

Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Master Plan - Update

Town of Okotoks

July 2023

Photo from: <https://www.facebook.com/townofokotoks>





The Town of Okotoks would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes Blackfoot Confederacy members Siksika, Piikani and the Kainai First Nations, the Stoney Nakoda of Bearspaw, Chiniki and Goodstoney First Nations, the Dene of Tsuut'ina First Nations, the Metis Nation Region 3, and all those who make Treaty 7 lands their home.



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1.0 Introduction



Recreation, parks, and leisure services are important contributors to the quality of life of residents and visitors to the Town of Okotoks. For this reason, the Town invests in facilities, spaces, and programs that enable people to be more active and more connected to each other and their community.

In practicing good governance, the Town of Okotoks completed a “Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master Plan” in 2017. The Master Plan laid out a roadmap for the delivery of recreation, parks, and leisure service in Okotoks.

Vision (2017 Master Plan)

Residents and visitors are engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation, parks, and leisure activities.

The 2017 Master Plan also identified four focus areas and a total of twenty-five strategies. A review of the progress the Town has made in the implementation of these strategies is presented in [Section 7.0](#) of this Update.

In July 2022, the Town of Okotoks moved to update the 2017 Master Plan. Because of the importance of these services, it is important to ensure that they are proactively planned and managed. The Town has grown, the composition of its population has changed, utilization patterns may have shifted, and people’s preferences may have changed. The update of the 2017 Plan is important to ensure that decisions are made on the most up-to-date information.

The Master Plan update was developed by completing several tasks, many of which were completed in the development of the 2017 Master Plan:

- An analysis of the demographics of the Okotoks has been completed.
- An examination of the facility inventory and its utilization was undertaken.
- Town policies were reviewed to ensure this update reflects current direction.
- Provincial policies and direction were reviewed.
- Broad societal issues are presented as elements that need to be reflected as municipal decisions are made.

Community Public participation was completed including a household survey, community group survey, and community pop-ups.

This update to the 2017 Master Plan is a companion document to that Master Plan. Unless otherwise stated, the foundational elements as well as the strategies are carried forward. This update is not intended to take the place of the earlier plan; rather it is an exercise to learn what progress has been made on the earlier plan and to identify what strategies need to be carried forward along with any potential new strategies the Town should employ.

This Report includes the following sections:

- Context update – a review of changes to Okotoks since the 2017 Master Plan was completed. This includes a look at the demographics of the Town. It also examines utilization of facilities and pertinent municipal, provincial, and federal policies. Broad societal issues are presented as factors to consider as decisions are made.
- Public participation – all findings gathered are presented under a separate cover; this section includes a synopsis of the findings.
- Master Plan update – this presents the philosophical foundations from the 2017 Master Plan and offers any tweaks or updates. As well it reviews all the strategies from the 2017 Plan and identifies implementation progress and necessary adjustments. Some strategies are carried forward while some new ones are identified.
- Implementation and evaluation – implementation considerations are offered to assist with putting into practice the recommendations. As well, some direction on how to measure progress with implementation of the strategies is identified.



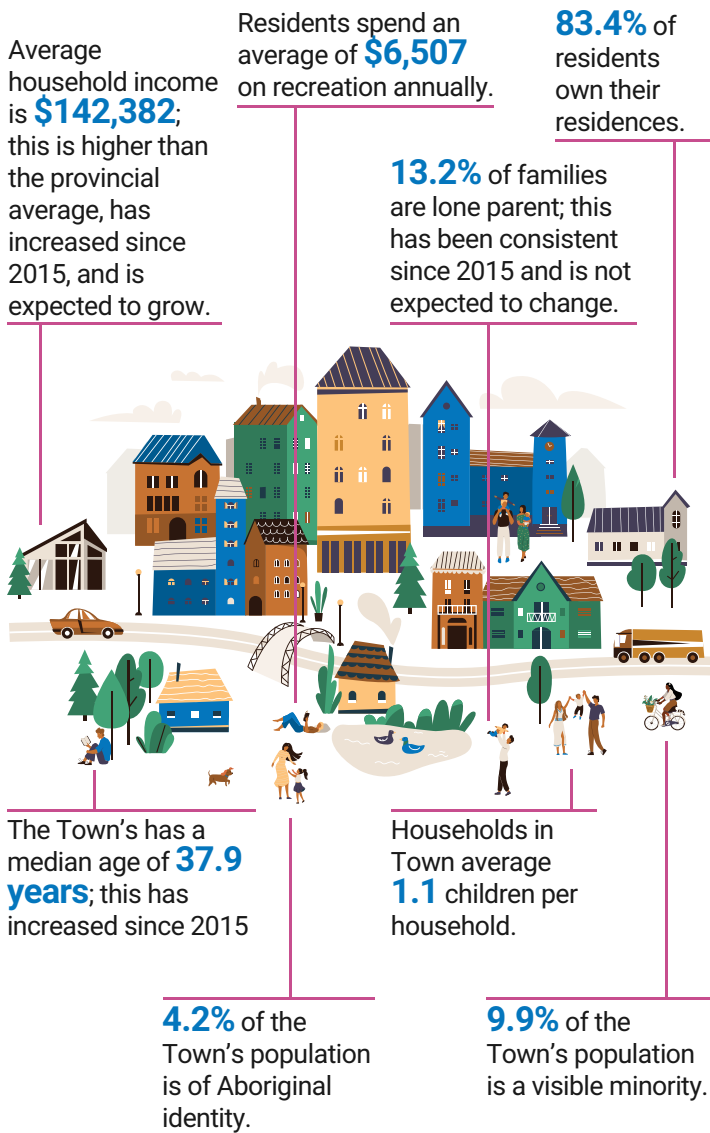
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Context Update



The Town of Okotoks is constantly evolving. Growth is occurring in terms of land mass as well as population. Demographics are changing and new residents are moving to the community; natural growth is occurring as well. When the 2017 Master Plan was developed, the most recent local census referenced (2015) showed a population of 28,016. Since then, another federal census has been conducted and the Town is reported to have a population of 30,405 (2021). This is a growth of 8.5% over a six year period (annual average of 1.4%).











Some key statistics about the Town's current 2022 population that impact recreation, parks and leisure provision are as follows:



From 2016 to 2021, Okotoks was the seventh fastest growing (4.8%) municipality in Alberta¹ behind only High River (5.4%) and Canmore (14.3%) in the Calgary area.

Further to this observed growth, the Town Municipal Development Plan (2021) identifies that the community could grow to 44,366 by 2041 and 68,166 by 2076. It is obvious that to simply maintain service levels in recreation, parks and leisure services, investment will need to be made in new facilities and spaces, programs, staffing, and other related expenses as growth continues to occur.

Although overall population density can be a good proxy for geographic distribution of parks and open spaces, it is known that although all facets of the population benefit from parks and open space, some can benefit more than others. The populations that can benefit most from access to parks and recreation are best described as:

-  youth,
-  lone parent families,
-  seniors,
-  recent immigrants,
-  those with aboriginal identity,
-  visible minorities,
-  no higher education (No Diploma, Certificate or Degree)
-  lower than median income
-  higher unemployment, and
-  renters as opposed to home owners.

¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/fastest-growing-communities-alberta-2021-census-1.6347448>

2.1 Asset Inventory and Utilization

As the Town continues to grow, so too does its inventory of recreation, parks, and leisure assets. Since 2017, the Town introduced a new ice sheet, leisure ice, and multipurpose rooms (3) at the Centennial Centre and increased total hectares of parkland. The following tables outline current inventories of indoor and outdoor recreation amenities.

Since 2017, the following additional outdoor amenities have been developed in the Town.



Further, there are several projects planned for development.

- 1 disc golf course with a second course being built in 2023
- Outdoor boarded rink to be built in 2023
- Bike pump track to be built in 2023

The Town's current trail system is presented as follows. Trails inventory has been expanded throughout the Town since 2017.

Okotoks has 97 km of trails (up from 85km in 2017), 4 km of nature/interpretive trails (up from 2km in 2017), 194 ha of public parks and open space (up from 170ha in 2017), and 326 ha of natural area (up from 325ha in 2017).

In terms of utilization all outdoor and indoor amenities have sustained growth as new inventory is added.



2.2 Broad Issues and Trends

Although many of these broader issues and trends were apparent in 2017, the pandemic and other circumstances have intensified their relevance in a recreation, parks, and leisure context.

The **impacts of climate change** are having a more pronounced impact on participation and seasonality as well as on the design and operations of both indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces. Minimizing the environmental impact / footprint of operations is a priority for many municipalities. This is driven both internally as well as externally with funding agencies such as the federal government including more stringent environmental impact reduction conditions on funding and support they offer. Related to climate is the impact that events have on infrastructure (such as the floods experienced in Okotoks) and the repair and investment they require to be dealt with and the use of recreation facilities and spaces as emergency management facilities in times of crisis. All of these have an impact on the planning and operation of recreation, parks and leisure assets.

Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility were important considerations in 2017 and continue to be today. Recreation, parks and leisure services accrue many benefits in a community. Some benefits are direct to users of these services while others are indirect and apply to all residents, regardless of their participation. That being said, some facets of our communities can benefit more from having access to quality recreation opportunities;

provision of service needs to consider this and target those who stand the most to benefit. These important services can also be a great medium for understanding, education, and connection.

Aging infrastructure in the recreation, parks and leisure sector has been an issue for the past 20+ years. It was highlighted as an important consideration in 2017 and continues to be today. Increased pressure to sustain and extend current service levels accompanied by inflationary pressures on repair costs and overall municipal budgets have widened the infrastructure deficits in many communities. It is vital that the Town plans to sustain existing service levels through prudent reinvestment and reserve budgeting in lockstep with planning to increase inventories to service expected growth.

In 2017 there was already a shift from structured group activities to **spontaneous, individual pursuits**. The pandemic accentuated this shift which led to enhanced demands for outdoor spaces and places for activity. There is still a shift away from organized sport in many instances and for those that are still within sport, the gap between competitive and recreational participation is widening with the introduction of private youth sports leagues, sport academies, and specialized amateur training opportunities. There is a direct relation between this widening gap and affordability of participants.



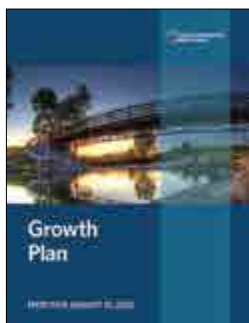
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Policy Enhancements: Local



Since 2017, the Town has either developed new or updated important policies related to recreation, parks, and leisure.

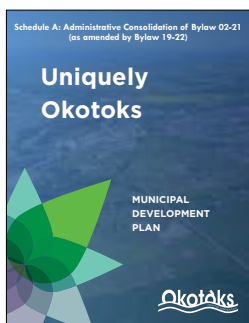
3.1 Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board Growth Plan (2022)



At an even broader level, Section 3.5.4 of the [Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board Growth Plan](#) (effective 2022) does provide some direction on recreation. It stresses the importance of regional collaboration and the value of consistent data collection to support Evidence Based Decision Making.

The CMRB also has developed a report entitled [Options for Enhancing Regional Recreation](#) (2020) that provides some direction as to how the Town could establish regional relationships in the provision of recreation and parks. This would obviously be beyond the strong and effective relationship the Town already has with Foothills County through the Shared Service Agreement and the joint ownership of the Cavalry FC Regional Field House.

3.2 Municipal Development Plan (2021)



Section 7 of the [2021 Municipal Development Plan](#) provides guidance regarding parks, recreation and natural areas. There is a clear focus on conserving, restoring and protecting local ecosystems, and strengthening the connections between residents and nature. Other priorities include:

- Maintaining a healthy urban forest
- Providing accessible recreation and leisure opportunities

- Enhancing linkages, embracing all seasons and considering life cycle costs in service delivery
- Enhancing access to and equity in recreation participation
- Focus on capacity building
- Using data better
- Implementing a parks and open spaces classification system

There is also some guidance in the MDP related to siting recreation amenities and a strong requirements for all new developments to include recreation amenities.



3.3 2022-2025 Town of Okotoks Strategic Plan (2022)



Developed in consultation with residents and approved by Council in September 2022, the Strategic Plan reflects Council's commitment to deliver services that are in the best interest of current and future residents of Okotoks. The Strategic Plan presents a vision for Okotoks:

A vibrant, resilient, and connected community that fosters the wellbeing of land and people; a community to call home.

The Strategic Plan identifies five outcomes including:

1. Responsibly Managed Growth;
2. Strong Local Economy;
3. Enhanced Culture & Community Health;
4. Demonstrated Environmental Leadership; and
5. Organizational Excellence.

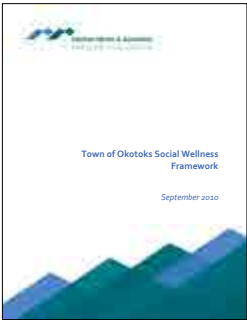
Specifically within the Enhanced Culture & Community Health outcome is an initiative to, "increase sport and recreational opportunities."

3.4 Town of Okotoks Response to the Social Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic (2022)

Since the 2017 Plan, the Town focused on social impacts of COVID-19 and highlighted its commitment to support the mental and physical wellness of residents and increasing community connection. Recreation, parks and leisure are a key contributor to this end.

This work highlighted a renewed focus for the Town related to providing inclusive and accessible options, engaging youth, combating social isolation, improving communication and enhancing social connection and civility – most of these themes were highlighted in the 2017 Master Plan and should continue to be a focus for recreation, parks and leisure.

3.5 Town of Okotoks Social Wellness Framework (2010)



The Framework connects and brings coherence to the factors identified as playing a key role in social wellness in Okotoks. The Framework is also a decision-making and planning tool. Six community values comprise the Social Wellness Framework; these include the following.

- Natural environment: preserving the natural environment and adopting sustainable environmental practices.
- Sense of community: fostering connected and caring neighbourhoods

Personal growth: supporting education, lifelong learning and personal development.

- Economic vitality: providing a range of opportunities to engage in meaningful work that benefits the individual and the community.
- Social inclusion: providing the community infrastructure that allows all residents to meet their basic needs and be engaged in and make a meaningful contribution to the community.
- Health and wellbeing: supporting individuals and families to realize physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.

While several are pertinent to the provision of recreation, parks and leisure, one recommendation in particular directly aligns with service provision: develop strategies that provide reduced costs for enrolling in multiple recreation, sport and cultural programs.

3.6 Culture, Heritage & Arts Master Plan (2018)



The Master Plan focuses on connecting and engaging citizens of all ages and backgrounds to nurture grassroots cultural development. Following the Town's vision, the Master Plan describes a principle (Vibrant Culture and Heritage) that serves as a vision for the Master Plan.

Residents joyfully embrace Okotoks, and cultivate a rich quality of life. Okotoks provides access to a wide range of cultural resources, fostering audiences, participants and creators who contribute to community building and economic development.

The strong tradition of community events is a hallmark of living in Okotoks. Residents are engaged in civic life, and Town Council and administration promote open dialogue.

Five goals are included:

1. To grow the capacity and leadership of the Okotoks community.
2. To broker opportunities for all Okotokians to come together through culture.
3. To connect people with the history of Okotoks.
4. To ensure culture is a contributing force in the Okotoks economy.
5. To champion the value of culture for Okotoks.

3.7 Environmental Master Plan (2018)



The Environmental Master Plan (EMP) is a plan with the intent of helping the Town achieve its vision as a thriving, sustainable community. It outlines strategies targeting:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Ecological protection and enhancement;
- Urban landscape design;
- Water conservation;
- Waste reduction; and
- Green economic growth.

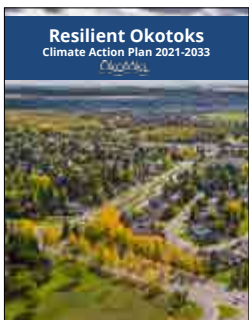
There are several goals that align with the foundations of the Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Master Plan. Some are noted below:

- Increase residents' access to and connection to nature.
- Integrate various modes of transportation into our urban fabric, including active transportation and public transit.

Environmental impacts due to the provision of recreation, parks, and leisure services need to be recognized. Decisions related to these services, particularly regarding infrastructure development and maintenance, need to consider the outcomes of the Environmental Master Plan

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3.8 Resilient Okotoks: Climate Action Plan (2021)

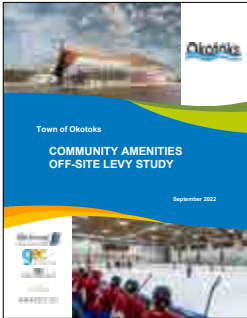


The Town has created this Climate Action Plan to guide Okotoks on the course to its desired future. The plan has been designed to meet the Town of Okotoks' target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, while also making the community more resilient and a better place to live. It establishes a detailed pathway to 2033 with guidance to 2050, while highlighting strategies that will help move the community forward for many years to come.

The Action Plan establishes goals across eight priority areas. Several of these goals have particular relevance to the provision of recreation, parks, and leisure services including the following:

- Okotoks is a leader in low-carbon, resilient building design.
- Getting around Okotoks is convenient and safe, with ample options that reduce reliance on cars

3.9 Community Amenities Off-site Levy Study (2022)



The Town recently completed the Community Amenities Off-site Levy Study (2022). The study identified some gaps in service provision in the Town now and as it grows to 60,000 residents. These gaps include:

- Aquatics (contemporary leisure)
- Climbing wall
- Indoor playground
- Studio space
- Ice arena

The study also provide revised service targets (compared to the 2017 Plan) as follows:

- 1 swim lane per 3,000 residents
- 1 ice rink per 10,000 residents
- 1 hard court gymnasium per 20,000 residents
- 1 indoor turf field per 20,000 residents

Finally, the study outlines a program for a new expansion at the Okotoks Recreation Centre (including aquatics, dryland, children's play, climbing wall, community hub, family resource centre and support areas) as well as a program for a new twin ice pad. Of note is that the total value of both of these projects is estimated at \$109M (2022). Both of these programs will be key in future capital planning for major indoor recreation facility development.



4.0

Community Engagement Synopsis



A varied program of public participation was implemented to gather the opinions and perspectives of organizations and residents in Okotoks. The tactics employed included two online surveys as well as pop-up or intercept engagements. Regarding the surveys, one was fielded with Okotoks households. In this instance households were sent a postcard in the mail promoting the survey and providing an access code unique to each household. The second survey was fielded with groups who use (or may use) recreation facilities and spaces in Okotoks. Finally, several pop-ups were implemented in which study team members went into the community to solicit some top of mind thoughts from community members.

Tactic	Participation	Margin of Error
Community Survey – Coded Access Household Survey	898	+ 3.3% 19 times out of 20
Group Survey	12	N/A
Community Pop-Ups	4 locations	N/A

**If the survey was fielded using random selection, this sample size would yield a margin of error of +3.3% 19 times out of 20.*

The detailed findings from all public participation activities are presented under a separate cover entitled “What We Heard Report”. A synopsis of the findings from each engagement tactic is presented over the next few pages.



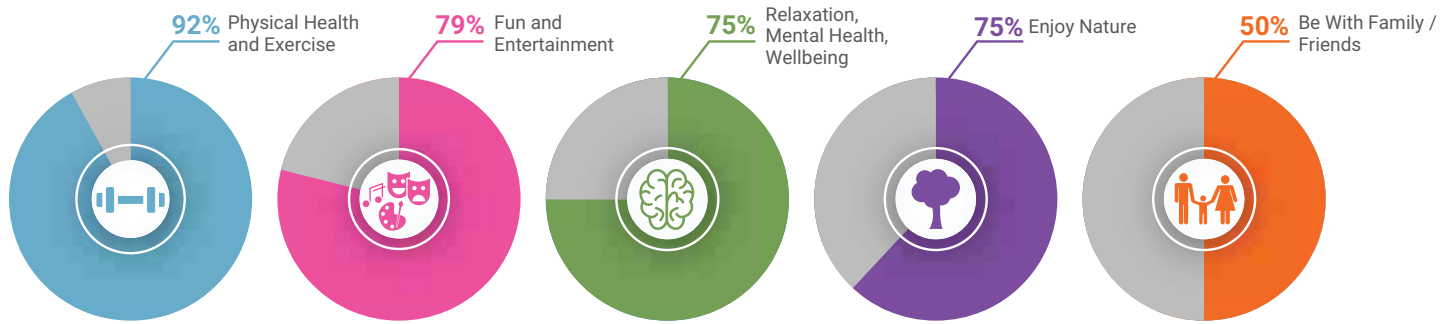
4.1 Engagement Conclusions

- There is a good level of satisfaction with the availability of indoor and outdoor recreation, leisure and parks facilities, amenities, and programs in Okotoks.
- Barriers impacting respondents’ participation in recreation, leisure and parks activities include the hours of operation (e.g. schedules of programs and facility hours) and cost of participation. Notably, there is some belief that nothing prevents participation in recreation activities. For groups, a main barrier is gaining sufficient access to facilities.
- The aquatic centre and paved pathways & community parks are the most utilized facilities and amenities in Okotoks.
- There is a belief that the local community, as a whole, benefits from recreation, parks and leisure programs and facilities.
- There is belief that there is a need for more leisure swimming pools and walking/cycling trails.
- Community demand and the multi-use nature of facilities should be key criteria when the Town makes decisions about facilities.
- Residents are generally informed about recreation, leisure and parks opportunities and programs but not about financial assistance programs.
- There is an expectation among groups that participation levels will see an increase.

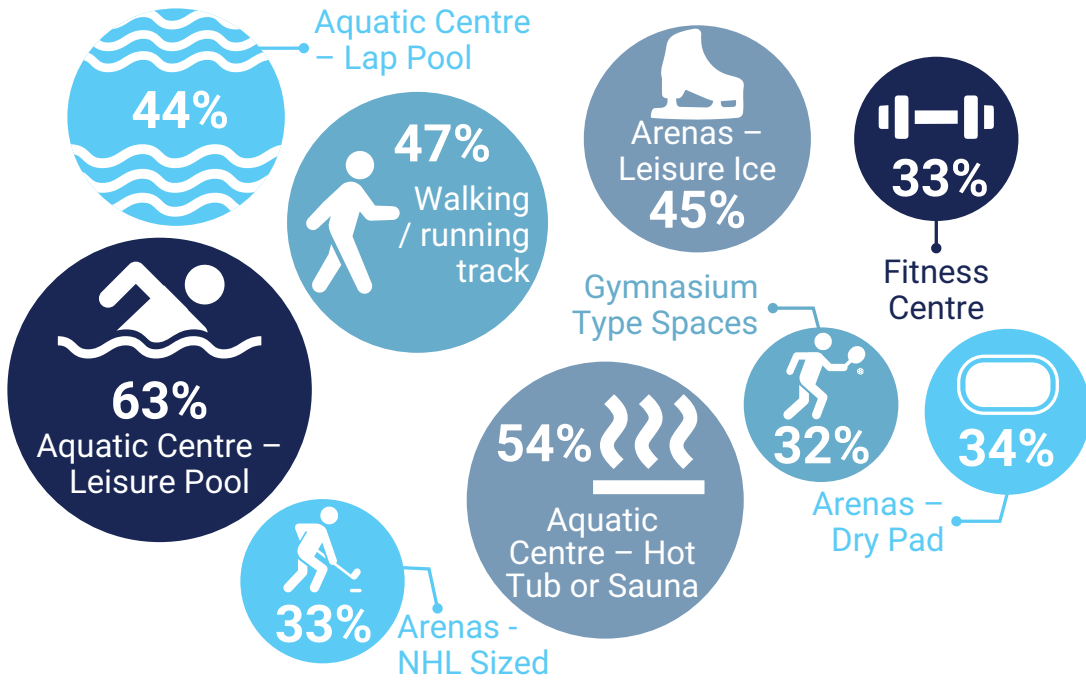
4.2 Community Survey

A synopsis of the survey findings is presented below.

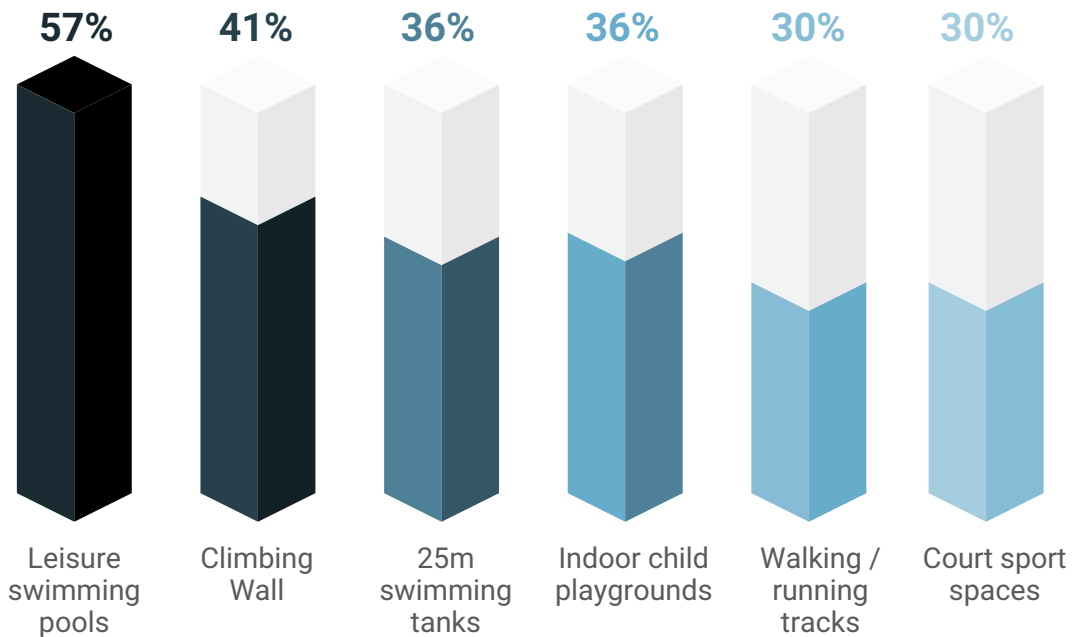
Primary Reasons to Participate in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Activities



Most Used / Visited Facilities - Indoor Facilities



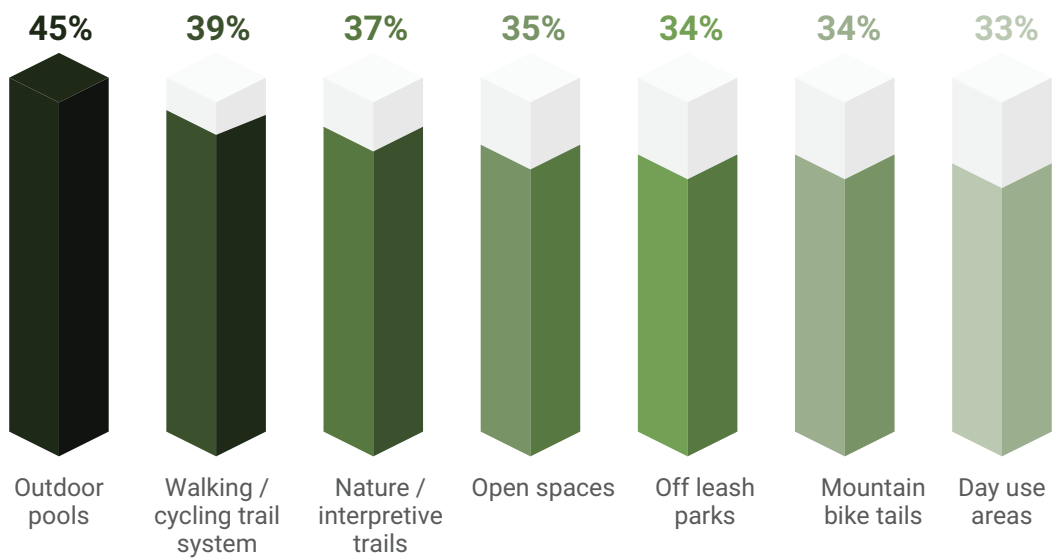
Facility Priorities: Indoor Amenities - More Needed



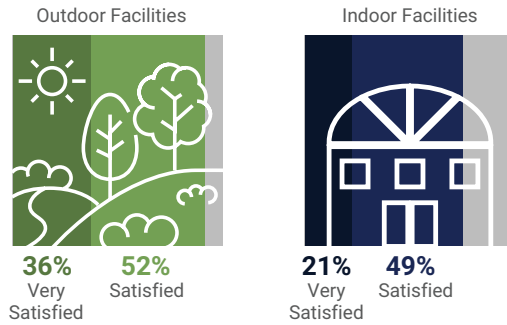
Most Used / Visited Facilities - Outdoor Facilities



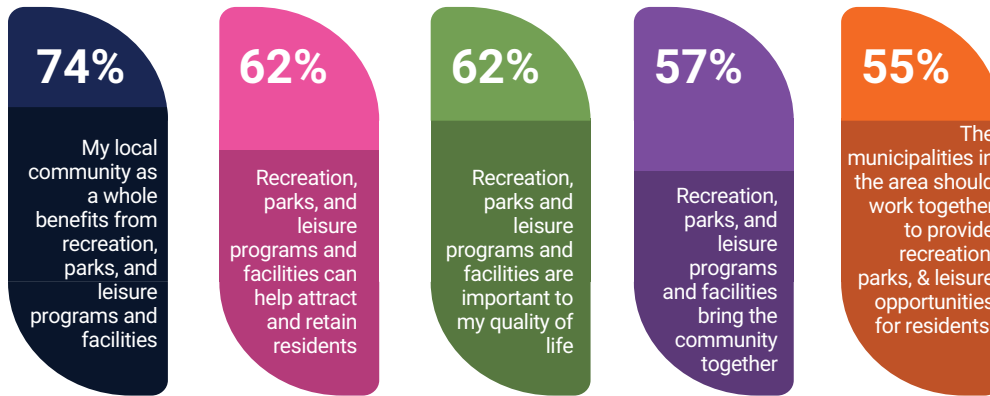
Facility Priorities: Outdoor Amenities - More Needed



Satisfaction with the Availability of Facilities and Amenities



Values and Considerations (Strongly Agree)



Prioritization Criteria - Top Five



4.3 Group Survey

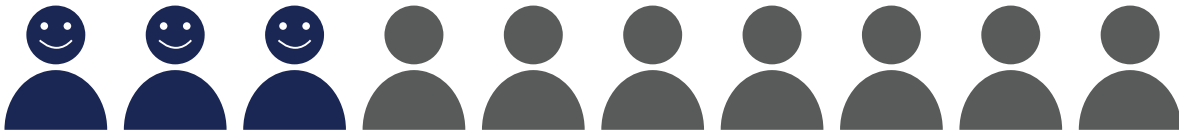
A synopsis of the survey findings is presented below. Note: not all questions were answered by all respondents.

Expectations for Increase in Participation



9/12 respondents expect an increase in participation over the next few years

Current Spaces and Facilities Meet User Needs



3/10 respondents said that the current facilities and spaces in Okotoks completely meet their needs;



5/10 said the facilities and amenities somewhat meet their needs.



2/10 said the facilities and amenities did not meet their needs.

Top privatization criteria



Support for Increase in User Fees



7/10 respondents would support an increase in user fees to ensure community needs are met

4.4 Community Pop-Ups

A synopsis of the survey findings is presented below.

Strengths of recreation, parks, and leisure services in Okotoks



Aquasize classes



Trail system and outdoor spaces



Staff are Friendly

Amenities or Programs that should be more available



Outdoor Pool



More opportunities for teens

Number One Action for the Town

Changes or Improvements



Increased aquatics programs



Shade at outdoor amenities



Additional teen nights

Build a new facility to meet growing community

Invest in art and culture

5.0

Master Plan Update



This Update is built upon the 2017 Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Master Plan. Based on an investigation of the current context (presented in previous sections of this report); and a review of the progress achieved with the recommendations from the 2017 Master Plan, the following foundations and focus areas were determined.

5.1 Strategic Focus Areas

The 2023 Master Plan Update is comprised of specific strategies brought forward from the 2017 Master Plan in addition to some new strategies.

5.1.1 2017 Master Plan Review

The 2017 Master Plan included twenty-five (25) strategies across four focus areas. The Town reviewed each of these strategies, considered progress made since the 2017 Plan’s development, and determined whether each is still relevant to the delivery of recreation, parks, and leisure services in Okotoks. The following table lists the individual strategies. For each strategy the table indicates the status of its implementation (complete or in progress) including an update. The table also shows alignment between the the strategies and Town’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP), Strategic Plan, and other policies.

Future implementation of the Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Master Plan strategies will be incorporated into the Corporate Business Plan and the bi-annual Corporate Progress Report.

Focus Area 1: Delivery System Analysis and Enhancement		
Subtheme: Governance, Decision Making, and Operations		
Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
1. The Town should continue to utilize a spectrum of delivery approaches in the provision of recreation, parks, and leisure opportunities.	✓	The decision making model for investment and service level adjustments as represented in the 2017 Master Plan is utilized. Inter-municipal partnerships to create regional recreation opportunities is considered in the decision making process for all investments and supported by the Calgary Regional Municipal Board and the Municipal Government Act requiring municipalities to discuss the potential for regional collaboration in certain service areas: recreation being one. Source CRMB - Options for Enhancing Regional Recreation
Aligns with MDP 7.5 and with Town of Okotoks Values “A Regional Focus”, “Partnering for Success”, and “Financial Responsibility.”		
2. The Town should set specific and measurable targets for Town provided recreation, parks, and leisure infrastructure and programs.	✓	Target utilization of facilities and programming is reviewed annually in the Capital and Operating budget process to ensure that adjustments to rates and fees that could significantly affect participation is considered. Environmental scans and regional reviews of best practices are also completed to ensure that the Town of Okotoks Parks and Recreation services and programs are delivered efficiently and feasibly.
Aligns with MDP 7.5.3 c and 2022-2025 Strategic Plan - Organizational Excellence “Create a technology road map to advance access to data and information, improve client experience and decision making”		

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 1: Delivery System Analysis and Enhancement

Subtheme: Governance, Decision Making, and Operations

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
3. The Town should develop a systematic process for gathering regular and ongoing feedback from a representative group of the community who are mandated with an advisory and advocacy role. Specifically, this representative group will provide a community lens from a recreation, parks, and leisure perspective.	✓	A Public Participation Policy and strategy toolkit was adopted in 2018 that defines how and when engagement is accessed. Parks and Recreation will continue to utilize strategies for gathering input from residents including Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master Plan updates, program participation and feedback surveys, open house events, user group meetings and through informal feedback channels.

Aligns with Strategic Plan Corporate Priority - Organizational Excellence "Create a technology roadmap to advance access to data and information, improve client experience and decision making"

Subtheme: Partnerships

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
4. The Partnership Assessment Framework should be used by the Town when evaluating potential partnerships.	In progress to 2028	The Town has continued to assess and develop partnerships since 2017 most notably the partnership agreement between the Town of Okotoks and Diamond Valley in the operation of the Dr. Lander Memorial Pool (2021 - 2023) and the delivery of the upcoming 2023 Alberta Summer Games. The Town continues to support the regional partnership in regards to the operation of the Cavalry FC Regional Fieldhouse. However a formalized collaboration process or agreed-to model has not been developed as suggested in the Calgary Regional Municipal Board - Options for Enhancing Regional Recreation study in 2020. Further progress on regionalized recreation to be reported in the next update of the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master Plan.

Aligns with MDP 7.5.1.a and with Town of Okotoks Values "A Regional Focus", "Partnering for Success", and "Financial Responsibility"

5. The Town should continue to support community organizations with a focus on: organization capacity building; sustainability planning; event hosting.	In progress to 2025	Significant socio-economic changes have occurred since 2017 and further amplified by the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pandemic. Further progress is needed to determine future needs for the community and organizations in regards to capacity and sustainability as the survey results indicate that organizations expect growth into the future. The Fee Waiver policy approved in 2020 and the Sport Tourism Grant approved in 2023 are examples of progress made since 2017.
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Aligns with GP-F-2.6 Sport Tourism Grant and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health "Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being"

6. The Town should increase its efforts to foster volunteerism in Okotoks	✓	Volunteerism continues to be an important element in enhancing culture and community health. The Volunteer Resource Centre continues to match community needs with volunteer opportunities and contributing members are honoured each year as part of National Volunteer Week celebrations.
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✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 1: Delivery System Analysis and Enhancement

Subtheme: Community Dialogue

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
7. The Town should develop and implement an ongoing community input process for recreation, parks, and leisure service delivery.	In progress to 2025	The tactics and mechanisms for gathering regular feedback for engagement continue to be utilized. The Town may also wish to further develop policies regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure all residents have access to the available resources. Examples of current feedback channels include program participation surveys, open house events, and user group meetings.
Aligns with GP-D-2.1 Public Participation and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Organizational Excellence <i>“Create a technology road map to advance access to data and information, improve client experience and decision making”</i>		

Focus Area 2: Opportunities and Programs

Subtheme: Reducing Barriers to Participation

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
8. The Town should sustain and enhance existing financial support programs and identify opportunities to expand awareness of these, and similar programs, available to residents.	In progress to 2023	Administration has updated the Recreation Fee Assistance program. There is a need to review the program periodically to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the community. Socio-economic factors continue to be important determining factors in accessing recreation, particularly indoor and structured recreation.
Aligns with MDP 7.5. and with Town of Okotoks Values <i>“Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility”</i> and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health <i>“Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being”</i>		
9. Town recreation, parks, and leisure services should prioritize social inclusiveness to meet the needs of a growing, evolving, and diversifying community	In progress to 2025	As per the 2023-2026 Town of Okotoks Strategic Plan and in an effort to enhance culture and community health, Town Council is committed to enhancing community dialogue, taking meaningful steps to address truth and reconciliation, increase sport and recreational opportunities, evolving trends, and to provide access to programs and services for all ages. In an effort to meet the growing and diverse needs in our community.
Aligns with MDP 7.5 and with Town of Okotoks Values <i>“Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility”</i> and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health <i>“Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being”</i>		

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 2: Opportunities and Programs

Subtheme: Programming Focus Areas

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
<p>10. The following programming focus areas should be a priority for the Town in the short term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » outdoor skill development for youth and teens; » fitness and wellness programming for all ages and abilities; » non competitive / recreational sports for youth, teens, and adults; » multi-generational opportunities; » seniors recreation and active living programs; » programming for populations facing barriers 	<p>In progress to 2025</p>	<p>Pandemic interruptions effected the delivery of programming. However, the Town is committed to continually evolve and grow programming to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion are factored into decision making and program development. The Town may also wish to further develop policies regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure all residents have access to the available resources. As a result of the 2022-2023 Master Plan update the following programming areas are identified as the communities priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs for individuals facing social, physical, or cognitive barriers to participation, nature / outdoor education programming, and wellness e.g. healthy eating and mental health for children, youth and teens Wellness and self improvement programming for adults and seniors

Aligns with MDP 7.5.1. and with Town of Okotoks Values "Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility" and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health "Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being"

<p>11. The Town should enhance the use of data and consultation findings in program design, costing, and scheduling</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>As mentioned in Strategies 2, 3 and 7 the Town has many tactics and tools employed.</p>
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Aligns with 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Organizational Excellence "Create a technology roadmap to advance access to data and information, improve client experience and decision making"

Subtheme: Promotions and Marketing

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
<p>12. The Town should develop and execute a formal marketing and promotions strategy focused on: benefits of participation; awareness of existing programs and opportunities; celebrations of success</p>	<p>In progress to 2025</p>	<p>Pandemic interruptions effected the delivery of programming. The Recreation Master Plan survey results will provide updates to priorities for the Town to use to determine new initiatives and a new marketing strategy will be developed to ensure that all residents have access to the services they value.</p>

Aligns with MDP 7.5.1.b, 7.5.1.c and with Town of Okotoks Values "Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility" and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health "Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being"

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 3: Recreation Infrastructure

Subtheme: Infrastructure Priorities and Future Decision-Making Approaches

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
13. The Town should place a priority on sustaining current infrastructure before new development is undertaken	✓	The Town is committed to asset management practices to ensure that all municipal infrastructure assets meet expected performance levels and continue to provide desired service levels in the most efficient and effective manner. The standard operating guidelines will ensure that infrastructure and asset management planning will implement continuous protocols and best practices regarding data gathering, risk and condition assessments, lifecycle management, financial strategies and service level considerations.
Aligns with MDP 7.5.1.h, 7.5.5 and Town of Okotoks Values “Financial Responsibility”, and 2022 - 2025 Council Plan - Organization Excellence “Operationalize Asset Management”		
14. When investing in new infrastructure, leveraging existing facilities and spaces where feasible	✓	As per Bylaw 02-21 Municipal Development Plan it is a requirement that large recreation facilities should include clustering of facilities for several types of recreation. The idea of “hub” spaces will continue to be an important decision making factor when considering infrastructure needs. Further, the ability to utilize communal amenities such as public restrooms particularly for outdoor recreation and active transportation is important to meet the needs of residents. Examples of leveraging existing facilities in the past 5 years include the expansion of the Centennial Arenas in 2018, converting the management operations of the Foothills Centennial Centre to the Town in 2020 and the upgrades and conversion of tennis and pickleball courts.
Aligns with MDP 7.5.1.h, 7.5.5 and Town of Okotoks Values “Financial Responsibility”, and 2022 - 2025 Council Plan - Organization Excellence “Operationalize Asset Management”		
15. The Amenity Prioritization Framework should be used to rank potential projects	In progress to 2028	The Amenity Prioritization Framework was updated in this report to further emphasis utilization, community accessibility, and market demands. The framework assessment and prioritization will also be completed upon the next update and the results will be taken into consideration by Council and Administration in the capital budget decision making process. Future Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master plan updates will combine strategies 15 & 16.
16. The Town should focus on the ranked amenities. It is suggested as a standard practice that the amenities be re-ranked every 5 years		
Aligns with MDP 7.5.1. and Town of Okotoks Values “Financial Responsibility”, and 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health “Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being”		
Subtheme: Infrastructure Priorities and Future Decision-Making Approaches		
17. The Planning Process Framework and Facility Condition Index should be utilized by the Town when making decisions related to major capital investment in infrastructure	In progress to 2025	As per the Facility Condition Index, as mentioned in Strategy 13, the Asset Management Guidelines incorporate long-term financial planning and budget strategies for replacement and/or renew municipal infrastructure assets based on full lifecycle costing. Additionally, to meet MDP goals, all Town facilities should be built or retrofitted for energy efficiency.
Aligns with MDP 7.5.1.h and Town of Okotoks Values “Financial Responsibility”, and 2022 - 2025 Council Plan - Organization Excellence “Operationalize Asset Management”		

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 3: Recreation Infrastructure		
Subtheme: Inventory Management and Amenity Strategies		
Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
18. The enhanced parks and open space classification system and hierarchy should be implemented by the Town and used to organize its asset base	✓	The 2017 classification system has been updated and utilized in decision making.
Aligns with MDP 7.5.3		
19. The Town should consider the amenity strategies to guide the management of existing assets and future planning	In progress to 2025	The Amenity Strategies was updated in this report to further emphasis utilization, community accessibility, and market demands. The framework assessment and prioritization will also be completed upon the next update and the results will be considered by Council and Administration in the capital budget decision making process.
Aligns MDP 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 2.1.1, 2.5.1, Town of Okotoks Values "Financial Responsibility", and 2022 - 2025 Council Plan - Organization Excellence "Operationalize Asset Management"		

Focus Area 4: Funding Sources and Strategies		
Subtheme: Traditional Funding Sources		
Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
20. The Town should create a policy to establish criteria for setting annual user fees	In progress to 2028	As per Strategies 2, 3, & 13 user fees are reviewed annually as part of the budget cycle and asset management framework. Future consideration for developing a Recreation Fee Policy will be considered.
Aligns with Town of Okotoks Values "Financial Responsibility" and Bylaw 09-23		
21. The Town should identify tactics and opportunities to further maximize utilization of existing facilities	In progress to 2025	Continuous review of allocation, utilization and capacity is important. The Town may also wish to explore systems for data collection and reporting.
Aligns with 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Enhanced Culture & Community Health "Increase sport and recreational opportunities" and "provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being"		

Subtheme: Inventory Revenue Generation		
Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
22. The Town should develop a sponsorship and naming strategy	In progress to 2025	Additional revenue generation opportunities is a goal to help offset costs for indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure. Future Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master plan updates will combine strategies 12, 21 & 22.
Aligns with 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Responsibly Managed Growth "Review additional revenue generation opportunities to meet the needs of a growing community"		
23. Future capital facility development should place a priority on the inclusion of revenue generating spaces	✓	Revenue generation will continue to be an important factor when considering the relatively high costs associated in operating recreation facilities. Recreation facilities provide a variety of spaces for leisure, low-cost/no-cost, non-profit, and for profit
Aligns with 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan - Responsibly Managed Growth "Review additional revenue generation opportunities to meet the needs of a growing community"		

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.

Focus Area 4: Funding Sources and Strategies

Subtheme: Land Acquisition and Management

Strategy	Status Complete/In Progress	Progress Update
24. The Town should acquire land beyond Municipal Reserve dedication for infrastructure purposes	✓	As per Bylaw 02-21 Municipal Development Plan the Town is committed to acquiring land dedicated to recreation, parks and leisure. Since 2017, the Town has purchased a 32nd st parcel, Waller Lands, Iitopatopa parkland and other river valley lands.
25. The parks and open space vision, guidelines, and principles should be incorporated into existing practices and considered during land acquisition	✓	As per Bylaw 02-21 Municipal Development Plan and Council's Strategic Plan the Town establishes priorities for land acquisition.
Aligns with MDP 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5		

✓ = Strategy has been fully embraced by policy and is still relevant but considered business as usual.



5.1.2 New Strategies

Based upon the change in context (including community perspectives), several new strategies have been identified for inclusion in this Master Plan Update. These strategies are noted below along with a brief description and the focal area in which they should reside.

Focus Area 1: Delivery System Analysis and Enhancement	
Subtheme: Governance, Decision Making, and Operations	
Strategy	Details
1. The Town should integrate data gathering and analysis more fulsomely into its decision making.	To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, considering limited resources but unlimited demands, the use of data needs to be enhanced in Town decision making. It is not sufficient to simply collect a vast array of data, consideration needs to be given in what decisions will be made and therefore, what data is needed to inform those decisions. The identification of the data, the means to collect it, and procedures to analyze it all need to be components of established processes. This can start with registration information but can also involve community wide surveys. The utilization of spatial data can yield critical insights as well.

Focus Area 1: Delivery System Analysis and Enhancement	
Focus Area 2: Opportunities and Programs	
Subtheme: Governance, Decision Making, and Operations	
Subtheme: Partnerships	
Subtheme: Reducing Barriers to Participation	
Strategy	Details
2. The Town should establish policies or procedures related to facility and allocations, diversity / inclusion / equity, climate change, and Sport Tourism policy completed in 2023.	<p>While disparate topics, each is of sufficient importance to warrant a specific policy or procedure to guide the Town's approach to the issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Facility Allocations</u> – With growing demands and limits to time in recreation, parks, and leisure facilities and amenities, the allocation of that time can be the focus of attention from different community perspectives. The Town should have clear direction in place that delineates the principles and hierarchy utilized to assign space in facilities. These policies often have considerations for age, breadth of opportunities, Town versus community led programs, residency and other factors. • <u>Diversity / Inclusion</u> – Okotoks is continuing to become more diverse. This is reflected through ethnicity, gender identification, age, ability, and many other factors. It is important for the Town to purposefully consider how diversity is reflected in its programs and how everyone in the community is being included. This can be manifested in a variety of ways from art and design, promotional messages, program types offered, and staff training and hiring. • <u>Climate Change</u> – Having a significant impact on municipalities in a variety of ways, climate change is forcing communities to act. The Town of Okotoks will adapt outdoor and indoor spaces for the effects of climate change which will include efficiently heating and cooling indoor facilities and amenities; care and maintenance of outdoor spaces; providing comfort water conservation, amenities like shade, water fountains, shelter for participants; emergency response centres; and responses to extreme weather. Okotoks needs to ensure that the ramifications of climate change is considered broadly.

6.0

Prioritization Framework



6.1 Prioritization Framework

The 2017 Plan included a Prioritization Framework (on page 35) that outlined seven criteria and a set of metrics and weights attached to each. Using these criteria to assess indoor and outdoor amenities rendered a ranked list that influenced amenity action planning and decision-making.

In revisiting this Framework in a 2023 context, two changes have been made to the Framework. The first of which is some adjustment to the criteria, namely the addition of an 8th criteria focused on "utilization" and some interpretation to "community accessibility". The second change is the introduction of a Service Level Assessment aspect to the Framework which takes five of the eight criteria and uses them to determine whether current service levels are appropriate.

The 2023 Prioritization Ranking can be found in the column 1 of the Outdoor and Indoor inventory Management and Amenity Strategies table on pages 33 - 36. Utilizing this refined Framework and considering the 2023 market context, the following ranked list of indoor and outdoor amenities has been compiled. The criteria in red at the top of the preceding table are specifically used to determine the Service Level Assessment. The additional criteria are then used to prioritize the amenities.

Criteria	Metrics				Weight
	Enhance	Maintain	Maintain	Decrease	
Market demand	3 points – for "top tier" - changes needed (household survey)	2 points – for "second tier" - changes needed (household survey)	1 point – for "third tier" - changes needed (household survey)	0 points – for "bottom tier" - changes needed (household survey)	5
Town Goals and outcomes	3 – the amenity achieves more than one goal and a variety of outcomes	2 – the amenity achieves one goal (of 3) and a variety of outcomes	1 – the amenity achieves a specific service outcome	0 – the amenity does not achieve any service outcomes	5
Community accessibility	3 – there are no barriers to participation	2 – barriers to participation are minimal	1 – barriers to participation are moderate	0 – barriers to participation are significant	5
Utilization	3 – current utilization is at or near capacity	2 – current utilization is significant	1 – utilization is unknown	0 – utilization is low	4
Current provision	3 – the facility space would add completely new activity to recreation in the market catchment area	2 – the facility space would add completely new activity to recreation in the Town	1 – the facility space would significantly improve provision of existing recreation activity in the market catchment area	0 – the amenity is already adequately provided in the market catchment area	3
Financial Sustainability	3 – the amenity has a low overall cost	2 – the amenity has a moderate overall cost impact	1 – the amenity has a high overall cost	0 – the amenity is not likely to be financially feasible	4
Cost savings through partnerships or grants	3 – partnership and/or grant opportunities exist that dramatically reduce cost	2 – partnership and/or grant opportunities exist that moderately reduce cost	1 – partnership and/or grant opportunities exist that minimally reduce cost	0 – no potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in time	3
Economic impact	3 – the amenity has a significant economic impact	2 – the amenity has a moderate economic impact	1 – the amenity has a minimal economic impact	0 – the amenity has no economic impact	3

Utilizing this refined Framework and considering the 2023 market context, the following ranked list of indoor and outdoor amenities has been compiled. The criteria in red at the top of the preceding table are specifically used to determine the Service Level Assessment. The additional criteria are then used to prioritize the amenities. Note that these also include an assessment of current services levels where:

- Amenities indicated as **"maintain"** should continue to be provided at the same service level as they are today, meaning that although more is not needed right now, as the community grows provision should also be increased in lockstep with growth (as able).
- Amenities indicated as **"enhance"** could warrant further exploration regarding adding more capacity now. This addition would be subject to further feasibility assessment and decision-making but preliminary indications suggest if more of this amenity were introduced in the market it would be consumed.
- Amenities indicated as **"decrease"** may be able to be reduced should resource limitations exist or should major reinvestment be required. This is not to say with certainty that service levels should be reduced, but it is to suggest that should resource limitations exist the option of reducing service levels should be weighed against other alternatives.

Outdoor Inventory Management and Amenity Strategies

Amenity	2023 Amenity Prioritization Framework Ranking	Public Participation Survey Rank	Current Provision	Current Provision Ratio / # of residents per amenity (Current population = 30405)	Targeted Service Level	Service Level Assessment	Current Capital Allocation	Order of Magnitude Costing ¹
Open spaces (e.g. parks, greenspace) (hectares)	1	4	194	157	Ensure adequate provision and geographic distribution	Enhance	2023-2024	\$1.35M
Community gardens (sites)	2	9	2	15,203	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$100k
Walking/cycling pathway system (km)	3	1	100	313	Ensure connectivity and develop new with growth	Maintain	2023-2025	\$400K
Day use areas (with BBQs and cook shelters)	4	5	2	15,203	1 per 15,000 residents	Enhance	2023-2024	>\$500k
Event spaces (e.g. amphitheatres)	4	12	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain	2024 - 2026	\$14K
Outdoor pools	6	2	0	0	1 per 60,000 residents (assumes indoor aquatics is sustained)	Maintain		\$8M
Nature/interpretive trails (e.g. single track multi-use trails)	7		4 km	7990 / 1 km	Ensure connectivity and develop new with growth	Maintain		\$50k
Dog off leash areas	8	6	1	30,405	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$250k
Playgrounds	9	14	60	507	Ensure provision in new parks and sustain existing .	Maintain	2023-2025	>\$100k
Toboggan hills	9	8	6	5,068	1 per 5,000 residents	Maintain		\$75k
Outdoor boarded rink	N/A	N/A	0	0	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain	2023	\$1M
Mountain bike trails (e.g. single track multi-use trails)	12	7	4 km	7990 / 1 km	Ensure connectivity and develop new with growth - limit growth in river valley	Maintain		\$150k
Water spray parks	13	13	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain - water feature to be built at the Arts and Learning Campus	2023	\$1.5M
Bike skills park (e.g. BMX track)	14	15	1	30,405	1 per 25,000 residents	Maintain	2023	\$1M
Pickleball courts	15	18	6	5,068	3 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$400k

= Increase in inventory = Potential for regional approach

¹ Order of Magnitude Costing is development costs (land not included)

Amenity	2023 Amenity Prioritization Framework Ranking	Public Participation Survey Rank	Current Provision	Current Provision Ratio / # of residents per amenity (Current population = 30405)	Targeted Service Level	Service Level Assessment	Current Capital Allocation	Order of Magnitude Costing ¹
Campgrounds	16	11	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain - Continue to service through partnerships or privately owned		\$2.5M
Skateboard parks	17	16	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain	2024-2024	>\$1.5M
Tennis courts	17	19	3	10,135	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$400k
Sports fields (e.g. soccer, football) Natural Turf	17	20	21	1,448	Natural Surface (NS) (1 per 2,000 residents)	Maintain	2025	\$1M
Sports fields (e.g. soccer, football) Artificial Turf	N/A	N/A	0	#DIV/0!	Artificial Turf Surface (ATS) (1 per 30,000 residents)	Maintain		\$3.0M
Outdoor fitness equipment (locations)	20	21	3	10,135	As required	Maintain		\$200k
Ball diamonds	20	23	17	1,789	1 per every 2,000 residents	Maintain		\$1M
Hard sport courts (e.g. basketball) (locations)	21	17	14	2,172	1 per 3,500 residents	Maintain		\$250M
Track and field spaces	22	22	2	15,203	1 per every 20,000 residents	Maintain		\$2.0M
Beach volleyball courts	23	24	4	7,601	1 per 10,000 residents	Maintain		\$100k
Disc Golf Course	N/A	N/A	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain	2023-2024	\$50k

■ = Increase in inventory ■ = Potential for regional approach

¹ Order of Magnitude Costing is development costs (land not included)

Indoor Inventory Management and Amenity Strategies

Amenity	2023 Amenity Prioritization Framework Ranking	Public Participation Survey Rank	Current Provision (Inventory)	Current Provision Ratio / # of residents per amenity (Current population = 30405)	Targeted Service Level	Service Level Assessment	Current Capital Allocation	Order of Magnitude Costing
Leisure swimming pools	1	1	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Enhance	2027-2029	\$55M ORC Expansion Project Phase 1
Climbing gyms	2	2	0	0	1 per 30,000 residents	Enhance	2027-2029	
Indoor child playgrounds	2	4	0	0	1 per 30,000 residents	Enhance	2027-2029	
25m swimming tanks	4	3	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Enhance		\$14M ORC Expansion Phase 2
Seniors centres	5	5	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain		\$5M
Fitness/wellness facilities	5	10	1	30,405	1 per 15,000 residents (public/partner provision)	Maintain		\$5M
Court Sport Spaces (e.g. pickleball)	7	7	2	15,203		Maintain	2024	\$2M
Walking/running tracks	8	6	2	15,203	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$4M
Youth centres	9	8	1	30,405	1 per 20,000 residents	Maintain		\$5M
Community hall/banquet facilities	9	14	1	30,405	1 per 25,000 residents	Maintain		\$10M
Gymnasium type spaces	11	12	15*	2,027	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain - Provisions obtained through joint use agreement with the school divisions		\$10M
Ice arena facilities (regulation size boarded ice surface)	12	11	4	7,601	1 per 12,500 residents	Maintain		\$39M - Twin Ice Pad
Leisure ice surfaces (non-hockey, non-boarded ice surface)	13	9	1	30,405	1 per 30,000 residents	Maintain		\$5M

■ = Increase in inventory

■ = Potential for regional approach

*land not included

Amenity	2023 Amenity Prioritization Framework Ranking	Public Participation Survey Rank	Current Provision (Inventory)	Current Provision Ratio / # of residents per amenity (Current population = 30405)	Targeted Service Level	Service Level Assessment	Current Capital Allocation	Order of Magnitude Costing
Classroom/meeting spaces	14	17	12+	2,534	To be included in facility development projects	Maintain		\$750k
Indoor field facilities (# of surfaces)	15	16	3	10,135	1 per 15,000 residents	Maintain		\$15M
Curling rinks	16	18	1	30,405	1 per 40,000 residents	Maintain		>\$15M
Dance/program/ martial arts rooms	17	15	12+**	2,534	To be included in facility development projects	Maintain		\$750k
Gymnastics spaces/ parkour rooms	18	13	0	0	Dependent upon partnership opportunities	Dependent upon partnership opportunities		\$5M

■ = Increase in inventory ■ = Potential for regional approach

*Gymnasium space access through joint use agreement with school divisions

**Meeting rooms have been converted to multi-purpose spaces, some with sport flooring.



6.2 Amenity Strategies and Community Amenities Off-Site Levy Alignment

The assessment and ranking can influence capital decisions related to investment in facilities and amenities. The assessment does align with the Community Amenities Off-Site Levy Study which outlines specific requirements for indoor recreation facilities.

Based on these new rankings and the service level assessment, as well as progress made since 2017 related to the Plan's original amenity strategies and other planning work done by the Town since 2017, the following amenity strategies are recommended to be considered by the Town.

- Feasibility planning for a major expansion at the Okotoks Recreation Centre to include leisure aquatics, dryland, children's play, climbing wall, community hub, family resource centre and support areas.
- Feasibility planning for the development of a new twin ice pad.
- Feasibility planning for a new indoor racquet court centre.





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