





Town of Cochrane

Cochrane Parks, Culture and Active Living Master Plan

Your Future, Your Community

2026

rcs+

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW



The Town of Cochrane gratefully acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional lands of Iyarhe Nakoda peoples of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations. Treaty 7 is also home to the Tsuut'ina, Niitsitapi peoples of Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations, as well as the homelands of the Métis residing within the Rocky View Métis District of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government within the Métis Nation of Alberta.





Executive Summary

The Town of Cochrane has undergone remarkable growth over the past two decades, more than tripling in population from 12,041 residents in 2001 to 37,011 in 2024. As Cochrane continues to grow and evolve, so too does the community's expectation for high-quality parks, culture, and active living (PCAL) services that support health, connection, and quality of life. This Master Plan establishes a clear, strategic direction for the delivery and development of these services over the next 15 years, rooted in the community's vision as expressed through Envision Cochrane 2050.

The Plan is grounded in research, community input gathered through three phases of engagement, and an assessment of Cochrane's current infrastructure and service landscape. It guides decision-making for Town Council, administration, and community partners on where and how to invest in parks, facilities, programs, and culture to best serve residents today and in the future.

Strategic Foundations

Parks, culture, and active living services in Alberta are delivered without formal provincial standards, giving municipalities the freedom to define their own approach. Cochrane's approach is grounded in a clear purpose and a set of guiding principles that connect PCAL investment directly to the Town's broader strategic vision.

Purpose Statement: The Town of Cochrane enables parks, culture and active living services to enhance quality of life and community wellbeing by creating opportunities for physical activity, creative expression, social connection, and engagement with nature.

Seven guiding principles shape how the Town pursues this purpose:

- Plan for Growth with Intention: proactively plan infrastructure to serve existing and future residents, with equitable distribution across neighbourhoods.
- Protect and Connect Natural Assets: preserve Cochrane's open spaces, natural areas, and viewscapes as essential community infrastructure.
- Design for Multi-Generational and Multi-Use Experiences: support flexible spaces and programs that serve diverse users and changing needs.
- Integrate Culture and Heritage into the Everyday: embed arts, culture, and heritage into parks, facilities, and public spaces, not just dedicated venues.
- Leverage Partnerships to Expand Capacity: vcultivate partnerships with community organizations, school boards, neighbouring municipalities, and the private sector.
- Make Evidence-Informed Decisions: use data, community input, demographic trends, and best practices to guide investments.
- Remove Barriers and Design for Equity: proactively identify and address barriers to participation, whether physical, financial, social, or cultural.

The Current State of PCAL in Cochrane

Community engagement and research confirmed that Cochrane residents value their parks, trails, and outdoor spaces highly and regard access to nature as central to quality of life. Satisfaction is strong when it comes to the pathway system and natural areas. However, the data also reveals clear areas of pressure:

- Facilities are busy and at or near capacity, with limited availability for drop-in and casual use.
- Gaps exist in specific facility types, particularly indoor turf, gymnasium and fitness space, and arts performance space.
- Aging infrastructure requires increasing investment to remain safe, functional, and relevant.
- Barriers related to cost, operating hours, and awareness limit full participation for some residents.
- Community connection and social gathering are highly valued but need more dedicated support.

Cochrane currently stewards over $430 million in PCAL infrastructure, including 14 indoor facilities, more than 80 kilometres of trails and pathways, and 221 outdoor amenities. Alberta municipalities shows that Cochrane is well-served in arenas, aquatics, and pathways, but has gaps in gymnasium space, indoor hard courts, outdoor pools, and spray parks.

The Town's Approach to Service Delivery

Cochrane employs an indirect service delivery model, relying on community partners, non-profit organizations, user groups, and school boards to deliver most PCAL programs and animate Town facilities. This approach extends the Town's reach, leverages community expertise, and builds a resilient, community-owned sector. The Town's role is to lead, fund, enable, and set clear expectations, not to deliver most programs directly.

To strengthen this model, the Plan recommends actions across eight areas:

1. embedding strategic clarity into all planning and partner relationships;
2. sustaining grant programs and establishing a new capital partnership fund;
3. fostering communication across the sector;
4. encouraging partner alignment with Town goals;
5. investing in professional development for staff, partners, and volunteers;
6. building a culture of data use and evidence-based decision-making;
7. expanding and formalizing the partnership network;
8. responding to unmet community demand before stepping in as a direct provider.

The Future of PCAL Infrastructure

Prudent asset management is the first priority. Regular condition assessments, accessibility and energy audits, and a comprehensive asset management database form the foundation of responsible infrastructure stewardship. Site selection for all new PCAL infrastructure will be guided by a consistent set of criteria, including centrality, accessibility by active transportation, proximity to complementary services, and colocation potential.

Indoor Infrastructure Priorities

As opportunities and capacity allow, the following indoor facilities represent the highest priorities for planning and investment:

- Additional ice arena capacity to address confirmed demand and accommodate growing ice sport participation.
- Additional library capacity to keep pace with growth and address demand.
- An indoor turf facility to support year-round field sport programming, with strong potential for regional partnerships.
- An arts performance space to support the growing cultural sector, potentially integrated with a library or cultural centre.
- Distributed multipurpose program rooms to serve diverse community programming needs across neighbourhoods.

Outdoor Infrastructure Priorities

As opportunities and capacity allow, the following outdoor spaces represent the highest priorities for planning and investment:

- Trails and Pathways
- Sport Fields
- Ball Diamonds
- Off Leash Dog Parks
- Amphitheatres
- Picnic Areas and Shelters

Active Living Services and Programs

Programs and services animate the infrastructure the Town and its partners provide. The Plan's recommendations focus on four priorities:

- Reduce Barriers to Participation: expand fee assistance programs, improve physical and information accessibility, support culturally diverse programming, and distribute services equitably across neighbourhoods.
- Strengthen Community Events and Celebrations: maintain and grow the Town's leadership in signature events, seasonal celebrations, neighbourhood events, and spontaneous public space activation.
- Expand Drop-in and Unstructured Opportunities: increase public swim, public skate, open gymnasium, and drop-in sport options, and design parks and outdoor spaces for spontaneous, unstructured use.
- Monitor Trends and Respond to Emerging Opportunities: stay current with participation trends including outdoor adventure, wellness, pickleball, adaptive sports, and short-form programming, and pilot emerging activities before committing to infrastructure investment.

Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are essential to Cochrane's identity and quality of life. This Plan establishes a strategic arts and culture direction and lays the foundation for a future Arts and Culture Master Plan. The vision is that Cochrane's arts and cultural sector will reflect the community's dynamic identity, enlivening neighbourhoods, drawing visitors, and contributing to economic growth.

Three priority areas guide the arts and culture direction:

- Make Cochrane a Culturally Vibrant Place to Live: share Cochrane's stories through expanded platforms, broaden heritage interpretation to include Indigenous history and diverse settler stories, complete a cultural mapping exercise, and develop a public art plan with a percent-for-art funding mechanism.
- Maximize Economic Development Potential: create distinctive Cochrane cultural products, establish a vehicle for sector connection such as an arts council or roundtable, market Cochrane as a cultural destination, and attract creative workers and entrepreneurs through affordable workspace and supportive land use planning.
- Improve Sustainability of the Arts and Cultural Sector: provide capacity building support for organizations, simplify the municipal grant process, and regularly update funding programs to reflect the sector's evolving needs.

Green and Open Spaces

Cochrane's green and open spaces are fundamental to community character and quality of life. The Town targets a park or open space within 400 metres of every resident. Three priorities guide this section:

- Grow and Sustain Cochrane's Tree Canopy: manage the urban forest with the same rigour applied to build infrastructure, through comprehensive inventory, strategic planting in gap areas, integration into asset management, and pursuit of external funding such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Growing Canada's Community Canopies program.
- Protect Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity: use parks, open spaces, and the Rugged and Wild typology to protect wildlife corridors and biodiversity along the Bow River and its tributaries, in collaboration with environmental organizations and regional partners.
- Manage Public Art as a Community Asset: build on recent public art initiatives with a formalized Public Art Management Plan that includes inventory and condition assessment, maintenance protocols, acquisition policies, and staff training.

Funding PCAL Services and Infrastructure

Sustaining and growing Cochrane's PCAL system requires a diversified, strategic approach to funding. The Plan identifies four key mechanisms:

- Municipal Reserve Contributions: require maximum allowable land and cash-in-lieu dedications from new development to protect service levels as the community grows.
- Local Improvements and Off-Site Levies: maximize developer contributions toward both neighbourhood-level amenities and community-wide infrastructure to ensure growth pays for growth.
- Dedicated Tax Levy: establish a dedicated levy for PCAL infrastructure renewal and new amenity development, providing predictable, transparent, long-term funding capacity.
- Grants: actively monitor and pursue provincial, federal, and foundation grant programs, aligning capital projects with grant cycles and securing matching funding in advance.

User fees play a supporting role, helping to offset costs while ensuring broad community access. Fees should be set at levels that do not exclude middle-income families, supported by fee assistance programs for those who cannot afford to participate.

Implementation

The Plan includes 27 recommendations across six categories: service delivery, infrastructure, active living programs, arts and culture, green and open spaces, and funding. Each recommendation is supported by specific actions, considerations, and performance metrics to guide implementation and measure progress. Recommendations are assigned short-term, medium-term, long-term, or ongoing timelines to sequence priorities within available resources.

Together, these recommendations reflect a practical, partnership-centred approach to delivering exceptional parks, culture, and active living services for a growing, diverse community. This Plan is a living document; its intent is to guide decisions, not to constrain them. As Cochrane grows and circumstances evolve, the direction set here will be revisited and refined to ensure it continues to reflect community needs, opportunities, and values.

Preface

This Parks, Culture, and Active Living Master Plan is meant to provide strategic and tactical guidance to Town decision makers, administration, and partners involved in the delivery of these important community services.

This Plan is rooted in the Town's strategic planning fabric, influenced by community input, research and data and sets the stage for both decision-making and further detailed planning related to service delivery and infrastructure.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Town Council, Staff and Committee Members who have supported the development of this Master Plan. Along with residents of Cochrane who participated in focus groups, attended open houses, and completed the surveys throughout the planning process.

Glossary

Active Living: A way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines and leisure time. Active living goes beyond structured sport and exercise to include walking, cycling, gardening, active play, outdoor recreation, and movement throughout the day. It emphasizes accessible, enjoyable, lifelong participation in physical activity as a foundation for health, wellbeing, and community connection.

Amenity: An activity space within a facility or design element that enhances the quality, usability, or appeal of a park, facility, or public space. Amenities range from basic features (benches, lighting, washrooms, drinking fountains) to specialized elements and active spaces (playgrounds, splash pads, ice sheets, pools).

Culture: The arts, heritage, creative expression, traditions, and shared identity that define a community. Culture includes visual and performing arts, museums and galleries, festivals and events, heritage interpretation, public art, storytelling, and cultural practices. In the Canadian context, culture recognizes Indigenous heritage, celebrates diversity, honours historical roots, and embraces evolving expressions of community identity.

Facility: A building, structure, or venue purpose-built to support recreation, sport, culture, or community activities. Facilities include arenas, aquatic centres, libraries, community centres, performance venues, and sport fields. They provide controlled environments for programming, events, and year-round use, typically requiring operational staffing and ongoing maintenance.

Parks: Public outdoor spaces designed and maintained for recreation, relaxation, natural experience, and community gathering. Parks range from small neighbourhood green spaces to large natural areas, and serve diverse purposes including active play, passive enjoyment, ecological preservation, cultural programming, and community events. Parks provide accessible contact with nature and contribute to environmental health, community identity, and quality of life.

Recreation: Leisure-time activities pursued for enjoyment, personal development, health, wellbeing, and social connection. Recreation encompasses sport, arts, culture, outdoor activities, fitness, hobbies, play, and informal socializing. It includes both structured programs (leagues, classes, events) and unstructured participation (drop-in, spontaneous use of parks and facilities). Recreation is essential to individual quality of life and community vitality.

Social Impact: The effect of programs, services, infrastructure, and policies on community wellbeing, social connections, equity, and inclusion. Positive social impacts include reduced isolation, increased sense of belonging, improved mental and physical health, stronger community identity, enhanced social cohesion, and greater equity in access to opportunities. Social impact recognizes that parks, culture, and active living services contribute to outcomes beyond individual participation.

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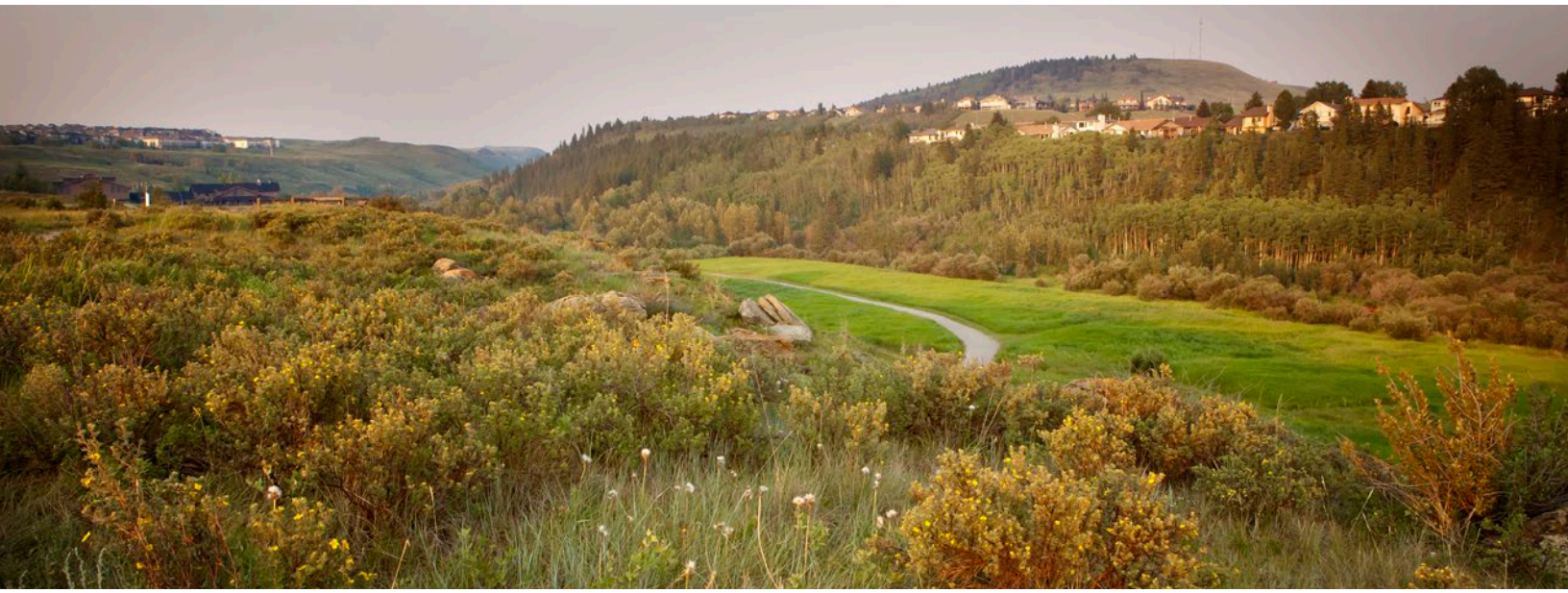
1 Introduction and Methodology

The purpose of this **Parks, Culture, and Active Living (PCAL) Master Plan** is to help the Town navigate complex decision making and actions related to these important community services. The Plan is intended to influence current and future delivery of services, inform future operating and capital budgets, and articulate how the Town will work with partners.

The Plan has been developed through a multi-phased approach that first focused on defining the current state of parks, culture, and active living in the community and region, and then assessed how services could best be maintained and enhanced moving forward. This was done through a robust program of research and community engagement, as well as through the guidance of community collaborators comprised of Town staff and community volunteers.

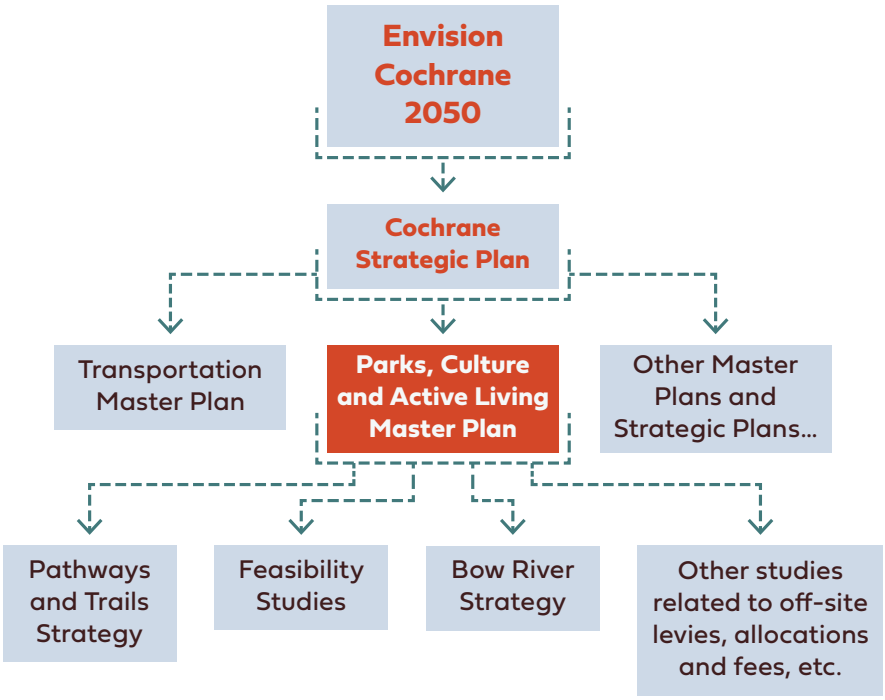
Figure 1: Planning Process





It is important to note where this Plan sits in terms of the Town's hierarchy of planning. It is rooted in the broad community vision portrayed in Envision Cochrane 2050 and is also influenced by the Town's most recent Strategic Plan. It is meant to provide guidance related to the Town's investment in parks, culture, and active living, and it provides the foundation for more specific strategic and tactical planning around service areas (geographic or subject matter) and further feasibility analysis for related major infrastructure projects.

Figure 2: Town Planning Hierarchy



This Plan serves an important purpose within a complex planning context shaped by growth, societal change, and financial realities. It guides decision making for essential municipal services whose public provision is often subjective. These decisions and associated actions are challenging, especially when financial constraints exist, as such, this Plan is intended to support clearer, more informed action.







1.1 The Value and Impact of PCAL

Parks, culture, and active living services and infrastructure offer numerous indirect and direct benefits to communities and residents, including addressing growing social and health concerns such as physical inactivity, increasing rates of chronic health problems, and social isolation. These benefits do not end at municipal or regional borders, nor do residents see municipal boundaries when considering participating in these types of opportunities or experiences. The benefits derived from parks, culture, and active living services, particularly indirect benefits such as increased community well-being, economic impact, and positive impacts on the justice and education sectors, cannot be escaped even by those who do not participate.

Figure 3: Benefits of Parks, Culture and Active Living

Environmental

- Build a culture of stewardship
- Protect & restore biodiversity
- Provide essential ecological service (e.g., water filtration, pollination, climate regulation)
- Enhance our resilience and adaption climate change
- Mitigate risk from extreme weather events

Health

- Improve physical health, including supporting rehabilitation post illness or injury
- Improve wellbeing, support mental health and positive self-esteem
- Provide safe environments for re-engaging individuals with physical activity
- Develop fundamental physical literacy skills

Social & Cultural

- Increase social interaction for individuals and families
- Build community pride
- Be welcoming experiences to support inclusive communities
- Support reconciliation with Indigenous communities
- Reduce anti-social and risk behaviours of youth
- Provide leadership experiences and training
- Enhance appreciation about an areas' history & culture

Economics

- Support growth of the sport, recreation, tourism, and event economies
- Create new direct and indirect jobs
- Attract new and retain existing skilled labour and businesses
- Increase land values and local government revenues
- Serve as important assets to deliver core government services and programs.

Sources include the Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015/2024) and Measuring-impact.ca.

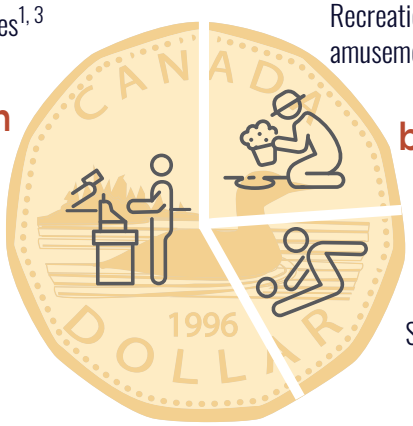
Although many of these benefits are qualitative in nature, the national recreation and parks community has developed a quantitative assessment of the social impact of recreation and parks across Canada. The Measuring Impact initiative suggests that the impact of recreation and parks to the nation is in the billions and when extrapolated to the Town of Cochrane, the impacts are significant.

Figure 4: Measuring Impact Key Findings

Economic Impact (2022) $37.2 billion

Retail Sales[1, 3]
$21.5 billion

Recreation and amusement sector[1, 2]
$8.8 billion

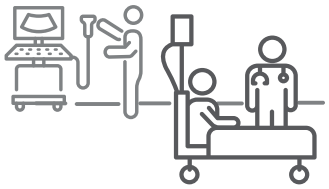


Sport sector[1]
$6.9 billion

Economic impact reflected as the annual contribution to Canada's economy from SPAR and retail sales.

Health Impact (2022) $3.9 billion

Direct costs of select non-communicable diseases and depression[4]
$3.87 billion



Cost associated with pre-mature mortality[4]
$36.9 million



Health impact reflected as the annual contribution to health care costs for select health conditions related to physical inactivity.

Social Impact (2020) $13.6 billion

Value of volunteering[5]
$13.6 billion



Social impact reflected as the value of volunteering for SPAR-based activities.

Environmental Impact (2020) $42.5 billion

Recreation and sports facilities[6]
$33.5 billion



Active transportation infrastructure[6]
$9.0 billion



Environmental impact reflected as the replacement value of SPAR facilities and active transportation infrastructure.

1 Value as it relates to the gross domestic product.
2 Recreation and amusement sector comprised of golf and country clubs, skiing facilities, fitness and recreational sports, and all other amusement and recreation facilities.
3 Retail sales comprised of athletic footwear, sporting equipment and recreation vehicles.
4 Based on non-communicable diseases which include coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, colon cancer, hypertension, osteoporosis, depression.
5 Calculated using percentage of volunteers in sport, physical activity and recreation and hours spent.
6 Based on estimated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities, and active transportation infrastructure in 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' condition.

1.2 How to Read the Document

As a strategic document, this Master Plan establishes long-term direction, priorities, and decision-making frameworks for parks, culture, and active living in Cochrane, rather than prescribing detailed actions. Readers should focus on overarching themes, guiding principles, and recommendations, while recognizing that implementation will occur through more detailed planning undertaken by the Town. These supporting plans may include specific project plans, service delivery strategies, operational adjustments, budgets, timelines, and partnership agreements.

Throughout the document there are visual cues, such as the highlighted orange boxes which highlight key directions from Envision 2050 and the yellow boxes which include recommendations.

This document serves as a foundation to guide future, action-oriented planning and investment decisions.

Orange boxes highlight key connections to Envision 2050 recommendations and strategic directions.

Yellow boxes highlight Plan recommendations. They are organized by the following categories:


parks, culture and active living service delivery (SD)


parks, culture and active living infrastructure (I)


active living services and programs (P)


arts and culture (AC)


green and open spaces (GS)


funding (F)



2 Strategic Foundations

Cochrane not only grows but thrives. And as we grow, we set a high bar for financially sustainable, inclusive and welcoming neighbourhoods. We also maintain what makes us special -- respect for our past, maintaining our charm and heritage, and stewardship of the land, protecting our natural setting. Lastly, responsible investments meet today's needs while anticipating future requirements. Together, this ensures Cochrane continues to attract diverse residents, businesses, entrepreneurs, risk takers and ground breakers, resulting in a vibrant community of choice for people to visit, live, work, enjoy and belong.

– Vision, Envision Cochrane 2050



The provision of parks, culture, and active living (PCAL) services in Alberta communities involves choice. There are no formal standards, guidelines, or legislation that define what a community of a certain size or context should provide in terms of facilities and spaces (infrastructure), programs, or services. In addition to this lack of guidance are varying approaches communities take in how they deliver these important services, with some delivery services directly (through municipal staff), others delivering services through partnerships with third parties (non-profit or private), and others employing a hybrid mix of both indirect and direct approaches.

Regardless of what infrastructure and services are delivered and by whom, it is vital for municipalities to articulate why they invest in parks, culture, and active living opportunities for residents and visitors. This rationalization helps ensure that these important services are sustained and enhanced and serves as the foundation for decision-making and action by Town Council, staff, and community partners.

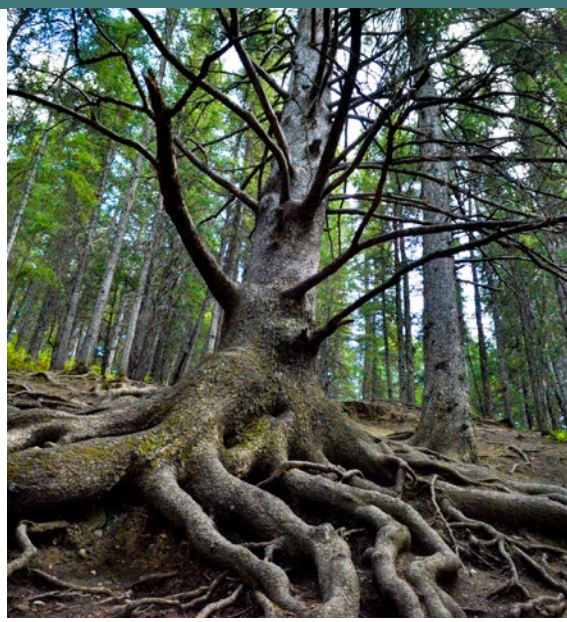
It is important for the Town's purpose in investing in parks, culture, and active living to align with broader community strategy, planning, and vision. In 2026, this broader strategic stance for the Town is best represented through Envision Cochrane 2050 – Cochrane's Municipal Development Plan. Cochrane's current vision and values support the rationale for parks, culture, and active living service investment and guidance for how these services are delivered. Parks, culture, and active living opportunities are key to having a community that thrives and one that attracts residents and businesses; these services are integral to how people enjoy a community. Envision 2050 also provides some specific directions for parks, culture, and active living that are highlighted throughout this Master Plan.

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas

Our Objectives

- Cochrane is exploring locations, partnerships and funding mechanisms for a new regionally significant park space to enjoy today and into the future
- Environmental protection is important and Cochrane is using the tools available to protect its natural assets
- Cochrane is part of a continuous recreational and natural corridor east to Glenbow Ranch, north to Big Hill Springs, west to the mountains and south to Bragg Creek
- Cochrane offers a range of recreational and outdoor experiences throughout the year that support all ages and abilities
- Cochrane is investing in its facilities, parks and open spaces to maximize the recreational and environmental benefits they provide to the community
- Public spaces that support diverse community-based programming are accessible throughout Cochrane

– page 77 Envision Cochrane 2050



Arts and Culture

Our Objectives

- Cochrane collaborates with arts and culture organizations to understand their immediate needs and support their long-term aspirations
- Cochrane is considering locations, partnerships and funding mechanisms to bring a multi-purpose venue to the community to support a growing arts and culture scene
- Local community groups can scale up, reach new audiences and work together to realize shared potential
- Events, festivals and community gatherings are increasing in number and attendance year-over-year

– page 87 Envision Cochrane 2050











It is with Envision 2050 and various other approved Town documents, as well as referencing relevant regional, provincial, national, and international guidance on parks, culture, and active living service provision, the following purpose and guiding principles have been created.

These statements are meant to answer both why and how the Town invests in parks, culture, and active living and influence the various directions and recommendations outlined in this Master Plan.

2.1 Purpose Statement

Purpose: *Why does the Town invest in parks, culture, and active living?*

The Town of Cochrane enables parks, culture and active living services to enhance quality of life and community wellbeing by creating opportunities for physical activity, creative expression, social connection, and engagement with nature.

2.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles: *What ideas or concepts influence Town decision-making and action related to parks, culture, and active living services?*

Plan for Growth with Intention: As Cochrane grows, we proactively plan recreation, parks and culture infrastructure to serve both existing and future residents. We will ensure equitable distribution across neighbourhoods and require new development to contribute to our network of parks, trails, and community spaces.

Protect and Connect Natural Assets: We preserve Cochrane's open spaces, natural areas, and viewscapes as essential community infrastructure. We protect an interconnected greenway system that protects ecological functions and wildlife corridors, provides nature-based recreation, and maintains the community's relationship with the landscape.

Design for Multi-Generational & Multi-Use Experiences: We support flexible spaces and programs that serve diverse users and changing needs over time. We design facilities and spaces for multiple activities and age groups, maximizing utilization and fostering intergenerational connection.

Integrate Culture & Heritage into the Everyday: We embed arts, culture, and heritage into parks, facilities, and public spaces, not just into dedicated cultural venues. We celebrate Cochrane's story and create opportunities for creative expression in daily life.













Leverage Partnerships to Expand Capacity: We recognize we cannot do this work alone. We cultivate partnerships with community organizations, neighbouring municipalities, school boards, and the private sector to co-invest in infrastructure, share resources, and expand program delivery.

Make Evidence-Informed Decisions: We use data, community input, demographic trends, and best practices to guide our investments. We regularly assess needs, measure outcomes, and adjust our approach to ensure we're providing community benefit and meeting community expectations.

Remove Barriers & Design for Equity: We proactively identify and address barriers to participation, whether physical, financial, social, or cultural. We apply an equity lens to planning, design, and programming to ensure all residents can benefit from recreation, parks and culture services.

These philosophical statements about public investment in parks, culture, and active living align with the broader strategic intentions of the Town and other key contributors and will help to ensure that the future of these vital community services deliver highest returns.



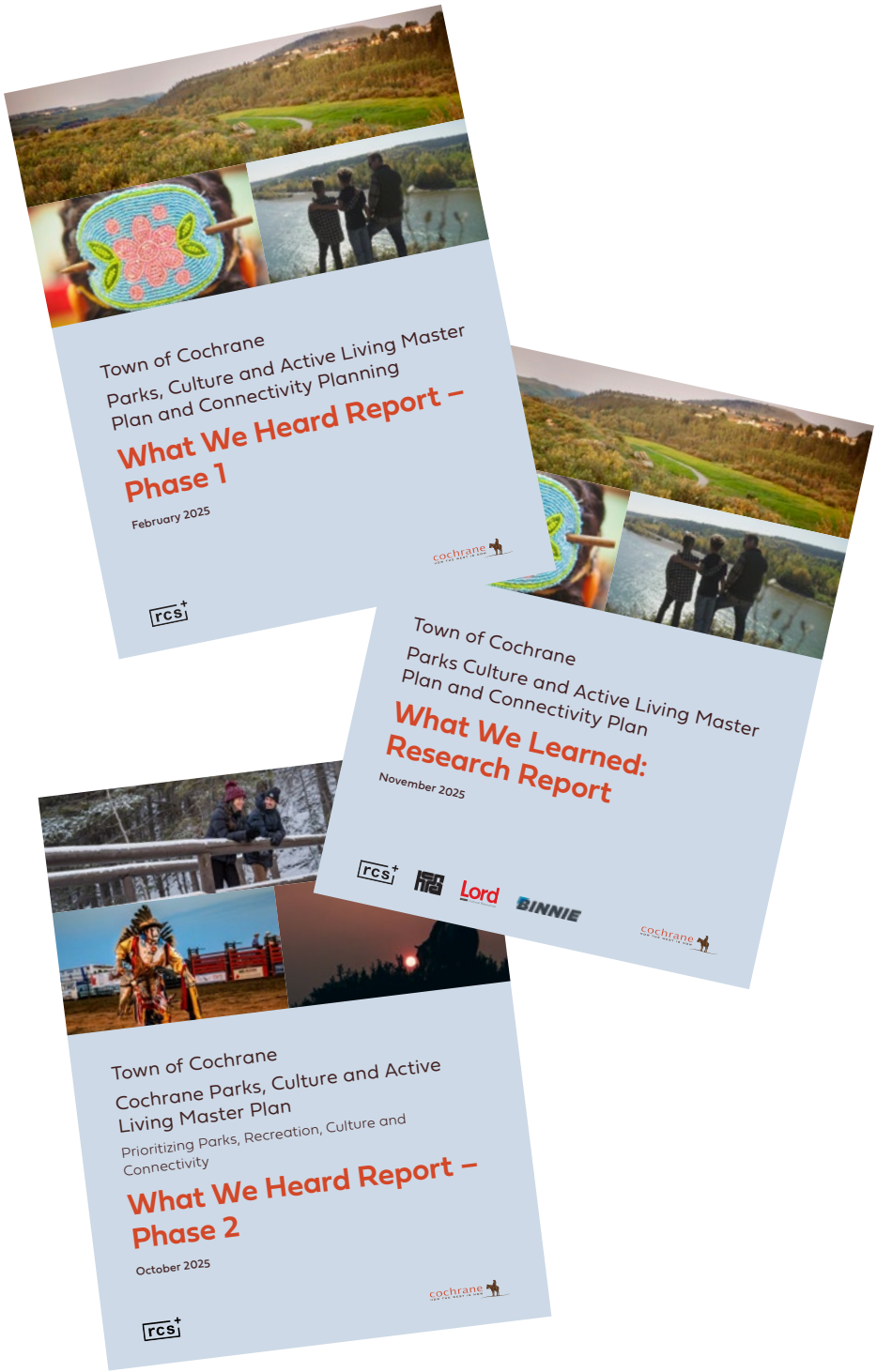
3 The Current State of Parks, Culture, and Active Living in Cochrane







Three reports were prepared to assess the current state of parks, culture, and active living (PCAL) in the Town of Cochrane. Two of the reports focused on community input and engagement (What We Heard Phases 1 and 2), and one focused on data and information that provides influence and insight about these services in the community and beyond. The following sections highlight key findings from each report.



3.1 What We Heard

The following highlights key findings from the initial two phases of community engagement conducted.

Trails, Pathways, and Connectivity as Foundational Infrastructure

- Respondents consistently identified trails and pathways as one of Cochrane's greatest assets and a top priority for future investment. In Phase 1, walking, running, and cycling on trails were the most common forms of physical activity, and trails along the Bow River and Cochrane Ranche were frequently cited as favourite community spaces. At the same time, respondents identified gaps in connectivity, safety concerns at crossings, and the need to complete missing links between neighbourhoods and key destinations
- Phase 2 reinforced these findings, with support for investing in paved multi-use pathways, safer pedestrian and cycling routes, improved crossings, and better wayfinding. Trail access and connectivity was framed not only as a recreation amenity, but as essential infrastructure that supports daily mobility, access to programs, and transportation. Residents emphasized the importance of designing pathways that are accessible for all ages and abilities and that balance safety, environmental protection, and recreation activities.

Recreation Facility and Amenity Investment

- Across both phases, residents expressed support for expanding both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to meet growing demand and address capacity pressures. Phase 1 identified high participation in swimming, fitness, field sports, skating, and unstructured recreation, alongside concerns about crowded facilities, limited booking availability, and aging infrastructure.
- In Phase 2, residents prioritized investment in outdoor amenities such as soccer fields, splash pads, outdoor rinks, bike parks, and support amenities (washrooms, seating, shade), as well as indoor facilities including indoor turf/soccer facilities, ice surfaces, gymnasiums, aquatic facilities, and neighbourhood community centres. These investments were emphasized by respondents as critical to supporting youth sport, adult recreation, informal drop-in use, and year-round activity.

Engagement Tactics

Pop-Up Events – 2,220 + participants

Resident Survey – 980 responses

Online Mapping Tool – 409 pins

Community Group Survey – 84 participating groups

Community Group Pop-Up – 30+ participants

Youth Pop-Up Event – 30 participants

Group Meetings – 84 participants *(32 community and recreation, 20 arts and culture)*

=

over 3,500 touchpoints with the Cochrane community!







Arts, Culture, and Creative Spaces that Foster Belonging

- Arts and culture emerged as a critical contributor to community identity, social connection, and economic vitality. In Phase 1, residents expressed a desire for more festivals, performances, cultural celebrations, and spaces that support local artists and diverse cultural expression, including Indigenous heritage
- Phase 2 reinforced these findings, with support for a performing arts centre, arts and culture centre, outdoor amphitheatre, and dedicated Indigenous cultural spaces. Residents also emphasized the need for better promotion, partnerships with local organizations, and neighbourhood-based arts programming to increase participation and awareness.

Environmental Stewardship and Preservation of Cochrane's Identity

- Protection of natural spaces and Cochrane's unique western character was consistently mentioned across both phases. Residents expressed support for preserving green spaces, wildlife corridors, river access, and natural landscapes, while ensuring that recreation development is environmentally responsible. Trails, parks, and riverfront areas were valued not only for recreation but for their role in defining Cochrane's "wild" and western identity.
- Phase 2 reinforced the importance of balancing growth with environmental stewardship, integrating Indigenous knowledge, and protecting mature trees, wetlands, and sensitive ecosystems as the community grows.

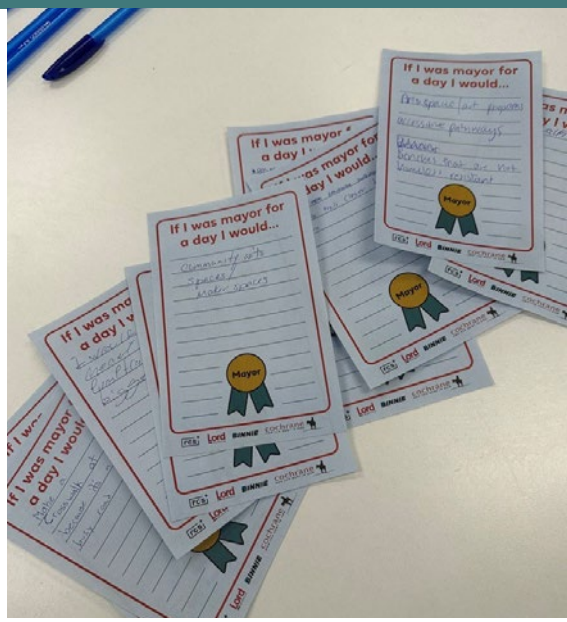
Vibrant Community Identity and Social Connection

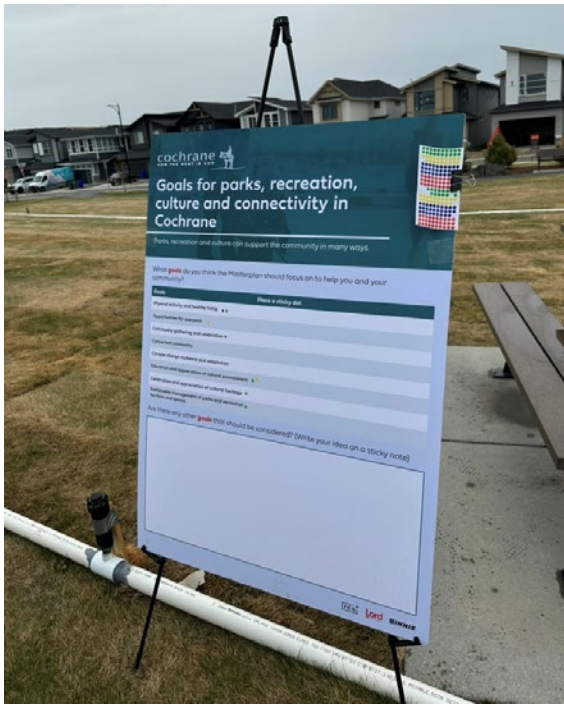
- Beyond facilities and programs, respondents mentioned the role parks, recreation, and culture play in building community. Phase 1 identified interest in spaces and programs that encourage social interaction, volunteering, intergenerational connection, and community pride.
- Phase 2 reinforced this theme, with residents highlighting the importance of community hubs, festivals, markets, events, and gathering spaces that bring people together and reflect Cochrane's unique character. Improved communication and promotion were also seen as key to strengthening participation and community awareness.

Overall Satisfaction is Strong, but Capacity, Access, and Gaps Are Emerging

- Across Phase 1 engagement, many residents expressed positive experiences with Cochrane's parks, trails, and natural areas. The community's pathway system and access to scenic outdoor spaces were frequently described as valued assets that contribute to quality of life. Existing parks and trails are seen as well-used and important to daily recreation and community identity.
- However, satisfaction was more mixed when it came to recreation facilities and access to programs. Phase 1 and Phase 2 both highlighted concerns about:
  - » Facilities being too busy or at capacity
  - » Limited availability for bookings and drop-in use
  - » Gaps in certain facility types (e.g., indoor turf, ice)
  - » Aging infrastructure and maintenance needs
  - » Barriers related to cost, operating hours, and awareness of available opportunities

Phase 2 survey results further reinforced that while many residents are active users, a portion experience barrier that limit full participation. Facility operation issues, affordability, and crowding were among the most frequently cited constraints.











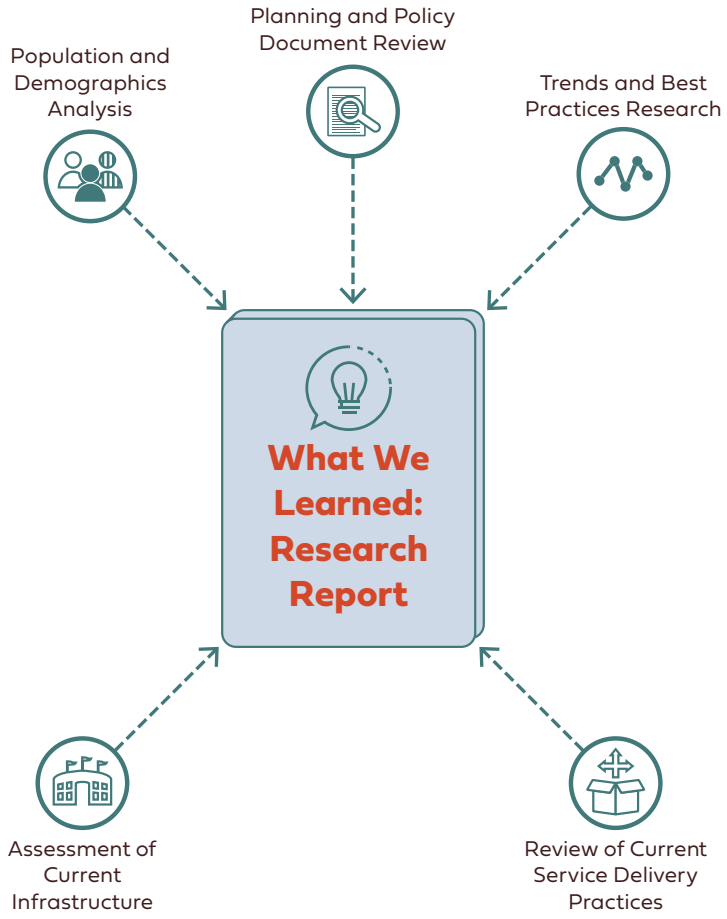


3.2 What We Learned

Key findings related to the market for parks, culture, and active living services in Cochrane.

Community Demographics and Growth

- Cochrane's population has more than doubled in 20 years (12,041 in 2001 → 32,195 in 2021) and reached 37,011 in 2024, a 26% increase since 2019. Growth of the community is expected to continue, placing increasing pressure on recreation, parks, culture, and infrastructure capacity.
- Around 65% of Cochrane residents have a college/trade, or university education. The average after-tax household income is $107,100, higher than the Alberta average, but equitable access to opportunities remains important.
- Residents have higher life expectancy and lower rates of chronic disease than the provincial average.



Parks, Culture, And Active Living Infrastructure

The following table explains the current delivery models for differing types of spaces.

Infrastructure type	Owner	Operator
Indoor recreation facilities (i.e. arenas, pools gyms, etc.)	Town and municipal partners, including schools	Third party
Indoor arts and culture facilities (i.e. museums, social gathering facilities, etc.)	Town and non-profit partners	Third party and Town staff
Libraries	Town	Library staff
Outdoor active use spaces (i.e. ball diamonds, sports fields, etc.)	Town and schools	Third party and Town staff
Outdoor passive use spaces (i.e. parks, playgrounds, trails, etc.)	Town	Town staff

The following map and table provides an overview of the current inventory of indoor and outdoor amenities in Cochrane. As can be seen, significant investment has been made in indoor and outdoor parks, culture, and active living infrastructure.



Map 1: Overview of the Current Inventory of Indoor and Outdoor Amenities

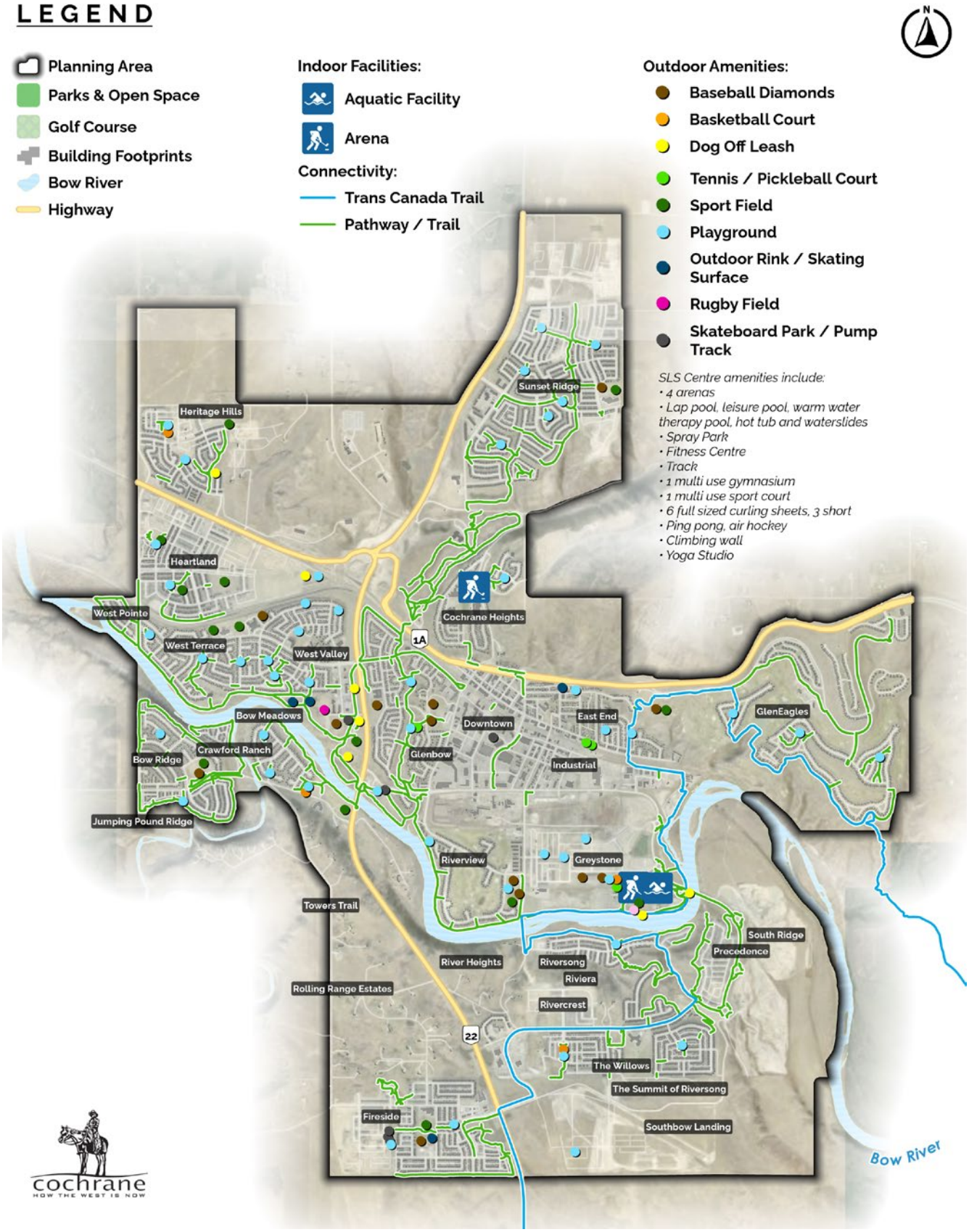


Table 1: Value of Cochrane PCAL Infrastructure

	Quantity	Approximate 2026 replacement value per asset (+/-50%)	Total replacement value (+/- 50%)
Indoor infrastructure			
Indoor aquatic centres	1	$75,000,000	$75,000,000
Ice arenas	4	$30,000,000	$120,000,000
Curling rinks (9 sheets)	1	$20,000,000	$20,000,000
Indoor climbing walls	1	$5,000,000	$5,000,000
Indoor fields	0	$40,000,000	$0
Gymnasia / multi-sport court spaces	2	$15,000,000	$30,000,000
Fitness centres	1	$7,500,000	$7,500,000
Social gathering facilities	3	$15,000,000	$45,000,000
Libraries	1	$20,000,000	$20,000,000
Total indoor	**14**		**$322,500,000**
Outdoor infrastructure			
Kilometers of trails and pathways	80	$400,000	$32,000,000
Ball diamonds	13	$750,000	$9,750,000
Outdoor fields	18	$500,000	$9,000,000
Tennis and pickleball courts	48	$250,000	$12,000,000
Disc golf courses	1	$750,000	$750,000
Skate parks	2	$2,500,000	$5,000,000
Off leash dog parks	6	$500,000	$3,000,000
Boarded rinks	2	$500,000	$1,000,000
Playgrounds	51	$750,000	$38,250,000
Total outdoor	**221**		**$110,750,000**

**It is important to note that there are other assets such as tree canopy that are not included in the table above.*

- With over $430M in overall infrastructure investment already made, renewal and reinvestment in existing facilities and spaces will require significant resources. A common industry guideline suggests that between 1.7% and 2.5% of replacement value should be placed in a reserve each year to sustain this type of infrastructure. Applying that rate to the existing stock of facilities and spaces would equate to $8-$10M per year.
- Facility assessments were completed by a registered architect to provide observations and recommendations for some of the Town's indoor facilities, not including the SLS Centre. For a total of five facilities, investment requirements of almost $3M were identified.



How Cochrane Compares

- Benchmarking[1] was completed to review how Cochrane compares to a sampling of other Alberta municipalities in the provision of key types of parks and recreation infrastructure:
- Strengths
  - » Cochrane has more indoor arenas, curling rinks and aquatic leisure components than its comparators.
  - » Cochrane had more pathways and dog areas in comparison to the other communities evaluated.
- Gaps
  - » The comparators were found to have more available gym spaces as well as indoor hard courts.
  - » Cochrane was found to be below its comparators when looking at outdoor amenities such as outdoor pools/spray parks and regular grass fields.

1 *Communities included in the benchmarking exercise included Airdrie, Lethbridge, Okotoks, Leduc, Milton, Oakville.*

Arts and Culture Sector Management Analysis

An analysis of municipal cultural sector management in a number of cities and towns in Canada produced a number of general findings as well as some specific lessons gleaned from the various municipal cultural plans. In general, the experience of the comparable municipalities reveals the following:

- Through their cultural sector management activities, municipalities focus on creating conditions for culture and cultural participation to thrive. This may take many forms, such as assisting cultural organizations with facility provision, streamlining granting processes, eliminating barriers to cultural participation and a wide range of other initiatives. Leveraging existing cultural resources for key municipal goals, such as tourism or economic development or quality of life initiatives, is very common.
- Culture is often understood as an ecosystem or network that includes traditional expressions of culture such as festivals and "bricks and mortar" institutions, but also natural endowment and intangible cultural resources.
- There is a range of potential roles for municipalities in cultural sector management, but most focus on capacity building, facilitation of collaborations and funding.
- While municipalities often do have cultural grant programs, the strategic emphasis is not on direct funding, but on broader forms of support intended to create the conditions for cultural organizations to better support themselves.

With regard to the specific municipalities, the plans may be classified according to their characteristics, which may provide guidance for the situation in Cochrane:

- In several of the communities, the purpose of culture is seen as a pillar of sustainability and inclusion. Social cohesion is a priority outcome for cultural planning. For each, the plan is intended to enrich cultural vibrancy and provide a framework to guide future investments. In addition, culture is included in all aspects of city planning (land use, infrastructure, economic development, etc.).
- There is a focus on maximizing opportunities in economic development, tourism, placemaking, and community building in alignment with municipal goals.
- Implementation is commonly staff-led, but staff coordinate with and delegate to community partners.













Broader societal trends impacting the provision of parks, culture, and active living

- Changing Community Demographics
- Climate Change
- Economy
- Health and Wellness
- Equity, Inclusion and Access
- Volunteerism

Trends specific to parks, culture, and active living services

- Regional Collaboration and Partnership
- Measuring the Value of Investment/ Outcomes
- Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
- Managing Aging Infrastructure
- Event Hosting and Tourism
- Use of Data
- Safe Sport

Trends specific to arts and culture

- A reconceptualization of cultural sector management models.
- A focus on community building and wellbeing.
- Community-driven and decentralized approach.
- Activation of public spaces.
- Creative placemaking.
- Less reliance on new physical infrastructure.
- Facilitation and partnership; greater engagement with the private sector (both for- and not-for-profit).
- Cultural mapping.

Amenity Service Level Assessment Summary and Findings

The Service Level Needs Assessment serves as an initial infrastructure evaluation tool, identifying whether the current provision should be "enhanced," "protected," or "limited." This assessment determines if there is sufficient provision, if more is warranted, or if less could be appropriate for specific amenities, both currently and in the future.

4.3.17. Conduct regular recreational needs assessments to identify gaps or pressures in service provision.

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Figure 5: Service Levels



Enhance
(High Demand / Low Supply)

Protect
(High Demand / High Supply)

Limit
(Low Demand)



The following tables outline the indoor and outdoor amenity assessment results. See Appendix A for further detail.

Table 2: Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Service Level Assessment

Indoor Amenity	Service Level	Outdoor Amenity	Service Level
Art Galleries	Protect	Amphitheatres / band shelters	**Enhance**
Artist Studios/Maker Spaces	**Enhance**	Bike parks	Protect
Climbing Walls	Protect	Community Gardens	Protect
Community hall spaces	Protect	Diamonds	**Enhance**
Cultural Centres	Protect	Dog Off-leash Areas	**Enhance**
Event and social gathering spaces	Protect	Mountain Bike Trails	Protect
Fitness / wellness spaces	**Enhance**	Open spaces	Protect
Gymnasium	**Enhance**	Outdoor Courts	Protect
Ice arena	**Enhance**	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Limit
Indigenous Gathering Spaces	Protect	Outdoor Performance Spaces	Protect
Indoor Racquet Court	Protect	Outdoor Pools	**Enhance**
Indoor field / turf	**Enhance**	Outdoor rink	Protect
Indoor play spaces	Protect	Pathways	**Enhance**
Lap Pool	**Enhance**	Picnic Areas/Shelters	**Enhance**
Leisure Pool	**Enhance**	Playgrounds	Protect
Libraries	**Enhance**	Public Art Installations	Protect
Multi-purpose program rooms	**Enhance**	Skate Parks	Protect
Performance Spaces	**Enhance**	Sport fields - grass	**Enhance**
Senior focused spaces	Protect	Sport fields - turf	**Enhance**
Youth focused spaces	**Enhance**	Spray Park	Protect
		Trails	Protect

Six additional attributes were assessed, ultimately leading to a prioritized list of parks, culture and active living amenities. These included the results of the service levels assessment as well as public benefit, financial impact, economic and community development potential, future adaptability, and partnership opportunities. The following tables highlight the results.

Table 3: Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Priorities

	Indoor Amenity Priorities	Outdoor Amenity Priorities
High	• **Indoor field / turf** • **Multi-purpose program rooms** • Community hall spaces • Event and social gathering spaces • **Libraries** • **Leisure Pool** • **Ice arena** • Cultural Centres • Youth focused spaces	• **Pathways** • **Sport fields - grass** • **Picnic Areas/Shelters** • Community Gardens • **Dog Off-leash Areas** • **Sport fields - turf** • **Outdoor Pools** • Open spaces • Outdoor Performance Spaces • Public Art Installations • Trails
Medium	• **Gymnasium** • Indigenous Gathering Spaces • **Lap Pool** • Performance Spaces • **Artist Studios/Maker Spaces** • Fitness / wellness spaces • Senior focused spaces	• **Amphitheatres / band shelters** • **Diamonds** • Spray Park • Mountain Bike Trails
Low(er)	• Indoor Court • Art Galleries • Indoor play spaces • Climbing Wall	• Outdoor rink • Bike parks • Outdoor Courts • Skate Parks • Playgrounds • Outdoor fitness equipment









4 The Future Service Delivery of PCAL

The Town of Cochrane takes a partnership-based approach to delivering parks, culture, and active living services:

- **The Town owns** most indoor facilities and outdoor spaces.
- **Community partners operate** most facilities and run programs.
- **Non-profit and private groups deliver** leagues, classes, and activities.

This approach lets the Town invest in quality infrastructure while community organizations bring specialized knowledge and connect directly with residents.

This approach works well for the Town of Cochrane. Based on community input and research, there is no need for major changes to this service delivery approach. However, there are opportunities for the Town to strengthen how it supports and coordinates with partners to get the best results from public investment.

To make this collaborative approach work and deliver even more benefit to the community, the Town should focus on eight areas for the strategic improvement of its service delivery:

1. **Strategic clarity:** Providing clear decision-making structures
2. **Funding community efforts:** Supporting community-led efforts
3. **Leadership:** Providing guidance and defining expectations
4. **Influencing Activity:** Supporting healthy and active living through policy and procedure development
5. **Expertise and Skill Development:** Building capacity in the PCAL system
6. **Data:** Gathering of information to understand usage patterns and capacity
7. **Partnerships:** Building strong relationships with clear roles and expectations
8. **Filling gaps:** Enhancing the system

The following sections outline specific actions the Town should take in each area.

Municipalities can deliver parks, culture, and active living services either directly, through direct ownership and municipal staff operations of facilities and programs, or indirectly through direct or joint ownership and third-party operations. Each approach entails different involvement by municipal staff and decision-makers and either approach can be effective. Determining the best approach needs to consider expertise available in a market (in house or available), affordability (typically indirect is less costly), and the desired amount of control or influence over operations.



4.1 Strategic Clarity

SD R#1: Incorporate the Town's strategic intentions for parks, culture, and active living investment in all related Town planning and policy development, including Partner relationships.



When partners deliver services on behalf of the Town, everyone needs to understand what success looks like. Clear expectations and accountability ensure public money is spent well and community needs are met.

This Master Plan includes a purpose statement and a set of guiding principles that guide all decisions and partnerships. These aren't abstract concepts; they're practical tools that answer the question: "What are we trying to achieve with this investment?" Every partnership, facility decision, and program choice should connect back to this purpose.

Partners using Town facilities and receiving Town funding should:

- Align their work with the Town's purpose and values
- Reference the purpose and values when negotiating agreements with the Town
- Report regularly on how they're contributing to community goals
- Demonstrate outcomes that connect to the priorities in the implementation plan

When partners show how their work advances community wellbeing, it justifies the partnership model and demonstrates value to taxpayers.

Clear strategic direction serves several important functions:

- Internal alignment - Town staff across departments understand priorities and make consistent decisions
- Partner clarity - Organizations know what the Town values and how to align their proposals
- Council decision-making - Elected officials have a framework for evaluating opportunities and trade-offs
- Public transparency - Residents understand how their tax dollars support community outcomes

Strategic clarity turns good intentions into measurable results.

4.2 Funding Community Efforts

An indirect delivery model means the Town must be ready to respond when community groups propose partnerships. This requires two things:

- Clear partnership policies - Guidelines on how and when the Town partners (as recommended in the previous section)
- Budgeted funding - Capital and operating dollars available for partnership opportunities

SD R#2: Continue supporting community organizations through existing grant programs and create a new capital fund that allows the Town to be a meaningful partner when significant infrastructure opportunities arise.

Current Grant Program

The Town's existing community grant program supports groups with:

- Program delivery and operations
- Event hosting
- Community infrastructure projects
- Organizational supports
- Youth dedicated stream

This program is essential to the indirect delivery model and should continue. The Town may want to review grant criteria to ensure alignment with the purpose and values in this Master Plan.



Capital Partnership Fund

In addition to the current support for community infrastructure projects through the existing Grant Policy, the Town should consider establishing a capital development grant program for larger partnership opportunities. This fund would:

- Enable the Town to respond when significant partnership opportunities arise.
- Demonstrate the Town's commitment and capacity to partner on major projects.
- Support community-led infrastructure that aligns with Town priorities.

4.3 Leadership

SD R3#: Continue to foster connection and communication within the parks, culture, and active living community in Cochrane.



Most partners in the parks, culture, and active living sector focus on a specific activity, age group, or interest area. The Town is different; it sees the whole system and serves the entire community. The Town is also the only organization with a purely public interest (no membership fees, no competitive advantage, no exclusive focus).

This broad perspective makes the Town best positioned to lead the sector in Cochrane.

Leadership means three things:

1. Creating a common understanding of community needs and opportunities
2. Coordinating efforts so resources aren't duplicated or wasted
3. Influencing activity to maximize public benefit

This Master Plan and its supporting reports (What We Heard, What We Learned) provide a comprehensive picture of:

- Current facilities, parks, and programs
- Community needs and preferences
- Trends and gaps

This information shouldn't stay with the Town, it should be shared with all partners: user groups, schools, businesses, cultural organizations, and anyone else working in this space. When everyone understands the landscape, better decisions get made.

The Town should update this information regularly (every 3-5 years) and share it openly.

As the Town works with many partners, it has insight that other organizations may not, such as who's planning what, where gaps exist, which efforts overlap, and where collaboration could help. The Town can strengthen coordination by:

- Hosting regular partner gatherings and networking events
- Maintaining an email contact list to share information and opportunities
- Creating an online community or portal for sector communication
- Managing a database of organizations, programs, and contacts

Some of these tools are already in place; others could be added over time.

The Town should bring together community leaders to advise on key priorities, implement initiatives, and strengthen sector collaboration. This currently happens through the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Although this Committee is effective in connecting the Town with the community, its scope is limited and does not include arts and culture or pathways and trails. Both arts and culture and trails and pathways should be considered as specific areas of interest for the Town to create this community connection for. This could occur through expanding the scope of the existing Parks and Recreation Committee or establishing new committees.

These committees provide valuable perspective, help the Town stay connected to the community, and give partners a voice in decision-making.

The Town's Parks and Recreation Committee is comprised of elected officials and other community contributors and partners, and will review and discuss:

- Community parks and recreation services that exist or may be needed.
- The most effective use of the parks and recreation infrastructure and programming in the community.
- Invite and receive submissions from community groups and Administration with respect to creating and enhancing recreational opportunities.
- Review any parks and recreation issues referred to the Committee by Council.
- Make recommendations to Council and Administration on projects or programming and to create and enhance parks and recreation opportunities.
- Review and provide input into Capital Budgets.
- Comply with the Town of Cochrane Procedural Bylaw and Municipal Government Act.

4.4 Influencing Activity

SD R4# Encourage and support Partners and community groups to align with and advance the Town's PCAL strategic intentions.



The Town doesn't deliver most programs directly, but it still has significant influence over what happens in the parks, culture, and active living sector. The Town invests public dollars in facilities and parks where programs happen. Taxpayers fund these spaces because they create public benefit, healthier residents, stronger communities, greater equity, and enhanced quality of life.

When organizations use these publicly funded spaces, they receive a subsidy. In return, they should help achieve the community outcomes that justify that investment.

The Town can be more intentional about communicating expectations to partners through:

- **User fee policy:** Ensuring groups make programs affordable and offer fee assistance
- **Allocation policy:** Prioritizing time of Town operated spaces for organizations that align with Town goals
- **Partnership agreements:** Including clear expectations about community benefit and performance

4.5 Expertise and Skill Development

Delivering high-quality parks, culture, and active living services requires a skilled team. Town staff need expertise in the programs and facilities themselves, but they also need strong relationship and partnership skills.

Town staff need two types of expertise:

- **Subject matter knowledge:** Understanding parks, recreation, culture, and active living services
- **Partnership skills:** Managing contracts, building relationships, and supporting partners

The second skill is equally important but often overlooked. Indirect delivery depends on strong partnerships, and every agreement, whether an operating contract, lease, or rental arrangement, needs careful setup, monitoring, and nurturing.

Town staff should be supported to continue developing both skill sets through:

- Conferences and sector gatherings
- Professional development courses
- On-the-job learning and mentorship

SD R#5: Foster a learning culture by supporting ongoing professional development and training for Town staff, delivery partners, and volunteers across the parks, culture, and active living sector.









When possible, the Town should extend these learning opportunities to partners, user groups, and volunteers to address the common challenges of community organizations:

- Attracting and retaining volunteers
- Building effective boards
- Fundraising and grant writing
- Marketing and communications
- Strategic planning and governance
- Administration (registration, fees, bookkeeping)

The Town can help partners overcome these challenges by providing:

- Training workshops and resources
- Sharing best practices from other organizations
- Direct support (shared systems, templates, advice)

When partners succeed, the entire parks, culture, and active living system gets stronger.

4.6 Data

The collection of quality data and information should be a priority of the Town and its partners, as the Town needs good data to lead effectively and efficiently. This includes information about:

- Who participates in programs and activities
- Demographics and population trends
- Facility and park conditions
- Recreation and cultural trends

There are several different approaches to gathering and acquiring data. The Town and its partners should collect data through:

- Partner registration systems (program enrollment, waitlists, participation numbers)
- Movement and mobility tracking (trail counters, facility visits)
- Sector conferences, benchmarking studies, and best practice networks

This data helps the Town understand current participation and plan for future needs.

Once collected, data should be:

- Organized and analyzed using available software and tools
- Presented in clear, visual formats (dashboards, reports, maps)
- Shared with partners and decision-makers to inform planning and investment

SD R#6: Gather data that explains the current and expected future state of the parks, culture, and active living context in Cochrane and share it with all relevant contributors on a regular basis.



4.7 Partnerships

SD R#7: Build and strengthen the network of community partners who share in the responsibility for delivering parks, culture, and active living programs, services, and infrastructure in Cochrane.

Partnerships are essential to delivering parks, culture, and active living services. The Town should actively pursue partnerships for:

- Service delivery and programming
- Facility and space animation (i.e. lease or License of Occupancy, etc.)
- Infrastructure development

Partnerships range from neighbourhood community associations to joint facilities with schools, user groups, or neighbouring municipalities.

Partnership Agreements

Every formal partnership requires a written agreement (contract, memorandum of understanding, lease, etc.) that clearly defines:

- Roles and responsibilities of each party
- Length of the partnership
- Financial arrangements
- Risk mitigation considerations
- How to end the partnership
- How the Town's goals will be achieved
- How performance will be measured
- How data (participation numbers, facility condition, etc.) will be shared

Some agreements have specific legal requirements, such as **Joint Use Planning Agreements (JUPA)** with school boards and **Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks** with neighbouring municipalities. These must follow requirements in the Municipal Government Act.

Some significant partnership agreements related to parks, culture, and active living that the Town will develop and manage include:

- Joint Use Planning Agreements with all school jurisdictions that operate with Town boundaries.
- Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework focusing on Recreation with Rocky View County.
- Lease agreement with Lion's Club for Legacy Park.
- Third party operating agreement for the Spray Lake Sawmill Centre.

4.3.16. Collaborate with community partners and school boards through the Joint Use Planning Agreement to develop and deliver innovative indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

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To support the enhancement of partnership relationships and achievement of desired. All partnerships must align with the Town's purpose and values outlined in this Master Plan. This means:

- Including the purpose and values in all partnership agreements
- Measuring partner performance against these standards
- Applying this approach to all partner types: user groups, facility operators, co-owners, and leaseholders

The Town should develop a comprehensive partnership policy that addresses:

- Why the Town partners (rationale)?
- How groups can propose partnerships to the Town?
- How partnerships are maintained and supported?
- How partnership performance is measured?

5.3.12. Collaborate with Rocky View County, Treaty 7 Nations, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government in District 4 of the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board, regional municipalities, school boards (Rocky View Schools, Calgary Catholic School Division and Le Conseil Scolaire FrancoSud), other agencies, and non-governmental organizations to:

...

b. Develop and manage a regional transportation network, including rail, public transit, roads and pathways

...

i. Protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas

...

j. Plan and shared school sites and facilities

...

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4.3.35. Collaborate on initiatives to connect and enhance regionally significant areas and infrastructure such as parks, pathways, recreational facilities and corridors that provide these areas with servicing.

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5.3.18. Explore the creation of an integrated open space network connecting through the County and the Town.

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4.3.36. Collaborate with adjacent municipalities to develop evidence-based, high quality and cost-effective recreational opportunities.

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In addition to providing strategic guidance, robust policy related to partnership in parks, culture, and active living services should outline when the Town will consider partnership and how it will adjudicate potential partnership proposals. It should also outline the Town's expectations related to partnership, including but not limited to considerations such as:

- The partner should demonstrate how the asset helps the Town achieve its strategic goals on an ongoing basis.
- The partner should demonstrate how the asset improves the quality of life of Town residents and visitors.
- The partner and the Town should promote and share successes with residents related to the partnership on an ongoing basis.
- The Town should have some influence (proportionate to the amount of public investment) over the operations of the service offered.

The Town should gather partner information related to participation and usage, physical condition and related investment, and partner organization information such as financial statements.

Access to this information is essential to ensure accountability, transparency, and alignment with the Town's strategic objectives when entering into and maintaining partnership agreements. It enables the Town to assess whether public investments are achieving intended community benefits, understand asset performance and lifecycle needs, and evaluate the financial sustainability and capacity of partner organizations. This insight supports informed decision-making, risk management, and equitable allocation of resources, while also strengthening trust, performance monitoring, and long-term partnership effectiveness.

4.8 Filling Gaps

The Town relies on community partners to deliver programs and animate public facilities. However, gaps emerge when residents want activities that no partner can provide.

When gaps are identified, the Town addresses them through one of two approaches:

- **Direct delivery:** The Town delivers the program temporarily until a community partner emerges to take it over
- **Partner development:** The Town works with interested organizations to build their capacity to deliver the program

SD R#8: Continuously monitor community demand for parks, culture, and active living opportunities and work with partners to address gaps before the Town steps in as a direct provider.

The following framework guides the Town's response to unmet community demand for programs and opportunities.

Figure 6: Service Delivery Approach Framework

1. **Survey Residents**
   Ask facility users and event attendees what programs they want to see in Cochrane.
2. **Consult Partners**
   Talk with recreation organizations and community groups about gaps and opportunities they've identified.
3. **Research Trends**
   Look at what other communities are offering to identify emerging activities and interests.
4. **Learn from Peers**
   Attend conferences, connect with other municipalities, and learn about new program areas and delivery approaches.
5. **Analyze Participation Data**
   Review registration numbers, waitlists, and usage patterns to understand current demand and predict future needs.
6. **Test and Launch**
   When a gap is confirmed, either:
   - Town pilots the program: Deliver it directly to prove demand exists, then transition to a partner
   - Support a partner to pilot: Provide space, funding, or other assistance to help an organization test the program





The Town's collaborative approach to delivering parks, culture, and active living services is sound. To make it even stronger, the Town must:

- Lead with clarity - Establish governance structures and keep partners connected.
- Set expectations - Define partnership roles and accountability.
- Provide resources - Fund community efforts through grants and partnerships.
- Guide with policy - Create fair frameworks for allocation and fees.
- Build capacity - Support staff and partner development.
- Use data - Track performance and make evidence-based decisions.
- Fill gaps strategically - Deliver directly only when partnership isn't viable.
- Recognize success - Celebrate partners who exemplify Town values and support resident active living.

Over the next 15 years, implementing these recommendations will strengthen the indirect service model and ensure Cochrane's PCAL system serves all residents effectively.



5 The Future of PCAL Infrastructure



Infrastructure is fundamental to the Town's approach to delivering parks, culture, and active living services. The Town's primary role is to invest in and maintain quality facilities and spaces where residents can be active, connect, and create. The inventory of public parks, culture, and active living infrastructure in the Town is worth over $400M in 2026 replacement value. How the Town develops, operates, and animates this infrastructure directly supports the partnership-based service delivery model outlined in Section 4.

The Town's infrastructure responsibilities include:

- Owning and maintaining indoor facilities and outdoor spaces
- Planning strategically for renewal, replacement, and expansion
- Partnering effectively to operate facilities and deliver programs
- Responding to growth by ensuring new development contributes to the system
- Making evidence-based decisions about where and when to invest

This section provides strategic direction on infrastructure priorities for the next 15 years, recognizing that specific projects will require detailed feasibility studies and partnership discussions before moving forward.

The Town should focus on five areas to support the future of PCAL investment:

- Project Selection and Prioritization
- Capital Project Evaluation
- Site Selection for PCAL Infrastructure
- Indoor PCAL Infrastructure
- Outdoor PCAL Infrastructure

5.1 Deciding What to Invest In

Analysis has identified that the Town is achieving basic targets for providing a variety of parks, culture, and active living opportunities to residents.

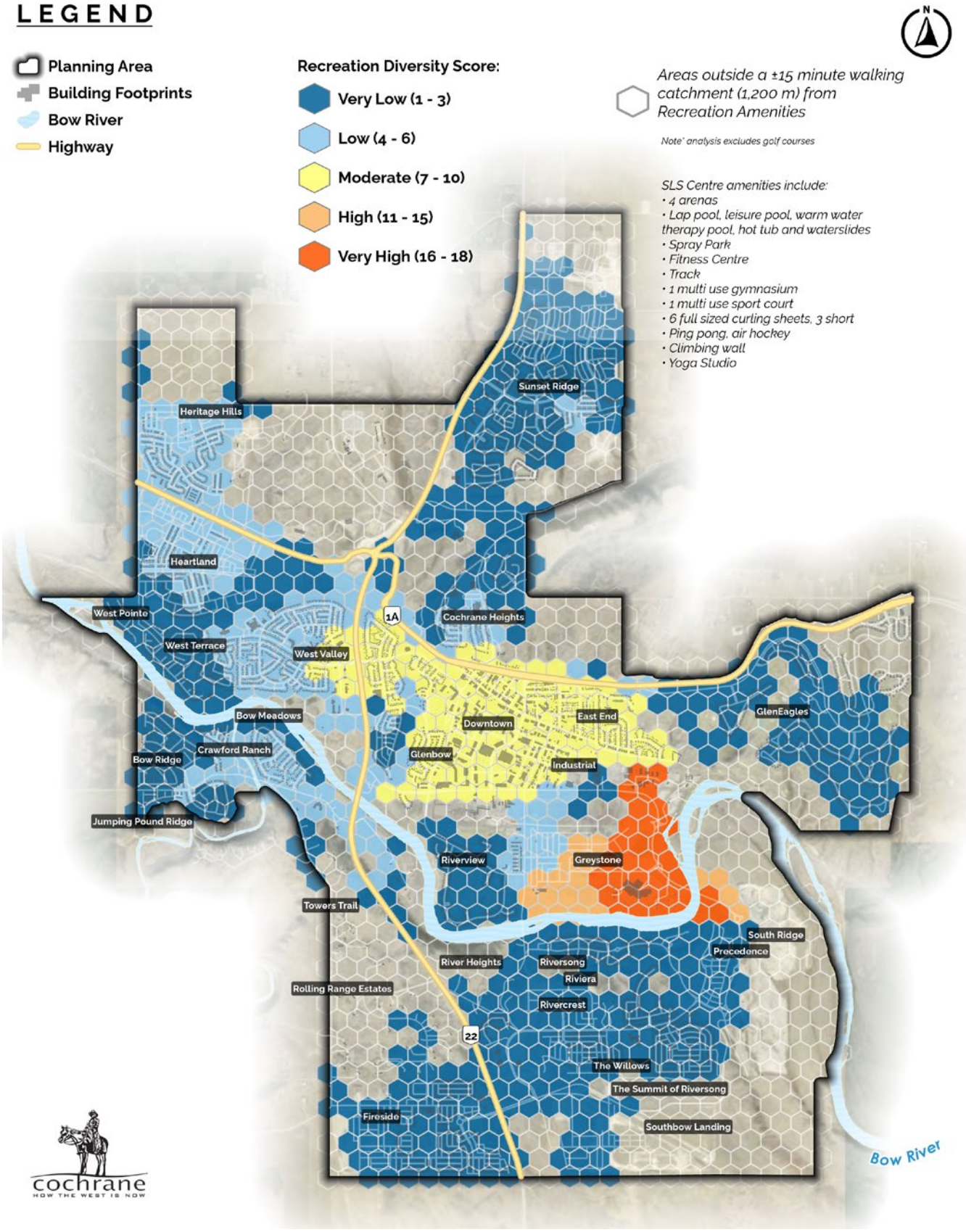
I R#1: Continue to practice and strengthen prudent asset management protocols.

4.3.9. Ensure new amenities in parks, open spaces and recreational facilities are designed to adapt to changing needs and priorities.

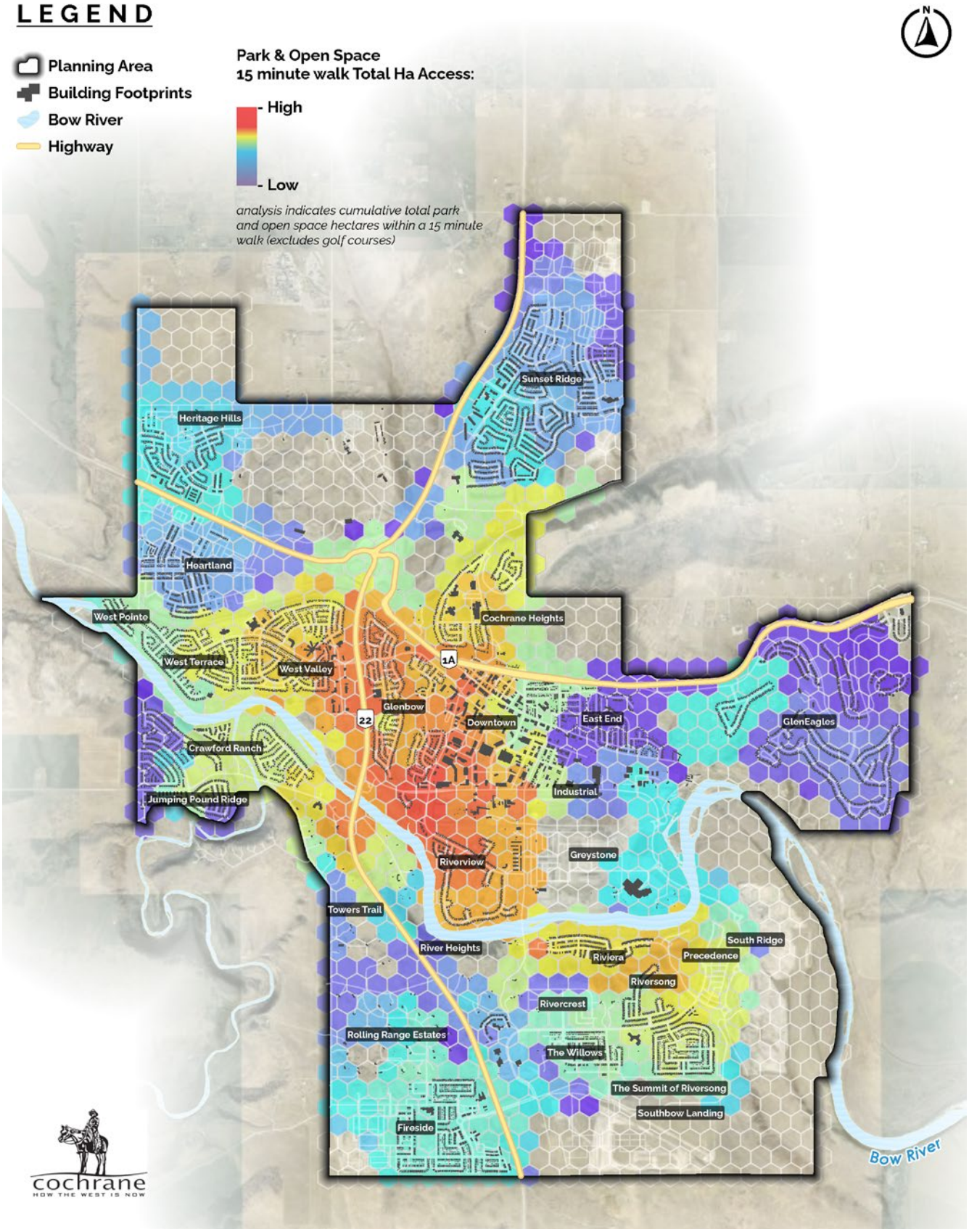
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Map 2: PCAL Activity Diversity Access



Map 3: Park and Open Space Access





As can be seen, the Town is nearly achieving its basic targets for parks and open space provision and is also providing a variety of parks, culture, and active living opportunities to residents.

Maintaining what the Town already has is the foundation of good infrastructure planning. Parks, facilities, trails, and public spaces need ongoing investment to stay safe, functional, and relevant to how people use them today.

Smart asset management starts with knowing what condition everything is in. The Town should conduct regular professional assessments of facilities to evaluate structural integrity, mechanical and electrical systems, architecture, and how well spaces actually work for users. Accessibility audits and energy audits add even more value by identifying opportunities to improve buildings and meet modern expectations.

Outdoor spaces need regular attention too. Playgrounds require inspection by certified inspectors to ensure safety and meet insurance requirements, for both the Town and partner organizations using the spaces. Ball diamonds, sports fields, and trails should also be assessed regularly to confirm they're safe and meeting user needs.

Once existing infrastructure is well-maintained, the Town can consider developing new facilities and spaces to improve service and accommodate growth. This Master Plan provides guidance on both priorities: keeping what we have in good condition and making smart decisions about where new investment will deliver the greatest benefit.

Major infrastructure decisions, like building a new ice arena or developing a specific park, will require detailed feasibility studies. Complex issues such as fees and allocations or off site levies may require focused strategies. Although this Plan provide some guidance and information, in most cases further feasibility analysis for specific projects or detailed strategies focusing on certain types of infrastructure or specific areas may also be required to give decision makers and Town staff the information and guidance they need to optimize infrastructure provision. These deeper analyses give decision-makers and Town staff the specific information they need to move forward with confidence. The following table explains when and how these more detailed studies would be conducted.

	Amenity or geographic area strategies	Infrastructure feasibility studies
Rationale for development	If provision of a certain area or amenity type is a top priority of the Town, is complex, involves a variety of contributors, and draws significant public and political attention.	If a proposed infrastructure project is identified by Town planning as a priority, is proposed by an external party, requires significant public investment (>$1M), and will be funded by grants from external sources.
Typical inputs	Community engagement. Policy and background review. Technical assessment of existing spaces. Trends and benchmarking.	Community engagement. Policy and background review. Technical assessment of existing spaces. Trends and benchmarking.
Timelines	6-12+ months	6-12+ months
Costs	$100,000-$150,000+	$100,000-$150,000+





4.1.12. Ensure design guidelines promote development that considers Cochrane's context in terms of geography, climate, economy and general livability.

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Project delivery methods could include:

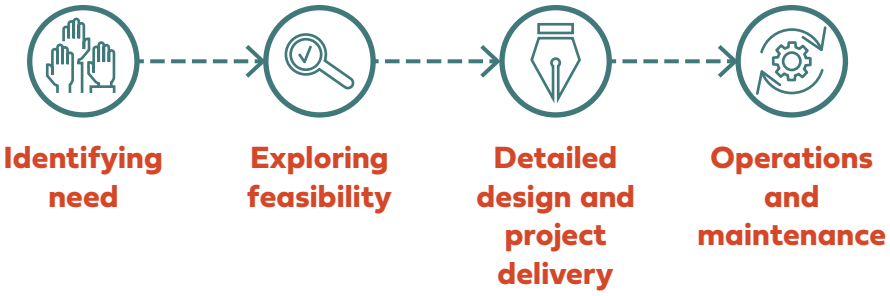
- Design-bid build
- Design-build
- Progressive Design Build
- Construction Management
- Integrated Project Delivery



5.2 Capital Project Evolution

This Master Plan and subsequent feasibility studies and strategies form part of the parks, culture, and active living infrastructure planning, design, and construction process. The overall infrastructure planning and development process is explained as follows.

Figure 7: Capital Project Development Process



Identifying need: Conducting strategic planning and needs assessment through community input, research, and other forms of analysis similar to the tactics used and information generated in the What We Heard and What We Learned elements of this Master Plan process.

Exploring feasibility: Articulating how to meet identified needs and estimating the associated costs (operating and capital as well as fund resourcing) and benefits to inform decision making, which occurs at the end of this phase, prior to detailed design. It is important for the Town of Cochrane to engage potential partners during the feasibility stages.

Detailed design and project delivery: Designing infrastructure that meets the requirements outlined in the feasibility stage of planning. This involves the engagement of architects and landscape architects, engineers, and specialty consultants, as well as general contractors and trades. Various project delivery methods can be employed depending on the unique characteristics of each project.

Operations and maintenance: Involves the ongoing operations (and use), regular maintenance, and major repair and replacement as per asset management policies and protocols of the Town.

5.3 Site Selection for PCAL Infrastructure

The siting of parks, culture, and active living infrastructure is typically achieved through assessing available public lands or identifying new sites for development through municipal reserve dedication in new land development areas. In some instances, communities also acquire land through purchase or trade/land swap to garner ideal sites. Site acquisition for new projects will be limited by available land, opportunity cost, and affordability (site servicing or acquisition).

Regardless of how site options are identified, the application of a common set of site criteria for parks, culture, and active living infrastructure can assist in identifying sites that are more appropriate than others, depending on the type of infrastructure. The following table highlights site criteria to consider when multiple sites are available for a project. These criteria can be weighted differently depending on the type of infrastructure being developed.

I R#2: Apply the Site Selection Criteria as a consistent decision-making tool when evaluating locations for future parks, culture, and active living infrastructure.



Table 4: Site Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Centralized location in the Town	The level to which the site is centralized within the geographic boundaries of the Town.
Future expansion capability	The degree to which the site will accommodate future expansion and growth of recreation facilities (as well as other public amenities).
Land use	The degree to which the facility will integrate with existing land uses adjacent to the site and current zoning for the site.
Parking + traffic impacts	The degree to which the facility will integrate with and compliment availability of adjacent parking and traffic patterns.
Pedestrian + bike connections	The degree to which the site is accessible via active transportation.
Proximity to accommodations	The location of the site in proximity to hotels, campgrounds, or other forms of accommodations.





Criteria	Description
Proximity to complimentary services and businesses	The location of the site in proximity to health and wellness services and/or commercial areas, especially those that are complimentary to the facility.
Proximity to public outdoor spaces	The location of the site in proximity to public outdoor spaces, especially those that are complimentary to the facility.
Proximity to public indoor spaces	The location of the site in proximity to public indoor spaces, especially those that are complimentary to the facility.
Proximity to public transit	The location of the site in proximity to public transit opportunities.
Proximity to schools	The location of the site in proximity to existing or planned schools.
Regional partnership appeal	The attractiveness of the site in relation to potential regional partnerships related to the facility.
Re-use or sharing of existing facilities	The relevance of the site in the reinvestment in, repurposing of, and/or economies of scale related to existing recreation, parks, and culture facilities (as well as other public amenities).
Site servicing + conditions	The readiness of the site in relation to site servicing and existing physical / environmental site conditions.

5.3.1 Colocation of PCAL Infrastructure

Putting multiple amenities in one place can create real benefits, both for operations and for the people who use them.

The SLS Centre demonstrates this well. By bringing together arenas, aquatics, fitness, and outdoor amenities at one site, the Town and Partners have achieved significant efficiencies. Staff can cover multiple areas (front desk, maintenance, programming), spaces can be shared (parking, change rooms, lobby), and the building footprint stays smaller than if each amenity stood alone.

Co-location also improves the user experience. Parents can work out while their kids are at hockey practice. Visitors coming for one activity discover others they didn't know existed. Multiple ice sheets at one location make Cochrane attractive for tournaments, which brings visitors and supports local businesses.

These benefits are real, but they don't scale infinitely. Eventually, a building becomes too large and complex to manage efficiently, or a community grows to the point where people in different areas need local access.

Benefits of colocation:

- Operational efficiencies (shared staffing, utilities, parking)
- Convenience for users (multiple amenities at one site)
- Tournament and event hosting capability
- Enhanced visibility and activation

When to distribute rather than consolidate:

- Community has grown to warrant multiple service hubs
- Geographic equity requires neighbourhood access
- Site constraints limit further expansion
- Different amenity types serve different markets

Arts and Culture Infrastructure: A Different Consideration

Arts and culture facilities often function best as standalone spaces; a performance theatre operates differently from an art studio or gallery. That said, some co-location opportunities may make sense depending on the specific amenity type.

For example, program spaces for arts classes might work well integrated with a library or community centre, while a performance venue might need its own building. These decisions should be explored during feasibility studies for specific projects, where the unique needs of each amenity can be properly assessed.



5.4 Indoor PCAL Infrastructure

The Town has opportunities to enhance indoor infrastructure in two situations: when major investment is needed to revitalize an existing facility, or when new facilities on new sites are being considered. Both scenarios require careful analysis to ensure investments align with community needs and financial capacity.

What does the Town want indoor facilities and spaces to be?

- **Places to Gather;** to bring community members, visitors, and interests together in an indoor, sheltered setting
- **Places to Play;** to enable physical activity, recreational sport, and competitive sport to occur in a variety of different ways
- **Places to Create;** to enable creative expression and activity through different types of arts and culture activity
- **Places to Interpret;** to enable people to interpret the Town's heritage and historical context
- **Places to Manage emergencies;** to ensure that there are indoor public spaces that can act as muster points and emergency management centers as required

The Town also wants to achieve these intentions in a way that is as fiscally responsible, inclusive, and as environmentally conscious as possible.



Opportunities Beyond Town-Led Investment

Not every infrastructure opportunity needs to originate with the Town. Important facilities sometimes emerge from other sources:

- Sport and recreation organizations wanting to build their own facilities
- Private developers creating recreation amenities as part of larger projects
- Schools building gymnasiums, fields, or performance spaces that the community could access
- Health facilities with fitness or wellness spaces that serve broader community needs

The Town should actively watch for these opportunities and explore partnerships when they align with community needs. A feasibility assessment and partnership development process can determine whether a proposed project makes sense for Cochrane and how the Town might support it through land contributions, funding, operational agreements, or other means.

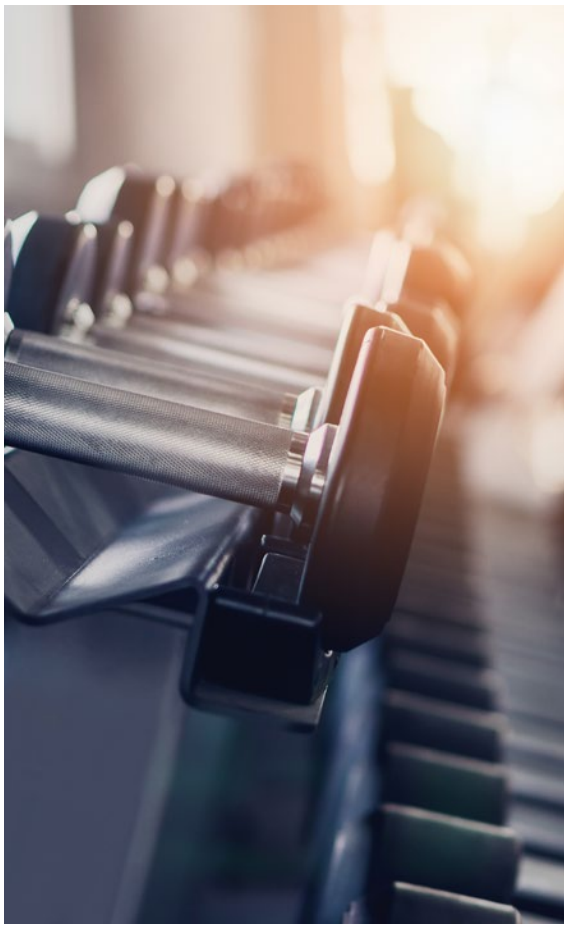
The following recommendations provide strategic direction for indoor infrastructure investment over the next 15 years. Each includes guidance on timing, partnership approaches, and next steps.

4.3.19. Explore the feasibility of a regional scale sporting venue for competitions and events.

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4.4.5. Explore the feasibility of a new multi-purpose facility that enhances opportunities for local artistic, creative and cultural industries to advance their goals.

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5.4.1 Indoor Infrastructure Priorities

The following indoor infrastructure priorities are not presented in a fixed or sequential order of need. While the Service Level Assessment (Appendix A) provides an important evidence-based foundation for identifying areas of focus, the timing and order of investment will be influenced by a range of dynamic factors. These include the availability of funding, emerging partnership opportunities, the condition and lifecycle of existing facilities (including potential closures or major reinvestments), and shifts in community participation trends and preferences over time. As such, this framework is intentionally flexible, allowing Administration and Council to respond to changing circumstances while still aligning decisions with the overall strategic direction of the Plan.



I R#3: Initiate planning and investment in new indoor PCAL infrastructure as opportunities for investment are identified and capacity exists.

Public Library and Complementary Arts & Culture Program Space

Why this is a priority:

- Libraries serve all ages and demographics
- High community value and utilization
- Supports literacy, learning, and community connection
- Opportunity to integrate arts and culture programming
- Potential for partnerships with library board, cultural organizations, and school boards

Strategic direction:

The Town should explore expanding library services and integrating complementary arts and culture program spaces. This could take several forms:

- Expansion of existing library space
- Development of a new library branch in a growing area
- Integration of arts program spaces (maker spaces, artist studios, workshop rooms) with library services
- Colocation with other community services (community halls, program rooms, social services)

Next steps:

- Conduct a library and arts program space feasibility study (ongoing)
- Engage library board, arts organizations, and school boards in planning
- Explore funding partnerships and grant opportunities
- Determine optimal location and scale based on growth patterns
- Consider phased implementation if the project is large-scale

Indoor Ice Arena Capacity

Why this is a priority:

- High demand and capacity constraints noted by user groups
- Strong participation in ice sports (hockey, ringette, figure skating, public skating)
- Existing facilities are well-utilized
- Ice sport organizations are established partners
- The Cochrane Arena is reaching the end of its lifespan and requires significant investment.

Strategic direction:

The Town should plan for additional ice capacity to meet current and future demand. Options include:

- Adding an additional sheet of ice at SLS Centre (if site and building allow)
- Developing a new arena as part of a second recreation hub in another area of town
- Partnership with regional municipalities, school boards, or ice sport organizations

The approach should balance geographic distribution with operational efficiency. If the SLS Centre expansion is feasible and cost-effective, this may be the first step. As the community continues to grow, developing a second recreation hub with ice in another area of town will improve access and create a second activity center.

Next steps:

- Assess SLS Centre site and building expansion capability
- Conduct ice arena feasibility study, including partnership and site analysis
- Engage ice sport user groups in planning
- Determine optimal timing based on growth and utilization trends
- Explore partnership and funding models





Indoor Turf Field

Why this is a priority:

- No indoor turf currently exists in Cochrane
- High demand for year-round field sport programming (soccer, football, lacrosse)
- Addresses capacity pressures on outdoor fields during summer
- Enables winter programming and training
- Regional facility potential

Strategic direction:

An indoor turf facility would significantly expand year-round programming opportunities. This type of facility typically requires strong partnerships due to high capital and operating costs.

The Town should:

- Explore partnership models with field sport organizations, school boards, or regional municipalities
- Consider colocation with other recreation amenities (as part of a second recreation hub)
- Investigate multi-use design allowing for non-sport uses (events, markets, trade shows)
- Assess regional demand and partnership interest beyond Cochrane

Next steps:

- Conduct indoor turf feasibility study
- Engage field sport user groups and potential regional partners early
- Explore capital partnership opportunities (community fundraising, grants, co-investment)
- Determine site requirements and optimal location
- Develop a business model addressing operating cost sustainability

Arts Performance Space

Why this is a priority:

- Gap identified by the arts and culture community
- Supports cultural sector development and culture related tourism
- Contributes to building a creative economy to attract new resources
- Enables theatre, music, dance, and other performing arts
- Potential for partnerships with cultural organizations and school boards

Strategic direction:

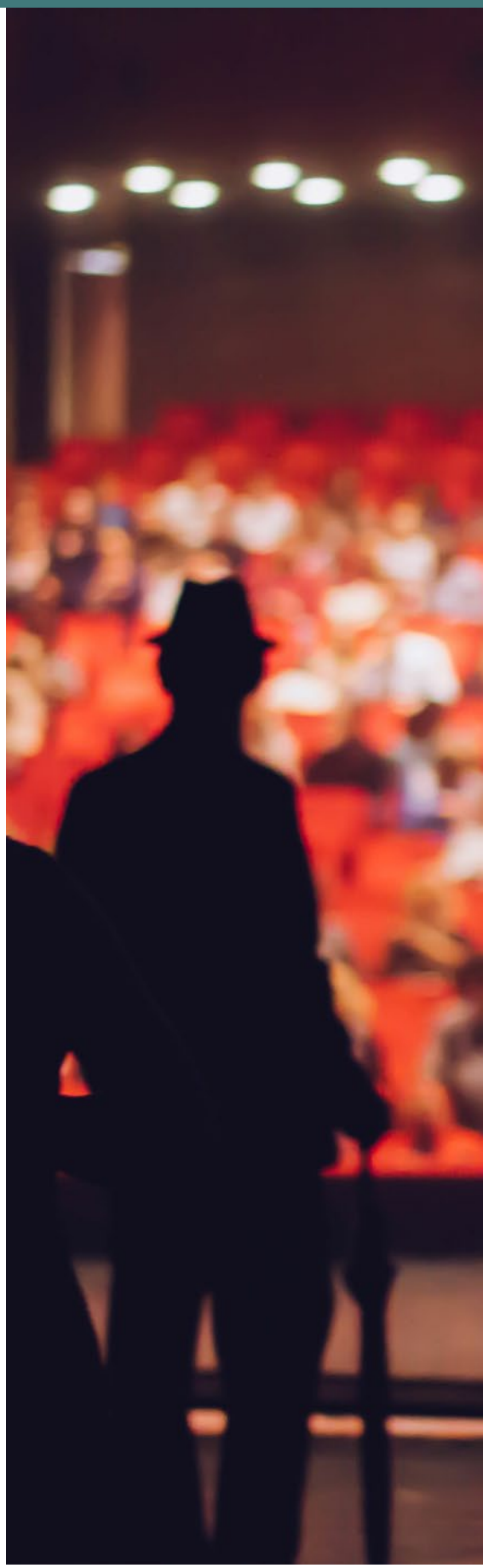
The Town should explore developing a dedicated performance space to support the growing arts and culture sector. This could be:

- A standalone performing arts centre
- Integrated into a library/cultural centre
- Shared-use space with school boards
- Flexible multi-use space supporting both performance and other community uses

The scale and design should reflect community capacity and partnership potential. A mid-sized flexible theatre (200-400 seats) may be more sustainable than a large, dedicated venue.

Next steps:

- Include performance space planning in arts and culture feasibility work
- Engage cultural organizations in visioning
- Explore partnership models (joint development with schools, cultural organization operation)
- Consider integration with library or cultural centre development
- Assess financial sustainability and operating models





Multipurpose Program Rooms

Why this is a priority:

- High flexibility serves diverse programming and community needs
- Supports partnerships with community organizations
- Addresses capacity constraints in existing program spaces
- Relatively lower cost compared to other amenities

Strategic direction:

Multipurpose program rooms are adaptable spaces that support a wide range of activities - fitness classes, arts programs, community meetings, workshops, and social gatherings. These spaces should be distributed throughout the community to improve access.

The Town should:

- Include multipurpose program rooms in new community facilities
- Explore integration with library, community centres, or recreation facilities
- Ensure rooms are designed for flexibility (movable partitions, appropriate storage, technology)
- Consider varying sizes to accommodate different group sizes and uses
- Plan for program rooms in growing neighbourhoods
- Explore partnerships with community organizations.

Next steps:

- Include program room requirements in all new facility planning
- Assess existing program room utilization to quantify additional need
- Explore partnership opportunities with community associations for neighbourhood-level program spaces
- Consider modular or incremental additions to existing facilities where feasible

5.5 Outdoor PCAL Infrastructure

The planning, management, and operations of outdoor infrastructure is more complex than indoor in that it entails a greater number of sites and amenities. One tool to help understand and plan for outdoor infrastructure is the implementation of a parks classification system. The Town currently has a parks classification system from the **Open Space Master Plan** (2012), which classifies the land masses that make up the open spaces system into major (indicating iconic destinations that are large in size and scope) and minor (indicating smaller size and scope) nodes.

Table 5: Cochrane Parks Classification System

Major nodes	Minor nodes
Natural environmental park	Sub-neighbourhood park
Major park	Neighbourhood park
Athletic park	School park/school reserve
Urban plazas and squares	Urban plazas and squares
Special use	Special use

These categories are explained further in the appendix . The Town also has an extensive (>80km) pathway and trail system that includes the following categories of linear parks as outlined in the accompanying **Pathways and Trails Strategy** (2026). These categories and classifications are relevant from a community growth planning perspective as well as to support and help focus operations and maintenance programs.

What does the Town want outdoor spaces and parks to be?

- **Places to Gather;** to bring community members, visitors, and interests together in an outdoor environment
- **Places to Play;** to enable physical activity, recreational sport, and competitive sport to occur in a variety of different ways
- **Places to Interpret;** to catalyze connection with nature and land as well as the Town's heritage and arts and culture
- **Places to Connect;** provide opportunities for active transportation between residences and key destinations in the community and region
- **Places to Manage emergencies;** to make the landscape more resilient to fire, flood, and other natural or manmade events.

The Town also wants to achieve these intentions in a way that is as fiscally responsible, geographically balanced, inclusive, and as environmentally conscious as possible.

4.3.20. Provide a variety of park types that support a comprehensive greenspace network.

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4.3.13. Continue integrating Cochrane's pathway system to expand safe, comfortable and efficient non-motorized travel to amenities such as parks, schools, recreation facilities, community services and open spaces.

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In addition to these categories, the Town must also consider how the various spaces are animated and used for different purposes. In alignment with the Town's intentions for outdoor spaces and the broader strategic context in which these spaces are delivered, the following typologies have been created and should be consistently referenced and applied to all outdoor space planning and in related strategic planning, such as the Town's **Bow River Strategy** (2026). These typologies are applicable to all outdoor PCAL spaces in the town and speak to their respective purpose and intention as presented within this Master Plan.

Rugged and Wild

The "Rugged & Wild" typology focuses on protecting and enhancing native ecosystems, creating a safe haven for local wildlife and native plants, while also ensuring reliable access for both residents and visitors. While conservation elements are incorporated in other areas and typologies, the areas identified under Rugged & Wild are specifically centred on this focus. The natural landscape in these areas plays a key role in shaping the identity of the region, offering opportunities for ecological stewardship and conservation.

The spaces cannot always be provided with geographic balance and standardized proximity to residences as they are dependent on naturally occurring topography and ecological features. These areas are also most likely to involve interaction with wildlife.

Natural Discovery

This typology is primarily dedicated to conserving and enhancing the natural environment while providing space for low-impact, passive recreation activities that naturally complement the interface with residential lots and neighbourhoods. These spaces aim to foster a connection with nature, support native vegetation and wildlife, and offer a tranquil setting for community members and visitors to enjoy. In general, this typology is characterized by walking, jogging, hiking, wildlife observation, picnicking, nature appreciation and educational programming.

These spaces are more likely to be provided with geographic balance and standardized proximity to residences as they involve respecting existing naturally occurring topography and ecological features, as well as enabling lands to revert to their natural state.

Gather and Play

This typology is depicted by vibrant gathering spaces for recreation, arts and cultural activities, and community connection. The Gather and Play typology is designed to celebrate active lifestyles and community connection by creating nodes that are more programmed in nature and layer in opportunities related to Cochrane's history and culture, learning, arts and entertainment, providing a dynamic environment for both residents and visitors to engage in shared experiences. Areas within Gather and Play offer a balance of active spaces and hubs to gather and connect, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere that reflects the Town's identity.

These spaces are most likely to be provided with geographic balance and standardized proximity to residences. Although standardized access (i.e. every resident has access to this type of space within 400m of their residence) to these spaces is targeted, the specific amenities within the space (i.e. ball diamonds or skate parks) might not warrant the same standardization. The formation of multi-amenity community wide sites for activity and event hosting also falls into this category.

Energy and Activation

This typology focuses on providing spaces for active recreation, community gathering, and small businesses. It is intended to interface with current and future residential and commercial uses and to integrate economic development opportunities, cultural, and recreational uses, making it a place for people to connect, create, and celebrate.

These spaces tend to be community-wide destinations and geographic balance and standardized proximity to residences are less a priority as is proximity to other types of land uses.

3.2.64.Limit recreational uses within natural areas to passive activities (such as walking and cycling on trails and pathways).

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3.2.65. Integrate activities, facilities and structures into open spaces only in areas where the natural integrity is not compromised or impacted.

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Table 6: Outdoor Space Typology

Typology	Typical amenities	Ideal adjacencies
Rugged and wild	• Trails • Mountain bike trails • Dog off-leash areas	• Natural ecological features (i.e. river valley) • Natural discovery areas
Natural discovery	• Trails • Mountain bike trails • Bike parks • Picnic areas / shelters • Open spaces • Community gardens • Dog off-leash areas • Public art installations	• Rugged and wild areas
Gather and play	• Trails • Sports fields • Ball diamonds • Outdoor courts • Outdoor rinks • Bike parks • Spray parks • Skate parks • Playgrounds • Outdoor fitness equipment • Community gardens • Dog off-leash areas • Public art installations	• Schools • Indoor parks, culture, and active living infrastructure
Energy and activation	• Trails • Outdoor performance spaces • Amphitheaters / band shelters • Dog off-leash areas • Playgrounds	• Schools • Indoor parks, culture, and active living infrastructure • Commercial / retail areas

The classification system and the typologies converge into a way to understand, plan, and maintain the Town's outdoor PCAL spaces. The balance of the typologies across outdoor spaces, depending on the proximity to residences, schools, commercial areas, and other land uses, is important in planning and maintaining spaces, as is connectivity throughout the entire system with trails and pathways.

I R#4: Adopt and incorporate the four outdoor space typologies into the planning, design, operations, and maintenance of all outdoor PCAL spaces.



I R#5: Initiate planning and investment in new outdoor PCAL infrastructure as opportunities for investment are identified and capacity exists.

5.5.1 Outdoor Infrastructure Priorities

The following outdoor infrastructure priorities are not presented in a fixed or sequential order of need. While the Service Level Assessment (Appendix A) provides an important evidence-based foundation for identifying areas of focus, the timing and order of investment will be influenced by a range of dynamic factors. These include the availability of funding, emerging partnership opportunities, the condition and lifecycle of existing assets and spaces, growth patterns and land availability, and shifts in community participation trends and preferences over time. As such, this framework is intentionally flexible, allowing Administration and Council to respond to changing circumstances while continuing to align decisions with the overall strategic direction of the Plan.



Trails and Pathways

Why this is a priority:

- Consistently identified as the most valued community asset
- Supports active transportation, recreation, and connection to nature
- Benefits all ages and abilities
- Relatively lower cost per user than specialized facilities
- Strong community demand for completion and connectivity improvements

Strategic direction:

All outdoor space typologies (Rugged & Wild, Natural Discovery, Gather & Play, Energy & Activation) should include trail and pathway connections.

Trail and pathway development should be guided by the Town's Pathways and Trails Strategy. Priorities include:

- Completing missing links in the pathway network
- Improving safety at road crossings
- Connecting neighbourhoods to schools, parks, commercial areas, and natural areas
- Creating regional trail connections (Bow River pathway, connections to adjacent municipalities)
- Ensuring pathways meet accessibility standards

Next steps:

- Implement Pathways and Trails priorities on an ongoing basis
- Secure pathway easements and rights-of-way in new developments
- Budget for pathway construction, maintenance, and renewal annually
- Explore regional partnership opportunities for major trail connections
- Install wayfinding and signage to improve usability





Picnic Areas and Shelters

Why this is a priority:

- Supports passive recreation and social gathering
- Enhances usability of all park types
- Relatively modest investment with high community benefit
- Extends the season of use in shoulder seasons
- Supports Cochrane's Age Friendly designation

Strategic direction:

Picnic areas and shelters should be provided across **all open space typologies** to support diverse uses:

Rugged & Wild: Basic picnic tables at trailheads and viewpoints

Natural Discovery: Picnic areas integrated with natural settings, minimal structures

Gather & Play: Sheltered picnic areas near playgrounds and sports amenities, support for group gatherings

Energy & Activation: Larger shelters and group picnic facilities supporting events and tourism

Next steps:

- Develop design standards for picnic areas and shelters appropriate to each typology
- Include picnic infrastructure in new park development
- Prioritize adding shelters to existing high-use parks
- Consider partnerships for sponsorship or naming opportunities
- Plan for ongoing maintenance and replacement
- Enhance the current memorial bench program

Dog Off-Leash Areas

Why this is a priority:

- High community demand
- Supports pet ownership and social connections
- Can be integrated into various park types
- Addresses conflicts between leashed and off-leash use
- Large number of registered dog owners in Cochrane

Strategic direction:

Dog off-leash areas should be provided across **all open space typologies** with a design appropriate to the setting:

Natural Discovery: Off-leash areas that protect sensitive habitats, potentially seasonal restrictions

Gather & Play: Fenced off-leash areas near neighbourhoods with amenities (water, waste stations, seating)

Energy & Activation: Off-leash areas integrated into active spaces, potentially with agility features

Next steps:

- Assess geographic distribution of existing off-leash areas and identify gaps
- Develop standards for off-leash area size, amenities, and maintenance
- Include off-leash areas in new park development where appropriate
- Explore partnerships with dog-focused community groups for enhancements
- Ensure adequate signage and waste management infrastructure





Ball Diamonds

Why this is a priority:

- Support established baseball and slo-pitch programs
- Current diamonds are well-utilized during the season
- Growth will create additional demand
- Partnership potential with sport organizations

Strategic direction:

Ball diamonds should be developed in **Gather & Play** spaces, ideally clustered in multi-amenity sports parks to support tournaments and efficient maintenance. New diamonds should:

- Be sited in areas of population growth
- Should be planned in multiple amenity configurations
- Include appropriate support amenities (dugouts, fencing, lighting for evening use)
- Consider diamond orientations and spacing for safety and playability
- Include parking, washrooms, and spectator areas where feasible
- Should be primarily for softball and baseball.

Next steps:

- Monitor utilization of existing diamonds to identify when expansion is needed
- Plan for diamond development in growing areas as municipal reserve lands become available
- Engage baseball and slo-pitch associations in planning and partnership discussions
- Consider lighting and amenity upgrades to existing diamonds to extend usability
- Explore partnership opportunities for diamond development and maintenance

Sports Fields - Grass and Turf

Why this is a priority:

- High demand for rectangular field sports (soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby)
- Current fields at or near capacity during peak seasons
- Growth will increase demand significantly
- Turf fields extend season and increase utilization
- Current fields are primarily shared with schools

Strategic direction:

Rectangular sports fields should be developed in **Gather & Play** spaces, with a mix of grass and turf surfaces. The Town should:

For grass fields:

- Develop new grass fields in growing neighbourhoods
- Ensure adequate irrigation and maintenance
- Size fields to accommodate multiple age groups
- Cluster fields in multi-field complexes where possible

For turf fields:

- Prioritize high-use fields for conversion to synthetic turf
- Consider turf fields in multi-amenity sports parks to maximize utilization
- Explore partnerships with field sport organizations and school boards for cost-sharing
- Plan for turf replacement in lifecycle budgets

Next steps:

- Assess current field utilization and project future demand based on growth
- Should be planned in multiple amenity configurations
- Identify priority locations for new field development
- Conduct feasibility analysis for turf field investment (cost-benefit, partnership potential)
- Engage field sport user groups in planning and partnership development
- Include field development in new neighbourhood park planning





Amphitheatres / Band Shelters

Why this is a priority:

- Support outdoor performances and community events
- Activate public spaces and support cultural programming
- Tourism and community gathering benefits
- Partnership opportunities with cultural organizations

Strategic direction:

Amphitheatres and band shelters should be developed in **Energy & Activation** spaces, typically downtown, commercial areas, or major community gathering sites. These spaces:

- Enable outdoor concerts, theatre, festivals, and markets
- Should be designed flexibly to support multiple event types
- Require proximity to parking, transit, and commercial amenities
- May be smaller neighbourhood-scale or larger community-wide destinations

Next steps:

- Identify optimal locations for outdoor performance spaces (likely linked to downtown/commercial development)
- Engage Parks and Recreation Committee and event organizers in planning
- Explore partnership models (sponsorship, cultural organization operation)
- Consider integration with other Energy & Activation amenities (plazas, markets)
- Plan infrastructure to support events (power, water, storage, washrooms)



6 The Future of Active Living Services and Programs







The Town's investment in parks, culture, and active living infrastructure creates the physical spaces where residents can gather, play, and be active. But infrastructure alone is not enough, these spaces must be animated with programs, services, and opportunities that bring people together and meet diverse community needs.

As established in Section 4, Cochrane uses an indirect service delivery model where most programs and opportunities are delivered by community partners such as sport organizations, recreation groups, cultural associations, schools, and private providers. The Town's role is to:

- Enable partners to deliver high-quality programs through facility access, funding support, and capacity building
- Monitor demand to identify gaps where community needs are not being met
- Fill strategic gaps through direct delivery when no partner exists or can deliver
- Identify, lead and support community events that bring residents together and celebrate Cochrane's identity
- Support spontaneous use through well-maintained parks, trails, and public spaces

6.1 Active Living Services and Program Priorities

This section outlines strategic recommendations for strengthening recreation and sport opportunities over the next 15 years, ensuring that Cochrane's residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can participate in activities that enhance their quality of life.

Not all residents can easily access recreation and sport opportunities. Barriers include cost, transportation, lack of information, cultural differences, physical accessibility, and limited programs for specific populations. The Town's purpose (Section 2.1) emphasizes that PCAL services should be for everyone, this requires intentional effort to remove obstacles.

The Town should work with partners to systematically reduce barriers to participation through the following considerations:

Financial Accessibility

- Expand fee assistance programs to ensure cost is not a barrier to participation
- Require partners receiving Town funding or facility access to offer sliding scale fees or subsidies
- Explore creative pricing models (family passes, multi-program discounts, pay-what-you-can options)
- Connect residents to available subsidy programs (e.g., KidSport, JumpStart, PSO or NSO programs, and Town programs)



P R#1: Reduce Barriers to Participation

4.8.12. Explore opportunities to collaborate on events, venues, attractions, conferences and accommodations that will enhance the economic benefit of tourism in Cochrane.

– page 124 Envision Cochrane 2050

4.8.15. Encourage festivals, cultural activities, tournaments, conferences and other events.

4.8.16. Explore opportunities to establish a sport economy in Cochrane.

– page 124 Envision Cochrane 2050

4.4.7. Support events and gatherings in public spaces, including parks, facilities, streets and other areas.

4.4.8. Continue growing a Town-led approach to enhancing the local events culture through investments, partnerships, programs and grants.

4.4.9. Continue investing in Town-led events that complement the local calendar of community-led events, offering the residents of Cochrane year-round opportunities to gather, celebrate and connect.

– page 90 Envision Cochrane 2050



Physical Accessibility

- Ensure all Town facilities meet or exceed accessibility standards and Age Friendly standards
- Work with partners to offer adapted programs for people with disabilities
- Provide specialized equipment (adaptive bikes, accessible playground features)
- Train staff and volunteers in inclusive program delivery

Cultural Accessibility

- Support programming that reflects Cochrane's cultural diversity
- Work with cultural communities to identify and address participation barriers
- Provide information in multiple languages where needed
- Celebrate diverse cultural traditions through programs and events

Information Accessibility

- Improve communication about available programs and how to register
- Create a centralized PCAL information hub (online and physical)
- Work with partners to simplify registration processes
- Reach underserved populations through targeted outreach

Geographic Accessibility

- Distribute programs across neighbourhoods to reduce travel distance
- Coordinate transportation options for youth and seniors where possible
- Offer programs in multiple locations, not just at major facilities

Community events and festivals serve a unique purpose, they bring residents together across differences, celebrate shared identity, activate public spaces, and create memories. Unlike sports leagues or arts classes, events are typically free or low-cost, require no registration, and welcome everyone. The Town plays a direct role in event delivery, working alongside community partners.

The Town should maintain and expand its leadership in community-wide events that:

Build Community Identity

- Celebrate Cochrane's heritage (Western culture, Indigenous connections, pioneer history)
- Mark important milestones in the community's development
- Showcase local talent and cultural traditions
- Create traditions that residents look forward to annually

Activate Public Spaces

- Use parks, trails, downtown areas, and plazas as event venues
- Demonstrate the value of public infrastructure investments
- Increase visibility and use of underutilized spaces
- Create vibrancy that attracts visitors and supports local businesses

Foster Inclusion and Connection

- Design events to be accessible and welcoming to all ages and abilities
- Incorporate diverse cultural celebrations and traditions
- Create opportunities for spontaneous participation (not just spectating)
- Build bridges between different community groups

Support Local Arts and Culture

- Provide performance and exhibition opportunities for local artists
- Partner with cultural organizations in event planning and delivery
- Integrate arts and heritage interpretation into community events
- Connect events to broader cultural development goals (Section 7)

P R#2: Strengthen Community Events and Celebrations





Types of Events to Prioritize

The following provides an initial categorization of events that the Town should consider a balanced offering throughout the year.

Annual Signature Events

- Large-scale festivals that define Cochrane's identity and attract regional visitors
- Multi-day events with diverse programming (music, food, activities, sports)

Consideration: *Significant Town investment and extensive partner collaboration.*

Seasonal Celebrations

- Regular events marking seasons and holidays
- Community gatherings (Canada Day, winter festivals, harvest celebrations)
- Moderate scale, family-friendly focus

Consideration: *Traditional events typically led by the Town that can support building destination brand.*

Neighbourhood Events

- Smaller-scale events in local parks and community spaces

Consideration: *Build connections within neighbourhoods and often partnership-led with Town support.*

Spontaneous Animation

- Pop-up activities and performances in public spaces
- Food trucks, outdoor movies, drop-in sports
- Low-barrier, surprise-and-delight experiences

Consideration: *Temporary animation of public spaces and often partnership-led with Town support.*

Not everyone wants to join a league, commit to a season, or register in advance. Many residents prefer flexible, spontaneous recreation and showing up when they have time, trying activities without commitment, or participating informally with friends and family. These unstructured opportunities are particularly important for:

- Busy families who need flexibility
- New residents exploring what's available
- People testing activities before committing to programs
- Casual participants who recreate for fun, not competition
- People with unpredictable schedules

Spontaneous use is also the lowest-barrier way to participate as they are typically free or low-cost, no registration, no equipment requirements.

The Town and partners should expand opportunities for unstructured recreation across settings, the following are examples of unstructured recreation in various Town settings.

Facility-Based Drop-in

- Public swim times in pools (all ages, abilities)
- Public skate times in arenas
- Gymnasium open times (basketball, volleyball, pickleball)
- Fitness centre drop-in access
- Drop-in sport (shinny hockey, pick-up soccer, yoga in the park)
- Creative space open studios (maker spaces, art rooms)

Park-Based Spontaneous Use

- Sport courts and fields designed for pick-up play
- Playground and spray park access
- Outdoor fitness equipment along trails
- Picnic areas and gathering spaces
- Off-leash dog areas
- Skate parks and bike parks

P R#3: Expand Drop-in and Unstructured Opportunities





Trail and Pathway Use

- Walking, running, cycling on pathways
- Mountain bike trail systems
- Winter trail use (snowshoeing, fat biking, cross-country skiing)
- Trail-based events and challenges (self-guided, not programmed)

Public Space Activation

- Pop-up activities in plazas and parks (lawn games, outdoor movies)
- Seasonal installations (outdoor rinks, summer games)
- "Take What You Need" equipment stations (bikes, sleds, sports equipment)
- Enhance the block party trailer program

Recreation and sport trends are continually evolving. Activities that are popular today may decline, while new activities emerge and grow. The Town must stay informed about trends to ensure investments and partnerships remain relevant to resident interests. This is particularly important in an indirect delivery model, as the Town depends on partners to deliver programs, understanding what residents want helps the Town support the right partners and investments.

P R#4: Monitor Trends and Respond to Emerging Opportunities

Current trends in activity participation worth monitoring include:

- Outdoor adventure activities (trail running, mountain biking, climbing, paddling)
- Wellness and mind-body activities (yoga, meditation, tai chi, walking groups)
- Racquet sports (pickleball)
- Field sports (cricket)
- E-sports and digital recreation
- Adaptive sports and inclusive recreation
- Multi-generational programming (programs that welcome all ages together)
- Short-form programming (micro-classes, lunch-hour activities, single-session workshops)





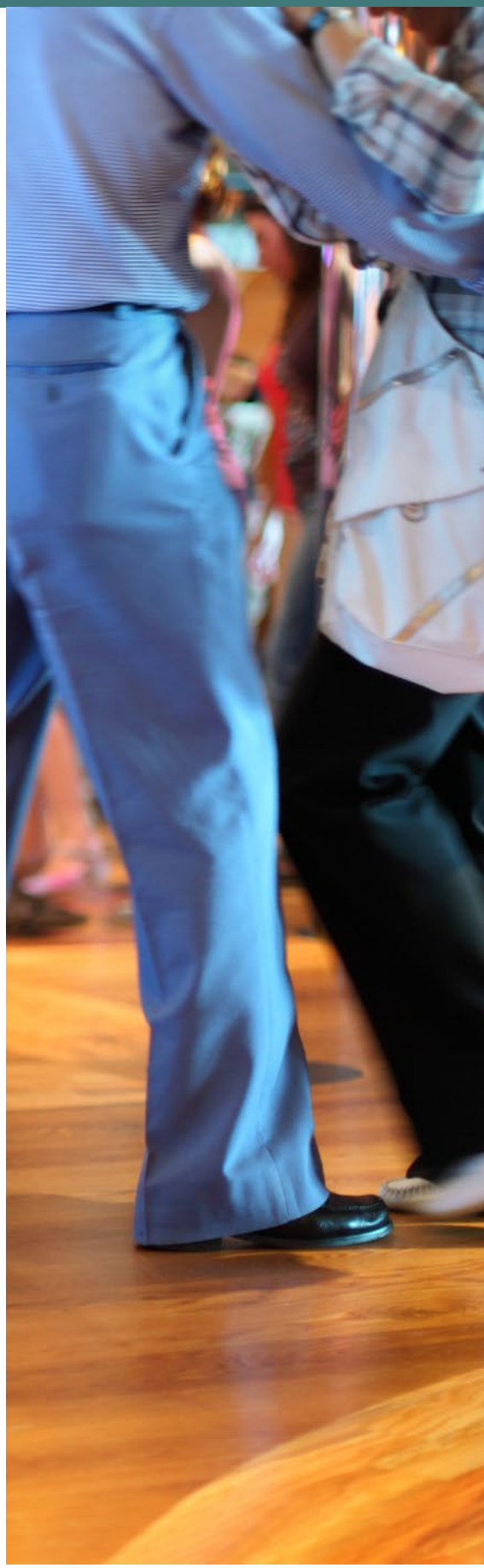
7 The Future of Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are essential to Cochrane's identity and quality of life. They tell the story of the Town, celebrating Western heritage and Indigenous connections while embracing new cultural expressions and identities. They activate public spaces, support social cohesion, attract visitors, and contribute to economic vitality.

Cochrane uses an indirect service delivery model where most programs and opportunities are delivered by community partners and organizations, recreation groups, cultural associations, schools, and private providers. The Town's role is to:

- Enable partners to deliver high-quality programs through facility access, funding support, and capacity building
- Monitor demand to identify gaps where community needs are not being met
- Fill strategic gaps through direct delivery when no partner exists or can deliver
- Lead community events that bring residents together and celebrate Cochrane's identity
- Support spontaneous use through well-maintained parks, trails, and public spaces

This section comprises the core of the Town of Cochrane's strategic intentions for the delivery and management of arts and culture opportunities. A draft vision and recommendations are all provided here, which will provide a foundation for future consideration in developing an Arts and Culture Master Plan for the Town of Cochrane.





In the cultural planning context, a vision is an aspirational goal describing the arts and culture sector's impact on a municipality, or the outcome of a municipality's efforts to manage the sector. The **Envision Cochrane** report provided a vision for arts and culture, as follows:

> *Envision Cochrane 2050 maximizes existing spaces, venues and talent and explores new indoor and outdoor facilities to set the stage to grow a vibrant arts and culture scene. Support for artists, events and industries will promote local culture and identity throughout Cochrane's public spaces, attract tourism, stimulate economic growth and enhance quality of life for residents.*

There are valuable elements in the existing statement, although others might be more properly expressed as strategic goals or objectives rather than vision. Since this plan is for the next 15 years up to 2040, and because of the research and key findings of this process to date, we would suggest revising the vision as follows:

> *By 2040, arts and culture will reflect Cochrane's cultural identity as a dynamic and unique town with a strong Western heritage and an evolving cultural mix. The town's thriving arts and cultural sector will enliven Cochrane's neighbourhoods, make the Town a tourist destination and contribute to the Town's economic growth.*

7.1 Arts and Culture Priorities

The following recommendations provide direction to bring coherence and focus to the Town of Cochrane's cultural sector management efforts, as derived from all of the research and consultation to date.

This strategic approach to arts and culture sector management is intended to accomplish the following:

- Enhance social cohesion in the context of a rapidly growing and diversifying populace and a particular cultural heritage.
- Preserve Cochrane's uniqueness in Alberta and in Canada.
- Contribute to economic development and economic diversification.
- Position Cochrane's arts and cultural sector for sustainability and success.

Cochrane has a rich and evolving story—one that belongs to everyone who lives here. When residents see their history celebrated, their culture reflected, and their voices included, they feel they belong. That sense of belonging is the foundation of a strong, connected community.

The Town's role is to create the conditions where this can happen—building platforms, supporting infrastructure, and weaving arts and culture into the fabric of everyday life. Five areas of action will bring this goal to life.

AC R#1: Make Cochrane a Culturally Vibrant Place to Live.





Sharing Cochrane's Stories

Stories build identity. They help long-time residents see their history honoured and new residents understand the community they've joined.

Some platforms for storytelling already exist such as museums, festivals, libraries, and theatres. Others are yet to be created, such as digital portals, QR code installations at heritage sites, and new festival programming. The Town's job isn't to create the content—it's to build and support the platforms where stories can be told. Cultural organizations, ethnocultural groups, libraries, and community members will bring those platforms to life.

Expanding Arts and Culture Infrastructure

Finding affordable, suitable space is one of the biggest challenges facing arts and culture organizations in growing communities. Cochrane is no exception.

The goal of a cultural infrastructure strategy isn't simply to help local groups find space—though that matters. It's to maximize access to arts and culture, enhance the livability and attractiveness of Cochrane, and create the conditions for cultural innovation. Actions could include a facility audit to understand current gaps, municipal incentives for building owners to include cultural spaces in new developments and exploring the feasibility of a downtown arts and culture hub. In every case, decisions should be guided by the vision and strategic direction in this plan.

Broadening Heritage Interpretation

Cochrane's heritage is rich but much of it is underrepresented. Currently, heritage interpretation is delivered primarily through Cochrane Historical and Area Preservation Society (CHAPS), the Stockmen's Foundation, and a handful of other sources.

There is significant opportunity to expand both the reach and the scope of heritage interpretation. Incorporating stories along the Town's trail system, adding QR codes at significant heritage sites downtown, and using digital tools to bring history to life are all possibilities. But the opportunity goes beyond delivery methods. Cochrane's story includes Western heritage and ranching culture and also Indigenous history, diverse settler stories, and the contemporary milestones that reflect how the community has evolved. Broadening interpretation to include these perspectives builds a more complete, inclusive picture of who Cochrane is and where it's headed.

Creating a Placemaking and Public Art Strategy

Arts and culture shouldn't be confined to galleries and theatres; they should be woven into everyday public spaces. A placemaking strategy would identify where arts and culture currently exist in Cochrane, where gaps are, and where investment would have the greatest community impact. A cultural mapping exercise is a common and effective tool for this work.

Central to any placemaking strategy is a **public art plan**. Cochrane has recently piloted a public art installation at The Station, a promising start. Building on this momentum, the Town should develop a formalized public art plan that includes:

- A percent-for-art funding mechanism that dedicates a portion of capital project budgets to public art
- Clear governance, processes, and procedures for selecting and commissioning artwork, including temporary installations
- Strategic locations for installations including the trail system, new roundabouts, downtown spaces, and key public gathering areas

Public art makes culture visible and accessible to everyone, not just those who seek it out.



AC R#2: Maximize Economic Development Potential of Arts and Culture



Cochrane has something many communities are working hard to build: a distinctive identity with deep roots and an evolving creative scene. The goal of this recommendation is to turn that identity into an economic asset: attracting visitors, growing the creative industry sector, drawing creative entrepreneurs, and positioning Cochrane as a destination worth seeking out.

The Town already has a provincial designation as an emerging destination. This recommendation builds on that foundation by creating the conditions where arts and culture drive economic growth and community vitality. Four areas of action will bring this goal to life.

Creating Unique Cochrane Cultural Products

Generic experiences don't draw visitors, distinctive ones do. Cochrane needs cultural products and experiences that are uniquely its own: things that can't be found anywhere else and reflect everything the community was, is, and is becoming.

The Town can encourage this kind of creative production by offering tools and incentives that motivate artists, organizations, and creative businesses to innovate. Tax incentives for creative entrepreneurs, festivals that celebrate local culture, and competitions that challenge artists to produce distinctly Cochrane work are all practical ways to spark new products and experiences. The goal is a cultural offering that gives Cochrane a compelling and unique value proposition for visitors and new residents alike.

Connecting the Arts and Culture Community

A thriving creative sector depends on connection. When artists know other artists, when cultural organizations collaborate, and when leaders in the sector can share ideas and challenges, innovation follows.

The Town should create a vehicle for these connections to happen. This could be a formal structure like an arts council, or something lighter, a regular roundtable where cultural sector leaders come together to discuss needs, opportunities, and potential collaborations. Either way, the benefits go both ways: the Town stays connected to the pulse of the arts and culture community, and organizations stay connected to their audiences and to each other. Good conversations lead to new collaborations, new products, and better services.

Marketing Cochrane as a Cultural Destination

Many people consulted during this planning process identified a clear opportunity: the Town can do much more to spread the word about arts and culture in Cochrane. Residents don't always know what's available, and visitors don't always know why Cochrane is worth the trip.

A coordinated marketing and communications approach, developed in partnership with a broader tourism strategy, would raise Cochrane's profile as a unique cultural destination. This means telling the story of Cochrane's arts and culture scene to audiences near and far, promoting events and experiences, and building a reputation that draws visitors and keeps them coming back. The Town doesn't need to do this alone, cultural organizations, tourism partners, and regional agencies can all play a role.

Attracting and Supporting Creative Workers and Entrepreneurs

A vibrant creative industry sector doesn't just happen it needs the right conditions to take root and grow. Attracting creative workers and entrepreneurs to Cochrane builds capacity in the cultural sector, generates new products and experiences, and contributes to a dynamic local economy.

The Town can help create these conditions in practical ways: designating spaces available at below-market rates for artists and creative businesses, exploring innovation districts or creative hubs through land use planning, and developing programs that support creative entrepreneurs to establish and grow their work in Cochrane. When creative workers thrive, the whole community benefits through richer cultural offerings, a stronger local economy, and a more attractive and vibrant place to live.



AC R#3: Improve Sustainability of the Arts and Cultural Sector



A culturally vibrant community depends on organizations that are healthy, well-resourced, and built to last. Many arts and culture organizations in Cochrane, and across Canada, operate with limited staff, tight budgets, and stretched volunteers. When these organizations struggle, the programs and experiences they deliver are at risk.

The Town's role is to help strengthen the sector from the inside out, reducing barriers, building capacity, and ensuring municipal funding programs keep pace with what organizations actually need. Three areas of action will support a more sustainable arts and culture sector.

Building Organizational Capacity

Many cultural organizations have great ideas but limited resources to bring them to life. Business planning, grant writing, and strategic planning are time-consuming and require skills that volunteer-driven organizations often don't have on hand.

The Town can help bridge this gap by offering practical support: assistance with business and strategic planning, guidance through grant application processes, and access to a maintained database of government and private sector funding opportunities. Helping organizations find and successfully access external funding reduces their dependence on municipal grants and builds their long-term resilience. When cultural organizations are stronger, the programs and experiences they deliver get better.

Simplifying the Municipal Grant Process

Applying for grants is hard work, especially for small non-profit organizations juggling programs, fundraising, and day-to-day operations with limited staff or volunteers. A complex or time-consuming municipal application process can discourage organizations from applying or divert energy away from what matters most: delivering great programs and experiences for the community.

The Town should review its grant application process and look for ways to simplify and streamline it. Every hour a cultural organization saves navigating paperwork is an hour they can spend creating, connecting, and serving the community. A straightforward, accessible process signals that the Town is a genuine partner.

Keeping Municipal Funding Relevant

Cochrane has increased its grant allocations in recent years—a meaningful investment in the cultural sector that reflects the Town's growing commitment to arts and culture. That commitment needs to keep pace with the sector's evolving needs.

The Town should regularly revisit its municipal funding programs to ensure they remain aligned with what cultural organizations actually need to thrive. This means reviewing grant amounts, eligibility criteria, and funding categories on a regular cycle and being willing to adjust when the evidence shows a better approach. A funding program that reflects current realities is a much more effective tool than one designed for a community that no longer exists.





8 The Future of Green and Open Spaces

Green and open spaces are essential to Cochrane's identity and quality of life. They provide places for play, relaxation, connection with nature, and community gathering. They support environmental health, enhance property values, and contribute to the character that makes Cochrane special.

The Town targets having a park or open space within 400 metres of every resident (see Map X) ensuring everyone has easy access to outdoor experiences. Beyond this baseline, Cochrane strives to provide as many parks, culture, and active living options as resources allow.

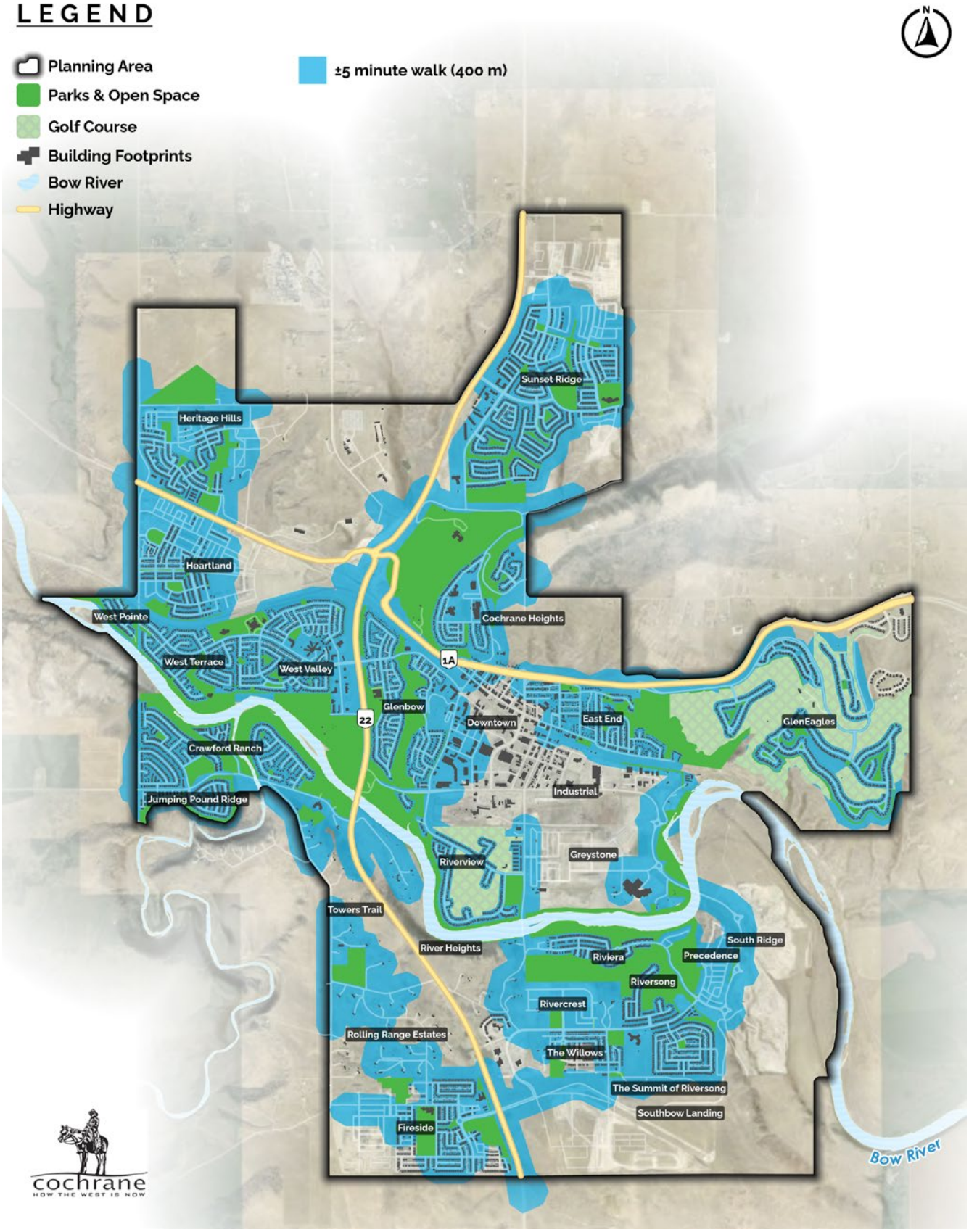
This section addresses three strategic priorities for green and open spaces: growing the tree canopy, protecting wildlife and biodiversity, and managing public art as a valued community asset.

4.3.15. Ensure all residents live within a 400-metre walking distance of a park, plaza or open space, where possible. When this target cannot be met, identify pathways and routes that can be improved to facilitate better connectivity.

– page 80 Envision Cochrane 2050



Map 4: Access to Parks and Open Spaces (400m)



8.1 Green and Open Spaces Priorities

Trees are more than decoration in a community; they are essential infrastructure. They improve air quality, provide shade and cooling, enhance climate resilience, offer connection with nature, and define Cochrane's landscape character. The Town has a history of valuing trees, both historic specimens that have shaped the community and new plantings in developing areas.

A healthy tree canopy contributes to resident wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and community identity. Like roads and buildings, trees are assets that require strategic management and long-term investment. See Map (X) for the 2020 canopy in Cochrane.

The Town should manage its tree canopy with the same rigor applied to built infrastructure through inventory, valuation, maintenance, and strategic planning.

Inventory and Assess the Current Canopy

Before setting goals, the Town needs to understand what it has:

- Conduct a comprehensive tree inventory (species, age, location, condition)
- Valuate the tree canopy using industry-standard methods
- Identify areas where canopy is sparse and where planting would have the greatest impact
- Map tree assets alongside other municipal infrastructure

This inventory becomes the foundation for all future tree management decisions.

GS R#1: Grow and Sustain Cochrane's Tree Canopy





Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC) is a federal-government-backed grant program delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund to support communities across Canada in planting trees and expanding their local tree canopy.

The initiative helps local governments and partners grow, manage and protect their tree canopies by funding new tree plantings, strategic planning, and related activities.

Integrate Trees into Asset Management

Trees should be managed with the same policies and protocols as other Town assets:

- Include trees in regular condition assessments
- Budget for tree maintenance, pruning, and replacement
- Track the value of the urban forest over time
- Establish standards for tree protection during construction and development

Strategic Planting to Fill Gaps

Once the inventory is complete, prioritize planting in areas where tree canopy is sparse:

- New developments (ensure adequate trees are planted from the start)
- Established neighbourhoods with limited shade
- Parks and public spaces
- Along trails and pathways
- Downtown areas

Tree planting should be incorporated into all four park and open space typologies (see Section 5.5):

Rugged & Wild - Protect existing natural tree cover

Natural Discovery - Feature native trees for education and connection with nature

Gather & Play - Provide shade trees for comfort during activities

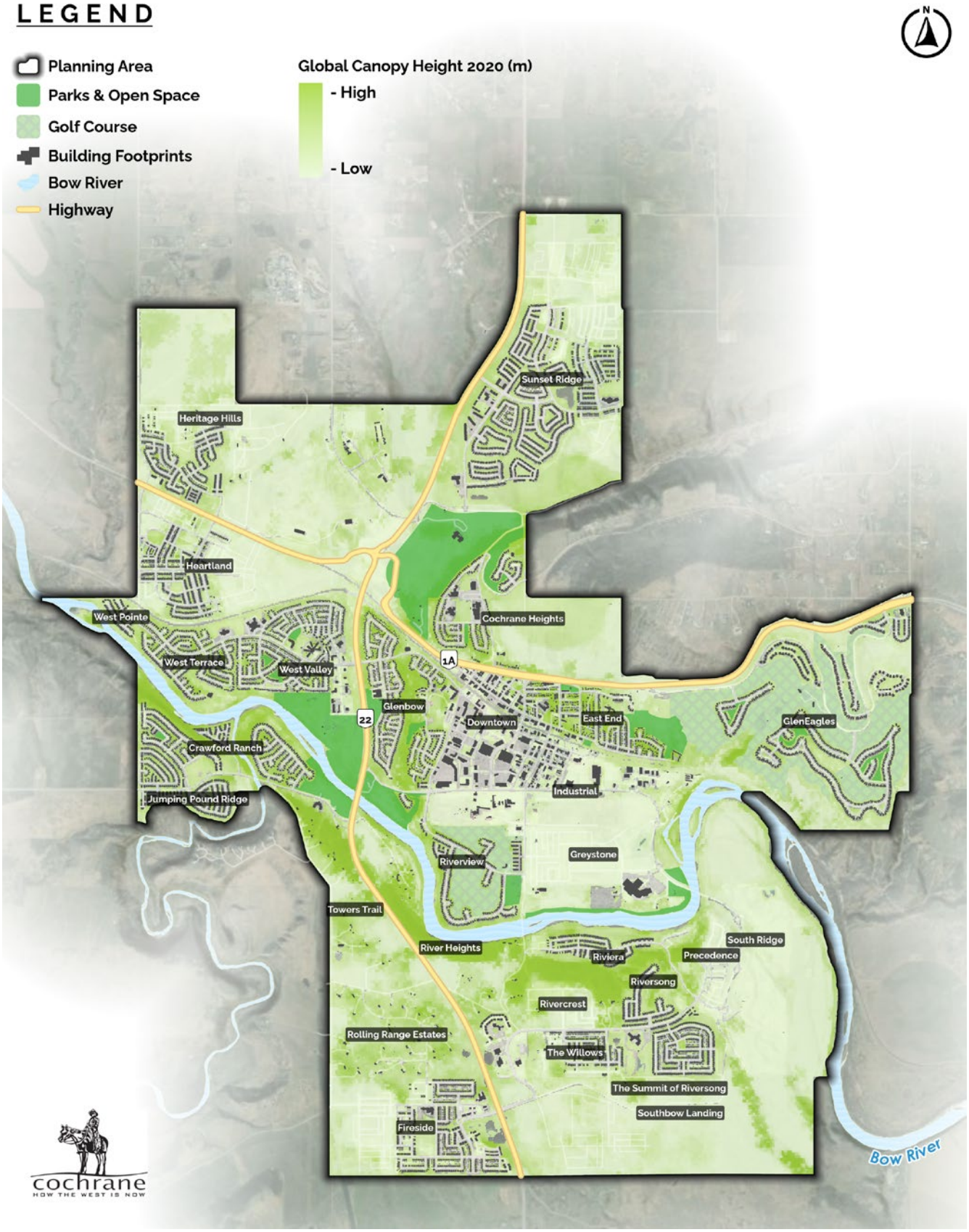
Energy & Activation - Use trees to define spaces and provide visual interest

Pursue External Funding

Tree planting can be expensive, but external funding opportunities exist:

- Provincial and federal environmental grant programs
- Corporate sponsorships and partnerships
- Community planting initiatives with volunteers
- Collaboration with environmental organizations

Map 5: Global Canopy Height





GS R#2: Protect Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity

4.3.6. Utilize Conservation Reserves in accordance with the Municipal Government Act to enhance the connectivity and health of valued natural areas and features that cannot be otherwise protected through reserve allocations.

– page 79 Envision Cochrane 2050

4.1.29. Design public spaces, parks and open spaces to protect or integrate natural features, supporting an interconnected ecological network.

– page 66 Envision Cochrane 2050

3.2.62. Support uses and structures that support park, recreation, or arts and culture functions in open spaces that do not include intact natural areas.

– page 56 Envision Cochrane 2050

Cochrane's proximity to the Bow River and its tributaries is one of the Town's defining features. The riverbank topography, associated ecosystems, wildlife corridors, and diverse vegetation make Cochrane unique. Where these natural features intersect with public parks and open spaces, the Town has opportunities to protect and steward them for current and future generations.

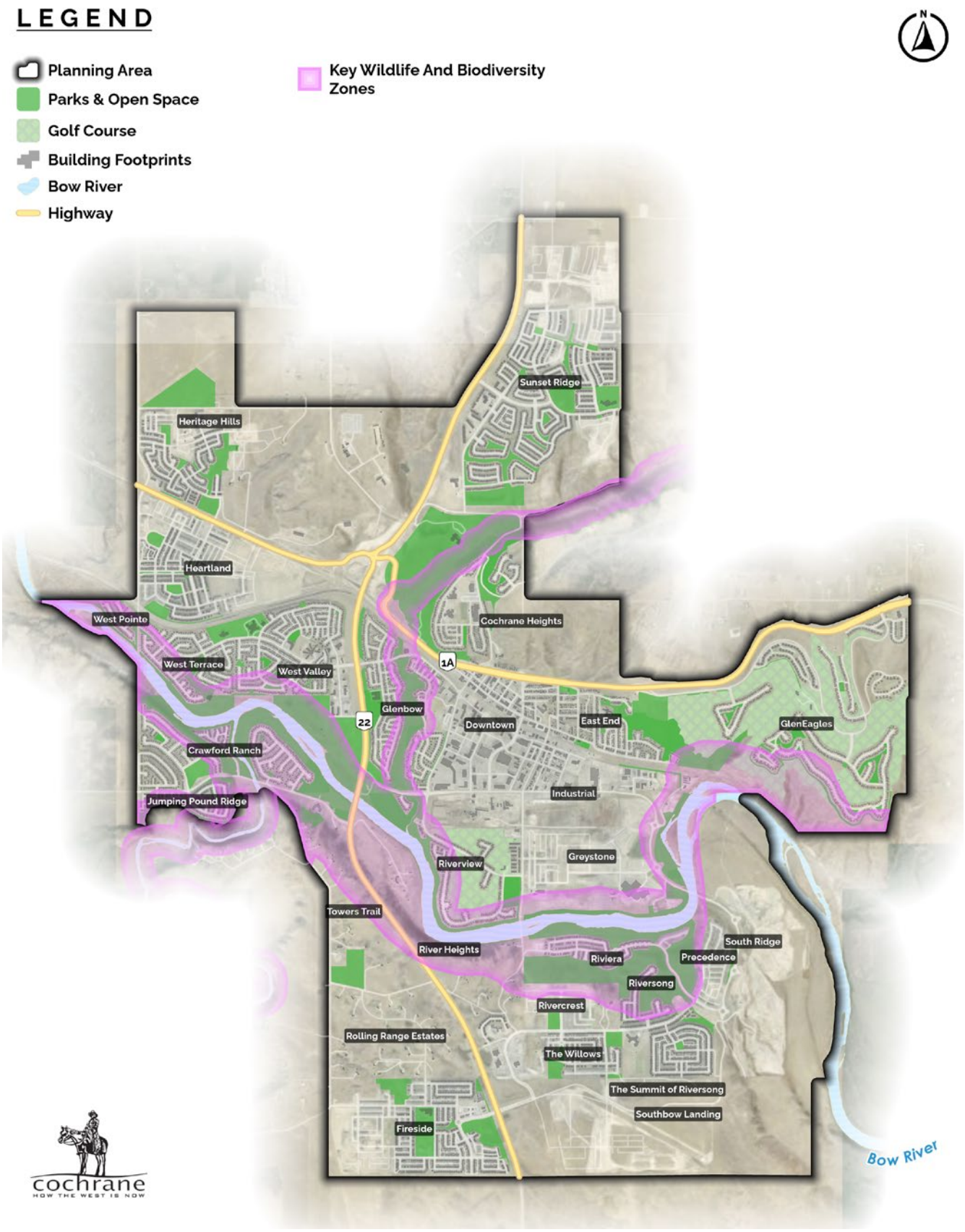
Wildlife habitat and biodiversity contribute to environmental health, ecological resilience, and quality of life. They provide educational opportunities, connect residents with nature, and distinguish Cochrane from communities that have lost their natural heritage to development.

The Town should strategically use parks, open spaces, and public lands to protect wildlife corridors and biodiversity while also enabling appropriate public access and education. See Map X which identified key wildlife and biodiversity zones.

It is important to note that the Town doesn't need to do this work alone. The Town can:

- Collaborate with environmental groups on habitat assessment and monitoring
- Work with regional partners (neighboring municipalities, provincial agencies) on wildlife corridor protection
- Engage volunteers in habitat restoration and stewardship
- Leverage external expertise for biodiversity planning

Map 6: Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zones



An Environmental Reserve (ER) in Alberta is a land designation under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) that allows subdivision authorities to reserve land for specific purposes, such as preserving natural features, preventing pollution, and ensuring public access to water bodies. The land is transferred from the landowner to the municipality during the subdivision process, and it must remain in its natural state unless designated as a public park. This tool is essential for municipalities to support sustainable development and protect environmentally significant areas.

3.2.63.Support passive recreation use, restoration and conservation in open spaces with intact natural areas.

– page 56 Envision Cochrane 2050

4.3.28. Protect intact natural areas, restore disturbed areas (when possible) and naturalize public land where appropriate.

– page 81 Envision Cochrane 2050

The Rugged and Wild typology (Section 5) is the primary and most effective way that wildlife and biodiversity preservation and protection can overlap with parks and open space that is not already categorized as Environmental Reserve. These spaces:

- Remain in the most natural state with minimal development
- Include known wildlife corridors
- Protect areas with biodiverse vegetation
- Are typically adjacent to Environmental Reserves
- Include environmentally sensitive areas

When designating new parks or planning existing spaces, identify areas where Rugged & Wild typology best serves both ecological, including for wildlife corridors and biodiversity, and community goals.

Natural Discovery parks typologies could also be used to help steward wildlife corridors and biodiversity while also enabling interpretation, education and people connecting with nature. These areas:

- Provide trails and viewing areas designed to minimize habitat disruption
- Include educational signage about local ecosystems and wildlife
- Balance public access with habitat protection
- Manage use carefully to prevent user conflicts with sensitive areas

It is important to note that wildlife and ecosystem needs change over time, therefore the Town should consider the following actions:

- Conduct regular habitat assessments
- Monitor wildlife activity and movement patterns
- Adjust park design and management based on monitoring results
- Document biodiversity to track changes over time

GS R#3: Manage Public Art as a Community Asset

4.4.12. Establish a cohesive public art approach across the Town.

– page 90 Envision Cochrane 2050

Public art tells Cochrane's story. The Town currently has 20 installations of public art in indoor and outdoor spaces. These works express heritage, history, and community character. They create landmarks, enhance public spaces, and contribute to cultural identity.

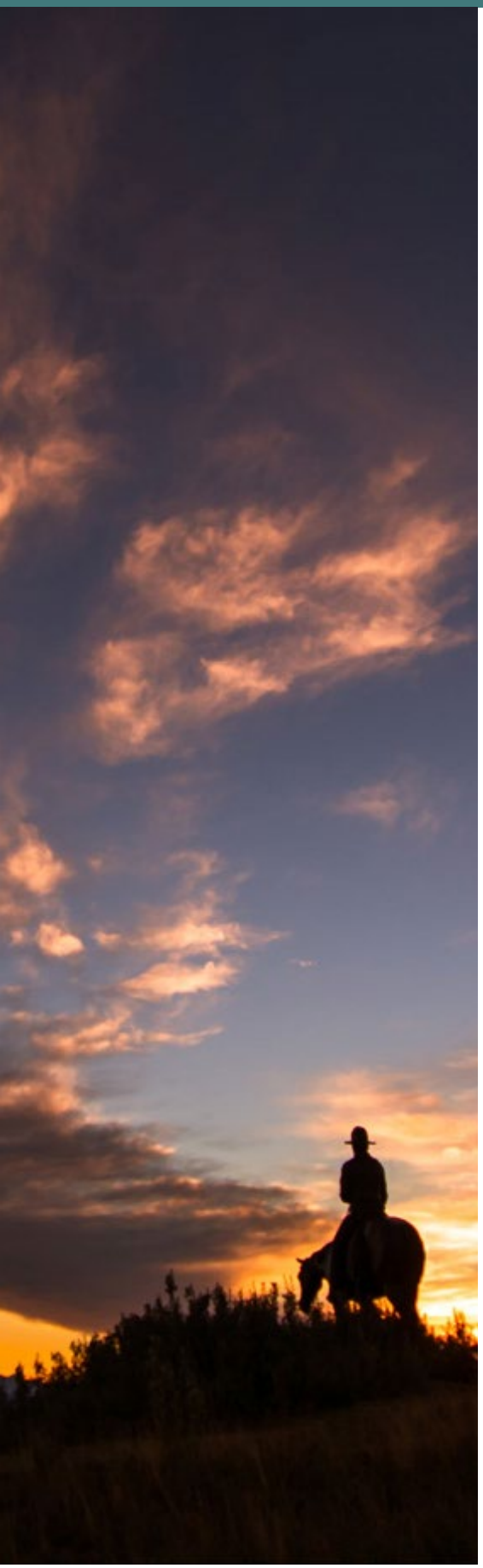
Like trees and other community assets, public art requires strategic management—proper inventory, valuation, maintenance, and thoughtful expansion. Well-managed public art enriches the community for generations.

Note: This recommendation focuses on managing existing public art as an asset. The development of new public art and comprehensive public art and culture program is addressed in Section 7.

The Town should treat public art with the same asset management approach as other infrastructure:

- Create a comprehensive inventory of all public art (location, artist, materials, condition, value)
- Document each piece with photos and historical information
- Assess condition and maintenance needs
- Assign valuations for insurance and replacement planning





Establish Maintenance Standards and Protocols

Public art requires ongoing care:

- Develop maintenance schedules based on materials and environmental exposure
- Budget for regular cleaning, repairs, and conservation
- Train staff or contract specialists for art-specific maintenance
- Plan for eventual restoration or decommissioning of aging works

This asset management work supports the broader public art approach outlined in Section 7 and recommended in Envision 2050 to address:

- Percent-for-art funding mechanisms
- Public art policy and governance
- Selection processes for new art
- Themes and priorities for future installations
- Placemaking through strategic public art placement



9 Funding PCAL



The Town of Cochrane, like all Alberta municipalities, funds parks, culture, and active living services through three main sources, in order of importance:

- **Property taxes:** The primary funding source
- **User fees:** Partial cost recovery from people using facilities and programs
- **Grants:** External funding from provincial, federal, and other sources

This mix stays relatively consistent year to year. It shifts temporarily when major "one-off" projects occur, like building a new recreation centre with Provincial and Federal support, but the basic funding sources remain the same.



- When new neighbourhoods develop, the Town gains land and funding for parks and recreation infrastructure through several mechanisms set out in Alberta's Municipal Government Act:
  - » **Municipal Reserve (MR) –** Developers dedicate up to 10% of land for parks and public spaces, or pay cash instead
  - » **Environmental Reserve (ER) –** Land with environmental significance (floodplains, steep slopes, wildlife habitat) becomes public land
  - » **Development levies –** Financial contributions from developers help fund infrastructure both within and outside new neighbourhoods



Growing communities face competing demands for limited land, schools, parks, municipal facilities, and operations yards, all of which need space. Once an area develops, securing land for public use becomes difficult or impossible.

The Town should maximize land dedication rather than accepting cash in lieu whenever possible. However, not all land makes good parkland. Appendix B outlines guidelines on accepting Municipal Reserve contributions during subdivision. Appendix C outlines different ways that the Town can acquire parkland.

Beyond land dedication, growth enables two additional funding tools:

- **Local improvements –** Developers complete park development (grade and seed, playgrounds, sports fields, public art, pathways) in new neighbourhoods as part of the development process
- **Off-site levies –** Developers contribute funding toward community-wide infrastructure that serves new areas, like major recreation facilities or regional parks

Both tools help ensure new growth contributes to parks, culture, and active living infrastructure without placing the full burden on existing taxpayers.

This section addresses key mechanisms the Town can employ to fund the future delivery of parks, culture and active living services in Cochrane.

4.3.1. Require the maximum Municipal Reserve be satisfied through land dedications or cash-in-lieu, at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

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F R#1: Require maximum allowable reserve contributions when land development occurs to ensure parks, culture, and active living infrastructure service levels do not deteriorate due to growth.



F R#2: Maximize local improvements and off-site levies during land development to ensure parks, culture, and active living service levels do not deteriorate due to growth.

9.1 Taxes

F R#3 Utilize dedicated tax levies to pay for parks, culture, and active living infrastructure renewal and for the development of new amenities to meet need and protect existing service levels.

Many Canadian municipalities face a significant gap between available funding and what's needed to maintain aging infrastructure and build new facilities. Cochrane is no exception. As existing parks and facilities age, they require major reinvestment. At the same time, growth creates demand for new infrastructure.

Addressing both needs, renewing what we have and building what we need, requires a sustainable funding strategy.

Some communities across Canada have implemented dedicated tax levies specifically for parks, culture, and active living infrastructure. These levies provide:

- Predictable funding for infrastructure renewal and replacement.
- Capacity to invest in new facilities as the community grows.
- Transparency for taxpayers about what their investment supports.
- Long-term planning ability with known funding levels.

The Town should consider establishing a dedicated levy for PCAL infrastructure. This approach would:

- Ensure aging facilities receive necessary reinvestment.
- Enable strategic development of new infrastructure to meet community needs.
- Provide stable, long-term funding for both maintenance and growth.
- Demonstrate commitment to maintaining and enhancing community quality of life.

A dedicated levy makes the Town's investment in parks, culture, and active living visible and intentional, while ensuring these essential services remain strong as Cochrane grows.

3.1.11. Explore and potentially utilize a range of funding and financing models to ensure growth pays for growth, such as:

a. Off-site levies
b. Development agreements
c. Cost recovery agreements
d. Community revitalization levies

– page 42 Envision Cochrane 2050

3.2.66. Enable the planning and integration of natural areas and open space into all new development, where applicable.

– page 56 Envision Cochrane 2050

9.2 User fees

User fees and rental charges provide some revenue for parks, culture, and active living services. The Town collects fees for facility rentals and program access, even though most programs are delivered by partners rather than Town staff directly.



However, user fees rarely cover the full cost of building and operating infrastructure. A registration fee for a fitness class or rental charge for a community hall typically recovers only a portion of what it costs to maintain the building, heat it, staff it, and keep it safe.



Fees are meant to support access, not generate profit. This is intentional. Parks, culture, and active living infrastructure exists to benefit the community, not to generate profit like private enterprise. User fees help offset some costs and demonstrate user commitment, but public subsidy is what makes these services accessible and affordable.

User fees should be set so most residents can participate. When fees become barriers, the community benefit is lost. This requires:

- Reasonable fee levels that don't exclude middle-income families
- Fee assistance programs for those who can't afford to participate
- Some free access to basic amenities like parks, playgrounds, and trails



Communities achieve this balance through user fee policies that explain how fees are set, why subsidies exist, and how decisions balance revenue goals with accessibility.

User fees are a tool to support parks, culture, and active living investment, not the reason these services exist. Fees should help sustain infrastructure while ensuring broad community access remains the priority.

9.3 Grants

F R#4: Monitor the availability of and apply for relevant grant opportunities.

Provincial, federal, and private grant programs can help fund parks, culture, and active living projects. These grants typically support major capital investments like building new facilities, upgrading existing infrastructure, or developing parks.

Most grant programs have conditions:

- **Matching funding –** The Town must contribute a set portion of project costs (often 50% or more)
- **Specific priorities –** Funding targets particular outcomes like environmental sustainability, accessibility improvements, or community health

The Town should actively monitor available grants and apply when projects align with grant priorities. This means:

- Tracking federal, provincial, and foundation grant programs
- Planning projects to align with grant cycles and requirements
- Building grant applications into capital planning timelines
- Ensuring matching funding is available when opportunities arise

Grants won't fund everything, but they can significantly reduce the Town's share of major project costs.

Examples of Relevant Grant Programs:

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Growing Canada's Community Canopies (tree planting)
- Municipal Climate Change Action Centre programs (environmental stewardship)
- Infrastructure grants for recreation facilities
- Cultural infrastructure programs



9.4 Partnerships

Partnerships with other municipal, institutional, non-profit, or private sector organizations may enable the Town to sustain or enhance parks, culture, and active living services and infrastructure. Some potential funding related partnerships that existing in the PCAL service area include the following. Some of these are in place in the Town already.

1. Joint municipal ownership of regional parks, culture, and active living infrastructure
2. Municipal investment in school development to create more dedicated community parks, culture, and active living spaces in school.
3. Operational agreements for public spaces that entail lower costs that direct municipal provision.

Each of these types of arrangements depends on market conditions and partner willingness. The Town should explore all partnership opportunities when sustaining and enhancing parks, culture, and active living service levels.









10 Implementation Plan

The PCAL Master Plan has been designed to be a guiding strategic document to lead the work of the Town and service delivery partners.

The following implementation plan provides additional direction on how to achieve the desired state of a healthy, connected community where residents can enjoy a variety of parks, recreation, and culture opportunities in vibrant spaces.

Recommendation Structure

- parks, culture and active living service delivery (SD)
- parks, culture and active living infrastructure (I)
- active living services and programs (P)
- arts and culture (AC)
- green and open spaces (GS)
- funding (F)



SD R#1: Incorporate the Town's strategic intentions for parks, culture, and active living investment in all related Town planning and policy development, including Partner relationships.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The Master Plan's purpose statement and guiding principles should guide all PCAL decisions and partnerships
- Partners using Town facilities and receiving funding should align their work with Town values
- Strategic clarity serves internal alignment, partner clarity, Council decision-making, and public transparency

ACTIONS:

- Reference the Master Plan purpose and values in all partnership agreements and facility allocation policies
- Require partners to report regularly on how their programs advance community goals
- Ensure all Town planning documents (ASPs, MDPs, facility master plans) explicitly reference PCAL strategic intentions
- Train staff across departments on the Master Plan framework to ensure consistent application
- Include PCAL strategic alignment as evaluation criteria for partnership proposals and grant applications
- Develop partnership policy that clearly outlines Town expectations for alignment with strategic intentions

Potential Performance Metrics

- % of partnership agreements that explicitly reference Master Plan purpose and values (target: 100% by Year 2)
- % of partners submitting annual reports demonstrating alignment with community goals (target: 100%)
- # of Town planning documents updated to include PCAL strategic intentions (track annually)
- # of staff trained on Master Plan framework (target: 100% of PCAL staff within first year)
- % of partnership/grant proposals evaluated using strategic alignment criteria (target: 100%)
- Partnership policy developed and adopted by Council (target: Year 1)

SD R#2: Continue supporting community organizations through existing grant programs and create a new capital fund that allows the Town to be a meaningful partner when significant infrastructure opportunities arise.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- An indirect delivery model requires the Town to respond when community groups propose partnerships
- Current grant program supports operations, events, community infrastructure, and organizational capacity
- A capital partnership fund would demonstrate Town commitment to major partnership opportunities

ACTIONS:

- Continue existing community grant program and review criteria to ensure alignment with Master Plan values
- Establish a dedicated capital development grant program for larger partnership opportunities (>$1M projects)
- Budget annually for capital partnership fund to ensure readiness when opportunities arise
- Develop clear eligibility criteria and application processes for capital partnership funding
- Create partnership evaluation framework that assesses alignment with strategic intentions and community benefit
- Track outcomes of grant-funded projects to demonstrate value and inform future funding decisions

Potential Performance Metrics

- Total annual grant funding allocated to community organizations (track year-over-year)
- # of organizations supported through grant programs (track annually)
- Capital partnership fund established with dedicated budget allocation (target: Year 2)
- $ value of capital partnership fund (track annually)
- # of partnership projects funded through capital fund (track annually)
- Grant criteria reviewed and updated for Master Plan alignment (target: Year 1)
- % of grant recipients reporting successful program/project outcomes (target: >85%)
- Community benefit assessment completed for all funded projects (target: 100%)

SD R#3: Continue to foster connection and communication within the parks, culture, and active living community in Cochrane.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The Town sees the whole system and serves the entire community with purely public interest
- Town leadership means creating common understanding, coordinating efforts, and influencing activity
- Parks and Recreation Committee currently provides community connection but scope is limited to parks/recreation

ACTIONS:

- Maintain and update comprehensive PCAL information (facilities, programs, trends, gaps) every 3-5 years and share openly with all partners
- Host regular partner gatherings and networking events to facilitate coordination and collaboration
- Maintain email contact list to share information and opportunities across the sector
- Consider expanding Parks and Recreation Committee scope to include arts/culture and trails/pathways, or establish new committees
- Create online community portal or database for sector communication and organization directory
- Share Master Plan findings and supporting reports (What We Heard, What We Learned) with all partners

Potential Performance Metrics

- PCAL sector data updated and shared with partners (target: every 3 years minimum)
- # of partner gatherings/ networking events held annually (target: minimum 4 per year)
- # of organizations on sector email contact list (track growth annually)
- Committee scope expansion or new committees established (target: Year 2)
- Online community portal/ database launched (target: Year 2)
- # of partners accessing online portal/database (track quarterly after launch)
- # of What We Heard/ What We Learned reports distributed to partners (target: 100% of active partners)
- Partner satisfaction with communication and connection (survey annually, target: >80% satisfied)

SD R4# Encourage and support Partners and community groups to align with and advance the Town's PCAL strategic intentions.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Organizations using publicly funded spaces receive a subsidy and should help achieve community outcomes
- The Town has significant influence over the sector through facilities, funding, and policy
- Clear expectations help partners understand what the Town values

ACTIONS:

- Develop user fee policies that ensure groups make programs affordable and offer fee assistance
- Create allocation policies that prioritize Town-operated space for organizations aligning with Town goals
- Include clear expectations about community benefit and performance in partnership agreements
- Establish regular reporting requirements for partners to demonstrate alignment with strategic intentions
- Recognize and celebrate partners who exemplify Town values and support resident active living
- Provide guidance and support to help partners understand and align with PCAL strategic framework

Potential Performance Metrics

- User fee policies requiring affordability and fee assistance developed (target: Year 1)
- Allocation policies prioritizing alignment with Town goals adopted (target: Year 1)
- % of partnership agreements including community benefit expectations (target: 100%)
- % of partners submitting annual alignment reports (target: 100%)
- # of partners recognized for exemplifying Town values (track annually)
- # of partner support/ guidance sessions provided (target: minimum 2 per year)
- % of partners reporting understanding of PCAL strategic framework (survey annually, target: >85%)
- % of facility users served by partners with fee assistance programs (track annually)

SD R#5: Foster a learning culture by supporting ongoing professional development and training for Town staff, delivery partners, and volunteers across the parks, culture, and active living sector.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- High-quality PCAL services require skilled Town staff with subject matter knowledge and partnership skills
- Partners and volunteers also need capacity development to deliver effectively
- Investment in learning builds sector strength and service quality

ACTIONS:

- Allocate annual budget for staff professional development in both subject expertise and partnership management
- Support staff participation in conferences, workshops, and sector networking opportunities
- Provide capacity building support to partners (business planning, grant writing, strategic planning assistance)
- Offer training opportunities for volunteers across the sector
- Create mentorship or knowledge-sharing programs between experienced and new staff/partners
- Track professional development activities and outcomes to demonstrate value and identify gaps
- Develop internal expertise in emerging areas (equity, accessibility, reconciliation, environmental stewardship)

Potential Performance Metrics

- Annual professional development budget allocated for PCAL staff ($ track annually)
- # of staff participating in conferences/workshops/ training (target: 100% of staff annually)
- # of professional development hours per staff member (track annually)
- # of capacity building sessions provided to partners (target: minimum 4 per year)
- # of partners/volunteers participating in training opportunities (track annually)
- Mentorship/knowledge-sharing program established (target: Year 2)
- # of mentorship pairs/ knowledge-sharing sessions (track annually)
- Staff competency assessment in equity, accessibility, reconciliation, environmental stewardship (conduct every 2 years)
- Partner satisfaction with capacity building support (survey annually, target: >80% satisfied)

SD R#6: Gather data that explains the current and expected future state of the parks, culture, and active living context in Cochrane and share it with all relevant contributors on a regular basis.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Evidence-based decisions require comprehensive data on facilities, programs, participation, and trends
- Shared understanding of the landscape helps all partners make better decisions
- Data collection should be ongoing and systematically shared

ACTIONS:

- Conduct comprehensive PCAL needs assessment every 3-5 years (community input, demographics, trends, benchmarking)
- Establish regular data collection protocols for participation, facility usage, and program demand
- Create annual PCAL sector report summarizing current state, trends, and emerging opportunities
- Share data and findings with all partners through reports, presentations, and online portal
- Track performance indicators aligned with Master Plan goals (participation rates, equity outcomes, infrastructure condition)
- Monitor emerging trends through peer learning, conference participation, and sector research
- Use data to inform capital planning, partnership priorities, and service delivery adjustments

Potential Performance Metrics

- Comprehensive PCAL needs assessment completed (target: every 3-5 years)
- Data collection protocols established for all key metrics (target: Year 1)
- Annual PCAL sector report published and distributed (target: every year)
- # of partners receiving annual sector report (target: 100% of active partners)
- # of performance indicators tracked aligned with Master Plan goals (establish baseline Year 1, track annually)
- Overall participation rate in PCAL programs/facilities (track annually, set growth targets)
- Equity in participation across demographics (measure annually, target: reduce gaps by 10% over 5 years)
- % of infrastructure in good/fair condition (target: >85%)
- # of emerging trends identified and monitored (track annually)
- # of data-informed decisions documented in capital planning and service delivery (track annually)

SD R#7: Build and strengthen the network of community partners who share in the responsibility for delivering parks, culture, and active living programs, services, and infrastructure in Cochrane.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Partnership policy should outline when the Town will partner and how proposals will be evaluated
- Partners should demonstrate how assets help achieve strategic goals and improve quality of life
- Town should have influence proportionate to public investment and access to partner information

ACTIONS:

- Develop comprehensive partnership policy covering facility partnerships, program partnerships, and infrastructure partnerships
- Define Town expectations for partnerships (alignment with goals, community benefit, performance reporting, information sharing)
- Establish partnership evaluation criteria and transparent adjudication process for proposals
- Create partnership agreement templates that include clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability measures
- Build regional partnerships with Rocky View County, school boards, neighbouring municipalities for shared facilities and programs
- Explore joint municipal ownership opportunities for regional PCAL infrastructure
- Recognize and promote successful partnerships with residents

Potential Performance Metrics

- Comprehensive partnership policy developed and adopted (target: Year 1)
- Partnership evaluation criteria established (target: Year 1)
- Partnership agreement templates created for all partnership types (target: Year 1)
- # of active partnership agreements in place (track annually)
- # of new partnerships established annually (track year-over-year)
- # of regional partnerships with other municipalities/school boards (track annually)
- $ value of partner contributions to PCAL system (track annually)
- # of residents served through partner-delivered programs (track annually)
- % of partners meeting performance reporting requirements (target: 100%)
- # of joint municipal ownership opportunities explored (track annually)
- Community awareness of PCAL partnerships (survey every 2 years, target: >70% aware)

SD R#8: Continuously monitor community demand for parks, culture, and active living opportunities and work with partners to address gaps before the Town steps in as a direct provider.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Gaps emerge when residents want activities that no partner can provide
- Town addresses gaps through direct delivery (temporary until partner emerges) or partner development (building capacity)
- Systematic gap identification helps Town respond strategically

ACTIONS:

- Survey facility users and event attendees regularly about desired programs and services
- Consult partners about gaps and opportunities they've identified in the sector
- Research trends in other communities to identify emerging activities and interests
- Attend conferences and connect with peers to learn about new program areas and delivery approaches
- Analyze participation data (registration numbers, waitlists, usage patterns) to understand current demand and predict future needs
- When gaps are confirmed, test programs through Town pilot or support partner to pilot before committing to ongoing delivery
- Document gap-filling process and transition programs to partners once demand is proven and partner capacity exists

Potential Performance Metrics

- Resident survey on desired programs/services conducted (target: annually)
- # of partner consultations on gaps and opportunities (target: minimum 4 per year)
- # of waitlisted programs identified (track quarterly)
- # of gap areas identified through data analysis (track annually)
- # of pilot programs launched to address gaps (track annually)
- # of pilot programs transitioned to partner delivery (track annually)
- Average time from gap identification to pilot launch (target: <6 months)
- Average time from pilot to partner transition (track annually)
- % of identified gaps addressed within 2 years (target: >75%)
- # of new activity types introduced based on trend research (track annually)
- Unmet demand indicator (waitlist trends, survey results - track quarterly)

I R#1: Continue to practice and strengthen prudent asset management protocols.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Maintaining existing infrastructure is the foundation of good infrastructure planning
- The Town's PCAL infrastructure is worth over $400M in 2026 replacement value
- Professional assessments identify renewal needs and opportunities for improvement

ACTIONS:

- Conduct regular professional condition assessments of all facilities (structural, mechanical, electrical, architectural, functional)
- Complete accessibility audits and energy audits to identify improvement opportunities
- Ensure playground inspections by certified inspectors meet safety and insurance requirements
- Assess ball diamonds, sports fields, and trails regularly for safety and user needs
- Develop and maintain asset management database tracking condition, lifecycle, and replacement costs
- Budget annually for lifecycle renewal and major repairs based on assessment findings
- Prioritize investments that protect existing service levels and extend useful life of infrastructure
- Integrate asset management data into capital planning and budgeting processes

Potential Performance Metrics

- % of facilities with current (<5 years old) professional condition assessments (target: 100%)
- % of facilities in good/fair condition (target: >85%)
- Asset management database developed and operational (target: Year 1)
- % of assets in database with complete condition/lifecycle data (target: 100% by Year 2)
- # of accessibility audits completed (target: all facilities by Year 3)
- # of accessibility improvements implemented based on audit findings (track annually)
- # of energy audits completed (target: all major facilities by Year 3)
- # of playgrounds inspected by certified inspectors (target: 100% quarterly)
- % of outdoor sports facilities assessed annually (target: 100%)
- Annual lifecycle renewal budget allocated based on assessments ($ track annually)
- Deferred maintenance backlog ($ track annually, target: reduce by 10% over 5 years)
- Average facility condition rating (track annually on standardized scale)

I R#2: Apply the Site Selection Criteria as a consistent decision-making tool when evaluating locations for future parks, culture, and active living infrastructure.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Site selection for PCAL infrastructure depends on available public lands, new development dedication, or acquisition
- Common criteria help identify most appropriate sites when multiple options exist
- Criteria can be weighted differently depending on infrastructure type

ACTIONS:

- Apply Site Selection Criteria (centralized location, expansion capability, land use compatibility, parking/traffic, active transportation access, proximity to accommodations/ services/schools/transit, regional partnership appeal, re-use/sharing potential, site servicing/conditions) to all PCAL infrastructure projects
- Weight criteria differently based on infrastructure type (e.g., regional facilities prioritize centrality and partnerships, neighbourhood parks prioritize proximity and walkability)
- Document site evaluation process and rationale for site selection decisions
- Use criteria to evaluate municipal reserve dedication in new developments
- Consider co-location opportunities that maximize community benefit and operational efficiencies
- Engage stakeholders in site selection process and communicate how criteria informed decisions

Potential Performance Metrics

- Site Selection Criteria formally adopted by Council (target: Year 1)
- % of new PCAL infrastructure projects using Site Selection Criteria (target: 100%)
- # of site evaluation reports documenting criteria application and rationale (track for each project)
- % of municipal reserve lands accepted meeting minimum criteria thresholds (track annually)
- # of co-location opportunities identified and pursued (track annually)
- # of co-located facilities developed (track annually)
- Stakeholder satisfaction with site selection process (survey after each major project, target: >75% satisfied)
- # of site selection decisions appealed or significantly challenged (track annually, target: minimize)
- % of new facilities meeting walkability targets (within 400m for neighbourhood, 2km for community-wide)
- % of new facilities with active transportation access (target: 100%)

I R#3: Initiate planning and investment in new indoor PCAL infrastructure as opportunities for investment are identified and capacity exists.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Specific facility projects require detailed feasibility studies before proceeding
- Feasibility studies assess community need, partnership potential, capital and operating costs, and funding sources
- Indoor infrastructure priorities are outlined in Master Plan based on needs assessment and community input

ACTIONS:

- Prioritize feasibility studies for high-priority indoor infrastructure based on Master Plan guidance (aquatics, ice, multi-use community spaces)
- Engage potential partners during feasibility stages to explore partnership models
- Assess capital costs, operating costs, and revenue potential for proposed facilities
- Identify funding sources (municipal investment, partnerships, grants, development contributions)
- Apply Site Selection Criteria to identify optimal locations for new facilities
- Ensure detailed design incorporates accessibility, sustainability, flexibility, and community engagement
- Plan for ongoing operations and maintenance capacity before committing to new facility construction
- Consider multi-use and flexible design to maximize utilization and serve diverse users

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of feasibility studies initiated for priority indoor infrastructure (track annually)
- # of feasibility studies completed (track annually)
- # of new indoor facilities planned based on completed feasibility studies (track by project)
- # of new indoor facilities constructed (track by completion date)
- $ value of new indoor infrastructure investment (track annually)
- # of partners engaged in feasibility planning for each project (track by project)
- % of new facilities with confirmed operating capacity before construction (target: 100%)
- % of new facilities incorporating accessibility, sustainability, flexibility features (target: 100%)
- Utilization rate of new indoor facilities within first year of operation (target: >60%)
- Operating cost recovery ratio for new facilities (track annually, set targets by facility type)
- # of different user groups served by new facilities (track annually)

I R#4: Adopt and incorporate the four outdoor space typologies into the planning, design, operations, and maintenance of all outdoor PCAL spaces.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Four outdoor typologies provide framework for planning, design, operations, and maintenance: Rugged & Wild (conservation focus), Natural Discovery (low-impact passive recreation), Gather & Play (programmed activity and community connection), Energy & Activation (active recreation and economic development)
- Balance of typologies depends on proximity to residences, schools, commercial areas, and natural features
- Connectivity throughout system via trails and pathways is essential

ACTIONS:

- Apply typology framework to all new outdoor space planning and design
- Review existing parks and assign typology classifications to guide future investment and maintenance
- Develop design standards and amenity guidelines for each typology
- Align operations and maintenance protocols with typology characteristics (e.g., conservation focus for Rugged & Wild, programming support for Gather & Play)
- Ensure geographic balance of typologies across Town, especially Gather & Play spaces (target 400m proximity to all residences)
- Use typologies to guide municipal reserve planning in new developments
- Integrate trail and pathway connections across all typologies
- Communicate typology framework to residents and partners to build understanding of outdoor space system

Potential Performance Metrics

- Outdoor space typology framework formally adopted (target: Year 1)
- % of existing parks classified by typology (target: 100% by Year 2)
- Design standards developed for each typology (target: Year 1)
- % of new outdoor spaces planned using typology framework (target: 100%)
- % of residents within 400m of Gather & Play typology space (track annually, target: >95%)
- Hectares of outdoor space by typology (track annually, maintain appropriate balance)
- # of parks with updated operations/maintenance protocols aligned to typology (track annual progress)
- % of municipal reserve dedications guided by typology framework (target: 100%)
- Kilometers of trails connecting typologies (track annually, set connectivity targets)
- Community understanding of typology framework (survey every 2 years, target: >60% aware)
- User satisfaction with outdoor spaces by typology (survey annually, target: >80% satisfied for each)

I R#5: Initiate planning and investment in new outdoor PCAL infrastructure as opportunities for investment are identified and capacity exists.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Outdoor infrastructure priorities outlined in Master Plan based on service level assessment, community input, and alignment with purpose and principles
- Trails consistently identified as most valued community asset with strong demand for completion and connectivity
- Strategic outdoor investments should balance neighbourhood access with community-wide destinations

ACTIONS:

- Prioritize trail and pathway development guided by Connectivity Plan (complete missing links, improve safety at crossings, connect neighbourhoods to destinations, regional connections, accessibility standards)
- Implement outdoor infrastructure priorities from Master Plan (trails, playgrounds, sports fields, spray parks, outdoor courts, off-leash areas, etc.)
- Secure pathway easements and rights-of-way in new developments to enable future trail network completion
- Budget annually for pathway construction, maintenance, and renewal
- Apply outdoor space typologies to guide amenity selection and design for new parks
- Engage community in planning and design of neighbourhood and community-wide outdoor spaces
- Monitor outdoor space usage and adjust investment priorities based on participation patterns and emerging needs
- Explore partnership opportunities for outdoor facility development and programming (schools, regional municipalities, community organizations)

Potential Performance Metrics

- Kilometers of new trails/pathways constructed annually (track against Connectivity Plan targets)
- % of Connectivity Plan completed (track annually)
- # of trail network gaps/missing links closed (track annually)
- # of new playgrounds developed (track annually)
- # of new sports fields/courts developed by type (track annually)
- # of new spray parks/outdoor amenities developed (track annually)
- $ annual budget for pathway construction/maintenance (track annually)
- % of pathway easements secured in new developments (target: 100%)
- # of community engagement sessions for outdoor space planning (target: minimum for each major project)
- Trail usage counts (conduct annually at key locations, track year-over-year growth)
- # of partnership opportunities explored/established for outdoor infrastructure (track annually)
- User satisfaction with outdoor infrastructure (survey annually, target: >85% satisfied)

P R#1: Reduce Barriers to Participation

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Not all residents can easily access PCAL opportunities due to cost, transportation, information, cultural differences, physical accessibility, or limited specialized programs
- Town's purpose emphasizes PCAL services should be for everyone
- Intentional effort required to systematically remove barriers

ACTIONS:

- Expand fee assistance programs to ensure cost is not a barrier (require partners receiving Town funding/facility access to offer sliding scale fees or subsidies)
- Explore creative pricing models (family passes, multi-program discounts, pay-what-you-can options)
- Connect residents to available subsidy programs (KidSport, JumpStart, Town programs)
- Ensure all Town facilities meet or exceed accessibility standards
- Work with partners to offer adapted programs for people with disabilities and provide specialized equipment
- Train staff and volunteers in inclusive program delivery
- Support programming that reflects Cochrane's cultural diversity and work with cultural communities to identify barriers
- Improve communication about available programs through centralized PCAL information hub (online and physical)
- Simplify registration processes and provide multilingual information where needed
- Distribute programs across neighbourhoods to reduce travel distance and coordinate transportation options for youth and seniors

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of households receiving fee assistance (track annually, set growth targets)
- $ value of fee assistance provided (track annually)
- % of partners with fee assistance programs in place (target: 100% of funded partners)
- # of creative pricing models implemented (track annually)
- % of facilities meeting accessibility standards (target: 100% by Year 5)
- # of accessibility improvements completed annually (track by facility)
- # of adapted programs offered (track annually, set growth targets)
- # of participants in adapted programs (track annually)
- # of staff/volunteers trained in inclusive program delivery (track annually, target: 100%)
- # of culturally diverse programs offered (track annually)
- Participation rates by demographic group (track annually, target: reduce equity gaps by 10% over 5 years)
- # of languages PCAL information available in (track annually)
- User satisfaction with registration process (survey annually, target: >85% satisfied)
- Geographic distribution of programs across neighbourhoods (assess annually against equity targets)

P R#2: Strengthen Community Events and Celebrations

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Events bring residents together across differences, celebrate shared identity, and activate public spaces
- Events are typically free or low-cost with no registration required, making them highly accessible
- Town plays direct role in event delivery working alongside community partners

ACTIONS:

- Maintain and expand Town leadership in community-wide events that build community identity (celebrate heritage, mark milestones, showcase local talent)
- Activate public spaces through events (use parks, trails, downtown areas, plazas as event venues)
- Design events to be accessible and welcoming to all ages and abilities
- Incorporate diverse cultural celebrations and traditions in event programming
- Provide performance and exhibition opportunities for local artists through events
- Balance event portfolio across categories: annual signature events (large-scale, multi-day, regional draw), seasonal celebrations (moderate scale, family-friendly), neighbourhood events (smaller scale, local parks), spontaneous animation (pop-up activities, low-barrier experiences)
- Partner with cultural organizations, schools, businesses in event planning and delivery
- Connect events to broader cultural development goals and tourism strategy
- Evaluate event outcomes and community satisfaction to inform future programming

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of community events held annually by category (signature, seasonal, neighbourhood, spontaneous)
- Total event attendance annually (track year-over-year growth)
- # of different public spaces activated through events (track annually)
- Event accessibility rating (assess each major event, target: 100% meet accessibility standards)
- # of cultural celebrations/traditions represented in annual event portfolio (track annually, set diversity targets)
- # of local artists/performers featured in events (track annually)
- # of event partnerships with cultural organizations/schools/businesses (track annually)
- Event attendance by demographic group (survey at events, target: proportional to community demographics)
- Participant satisfaction with community events (survey at events, target: >85% satisfied)
- Economic impact of major events (assess annually for signature events)
- # of visitors attracted to Cochrane through events (estimate annually)
- Community sense of belonging (survey every 2 years, target: >75% feel strong sense of community)

P R#3: Expand Drop-in and Unstructured Opportunities

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Many residents prefer flexible, spontaneous recreation over structured programs requiring registration and commitment
- Unstructured opportunities particularly important for busy families, new residents, casual participants, and those testing activities
- Drop-in participation is lowest-barrier way to participate (typically free or low-cost, no registration, minimal equipment)

ACTIONS:

- Expand facility-based drop-in opportunities (public swim, public skate, gymnasium open times, fitness centre drop-in, drop-in sports, creative space open studios)
- Enhance park-based spontaneous use (design sport courts and fields for pick-up play, ensure playground and spray park access, install outdoor fitness equipment, develop picnic areas, off-leash areas, skate parks, bike parks)
- Promote trail and pathway use for walking, running, cycling, mountain biking, winter activities
- Create public space activation (pop-up activities in plazas and parks, seasonal installations, "Take What You Need" equipment stations)
- Ensure adequate drop-in time allocation in facility scheduling (balance with organized group bookings)
- Communicate drop-in opportunities clearly through signage, online resources, and community outreach
- Design new outdoor spaces with spontaneous use in mind (open lawns, informal play areas, gathering spaces)
- Monitor drop-in participation and adjust offerings based on usage patterns

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of drop-in program hours offered weekly by facility/activity type (track annually, set growth targets)
- Drop-in participation numbers by program type (track monthly, analyze trends)
- % of facility prime-time allocated to drop-in vs. organized bookings (track by facility, target balanced allocation)
- # of parks designed for spontaneous use (track annually)
- # of outdoor fitness equipment installations (track annually)
- # of off-leash dog areas (track annually)
- Trail usage counts (conduct annually, track year-over-year growth)
- # of pop-up activation events (track annually)
- # of "Take What You Need" equipment stations established (track by location)
- User awareness of drop-in opportunities (survey annually, target: >70% aware)
- Drop-in user satisfaction (survey quarterly, target: >85% satisfied)
- First-time user rate for drop-in programs (track quarterly, indicates accessibility)
- Average drop-in participation cost per visit (track to ensure affordability)

P R#4: Monitor Trends and Respond to Emerging Opportunities

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Recreation trends continually evolve - popular activities may decline while new ones emerge
- Town must stay informed about trends to ensure investments and partnerships remain relevant
- Understanding resident interests helps Town support the right partners and investments in indirect delivery model

ACTIONS:

- Monitor current trends in activity participation (outdoor adventure, wellness/mind-body, racquet sports, field sports, e-sports, adaptive sports, multi-generational programming, short-form programming)
- Attend conferences and connect with peers to learn about emerging activities and delivery approaches
- Survey residents regularly about activity interests and participation preferences
- Review participation data from partners to identify growing and declining program areas
- Research best practices in other communities for new program delivery models
- Pilot emerging activities through short-term programs before committing to infrastructure investment
- Support partners interested in delivering emerging activities through facility access and capacity building
- Communicate trend findings with partners to inform their program planning
- Adjust infrastructure priorities and partnership strategies based on documented trends and demand

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of trend monitoring reports produced annually (target: minimum 1 comprehensive annual report)
- # of conferences/peer learning opportunities attended (target: minimum 2 per year)
- # of emerging activity trends identified and tracked (track annually)
- # of resident surveys on activity interests conducted (target: annually)
- Participation trends by activity category (track annually, identify growth/decline patterns)
- # of pilot programs launched for emerging activities (track annually)
- Success rate of pilots (% transitioned to ongoing programs, track annually)
- # of partners supported to deliver emerging activities (track annually)
- Infrastructure adjustments made based on trend analysis (document annually)
- Time from trend identification to pilot/response (track average, target: <12 months for confirmed trends)
- % of program portfolio reflecting current trends vs. traditional offerings (track annually, maintain appropriate balance)
- Stakeholder satisfaction with Town's responsiveness to trends (survey partners annually, target: >75% satisfied)

AC R#1: Make Cochrane a Culturally Vibrant Place to Live.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Arts and culture build identity and sense of belonging essential to strong, connected community
- Town's role is creating conditions through platforms, infrastructure, and integration into everyday life
- Five action areas: sharing Cochrane's stories, expanding arts/culture infrastructure, broadening heritage interpretation, creating placemaking/public art strategy, supporting cultural organizations

ACTIONS:

- Support platforms for storytelling (museums, festivals, libraries, theatres, digital portals, QR code installations, heritage sites, festival programming) - Town builds/supports platforms, cultural organizations create content
- Expand arts and culture infrastructure through facility audit to understand gaps, municipal incentives for cultural spaces in new developments, feasibility study for downtown arts/culture hub
- Broaden heritage interpretation beyond current CHAPS and Stockmen's Foundation delivery to include Indigenous history, diverse settler stories, contemporary milestones through trail system interpretation, QR codes at heritage sites, digital tools
- Create placemaking and public art strategy including cultural mapping exercise, percent-for-art funding mechanism, governance/processes for selecting and commissioning artwork, strategic locations for installations (trail system, roundabouts, downtown, public gathering areas)
- Build on recent public art pilot at The Station with formalized public art plan
- Support ethnocultural groups, libraries, and community members in bringing storytelling platforms to life

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of storytelling platforms supported (museums, festivals, digital portals, QR installations - track annually)
- Cultural infrastructure facility audit completed (target: Year 1)
- # of cultural spaces created in new developments through incentives (track annually)
- Downtown arts/culture hub feasibility study completed (target: Year 2)
- # of heritage interpretation installations/programs created (track annually)
- # of diverse heritage stories represented (Indigenous, settler, contemporary - track annually)
- Cultural mapping exercise completed (target: Year 2)
- Placemaking and public art strategy adopted (target: Year 2)
- Percent-for-art funding mechanism established (target: Year 2)
- # of public art installations (track annually from baseline)
- Public Art Plan adopted with governance framework (target: Year 2)
- # of ethnocultural groups/organizations supported (track annually)
- Resident perception of cultural vibrancy (survey every 2 years, target: >70% rate Cochrane as culturally vibrant)
- # of residents engaging with arts/culture opportunities (track annually)

AC R#2: Maximize Economic Development Potential of Arts and Culture

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cochrane has distinctive identity with deep roots and evolving creative scene that can be economic asset
- Goal is attracting visitors, growing creative industry sector, drawing creative entrepreneurs, positioning Cochrane as destination
- Four action areas: creating unique cultural products, connecting arts/culture community, marketing Cochrane as cultural destination, attracting/supporting creative workers and entrepreneurs

ACTIONS:

- Create unique Cochrane cultural products and experiences through tools and incentives (tax incentives for creative entrepreneurs, festivals celebrating local culture, competitions for distinctly Cochrane work)
- Connect arts and culture community through vehicle for collaboration (formal arts council or regular roundtable for cultural sector leaders to discuss needs, opportunities, collaborations)
- Market Cochrane as cultural destination through coordinated marketing and communications approach developed with broader tourism strategy, promoting events and experiences to build reputation
- Attract and support creative workers and entrepreneurs by designating spaces at below-market rates for artists/creative businesses, exploring innovation districts or creative hubs through land use planning, developing programs supporting creative entrepreneurs
- Align arts/culture economic development with provincial designation as emerging destination
- Partner with tourism organizations, regional agencies, and cultural organizations in marketing efforts

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of unique Cochrane cultural products/experiences created (track annually)
- # of tax incentive applications/approvals for creative entrepreneurs (track annually)
- # of distinctly Cochrane cultural competitions/festivals held (track annually)
- Arts council or sector roundtable established (target: Year 2)
- # of arts/culture sector collaboration meetings held (target: minimum 4 per year)
- # of new collaborations between cultural organizations (track annually)
- Cultural destination marketing campaign launched (target: Year 2)
- # of cultural tourism visitors to Cochrane (estimate annually, track growth)
- Economic impact of cultural tourism ($ measure annually)
- # of designated affordable spaces for artists/creative businesses (track annually, set targets)
- Innovation district or creative hub feasibility assessed (target: Year 3)
- # of creative entrepreneurs/workers attracted to Cochrane (track annually through business licenses, studio rentals)
- # of creative sector jobs (track every 2 years, set growth targets)
- Cultural sector economic contribution ($ assess every 2 years)

AC R#3: Improve Sustainability of the Arts and Cultural Sector

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Culturally vibrant community depends on healthy, well-resourced organizations built to last
- Many arts/culture organizations operate with limited staff, tight budgets, stretched volunteers
- Town's role is strengthening sector through reducing barriers, building capacity, ensuring relevant funding

ACTIONS:

- Build organizational capacity by offering practical support (assistance with business and strategic planning, guidance through grant application processes, access to maintained database of government and private sector funding opportunities)
- Help organizations find and successfully access external funding to reduce dependence on municipal grants and build long-term resilience
- Simplify municipal grant process by reviewing application procedures and streamlining to reduce administrative burden on organizations
- Keep municipal funding relevant by regularly revisiting programs to ensure alignment with sector's evolving needs (review grant amounts, eligibility criteria, funding categories on regular cycle, adjust when evidence shows better approach)
- Continue increased grant allocations that reflect Town's growing commitment to arts and culture
- Ensure funding programs reflect current realities rather than designed for community that no longer exists
- Track outcomes of capacity building support to demonstrate value and identify additional needs

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of cultural organizations receiving capacity building support (track annually)
- # of capacity building sessions/ workshops provided (target: minimum 4 per year)
- # of organizations successfully accessing external grants with Town support (track annually)
- $ value of external grants secured by cultural organizations (track annually)
- External funding leverage ratio ($ external: $ municipal, track annually, set growth targets)
- Municipal grant process review completed and improvements implemented (target: Year 1)
- Application completion time reduced (measure before/after streamlining, target: 30% reduction)
- Grant program review cycle established (target: every 2 years)
- Municipal grant funding allocation adjusted based on sector needs (track changes annually)
- Total municipal funding to arts/culture sector ($ track annually, set growth targets aligned with community growth)
- # of cultural organizations active in Cochrane (track annually, target: growth)
- Cultural organization sustainability rating (assess organizational health every 2 years, target: >75% financially stable)
- Cultural organization satisfaction with Town support (survey annually, target: >80% satisfied)

GS R#1: Grow and Sustain Cochrane's Tree Canopy

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Trees are essential infrastructure improving air quality, providing shade/cooling, enhancing climate resilience, offering nature connection, defining landscape character
- Town values both historic specimens and new plantings in developing areas
- Strategic approach needed to protect, maintain, and expand tree canopy

ACTIONS:

- Develop and implement Urban Forest Management Strategy addressing tree preservation in development, street tree planting programs, naturalization in parks, species selection for climate resilience
- Establish tree protection bylaws and policies for development areas
- Create street tree planting program for new and existing neighbourhoods
- Incorporate naturalization and tree planting in park development and renewal
- Select tree species that enhance climate resilience and adapt to changing conditions
- Partner with environmental organizations and residents in tree planting initiatives
- Monitor tree canopy coverage and health over time
- Budget annually for tree planting, maintenance, and replacement
- Educate community about urban forest benefits and stewardship opportunities
- Explore grant opportunities for tree planting (e.g., Growing Canada's Community Canopies)

Potential Performance Metrics

- Urban Forest Management Strategy developed and adopted (target: Year 2)
- Tree canopy coverage (% of land area - measure at baseline, track every 2 years, set growth targets)
- # of trees planted annually (by municipality, partners, residents - track with targets)
- # of street trees planted in new developments (track annually, target: 100% of eligible streets)
- # of street trees planted in existing neighbourhoods (track annually with targets)
- # of parks with naturalization/tree planting initiatives (track annual progress)
- Tree protection bylaw established (target: Year 1)
- # of significant trees preserved during development (track annually)
- Tree species diversity (track to ensure climate resilient mix)
- Tree health assessment (conduct every 2 years, % of trees in good health)
- Annual tree planting budget ($ track annually)
- # of community tree planting events/ volunteers (track annually)
- # of grant applications for tree planting programs (track annually)
- $ grant funding secured for tree canopy initiatives (track annually)
- Community engagement in urban forest stewardship (# participants annually)

GS R#2: Protect Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cochrane's natural areas provide critical wildlife habitat and ecological functions
- Development pressure threatens sensitive areas and connectivity
- Strategic approach needed to balance growth with environmental protection

ACTIONS:

- Identify and protect environmentally significant lands through Environmental Reserve dedication in development
- Establish ecological connectivity corridors linking natural areas
- Limit recreational uses within natural areas to passive activities (walking, cycling on designated trails)
- Apply Rugged & Wild and Natural Discovery outdoor space typologies to protect and enhance native ecosystems
- Develop wildlife management policies for parks and natural areas (human-wildlife conflict management, habitat restoration)
- Partner with environmental organizations in conservation initiatives
- Educate community about wildlife habitat protection and responsible recreation in natural areas
- Monitor biodiversity indicators in protected areas
- Integrate ecological considerations into all park planning and design
- Collaborate with Rocky View County and regional partners on regional conservation initiatives
- Apply for environmental stewardship grants (Municipal Climate Change Action Centre programs)

Potential Performance Metrics

- Hectares of environmentally significant lands protected through Environmental Reserve (track annually with targets)
- # of ecological connectivity corridors established (track progress against plan)
- Length (km) of ecological corridors maintained/enhanced (track annually)
- % of natural areas with passive recreation only (target: 100% of Rugged & Wild typology)
- Wildlife management policies adopted (target: Year 2)
- # of habitat restoration projects completed (track annually)
- # of partnerships with environmental organizations (track annually)
- # of community education sessions on wildlife/habitat protection (target: minimum 2 per year)
- # of participants in wildlife education programs (track annually)
- Biodiversity monitoring program established (target: Year 2)
- Biodiversity indicators tracked (# of species, habitat quality measures - track annually)
- # of human-wildlife conflicts reported and managed (track annually)
- % of new park planning incorporating ecological considerations (target: 100%)
- # of regional conservation partnerships/ initiatives (track annually)
- $ environmental stewardship grant funding secured (track annually

GS R#3: Manage Public Art as a Community Asset

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Public art makes culture visible and accessible to everyone
- Town recently piloted public art installation at The Station
- Formalized approach needed to manage public art as valued community infrastructure

ACTIONS:

- Develop Public Art Management Plan addressing acquisition, maintenance, conservation, deaccessioning
- Establish inventory and condition assessment protocols for existing public art
- Create maintenance and conservation schedule for public art assets
- Develop policies for donation, commissioning, and purchase of public art
- Train staff in public art care and maintenance requirements
- Budget for public art maintenance and conservation as part of asset management
- Document public art locations, artists, materials, and history
- Integrate public art management with broader Public Art Plan (percent-for-art funding, governance, selection processes, strategic locations)
- Engage community in public art stewardship through interpretation and education
- Build partnerships with artists and cultural organizations in public art management
- Consider insurance and liability requirements for public art assets

Potential Performance Metrics

- Public Art Management Plan developed and adopted (target: Year 2)
- Complete public art inventory established (target: Year 1, update annually)
- # of public art pieces in inventory (track annually from baseline)
- % of public art pieces with current condition assessments (target: 100% annually)
- % of public art in good/fair condition (target: >90%)
- Maintenance and conservation schedule created (target: Year 2)
- # of public art maintenance activities completed annually (track against schedule)
- Public art acquisition policies established (target: Year 1)
- # of new public art acquisitions (by type: commission, donation, purchase - track annually)
- Annual public art maintenance budget ($ track annually)
- # of staff trained in public art care (target: 100% of relevant staff)
- # of public art interpretation/education programs (track annually)
- # of participants in public art programs (track annually)
- Community awareness of public art collection (survey every 2 years, target: >60% aware)
- # of artist/cultural organization partnerships for public art management (track annually)
- Insurance coverage for public art collection ($ value insured, track annually)

F R#1: Require maximum allowable reserve contributions when land development occurs to ensure parks, culture, and active living infrastructure service levels do not deteriorate due to growth.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Growth should pay for the PCAL infrastructure needed to maintain service levels for new residents
- Municipal reserve dedication provides land for parks and open spaces in new developments
- Cash-in-lieu provides funding when land dedication is not feasible

ACTIONS:

- Maximize municipal reserve dedication up to 10% of land area in new developments (Municipal Government Act maximum)
- Accept cash-in-lieu only when land dedication is not appropriate or feasible (e.g., industrial development, small infill sites)
- Establish clear Municipal Reserve Guidelines specifying acceptable land characteristics (frontage, size, usability, no pocket parks, credit for useable space only)
- Apply Site Selection Criteria when evaluating proposed municipal reserve lands
- Ensure municipal reserve dedication aligns with outdoor space typology framework and connectivity priorities
- Track municipal reserve acquisition and cash-in-lieu revenue annually
- Use cash-in-lieu funds strategically for park development and trail connections that serve new development areas
- Coordinate municipal reserve planning with Developer-Provided Infrastructure requirements
- Include municipal reserve requirements and expectations in pre-development discussions

Potential Performance Metrics

- % of new developments dedicating maximum allowable (10%) municipal reserve (target: >90%)
- Hectares of municipal reserve land acquired annually (track against growth targets)
- Municipal Reserve Guidelines established and adopted (target: Year 1)
- % of municipal reserve dedications meeting Guidelines criteria (target: 100%)
- Cash-in-lieu revenue collected annually ($ track year-over-year)
- % of developments providing land vs. cash-in-lieu (track ratios annually)
- % of municipal reserve lands meeting Site Selection Criteria (target: 100%)
- % of municipal reserve aligned with typology framework (track annually, target: 100%)
- $ cash-in-lieu funds allocated to PCAL infrastructure projects (track annually with project list)
- Service level maintained despite growth (residents within 400m of parks, track annually - target: >95%)
- Municipal reserve contribution per new dwelling unit (average $ value, track annually)
- # of pre-development consultations addressing municipal reserve (track annually, target: 100%)

F R#2: Maximize local improvements and off-site levies during land development to ensure parks, culture, and active living service levels do not deteriorate due to growth.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Off-site levies fund infrastructure serving multiple developments or broader community
- Local improvements fund infrastructure within specific development
- Strategic use of both tools ensures new development contributes fair share to PCAL infrastructure system

ACTIONS:

- Develop Off-Site Levy Bylaw that includes PCAL infrastructure in eligible projects
- Identify regional PCAL facilities and major trail connections eligible for off-site levy funding
- Require local improvement construction of neighbourhood parks, pathways, and basic amenities within developments
- Coordinate off-site levy planning with Capital Improvement Program and Master Plan priorities
- Update off-site levy rates regularly to reflect actual infrastructure costs
- Use off-site levies strategically for major PCAL infrastructure serving multiple developments (regional parks, major trail connections, community-wide facilities)
- Track off-site levy revenue and expenditures transparently
- Engage development community in off-site levy bylaw development and updates
- Ensure off-site levy approach complies with Municipal Government Act requirements
- Align local improvement standards with outdoor space typology framework and design guidelines

Potential Performance Metrics

- Off-Site Levy Bylaw including PCAL infrastructure adopted (target: Year 3)
- Off-site levy rates established for PCAL infrastructure (target: Year 3)
- # of regional PCAL projects identified for off-site levy funding (track in Capital Improvement Program)
- Off-site levy revenue collected annually ($ track from bylaw adoption)
- $ off-site levies allocated to PCAL projects (track annually with project list)
- # of major PCAL projects funded (partially/fully) by off-site levies (track annually)
- Local improvement standards for PCAL infrastructure established (target: Year 2)
- % of new developments meeting local improvement standards (target: 100%)
- $ value of local improvements for PCAL per development (track averages annually)
- Off-site levy rates updated (target: every 2 years minimum)
- # of development community engagement sessions on off-site levies (track annually)
- Service level trends (track key indicators annually to ensure no deterioration with growth)

F R#3 Utilize dedicated tax levies to pay for parks, culture, and active living infrastructure renewal and for the development of new amenities to meet need and protect existing service levels.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Tax funding is primary source for PCAL infrastructure operations and capital investment
- Dedicated levy ensures predictable funding for lifecycle renewal and new development
- Balancing renewal needs with growth demands requires strategic allocation

ACTIONS:

- Establish dedicated PCAL infrastructure levy in annual budget to fund lifecycle renewal and new amenity development
- Develop Capital Improvement Program prioritizing infrastructure renewal based on asset condition assessments
- Create reserve funds for major facility renewal and replacement (separate from annual operating budgets)
- Balance levy allocation between existing infrastructure renewal and new amenity development (protect existing service levels while accommodating growth)
- Communicate PCAL infrastructure investment needs and levy requirements to Council and public transparently
- Track levy revenue and expenditures by category (renewal vs. new development) to demonstrate stewardship
- Adjust levy levels based on infrastructure condition trends, growth forecasts, and service level targets
- Coordinate tax levy planning with other funding sources (development contributions, grants, partnerships)
- Demonstrate value of PCAL infrastructure investment through usage data and community satisfaction measures
- Plan multi-year capital projects to enable strategic levy increases and avoid spikes

Potential Performance Metrics

- Dedicated PCAL infrastructure levy established (target: Year 1)
- Annual PCAL tax levy revenue ($ track annually)
- PCAL levy rate ($ per $100,000 assessment or similar measure, track annually)
- Capital Improvement Program aligned with levy funding (target: updated annually)
- Reserve funds for facility renewal established (target: Year 2)
- Reserve fund balance for PCAL infrastructure ($ track annually with targets)
- % of levy allocated to renewal vs. new development (track annually, maintain appropriate balance)
- $ annual investment in infrastructure renewal (track annually)
- $ annual investment in new amenity development (track annually)
- Deferred maintenance backlog ($ track annually, target: reduce over time)
- # of community communications on PCAL investment/levy (target: minimum annually)
- Public understanding of PCAL levy purpose (survey every 2 years, target: >65% understand)
- Service level trends maintained (track key indicators annually)
- Multi-year capital plan communicated (target: annual updates showing 5-year outlook)

F R#4: Monitor the availability of and apply for relevant grant opportunities.

Supporting Actions / Considerations

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provincial, federal, and private grants can significantly reduce Town's share of major project costs
- Most grants require matching funding and target specific priorities (environmental sustainability, accessibility, community health)
- Strategic grant pursuit requires planning projects to align with grant cycles and requirements

ACTIONS:

- Track federal, provincial, and foundation grant programs relevant to PCAL infrastructure (Infrastructure grants, cultural infrastructure programs, FCM Growing Canada's Community Canopies, Municipal Climate Change Action Centre programs)
- Plan capital projects to align with grant cycles and requirements
- Build grant applications into capital planning timelines
- Ensure matching funding is budgeted and available when grant opportunities arise
- Assign staff responsibility for grant monitoring and application coordination
- Develop grant application library of standard project information for efficient application preparation
- Partner with regional municipalities and organizations on joint grant applications where appropriate
- Track grant application success rates and learn from unsuccessful applications
- Communicate grant funding achievements to Council and public to demonstrate value of pursuit efforts
- Budget for grant application preparation costs (feasibility studies, technical reports, community engagement) in project planning

Potential Performance Metrics

- # of relevant grant programs monitored (track annually)
- # of grant applications submitted (track annually with targets)
- # of grant applications successful (track annually)
- Grant application success rate (%, track annually, target: >50%)
- $ grant funding secured (track annually, set growth targets)
- Grant funding leverage ratio ($ grants: $ municipal contribution, track annually)
- # of projects with grants aligned in planning phase (track annually)
- # of projects with matching funding secured before application (target: 100%)
- Staff dedicated to grant coordination (FTE, track capacity)
- Grant application library established and maintained (target: Year 1)
- # of joint grant applications with regional partners (track annually)
- # of grant funding sources utilized (diversity of funding, track annually)
- Time from opportunity identification to application submission (track average, optimize efficiency)
- # of Council/public communications on grant achievements (track annually)
- Grant application preparation costs ($ budgeted annually as % of potential grant value)



11 Conclusion and Next Steps







Cochrane is a community that knows what it values when it comes to parks, active living and cultural experiences and opportunities. Residents have been clear in sharing their priorities for accessible trails and parks close to home, facilities that serve the whole family, a cultural life that reflects who they are, and natural spaces that remain wild and connected. This Master Plan is the Town's commitment to delivering on those expectations, now and over the next 15 years.

The direction set within this Master Plan is intentional. It builds on the existing infrastructure, a strong network of community partners, and a tradition of outdoor living that defines Cochrane's character. It is shaped by Envision Cochrane 2050 and anchored in a clear purpose to enhance quality of life and community wellbeing through opportunities for physical activity, creative expression, social connection, and engagement with nature.

Growth will continue. Cochrane's population has more than tripled in two decades, and that momentum is not slowing. The decisions made in the near term about land, infrastructure, partnerships, and funding will shape what kind of community Cochrane becomes. This Master Plan ensures those decisions are made deliberately, equitably, and with the long view in mind.

The work ahead is significant. Trails to complete. Facilities to renew and build. Cultural spaces to create. Natural areas to protect. Partners to support and hold accountable. None of it happens all at once, and no single budget cycle will accomplish everything. What this Master Plan provides is a framework for the Town and partners to make progress consistently, transparently, and in alignment with what this community has asked for.

Cochrane's parks, culture, and active living system is one of the Town's greatest assets. It is where children learn to move, where neighbours become friends, where artists find their audience, where nature is still within reach. Protecting and growing that system is a shared responsibility.

The path forward is clear. The commitment is made. Cochrane will continue to be a place where people thrive. Your future, your community.



Appendices





Appendix A: Service Level Assessment

Parks, recreation, and cultural activities are vital to community vibrancy, promoting individual and community health while building social capital. Parks and recreation professionals guide decision-makers on necessary facilities and amenities, while municipal governments and partners must determine the optimal mix of opportunities for healthy, vibrant communities.

Unlike other municipal services, parks, recreation and culture lack mandated provision standards. Therefore, planners must consider various factors when assessing current facility supply against present and future demand to determine service levels.

The Service Level Needs Assessment serves as an initial infrastructure evaluation tool, identifying whether current provision should be "enhanced," "protected," or "limited." This assessment determines if there is sufficient provision, if more is warranted, or if less could be appropriate for specific amenities, both currently and in the future.



Enhance
(High Demand / Low Supply)

Protect
(High Demand / High Supply)

Limit
(Low Demand)

Please Note: A "limit" service level assessment does not necessarily indicate immediate closure of an amenity but does suggest that when significant investment is required that a reduction of service should be considered.

An "enhance" service level assessment does not mean that immediate investment or development of that amenity type should occur. It suggests that future study is warranted.

Table 7: Indoor Amenity Assessment

Amenity	Service Level
Art Galleries	Protect
Artist Studios/Maker Spaces	**Enhance**
Climbing Walls	Protect
Community hall spaces	Protect
Cultural Centres	Protect
Event and social gathering spaces	Protect
Fitness / wellness spaces	**Enhance**
Gymnasium	**Enhance**
Ice arena	**Enhance**
Indigenous Gathering Spaces	Protect
Indoor Raquet Court	Protect
Indoor field / turf	**Enhance**
Indoor play spaces	Protect
Lap Pool	**Enhance**
Leisure Pool	**Enhance**
Libraries	**Enhance**
Multi-purpose program rooms	**Enhance**
Performance Spaces	**Enhance**
Senior focused spaces	Protect
Youth focused spaces	**Enhance**





Table 8: Outdoor Amenity Assessment

Amenity	Service Level
Amphitheatres / band shelters	**Enhance**
Bike parks	Protect
Community Gardens	Protect
Diamonds	**Enhance**
Dog Off-leash Areas	**Enhance**
Mountain Bike Trails	Protect
Open spaces	Protect
Outdoor Courts	Protect
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Limit
Outdoor Performance Spaces	Protect
Outdoor Pools	**Enhance**
Outdoor rink	Protect
Pathways	**Enhance**
Picnic Areas/Shelters	**Enhance**
Playgrounds	Protect
Public Art Installations	Protect
Skate Parks	Protect
Sport fields - grass	**Enhance**
Sport fields - turf	**Enhance**
Spray Park	Protect
Trails	Protect

Appendix B: Parks and open space classification table

Type	Purpose	Examples	Recommended Size	Catchment Area	Location, Access + Connectivity
Natural Environment Park	Natural environment parks protect landscapes, views and/or ecological services, while providing appropriate passive or low-impact active recreational opportunities. Developments are compatible with, and complimentary to, the site's ecological, scenic and historic resource values. This category can include ERs and MRs.	Caroline Godfrey Park	Not applicable	n/a	Linked by local pathways + trails, and/or regional pathways Parking according to program
Major Park (Regional Park)	The major park serves all the residents of the town by offering a range of amenities and services not available in other areas. Its scale and/or unique features attract visitors from across the municipality and the wider area. Often large in size, this type of park may also provide wildlife habitat and maintain ecological processes along with providing more extensive and intensive recreational opportunities.	Mitford Park and Riverfront Park	>8.0 ha	Town wide	Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + trails, regional pathways Access by public transportation Parking according to program
Neighbourhood Park	The focus of neighbourhood parks is on meeting neighbourhood based recreational needs by providing access to community-level sports fields and other active and passive recreational opportunities.	Rotary Park	4.0 ha (9.9 acres) - 8.0 ha (19.8 acres)	2-5km	Access should be uninterrupted by major roads or other physical barriers Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + Trails, regional pathways Potential parking lot

Type	Purpose	Examples	Recommended Size	Catchment Area	Location, Access + Connectivity
Sub-Neighbourhood Park	Sub-neighbourhood parks are smaller in size and are primarily used for passive recreation, but may contain a range of active recreation facilities such as playgrounds. These parks serve adjacent or nearby residents.	Kerfoot Park	0.4 ha (1.0 acre) - 1.5 ha (3.7 acres)	0.5-1.0 km	Access should be uninterrupted by major roads or other physical barriers Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + Trails
Pocket park	Provides passive recreation opportunities, seating, landscaping, small gathering spaces, public art, or limited play features, and are intended to be accessed primarily on foot by nearby residents.	-	< 1 acre	0.5-1.0 km	Access should be uninterrupted by major roads or other physical barriers Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + Trails
Greenways / Linear Park	Greenways are major linear parks that connect important nodes and features both inside and outside the municipality. They are used for recreation including pedestrian and bicycle traffic, They may include both ecological and cultural elements. They provide passive use recreational opportunities and in many cases preserve natural resources, remnant landscapes and provide visual buffering. In others, they provide a landscape structure around which residential and/or commercial activity is structured.	Riverview Park and William Camden Park	Not applicable	n/a	Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + trails, regional pathways
School Site/ Reserve and Joint Use	School reserves are primarily used by the school authority but may have a joint use function and be used by residents of the neighbourhood.	Terry Fox Park	Min 4.0 ha (9.9 acres)	2-3 km	Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + trails

Type	Purpose	Examples	Recommended Size	Catchment Area	Location, Access + Connectivity
Athletic Park	Athletic parks contain a wide range of facilities and services that support intensive recreation activities and serves all the residents of the municipality. They are often contained within or adjacent to major parks.	-	Min 18.0 ha (44.5)	n/a	Linked by sidewalk, local pathways + trails, regional pathways Access by public transportation Parking according to program
Special Use	Special use areas cover a broad range of park and recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use.	Tennis court and Community gardens	Not applicable	n/a	Varies
Urban Plazas and Squares	Urban plazas and squares contribute to the character, the livability and the vitality of the downtown area. They often consist of a higher level of hard surfaced and semi-permeable areas and highly ornamental areas with a community gathering and civic function.	Cochrane Centennial Plaza	Not applicable	n/a	Varies
Incidental Open Space	Incidental open spaces are residual parcels that have limited recreational function or preservation of sensitive ecological values. The primary aim of these spaces is to provide visual and psychological relief and buffering from the built environment, support the urban forest, and provide ecological services were deemed appropriate.	Traffic Islands and boulevards, landscaping	Not applicable	n/a	n/a

Appendix C: Parkland Acquisition Tools

Strategy	Process	Key Players	Potential Implications
VOLUNTARY LAND ACQUISITION			
Fee Simple	Involves the purchase of the fee title in a parcel of land, usually acquired at fair market value. Land can sometimes be sold at a reduced price, which may qualify as a charitable donation from income taxes.	• Landowners • Town of Cochrane	• Appropriate environmental investigations should be undertaken to ensure land is not contaminated
Restrictive Covenants	Developers restrict the use of a portion of land in order to provide amenity space, e.g. for common ownership associated with a condominium development.	• Developers	• Ensures that land will not be developed except for purposes relating to recreation or park space
Conservation Easements and Caveats	A voluntary legal agreement (as noted in Section 22 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, Alberta) between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits the use of land to protect its conservation values.	• Landowners • Land Trusts • Town of Cochrane	• Landowner retains ownership of the land to pass on to heirs but resigns the associated rights • Public access may not be permitted
Donation	Private landowners give their land to a land trust, non-profit or government agency, potentially releasing themselves from land management responsibilities.	• Landowners • Town of Cochrane	• Income tax deduction and estate tax benefits for landowner
Land Trusts	Independent non-profit organizations that work with landowners interested in safeguarding open space (sometimes collaborating with government agencies through a partnership). They must abide by a code of practice such as the Canadian Land Trust Alliance (CLTA).	• Landowners • Land Trusts • Town of Cochrane	• Relies on active volunteer effort • Ecological Gifts or "Ecogift" provide a way to protect ecologically sensitive land through a special tax assistance program • May restrict public use

Strategy	Process	Key Players	Potential Implications
Urban Forest Legacy Program	A Program could establish to identify and protect environmentally sensitive forests that are threatened by invasive species (noxious weeds or residential growth affecting groundwater tables and affecting soil erosion).	• Landowners • Town of Cochrane	• Relies on willing sellers or those wishing to donate land • Financial support can be gained from programs such as the Tree Canada Foundation
Land Exchange	Exchanging land for land. For example if a developer wishes to develop parcels of land that are identified as protected open space, the Town may identify surplus land in their inventory that is considered less significant as open space.	• Developers • Town of Cochrane	• Subject to negotiation and land availability
Public Access Easements	These allow the general public the right to access and use a specific parcel of the property. They are commonly used for pathways in new developments, alongside water bodies or in parks and open space areas.	• Town of Cochrane	• Easement remains in place even if the land ownership changes
Landowner Discussion	The Town is encouraged to begin discussions with landowners for parcels that are identified as new park and open space within the Open Space Concept map.	• Landowners • Town of Cochrane	• Subject to negotiation
REGULATORY LAND ACQUISITION			
Municipal Reserves	Land may be taken as Municipal Reserve (MR) only for the following uses: public park, public recreation areas, a school or to separate different land use areas (MGA, S. 644 and 671). Triggered by an application for subdivision, MR may not exceed 10% of the parcel of land or cash-in lieu, less the land required for Environmental Reserve (ER).	• Developers • Town of Cochrane	• Must adhere to specific site requirements and not contain any rights-of-way that may limit design options for the site

Strategy	Process	Key Players	Potential Implications
Environmental Reserves	Applied to land that consists of a swamp, gully, coulee or ravine is susceptible to flooding or is considered unstable by the Town. ER is also used for the 6m area surrounding a lake or water body to prevent water pollution or as a means of access (MGA, S. 644). Environmental Reserves are not 'riparian buffers' but they often include riparian lands. As a result, they should not be excessive in size as this is not their intent or purpose.	• Town of Cochrane	• Multiple benefits: environmental protection, habitat enhancement and public access • Ensures land remains in a natural state as if it was owned by the Town
Density Transfer / Development credits	Allows for open spaces to be dedicated to the Town for density transfers on the development of a property.	• Developers • Town of Cochrane	• Directs development to more suitable less sensitive locations • Can also be applied to heritage resources
Overlay Zoning	A set of additional standards or controls that are applied over a large area across multiple land use districts. A bylaw is applied to areas unsuitable for development. The overlay could be administered through a transfer of development credits (TDC), which are typically set up to compensate landowners for the protections of ecologically sensitive areas under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA).	• Town of Cochrane	• Requires Town resources to prepare the overlay zoning • Can be applied to areas not zoned as typical 'open space' land use zones
Subdivision Approvals	Section 655 of the MGA allows municipalities to impose conditions on a subdivision approval, such as the construction of pathways that serve a new development or connect adjacent developments. This is supported in the Town of Cochrane MDP under policy 8.3.17.	• Developers • Town of Cochrane	• Should be applied where capital improvements associated with the Open Space Master Plan are within a proposed subdivision

Strategy	Process	Key Players	Potential Implications
Performance Zoning	This technique establishes zones, which are based on an allowable environmental impact to the resources of an area as opposed to a specific allowable use.	• Town of Cochrane	• Requires Town resources to prepare the performance zoning • Allows the Town to maintain control over development impacts and to ensure that development will occur only in ways in which the natural resources will not be severely damaged • Allows flexibility for new and emerging uses that do not fit in with the current land use bylaw
Special Use Permits	A zoning regulation will list "as of right" uses which are allowed in a particular district without the necessity of obtaining any further review. After these uses are listed, a list of conditional uses or "special use permit" uses may be listed, as exceptions.	• Developers • Town of Cochrane	• Provides an additional level of protection for uses that are desirable but may have an adverse impact or require special review before being approved




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