

Note: This report reflects the direction chosen by Rocky View County Council at their July 23, 2019 Council Meeting.

# RVC Recreation Governance Report



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## Executive Summary

Rocky View County (RVC) does not provide direct recreational programs or facilities, and depends on non-profit community groups and municipal partners to provide recreational opportunities to residents. Since 1972, RVC has relied on district recreation boards, composed of members of the public and elected officials, to foster and support recreation programs, facilities, and services for Rocky View communities, and to advise Council on recreational grant allocations.

This model distributes funding to ten recreation districts based on population and has the following shortcomings:

- No equitable distribution of amenities and opportunities;
- Recreation needs in the larger and growing hamlets are not supported;
- Administration is focused on district board management rather than providing support services to community organizations;
- Does not allow for long-term strategic recreational planning; and
- Does not allow funding to be based on county-wide prioritization.

Consequently, many County residents' recreational needs are not met, resulting in additional requests for RVC support for community recreational opportunities and amenities beyond what is allocated in the recreational budget.

To develop a new way forward, RVC Council has directed Administration to develop a new model for recreation governance. The goals of the model are to support recreation in RVC communities; align with the Council's vision, mission, and values; be focused on service delivery; and achieve long-term sustainability.

Administration has reviewed the current recreation model and best practice research, and developed the Recreation Governance Committee Model.

A **Recreation Governance Committee** does not identify district zones; instead, it consists of a **Committee of Council** as a whole. Including all of Council allows for enhanced transparency, communication, and fiduciary responsibility; reduced redundancy in funding approval process at the Committee level; and increased engagement with RVC residents and communities through their local Councillor and Administration. For these reasons, Administration is recommending Model 2.

Finally, this report also addresses the implementation stage that focuses on how the County will enhance support to community groups and local recreation facilities, through streamlined funding processes. As part of the governance model review, Administration has initiated an assessment of the current granting process and researched best practices from other municipalities in Alberta, which provides consideration for revisions to Community Recreation Funding – Policy C-317.

## Introduction

Since 1972, RVC has entrusted and depended upon community volunteers (through district recreation boards, composed of members of the public and elected officials) to foster and support recreation programs, facilities, and services for Rocky View communities, and to advise Council on recreational grant allocations. Currently, RVC does not provide direct recreational programs or facilities and depends on non-profit community groups and municipal partners to provide recreation opportunities in and adjacent to County communities.

At the March 12, 2019, Council Meeting, Council directed Administration to a “draft County-wide recreation model, taking into specific account governance responsibilities, operational accountability, and financial controls.”

To support Council in their decision-making, Administration has developed two models for Recreation Governance that result in a complete change in the board governance structure, an overhaul of the granting process, a focus on how to support our community recreation in a more effective and sustainable manner, and consideration for how Administration will work differently in County communities.

## **Background**

Between 1972 and 1981, ten Recreation Boards were established in RVC (Table 1). These boards provided an opportunity for the public to provide input into the programs and facilities offered to County residents and the financial resourcing provided to recreation groups. Originally working at arms-length from the County, the model for recreation provision has morphed in the last 40 years to the current state of nine District Recreation Boards that:

- provide an understanding of community opinions on recreation matters;
- advise on recreation and community service levels; and
- make recommendations to Council on how to best support local community needs and allocate County recreational funds.

Although the model has worked reasonably well for the last 47 years, the nature of RVC has changed significantly over this period of time from a predominantly rural municipality with small hamlets and summer villages and a total population of 10,433 to a municipality of 39,407 with 11 hamlets ranging in population from 13 to 5,364 residents. In the medium term, it is anticipated that at least four hamlets will develop populations in excess of 10,000 residents ((Table 1 & 2 - Langdon, Harmony, Glenbow, and Conrich) (Government of Alberta, 2019)).

**Table 1: RVC Recreation Board History**

Board	Established
Bearspaw-Glendale	1995*
Ranch Lands	1997*
Beiseker	1972
Bow North	1978
Chestermere-Conrich	1976***
Crossfield	1972
Madden	1981
Rocky View Central	1973
Rocky View East	2006**
Rocky View West	1975

\*Preceded by the Cochrane Regional Rec Dist, which was established in 1982 to replace the 1973 Town of Cochrane and District Rec Board

\*\*Preceded by the Irricana Regional Recreation District, which was established in 1973

\*\*\*This Board was formally dissolved on January 2019.

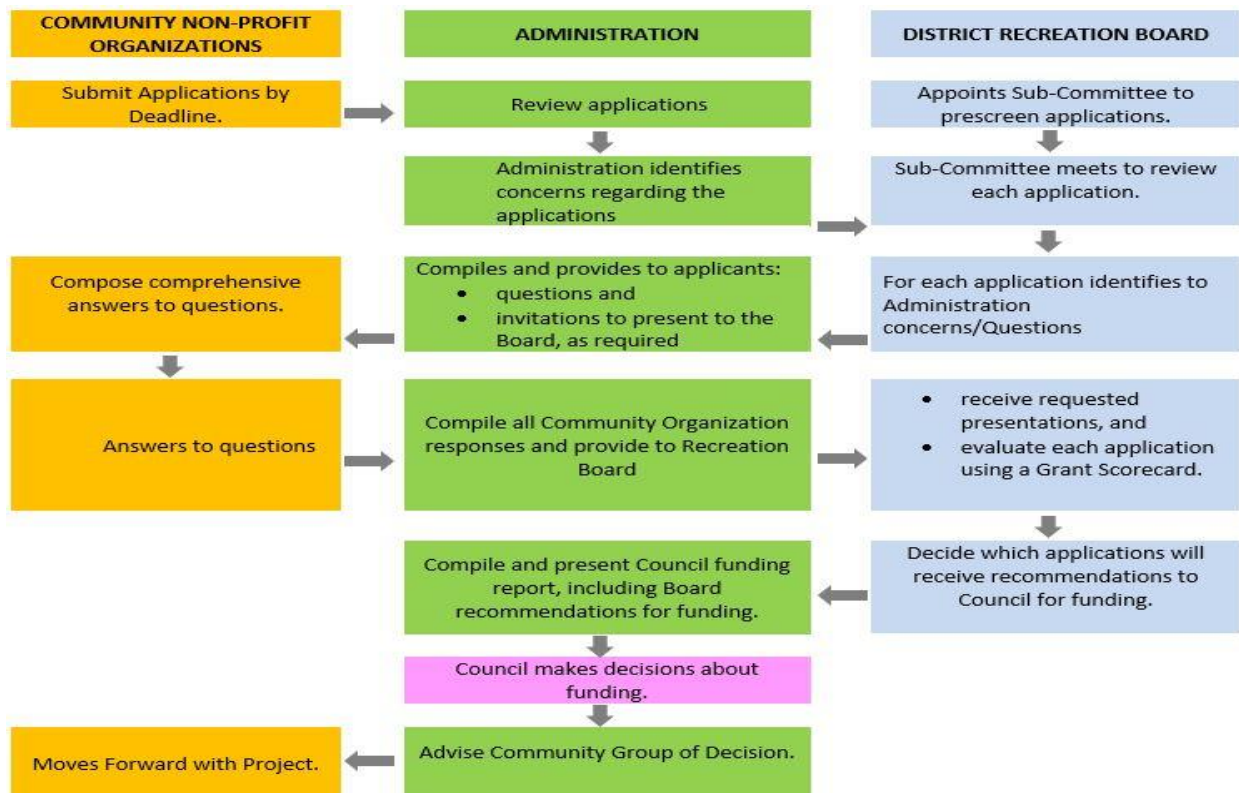
**Table 2: Population Growth**

	1972	2018
RVC	10,433	39,407
Chestermere		20,732
Calgary	412,777	1,267,344
Airdrie	1,160	68,091
Cochrane	1,101	27,960
Beiseker	407	819
Crossfield	618	3,308
Irricana	127	1,216

## Recreation Grants

The Recreation District Boards support grant funding allocation across RVC. Recreation grant funding for each district is allocated at \$150 per household with opportunities to apply offered twice per year. Applications are submitted to the County for review to ensure compliance with Community Recreation Funding Policy C-317. Following submission, the recreation boards review, and recommend or decline funding. Decisions from the Board are then presented by Administration to Council for approval (Figure 1). The process takes about three months for community members to secure funding.

**Figure 1:** Current Grant Allocation Process



## Why Change?

Rocky View County's recreation board structure and granting process has a number of challenges, including:

- Addressing changing demographics, urbanization, and projected population growth;
- Short-term decision making and a lack of long-range planning that allows for prioritization;
- Community desire for improved service delivery;
- Aging facilities and amenities that require life-cycle planning and secured funding;
- Limited tax base and inadequate revenue sources; and
- Board structures that are unsustainable due to volunteer time demands, lack of turnover, and multiple, differing board bylaws.

As discussed, RVC is becoming increasingly urbanized. According to recent population predictions, the County's population will grow to over 50,000 residents (Rennie Intelligence,



2018). Conrich, Langdon, Glenbow, and Harmony are expected to become full service communities with populations that would classify them as a City under the MGA, and there are other potential unapproved communities that may increase the growth of the County.

In addition to funding demands for new amenities for a growing population, the County has many aging facilities and amenities that are in need of upgrades that place demands on a limited tax base.

Other shortfalls of the current board structure include the following:

- Does not allow for long-term strategic alignment between Recreation Boards;
- Board priorities that may not align with County-wide recreational priorities and planning;
- Multiple and differing Board bylaws that cause administrative problems;
- Revenue sources that are inadequate to support the requested service;
- Many requested amenities are beyond what can be sustained by the current or anticipated tax base;
- Funding/grant process that are outdated, time consuming, and difficult to communicate to partners;
- A lack of consistency in funding allocations and the spreading out of funding to many groups, not based on any type of prioritization, limits RVC's ability to plan and fulfill the needs of future recreation amenities and programs; and
- Considerable staff time spent in board meetings instead of on facilitation of services.

Finally, the dated board structure has resulted in a limited volunteer turnover and a challenge in recruiting new members. Administration is unsure if some boards accurately represent the County's dynamic and changing communities.

In summary, all of these challenges reduce the County's ability to provide efficient and effective customer service.

## **Recreation Governance Best Practice Research**

In support of a new Recreation Governance model, Administration conducted primary and secondary research with both recreation associations and other municipalities. Detailed results not presented in the body of this report can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

Rocky View County's review of its recreation model is timely as there are many recreation organizations, including the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) and the Government of Alberta, that have the objective to review and develop a new path forward on how to manage recreation (Wells, 2019) (Schwerman, 2019). In fact, RVC may set the standard for other Alberta municipalities moving forward as a number of other Counties, not-for-profit recreational organizations, and the provincial government are all struggling with the same questions about provision standards.

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association's CEO, Bill Wells, has observed that over the last 25 years, a more corporate model of recreation has replaced a number of Alberta's recreation boards (Wells, 2019). This notion was validated through research where it was identified that 50% of the municipalities studied have no recreation boards, and that there has been a change



in governance from community Recreation Boards to a Council Recreation Board with support from Administration.

## **Rural Alberta Recreation Overview**

Rural recreation provision in Alberta is as varied in its approach as the communities each of the municipalities serve. As with RVC, some rural municipalities make use of recreation boards that are remnants of a model established in the early 1970s, where boards are provided with per capita funding for rural municipal recreation projects. The number of recreation boards in a County can vary from one to as many as ten or more, depending on a municipality's division of their lands.

According to the Zama Recreation Society, Some municipalities have Recreation Boards that are independent not-for-profit organizations receiving funding from local municipalities through operational agreements that enable their provision of facilities and services for residents. Yet others, such as in Clearwater County, operate without recreation boards at all, ensuring residents have access to recreational programs and facilities and programs through a combination of grants paid out to local community groups, and cost-sharing agreements with adjacent municipalities.

## **Rural and Specialized Alberta Municipalities Recreation Survey**

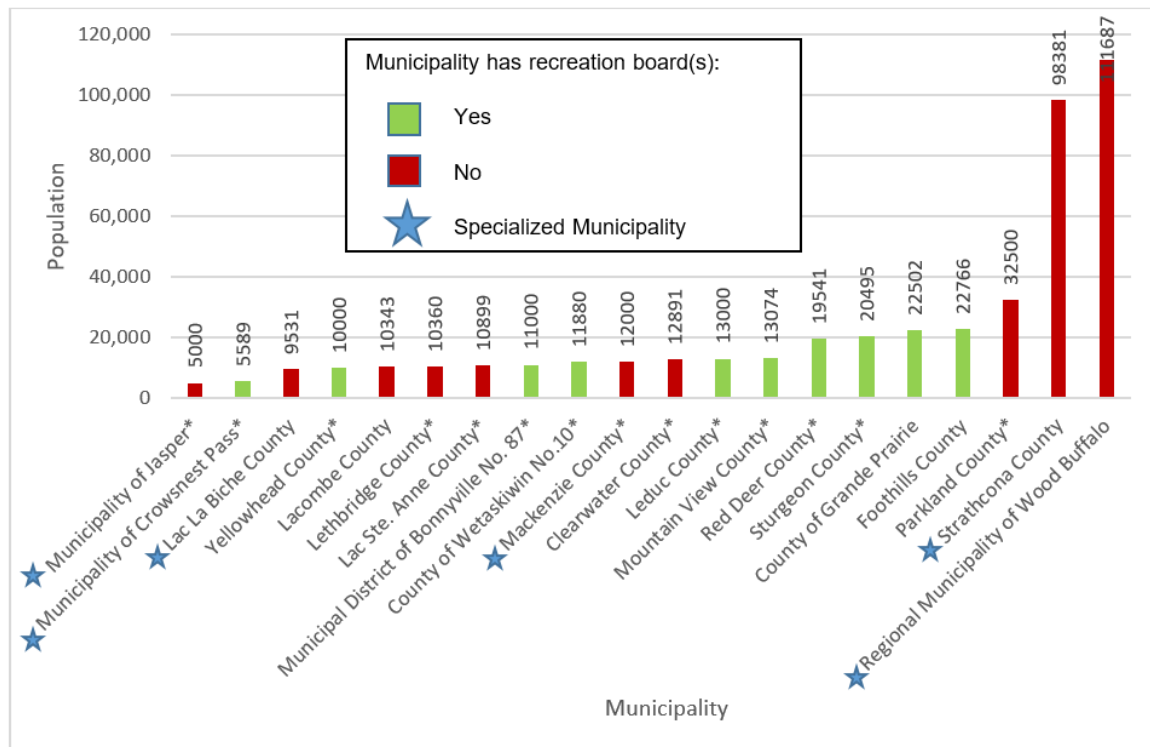
In April and May 2019, the County sent out a survey request to 21 rural Alberta municipalities with populations of 10,000 or more; this list also includes the province's six Specialized Municipalities. Figure 2 provides information that details the subject municipalities' population and presence of recreation boards. Of the 21 municipalities surveyed, 14 responses were received, 11 of which are from municipalities and three of which are from specialized municipalities. Survey results indicate that 10 have recreation boards and are council-appointed<sup>1</sup>.

The following findings are summarized below:

- Six of these ten municipalities have only one board; the remaining four have divided the municipality into districts, and have corresponding boards for each of these districts.
- All but one of the recreation boards have representation from community residents.
- Nine of the ten are council-appointed; one county has community-elected boards.
- All boards, with the exception of one municipality, are advisory to Council, while the remaining is operational.
- Five of the six specialized municipalities do not have recreation boards; instead, they have Administration or Council administering and approving grants.
- Only one municipality has School Board representation on their Recreation Boards.

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<sup>1</sup> Wood Buffalo is unique in that it has a Regional Recreation Corporation Board (RRC). Given its structure, Wood Buffalo has been represented as not having a recreation board.



**Figure 2:** Implementation of Recreation boards by Rural Alberta municipalities with populations over 10,000 and specialized municipalities.

# A New Way Forward for Rocky View County

## Recreation Governance Guiding Principles

Aligning with best practice research, Administration developed eight guiding principles to support the development of two Recreation Governance models:

- 1. Provide Strategic Recreation Leadership**
  - Short/medium/long-range recreation planning
  - Facilitated and guided approach to planning
- 2. Align with Council's Vision and Mission**
  - Service Excellence
  - Financial Health
  - Responsible Growth
- 3. Ensure Community Engagement & Partnerships**
  - Reduce cost of service delivery
  - Create capacity for recreation opportunities
- 4. Expanded Community Service Delivery**
  - Inclusive
  - Open & timely communication
  - Early Involvement
  - Planned engagement
  - Easy to follow processes
- 5. Create a Diversity of Recreation Opportunities**
  - Provide a wide range of programs and services
  - Support the development of future programs
  - Enhance the types of services RVC provides as RVC grows
- 6. Ensure Transparency & Accountability**
  - Transparent grant evaluation & distribution
  - Operational sustainability
- 7. Evaluate and Improve the selected model**
  - Balanced Scorecard approach
  - Clear outcomes and key performance indicators
  - Performance measurement to drive decision-making
- 8. Create the conditions for Sustainable & Responsible Growth**
  - Coordinated approach (regional planning)
  - Soft service levies
  - County-wide recreation needs assessment
  - Long-range master plan

**Figure 4 – Recreation Governance Guiding Principles**



## Aligning with Council’s Vision and Mission

Recreation, Parks and Community Support must align with Council’s vision and mission, and key County planning documents. Recreation programs, facilities, and amenities must “*grow intelligently*” by supporting the unique and diverse recreation needs across RVC through short, medium, and long-term strategic planning.

Further, taking an active and facilitating role in the development of recreation programs and facilities to support the diverse lifestyles of residents so that they can flourish and thrive within their communities will allow RVC to “*lead with integrity*”.

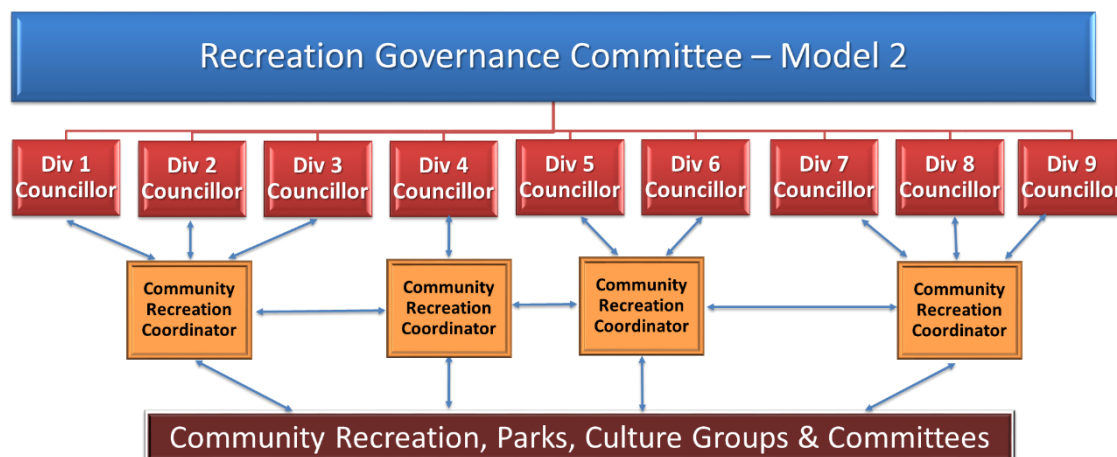
Lastly, leading recreation planning and community development with a systems thinking approach, with a focus on proactive community leadership, will allow County residents to “*live harmoniously*” with the understanding that RVC is supporting their local community needs.

## Recreation Governance Committee

The second, and recommended, model for Recreation Governance in RVC includes a Committee of Council, as show in Figure 7. Components of this model have been drawn from a variety of Alberta municipalities to provide an approach to Recreation that is unique to RVC and provides improvements to the challenges currently faced by RVC (including, but not limited to):

- improved connection and collaboration between Administration and RVC recreation community groups;
- enhanced transparency and communication;
- improved service delivery in communities;
- consistency in funding allocations;
- improved strategic alignment and collaboration amongst communities; and
- Grant allocations based on the County-wide Recreation Master plan.

**Figure 7 – Recreation Governance Committee**



## A Made in Rocky View Solution

To best support the needs of RVC residents, key components of the Recreation Governance Committee (RGC) Model include:

1. Single Recreation Governance Committee of Council.
2. Reduced redundancy in reviewing and approving grants.
3. Public participation capacity.
4. Enhanced community service and support.
5. Strategic alignment and prioritization.

As opposed to the first model presented, this new approach to recreation decision-making allows all of Council to be involved in Recreation planning and decision-making, aligns with Council's Strategic Plan (Rocky View County, 2019), and includes enhanced:

- **Customer service and community support** through:
  - More direct engagement with community organizations by Administration;
  - Streamlined granting processes with more objective consideration of applicant group needs and how they fit into the County's Recreation Master Plan;
  - Recreation provision decisions made to benefit RVC as a whole, moving away from a district-centric model to one that is more considerate of regional facility and service availability; and
  - Continued engagement of residents when ad hoc recreation-centered committees are required and established per the County's Public Participation Policy.
- **Transparency and communication** through:
  - Fiduciary responsibility exhibited through Councillor involvement in decision making at a county-wide level with consideration of the Municipal Government Act's intermunicipal collaboration agreement requirements in the provision of recreation.

The County-wide Recreation Master Plan, along with information provided by Administration engaged with community organizations, would provide the RGC with a balanced understanding of the dynamic recreation needs and challenges across the County. Subsequently, regional provision and intermunicipal cost-sharing can be considered by Councillors from a County-wide perspective, such that the County's top recreation priorities can be identified and addressed.

### Recreation Governance Committee Membership

In this model, the Committee membership would be restricted to County Councillors, with public participation incorporated as necessary. Unlike the first model, this would allow each Councillor to participate in constructing and supporting Recreation across the County and would allow for improved first-hand knowledge of the recreation needs in each Division.

To support the RGC, Administration would embed itself in the community, both providing enhanced community support and better familiarizing the Committee with the true community needs. This would provide the Committee with objective information required to make informed decisions about recreation provision. As Councillors are required to consider the welfare of the municipality as a whole, decisions made by a Committee composed of Councillors alone would better represent the needs of RVC.

## Keeping the Community Involved

As RVC moves forward with a “made in Rocky View solution”, the focus would be on providing services for RVC residents as a whole. Clearly, it is essential to keep the community groups involved, as they are the link between the County and the community, they have a sense of ownership and investment in their communities, they inform and collaborate with the County, and they understand the needs of their communities.

Consequently, as suggested above, in this recommended model, community needs would be brought to the RGC through the Community Recreation Coordinators. The Recreation Coordinators, working with the community groups, are “the boots on the grounds”, and bring with them the expertise and understating of the residents' needs. Moreover, the Recreation Coordinators would support recreation programs, facilities, and services for communities, linking RVC with its people.

## Public Participation Capacity

The RGC would have the flexibility to reach out to residents to inform them of changes in recreation, request feedback, or establish sub-committees with public membership to address recreation-specific questions that require public input as defined in the County's *Public Participation Policy* (Rocky View County, 2019). In addition, community committees that work together to support their communities would be able to request the opportunity to present to the RGC.

As required by the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c-M-26 (Part 7, Section 216) (Government of Alberta, 2019), Council is bound by the County's Public Participation Policy C-191, which ensures meaningful stakeholder engagement to enrich Council's and Administration's decision-making when there is an opportunity for stakeholders to shape action or policy. Public Participation is undertaken in the following circumstances:

1. When new programs or services are being established;
2. When existing programs and services are being reviewed or changed in significant ways;
3. When RVC examines services and service standards as part of budgeting, capital, or financial plans;
4. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the County's strategic or business plans;
5. When required by legislation;
6. When deemed necessary by the CAO; or
7. When directed by Council.

The policy ensures that, as required, a Committee composed of Councillors alone will continue to engage the public. More information on the International Association for Public Participation's spectrum for public participation is found in Appendix 3.

## Enhanced Community Support

In this model of Recreation Governance, Administration would be actively involved in the community, working with non-profit organizations and community groups to better understand the dynamic needs of the community and, where possible, to enable service delivery. This

information would be provided to the RGC to ensure they have the accurate and relevant information required to make responsible and informed decisions. These activities may include:

1. Engagement and collaboration with recreation provision stakeholders to understand their needs and challenges through:
  - a. Open houses;
  - b. Educational outreach;
  - c. One-on-one meetings to address good governance and strategic financial planning in partnered community groups;
  - d. Support for strategic business planning.
2. Program planning and implementation where appropriate.
3. Community planning and development with local groups and interested stakeholders.
4. Liaison with other divisions to support capacity building and sharing of best practices.
5. Liaison with neighboring cities, towns etc., to partner on programs, events and services.
6. Project management and support for larger capital projects.

### **RGC Recreation Grant Approval Responsibility**

As with Model 1, the grant funding process would be updated and would include the rewrite of the current Community Recreation Grant Policy C-317 to allow Administration to revise how recreation funds are allocated.

Once the policy review is complete, the updated grant review process for Model 2 involves the following (shown in Figure 8):

1. Administration would review operational or capital grant applications for compliance with the new policy. Grants under a defined threshold (e.g.\$150,000.00 or as determined in the policy) would be compiled and submitted to the RGC to determine if a presentation is required, with the exception of the pre-approved list of organizations mentioned below. The Committee would review the applications submitted and vote to allocate funding, seek more information from the applicant, or decline the application.
2. Any grants above the determined threshold would require the organization to provide a presentation to the RGC for the requested funds, where the Committee would determine if the application should be approved, whether further information should be requested, or whether the request should be declined.
3. To streamline the grant review process, Administration also proposes to create a list of preapproved recreational providers who would receive an annual contribution from the County as part of the Recreation, Parks, and Community Support's operational budget. Additional analysis regarding this proposal is explained in the next section.
4. Lastly, to reduce the burden on our groups and allow for a more streamlined and efficient process, Administration would create a preapproved list of recreation providers that would be able to access recreation grant funds by securing multi-year grants and not having to apply for funding annually .



**Figure 8 – RGC Grant Approval Process**



## **RVC Regional Recreation Facilities**

In 2008, it became apparent that the ten District Recreation Boards were struggling with understanding the complexities of the larger and more complex facilities within RVC. For example, facilities like the Springbank Park For All Seasons would request project-based funding from the District Recreation Board, which would be a substantial financial grant request in comparison to the smaller amenities. It was becoming difficult for the Recreation Boards to understand why these larger facilities were requiring large grants to support life cycle replacement and enhancements. As a result, the Recreation Boards were not necessarily supporting the large financial requests and either recommending a smaller amount, or not recommending the request at all.

As well, the smaller community centers were expressing concern that the larger facilities were taking all the grant dollars, with little left for them. Further, as the approving body, Council was faced with challenges as they wanted to support the larger facilities but did not want to disregard the recommendations of the Recreation Boards.

After conducting research on best practices across multiple municipalities in Canada, Administration developed the regional funding model, which was initially administered through the Regional Recreation Board; however, recommendations for approval of regional funding was delegated to the Governance and Priorities Committee.

With the 2017 revision of Policy C-317, Regional Facilities were redefined as

*a facility that is determined by the County to be qualified as such, is owned or co-owned by the County, or is financially supported by the County but resides in another municipality and must provide public access without discrimination to County residents.*

*Further, a regional facility is a public facility designed and operated to include an integrated range of recreational interests, skill levels, and service areas. It is responsive to the needs of all ages and abilities, and contributes to a sense of community. It incorporates multiple indoor and outdoor components, participation and opportunities for both structured and organized sport, as well as unstructured and spontaneous recreational activities. Facility services may be provided through an alternative municipal*

*service provider with public access negotiated through an inter-municipal cost sharing agreement.*

Further to the definition above, on September 5, 2017, additional revisions were made to the Policy to include “Joint Regional Facility” which is defined as:

*A classified regional recreational facility designed and operated in synergy under shared funding with other regional facilities within a service planning catchment area established and classified by Policy & Priorities Committee by Schedule A – Procedure 317.*

The inclusion of a Joint-Regional classification allowed the Indus Recreation Centre and the future Langdon Joint Use Facility access to funding allocated for regionally designated facilities. To this date, the following are considered regional facilities:

**1. City of Airdrie - Group of Amenities**

Through a cost-sharing agreement, the City of Airdrie receives \$200,000 towards facilities such as the Bert Church Theatre, Genesis Place, and various parks around the City.

**2. Indus Recreation and Langdon Joint Use Facility**

Both groups receive a total of \$100,000 annually.

**3. Springbank Park For All Seasons**

Receives \$400,000 of annual funding to go towards capital or operational costs. It is assumed that this amount was committed previously as it was the only facility located in the County, and was not linked to a cost-sharing agreement; therefore, it did not have matching funding from another municipality.

**4. Spray Lake Sawmills Recreation Society**

This facility is co-owned with the Town of Cochrane and receives \$200,000 through a cost-sharing agreement.

As a component of the governance review, Administration proposes examining partnerships with recreational providers who regularly return to RVC for operational assistance – this includes both regional and district facilities. Depending on the funding model ultimately chosen, amenities available for County residents may have to be grouped based on facility types.

Administration is currently researching the appropriate means to classify facilities; findings from initial research show that municipalities like Lacombe County (Lacombe County, 2014) and Leduc County (Leduc County, 2012) have proposed identifying facilities as regional, district, specialized, and local facilities. To ensure that funding is being allocated appropriately, considerations for the type of facility is critical. An introduction of a classification system to categorized the different type of facilities and allocation of funding will be examined at the implementation process. Further information regarding the changes to the operational grants are outlined in the following section.

## **Operational Support for Facilities in RVC**

Currently, the Community Recreation Funding granting process provides two opportunities a year for applicants to submit their funding requests to help them operate recreational facilities, parks, programs, and events. During the spring intake, organizations can apply for both operational and capital applications, while in the fall, only capital requests are considered.

The County recognizes the importance of this granting program and the impact that it has to these community groups. Nonetheless, there are also limitations to the granting process; examples of these include the following:

- demands for the facilities are increasing; however, financial commitments to regional facilities have not changed for many years;
- both district and regional facility operators are required to apply every year, limiting their ability to plan long-term for their organization; and
- It may take as many as three months for an application to go through the grant review and approval process.

Applicants throughout the years have expressed their concerns about the timeline of the granting process and how the funds are allocated and distributed. As RVC continues to grow, demands for these facilities and programs increase, putting stress on these organizations.

Many of the organizations in RVC rely on the Community Recreation Funding grant to keep their doors open, returning annually for operating assistance. These same applicants often request regular annual funding for operational costs; most often, the same amount year after year. Regional facilities are an example of this, as are larger district facilities like the Bears paw Lifestyle Centre, Bragg Creek Community Centre, Springbank Equestrian Centre, Bragg Creek Snowbirds Seniors Fellowship, and Madden and District Agricultural Society. In 2019, 29 of the 34 applicants requesting operational grants had previously received funding from RVC through the Community Recreation Funding program—this includes both regional and district applications as shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9 – Community Centre Recreation Funding**

Average of Funding from 2016-2019		
Organization	Facility Type	Average Operating Grant Received
<b>District Facilities</b>		
Bears paw Glendale Community Association	Community hall	\$ 110,705.00
Bragg Creek Community Association	Community hall	\$ 166,200.00
Bragg Creek Snowbirds Seniors Fellowship	Community hall	\$ 9,131.50
Butler Park Community Association	Park	\$ 11,525.00
Chestermere Regional Community Association	Recreation Centre	\$ -
Dalroy U.F.A. Association	Community hall	\$ 6,700.00
Delacour Agricultural Society and Community Club	Community hall	\$ 5,000.00
Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association	Pathways/Trails	\$ 5,000.00
Jumping Pound Community Hall Society	Community hall	\$ 10,333.33
Keoma Community Society (Hall)	Community hall	\$ 5,250.00
Langdon Community Association	Community hall	\$ 15,258.83
Prairie Royal Estates Community Association	Park	\$ 3,157.60
Sharp Hill Preservation Society	Park	\$ 15,762.50
Springbank Equestrian Society	Community hall/equestrian facility	\$ 10,500.00
Springbank Heritage Club	Community hall	\$ 24,000.00
<b>District Facilities Total</b>		<b>\$ 398,523.76</b>
<b>Regional Facilities</b>		
Springbank Park for All Season	Regional Facility	\$ 400,000.00
Indus Recreation Centre (Bow Valley Ag Society)	Regional Facility	\$ 100,000.00
Spray Lake Sawmill Family Sports Centre	Regional Facility	\$ 200,000.00
Langdon Joint Use Site	Regional Facility	\$ 100,000.00
Genesis Place	Regional Facility	\$ 200,000.00
<b>Regional Facility Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,000,000.00</b>

Chestermere - not requested operational grants since 2013 / Langdon - total includes grants from Langdon Special tax

Using an analysis of the district grants distributed from the last five years (2015-2019), it was noted that approximately 60% of the funds available annually for operational grants are distributed to community groups (many of which are returning applicants), with the remaining 40% being rolled over to the Capital Reserve. The value remains the same annually for regional groups as they are committed to set amounts.

Once the Recreation Governance model is approved, to streamline the process and alleviate the need for community groups to apply annually, Administration is proposing that RVC partner with these organizations on a fixed term and include the funding amounts as line items in the Recreation, Parks, and Community Support operating budget for three-year terms. This would allow these not-for-profit groups to plan for their facilities on a longer-term basis.

In order to continue to receive regular funding, these groups would be required to report to the County annually as to the expenditure of these allocated funds. This annual commitment would only be applicable to operational costs of recreational centres. Groups applying for capital or program costs would still be required to apply on an annual basis through the standard recreational grant process mentioned above. There would be various considerations for eligibility to ensure that County funds are being used as intended, which will be defined during the implementation of the new model.

Further, when designating preapproved facilities, RVC would consider the groups' historical operational grants, and impose requirements to submit strategic plans and operational budgets to be reviewed annually. Administration is currently assessing how other municipalities process their operational grants to identify best practices that RVC can implement to allocate annual recreation funding. Findings from this initial review show that grants administration practices vary from municipality to municipality; options are outlined below:

### **Funding based on specific amounts**

This option provides maximum amounts depending on the type of facility. For example, in Red Deer County, halls and emergency reception centres with operating expenses over \$20,000.00 are eligible for up to \$7,500.00 of annual funding. Further to this, they offer up to \$50,000.00 of operating assistance for Agricultural Societies that operate arenas (Red Deer County, 2015). This type of model is also used in Lacombe County with similar funding thresholds (Lacombe County, 2014). Should RVC choose this option, the maximum funding thresholds will have to be determined depending on the type of facility.

### **Funding based of percentage of operational cost**

This option commits to funding operational costs up to a certain percentage. In Yellowhead County, registered not-for-profits organizations or hall boards are given the opportunity to request funding up to 50% of their operating expenses up to a maximum of \$10,000.00 (Yellowhead County, 2017). Insurance and utility costs are the only eligible expenses included in this grant. This model may be limited as the operating costs may vary depending on the facility with the potential to deplete the limited funding available through the County budget.

## **Funding based on size of facility**

This option allows for funding to be distributed based on the size of the facility. Strathcona County distributes financial assistance to community halls according to the size of the facility. In their model, the size of the 14 facilities and four senior centres are combined and the funding is based on the percentage from the total. Funding consideration for this process would have to account for the different type of facilities available, meaning that the larger recreation facilities should be accounted for differently than smaller facilities such as community halls or parks.

All of the examples above provide a consistent process of administering funding; however, it is limited in that it does not account for the impact that the facility provides – these formulas do not necessarily answer questions such as number of residents using the facility. Is it all local residents, or is it being used predominantly by non-residents? As there are various options for funding considerations, prior to committing that a specific dollar amount be provided to organizations on an annual basis, Administration requires that further analysis of the available options be completed to determine the most appropriate way to allocate grants. This will take place as part of the implementation process, and coincides with the review of policy C-317 – Community Recreation Funding.

At this stage, Administration will complete external engagement with community organizations to better understand their financial needs and consult with them to discuss other (non-fiscal) ways in which Administration can provide assistance. These ideas include capacity building workshops, and assisting organizations with their strategic planning or facility life cycle planning<sup>2</sup>. Completing further analysis is critical as these changes can heavily impact the operation of these organizations. This ensures that the model ultimately implemented will result in funding that is distributed in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner.

## **Tracking Success towards Outcomes**

With either model of recreation governance proposed, utilizing performance management information to improve decision-making that includes performance measures linked to results, has the potential to focus RVC on continuous improvement of services, thereby creating greater value for taxpayers. Accordingly, in order to ensure continual improvement and to evaluate success, it is proposed that key performance indicators are developed using a balanced scorecard approach (shown in Appendix 5). Therefore, in the implementation phase of the new Recreation Governance Model and grant funding program development, Administration will develop a performance management program to track success toward outcomes.

## **Implementation Plan**

In order to ensure a seamless and well-managed transition to a new board structure, the following activities will take place once a Recreation Governance model is approved. The Gantt chart located in Appendix 4 identifies timelines for implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> The Recreation, Parks and Community Support has already began to provide to some community groups assistance in good governance and planning.

- Develop a change management and communications strategy to inform current board members of the changes (Q3, 2019)
- Rescind current Board Bylaws (Q3, 2019)
- Develop and present new Board Terms of Reference and Bylaw (Q3, 2019)
- Communicate the new Recreation Board to public through various channels (Q3, 2019)
- Plan a Board member recognition event (Q3, 2019)
- Develop and present new Recreation Grant Policy - 317 (Q4, 2019)
- Communicate and implement new granting process to community members (Q4, 2019)

Further implementation considerations include:

- Eliminating unnecessary processes and touchpoints;
- Improving coordination amongst communities;
- Standardizing work, where possible, to reduce variance in processes and performance;
- Reviewing potential gaps in service delivery and possible revenue generation;
- Moving staff from administering to coaching, facilitating, and planning with community members;
- No longer doing things our citizens do not value and boost efficiency;
- Creating a culture of continuous improvement; and
- Developing clear roles for staff to allow for more time spent on value-added activities.

## Conclusion / Recommendations

Rocky View County is a mix of rural and urban communities. Residential growth predictions require RVC to plan now for future growth to provide current and future recreation service demand. In the next 20 years, substantial change will be required to ensure RVC can manage the wide-ranging and every growing needs for recreation services. The ability to respond appropriately will be shaped by the County's willingness to embrace change and respond proactively to the diverse communities throughout RVC.

To mitigate the current and future challenges, RVC needs to move forward by taking a strategic and active role in community recreation development through active Council and Administration involvement. Rocky View County can no longer rely on the current district model of recreation boards to develop the long-range strategic plans and deliver upon Councils strategic goals.

Further, future recreation needs should meet a priority-based grants/fund allocation priority that aligns with the County-Wide Recreation Master Plan. Consequently, in order to meet current and future demands, it is critical that RVC reviews its funding approach and the funding allocation to recreation services.

Accordingly, developing and adopting a new model for recreation board governance, and a renewed and efficient granting process, will ensure transparent and priority-based recreation funding that will support the development of the long-range County-Wide Recreation Master Plan.

Administration assessed both options and recommends the implementation of Model 2 - Recreation Governance Committee as it not only exhibits the benefits outlined in the report, but also allows all of Council to be involved in the planning and implementation of Recreation. It

also promotes efficiency in the granting process as the Committee can approve all grant applications. Moreover, this model enhances Council's and Administration's presence in the community, providing opportunities to directly support community organizations while fulfilling Council's fiduciary responsibility.



# Appendix 1 – RVC Rural and Specialized Alberta Municipalities Recreation Survey Results

## Recreation Survey Board Composition Details

### 1. Survey Results:

Of the 26 municipalities invited to complete the survey, 14 municipalities provided responses, eight of which have recreation boards. The data provided by the eight municipalities with recreation boards provided a detailed picture of rural recreation board composition.

The composition of recreation boards in Rural Alberta municipalities with populations over 10,000 and Specialized Municipalities\* is provided below.

Municipality	Population	Public Members			Council			Adjacent Municipality			School Board		
		# of Boards	Term (years)	Maximum Consecutive Terms	# of Boards	Term (years)	Maximum Consecutive Terms	# of Boards	Term (years)	Maximum Consecutive Terms	# of Boards	Length of Term (years)	Maximum Consecutive Terms
Municipality of Crowsnest Pass*	5,589	7	3	unlimited	2	1	unlimited	0			0		
Yellowhead County	10,000	8	3	2	1	unlimited	unlimited	0			0		
MD of Bonnyville No. 87	11,000	0			2	1	unlimited	6	1	unlimited	0		
County of Wetaskiwin No.10	11,880	6	1	2	4	1		0			0		
Leduc County	13,000	7	2	2	2			0			0		
Mountain View County	13,074	5			1			1			0		
Red Deer County	19,541	9	3	3	0			0			0		
Sturgeon County	20,495	6	3		2	1		0			1	1	

## Interview Feedback from County Recreation Specialists

### **Strathcona County (population 98,381)**

Strathcona County had a Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee with public representation until about 2005. The committee was disbanded as it was no longer required by legislation. Strathcona's Recreation and Culture Strategy Advisory Committee (an administrative committee) was established in 2017. It is made up of community members and stakeholders that offer input and strategic advice for the Steering Committee to consider as it works to ensure that the strategy for recreation, parks, and culture meets the needs of the County and is realistic and feasible to implement. The committee is due to disband by no later than October 2019.

The bulk of Strathcona's major recreation facilities are owned and operated by the County. These facilities are located on County lands, and although a number of them were originally built and operated in the 1960s by community organizations, the County took them over in the 1970s.

Many of the County's community halls are located on County lands. Non-profit organizations have licenses with the County to operate these facilities. Annual funding provided to these organizations for hall operations is based on the facility's square footage. Any facility upgrades are carried out by the County.

When the County doesn't have the expertise to run a facility, non-profits do so. Though the County may subsidize costs for facility use, it does not provide direct programming subsidies. In addition to facility funds, resourcing is provided to the community for events. Normally, recreation decisions and grants default to Administration. Public engagement is carried out when more detailed input is required from the community (Cunningham, 2019).

### **Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (population 111,687)**

Wood Buffalo is unique in that it has a Regional Recreation Corporation Board (RRCB). This is a not-for-profit organization registered under Section 9 of the Companies Act, with the municipality as the single shareholder; public members are vetted and appointed by Council with the aid of a skills matrix.

The RRCB operates the municipally-owned recreation facilities and is subsidized with 40% of operational costs through a line item in the Council budget. Grants are provided to other facilities in Wood Buffalo, but not for programs (Council gets funding recommendations from Administration).

In addition to the major recreation facilities operated by the RRCB, Wood Buffalo also provides sustaining grants to not-for-profits that operate other recreation amenities (e.g. ball diamonds, trails, cross-country ski trail, AJHL, and minor hockey), community impact grants, Games Legacy Grants, and Development Grants. None of these grant support programs. All are focused on facilities.

(Elliott, 2019)

### **Foothills County (population 22,766)**

Foothills County was unable to provide a survey response; however, it was noted that, similar to Rocky View County, the bylaws for their nine Council-appointed boards date back to the mid-1970s with very few amendments. Foothills Administration anticipates that these bylaws will be readdressed in the next couple of years (Foothills County, 2019).

## Appendix 2 – Recreation Governance Board Secondary Research

The following information was retrieved from the websites of municipalities adjacent to RVC as well as municipalities of similar size and with models that may provide components applicable to RVC recreation.

### Chestermere

The City of Chestermere recently removed their representation from Rocky View County's Chestermere-Conrich Recreation Board. Currently, Chestermere does not have a recreation board. All of their grant applications are reviewed by an ad hoc committee made up of Councillors and staff.

### Town of Cochrane

The Town's Parks and Recreation Committee is "an advisory body to Council and Administration regarding matters pertaining to community parks, and recreation". The board has public, Council, and school board representation.

### Airdrie

Airdrie's Community Services Advisory Board has both Council and Community representation. The Board oversees leisure services, social services (including FCSS allocations and Transit) and Parks.

### City of Calgary – Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services

Though the City of Calgary does not have recreation boards, they do have a standing committee of Council that addresses recreation concerns.

The role of Calgary's Standing Policy Committees (SPC) is outlined in their Procedure Bylaw 35M2017 (per section 145 of the MGA), wherein they establish the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services as one of four SPCs.

SPC Mandates B.3: The mandate of the SPC on Community and Protective Services: parks, recreational, cultural and social services; civic partners; affordable housing; grants related to such services provided or allocated by The City;

Per Part 4 – Roles and Conduct, section C. 31. (2) – members of the public can provide their input when a Standing Policy Committee is considering proposed recommendations on matters contained in their agendas, the SPC must hear from members of the public who wish to speak to those matters prior to debating the proposed recommendations (City of Calgary, 2019).

### Parkland County (population 32,500)

Parkland County does not have a recreation board. Their Community Sustainability Committee provides recommendations to Council on higher-level matters relating to Complete Communities and Respected Environment, and their alignment with the Strategic Goals set out in the Strategic Plan. Recreation facilities and provision are but two of a larger number of considerations.

Administration provides recommendations to Council regarding funding allotments for recreation grant applicants.

### **Grande Prairie (population 22, 502)**

The County of Grande Prairie did not respond to the survey, however, according to their website, a Recreation Advisory Committee exists. It is composed of all Council members with no public representation, and their model incorporates the use of six regional recreation boards across the County.

### **Saskatoon (pop 273,010)- Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services**

The committee consists of five City Councillors, with the Mayor as ex officio.

With respect to all matters within the committee's policy areas, the mandate of this committee is:

- To provide advice and recommendations to Council;
- To oversee the implementation of approved policy decisions by the civic Administration; and
- To exercise every power delegated by Council.

The policy areas for this committee includes (amongst others):

- arts, culture, recreation and immigration;
- parks;

Delegated Authority:

The following power or duties are delegated to this committee (amongst others):

- The receipt and final consideration of any reports and status updates respecting any program or business line within the committee's policy areas;
- the approval of assistance for special events;
- the establishment of the list of standard facilities to be used in calculating neighbourhood, local and district parks, and recreation levies;
- the approval of assistance for community groups;
- the approval of leasing of civic buildings to outside organizations;
- the approval of special occasion licences if the application does not comply with policy;
- the designation of specific City-operated recreational facilities where advertising signs promoting the sale and consumption of beverage alcohol will be permitted;

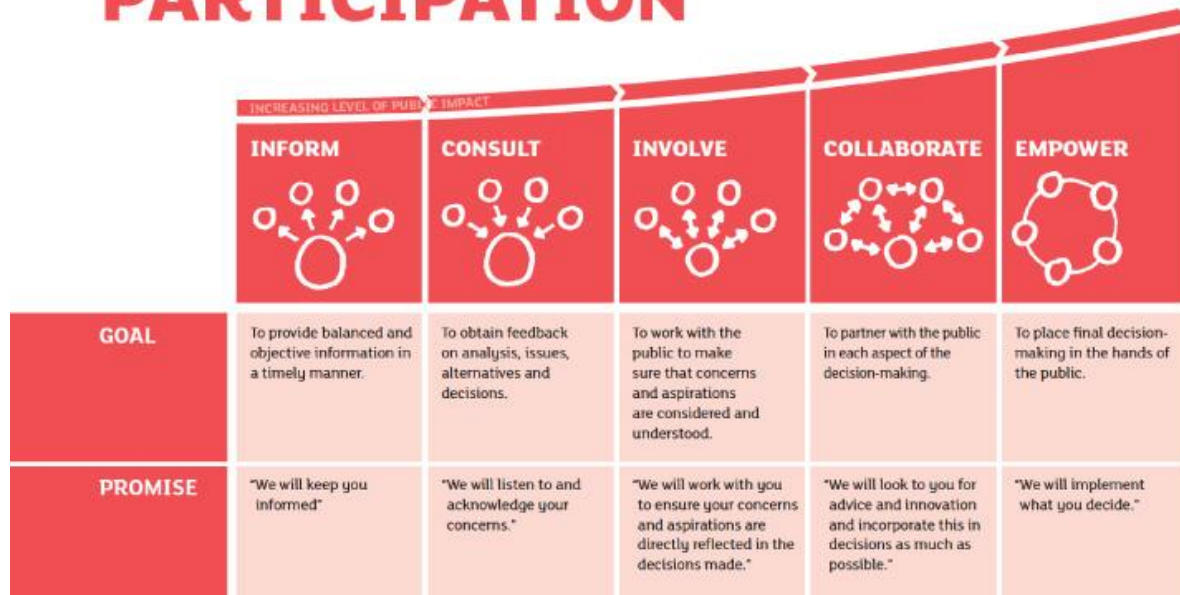
(City of Saskatoon, 2019)

## Appendix 3 – Community Engagement Strategies

The engagement strategies are based on International Association for Public Participation's spectrum for public participation (International Association For Public Participation Canada, 2019), and include:

1. **Inform:** Communicate decisions and actions to Stakeholders.
2. **Consult:** Gather and understand Stakeholder feedback.
3. **Involve:** Work with Stakeholders to ensure that their input is directly reflected in the alternatives developed.
4. **Collaborate:** Consider Stakeholders to be partners in decision-making process.
5. **Empower:** Aspects of the decision-making process are delegated to Stakeholders.

## IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



## Appendix 4 – Implementation Plan

Recreation Governance Timeline	2019 Aug				2019 Sep					2019 Oct				2019 Nov				2019 Dec					2020 Jan					2020 Feb				2020 Mar		
	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30												
Recreation Governance Implementation Plan																																		
Recreation Board Bylaws Rescind Report						10																												
New Recreation Board Bylaw to Council						10																												
New Recreation Grant Program / Policy Development																																		
New Recreaiton Grant Policy 317 to Council																			10															
Communicate new Grant Program to Public (café's, community meetings etc.)																																		
New Grants in Place for Spring Grants																																		
Board Communications & Recognition																																		
New Board Development																																		
New Board Reviews & Approves Grants																																		
Recreation Master Plan																																		
County Wide Recreation, Culture, Parks Needs Assessment																																		
Recreation Master Plan Development																																		

### Strategic Alignment

In 2020, to support current recreation needs and address future Recreation development in the County, a Recreation Master Plan will be developed. Creating a long-term vision and strategic master plan utilizing a community development approach (Figure 7) will support Council's priorities for Service Excellence, Financial Health, and Responsible Growth in our communities.

Creating an environment where there is clarity on the path forward that includes strategic long-range planning, community inspiration and ownership, and key performance metrics to track successes will ensure community members appreciate the way recreation is provided and that service is delivered on time. Residents will know how and why their money is spent, and understand that Administration is considering the county as a whole in planning and development of future recreation facilities and amenities.

**Figure 7 – Planning Approach for Community Leaders**

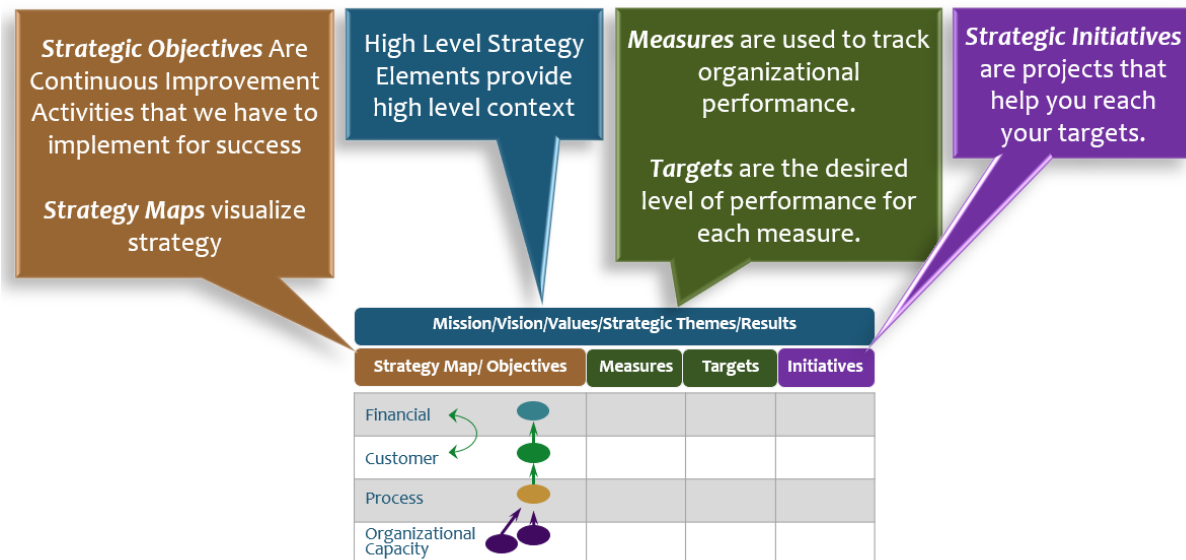


## Appendix 5 – Balanced Scorecard Approach to Performance Management

Developed by the Balanced Scorecard Institute

The Balanced Scorecard approach to Performance Management includes developing goals and measures in each of the quadrants that include:

1. **The financial perspective**, considering how we are spending tax dollars;
2. **The internal business perspective**, including what we must excel at in our communities;
3. **The innovation and learning perspective**, which includes how can we continue to improve and create value;
4. **The citizen or customer perspective**, which considers how we are perceived by our citizens. Performance measures include customer satisfaction, customer service targets, public awareness, and customer utilization.





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