

Introduction

Strathcona County offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities, which contribute to the well being of citizens. The County provides passive and structured leisure and recreational facilities that complement a variety of healthy lifestyle choices.

There is a desire to provide parks and recreational areas which adapt to the changing needs of the population. From young to old, there is a need for a diverse range and variety of parks and recreational opportunities in both the urban and rural areas of the County. It is important when developing parks and recreational facilities, to ensure they complement the surrounding land uses and environment.

Objectives

Strathcona County's parks and recreation objectives are to:

- 1) Provide for, and enhance the recreational and educational opportunities for County residents, while protecting the natural environment;
- 2) Ensure that public parkland of varying types is distributed throughout the community in a sensitive manner;
- 3) Select, develop and maintain open space to meet the present and future recreational, environmental, aesthetic and educational needs of our citizens;
- 4) Encourage the continued development of an integrated open space system, which serves a variety of leisure interests;
- 5) Generate opportunities for the benefit of Strathcona County residents that enable the pursuit of healthy lifestyle choices;
- 6) Provide year round park opportunities and experiences; and
- 7) Provide a variety of park experiences for the community regardless of age, culture or income.

Policies

General

Strathcona County will:

- 9.1 Encourage a variety of recreational opportunities in the County as a means of:
 - a) Strengthening community pride and appeal while contributing to the "small community" identity;
 - b) Contributing to the physical fitness and personal well-being of residents;
 - c) Bringing various segments of the community together through sports, arts, environmental, cultural and family activities; and
 - d) Strengthening complementary tourism initiatives, attractions and services.
- 9.2 Provide public open space, to accommodate present and future leisure needs of County residents;

- 9.3 Consider the following criteria in the design and development of open space within the County:
- a) Conservation or enhancement of environmentally sensitive areas;
 - b) Community profiles and future population growth projections;
 - c) Connectivity within and between neighbourhoods;
 - d) Utility and the complimentary nature of the proposed reserve land in meeting the future needs of the user groups and the community;
 - e) The innovative nature of the recreational opportunity;
 - f) Accessibility to the space, based on proposed use;
 - g) Opportunities for private or joint ventures; and
 - h) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- 9.4 Support the identification and protection of corridors to link the open space network;
- 9.5 Encourage the development of multi-purpose and joint use park and recreational areas;
- 9.6 Ensure trail systems are developed to create linkages between neighbourhoods;
- 9.7 Cooperatively and collaboratively plan with the public and private sectors, initiatives which link and develop rural and urban open space including parks, recreation and tourism nodes, and natural areas;
- 9.8 Promote the development of a variety of recreational programs;
- 9.9 Continue supporting the development of specialized parks, such as dog parks and skate parks, as well as recreational areas, such as multi purpose trails; and
- 9.10 Ensure there is the ability to financially maintain the physical site as well as maintaining the appropriate insurance.

Urban

Strathcona County will:

- 9.11 Encourage a County-wide integrated open space system which features a series of major and minor components as follows:
- a) Major components, consisting of structured sports fields within communities with adequate off-street parking; and
 - b) Minor components, consisting of a series of community parks, interconnected by pathways. Community parks will be designed for unstructured use by the public.
- 9.12 Subject to safety, risk and environmental management considerations, examine potential use of utility corridors, easements and other rights-of-way as passive recreational areas that provide linkages to the open space network;
- 9.13 Recognize that stormwater management facilities (SWMF) are utilities. However, the area around SWMF must be designed and landscaped to mimic the form and function of a local natural wetland. Municipal Reserve (MR) credit will not be given for landscaping around stormwater management facilities;

- 9.14 Utilize existing natural wetlands as part of the design of new stormwater management facilities in the area;
- 9.15 Encourage naturalization and the planting of native grasses, trees and shrubs as an alternative to irrigated turf in selected new parks, open spaces, buffer zones and boulevards to lower maintenance costs; and
- 9.16 Ensure park space is distributed to its best potential, by accommodating a variety of activities and eliminating the number of remnant, small park lots in neighbourhoods.

Rural

Strathcona County will:

- 9.17 Ensure recreational opportunities are available to residents in the Rural Service Area;
- 9.18 Support the development of low impact recreational activities which have minimal disturbance on the environment;
- 9.19 Ensure that recreational facilities, developed in the rural area, complement the surrounding landscape; and
- 9.20 Where feasible, encourage municipal reserves in country residential subdivisions and Agriculture – Small Holdings Policy Areas to be located in a manner which provides benefit to all residents.

Municipal Reserve

Strathcona County will:

- 9.21 Require that a minimum of 10% of the gross developable area of land to be subdivided, be dedicated to the County as municipal reserve, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act;
- 9.22 Require the dedication of municipal reserve up to an additional 5% of the parcel's developable land, when in the opinion of the subdivision authority, a proposed subdivision will result in a density of 30 dwelling units or more per hectare of gross developable land. The additional municipal reserve may be used to accommodate additional requirements for schools, parks and public recreation facilities;
- 9.23 Ensure municipal reserve, school reserve or municipal and school reserve be used for the following purposes:
 - a) A public park (may include lands identified as High and Medium Priority Environment Management Areas);
 - b) A public recreation area;
 - c) School authority purposes; and
 - d) To separate incompatible land uses.
- 9.24 Work with school board authorities in the allocation of municipal reserve lands for school and park purposes.

Parks

Strathcona County will:

9.25 Categorize park space and the levels of development activity, by maintaining the following guidelines:

a. Neighbourhood Parks

- i) Approximate size, a minimum of 0.8 hectares;
- ii) Provide for playground opportunities;
- iii) Informal play areas;
- iv) Passive trail/ walkway system and seating areas;
- v) May be located in proximity to, or as joint-use sites, with schools; and
- vi) Designed to serve residents who live within walking distance of the park.

b. Community Parks

- i) Approximate size, a minimum 4 hectares;
- ii) Provide for playground opportunities;
- iii) Informal play areas;
- iv) Passive trail/ walkway system and seating areas;
- v) High activity sports fields and tennis courts;
- vi) Wider range of activities; and
- vii) Serves the community as a whole.

c. District Parks

- i) Approximate size, minimum 8 hectares;
- ii) Provide for playground opportunities;
- iii) Informal play areas;
- iv) Passive trail/ walkway system and seating areas;
- v) High activity sports fields, tennis courts;
- vi) Wider range of activities;
- vii) Major indoor/outdoor recreation facilities; and
- viii) Serves the community and outlying areas.

d. Linear Parks

- i) Minimum size, 10 metres wide; and
- ii) Physical connection to parks, schools, street intersections and public open space.

The North Saskatchewan River and Tributaries

Strathcona County will:

9.26 Cooperate with municipalities in the Edmonton Capital Region, other levels of government and private landowners, to protect the North Saskatchewan River Valley and its tributaries for the beneficial use of regional residents, recognizing the range of values, capabilities and constraints that exist in different locations along the River Valley and its tributaries; and

9.27 Participate actively in organizations that work to protect, preserve and enhance the North Saskatchewan River Valley and its tributaries for its recreational, aesthetic and natural capital.