

TRI-MUNICIPAL **REGIONAL** PLAN



Recreation Strategy

Stages 1, 2 and 3 Reports

April 2021



**Submitted by RC Strategies,
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Recreation Strategy is one component of the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, which has the overall goal of improving governance, service delivery, fiscal capacity, and economic prosperity for the benefit of the citizens of the region. The Strategy includes both tactical and strategic initiatives to guide decision-making and action over the next 10+ years with the intent of enhancing the value and benefit of these services throughout the region.

The Recreation Strategy is based on several inputs all of which are referenced in the Stage 1 Research Report (Appendix 1). These inputs include:

- a socio-demographic profile and analysis of the Tri-Municipal Region;
- a review of existing planning documents related to recreation and parks in the region and beyond;
- presentation of national, provincial and regional drivers of change and trends in the recreation and parks sector;
- inventory and analysis of current recreation and parks facilities and programs offered in the region;
- a review of the current governance structure, service delivery, and operational practices related to recreation and parks in the region;
- reference to the learnings of the Regional Plan Current State Analysis, Service Strategy, and funding framework, and;
- a review of how other regions within Alberta and beyond collaborate and work together.

Based upon these inputs and influences, the Recreation Strategy included herein sets forth a common foundation for regional recreation and parks services, outlines a comprehensive inventory and analysis of recreation and parks assets in the region and classifies them as regional, district, local or special use. The Strategy provides recommendations related to service delivery, cost sharing approaches and provides direction on future programming and prioritized investment in indoor and outdoor amenities. The following summarizes the recommendations in the Recreation Strategy, more detail and justification for each is provided in the body of the report.

A Common Foundation for Regional Recreation

The following Vision is recommended for regional recreation.

A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and parks experiences that foster:

- *Individual wellbeing*
- *Community wellbeing*
- *The wellbeing of our natural and built recreation and parks environments*

In order to achieve the regional vision, the following Outcomes are recommended to help focus effort and investment in recreation and parks services. These Outcomes are phrased as the ideal or desired

state of recreation and parks services in the region and form the basis for measuring the change that investment in regional recreation and parks makes in the three partner municipalities and beyond.

1. Residents and visitors are physically active.
2. Residents and visitors connect with nature.
3. Residents and visitors develop basic skills in a variety of pursuits.
4. Residents and visitors develop advanced skills in some pursuits.
5. Residents and visitors gather.
6. Residents are connected with each other and their community and region.
7. Residents are proud of their community and region.
8. Residents are proud of the recreation and parks assets in their community and region.
9. Residents are engaged in their community and region.
10. The region is more attractive to business and residents because of recreation and parks services.
11. Economic activity and tourism are generated through recreation and parks services.

As it relates to how the region should approach working together more collaboratively to achieve the common Vision and Outcomes, the following Principles are proposed.

1. **Collaboration** – Partner municipalities will aim to work together on all regional matters related to recreation and parks.
2. **Communication** – Partner municipalities will communicate their plans and aspirations related to recreation and parks, regardless of whether it is regional in nature or not, through both informal and formal channels and at appropriate times in the planning process.
3. **Reciprocity** – Partner municipality contributions to regional recreation and parks will yield benefits for their organizations and communities. In other words, partners will be able to clearly answer “What’s in it for us?”
4. **Mutually respectful** – Partner municipalities will treat each other the way they expect to be treated. They will act with professionalism and accept differences of opinion and encourage accountability.
5. **Equity** – Partner municipalities will recognize that their ability to contribute to regional recreation and parks efforts may not be equal. They will embrace each other’s complementary, strengths-based contributions, understanding that each partner’s unique contribution will advance their collective capacity to achieve the shared goal.
6. **Trust** – Partner municipalities will build trusting relationships by interacting with each other in honest and dependable ways.
7. **Leverage** – Partner municipality investments and efforts in regional recreation and parks will amplify their individual investments.
8. **Good faith** – Partner municipalities will operate with clarity and transparency about the parameters of their contributions to regional recreation and parks.

9. **Data driven** – Partner municipalities will make decisions based on the best information possible and will strive to gather robust, accurate and standardized information related to recreation and parks.
10. **Social good** – Partner municipalities understand that the value of recreation and parks services is in the social good and value that they provide in the region and through which public investment is justified.
11. **Capability** – Partner municipalities recognize that each municipality is unique and has varying capabilities and constraints.

Building from the common foundation proposed, the following **Recreation Strategy Recommendations** are intended to challenge the partners and region moving forward. These recommendations have been categorized as foundational, developmental and aspirational as per the definitions and direction related to the overall Tri Municipal Regional Plan.

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
Governance			
1. It is recommended that the partner municipalities accept the common foundation and use it to influence current and future regional collaboration related to recreation and parks.	✓		
2. It is recommended that a regional recreation administrative committee, outside the scope of the current Part 9 Corporation, be formed with administrative representation from each partner municipality to provide advice to each partner municipality on matters related to regional recreation and parks and the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy.		✓	
3. It is recommended that the Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation should remain in its current form and continue to operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre, and that the Corporation be considered as a delivery agent for other district or neighborhood recreation facilities on behalf of partner municipalities (where desired and feasible) .	✓		
4. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional and Special Use Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.		✓	
5. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for District Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy		✓	

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within a 15 minute drive from the facility / space and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.			
6. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional Programs, Events and other aspects of service delivery occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary.		✓	
Service delivery			
7. It is recommended that the following aspects of a more regional approach to recreation service delivery be analyzed by the regional recreation administrative committee (Model 3, 4 or 5):		✓	
a. Capacity building for volunteers and community groups		✓	
b. Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities		✓	
c. Maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture			✓
8. It is recommended that regional approaches to the following practices / protocols should be developed by the regional recreation administrative committee:	✓		
a. Ice allocations (already underway)	✓		
b. Gathering and reporting on recreation and parks utilization	✓		
c. Public and group engagement related to recreation and parks preferences and values		✓	
d. Maintaining a robust and accurate recreation and parks asset inventory	✓		
e. Administering Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation		✓	
Programming, events and opportunities			
9. It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct a consistent / standardized recreation and parks preferences survey of both residents and community groups.		✓	
10. It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct consistent, regular and thorough recreation and parks needs assessments.		✓	

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
<p>11. It is recommended that a regional event or program be defined by meeting one or more of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An event/program is hosted at facilities / spaces that are located in more than one regional municipality b. An event/program is sponsored / hosted / facilitated by groups that are comprised of residents of more than one regional municipality c. An event/program leads to measurable benefit in more than one regional municipality 	✓		
<p>12. It is recommended that the following focus areas be considered in designing and delivering regional recreation and parks events, programs and opportunities. These should be revisited as new information becomes available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Opportunities to increase physical activity and fundamental movement (physical literacy and long-term athlete development) b. Spontaneous and “scheduled” drop-in activities - indoors and outdoors c. Free and low-cost opportunities d. Opportunities that are inclusive, including overcoming structural biases related to race, gender and identity (may be actual program focus or a lens for minimizing barriers to participation related to existing efforts). e. Opportunities that deliberately focus on and include marginalized populations f. Opportunities to drive non-local investment into the partner municipalities through recreation and sport event and competition hosting. g. Opportunities for play (risky and unstructured) for all ages 	✓	✓	✓
Infrastructure			
<p>13. It is recommended that a regional recreation and parks life cycle reserve be put in place for all Regional and Specialty facilities and spaces with annual contributions being split by each municipality based on the cost sharing principles and models herein and in the amount of no less than 1.7% of modernized replacement value. Furthermore, each partner municipality should be doing the same for District and Neighborhood facilities and spaces.</p>	✓		

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
14. It is recommended that the partner municipalities use the following categories when managing recreation and parks facilities and spaces and that final classification be subject to approval from partner municipality Council's with reference to recommendations of the regional recreation administrative committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regional b. District c. Neighborhood d. Special Use 	✓		
15. It is recommended that the needs assessment and prioritization process outlined be used by the partner municipalities to plan, develop and manage recreation and parks facilities and spaces in the region.	✓		
16. It is recommended that a feasibility study be completed of the development of new regional, district and special use amenities as prioritized herein, or upon completion of a community engagement process, under the advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee, considering the direction in this Recreation Strategy and including involvement by all three partner municipalities.		✓	
17. It is recommended that the facility and space planning process from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) be used to plan and deliver new facilities and spaces, with oversight from the regional recreation administrative committee.	✓		
18. It is recommended that the facility and space design guidelines from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) as well as designing to promote physical activity, adapt to social distancing guidelines and to promote inclusion be considered when reinvesting in existing or building new recreation and parks infrastructure.	✓		

Considering the common foundation and recommendations presented, the **Implementation** of the Recreation Strategy could materialize in the following way (subject to the overall implementation of the Tri Municipal Regional Plan.

Step 1: Each partner municipality accepts the Recreation Strategy as part of the Regional Plan process and agrees to the common foundation outlined

Step 2: The partner municipalities develop a terms of reference for the regional recreation administrative committee and appoint members to it

Step 3: The regional recreation administrative committee reviews the Recreation Strategy and works to achieve the following governance and administrative actions.

- Governance focused actions: Confirm definitions of regional and district recreation and parks amenities and the classification of existing assets into the classifications
- Confirm the cost and responsibility sharing principles and approaches outlined and work to adjust current approaches to align with them
- Administrative focused actions: Conduct a regional recreation and parks preferences survey of the general public and user groups (in 2022 prior to or as part of a regional recreation facility feasibility study)
- Conduct a feasibility study for a new regional recreation facility development with the involvement of all three partners (in 2022) while partner municipalities continue to invest in existing facilities to sustain current service levels
- Develop and apply shared practices and protocols:
 - Ice allocations (2021)
 - Utilization data gathering (2021-)
 - Public and group engagement (2022-)
 - Recreation and parks asset inventory (2021-)
 - Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation (2022)
- Explore shared service delivery:
 - Capacity building for volunteers and community groups (2022)
 - Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities (2023)
 - Some maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture (2023)

Step 4: Continue to build out other recommendations related to service delivery (practices and protocols and shared service delivery, programming and events and infrastructure)

Strategic Learning and Evaluation

The Recreation Strategy presents an opportunity to begin to establish the infrastructure for the regional recreation administrative committee to use monitoring and evaluation as a tool for strategic learning.

The initial conceptual alignment between the Recreation Strategy and monitoring and evaluation has been outlined in this report.

The regional recreation administrative committee now has guidance (through a strategy-level theory of change and examples of information gathering approaches) as to how to develop and implement a complete strategic learning monitoring and evaluation system. This system, as outlined, would be based upon focusing on three important areas related to recreation and parks provision:

1. Implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy
2. The benefits of collaboration.
3. Regional recreation and parks outcomes.

This approach will require commitment from partner municipalities and will take time to establish and entrench. It will help partner municipalities identify success related to the Strategy, regional collaboration, and broader recreation and parks outcomes.

Risks and Rewards Moving Forward

Recreation and parks add value to the region; these services improve quality of life and lead to healthier residents, more connected communities, and better public spaces. Each partner municipality invests in these services for the outcomes identified herein. As it relates to working together to deliver recreation and parks services, the Region has a leadership position in the province and has been able to avoid construction cost inflation for projects that could only happen together (as the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre was not viable independently in the early 2000s), and attract government grants (as the Tran Alta Tri Leisure Centre received a \$7M grant related to regional collaboration which represented approximately 1/4 of the overall costs to build it).

It is expected that further collaboration will lead to similar benefits and extend the reach of independent effort and investment to enhance quality of life in the region and make it more attractive to residents and businesses while maintaining the Region's leadership position in inter-municipal collaboration.

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INTRODUCTION

Recreation and parks experiences and opportunities contribute significantly to the physical, mental, social, economic, and environmental health and wellbeing of individuals, households, and communities. The Tri-Municipal Region, comprised of the municipal partners of City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain, and Parkland County, values recreation and parks and the contributions these services make to the attractiveness of the region and the quality of life of the urban and rural residents which they govern.

Guided by strategic regional documents related to recreation and parks, such as the Leisure Services Master Plan (2009) and Tri-Plan: Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region (2017), as well as other regional recreation agreements and policies and plans developed independently, the regional partners have demonstrated their commitment to sustaining and enhancing recreation and parks opportunities. Several achievements have resulted from collaboration related to recreation within the region. One example of this collaboration is the construction and operations of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre - a facility and a regional governance structure that is envied by many other regions in the province and beyond.

The following image illustrates the strength and relevance of the recreation and parks related plans and strategies that have been developed collaboratively or independently by the partners.

The Tri-Municipal Regional Plan

The Tri-Municipal Region has collaborated on significant projects and initiatives in the past, including the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. In building upon past success, regional leaders have decided to extend, enhance, and formalize that collaboration through the creation of a Tri-Municipal Regional Plan. This Regional Plan will enable the partners (Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and Parkland County) to strategically align land use, municipal services, and infrastructure to achieve mutual benefit through a variety of delivery mechanisms. The aim of the Regional Plan is to coordinate and drive investment within the Tri-Municipal Region in a manner that enables each partner municipality to individually and collectively achieve heightened competitiveness based on the philosophy of 'shared investment for shared benefit'.



The development of this Regional Recreation Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region respects and builds upon this extensive and thorough recreation and parks planning foundation already in place. It builds upon the strengths and successes of the region to help each partner prepare for an exciting and uncertain future.

The Strategy includes both tactical and strategic initiatives to guide decision-making and action over the next 10+ years with the intent of enhancing the value and benefit of these services throughout the region.

The Regional Recreation Strategy is one component of the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, which will formalize strategic partnerships and regional goal setting from a holistic municipal government perspective during later phases of the planning process.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Recreation Strategy is based on several inputs all of which are referenced in the Stage 1 Research Report (under separate cover). These inputs include:

- a socio-demographic profile and analysis of the Tri-Municipal Region;
- a review of existing planning documents related to recreation and parks in the region and beyond;
- presentation of national, provincial and regional drivers of change and trends in the recreation and parks sector;
- inventory and analysis of current recreation and parks facilities and programs offered in the region;
- a review of the current governance structure, service delivery, and operational practices related to recreation and parks in the region;
- reference to the learnings of the Regional Plan Current State Analysis, Service Strategy, and funding framework, and;
- a review of how other regions within Alberta and beyond collaborate and work together.

The following illustration identifies three specific stages of this planning process. This document includes the findings of both Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the planning process.



The Recreation Strategy includes strategic and tactical ideas and recommendations related to future recreation and parks governance, service delivery, programming and infrastructure. It is meant to be a reference point for decision makers and an input into the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan.

Integrating an Evaluative Lens through Systematic Reflection and Evaluative Thinking

Integrating an evaluative lens into the development of the Recreation Strategy initially occurred through an intentional exploration of what has contributed to successful implementation of regional strategies in the Tri-Municipal region in the past, with a focus on understanding what was learned from the experiences and the strategic implications of what was learned. In addition to ensuring the Recreation Strategy is sensitive to the Tri-Municipal context, grounding the Recreation Strategy in this intentional approach to evaluative thinking will help set the stage for ongoing strategic learning and evaluation.

The evaluative aspect of this planning process began with a review of strategic plans that are relevant to recreation and were completed by the partners within the past 13 years. Analysis of the plans sought to understand the work that has been completed and to identify salient features for further exploration.

The analysis confirmed partners' commitment to robust strategic planning. It did not, however, yield insights about what has contributed to successfully operationalizing a regional strategy.

Evaluative thinking meetings were held to explore experiences with regional strategies and identify the key attributes that led to successful implementation, as well as issues that impacted implementation. Co-interviews were completed with subject matter experts from each of the Tri-Municipal partners. Grounded in discussion of participants' past experiences with implementation of regional recreation strategies, the interviews gathered insights about implementation and considered the strategic implications of what was learned. Analysis of the validated interview notes yielded key themes about lessons learned, which have been integrated throughout the Recreation Strategy.

THE CURRENT STATE OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN THE TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

This Recreation Strategy (Stage 1) report provides relevant background material upon which this Stage 2 report is built. Key takeaways from the various sections of the Stage 1 report are presented as follows.

Key takeaways related to the **planning process**:

- The Tri-Municipal Regional Recreation Strategy is part of a broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan process.
- The three regional partners have completed numerous recreation and parks plans in the past - some collaboratively and some independently.
- This Stage 1 Report was compiled through review of existing plans; engagement with regional subject matter experts; assessment of existing recreation and parks spaces and programs, regional demographics; and review of other relevant information. It is intended to support strategic and tactical direction outlined in the Recreation Strategy.

Key takeaways related to the **benefits of recreation and parks**:

- Recreation and parks provide both indirect and direct benefits in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- Recreation and parks benefits transcend municipal boundaries.
- Recreation and parks benefits, primarily those that are indirect, cannot be escaped by regional residents and translate into social good.
- Recreation and parks benefits justify public investment in recreation and parks.

Key takeaways related to the **drivers of change** facing recreation and parks:

- Youth and adults are not moving as much as they should. Physical and wellness activity plays an important role in the management of chronic health conditions and mental health.
- Maintaining existing service levels requires continual reinvestment and appropriate asset management practice.
- Applying a climate change lens to the design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places will impact decision making and action. Climate change will also impact people's participation in and their demand for some activities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic will influence the future design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places; operator readiness for possible future events will need to be front of mind in planning activities.
- A greater alignment between recreation and public health should be established.
- Recreation can be a medium to influence positive change in communities as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This refers to ethnicity, gender identity, ability, and socio-economic status.

Key takeaways related to the **planning context**:

- Recreation and parks are important to each partner municipality as evidenced by the plethora of strategic plans developed.
- Regional recreation planning has already occurred related to:

- o outdoor infrastructure and trails as well as indoor recreation facilities
 - o Regional event hosting
 - o Supporting community capacity building
 - o Strengthening linkages and collaboration
 - o Strengthening recreation programs and services
- Recreation and parks can help achieve desired strategic outcomes for provincial and federal governments related to, but not limited to public health, environment, and social cohesion and inclusion (including reconciliation).
- Key trends in recreation and parks that may influence the provision of services in the Tri-Municipal region include:
 - o Changing User Expectations and Behaviours
 - o Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation
 - o Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation
 - o Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health
 - o Overscheduled Children
 - o Physical Activity and Older Adults
 - o Sport and Recreation Tourism
 - o Performance Measurement in Recreation and Parks

Key takeaways related to internal engagement:

- The region has a solid foundation for regional recreation and parks delivery, which is manifested in the TLC Part 9 and many other agreements and initiatives in place.
- There is a desire for enhanced collaboration in the region as well as more clarity and vision around what constitutes regional recreation and parks planning.
- Meaningful and timely engagement of all partners in planning and decision making for regional recreation and parks is a must.
- The recreation and parks department structures and hierarchy within each municipality are not uniform across the three municipalities. This has impacted the ability to form and strengthen relationships.
- Recreation and parks initiatives can be the subject of politics across the Councils. This can hinder regional implementation.
- Interpersonal trust and informal relationships are key to successfully navigating inter-organizational barriers to regional implementation.
- Reciprocity is important for regional implementation. For some, this may include a focus on equitable contributions, shifting away from expectations of equality.
- The region currently collaborates, either informally or formally, on items such as fee setting, allocations (for ice) and marketing and promotions.
- There is less collaboration related to community group support (capacity building) and the provision of direct programming.
- More specific to the TLC Part 9 and as part of a governance review¹:

¹ It is important to note that the review of the TLC undertaken within the scope of this Strategy was focused on the effectiveness of governance and operational characteristics (efficiency, viability, staffing, etc...) was not included.

- o the current governance structure is seen as an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC;
- o the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality;
- o a large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC organization;
- o although not unanimous, the current model in which municipalities share budget requirements for the TLC on a population basis is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities; and
- o all but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded role for the TLC Part 9 company.

Key takeaways related to **service delivery**:

- Municipal partners use various delivery methods to provide recreation services to residents.
- A high degree of potential exists to expand regional service delivery in several areas including, but not limited to, recreation planning, fitness centre and arena operations, and wellness/fitness programming.
- As a region, municipal government spends an average of 14.5% of overall expenses on community services (11.7% for Parkland County, 10.8% for Spruce Grove and 28.1%² for Stony Plain).
- As a region, municipal government spends an average \$359.67 per person on community services (\$305.76 per person for Parkland County, \$265.48 per person for Spruce Grove and \$648.99 per person for Stony Plain).
- There is a variety of cost sharing agreements in place between Parkland County and both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The basis for these agreements includes observed utilization.
- The Tri-Leisure Centre Part 9 Corporation is a municipal partnership between the three municipalities that operates the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and operates the Stony Plain outdoor pool and the Spruce Grove outdoor rink. Each partner has a single share in the Corporation. Any capital and operational deficit requiring subsidy is based on the population of each municipality within the service area.
- There are multiple opportunities in both recreation and parks / environment in which the three municipalities deliver similar services in similar manners. They present good opportunities for regional provision.

Key takeaways related to the **market context**:

- The Tri-Municipal Region population is characterized by the following:
 - o Study area population of 71,818 in 2016, with a projected growth of 9% the population is approximately 78,000 today. The regional population could reach 144,444 by 2059.

² It is important to note that the figures for Stony Plain include the operations of the Stony Plain Golf Course, an amenity unique to the Town in the partnership.

- o The median age of residents in the study region in 2016 was 43 years in Parkland County, 34 years in City of Spruce Grove, and 38 years in the Town of Stony Plain
 - o Overall residents are fairly well educated with over half obtaining a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree
 - o The average household income within the study region in 2016 was \$126,843
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling Favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling. Favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing.
- Residents are well served with a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Within the Tri-Municipal Region study area there are:
 - o 63 indoor recreation amenities
 - o 251 outdoor recreation amenities
 - o 80 parks
 - o 139 kilometres of known trails and pathways
- The total estimated modernized replacement cost for all indoor and outdoor amenities exceeds \$400 million. Using this estimated figure, annual lifecycle contributions can be calculated as follows:
 - o Minimum recommended annual contribution (1.7%): \$6.8M
 - o Maximum recommended annual contribution (2.5%): \$10.0 M
- Both the City of Spruce Grove (event centre with ice arena) and Town of Stony Plain (multipurpose recreation facility) have recreation related capital projects they are contemplating; Parkland County is opening a new community hub including an outdoor pool in Entwistle (outside the study area)
- Those regional recreation facilities and spaces in which utilization is tracked have capacity; utilization information across the region is not standardized and gaps exist
- There are a variety of programs, events, and opportunities offered in the Region

Key takeaways related to other municipal practices:

- There are no standard approaches to regional collaboration related to recreation and parks in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, the Province of Alberta, or beyond.
- Some new practices that have occurred in the recent past where municipalities have collaborated to provide recreation include:
 - o Creating regional recreation advisory boards
 - o Hiring regional staff to coordinate recreation
- Related to cost sharing, some new practices being considered in Alberta include:
 - o Considering both cost and responsibility sharing in agreements
 - o Defining a benefitting 'market area' for different types and scales of recreation services
 - o Breaking down cost and responsibility by both population and assessed ability to pay
- Regional collaboration is being contemplated in Alberta beyond the ratification or negotiation of cost sharing (ICF) agreements. Some regional initiatives underway in the province include developing regional policies dealing with user fees and allocations, creating consistent user code

of conduct and cancellation policies, standardizing the collection of utilization data and conducting regional needs assessments (surveys and research) and promoting and marketing recreation and parks opportunities regionally.

Key takeaways related to **resident service levels**:

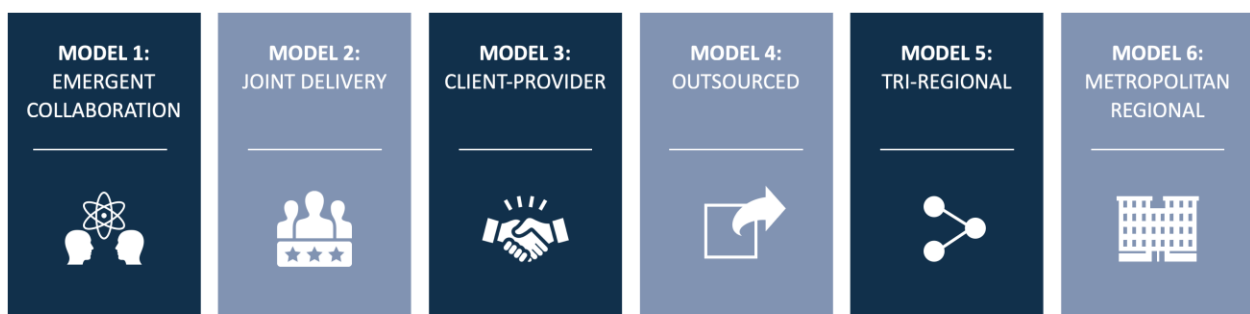
- 100% of study area residents live within a 30-minute drive to indoor pools, arenas or dedicated gymnastics.
- 100% of study area residents live within a 15-minute drive to non-major indoor amenities.
- 95% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 71% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 86% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to trails.
- 33% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to trails.

POSITIONING THE RECREATION STRATEGY

This Recreation Strategy, and the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, has been developed during a unique point in the history of the Tri-Municipal Region. Although provoked by the desire to be more efficient and possibly enhance regional service levels and under the expectations of a different economic future, the COVID-19 pandemic and other societal challenges related to systemic racism and discrimination and climate change have altered the expectations and preferences of recreation and parks user markets immensely. It is anticipated that some of these changes will be short lived while others will last forever. The full impacts on recreation (and all municipal services) have not yet been realized as the three communities, much like others around the world, are still grappling with public health regulations and measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That being said, the delivery of recreation in the Tri-Municipal region has a strong history of regional collaboration from which to work. The TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre is a one of a kind regional venture that has served residents in the region for 20 years and is the envy of many other regions in Canada. Building upon the success of the facility, the Tri-Municipal region has completed numerous strategic and tactical planning exercises related to recreation and parks services. The Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017), the Regional Event Hosting Strategy (2014), and the Leisure Services Master Plan (2009) are all very relevant recreation planning exercises completed by the three municipalities (or combination of) and have research and recommendations that are still relevant today. As well, the development of the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan (2021) also provides influence and insight related to recreation services as part of a broader regional vision. More specifically, the broader Regional Plan is based on the region working together through six different approaches to collaboration as noted below. These models are referenced herein as well.

Of all the regional recreation planning previously completed in the Tri-Municipal Region, the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy completed in 2017 has most relevance to this Recreation Strategy. In order to demonstrate alignment with the recommendations found in that study, it is referenced through this Strategy and identified through text boxes like these.



An important aspect of strategic planning related to recreation is gathering input from the general public and organized user groups within a community or region. Due to the extensive planning already conducted and the current market circumstance, the three municipal partners decided not to conduct any external community engagement during the initial draft development of this Recreation Strategy or the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan. Therefore, this Strategy relies on some of the engagement

conducted for past plans and also recommends how and when further community engagement may be warranted.

Finally, this Recreation Strategy has been developed with the benefit of hindsight related to other regional planning efforts including those referenced as well as other planning related to the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. Understanding the successes and short comings of past plans and in setting the region up for enhanced implementation, this Strategy has been developed through an evaluative lens with a focus on implementation and measurement. Evaluative thinking has been introduced where applicable and is intended to be part of the future of recreation services in the region.

The partner municipalities have had much success in working together collaboratively on a number of initiatives and services, including recreation and parks. Perhaps one of the most significant achievements is that of the development and operations of the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre (TLC) through a Part 9 Corporation owned by all three partner municipalities which began in the early 2000's and is still in place today. Since its development, the partners have attempted to plan and develop facilities at a regional scale but have not been successful. These regional projects included a potential expansion at the TLC and larger new facility construction projects in both Stony Plain and Spruce Grove.

Although the exact reason why major regional projects have not been able to materialize in the same way as the TLC project did, a few considerations may shed some light:

- 1) The capital funding for the TLC included municipal debentures (confirmed through concurrent plebiscite votes in all three partner municipalities) as well as significant grant funding (1/4 of overall cost) from the provincial government related to regional partnerships; the provincial government has not had grant programs available to the partner municipalities of that magnitude since and thus there is no "external motivator" for collaboration.
- 2) The TLC Board, the governing body for the TLC, is focused on the operations of the facility and neither it, nor any other formal governance or administrative body in the region has the purview of regional recreation thus major decisions about new facility projects are handled by each partner municipality separately; although this is how the original agreement for the TLC was reached, the lack of accountability for regional focused decision making may also contribute to the issue.
- 3) The development of the TLC happened when all three communities were at a stage that they needed enhanced amenities but were not likely to be able to afford developing them independently; the TLC partnership gave them all the opportunity to enhance services levels to a point where they arguably would not have been able to do so on their own. Growth over the past 20 years has evolved each municipality to the point where they are more able to tackle large scale projects on their own and thus less likely to benefit from partnership.

All of these considerations, as well as the research and engagement undertaken in the development of the Stage 1 report has lead the consulting team to the conclusions and recommendations outlined herein.

A COMMON FOUNDATION

Recreation and parks are an important municipal service in the Tri-Municipal Region. They lead to many direct and indirect benefits in each community and contribute to positive health outcomes for residents and visitors and enhance community connection and cohesion.

The value that the Town of Stony Plain, City of Spruce Grove and Parkland County place on recreation and parks is apparent through the complement of programs, facilities and spaces that each invests in, either independently or collaboratively. The value of recreation and parks is also apparent in the strategic planning and policy already in place in the region.

Although very valuable, there is limited legislation or standards related to which recreation and parks services a community or region must or should have. There are no standardized delivery models and there are no consistent programs and facility design and operating protocols that municipalities in Alberta (or beyond) must follow in providing these services. For this reason, it is important for a community to articulate goals and desired outcomes (why they invest in recreation and parks) as well as principles (how they provide recreation and parks) in order to have a reference point for strategic learning and decision making; provide justification for investment; and focus and optimize limited resources available. This is not an easy feat and becomes even more complex when more than one municipality is involved.

Defining a clear vision for recreation and parks in the Tri-Municipal Region that is accepted by all three municipalities and that includes the full scope of recreation and parks services (programs, indoor and outdoor facilities, service delivery) will create a common foundation for the regional partnership to be sustained and enhanced. It will help to galvanize regional recreation and parks provision and serve as a check point for decision making.

Since the delivery of recreation and parks for the region is a combination of jointly provided services (like the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre) and service provided by each municipality (like the Glenn Hall or Grant Fuhr Arenas), a common foundation for regional recreation and parks needs to be applicable to the partnership while still respecting the identity and autonomy of each.

Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) provides recommendations further detailing a governance plan for indoor recreation facilities:

1. Develop terms of reference—indicating what is included in the scope of a regional recreation strategy.
2. Develop a shared vision for services delivery for the Region with all service delivery partners.
3. Determine strategic directions identifying the priority areas of focus.
4. Identify recreation outcomes for the region; what specifically can be done to help meet Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and health objectives for all 3 municipal partners.
5. Identify internal departments and planning initiatives to partner with on new facilities and identify new and existing partners.
6. Identify strategies and actions that will be implemented in order to achieve agreed upon outcomes, set and review priorities annually to keep things on track.
7. Determine the monitoring, assessment and reporting structure.

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The current strategic vision statements for recreation and parks that are “in play” throughout the region are presented below.

“Our indoor recreation facilities are the centerpiece of community spirit and wellness in our communities and destinations for active and passive recreation opportunities. Our facilities are adequately meeting the region’s indoor recreation needs and support meaningful and accessible recreation experiences that foster individual health and wellbeing, community wellbeing, opportunities for life-long participation and economic diversification. These facilities, which will be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, are helping to position the region as a major quality of life destination in Alberta.” TRI-PLAN (page 44, 2017)

“The parks and open space in the Town of Stony Plain reflect residents’ pride in the community.

The major parks are well distributed and connected with a trail system that passes through natural areas, and green corridors within neighbourhoods. Parks provide a variety of recreation and social opportunities that support healthy and active lifestyles and a sense of community.

The natural environment is respected, protected and enhanced for the multiple benefits it provides.” Stony Plain Parks and Open Space Master Plan (page 5, 2015)

“By 2026, Spruce Grove’s Open Space & Parks System will be a model of environmental stewardship and a highly valued community asset. Strong forward planning over the coming years will provide Spruce Grove with a comprehensive, contiguous and innovative parks, open space and trail system. Residents will recreate and commute to work through a network of trails, pathways and streetscapes while stopping to enjoy the many park space amenities available. Sustainable solutions to growth will provide the means for implementing this Plan. All of this will contribute to Spruce Grove being the Community of Choice.” Spruce Grove Parks and Open Space Plan (page 14, 2007)

“We bring community together to inspire quality life experiences and healthy active living” TLC Strategic Plan (page 7, 2016)

“The Tri-Municipal Region will host a variety of regional events that will bring people into the region as participants and spectators. The region will be positioned as a locale of choice for event facilitators and organizers looking to host events. Community organizations will be supported in their efforts to host regional events; in turn community organizations will support, champion, and celebrate events. Regional facilities will be more fully utilized, and the benefits of public infrastructure investment will be more fully realized.” Regional Event Hosting Strategy (page 7, 2014)

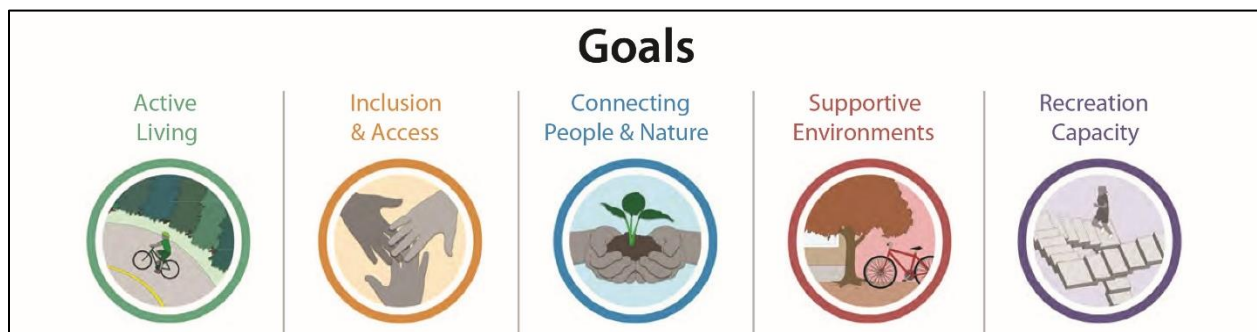
“Parkland County has become known for our impressive system of connected and accessible park lands, recreation opportunities and cultural experiences. Our residents and our families have become happier, healthier and stronger as they spend more time taking part in parks, recreation and cultural experiences. 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.” Parkland County Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2016, page 83)

While there are some commonalities in the vision of the different municipalities, at the same time each is unique. In respecting the identity of each municipality and the planning in place, a renewed regional vision needs to consider what exists, but be acceptable to all.

The Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)³ was developed by recreation and parks stakeholders from across Canada. It is meant to guide investment and effort in recreation into the future and is based on achieving five main goals. The Framework also outlines a vision for recreation in Canada.

We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- *Individual wellbeing*
- *Community wellbeing*
- *The wellbeing of our natural and built environments*



Each municipality in the region, either through independent or collaborative strategic planning, has identified the Framework as a relevant and common reference point for planning and decision making. Other municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region (EMR) and throughout the province are also aware of and use the Framework, as well as, the Province of Alberta and Government of Canada. The following vision for regional recreation and parks in the Tri-Municipal Region is proposed and is closely tied to the vision outlined in the Framework. This vision will not only provide a common and already accepted reference point for the Tri-Municipal Region, but will also position the region to partner with other municipalities in the EMR should opportunities exist to do so. It will also enable the Tri-Municipal Region to demonstrate alignment with the goals and outcome of provincial and federal governments, potentially being able to access available supports or other partnership opportunities.

A VISION FOR RECREATION AND PARKS IN THE TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and parks experiences that foster:

- **Individual wellbeing**
- **Community wellbeing**
- **The wellbeing of our natural and built recreation and parks environments**

³ More information on the Framework for Recreation in Canada can be found here: <https://www.cpra.ca/about-the-framework/#:~:text=The%20Framework%20for%20Recreation%20in%20Canada%20is%20our,outdoor%20experiences%20in%20supportive%20physical%20and%20social%20environments.>

This vision provides a broad perspective as to what the region is trying to achieve with its investment and efforts related to recreation and parks and why the service is provided. The vision however does not speak to specific outcomes desired. The following list of desired outcomes has been developed considering existing planning in the region, the benefits of recreation and parks, and the role that municipalities play in recreation and parks delivery. The outcomes further explain why recreation and parks investment is required and what the region wants to see from its public investment in them.

These outcomes are not only valuable for justifying investment and explaining benefit, measurement of them can inform strategic decision making about current and future projects or initiatives. These outcomes are also aspirational; they may never be fully achieved. This is intentional and will lead to continuous improvement. They are also not solely “owned” by municipal recreation and parks services. Many other stakeholders, service providers, and other factors influence things like activity levels and community connection. Finally, these outcomes help provide focus in a service area that can sometimes be dominated by passion and bias.

DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR REGIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS

- 1. Residents and visitors are physically active.**
- 2. Residents and visitors connect with nature.**
- 3. Residents and visitors develop basic skills in a variety of pursuits.**
- 4. Residents and visitors develop advanced skills in some pursuits.**
- 5. Residents and visitors gather.**
- 6. Residents are connected to each other and their community and region.**
- 7. Residents are proud of their community and region.**
- 8. Residents are proud of the recreation and parks assets in their community and region.**
- 9. Residents are engaged in their community and region.**
- 10. The region is more attractive to business and residents because of recreation and parks services.**
- 11. Economic activity and tourism are generated through recreation and parks services.**

Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) outlines desired outcomes and objectives related to indoor recreation facilities in the region.

Our residents will:

- Have a higher quality of life
- Be more physically active, more often throughout their daily lives
- Be healthier and live longer
- Have a higher self-esteem, self-confidence and life satisfaction.
- Have stronger relationships with their family, friends and the community as a whole.
- Have greater pride and connection to their community.

Our region will:

- Attract and retain more skilled workers and employers.
- Diversify and strengthen its economy through sport and recreation- based tourism.
- Experience stronger land values.
- Experience lower health care costs and costs associated with crime and other anti-social behaviours.

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These outcomes further explain why recreation and parks are a priority in the region. They help to justify investment regionally and can also be used by each partner to rationalize the delivery of local services. Each municipality has guiding principles and protocols in place related to recreation and parks, whether they are enshrined in a document or not. The independent principles help to ensure each municipality is providing services in an appropriate fashion. Although each partner has principles in place, a commonly accepted set of regional recreation and parks guiding principles will help define and manage relationships between the three partners. These principles help to explain how regional recreation and parks services will be planned and provided and are meant to complement what each partner already has in place.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REGIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS

1. **Collaboration** – Partner municipalities will aim to work together on all regional matters related to recreation and parks.
2. **Communication** – Partner municipalities will communicate their plans and aspirations related to recreation and parks, regardless of whether it is regional in nature or not, through both informal and formal channels and at appropriate times in the planning process.
3. **Reciprocity** – Partner municipality contributions to regional recreation and parks will yield benefits for their organizations and communities. In other words, partners will be able to clearly answer “What’s in it for us?”
4. **Mutually respectful** – Partner municipalities will treat each other the way they expect to be treated. They will act with professionalism and accept differences of opinion and encourage accountability.
5. **Equity** – Partner municipalities will recognize that their ability to contribute to regional recreation and parks efforts may not be equal. They will embrace each other’s complementary, strengths-based contributions, understanding that each partner’s unique contribution will advance their collective capacity to achieve the shared goal.
6. **Trust** – Partner municipalities will build trusting relationships by interacting with each other in honest and dependable ways.
7. **Leverage** – Partner municipality investments and efforts in regional recreation and parks will amplify their individual investments.
8. **Good faith** – Partner municipalities will operate with clarity and transparency about the parameters of their contributions to regional recreation and parks.
9. **Data driven** – Partner municipalities will make decisions based on the best information possible and will strive to gather robust, accurate and standardized information related to recreation and parks.
10. **Social good** – Partner municipalities understand that the value of recreation and parks services is in the social good and value that they provide in the region and through which public investment is justified.
11. **Capability** – Partner municipalities recognize that each municipality is unique and has varying capabilities and constraints.

Accompanying each recommendation presented in its own “box” is a list of inputs. These inputs are presented in detail in the Stage 1 Report. For each recommendation, the inputs are listed with the check mark (✓) signifying that the input supports the development of the recommendation.

The vision, desired outcomes, and guiding principles provide clarity for the region as to why recreation and parks service are justified; what the region wants to see occur out of investment and effort related to recreation and parks; and provides parameters as to how all partners should approach regional recreation and parks planning and provision.

It is recommended that the region accept this common foundation and use it to influence current and future collaboration related to recreation and parks.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

The following sections outline key recommendations related to regional recreation and parks governance, service delivery, programming and infrastructure that are intended to build upon the strong foundation of collaboration in the region and help the three municipalities achieve the vision and outcomes outlined.

Vision

A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and parks experiences that foster:



Individual Wellbeing



Community Wellbeing



The wellbeing of our natural and built recreation and parks environments

Outcomes



Residents and visitors are physically active.



Residents and visitors connect with nature.



Residents and visitors develop basic skills in a variety of pursuits.



Residents and visitors develop advanced skills in some pursuits.



Residents and visitors gather.



Residents are connect with each other and their community and region.



Residents are proud of their community and region.



Residents are proud of the recreation and parks assets in their community and region.



Residents are engaged in their community and region.



The region is more attractive to business and residents because of recreation and parks services.



Economic activity and tourism are generated through recreation and parks services.

Guiding Principles



Collaboration



Communication



Reciprocity



Mutually Respectful



Equity



Trust



Leverage



Good Faith



Data Driven



Social Good



Capability

RECREATION AND PARKS GOVERNANCE IN TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

The Tri-Municipal Region has a deep history of collaboration on a variety of municipal services. This collaboration is manifested in memorandums of understanding and cost share agreements as well as a more structured Commission (Capital Region Parkland Water Services Commission) and a Part 9 Corporation (Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation). Although collaboration is strong in the region, the development of the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan by the three municipalities shows a commitment to do even more together.

It is possible that the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan once completed may lead to adjustment and evolution in governance related to regional matters but for the purposes of this Recreation Strategy, enhancements to the governance and delivery structure of recreation and parks are discussed in isolation of broader changes that might be recommended.

The current governance structure related to recreation and parks in the region is highlighted by the Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation. This corporation is a Part 9 company originally set up to own and operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. The Corporation is owned by all three municipalities and has both elected official and public representation on its Board of Directors. This is the most formal and structured example of collaboration in the region and the only example of recreation and parks that involves all three partners. Parkland County has cost sharing agreements in place with both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain for the operation of key recreation facilities (The Agrena, The Glenn Hall Centennial Arena) and also has similar relationships with other municipalities outside the Tri-Municipal Region.

Although the three partners are brought together through the Corporation to operate a significant and valued resource, there is no formal governance or administrative body in place that is accountable for the broader provision of regional recreation and parks. The Corporation is focused on the ownership and operations of a major recreation facility (as well as the contracted operations of the Stony Plain Outdoor Pool and Spruce Grove outdoor rink) and does not have a broader mandate related to other regional facilities, parks and open spaces, programs and events (outside the scope of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre). Right now, ideas and actions related to regional recreation and parks collaboration are brought forward by administration or elected officials and are primarily discussed and decided upon independently in each municipality.

The region has developed several recreation and parks related plans and initiatives which recommended enhancements to the regional recreation and parks delivery system that have not been fully implemented. A possible reason for this is that there is no regional administrative or governance committee in place to create accountability for regional decision making and action and to provide advice as to what is best for recreation and parks in the region. In some cases, it is not easy, or perhaps possible, for independent councils and administrations to make decisions that are best for the region when each is primarily accountable to its individual municipality. The difficulty in making decisions through a “regional lens” has been highlighted previously and is one of the factors that lead to the restructuring of the Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation Board during the course of its existence.

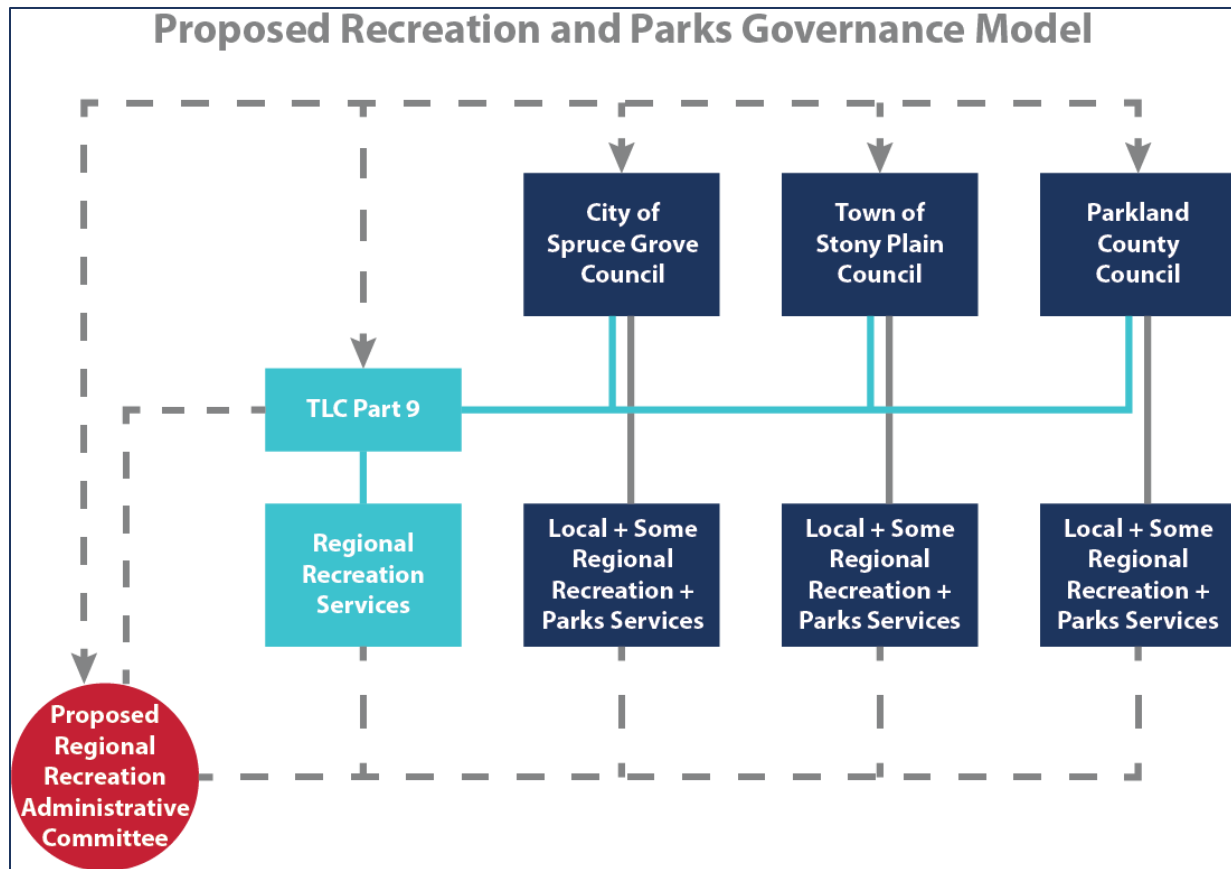
When looking at other examples of successful regional collaboration, it is not uncommon to see some advisory or decision-making body (governance and/or administrative level) with a truly regional mandate as part of the decision-making process. In the Province of British Columbia, many regional

districts provide regional recreation and parks services through a formal commission structure that even has its own ability to requisition taxes directly from residents. These services are delivered by regional district staff and owned through this formal layer of municipal government. In other parts of Alberta, some regional recreation boards or committees exist, but most are in place to provide advice to independent municipalities that deliver regional and local services. There are only a few regional jurisdictions in Alberta that have structure beyond typical cost sharing agreements; those that do have formal facility ownership and operating partnerships, structured as societies, Part 9 corporations, commissions or federal non-profit corporations, or have created formal advisory committee or boards to help independent municipalities incorporate regional considerations into decision-making. More information about what happens in other jurisdictions as well as more detail about governance in the Tri-Municipal Region can be found in the Stage 1 report found in the appendix.

For all of these reasons, it is recommended that a regional recreation administrative committee, outside the scope of the current Part 9 Corporation, be formed with administrative representation from each partner municipality to provide advice on matters related to regional recreation and parks and the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy. Under this new approach:

- Partner municipalities retain independence for some regional and all local recreation and parks service delivery;
- Partner municipalities continue to participate in the Part 9 Corporation to own and operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre, and;
- The Part 9 Corporation continues to be an option for service delivery of any independent partner asset under contract.

The administrative nature of this regional recreation administrative committee will enable it to assess, analyze and provide advice to partner municipalities related to regional recreation matters including, but not limited to, the implementation of this Recreation Strategy. If the implementation of the good work of this committee is challenged at a political level, the region may want to explore the creation of a similar committee of elected officials for all of the same rationale listed herein.



Although not recommended initially, the regional recreation administrative committee could eventually be responsible for overseeing the introduction and potential delivery of different aspects of regional recreation and parks delivery. That said, the initial rationale and responsibilities of the regional recreation administrative committee includes the following.

- Creating clear accountability structures for the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy; including the development and sharing of regional policies and protocols.
- Screening proposed and exploring new potential recreation and parks project proposals for regional merit.
- Administratively advising partner municipal councils on the development and acceptance of regional policies, facilities, programs, services, and initiatives (where appropriate).
- Formally sharing information related to recreation and parks between the three partner municipalities.
- Conducting and monitoring regional recreation and parks needs assessment, including an updated regional recreation and parks engagement process.
- Monitoring progress towards the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy and the anticipated outcomes.
- Provide advice and guidance on other regional recreation and parks matters as needed.
- Strengthening and embedding a trusted regional approach process in each municipal operation

Administrative capacity would need to be allocated to support the functioning of the regional committee (meeting logistics, decision making, reporting, etc.). If capacity limitations exist within each of the three municipalities to help coordinate and support the regional committee, the hiring of a regional recreation coordinator should be considered.

The regional recreation administrative committee would ideally be comprised of managers responsible for recreation and parks from each partner municipality and be supported by other subject matter expert administrators as needed. These administrators would meet on a frequent and regular basis. This level of administrative communication already exists to some degree in the region and this approach would simply formalize it and create a more concrete and standardized line of communication related to regional recreation and parks matters to partner municipal councils to support decision making.

The regional recreation administrative committee should follow a terms of reference and be held accountable to report back to each partner municipality, periodically on progress.

It is recommended that a regional recreation administrative committee, outside the scope of the current Part 9 Corporation, be formed with administrative representation from each partner municipality to provide advice to each partner municipality on matters related to regional recreation and parks and the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓		✓		✓	

THE FUTURE OF THE TRI-MUNICIPAL LEISURE FACILITY CORPORATION

During the development of this Strategy, a thorough governance effectiveness review of the Corporation was conducted. The review included engagement and input gathered from identified stakeholders in the region, a review of the other potential models that could be used in lieu of a Part 9 structure, and a review of past planning documents related to the Corporation. It is important to note that the review undertaken did not include operational considerations such as financial matters (revenues and expenses), staffing complements, asset management practices or other protocols and practices. An operational review that addresses the aforementioned items may be required from time to time, as is the case for any public service, but was not included in the scope of this Strategy.

The key findings of this governance effectiveness review are summarized as follows. More detail can be found in the appendix.

- The Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation (the Corporation) should remain in its current form and should continue to own and operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre.
- The Corporation will continue to be considered as a delivery agent to operate other recreation facilities on behalf of partner municipalities where feasible (as is the case right now for some partner municipality facilities and spaces).
- The Corporation may need to acquire new skillsets and capacity if new responsibilities (beyond status quo) are added to its purview.

It is recommended that the Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation should remain in its current form and continue to operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre, and that the Corporation be considered as a delivery agent for other district or neighborhood recreation facilities on behalf of partner municipalities (where desired and feasible).

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓		✓	

THE FUTURE OF COST SHARING IN THE REGION

Right now, there are two different relationships related to the financing of regional recreation and parks between the three partner municipalities. Parkland County has cost sharing agreements in place with both Stony Plain and Spruce Grove to support the operations of ice arenas. These cost sharing agreements are based on observed or estimated use of these facilities by Parkland County residents. Of note is that Parkland County also has cost sharing agreements in place with other municipalities outside of the Tri Municipal Region. The TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre is supported by all three municipalities on an annual basis with allocations based on percentage of population with the defined regional market area.

Cost sharing for recreation and parks services throughout Alberta occurs in many forms. These include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage of observed utilization by non-host users.
2. Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage proportionate to population in a defined market catchment area.
3. Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage proportionate to population and assessment in a defined market catchment area.
4. Annual deficit/subsidy-based sharing indexed to an agreed upon amount or percentage not indexed to population, assessment or utilization.
5. A fixed amount, not tied to annual deficit/subsidy, based on a reference point such as community size or type of facilities.
6. A per capita amount based on an agreed to market population served.
7. Annual contributions indexed to assessment base and not tied to deficit/subsidy or type of facility/service.

Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) outlines recommendations related to cost sharing for indoor recreation facilities in the region:

10.7 Cost Sharing

A cost sharing agreement is recommended between Tri-Municipal partners to ensure that all parties are properly compensated for the recreation services they provide to the region.

Recommendation:

10.7 Develop a cost sharing agreement between Tri-Municipal partners. (2017)

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Each of these models has pros and cons; however, selecting the most appropriate form needs to be based on the input and intentions of all partners. These intentions are best defined through some basic considerations for cost (and responsibility) sharing. Although the discussion around cost and responsibility sharing amongst the partner municipalities is expected to be broader than just this Recreation Strategy, the following considerations are outlined to help the partners identify the most appropriate model(s) moving forward from a recreation and parks perspective. These should be considered in addition to the guiding principles outlined in previous sections of this Strategy.

The **sharing of risk and reward** involves the distribution of risks associated with the inputs of operating recreation and parks resources (utilizations, staffing, supplies, etc.) and the potential upside of operations related to overall use and revenues. For the Tri-Municipal Region, it is recommended that the sharing of risk and reward is a priority amongst the three partners.

The **sharing of responsibility** involves the ability for all partners to influence aspects of service delivery such as hours of operation, levels of service, types of programs, etc. Giving all parties an opportunity to influence operations of services, facilities and spaces ensures accountability to all taxpayers. For the Tri-Municipal Region, it is recommended that the sharing of responsibility proportionate to contribution be built into all relationships.

The **benefits of recreation and parks transcend municipal boundaries**. Those same benefits are both direct (to users) and indirect (to all residents). As these benefits drive investment in recreation and parks, some of the **costs to provide them should be attributed to all taxpayers and some to users through user fees**. The costs/subsidies incurred for the provision of recreation and parks are primarily for the indirect benefits of recreation as user fees capture direct benefits. For the Tri-Municipal Region, it is recommended that cost sharing consider the benefits received by all residents, including but not limited to just users.

Equity in relationships recognizes that partners may not have the same access to resources or capacities and adjusts expectations about their contributions to reflect their unique circumstances. For example, at any point in time, partners will be in different financial circumstances which may impact their abilities to contribute equal amounts of funding. For the Tri-Municipal Region, it is recommended that agreements be structured in an equitable fashion that accepts different contributions from partners, based on their areas of strengths and capacities. This means the financial contributions may not always be equal.

Another less important, but still important, consideration for cost sharing is **flexibility**, realizing that not all situations are the same and thus a standardized single approach to cost sharing is not realistic. As well, **motivation** for all partners related to the recreation resource should be to garner as much benefit in the region as possible. Basing an agreement on non-local utilization (like some agreements already in place in the region), as an example, does not create motivation for all parties to increase utilization as one partner pays more as the utilization of the resource by their respective residents increases.

Possible Cost Sharing Approaches	Shares risk	Shares responsibility	Attributes direct and indirect benefits appropriately	Ensures equity	Motivates all to increase participation
Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage of observed utilization by non-host users.*	✓	✓			
Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage proportionate to population in a defined market catchment area.**	✓	✓	✓		✓
Annual deficit/subsidy-based cost sharing indexed to a percentage proportionate to population and assessment in a defined market catchment area.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual deficit/subsidy-based sharing indexed to an agreed upon amount or percentage not indexed to population, assessment or utilization.	✓	✓			✓
A fixed amount, not tied to annual deficit/subsidy, based on a reference point such as community size or type of facilities.		✓			
A per capita amount based on an agreed to market population served.		✓			
Annual contributions indexed to assessment base and not tied to deficit/subsidy or type of facility/service.		✓	✓	✓	

*Recreation Cost Share Agreement – The Agrena. Between Spruce Grove and Parkland County

*Recreation Cost Share Agreement – The Glenn Hall Arena. Between Stony Plain and Parkland County

*Recreation Cost Share Agreement – Devon Arena and Devon Pool. Between Devon and Parkland County

*Recreation Cost Share Agreement – Omniplex and Park Valley Pool Between Drayton Valley and Parkland County

**Part 9 Corporation – TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre

**Recreation Cost Share Agreement – Entwistle Community Hub and Pembina Rec Plex. Yellowhead County and Parkland County.

The true cost of service of providing recreation and parks infrastructure and programs includes not only the annual operating inputs required to keep a facility or space open, it also includes the costs to build and maintain it. As well, there is even an opportunity cost attached to the land on which a facility or park is situated. In order for a cost sharing agreement to be effective and to represent the interests of all partners involved, costs need to be defined and agreed to.

For the Tri-Municipal Region it is recommended that the total annual costs of providing recreation facilities should be calculated as follows:

1. Operating costs such as staffing, utilities, supplies, etc. required to keep the facility open and animated every year.
2. Capital costs, annualized (perhaps over a 50-year expected life span) that are / were required to build the facility.
3. Life cycle / asset management costs contributed to reserves annually to ensure the facility and the service it provides can be perpetuated (perhaps calculated as 2.1% of current replacement value).
4. The cost of land, annualized (perhaps calculated as an opportunity cost of not using the land for other purposes).
5. Annual administrative and oversight costs related to managing the municipalities' portfolio of recreation facilities and associated services, attributed proportionately throughout the entire inventory.

Although a new approach to recreation and cost sharing would need to align with the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan and that any changes to the existing cost sharing relationships in the region would need to be approved by respective Councils under advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee, the following is recommended at this stage. It is expected that these approaches may be reviewed, adjusted and ratified before implementation.

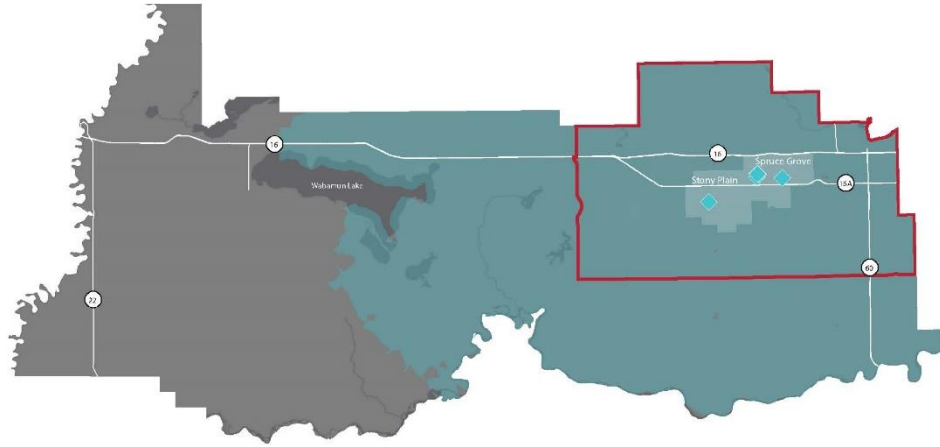
COST AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING FOR REGIONAL AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES AND SPACES

Cost and responsibility sharing for agreed to Regional and Special Use facilities and spaces, as per the definition found in the Tri-Plan Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region (page 49, 2017) and discussed later in this document, should occur based on the assumption that the benefits of these facilities and spaces cover the entire Tri-Municipal Region and are therefore apportioned based on the proportion of population (weighted at 50%) and equalized assessment (weighted at 50%) within the market area.

Table 6: Facility Classification				
FACILITY CLASS	REGIONAL FACILITY	DISTRICT FACILITY	NEIGHBOURHOOD FACILITY	SPECIAL USE FACILITY
Typical Facility Size	10 - 25 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)	10 - 15 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)	5 minutes (period) 10 or 20 minutes (1 or 2 times / week)	10 - 30 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)
Facilities in the Tri-Municipal Region	Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville	Amesbury, Oakville, etc.	Community halls, community recreation centres, school sports, etc.	Heritage Park, etc.
Typical Facility Size	10 - 25 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)	10 - 15 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)	5 minutes (period) 10 or 20 minutes (1 or 2 times / week)	10 - 30 minutes (period) 30 minutes + (daytime / week)
Facilities in the Tri-Municipal Region	Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville	Amesbury, Oakville, etc.	Community halls, community recreation centres, school sports, etc.	Heritage Park, etc.

The calculation of annual subsidy should include operating costs as well account for capital costs, life cycle reserve budgeting, administrative overhead, and the costs of land (if any are applicable).

Responsibility for these facilities are currently and may continue to be shared through the Part 9 Corporation structure (if it is the desired delivery agent for new regional facilities or spaces), which only includes one facility (the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre - TLC) as of January 2021.

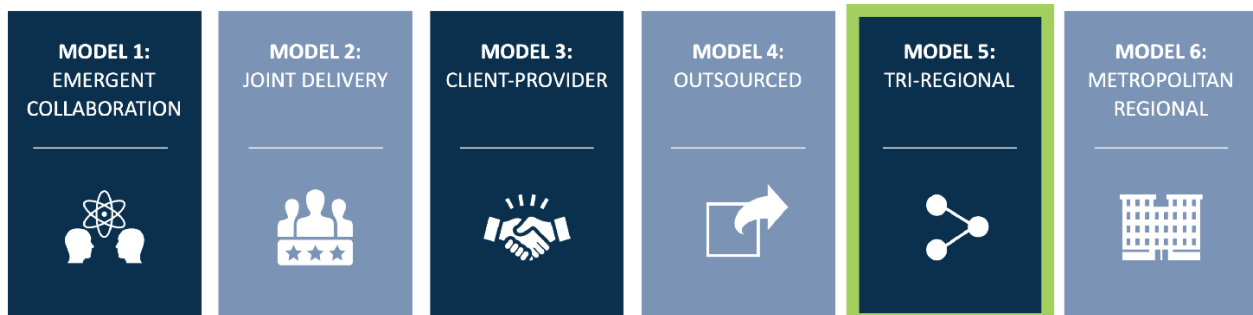


This approach is currently being taken in the region for the TLC and the only incremental change to the existing Part 9 relationship would be to revisit how including assessment (in addition to population) may impact current cost share proportions.

*An additional consideration could be to allocate an initial percentage of the annual subsidy to the host community if it is deemed that it receives more benefit than non-host communities.

Examples of how this approach would change current cost and responsibility sharing in amongst partner municipalities is provided in the appendix.

This approach corresponds with regional collaboration Model 5 – Tri-Regional.



It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional and Special Use Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Cost and responsibility sharing for District Facilities and Spaces

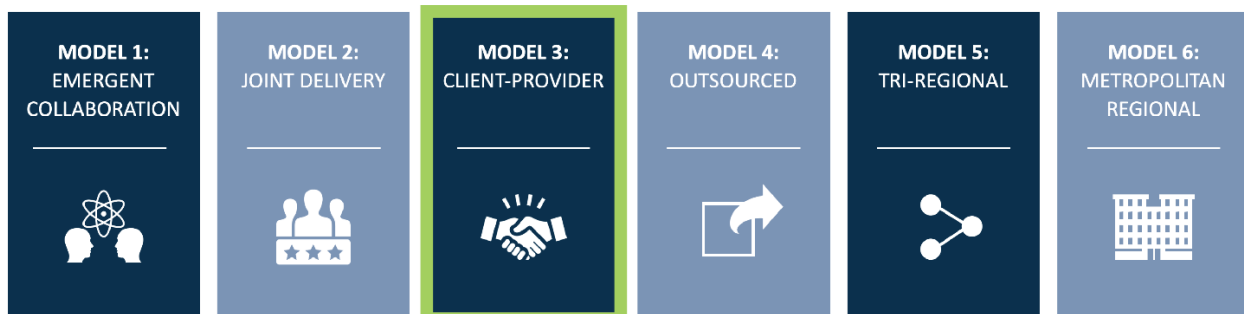
Cost and responsibility sharing for agreed to District facilities and spaces, again as per the definition found in the Tri-Plan Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy (page 49, 2017), should occur based on the assumption that the benefits of these facilities are accrued to all residents and lands within a benefitting market catchment area of a 15 minute drive. Using the same approach as identified for Regional facilities and spaces, the annual subsidy should include all the elements of cost outlined and they should be shared proportionately based on population and equalized assessment within the benefitting market catchment area.

Responsibility for District facilities would remain primarily within the portfolio of the host community however some decision making and operational control should be shared between all contributing partners.

This would require a shift in the current approach through which operating subsidies are paid for based on observed utilization for arenas only and only include cost sharing between the County and the Town and City respectively. Under this new approach, all three municipalities would be implicated in the operations of arenas and curling clubs (as per the definition of District facilities in the Tri Plan document) and subsidy would be apportioned based on population and equalized assessment within a 15-minute drive.

An additional consideration could be to allocate an initial percentage of the annual subsidy to the host community, if it is deemed that it receives more benefit than non-host communities.

This approach corresponds with regional collaboration Model 3 – Client Provider.



It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for District Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within a 15 minute drive from the facility / space and include the total cost to provide the facility / space.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

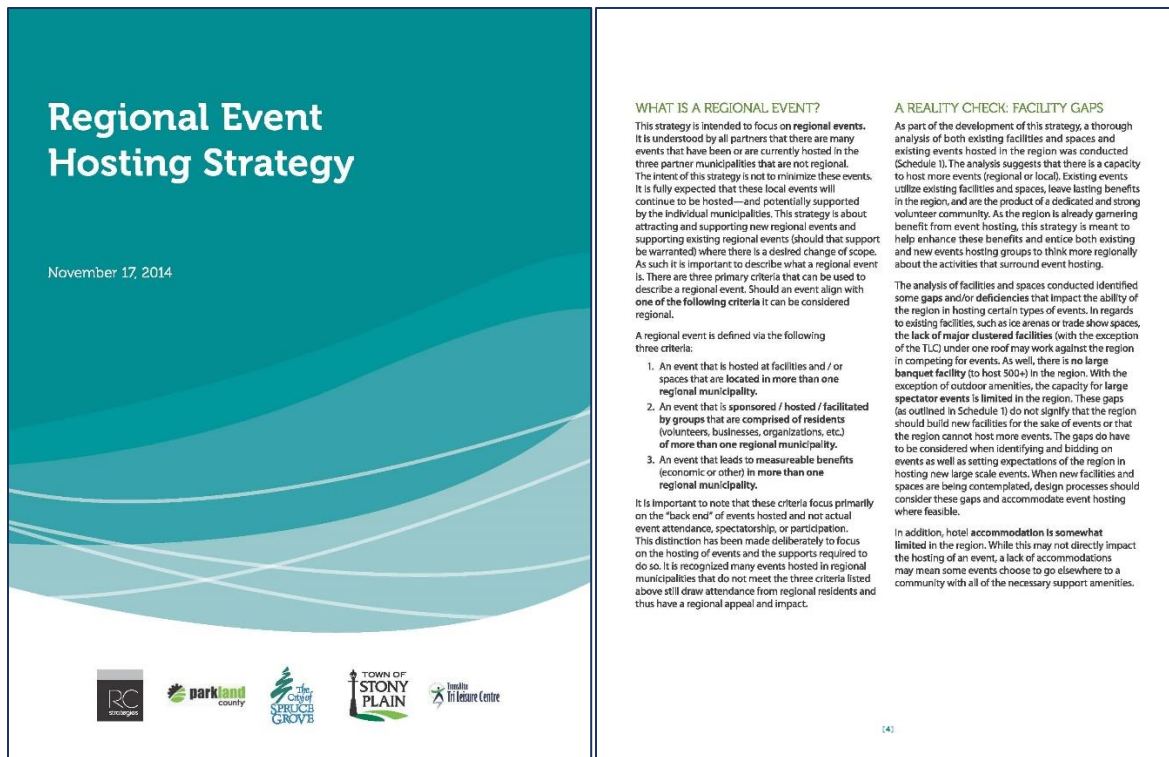
COST AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES AND SPACES

Since the host community derives the most benefit from the Neighborhood facilities and spaces within its boundaries, cost and responsibility sharing for these facilities and spaces is not recommended. That being said, if the case for inter-municipal benefits derived from a facility or space can be made, potential cost and responsibility sharing should follow the same approach as outlined for District facilities and spaces.

COST AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING FOR PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Cost and responsibility sharing for agreed to Regional Programs and Events, as per the definitions found in the Regional Event Hosting Strategy (page 4, 2014), should occur on a similar basis to that of District facilities and spaces. The only recommended difference is that instead of using a benefitting market catchment area, the subsidy required to provide programs, events and other aspects of service delivery should be apportioned based on the assumption that all municipalities implicated (either through geographic location, resident engagement or measurable benefits as per the conditions of the definition) would share based on proportions of population and assessment (50:50) with the benefitting market catchment including the entire municipality (for the Town and the City) and the entire Tri-Municipal portion of the County.

An additional consideration could be to allocate an initial percentage of the annual subsidy to the host community, if it is deemed that it receives more benefit than non-host communities.



It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional Programs, Events and other aspects of service delivery occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

RECREATION AND PARKS SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

The delivery of recreation and parks services occurs differently in each partner municipality. In a general sense, Stony Plan and Spruce Grove primarily use both direct and indirect modes of service delivery, while Parkland primarily employs an indirect mode of delivery. It is also important to note that each municipality, through their respective indirect approach to service delivery, relies heavily on volunteers, non-profits and even the private sector. This indirect approach includes providing access to publicly funded spaces (either free or requiring user fees) to groups and organizations that deliver programs or opportunities (that animate spaces) as well as providing public support to groups and organizations that are responsible for providing facilities and spaces directly.

Service delivery also entails a variety of other “back of house” tasks and responsibilities that the partner municipalities incur to facilitate the provision and animation of facilities and spaces. These other tasks and responsibilities include things such as facility and space maintenance, promotions and marketing, providing support to volunteers and non-profit groups, scheduling and allocations and others.

As part of the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, a broader Service Strategy process is being facilitated to look at all types of services the three municipalities offer. Related to both Recreation Services and Parks / Environment Services, the following tables identifies the services provided and those that are candidates for more collaboration (those that are already within the portfolio of all three municipalities).

RECREATION SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration – High Potential
Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes
Aquatics Operations	The management, cleaning, minor maintenance, on site management and direct programming for pool facilities. Includes programming for all ages, drop-in programming, event/tournament hosting, etc.	No
Recreation Planning	Long-term recreation planning work, including facility planning, community needs assessment and regional planning initiatives. Includes providing input into other departmental plans, policies and initiatives with recreation impacts.	Yes
Community Capacity Building and Engagement	Planning, management and administration of recreational and sport grant programs, including funding program development, researching opportunities, promoting, assisting applicants, approving grants and reviewing grant applications. Provide ongoing support, capacity building programming, consulting and education for NFP partners to build community capacity.	Yes
Child Minding Services	Operate and manage any child minding services available at recreation facilities.	Yes
Fitness Centre Operations	Operate any fitness centre facilities for drop-in and membership-based public use available at recreation facilities.	Yes
Arena Operations	Operate arena facilities including ice rentals, local sport association engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, ice surface installation and maintenance, concession management, allocations, etc.	Yes
Curling Facility Operations	Operate curling facilities including rentals, local club engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, ice surface installation and maintenance, concession management, etc.	No
Indoor Sports Field Operations	Operate any indoor sporting facilities (i.e. indoor soccer, gymnasium, racquet courts, etc.) including rentals, local sport association engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, basic maintenance, etc.	No
Private Meeting / Event Rentals	The management of the meeting rooms and rental spaces in municipal recreation facilities. Includes promotion, planning, rental process, room set ups and teardown, A/V rentals and support, catering and other event related services.	No

RECREATION SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration – High Potential
Outdoor Sports Field Operations	The management, cleaning, minor maintenance, mowing, surface maintenance, ice maintenance, rentals/bookings/logistics, monitoring, on site administration and programming at outdoor sports fields, specialty parks, playgrounds, outdoor facilities (playgrounds, ball diamonds, specialty parks, spray parks/decks, tennis courts, basketball courts, pickle ball courts, sand volleyball courts, skateboard park, bike parks, off-leash areas, etc.	No
Golf Course Operations	Includes the management and maintenance of community golf courses, including promotions and marketing, membership management, onsite food and liquor sales, rentals and events, pro shop inventory and sales, course maintenance, event management, staff management, etc.	No
Wellness / Fitness Programs	Planning and delivery of a range of wellness/fitness programs using community facilities, including programs for a range of participant ages and abilities. Includes drop-in and registered programs. Includes management and sourcing of needed equipment, as well as trainer contracted services.	Yes
Library Management	Build relationships and support Library planning and collaboration. Maintain funding agreements for libraries.	No
Major Multi-Use Recreation Centre Operations	Operations, management and programming of a major, multi-use recreations centre (typically over 5 uses), with potential regional draw and tourism attraction.	No
Summer Camp Programs	Specialized programming to provide affordable day camps with various themes throughout the summer	No

All of the aspects of Recreation Service delivery are important to the region and to the success of recreation in each responsive municipality. Those aspects of service delivery that are candidates for more regional collaboration are as follows. (It is important to note that the Municipal Services Strategy, a component of the over Tri Municipal Regional Plan, explored all of the services each partner municipality offers and identified those services that had the best and most immediate potential for enhanced collaboration). The following is a product of that assessment:

1. Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership
2. Recreation Planning
3. Community Capacity Building and Engagement
4. Child Minding Services
5. Fitness Centre Operations
6. Arena Operations
7. Wellness / Fitness Programs

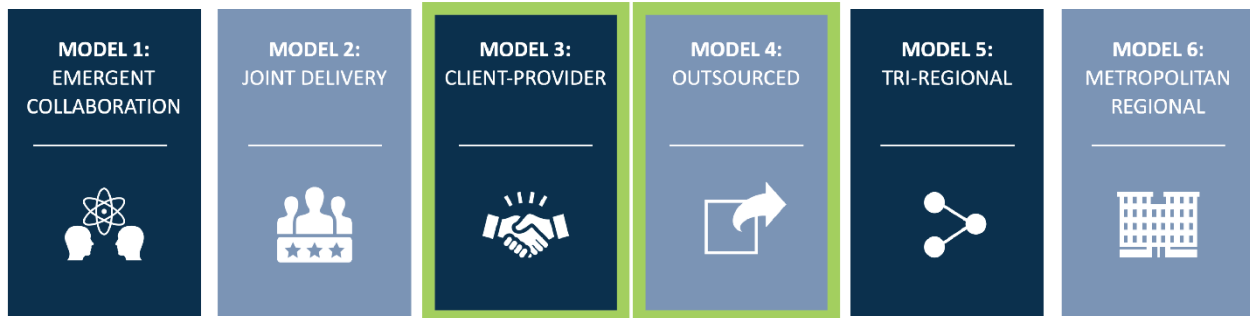
Service	PARKS / ENVIRONMENT SERVICES Description	Regional Collaboration – High Potential
Environment: Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes
Environmental Planning Review and Support	Plan, consult, advocate and support all municipal decisions related to long-term environmental planning, including conservation, sustainability, land-use, carbon reduction, and waste management considerations. Includes supporting long-term planning, policy and program development, etc. with internal and external stakeholders.	No
Environmental Program Development and Implementation	The development and oversight of specific environmental programs and policies to support the achievement of long-term environmental plans. Includes working with internal and external stakeholders to develop programs.	No
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment	Develop and administer environmental monitoring program including a range of sampling programs for air, water, soil and biodiversity inspections. Includes maintaining monitoring results to support environmental measurement program	No
Naturalized Areas Management	Overseeing the planning, policy development and administering of strategic naturalization processes for municipal-owned lands.	No
Public Outreach & Education for Sustainability Programs	Plans and delivers public education programs for environmental sustainability for private residents and businesses. Includes communication and promotion of municipal environmental programs and achievements.	Yes
Parks Maintenance	Plans, manages and delivers mowing, cleaning and maintenance of open park spaces. Includes mowing program and maintenance of park features (non-sport/playground related). May include school playgrounds under agreements with school boards.	Yes
Cemetery Operations	Plans, manages and delivers all Cemetery planning, operations and maintenance. Maintenance of grounds includes landscaping, mowing and repairs. Administration includes conducting plot sales, maintaining burial records, marking plots for headstones and urns, accommodating special requests, scheduling, maintaining cemetery system, etc.	Yes
Event Support Services	Review special event permits and provide support including delivering and picking up signage, barricades, benches and waste receptacles.	No
Forestry & Horticulture	Plans, develops standards, and delivers all forestry and horticultural programs to maintain the municipality's trees and plants. Forestry includes planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs as well as addressing potential safety concerns for tree removal and stump treatment/removal. Horticulture services maintains and develops all plant material (flower beds and planters, as well as open planted areas) at facilities, roadways, parks, etc. Includes reviewing landscaping requirements for municipal acceptance of new development.	Yes

PARKS / ENVIRONMENT SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration – High Potential
Pest Control	Plans and administers all pest control processes including chemical (pesticide, herbicide) and non-chemical (trapping, physical removal, etc.) methods in accordance with environmental requirements and internal policy.	No
Mowing Operations	Plans, manages and delivers the overall mowing, line trimming, weed control, aeration, and fertilization program for the community's open turf spaces. Includes boulevards, facility ground, etc. Excludes park spaces and cemeteries (captures elsewhere).	No
Trail Maintenance	Manage and deliver planned and emergent trail maintenance, cleaning and operations. Includes surface maintenance, material clearing, cleaning, etc. Also includes supporting any new construction of trails in the community.	Yes
Litter and Garbage Control	Manage and deliver regular garbage and litter collection program from municipal facilities. Includes regular waste bin collection, dog park waste/bags, collecting litter, or illegal dumping.	No
Parks: Administration, corporate initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes

Again, all of the aspects of Parks / Environment Service delivery are important to the region and to the success of recreation in each responsive municipality. Those aspects of service delivery that are candidates for more regional collaboration as follows. Again, these were identified through the Municipal Services Strategy process as having the highest and most immediate opportunity for further collaboration:

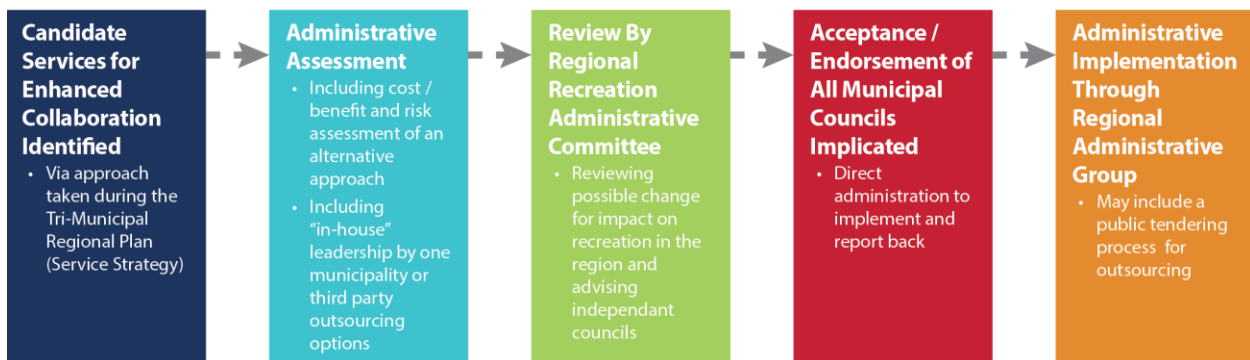
1. Environment: Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership
2. Parks: Administration, corporate initiatives, leadership
3. Public Outreach & Education for Sustainability Programs
4. Parks Maintenance
5. Cemetery Operations
6. Forestry & Horticulture
7. Trail Maintenance

Recognizing that the current organizational structures of each partner municipality are different and that each has advanced capability and expertise in certain aspects of service delivery compared to others, enhanced collaboration could take the form of one municipality providing leadership (Model 3 – Client-Provider) and taking responsibility for a task or a combination of two or three municipalities in doing so. The possibility of all three municipalities outsourcing (Model 4 - Outsourced) could also be considered.



The lists of potential services, identified through the Municipal Services Strategy⁴, that could be delivered more collaboratively provides a starting point for the regional recreation administrative committee to explore synergies and enhancements that could be achieved by taking a more collaborative approach. The following flow chart explains:

Getting to More Regional Service Delivery Collaboration



Not all potential aspects of a more regional approach to recreation and parks service delivery will be implemented. For those that are delivered by one municipality (Model 3) the following is recommended:

- Ad hoc "accounting" for regional functions will occur in the spirit of collaboration and considering the principles outlined and may be able to be absorbed in current staff allocations and budgets (Model 2 and 3)

⁴ The Municipal Services Strategy was conducted as part of the broader 2020-2021 Tri Municipal Regional Plan process and looked at all aspects of municipal services delivery including, but not limited to, recreation and parks services.

- Each partner will contribute in good faith as able understanding varying capacities and capabilities in an equitable fashion
- For regional functions that cannot be absorbed with current resource allocations, the additional costs and responsibilities to provide regional functions will be split based upon cost sharing principles and models; consideration may be given to the TLC Part 9 as a potential delivery agent for aspects of service delivery that fall within it's current scope and mandate (Model 5)

Some aspects of service delivery could be considered for third party contracted services (Model 4) under the advisement of the Regional Recreation Committee / Body and considering the vision, outcomes, principles and cost sharing models provided herein. Any opportunities for third party service delivery should be publicly tendered and adjudicated under advisement of the Regional Recreation Committee / Body and the regional administrator' group.

Initially, it is recommended that the following aspects of a more regional approach to recreation service delivery be analyzed by the regional recreation administrative committee (Model 3 or 5). These have been identified due to work already being done in the region (within recreation and parks as well as in other service areas such as family and community support services), expected ease of enhanced collaboration, and the expected impacts on and acceptance by the regional user groups and public.

- Capacity building for volunteers and community groups.
- Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities.
- Some maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture.

The above would be in addition to a continued commitment of the partners to planning for recreation regionally with a renewed approach to needs assessment and engagement on a consistent basis across the region.

It is recommended that the following aspects of a more regional approach to recreation service delivery be analyzed by the regional recreation administrative committee (Model 3, 4 or 5):

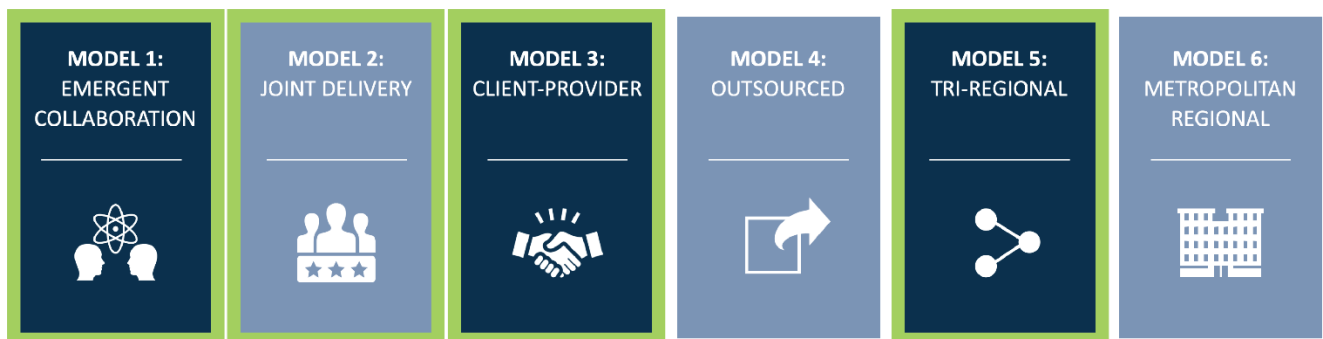
- Capacity building for volunteers and community groups**
- Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities**
- Maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture**

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓		✓	

An important aspect to service delivery is the creation of policies⁵ and protocols⁶ that provide guidance for administration and decision-makers in enabling recreation and parks opportunities to occur.

The region currently has an extensive complement of regional recreation planning, complete with recommendations for enhancement, that can be implemented independently or as a region. That said, there is only limited alignment in the policies and procedures of each municipality as it relates to things like the setting of user fees, allocations, sponsorship, and user conduct. All are common areas where municipal recreation departments have standardized policy and protocols.

In 2020, all three municipalities embarked on a process to standardize ice arena allocation. This process is still underway in early 2021 and is an example of how the region could standardize approaches to key aspects of service delivery (Model 1 or Model 2).



The following practices and protocols are recommended to be conducted on a standardized basis across the region (Model 3 or 5). Regional approaches to these should be developed by the regional recreation administrative committee and proposed to partner municipalities.

- Ice allocations; matching regional ice arena time with the activities that demand it in an appropriate, equitable and consistent fashion throughout the region (possible to extend into other facility / space types as well).
- Utilization data gathering; understanding actual use of recreation and parks spaces consistently throughout the region.
- Public and group engagement; gathering insight from the public and stakeholders about recreation and parks participation, satisfaction and preferences.
- Recreation and parks asset inventory; understanding the quantity and quality of recreation and parks assets consistently throughout the region.
- Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation; developing, supporting and creating awareness of financial assistance programs accessible to residents to enhance participation.

⁵ For the purposes of this report, the term policies refers to formal documentation around certain aspects of service delivery that guides operational and strategic decision making.

⁶ For the purposes of this report, the term practices refers to informal actions and norms around certain aspects of service delivery that guide operational and strategic decision making.

Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) outlines recommendations related to regional practices and protocols for indoor recreation facilities in the region:

10.1 Data Tracking

Keeping better records throughout the Tri-Municipal Region facilities, including usage of halls, community centres, and all public facilities would be helpful for facility planning. Create a unified reporting structure with standard reporting forms, set annual dates and summary template for recording recreation usage, demand, trends and opportunities/issues for each facility/type within the facilities inventory.

10.3 Fees

Users identified a disparity in fees charged for services throughout the region. A standardized policy with universal pricing would be well received by users.

10.4 Primetime and Non-Primetime Consistency

Primetime demand, particularly where limited facilities exist and membership is growing at a steady rate, such as hockey and ringette, is defined similarly in both Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. For example, the Spruce Grove Ringette Association has been growing consistently at a rate of about 10% annually and is already experiencing a shortcoming of 6 hours per week of demanded ice time, even when maximizing efficiency within the region. This gap is expected to grow to 35 hours per week by 2020, not including additional hours for special event hosting, given the current rate of growth. Clearly, the lack of facilities is directly impacting growth opportunities and participation within ice sports, leaving little room for any leisure ice time for casual skating, figure skating or informal drop ins.

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Furthermore, the following regional practices and protocols might be considered (Model 3 or 5) if deemed appropriate by the regional recreation administrative committee. These were identified through research and engagement, and review of past planning documents.

- A regional allocations policy for all recreation facilities and spaces (underway for ice only); allocating limited time in facilities and at spaces consistently and equitably across all three partner municipalities.
- A regional fees and charges policy (including cancellations); charging consistent, justifiable, and equitable fees for access to recreation spaces across the partner municipalities.
- A regional sponsorship policy; valuating and marketing recreation and parks assets to sponsors and donors consistently throughout the partner municipalities.
- A regional user code of conduct; expecting the same level of accountability for users in facilities and at spaces throughout the partner municipalities.
- A regional approach to sport tourism promotion and facilitation; marketing the assets and abilities of all three partner municipalities when attracting events and competitions to the region.
- A regional approach to formulating joint use agreements with local school authorities.

Each aspect of service delivery to be considered more regional as well as the policies and protocols outlined should be considered by regional administrators under the advisement of the Regional Recreation Committee / Body and then implemented— if approved by independent Councils.

It is recommended that regional approaches to the following practices / protocols should be developed by the regional recreation administrative committee:

- a. Ice allocations (already underway)
- b. Gathering and reporting on recreation and parks utilization
- c. Public and group engagement related to recreation and parks preferences and values
- d. Maintaining a robust and accurate recreation and parks asset inventory
- e. Administering Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

RECREATION AND PARKS PROGRAMMING IN THE TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

Recreation and parks programming can also be described as animating the various recreation and parks assets throughout the region. This animation can occur on a structured / scheduled basis or can be more spontaneous or unstructured. It can also include free, unencumbered access to space, rental of space for exclusive use (typically paid for through user fees) or drop-in use (typically paid for through user fees).

The provision of the recreation and parks programs, events and opportunities in the Tri-Municipal Region, much like any other region in Canada, is the product of the efforts of volunteers and non-profit community groups, private sector businesses, school and other institutions and the three partner municipalities. The current roles of the partner municipalities as it relates to programming and events is a combination of direct provider, using municipal or Part 9 staff to provide programs and events, and as an enabler, supporting other organizations to provide programs and events.

Although the COVID 19 pandemic altered the amount and types of programs and events offered throughout the region, the three municipalities and the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre offer a variety of recreation programs for residents and visitors. This variety included a mix of drop-in and scheduled opportunities, programming for families, children, youth, adults and seniors and at a variety of user fee price points. As well, the non-profit and private sectors also provided a number of opportunities at recreation facilities and spaces.

In order to understand how relevant the current provision of recreation and parks programs, opportunities and events (as well as the complement of indoor and outdoor recreation and parks spaces that enable them to occur) are in the region, constant analysis of the user market needs to be

undertaken. This analysis can include review of trends and other practices in the recreation and parks industry, gathering input from residents and community groups, and aligning programs with the strategic direction of local municipal partners (intended outcomes). Understanding the values and perceptions of the local market is also important in order to be able to identify motivations and barriers to participation so as to heighten overall recreation and parks activity in the region and achieve more benefits.

Although community engagement was outside the scope of this Recreation Strategy, it is recommended that the region conduct a recreation and parks preferences survey of both residents and community groups. This would provide key information to the region on a regular basis and would give insight into resident and group preferences (current activities, new activities) and satisfaction levels, barriers to participation, trends and other desired inputs. This insight would not only drive efforts related to programming, events and opportunities but would also feed into facility and park planning (both local and regional) and other aspects of service delivery. Although similar engagement processes have been completed as recently as 2017 (Tri Plan), this information should be gathered every 5 years at a minimum and even sooner if major shift in societal preferences are observed. The COVID 19 Pandemic and its impacts on recreation and parks activity is profound and necessitates gathering community input on the future of recreation and parks.

It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct a consistent / standardized recreation and parks preferences survey of both residents and community groups.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Beyond community input, there are important sources of information to help understand the preferences of the recreation and parks market as well as the impacts or change that these services lead to in the Tri-Municipal Region. These include ensuring staff and volunteers have access to industry publications and planning initiatives (like those referenced in the Stage 1 report) such as the Framework for Recreation in Canada, the national benefits hub, information developed by industry associations such as the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and others). Additionally, constant monitoring of the utilization of existing facilities and spaces throughout the region should occur. Furthermore, there are new and evolving sources of demographic information available to municipalities to help better understand the composition of the Tri-Municipal market as well as its preferences and perceptions.

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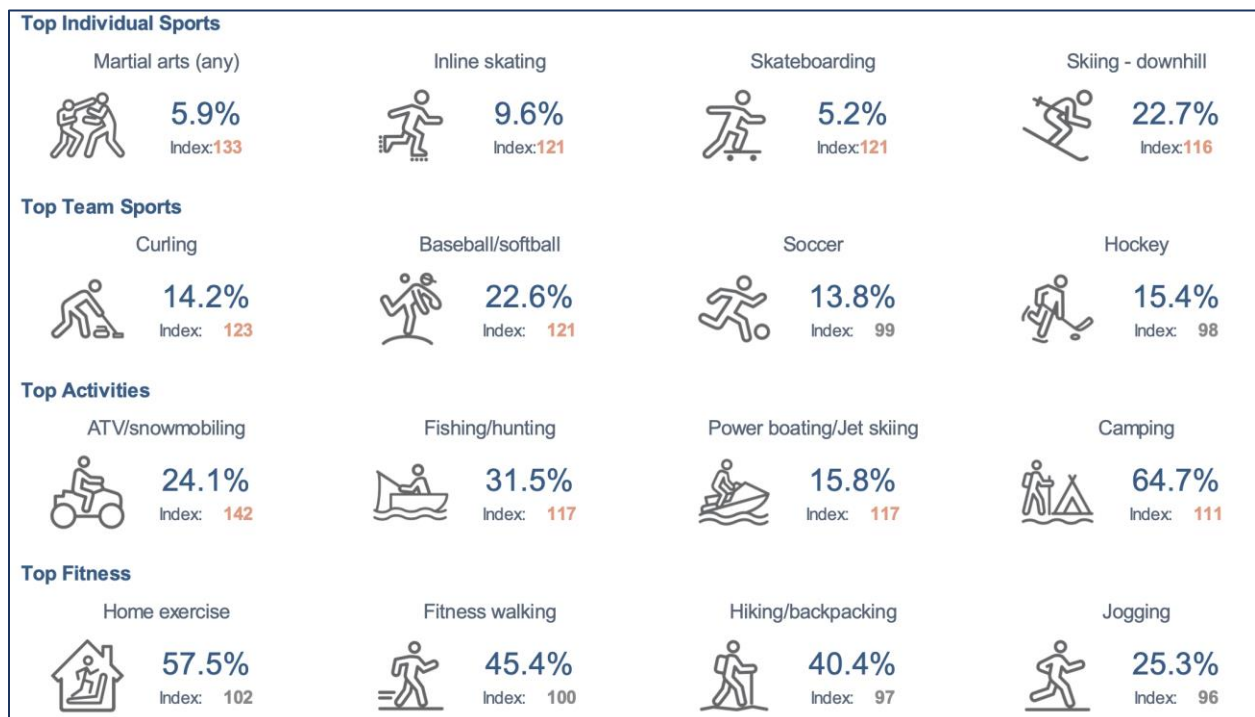
Traditional open sources of information such as municipal census data or StatsCan information are now supplemented by fees-based “big data” sources such as Environics Analytics that compile and synthesize data about residents gathered from various sources. Relevant conclusions about the current and future state of the population are drawn from this data. This insight is valuable in not only understanding the relevance of current recreation and parks investment and effort, but also may link with strategic learning and evaluation in the future.

Some insights gathered from Environics Analytics in the development of this study include information on self-perceived health and stress levels as well as leisure activities preferences. Some of these insights are presented below (and in the Stage 1 report).

Overall residents of the Tri-Municipal study area are fairly active with 54% of adult residents reporting that they consider themselves active; however, 21% of adults are considered sedentary. The most common forms of physical activity include using active transportation, participating in sports or fitness program, or engaging in vigorous intensity physical activity.



Top sports, leisure activities and fitness preferences of Tri-Municipal residents are outlined as follows.



As can be seen, understanding needs and demands for recreation and parks opportunities is a complex task and must consider a variety of the relevant and up to date information. For the Tri-

Municipal Region, this needs assessment function should be completed for the entire region and pertain to regional facilities, spaces, programs, opportunities and events as well as those provided locally by each municipality. It should be overseen by the regional recreation administrative committee and should be a single, common and consistent point of reference for decision making at both a regional and local level to ensure services are complimentary and to avoid duplication where able.

It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct consistent, regular and thorough recreation and parks needs assessments.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Defining regional programs, opportunities and events is also important in a Tri-Municipal context, as those that are regional in nature would implicate the partners in sharing costs and responsibilities to provide them. The 2014 Regional Event Hosting Strategy (page 4) defines criteria for classifying regional events as follows.

Criteria for defining a regional event or program:

- An event/program is hosted at facilities / spaces that are located in more than one regional municipality.
- An event is sponsored / hosted / facilitated by groups that are comprised of residents of more than one regional municipality.
- An event leads to measurable benefit in more than one regional municipality.

These criteria have already been agreed to and should be carried forward in defining and supporting regional events, programs and opportunities outlined herein. The identification of regional events, opportunities and programs would be subject to advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee and those that are classified as such would be shared according to the cost sharing models and principles outlined herein.

Furthermore, the Regional Event Hosting Strategy provides insight into how regional events should be delivered.

- Support for regional events / programs will be delivered under the advisement of the regional committee / body; some will be delivered by partner municipalities independently; some may be outsourced.
- Responsibility and cost for facilitating regional events and programs will be shared via an agreed to set of principles and models.

These recommendations from the 2014 Regional Event Hosting Strategy align with what is also proposed in this Recreation Strategy.

It is recommended that a regional event or program be defined by meeting one or more of the following conditions:

- **An event/program is hosted at facilities / spaces that are located in more than one regional municipality**
- **An event/program is sponsored / hosted / facilitated by groups that are comprised of residents of more than one regional municipality**
- **An event/program leads to measurable benefit in more than one regional municipality**

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓		✓		✓	

As it relates to focus areas for programs, opportunities and events in the future, the information gathered in the development of this Strategy provides some insights, but is limited in that thorough community engagement was not conducted. That said, the following focus areas are meant to provide some guidance related to both the design and the delivery of local and regional recreation and parks related opportunities. These reflect a post-COVID 19 pandemic context but should be revisited once community input is gathered.

- Opportunities to **increase physical activity and fundamental movement** (physical literacy and long-term athlete development).
- **Spontaneous and “scheduled” drop-in** activities indoors and outdoors.
- **Free and low-cost** opportunities.
- Opportunities that are **inclusive**, including overcoming structural biases related to race, gender and identity (may be actual program focus or a lens for minimizing barriers to participation related to existing efforts).
- Opportunities that **deliberately focus on and include marginalized populations**.
- Opportunities to drive **non-local investment into the partner municipalities** through recreation and sport event and competition hosting.
- Opportunities for **play (risky and unstructured) for all ages**.

It is recommended that the following focus areas be considered in designing and delivering regional recreation and parks events, programs and opportunities. These should be revisited as new information becomes available:

- **Opportunities to increase physical activity and fundamental movement (physical literacy and long-term athlete development).**
- **Spontaneous and “scheduled” drop-in activities indoors and outdoors.**
- **Free and low-cost opportunities.**
- **Opportunities that are inclusive, including overcoming structural biases related to race, gender and identity (may be actual program focus or a lens for minimizing barriers to participation related to existing efforts).**
- **Opportunities that deliberately focus on and include marginalized populations.**
- **Opportunities to drive non-local investment into the partner municipalities through recreation and sport event and competition hosting.**

Opportunities for play (risky and unstructured) for all ages.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

These focus areas are meant to influence regional and local recreation providers, but at the same time enable those designing the opportunities the flexibility they need to respond to the local market. It is recommended that these should be shared throughout the recreation and parks delivery system (within partner municipalities but also with volunteers, non-profit groups, institutions and the private sector where able) and they should be revisited every time new information become available.

RECREATION AND PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION

One of the most important roles of the Town of Stony Plain, City of Spruce Grove and Parkland County in enabling residents and visitors to participate in recreation and parks activities is in providing and supporting indoor and outdoor spaces where activities occur.

Similar to the provision of programs, opportunities and events, regional investment in public recreation and parks spaces occurs both directly (direct provider) and indirectly (as an enabler). The amount of investment in existing facilities and spaces is significant. Simply sustaining existing facilities and spaces requires further investment and effort and needs to be considered at the same time as contemplating new facilities and space development.

Industry publications suggest an appropriate life cycle reserve (reinvestment rate) in recreation facilities and parks to be between 1.7% and 2.5% of modernized replacement value. For the region’s estimated \$353.5M worth of indoor recreation infrastructure and \$47.3M worth of parks, recommended annual

reserve budgeting is significant at between \$6.8M and \$10.0M. Although regional municipalities consider life cycle reserves in their current financial plans, the region is not allocating enough currently to simply sustain existing facilities and spaces. **It is recommended that a regional recreation and parks life cycle reserve be put in place for all Regional and Specialty facilities and spaces with annual contributions being split by each municipality based on the cost sharing principles and models herein and in the amount of no less than 1.7% of modernized replacement value. Furthermore, each partner municipality should be doing the same for District and Neighborhood facilities and spaces.**

Indoor Amenity	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost (per 1 amenity)	Number of Amenities in Region	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost	Minimum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (1.7%)	Maximum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (2.5%)
Community group office/meeting space	\$250,000	10	\$2,500,000	\$42,500	\$62,500
Community hall	\$7,500,000	11	\$82,500,000	\$1,402,500	\$2,062,500
Curling rink	\$10,000,000	3	\$30,000,000	\$510,000	\$750,000
Dedicated youth centre space	\$250,000	1	\$250,000	\$4,250	\$6,250
Fitness centre	\$5,000,000	1	\$5,000,000	\$85,000	\$125,000
Gymnasium	\$5,000,000	19	\$95,000,000	\$1,615,000	\$2,375,000
Gymnastics centre	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Ice arena	\$15,000,000	5	\$75,000,000	\$1,275,000	\$1,875,000
Indoor field (arena or half size pitch)	\$5,000,000	2	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Indoor playground	\$500,000	1	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Indoor pool	\$20,000,000	1	\$20,000,000	\$340,000	\$500,000
Leisure ice skating surface	\$2,000,000	1	\$2,000,000	\$34,000	\$50,000
Multipurpose program space (e.g. yoga, aerobics)	\$250,000	2	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Social/banquet facility	\$5,000,000	4	\$20,000,000	\$340,000	\$500,000
Walking/jogging track	\$250,000	1	\$250,000	\$4,250	\$6,250
Total			\$353,500,000	\$6,009,500	\$8,837,500





Outdoor Amenity	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost (per 1 amenity)	Number of Amenities in Region	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost	Minimum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (1.7%)	Maximum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (2.5%)
Agricultural area (i.e. equestrian areas)	\$500,000	3	\$1,500,000	\$25,500	\$37,500
Artificial turf field	\$75,000	2	\$150,000	\$2,550	\$3,750
Ball diamonds	\$250,000	13	\$3,250,000	\$55,250	\$87,750
Basketball court - full sized	\$100,000	13	\$1,300,000	\$22,100	\$35,100
Basketball court - half / mod	\$50,000	4	\$200,000	\$3,400	\$5,400
Beach volleyball court	\$100,000	4	\$400,000	\$6,800	\$10,000
BMX track	\$500,000	1	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Boat launch	\$2,000,000	0	-	-	-
Disc golf course	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$850	\$1,250
Dog off-leash area	\$250,000	3	\$750,000	\$12,750	\$18,750
Golf course - 18 holes	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$270,000
Grass field / combo field	\$250,000	3	\$750,000	\$12,750	\$18,750
Outdoor pool	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Outdoor rink (boarded)	\$250,000	9	\$2,250,000	\$38,250	\$60,750
Outdoor rink (non-boarded)	\$100,000	3	\$300,000	\$5,100	\$7,500
Outdoor skating oval / trail	\$100,000	3	\$300,000	\$5,100	\$7,500
Playgrounds	\$100,000	81	\$8,100,000	\$137,700	\$202,500
Pickleball court	\$100,000	22	\$2,200,000	\$37,400	\$55,000
Skateboard park	\$500,000	2	\$1,000,000	\$17,000	\$25,000
Tennis court	\$100,000	9	\$900,000	\$15,300	\$22,500
Toboggan hill	\$50,000	4	\$200,000	\$3,400	\$5,000
Track (non-rubberized)	\$100,000	5	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Track (rubberized)	\$2,000,000	1	\$2,000,000	\$34,000	\$50,000
Trails (per KM)	\$5,000	139	\$695,000	\$11,815	\$17,375
Total			\$47,295,000	\$804,015	\$1,182,375

It is recommended that a regional recreation and parks life cycle reserve be put in place for all Regional and Specialty facilities and spaces with annual contributions being split by each municipality based on the cost sharing principles and models herein and in the amount of no less than 1.7% of modernized replacement value. Furthermore, each partner municipality should be doing the same for District and Neighborhood facilities and spaces.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓		✓	

DEFINING REGIONAL FACILITIES AND SPACES

Tri Plan, the Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region completed in 2017 contains an analysis of indoor recreation facilities and guidance for future investment and effort. The study also includes a definition for Regional, District, Neighborhood and Speciality recreation facilities. Since this Plan has been accepted in the region, these same definitions apply to recreation facilities today and can also be applied to parks and open spaces.

Table 9: Facility Classification				
FACILITY CLASS	REGIONAL FACILITY	DISTRICT FACILITY	NEIGHBOURHOOD FACILITY	SPECIAL USE FACILITY
				
Description	Regional level facilities are multi-use and multi-purpose, designed to host competitive sport and regional level tournaments. These facilities are recognized as key recreation destinations and may be co-located near retail and entertainment districts. Activities are pre-programmed, and opportunities for spontaneous recreation are limited. Large facilities for spectator events may be included.	District facilities serve the regional market primarily but are branded 'locally' within the community. Facilities could be single or multi-purpose and serve also as venues for spontaneous recreation, senior and junior competitive sports and recreational and sports associations.	Neighbourhood facilities typically be single purpose, although they may include multi-purpose spaces and will generally serve as locations for spontaneous recreation and possibly junior competition. Bookings may or may not be required and basic programs and gathering spaces that serve the local community are provided.	This category captures facilities that target specific user groups in the community. These facilities fulfil specific needs that are not provided by the municipality and include large sporting venues or banquet facilities that support capacity >500.
Catchment Area	All of Tri-Municipal Region and surrounding cities, towns and hamlets outside of the Tri-Municipal Region, usually within a 20-30 minute drive.	Tri-Municipal Region, usually within a 15-20 minute drive, serving populations of 30,000 or less.	Primarily from the immediate community or neighbourhood and may include facilities co-located with schools, colleges or other public institutions within a 5-10 minute drive.	Typically these facilities serve the District, but may also serve the entire region and are located within a 30 minute drive.
Typical Location	More densely populated areas such as cities 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 neighborhoods with convenient access from local trails.	Urban with easy access off primary highways, public transit and local/regional trails.

Based on the definitions included, the only Regional Facility in the Tri-Municipal Region is the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. Further to this regional facility definition, the Heritage Park Pavilion and the Border Paving Athletic Centre are defined as Specialty Facilities while arenas (Grant Fuhr and Stu Barnes Arenas

in Spruce Grove and the Glenn Hall Centennial Arena in Stony Plain) as well as the curling rinks (in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain) are considered District. Each of these definitions have defined catchment areas and desired travel times.

Applying these definitions to a parks and open space context, there would be no Regional parks or open spaces with the exception of a regional trail system (should one be developed). Major outdoor sports parks (found in each municipality) including artificial turf fields would be considered Specialty spaces while outdoor pools, spray parks, higher level ball diamonds and fields, large scale playgrounds and outdoor event hosting spaces (amphitheatres and large parks) would be considered District level spaces.

Parks and open space classification

Parks and Open Space Class	Regional	District	Neighborhood	Special Use
Description	Regional level parks and open spaces are multi-purpose and are recognized as key recreation destinations. Large facilities for spectator events may be included.	District parks and open spaces serve the regional market primarily but are branded 'locally' within the community.	Neighborhood parks and open spaces primarily serve local markets and do not draw significant use from throughout the region.	This category captures parks and open spaces that target specific user groups in the community. These spaces fulfill specific needs and can be provided by municipalities or partners.
Catchment Area	All of Tri-Municipal Region and surrounding cities, towns and hamlets outside of the Tri-Municipal Region, usually within a 20–30 minute drive.	Tri-Municipal Region, usually within a 15-20 minute drive, serving populations of 30,000 or less.	Primarily from the immediate community or neighbourhood and may include spaces co-located with schools, colleges or other public institutions within a 5-10 minute drive.	Typically, these spaces serve the District, but may also serve the entire region and are located within a 30 minute drive.
Typical Location	More densely populated areas such as cities 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 neighborhoods with convenient access from local trails.	Urban with easy access off primary highways, public transit and local / regional trails.

Parks and Open Space Class	Regional	District	Neighborhood	Special Use
	Typical Travel Time	Typical Travel Time	Typical Travel Time	Typical Travel Time
	15 – 30 minutes (vehicle) 30 minutes + (bicycle / walk)	10 -15 minutes (vehicle) 30 minutes + (bicycle / walk)	5 minutes (vehicle) Under 20 minutes (bicycle / walk)	15 – 30 minutes (vehicle) 30 minutes + (bicycle / walk)
Parks and Open Spaces in the Tri-Municipal Region	None currently; potential regional trail system	High quality sports fields and ball diamonds, event hosting / amphitheatre spaces, large scale playgrounds, outdoor pools, spray parks	Smaller playgrounds, single recreational use ball diamonds or fields	Major sports parks, artificial turf fields, BMX bike parks, skate parks, water activities/lack access, tennis and pickleball courts

Final categorization of regional, district, neighborhood and speciality facilities and spaces would be concluded under the advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee.

It is recommended that the partner municipalities use the following categories when managing recreation and parks facilities and spaces and that final classification be subject to approval from partner municipality Councils with reference to recommendations of the regional recreation administrative committee Regional

- District
- Neighborhood
- Special Use

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓		✓			✓

PRIORITIZING REGIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS AMENITIES

Recreation and parks facilities and spaces are comprised of program areas. Some facilities and spaces have multiple program areas (multipurpose) while others only have one (single purpose). These program areas are commonly referred to as recreation amenities.

The previous section defines what types of facilities and spaces (and amenities) are classified as Regional, District, Neighborhood and Specialty. All of those facilities and spaces that are not considered

local may have a regional appeal and implication. The following list includes all of the recreation and parks amenities currently offered in the region and classifies each:

Indoor Amenity Type	Classification	Regional Quantity
Community group office/meeting spaces	Local	10
Community halls	Neighborhood	11
Curling rinks	District	2
Dedicated youth centre spaces	Local	1
Fitness centres	Local	1
Gymnasiums	District	19
Gymnastics centres	Special Use	1
Ice arenas	District	5
Indoor fields (arena or half size pitch)	District	2
Indoor playgrounds	Special Use	1
Lane swimming pools	Regional	1
Leisure ice skating surfaces	District	1
Leisure swimming pools	Regional	1
Multipurpose program spaces (e.g. yoga, aerobics)	Local	2
Social/banquet facilities	Local	4
Walking/jogging tracks	District	1

It is important to note that these indoor amenity classifications will be subject to approval by partner municipalities under the recommendation of the regional recreation administrative committee. It is also important to note that some of the classifications may be subject to change in instances where the amenity is co-located with a regional amenity or if it is included in a regional facility (such as the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre).

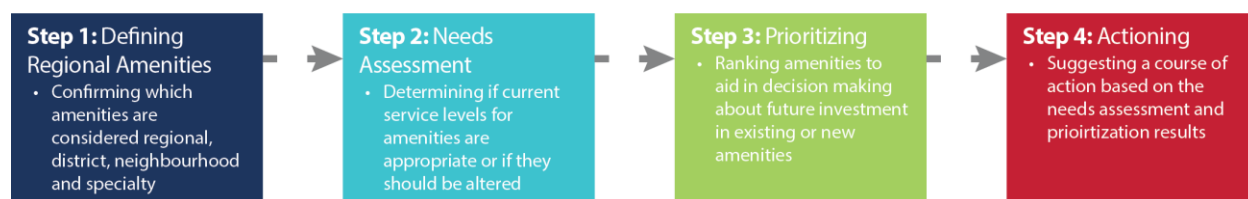
Outdoor Amenity Type	Classification	Regional Quantity
Agricultural areas (i.e. equestrian areas)	Special Use	3
Artificial turf fields	Special Use	2
Baseball Diamonds	District/Local	13
Basketball courts - full sized	Local	11
Basketball courts - half / mod	Local	4
Beach volleyball courts	Special Use	4
BMX tracks	Special Use	1
Boat launches	Special Use	
Combo field/diamonds - natural turf	Local	1
Disc golf courses	District	1
Dog off-leash areas	Local	3
Golf courses	District	2
Grass fields	Local	39
Outdoor pools	District	1

Outdoor Amenity Type	Classification	Regional Quantity
Outdoor rinks (boarded)	Local	9
Outdoor rinks (non-boarded)	Local	3
Outdoor skating ovals / trails	Local	3
Playgrounds / spray parks	District/Local	81
Pickleball courts	Special Use	22
Skateboard parks	Special Use	2
Softball Diamonds - junior	District/Local	22
Softball Diamonds - senior	District/Local	14
Tennis courts	Special Use	11
Toboggan hills	Local	4
Tracks (non-rubberized)	Local	5
Tracks (rubberized)	District	1
Trails	Regional/Local	139km

It is important to note that these outdoor amenity classifications will be subject to approval by the partner municipalities under recommendation from the regional recreation administrative committee.

For each amenity that receives public support, municipalities in the region must first determine if current services levels (amount of facilities and spaces) is appropriate or not; and whether service levels be maintained (appropriate now and expand with growth), enhanced (more is needed now) or possibly reduced (if significant investment is required, consider not reinvesting). This service level analysis, or needs assessment, is based on a set of demand indicators and is the basis for an “ideal course of action” for each amenity into the future.

As limited resources exist, the partners within the Tri-Municipal Region will also need to prioritize where investment in sustaining existing and building new amenities should occur. In order to do so, an analysis of the demand indicators and other prioritization considerations needs to be conducted. In some cases, this prioritization may render a different result from a Regional perspective than compared to local priorities. The following graphic explains.



This approach requires a set of criteria to both determine need and prioritize amenities amongst others. For the Tri-Municipal Region, these criteria and the metrics used to score and assess them are presented as follows.

Criteria	Definition	Scoring Metric						
		Demand Indicator		Enhance	Maintain	Maintain	Consider Reduction	Weight
			Prioritization Criteria					
				3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points	
Regional General Public Preference	The degree to which the amenity is identified as a priority of the general public in all partner communities; ideally identified through a statistically reliable survey of the general public conducted consistently in all three municipalities			Top 5 priority in all three regional municipalities	Top 5 priority in two of three regional municipalities	Top 10 priority in one or more regional municipality	Outside top ten list in all regional municipalities	5
Regional organized User Group Preference	The degree to which the amenity is identified as a priority of organized community groups in all partner communities; ideally identified through a statistically reliable survey of the general public conducted consistently in all three municipalities			Top 5 priority in all three regional municipalities	Top 5 priority in two of three regional municipalities	Top 10 priority in one or more regional municipality	Outside top ten list in all regional municipalities	5
Regional use and benefit	The degree to which residents from each partner municipality are expected to use and			The amenity will be generally used by all regional residents	The amenity will be generally used by residents from two regional municipalities	The amenity will be generally used by residents from one regional municipality	The amenity will not be generally used by residents from any regional municipality	5

Criteria	Definition	Scoring Metric						
		Demand Indicator		Enhance	Maintain	Maintain	Consider Reduction	Weight
			Prioritization Criteria	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points	
	benefit from the amenity							
Trends and other practices	Local, regional, provincial, or national trends related to the amenity that may influence current and future public investment			Aligns strongly with trends and other practices	Somewhat aligns with trends and other practices	Aligns minimally with trends and other practices	Does not align with trends and other practices	4
Regional appeal	The degree to which the amenity helps achieve regional goals and aspirations			The amenity strongly aligns with regional goals and aspirations	The amenity somewhat aligns with regional goals and aspirations	The amenity minimally aligns with regional goals and aspirations	The amenity does not align with regional goals and aspirations	4
Associated Costs and Financial Impact	Overall net cost impact of providing the amenity including capital and operating costs			Low overall cost impact	Moderate overall cost impact	High overall cost impact	Not likely to be financially feasible	4
Utilization of Existing Amenities	Actual user/rental statistics related to how existing amenities in are being utilized and whether or not there are indications of excess demand			Utilization is at or near capacity (90%+) and indications of excess demand exist	Utilization is nearing capacity (50%-90%) and indications of excess demand exist	Utilization is nearing capacity (50-90%) or information is unavailable	There is excess capacity	3

Criteria	Definition	Scoring Metric						
		Demand Indicator		Enhance	Maintain	Maintain	Consider Reduction	Weight
			Prioritization Criteria	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points	
Supply in the Region	An overview of both existing and planned inventories of the amenity within the Tri-Municipal Region and broader Edmonton Metropolitan Region			The amenity is not provided in the Tri-Municipal or broader Edmonton Metropolitan Regions nor within an acceptable travel distance	The amenity is not provided in the Tri-Municipal Region but can be found in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region	The amenity is not provided in the Tri-Municipal or broader Edmonton Metropolitan Regions but is available within an acceptable travel distance	The amenity is provided in the Tri-Municipal Region	3
Supply Compared to other Regions	An overview of how the Region compares to others regarding the provision/quantity of publicly owned/supported amenities related to the overall market population served			The amenity is provided in other identified regions but not in the Tri-Municipal Region	The amenity is provided at a significantly lower rate in the Tri-Municipal Region as compared to the average of other identified regions	The amenity is provided at a moderately lower rate in the Tri-Municipal Region as compared to the average of other identified regions	The amenity is provided at a similar or better rate in the Tri-Municipal Region as compared to the average of other identified regions	3
Partnership Opportunity	The ability for the Region to reduce public investment in an amenity through capital and/or operational cost sharing with non-municipal partners			Partnership opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 30% or more of the overall amenity cost	Partnership opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 10-30% of the overall amenity cost	Partnership opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to up to 10% of the overall amenity cost	No potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in time	3

Criteria	Definition	Scoring Metric						
		Demand Indicator		Enhance	Maintain	Maintain	Consider Reduction	Weight
			Prioritization Criteria					
				3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points	
Expected Economic Impact	Level of economic impact measured by direct injection into the local and regional economy as well as the impact on overall brand and image of the Region			Has the potential to draw reoccurring non-local spending into the region and catalyze provincial, national and/or international exposure	Has the potential to draw reoccurring non-local spending into the region	Has the potential to draw moderate non-local spending into the region	Does not have the potential to draw any regular non-local spending into the Region	2

It is recommended that the needs assessment and prioritization process outlined be used by partner municipalities to plan, develop and manage recreation and parks facilities and spaces in the region.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓			✓	

Using these criteria and metrics and the information found in the Stage 1 Research report (found in the appendix), the following indications of need and priorities have been calculated. It is important to note that a thorough public engagement process was not conducted during the development of this strategy and that once that occurs, this assessment would need to be revisited. Detailed scoring can be found in the appendix.

Indoor Need Assessment and Prioritization

Indoor Amenity	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication	Classification
Indoor fields (full size)	89	Enhance	District
Ice arenas	83	Enhance	District
Leisure swimming pools	81	Enhance	Regional
Lane swimming pools	79	Enhance	Regional
Fitness centres	78	Enhance	Regional

Indoor Amenity	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication	Classification
Gymnasiums	72	Enhance	District
Indoor fields (arena size)	72	Enhance	District
Walking/jogging tracks	68	Maintain	Regional
Multipurpose program spaces (e.g. yoga, aerobics)	58	Maintain	Local
Community group office/meeting spaces	56	Maintain	Local
Dedicated youth centre spaces	56	Maintain	Local
Gymnastics centres	51	Maintain	Special Use
Indoor playgrounds	43	Maintain	Special Use
Curling rinks	37	Maintain	District
Leisure ice skating surfaces	34	Maintain	District
Social/banquet facilities	33	Maintain	Local
Community halls	26	Potentially Reduce	Neighborhood

As can be seen, all indoor recreation amenity service levels are suggested to be enhanced or maintained with the exception of community halls (which could potentially be reduced should investment be required).

It is also important to note that enhanced service levels in indoor fields, ice arenas, leisure and program pools, fitness centres and gymnasiums are also suggested. Regional amenities (indoor aquatics) warrant regional feasibility exploration and other district amenities warrant further feasibility exploration and may be part of a future regional facility - if deemed feasible. Planning for regional (and potentially district) facility development as well as investment to sustain existing facilities should be done under the advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee.

Although the provision of indoor recreation amenities is not based on standardized per capita provision ratios, when contemplating expected population growth in the region and the assessment of current service levels provided, the following table outlines when development of new facilities may be required.

Amenity	Classification	Target regional provision (Population per amenity)	Current provision (pop.77,593; 2019)	2024 (pop. 79,543)	2029 (pop. 89,078)	2059 (pop. 144,444)
Curling rinks	District	40,000	25,864	26,514	29,693	48,148
Fitness centres	Regional	50,000	77,593	79,543	89,078	144,444
Gymnasiums	District	5,000	4,084	4,186	4,688	7,602
Ice arenas	District	10,000	15,519	15,909	17,816	28,889
Indoor fields (arena size)	District	25,000	38,797	39,771	44,539	72,222

Amenity	Classification	Target regional provision (Population per amenity)	Current provision (pop. 77,593; 2019)	2024 (pop. 79,543)	2029 (pop. 89,078)	2059 (pop. 144,444)
Lane swimming pools	Regional	40,000	77,593	79,543	89,078	144,444
Leisure ice skating surfaces	District	75,000	77,593	79,543	89,078	144,444
Leisure swimming pools	Regional	40,000	77,593	79,543	89,078	144,444
Walking/jogging tracks	Regional	40,000	77,593	79,543	89,078	144,444

The target regional population per amenity figures have been taken from the 2017 Tri Plan study. If those targets are to be met, there is an immediate need for fitness, ice, indoor fields, lane swimming, leisure swimming and walking/jogging tracks. If those amenities were introduced in the short-medium term, further development would not be required (assuming these target holds true) until 2059+. The cells shaded in green indicate a point in time where introduction of new amenities may be warranted.

As can be seen, although there are some short term pressures identified for some regional and district facilities, should development occur soon further development would not be required for at least the next 10-15 years.

This planning should build upon the work done independently by the Town of Stony Plain for a multipurpose recreation centre (including aquatics, ice, indoor fields, etc.) and by the City of Spruce Grove for an arena facility (spectator or user twin) but should be conducted by all three municipalities in solidarity, with community engagement, research and justification being conducted consistently across the Tri-Municipal Study area. It is important that the planning be driven by all three partner municipalities and that community engagement and research be conducted consistently throughout the region as this will create a common reference point for decision makers to refer to when contemplating partnership and investment.

Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) provides recommendations related to the future planning of indoor recreation facilities:

1.1 Rather than expanding and upgrading the Tri Leisure Centre, conduct a feasibility study for a new multiplex that includes a leisure pool, lane pool, twin arena, indoor adventure park, fieldhouse, fitness/wellness space, walking track and multipurpose programmable space.

3.1 Complete the feasibility study for the twinning of the Glenn Hall Centennial Arena and expand the arena if deemed feasible.

3.2 Include considerations for a twin arena in the feasibility study for a new multi-purpose leisure centre.

4.1 Include considerations for an aquatics centre, including a zero-entry pool, lane pool and lazy river in a feasibility study for a new multi-purpose leisure centre.

5.1 Include considerations for an indoor adventure centre in the feasibility study for a new multi-purpose leisure centre.

6.1 Include considerations for a fitness/wellness facility and walking track in the feasibility study for a new multi-purpose leisure centre.

7.1 Include considerations for a fieldhouse in the feasibility study for a new multi-purpose leisure centre.

- pages 56-57

It is recommended that a feasibility study be completed of the development of new regional, district and special use amenities as prioritized herein, or upon completion of a community engagement process, under the advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee, considering the direction in this Recreation Strategy and including involvement by all three partner municipalities.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓		✓	✓	✓	

Outdoor Needs Assessment and Prioritization

Outdoor Amenity	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication	Classification
Trails	58	Maintain	Regional/Local
Boat launches	54	Maintain	Special Use
Campgrounds	54	Maintain	Special Use
Dog off-leash areas	52	Maintain	Local
Outdoor skating ovals / trails	52	Maintain	Local
Artificial turf fields	46	Maintain	Special Use
Combo field/diamonds - natural turf	44	Maintain	Local
Outdoor pools	44	Maintain	District
Playgrounds / spray parks	44	Maintain	District/Local
Beach volleyball courts	43	Maintain	Special Use
BMX tracks	43	Maintain	Special Use
Disc golf courses	43	Maintain	Local
Grass fields	43	Maintain	Local
Outdoor rinks (non-boarded)	43	Maintain	Local
Pickleball courts	43	Maintain	Special Use
Toboggan hills	43	Maintain	Local
Golf courses	42	Maintain	District
Baseball Diamonds - senior	41	Maintain	District/Local
Softball Diamonds - junior	41	Maintain	District/Local
Softball Diamonds - senior	41	Maintain	District/Local
Basketball courts - full sized	39	Maintain	Local
Basketball courts - half / mod	39	Maintain	Local
Outdoor rinks (boarded)	39	Maintain	Local
Skateboard parks	39	Maintain	Special Use
Tennis courts	39	Maintain	Special Use
Tracks (rubberized)	39	Maintain	District
Tracks (non-rubberized)	38	Maintain	Local
Agricultural areas (i.e. equestrian areas)	37	Maintain	Special Use

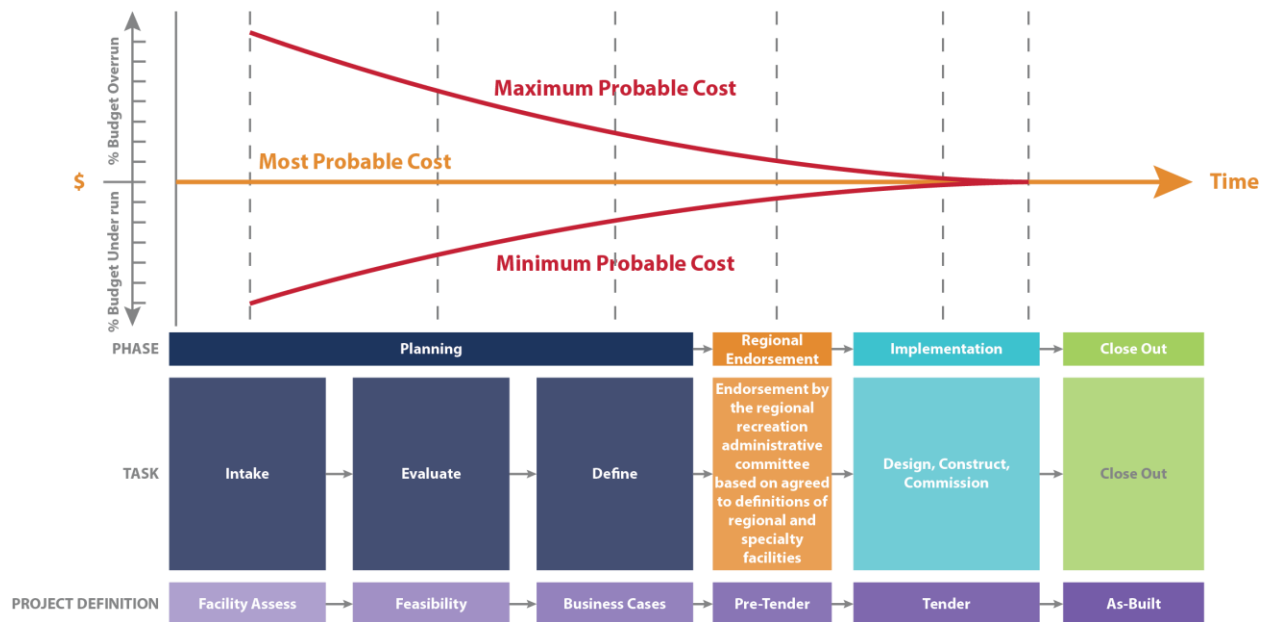
As can be seen, all outdoor amenities are suggested to be maintained, with no immediate service level enhancements required. It is important to note that this conclusion may be impacted by a lack of community input related to public and user group preferences available for outdoor recreation and parks amenities. When more information becomes available, the scoring would need to be revisited.

It is also important to note that although there is no formal regional trail system in the region right now, that amenity is probably the best candidate for a Regional classified outdoor amenity. Further feasibility analysis related to a regional trail system may be warranted and would need to occur under the advisement of the Regional Recreation Committee / Body and the administrative support group.

FACILITY AND SPACE PLANNING PROCESS

The region has already outlined a process for planning, approving and constructing new recreation facilities. It is recommended that this process be upheld for both indoor and outdoor infrastructure and that the approval stages include the advice and recommendations of the Regional Recreation Committee/ Body and administrative support group prior to the approval stage shown.

Capital Planning, Project Definition & Budget Accuracy



Tri Plan: The Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) provides recommendations outlining a process for planning and developing indoor recreation facilities:

10.2 Facility Planning Process

Each of the three municipalities has different processes for planning facilities. To work together and increase collaboration between the three partners, a consistent and transparent facility planning process should be agreed upon that establishes planning triggers (i.e. set length of time since last plan, facility life cycles) and a set process for capital planning.

Recommendation:

10.2 Adopt the Recreation Facility Development Process presented in Section 7.6. between the Tri-Regional Partnership that establishes clear processes for facility planning, approvals, implementation and close out. (2017)

- page 58

It is recommended that the facility and space planning process from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) be used to plan and deliver new facilities and spaces, with oversight from the regional recreation administrative committee.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓		✓		✓	

FACILITY AND SPACE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Further to this planning process, TRI-PLAN also outlines facility design guidelines including the concepts of universal design, multiplex style design, energy efficiency, flexible spaces, transportation, gender neutral and four-season use (TRI PLAN pages 54-55). These considerations should all be taken into account during the planning and design process for new or renovated facilities and spaces as well as the following additional considerations:

Designing to promote physical activity: facilities and spaces should be designed so as to promote and encourage physical activity. This can include making stairwells more welcoming and bright, creating sightlines into program areas and strategically locating amenities and support areas to promote walking.

Designing to adapt to social distancing guidelines: as a result of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, recreation facilities and spaces had to accommodate social distancing requirements. This includes ensuring adequate space for facility and space access/egress, designing corridors for single or multi-direction traffic and planning space capacities under normal and socially distanced scenarios.

Designing to promote inclusion: although equity and universal design are strongly aligned with this consideration, there are other design considerations related to gender, identity and race that should be incorporated into public spaces.

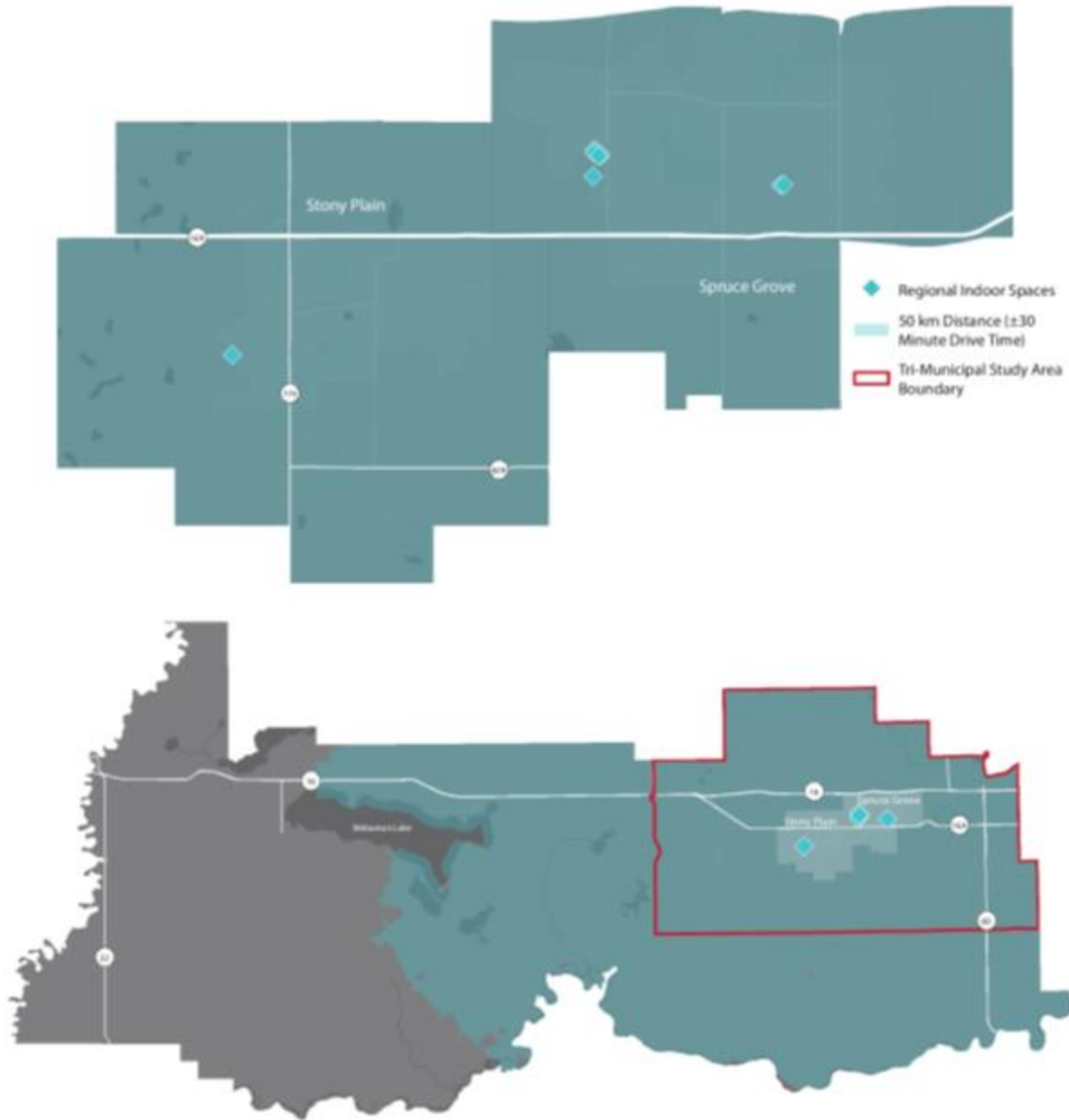
It is recommended that the facility and space design guidelines from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) as well as designing to promote physical activity, adapt to social distancing guidelines and to promote inclusion be considered when reinvesting in existing or building new recreation and parks infrastructure.

Existing Regional Policy and Planning	Other Policy and Planning	Trends and Other Practices	Demographics and Growth	Internal Engagement	Spatial Analysis
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

SITING OF FUTURE REGIONAL, SPECIALTY AND DISTRICT FACILITIES AND SPACES

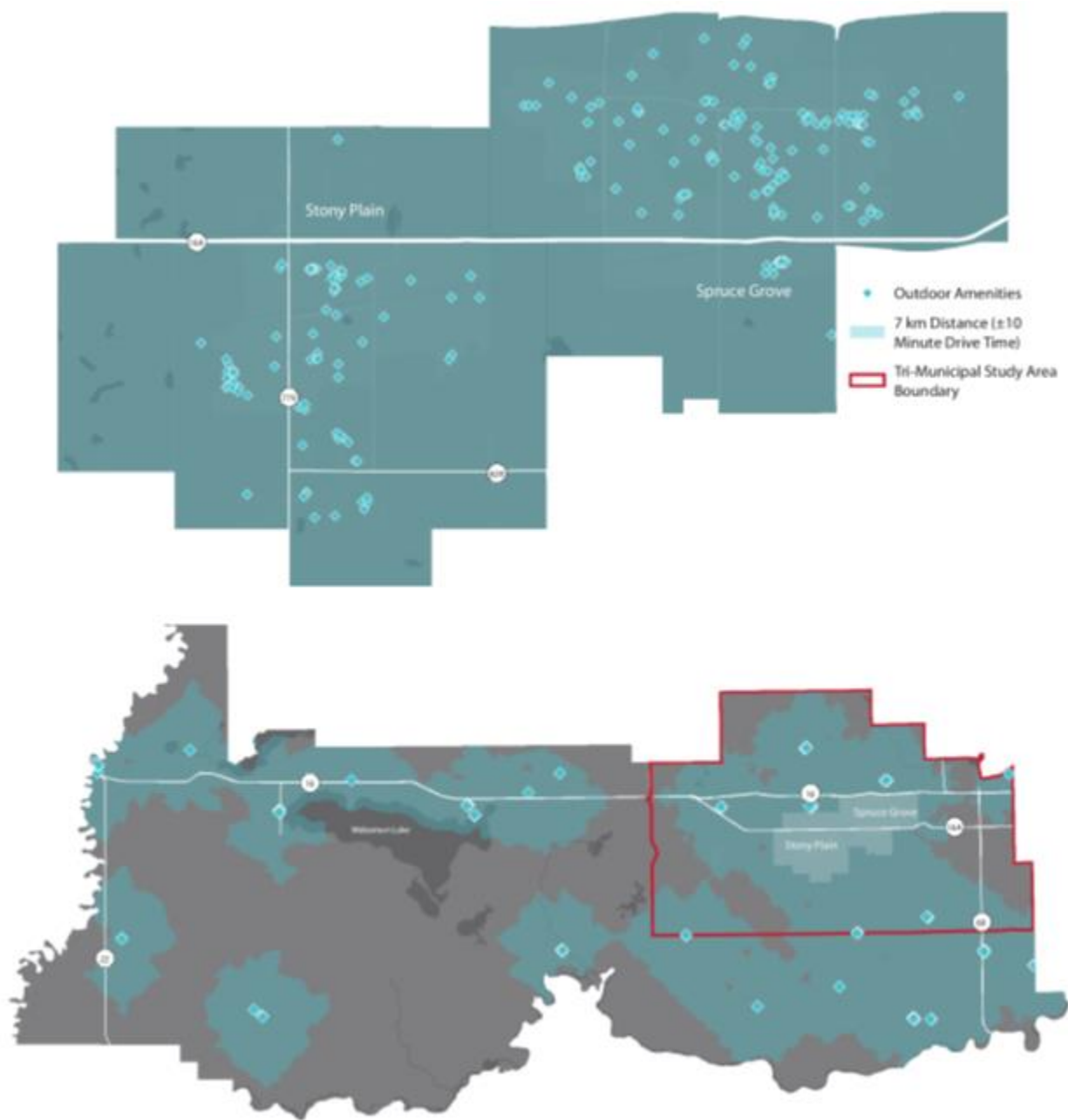
As the region grows and evolves, investment will be required for new regional, speciality and district facilities. As well, the replacement of aging infrastructure will also eventually have to occur. When significant investment is made in recreation and parks infrastructure the region (and each partner) will have an opportunity to select where development should occur.

The Tri Plan Study (page 52-53) outlines facility siting criteria to be considered when selecting sites for recreation and parks amenities. These criteria include social viability, economic viability, the location of stakeholders, accessibility and site capacity. Considering these factors and coupling them with spatially presented demographic data and current facility and space inventories can provide a framework for site selection that is less tied to municipal boundaries and more to the market population which an amenity serves. During the development of the Stage 1 report (found in the appendix), an analysis on the provision of recreation and parks amenities related to population was completed. It was based on the current inventory of regional and district (non-major) indoor facilities and the target catchments for each. The analysis concluded that target catchments were being met for all regional and district facilities.



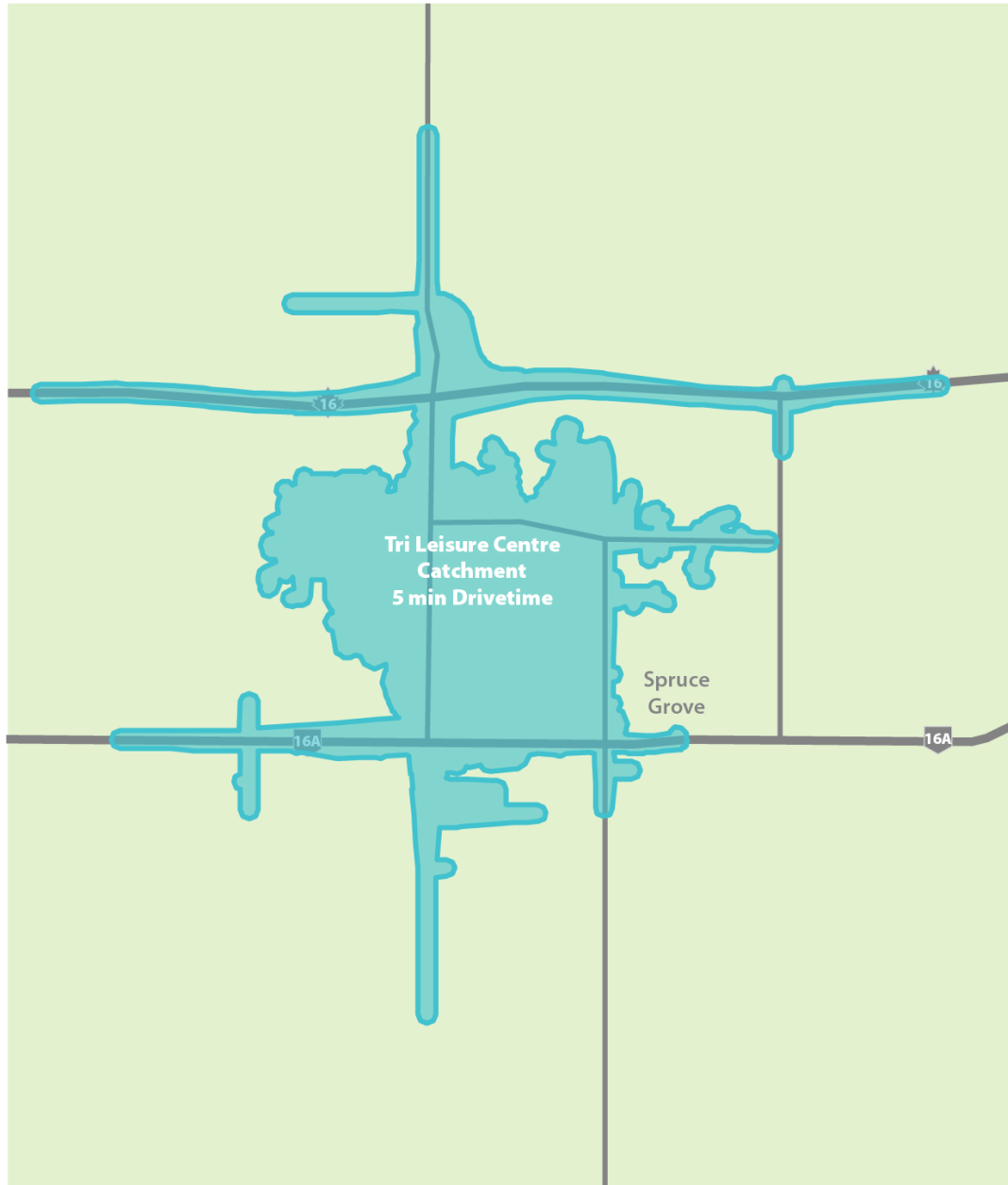
Characteristic	Within a 30-Min Drive	Not within a 30-Min Drive
Population Distribution	100%	0%

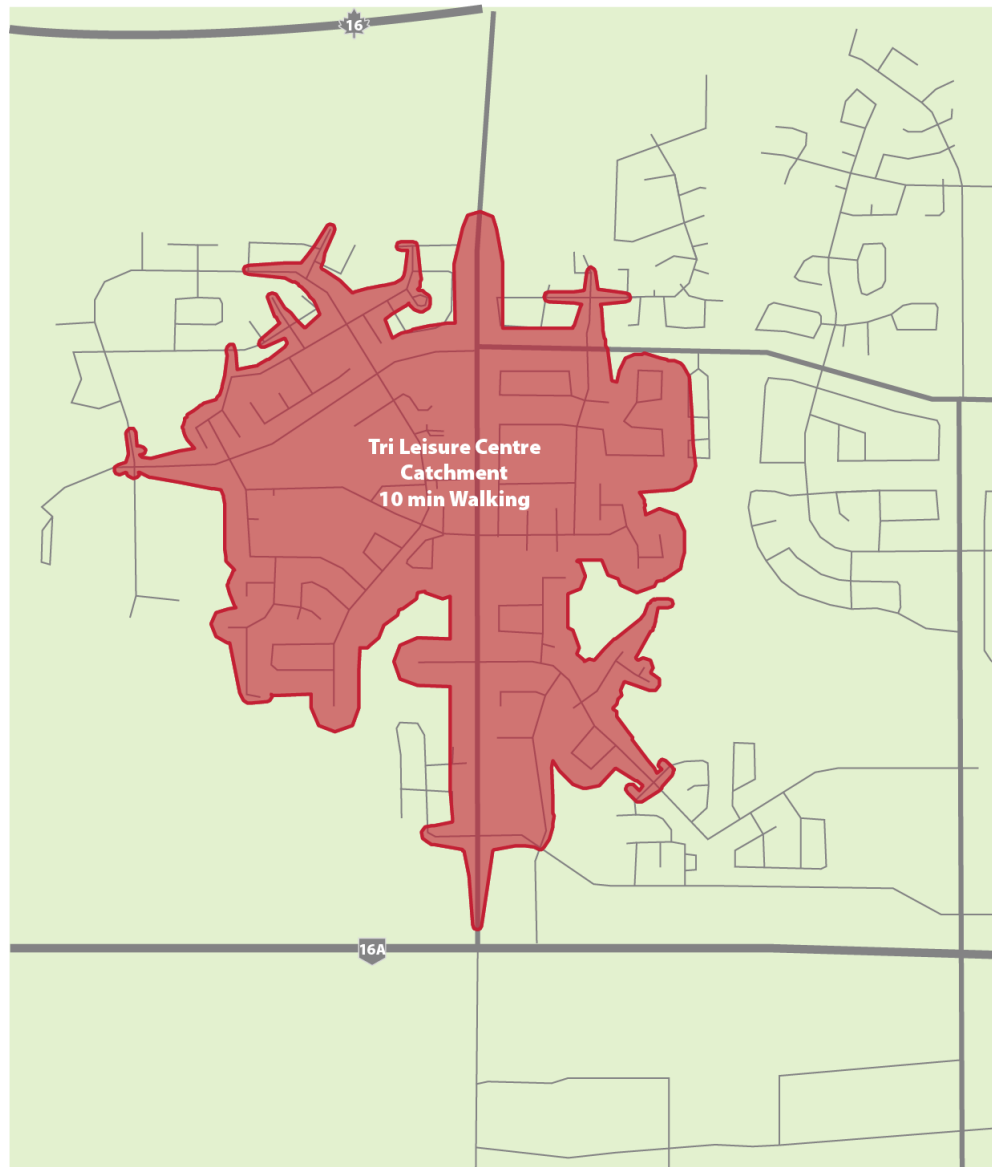
The same analysis was done for parks amenities and the same conclusions were made.



Characteristic	Within a 10-Min Drive	Not within a 10-Min Drive
Land Area Distribution	80%	20%
Population Distribution	95%	5%
Median Household Income	\$107,352	\$118,571
Indigenous Identity	8.4%	21.6%

Further to this analysis, and to show the capabilities of a robust recreation and parks asset inventory and good population data, an assessment of the market populations within different catchments of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre were also completed. Of note, is that the further away from the facility, the more likely residents are to be more sedentary, have lower perceived health and are less likely to be active (although there are other social determinants of health that may be impacting this conclusion).







Characteristic	Within a 10 Minute Walk	Within a 5 Minute Drive	Within a 10 Minute Drive
Population	7,299	19,654	49,916
Household Average Income	\$114,533	\$120,922	\$122,141
Visible Minority	8.6%	6.8%	5.4%
Perceived Health - Excellent	27%	23%	21%
Physical Activity Indicator - Active	61%	58%	55%
Physical Activity Indicator - Sedentary	12%	17%	20%

As can be seen with the previous analysis, a spatial approach to site selection can help to guide investment in recreation and parks amenities to areas where they are needed the most.

In order to take this approach, the region would need to continue adding more depth to the asset inventory (which has been started through this planning process) and marry it to spatial based population information, either available through existing census information (local or StatsCan) or via another source of data such as Environics Analytics.

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Recreation Strategy, as part of a broader Tri Municipal Regional Plan, is meant to provide guidance to the three partner municipalities as to how to better work together to enhance the current state of recreation and parks in the region. The analysis and recommendations herein are based on the findings of the Stage 1 Research report and will be integrated into the conclusions of eight other sub strategies during the integration phase of the broader Tri Municipal Regional Plan process.

There are 18 recommendations in this strategy listed as follows. They deal with governance, service delivery, programs and events and infrastructure. These recommendations have been categorized as foundational, developmental and aspirational as per the definitions and direction related to the overall Tri Municipal Regional Plan.

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
Governance			
1. It is recommended that the partner municipalities accept the common foundation and use it to influence current and future regional collaboration related to recreation and parks.	✓		
2. It is recommended that a regional recreation administrative committee, outside the scope of the current Part 9 Corporation, be formed with administrative representation from each partner municipality to provide advice to each partner municipality on matters related to regional recreation and parks and the implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy.		✓	
3. It is recommended that the Tri-Municipal Leisure Facility Corporation should remain in its current form and continue to operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and that the Corporation be considered as a delivery agent for other district or neighborhood recreation facilities on behalf of partner municipalities (where desired and feasible) .	✓		
4. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional and Special Use Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.		✓	
5. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for District Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within a 15 minute drive from the facility / space and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.		✓	
6. It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional Programs, Events and other aspects of service delivery occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary.		✓	

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
Service delivery			
7. It is recommended that the following aspects of a more regional approach to recreation service delivery be analyzed by the regional recreation administrative committee (Model 3, 4 or 5):		✓	
a. Capacity building for volunteers and community groups		✓	
b. Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities		✓	
c. Maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture			✓
8. It is recommended that regional approaches to the following practices / protocols should be developed by the regional recreation administrative committee:	✓		
a. Ice allocations (already underway)	✓		
b. Gathering and reporting on recreation and parks utilization	✓		
c. Public and group engagement related to recreation and parks preferences and values		✓	
d. Maintaining a robust and accurate recreation and parks asset inventory	✓		
e. Administering Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation		✓	
Programming, events and opportunities			
9. It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct a consistent / standardized recreation and parks preferences survey of both residents and community groups.		✓	
10. It is recommended that the partner municipalities conduct consistent, regular and thorough recreation and parks needs assessments.		✓	
11. It is recommended that a regional event or program be defined by meeting one or more of the following conditions:	✓		
a. An event/program is hosted at facilities / spaces that are located in more than one regional municipality			
b. An event/program is sponsored / hosted / facilitated by groups that are comprised of residents of more than one regional municipality			
c. An event/program leads to measurable benefit in more than one regional municipality			

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
<p>12. It is recommended that the following focus areas be considered in designing and delivering regional recreation and parks events, programs and opportunities. These should be revisited as new information becomes available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Opportunities to increase physical activity and fundamental movement (physical literacy and long term athlete development) b. Spontaneous and “scheduled” drop-in activities - indoors and outdoors c. Free and low cost opportunities d. Opportunities that are inclusive, including overcoming structural biases related to race, gender and identity (may be actual program focus or a lens for minimizing barriers to participation related to existing efforts). e. Opportunities that deliberately focus on and include marginalized populations f. Opportunities to drive non-local investment into the partner municipalities through recreation and sport event and competition hosting. g. Opportunities for play (risky and unstructured) for all ages 	✓	✓	✓
Infrastructure			
<p>13. It is recommended that a regional recreation and parks life cycle reserve be put in place for all Regional and Specialty facilities and spaces with annual contributions being split by each partner municipality based on the cost sharing principles and models herein and in the amount of no less than 1.7% of modernized replacement value. Furthermore, each municipality should be doing the same for District and Neighborhood facilities and spaces.</p>	✓		
<p>14. It is recommended that the partner municipalities use the following categories when managing recreation and parks facilities and spaces and that final classification be subject to approval from partner municipality Council’s with reference to recommendations of the regional recreation administrative committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regional b. District c. Neighborhood d. Special Use 	✓		
<p>15. It is recommended that the needs assessment and prioritization process outlined be used by the partner</p>	✓		

Recommendation	Foundational	Developmental	Aspirational
municipalities to plan, develop and manage recreation and parks facilities and spaces in the region.			
16. It is recommended that a feasibility study be completed of the development of new regional, district and special use amenities as prioritized herein, or upon completion of a community engagement process, under the advisement of the regional recreation administrative committee, considering the direction in this Recreation Strategy and including involvement by all three partner municipalities.		✓	
17. It is recommended that the facility and space planning process from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) be used to plan and deliver new facilities and spaces, with oversight from the regional recreation administrative committee.	✓		
18. It is recommended that the facility and space design guidelines from the Tri Plan: Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy (2017) as well as designing to promote physical activity, adapt to social distancing guidelines and to promote inclusion be considered when reinvesting in existing or building new recreation and parks infrastructure.	✓		

Although some of the recommendations outlined could be implemented by each partner independently, the majority of them require ongoing interaction and collaboration between all partners. That being said, the following next steps are suggested to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy.

Step 1: Each partner municipality accepts the Recreation Strategy as part of the Regional Plan process and agrees to the common foundation outlined.

Step 2: The partner municipalities develop a terms of reference for the regional recreation administrative committee and appoint members to it.

Step 3: The regional recreation administrative committee reviews the Recreation Strategy and works to achieve the following governance and administrative actions.

Governance focused actions...

- Confirm definitions of regional and district recreation and parks amenities and the classification of existing assets into the classifications
- Confirm the cost and responsibility sharing principles and approaches outlined and work to adjust current approaches to align with them

Administrative focused actions...

- Conduct a regional recreation and parks preferences survey of the general public and user groups (in 2022 prior to or as part of a regional recreation facility feasibility study)

- Conduct a feasibility study for a new regional recreation facility development with the involvement of all three partners (in 2022) while partner municipalities continue to invest in existing facilities to sustain current service levels
- Develop and apply shared practices and protocols:
 - Ice allocations (2021)
 - Utilization data gathering (2021-)
 - Public and group engagement (2022-)
 - Recreation and parks asset inventory (2021-)
 - Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation (2022)
- Explore shared service delivery:
 - Capacity building for volunteers and community groups (2022)
 - Promotions and marketing (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities (2023)
 - Some maintenance of parks and open spaces, including trails, cemeteries and forestry / horticulture (2023)

Step 4: Continue to build out other recommendations related to service delivery (practices and protocols and shared service delivery, programming and events and infrastructure)

In further defining the impacts associated with short term implementation steps, the following table outlines expected cost implications and timing of immediate recommended actions.

Step / Action	Considerations	Human Resource Implications – incremental FTE (D=project based; O=ongoing)	Operating Cost Implication (non staff, ongoing, annual)	One Time Capital Cost
Step 1: Each partner municipality accepts the Recreation Strategy as part of the Regional Plan process and agrees to the common foundation outlined				
	Review the Strategy	n/a	n/a	n/a
Step 2: The partner municipalities develop a terms of reference for the regional recreation administrative committee and appoint members to it				
	Each partner designate staff resources	.5 FTE (incremental; formally allocate existing staff time)	\$5,000	n/a
Step 3: The regional recreation administrative committee reviews the Recreation Strategy and works to achieve the following governance and administrative actions.				
Governance focussed actions				
Confirm definitions of regional and district recreation and the classification of existing assets into the classifications	Committee work	0	n/a	n/a
Confirm the cost and responsibility sharing principles and approaches outlined and work to adjust current approaches to align with them	Committee work	.25 FTE (temporary technical support)	**	\$10,000
Administrative focussed actions				
Conduct a regional recreation and parks preferences survey of the general public and user groups (in 2022 prior to or as part of a regional recreation facility feasibility study)	Tender RFP	**	**	\$50,000 (every 5 years)

Step / Action	Considerations	Human Resource Implications – incremental FTE (D=project based; O=ongoing)	Operating Cost Implication (non staff, ongoing, annual)	One Time Capital Cost
Conduct a feasibility study for a new regional recreation facility development with the involvement of all three partners (in 2022) while partner municipalities continue to invest in existing facilities to sustain current service levels	Tender RFP	**	**	\$100,000
Develop and apply shared practices and protocols: - ice allocations - utilization data gathering - public and group engagement - recreation and parks asset inventory - financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation	Committee work	**	**	n/a
Explore shared service delivery: - capacity building for volunteer and community groups - promotions and marketing related to recreation and parks opportunities - some maintenance of parks and open spaces	Committee work	**	**	n/a
Step 4: Continue to build out other recommendations related to service delivery (practices and protocols and shared service delivery, programming and events and infrastructure)				
	Review Strategy and determine what is elevated to Regional Recreation Administrative Committee	n/a	n/a	n/a

The Tri Municipal Region now has a road map for the future that is founded in the successes of the past but also looks to the future with renewed excitement and focus. As this Strategy is implemented in conjunction with the other focus areas of the Tri Municipal Regional Plan, the impacts of recreation and parks in the region will be enhanced and lead to healthier, happier and more connected residents of the region.

The following sections further discuss the Strategy from an evaluation and monitoring and risk perspective. In past plans completed by the partner municipalities related to recreation and parks, evaluation was less of a focus; this type of approach to measuring change could be a catalyst for the Recreation Strategy being implemented to a greater degree.

STRATEGIC LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation systems typically focus on programs and services. While a micro-level focus can inform departmental decision making about quality improvement, it may not provide adequate information about a regional strategy. To answer critical questions and inform decision making about a regional strategy, also known as strategic learning, monitoring and evaluation infrastructure must conceptually align with the strategy level.

In other words, connecting strategic learning and evaluation enables understanding about:

- The nature and extent of strategy implementation
- The extent of attainment of strategic outcomes
- Unanticipated impacts of the strategy

Often “... organizations spend significant amounts of time and effort developing a compelling strategy, defining goals, and articulating a convincing theory of change, without putting into place the infrastructure and support needed to monitor and evaluate whether or not the strategy is actually working.”

(Preskill & Mack. Building a Strategic Learning and Evaluation System for Your Organization, p. 5)

The Recreation Strategy presents an opportunity to begin to establish the infrastructure for the regional recreation administrative committee to use monitoring and evaluation as a tool for strategic learning. The first step is to establish conceptual alignment between the strategy and monitoring and evaluation infrastructure by:

- 1) Outlining a strategy-level theory of change.
- 2) Proposing examples of information-gathering approaches

Based on the following information, the partner municipalities, through the regional recreation administrative committee, could develop and implement full scope strategic learning monitoring and evaluation system that initially focuses on the success of the committee and the level of collaboration in the region and eventually includes the ability of recreation and parks to lead to positive change in the service outcomes identified.

This approach will require commitment, investment, and perseverance and will take time to evolve. The involvement of Credentialed Evaluator expertise may also be required.

Strategy Level Theory of Change

The Regional Recreation Strategy's theory of change emphasizes implementation, but also outlines the theoretical linkages to broad outcomes. Together, the conceptual pathways will contribute to the vision for recreation and parks in the Tri-Municipal Region: *A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and parks experiences that foster individual wellbeing, community wellbeing and the wellbeing of our natural and built recreation and parks environments.*

As portrayed by the conceptual model, the pathways progress across three main areas:

- Implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy
- The benefits of collaboration
- Regional recreation and parks outcomes.

Beginning with Implementation, each area builds on the previous component. For example, if effective Regional Leadership directs the implementation of strategies at regional and local levels, then the Tri-Municipal Region will realize the benefits of coordination and collaboration. Effective collaboration ultimately contributes to regional recreation and parks outcomes.

Beginning with Regional Leadership, each area builds on the previous component. For example, if effective Regional Leadership directs the implementation of strategies at regional and local levels, then the Tri-Municipal Region will realize the benefits of coordination and collaboration. Effective collaboration ultimately contributes to regional recreation and parks outcomes.

All aspects of the theory of change are also grounded in the Strategy's guiding principles. Framed as effectiveness principles,⁷ they are meant to both guide implementation and enable the achievement of outcomes. For example, by ensuring frequent, clear communication in its operations, the regional recreation administrative committee will contribute to the effective roll out of recreation and parks regionally and locally.

A *Theory of Change* is a narrative description of how implementation of the strategy will contribute to the desired outcomes. Its purpose includes:

- Explaining the linkages between relationships (an *if-then* sequence)
- Describing how social sciences theories support the actions and outcome
- Articulating causal assumptions
- Providing a roadmap for evaluation

Conceptual Model provides a graphic overview of the elements and linkages in the Strategy's Theory of Change. Its purpose includes:

- Demonstrating the high-level implementation and impact pathways
- Fostering alignment between the Strategy and more context-specific logic models in each of the three main areas.

Implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy

The Regional Recreation Strategy provides a framework for recreation and parks facilities and spaces through strategies in four broad areas: 1) governance, 2) service delivery, 3) programming, events and opportunities, and 4) infrastructure.

⁷ Patton, M.Q. (2018). *Principles-Focused Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Regional leadership

Implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy begins with the regional recreation administrative committee, the critical administrative body that rationalizes and provides recommendations to the partner municipalities for effective regional collaboration. Building on the strong relationships that already exist between the Tri-Municipal partners, the committee will provide a structure for planning and implementing the Strategy actions. Not only will its leadership provide clear guidance about which jurisdiction is responsible for recreation and parks initiatives, and at the regional or local level, it also will identify priorities for action. This clarity is essential to successfully rolling out the strategy's recommendations; in other words, the functions of this committee enable coordinated, collaborative regional action in parks and recreation.^{8, 9}

Clarity about Strategy implementation

While effective governance is critical to implementation,¹⁰ the relationship between the regional recreation administrative committee and implementation is not unidirectional. Rather, information gleaned from regional and local implementation needs to be regularly provided back to the committee to inform decisions.

For example, recreation and parks needs assessments (Regional Programming, Events & Opportunities) will provide information for both regional and local level decision making about facilities, spaces, programs, opportunities and events. In this way, an effective regional recreation administrative committee will also strengthen the relationships underpinning intermunicipal collaboration.¹¹

Ultimately, implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy will yield:

- Clear expectations about regional and local planning, delivery and evaluation of recreation and parks
- A coordinated approach to recreation and parks across regional and local levels

The Benefits of Collaboration

Research about intermunicipal collaboration and partnerships specifies the anticipated outcomes of coordinated, collaborative implementation of recreation and parks.¹² In other words, in theory, regional leadership and clarity about implementation in the Tri-Municipal context may contribute to:

⁸ Ramadass, S.D., Sambasivan, M., Xavier, J.A. (2018). Collaboration outcomes in a public sector: impact of governance, leadership, interdependence and relational capital. *J Manag Gov*, 22: 749-771.

⁹ Mattessich, P. W. & Johnson, K.M. (2018). *Collaboration: What Makes it Work*. (3rd Ed.). New York, NY: Fieldstone Alliance.

¹⁰ Mattessich & Johnson (2018); Ramadass et al. (2018).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Please note: A systematic review of the body of literature on intermunicipal collaboration is beyond the scope of the Regional Recreation Strategy. A more nuanced understanding of the benefits of regional collaboration in recreation may emerge from Tri-Municipal Regional Plan.

- Reduced duplication of services¹³
- More effective leveraging of existing resources, including funding, personnel, facilities and spaces.¹⁴ This may also link with improved access to resources, strengthened staff skills and improved service quality.¹⁵
 - Over time, reduced duplication and leveraged resources may contribute to more efficient delivery of recreation and parks.¹⁶
- Strengthened alignment with the requirements of provincial and federal governments,¹⁷ thereby broadening the pool of possible funding sources.¹⁸
 - Further to aligning with other orders of government, a common, coordinated regional voice may strengthen political influence.¹⁹

Ultimately, effective collaboration will contribute to more sustainable recreation and parks facilities, spaces, programs, opportunities and events. It will enable the partner municipalities to leverage their independent investment and effort related to recreation and parks further; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The leverage achieved through enhanced collaboration will mean more benefit for existing levels of investment or could mean achieving the same level of benefit with less (if necessary).

Regional Recreation and Parks Outcomes

The Regional Recreation and Parks outcomes provide an aspirational aim; they are the ultimate reason the Tri-Municipal partners provide recreation and parks programs, services, facilities and spaces. They also pertain to each independent municipality, as well as the region as a whole. In theory, effective collaboration and sustainable provision of recreation and parks are more likely to contribute to impact pathways that lead to lasting realization of the ultimate outcomes.

For example, if coordinated delivery of services reduces duplication and achieves cost savings, then the municipal partners will be able to more strategically invest in recreation and parks opportunities that meet communities' needs. In this way, the synergy between implementation and collaboration will support attainment of the ultimate Regional Recreation and Parks outcomes.

¹³ Powers, S.L., Trautvein, N.E. & Barcelona, R.J. (2020). Municipal stakeholders' perceptions of the importance and outcomes of multi-sector recreation partnerships. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, DOI: 10.1080/23750472.2020.1791235

¹⁴ Kim, S. (2020). Inter-municipal relations in city-region governance. *Cities*, DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2020.102771

¹⁵ Powers et al. (2020).

¹⁶ Giacomini, D., Sancino, A., Cimonetto, A. (2017). The introduction of mandatory inter-municipal cooperation in small municipalities. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 31(3), 331-346.

¹⁷ Hugo Consciência Silvestre, Rui Cunha Marques, Brian Dollery & Aldenísio Moraes Correia (2020) Is cooperation cost reducing? An analysis of public-public partnerships and inter-municipal cooperation in Brazilian local government, *Local Government Studies*, 46:1, 68-90, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2019.1615462

¹⁸ Kim, S. (2020).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Examples of information-gathering approaches

Keeping the focus on implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy, the following sections provide examples of possible approaches to gather information to inform strategy-level decisions.

In each area, the first step is to establish routine monitoring systems in order to systematically track progress. Since mixed methods approaches provide the greatest methodological confidence in the results, the examples include ways to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, the examples should be considered starting points for the development of a more fulsome monitoring and evaluation system.

While quarterly analysis of monitoring data will reveal strengths and areas for improvement, these data will not explain how or why. In other words, analysis of monitoring data typically identifies areas that need to be understood better through in-depth evaluation. For that reason, possible evaluation approaches are described.

Monitoring is the ongoing collection of information about an initiative's activities.

- It shows whether implementation is happening as planned and it helps project managers to identify and solve problems quickly.

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purposes of learning or decision-making ([Canadian Evaluation Society](#)).

- Different types of evaluation can be done throughout an initiative's cycle: before implementation, during implementation, or after implementation ([Better Evaluation](#))

Regional Leadership

Monitoring Examples

Committee Activities	Examples of Indicators
Develop clear accountability structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Terms of Reference a) developed and b) approved Partners accurately describe the committee's purpose Partners accurately articulate their role on the committee Number and type of regional policies a) developed and b) approved
Screen recreation and parks proposals for regional merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of a) recreation and b) parks proposals received from each municipality Number, type and proportion of a) recreation and b) parks proposals deemed Regional Number, type and proportion of a) recreation and b) parks proposals deemed Local
Conduct and monitor regional needs assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number, type and scope of needs assessment a) RFPs and b) commissioned projects Number, type and scope of regional recreation engagement process
Monitor and evaluate progress on Regional Recreation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional monitoring data system is a) in development and b) operational in each partner municipality (gauge progress over time) Number and type of evaluations a) commissioned and b) completed Types of data available for Committee decisions Number and type of Committee decisions based on data
Share information with each partner municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of communications between Committee and each partner municipality Time interval of communications (how often), by type
Advise partner Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of communications between Committee and each partner Council Time interval of communications (how often), by type
Provide advice and guidance or other regional recreation and parks matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency and types of advice provided a) regionally and b) to each partner

Possible Evaluation Approaches

How the regional recreation administrative committee operates is critical to both its success and successful implementation of the Regional Recreation Strategy. For that reason, the evaluative focus should be on the committee's processes.

- A developmental approach to evaluating collaboration would involve iterative, self-examination of how the committee operates. For example, every six months committee members could complete a collaboration assessment tool that yields information on strengths and areas for improvement, and focus process improvement efforts to make the collaboration more successful. Possible tools include the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory²⁰ or the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool.²¹
- Principles-Focused Evaluation (PFE) would explore to what extent and in what ways the committee adheres to its principles (e.g., walks the talk). Completed after its first year of operation, a PFE would also enable the committee to determine the relevance of its core principles to its functioning.

Clarity about Strategy Implementation

Monitoring Examples

Implementation of Strategy	Examples of Indicators
Governance	
Determine cost and responsibility sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type, per partner municipality, of facilities and spaces determined to be: regional, special use, district and neighborhood • Type of cost share agreement implemented, regionally and per partner municipality, for: regional, special use, district and neighborhood facilities and spaces
Service Delivery	
Adopt a regional approach to service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of regional promotions and marketing efforts (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities • Number and type of promotions and marketing efforts (public outreach) related to recreation and parks opportunities, per partner municipality • Number and type parks and open spaces with a regional approach to maintenance • Number and type parks and open spaces with maintenance provided by each partner municipality

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/resources-and-tools>

²¹ Available at: <https://www.nccmt.ca/knowledge-repositories/search/10>

Implementation of Strategy	Examples of Indicators
Develop a regional approach to practices and protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of capacity building opportunities offered regionally for volunteers and community groups • Number and type of practices with standardized regional approach • Number and type of policies with standardized regional approach • % change in overall proportion of regional a) practices and b) policies • % change in adoption of a standardized approach to regional practices in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ice allocations - Utilization data gathering - Public and group engagement - Recreation and parks asset inventory - Financial assistance programs and other participation barrier mitigation -
Programming, Events and Opportunities	
Conduct regional recreation and parks preferences surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number regional surveys conducted with a) residents and b) community groups about a) recreation and b) parks • Number and type of other data sources about the Tri-Municipal Region
Conduct recreation and parks needs assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number needs assessments completed for regional: facilities, spaces, programs, opportunities and events • Number needs assessments focused on local provision of: facilities, spaces, programs, opportunities and events • Number and type of Programming, Events and Opportunities offered a) regionally and b) locally • % change in overlap between regional and local Programming, Events and Opportunities, over time
Determine which events or programs are regional or local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of programs, opportunities and events defined as a) regional and b) local • Number events or programs hosted in a) facilities or b) spaces in more than one municipality • Number events or programs with residents from more than one municipality involved
Design and deliver regional and local events, programs and opportunities that align with focus areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of focus area designated as priority by the Regional Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % change in focus areas over time • Number and type of regional events, programs and opportunities that align with priority focus areas

Implementation of Strategy	Examples of Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of events, programs and opportunities that align with priority focus areas in each partner municipality
Infrastructure	
Establish regional and local life cycle reserve funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation amounts to regional life cycle reserve fund Allocation amounts to local life cycle reserve funds, per municipality
Classify recreation and parks facilities and spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of facilities, parks and open spaces classified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional District Neighborhood Special Use Number of facilities, parks and open spaces the remain unclassified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional District Neighborhood Special Use % changes in classification over time
Use the needs assessment and prioritization process to plan, develop and manage recreation and parks facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number assessments completed for indoor amenities and facilities, by region and partner municipality Completion of prioritization scores for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional District Local Neighborhood Special use
Complete feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of recreation amenities that require enhanced service levels, by Regional and Special Use categories Number and type of recreation facilities that require enhanced service levels, by Regional and Special Use categories Number of feasibility studies completed for a) amenities or b) facilities, in Regional and Special Use categories
Follow facility and space planning and process guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of concepts considered priorities for facility and space design guidelines Number and type of adaptations to design guidelines over time

Implementation of Strategy	Examples of Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of design concepts evident in plans for new or renovated existing facilities and spaces Number facilities and spaces designed with planning process

Possible Evaluation Approaches

Monitoring will provide the regional recreation administrative committee and partner municipalities with robust information about the progress of Strategy implementation. Quarterly reports will identify areas where implementation is progressing as expected, as well as areas that seem to be stalled. These monitoring reports should be used to identify and prioritize areas for evaluation. The most suitable type of evaluation approach would be Utilization-Focused Evaluation.²²

- Between 12- 18 months of the committee's operation, the evaluative focus should be on implementation processes (explore and explain implementation progress).

Next Steps Related Monitoring and Evaluation

The regional recreation administrative committee now has guidance as to develop and implement a full scope of a strategic learning monitoring and evaluation system.

The Strategy-level Theory of Change and Nested Logic Models

The strategy-level theory of change provides a conceptual structure to guide strategic learning. Each of the three areas should be further developed and linked with nested theories of change and logic models. This would make clear the linkages and progression of impact pathways within and across each component (i.e., which activities specifically contribute to short, medium and long-term outcomes).

Development of nested logic models would require the following:

- The linkages among the implementation activities need to be staged in order to identify what comes first, next and later for the Committee's consideration, as well as potential synergies amongst the activities.
- In both outcome areas (collaboration and benefits of recreation and parks), the theory of change is purposefully at a high-level. The impact pathways in each area need to be further developed to identify the short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes that are critical to the impact chain. By identifying the progression of outcomes, the measurement approaches will be able to detect early changes (e.g., immediate or short-term outcomes) and show that implementation is on the right path to the ultimate outcomes.

A Logic Model is a graphic image of the Theory of Change. It provides a roadmap for evaluation by:

- Identifying what needs to be measured
- Specifying the sequence of measurement (e.g., the short-term, medium-term and long-term changes to be measured)

²² Patton, M.Q. *Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Information Gathering Approaches

Possible approaches to monitoring and evaluating aspects of Strategy implementation have been outlined. The next step is to confirm the practicality and feasibility of these examples and determine the extent to which they align with the Tri-Municipal partners' current approaches. In this way, strategic learning can build on what already exists and strengthen regular institutional practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

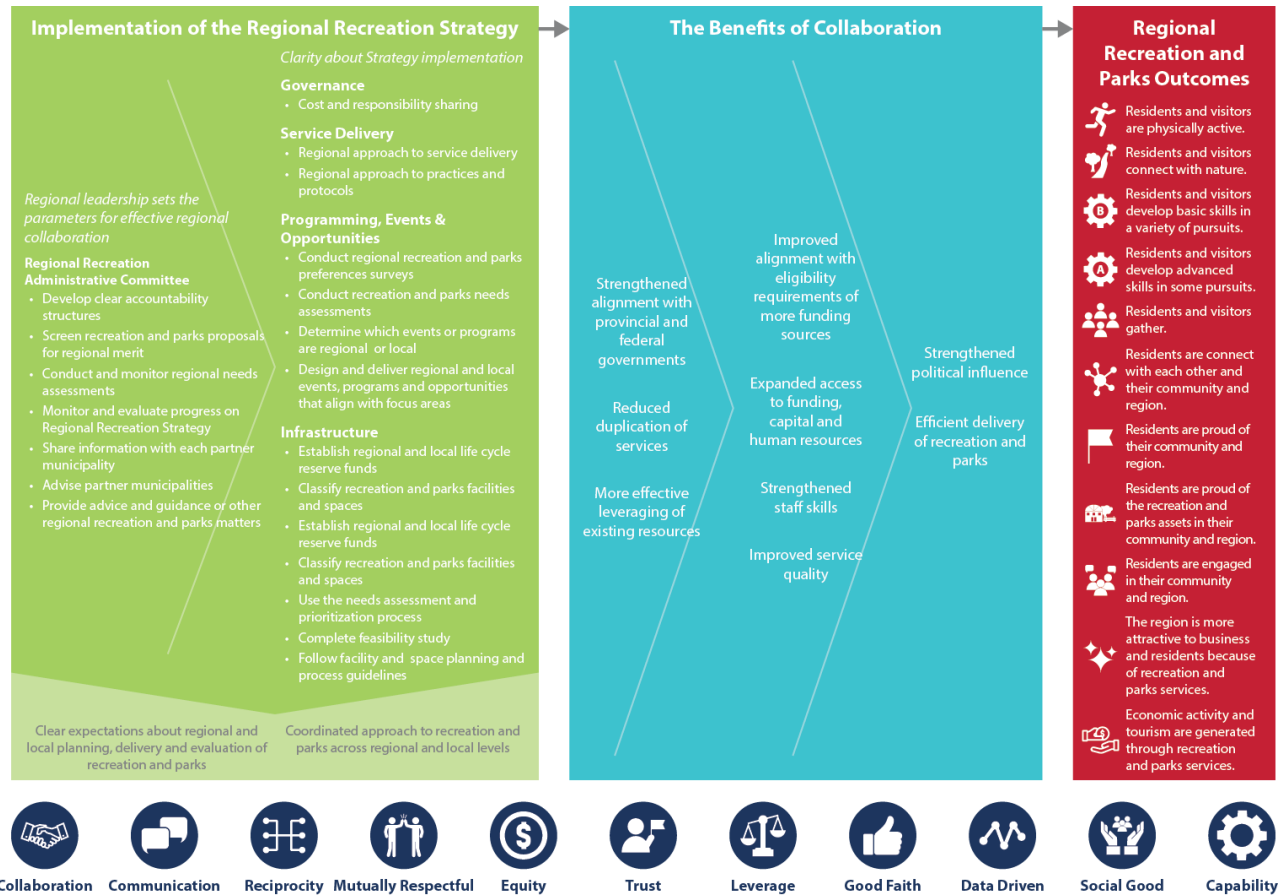
- Grounded in a fulsome theory of change and nested logic models, the Tri-Municipal partners should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with specific approaches to measurement. For both process and outcome elements of the logic models, the evaluation framework should include indicators, approaches to data collection, data sources, timelines and responsibilities.
- Approaches to data collection could include resident surveys, user statistics, and other primary research that will need to be generated by partner municipalities.
- In order to avoid burden, the evaluation framework should leverage the partners' existing approaches to data collection as much as possible.

Evaluation of Outcomes

- The committee should make sure that the focus of their outcome evaluations aligns with the stage of maturity of implementation. In other words, in the first year of implementation, they should focus on the short-term outcomes.
- This will make it possible to sensitively detect the early stages of change that could be missed if the focus was only on long-term or ultimate outcomes.
- The development of nested logic models for collaboration and the benefits of recreation and parks outcomes will show the early outcomes to focus on (e.g., those achieved between 6 months – 12 years after implementation begins).
- It is also important to note that outcome evaluations should always include a focus on process (implementation). This allows for learning about what happened to create the conditions that support change, which will enable the committee to keep doing what is working.

Ultimately, the development of a coordinated, aligned approach to monitoring and evaluation under the direction of the regional recreation administrative committee would establish the groundwork for a common approach to measurement in the region.

**A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation and parks experiences that foster:
Individual wellbeing, community wellbeing and the wellbeing of our natural and built recreation and parks environments**



RISKS AND REWARDS MOVING FORWARD

The Tri Municipal Region is a desirable place to live work and play; residents enjoy a high quality of life in the area. The partner municipalities that comprise the region invest in a variety of municipal services that enhance residents and visitor quality of life. Recreation and parks services are one of many services that lead to the quality of life in the region. This Strategy is focused on recreation and parks services and how to enhance them to create even more benefit in the region and further enhance quality of life.

The success of this Strategy is about creating more benefit and value from recreation and parks. It is also about the partner municipalities working together as a region in doing so. The Strategy outlines a common foundation for working together (vision, outcomes and principles), it outlines strategic recommendations related to governance, service delivery, programming and events, and infrastructure and proposes a framework as to how to evaluate and measure success on an ongoing basis.

The rationale for providing recreation and parks services is clear; these services lead to healthier individuals, more connected communities, and better public spaces. The rationale for working together in providing them, however, is not as clear. Successful collaboration in the region in the past has afforded the region enhanced services levels, lower investment requirements, and a leadership position in the province. For example, if the partner municipalities did not partner to develop the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre over 20 years ago, the development of the amenities within it would not have occurred when they did. This means that demand pressure for recreation services like indoor fields, indoor aquatics, fitness, and indoor ice arenas would have continued to grow, possibly to a point where less residents and business chose to locate in the area. It also means that every year that amenities development was delayed, capital cost inflation occurred increasing the overall costs to provide the services and amenities to the region.

Further to the leverage the project lead to in the region is the fact that it attracted significant capital cost investment from the provincial government, investment that would not have been made in the region should the partners have not been working together.

Lastly, the Tri Municipal Region is seen as a leader in regional collaboration for the past successes it has had in doing so. Although this image and reputation is hard to value, it is something that the

Since the development of the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre in 1999 it is estimated that in Alberta, a basket of good has increased 58.32% (<https://inflationcalculator.ca/alberta/>). Furthermore, since 2009 (the first time a feasibility study for a new regional facility was discussed) that same basket of goods has increased 19.09%. Although price inflation estimates like this do not directly correspond to construction costs (in fact construction inflation is likely to be much more significant), for a \$50 million project, this would be an increase of \$10 million since 2009.

Although construction cost inflation is one proxy for the costs of not moving forward with regional facility development, the more significant impact is the cost of overall population inactivity. In Canada, inactivity and obesity have been estimated to have an annual cost as much as \$5.3B and \$4.3B respectively (\$9.6B in total). This is about \$250 per person on average annually. In the Tri Municipal Region that could equate to a cost to society (all levels of government) of \$20M annually if the entire region were to be inactive.

three communities are proud of and continue to focus on; this Strategy and the broader Regional Plan are examples of this pride and commitment.

Although success related to past and future recreation and parks services in the region as well as the benefits of collaboration in doing so is not easy to depict as well collaborative efforts

APPENDIX 1: STAGE 1 REPORT



Recreation Strategy

Stage 1 Report Final

March 2021



Executive Summary

This Recreation Strategy report has been compiled to support the development of a Tri-Municipal Regional Plan. It provides relevant background material that should be considered when thinking strategically and tactically about the future of recreation and parks in the region. Key takeaways from each section of the report are noted below.

Key takeaways related to the **planning process**:

- The Tri-Municipal Regional Recreation Strategy is part of a broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan process.
- The three regional partners have completed numerous recreation and parks plans in the past - some collaboratively and some independently.
- This Stage 1 Report was compiled through review of existing plans; engagement with regional subject matter experts; assessment of existing recreation and parks spaces and programs, regional demographics; and review of other relevant information. It is intended to support strategic and tactical direction outlined in the Recreation Strategy.

Key takeaways related to the **benefits of recreation and parks**:

- Recreation and parks provide both indirect and direct benefits in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- Recreation and parks benefits transcend municipal boundaries.
- Recreation and parks benefits, primarily those that are indirect, cannot be escaped by regional residents and translate into social good.
- Recreation and parks benefits justify public investment in recreation and parks.

Key takeaways related to the **drivers of change** facing recreation and parks:

- Youth and adults are not moving as much as they should. Physical and wellness activity plays an important role in the management of chronic health conditions and mental health.
- Maintaining existing service levels requires continual reinvestment and appropriate asset management practice.
- Applying a climate change lens to the design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places will impact decision making and action. Climate change will also impact people's participation in and their demand for some activities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic will influence the future design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places; operator readiness for possible future events will need to be front of mind in planning activities.
- A greater alignment between recreation and public health should be established.
- Recreation can be a medium to influence positive change in communities as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This refers to ethnicity, gender identity, ability, and socio-economic status.

Key takeaways related to the **planning context**:

- Recreation and parks are important to each partner municipality as evidenced by the plethora of strategic plans developed.
- Regional recreation planning has already occurred related to:
 - Outdoor infrastructure and trails as well as indoor recreation facilities
 - Regional event hosting
 - Supporting community capacity building
 - Strengthening linkages and collaboration
 - Strengthening recreation programs and services
- Recreation and parks can help achieve desired strategic outcomes for provincial and federal governments related to, but not limited to public health, environment, and social cohesion and inclusion (including reconciliation).
- Key trends in recreation and parks that may influence the provision of services in the Tri-Municipal region include:
 - Changing User Expectations and Behaviours
 - Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation
 - Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation
 - Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health
 - Overscheduled Children
 - Physical Activity and Older Adults
 - Sport and Recreation Tourism
 - Performance Measurement in Recreation and Parks

Key takeaways related to **internal engagement**

- The region has a solid foundation for regional recreation and parks delivery, which is manifested in the TLC Part 9 and many other agreements and initiatives in place.
- There is a desire for enhanced collaboration in the region as well as more clarity and vision around what constitutes regional recreation and parks planning.
- Meaningful and timely engagement of all partners in planning and decision making for regional recreation and parks is a must.
- The recreation and parks department structures and hierarchy within each municipality is not uniform across the three municipalities. This has impacted the ability to form and strengthen relationships.
- Recreation and parks initiatives can be the subject of politics across the Councils. This can hinder regional implementation.
- Interpersonal trust and informal relationships are key to successfully navigating inter-organizational barriers to regional implementation.
- Reciprocity is important for regional implementation. For some, this may include a focus on equitable contributions, shifting away from expectations of equality.
- The region currently collaborates, either informally or formally, on items such as fee setting, allocations (for ice) and marketing and promotions.
- There is less collaboration related to community group support (capacity building) and the provision of direct programming.
- More specific to the TLC Part 9:

- the current governance structure is seen as an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC;
- the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality;
- a large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC organization;
- although not unanimous, the current model in which municipalities share budget requirements for the TLC on a population basis is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities; and
- all but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded scope and mandate.

Key takeaways related to **service delivery**:

- Municipal partners use various delivery methods to provide recreation services to residents.
- A high degree of potential exists to expand regional service delivery in several areas including, but not limited to, recreation planning, fitness centre and arena operations, and wellness/fitness programming.
- As a region, municipal government spends an average of 14.5% of overall expenses on community services (11.7% for Parkland County, 10.8% for Spruce Grove and 28.1% for Stony Plain).
- As a region, municipal government spends an average \$359.67 per person on community services (\$305.76 per person for Parkland County, \$265.48 per person for Spruce Grove and \$648.99 per person for Stony Plain).
- There is a variety of cost sharing agreements in place between Parkland County and both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The basis for these agreements includes observed utilization.
- The Tri-Leisure Centre Part 9 Corporation is a municipal partnership between the three municipalities that owns and operates the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and operates the Stony Plain outdoor pool and the Spruce Grove outdoor rink. Each partner has a single share in the Corporation. Any capital and operational deficit requiring subsidy is based on the population of each municipality within the service area.
- There are multiple opportunities in both recreation and parks / environment in which the three municipalities deliver similar services in similar manners. They present good opportunities for regional provision.

Key takeaways related to the **market context**:

- The Tri-Municipal Region population is characterized by the following:
 - Study area population of 71,818 in 2016, with a projected growth of 9% the population is approximately 78,000 today. The regional population could reach 144,444 by 2059.
 - The median age of residents in the study region in 2016 was 43 years in Parkland County, 34 years in City of Spruce Grove, and 38 years in the Town of Stony Plain
 - Overall residents are relatively well educated with over half obtaining a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree
 - The average household income is within the study region in 2016 was \$126,843
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling and favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling and favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing.
- Residents are well served with a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Within the Tri-Municipal Region study area there are:
 - 63 indoor recreation amenities
 - 251 outdoor recreation amenities
 - 80 parks
 - 139 kilometres of known trails and pathways
- The total estimated modernized replacement cost for all indoor and outdoor amenities exceeds \$400 million. Using this estimated figure, annual lifecycle contributions can be calculated as follows:
 - Minimum recommended annual contribution (1.7%): \$6.8M
 - Maximum recommended annual contribution (2.5%): \$10.0 M
- Both the City of Spruce Grove (event centre with ice arena) and Town of Stony Plain (multipurpose recreation facility) have recreation related capital projects they are contemplating; Parkland County is opening a new community hub including an outdoor pool in Entwistle (outside the study area)
- Those regional recreation facilities and spaces in which utilization is tracked have capacity; utilization information across the region is not standardized and gaps exist
- There is a variety of programs, events, and opportunities offered in the Region

Key takeaways related to other **municipal practices**:

- There are no standard approaches to regional collaboration related to recreation and parks in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, the Province of Alberta, or beyond.
- Some new practices that have occurred in the recent past where municipalities have collaborated to provide recreation include:
 - Creating regional recreation advisory boards
 - Hiring regional staff to coordinate recreation
- Related to cost sharing, some new practices being considered in Alberta include:
 - Considering both cost and responsibility sharing in agreements
 - Defining a benefitting 'market area' for different types and scales of recreation services

- Breaking down cost and responsibility by both population and assessment ability to pay
- Regional collaboration is being contemplated in Alberta beyond the ratification or negotiation of cost sharing (ICF) agreements. Some regional initiatives underway in the province include developing regional policies dealing with user fees and allocations, creating consistent user code of conduct and cancellation policies, standardizing the collection of utilization data and conducting regional needs assessments (surveys and research) and promoting and marketing recreation and parks opportunities regionally.

Key takeaways related to **resident service levels**:

- 100% of study area residents live within a 30-minute drive to indoor pools, arenas or dedicated gymnastics.
- 100% of study area residents live within a 15-minute drive to non-major indoor amenities.
- 95% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 71% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 86% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to trails.
- 33% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to trails.

Key takeaways from **preliminary findings and next steps**:

- There are many more strengths than weaknesses upon which to develop the Recreation Strategy.
- While there are a number of threats that will need attention, there are plentiful opportunities.
- This Stage 1 Report presents the current context as it relates to the delivery of recreation and parks services in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- The Stage 1 Report is the foundation upon which the Recreation Strategy will be developed.
- A visioning session with the Administrative Committee during which potential strategies and regional opportunities will be discussed. This discussion will be used to shape the draft Recreation Strategy.

Introduction

Key Takeaways

- The Tri-Municipal Regional Recreation Strategy is part of a broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan process.
- The three regional partners have completed numerous recreation and parks plans in the past - some collaboratively and some independently.
- This Stage 1 Report was compiled through review of existing plans, engagement with regional subject matter experts, assessment of existing recreation and parks spaces and programs, regional demographics and review of other relevant information. It is intended to support strategic and tactical direction outlined in the Recreation Strategy.

Within this section the Recreation Strategy planning process is introduced.

Recreation and parks experiences and opportunities contribute significantly to the physical, mental, social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing of individuals, households, and communities. The Tri-Municipal Region, comprised of the municipal partners of City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County, values recreation and parks and the contributions these services make to the attractiveness of the region and the quality of life of the urban and rural residents which they govern.

Guided by strategic regional documents related to recreation and parks, such as the Leisure Services Master Plan (2009) and Tri-Plan: Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal (2017), as well as other regional recreation agreements and policies and plans developed independently, the regional partners have demonstrated their commitment to sustaining and enhancing recreation and parks opportunities. Several achievements have resulted from collaboration related to recreation within the region. One example of this collaboration is the construction and operations of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre - a facility and a regional governance structure that is envied by many other regions in the province and beyond.

The Tri-Municipal Regional Plan

The Tri-Municipal Region has collaborated on significant projects and initiatives in the past, including the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. In building upon past success, regional leaders have decided to extend, enhance, and formalize that collaboration through the creation of a Tri-Municipal Regional Strategy. The Regional Plan will enable the partners (Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and Parkland County) to strategically align land use, municipal services, and infrastructure to achieve mutual benefit through a variety of delivery mechanisms. The aim of the Regional Strategy will be to coordinate and drive investment within the Tri-Municipal Region in a manner that enables each partner municipality to both individually and collectively achieve heightened competitiveness based on the philosophy of 'shared investment for shared benefit'.

The following image illustrates the strength and relevance of the recreation and parks related plans and strategies that have been developed collaboratively or independently by the partners.



The development of a Regional Recreation Strategy for the Tri-Municipal Region needs to respect and build upon this extensive and thorough recreation and parks planning foundation already in place. It will help to build upon the strengths and successes of the region to prepare for an exciting and uncertain future. The Strategy will present both tactical and strategic initiatives to guide decision-making and action over the next 10+ years with the intent of enhancing the value and benefit of these services throughout the region. The Regional Recreation Strategy is one component of the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, which will formalize strategic partnerships and regional goal setting from a holistic municipal government perspective.

The Planning Process

The Recreation Strategy is based on several inputs all of which are referenced in this Stage 1 Report. These inputs included:

- a socio-demographic profile and analysis of the Tri Municipal Region;
- a review of existing planning documents related to recreation and parks in the region and beyond;
- presentation of national, provincial and regional drivers of change and trends in the recreation and parks sector;
- inventory and analysis of current recreation and parks facilities and programs offered in the region;
- a review of the current governance structure, service delivery, and operational practices related to recreation and parks in the region; and
- a review of how other regions within Alberta and beyond collaborate and work together.

The following illustration identifies three specific stages of this planning process. This Report summarizes all research, analysis, and internal stakeholder engagement completed during Stage 1.



This Report begins by providing an introduction to the key benefits of recreation and parks for communities and residents, along with the identification of drivers of change that will be shaping the future of recreation provision.

Next the planning context provides a review of relevant policy and trends that need to be considered in contemplating the future of recreation and parks in the region.

A market context outlines key regional demographic considerations from a recreation and parks perspective and also presents and analyzes the provision of recreation facilities, spaces and programs in the region.

The Report culminates in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis which serves as a depiction of the current state of recreation and parks in the region and a foundation for future planning to occur.

Benefits of Recreation and Parks

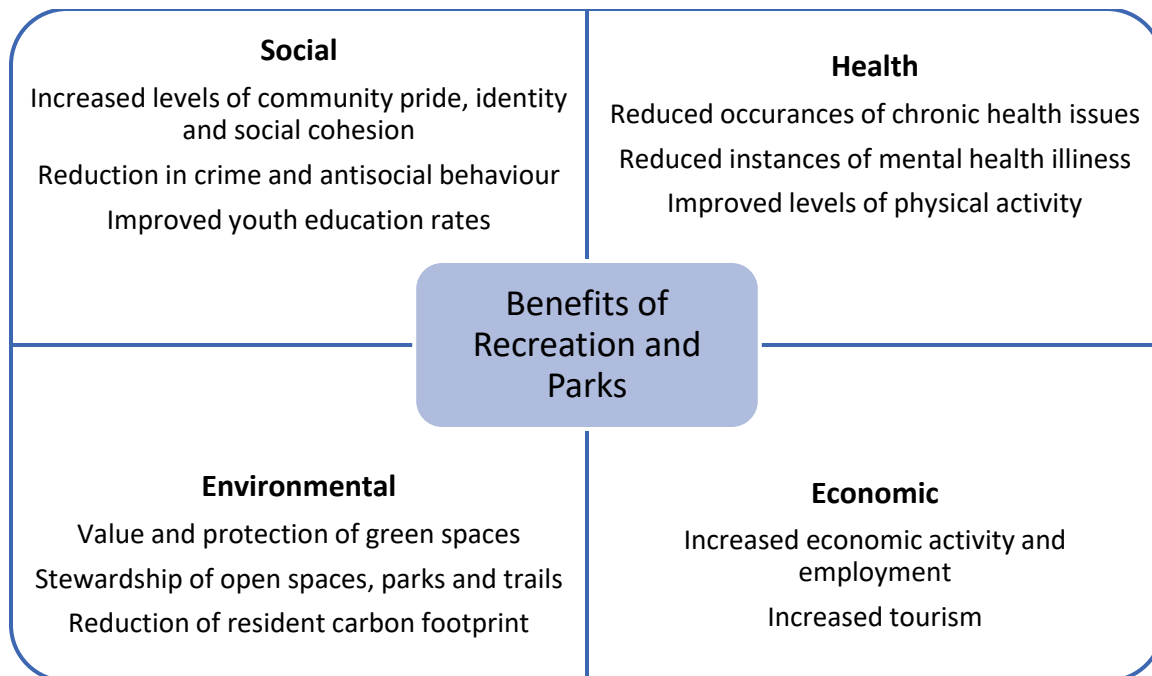
Key Takeaways

- Recreation and parks provide both indirect and direct benefits in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- Recreation and parks benefits transcend municipal boundaries.
- Recreation and parks benefits, primarily those that are indirect, cannot be escaped by regional residents and translate into social good.
- Recreation and parks benefits justify public investment in recreation and parks.

Within this section benefits of recreation and highlighted.

Recreation and parks offer many indirect and direct benefits to communities and residents. These benefits include addressing growing issues such as physical inactivity, increasing rates of chronic health problems, and social isolation. These benefits do not end at municipal or regional borders, nor do residents see municipal boundaries when considering participating in recreation and parks opportunities or experiences. The benefits derived from recreation and parks amenities and services, particularly indirect benefits such as increased community well-being, economic impact, and positive impacts on the justice and education sectors, cannot be escaped even by those who do not use municipal recreation and parks amenities and services.

Effective planning and service delivery of recreation and park amenities will lead to a variety of benefits for a community and its residents. For example, supporting the promotion of healthy lifestyles can lead to lower health care costs and hosting community events to build a cohesive community can lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviours and actions by youth. Additionally, recreation and parks amenities and services, when properly managed, can also bring about positive environmental and economic benefits to a community. Together the myriad of benefits residents derived from community recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places, and the creation of social good justify the public investment in recreation and parks. The following illustrates the benefits that recreation and parks may bring to a community and region.



Supporting Recreation and Parks Benefits Research

The following references have been selected to help articulate further how the benefits of recreation and parks are manifested in individuals, communities, and regions.

Social

- Recreation activities are a vehicle to develop social capital in communities²³. They allow for the creation of strong community networks with widespread involvement in the organizational function of the community. Participation, both active and passive, can contribute to the creation and adoption of a sense of community and local identity.
- Partnerships between education providers and recreation/sport organizers to deliver youth programming has been found to result in greater academic success for participants²⁴.
- Recreation can promote lifelong learning through volunteer opportunities for adults to learn new skills or to apply their skill set in a new manner.

Health

- Numerous studies have found that proximity to recreation amenities and parks leads to an increase in physical activity²⁵. Regular physical activity can improve health and reduce the risk of diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.
- Exercise and active lifestyles can also provide psychological benefits, improve mental health, and alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Parks enable people to connect with nature, which is known to confer certain health benefits and enhance well-being²⁶.

²³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4944602/>

²⁴ https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1775&context=cmc_theses

²⁵ <https://www.tpl.org/benefits-parks-white-paper>

²⁶ https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/SOPARC-Report.pdf

Environmental

- Local parks in urban and suburban communities play an important role in the protection of our environment through green infrastructure, conservation of public lands, and provision of wildlife habitat²⁷.
- Communities with active transportation networks, including bike paths, walking trails and public transportation, have been found to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by as much as 10 percent²⁸
- Through stewardship activities, recreation and parks departments can increase public awareness of environmental needs and conversation efforts.

Economic

- Recreation amenities and open spaces, such as parks and trails, can have a positive effect of approximately 8 – 10% on surrounding residential property values²⁹. This will also lead to proportionately higher property tax revenues for local governments.
- Recreation and parks municipal departments, amenities and supports can be a significant employer for a municipality (albeit, subsidized by the municipality).
- Investments in developing and improving community recreation and parks can create a development/construction cycle that creates local jobs, which in turn can attract additional investment and creation of jobs.
- Recreation and parks facilities and amenities can aid in the attraction of businesses to a region as companies recognize the attractiveness of a community to employees.
- Recreation amenities and parks provide sites for special events and festivals that attract visitors to a community. Facilities provide the opportunity to host sport tournaments, which can be an important tourism driver with economic benefits for smaller cities.

²⁷ <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-in-conservation/>

²⁸ https://participatoryplanning.ca/sites/default/files/upload/document/tool/designed_to_move_.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00222216.2019.1637704?src=recsys>

Drivers of Change in Recreation and Parks

Key Takeaways

- Youth and adults are not moving as much as they should. Physical and wellness activity plays an important role in the management of chronic health conditions and mental health.
- Maintaining existing service levels requires continual reinvestment and appropriate asset management practice.
- Applying a climate change lens to the design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places will impact decision making and action. Climate change will also impact people's participation in and their demand for some activities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic will influence the future design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places; operator readiness for possible future events will need to be front of mind in planning activities.
- A greater alignment between recreation and public health should be established.
- Recreation can be a medium to influence positive change in communities as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This refers to ethnicity, gender identity, ability, and socio-economic status.

Within this section, key drivers of change impacting recreation and parks provision are presented and discussed.

In recent years the recreation and parks sector has been greatly influenced by the broader changes that have been occurring in our society including, but not limited to, major shifts such as economic instability, increased migration, changing climate patterns and a dramatic expansion in digital information technology. These shifts have had wide-ranging impacts, which have led to new opportunities and presented new challenges in how municipal recreation services and facilities are planned, organized and implemented or built. Therefore, recreation and parks providers are required to be innovative as they anticipate and effect community change, rather than wait and react to shifting community demands.

Through an exploration of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors, this section explores how recreation may be influenced by these broader drivers of change. This section, together with the trends overview (presented later in this document), will highlight how recreation can be a powerful tool for advancing a wide range of municipal and regional objectives including public health, community belonging, neighbourhood development, culture and heritage, tourism and economic growth, and green space enhancement.

Public Health Alignment and Pandemic Response

While there is a strong foundation that has connected the roles of public recreation and the role of public health in communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the **need for greater alignment of the recreation sector with public health**. The 2020 pandemic experience has underscored the vital importance of community recreation for citizens. As the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association stated, “...past crises have proven that recreation is one of the first and most crucial services to return to communities. It plays a critical role in the mental and physical health recovery of citizens, and in community social and economic revival.”³⁰

Pandemic readiness will be top of mind for parks and recreation professionals, as the COVID-19 experience will impact the provision and design of parks and recreation in the future. While the outcomes are still unknown (the crisis is ongoing at the time of the writing of this report) it can be expected that parks and recreation professionals will need to consider the following.

- Expanding their relationship and coordination of efforts with public health departments.
- Making adjustments to maximum capacities in recreation facilities and spaces.
- Adopting new recommendations for sanitizing public spaces.
- Ensuring vulnerable and marginalized populations are supported.
- Exploring new partnerships with community organizations to build healthy and connected neighbourhoods.
- Addressing the natural conflict with physical distancing and community building/desire for social capital.

Community recreation organizations, facilities and spaces play a vital role in providing opportunities for citizens to take part in affordable activities and to enjoy physical activity on a daily basis. They are an important component of the social fabric of all communities and are places and spaces where people maintain and enhance their personal and mental health. The recreation sector could capitalize on this momentum and position recreation and parks activities to be vital to overall public health. Applying a public health lens to future planning and delivery of services and programs is a means for this to happen.

Furthermore, the experience of a pandemic event will **influence future operating practices, participation levels, and facility and site design of public parks and recreation facilities and spaces**. While it is not yet known what a general shift in the public psyche will be, in the case of Covid-19, it can be surmised that a shift will occur based on public responses to past global events (e.g. 9/11; World War II; Spanish Flu 1918). This shift will impact how communities interact, gather and celebrate, and impact how residents view and use (once safely opened) parks and recreation facilities and spaces. Participants will need to be convinced and reassured that recreation and public spaces are “safe”.

Importance of Health and Wellness

There is a growing recognition and policy focus of the important **role physical and wellness activity plays in managing chronic disease and support mental health**. Understanding the positive link between physical activity and improved health (i.e. reduction in obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and

³⁰ <https://www.cpra.ca/covid19>

anxiety) and developing programming with this in mind will be important when articulating the value of recreation and the broader benefits (e.g. reduction in healthcare costs).

As recreation trends and society change, municipalities are finding the need to re-focus their investment and services beyond sport and physical activity to a broader package of wellness pursuits that link body, mind and spirit. Recreation now spans multiple objectives: as a tool to address public health issues such as obesity rates among children; as a way to engage and promote healthy living among seniors; and as a means to promote community involvement and combat social isolation. For example, a study for the BC Ministry of Health Planning found that physical inactivity costs the British Columbian health care system \$211 million a year in direct healthcare costs. The same study concludes that if 10% more British Columbians were physically active the province could directly save an estimated \$18.3 million every year in prevented healthcare costs, plus an added \$31.1 million in productivity gains³¹.

The 2019 ParticpACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults identified a continued **decrease in adults meeting the national physical activity guidelines**.

- 29% of adults 18 to 79 years living in Canada fall within the 'low active lifestyle' category.
- 16% of adults 18 to 79 years living in Canada achieve at least 150 minutes of weekly moderate to vigorous physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more.
- Adults 18 to 79 years living in Canada are sedentary for 9.6 hours per day, excluding sleep time.

The 2018 ParticpACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth found that **children are not moving enough**.

- 39% of 5- to 17- year-olds are reaching their recommended physical activity levels.
- 62% of 3- to 4-year-olds are achieving the recommended activity levels for their age group.
- 51% of 5- to 17-year-olds are engaging in more screen time than is recommended.
 - 76% of 3- to 4-year-olds are engaging in more screen time.
- 77% of 5- to 19-year-olds participate in organized physical activity or sport.

Aging Infrastructure

Managing aging infrastructure is of key concern for Canadian municipalities. This certainly includes recreation amenities that are vital to the delivery of important community programming. Many **municipalities are facing difficult realities related to sustaining current service levels for their residents**. The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card³² (CIRC) assesses the condition of municipally owned infrastructure; the Report Card (a nationally conducted study) was first released in 2016. A follow-up report was completed in 2019. The Report Card assessed several infrastructure categories, including an analysis of the state of culture, recreation and sport facilities in Canada.

Both reports reveal several concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of recreation over the next number of years. Approximately **30-35% of facilities are in fair condition or worse** and a large proportion are more than 50 years old. While the condition of individual facilities varies, it can be

³¹ <http://www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/health/inactivity-bc.pdf>

³² The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. 2016/2019. *Informing the Future: The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card*. <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca/en/index.html>

assumed that a collection of facilities many decades old will **require significant capital investment** (or replacement) compared with much newer facilities. The categories in the worst condition (i.e., more than 30% are in fair, poor or very poor condition) include single pad ice arenas, outdoor pools and wading pools, indoor 25-metre pools, indoor curling rinks and tennis courts.

Canadian Infrastructure Report Card Key Findings

- The Report Card demonstrates that Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, is at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment.
- The average annual reinvestment rate in sport and recreation facilities is currently 1.3% (of capital value) while the recommended target rate of reinvestment is 1.7% – 2.5%.
- Almost 1 in 2 sport and recreation facilities are in 'very poor', 'poor', or 'fair' condition and need repair or replacement.
- In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, sport and recreation facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.
- The Report Card indicated that the extrapolated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition is \$9 billion while those in 'fair' condition require \$14 billion.

Equity & Inclusion

The diversity of the Tri-Municipal Region can only be expected to increase. As such the regional governments will need to consider how policies and practices will contribute to building bridges between cultural and ethnic gaps and address barriers to participation. Equity is about creating fairness and providing citizens with access to facilities, services and supports that they require to meet their needs. Recreation practitioners are in an excellent position to improve the lives of those who have been oppressed through the delivery of services and **programs that are thoughtfully designed to empower and provide a sense of self-determination**. A first step in creating and fostering equity is to facilitate inclusion. Inclusion is about providing a voice to all; it involves the conscious practice of activity engaging people of different backgrounds and experiences. These processes require the acknowledging of our history and reflections on power and privilege. Such experiences and reflections should result in the valuing differences and recognizing that each person has a valuable contribution to society.

When working to build inclusion and racial equity, it is important to frame the planning of programming and services as working towards collective benefit for all; this can include strategies such as writing policies and procedures in plain language so they are easy to understand by all communities and creating welcoming facilities that all people feel safe in³³. **Creating fairness within the recreation sector, and our broader society, should be something that motivates all providers and participants, and is a constant driver of change within the field.**

Furthermore, and important within this regional context, it is important to consider the process of reconciliation and fostering relationships with Indigenous communities. The 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Call to Action Report³⁴ identified sport and recreation as tools for social development to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities (Calls to

³³ See <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2015/december/racial-equity-in-parks-and-recreation/>

³⁴ http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Action 87 – 91). The platform of reconciliation in Canada challenges the recreation sector to do more than an acknowledgment of territorial land or of the Calls to Action within the Truth and Reconciliation Report. It is an opportunity to learn about the land Canadians reside on, the traditional peoples and cultures, and to foster new relationships that will lead to healthier individuals, communities and balanced partnerships. **Reconciliation is an ongoing process that must occur in a respectful manner recognizing Indigenous cultural traditions and protocols to enable a positive move forward with Indigenous communities.**

Climate Change

Climate change has far reaching effects on all aspects of society, with implications for economic growth, public health and ecological function. There is a direct relationship between recreation and the environment. Recreation impacts the natural environment, and the natural environment impacts the provision of recreation. **Climate change and resulting environmental implications will challenge, and more than likely alter, the provision of recreation** and management of parks in the coming years through changes to weather patterns, extreme weather-related events, and air pollution. Recreation providers must be committed to sustainable practices to support the natural environment and practices to adapt to the changing climate.

There is a growing body of work that examines the impact of climate change on outdoor recreation and natural recreation areas as drivers of tourism³⁵. As well literature that explores the managerial implications of sustainability practices and the provision of programming as impacted by climate change and extreme weather³⁶ is growing. For facility operators and event managers, the warming planet will have significant implications related to water, energy, and waste. Additionally, the declining quality of the natural environment or damage from extreme weather events will have significant implications for park management. For example, poor air quality from forest fires may limit the use of public play spaces, parks and the spectator attendance, and participation in outdoor recreational sport. Rising temperatures and reduced rainfall can impact the utilization of outdoor spaces as well. Both scenarios could create increased demand for climate controlled indoor spaces.

³⁵ See Askew & Bowker, 2018

³⁶ See Casper & Pfahl, 2015

Planning Context

Key Takeaways

- Recreation and parks are important to each partner municipality as evidenced by the plethora of strategic plans developed.
- Regional recreation planning has already occurred related to:
 - outdoor infrastructure and trails as well as indoor recreation facilities
 - Regional event hosting
 - Supporting community capacity building
 - Strengthening linkages and collaboration
 - Strengthening recreation programs and services
- Recreation and parks can help achieve desired strategic outcomes for provincial and federal governments related to, but not limited to public health, environment, and social cohesion and inclusion (including reconciliation).
- Key trends in recreation and parks that may influence the provision of services in the Tri-Municipal region include:
 - Changing User Expectations and Behaviours
 - Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation
 - Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation
 - Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health
 - Overscheduled Children
 - Physical Activity and Older Adults
 - Sport and Recreation Tourism
 - Performance Measurement in Recreation and Parks

Within this section the influence and relevance of current local, regional, provincial and national policy and planning documents are summarized, and key trends in recreation and parks are identified.

Policy Context

The Tri-Municipal Region is undergoing a significant planning exercise with the overall aim of improving service delivery for residents, support the regions fiscal capacity, and strengthen the existing

governance structure within region. As a component of the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, the Tri-Municipal Regional Recreation Strategy must be rooted in the experience and knowledge of previous planning exercises such as the Leisure Services Master Plan (2009), Parkland County Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan (2017) and Tri-Plan: Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal (2017).

The Recreation Strategy must also incorporate and align with the foundations set within national and provincial planning documents such as the Framework for Recreation in Canada, Parks for All and Active Alberta.

Key Policy References

Tri-Municipal Region

- Leisure Services Master Plan (2009)
- Parkland County Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan (2017)
- Tri-Plan: Indoor Recreation Facility Strategy for the Tri-Municipal (2017)

Provincial

- Active Alberta
- Spirit Alberta
- Alberta Sport Action Plan
- Municipal Government Act

National

- Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)
- Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action Report (2015)
- Let's Get Moving (2018)
- Canadian Sport for Life
- Parks for All (2017)
- Canada Sport Policy

A thorough review of a variety of policy and plans is included in the Appendix. The following summarizes key findings of this review. The analysis of regional policies and planning documents discovered that while the municipalities develop strategies unique to their context and goals, there is conceptual alignment throughout the region, over time, and between municipalities.

The following chart illustrates eight strategic themes identified within the existing recreation and parks related planning documents of the region.

Cross-Cutting Strategic Themes	2007	2009	2014	2015	2017	2017	2020
1. Improve trail connectivity: Develop policies & plans; specific approaches					Parkland County		Stony Plain
2. Improve parks & outdoor infrastructure: Develop policies; enhance and upgrade outdoors	Spruce Grove				Parkland County		Stony Plain
3. Host events: Develop nature tourism; support planning & attracting; enhance hosting capacity	Spruce Grove	Leisure Services	Regional Event		Parkland County	Indoor Rec Facility Strategy	
4. Support community capacity building: Offer grants; organizational development		Leisure Services	Regional Event		Parkland County		
5. Strengthen linkages & collaboration: Cost sharing; communications & engagement; partnerships (regional); partnerships (community & intersectoral)		Leisure Services			Parkland County	Indoor Rec Facility Strategy	Stony Plain
6. Strengthen environmental protection & sustainability: Protect nature		Leisure Services			Parkland County		
7. Focus on recreation facilities: Accessibility; quality; diversity		Leisure Services		Stony Plain	Parkland County	Indoor Rec Facility Strategy	
8. Strengthen recreation programs & services: Affordability; reduce participation barriers; quality; coordination (regional & community)		Leisure Services			Parkland County	Indoor Rec Facility Strategy	

Considering the regional policy review with as well as information uncovered through a review of the Edmonton Metro Regional Board, provincial and national policy and planning documents, the following key themes were identified as relevant to the future provision of recreation and parks services within the Tri-Municipal region.

1. The public provision of recreation and parks amenities and services is essential to public health; it supports fundamental **lifelong sport and physical activity participation** for residents.
2. **Equitable access to public recreation facilities and trails** and **inclusive programming** should be a priority regardless of ability, race, gender, orientation or age.
3. **Multi-sector partnerships** to deliver recreation services and programming to individuals and communities are essential.
4. **A value-based** approach to regional partnership management will ensure intended outcomes are met.
5. Outcome based and **evidence driven decision making** should focus on fostering healthy, active communities and supporting the wellbeing of communities and citizens.
6. **Environmentally sustainable** building practices and facility management protocols need to be prioritized to minimize ecological footprint of activities.
7. Recreation has unique role to play in **fostering a diversified, strengthened regional economy** through tourism and as part of a broader strategy to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Recreation and Parks Trends

The following provides an overview of key trends and leading practices that may influence the provision of recreation and parks in the Tri-Municipal region. This information is meant to complement the analysis of recreation and parks amenities and services within the region, the aforementioned drivers of change, and provide additional context for strategic planning.

Recreation activity preferences are constantly changing and user expectations for recreation and sport facilities continue to increase. Active participants and spectators alike **have higher expectations for the**

experience provided at facilities that they use, and visit compared to decades past. This trend is largely fuelled by the significant investment made in recreation and sport infrastructure by municipalities of all sizes throughout Canada and beyond. This increased provision has raised expectations across the board and resulted in a highly competitive landscape. Convenience and comfort amenities expected by many users at recreation facilities (including multisport field sites) now include Wi-Fi, comfortable seating areas, washroom facilities, change areas and child play areas. Investment in athletic field infrastructure in many municipalities has become driven by the demand for sites that can accommodate special events and tournaments.

Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation

There is growing demand for more flexibility in timing and activity for leisure pursuits. **People are now seeking individualized informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home.** This trend does not eliminate the need for structured activities but suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for more traditional structured-use environments. Research on teenage activity preferences in Wales suggests that access and lack of opportunity hinder youth activity levels. Creating a voucher-type program where researchers provided teenagers with funds to pay for preferred activities, researchers found that teenagers gravitate towards fun, unstructured and socially oriented activities such as trampolining, laser tag and going to water parks. Top-down policy approaches are likely ineffective when it comes to increasing youth activity levels, as many teenagers prefer more flexible, spontaneous opportunities.

Spontaneous recreation is broadly characterized as physical activities in which the activities, nature of participation, and timing of participation are freely chosen and do not require registration for programs or leagues. Examples of spontaneous recreation activities include walking, running, children playing, skateboarding, and other pick-up sports, games, and activities.

Bostwick Community Centre, London Ontario

The new multiplex community centre will have traditional amenities such as a pool and ice surface, however it will also house a unique ninja-style obstacle rooms for both adults and kids to provide opportunities for spontaneous play at all ages.

Recreation consumers have a greater choice of activity options than ever before. As a result, service providers are now required to ensure that they are approaching **service delivery fluidly** and in such a way so to be able to quickly adapt to meet community needs. Many municipalities have also had to make hard decisions on activities they are able to directly offer or support, versus those that are more appropriate to leave to the private sector to provide.

Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation

The **value of the local parks and green spaces should not be understated** in times of crisis. A 2020 study conducted by National Recreation and Parks Association³⁷ found that 83% percent of adults agree that visiting their local parks, trails and open spaces is essential for their mental and physical wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 60% responded that it is very or extremely essential to exercise in parks and green spaces to relieve stress and remain healthy during the COVID-19 crisis. Given the

³⁷ <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/the-essential-need-for-parks/>

strong connection communities feel to their local green spaces, recreation and parks will be key to social recovery and in the maintaining of community bonds and relationships.

While structured programming and user groups are often the primary consideration when planning for future parks and field spaces, in recent years there has been a **growing demand for passive or “spontaneous” recreation in community parks year-round**. This demand can only be expected to grow as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic event and related restrictions to organized play/sport. While designated fields and parks can accommodate spontaneous and “pick up” activities, barriers to using these spaces often exist. These barriers include residents being unaware if a space is booked by an organized user group, physical barriers such as fencing that restricts access, and seasonal limitations such as snow removal and lacking support amenities (shade, warming hut).

To ensure spontaneous opportunities exist for residents, many municipalities are actively encouraging the use of parks and greenspace for casual and “pick up” activities. In addition to encouraging physical and social activity, encouraging these activities in public greenspaces can result in a number of broader benefits.

- Increased utilization of parks and open spaces.
- Reduction in deviant behaviour through increased resident value and regular use.
- Increased opportunities for multi-generational recreation, sport and physical activity.

A number of municipalities have had success encouraging this practice in the following ways.

- Communicate and promote (through traditional and social media platforms) that unstructured activities are permitted in parks and open spaces.
- Installation of washroom facilities, shade barriers and warming stations.
- Regular, year-round maintenance.
- Signage in park spaces which promotes spontaneous recreational and spontaneous sport.

Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health

Physical literacy has become an increasing prominent concept in the field of sport and recreation in the past few decades. It likens the idea of physical ability to language literacy, in which children, youth and adults follow a development path. The physical literacy model is composed of the basis of knowledge, awareness, **behaviours and understanding needed for healthy active living and lifelong participation in physical activity**.

Canada, along with the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, pioneered major initiatives in education, community and public health to increase physical participation and

The City of Montreal is creating 17 “winter resorts” at parks throughout the community. Installations will include outdoor furniture and colored lights with the intention of animating parks and open spaces and creating recreation outlets for residents.



[A Montreal winter: 'Resorts' will be set up across the city, parks will remain open for sports | CTV News](#)

Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life (International Physical Literacy Association, 2017)

performance using the physical literacy model. The concept of physical literacy was adapted and popularized by the (Canadian) Sport for Life movement, which was included in the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 as a foundation for sport participation. It has also been applied at the provincial level, such as within the Alberta Sport Plan, 2014 and within the Framework for Recreation in Canada, 2015. As a result, many Canadian municipalities are now including physical literacy within their own community sport strategies and policies such as the City of Mississauga Sport Plan, 2013 and the Richmond Sport for Life Strategy, 2010.

A 2018 report on the state of children's physical literacy in Canada presented the findings of a national research study. The study included participation over 10,000 children, aged 8 to 12, from 11 cities across the country in the years 2014 to 2017³⁸. The study found that **nearly two-thirds of Canadian children have not achieved an acceptable level of physical literacy**. The findings were based on daily step counts and questionnaires about physical activities. These findings indicate that more needs to be done to ensure children are physically literate in Canada, and as such the concept of physical literacy will continue to be an important component within the Canadian recreation sector.

Overscheduled Children

The overscheduling of children has become a predominant problem in today's culture. There are increasing opportunities for youth to participate in sports, art and theatre camps, skill building lessons and leagues (such as learn to swim and Timbits hockey, soccer and softball programs) year-round and opportunities for children as young as 4 years old. Children who become part of competitive sport teams travel frequently to different communities on the weekends to play in tournaments and participate in clinics. Parents feel pressure to start their children in recreation programming at young ages to ensure they are not left behind in skill development or miss out on forming social connections with other children their own age. Couple a child's participation in various recreation activities, classes, and clubs with the demands of household responsibilities and school assignments, and the result is little to no non-scheduled time for today's youth and children.

Although enrichment activities such as art and music lessons as well as sport and other educational activities may be beneficial to the child, there comes a point when the child has too many things going on in her life. This can result in damage to a child's self-esteem because she sees that her parents are always trying to improve her, and she is not good enough³⁹. Researchers have found that **overscheduling can add unnecessary stress to a child's life and quite possibly lead to escalated incidences of depression, anxiety, and a lack of creativity and confidence**. Children need a balance between athletics, academics, and character-building activities.

Apple Schools, Alberta

An Alberta-based program that adds healthy living messaging and activities to the school environment. Involves teachers, parents and community partners to help students stay active and eat healthily outside school hours.

³⁸ <https://www.capl-eclp.ca/2018/10/02/canadas-first-state-of-the-nation-report-on-childrens-physical-literacy/>

³⁹ https://blink.ucsd.edu/_files/sponsor-tab/vcsa/SelfEsteemTrap.pdf

While the overscheduling of children has correlated to a higher demand of structured recreation services and programming for youth, including those of competitive nature, this awareness of the pressures children now face and potential harmful effects of overscheduling, may present a shift in the types and frequency of activities in demand for children towards more child-driven free play⁴⁰. After all, **play is important to child development**; it has been recognized by the United Nations as a basic right of every child. This shift has been represented in the growing number of community play spaces that are designed with natural features, abstract designs and multi-sensory experiences for children to engage in creative, free play time. Additionally, research has shown that the over structuring a child's leisure time leads to the eventual decline in participation once a child is able to control of her own schedule.

Physical Activity and Older Adults

A major trend within recreation and leisure service delivery is greater focus on providing programs and services for aging populations. The **Canadian population is aging steadily and there will be larger cohorts of Canadians aged 65+ than ever before**. This growing population has created a tremendous demand for unique recreation services to meet the needs of older adults. Regular physical activity contributes to the prevention and management of chronic diseases, as well as a host of other health issues older adults face. It also has been shown to reduce the risk of falling and bone fractures as people age, can help prevent or lessen a variety of physical limitations, stave off depression and improve mental well-being, and can significantly help older adults maintain their independence and enjoy daily life.

Today older adults are expected to live longer and live a more active life than generations past. This will present growing opportunities and user demands for creative, innovative programming for older adults.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health outlines the Physical Activity and Older Adults: WHO Global Guidelines of Physical Activity for Adults 65 Years and Older

1. Older adults should achieve at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity.
2. Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration.
3. For additional health benefits, older adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity.
4. Older adults, with poor mobility, should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week.
5. Muscle-strengthening activities, involving major muscle groups, should be done on 2 or more days a week.
6. When older adults cannot achieve the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.

Source: <https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/physical-activity-recommendations-65years.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-importance-of-free-play-2633113>

However, contradictory to these anticipated trends is a 2018 Statistics Canada report⁴¹ that highlighted older Canadians are becoming less and less physically active over time. The report revealed a slow decline in overall activity levels among older adults. Participation rates of women aged 65 and older in active pursuits declined from 77% in 1986 to 69% in 2015. Over the same period the average time spent by senior men and women on physical activity declined by 35 and 40 minutes per day, respectively. Forty-four percent (44%) of men age 65 and older participate in physical activities, along with 39% of women. This may indicate a need for recreation programmers to reassess the types of opportunities and experiences they offer older adults.

Sport and Recreation Tourism

Tourism, related to event hosting, sport and recreation activities, is a significant segment in the tourism industry, and has become a highly competitive sector for regions small and large. As such, the hosting of an event is often a key driver in the development of new infrastructure (such as recreation facilities, transportation improvements) in Canadian cities. In 2016, the sports tourism industry in Canada was valued at \$6.5 billion dollars. In contrast to other segments of the tourism industry, **sport tourism in Canada continues to grow and is largely driven by the domestic market**. The domestic market, particularly the intra-provincial tourism market, is anticipated to continue to grow as travel restrictions and concerns will remain during and following COVID-19.

Given this important contribution events and active tourism makes to local and national economies, many governments are reacting to the growth and associated opportunities by dedicating resources to the attraction and retention of events. This type of tourism is a fairly new concept. Organization such as sport or park tourism councils are an emerging trend in municipal governance that are evolving in many communities and regions as they determine what model works for them. These organizations often receive public support and are tasked with building tourism capacity and working with community recreation and parks organizations and volunteers in the attraction and hosting of events. Some municipalities also dedicate internal staff resources to tourism through the creation of new positions or re-allocation of roles. It should be noted that there is no “best” organizational structure for a community’s tourism body.

While tourism can be highly beneficial to a community, it is important to consider a number of factors when allocating resources in order to ensure that investment provides positive and long-lasting impacts. This is especially the case when considering the pursuit of larger scale events and competitions. The host municipal government must aim to achieve **a balance between the recreational needs of local citizens and community value with the social and economic benefits of event hosting**. Best practices that should be followed include the following:

Infrastructure investment (enhancement or new development) needs to be sustainable and beneficial to a wide array of residents.

- Benefits from each event are communicated to the general public.
- Volunteer capacity needs to be accurately assessed and deemed appropriate.
- The pursuit of events needs to be strategically aligned with community values and goals.

⁴¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/180321/dq180321a-eng.htm>

Performance Measurement in Recreation and Parks

There are various methods to measure the performance of recreation, park and cultural assets. Given that most governments, particularly at the municipal level, are frequently being tasked with delivering more with less budgetary support, determining the value or performance of recreation and parks amenities and assets is often critical as it can be tied to funding and budgetary decisions.

It is increasingly important that governments, along with not-for-profit organizations, are accountable to funders (i.e. taxpayers, other levels of government) and show progression to stated strategic goals.

While a **traditional approach to measuring success may have focused on financial performance and utilization data, this does not capture the full value of recreation and parks** as they play an important role in the quality of life of the communities in which they are located. To fully measure the performance of recreation and parks assets, the focus needs to shift solely from outputs such as revenue or registration numbers, to encompass broader outcomes such as healthy people, healthy communities and healthy environment.

In the recreation sector measuring outputs has focused on measures of activity and efficiency, whereas the measuring outcomes focuses on measuring the accomplishment and effectiveness of actions. A shift to measuring outcomes will see the full benefits of the public good created by the provision of recreation, park and cultural assets within a community are captured. Measuring outcomes can be a challenging proposition as the units of measurement are often subjective in nature. To overcome this challenge, measurement should focus on a small number of key metrics and focus on change internal to the organization or community over time versus comparisons with other organizations or communities.

Internal Engagement

Key Takeaways

- The region has a solid foundation for regional recreation and parks delivery, which is manifested in the TLC Part 9 and many other agreements and initiatives in place.
- There is a desire for enhanced collaboration in the region as well as more clarity and vision around what constitutes regional recreation and parks planning.
- Meaningful and timely engagement of all partners in planning and decision making for regional recreation and parks is a must.
- The recreation and parks department structures and hierarchy within each municipality is not uniform across the three municipalities. This has impacted the ability to form and strengthen relationships.
- Recreation and parks initiatives can be the subject of politics across the Councils. This can hinder regional implementation.
- Interpersonal trust and informal relationships are key to successfully navigating inter-organizational barriers to regional implementation.
- Reciprocity is important for regional implementation. For some, this may include a focus on equitable contributions, shifting away from expectations of equality.
- The region currently collaborates, either informally or formally, on items such as fee setting, allocations (for ice) and marketing and promotions.
- There is less collaboration related to community group support (capacity building) and the provision of direct programming.
- More specific to the TLC Part 9:
 - the current governance structure is seen as an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC;
 - the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality;
 - a large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC organization;
 - although not unanimous, the current model in which municipalities share budget requirements for the TLC on a population basis is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities; and
 - all but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded roles for the TLC Part 9 Corporation as the municipalities identify future

This section outlines the results from the engagement process that occurred in support of the development of the Recreation Strategy. The engagement process included two components; first a discussion with subject matter experts from each of the three municipalities, and secondly a survey was fielded to key stakeholders in the TLC Part 9 corporation.

Tri-Municipal Subject Matter Expert Engagement

A discussion was convened with the subject matter experts (SMEs) from each of the three municipal partners on November 16, 2020. Over the course of ninety minutes the SMEs covered a variety of topics, first providing information about their municipality's approach and / or perspective and secondly discussing potential regional approaches. The conversations with representatives from each individual municipality separate from one another. The intent was to provide a confidential session during which participants could speak unencumbered and provide frank answers to questions posed. Participants were reassured of their anonymity and were instructed that their comments would be confidential but that a synopsis of all conversations and sessions would be developed and shared.

The following synopsis presents some of the information pertinent to the individual municipalities and considerations for a regional approach. The focussed intent is not to individually identify the practices of the separate municipalities but rather to present the array of thinking and practices within the region and then consider shared approaches (if and where pertinent)⁴².

Overall Recreation Assessment

The discussion began with a broad topic asking participants to assessment the current provision of recreation in the region. A traditional SWOT / SWOC framework was employed.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is general alignment amongst the three municipalities as it relates to fees and staff wages (e.g. lifeguards) • Good communication between the three municipalities particularly around programs, programming schedules and fees • The three municipalities have a good track record of working together – from planning initiatives through to the hosting of provincial games • Regionally the provision of recreation facilities, amenities, and programming is comprehensive 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tri-municipal region is not an island and there are other municipalities looking to partnerships as well • The partners are not as strong implementing things regionally compared with planning regionally
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater alignment for recreation delivery • A more regional approach to delivery is possible 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats / Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long term impacts of service delivery that have originated from the pandemic response • Participation in recreation is changing. It is unknown if this is long term and how that may impact delivery

⁴² It is important to note that the information presented is a synopsis of the discussion only.

- It is important to consider issues from the perspective of the individual municipality. Considering issues more broadly from a regional perspective is challenging.

Community Group Supports

The SMEs discussed supports offered to community groups. The recreation services delivery system includes community organizations; from a programming perspective, community organizations have a significant role in service delivery. Municipalities offer different types and amounts of support to community organizations. This can include grant programs as well as in-kind supports, and even facility access.

There are some differences in the supports offered by the municipalities. In one instance there is a staff person who spends a significant amount of time building capacity in groups and organizations. This community development approach is not solely a recreation function – it may be included in other areas of the municipality. The availability of grants does differ between the three partners as well. While one municipality does not have a grant program in place, another has a significant granting program that addresses programs and events as well as infrastructure. One municipality offers an “incubation” grant with the intent to help a group become established. Assistance with volunteer recruitment and challenges is available as well, often through Family and Community Support Services.

Regionally, taking a community development approach makes some sense. Building capacity within the community organizations helps with their sustainability and reduces the direct reliance on the municipality. Some of the community groups have taken a regional approach unto themselves which has made it simpler from the municipality’s perspective – only one group to deal with rather than multiple. If the groups themselves are seeing the advantages of this regional approach, then perhaps other groups can see the benefits. Grant programs was considered as something that would not be regional in nature most likely.

Cost Recovery & Fee Setting

Cost recovery rates refers to the proportion of costs associated with delivering a service that is recouped from user fees and booking revenue. There is a relation to fee setting as higher fees may help increase recovery rates if utilization does not decline as rates rise. The SMEs discussed these issues interchangeably. As it relates to cost recovery there was the acknowledgement that there needs to be a clear understanding of cost – this is an exercise that can be difficult. One municipality spoke of setting cost recovery targets that, when not met, were lowered. As such they became arbitrary; they assume efficiencies are in place for service delivery as well. As well this type of approach does not necessarily align with the public good that comes from providing the service.

As it relates to fee setting, a standardized type of approach is to consider comparators. A scan is conducted of the fees in the marketplace to ensure the fees being charged are “in balance”. Historic measures for fees also impact current fees. Fee policies do exist as do cost recovery, but they may not be current.

With an examination of the marketplace, there is an informal regional approach to fee setting. It was felt that comparable facilities need to exist across the municipalities to really be able to set fees regionally. For some residents of the region, they may look logically outside the region for recreation opportunities (e.g. they may live closer to Drayton Valley than Spruce Grove). With thoughts to offer services comparable to the marketplace this would mean consideration of fees charged in places outside the tri-municipal area is needed.

Facility Allocations & Scheduling

Allocations and scheduling relate to the process and principles that pertain to providing facility space to groups. Often facility allocation is based on historical practices meaning that if an organization has a certain proportion of time then most likely that proportion or something similar will be in place for subsequent years. With spaces nearing capacity there is little room to move. Newer groups have a difficult time getting a foothold.

Within the municipalities there have been discussion about the normal practice of giving preference to youth – it is seen as good to examine all aspects of the allocation process. Also providing significant blocks of time to groups because of their history would benefit from discussion or examination. Is there a relationship between proportion of time booked at a facility and proportion of municipal revenue? With the pressure to provide space, the changing demands from the community, and the cost to provide space a fresh look at providing space within existing facilities is needed. Those providing ice facilities are examining the issues that come from black ice – the situation in which ice is booked by a group, is paid for, but may not be used. While the municipality still will receive the revenue, there are groups who would like to use the unused time but cannot get access to it.

There are efforts in place to examine a regional approach to space allocation. Progress was being achieved but was slowed as the pandemic took hold as the focus on municipal staff was elsewhere. Continuing to discuss and explore the regional approach to allocation is of interest to the partners.

Marketing & Promotions

Each municipality would like to see its residents participating fully in the recreation opportunities available to them. In order for this to happen however, the residents need to be aware of those opportunities. The SMEs discussed the role they play in marketing these opportunities and promoting the value in participation.

The corporate structure of the municipality itself plays a role in how marketing and promotions occurs. There can be a corporate communication role which may have a different mandate than if communications were embedded directly with recreation.

There is a regional Tri Municipal Leisure Guide in which the three regional partners promote recreation opportunities. There is a sense however that there is some room for improvement in this area. Each of the municipalities does have some of its own unique mechanisms for marketing. There is an understanding that having a more centralized or single source of information can be beneficial to residents.

Regional vs. Local

Finally, the SMEs were asked how a facility or amenity can be considered a regional asset or a local asset. The Indoor Regional Facility Strategy includes a facility classification that works and that should be carried forward. While this is in the previous Strategy, there needs to be formal agreement from all municipalities to follow that classification system.

In terms of prioritizing competing facility projects, it is important to have data to examine, including community input. It is important to properly gather community input. The community needs to weigh what the choices actually are. Before raising expectations within the community, the three municipalities in the region need to hold conversations to clearly understand what contributions, if any, each will bring to the table. It is important to clearly understand the positions of the three partners as projects are being considered.

TLC Part 9 Corporation Stakeholder Survey

Part of the scope of the Recreation Strategy is to make “Recommendations on the continued or expanded role for Tri-Municipal Part 9 company”. In order to do so, it is necessary to understand the opinions of key stakeholders affiliated with the Part 9 in the Tri-Municipal region. As such, a survey of key stakeholders in the TLC Part 9 corporation was fielded inviting members of the Tri Municipal Project Committee, TLC Public Board members, the Chief Administrative Officers of each of the three municipalities, and elected Council Members who sit on the TLC Board. In total responses were collected from fifteen participants between November 12 and 19:

- Municipal CAOs – 2;
- Public Board Members – 5;
- Elected Council Members sitting on the TLC Board – 2; and
- Tri Municipal Project Committee members – 6.

Responses by municipality were:

- Parkland County – 6;
- Spruce Grove – 3; and
- Stony Plain – 6.

Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with 13 statements addressing the following subjects:

- The extent to which the current model enables effective governance of the TLC and separates governance decision making from its shareholder organizations (the three municipalities);
- The ability of the arm’s length body to provide fair and balanced services to all municipalities;
- The extent to which separation of the TLC’s specific recreation activities from the broader recreation roles of the municipalities impacts the TLC or the municipalities;
- General support by this group of stakeholders for the current model;
- The extent to which use of the TLC has a financial impact on the municipalities; and

- The extent to which the TLC's role is effective for its current scope or should be reconsidered in some way.

While every subject generated both positive and negative responses, the overall majority of responses indicated that, as a group, the stakeholders felt:

- The current model with nine board members consisting of three elected officials and six appointed public members, providing a balance of three representatives from each municipality, overall is an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC.
- While there are concerns by a small number of stakeholders, overall, the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality.
- There may be some operational-level opportunities for improved coordination of TLC recreation functions with the broader recreational functions of the three municipalities, but from a structural and governance perspective the current model is effective.
- A large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC organization.
- Although not unanimous, the current model in which municipalities share budget requirements for the TLC on a population basis is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities.
- All but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded roles for the TLC Part 9 Corporation as the municipalities identify future tri-municipal collaboration opportunities.

None of the response areas resulted in unanimous agreement by all participating stakeholders but virtually all demonstrated a clear majority position for each set of responses. The responses were evaluated to discern any patterns of dissent by a municipality. It was determined that minority dissenting positions across the survey came from a mixture of all three municipalities – no one municipality's stakeholder representatives grouped together in objection to any particular issue.

While the results cannot be considered statistically significant indicators of any particular position or issue, the consistency of responses gives confidence that most stakeholders are comfortable with the current Part 9 governance model, and there are no specific governance issues that need to be investigated in more detail at this time. For the purposes of this study, this survey provides a basis to work with the TLC Part 9 Corporation model in its current form when exploring potential future uses. Refer to the appendix for the survey responses⁴³.

⁴³ The survey responses are presented aggregate fashion to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Recreation and Parks Service Delivery in Tri-Municipal Region

Key Takeaways

- Municipal partners use various delivery methods to provide recreation services to residents.
- A high degree of potential exists to expand regional service delivery in several areas including, but not limited to, recreation planning, fitness centre and arena operations, and wellness/fitness programming.
- As a region, municipal government spends an average of 14.5% of overall expenses on community services (11.7% for Parkland County, 10.8% for Spruce Grove and 28.1% for Stony Plain).
- As a region, municipal government spends an average \$359.67 per person on community services (\$305.76 per person for Parkland County, \$265.48 per person for Spruce Grove and \$648.99 per person for Stony Plain).
- There is a variety of cost sharing agreements in place between Parkland County and both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The basis for these agreements includes observed utilization.
- The Tri-Leisure Centre Part 9 Corporation is a municipal partnership between the three municipalities that owns and operates the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and operates the Stony Plain outdoor pool and the Spruce Grove outdoor rink. Each partner has a single share in the Corporation. Any capital and operational deficit requiring subsidy is based on the population of each municipality within the service area.
- There are multiple opportunities in both recreation and parks / environment in which the three municipalities deliver similar services in similar manners. They present good opportunities for regional provision.

This section outlines how each municipality in the Tri-Municipal Region provides recreation and parks services, how much they spend on those services, and how they currently interact in doing so.

As part of the planning process, Tantus, the Integration Consultant for the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan, conducted Service Strategy Sessions with representatives from the three municipalities in August 2020 to discuss their current service delivery approaches and strategize to identify potential areas where they could enhance collaboration. These discussions took place with subject matter experts in recreation and a separate one for parks.

The following charts summarize the service delivery approaches of the three municipalities. As it refers to recreation services, the chart includes 16 specific service areas and indicates where potential for enhanced collaboration exist. Relating to parks the table presents 15 specific service areas. This analysis also highlights where the recreation delivery systems for each municipality are different as the areas indicated as having “regional collaboration potential” are those that are delivered (in some cases in similar ways) across all three municipalities. In those instances, in which each municipality delivers a service in a similar manner and to a similar degree, the table identifies that there is regional collaboration potential. This is not to suggest that potential does not exist with the other services, rather it suggests that regional collaboration in those areas may require further attention.

The information presented in the chart below is a summary of the Tantus led Service Strategy Session, and supplemented with information gleaned from internal engagement conducted with Subject Matter

Experts from the municipalities. For more information, please refer to the Recreation Service Delivery Strategy under separate cover.

RECREATION SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration - High Potential
Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes
Aquatics Operations	The management, cleaning, minor maintenance, on site management and direct programming for pool facilities. Includes programming for all ages, drop-in programming, event/tournament hosting, etc.	No
Recreation Planning	Long-term recreation planning work, including facility planning, community needs assessment and regional planning initiatives. Includes providing input into other departmental plans, policies and initiatives with recreation impacts.	Yes
Community Capacity Building and Engagement	Planning, management and administration of recreational and sport grant programs, including funding program development, researching opportunities, promoting, assisting applicants, approving grants and reviewing grant applications. Provide ongoing support, capacity building programming, consulting and education for NFP partners to build community capacity.	Yes
Child Minding Services	Operate and manage any child minding services available at recreation facilities.	Yes
Fitness Centre Operations	Operate any fitness centre facilities for drop-in and membership-based public use available at recreation facilities.	Yes
Arena Operations	Operate arena facilities including ice rentals, local sport association engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, ice surface installation and maintenance, concession management, allocations, etc.	Yes
Curling Facility Operations		No

RECREATION SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration - High Potential
	Operate curling facilities including rentals, local club engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, ice surface installation and maintenance, concession management, etc.	
Indoor Sports Field Operations	Operate any indoor sporting facilities (i.e. indoor soccer, gymnasium, racquet courts, etc.) including rentals, local sport association engagement, equipment rentals, drop-in programming, basic maintenance, etc.	No
Private Meeting / Event Rentals	The management of the meeting rooms and rental spaces in municipal recreation facilities. Includes promotion, planning, rental process, room set ups and teardown, A/V rentals and support, catering and other event related services.	No
Outdoor Sports Field Operations	The management, cleaning, minor maintenance, mowing, surface maintenance, ice maintenance, rentals/bookings/logistics, monitoring, on site administration and programming at outdoor sports fields, specialty parks, playgrounds, outdoor facilities (playgrounds, ball diamonds, specialty parks, spray parks/decks, tennis courts, basketball courts, pickle ball courts, sand volleyball courts, skateboard park, bike parks, off-leash areas, etc.	No
Golf Course Operations	Includes the management and maintenance of community golf courses, including promotions and marketing, membership management, onsite food and liquor sales, rentals and events, pro shop inventory and sales, course maintenance, event management, staff management, etc.	No
Wellness / Fitness Programs	Planning and delivery of a range of wellness/fitness programs using community facilities, including programs for a range of participant ages and abilities. Includes drop-in and registered programs. Includes management and sourcing of needed equipment, as well as trainer contracted services.	Yes
Library Management	Build relationships and support Library planning and collaboration. Maintain funding agreements for libraries.	No
Major Multi-Use Recreation Centre Operations	Operations, management and programming of a major, multi-use recreations centre (typically over 5 uses), with potential regional draw and tourism attraction.	No
Summer Camp Programs	Specialized programming to provide affordable day camps with various themes throughout the summer	No

PARKS / ENVIRONMENT SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration - High Potential
Environment: Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes
Environmental Planning Review and Support	Plan, consult, advocate and support all municipal decisions related to long-term environmental planning, including conservation, sustainability, land-use, carbon reduction, and waste management considerations. Includes supporting long-term planning, policy and program development, etc. with internal and external stakeholders.	No
Environmental Program Development and Implementation	The development and oversight of specific environmental programs and policies to support the achievement of long-term environmental plans. Includes working with internal and external stakeholders to develop programs.	No
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment	Develop and administer environmental monitoring program including a range of sampling programs for air, water, soil and biodiversity inspections. Includes maintaining monitoring results to support environmental measurement program	No
Naturalized Areas Management	Overseeing the planning, policy development and administering of strategic naturalization processes for municipal-owned lands.	No
Public Outreach & Education for Sustainability Programs	Plans and delivers public education programs for environmental sustainability for private residents and businesses. Includes communication and promotion of municipal environmental programs and achievements.	Yes
Parks Maintenance	Plans, manages and delivers mowing, cleaning and maintenance of open park spaces. Includes mowing program and maintenance of park features (non-sport/playground related). May include school playgrounds under agreements with school boards.	Yes
Cemetery Operations	Plans, manages and delivers all Cemetery planning, operations and maintenance. Maintenance of grounds includes landscaping, mowing and repairs. Administration includes conducting plot sales, maintaining burial records, marking plots for headstones and urns, accommodating special requests, scheduling, maintaining cemetery system, etc.	Yes

PARKS / ENVIRONMENT SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration - High Potential
Event Support Services	Review special event permits and provide support including delivering and picking up signage, barricades, benches and waste receptacles.	No
Forestry & Horticulture	Plans, develops standards, and delivers all forestry and horticultural programs to maintain the municipality's trees and plants. Forestry includes planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs as well as addressing potential safety concerns for tree removal and stump treatment/removal. Horticulture services maintains and develops all plant material (flower beds and planters, as well as open planted areas) at facilities, roadways, parks, etc. Includes reviewing landscaping requirements for municipal acceptance of new development.	Yes
Pest Control	Plans and administers all pest control processes including chemical (pesticide, herbicide) and non-chemical (trapping, physical removal, etc.) methods in accordance with environmental requirements and internal policy.	No
Mowing Operations	Plans, manages and delivers the overall mowing, line trimming, weed control, aeration, and fertilization program for the community's open turf spaces. Includes boulevards, facility ground, etc. Excludes park spaces and cemeteries (captures elsewhere).	No
Trail Maintenance	Manage and deliver planned and emergent trail maintenance, cleaning and operations. Includes surface maintenance, material clearing, cleaning, etc. Also includes supporting any new construction of trails in the community.	Yes
Litter and Garbage Control	Manage and deliver regular garbage and litter collection program from municipal facilities. Includes regular waste bin collection, dog park waste/bags, collecting litter, or illegal dumping.	No
Parks: Administration, corporate initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	Yes

Agricultural Services does provide some services in Parkland County that relates to parks and recreation provision in the region. Those specific services that are most closely related are presented in the following table. Because neither Stony Plain nor Spruce Grove have Agricultural Services the table does not show high potential for regional collaboration for any of the services. The potential for regional collaboration may exist however in conjunction with some of the parks and recreation services delivered by the two urban centres.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES		
Service	Description	Regional Collaboration - High Potential
Agricultural: Administration, Corporate Initiatives, leadership	Department level participation in management, leadership, and corporate initiative participation including budget work, meetings, committee participation, management/council requests, etc.	No
Agriculture Development and Strategic Planning	Development and management of long-term agriculture planning, continue to relevant land use planning, and contribution to other departmental plans, policies and programs relevant to rural life. Includes managing referrals, engagement and information requests with the provincial government and other agencies.	No
Rural Outreach and Support	Engaging with rural residents, managing referrals, requests and providing agricultural advisory and education services. Includes providing recommendations to producers for crop production, pasture and range management, forage production and livestock through workshops, field days, site visits, research, etc. Assist landowners and businesses with conservation advice, development and easements. Promotion of rural communities, businesses and organizations. Manages rural contact/satellite offices. Oversee grant funding programs, and support for Ag Societies.	No
Vegetation Control	Administer roadside mowing program, no spray program and vegetation management program to ensure compliance with Weed Act on private and public land.	No
Pest Control	Enforcement of the Agricultural Pest Act in both urban and rural settings, including inspections and surveying for designated pests. Provide resources, information and education to concerned residents. Distribute substances to control predators such as coyotes, gophers and ground squirrels.	No
Weed Inspection and Enforcement	Enforce the Weed Control Act, inspect private and public properties and respond to complaints. Includes public outreach and education on weed control. Also includes all legislated reporting and record retention.	No

Staff dedicated to recreation and parks amenities and services vary significantly between the municipalities, which is reflective of the level of services offered and the population base. The follow chart summarizes the information gathered by Tantus and presented within the overall Regional Plan Current State Report.

Service Area	Service Description	City of Spruce Grove Operational Notes	Town of Stony Plain Operational Notes	Parkland County Operational Notes
Parks & Open Spaces Services	Includes overall maintenance and management of parks, and open spaces. Includes regular park and trail maintenance, cemetery operations, event support, forestry and horticulture, pest control, mowing program, and litter and garbage control.	25.83 FTE's Internal resources for horticulture and arborist services Well defined service levels for parks and open spaces maintenance. Parks and Open Spaces team in Public Works maintains outdoor sports fields and equipment.	5 FTE's – Parks team (Operations) 2 FTE's – Horticulture team All planning is conducted by Planning Team Operations and basic maintenance by Parks team in Operations. Cemetery operations are being planned. Specialized Horticulture team including Arborist. Facilities handles playground maintenance.	2 FTE's – Parks (Community Services) Parks, Trail and Cemetery services are provided by Parks team in Community Services Department. Mowing team are under Agricultural Services – focused on trees, environmental reserves and weed mowing.
Recreation Services	Includes all sport, leisure and recreation services offered in the community, includes recreation planning and community capacity building, any aquatics operations, arena operations, fitness centre operations, curling rink operations, golf course operations. Also includes direct programming, facility logistics and library management.	20.5 FTE's (including Director) Teams for Programs, Facility Operations, Community Development and Booking. Heavily focused on granting to external partners to build community recreation capacity. Includes operations of Border Paving Athletic Centre, maintenance of curling rink, Grant Fuhr Arena, Fuhr sports park.	Facility operations and rentals (two community centres) handled by Facilities Team. Golf Course is managed by Golf Operations Team (5 core FTE's, plus operations staff). Community Service Programs Team (4 FTE's including Manager) deliver community events and provide some basic recreation programming. Outdoor pool operations contracted to Tri-Leisure Centre.	2 FTE's (Community Services) Community development with a heavy focus on providing grants and partnerships to community leagues, community organizations and municipal partners to provide services to residents. Pool staff are provided for facility in Entwistle.

Service Area	Service Description	City of Spruce Grove Operational Notes	Town of Stony Plain Operational Notes	Parkland County Operational Notes
Multi-use Recreation Centre Operations	Includes the operations and maintenance of premier recreation facilities accommodating a wide range of recreation, wellness, sport, and cultural uses for the community.	Tri-Leisure Centre is operated through an independent corporate entity. It offers aquatics programming for the sub-region.	Tri-Leisure Centre is operated through an independent corporate entity. It offers aquatics programming for the sub-region.	Tri-Leisure Centre is operated through an independent corporate entity. It offers aquatics programming for the sub-region.
Agricultural Services	Includes County specific agriculture development and planning, weed and pest control, rentals, permit issuance and education and capacity building for rural residents.	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>Provided by Agriculture Services team of 8 FTEs</p> <p>Has teams for Community Sustainability for programming and outreach. Operations for mowing and spraying and Agronomic for weed and plant management.</p>

Current Spending on Recreation Services

This financial analysis involved the review of the financial position of each of the individual municipalities related to recreation provision. This review included an examination of the contribution of recreation related revenue to the municipalities' income as well as the costs of providing recreation services. A contribution on a per capita basis is presented on an individual basis and from a regional perspective. This examination utilizes financial statements from each of the municipalities; there has been no further examination of the elements included in each line item, rather the information has been taken as presented. Information provided by the municipalities to Alberta Finance will be examined as well. The Alberta Finance information will allow some comparisons with other municipalities and regions.

It should be noted that the financial realities of all municipalities are in flux as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. While there are always circumstances that can have a material impact upon the financial position of a municipality (including the move away from coal and coal generated power), the impacts from the pandemic bring significant uncertainty into the financial positions of the Tri-Municipal partners. As is frequently the case, this financial examination is undertaken using historical data that does not reflect the current realities. There are still some learnings to be gained from this analysis and that is the relative positions and situations of the individual municipalities compared with one another and the comparisons of the Tri-Municipal Region to others.

Parkland County

Total Expenses \$85,809,594

Community Services⁴⁴ \$10,000,506

Community Services' expenses totalled \$10,000,506 which is 11.7% of the annual expenses. In 2017 the department's expenses were higher (\$10,722,306) but the proportion of the overall expenses was 12.3%. Utilizing population figures from the Alberta Government's Alberta Regional Dashboard⁴⁵ (regionaldashboard.alberta.ca) the per capita cost of providing community services in 2018 and 2017 is noted in the following table.

	2018	2017
Community Services Expenditure	\$10,000,506	\$10,722,306
Alberta Dashboard population	32,707	32,637
Per capita spend⁴⁶	\$305.76	\$328.53

Parkland County spent over \$300 per capita in 2018 and 2017 on Community Services with a reduction shown in 2018 from 2017.

The 2018 and 2017 Community Services income statements are presented below. A couple of items of note:

- User fees and sales comprise 20.5% of department revenue in 2018 and 14.9% in 2017
- Government transfers comprise 14.4% of department revenue in 2018 and 31.4% in 2017
- Direct staff costs (salaries, wages & benefits) make up 39.9% of department expenses in 2018 and 36.6% in 2017
- Transfers to governments, agencies and organizations make up 24.1% of expenses in 2018 and 29.3% in 2017

⁴⁴ Community services provides recreational and cultural services, activities which promote health and well being of its citizens, and activities related to parks and cemetery maintenance and operation. (2018 Year End Consolidated Financial Statements, Parkland County)

⁴⁵ The Regional Dashboard includes information provided to the Alberta Government from each of the individual municipalities. While there is some standardization, how individual municipalities treat individual revenues and expenses can vary. As such the comparison may not be exactly an "apples to apples" comparison but may be as close as can be achieved. Additionally, the most "current" information presented from the dashboard is over one year old.

⁴⁶ The per capita expenditure does not align with the figures calculated in the separate Service Strategy primarily due to the fact that the costs in the Service Strategy were "fully loaded" and included costs attributed to the service from other areas of the municipality. The per capita costs here simply use the figures as reported in the statements from each municipality.

Community Services	2018	2017
Revenue		
Taxation	\$5,505,751	\$6,518,198
User Fees and Sales	\$2,060,760	\$2,073,232
Investment Income	\$198,220	\$124,192
Government Transfers	\$1,444,849	\$4,373,487
Other Revenue - Operating	\$355,706	\$218,323
Gain on Disposal of Tangible Capital Assets		\$8,375
Develop and Customer Contributions-Capital	\$27,293	\$599,058
Contributed Tangible Capital Assets	\$452,754	
Total Revenue	\$10,045,333	\$13,914,865
Expenses		
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$3,987,334	\$3,923,873
Contracted & General Services	\$1,875,539	\$2,163,570
Materials, Supplies and Utilities	\$819,132	\$920,477
Bank Charges	\$1,575	\$370
Interest on Long Term Debt	\$43,274	\$52,845
Transfers to Governments, Agencies and Organizations	\$2,406,753	\$3,138,178
Purchases from Other Governments		\$,591
Loss on Disposal of Tangible Capital Assets	\$282,519	
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	\$584,380	\$518,402
Total Expenses	\$10,000,506	\$10,722,306
Annual Surplus	\$44,827	\$3,192,559

City of Spruce Grove

Total Expenses (2018) \$92,867,000

Community and Protective Services⁴⁷ \$10,032,000

Community and Protective Services' expenses for areas directly related to recreation represented 10.8% of total City expenses. In 2017, the department's recreation expenses were lower (\$8,884,000) but the proportion of the overall expenses was similar 10.6%. Utilizing population figures from the Alberta Government's Alberta Regional Dashboard (regionaldashboard.alberta.ca) the per capita cost of providing community services in 2018 and 2017 is noted in the following table.

⁴⁷ Community and Protective Services includes the Agrena/ Sports Park, Culture, Family and Community Support Services, Fire, Leisure Centre, Library, Municipal Enforcement and Safe City, Police, Recreation. The figure shown here includes the Agrena / Sports Park, Leisure Centre, Library, and Recreation.

	2018	2017
Community Services Expenditure	\$10,032,000	\$8,884,000
Alberta Dashboard population	37,788	36,661
Per capita spend ⁴⁸	\$265.48	\$242.33

The City of Spruce Grove spent \$265 per capita in 2018 and \$242 in 2017 on recreation services with an increase in 2018 from 2017.

Town of Stony Plain

Total Expenses (2018) \$42,486,212

Recreation and Culture⁴⁹ \$11,932,291

Expenses for Recreation and Culture represent 28.1% of the total Town expenses for 2018. This is up slightly from 27.4% for 2017. Utilizing population figures from the Alberta Government's Alberta Regional Dashboard (regionaldashboard.alberta.ca) the per capita cost of providing community services in 2018 and 2017 is noted in the following table.

	2018	2017
Recreation and Culture Expenditure	\$11,932,291	\$10,688,252
Alberta Dashboard population	18,386	18,068
Per capita spend ⁵⁰	\$648.99	\$591.56

The Town of Stony Plain spent \$649 per capita in 2018 and \$592 in 2017 on recreation and culture services. This represents a 9.7% increase from 2017 to 2018.

⁴⁸ The per capita expenditure does not align with the figures calculated in the separate Service Strategy primarily due to the fact that the costs in the Service Strategy were "fully loaded" and included costs attributed to the service from other areas of the municipality. The per capita costs here simply use the figures as reported in the statements from each municipality.

⁴⁹ Recreation and Culture is comprised of Parks and Recreation, Culture and Cultural Facilities. Parks and Recreation and Culture provide recreational and cultural services and activities which promote the well-being of its citizens. These areas are responsible for the parks, playgrounds, facilities, and green spaces of the Town. This area also acts as a liaison between community groups and the Transalta Tri-Leisure Centre.

⁵⁰ The per capita expenditure does not align with the figures calculated in the separate Service Strategy primarily due to the fact that the costs in the Service Strategy were "fully loaded" and included costs attributed to the service from other areas of the municipality. The per capita costs here simply use the figures as reported in the statements from each municipality.

The 2018 and 2017 Recreation and Culture income statement are presented below. A couple of items of note:

- Sales and User Charges comprise 34.5% of department revenue in 2018 and 30.1% in 2017
- Government transfers comprise 8.1% of department revenue in 2018 and 1.9% in 2017
- Direct staff costs (salaries, wages & benefits) make up 35.8% of department expenses in 2018 and 34.2% in 2017
- Transfers to local boards and organizations make up 2.7% of expenses in 2018 and 6.6% in 2017

Recreation and Culture	2018	2017
Revenue		
Taxation	\$5,135,850	\$6,184,322
Sales and user charges	\$3,449,149	\$3,137,759
All other	\$617,702	\$737,117
Government transfers	\$807,060	\$202,617
Interest		\$150,070
Total Revenue	\$10,009,761	\$10,411,885
Expenses		
Salaries, wages & benefits	\$4,274,682	\$3,659,556
Materials, goods, and contracted and general services	\$4,259,161	\$3,578,383
Utilities	\$415,975	\$392,309
Repairs and maintenance	\$480,077	\$400,209
Transfers to local boards and organizations	\$317,642	\$700,806
Interest in long term debt	\$190,146	\$202,801
Insurance	\$60,067	\$79,548
Amortization	\$1,934,541	\$1,674,640
Total Expenses	\$11,932,291	\$10,688,252
Annual Surplus	(\$1,922,530)	(\$276,367)

Municipal Investment Summary

The following table summarizes the overall spending and spending per capita of the three municipal partners on community services.

	Parkland County	Spruce Grove	Stony Plain	Tri-Municipal Region
Proportion of 2018 Total Expenses ⁵¹	11.7%	10.8%	28.1%	14.5%
Per Capita Cost	\$305.76	\$265.48	\$648.99	\$359.67

⁵¹ Parkland County's figures relate to Community Services, Spruce Grove refer to some items from the total Community and Protective Services costs, and Stony Plain refer to Recreation and Culture.

Cost Sharing Agreements

Several agreements exist between the municipalities of the Tri-Municipal Region related to recreation provision and cost sharing. An overview of these agreements is provided below.

Parkland County & City of Spruce Grove

The Arena

Parkland County and the City of Spruce Grove extended for the year 2020 the Recreation Cost Share Agreement from the 2015-2017 agreement. The agreement provides Parkland County residents the ability to use the Arena within Spruce Grove at no additional costs and in turn the County would contribute to the annual operational cost of the facility. The cost is based on the previous year's net cost of operations. The annual interest payment on any debentures on the facility can be included in operational costs if the capital cost has not already been shared.

The cost share is based on the average Parkland County Use with a maximum amount that Parkland County will pay at \$139,460. The City of Spruce Grove will consult with Parkland County when planning capital expenditures in excess of \$50,000.

Parkland County & Town of Stony Plain

Glenn Hall Arena

Parkland County and the Town of Stony Plain have extended for the year 2021 the Recreation Cost Share Agreement that was struck for January 2015 to December 2017. This agreement applies to the Glenn Hall Arena and identifies a new maximum of \$94,134 (a 5% reduction from the previous agreement).

The Agreement provides for the cost sharing on the maintenance and operation of the facilities. Through this agreement Parkland County ensures its residents can use facilities within Stony Plain at no additional cost to Parkland County residents. However, Parkland County will be recognized on site facility signage, the website and other program literature.

The funding is paid annually in one instalment and is based on the new cost of operations from the previous year. Interest on any debenture for the facility can be included in annual operating expenses in this agreement if the capital cost has not already been shared. The amount of the cost share is based on Parkland Use which is the percentage of Parkland residents using the facility – this does not include programs operated through schools.

The Town of Stony Plain cannot plan capital expenditures in excess of \$50,000 without consulting with the County. The cost share is based on the average Parkland County use from 2012-2014 (38.5%).

Parkland County & Town of Devon

Devon Arena and Devon Pool

Parkland County and the Town of Devon extended for the year 2020 the Recreation Cost Share Agreement from the 2015-2017 agreement. The agreement provides Parkland County residents the

ability to use the arena and pool in Devon at no additional costs and in turn the County would contribute to the annual operational cost of the facilities. The cost is based on the previous year's net cost of operations. The annual interest payment on any debentures on the facility can be included in operational costs, if the capital cost has not already been shared.

The cost share is based on the average Parkland County Use with a maximum amount that Parkland County will pay at \$117,890 for the arena and \$23,572 for the pool. The Town of Devon will consult with Parkland County when planning capital expenditures in excess of \$50,000.

Parkland County & Town of Drayton Valley
Omniplex and Park Valley Pool

Parkland County and the Town of Devon extended for the year 2021 the Recreation Cost Share Agreement from the 2015-2017 agreement. The agreement provides Parkland County residents the ability to use the Omniplex and Park Valley Pool at no additional costs and in turn the County would contribute to the annual operational cost of the facilities. The cost is based on the previous year's net cost of operations. The annual interest payment on any debentures on the facility can be included in operational costs if the capital cost has not already been shared.

The cost share is based on the average Parkland County Use with a maximum amount that Parkland County will pay at \$111,929 for the Omniplex and \$15,027 for the Park Valley Pool. The Town of Drayton Valley will consult with Parkland County when planning capital expenditures in excess of \$50,000.

Parkland County Yellowhead County
Entwistle Community Hub and Pembina Rec-Plex (not finalized)

Parkland County and Yellowhead County have updated their recreation cost sharing agreement to encompass January 1, 2021 through to December 31, 2030. The agreement identifies a catchment area in which its residents are primary beneficiaries. The annual operating costs of the facility are paid in the following manner:

- Entwistle Community Hub – 25% of the operating cost (less the Library portion) will be paid by Yellowhead County.
- Pembina Rec-Plex – 50% of the facility operating costs to be paid by Parkland County.

Each will provide the other with a five year capital plan that will include a statement of need for any improvements. The capital cost sharing requests are submitted annually for review and approval.

Parkland County Major Capital Cost Share Funding Policy

Council Policy C-AD52 Major Capital Cost Share Funding is a policy that establishes protocols and methodology to request funds from Parkland County for Major Capital investments. The policy provides the basis for the governance process for all major capital cost share requests not defined in another contractual relationship.

Capital investments will only be provided when approval milestones are reached and only upon due diligence. Investments must meet certain criteria. This policy refers to projects where the County's contribution exceeds \$250,000. Three stages are identified, each with specific requirements to be met to secure funding. The stages are: Project Initiation; Preliminary Capital Cost Share Project Proposal; and Project Sanctioning.

Tri-Municipal Part 9 Agreement

The 'Tri-Municipality Leisure Facility Corporation' is a Part 9 company (the Company) formed by the municipalities of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County with equal shareholdings of one share each. The Company operates through an operating agreement (called a Memorandum of Agreement) with the three municipalities, originally created in 2001 but most recently updated and executed in 2015.

The scope of the Company's functions centers around the Tri Leisure Center and its immediately surrounding lands, and includes not just recreation and sporting activities in the facility, but also social, cultural, arts, convention, business trade shows, fundraising and plus any other activities events and gatherings as may be appropriate for the facility. The Company not only operates the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre but also the Stony Plain Outdoor Pool and the Spruce Grove outdoor rink.

As a Part 9 corporation, the Company is an independent entity from its municipal shareholders, with its own strategic plan, policies, finances and staffing. It is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors for which, under the Memorandum of Agreement, each municipality appoints one elected member from its Municipal Council and submits names of residents for each the Company selects two from each municipality. Operational subsidies are shared by each partner based on percentage of population within the service area. Article 7 of the Agreement states that the share of any deficit will be based on the population of the Service Area "...as shown on the last year for which a complete census has been carried out by Statistics Canada for all the municipalities prior to the fiscal period in question."

The three municipalities currently have several agreements and commitments for shared services/functions (see below), but only this one Part 9 company.

Inter Municipal Agreements

An intermunicipal agreement, in the most basic form, can simply be a contract for one municipality to perform a function or provide a service to another municipality. Whether in this simple form or more complex, the mechanism is a written contract that spells out the work and financial elements as agreed among the parties.

The three municipalities in this Tri Municipal Regional Planning project have a deep history of contract-based collaboration, as evidenced by the large number of agreements in place – general agreements or understandings or contracts for service.

- Capital Region Parkland Water Services Commission (CRPWSC)
- Meridian Housing Foundation
- Shared Space – Memorandum of Agreement

- Recreation Cost Share Agreement – Term Extension
- Horizon Stage Cost Share Agreement – Term Extension
- Joint Fire Training Facility – Memorandum of Agreement
- Fire Aerial Ladder Truck Agreement – Memorandum of Understanding
- Outdoor Rink Operation – Memorandum of Agreement
- Animal Shelter Service Agreement
- Peace Officer Shared Services – Memorandum of Agreement
- Family and Community Support - Cost Share Agreement
- EMS Building – Memorandum of Understanding
- RCMP Facility – Memorandum of Agreement
- Student Resource Officer – Memorandum of Understanding
- Firefighting Services – Mutual Aid Agreement
- Criminal Analyst – Cost Sharing Agreement
- Tri-Region Transit – Memorandum of Agreement
- Glenn Hall Arena – Cost Sharing agreement
- Visitor Information Center – Memorandum of Agreement
- Tri-Leisure Center Part Nine – Memorandum of Agreement
- Tri-Leisure Center Operation Agreement (Renewal)
- Heritage Agriculture Society Agreement – Memorandum of Agreement
- Pioneer Museum Society – Memorandum of Agreement
- Environmental Sustainability Initiatives and Planning – Memorandum of Understanding

The following were indicated as ‘outstanding’ in the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan Current State Report:

- Storm and Sewer Crossing Agreements
- Accessible Transportation Services Agreement
- Family and Community Support - Cost Share Agreement
- Tri-Region Transit – Commuter Cost Sharing Agreement
- Tri-Region Transit – Operating Agreement
- Visitor Information Center – Memorandum of Agreement
- Visitor Information Center – Memorandum of Agreement
- Heritage Agriculture Society Agreement – Memorandum of Agreement
- Pioneer Museum Society – Memorandum of Agreement
- Regional Ice Allocation Policy Agreement (In Progress)

Market Context

Key Takeaways

- The Tri-Municipal Region population is characterized by the following:
 - Study area population of 71,818 in 2016, with a projected growth of 9% the population is approximately 78,000 today. The regional population could reach 144,444 by 2059.
 - The median age of resident in the study region in 2016 was 43 years in Parkland County, 34 years in City of Spruce Grove, and 38 years in the Town of Stony Plain.
 - Overall residents are fairly well educated with over half obtaining a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.
 - The average household income is within the study region in 2016 was \$126,843.
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling and favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing.
- Residents are well served with a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Within the Tri-Municipal Region there are:
 - 84 indoor recreation amenities
 - 319 outdoor recreation amenities
 - 80 parks
 - 139 kilometres of known trails and pathways
- The total estimated modernized replacement cost for all indoor and outdoor amenities exceeds \$690 million. Using this estimated figure, annual lifecycle contributions can be calculated as follows:
 - Minimum recommended annual contribution (1.7%): \$11.7M
 - Maximum recommended annual contribution (2.5%): \$17.3 M
- Both the City of Spruce Grove (event centre with ice arena) and Town of Stony Plain (multipurpose recreation facility) have recreation related capital projects they are contemplating; Parkland County is opening a new community hub including an outdoor pool in Entwistle (outside the study area)
- Those regional recreation facilities and spaces in which utilization is tracked have capacity; utilization information across the region is not standardized and gaps exist
- There is a variety of programs, events, and opportunities offered in the Region

This section outlines key features of the region's demographic makeup, population growth projections, the values residents have related to recreation and parks activity and provides an overview of the many recreation and parks assets, programs and opportunities currently available to regional residents.

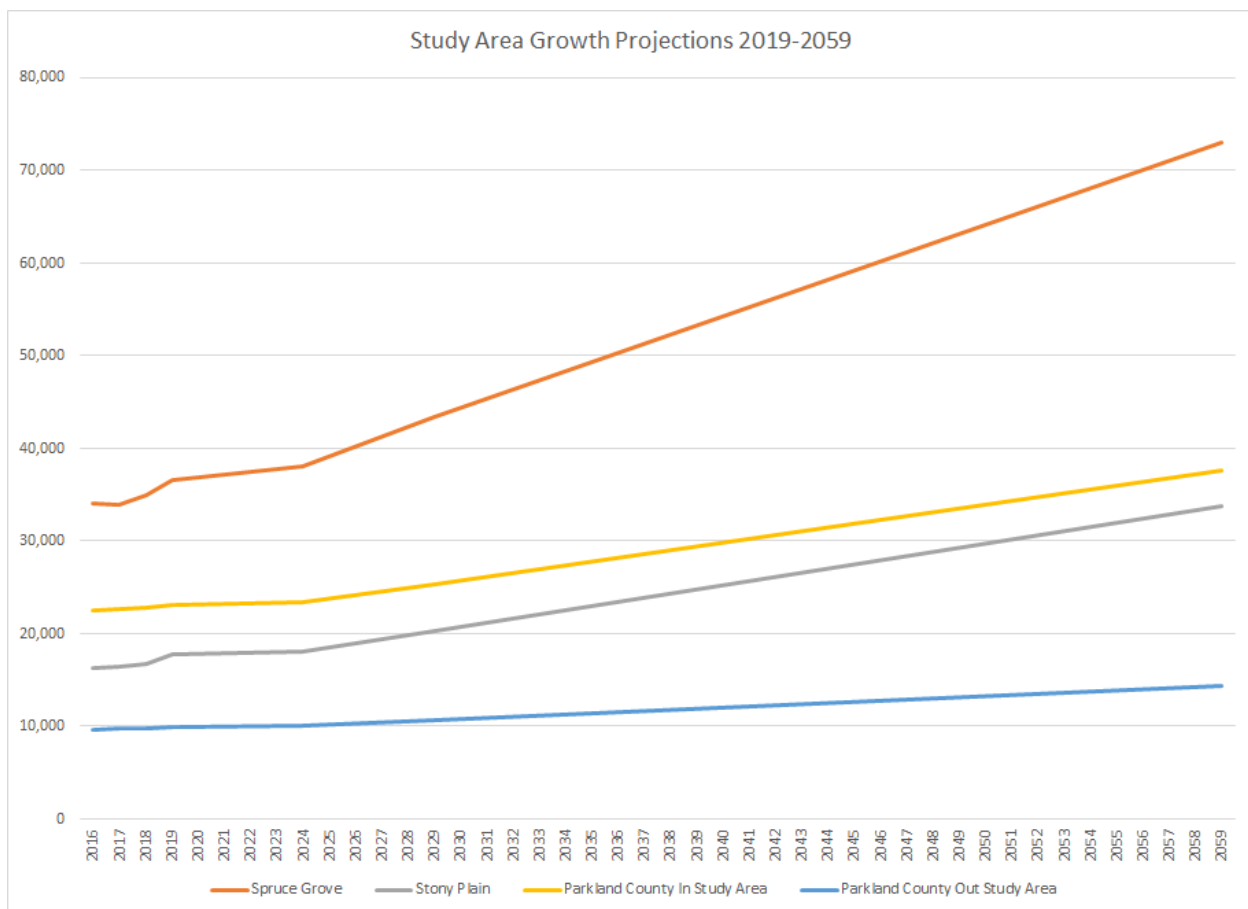
Population and Demographics

Demands on recreation spaces and places are driven by the size, composition and distribution of the region's population. Making good decisions about the future provision of recreation in the region requires a strong understanding of the population and the demographic characteristics of residents today and tomorrow; along with how residents are distributed throughout the region today and how those patterns may change into the future.

Regional Population

The Tri-Municipal region is growing and changing. According to the 2016 Census, the study region was home to 71,818 residents – with the inclusion of all of Parkland County the region is home to nearly 86,000. Recognizing that the population has continued to evolve since the last census in 2016, estimates suggests that the study area population could be around 78,000 residents today – nearly 9% growth since 2016. Recently completed growth projections have indicated that the area population could grow to 89,078 by 2029 and 144,444 by 2059.

How residents are distributed throughout the region today and how these patterns may evolve into the future have significant implications on how recreation and parks amenities and services are consumed. The chart below illustrates the projected growth within the individual municipal study areas. Between 2019 and 2024 it is projected that City of Spruce Grove will experience 4% growth, and Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County (area within the study) similar approximate growth of 1.2%. However, in projecting forward to 2059 it is anticipated that Stony Plain will see period of more significant growth, aligned closely to the growth rates for the City of Spruce Grove.



Residents

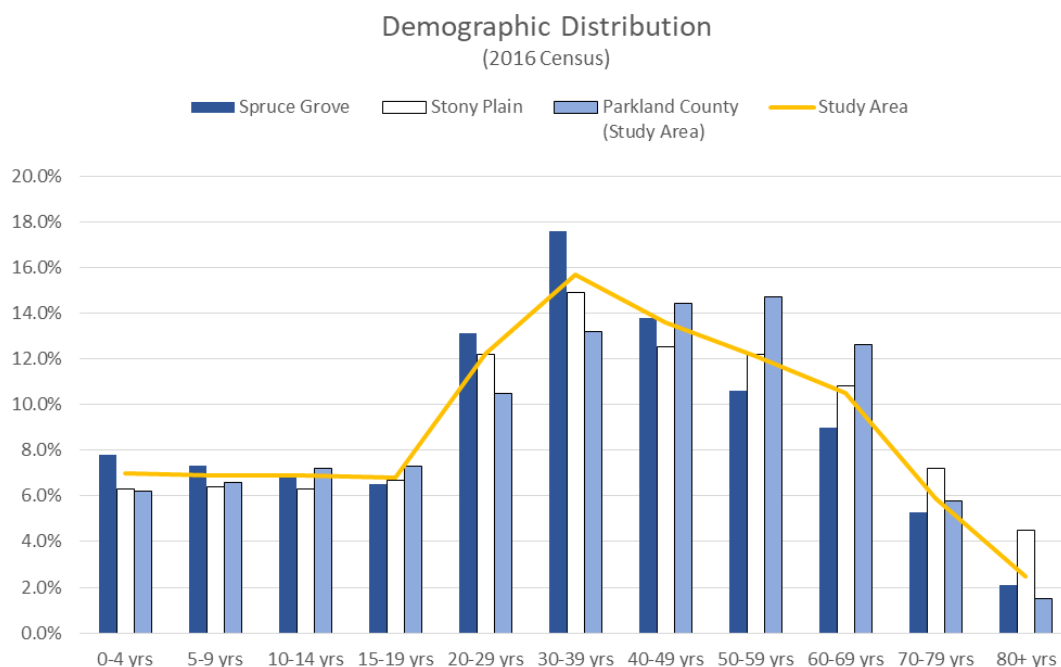
As the composition of the regional population continues to evolve, so too will residents' demands and expectations for recreation and parks amenities and services. Understanding the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the regions residents is essential to deliver the right mix of recreation and parks opportunities in the right locations. Careful planning is critical to ensuring the region's

recreation and parks amenities and services become and remain desirable as well equitably accessible to all residents. As such, this section provides an understanding of the gender, age, education, income, and ethnicity of Tri-Municipal residents. A thorough review of available census and other demographic datasets was undertaken.

Age

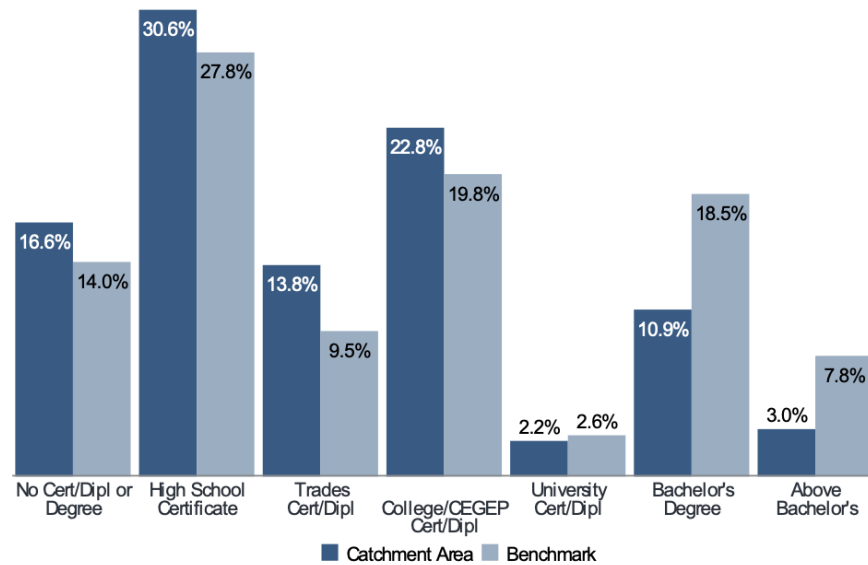
The total study region is characterized by a fairly large youth population with 21% (or 15,164) of the population aged 14 years or younger in the 2016 Census. This population segment is fairly consistent across the three municipalities. Considering the population 20-49 years, Spruce Grove has the largest proportion (44.5%) compared to Stony Plain (39.6%) and Parkland County (38.1%). The median age of resident in 2016 was 43 years in Parkland County, 34 years in City of Spruce Grove, and 38 years in the Town of Stony Plain.

However, the population in general is aging and there are variations within the senior population across the study region. Within the total study area in 2016, the population segment aged 60 years or older is 19%, however, there is a larger segment in Stony Plain where 23% of the population is aged 60 or older. Parkland County (20%) and Spruce Grove (16%) have a smaller proportion of their population 60 years of age and older. Of significance, in Parkland County (within the study area) 29% of its population is aged 40-59 years of age (as of 2016 census) which is more than Spruce Grove (24%) and Stony Plain (25%). It is projected that by 2029, 32% of Parkland County population (within the study area) will aged 60 or older, followed by Town of Stony Plain (27%) and the City of Spruce Grove (19%).



Education & Employment

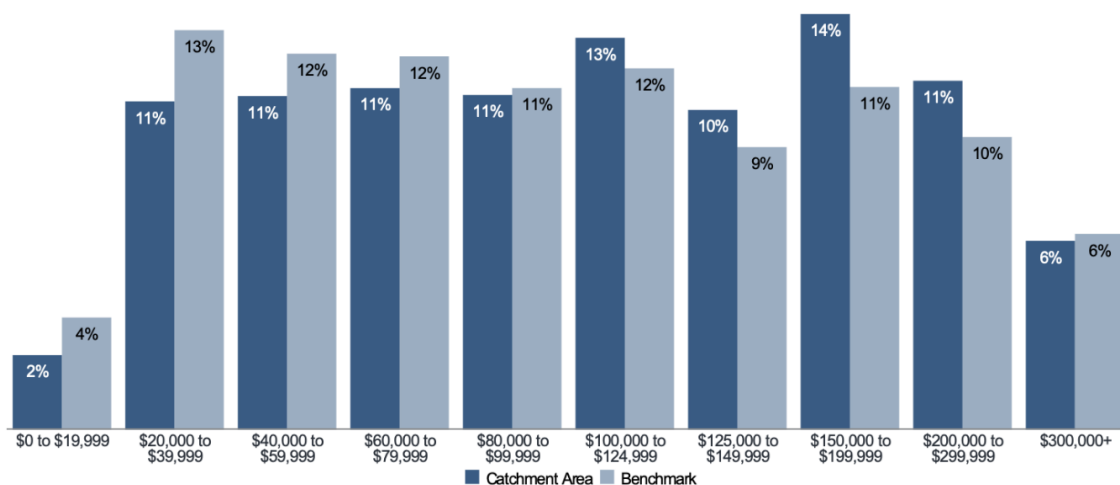
Overall, residents are fairly well educated with over half obtaining a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree – the majority obtaining a trade certificate or college diploma. The following chart illustrates the educational attainment by residents with Tri-Municipal study area, benchmarked against the City of Edmonton.



As of 2016, there was 6% unemployment, and an additional 27% not in the labour market – it is estimated that in 2020 there is approximately 70% participation in the labour market. The top occupations are in trades, sales and service and business and finance.

Income

The average household income is within the study region in 2016 was \$126,843. Within the region 24% of households have an income of less than \$60,000 (per year). The following chart illustrates the household income distribution between the Tri-Municipal study region and Edmonton. Comparatively the region's households have a slightly higher income distribution than households in nearby Edmonton⁵².



*Note: the "Catchment Area" refers to the study region while "Benchmark" refers to Edmonton.

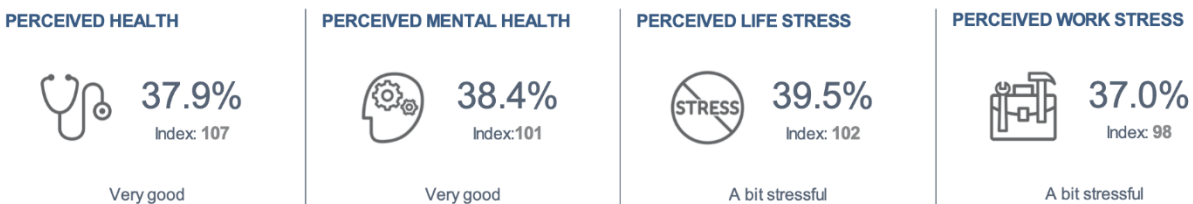
⁵² Edmonton has been used as the benchmark because of its proximity to the tri-municipal region and its scale. It is not uncommon for residents and service providers in the tri-municipal region to consider the supply and demand of recreation services in nearby Edmonton.

Ethnic Diversity

Within the Tri-Municipal study region, according to the 2016 Census 4.75% of the population identified as a visible minority. Based on the projected growth of the region to 2020, in 2020 6.7% of the region's population would identify as a visible minority. Nearly all of the population speaks English at home.

Resident Health & Physical Activity

Generally, residents of the Tri-Municipal study area have a positive perception of their perceived general health with the vast majority rating their perceived health as good, very good or excellent. There are similar responses for perceived mental health, as illustrated below. Knowing the direct correlation between physical and wellness activities and physical and mental health underscores the value of recreation and parks in the region. The regions residents also report a strong level of community belonging.



Overall residents of the Tri-Municipal study area are fairly active with 54% of adult residents reporting that they consider themselves active; however, 21% of adults are considered sedentary. The most common forms of physical activity include using active transportation, participating in sports or fitness program, or engaging in vigorous intensity physical activity.

Leisure Participation Patterns

Resident of the Tri-Municipal region enjoy participation in a variety of activities and leisure pursuits. The most common team sport activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling. The most common leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing. Residents generally engage in home exercise, walking and jogging for the fitness activities.

Recreation Strategy: Appendices

Top Individual Sports



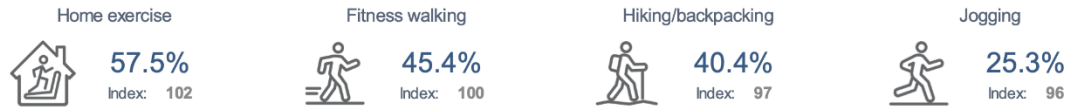
Top Team Sports



Top Activities



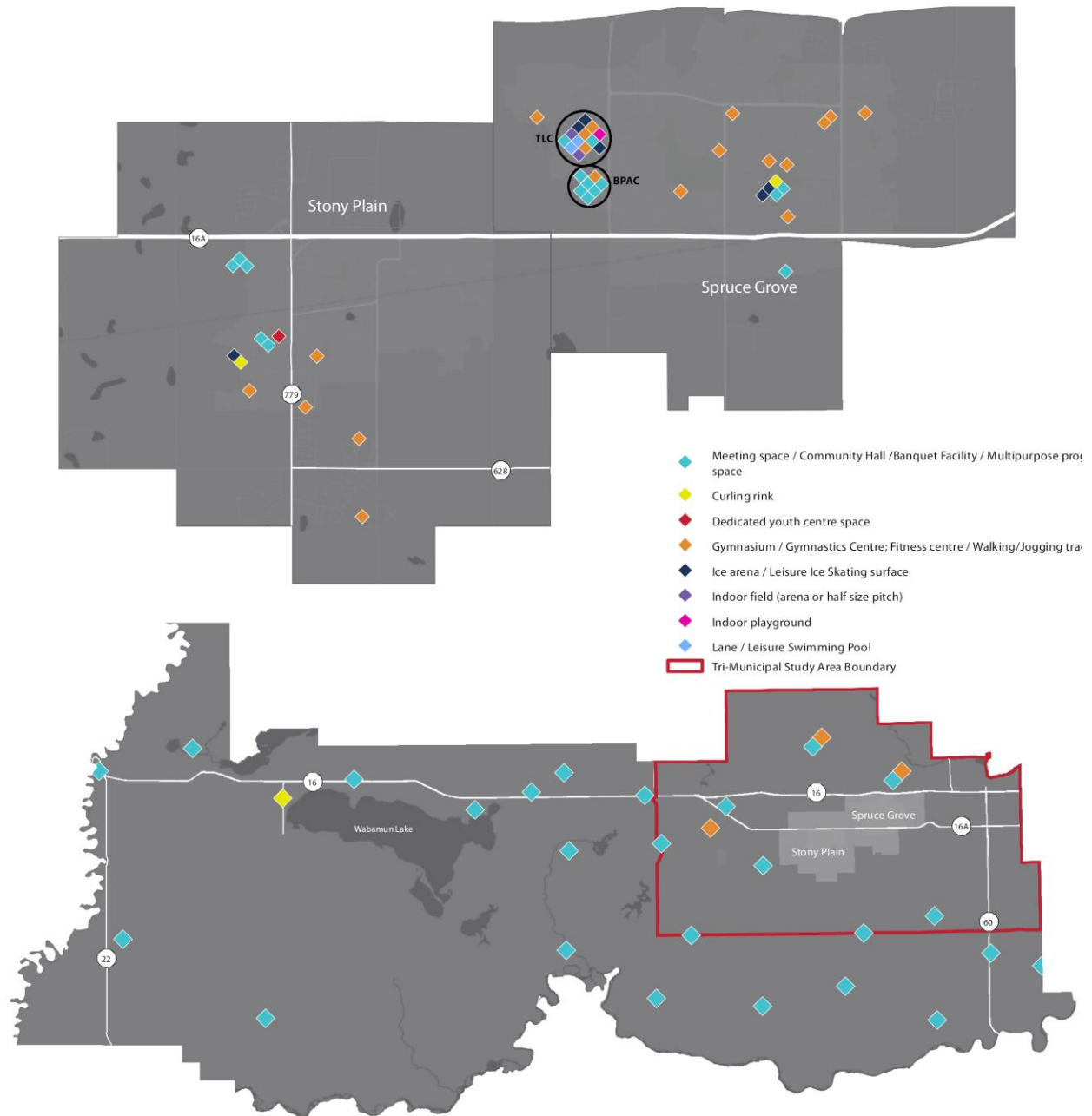
Top Fitness



Recreation and Parks Asset Inventory in Tri-Municipal Region

Indoor Asset Inventory

There are 86 known individual indoor amenities ranging from meeting rooms and community halls to ice arenas and swimming pools. Considering only the study area, there are 63 indoor amenities.

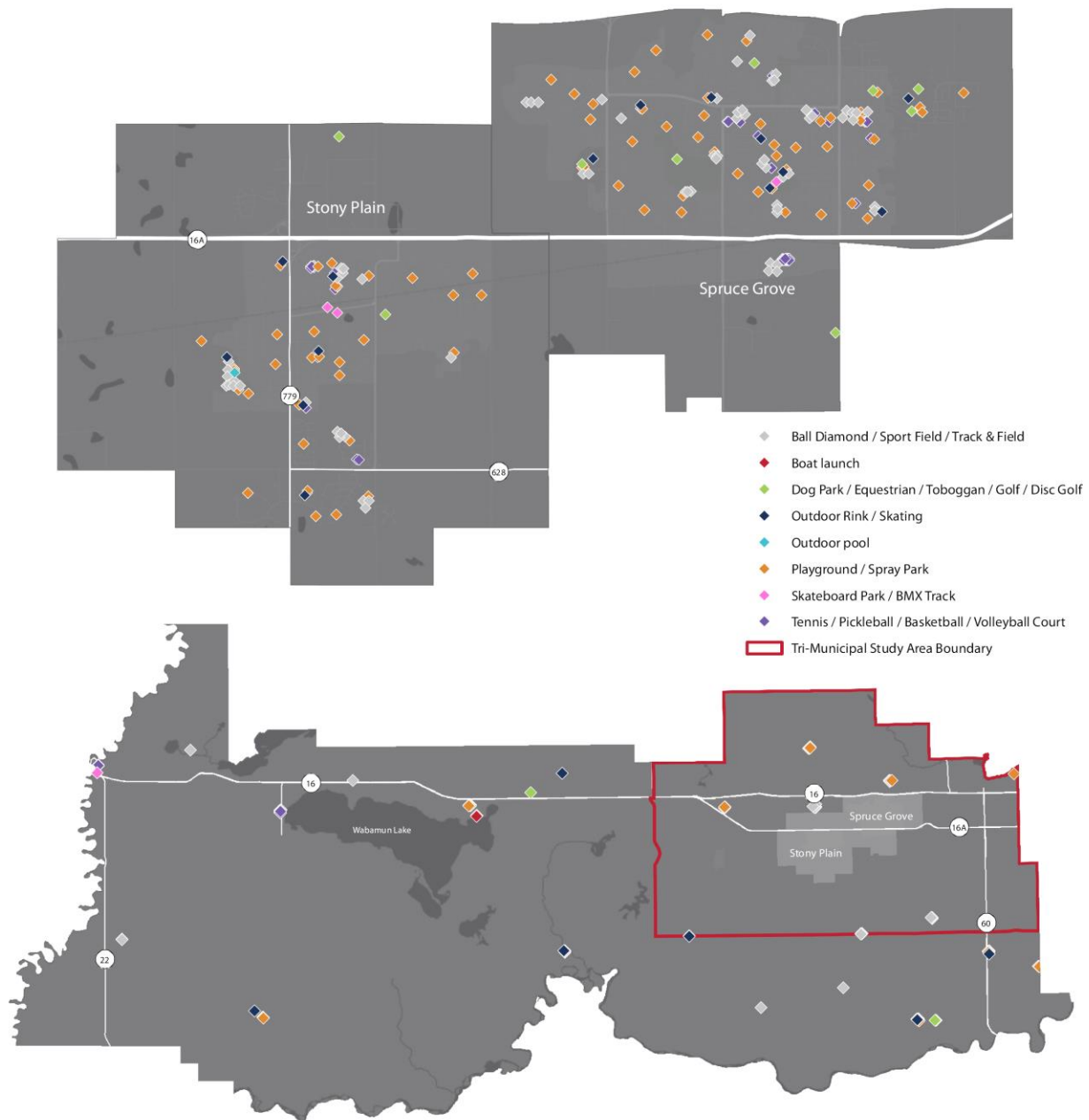


Indoor Amenity Type	Parkland County	Spruce Grove	Stony Plain	Regional Total
Community group office/meeting spaces		7	3	10
Community halls	8	1	2	11
Curling rinks		1	1	2
Dedicated youth centre spaces			1	1
Fitness centres*		1		1
Gymnasiums*	3	11	5	19
Gymnastics centres		1		1
Ice arenas*		4	1	5
Indoor fields (arena or half size pitch)*		2		2
Indoor playgrounds*		1		1
Lane swimming pools*		1		1
Leisure ice skating surfaces*		1		1
Leisure swimming pools*		1		1
Multipurpose program spaces (e.g. yoga, aerobics)*		2		2
Social/banquet facilities		1	3	4
Walking/jogging tracks*		1		1
TOTALS	11	36	16	63

*TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre has these amenities which are shown as being in Spruce Grove due to location of facility.

Outdoor Asset Inventory

There are over 300 individual outdoor amenities ranging from playgrounds and spray parks, to sports fields and outdoor pools. Considering only the study area there are 250+ amenities.



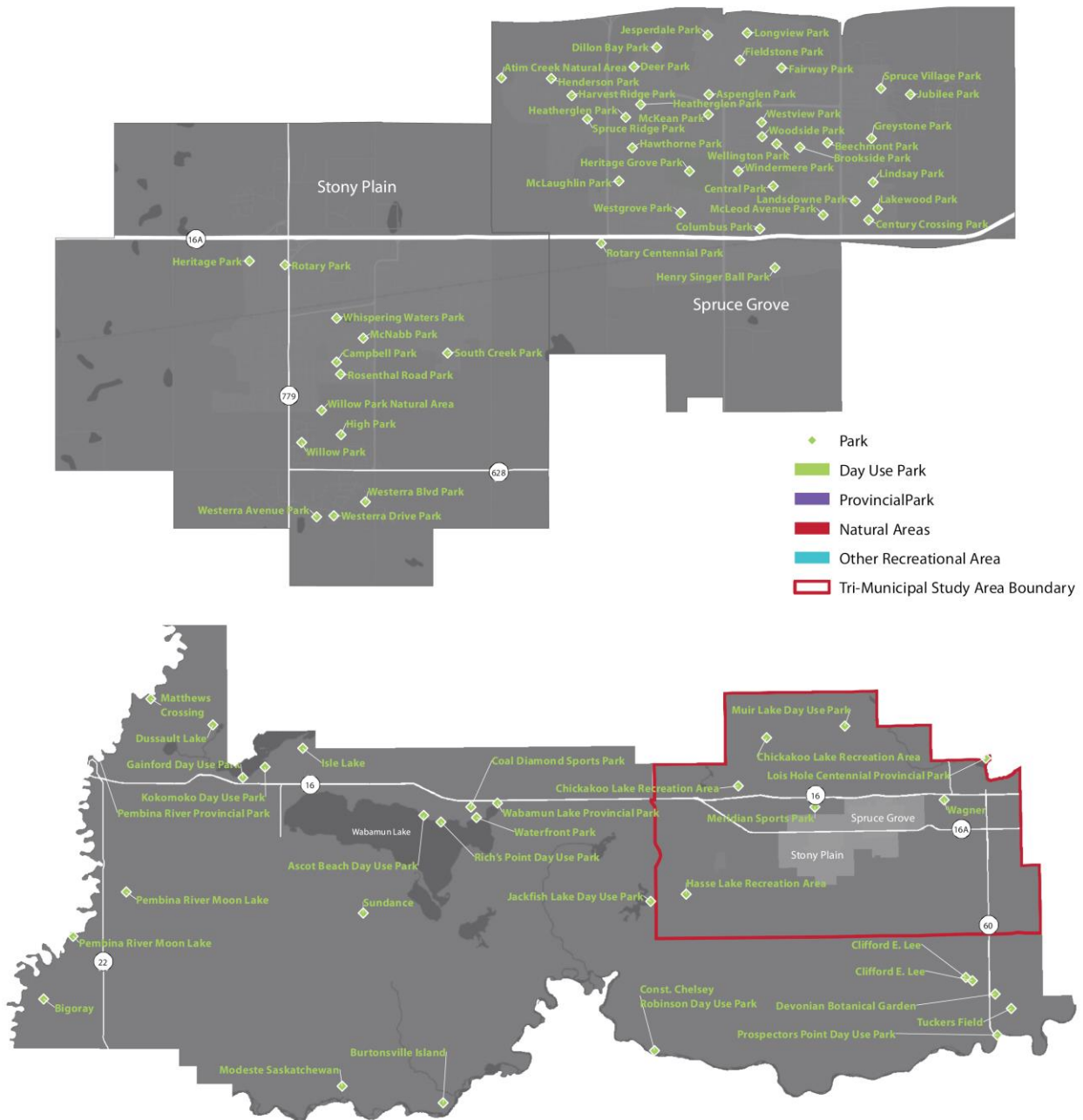
Outdoor Amenity Type	Parkland County	Spruce Grove	Stony Plain	Regional Total
Agricultural areas (i.e. equestrian areas)	2		1	3
Artificial turf fields*		2		2
Baseball Diamonds	5	7	1	13
Basketball courts - full sized		7	4	11
Basketball courts - half / mod		2	2	4
Beach volleyball courts		3	1	4
BMX tracks			1	1
Boat launches				
Combo field/diamonds - natural turf			1	1
Disc golf courses		1		1
Dog off-leash areas		2	1	3
Golf courses		1	1	2
Grass fields	3	27	9	39
Outdoor pools			1	1
Outdoor rinks (boarded)		4	5	9
Outdoor rinks (non-boarded)		2	1	3
Outdoor skating ovals / trails		2	1	3
Playgrounds / spray parks	5	44	32	81
Pickleball courts		18	4	22
Skateboard parks		1	1	2
Softball Diamonds - junior	4	9	9	22
Softball Diamonds - senior	11	2	1	14
Tennis courts		5	4	11
Toboggan hills		4		4
Tracks (non-rubberized)		5		5
Tracks (rubberized)	1			1
TOTALS	27	142	82	251

*TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre has these amenities which are shown as being in Spruce Grove due to location of facility.

Parks

There are 80 known parks in the three municipalities. In addition to municipal parks, there are 11 natural areas and 3 Provincial Parks within Parkland County.

Parks	Parkland County	Stony Plain	Spruce Grove	Regional Total
Number of Parks	31	13	36	80



Trails

There are 139 KM of known trails in the whole region.

Parks	Parkland County	Stony Plain	Spruce Grove	Regional Total
Trails and pathways (KM)	39 KM	40 KM	60 KM	139 KM



Estimated Modernized Replacement Value

In order to get a sense of the region's collective investment in recreation assets, estimated modernized replacement values can be assigned to each asset and then totalled. These values do not represent original capital costs; rather, they represent an estimated cost required to reconstruct all existing amenities to meet modern expectations.

Indoor Replacement Cost

The total estimated modernized replacement cost for indoor amenities is \$353 M. Using the estimated figures, annual lifecycle contributions could range from \$6.0 M to \$8.8M.

Indoor Amenity	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost (per 1 amenity)	Number of Amenities in Region	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost	Minimum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (1.7%)	Maximum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (2.5%)
Community group office/meeting space	\$250,000	10	\$2,500,000	\$42,500	\$62,500
Community hall	\$7,500,000	11	\$82,500,000	\$1,402,500	\$2,062,500
Curling rink	\$10,000,000	3	\$30,000,000	\$510,000	\$750,000
Dedicated youth centre space	\$250,000	1	\$250,000	\$4,250	\$6,250
Fitness centre	\$5,000,000	1	\$5,000,000	\$85,000	\$125,000
Gymnasium	\$5,000,000	19	\$95,000,000	\$1,615,000	\$2,375,000
Gymnastics centre	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Ice arena	\$15,000,000	5	\$75,000,000	\$1,275,000	\$1,875,000
Indoor field (arena or half size pitch)	\$5,000,000	2	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Indoor playground	\$500,000	1	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Indoor pool	\$20,000,000	1	\$20,000,000	\$340,000	\$500,000
Leisure ice skating surface	\$2,000,000	1	\$2,000,000	\$34,000	\$50,000
Multipurpose program space (e.g. yoga, aerobics)	\$250,000	2	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Social/banquet facility	\$5,000,000	4	\$20,000,000	\$340,000	\$500,000
Walking/jogging track	\$250,000	1	\$250,000	\$4,250	\$6,250
Total			\$353,500,000	\$6,009,500	\$8,837,500

Outdoor Replacement Cost

The total estimated modernized replacement cost for outdoor amenities is \$47.3 M. Using the estimated figures, annual lifecycle contributions could range from \$0.8 M to \$1.2 M.

Outdoor Amenity	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost (per 1 amenity)	Number of Amenities in Region	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost	Minimum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (1.7%)	Maximum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (2.5%)
Agricultural area (i.e. equestrian areas)	\$500,000	3	\$1,500,000	\$25,500	\$37,500
Artificial turf field	\$75,000	2	\$150,000	\$2,550	\$3,750
Ball diamonds	\$250,000	13	\$3,250,000	\$55,250	\$87,750
Basketball court - full sized	\$100,000	13	\$1,300,000	\$22,100	\$35,100
Basketball court - half / mod	\$50,000	4	\$200,000	\$3,400	\$5,400
Beach volleyball court	\$100,000	4	\$400,000	\$6,800	\$10,000
BMX track	\$500,000	1	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Boat launch	\$2,000,000	0	-	-	-
Disc golf course	\$50,000	1	\$50,000	\$850	\$1,250
Dog off-leash area	\$250,000	3	\$750,000	\$12,750	\$18,750
Golf course - 18 holes	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$270,000
Grass field / combo field	\$250,000	3	\$750,000	\$12,750	\$18,750
Outdoor pool	\$10,000,000	1	\$10,000,000	\$170,000	\$250,000
Outdoor rink (boarded)	\$250,000	9	\$2,250,000	\$38,250	\$60,750
Outdoor rink (non-boarded)	\$100,000	3	\$300,000	\$5,100	\$7,500
Outdoor skating oval / trail	\$100,000	3	\$300,000	\$5,100	\$7,500
Playgrounds	\$100,000	81	\$8,100,000	\$137,700	\$202,500
Pickleball court	\$100,000	22	\$2,200,000	\$37,400	\$55,000
Skateboard park	\$500,000	2	\$1,000,000	\$17,000	\$25,000
Tennis court	\$100,000	9	\$900,000	\$15,300	\$22,500
Toboggan hill	\$50,000	4	\$200,000	\$3,400	\$5,000
Track (non-rubberized)	\$100,000	5	\$500,000	\$8,500	\$12,500
Track (rubberized)	\$2,000,000	1	\$2,000,000	\$34,000	\$50,000
Trails (per KM)	\$5,000	139	\$695,000	\$11,815	\$17,375
Total			\$47,295,000	\$804,015	\$1,182,375

Replacement Cost Summary

Amenity Type	Estimated Modernized Replacement Cost	Minimum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (1.7%)	Maximum Recommended Annual Lifecycle Contribution (2.5%)
Indoor	\$353,500,000	\$6,009,500	\$8,837,500
Outdoor	\$47,295,000	\$804,015	\$1,182,375
Total	\$400,795,000	\$6,813,515	\$10,019,875

Future projects

Both the City of Spruce Grove and Town of Stony Plain are contemplating the development of significant recreation facilities. These notions of these facilities have risen from champions in the communities as well as from studies from each municipality and from previously completed regional studies. Each municipality has completed some work singularly in-line with the facility development process. Parkland County is opening a new outdoor pool and community facility in Entwistle. The pool is replacing a decommissioned facility on the same site. It is important to note that: the Entwistle facility involves a partnership between Yellowhead County and Parkland County; and that Entwistle is outside the study area for this Recreation Strategy.

Utilization of Recreation Facilities and Spaces

Utilization data provided was summarized and presented as follows. It should be noted that not all facilities in the region are presented in the following analysis as utilization information was not available.

Utilization of Recreation and Parks in Stony Plain

The spaces within the Heritage Park facility were used for nearly 4,000 hours in 2019.

Type	2018 Hours Used	2019 Hours Used
Fields	1,213	1,087
Ball Diamonds	1,811	1,638
Community Centre	818	935
Heritage Park	3,485	3,946
Total	7,327	7,606

Spruce Grove

The following table outlines utilization of multipurpose spaces in Spruce Grove.

Space	Days Available	Days Reserved	Daily Utilization Percentage	Hours Available	Hours Reserved	Hourly Utilization Percentage
Agra Room	294	161	55%	7,039	604	9%
BPAC Jen-Col Room	338	235	70%	3,515	1,349	38%
BPAC Zender Ford Room	338	215	64%	3,515	1,220	35%
BPAC Lodgepole Pine Room	338	189	56%	3,515	1,117	32%
BPAC Wild Rose Room	338	131	39%	3,515	576	16%
BPAC Great Horned Owl Room	338	200	59%	3,515	1,150	33%
Elks Hall Auditorium	365	175	48%	6,935	2,902.50	42%
Elks Hall Auxiliary Room	365	182	50%	6,935	3,009.00	43%
Elks Hall Kitchen	365	340	93%	6,935	5,899.00	85%
Total Multipurpose Spaces	3,079	1,828	59%	45,419	17,826	39%

Tri-Leisure Centre Program Participation

The Tri-Leisure Centre accommodated over 22,000 program participants in both 2018 and 2019.

Adult Fitness	2018	2019
Programs offered	250	208
Participants	1,302	1,197
Drop-in programs offered	14	14
Drop-in participants	9,135	9,421
Children & Youth	2018	2019
Programs offered	175	168
Participants	1,512	1,594

Adult Fitness	2018	2019
Aquatics	2018	2019
Programs offered	1,366	1,340
Participants	10,523	10,498
Total	2018	2019
Programs offered	1,805	1,730
Participants	22,472	22,710

It is important to note that although utilization information for other recreation and parks assets throughout the region such as ice arenas and ball diamonds is likely available, this type of information is generally lacking or hard to gather and analyze.

Recreation and Parks Program and Opportunities in the Tri-Municipal Region

There are many recreation services, programs and events within the Tri-Municipal Region that provide residents and visitors with access to high quality recreation opportunities. These opportunities are important to supporting regional residents to maintain active, healthy lifestyles. This section highlights some of the services, programs, and events offered within the Tri-Municipal Region. Information is organized first by municipality, with specific detail provided for the Tri-Municipal Leisure Centre. The important role that non-profit organizations play in providing opportunities is also important within the Tri-Municipal context, but these programs and events have not been reviewed as part of this study. Most recreation services and programs are delivered through the Tri-Leisure Centre.

Parkland County Recreation Programs

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Summer Programs	Children	\$56.25 - \$75	Several day camps are hosted in communities across Parkland County between July and August
Assorted Programs	All Ages	N/A	Recreation opportunities provided at community hubs in Entwistle and Keephills, as well as through partnerships between non-profit associations and the County

City of Spruce Grove Recreation Programs

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Public Skating	Family/All Ages	Free	Public skating is available at the Stu Barnes Arena, but must be booked in advance due to COVID
Spray Park	Children	Free	Spray park sessions available via booking online, due to COVID
SITC – Weeklong Adventure Camps	Children/Youth	\$155 – 4 day week \$195 – 5 day week	Eight different theme weeks of Adventure Camps are available for children ages 5 through 13 to register for. Children attend for the day where they play games and make crafts.
SITC – Pop-up Playground	Children/Youth	Free	Summer program that sets up crafts and games at a playground Monday through Friday for eight weeks. Drop-in activity with no registration.
SITC – Leaders in Training	Youth	Free	Volunteer opportunity for youth to assist in Summer in the City Adventure Camps and Pop-up playground programs.
Adult Pick-up Sports	Adult	Free	Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer, Badminton, and Pickleball drop in sessions are run once a week during the school year.

Town of Stony Plain Recreation Programs

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Ballroom Dancing	Adult	\$120.00 for six classes (per couple)	Classes presented by ‘Dance on Cloud Nine’ at the Community Centre
Seniors’ Jamboree	Senior	\$8 per person, \$15 per couple	Is a dance/regular event featuring music, coffee, and snacks. Cancelled due to COVID
Summer Programs	Children/Youth	Unknown, subsidy available	Four separate summer programs offered, three tailored towards children and one for youth leadership
Youth Centre	Youth	Free	Youth Centre offers regular drop-in programs for free, with a variety of activities, as well as summer programs that are free/low cost
Golf Lessons	All ages	\$40-\$300	Golf lessons are offered for all ages at the Golf Course, with summer opportunities available for those ages 4-9 at a cost of \$100 per golfer
Swim Lessons	All ages	\$50-\$350	Swimming lessons are offered at the Outdoor Pool starting in May. Registration coordinated through the TLC

Tri-Leisure Centre Recreation Programs

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Wellness Pass	Families/All Ages	Variable, from \$47.50 - \$115.00/yr.	Provides access to classes, courses and other offerings at the TLC without gym or pool access

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Adult Swimming Lessons	Adults	Variable, from \$55 for members to \$399 for non-members	A variety of adult swim lessons are available, from basic to first aid training
Children/Youth Swimming Lessons	Children and Youth (4 months+)	Variable, \$55.00 - \$115.00	Lessons are available for all age groups and swim levels
Private Swim Lessons	All Ages	Variable, \$124.00 and up, with discounts for up to 5 people per private lesson	Provides one-on-one lessons tailored to individual swim levels
Youth Swimming Lessons	Youth-Teens	Variable, \$58.00 - \$67.00	Diving lessons, swim basics, and junior lifeguard lessons are available for older youth and teens
Dryland Programs	Children	Variable, \$66.00 - \$78.00	Indoor 'learn through play' programs are available for children ages 2-5
PD Day Camps	Children/Youth	\$50.00 for members, \$60 for non-members	PD day programming for 6-12 year old ages
TLC Home School Physical Education	Children/Youth	\$210.00 for members, \$241.50 for non-members	Unique program runs from Sept to May to allow children and youth age 5-16 to develop physical skills
TLC Preschool	Children (3-5)	\$1600 for members, \$1840 for non-members	Licensed preschool classes focused on 'learn through play' – multi-month
Babysitting Course	11-15 years	\$62.00-\$72.00	Covers responsibilities of babysitting
Home Alone Course	10+ years	\$35.00-\$45.00	Provides skill development on how to stay home safely for short periods of time
Youth Running	8-16 years	\$55.00-\$77.00	Designed to improve running speed and endurance for youth
Youth RX	10-13 years	\$25.00-\$35.00	Training on how to use the exercise equipment
P90X	Adult	\$63.00-\$77.00	Seven group exercise classes based on P90X program
Total Shred Tabata	Adult	\$63.00-\$77.00	High-intensity group work out, six or seven classes
45-Minute Cycle	Adult	\$49.00-\$63.00	Evening cycling class
Rise & Spin	Adult	\$63.00-\$77.00	Early morning cycling class, seven classes
Saturday Spin	Adult	\$54.00-\$77.00	Weekend AM cycling class, six or seven classes
Feel Good Flow	Adult	\$84.00-\$98.00	Basic flow yoga introduction, seven classes
Gentle Yoga	Adult	\$84.00-\$98.00	Relaxation focused yoga, seven classes
Intermediate Tai Chi	Adult	\$54.00-\$66.00	Tai Chi in long form, six or seven classes
Rejuvenate & Meditate	Adult	\$84.00-\$98.00	Meditation and yoga combined, seven classes
Sunrise Tai Chi	Adult	\$54.00-\$66.00	Introductory Tai Chi, six or seven classes

Program	Type	Cost	Notes
Yoga for the Stiff Guy	Adult	\$72.00-\$98.00	Flexibility training (not just for guys), six or seven classes
Professional Training	Adult	\$45.00-\$456.00	Individual or small group personal training
Nutrition Programs	Adult	\$80.00-\$485.00	A variety of nutrition programs offered by a Registered Nutritionist
Drop in Fitness Classes	14+	\$7.25-\$10.50 daily rate (free with membership)	A wide variety of drop-in fitness classes are offered at various times and days throughout the week, including spin classes, training classes, full-body classes, and Zumba classes
Drop in Aquatic Classes	14+	\$7.25-\$10.50 daily rate (free with membership)	AquaFit drop in classes are offered at various times and days during the week, at several intensity levels

Note: Tri-Leisure Program offerings were identified via the spring/summer and fall/winter Leisure Guides. There is likely a greater variety of programs being delivered at the TLC than published in these Guides alone.

Tri-Municipal Region Notable Events

Municipality	Event	Notes
Parkland County	Family Day Skating Party	Hosted on Family Day each year
	Parkland Music Festival	Occurred in March this year
	Baba Claus Christmas Market	Hosted at Carvel Hall
Spruce Grove	Canada Day	Virtual celebration this year due to COVID, collaborated with the City and other regional municipalities
	Christmas in Central Park	Annual event where Christmas lights are lit, holiday crafts, etc.
	Mini Monster Bash	Presented in partnership with Spruce Grove
	Remembrance Day	Annual ceremony held each year
	Seniors' Strawberry Tea	Hosted each year at the Elks Hall in June
Stony Plain	Artwalk	Hosted at the Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Museum each June
	Alberta Culture Days	Celebrated each year in September
	Arbour Day	Annual event with tree planting, music and games, and food and drinks
	Canada Day	See notes above
	Christmas Light Up	Lighting of the Town Christmas tree in the 3 rd week of every November
	Community Street Market	Main street garage sales offered twice per year in the Spring and Fall
	Family Fest	Annual New Years Eve celebration at Heritage Park
	Farmers' Days Rodeo & Exhibition	Annual exhibition that runs in early June
	Jane's Walk	Annual walking tour of the community
	Mini-Monster Bash	Presented in partnership with Spruce Grove
	Outdoor Movie	Annual summer drive-in outdoor movie
	Summer Sessions	Live music hosted between June and August on a weekly basis

Other Municipal Practices

Key Takeaways

- There are no standard approaches to regional collaboration related to recreation and parks in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, the Province of Alberta, or beyond.
- Some new practices that have occurred in the recent past where municipalities have collaborated to provide recreation include:
 - Creating regional recreation advisory boards
 - Hiring regional staff to coordinate recreation
- Related to cost sharing, some new practices being considered in Alberta include:
 - Considering both cost and responsibility sharing in agreements
 - Defining a benefitting 'market area' for different types and scales of recreation services
 - Breaking down cost and responsibility by both population and assessment ability to pay
- Regional collaboration is being contemplated in Alberta beyond the ratification or negotiation of cost sharing (ICF) agreements. Some regional initiatives underway in the province include developing regional policies dealing with user fees and allocations, creating consistent user code of conduct and cancellation policies, standardizing the collection of utilization data and conducting regional needs assessments (surveys and research) and promoting and marketing recreation and parks opportunities regionally.

The following section explores regional collaboration related to broader municipal services and more specifically recreation and parks in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region as well as other areas in the province and beyond.

Edmonton Metro Region Board Regional Approach

This section presents an overview of the Edmonton Metro Region Board (EMRB), how other municipalities in EMRB approach regional recreation collaboration, including cost and responsibility sharing, and any other innovations or efficiencies identified in their approaches.

EMRB Overview

Parkland County, the City of Spruce Grove and the Town of Stony Plain are members of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB), a Growth Management Board per Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act (Section 708), and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board Regulation 189/2017. The municipal partners have participated in the establishment of a 50-Year Vision and share a commitment to growing collaboratively.

As members of the Board, the Tri-Municipal mayors have approved the Growth Plan (October 2017) addressing key policy areas of Economic Competitiveness and Employment, Natural Living Systems, Communities and Housing, Integration of Land Use and Infrastructure, Transportation Systems and Agriculture.

Membership on the EMRB makes approval of Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) Agreements (Section 708) and Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) (Section 631) between the three parties unnecessary. The Tri-Municipal Members have, however, undertaken to develop a comprehensive (sub)-regional Plan.

The EMRB mandate is to provide collaborative regional leadership in the development and implementation of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan and a Metropolitan Region Servicing Plan to meet the future population and employment needs of the region. These two key documents will now be reviewed. It should be noted that **recreation has not been identified as a regional service area focus at this time.**

Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (Growth Plan)

Effective October 2017, the EMRB Growth Plan 'Re-imagine. Plan. Build.' Anticipating a 2044 Regional population of more than 2.2 million people, the Growth Plan seeks to set an innovative path to plan growth across the Region in a responsible manner that sustains and advances regional prosperity.

The Growth Plan presents six interrelated regional policy areas to support where and how to manage growth:

- Economic Competitiveness & Employment
- Natural Living Systems
- Communities and Housing
- Integration of Land Use & Infrastructure
- Transportation Systems
- Agriculture

Regional collaboration is identified as critical to the overall success of the Growth Plan and advancing the aforementioned policy areas. Each member municipality is responsible for preparing regional context statements that in turn guide the development of key statutory plans such as Municipal Development Plan updates and others. Statutory plans are then reviewed by the EMRB through the Regional Evaluation Framework for final approval, whereas non-statutory plans (such as a recreation plan) are sent to the EMRB for comment on how the plan relates to or advances the Growth Plan. While non-statutory plans are not reviewed via the REF, it is important to recognize that many of these plans are rooted in statutory plans and that **it is prudent to consider regional implications of non-statutory plan development whenever feasible.**

Within the EMRB Growth Plan, the Tri-Municipal Region falls within both the Rural Area (Parkland County) and the Metropolitan Area (Spruce Grove and Stony Plain). Based on the EMRB Growth Plan, community gathering spaces and limited recreation opportunities should be available within the Rural Area (including Parkland County), whereas major community centres and recreation facilities should be located in urban centres within the Metropolitan Area (including Spruce Grove and Stony Plain). Types of services and growth direction notes related to recreation in these areas is presented below.

Rural Area

- Rural centres provide services for their own community with the potential to accommodate higher density mixed uses, including central areas of towns, villages, and some growth hamlets.

- Service levels should consist of facilities that accommodate community gathering spaces and limited recreation opportunities.

Metropolitan Area

- Central urban areas in the metropolitan area that accommodate mixed use development at higher intensities, including downtowns and central areas of urban communities.
- Provide a sub-regional service level consisting of major community centres and recreation facilities.
- Plan and build transit-oriented development (TOD) with higher densities and foster active transportation opportunities.

As mentioned, the Regional Plan is organized around six regional policy areas. For each of these six areas there are corresponding objectives and policies to advance EMRB municipalities. The Regional Plan policy areas are wide-ranging, ambitious, and bold. While all content in the Growth Plan is relevant to the Tri-Municipal area, elements particularly pertinent to recreation are noted below.

What are recreation corridors?

The Growth Plan identifies establishing *recreation corridors* as a priority within the EMR. Recreation corridors are defined as: public and private lands acquired in the public interest to conserve and protect natural features, landscapes and resources, and/or to provide passive recreation space with limited or no development (e.g., school yards, public parks, parks adjacent to water courses, and/or water bodies, and recreation areas).

The Growth Plan also identifies the importance of active engagement and collaborative efforts to support the Plan. EMRB members are identified as advocates for the Growth Plan at the local level through their municipal actions and decisions, as well as be effective ambassadors to the private sector by engaging in constructive dialogue over how to work collaboratively.

Metropolitan Region Servicing Plan (MRSP)

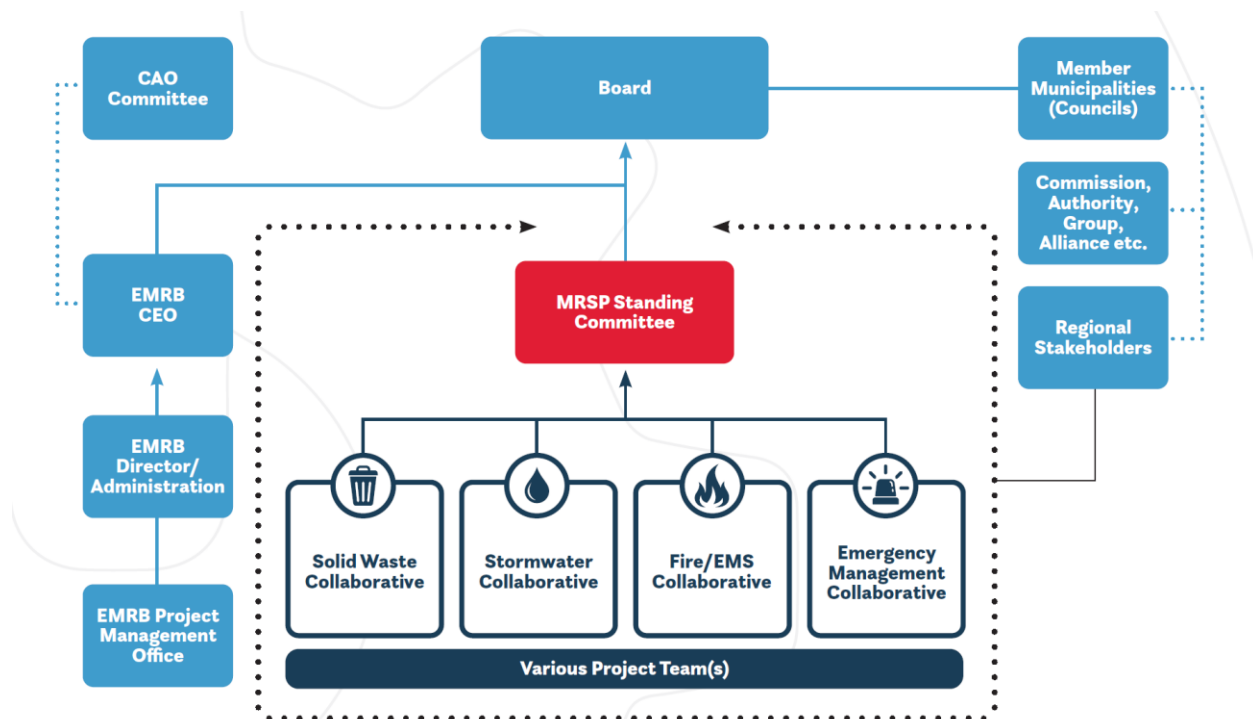
The EMRB MRSP was developed in 2019 to provide a strategic and operational direction, as well as identify the enabling structures needed, to achieve enhanced municipal collaboration and service coordination in significant service areas. In total, seven service areas were examined for potential for enhanced collaboration: transportation (roads), regional transit, water, wastewater, storm water, solid waste, and emergency services.

Through its environmental scanning work, EMRB concluded that only four service areas were not already covered through other regional agreements: solid waste, storm water management, fire and EMS services, and emergency management. Regional transit is being advanced through a Regional Transit Services Commission and the Integrated Regional Transportation Master Plan is under development.

While the **MRSP does not address recreation provision within the EMR**, it is noted that “the EMRB may add other service areas (e.g., recreation) and may establish new strategies to address the growth and

Figure 1 - MRSP Governance Structure

change in regional servicing needs.” (p.69). The EMRB is committed to reviewing the MRSP on a regular basis and update it every 5 years. In this regard, enhanced and more robust MRSPs may be expected – at which point, **recreation may be identified as a key area for collaboration in the MRSP in the future.**



This graphic outlines how the EMRB is approaching collaboration via the MRSP priority areas. Collaborative groups have been established for each focus area. These groups are comprised of representatives from all 13 member municipalities. The goals of the MRSP are to optimize service delivery, find efficiencies and harmonies in things like data collection, information sharing, and service planning, improve investment attractiveness, and enhance service for regional residents. The **MRSP provides a robust collaboration framework that could be expanded to also focus on recreation provision in the EMR.**

Accelerating Transit in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region: Building a Regional Transit Services Commission (2020)

As mentioned above, regional transit was also excluded from the MRSP, as work is underway to establish a Regional Transit Services Commission (RTSC). In early 2020, a comprehensive report was released that makes a case for a RTSC and explores various strategies, governance and operating models, service delivery, and presents an implementation plan. Of relevance to recreation is information presented in this report pertaining to governance and operating models, service delivery, and finances.

The overarching benefits of a RTSC include enabling municipalities to work together to align transit services, deliver an integrated regional transportation network while synchronizing land use planning initiatives, provide residents with a more seamless, customer-focused, and coordinated service, combat congestion, and to align transit planning with other efforts to regionally coordinate and plan infrastructure. Benefits of a RTSC are also outlined in this report, organized into six areas: financial, transit users, service providers, community, economic, and environmental. **Overall, the RTSC illustrates a potential recreation governance, service delivery, and cost sharing model that may provide a**

template for regional recreation collaboration. It is important to note that several EMRB members, including Parkland County, have declined being part of this regional service. While this specific example does not serve as an exemplar for the tri-municipal region, there is a framework in place that does offer a model from which learnings can be gained.

Governance & Operating Model

A Board of Directors model is proposed, comprised of a councillor from each of the 13 member municipalities. A CEO will report to the board, who oversees a variety of functional areas, ranging from customer service, to experience, to HR-related items, innovation, and corporate services. The RTSC has established a goal of structuring the Board of Directors in 2021 and to begin delivering services in 2022.

Service Delivery

The RTSC Transit Service Levels Guidelines are to structure service delivery, creating three separate types of service: rapid transit, regional express, and major trip attractions. These service levels vary by frequency, service span, directness of route, and other factors. The RTSC would then operate several lines, with routes being reallocated from member municipalities and service hours transferred to the RTSC. For the Tri-Muni Region, approximately 5 routes would be reallocated to RTSC, equalling approximately 441 service hours.

Finances

As widely recognized, revenues earned by municipal transit agencies cover only some operating costs, with the rest of costs covered using property taxes and other revenues. The RTSC seeks to share potential funding shortfalls equitably between the 13 member municipalities. The cost sharing methodology is complex, but factors in elements such as base fees collected, and level of service provided. The Tri-Muni Region is projected to contribute approximately 5.76% or around \$16.6 million of total RTSC operating costs between 2022 and 2026.

Recreation Collaboration in the EMRB

Within the EMR, the Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland County are the leading example when it comes to recreation collaboration, with the innovative cost-sharing model and the Tri-Municipal Leisure Centre as demonstrating the positive results of working together.

There is significant regional interest in at least exploring greater collaboration in the EMR when it comes to recreation. Determining scope and the level of integration when it comes to partnerships is key. The City of Edmonton's *Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning* (2018) examined municipal interest in recreation assets at a regional scale and interest in partnerships. **The following table** summarizes some findings from this report, with findings presented from the City of Edmonton's perspective.

Other examples of collaboration in the EMR not covered in this report that may prove insightful as the Tri-Municipal Region explores more formal recreation collaborations include:

- Transit Bus Service Agreement (2018) (Spruce Grove, Parkland County, Edmonton)
- Edmonton Global Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (2018) (EMRB members)
- Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (City of Fort Saskatchewan, Lamont County, Sturgeon County, Edmonton, Bruderheim, Gibbons, Redwater)

EMR Member Interest in Recreation Collaboration

Municipality	Apparent or Declared Interest in Partnership or Exploring Further Collaboration
Leduc	Yes - especially considering Leduc and Edmonton will share a common boundary post annexation
St. Albert	Yes – definite need to collaborate more, as regional decisions on recreation affect the market for users
Spruce Grove	Yes – collaboration can work but making a reality can be hard work. Good idea to work together more
Fort Saskatchewan	Yes – interest in further regional collaboration in recreation service planning and infrastructure
Stony Plain	Yes – collaboration could complement each other for facilities, services, and branding/market research
Beaumont	Yes – absolutely need to have a regional conversation about recreation facilities and services, can't do everything individually
Devon	Yes – regional conversation could have merit, but must prioritize need of own residents
Morinville	Yes – regional discussions would be good to have, regional approaches to infrastructure development, scheduling and allocations needed
Sturgeon County	Yes – regional discussion is imperative and needs to happen, including all EMR municipalities
Strathcona County	Yes – discussion should occur to talk about infrastructure and service delivery, formal discussions should be coordinated
Parkland County	Yes – already working collaboratively, but having conversation about recreation facilities should happen

Case Study: St. Albert Soccer

Responding to both growth in registration numbers and regional populations, the St. Albert Soccer Association (SASA) identified a need for an indoor soccer facility in the St. Albert area in 2011. Once this need was identified the 'Field of Dreams' project was initiated at the request of the SASA Board of Directors, with the goal of developing a full-sized, covered soccer pitch to be run by SASA.

Early in the Field of Dreams project, SASA engaged key stakeholder groups that included Alberta Soccer, the City of St. Albert, and FC Edmonton Soccer Club. Between 2011 and 2015, SASA worked closely with these stakeholder groups to develop a functional program for the soccer pitch and explored various strategies for collaborating to finance, build, and operate the facility (estimated cost of \$32 million in 2011). SASA's 2016 Strategic Plan further enforced the importance of partnership arrangements for the Field of Dreams project, expanding the list of potential stakeholders to include the City of Edmonton.

Since 2017 the Field of Dreams project has made progress towards becoming a reality. However, the role of collaboration in field development remains uncertain, as only St. Albert has provided a financial commitment to the project so far. Discussions between Edmonton and St. Albert on recreation collaboration have been promising in 2020, but it is possible that it is too soon for the two municipalities to explore joint funding of recreation facilities. The Field of Dreams project exemplifies the need to have a committed project advocate (SASA has been working on this since 2011), at least one key municipal stakeholder to be a champion for the project to higher levels of government, and the importance of patience in allowing for municipal collaboration to take root in new service delivery areas.

While formal recreation collaborations or partnerships do not exist at the EMR level, there are several examples of successful agreements between member municipalities that have been negotiated on a more piecemeal basis. The following table highlights some of these agreements, some of which may be useful in guiding more formal recreation collaborations in the EMR in the future.

Mechanisms for Recreation Collaboration in EMR

Agreement	Municipalities Involved	Details
Formal Legal Agreement (i.e. Part 9)	Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, Parkland County	Part 9 is a formal agreement underpinning the development and operation of the Tri-Municipal Regional Leisure Facility. Establishes a Board of Directors and cost-sharing formula for facility operations. Unique in the EMR and often cited as an example for how collaboration could occur.
Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs)	Several EMR members	ICFs are an avenue for municipalities to work together on planning and funding of future development, including recreation. In the case of the EMR, the Growth Plan does not speak to recreation. As such, member municipalities – if they so choose – can explore formal collaborations through ICFs. ICFs will

		be discussed further in another section, but several municipalities in the EMR have identified recreation in ICFs, including Edmonton, St. Albert, Beaumont, and Leduc County. In early 2020, Edmonton and St. Albert explored jointly funding a recreation facility, but it was determined this level of collaboration was too significant at this time. ICFs can be tailored to be more or less specific in terms of details – such as shared services, planning and development, and so forth. Cost-sharing agreements and ratios can also be covered through ICFs.
Cost-Sharing Agreements	Several EMR members	Cost-sharing agreements have been/are being utilized by EMR municipalities for recreation purposes. Several cost sharing agreements are in place currently, including between Devon, Beaumont and Leduc County (library and recreation funding from Leduc County), Devon and Parkland County (recreation), and many others. Cost-sharing agreements are typically negotiated on a case-by-case basis and in cases where one municipality is benefitting from the investments and spending of another municipality, or, when it is determined that residents from one municipality are utilizing recreation amenities in other communities. For example, at one time Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan had an agreement in place where members of the Dow Centennial Centre could access Millennium Place at a discounted cost.
Joint-Use Agreements	Most/all EMR members	EMR member municipalities also utilize joint-use agreements to access school facilities for community groups and to make municipal facilities available for use by schools, as well as to share use of fields, etc.
Memorandums of Understanding or Agreement	Several EMR members	MOUs/MOAs are often utilized to express high-level support for collaboration, or, to explore topics further, including recreation. Examples of recreation-focused MOUs/MOAs include the City of St. Albert, St. Albert soccer clubs, and the City of Edmonton signing an agreement to develop an indoor soccer field ('Field of Dreams' project). This project has been hindered as a result of uncertain funding streams and how to share costs appropriately between levels of governments/MOU signatory.
Other Agreements	City of Edmonton and Enoch Cree Nation	The City of Edmonton and Enoch Cree Nation have both an MOU and formal agreement in place (CEDI), neither of which are focused directly on recreation. However, opportunities for collaboration that have been identified through these agreements include the 'Woodbend-Big Island' provincial park (co-management) and information sharing in the Lewis Farms recreation centre planning process (now cancelled)

Comparative Review

This section reviews how other comparable regions/municipalities approach service delivery to determine if there are any best practices/learnings that could be applied to the Tri-Municipal recreation context. Case studies are utilized to better illustrate the variety of approaches possible.

Regional Recreation Plans

Like the Tri-Municipal Region, several municipalities in Alberta are working towards regional recreation collaboration. While other municipalities are not quite as integrated in their approach as the Tri-Municipal partners, a frequent approach is to develop regional-scale master plans that involve some degree of collaboration between municipal partners.

Regional recreation master plans can provide a common foundation and encourage closer collaboration to occur. However, it is important for partners to first identify areas where collaboration makes sense, define what assets might benefit from collaborative management/funding approaches, and where service delivery can be improved by working together. Building the foundation for collaboration is an important first step and is a high-level planning initiative. From this foundation more specific questions of who should pay for what may emerge, with a framework already in place to support equity. Collaboration amongst partnering municipalities may occur via new initiatives or projects, including recreation advisory boards, regional scale policies covering topics such as user fees, time allocation policies, and so forth, cost sharing agreements, as well as jointly funded facilities.

While the case studies presented below are not exhaustive of all regional recreation collaborations occurring in Alberta and beyond, they each illustrate some learnings that might be applied to the Tri-Municipal recreation context. It should be noted that even in formal regional governance structures, there are no formal definitions of what is 'regional' and what is not. Most jurisdictions approach regional recreation differently and there is a need for flexibility to be a key part of regional governance.

Case Study: Camrose Regional Recreation Plan

Recognizing the shared interest and responsibility in providing recreational services, the City of Camrose and Camrose County have come together to create a Regional Recreation Master Plan (2019). The Plan **provides a foundational direction for both the City and County to approach regional recreation services and facilities**. The City and County have a long history of working together to provide recreation opportunities through a cost-sharing agreement whereby the County transfers funds to the City, the City in turn owns facilities, employs staff, and programs spaces. Beyond the cost sharing agreement, however, there was little interaction between the two partners in terms of service delivery. The Camrose Regional Master Plan provided the impetus to revisit the cost sharing model between the County and City in a collaborative and positive manner. Successful collaboration often requires difficult conversations and negotiations to ensure that benefits and costs are shared equitably.

The Master Plan **recommends developing policies to support closer collaboration**, including for facility and space allocation (to ensure consistency across the region), standardized user fees based on agreed upon cost recovery targets, a sponsorship policy, a partnership policy, and joint-use planning agreements with all school boards.

Having a strong foundation for regional recreation collaboration, the City and County then set about to examine their long-term cost sharing agreement to determine if any adjustments are required, or, if any other regions had adopted innovative approaches to sharing costs. Key findings of this secondary research, which emerged out of the Master Plan, include:

- There are no standard approaches for operating or capital cost sharing, but user statistics are most used to identify cost breakdowns.
- Several regions in Alberta are considering creating regional recreational advisory boards.
- Catchment areas/benefitting market areas for recreation services is being explored.
- Not all assets have regional (intermunicipal appeal) and only certain recreational assets should be included as such.
- Shared operational costs and risk needs to include asset management/reinvestment, which should be funded through annual reserve contributions.
- Existing regional assets should be covered under one agreement, with joint planning overseen by a regional recreation committee utilized for new/expanded facilities.
- Catchment areas should be based on known usage data and cost sharing based on the overall proportion of the regional population using facilities.

Case Study: Grande Prairie Area Joint Recreation Master Plan

Adopted in 2016, the Grande Prairie Area Joint Recreation Master Plan serves as a framework and guideposts for the planning and development of cooperatively developed and delivered recreation opportunities involving municipalities across the Grande Prairie Region. Beyond the County and City, ten other municipalities were involved in developing the Plan, including the MD of Greenview.

Through the Master Plan development process, the County and City of Grande Prairie recognized that there are several levels of cooperation when it comes to regional recreation collaboration. Beyond identifying regional assets, another key decision is to establish criteria for which partners need to be involved, when, and to what level. Identifying the need for flexibility, a **major recommendation of the Plan was to establish a Joint County-City Recreation Committee** to provide guidance on recreation service delivery in the Region, as well as to oversee the implementation of other Plan recommendations.

Case Study: Calgary Metropolitan Region Board

In contrast to the EMRB, the Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board (CMRB) includes recreation as being within its regional purview. The CMRB approach to regional recreation entailed creating a recreation-specific advisory group. The work of this group establishes a common foundation for approaching regional recreation, as well as region-specific definitions and approaches for assessing what should be considered regional or local. The CMRB Recreation Servicing Technical Advisory Group (Recreation TAG) is comprised of representatives from all 10 member municipalities, operating under a group specific terms of reference document. The Recreation TAG meets periodically to discuss matters related to recreation and the Calgary Metropolitan Region (CMR). The CMRB is now working to integrate regional recreation into its 2021 Growth and Servicing Plan.

One of the first tasks the Recreation TAG set about to accomplish was to attempt to define ‘regional recreation’. Through extensive surveying, workshops, visioning sessions, and other engagements, the Recreation TAG first identified the primary benefits of providing recreation services on a regional level:

- Better ability to leverage support and resources within the CMR and from other levels of government.
- Enables sharing of costs, risks, and rewards – by working together, member municipalities can develop higher quality facilities and achieve greater success with lower individual risk.
- Reduces overlap, duplication, and competition by increasing coordination of services.
- Creates a regional level forum for recreation that will allow all municipalities to work towards a shared vision.

The CMRB outlines the definition of, vision for, decision making principles, and key steps in regional recreation in the CMR as established by the Recreation TAG. This ‘common foundation’ enables collaboration by first identifying what a regional recreation facility or service is. Collective action entails creating mechanisms for partners to arrive at a common definition of regional facilities, spaces, programs, services, and events, then to share the responsibility and costs in an equitable manner.

With a common foundation established, greater levels of collaboration and coordination are possible – all the way to the point of an integrated regional recreation system. The framework suggests assessing assets or services according to level of regional merit, then by scope of benefits – regional, sub-regional, or local. Based on the scale of benefit, different levels of shared responsibility can then be explored. Benefits can be determined in terms of what the market area is for an asset or service area (e.g. drive time to access a facility and total population in that area), as well as each individual municipality’s ability/willingness to pay for that asset or service.

As the CMR works to build out its 2021 Growth and Servicing Plan, the work of the Recreation TAG may help to facilitate greater levels of regional recreation collaboration. It is important to first work together as a region to define what is a ‘regional’ level asset, identify to what extent benefits are realized, and determine how responsibilities should be shared.

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Shared Service Agreements

Another strategy for regional recreation collaboration as an alternative or complement to regional recreation planning is to utilize shared-service agreements to ensure that benefits and costs are being equally shared between municipalities. Shared services agreements may allow for iterative recreation collaboration in that the scope of collaboration and cost sharing formulas can be adjusted on a regular basis. Agreements can be more or less specific, as well as can be expanded overtime or dissolved entirely if the situation warrants it.

The Tri-Municipal Region already utilizes cost sharing agreements with neighbouring municipalities for recreation service delivery. While cost sharing can be encompassed within an ICF, municipalities may wish to negotiate separate shared service agreements to provide an additional level of detail or that can be updated more frequently than an ICF. Such agreements should provide information on cost sharing formulas, a dispute resolution framework, and so forth.

Case Study: Town of Okotoks and Municipal District of Foothills Shared Services Agreement

Recognizing that population growth was creating a situation in which the Town of Okotoks began to operate as a regional hub for municipal services being utilized by regional residents, the MD of Foothills and Town first adopted a shared services agreement in 2012. This agreement was initiated under the recognition that many Town services, including libraries, recreation facilities, and so forth, are assets that benefit residents of the entire region. The Town and MD renewed its 'Master Shared Services Agreement Bylaw' in 2018. The Agreement defines recreation services, as well as what costs are to be shared. Outdoor recreation facility costs are excluded for the time being.

The Agreement also speaks specifically to the Town, MD, and the Foothills-Okotoks Recreation Society cooperating and collaborating with each other in the financing and operations of the Crescent Point Regional Field House, with the Town and MD sharing operating and capital costs equally. Opened in 2014, the Facility is a model for collaborative partnerships. A third-party (Nustadia Recreation) operates the facility on behalf of the Foothills-Okotoks Recreation Society – itself comprised of representatives from the MD, the Town, and three citizens-at-large.

The Town and MD are taking the innovative approach of utilizing a shared services agreement to establish the right level of detail needed for recreation collaboration to occur, while also outlining limits of such collaboration and specific focus areas that are to be addressed. As such, shared services agreements may allow for iterative recreation collaboration in that the scope of collaboration and cost sharing formulas can be adjusted on a regular basis – either expanded or contracted, depending on what partners deem to be warranted.

Regional Recreation Corporations

As discussed above, specialized municipalities in Alberta tend to approach recreation from a regional perspective due to their unique geographies (rural and urban). Such municipal structures lend themselves well to regional-scale service delivery. In terms of recreation, corporations are often formed to guide decision making, service delivery, and infrastructure investment/maintenance.

Regional Districts & Tiered Municipalities

Case Study: Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is the second largest municipality in Alberta by area. To deliver quality and coordinated recreation amenities and programs for a regional population of more than 100,000 the RMWB created the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo (RRC) in 2013. The RRC operates recreation facilities located throughout the region, including MacDonald Island Park, the Anzac Recreation Centre, the Sonny Flett Aquatic Centre in Fort Chipewyan, and the Conklin Multiplex. The RRC operates as an incorporated non-profit, with a Board of Directors guiding the work of a senior leadership team that includes a CEO and executive team of 9 staff.

By working on a regional scale, the RRC has created significant administrative cost savings and a streamlined recreation experience for residents of the RMWB. In 2019, the RRC received approximately \$16.2 million to operate recreation facilities and to deliver programs and services across the RMWB. The RRC also brought in more than \$25 million in revenues from memberships, hospitality services, rentals, programs, and so forth. For fiscal year-end 2019, the RRC recovered approximately 99% of expenses.

Within the Province of British Columbia, there are 27 separate Regional Districts. These districts emerged out of a need for greater regional cooperation and more equitable cost-sharing between municipal areas and rural areas in the province.

Regional Districts are modeled as a federation comprised of multiple municipalities, electoral areas, and in some cases, Treaty First Nations, each of which having representation on the Regional District board. Regional District boundaries span nearly the entire geographic area of the province. Districts are further divided into smaller areas called electoral areas – these are mostly rural areas.

Recreation is typically managed by a sub-Regional board or commission that is comprised of elected officials from each electoral area/municipality within the Regional District. The tax base of the entire Regional District contributes to a recreation service within their given boundary. Therefore, some Regional Districts have more than one recreation department and area. In the Regional District framework, however, both rural and urban elected officials have influence over recreation services and make shared decisions on both operating and capital costs.

In Ontario, the province operates regional governments as a ‘two-tier’ system. In this system, there are two tiers of municipal governments: lower-tier municipalities (local) and upper-tier municipalities (a county or region). In the two-tier system, some services are delivered by upper-tier municipalities and

others by lower-tier, depending on the service. Upper-tier municipalities often coordinate service delivery between municipalities in their area, or, provide area-wide services.

Ontario's tiered municipality system is a form of consolidated governance. The primary rationale for this approach is that consolidation helps to create a more unified administration, helping to relieve financial pressure for service provision, allowing for more effective and efficient governance through streamlined decision making, and creating opportunities to deliver improved or expanded services at a regional-scale. An example of how this tiered system operates is provided below.

Case Study: County of Lambton, Ontario

The County of Lambton is an upper-tier municipality in Ontario. Within the County, there are several lower-tier municipalities – also known as local municipalities – including Townships, Villages, Towns, Municipalities, as well as the City of Sarnia (pop. est. 70,000).

The County is governed by a County Council, comprised of 17 representatives from the 11 local municipalities. Local municipality Mayors and Councillor appointees (when more than one County Council seat exists) work together to represent the entire County. County Council then elects a Warden and Deputy Warden every two years. The Warden chairs County Council meetings and represents the County at a range of functions and activities. County Councillors then sit on standing committees. These committees can be responsible for several aspects of the municipality, including recreation and culture. However, each municipality within the County is responsible for delivering recreation services in their own communities, as well as incur the costs associated with doing so (but also collects and keeps a portion of property taxes to do so). In contrast to the Regional District system in British Columbia, where some recreation services are delivered regionally, Ontario's tiered system provides municipalities with more autonomy to deliver services, but with some degree of collaboration or coordination inherent.

Resident Service Levels

Key Takeaways

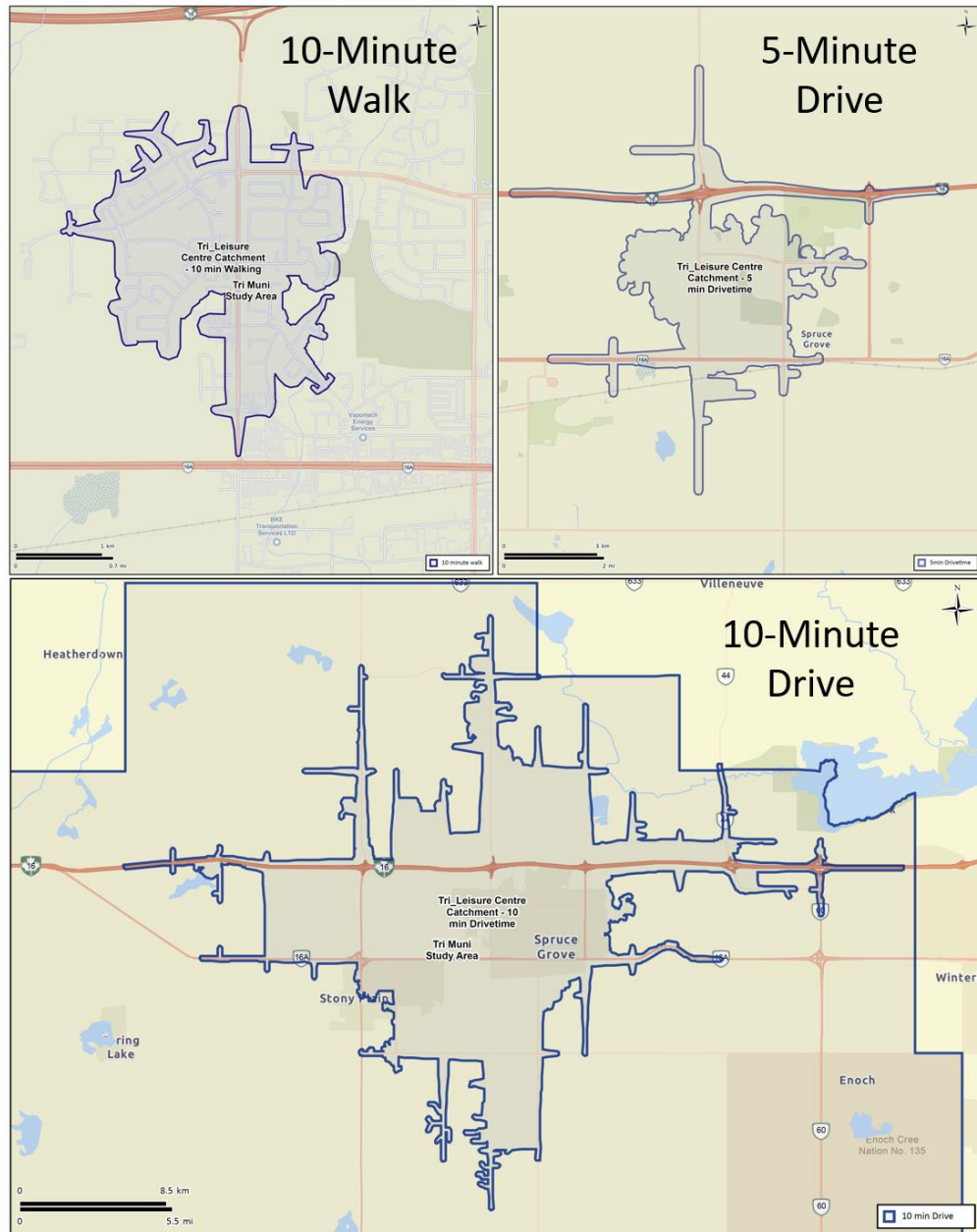
- 100% of study area residents live within a 30-minute drive to indoor pools, arenas or gymnastics facilities.
- 100% of study area residents live within a 15-minute drive to non-major indoor amenities.
- 95% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 71% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 86% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to trails.
- 33% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to trails.

The following section combines information found in the market context and planning context sections of the report. The analysis applies catchments and service targets outlined in current planning documents and relates them to the residents they serve.

Tri-Leisure Centre Example Catchments

Example catchments of are shown extending from the Tri-Leisure Centre representing a 10-minute walk, a 5-minute drive, and a 10-minute drive.

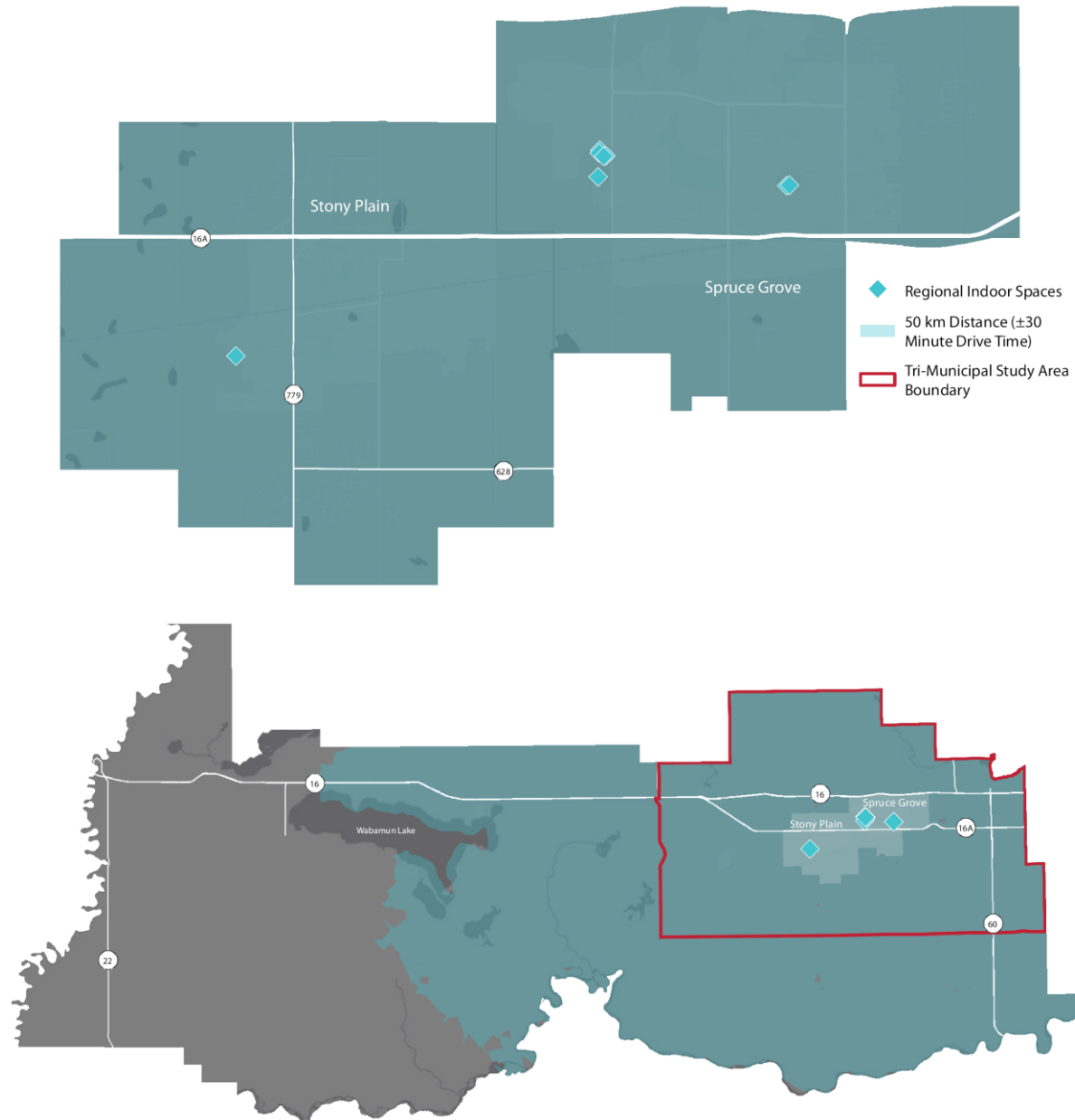
Characteristic	Within a 10 Minute Walk	Within a 5 Minute Drive	Within a 10 Minute Drive
Population	7,299	19,654	49,916
Household Average Income	\$114,533	\$120,922	\$122,141
Visible Minority	8.6%	6.8%	5.4%
Perceived Health - Excellent	27%	23%	21%
Physical Activity Indicator - Active	61%	58%	55%
Physical Activity Indicator - Sedentary	12%	17%	20%



Regional Indoor Facilities

Analysis of the region's indoor facilities has found that 100% of study area residents live within a 30-minute drive (50 km) to indoor pools, arenas or a gymnastics facility.

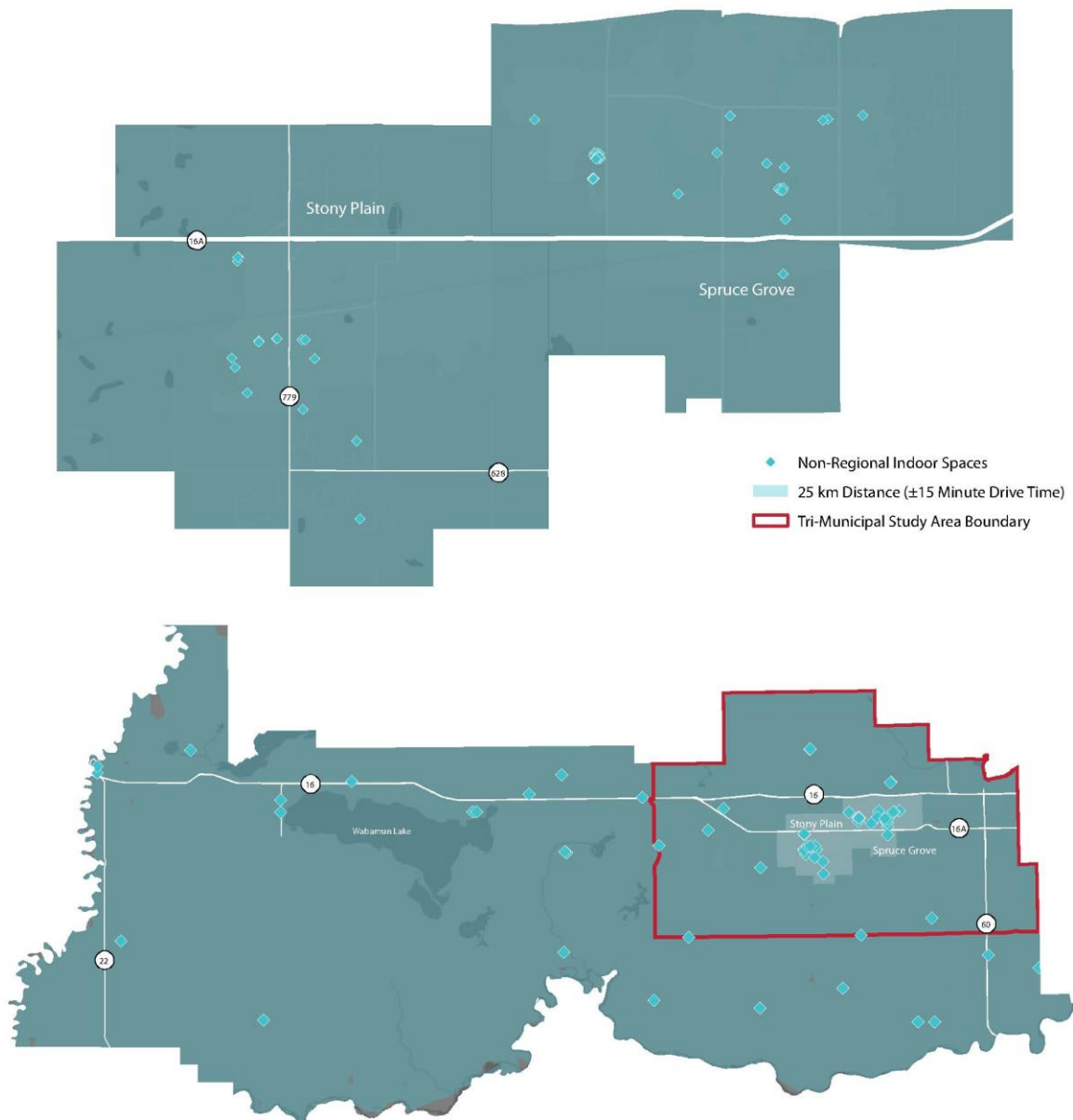
Characteristic	Within a 30-Min Drive	Not within a 30-Min Drive
Population Distribution	100%	0%



Non-Regional Indoor Amenities

All regional and study area residents live within a 15-minute drive (25 km) to non-major indoor amenities (i.e. amenities that are not arenas, pools, or dedicated gymnastics).

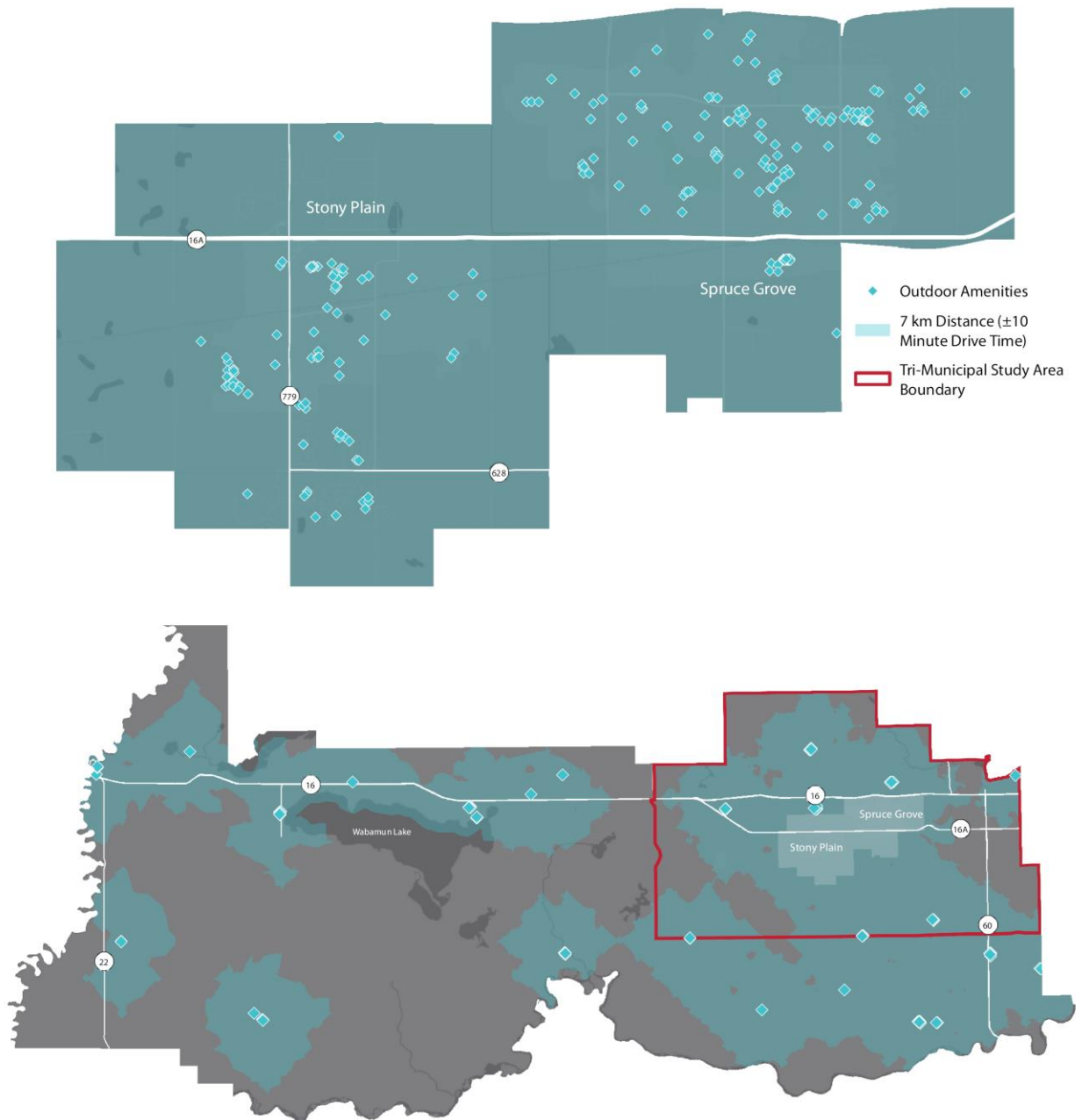
Characteristic	Within a 15-Min Drive	Not within a 15-Min Drive
Population Distribution	100%	0%



Driving to Outdoor Amenities

Analysis of the region's outdoor recreation amenities found that 95% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive (7 km) to amenities.

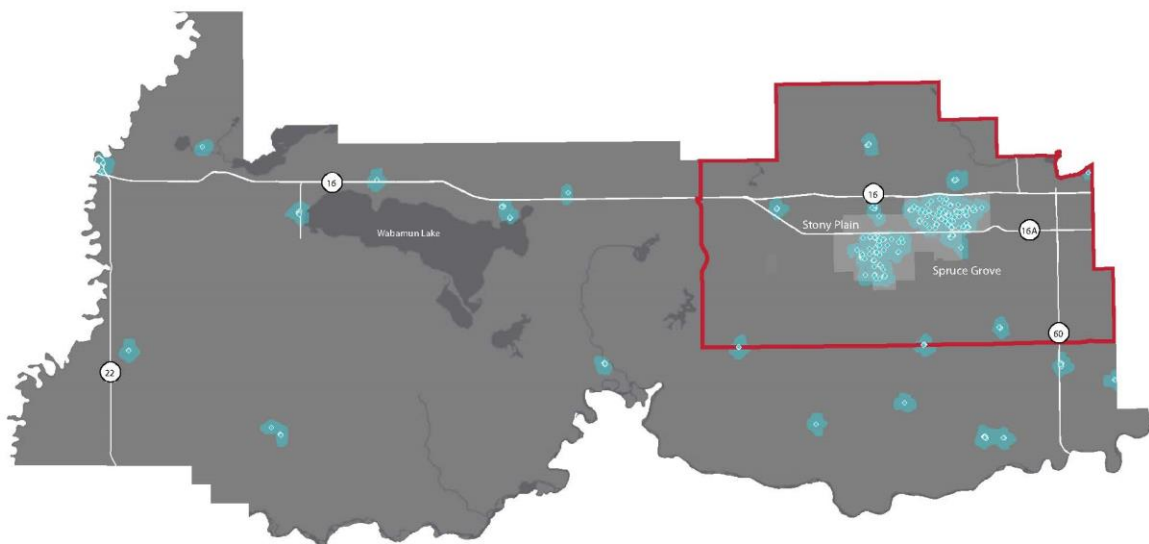
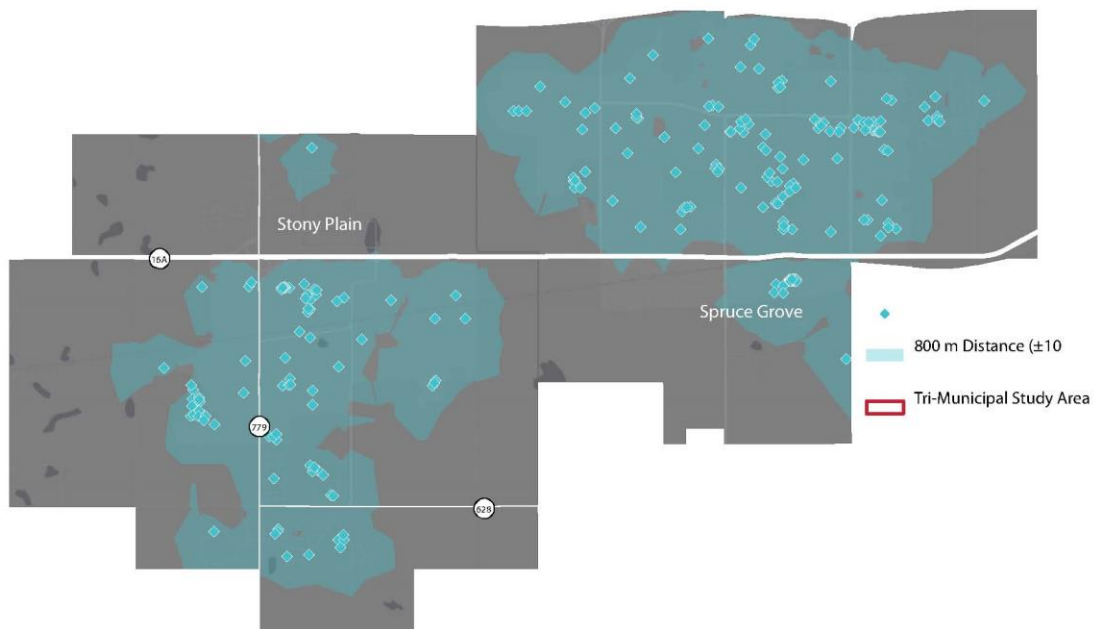
Characteristic	Within a 10-Min Drive	Not within a 10-Min Drive
Land Area Distribution	80%	20%
Population Distribution	95%	5%
Median Household Income	\$107,352	\$118,571
Aboriginal Identity	8.4%	21.6%



Walking to Outdoor Amenities

Analysis of the region's outdoor amenities found that 71% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk (800 m).

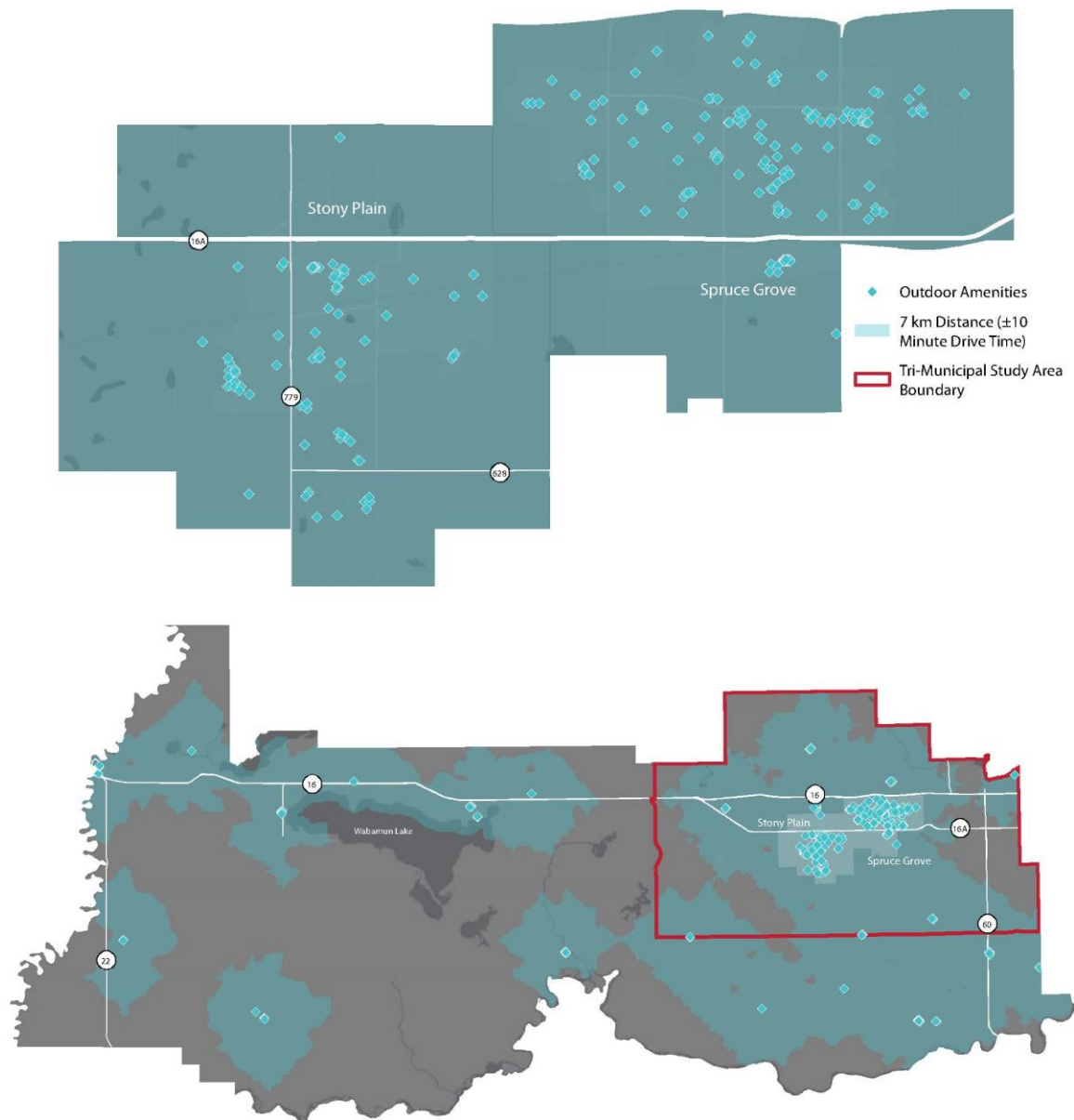
Characteristic	Within a 10-Min Walk	Not within a 10-Min Walk
Land Area Distribution	15%	85%
Population Distribution	71%	29%
Median Household Income	\$104,409	\$118,154
Aboriginal Identity	7.4%	13.0%
Physical Activity Indicator - Sedentary	19%	26%



Driving to Trails

Analysis of the region's trails found that 86% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive (7 km) to trails.

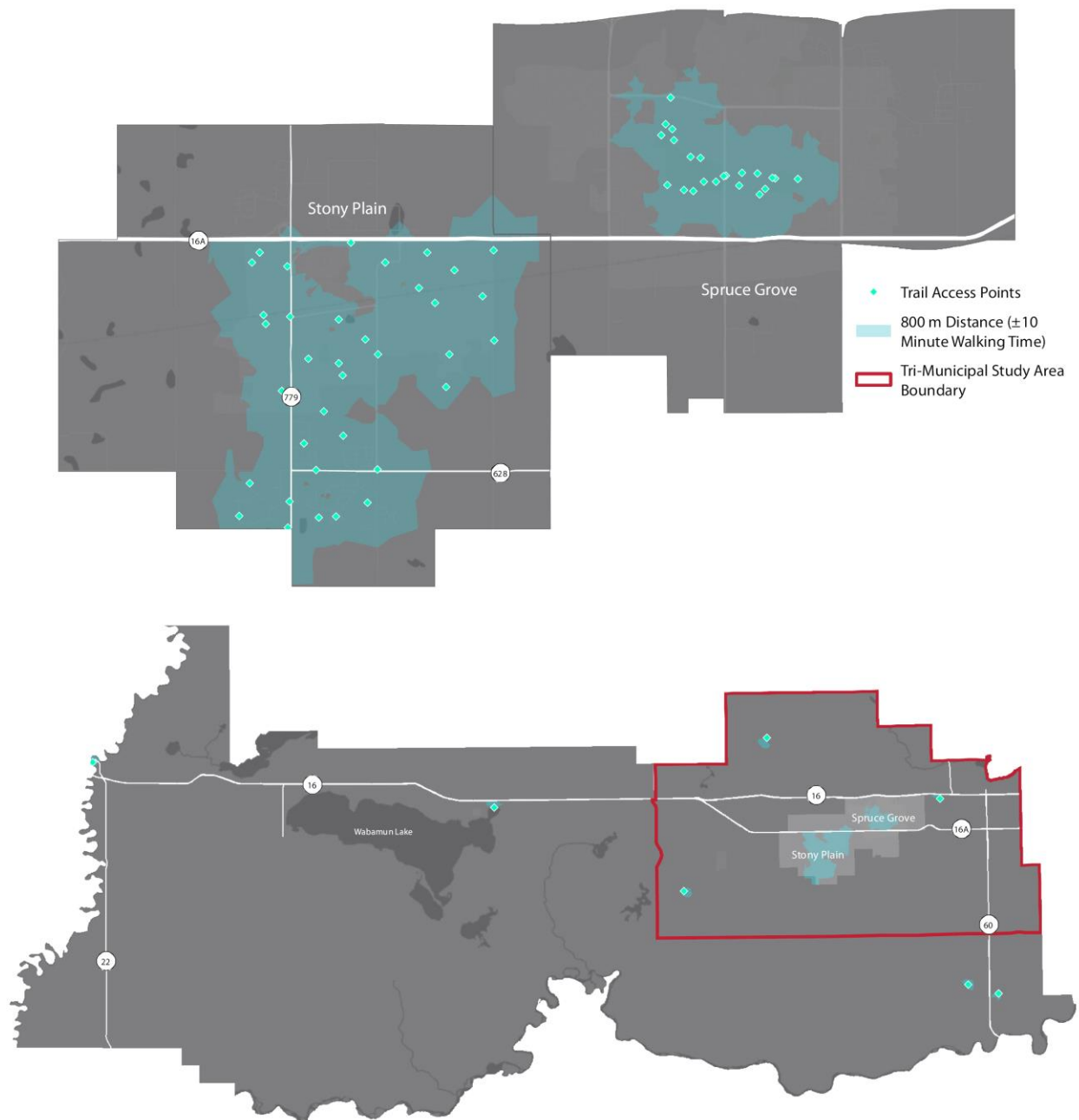
Characteristic	Within a 10-Min Drive	Not within a 10-Min Drive
Land Area Distribution	54%	46%
Population Distribution	86%	14%
Median Household Income	\$106,219	\$120,575
Aboriginal Identity	7.6%	17.9%
Physical Activity Indicator - Sedentary	20%	28%



Walking to Trails

Analysis of trails in the region found that 33% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk (800 m).

Characteristic	Within a 10-Min Walk	Not within a 10-Min Walk
Land Area Distribution	5%	95%
Population Distribution	33%	67%
Median Household Income	93,986	114,746
Aboriginal Identity	7.4%	9.8%



Preliminary Analysis & Next Steps

Key Takeaways

- There are many more strengths than weaknesses upon which to develop the Recreation Strategy.
- While there are a number of threats that will need attention, there are plentiful opportunities.
- This Stage 1 Report presents the current context as it relates to the delivery of recreation and parks services in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- The Stage 1 Report is the foundation upon which the Recreation Strategy will be developed.
- A visioning session with the Administrative Committee during which potential strategies and regional opportunities will be discussed. This discussion will be used to shape the draft Recreation Strategy.

The key takeaways from the different sections of this report are considered and categorized into the component elements of the SWOT. Certain items may be considered to fit into more than one section; alternatively different audiences may view items differently. Each key takeaway has been categorized into the component with the best fit.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The three regional partners have completed numerous recreation and parks plans in the past, some collaboratively and some independently.
- Recreation and parks are important to each partner municipality as evidenced by the plethora of strategic plans developed.
- Regional recreation planning has already occurred related to:
 - outdoor infrastructure and trails as well as indoor recreation facilities
 - Regional event hosting
 - Supporting community capacity building
 - Strengthening linkages and collaboration
 - Strengthening recreation programs and services
- Recreation and parks can help achieve desired strategic outcomes for provincial and federal governments related to, but not limited to public health, environment, and social cohesion and inclusion (including reconciliation).
- The region has a solid foundation for regional recreation and parks delivery, which is manifested in the TLC Part 9 and many other agreements and initiatives in place
- More specific to the TLC Part 9:
 - the current governance structure is seen as an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC;
 - the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality;

- a large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC organization;
 - although not unanimous, the current model in which municipalities share budget requirements for the TLC on a population basis is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities; and
 - all but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded There is a desire for enhanced collaboration in the region as well as more clarity and vision around what constitutes regional recreation and parks planning.
- The region currently collaborates, either informally or formally, on items such as fee setting, allocations (for ice) and marketing and promotions
- Municipal partners use various delivery methods to provide recreation services to residents.
- As a region, municipal government spends an average of 14.5% of overall expenses on community services (11.7% for Parkland County, 10.8% for Spruce Grove and 28.1% for Stony Plain).
- As a region, municipal government spends an average \$359.67 per person on community services (\$305.76 per person for Parkland County, \$265.48 per person for Spruce Grove and \$648.99 per person for Stony Plain).
- There is a variety of cost sharing agreements in place between Parkland County and both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The basis for these agreements includes observed utilization.
- The Tri-Leisure Centre Part 9 Corporation is a municipal partnership between the three municipalities that owns and operates the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and operates the Stony Plain outdoor pool and the Spruce Grove outdoor rink. Each partner has a single share in the Corporation. Any capital and operational deficit requiring subsidy is based on the population of each municipality within the service area.
- The Tri-Municipal Region population is characterized by the following:
 - Study area population of 71,818 in 2016, with a projected growth of 9% the population is approximately 78,000 today. The regional population could reach 144,444 by 2059
 - The median age of resident in 2016 was 43 years in Parkland County, 34 years in City of Spruce Grove, and 38 years in the Town of Stony Plain
 - Overall residents are fairly well educated with over half obtaining a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree
 - The average household income is within the study region in 2016 was \$126,843
- Residents of the Region have very good perception of their health and fitness levels and their favorite recreation activities include baseball/softball, hockey and curling and favorite leisure activities include camping, ATV/snowmobiling, and fishing
- Residents are well served with a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Within the Tri-Municipal Region study area there are:
 - 63 indoor recreation amenities
 - 251 outdoor recreation amenities
 - 80 parks
 - 139 kilometres of known trails and pathways
- There is a variety of programs, events, and opportunities offered in the Region

- 100% of study area residents live within a 30-minute drive to indoor pools, arenas or gymnastics.
- 100% of study area residents live within a 15-minute drive to non-major indoor amenities.
- 95% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 71% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to outdoor recreation amenities.
- 86% of study area residents live within a 10-minute drive to trails.
- 33% of study area residents live within a 10-minute walk to trails.

Weaknesses

- Youth and adults are not moving as much as they should. Physical and wellness activity plays an important role in the management of chronic health conditions and mental health.
- Recreation can be a medium to influence positive change in communities as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This refers to ethnicity, gender identity, ability, and socio-economic status.
- The recreation and parks department structures and hierarchy within each municipality are not uniform across the three municipalities. This has impacted the ability to form and strengthen relationships.
- Recreation and parks initiatives can be the subject of politics across the Councils. This can hinder regional implementation.
- There is less collaboration related to community group support (capacity building) and the provision of direct programming
- The total estimated modernized replacement cost for all indoor and outdoor amenities exceeds \$400 million. Using this estimated figure, annual lifecycle contributions can be calculated as follows:
 - Minimum recommended annual contribution (1.7%): \$6.8 M
 - Maximum recommended annual contribution (2.5%): \$10.0 M
- Those regional recreation facilities and spaces in which utilization is tracked have capacity; utilization information across the region is not standardized and gaps exist
- 27% of regional residents live within a 10-minute walk to trails.

Opportunities

- Recreation and parks benefits transcend municipal boundaries.
- Recreation and parks benefits justify public investment in recreation and parks.
- Recreation and parks benefits, primarily those that are indirect, cannot be escaped by regional residents and translate into social good.
- Recreation and parks provide indirect and direct benefits in the Tri-Municipal Region.
- A greater alignment between recreation and public health should be established.
- Key trends in recreation and parks that may influence the provision of services in the Tri-Municipal region include:
 - Changing User Expectations and Behaviours
 - Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation
 - Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation
 - Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health
 - Overscheduled Children

- Physical Activity and Older Adults
 - Sport and Recreation Tourism
 - Performance Measurement in Recreation and Parks
- Meaningful engagement of all partners in planning and decision making for regional recreation and parks is a must
- Interpersonal trust and informal relationships are key to successfully navigating inter-organizational barriers to regional implementation
- Reciprocity is important for regional implementation. For some, this may include a focus on equitable contributions, shifting away from expectations of equality
- A high degree of potential exists to expand regional service delivery in several areas including, but not limited to, recreation planning, fitness centre and arena operations, and wellness/fitness programming.
- There are no standard approach to regional collaboration related to recreation and parks in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, the Province of Alberta or beyond.
- There are multiple opportunities in both recreation and parks / environment in which the three municipalities deliver similar services in similar manners. They present good opportunities for regional provision.
- Some new practices that have occurred in the recent past where municipalities have collaborated to provide recreation include:
 - Creating regional recreation advisory boards
 - Hiring regional staff to coordinate recreation
- Related to cost sharing, some new practices being considered in Alberta include:
 - Considering both cost and responsibility sharing in agreements
 - Defining a benefitting 'market area' for different types and scales of recreation services
 - Breaking down cost and responsibility by both population and assessment ability to pay
- Regional collaboration is being contemplated in the Alberta beyond the ratification or negotiation of cost sharing agreements. Some regional initiatives underway in the province include developing regional policies dealing with user fees and allocations, creating consistent user code of conduct and cancellation policies, standardizing the collection of utilization data and conducting regional needs assessments (surveys and research) and promoting and marketing recreation and parks opportunities regionally.

Threats

- The COVID-19 pandemic will influence the future design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places; operator readiness for possible future events will need to be front of mind in planning activities.
- Applying a climate change lens to the design and operation of recreation and parks facilities, spaces and places will impact decision making and action. Climate change will also impact people's participation in and their demand for some activities.
- Maintaining existing service levels requires continual reinvestment and appropriate asset management practice.
- Both the City of Spruce Grove (event centre with ice arena) and Town of Stony Plain (multipurpose recreation facility) have recreation related capital projects they are

contemplating; Parkland County is opening a new community hub, including an outdoor pool, in Entwistle (outside the study area)

Next Steps

This Stage 1 Report describes the current context, with historical precedents, for how recreation and parks services are delivered within the three partner municipalities in the Tri-Municipal Region. Importantly, the regional delivery of recreation and parks services is identified as well along with an assessment of services that could migrate from individual municipal delivery to regional delivery. This environmental scan and assessment are the foundation upon which the Recreation Strategy will be developed.

A visioning session will be convened with the Administrative Committee and the Integration Consultant. During that session a shared understanding of the current context will be reached after which a guided discussion of potential strategic opportunities will occur. Through that discussion the perspectives of the municipal representatives will be understood as it relates to the potential for several strategic opportunities. Based upon the discussion and the input from the Administrative Committee, a draft of the Recreation Strategy will be developed.

Appendix 1: Policy Review

Tri-Municipal Policy and Planning Documents

Parkland County

Policy/Planning Document	Why is it Important?
Corporate Plan	A short-term strategic document detailing strategic focus areas, strategies, projects, and desired outcomes.
Long Term Strategic Plan	Long term strategic document that sets the vision and guiding principles for the County over the next 25 years.
Municipal Development Plan	Long range, statutory document that communicates the long-term desired land use for a community, and how growth will impact the evolution of the municipality
Operating and Capital Plan	A multi-year forecast that indicates future operational and financial trends to develop high level estimates of tax impacts.
Community Scan and Analysis	A feeder document into the ICSP and MDP. This document is an analysis and current state of a wide range of factors in the community including population growth, demographics, land use, development and economic activity, jobs and employment, housing, parks and recreation, agriculture, and plans affecting land use and development
Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan	Strategic document to provide long term direction for Parks, Recreation and Culture in the County over the next 10 years. Includes Findings, Recommendations, and a Parks and Recreation Classification System
Tourism Action Plan	A strategic document that details opportunities to diversify the County's economy through tourism. Includes, pillars of action, an implementation plan, and some potential key performance indicators.

City of Spruce Grove

Policy/Planning Document	Why is it Important?
Corporate Plan	A strategic document that details operating and capital initiatives (approved, and future) to support and achieve strategic goals. This document also includes fiscal plan information, and brief business area profiles
Municipal Development Plan	Long range, statutory document that communicates the long-term desired land use for a community, and how growth will impact the evolution of the municipality
Strategic Plan	Long term strategic document that sets the vision and guiding principles for the City over the next 15 years.
Parks and Open Space Master Plan	A comprehensive source of open space policy and a guide for its development and use. Includes a townscape analysis, an open space inventory and analysis, an open space concept plan, and implementation strategies.

Town of Stony Plain

Policy/Planning Document	Why is it Important?
Corporate Plan	A strategic document that details operating and capital initiatives to support and achieve strategic goals. This document also includes fiscal plan information, and brief business area profiles
Municipal Development Plan	Long range, statutory document that communicates the long-term desired land use for a community, and how growth will impact the evolution of the municipality
Strategic Plan	Strategic document aligned to the community's top priorities for the next four years. Identifies overarching goals and key actions to support them
Active Transportation Strategy	Document to establish vision and direction for Active Transportation in the community. Includes components of infrastructure design, sidewalk and trail connectivity, and promotion/enableness strategies.
Parks and Open Space Master Plan	Guiding document for parks and open spaces, includes recommendations around parks and open space supply, planning processes and specific parks, amenities and use, and management and operations. Includes a map of existing parks and trails in the community.

Provincial and National Policy and Planning Documents

Plan or Policy	Why is it Important?	How will it Influence this Strategy?
Active Alberta (2011 – 2021)	Active Alberta is the Province's overarching strategy to guide the delivery of recreation, active living, and sport opportunities in Alberta to 2021. The Policy identifies recreation active living, and sport as being important to Albertans and their lives. There are six core outcomes identified in the policy, one of which speaks directly towards collaboration. Active Coordinated System: all partners in providing recreation, active living, and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.	Coordination is an important element of collaboration and the Active Alberta policy provides direct support to partners involved in recreation to work more closely together
A Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)	A Framework for Recreation Canada is a guiding document to support recreation providers across Canada. Developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, the Framework provides a philosophic foundation for the recreation sector and affirms recreation as an essential public service. The Framework establishes a vision for recreation delivery in Canada, as well as five goals to help guide service providers. The Framework was endorsed by all Provincial and Territorial governments in 2015.	The Framework provides a common starting point for recreation planning and a foundation for national and regional-level alignment within the recreation sector. Such alignment can bolster community cases for government investment in regional-scale projects and initiatives.
Parks for All (2017)	The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association developed the Parks for All Action Plan to establish, a common vision and strategic directions to support parks and recreation providers across Canada. The Plan presents four strategic directions – collaborate, connect, conserve, and lead.	While all four strategic directions are important to consider, for the purpose of this report, collaborate is perhaps the most important: nurture partnerships between Indigenous organizations and the broader parks community; collaborate with new and diverse sectors; and, strategize beyond parks boundaries
Canadian Sport for Life	Sport for Life (CS4L) is a broader movement promoting quality sport and physical activity, led by the Sport for Life Society. The movement advocates for two key concepts – long-term	CS4L calls to action include better aligning municipal plan and sport strategy development with CS4L

	athlete development and physical literacy. To achieve positive outcomes related to these concepts, CS4L also has several 'calls to action' for municipalities to advance the cause.	principles, greater collaboration and alignment overall, and working with and supporting various Sports Councils across Canada.
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	To redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) included 94 Calls to Action in their final report. Regarding recreation, the TRC identifies a few actions to advance reconciliation, including focusing on health goals and measurable outcomes, education of sport history, long-term athlete development, and amending specific acts and policies to ensure inclusivity of Indigenous people	What unifies all the TRCs calls to action is the critical role of collaboration – between Indigenous communities, non-Indigenous communities, all levels of government, service providers, and so forth – as a driver of reconciliation.

Appendix 2: TLC Survey Responses

The survey responses from the TLC Survey of the municipal CAOs, TLC Board members, and members of the Project Committee not included in the aforementioned positions is presented below in its raw format. All efforts have been made to ensure comments cannot be attributed to anyone individual. To protect anonymity comments have been adjusted slightly⁵³ or removed altogether if an adjustment was not possible.

Using a Part 9 Company protects elected officials on each of the three Councils from political pressures they might otherwise face to influence TLC operations, programming, and pricing in a way that may bias it towards one municipality over the others.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	4
Agree	8
No position / not sure	1
Disagree	2

Comments

Council members need to recognize and respect the arm's length nature of management decisions in the TLC. I don't believe there is any pressure from councils as to operations, though there continues to be significant limitations on some financial aspects (such as the ability to utilize reserves). So while the Part 9 is separate from Councils, there are still significant restraints on the ability of Part 9 full independence. I think of it less as protecting the elected officials, and more as protecting the interests of the residents in the community, such that the organization (TLC) is free from undue political influence from any one 'municipal' stakeholder. Facility (residents) first; councils second.

If the board is strong

It isn't a true Part 9 model so that is part of the problem. The "entity" does not own assets or take on the risk so it actually creates more political pressure in that the muni's are required to backstop and fund but then told they can't influence operational decisions. Citizens still don't understand it is run by a separate entity and think it is run by muni's with a shared partnership.

Ownership and equal representation from all 3 municipalities provides a level of protection from influence from one of the 3 owners. The collective municipal owners have a direct ability to influence and guide the decisions of the Part 9 as the Councils must collectively approve the financial operations annually

The TLC is effective currently and will remain so if the board remains in the hands of the public members (majority) opposed to elected officials that it

⁵³ Any adjustments made have been done in a manner so as not to change the meaning of the comment.

once use to be and if the elected officials do not try to influence the decision making process

TLC decisions are still heavily influenced by both councils and administrations.

We have been fortunate that the delegated elected officials have been able to separate themselves from their role as Councillors when making decisions as part of the Part 9 company

We have heard that in the past Councillors from the three municipalities were being approached to deal with operational issues at TLC. That is something that TLC Management should and is dealing with rather than councils. The Part 9 structure helps lessen this situation.

Using a Part 9 Company protects TLC management from competing political pressures they might otherwise face from elected Council members and / or municipal administrators from the three municipalities.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	3
Agree	6
No position / not sure	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

Being owners of the facility, the 3 municipalities have the ability to influence the decisions of TLC management annually during various meetings held at the General Manger level. 2020 is an example of where those discussions were conducted. A TLC deficit defaults to the municipal owners, direction to influence operations to protect against a deficit positions were conducted.

Far more political pressures for TLC management compared to operational staff in other municipally run facilities.

I some what disagree, being that the management understands full well the power of the owners.

Other than some financial elements (i.e.. the use of reserves), TLC management (under Board direction and guidance) has endeavored to operate at arm's length in a competitive environment. It is important to note that competition in the tri-region for many of the TLC's services (non-aquatic) is significantly higher/greater now than when the TLC first opened. The board has one responsibility...governance of the TLC Facility for the benefit of its users. That is independent of any "community" based interests/politics.

Under the current model, there are challenges in making sure the TLC can be equally responsive to the needs of the residents of all three municipalities in an appropriately balanced manner.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	3
Agree	3
No position / not sure	1
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	2

Comments

Each municipality may have fundament differences in recreational services that its residents are seeking

I think the model works

The current model makes comparisons to other similar models difficult as there are very limited number of recreational facilities set up like the TLC. As such, key performance indicators such as the recovery rate are not comparable (such as when other rec facilities in other municipalities have their admin functions taken care of by the muni). However, to be clear, the ability to change strategy is much easier under this model than if solely under a municipal model.

The model isn't the problem. The problem is the geography. The TLC is not centrally located to get the most bang for the buck for County residents. If a sister facility located further west were to be established and run under the same structure, the residents living in Stony and west would be "better" served due to being closer to the programs.

The past year has been a challenge due to Covid-19 and budget is a huge challenge and how to deal with that challenge has been met with some resistance from the 3 municipalities.

The TLC is operated in a manner that meets the greater needs of each community. Being located in Spruce Grove may provide a perception to some the needs of Spruce Grove are being prioritized. That is not the reality.

Under the current model, it is a challenge for municipalities to readily coordinate, where appropriate, their own recreation planning and programming elements with the TLC's planning and programming.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	1
Agree	3
No position / not sure	4
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

I am not involved in TLC operations; cannot comment.

Ice allocation, rates, etc. It makes it harder to build relationships with user groups when from a customer service perspective they have several entities with varying rules/procedures to go through.

Look back at what the basic requirements were twenty years ago - they may not have changed. Let private recreation fill the gap

Spruce Grove and Stony Plain have been working on rec facilities in their own communities. While there are needs in each centre, each of these facilities have the opportunity to directly compete with the TLC and could potentially reduce revenues in the TLC, thus potentially requiring further muni contributions. It is hard to reconcile the implications of a TLC owner setting up its own operations that could conceivably undermine its investment in the TLC. We've also heard that some muni's may also be looking at external parties to operate the new sites - not sure that this is an option that would benefit the TLC.

TLC management benefits from consultation with the municipalities' recreation staff. Nobody wins if we are cannibalizing programs. The Cooperation in the TLC running the Stony Outdoor Pool is a good example of how the various communities can work together with the TLC. I'm not be opposed to increased cooperation even to the extent to run TLC programs at offsite municipal facilities.

There is a collaborative approach to programming with municipal and TLC staff to meet the greater regional needs.

Municipalities should have more input to setting rates for TLC programs and services offered within the TLC.

Value	Count
Agree	2
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	3

Comments

Absolutely not. The TLC Board and Mgmt. look to be competitive with all other recreational providers without any pressure on rates from the municipalities.

Given the sizable annual deficits covered by the municipal owners, discussions have included service offerings and operational priorities at a General Manager level. As financial challenges continue to impact municipal planning there may be a desire to play a larger role operations.

If we are independent then hands off. The 3 municipalities need to give targets as to cost recovery, also whether or not the first user groups to be served should be residents vs non-resident users

In the current structure, all annual budgets require the owners approval, which is ultimate input for setting rates and services offered at TLC.

Not under current model.

Perhaps; but it's a slippery slope to being too involved in day-to-day operations....

The Board oversees rates on the recommendation of TLC Management. The delicate balance of fees and charges versus facility usage is best managed by those closest to the business. They are best suited to asses and analyze pricing sensitivity and market rates. The Municipalities have input into the budget that can have impact on the fee structures. That is sufficient input.

The municipalities should communicate and partner more with the TLC to establish regional pricing and discuss opportunities to partner in programming

The current TLC Board structure has three representatives from each municipality, one member of Council and two public members selected by the TLC Board from a slate of candidates offered by each municipality. Overall, I believe this is an effective model for providing guidance and governance for TLC operations in the interests of the three municipalities overall.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	6
Agree	7
No position / not sure	1
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

Can't think of a better model, although possibly choosing reps. through the election process - like school boards - is doable (i.e. some municipalities have elected 'parks boards')

Its better with only 1 elected official vs. 2 as it was before but again I don't believe this is a true part 9. This board effectively functions more as an advisory body as most of the decisions they make don't have associated risk knowing that the muni's are the backstop for funding and covering for issues related to their decisions. COVID has been a glaring example of this.

Municipal Council members are required to remove their Council hat when acting as a TLC Board member. It is very challenging for an elected Official to transition from an elected Official to a community member. Elected members are asked to bring the elected opinion to Board meetings, but are asked not be elected Officials on the Board. Contradictory.

Obviously the owners (the three municipalities) require a seat at the table. By moving to two public members and one elected member from each municipality, the board truly can stay out of local political issues to focus on vision and mission we have for the facility: VISION - The TLC is the premier recreation provider for the communities it serves. MISSION - We bring community together to inspire quality life experiences and healthy, active living.

The current structure covers for the transition of members into and out of the individual Board positions while maintaining continuity as a complete entity

The move to two unelected officials to the TLC board 6 years ago was of tremendous benefit as it effectively removed the "political" aspect and pressure on the Board. Board executive positions being held by non-elected officials is also important. This move has also led to the TLC being operated in a more entrepreneurial spirit.

This model seems to work well. Municipalities have influence with one council rep but decision seldom seem political based when the political view only comes from one voice from each municipality.

Having the TLC as an arm's length organization with its own operations, management, and support staff is more effective than having the municipalities perform any or all of these functions.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	4
Agree	9
Strongly disagree	2

Comments

As long as there are three separate municipalities with three different lists of priorities/management structures, departments, budget philosophies, etc. I cannot imagine how the three could run the TLC with one voice like the board currently operates.

It would be more effective if we could expand the part 9 to manage all recreation.

The only way it is more effective is in managing in a small way the expectations of the partners. We have far more successful examples of inter-municipal agreements where one provides a service for the other through agreement. In this case there are increased management costs, HR costs, finance staff costs, and other redundancies that would be greatly diminished if run by one municipality or another third party that already has an operational infrastructure in place. This is not an "entity" but rather a facility not unlike many more.
the separation is good

There are elements of the operation that are duplications of existing municipal services. Examples include, HR, Supervisory Positions, Asset Management, Operations staff. Operated by a municipal owner may result in some savings to the overall staff costs.

TLC as an arms length organization is the only way to ensure regional engagement, regional use and financial support from all 3 municipalities.

While I generally agree with the statement, there could potentially be situations where there are redundancies between administrative functions (such as perhaps payroll and accounting). However, given the size of the TLC budget, I don't believe this to be the case.

As a totally separate corporate entity at arm's length from the three municipalities, the TLC Part 9 model is the most effective way of planning and delivering the TLC's services in the fairest manner to residents of all municipalities.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	5
Agree	7
No position / not sure	1
Strongly disagree	2

Comments

It isn't a totally separate corporate entity. Not in the least.

The Board's view is always focussed on what is best for the TLC facility, its users, and its employees! The Board operates with that in mind without feeling pressure from individual communities' politics. The Board titles are really only relevant when vacancies need to be filled. During the meetings, the sole focus is on the needs/issues/planning/budgeting relating to the governance of the facility.

The Part 9 is operating like a municipal facility with an operational deficit subsidized by the municipalities. Is the Part 9 in a position to adjust operations to meet approved annual operational budget? Are the municipal owners a backstop to challenges to annual budgets?

TLC as an arms length organization is the only way to ensure regional engagement, regional use and financial support from all 3 municipalities.

Work continues to be required on the concept of TLC being a "totally separate corporate entity". There are at times confusion as to whether the TLC is really autonomous and able to operate as such.

It would not be practical to have the TLC operated by one of the municipalities using service agreements with the others to ensure it meets the needs of its regional partners.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	4
Agree	5
No position / not sure	2
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	2

Comment

Dependent on particulars within a negotiated service agreement to meet current needs of regional partners

I believe the creation of a separate entity is by far superior to the facility being operating by one muni with a service agreement. A service agreement could potentially lead to disagreements between cost sharing, overhead burden, etc. By being separate, the TLC should not have these issues, as long as it is fully transparent and accountable.

Since tweaks were made to the TLC governance plan about 6 years ago, the TLC is being governed efficiently and effectively. The current model may prove helpful in an expanded recreational plan involving future facilities or programs.

There are countless examples where this is done including other recreation or culture facilities.

There is an increased appetite with the 3 municipalities to find more regional alignment and service efficiency. Examples include: RCMP Detachment, Accessible Transit, Regional Transit. An outcome of this regional plan work is to find regional service efficiencies that may result in positive financial reductions. Operations of the TLC by a municipal partner should be explored and compared to the current model.

Under the current model, it is difficult for the TLC Board to hold the TLC accountable for performance.

Value	Count
No position / not sure	6
Disagree	7

Strongly disagree 2

Comments

I believe the Board has the ability to. The municipalities are in the background to support financially vs having to make hard decisions to adjust operations.

I wouldn't say it is difficult but I would question whether it happens knowing there is a municipalities as the backstop for funding and support.

Management faces intense scrutiny during planning and budgeting sessions. The Board views itself as stewards of the facility.

The TLC board holds TLC management accountable for performance against established goals and objective.

I think we should investigate the potential of expanding the role of the TLC Part 9 Company from managing just the one facility (plus the Stony Plain outdoor pool seasonally) to being responsible for other facilities and programs as well.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	3
Agree	9
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

Because it is limited currently in terms of risk and ownership and because it is basically one facility not unlike others that are run municipally, I don't think there is the expertise in the leadership and board in order to expand their role.

I think coordination within the entire region would provide the best service levels. Plus would eliminate any redundancies (i.e.. admin expenditures) and provide economies of scale in purchasing and other contractual arrangements. Plus it would promote a more entrepreneurial spirit in managing the sites.

I think it is worth investigating but not committing to such an endeavor. This would be a huge shift in responsibility and workload and would need to come with significant financial support from the municipalities

If the TLC was a true Part 9, this may be a more viable option. Before this is considered some time should be dedicated to a municipally operated or 3rd party model.

The new 'Parkland Iceplex' (the long-awaited new ice arenas for the area) should be built & funded using the TLC model.

The TLC is a success. For several years the TLC has expressed an interest and desire to work with municipalities to expand its sphere of influence in healthy living across the geographic boundaries of the three owners. The current facility is limited by the size and location. For the TLC to grow in its role in healthy living the TLC is looking forward to playing a role in future recreational facilities or programs. "Stepping on toes" has always been something to avoid. The Stony Plain Pool experience, however, has provided evidence that working with the municipalities can result in favourable results. Collaborating and coordinating programs, training, staffing, etc. could be a win/win/win/win proposition for all parties.

The cost of operating the TLC through a Part 9 Company are not significantly higher than if it were operated as part of one of the municipalities.

Value	Count
Strongly agree	2
Agree	5
No position / not sure	5
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

Certainly, there are some costs that a municipality can spread amongst all of their operations that the TLC cannot (HR, advertising, to a degree maintenance, etc.). There may be some efficiencies to be gained there (assuming only one municipality ran a facility).

Operating costs are not higher (may actually be lower as has the ability to negotiate its own contracts). However, in the case of administration, there could be a potential for redundant costs (i.e.. payroll, accounting, etc.), though only if the muni could absorb these functions without hiring additional staff.

There has not been enough work completed to support this statement.

The current budgeting process in which the TLC submits a budget for Board approval which is then sent to each municipality for funding their portions may be effective for the TLC, but it is a challenge for the municipalities as they allocate their financial resources.

Value	Count
Agree	2
No position / not sure	4
Disagree	8
Strongly disagree	1

Comments

Discussions at the General Manager or CAO level can influence the budget presented to the Board. It may be a challenge moving forward for the municipal owners to fund future expected levels. This may result in a challenging approval process that risks the removal of Board autonomy

I believe that the municipalities have final budget approval of TLC Budget not the Board

I do not see how the budgeting process varies from a similar process when large municipal department must submit budgets to their manager. Quite the opposite true because the Board reviews budget proposals shortly after getting official approval for the previous year. There are budgeting deadlines established in the Memorandum of Agreement that governs the Board budgeting process.

I don't see how this can be the case. The TLC budget is prepared and submitted well in advance of each muni requirements (would be at the same time as other muni departments would submit budgets). Operating funding requirements are generally fairly consistent, and the capital requirements have been well documented and shared with the munis, so there should be no surprises.

It's fine. The challenge comes when there is a deficit and the TLC makes decisions they feel are best, as directed by the Board, but then come to the municipality to cover those decisions.

Please share any other thoughts you might have about its current or future use as a tool for regional recreation collaboration.

Current structure is proven and low risk model in operation of 2 facility(s); TLC and SP Pool. It makes sense to explore opportunity to take advantage of current structure in operation of additional facilities.

We keep focusing on whether the Part 9 does this or that without actually defining and clarifying whether it truly is a Part 9. It may meet the definition in theory but in a practical sense it is not operating as a Part 9 in my view. I believe we could save a great deal of money with having one municipality run it, with detailed and specific agreements in place. Another third party operator should be explored with significant operational infrastructure in place.

The biggest factor obviously is funding. A recreational facility such as the TLC is not likely to ever be able to be self-sustaining, particularly while at the same time being competitive in rates where it has to be and offering services to residents that would not otherwise be supplied by a private entity (in particular the aquatics). There are limited revenue sources, and at the end of the day, there is only one taxpayer that can support the facility from a muni level. The ability for the TLC to access other forms of revenue (i.e.. concerts) is important.

The current governance structure (Part 9) is an innovative solution to a unique challenge. Until there is a Regional Municipality of Parkland (including all three municipalities) where all services are consolidated, managed by one department and paid for under one budget I would be hard pressed to come up with a more effective or efficient governance model. The original concept of the TLC was leading edge in the Province 15 years ago. As the 3 municipalities continue to grow and debentures near their end, owners will have the option to remove themselves from the operational model. The current Part 9 does not protect against this potential. The TLC has not been considered a strong solution as the regional recreation solution in the most recent plans. The political appetite for this reality appears low.

The Part 9 company is a great group of community representatives that I truly believe have the best interests of the facility and region in mind and do not come with bias or personal agendas.

APPENDIX 2: TRI-MUNICIPAL LEISURE FACILITY CORPORATION REVIEW

Purpose and Approach

The terms of reference for the Recreation Strategy component of the Tri-Municipal Project include a requirement for a review of the Tri Leisure Centre (TLC) Part 9 Corporation. The purpose is to determine:

- An assessment of the **effectiveness** of Tri-Municipal Part 9 Company as a management model for programs and facilities (4.1.4.3.1.i Current State Description); and
- Recommendations on the continued or expanded **role** for Tri-Municipal Part 9 company (4.1.4.3.6.c.i – Current State Objectives).

This document presents the results of this review.

In preparing this review, evaluating **governance effectiveness** in the context of the TLC Part 9 Company management model does not include an evaluation of operating performance of the TLC organization. The focus is on the governance effectiveness of the TLC as an arm's length corporate body created to serve the regional needs of the three municipalities it serves. Therefore, the conclusions made may need to be revisited upon further review of the TLC from an operational perspective, should an operational review or analysis take place. Specifically, effectiveness focuses on the following questions:

- Does the current model enable effective independent governance of the TLC, separating governance decision making from its three municipal shareholder organizations?
- Does the governance model support the ability of the arm's length body to provide fair and balanced services to all municipalities?
- Does separation of the TLC's specific recreation activities from the broader recreation roles of the municipalities impact the TLC or the municipalities?
- Do key stakeholders involved in the model have confidence in the model, or identify areas for improvement?
- To what extent do the funding arrangements between the TLC and its municipal shareholders meet the needs of the TLC or have an impact on the financial management roles of the municipalities?

Evaluation of a continued or expanded **role** for the TLC Part 9 corporation requires:

- Determination of the degree of support for an expanded role by the key stakeholders;
- Evaluation of the Part 9 Company model against alternatives available to Alberta municipalities.

Effectiveness was first assessed by surveying key stakeholders of the model today who are most knowledgeable about the model and its functions. The results of the survey are reported under separate cover, with a brief summary in the following sections.

Potential future roles were evaluated against research into the field of regional municipal recreation today and through a comparative evaluation of the key attributes of Part 9 corporations against its other alternative arm's length corporate forms:

- Municipally Controlled Corporations;
- Regional Service Commissions;
- Societies;
- Cooperatives; and
- Federally incorporated not-for-profit corporations.

This evaluation provides a framework for considering role of the TLC relative to the various strategic directions and options that arise from the core of the Recreation Strategy stream of this project.

TLC Part 9 Model Overview

The 'Tri-Municipality Leisure Facility Corporation' is a Part 9 company (the TLC) formed by the municipalities of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County with equal shareholdings of one share each⁵⁴. The Company operates through an operating agreement (called a Memorandum of Agreement) with the three municipalities, originally created in 2001 but most recently updated and executed in 2015.

The scope of the Company's functions centers around the Tri Leisure Center and its immediately surrounding lands, and includes not just recreation and sporting activities in the facility, but also:

- Social events and gatherings;
- Cultural and art exhibits and shows;
- Trade shows and fairs;
- Conventions;
- Business events;
- Fundraising events;
- Community events and meetings; and
- Commercial uses ancillary or complementary to the uses described above.

In recent years its role has expanded to managing the Stony Plain outdoor pool on a seasonal basis.

As a part 9 company, the TLC is an independent entity from its municipal shareholders, with its own strategic plan, policies, finances and staffing. It is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors. Under the Memorandum of Agreement each municipality appoints one elected member from its Municipal Council and submits names of candidates who are residents, from which the TLC Board selects two for each municipality. This puts the three elected municipal directors in a minority position.

Earlier versions of the agreement had more elected member representation and also different processes. Previously the municipalities recruited and screened candidates for public member positions to submit a list for Board consideration. Currently, municipalities administer the recruitment process and submit their applicants to the TLC Board, which then conducts the screening itself to narrow to a preferred list for open positions. The Board's selections are then submitted to the municipalities for administrative review and final Council approval⁵⁵.

The Board is responsible for all governance functions, including policies, strategies, operational standards, direction and oversight of management and budgeting. An annual general meeting allows the shareholders to approve budgets, strategies and major plans. Board minutes are not highly detailed, but a brief sampling of minutes indicates that the Board appears to function principally as a governance body rather than a management board, although it is more closely involved in Covid related operations decisions, as can be expected during these times.

There are operational processes in place in which the recreation managers from the three municipalities meet periodically with TLC management to provide advice and establish mechanisms for coordination where recreational planning, programming and service delivery may overlap. The TLC General Manager prepares budgets which, after discussion with the municipal recreation managers, are submitted for

⁵⁴ The Memorandum of Agreement (Sec 2.2) specifies that ownership of the physical facility itself is 42%, 24.5% and 33.5% respectively for Spruce, Stony and Parkland, but actual shareholding is one voting share each (Sec 3.2(a) and (c)).

⁵⁵ The October 8, 2020, TLC Board meeting minutes indicate the Board passed a resolution changing this process, but we have not confirmed that similar approvals have been made by the municipalities.

Board approval. The approved budgets are submitted to each municipal council for approval of the funding requisitioning to balance the budget.

Funding responsibilities are defined in the most recent (2015) version of the memorandum of agreement as split as follows (note these figures were updated as 2016 census data was made available):

- Spruce Grove – 49.5%;
- Stony Plain – 25.0%; and
- Parkland County – 25.5%.

The three municipalities currently have a large number of inter-municipal agreements and commitments for shared services/functions but only this one Part 9 company.

TLC Part 9 Corporation Effectiveness

Survey Results

A survey of key stakeholders in the TLC Part 9 company was conducted between November 12 and 19, with fifteen participants:

- Municipal CAOs – 2;
- Public Board Members – 5;
- Elected Council Members sitting on the TLC Board – 2; and
- Tri-Municipal Project Committee members – 6.

Responses by municipality were:

- Parkland County – 6;
- Spruce Grove – 3; and
- Stony Plain – 6.

Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with 13 statements addressing the following subjects:

- The extent to which the current model enables effective governance of the TLC and separates governance decision making from its shareholder organizations (the three municipalities);
- The ability of the arm's length body to provide fair and balanced services to all municipalities;
- The extent to which separation of the TLC's specific recreation activities from the broader recreation roles of the municipalities impacts the TLC or the municipalities;
- General support by this group of stakeholders for the current model;
- The extent to which use of the TLC has a financial impact on the municipalities; and
- The extent to which the TLC's role is effective for its current scope or should be reconsidered in some way.

While every subject generated both positive and negative responses, the overall majority of responses indicated that, as a group, the stakeholders felt:

- The current model with nine board members consisting of three elected officials and six appointed public members, providing a balance of three representatives from each municipality, overall is an effective model for providing independent governance of the TLC;

- While there are concerns by a small number of stakeholders, overall the current model results in as fair and balanced service to citizens of each municipality as is practical given the geographic realities of the two urban and one rural municipality;
- There may be some operational-level opportunities for improved coordination of TLC recreation functions with the broader recreational functions of the three municipalities, but from a structural and governance perspective the current model is effective;
- A large majority of the stakeholders feel that the current model is effective and should not be modified by having individual municipalities take on roles or functions currently within the domain of the TLC;
- Although not unanimous, the current model and processes for the municipalities to fund TLC budget requirements in the proportions specified in the memorandum of agreement – roughly a population basis in 2015 – is overall an effective model for the TLC and for the municipalities; and
- All but three of the fifteen respondents indicated an interest in exploring potential expanded roles for the TLC Part 9 Corporation as the municipalities identify future tri-municipal recreation collaboration opportunities.

None of the response areas resulted in unanimous agreement by all participating stakeholders but virtually all demonstrated a clear majority position for each set of responses. We were able to evaluate responses to see if there was a pattern of dissent by municipality and determined that minority dissenting positions across the survey came from a mixture of all three municipalities – no one municipality’s stakeholder representatives grouped together in objection to any particular issue.

While the results cannot be considered statistically significant indicators of any particular position or issue, the consistency of responses gives confidence that most stakeholders are comfortable with the current Part 9 governance model, and there are no specific governance issues that need to be investigated in more detail at this time. For the purposes of this study, this survey provides a basis to work with the TLC Part 9 Corporation model in its current governance form when exploring potential future uses.

Structural Governance Factors Impacting Effectiveness

Municipal councils and their administrations are constantly exposed to pressures from various groups to make decisions that may not be in the interests of all residents of the municipality. Their jobs are to make the decisions in the best interests of the municipality overall. But when more than one municipality embarks upon a program of shared interest, such as with the TLC, unbiased decision making in the shared interests of all stakeholders becomes more challenging.

A core purpose of using a separate corporate body to deliver any inter-municipal municipal program or service is to separate decision making at the operational and governance levels from the various political influences that municipalities experience on a daily basis. For example, a model in which the board is populated solely by elected officials or municipal administrators, or in which they constitute a majority, will inevitably find political factors from one or more municipalities introduced into the decision making. The current TLC model has only three elected officials and six public members. Members of the public, who are not subject to the same pressures as municipal members, hold a majority. As such, the structure of the Board appears to be a factor in the survey findings that the current model provides effective governance independence from the municipal owners.

The TLC Part 9 Model Relative to Alternative Forms

Municipalities have six principle corporate options for creating arm's length organizations to administer municipal functions:

- A Part 9 Corporation, formed under Part 9 of the Companies Act⁵⁶;
- A Municipally Controlled Corporation (MCC) formed under the Business Corporations Act;
- A Regional Services Commission formed under the Municipal Government Act;
- A Society formed under the Societies Act;
- A Cooperative formed under the Cooperatives Act; and
- A Federal Not-For-Profit Corporation formed under the Canada Not-For-Profit Act.

Alberta Municipal Affairs website has a useful summary table that highlights the some of the key differentiating attributes of some of these governance forms. A more comprehensive analysis is available from the law firm Brownlee LLP. This table is provided (with permission) at the end of this appendix and is the basis for the following discussion.

There can be technical differences between the corporate forms in things like the incorporation process or regulations, and some have unique powers or restrictions. For example, only one of these corporate forms can be created to generate profits, only one is eligible for borrowing from Alberta Municipal Finance Corporation, and only one contemplates continued Municipal Affairs approval involvement. But for the most part, the functional differences between these forms in what the corporation can do and how it is governed are subtle. In many cases municipalities just need to make a choice that best communicates their intent for the organization (i.e. society, cooperative, regional commission, corporation).

The *major* functional differences relative to the TLC's Part 9 Corporate form are highlighted below:

Municipally Controlled Corporation (MCC)

In Alberta, MCCs have been mostly used for utility businesses such as Epcor, Enmax and Aquatera but there is increasing usage for non-utilities. There are four key differences of an MCC relative to a Part 9 Company:

- An MCC is able to generate, retain and distribute profits;
- Public hearings are required before approval to incorporate an MCC will be granted;
- An MCC can, through a unanimous shareholder agreement, restrict certain types of decisions to the shareholders only (i.e. decisions made by councils instead, as the shareholder), limiting the powers of the Board of Directors on certain fundamental decisions; and
- An MCC can have an imbalanced shareholder structure in which one shareholder, through a larger share ownership proportion, has more control over decision making at the shareholder level.

Without a specific purpose of making a profit, and with a clear intent of equal control, an MCC would not be a preferable governance model for the TLC than a Part 9 corporation.

Regional Services Commission

Regional Services Commissions (RSC) are formed under the Municipal Government Act and as such are subject to oversight by Alberta Municipal Affairs. While Municipal Affairs approval is no longer required (as of Sept 1, 2020) for the formation of an RSC, major corporate changes still require prior approval through public hearings. Major differences are requirements for:

- Public hearings;

⁵⁶ Part 9 is titled "Provisions Applying to Companies with Objects other than the Acquisition of Gain"

- Annual reporting to Municipal Affairs; and
- Only elected officials can be board members.

Municipal Affairs also has the authority, in extreme cases, to take over control of an RSC.

Overall, an RSC appears to be more constrained through public reporting requirements than a Part 9 and would not allow an independent board of public members. As such, an RSC would not be a practical option if the goal is to include public members on the TLC Board.

Society and Cooperative

Societies and cooperatives basically have the same functional capabilities as a Part 9 Corporation, although major amendments do not require a court order. Both are formed under their respective legislations through appointment of 'members' rather than shareholders, and members appoint a board to govern the body, although in a society one forming body can have disproportionate representation in the membership.

The only notable difference relevant to this review of the TLC Part 9 Corporation is the naming impact – there may be a public connotation of what organizations designated as a society or a cooperative are. While functionally there is little other difference, at the same time there is no apparent advantage, and for the purposes of this review they do not appear to be relevant alternatives.

Federal Not-For-Profit Corporation

Federal not-for-profit corporations can be created very quickly but have little other functional difference from a Part 9 corporation. Federal NFPs are eligible for Canada Revenue Authority (CRA) registration for tax deductible donations, but so can Part 9 corporations and societies (but not MCCs, RSCs or cooperatives). From a comparative perspective, a Federal NFP company does not appear to be a relevant alternative to the TLC Part 9 Company model.

Summary

Individual TLC stakeholders may prefer the differentiating factors of any of the models above, but based upon our understanding of the objectives and intent of the three municipalities in the creation of the TLC Part 9, and upon consideration the above analysis, there appear to be no material advantages of any one of these governance models over the existing Part 9 Corporation model in use for the TLC. As a result, in considering the effectiveness of the TLC from possible alternative corporate forms, the TLC appears as or more effective than any of the choices available.

Potential for an expanded Role

From a purely governance model perspective, the survey results suggest that the current TLC model appears effective and practical for its current purposes. A majority of stakeholders believe it provides the governance independence that is required, does not sufficiently duplicate functions such that it creates a financial burden, does a generally good job of providing fair and balanced services to all its shareholder municipalities and coordinates effectively with related municipal recreation functions.

A majority of those surveyed also believe potential for an expanded role should be explored. However, the positive majority survey conclusions relating to the elements noted above apply only to the current scope and scale of operations, and as such do not automatically lead to a conclusion that the TLC can take on an expanded role.

The factors impacting the TLC's ability to take on an expanded role relate to its resource levels; technical expertise; management depth; and governance capacity. A detailed operational review

would be required to allow definitive conclusions on what needs to be addressed for the TLC to take on more responsibilities than those which it is currently performing, but resource levels, technical expertise and management depth should all be scalable should an expanded role be contemplated.

For governance capacity, in principle a nine member Board of Directors structured as the TLC is with equal municipal representation and a majority of public members, should in itself be capable of taking on oversight of an expanded scope of operations, provided the operational capacity factors noted above, particularly management depth, are addressed. There are, however, some potential limiting factors to be considered carefully before drawing conclusions about the capacity of the Board to take on such an expanded role:

- The extent to which the Board functions at the governance level and is not unduly involved in operational decision making (in part a function of management depth);
- The capacity of the existing members to meet the commitment requirements for the current functions, and the capacity to provide increased time and attention that may be required with an expanded scope of operations;
- The degree to which Board membership criteria ensure the appropriate competencies to oversee a larger scale of operations (the scope of this review did not include investigation of such elements as competency-based membership requirements, for example);
- The difficulty in attracting appropriately skilled and committed volunteers for Board positions as membership turns over; and
- The availability of resources to support the Board during any transition process which will require more depth of analysis (and independence) than may be possible with a management team with full time operational responsibilities.

Based upon the results of our analysis, we concur with the majority of the stakeholders surveyed that the current TLC Part 9 model may be an appropriate platform for an expanded role or scope of responsibilities. However, any analysis of such opportunities should include a thorough capacity and financial analysis address the factors noted above before arriving at a definitive conclusion for a specific scenario.

Operating Models for Alberta Public Projects



BROWNLEE LLP
Barristers & Solicitors

Contact John McDonnell at Brownlee LLP at 780-497-4801 or jmcdonnell@brownleelaw.com with any questions

OPERATING MODELS FOR ALBERTA PUBLIC PROJECTS MATRIX

DECISION – MAKING MATRIX

		CORPORATION (MUNICIPAL CONTROLLED CORPORATION)	REGIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION	PART 9 COMPANY	SOCIETY	FEDERAL NOT-FOR- PROFIT CORPORATION	COOPERATIVES
	Governing Legislation	<i>Business Corporations Act</i>	<i>Municipal Government Act</i>	<i>Companies Act</i>	<i>Societies Act</i>	<i>Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act</i>	<i>Cooperatives Act</i>
	Can a Commission be a member?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Can profits of entity be paid to Members?	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
	Ease of changing governing corporate documents	Easy	Municipal Affairs consent necessary	Court order necessary	Easy	Easy	Easy
	Issuance of shares?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	How do Members financially contribute to entity?	Through rates and in unanimous shareholder agreement (“USA”)	Through setting of rates for services	Through rates/dues and membership agreement	Through rates/dues and membership agreement	Through rates/dues and membership agreement	Through rates/dues and membership agreement
	Will Members also pay for services provided?	Yes, if it is set it up as such	Yes, if it is set it up as such	Yes, if it is set it up as such	Yes, if it is set it up as such	Yes, if it is set it up as such	Yes, if it is set it up as such
	Are capital contributions mandatory?	Only if agreed	Only if agreed	Only if agreed	Only if agreed	Only if agreed	Only if agreed
	Can other binding obligations be imposed upon members?	Through: 1. USA and 2. service agreements	Through service agreements	Through: 1. membership agreement and 2. service agreements	Through: 1. membership agreement and 2. service agreements	Through: 1. membership agreement and 2. service agreements	Through: 1. membership agreement and 2. service agreements
	Can there be disproportionate share/membership interest?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Any unusual restrictions on who can be directors?	No	Only elected officials	No	No	No	No
	Municipal Affairs consent necessary to create?	No	No	No	No	No	No



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	CORPORATION (MUNICIPAL CONTROLLED CORPORATION)	REGIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION	PART 9 COMPANY	SOCIETY	FEDERAL NOT-FOR- PROFIT CORPORATION	COOPERATIVES
Municipal Affairs approval to sell assets?	No	Perhaps, based on grant agreement	No	No	No	No
Corporate Registrar consent necessary?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
How long to obtain external consents?	Advance public hearings are required	Advance public hearings are required	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
How long to create with Corporate Registrar after submission of documents?	Same day as submission	N/A	3-4 months for Registrar to process	3-4 months for Registrar to process	5 working days	3-4 months for Registrar to process
Are there mandatory public hearings on material changes to entity?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Ongoing reporting to Municipal Affairs?	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Mandatory financial reporting to Councils?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Is there a need to register in both provincial and federal corporate registries?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Will entity automatically own assets upon creation?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Will it be necessary to take additional steps to transfer assets to entity after its creation?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can entity expropriate land in its own name?	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Can entity borrow from Alberta Capital Finance Authority?	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

APPENDIX 3: INDOOR AMENITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITIZATION SCORING

Amenity	Regional General Public Preference	Regional organized User Group Preference	Utilization of Existing Amenities	Trends and other practices	Supply in the Region	Supply Compared to other Regions	Regional appeal	Regional use and benefit	Associated Costs and Financial Impact	Partnership Opportunity	Expected Economic Impact	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication
Community group office/meeting spaces	1	1	1	3	0	0	2	3	2	0	0	56	Maintain
Community halls	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	26	Potentially Reduce
Curling rinks	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	37	Maintain
Dedicated youth centre spaces	3	0	1	2	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	56	Maintain
Fitness centres	3	3	2	3	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	78	Enhance
Gymnasiums	3	3	1	3	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	72	Enhance
Gymnastics centres	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	51	Maintain
Ice arenas	3	3	3	2	0	1	2	3	2	0	1	83	Enhance
Indoor fields (arena size)	3	3	2	1	0	1	1	3	2	0	1	72	Enhance
Indoor fields (full size)	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	0	1	89	Enhance
Indoor playgrounds	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	43	Maintain
Lane swimming pools	3	3	3	2	0	1	2	3	1	0	1	79	Enhance
Leisure ice skating surfaces	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	34	Maintain
Leisure swimming pools	3	3	3	3	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	81	Enhance
Multipurpose program spaces (e.g. yoga, aerobics)	2	3	1	2	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	58	Maintain
Social/banquet facilities	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	33	Maintain
Walking/jogging tracks	3	3	1	2	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	68	Maintain

APPENDIX 4: OUTDOOR AMENITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITIZATION SCORING

Amenity	Regional General Public Preference	Regional organized User Group Preference	Utilization of Existing Amenities	Trends and other practices	Supply in the Region	Supply Compared to other Regions	Regional appeal	Regional use and benefit	Associated Costs and Financial Impact	Partnership Opportunity	Expected Economic Impact	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication
Agricultural areas (i.e. equestrian areas)	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	37	Maintain
Artificial turf fields	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	46	Maintain
Baseball Diamonds - senior	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	41	Maintain
Basketball courts - full sized	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	39	Maintain
Basketball courts - half / mod	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	39	Maintain
Beach volleyball courts	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	43	Maintain
BMX tracks	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	43	Maintain
Boat launches	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	3	2	0	1	54	Maintain
Campgrounds	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	3	0	1	54	Maintain
Combo field/diamonds - natural turf	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	44	Maintain
Disc golf courses	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	43	Maintain
Dog off-leash areas	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	52	Maintain
Golf courses	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	42	Maintain
Grass fields	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	43	Maintain
Outdoor pools	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	44	Maintain
Outdoor rinks (boarded)	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	39	Maintain
Outdoor rinks (non-boarded)	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	43	Maintain
Outdoor skating ovals / trails	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	52	Maintain
Playgrounds / spray parks	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	44	Maintain
Pickleball courts	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	43	Maintain
Skateboard parks	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	39	Maintain

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Amenity	Regional General Public Preference	Regional organized User Group Preference	Utilization of Existing Amenities	Trends and other practices	Supply in the Region	Supply Compared to other Regions	Regional appeal	Regional use and benefit	Associated Costs and Financial Impact	Partnership Opportunity	Expected Economic Impact	Prioritization Score	Demand Indication
Softball Diamonds - junior	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	41	Maintain
Softball Diamonds - senior	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	41	Maintain
Tennis courts	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	39	Maintain
Toboggan hills	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	43	Maintain
Tracks (non-rubberized)	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	38	Maintain
Tracks (rubberized)	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	39	Maintain
Trails	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	3	3	0	1	58	Maintain

APPENDIX 5: COST SHARING RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATION

In this appendix the impacts are portrayed of implementing the following Recreation Strategy recommendations. The figures included have been calculated by the consulting team and should be subject to review and confirmation by representatives from the three partner municipalities.

It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for Regional and Special Use Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within the Tri Municipal Area boundary and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.

It is recommended that cost and responsibility sharing for District Facilities and Spaces occur based on subsidy required and allocated on a weighted average of population (50%) and assessment (50%) within a 15 minute drive from the facility / space and including the total cost to provide the facility / space.

More specifically, the analysis presented herein assesses the impacts from the current cost sharing arrangements for three facilities (1 “regional” and 2 “district” as per the recommended definitions outlined herein). In addition to outlining the impacts of implementing the recommendation as is, variants of the recommendations are also presented to reflect different weighting for assessment and different types of assessment (including all assessment and including only residential assessment).

Costs

As a basis for comparison, the following table presents the 2019 subsidies required to operate the facilities along with the contributions from each of the three regional partner municipalities.

Facility	2019 Subsidy	Stony Plain Contribution	% of Total	Spruce Grove Contribution	% of Total	Parkland Contribution	% of Total
Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre	\$1,699,779	\$424,987	25.0%	\$842,155	49.5%	\$432,637	25.5%
Spruce Grove Agrena	\$464,843	\$0	0.0%	\$325,383	70.0%	\$139,460	30.0%
Stony Plain Glenn Hall Centennial Arena	\$335,681	\$241,547	72.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$94,134	28.0%
Total	\$2,500,303	\$666,534		\$1,167,538		\$666,231	

For the purposes of this analysis, the cost figures presented will be utilized but it is also important to note that the Strategy also recommends that overall costs to provide the service should be considered in cost sharing arrangements.

“The true cost of service of providing recreation and parks infrastructure and programs includes not only the annual operating inputs required to keep a facility or space open, it also includes the costs to build and maintain it. As well, there is even an opportunity cost attached to the land on which a facility or park is situated. In order for a cost sharing agreement to be effective and to represent the interests of all partners involved, costs need to be defined and agreed to.

For the Tri-Municipal Region it is recommended that the total annual costs of providing recreation facilities should be calculated as follows:

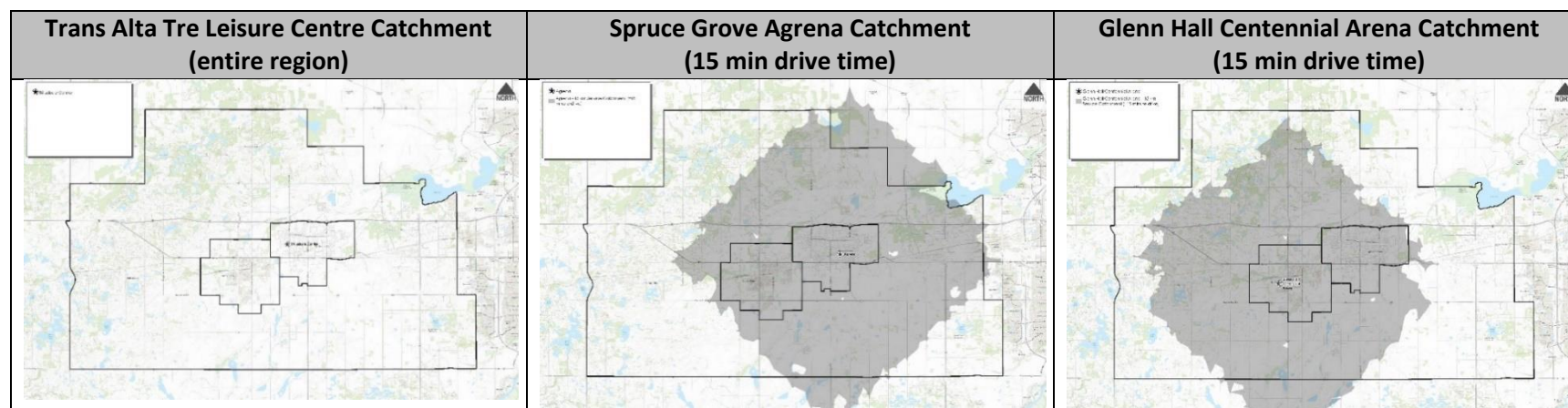
- 1. Operating costs such as staffing, utilities, supplies, etc. required to keep the facility open and animated every year.*
- 2. Capital costs, annualized (perhaps over a 50-year expected life span) that are / were required to build the facility.*
- 3. Life cycle / asset management costs contributed to reserves annually to ensure the facility and the service it provides can be perpetuated (perhaps calculated as 2.1%⁵⁷ of current replacement value).*
- 4. The cost of land, annualized (perhaps calculated as an opportunity cost of not using the land for other purposes).*
- 5. Annual administrative and oversight costs related to managing the municipalities’ portfolio of recreation facilities and associated services, attributed proportionately throughout the entire inventory.” – page 26, Recreation Strategy Version 2.0*

⁵⁷ 2.1% has been identified as a median in a range of 1.7%-2.5% suggested for recreation facilities as per the 2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card ([Canadian Infrastructure Report 2016.pdf](#))

This approach is important but applying it in this context would not provide value in determining the impacts of changing from the current arrangements to a new, more standardized cost sharing approach throughout the region.

Catchment Areas

In order to estimate the impacts of the recommended cost sharing model, the costs identified need to be allocated based on a proportion of population and assessment value within the catchment areas for each facility. For the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre, this includes total population and total assessment within the entire study region because the facility is considered regional. For the other two facilities, a 15min drive catchment is used as they are 15km catchments. The following maps explain.



Within each of these catchment areas, each partner municipality has a proportion of overall catchment area population, residential assessment value and non-residential assessment value. These proportions form the basis of the cost sharing recommendations. The following table presents the base values for population, residential assessment and non-residential assessment in the three catchments.

Note that the following tables form the basis for cost sharing scenario calculations and should they be incorrect, the resulting calculations would need to be revisited.

Population Breakdown

Facility	Service Catchment	Total Population of Tri-Muni Region	Population within Catchment	% Population within Catchment	Population within catchment: Spruce Grove	% of Population within Catchment : Spruce Grove	Population within catchment : Stony Plain	% of Population within Catchment: Stony Plain	Population within catchment: Parkland	% of Population within Catchment: Parkland
TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre	n/a	71,615	71,615	100.0%	34,061	47.6%	17,189	24.0%	20,365	28.4%
Spruce Grove Agrena	15 km	71,615	59,790	83.5%	34,061	57.0%	17,189	28.7%	8,540	14.3%
Stony Plain Glenn Hall Centennial Arena	15 km	71,615	61,743	86.2%	34,061	55.2%	17,189	27.8%	10,493	17.0%

Residential Assessment Breakdown

Facility	Service Catchment	Total Residential Assessment of Tri-Muni Region	Residential Assessment within the Catchment	% Residential Assessment within Catchment	Residential Assessment within Catchment: Spruce Grove	% of Residential Assessment within Catchment : Spruce Grove	Residential Assessment within Catchment : Stony Plain	% of Residential Assessment within Catchment: Stony Plain	Residential Assessment within Catchment : Parkland	% of Residential Assessment within Catchment: Parkland
TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre	n/a	\$,475,929,590	\$9,475,929,590	100%	\$4,809,965,700	50.8%	\$2,201,332,380	23.2%	\$2,464,631,510	26.0%
Spruce Grove Agrena	15 km	\$9,475,929,590	\$8,458,829,310	89.3%	\$4,809,965,700	56.9%	\$2,201,332,380	26.0%	\$1,447,531,230	17.1%
Stony Plain Glenn Hall Centennial Arena	15 km	\$9,475,929,590	\$8,397,699,180	88.6%	\$809,965,700	57.3%	\$2,201,332,380	26.2%	\$1,386,401,100	16.5%

Non-Residential Assessment Breakdown

Figure	Service Catchment	Total Non-Residential Assessment of Tri-Muni Region	Non-Residential Assessment within the Catchment	Non-Residential Assessment within Catchment	Non-Residential Assessment within Catchment: Spruce Grove	% of Non-Residential Assessment within Catchment : Spruce Grove	Non-Residential Assessment within Catchment : Stony Plain	% of Commercial /Industrial Assessment within Catchment: Stony Plain	Non-Residential Assessment within Catchment : Parkland	% of Commercial /Industrial Assessment within Catchment: Parkland
TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre	n/a	\$4,035,118,690	\$4,035,118,690	100%	\$1,063,089,430	26.3%	\$805,460,190	20.0%	\$2,166,569,070	53.7%
Spruce Grove Agrena	15 km	\$4,035,118,690	\$3,908,904,620	96.9%	\$1,063,089,430	27.2%	\$805,460,190	20.6%	\$2,040,355,000	52.2%
Stony Plain Glenn Hall Centennial Arena	15 km	\$4,035,118,690	\$2,223,792,260	55.1%	\$1,063,089,430	47.8%	\$805,460,190	36.2%	\$355,242,640	16.0%

Total Assessment Breakdown

Figure	Service Catchment	Total Assessment of Tri-Muni-Region	Total Assessment within the Catchment	% Total Assessment within Catchment	Total Assessment within Catchment: Spruce Grove	% of Assessment within Catchment : Spruce Grove	Total Assessment within Catchment : Stony Plain	% of Total Assessment within Catchment: Stony Plain	Total Assessment within Catchment : Parkland	% of Total Assessment within Catchment: Parkland
TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre	n/a	\$13,511,048,280	\$13,511,048,280	100%	\$5,873,055,130	43.5%	\$3,006,792,570	22.3%	\$4,631,200,580	34.3%
Spruce Grove Agrena	15 km	\$13,511,048,280	\$12,367,733,930	91.5%	\$5,873,055,130	47.5%	\$3,006,792,570	24.3%	\$3,487,886,230	28.2%
Stony Plain Glenn Hall Centennial Arena	15 km	\$13,511,048,280	\$10,621,491,440	78.6%	\$5,873,055,130	55.3%	\$3,006,792,570	28.3%	\$1,741,643,740	16.4%

Impacts to Current Levels of Cost Sharing

The recommendation as stated in the Recreation Strategy suggests that the cost share allocation for Regional and District facilities be based on a 50:50 split based on population and total assessment within the defined catchment area. The following table explains how these allocations work out based on that 50:50 split.

	Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre (Regional)				Glenn Hall Centennial Arena				Spruce Grove Agrena			
Partner Municipality	Current Contribution	New Contribution	\$ change	% Change	Current Contribution	New Contribution	\$ change	% Change	Current Contribution	New Contribution	\$ change	% Change
Parkland County	\$432,637	\$532,999	\$100,362	18.8%	\$94,134	\$56,045	-\$38,089	-68.0%	\$139,460	\$98,744	-\$40,716	-41.2%
Spruce Grove	\$842,155	\$773,653	-\$68,502	-8.9%	\$0	\$185,396	\$185,396	100.0%	\$325,383	\$242,775	-\$82,608	-34.0%
Stony Plain	\$424,987	\$393,127	-\$31,860	-8.1%	\$241,547	\$94,239	-\$147,308	-156.3%	\$0	\$123,324	\$123,324	100.0%
Total	\$1,699,779	\$1,699,779	\$0	0.0%	\$335,681	\$335,681	\$0	0.0%	\$464,843	\$464,843	\$0	0.0%

Partner Municipality	Current Contribution	New Contribution	\$ change	% Change
Parkland County	\$666,231	\$687,788	\$21,557	3.1%
Spruce Grove	\$1,167,538	\$1,201,824	\$34,286	2.9%
Stony Plain	\$666,534	\$610,691	-\$55,844	-9.1%
Total	\$2,500,473	\$2,500,473	\$0	0.0%

It is also important to note that the concept of sharing responsibility as well as cost is also introduced in the Recreation Strategy. This means that for those facilities and spaces that are invested in by multiple partner municipalities, investors should have a proportionate influence as to how the facilities and spaces are planned, operated, and maintained. For the Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre this is already the case with the oversight afforded to each partner municipality included on the Board, but for facilities like the Glenn Hall and Agrena, this would require further collaboration.

Throughout the review process, questions were raised about the inclusion of non-residential in the assessment calculation as well as the appropriate proportion of population to assessment. For these reasons, the following other scenarios have been provided.

Cost Share Impacts to Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre					
Partner Municipality	Current	50 (population) : 50 (total assessment)	25 (population) : 75 (total assessment)	75 (population) : 25 (total assessment)	50 (population) : 50 (residential assessment only)
Parkland	25.45%	30.7%	31.9%	29.6%	33.7%
Stony Plain	25.00%	22.7%	22.1%	23.4%	29.4%
Spruce Grove	49.54%	46.5%	46.0%	47.0%	37.0%
Total	100.00%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Summary

In summary, this approach would lead to the following changes:

- Spruce Grove and Stony Plain accepting some responsibility for the operations of each others ice arenas (district facilities).
- A slight increase in the proportionate share for both Spruce Grove and Parkland County for Regional facilities (and a slight decrease for Stony Plain).
- An overall decrease in cost allocation (\$55,000) for the operations of the three facilities in question for Stony Plain and offsetting increases for both Parkland and Stony Plain.