

Part A

Recreation, Parks and Culture Community Assets Needs Assessment

A Directional Plan for The City of Red Deer
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FORWARD

This aim of this assessment is identifying the needs and requirements for Recreation, Parks and Culture assets for The City of Red Deer.

This required assessing the needs, desires and attitudes of citizens. To help identify these, interviews were held with community partners, focus groups with recreation, parks and culture stakeholders, a survey of casual users of the major recreation facilities was conducted, consultation with regional partners, as was a detailed and rigorous public survey, all to identify the activities in which citizens are engaged as well as identify areas of improvement they would like to see in Red Deer's recreation, parks and culture facilities.

In addition, a comprehensive inventory was completed of Red Deer's recreation, parks and culture assets. This included identification and mapping of all facilities and green spaces within the city.

By comparing the stated preferences of citizens and stakeholders with the existing inventory within Red Deer, gaps were identified and strategies and supporting initiatives were developed to address these gaps.

The result is a comprehensive statement of direction for the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department for the next 25 years, combined with a list of potential supporting initiatives to be considered in pursuing this direction.

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1.0 Executive Summary

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS REPORT

This report details a strategic direction in the provision of recreation, parks and culture assets (facilities and parks) for the citizens of Red Deer for the next 25 years. Extensive community consultation, including survey research, focus groups, public meetings and interviews with key stakeholders have all been used to try and better understand what community expectations are regarding the provision of these types of assets.

In addition, the review examined what assets The City of Red Deer has in place, how the recreation, parks, and culture oriented needs of citizens are being met and what gaps will likely emerge in the future.

In putting the pieces together, a list of basic strategies and supporting initiatives has been identified. It is an extensive and ambitious listing – not intended for The City of Red Deer to take on all at once but over an extended time period. Priorities and timelines will have to be set. To help:

- ▲ Suggested timing of initiatives is provided using the following definitions:
 - ▲ Immediate (0 to 2 years)
 - ▲ Short term (3 to 8 years)

- ▲ Medium term (9 to 16 years)
- ▲ Long term (17 to 25 years)
- ▲ Ongoing (currently underway)
- ▲ A structured priority setting process and supporting model have been developed for the Department.

Because of this, initiatives identified in the report are to be taken as potential opportunities in which The City of Red Deer could become engaged and that would support the strategic direction of the Department.

Some specific highlights include:

- ▲ Research and community consultation has confirmed that the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department mandate and role is appropriate to the organization.
- ▲ Greater transparency and community engagement in the setting of priorities among various potential facility proposals will be the result of a structured priority setting process that incorporates clearly defined evaluative criteria.
- ▲ A focus on Red Deer's parks, with an emphasis on expansion of green space, developing larger outdoor spaces capable of providing multiple amenities and improving the level of integration of smaller green spaces to enhance the backbone of the parks system in Red Deer - Waskasoo Park.
- ▲ Getting the groundwork ready for a second major (Collicutt-scaled) multi-use facility in the north area of the city, west of the river. Collicutt has been and remains, a major success story. Large scale facilities like it have set the bar for community

expectations. The growth rates Red Deer is experiencing combined with the focus of development in the city's north area means that a facility will be required within ten years. Planning, including land acquisition and neighborhood design, must start now.

- ▲ Culture assets have taken a back seat to higher priority recreation and park facility development over the past few years. A reinvestment is required in terms of upgrading of current facilities and the development of new facilities, including a 1500 to 2000 seat theatre and an outdoor festival site capable of providing some degree of weather protection during the summer season.

2.0 Strategies and Potential Initiatives

ADDRESSING THE GAPS IN FACILITY NEEDS

Identification of strategies and potential supporting initiatives is organized into five broad sections. These sections are:

- ▲ Foundation Principles: Principles that provide a basis for the recommendations that follow.
- ▲ Recreation, Parks and Culture Mandate: Strategies and initiatives concerning how the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department should accomplish its' mandate and functions within The City of Red Deer.
- ▲ Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities: Strategies and supporting initiatives concerning assets and facilities that support outdoor passive and active recreation activities.
- ▲ Indoor Recreation Facilities: Strategies and supporting initiatives that support indoor recreation activities.
- ▲ Culture Facilities: Strategies and initiatives that support and facilitate culture activities, both indoor and outdoor.

2.1 Foundation Principles

The set of strategies and initiatives that follow provide the initial draft of an agenda, or the actions that will define recreation, parks and culture activities in Red Deer in the years to come. It is important to note that these initiatives (and the processes that led to them) were built upon a foundation comprised of three pillars:

- ▲ Focus on value and where The City and Department can best add it.
- ▲ Be close to customers and,
- ▲ Pursue sustainability as defined in The City of Red Deer Corporate Strategic Plan.

These pillars are the set of principles upon which the recommended strategies have been based. They are the same set of principles that guided the organizational and functional review of the department, although the implications are different, given the focus of the research for this report.

2.1.1 Focus on value and where The City can best add it.

Focusing on value means focusing on those activities where The City of Red Deer and its Recreation, Parks and Culture Department can provide the most significant results (output/outcome) for the tax dollar.

The City adds value by bringing together sufficient financial and human resources to develop relatively large scale projects and initiatives that smaller community-based organizations cannot take on. Largely, this capacity of The City takes the form of the design, development and maintenance of public assets and facilitating the access to those assets

Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.1.1.1 Ensure departmental planning includes careful attention to asset development and sustainability</p>	<p>Recreation, Parks and Culture adds value through the development and sustainability of its core assets. Attention to these core assets is, therefore, critical to the success of the Department and comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Identification of the recreation, parks and culture asset requirements in longer term plans of The City of Red Deer, including requirements for different types of park space, recreation facilities and culture venues and spaces. ▲ Careful design and development of new facilities to ensure the long-term usefulness and appeal of the facility. Attention must be paid in their design and development to ensure facilities are efficient in operation, effective in ability to serve the needs of citizens, and flexible to meet changing demands and circumstances. ▲ Explicit recognition in The City of Red Deer and its Recreation, Parks and Culture Department for planning of the longer term maintenance and refurbishment costs associated with existing core assets. The development of spaces and facilities that meet the needs of citizens is not enough. Explicit plans must be made to ensure sustainability, including planning for the costs of refurbishment and operating the facilities created. 	<p>Immediate</p>

Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.1.1.2 Focus activities on the maintenance of core assets</p>	<p>The core assets are the primary means by which the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department provides value to citizens and maintaining these value-generating assets is central to Department mandate. This is distinct from programming services. While there will always be a role for some City directed and operated programming, the emphasis should be on maintaining assets so that community groups can use them in delivering their programming. This community-based approach helps ensure that asset planning and operation remains customer-driven and that The City is able to focus on the maintenance of these core assets where it can best add value.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.1.1.3 Pursue partnerships</p>	<p>Community groups and organizations have unique competencies and areas of specialty that allow them to contribute in different ways and in different areas. Pursuing partnerships recognizes that The City of Red Deer cannot do it all. Success will come from engaging and working with community groups and regional partners to help design, develop, maintain and operate facilities and amenities.</p> <p>The City will need to establish partnerships based on the principles of adding value, staying close to the customer and sustainability (including the organizational capacity of the potential partner). Both The City and the potential partner will need to clearly define responsibilities and roles of the partnership including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Primary development role ▲ Capital role ▲ Operating and/or maintenance roles ▲ Programming role 	<p>Immediate</p>

2.1.2 Be close to customers

This second pillar focuses on the need for the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department to be sensitive and responsive to the needs and requirements of the citizens it serves.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.1.2.1 Ensure the needs of customers are built into the plans for recreation, parks and culture asset development</p>	<p>The data gathering process for this study is a solid step in this direction. The stakeholder focus groups, the partner interviews, the casual user survey, the public survey and the workshop to share the research results are significant in defining citizen expectations for recreation, parks and culture facilities and amenities. The Department wishes to become more customer/citizen driven, ensuring that the voice of citizens is not just heard but embedded into recreation, parks and culture facility planning and development.</p> <p>Plan for regular “pulse checks” with stakeholders and users (annually) and citizens (five years).</p>	<p>Immediate And Ongoing</p>
<p>2.1.2.2 Balance customer expectations and requirements with broad community needs and objectives.</p>	<p>It is important to take the time to understand the needs and requirements of customers in all their complexity. Citizens do not share a single, common set of interests. Different people want different things for recreation, parks and culture amenities. Appreciation of the various interests of different groups within the community and sensitivity to these differing needs is a foundation for sound asset development planning. The City plays the role of balancing a multitude of requests and needs, identified by the customer, taking into consideration the criteria identified in Appendix A which will be used to evaluate potential projects.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.1.3 Pursue sustainability as defined in The City of Red Deer Corporate Strategic Plan

The need to balance social, cultural, economic, environmental and governance issues in decision-making is critical for local authorities to create places where people want to live – sustainable communities. People are very clear about what they want from their communities – places where they can live, work and play; places that are safe, clean, friendly and prosperous, with good amenities such as education, health services, shopping and green spaces. The City of Red Deer uses five pillars: social, cultural, economic, environmental and governance when planning and coordinating recreation, parks and culture initiatives (and all municipal initiatives). Using the AUMA framework for sustainability, these can be screened to determine the degree to which they help to create the kind of community towards which Red Deer is growing:

- ▲ Social: Harmonious and inclusive communities
- ▲ Cultural: Vibrant and festive communities
- ▲ Economic: A flourishing and diverse local economy
- ▲ Environmental: A quality natural and built environment
- ▲ Governance: Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.1.3.1 Allocate resources where the value-added is greatest	The City of Red Deer generally, and the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department specifically, is faced and will continue to be faced, with a broader selection of possible investments than it can afford. When setting priorities and making decisions as to what investments/development will be pursued, how The City of Red Deer and the Department can add value must be a key consideration.	Immediate
2.1.3.2 Pursue partnerships in the development and maintenance of assets	In considering investment alternatives, The City of Red Deer needs to give greater weight to those projects or initiatives that entail a level of partnership between The City of Red Deer and community groups, organizations or sponsors. The fact is The City of Red Deer cannot, and indeed should not, do it all. Pursuing or participating in partnerships in the development of recreation, parks and culture	Immediate

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>assets is a more sustainable approach and permits various organizations to play different, including lead roles depending upon where each organization can best add value.</p> <p>Partnerships also require time and effort. Building and strengthening partnerships must be part of the development process and the added requirements must be acknowledged.</p>	
<p>2.1.3.3 Embed sustainability objectives into the prioritysetting process</p>	<p>The five elements of The City of Red Deer Sustainability Model: social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governance need to be embedded into the Department’s priority setting process. This means explicit consideration of how investment alternatives compare across these five areas and giving them significant weight in final decision making.. These five elements of sustainability are embedded into the Evaluation Feedback Tool for priority setting. See priority setting process outlined in Appendix A.</p>	<p>Immediate .</p>
<p>2.1.3.4 Recognize the long-term costs of assets through capital planning and cost projection</p>	<p>Sustainability demands that attention be paid to the long-term. This is especially true with assets because, by definition, assets are long-term in nature. When evaluating alternatives, therefore, consideration has to be given to more than just the immediate capital costs for the development of the asset. The longer-term maintenance costs, as well as the refurbishment costs required to keep the asset to acceptable standards, must also be considered.</p>	<p>Immediate.</p>

2.2 Recreation, Parks and Culture Mandate and Policy

Recreation, Parks and Culture exists within the context of a larger organization, namely that of The City of Red Deer. The Vision and Mission of The City of Red are:

Vision

- ▲ *Innovative thinking.*
- ▲ *Inspired results.*
- ▲ *Vibrant community.*

Mission

The City of Red Deer works together to provide leadership and sustainable municipal services for our community.

In support of this Vision and Mission, the Recreation, Parks and Culture Service Plan Mandate is as follows:

- ▲ *Support a quality of life for all citizens of Red Deer by ensuring people have access to recreation, parks and culture resources.*
- ▲ *Through a community development approach, ensure the following key values are incorporated into all service delivery:*
 - ▲ *Diversity is valued and respected*
 - ▲ *Inclusion of all citizens*
 - ▲ *Sustainability of our natural and built environment*
 - ▲ *Creativity is valued and nurtured*

- ▲ *Community governance is embraced*
- ▲ *Active living is not just promoted by engaged*

The mandate and values stated above are well aligned with the Mission Statement for Recreation, Parks and Culture, adopted with the 2006 Organizational and Functional Review:

To facilitate and/or develop recreation, parks and culture programs, facilities and services that are fundamental to quality of life in Red Deer."

A principle integral to the mission and mandate of the Department is focusing on where the Department (and The City of Red Deer) can

best add value in serving the community. The Department focuses on adding value in the provision and maintenance of public assets – parkland, recreation facilities, and culture facilities. This initiative demands a level of organizational capacity that others in the community are challenged to provide.

Programming and services are provided to encourage, facilitate and maximize the public use of these facilities. Programming and services are delivered either directly or indirectly depending upon a number of factors, including the capacity of the community or community-based organizations.

2.2.1 Strategy: Reaffirm the mandate of the Department to stakeholders

The Department has developed a strong focus over the years. The positive response from the citizenry concerning perceived levels of service provision, as well as the condition of facilities, indicates that this is a focus that has the support of the community.

While minor changes to mission may be of value, the basic intent is sound and well aligned to community expectations and focuses the Department on the areas in which it adds value.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.2.1.1 Affirm the focus of the Department’s mission and mandate</p>	<p>The mission and mandate of the Department are intended to convey a focus on the development of recreation, parks and culture assets that encourage and promote basic skill development, that are readily accessible to the public and that are flexible in nature. These are distinguished from facilities designed to support solely the development of high-level competitive or highly skilled activities. This focus needs to be reaffirmed within the Department and communicated to the public.</p> <p>This does not exclude the development of facilities where components of the facility are aimed at highly competitive activities. It means that the Department, in setting priorities for facilities, will place greater weight on the extent to which the facility will or can serve a broader activity range. Flexible facilities, that can be adjusted to meet varying types of activities and skill levels, therefore, will be given greater priority weighing than those that are focused on single purpose or high-end competitive activities.</p> <p>Two specific actions to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Communicate the mandate and seek affirmation as part of the acceptance by Council of this report. ▲ Embed focus in the Opportunity Description form and in the evaluation model criteria. 	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.2.1.2 Strengthen the branding associated with the Department's assets</p>	<p>Signage on Recreation, Parks and Culture assets tends to be inconsistent in design and quality. In some cases, parks and outdoor recreation areas have no signage at all, and indoor facilities often show no reference to "The City of Red Deer". The absence and/or poor quality of signage contributes to a lack of public awareness as to what is provided by The City of Red Deer. Equally important, the situation contributes to public confusion as to the various trails linking the parks system.</p> <p>The Department needs to ensure that City of Red Deer assets are properly marked with a consistent branding and image. Specific recommendation for signage of the Parks system is made later. Provide for capital dollars in the next capital budget.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.2.2 Strategy: Strengthen asset management capacity

Since the completion of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Organizational and Functional Review three years ago, the Department has been working toward implementing many of the changes recommended – including placing a focus on where the Department can best add value – asset development and maintenance.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.2.2.1 Optimizing the benefits of joint use agreements</p>	<p>Planning for community use in future school developments should be emphasized. Fields and other recreation amenities provided as part of school development, form an important component of the recreation assets of the community and the city. Continuing to work with school boards to plan new school locations with these community amenities in mind is important in ensuring best use of citizens’ tax dollars in facility development.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.2.2.2 Place a greater reliance on guidelines and standards in planning</p>	<p>The City of Red Deer needs to place a greater reliance on guidelines and standards for facility development and maintenance. These standards typically define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ The quality of the asset for a given development area (neighbourhood, community, population type or base, etc.) ▲ The quantity or size of the asset for a given development area or population. <p>Standards do exist and are generally followed. However, they are in various forms and only some are approved by Council.</p> <p>The 2003 – 2006 <i>Community Services Open Spaces and Facilities Action Plan</i> provided a series of commitments and guidelines relating to land and facilities under the division’s control. Our recommendations are informed by this earlier document, but also highlight areas where updates may be needed.</p> <p>The City of Red Deer has grown rapidly over the past few years and keeping up with infrastructure development has been challenging in all areas, not only in the</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>provision of recreation, parks and culture facilities. Without the guidelines provided by development standards in this area, facility development will continue in an ad hoc fashion, potentially creating gaps and overlap in provision. There is a need for The City to identify and communicate the service levels users can expect.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Planning Guidelines and Standards (NPGS) can form a basis for this development. With the gaps in the types of parks addressed, and considering neighbourhood, community (multi-neighbourhood), and regional (several communities), as identified later in section 2.3.2.1, a set of guidelines and standards unique to Red Deer could be established in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Neighbourhood Planning Guidelines and Standards (NPGS) ▲ Community Activity Centres ▲ Sports fields (as this is more inclusive of all types of fields) ▲ Indoor Facilities ▲ Outdoor Facilities <p>Again, these guidelines and standards should focus on both the quality and quantity of assets being provided.</p>	
<p>2.2.2.3 Refine the inventory data and maintain it in a manner that supports effective management</p>	<p>Recreation, Parks and Culture adds value, in large measure, from its ability to develop and maintain recreation, parks and culture assets. Managing relevant information concerning those assets is an essential aspect of this work.</p> <p>It became clear, during the development of an inventory of assets for this project, that asset information is managed through a number of disconnected systems, both electronic and otherwise. Different functions manage and keep the data that is relevant to them. There are few integrating mechanisms among these systems.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>As a result, there is little agreement among the various systems as to just what the inventory of assets is, the state of repair, the amenities or maintenance requirements, and so on. It needs to be emphasized that we believe that maintenance is happening and that the various functions have the information they need to accomplish their functions. The issue is one of integration and linkage. Specifically, developing an effective system of managing inventory data would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Use a standardized system of asset classification across the organization that is aligned with planning standards (such as NPGS and OSFAP). ▲ Use a system of unique identifiers to identify every asset (facility, park, and amenity) owned or in which The City of Red Deer is a stakeholder. ▲ Ensure that unique identifiers or linkages are maintained across the GIS System, booking system (CLASS), maintenance and asset management systems, and land management systems. <p>The current City of Red Deer initiative on Asset Management may help to address some of these concerns. This reinforces the need for Recreation, Parks and Culture participation in this process.</p>	
<p>2.2.2.4 Continue to use 10 Year Infrastructure Maintenance Plan</p>	<p>The Infrastructure Maintenance Plan (IMP) identifies the anticipated costs for lifecycle maintenance for the facilities discussed in this report. Continue the ongoing renewal of the IMP to maintain, protect and enhance the facilities that form the recreation, parks and culture system in Red Deer.</p> <p>This plan identifies the magnitude of existing facility Capital Development and Major and Minor Infrastructure Maintenance. It is renewed each year by the operational staff at the facilities supported by the Projects Section team. In this way, facility needs and cost implications are kept current.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.2.2.5 Build flexibility into amenity planning and development</p>	<p>The world changes and along with it, the circumstances and opportunities that guided our plans. It is important that when opportunities arise that would support the quality of life objectives of citizens, decision makers be afforded the flexibility to modify plans accordingly (i.e., curling and tennis facility development).</p> <p>Doing so, while ensuring sustainability considerations are met, will require adopting a common evaluation and priority setting model (see next initiative).</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.2.2.6 Adopt a structured model for the evaluation of opportunities</p>	<p>The Department currently lacks a formalized evaluation process for setting priorities among competing interests. These competing interests include requests from various groups for funding support (both operating and capital) for development opportunities, as well as from various potential projects within The City of Red Deer’s portfolio of development opportunities.</p> <p>A structured approach would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Identification of specific criteria and the specification of how important these criteria are in making the evaluations (weighting). ▲ Developing a tool to help decision makers apply these criteria to various development opportunities and set priorities. ▲ Reporting on the outcomes of these evaluations to the community/stakeholders to support transparency and accountability objectives. ▲ Use of the process in both externally and internally generated projects or opportunities. ▲ Embedding participation/usage rates, broad appeal, flexibility and cost (for staff processes) as criteria within the structured evaluation process. 	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	An outline of this structured process is contained in Appendix A along with instructions for an evaluation tool developed electronically.	

2.2.3 Strategy: Develop an implementation plan to support this Directional Plan

The directions that follow need to be reviewed, agreed upon and planned for within the current processes of The City of Red Deer. Failure to incorporate this direction will mean initiatives that follow will not gain the traction required to move forward.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.2.3.1 Seek approval of Red Deer City Council for this directional plan</p>	<p>Civic administration needs to seek approval for the broad strategies presented within this plan to provide the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department with the direction it requires to move forward. This would also provide the authority for the Recreation, parks and Culture Department to move forward in the development of an implementation plan (next).</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.2.3.2 Develop an implementation plan to support the directions laid out in this report</p>	<p>The Recreation, Parks and Culture Department needs to develop a detailed implementation plan highlighting the timing and resource requirements required to see this directional plan come to fruition. This will include revisions to the “Community Services Open Spaces and Facilities Action Plan”.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.2.3.3 Put this directional plan in context</p>	<p>There are a significant number of identified strategies and initiatives identified within this Directional Plan all with capital (and operating) budget implications. These must be placed in context and considered along with other capital priorities from other areas such as Transit and Public Works.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.3 Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Parks and outdoor recreation is an area which the community highlighted as having the greatest frequency of use and an area of focus for future asset and amenity development. Parks specifically were identified in the community survey as being in a league of their own when it comes to the pride the community takes in its parks system. In fact, we would go so far as to say the community, in large measure, defines itself by the quality of the parks in and around Red Deer. It is not surprising then that residents should place such an emphasis on parks and outdoor recreation amenities.

The reputation of Red Deer's parks and outdoor recreation amenities is not undeserving. Red Deer simply outpaces other municipalities with the ratio of green space to number of citizens. Per capita green space allocation is high and citizens appreciate it. However, analysis of GIS data indicates that much of the green space in these per capita calculations is fragmented and of insufficient size to support significant passive or active amenities. This is likely why citizens rated integration of park spaces and connections to the Waskasoo system as a major priority.



2.3.1 Strategy: Comprehensive transportation planning to connect residential areas with parks

An opportunity exists to establish Red Deer as a leader in integrating alternative means of transportation into parks and residential planning.

Traditional planning approaches have emphasized (or assumed) vehicular transportation as the primary means of gaining access to parks and outdoor recreation activities. Private vehicles are, and will likely remain one of, if not the primary means of accessing municipal parks. At the same time, it would be fair to say those using park and outdoor recreation amenities are likely predisposed to using alternative means of access (public transportation, walking, biking, etc.). Design of parks and residential areas needs to encourage non-vehicular recreation and commuter transportation links from residential areas to parks (as well as recreation and culture) facilities.

This involves strengthening the policy supports in the Neighbourhood Planning Guidelines and Standards (NPGS) to facilitate this process, establishing a firm partnership with Transit and Engineering in the planning and development of transportation assets and route plans for facilities, and fully implementing the provisions of the Trails Master Plan as new subdivisions develop.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.3.1.1 Host an active transportation seminar	A seminar to further reinforce the concepts of Active Transportation to City Council, City Staff, Parkland Community Planning Services, and key community leaders would develop interest and a process to integrate the principles into future plans and the culture of planning in Red Deer.	Immediate
2.3.1.2 Review NPGS for opportunities to embed active transportation concepts	Undertake a project to review how NPGS and transportation planning can be better integrated with a focus on non-vehicular and commuter transportation, following the active transportation seminar.	Short Term
2.3.1.3 Establish a partnership with Transit for route	As the community continues to grow and the number and location of recreation, parks and culture assets grows, it will be important to ensure flexibility of access	Short Term

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>planning</p>	<p>for all members of the community.</p>	
<p>2.3.1.4 Establish a partnership with Engineering in road and transportation planning</p>	<p>What applies for Transit in the planning of public transportation routes applies to Engineering in the planning of roads and related transportation corridors. Recreation, Parks and Culture must ensure that Engineering has the information it requires concerning asset development and use to properly design means of access. Likewise, Recreation, Parks and Culture must be assured that avenues of transportation are appropriate to the nature and type of asset.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

2.3.2 Strategy: Focus on the development of a parks planning system that has a progressive order of magnitude and includes contiguous parks spaces and the development of larger parks with a mix of leisure amenities

Stakeholders and the public survey were consistent in reporting that citizens of Red Deer see the parks system as the backbone of the community. Currently, Red Deer has about 12.7 hectares of parkland per 1000 people which is higher than levels identified in the comparative research and literature review which tend to highlight about 8.0 hectares per 1000. Red Deer’s strong performance here may have evolved because of the foresight of protecting the river valley as public access parkland – a policy that needs to be reaffirmed.

As the city grows into the annexation areas, there is a need to continue to assemble parkland and keep pace with the established guideline. Attention to assembling larger parcels of contiguous park space, rather than smaller disconnected spaces, will move Red Deer towards a stronger system that will be more effective for public use and also efficient for maintenance.

Should The City increase its efforts to acquire and protect natural areas within its boundaries (current and future), attention should be given to opportunities within the annexation areas in the north and east, particularly along the river valley, to maintain the current ratio of green space per capita (12.7 hectares per thousand).

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.3.2.1 Ensure a minimum park size aligned with NPGS</p>	<p>While Red Deer has high levels of green space per capita, much of this green space is of extremely small size – smaller than minimum sizes identified in the NPGS. These may represent simply ‘leftover’ pieces in development plans. While pleasant, they are too small for The City of Red Deer to maintain efficiently. An exception to this may be the downtown area where any number of pocket parks and spaces are welcomed.</p> <p>Effort should be made to minimize the number of these extremely small green spaces in new developments, other than in the downtown area. At a minimum, when reviewing development plans, the amount of green space comprised of spaces smaller than minimums identified in the NPGS should not be included in calculations of the ratio of green space to population of development size.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>
<p>2.3.2.2 Create an all-inclusive</p>	<p>A classification system that encompasses all of Red Deer’s existing green spaces is</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>parks classification system</p>	<p>required. Currently, many (if not most) of Red Deer’s parks are of sizes that have no formal classification status. Large gaps exist in park classifications within the NPGS for example.</p> <p>Modifications should include the addition of the following classifications (or modification of existing classifications) to encompass the size ranges of the classifications recommended below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Downtown Vest Pocket Park, small green spaces specifically developed within the downtown. ▲ Linear Park/Parkette, change the classified maximum size from 0.8 hectares to 2.5 hectares to encompass those green spaces that are larger than current Parkette definitions but smaller than Neighborhood Park definitions. ▲ Neighborhood Park, designed to serve a single neighborhood with a size range of between 2.5 and 6 hectares ▲ Multi-Neighbourhood Park, to encompass those green spaces too large for current classification of Neighborhood Parks (2.5 to 6.0 hectares) and too small to be classified for City Parks (25+ hectares). ▲ City Park, 25 to 85 hectares and located entirely within the city of Red Deer boundaries. ▲ Regional Park. Over 85 hectares and located in both the city of Red Deer or Red Deer County. 	
<p>2.3.2.3 Modify Neighbourhood Planning Guidelines and Standards (NPGS)</p>	<p>To support the strategy, we would recommend making changes to the NPGS so that the parkland obtained through dedication is in larger and more contiguous spaces. These changes would include the modification of park classifications so that:</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
to support the changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Minimum park sizes are established, except in the downtown area and ▲ A comprehensive classification scheme is adopted. 	
2.3.2.4 Implement Waskasoo Park Special Gathering Places Report recommendations	The Waskasoo Park Special Gathering Places Report identifies a program of park renovations and upgrades over 10 years. The investments required are consistent with the directional findings of this study. The costs associated with this, however, have not been added to this plan.	Medium Term

2.3.3 Strategy: Expanded trail development

The Waskasoo Trail System is the backbone of the entire trail system in Red Deer. The public reaffirms this principle and the research makes it clear that trails and pathways that link the rest of the city to this network are of critical importance to the community. Trails provide a no-cost (to users) alternative for recreation and fitness that is easily accessed for spontaneous, unscheduled activities, for a link to nature, and for health and fitness. This aligns with trends across the country.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.3.3.1 Expand and link trails within the Waskasoo system</p>	<p>The City should work toward the development of a contiguous pathway system that connects all parks and facilities for non-vehicular access using the typology from the Trails Master Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Waskasoo Trails – All designated asphalt trails (Waskasoo, Devonian) and all asphalt trails in destination parks (McKenzie Trail, Three Mile Bend, Heritage Ranch). ▲ Nature Trails – designated soft surfaces within natural areas and designated reserve sites, designed for pedestrian use only. 	<p>Short Term</p>
<p>2.3.3.2 Link subdivisions to main trail system</p>	<p>Red Deer should reaffirm its commitment to the Trails Master Plan and the standards established through that process, so that new subdivision plans include linkages to the main trail system.</p> <p>The research conducted for this study clearly establishes trails, linking trails and access to natural areas as a priority for Red Deer’s citizens. This will become more important as The City annexes additional land, particularly for new subdivisions that are farther removed from the river valley. The following elements should be included as outlined in the Trails Master Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Arterial Trails – designated concrete sidewalks or asphalt trails on one side of designated arterial roadways. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Collector Trails – designated concrete sidewalks on one side of all collector roads. ▲ Bikeways – designated routes for bicycles to share with other vehicles. ▲ Neighbourhood Trails – designated to provide links between neighbourhoods, neighbourhood facilities and the main trail and pathway system. <p>The objective is to have the trail plan included in new subdivision plans as a condition of approval.</p>	
<p>2.3.3.3 Improve signage of the trail network</p>	<p>Branding of The City of Red Deer Recreation, Parks and Culture assets and facilities is an issue. This includes signage on trails that, in addition to providing identification of the asset, would also provide essential information and directions to users of the asset – in this case, the trails.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.3.3.4 Improve public communication concerning linkages currently in place</p>	<p>In addition to improved branding and signage associated with the trails system, other communication avenues need to be explored to improve public awareness of the existing trail system and the components of which it is comprised.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.3.4 Strategy: Pursue significant expansion to the parks system

The relative amounts of green space within Red Deer are high when compared to other municipalities, but other municipalities are catching up. The parks and green spaces of Red Deer are no longer the differentiating factor they once were.

Part of this is due to the development of Waskasoo Park. Developed some years ago, the park was planned for a city of 100,000. So at inception of Waskasoo, Red Deer had high levels of park space per capita. Now, as Red Deer approaches this population level, the amount of park space per capita is approaching levels near that of other municipalities.

The parks system in Red Deer is clearly a source of pride in the community. It is well used by citizens and they would like to see the system expanded.

This strategy would see The City of Red Deer reconfirm its desire to be more than simply on par with other municipalities, but to take a leadership position in preserving areas of green space and creating a parks system that supports a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities within the city.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.3.4.1 Confirm the river valley as the backbone of the parks system</p>	<p>The river valley is the current backbone of the parks system in Red Deer. This role needs to be confirmed and reflected in all future development, including whatever development takes place over the next thirty years within the soon to be annexed areas.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.3.4.2 Work with provincial government to Support the River Valley Corridor and Tributary Strategy</p>	<p>To support such a major commitment, The City of Red Deer will have to work with the Provincial Government to secure the resources required. The assembly of land to preserve and develop parks along the river valley will be a major undertaking, especially in terms of cost. It is likely a cost that would be prohibitive without the involvement of other orders of government.</p> <p>To support this process, the Department should prepare a set of objectives and a long term vision statement for the river valley (roughly 10 km west of Red Deer to the Canyon Ski area facility to the east), in conjunction with Red Deer County.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.3.4.3 Investigate the acquisition of large tracts of parkland in future development areas</p>	<p>It is often challenging to identify and acquire larger tracts of parkland through the development process at reasonable cost. Nevertheless, avenues must be explored to identify suitable lands and make provision for their acquisition for parks/green space purposes.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.3.4.4 Ensure an appropriate parks/urban interface especially to the downtown core</p>	<p>The interface between parks and green spaces on the one hand and urban development on the other, is an important one. The boundary needs to be a welcoming one that provides easy access and a smooth visual transition.</p> <p>Projects and initiatives highlighted earlier in this Directional Plan, for example, have discussed the need for this interface in terms of enhancing trails that link urban (usually residential) neighborhoods to the larger park system. The importance of interface between parks and the downtown areas (which are typically more commercial in their development) is significant enough to warrant special attention.</p> <p>Three existing plans: The Waskasoo Master Plan, The Riverlands Plan and The Greater Downtown Action Plan (GDAP), all deal with this interface between the downtown and the parks system. For example, plans call for a linking plaza close to the river and the downtown area along Alexander Way and over to Bower Ponds with the future walking bridge development. Prepared at different times, with different areas of focus, but all related to one another, these three plans need to be examined together with specific attention paid to how the three plans integrate with one another and how well they integrate the parks system with the downtown core.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.3.5 Pursue outdoor recreational opportunities as part of parks system expansion

A large reason for the support the parks system in Red Deer enjoys, is the wide range of recreational opportunities it affords the public. This trend toward providing assets that support a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities should be supported. Typically, these types of assets are characterized by a high degree of accessibility and appeal to a diverse set of populations within the community.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.3.5.1 Pursue non-traditional and / or alternate outdoor recreation opportunities</p>	<p>Parks in developing areas of the city need to be planned to accommodate alternate activities such as mountain biking, skateboarding, BMX and even off-leash dog areas. These types of facilities should be aligned with future development considerations when multi-purpose indoor and outdoor facilities are considered. Accommodating these activities or uses will reduce user conflicts in other areas of the parks system, and help to reduce inappropriate uses of parks or other spaces in the community.</p> <p>As part of this initiative, a plan to improve or replace the existing skateboard park in Red Deer in conjunction with input from skateboard community, should be developed.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.3.5.2 Pursue partnership opportunities concerning the Canyon Ski Hill</p>	<p>An opportunity exists to investigate the acquisition of the Canyon Ski Hill area as a major park anchor to the river valley development east of the city. Not only would it meet the longer term open space requirements in close proximity to the city as it grows, it would also ensure continued operation of the ski hill providing benefit to families, children and schools in Red Deer.</p> <p>Should its acquisition be approved, the site could serve as a convenient eastern anchor to the region and to the Red Deer parks system.</p> <p>In the future, this area could accommodate campground facilities, as well as a more intensive activity area for multi-sport and recreation activities including BMX and mountain biking. This would support the pursuit of additional non-</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>traditional recreational assets.</p> <p>Given the nature of this site and the current draw from across Central Alberta, it becomes an ideal case for collaborative development with partners such as the Counties of Red Deer and Lacombe.</p>	

2.3.6 Strategy: Expanding sport field capacity

The stakeholder focus groups and survey responses strongly indicated that athletic fields are viewed as a priority. Priority should be given to develop field facilities together, as much as possible, within new subdivision development or the annexation lands to prevent increasing the number of stand alone fields.

To accommodate the growth that The City of Red Deer will experience in the next 10 to 15 years and to accommodate the need to replace the Edgar Industrial Athletic Park, The City will require the development of a new city-wide site for field sports. Current facilities are at capacity (Edgar). The development of a major athletic park was identified by stakeholders as a need. While an athletic park itself was not identified in the survey, the need for additional fields was clearly indicated.

Stakeholders also indicated that the level of maintenance for playfields is not at the standard they expect in some cases. There is a difference between what The City thinks it provides and what is expected by users, particularly at Great Chief Park. Volunteers are interested in assisting with the process, however there seems to be a disconnect between the stakeholders and The City in this regard.

The disconnect appears to be the class of field and the level of maintenance it might receive. While Red Deer appears to have sufficient fields for the next 5 years, stakeholders have indicated that the type of fields currently being developed may not match the needs of the users. For example, stakeholders express concern over:

- ▲ The number and type of fields being developed in storm water detention ponds and the availability of these fields being weather dependent.
- ▲ The number and type of fields being developed on school and other community sites and whether they are of the quantity (i.e. number of fields clustered together), quality and in the locations that allow the most effective use of the resource.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.3.6.1 Development of major (50 to 60 acre) athletic park	<p>Some key sports fields, such as Edgar, are used to capacity and lack adequate amenities, including parking. This location, in the middle of an industrial area, was initially temporary, and has begun to exceed its ability to serve users. With The City’s current shortage of industrial lands, stakeholders have indicated that an exchange of this site for a more suitable location may be timely.</p> <p>Stakeholders identified a multi-sport park as one of their outdoor recreation</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>facility development priorities. The high level of use on current facilities in Red Deer restricts user groups' capacity to host games and practices in soccer, baseball, slow pitch and football. These groups have expressed the desire for, and willingness to support, a multi-use facility that would make possible the opportunity to host both league games and tournaments.</p> <p>In addition to fields, in order to be viable and attractive to the widest population, the new development could contain a camping facility, a skate park, a BMX track and a new Mountain Bike Park.</p> <p>Existing fields impacted by this initiative (and specifically Edgar) should be maintained, but not upgraded, until new fields are available to replace them.</p>	
<p>2.3.6.2 Pursue partnerships in the development of sport fields</p>	<p>Pursuing partnerships is an overarching consideration in this report and need to be taken into consideration in the development of any new sports field developments.</p> <p>For example, partnership with The County in outdoor recreation opportunities including a major athletic park development. The needs study conducted by Red Deer County identifies the possibility of exploring a regional outdoor recreation facility in a partnership model, which further supports The City's consideration of this initiative.</p> <p>Partnership opportunities are not limited to The County, however. In the development of any new facility, The City of Red Deer should pursue a partnering model to help ensure: designs consistent with user group requirements, shared responsibility for maintenance and reduced operating costs.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.3.6.3 Upgrade program of existing outdoor</p>	<p>Beginning in 2009, The City will need to commit to upgrading existing outdoor facilities to make them more suitable for user group needs. This will include:</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Reconsider storm water detention pond development for major fields. ▲ Development and Maintenance Classification Standards* for ball diamonds and soccer fields as they currently exist is summarized in the Table below. ▲ Work with stakeholders to increase the capacity to support field operation and maintenance. 	

** Ball and Soccer Classification*

Class Level	Ball	Soccer
Class A	Outfield 320 feet or longer	110 yards by 65 yards
	Receive higher quality maintenance levels	
Class B	Outfield 275 feet to 325 feet	90 yards by 55 yards
	Receive high quality maintenance levels	
Class C	Outfield 275 feet or less	75 yards by 35 yards
	Receive medium quality maintenance levels	
Class D	Outfield less than 200 feet	Undefined soccer size
	Receive basic maintenance	

Source City of Red Deer Parks Section

User groups have experienced a high rate of growth over the past five years, and are currently being challenged to meet the continued demand for their sports. Some groups indicated existing facilities are unsuitable or inappropriate for the

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>uses for which they were designed. The recent practice of developing sports fields in Storm Water Detention Ponds seems to create situations where sports activities must be cancelled due to weather more often than if the fields were built on other sites.</p>	

2.3.7 Reconfigure Great Chief Park

Great Chief Park (GCP) has been a show piece for Red Deer and Central Alberta teams. Stakeholders using GCP for games and tournaments appreciate the ambiance of the site – peaceful and surrounded by trees on the river’s edge. Nevertheless, GCP is becoming stretched to capacity and improvements are necessary. The installation of artificial turf would allow for heavier use that is less dependent on the weather increasing capacity to some degree. Such improvements are desirable but will not be able to address all the capacity issues of GCP.

As the population of Red Deer grows and the demand continues for additional Class A field, significant pressure will be placed on the facility, including parking and increased congestion in the area. The site has some restrictions as to municipal bylaws, noise and parking, which stakeholders identified as detracting from the overall experience.

The bottom line is that GCP is stretched to capacity and while some local improvements will help, GCP cannot sustain the demands placed upon it in the medium term.

The City of Red Deer needs to explore a strategy for an expanded space that increases the number and quality of fields that exist at GCP, provides for improved access and increased parking. The expansion could incorporate a BMX park or relocation to a larger site encompassing a multi-purpose indoor facility.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.3.7.1 Upgrade Great Chief Park for an interim period	<p>As an interim measure, the current surfaces at GCP should be upgraded to enhance quality and increase capacity. This would allow the facility to operate as an athletic park until a new athletic park is created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Surfaces may be added to the baseball, football and soccer fields. ▲ Artificial turf and dressing room improvement to accommodate use until a new site is identified, acquired and developed. 	Short Term
2.3.7.2 Redevelop Great Chief Park	<p>Improvements will allow GCP to operate as an athletic park until a new athletic facility is created. Once this is done, a redevelopment and reconfiguration of GCP should take place.</p>	Medium Term

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>This redevelopment should complement the activities and amenities at Bower Ponds and accommodate alternate uses that are compatible with the rest of the Bower Pond node of Waskasoo Park. There are already improvements underway to the trails and stage, and the addition of a serenity garden that are being completed as part of the Waskasoo Special Gathering Places Study.</p> <p>Redevelopment should also be done in concert with other initiatives identified in this Directional Plan including those relating to the interface between parks and the more developed areas of the urban environment.</p> <p>The new park would contain fields of the same class and type as are currently available at GCP, and would include some fields with artificial turf to extend the usability of the park.</p>	

2.4 Indoor Recreation Facilities

This section refers to all facilities providing indoor recreation amenities to citizens.

Citizen feedback was supportive of the conditions of these facilities although there were some pockets of dissatisfaction with specific facilities. Overall, the service levels measured by facility type per capita are in line with other communities. This suggests a general strategic direction of maintaining existing service levels but expanding the number of recreation facilities to match growth in population.



2.4.1 Strategy – Maintain arenas for usability and develop new ones to accommodate growth

Red Deer has six ice surfaces operated by The City in five locations. The facilities are of varying ages and amenities. Three of these facilities are in relatively good physical condition but will require capital investment to maintain the facilities in a state that is acceptable to the community and its users. Two of these facilities are in poor physical condition. In these cases retrofitting is not recommended; however, replacement is.

Profile of Existing Arenas

Inventory	Condition	Cost	Twinning	Recommendation
Kinex 1967	Poor	8.00M	No	Replace
Kinsmen 1975	Good	0.28M	No	Retrofit
Kinsmen 1988	Good	0.15M	No	Retrofit
Dawe 1983	Good	8.00M	Yes	Twin
Red Deer Arena 1952	Poor	12.00M	No	Replace
Collicutt Centre Arena 2001	Good	6.00 M	Yes	Add additional dry land space

Source: Converge/CDC

In addition to the replacement of two existing arenas, and the twinning of the Dawe Arena, two additional ice surfaces will be required in the medium term to accommodate growth. A twin arena design has significant capital and operating economies of scale. To facilitate capital planning, however, a single arena complex could be designed and constructed with the intent of adding a twin at a later date when population growth demands it.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.4.1.1 Phase II Dawe Revitalization</p>	<p>Given site constraints and the efficiencies of operating twinned arenas, it is suggested that consideration be given to twinning the Dawe Centre Arena. Because of the current renovation being undertaken at Dawe, it will be timely to consider the development of an additional ice surface as part of the Phase II site development plan that was identified prior to commencement of the current Dawe revitalization. This would also include access to the site off 67th Street, and an additional entrance and parking being created on the north side of the facility.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>
<p>2.4.1.2 Develop a new twin arena at the Red Deer Arena/Kinex site that would replace the existing facilities</p>	<p>Both the Red Deer Arena and the Kinex are approaching the end of their useful life cycles. Rather than investing the ongoing capital required to maintain facilities of this age, it is appropriate to begin to plan for replacement of these important facilities. The development of a new twin arena on this site, with one side having the seating capacity of the existing arena and perhaps slightly larger, would replace these aging facilities with a more efficient modern operation. Phased planning/construction needs to be completed such that there is not a reduction in available ice while replacement is undertaken.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
<p>2.4.1.3 Develop a twin arena in the north central area in the vicinity of Hazlett Lake</p>	<p>A second surface should be considered at a site in the northeast along with the development of a regional recreation centre as proposed in this report.</p> <p>New ice surface development is done as a twinning concept to create efficiencies in operation and use, which could be done as a phased development or it would create an “over allocation” of ice for a certain period of time</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
<p>2.4.1.4 Develop additional dry land activity space at the Collicutt Centre</p>	<p>The Collicutt Centre was planned with sufficient land to expand the facility as the population and demand for service increased. It was intended that the expansion include an ice surface. Given the anticipated demand north of the river for the next ice surface, and the existing demand for dry land activity space, the decision</p>	<p>Short Term</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	to expand dry land facilities at Collicutt is appropriate at this time. Due to existing challenges with on site parking, consideration for expansion of parking capacity would be advised.	
<p>2.4.1.5 Work with Red Deer College, Red Deer County and the Westerner to develop a “Community Facility Plan”</p>	<p>The City of Red Deer is only one of the players in the provision of recreation, parks and culture facilities in Red Deer. Red Deer College, Red Deer County and the Westerner are also key players. A community facility plan developed among these partners would help to maximize the availability of public funding and eliminate the potential for duplication.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.4.1.6 Continue work with existing initiatives in this area</p>	<p>Two projects are currently underway in Red Deer and work needs to continue on these. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Development of a larger curling facility on a new site within the in conjunction with the RD Curling Club. ▲ Redevelopment of the current curling asset to house an indoor tennis facility using an inflatable tennis structure on the existing south courts at the Rotary Recreation Park. <p>Both of these initiatives are consistent with the directions set out in this plan.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

2.4.2 Strategy: Continue emphasis on multi-use recreation facilities.

Recreation facilities are well used within Red Deer and the public is generally well-satisfied with the quality of the facilities. However, the development of the Collicutt Centre has set the bar for indoor recreation centre development in Red Deer. Future developments will draw the inevitable comparisons between whatever is proposed, and the Collicutt Centre.

These types of developments are expensive, however, and take a great deal of time to develop. Nevertheless larger, multi-use facilities are simply more popular with the public.¹

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.4.2.1 Plan for implementation of a multi-use regional recreation complex in north Red Deer in the Hazlett Lake area</p>	<p>Population growth is anticipated in the north and east quadrants of the city in areas that are currently underserved by recreation, parks and culture facilities. With the current renovation at the Dawe Centre, any new development contemplated should be first concentrated in the north central area west of the river. A multi-use complex in that region will serve not only residents of north Red Deer in the Hazlett Lake area, but also serve those in the north eastern parts of the city as they develop. Some specific actions to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Assemble land in the north central area of Red Deer, near Hazlett Lake, to accommodate the development of a multi use complex ▲ Plan for a future development on the east side of Red Deer (east of the current city limit and north of 67 Street) 	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Medium Term</p>

¹ Although not with everyone. Some groups still prefer smaller pool facilities and the like. However, the ability of centres like Collicutt to create demand is evidenced by the recreation membership mapping in which Collicutt dominates.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.4.2.2 Examine opportunities to provide a fitness/wellness complex, including a 50 metre lane pool/aquatic centre</p>	<p>While there appears to be an under service of aquatic facilities by location, Red Deer is well served by aquatic facilities. There are four existing pools that serve a variety of functions: Dawe, Recreation, Michener and Collicutt Centres. The primary gap here is in pools that can support lane swimming, diving and deep water activities. The secondary gap is the long-term availability of the Michener Centre pool currently under lease from the province.</p> <p>An aquatic facility would ideally contain an 8 lane 50 metre competition pool, 6 lane 25 metre warm-up pool, deep water tank, creative drop-in sport and aquatic activities, in order to meet the principle of multi-use and flexible development.</p> <p>However, given the cost of building and operating a major aquatic facility, and the degree to which recreation pools exist within the inventory, it is difficult to see how the costs could be justified in the short term. Shorter term options may exist to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ seek a 50m lane pool development within the context of other proposed projects such as the Wellness Centre at Red Deer College, ▲ develop in conjunction with a multi-use regional recreation facility or as a way to ▲ redevelop the current outdoor pool space at the Recreation Centre. 	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2.4.2.3 Maintain community activity centres and community centres</p>	<p>The City of Red Deer recognizes the importance of indoor community facilities that support recreation activities. These community activity centres should be supported where appropriate and consolidated where needed.</p> <p>Currently, The City has “Activity Centres” located in each community and primarily focused on winter use to support outdoor rinks and summer use to support day camps.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Incorporate into NPGS</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>The apparent over supply of these facilities may be causing a burden for some groups as they struggle to operate and maintain these facilities. Consolidation of these facilities among the larger and stronger organizations may be appropriate.</p> <p>There is proportionally fewer activity/community centres on the north side of Red Deer compared to the south side. However, it is impossible to tell if this is a function of the north being under-served (in terms of the number of these facilities) or the south being over served. This disproportion may become more exaggerated as the annexation areas in the north come on stream. Given the concern that as community associations assume greater responsibility for the provision of leisure activities, a different type of facility may be needed, therefore looking to a different model in the future, is appropriate</p> <p>Red Deer distinguishes between types of Community Activity Centres. The larger ones such as Bower may be better identified as a “community centre” rather than an” activity centre”. It is a larger facility with different amenities and activity opportunities than currently offered by the other activity centres. The recreation needs in new subdivisions may be better served through a stand alone “community centre” or as part of future school development in partnership with the Boards of Education. This may be the direction for future development in the areas to be annexed, reducing the need to develop activity centres for every one or two neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Specific actions required here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Develop community centres in new subdivisions and ensure they are available within the annexation areas to a standard of 1/20,000 of population. ▲ Develop future community activity centres and community centres in conjunction with school developments ensuring that the community portion is well signed and visually distinct from the school facility and ideally with a 	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>physical distinction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Work with the school boards to improve visual distinction and ensure community usage of current joint facilities. 	

2.5 Culture

Culture amenities have often played third fiddle in Red Deer's parks and recreation demands. At least, that is the perception of many making frequent use of Red Deer's culture amenities.

It is true that Red Deer has fallen behind in the quality and capacity of culture facilities compared to similar municipalities. Overall, this means employing a strategy of 'catch-up' to bring culture facilities in line with the demand of the community.

It is important to recognize that culture here entails a comprehensive definition. The research was not constrained to traditional notions of culture activities or amenities – attending the opera as an example. Rather the focus was on the full range of culture activities. When this more comprehensive notion of culture is adopted, it is easier to understand the poor ratings culture facilities received from younger age groups within Red Deer. These groups are looking for less formal culture venues – festival venues, as an example.

2.5.1 Strategy: Strengthen the mix and quality of culture amenities

Where culture facilities are in place, the city has outgrown their size and amenities. Equally important, maintenance of some facilities has not kept pace with the times. Addressing this requires a deliberate strategy of strengthening the mix and quality of the culture assets of the community.

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.5.1.1 Facilitate the development of a performing arts theatre that includes a concert hall in the Riverlands district</p>	<p>Red Deer has an active culture community that will continue to grow as the population increases. There are a number of performing arts spaces from a dinner theatre at the Black Knight Inn to the Red Deer College Performing Arts Centre, and including the Snell Gallery, Scott Block, Memorial Centre, Matchbox Theatre and even the Centrium. These facilities, however, are limited in their capacity to serve larger audiences (other than the Centrium). The RDC Performing Arts Centre holds 560 and the Memorial Centre 700.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>
	<p>The stakeholder interviews and the situation analysis completed for The City of Red Deer’s Strategic Plan both indicate a gap in the performance facilities in Red Deer. The size and amenities in the existing facilities – the Centrium, the Memorial Centre and the RDC Performing Arts Centre are not conducive to performances for 1500 to 2000 people in a concert environment.</p> <p>Some specific actions:</p>	
	<p>Facilitate the development of a 1500-2000 seat performing arts space that includes a concert hall, at a location identified in the Riverlands Plan, to augment the existing performance spaces in Red Deer.</p> <p>Undertake feasibility work including the exploration of funding options and partnerships.</p>	<p>Medium Term</p> <p>Short Term</p>

2.5.2 Strategy: Redevelop museum and archive spaces

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
<p>2.5.2.1 Short-term renovations</p>	<p>The City of Red Deer is in partnership with the Red Deer Museum Society that operates the MAG (Museum and Art Gallery). This operation was formerly operated by the Normandeau Cultural and Natural History Society. MAG acts as the conservation steward of historically and culturally significant collections for Red Deer and the region. The City of Red Deer also operates the Red Deer and District Archives as part of Culture Services.</p> <p>Growth of collections and programming has created serious space concerns at the facility that houses the museum and archives. Space constraints at the current facility limit the capacity of the two operations to continue to receive donated artifacts and archival material from the public in a meaningful way. The existing structure was not built to adapt to evolving standards required for artifact preservation. The 2003 Simpson Roberts Study on Rotary Recreation Park recommended that The City and its partners consider developing a new facility for the Museum and Archives. Although this report concluded that adapting the current facility for alternate uses would be more effective than attempting to retrofit the existing facility to meet the technical specifications required by museums and archives today, budget constraints and the magnitude of a project of this nature have dictated the evolution of work at this facility.</p> <p>The Red Deer Museum and Archives facility was developed in the mid 1970s. Without sufficient capital attention, it will be unable to meet the needs of a modern museum and archives. A four part approach is likely required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Complete short term renovations to address space and lifecycle issues and to improve gallery spaces and overall functionality of the facility as a “survival strategy”. ▲ Secure interim offsite storage to accommodate both the collections of both the 	<p>Immediate</p>

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.5.2.2 Interim offsite storage	<p>museum and the archives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Develop permanent offsite storage for both the museum and archives. 	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Short Term</p>
2.5.2.3 Permanent offsite storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Plan for the development of a new facility in conjunction with the Civic Centre project. 	Medium Term
2.5.2.4 New facility		

2.5.3 Strategy: Festival site

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
2.5.3.1 Explore options for new festival site	<p>The Bower Ponds site has historically hosted Canada Day celebrations, one of the largest culture festivals in Red Deer. This site is hampered by a single access, limited parking and potential impact on surrounding residents. Developing a new site would relieve pressure on both the residential area near Bower Ponds, as well as the natural area along the river.</p> <p>In 2005, following major flooding, the Canada Day Festival was moved to the Collicutt Centre. While organizers lamented the loss of the ambiance of Bower Ponds, transportation and safety were enhanced at the alternate site and citizen attendance did not drop. Many commented on the much easier access.</p> <p>A new festival site is also aligned with results of the community survey and particularly the demand for less ‘formal’ culture facilities, especially among younger populations.</p> <p>Three options exist for a new festival site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ A new facility developed within existing green space. The intent would be to try and provide the ambiance of a park located facility, while ensuring access 	Short Term

Project/Initiative	Description	Timing
	<p>and related issues are addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Partner with The Westerner in the development of a new festival site. The Westerner is interested in the development of a festival site that would be serviced and have other amenities, such as camping, that could enhance festival attendees' experience. ▲ Redevelop Bower Ponds into a major festival site incorporating the Great Chief Park area once a bridge link is assured across to the river to Riverlands. This should be done with consideration to the need to design and pursue an appropriate urban/parks interface (2.3.4.4). 	

3.0 The Priority Setting Process

USING A CRITERIA BASED APPROACH

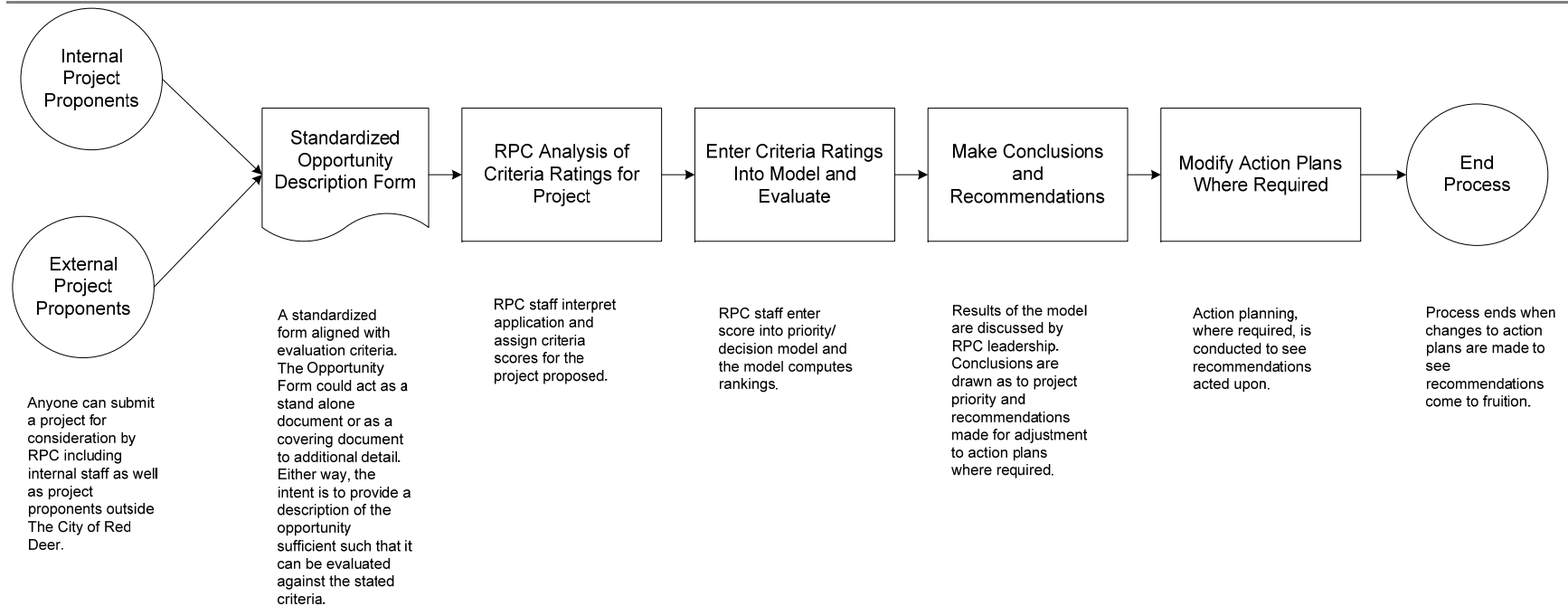
This report recommended the development and adoption of a structured process to assist with the prioritization of various recreation, parks and culture investment alternatives. Here, an outline of that process, including the use of a specific model is presented.

It is important to emphasize that the model developed to support the priority setting process does not make decisions for people. Rather, the model makes explicit the criteria used in evaluating various investment alternatives and details how various alternatives rate against these criteria in the judgment of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department or other 'evaluators'. As such, the purpose of the model, and indeed the structured priority setting process the model supports, is to improve transparency in the priority setting process.

3.1.1 The Process

The following process is proposed for managing and prioritizing the large number of potential projects that could be undertaken by The City of Red Deer

Process Flow Chart



The concept is that a standardized assessment process be applied to projects so that people will have confidence that evaluation of recreation, parks and culture projects is being done fairly and transparently.

The process applies a standardized evaluation process to all projects for consideration, regardless of source. RPC staff rate the project against the criteria and enter these results into the priority setting model. The model produces two sets of rankings: one without

consideration of cost so that the relative benefits of projects can be evaluated and the second inclusive of costs so that a cost benefit ratio can be calculated.

These results are then discussed and evaluated by Recreation, Parks and Culture staff, who make recommendations to Council.

3.1.2 Standardized Opportunity Description

The Standardized Opportunity Description (SBOD) is designed to gather basic information on proposed projects, initiatives, services or facilities in a standardized way that will facilitate the process of evaluating opportunities of different types. The SBOD is designed to be used by community groups, sponsoring organizations and internal staff – any individual or group proposing a business opportunity to the Recreation, Parks and Culture Department.

As the SBOD is organized around the standardized criteria in the model (below), it provides a level of transparency to the public about how opportunities are being considered and how the Department sees the strengths and weaknesses associated with each.

3.1.3 The Model

Structured priority setting demands that specific criteria are identified and weighted in advance of the evaluation or priority setting process itself. These criteria represent the factors that will go into establishing the priorities.

Five major criteria are established within the model. These are highlighted in the Table.

Criteria

Major Criteria	Sub Criteria	Description of Criteria
STEP ONE		
Mandate and Direction of RPC	Scale (5%)	The size of the asset must be appropriate, neither too small nor too large.
	Level of Recreation, Parks or Culture Focus (5%)	Degree of alignment between project objectives and Departmental mandate.
Sustainability	Social (8%)	Harmonious and inclusive communities
	Cultural (8%)	Vibrant and festive communities
	Economic (8%)	A flourishing and diverse local economy
	Environmental (8%)	A quality natural and built environment
	Governance (8%)	Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
STEP TWO		
Community Benefits	Community Use (10%)	Level of use and broad community appeal
	Addressing Community Gaps (10%)	Does project address a specific gap or will it cannibalize other facilities/groups?
	Flexibility (10%)	How flexible is the opportunity to changing community preferences?
Other Considerations	Options & Alternatives (5%)	How else could community needs be met other than by the proposed opportunity?
	Timing (4%)	How important is it to act now?
	Other/Special (1%)	What else is important to consider?

Major Criteria	Sub Criteria	Description of Criteria
STEP THREE		
Cost and Corporate Priority	Capital Cost (5%)	Capital costs and risks to The City of Red Deer
	Operating Cost (3%)	Operating costs and risks to The City of Red Deer
	Opportunity Costs (2%)	The cost of failure to pursue the opportunity

3.1.3.1 Weighting of Criteria

The model requires that the criteria be weighted as to their relative importance. To do this, feedback was gathered from the public, internal staff and City Council as to how important each of these criteria should be in making decisions. These weights are provided in the Table as percentages besides the various criteria listed.

3.1.3.2 Alternatives

With the criteria weighted, various development alternatives can be identified. With each alternative, the criteria related data needs to be entered. For example, the capital cost of each alternative needs to be entered (or a 9 point rating of relative cost) for that alternative.

With the individual selection criteria, decision makers may enter their own selections independently and the model will calculate group averages to be used in the criteria.

3.1.3.3 Priorities

When all the alternatives have been scored against the criteria, the model automatically calculates the ranked priorities and can provide detailed information as to how

different evaluators scored various opportunities. Similarly, reports are available that are suitable for internal use and feedback to sponsoring organizations.