization of the Cultural Summit and preparing the Cultural Report Card.
3. Enter into discussions with Spruce Grove and Stony Plain about the opportunities to establish regional leadership mechanisms (e.g., Regional Cultural Leadership Group, Annual Summit) on a Tri-Municipal basis. Consider opportunities for collapsing some local and regional planning and governance mechanisms.

9.2 ENHANCE THE MUNICIPAL ART PROGRAM

The following five goals have been identified for the Municipal Arts Program:

- Acquire a dedicated support staff to implement the goals and strategies of the Municipal Arts Program.
- Develop a vibrant comprehensive online presence.
- Secure stable funding through corporate, public, and individual sponsorships to ensure long-term sustainability of the program.
- Advocate the creation of a Parkland County Feature Gallery.

There was also a call to examine the feasibility of establishing an outdoor public art program. The success of Stony Plain's mural program demonstrates the power of these outdoor expressions of the community's history and culture contributing to a sense of identity and belonging while contributing to interesting and vibrant places in the community.

The Program has been successful in engaging Aboriginal artists and Aboriginal communities and maintains a commitment to this priority. While the focus of the Program is to advise on the acquisition of work of art for the County's collection, some of the discussion extended to a wider arts and cultural development agenda. For example:

- Create a foundation to cultivate an expansion from art to art and culture.
- Build a regional art gallery.

Actions:

1. Focus efforts on establishing a public art policy and program supporting the installation of works of art at key junctures in the County.
2. Build on existing successes in exhibiting the collection in the Parkland County Centre, the County Services Building and the SMS building in the Acheson area to a wider range of public buildings.
   a. Identify public buildings suitable for the display of the current visual art collection.
   b. Consider the purchase of exhibition display cases to address security concerns related to the exhibition of the collection and significantly expand the number of venues.

9.3 CREATE OUTDOOR CULTURAL SPACES

In the Parks element of the PRCMP there is a call for more parks, in particular destination parks. Destination parks in the county can serve as locations for creating one or more amphis to serve as venues for outdoor performances by community groups or professional performers.

Actions:

1. Create new destination parks including the potential for an outdoor performing arts venue/amphitheatre.
2. Enhance interpretive programming in destination parks to share the County's culture and heritage.

9.4 COMMUNITY HALLS FOR THE FUTURE

Significant investments have been made in the creation of an infrastructure of community associations and community halls. Some individuals consulted viewed community halls as one of the county's most important community assets and achievements. Several of those interviewed indicated that a greater number and variety of programs were being offered. The Household Survey concluded that community halls were second only to libraries in terms of the overall number and frequency of visits.

On the other side, there was discussion regarding the need for significant investment in facility upgrades (also validated by the Household Survey). Others felt that community associations and community halls were not offering programming of interest to youth and young adults and that a rethinking of programing and facilities is needed if community associations and halls are to remain relevant and valued community assets as the population evolves.

Physical upgrades to community halls across the county will be a long-term endeavour but should be guided by a shared vision related to facility and equipment changes and upgrades tied to cultural (and other) interests and needs of residents of all ages, with a strong emphasis on youth. The convening of leaders from associations to consider programming and facility needs noted earlier can take up this issue of diversifying programming to meet wider community needs.

Actions:

1. Community halls in Parkland County have evolved and adapted to changing community needs. Some had "previous lives" as schools and churches. Going forward consideration could be given to incorporating new elements such as:
   - **a.** Small exhibition spaces for visual arts or heritage displays
   - **b.** Digital media and sound/video recording facilities and equipment
   - **c.** Makers Labs
   - **d.** Small performance spaces/venues

   Not every community hall would require all these and other features. Different specialized facilities (e.g., sound recording facilities/equipment) could be implemented in select halls but promoted for use by residents from other areas of the county. Consideration should also be given as to whether facility upgrades incorporating these cultural elements are best addressed through community associations/community halls or in adjacent schools or libraries.

9.5 GROW A CREATIVE RURAL ECONOMY

Traditionally issues of the creative economy and creative industries have been seen mainly in the context of larger urban centres. However, considerable attention in recent years has been directed toward identifying creative economy opportunities in smaller towns and rural areas leading to the ideas and practices related to the *creative rural economy*.

These opportunities relate to the growing number of small and medium-sized creative businesses responding to new consumer demands for original and authentic place-based products and services in the fields of food, wine, art and artisans, music, tourism, and hospitality - to name a few. Promoting and profiling existing creative and cultural enterprises can assist in attracting new creative talent. Maintaining a comprehensive inventory (mapping) and understanding of creative enterprises in the county and developing strategies to grow this sector should be a cross-departmental responsibility if it is to succeed.

Actions

1. Investigate best practices in rural communities in Canada and beyond in strategies and practices related to building creative rural economies
2. Examine models for arts or creative industries incubators that provide space for individual artists and commercial cultural enterprises to co-locate and benefit from the transfer of ideas and new partnerships; examine either County owned or underutilized buildings in the county to serve this purpose

9.6 FOCUS ATTENTION ON PLACEMAKING

There was a high level of agreement during consultations that it is unlikely and impractical for the County itself to establish any major new cultural facilities. Existing community associations and halls, together with schools and libraries, will remain the primary cultural venues or facilities. All are in need of significant capital improvements and upgrading which must remain the priority for any investment in cultural infrastructure.

The county possesses a rich inventory of parks and open spaces many of which can serve as venues for cultural programs and activities. The use of outdoor spaces also points to the potential of placemaking as a cultural development priority in the county. In this context, one idea receiving growing attention in Canada and the United States is *creative placemaking*. Placemaking, as noted earlier, is a planning practice focused on improvements to the public realm through interventions including landscaping, urban design, public art, among others. *Creative placemaking* embraces these ideas but with a higher "cultural quotient".

Creative placemaking leverages public art through traditional commissions for permanent installations, as well as community-based public art. Here a professional artist engages community members in the creation of public art. Creative placemaking also places a strong focus on the animation of public space through cultural activities. This can take the form, for example, of small scale musical performances where the community is an audience, to opportunities for direct participation in the creation and performing of cultural activity. Much is being made today in municipalities about the need to provide flexible spaces to support spontaneous or "pop-up" activity. Placemaking activity can be one form of this activity.

Actions:

1. Identify best practices in creative placemaking—in Canada and abroad[10]
2. Identify optimum locations in the county for creative placemaking initiatives
3. Engage planning staff in working collaboratively to develop strategies for implementing creative placemaking in the county

10.0 Timelines for Recommendations

This plan provides County staff and our partners with a long-term road map for enhancing parks, recreation and culture opportunities for residents. It is intended to guide decision making over the next 10 years. Implementation of the plan will take time and capacity. Each action in the plan has been prioritized as short, medium or long-term priorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
6.0 OVERARCHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS			
6.1 Grow Volunteer Capacity and Commitment			
1. Continue to support not-for-profit organizations and volunteers who are providing parks, recreation and culture opportunities to our target markets. Support may include items such as: a. Training b. Grant funding and fundraising c. Information referral d. Board development e. Insurance f. Marketing and communications g. Shared registration management software h. One-stop registration i. Shared customer data (in accordance with relevant legislation) and data management	●		
2. Work collaboratively with community associations to: a. Identify performance and level of service guidelines for the community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds as part of County grants	●		
b. Evaluate the life cycle stage of community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds.	●		
c. Identify opportunities to enhance community halls and associated outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds to better meet needs	●		
d. Prepare implementation plans and funding strategies to achieve the upgrades.		●	
3. Undertake and inventory and strategic review of the County's current parks, recreation and/or culture related partnerships. Evaluated the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of each partnership and identify any areas for growth/ improvement. Prepare a partnership maintenance plan to respond to opportunities to strengthen each partnership.	●		
4. Based on the inventory of partnerships, identify key partnership gaps that ought to be filled in order to deliver on the priorities established in this plan. Work to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with those organizations.	●		
6.2 Enhance the Not For Profit Grant Program			
1. Recognizing the critical role of not-for-profit organizations and volunteers in meeting the County's parks, recreation and cultural needs, the County will continue to provide, and as able enhance, the Not-for-Profit Grant program. The grant will continue to offer operations, minor capital and project funds to successful organizations.	●		
2. Provide incentive through the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program to encourage collaboration among arts, culture or heritage organizations that in turn will support undertaking more ambitious programs or initiatives.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
6.3 Continue Cost Sharing			
1. In accordance with the cost share policy outlined in this plan, the County will continue to support partners in the planning, development and operation of parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs through Cost Share agreements on eligible initiatives.	●		
2. Proactively pursue new cost share partnerships that will enable the County to address eligible parks, recreation and culture facility gaps identified in this plan.	●		
3. Work collaboratively with cost share partners to undertake a review of the facility charges, allocation policies and definitions of prime time and non-prime time hours to ensure consistency throughout the region, identify incentives to maximize utilization of non-primetime capacity and to ensure prime time capacity is fairly allocated by age group and facility use.		●	
4. Work with partners to prepare and implement a long-term preventative facility asset management program for County provided or cost shared facilities.			✓
6.4 Minimize Barriers To Participation Through Leisure Education			
1. In alignment with the Leisure Education framework presented in this plan, the County will work with partners in the education, health, justice, social services and others to develop and implement a comprehensive leisure education strategy to address the barriers to participation faced by those residents who have low leisure literacy and a small leisure repertoire.	●		
6.5 Apply Consistent Classification Systems			
1. Adopt and apply the parks classification system defined in Appendix A.1.	●		
2. Adopt and apply the trails classification system defined in Appendix A.2.	●		
3. Adopt and apply the staging area classification system defined in Appendix A.3.	●		
4. Adopt and apply the water access classification system defined in Appendix A.4.	●		
5. Adopt and apply the outdoor sport facility classification system defined in Appendix A.5.	●		
6. Adopt and apply the indoor recreation facility classification system defined in Appendix A.6.	●		
6.6 Grow Capacity & Improve Data			
1. Undertake a Rec Excel assessment to evaluate the County's service delivery strengths and areas for improvement.	●		
2. Consider increasing the number of staff dedicated to supporting implementation of the recreation program to focus on developing and maintaining relationships with partners, supporting partners and supporting any County led recreation programming.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
3. Consider the creation of either a new part-time cultural staff position or assigning an existing staff person with clear responsibilities in culture. Responsibilities could include: a. Supporting the work of the Municipal Arts Program, in particular moving the collection out into other community venues and in establishing a public art policy and program b. Acting as the champion and lead staff position responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Culture component of the PRCMP (including a Cultural Leadership Group, regular Cultural Summit and possible Cultural Report Card) c. Taking stock of cultural groups and activities in the county (beginning with findings from the cultural mapping process) d. Working with Economic Development in supporting in tourism development in the county, including the development of packages or itineraries drawing on cultural resources, and marketing programs leveraging these resources e. Supporting new arts, culture and heritage initiatives as they arise f. Playing a leadership role in the delivery of a major "signature" event that draws attention to the cultural life and cultural resources in the county; work in collaboration with interested cultural groups, business and community leaders in the county g. Working with staff in the Planning and Development Department to establish and implement a heritage mandate for the County		●	
4. Continue Staff training and capacity development in parks, conservation, recreation and culture planning, management, facility operations, asset management, volunteer leadership and other key areas as identified in the Rec Excel program evaluation.	●		
5. Work with municipal, not-for-profit and other partners to align and enhance data collection regarding parks, recreation and culture participation in the region including program registration, facility usage, capital and operation expense and revenue tracking and other data critical to informed planning and management.	●		
6. Work with municipal, not-for-profit, private sector and other partners to maintain inventory of parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs in the region and to complete and ongoing analysis of priority gaps in the supply of facilities and programs.	●		
6.7 Strengthen Communications & Engagement			
1. Hold a County Parks, Recreation and Culture Roundtable with stakeholders and the public each year to: a. Review progress on implementing the master plan, b. Raise and receive input on issues affecting parks, recreation and culture, c. Receive input on priorities for implementing the master plan.	●		
2. Continue to work with regional partners to provide integrated communications tools that promote and provide residents with the information they need to take part in parks, recreation and culture programs and utilize parks, recreation and culture facilities.	●		
3. Work with communications to develop a communications campaign to promote the benefits or parks, recreation and culture to County residents and the outcomes that parks, recreation and culture programs are achieving.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
4. Apply modern communications tools and approaches (e.g., social media, youtube channel, blogs) to create a "connected community" of parks, recreation and culture champions in the County and to share information about the importance and benefits of parks, recreation and culture to residents; County progress toward enhancing parks, recreation and culture and upcoming parks, recreation and culture opportunities.	●		
5. Develop, maintain and promote a comprehensive and integrated calendar of parks, recreation and culture events and programs. Promote the calendar through proven communication channels.	●		
6. Develop interactive webpages/apps that allow residents and visitors to easily plan their desired parks, trails, recreation and culture experiences.		●	
7. Investigate the creation of a Parkland County Cultural Portal based on an examination of best practices in other municipalities. Explore the potential of a regional portal serving all three municipalities.		●	
6.8 Grow Nature-Based and Cultural Tourism			
1. Work with economic development to create a Tourism Master Plan that: a. Identifies target markets and market expectations; b. Inventories existing nature based, sport and cultural tourism experiences; c. Identify the County's competitive advantages for nature based and cultural tourism; d. Identifies gaps between market expectations and the current opportunities; e. Proposes strategies to improve existing and develop new visitor experiences; and f. Proposes strategies to improve marketing.	●		

7.0 THE PLAN FOR PARKS, CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

7.1 Protect Our Nature			
1. Designate additional Conservation Parks to expand the protection of the County's environmentally significant areas. Though not exhaustive, some key areas of focus include: a. Devon Dunes Landscape Unit b. Kilini Creek Corridor ESA (Provincial Significance) from Johnny's Lake northeast to Eden Lake. (Kilini Creek Crown Reserve covers some of this corridor). c. County-owned lands on the northeast portion of Cottage Lake (Provincially Significant ESA). d. North Saskatchewan and Pembina River Corridors.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
2. Create ecological connections between the County's existing and future network of Conservation Parks, Conservation Reserves, Provincial Parks, Natural Areas, private conservation lands and environmentally significant areas.		●	
3. Work with conservation partners to identify and prioritize areas for restoration within existing and future Conservation Parks. Develop and implement restoration plans.	●		
4. Actively manage recreational use (see Section 7.3) within all County parks and environmentally significant areas to avoid or mitigate visitor impacts on ecological values.	●		
5. Educate County operational staff about the ecological values in County parks and natural areas and appropriate management practices to sustain and/or restore those values.	●		
6. Encourage the design and construction of new park, recreation and culture facilities to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency. Work towards achieving a program standard such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.	●		
7.2 Expand Diversify & Connect Our Parks & Trails			
7.2.1 Expand and Diversify Our Parks Supply			
1. Adopt and apply the following parks planning principles to guide the planning and design of the County's park system. **a. Access** - All residents have access to barrier-free park space within a reasonable distance from home. **b. Diversity and Flexibility of Park Types** - Parks and programs allow for diverse uses, adaptability and flexibility of uses within parks. **c. Connection** - Parks, pathways and open space are viewed as an interconnected system, and future parks planning should work to further the connectivity of the system. **d. Sustainable** - All parks follow sustainability design practices for the wellbeing of the environment and our residents. **e. Parkland Identity** - All parks are designed as community hubs and social spaces that add to our identity and sense of community.	●		
2. Establish new Community Parks to enhance access to recreational opportunities within the areas of greatest need as identified in Figure 23 and in the western reaches of the County to service the current population and potential growth that may occur in Entwistle. **Area 1**—Community Park **Area 2**—Natural Area **Area 3**—Community Park **Area 4**—Community Park **Area 5**—Community Park **Area 6**—Community Park **Area 7**—Natural Area		●	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
3. In response to the ever-growing popularity of motorized recreation and the potential tourism benefits, lead the planning, design, development and management of a regional motorized recreation destination park. The park should be sited, designed and managed to mitigate impacts related to noise, user conflicts and environmental impacts. Consider opportunities to collaborate with TransAlta at gravel pit areas South of Wabamun Lake, for potential motorized recreation use.	●		
4. Explore, and if feasible, pursue opportunities to collaborate with TransAlta to establish new parks and trails on their reclaimed lands; including: **a.** Destination Park on the reclaimed Whitewood Mine site. **b.** Establish a Destination park with trails on the southwest side of Lake Wabamun, in accordance within the Highvale End Area Structure Plan. (Figure 23).		●	
5. Work to assemble park land through the land development process, rather than cash-in-lieu, when one or more of the following conditions exist: **a.** There is a gap in parks and/or trails supply in the area under development as identified in this plan. **b.** There is an opportunity to protect, or contribute to the protection, of one or more of the County's Environmentally Significant Areas or to improve ecological connectivity. **c.** The existing supply of park land in the area is unsuitable to meet the contemporary parks, or recreation needs of the community. **d.** The quality and condition of the existing supply of park land, trails or recreation opportunities does not meet the contemporary needs of the community. **e.** Residents are not currently within a reasonable proximity to an existing park or trail. When considering the nature of the land to be assembled, the County will prefer parcels of land that meet one or more of the following: **f.** Contains an environmentally significant area. **g.** Is suitable and cost effective for the development of recreational opportunities. **h.** Contains unique and/or desirable recreational resources. **i.** Enables completion of gaps in the County's parks and/or trail system. **j.** Is within reasonable proximity to and/or would provide better park access to the populations it is intended to serve. **k.** Contains proven cultural resources of importance to local heritage of the County.	●		
7.2.2 Expand, Diversify & Connect our Trail Network			
1. As illustrated in the conceptual trail network shown in Figure 45, work with partners to develop a Trails Master Plan to establish a County-wide, all-season, multi-use land and water trail network for both non-motorized and motorized recreation. Opportunities should be sought to integrate historic wagon, indigenous, pioneer and other historic transportation routes into the County trail system.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
7.3 Enhance and Upgrade Our Existing Parks and Trails			
7.3.1 Park Enhancements			
1. Invest in improving the quality of parks that are below expectations; upgrade these parks to ensure they are meeting the contemporary year-round expectations of visitors and the design direction identified in the parks classification system (Appendix A). Emphasis should be placed on: **a.** Improving basic comfort and convenience amenities in all parks including washrooms, benches, wayfinding, signage, garbage and recycling receptacles, fish cleaning stations, picnic areas and clearly delineated parking areas and vehicle circulation. **b.** Enhancing the quality and sustainability of designated trail systems within the parks. **c.** Spaces for social and cultural gatherings (e.g., picnics and concerts) and inclusion of infrastructure to support these gatherings. **d.** Diversifying the recreational amenities available to respond to the community's need and desire for spontaneous recreation (e.g., trails, beaches, beach access, day use areas, fire pits, cooking shelters).	●		
2. Implement the remaining concept plans for Kokomoko, Ascot Beach, Rich's Point, and Gainford parks.		●	
3. Upgrade the following parks to Destination Parks: **a.** Hasse Lake Park - work with partners and the community to develop a master plan to establish a renewed vision and redevelopment plan for the site.	●		
b. Tucker's Field - Recognizing the efforts of the Nature Conservancy of Canada to enhance the Bunchberry site and the current development of the Devonian Trail, the combination of sites have the potential to become a destination park.		●	
c. Evaluate the potential to further enhance the destination appeal of Prospectors Point with the goal of making it a significant western anchor in the Capital Region River Valley Park system and connecting it to Devon's Voyageur Park.		●	
4. Examine the feasibility of developing an adventure park for youth including a mountain bike skills park and skate park. Development should occur in areas of higher youth and population density.	●		
5. Work with Community Associations to undertake a playground revitalization program to enhance the appeal, play value and quality of playgrounds in areas with moderate to high densities of children.	●		
6. As new playgrounds are planned and existing playgrounds are redeveloped, encourage community associations and the school district to gradually shift toward the provision of natural playgrounds. Best Practices such as the Seven C's of Early Child Outdoor Play Spaces should be incorporated into play space upgrades. Pursue the development of a natural playground pilot project in the County.		●	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
7. In alignment with the park classification, continue to design, develop and manage parks to provide and enhance universal access to the extent practicable.	●		
8. Develop a sustainable maintenance schedule and plan for each park to ensure adequate time for mowing, cleaning of washrooms and guidance on pruning and other plant management, as well as aeration of grass. Ensure adequate tools and equipment to meet established landscape maintenance standards.	●		
9. Work with conservation organizations, historical/cultural organizations, local First Nations and other partners to develop and deliver a visitor experience programming strategy for the County's Destination Parks. Content could focus on educating visitors about: **a.** Nature ecosystems, habitats and species at risk **b.** Ecosystem services **c.** Ecological restoration initiatives **d.** First Nations history, cultural practices and stories **e.** Archaeological sites **f.** History of Parkland County	●		
7.3.2 Trail Enhancements			
1. Upgrade existing trails to meet the design guidelines provided in the revised trail classification system (see Appendix A.2).		●	
2. Where appropriate, continue to design, develop and manage trails to provide universal access to the extent practicable.	●		
3. Classify each trailhead in the County in accordance with the Staging Area Classification System (Appendix A.3) and enhance the staging to provide the intended visitor comfort and convenience amenities.	●		
4. Conduct Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits of exiting parks and trails to identify opportunities to enhance safety and mitigate vandalism and nuisance behaviours.	●		
5. Encourage local stewardship, trail activity based businesses and groups to undertake education based events on the trails and to participate in trail promotion activities: **a.** Adopt-A-Trail Partnerships **b.** Trail Stewardship Teams **c.** Interactive Trail Inventory **d.** Public Volunteer Trail Events **e.** Sponsored Events **f.** Public campaign initiatives and trail etiquette education	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
7.4 Actively Manage Our Parks & Trails			
7.4.1 Visitor Management			
1. As necessary, the County will apply the full range of direct and indirect visitor management strategies to proactively avoid and/or manage environmental and social impacts in park and trails. **Direct Strategies** • Rationing use based on carrying capacities • Activity restrictions/prohibitions • Site closures—temporary and/or permanent • Enforcement officer presence • Enforcement **Indirect Strategies** • Infrastructure design and/or alterations • Visitor information & education programming through the Leave No Trace program • ParkWatch/Steward Program	●		
2. Develop and promote a means for parks and trail users to report maintenance and safety issues and accidents to operations staff. Document all reports and maintenance actions taken to respond to the reports.	●		
3. Develop a maintenance guideline manual for parks, trails and sport fields. The manual should identify the inspection and documentation procedures and maintenance procedures for each park, trail and outdoor sport facility class.	●		
4. Maintain an up to date spatial inventory of parks and trails assets. Consider the acquisition or development and deployment of a GIS based mobile asset management program that is capable of tracking the supply of assets and their condition, characteristics, maintenance backlogs and maintenance reports.	●		
5. Design and implement a visitor monitoring/counting program for parks and trails using TrafX or other similar visitor counter tools. The purpose of the program is to identify trends in use, collect comparative data over the long-term, support and direct compliance efforts and to assist in measuring the success of future capital projects as they are implemented.	●		
6. Adopt the Leave No Trace program and integrate the program's educational materials into all visitor information, signage and other communication tactics.	●		
7. Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette program to clearly educate trail users about respectful use of trails and the yield hierarchy for multi-use trails and other trail use best practices.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
8. Review the financial procedures and coding processes related to tracking parks and trails maintenance expenditures and revenue generation. Ensure expenditures and revenues are accurately tracked and can be easily analyzed by parks and trail facility.	●		
9. Consider the implementation of a regular visitor survey to maintain an understanding of residents' and visitors' changing demands for and satisfaction with parks and trails services.	●		
7.4.2 Signage & Wayfinding			
1. Undertake the development of a signage manual to identify a compelling brand for the County's parks and trails and to ensure the consistent application of signage within the system and appropriate language to help manage and mitigate risk and liability.	●		
2. Enhance staging area, trailhead and wayfinding signage within and between parks and trails to make using the parks and trails system as easy as possible.	●		
3. Install branded and consistent highway signage to help residents and visitors access County parks.		●	
4. Develop a park and trails interpretation strategy to identify the strategic locations for interpretive signage and messaging in the County's parks and trails. Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the park and trail system to interpret the region's rich First Nations history, unique ecosystems and biodiversity, and local culture and history.	●		
7.5 Enhance Water-Based Recreation Opportunities			
1. Work with County partners to develop seamless and themed water trails on the North Saskatchewan and Pembina Rivers. Undertake the development of a Water Trail Master Plan for each river to identify key river water access and egress locations and types (see Appendix A.4), amenities and interpretive opportunities.	●		
2. Develop amenities to support paddling experiences at day use parks on County lakes, including enhanced public access and amenities to support access (e.g., kayak launch ramps). Refer to the Boat Launch design categories below.		●	
3. In alignment with the Lake Wabamun Boat Launch Study[5], identify a suitable and large enough parcel for development of a new Type 1 boat launch (See Appendix A.4) on the South Shore of Wabamun Lake.		●	
4. Encourage Alberta Parks and the Village of Wabamun to maintain the quality of, and pursue upgrades, to Type 1 boat launch sites at Wabamun Lake Provincial Park and in the Village of Wabamun.			●
5. Ensure that all formalized County-owned water access points are designed in accordance with the water access classification in Appendix A.4.	●		
6. Develop and install branded signage and recognizable gateway features identifying formalized public water access points, as well as signage on the local roads with direction to formalized water access points.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
7.6 Enhance Outdoor Sport Facilities			
1. Invest in upgrading Meridian Sports Park into the region's "A" class softball facility. Emphasis should be placed on:			
a. Examining the feasibility of replacing existing soccer field with an addition softball diamond to address current and projected utilization.	●		
b. Improving basic comfort and convenience amenities including washrooms, benches, signage.	●		
c. Add floodlighting to increase usage capacity.	●		
d. Replace fencing where deterioration has become a safety issue.	●		
e. Spaces for social and cultural gatherings (e.g., picnics and concerts) and inclusion of infrastructure to support these gatherings (e.g., power, potable water).		●	
f. Diversifying the supporting recreational amenities for spontaneous use (e.g., outdoor exercise equipment/circuit, natural playground).			●
8.0 THE PLAN FOR RECREATION			
8.1 Collaborate for Recreation			
1. The County will work with the School District to prepare joint use agreements for joint use sites. The agreements will enable the County to influence the future design and development of joint use sites during site upgrades and new developments to ensure the sites support implementation of this plan.	●		
2. Develop positive relationships with local Indigenous leaders in the County and explore opportunities to partner on the development and implementation of recreational programs and services targeted to the County's indigenous communities.	●		
8.2 Enable Easy Access To Quality & Diverse Recreation Facilities			
1. Continue to support Tri-Region partners in the implementation of the Tri-Region Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy to guide facility development and operations decisions in the east.	●		
2. There is clear local interest in the development of an Entwistle Aquatic Facility & Community Hub by residents in the west. However, analysis suggests the ability to recover the development and operational costs of a new indoor aquatic and community hub facility would very challenging given the small catchment population. The County will undertake further study to evaluate the political and financial feasibility and broader regional partnership opportunities to develop a modest outdoor aquatic facility and community hub that would provide residents access to aquatic, flexible programming space, fitness and gymnasium.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
3. The Wabamun Arena serves to meet some of the indoor ice surface (e.g., hockey and recreational skating) demands from residents in the west. The County will support the Village of Wabamun in the completion of the Wabamun Arena Needs Assessment Study and work with the Village to implement, if appropriate, the findings from the study. Given the life cycle stage of the Wabamun Arena, should a new indoor ice facility be considered, the County will work to ensure the facility be sited in a location that takes advantage of the benefits of multipurpose hub that is centrally located.	●		
8.3 Enhance Recreation Programs			
1. The County will continue to encourage and enable the development and delivery of quality parks, recreation and culture programs. However, the County will take a more strategic role in identifying priority program gaps and, where there is no partner to fill the gap, the County will consider direct delivery of the program.	●		
2. The County will work with partners to analyse the current supply of recreation programs to identify overlaps and redundancies in programming. Plans to address identified redundancies will be put in place with a focus on ensuring limited County and volunteer resources are allocated efficiently.	●		
3. The County will work with partners to undertake regular evaluations of recreational programs that are supported by the County to ensure a high level of user satisfaction.	●		
9.0 THE PLAN FOR CULTURE			
9.1 Organize For Culture			
1. Establish a Cultural Leadership Group, a regular Cultural Summit and Culture Report Card (frequency to be determined acknowledging staff time required to organize).	●		
2. Call on the Cultural Leadership Group to recruit additional community support and assist the cultural staff resource in the organization of the Cultural Summit and preparing the Cultural Report Card.	●		
3. Enter into discussions with Spruce Grove and Stony Plain about the opportunities to establish regional leadership mechanisms (e.g., Regional Cultural Leadership Group, Annual Summit) on a Tri-Municipal basis. Consider opportunities for collapsing some local and regional planning and governance mechanisms.	●		
9.2 Enhance The Municipal Art Program			
1. Focus efforts on establishing a public art policy and program supporting the installation of works of art at key junctures in the County.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
2. Build on existing successes in exhibiting the collection in the Parkland County Centre, the Community Services Building and the SMS building in Acheson area to a wider range of public buildings. **a.** Identify public buildings suitable for the display of the current visual art collection. **b.** Consider the purchase of exhibition display cases to address security concerns related to the exhibition of the collection and significantly expand the number of venues.		●	
3. Ensure staff administrative support for the Committee.	●		
9.3 Create Outdoor Cultural Spaces			
1. Create new destination parks including the potential for an outdoor performing arts venue/amphitheatre.		●	
2. Enhance interpretive programming in destination parks to share the County's culture and heritage.	●		
9.4 Community Halls for the Future			
1. Community halls in Parkland County have evolved and adapted to changing community needs. Some had "previous lives" as schools and churches. Going forward consideration could be given to incorporating new elements such as: **a.** Small exhibition spaces for visual arts or heritage displays **b.** Digital media and sound/video recording facilities and equipment **c.** Makers Labs **d.** Small performance spaces/venues Not every community hall would require all these and other features. Different specialized facilities (e.g., sound recording facilities/equipment) could be implemented in select halls but promoted for use by residents from other areas of the county. Consideration should also be given as to whether facility upgrades incorporating these cultural elements are best addressed through community associations/community halls or in adjacent schools or libraries.	●		
9.5 Grow A Creative Rural Economy			
1. Investigate best practices in rural communities in Canada and beyond in strategies and practices related to building creative rural economies.	●		
2. Examine models for arts or creative industries incubators that provide space for individual artists and commercial cultural enterprises to co-locate and benefit from the transfer of ideas and new partnerships; examine either County owned or underutilized buildings in the county to serve this purpose.	●		

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	TARGETED TIME FRAME		
	Short-term (0–3 years)	Medium-term (4–7 years)	Long-term (8–10 years)
9.6 Focus Attention on Placemaking			
1. Identify best practices in creative placemaking—in Canada and abroad.	●		
2. Identify optimum locations in the county for creative placemaking initiatives.	●		
3. Engage planning staff in working collaboratively to develop strategies for implementing creative placemaking in the county.	●		

DRAG
2
BEARING SYSTEM

11.0 Measuring Our Progress

As outlined in the County's Strategic Plan: 2016–2020, we value responsibility. Measuring our progress towards the outcomes set forth in this plan is critical to ensuring we are open and transparent, are providing quality services and embracing continual improvement.

To share our successes and progress, we will prepare and share a regular progress report (at least every two years). The annual report card provides a means of monitoring progress in implementing the Plan as well as profiling new initiatives not addressed in the Plan. The report card will report on the following performance metrics which are seen as general proxies that can indicate progress toward the desired outcomes we have established. These metrics have been selected based on a combination of their meaningfulness and representation of the outcomes and their ease and affordability of monitoring.

Parks Services:

Parks & Conservation

- County park visitation
- # and area of Destination and Community parks
- % of residential parcels within 8km of a parks, trails and playground
- # and area of Conservation Parks
- % of Environmentally Significant Areas protected by Conservation Parks or Conservation Reserves.

Trails

- Trail visitation
- Kilometres of trails
- % of residential parcels within 8km of a trailhead

Playgrounds

- # of playgrounds
- % of residential parcels within 8km of playground

Outdoor Sport

- # of outdoor sport facilities by type
- Facility bookings by type
- % utilization (prime time & non-primetime)

Recreation Services:

Recreation Facilities

- # of facilities by type provided/cost shared by County
- % of residential within 8km of a recreation facility by type

Recreation Programs

- # and type of recreation programs provided by County
- # and type of recreation programs supported by County
- # and type of special events and races hosted in the County
- Participation in directly provided and supported programs

Culture Services:

Cultural Events

- # of annual or recurring cultural events, festivals
- # of new festivals or events launched
- Participation in recurring and new cultural events
- # of cultural tourism packages developed

Cultural Facilities & Heritage Resources

- # of cultural facilities by type directly provided or cost shared by County
- # of heritage sites and buildings protected by the County

Cultural Industries

- # of creative cultural industries as a percentage of total businesses
- # of people working in the creative cultural industries
- # of cultural organizations and artists from Aboriginal or diverse ethno-cultural communities actively engaged

Leisure Education Services:

Leisure Education Program

- # and type of leisure education programs delivered/supported
- Participation in leisure education

Fiscal Discipline

Cost Distribution

- Parks, Recreation & Culture annual budget
- % of total County budget allocated to Parks, Recreation & Culture
- % of net cost breakdown by service area (parks, recreation, culture, leisure education)
- Budget performance for actual vs planned expenditures
- Amount allocated to cost share agreements by service area
- Not for profit grant amount allocated vs amount requested

Revenues & Cost Recovery

- Revenues generated by service area.
- Cost recovery rate (total and by service area)
- Net tax subsidy per capita (total and by service area)

Staffing & Volunteer

- # of full-time equivalents dedicated to each service area
- # of dedicated volunteers participating in parks, recreation and culture services
- Change in staffing levels year over year

12.0 References

1 ParticipACTION (2016). The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Retrieved October 16, 2016 from https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/thought-leadership/report-card/2016

2 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (2016). Retrieved online March 14, 2017 from http://www.canadainfrastructure.ca/downloads/Canadian_Infrastructure_Report_2016.pdf

3 Population Source: Statistics Canada Retrieved online March 14, 2017 from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table-Tableau.cfm?LANG=Eng&T=302&SR=1&S=51&O=A&RPP=9999&PR=48&CMA=0 and http://fnp-ppn.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/FNP/Main/Search/FNRegPopulation.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=441&lang=eng

4 O2 Planning & Design Inc., 2014. Parkland County Environmental Conservation Master Plan Phase 1 Background Technical Report. Parkland County, AB: Parkland County.

5 Parkland County. 2013. Lake Wabamun Boat Launch Study Submitted by EDA Collaborative.

6 Town of Stony Plain Programs (http://www.stonyplain.com/Town-Hall/Departments/Community-and-Protective-Services/Programs.htm)

7 Creative City Network of Canada (2009). Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Culture. Retrieved from: http://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/rural_arts_summ_overview.pdf

8 Dudley N (ed) (2008) Guidelines for applying protected area management categories. IUCN, Gland. http:// data.iucn.org/dbtwwpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf

9 http://www.wstcoast.org/playspaces/outsidecriteria/7Cs.pdf

10 City Lab. Four Examples of Powerful Placemaking (http://www.citylab.com/design/2013/01/3-examples-powerful-placemaking/4329/)

Appendix A

Parks & Recreation Classification Systems

A.1 Parks Classification

Each park's size, setting, the amenities provided, accessibility and environmental values combine to provide a unique character and visitor experience. Recognizing the uniqueness of each site, we know that providing consistent park design guidance to staff, contractors, developers, and the community is an important foundation in ensuring the delivery of safe, quality, sustainable and diverse visitor experiences. A classification system also allows our users to better select parks and trails that are likely to meet their skill level and desired experience. As such, there is value in categorizing parks and trails based on common characteristics and establishing high level design, development and management guidance that ensures a desired level of service while being careful not to homogenize our parks and trails experiences or infringe upon future design processes.

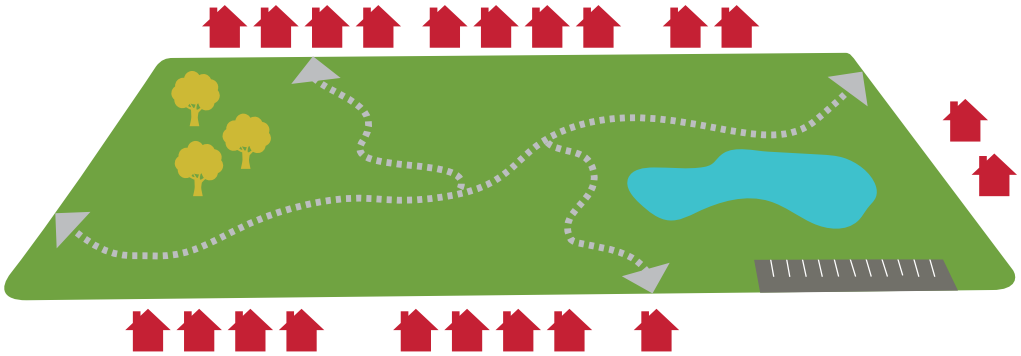
The intent of this section is to establish a clear classification structure for parks and trails in our community. The result is consistent direction for the planning, design and programming of parks, off-road trails and associated staging areas. Brief descriptions of each park class are provided below. More detailed design guidance for each class of park is available on the following pages.

Class 1: Community Parks

The purpose of this park type is to provide for the spontaneous and, to a lesser extent, programmed recreational needs of multiple neighbourhoods. They are designed as community gathering spaces and can be utilized for community events. May also conserve locally important habitats and provide for functioning ecosystem processes. Where possible, Community Parks should be linked to local and regional pathway systems.

Size
Typically 1 hectare or larger

Intended Attraction
Multiple adjacent neighbourhood residents



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Percent Developed
25—100%

Parking
On-site or on-street

Amenities (desired)

- Benches
- Picnic tables
- Washrooms
- Water access
- Active recreation amenities
- Passive play area
- Designed landscape
- Improved paths
- Pathways for play
- Play area (natural playground/pre-fabricated equipment)
- Wayfinding signage
- Trash cans

Amenities (optional)

- Swimming (pool or natural)
- Outdoor sport fields/ courts
- Outdoor performance space
- Concessions
- Food trucks and vendors
- Outdoor BBQ area/fire pits
- Community garden
- Natural area
- Outdoor fitness
- Off-leash area
- Community centre
- Outdoor classroom
- Action sport facilities
- Spray park
- Outdoor shower
- Public art
- Street performers
- Interpretive signage
- Shade structures
- Lighting

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Natural Areas
May, but is unlikely, to contain undeveloped natural areas, habitats for species at risk, lake shore, wetlands and other sensitive environments

Ecosystem Services
Wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, native plants, flood protection, erosion control, water filtration, green stormwater infrastructure

Revenue Generation
Limited. May cover partial operational costs via rental fees.

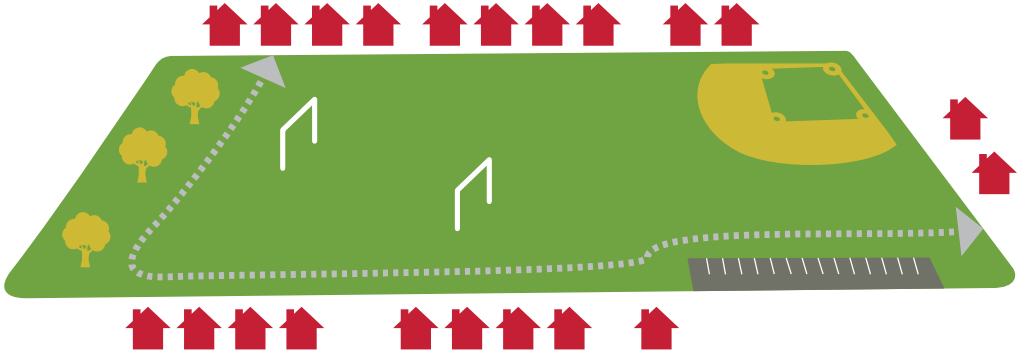
Local Parks In this Class

- Muir Lake (3.5 ha)
- Kokomoko Day Use Park (2.77 ha)
- Jackfish Lake (3.47)
- Ascot Beach Day Use Park (0.48 ha)
- Rich's Point Day Use Park (0.36 ha)
- Gainford Day Use (0.33 ha)

Class 2: Sportsfield/Athletic Parks

The primary focus of athletic/sportsfield parks is to provide outdoor sports facilities that serve the community's needs for active recreation and organized outdoor sport. These parks have a strong sports focus, but they may also include walking trails and children's playgrounds. Subsequently, these parks also serve the local neighbourhood and provide families the opportunity for active play while siblings and friends are engaged in sporting activities.

Size
Necessary to meet the intended use



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Percent Developed
75—100%

Parking
On-site

Amenities (desired)

- Regulation sized sportsfields
- Play area
- Trash cans
- Bleachers
- Washrooms
- Parking

Amenities (optional)

- Benches
- Interpretive signage
- Dock
- Natural area
- Designed Landscape
- Improved paths
- Lighting (pathway and sportsfield)

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Natural Areas
None required

Ecosystem Services
Limited to none

Revenue Generation
Dependent on intended purpose.

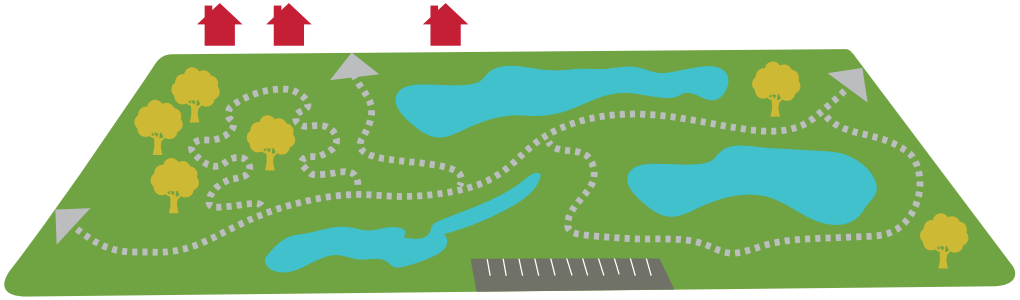
Local Parks In this Class

- Meridian Sports Park (11.2 ha)

Class 3: Destination Parks

Under this classification lands are intended to conserve, restore and protect major parks that offer unique features and recreational opportunities as well as numerous amenities. These significant parks are designed for multiple uses and are travel motivators of the calibre to attract people from both within the County and abroad.

Size
Variable



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Percent Developed
Varies

Parking
On-site

Amenities (desired)

- Parking
- Trails
- Wayfinding
- Washrooms
- Trash cans
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Interpretive Signage

Amenities (optional)

- Swimming (natural)
- Lighting
- Designed landscape

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Natural Areas
Varies but typically significant

Ecosystem Services
May include wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, native plants, flood protection, erosion control, water filtration, green stormwater infrastructure

Revenue Generation
Dependent on intended purpose

Local Parks In this Class

- Chickakoo Lake Rec Area (120 ha)
- Hasse Lake (44 ha)
- Const. Chelsey Robinson Day Use Park (2.7 ha)
- Prospector's Point Day Use (2.18 ha)

Class 4: Conservation Parks

Under this classification are lands intended for the conservation, restore or protect flora and fauna of international, national or local importance. This includes the protection of habitats of native species of flora and fauna and, similarly, to maintain and/or repair the natural ecosystems processes of the area. Human use is allowed for educational and research purposes.

Size
Any size. Dependant on the environmental area and values places on the site.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Percent Developed
Development should be limited to a minimum, maintaining the wilderness qualities of the area for current and future enjoyment. The only development should be for visitor experience or visitor management purposes. Development should also be emphatic on low-impact educational and scientific activities that foster a greater appreciation and/or understanding of the area.

Parking
On-site or on-street in areas of lesser ecological significance.

Amenities (desired)

- Benches
- Trails
- Educational interpretive signage
- Wayfinding
- Wildlife proof trash cans

Amenities (optional)

- Boat launch (non-motorized)
- Basic washrooms

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Natural Areas
As close to completely naturally as possible, working towards complete naturalization with the exception of low-impact human use.

Ecosystem Services
Wildlife habitat, restoration to wilderness state, carbon sequestration, native plants, flood protection, erosion control, water filtration, green stormwater infrastructure.

Revenue Generation
None

A.2 Trail Classification Descriptions

TRAIL CLASS 1 - GREENWAY / URBAN TRAIL		
DESCRIPTION	RELATIVE LEVEL OF USE	MAINTENANCE
These trails are completely separated from vehicular traffic and support high volumes of users. Paving options include asphalt, unit pavers, concrete or compacted gravel. Class 1 trails will typically provide universal access to a variety of community amenities and are intended to function as an active transportation route for residents and tourists alike.	High	High

DESIGN ELEMENTS						
SURFACING	SLOPE	TRAIL WIDTH (M)	CLEARING WIDTH ON EACH SIDE OF TRAIL (M)	CLEARING HEIGHT (M)	CROSS SLOPE	SIGHT LINES (M)
Paved / Compacted Gravel	Gentle (0–5%) Max. 10%	2–4	1	3	1–2%	10–20

TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE
	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

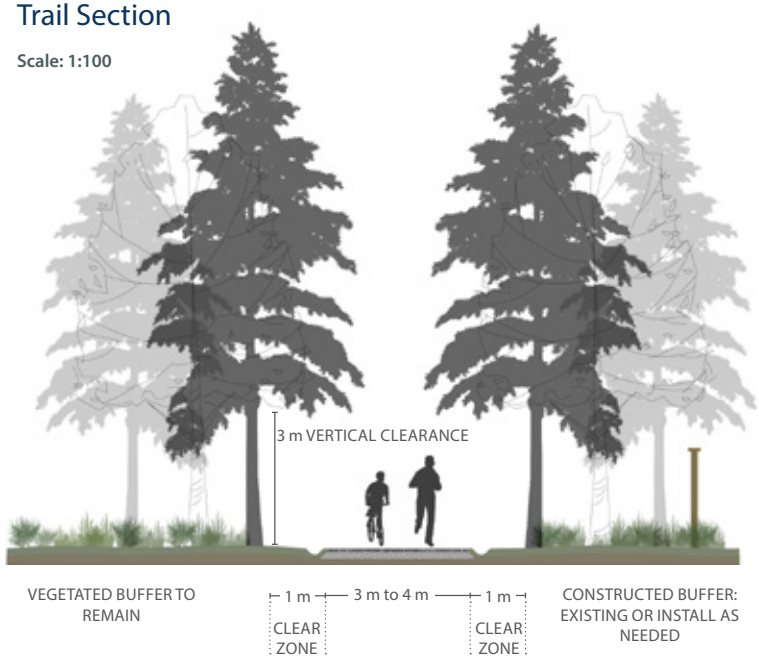
AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

■ TYPICALLY PROVIDED

□ OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

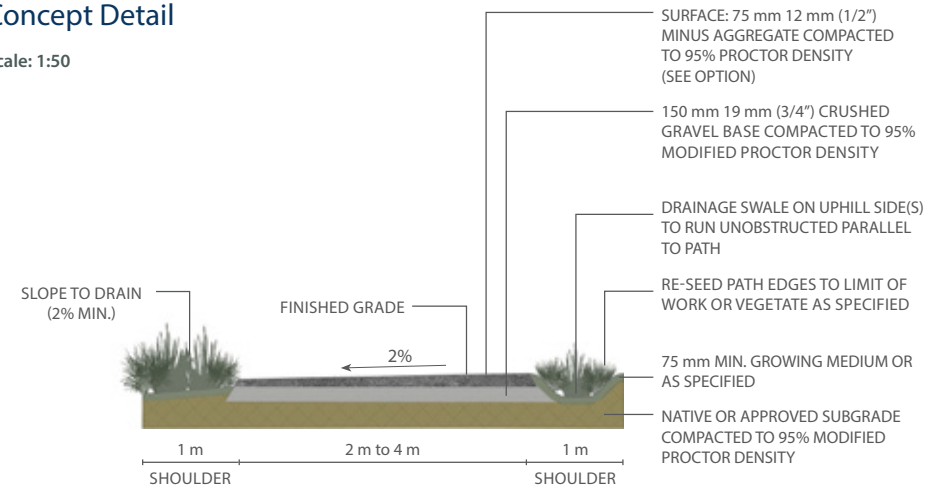
Trail Section

Scale: 1:100



Concept Detail

Scale: 1:50



TRAIL CLASS 2 - DOUBLE TRACK		
DESCRIPTION	RELATIVE LEVEL OF USE	MAINTENANCE
Class 2 Trails typically provide a mid-country and neighbourhood level recreational experience. They are typically more challenging than Class 1 trails as they are constructed of softer surface materials (gravel, sand, etc.) and cover a more varied terrain.	Moderate	Medium

DESIGN ELEMENTS						
SURFACING	SLOPE	TRAIL WIDTH (M)	CLEARING WIDTH ON EACH SIDE OF TRAIL (M)	CLEARING HEIGHT (M)	CROSS SLOPE	SIGHT LINES (M)
Crushed Gravel or Natural Surface	Up to 30%	1–1.5	1	3	1–2%	Provide safe sight lines

TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE
●	●	●	●	●			

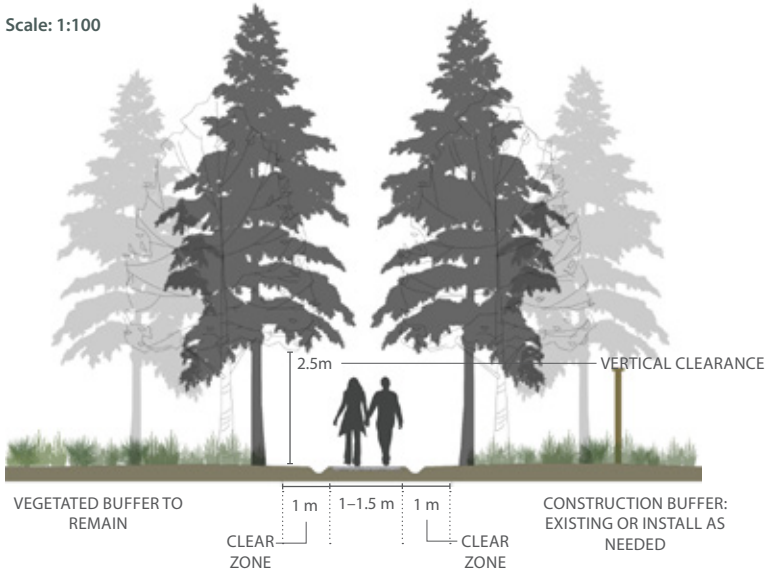
AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING
●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● TYPICALLY PROVIDED

○ OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

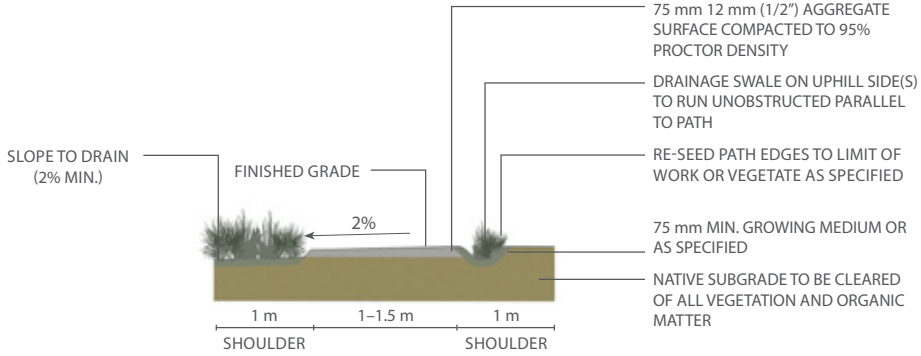
Trail Section

Scale: 1:100



Concept Detail

Scale: 1:50



TRAIL CLASS 3 - SINGLE TRACK NATURAL SURFACE		
DESCRIPTION	RELATIVE LEVEL OF USE	MAINTENANCE
Single-track trail, typically not universally accessible due to surfacing and terrain. Provides a mid-country to more back-country experience with very few amenities. The narrow natural surface trail has fewer environmental impacts, protects sensitive ecosystems, and enhances user experience.	Low	Low

DESIGN ELEMENTS						
SURFACING	SLOPE	TRAIL WIDTH (M)	CLEARING WIDTH ON EACH SIDE OF TRAIL (M)	CLEARING HEIGHT (M)	CROSS SLOPE	SIGHT LINES (M)
Natural Surface/ gravel added where needed	Up to 30%	0.5–1	0.5	2.5	2–4%	Provide safe sight lines

TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE
●	●	●		●			

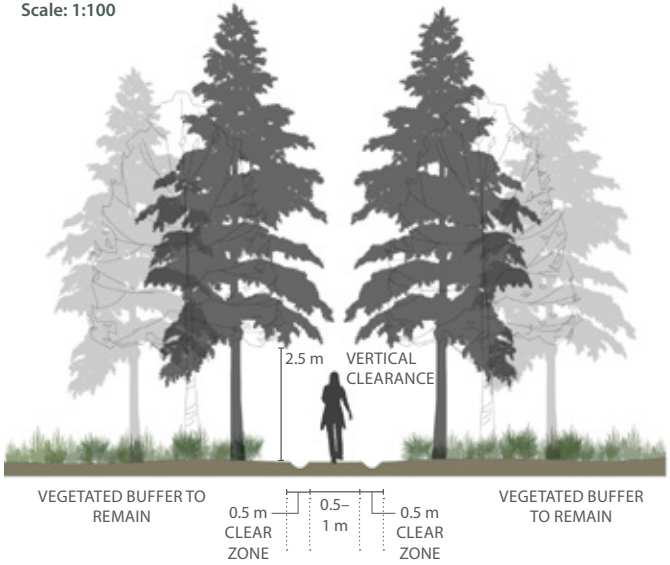
AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING
					P	P

■ TYPICALLY PROVIDED

□ OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

Trail Section

Scale: 1:100



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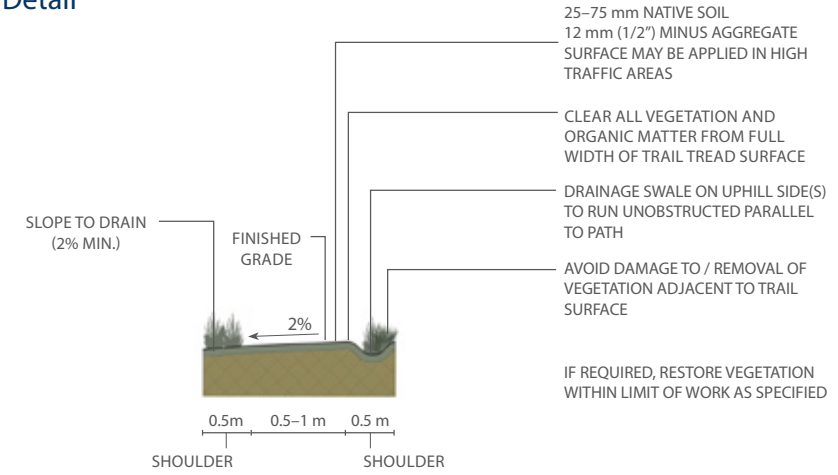

TRAIL CLASS 4 - MULTI-USE		
DESCRIPTION	RELATIVE LEVEL OF USE	MAINTENANCE
This class includes both motorized and non-motorized uses on the same trail. The trail would have a natural surface and a width of 2.5-4.0m. An extensive number of user combinations is possible. The user group with the highest requirements (widest trail, largest clear zone, and most gentle gradients) will determine the design characteristics for the trail.	Low	Low

DESIGN ELEMENTS						
SURFACING	SLOPE	TRAIL WIDTH (M)	CLEARING WIDTH ON EACH SIDE OF TRAIL (M)	CLEARING HEIGHT (M)	CROSS SLOPE	SIGHT LINES (M)
Natural	Max. 15%	2.5–4	0.5	3.5	1–2%	10–20

TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE

AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING

TYPICALLY PROVIDED

OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

Trail Section

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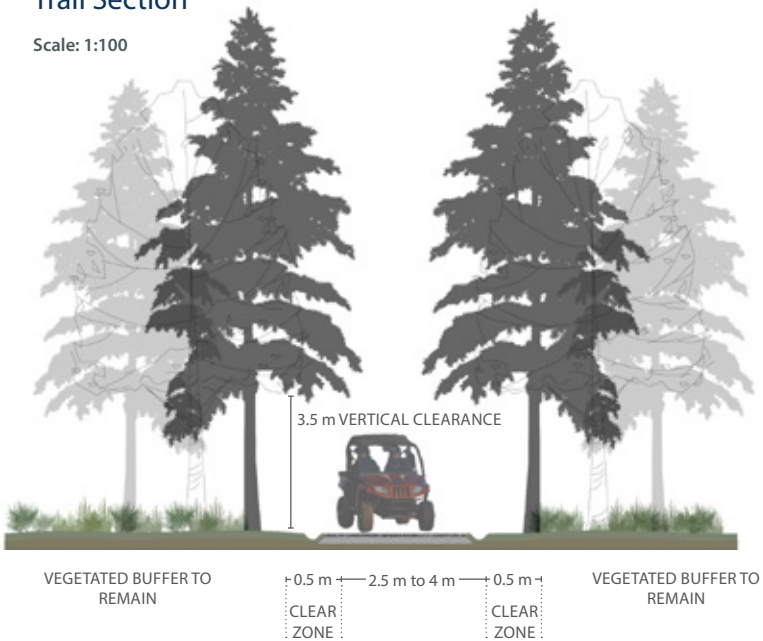

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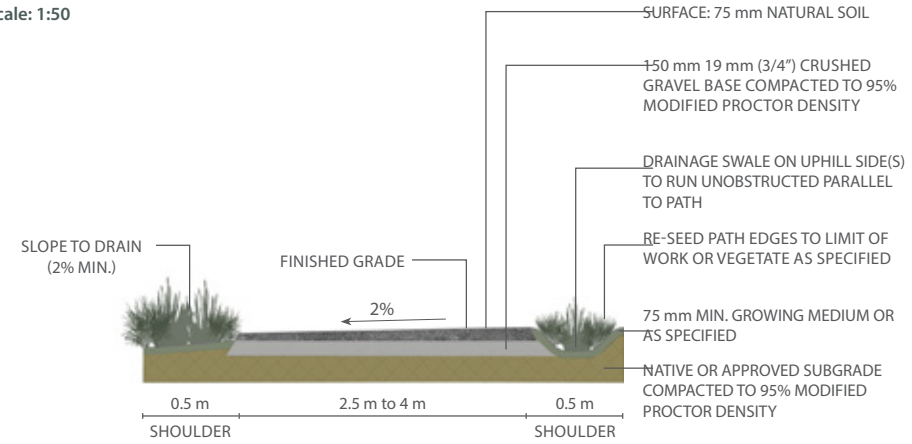


A.2.1 Trail Difficulty Guidelines

Trail difficulty is a key consideration in our visitors' decision making process. Some seek a challenge while others look for less adventurous trail opportunities. Ensuring visitors understand the difficulty of each trail is essential to helping visitors remain safe while on our trails. As such, it is essential to classify the difficulty of our trails. Table A.1 identifies the classes of trail difficulty—from easy to extremely difficult—and presents the characteristics that are evaluated in assigning each. These classes are to be applied to all existing and future off-road trails in the County, including walking, hiking and biking.

Table A.1 Trail Difficulty Standards

	Easy	Moderate	Difficult
Difficulty Rating Sign Graphic			
Trail Width	4m	1—1.5m	0.5—1m
Tread Surface	Paved or compacted gravel hard surface	Gravel or natural surface	Natural surface
Average Trail Grade	0-5%	10% or less	15% or less
Max Trail Grade	10%	25%	30%
Natural Obstacles and Mountain Bike Technical Trail Features (TTF)	None	• Unavoidable bridges 1m or wider • Avoidable obstacles may be present	• Unavoidable obstacles 0.25m tall or less • TTF's 1.25m high or less, width of deck is less than 1.2 the height • May include loose rocks • Avoidable obstacles may be present • Short sections may exceed criteria
Associated with following Trail Classification	Trail Class 1	Trail Class 1, Trail Class 2	Trail Class 3

A.3 Staging Areas

Staging areas are situated at the entrance of certain parks and trails. Staging areas create a first impression and set the tone for the recreation experience. Staging areas vary, based on the type of park or trail, location, usage level, demand, and space provided. Considering the diversity of conditions throughout Parkland County, staging areas are grouped into three distinct classes, each with unique design guidelines and amenities. The following matrix outlines the three different types of staging areas and the required and optional services to be provided at each:

Staging Type	Vehicle Parking	Handicap Parking	Bicycle Parking	Toilets	Garbage Receptacles	Map kiosk Directional	Seating
1 High Use	[1]	[3]					
2 Medium/ Low Use	[2]	[3]					
3 Access Point							

Required

Optional

[1] Minimum of 10 stalls

[2] Minimum of 5 stalls

[3] If trail is universally accessible

Type 1 Staging Area—High Use

The high use staging area is designed for large multi or single use trails or popular parks with a high demand and substantial traffic flow.

Type 2 Staging Area—Medium/Low Use

The medium use staging area is designed for multi or single use trails and parks and trails with intermediate demand level, and less traffic flow than the high use staging area.

Type 3 Staging Area—Access Point

The access point staging area is designed for trails or parks with a low traffic flow and demand level. This trailhead may also be used at a secondary access point of a higher demand trail, or as an access point to a trail where no parking is required, such as a small trail in a community neighbourhood.

A.4 Water Access

Our County is fortunate to have numerous lakes and rivers that create amazing recreation opportunities. We are committed to creating water access in the County that meets user demands while protecting the natural conditions of water bodies and surrounding environment. Creating safe, functional and environmentally sensitive water access will allow us to enjoy our rivers and lakes without taking away from natural character, which after all, is one of their main points of attraction.

Water access sites in Parkland County have very different physical, ecological and user characteristics, and so will require site-specific design solutions. The following simple typology of boat launch designs will assist with preliminary planning and design of water access points. Three general typologies are presented below, which give general guidelines on when and where we should employ each access type. The accompanying diagrams are purely conceptual—each site will have different requirements and require site specific design.

As more formalized water access points are created, we should also be working to close any existing informal access points. Informal points generally do not have the desired level of user experience that we wish to have in the County. Additionally, as they often have been constructed in an ad-hoc manner they do not properly address environmental constraints and often are leading to damage of natural areas. As formal access points are created, access to informal points should be closed and revegetation of the sites undertaken to return them to their natural state.

For each specific water access point the best point of entry into the waterbody must be determined to not cause negative impacts to the environment. Any biologically significant zones should be avoided. The following typologies do not present environmental criteria to consider when determining access points, but rather give us the proper user experience and amenities for different types of ways that we use waterbodies for recreation. As each site is being designed, an environmental assessment should be performed to determine the best point of access to maintain the ecological function of the waterbody and surrounding area.

A.4.1 Water Access Principles

Conservation: Water access points should be designed in a way to minimize their environmental impacts

Minimal intervention: The natural form of the shoreline should be altered as little as possible when constructing water access points

Diversity: A range of water access types should be provided for our residents and visitors

A.4.2 Criteria for Selecting Water Access

Opportunities for water access and amenity nodes along shorelines of lakes and rivers will generally be driven by the physical site characteristics and the desired level of staging type. Two criteria categories have been considered in the development of water access typologies. The first is access, which specifically deals with how boats and people get into the water. The second is amenities, looking at the services available around the water access point.

Access: the determined point of entry into the water body.

Amenity: the surrounding site features around the water access point.

Together, the combination of these two elements will determine the type of water access and level of service to be located at our parks and waterbodies that are being used for recreation. Access and amenity should be linked to ensure that more significant access points have greater amounts of amenities, and that smaller access points require fewer amenities.

The deciding factor in the type of water access should be the largest water craft deemed to be acceptable at any given access point.

Figure 47 Example River Access

River Versus Lake Access

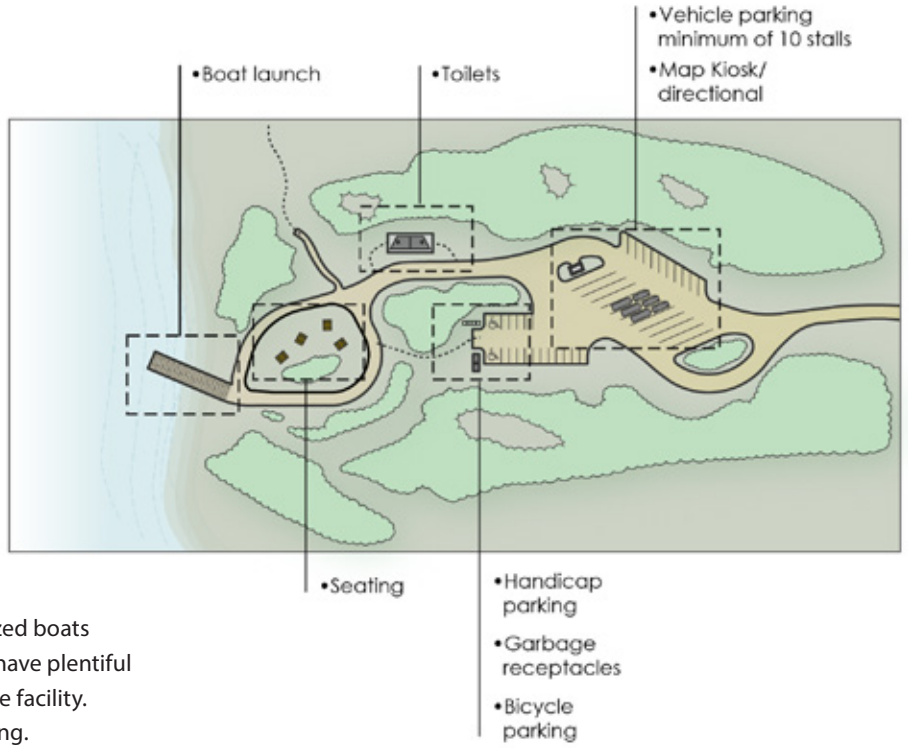
Access points vary in rivers and lakes. In rivers access should be away from the current to make access easier and to also prevent erosion of any access/egress infrastructure present in the waterway. These considerations present less issues in lakes, but still should be considered when selecting a point of access.

A.4.3 Water Access Classification

Three general types of water access have been created. For each type, the type of water body will also dictate the type of access that can be created.

Type1: Major Boat Launch

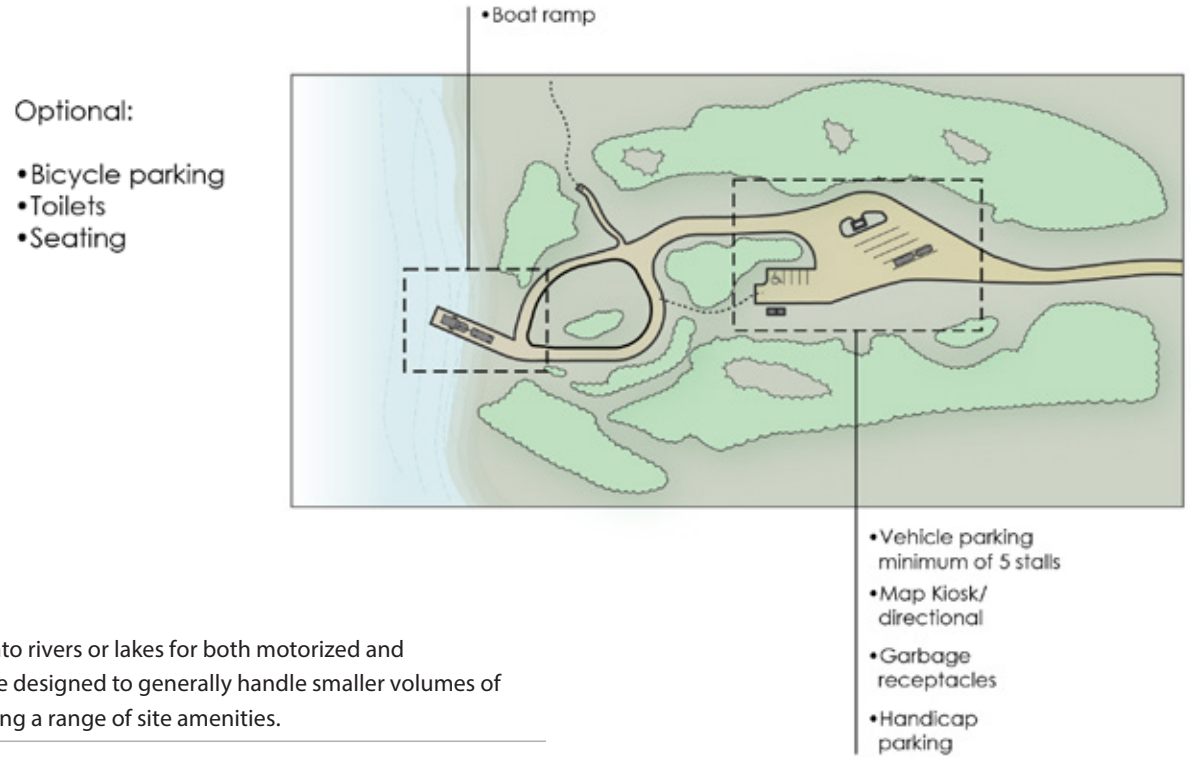
Major Boat Launch



Purpose	The purpose of the boat launch is to facilitate the access of large motorized boats into waterbodies that have high amounts of boat traffic. These facilities have plentiful site amenities because of the relatively large volumes of people using the facility. Infrastructure is also required for staging and for truck/boat-trailer parking.		
Intended Attraction	Regional Attraction		
Access			
Desired Waterbody	Lake		
Point of Water Access	Concrete (or similar) ramp		
Watercraft types	Motorized or non-motorized		
Desired Shore Conditions	Sandy, gradually sloped bank Area with minimal current and exposure to elements		
Amenities (desired)	• Truck/boat trailer parking • Staging area • Vehicle parking	• Handicapped parking • Bike racks • Toilets	• Garbage bins • Picnic tables • Informational/map kiosk
Amenities (optional)	• Dock (adjacent to launch- in lake)	• May include an interpretive/info centre	• May be located at a campground

Type 2: Boat Ramp

Boat Ramp



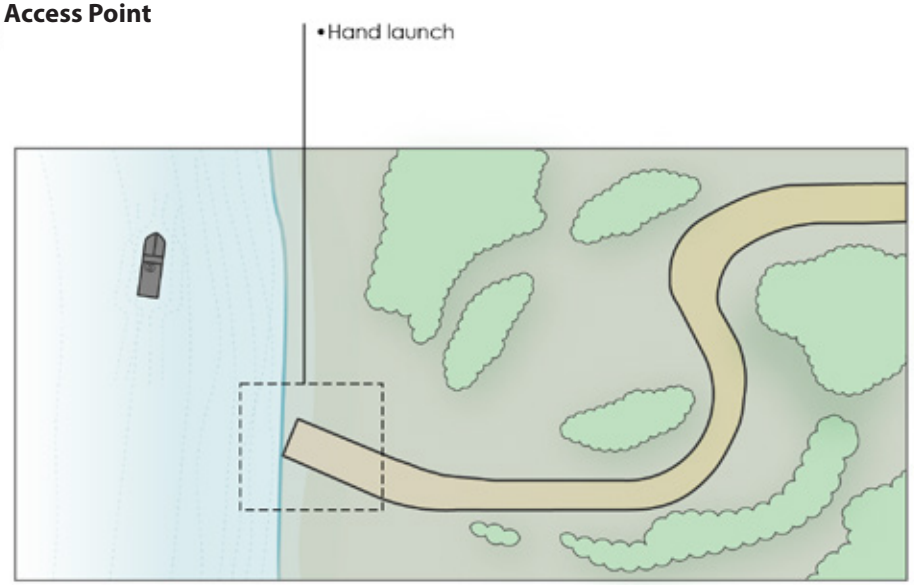
Purpose	The purpose of the ramp is to make access into rivers or lakes for both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. These facilities are designed to generally handle smaller volumes of traffic and smaller watercraft while still offering a range of site amenities.		
Intended Attraction	District Level Attraction		
Access			
Desired Waterbody	Lake or River		
Point of Water Access	Concrete or gravel ramp		
Watercraft types	Motorized or non-motorized		
Desired Shore Conditions	Sandy or rocky, gradually sloped bank Area with minimal current and exposure to elements		
Amenities (desired)	• Truck/boat trailer parking • Staging area	• Vehicle parking • Handicapped parking	• Garbage bins • Informational/map kiosk
Amenities (optional)	• Dock (adjacent to ramp—in lake)	• Bike racks • Toilets	• Picnic tables/seating

Type 3: Access Point

Access Point

Optional:

- Bicycle parking
- Toilets
- Seating
- Vehicle parking
- Handicap parking
- Garbage receptacles
- Map kiosk/Directional



Purpose	The access point is meant for non-motorized watercraft. It uses a hand launch that can be on-shore or off a dock. The surrounding site should remain largely scenic in character.
Intended Attraction	District Level Attraction
Access	
Desired Waterbody	Lake or River
Point of Water Access	Hand launch or dock (in lake)
Watercraft types	Non-motorized
Desired Shore Conditions	• Sandy or rocky, gradually to moderately sloped bank • Area with minimal current and exposure to elements
Amenities (optional)	• Vehicle parking • Handicapped parking • Dock (in lake) • Bike racks • Toilets • Garbage • Picnic tables • Informational/map kiosk

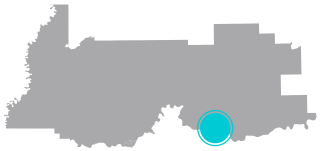
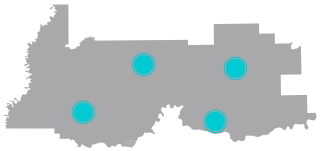
A.5 Outdoor Sport Facilities

We recognize the opportunity to enhance the system of outdoor sport facilities that are provided directly by the County or supported by the County to ensure they provide clear design, level of service and maintenance direction. Specifically, the classification system to more clearly communicate the:

- Expected Catchment Area
- Level of Play
- Degree of Design + Engineering
- Player Amenities
- Comfort and Convenience Amenities & Site Servicing
- Maintenance + Capacity
- Level of Investment

		OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITY CLASSIFICATION			
		AA	A	B	C
CATCHMENT		COUNTY +	COUNTY/REGION	REGION/LOCAL	LOCAL
LEVEL OF PLAY		Provincial +	Regional Tournament/Recreational	Recreational	Spontaneous/Practice
DESIGN	SURFACE	Synthetic	Natural Grass	Natural Grass	Natural Grass/Gravel
	IRRIGATION	Yes	Preferable	Preferable	No
	DRAINAGE	Yes	Preferable	Not Required	No
	LIGHTING	Yes	Preferable	Not Required	No
	FENCING	Yes	Yes	Not Required	No
	SCOREBOARD	Yes	Preferable	Not Required	No
PLAYER AMENITIES	CHANGE ROOMS	Yes	Preferable	Not Required	No
	SHOWERS	Yes	Preferable	Not Required	No
	PLAYER BENCHES	Yes	Yes	Not Required	No
COMFORT & CONVENIENCE AMENITIES	BLEACHERS	Yes	Preferable	No	No
	WASHROOMS	Flush/Fixed Service Center	Flush	Portable	No
	CONCESSION	Yes	If site can accommodate	Not Required	No
	WATER FOUNTAINS	Yes	Preferable	Not required	No
	SPONTANEOUS RECREATION AMENITIES	Yes	Preferable	Not required	No
	EVENT/CLUB SPACE	Yes	Potentially Available	Not required	No
	ON-SITE PARKING	Yes	Preferable	Not required	No
SERVICING	POWER	Yes	Yes	Not required	No
	SEWER	Yes	Yes	Not required	No
	POTABLE WATER	Yes	Preferable	Not required	No
INCLEMENT WEATHER AVAILABILITY		Available	Potentially Available	Unlikely	Unlikely
MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT		High	High	Moderate–Low	Low
CAPITAL INVESTMENT		$$$$	$$$	$$	$

A.6 Indoor Recreation Facilities

Facility Class	Regional Facility	Divisional Facility	Neighbourhood Facility	Specialty Facility
				
Description	Regional level facilities will be multi-purpose, designed to high standard and be capable of hosting competitive sport and regional level tournaments. Regional facilities are recognized as recreation destinations and may be co-located with retail and entertainment districts. Bookings are typically required or preprogrammed and opportunities for spontaneous recreation are limited.	Divisional facilities may be single use or multi-purpose and will serve as venues for spontaneous recreation, senior and junior competitive sports/ activities, schools and recreation and sporting associations. Facility bookings may or may not be required.	Neighbourhood facilities will typically be single purpose and will generally serve as locations for spontaneous recreation and possibly junior competition. Bookings are not typically required.	Special use facilities will primarily target a specific user group in the region or community for a specific recreational activity. They may or may not be to competition standard. Bookings may or may not be required.
Catchment	Region/Entire County	Within the County Division	Primarily from the immediate neighbourhood and may include facilities co-located with or adjacent to schools and other public institutions.	Region or County Division
Typical Location	More densely populated areas such as City or Towns with convenient access off primary highways, public transit or local/regional trails and close to amenities, services and accommodations.	Urban area with easy access off primary highways, public transit and local/regional trails.	Within walking distance from local neighbourhoods with convenient access from local trails.	Urban with easy access off primary highways, public transit and local/ regional trails.
Typical Travel Time	15–30 mins (vehicle) 30 mins + (bicycle/walk)	10–15 mins (vehicle) 30 mins + (bicycle/walk)	5 mins (vehicle) Under 20 mins (bicycle/walk)	15–30 mins (vehicle) 30 mins + (bicycle/walk)

Appendix B

Cultural Resource Framework

Cultural Enterprises (Creative Cultural Industries)		
Advertising	**Dance**	**Music**
Advertising Agencies	Dance Studios and Instruction	Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores
Media Representatives	Dance Material and Equipment Suppliers	Sound recording studios
Antiques	**Design**	Musicians
Antique Dealers	Fashion Design Services	**Performing Arts**
Antique Restoration Services	Graphic Design Services	Comedy Companies
Architecture	Industrial Design Services	Dance Companies
Architectural Services	Interior Design Services	Musical Theatre and Opera companies
Art Dealers	**Film and Video**	Other Performing Art Promoters/Presenters
Artist Representatives	Motion picture and video production	Performing Arts Promoters without Facilities
Commercial Galleries	Motion picture and video distribution	Performing Art Promoters and Presenters
Art Galleries	Post-production and other video industries	Professional Bands
Artist-Run Galleries	**Digital and Interactive Media**	Professional Choirs
Public Art Galleries	Digital Media Production	Symphonies
Book Stores	Interactive Media Production	Theatre Companies
Book, Periodical and Newspaper Distributors	Video Games Design and Production Services	Independent actors and performers
Book Stores and News Dealers	Web Design and Production Services	**Photography**
Breweries and Wineries	**Libraries and Archives**	Photographers
Breweries	Archives	Photography Instruction and Studios
Wineries	Libraries	Photography Suppliers
Other Specialized Beverage Producers	**Museums**	**Publishing**
Broadcasting	History Museums	Newspaper publishers
Local Radio Stations	Science Museums	Periodical publishers
Local Television Stations	Other Museums	Book Publishers
Crafts	**Music**	Other Publishers
Crafts Stores	Record production	News Syndicates
Crafts Studios and Instruction	Music Instruction and Studios	Music Publishers

Cultural Enterprises (Creative Cultural Industries)	
Crafts Suppliers	Integrated record production/distribution
Visual Arts	**Zoos and Aquariums**
Visual Arts (Artists) Studios	Aquariums
Visual Arts Instruction	Wild Life Sanctuaries
Visual Arts Materials Suppliers	Zoos

Community Cultural Organizations		
Aboriginal (Indigenous) Groups	**Agricultural Groups**	**Craft Groups**
Aboriginal Artist Guilds	Horticultural Societies	Craft Guilds
Aboriginal Societies	Volunteer Farmer Markets	Craft Societies/Co-operatives
Dance Groups	**Heritage Groups**	**Multicultural Groups**
Dance Clubs	Genealogical Societies	Multicultural Clubs
Volunteer Run Dance Classes/Programs	Historical Societies	**Storytelling Groups**
Music Groups	**Visual Arts Groups**	Language Clubs
Bands and Choirs	Volunteer Run Art Organizations	Literature Groups
Volunteer Run Music Classes/Programs		Folklore Groups

Cultural Facilities and Spaces		
Aboriginal (Indigenous) Facilities	**Motion Picture Facilities**	**Community Facilities**
Living Arts Centers	Cinemas	Town Halls
Cultural Centers	Exhibit Theatres	Town Centers
Food and Entertainment Facilities	**Multicultural Facilities**	Community Centers
Eating establishments with cultural activity	Multicultural Club Halls	Social Club Facilities
Drinking establishments with cultural activity	Multicultural Outdoor Space	**Public Spaces and Event Zones**
Cultural Facilities	**Religious Institutions**	Fairgrounds
Art Centers or Interpretive Centers	Religious Institutions with event space	Event Zones
Performing Art Theatres or Spaces	**Educational Facilities**	Parks
Libraries	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Amphitheatres
Museums	Post-Secondary Schools	Public Markets (including Farmers' Markets)

Natural Heritage		
Conservation Areas	**Nature Centers**	**Parks**
Protected Areas	Planetariums	National Parks
Gardens	**Nature Centers**	State Parks
Arboretums	Nature Observatories	Local Parks
Botanical Gardens	Nature Reserves	**Trails**
Local Public Gardens	Bodies of Water	State/Nation Trails
	Rivers/Creeks	Experience Trails
	Ponds/Lakes	

Cultural Heritage		
Built Heritage Properties	**Heritage Districts**	**Heritage Sites**
Heritage Properties (Non-registered)	Heritage Districts	Archaeological Sites
Registered Heritage Properties	Heritage Designated Zones	Local Historic Sites
Public Art	**Plaques and Monuments**	State Historic Sites
Murals	Historical Plaques	National Historic Sites
Sculptures/ Statues	Monuments	
Intangible Heritage		
Languages (Oral Traditions)		
Cultures/Ceremonies		

Festivals and Events		
Aboriginal Festivals and Events	**Food and Wine Festivals and Events**	**Celebrations**
Craft Festivals and Events	**Gallery or Studio Tours**	**Literary Festivals and Events**
Multicultural Festivals and Events	**Cultural Heritage Festivals and Events**	**Fall Fairs**
Dance Festivals and Events	**Agricultural Festivals and Events**	**Film Festivals and Events**
Music Festivals and Events	**Natural Heritage Festivals and Events**	**Natural Heritage Tours**
Public Art Tours	**Street Festivals and Events**	**Visual Arts Festivals and Events**

Appendix C

Cultural Roundtables Terms of Reference

1. Cultural Roundtable - Orillia, Ontario

Orillia's cultural plan was led by a Steering Group with wide representation including Council members and staff, representatives of the cultural sector, the business community, First Nations and a range of other community leaders. Upon the adoption of the cultural plan, the Steering Group for the plan evolved into a Cultural Roundtable mandated with the task of supporting the implementation of the plan and ongoing cultural planning and development opportunities in the community.
The purpose of the Cultural Roundtable is to "Build community capacity in cultural development by facilitating communication and supporting collaboration among community, business and municipal interests. The model proved highly successful in implementing the cultural plan but has been successful in sustaining momentum and bringing forward a range of successful new programs and initiatives. City staff provides administrative support to the Roundtable but it does not itself receive financial or operating support.

Orillia Cultural Roundtable Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Cultural Roundtable builds community capacity in cultural development by facilitating communication and supporting collaboration among community, business and municipal interests.

Roles

1. Building a shared vision and understanding of culture in Orillia.
2. Acting as a catalyst for leadership and innovation.
3. Serving as a sounding board for ideas and actions (including issues being brought forward to Council).

Principles

The following principles guide the work of the Roundtable.

- Inclusive engagement—engaging citizens in ways that cross boundaries and builds shared understanding and empathy.
- Valuing the grassroots—celebrating the energy and capacity of the community at the grassroots level.
- Emergence and purpose—balancing a commitment to open-ended dialogue that generates new understandings with advancing concrete plans and actions.
- "Hard and soft" skills—strengthening practical skills and knowledge as well as those devoted to conversation and imagining new forms of community.

Administration

Finances—The Cultural Roundtable will be responsible for generating the financial support needed to sustain its work. This may take the form of funding and sponsorships and/or earned revenue and memberships. A long term plan for financial sustainability will be developed.

Administrative Support—The Department of Culture and Heritage provides administrative support to the Roundtable including:

- Scheduling and meeting logistics
- Supporting communications with the community (e.g., maintaining a contract list, press releases, website updates, period newsletters)
- Serving as a contact point for referrals and networking ('who could I talk to?')

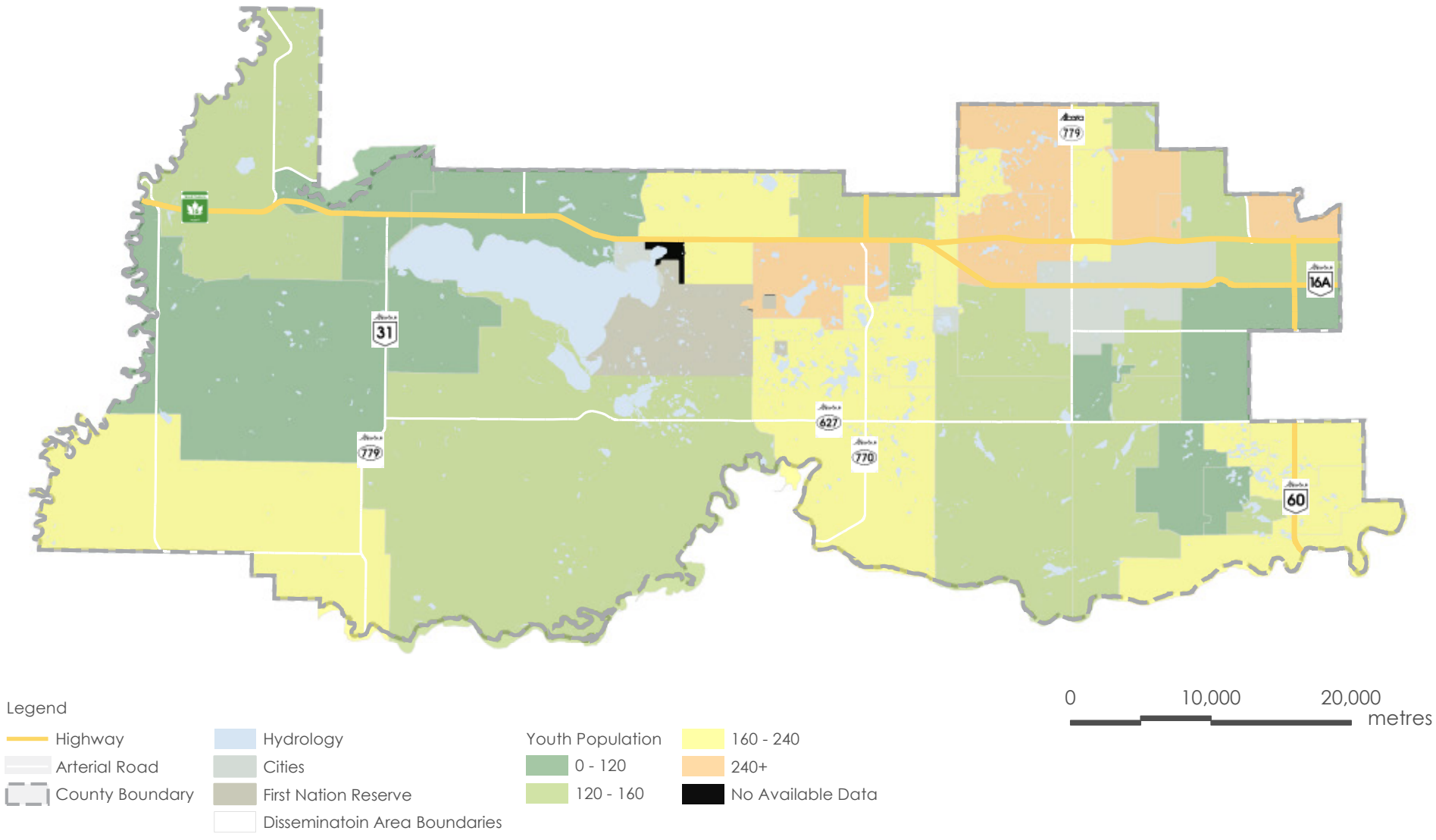
Leadership—Consistent with its purpose and guiding principles, the Cultural Roundtable will be governed using a shared leadership model. The role of the Chair will be to enable participation and facilitate dialogue among members of the Roundtable and the larger community.

A small steering group of 3 to 4 people will serve as a as a sounding board and coordinating body between meetings of the full Roundtable.

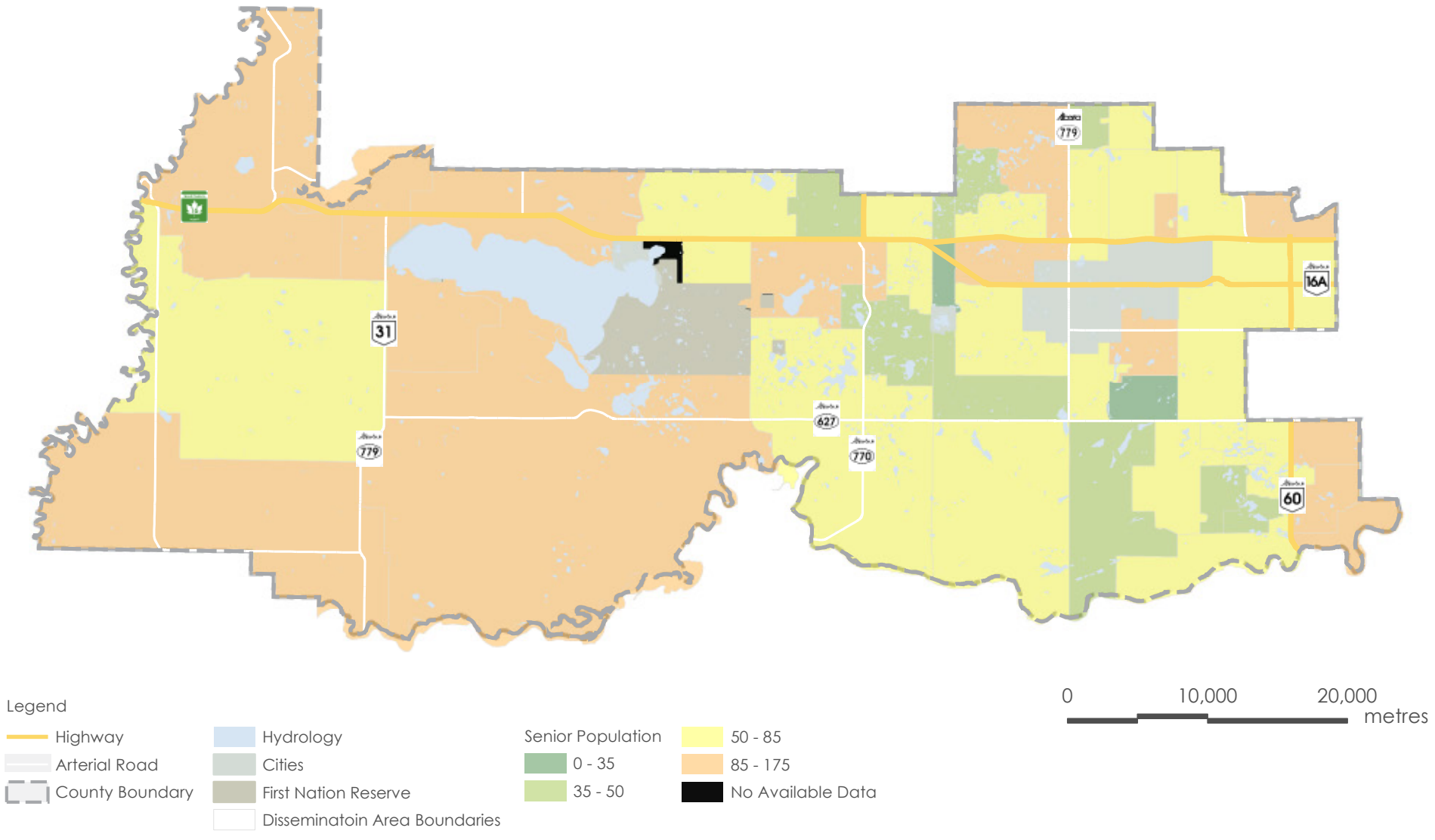
Appendix D

Demographic Maps

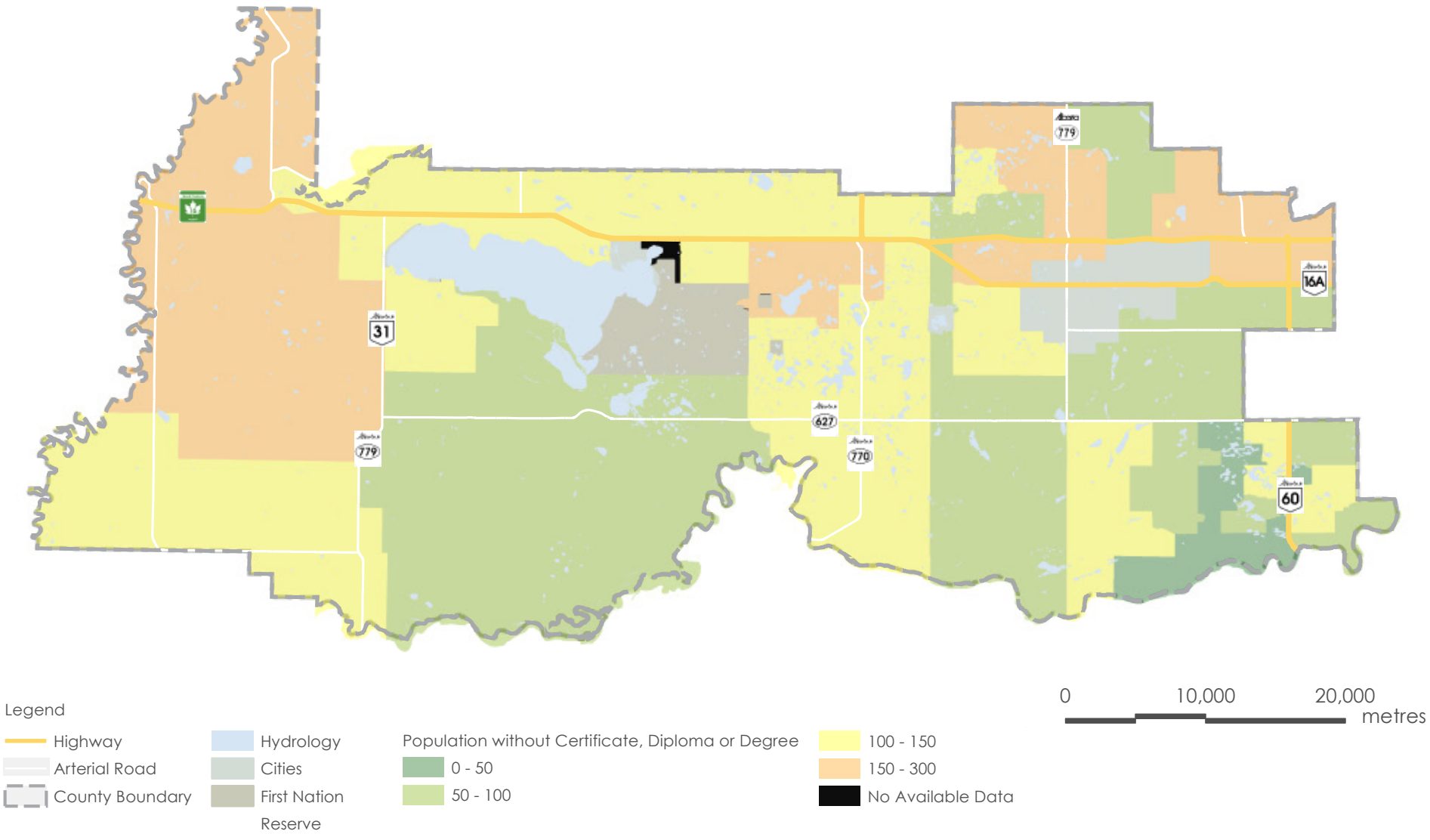
Youth Population Distribution



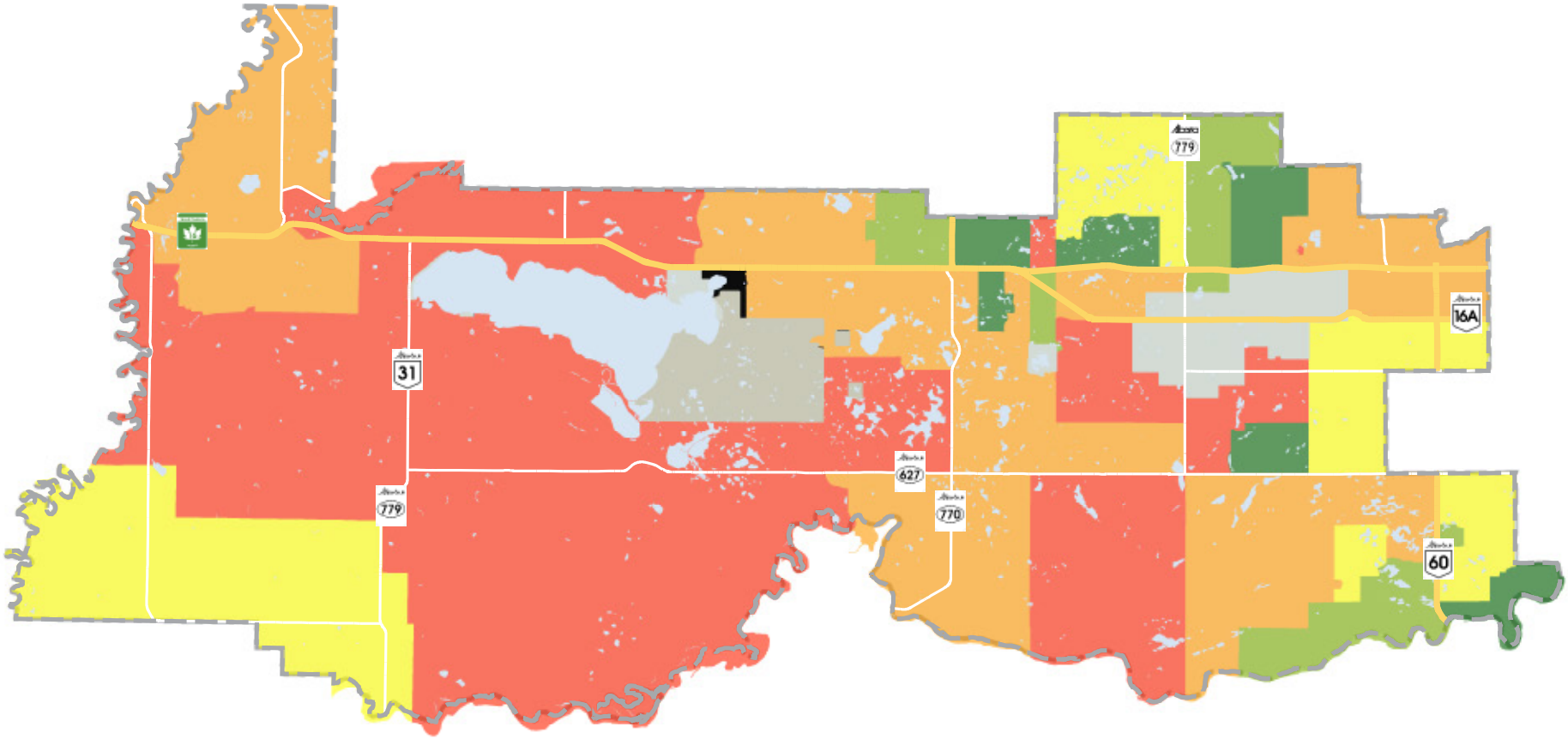
Seniors Population Distribution



Population without Certificate, Diploma or Degree



Prevalence of Lower Income



Legend

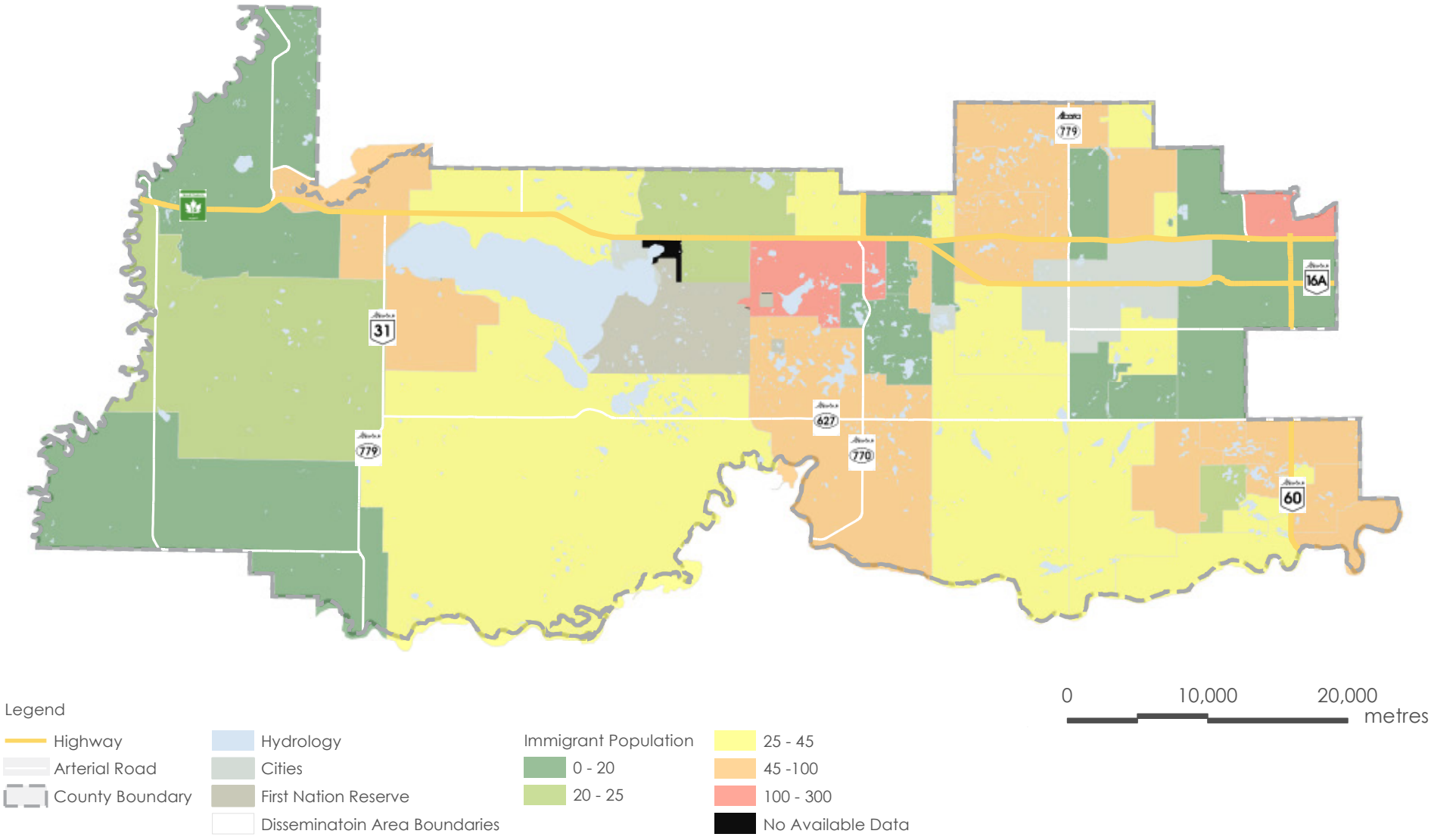
- Highway
- Arterial Road
- County Boundary
- Hydrology
- Cities
- First nation Reserve

Prevelance of Low Income per Household

- 0 - 2%
- 2 - 3%
- 3 - 5%
- 5 - 10%
- 10 - 30%
- No Available Data

0 10,000 20,000 metres

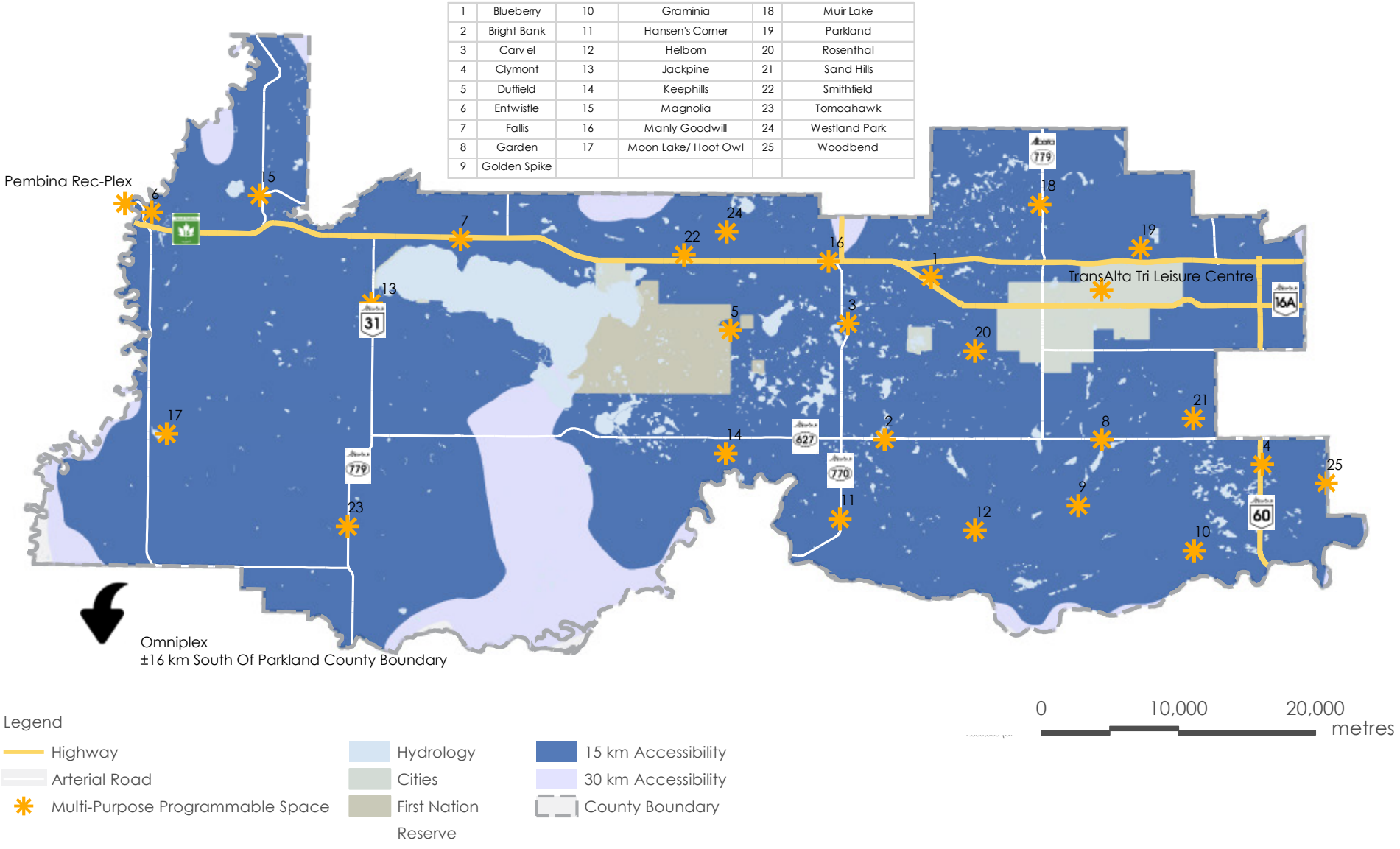
Distribution of Immigrant Population



Appendix E

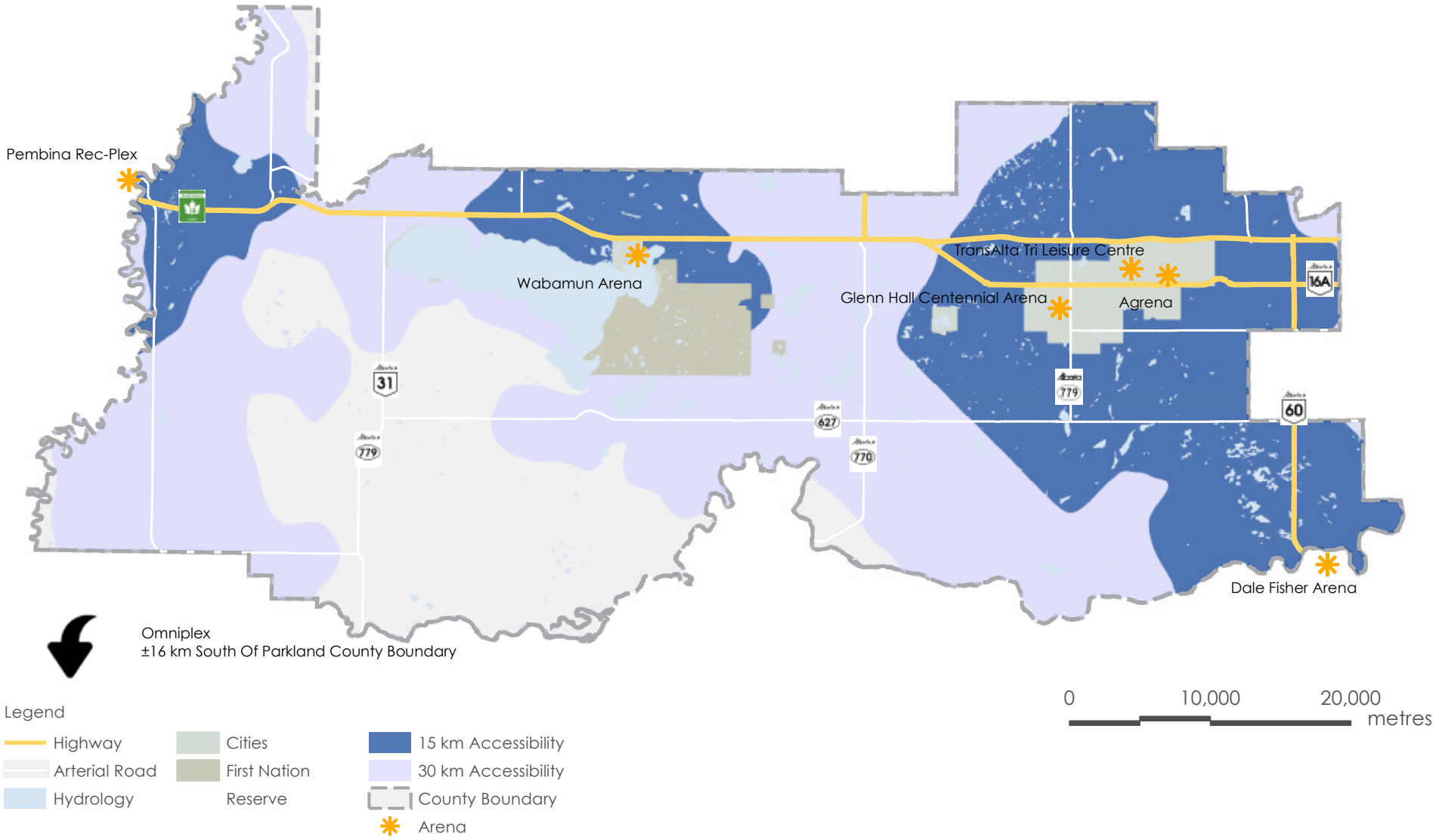
Recreation Facility Service Areas

Access to Multi-purpose Programmable Space

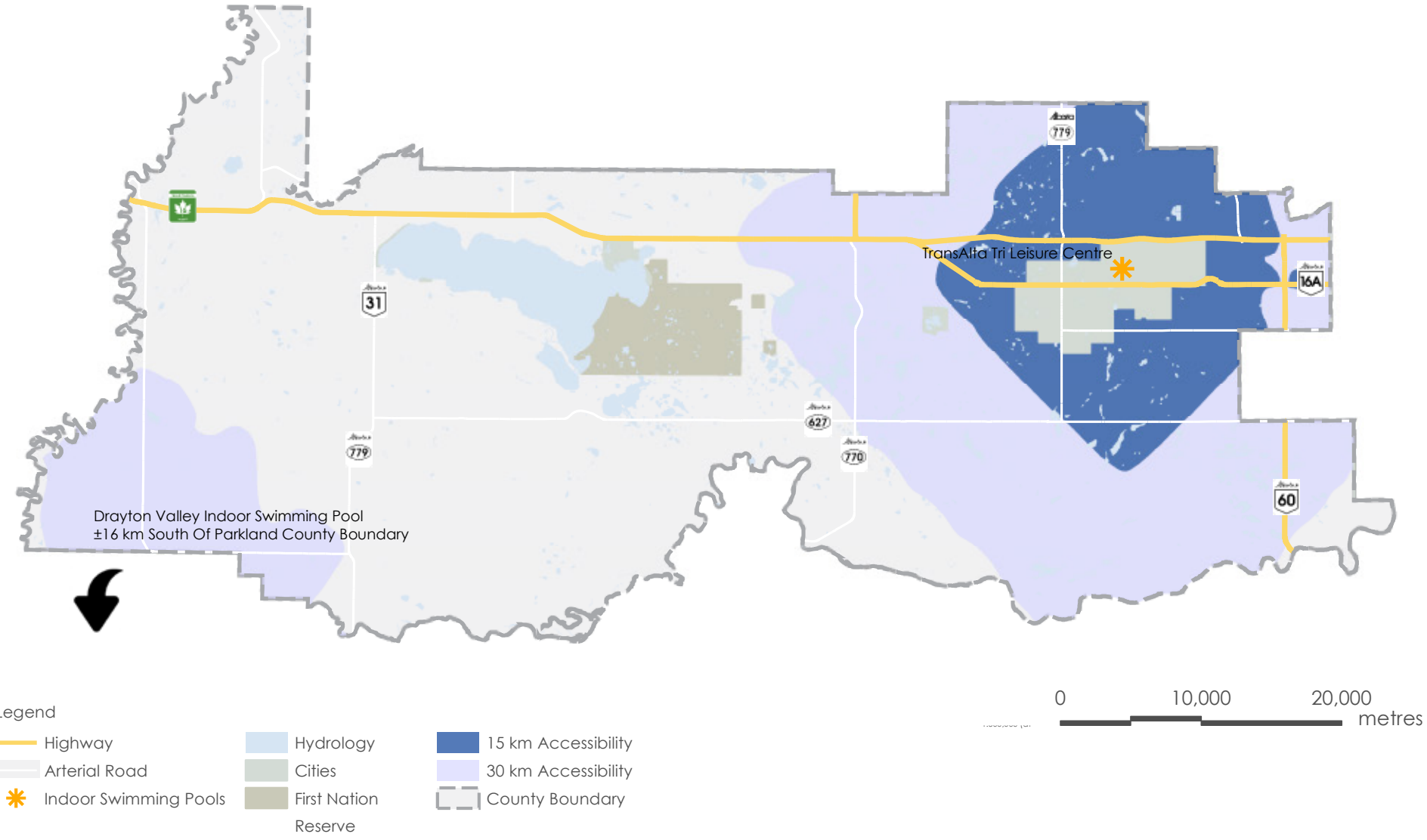


1	Blueberry	10	Graminia	18	Muir Lake
2	Bright Bank	11	Hansen's Corner	19	Parkland
3	Carvel	12	Helborn	20	Rosenthal
4	Clymont	13	Jackpine	21	Sand Hills
5	Duffield	14	Keephills	22	Smithfield
6	Entwistle	15	Magnolia	23	Tomoahawk
7	Fallis	16	Manly Goodwill	24	Westland Park
8	Garden	17	Moon Lake/ Hoot Owl	25	Woodbend
9	Golden Spike				

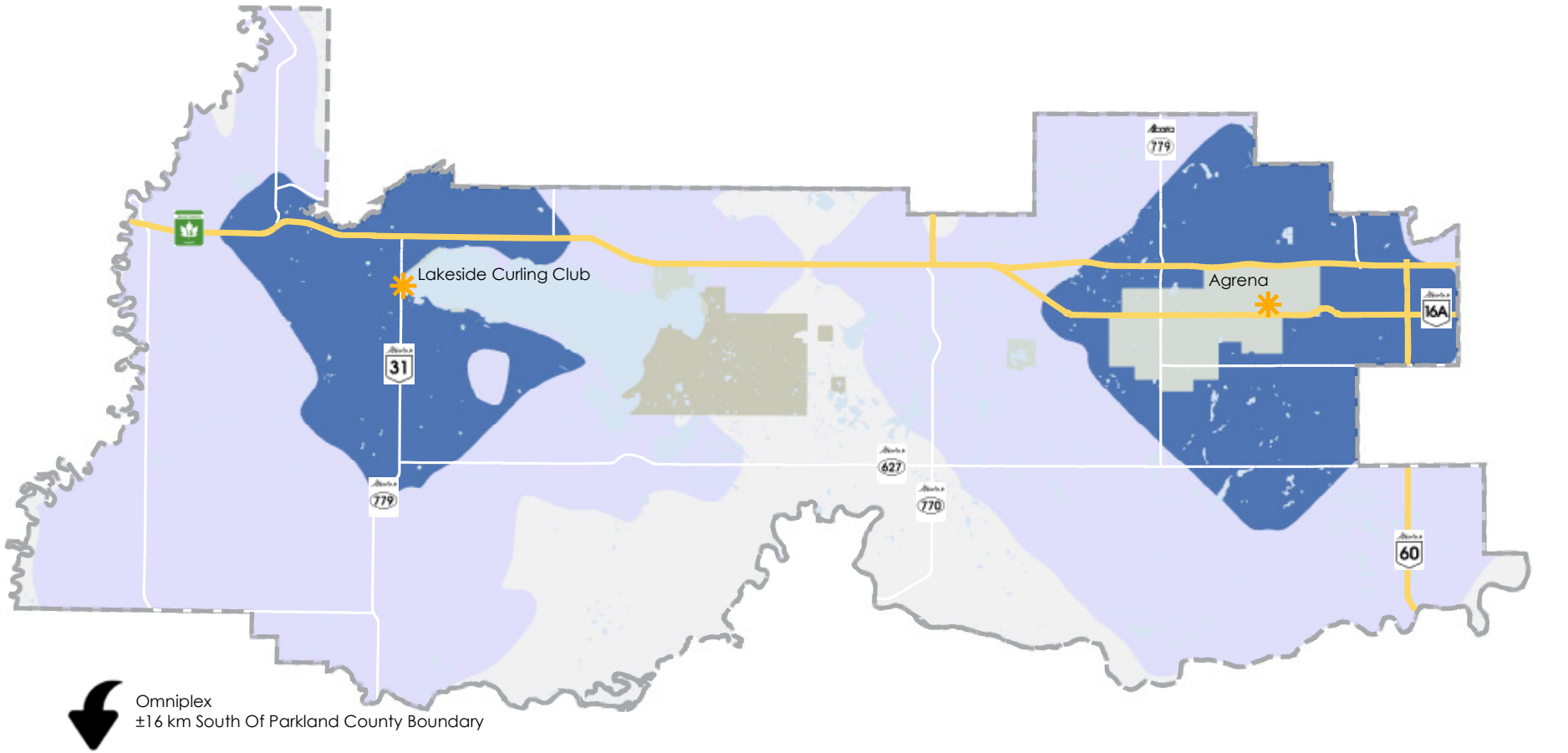
Access to Arenas



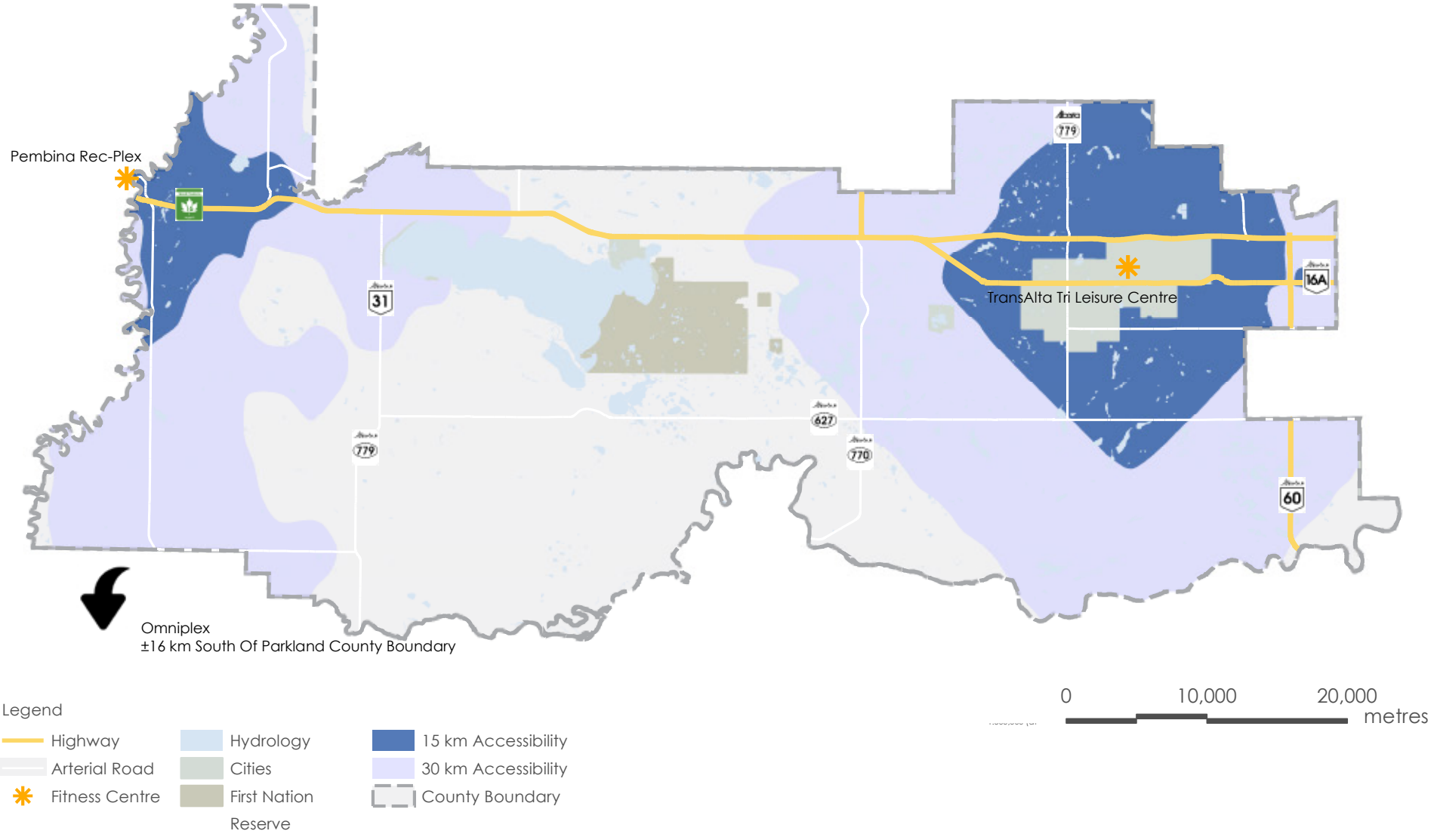
Access to Indoor Pools



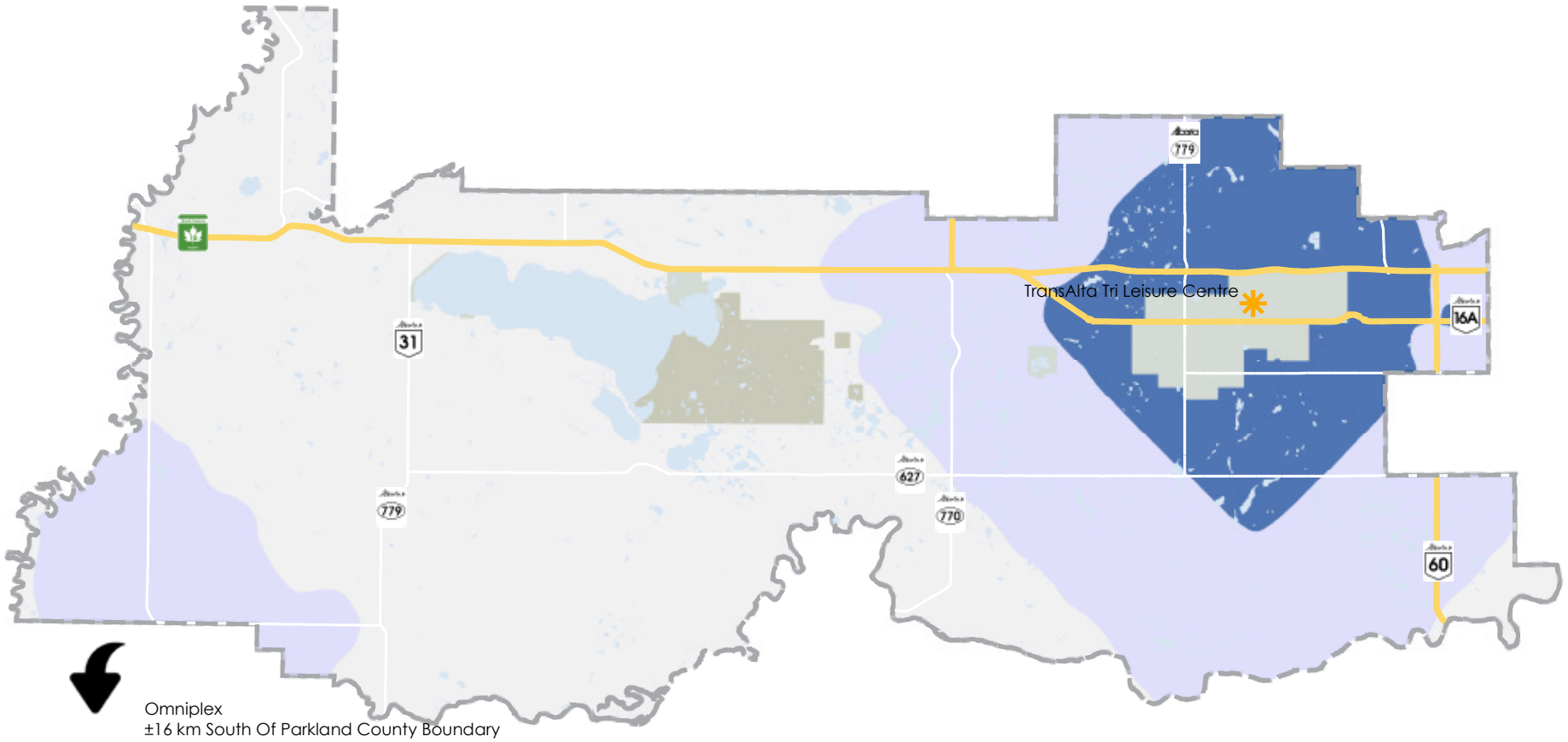
Access to Curling Rinks



Access to Fitness Centres



Access to Indoor Fieldhouses, Sport Courts and Running Tracks

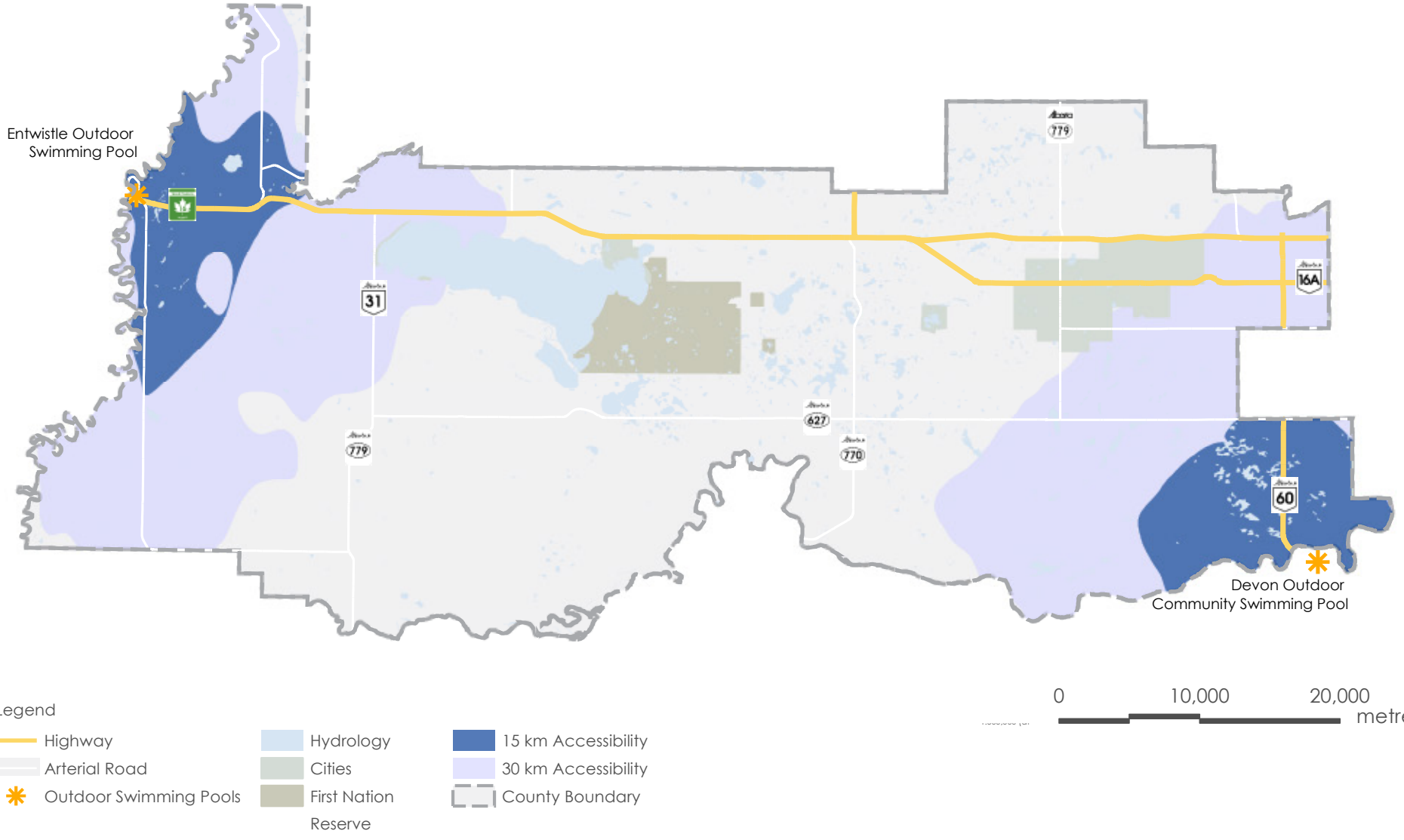


Legend

- Highway
- Arterial Road
- Fieldhouses, Court Sports & Running Tracks
- Hydrology
- Cities
- First Nation Reserve
- 15 km Accessibility
- 30 km Accessibility
- County Boundary

0 10,000 20,000 metres

Access to Outdoor Swimming Pools



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