

What is a multi-purpose agricultural facility?

The Strathcona County multi-purpose agricultural facility will be a destination where residents from across the County can enjoy a variety of agricultural, community and social events.

Why is a multi-purpose agricultural facility a priority for Strathcona County?

The need for agricultural recreation space has been referenced in several County planning documents and has been continually requested by residents and community organizations. Responding to these needs aligns with the County's vision to preserve our agricultural heritage and to invest in recreational programs and facilities that set us apart as a specialized municipality with rural roots. It also supports our strategic priority to increase and diversify agricultural business.

What kind of events and activities will take place there?

The facility is designed to accommodate [agricultural events and group activities](#) identified by local community groups, and the site will feature outdoor spaces that all residents can enjoy.

Amenities will include an indoor arena and a covered outdoor arena to support agricultural events, such as 4H shows, barrel racing, horse breed shows, livestock shows, and canine clubs and shows. The site will also include trails and day-use spaces with the potential for farmer's markets, barbecues and camping.

Future expansion would allow for larger and higher-level competitions, and would include event, concert and banquet space and serviced RV camping.

Where will it be located?

The facility will be located on a 150-acre parcel of land surrounding the Bremner Heritage Site on Range Road 225 north of TWP Road 534, approximately 15 minutes northeast of Sherwood Park.

How was the location chosen?

To determine the most suitable location, Strathcona County developed [site selection criteria](#) that considered recommendations outlined in the [feasibility study](#), along with the research and expertise of internal departments. Key criteria included access to major transportation routes and proximity to the urban centre.

The criteria helped us refine the number of potential sites, which were brought to Council for consideration. From there, Administration was asked to complete engineering design briefs on the top choices. After the studies were completed, Council was presented with the options. The land surrounding the Bremner Heritage Site was selected by unanimous vote on September 12, 2017.

Which other locations were considered as part of the site selection process?

The parcels of land cannot be disclosed because they relate to negotiations regarding the price of land. We can tell you that both County-owned and privately-owned areas from across Strathcona County were evaluated using the [site selection criteria](#). Our Planning and Development Services department also reviewed potential sites for other considerations, such as land use and zoning requirements.

When will construction start?

We are currently estimating that facility construction will begin in late 2020, but that is subject to change. Once we confirm the design, we will update the timelines.

How much will it cost?

Council approved a regional facility model in October 2016, along with the purchase and servicing of additional land and amenities to expand to a provincial facility in the future. This regional-plus concept is estimated to cost approximately \$47.2 million.

What kind of public engagement did you do for the facility?

We started with a [feasibility study](#) conducted by an external consulting company in 2013. This included a survey of 21 local community groups; interviews with 16 stakeholder groups; and a telephone survey of 400 residents (200 rural and 200 urban). At the same time, we attended local agricultural events to gather additional input, and a visioning session was held at the Colchester Community Hall with local and provincial stakeholders.

After the feasibility results were accepted by Council, we interviewed local community groups again to confirm their requirements and inform functional programming and conceptual design of a regional facility model. A total of 61 local and provincial groups were consulted.

What are the next steps for this project?

Next steps include development of the site plan concept, which includes the layout of all the approved components of the facility and site. Once drafted, the County will share plans with community groups to get their input on the functionality of the layout.