



Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County



February 2016 Final Report

Prepared by



EDA
Collaborative Inc.


Sierra Planning and Management
advice • strategy • implementation



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County was prepared to guide the acquisition, development and disposition of open space within the county. The plan is based on an existing situation review, which included; an assessment of the County's existing open space system, the current County statutory plans and policies, and updated assessment of needs and trends that were drawn from previous studies and current community consultation. This research informed the development of the guidelines and recommendations that formed the basis of this document.

Some of the key findings from the analysis of the existing situation review included:

- The county is rich in reserves but facility poor
- There is a lack of open space diversity within the County.
- There needs to be more recognition of the role of environmental stewardship within the open space system
- There is a strong desire for trail development throughout the County
- There needs to be more recognition of neighbourhood (as defined in the Municipal Development Plan) level open space as a bridge between local level open space (playgrounds) and Countywide facilities (i.e., Cardiff Park),
- Developers, community associations and municipalities contribute greatly to the open space system therefore continued / strengthened support and partnerships are important.
- The provision of future open space is important especially in growth areas identified in the Municipal Development Plan.

In response to the findings, several guidelines were developed to provide direction on the acquisition and development of open space. More specifically guidelines were developed to address Environmental Protection, Historic Resources, Open Space Allocation and Management, Facility Development, Trail Development and Scenic Character.

In addition to the guidelines, an Open Space Typology outlines the types of parks and open spaces proposed for Sturgeon County. The typology includes recommended sizes, service standards, location criteria and associated amenities for each level of open space together with relative priority for maintenance.

To provide specific guidance regarding the development of assets within the open space system, site-specific capital improvements were recommended for each level of open space. Recommendations were assigned a relative priority, and short-term priorities included associated budget implementations.

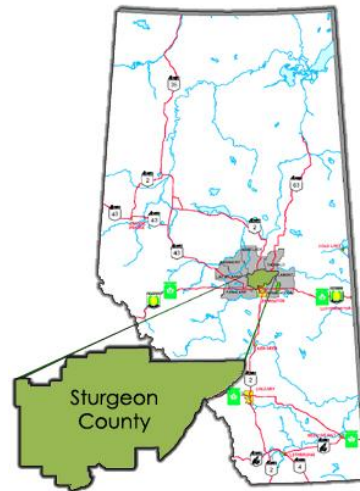
Other key outcomes of this plan included an asset strategy for the development of an approach that would guide the long-term management of parks and open space and a suggested disposition process for non-contributing open spaces.

The Plan, when implemented, will help ensure delivery of an open space system that responds to both the current and future needs of the County.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Sturgeon County covers more than 2,300 square kilometers of land in Alberta's Capital Region, north of the cities of Edmonton and St. Albert. The County offers residents the best of both rural and urban living and lifestyle, and has a diverse range of land uses ranging from agricultural and industrial to residential. The county's proximity to St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, the CFB Edmonton Garrison and Edmonton in addition to its profusion of natural resources, has led to a significant forecasted population growth. Population is projected on the high end to nearly double over the next 30 years¹. It is therefore important to develop a strategy to guide Open Space acquisition and development in order to ensure adequate supply to meet increasing demand.



1.2 Purpose

The County has developed an extraordinary compliment of programs and services for its residents through a broad range of up to date leisure facilities and outdoor parks and open spaces. The level of municipal commitment in developing and sustaining this open space infrastructure has been directed by the County's 2004 Open Space Master Plan Update. With the plan being over a decade old and the current challenges facing the County in clearly defining the role of municipal reserves within the County's context, the County retained the services of EDA Collaborative Inc. and Sierra Consulting Ltd. to develop an updated Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County.

The purpose of the plan is to provide a planning and decision making framework for the strategic development of Open Space and the assessment of municipal reserves within Sturgeon County.

¹ Capital Region Population and Employment Projections to 2047, p.S-5

1.3 Objectives

In order to realize the goal of this plan, several key objectives need to be met:

- This Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County shall strategically align with other planning documents including the Municipal Development Plan;
- The Plan should consider the current and anticipated future open space needs of County residents and stakeholders in relation the financial and operational realities facing the County.
- This document should identify strategies to protect environmental, cultural and historical resources in addition to the scenic rural character of the County.

1.4 Study Process

The open space planning process involved several steps. A review of the County's existing open space system was undertaken to identify current issues specific to the County ranging from existing supply and utilization, to demographic and finances. A comparative review was also conducted to analyze current trends and best practices in open space acquisition and development. The review considered

general provincial and national trends in addition to an examination of open space management and development strategies implemented in similar municipalities. The findings from the comparative review were assessed against the existing open space supply to form the basis for proposed development guidelines and recommendations which are the basis of the ultimate open space strategy for the County.



Figure 1: MR, Parks and Open Space Master Plan Process

Key findings from each stage of the process are highlighted in the text in bold italicized text.

2 EXISTING SITUATION

2.1 Plan Foundation

Many documents provide guidance to the development of land and open space within the County. At the provincial level, the Municipal Government Act outlines requirements for land dedication as well as cash in lieu of dedication. At the regional level, the Capital Region Growth Plan provides an integrated strategic vision for growth within the Capital Region, while the Municipal Development Plan provides a guiding vision at the County level. Within the County, area redevelopment plans, outline plans, areas structure plans, and other master plans provide more detail specific to one area or type of development. Additional related documents include the Land Use Bylaw as well as redistricting, subdivision and development permit applications.

This Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County needs to follow the policy directions of Municipal Government Act, Regional Growth Plan and Municipal Development Plan in addition recognizing and adhering to the recommendation outlined in other guiding documents. In addition to the aforementioned planning documents, the findings and recommendations of the 2010 Needs Assessment also needs to be considered.

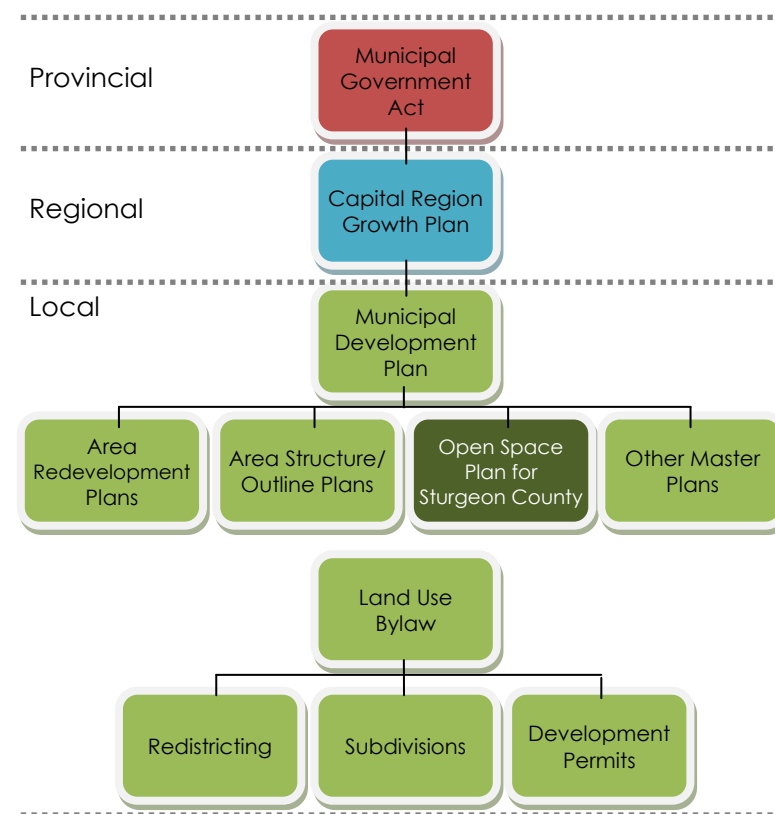


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Planning Documents

2.1.1 Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act helps ensure the provision of public open space in communities through legislated land dedication (or cash-in-lieu) requirements as part of the subdivision process. As per the Municipal Government Act, 10% of developable land (or cash in lieu) is to be dedicated as municipal reserve (MR), school reserve (SR) or municipal and school reserve (MSR). An additional 5% of developable land may be required if the density matches or exceeds 30 dwelling units per hectare of developable land. In the event that cash in lieu of all or part of the municipal reserve is being taken, pursuant to the Municipal Government Act section 674, the money shall be used for a public park, a public recreation area, school board purposes, or to separate areas of land that are used for different purposes.



Section 664 of the Municipal Government Act indicates that an environmental reserve (ER) may also be required, if part of the parcel of land consists of:

- a) "a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course",
- b) "land that is subject to flooding or is, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, unstable, or"
- c) "a strip of land, not less than 6 metres in width, abutting the bed and shore of any lake, river, stream or other body of water for the purpose (i) preventing pollution, or (ii) providing public access to and beside the bed and shore".

Public Utility Lots (PULs) often contribute to the perceived amount of public open space system (i.e. storm water management ponds, public access, etc.) however their primary function is utilitarian.

2.1.2 Growing Forward Capital Region Growth Plan

The Capital Region Board is a non-profit corporation created to develop and implement an integrated Capital Region Growth Plan for 24 municipalities within the Alberta's Capital Region. Policies are recommended to follow four principal components: Land use, Intermunicipal Transit Services, Geographic Information Services and Non-market and market affordable housing.

2.1.3 Municipal Development Plan (2014)

The 2014 Municipal Development Plan divides the County into 10 neighbourhoods, A-J with F being an overlay (refer to figure below).

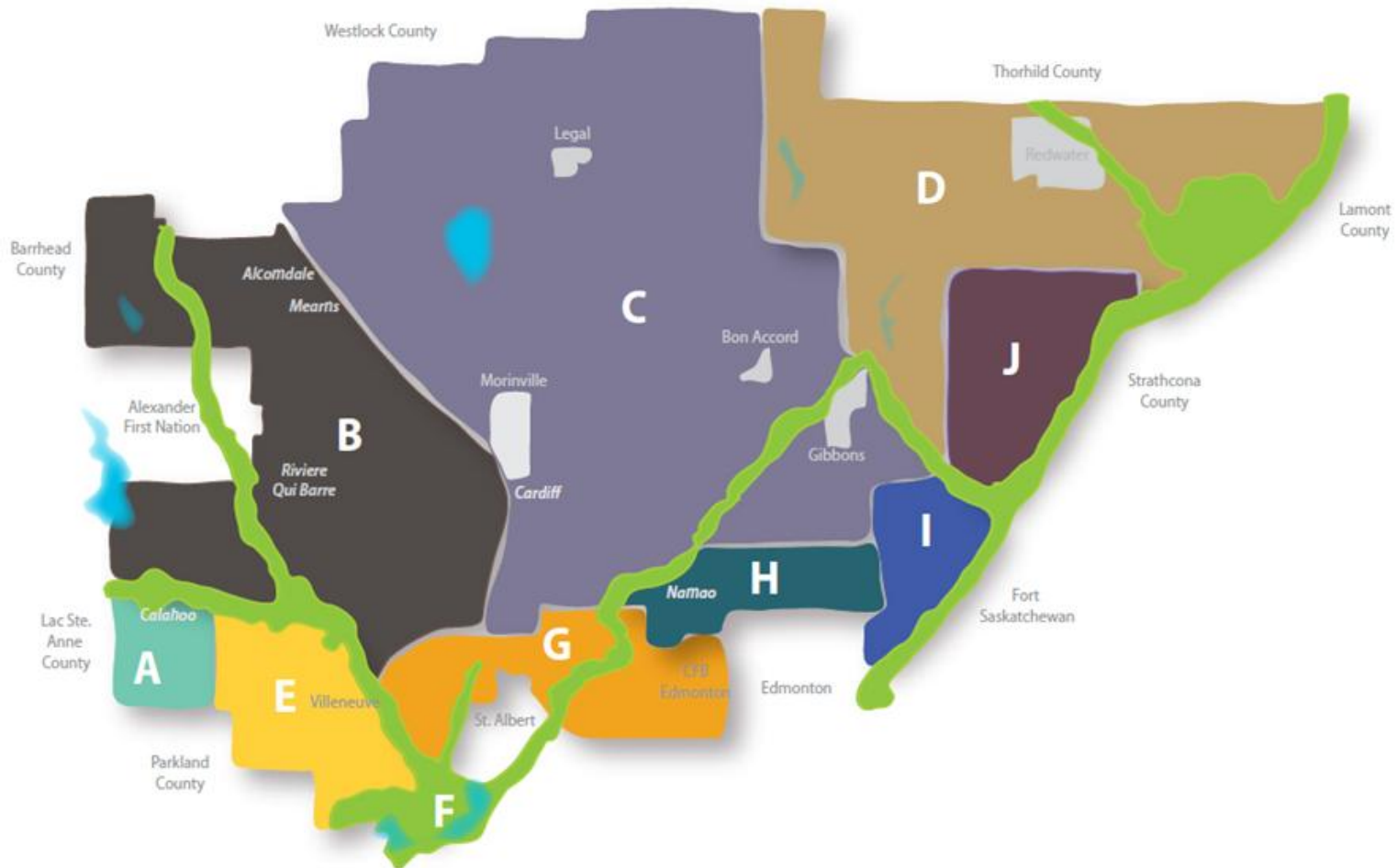


Figure 3: Municipal Development Plan Neighbourhoods

Source: Sturgeon County (2013) Municipal Development Plan, p.11

The Municipal Development Plan establishes distinctive roles for each of the neighbourhoods, as illustrated below.

Distinctive Roles of Neighbourhoods

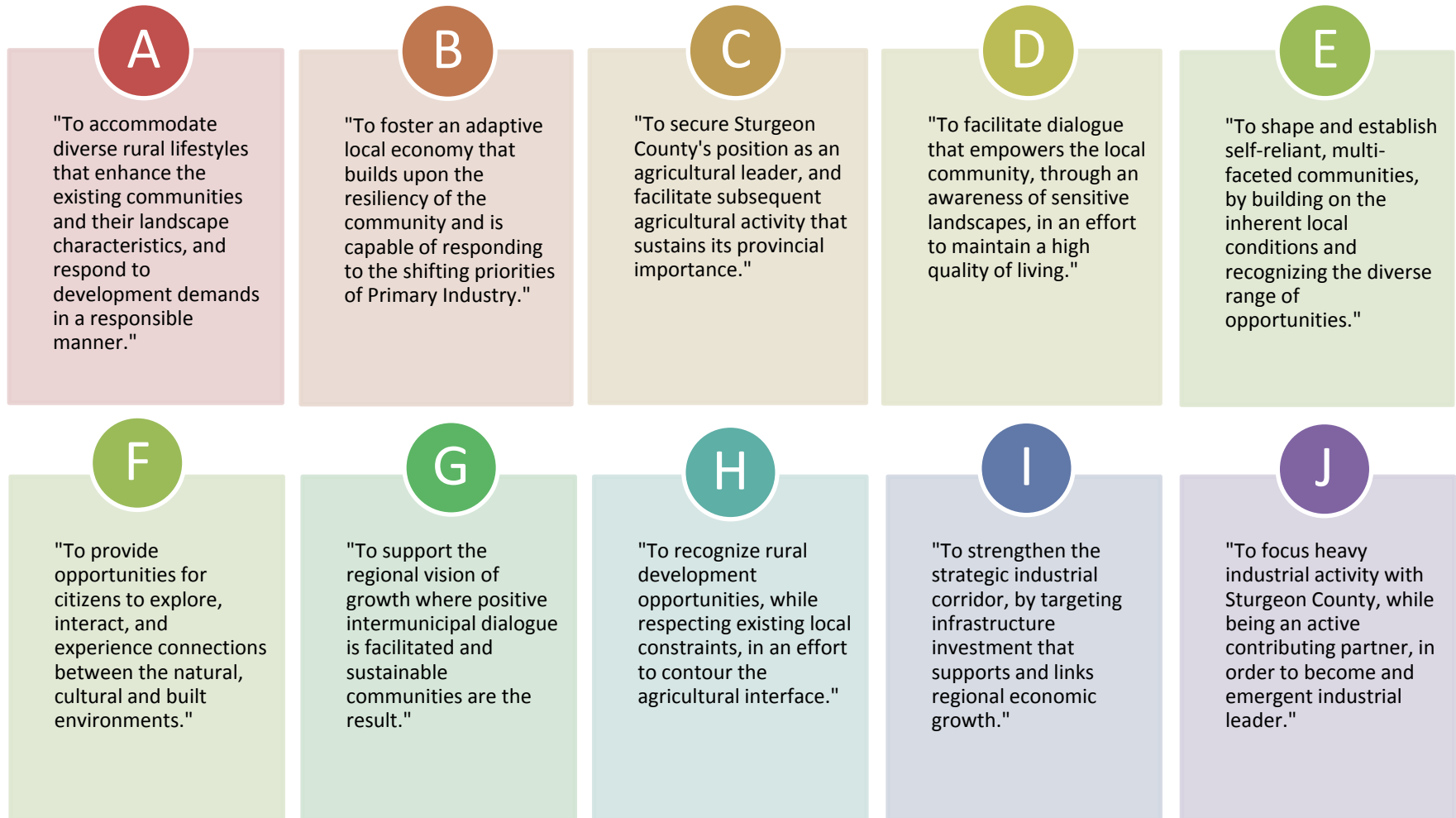


Figure 4: Municipal Development Plan Distinctive Roles of Neighbourhoods

Source: Sturgeon County (2013) Municipal Development Plan, p.56-57

To support the distinctive role, the Municipal Development Plan identifies desired outcomes and actions to achieve the outcomes for each neighbourhood (with the exception of Neighbourhood F, which serves as an overlay to other neighbourhoods). The outcomes are based on the 5 Community Guiding Principles listed below:



Figure 5: Community Guiding Principles Identified in the Municipal Development Plan

Source: Sturgeon County (2013) Municipal Development Plan, p.56-57

It is important that the Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County recognizes the intended outcomes identified on the Municipal Development Plan, particularly as they relate to the two most relevant categories to this plan: **Cultural Vitality** and **Environmental Stewardship**. The outcomes for the two categories are therefore listed by neighbourhood in the following.

Neighbourhood Cultural Vitality Outcomes

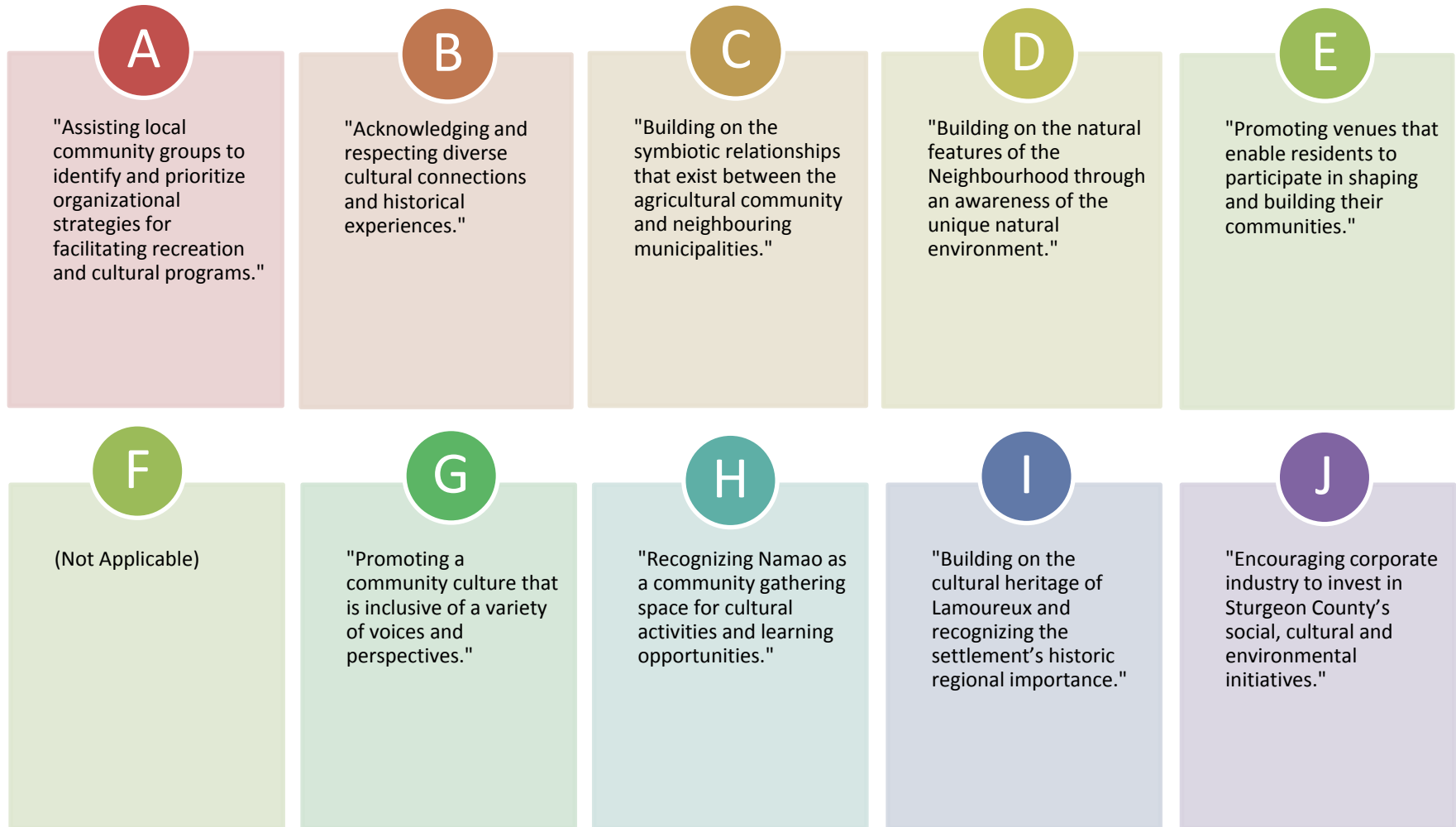


Figure 6: Municipal Development Plan Proposed Neighbourhood Cultural Vitality Outcomes

Source: Sturgeon County (2013) Municipal Development Plan, p.62, 70, 80, 88, 95, 118, 126 and 142

Neighbourhood Environmental Stewardship Outcomes

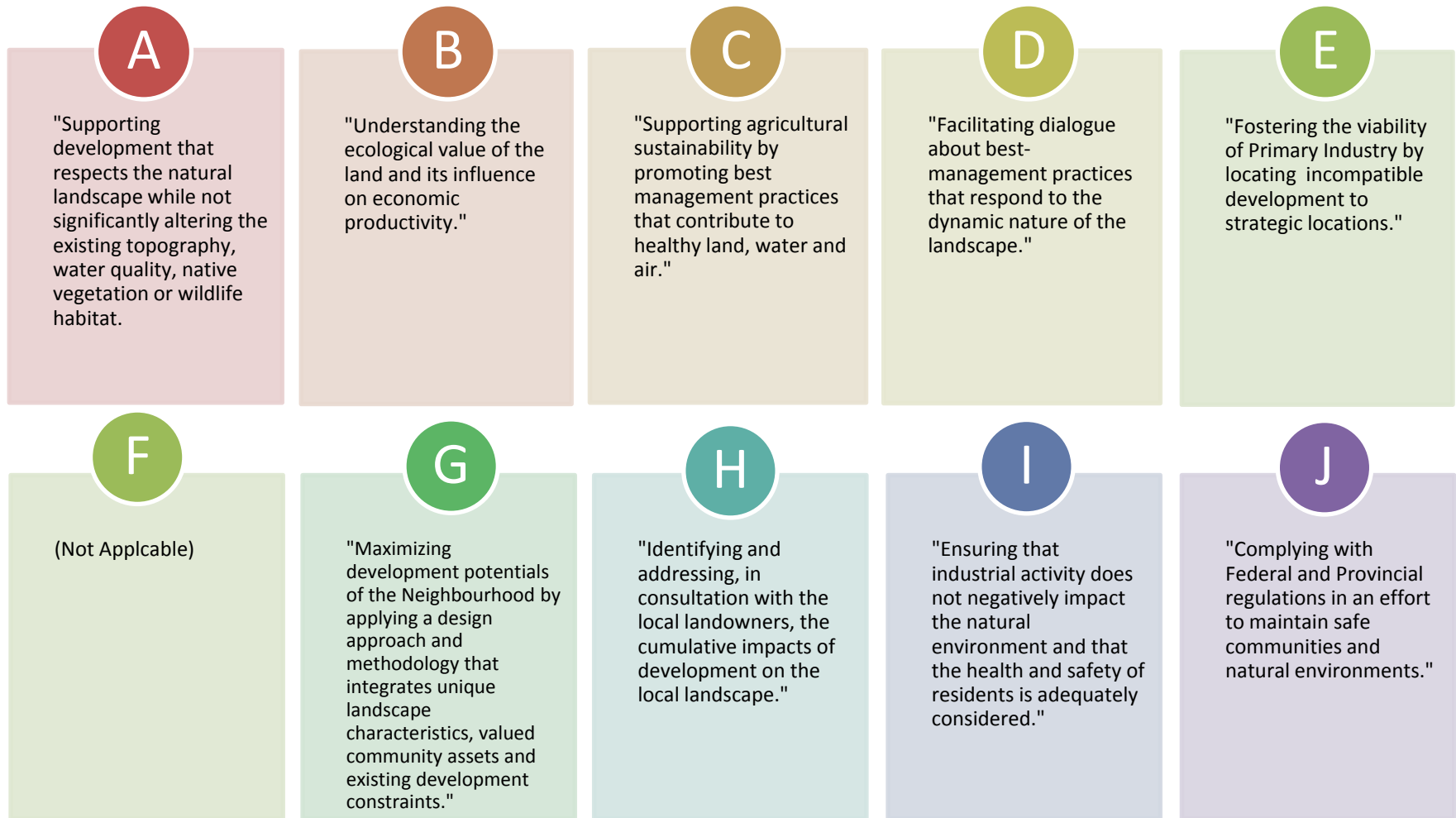


Figure 7: Municipal Development Plan Proposed Neighbourhood Environmental Stewardship Outcomes

Source: Sturgeon County (2013) Municipal Development Plan, p. 63, 71, 81, 89, 96, 119, 127 and 143

2.1.4 2004 Sturgeon County Open Space Update

The Goal of the 2004 Sturgeon County Open Space Plan Update was: *"to guide the responsible management, development, use and maintenance of public open space within Sturgeon County's jurisdiction and to consider opportunities for linkages and coordination with adjoining municipalities"*. To achieve this goal, the 2004 Open Space Plan update identified numerous policies under the following 12 categories of Open Space Management Strategies (refer to Figure 8).

In addition to open space management strategies, the Open Space Plan Update proposed a hierarchy of open space with related categories of designated use. The proposed hierarchy and designation are discussed in section 6.1 of this report.

-
- "Conserve Significant Environmentally Sensitivity Areas"
 - "Protect Environmentally Sensitive Lands and Significant Native Vegetation on Private Land"
 - "Develop a Parks Bylaw"
 - "Locate Active Recreation Facilities in Towns and Hamlets"
 - "Strategically acquire Reserve Lands"
 - "Categorize and Manage County Owned Reserves"
 - "Development of New 'Regional and District' County Owned Reserves"
 - "Upgrade Existing 'Regional and District' County Owned Reserves"
 - "Provide a County Wide Trail System"
 - "Management of Off Highway Vehicle Use"
 - "Protect and Interpret Historic Resources and Cultural Features"
 - "Protect County's Scenic Character and Setting"

Figure 8: 2004 Sturgeon County Open Space Plan Update's Open Space Management Strategies

Source: 2004 Sturgeon County Open Space Plan Update, p. 7-36

2.1.5 Area Structure Plans

As shown below, six area structure plans provides guidance to specific regions within the County.

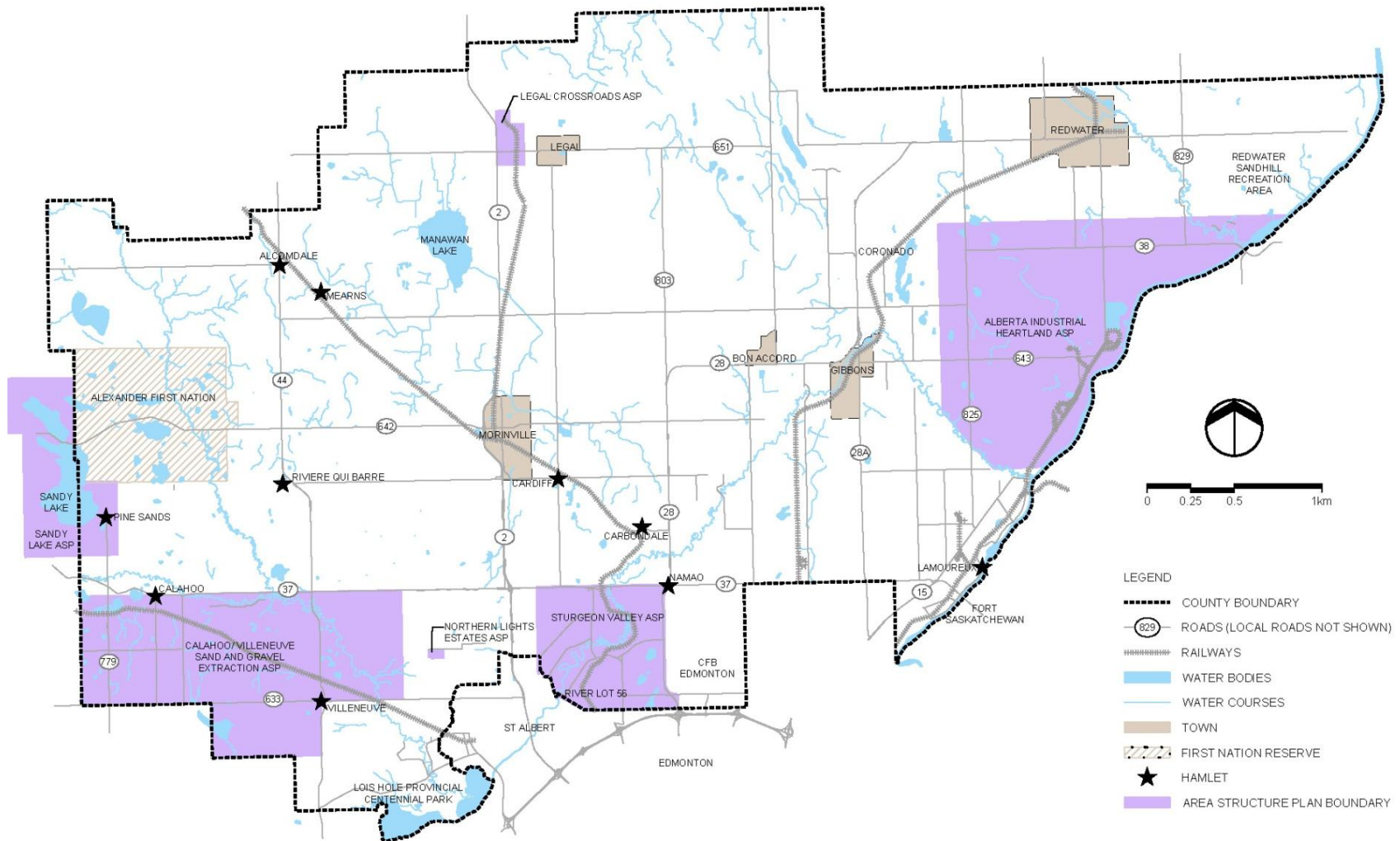


Figure 9: Area Structure Plans within the County

The area structure plans that relate most strongly to this open space plan are the Sandy Lake Area Structure Plan and the Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan. The following summarizes the plans as they relate to open space development.

The Sandy Lake Area Structure Plan

Relevant Goals include:

- Develop a lake management plan
- Protect resources from development
- To allow for joint partnership recreation develop
- Conserve wildlife habitat

Relevant Conclusions:

- Recommends that Lac Ste. Anne County, Sturgeon County and Summer Village of Sandy Beach request that the Province develop a public campground.
- County owned land ranges from very severe developmental restrictions near the waterfront to areas of highest development potential in the central portions of the site.
- County owned land classified as agricultural which purpose includes "to conserve areas with

high recreational and residential development potential by placing them in a suitable land classification until an application for recreational or residential subdivision or development is submitted, which, if acceptable, will result in an amendment to the classification".

Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan

The Sturgeon Valley Area Structure Plan suggests the development of an environmental protection zone with trail development along the Sturgeon River Valley. This recommendation was also identified in the Sturgeon County's two previous open space plans.

2.1.6 Public Lands Bylaw (Under development)

A Public Lands Bylaw is currently under development that is expected to address issues such as off highway motor vehicle use, noise, firepits, etc. on public land. Given the timing of this Open Space Plan, it may be possible to suggest possible topics for inclusion which pertain to parkland use.

2.1.7 Review of 2010 Needs Assessment

Sturgeon County conducted a Community Services Needs Assessment in 2010 to proactively determine the recreational and social needs of County residents and compare the County's standards of provision with those of comparable communities. The Needs Assessment documents the following trends that are relevant to this plan. Below each trend is suggested applicability to this open space plan:

- Sturgeon County was in a strong position in relation to comparable communities in the realms of providing parks and open spaces, non-mechanized trails, outdoor sports parks, and outdoor rectangular fields. ***This Plan will build on the existing strengths of the County's parks and open space system to identify options to improve the functionality of existing open spaces for residents, and identify mechanisms to better identify municipal land that is favourable for acquisition, and development or protection.***
- Sturgeon County was in a weaker position relative to comparable communities in the realms providing of boat launches and playgrounds. ***Through community engagement this Open Space Plan will confirm residents' priorities and aspirations for parks and open spaces amenities.***



- The County spent less on a per capita basis, on recreation and culture than municipalities of a similar size or smaller. ***This plan will review current open space budget allocation and recommend priorities for capital investment***
- The County's parks, open spaces and trails were found to be used by a little under half of all residents that participated in the study. ***This Master Plan will confirm community recreation participation trends, and park usage through community engagement.***

- Residents indicated that they were satisfied with the county's parks, open space, and trails network, and that they were of moderate-to-high importance with regards to municipal investment when compared to other community services. ***This Plan will review the current perception of open space.***
- One in five respondents to the project's survey indicated that open spaces (parks and greenfields) should be more readily available in the county. Of particular note, residents desire an enhanced trail system linking the urban centres in the County, more specifically, to connect Morinville, Edmonton Garrison with the Sturgeon Valley, and ultimately St. Albert. It is important to note also note that some safety concerns were expressed with the number of people using the shoulders of the highways as a trail. ***Through community engagement, this Plan will confirm residents' priorities and aspirations for parks and open spaces in terms of amenities.***



2.2 Population / Demographic Review

Sturgeon County is located directly north of the Edmonton and covers more than 2,300 square kilometres. Geographically, the county encompasses the Towns of Bon Accord, Gibbons, Legal, Morinville, and Redwater, and a collection of hamlets and rural subdivisions. As a Municipality however, Sturgeon County provides governance to all communities outside of these towns, with the towns each having their own elected councils and administration.

The County's close proximity to Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert and CFB Edmonton Garrison has contributed to population growth. Over the past decade and a half, the County's population grew from 15,485 residents in 1996, to a total population of 19,165 residents in 2011. The Capital Region Growth Plan suggests that the County's resident base could grow to up to 32,782 residents by 2044. The significantly stronger projected growth for Sturgeon County can be linked to the growing footprint of Edmonton which has left the County on the border of the city's outer suburbs. The expected location and characteristics of this growth are examined in greater detail throughout this development analysis.

Sturgeon County residents are relatively youthful compared to the national average, with a median age of a little less than 39 years. Compared to neighbouring communities however, Sturgeon County has a higher median age, particularly compared to the towns of Bon Accord, Gibbons, Legal and Morinville. This is likely due to younger families choosing to locate within the population centres where there is greater accessibility to services.

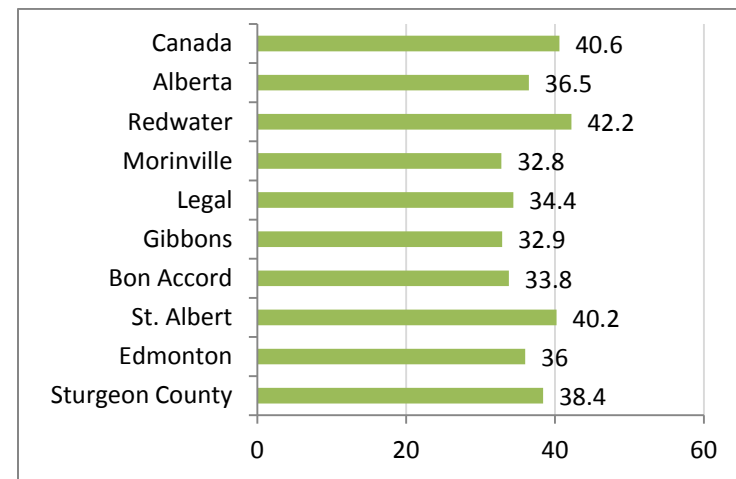


Figure 10: Median Age of Residents (2011)

Source: Statistics Canada Census of Canada, 2011

Residents of Sturgeon County are employed in a wide variety of industries. Of particular importance are the construction industry, retail, health care and social assistance, and public administration. The Sturgeon Industrial Park is a major employer for local residents, as is CFB Edmonton Garrison, and broader industry within the City of Edmonton. As such, many Sturgeon County residents commute outside of their communities, and many outside of the county, for employment purposes.

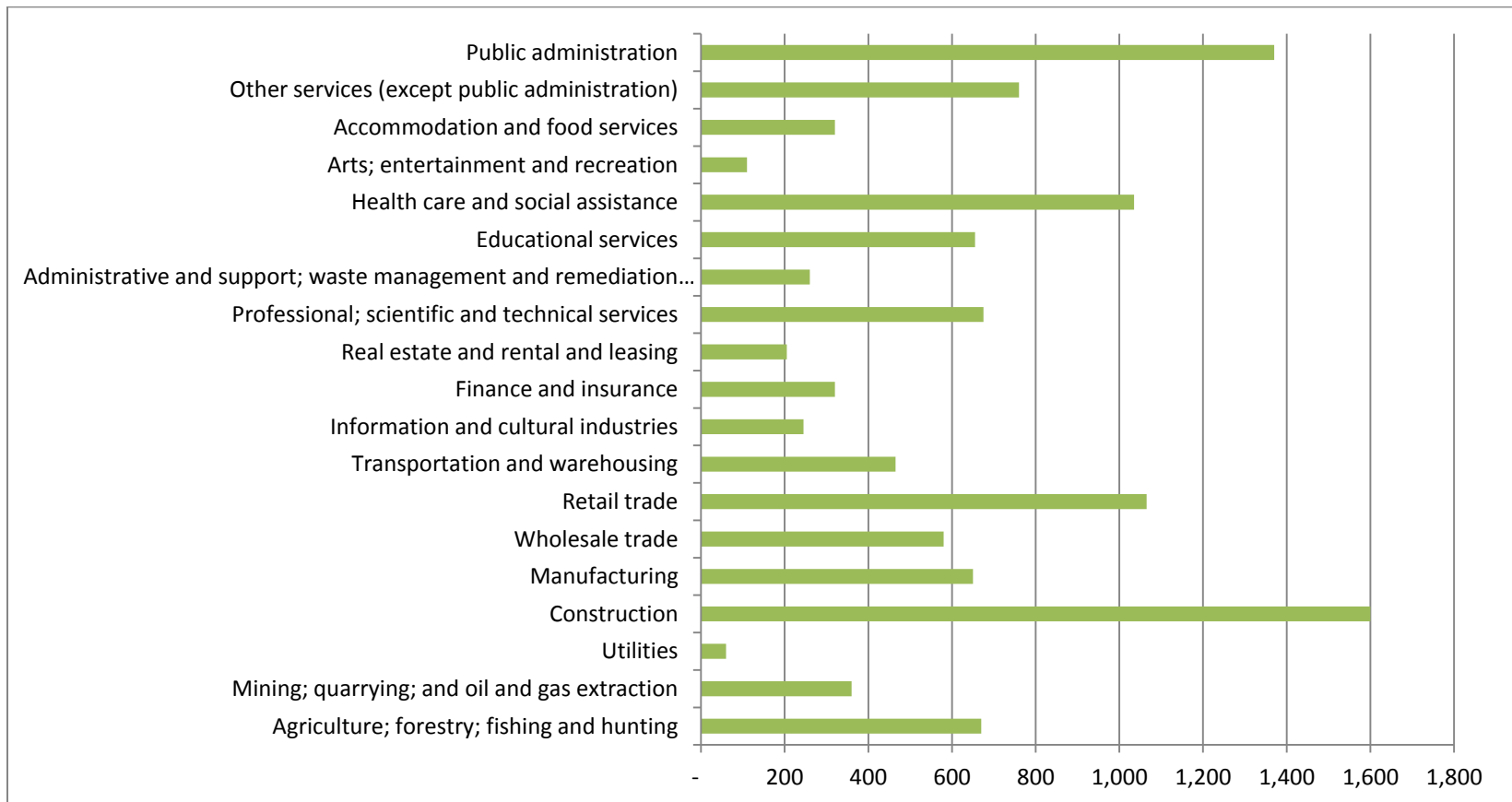


Figure 11: Employment Patterns of Sturgeon Residents by Sector (2011)

Source: Statistics Canada Census of Canada (2011)

The County has experienced relatively strong population growth in comparison to surrounding communities. Between 2006 and 2011, the county grew by approximately 1,000 residents. This is relatively high growth compared to the municipalities that neighbour Sturgeon County (with the exception of St. Albert and Morinville) and can be attributed to the growing popularity of the Sturgeon Valley as a new residential neighbourhood. Indeed, most of this growth has occurred in the Sturgeon Valley as opposed to country acreages, country subdivisions, and the hamlets.

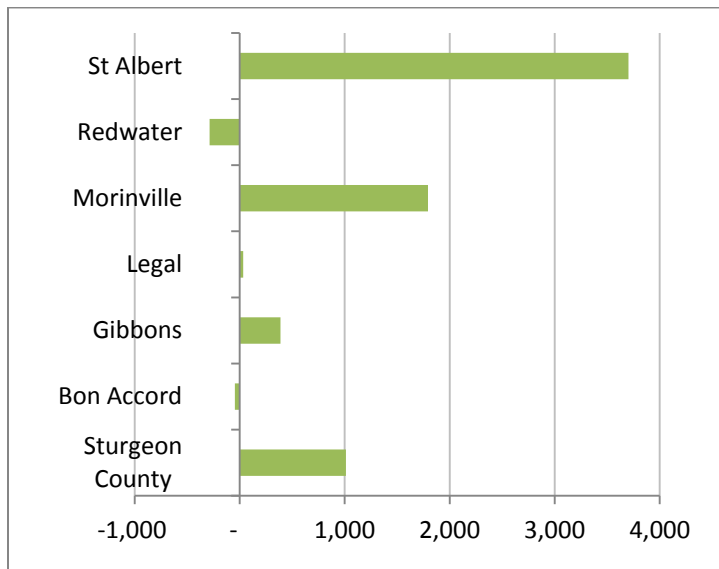


Figure 12: Population Growth 2006-2011 - Sturgeon County and Neighbouring Communities

Source: Statistics Canada Community Profiles, 2011



Sturgeon County encompasses a broad collection of communities, each with their own distinct character. The County's Municipal Development Plan identifies ten 'neighbourhoods'. These neighbourhoods have been developed by the County to better structure planning for such a large, diverse area. Each neighbourhood has its own vision in terms of residential character, economic health, responsible governance, environmental stewardship and cultural vitality. The neighbourhoods identified in the MDP and their associated boundaries are illustrated in Figure 3.

The County is actively looking to keep future development and population growth concentrated within the towns, and the developing area of the Sturgeon Valley (Neighbourhood G as identified by the county's Municipal Development Plan. Population projections developed as a part of the County's Municipal Development Plan indicate that population growth will be primarily concentrated in the Sturgeon Valley, working to both maintain the rural character of the county, and minimizing the development footprint. This area has been identified by the Capital Region Board as a Priority Growth Area (PGA) in which new development should be concentrated. Outside of the Sturgeon Valley, the only community expected to experience growth on a notable scale is Cardiff.

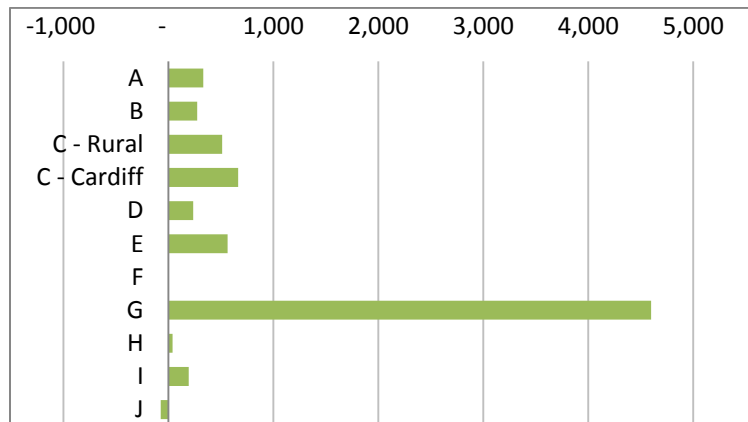


Figure 13: Projected Population Growth by Neighbourhood 2015 to 2035

Source: Sturgeon County Municipal Development Plan

As it compares to the broader capital region, Sturgeon County is expected to grow at a faster rate than other communities with the exception of Lamont County. Relatively, the City of Edmonton is expected to shoulder the vast proportion of the region's growth. While significantly less population growth is projected for Sturgeon County, given its relatively small size, projected growth is expected to increase the county's population by 50-100%. This projected growth however is contingent on expanded services (sewer, water etc.): At present, existing servicing is at, or close to capacity, limiting current potential for continued population growth.

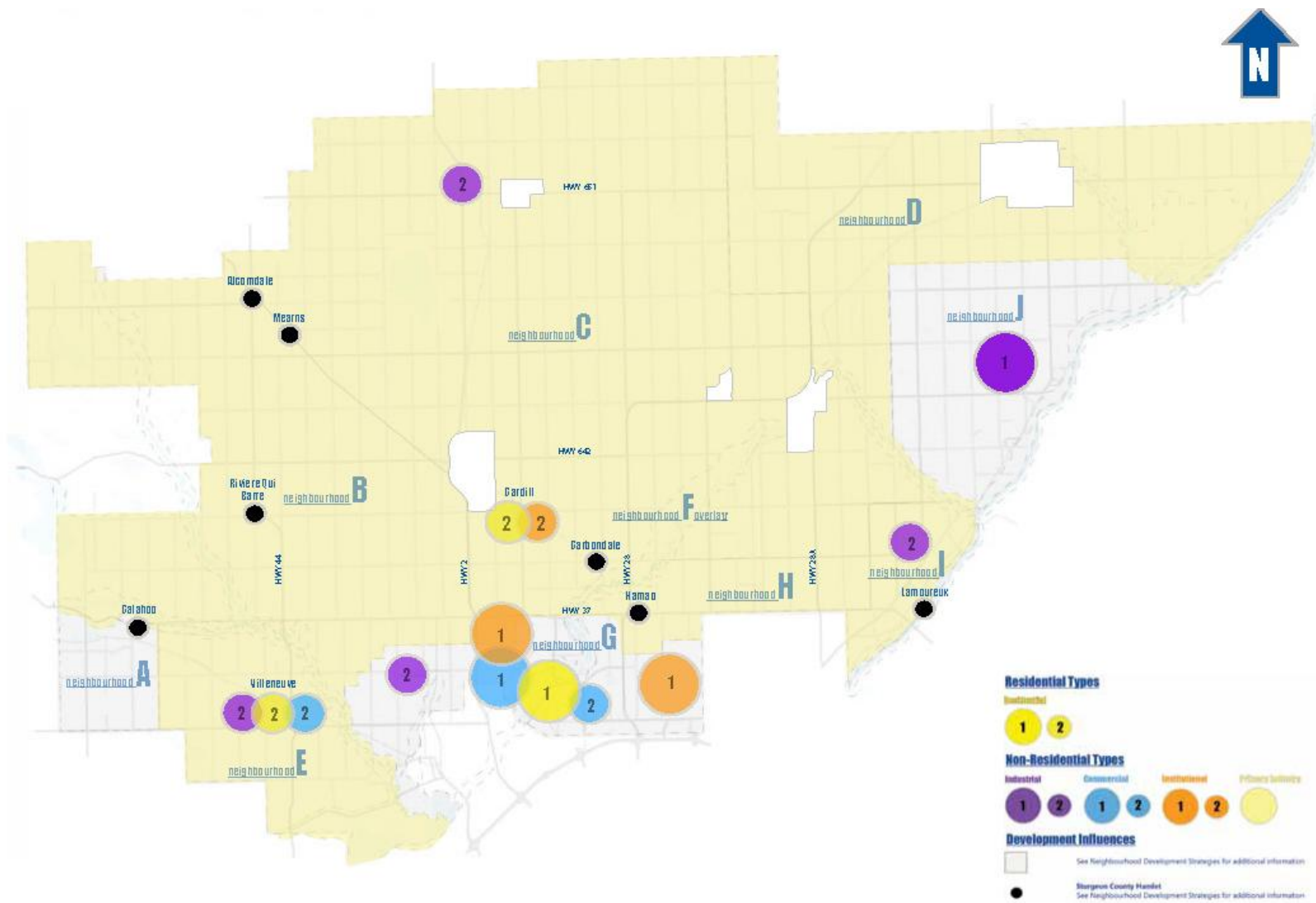


Figure 14: Municipal Development Plan Growth Strategy Concept
 Sturgeon County (2014) Municipal Development Plan, p.25

The following map depicts Sturgeon County in relation to the other municipalities within the Alberta's Capital Region.



Figure 15: Capital Region
Source: Capital Region Board

Population projections for the Capital Region are listed in the following figure.

Municipality	Population Totals			Average Annual % Change	
	2014	Low 2044	High 2044	Low 14-44	High 14-44
	Sturgeon County	20,600	31,000	39,200	1.4
Edmonton	861,900	1,336,800	1,443,900	1.5	1.7
Lamont County	4,200	7,200	8,500	1.8	2.3
Leduc County	14,000	19,300	23,200	1.1	1.6
Parkland County	31,800	42,700	50,000	1.0	1.5

Figure 16: Population Projections: 2014-2044 for Edmonton and surrounding Counties

Source: Capital Region Population and Employment Projections to 2047, p.S-5

2.3 Service Delivery

2.3.1 Existing Service Delivery

The County's reserves vary in their development, range of amenities, and level of maintenance. Some reserves are entirely unmaintained or developed – with the County choosing to leave these as natural spaces, while at the other end of the spectrum, other reserves have been developed into functional community parks with a variety of passive and active amenities.

The County's Agriculture Services department is responsible for the maintenance of all county reserves. The department is responsible for weed control and mowing on those reserves that are maintained. The total cost of this maintenance is budgeted to be approximately \$385,378.00 in 2015. This facet of the County's reserve and parks operation is **direct provision**.



Source: EDA Photo of Sturgeon Valley Park

In addition to the basic reserve maintenance, Sturgeon County directly operates the Sandy Lake Wilderness Area and Cardiff Park – a 160 acre regional park that includes a variety of both passive and active amenities. Features of the park includes picnic sites and shelters, BBQs and firepits, three playground structures, horseshoe pits, one sand volleyball court, four softball/slowpitch diamonds, and four full size soccer pitches. The five kilometre 'red ribbon' trail system within the park is used for walking, running and cycling in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. In addition to land base facilities, Cardiff Lake provides a local fishing hole for trout and perch, which facilitates less structured outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Given the scale of amenities available, Cardiff Park functions as a hub for outdoor structured activities within the county.

In addition to parks and county reserves, the County also provides operational funding to numerous community organizations that maintain and operate parks and outdoor amenities on reserves such as playgrounds, community halls, and outdoor rinks. This arrangement is **facilitated provision**.

The County has also acquired a piece of land for the Riviere Qui Barre Recreation Association, and is providing capital funding for the development of this

site into an outdoor recreation space that will include soccer fields and ball diamonds.

Other parkland in the County is owned and operated by Alberta Parks, specifically the Redwater Provincial Recreation Area, and the Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park. The County does not contribute to the operations of these parks; however a review of the County's capital budget indicates that the County contributes to upgrades for this facility.

The Riverlot 56 Natural Area is an environmentally and historically significant area on the outskirts of the Sturgeon Valley. The land is provincially owned, and leased to the Riverlot 56 Natural Area Society who operates the facility. The County does not provide funding for this group, and it does not currently hold non-profit status.

Sturgeon County residents also have access to recreation and leisure facilities located on CFB Edmonton Garrison. These are primarily indoor facilities however, and as such are not relevant to this study.

The level of required maintenance for each park or open space is determined by the County's Operations Department through a weighted analysis of 13 criteria relating to several factors including the site's context, existing usage, presence of recreational amenities, the accessibility of the site to the public and for

maintenance equipment. The results of the evaluation determines the site's priority for maintenance with high priority sites being level 1 sites, and lower priority sites being level 3. The following table outlines the 2015 Maintenance budget for each level of open space.

Table 1: 2015 Maintenance Budget

Maintenance Category	Spending	% of Total Maintenance Budget
Level 1	\$32,536.00	9%
Level 2	\$175,238.70	45%
Level 3	\$13,318.00	3%
Cardiff	\$164,285.25	43%
Total	\$385,377.95	100%



Source: EDA Photo

2.3.2 2015 Capital Priorities Plan

Sturgeon County develops capital budgets that span a period of ten years. The County's 2015 Capital Priorities Plan was reviewed for this study. 2015 capital priorities included the following upgrades to parks in addition to trail development (see list below). The 2015 focus of planned County investment in the parks and open space system was on developing connections through enhanced and new trails. ***It is important to note however, that this project will influence funding priorities and the focus of future investment in open space.***

Should the current limitations in servicing capacity be resolved, allowing for greater development in Sturgeon Valley, the County will likely need to expand its plans for new parks outside of those listed below:

Parks:

- Development of the Sturgeon Valley Park
- Cardiff Park – a new band shelter and other amenities yet to be determined.

- Upgrades to the Redwater Natural Area: Specific upgrades yet to be determined.

Trails:

- A new trail from Riverstone Point to Sturgeon Road East in the new developments in the Sturgeon Valley.
- A new trail from the Sturgeon Golf Course to St. Albert.
- A financial contribution to the development of the Athabasca Landing trail – a continuous trail that will run 150km from Fort Saskatchewan to Athabasca
- A new trail from Starkey Road to Bellerose (Saint Albert)
- A new trail along the Sturgeon River from CN Row to Trestle Ridge Estates
- A new trail from Sturgeon Road to Highway 37
- A new trail in Lamoureux with the assistance of the River Valley Alliance

The cost of these upgrades over the next ten years was expected to total \$4,995,000. Trail development accounts for the majority of this planned investment.

2.4 Community Engagement

2.4.1 Stakeholders

EDA met with stakeholder groups at Cardiff Community Hall to present an overview of this project and to listen to their input as open space concerns and observations. Representatives from the Morinville Rotary club, Riverlot 56, Community Services Advisory Board, the Sturgeon Valley Parks and Recreation Society, Sturgeon Rural Crime Watch Association, Riverstone Pointe Home Owner's Association, Calahoo community association, Namao Ridge Recreation Society, and the West Sturgeon Agricultural Society were in attendance. Comments that were generally as follows:

- Community groups that are spearheading initiatives to develop/operate recreational facilities within need more support from the County (financial, operational, maintenance, etc.). Similarly adequate support for joint use facilities.
- County residents are often not aware of the open space and recreational assets present in the community. More education is required.
- Trail corridor development is desired especially as it relates to providing a trail link from Sturgeon Valley residential developments to Riverlot 56 and St. Albert, as well as along Sturgeon River in general and the proposed Capital Region River Valley Parks Trail connection in Sturgeon County. There are

concerns that the land necessary to make the connection is protected from future development and that it should be proactively acquired to avoid development.

- The Sandy Lake Wilderness Area is an important environmental and should be protected from further degradation
- Stakeholders expressed a desire for recreation development including an RV camping area towards the southern portion of Cardiff Park, a playground at Namao Ridge, and a disk golf course somewhere in the county. Similarly there was the desire to maintain existing resources such as snow clearing Sturgeon Valley trails.
- There is general support for disposition of underutilized non-contributing open space as long as a thorough process is considered which considers potential for future use. As an alternative to disposition, long term leases (i.e. for farmers where appropriate) was suggested.

2.4.2 General Public

A public survey was posted online queering residents on their views of the County's parks and open space facilities. In total 51 responses were received. Some of the highlights are as follows:

- Respondents use outdoor recreation facilities for a variety of reasons with the most frequently

mentioned reason being to maintain a healthy / active lifestyle (87%).

- The three activities with the highest participation rates were self directed activities including walking for leisure or exercise (79%), dog walking (57% and cycling 52%).
- Sturgeon Valley trails were the most widely used outdoor recreation facility (49%) followed by Riverlot 56 (33%) and Cardiff Park (30%).
- Distance was noted as the number one factor limiting use of outdoor facilities, parks and trails (48%), followed by lack of appropriate amenities.
- 84% of respondents travel to use outdoor recreation facilities, parks or trails in other communities. With the highest percentage of people traveling outside the County for recreation opportunities a few times a month (39%). Commonly mentioned destinations

include parks and trails within St. Albert and Edmonton as well as national and provincial parks.

- When respondents were asked what they felt was missing in terms of the range of outdoor opportunities, commonly mentioned features included larger sized parks, park with more diversity, playground, trail connection, and maintenance.
- When asked about priorities for new outdoor recreation facilities, parks or trails in Sturgeon County, frequently mentioned items included expansion of trail system to ensure more connections, more natural areas, family destinations with activities for different age groups, waste receptacles/higher level of park cleanliness, higher standard of facilities and destination features.

3 TRENDS / BEST PRACTICES

3.1 Parkland Development

While each municipality sets its own goals and priorities in the development of its parkland system, current trends include:

- **Planning for entire systems (holistic planning):** Parks planning has historically taken a more fragmented approach, identifying parcels of green space to protect from residential development, and develop into active and passive parks. More recent trends in parks planning however have focused on a more holistic approach that attempts to understand the role that each park and open space plays in the broader system. This has bolstered the use of greenways and trails where possible to connect islands of green space, particularly within urban areas but also in more rural municipalities that encompass a number of distinct communities.
- **Providing for overlapping functions:** Parks and green spaces that are most successful in encouraging residents to participate in outdoor recreation and leisure pursuits are those that provide a range of amenities that facilitate a broad variety of activities. As an example, well designed neighbourhood parks may include a playground, walking track, benches, and playing field. Based on availability and original condition of the land, the park may also include a natural/naturalized area. Diversification of park functions provides greater opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in outdoor recreation.
- **Parks as social hubs:** This concept emphasizes the development of parks as community places which can animate and revitalize neighbourhoods and whole communities. The development of a park as a social hub is typically achieved through community involvement at the design stage by identifying which amenities the community would use. These parks also typically offer amenities that encourage community involvement and cohesion such as community gardens, playgrounds, and playing fields. The park design should focus on 'placemaking' – i.e. the development of a park that reflects the community's character through design.
- **Parks as cultural and educational spaces:** Parks with amenities that support arts, culture, and heritage. Examples include performance spaces, local art exhibitions, and community gardens.
- **Aging communities and rising senior needs for passive pursuits**

- Participation trends in traditional field sports
- Active Transportation and Active Living
- Linking recreation and leisure services to the quality of life – as a key consideration in residential choice
- Greater public engagement in initiation of local park design
- Going beyond traditional policies of parkland dedication: developer contributions to capital infrastructure as conditions of approval

In the case of Sturgeon County, the municipality is home to a large number of municipal reserves that vary in their size, configuration, level of development and maintenance, available amenities, and connection to existing trails. **As it pertains to this Plan Update, the County will need to focus on holistic parks planning that takes into consideration how best to integrate existing reserves into existing and developing trail systems to improve their accessibility. Similarly, the plan should identify prime parcels for parks and open space development and criteria for those that should be candidates for disposition. In addition, this Plan should consider ways of promoting the planning for parks that function as central hubs for each neighbourhood, as identified in the Municipal Development Plan. The specific priorities and goals of the County’s parks planning exercise will be developed from this background review in discussion with the County.**

3.2 Recreation Participation and Provision

Outdoor Recreation Participation

The recent Alberta Recreation Survey (2013) found that Albertans are highly motivated in terms of participation in leisure and recreational activities, with almost all households (98.7%) indicating that they participate in some way. Outdoor activities ranked highly in Albertan’s preference for leisure and recreation, with walking, golf, and camping ranked the more popular activities. Albertans’ preferred location for participation in leisure and recreation is parks or outdoor spaces (approximately 60% of participants). This suggests that municipal investment in high quality, functional, and attractive parks and open spaces are a key contributor to resident satisfaction, and new resident attraction.

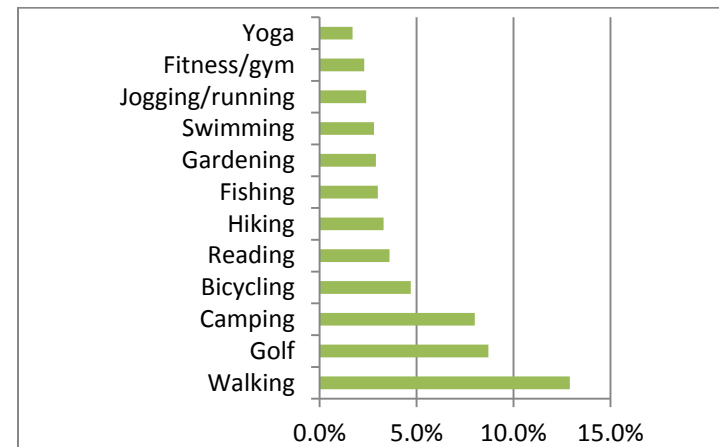


Figure 17: Favourite Activities of Albertans

Source: 2013 Alberta Recreation Survey

While Albertans are keen to participate in leisure and recreation, key barriers to participation in preferred activities were identified as:

- Being too busy (with work, family, and other activities)
- Various costs associated with participation; and
- The overcrowding of facilities and recreational areas.

Given these barriers, it is important to provide residents with:

- Opportunities to participate in activities that have flexible scheduling (e.g. drop-in classes);
- Access to activities with low start-up and participation costs; and
- Opportunities to participate in activities at a variety of locations.

The provision of unstructured open spaces can provide residents with places to participate in a wide variety of activities, while avoiding many of the key barriers that often hamper participation in recreation and leisure pursuits. While this unstructured open space is an important component to any municipality's recreation inventory, the Alberta Recreation Survey (2013) found high levels of support for municipal investment in picnic areas, playing fields, courts, and trails to broaden the potential range of activities that these open spaces can support. Albertans strongly support the provision of the following facilities in municipal parks:

- Picnic Areas (88%)
- Playing fields (78%)
- Courts (e.g. tennis, volleyball, basketball) (77%)
- Cross-country ski trails (73%)
- Mountain Biking Trails (62%)

In addition to the above, almost half of all respondents indicated that they support the provision of downhill skill areas, golf courses, campgrounds, snack bars, and off-leash dog areas, within municipal parks. The scale to which any of these facilities is appropriate for a given space is contingent on the size, location, topography, and environmental character of any given municipal park. What is clear from these results, however, is that Albertans support the development of infrastructure in municipal parks as a municipal priority.

Motivations for participating in recreation and leisure activities are well documented, and include personal health and wellbeing, fitness, stress relief, socializing, an opportunity to meet new people, among others. The Alberta Recreation Survey (2013) found that Albertans are similar to all other Canadians in their motivations for participation in recreation and leisure activities. Of particular note however, are an added sense of stewardship, environmental activism, and interest in the environment of Western Canadians, as identified by the BC Parks & Recreation Association (Trends in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Field, 2006).

Given these added motivations for participation in outdoor leisure and recreation experiences, ***it is of particular importance for Sturgeon County to provide high quality outdoor spaces that both facilitate active leisure and recreation activities, but also steward and protect natural landscapes and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy them. Examples include the protection of natural areas and the development of non-invasive trails to facilitate public access and enjoyment of these areas.***

Outdoor Recreation Provision: Parks + Open Spaces

Trends in the provision of parks and open spaces in Alberta include:

- **Growing demand for public green spaces:** Higher residential building densities, such as those found in the newer developments in the Sturgeon Valley, have the effect of increasingly demand for, and on, public green space.
- **Use of creative funding mechanisms to improve access to outdoor amenities:** In some jurisdictions across Alberta, there is an increasing trend toward resident association fees being collected to offset park operating costs beyond municipal standards. These parks include amenities with a broad range of programmable amenities (e.g. soccer fields, courts etc.), and also those with environmental significance such as water features, ravines, and

other attractive landscapes that are developed to facilitate public access while maintaining their environmental significance.

- **Development of linear parkway as connectors for municipal parks and open spaces:** There is a trend toward further development of linear parkways with parks and open spaces located within these systems, and contiguous pathway systems offering alternative transportation routes. Proactive planners can ensure that even small open spaces acquired through the subdivision process can function well as destinations for outdoor recreation and leisure spaces if they are effectively connected through a system of linear trails.
- **Naturalization of selected open spaces:** Naturalization is an alternative landscape management technique whereby the landscape is allowed to become more natural by planting trees and shrubs that are found naturally in Alberta. This has significant environmental benefits, with the added bonus of reducing maintenance costs and the need for mowing.
- **Maximizing visibility of open spaces:** Increasingly, park planning principles that deter negative social behaviour are being implemented. This involves improving open street visibility. Measures include greater street frontage, and fewer homes backing on to parks.

- **Creative landscaping to maximize public utility:** Parks and open spaces are increasingly being developed in new subdivisions that are built on previously farmed land with limited existing native trees or foliage. In these cases, parks planning must take into account creative park and open space designs that maximize the utility of these spaces for leisure and recreation pursuits.
- **Centralization of amenities:** While neighbourhood parks should house soccer fields, ball diamonds, and other facilities that facilitate local participation in outdoor sports, there is a trend towards the centralization of these amenities on a larger scale, co-located with community centres and indoor recreation complexes.
- **Regional planning and partnerships:** Municipalities are increasingly embracing a regional perspective as it pertains to parks and open space planning. This can take the form of full regional parks and open space master planning, or planning on a project-by-project basis such as trails.

3.3 Parkland Acquisition and Disposition

The County has a fiduciary duty to engage in due process when acquiring or disposing of public lands.

This requires a balanced practical and programmatic process that provides a transparent mechanism through which this takes place. The process must be guided by principles that reflect the priorities of the municipality.

For large, complex corporations, the process of acquiring and disposing of land can involve a dedicated agency. As examples:

- The Canada Land Corporation is responsible for land transactions for the Federal Government;
- The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has the Toronto Lands Corporation for this purpose;
- The City of Toronto has Build Toronto for this purpose.

The preceding examples are of particularly large and complex organizations that manage some of the largest land and property portfolios in Canada. They exist however to simplify the process of land and property acquisition and disposition through clear and transparent processes. ***It is the development and implementation of such a process that this Open Space Plan recommends for Sturgeon County.***

The principles that should guide acquisition and disposition of municipal land in Sturgeon County are simplicity, clarity; consistency; and due process. This process excludes environmental reserves as they are

not really intended for disposition (i.e. they can be sold only to the Crown, or leased out for short periods of time).

Typical measures of acquiring parkland include:

- **Direct Purchase:** via funds from the property tax base or from 'cash-in-lieu'.
- **Cash-in-lieu:** where dedication is deemed unnecessary or undesirable.
- **Parkland dedication transfers:** In Alberta, dedicated land can be transferred from one subdivision to another, allowing a developer to provide more land on one site in exchange for less on another.
- **Alternate Open Space Acquisition:** donations/bequests, conservation easements, trusts, etc.

While these parkland acquisition techniques are available to municipalities, the specific combinations used by each municipality will vary based on individual circumstances.

Each province and territory in Canada has enacted legislation regarding the proportion of subdivided land that must be made available for parkland acquisition. The standard across the County is generally 10% of all subdivided land – such is the case in Alberta.

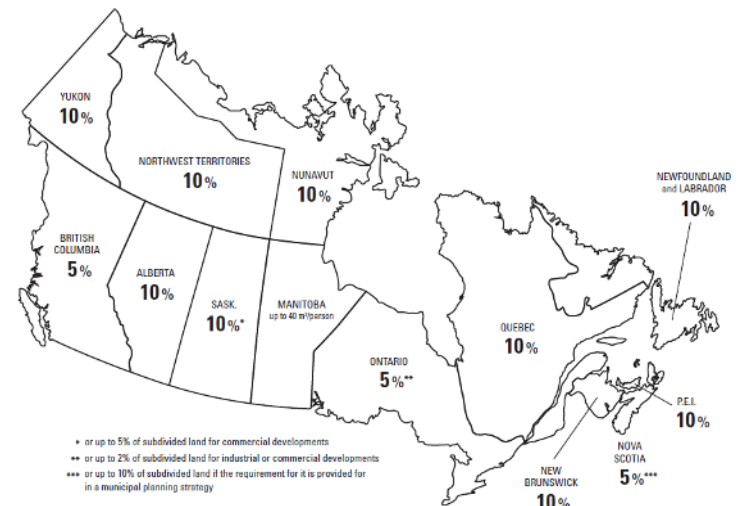


Figure 18: Legislated Parkland Dedication Rates in Canada's Provinces and Territories

Source: Green space acquisition and stewardship in Canada's urban municipalities

In Sturgeon County then, a minimum of 10% of subdivided land must be made available for parkland acquisition. ***What is of greater importance however is an open space plan that identifies criteria or guidelines for when the County should take the 10% of dedicated parkland, and under what circumstances the County may instead decide to take cash-in-lieu.***

Parkland acquisition policies in comparable municipalities say relatively little about the circumstances under which the municipality should take parkland versus when they should instead accept cash-in-lieu. Specific examples however are as follows:

Table 2: Cash in Lieu Strategies

Municipality	Provision
Parkland County	Cash-in-lieu may be taken in circumstances where the amount of land is 2.0 acres or less.
Red Deer County	Cash-in-lieu is to be accepted where land to be dedicated is too small to be useful, or the area does not benefit from reserve lands. The revenue generated from cash-in-lieu is to be used to acquire lands for recreational purposes, the development of regional parks, school sites or recreation facilities.

Similarly, parkland disposition policies in comparable municipalities do not provide a sample classification system that identifies specific traits and attributes that would lead a municipality to dispose of reserves. Current best practice provisions are listed below:

Table 3: Land Deposition Strategy Comparison

Municipality	Provision
Parkland County	Municipal reserves can be sold or swapped where appropriate and proceeds from reserve sales are directed into a fund to be utilized for recreation purposes as legislated in the Municipal Government Act (MGA).
Red Deer County	Municipal or school reserve parcels which serve no existing or potential purpose may be sold. Revenue obtained from the sale of such lands shall be allocated as per the MGA.
Rocky View County	Acquisition, cash in lieu, deferral, and disposition of reserve land shall adhere to County policy, agreements with school boards, and requirements of the MGA. The County shall not dispose of reserves in an intermunicipal development plan area without prior consultation with the appropriate municipality. County may defer all or a portion of the reserves by registering a deferred reserve caveat.
Ottawa	Before disposition of any surplus lands, Ottawa will consider the land's value in terms of such matters as the adequacy of the parcel for the provision of affordable housing, the value as a natural area and the need for transportation corridors.

Lacombe County Deposition Case Study

- Disposal will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the County has carefully considered existing and future use of the property and decided that the reserve is surplus to County needs.
- Land is considered surplus if the land plays no major recreation role and is unlikely to serve a future recreation, environmental or utility purpose. Surplus land may be sold, subdivided or leased. Preference is given to sale.
- Environmental reserves will not generally be considered for lease and shall not be sold. Leases will only be considered for these lands for shoreline access stairs or for licensing of existing structures where removal may cause environmental damage
- Process of disposal includes a community meeting for input from local residents.
- Formal public hearing will be advertised and held to provide notice of the County's intention to pass a bylaw to sell or lease a reserve
- Disposal enacted through a process of public tender, advertisement, or auction.
- Money raised from sale or lease placed in Municipal Reserve Trust Fund as required by the Municipal Government Act. Proceeds may be used to support recreation development of existing reserves or for the acquisition of lands for new parks.

Strathcona County Deposition Case Study:

- Process may be initiated by the municipality or a formal request from the public (the latter requires 66% of the subdivision landowners in agreement)
- A minimum block of 1.2 ha (3 acres) of municipal reserve must be retained within a subdivision for public use unless the regional area has adequate reserve land to satisfy the public needs of the area.
- Process requires a public meeting held with the subdivision residents, followed by a public hearing.
- Removal of the reserve designation shall be in accordance with the MGA
- It is not practical to tender lands required for:
 - Legitimization of encroachment issues
 - Municipal use
 - Roadways
 - Non-profit organizations.

With the high amount of unprogrammed local reserves in Sturgeon County, **this open space plan will include guidelines for acquisition and disposition of open space including situations where accepting cash-in-lieu is recommended.**

3.4 Open Space Typology Comparison

Effective municipal parks' planning is grounded in the classification of park types. From here, municipalities may identify:

- The range of amenities required in each type of park; and
- The number and variety of park types required at a range of scales (e.g. neighbourhood, municipality-wide, region-wide etc.)

The specific classifications vary by municipality; however classifications typically take into consideration a range of factors including size, configuration, and range of amenities. A typical classification of park types comprises the following:

- **Regional/City Park** – services the entire municipality and/or region; offers a broad range of passive and active amenities; may be associated with a community centre or other indoor recreation and leisure hub.
- **District Park** – services an entire residential subdivision, or rural municipality. Provides a range both passive and active amenities.
- **Neighbourhood Park** – serves a local neighbourhood, typically within a short walk of local residences, and preferably does not require

residents to cross a major road. Typically includes a playground, and may include small playing fields/ball diamonds.

- **Parkette/ Tot lot** – a small park with minimal amenities. May showcase historic or cultural amenities such as plaques, public art displays etc.

Other open space classifications that are often used include:

- **Pocket park** – an alternative term for a parkette, or small park.
- **Greenways** – typically used to describe trailways.
- **Natural Areas** – large open spaces that are typically left undeveloped, however may include trails to facilitate public access. May protect and showcase protected and/or at risk natural environments.
- **Special Use Areas** – A term to describe open spaces that have unique functions within the parkland system e.g. beaches, boat launches etc.

Figure 19 compares the open space hierarchy of comparable communities with that of Sturgeon County followed by Figure 20 which categorizes County reserves base on the existing open space typology.

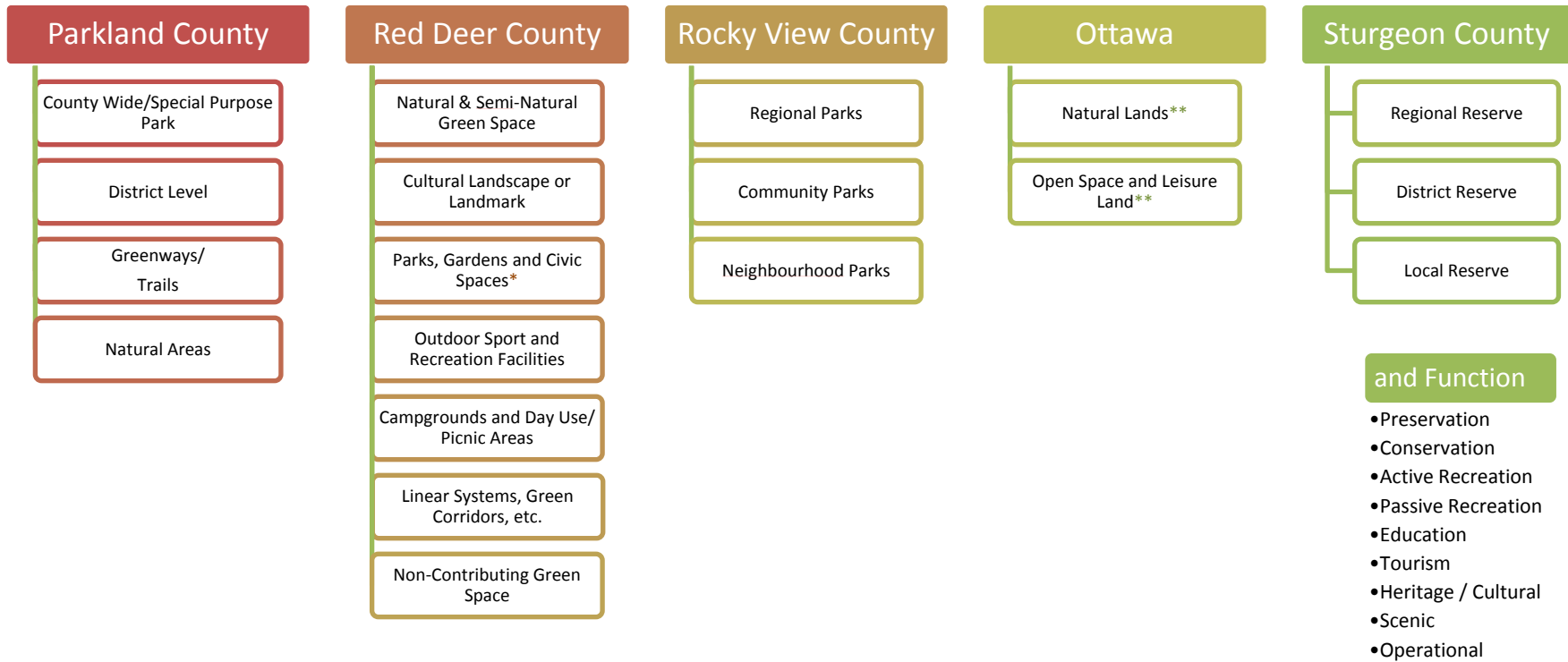


Figure 19: Open Space Typology Comparison

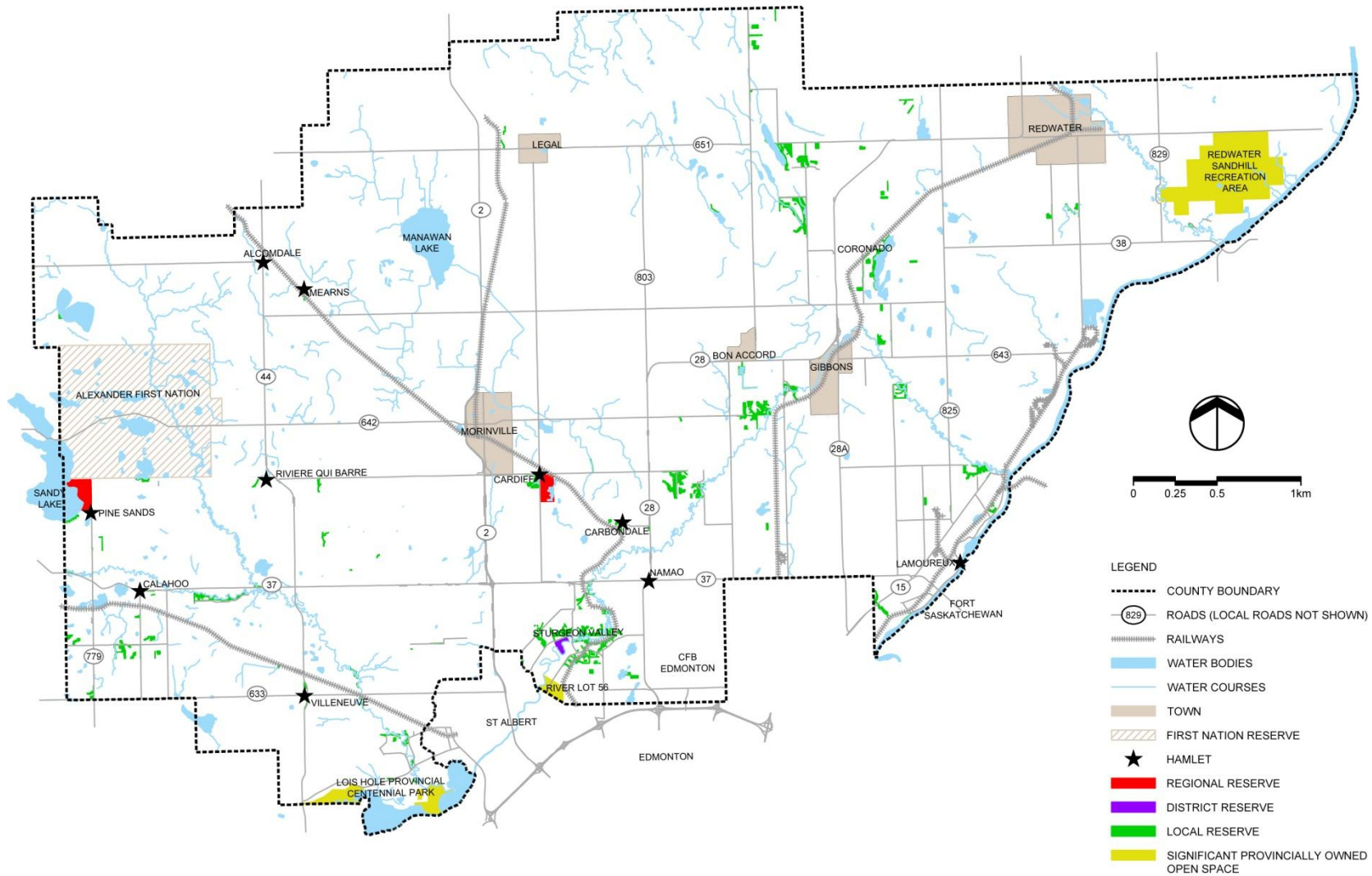


Figure 20: Categorization of Existing Reserves based on Existing Open Space Typology

An analysis of the various types of open space reserves reveals that over a quarter of land being dedicated is in the form of environmental reserve. It is important to note that the above composition neither includes Sandy Lake nor Cardiff Park, which contributes and additional 297.3Ha of open space.

Table 4: Existing Open Space Composition

Type of Open Space	Quantity of Open Space	% of Reserve Dedication
Municipal Reserve (MR)	160.8 Ha	15%
Reserve (R)	612.1 Ha	57%
Environmental Reserve	295.6 Ha	28%

Key Trends and Conclusions

As identified in the previous section, each municipality has their own method of classifying parkland types based on size, function, and available amenities. What is clear from this review of best practice in comparable municipalities, is that **a hybrid classification system that encompasses both more urban classifications (i.e. regional parks, community parks, neighbourhood**

parks, parkettes etc.), and those types of parkland that are predominantly found in more rural municipalities may be applicable to Sturgeon County. The form and function of parks and open spaces in more developed areas of the County such as the Sturgeon Valley will differ from that of spaces in the County's rural communities and subdivisions.

Given the rural nature of Sturgeon County, a specific target of number of hectares of open space per population for the whole county is likely to have relatively limited use as it pertains to parks planning. Instead, it would likely be of greater use for the County **to develop a parkland standard based on hectares for the different residential classifications and densities identified in the County's MDP.**

The classification system will be expanded on to provide the County with **greater guidance when making decisions regarding the acquisition, disposition, development, and further investment in existing parkland in a methodical manner.**

4 OPPORTUNITIES / CONCERNS

4.1 Open Space and Facility Distribution

4.1.1 Analysis Mapping

Several maps were prepared to analyse the distribution of open space, population, growth, and facilities in addition to open space ratios, population densities and environmental sustainability.

The maps that were prepared are presented in subsequent pages and include:

- Figure 21: Existing Open Space, Population and Land Mass Neighbourhood Comparison, page 50
- Figure 22: Existing Relative Neighbourhood Population Density, page 51
- Figure 23: Existing Relative Open Space Per Capita, page 52
- Figure 24: Existing Distribution of Select Outdoor Recreation Facilities, page 53
- Figure 25: Existing Distribution of Trails, page 54
- Figure 26: Existing Distribution of Environmentally Sensitive Land, page 55

Following the maps is a summary of the findings of the open space analysis.



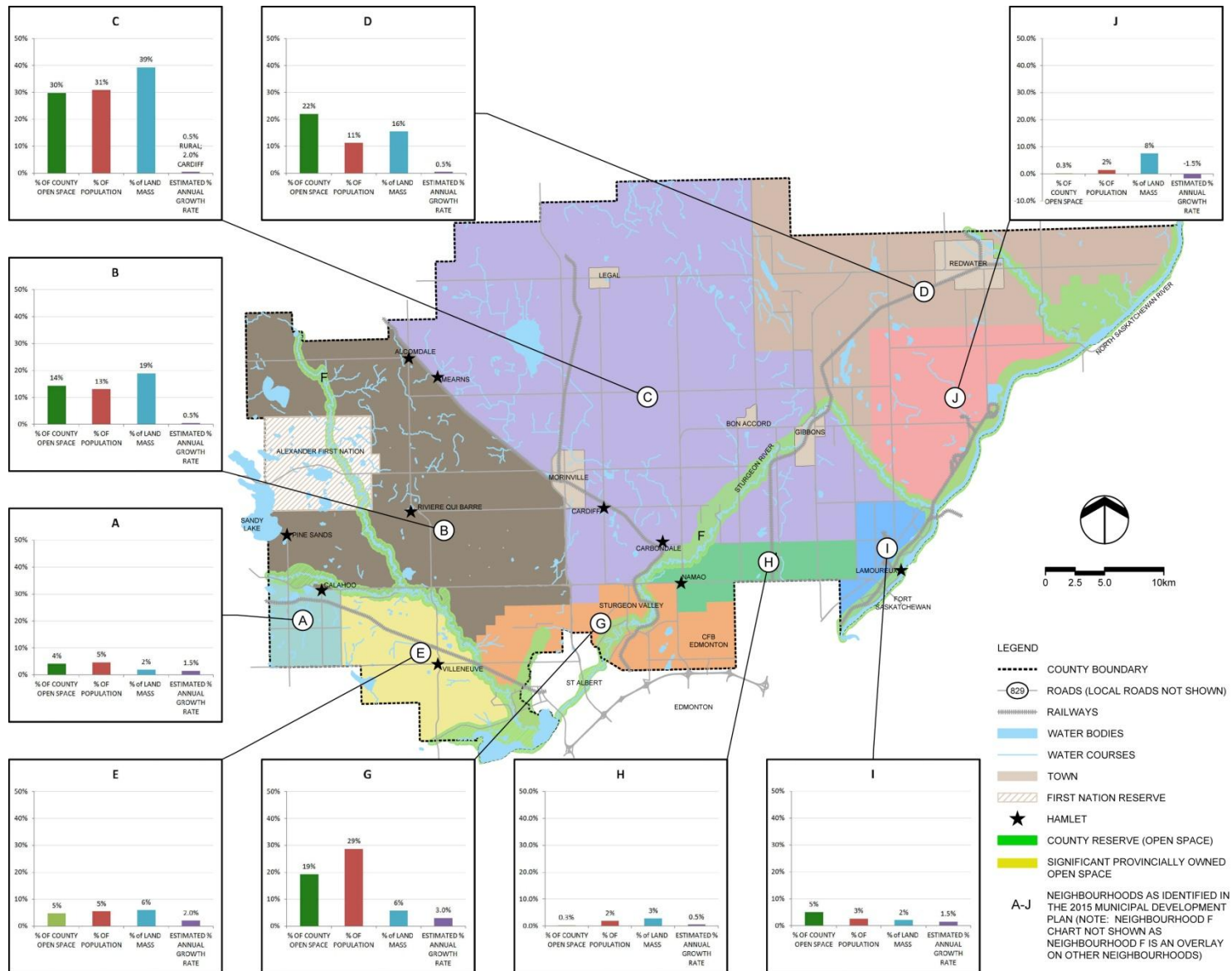


Figure 21: Existing Open Space, Population and Land Mass Neighbourhood Comparison

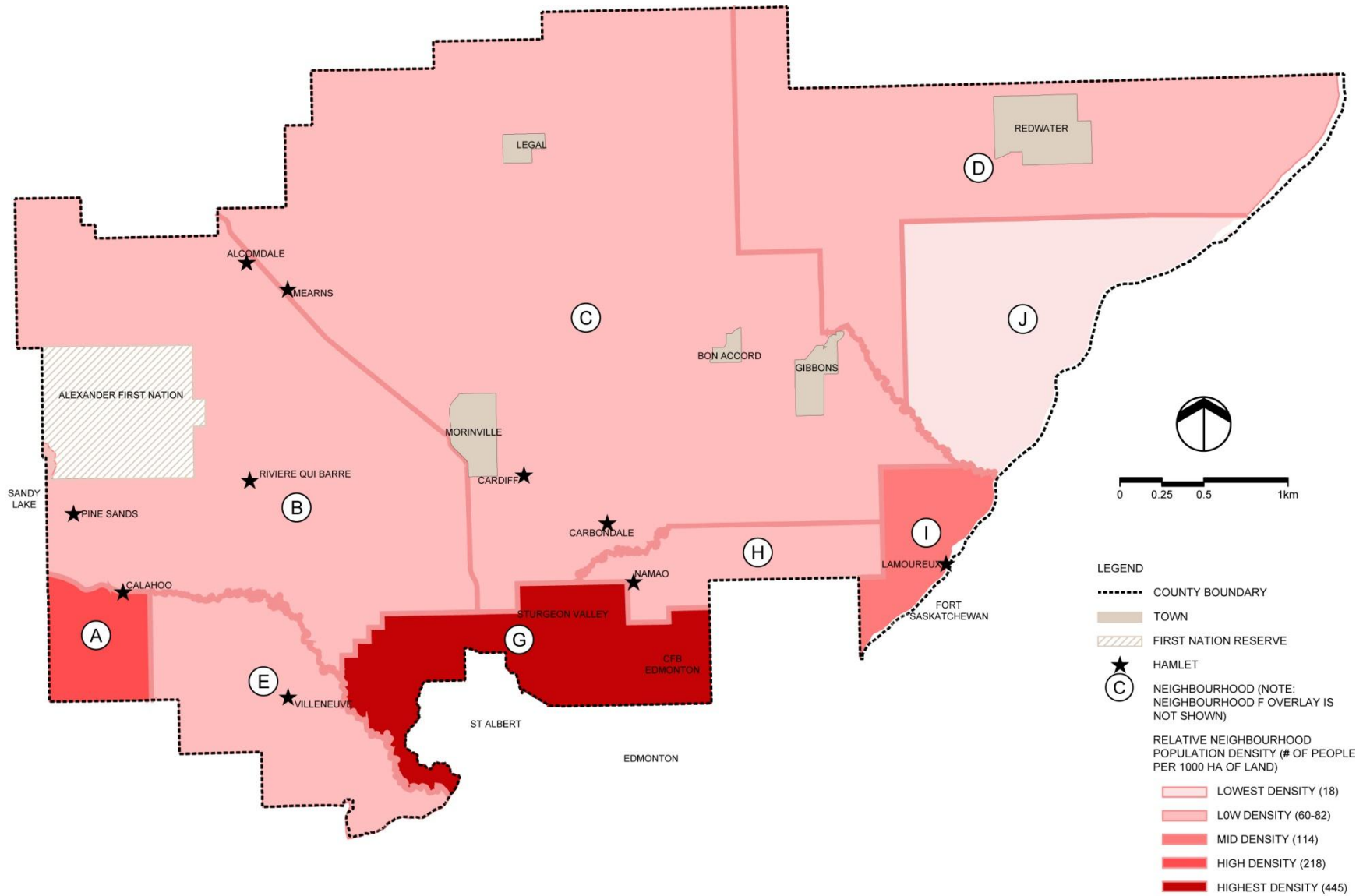


Figure 22: Existing Relative Neighbourhood Population Density

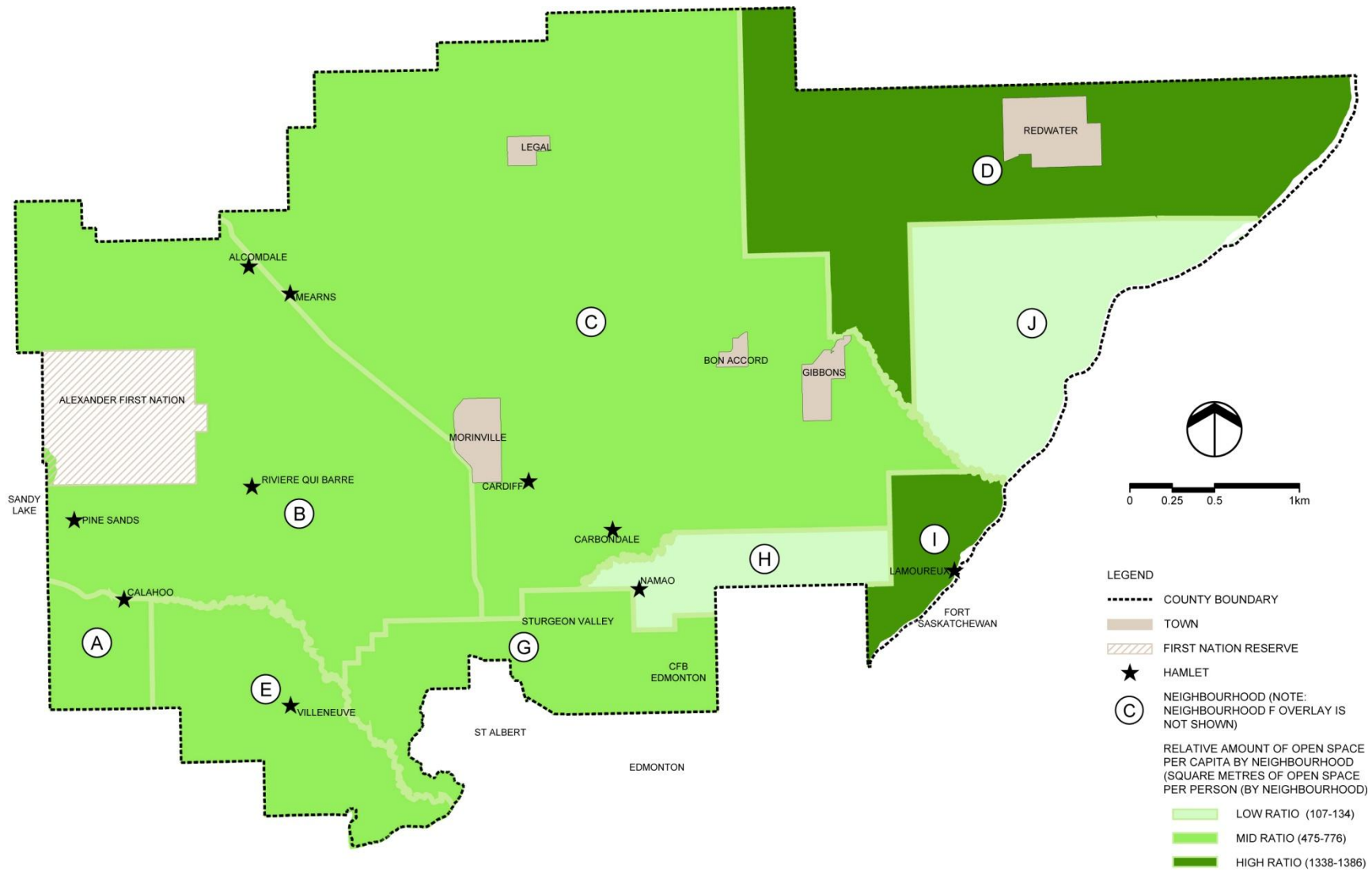


Figure 23: Existing Relative Open Space Per Capita

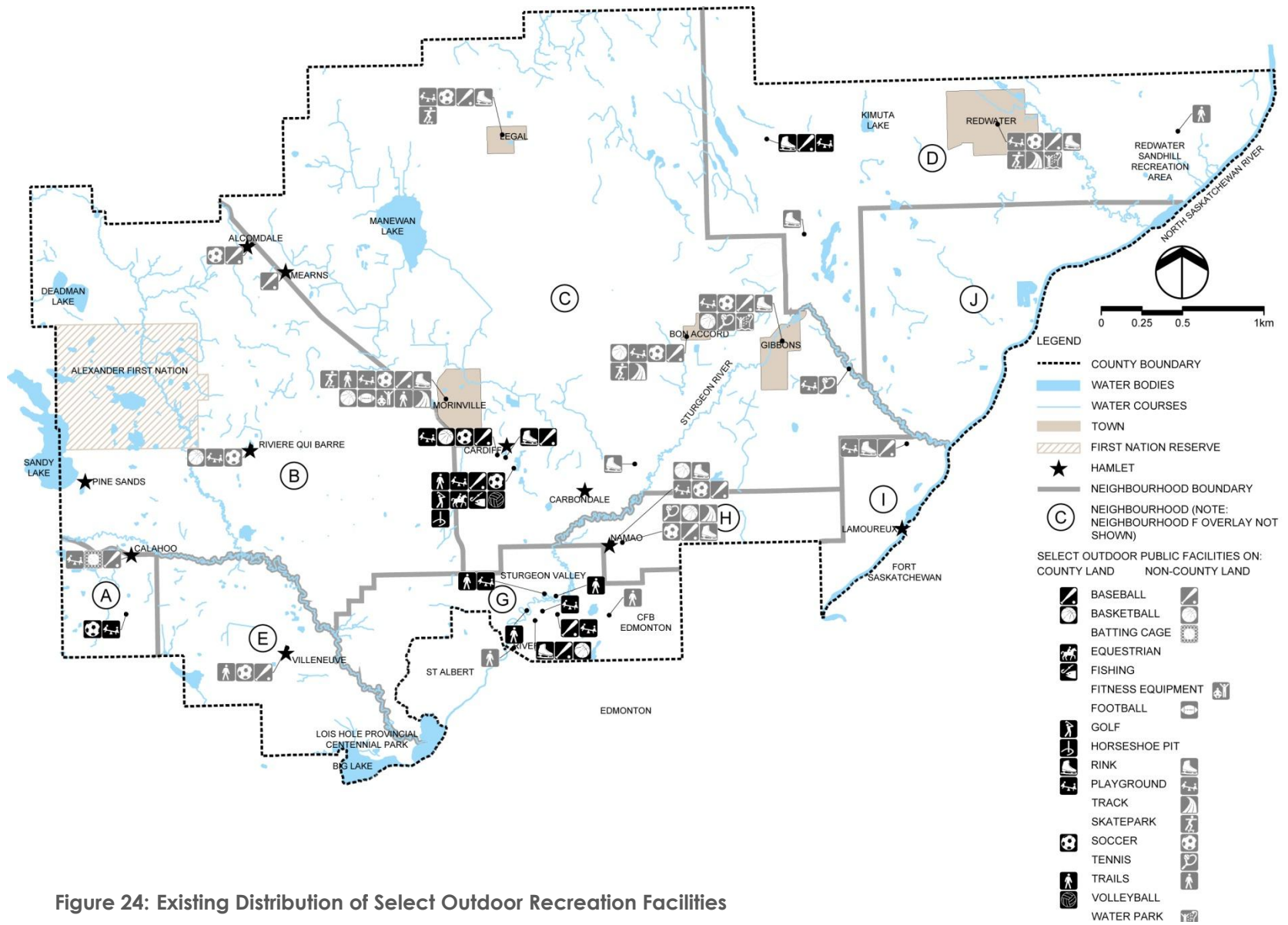


Figure 24: Existing Distribution of Select Outdoor Recreation Facilities

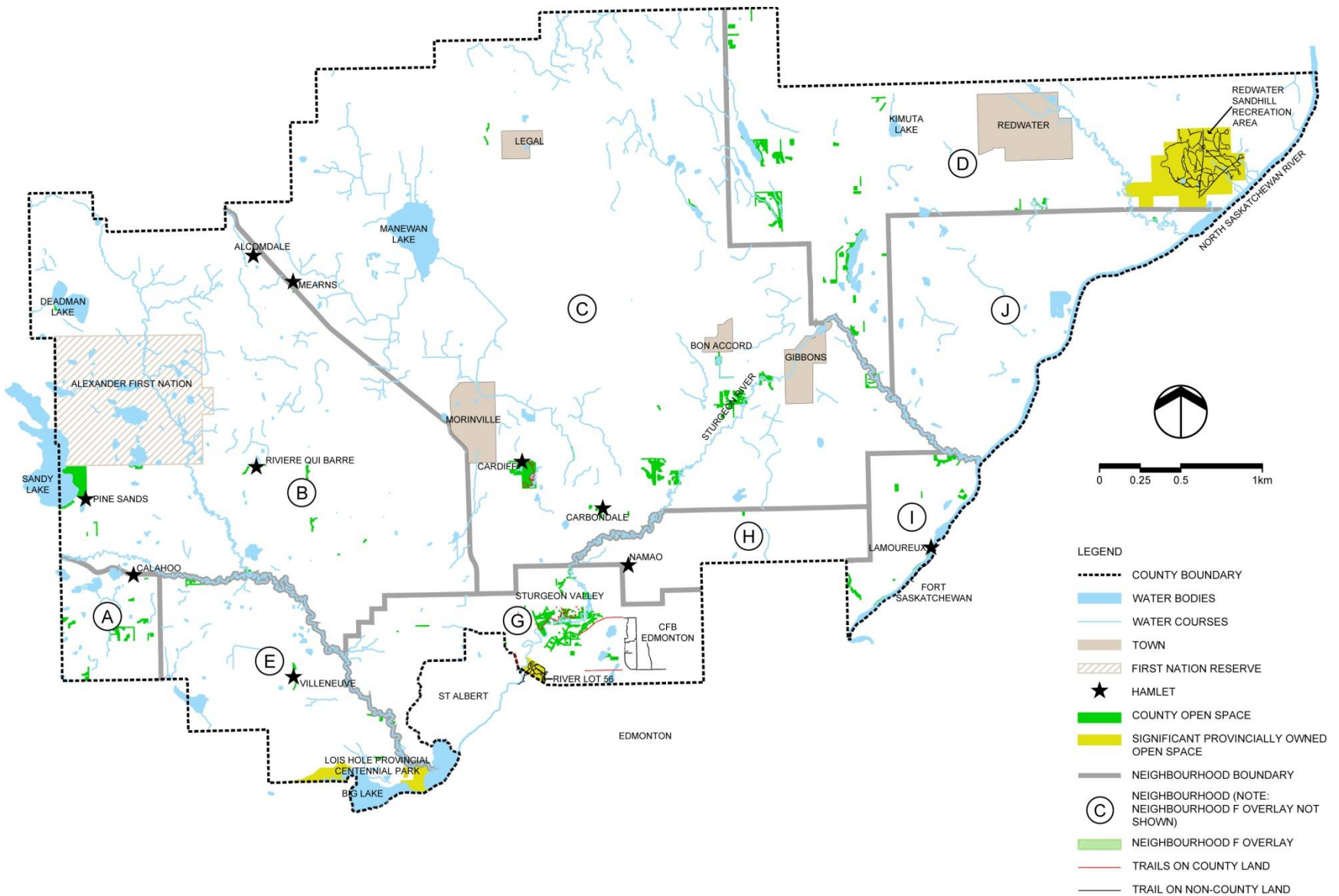


Figure 25: Existing Distribution of Trails

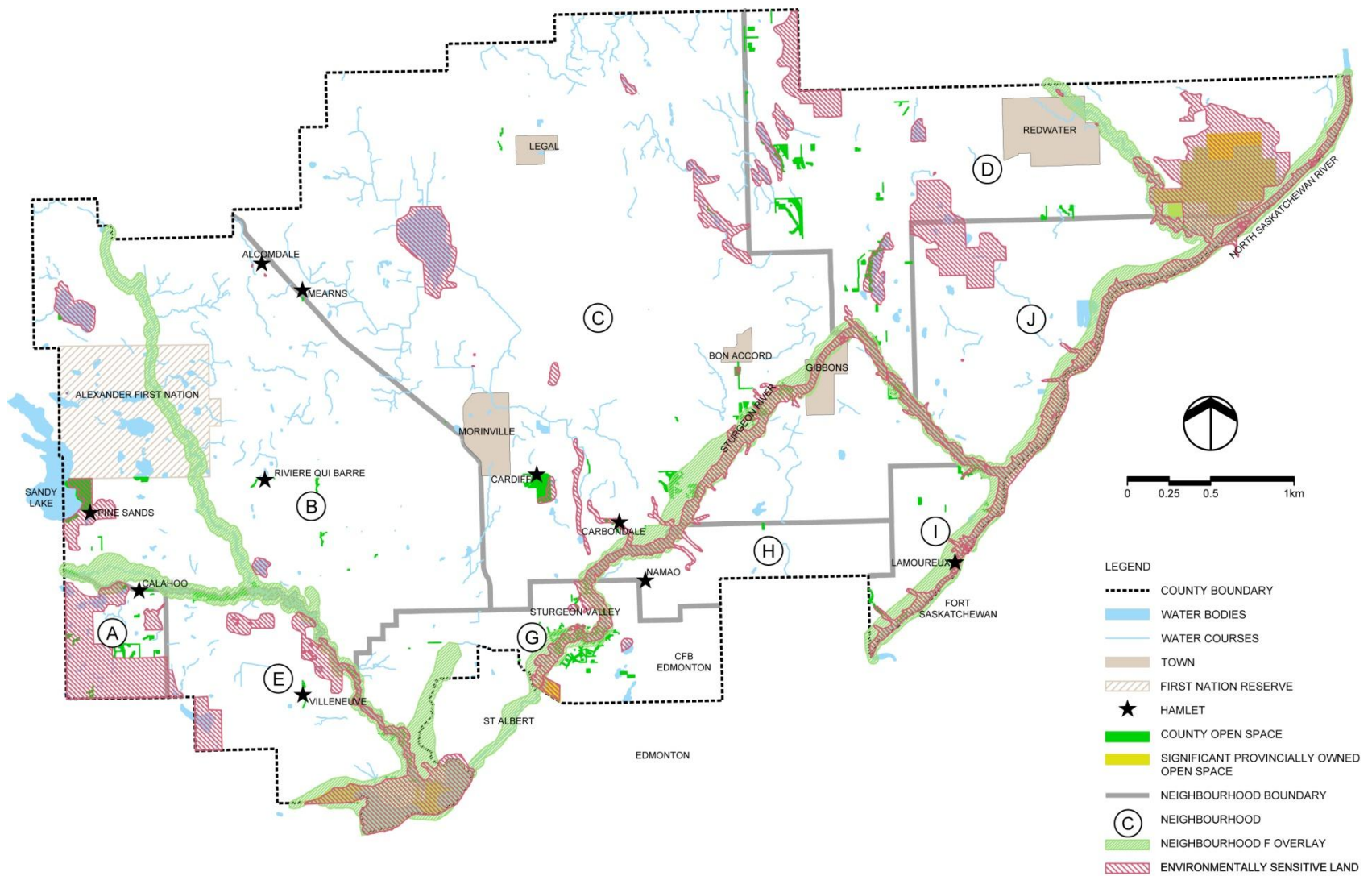


Figure 26: Existing Distribution of Environmentally Sensitive Land

4.1.2 Analysis Findings

Neighbourhood A

- Percent of open space is fairly representative of % of population and landmass.
- 1.5% annual growth is expected.
- Second highest population density at 218 people per 1000Ha of land
- Open space ratio of 641m² per person
- Soccer and playground facilities on county land; playground, batting cage and ball diamond public on community association's property.
- Approximately half of neighbourhood A is identified as being environmentally sensitive.

Neighbourhood B

- Fairly even proportion of open space (14%) in relation to population (13%). Neighbourhood represents 19% of land, and is expected to have an annual growth rate of 0.5%.
- Relatively low population density at 62 people per 1000 hectares of land.
- Mid ratio of open space per capita (776m² per person)
- No recreation facilities on County land (although some informal use of Sandy Lake Wilderness Area). Publically available facilities at Camilla School include soccer, playground and basketball facilities, while ball diamond and soccer facilities are located in Alcomdale.

Residents in northwest of this neighbourhood have the furthest traveling distance to a public playground.

- Limited amount of environmentally sensitive land, primarily as it relates to waterbodies (including Sandy and Deadman's Lakes).
- A multiuse outdoor recreation facility is proposed on County land in Riviere Qui Barre.

Neighbourhood C

- Largest neighbourhood in terms of % landmass. Highest population and amount of open space. Expected growth is 0.5 % annually for rural areas and 2.0% in Cardiff.
- Mid range population density of 71 people per 1000 hectares of land.
- Mid ratio of open space per capita at 684m² per person.
- All outdoor recreation facilities on County land are in Cardiff, however public facilities managed by community groups and towns are distributed throughout the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood C offers the greatest diversity of publically available outdoor recreation facilities.
- Environmentally sensitive land largely relate to waterbodies (most notably Manawan Lake) and water courses (Sturgeon River and other).

Neighbourhood D

- Neighbourhood D has the second highest amount of open space (22%). By comparison, neighbourhood D represents 11% of the County's population and 16% of its land mass. Limited annual growth (0.5%) is expected to occur.
- Mid range population density of 65 people per 1000 hectares of land.
- Highest ratio of open space per person at 1386m² of open space per person.
- Skating, ball diamond and playground facilities on County land are provide in Pinewood Estates, and additional publically accessible recreation facilities are located in Redwater and Coronado. Environmentally sensitive land is scattered throughout the neighbourhood with the largest portion being related to the provincially owned Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area.

Neighbourhood E

- Neighbourhood E has a fairly balanced proportion of County open space (5%); population (5%) and land mass (6%). Anticipated annual growth is expected to be relatively high at 2.0%.
- Population density is mid range at 82 people per 1000Ha.

- Open space supply is mid range at 620m² per person.
- There are no county operated outdoor facilities, however publically accessible recreation facilities are located in Villeneuve (trails, soccer and ball diamond facilities). There are no public playgrounds in this neighbourhood.
- Environmentally sensitive land is located primarily around the perimeter of the neighbourhood in association with water bodies and courses (including Big Lake).

Neighbourhood F

- Neighbourhood F overlay primarily relates to major water courses throughout the County and consequently contains a significant portion of environmentally sensitive land.

Neighbourhood G

- Neighbourhood G has the second highest populatuion (29%) yet only 6% of the land mass. By comparison, 19% of the County's open space is in Neighbourhood G. Anticipated annual growth for this neighbourhood is the highest at 3.0%.
- Highest population density of the neighbourhoods at 445 people per 1000 hectares of land.
- Open space supply is mid range for the population with 475m² per person.

- Neighbourhood G has the highest number of sites with outdoor recreation facilities and neighbourhood contains a diversity of recreation facility types.
- Environmentally sensitive land relates primarily to the Sturgeon River Valley.
- The impact of future school sites and opportunities for joint use agreements need to be recognized.

Neighbourhood H

- Neighbourhood H and J have the lowest proportion of County open space at 0.3%. Both neighbourhoods H and J also have least population (2%). Where the two neighbourhoods differ is neighbourhood H is expecting annual growth around 0.5%, while the population of J is expected to decline by 1.5%.
- Neighbourhood H has the second lowest population density at 60 people per 1000 hectares of land and the lowest ratio of open space per person (107m² per person)
- No outdoor recreation facilities on county land are present in neighbourhood H; however residents have access to a diverse range of public facilities as the result of the Namao and Sturgeon Composite schools.
- Environmentally sensitive land primarily relates to the Sturgeon River valley.

Neighbourhood I

- Neighbourhood I accounts for 5% of the County's open space, 3% of the County's population and 2% of the land mass. This neighbourhood is project to have a 1.5% annual growth rate.
- Neighbourhood I has a mid range population density of 114 people per 100 hectares of land, and the second highest ratio of open space per person at 1338m² of county open space per person.
- There are no recreation facilities on public land, however outdoor recreation facilities are provided by the Hu Haven Community Association (skating, ball diamond and playground facilities).
- Environmentally sensitive land primarily relates to the North Saskatchewan and Sturgeon River valleys.

Neighbourhood J

- Neighbourhood H and J have the lowest proportion of County open space at 0.3%. Both neighbourhoods H and J also have least population (2%). Where the two neighbourhoods differ is neighbourhood H is expecting annual growth around 0.5%, while the population of J is expected to decline by 1.5%.

- Not surprisingly, given that neighbourhood J constitutes a portion of Alberta's Industrial Heartland; neighbourhood J has the lowest population density of all the neighbourhoods (18 people per 1000 hectares). Similarly, neighbourhood J has the second lowest ratio of open space per person (134m² per person).
- No public outdoor recreation facilities are located in the neighbourhood.
- Environmentally sensitive land is concentrated around the Sturgeon and North Saskatchewan River valleys, in addition to areas to the south of the Redwater Sandhill Recreation Areas and a grouping of water bodies in the NW of the neighbourhood

Recreation Facilities on County versus Non County Land

Schools and community owned parks contribute greatly to the outdoor recreation assets in the County. In fact, non-county owned parcels comprise 54% of all open space parcels with outdoor recreation facilities in the County (excluding towns). Similarly, schools or community owned parks provide a source of recreation to neighbourhoods not serviced by County owned parks with recreational facilities (neighbourhoods E, B, I and J). ***It is therefore of great importance to provide support (financial, operational, maintenance, etc.) to community organizations spearheading and operating public accessible recreational facilities and ensuring investments are low***

risk through the adoption of joint use agreements on all non county lands.

Privately operated outdoor recreation facilities including Jurassic Forest and Prairie Gardens are also present in the County and contribute greatly to outdoor open space system; however an analysis of privately owned facilities is outside the scope of this Plan.

Recreation Facilities Distribution

With the exception of Pinewood Estates (neighbourhood D) and joint use facilities, County owned outdoor facilities are located in the southern half of the County (south of Morinville), namely in Cardiff, Sturgeon Valley and Glory Hills. The northern half of the County is serviced primarily by outdoor recreation facilities within towns, with some community operated facilities in Alcomdale, Mearns and Casa Vista, in addition to the aforementioned facilities in Pinewood Estates. The traveling distance to a playground is especially great for residents in the Northeast corner of the County. ***A playground located in Alcomdale or Mearns is therefore of benefit.***

Soccer is well distributed throughout the County; however no soccer fields presently exist in Sturgeon Valley. A soccer field in Sturgeon Valley will likely be of benefit given neighbourhood G has the highest

population density as well as the highest anticipated annual growth.

Neighbourhood Growth and Open Space / Trail Supply

There is currently 18.43km of trails (12.47 hard surface and 5.69km of soft surface trails) on County land. **With the anticipated annual growth in neighbourhoods A (1.5%), E (2%), G (3%) and I (1.5%), it will become important to ensure sufficient and well positioned open space to ensure adequate supply for recreation development in addition to protecting and creating trail links along river valleys.**

Environmentally Sensitive Land

11% of the County's land is noted as being environmentally sensitive. By comparison, environmental reserves constitutes 0.1% of land mass, and parks and reserve dedication (R and MR) constitutes an additional 0.6% of County's land Mass. **Given the amount of sensitive land on private land, it will become important to develop policies to ensure the protection of sensitive lands on private property. In addition, as subdivision development occurs, ensure that sensitive lands be taken as ER where applicable, or**

protected by alternate means where ER designation does not apply.

Population Density and Open Space Comparison

As shown in Figure 21, there is an imbalance between amounts of County owned open space and population in many neighbourhoods. For example, neighbourhood D has an over representation of open space in relation to population, while G is under proportioned in terms of their supply, and is anticipated to have the greatest annual growth. **Adequate provision for open space in Neighbourhood G will become increasingly important.**

Trails

Numerous trails are proposed throughout the County including the River Valley Alliance's Capital Region River Valley Park system trails, Alberta TrailNet's Athabasca landing trail, and several linkages proposed in the 2004 Open Space Plan Update. In addition, trail development is occurring in adjacent municipalities and Edmonton Garrison. **As development occurs, it will become important to secure land necessary for trail development.**

4.2 Policy Review

The 2004 Sturgeon County Open Space Plan Update identified 55 policies/actions to inform open space acquisition and utilization under 12 broad categories. The policies were reviewed with the project Steering Committee to gain a better understanding of the relevance of each policy with the current open space vision and public concerns. The policy categories and proposed changes for this Open Space Plan are as follows:

2004 Open Space Plan Update Policy Category	Proposed Action
Conserve Significant Environmentally Sensitivity Areas	2015 Open Space Plan should recognize conservation at different scales: micro to macro levels.
Protect Environmentally Sensitive Lands and Significant Native Vegetation on Private Land	2015 Open Space Plan should reference MDP Strategies
Develop a Parks Bylaw	Retain Policy Category
Locate Active Recreation Facilities in Towns and Hamlets	2015 Open Space Plan should no longer include Towns in description.
Strategically acquire Reserve Lands	There should be no minimum or maximum setback from riparian courses - Should be based on site specific opportunities and constraints.
Categorise and Manage County Owned Reserves	Plan should identify criteria for evaluating existing parcels (aesthetic, recreation, social, environmental, servicing capacity, etc.) in order to inform how best to manage / operate individual reserves. Consider caveats as a way of protecting environmentally sensitive areas on private land.
Development of New 'Regional and District' County Owned Reserves	Refer to MDP
Upgrade Existing 'Regional and District' County Owned Reserves	Refer to MDP
Provide a County Wide Trail System	Carrot Creek is a shared regional resource that is planned to be a destination point in the next 20 years. This should be considered in the 2015 Open Space Plan.
Management of Off Highway Vehicle Use	Use is currently being reviewed under the proposed Public Lands Bylaw
Protect and Interpret Historic Resources and Cultural Features	Should no longer reference the need to inventory remnant historic trail sections.
Protect County's Scenic Character and Setting	Still valid although should no longer include recommendations for a scenic management guideline.

5 PROPOSED OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

5.1 Environmental Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo of Sandy Lake Wilderness Area

The County has a responsibility, along with the Government of Alberta, to protect all areas of environmental significance within its jurisdiction, for the benefit of current and future residents, and for the maintenance of natural ecological processes and diversity. The County should help ensure that environmental protection remains a primary consideration in decisions made regarding land under its ownership and land that is under consideration for development approval.

Management of environmentally sensitive areas within private land holdings cannot be actively controlled by the County unless the land is proposed for development. The County has little direct influence on day-to-day land management practices, however there are ways in which the County could promote and support appropriate voluntary environmental management on private land through education and partnership. Although many private landholders may already practice sound environmental management of their land, some may not realise the significance of the environmental assets on their land. Promotion of suitable environmental management practices in these areas may be complimentary to agricultural practices, especially in regards to water management.

To help ensure the protection of environmental assets within the County, the following guidelines are proposed.

5.1.1 Protect designated natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas

- a) All areas of land under direct County ownership and management should include protection of environmental assets as a high priority

- b) As part of the preparation of area structure plans (ASPs), undertake a review of possible environmentally significant areas and sensitive natural areas to determine level of significance, sensitivity, intrinsic value and ultimately the appropriate level of protection in relation to future development.
- c) Undertake a habitat / landscape assessment to determine the value and significance of wetland areas. Develop a strategy to conserve and manage wetland areas.
- d) Restrict off highway motor vehicle use to help maintain the Sandy Lake Wilderness Area as valuable environmental asset.

5.1.2 Encourage and cooperate in conservation of provincial natural assets.

- a) Sturgeon County should work with the Province of Alberta, the River Lot 56 Society, and the City of St. Albert to ensure that River Lot 56 is protected as a natural area and appropriate public access is maintained.
- b) The Redwater Sandhills Natural area is a significant environmental asset in Sturgeon County. The County should encourage the province to prepare a Management Plan which identifies area of environmental sensitivity in addition to allowable recreational and land uses, access points, linkage opportunities and potential service corridors

5.1.3 Encourage the protection of natural assets on private land.

- a) Inform owners of environmentally sensitive lands about the significance of their holding.
- b) Promote the protection of private land as naturalized habitat, especially along the fringes of rivers and lakes, to create an environmental buffer
- c) Consider incentives for landholders who establish, protect or expand natural(ized) areas
- d) Promote sound environmental management practices and make available to the public information on environmental management including brochures and links to conservation organizations on the County website (i.e. Nature Conservancy of Canada, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Environment Canada, etc.).
- e) Investigate a variety of arrangements with private landholders in order to set aside land for environmental protection. These arrangements could include:
 - Simple non development or farming of portions of properties
 - Dedication of sensitive lands to a trust
 - Purchase by County
 - Conservation easements

5.2 Historic Resources Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo

Historic and cultural features are valuable County resources. They can serve as points of regional interest and a source of educational interpretation. Similarly historic and cultural assets can enhance recreational experiences by providing landmarks or themes and can serve as a tourism destination.

The County has a number of trail routes that were historically used in settlement of the County and adjoining areas. These trails include Athabasca Trail, Lac St Anne Trail, Morinville Trail and Victoria Trail. Historic trails often have more of a meandering quality to them and tend to be sensitively situated around

watercourses and vegetation stands. Historic trails are often great opportunities for greenway development.

In addition to greenways, there is substantial potential in the County to develop scenic drives with points of interest to promote its natural and historic resources. Marketing of these features may be appropriate to increase awareness of the County's heritage while improving the economic viability of the towns and hamlets through increased tourism. There is a large potential audience within the County and in adjoining municipalities for car based day trips which offer scenic attractions, recreation highlights (such as picnic areas and trails) and historic features. Similarly, foreign visitors staying in area (specifically Edmonton), may be interested in experiencing part of rural Alberta. Some scenic drive routes such as the French Tourism Historic Corridor (through Legal) have already been identified and marketed. Other possible routes for designation and marketing include St. Albert to Sandy Lake loop via Meadowview Drive, Lac Ste Anne Trail and Riviere Qui Barre, or North Edmonton to Redwater.

The following guidelines have been developed to manage and promote historical and cultural resources:

5.2.1 Protect heritage resources and interpret where appropriate

- a) Compile a complete listing of historic areas and sites with a description of their relevance, based largely on Alberta Community Development's "Listing of Significant Historical Sites and Areas". This inventory would be a first step in determining the value of the resource and the marketability of the resource as a destination within the open space system.
- b) Where practical, develop and interpret remnant sections of Sturgeon County's historic trails as greenways for recreational benefit or as scenic routes for the promotion of tourism.
- c) Develop standardized signage for historic trail and scenic routes, guided by the General Municipal Servicing Standards. This should be easily recognizable from a distance and at a small scale (for printed promotional material).

5.3 Open Space Allocation and Management Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo

The following guidelines are proposed to guide the acquisition and development of open spaces.

5.3.1 Strategically acquire open space

- a) Require ER and MR as per the Municipal Government Act.
- b) Ideally the full 10% of developed land would be dedicated as MR (as opposed to cash in lieu) when a subdivision is developed adjacent to a lake, river or any area designated for environmental protection.
- c) Maximize the amount of usable open space by taking ensuring parcels which serve a utilitarian purpose (i.e. drainage or transportation) are taken as public utility lot (PUL) as per the Municipal Government Act, as opposed to a municipal reserve (MR).

- d) Ensure municipal reserves are adequately configured for maximum usability, as opposed to remnants spaces which are unusable to a developer (i.e. narrow strips or small fragmented parcels)
- e) Consider MR as a means of protecting significant stands of remnant native vegetation, which are not protected as ER.
- f) In areas designated for future residential use, consider postponing land dedication through a deferred reserve caveat until after an area structure plan is prepared in order to have adequate and well located parks, greenways and school sites.
- g) MR should ideally adjoin a public street and avoid backing onto residential lots where possible. Public street frontages provide better casual surveillance and easier (and safer) public access (Bellerose Drive in Sturgeon Valley is a good example).

Through the subdivision processes, acquire municipal reserve in addition to environmental reserve along major river corridors (North Saskatchewan, Sturgeon, Redwater) to provide an additional habitat as well provision for a greenway (Figure 27 and Figure 28).

- b) Specifically investigate provision of pathway links to the park from adjoining Cardiff Echoes neighbourhood, Morinville and Carbondale
- c) Prepare marketing strategy for Cardiff Park so more residents of County know what is available there

5.3.3 Consider the disposition of non-contributing or underutilized open space

- a) Consider the disposition of non-contributing or underutilized open space to further the development of more useable park space.

5.4 Facility Development Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo

5.4.1 Prepare an inventory of existing outdoor facilities and their conditions

- a) Conduct an inventory of the physical condition of existing recreational facilities, both County owned and public facilities on non-county land. Determine which facilities need to be upgraded and a strategy for their revitalization.

5.4.2 Provide overlapping functions in open space where possible

- a) As identified in the trends analysis, parks and green spaces that are most successful in encouraging

residents to participate are those that provide a range of amenities. It is therefore important that open spaces and their associated amenities can cater to different age groups and interests whenever possible.

- b) Involve the public in the park planning process where feasible in an effort to optimize the usability of parks.
- c) Recognize the important role of neighbourhood parks as community gathering spaces and support communities in the promotion of special events / community activities that bring neighbourhood residents together.

5.4.3 Create an awareness campaign for outdoor recreational assets

- a) The County has numerous recreation assets throughout the County, however residents are often unaware of the recreation assets available to them to use throughout the county. An awareness campaign should therefore be developed for countywide parks and trails systems, in addition to neighbourhood level parks where appropriate.

5.4.4 Consider partnerships

- a) The County should explore the possibility of partnering with adjacent municipalities (counties, cities, towns, reserves) for the development / preservation of open space. More specifically, the county and municipalities could work jointly to protect and enhance shared natural assets such as the North Saskatchewan River, the Sturgeon River, Big Lake and Sandy Lake. Combined effort could also be used to develop and market touring routes of historic and cultural or to develop trail linkages to and from Sturgeon County.
- b) Investigate the possibility of establishing joint use facilities with community organizations, adjacent municipalities and/or the Edmonton Garrison. Investigate and mitigate investment risk. Inform the public of new and existing joint use arrangements.
- c) Non-profit organizations contribute greatly to the outdoor recreation supply available to County residents, and should therefore be supported where possible through funding, maintenance or operational assistance. As there is a degree of risk when investing in recreation facilities on non county owned land, risk should be evaluated and mitigated (i.e. through a joint use agreement) prior to any investments.
- d) Work with industrial companies such as gravel extraction companies to ensure reclamations plans are affectively translated into usable open space.

5.5 Trail Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo

Communities within Sturgeon County have consistently expressed a need for a non-motorized multi-use trail system that would give them access to many of the landscape features and destinations both within and adjoining the County. Provision of a greenway trail system is a long term objective

Many of the longer regional trail corridors identified as having potential, mostly along rivers, are primarily privately owned. The potential of the County to purchase or obtain these lands through dedication in the foreseeable future is minimal. Realisation of these trail corridors within a reasonable time frame would

require negotiation of some public access to private lands.

This negotiation would initially be based on identification of desired trail routes and identification of who would be anticipated to use these trails and how use would be managed. It is likely that differentiation between non-motorized use (hikers, cross country skiers, etc) and off highway vehicle use (all terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, etc) would be a major consideration.

There are precedents throughout Canada for similar access to private land and these arrangements have often been made directly between private landholders and trail use organizations. The County's role may be primarily in planning the trail network, determining suitable trail standards and partnering with trail users groups to address funding and liability issues. Guidelines for trails include:

5.5.1 Identify potential volunteers

- a) Identify and catalogue individuals and organizations willing to volunteer their time to assist with the operation and management of trails within the county

5.5.2 Create trails in conjunction with land development

- a) As a condition of development, especially country residential, require developers to design and build trails according to County's 2004 Sturgeon Valley Trails Plan in addition to joint regional trail initiative spearheaded by others including the River Valley Alliance's Capital Region River Valley Park, the Alberta TrailNet's Athabasca Proposed Athabasca Trail Alignment and the Canadian Forces Base trail.

5.5.3 Provide trail routes within major park areas

- a) Investigate opportunity for upgrading existing developed or informal trails in major parks and open spaces such as Cardiff Park and Sandy Lake Wilderness Area

5.5.4 Confirm alignment of preferred corridors along major rivers

- a) The trail corridors depicted in this plan are conceptual. More detailed assessment of local conditions is required to determine suitable trail alignments and site-specific development.

5.5.5 Investigate opportunity for trail loops around lakes

- a) Investigate locations such as Big Lake, Lily Lake, Sandy Lake, etc for potential lake frontage trails, whether a complete loop or trial segment.

5.5.6 Investigate and promote trail access on private land and acquire access rights where possible

- a) There is potential to negotiate public access onto private land along proposed trail corridors. This would help to provide links along routes, which may never be in public ownership.

5.5.7 Coordinate trail development between residential developments

- a) A coordinated approach to reviewing development applications is required in order to ensure trail linkages between multi-lot residential subdivision developments and enhance neighbourhood level trail linkages.

5.5.8 Coordinate possible trail development with trail user groups

- a) Continue to work with trail users groups including the River Valley Alliance, Alberta TrailNet, Canadian Forces Base, River Lot 56, etc. with a goal of developing regional connections.

5.6 Scenic Character Guidelines



Source: EDA Photo

The County's scenic character is not unique within Northern Alberta and may not be considered dramatic in comparison to other landscape features in Alberta. It does however offer a fairly consistent and attractive rural setting with a balance of naturally vegetated and farmed areas. The landscape has not predominantly been degraded by urban development. Most development has been successfully contained to towns and hamlets in most cases, with the exception of

country residential estates and industrial uses such as the Villeneuve gravel pits.

The County's major scenic features will likely be significant natural features such as lakes and rivers. The most valued scenic locations may be where these natural features are crossed by major transportation corridors and therefore regularly viewed by many travelers.

Proposed scenic character guidelines are as follows:

5.6.1 Protect major scenic features of the County

- a) Scenic impact of development should be considered when developing any new ASPs.
- b) Future development should be carefully assessed in relation to its potential for scenic impact.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Proposed Open Space Typology and Standards

An open space system should be viewed as a continuum of large to small open spaces. Each space has its own purpose and target audience. As shown in Figure 29, five types of open space are being proposed for Sturgeon County.



Figure 29: Proposed Open Space System

County Wide Parks are destinations parks which provide a recreational amenity to the entire County. Currently Cardiff Park would be classified into this category in addition to Sturgeon Valley which is included in this category primarily because of its size, location and potential for future development.

Neighbourhood Parks by contrast serve residents primarily with a Municipal Development Plan defined neighbourhood. Depending on neighbourhood size, several neighbourhood parks may be required to provide adequate servicing. Neighbourhood parks would ideally be on County property however several parks on non County land currently fill the role i.e. Calahoo Park.

Local Open Spaces is intended to serve a limited amount of residents, primarily in close walkable distance. Recreation features are limited and primarily include passive self directed activities.

Greenways serve as a linear parks, buffers or trail system, and often run adjacent to water courses and/or connect residential developments and parks.

Natural Areas are primarily intended to protect native vegetation and sensitive landscapes features and may include passive recreation features where appropriate.

The proposed types of open spaces are further described in the following table:

Table 5: Proposed Open Space System

	Proposed Open Space System				
	County-Wide Parks	Neighbourhood Park	Local Open Space	Greenways	Natural Areas
Description	An open space destination with County wide recreational appeal of both active and passive uses.	An open space destination within a neighbourhood (as identified in the MDP) for active and passive recreation and community gathering. Often achieved through community organized facilities on non-county land.	Contains a limited amount of primarily passive recreational facilities in close proximity (walking distance) to multi lot residential development(s).	The primary purpose of greenways is to accommodate trails, wildlife corridors or to serve as environmental buffer / screening.	Natural areas are intended to promote biodiversity, ecological conservation and preservation.
Size	Minimum 10 Hectares	Minimum 5 Ha	Maximum 1 Ha	As required to provide desired connections or environmental buffering.	As required to conserve natural features or promote ecological diversity
Standard / Service Ratio	Serves all County residents	Minimum 1 per neighbourhood. Serves neighbourhood residents within a 5-10km service radius	In association with multi-lot residential developments. Serves a 1-1.5km radius		
Location Criteria	Located on along a major roadway, preferably adjacent to a community facility	Along a roadway, preferably adjacent to community facility.	To best meet the needs of residents in which it is intended to serve.	Where possible connects parks and significant destinations	As appropriate to meet intent.
Potential Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year round active and passive recreation facilities for all age groups • On-Site Parking • Destination play and / or water play features • Manicured or natural Areas • Picnic and/ or bbq facilities • Dog off leash areas • Public Art • Trails • Washrooms, change rooms • Overnight camping • Lighting • Heritage, tourism or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and passive features and open areas for informal play for all age groups • Play structures • Active Sports • Parking (on or off site) • Manicured or natural Areas • Open areas for informal play • Picnic facilities • Dog off leash areas • Trails • Lighting • Heritage, tourism or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive recreation. • Minimal active recreation facilities • Play features • Open areas for informal play • Picnic areas • Benches and trash receptacles • May be non-contributing in terms of existing open space supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail connection • Seating, rest stops, and waste receptacles • Access to public toilets and drinking water where in proximity to public facility • Parking • Signage and directional maps • Heritage, tourism or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails • Seating and waste receptacles • Picnic tables • Interpretive signage • Heritage, tourism or cultural elements
Maintenance Priority	High priority for regular maintenance (snow clearing of major paths and parking lots)	Medium priority for maintenance. Periodic snow clearing of paths & parking lots	Low priority for maintenance. No snow removal	High level of snow clearing of major trails, moderate elsewhere	High priority for conservation
Examples	Cardiff Park	Manor Estates or Riviere Qui Barre future park development	Austin Acres R2 Parcel	Athabasca Trail	Sandy Lake Wilderness Area

The following map categorizes existing opens spaces based on their size, location and facilities in addition to growth potential.

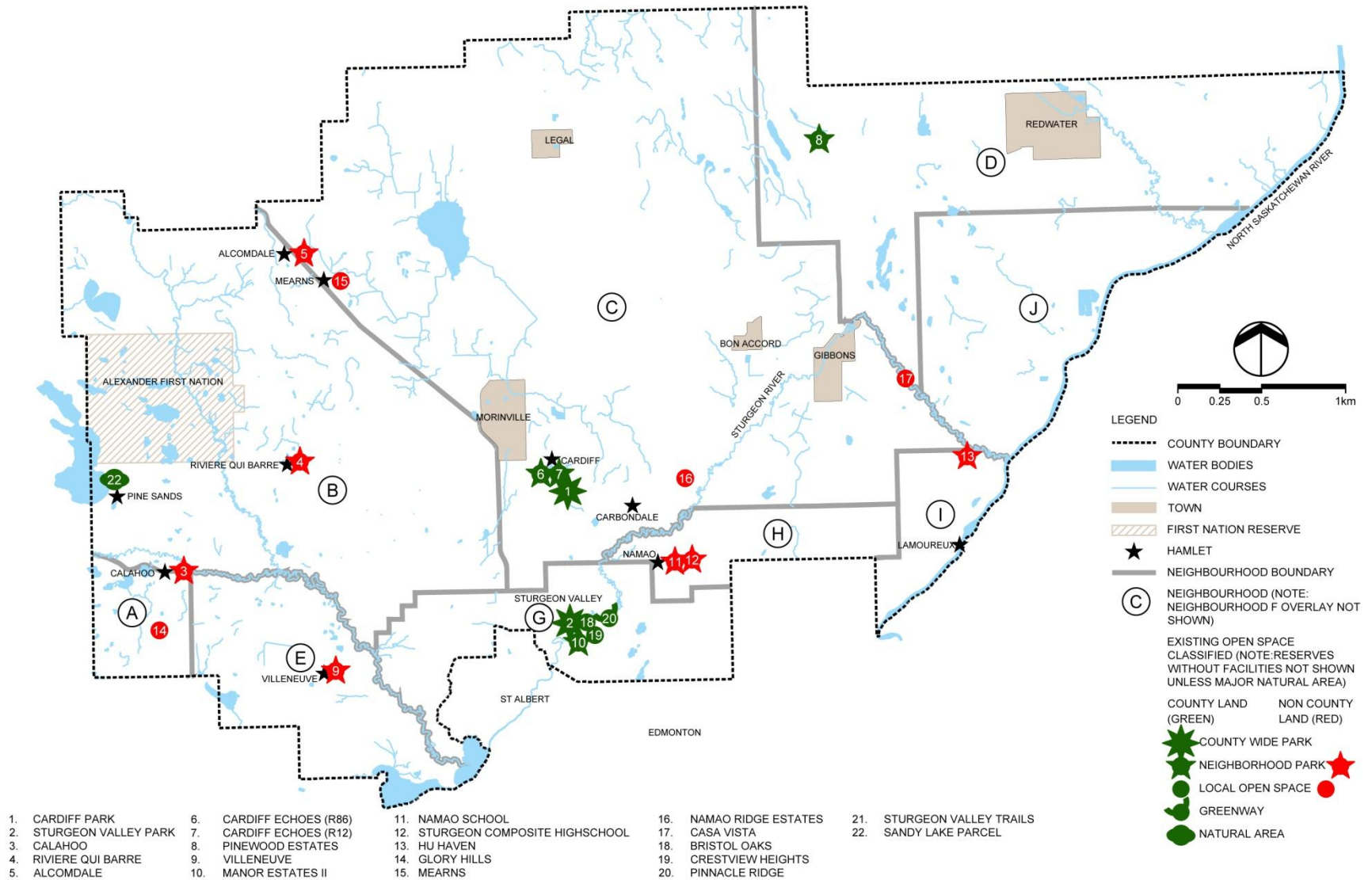


Figure 30: Categorization of Existing Open Space based on Proposed Typology

6.2 Open Space Recommendations

The following open space recommendations are proposed based on existing conditions review, the identification of opportunities and constraints and the categorization of existing open space (refer to sections 2, 1 and 6.1).

Table 6: Open Space Recommendations Summary Table

Site	#	Recommendation	Priority Level			Short Term Budget
			Short Term (1 – 5 Yrs)	Mid Term (5-10 Yrs)	Long Term (10+ Yrs)	
County Wide Parks						
Sturgeon Valley Park	1a	Update the Sturgeon Valley Park Master Plan based on community consultation of the long-term master plan and develop a phased approach to the implementation of the park to create a countywide park.	◆			\$20K
	1b	Implement phase 1 of the revised Sturgeon Valley master plan.	◆			\$350K
Cardiff Park	2	As recommended in the MDP, review and develop a long term management plan for Cardiff Park that incorporates cultural and recreational assets. Work with the Rotary Club to determine the feasibility of a group camping site in a portion of the county wide park.	◆			
Neighbourhood Parks						
Riviere Qui Barre	3	Evaluate the need for additional recreation opportunities in Riviere Qui Barre and develop a plan for a new neighbourhood park utilizing the County land in the community. Given the parcel's proximity to Camilla School facilities, any new neighbourhood park utilizing the County's parcel should be primarily passive use, but may include active recreation components.	◆			\$35K
Alcomdale Park Site	4	Work with the community association to develop a playground at the park and discuss any other facilities that could be added to better service residents in the northwest of the county.		◆		

Site	#	Recommendation	Priority Level			Short Term Budget
			Short Term (1 – 5 Yrs)	Mid Term (5-10 Yrs)	Long Term (10+ Yrs)	
Local Open Space						
Various Sites	5	Assess remnant open space parcels and consider disposition if warranted.	◆			
Greenways (and Trails)						
Sturgeon Valley Park to St. Albert	6	Develop a trail from Sturgeon Valley Park to St. Albert on both the north and south side of the river. Ensure that any subdivisions that occur along the proposed route include the development of necessary trail linkages. (approx. 4.9km)	◆			\$850K
Riverstone Pointe to Sturgeon Road East	7	Develop a trail from Riverstone Pointe to Sturgeon Road east along road right of way including a bridge crossing of the Sturgeon River (approx. 1.8km).		◆		
Sturgeon Road to Township Road 542	8	Develop a trail from Sturgeon Road to Township Road 542 via Range Road 250 (approx. 2.3km)		◆		
97 th Street Overpass	9	Develop a trail to connect with the 97 th Street overpass along Township Road 542 (approx. 1.5km).	◆			\$325K
Lamoureux Parking Lot to Sturgeon River	10	Develop a trail from the Lamoureux Parking lot to Sturgeon River via North Saskatchewan River (proposed River Valley Alliance route)			◆	
North Saskatchewan River	11	Bridge across North Saskatchewan River near Lamoureux to Fort Saskatchewan			◆	
Morinville to Cardiff Park:	12	Develop a trail from Morinville to Cardiff Park along the rail corridor or via secondary roads (approx 2.4km)		◆		
Cardiff Park to Cardiff Echoes	13	Develop a trail from Cardiff Park to Cardiff Echoes from both the northern and southern portions of the park via road reserves and public reserve (approx 2.1km)	◆			\$500K

Site	#	Recommendation	Priority Level			Short Term Budget
			Short Term (1 – 5 Yrs)	Mid Term (5-10 Yrs)	Long Term (10+ Yrs)	
Sandy Lake Wilderness Area	14	Construct loop trails within Sandy Lake Wilderness Area based on a long range plan (approx 8.2km)		◆		
Gibbons to Sturgeon Valley Vista	15	Develop a trail from Gibbons to Sturgeon Valley Vista via Sturgeon River Valley (approx. 13.8km)			◆	
Trestle Ridge Estates to Carbondale Creek	16	Develop a trail from Trestle Ridge Estates to Carbondale Creek via one side of Sturgeon River (approx. 5.6km)			◆	
Carbondale Creek to Valley Vista	17	Develop a trail from Carbondale Creek to Valley Vista via Sturgeon River Valley (approx. 9.2km)			◆	
Gibbons to North Saskatchewan River	18	Develop a trail from Gibbons to North Sask. River via the Sturgeon River (approx. 18.1km). Note this trail constitutes part of Athabasca Landing Trail and Trans Canada Trail routes			◆	
Gibbons to Sturgeon River	19	Develop a trail from Gibbons to Sturgeon River: multiple connections (approx. 1.1km)			◆	
Redwater to Redwater River	20	Develop a trail from Redwater to Redwater River (approx. 1.6km)			◆	
Redwater to Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area	21	Develop detail design drawings and construct a trail from Redwater to Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area (approx. 8.7km)			◆	
Lily Lake	22	Develop a trail Loop around or adjacent to Lily Lake (approx. 3.7km)			◆	
Carbondale to Sturgeon River	23	Develop a trail from Carbondale to Sturgeon River via ravine/creek (approx. 1.5km)			◆	

Site	#	Recommendation	Priority Level			Short Term Budget
			Short Term (1 – 5 Yrs)	Mid Term (5-10 Yrs)	Long Term (10+ Yrs)	
Redwater Sand Hills to North SK River	24	Develop a trail from Redwater Sand Hills to North SK River via Redwater River (approx 4.3km)			◆	
Top of North Saskatchewan River Bank – Sturgeon River to Redwater River	25	Develop a trail along the banks of the North Saskatchewan River from Sturgeon River to Redwater River (21.5km)			◆	
Sturgeon River from Big Lake to Calahoo	26	Develop a trail along the banks of the Sturgeon River from Big Lake to Calahoo (25.5km).			◆	
Cardiff Park to Carbondale	27	Develop a trail from Cardiff Park to Carbondale trail access along the rail corridor or via secondary roads (approx 4.9km)			◆	
Bon Accord to Township Road 582	28	Develop a trail from Bon Accord to Township Road 582 connection past Lily Lake (approx. 17.9km)			◆	
Bon Accord to Sturgeon River and Gibbons	29	Develop a trail from Bon Accord to Sturgeon River and Gibbons trail connection (approx. 4.1 km)			◆	
Natural Areas						
Sandy Lake Wilderness Area	30a	Fence Sandy Lake Wilderness Area to prevent further degradation of the site caused by unauthorized off highway motor vehicles.	◆			\$200K
	30b	Prepare a Management Plan, which supersedes the 1989 report to address items such as fencing, signage, trails, preservation, conservation and remediation, group camping and campgrounds, and as a strategy for long term use of the site.	◆			\$65K
	30c	Implement long-term plan for Sandy Lake Wilderness Area		◆		

Site	#	Recommendation	Priority Level			Short Term Budget
			Short Term (1 – 5 Yrs)	Mid Term (5-10 Yrs)	Long Term (10+ Yrs)	
Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area	31	Partner with the Province to create a day use area and acquire land in close proximity to the Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area for a day use natural area.		◆		
General						
Various Sites	32	Allocate funding to provide support (financial, maintenance and operation) of community organizations providing public recreation opportunities within the County.	◆			
	33	Evaluate the condition of existing open space infrastructure and develop a plan for life cycle improvements to existing infrastructure.	◆			

6.2.1 Plan Review

Ongoing review and improvement will be necessary in order to keep the Open Space Plan relevant, on track and in order for it to have continuing value to all constituents. The following review process is suggested for the plan:

- Annual reviews on the projected completion timing and other points with a resetting of timelines and related tasks, plus updating of potential projects and recommendation considerations as they evolve within the capital and operations cycle.
- A five-year review, which would constitute a significant updating and integration with other strategy, documents (Bylaws, General Municipal Servicing Standards, etc.). This would allow for consolidation of previous changes as well as provide clarification of the capital funding available from Development requirements for the next five-year period.
- A ten-year anniversary review, which would likely involve public consultation and related activities to position the Plan for its second ten year planning term.

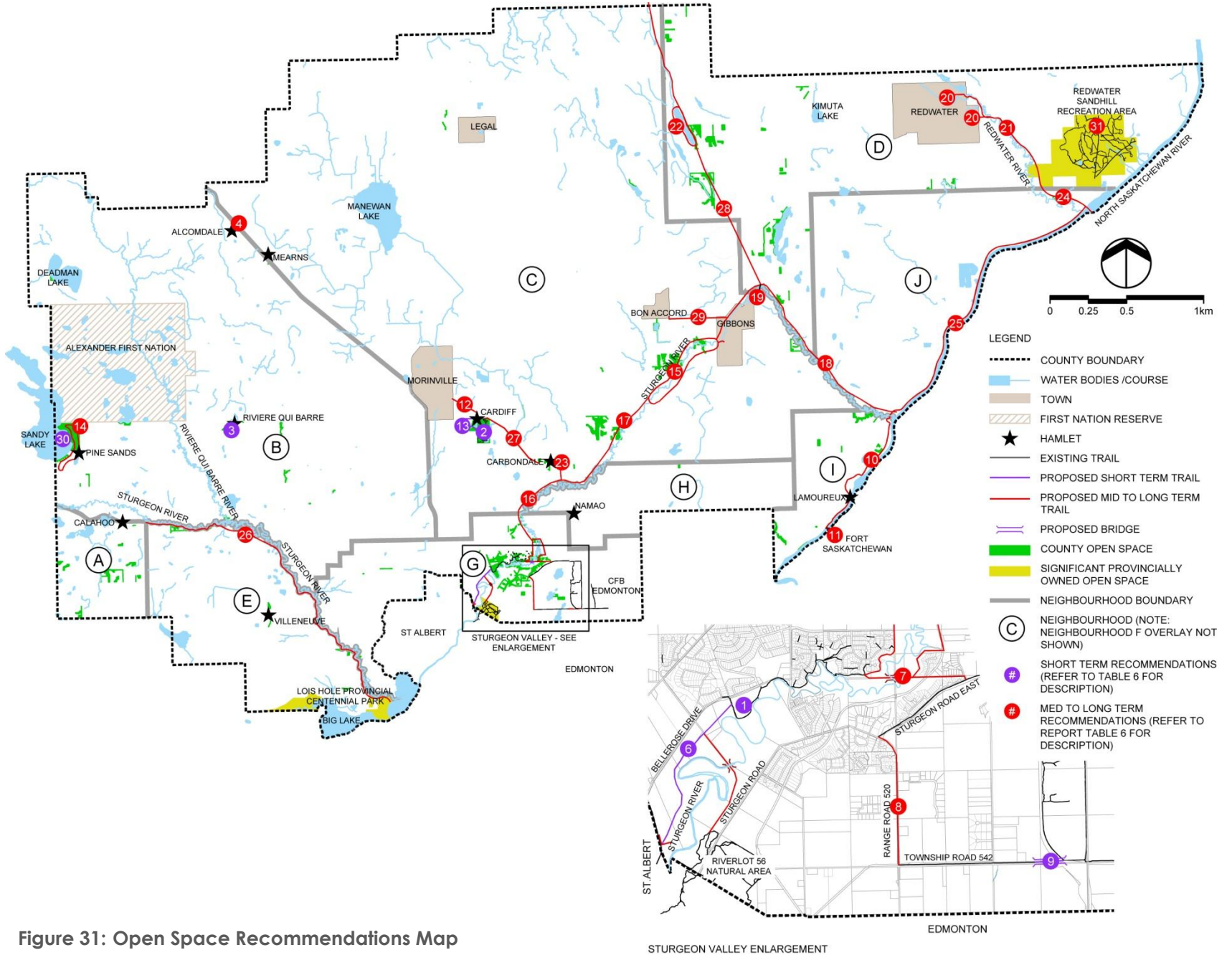
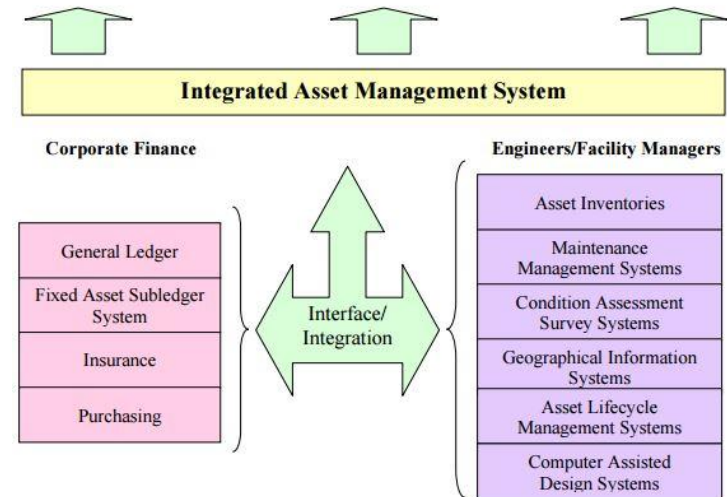


Figure 31: Open Space Recommendations Map

6.3 Asset and Management Strategies

The development of long term asset management plans by Canadian municipalities has been promoted significantly since the 2004 Open Space Plan Update was completed. The federal and provincial governments have produced guidelines and best practices, while the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) have each played a role in raising awareness of the benefits associated with an integrated and forward planning approach to asset management. Open space systems are no different than other classes of tangible capital assets – involving important considerations of construction value, depreciation and lifecycle costing, as well as replacement.

Long term asset management planning is linked to financial strategies for sustaining services and investment in community assets. In addition, policies surrounding acquisition of assets and disposition feature prominently in the financial strategy and an overall approach to an integrated asset and growth management plan. ***It is therefore recommended that Sturgeon County adopt an Assessment Management approach to their parks and open space assets.***



Source: Guide to Accounting for and Reporting Tangible Capital Assets, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2007

While many municipalities have moved toward the creation of long term asset management plans as a result of the changes to the accounting practice for capital assets which now sees the investment accounted for over the life of the asset, many municipalities have not. The opportunity exists for Sturgeon County to begin to adopt management practices that enable effective long term planning. While protocols for decision-making have been in place, creating a deeper understanding and connection between community needs for open space and parks, current inventory and condition, and the financial implications of the proposed changes to

the system should underpin the implementation of the master plan. ***It is therefore recommended that the County undertake the necessary elements of a long – term asset management plan in sequence.***

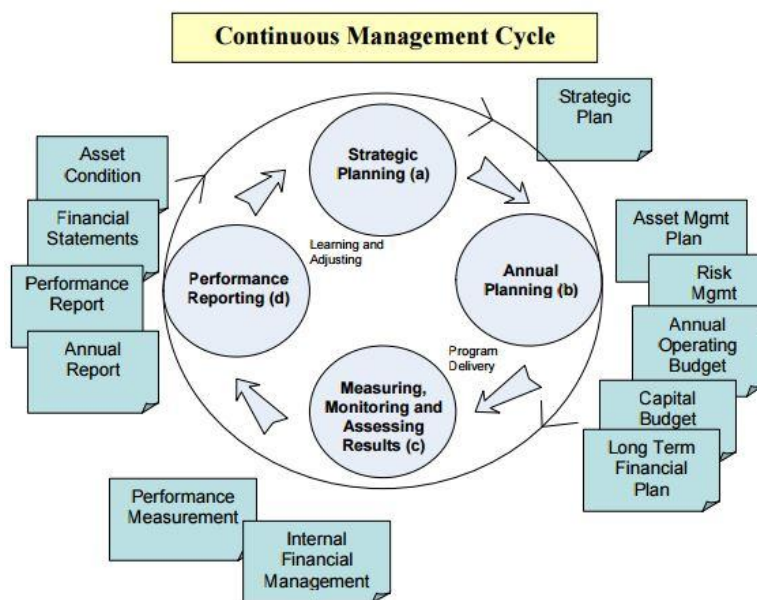
Asset management planning is a process of decision making regarding all aspects of asset development, operations and maintenance, acquisitions, replacement and disposal. This is done to maximize benefits, mitigate risks, create efficiencies, and achieve the desired level of service over the long term. To achieve all of this, asset management will require an understanding of existing conditions, service levels, priority setting and the development of a financial plan. As such an asset management plan can be seen as an umbrella strategy that is part of a broader municipal framework of resource allocation. ***The County should therefore do the following:***

- Adopt a formalized asset management process and consider this in relation to not only parks and open space but to other aspects of its portfolio;

- Follow PSAB guidelines for reporting on asset conditions and value.
- Undertake a planned or phased program to assess current condition of existing facilities in the open space system: sports fields, play equipment; paths, fencing and protective structures, access roads, buildings, etc.
- Keep an annually updated schedule of capital asset value – both depreciated value and replacement cost value, along with a clear indication of which investments are required on an automatic renewal basis versus those that are discretionary as to timing.
- Link this work into other relevant planning documents such as recreation plans, potentially working in association with the towns and hamlets, and feed the data into the budget and long-term capital planning process. The development of a formalized asset management database will enable more accurate financial planning for both operations and capital.

6.4 Financial Strategy

Financial strategy and asset management should be viewed as part of a continuous management cycle.



Source: Guide to Accounting for and Reporting Tangible Capital Assets, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2007

6.4.1 Acquisitions

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) sets out the purposes for which land dedication related to residential and non-residential development can occur. Section 671 (2) of the MGA limits the use of municipal reserve including municipal and school reserve to the following purposes:

- (a) Public park
- (b) Public recreation area
- (c) School board purposes; and
- (d) To separate areas of land that are used for different purposes

Accordingly, in addition to land fulfilling these requirements, the provision for cash in lieu of parkland dedication (which is currently pursued to some degree by the County) could be used for a range of park related investments – this could include replenishment, renewal, additions, improvements or other enhancement of existing assets, as well and contributions toward the development of new parks. This is fundamental to the plan because the analysis has demonstrated that in some parts of the county, a significant over supply of parkland space exists. To the extent that an over-supply when measured against the required level of service exists (and it would need to be determined to the satisfaction of the County in regard to any particular community), the use of cash and the development of a parkland cash reserve rather than land acquisition, should be promoted.

The Use of Deferral Provisions

It is evident from the review of planning for open space since 2000 that the concept of deferring parkland dedication until a finer grain of land use planning has been completed, is an important planning tool. The

deferral of dedication is provided for in the MGA. It is not certain that the County has adequately utilized this provision.

Recommendations include the following:

In implementing best practice for acquisitions, the County should establish through forward planning with regard to subdivision development, the known capital plan for investment in existing parkland assets and the need to development land in certain areas to meet the appropriate service standard, the following principles:

- Continue to obtain land through dedication, exchange or other appropriate means to achieve the desired level of service in the neighbourhoods.
- The determination of whether those standards have been met will rest on the consideration by the County as to the appropriate geographic coverage of a park; that in terms depends on the role of the park in the hierarchy of open space. In addition, the presence of parkland and open space facilities in towns and hamlets is a further complicating factor that will need to be assessed in order to determine accurately whether a new subdivision has the appropriate level of open space.
- It is important to note that given the largely rural nature of the communities, this Open Space plan has not adopted a definitive statement of the geographic areas of each community within which

the existing parks standards are calculated. The targets for provision and distance radius should be used to determine if additional acquisitions are required.

- Assuming that the standards are met, the County should fully and aggressively utilize its rights to obtain cash in lieu of parkland dedication, as this will enable strategic land purchases and/or the broader use of the available funds to re-invest in existing park assets.
- The County should make full use of the deferral mechanisms to prevent the continuation of a parks system of municipal reserves that is linked entirely to land dedication as part of every subdivision development. This is what has historically happened and the resulting geographic and functional desegregation of assets has resulted in sub-optimal open space systems in the County.
- Cash in Lieu in the form of a reserve (perhaps bolstered by any proceeds from disposal) can also be used to later pay down an upfront purchase of parkland should an earlier purchase be warranted or necessary in the interests of creating an effective long term plan. This may pertain to trails developments and other open space outside of the ER category.

The approach to acquisitions and the use of parkland dedication rights is one of achieving flexibility in response and enabling the County to become familiar

and comfortable in utilizing a range of acquisition strategies and dispositions (land, cash, upfront purchase, disposals) to meet the long term vision for the parks system in the County.

6.4.2 Dispositions as part of the Financial Strategy

With the creation of a formal disposition policy, the identification and disposal via sale of these assets can result in a funding source to be used for acquisitions. The Municipal Government Act (2000) restricts the proceeds of these sales to reinvestment in parks and recreation.

6.4.3 Collaboration

The County operates on a collaborative basis in terms of ensuring the sustainability of its open space and recreational assets. The County works co-operatively with towns and hamlets as well as volunteer groups and other sports user groups. This includes grants and other assistance to the municipalities on an individual partnership basis. It is important therefore that the assets which are localized in the towns and hamlets are factored into the level of service and delivery mechanisms for ensuring community access to passive and active recreation.

The County should continue to undertake this collaboration. In addition, it is recommended that the following occur:

1. Consider whether there should be a reserve agreement with other parties such as the school boards and the towns and hamlets that creates a more formalized approach to this collaboration that currently exists in an effort to minimize risk
2. Further consideration of an inter-municipal funding model for parks investment including re-investment in parks.

6.5 Proposed Disposition Process

Based on our review of current and best practice in other municipalities across Alberta and the broader country, we propose that Sturgeon County consider the following process to guide the process through which the municipality disposes of reserve land. The following process is limited to Municipal Reserves, however it could be adjusted to include school reserves and community services reserves. The flow chart below summarizes the process, which is then described step by step.

There are two streams through which the disposition process could occur:

Stream 1: Municipally-led disposition – Municipal staff initiate the process of identifying the eligibility of land for potential disposition.

Stream 2: Non-municipally-led disposition – Non-municipal individual(s) initiate the process of identifying the eligibility of land for potential disposition.

The process for both streams is similar, with the addition of the following step i outlined in the figure below for Stream 2 (non-municipally-led dispositions):



Figure 32: Stream 1: Process Flowchart for Municipally- Led Disposition of Municipal Reserves.

Additional Pre-Step: Private-Interest Based Rationale for Disposal (for Stream 2 only)

The party(ies) leading the request for disposition of the land in question must submit an application for the municipality to begin the process of evaluation of the land for disposition. The application should be a standardized form that the municipality provides on its website that includes:

- Property information: land description including civic address;
- Planning reasons and merits that support municipal disposition.

Step 1: Legal Process

The first step within the disposition process is to assess the eligibility of the land in question for disposition, and to identify the legal process through which the disposition can occur.

- Environmental Reserves are to be excluded, given that these can only be disposed in perpetuity to the Crown, or leased for a maximum of a three year period.
- Municipal Reserve (MR) designation is required to be removed via a formal public process, involving the required notice, and a public hearing. Following this, disposition can occur.

Step 2: Assessment Process for Disposition

The legal process Step 1(ii) above must be followed. The County will need to:

- Justify the intent to dispose of the land – i.e., to justify why it is surplus or deemed to be surplus now or in the future.
- In the case of requests for disposition that are non-municipally initiated, the Municipality will need to weigh the merits, resulting in a recommendation to Council to deem the parcel(s) either surplus, or not.
- The Municipality should not recommend that a parcel is deemed surplus where:
 - The site has a risk management function (e.g. acts as a buffer)
 - Has contamination at depth which does not impede use as a park; and
 - The site has potential for being linked to a future open space system.

If the site is deemed to be surplus to the Municipality's needs, the Municipality should proceed to the public hearing process.

Step 3: Consideration of Fit with Existing Plans

The site must be considered in terms of its current fit with, and potential contribution to, the prescribed goals and policies of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), Capital Region growth Plan, Area Structure Plans (ASP), Community Services Needs Assessment, and existing recreation, parks and open space Master Plans.

Step 4: Consideration of Contribution to Current and Future Use/Needs

The site must be considered in terms of its current and potential contribution to the parks and open space system. This must be conducted through an evidence-based approach that takes into consideration current use by the public and/or user groups, and service standards applicable to the area.

This Step requires the completion of:

- i. A detailed description of the asset; and
- ii. Assessment of the current and future contribution of the asset to the parks system.

Step 5: Consideration of Asset Management and Long-Term Planning Needs

- Municipal financial obligations annually;
- Lifecycle planning (recently sunk capital, and future costs); and
- Role of user groups and volunteers in maintaining the asset.

Step 6: Assessment of Future Use

Does the disposal for intended use(s) conform to the MDP regarding:

- Environmental policies;

- Heritage value and preservation;
- Avoiding creating another use which undermines or duplicates, or results in underutilization of other municipal assets;
- Avoiding the creation of undue servicing or infrastructure capacity issues that cannot be resolved through developer-funded infrastructure upgrades; and
- Other regular development control reviews.

Step 7: Documentation of public expressions of value of the asset

- Consider surveying residents within a given radius depending on the geographic area that the asset serves.
- Option: Invite input from organized groups.

The Open Space Plan for Sturgeon County proposes a classification for the County's open spaces. This provides guidance as to the general geographic area of residents that should be surveyed within this process depending on the asset type.

Consultation conducted for the Open Space Plan has indicated that many of the County's open spaces are stewarded by community groups. Accordingly, there may be a need to survey local groups that are actively involved in the stewardship of the parcel of land in question, and/or surrounding lands.

Step 8: Determination of Interest of Other Public Agencies

As identified in the Open Space Plan, Sturgeon County residents are served by indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and spaces that are owned and managed by a variety of public agencies, including but not limited to the County, neighbouring municipalities, and school boards among others. Accordingly, there is a need to determine interest by these agencies in land identified for potential disposition to contribute to their planning efforts. To transfer a municipal reserve or interest in land to school boards, the Registrar must designate the land as school reserve as per the MGA 673(2).

Step 9: Reporting and Recommendations: Staff report, internal review, and recommendations

If steps 1 through 8 have resulted in staff recommending that the land be deemed surplus to the municipality's needs, staff must issue a public report indicating the recommendation of surplus status. This should be reviewed internally prior to publication.

Step 10: Market Valuation (at fair market value)

Once the land has been deemed surplus to municipal needs, the municipality needs to undertake the valuation of the land at market value. The valuation should be completed by an independent qualified appraiser.

Step 11: Council Approval to Proceed

Staff must present their recommendations to Council to receive approval from Council to proceed with the disposition process.

Step 12: Determination of Method of Sale

This requires municipal due diligence as to the merits of the proposed method of sale of the surplus land, and under what conditions. This could include:

- Exclusive negotiation (direct sale or lease);
- Public sale (If so, does this include a right of first refusal to the applicant?)

This all depends on the particulars of the site, including:

- Existing usage and access including encroachment and ability to resolve encroachment through sale; and
- Size and significance of the site – whether it is a remnant and small, versus a larger and strategic piece of land.

Step 13: Public Hearing

The MGA identifies the requirements for public notification of an upcoming hearing under Section 606. The public hearing must occur in front of Council and present the recommendation and rationale for the disposal of the municipal land.

Step 14: Council Decision

At the public hearing, Council must make its decision whether or not to dispose of the surplus land. Specifically, this will take the form of a decision such as:

- No Disposition at this time;
- Disposition in-principle pending the outcome of further study (or other case-appropriate resolution); or
- Disposition with required conditions (fee simple, lease, other...)

In terms of method of disposition:

- Disposition via direct sale; or
- Disposition with public sale options.

Many municipalities choose to develop a database of surplus municipal land that is made available to the public online.

Step 15: Sale and Proceeds

Sale of the land will occur through:

- Tender; or
- RFP (provides greater control over development)

As per the Province of Alberta's Municipal Government Act, funds raised through the sale of a municipal reserve must be used for any of all of the following purposes:

- A public park;
- A public recreation area;

- School board purposes; To separate areas of land used for different purposes. (67(2)).

Establishing Criteria for Assessment of the Appropriateness of Disposition

Establishing Criteria can be an important tool in determining the value of a municipal land asset and providing a transparent and accountable process as part of a disposition exercise. However, it is also the case that adherence to criteria that are either too strict or otherwise difficult to gauge with the necessary degree of accuracy, can be just as problematic as not having criteria. Criteria-based assessments are most valuable when they are simple, easy to understand, easy to complete, and are generally accepted as fair and representative by all involved.

For this reason, criteria themselves are less important than the process of decision-making that leads to a disposition of real property. The above procedural steps are therefore the most effective way to ensure that the municipality follows the requirements of legislation as well as open dialogue with the community before decisions are made to divest municipal reserves.

The criteria example found in the appendices on page 138 provides an illustration of the types of variables that can be measured on an objective basis prior to and following the necessary public consultation as part of a process to delist a site from the Municipal Reserve.

In our view, a preferred approach is for the County to use its discretion to establish criteria from time to time to help in its due diligence with respect to establishing the potential for disposition of municipal reserve lands. Those criteria can be expected to change over time and be customized to reflect the issues of significance for any given site under review. We do not recommend the adoption of these criteria as official policy, but rather the adoption of the process itself as outlined in this section. This is appropriate because criteria change and flexibility is required to amend the criteria as needed.

Criteria assessment is part of several steps laid out above including Steps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. The criteria assessment tool is comprised of the following elements:

- a) Screening criteria – the presence of an important ongoing function for the municipal reserve such as acting as a buffer between two opposing land uses would be sufficient to rule out the site for disposition. There are a number of such functions and/or site constraints that would effectively screen out a site. Where these are demonstrated to exist, this would, other things being equal, result in terminating the disposition assessment process;
- b) Assessment of the Functional Requirements of the Asset for its primary recreational purpose – a series of criteria which establish the extent to which the site is

an integral part of the open space and parks system; and

- c) Assuming that a site does not have a significant value as a recreational asset (in the view of not only the municipality but also user groups and the general public), a second series of criteria determine the value of the municipal reserve in alternative use. Only where there is a value of sufficient scale in the view of the municipality would the process lead to disposition.

Based on this framework, the overall balance of factors can dictate whether a site should be removed from the municipal reserve designation.

It should be noted that requests for disposition from private interests such as adjacent landowners would need to demonstrate why transfer of ownership is in the public interest. The criteria established to measure these applications are directly related to the public benefits of both retaining sites where they fulfill a key public function, and disposition where this results in a net long-term benefit to the municipality.

6.6 Future Recommendations

In addition to specific guidelines and capital recommendations discussed previously, The County should consider several ongoing challenges to the Open Space Plan and potential choices and directions that will aid in its implementation.

1. **Partnerships / Joint Use Agreements** – with other municipalities, school boards, the development industry, non-profit organizations and community / recreation associations
2. **Open Space Facility Evaluation** – build on the current maintenance plan to determine future facility upgrading and/or replacement recommendations.
3. **Existing Facility Database** – undertake a comprehensive inventory of all county and non-County open space facilities including; sport fields, day use facilities, servicing, site furniture, trails, etc.
4. **Open Space Plan Review** – undertake yearly reviews and updates of the Open Space Plan (see 6.2.1)
5. **Open Space Guidelines/Standards and Specifications** – undertake the development of County specific guidelines/standards for use by all those wishing to develop open space facilities.
6. **Open Space Planning Framework** – develop a set of guidelines used in determining best

management practices for the planning of open space

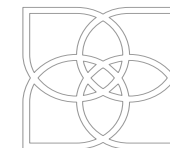
7. **Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw** – The County is currently developing and Public Lands Bylaw. Suggested policies that would relate to parks and open space which could be included in the Parks Bylaw to address parks and open space include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Roles and responsibilities of authorities;
- Hours;
- Signage requirements;
- Donations and recognition memorials;
- Acceptable patron conduct;
- Use of vehicles;
- Restrictions on animals;
- Restrictions on fires;
- Restrictions on camping;
- Use of water bodies;
- Litter;
- Powers of authorities; and
- Offenses and penalties.

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Glossary of Terms

active recreation	Includes formalizes sports leagues, and organized recreational activities such as baseball, soccer, tennis, etc.	hazard lands	Areas of land unsuitable for development in their natural state including flood plains, steep or unstable slopes, areas subject to erosion or other geotechnical limitations.
Conservation easement	An agreement between the landowner and a qualified private land conservation organization (land trust) or government to control the development, use and management of land for conservation purposes under specific conditions	historic resource	A building, work, relic, tree or place which has historic, scientific, cultural, social, architectural, archaeological, natural or aesthetic significance.
environmental reserve	Land dedicated (given) to a municipality during the subdivision process because it is considered unsuitable for development for environmental reasons in accordance with Section 664 of the Municipal Government Act. This may include, but not be limited to, areas such as wetlands, ravines, drainage courses, and steep slopes.	land trust	an agreement whereby a trustee agrees to hold ownership of a piece of real estate property for the benefit of another party (beneficiary)
environmentally significant area (ESA)	A natural area that is significant from an environmental perspective because of its size or features on the site. An ESA will usually contain a diverse blend of common species or habitat or function as a linkage between other significant natural areas or environmentally sensitive areas. ESAs can withstand various degrees of human use.	municipal reserve	Land provided as part of a subdivision by the developer without compensation for park or school purposes pursuant to Section 616 of the Municipal Government Act.
floodplain	The area of land bordering a watercourse or water body that would be inundated by a 1 in 100 year flood (i.e. a flood that has a 1% chance of occurring every year).	natural area	Includes landscapes, which are found in their natural state and may be remnant, undisturbed, diverse or contain unique environmental characteristics.
		open space	Open space includes both parks as well as landscapes that remain relatively undisturbed or not built upon.
		passive recreation	Includes informal non-competitive activities such as walking, cycling, picnicking, etc



EDA
Collaborative Inc.

7.2 Community Engagement Meeting Notes

STAKEHOLDER - MEETING NOTES #1

MR, Parks and Open Space Plan Update – Sturgeon County

EDA File: e15011

Date: October 5, 2015 Time: 2:30 – 4:30pm

Location: Cardiff Community Hall

In Attendance

Name	Organization
Bill Santrock	Morinville Rotary
Dan Stoker	Riverlot 56
Georges Binette	Riverlot 56
Mary Binette	Riverlot 56
Ray Soetaert	Community Services Advisory Board
Ron Shaver	Sturgeon Valley Parks and Recreation Society
John Dowler	Sturgeon Rural Crime Watch Association
Lisa Blair	Riverstone Pointe Home Owners Association
Gary Tardif	Riverstone Pointe Home Owners Association
Dale Soertaert	Calahoo
Colleen Prefontaine	Sturgeon Rural Crime Watch Association
Todd Hudec	Namao Ridge Recreation Society
Chad Perrott	West Sturgeon Agricultural Society
Terry Cashin	Sturgeon County, Special Projects Community Services
Ted Muller	EDA Collaborative Inc. (EDA)
Kristin Grimard	EDA Collaborative Inc. (EDA)

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Planning

Discussion Points

1. A site has been selected for a joint use recreation centre in Morinville. The centre is much needed. Adequate support should be provided by both the Town of Morinville and Sturgeon County.
2. An RV park is desired near the southern portion of Cardiff Park and could help boost the local economy,
3. Many people in Sturgeon Valley do not know about or utilize Cardiff Park. An awareness campaign would be helpful.
4. There are only a few disk golf courses in capital region. It would be great if Sturgeon County could develop one.
5. The land adjacent to the Sturgeon River should be developed as a recreational / trail corridor connecting residential development with Riverlot 56 and St. Albert. It is important that action be taken to acquire the necessary land to accommodate this, especially as

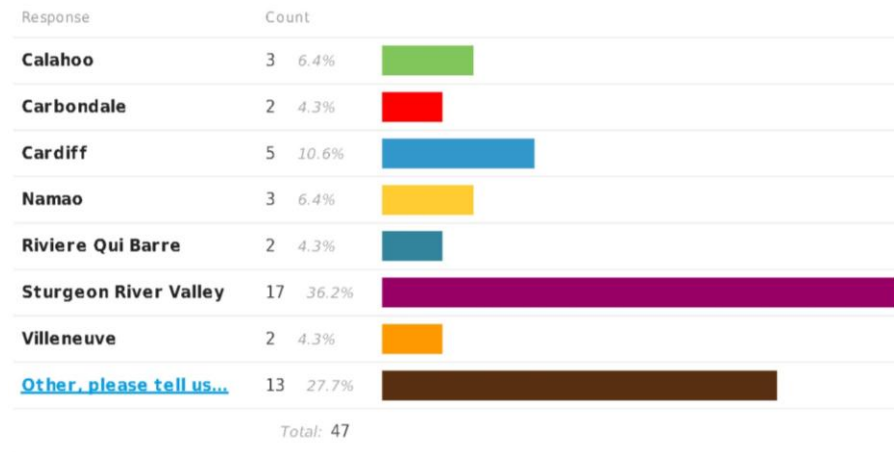
more development is expected in the area. Mountain bikes are not permitted in Riverlot 56, therefore a bike route would likely need to utilize the road right of way to make the connection. Difference in desired trail use may vary from area to area and should be considered.

6. Snow clearing/maintenance of trails is the number one complaint for many Riverstone Pointe residents.
7. Assistance with the snow clearing of the Namao Ridge parking lot is desired.
8. There is insufficient parking at Sturgeon Valley Park. The park is currently being used by many dog and anti-dog people. A designated dog area, naturalized area, playground and picnic area is likely desired.
9. There are several residential subdivisions around Namao Ridge but no playground.
10. Community groups that are spearheading initiatives to develop/operate recreational facilities within need more support from the County (financial, operational, maintenance, etc.).
11. River lot 56 would like assistance securing a grant for reforestation. In addition, littering is an issue and assistance is desired for refuse removal. Efforts to assist should be coordinated between St. Albert and Sturgeon County.
12. Sandy Lake is experiencing environmental degradation as the result of unauthorized off highway motor vehicle use. If the land were to be leased to a low impact community organization, there would be more stewardship of the land and hopefully less environmental impact. Similarly, it was thought that a legitimate location for off highway vehicle use in the area would result in less environmental impact at Sandy Lake.
13. There is general support for disposition of underutilized non-contributing open space as long as a thorough process is considered which considers potential for future use. As an alternative to disposition, long term leases (i.e. for farmers where appropriate) was suggested.

7.3 Survey Results

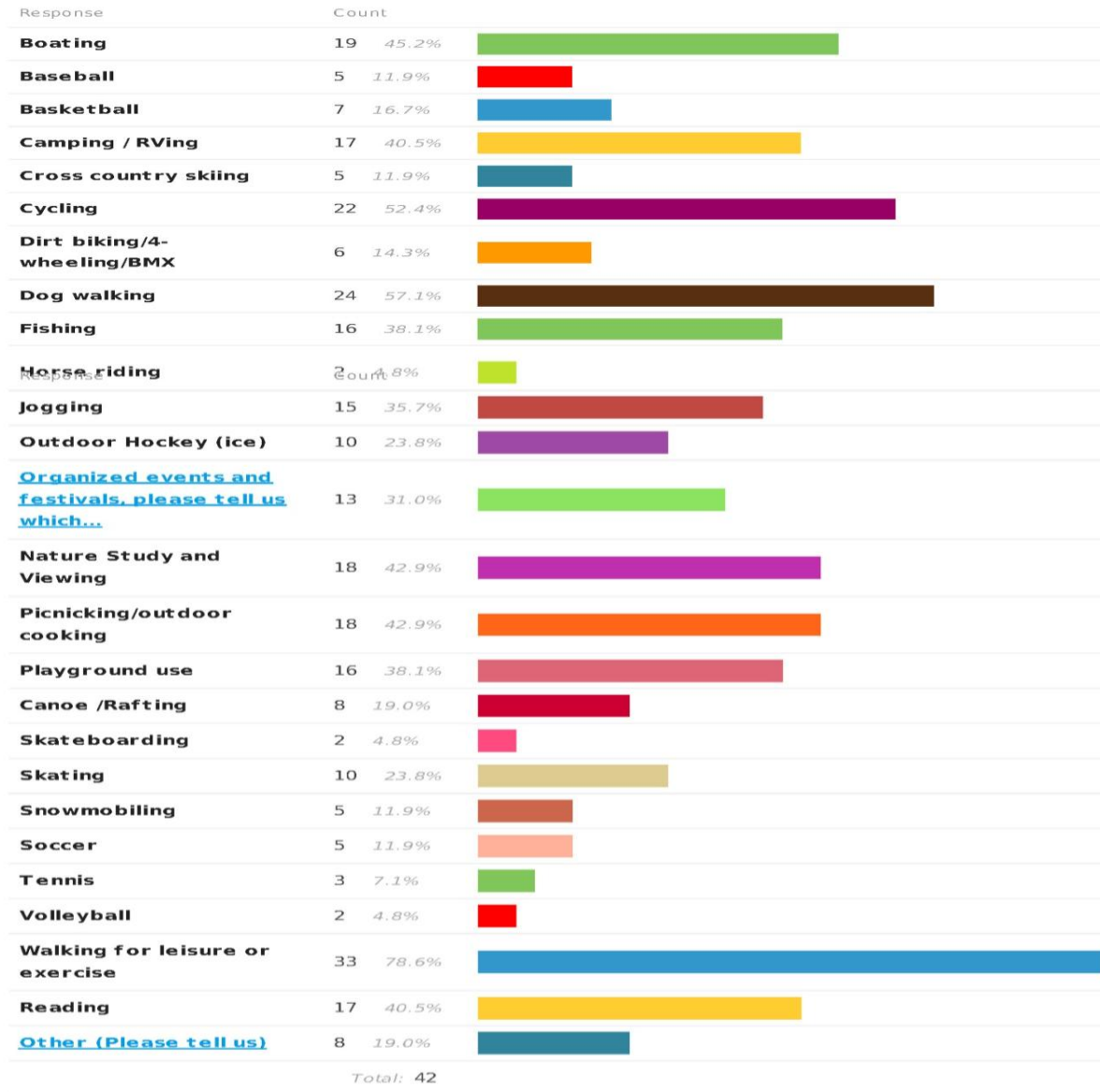
Parks and Open Space Plan Summary Report

To start, please tell us which community you live in, or are closest to:



- Gibbonslea
- Morinville
- Gibbonslea
- Bon accord
- Beaumont
- upper manor estates
- starky road
- Bon Accord
- coronado
- Riverlot 56
- St. Albert
- Bon Accord
- Rural subdivision near Gibbons

Over the last year, what outdoor recreation activities have you participated in?



Meditation

tobogganing

Skiing

Regularly picking garbage along local municipal roadways

Understanding that none of the aforementioned activities were available or occurred in Sturgeon Valley.

Even though we live in St. Albert, we make a lot of use of Riverlot 56 which is an open space in Sturgeon County.

Walking Trail in Gibbons

Gardening, snowshoeing

SJB, Canada Day, Soccer jamboree in Cardiff Park

Calahoo Days

Summer fun day at Namao, Summer Programming at Cardiff hall

various - mostly in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain (e.g. Canada Day)

County organized fun days ... Seniors conference ... Etc

Events in Edmonton

farmers market, cardiff culinary cookout,

Coronado Fun Day, Gibbons Pioneer Days, Bon Accord Harvest Days, Edmonton: Kaleido & Deep Freeze Festivals

Sturgeon County Bounty, Canada Day Festivities

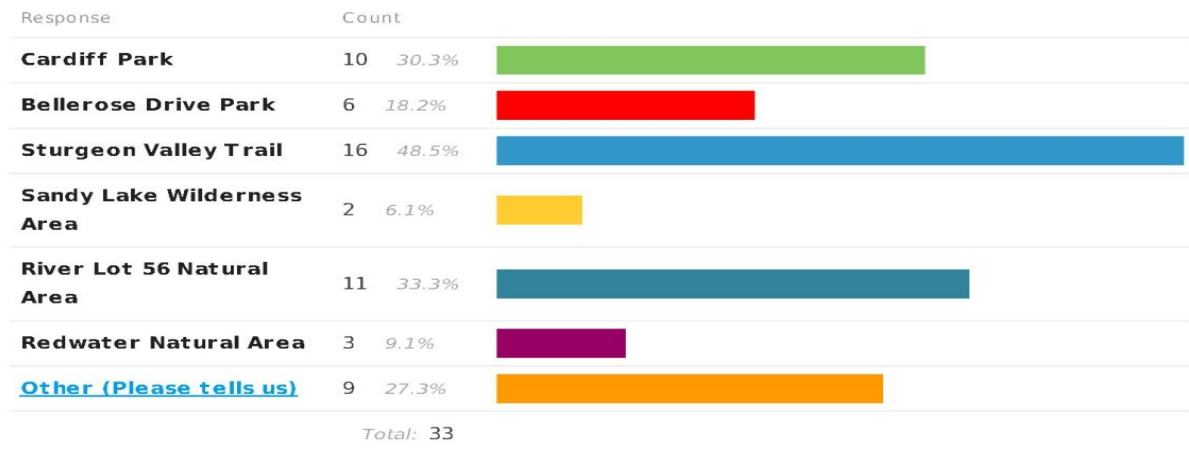
Family Fun Day

Outdoor mass at West Country Hearth. Volunteered at West Country Hearth Attack fundraiser

farm fair open days, community events hosted mornville

Bon Accord Harvest Days

[RecFacilitiesUsed] Over the last year, which outdoor recreation facilities, parks and trails have you used in Sturgeon County?



Trails south of Riverstone Pointe and Pinnacle Ridge
 range and township roads
 open space in manor phase 2
 Green space in North Point
 Morinville Fish & Game Pond, Rainbow Equitation Society (Westlock County), Echo Glen Park (Gibbons)
 Cameron Park environmental reserve
 Gibbons walking trail
 Fields and trails on private land in the vicinity of the subdivision and also near where my horses are boarded.



{loop:"Cardiff Park"} You indicated that you have used {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }}. What activities did you participate in at this location?

Response	Count
10 responses	
Soccer Jamboree w/Morinville Soccer Association	
We played soccer and at the park while having a picnic.	
Walking and biking along trails	
Walking the trails	
Fishing, picnic, walking and jogging	
culinary cookoff	
Walking	
Baseball	
Golf	
Playground	

{loop:"Cardiff Park"} FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?





Response	Count	Percentage	Bar
Excellent	2	20.0%	<div style="width: 20%; height: 15px; background-color: #76b82a;"></div>
Good	3	30.0%	<div style="width: 30%; height: 15px; background-color: #e74c3c;"></div>
Average	5	50.0%	<div style="width: 50%; height: 15px; background-color: #3498db;"></div>
<i>Total:</i>		10	



[(loop:"Cardiff Park") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

Response	Count
9 responses	
The parking facilities are poor. I did enjoy the wide open spaces and that there was a washroom for the kids to use.	
The Playground is old an outdated.	
None touristy, quiet, nature orientated ... Love this about the park. Close to nature and this beautiful park is close to where I live. Could use a trail to connect Cardiff to the park ... Would improve family safety in accessing.	
It is an average park, nothing extra special about it or nothing wrong with it	
Compared to other outdoor location - Edmonton and St Albert	
It is a nice park, It could be improved with sealed trash cans. Wasps were awful	
Average quality diamonds. Sometimes there is bathrooms available, sometimes not b	
no particular reason	
na	

[(loop:"Cardiff Park") howoftenused] How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?

Response	Count	
A few times a week	1 12.5%	
A few times a month	2 25.0%	
About once every 2-3 months	2 25.0%	
About once or twice a year, or less	3 37.5%	
<i>Total: 8</i>		

[(loop:"Cardiff Park") likebecause] I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

Response

Count

7 responses

It is close to home.

It is close to home, and is a beautiful open space.

Natural environment ... Not touristy ... Quiet which allows for nature viewing. Like trails to walk and bike along.
Like the little lake.

It's close to home, nice walk there

It is not used by many people

It is quiet and peaceful. Also there is much less dog poop than Bellerose Drive park

no particular reason

It is close to home.

It is close to home, and is a beautiful open space.

Natural environment ... Not touristy ... Quiet which allows for nature viewing. Like trails to walk and bike along.
Like the little lake.

It's close to home, nice walk there

It is not used by many people

It is quiet and peaceful. Also there is much less dog poop than Bellerose Drive park

no particular reason

Walking

walking, biking, skateboarding, dog walking

x

walking around, enjoying the view

Walking, photography

pic nic, walking, running, playing with pets

Went for walks with the dog.

Walking

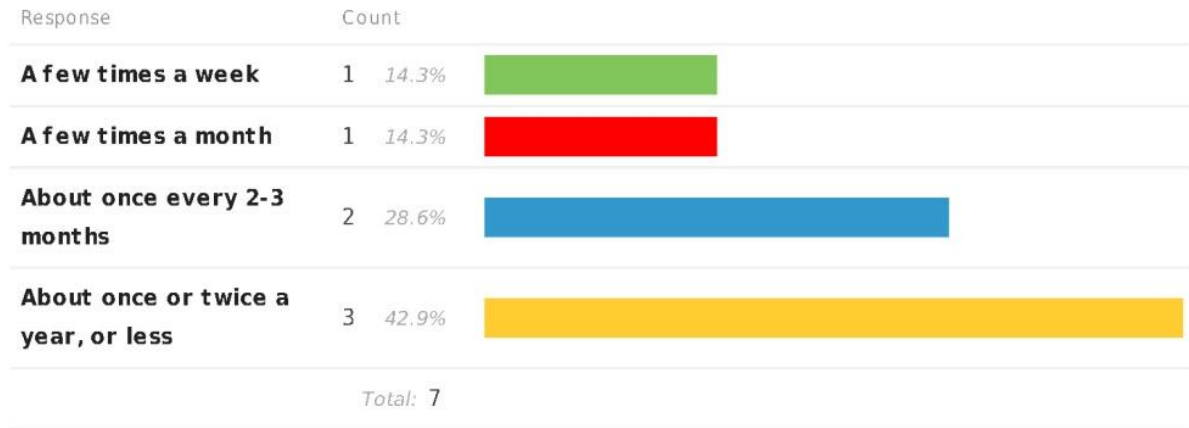
[[loop:"Bellerose Drive Park") FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?



[[loop:"Bellerose Drive Park") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

Response	Count
	7 responses
?	
it is easily accessable safe place to park	
it is pretty and has benches, wish you could snow mobile in the area	
Filthy with Dog feces. Also have had bad experiences (3) with large dogs off leash	
It also has the skating in the winter as well as fun for summer. The indoor shack is great to put on skates.	
Do not no why saskatoons, choke cherries, pin cherries,or high bush cranberries were not planted. They are native to this area. County sprayed for weeds. What a joke! Only the weeds should have been sprayed. Wild flowers and strawberries were killed. Do not mess it up. Leave it a wilderness area. Allow the grass to grow tall and allow a farmer cut it for hay in the second weekof August. This will provide a nesting site for small birds, ducks, and geese. They will be gone in the second week of August.	
Lack of development and maintenance	

How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?



I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

- | Response | Count |
|---|-------|
| 7 responses | |
| ? | |
| it is close to our house, but I would like it extended to meet with the St Albert trails | |
| it is close to my house and nice green space along the river | |
| I no longer go there. I have a small dog that is always leashed. 3 Bad encounters with off leash aggressive dogs was the tipping point | |
| It is very close in proximity to riverlot 56, it has very mature tree line, great walking trails. | |
| It is a wilderness area. I like to see the ducks, geese, and other birds in the spring, summer, and fall. I like seeing a coyote, fox, or deer in the wild. | |
| The trail system | |

[(loop:"Bellerose Drive Park") whattochange] What I'd like to change about {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} is:

Response	Count
	5 responses
<hr/>	
Definitely extend it to St Albert's trail so that we can safely walk, and bike into town. Especially important for families and school kids because Bellerose Drive is not safe to bike and walk alongside.	
<hr/>	
allow snow mowing	
<hr/>	
Designate it on leash for dogs. Encourage users to clean up after their animals. Enforce bylaws to do so	
<hr/>	
Preserve it as a wilderness area. Keep out all terrain vehicles and ski doos. Plant saskatoons, choke cherries, pin cherries, and high bush cranberries to attract song birds around the perimeter. Many children do not have contact with wilderness. It is important for children to come in contact with nature.	
<hr/>	
The trail system should be integrated with the the trail system behind the Allin Ridge subdivision. This would likely require a pedestrian bridge over the river.	
<hr/>	






(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") You indicated that you have used {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }}. What activities did you participate in at this location?

Response	Count
15 responses	
Cycling	
waking, dog walking, biking,	
Walking, walking dog, running, biking	
Cycling and walking	
walking and biking	
biking.	
Running, walking and bike riding	
walking and cycling; alone and with family including grandchildren	
walking	
Walking, jogging, reading	
Walking for exercise	
We did lots of walking , biking, dog walking...	
ATV, Hiking	
Biking	
walking and bike riding	



[(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?

Response	Count	
Excellent	2 13.3%	
Good	12 80.0%	
Average	1 6.7%	
<i>Total: 15</i>		

[(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

It is a beautiful trail

smooth and easy to use

Not sure this is the precise name of the trails I use by my neighbourhood of Riverstone Pointe, but I enjoy that they are close to nature and mostly kept up. I am dissappointed that it takes a LONG time to fix problems (e.g. sections torn up last year) or update things (e.g. garbage fixtures that have been lying on their sides, uninstalled, all this summer)

Good except it could be longer

Paved trail not touristy

it is nice along the river

There is lack of connection in critical areas - need connection from older subdivisions to new - especially across the river. The bridge across Starkey is very dangerous especially when you go with the kids. We will experience a fata accident on the bridge at one time. Traffic is very heavy and it is dangerous to ride. Also, there is still lack of connection with trails to St. Albert

The trail is very popular with dog walkers. While I'm not one of them, I certainly agree that it is an appropriate use of the trail. What I get frustrated with is when people use it as an off-leash area. If I walk in an off-leash area I expect to encounter dogs (jumping up, etc) however in an on-leash area like this I do not like or want to be "the police" and have to confront the folks who refuse to respect this bylaw. Dog feces on the trail is just disgusting.

Was a pleasant walk

The trail is nicely paved, however, the trail is choppy and doesnt connect well enough and should go longer to st. albert to connect into bellerose. Plus, it would be great to have the system extend east past Riverstone over through the other developments. (maybe another bridge to connect into allin ridge, noroncol etc.

On to highway

Trail system is good but should be expanded and tied into the area behind the Allin Ridge subdivision.

[(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") howoftenused] How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?



[(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") likebecause] I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

Response	Count
11 responses	
The scenery is beautiful and it is close to home. My children love to sit by the river and watch birds.	
close to our neighbourhood, smooth and easy to use	
Nature, beautiful views	
Close to home	
trying to keep natural ... Paved so easier for elderly to use	
it is outside and treed and green space	
I do not have a y other options right now, so use what we have, but still go to St Alberta and/or Edmonton to experience much better and longer trails	
It follows the river, has benches to stop and enjoy the birds or watch the kids play. It's now connected to our neighbourhood - Banks of Sturgeon.	
convenient location	
It is beautiful, lots of trees, great place to walk dogs and run. It is the only area to do this without vehicle traffic in the county.	
Nice for walking and bike riding	

[(loop:"Sturgeon Valley Trail") whattochange] What I'd like to change about {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} is:

I would like the trail to be longer, and have it connect with a St.Albert trail. This would make the potential for commuting to work by cycling way more enticing.

Definitely have it connect to St Albert's trail system so that we can easily and safely walk, bike, run to town and back

Maintenance is slow , delayed

Longer and a river crossing closer to The Crossing at Rivers Edge subdivision

Nothing

i hate the new development along the trail. Should have not aloud rivers gate to build

As outlined before: safer river crossing around Starkey road and connection to St. Albert.

It would be great to see it connected to St. Albert.

nothing

I would love to have the sturgeon valley trail extend out west on bellerose all the way to st. albert so people can bike in all the way. I would also like to see it go over the starkey road bridge and out as a foot path on sturgeon road all the way in to Riverlot 56 and kingswood park.

I would like to see more trash cans so people would be able to dump their dog poop and pic nic garbage (more incentive to pick it up)

I would also like to see a childrens park placed there somewhere as I am unaware of any parks in the area other than in pinnacle ridge

Needs to be expanded and tied into the Allin Ridge trail system

[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area")] You indicated that you have used {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }}. What activities did you participate in at this location?

No data available to display

[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area") FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?

No data available to display

[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

No data available to display

[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area") howoftenused] How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?

No data available to display

[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area") likebecause] I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

No data available to display

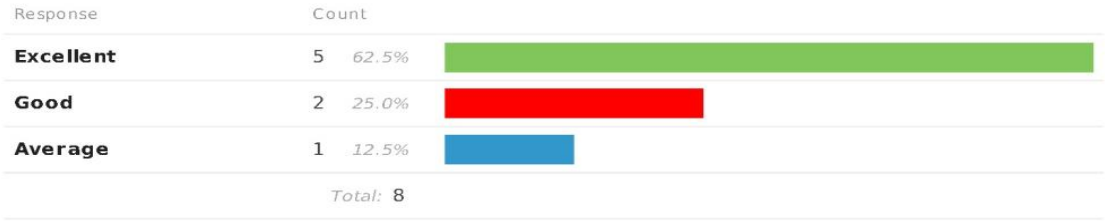
[(loop:"Sandy Lake Wilderness Area") whattochange] What I'd like to change about {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} is:

No data available to display

{(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area")} You indicated that you have used {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }}. What activities did you participate in at this location?

- hiked
- walking around
- Walking
- walking
- I walk in winter and summer. Explore with kids
- Cross-country skiing, bird watching, hiking, nature enjoyment.
- Cross Country Skiing.
- walking

{(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area")} FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?



{(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area")} RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

- hiked
- walking around
- Walking
- walking
- I walk in winter and summer. Explore with kids
- Cross-country skiing, bird watching, hiking, nature enjoyment.
- Cross Country Skiing.
- walking



[(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area") FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?



[(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

- it is a beautiful area

- lots of garbage along the roads

- It is natural

- no particular reason

- its beautiful and untouched mostly other than the path.

- The cross-country skiing is superbly run by the STANSKI club with excellent trails for various levels of interest. The walking trails are an excellent way to get into nature and to do bird watching. The wildlife viewing opportunities include moose, deer, rabbit, coyote, porcupine and various birds including great horned owl in winter.

- Mostly untouched. Wilderness area close to home. Tracks are groomed for cross country skiing.

- Nice natural area for walking

[(loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area") howoftenued] How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?



[[loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area") likebecause] I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

it is a beautiful natural area

green space close to my house

It is quite and natural

no particular reason

its a natural wild setting.....no development there.

It is a large natural area that is in the midst of urban growth but is being preserved and restored (re-naturalized) for the long term. It is reasonably close to where we live in St. Albert. It is well-treed for much of the area but has a variety of environments with even some access to the Sturgeon River. It provides great trails for use both in the winter and summer-.

Wilderness close to home. Not messed up by us.

natural

[[loop:"River Lot 56 Natural Area") whattochange] What I'd like to change about {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} is:

Response

Count

8 responses

Nothing, I like it the way it is.

less garbage no construction

Nothing

nothing - leave as is.

Nothing. It is great the way it is.

Dogs should be kept on leash.

A clean and well maintained rest room next to the parking lot.

nothing

[(loop:"Other, please tell us...")] You indicated that you have used {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }}. What

activities did you participate in at this location?

Response	Count
1 responses	

Quadding

[(loop:"Other, please tell us...") FacilityRating] How would you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} in terms of your experience?

Response	Count
Good	1 100.0%
<i>Total: 1</i>	



[(loop:"Other, please tell us...") RatingWhy] Why did you rate {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} this way?

Response	Count
1 responses	

No issues

[(loop:"Other, please tell us...") howoftenused] How often do you and/or use {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} ?

Response	Count
About once or twice a year, or less	1 100.0%
<i>Total: 1</i>	



[(loop:"Other, please tell us...") likebecause] I like {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} because:

Response	Count
1 responses	

Good area for ridding

[(loop:"Other, please tell us...") whattochange] What I'd like to change about {{ RecFacilitiesUsed }} is:

Response	Count
	1 responses
Better controls	

Do you travel to other communities to use outdoor recreation facilities?

Response	Count
Yes	26 83.9%
No	5 16.1%
<i>Total: 31</i>	

To which communities do you travel to use outdoor recreational facilities?

For which outdoor recreation facilities/parks and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County?

- For which outdoor parks, open space and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County? |** 25 responses
- For which outdoor parks, open space and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County? |** 21 responses
- For which outdoor parks, open space and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County? |** 10 responses
- For which outdoor parks, open space and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County? |** 5 responses
- For which outdoor parks, open space and trails do you travel outside of Sturgeon County? |** 3 responses

Discovery Canyon Red Deer

Holmes Crossing Recreation Area county of Barrhead (in the fall because the colours are really beautiful there.)

Various other parks in Banff, Waterton, Kananaskis, etc. for camping, skiing, biking, bird watching, hiking.

Spray Parks, everywhere!!!!

Thorhild County Long Lake Provincial Park

park on erin ridge drive

National Parks (Banff, Jasper, etc.)

Spruce Grove has a park for Disc Golf.

Edmonton river valley

Lake Wabumun

Muir Lake

Jasper & Banff Hiking

River valley in St Albert

Westlock County Rainbow Equitation Society

bellerose drive park as you come into st. albert

North Saskatchewan River

St. Albert Red Willow Trail System

Spruce Grove for hiking, bird watching.



Lessard

Gibbons trails

Red willow trail in st.albert

Oakmont Park

Edmonton river valley

Edmonton Garrison trails

Chickakoo Provincial Park

Stony Plain Heritage Park

St. Albert River trail system

Brentwood outdoor rink (Sherwood Park)

River trail in Edmonton

St. Albert - Spray Park

Parkland County Chickakoo Lake

Big Lake, St Albert

morinville

woodlands park

St. Albert trail system

St. Albert Red Willow Trail System

North Saskatchewan River Valley

Rundle Park in Edmonton to play Disc Golf.

Red Willow skating rink

St. Albert parks and trail system

St. Albert water park

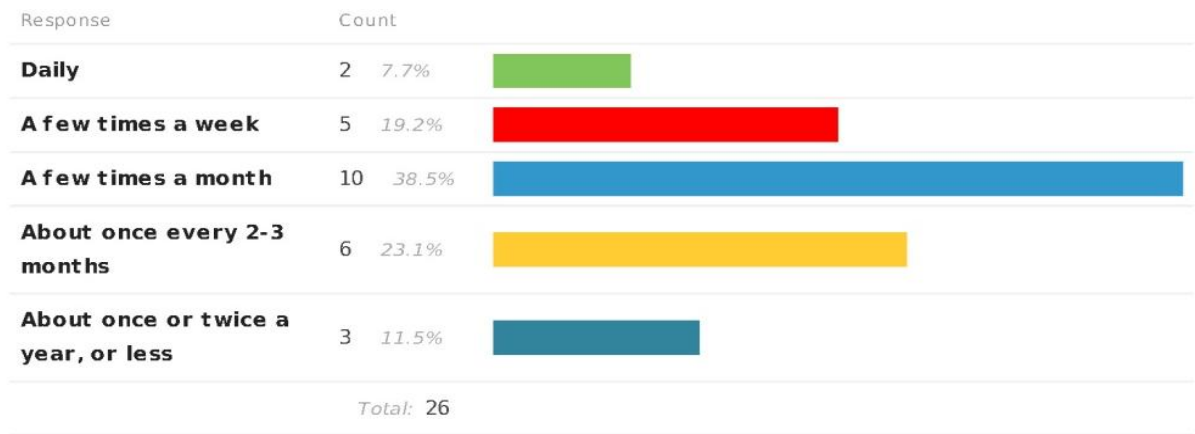
St Albert walking trails

Elk Island has beautiful Trails for hiking

Red Willow Trail System in St Albert, AB
St. Albert
Red Willow trails in St. Albert
Various playgrounds/parks in Spruce Grove, Stoney Plain
St. Albert spray park
Edmonton River Valley
Haweraluk Park
Rundle Park
Number in St Albert
St. Albert - Botanical Gardens
Edmonton River Valley
Red Willow, St Albert
st. albert
st albert spray park
Fort Saskatchewan
National parks
Edmonton River Valley Trail System
Edmonton Trail System
Edmonton parks for hiking, bird watching and some biking.
Occasional use of trails elsewhere, but for convenience and regular use I would prefer to have access to options within the county.
Red Willow trail system

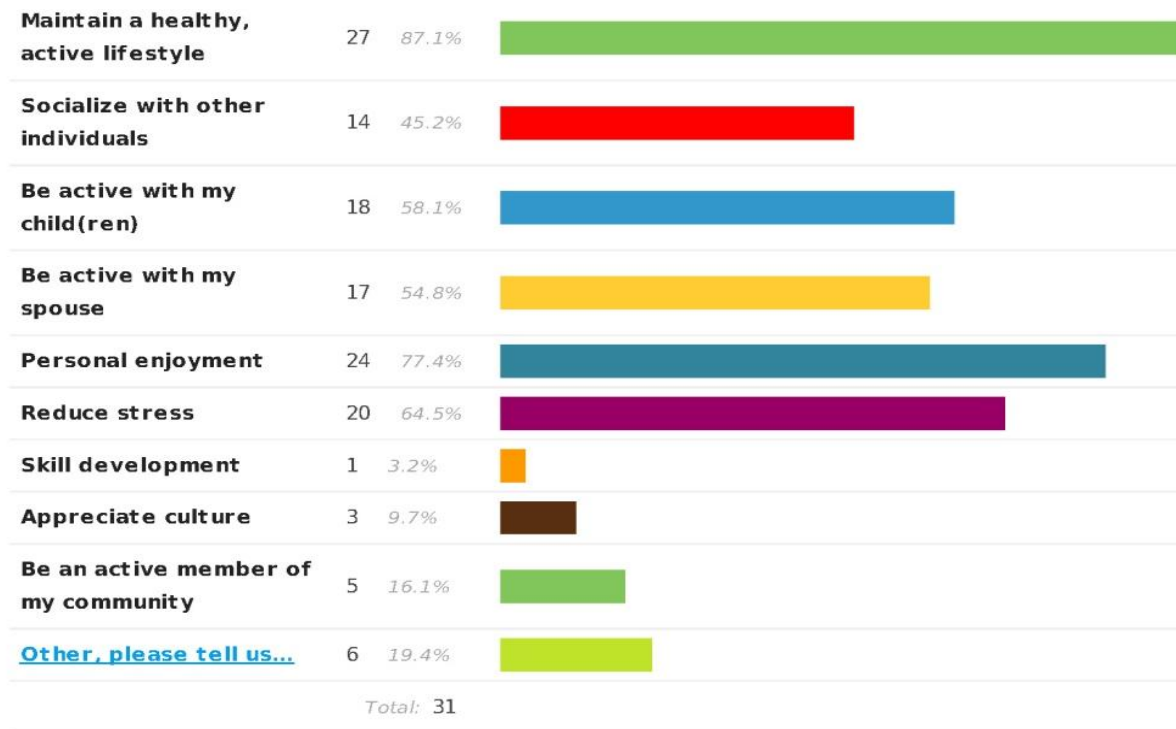


How often do you travel outside of Sturgeon County to use outdoor recreation facilities, park and trails?



Why do you travel outside of Sturgeon County to use these facilities?

What motivates your use of outdoor recreation facilities, parks and trails?



Enjoy nature ... Peace and quiet

To learn about and experience nature: identify plants and trees, catch a glimpse of wildlife.

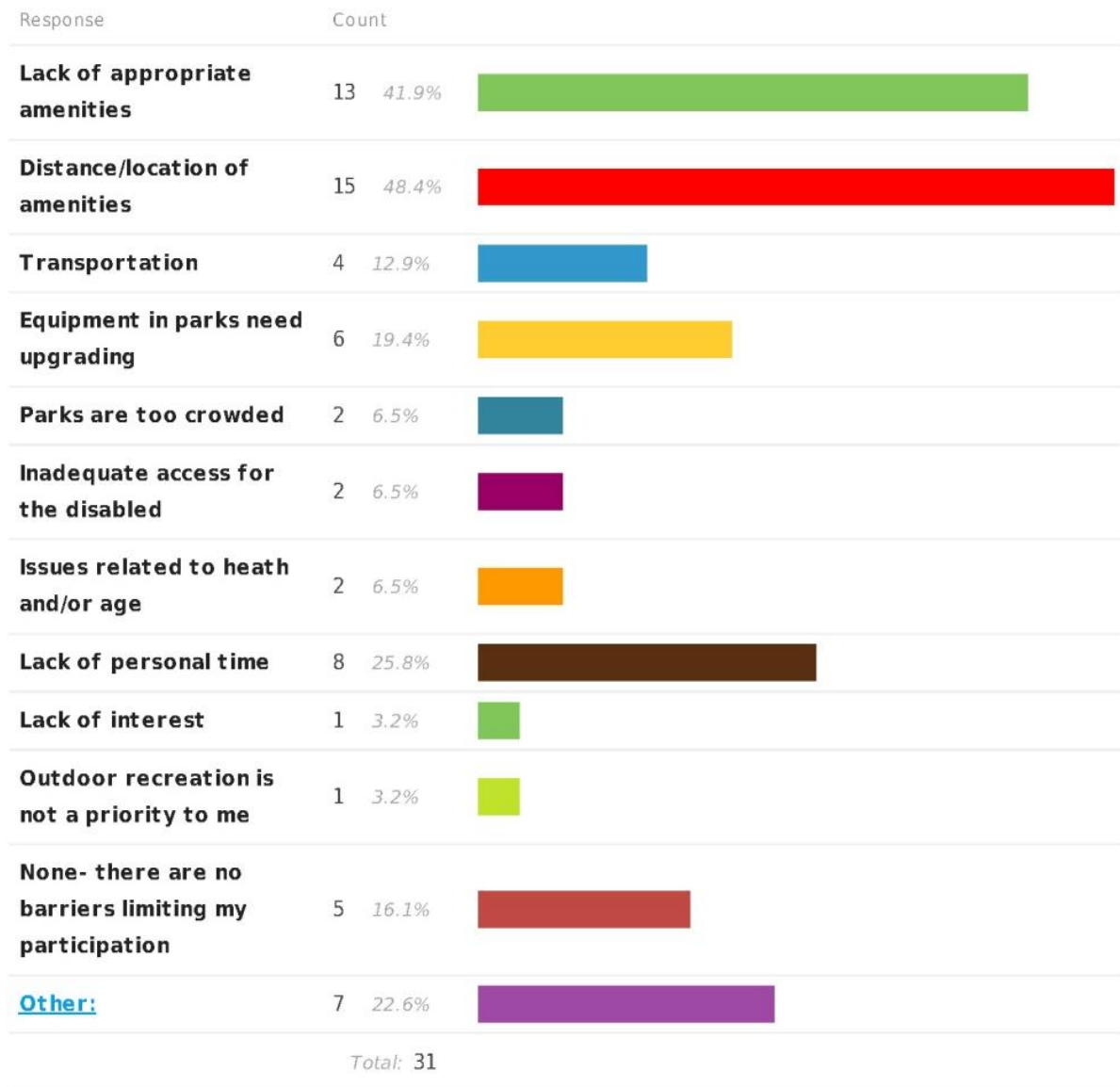
Be active with my grandchildren

Garbage pickup: Pick up the mess created by others since its obvious that nobody else will (including the County employees).

I also enjoy golfing at the Spring Creek golf course.

Especially important as one ages to maintain a very active lifestyle. Riding and dog walking are part of my personal fitness plan, which has other components as well. Also, I have a commitment to my animals to do things with them for their own enjoyment and help maintain their own fitness.

Are there any barriers limiting your use in outdoor recreation facilities, parks and trails?



lack of trail connection to St Albert Trail System

Honestly, I feel like I haven't made the effort to get to know about them. I guess I've associated a lot of the areas with ATV or BMX use. If I know that I can go to a place and have a fairly quiet walk or bike ride and actually experience nature, then I will definitely make the effort to go.

Off leash dogs

The trail system in the Sturgeon Valley is fragmented, within itself, and from St. Albert's Red Willow Trail System. This isn't news to anybody at the County, but from someone who has active children, the fragmented serves not only as a impediment to amenity use, but more importantly, presents a dangerous condition for anyone access travelling on either Bellerose Dr or Sturgeon Road. Connecting the existing trails to the St. Albert system should be the County's #1 priority, at least in the Sturgeon Valley. Doing so requires changing how the County does business & engaging directly, respectfully & fairly with the impacted stakeholders (namely the large holdings owners whose lands the trails cross). Such interconnecting trails do not need to be optimally located, nor front the river - they simply must connect the existing system, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. In our local area, that means travelling along the existing ATCO utility right-of-way between St. Albert and Sturgeon Park. (We've said this for years, and it is not rocket science). Its safe to say that the vast majority (if not all) Sturgeon Valley residents use City of St. Albert recreational services on a route basis. The least the County can do is be proactive, and work WITH landowners to complete a safe, simple & cost-effective trail system along what once was referred to as the 'Scenic Drive Route', from the City boundary, along Sturgeon Road, across Starkey Bridge, then back along Bellerose Drive.

Sturgeon Valley has zero amenities, other than a development-driven, disjointed trail system that is not interconnected to the regional trail systems. The first priority of any open space plan should not be committed to sole to completing the quickest and most cost-effective 'scenic route' trail system (loop connecting Sturgeon Road, Starkey Road, Bellerose Drive) to the St. Albert Trail system. This does not mean waiting for developers to dedicate trails, but for the municipality to be proactive and work in a respectful and cooperative manner with those landowners where trails along Bellerose, Sturgeon and Starkey may cross. While doing nothing may be preferable to some residents preoccupied merely by their own municipal tax rate, the product is that there is virtually zero sense of community in the Sturgeon Valley, nor will there ever be until the investment is made. Simply utilizing those services of our municipal neighbours such as City of St. Albert (and to a lesser extent, City of Edmonton), is not a solution.

We also went to Jurassic Park. The facilities and trails were excellent, but my wife is in a wheelchair and parking lot not good.

Fences can make it difficult to access lands. I have no idea where some of the spaces mentioned earlier in the survey are located, or maps for those either. When I ride, I want my dogs to go along, so I do not usually take my horses to places where my dogs are unwelcome.

Do you think your community needs any additional outdoor recreation facilities, parks and trails?

What's missing for you in terms of the range of outdoor opportunities?

Response	Count
	26 responses
I have 3 kids - one is a young toddler, one is pre-school aged, one is elementary aged. I wish there was a large park area (that's still all together in one big location) that have park amenities that would interest all three of my kids.	
Safety. Noise. Frequently encounter intoxicated individuals.	
In Sturgeon County there is a lack of fun engaging space that can hold my children s attention. We often plan day trips outside of Sturgeon County to find these areas where my children will play for hours without getting bored.	
I find that sturgeon county has the basics for outdoor play. But could use some creativity to create a play space that has people wanting to come back.	
The trail system does not connect to St Albert There is no park/playground for kids in the Valley area near Summerbrook, Upper Manor, The Banks, etc.	
Washrooms and / or water fountains limit my stay at parks, trails without these facilities.	
None	
There ain't much in Calahoo if you don't play softball or hockey - one decrepit piece of playground equipment behind a church. Also lack of sanitation/water at park area.	
Very little outdoor opportunities within Sturgeon County in the area I live.	
we can't use the park in manor phase 2 to it full ability	
nothing	
Free 24/7 access to maintained space close to home that includes a shelter in case of inclement weather	
have already answered.	
1) There is no playground in or adjacent to our community - Banks of Sturgeon. 2) Our house is not located near the Sturgeon Valley Pathway - so we have to ride/walk on the road to get to it; that's ok if people didn't exceed the 40 kph speed limit. It's frightening to have very young children (who are often just learning to ride their bike) out on the road when people speed through. Perhaps on those streets that provide access	

30 of 40

ride their bike) out on the road when people speed through. Perhaps on those streets that provide access to the trail - a marked walking/cycling lane might work. I wish people would remember that we "drive on our sidewalk" and need to slow down.

A group! Or programming! Sometimes getting INTRODUCED to a place means that you'll return to it. If I was to head off to the Redwater area right now, I'd feel a bit insecure. I'm not exactly sure where to go, where to park. Are there bathrooms or picnic tables? Am I going to get run over on a trail by a quad? BUT if I saw that there was a group meeting there on a summer evening or a Sunday afternoon for a quick introduction to the park, or a one-hour walk, or for a short plant or tree or mushroom or weed identification session, then I would go. And once I had been there for sure I would return. Also forgot to mention: I LOVE Lac Ste. Anne County's George Pegg Botanic Garden. I try to get there once a year or more. I think that there's real potential to tie in open spaces and gardening and nature along with adult learning, family fun, etc.

nothing

diversity

There is nothing missing. With my age & lifestyle it is not a priority.

We need a large park for kids in Sturgeon Valley or at least a few smaller ones. I am only aware of the one park in Pinnacle, and it would be nice to have a few smaller ones spattered throughout the area. Pie in the sky would be to have a splash park!!

none

There has been a reserve space in Carbondale for a very long time that has never been developed in any way, shape or form. It is currently being used as temporary parking and storage for some local residents. There are lots of young children in the area that could benefit from a simple playground, basketball net and small pad, skateboard area, etc. rather than the current waste of space.

(First off, asking for an intelligent review would be more helpful if the existing Open Space report was made convenient for review . . .).

As said on an earlier response, the vast majority of Sturgeon Valley residents rely solely on driving to adjacent communities (largely St. Albert) for virtually all of their recreation and social needs. While that may have worked 20 years ago, it is not sustainable nor does it meet expectations for the future, should the Valley collectively decide that it wishes to be a community, rather than what is has been - an area of homes scattered across a geographic area. (Furthermore, a semi-public clubhouse hidden in Pinnacle Ridge is not a community centre . . .)

As for specifics, priority one is connecting the existing trail system with the City of St. Albert, and to a lesser extent, the City of Edmonton and Garrison. Trail connections should ignore the 'optimum' trail placement along the River, which will only be development driven (which has been delayed for at least a decade by lack of a current Area Structure Plan) and should instead be implemented along the major roadways (cheapest and fastest) in cooperation with the existing large holding landowners, in a respectful and

cooperative fashion. Sturgeon might be surprised what can be accomplished if landowners are treated with respect and courtesy. Yet, nobody is holding their breath; a landowner-driven initiative earlier this year to link Sturgeon Park to the City of St. Albert has been all but ignored and given zero support, despite the need and urgency for a safe means of linkage between the existing trail systems.

The Open Spaces update should be dovetailed with any future infrastructure plans, but only those plans that are completed with full consultation with the development industry (unlike the newly released Urban Systems report which has fundamental errors in it). For example, new roadways or stormwater drainage infrastructure should incorporate trail systems, etc.

Disc Golf is a very neat and involving activity that is growing to some degree in many communities, Calgary being the best example. Edmonton only has one course but Spruce Grove has set one up (9 hole). St. Albert should have one but doesn't. Edmonton should have more than just the one at Rundle (18 hole). Pickleball is also a great outdoor sport which is growing with older people (especially the retired). St. Albert now has outdoor courts behind Bertha Kennedy Elementary. Spruce Grove has good outdoor courts. Edmonton has many outdoor court facilities. Are there courts in Sturgeon anywhere? Pickleball is growing fast. It is taking over from tennis in southern U.S. especially in winter months. Snowbirds are bringing the game back to Canada for our summers.

nothing

Young age, ambition, cost of transportation. We used to catch the bus to go swimming at Fort Saskatchewan. You have changed the rules now and will not pick us up in Bon Accord unless we have 4 people going. You need to make it easier for seniors to have transportation, not more difficult.

See comments above. Neither the development of subdivisions nor the maintenance of country roads are done to provide the kinds of opportunities I need. Note that I spend a great deal of money locally, especially for horse-related activities, but there is no return in terms of county facilities.

Better developed trail system that is maintained properly. For example, the trails behind the Allin Ridge subdivision are not maintained and are over grown. These trails should be maintained and tied into the trails on the other side of the river.

What are your top three priorities for new outdoor recreation facilities, parks or trails in Sturgeon County?

Variable	Count
Top Priority	29 responses
Second Priority	23 responses
Third Priority	21 responses

Good fields that are not full of gopher holes

A place where we could enjoy multiple activities in the same area

Join Trail system to St Albert's Red Willow System along Bellerose

Washrooms (within reason)

Local festivals

Close to Villeneuve

Open green spaces should not be encroached upon by private residences backing onto green spaces

parks for kids

variety

Infrastructure for activities such as skating

No trails on the south side of Sturgeon river - we had plenty of opportunities to put them in place when some of the road work was done last year.

Solar powered pedestrian activated lights where the path crosses Starkey Road and Bellerose Drive.

A tie in with gardening maybe? There's so much energy around gardening right now (think--community gardens in Gibbons and Morinville). Not sure if we could get county residents excited in the same way. but it could be cool.

Parking

No comment

put more garbage bins along the trails please!

Add paddling water feature/skating area in Sturgeon Park

Forest Trails and Natural Areas

clean and maintained wash rooms next to the parking lot

Water conservation for rivers, lakes and ponds.

I am not at all interested in public parks used by many people. We live in the country and should be able to take advantage of that.

Things for younger kids to do

Access to areas friendly to those with limited mobility.

A area where my children will be excited to go to daily

Join Trail system to St Albert's Red Willow System along Bellerose

Water fountains (within reason)

Trails for hiking

Protected open space for biking, running and walking

Keep parks natural ... Close to nature and not to commercialism

snow mowing areas

Easy access

Amenities such as drinking water and shelter

Connection of trails to St Albert

Extend the trail to connect with St. Albert

Fun for kids. I have a ten year old son. I want him to experience being outside, to learn, as well as have fun with other kids.

Cleanliness

No cost to taxpayers

Build some parks for kids!!

Seek input from Local residents before developing local reserves.

Connect fragment trails from Starkey to RL56/ City of St. Albert (suggest giving RL56 to St. Albert so it can maintain and fund it)

Disc Golf

cleanliness

Better access to bus transportation. If two people are going from each community, pick them up, change the rules back to the way they were.

Connect the trails that already exist and provide good information about them (e.g., maps, haul-in locations).

Clean, sanitary washrooms

Outdoor pool

Safety to relax and enjoy. Not excessive supervision; would defeat the purpose.

A family friendly play space, where we could spend our days and get to know our neighbors

Join Trail system to St Albert's Red Willow System along Bellerose

Garbage cans

More trails (or longer)

More local playgrounds for families

No further ridiculous increase in taxes to support this new development

More interconnecting trails

outdoor rinks

Maintained

Easy access

Safer crossing to connect south and North Sturgeon Valley - current crossing on Starkey very dangerous for those riding bikes, walking or running.

Playground in the neighbourhood of Summerbrook/Banks of Sturgeon area (easy walking/cycling distance) - not in the trail area by the river.

A master naturalist program where we learn about the wildlife and plants in these spaces and then we become ambassadors for them.

Safety

access to unique areas

Something to suit everyone

Extend and connect the existing sturgeon valley river trail system into st. albert and east to the rest of the sturgeon developments.

Keeping things natural

leave all as is

Utilize currently unused or underutilized spaces.

Concept built from Sturgeon Park to City of St. Albert along Bellerose Drive (St. Alb. M.U. 2015-2016) 25 of 40

Connect trails from Sturgeon Park to City of St. Albert along Bellerose Drive (along the NUL rightway)

Pickleball

wilderness

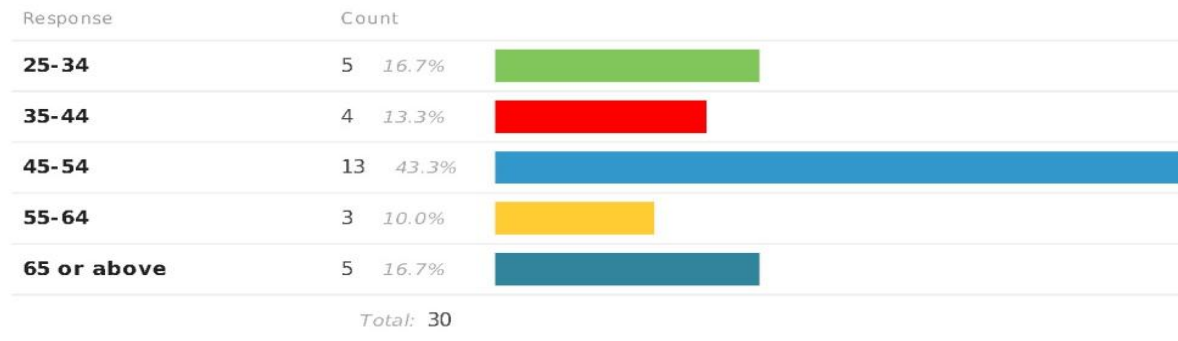
Longer trails along the Sturgeon River.

Regrading county roads for multi-use activities (for me, walking and horse-back riding).

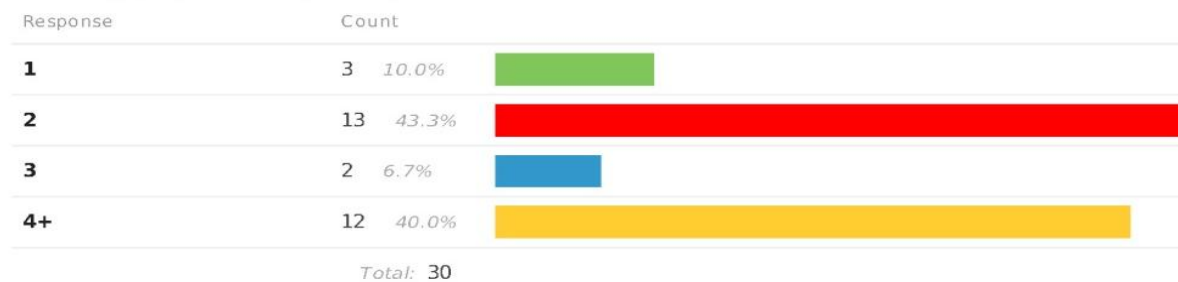
Expand and maintain trail system

What are your top three priorities for new outdoor recreation programs or services in Sturgeon County?

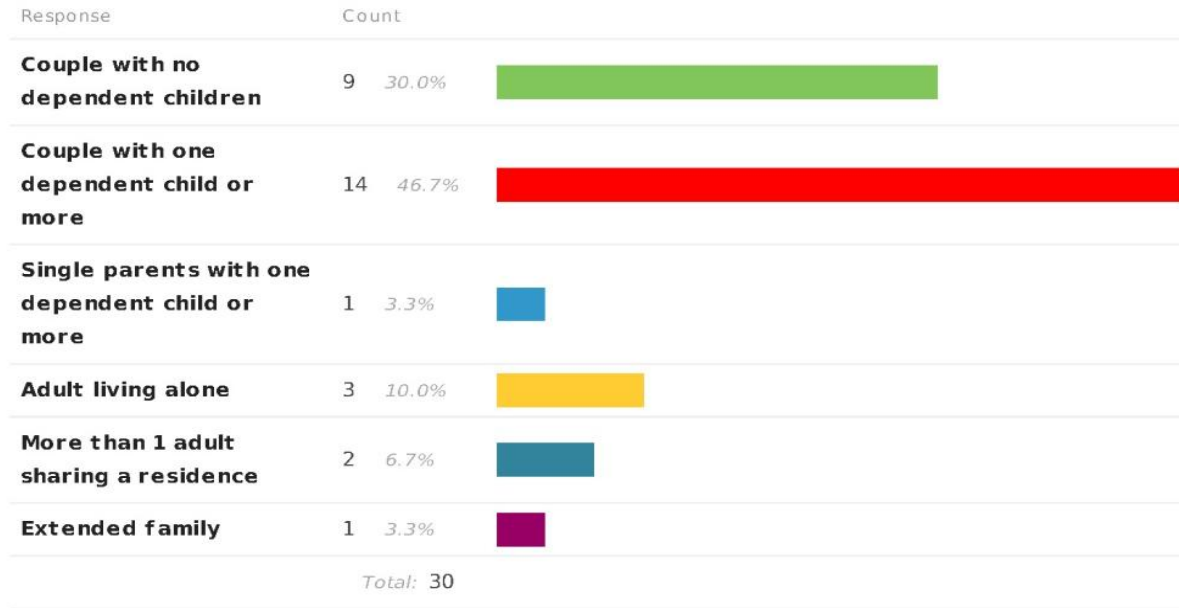
Our goal is to provide recommendations that reflect the diverse needs of the residents of Sturgeon County. To help us do this, before you go - please tell us a bit about yourself?



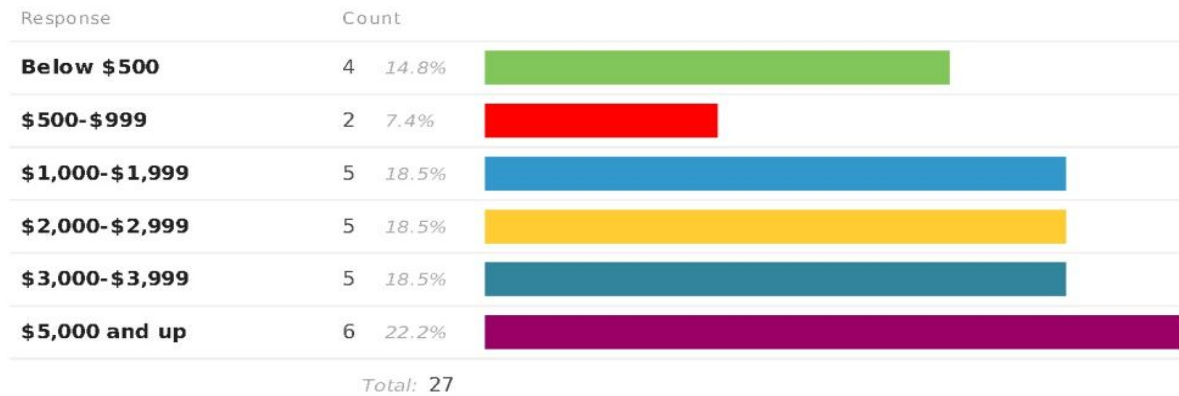
How many people currently live in your household?



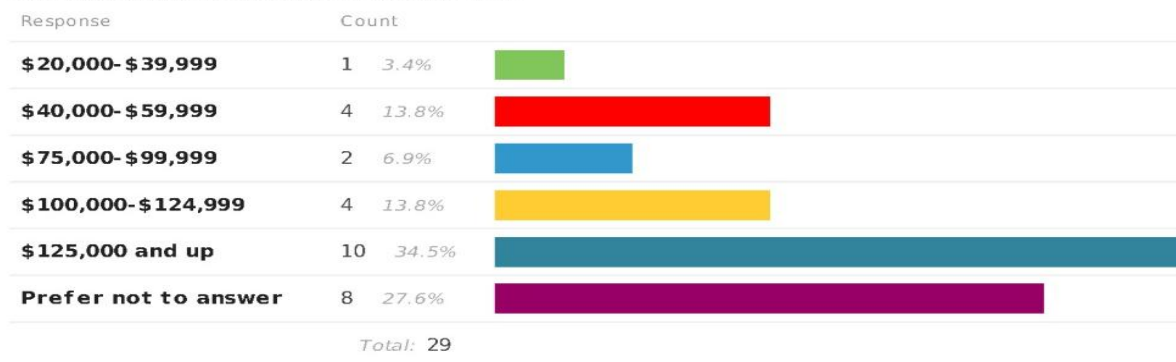
Which description best fits your household?



How much do you spend on leisure (excluding vacations) annually as a household?



What is your approximate household income?



Do you have any additional comments to make concerning the future planning of Parks and Open Space in the County?

Response	Count
	21 responses

Pl know this falls under public works but if you could tie this into your parks/open spaces plan it would be great: please do not spray for dandelions in the parks. Kids play there and how are we to know if chemicals have recently been sprayed. Dandelions are not a noxious weed, they do not need to be sprayed.

Need better utilization of reserve areas of developments.

Change and improved acessability would be nice. But I've lived here long enough to know better than to expect actual action to take place. Enjoy your plans and committees, I'll keep going to St. Albert and Edmonton.

Absolutely necessary to join the trail system with St Albert's Red willow system. Sturgeon County has a fantastic start to this, please continue on and join it as quickly as possible.

Although I LOVE the trails by my neighbourhood, I don't see them being used much, so as a taxpayer, I can't see putting too much more money into them in this area (except garbage cans)

This is all nice to talk about. I cannot stress enough how this activity must not result in any net tax increase. That would be disappointing.

Keep parks and open spaces as close to nature as possible ... That is what we need to connect with.

stop allowing residential communities to develop. we do not need anymore houses taking up green space.

the million dollar houses aren't selling and we don;t need anymore fill the ones we already have so we can have increased green space.

I think in some ways this is our 3rd or 4th survey around the same issues and I am doubtful anything will happen. Previous one was on the development of park, trails and no progress other than in the newest subdivisions

Shared spaces like this require bylaws (e.g. speed limit, off-leash dogs) and I do not think it's appropriate for users to be the main "enforcers" (i.e. it's up to us to make a complaint to see any action). Monitoring needs to be ongoing - not sure how but it needs to happen or a portion of the population will just stop using the trails/roads - which sadly defeats their whole purpose of keeping us active in a shared public space.

I'm excited to hear about where it goes! Sorry, I screwed up the questionnaire by referring to non-county open spaces in the first questions.

A community garden in the Valley would be a very nice addition

there is a severe lack of appreciate for open space planning in Sturgeon County.

Not at this time

We would like to keep the valley as beautiful as possible. People move to the "country" to enjoy the peace and harmony with nature so by having a beautiful river valley to walk would be huge. (like edmonton's) As well, to have some parks for kids and parents to meet up rather than going to st albert would be a huge plus. thank you for taking my input.

We do not want to encourage more traffic in the Valley area. Increased traffic brings crime

Suggest funding cleanups in the Valley along the 'Scenic Drive' at least once (if not twice) a year. Currently, most cleanup is done by 2 or 3 individuals who are increasingly unable to do so, and are increasingly fed up with the shenanigans experienced with the County. Past attempts to include administration and neighbours have failed miserably. I expect that the lack of community (at least for the foreseeable future) means that somebody should be paid to do this. It will start by having a kid picking up in the spring, and in advance of the ditch mowing.

If there is a committee, or citizens group who provides input, suggest it include people who actually do things to improve the area (see above), instead of just talking about it, and/or padding their volunteer time for their resume/CV.

The County seems to have money to burn on consultants - perhaps use some of that money on asking the people who are most impacted by any new infrastructure (large holdings owners), and those currently doing the work voluntarily, how things can be done better.

After the aforementioned, the potential for the Sturgeon Valley is very promising, but if the County can't even connect the trail systems, there is not point going any further.

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I am providing my input even though I am not a resident of the County because, as a St. Albert resident, I make use of a great Natural Area called Riverlot 56. I suspect it is one of the higher use areas in Sturgeon County although the users are more from Edmonton and St. Albert. There are however a lot of residents in the Sturgeon River valley east of Riverlot 56 who are County residents who also value Riverlot 56.

Leave and increase the wilderness as much as possible. Children develop better mentally if they are in contact with nature. Perhaps there can be a little lodge for waxing cross country skis with clean and well maintained washrooms next to the parking lot of lot 56.

It would be nice to see a map with Parks, Open Spaces and Walking Trails. This could show what we have now and what you are planning for the next five years.

The county evidently has someone working on trails, but to date I have never heard anything about county initiatives. There has been talk of an equestrian trail from the N. Saskatchewan River running all the way to Athabasca, which is supposed to go along a portion of the Sturgeon River. Let's get on with it and connect with trails people in the other counties!

7.4 Sample Evaluation Criteria for Deeming Municipal Reserve Land Surplus and Available for Disposition

Evaluation Category and Description of Criteria (Note: criteria specific to municipal reserves only)	Scoring	Weight
A) ARE LANDS REQUIRED FOR MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE RESERVE FUNCTIONS		
Note: Municipal Reserve functions are directly related to the reserve dedication legislative requirements to provide for recreational and open space needs of the community of residents and businesses. The function of Municipal Reserves differs from that of Environmental Reserves, School Reserves and Community Services Reserves. Municipal Reserves (including Municipal-School Reserves) can be used for public parks, recreational spaces and trails, or as buffer lands to separate two or more land uses.	High Score = Low or No potential for Removal of Designation	
The following Criteria should apply:		
FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
1. Does the site, in part or in whole, function any of the following ways:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmentally sensitive or significant 	If yes, likely fails test for disposition	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural use capacity and existence of natural resources below surface 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constrained land: contaminated land, geotechnical constraints; high water table, floodplain or otherwise physically constrained yet not identified as environmental reserve 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waterfront 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part of utility corridor or future transportation corridor right of way 		
2. Does the site otherwise hold strategic value as a land asset in municipal ownership?		
If yes, describe in full:	Scoring 1-3 based on specific importance	HIGH
3. Does site have potential or active consideration for designation as School Reserve, Municipal-School Reserve or Environmental Reserve?		
Very Likely	3	HIGH
Somewhat likely	2	
Unlikely/No	1	

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ADJACENCIES		
4. Topographical or other features of special note or which vary across site making disposition of entire parcel problematic		
Severance to effectively create parcel for future development difficult to achieve	Scoring 1-3 based on specific constraints	HIGH
5. Adjacent use are compatible with maintaining site as Municipal Reserve		
Compatible - for example reserve is centrally located relative to school, houses and institutions in a community	3	HIGH
No impact - adjacent uses would not be impacted by a change of use	2	
incompatible - municipal reserve is clearly not the highest and best use of lands	1	
ASSESSED FUNCTION WITH OPEN SPACE NETWORK/CULTURAL AND HERITAGE SPACES		
6. Does the Site function as part of the open space and recreational system at any scale: neighbourhood or regional?		
Part of Active Recreation Space Network	Score 1-3 Based on overall contribution to recreational function	VERY HIGH - HIGHEST
Part of Passive Recreation Space Network		
Operates as part of major view corridor		
Operates as part of open space trail networks		
7. Does the Site function as part of the cultural and/or heritage assets of the community?		
Has cultural significance	Score 1-3 based on significance of any of these functions	MEDIUM
Is a gathering space and or used for events/festivals		
has locally defined heritage value		
PUBLIC OPINION (BASED ON FORMAL PROCESS FOR ASSESSMENT OF VALUE OF MUNICIPAL RESERVE UNDER REVIEW)		
8. What is the opinion of other stakeholders as to value of the current use of lands?		
Value ascribed by users / user groups (low to high)	Score 1-3 based on degree of common expression of value	HIGH
Value ascribed by general public (low to high)		
Value ascribed by other agencies (low to high)		
SCORING - PART A SUB TOTAL		

B) VALUE (REVENUE OR SAVINGS) TO THE MUNICIPALITY FROM DISPOSITION		
Municipality benefits from disposition include not only financial benefits but also less tangible community and economic development benefits	Higher Score = greater value in disposition	
USE AND VALUE		
9. The intended use is known and is supported by existing municipal policy		
The sale of the property supports the achievement of municipal policies including MDP, ASPs, Inter-Municipal Plan and other stated policies and strategies including the Counties policies in regard to Open Space planning.		HIGH
10. Intended Use is known and supported by community		
Criterion may be "not applicable" where intended use is unknown or disposition is initiated by the Municipality		HIGH
11. Appraised Market Value significant in the view of Municipality to justify disposition		
Likelihood of achieving market value and scale of value	Score 1-3 based on likelihood and scale of value	MEDIUM
12. Does sale optimize the long-term financial return from the asset?		
Is sale in fee simple the best option or long term lease? Will value increase over time due to adjacent development of servicing? Would partnership with other landowners improve site value?	Score 1-3 based on likelihood and scale of value	MEDIUM
TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL COST SAVINGS		
13. Timing of Development and availability of servicing		
Potential tax gains to the Municipality reflected in both the form of development (scale of market value above) and timing of development (near term versus long term)	Score 1-3 based on immediacy of development	MEDIUM
Presence of existing services to site boundary also limits municipal exposure to additional costs necessary to enable development and/or market the property for disposition		
14. Operational and Life-Cycle cost savings to Municipality arising from disposition are significant		
Net savings to the municipality on an annual basis can be identified; if net savings cannot be readily estimated or are negligible, does retention of the site result in any unnecessary costs including opportunity costs of property taxes foregone.	Score 1-3 based on scale of savings	MEDIUM

OTHER BENEFITS

15. Will disposition create economic benefits and / or social benefits/quality of life improvements for community?

General opinion on the benefits associated with the resulting land development - e.g. development for affordable housing, seniors housing or tourism operations could be considered as significant for local economic development and social enhancement.	Score 1-3 based on extent of benefits	HIGH
Private residential development not score as highly and benefits covered under site value and property tax benefits above.		
SCORING - PART B SUB TOTAL		

7.5 Process for Disposal or Lease of Public Lands

