



Okotoks Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master Plan - Refresh

Public Participation Plan

July 2022





Image source: Facebook, Town of Okotoks, Photos

Project Overview

Recreation, parks and leisure programs, events, and amenities are valued and important municipal services. Residents that have access to quality opportunities are proven to be healthier, happier and more connected to their community. Recreation, parks and leisure activities spur on economic activity, provide healthier choices to anti-social behaviours and are a source of community pride and spirit. It is for all of these reasons that the Town of Okotoks invests in these services and also why residents have come to expect the quality and quantity of current facilities and spaces as part of their everyday lives. The current period of uncertainty and the temporary reduction of these services throughout Alberta will undoubtedly enhance the perceived and real value of them to resident quality of life and bolster the importance of providing recreation parks into the future.

To proactively manage these services, the Town of Okotoks is updating its Recreation, Parks and Leisure Master Plan. The Master Plan will guide the development, delivery, and continuous improvement of parks, sport, culture, and recreation programs, services, and facilities. Okotoks is a dynamic Town and the needs and demands of the community are shifting. The Master Plan is an important tool helping the municipality proactively manage these critically important public services. The Master Plan will have a horizon of 15 years.

The Master Plan will:

- Align with the strategic direction, priorities, plans, and policies of the Town;
- Account for forecasts related to the Town's changing community profile/ demographics;
- Reflect trends, best practices and changing expectations and practices related to sports and recreation;
- Provide guidance on future direction of parks and recreation programs, services, and facilities;
- Create strategies for service and amenity implementation; and
- Reflect public and stakeholder input in recreation, parks and leisure values, needs, and expectations.

The Master Plan needs to be developed based on sound research including a comprehensive program of engagement. This document presents the plan for community engagement with the identification of audiences, tactics used, and implementation considerations. The engagement undertaken in the development of the allocation framework will align with the Town's practices and processes. The engagement will also reflect the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and A Project Ethics Community Consensus Initiative (ARECCI)¹.



¹ ARECCI is an initiative from Alberta Innovates. It is an ethical framework that can be employed for projects that do not require ethical approval. It offers tools to ensure engagement practitioners consider the risks associated with the participation of people in the engagement research.

Public Participation

– Its Importance and Its Process

Recreation, parks and leisure services are subjective; there is no official and definitive source that dictates the types of facilities and services a community needs to provide. As such, service delivery becomes a product and balance of both community and political will. For this reason, providing meaningful opportunities for community input when thinking strategically about the future of recreation, parks and leisure is critical and equitable.

A balanced approach with a diversity of tactics is important when conducting public participation. Soliciting input from residents, community organizations, and key stakeholders will provide important information to understand the diverse perspectives of those using and benefiting from these key quality of life services. The public participation will also shed some light on the challenges some people in Okotoks face that impact their full participation in recreation, parks and leisure.

Because of the importance of this Master Plan, it is necessary to gather information from community members in a manner that enables the findings to be considered representative of the Town. As such, the methodology presented in this plan will provide those processes to ensure everyone's voice is heard. Opportunities to gather the perspectives of consumers, providers, and others impacted are built into the public participation plan. Together these inputs will ensure the strategy is developed with a thorough understanding of community perspectives, while ensuring equity in how people experience recreation, parks and leisure opportunities in Okotoks.

All participants will be welcome into some aspect of the public participation activities. While methodologies have been set, flexibility exists to accommodate as many people as possible regardless of their circumstances. While there are limitations of time and resources, efforts will be made to ensure the program of engagement is as inclusive as it can be. Considerations will be given to all manner of diversity. Additionally, the engagement will adhere to the intents of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



Project Engagement Foundations

Objectives

While there are specific objectives related to the individual engagement tactics, there are some overall objectives that will guide the program of engagement. These objectives can be considered in two different groupings:

- content related, and
- process related.

The content related objectives refer to the information collected that will inform the allocation framework. The process objectives speak to items to achieve through implementation of the engagement.

Content Objectives

Gather greater understanding and insight into:

- how the public and community organizations use recreation, parks and leisure facilities and amenities.
- changes in amenity demands and needs.
- barriers and challenges exist for participation.
- values related to service provision.
- needs and expectations from the community.
- opportunities to further the Town's efforts regarding access and inclusivity.

Process Objectives

These process objectives are very much tied into the values of the IAP2 and are reflected in the Town's Public Participation Strategy.

- Accountability & Learning
- Inclusiveness
- Transparency
- Responsiveness

Our Commitment to the Public

All participants will be treated with respect and their opinions valued. Their input will be collected, housed, and reported on in a manner that respects the intent with which it was gathered. Input will only be solicited on items and issues only on those items for which it will truly be considered. The public and stakeholders will understand any limitations that exist as it relates to decision making.

Audiences and Tactics

This section presents the details related to the public participation. The table identifies the audiences upon which the plan is built. It identifies a tactic for the audience and describes it along with the purpose for using the tactic. Related to the implementation of each tactic, the table provides a description of the tasks that need to be done to implement the tactic along with roles for both the consulting team and the Town of Okotoks.

Tactic	IAP2 Continuum of Public Engagement	Purpose / Info Sought	Targeted Stakeholders	Implementation	Timing	Responsibilities OK - Town of Okotoks RCS - Consultant team	Communication Tactics
Communications & Pop-Up Events	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform the public of the project and its process gather some "top of mind" thoughts about recreation, parks and leisure to get people thinking promote engagement opportunities " 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Okotoks residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 static panels that can be posted around the community at various events project team member accompanying panels to interact with community Post-It notes and writing utensils for people to answer questions "publish" project notice 	August-September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to design and develop panels OK to approve and have panels produced OK to identify locations and timing for panels OK to host panels RCS to develop project notice OK to post messages from notice on project website and across established communication channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communiques / media release messaging through existing communication channels (including social media, newspapers, etc) through fielding time project webpage

Tactic	IAP2 Continuum of Public Engagement	Purpose / Info Sought	Targeted Stakeholders	Implementation	Timing	Responsibilities OK - Town of Okotoks RCS - Consultant team	Communication Tactics
Household Survey - coded access	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> solicit input from Okotoks households information sought includes satisfaction with recreation, parks and leisure opportunities, value of those services, participation rates, future needs, personal preferences controlled access enables findings to be considered representative of Okotoks households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Okotoks households (~14,000 cards distributed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce hard copy (pdf) and online version of questionnaire host online questionnaire on project page on Town's website develop postcard with unique access code mail postcards to households in Okotoks postcard includes a unique access code postcard will provide contact information for households that would prefer hard copy 	September to October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to draft questionnaire OK to review and approve questionnaire RCS to program in online platform and provide URL to Okotoks OK to post link online and promote RCS to draft postcard OK to review and approve postcard RCS to have postcard produced and mailed OK to collect mailing addresses and access code from residents wanting hard copy and provide to RCS RCS to mail out hard copy to residents (include self addressed postage paid return envelope) RCS to track survey participation RCS to analyze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> postcard messaging through existing communication channels (including social media, newspapers, etc) through fielding time

Tactic	IAP2 Continuum of Public Engagement	Purpose / Info Sought	Targeted Stakeholders	Implementation	Timing	Responsibilities OK - Town of Okotoks RCS - Consultant team	Communication Tactics
Community Group Survey	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solicit input from organized user groups and those groups / entities who use recreation, parks and leisure facilities and those who deliver recreation, parks and leisure programming. • information sought: desired program and support amenities, need for facility enhancements / additions, challenges and barriers experienced, trends in participation, assessment of service levels, potential utilization, potential partnerships, and willingness to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organized recreation, parks and leisure groups (e.g. Big Rock Pickle Ball Group, Percy Pegler Men's Slowpitch, Foothills Lions Rugby Club, Okotoks Mavericks Swim Club, Okotoks United Soccer Club) • other organized groups who may use recreation, parks and leisure facilities and associated amenities (e.g. Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Okotoks Lions Club) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop questionnaire (pdf and online versions) • invite organizations (through email) to participate in the survey" 	September to October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop questionnaire, OK to approve • OK to have list of organized groups with representative and email address • RCS to develop draft email text • OK to review and approve questionnaire • RCS to develop hard copy and program online. Provide URL to OK • OK to send email to group representatives • RCS to monitor participation in survey • OK to send reminder emails encouraging participation • RCS to analyze findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitation only using Town contact lists

Tactic	IAP2 Continuum of Public Engagement	Purpose / Info Sought	Targeted Stakeholders	Implementation	Timing	Responsibilities OK - Town of Okotoks RCS - Consultant team	Communication Tactics
Stakeholder Interviews / Meetings	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather insight about recreation, parks and leisure provision from perspectives in the community beyond "typical" organizations importance of recreation, parks and leisure services, assessment of service levels, desired amenities, barriers to use, willingness to pay, partnership potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may include group discussion sessions with primary facility users (e.g. ice users) include a broader array of organizations: social agencies, Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Health, the faith community, Okotoks Public Library, Foothills School Division, Conseil Scolaire Franco Sud, Okotoks Newcomers Club, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify interests, perspectives, and groups to include in the meetings invite groups and their representatives to the meeting convene the meetings ~12 meetings <p>*some in-person meetings may occur depending upon restrictions and individual preference"</p>	September to October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OK and RCS to identify groups to invite RCS to provide meeting schedule availability RCS to draft email invitation OK to schedule meetings RCS to follow-up with meeting details (e.g Zoom link for online meetings) RCS to convene meeting RCS to write synopsis of the meetings" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> invitation only

Engagement Timing

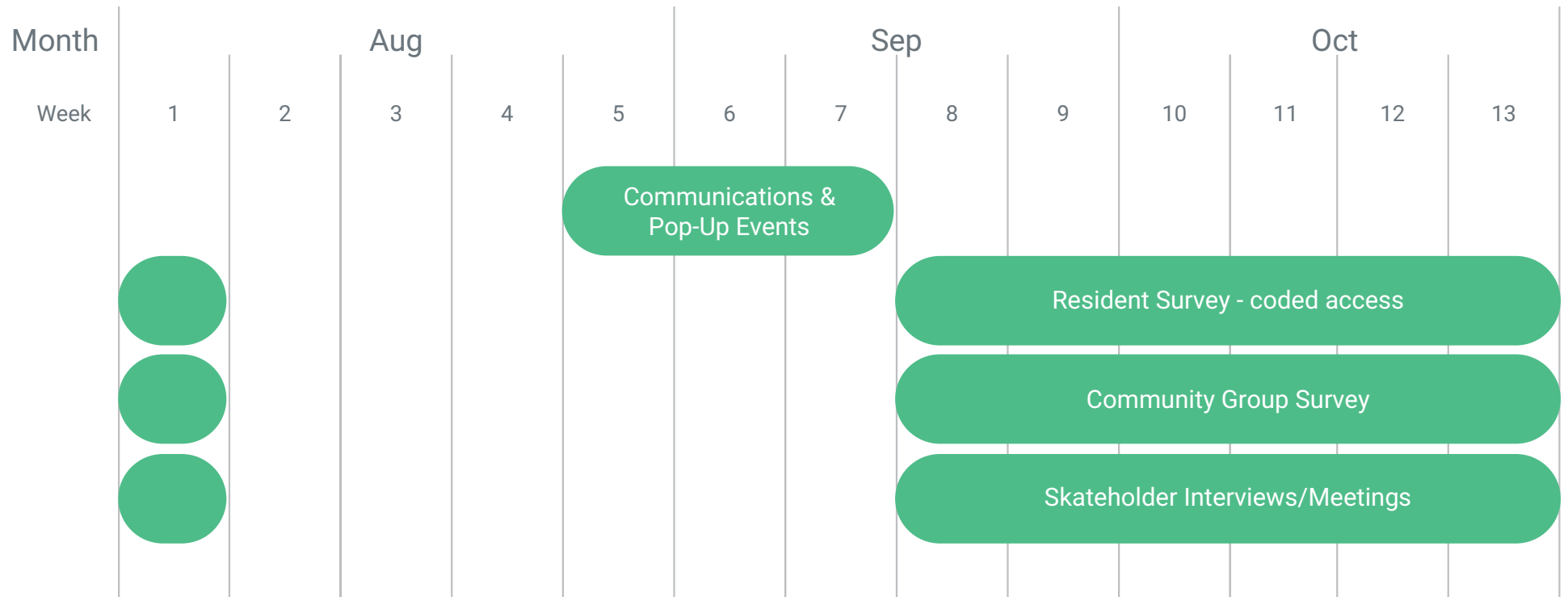




Image source: Facebook, Town of Okotoks, Photos



Okotoks

Historic Past, Sustainable Future

