

# Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy

## 5 YEAR UPDATE

Emerald Hills Aquatic Centre



Emerald Hills Sports Pavilion



## 5-Year Review & Update

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## I. Looking back at the OSRFS

The Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS) was approved by Council on June 24, 2008. The strategy provided broad direction to how parks, natural areas, trails, and leisure and recreation facilities should develop over the next 15 years.

The strategy was originally developed by Strathcona County Administration with the assistance of consulting resources. The strategy was built on the needs articulated by the community. An extensive amount of public dialogue took place to guide the creation of the OSRFS; engagement has been ongoing with both the general public and stakeholder groups as the strategy continues to move forward.

### Reminder of the plan and vision

The vision for open spaces and recreation facilities in Strathcona County is to invest in a healthy and active community by providing safe, affordable and accessible recreation, parks and culture opportunities.

The guiding principles are:

- revitalizing existing parks, open spaces and recreation facilities before investing in new spaces;
- creating an integrated system of indoor and outdoor places and facilities to meet multiple recreation needs, across multiple locations;
- reducing the ecological footprint of development;
- creating opportunities for community partnerships and stewardship.

### Research and Guiding Documents

The OSRFS is a guiding document and plan for future development and redevelopment of indoor and outdoor spaces. The OSRFS recommended additional work in three areas, which lead to the creation of three guiding strategies including Aquatics, Sportsfields and Trails. These strategies were developed through extensive public engagement to establish priorities in these areas.

**Most Albertans say they receive benefits from the availability of recreation services, even if they don't participate.**

- Alberta Centre for Active Living, 2013

### Project Positioning

As part of the ongoing OSRFS needs assessment process, the following tools provide the key information required to make decisions on priorities for future OSRFS projects.

*Environmental Scan* - monitor industry changes, trends and issues for early signs of opportunities or challenges that may influence current and future plans.

*Market Research* - gather information about user needs and preferences.

*Public Engagement* - involve residents/other stakeholders to develop an understanding of issues, gather specific input, identify alternatives, or partner in decision making.

*Usage Analysis* - monitor usage, program registration or participation over time within specific functional areas of recreation to understand and predict future needs and trends.

*Feasibility studies* - may be initiated to further investigate specific projects as needed.

### Community Partnership Projects

In September 2011 Strathcona County Council adopted a new municipal policy to create a systematic approach for building community-based recreation and open space infrastructure. The new approach is done through the Community Partnership Projects (CPP) process. The [guidebook](#) for the process is available on the county website.

To leverage County resources, the CPP process assists with responses for new or revitalized infrastructure, evaluating requests against projects already identified in the OSRFS, any approved Park Master Plans, and 'other' related strategies.

When a group wants to increase the number of amenities, add specialized amenities, or enhance existing infrastructure and open spaces, a partnership may be necessary as it allows the County to enhance service levels beyond what the municipality can do alone.

## Linking to the Strategic Plan

The OSRFS is a vehicle to address many of the priorities set out by Strathcona County's Strategic Plan. Our recreation spaces contribute to the quality of life that our residents value and

enjoy. Investment in infrastructure, quality services, cultural and recreational programs and facilities is a priority and sets us apart. Effective and efficient infrastructure and community partnerships are top priorities in the new Strategic Plan.

## How OSRFS outcomes contribute to the County's Strategic Goals



**Most Albertans (94%) agree that physical activity will reduce their chances of getting serious health problems.**

- Physical Activity in Alberta 2013

## OSRFS Project Cycle

The following terms are used often when describing where we are at in the OSRFS project cycle. The stages are progressive, and each stage builds upon the work completed in earlier stages. There may be pauses between stages, and timelines vary enormously depending on the type of project and funding capabilities.

### Strategy

- gives general direction to what amenities are needed, and where
- high level public input i.e. annual OSRFS survey
- identify and explore potential partnerships
- submitted as a planning request through the budgets' business initiatives process

### Concept

- working to create the initial details for a specific project determined through the Strategy stage
- invested community stakeholders and the general public participate in identifying the specific needs related to the project
- expertise is hired to assist the community and administration to arrive at a final concept and to proceed to the design stage
- the final concept is developed to the merit stage of design, which generates enough design detail to establish cost certainty for capital budget consideration and approval
- submitted as a planning request through the budgets' business initiatives process

### Design

- project has been approved in the capital plan
- the public and invested partners are kept informed about the progress of the detailed design
- costing is monitored throughout the design to ensure the project remains within budget
- creation of tender ready documentation to provide to construction

### Build

- tentative construction schedules are established and communicated
- public engagement shifts to how the new spaces may be used/programmed
- public is kept informed of timelines, construction progress and operating changes

### Operate

- facility/space is open and fully functional
- public engagement to obtain feedback related to satisfaction with the new space/facility and its operation

**80% of funding for the first 5 years of outdoor OSRFS projects has gone towards revitalization of existing spaces**

## II. Review of the First Five Years

The initial OSRFS accomplishments have been the result of an ongoing, coordinated and cooperative effort between internal departments, community and facility stakeholders, residents and facility users.

		Strategy	Concept	Design	Build	Operate	Current	Projected	Trails	Streetscapes	Sportsfields	Play	New land acquisitions	Funding*	
		<b>2009 - 2013</b>													
<b>COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS</b>	Gilmore Park Phase 1	▶										•		Y	
	Bike Skills Park Phase 1	▶							•					Y	
	McPherson Park	▶										•		Y	
	Miok-McCormack Memorial	▶								•				Y	
	<b>2014 - 2018</b>														
	Gilmore Park Phase 2	▶	▶						•					Y	
	Bike Skills Park Phase 2	▶	▶						•					Y	
	One Wall Handball	▶	▶									•		Y	
	Emerald Hills Sports Pavilion	▶	▶								•			Y	
	St. Theresa Playground	▶	▶									•		N	
		<b>2009-2013</b>													
<b>PLANNING</b>	Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan	▶							•	•	•	•		Y	
	Josephburg Community Recreation Master Plan	▶							•	•	•			Y	
	South Cooking Lake Master Plan	▶							•	•		•		Y	
	Brentwood Park Master Plan	▶							•		•	•		Y	
	Heritage Hills Park Master Plan	▶							•	•	•	•		Y	
	Kinsmen / Westboro Park Master Plan	▶							•	•	•	•		Y	
	Sportsfield Strategy	▶									•		•	Y	
	Trail Strategy	▶							•				•	Y	
	Aquatic Strategy	▶										•		Y	
			<b>2014-2018</b>												
Multi Purpose Agricultural Feasibility Study	▶	▶										•	•	Y	
Dog Off Leash Strategy	▶											•	•	Y	
Future Growth Area Indoor Rec Facilities		▶						•	•	•	•	•	N		
New Schools partnership		▶						•		•	•	•	N		

\*projects noted as not currently funded (N) will be submitted for consideration in the 2015 Business Plan Initiatives process.

		Strategy	Concept	Design	Build	Operate				
INDOOR	2009 - 2013	Current	Projected	Wellness	Ice	Aquatics	Dry surface	Culture	Play	Funding*
	Ardrossan Recreation Complex	▷		•	•		•		•	Y
	Millennium Place	▷		•	•				•	Y
	Broadmoor Arena & Clubhouse	▷			•		•			Y
	2014-2018									
	Emerald Hills Sports Pavilion	▷	▷						•	Y
	Emerald Hills Aquatic Centre	▷	▷			•				Y
	Glen Allan Recreation Complex	▷	▷	•						Y
	2014-2018									
	Festival Place	▷	▷						•	N
Sherwood Park Arena	▷	▷	•	•					N	
Kinsmen Leisure Centre	▷	▷			•				N	
GARC Wellness Phase 2	▷	▷	•			•			N	
Emerald Hills Indoor Facility Phase 2	▷	▷	•						N	
Moyer Recreation Complex		▷		•					N	
Strathcona Olympiette Centre		▷		•				•	N	
New Major Multi Purpose Rec Facility		▷		•	•	•	•	•	N	
Curling Club		▷		•					N	
Salto Gymnastics / Multipurpose Dry Surface		▷				•			N	

\*projects noted as not currently funded (N) will be submitted for consideration in the 2015 Business Plan Initiatives process.

	Current	Projected	Trails	Streetscapes	Sportsfields	Play	New land acquisitions	Funding
<b>2009-2013</b>								
<b>TRAILS</b>								
J&R Trail	▶		•					Y
Collingwood Cove Access	▶		•					Y
River Valley Alliance Trail (Phase 1)	▶		•					Y
Centennial Park Palisades & Wetland- Trails	▶		•					Y
Broadmoor Lake Land Bridge	▶		•					Y
Clarkdale/Chelsea Trail	▶		•					Y
Lakeland Ridge trail	▶		•					Y
Ridgepoint trail	▶		•					Y
Sherwood Drive Trail (Baseline - Main)	▶		•					Y
Ardrossan Trail & Bridge	▶	▶	•					Y
Heritage Hills Wetland Trail	▶		•					Y
<b>STREETSCAPES</b>								
Baseline Road median/blvd planting	▶			•				Y
<b>PARKS</b>								
Centennial Park Diamonds 5 & 7	▶				•			Y
McGhan Park - outdoor rink	▶		•		•			Y
Emerald Hills Artificial Turf / Soccer Fields	▶	▶			•			Y
Cloverbar Jr High Soccer Realignment	▶				•			Y
Davidson Creek ball diamond	▶			•	•			Y
Sherwood Heights Park	▶	▶	•		•			Y
Heritage Hills Ball Diamond Upgrade	▶				•			Y
Deermound Off Leash Upgrade	▶		•					Y
South Cooking Lake Playground	▶					•		Y
Interpretive Signs	▶		•					Y
Cloverbar Ranch Spray Park & Community Gardens	▶					•		Y

## OUTDOOR



Current

Projected

Trails

Streetscapes

Sportsfields

Play

New land acquisitions

Funding

## 2014-2018

## OUTDOOR

## TRAILS

Fountain Creek Trail



Y

Ordze Trail



Y

Sherwood Drive Trail (Oak to Brentwood)



Y

Brighton Bay PUL (Sherwood - Bethel)



N

Petroleum Way Trans Canada



N

Wye Road along Estates



N

Centennial Wetlands Trail (Park - Lakeland Dr)



N

Baseline to Hwy 21 Trail



N

## STREETSCAPES

Rural Entrance Feature Landscaping ( SCL, Ardrossan, Josephburg)



Y

Lakeland Drive Planting



N

Baseline Road Planting



N

Wye Road Planting



N

Cloverbar Road Planting



N

## PARKS

Josephburg Trail &amp; Older Adult Fitness Equipment



Y

Emerald Hills Artificial Turf



Y

Emerald Hills Ball Diamonds



Y

Broadmoor Spray Park &amp; Playground



Y

Emerald Hills Regional Park Landscaping



Y

Centennial Park Sportsfield Expansion



Y

Ardrossan Sportsfield Upgrades



N

South Cooking Lake Park



N

Ardrossan Youth Amenity



N

Brentwood Park



N

Heritage Hills Park



N

Kinsmen/Westboro Park



N

Sally Stewart Park



N

Outdoor Aquatics Infrastructure



N

### III. Strategy Review

The OSRFS planning document is regularly reviewed to accurately reflect community needs of the day, as well as to ensure the future direction remains in line with the original guiding principles. The OSRFS is a 15 year living and dynamic strategy that has been organized into 5 year increments, providing the community with a report card on the progress of the strategy. The purpose of ongoing reviews is to celebrate completed projects, inform on the status of current projects and to lay the foundation for the future.

#### Opportunities through available funding

Thanks to the support of Council, this is the first time in County history there has been ongoing funding to support indoor and outdoor recreation needs coordinated across all Country departments. As part of a cost effective strategy, the OSRFS works on revitalizing existing infrastructure before building new by creating synergies with other departments and the community through the Community Partnerships Program.

A number of successes have been realized through the first years of the OSRFS. In order to continue serving the community recreation needs of both today and tomorrow, additional funding is needed to move projects forward at the pace of community demand, or all parties will need to work at adjusting expectations to match current funding levels.

**Canadians have indicated that recreation services make a significant contribution to improved health (93%), boost social cohesion (89%), ensure children and youth live healthy lifestyles (75%) and are a major factor in crime reduction (77%).**

- National Recreation Framework, 2014



## How projects are prioritized



### Strategy

- Projects may be initiated by members of the community / community groups, by a member of Council, or by Administration.
- Regardless of where the project originates, all projects are considered based on the same criteria to increase fairness and transparency, while also meeting the greatest community needs most effectively and efficiently.

### Concept

### Design

- A Needs Assessment involves gathering a detailed outline of a project, and research to determine the community needs involved.
- A Business Case involves a more thorough analysis of the investment required in a project, both from a capital and operating perspective, and any potential risks and challenges involved.
- Priorities are evaluated based on the County's Strategic Plan and other guiding documents. We are also guided by ongoing assessment of the needs of the broader community.

### Build

### Operate

- Projects may be partly funded through Community Partnership Projects if a community group initiates it.
- The majority of projects will become part of the OSRFS, and be funded on an annual basis.
- Smaller modernizations or upgrades to existing facilities / spaces may be funded through the Facility Services annual lifecycle program.
- Projects not funded in one of these ways will be revisited in future planning cycles.

## IV. The Next Steps



### Balancing Needs

Balancing immediate planning needs with long range strategic planning is critical. OSRFS is an integral part of growth management planning.

The OSRFS provides the mechanism to find the financial balance of continued reinvestment in existing recreation infrastructure, while also meeting the needs of new and developing neighbourhoods.

New parks, trails and natural areas will continue to be built by our development industry partners. This strategy builds on that work and on the Strategic Plan

by focusing taxpayer funds on revitalizing our existing indoor and outdoor assets before building new. This will maximize the benefit of our past investment decisions. It will also ensure our indoor and outdoor facilities will remain well used and relevant to the community as it ages and our needs evolve.

New capacity will continue to be reviewed as required, and emerging community recreation needs will be built into future stages along with investment in existing infrastructure to meet the highest priority community need.

**Every 14 minutes,  
another Alberta turns 65.  
Unfortunately, only 35%  
of those adults 65+ are  
physically active.**

- Physical Activity in  
Alberta, 2013





### Capacity

Keeping pace with the demand that comes with increasing community development and residential growth is a challenge not unique to recreation. The reality is that projects are moving as fast as funding is available. High community expectation means that projects are competing for funding. Challenges related to the current robust economic environment also limit progress.

The need for infrastructure will be coordinated in a manner that will be the most effective and efficient use of funding, and to minimize operational disruption to residents. Timing will also be dependent on other corporate priorities within the capital budget cycles, and also annual project resource availability.

**Supportive physical and social environments help people adopt healthy, active lifestyles by making “the healthy choices the easy choices”.**

- National Recreation Framework, 2014



## V. Future OSRFS Planning

As projects currently in the design stage move into construction, project planning will shift into a phase of reassessment and research into determining priorities for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 budget cycles. Long range strategic planning will also continue to look at the changing needs of the community and how recreation infrastructure will fit into future budget cycles.

Planning pieces that will be considered to help support the OSRFS include a potential Streetscape Strategy, and consideration of a possible grant strategy to help community groups fund a portion of their Community Partnership Projects.

### 15 year focus (2018+)

Even though the majority of projects completed to date have been focused on revitalizing existing infrastructure, there are still more facilities and spaces left that require reinvestment to maintain their functionality, as well as address accessibility and technology needs. Once a project has been identified, it remains on the list of priorities, and moves according to available funding.

Although the OSRFS was intended to be a 15 year plan, we must also think beyond those 15 years. As Council approves new residential areas, the recreation and cultural needs for the entire community will be reassessed, and recommendations for new indoor facilities and outdoor spaces may be made to maintain service levels.

Having heavily used and in-demand recreational and cultural facilities and open spaces is a wonderful situation. It means that our residents value leisure activities, sport and recreation, and are more likely to be healthier, happier and more engaged in their community.

The OSRFS absolutely represents “Living. Refined.” The capital investments translate into highly visible, tangible outcomes for residents that consistently rank as some of the most positive attributes of our community.

**89% of residents have used a County indoor recreation facility in the past 12 months**



# Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy

