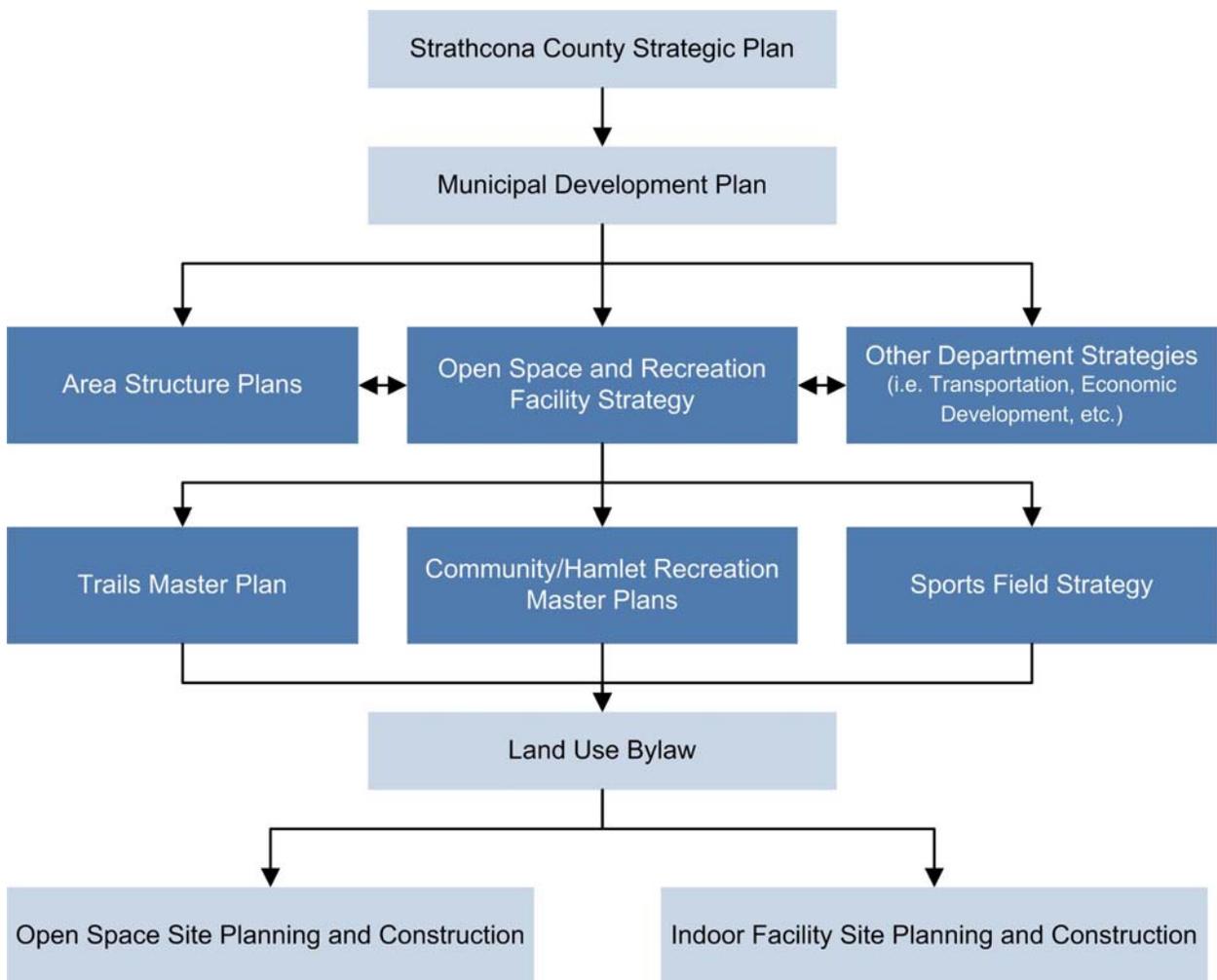




4.0 Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan Background

The intent of the Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan is to build upon the goals, policies and standards presented in existing Strathcona County planning documentation. Information provided in existing studies and plans has been developed based upon sound research and thorough public input and as such, the intent of this Master Plan is to build upon existing information as opposed to “reinventing the wheel”. The following diagram illustrates the hierarchy and connection of a variety of municipal plans. The Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan is a more detailed plan that would further support the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS).



The following sections provide an overview of pertinent Strathcona County Plans / documents as well as plans of other stakeholders that compliment this Master Plan.

4.1. Strathcona County Strategic Plan

Strathcona County's Strategic Plan is the primary guiding document for service delivery, community development, and governance in Strathcona County. The Plan is the basis from which the other municipal plans are developed. Under "Social Sustainability" the capstone policy states:

Strathcona County is a safe and caring community whose residents enjoy opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

An underlying goal speaks to Strathcona County offering a broad range of opportunities for healthy lifestyles. Some of the specific strategies to achieve this goal include:

- Invest in both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, in accordance with the Open Space and Recreational Facility Strategy.
- Promote the benefits of participating in recreational, cultural, and educational activities.
- Increase trail linkages throughout Strathcona County.

4.2. Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a tool utilized by Strathcona County Council, administration, and the public to make decisions pertaining to growth and development over the next twenty years. The MDP describes a vision for Strathcona County and also provides a strategy by which long term goals can be achieved. The MDP Bylaw 1-2007 was approved in May 2007.

The Municipal Government Act (Provincial Statute) guides the development of the MDP, stating what the MDP must include the provision of municipal services and facilities, and future land use within the municipality. The following excerpts provide some context within which this Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan was developed.

In Section 8, the MDP explains Strathcona County's environmental management objectives. In regards to recreation and open space, the following applies:

General

Strathcona County will:

8.6 Ensure no development is allowed on hazard lands except for extensive agricultural uses, passive recreational uses, or interim resource extraction, approved on a site by site basis;

8.8 Ensure that no permanent structures are allowed within the 1:100 year flood plain of Strathcona County's rivers, streams, lakes and natural watercourses. Consideration may be given to non-residential developments, such as boat houses, proposed in the 1:100 year flood plain, subject to appropriate flood proofing and the proponent demonstrating to the municipality's satisfaction, the precise boundary of the flood plain;

8.11 Encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of disturbed natural areas;

8.12 Identify, conserve and protect to the greatest extent possible, environmentally sensitive lands such as the North Saskatchewan River Valley, the Beaver Hills Moraine and all water bodies;

Water

Strathcona County will:

8.18 Ensure no development is permitted adjacent to the North Saskatchewan River Valley, lakes or other watercourses which would:

- a) Reduce water quality or impede the flow of water;*
- b) Lead to soil erosion or shoreline damage;*
- c) Adversely affect the natural amenity;*
- d) Adversely affect appropriate recreational potential;*
- e) Restrict access to the water unless safety factors dictate otherwise;*
- f) Adversely impact the visual quality of the natural amenity;*
- g) Adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat; or*
- h) Increase the quantity of flow or decrease water retention.*

8.19 Create development guidelines to protect lands and riparian corridors adjacent to watercourses and water bodies;

8.20 Ensure development on parcels where wetlands, water bodies and/or watercourses are located within or adjacent to the subject property, are developed in accordance with Strathcona County's "Wetland Policy" by ensuring:

- a) Wetlands/low areas are not filled in, drained or altered to accommodate development, except where sanctioned by the Approving Authority;*
- b) A professional biophysical and/or geotechnical assessment is completed and confirms that there are no environmental issues and the potential for hazards such as flooding or instability of land are eliminated;*
- c) Sufficient setbacks are identified and incorporated into the site design; and*
- d) Mitigative measures such as replanting and naturalization are incorporated into the site design.*

8.21 Protect watersheds to maintain the water quality and quantity of surface and ground water systems;

8.24 Ensure lands classified as environmental reserve as defined by the Municipal Government Act, are identified and protected as such;

8.25 Maintain a buffer to protect lands and water resources adjacent to watercourses for:

- a) *The North Saskatchewan River, a minimum 50 metre (164 feet) buffer from the top of bank must be maintained. No buildings or structures will be allowed within the minimum setback requirement, except under unique and appropriate circumstances as determined by the Approving Authority;*
- b) *Old Man Creek and its tributaries, a minimum 36 metre (118 feet) buffer from the top of bank must be maintained for properties within the North of Yellowhead Area Concept Plan (See Bylaw #51-2003, as amended). No buildings or structures will be allowed within the minimum setback requirement, except under unique and appropriate circumstances as determined by the Approving Authority; and*
- c) *All other lakes, waterbodies and watercourses, a minimum 30 metre (98 feet) buffer from the top of bank must be maintained. No buildings or structures will be allowed within the minimum setback requirement, except under unique and appropriate circumstances as determined by the Approving Authority.*

Land

Strathcona County will:

- 8.31 *Educate the public about alternative forms of landscaping which minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides and reduce water consumption by supporting the development of ecoscape (xeriscape) yards by utilizing native plants in the landscape;*
- 8.32 *Encourage land uses and forms of development that conserve natural habitat;*
- 8.33 *Support the implementation of the Legacy Lands Policy to:*
 - a) *Acquire lands of historical, cultural and environmental significance to the community; and*
 - b) *Provide access to significant natural and heritage lands.*
- 8.37 *Ensure areas with significant environmental features which are proposed for future urban growth, hamlet or country residential development, are protected through the provisions of an area structure plan, area redevelopment plan, conceptual scheme, a Land Use Bylaw designation or conservation easement;*

In Section 9, the MDP speaks to the provision of parks and recreation in Strathcona County. Specifically it states:

Strathcona County will:

- 9.1 *Encourage a variety of recreational opportunities in the County*
- 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:
- b) Community profiles and future population growth projections;
 - c) Connectivity within and between neighbourhoods;
 - f) Accessibility to the space, based on proposed use;
 - g) Opportunities for private or joint ventures; and
- 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;
- 9.8 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

Section 11 addresses Institutional and Community Facilities. In part it states,

Strathcona County will:

- 11.18 Continue to assess, maintain, and where appropriate, enhance the facility infrastructure that supports the delivery of recreation services and where delivery can be accomplished in an economical manner; and
- 11.19 Encourage the expansion of the range of community recreation services, in an effective and efficient manner through alliances with private, non-government and public sectors and by sharing the provision of services with voluntary organizations.

Section 12 addresses Social Development. In part it states:

Strathcona County will:

- 12.12 Promote healthy, self-reliant, sustainable communities by seeking to provide accessible, social services;
- 12.13 Encourage the development of public parkland, recreational and cultural facilities that are distributed in a suitable manner throughout the community;

4.3. Ardrossan Area Structure Plan (ASP)

The Ardrossan Area Structure Plan (ASP) was approved as Bylaw 3-97 in February 1997. The primary purpose of the ASP is to identify a framework for the future development and growth within Ardrossan. The development concept plan identifies the

proposed land use pattern, the general location of major transportation routes, water/sewer lines, utilities, the sequence of development within the plan area, and projected population densities.

There are a number of goals of the ASP, many of which are directly applicable to this Master Plan. These include:

- Encourage greater interconnectivity within the plan area; and
- Ensure that new land development occurs in an orderly manner and is sensitive to the natural area.

The ASP supports the development of passive recreational facilities that will help create a pedestrian circulation network. Related, the ASP also refers to the integration of the schools, the existing services, the hamlet itself, and future residential areas.

Of note is that a revision to the ASP in regards to the hamlet boundaries has been proposed and is in progress. As of September 30, 2009, the hamlet boundaries presented herein are accurate.

4.4. Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS)

The Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS), which received Strathcona County Council approval on June 24, 2008, is a guiding document and plan for future open space and indoor recreation facilities in Strathcona County.

The strategy sets the path for investment in the Strathcona County community's health and wellness to address needs in parks, natural areas and recreation facility requirements from 2009 through to 2024

Expanding safe, affordable and accessible opportunities that promote healthy lifestyle choices for all ages is the focus of the strategy. Needs of the individual spontaneous user, activity program participant, and organized sports groups will be addressed as the Strategy is implemented. Needs in urban, country residential and agricultural areas will be dealt with as well.

4.4.1. OSRFS Background

Key concepts of the new vision for open space and recreation facilities

An investment in people - The creation of a system of indoor and outdoor natural and man-made community gathering places provide residents of all ages with a high quality of life and the opportunity for improved health and wellness, now and in the future.

A carefully planned infrastructure investment strategy built with the community - The focus is to invest in revitalizing our existing infrastructure before new facilities are built. Strathcona County will work with a variety of partners (not-for-profit groups, for-profit

groups, health care, school boards, other municipalities, etc.) to develop facilities and amenities in a timely fashion while at the same time building community involvement.

An investment in a healthier environment - Conserving and maintaining natural heritages, and ensuring that man-made redevelopment and development has a reduced ecological footprint will show Strathcona County's commitment to a more sustainable community.

4.4.2. Open Space and Recreation Facilities Program Categories

Outdoor

- Walkable Community Revitalization Program
- Outdoor Community Gathering Places Revitalization Program
- Streetscape Revitalization Program

Indoor

- Wellness & health
- Ice
- Aquatics
- Dry surface – for example gymnasiums and indoor soccer fields
- Culture
- Special purpose – for example Millennium Place

Indoor and outdoor activities are deeply connected, work together, affect the other and operate toward the common purpose of providing healthy lifestyle choices.

More specifically in relation to the Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan, there are a number of key initiatives originating in the OSRFS that may impact future recreation resources in the hamlet. These initiatives are mentioned through this Master Plan and include:

- Sports Field Strategy – To be completed in 2010 and including:
 - Identify and map existing sites where field sports currently take place
 - Identify maintenance status of existing infrastructure and need for repairs
 - Quantify how existing fields are currently booked/utilized using Strathcona County and group records
 - Identify group needs in consultation with groups
 - Project future demand for field sports
 - Identify future field sport network and associated upgrades (as required)
- Community Hall Revitalization – To be completed in 2010, a system wide study of community halls undertaken with the community to better understand the long term future

- Aquatic Feasibility Study – To be initiated in 2010 and including an assessment of current and new aquatic options to address overcrowding in learn to swim programs and to meet other indoor and outdoor water based community needs.

Although these initiatives include a much broader perspective than this Master Plan, elements of each will impact recreation facility, parks and open space provision in the Hamlet.

4.5. Capital Region Board (CRB)

On April 15, 2008, the Government of Alberta established the Capital Region Board (CRB) by adopting the Capital Region Board Regulation AR 49/2008. The Regulation identified the twenty five participating municipalities of the Capital Region, including Strathcona County, and directed the CRB to prepare a Capital Region Growth Plan by March 31, 2009.

The Regulation required that the Board complete a Growth Plan with four key components: land use; inter-municipal transit; housing; and geographic information services.

The Growth Plan fulfills the requirements of the Regulation, and provides a vision for the future of the Capital Region. The plan also contains implementation strategies for each of the four key components. The implementation of the Growth Plan will occur over a number of years.

Specifically, the plan:

- Provides an integrated and strategic approach to planning for future growth in the Capital Region;
- Identifies the overall development patterns and key future infrastructure investments that would best complement existing infrastructure, services and land uses in the Capital Region, and which would also maximize benefits to the Capital Region; and
- Coordinates decisions in the Capital Region to sustain economic growth and ensure strong communities and a healthy environment.

The plan is a framework to guide and coordinate planning and development decisions of municipalities in the Region.

4.6. Alberta Land Use Framework

The Province of Alberta Land Use Framework is,
“a comprehensive strategy to better manage public and private lands and natural resources to achieve Alberta’s long-term economic, environmental and social

*goals. The framework provides a blueprint for land use management and decision-making that addresses Alberta's growth pressures.*²

The framework is meant to promote regional cooperation in land use planning and ensure the efficient use of lands throughout the Province. The framework outlines seven regional areas geographically covering the province and requires that land use in each of the seven regions be guided by a Land Use Secretariat and Regional Advisory Council.

The overall intent of the framework, as it pertains to the scope of this Master Plan, is to, "...develop regional plans that will:

- integrate provincial policies at the regional level;
- set out regional land-use objectives;
- provide direction and context for land-use decision-making in the region; and
- reflect the uniqueness of the landscape and priorities of each region within a planning context."³

Strathcona County is located in the North Saskatchewan Region and will have the opportunity to get involved in the development of the regional land use plan for the North Saskatchewan Region. It is important to note that this regional plan will have direct implications to current Strathcona County land use as it will require, at the very least, Strathcona County to relate how existing land use is compliant with strategies outlined in the regional context.

4.7. Strathcona County Sustainability Frameworks

Through direction from Strathcona County's Capstone Policies, three Sustainability Frameworks either have been, or are being, developed by Strathcona County Administration. These three Sustainability Frameworks outline how Strathcona County and its many stakeholders can assess, promote, and achieve sustainability within each of the three pillars (environment, social, and economic).

Of the three, the Social Sustainability Framework has been in practice the longest (2004). The Social Sustainability Framework explains the role of Strathcona County in assessing, promoting and achieving social sustainability. The framework acts:

- *To serve as a foundation for responding to social issues.*
- *To provide opportunities for the assessment of the impact of demographic, social, and economic changes on residents.*

² http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/documents/Land_use_Framework_QAs.doc

³ http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/documents/Land_use_Framework_QAs.doc

- *To provide for the assessment of the social impact of municipal decisions on the quality of life of residents.*
- *To facilitate the prioritization and planning for current and future social needs.*
- *To aid in monitoring key socio-demographic indicators to address issues as they emerge.*
- *To clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the County and other sectors.*
- *To guide the development of policies to address community and social issues.*
- *To strengthen the County's commitment to integrated planning for all people services.*

The other two frameworks, Economic (development to commence in the autumn of 2009) and Environment (recently completed) have similar goals and objectives in each respective area. Together with the Social Sustainability Framework, these two frameworks will ensure that balanced municipal sustainability is achieved in future decision making and operations.

4.7.1. The Strathcona County Older Adult Plan

The Strathcona County Older Adult Plan (OAP) was identified as a recommendation of the Social Sustainability Framework. The OAP includes a number of strategic goals, one of which states that Strathcona County should "...maximize opportunities for older adults to contribute to their families, community and economy". Although the OAP addressing much broader issues facing the older adult population in Strathcona County, its pertinence to this Master Plan is likely most apparent in its recommendation that Strathcona County "follow the 'Principles of Universal Design' in the design and construction of new or renovated buildings." These principles are applicable to all indoor and outdoor development projects and should be considered in any future recreation, parks and open space provision in the hamlet.

4.8. Other Related Plans and Projects

There are a number of projects planned or underway in Strathcona County that are related to the Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan.

4.8.1. Ardrossan Recreation Complex Infrastructure Reinvestment

The Ardrossan Recreation Complex Infrastructure Reinvestment focuses on improving the quality of existing ice functions and examines the potential for improved wellness and spontaneous recreation opportunities.

The concept for the facility's revitalization looks at maximizing the potential based on funding to introduce wellness and health opportunities as well as accommodating other spontaneous uses.

The ice component identifies building a new arena to replace the 42 year old aging portion of the complex.

The work occurring in Phase 1A at the Ardrossan Recreation Complex forms an integrated subset of the overall Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan, being undertaken in 2009. Ardrossan community trails and the outdoor ice surface are also being addressed as part of Open Space and Recreation Facilities Strategy (OSRFS) walkable communities and outdoor community gathering places.

What is the new vision for open spaces and recreation facilities in our community?

To invest in a healthy and active community for today and into the future by

- focusing on revitalizing existing infrastructure by growing in place before building new facilities;
- presenting an integrated system of indoor and outdoor places and facilities to meet multiple recreations needs across multiple locations; and
- creating opportunities for community partners to contribute to project design outcomes consistent with the approved OSRFS and capital budget.

The revitalization of the Ardrossan Recreation Complex will encourage and entice the neighbourhood, the community and Strathcona County residents to come together for various recreation reasons to participate and enjoy this newly developed community gathering place.

A site plan of the revitalization project, as at September 14, 2009, is presented as follows.

4.8.2. Strathcona County Trails Master Plan

Strathcona County is looking at updating the existing Trails Master Plan, which was originally approved in June 1998, as identified in the OSRFS. There are a number of tasks that comprise this strategy, they include:

- Identify and map the existing trail linkages by type of trail (i.e. gravel, paved, etc).
- Identify a County wide system of trails in urban and rural areas, and hamlets. The trail system should consider the potential for snowmobile trail(s), major trunk trail systems linking urban and rural areas, and hamlets. It should also consider trail systems within urban and rural areas, and hamlets.
- Identify criteria to recommend trail surfaces throughout the County. This will include identifying a hierarchy of trails within the County. It also involves establishing standards and guidelines for the development and maintenance of each level of the hierarchy.
- Develop a priority ranking system and identify a list of sites and a proposed construction program for each trail site and link.
- Exploration of construction and maintenance partnership/sharing opportunities where available.

4.8.3. Ardrossan Community Trail Upgrades – Strathcona County Approved 2009 Capital Projects

This program involved two upgrades. One upgrade included the construction of an asphalt trail to connect north of Main Street into the school/park site. The second included having the existing gravel trail in the Ardrossan Heights Subdivision surfaced with asphalt. Both of these upgrades form part of the Master Plan.

4.8.4. Ardrossan Outdoor Rink

As part of the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS) Community Gathering Places Revitalization Program, the Ardrossan Outdoor Rink project was been identified to proceed in 2009/2010. This project will see a new outdoor rink located adjacent to the Recreation Centre. Consideration for the placement of the outdoor rink has been included in the Community Master Plan. The timing of this project has been altered to coincide with the completion of the Ardrossan Recreation Complex Infrastructure Reinvestment (described earlier) and as such will not occur until that project is underway and/or complete.

4.8.5. Sportsfield Strategy

Strathcona County is moving ahead with a Sportsfield Strategy as identified in the OSRFS. There are a number of tasks that comprise this strategy, they include:

- Identify and map the existing sites where field sports currently take place.

- Identify maintenance status of existing infrastructure and need for repairs.
- Quantify how existing fields are currently booked/utilized using the records provided by those organizations responsible for booking the fields including Strathcona County and others.
- Identify group needs in consultation with those groups.
- Project demand for field sports over some future fixed term.
- Identify future field sport network and associated upgrades (as required).

The Sportsfield Strategy is in the public input stage, with open houses and public surveys facilitated in fall of 2009. The study is expected to be completed by winter 2010.

4.8.6. Ardrossan Youth Park

The need for a dedicated youth park has been identified by a number of people within the Ardrossan community and a community support group/network has been formed. The community group has dedicated itself to the development of a permanent youth skateboard park in Ardrossan. Towards that end the group has:

- Raised capital funds;
- Discussed its ideas with Strathcona County; and
- Met with a private design consultant to discuss the facility development process and development a park concept plan (with assistance from Strathcona County).

The group can now, under the auspices of this Master Plan, move forward with capital fundraising and ultimately, concept development once funding is in place.

4.8.7. Ardrossan Memorial Hall Expansion

The Ardrossan Memorial Hall is owned and operated by the Ardrossan Recreation and Agricultural Society (ARAS). The Hall amenities include a dance floor and bar on the upper level with a basic kitchen in the basement. The basement also has a meeting area. The Hall is suitable for meetings and social events for up to 100 people. There are plans underway to expand the Memorial Hall, funding for planning and expansion has already been partially secured.