

STONY PLAIN

Parks + Open Space Master Plan 2015



Acknowledgments

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan arose from collaboration with Stony Plain residents and key stakeholders.

We sincerely thank all participants for generously contributing your time and providing your ideas on how to make Stony Plain a better place.

Thank you!



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Introduction

Parks and open spaces are key contributors to the quality of life in our community. These lands help to protect the environment, connect us with each other, support active and healthy living, and provide economic benefits.

This Master Plan provides guidance on the acquisition, development and management of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation amenities to meet the needs of the community over the next ten years.

Included in this Master Plan are a vision, goals and objectives, and recommendations that provide this guidance. A separate Background Document contains the details that support this Master Plan. Results of community surveys and focus group workshops are also available.



Context

The Town of Stony Plain (Town) has several planning and policy documents that establish the foundation and overall Town direction for this Master Plan.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) 2013 is the overarching planning document that provides direction on many different topics, ranging from environmental and social issues to growth management and economic development. It also identifies a number of directives that the Town will complete over the next several years, one of which is the preparation of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

The MDP clearly recognizes the value of parks and open spaces by outlining specific initiatives to preserve, enhance, and maintain these community assets. Parks and open space are viewed as significant contributors to a healthy, livable community and need to be “protected and cherished” (MDP).



Process

This Master Plan is based on a comprehensive public process that included a community survey, open houses, and focus group workshops. We asked the community about your outdoor recreation activities, perspectives on parks and open space, satisfaction with the way things are today, and vision for the future.

We prepared the Master Plan based on your interests and needs, and asked you to review a draft to help refine the plan and establish priorities. This Master Plan reflects the unique characteristics of Stony Plain and its residents.



Our Community

Beginning as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural lands, Stony Plain has seen rapid growth over the past 40 years, and that growth is expected to continue. The assumed population figures for the purpose of this Master Plan are 17,184 in 2015 and 22,871 in 2025, based on the existing 2.9% annual growth rate. The overall growth rate over the 10-year period is 33%.

As the community grows, it will be important to ensure that sufficient parks and open space is provided in new developments, and that these areas have the amenities that meet the interests and needs of residents. The community is proportionately getting older; it will be important to provide opportunities for all age groups, particularly the older demographic.

The commuter lifestyle suggests a need for activities that can be undertaken at any time of the day. Trails are particularly important to the community for leisure and as active transportation corridors. Increasing population density will make it important to provide all residents with access to open space and nature, due to their proven benefits to health and quality of life.



Our Vision for Parks + Open Space

A vision statement is an important planning tool because it provides clarity about the desired future and a rallying point for the community, Council and staff. The vision statement for the Parks and Recreation (PR) Master Plan was generated from input received at the visioning workshops. It is written in the present tense since it describes how it is hoped the Town's parks and recreation will be described in the future:

The parks and open space in the Town of Stony Plain reflect residents' pride in the community.

The major parks are well distributed and connected with a trail system that passes through natural areas, and green corridors within neighbourhoods. Parks provide a variety of recreation and social opportunities that support healthy and active lifestyles and a sense of community.

The natural environment is respected, protected and enhanced for the multiple benefits it provides.

Goals + Objectives

The following are the goals and objectives of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The information is derived primarily from focus groups:

Natural Environment

1. Protect and enhance the quality, integrity and sustainability of the environment.
 - a) Restore and enhance habitats and ecosystems in woodlands and along riparian areas.
 - b) Establish new habitat areas as part of stormwater management features.
 - c) Manage all natural areas for long-term sustainability.
 - d) Use a sustainable approach to planting in natural or naturalized areas,
 - e) Support and encourage stewardship and nature education.



Healthy Living + Wellness

2. Accommodate the outdoor recreation needs of the community as the population expands and evolves.
 - a) Increase parkland and outdoor recreation amenities and services as the population grows.
 - b) Provide sports opportunities from beginner to competitive levels.
 - c) Consider opportunities for the larger numbers of people, including young families, living in high density housing.



Connectivity + Accessibility

3. Provide a connected and accessible trail system that links parks, recreation/ community centres, schools and key destinations.
 - a) Expand the trail and bikeway systems to link existing trails with each other, achieving the ability to walk and bike safely throughout the Town.
 - b) Improve accessibility to and within parks and recreation/community centres through universal design.
 - c) Expand access along riparian and stormwater management corridors.
 - d) Consider active transportation as a whole, integrating trails with bikeways, and considering the interrelationships with vehicular access, parking and links to surrounding communities.



Social Connections + Community Engagement

4. Strengthen the involvement and attachment of residents to the community.
 - a) Involve residents in park planning and design processes.
 - b) Engage residents in improving the physical and social roles of their community and neighbourhood parks.
 - c) Plan for and design a range of seating areas and gathering spaces within parks and open spaces.
 - d) Encourage and support more festivals and events in the community.





Quality Experiences

5. Provide high quality experiences and opportunities to retain existing and attract future residents to the community.
 - a) Improve the visual quality and comfort of parks and open spaces through more tree planting, unique designs and varied amenities.
 - b) Provide adequate parkland in all areas of the City.
 - c) Provide access to nature within a reasonable distance of all residents.
 - d) Encourage and support revitalization efforts downtown that enhance parks and open space and walkability.



Facilities to Meet Needs

6. Provide a diverse range of facilities to meet community needs as efficiently as possible.
 - a) Expand multi-use opportunities in parks, trails and open spaces.
 - b) Maintain, upgrade and replace older infrastructure to better serve community needs and aspirations.
 - c) Provide new amenities that reflect current practices, demographics and needs.
 - d) Improve the efficiency and use of existing parks and open spaces.
 - e) Identify park requirements prior to development, and work with developers to have these requirements met.



Partnerships



7. Expand partnerships with other service providers and the community to maximize opportunities.
 - a) Continue and increase collaboration with the school districts to maximize the use of amenities and opportunities for the school population and community.
 - b) Collaborate with the private industry to provide complementary services.
 - c) Increase collaboration with adjacent municipalities in relation to the provision of amenities and fees.
 - d) Encourage and support volunteerism and community groups.

Communication

8. Improve and expand communication services related to parks and outdoor recreation.
 - a) Promote healthy and active lifestyles.
 - b) Promote parks, trails and outdoor recreation opportunities.
 - c) Improve way-finding with respect to parks and trails.





Recommendation Topics

The following sections list the recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. These fall within the following topic areas:



Recommendations for Parks + Open Space Supply

1. When planning new parks, consider the distribution of parks and trails over broader land areas, at least one section at a time, rather than focusing on the quarter section.
2. Strive for a minimum of one community park within 800 metres and neighbourhood parks within 400 metres of each resident, with connecting linear parks, located as needed to meet site-specific conditions.
3. Establish new community parks of at least 4 ha in the south and east portions of the community, ideally diverse parks that include natural or naturalized areas, recreation amenities and sports fields.
4. When considering parkland dedication, do not count the land occupied by stormwater ponds (below high water) as part of the 10% MR.
5. Establish the following site selection criteria for community and neighbourhood parks:
 - Locate community parks adjacent to secondary and elementary schools where possible.
 - Locate community and neighbourhood parks near protected natural areas where possible.
 - Lay out community and neighbourhood parks to include trails that provide continuous connections through the development, with links to external trails to parks, schools and other destinations.
 - Locate linear parks as connectors to community and neighbourhood parks and external trails.
 - Locate community and neighbourhood parks with pedestrian access from all four sides if possible.
 - Locate community and neighbourhood parks with significant street frontage to a local or collector road on at least one side.
 - Use the minimum sizes in section 3.1 for community and neighbourhood parks.

Recommendations for Planning Processes + Specific Parks

PLANNING

6. Involve the community in comprehensive park master planning processes for new destination parks or significant upgrades to existing destination parks.
 - Include site inventory and analysis, visioning, programming, preparation of options and a draft plan, and generation of a preferred plan and management strategies as part of these processes, with community engagement at all key stages.
7. Involve neighbourhoods in planning processes to upgrade community and neighbourhood parks.
 - Involve two neighbourhood engagements in these processes where possible, one to solicit input and generate ideas, and the second to present a draft plan for comments (the latter could be online if that is acceptable to or preferred by the neighbourhood).





DESIGN

Parks and Open Space in General

8. Establish the following design criteria for parks in general, recognizing that all criteria will not be relevant to all parks:
 - Protect existing habitat and environmental resources
 - Introduce nature where there is none on site
 - Plant more trees to provide shade for the comfort of visitors
 - Design unique and attractive environments and features that draw residents to the park
 - Provide a variety of activity opportunities for different ages and demographic groups
 - Consider universal design for all people, including accessibility as a component of this
 - Consider safety and security through CPTED, balancing this with the importance of including vegetation in parks
 - Include locations and amenities for sitting, gathering and picnicking
 - Provide opportunities for year-round use
 - Provide opportunities for public art
9. Establish names for all destination, community and neighbourhood parks, and use these names on park signs, maps and all Town materials.



DESTINATION PARKS

Rotary Park

- 10.** Prepare a park master plan, with community engagement, including a comprehensive site and use analysis, visioning, programming, consideration of options, and preparation of a proposed site plan and management strategies.

Centennial Park

- 11.** Once additional land to the west of the park is acquired, prepare a park master plan, with community engagement, including a comprehensive site and use analysis, visioning, programming, consideration of options, and preparation of a proposed site plan and management strategies.
 - Consider four adult-size ball diamonds (one more than currently exists).
 - Consider renovating the surfaces of the four sports fields as needed.
 - Consider lights on one ball diamond, if the turf will be able to sustain the increased use.
 - Consider a central fieldhouse containing washrooms, showers, concession and meeting space.
 - Consider upgrading the track.

Golf Course

- 12.** Conduct a feasibility study, with community engagement, and determine the most appropriate uses for this site, considering social, environmental and economic factors.
 - Consider play opportunities for small children at the golf course.



SCHOOL PARKS

- 13.** Update the Joint Use Agreement with school districts, ideally using the same agreement for all schools and school districts.
 - Establish clear direction on roles and responsibilities, administration of the agreement, planning of amenities, booking, charges, and maintenance.
- 14.** Establish a Joint Use committee of School District, Town, Spruce Grove and County administrators to prepare and implement the Joint Use Agreement.
- 15.** Apply the design criteria for parks (# 8) to the design of parks adjacent to school sites. In addition, consider the following:
 - Provide spaces for outdoor classes.
 - Naturalize areas within these parks and plant trees to the degree possible.
- 16.** Support the School Districts in developing school grounds as park areas.



CAPITAL / LIFE CYCLE

Shikaoi Park

17. Upgrade aging infrastructure.

Other Community and Neighbourhood Parks

18. Improve other community parks and neighbourhood parks based on the interests of surrounding residents and identified needs. Consider more trees, more seating and gathering areas, picnic amenities, and loop paths as potential enhancements to parks.

OPERATIONS

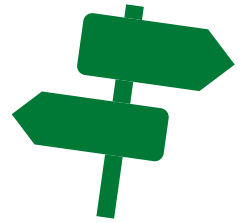
19. Offer the opportunity for neighbourhoods to have gatherings at their parks with the purpose of community building and naming these parks.
 - Provide some incentives for these events, e.g., food coupons, assistance in setting up.



Recommendations for Amenities + Use

TRAILS

- 20.** Plan and design the trail system based on best practices.
 - Design paths and trails to be a logical network, with loops where there is sufficient space.
 - Connect trails to all schools, major parks, neighbourhoods, downtown, and other important destinations.
 - Route trails through natural areas where possible, acquiring additional width next to riparian areas if necessary to respect environmental considerations.
 - Make trail heads and staging areas identifiable, and provide infrastructure to suit the location, e.g., parking, kiosk sign, garbage bins, dog bag dispensers.
 - Involve Town staff in the planning of trails, with community engagement where major new trails are planned.
 - Include environmental considerations in the planning of major new trails through natural areas, and design trails to minimize environmental impacts.
- 21.** Establish new trails to improve connectivity.
 - Build trails (through Town capital projects) where there is no new development planned.
 - Require developers to build trails within their projects that connect internally through the development and to external trails.





22. On routes along roads with existing or anticipated high use by children, consider bike lanes so parents can ride alongside their children.
23. Prepare standards for trail amenities (e.g., signage, staging areas, rest areas, benches, picnic tables, dog bag dispensers, waste receptacles, lighting) with a minimum spacing where applicable.
 - Apply the standards to all trail construction on public and private land.
24. Work with the City of Spruce Grove to integrate the trail systems of both communities.
25. Work with CN Rail and Alberta Transportation to provide better connections across the rail and highway barriers, respectively.
26. Consider an “adopt-a-trail” program for involving volunteers in monitoring and removal of minor litter along trails.

FESTIVALS + EVENTS

27. Encourage and support more festivals and events in the community.

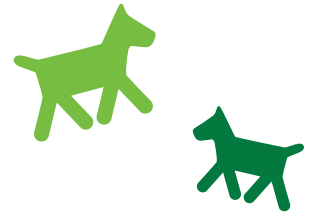


PLAY + EXERCISE AREAS

- 28.** Require playgrounds in all new destination, community and neighbourhood parks, with the equipment scale relative to the park type, and the play elements suited to the anticipated ages of children.
 - Provide inclusive equipment and overall inclusive design at destination parks and consider installing at least inclusive swings at community parks.
 - Use poured rubber as the preferred surface.
- 29.** Encourage more creativity in the design of playgrounds, including nature play, creative features and play environments, especially in destination and community parks.
- 30.** Work with the community to better understand interests in outdoor exercise equipment, and make adjustments as required.
 - Consider relocating the outdoor exercise equipment in Rotary After Dark Park, or identify a strategy for attracting more use, e.g., programs, events, signage.
- 31.** Establish a replacement cycle for playground equipment and surfacing.
 - Encourage school districts to upgrade playgrounds per this cycle, raising funds through PACs if necessary.
- 32.** Consider the development of new spray parks in the east and south areas of Town.



DOG ACTIVITIES



- 33.** Consider dog management measures including the following:
 - Consider the designation of off-leash and no-dog areas.
 - Review ways to improve compliance with regulations, e.g., on-leash, cleaning up.
- 34.** Improve amenities in the Dog Park, including the addition of an area for small dogs.
 - Explore methods for reducing mosquitoes at the pond, e.g., more native vegetation, simple water jet fountain for water circulation.
 - Consider motion-activated lighting.
- 35.** Consider the establishment of three new neighbourhood-level off-leash dog parks in the south-west, south and south-east of Stony Plain.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

- 36.** Consider two designated tobogganing hills in different locations.



FIELD SPORTS

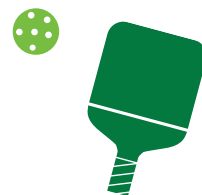
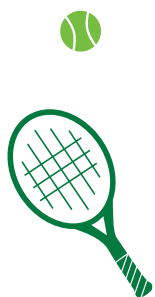


- 37.** Upgrade and rebuild the sports fields at Centennial Park to be confirmed through the park master plan.
- 38.** Conduct further consultation with sports groups to understand needs and to identify the appropriate levels of service.
 - Consider needs for access to washrooms, shower, and change rooms
 - Consider surface quality, irrigation and drainage
- 39.** Phase out the use of St. Andrews for community sports, using it and South Creek only for overflow youth fields as needed.
- 40.** Work with sports groups to expand the times when they practice and play to make better use of the fields.
- 41.** Consider allowing sports groups to participate in field maintenance.
- 42.** In order to accommodate the 33% increase in population over the next 10 years, build the following new fields:
 - Six new sports fields, of which two are adult size.
 - Four new ball diamonds, of which two are adult size.



COURT SPORTS

- 43.** Encourage or partner with the school districts to upgrade existing basketball courts.
- 44.** Consider multi-purpose sport courts in new or upgraded destination, community and neighbourhood parks.
- 45.** Establish a life cycle schedule for improving the surface of tennis and pickleball courts.
- 46.** Build the following new outdoor sports facilities within new parks to accommodate population growth:
 - Four dedicated pickleball courts (based on increasing activity and the need for larger courts)
 - Two new tennis courts on or near a school site (based on a similar amount of use per population)



COMMUNITY GARDENS + URBAN AGRICULTURE

- 47.** Encourage and support the development of more community gardens, especially close to downtown.
- 48.** Encourage and support community-based food production if there is interest in the community.



YOUTH FACILITIES

- 49.** Include the youth on all planning and design related to youth facilities in parks, per the Cultural Master Plan.
 - Ask youth to consider the need for more features at the skate park and/or some skate facilities in the south of Stony Plain.
 - Engage youth in identifying barriers to increased participation at the BMX track.
- 50.** Encourage more youth programs and groups to help facilitate new projects and provide input on planning.
- 51.** Consider neighbourhood-level bike skills and or skateboard areas in communities in the south part of Stony Plain.
- 52.** Consider partnering with the BMX club in the development of washrooms, concession and picnic area, and support the BMX club in attracting more youth.

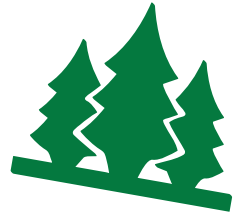
PUBLIC ART

- 53.** Integrate the Cultural Master Plan recommendations into parks and open space planning and design.
- 54.** Encourage the inclusion of public art in parks and open space, potentially as part of infrastructure, e.g., benches, lights, bridges, bike racks.

OTHER AMENITIES

- 55.** Pursue opportunities for washrooms accessible from outdoors at schools, especially new or renovating schools.
- 56.** Pursue opportunities to locate parks and community buildings where washrooms can be shared, e.g., recreation/community centres, golf course.

Recommendations for Management + Operations



MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AREAS

- 57.** Provide information on signs, brochures, media, social media and Town website on natural areas and measures required to protect them.
- 58.** Provide information to developers, developments and residents on landscape maintenance near natural areas.
- 59.** Encourage and support stewardship activities, e.g., planting of native trees in natural areas.
- 60.** Prepare guidelines for Town operations staff related specifically to management of natural areas.

PARKS OPERATIONS + SUSTAINABILITY

- 61.** Work with the community to better understand their concerns about maintenance, and increase attention to those areas.



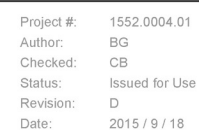
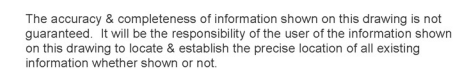
Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan, which is included in the Background Report, identifies the type of work, phasing, and costs or responsibility, based on input from the community and analysis by Town staff and the consultants. It also outlines the next steps for incorporating the recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan into the Town's policies, bylaws and practices.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--|
|  | Destination Parks |  | Recreational Facilities |
|  | Community Parks |  | Community Bulletin Boards (2013) |
|  | Neighbourhood Parks |  | Playgrounds (2013) |
|  | Linear Park |  | Signalized Pedestrian Crossings (2013) |
|  | Open Space |  | Trail |
|  | Natural Areas |  | Pedestrian Walkway |
|  | School Park |  | New Residential Development Area |
|  | Town Owned Land |  | Parcels (2014) |
| | |  | Stony Plain Municipal Boundary (2014) |



URBAN
systems

FIGURE 1