

Teacher & Student Package on Specialized Municipalities

This year – 2016 - marks the celebration of Strathcona County's 20 years as a [specialized municipality](#) in Alberta. In order to provide some context for this occasion, we have compiled this information package for Grade 6 teachers and students in Strathcona County to inform classroom teaching of the uniqueness of our municipality. It is intended to complement the existing grade 6 local government curriculum.

Embedded in the electronic version of this package are links to websites which further explain some of the relevant facts and definitions found in the document.

[The History of Strathcona County](#) – check it out if you'd like to learn a bit about our history!

And check out our [Facts & Stats brochure](#) to learn more about Strathcona County.

On January 1st, 1996 the Province of Alberta granted Strathcona County status as a specialized municipality. This year is the 20th anniversary of the County's unique model of governance! Strathcona County is one of five municipalities within Alberta designed with the status of specialized municipality. These are unique municipal government structures that can be formed without resorting to special Acts of the Alberta Legislature. Specialized municipality status allows rural and urban communities to co-exist within a single municipal government structure.

Strathcona County represents a diverse population of urban, agriculture, and rural communities. Specialized municipality status means the Province of Alberta recognizes Sherwood Park (urban service area) as equivalent to a city for purposes of government programs and grants. Rural Strathcona County is recognized as equivalent to a municipal district for government programs and grant purposes. The rural area also includes the smaller hamlets, of which there are eight in Strathcona County. This classification provides for the unique needs of a municipality that includes both a large urban centre and a significant rural area and population.

Strathcona County has the ability to provide a variety of infrastructure (such as recreation facilities, municipal buildings, roads, parks), programming (such as summer camps, youth council, swim lessons), and services (library, fire departments, building permits) to both their urban and rural residents through the specialized municipality status because of its [diverse tax base](#) (residential, industrial, commercial, linear, etc.), as well as user fees and funding from other levels of government.

Benefits of specialized municipality status include:

- Innovative ways to apply and administer tax dollars and grants
- One body of governments representing all of our different residential, urban, agricultural, and industrial interests
- Savings through efficiencies in administration, governance, and staffing
- More effective and efficient use of infrastructure

STUDENT FACT SHEET

Did you know... that Strathcona County is a specialized municipality?

- But what is a specialized municipality, and what does that mean for us? Our specialized municipality is different from an urban city or a rural county – it is both *rural* and *urban*. We have the urban area of Sherwood Park, and a large rural area surrounding it. Throughout the rural area are *eight hamlets*, which are clusters of homes, businesses, recreation centres, and even schools.

Our eight hamlets are:

- [Antler Lake](#)
 - [Collingwood Cove](#)
 - [Ardrossan](#)
 - [Half Moon Lake](#)
 - [South Cooking Lake](#)
 - [North Cooking Lake](#)
 - [Hastings Lake](#)
 - [Josephburg](#)
- There are [four other specialized municipalities in Alberta](#):
 - Municipality of Jasper, Mackenzie County, Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo!

Did you know... that long before Strathcona County existed, First Nations peoples used to occupy this land?

- The [Sarcee Indians and the Eastern Cree Indians](#) once lived in the land we now call Strathcona County
- Currently, there are no First Nations or Métis reserves in Strathcona County

Did you know... that this year is Strathcona County's 20th anniversary of becoming a specialized municipality?

- Strathcona County became a [specialized municipality on January 1st, 1996](#)

Did you know... that Sherwood Park used to have a different name?

- In 1955, a little hamlet started to form called [Campbelltown](#) – and this hamlet eventually became Sherwood Park!

Did you know... that our main economic drivers are the energy and the agricultural industries as well as small/medium sized businesses?

- The energy sector employs the [greatest number of people in the County](#) and generates more new jobs than any other sector

Did you know... that Strathcona County has nearly 96,000 residents?

- There are [68,782 residents in Sherwood Park, and 26,815 residents in the rural areas of Strathcona County](#)

Did you know... that Alberta has 266 urban municipalities?

- These [urban municipalities](#) represent 81% of Alberta's population, but occupy 0.6% of its total land area

Did you know... that Alberta has 75 rural municipalities?

- These [rural municipalities](#) represent 13% of Alberta's population, but occupy 75.6% of its total land area

Did you know... that the rolling landscape east and south of Sherwood Park is called the Beaver Hills moraine?

- This area has a [unique ecosystem](#) that is only found here!

Did you know... that in 2015 Strathcona County received the FireSmart Community Protection Achievement Certificate?

- This award recognizes [Strathcona County's achievements](#) in helping rural residents work to reduce the risk of property damage due to wildfires

Did you know... that we have a mobile library called the Bookmobile?

- We have a converted [Strathcona County transit bus that functions as a mobile library](#) – it heads out to areas of rural Strathcona County bringing books, DVDs, and CDs out to our rural residents!

Glossary of Terms for Teachers:

Municipal government: also known as local government, municipal governments in Alberta are created by the Government of Alberta's *Municipal Government Act*. It is the form of government closest to the people, and is responsible for enacting bylaws, providing a variety of services from transit and recreation to road maintenance and economic development. Provinces have ultimate jurisdiction over municipal governments according to Section 92 (8) of the federal *Constitution Act, 1867*.

Urban municipality: according to the *Municipal Government Act*, urban municipalities are any city, town, village or summer village.

Rural municipality: according to the *Municipal Government Act*, rural municipalities include municipal districts such as counties, improvement districts, and special areas.

Hamlet: A community consisting of five or more dwellings, has a generally accepted boundary and name, and contains land that is used for non-residential purposes. These are unincorporated and under the governance of the surrounding municipal district or specialized municipality.

Summer village: incorporated communities that have permanent populations generally less than 300 permanent residents, as well as seasonal residents. These communities formed around seasonal use, such as resorts and summer cabins around lakes. Municipalities can no longer form new summer villages in Alberta, but existing summer villages can remain.

Village: a village is a municipality that has a population of at least 300 people whose buildings are on small plots of land (less than 1850 m²). A village that exceeds 1000 people can apply to change its status to that of a town, but it is not required for them to do so.

Town: a town can be formed when the population is at least 1000 people and may exceed 10,000 people unless it requests a change to city status.

City: to qualify as a city, the population size of a town must be over 10,000 people, and a formal request to change the status to city must be made to the provincial government.

Specialized municipality: specialized municipalities are unique municipal structures that can be formed without resorting to special Acts of the Legislature. Often, specialized municipalities allow urban and rural communities to coexist in a single municipal government.

Municipal District (or County): a municipal district (M.D., also called a County) is a form of government in rural areas of the province. It includes farmlands as well as communities such as hamlets and rural residential subdivisions.

Incorporate: to formally gain status as a municipality through the *Municipal Government Act* and Alberta Municipal Affairs. Incorporating defers certain powers onto the government of a municipality so that it can provide services to residents.

Urban service area: areas that are designated as urban and enjoy the same benefits as a city, such as Sherwood Park.

Rural service area: areas that are designated as rural and therefore enjoy the benefits of rural status, such as counties.

Multiple Choice Questions: Use your fact sheet to find the answer.

1) Using the map provided on the previous page, identify the eight rural hamlets in Strathcona County. (*Write the hamlet names in the spaces provided on the bottom right hand corner of the map.*)

2) There are many types of municipalities in Alberta. Can you name the three that are part of Strathcona County?

- _____
- _____
- _____

3) In what year did Strathcona County become a specialized municipality?

- a) 1990
- b) 1996
- c) 2000
- d) 2016

4) What are the five specialized municipalities in Alberta?

- a) Crowsnest Pass, Wood Buffalo, Mackenzie County, Jasper, and Strathcona County
- b) Strathcona County, Mackenzie County, Athabasca, Jasper, and Beaumont
- c) Mackenzie County, Wood Buffalo, Big Valley, Airdrie, and Crowsnest Pass
- d) Jasper, Airdrie, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, and Strathcona County

5) What was the name of the hamlet that became Sherwood Park?

- a) Clover Bar
- b) Bremner
- c) Campbelltown
- d) Old Strathcona

True/False Questions: Please circle your answer

6) TRUE or FALSE: Strathcona County was the first municipality in Alberta to obtain double decker busses.

7) TRUE or FALSE: There are First Nations Reserves located within Strathcona County's rural areas.

8) TRUE or FALSE: City of Edmonton Bylaws do not apply to Strathcona County.

9) TRUE or FALSE: The south and east parts of rural Strathcona County are part of a UNESCO Biosphere.

10) TRUE or FALSE: Strathcona County is Alberta's fifth largest city.

ANSWER KEY FOR QUESTIONS

1) Using the map provided, can you identify the eight rural hamlets in Strathcona County?

Answer:

- 1) Josephburg
- 2) Ardrossan
- 3) Antler Lake
- 4) North Cooking Lake
- 5) Half Moon Lake
- 6) Collingwood Cove
- 7) South Cooking Lake
- 8) Hastings Lake

2) There are [many types of municipalities in Alberta](#). Can you name the three that are part of Strathcona County?

Answer:

- Specialized Municipality
- Municipal District (or County)
- Hamlets

3) In [what year did Strathcona County](#) become a specialized municipality?

- a) 1990
- b) **1996**
- c) 2000
- d) 2016

4) What are the five specialized municipalities in Alberta?

- a) **Crowsnest Pass, Wood Buffalo, Mackenzie County, Jasper, and Strathcona County**
- b) Strathcona County, Mackenzie County, Athabasca, Jasper, and Beaumont
- c) Mackenzie County, Wood Buffalo, Big Valley, Airdrie, and Crowsnest Pass
- d) Jasper, Airdrie, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, and Strathcona County

5) What was the name of the hamlet that became Sherwood Park?

- a) Clover Bar
- b) Emerald Hills
- c) **Campbelltown**
- d) Old Strathcona

True/False Questions: Please circle your answer

6) **TRUE** or FALSE: Strathcona County was the first municipality to obtain [double decker busses](#) in Alberta.

Answer: True.

7) **TRUE** or **FALSE**: There are First Nations Reserves located in Strathcona County's rural areas.

Answer: False. Although there is historical evidence of First Nations history in the area, no

current Reserves or communities of First Nations people have dedicated land in Strathcona County.

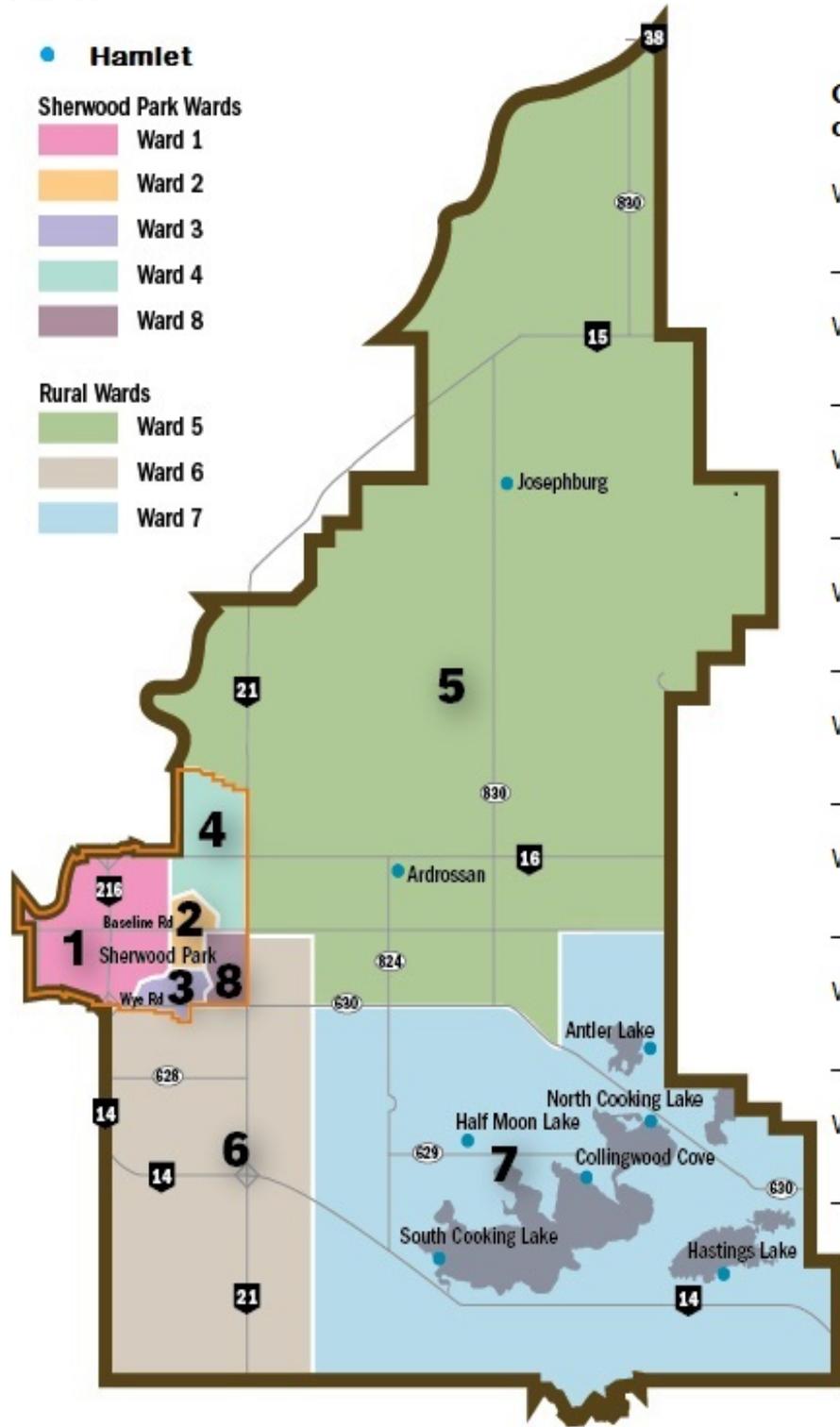
8) **TRUE** or FALSE: City of Edmonton Bylaws do not apply to Strathcona County.
Answer: True. Bylaws only apply to the municipality they are enacted in.

9) **TRUE** or FALSE: The south and east parts of rural Strathcona County are part of a [UNESCO Biosphere](#).
Answer: True. Beaver Hills is now a designated biosphere.

10) TRUE or **FALSE**: [Strathcona County is Alberta's fifth largest city](#).
Answer: False. Strathcona County is a specialized municipality.

GROUP ACTIVITY #1: Wards of Strathcona County

Part A



Can you name the councillors in each ward?

Ward 1:

Ward 2:

Ward 3:

Ward 4:

Ward 5:

Ward 6:

Ward 7:

Ward 8:

Bonus: Who is the mayor of Strathcona County? _____

Part B

There are eight wards in Strathcona County. In your group, work together using the tools below and general internet searches to identify one interesting place, activity, or fact in each ward! Discuss in your group why you chose this place, activity, or fact.

Useful tools:

- [Strathcona County tourism](#)
- [Things to do in Strathcona County](#)
- [Outdoor activities in Strathcona County](#)
- [Parks & trails map](#)
- [Strathcona County rural attractions](#)
- [Strathcona County Tr@veller](#)

Ward 1:

Ward 5:

Ward 2:

Ward 6:

Ward 3:

Ward 7:

Ward 4:

Ward 8:

GROUP ACTIVITY #2: Tour of Strathcona County

Your school is hosting two foreign exchange students from Japan. Your group is assigned to design a tour of Strathcona County that would highlight the different components of our *specialized municipality*.

What would be of interest to see:

- [in Sherwood Park](#) (3 places)
- [north of Highway 16](#) (2 places)
- [south of Highway 16](#) (2 places)
- [a hamlet](#) (you decide!)

Don't forget to explain why you chose each of those places.

Helpful hints:

- *Use a map – check out the links above!*
- *Think of places that are important to Strathcona County – and things that highlight the importance of us as a specialized municipality*
- *What do you think would be interesting for a newcomer to Strathcona County to see?*

List of Resources to Explore:

Strathcona County - maps, facts, statistics, history, local government, information
<http://www.strathcona.ca/local-government/about-strathcona-county/>

Beaverhills Moraine and UNESCO Biosphere designation - maps, geography, wildlife and ecological information
www.beaverhills.ca

Strathcona County hamlets
<http://www.strathcona.ca/local-government/about-strathcona-county/communities/>

Types of municipalities in Alberta
http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/am_types_of_municipalities_in_alberta

Maps of Strathcona County
<http://www.strathcona.ca/local-government/about-strathcona-county/maps/>

Strathcona County – Specialized municipality status
<http://www.strathcona.ca/local-government/about-strathcona-county/specialized-municipality-status/>

Strathcona County – 2016 Facts and Stats Brochure
<http://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-comc-factsandstats2016.pdf>

Strathcona County – 2016 Budget
http://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-fin-approved-consolidated_-budget-2016.pdf