



# WOOD BUFFALO Regional Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan

JULY, 2015



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## Executive Summary

This Master Plan is a municipal guidance document, designed to further effective planning, budgeting, and implementation of stated goals and objectives for indoor recreation and community facilities in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The Master Plan provides a comprehensive, multi-year framework of short (1-2 years), medium (3-6 years), and longer-term (7+ years) priorities for the development of indoor recreation and community facilities and programming within the Municipality. Accordingly, this Master Plan is a flexible document to guide municipal decision making over the next ten years that provides Council with discretion to invest in indoor recreation and community facilities in the context of uncertain population growth patterns.

The process guiding the development of the Master Plan required:

- Public engagement and stakeholder outreach;
- Analysis of local, regional, and provincial demographic and leisure and facility trends;
- Review of best practices in other communities;
- Region-wide review of existing indoor recreation and community facilities;
- Establishment of facility provision targets regionally; and
- Analysis of Municipal strategic plans and policies so as to align Master Plan recommendations in a manner which ensures the Municipality is able to take full advantage of programming, investment, and partnership opportunities.

The Master Plan provides a series of recommendations to guide municipal decision-making. These recommendations are based on a set of principles and goals developed for this Plan (see Section 5). Development principles provide a framework as to how indoor recreation and community facility and programming provision should take place within the regional Municipality:

- The Municipality must engage in recreation and community facilities as a public investment;
- The Municipality must maintain the community development model of recreation and community facilities;
- The Municipality must continue to engage in a partnership approach to indoor facility operations; and
- The Municipality must plan for growth and diversity of opportunity in indoor recreation and community facilities and programming.

Each principle is supported through a series of goals that outline the Master Plan's aspirations for indoor recreation and community facilities and programming in the regional Municipality. These goals underpin each of the Master Plan recommendations. The goals are intended to be mutually reinforcing:

1. **Develop** infrastructure to enhance quality of life for residents, resident retention and financial sustainability;
2. **Promote** health, wellness and active living;
3. **Maximize access** to recreational and community-oriented opportunities, programs and services;
4. **Enhance** operational accountability;
5. **Improve** value for money;
6. **An improved, coordinated and integrated** recreation and community service delivery system;
7. **Strengthen** the region's sport tourism mandate; and
8. **Solidify** the Urban Service Area's role as a regional hub for recreation.

Based on these principles and goals, the Master Plan provides recommendations under the broad categories of facilities, programming, and service delivery. A summary of recommendations can be found in Appendix A.



The Master Plan is structured through the following sections:

**Section 1:** Provides an introduction to the Master Plan, reviewing its purpose, alignment with Council’s strategic priorities, and process guiding the Master Plan’s development and implementation.

**Section 2:** Provides an overview of strategic directions guiding the Master Plan from previous Municipal planning exercises. The recommendations contained within this Master Plan build on these strategic directions.

**Section 3:** Provides a detailed analysis of the historic, present, and projected community characteristics in each of the constituent communities of the regional Municipality. Demographic patterns and trends will shape required Municipal investment in indoor recreation and community facilities and programs over the duration of the Master Plan. Key trends identified in this section provide a foundation for the Master Plan recommendations.

**Section 4:** Provides an analysis of the existing inventory of indoor recreation and community facilities. Specifically the section outlines which facilities are provided in each community, and general community satisfaction with each of these assets as gathered through an in-depth public engagement process. This section also provides insight into community aspirations – i.e., which facilities and programs residents would like to see developed in their community over the duration of the Master Plan.

**Section 5:** Outlines the guiding principles, goals, and objectives of the Master Plan, developed as a product of all analysis contained within the preceding sections.

**Section 6:** Provides Master Plan recommendations pertaining to indoor recreation and community facilities, programming, and service delivery. Each recommendation is provided with an accompanying rationale and justification.

**Section 7:** Provides a plan for implementation, indicating the proposed timing of recommendations and investment in new indoor recreation and community facilities and associated fiscal considerations.







# 1 INTRODUCTION





# 1 Introduction to the Plan

## 1.1. What is a Regional Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan?

This Regional Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan provides a comprehensive, multi-year framework of short (1-2 years), medium (3-6 years), and longer-term (7+ years) priorities for the development of indoor recreation and community facilities and programming in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

This Master Plan is a municipal guidance document, designed to further effective planning, budgeting and implementation of stated goals and objectives for indoor recreation and community activities in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

This Master Plan is a flexible blueprint to guide municipal decision making over the next ten years. Many of the recommendations provided in this Plan are stand-alone, and can be implemented separate and apart from decisions required to implement other aspects of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan is a regional document in that it identifies required investment in communities across the region, recognizing the interconnected nature of the Municipality’s communities.

**Indoor recreation facilities** are spaces and buildings that are open to the public for recreation activities – those activities that we do in our free time (leisure) that includes physical activity, skill development, relaxation, socializing with others, for example. Because recreation activities are those that we do in our leisure time, recreation facilities are often also referred to as **leisure facilities**. Examples of recreation and leisure facilities include public meeting spaces, museums, galleries, and facilities that are related to specific sports including arenas, pools, fitness rooms, curling rinks, squash courts etc.

**Indoor community facilities** are spaces and buildings that primarily serve the local neighbourhood and/or community. This can include facilities such as libraries, community halls, meeting spaces, and schools, but also more specialized facilities that may serve the whole community.

Indoor recreation, leisure and community facilities are usually publicly owned. There are also privately owned facilities – fitness centres are a leading example. The Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan recognizes the role of private operators and the need to plan for where and how to best work with the private sector.

## 1.2. Aligning the Master Plan to Council’s Strategic Priorities

Municipal Council makes decisions based on strategic priorities. This Master Plan aligns with Council’s strategic directions as follows:

Priority*	Alignment
<b>Encouraging permanent residency</b>	Complete communities have a range of housing options, commercial opportunities, and public services. This Master Plan identifies required investments in indoor recreation and community facilities to help build complete communities that will encourage worker retention and permanent residency.
<b>Economic diversification through tourism development</b>	Recommendations in this Master Plan will solidify the Municipality’s role as a hub for recreation and community facilities and activities in north-eastern Alberta.
<b>Increasing access to recreation and community services</b>	This Master Plan provides recommendations that will increase access to recreation and community services through investment in new facilities, enhanced facilities, availability of programming, and affordability of programming.
<b>Fiscal responsibility and accountability</b>	Recommendations in this Master Plan will allow the Municipality and its operating partners to work more effectively towards efficient and fiscally responsible service provision for indoor recreation and community facilities, and identification of required investment in new infrastructure.
<b>Effective partnerships</b>	The Municipality has historically worked effectively with a wide range of community partners to provide indoor recreation and community facilities and associated programming. The recommendations contained within this Master Plan are a foundation to build on and strengthen the partnerships that the Municipality has already developed, and to build new partnerships.

*\*Relevant Council priorities have been identified through a review of a variety of strategic documents including but not limited to the Municipal Development Plan (2011) and Strategic Plan 2012-2016.*

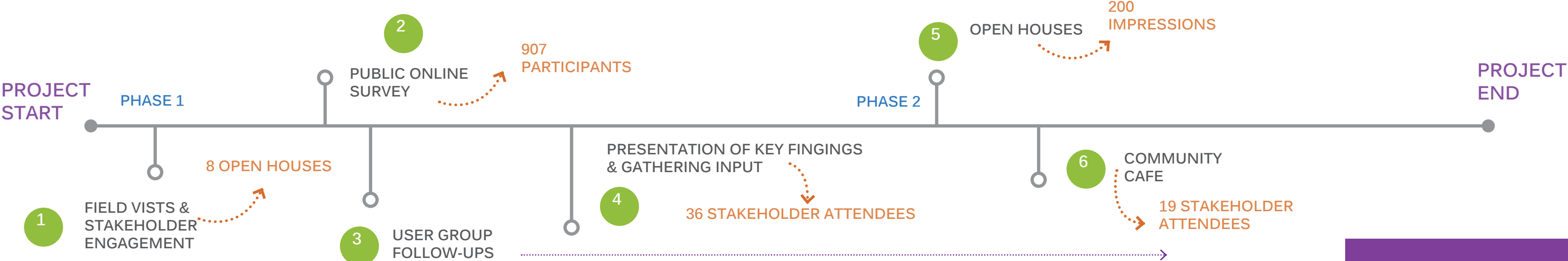
### 1.3. Process Guiding Plan Development and Implementation

Developing the Master Plan involved:

- Public engagement and stakeholder outreach across the region. Members of the public, and key stakeholders from each community, were consulted at each stage in the Plan’s development. The following page provides an overview of engagement that informed the development of Master Plan principles, goals, and recommendations;
- An analysis of local, regional, and provincial demographic and leisure and facility trends, as well as best practices in other communities across Alberta and nationally;
- A review of existing indoor recreation and community facilities (including facility conditions, revenues and expenditures and utilization), and the establishment of provision targets regionally; and
- An analysis of strategic plans and policies for indoor recreation and community facility development and programming over the long-term horizon. This ensures that the Master Plan aligns recommendations in a manner which allows the Municipality is able to take full advantage of programming, investment, and partnership opportunities.



CONSULTATION TIMELINE



Goal 2: Promote Health, Wellness and Active Living

Objective: To offer opportunities for participation in recreation for all members of the community irrespective of age, ability, ethnicity and income





## 2 KEY DIRECTIONS





## 2 Strategic Directions

The Municipality has a wealth of recommendations and strategic direction from previous studies and planning documents. This Master Plan builds on these documents:

- RRC Aquatic Needs Assessment (2015)
- RRC Ice Needs Assessment (2015)
- RMWB Community Services Department Business Plan (2014)
- RRC Strategic Plan (2014)
- RRC Northside Recreation Centre Business Plan (2014)
- RMWB Economic Profile (2013-14)
- Live Play Thrive: Wood Buffalo Recreation and Culture Plan (2013)
- City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan (2012)
- RMWB Municipal Development Plan (2011)
- RMWB Parks, Recreation, and Culture Plan (2011)
- RMWB Rural Service Delivery Review (2010)
- Future Forward 2030 (2007)
- RMWB Strategic Plan 2012-2016
- Regional Structure Action Strategy Study (2014)

### Strategic Direction:

Investment in indoor recreation and community facilities, programming, and partnerships is central to the Municipality's recent strategic planning exercises in achieving the following:

- Positioning the Municipality as a welcoming place for workers in the region to settle permanently, providing top-of-the-line amenities;
- Improving the physical and mental well-being of the residents of the Municipality through facilitating access to recreation and leisure facilities and activities;
- Encouraging responsible investment in municipal infrastructure;
- Balancing growth in rural communities;
- Developing and strengthening social programming;
- Achieving innovation in service delivery; and
- Encouraging permanent residency and early integration of newcomers into the community.







# 3 COMMUNITY CONTEXT





### 3.1. Urban Service Area – Fort McMurray

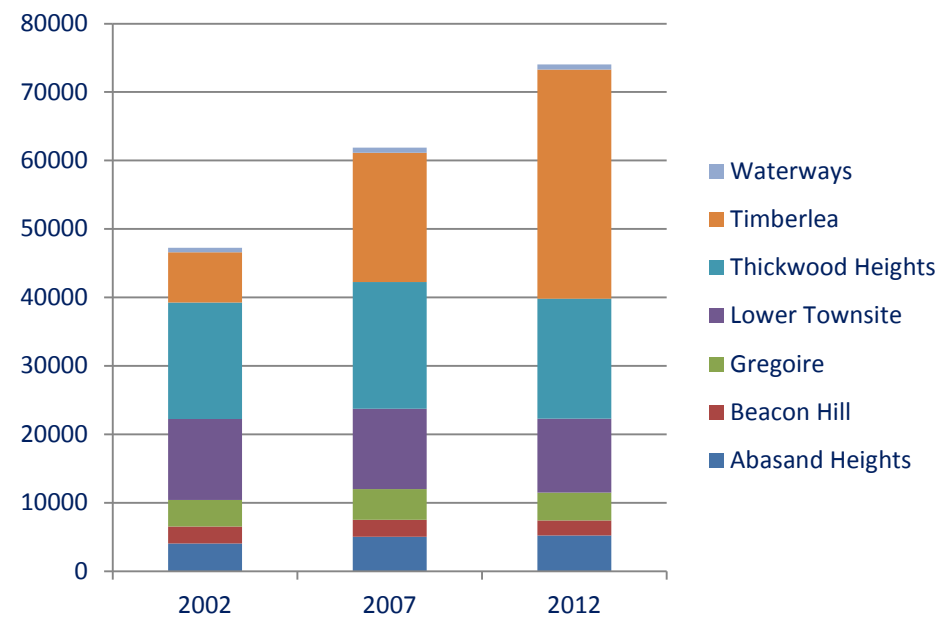
#### 3.1.1. Historic and Projected Growth

Fort McMurray is the region's residential and service hub. Between 2000 and 2012, the city's population grew by almost 80 percent to reach just over 76,000. Much of this population growth has been in Timberlea. Other neighbourhoods, for the most part, are at or near capacity.

Limited land supply has restricted the expansion of existing neighbourhoods as they reach capacity. Much of the region is Crown land and land release for development must be negotiated with the Province.

There are two new neighbourhoods under development, Parsons Creek (815 ha) and Saline Creek (826 ha), which will eventually be home to 24,000 and 21,000 residents respectively.

Exhibit 3: Fort McMurray: Population Growth by Neighbourhood 2002-2012



Source: RMWB Municipal Census 2007 & 2012  
Sierra Planning and Management

The significant population growth in Fort McMurray has had implications for the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities. Over the past decade, Fort McMurray has welcomed the development of a variety of indoor facilities in new and established neighbourhoods. Examples include the Suncor Energy Centre for Performing Arts, Syncrude Athletic Park with Syncrude Clubhouse, and the Eagle Ridge Community Centre at the Walter and Gladys Hill School and Saint Kateri Elementary School— all in Timberlea.

As Fort McMurray's population continues to grow over the next two decades, expanding into new neighbourhoods and densifying downtown, the Municipality will need to plan for new indoor recreation and community facilities in these areas. Planning for these must identify requirements for regional, community, and neighbourhood-scaled facilities. These scales are defined in detail in the following section.

The Municipality's Fringe Area Assessment Study (see Exhibit 4) identifies additional urban growth areas in Fort McMurray – an additional 4,044 ha that, at current densities, could accommodate approximately 100,000 residents. New residential areas are expected to combine traditional suburban development with higher densities (*Municipal Development Plan, 2011*).

As planning for these urban growth areas progresses, the Municipality will need to identify the required recreation and community facilities for each community.

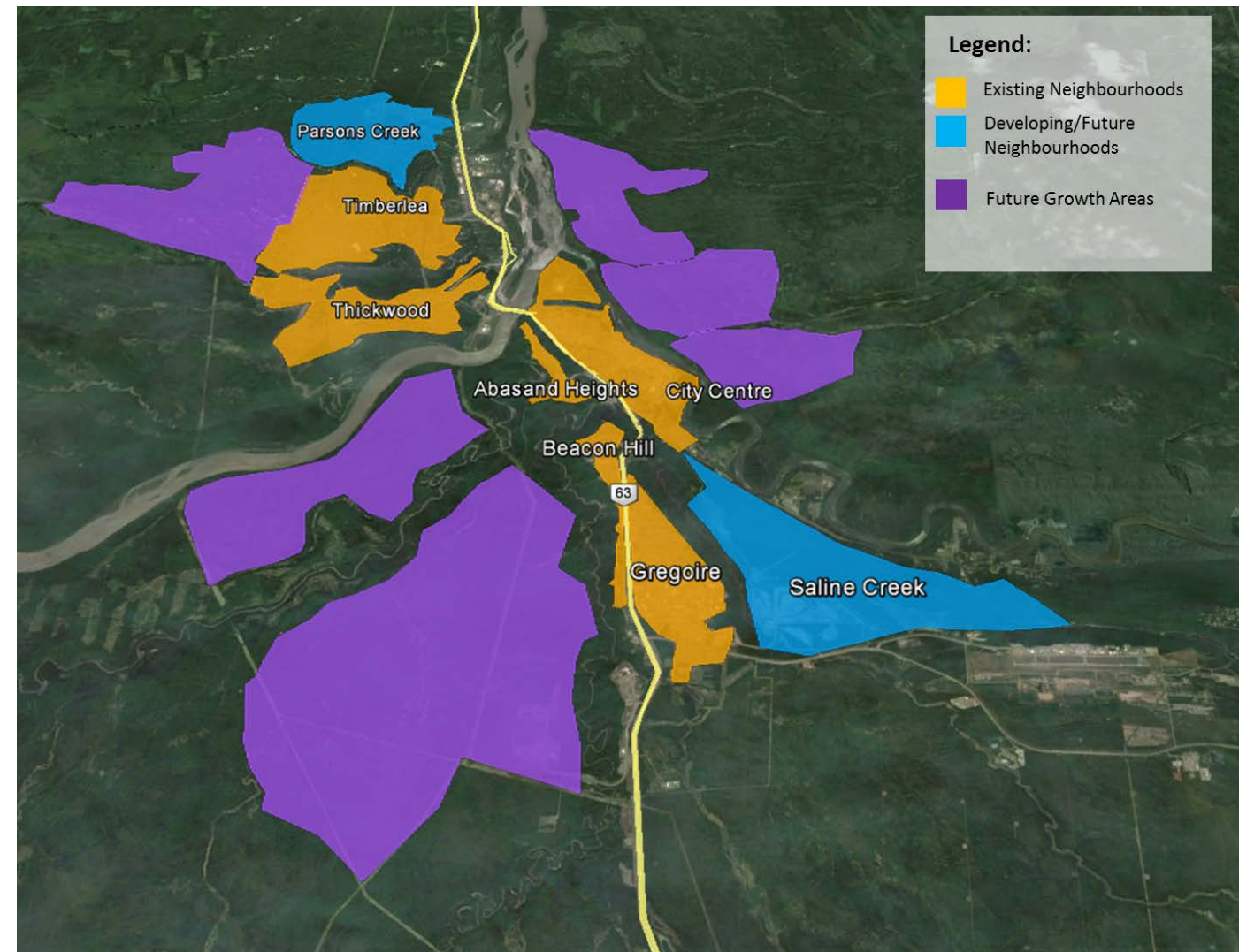
This Master Plan identifies current and future standards of indoor recreation and community facility provision within our facility-based recommendations in Section 6. The distribution of required facilities will vary based on the geography and timing of community development however we have provided guidance in this regard. The application of population-based standards of provision will result in estimated target points for when new facilities are brought online, however this will be based on whether the Municipality reaches these growth targets



Many of the identified growth areas for Fort McMurray, lie south of existing neighbourhoods. As the city expands, it will likely begin to move towards some of the communities that lie south of Fort McMurray – Draper and Sapræ Creek. As such, investment in indoor recreation and community facilities over the longer term for the urban service area will likely serve both residents of Fort McMurray and those of rural hamlets and communities to the south of the city. The Master Plan recommendations take the projected geography and timing of this population growth into account.

The Master Plan provides estimations of when Council will need to take action based on our facility-based recommendations. These estimations are based on data from the Municipality that indicates that Fort McMurray is likely to grow by approximately 50 percent over the next fifteen years to 2030.

Exhibit 4: Urban Growth Areas: Fort McMurray



Sierra Planning and Management based on the RMWB Fringe Area Development Assessment:  
Urban Service Area (2007), with Google Earth base mapping

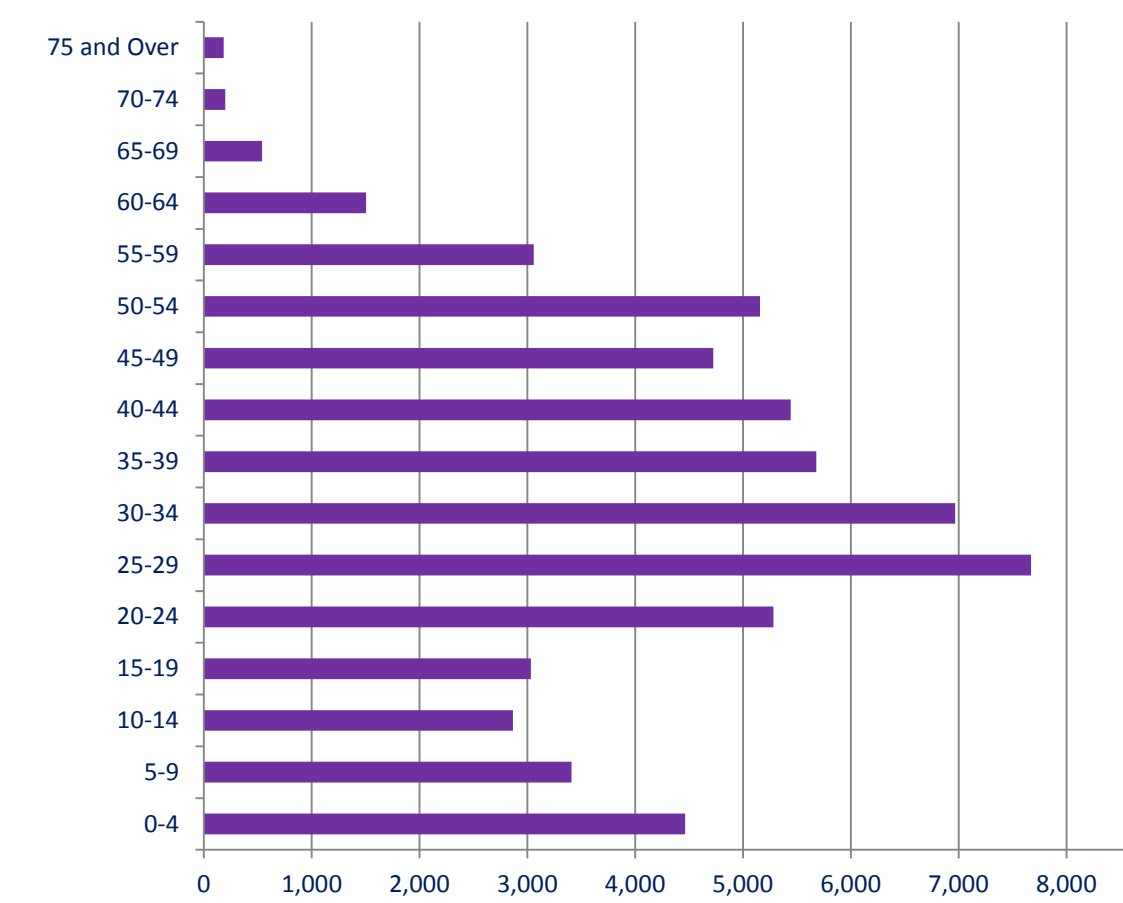


3.1.2. Current Community Characteristics: Fort McMurray

The following discussion is based on data from the Municipality’s 2012 Municipal Census and the 2011 National Census of Canada.

Fort McMurray has a relatively young population with an average age of 32 years, in 2012. This is comparable to a national average of 40 years. This is attributable to inter-provincial migration of young workers and the increasing number of families choosing to make the city home.

Exhibit 5: Fort McMurray Total Population by Age Category (2012)

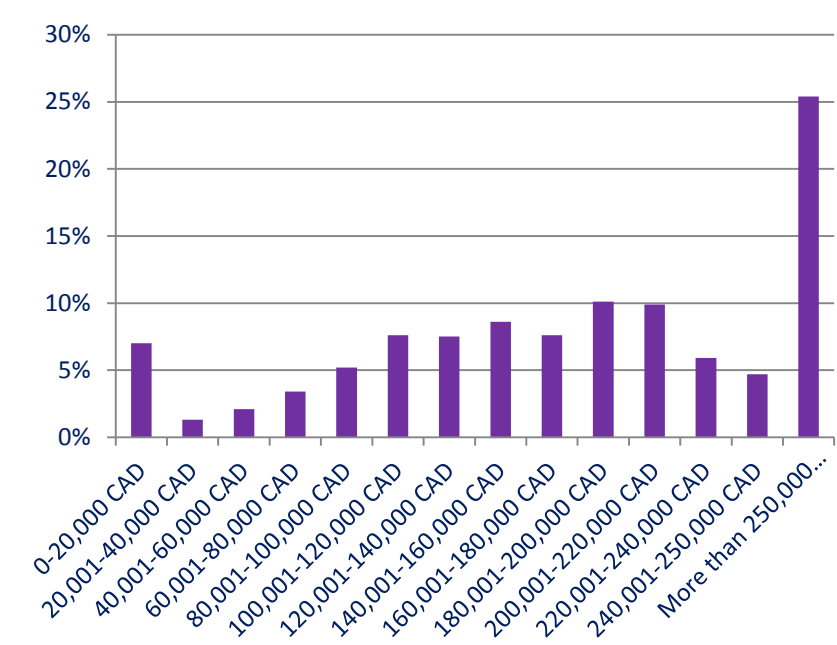


Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB Municipal Census (2012)

Fort McMurray has a significantly higher proportion of its households in upper income brackets than the provincial average. According to Statscan’s 2011 National Household Survey, 10 percent of Albertan households earned more than \$100,000 annually. This is compared to 87 percent of households of Fort McMurray. Approximately a quarter of the city’s households earn more than \$250,000 annually.

These higher household incomes however must be considered within the context of accommodation prices within Fort McMurray. The 2011 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) indicates that the average rent for a two bedroom dwelling is almost twice that of Vancouver – one of the country’s most competitive property markets. Similarly, the average price of a single detached house in Fort McMurray far exceeds other communities within Alberta. This restricts disposable income available for leisure pursuits and other activities.

Exhibit 6: Percentage of Households by Income Group, Fort McMurray (2012)



Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB Municipal Census (2012)





*Timberlea, Fort McMurray*



The 2012 Municipal Census found that almost 80 percent of the city's population identifies as being Caucasian. The largest ethnic minority groups identified in this census in Fort McMurray are:

- South Asian (6 percent)
- Aboriginal (3 percent)
- African (3 percent)
- Asian Pacific (3 percent)

Although historical data on ethnicity within Fort McMurray is not included within past municipal censuses, anecdotal discussions with Municipal staff, facility managers, and other stakeholders within Fort McMurray indicated that many have seen a growth in minority ethnicity groups over the past five years. The Suncor Energy Centre for Performing Arts in particular indicated that they have seen a recent increase in space rental requests by multi-cultural groups.

The development of Abraham's Land in Thickwood-Timberlea by a multi-faith consortium includes a new Islamic Centre, another sign of the increasingly diversified community. The current centre started out in 2004 with 23 students; it is now at capacity with 292 students and another 100 on a waiting list. (*Markaz Ul Islam, 2014*).

Proposed population growth in Fort McMurray can be expected to continue to diversify the city's ethnic composition. As such, planning for new indoor recreation and community facilities will need to consider the changing ethnic composition of new and existing neighbourhoods to provide ethnically appropriate space and facilities.

Exhibit 7: Rendering of the new Islamic Centre proposed for Abraham's Land, Fort McMurray



*Source: Markaz Ul Islam, 2014*



3.2.Rural Service Area

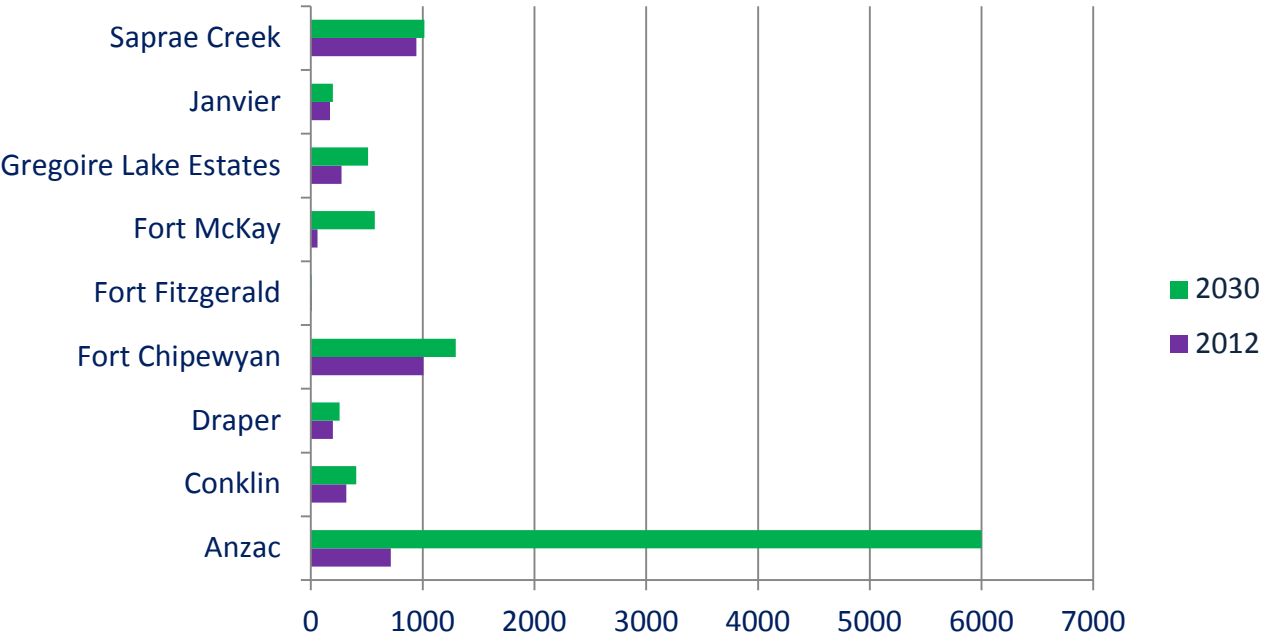
3.2.1. Projected Growth

In 2012, the region’s rural hamlets, stretching from Conklin in the south to Fort Fitzgerald in the north, accounted for three per cent of the population. Current population projections call for all hamlets, excluding Anzac, to remain ‘Areas of Stability’. These are areas where growth will be kept within the expansion capacity of the community, to ensure that the next generation lives where they were born.

Anzac has been identified as a priority growth area by the Municipality. It is anticipated that the majority of rural population growth will be directed towards this community, which will transform into a small urban centre and the region’s secondary service centre over time.

All hamlets, with the exception of Anzac, are expected to experience minimal population growth. Anzac’s population is expected to grow almost seven-times over. The newly developed Anzac Recreation Centre will serve this growing community. Section 6 identifies the likely required additional indoor recreation and community facilities by 2025 based on the current population projections for each community, in collaboration with community aspirations.

Exhibit 8: Projected Population Growth 2012-2030: Rural Hamlets

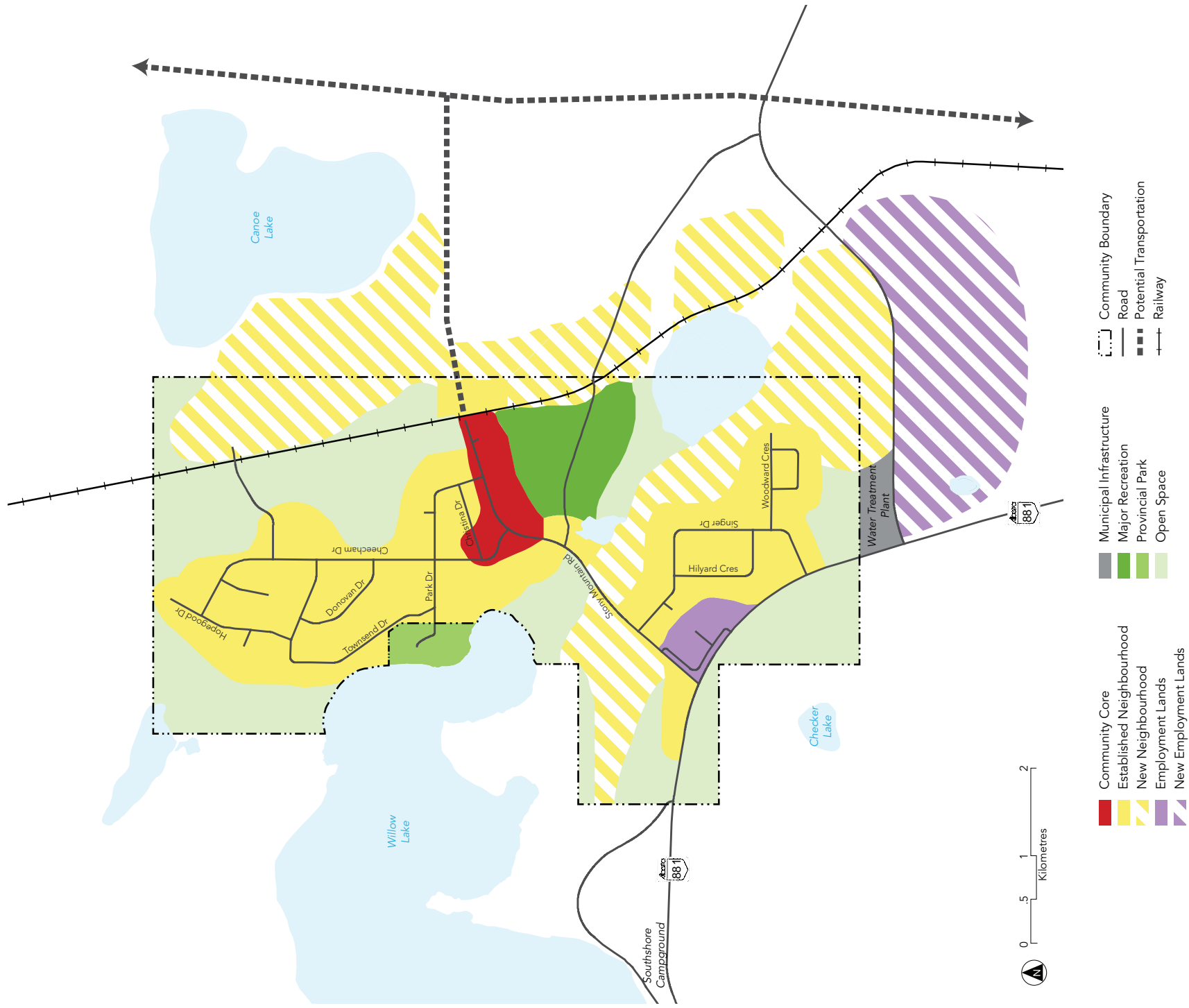


Source: RMWB Planning Department



# Anzac

## Generalized Land Development Concept





## 3.2.2. Current Rural Community Characteristics

Exhibit 9: Map of Wood Buffalo Communities



Source: RMWB

**Anzac:** Located approximately 45km southeast of Fort McMurray, Anzac is a rural community (714 residents as of 2012), in proximity to several project accommodations including the Nexen East Camp at Long Lake, Nexen North Camp, PTI Anzac Lodge, and Nexen Kinosis.

**Conklin:** Located approximately 155km south of Fort McMurray, Conklin is a quiet rural community. The majority of Conklin residents are of Métis descent. While Conklin was home to just 318 residents in 2012, like Anzac it is in close proximity to industry operations and project accommodations, including Karen's Katering, Tamarack (Conklin) Lodge, and Leismer Lodge which provide a total of 829 rooms to temporary workers.

**Draper:** Located just 12km south of Fort McMurray, this hamlet has grown over the past decade and a half from just 60 residents in 2000, to 197 in 2012. Due to proximity to the Urban Service Area, residents in Draper use the services in Fort McMurray.

**Fort Chipewyan:** The second most northern communities of the regional Municipality, Fort Chipewyan has limited accessibility – by boat and plane in the summer, and ice road and plane in the winter. The hamlet was home to 1,008 residents in 2012, however its proximate population also includes First Nation communities in Dog Head and Allison Bay.

**Fort Fitzgerald:** The regional Municipality's most northern community, Fort Fitzgerald is home to 8 residents according to the 2010 Municipal Census. It is a remote community with no supporting services other than electricity. Residents use services in nearby Fort Smith, NT.

**Fort McKay :** Located approximately 60km north of Fort McMurray, the hamlet has a small population (59 in 2012); however, this does not include the adjacent First Nations community, or nearby project accommodation projects. Like Anzac and Conklin, Fort McKay is proximate to a number of large project accommodation projects servicing the Suncor Energy site and others.

**Gregoire Lake Estates:** This hamlet serves predominantly as a bedroom community for residents working in industry. Given its location only 35km south of Fort McMurray and relatively less expensive housing, the hamlet is becoming popular with workers in Fort McMurray also. The hamlet has no community services but is close to services in Anzac.

**Janvier:** Approximately 120km south of Fort McMurray, Janvier is a small hamlet (171 residents in 2012), with a municipal office and outdoor rink. Other community services are available on the adjacent Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation.

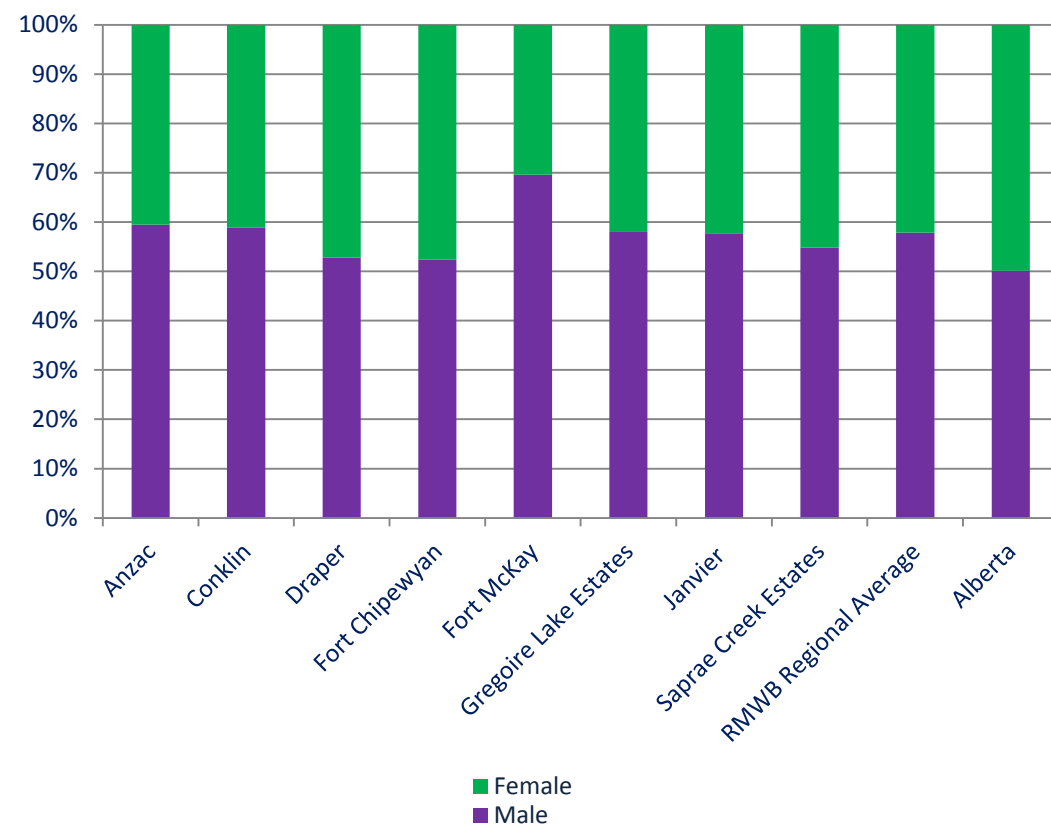
**Sapræ Creek Estates:** Located 25km south of Fort McMurray, this hamlet is home to acreages, and primarily serves as a bedroom community for Fort McMurray. The community's main facility is the Vista Ridge All Seasons Park.



The proportional population by gender of the region’s rural communities for the most part hovers around the regional average, with a slight skew towards males. Fort McKay has a more pronounced skew with only 30 percent of its population female. This skew is likely the result of the Municipality surveying only the off-reserve population, which given the community’s location, likely includes a high proportion of temporary oil sands workers. The Municipal Census (2012) indicates that temporary workers are more likely to be male.

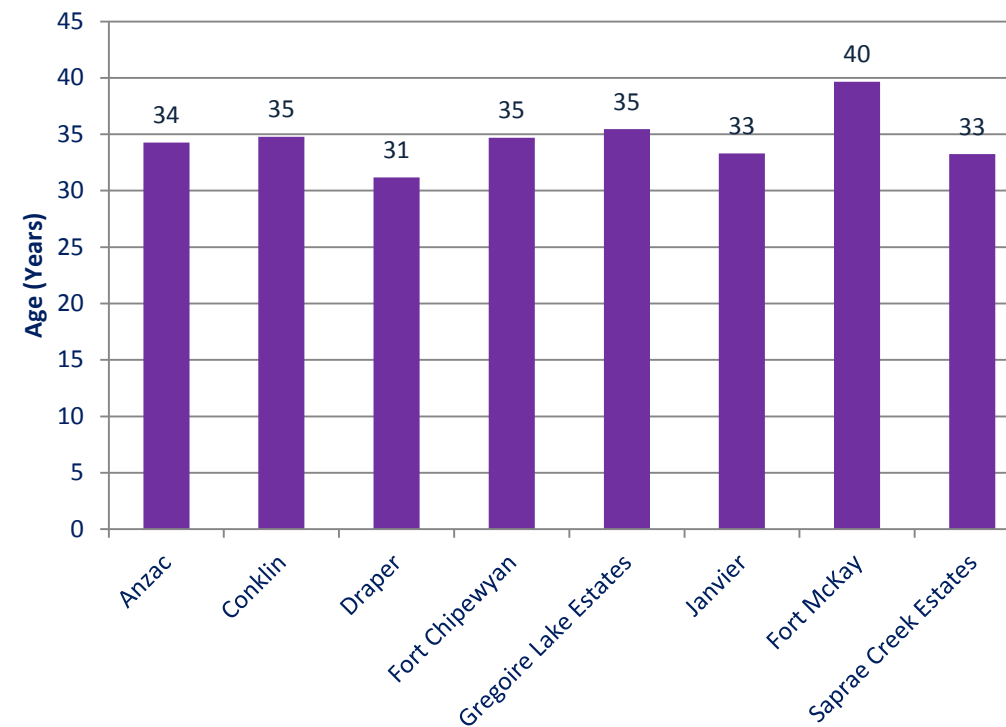
The proportion of males in Conklin grew by almost ten percent between 2002 and 2012. This is likely the result of new industry operations opening up over the past decade. The high proportion of new oil sands operations projected to begin production over the next decade near Conklin is likely to further increase this gap.

Exhibit 10: Proportional Population by Gender: Rural Hamlets and Provincial Average (2012)



Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB Municipal Census 2012;  
Statistics Canada Census of Canada 2011

Exhibit 11: Average Age of Residents in Rural Communities (2012)



Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB Municipal Census (2012) –  
based on respondents only (no extrapolation)

While the Municipal Census (2012) reports age distribution of respondents only (i.e. no aggregation to total population), the data gives some indication of the average age of residents in the region’s rural communities. Similar to the Urban Service Area of Fort McMurray, the region’s rural communities have a relatively young population as compared to the national average of 40 years (2011 Census of Canada). The relatively high average age of Fort McKay can be attributed to the particularly small sample used for the Census and as such may not accurately reflect the true average age of this community.

It should be noted that these figures pertain to the rural hamlets only and do not include First Nation communities that may live in proximity to these hamlets.





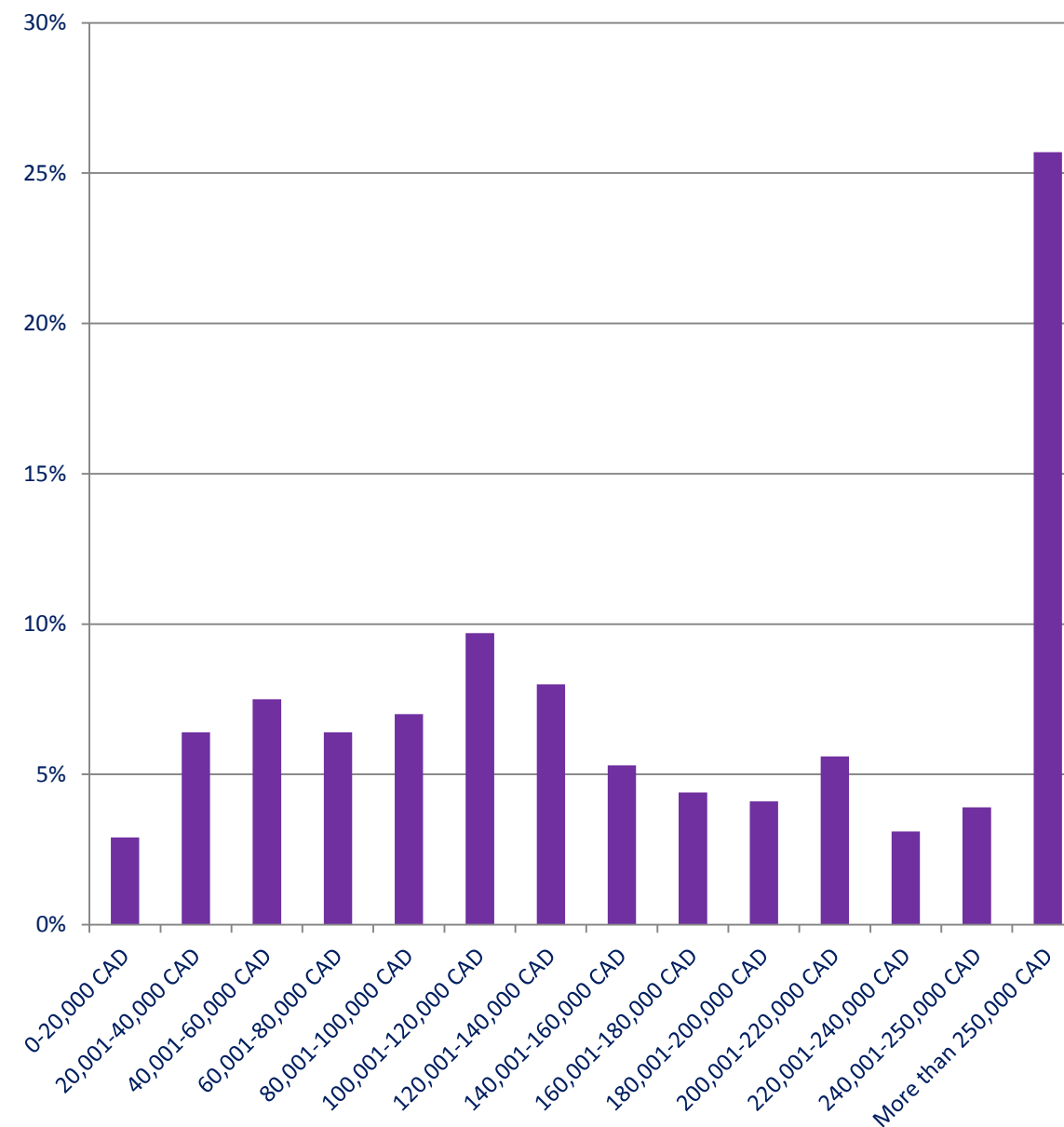


In contrast to the urban service area of Fort McMurray, rural communities are predominantly Aboriginal (47 percent), and Caucasian (50 percent) in ethnicity. This does not include the First Nation communities in proximity to some of the region's rural hamlets.

Similar to the urban service area, the region's rural communities have a high proportion of households that earn more than \$250,000 per year. This is primarily the result of employment in oil sands industries. It should be noted however, that the rural service area is characterized by a higher proportion of its households in the lower income brackets than households in Fort McMurray. In 2012, almost one third of all households in the rural service area reported annual incomes less than \$100,000. This is compared to just one fifth of all households in Fort McMurray. This may in part be due to the lower employment rate in the rural service area (73 percent in 2012, compared to 83 percent in the urban service area).

As noted earlier, these figures pertain to the rural hamlets of the regional Municipality only, and do not include the First Nation communities in proximity to many of the hamlets.

Exhibit 12: Percentage of Households by Income Group – Rural Service Area (2012)



Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB Municipal Census (2012) – based on respondents only (no extrapolation)



### 3.2.3. Rural Communities and Proximate First Nation Communities

The preceding analysis does not take into consideration First Nation communities near the hamlets. While residents of these communities are not subject to municipal taxes, anecdotal discussions with residents indicated that there is significant two-way flow between the rural hamlets, and proximate/adjacent First Nation communities to use recreation and community facilities and programs.

Based on 2011 Census Data from Statistics Canada, the populations of surrounding First Nation communities in proximity to rural hamlets were as follows:

Community	Hamlet Population (2012)	Proximate First Nation Communities Population (2011)	Total Population
Fort Chipewyan	1,008	Allison Bay: 84 Dog Head: 111	1,203
Fort McKay	59	Fort McKay: 396	455
Gregoire Lake Estates	275	Gregoire Lake: 121	396
Janvier	171	Janvier: 295	466

The Master Plan recommendations regarding the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities within these hamlets take into consideration the presence of these First Nation communities, and the associated services provided within them.

### Exhibit 13: Map of municipal communities and First Nation communities



Source: Municipal Development Plan (2011)



### 3.3. Project Accommodations

The growth in project accommodations associated with oil sands developments has accounted for an increasing proportion of the region's population growth over the past decade. Data from municipal censuses indicates:

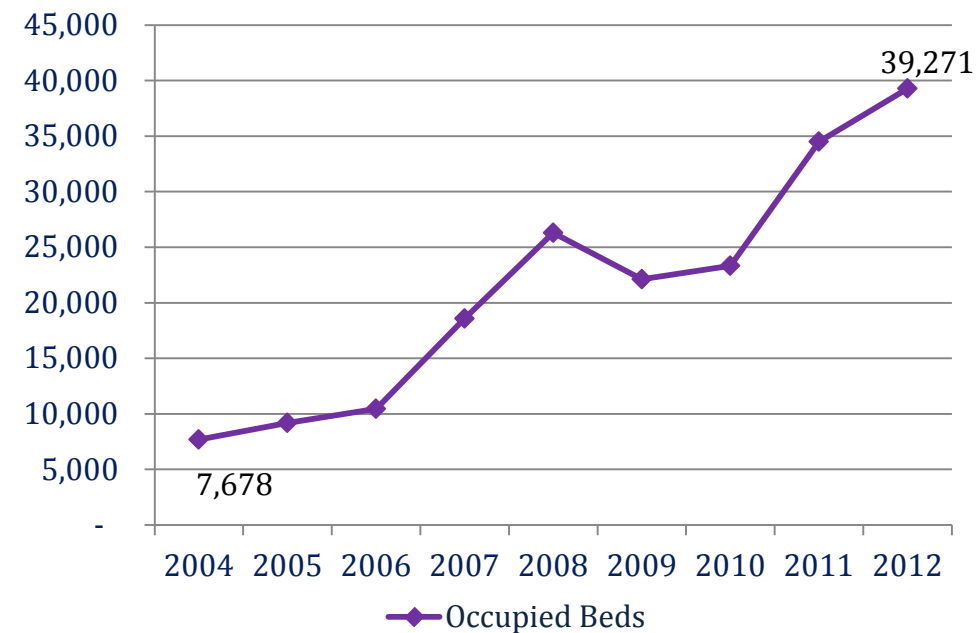
- Between 2002 and 2005, Fort McMurray accounted for 92 percent of the region's population growth and project accommodations for eight percent.
- Between 2005 and 2012, Fort McMurray accounted for 28 percent of the region's population growth and project accommodations for 70 percent.

The growth of project accommodations has had, and will continue to have, an impact on planning for and providing indoor recreation and community facilities in the region. Current oil industry employment is concentrated around Fort McMurray, Anzac, Fort McKay and Conklin.

Anecdotal discussions with facility managers in Fort McMurray and Anzac indicated that facilities in these communities are frequently used by workers living in project accommodations surrounding these communities. Similarly, the new recreation complex about to be built in Conklin is likely to service a growing oil sands workforce around the hamlet. This statement is not to discount the fact that many project accommodations also house fitness facilities. A background review undertaken for this Master Plan identified that the majority of project accommodations include basic fitness facilities, with larger camps housing more sophisticated facilities ranging from outdoor rinks, squash courts and driving ranges. Project accommodations with these larger recreation facilities are typically far from existing communities within the Municipality. Rather, residents of these project accommodations are likely to use facilities such as indoor arenas, and gymnasiums – that are not available in camps.

The region's Municipal Development Plan supports the development of Consolidated Work Camps which facilitate the provision of services. A key underlying assumption of the MDP, however, is that long-term operational workers in the oil industry can be attracted to settle in the priority growth areas of Fort McMurray and Anzac (*Municipal Development Plan, 2011*). The provision of high quality, indoor recreation and community facilities within the priority growth areas will be a key factor in attracting temporary residents to settle permanently within the Municipality.

Exhibit 14: Growth in Project Accommodation Population 2004-2012



Source: Joint Review Panel Hearing #1554388

Exhibit 15: Fitness Room at McClelland Lake Lodge





The following tables indicate the scale of projected growth in oil sands employment, by location, by 2030, as outlined in the 2011 Municipal Development Plan. Much of this employment is projected to be concentrated around the existing urban centre of Fort McMurray, priority growth area of Anzac, and the rural community of Conklin. While this employment is by its very nature temporary (resource-based), it is longer-term in that these operations are expected to last several decades. These residents will use services in their surrounding communities and as such may need to be planned for. This being said, the location of any required recreation infrastructure to service these additional residents in and around these communities should not be determined by the location of project accommodations given their temporary nature – rather we suggest, any additional service must be centralized within existing communities to ensure their utility to permanent residents.

In the context of the recent economic downturn, it is possible that growth in industrial employment will be slower than as predicted in the Municipal Development Plan. As indicated throughout this Master Plan however, the recommendations provided within this document are population- and participation-based and as such will guide municipal decision-making based on when the Municipality’s population reaches certain thresholds. We have provided an estimation of when this may happen based on preliminary revisions to the population projections for the region from the Municipality. Identifying the precise point in time when investment in a new facility should take place will be the role of Council and Administration based on both thresholds identified within this Master Plan, and political will.

Exhibit 16: Projected Growth in Operational Jobs by 2030

Proximity to Fort McMurray	Additional Operational Jobs (2030)
Within 50km	13,891
Within 75km	32,271
Within 100km	45,787

Proximity to Anzac	Additional Operational Jobs (2030)
Within 25km	2,244
Within 50km	4,001

Proximity to Conklin	Additional Operational Jobs (2030)
Within 25km	4,840
Within 50km	5,741

Source: Municipal Development Plan (2011)



### 3.4. Trends and Implications

Based on available data from the Municipality regarding recent demographic trends, and projected growth patterns, the following trends can be expected to impact the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities over the duration of this plan:

1. With a relatively young population, and the region encouraging permanent residence among current and future temporary workers, the number of young families can be expected to grow.
2. The provision of urban services, including recreation and community services, should be a key part of the Municipality's resident retention strategy.
3. Encouraging permanent residency through building sustainable communities can be expected to encourage retirees who would have previously moved away, to remain within the Municipality. The provision of recreation and community facilities and programs for older adults will need to be planned for in existing and new facilities.
4. The relatively high proportion of regional residents employed in shift work will require flexible program schedules to encourage participation in recreation and community programs.
5. Given the projected growth in operational jobs, much of the expected population growth in the region will likely come from in-migration. As indicated in the 2012 Municipal Census, there is a multicultural element to urban service area population which is likely to grow as immigration continues from ethnically diverse communities across Canada and the world. Future provision of indoor recreation and community facilities will need to consider the unique space and programming needs of these different communities and cultures.
6. Significant growth is projected for Anzac, transforming it from a hamlet into a large town. The new Anzac Recreation Centre will service this growing population.
7. Despite the MDP (2011) calling for the region's rural communities (with the exception of Anzac) to remain areas of stability with minimal population growth over the next 15 years, many of these lie close to current and pending industry operations that are supported with project accommodations (e.g. Fort McKay and Conklin) whose residents may or may not choose to use nearby indoor recreation and community

facilities. Any indoor recreation and community facilities developed within these communities should be centralized to ensure optimum accessibility for permanent residents.

8. Similarly, the identified populations of the rural hamlets from the 2012 Municipal Census do not include the populations of nearby (sometimes adjacent) First Nation communities in the region. On-the-ground engagement in these communities indicated that residents flow between First Nation community and hamlet boundaries to access services, and as such these populations and associated services provided in these communities, should be considered in planning for new indoor recreation and community facilities.
9. The proposed densification of Fort McMurray's Lower Townsite neighbourhood will come with its own facility requirements. Given that the site is close to MacDonald Island Park, Syncrude Sport and Wellness, and the proposed new Sports and Entertainment Centre (SEC) for the neighbourhood, these residents will be served by regional-scale recreation and community facilities. It will be important in future recreation and community facility planning to ensure that these residents are well served by both community-scale and neighbourhood-scale facilities (see Section 4 for an overview of these scales).





4

## CURRENT INVENTORY & COMMUNITY VIEWS





## 4 Current Inventory and Community Views

The Municipality's inventory of indoor recreation and community facilities is provided on three key scales:



*\*Within the Municipality, neighbourhood scale facilities are predominantly provided through community schools. With the exception of Draper, Saprae Creek, and Fort Fitzgerald, each rural community in the region has a community school with an indoor gym that serves the immediate neighbourhood. Fort McMurray is home to schools in each of its neighbourhoods.*

This section provides an overview of the current and planned inventory of indoor recreation and community facilities, includes community views as gathered through public engagement. A more detailed discussion regarding the service delivery model employed by the Municipality to plan for, finance, and operate these facilities is provided in Section 6 accompanying the recommendations for this topic.

### 4.1. Regional-Scale Indoor Recreation and Community Assets

Regional indoor recreation and community assets within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo comprise:

- **Suncor Community Leisure Centre, MacDonald Island Park** (Fort McMurray)
- **Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre, Keyano College** (Fort McMurray)
- **Anzac Recreation Centre** (Anzac) – a community scale facility currently operating on a regional scale given Anzac's small population base.
- **Keyano College Theatre and Arts Centre** (Fort McMurray)
- **Casman Centre** (Fort McMurray)

These facilities draw participants from across the region and provide both broad appeal and specialized facilities amenities, and programming.

Regional indoor recreation and community facilities are concentrated within the urban service area of Fort McMurray where the majority of the region's population is located. The recently-opened Anzac Recreation Centre was constructed in anticipation of significant population growth and development in the hamlet over the next fifteen years.



**Suncor Community Leisure Centre, MacDonald Island Park – Fort McMurray**  
*Ownership: Municipal*

At 600,000 sq. ft., this is the region’s signature indoor recreation complex. The facility recently underwent an expansion that opened in June – Shell Place. The facility is owned by the Municipality and operated by the Regional Recreation Corporation (RRC).

**Indoor Amenities**

Hockey Rinks (2) – 1 NHL size with seating, the other 185’	Indoor turf field house
Terry Conroy Mini Ice	Badminton house (9 nets)
Aquatic Centre - 103,000 sq. ft. (54m pool, two waterslides, lazy river, hot tubs, spray park)	Shared space for non-profit organizations
Indoor fields (2)	Banquet and conference space
Concessions (1 private, one RRC-run)	
Fort McMurray Public Library (56,000 sq. ft.)	
210m walking track (4-lane)	
Community art gallery	
Squash courts (3)	
Rock Climbing Wall	
Banquet room and office space	

During public engagement conducted for this Master Plan, MacDonald Island Park (MIP) was the most frequently discussed indoor recreation and community facility. To quantify relative use of the facility, within the public online survey, MIP was the most frequently cited facility used – with approximately 70 percent of respondents (n=657) indicating that they had visited the facility in the last year. Many residents from communities outside of Fort McMurray whom we spoke to during the open houses indicated that the facility is their “go-to” destination for indoor recreation and community activities given the variety of activities for the whole family.

Residents indicated that they liked the quality of facilities available at the complex, saying they are well-maintained and provide a “one-stop-shop” for families looking to engage in a variety of activities under one roof.

Parking issues at the complex were the most frequently cited complaint about MIP, and also throughout the survey whenever respondents had an opportunity to indicate what they would like to change about recreation and community facilities in Fort McMurray. Respondents indicated a parking structure is needed to improve visitor experience, particularly in the context of the development of Shell Place.

Other key concerns included:

- Users are often “bumped out” when there is a special event;
- Changing rooms are far from the fitness room which can be awkward when special events are taking place;
- Need for more activities for toddlers and young children;
- Cost of renting space is expensive;
- Need graded curbs around the facility (not just at the entrance) for young families and others with accessibility concerns;
- Distance from the growing communities of Timberlea and Parsons Creek; and
- Fee structure that discourages drop-in use for non-members; and
- Long entrance lines for members: A number of respondents indicated that the use of swipe turnstiles for members could address this issue.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Municipality to work with the RRC to identify feasibility of a parking structure to improve parking.*







**Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre, Keyano College – Fort McMurray**  
*Ownership: Private/Institutional*

Owned and operated by Keyano College, the Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre serves both students and the general public. Current membership sits at approximately 3,500 (1,500 public; 2,000 students).

The Centre is home to the Keyano Huskies (Basketball, Futsal, Soccer, Volleyball), and a training facility for the College’s hockey team. It also houses office space for the Fort McMurray Youth Soccer Association.

Keyano has expressed an interest to the Municipality in operating a community arena for the Municipality. These plans remain anecdotal and informal at this time. The College owns land adjacent to the existing Syncrude Sports & Wellness Centre that it has identified as a potential site for a new-build arena should the Municipality wish to engage Keyano as a partner in ice provision.

Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre: Indoor Amenities
Fitness Centre
Field House (2)
Basketball/Volleyball Court
Walking Track
Office Space
Meeting Room
Concession
Primary Care Network Admin Offices

The public online survey indicated that this facility was well-used by respondents, with approximately half of all respondents indicating that they had used this centre in the past year (n=445). Specifically, most indicated in their comments that they chose to use this facility due to their dissatisfaction with parking, wait times, and crowding at MIP. The facility is popular with residents from Draper, given its location to the south of the Lower Townsite neighbourhood. The only concerns raised during the public engagement process were associated with customer service, paid parking, and the lack of concessions (which are now open). Several respondents indicated that the tracks were closed for Huskies home games, which caused scheduling issues with league sports.

Exhibit 17: Basketball/Volleyball Court at Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre





**Anzac Recreation Centre – Anzac**  
*Ownership: Municipal*

Opened in 2014, the Anzac Recreation Centre is the newest recreation facility operated by the RRC. While the centre is community-based in scale, the limited population size of Anzac at present means that the facility currently has the potential to attract residents from across the region including Fort McMurray and rural hamlets to the south of the urban service area. The scale on which this facility operates as Anzac begins to build out will depend on what other facilities will be built in the community.

The centre currently serves Anzac’s 756 residents, in addition to a large project accommodation population in proximity to the community. The Municipal Development Plan suggests there may be approximately 2,244 employees at the in-situ operations within 25km of Anzac, many of whom commute to Fort McMurray, passing through the hamlet.

The MDP suggests that with sufficient land, Anzac is projected to grow to 6,000 to 8,000 residents over the next two decades, at which point the Recreation Centre would form the foundation of a core set of municipal services.

The facility is relatively under-utilized at present, primarily a factor of the relatively small population that serves. During the 2014-15 season for example, the ice surface was booked 48 percent of the available time. This compares with utilization rates in the range of 65-75 percent in Fort McMurray. There is potential for ice groups from Fort McMurray to make better use of the ice time however, the online survey indicated that Fort McMurray residents are unreceptive to travelling outside of the city to use indoor recreation and community facilities. Eighty percent of respondents from Fort McMurray indicated that they choose not to use indoor recreation and community facilities in other Wood Buffalo communities because their location is not convenient.

Through an open house and the public online survey, Anzac residents indicated that they were happy with the recreation and community facilities available in their community. A handful of residents indicated that while they were satisfied with the amenities available at the Anzac Recreation Centre, they felt that the indoor playground and library services at the facility could be improved. Specifically:

- The indoor playground should incorporate amenities suitable for older children; and
- Programming at the library should cater to children under the age of five (rather than relying on the indoor playground to entertain them).

Anzac Recreation Centre: Indoor Amenities
Arena: NHL size, seating for 200
Fieldhouse
Fitness centre
Fitness/dance studio with Fitness on Demand®
Running track (210m)
Indoor playground (0-7 years)
Multi-purpose Rooms (2)
Meeting room
Office space
Concession

Exhibit 18: Guest Services: Anzac Recreation Centre





**Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre - Fort McMurray**  
*Ownership: Private/Institutional*

Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre is the leading regional facility providing access to theatrical and musical performances and programming, and an art gallery that hosts regular community events. It is one of two specialized performance spaces in the region, the other being the Suncor Energy Centre for Performing Arts at Holy Trinity Catholic High School, which is more community-focused in terms of the type of events and activities that are hosted.

The Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre features two theatres and several program rooms used by the college and other community groups to offer dance, music, art, and other cultural programming. The theatres are used by touring theatrical productions, in addition to community groups and local schools.

Public engagement indicated that the Theatre and Arts Centre is appreciated by the community but used primarily by residents in Fort McMurray. It is a popular venue for Fort McMurray residents, with approximately one-third of respondents to the public survey indicating they have used the facility in the last year (n=251). There is potential for the centre to attract residents from neighbouring communities (e.g. Anzac, Gregoire Lake Estates, Saprae Creek, Draper and Fort McKay) but, at present, the facility is relatively constrained in terms of capacity. Specific concerns identified during the engagement process for this Master Plan were:

- **Restricted seating capacity:** Limits the number of tickets available, and also hinders Fort McMurray in attracting shows and performances that typically attract a much larger audience;
- **Limited lobby space:** This limits the amount of time that patrons wish to spend at the facility before or after the performance, reducing the attractiveness of the centre as a full cultural experience; and
- **Dated décor and facilities.**

Keyano College has presented a proposal for expansion to the Municipality. The proposed expansion would expand the capacity of the facility’s existing main theatre to 1,200, with a redesigned and expanded multi-use lobby, art gallery, and bar. It is Keyano’s intention that the facility function as the centrally-located performance centre originally proposed in the City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan (2012). The project was not approved in the 2015 Municipal budget.

Keyano Theatre & Arts Centre: Indoor Amenities
Main theatre (capacity 594)
Recital theatre (capacity 194)
Dance studios
Art gallery
Music room
Classrooms

Exhibit 19: Conceptual Design: Keyano Theatre Expansion



Source: Keyano College



**Casman Centre - Fort McMurray**  
*Ownership: Municipal*

Home to the Fort McMurray Oil Barons, the Casman Centre is a 1,533-seat arena located in the Thickwood Heights neighbourhood in Fort McMurray. Built in approximately 1980, the arena also houses an amphitheatre and a pottery studio. The arena has recently undergone a renovation to improve visitor flow during busy games. The arena is primarily used by the Oil Barons, with the Keyano Huskies, Fort McMurray Ringette, and several adult hockey leagues claiming the majority of the remaining ice time at the arena.

The arena is well-used, and Oil Barons games well-attended. Engagement with the facility manager indicated that the arena is at capacity for Oil Baron games.

The Fort McMurray Potters Guild operates the pottery studio within the Casman Centre, offering classes for all ages. The Guild was unable to provide classes during 2014 due to renovations.

Public engagement through the public survey indicated that the Casman Centre is well-liked by Fort McMurray residents, primarily for Oil Barons games (n=340). Key issues raised were:

- Limited parking;
- Older décor that needs a facelift; and
- Poor acoustics for concerts.

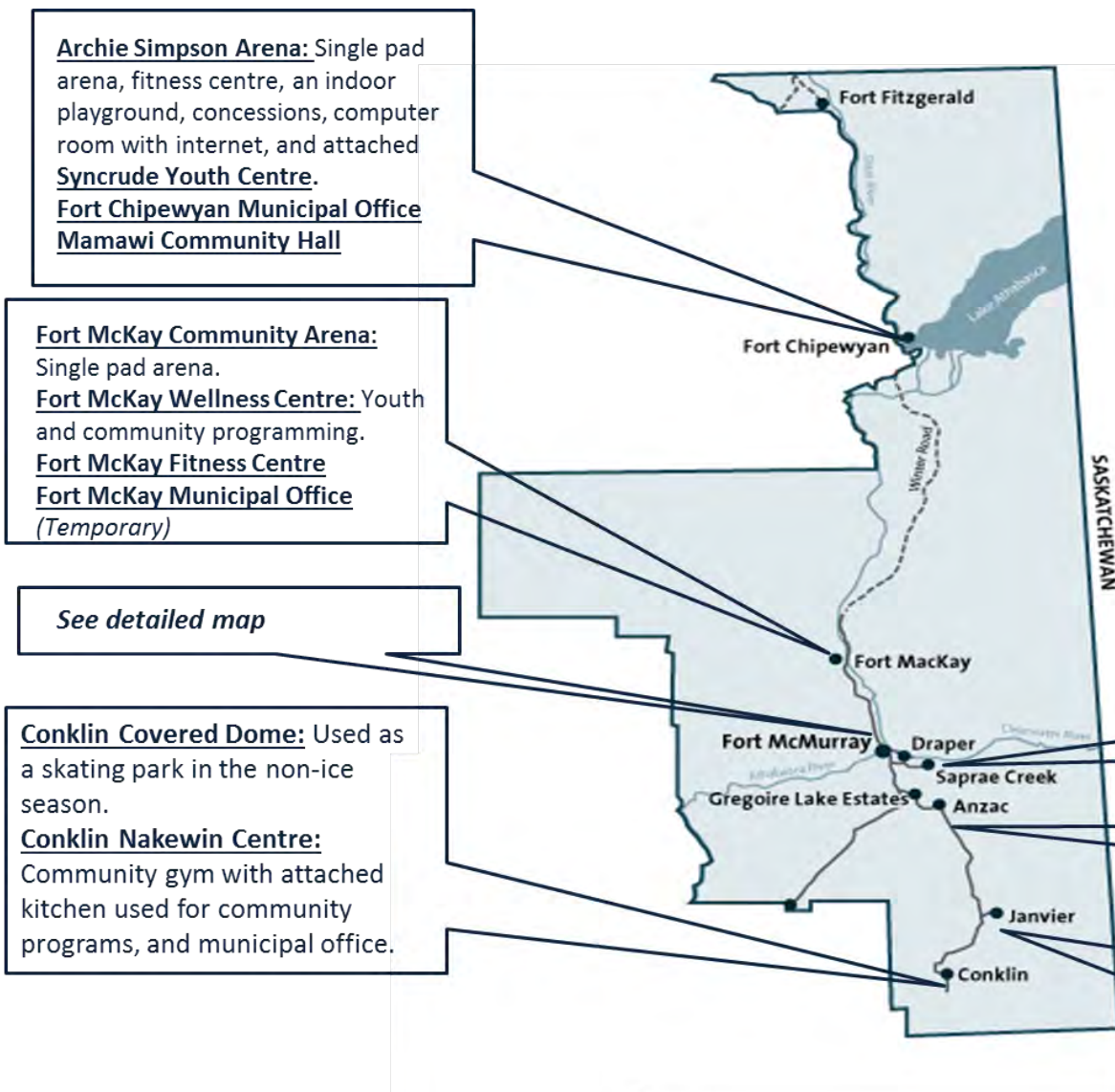
Casman Centre: Indoor Amenities
1,533-seat arena with concession
Pottery studio
Multi-purpose room with kitchen
Amphitheatre



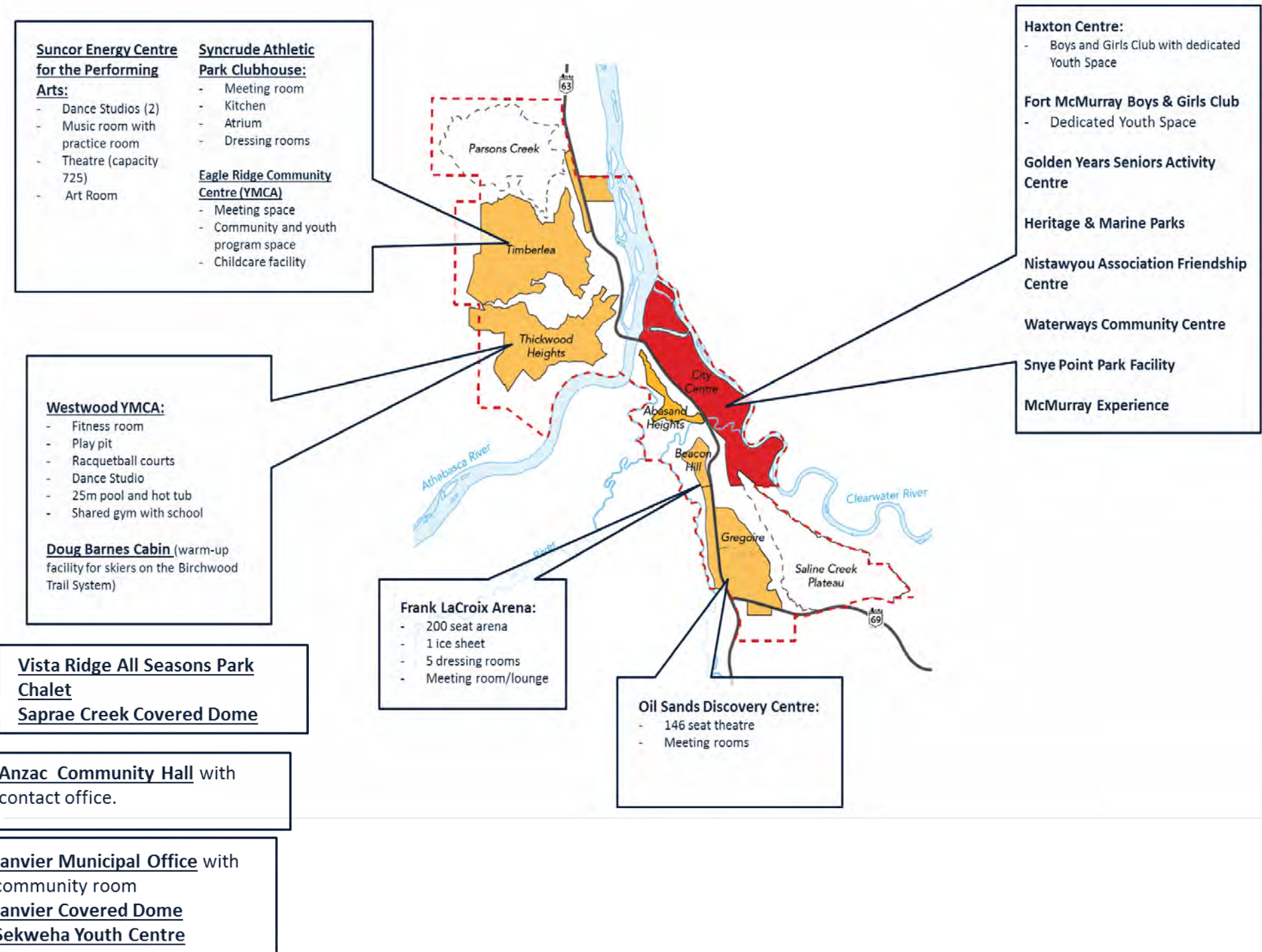
## 4.2. Community-Scale Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities

The following maps identify community-scale indoor regional and community facilities across the Municipality's constituent communities. These are facilities that are accessed by the entire community. Community satisfaction with these facilities, and community aspirations, are provided below.

**Exhibit 21: Community-Scale Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities**



**Exhibit 20: Fort McMurray: Detailed Map – Community-Scale Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities**





#### 4.2.1. Resident Satisfaction with Community-Scale Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities

##### Anzac:

*Anzac and Gregoire Lake Estates residents provided input into this Master Plan primarily through a three-hour open house for residents in October 2014.*

**Anzac Community Hall:** Anzac and Gregoire Lake Estates residents indicated during an open house (n=11) for this Master Plan that they appreciate the programming at the Anzac Community Hall, and the availability of the space for hosting local events. They recognize that the new Anzac Recreation Centre will be used by the communities for recreation-based programming, but see the hall as a community events space that is not duplicated by the new recreation centre.

##### Conklin:

*Conklin residents provided input into this Master Plan primarily through an open house at the Conklin Nakewin Centre, which occurred during the ground breaking ceremony for the Conklin Multiplex (n=22). As such, when we asked residents about their recreation participation and facility needs, most indicated that they felt the new multiplex will meet the community's needs. Some expressed concern that growing numbers of project accommodations in the area would overwhelm the community's infrastructure however.*

*Conklin residents indicated that they are willing to travel to other communities to use recreation, but that they often felt the journey along Highway 881 was dangerous and not worth the risk to engage in recreation and leisure activities.*

**Conklin Nakewin Centre:** Residents enjoy the building's amenities for community events and programming. The poor condition of the building means that residents are eagerly anticipating the new multiplex to replace this facility for community events and programming and to provide a broader range of amenities including an ice pad.

**Conklin Covered Dome:** Residents indicated the structure is well-used and appreciated by the community year-round. There were some concerns regarding the opening hours and a need for a more regular schedule.

##### Fort Chipewyan:

*Fort Chipewyan residents provided input into this Master Plan primarily through a five-hour open house for residents in October 2014.*

**Archie Simpson Arena & Syncrude Youth Centre:** This is a popular hang-out location for kids after school; however, there is no programming or instruction. Rather, the arena functions as a drop-in space. Some parents indicated that because of the lack of supervision and structure, they did not feel comfortable letting their children use the facility after school.

*Many residents indicated that prior to the collapse of the old arena, which functioned as a curling rink, curling was very popular amongst all age groups, particularly elders, and functioned as a constructive activity that helped to develop a sense of community. Since the new arena was constructed, the community no longer engages in curling and many feel this has contributed to a decline in the sense of community among residents.*

**Mamawi Community Hall:** This is a popular venue for community events, with a large hall with a stage, kitchen, Elders Room, and newly renovated art studio. The facility is popular, and residents indicated that there are often competing events looking to use the space.

*The community lacks any formal recreation and leisure programming. Some residents felt that this was the result of a lack of appropriate space for groups to meet (e.g. dance groups, craft groups etc.), and a lack of support from the Municipality in terms of providing instruction. The community suffers from a relatively high resident turn-over rate, and most residents felt that programs typically start with an enthusiastic resident, and the program dies out several years later once that resident moves away.*

Syncrude Youth Centre, Fort Chipewyan





### Fort McKay:

*Input into this Master Plan from Fort McKay occurred primarily through a stakeholder engagement at the Municipal Office in October 2014. Indoor recreation and community facilities in Fort McKay are owned and operated by the Fort McKay First Nation (FMFN) but also used by the Fort McKay Métis community.*

**Fort McKay First Nation Arena:** This is a focal point of the community and a source of community pride. The community is happy with this facility, and it also provides ice time to user groups from Fort McMurray when they are unable to book sufficient or convenient ice at local arenas. The community is planning an upcoming renovation to the second floor to add a heated viewing platform, and concession.

**Fort McKay Wellness Centre:** This offers after-school programming for children, run by a mothers group. The community is satisfied with this facility.

**Fort McKay Fitness Centre:** Located within the community's Band Hall, this facility is relatively small but appreciated by the community. The ultimate goal of the Fort McKay First Nation is to provide a larger fitness facility.

### Fort McMurray:

*Residents in Fort McMurray and users of facilities in this community primarily provided input into the Master Plan through an online survey. In total, 904 residents responded to the survey (858 from Fort McMurray). Additional input was gathered through stakeholder and public engagement sessions during the fall/winter of 2014/15.*

As a whole, Fort McMurray residents who provided input into the Master Plan were satisfied with indoor recreation and community facilities in the city. To provide some level of quantification - two thirds of respondents to the online survey indicated that they were either "highly satisfied", or "somewhat satisfied" with indoor recreation and community facilities in Fort McMurray.

Frequently cited responses when asked 'what do you like the most about recreation in Fort McMurray' included:

- MacDonald Island Park
- Variety of activities and facilities/lots of options
- Quality of facilities

For those respondents who indicated that they were dissatisfied with an aspect of recreation and community facilities and programming in Fort McMurray, top answers included:

- Lack of community facilities in the Timberlea-Thickwood-Parsons Creek area/too many facilities downtown
- Parking issues associated with MacDonald Island Park
- Community uses getting bumped from MacDonald Island Park for industry events
- Cost of programs/membership
- Crowding at facilities
- Over-enrollment in programming

Consistent with these concerns, the top barriers limiting residents' participation in recreation and leisure community activities were (in descending order of number of responses):

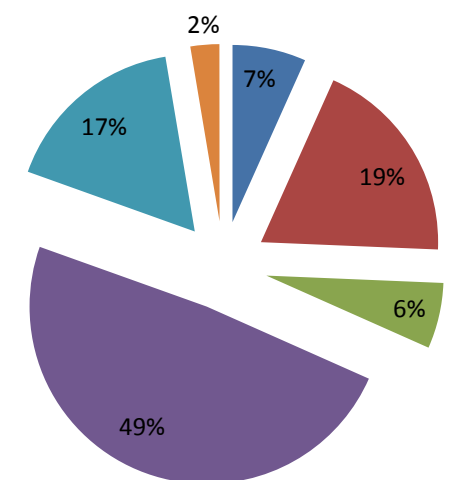
1. Cost of programs
2. Over-crowded facilities
3. Lack of appropriate facilities
4. Timing of programming
5. Distance/location of facilities

**Exhibit 22: Public Survey Response – Satisfaction with Indoor Recreation and Community Facilities in Fort McMurray**

### Public Survey:

***'How satisfied are you with indoor recreation and community facilities in Fort McMurray?'***

■ Highly Dissatisfied    ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied  
 ■ Indifferent    ■ Somewhat Satisfied  
 ■ Highly Satisfied    ■ I don't use them



Sierra Planning and Management



Distance to facilities was the most frequently cited barrier by respondents from Timberlea. When asked where in Fort McMurray new indoor recreation and community facilities should be located, Timberlea was the most popular answer, even for residents who indicated that they do not reside in the neighbourhood themselves. As an example, almost 40 percent of residents living in the Lower Townsite indicated that new facilities should be developed in Timberlea. Satisfaction and concerns with specific community-scale facilities are provided as follows:

**Frank LaCroix Minor Hockey Arena: (n=149<sup>1</sup>)** Residents indicated that they are generally happy with their experience at the arena (80 percent of respondents). Residents liked the canteen, renovated parking, and availability of ice sharpening. They also liked that the arena provides ice time to schools. Some respondents indicated that limited parking remains an issue.

**Lion's Park Clubhouse: (n=30)**

Residents indicated that this was a good community space for small functions and programs and relatively affordable compared to other community meeting spaces. Many suggested that the clubhouse's furnishing and finishings are somewhat dated and the facility could use a facelift to keep up with other newer facilities in Fort McMurray.

**Golden Years Seniors Activity Centre: (n=65)**

This was well-reviewed by residents who use this facility, indicating that it is an affordable space and often busy with programming and social events. It is an older facility and accordingly could use some updating to interior finishings to modernize the building.

A key concern among respondents who use this centre is that as the Municipality encourages more residents to settle permanently in the region, there will be a growing need for seniors activities and facilities. While the Golden Years Centre currently serves the community well, many indicated that eventually the seniors community will require a bigger facility, or more likely a number of smaller facilities located throughout new neighbourhoods.



*Frank LaCroix Minor Hockey Arena*

<sup>1</sup> n=149 refers to the number of survey respondents in the public survey indicated that they have used this facility over the past year. This numbering is used throughout this section to indicate the sample size of the public survey relative to comments. In person open houses supplement this but represent a significantly smaller sample size.



**Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse: (n=104)**

A small number of respondents indicated that they had used the clubhouse – with most indicating they had used the playing fields only. For those who had used the clubhouse, all agreed that it is an attractive and functional facility, however the acoustics in the main hall are troublesome for meetings and social events.

**Haxton Centre: (n=28)**

Very few respondents indicated that they used the Haxton Centre. Those who did provide input were generally unsatisfied with the facility, however. Key complaints were associated with its location away from residential areas and as such limited accessibility by youth confined to public transit. Others said the space is relatively small and that it is not well-used by other youth in the community. Despite the shortcomings of the physical facility, the programming at the Haxton Centre was well-reviewed and liked.

**Westwood YMCA: (n=260)**

The YMCA was well-liked by members, who indicated that they had a poor experience at MIP in terms of parking and crowding; however, most respondents suggested that this facility could use renovations and improvements. Particular concerns included the lack of light in the pool and gym, and outdated exercise machines. Despite these concerns, respondents indicated that this facility has good fitness classes.

**Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts: (n=161)**

Respondents indicated that this is an accessible and flexible community space that serves a variety of functions for community groups. The only concerns raised were insufficient promotion of events, and a lack of air conditioning turned on in the main theatre.

**Fort McMurray Public Library: (n=373)**

This is a well-used facility, with one in four respondents to the public survey indicating they had used the library in the last year. Respondents liked the programming and flexible space; however, many disliked its location at MIP, which is a very busy facility and located away from the growing residential areas of Thickwood and Timberlea. Suggestions for improvements included keeping this facility as the library's main branch while developing new satellite locations in new neighbourhoods, introduction of foreign-language collections and the introduction of continuing education courses for adults.



*Fort McMurray Public Library*



**Doug Barnes Cabin (n=57)**

The cabin is a warm-up shelter for the Birchwood Trail System, owned by the Municipality but operated by the Ptarmigan Nordic Ski Club which also grooms the trails surrounding the facility. It is popular with residents for both recreation-based activities in the Birchwood Trails, and as a venue for smaller community events. The cabin has a BBQ but no washrooms.

Community comments regarding the cabin were largely positive, with residents enjoying the facility with the Birchwood Trails, but also as a venue for small events. Specific requirements identified by the community were:

- Need to expand the cabin to facilitate larger community events; and
- The need for washroom facilities.

The Ptarmigan Nordic Ski Club is working with the Municipality to expand the cabin. This Master Plan supports this work (see Section 6).

**Waterways Community Centre (WCC)**

*Engagement regarding the WCC primarily took place during an open house in the Waterways neighbourhood in January 2015.*

The original Waterways Community Centre (WCC) site was originally developed in 1950 at 7302 Bulyea Avenue, with a new building constructed on the existing foundation in 1970. Since 1982, the Municipality has had an agreement with the Waterways Neighbourhood Association (WNA), formerly the Waterways Community Association, to operate the WCC. Recent structural and building life cycle assessments identified that the WCC has surpassed its useful lifecycle and the current building does not meet standards for public use.

The building has been historically well-liked by the Waterways neighbourhood as an affordable space to host community events.

**The McMurray Experience (MME)**

Construction will be complete on the McMurray Experience (MME) in 2015. MME will be an engaging public attraction for residents, tourists, and investors of all ages. This multimedia environment will combine different levels of interaction, such as video, lighting, interactive screens, building blocks, photo booth, 3D imaging, and sound and special effects to showcase the Municipality

and what it has to offer. The McMurray Experience may be used as a recruitment tool for both business and industry to demonstrate the positive elements of living, working, playing, and investing in the region. The space is also designed to host indoor events, both private and public.

**Snye Point Park Facility**

Snye Point Park Facility commenced construction in 2014, envisioned to be a multi-use community space to service local non-profits. In April, 2015 Council supported the recommendation that construction of the facility proceed, incorporating recommendations put forward by the Waterfront Steering Committee (a committee created by Council to give citizens more opportunity to guide development along the waterfront of the Clearwater River and the Snye). The design concept incorporates stakeholder concerns and satisfies the need for the upcoming construction season, including timelines as required for the Western Canada Summer Games being hosted in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in 2015.

**Eagle Ridge Community Centre**

The Eagle Ridge Centre, recently opened, is a 26,834 sq. ft. community centre in the Timberlea/Eagle Ridge. The facility sits between the Walter and Gladys Hill School, and the Saint-Kateri Elementary School. The facility houses community meeting space and programming, youth activities, after-school programming, and a full-time licensed childcare facility.



**Janvier:**

*Janvier residents primarily provided input into this Master Plan through an open house at the Janvier Municipal Office, where residents were invited to learn about the project and provide input.*

**Municipal Office:** This facility includes a hall with a capacity of approximately 75, with a non-industrial kitchen. As Municipal property, local groups must book the space from the Municipality, which has caused some friction as local residents feel they would like a proprietary space that they can use at their own leisure. The hall is quite well-used by the Janvier Dene Wood Buffalo Community Association which holds elder meetings once a month, craft nights twice per week, and parenting programs. A larger facility would improve community spirit by allowing all residents to attend programming and meetings.

**Janvier Covered Dome:** The physical condition of the dome is a bone of contention amongst residents. It was previously covered (2011-2013), however, it was vandalized and subsequently removed. Because it remains uncovered, it is not used by the local community.

**Sekweha Youth Centre:** Located on the First Nation community adjacent to Janvier hamlet, the centre is well-used by the local community. Anecdotal discussions indicated that other groups in the hamlet try not to compete with the youth centre as it is very popular.

**Saprae Creek:**

*Saprae Creek residents provided input into this Master Plan primarily through both the online public survey, and through an open house with residents in January, 2015 at the Vista Ridge All Seasons Park Chalet.*

**Vista Ridge All Seasons Park Chalet:** The chalet at Vista Ridge is well-used by the local residents society for recreation and community programming. The facility is liked and appreciated by the community; however, the local residents society has concerns regarding scheduling conflicts between the park as a business and the needs of the local community. The community is hoping for a designated community hall to better meet their needs.



### 4.3. Community Aspirations and Planned Projects

This section summarizes community aspirations for indoor recreation and community facilities as expressed through the public engagement process for this Master Plan. It also outlines planned projects that will work to meet some of these expressed community aspirations.

**Conklin:** The key community aspiration that arose from public engagement was the construction of the Conklin Multiplex. The project's design includes an ice pad, community space and community services, including the Municipality and space for medical staff. The project has been approved by Council at this time.

**Draper:** Draper residents are largely amenable to travelling to Fort McMurray for indoor recreation and community facilities. Public engagement with Draper residents indicated they are interested in a facility that provides community space for local events. This could take the form of a community hall or a covered shelter in a community park. To fulfil this community aspiration, the Municipality is currently tendering a feasibility study for this proposed facility.

**Fort Chipewyan:** While residents are satisfied with the existing indoor recreation and community facilities in the hamlet, they would like more space for crafts and traditional dancing given that the Mamawi Hall is often booked up. Parents would like more structured programming at the Archie Simpson Arena to ensure a healthy and safe space for their children to spend time at after the school day.

The aquatic complex currently under construction in Fort Chipewyan will serve to diversify programming options in the community.

**Fort McKay:** Residents are happy with their current facilities but would like a larger fitness space and a fieldhouse to allow for an expansion in recreation and community programming. A larger fitness space could potentially provide memberships to project accommodations around Fort McKay to generate revenue.





**Fort McMurray:** When residents were asked what new indoor recreation and community facilities they felt Fort McMurray needed, the most frequently cited response from respondents in the public survey were a bowling alley, a movie theatre/cinema, an arena/ice, and a pool. Many respondents stressed the need for facilities in the Thickwood-Timberlea-Parsons Creek area “north of the bridge”. This aligns with findings of previous facility needs assessments conducted by the RRC.

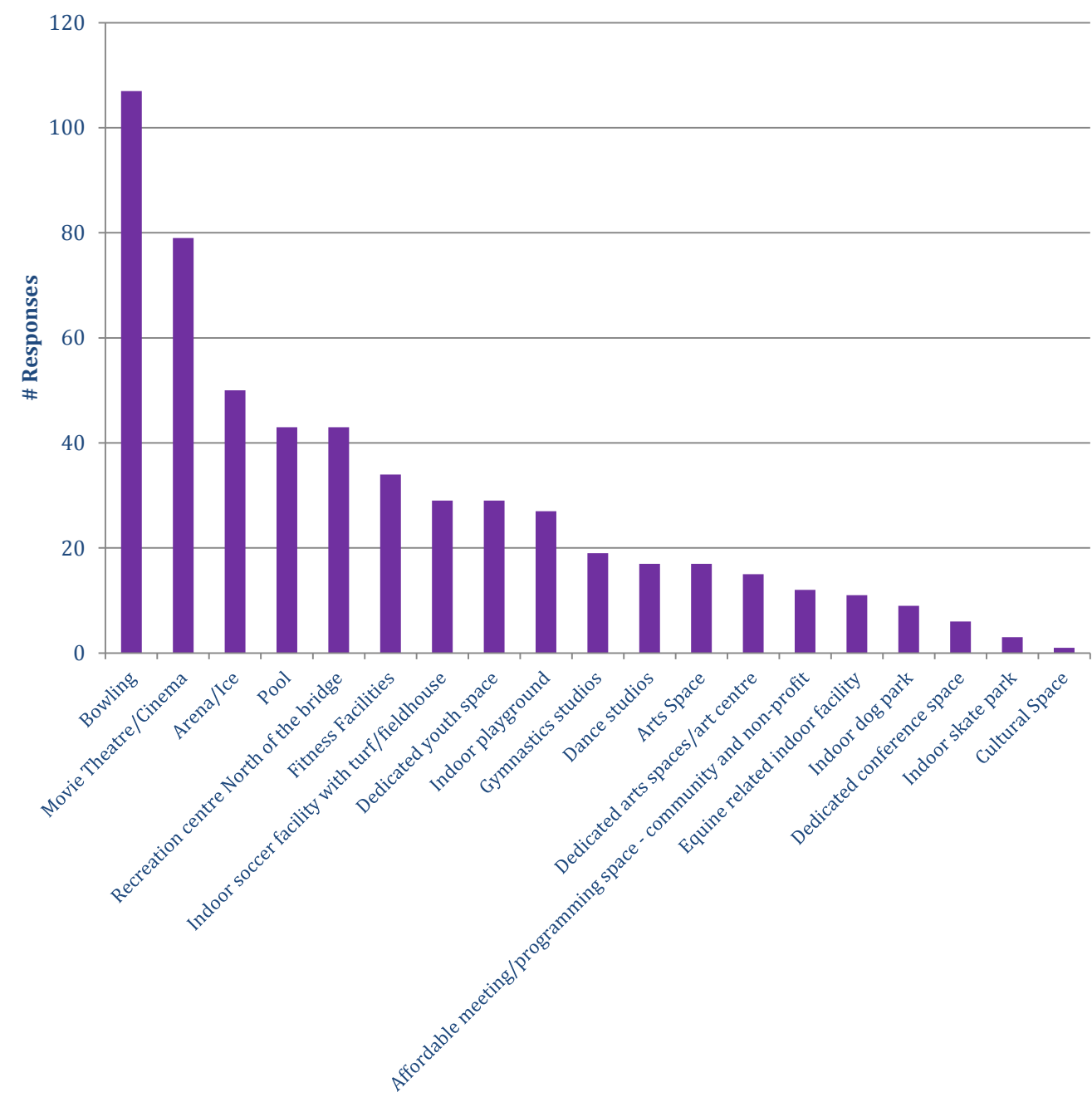
While dedicated arts and cultural space was indicated as a community need by relatively few respondents, the responses that were provided were very detailed, specifying the need for dedicated space for local artists, more performance space, and space to display artwork. Some indicated that a “dedicated arts centre” would fulfil this function, others indicated they supported investment in Keyano Theatre & Arts Centre in this regard.

Other, less specific answers identified a need for more social-based recreation and leisure activities, and facilities to support these. Several respondents indicated that while professional and organized sports are important for the community, Fort McMurray needs less formal activities and continuing education classes to function as social space for new residents to get to know each other outside of bars and restaurants.

Key concerns throughout responses regardless of the types of facilities respondents felt the community needed, were the need to plan for sufficient parking, the need to locate facilities in newly developing neighbourhoods (not just downtown), and the need to invest in a series of smaller community-based facilities rather than large all-in-one centres.

Exhibit 23: Public Survey Response – Additional Facility Needs in Fort McMurray

*‘What additional indoor recreation and community facility/ies do you feel Fort McMurray needs?’*





Planned facilities in Fort McMurray are:

- The Northside twin arena that has a potential expansion into a multi-purpose recreation and community centre using a phased approach: This will alleviate community ice demands, and potentially (if Phase 2 moves ahead) fulfil community aspirations for a new pool in Timberlea-Parsons Creek, fitness facilities, youth space, and other amenities.
- Shell Place: This is a performance stadium at MacDonald Island Park which will alleviate community ice needs by freeing up existing arenas that are currently being used as event space. Shell Place will also feature indoor and outdoor recreation and community amenities that will add gym space, and provide shared space for non-profit groups. As of writing, Shell Place had just opened to the community.

**Janvier:** Community members would like a larger community hall independent from the Municipal Office. Residents feel that a larger hall would strengthen community spirit by allowing all members of the community to attend events – something that is not currently possible due to the capacity of the community room in the Municipal Office. A larger hall also has the potential to provide more space for programming, given that community members feel the school gym is relatively small and limits programming opportunities.

**Saprae Creek:** Community members are largely amenable to travelling to Fort McMurray for larger recreation and community facilities, such as indoor ice and pools. Given scheduling conflicts between Vista Ridge and the local resident society, the community hopes to have its own community hall with facilities to house a variety of programs and events. The residents society is concerned that existing pressures will intensify as Vista Ridge expands its year-round programming. To fulfil this community aspiration, the Municipality is currently tendering a feasibility study for this proposed facility.







# 5 THE MASTER PLAN





## 5 The Master Plan

### 5.1. Development Principles

#### A: Engage in Recreation and Community Facilities as a Public Investment

1. The Municipality should be (and is) the provider of first resort for key recreation and community activities when there is no private market.
2. The Municipality should not fulfill this role for all activities. In some instances, the Municipality should constitute the provider of last resort when an active private market exists or when the cost and resources required to provide the activity are prohibitive relative to the specialized nature of the service.
3. Within this framework guiding municipal involvement, the Municipality should adopt policies and practices related to its recreational and community facilities and services that ensure that the private sector market is not “crowded out”. This applies to facilities as well as programs and services.
4. This Master Plan recognizes existing designs or commitments made to communities that may exceed the minimum level of provision we have provided as guidelines for Council for investment in indoor recreation and community facilities.
5. Recreation and community services are key drivers of the economy in terms of diversifying the economy, and a part of the Municipality’s long-term resident retention strategy.

#### B: Recreation and Community Facility Delivery Model

1. Maintain the community development model of indoor recreation and community facility and program provision, namely the provision, maintenance of, and investment in, facilities by the Municipality, and financially supporting the delivery of programs and services largely by other non-profit recreation and community groups.
2. Enhance Municipal engagement in policy-making and direction-setting for recreation, health and wellness goals in its jurisdiction.
3. Remove physical and financial barriers to participation, grow participation and skills development based on nationally-recognized recreation and community participation models.
4. Target key groups to enhance accessibility: Seniors, low-income households, Aboriginal communities, and new Canadians – how the Municipality does that when it is not a programmer involves maximizing the Municipality’s role in recreation policy-making, promoting/marketing activities, targeted approach to subsidy and achieving targets for the attainment of recreation, health and wellness benefits within at-risk groups.



### C: Partnership Approach to Indoor Facility Operations

1. The Municipality will ensure the most effective use of its owned recreation and community facilities and will develop long-term partnerships for the operation of facilities and delivery of recreation and community services.
2. Partnerships will be measured for their success as a basis for continued investment by the Municipality in the delivery agencies that are chosen to provide recreation and community facilities and services.
3. Strengthen and diversify organizational capacity to attain the goals for recreation and community betterment in both the urban and rural service areas.
4. The traditional forms of collaboration and informal networks to deliver recreation should remain important ties that bind communities. To these should be added the incremental addition of formal processes and measurements to evolve and maximize the value of the partnerships through which recreation and community services will be delivered now and in the future.

### D: Plan for Growth and Diversity of Opportunity

1. The Master Plan recognizes Fort McMurray as the major regional service centre in North-East Alberta. This role as a regional hub will underscore all planning and investment in recreation, culture, and related community activities in the region.
2. The Master Plan will anticipate change in population tied to projections of population growth and distribution that may exist over the plan period.
3. The provision of new facilities, their location and opportunities for new services will be based on standards of recreation and community facility supply. These provision standards will guide the Municipality in its investment in new recreation and community infrastructure.
4. Investment is contingent on the achievement of target population growth, which necessitates or “triggers” the requirement for additional facilities to maintain the appropriate standards of provision for the community as it grows.
5. Internal planning for new infrastructure commencing with this Master Plan, should result in a streamlined analysis, design, and delivery approach to ensure standards of provision are maintained going forward.
6. Planning for renewed investment in recreation and community infrastructure should be based on an agreed-upon menu of community assets that should be in place in all communities. Maintaining these, investment in new assets and effectively programming these assets is important. This should be tied to increased utilization of facilities for structured programming.
7. The Municipality will seek to promote the emerging recreation and cultural requirements of its residents. This includes new residents as well as target groups within existing communities, including the needs of the growing seniors population over the plan period and further to 2030.



## 5.2. Master Plan Goals

Each of the Master Plan recommendations is related to one or more of the identified goals. The goals are intended to be mutually reinforcing.

1. Develop Infrastructure to Enhance Quality of Life for Residents, Resident Retention and Financial Sustainability

2. Promote Health, Wellness and Active Living

3. Maximize Access to Recreational and Community Oriented Opportunities, Programs and Services

4. Enhance Operational Accountability

5. Improve Value for Money

6. An Improved, Coordinated and Integrated Recreation & Community Service Delivery System

7. Strengthen the Region's Sport Tourism Mandate

8. Solidify the Urban Service Area's Role as a Regional Hub for Recreation



### 5.3.Objectives

Each Master Plan Goal supports a series of objectives:

#### Goal 1: Develop Infrastructure to enhance quality of life for residents, resident retention and financial sustainability

- To ensure long-term capital planning for infrastructure renewal as a principle of operational sustainability and efficient facility maintenance: *Build New and Plan for it;*
- To enhance, where feasible and fiscally sustainable, the useful life of existing facilities;
- To encourage development of multi-use facilities;
- To consider alternative facility delivery and operation models and pursue partnerships in funding and operations;
- To recognize the disparity between urban and rural infrastructure and service provision, formalizing rules of service delivery to reflect this; and
- Recreation and community services should be seen as a key driver of the economy in terms of the region's resident retention and regional economic diversification strategy.

#### Goal 2: Promote Health, Wellness and Active Living

- To promote physical activity as a way of life and quality of life through programming and education of target groups;
- To offer opportunities for participation in recreation and community activities for all members of the community irrespective of age, ability, ethnicity and income; and
- To ensure that this is achieved in both the urban and rural areas.

#### Goal 3: Maximize Access to Recreational and Community-Oriented Opportunities, Programs and Services

- To increase public awareness of recreation and community programs, services, opportunities, events and tournaments across the Municipality's constituent communities through community-based knowledge and information- sharing tools;
- To provide support to user groups through a range of means including tournament development (sport tourism), ice allocation and volunteerism;
- To support access to sport and elite athlete development opportunities (*Sport for Life*);
- To support the development of new sports;
- To provide facilities that offer opportunities for recreation and community activities on a year-round basis, recognizing the confluence between outdoor activities and complementary indoor spaces;
- To improve access to recreation and community programming through accessible facility design and the provision of appropriate programming and equipment for people with special needs; and
- To improve physical access to recreation and leisure through alternative and informal opportunities.

#### Goal 4: Enhance Operational Accountability

- To improve the current process of:
  - Defining annual building needs and policies;
  - Reporting requirements; and
  - Installing an enhanced framework for decision-making.





**Goal 5: Improve Value for Money**

- To ensure efficient investment in recreational infrastructure that maximizes facility benefits to residents and visitors;
- To leverage investment in new and existing facilities for enhanced utilization and revenue generation; and
- To ensure sustainable investment in modern amenities that expand opportunities for multiple and multi-use programs and event hosting.

**Goal 6: An Improved, Coordinated and Integrated Recreation and Community Service Delivery System**

- To develop, maintain and enhance effective, efficient and formal partnerships for program development, service delivery and facility maintenance;
- To enhance communication and collaboration between Municipal, public, private, school and community stakeholders to ensure the development of equitable and efficient planning, policy and facility use mechanisms and protocols; and
- To adopt a social development approach to program development and service delivery that recognizes recreation and community activities as a means to address issues of poverty alleviation and social inequality.

**Goal 7: Strengthen the Region's Sport Tourism Mandate**

- To enhance opportunities for sport tourism through the development of modern recreation and community amenities for extended as well as regional tournament hosting;
- To increase overnight stays in the region through linked events (tournaments, festivals, fairs) and packaged experiences for sport tourism; and
- To market the region as a provider of high-quality sport and recreational experiences.

**Goal 8: Solidify the Urban Service Area's Role as a Regional Hub for Recreation**

- To pursue all opportunities to further develop sport infrastructure, leveraging provincial programs that exist and working in partnership with groups;
- To solidify the urban service area as a recreation and service hub for north-eastern Alberta; and
- The Municipality to play a larger role in facilitating program development and facility renewal throughout the region.







# 6 RECOMMENDATIONS





## 6 Recommendations

### 6.1. Introduction

The following recommendations cover the following spectrum of considerations as it pertains to the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities, and associated programming:

- Facility construction, development and capital investment;
- Programming; and
- Service delivery and operations.

### 6.2. Facility-Based Recommendations

Our facility-based recommendations are based on a variety of considerations inclusive of:

- Community “needs and wants” as expressed through public engagement;
- Population-based standards of provision; and
- Participation-based standards of provision.

Community needs and wants are those that are expressed by members of the public, stakeholders and community groups. They reflect the aspirations of the community as communicated through the public engagement process associated with the Master Plan process.

These identified aspirations are balanced by population- and participation-based standards of provision - guidelines to inform decision-making regarding the appropriate range of facilities at regional, community, and neighbourhood scales. They reflect, in part, expected utilization of a given facility versus its capacity, and accordingly expected revenues and subsidization. Population-based standards of provision can provide a more general picture of the required population to support a facility, while participation-based standards of provision more accurately reflect local recreation and leisure trends.

Standards represent important guidelines, however no one plan or standard can be applied to every community. They must rather be adapted to locally expressed needs, values, interests, and financial capabilities. As an example, while an “average” community across the country provides indoor arenas at a

rate of 1 per 20,000 residents<sup>2</sup>, this may not apply to a community of 5,000 that decides that demand for indoor ice is sufficient to warrant the initial investment and ongoing operating subsidy associated with the development of an indoor arena.

We have provided our professional opinion on the range of indoor recreation and community facilities required in each community across the region. The Master Plan recommendations reflect the balance between expressed community wants and needs, and population- and participation-based standards of provision.

The Master Plan recommendations provide guidance to Council on investment in new facilities over the planning period. This withstanding, however, the development of facilities not recommended in this plan remains at the discretion of Council based on budget surpluses and political will.

This adoption of the Master Plan for future planning for indoor recreation and community facilities should include recognition of the importance of the use of service and facility standards. In the context of a growing urban area, the use of standards represents an effective means to understand when new facilities will be required. Changes to the rate of growth of the community do not alter the standards but instead impact the point at which population growth triggers the need for investment.

An appropriate use of standards can aid in decision-making well in advance of achieving the population triggers that justify new facilities. Based on predicted growth, even with variation in the rate of growth, the standards adopted in this plan translate into the necessary timeline for preparatory work to be undertaken:

1. Commitment to the development of new facilities;
2. Providing for advance planning in terms of the most appropriate locations; and
3. Creating the necessary funding strategy and delivery mechanisms to build and operate the facilities.

As much as the circumstances of each community vary, particularly the needs and opportunities in the rural areas compared to the urban core, standards present the necessary framework to help plan for sustainable infrastructure. This, in part, results from the fact that standards broadly reflect

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<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (2004)



the experience of other communities as well as the balance between the cost of facilities and community need. As an example, the cost to provide indoor aquatic facilities and services generally restricts these facilities to urban areas with a sufficient population and tax base to justify their development and ongoing operating subsidy. Knowing this gives the Municipality the option to determine whether or not to vary or otherwise alter the standards in relation to specific circumstances, including any special circumstances surrounding the business model for development that may rest on other sources of funding other than traditional municipal funding and operation. The Municipality is unique in that up to ninety percent of the tax base is provided through rural non-residential, supporting a wide variety of community initiatives, infrastructure, and improvements. It is in this context that we recognize that Council may deviate from the minimum standards of provision outlined in this Master Plan.

→ **Recommendation:** *Adopt a standards-based approach to planning for future recreation and community infrastructure, including both the provision of municipal capital facilities as well as development through partnerships with other providers.*

6.2.1. Ice

→ **Recommendation:** *Adopt the minimum standard of ice provision of one covered dome in each community more than 20km away from an indoor arena.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Complete immediate repairs to Janvier covered dome to ensure continued community use.*

Indoor ice is provided within arenas and covered domes across the Municipality. To ensure that each community has access to ice, we recommend that the Municipality adopt a minimum standard of ice provision of one covered dome in each community more than 20km away from an indoor arena.

The typical population-based standard of provision for an indoor arena across the country is 1 ice pad per 20,000; however, this varies from community to community based on local recreation trends and community support to subsidize the operations of an indoor arena. It is, however, rare to find an indoor arena within a community of less than 1,000 residents on account of the required volume of bookings required to support the operating costs associated with this type of facility.

→ **Recommendation:** *Facilities in disrepair or in need of investment should have investment budgeted unless utilization suggests poor use of funds.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Facilities in disrepair should be torn down if their value is not apparent in comparison to new-build costs.*

Exhibit 24: Comparable Population-Based Standards of Urban Indoor Ice Provision

Community	Population (2011)	Standard (per person)
Lethbridge	83,517	1:13,920
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 13,758
Red Deer	90,564	1: 15,094
Airdrie	54,891	1: 10,978
Medicine Hat	61,180	1: 10,097
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 19,484
Nanaimo	83,810	1: 20,953
Prince George	71,974	1: 11,996
Fort McMurray	88,228 (2015)	1: 22,057

Sierra Planning and Management







Adopting this standard of provision requires that the Municipality move quickly to complete necessary repairs at the Janvier covered dome to ensure that this facility can continue to be used by the community. A general policy for the Municipality to follow throughout the duration of this Master Plan is that the Municipality, as a provider of recreation and community infrastructure, must invest in facilities in disrepair or in need of investment through budgeting unless utilization suggests that this is a poor use of funds. Facilities in disrepair should be torn down if their value is not apparent in comparison to new-build costs.

As it pertains to Janvier, community engagement indicated that the dome was well-used by the community prior to its closure due to safety concerns. A visual inspection of the facility indicated that the slab and boards are in good condition, with the dome requiring replacement.

→ **Recommendation:** *Move forward with the Council-approved Conklin Multiplex, with the recognition while this is not supported through population-based standards, it reflects Council's discretion to provide this facility for this community.*

Population- and participation-based standards of provision do not support the provision of indoor ice within the regional Municipality's rural hamlets, all of which have a population of less than 1,000 residents. Despite this, this Master Plan recognizes that the provision of indoor ice within rural hamlets remains at the discretion of Council based on budget availability and political will. As such, we recommend that the Municipality moves forward in its Council-approved plans to build an ice pad at the Conklin Multiplex in Conklin.

Community	Action based on adoption of minimum standard of ice provision of one covered dome in each community more than 20km away from an indoor arena.
<b>Anzac</b>	None: Served by the Anzac Recreation Centre
<b>Conklin</b>	Served by Conklin covered dome and future Conklin Multiplex
<b>Draper</b>	None: Served by indoor arenas in Fort McMurray
<b>Fort Chipewyan</b>	None: Served by Archie Simpson Arena
<b>Fort Fitzgerald</b>	None: Served by Fort Smith, NT
<b>Fort McKay</b>	None: Served by the Fort McKay First Nation Arena
<b>Fort McMurray</b>	Move forward with twin arenas at Northside
<b>Gregoire Lake Estates</b>	None: Served by Anzac Recreation Centre.
<b>Janvier</b>	Make necessary repairs to covered dome.
<b>Saprae Creek</b>	None: Served by existing covered dome.





*Conklin Covered Dome*



➔ **Recommendation:** *Move forward with the twin arenas at the Northside Recreation Centre in the short term.*

As the population and service-core of the regional Municipality, Fort McMurray has a population of sufficient size to support the operations of indoor arenas. Comparable population-based standards of provision across multiple western Canadian communities vary, but for mid-size communities standards of provision typically fall between one ice pad per 10,000 to 20,000 residents (refer back to Exhibit 24). Ice provision in Fort McMurray currently stands at one ice pad per approximately 22,000 residents, and accordingly, is slightly higher than this broad average. Within this analysis, we have included only full-size ice surfaces. While we recognize the mini rink at MacDonald Island Park as a valuable community resource, the variety of activities it supports is limited given its size.

Comparable standards should not be viewed as the only basis for decision-making and reference should also be made to lifecycle conditions of facilities, how they are used and importantly the participation levels in ice sports. Fundamentally, rather than simple reliance on standards elsewhere, all of which reflect in part, circumstances specific to each community, the question is whether the existing standards in the RMWB are acceptable in view of all circumstances, and therefore acceptable for forward planning based on population growth. The Master Plan recommends that a modest improvement in the standard is warranted.

Indoor ice is well-used across Fort McMurray with arenas booked between 73-84 percent of bookable time during the 2013/14 season, inclusive of estimated floodings between bookings. Given the nature of employment in the regional Municipality, arenas are booked throughout the day rather than having a tight crunch during the traditional “prime-time” after 6 p.m.

In the context of projected population growth within Fort McMurray, the addition of a twin-pad arena at the Northside Recreation Centre will slightly improve the population and participation-based standards of indoor ice provision to 2030, as outlined in Exhibit 26. Moreover, it will provide indoor ice in the Dickinsfield neighbourhood – a community need that was clearly communicated during public engagement for this Master Plan to give families in this neighbourhood access to local ice. The facility will also serve the currently developing Parsons Creek neighbourhood north of Timberlea. As such, we recommend that the Municipality moves forward with its plans for the twin arena at this facility.

Exhibit 25: Indoor Ice Pad % Utilization 2013-14, Fort McMurray

Ice Sheet	% Utilization
Casman Centre	73%
Frank LaCroix	76%
MacDonald Island 1	81%
MacDonald Island 2	84%

Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB



Exhibit 26: Illustration of Impact of Northside Twin Arenas on Level of Provision of Indoor Ice in Fort McMurray 2015-2030

2015		2020			2025			2030		
Current:		Scenario 1: No change to Inventory	Scenario 2: Addition of Northside		Scenario 1: No change to Inventory	Scenario 2: Addition of Northside		Scenario 1: No change to Inventory	Scenario 2: Addition of Northside	Scenario 3: Addition of Northside and Southside (twin arena complexes)
1: 22,057 Residents		1: 25,273 Residents	1: 16,848 Residents		1: 27,674 Residents	1: 18,449 Residents		1: 29,850 Residents	1: 19,900 Residents	1: 15,038 Residents
1:371 Youth Participants (0-19)		1: 405 Youth Participants (0-19)	1: 270 Youth Participants (0-19)		1: 445 Youth Participants (0-19)	1: 296 Youth Participants (0-19)		1:454 Youth Participants	1: 302 Youth Participants	1: 227 Youth Participants
1: 662 Total Participants		1: 848 Total Participants	1: 565 Total Participants		1: 830 Total Participants	1: 553 Total Participants		1: 1,009 Total Participants	1: 672 Total Participants	1: 504 Total Participants

Sierra Planning and Management



→ **Recommendation:** *Construct a second twin-pad arena at a multi-purpose recreation complex over the longer term to maintain and/or slightly improve standard of provision.*

Despite the suggested geographic distribution of new arenas, it should be noted that the development of additional indoor ice is based on meeting the needs of the urban area as a whole and should not be viewed as exclusively designed to service individual new growth areas.

The development of the Northside twin arenas will improve the current population-based standard of indoor ice provision to 2030, however after this point the standard of provision will continue to rise, putting pressure on ice time. A review of utilization data suggests that the existing standard of provision is adequate, however that it should not be permitted to rise significantly above this to ensure available ice for residents looking to participate in ice-based activities.

Based on youth participation standards, the RMWB has a good standard of provision at present. Given the demographic character of the urban service area as a relatively youthful community with a growing number of young families, we can expect that this standard will worsen over the planning period without the addition of ice surfaces. Based on standards of total participants, Fort McMurray lies at the higher end of other urban-based communities, reflecting both the use of these facilities by temporary residents, and the current demographic character of Fort McMurray which, although it has a growing proportion of child and youth residents, remains a community with a significant proportion of working-age adults.

To ensure that the existing standard of provision for indoor ice is maintained past 2030, and in the context of planned population growth in Saline Creek – a neighbourhood that is estimated to house approximately 20,000 residents we recommend that the Municipality plan for the construction of a second twin-pad arena at a multi-purpose recreation complex in the southern end of Fort McMurray as Saline Creek builds out. Based on the most recent population projections, the Master Plan estimates that this facility would come on-stream by 2030.

The addition of this twin-pad, assuming no existing arenas are decommissioned, and the construction of Northside Twin Arenas moves forward, would temporarily improve the community's population-based standard of provision to one ice pad per approximately 15,000 residents by 2030 (a standard of provision is in the mid-range of comparable communities),

but more importantly would ensure that the standard of ice provision in Fort McMurray does not worsen over the longer-term. In providing this recommendation, we are planning for continuity between the 10 year horizon of the current plan (to 2025) and essential planning for growth continuing beyond this into the next 10 year + planning period.

A new-build twin-pad arena in a multi-purpose recreation complex in Saline Creek has the added advantage of improving provision of indoor ice for Draper and Saprae Creek.

The future development of the SEC in the Lower Townsite neighbourhood continues to be debated by Council. Should this facility be developed, it will provide an adequate supply and quality of ice provision. Its impact on meeting community demand will be a function of the balance of uses in this venue.

→ **Recommendation:** *Monitor ice utilization at the Anzac Recreation Centre and allocate user groups to Anzac before building new facilities in Fort McMurray.*

Opened in fall of 2014, the Anzac Recreation Centre had a booked utilization rate of 48 percent in the 2014-15 season, with the remainder of its bookable time used for open leisure skating. This utilization is far below its capacity, and a reflection of the Municipality's decision to build the facility in anticipation of strong population growth in this community. Anecdotal evidence suggests the facility serves groups from Anzac and Fort McMurray, and some temporary residents working around the Anzac area.

Public engagement indicated that take-up of ice time in Anzac by recreation user groups in Fort McMurray has been slow on account of:

- a. The drive-time to reach Anzac from Fort McMurray; and
- b. Traditional use patterns whereby residents belong to groups that have allocated ice time at a rink in Fort McMurray.

Increasing utilization of the ice pad at the Anzac Recreation Centre will be a medium-term proposition. Council has approved the twin arenas at the Northside Recreation Centre and with demonstrated need for additional ice in the city, we have recommended that the Municipality moves forward with this project in the short term. The construction of a second twin-pad arena should not proceed until the Municipality has improved ice utilization at the Anzac Recreation Centre through encouraging new and existing groups to take up ice time at this facility.



Ice at the Anzac Recreation Centre



6.2.2.Aquatics

➔ **Recommendation:** *Adopt a minimum population-based standard of provision for indoor aquatic facilities of one pool per 50,000 residents in each community.*

Indoor aquatic facilities are typically provided on a basis of one indoor aquatic centre per 50,000 residents<sup>3</sup>. Like indoor arenas, this standard is based on both the size of population to use the pool to a capacity sufficient to provide a revenue stream for the facility, in addition to a tax base of sufficient size to subsidize operations. A 25m lane pool with user revenues from a population of 50,000+ typically operates with an annual deficit of in the range of \$1 million. Across mid-size communities in western Canada, the population-based standard of provision varies between 1 per 22,000 and 55,000 residents. Taking into consideration that the Municipality subsidizes the pool at the YMCA in Thickwood to operate this facility for the community, Fort McMurray is currently in the mid-range of these communities. This is in line with the findings of the RRC’s Aquatic Needs Analysis.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Move forward with the Council-approved indoor aquatic complex in Fort Chipewyan with the recognition that this project is not supported by population-based standards but reflects Council’s political will to provide this service for Fort Chipewyan as a remote community.*

Based on the adoption of a minimum population-based standard of provision of one indoor pool per 50,000 residents in each community, we recommend the development of additional indoor aquatic complexes in Fort McMurray (discussed in next paragraph). Based on Council’s approval of the indoor pool in Fort Chipewyan, and the commencement of work on the construction of this pool, we recommend that the Municipality move forward with this project with the proviso that while this does not meet the recommended minimum population-based standard of provision for indoor aquatic facilities, it reflects Council’s political will to provide this service for Fort Chipewyan as a remote community.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Include an aquatic complex in the Northside Recreation Complex with the understanding that this will likely be required in the next 5-7 years.*

➔ **Recommendation:** *Identify potential cost savings associated with full build out of the Northside Recreation Complex in the short term over a phased approach.*

Based on projected population growth in Fort McMurray, it is expected that the standard of provision of indoor aquatic facilities will reach the minimum target of 1 pool per 50,000 residents by 2020. The plan for the Northside Recreation Centre originally included an aquatic complex. Council has since changed the plans for this facility to take a phased approach that will develop the twin arenas in the short term, with additional planned amenities in future budget years. The Master Plan recommendation is that with the understanding that an additional aquatic complex will be required in the community in the next 5-7 years, the Municipality should move forward in its plans to include an aquatic complex in the Northside Recreation Complex. The Municipality must also weigh the potential cost penalties associated with a phased construction approach to the facility versus full build-out in the short to medium term.

Exhibit 27: Comparable Population-Based Standards of Urban Indoor Pool Provision - Mid-size communities

Community	Population (2011)	Standard (per resident)
Lethbridge	83,517	1:27,839
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 55,032
Red Deer	90,564	1: 22,641
Airdrie	54,891	1: 54,891
Medicine Hat	61,180	1: 30,590
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 38,968
Nanaimo	83,810	1: 27,937
Prince George	71,974	1: 35,987
Fort McMurray	76,009 (2012)	1: 38,005

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (2004)





*Lane Pool at Suncor Community Leisure Centre*



6.2.3. Seniors Space

- ➔ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality to continue to support community groups that provide seniors infrastructure, services, and programming.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality to engage in an Active Living Strategy to identify opportunities to strengthen opportunities for all residents, including seniors, to take part in passive and active physical activity.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Plan for a variety of passive recreation amenities in new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities owned by the Municipality.*

Seniors space and programming across communities in the regional Municipality are provided primarily through community groups. Many of these groups receive financial support from the Municipality through Community Investment Program (CIP) grants and operating grants. We recommend that the Municipality continue to invest in seniors’ infrastructure and programming in this way.

The Municipality should take a proactive approach to ensuring the availability of seniors’ services in each rural community through a more collaborative role with local community groups. This is elaborated on in the programming recommendations in the subsequent section.

Where the Municipality plans to build new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities within its constituent communities, the design should include a variety of passive recreation amenities that encourage all age groups to participate in recreation. For example, walking tracks within multi-purpose recreation and community facilities encourage all age groups to get moving, and broaden the range of recreation activities open to seniors. The inclusion of community meeting space (more detailed recommendations follow), facilitates more community/social-oriented activities for seniors. Broadening the variety of activities for seniors was a key issue that arose within the public engagement for this Master Plan.

Seniors in Fort McMurray are served by the Golden Years Activity Centre in Fort McMurray – owned by the Golden Years Society. The building is in good condition, although there is no room for future expansion. The facility is centrally located in the Lower Townsite neighbourhood, with the Municipality subsidizing the cost for transportation to and from the centre for seniors.

Fort McMurray is a relatively youthful community, and accordingly, while the city is served by only one seniors centre, it has an excellent standard of provision based on population targets, and the standard of provision in comparable mid-size communities in Western Canada. This Master Plan does not envision the need for an additional seniors activity centre in Fort McMurray over the next ten years. Projected population growth suggests that this issue may need to be revisited in subsequent Master Planning exercises.

Exhibit 28: Comparable Standards of Dedicated Seniors Facility Provision - Mid-size Communities in Western Canada

Community	Population (2011)	Standard (per resident 65+)
Lethbridge	83,517	1: 6,423
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 3,443
Red Deer	90,564	1: 2,275
Airdrie	54,891	1: 2,420
Medicine Hat	61,180	1: 10,170
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 3,562
Nanaimo	83,810	1: 1,105
Prince George	71,974	1: 1,675
Fort McMurray	76,009 (2012)	1: 1,088

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Exhibit 29: Golden Years Society, Fort McMurray





6.2.4. Youth Space

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue to support community organizations providing youth space and programming.*

Youth space can take the form of dedicated space, which typically takes the form of youth drop-in spaces, and general space – which includes a mix of indoor and outdoor facilities, unstructured time in gyms, BMX tracks, tennis courts etc., and anywhere that youth may assemble and play safely. While the scope of this Master Plan is exclusively indoor facilities, as a general rule the Municipality should plan for the provision of general youth space in each neighbourhood. Given the scope of work of this project, this Master Plan focuses on dedicated youth space.

Youth space and programming is primarily provided through community organizations within the respective communities in the regional Municipality. The Municipality provides financial support to these groups, and this Master Plan recommends that this arrangement continues.

- **Recommendation:** *Plan for the inclusion of dedicated youth space in new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality.*
- **Recommendation:** *Include dedicated youth space at the Northside Recreation Centre.*
- **Recommendation:** *Build dedicated youth space at a new multi-purpose recreation and community facility in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex) over the longer term (2025-2030).*
- **Recommendation:** *Consider the feasibility of dedicated youth space in designs for Sapræ Creek and Draper community halls.*

An appropriate standard of provision for dedicated youth space is a product of both population-based and geographic considerations. Youth typically have limited mobility outside of public transit and as such, youth space should be made available at locations that can be easily accessed by public transit.

Community	Required Action: Youth Space
Anzac	No new capital expenditures, but focus on programming in the existing facility at the Anzac Recreation Centre. This facility will be ready for the growing population.
Conklin	Continue to support the Conklin Community Association.
Draper	Consider the feasibility of dedicated youth space in the design for the Draper Community Hall.
Fort Chipewyan	Further investment in programming at the Syncrude Youth Centre.
Fort Fitzgerald	Serviced by Fort Smith.
Fort McKay	Continue to support the Fort McKay Recreation & Culture Society.
Fort McMurray	Build dedicated youth space at the Northside Recreation Centre, and a new multi-purpose recreation and community centre in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex).
Gregoire Lake Estates	Serviced by Anzac Recreation Centre.
Janvier	Continue to support the Janvier Dene Wood Buffalo Community Association.
Sapræ Creek	Consider feasibility of dedicated youth space in the design for the Sapræ Creek Community Hall.

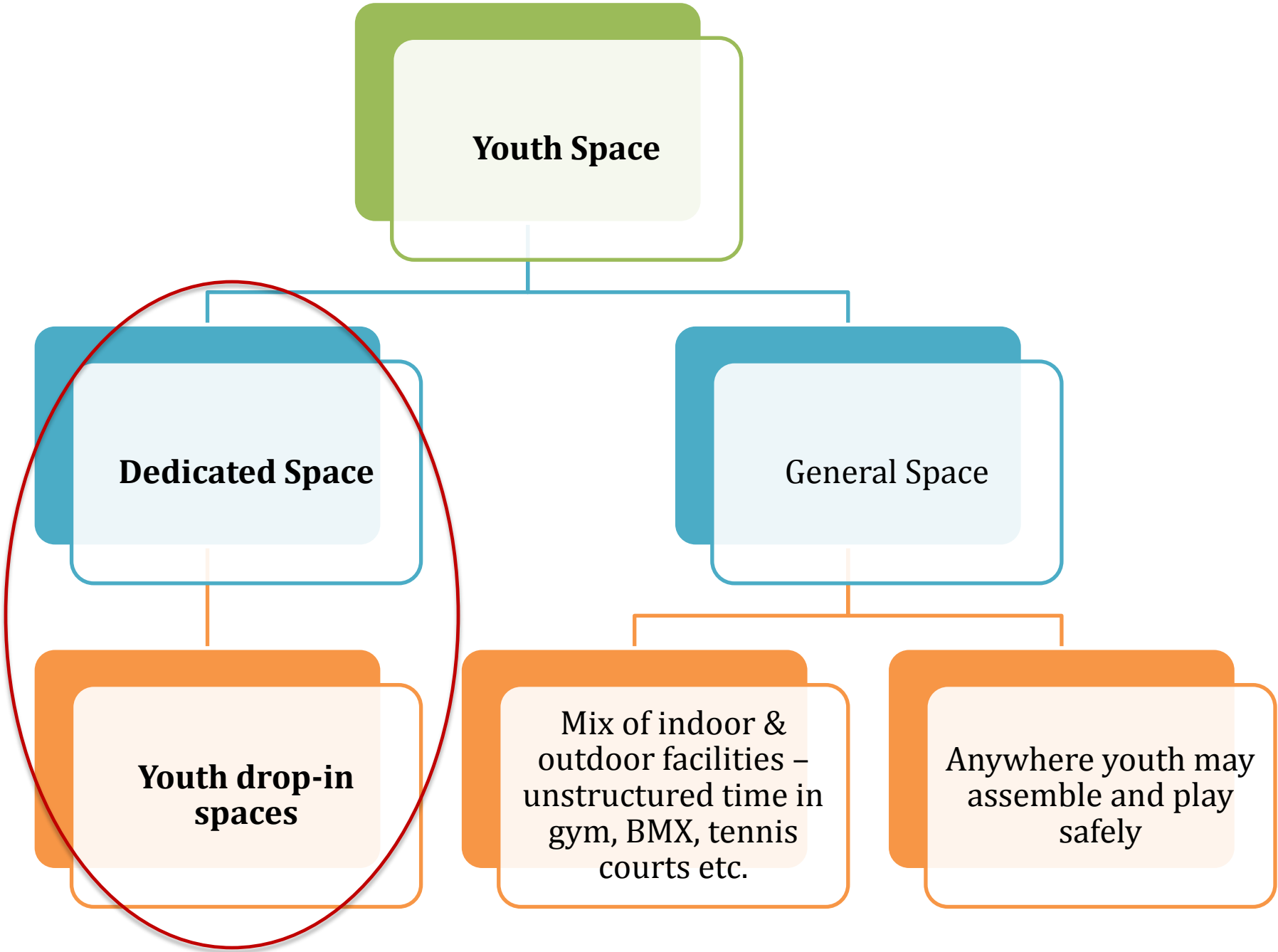


Exhibit 30: Master Plan Focus - Youth Space

To address existing gaps in provision, the Municipality should plan to include dedicated youth space in future multi-purpose recreation and community facilities that it finances. Specifically, youth space should be included in the Northside Recreation Centre over the short term, and a new multi-purpose recreation and community facility in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex) over the longer term. The inclusion of youth space at the Northside Recreation Centre should be a particular priority for the Municipality given the current deficit of youth space in the Thickwood/Timberlea/Parsons Creek area. The feasibility of dedicated youth space in designs for Sapræ Creek and Draper should be considered as a part of upcoming feasibility studies for community halls in these communities.

➔ **Recommendation:** Focus on developing programming in Municipally-owned youth spaces to improve utilization.

The Municipality owns the facilities in which youth space is provided in Anzac (Anzac Recreation Centre), Fort Chipewyan (Athabasca Youth Centre at the Archie Simpson Arena), and Fort McMurray (Haxton Centre). The focus in these communities for the Municipality should be on programming to improve utilization.





6.2.5. Gyms/Fieldhouses

- **Recommendation:** *Adopt a minimum standard of provision of gymnasiums of 1 per 3,500 residents.*
- **Recommendation:** *Consider the feasibility of gym space in the designs for community halls in Saprae Creek and Draper.*
- **Recommendation:** *Consider the inclusion of gymnasium space in new indoor recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality over the planning period.*

Gymnasiums in the Municipality are provided through a combination of local schools, Municipally-owned recreation and community facilities, and institutions of higher learning. The existing standard of provision appears to meet community needs for those communities that have existing gymnasiums, based on comparable resident-based standards of provision and community engagement. Comparable and best practice standards of provision indicate that gymnasiums should be provided on a one-per-school basis and/or a population-based standard of provision of 1 per 3,000-4,000 residents.

This Master Plan recommends that the Municipality adopt a minimum standard of provision of 1 gymnasium per 3,500 residents over the planning period. This requires that the Municipality consider the feasibility of gym space in the designs for community halls in Saprae Creek and Draper. The Municipality should also consider the inclusion of gymnasium space in new indoor recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality over the planning period. This means gymnasium space should be included in the designs for the Northside Recreation Centre and a new multi-purpose recreation and community facility in Saline Creek. Double gymnasiums provide the most flexibility for user groups.

To maintain the current population-based level of provision in Fort McMurray, the city will require an additional six gyms by 2020, and four more by 2025 (10 total). This will primarily be accommodated through the development of new schools. The inclusion of gymnasium space in new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities should be considered in collaboration with the development of proximate new schools with gymnasiums. The Municipality has a Joint Use Agreement with both local school boards to facilitate public use of school facilities. As such, the duplication of facilities in close proximity should be avoided.

Exhibit 31: Comparable Standards of Dedicated Gymnasium Provision - Mid-Size Communities in Western Canada

Community	Population (2011)	Standard (per resident)
Lethbridge	83,517	1: 2,610
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 3,237
Red Deer	90,564	1: 3,123
Medicine Hat	61,180	1: 3,599
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 3,897
Nanaimo	83,810	1: 3,991
Prince George	71,974	1: 3,272
Fort McMurray	76,009 (2012)	1: 3,305

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*Syncrude Sport & Wellness Centre, Keyano College  
Fort McMurray*



6.2.6. Curling

- **Recommendation:** *Maintain status quo. Revisit demand for additional curling facilities in next Master Planning exercise.*
- **Recommendation:** *Demand for curling facilities outside of the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Curling Club should be met by negotiating ice time with local rink operators.*

Curling in the regional Municipality is provided through the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Curling Club at MacDonald Island Park. The Master Plan recommendations as they pertain to curling facilities are linked to those we provided for indoor ice arenas in that we recommend a minimum standard of provision of ice at one covered rink per community more than 20km from an indoor rink. Local community groups wishing to book ice time for curling outside of the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Curling Club facility should work with local facility operators to rent ice time at existing covered rinks and indoor arenas.

Within Fort McMurray, the population-based standard of provision of designated curling sheets is within the range of comparable mid-size communities across Western Canada. Over the 10- year planning period, this will reach the upper limit of comparable communities, and accordingly, the demand for additional curling facilities should be revisited in the next Master Planning exercise.

Exhibit 32: Comparable Standards of Curling Sheet Provision - Mid-Size Communities in Western Canada

Community	Population (2011)	Standard (per resident)
Lethbridge	83,517	1: 8,352
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 6,879
Red Deer	90,564	-----
Airdrie	54,891	1: 6,861
Medicine Hat	61,180	1: 7,648
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 12,989
Nanaimo	83,810	1: 10,476
Prince George	71,974	1: 8,997
Fort McMurray	76,009 (2012)	1: 9,501

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## 6.2.7. Fitness

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality must continue the momentum toward better co-operation with the private sector established during this Master Plan process, through active engagement and strategy development for ensuring effective coexistence between the services of the RRC and those of the private sector gyms.*

Specifically, this should include open dialogue on the target markets of Municipal programming (via RRC) versus the private sector to establish protocols on areas where price and service-based direct competition should be avoided and complementarity promoted. A focus on youth and seniors programming versus the general market for fitness gyms may form the basis of the Municipal service strategy.

- **Recommendation:** *The Municipality must develop a series of performance measures for the operation of all fitness facilities in its ownership. While not enforceable on facilities in non-profit and private ownership, the commitment of the Municipality to minimize direct competition should be based on a commitment to provide high-quality services regardless of the provider.*
- **Recommendation:** *Consider targeted grant support to private sector providers in exchange for expanded programming which meets community needs.*
- **Recommendation:** *In developing new multi-use recreation centres, consider the business case for private and non-profit provision of fitness gyms and programming within these facilities.*
- **Recommendation:** *In the smaller communities of the regional Municipality, the Municipality should maintain and enhance its focus as the primary provider of fitness services through support for existing community facilities, organizations and programming.*

Fitness activities are comprised in a variety of different formats in the regional Municipality. Health and fitness programming is undertaken by all three sectors: Public, non-profit/institutional, and private sector. The Municipality through its agency the RRC, provides a wide range of fitness programming as well as weight rooms, fitness rooms, walking tracks and more. The non-profit sector (example: YMCA) provides facilities and programming while the three independent, privately operated fitness gyms in urban Fort McMurray provide

an important opportunity for the private sector to meet the demands for this service.

The involvement of all three sectors should be viewed as a continuum of service delivery options, and each should be supported. This should translate into a cooperative relationship between all providers based on established principles underlining this plan. These principles include:

1. Recognition of the respective opportunities for the non-profit and private sectors to be providers of recreation services, where appropriate and where a private operation is commercially viable;
2. Commitment to quality and diversity of offerings – such that the public sector does not directly compete with the private sector on like-for-like services. Accordingly, actions of the Municipality should not result in crowding out the private sector from the market place or otherwise diminish the capacity of the private sector to enhance its service offering in response to community need and demand;
3. Recognition that fitness is an integral component of Municipal facility and program offerings, and new multi-use recreation centres are expected to include fitness as a defined business element; and
4. Partnerships in delivering recreation and community services: non-for-profit partners such as the YMCA have in many communities become important partners with municipalities in delivering high-quality programs and services. The Municipality should seek to extend the reach of partnership to the private sector, as detailed in the recommendations that follow.

Exhibit 33: Fitness at the Anzac Recreation Centre





### 6.2.8. Community Halls

→ **Recommendation:** *Each community within the region should have its own community hall where Municipal land holdings allow.*

A community hall is defined by this Master Plan as a defined community event space with a kitchen. Community halls traditionally function as affordable community space for local residents to hold social events and engage in both recreation-based and community/social programming. In urban areas, the population-based standard of provision is typically quite low given that larger communities have access to a broader range of facilities that function as both community and event space. Community halls are typically the social focal point for the community and serve a broad range of social needs including community events and recreation programming. Given the relative importance of community halls in smaller communities, we recommend that each community within the Municipality has its own community hall where Municipal land holdings allow this. We recognize within this recommendation that the lack of Municipal land in Fort McKay will likely not permit development of a standalone facility in this community.

→ **Recommendation:** *Move forward with construction of community space in the Conklin Multiplex.*

The Conklin Nakewin Centre has historically served as a well-used community event space. Council has approved the construction of the new Conklin Multiplex, which will include community space. We recommend that the Municipality moves forward with the construction of this building to replace the Nakewin Centre.

→ **Recommendation:** *Move forward with feasibility studies for community halls in Sapræ Creek and Draper.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue open dialogue with the Draper Residents Society and Sapræ Creek Residents Society to identify appropriate community gathering spaces for their respective communities.*

While the Sapræ Creek Residents Society has historically used the Vista Ridge All Seasons Chalet for community programming, the ski park is currently proposing an expansion that will add to the demands on this already busy facility. As such, the Residents Society is keen to have its own community hall independent of Vista Ridge, within which it can run community programming. The recommendation of this Master Plan is that the Municipality moves forward with the feasibility study for this community hall.

The Draper Residents Society indicated that its community is interested in a community gathering space that does not necessarily need to be enclosed. Council has approved a feasibility study for a new community hall in Draper to serve this function. The Master Plan recommends that the Municipality move forward with this feasibility in collaboration with the community to identify an appropriate community gathering space for Draper.

→ **Recommendation:** *Identify possibilities for a dedicated community hall in Janvier distinct from the Municipal office.*

Janvier hamlet residents are currently served by the small community room in the Janvier Municipal Office. The room is limited in capacity for larger events, and the kitchen lacks catering capacity. While the community uses the space for a variety of programs including Elders Craft Circles and bingo nights a few times a week, a larger facility distinct from the Municipal Office would encourage a broader range of programming and better serve community needs. As such, we recommend that the Municipality identify possibilities for a dedicated community hall in Janvier.

→ **Recommendation:** *Maintain both the Anzac Recreation Centre and the Anzac Community Hall over the medium-term, monitoring utilization to assess the need for two facilities, and weighing cost to maintain the Anzac Community Hall over a new-build facility.*

The Anzac Community Hall is an older facility (built in 1984) that will require significant capital work to 2025 to maintain. The community is also home to the relatively new Anzac Recreation Centre, which includes a community room suitable for hosting events.



In this context, the Municipality must weigh the costs of maintaining the Anzac Community Hall versus the cost of a new-build facility. The Municipality should also monitor utilization at both facilities to determine community need for two community meeting spaces, particularly if population growth is slower than initial projections suggested. Over the longer term, if utilization of both community spaces remains low, the Municipality should consider decommissioning the Anzac Community Hall.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Maintain the Mamawi Hall.*

The Mamawi Community Hall in Fort Chipewyan is well-liked by the community, and is currently undergoing renovations to update the facility. We recommend that this facility is maintained.

- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Improve acoustics at the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse (SAPC) to encourage community use.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *New multi-purpose recreation and community facilities should include community facilities that improve the supply of community space.*

As discussed above, the per capita provision of community halls in larger communities is typically to a standard much lower than in smaller communities, given the availability of alternative spaces for community gatherings.

Community halls in Fort McMurray are primarily provided by service clubs, with the Municipality owning and operating the Clubhouse at the Syncrude Athletic Park in Timberlea until a suitable operator can be found. As it pertains to this the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse, this Master Plan recommends that the Municipality improve the acoustics to encourage community use of this asset – work that the Municipality indicates it is in the process of beginning.

Broadly, given the availability of alternative event spaces, this Master Plan recommends that new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality should include community facilities that improve the supply of community space within the urban service area. Specifically, as this links to other facility-based recommendations outlined in this Master Plan, we recommend that community space is incorporated in the designs for the Northside Recreation Centre and a new multi-purpose recreation and community facility to be built in Saline Creek over the longer term.

Exhibit 34: Comparable Standards of Community Hall Provision - Mid-Size Communities in Western Canada

Community	Pop’n (2011)	Standard of Provision
Lethbridge	83,517	1: 3,480 residents
Grande Prairie	55,032	1: 5,003 residents
Red Deer	90,564	1: 5,327 residents
Chilliwack	77,936	1: 4,584 residents
Prince George	71,974	1: 8,997 residents
Fort McMurray	76,009 (2012)	1: 15,201 residents

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Community	Required Action: Community Halls
Anzac	Maintain Anzac Community Hall – weigh costs in comparison to new-build in longer term.
Conklin	Move forward with the community space at the Conklin Multiplex.
Draper	Move forward with the feasibility study for a community hall for this community.
Fort Chipewyan	Maintain the Mamawi Centre.
Fort Fitzgerald	Serviced by Fort Smith, NT.
Fort McKay	Identify options for providing a community hall in the context of land constraints.
Fort McMurray	Build community space at the Northside Recreation Centre and a new multi-purpose recreation and community centre in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex).
Gregoire Lake Estates	Serviced by Anzac Community Hall.
Janvier	Construct a community hall distinct from the Municipal Office.
Saprae Creek	Move forward with the feasibility study for a community hall for this community.





## 6.2.9. Libraries

- **Recommendation:** *Develop library space in the Northside Recreation Centre with the understanding this will be required over the next 5-7 years.*
- **Recommendation:** *Incorporate branch library space into a multi-purpose recreation centre in Saline Creek by 2025-2030.*

Library services within the regional Municipality are provided by the Fort McMurray Public Library (FMPL). The library currently operates one permanent branch at MacDonald Island Park of approximately 55,000 sq. ft. The library serves the entire city of Fort McMurray, and offers a mobile library service to rural communities surrounding the urban service area. The library offers a variety of programs for adult, youth, newcomers, and seniors that have experienced good take-up and customer satisfaction. Fort Chipewyan residents have access to a library at Keyano College.

Based on mid-range space guidelines from the Government of Alberta's Municipal Affairs for public libraries in the province, Fort McMurray will require an additional approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of library space over the next five years (to 2020), and a total of an additional 22,000 sq. ft. by 2030. We recommend that the proposed library space at the Northside (6,700 sq. ft.) is developed to provide library facilities to the Thickwood-Timberlea-Parsons Creek neighbourhoods. To fulfil space needs to 2030, we recommend that library space is developed as a part of a Southside multi-purpose recreation complex (multiplex) over the longer term by 2025-2030.

In providing a commitment to new library space, the Municipality should undertake further analysis of space requirements based on engagement with the existing and emerging communities in order to effectively plan for an efficient space standard and suite of services in each location. Further, we recommend an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with a decentralized model of delivery based on three branches versus the current centralized model, such that the operating costs to the library system as a whole can be appropriately resourced.

- **Recommendation:** *Work with community partners to develop rotating library collections in community halls in each community where no permanent library branch exists.*

The Municipality must work towards providing access to rotating library collections in each of its communities. Community halls can serve this function in the interim through library corners that are refreshed by the Fort McMurray Public Library on a monthly basis. The incorporation of permanent library space must be a high priority within any new-build multi-purpose facility in these communities.



*Fort McMurray Public Library*

#### 6.2.10. Dance Studios

- **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should pursue policies to ensure co-existence with the private sector, and the success of private operators.*
- **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should consider the addition of value-added components (such as dance studios) in the development of multi-purpose recreation and community facilities in terms of viability, impact on costs, and community desirability.*

The provision of dance studios is primarily a function of the private market. Traditionally, the role of municipalities in the provision of dance studios and classes is introductory in nature, and limited to those programs and facilities not provided for in sufficient quantity or quality by the private sector to meet community demand.

The development of additional dance studios and dance programming, the Municipality should pursue policies to ensure the coexistence of its services with the private sector, and the success of private operators. The development of any new dance studios should be considered as value-added components in the development of new indoor multi-purpose recreation and community facilities, the merit of which should be weighed in terms of impact on costs, impact on the private market, and community desirability.

#### 6.2.11. Indoor Playgrounds

- **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should consider the addition of indoor playgrounds as a value-added component of new indoor multi-purpose recreation and community facilities.*
- **Recommendation:** *Consider the design of future indoor playgrounds to provide amenities for both toddlers and young children.*

Given the climate of the Municipality, indoor playgrounds are useful amenities for young families to provide safe, indoor spaces for children to play, socialize and stay active. As such, this Master Plan recommends that the Municipality consider their inclusion into new indoor multi-purpose recreation and community facilities as value-added components. Their inclusion must be weighed in terms of their impact on development cost, feasibility, and community desirability. As it pertains to facility-based recommendations within this Master Plan, we recommend that the inclusion of an indoor playground be considered in both the Northside Recreation Centre, and a new multi-purpose facility in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex).

The design for any indoor playground should consider including amenities for both toddlers and young children to maximize access to recreation for all families.

#### 6.2.12. Specialized Facilities

Both Vista Ridge All Seasons Park Chalet and the Doug Barnes Cabin are smaller indoor recreation and community facilities that support a broad range of outdoor activities. This Master Plan recognizes the importance of these facilities in facilitating outdoor activities year-round through the following recommendations:

##### Vista Ridge All Seasons Park Chalet

- **Recommendation:** *Maintain the chalet as a valuable community space with revenue-generating potential, in the context of feasibility work to expand the park.*

The Vista Ridge All Seasons Park Chalet functions as both a community space for Saprae Creek residents and a revenue-generating business for the Municipality. In the context of the planned feasibility work to expand the outdoor activities in the park, this Master Plan recommends that the chalet is maintained over the duration of the planning period.

##### Doug Barnes Cabin

- **Recommendation:** *Move forward with the design work for the cabin expansion.*

The Doug Barnes Cabin is a specialized indoor facility (warm-up cabin for the Birchwood trails) in that it serves a niche community need for the Ptarmigan Nordic Ski Club and local residents. The facility anecdotally is well-used by the club and an asset that is strongly appreciated by the community based on public engagement for this Master Plan. The expansion will improve community access to the facility by providing a larger space that will be available for community events. As such, this Master Plan recommends that the Municipality move forward with the design work for the cabin expansion to assess the feasibility of the expansion.



## 6.3. Programming Recommendations

### 6.3.1. Focus

The recommended focus for developing recreation and community programming within the Municipality is as follows:

- Key role for the Municipality as a funder and facilitator of recreation and community programming across its constituent communities
- Development of healthy citizens engaged in recreation and community activities for life through:
  - Development of an Active Living Strategy that identifies programming priorities by age group. Priorities should be focused based on recommendations from the Canadian Sport for Life program (Long Term Athlete Development), in collaboration with appropriate cultural and artistic programs;
  - The Municipality providing support to develop programming based on the priorities developed within the Active Living Strategy that provides for inclusive and contiguous programming through the RRC and community partners that provide all residents with the opportunity to develop their athletic skills through a charted path; and
  - Ensuring appropriate programming and equipment is available for all groups, inclusive of people with special needs.
- Emphasis on health and wellness programs that will encourage active lifestyles at all ages.
- Provision of arts and culture programming appropriate to each community within the Municipality.

### 6.3.2. Recommendations

Recreation and community programming at present is provided through the Municipality through the Regional Recreation Corporation (RRC), and through community organizations – some of which receive operational funding from the Municipality to provide programs. As such, it is a hybrid system of recreation and community programming provision.

- ➔ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality must be an active and engaged partner in terms of program development with its community partners, and the RRC.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Identify through an Active Living Strategy what programs, or types of programs, should be available to all residents regardless of location, based on strategic planning. Programs should be offered that cater to all life stages.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality to take a lead role in building capacity amongst program providers to facilitate progression in sport (skill development).*

As is necessary in any hybrid system, there needs to be coordination to ensure the programs of consistent quality, quantity, and variety, are provided amongst partners. The role of the Municipality then is two-fold:

- To facilitate appropriate program development among its community partners; and
- To provide programming that fills community needs unmet by these groups where the Municipality is the operator of indoor recreation and community facilities through the RRC.

The first step in this process is for the Municipality to develop an Active Living Strategy to identify the menu of programming that should be made available in all communities. The next is to identify appropriate staff members within Aboriginal and Rural Relations (ARR) and Community Services to guide the implementation of this strategy within each community through both community partners and the RRC. As an example, health and wellness programs (from nutrition to fitness options), culturally-appropriate programming, and provisions for people with special needs should be made available within each community.





*Learn to Swim Lessons at MacDonald Island Park*



Identifying appropriate programming priorities, and continuing to provide operational funding for community organizations providing recreation and community programming, will ensure that programs are provided on a consistent basis year-to-year to allow participants to hone specific skills. This will address the issue identified in many communities through the public engagement in this project of programs that are offered one year and then gone the next, leaving youth with a mismatch of skills that do not lend themselves to athlete development. Expanding program capacity within larger communities in particular, will ensure that beginners have an opportunity to progress to more advanced levels and are not crowded out by new registrations.

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality to take a leadership role in expanding the range of senior-focused programming available for each community.*

Recreation and community programs for seniors should include both social pursuits and active lifestyle activities. The Municipality should take a lead role in facilitating the development of appropriate seniors programming through the RRC and its community partners in tandem with an Active Living Strategy that outlines strategic priorities for these members of the community.

→ **Recommendation:** *Work with community partners and the RRC to monitor performance, and community satisfaction, with program quality, scheduling and availability.*

The RRC currently monitors client satisfaction through daily surveys conducted through intercepting visitors. Questions are broad, covering both satisfaction with programming and facilities. The RRC conducts a minimum of 100 surveys each month. The Municipality should support the RRC in continuing this work and building capacity to use this data for strategic planning to ensure that programming evolves over time to maximize its fit with community needs.

Municipal staff should work collaboratively with its community partners to build capacity to develop programs that meet community needs and satisfaction. This may include the provision of standardized community satisfaction surveys, and/or provision of staff time to analyze data and provide recommendations based on findings and alignment with the proposed Active Living Strategy to guide programming priorities.

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should play a central role in promoting programming to ensure information regarding programming for all demographics is widely accessible.*

Cultural programming provided by the Municipality through the RRC is currently promoted through the Municipality's Community Guide, along with information regarding the type of programming and contact information for community groups offering programming, and the YMCA. There is potential to also provide listings for categories of recreation-based programming offered by the RRC in this guide.

Programming outside of Fort McMurray is primarily communicated through rural newsletters. Public engagement for this project indicated that this is an effective form of communication within rural communities and should be continued.

→ **Recommendation:** *Facilitate affordable access to programs for low-income families and residents. Continue with the MI-Kids initiative. Support for agencies that subsidize recreation and community programming is important.*

Programming developed by rural resident societies is either provided free of charge or at minimal cost to community members. As such, access to these programs is already affordable and no change is required to improve financial accessibility. The key challenge as it pertains to accessibility to recreation and community programming, as this Master Plan has identified at multiple points, is the availability of programs.

Programming provided by the Municipality through the RRC is provided with an associated fee that is typically more expensive than the fees associated with rural programming. Similarly, community groups in Fort McMurray that provide programming do so by charging for their services. Adhering to the goals guiding this Master Plan, specifically to maximize access to recreational opportunities, programs and services, we recommend that the Municipality continue to facilitate affordable access to recreation and community programming for which fees are charged through the continuation of the MI-Kids initiative, and support for funding agencies that subsidize recreation and community programming.

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should continue to fund community groups providing transportation services that improve access to seniors programming.*

The Municipality currently provides operational funding for the Golden Years Society in Fort McMurray to provide a city-wide Mobility Bus program for seniors as a means of facilitating access to recreation facilities and programs for these community members. This is a valued service within the community and should be continued.

Outside of Fort McMurray, the Municipality should work with community groups to assess the need for and feasibility of providing transportation for seniors to indoor recreation and community facilities that provide programming for these community members.

→ **Recommendation:** *Tighten planning/scheduling mechanisms to ensure the impact of community events and tournaments does not undermine program delivery.*

A key concern identified through public engagement for this project was the impact of events on community use of facilities for programming and drop-in recreation and community activities, particularly MacDonald Island Park. As the Municipality moves to construct new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities, this issue may become a larger concern.

We recommend that the Municipality tighten scheduling mechanisms to ensure that the impact of community events and tournaments does not undermine community access to reliable, high-quality program delivery. These mechanisms should be adopted by the RRC as operator of the Municipality's multi-purpose indoor recreation and community facilities at present, and be provided to other community operators for consideration for adoption where appropriate.

Chinese Festival Event, Fort McMurray





## 6.4. Service Delivery Recommendations

This section provides an overview of the current delivery system for indoor recreation and community facilities and associated programming in the Municipality, and provides recommendations to enhance delivery.

### 6.4.1. Facility Development and Funding Process

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue with a non-traditional “facilitation model” for facility delivery and operations.*

The method of development of indoor recreation and community facilities by the Municipality has been historically that either:

- a. The Municipality is approached by a community group to finance the construction of a smaller facility with a demonstrated need for its own group or for a segment of the population; or
- b. The Municipality identifies the need independently for a facility – typically a larger facility such as an arena or multi-purpose recreation complex.

All proposed facilities are generally the subject of a feasibility study to further determine community need and the financial feasibility of the concept. Approved and constructed facilities are typically operated by the community group that approached the Municipality to finance its development, the RRC, or the Municipality in the interim of finding an appropriate operator.

According to staff, it is the intention of the Municipality to establish partnerships with non-profit organizations for the management of new facilities. Furthermore, partnerships will also be sought in cases when a new manager is required for existing facilities. In view of the fact that the Municipality has traditionally employed a facilitator role related to facility operations and given staff’s recent efforts to bring more standardization to the Municipality’s dealings with its operating partners, the Consultants support the continuance of this practice in the future.

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue the provision of the Community Capital Grant program to support the construction, expansion or renovation of recreational, social and cultural facilities.*

The Community Capital Grant program supports the construction, expansion or renovation of recreational, social and cultural facilities. Grants are executed through agreements with non-profit organizations that operate the facilities. Grant funding is available to facilities that are owned by the Municipality and operated by a community group or non-profit organization. Facilities owned by a non-profit organization are also eligible for Capital Grants so long as the funding involves tangible capital assets and non-financial assets having physical substance (e.g. the YMCA).

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue the limit of \$5,000 requirement for approval of capital expenditures for operating partners for Municipally-owned indoor recreation and community facilities.*

Most facilities in the region are Municipal capital assets and are entirely owned by the Municipality. Partners must receive approval to spend more than \$5,000 on any capital item or any one repair or maintenance requirement. The partner must build a rationale for an expense item above this funding limit unless it was previously approved through the annual budgeting process.





*Doug Barnes Cabin – Operated by the Ptarmigan Nordic Ski Club*



#### 6.4.2. Operational Controls and Standards

→ **Recommendation:** *Continue with the Community Investment Program (CIP) which provides operational funding to community groups across the region for the operation of indoor recreation and community facilities, and the development and operations of programming within these facilities.*

The Municipality adheres to a sustainable deficit model - i.e. the Municipality funds differences between revenue and expenses so that recreation and community facilities are able to contribute to the health and vibrancy of the community. This is achieved through a budgeting process in which the Municipality works closely with its operating partners to identify potential improvements to operating performance.

The operating expenses, minus revenues, are supported through Community Investment Program (CIP) Grants. The CIP Guideline sets out the process through which operating partners can apply for and receive an annual grant.

Prior to the establishment of the CIP policy in 2014, operating relationships between the Municipality and partners were relatively informal, with modest reporting obligations. Staff are currently assisting existing partners to transition from the previous relationship model to one that is more driven by business principles and that provides the Municipality with additional clarity regarding the partners' performance.

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should require its operating partners to develop an operating manual that outlines mutually agreeable service standards. The operating or grant agreements should obligate the facilities to always comply with specified standards.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Clarify within CIP guidelines, the obligation of the Municipality with regard to funding operational deficits in relation to operating partners' operating performance.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Adopted standards of performance within operating contracts must be clearly documented and measurable.*

One area of potential improvement would be to clarify the Municipality's expectations in terms of operating standards and the non-profit organization's obligations related to achieving and maintaining pre-established standards. It is very important that the non-profit partners comprehend the Municipality's expectations regarding the consistent application of clear and broadly accepted standards of operation for the Municipal facilities. In certain cases, commonly applied standards can be drawn from existing resources available through established sources such as: the Leisure Information Network ([www.lin.ca](http://www.lin.ca)); the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association ([www.arpaonline.ca](http://www.arpaonline.ca)); and the Canadian Recreation Facilities Association ([www.crfc.ca](http://www.crfc.ca)). In other cases, the municipality may be required to develop operating standards – possibly (and sometimes preferably) in consultation with its operating partner. Standards should be clearly documented and measurable.

Frequently, municipalities create comprehensive manuals containing a collection of standards and operating procedures so that applicable protocols can be uniformly implemented throughout the entire recreation facility system. As staff increases the degree of accountability expected its operating partners and as the partners become more comfortable with the more systematic approach to contract management, we recommend that the municipality's expectations related to operating standards be fully described in an operating manual developed in concert with the non-profit organization. Furthermore, the operating or grant agreement should be updated to include reference to the operator's obligations related to maintaining the stipulated standards.

Stipulated standards can cover a range of topics. As an example, standards and recommendations for safety standards within fitness facilities can cover the following areas:

- Fitness Related Personnel
- Emergency Procedures
- Communicable Diseases
- Special Exercising Population
- Pre-Screening & Informed Consent
- Fitness Environment

Exhibit 35: Fitness at Suncor Community Leisure Centre



### 6.4.3. Performance Management

The public engagement activities undertaken as part of this project have validated that residents of the regional Municipality greatly value the Municipality's recreation and community services. It is therefore not surprising that the Community Investment Program uses a benefits approach when considering funding applications for recreation and culture services, programs and facilities. According to the Wood Buffalo Recreation and Culture Plan, "investments in these areas yield multiplier effects, some monetary, while others relate to culture and quality of life for citizens. Recreation and culture are integral in strengthening the social fabric of our community and making it a place people call "home".

Historically, the Municipality's relationships with its partners have been managed on a case-by-case basis depending on a number of factors, including the length of relationship, the size of the project and other historical precedents. More recently, the CIP Officer and the Facilities Department are working closely with non-profit organizations in an attempt to ensure the operating relationships meet Municipal expectations. New partnership candidates, at a minimum must comply with the requirements of the CIP policy.

To summarize the current performance management system, the obligations of the non-profit operators and the Municipality are as follows.

- Partners produce business plans, operating rationales and other supporting documentation to meet pre-established CIP criteria.
- Operating agreements outline the need for and timing of budget and financial review processes.
- The Municipality is responsible to fund the operator in the amount of the negotiated CIP investment as well as underwriting the cost of all building repairs and maintenance.
- Although a rarity, the Municipality would be expected to reimburse the operator for differences between the negotiated CIP grant amount and actual financial performance.

- **Recommendation:** *Move forward with expanding the Municipal evaluation process for budget requests to include operating metrics and benchmarks to allow for a comparative analysis of operators performance.*
- **Recommendation:** *Create key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as meaningful and measurable operating and financial metrics to enhance the Municipal evaluation process for budget requests.*

As outlined above, to date the Municipality has concentrated most of its partnership oversight attention on financial parameters. However, staff have indicated an intent to develop performance criteria that will, in the future, be employed to rationalize budget requests or to evaluate an operating partner's success in producing results consistent with its business plan. Furthermore, staff have indicated an interest in expanding the municipal evaluation process to include operating metrics and benchmarks that would allow for a comparative analysis of operators' performances on a year over year basis, or potentially to compare parameters between "two like" facilities operated by different partners. The Municipality's intended advancement to a more robust, results-oriented evaluation process is entirely consistent with the accountability evolution that is underway throughout the recreation sector. Historically, recreation, parks and cultural service professionals have had few concrete, performance-related facts and standards to justify public investments in community services. However, at a time of increased competition for public resources, favourable public opinions about the value of community recreation is no longer sufficient to rationalize continued or increased tax-payer-funded financial support to these sorts of services.

The practice of deliberately identifying, measuring and reporting on the benefits realized by society as a result of public programs is now a widespread industry practice. Application of measurement concepts is now common to all levels of government as well as in non-profit agencies and community associations. To a large extent, the success of performance management hinges on the measurement component – in other words, how close did we get to our plan? While measuring is only one part of the overall performance management cycle, without the measures of achievement, the other components cannot be accomplished. When undertaking performance management, performance is used as information to set goals and strategies, allocate and prioritize resources, inform strategic decisions and report to stakeholders on results achieved. Performance measurement is a process for obtaining the necessary information on which actions and decisions are based.



Program and service delivery systems, facility maintenance procedures, staff deployment strategies and many other essential recreation service functions must therefore be carefully and rigorously monitored. Over time, the collection of these facts, ratios and performance benchmarks can offer insights about the impact and consequences of shifts in operating strategies that could lead to augmented efficiencies, access to new markets or the introduction of improvement strategies – all of which could increase the community benefits resultant from recreation services at the same or less cost to the tax payer.

- ➔ **Recommendation:** *In consultation with its partners, the Municipality should develop a straightforward data collection and analysis methodology that would be used to routinely assess the operator's performance compared to the anticipated thresholds and benchmarks described in its business plan.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Operator performance should be analysed on a pre-determined schedule.*

The Municipality's monitoring and oversight enhancement process should begin by the Municipality creating key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as meaningful and measurable operating and financial metrics. Several of these types of indicators are already available in project documentation produced by select non-profit operators (e.g. the Regional Recreation Corporation Performance Goals and Performance Document). Then, in consultation with its partners, the Municipality should develop a straightforward data collection and analysis methodology (likely in the form of an evaluation matrix) that would be used to routinely assess the operator's performance compared to the anticipated thresholds and benchmarks described in its business plan. Evaluation of the KPIs through the implementation of the methodology should be administered on a predetermined schedule based on the size and complexity of the project. The following tables provide a sample of statistics, metrics and performance or service ratios that are commonly used to evaluate effective and successful implementation of business plans by partners or contracted operators of public recreation facilities:

- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Operator should demonstrate a connection between their operating grants and the outcomes that should flow from facility operations or the delivery of recreation and community programs.*
- ➔ **Recommendation:** *Operators should be required to provide reports describing their actual performance compared to their forecasted performance levels - the schedule and level of detail of which should be dictated by the size and complexity of the project as well as degree of Municipal exposure to risk.*

Exhibit 36: Statistics and Metrics - Reporting Recommendations

Statistic/Metric	Operator Reporting Frequency
# Hours of Operation	Daily, weekly, annually
\$ Revenue	Per revenue category and area of operation
\$ Expenses	Per cost area and area of operation
# Hours Rented	Per rental type
# Facility Visitors	Per program area
# Pass Holders	Per each type of passholder
# Programs	Per each type of program
# Program Participants	Per each type of program
# Events	Per each type of event
# Event Attendees	Per type of event (concerts, shows, etc.)
# Groups of Users	Demonstrating diversity of reach
# Staff (FTEs)	Per department or activity

Exhibit 37: Service Ratios - Reporting Recommendations

Service Ratio	Reporting Requirements
Participant Retention	Number of returning clients over period
Client Satisfaction Index	Participant rating vs. expectations
Staff Retention	Length of staff tenure over period
Staff Satisfaction Index	Participant rating vs. expectations
# of Complaints	Formal complaint policy (i.e. response time)
# Safety Issues vs. Traffic	Assume safety issue tracking policy

Exhibit 38: Performance Ratios - Reporting Recommendations

Performance Ratios	Reporting Requirements
% Cost Recovery	Revenue over (÷) cost per service area & total
Change in Revenue	Year over year performance
Change in Expenses	Year over year performance
Change in Facility Traffic	Year over year performance
Change in Pass Holders	Year over year performance
Change in Programs	Year over year performance
Change in Program Participants	Year over year performance
Change in Events	Year over year performance
Change in User Groups	Year over year performance
Change in Complaints	Year over year performance
Expense per hour operation	Per each department or activity type
Revenue per hour rented	Compared to published rental rates
Revenue per visitor	Compare to change in revenue and traffic
Cost per visitor	Compare to change in traffic
Payroll % of Revenue	Payroll cost over (÷) revenue per service area
Payroll per Visitor	Payroll cost over (÷) visitor per service area
Revenue per Sq. Ft.	Revenue over (÷) facility size per service area
Cost per Sq. Ft.	Cost over (÷) facility size per service area
% Revenue	Per department or service area

#### 6.4.4. Developing and Managing Operating Partnerships

- **Recommendation:** *Develop a standardized partnership framework through which all partnership opportunities are vetted, and all potential partners are sourced and selected.*
- **Recommendation:** *Partnership agreements should fully describe the anticipated results of the arrangement, the roles and responsibilities of the owner and the operator, reporting obligations, operating specifications and performance levels, maintenance standards, conflict resolution mechanisms, notification and communication protocols, agreement review and adjustment processes and all other legal and procedural clauses normally included in an operating agreement.*

As a corporate policy, the Community Investment Program presents a firm foundation to create facility operating or program delivery partnerships after the project and the potential partner has been identified. However, many progressive municipalities across Canada have benefited from the development of a standardized partnership framework (or partnership model) through which all partnership opportunities are vetted and through which all potential partners are sourced and selected. These processes are generally consistent with the needs of the individual municipality but are similar in terms of their purpose, context, application and elements. Generally, partnership frameworks set out what Municipality expects from its partnership relationships. Normally, the intended results include the following items.

- Selecting a partnership model, choosing a qualified partner and developing a relationship between a municipality and a non-profit operator will align with the values and capabilities of both the municipality and the partner.
- Partnerships between municipalities and external entities will be capable of producing quantifiable benefits and outcomes for both parties in the agreement.
- Recognition on the part of both partners that, to be successful, the partnership must be proactively managed to ensure that the benefits and outcomes of the partnership are fully realized.

The framework should provide a process of logical thinking about key issues and consequences involved in working with others toward a common goal. An effective framework will help municipal decision makers answer several important questions.

- Is the service/facility needed in the community?
- Is the service/facility consistent with municipal values?
- Who is best equipped to deliver the service?
- Will municipal interests be protected within the selected approach?

It should be recognized that each project is unique and therefore, flexibility is an essential ingredient in functional frameworks. Furthermore, it is quite likely that the Municipality's framework would evolve as the template is applied to different types of projects and proposals.

Prior to developing a partnership framework, it is useful to create guiding principles that establish the municipality's position on issues affected by service delivery decisions. Principles generally deal with issues such as protecting the public's interest, demonstrated community need, client/service orientation, risk allocation, resource deployment, human resource management, desired levels of operating control, quality assurance, financial matters and stakeholder involvement. Clear, succinct principle statements describing the Municipality's public-service philosophy, strategic priorities and expectations of the relationship, normally form a solid foundation upon which the framework can be based. In the case of the Municipality, the CIP's Principles, Goals and Outcome Statements offer good preparatory points for the creation of useful partnership guiding principles.

Once the principles have been established, it is necessary to determine if a relationship with outside interests would be a feasible method of providing/operating a facility or delivering a service. This is a reasonable starting point whether the facility/service is currently provided by the municipality or a partner or if a new service is required to meet municipal priorities. Additionally, it will be important to determine if the proposed facility or service conforms to the municipal mandate and priorities because frequently municipalities are asked to participate in ventures that are outside of usual norms.



Exhibit 36: Steps within a Partnership Framework

A standardized partnership framework is an extremely valuable tool for municipal decision-makers. A well-structured framework will predetermine the municipality's response to partnership opportunities and set out minimum requirements and/or obligations of individuals with intentions of partnering with the Municipality. This not only helps to "level the playing field" for all potential partners, but also sets the stage for an open and transparent process through which partnership prospects can be evaluated.

Municipalities that have adopted a standard partnership framework have found that the process streamlines discussions with potential partners, minimizes confusion about the municipality's expectations of the partnership and reduces chances of favouritism for partner candidates. Frequently, municipal officials have commented that the framework has been useful in quickly identifying appropriate opportunities and discounting those without merit. They have also suggested that the ability to hand a prospective partner a framework document that outlines the requirements of the proponent for the opportunity to be considered has been very helpful in effectively and equitably dealing with partnership proposals – especially unsolicited proposals. Typical steps within a partnership framework are illustrated as follows:





#### 6.4.5. Engaging in Continuous and Progressive Improvement

- **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should create and implement a continuous partnership improvement process that is undertaken on a gradual and incremental basis.*
- **Recommendation:** *Partners for existing facilities exist, so transitioning should be incremental and include education as to the requirements. However, it should be clear that greater municipal oversight and policy direction is a central feature of this plan.*

The Municipality has made recent strides in standardizing its approach to partnering with non-profit entities. As mentioned earlier, the CIP became policy less than a year ago and Municipal staff are currently transitioning partners from a relatively informal relationship to a more strategic and systematic partnership management process.

The Community Capital Grant and the Community Operating Grant programs are the most applicable elements of the CIP to the Municipality's operating arrangements with its non-profit partners. In our view, the program objectives, eligibility guidelines, application process and evaluation criteria provide excellent guidance for Municipal decision-making regarding applications for financial support from the Municipality. As such, the CIP is a solid base to support additional elements that would be focused on identifying partnership opportunities, proactively searching for capable and willing partners and committing to a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for each arrangement.

Over the last two decades, public sector agencies have developed greater interest in realizing value for money, which has forced them to pay more attention to measuring outputs (productivity) and the conversion of inputs into outputs with the least waste (efficiency). Interestingly, several value-for-money indicators that are used by several municipalities as partnership and efficiency evaluation tools have been mentioned as rationale for why the Municipality creates operating partnerships for its assets. Developing a more fulsome and standardized partnership framework would better position the Municipality to create and administer its relationships so that they produce specific outputs that benefit the community.

We recognize that enacting change in a relationship management process takes time and careful planning, especially when the change involves both the Municipality and its partners. We therefore recommend that the Municipality create and implement a continuous partnership improvement process that is undertaken on a gradual and incremental basis. The formalization and standardization of the grant application and contract process supports the

goals identified within the Municipality's Community Services Department Business Plan (2014).

We recommend that the improvement process sequentially include the elements described in the foregoing sections. For clarity, each improvement element and its order of implementation are also briefly summarized below.

**1. Develop a partnership framework to enhance the CIP** – specifically setting out the Municipality's expectations and management processes for its relationships with operating partners. Partnership frameworks are tools to help identify the opportunities for which partnerships are appropriate or where the Municipality can proactively pursue a project with a suitable partner. They offer guidance for the examination of project propositions arising from private enterprise, non-profit agencies or community organizations.

**2. Establish and formalize operating standards that clearly define the Municipality's expectations for the operations of Municipal facilities.** The standards should include expected procedures, protocols, schedules and performance thresholds reflecting the minimum level of acceptable services for all aspects related to the management of the operating relationship.

**3. Establish partnership evaluation mechanisms, including statistical analysis and metrics or ratio calculation formulas, which are applicable to the partnerships within the Municipality's inventory of relationships.** As a starting point, the Municipality should adapt several elements currently contained in the RRC's Performance Goals and Indicators document, plus additional select statistics, metrics, performance and service ratios provided herein. Once developed, incorporate the evaluation mechanisms into the partnership agreement.

**4. Negotiate with the existing partners the application of operating standards and performance levels consistent with metrics and ratios described by the evaluation mechanism.**

**5. Update the partnership agreements to include additional clauses that are typically reflected in the management and operating agreements of Municipal assets operated by external entities.** The updated agreements should include schedules outlining the negotiated operating standards and performance thresholds as well as the evaluation mechanism that will be utilized to monitor the operator's performance on an ongoing basis. Language in the agreement should clearly describe the operator's reporting obligations and potential consequences of underperformance.



**6. Develop a Municipal policy that stipulates when it is appropriate to contemplate terminating an operating agreement and replacing a facility operator due to underperformance.**

**7. Develop a municipal policy that stipulates the manner in which the Municipality will procure its partners.** There are several types of candidates that could be potential partners, depending upon the service or facility in question. These could include: private sector providers; public sector agencies; non-profit corporations; other municipalities; community groups; and consortia of the foregoing. Regardless of the procurement method, the partner selection process must be fair, transparent and defensible. Evaluation criteria and other tools that will be used to select an appropriate partner must be clearly identified and understood by all perspective partners. Stakeholders should have an opportunity to provide input to the criteria and other selection tools. At Council's discretion, a wider consultation process may be initiated.

#### 6.4.6. User Fees

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should enhance its authority to establish and review user fee rates not only for the provision of ice as currently exists but for other activities.*

Specifically, we recommend the following:

- 1. The Municipality should increase its responsibility to review, approve and adjust fees for all recreation programs established by the RRC.** Since the RRC is a functional agency of the Municipality, with its operating revenues and costs assessed as part of the annual commitment to grant funding, it is important that the contribution of revenue generation from the provision of recreation and community facilities, services and programs to total cost recovery is maximized. This needs to occur with full consideration of the need to subsidize certain users groups and activities more than others on the basis of the principles of community access and active living that underpin this plan. As a result, the Municipality and the RRC should review their fee structure not only as part of the approval of the annual RRC business plan, but as an ongoing commitment to a user fee policy that promotes the goals of this plan.
- 2. The Municipality should undertake a review of its user fee policies** as part of a greater oversight of fee- and rate-setting for programs and facilities owned by the Municipality. Specifically, this policy should categorize fees and services to identify direct cost recovery targets for

individual programs and differentiate pricing between target groups (minors, seniors, for example) and other user groups, including corporate rentals of facilities.

- 3. It is recommended that the Municipality undertake greater oversight of the fees set by its community partners and the capacity to structure fees in such a way to meet the overall objectives of the program or user group seeking funding while improving cost recovery potential.** We recommend that funding criteria be set as part of the performance-based metrics that focus on revenue generation and the contribution to this from user fees.





# 7 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN





7 Implementing the Plan

7.1. Current Total Cost of Ownership

As described in the preceding section, the model of recreation and community facility provision and programming employed by the Municipality is a hybrid model. The Municipality owns the majority of indoor recreation and community facilities across its communities, contracting third-party operators where possible and desirable.

Based on this model, the Municipality incurs the following expenses on an annual basis as it pertains to the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities:

- **Operating and capital grants:** This pertains to all grants provided to operators on an annual basis to operate indoor recreation and community facilities, regardless of their ownership. As it is currently organized, this pertains to all CIP investment.
- **Departmental expenses:** The Municipality is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all Municipally-operated buildings. For facilities that are operated by third-parties, the Municipality has varying degrees of responsibility for external and internal maintenance as outlined in operating contracts and other, less formal agreements. Typical expenses in this category include snow removal and landscaping.
- **Corporate overhead:** This pertains to staff time across Municipal departments dedicated to the development and provision of indoor recreation and community facilities. While the Municipality contracts third-party operators to run most of the Municipally-owned facilities, Municipal staff remain responsible for liaising with operators, and assessing grant applications, among a variety of other responsibilities.
- **Debt service:** The Municipality finances the development of new facilities on a case-by-case basis. This line item pertains to remaining annual debt payments on indoor recreation and community facilities.

The calculation of the total cost of ownership to the Municipality for indoor recreation and community facilities is a valuable exercise in that it provides the Municipality with clarity on the total cost of its investment in indoor recreation and community facilities and programming on an annual basis. This can be used to improve budgeting mechanisms for the development and operation of

indoor recreation and community facilities moving forward, and analyze the impact of any cost saving measures.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Update the total cost of ownership calculation developed for this Master Plan on both a facility-by-facility, and total inventory basis each year.*

The exhibit below outlines the current total cost of ownership for Municipally-owned and supported indoor recreation and communities over a one-year period. It should be noted that this calculation was developed using data from a variety of years based on a lack of consistency in financial reporting mechanisms. The recommendations in Section 6 outline a process by which the Municipality should move forward in formalizing reporting requirements and mechanisms for operating partners. Within this process it will be key for the Municipality to outline required operating data from each operating partner on an annual basis. In this way, the total cost of ownership calculation can be updated using data from a given year consistently.



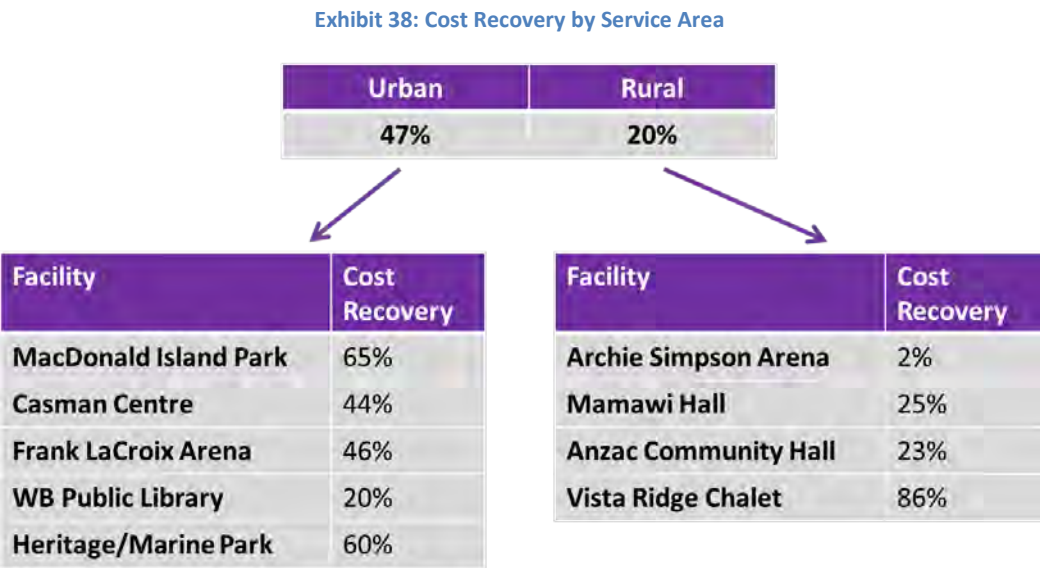
Sierra Planning and Management, based on data from the RMWB

7.2. Current Operating Performance

The recommendations in Section 6 provide guidance for the Municipality in terms of monitoring the fiscal operating performance of operators, and setting user fees to ensure fiscal responsibility. The development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as recommended by this Master Plan to assess both the operating performance of community partners and of the Municipality in its operations of indoor recreation and community facilities will facilitate a more rigorous assessment of operating performance on a facility-by-facility basis, and across like facilities in the Municipality.

➔ **Recommendation:** *Recognize the disparity between urban and rural cost recovery/delivery mechanisms. This Master Plan is an opportunity as a policy document to recognize this formally.*

The current operating performance of selected facilities (based on available data) for which the Municipality either owns or provides CIP grants to is outlined in the following exhibit:



Sierra Planning and Management based on data from the RMWB  
\* Note: The rural cost recovery is a weighted average.

It is the responsibility of the Municipality to decide the level to which it wishes to subsidize the operations of indoor recreation and community facilities as a provider of public services. The key message from the above exhibit however, should be the disparity between urban and rural cost recovery/delivery mechanisms. This Master Plan is an opportunity to formally recognize this, as an indication of the relative level of subsidy provided to rural communities as it pertains to the provision of indoor recreation and community facilities and associated programming, in comparison to the urban service area. Based on available data (which should be refined moving forward based on the recommendations provided within this Master Plan), the Municipality subsidizes indoor recreation and community programming in the rural service area by approximately \$300 per capita annually. This is in comparison to a per capita annual subsidy of approximately \$200 in the urban service area.

7.3. Future Capital Obligations

7.3.1. Existing Facilities

The Municipality has undertaken building condition studies on the indoor recreation and community facilities that it owns across the region. These reports identify estimated capital expenditures to maintain these facilities to 2032. The following exhibit summarizes capital future capital obligations:

Exhibit 39: Summary of Projected Capital Expenses for Existing Facilities to 2032

Summary	Capital Expenses	Cumulative Expenses
To 2014	\$ 1,034,102	\$ 1,034,102
2015-2018	\$ 10,086,250	\$ 11,120,352
2019-2022	\$ 6,936,778	\$ 18,057,130
2023-2028	\$ 11,880,035	\$ 29,937,165
2029-2032	\$ 13,302,250	\$ 43,239,415

Sierra Planning and Management based on Building Condition Reports from Golder Associates (2013)

Large projected capital expenses over the next two decades will be related to:

- Older facilities in need of capital repairs and upgrades: Anzac Community Hall, Casman Centre, Frank LaCroix Arena, Haxton Centre, Mamawi Community Hall, and the Vista Ridge Ski Hill Chalet;
- Larger facilities: MacDonald Island Park; and
- Remote facilities: Archie Simpson Arena.

Given that the Anzac Recreation Centre was not yet constructed at the time of conducting the building condition reports, projected capital expenses associated with this building have not been summarized in this Master Plan. Given the size of this facility however, it is likely to represent a large capital expense as it begins to age.



→ **Recommendation:** *Update building condition reports on a minimum five-year basis.*

The Municipality currently develops long-term capital plans that span five years, and are updated annually. These capital plans budget for new-build facilities, expansions, redevelopment of facilities, and large ticket capital expenditures. The continuation of up-to-date building condition reports is critical for accurate and responsible budgeting. It is also critical to inform decisions regarding continued investment in existing facilities versus the costs of a new-build facility. As such, this Master Plan recommends that the Municipality continue in its work to develop building condition reports, and update these on a minimum basis of once every five years for all Municipally owned facilities.

7.3.2. Existing Planned Facilities

The Municipality’s existing capital budget has approved the following projects, with estimated capital expenditures provided below:

Exhibit 40: Council Approved Capital Projects

Project	Anticipated budget 2015 and prior approved
Conklin Multiplex Construction	\$21,500,000
MacDonald Island Park Expansion Grant	\$128,900,000
Vista Ridge 2014-2016 Capital Grant	\$12,035,000
Northside Multi-Use Facility – Phase 1 (Twin Arenas)	\$34,500,000
Northside Multi-Use Facility – Phase 2 (Complete Design)	\$13,500,000
Fort Chipewyan Swimming Pool – Construction	\$16,000,000
TOTAL	\$226,435,000

RMWB 2014 Capital budget and Council Minutes March 24<sup>th</sup> 2015

As a principle, this Master Plan recognizes Council’s commitment to existing capital projects as it pertains to indoor recreation and community facilities. We have identified areas in which these do not adhere to the recommended standards of provision.

7.3.3. Master Plan Additions

In addition to existing capital and operating commitments, this Master Plan recommends the addition of the following facilities:

- Northside Phase 2 inclusive of an aquatics centre, youth space, community space, and library space at minimum;
- A multi-purpose recreation complex in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex) inclusive of a twin arena, youth space, community space, and library space at minimum;
- A community hall in Saprae Creek;
- A community hall or equivalent space in Draper; and
- A community hall in Janvier.

7.4.Making the Plan Work: Funding and Finance

7.4.1.Fiscal Considerations

The capacity of the Municipality to fund new infrastructure can be expected to vary over time in response to economic conditions and competing demands for investment in other infrastructure. The purpose of the Master Plan is to create the guidelines and strategy around which those investment decisions can be made and to understand the consequences of not proceeding with development.

It is not possible to predict the actual timing and cost of construction to implement the Master Plan as these are contingent on future economic and municipal corporate needs. Based on the provisions of the Master Plan, the key projects identified could create as much as 500,000 sq.ft. of additional recreation and community indoor facility floor space if all recommendations of this Master Plan as well as existing commitments are implemented by 2030. The amount of space is itself a broad estimate and the following estimates of fiscal impact are broad brush and for illustration only.

7.4.1.1. Planning for Capital

Incremental capital costs are based on a broad series of current costs for similar space and can be expected to vary due to escalation over time. Efficiencies in design may impact scale of development as well as overall capital costs. Most importantly, the method by which this new infrastructure is delivered to the community – either by traditional procurement or alternative strategy to reduce the burden on the public sector – will also impact the extent of capital that must be funded by the Municipality.

Exhibit 41: Additional Recreation and Community Floorspace to 2030

	Delivery		Operations	
Sq.Ft. Net New	500,000		Operating Costs	\$16 - \$23 million
Capital Costs	\$350 - \$400 million		Recovery	48%
Per Capita 2030	\$2,786		Net Cost Per Capita 2030	\$60.00 - \$90.00
			Net Operating Cost (current)	\$10.7 million +/-
			Existing Portfolio Net Cost per Capita (current)	\$129
			Combined Existing and New Portfolio Net Cost Per Capita by 2030	\$135 - \$170
			Percent Change Per Capita 2015- 2030	12% - 36%

Source: Indicative only (Sierra Planning and Management)

7.4.1.2. Planning for Operations

➔ **Recommendation:** As part of the decision-making process for the commitment to develop new municipally-owned recreation facilities, an operations plan should be required to be performed which outlines the likely operating costs and revenues annually from commissioning of the facility for 3-5 years. Approval for capital expenditure on new recreational facilities will in part rest on achieving this operations plan which is approved by the RMWB.

While the RMWB currently engages with its operating partners to plan for and fund the operating costs of its facilities, it is important that any planned new facilities are assessed in terms of their financial impact. Very few such facilities can be expected to break even and hence a full understanding of the net operating liabilities is an important part of future planning for new facilities. While the initial capital cost of an asset is often viewed as the most significant cost in terms of forward planning, the annual net operating costs are often overlooked. Over the life of the building, these annual costs can accumulate to become significant amounts, even if discounted for their future value. Establishing a protocol for municipal approval for building programs



based not only on capital costs but also operating impacts is an important recommendation.

#### 7.4.1.3. Operations and cost recovery

Firm estimates at this stage are not warranted until buildings are designed and business plans complete. However, based on existing information for the Municipality as well as comparable communities, the potential operating costs associated with this new infrastructure (assuming all of which is paid for by the Municipality) can range significantly, depending on the extent of efficiencies in operating performance that can be obtained.

With a renewed emphasis on cost recovery enhancements achieved through greater partnership with and oversight of facility operators, the Municipal fiscal impacts of a significant addition to the portfolio of Municipal recreation and community facilities can be moderated. The current annual deficit in the region of \$10 million -11 million based on a 44% total cost of recovery, translates into a per capita investment annually of \$129 per capita. Population growth and a commitment to at least the same rate of recovery in the future as at present are key elements in managing the fiscal impact of new recreational infrastructure. If growth is achieved and development proceeds as planned, while cost recovery expectations are maintained, the cost per capita for annual operating investment could range from a very modest increase to a more substantial increase if efficiencies in operations and operating cost structures are not achieved. This plan outlines the ways in which improvements to the cost base should be sought, and at the very least understood in more defined and measurable ways.

Managing the fiscal impact can be further improved by the Municipality pursuing an active policy of delivering and operating facilities based on best practice within the industry. This includes the full consideration of alternative means to build, finance and operate new buildings.

#### 7.4.2. Alternative Delivery Opportunities

##### 7.4.2.1. Managing Risks

Facilities, and in particular public-sector municipal capital facilities have a number of operating risks related to revenue generation and operating costs. Some of the principal operating risks for public facilities include:

- *Macro-economic shock*: the potential for global economic conditions to impact demand for services. This can include regional impacts such as

the impacts currently felt as a result of declining commodity prices to economy-wide impacts.

- *Revenue Risk*: ensuring that the commitment to a level of subsidy as required for Municipal recreation facilities does not translate into an over-reliance on Municipal subsidy.
- *Operating costs risk* – there is a risk that the operating costs will be higher than projected due to a range of factors such as increased utility costs, unforeseen repairs and maintenance cost, higher management costs and a range of other factors which can affect the financial performance of large scale facilities.
- *Management performance* – the management performance is a significant risk and can often be the difference between revenue growth and systemic revenue attrition.

Recommendations of this Master Plan include measures to monitor and guide performance to meet the expectations of the Municipality as owner of the facilities in regard to revenues and expenses, customer satisfaction, building maintenance and other aspects of service quality control.

In implementing the facility recommendations contained in this plan, the Municipality should consider the most appropriate means by which to ensure the reduction and/or transfer of the operating risks identified above. The Municipality should also consider the range of means that currently exist to create partnerships with the private sector in the design and development of new Municipal infrastructure. These risks can be mitigated to a lesser or greater degree by the particular method of delivery and operation of the facility.

#### 7.4.2.2. Delivery Mechanisms

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should establish a formalized policy on process to be followed in the delivery of new recreation capital infrastructure development that reflects the principles of risk reduction, efficiency, cost reduction and revenue maximization.*

→ **Recommendation:** *The Municipality should directly manage the process of establishing the following:*

- a. Establishing the requirements for new facilities;*
- b. The method of delivery (options);*
- c. The process of selecting partners (competitive process); and*
- d. Implementation utilizing necessary external resources as well as the selected partner for development and operation.*

→ **Recommendation:** *Key to selecting the method of facility delivery and partnership is the balance of financial benefits to the Municipality to control costs in the context of community recreation as a subsidized service. The Municipality is encouraged to address in its facility planning the full range of public-private partnership options that exist to reduce the financial risk to the Municipality while maintaining its commitment to development of cost-effective facilities to serve future populations.*

The range of means to deliver large-scale municipal capital projects has evolved in recent years. No longer are the options restricted to traditional public sector procurement, ownership and operation approaches, but a range of alternative financing and procurement (AFP) models have been implemented by jurisdictions throughout Canada.

The extent of private-sector involvement and, therefore, the degree of project risk transferred to the private-sector varies depending on the type of private-sector partnership as well as the intended use of the building. In community recreation, certain operations such as aquatics or arenas are often required to be subsidized, while other activities require less in that regard and can be provided by other community partners, including the private market. The degree to which the facility will require ongoing subsidization as part of the municipal mandate to provide recreation facilities at affordable rates, can be expected to impact the range of options for partnering with the private and non-for-profit sectors. While the involvement of the private sector in community recreation has traditionally been limited to the management of publicly-owned facilities, there is now a wider range of options open to municipalities to source new capital infrastructure and operate. As long as the

Municipality is willing to meet the obligations to bridge the gap between operating costs (including debt coverage) and revenues, a range of options exist for the design, development and operation of new recreation and community facilities.

In its limited form, the involvement of the private sector is in the provision of the design-build services whereby the design and construction (not necessarily the financing) are undertaken by the private sector. Ownership and operation of the facility when complete remains with the public sector. At the other end of the spectrum is full out privatization whereby the private sector fully substitutes the public sector in the provision of the facility, service or other activity under consideration. Between these two limits, there is a range of mechanisms that have proven valuable to a number of municipalities in the delivery of large scale, long-term capital facilities:

- **Operation and maintenance** – involves a private sector operator managing a facility owned by the public sector on the basis of a specific contract for a specified term, while ownership of the asset remains with the public sector.
- **Build-finance** – where the private sector builds and finances the construction of a capital asset during the construction period only. Following this, the responsibility for the repayment of the capital cost and the operation of the facility resides with the public sector.
- **Design-build-finance-maintain/operate**– this is often considered a true and complete form of public private partnership whereby a municipal capital facility is designed, constructed, financed, maintained and (sometimes) operated by the private sector on behalf of the municipality or other public-sector organization which has the use of the facility. There are a number of examples of new recreation and community facilities that are based on private ownership with municipal commitment to lease, rent or otherwise pay for services offered in the facility. Variations include private-sector build and lease-back to the municipality, lease-to-own, as well as public-sector own and lease-back where tax regimes favour public ownership.



Based on the preceding recommendations, the following represents steps towards implementation for each facility:

Recommendation	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Complete immediate repairs to Janvier covered dome																
Move forward with the twin arenas at the Northside Recreation Centre																
Move forward with Phase 2 of the Northside Recreation Centre inclusive of an aquatics centre, youth space, community space, and library space at minimum																
Move forward with the Council approved aquatic complex in Fort Chipewyan																
Construct a multi-purpose recreation complex in Saline Creek inclusive of a twin arena, youth space, community space, and library space at minimum																
Construct a community hall in Saprae Creek																
Construct a community hall or equivalent space in Draper																
Construct a community hall in Janvier																
Conklin Multiplex																
Improve acoustics at the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse																
Move forward with the pre-design work for the expansion of the Doug Barnes Cabin																

Key:		Commissioning
		Construction/Commissioning within 12 months
		Construction - project specific duration
		Procurement Process/Detailed Design
		Feasibility/Concept





## APPENDIX A





Appendix A: Summary of Recommendations

Facility-Based Recommendations:

General/Overarching:

- ➔ Municipality to work with the RRC to identify feasibility of a parking structure to improve parking at MacDonald Island Park.
- ➔ Adopt a standards-based approach to planning for future recreation and community infrastructure, including both the provision of municipal capital facilities as well as development through partnerships with other providers.
- ➔ Facilities in disrepair or in need of investment should have investment budgeted unless utilization suggests poor use of funds.
- ➔ Facilities in disrepair should be torn down if their value is not apparent in comparison to new build costs.

Ice:

- ➔ Adopt the minimum standard of ice provision of one covered dome in each community more than 20km away from an indoor arena.
- ➔ Complete immediate repairs to Janvier covered dome to ensure continued community use.
- ➔ Move forward with the Council-approved Conklin Multiplex, with the recognition while this is not supported through population-based standards, it reflects Council’s discretion to provide this facility for this community.
- ➔ Move forward with the twin arenas at the Northside Recreation Centre in the short-term.
- ➔ Construct a second twin-pad arena at a multi-purpose recreation complex over the longer-term to maintain and/or slightly improve standard of provision.
- ➔ Monitor ice utilization at the Anzac Recreation Centre and allocate user groups to Anzac before building new facilities in Fort McMurray.

Aquatics:

- ➔ Adopt a minimum population-based standard of provision for indoor aquatic facilities of one pool per 50,000 residents in each community.
- ➔ Move forward with the Council-approved indoor aquatic complex in Fort Chipewyan with the recognition that this project is not supported by population-based standards but reflects Council’s political will to provide this service for Fort Chipewyan as a remote community.
- ➔ Include an aquatic complex in the Northside Recreation Complex with the understanding that this will likely be required in the next 5-7 years.
- ➔ Identify potential cost savings associated with full build out of the Northside Recreation Complex in the short-term over a phased approach.

Senior Space:

- ➔ The Municipality to continue to support community groups that provide seniors infrastructure, services, and programming.
- ➔ The Municipality to engage in an Active Living Strategy to identify opportunities to strengthen opportunities for all residents, including seniors, to take part in passive and active physical activity.
- ➔ Plan for a variety of passive recreation amenities in new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities owned by the Municipality.

Youth Space:

- ➔ Continue to support community organizations providing youth space and programming.
- ➔ Plan for the inclusion of dedicated youth space in new multi-purpose recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality.
- ➔ Include dedicated youth space at the Northside Recreation Centre.
- ➔ Build dedicated youth space at a new multi-purpose recreation and community facility in Saline Creek (Southside Multiplex) over the longer term (2025-2030).
- ➔ Consider the feasibility of dedicated youth space in designs for Saprae Creek and Draper community halls.
- ➔ Focus on developing programming in Municipally- owned youth spaces to improve utilization.

**Gyms/Fieldhouses:**

- ➔ Adopt a minimum standard of provision of gymnasiums of 1 per 3,500 residents.
- ➔ Consider the feasibility of gym space in the designs for community halls in Sapræ Creek and Draper.
- ➔ Consider the inclusion of gymnasium space in new indoor recreation and community facilities financed by the Municipality over the planning period.

**Curling:**

- ➔ Maintain status quo. Revisit demand for additional curling facilities in next Master Planning exercise.
- ➔ Demand for curling facilities outside of the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Curling Club should be met by negotiating ice time with local rink operators.

**Fitness:**

- ➔ The Municipality must continue the momentum toward better co-operation with the private sector established during this Master Plan process, through active engagement and strategy development for ensuring effective co-existence between the services of the RRC and those of the private sector gyms.
- ➔ The Municipality must develop a series of performance measures for the operation of all fitness facilities in its ownership. While not enforceable on those in non-profit and private ownership, the commitment of the Municipality to minimize direct competition should be based on a commitment to provide high quality services regardless of the provider.
- ➔ Recommendation: Consider targeted grant support to private sector providers in exchange for expanded programming which meets community needs.
- ➔ Recommendation: In developing new multi-use recreation centres, consider the business case for private and non-profit provision of fitness gyms and programming within these facilities.
- ➔ Recommendation: In the smaller communities of the regional municipality, the Municipality should maintain and enhance its focus as the primary provider of fitness services through support for existing community facilities, organizations and programming.

**Community Halls:**

- ➔ Each community within the regional municipality should have its own community hall where municipal land holdings allow.
- ➔ Move forward with construction of community space in the Conklin Multiplex.
- ➔ Move forward with feasibility studies for community halls in Sapræ Creek and Draper.
- ➔ Continue open dialogue with the Draper Residents Society, and Sapræ Creek Residents Society, to identify appropriate community gathering spaces for their respective communities.
- ➔ Identify possibilities for a dedicated community hall in Janvier distinct from the municipal office.
- ➔ Maintain both the Anzac Recreation Centre and the Anzac Community Hall over the medium-term, monitoring utilization to assess the need for two facilities, and weighing cost to maintain the Anzac Community Hall over a new build facility.
- ➔ Maintain the Mamawi Hall.
- ➔ Improve acoustics at the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse (SAPC) to encourage community use.
- ➔ New multi-purpose recreation and community facilities should include community facilities that improve the supply of community space.

**Libraries:**

- ➔ Develop library space in the Northside Recreation Centre with the understanding this will be required over the next 5-7 years.
- ➔ Incorporate branch library space into a multi-purpose recreation centre in Saline Creek by 2025-2030.
- ➔ Work with community partners to develop rotating library collections in community halls in each community where no permanent library branch exists.



**Dance Studios:**

- ➔ The Municipality should pursue policies to ensure coexistence with the private sector, and the success of private operators.
- ➔ The Municipality should consider the addition of value-added components (such as dance studios) in the development of multi-purpose recreation and community facilities in terms of viability, impact on costs, and community desirability.

**Indoor Playgrounds:**

- ➔ The Municipality should consider the addition of indoor playgrounds as a value-added component to new indoor multi-purpose recreation and community facilities.
- ➔ Consider the design of future indoor playgrounds to provide amenities for both toddlers and young children.

**Specialized Facilities:**

- ➔ Maintain the chalet at Vista Ridge All Seasons Park as a valuable community space with revenue generating potential, in the context of feasibility work to expand the park.
- ➔ Move forward with the design work for the expansion of Doug Barnes Cabin.

**Programming Recommendations:**

- ➔ The Municipality must be an active and engaged partner in terms of program development with its community partners, and the RRC.
- ➔ Identify through an Active Living Strategy which programs, or types of programs, should be available to all residents regardless of location, based on strategic planning. Programs should be offered that cater to all life stages.
- ➔ The Municipality to take a lead role in building capacity amongst program providers to facilitate progression in sport (skill development).
- ➔ The Municipality to take a leadership role in expanding the range of senior-focused programming available for each community.
- ➔ Work with community partners and the RRC to monitor performance, and community satisfaction, with program quality, scheduling, and availability.
- ➔ The Municipality should play a central role in promoting programming to ensure information regarding programming for all demographics is widely accessible.
- ➔ Facilitate affordable access to programs for low-income families and residents. Continue with the mi-Kids initiative. Support for agencies that subsidize recreation and community programming is important.
- ➔ The Municipality should continue to fund community groups providing transportation services that improve access to seniors programming.
- ➔ Tighten planning/scheduling mechanisms to ensure the impact of community events and tournaments does not undermine program delivery.

**Service Delivery Recommendations:**

**Facility Development and Funding Process:**

- ➔ Continue with a non-traditional “facilitation model” for facility delivery and operations.
- ➔ Continue in the provision of the Community Capital Grant program to support the construction, expansion, or renovation of recreational, social and cultural facilities.
- ➔ Continue the limit of \$5,000 requirement for approval of capital expenditures for operating partners for Municipally-owned indoor recreation and community facilities.

**Operational Controls and Standards:**

- ➔ Continue with the Community Investment Program (CIP) which provides operational funding to community groups across the region for the operation of indoor recreation and community facilities, and the development and operations of programming within these facilities.
- ➔ The Municipality should require its operating partners to develop an operating manual that outlines mutually agreeable service standards. The operating or grant agreements should obligate the facilities to always comply with specified standards.
- ➔ Clarify within CIP guidelines, the obligation of the municipality with regard to funding operational deficits in relation to operating partners’ operating performance.
- ➔ Adopted standards of performance within operating contracts must be clearly documented and measurable.
- ➔ Move forward with expanding the municipal evaluation process for budget requests to include operating metrics and benchmarks to allow for a comparative analysis of operators performance.
- ➔ Create key performance indicators (KPI’s) as well as meaningful and measurable operating and financial metrics to enhance the municipal evaluation process for budget requests.
- ➔ In consultation with its partners, the Municipality should develop a straightforward data collection and analysis methodology that would be used to routinely assess the operator’s performance compared to the anticipated thresholds and benchmarks described in its business plan.
- ➔ Operator performance should be analysed on a pre-determined schedule.
- ➔ Operator should demonstrate a connection between their operating grants and the outcomes that should flow from facility operations or the delivery of recreation and community programs.

- ➔ Operators should be required to provide reports describing their actual performance compared to their forecasted performance levels - the schedule and level of detail of which should be dictated by the size and complexity of the project as well as degree of Municipal exposure to risk.
- ➔ As part of the decision-making process for the commitment to develop new municipally-owned recreation facilities, an operations plan should be required to be performed which outlines the likely operating costs and revenues annually from commissioning of the facility for 3-5 years. Approval for capital expenditure on new recreational facilities will in part rest on achieving a five year operational plan which is approved by the RMWB.

**Developing and Managing Operating Partnerships:**

- ➔ Develop a standardized partnership framework through which all partnership opportunities are vetted, and all potential partners are sourced and selected.
- ➔ Partnership agreements should fully describe the anticipated results of the arrangement, the roles and responsibilities of the owner and the operator, reporting obligations, operating specifications and performance levels, maintenance standards, conflict resolution mechanisms, notification and communication protocols, agreement review and adjustment processes and all other legal and procedural clauses normally included in an operating agreement.

**Engaging in Continuous and Progressive Improvement:**

- ➔ The Municipality should create and implement a continuous partnership improvement process that is undertaken on a gradual and incremental basis.
- ➔ Partners for existing facilities exist, so transitioning should be incremental and include education as to the requirements. However, it should be clear that greater municipal oversight and policy direction is a central feature of this plan.

**User Fees:**

- ➔ The Municipality should enhance its authority to establish and review user fee rates not only for the provision of ice as currently exists, but for other activities.





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