

# PARKLAND COUNTY TRAILS STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2023









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# PARKLAND COUNTY TRAILS STRATEGY

PREPARED FOR:

**PARKLAND COUNTY**

PREPARED BY:

**EDS GROUP INC.**

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

**Y-STATION**









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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Purpose & Trends in Trail Use

Parkland County is a dynamic municipality with a wide range of populated areas, ranging from rural agricultural areas to hamlets. The municipality encompasses Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, two densely populated municipalities that share a common interest with Parkland County to provide residents with exceptional indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities. With projections for continuous population growth across most communities in western Canada and growing demand for trails nation-wide, Parkland County recognized the need to create a guiding vision that directs future trail development within the County. Key planning documents, such as the Municipal Development Plan and Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan have illustrated community interest and benefits derived from a connected trail system but lack the specificity regarding long term goals and priorities. This Trails Strategy Plan (TSP) provides long-term direction to the systematic provision of trails, creating an integrated trail network for County residents and visitors to the region. The TSP ultimately outlines a framework of a county-wide trail network that clearly identifies priorities for the next 20 years, with a more detailed focus on the next 5-10 years.

The TSP is not intended to be a trails master plan that provides maps showing a County-wide proposed network of trails. It is a strategic document that translates what we heard from a very extensive public and

stakeholder engagement program into priorities and recommendations regarding trails. The plan recognizes a number of initiatives, studies and partnerships that will ensure that a future trails planning initiative has a strong foundation and is guided by local resident and stakeholder support. The strategy recommends further actions that are needed before trails are designed and implemented, and articulates where to start – what are the most important areas to first consider developing new trails? As a general finding of this strategy, there are some important areas within the County to focus trails in the near-term and some areas where trails are not valued and would not have public support.

### 1.2 Study Process

The TSP was developed in four phases by the project team in collaboration with County administration, County Council, stakeholders, and residents. The first three phases occurred concurrently, creating an iterative study process guided by community feedback. Once those three phases were completed, all project findings were compiled into this final report, and a summary presentation was prepared for Parkland County Council to endorse the findings.

### Phase 1:

Analysis and Review. This phase created a framework for the project through review of relevant legislation, mapping, trails assessments, and initial conversations with project stakeholders.

**INVENTORY MAPPING  
TRAILS ASSESSMENTS  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENT REVIEW**

### Phase 2:

Community Engagement. The engagement program defined TSP vision, goals, priorities. It occurred over two phases, ensuring the TSP reflected community aspirations, engaging with residents and multiple stakeholder types. To learn more about the engagement program see full details of what was heard in Appendix A.

#### STEP 1

- 1 In-depth Interviews
- 2 Project Webpage

#### STEP 2

- 1 Open Houses (Online and in Person)
- 2 Public Surveys
- 3 Workshops and Sessions
- 4 In-depth Interviews

### Phase 3:

Key Findings and Strategic Directions. Key findings from the first two phases were compiled to create a draft plan, presenting preliminary recommendations to County Council and residents for review.

**DRAFT TSP**

### Phase 4:

Strategy Finalization. Following revisions provided during Phase 3, the TSP was finalized for adoption as information by Council.

**FINALIZED TRAIL STRATEGY PLAN**

### 1.3 Background: Trends in Recreation & Trail Use

Nation-wide trends of trail use have shown exponential demands for this outdoor pursuit. This trend is also consistent with Provincial and regional trends that show other municipalities with similar statistics found through public and stakeholder engagement. While this leads to the presumption that Parkland County has similar trends, it was important that this TSP determines the demand for trails through a significant public and stakeholder engagement program to understand local interest. Examining current recreation trends also allowed for a better understanding of the potential opportunities and challenges associated with trails in the County. Overall, these broad national and provincial trends in recreation speak to a high demand for trails, and the engagement program for this TSP determined similar trends locally. Overall national and provincial trends show:

- A desire for spontaneous, unstructured recreation: With increasingly busy schedules, more individuals are looking to spontaneous recreation opportunities which can be accessed conveniently and closer to home. Unstructured play is also integral to the development improvisation, problem-solving, social skills, and self-expression among children.
- A need for connection to nature: A greater portion of the national and provincial population lives within urban areas, experiencing fewer opportunities to connect with the natural environment. Parkland County is well positioned to attract visitors and future residents to enjoy the rural charm and stunning natural landscapes the County is known for.
- Recreation for all: Communities are beginning to recognize the importance of providing equitable access to recreation opportunities. The associated outcomes for public health, social cohesion, and overall enjoyment illustrate that the provision of recreation is an essential municipal service.
- Decreasing physical activity: Just 28% of Canadian youth and children meet the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day (ParticipAction, 2022). Municipalities play an important role in providing facilities, such as trails, that can promote meeting daily physical activity requirements and improve public health goals.
- Declining biodiversity: Biodiversity continues to decline as environmentally significant areas are converted to other land uses. Trails create an opportunity for nature appreciation along with conservation of important landscapes. Careful trail planning, design and management can reduce impacts on natural areas and help protect biodiversity.



## 1.4 Benefits of Trail Use

A recent national survey on Canadian trail usage confirmed that trail usage remains an integral part of Canadian life, with 75 per cent of those surveyed using trails. More importantly, the survey indicates that among those who have made plans to travel, 43 per cent have decided to include trails in their plans<sup>1</sup>. The benefits of trails are far reaching and span beyond their face value benefit as a “place to go for a walk”.

- **Health:** The health benefits from trails are primarily derived from their ability to promote physical activity and opportunities interact with the natural environment. Safe, accessible trails provide community members with low to no cost places to meet physical activity requirements. Physical activity plays an important role in the management of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Other benefits include maintenance of a healthy body weight, improved mental health, quality of life and well-being (WHO, 2023).
- **Environment:** With proper management practices, trails can support environmental conservation and protection goals. Trails are typically associated with improved habitat values, opposed to other land uses that facilitate industrial, residential, or commercial development. Trails can link important habitat areas, reducing fragmentation.

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1. *Trail Use an Integral Part of Canadian Lifestyles, Survey Finds. Trans Canada Trail: June 29 2020.*

- **Economic:** Trails provide a multitude of economic benefits. However, these benefits can be difficult to quantify due to their down streams impacts on adjacent systems such as public health, real estate, and tourism.
- **Culture and Identity:** Parkland County’s natural environment is a significant cultural resource to communities past and present. Trails in the County can help celebrate the natural and cultural landscape that has been a key aspect of identity and heritage in the County since time immemorial.



## 1.5 Economic and Tourism Benefits of Trails

There are many quantitative as well as less measurable economic benefits to trail development. Trails have been a prominent tourism attraction, particularly as a way for visitors to explore new environments that they travel to. One of the immediate financial benefit of trails is income and employment generated by the construction and maintenance of trail infrastructure. Construction, maintenance and operations of trails is usually contracted to local companies that benefit from the revenue received. Some of the direct economic impacts of trails are generated primarily from spending by local residents and tourists, both domestic and international<sup>2</sup>. As people use trails, they require supporting amenities such as restaurants, equipment rentals, items from retail stores such as clothing and technical equipment, hotels, amongst others. Local users will tend to spend proportionately more on the purchase of clothing and technical trail use equipment, while tourists will spend more on hotels, accommodation and rentals<sup>3</sup>. Spending on trail-related services and equipment has a strong impact on local businesses.

Among Canadians who have made plans to travel for summer or fall 2020, 43% are considering using trails as part of their vacation plans. Those Canadians are increasingly looking to local trail travel and tourism options with 39% staying where they live, 41% looking towards another region of the province, 17% going to another province, and 3% are considering outside of Canada<sup>3</sup>.

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2. *Trekking Our Trails: The Benefits and Significance of Canada's Trails System*. The Conference Board of Canada: September 21, 2020.

3. *Understanding Local Versus Tourist Visitors to Recreational Areas*. Spencer, Daniel. *Managing Leisure* 18, No. 1: 2013.

Across Canada and Alberta, property values have also shown to increase in proximity to trails as these amenities become infrastructure used to better peoples' lives and offer low to no-cost recreation. Studies in several jurisdictions found that houses adjacent to trails without municipal reserve have a 2 per cent price premium, and if they were adjacent to a trail and municipal reserve they enjoy a 5 per cent premium<sup>4</sup>. In some jurisdictions it has been found that trail amenities in proximity to single family homes are directly related to land appreciations of 5 to 20 per cent depending on the proximity of the trail and the amenities on the trail<sup>5</sup>.

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4. *The Relative Impacts of Trails and Greenbelts on Home Price*. Asabere and Huffman. *The Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics* 38, No. 4: May 2007.

5. *Property Value . Desirability Effects of Bike Paths Adjacent to Residential Areas*. Racca and Dhanju. *University of Delaware*: November 2006.



**WHAT TOURISM  
OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU  
ENVISION FOR TRAILS IN  
PARKLAND COUNTY?**

NATURE  
APPRECIATION 74%

ADVENTURE  
TOURISM 41%

SPORTS  
TOURISM 35%

CULTURE &  
HERITAGE  
CELEBRATION 26%

OTHER 15%

DON'T KNOW /  
NOT STATED 7%



# 2.0 BACKGROUND

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Study Area and Community Profile

Parkland County is a rural municipality located immediately west of Edmonton. Parkland County is also included within Treaty 6, the traditional home of Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux Nations and members of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Residents from neighboring municipalities, particularly those characterized by more urban forms of development, frequently visit Parkland County to enjoy the natural landscapes and existing trails. The County is also recognized for its agricultural and industrial heritage which have largely shaped development in the County.

#### Community Demographics

According to the 2021 census, Parkland County has a population of 32,737 (Statistics Canada, 2021). This marked a decline in the County's population by 1.6%, compared to the 2016 census population. During the previous census period (2011-2016), Parkland County grew by 5% (Statistics Canada, 2016). This aligns with the Capital Region Board projections for Parkland County, which anticipates Parkland will be home to between 42,700 and 50,000 people by 2044 (Parkland County, 2017). Population growth in the County will likely place increased performance demands on County recreation areas and facilities, such as trails.

The average age of the population is 42.3 (Statistics Canada, 2021). Residents aged 55 to 64 compose the largest age group in the County, indicating a heightened need for accessible trails as this population ages given trail walking is one of the highest recreational activities for people as they age.

#### Land Use and Development

Covering an area of 242,595 hectares, Parkland County is one of the largest in size and one of the highest populated of all rural municipalities in Alberta. However, Parkland County residences are not evenly distributed, with the highest concentration of residents living in the eastern portion of the County and along the Highway 16 corridor. 89% of Parkland residents live in single detached homes; the average household size in 2021 was 2.7 (Statistics Canada, 2021). These development characteristics illustrate a low-density population, which can present challenges to delivering County-wide services. The County's Municipal Development Plan has identified existing hamlets as priority areas for the development of infrastructure and supporting services.



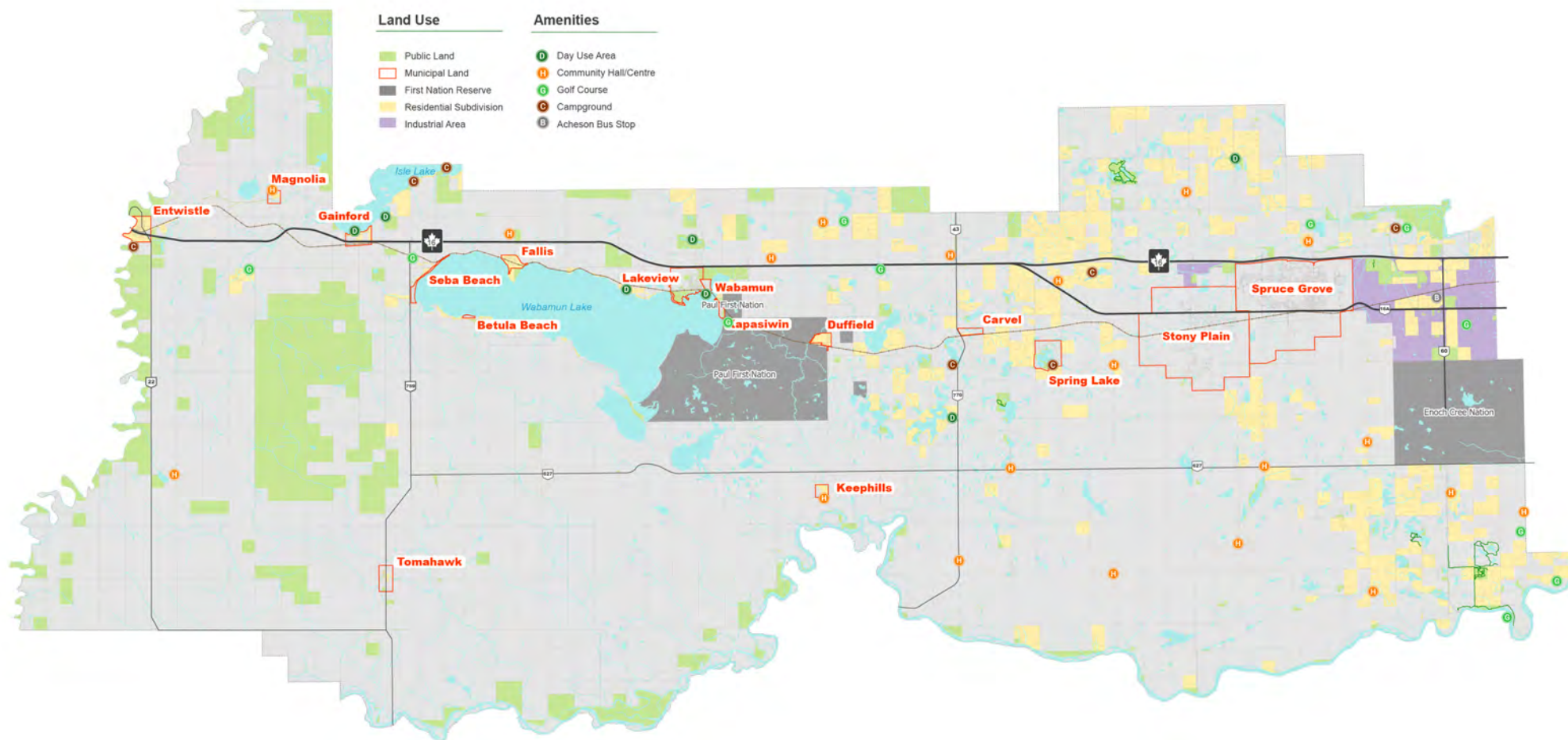


Figure 1 - Land Designation and Amenities

## Natural Environment

Parkland County hosts a range of landscapes, including varying vegetation communities, fish and wildlife species, wetlands and aquatic resources as well as several unique landforms, and historic resources. Much of the County's land area has been converted from its natural state for residential, agricultural, and industrial land uses. Intact stands of native vegetation, including aspen, balsam popular, jack pine, white spruce, and black spruce, provide important habitat and a scenic backdrop for outdoor recreation opportunities, such as trails. Hydrological systems are a definitive feature of the County's natural assets; the North Saskatchewan River, Pembina River, and peatlands offer excellent opportunities for enjoyment of unique landscape features.

## 2.2 Guiding Framework

The development of the TSP has been framed by recommendations and directions from previous planning processes and relevant legislation. Alignment with existing planning frameworks and best practices are required for the successful delivery of County Trails. As a result, the following documents, developed by Federal, Provincial, Local Governments, and organizations overseeing best practices, form the basis of the Trails Strategy. See Appendix B: Background Document Review for a summary of the supporting documents which were reviewed as part of the TSP.

### Jurisdiction and Current Partnerships

The delivery of trails in Parkland County, along with the supporting infrastructure and environmental management services, is collaborative effort which requires a number of partners. The following is a summary of the services and jurisdictional responsibilities of each partner.





5

**EDMONTON AND AREA LAND TRUST**

Management of Bunchberry Meadows

6

**LEE NATURE SANCTUARY SOCIETY**

Management of Clifford E Lee Nature Sanctuary

7

**WATERSHED ALLIANCE**

Groups such as the Wabumun Watershed Council, and the Pembina and North Saskatchewan River Watershed Alliances oversee the collaboration with numerous stakeholders to help manage the watershed of rivers in Parkland County, and influence planning initiatives such as trails and other recreational use of river valleys

8

**ATHABASCA WATERSHED COUNCIL**

Provides strategic oversight and guidance on management planning for development in the Pembina River Watershed, identifying areas of high restoration and conservation priorities. The Council recognizes the need for effective management of riparian areas for overall watershed health



# 3.0 CURRENT CONDITIONS

## 3.0 CURRENT CONDITIONS

Parkland County hosts eight different formal trail areas, spanning a total of approximately 43km. Some existing trails have been assigned a rating ranging from “easy” to “advanced” with most trails classified as “easy”.

Formally recognized trails within the County are located exclusively east of Highway 770 and found within recreation and protected areas. Parkland County and other independent operators are responsible for the maintenance and management of these trails. Permitted trail uses vary throughout the County, however some common themes are present:

- County managed trails are the only opportunities for cycling and equestrian trail use within Parkland County. Trails managed by other independent operators fall within land areas which are intended for conservation and environmental protection. Cycling, and horseback riding are typically regarded as more intensive trail uses and therefore do not align with the stewardship objectives of these organizations
- There are no publicly available lands within the County that are designated for off-highway vehicles. Stranger Hills Staging Area is a nearby off-highway vehicle located adjacent to the County’s north-western border within Lac St. Anne County

A summary of existing County Trails can be found in Appendix C: Existing Trails Inventory.

Regional trail development in the County has largely been orchestrated by the River Valley Trail Alliance (RVA): a not-for-profit organization composed of the six municipalities that border the North Saskatchewan River in the Edmonton metropolitan region. As a result, existing regional connections exist exclusively along the North Saskatchewan River, connecting Prospector’s Point Day Use Area (Prospectors Point Trail), Tucker’s Field, and the University of Alberta Botanical Garden (Devonian Trail).

The regional connectivity of existing trails is limited by the North Saskatchewan River and interests of private landowners, who hold the land parcels required to connect County trails to the regional network. The RVA intends to mitigate barriers to regional connectivity through the development of a Devon to Parkland County pedestrian bridge and supporting trail as part of RVA’s secondary trail network connection.

## 3.1 Trans Canada Trail System

The Trans Canada trail currently has not projected any sections of the proposed route within Parkland County. However, a designated parking area is provided as part of the Trans Canada Trail at Devon Voyageur Park; a future connection point to County trails is currently under consideration by the RVA, and Parkland County is contemplating a better connection to river valley trails on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River adjacent to Prospectors’ Point.



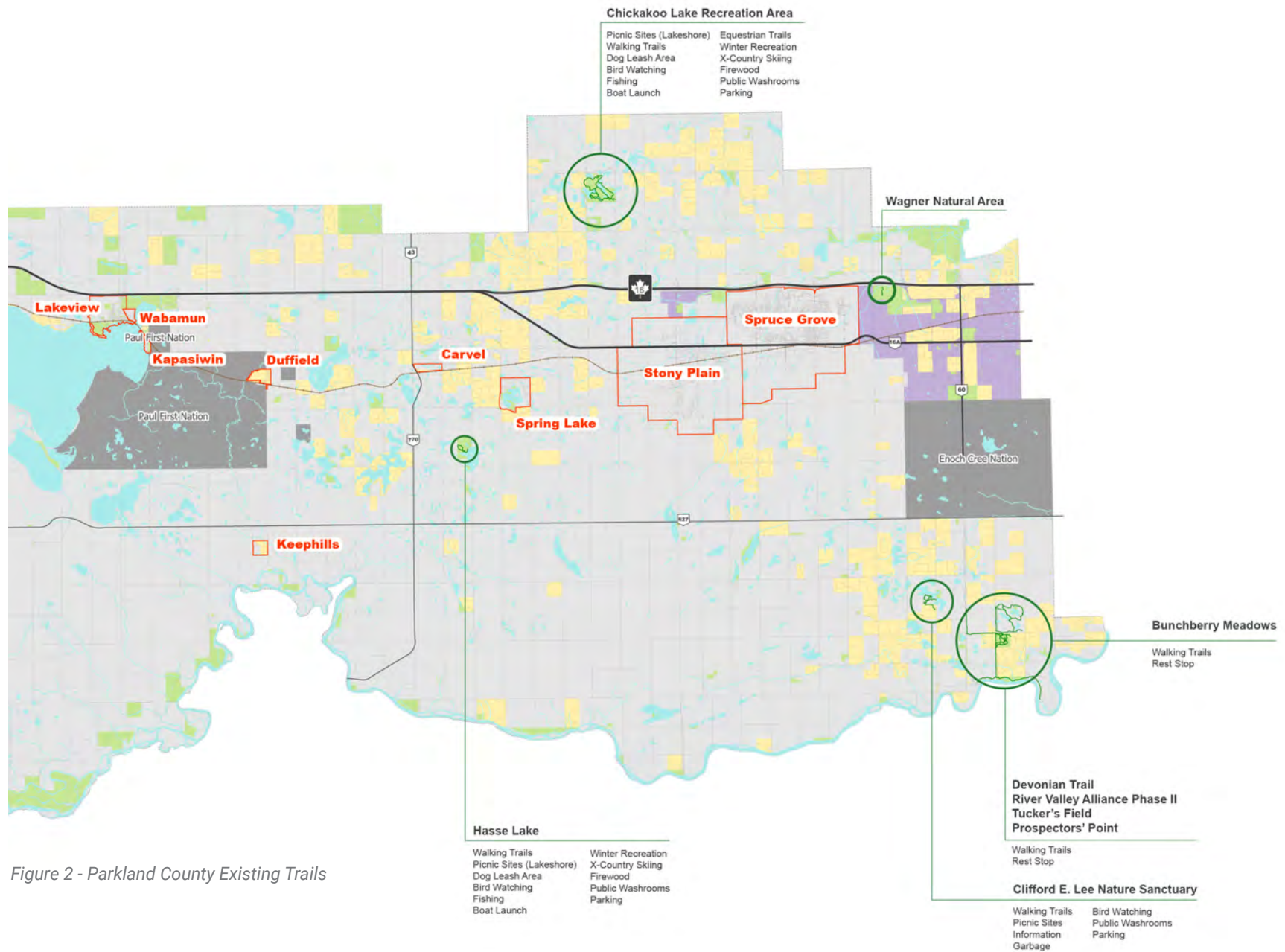


Figure 2 - Parkland County Existing Trails

### **3.2 Alberta Trail Net**

Alberta TrailNet Society is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to support the development of a provincial trail network, along with the implementation of the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta. The organization provides a summary of trails within the region of “Clearwater East” (which encompasses Parkland County). As result, the development of future trails within the County should be communicated to the Alberta Trail Net to maintain their status as an up-to-date information source and pursue potential partnerships for regional trails. Placing trails within the Alberta Trail Net database also helps promote trails to non-residents seeking recreational opportunities as they travel through the region.

### **3.3 Areas of Interest**

The County has formally designated areas for investment in tourism and recreation within the Municipal Development Plan as Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas. The County defines these lands as “areas with unique environmental, agricultural and community qualities that make them well-suited for recreation and tourism”. Wabamun Lake, Trestle Creek, Pembina River, Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary, and Chickakoo Recreation Area are examples of key community destinations which fall within Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas. Trails often serve as drivers of tourism and recreation independently and can be utilized to improve connectivity of existing or proposed recreation and tourism destinations. To align with County policy and promote future synergies, trail development should be prioritized within these areas. Figure 3 identifies the various natural areas, Provincial parks, reserves and other areas of interest as it relates to trail development.

### **3.4 Historical Connections**

Trails can connect communities to areas or destinations of historical significance, ensuring that they are protected and continue to contribute to the collective identity of a place. Currently, trails within the County do not directly highlight historical uses or cultural heritage of communities in the area. The Government of Alberta provides a listing of Historic Resources through the Alberta Historic Resources Management Branch. Land parcels that fall within the listings must have special consideration and as with all development align with the Historical Resources Act.

There are several sites identified within the County for their high historical value, such as St. Aidan and St. Hilda Anglican church. However, this record does not provide a complete understanding of historical sites and culturally significant areas which has been passed orally. A deeper exploration of key historical sites is required throughout the provision of trails, as it hopeful that as historical sites are enhanced they be accessible where appropriate by trails.

### **3.5 Areas of Avoidance for Trail Development**

Through the public and stakeholder engagement program we learned that there is limited interest from private landowners to see trail developed within rural areas, most notably in the central and west areas of the County where population density is very sparse. Because Parkland County permits off-highway vehicles on municipal roads and in ditches, there is little demand from residents to create extensive networks of OHV trails. A large portion of the County is a “working community” with less emphasis on the needs of recreational trails. As a result, the TSP recommends that trail development be primarily focused on the more populated areas of the County and in industrial developments where many people seek recreation during the day while taking breaks from work.



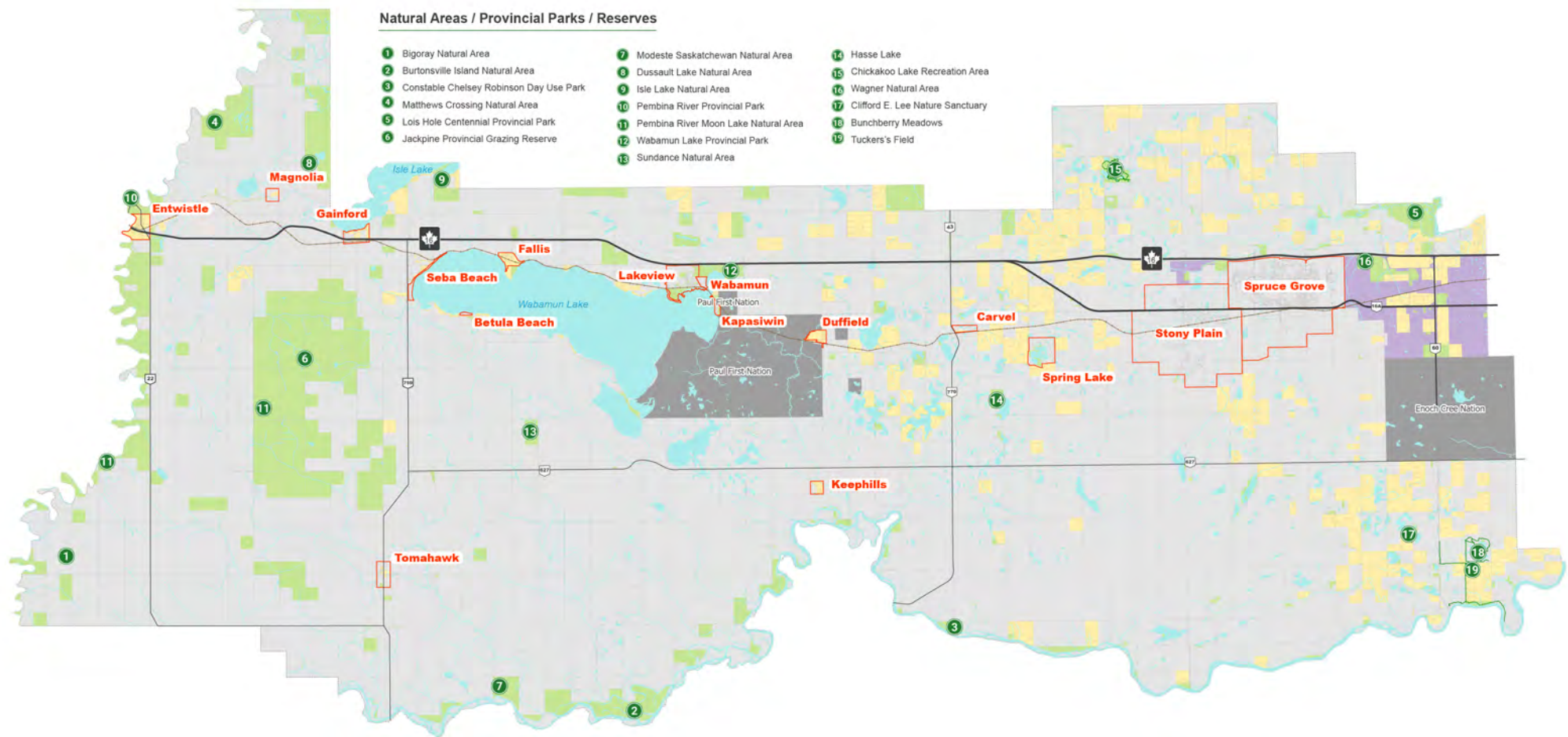


Figure 3 - Natural Areas / Provincial Parks / Reserves

### 3.6 Encroachment on Public Lands

Alike many other municipalities across Alberta that have private development alongside lakes and other Crown-owned lands, Parkland County faces significant challenges in limiting encroachment and other negative impacts on public land. Oftentimes property lines are not clearly delineated and landowners are unaware of the limitations such as conservation easements that may be put on their property. The protection of natural assets such as riparian areas should be a high priority, while still allowing public enjoyment for all people of natural assets. In many contexts, Parkland County has established Environmental Reserve lands between privately owned parcels and Crown-owned lands. Where trail development does not have adverse impacts on the Environmental Reserve, trails can act as a very clear boundary between private and public lands, serving as a clear delineation of ownership and the ability to manipulate land. These trails will also ensure natural features are enjoyed by all, and not exclusive to adjacent landowners. Parkland County is encouraged to develop passive trails within Environmental Reserve lands at or near the property line with private parcels, providing public access and making property limits explicitly known.

#### Planning Continuum

Within the collection of statutory and non-statutory plans and reports, many have significance and can bring support for trail development. From the highest level of strategic plans down to the implementation of new development, each can play a role in defining the importance of, proposed alignments and standard of trail that is built. The following identifies an example of some plans and reports, each of which will have a different level of specificity on trails.

#### WHAT SHOULD TRAILS CONNECT?

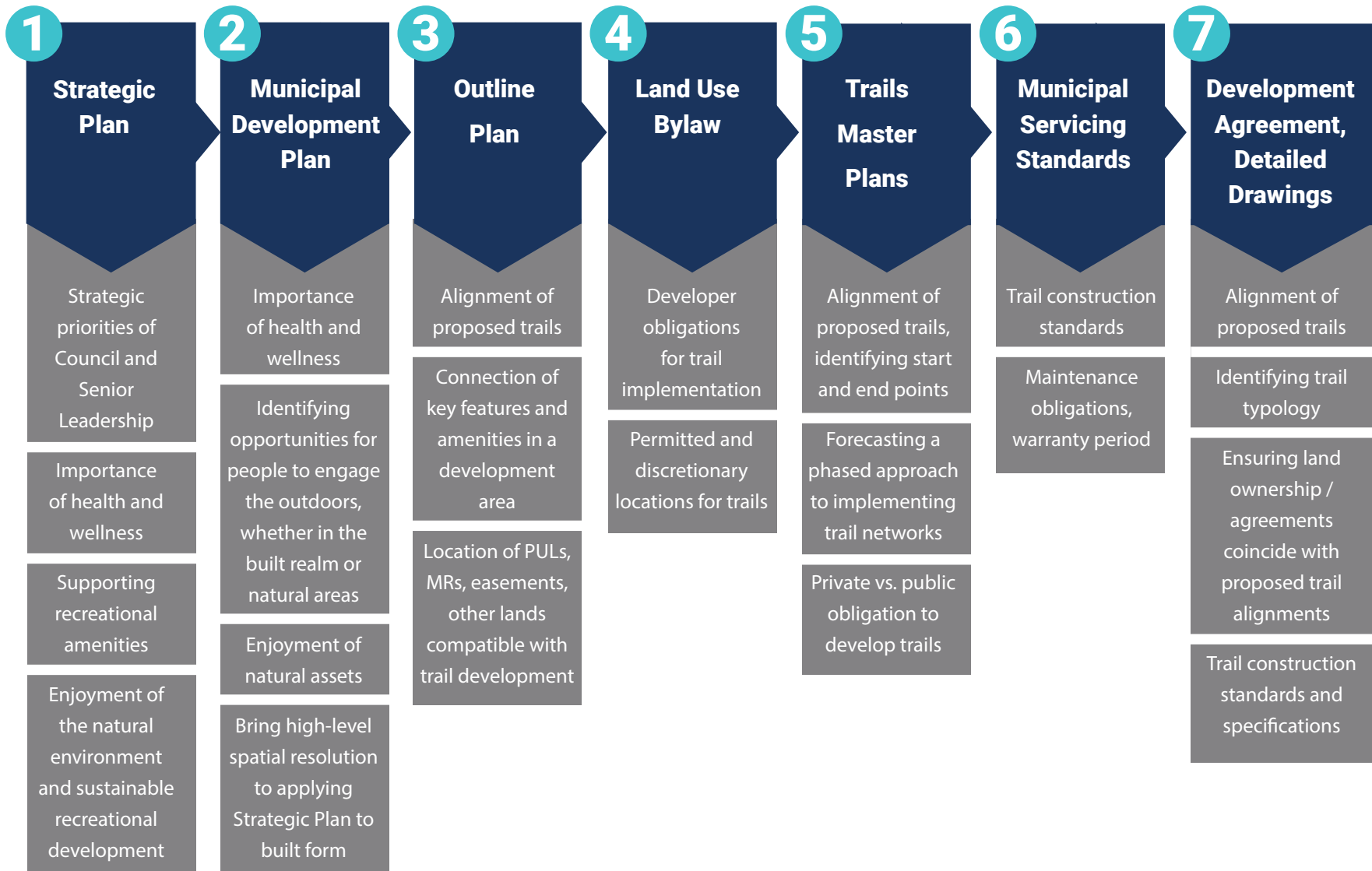


30%

**of survey respondents think trails should focus on connecting people to lakes, rivers and other bodies of water**

Other features of note to connect include: historic sites, landmarks and landscapes (8%); scenic viewing spots (6%); recreation centres (6%), provincial parks (5%); and nature preserves / conservation areas (4%).





# 4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## 4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement Program represents a substantive portion of the TSP planning process. It ensured that the recommendations of this plan are representative of community aspirations. Effective public engagement results in a better public understanding of decisions and improves the decisions made. A detailed 'what we heard report' can be found in Appendix A.

Overall, the engagement process connected with over 750 people to gather feedback and further refine the trail strategy.

- 478 surveys were completed
- 235 people attended in-person sessions
- 36 in-depth interviews were completed with key stakeholders
- 4 special sessions with committees of Council
- Numerous one-on-one phone calls

The phases of the Community Engagement Program included varying levels of participation. In the initial rounds of engagement, the level of involvement ranged from collaborate to involve and focused on vision, values, and priorities for trails. The latter phase of the engagement centered on involving the public in evaluating priorities to recommendations, opportunities for trail development in different contexts and strategies to help resolve challenges. The following graphics depict some of the key findings of the engagement program:

### HOW WE ENGAGED

36

Interviews with Key Stakeholders

9

Interviews with Parkland County Staff

582

Engagements Through 7 Social Media Posts

235

Open House Attendees

478

Surveys Completed

2,449

Visitors to the Project Website



## PHASE 1

24 In-depth Interviews

1 Project Webpage

## PHASE 2

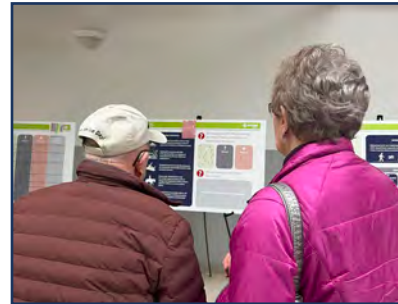
11 Open Houses (Online and In- Person)

2 Public Surveys

1 Community League Session

3 Committee Sessions




12 In-depth Interviews







# 5.0 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES











The following is a summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and strategic directions for trails gained as part of the first two phases of the TSP process. This summary considers the policy and legislative context, key themes heard during the community engagement process, and observations of existing conditions.

-  The policy and legislative context (PL)
-  Key themes heard during the community engagement process (CE)
-  Observations of existing conditions (O)

### Strengths

-  Several Natural Areas, Day Use Areas, and Provincial Parks which include existing trail networks (O)
-  Unique environmental features such as, the North Saskatchewan River, Pembina River, and peatlands (O)
-  Participants feel safe on trails in the County, particularly during the day (CE)
-  Overall support for trail development by community engagement participants, mostly in the more populated areas and less so in more rural agricultural areas (CE)

### Challenges:

-   Trails in Parkland County host a variety of trail uses, including equestrian, OHV, cross-country skiers, and dog walkers. Overlapping uses can cause conflict and environmental degradation without proper trail management practices in place (O) (CE)
-  Differing levels of support for trail development across the County and concerns that trails in more rural agricultural areas may encourage trespassing and vandalism on private land (CE)
-   Dangerous highway crossings (O) (CE)
-  Providing and maintaining trails and supporting amenities, such as parking, lighting, waste collection, washrooms, and signage over a vast area (O)
-  Public concerns of undesirable uses; concerns for potential for conflicts with private landowners (CE)
-  Existing trails classification from the PRCMP does not effectively classify trails and does provide appropriate trail requirements for suggested user types (O)
-   Lack of regulatory provisions which require developers to include trails in future land developments. Key stakeholders, such as developers, indicated that the market should dictate trails in both country residential and industrial development (PL) (CE)



### Opportunities:

- Recreational amenities such as trails are important in providing a sense of place and identity for Parkland County (CE)
- Parkland County has significant points of interest for trail development to help promote tourism (CE) (O)
- Improved access to supporting trail amenities such as washroom facilities, shelters of picnic areas, and garbage cans (CE) (O)
- Adjacent municipalities are interested in partnerships and trail connections over the long term, despite few current initiatives to see inter-municipal connections in the near-term (CE)
- Sites of historical significance in the area (O)

### Strategic Directions:

- Some trails should be for only for certain types of users, such as designated equestrian trails or those only for walkers or cross-country skiers (CE)
- It is important to provide trails in all developed areas, including country residential, hamlets and industrial areas (CE)
- Trails should connect key community destinations such as, recreation centers, parks, schools, and subdivisions (CE)
- Need a consistent approach for trail development in residential areas (CE)
- Waterways should be viewed as trails (CE)

#### INCOMPATIBLE TRAIL USES

- Motorized and non-motorized users do not mix;
- OHV should have separate trail system; and
- Cross Country skiers need their own groomed trails.



# 6.0 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## 6.0 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### 6.1 Vision and Goals

The TSP vision and values serve as a guide for future actions surrounding trail development and investment in the County for the next 20 years. The project vision elements and values were developed following the first phase of community engagement and validated during the second phase. The vision elements and values integrate knowledge gained during Phase 1: Analysis and Review.

#### Vision

##### Trails in Parkland County:

- Connect people to people and to places
- Support physical and mental health
- Promote value and appreciation of the natural landscape
- Bring together recreation, tourism, and conservation

#### Values/Goals:

- Increase Connectivity – Trails create an opportunity to connect to land and the environment. Trails connect key destinations
- Cultivate Community – Trails support engagement with the land in a culturally appropriate way. Trails support community growth
- Build Communication – Trail wayfinding is clear and intuitive

- Enhance the Natural Environment – Trails promote the health of surrounding ecosystems
- Forward Equity and Access – The benefits of trail use are derived by all members of the community
- Promote Active Living – Trails support an active lifestyle
- Expand Partnerships – Trails facilitate reciprocal relationships with community, businesses, the County, and the land. Trails are managed and used with respect to each other and the land
- Ensure Safety – Trail design and management create a feeling of security and well-being for users
- Facilitate Education – Trails cultivate an understanding of the environment and cultural significance of the land
- Provide Recreation Opportunities – Trails in the County provide opportunities for different recreation types



## 6.2 Recommendations

Appendix D provides a detailed chart that compiles each of the strategic recommendations of this strategy. It includes a summary of:

- Analysis / Research Observation – what was observed by the study team during the assessment phase of the study, and supported by what was heard during the engagement program
- Parkland County Policy – which statutory and non-statutory plans from the County are applicable to, or support the observation
- Policy Gap – where new policy, procedure or directive may be required to support the recommendation
- What We Heard – how engagement participants reacted to this recommendation when tested during the engagement process
- Next Steps / Recommendation – overarching recommendations
- Type – which or what combination of types the recommendation applies to, with partnerships, policy and infrastructure as the three typologies
- Timeline: suggested implementation timeline of the recommendation, in one of immediate (0 to 5 years), medium (6 to 10) or long-term (10 to 20 years)

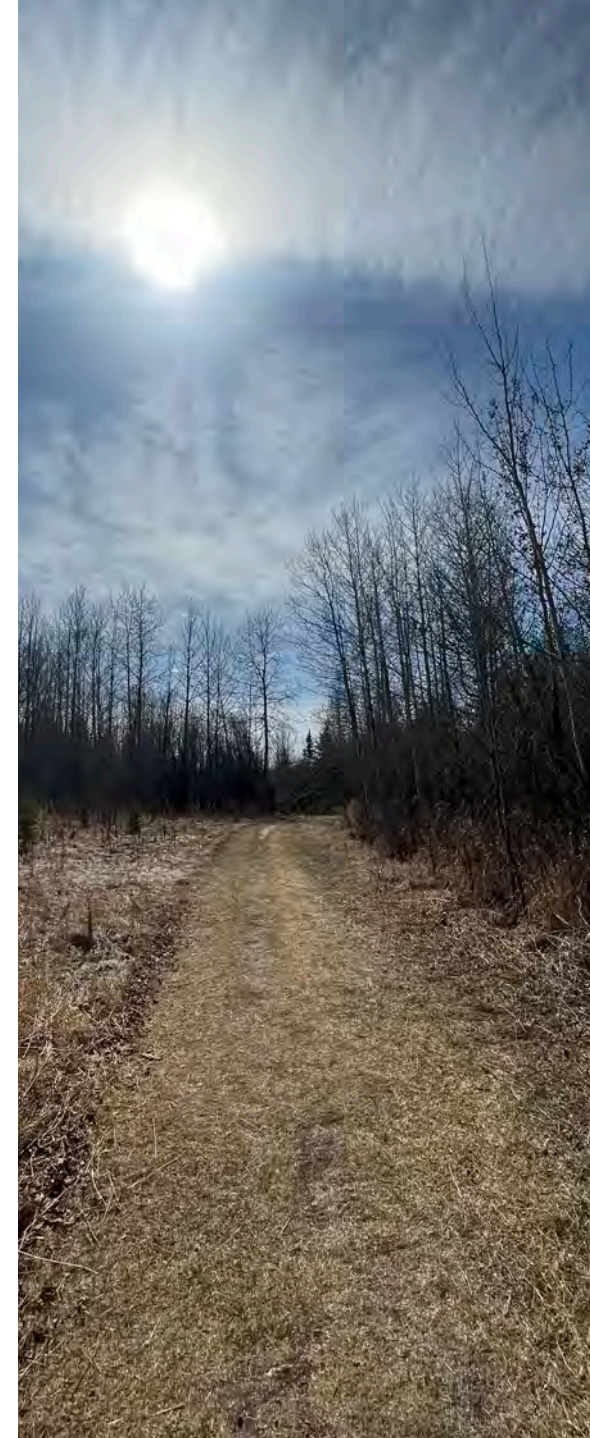
Residents agree:

**“trails create  
a sense of  
place and  
identity within  
communities.”**

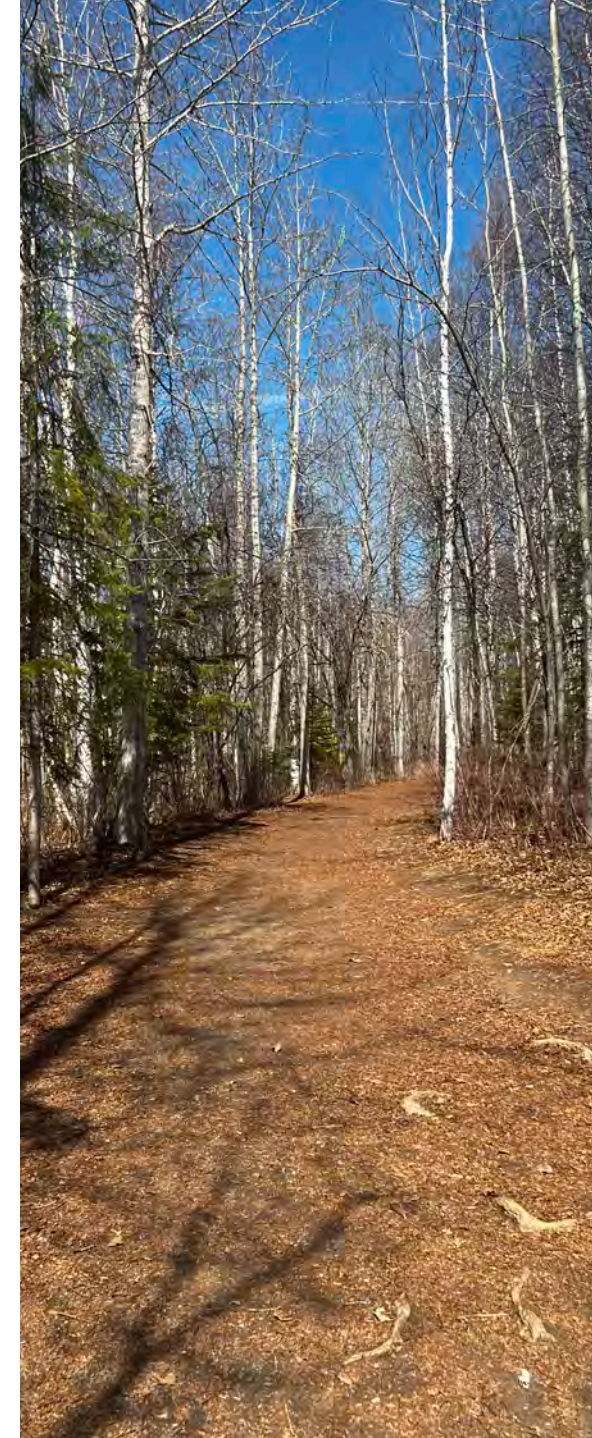


The following is an abbreviated version of the same recommendations showing the timeline (immediate-, medium- and long-term).

RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE
Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of motorized and non-motorized regional trails	IMMEDIATE 1
Work with developers to require the integration of municipal reserve and development of trails, where appropriate, within future residential developments	IMMEDIATE 2
Pursue conversations with Paul First Nation and Enoch First Nation to explore opportunities for cultural representation and interpretive opportunities on trails	IMMEDIATE 3
Utilize the Conservation Master Plan mapping data when examining future trail opportunities	IMMEDIATE 4
Develop a resident education campaign highlighting the importance of “staying on trail” and maintaining riparian/waterbody vegetative buffers	IMMEDIATE 5
Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette Education program to remediate instances where separate trail types are not feasible to reduce future conflicts between user types when sharing the trail	IMMEDIATE 6

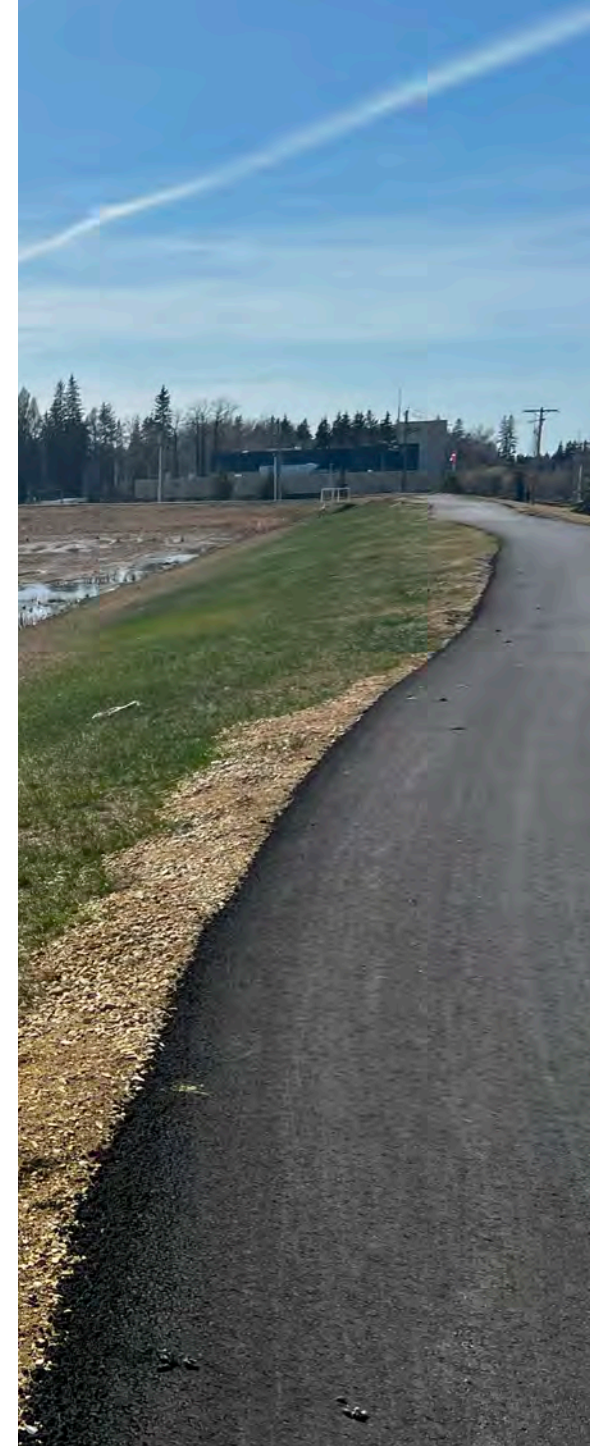


RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	
Update trail classifications to more comprehensively address trail uses within Parkland County	IMMEDIATE	7
Explore the opportunity to include supporting amenities (i.e. washrooms, hitching posts, waste receptacles) at trail heads to increase user comfort and enjoyment	IMMEDIATE	8
The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations and community leagues to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned	IMMEDIATE	8
Pursue the development of a management plan at Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area to improve relationships across trail user types and to mitigate the degradation of environmental systems	IMMEDIATE	10
Incorporate accessibility standards into trail classification which align with universal design standards	IMMEDIATE	11
Where possible, develop trails within Environmental Reserve along the common property line between private land and riparian areas to provide public access for all people and to clearly delineate property lines to limit the amount of encroachment and impacts caused by adjacent property owners. If trail implementation within the Environmental Reserve is not ecologically sustainable, then additional setbacks of Municipal Reserve land should be provided as part of the development and placed between Environmental Reserve and privately owned land, with the trail within that setback.	IMMEDIATE	12

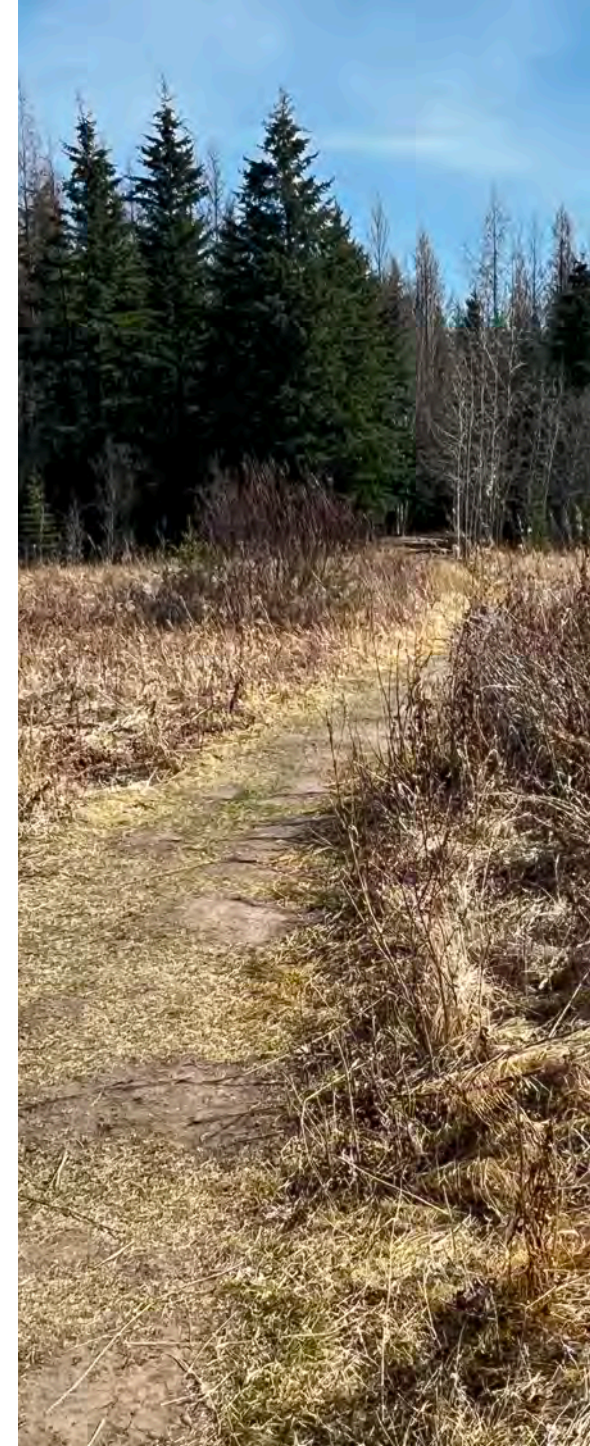




RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	
Pursue conversations with the Trans Canada Trail to identify potential trail connections in Parkland County	MEDIUM	1
Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls	MEDIUM	2
Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails and agreements with Jack Pine PGA leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County	MEDIUM	3
Collaborate with Paul First Nation and Enoch First Nation to identify and protect culturally significant trails or destinations in natural areas	MEDIUM	4
Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities and landowners	MEDIUM	5
To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups, such as recreation tourism operators, should work directly with the Province to get proper approvals and align with provincial standards	MEDIUM	6



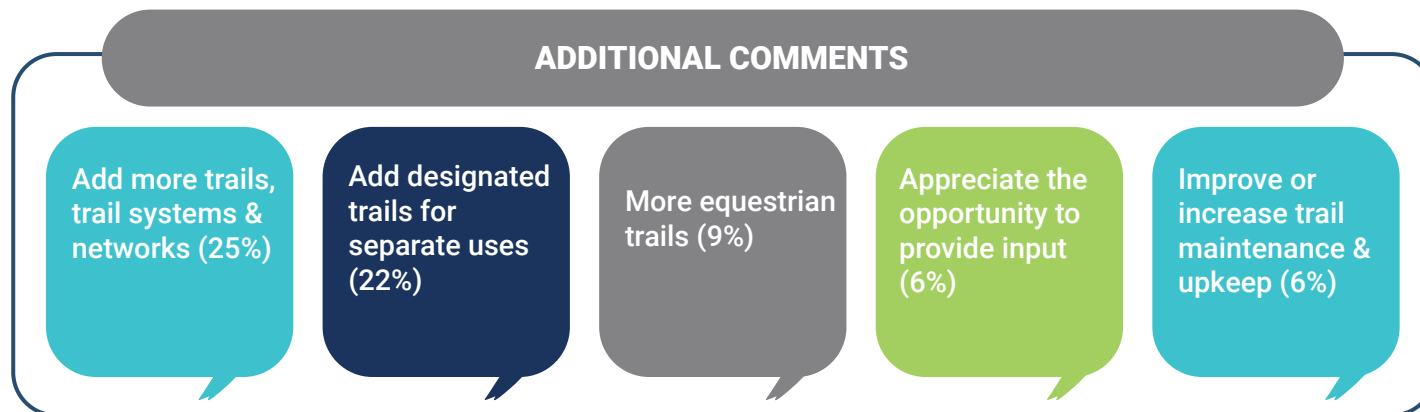
RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	
Develop a balanced approach to providing residents access to waterfront recreation such as a resident education campaigns, developing trails along waterfronts in MR setbacks (possibly ER) to be a visual aid between public vs. Private land, increasing the number of access points to waterfronts, etc.	MEDIUM	7
Conduct active transportation opportunity assessments in Growth Hamlets	MEDIUM	8
Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities	LONG	1
Build on existing commuter and on demand transit options and support the development of multimodal transit between Acheson, Parkland Village, Spruce Grove, and Edmonton	LONG	2
Pursue partnerships with utility corridor landowners / lease holders to explore ability for public use of land	LONG	3
Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County trail network	LONG	4



### 6.3 Quick Wins: Low to No-Cost Actions for Trail Implementation

The following considers the immediate-term recommendations and other quick wins that can be pursued by Parkland County at low-to no-cost:

- Review all statutory and non-statutory plans and develop a list of recommended changes to better define roles, responsibilities, location and typology of trail development. As each plan is updated in future years, refer to the list to influence recommended changes.
- Work with the development industry as new projects are proposed, and encourage trail development as part of the open space network. Revisit developer obligations that are defined by development agreements to include the need for trails to be developed in key areas such as environmental reserve and municipal reserve parcels.
- Pursue grants and create sponsorship opportunities to receive monetary grants, in-kind contributions and other support for trail development. Continue working with groups such as the River Valley Alliance and Trans Canada Trail to secure funding and leverage on their trail development knowledge and resources.
- Support the development of homeowners' associations for dense residential areas that have higher demands for neighbourhood trails. Facilitate a process for local homeowners to financially support trail construction and maintenance within their immediate community that they directly benefit from. Using a homeowners' association as a model for funding and maintaining trails should be considered for single family developments with parcel sizes smaller than 0.5 acres.



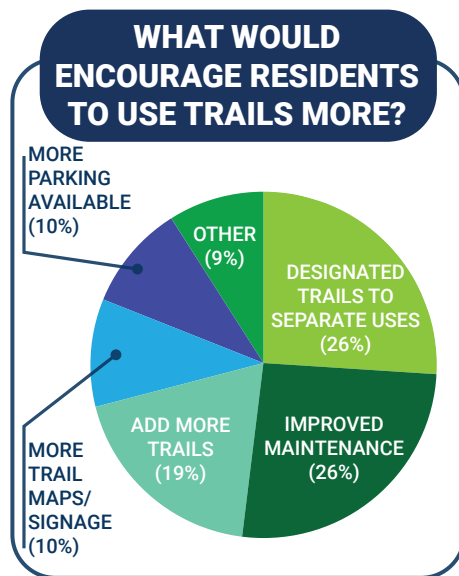






## Trail Classification

A review of the trail classification typologies developed as part of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan was completed. This review was initiated by the project team and findings validated during community engagement program. Early on during engagement, residents were quick to identify challenges with the classifications such as poor placement of equestrian corridors and improper trail materials for some uses. Opportunities that came out of conversations with the public also included integration of ecological sensitivities and trail etiquette into the classification system. The following should be considered as part of review of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan Trail Classification.



## Trail Class 1: Greenway / Urban Trail

Equestrian is listed as a potential use within this trail class. Simultaneously, “paved / compacted gravel” are listed as surface types. Many equestrian users noted that this surfacing is detrimental to the horses’ limbs.



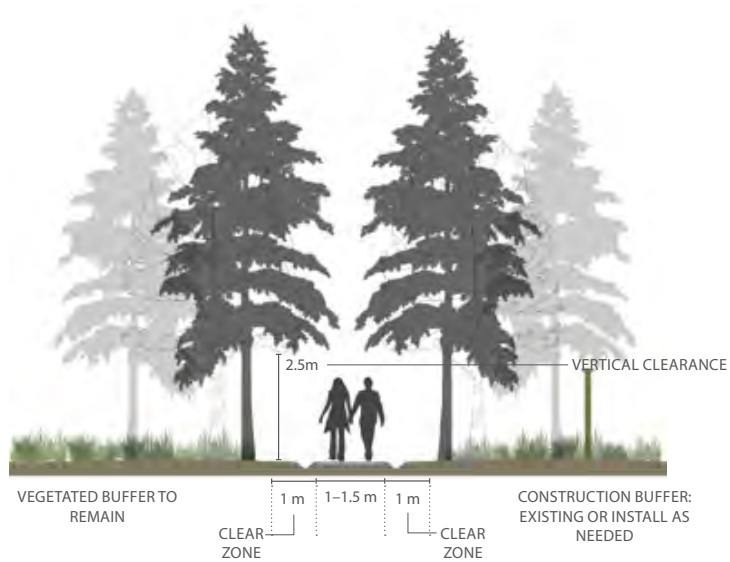
TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE
AMENITIES							
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING	

TYPICALLY PROVIDED

OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

## Trail Class 2: Double Track

Add additional clearing of approximately 3m to one side of the trail to accommodate equestrian trail riding.



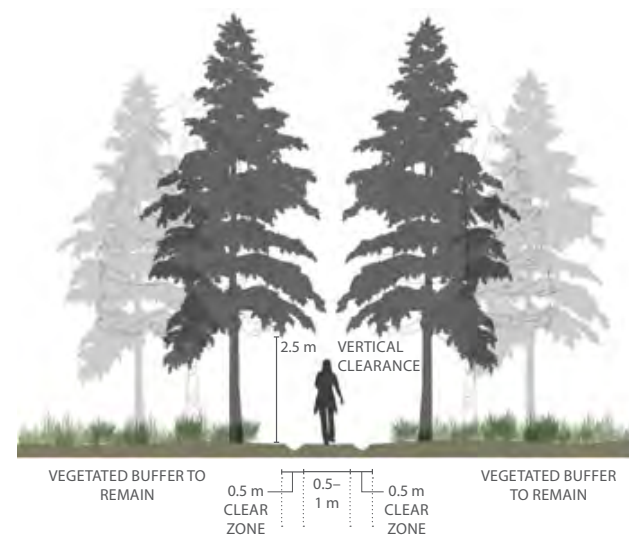
TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE

AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING



## Trail Class 3: Single Track Natural Surface

The title of this classification is "SINGLE TRACK NATURAL SURFACE" yet does list mountain biking as a potential use. This is contradictory as, "single track trails" are widely regarded as the trail type used most frequently by mountain bikers. Single track trails typically include technical features such as roots, berms, and rocks.



TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE

AMENITIES						
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING





## Trail Class 4: Multi-Use

No recommended changes



TYPICAL USERS							
HIKING	WALKING	EQUESTRIAN	MOUNTAIN BIKING	CYCLING	ROLLER BLADES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	MOTORIZED VEHICLE

AMENITIES							
FURNISHINGS	GARBAGE RECEPTACLES	KIOSK	REST AREAS	TOILETS	BICYCLE PARKING	VEHICLE PARKING	

TYPICALLY PROVIDED

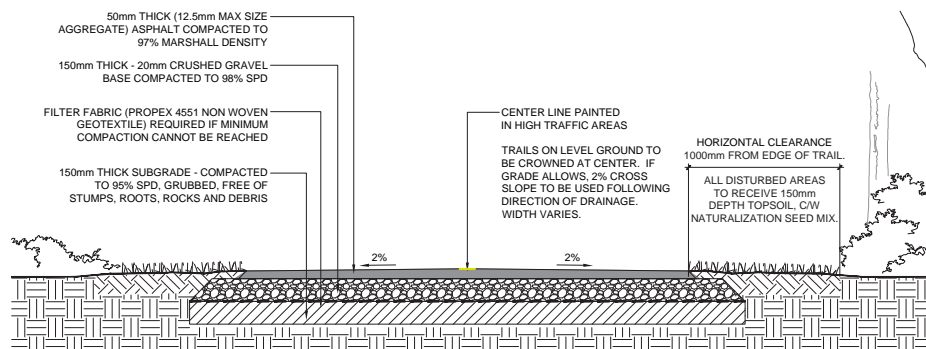
OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED

## Trail Ratings

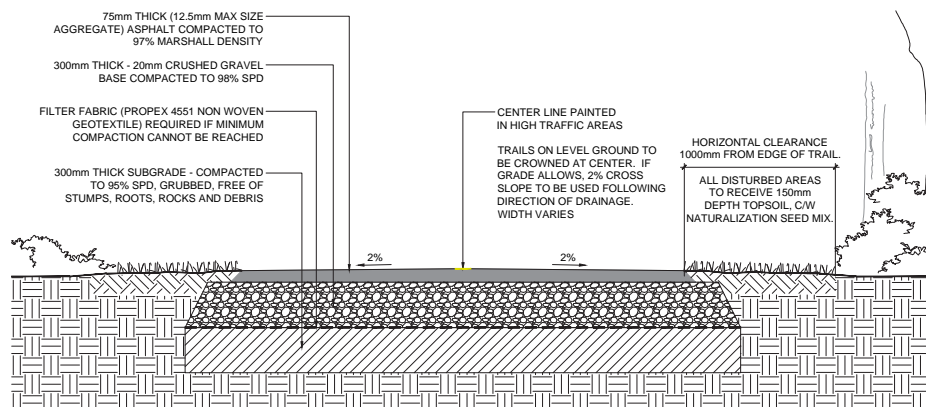
Existing trail ratings in the County vary from easy to advanced. The terrain throughout the County lends itself to the development of trails which are classified as “easy”. A rating system was established as part of the Park, Recreation, and Culture Master Plans, aligns with the direction of the TSP; future trails should continue to follow this rating system.

	Easy	Moderate	Difficult
<b>Difficulty Rating Sign Graphic</b>			
<b>Trail Width</b>	4m	1—1.5m	0.5—1m
<b>Tread Surface</b>	Paved or compacted gravel hard surface	Gravel or natural surface	Natural surface
<b>Average Trail Grade</b>	0-5%	10% or less	15% or less
<b>Max Trail Grade</b>	10%	25%	30%
<b>Natural Obstacles and Mountain Bike Technical Trail Features (TTF)</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unavoidable bridges 1m or wider</li> <li>Avoidable obstacles may be present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unavoidable obstacles 0.25m tall or less</li> <li>TTF's 1.25m high or less, width of deck is less than 1.2 the height</li> <li>May include loose rocks</li> <li>Avoidable obstacles may be present</li> <li>Short sections may exceed criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Associated with following Trail Classification</b>	Trail Class 1	Trail Class 1, Trail Class 2	Trail Class 3

The following are typical trail construction standards that can be applied to new projects. Trail structures will vary depending on terrain (longitudinal and cross-slope), ground conditions (water table level, soil type), intended use (able to accommodate vehicles for maintenance purposes versus lightweight pedestrian traffic only), amongst others. Geotechnical assessments are often required to refine these details to develop the most sustainable, cost effective and durable detail.

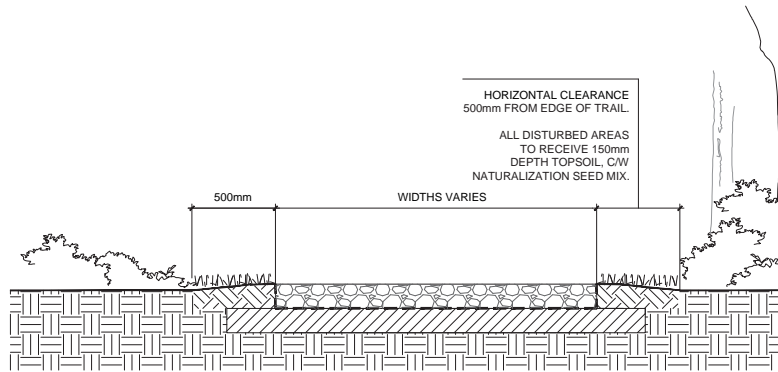


MULTI USE ASPHALT TRAIL - Light Duty

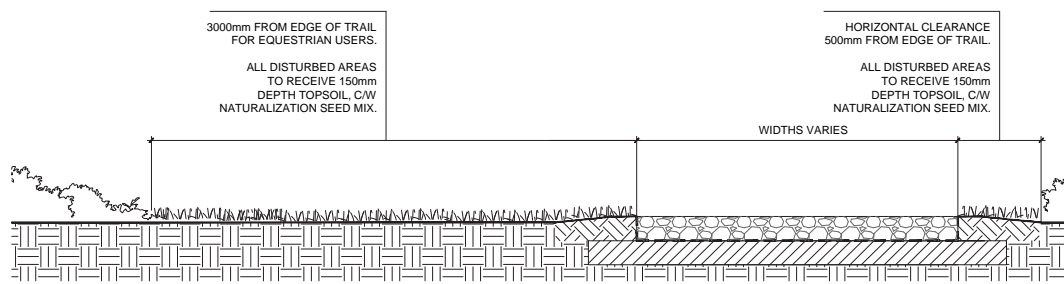


MULTI USE ASPHALT TRAIL - Heavy Duty

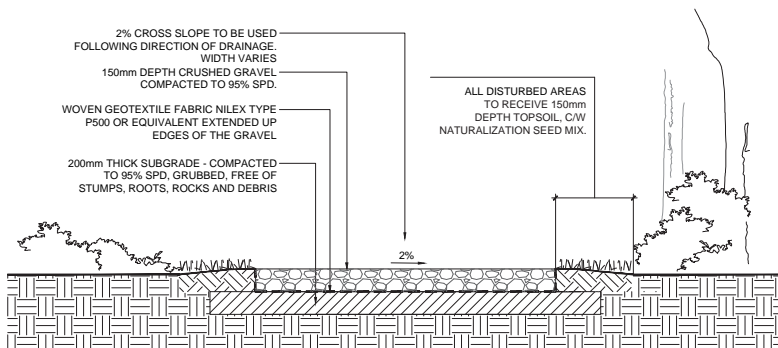




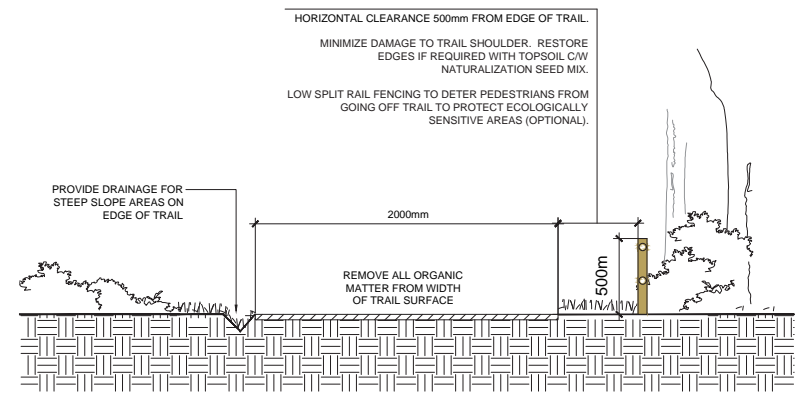
TRAIL - CLEARING ZONE



TRAIL - CLEARING ZONE FOR EQUESTRIAN USERS



MULTI USE GRAVEL TRAIL



NATURE TRAIL

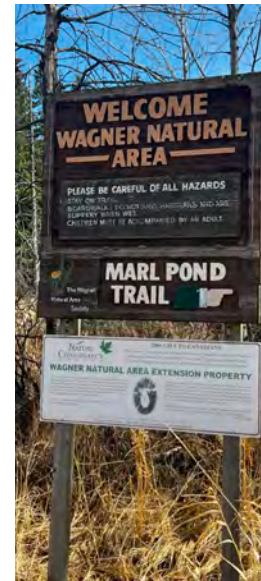




## Wayfinding, Signage, and Trail Amenities

Wayfinding, signage, and trail amenities play an important role in facilitating a connected, accessible, and comfortable trail system. The following features were recommended through engagement as important wayfinding, signage and trail amenities that would enhance trail use and encourage more participation:

- Staging Areas – locations for parking including passenger vehicles and trucks with trailers
- Trail Heads and Amenity Posts – maps and trail signs at the start of a key trail segment where public gathering or trail entry is anticipated
- Interpretive Signage – providing historical, cultural and other educational opportunities
- Benches – places for seating along trails and at trail heads
- Waste Receptacles – to be in key locations to gather trash but also must be easily accessible for maintenance purposes
- Lighting – being mindful of dark sky guidelines and the need to minimize disturbance that light has on natural areas and wildlife, while providing the ability for people to be safe and comfortable during nighttime conditions
- End of Trip/Bike Maintenance Facilities – tools and convenient tables as examples of amenities that riders can use to make post-travel adjustment to their equipment
- Design and Construction Standards – having consistent standards for how trails are planned, constructed and maintained

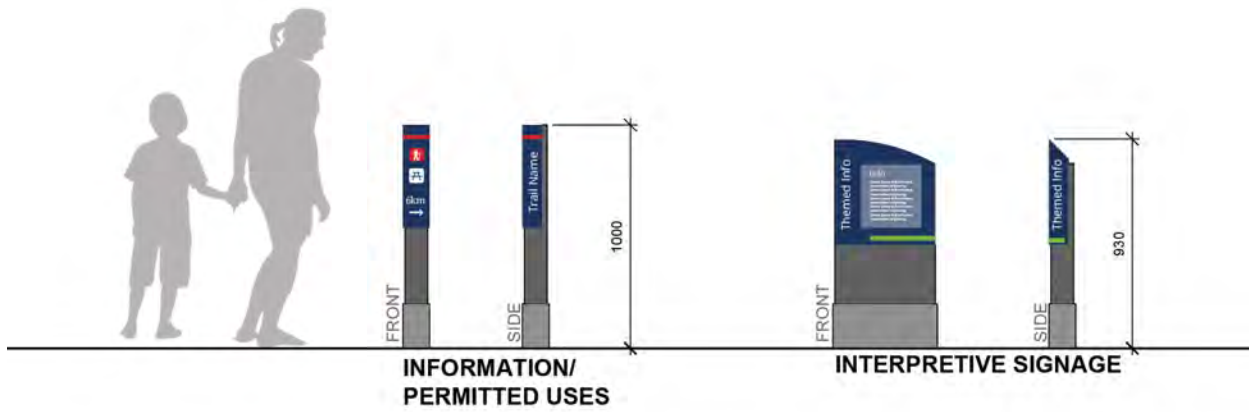
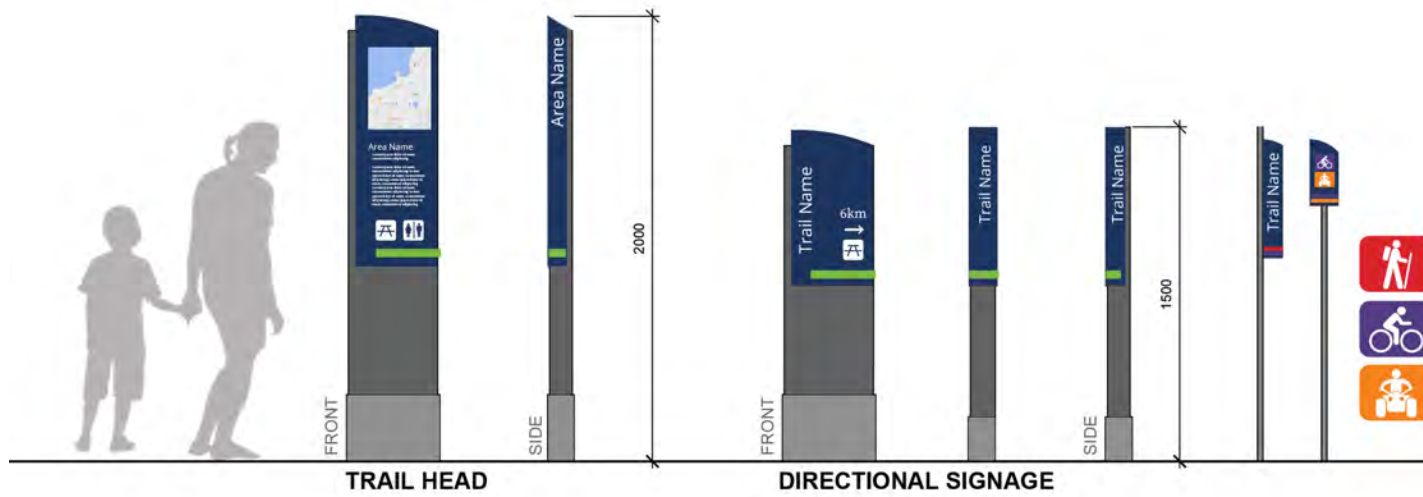


Trail signage is important for various reasons, primarily to communicate trail etiquette, to promote personal safety and to help trail users find their way. A family of signage can be developed to also convey important information such as safety precautions and the types of permitted trail use ranging from OHV riding to equestrian activities. The design of signage should be consistent County-wide. Signage should be recognizable for trail users across Parkland County and create a stronger sense of place by being consistent with the County's corporate branding. The following signs are recommended within a signage family:

- Trail Head – includes a context map of the area, noting trail alignments, points of interest and key destinations in the area. Trail difficulty and type should be included so users are aware of which trail best suits their pursuit. Other information at this primary sign can include trail etiquette and safety information.
- Directional Signage – perceived and actual safety can be drastically improved with directional signage, helping trail users understand their location and plan their trail journey. Directional signage helps a person orient themselves, determine trail lengths, and always know where they are located. Being able to convey one's location is important for search and rescue personnel to locate people in distress.
- Information Signage – usually using internationally recognized pictograms, information signage identifies trail direction, potential hazards, direction of key amenities such as washrooms or lookout points, amongst others. While the overall style of the signs should be consistent with the entire signage family, using standard pictograms is important.

- Permitted Use Sign – using recognizable pictograms, identify which types of trail uses are permitted on certain reaches of trail. These may be identified with both pictograms and colour coding, which can be correlated with colouring of signage so that trail users are clear on which segments are designated for certain uses.
- Interpretive Signage – educating people on local history, ecology, geology, culture and industry are just a few themes that can be conveyed by interpretive signage. A consistent style and a well-orchestrated collection of stories can be dispersed throughout a trail network.







## 6.4 Visitor Opportunities

### Economic Benefits

Trail tourism is common across Canada and allows businesses to develop economic wealth through activities such as equipment rentals, guided tours and adventure tours. Having a range of trail types that attract a wide range of trail users encourages a more diverse audience of users throughout the year, such as having more challenging trails, those available for alternative uses such as OHVs or equestrian riding, etc. Significant trail developments can also help support hotels, restaurants, sporting goods stores and gas stations.

The following is a summary of the TSP recommendations related to promoting economic benefits of trails:

- Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails and agreements with Jack Pine PGA leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County
- Pursue the development of a designated motorized recreation/ OHV area as directed in the Wabamun Area Vision. Engage adjacent municipalities in conversation regarding regional OHV trails
- Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails
- Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities
- To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups, such as recreation tourism operators, should work directly with the Province to get proper approvals and align with provincial standards
- Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County trail network
- Develop a Water Trail Master Plan
- Pursue conversations with Paul First Nation and Enoch First Nation to forward shared objectives trail-based objectives

### Communications, Promotions & Marketing

Trails have the potential of attracting significant numbers of tourists when properly promoted. Once a trail network master plan is developed, an important tool that can be available at tourism information centres, the municipal office, various local businesses and online is an existing trails map showing locations of trail heads, trail difficulties, types of users that the trails accommodate, nearby attractions, amongst others. Two examples of online-based trail information forums that are commonplace in western Canada includes Alberta Trail Net and TrailForks. As trail plans are developed they should be made widely available for public use.

The following is a summary of the TSP recommendations related to the promotion and marketing of trails:

- Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities and landowners
- Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities
- Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County trail network

## Partnerships

More often than not municipalities develop a range of partnerships in the planning, construction and maintenance of municipal trails. Oftentimes other organizations have access to funding that municipalities are not eligible for, allowing for greater financial resources. They may also have the ability to provide donating entities with tax benefits such as charitable donation receipts. Most of the trails currently available in Parkland County, such as those at Clifford E Lee Nature Sanctuary and Wagner Natural Area follow a partnership model whereby the County has little to no involvement in day-to-day trail maintenance however may help with indirect support such as road access and parking lot maintenance, providing promotional materials online and in marketing information.

Some partnerships also encourage trails to be developed in areas of the highest demand and where project partners have a vested interest. As an example, municipalities can work with homeowners associations to create legal instruments that define how trails are funded and operated over time within a specific residential area, which reduces the burden on taxpayers far from that development that may not necessarily benefit directly from those trails.

The following is a summary of the TSP recommendations related to partnerships in trail planning and maintenance:

- Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls
- Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails and agreements with Jack Pine PGA leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County
- Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails
- Work with developers to require the integration of municipal reserve and development of trails, where appropriate, within future residential developments
- Pursue partnerships with utility corridor landowners / lease holders to explore ability for public use of land
- To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups, such as recreation tourism operators, should work directly with the Province to get proper approvals and align with provincial standards
- Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County trail network
- The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned
- Pursue conversations with Paul First Nation and Enoch First Nation to forward shared objectives trail-based objectives (i.e. stewardship, cultural representation)

## 6.5 Risks and Limitations

Trails are common to nearly all municipalities across western Canada. Alike any recreational amenity there are safety, risk and liability concerns that come with constructing and maintaining trail networks. The following are a series of strategies, tactics and best practices that can be implemented to help reduce risk and promote actual and perceived safety of trail users:

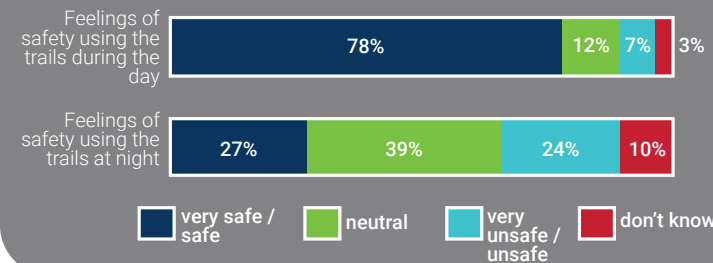
- Provide a strong wayfinding program that allows people to be aware of their location at all times, giving them the comfort of being able to explore without risk of getting lost. A wayfinding program can also help trail users contact emergency services if needed and convey exact locations to facilitate recovery
- Implementing trails development standards that make trails as robust, long-lasting and low-maintenance as possible. Standards will also ensure that appropriate trail widths and surface materials are implemented to suit the designated uses
- Having trail information that clearly identifies trail difficulty so that users don't become overwhelmed and become at risk of being on a trail that exceeds their comfort level
- Implementing trail typologies that are mindful of conflicting uses, such as the potential concern of integrating high volumes and high speeds of OHVs with equine trail users

### HOW TO MAKE TRAILS SAFER:

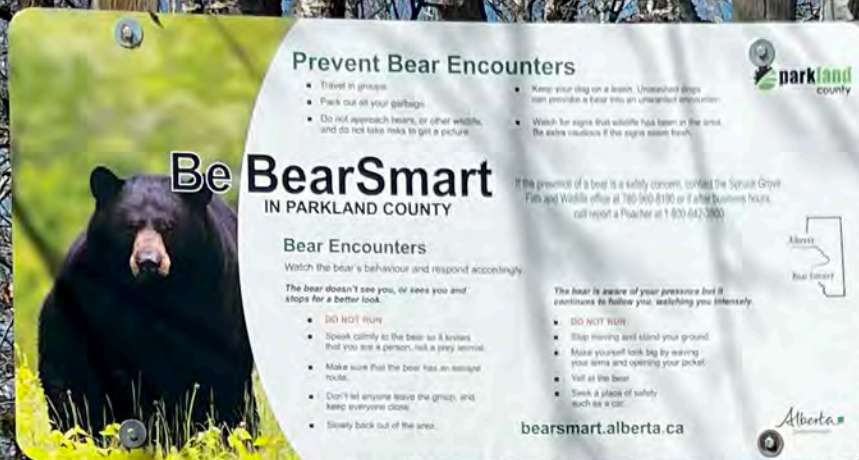
- Posting speed limits and hours of trail use;
- Additional lighting at key spots, like trail heads;
- Education on how to handle encounters with wildlife;
- More detailed trail information online, and signage on the trails and at trail heads; and
- Separate trails for different users in some areas.

- Have a diligent trail monitoring and maintenance program that quickly identifies trail degradation and other risks and follows up with remedial measures
- To avoid haphazardly developing trails, base decisions on a long-term vision that is supported by a trails master plan that depicts suitable trail types, links to key sites and other trails, suitable lengths of looped trails and appropriate trail users on certain trails
- Ensure that jurisdictions are understood, for example understanding how licensing and insuring OHVs are entirely of Provincial jurisdiction and cannot in any way be regulated by a municipality
- Understanding environmental risks such as open water, thin ice, wildlife encounters, steep slopes and cliffs, amongst others and planning appropriately designing trails or altogether avoiding areas of concern
- Ensuring that the potential of encountering historical resources

### FEELINGS OF TRAIL SAFETY:







**Be BearSmart**  
IN PARKLAND COUNTY

**Prevent Bear Encounters**

- Travel in groups.
- Pack out all your garbage.
- Do not approach bears, or other wildlife, and do not take risks to get a picture.
- Keep your dog on a leash. Unleashed dogs can provoke a bear into an unwanted encounter.
- Watch for signs that wildlife has been in the area. Be extra cautious if the signs seem fresh.

If the presence of a bear is a safety concern, contact the Spruce Grove Park and Wildlife office at 780-940-8190 or if after business hours, call report a Poacher at 1-800-642-3800.

**Bear Encounters**  
Watch the bear's behaviour and respond accordingly.  
The bear doesn't see you, or sees you and stops for a better look.

- DO NOT RUN
- Speak calmly to the bear so it knows that you are a person, not a prey animal.
- Make sure that the bear has an escape route.
- Don't let anyone leave the group, and keep everyone close.
- Slowly back out of the area.

The bear is aware of your presence but it continues to follow you, watching you intently.

- DO NOT RUN
- Stop moving and stand your ground.
- Make yourself look big by raising your arms and opening your jacket.
- Talk to the bear.
- Seek a place of safety such as a car.

[bearsmart.alberta.ca](http://bearsmart.alberta.ca)

Parkland County  
Alberta

**NO  
MOTORIZED  
VEHICLES**



## ATTENTION EQUESTRIAN USERS

- DO NOT RIDE ON TRAILS WHEN WET DUE TO DAMAGE CAUSED IN GRASSED AREAS.
- CHECK PARKLAND COUNTY WEBSITE TO SEE WHEN TRAILS ARE OPEN / CLOSED.
- RIDE SINGLE FILE ON ESTABLISHED DIRT TRAIL.
- KEEP SHOD HORSES OFF GRASSED AREAS AS THEY CAUSE EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.
- ONCE TRACK-SETTING COMMENCES FOR SKIING, TRAILS WILL BE CLOSED FOR EQUESTRIAN USE.
- YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED.
- FAILURE TO COMPLY COULD RESULT IN A COMPLETE BAN.

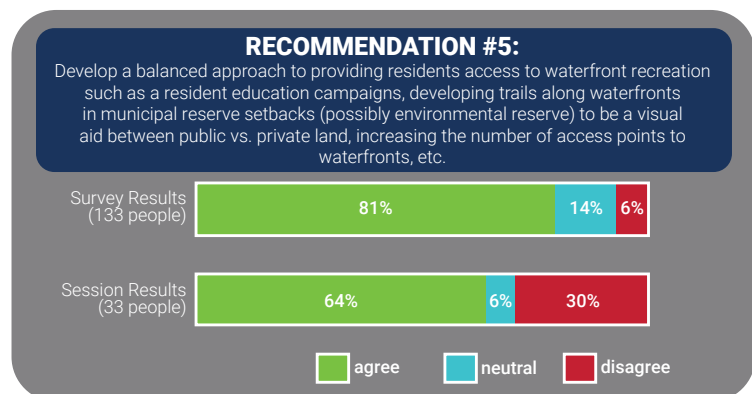
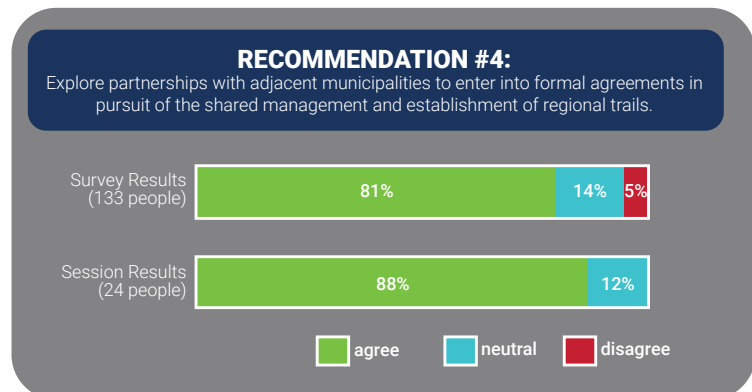
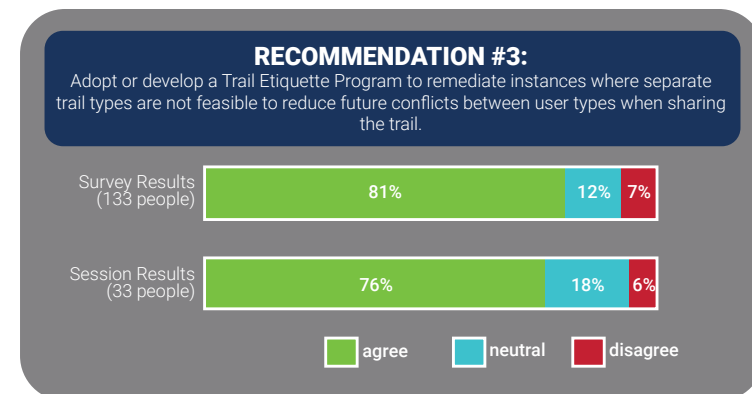
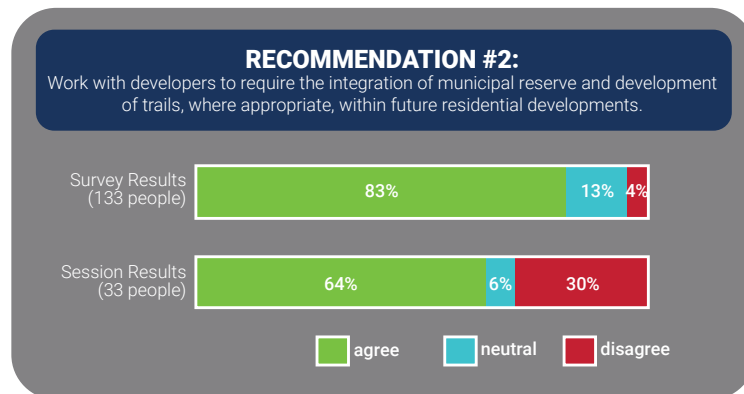
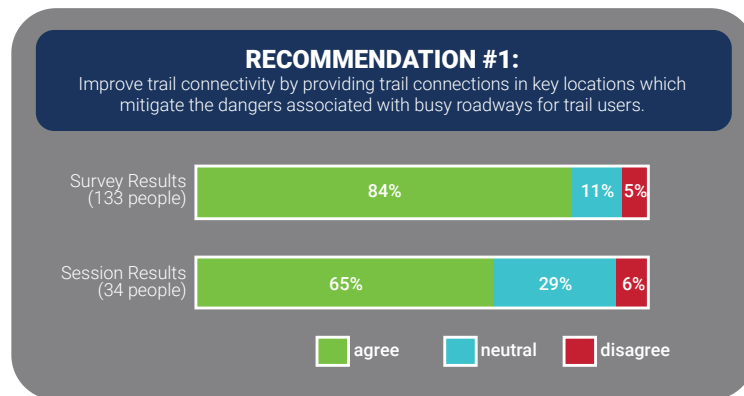
**ALL PETS  
MUST BE  
ON A  
LEASH**  
PLEASE CLEAN UP  
AFTER YOUR PET

**NO  
CUTTING  
TREES  
OR  
PLANTS**



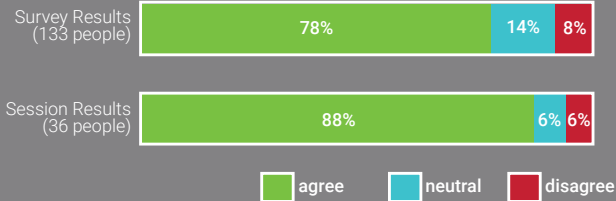
## 6.6 Overall Public Feedback on Recommendations

The following graphics outline public and stakeholder feedback received on several of the proposed recommendations, depicting the value that agree, were neutral or disagree.



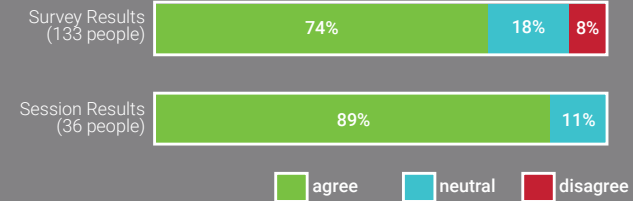
### RECOMMENDATION #7:

Explore the opportunity to include supporting amenities (i.e., washrooms, hitching posts, waste receptacles) at trail heads to increase user comfort and enjoyment.



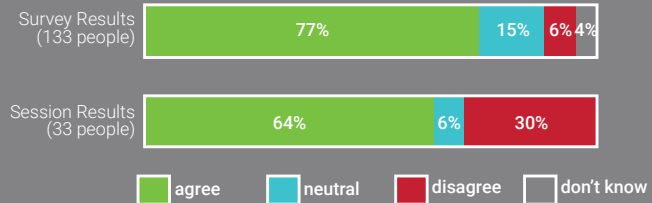
### RECOMMENDATION #9:

Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls.



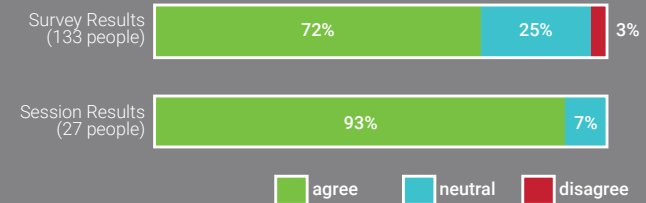
### RECOMMENDATION #6:

Utilize the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) mapping data when examining future trail opportunities. Examine opportunities for trail alignments that span different ecosystem types while considering protection of sensitive environments.



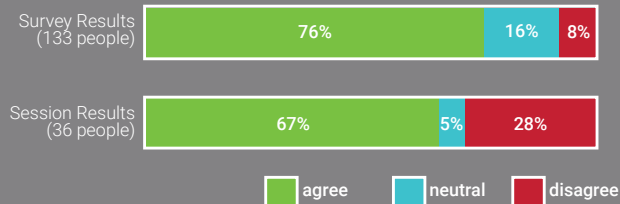
### RECOMMENDATION #10:

Update trail classifications to more comprehensively address trail uses with in Parkland County.



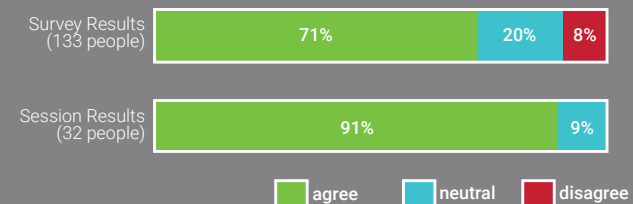
### RECOMMENDATION #8:

Options for accessible trails and supporting trail infrastructure should be considered a priority for key areas in order to support residents as they age.



### RECOMMENDATION #11:

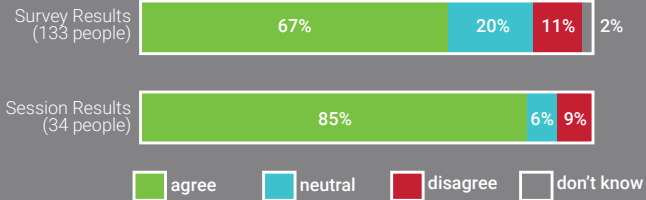
The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned.





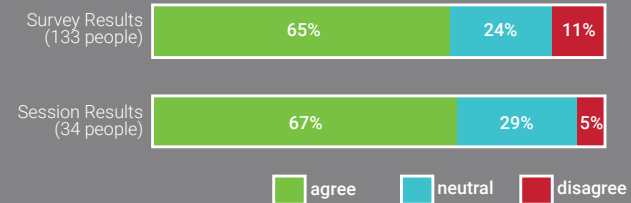
### RECOMMENDATION #12:

The County should begin negotiations with utility corridor landowners / lease holders to explore ability for public use of land.



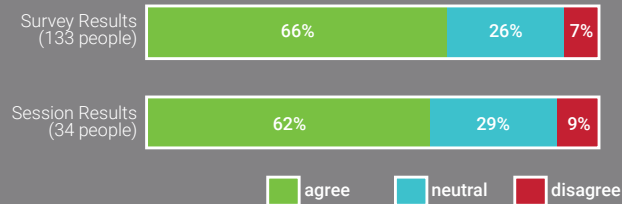
### RECOMMENDATION #15:

Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails, and agreements with Jack Pine Provincial Grazing Reserve leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County.



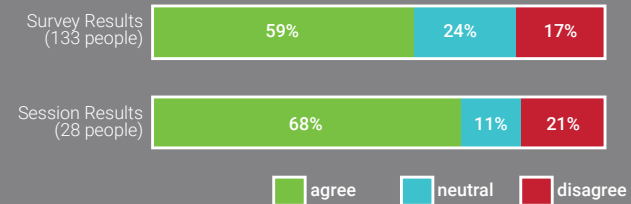
### RECOMMENDATION #13:

Pursue the development of a management plan at Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area to improve relationships across trail user types and to mitigate the degradation of environmental system.



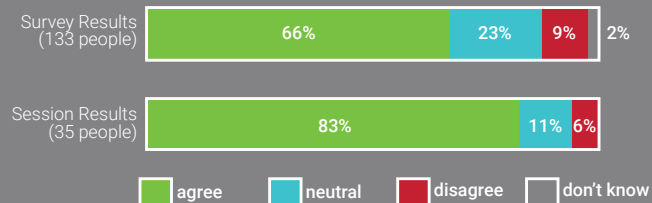
### RECOMMENDATION #16:

To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups such as recreation tourism operators should work directly with the province to properly develop and to get proper approvals to do so.



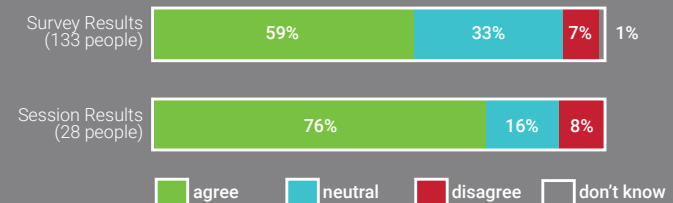
### RECOMMENDATION #14:

Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities and landowners.



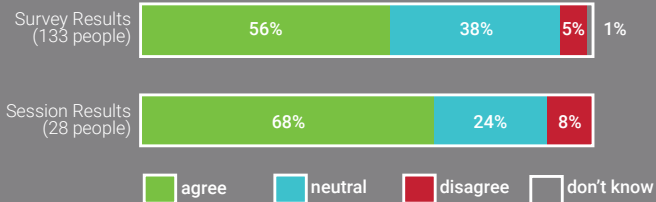
### RECOMMENDATION #17:

Develop a Parks and Trails Interpretation Strategy to identify strategic locations for interpretive signage and educational themes throughout the County's parks and trails system. Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the parks and trails system.



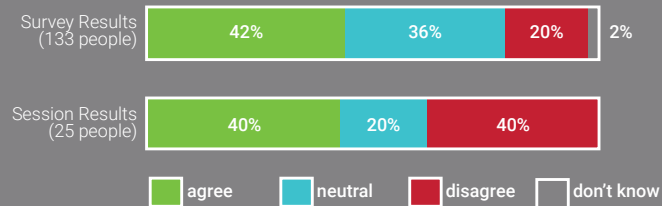
### RECOMMENDATION #18:

Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities which align with the direction and recommendations of the Trail Strategy.



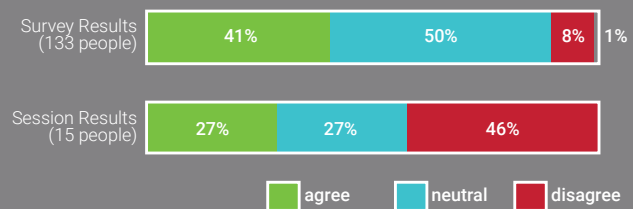
### RECOMMENDATION #19:

Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County Trail network.



### RECOMMENDATION #20:

Conduct active transportation opportunity assessments in Growth Hamlets.



# 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

## 7.0 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

As indicated at the onset of the TSP, this is a high-level strategy for trails development and not a master plan that delineates proposed trail locations. On the other hand, it applies the principles learned through engagement and in various contexts shows probable alignments for trails in a variety of contexts:

- Context One: Lois Hole Provincial Park
- Context Two: Entwistle Area
- Context Three: Wagner Natural Area
- Context Four: Country Residential Development Area
- Context Five: Industrial Development Area
- Context Six: Rural Amenities – Community Connections

For each application a table provided outlines the approximate length of trail, likely classification of trails and an estimated cost. Preliminary cost estimates reflect current dollars without any escalation and comes with the following limitations:

- Assumes no significant grading or sub-soil replacement
- Does not include land acquisition costs, and assumes that development will be on public land
- In natural areas, some tree and shrub clearing may be required however trail alignments will not navigate through wetland, bog or fen areas that may require boardwalks or other significant feature

- Costs do not include signage, trail heads, parking lots, washrooms or other supporting amenities
- These are Class D estimates based on only a cursory review of each site and is based on a highly conceptual trail layout and not knowing exact site conditions

### 7.1 Context One: Wagner Natural Area

This application of trails provides a new segment within the Wagner Natural Area as well as connections to adjacent populated areas. The proposed would require leadership from the Wagner Natural Area entity to provide the ideal alignment of new trails within the designated area. It also assumes that an easement can be obtained to the west leading to Spruce Grove. Other trails are easier to achieve having County-owned lands that lead to urbanized areas to the east.

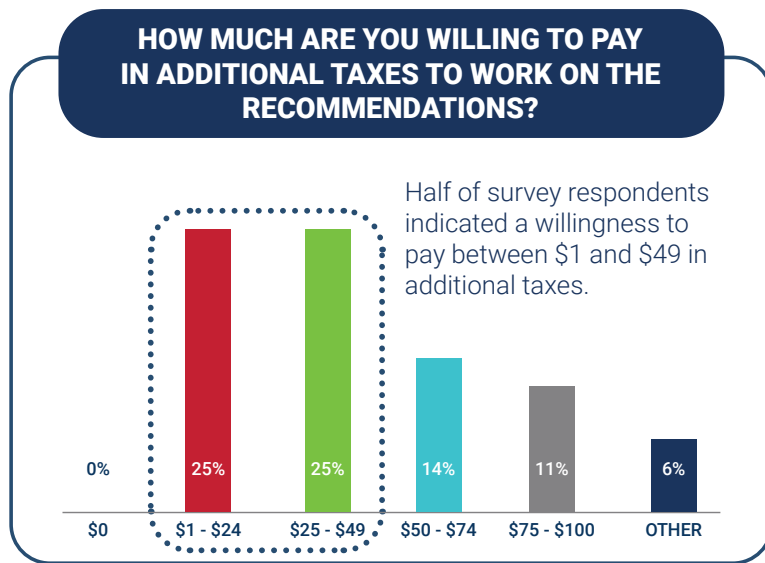
Figure 4 depicts the following lengths of trail within and around the Wagner Natural Area. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 2	4925m	\$ 170	\$ 837,250
Trail Class 3	4860m	\$ 90	\$ 437,400
Parking and staging area			\$80,000
Trail head signage	4	\$12,000	\$36,000
Trail wayfinding signage			\$16,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$40,000





Figure 4 - Wagner Natural Area



## 7.2 Context Two: Entwistle Area

This application of trails provides trail connections from residential areas that are within and adjacent to Entwistle. The proposed trails take advantage of existing Environmental Reserves and Public Utility Lots and would also require a combination of urban street trails or the designation of new municipal reserve land to accommodate trail corridors. A network of trails within natural areas and along the Pembina River would provide exceptional human-nature connections. A future partnership with Alberta Forestry and Parks / Pembina River Provincial Park may encourage additional trail connections.

Figure 5 depicts the following lengths of trail within the Entwistle area. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 1	1000m	\$ 170	\$ 270,000
Trail Class 3	9525m	\$ 90	\$ 857,250
Trail Class 4	1175m	\$ 230	\$ 270,250
Parking and staging area			\$140,000
Trail head signage	4	\$12,000	\$48,000
Trail wayfinding signage	2		\$24,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$100,000

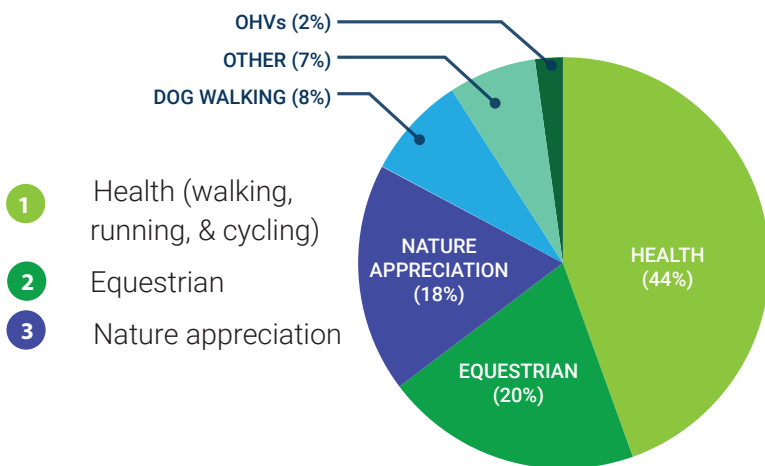




Figure 5 -Entwistle Area



### The Primary Reason Residents Use Trails:



## 7.3 Context Three: Lois Hole Provincial Park

This application of trails provides trail connections from residential areas that are adjacent to Lois Hole Provincial Park. The proposed trails take advantage of existing Environmental Reserves and Public Utility Lots and would also require a combination of road-side trails, easements over public and private lands, or the designation of new municipal reserve land to accommodate trail corridors. A network of trails within the Provincial Park would require a partnership with the Province of Alberta and any development and maintenance would need to follow Provincial park development guidelines.

Figure 6 depicts the following lengths of trail within the Lois Hole Provincial Park area. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 2	9260m	\$ 170	\$ 1,574,200
Trail Class 3	9525m	\$ 90	\$ 857,250
Trail Class 4	1760m	\$ 230	\$ 404,800
Parking and staging area			\$140,000
Trail head signage	2	\$12,000	\$24,000
Trail wayfinding signage			\$22,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$120,000



Figure 6 - Lois Hole Provincial Park

#### ECOLOGICAL FEATURES TO BE PROTECTED:

- Big Lake area;
- Chickakoo, Clifford E. Lee, Bunch Berry, Wagner Bog, Tuckers Field, North Saskatchewan River valley;
- Unique dune / sand features; and
- Wetland areas.



#### WINTER TRAIL USE:

34%

of survey respondents agree improved/ increased trail grooming would make the trails better for winter use.

## 7.4 Context Four: Country Residential Development Area

This application of trails provides trail connections in a country residential development, focused mostly within Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve and with limited roadside trails. Because of the limited vehicular traffic on country residential streets, the road carriage itself can be used as a trail surface in most instances. The proposed trails provide a range of natural area experiences and would be excellent equestrian trails with the range of terrain and ability to use proper footing for pedestrians, cyclists and equine trail users.

Figure 7 depicts the following lengths of trail within this country residential development. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 3	4925m	\$ 90	\$ 466,850
Trail Class 4	2940m	\$ 230	\$ 676,200
Trail wayfinding signage			\$6,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$24,000



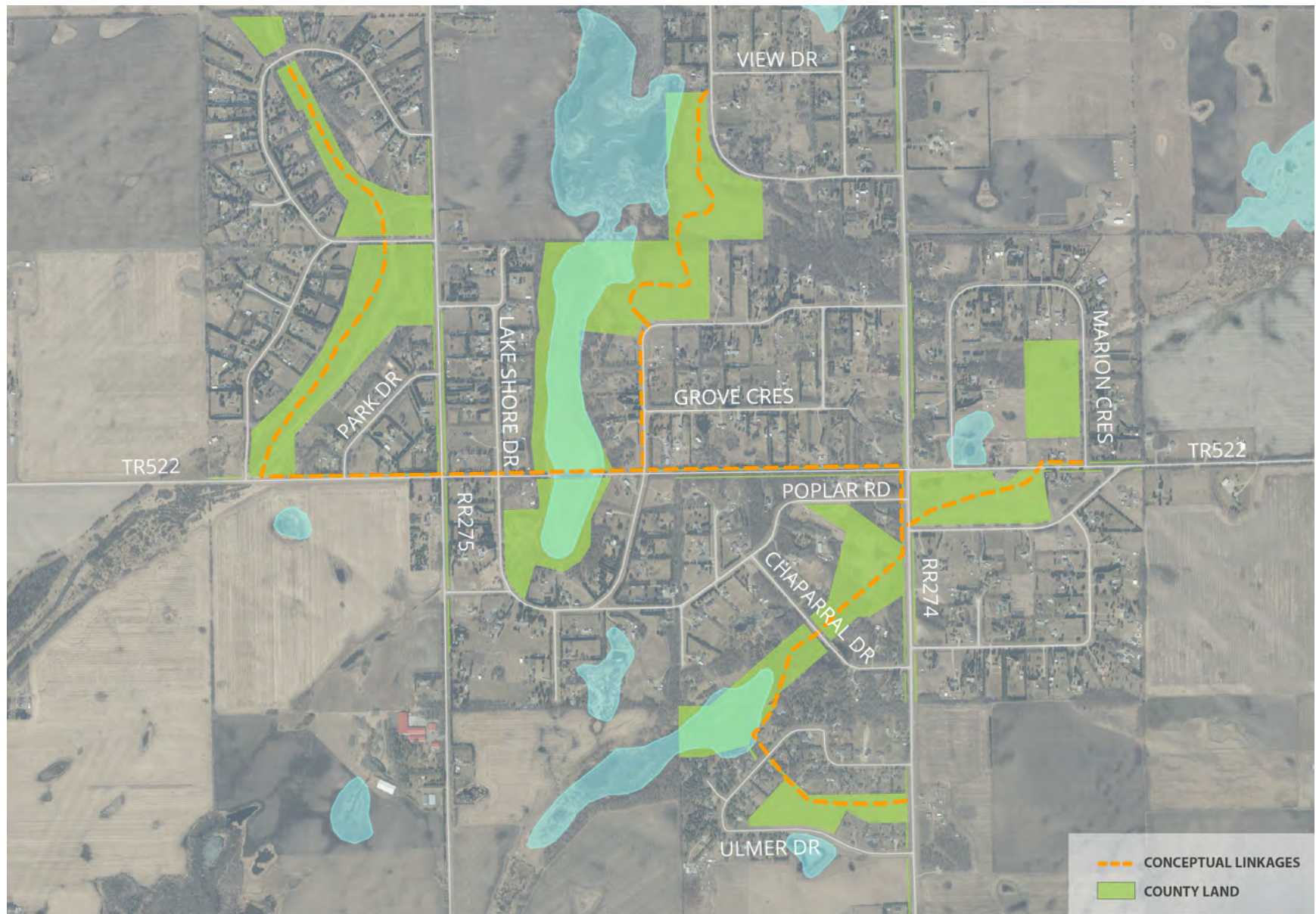


Figure 7 -Residential Area

### WAYS TO MAKE TRAILS MORE COMFORTABLE:

Increasing level of support

- Washroom facilities;
- Picnic tables;
- Garbage & recycling receptacles;
- Benches;
- Shelters / warming shacks;
- More parking;
- Trail signage / maps;
- Fire / BBQ pits;
- Dog waste bags;
- Groomed cross country ski trails; and
- Maintenance partnerships

## 7.5 Context Five: Industrial Development Area

This application of trails provides trail connections in an industrial area, taking advantage of streetside connections, stormwater management facilities / Public Utility Lots and other reserve land. Significant large-scale traffic would warrant separated trails off the shoulder of existing roads. The proposed trails provide a range of natural area, streetside and constructed natural area experiences and would be excellent amenities for employees of commercial and industrial developments.

Figure 8 depicts the following lengths of trail within this industrial development area. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 2	5500m	\$ 170	\$ 935,500
Trail Class 4	2620m	\$ 230	\$ 602,600
Trail head signage	2	\$12,000	\$24,000
Trail wayfinding signage			\$8,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$16,000





Figure 8 - Industrial Area



## EMERGING PRIORITIES



Recreational amenities such as trails are important in providing a sense of place and identity for Parkland County.



Parkland County should offer trail opportunities in a variety of ecosystems to allow for different experiences.



Parkland County has significant points of interest for trail development to help promote tourism.



Some trails should be for only for certain types of users, such as designated equestrian trails or those only for walkers or cross-country skiers.



It is important to provide trails in all developed areas, including country residential, hamlets and industrial areas.

## 7.6 Context Six: Rural Amenities: Community Connections

This application of trails provides trail connections in a country residential development that also contains key community connections – a community hall and a rural school. The primary intention of the trails would be promoting more safe connections for students to access the school and creating a connection between two key rural amenities. This trail network would help reduce busing and parent drop-offs and promote active transportation and would formalize goat trails that presently exist from local use of the walking paths. The trails would also serve as an overall recreational amenity for area residents.

Figure 9 depicts the following lengths of trail within this country residential area with key community connections. The following table outlines the approximate lengths of trails as shown, trail type and probable cost.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Trail Class 2	2960m	\$ 170	\$ 503,200
Trail Class 4	2440m	\$ 230	\$ 561,200
Trail wayfinding signage			\$8,000
Benches, waste receptacles			\$12,000

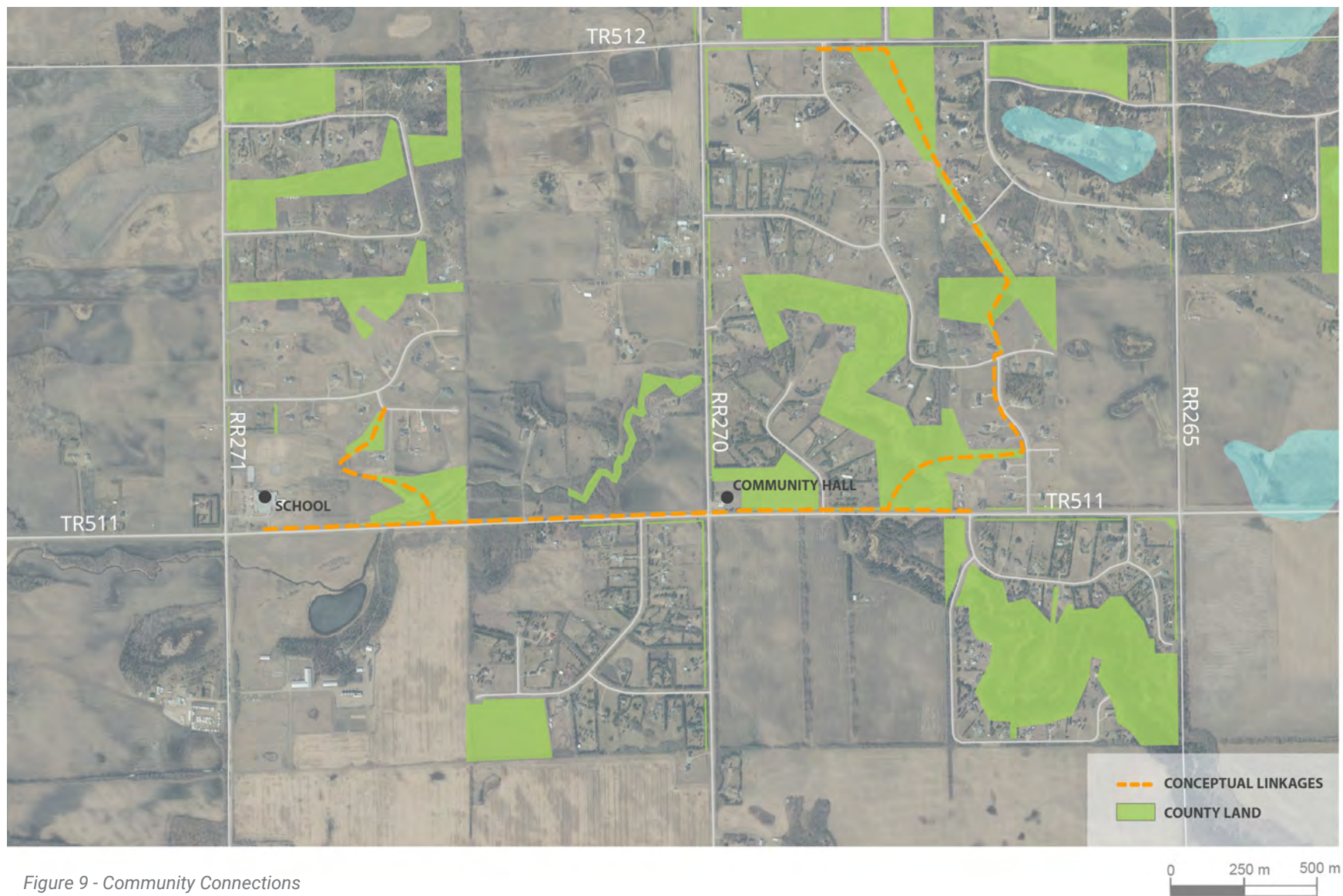


Figure 9 - Community Connections





Figure 10 - River Connections



## 7.7 Context Seven: River Valley Connections

This application demonstrates potential locations for a new staging area and trail head development, which will help connect upland trails to those within a river valley. These staging areas should accommodate ample parking and proper turning areas for trucks and trailers to suit people using horse trailers. The primary intention of staging areas is to provide a public gathering area, mostly for vehicle access to a trail network and to host important support amenities such as washrooms and trail head signage. Figure \*\*\* identifies potential locations in close proximity to Prospector's Point along the North Saskatchewan River, and are strategically located nearby future trails that are proposed by the River Valley Alliance and Trans Canada Trails. It will connect the Devonian Trail to existing and future river valley trails.

The following identifies potential costs of developing a staging area and trail head in this context.

AMENITY	QUANTITY	UNIT RATE	TOTAL COST
Parking Lot	1	\$120,000	\$ 120,000
Trail /Head Signs	2	\$ 12,000	\$ 24,000
Wayfinding Signs	1	\$ 16,000	\$16,000
Benches/Waste Receptacles	6	\$ 3,000	\$18,000

As part of any subdivision process, landowners are obligated to dedicate up to 10% of the total developable land area as Municipal Reserve (MR). As an alternative, the developer may provide the municipality with an equivalent value of that 10% land area as cash, and this is fully to the discretion of the development authority. In Alberta, the Municipal Government Act outlines the process and mechanisms for land dedication of MR. In past years, Parkland County has predominantly taken cash in lieu of accepting MR land. This trails strategy includes seven different context in which trails would benefit residents, and where the Municipality should focus taking MR.

Through the Land Use Bylaw as well as municipal servicing standards, Parkland County also can also require trail development as one of the minimum requirements of developers when creating new subdivisions, whether residential, commercial or industrial. The minimum improvements of MR land seen in other municipalities around Parkland County often includes the need for all MR land to be properly graded in a way that it has usefulness to the public, is topsoiled and seeded to minimum standards, has a specified number of trees and shrubs planted at a minimum density of plants per hectare (often 75 trees per hectare) and where previously identified in outline plan, trails master plans or other recreational planning documents the obligation to construct trails and install pedestrian furniture within MR. This trails strategy encourages Parkland County to establish clear and intentional policy through its various statutory and non-statutory plans to have trails included as minimum requirements in some instances. An emphasis should be to do so within dense residential developments where land parcels are less than 0.5ac / 0.2 ha.

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# **APPENDIX A**

## **WHAT WE HEARD**

### **ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**





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# **APPENDIX B**

## **BACKGROUND**

## **DOCUMENT REVIEW**



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# **APPENDIX C**

## **EXISTING TRAILS**

## **INVENTORY**





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# **APPENDIX D**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## SUMMARY





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# **APPENDIX A**

## **WHAT WE HEARD**

### **ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

# Parkland County Trails Strategy

## What We Heard Report

Public engagement provides a mechanism for including the public's values, interests, needs and desires in decisions that affect their lives and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes. Effective public engagement results in a better public understanding of decisions and improves the decisions made.

Critical to improving the decisions made through the engagement process is ensuring all perspectives have been heard and explored. Another critical success factor in public engagement is ensuring the public, those providing input, know what impact their participation will have in the decision-making process and their level of involvement in the process outcomes.

The Parkland County Trails Strategy public engagement has varying levels of involvement depending on the phase of the project. In phase one the level of involvement ranged from collaborate to involve while phase two rounds one and two centred on involving the public in critical decision criteria of the trail strategy's initial composition from vision, values, and priorities to recommendations.

## Executive Summary

Overall, the engagement process connected with over 750 people to gather feedback and further refine the trail strategy.

- 478 surveys were completed.
- 235 people attended in-person sessions.
- 36 in-depth interviews were completed with key stakeholders.
- 4 special sessions.
- 2 phone calls.

### Phase One

In phase one conversations the values of connectivity, community, communication, conservation, equity and access, active living, and partnership and responsibility emerged.

Central vision elements also surfaced: connect people to people and to places; support physical and mental health; promote value and appreciation of the natural landscape; and bring together recreation, tourism, and conservation. Additionally, nine possible priority areas emerged.

#### Phase Two, Round one

In phase two round one, these insights were tested and validated. Small additions to the values were recommended – “add in safety and education” – and the vision elements were validated. Priority preferences emerged loud and clear, the top five priorities areas included:

- Recreational amenities such as trails are important in proving a sense of place and identity for Parkland County;
- Parkland County should offer trail opportunities in a variety of ecosystems to allow for different experiences;
- Parkland County has significant points of interest for trail development to help promote tourism;
- Some trails should be for only for certain types of users, such as designated equestrian trails or those only for walkers or cross-country skiers; and
- It is important to provide trails in all developed areas, including country residential, hamlets and industrial areas.

In general, participants feel safe on Parkland County Trails during the day and would like to have access to washroom facilities, shelters of picnic areas, and more garbage cans. Survey respondents were largely comprised of specific user types including walkers, hikers, runners, and cyclists.

Participants indicated that key environmental areas that are currently protected should continue to be protected. Participants were least interested in trails being developed in industrial areas. Many participants felt the trail typology from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan needs to be revised to reflect county trail users more accurately. Most participants felt that trails should be designated for only certain user types to reduce potential conflicts or have parallel trails with appropriate signage and/or education regarding trail designation and appropriate use.

#### Phase Two, Round Two

In phase two round two, 20 recommendations were presented, and feedback was gathered to further validate and further refine the recommendations. Additional conversations were completed with key stakeholders to gather their feedback on the trail strategy component that impacts their activities. Key stakeholders, such as developers, indicated that the market should dictate trails in both country residential and industrial developments. Adjacent municipalities are interested in partnerships and trail connections.



Overall, session attendees agreed with round one results. In terms of recommendations, the top five most agreed-upon recommendations from the sessions were:

- Recommendation 10: Update trail classifications to address trail uses more comprehensively with in Parkland County.
- Recommendation 11: The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned.
- Recommendation 9: Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls.
- Recommendation 4: Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails.
- Recommendation 7: Explore the opportunity to include supporting amenities (i.e., washrooms, hitching posts, waste receptacles) at trail heads to increase user comfort and enjoyment.

Survey respondents indicated a different set of top five most agreed-upon recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Improve trail connectivity by providing trail connections in key locations which mitigate the dangers associated with busy roadways for trail users.
- Recommendation 2: Work with developers to require the integration of municipal reserve and development of trails, where appropriate, within future residential developments.
- Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities for designated equestrian-only trails, such as in Jack Pine PGA. Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette program to remediate instances where separate trail types are not feasible to reduce conflicts between user types when sharing the trail.
- Recommendation 4: Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails.
- Recommendation 5: Develop a balanced approach to providing residence access to waterfront recreation such as a resident education campaigns, developing trails along waterfronts in Municipal Reserves (MR) setbacks (possible Environment Reserves, ER) to be a visual aid between public vs. private land, increasing the number of access points to waterfronts, etc.

Session attendees and survey respondents were aligned on the two least agreed-upon recommendations:

- Recommendation 19: Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County Trail network.
- Recommendation 20: Conduct active transportation opportunity assessments in Growth Hamlets.

Regarding acceptance of a tax increase, 61% of respondents indicated they would accept a tax increase to begin work on trail strategy recommendation, with the majority of those respondents selecting a willingness to pay between \$1 to \$49 more in taxes.

All engagement participants had the opportunity to provide final comments, the key themes ranged from support for more trails, location-specific concerns, to concerns about taxes.

## How We Engaged

Throughout all rounds of engagements, the key tactic was to have all engagement tools and mechanisms share the same critical information and ask the same key questions with only slight modifications based on the mechanism or audience.

The in-person session materials and online session materials were nearly identical with the key difference being the online session had a presentation format while the in-person was drop-in style sessions. The drop-in style for in-person sessions was deliberately selected so that participants could attend anytime during the session timeframe and not miss any information.

Facilitators were available to answer questions, support people interacting with the materials and ensure all feedback was captured. For key feedback areas, such as priorities and recommendations, where a nuanced but also visually driven approach to capturing feedback was needed a process that was a blend of dotmocracy, and feedback frames was used. Similar to feedback frames, attendees could place a dot on an agreement scale next to a priority or recommendation and similar to dotmocracy the votes remained visible to all attendees.

The surveys were designed to provide key information and capture critical feedback and to provide people with a mechanism to provide feedback that could be completed at any time anonymously.

In-depth interviews and special sessions were completed with interested key stakeholders to ensure that range of perspectives and feedback was captured.

For the drop-in session locations, the project team strove to go to where the residents are. Locations were spread across the County so that residents would have options for in person attendance close to where they live. Online sessions were offered for those with travel challenges and accounted for people who have second residence in the County. For phase two, round two sessions, the drop-in session space was shared with a Parkland County Bylaw Review engagement.

Communication about the engagement opportunities for both rounds used similar mechanisms: local newspaper (Community Voice) advertisements, local radio station advertisements (Parkland Now and CIXM FM 105.3), stakeholder emails, county social media, and in round two roadside signs throughout the county.

## Who We Heard From

In phase one from December 7, 2022, to January 19, 2023, 24 in-depth interviews were completed with key stakeholders and Parkland County staff. Key stakeholders covered a variety of trail users:

- Seniors
- Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) users
- Private companies
- Cycling and running groups
- Community leagues
- Environmental groups
- Health, and wellness groups
- The Alberta provincial government

Internal staff represented a variety of departments:

- Strategic Services
- Agriculture Services
- Community Services
- Planning and Development
- Engineering
- Economic Diversification

Phase two, round one, was from January 31, 2023, to February 23, 2023. Participants were able to select an engagement mechanism which fitted best for their circumstances with:

- 90 people attended over 2 zoom sessions and 4 drop-in sessions.



- Sessions were held at Parkland County Centre, Muir Lake Community Hall, Fallis Community Hall, and Entwistle Recreation Centre.
- The majority of attendees self-identified as equestrians, OHV users, cross-country ski users, conservation group representatives, County residents, hikers/walkers, and cyclists. Some attendees noted they did not know about the trail strategy engagement; they came for the Bylaw engagement and were not regular trail users.
- 345 surveys completed (survey closed on Feb 23):
  - The vast majority of respondents are located in Parkland County.
  - Just under half of the respondents were aged 35 to 54 years.
- 500+ project page views.
- 2 project phone calls were received.

Phase two, round two, was from March 6, 2023, to April 4, 2023. In-depth interviews, community sessions, and committee sessions were held throughout round two. Participants were able to select an engagement mechanism which fitted best for their circumstances with:

- Over 145 people attended 1 Zoom session and 4 drop-in sessions.
  - Sessions were held at Clymont Community Hall, Parkland Village Community Hall, Wabamun Jubilee Centre, and Tomahawk AGRI Centre.
  - Attendees self-identified as equestrians, OHV users, cross-country ski users, conservation group representatives, County residents, hikers/walkers, and cyclists.
- 12 IDIs were completed with industrial and residential development companies, adjacent municipality representatives, local private recreation companies, and interested stakeholder groups.
- 1 community league session was completed, and 3 committee sessions were held.
- 133 surveys completed (survey closed on April 4).

## What We Heard

### Phase One

Through collaborating with stakeholders at this phase, we endeavoured to begin the process of finding common ground about what should guide a trail strategy.

The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to obtain a better understanding of current challenges and opportunities with the trail system and to lay the groundwork for a vision, values, and priorities for the Parkland County Trails Strategy.

The purpose of the staff interviews was to gather additional trail use and maintenance information from those involved with County planning or working directly with trails. Results across both groups were similar on nearly all topics with the exception of trail maintenance.

### Users Conflicts and Trail Opportunities

Participants were asked about awareness of user conflicts and trail opportunities. Both groups identified similar key conflicts:

- Motorized and non-motorized (lack of classification or space).
- Equestrians and other users (horses make messes and cause trail damage).
- Dog walkers and other users (hikers, cyclists, and equestrian).
- Drivers and trail users (dangerous highway crossings due to no markings, sidewalks, or other paths).
- Adjacent private land being used by the public.
- Staging/parking is an issue at main trailheads.

Participants noted a range of opportunities, beginning with more connections needed:

- To connect communities and town sites to other town sites, to parks, and to trails - specifically, Evansburg from the Pembina River area and between Evansburg and Entwistle.
- Integrate trails with the local transit system.
- Designate trail use by user type.
- Work closely with the Acheson Business Association.
- Enhance services that are available for people working in the area – mid-day recreation opportunities.
- Interchanges and roadway connections could be enhanced, larger shoulders on roads as a trail option or power line clearance to be used for trails.
- Need a consistent approach for trails in subdivisions.
- The waterways should be viewed as trails.

## Trail Maintenance and Monitoring

Next, the conversation focused on trail maintenance and monitoring, including challenges, issues, opportunities, and potential partnerships. Participants noted the existing trails are well maintained, especially in the summer. Regarding maintenance and monitoring, participants noted:

- Make sure the trail system is well signed/add more signs and specific reminders about the shared use nature of trails.
- Maintenance of the trails promotes winter use, specifically more cross-country ski tracks and some additional clearing of trails in the winter would increase users (specifically the Trail in the Woods).

Internal participants noted:

- Pembina area trails need better access for emergency situations.
- OHV users in subdivisions can cause damage to roads.
- Not enough staff to monitor current trail use and to deal with unsanctioned trails.
- Unmaintained trails are a big issue and there is an expectation from citizens that these trails are safe for public use.
- We need to support developers who want to develop trails.

Participants noted a few maintenance opportunities:



- Volunteer groups on the southeast side of the county seem more active in terms of trail maintenance (they can have challenges getting enough folks out for the work sessions).
- There is Interest in creating or joining existing partnerships to move work forward on trails improvement and further development.

## Priorities, Values and Vision

The final area of the exploration focused on priorities, values, and vision for the Parkland County Trails Strategy. Participants listed a variety of priorities ranging from tourism to creating more trails and trail connections:

- Tourism, economic diversification, and financial sustainability.
- The number one resource – the natural landscape:
  - More protected areas to protect wildlife and biodiversity are needed.
  - Maintain what is there.
  - Provide infrastructure to help people to keep the natural spaces clean (i.e., garbage cans).
- Remove barriers to community participation.
- Education and interpretation: connection to history and culturally significant landscapes, including how and why residents use the land.
- Safety:
  - A rural municipality with many 80km/hour roads needs to ensure opportunities for walking/biking/etc. are safe.
  - Provide lighting in key areas.
- Create trails areas for different user types, inclusive of waterways.
- Connect existing trails, subdivisions, and to provincial parks, to other villages, to other natural areas.

Across the participant groups, a set of values emerged:

- Communication, wayfinding, and education.
- Active living/travel.
- Connectivity:
  - To nature and the land.
  - Trails connecting to other trails.
- Conservation and preservation.

- Community:
  - Connection to people and the land in a culturally appropriate way.
  - Support community growth.
- Equity and accessibility.
- Partnerships with businesses, the County, and the land.
- Responsibility (to each other and the land) and respect.

When discussing a vision for the Parkland County Trails Strategy the concept of connection(s) figured largely in the thoughts of many stakeholders:

- Trails to connect people to people and to places.
- Connection of and access to nature and physical and mental health benefits.
- The recreational trail uses - a place where people can enjoy their hobbies safely while respecting private properties.
- Coordinate trail access system with amenities.
- Enhance peoples' appreciation and value of the land.

These results shaped the ideas, concepts, and materials presented to the general public in the first round of phase two engagements.

## Phase Two - Round One

Through involving and collaborating with citizens at this point in the trails strategy project we strived to confirm the trail strategy values, vision and priorities and began to gather insights for next steps and key recommendations based on user and citizen experiences.

The round one engagement materials for the open house and online sessions were mirrored in the online survey. The engagement materials first showed participants where trails are in the County, asked them to validate the values and vision, rank priorities, and then guided them materials and questions diving deeper into trail development related considerations: safety, comfort, environmental considerations, locations, and trail types.

## Values and Vision

The values and vision developed in phase one were validated in phase two, round one. The majority of participants felt the values and vision elements were accurate and inclusive.

Values	Vision Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connectivity.</li><li>• Community.</li><li>• Communication.</li><li>• Conservation.</li><li>• Equity and access.</li><li>• Active living.</li><li>• Partnership and responsibility.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect people to people and to places.</li><li>• Support physical and mental health.</li><li>• Promote value and appreciation of the natural landscape.</li><li>• Bring together recreation, tourism, and conservation.</li></ul>

A few participants noted that safety and education should be included in the values. Another participant noted that a nuanced approach to understanding conservation is needed.

## Priorities

A preliminary list of nine priorities was presented, respondents rated their agreement with the statement. Survey results mirrored the open house and online session results. The table below presents the survey results.

Priority	High agreement	Neutral	Low agreement
Recreational amenities such as trails are important in proving a sense of place and identity for Parkland County.	93%	5%	1%
Parkland County should offer trail opportunities in a variety of ecosystems to allow for different experiences.	87%	11%	2%
Parkland County has significant points of interest for trail development to help promote tourism.	82%	11%	7%



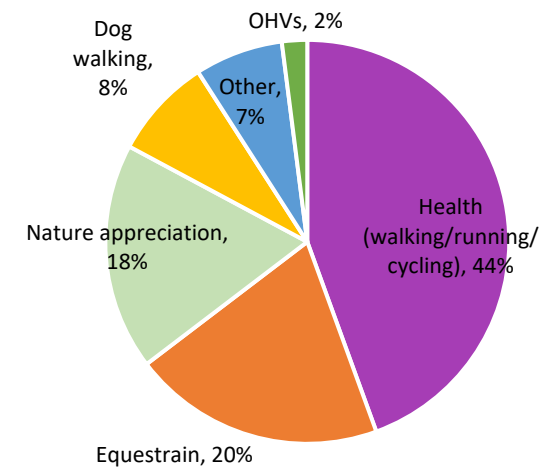
We need some trails that are only for certain types of users, such as designated equestrian trails or those only for walkers.	79%	11%	10%
It is important to provide trails in all developed areas, including country residential, hamlets and industrial areas.	77%	16%	7%
Trails should accommodate a variety of users at the same time, including off-highway vehicles, walkers/runners, bicycles / E-bikes, equestrian, etc.	49%	12%	39%
Providing interpretive opportunities along trails for education is important.	63%	28%	8%
Trails should not be built in sensitive ecosystems to protect the natural environment.	54%	26%	19%
Trails should be placed only around populated residential areas and not within industrial districts.	21%	37%	41%

Additional feedback was collected during the open house and online sessions. Several attendees felt that additional clarity on the terms “sensitive” and “conservation” is needed, also noting that people tend to be willing to protect natural spaces they can see and experience. Multi use trails should only be supported where the landscape can accommodate the diversity of users. A few attendees noted that a priority that addresses seasonal use is missing.

## Trail Use in Parkland County

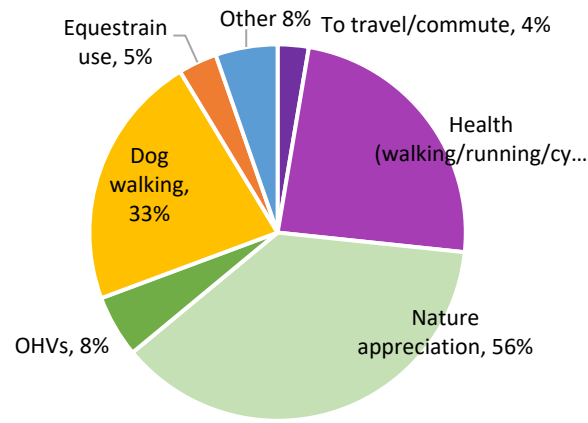
The survey asked several additional questions about trail use in Parkland County. They were asked to note their primary and secondary reasons for using the trails, to rank the importance of activities trails should be designed for and frequency of use with party size. The main primary reason people use Parkland Trails is for health, specifically walking, running, or cycling reflected in designing trails for walking the highest-ranking important use trails should be design for.

Survey respondents were asked for their primary reason to use trails:



n=345

Other reasons survey respondents use trails:

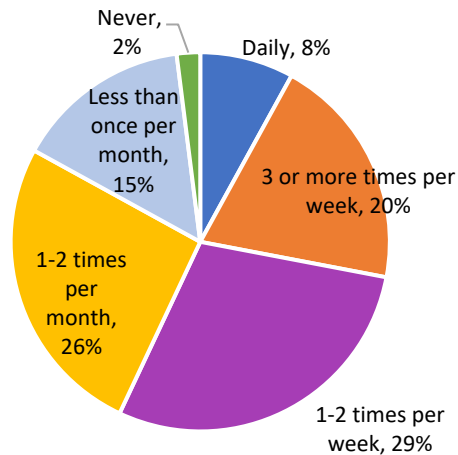


n=345

Survey respondents ranked what uses trails should be designed for with seven being the most important use and one being the least important.

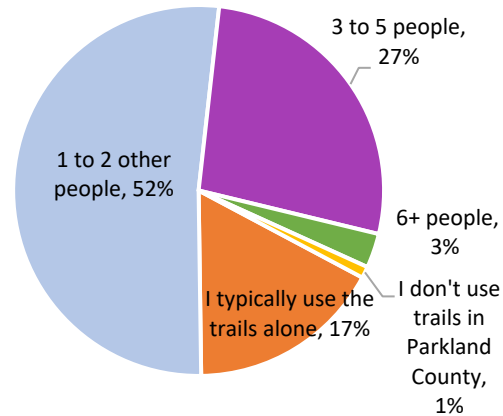
Trail use design	Mean out of 7 (n=345)
Walking/rolling	5.33
Running	4.56
Dog walking	4.46
Cross Country	4.06
Cycling	3.94
Equestrian	3.45
OHV	2.20

How often do you use trails?



n=345

How many people are typically in your party?



n=345

## Balancing Recreation with Environmental Considerations

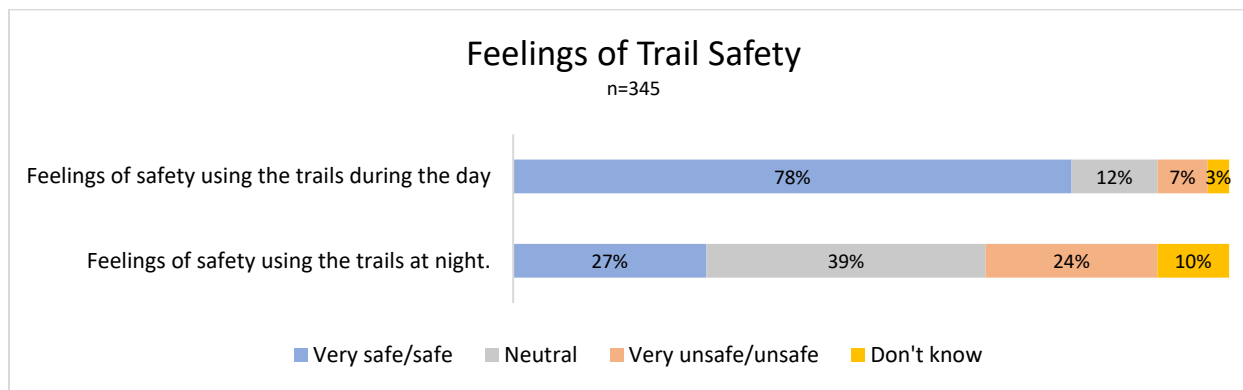
At the open house and online sessions attendees were asked to identify key ecological features in Parkland County that should be protected. Several participants mentioned continuing to protect the Big Lake area by not placing trails in the area. Areas currently with trails (Chickakoo, Clifford E. Lee, Bunch Berry, Wagner Bog area, Tuckers Field, North Saskatchewan River valley, etc.) should continue to be protected. A few participants noted that there are unique dune/sand features and wetlands areas in Parkland County that are prone to misuse and need additional protections.

Additional environmental concerns raised by attendees ranged from insecticide spraying to raising concerns about destruction caused by beavers. Other infrequently mentioned concerns included:

- Concern for areas around waterways.
- Protect mature tree stands.
- Need an invasive weed strategy.
- Lack of trails is leading to random use and misuse.
- Horses and OHV have higher environmental impacts than other users

## Trail Safety and Comfort

Throughout the engagement, participants were asked questions regarding trail safety and comfort. Survey respondents were asked to rate their feeling of safety on Parkland County trails. Respondents indicated feeling safer on trails during the day than at night.



The open house and online session attendees were asked 'what are some ways we can make county trails safe?'. Several participants noted their safety concerns ranging from fast moving trail users, wildlife, to off-leash dogs. In terms of suggestions for how to make trails safer several were raised:

- Posting speed limits and hours of trail use.
- Additional lighting at key spots, like trail heads.
- Education on how to handle encounters with wildlife.
- More detailed trail information online, and signage on the trails and at trail heads.
- Separate trails for different users.

All engagement mechanisms asked participants two key questions about trail comfort. Both questions, 'what are some ways that we can make trails more comfortable for people to use?' and 'are there amenities that should be included on all trails to improve



user comfort levels?’ elicited similar responses and suggestions. From the open house and online sessions these ranged from washrooms to hitching posts, including:

- Washroom facilities.
- Partnerships for maintenance.
- Maps and trail information.
- Dog waste bags.
- More garbage cans.
- Bigger parking lots.
- Groomed cross country ski trails.
- Warming shacks or fire pits for winter use.

From the survey, 263 respondents provided comments and the top themes included:

- Public washrooms (73%).
- Picnic tables/seating (36%).
- Garbage and recycling cans/containers (24%).
- Benches (16%).
- Shelter (10%).
- Parking availability (10%).
- Trail signage/maps (8%).
- Fire/BBQ pit (7%).

## Trail Locations

Participants were shown maps of Parkland County with trails areas highlighted, examples of area types that could have trails developed and a trail typology. They were asked to provide feedback on where trails should be located and what types of trails should be developed.

### The Maps

The desire to demonstrate knowledge and provide insights was strongly expressed by many of the open house attendees when viewing the maps of trails in Parkland County. Trail inventory revisions were suggested, locations of conflicts and possible

improvement areas were also noted. Several attendees noted the maps' clearly demonstrated trails have not been a priority in Parkland County. Additional themes were:

- The Jack Pine Grazing reserve was not well known has potential for additional uses, attendees noted OHV, particularly snowmobiles, or equestrians' trails could be added.
- Trails on provincial lands should be connected to trails on county lands.
- Need a foot bridge to Devon.
- Equestrian areas need larger parking lots/staging areas.
- Connections to/between destinations are needed.
- Avoid making changes to the Big Lake area.

#### Trails feedback

Survey respondents were asked about destinations, ones they typically access and ones that should be connected by trails, 173 provided comment. Lakes, rivers, and bodies of water were the destinations most often mentioned (30%), followed by mentions of historic sites, landmarks, and landscapes (8%), scenic viewing spots (6%), recreation centres (6%), provincial parks (5%), and nature preserves/conservation areas (4%).

Additionally, survey respondents were asked what can be done to encourage them to use trails more often, 242 provided comment. The top five themes were:

- Add designated trails for separate uses/activities (26%).
- Improve/increase trail maintenance/upkeep (26%).
- Add more trails/tail systems/networks (19%).
- More trail maps/signage (10%).
- More parking space availability (10%).

Survey respondents were also asked to provide feedback on what would make trails better for winter use and 210 respondents provided comment. The top five themes were:

- Improve and/or increase trail grooming (34%).
- Add designated trails for separate uses and activities (31%).
- Improve snow and ice control measures (14%).
- More trail maps and signs (9%).
- Improve trail maintenance and upkeep (7%).

### Country Residential Trails

Participants were asked ‘What types of trails do you feel Parkland County should provide in Country Residential areas, if any?’. Responses ranged from respondents wanting dedicated separate trails to not wanting dedicated trails because respondents use the roadways.

Respondents that wanted separate trails felt this separation would:

- Enhance safety.
- Encourage people to use trails,
- Provide connection opportunities to other areas.

Those who indicated they did not support separate trails in these areas indicated:

- Property owners do not want trails near their backyards or to be responsible for the littering.
- Trails can be added to the municipal reserve land in areas.
- Road shoulders could be widened for people to use.
- They don’t like people driving into and parking in their residential area to access a trail.

### Industrial

Next, participants were asked ‘What types of trails do you feel Parkland County should provide in industrial areas, if any?’.

Responses varied from no need for trails in these areas to trails in these areas promoting active transport. Additional ideas noted:

- Adding trails could be good for employees needing training opportunities.
- Safety concerns as there are few pathways in those areas.
- Example Roper Road industrial area in southeast Edmonton.

### Community

The last trail development area participants were asked to consider was trails in communities, hamlets, or lakefront residential areas by asking ‘what types of trails do you feel Parkland County should provide in Hamlets and Lakefront Residential areas, if any?’. Some respondents noted that adding trails in these areas creates a sense of place and identity. Other feedback included:

- Trails will encourage people to walk instead of drive to local places.
- Trails should be off set from roadways to increase safety.
- Need trails connecting parks to communities.

- Enhance local “goat trails”.
- Top of bank or lake shore access needs to be reviewed.

### Trail Types

Open house session attendees provided feedback on the trail typology. Many attendees felt that the typology presented required further refinement as it was combining trail user types that were not compatible, clearances that did not work for the recommended user type and lacked consideration for seasonal use in the trail typology.

Several attendees noted that trail Type 1 is noted as for equestrian, but it is not depicting a horse friendly trail design. Type 2 trails are also noted as for equestrian use but has gravel surfacing which most equestrians do not prefer or use. One participant recommended creating three trail types: a trail type for equestrians, another type for cyclists, walkers, runners, skiers, etc. and a final type for OHV users.

Participants were then asked, ‘where should each of these trail types be facilitated?’ and provided a range of responses:

- Consider developing an area for multiple users but with separate trails by user types and have good signage – parallel trails.
- OHV trails should be separated for other users.
- OHV trails could connect smaller towns and villages drawing people to business areas.
- Consider larger, longer trails that can be used for races which will draw people to nearby communities.
- Wabamun could be a good OHV area.

When considering what trail uses are incompatible, participants noted:

- Motorized and non-motorized users do not mix.
- OHV should have separate trail system.
- Cross County skiers need their own groomed trails.

Lastly, participants were asked to consider if there are trail uses that have been missed and should be included. One trail type and two user types were mentioned: boardwalks, portaging, and skiing.

At the conclusion of the survey respondents were asked if they have any additional comments, 110 comments were provided. The top 5 themes were:

- Add more trails, trail systems & networks (25%).



- Add designated trails for separate uses and activities (22%).
- More equestrian trails (9%).
- Appreciate the opportunity to provide input (6%).
- Improve or increase trail maintenance & upkeep (6%).

## FAQ

During public engagement often questions arise that cannot be answered at that moment in the project process. These questions have been captured. The questions typically related to costs to create trails:

1. Will this be a gradual plan with clear tax implications marked out?
2. Are there follow-up resources to create actual trails?
3. What are/will there be funding for this? Are there grants?
4. How much will be spent? And how are we going to pay for this?
5. Need to consider when there are too many users for an area and how will access be balanced?
6. Will there be attention/consideration given to identifying where public lands end? Is there a Parkland County Trails webpage?
7. If Wabamun is a priority hamlet what happens to Entwistle's status?
8. Is an east-to-west trail, covering the entire county, part of this plan?
9. What about cross-country skiing on lakes?

The majority of these questions were addressed as part of the round two session materials.

## Phase Two - Round Two

Through involving citizens at this point in the trails strategy project the main objective was to provide citizens with the opportunity to respond to what was learned in round one and to gather feedback and refinements to 20 draft recommendations derived from feedback in phase one, phase two round one, and current best practice, and County policy and plans.

The round two engagement materials were mirrored in the online survey, special sessions and IDIs. The engagement session materials (drop-in and Zoom session) first showed participants what stage the project was at, where trails are in the County, 4 boards describing the feedback received from round one with an opportunity for attendees to comment on the findings, and

then the boards with the 20 recommendations with places for participants to indicate agreement level and to provide comment. Lastly, where appropriate, responses to questions frequently asked in round one was also provided.

The IDIs focused on presenting and discussing the 20 recommendations. The survey focused on the 20 recommendations and asked questions about tax implications and tourism opportunities. Special sessions focused on items of interest or impact to those participants and in some cases review of the 20 recommendations.

A FAQ is presented for this round of engagement at the end of the results.

## Developer and Adjacent Muni conversations:

Early in round two individuals representing adjacent municipalities and developers, both residential and industrial developments, were contacted for an interview to gather information about trail development processes, requirements, and preferences for trail development. Three developers and five adjacent municipality representatives participated in an interview.

Through the conversations with developers, a key theme emerged:

- Let the market decide for both industrial and residential if a trail should be developed.
- From their perspective, it is best to let the consumer decide if trails should be built in an area and not have it a requirement from the municipality.
- Concerns about the maintenance of trails and if municipalities had the ability to increase that capacity if they make trail development a requirement.

In terms of trail development requirements for industrial developments, one key theme emerged:

- Requirements to make trails or pathways would actually drive development away.
- Not having trail or pathway requirements is what makes Parkland County attractive especially as compared to the City of Edmonton where industrial development requires pathways.

Through conversations with representatives from adjacent municipalities, several key themes emerged:

- More urban municipalities are requiring trails or pathways to be part of the development plans.
- All representatives indicated an interest in more trail connections and exploring partnerships, including cost sharing.
- Connecting counties to adjacent counties with bridges would be fantastic.

## Special Sessions:

A handful of sessions were held with County Council, County sub-committees, and one community league. The County sessions focused on a project update, next steps and gathering key feedback. The one community session was upon request and focused on the community league's feedback and concerns in terms of funding and creation.

Parkland County Council and the Council Sub-committees each had a special session. They each received a presentation of the results of the round one engagements and trails strategy development process to date. Their feedback ranged from concerns about tax dollars to where the strategy should consider a starting place to develop trails:

- Concerns about how much trails are actually used and their value for tax dollars/ accountability for the tax dollars spent.
- Enhance management of what we have and consider enforcement support to ensure rules adhere to.
- Environmental concerns were raised, specifically erosion caused by trails.
- Engagement concerns, only hearing from people who use or want trails.
- Private land use (agricultural land) without permission particularly OHV users.
- A lot of 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY) in the county from farmers to county residential citizens.
- Some interest in seeing developers have a threshold to develop trails based on the number of lots.
- Make sure everyone, including developers, understands their responsibilities as it relates to land use.
- Support for utility corridor trails.
- Start in densely populated areas first, so most people have access to trails and then move to less populated areas.

The community league provided feedback on who should be funding trails, who should be building trails and where:

- Parkland County should fund in full or partial the trail systems since they would be open for use to all people but with lots of input from community members.
- Community leagues should help gather funds since they are the immediate beneficiaries of the trails.
- Volunteers and league members are already struggling with time and attracting more volunteers.
- Concerns with maintenance in terms of labour and costs.
- Would be ideal to have trails to connect schools with the community.

## Session Map and Round One WWH Feedback

Similar to round one, attendees at the round two sessions provided feedback on the county maps that were presented. Attendees wanted to be marked on the maps where equestrians are allowed to use trails and noted they would like more trails. Other attendees noted there is a lot of opportunity in the county, especially with MR and ER. Several attendees raised the need for more access points to the rivers and others noted the need for more parking at current trail areas.

Several session boards provided an overview of the round one WWH results. Overall round two attendees agreed with the results of round one. Attendees raised a range of concerns from user types represented, trails and taxes, to concerns regarding adding amenities to trails:

- OHV needs to be considered more (why are so few respondents are OHV users) and they should be considered equal to other trail users.
- Need more OHV trails to encourage them to not drive around the country residential areas.
- Separate motorized users from trails for other users.
- Add more trails, especially more horse trails.
- Some tensions emerged between equestrian users and other users around animal waste.
- No more trails, no taxes for this.
- No taxpayer dollars for this.
- Concerns about trails being too close to houses resulting in trespassing, theft, vandalism, squatters, and concerns about houseless people from Edmonton.
- No trails in country residential areas as more traffic would be unwelcome.
- More trails less red tape.
- No fire pits these are dangerous.

Regarding the top five priorities, attendees provided additional feedback and voted their agreement with the priorities through a dotmocracy. Overall, the dotmocracy indicated agreement with the priority list. Comments about the priorities ranged from trails not being a priority for the county to ensuring the ecosystem is protected.

- Trails shouldn't be a priority.
- Priority statements are too broad.



- Work with residents to make trails or user groups to create trails that people will use.
- Need to keep current access and current user designation in some areas the same.
- People with mobility issues use key trails to access the waterfront and that should not change.
- Protect the ecosystem.

## Recommendations

The 20 recommendations for the trails strategic plan were presented to 145 attendees at the drop-in and Zoom sessions, 133 participants who completed the survey, and 6 people who participated in the IDIs. All people were given the chance to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the recommendation and the opportunity to provide any additional feedback they had for the recommendations. The recommendations were not presented in any particular order, and they were presented in different order between the survey, IDIs, and sessions.

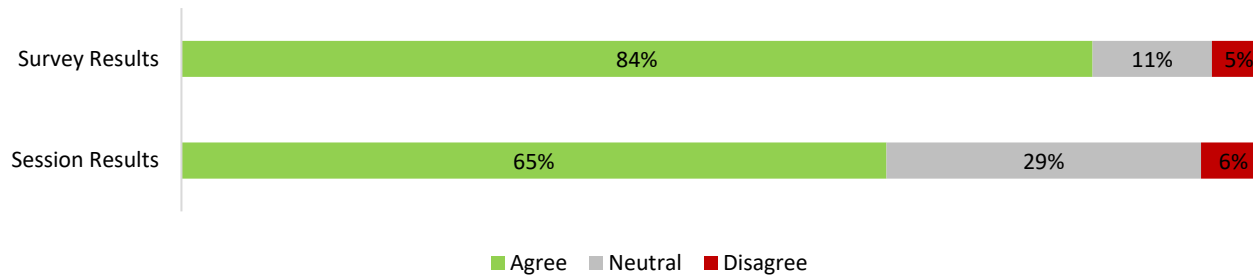
At the drop-in sessions attendees were able to use dotmocracy to indicate their agreement level with the priorities and about 25% of attendees placed dots.

Feedback on the recommendations is presented below in order of most agreed to least agreed to by the survey results with session results presented below. Throughout the survey recommendation questions, if a respondent selected strongly agree or strongly disagree with a recommendation, they were asked a follow-up question to expand on the reason for their selection. Themes emerged in the responses, they are presented below the graphed results along with key themes from the session notes and conversations.

### Recommendation 1:

Improve trail connectivity by providing trail connections in key locations which mitigate the dangers associated with busy roadways for trail users.

Survey n=133 and session n=34



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more trails/trail networks within Parkland County.
- Will help in keeping trail users safe by avoiding busy roadways.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Need more information/details about trail development plans.

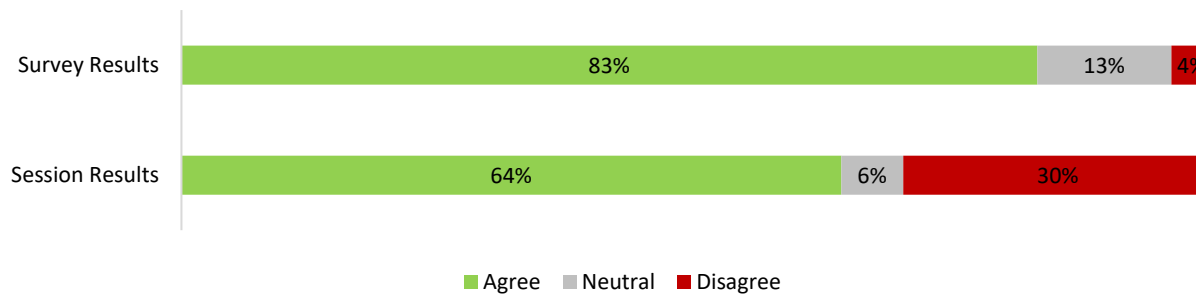
#### Session themes:

- Keep safety in mind.
- Main and secondary highways should be avoided if possible. Have signage before the highways on the trails and on the highways warning drivers of a trail crossing.
- Is this part of an active transportation strategy.
- Anything that can be done to help people get out of vehicle is laudable.

## Recommendation 2:

Work with developers to require the integration of municipal reserve and development of trails, where appropriate, within future residential developments.

Survey n=133 and session n=33



### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Trails should be placed in locations that are beneficial/useful/accessible to everyone.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Outdoor Recreation is beneficial to physical and mental health/well-being.
- Will help in reducing trail development costs.

### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

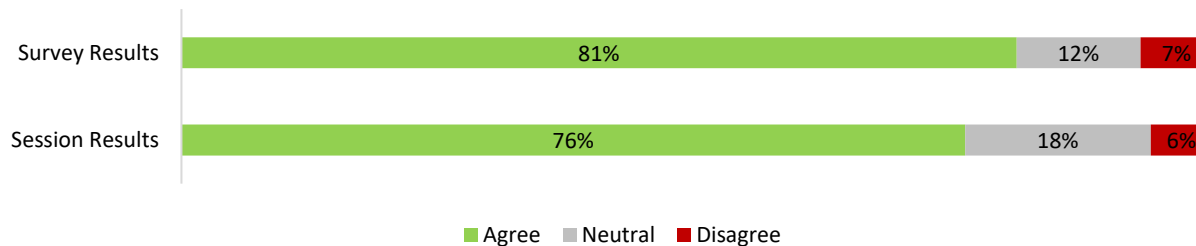
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

### Session themes:

- This should be done in collaboration with developers. It has the potential to increase property values.
- Is this for current country residential areas, this could be clearer.
- The County is already extremely onerous for developers to work with. More requirements will reduce investment not encourage it.
- Have to hold developers accountable to existing bylaws and rules first.
- Good forward planning will prevent conflicts in the future.

### Recommendation 3:

Explore opportunities for designated equestrian-only trails, such as in Jack Pine Public Grazing Allotment. Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette program to remediate instances where separate trail types are not feasible to reduce conflicts between user type



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Is important that all user types are aware/informed of trail etiquette.
- Need designated trails/areas for separate uses/activities (ex. Cross-country skiing, walking, equestrian use, cycling, etc.)
- Will help keep users safe.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Most users won't read/pay attention to trail etiquette.
- The trail etiquette program is not necessary/needed.

#### Session themes:

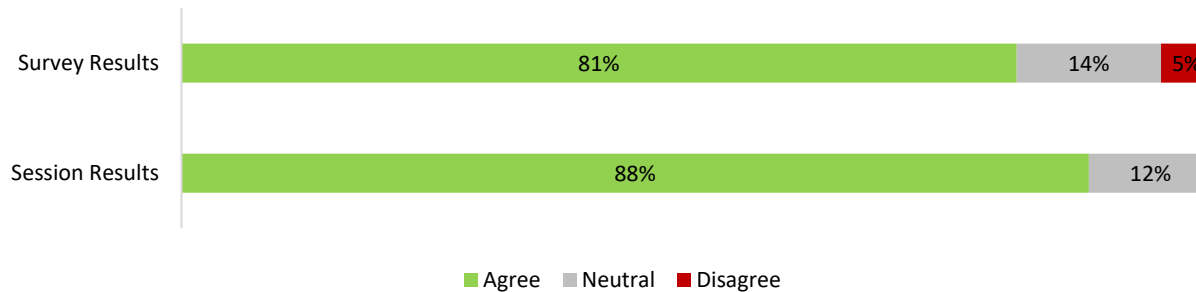
- There are etiquette standards in existence already that the County can use.
- Include seasonal considerations.
- Have separate trails for different users.
- This is practical and could be rolled into the trail's classifications. OHV could use something too.
- Private groups would help with creating this.
- This is important to be posted everywhere for proper and safe use of multiuser trails.
- Focus on the etiquette program, not on equestrians.
- Need adjacent municipality agreement.



#### Recommendation 4:

Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails.

Survey n=133 and session n=24



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more connected trails/trail networks within Parkland County.
- Will help attract more trail users.
- Shared management of trails will help with cost of project.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

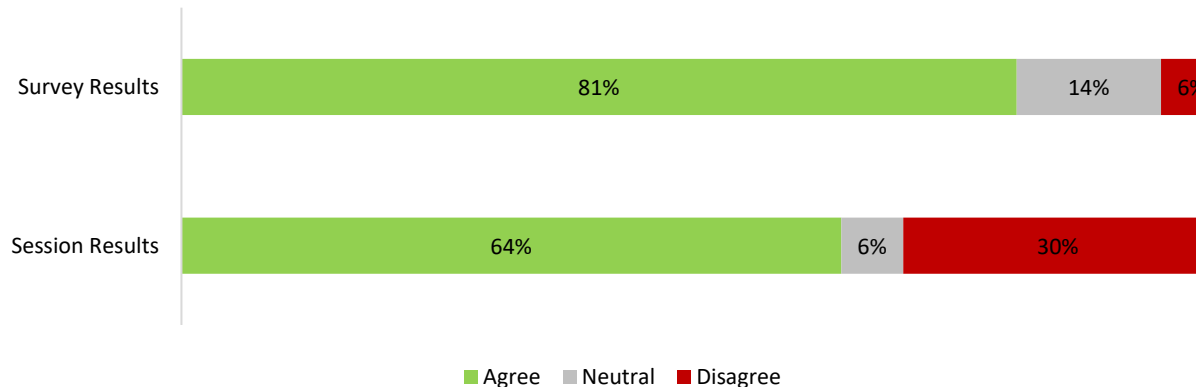
- Concerned about cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.

#### Session themes:

- Need full buy in from all groups for this to work.
- As long as it is fair and equitable and not just about what urban areas want.
- This should include working with adjacent countries to align OHV bylaws and requirements with provincial legislation.

#### Recommendation 5:

Develop a balanced approach to providing residence access to waterfront recreation such as a resident education campaigns, developing trails along waterfronts in MR setbacks (possible ER) to be a visual aid between public vs. private land, increasing the



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Is important that all residents have access to waterfront recreation/trails along waterfronts.
- Need more waterfront access points.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Need to increase public awareness/education campaigns.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Will negatively impact/affect private landowners.

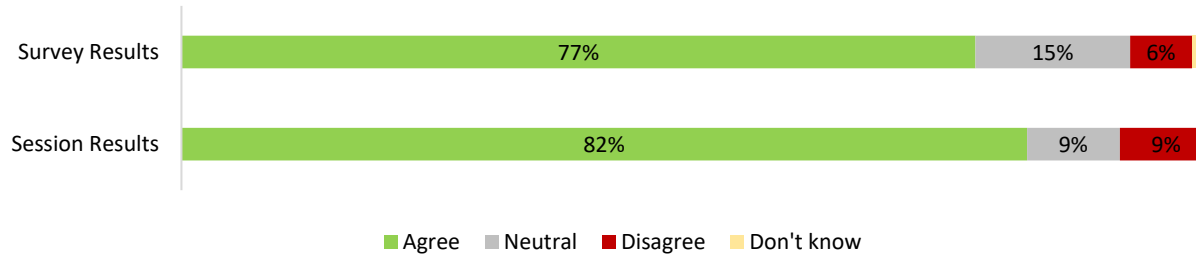
#### Session themes:

- A balanced approach is difficult to achieve, everyone defines balance differently.
- This is what people want.
- Without harming existing ecosystems
- I wouldn't put increase as a recommendation, improve might be a better word and still achieve the desired outcome.

#### Recommendation 6:

Utilize the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) mapping data when examining future trail opportunities. Examine opportunities for trail alignments that span different ecosystem types while considering protection of sensitive environments.

Survey n=133 and sess



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/ecosystems.
- Need to ensure that trails are regularly/adequately maintained.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Need to preserve/protect Environmentally sensitive areas/ecosystems.

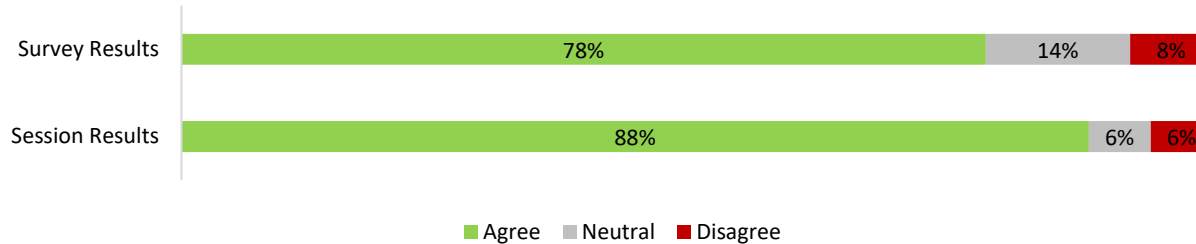
#### Session themes:

- There's an opportunity in this recommendation for education and interpretive signage as people meet to be connected to the space to see the sensitivity and uniqueness of the land. Maybe also include enforcement for breaking the rules.
- CMP is a good tool to help with this work.
- Keep trails out of the Wagner Natural area and protect its forests.
- Add more trails to the Wagner Natural area, the more people engaged with nature the more they will want to protect it.
- This doesn't seem like a county-wide strategy, perhaps identify areas.
- The CMP is a great document. It seems the County has other standards that conflict with the CMP and that the County bends to developers' wants.

## Recommendation 7:

Explore the opportunity to include supporting amenities (i.e., washrooms, hitching posts, waste receptacles) at trail heads to increase user comfort and enjoyment.

Survey n=133 and session n=34



### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Will help in keeping trails clean/free of litter.
- Is important to include supporting amenities for all trail users.
- Dog owners need to clean up after their pets.

### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Need to improve/increase trail maintenance.

### Session themes:

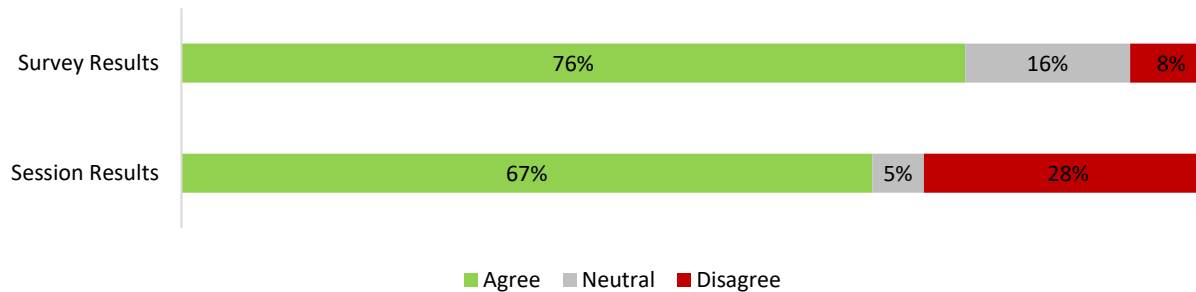
- This enhances the sustainability of areas, perhaps prioritizing the level of service by area.
- Keep maintenance in line of sight for this recommendation.
- This provides not just comfort but also cleanliness and environmental values.
- Not near where I live. I don't want any of these things near where I live in Osborne Acres.



#### Recommendation 8:

Options for accessible trails and supporting trail infrastructure should be considered a priority for key areas in order to support residents as they age.

Survey n=133 and session n=36



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Is important that trails/trail infrastructure are accessible/easy to access for everyone.
- Outdoor recreation is beneficial to physical and mental health/well.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Should not be considered a priority.
- Noise pollution/increased noise-related concerns/increased traffic concerns.
- Garbage/littering-related concerns.

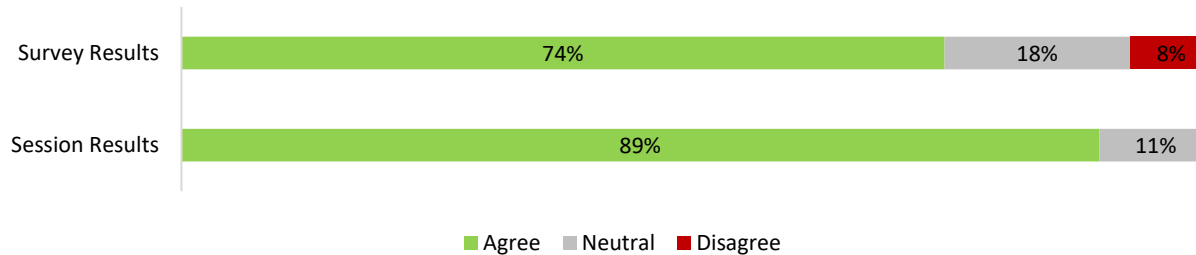
#### Session themes:

- Most folks will move out of the County as they age to be able to access health support more readily.
- Fits with inclusion strategies many governance groups have
- This seems like an urban perspective.
- It's important to have these accessible options.

#### Recommendation 9:

Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls.

Survey n=133 and session n=36



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need to listen to input/feedback/concerns/suggestions from community residents.
- Trails should be placed in locations that are beneficial/useful/accessible to everyone.
- Ensure that communities are informed/kept updated with plans on trail developments.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Noise pollution/increased noise-related concerns.

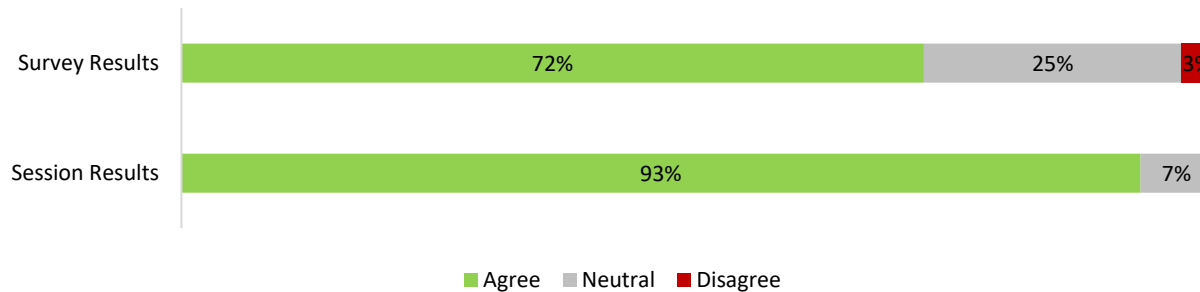
#### Session themes:

- Great way to capture key stakeholders and support community growth.
- Important to connect with the local community and ensure more than schools are considered.
- This could also include industrial area.

#### Recommendation 10:

Update trail classifications to more comprehensively address trail uses with in  
Parkland County.

Survey n=133 and session n=27



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Is important that users are made aware/informed of trail classifications.
- Need designated trails for separate uses/activities (ex. Cross-country skiing, walking, equestrian, cycling, etc.).
- Need better/improved/more user-friendly trail signage/maps.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

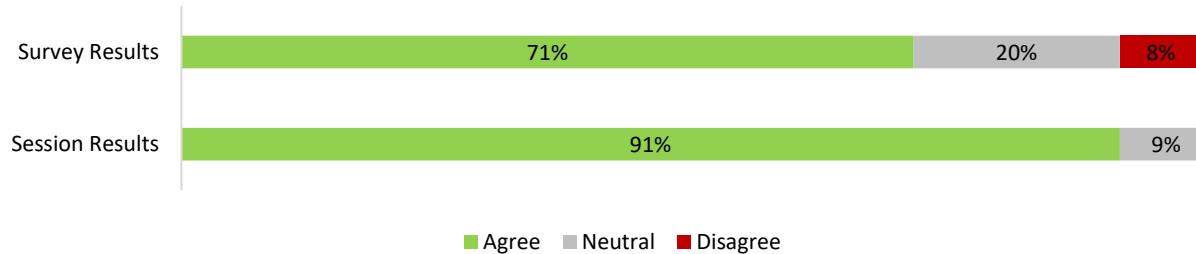
#### Session themes:

- Need more dedicated staging/parking areas.
- Need more communication about trails and trail users (seasonal newsletter).
- Keep some trails multi-use.
- Make sure classifications and designations match.
- Less focus on gravel - not good for most users.
- Nature trail classification that addresses the sensitivity of the landscape.

#### Recommendation 11:

The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned.

Survey n=133 and session n=32



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need to ensure that recreation amenities are included in future residential developments.
- Will help in reducing trail development costs.
- Recreational amenities are a major attraction to homebuyers.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- The development of recreation amenities should be the responsibility of residential developers.
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

#### Session themes:

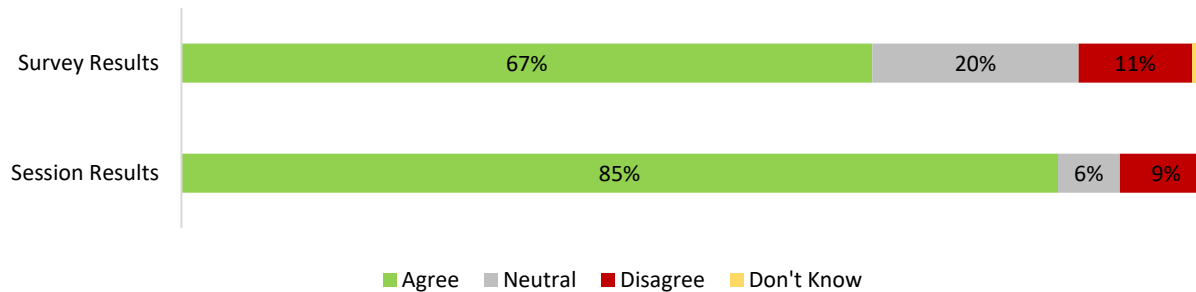
- This should be about awareness of nearby trails not about creating more trails.
- This is a low priority.
- This seems to overlap with the recommendation about existing developed areas.
- Consider adding protection of natural area during and after development.



## Recommendation 12:

The County should begin negotiations with utility corridor landowners / lease holders to explore ability for public use of land.

Survey n=133 and session n=34



### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- This will allow for the development of more trails/trail networks/connectivity.

### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Utility corridor land should not be for public recreational use.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-system.

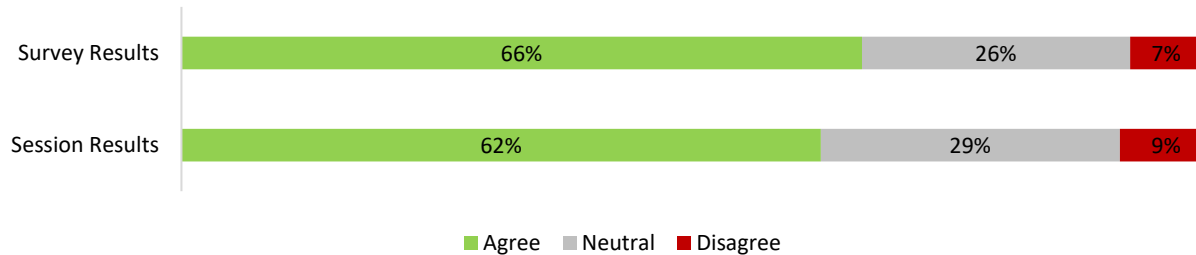
### Session themes:

- This is a great idea, especially for OHV as long as there is good signage.
- This is good as long as it is not near housing areas.
- Make sure who owns the land is clearly understood.

### Recommendation 13:

Pursue the development of a management plan at Chickakoo Lake Recreation  
Area to improve relationships across trail user types and to mitigate the  
degradation of environmental system.

Survey n=133 and session n=34



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Is important that all user types are aware/informed of trail etiquette.
- Trails should be available/accessible for all user types.
- Need designated trails/areas for separate uses/activities (ex. Cross-country skiing, walking, equestrian use, cycling, etc.).

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Trails should be available/accessible for all user types.
- The development of a management plan is not necessary/needed.
- Is important that all user types are aware/informed of trail etiquette.

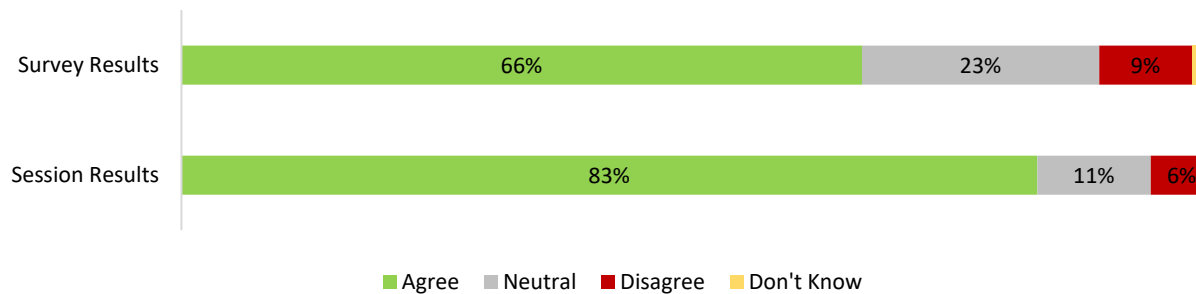
#### Session themes:

- This is needed.
- Local should manage this.
- Are there other areas in need of this type of plan in County.
- Parking at Chickakoo is needed.
- More regulations are not needed and are actually counterproductive, focus on communication and common sense.

#### Recommendation 14:

Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities and landowners.

Survey n=133 and session n=35



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more designated trails/areas for OHV use/programming.
- OHV trails should be located in areas that will not disturb nearby communities/residential areas.
- Collaboration between municipalities will allow for sharing of resources/knowledge.
- Need to listen to input/feedback/concerns/suggestions from community residents.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Need more designated trails/areas for OHV use/programming.
- Collaboration between municipalities will allow for sharing of resources/knowledge.
- OHV trails should be located in areas that will not disturb nearby communities/residential areas.

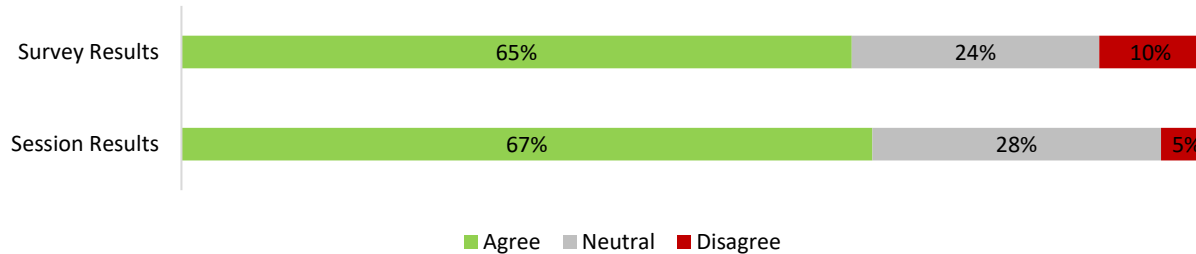
#### Session themes:

- Not sure if a separate Master Plan is necessary.
- This doesn't fit with the County we can use the roadways.
- This is needed to create a space for OHV.
- Important to note that OHV trails would not disturb residents.
- Keep OHV trails away from residential areas to keep the noise down.
- OHV need a place to go.

#### Recommendation 15:

Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails, and agreements with Jack Pine PGA (spell out) leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County.

Survey n=133 and session



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more designated trails/areas for equestrian programming.
- Need more parking space availability.
- Alberta has a strong/long history with equestrian programming/activities.
- Need to improve/increase trail maintenance.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Need to improve/increase trail maintenance.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

#### Session themes:

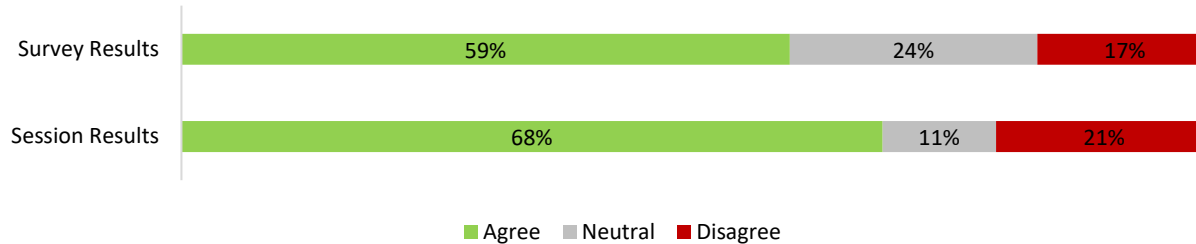
- This is a great recommendation. Partnering with the province, which has experience in this area, makes sense and will create opportunities for equestrians outside of the Rocky Mountains.
- Make sure this is separate from OHV.
- The Alberta Equestrian Federation is a great partner.
- Equestrians need more support.



#### Recommendation 16:

To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups such as recreation tourism operators should work directly with the province to properly develop and to get proper approvals to do so.

Survey n=133 and session n=28



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Will allow for the development of more trails/trail networks/connectivity.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Need to ensure that bylaws/regulations are enforced.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

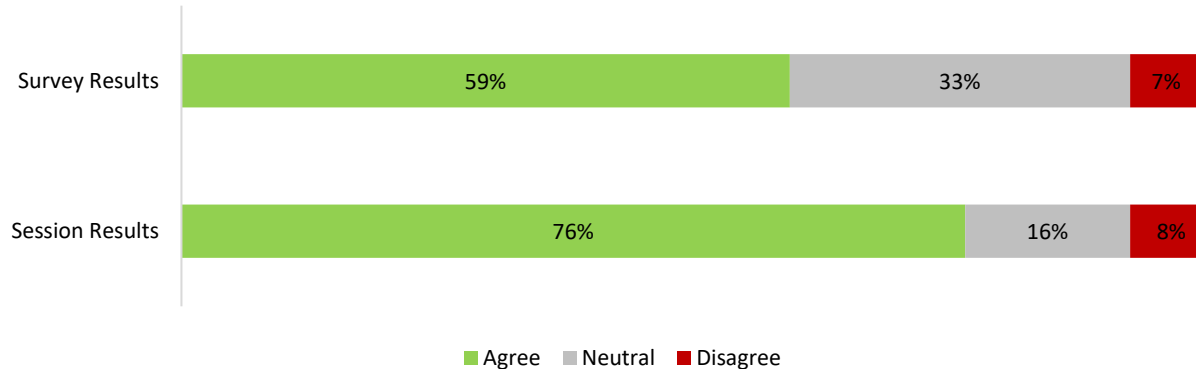
- The County and provincial governments should be involved with interest groups.
- I do not support/am against the development of recreational tourism in the area.
- Need more information/details about trail development plans.
- Need to ensure that bylaws/regulations are enforced.
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

#### Session themes:

- Stay attuned to riparian sensitivity on river valleys.
- This would enhance tourism to the area.
- Perhaps include location references
- This already happens so perhaps the recommendation needs to be reworded.
- There are environmental reserves on crown land (Wagner) so this recommendation should include the County and other stakeholders as needed to be a part of these conversations with the province.

#### Recommendation 17:

Develop a Parks and Trails Interpretation Strategy to identify strategic locations for interpretive signage and educational themes throughout the County's parks and trails system. Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the parks and trails system.



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more trail signage/maps.
- Will help in supporting local/small businesses.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.

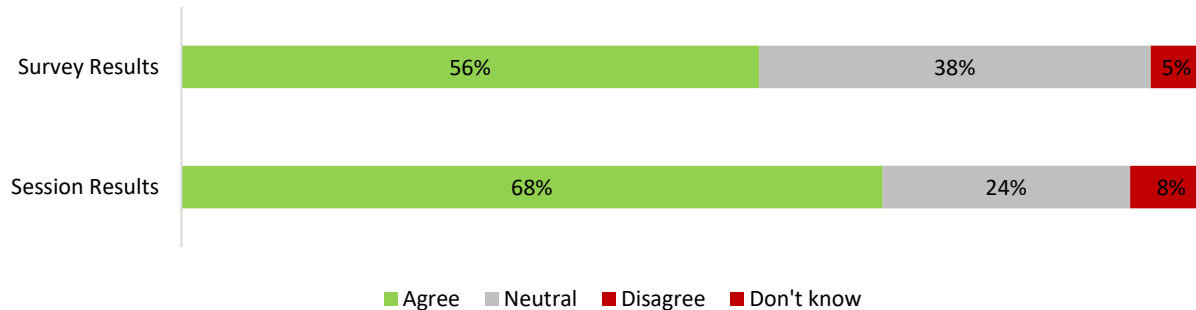
#### Session themes:

- Integrated the accessibility piece from the beginning to this one.
- More education the better.

#### Recommendation 18:

Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities which align with the direction and recommendations of the Trail Strategy.

Survey n=133 and session n=25



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more waterfront/water access points.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- This will help encourage more usage of County trails.
- Flooding-related concerns.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Need more information/details about the trail development plan.

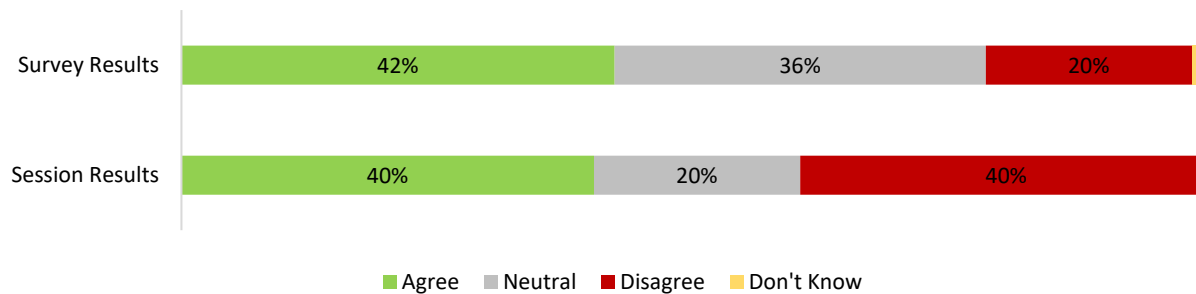
#### WWH in session:

- Ensure riparian and environmental considerations are part of the plan. Provide or create bird blinds to prevent stressing birds out.
- This needs to be done in conjunction with watershed management alliance groups.

#### Recommendation 19:

Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County Trail network.

Survey n=133 and session n=25



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Need more sport tourism opportunities.
- Sport tourism opportunities will bring County more business/revenue/good for the local economy.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- I do not support/am against the development of recreational tourism in the area.
- Concerned about the cost of trail development/infrastructure.
- Trails are often used by people who are not residents of Parkland County.

#### WWH in session:

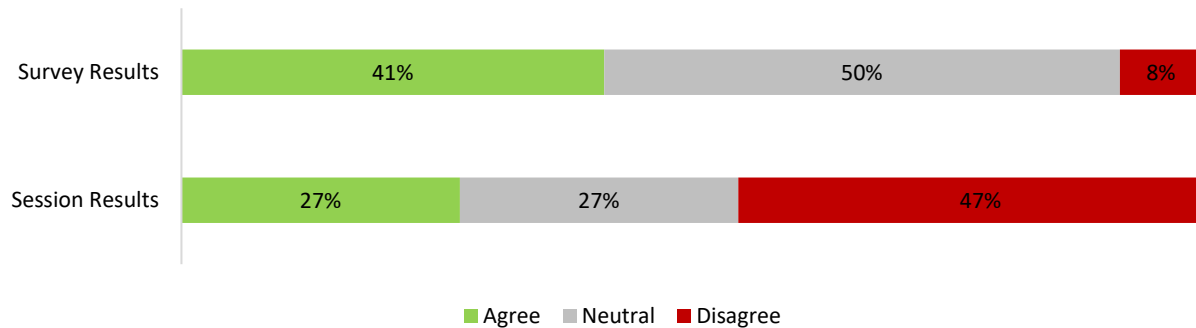
- Good idea, need to factor in staging areas.
- Don't know what this is or what it entails.
- Is this building different or special trails just for this activity.
- This could make Parkland a destination.
- In appropriate locations.



## Recommendation 20:

### Conduct active transportation opportunity assessments in Growth Hamlets.

Survey n=133 and session n=15



#### Strongly agree to open-ended themes:

- Is important/beneficial for future community development.
- Active transportation opportunities should be integrated everywhere/throughout Alberta.

#### Strongly disagree with open-ended top themes:

- Need more information/details about trail development plans.

#### WWH in session:

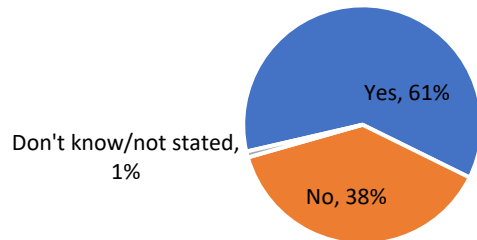
- Widen shoulders on roadways in small communities.
- Trails nearby are good, and they can help communities.
- Put a trail on the south side of Sundance Road from the power plant west to Seba Highway which would keep walkers off the road.

## Tax Implications and Tourism Opportunities

Two additional areas of trail strategy significance were explored in the survey: tax implications and tourism opportunities. Respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to accept a tax increase to complete trails work and 61% of respondents indicated yes.

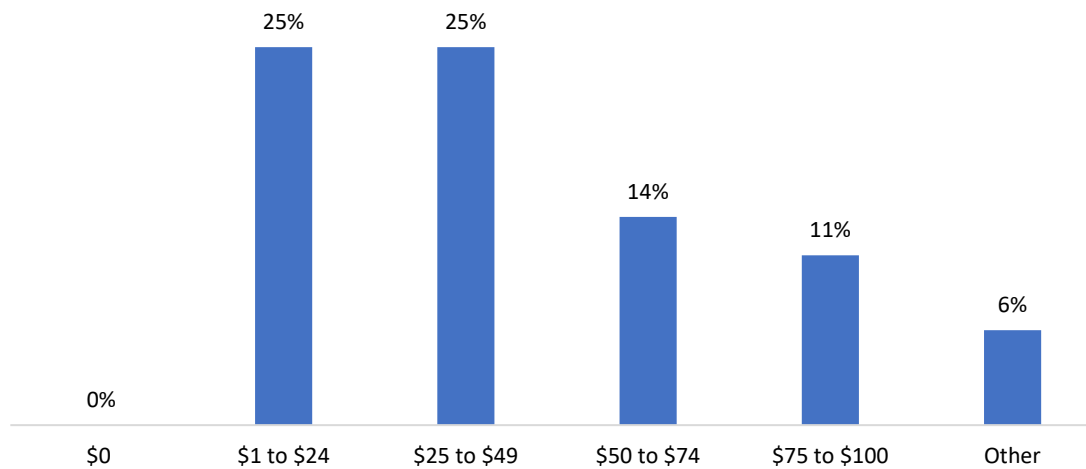
Willingness to accept a tax increase to complete trails work:

n=133



Survey respondents who indicated yes to a willingness to accept a tax increase were then asked to indicate how much they would be willing to pay in additional taxes to begin work on the trail strategy recommendations. Half of the respondents indicated a willingness to pay between \$1 and \$49 in additional taxes.

How much are you willing to pay in additional taxes to begin work on the Recommendations? (Base: Respondents what are willing to accept a tax increase to develop more trails) n=81



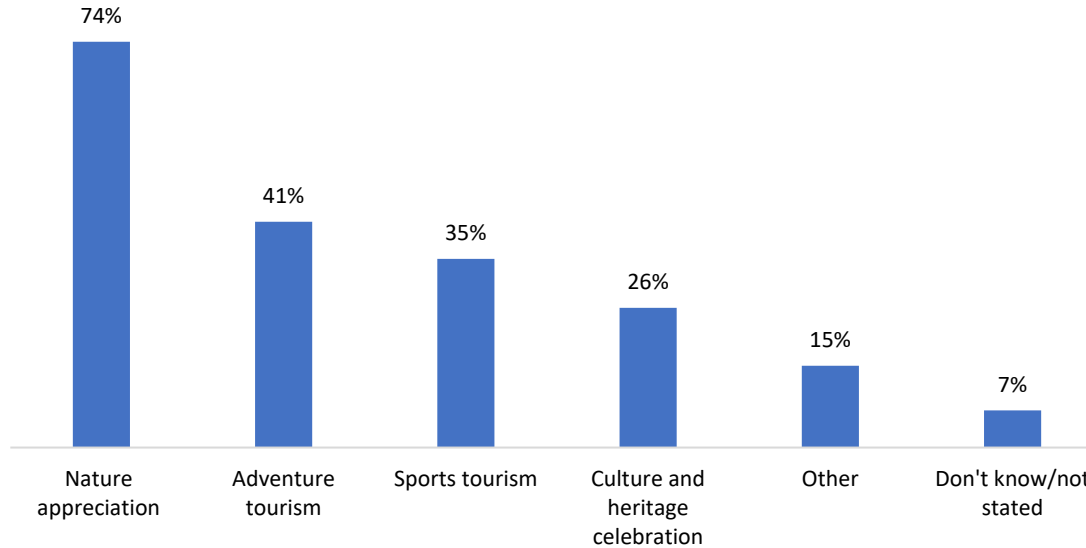
Other response themes:

- Depend on how much work is completed.
- Depends on what is being developed.
- Support 0.5% increase if it's both residents and businesses.
- Support an increase between 2% and 3% if garbage services are included.
- Support user-pay system.

Next survey respondents were asked about tourism opportunities that they envision for trails in the county. Nearly three-quarters indicated nature appreciation.

### What tourism opportunities do you envision for trails in Parkland County?

n=133



#### Other response themes:

- OHV/Off-highway vehicle recreation.
- Equestrian programming/recreation.
- Water recreation/activities.

## Final Comments

All engagement mechanisms provided participants with the opportunity to share any final feedback they might have regarding recommendations or any other aspect of the Trails Strategy Plan.

In the survey, fifty respondents provided additional comments, ranging from supporting trails development to an appreciation of being able to provide feedback:

- I support the development of a trail network in Parkland County/is a good idea.
- Need more trails/trail networks/connectivity in Parkland County.

- Ensure that trails are available/accessible to everyone/all user types.
- Need more designated trails/areas for equestrian programming.
- Concerned about cost of trail development/infrastructure/project is too costly to taxpayers.
- Need to preserve/protect environmentally sensitive areas/eco-systems.
- Appreciates being asked for input/feedback/thankful opportunity to do.

Many of the in-person final comments also ranged along similar themes as the survey responses from support for more trails to the appreciation of being able to provide feedback:

- We need more trails/build parallel trails/need more trail loops/connections between parks and to hamlets/more access to lake or river valley, possibly through ER or where appropriate MR.
- Etiquette for all trail users/ensure accessible language.
- Work with private groups wherever possible.
- Intelligent to make a plan first.
- Use stronger language, instead of should use will or must; What does implementation look like
- Separate out Indigenous connections as a recommendation (could be as simple as giving neighbouring Indigenous communities the opportunity to review signage before posting).
- Stop allowing OHV on county residential roads, they are very noisy.
- Appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the plan development.

Additionally, some location-specific feedback was provided at the in-person sessions:

- Clifford E Lee: users cleaning the boardwalks is great; off-leash dogs have chased away the wildlife, especially the fowls.
- Old Whitewood Mine is a designated recreational use area by the County but is not on the maps.
- Tomahawk Path connection to the school – people in support and people not in favour.
- Osbourne Acres and Wagner Bog area should not get fire pits, the fire risk is high there.
- No trails in County Residential areas or near the river valley.

Lastly, at the in-person sessions, several comments were provided expressing the perspective that more trails are not needed and concerns regarding taxes:

- Wasting taxpayer dollars.
- Tax implications of the plan.
- These recommendations seem to help/benefit other municipalities more than Parkland County residents and therefore my taxes for this project don't benefit me.



## FAQs

During public engagement often questions arise that cannot be answered at that moment in the project process. These questions have been captured. The questions typically related to costs to create trails:

- What about trail maintenance?
- Will taxes be paying for maintenance?
- What do we as a County want to be known for?
- What is a key location?
- There are alignments for what developers wants but what about for future landowners?
- Is an education campaign a separate recommendation?
- Who will own and have an obligation to fix trails?
- Why would we want to recreate under powerlines?
- Can the County help interest groups navigate requirements from different levels of government?

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# **APPENDIX B**

## **BACKGROUND**

## **DOCUMENT REVIEW**

## BACKGROUND REVIEW

The development of the TSP has been framed by recommendations and directions from previous planning processes and relevant legislation. Alignment with existing planning frameworks and best practices are required for the successful delivery of County Trails. As a result, the following documents, developed by Federal, Provincial, Local Governments, and organizations overseeing best practices, form the basis of the Trails Strategy.

### **National Acts, Policies, and Plans**

The following Acts were considered as part of the development of this Strategy and should be observed throughout the realization of future trails:

The Fisheries Act – The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is the primary Federal agency that monitors and sets compliance standards for environmental regulations as it relates to aquatic ecosystems. Trail development typically does not trigger DFO involvement. However, if trail development affects fish-bearing water bodies, the development is of interest to DFO. The purpose of the Act is to “...provide a framework for the proper management and control of fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat” (Government of Canada, 2019). Any activity that negatively alters the ecological integrity of naturally occurring, fish-bearing water bodies is prohibited by the Act.

The Species at Risk Act – The Act illustrates Canada’s “...commitment to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and secure the necessary actions for their recovery” (Government of Canada, 2019). The Act prohibits any activity that has negative consequences for any of the extirpated, endangered, threatened, or special concern species outlined in the Act, as well as their nest or den.

Migratory Birds Convention Act - Prohibits any disturbance to bird species covered under the act, such as removal of vegetation or water from nesting areas. The construction of trails that adversely affect migratory birds will not be permissible at certain times of the year. It is recommended that all proposed trail alignments and sites of reclamation activities be reviewed by a qualified professional prior to any work.

### **Infrastructure Canada - National Active Transportation Strategy**

As Canada’s First National Active Transportation Strategy, this document envisions that “...Canadians of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, genders, and backgrounds to be able to safely and conveniently access active transportation in their communities...”. It also aims to significantly increase the proportion of Canadians who select active transportation as their primary mode of transportation. The framework utilized in this strategy centers on six elements: awareness, coordination, targets, investment, value, and experience. The document also outlines several funding streams available to Canadians to catalyze federal investments in active transportation infrastructure – including parks, trails, foot bridges, bike lanes and multi-use paths.

### Transportation Association Of Canada - Strategic Plan

The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) is a “not-for-profit, national technical association that focusses on road and highway infrastructure and urban transportation”. While TAC does not set enforceable standards, it is the primary point of reference for national best practices in transportation. The strategic plan identifies eight focus areas to advance efforts nationally in pursuit of “safe, healthy, and prosperous” transportation in Canada: safety, mobility, infrastructure and asset management, environment and climate change, technology, and workforce development. TAC focus areas speak to the evolving goals of national transportation trends; transportation efforts should aspire to create seamless, integrated, multi-modal transportation, and complete streets that accommodate transportation needs of all ages and abilities. Focus areas identified in the Strategy also seek to address issues that have been prevalent themes nationally such as, shifting workplace demographics, data utilization, and concerns surrounding climate change.

### **Provincial Acts, Policies, and Plans**

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is the primary body that advances, monitors, regulates and enforces provincial legislation with respect to the recreational use of public lands. However, this role is only required if proposed municipal trail strategies overlap with the jurisdiction of Province. The following Acts have been considered as part of this strategy.

The Water Act – The Act “promotes the conservation and management of water, through the use and allocation of water in Alberta” (Government of Alberta, 2021). Alberta’s Water for Life Strategy complements the Water Act and outlines three key objectives of water management practices in the province: (1) safe, secure drinking water, (2) healthy aquatic ecosystems, and (3) reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy (Government of Alberta, 2011). must not impede the management objectives outlined by the Provincial strategy.

The Public Lands Act – The Act outlines the crown and Province’s ownership of the bed and shore of all naturally occurring waterbodies, rivers, streams, watercourses, and lakes. It prohibits any activities that damage or disturb these areas.

The Wildlife Act – The Act “supports and promotes the protection and conservation of wild animals in Alberta” (Government of Alberta, 2020). The act specifically describes the Province’s and appointed employees’ authority to take the appropriate measures that prevent negative impacts on wildlife and their habitat. This includes alteration or removal of existing vegetation. A wildlife assessment is recommended to confirm the presence of any nest or den prior to the development of new trails, or the reclamation of disturbed areas.

Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act - Establishes a legislated process for environmental assessments, and ensures potential environmental impacts are identified early in the planning stages. More detailed environmental assessments may be required for sensitive and significant ecological areas.

Alberta Historical Resources Act - Any fossil or other historical resource located prior to or during site development, as well as during ongoing operations, must be properly protected and reported to proper authorities. Depending on the historical resource identified a variety of mitigation strategies are available to follow through with trail development while respecting the Act's requirements.

The Trails Act – The trails act establishes a management system for motorized and non-motorized trails on land administered under the Public Lands Act. Municipal trails in the future will need to ensure their alignment with trails designated under this act and the associated provisions (i.e., trail use).

Weed Act - Specifies noxious and nuisance weeds that must be controlled within both publicly and privately owned lands. The identification of weed infestations will help establish a work plan for a vegetative reclamation strategy.

#### Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park Management Plan

Developed by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), this management plan is “designed to provide a long term and comprehensive framework to guide both park operations and park developments”. The Park's focal point, Big Lake, is one of the largest wetlands in the Central Parkland Natural Subregion of Alberta and provides passive recreation opportunities for park visitors. Most trails within the park have a compacted granular surface, however paved portions are permitted by AEP to facilitate connections to regional trails. Pedestrian traffic is encouraged, however, cycling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are permitted uses on park trails.

#### Alberta Recreation Survey (2017)

Prior to 2021, the Alberta Recreation Survey was conducted every four years since 1981. The data collected as part of this survey provides important context for the delivery of recreation services in the province and connects research, policy and practice. 2993 surveys were completed in 2017 by Albertans over the age of 18 living throughout the province. Key insights gleaned from the survey align with objectives of this trail strategy. The most popular active living activity among adults was walking (80%). Walking was identified as a top 3 favorite activity for nearly a quarter of Albertans (23%) and most Albertans prefer walking in natural areas or parks. The document describes the importance of recreation providers connecting people to nature through recreation. Complete communities with equitably located opportunities for recreation and access to nature play a key role in the delivery of recreation services.

#### Wetland Policy

The Alberta Wetland Policy seeks to conserve, restore, protect, and manage Alberta's wetlands to retain the ecosystem services Albertans derive from functioning wetlands. The policy encourages practices that avoid and minimize the impacts of development activity on wetlands, providing principles for mitigation, avoidance, and minimization. However, in instances where disturbance is unavoidable, the policy provides a framework for replacement, reflective of reflect differences in relative wetland value. The policy will inform Strategy direction in areas adjacent to wetlands



## **Regional Plans**

### Edmonton Metropolitan Growth Plan

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan (EMRGP) provides a vision and direction for responsible growth. The Growth Plan projects Parkland County's population to grow to between 42,700 (low projection) and 50,000 (high projection) people by 2044; a substantial increase from the County's population of 32,097 recorded during the 2016 Canadian Census. The Plan identifies the importance of providing high quality parks, trails and open spaces as part of complete communities for future residents. This Trails strategy also seeks to uphold Parkland County's commitment to the EMGP and connect to regional trails and open spaces, where appropriate.

### Tri-Municipal Regional Plan

The municipalities of Parkland County, Spruce Grove, and Stony Plain collaborated to develop a regional plan which "strategically aligns land use, services, and infrastructure to achieve mutual benefit". The plan focusses on strategies to catalyze investment in region based on a "philosophy of shared investment for shared benefit". The plan identifies "active transportation redundancy" as a development goal within the next decade. Within the context of this plan, active transportation redundancy refers to creation of an "active transportation system that mimics the redundancy (alternative routes) of the roadway network, providing access to alternative transportation infrastructure at a similar density level as roadways." The Plan also identifies the need to formalize a regional recreation administrative committee which improve accountability and leadership in the delivery of recreational services. When this committee is formalized, it will be essential to advocate for investments in County trails as a part of regional recreation objectives.

### The River Valley Alliance Plan

Developed in 2007, the River Valley Alliance Plan describes a vision for a connected system of parks, trails, and natural areas in North Saskatchewan River Valley. As one of seven River Valley Alliance municipalities, the Plan describes Parkland County's role in "Gateway to the west" section of plan and sets forth the following expectations of municipal partners:

- First and foremost, protect and preserve existing natural areas
- Maintain and enhance access for all residents and visitors
- Manage potential conflicting uses through a combination of planning design, regulations and enforcement
- Keep the river valley safe and enjoyable
- Promote partnerships to develop facilities and deliver programs and services
- Recognize the rights of private landowners and use dialogue and consensus to promote compatible land uses and appropriate public access to the river valley
- Recognize the uniqueness of the people, communities and cultures that are part of the river valley

## **Municipal Plans**

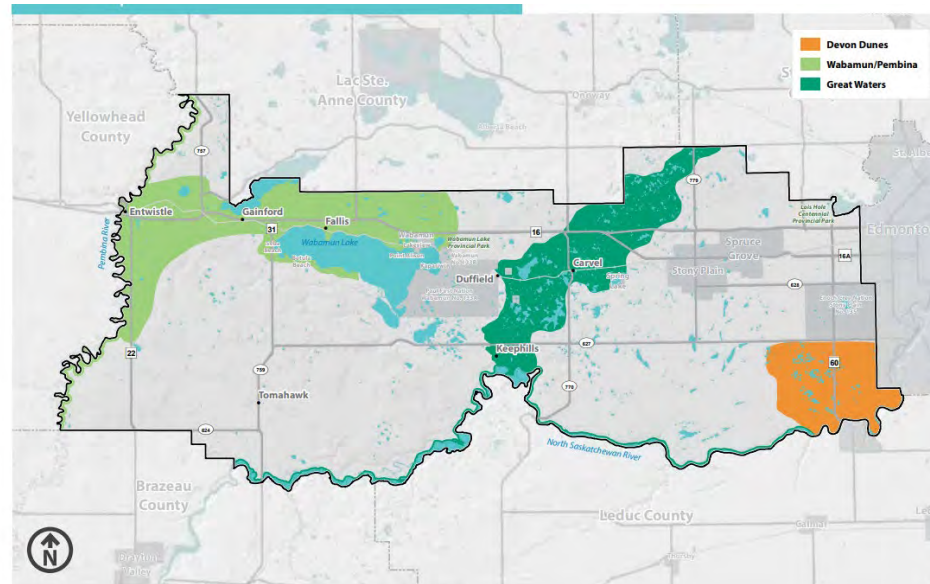
The County's assembly of municipal plans encourages a connected trail system, supportive of active lifestyle and conveniently located recreational opportunities for residents. County policy also indicates a preference to strategically locate high value, trails and recreational opportunities within or adjacent to priority growth areas (hamlets) and Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas. To align with County policies, trails and supporting amenities should be developed and enhanced with careful consideration for the natural environment and inclusive design practices.

### Municipal Development Plan (2017)

The County's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the overarching plan for existing and future land uses. This Plan establishes the vision and policies to guide growth over the next 30 years. The MDP supports the development of complete communities, directing development of amenities and services within existing hamlets. The following policies provide direction for the development of this trails strategy:

- 6.0.5 Hamlet Open Space, Pathways and Trails
  - a. The County encourages the creation of public parks and pathways within hamlets.
  - b. The County will seek opportunities to improve walking and cycling in hamlets through increasing the available active transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalks and pathways.
  - c. The County will look for ways to coordinate planning and connectivity between hamlets and nearby provincial parks, protected areas and recreation areas.
  - d. The County will establish standards for recreation facilities and open spaces in hamlets
- 8.1.9 Recreation & Tourism - Off-Highway Vehicles
  - a. The County should partner with local off-highway vehicle groups to identify designated locations for off-highway vehicle trails, staging areas and dedicated parks within County boundaries. Priority will be given to "Prime Recreation and Tourism" areas not in High Priority Landscapes (see MDP Figure 11 and 14). Other areas may be considered where the proposed area is located a sufficient distance from the following features to minimize any impacts:
    - i. existing or planned future residential development;
    - ii. sensitive ecological features including ESAs and waterbodies; and
    - iii. existing agricultural operations.
  - b. The County may study and update policies and regulations pertaining to off-highway vehicles
- 8.2.1 Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas
  - a. Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas shall be located as shown on Figure 11: Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas and will include Prime Recreation & Tourism Area – Wabamun / Pembina, Prime Recreation & Tourism Area – Devon Dunes and Priority Recreation and Tourism Area – Great Waters.

- b. Significant public and private investment in recreation and tourism development not located within the County's hamlets should generally be directed to Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas.



- 9.2.6 Multi-Use Roadways
  - a. The County supports active transportation across the County and may consider designing multi-use roadways with wider shoulders for non-motorized trail activity (such as walking, jogging, bicycling, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing) along new or upgraded rural roadways.
- 10.1.1 Healthy Ecosystems
  - a. Environmental stewardship is a County priority. The County will consider the ecological integrity of ecosystems, wildlife habitat and corridors and the potential cumulative impacts of development on the County landscape as a part of planning and development decisions.
  - b. The County shall consider the ecological integrity of the County's natural environmental features, High Priority Landscapes, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and corridors and overall ecosystem health when undertaking or updating statutory plans, policies, bylaws and other planning documents

- d. All planning and development projects initiated by the County or private developers shall adhere to relevant federal and provincial acts, standards and regulations.
  - f. Best Management Practices, as outlined in the County's Environmental Conservation Master Plan, should be incorporated whenever possible to protect Natural Ecological Capital and support healthy ecosystems.
- 11.1.6 Connected Trail Systems
  - a. The County will collaborate with regional stakeholders, neighbouring municipalities and adjacent provincially designated areas to develop an integrated regional trail system wherever possible.
  - b. The County supports the development of trail systems on existing Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve parcels to enhance public access to natural and recreational areas.
  - c. Trails on Environmental Reserve parcels will be restricted to non-motorized uses.
  - d. Multi-purpose trails should be developed as part of new multi-parcel subdivisions. Multi-purpose trails:
    - i. may be proposed in Municipal Reserve parcels and along subdivision road rights-of-way;
    - ii. should be designed to allow access for people of all abilities and shall comply with County Standards; and
    - iii. should support connectivity between adjacent subdivisions and hamlets where possible.
- 11.1.7 Subdivision and Development Requirements for Parks, Recreation, Schools and Open Spaces
  - a. Conceptual Schemes and/or Area Structure Plans must provide for public gathering places such as parks, open spaces and community facilities that are safe and accessible and create linkages between on-site and off-site pathways and open spaces, when practicable.
  - b. The County may require the dedication of right-of-ways at the time of subdivision or development to create strategic links for the County's wider parks, recreation and open space network.
- 11.2.2 Policing & Crime Prevention
  - b. Site design for public facilities, such as recreation centres, campground and playgrounds, should consider Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, such as the reduction of blind spots and strategic placement of lighting, to improve safety.
- 12.0.1 Collaborative Approach
  - a. The County supports intermunicipal alliances and partnerships that facilitate the provision of joint transportation, utility and community infrastructure, economic diversification and environmental and recreational initiatives.

### Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan

This Plan provides long-term direction for County parks, recreation and culture services. An extensive public engagement process illustrated the need for a strategy to address current deficiencies and aspirations for a connected motorized and non-motorized trail system. Analysis during the development of the PRCMP revealed only 39% of residents are within 8 km of a County designated trail. 8km was established as a service

area metric as part of the PRCMP. There are currently 13 km of formally designated County trails provided in the Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area, Prospectors' Point Trails, Devonian Trail and Hasse Lake area. Additionally, the County trail system is supported by approximately 26 km of provincial park, private conservation land, and municipal trails. While the PRCMP provides over-arching actions to improve the delivery of parks, culture, and recreation services in the County, the following directives guided the realization of the trail strategy:

- 6.3 Continue Cost Sharing
  - 6.3.1. In accordance with the cost share policy outlined in this plan, the County will continue to support partners in the planning, development and operation of parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs through Cost Share agreements on eligible initiatives.
  - 6.3.2. Proactively pursue new cost share partnerships that will enable the County to address eligible parks, recreation and culture facility gaps identified in this plan.
- 7.1 Protect Our Nature:
  - 7.1.4. Actively manage recreational use within all County parks and environmentally significant areas to avoid or mitigate visitor impacts on ecological values
  - 7.1.6 Encourage the design and construction of new park, recreation and culture facilities to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency. Work towards achieving a program standard such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System
- 7.2 Expand, Diversify, and Connect Our Parks and Trails
  - 7.2.2. Expand and diversify our trail network
    - 7.2.2.1. As illustrated in the conceptual trail network shown in Figure 45, work with partners to develop a Trails Master Plan to establish a County-wide, all-season, multi-use land and water trail network for both nonmotorized and motorized recreation. Opportunities should be sought to integrate historic wagon, indigenous, pioneer and other historic transportation routes into the County trail system.
    - 7.2.2.2 As necessary, work with private landowners to develop access agreements to enable the development of trail corridors to connect Parkland County's multi-use trail network.



Figure 45 Conceptual Trail Network



- 7.3 Enhance and Upgrade Our Existing Parks and Trails

- 7.3.2 Trail Enhancements

- 7.3.2.1. Upgrade existing trails to meet the design guidelines provided in the revised trail classification system.
    - 7.3.2.2. Where appropriate, continue to design, develop and manage trails to provide universal access to the extent practicable.
    - 7.3.2.3. Classify each trailhead in the County in accordance with the Staging Area Classification System and enhance the staging to provide the intended visitor comfort and convenience amenities.
    - 7.3.2.4. Conduct Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits of exiting parks and trails to identify opportunities to enhance safety and mitigate vandalism and nuisance behaviours.
    - 7.3.2.5. Encourage local stewardship, trail activity-based businesses and groups to undertake education-based events on the trails and to participate in trail promotion activities:
      - Adopt-A-Trail Partnerships
      - Trail Stewardship Teams
      - Interactive Trail Inventory
      - Public Volunteer Trail Events
      - Sponsored Events

- vi. Public campaign initiatives and trail etiquette education
- 7.4 Actively Manage Our Parks and Trails
  - 7.4.1 Visitor Management
    - 7.4.1.1. As necessary, the County will apply the full range of direct and indirect visitor management strategies to proactively avoid and/or manage environmental and social impacts in park and trails

DIRECT STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationing use based on carrying capacities</li> <li>• Activity restrictions/prohibitions</li> <li>• Site closures—temporary and/or permanent</li> <li>• Enforcement officer presence</li> <li>• Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure design and/or alterations</li> <li>• Visitor information &amp; education programming through the Leave No Trace program</li> <li>• ParkWatch/Steward Program</li> </ul>

- 7.4.1.2. Develop and promote a means for parks and trail users to report maintenance and safety issues and accidents to operations staff. Document all reports and maintenance actions taken to respond to the reports.
    - 7.4.1.3. Develop a maintenance guideline manual for parks, trails and sport fields. The manual should identify the inspection and documentation procedures and maintenance procedures for each park, trail and outdoor sport facility class.
    - 7.4.1.4. Maintain an up to date spatial inventory of parks and trails assets. Consider the acquisition or development and deployment of a GIS based mobile asset management program that is capable of tracking the supply of assets and their condition, characteristics, maintenance backlogs and maintenance reports.
    - 7.4.1.5. Design and implement a visitor monitoring/ counting program for parks and trails using TrafX or other similar visitor counter tools. The purpose of the program is to identify trends in use, collect comparative data over the long-term, support and direct compliance efforts and to assist in measuring the success of future capital projects as they are implemented.

- 7.4.1.6. Adopt the Leave No Trace program and integrate the program's educational materials into all visitor information, signage and other communication tactics.
- 7.4.1.7. Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette program to clearly educate trail users about respectful use of trails and the yield hierarchy for multi-use trails and other trail use best practices.
- 7.4.1.8. Review the financial procedures and coding processes related to tracking parks and trails maintenance expenditures and revenue generation. Ensure expenditures and revenues are accurately tracked and can be easily analyzed by parks and trail facility.
- 7.4.1.9. Consider the implementation of a regular visitor survey to maintain an understanding of residents' and visitors' changing demands for and satisfaction with parks and trails services.
- 7.4.2 Signage & Wayfinding
  - 7.4.2.1 Undertake the development of a signage manual to identify a compelling brand for the County's parks and trails and to ensure the consistent application of signage within the system and appropriate language to help manage and mitigate risk and liability.
  - 7.4.2.2 Enhance staging area, trailhead and wayfinding signage within and between parks and trails to make using the parks and trails system as easy as possible.
  - 7.4.2.3. Install branded and consistent highway signage to help residents and visitors access County parks.
  - 7.4.2.4. Develop a park and trails interpretation strategy to identify the strategic locations for interpretive signage and messaging in the County's parks and trails. Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the park and trail system to interpret the region's rich First Nations history, unique ecosystems and biodiversity, and local culture and history.

### Transportation Master Plan

The Transportation Masterplan (TMP) provides strategies to guide transportation and land-use decisions within Parkland County through a 25-year planning horizon. Active transportation, recreation, and tourism were identified as key aspects of the plan. Opportunities for the County's trail and active transportation network included:

- Address current transportation / active transportation network gaps and increase network development to support specific County economic, social, and environmental initiatives.
- Establish inclusive active transportation opportunities for all ages and abilities that promote healthy, social, and well-connected communities.
- Support a wide range of active transportation year-round initiatives and networks such as cycling (recreational, mountain / off-road etc.), off-highway vehicle (ATVs, snowmobile, etc.), hiking, cross-country recreation, and water-based activities in a respectful, controlled and well-programmed manner.

- Identify key areas of the County and destinations to support year-round connectivity, equity and potential innovations in land use development and growth such as tourism/eco-tourism, natural infrastructure and amenity development, and wayfinding.
- Establish connectivity to the North Saskatchewan River, Pembina River, and other water bodies, parks, open space and environmentally significant / protected lands; and between communities.
- Develop scenic routes and historic/natural site programs, interpretation, and education – supported via active transportation network development.
- Apply a Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP), as outlined in the PRCMP.
- Establish an integrated transportation/active transportation management, operations and maintenance approach.
- Promote sustainability and low-impact development applications.

#### The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) sets directives for planning, achieving and reporting on the success of sustainability initiatives within the County. The plan provides high level objectives around community, land-use, economics, environment, and governance to ensure a high quality of life for County residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

#### Our Communities, Our People: Parkland County Social Development Plan

The primary purpose of this plan “was to identify social needs and develop potential options for meeting these needs”. Many of the findings from this process stem from the fact the County has a very low-density population in comparison to neighboring jurisdictions. As a result, transportation was identified by residents as the biggest barrier to accessing services. Recommendations of this plan centered around improved County mobility. As it relates to trails, diversifying and improving access to recreation and leisure opportunities throughout the County, such as walking and cycling trails, was recognized as a priority.

#### Conservation Master Plan

The Conservation Master Plan presents an important step in the County fulfilling its goal in becoming a “respected steward of the environment” by developing an inventory of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs). The plan also “outlines the methodologies, theoretical underpinnings, and data sources used to map” ESAs. The ESA inventory is critical in the stewardship of the natural assets as it allows the County to make informed land use decisions. With this knowledge, the County can protect and maintain lands that contain vulnerable environmental resources, or resources that have unique, rare, or irreplaceable qualities.

#### Wabamun Area Vision Planning

The County is undergoing a visioning process for the Wabamun Area to “leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor”. The document focusses on future opportunities for housing, recreation, and industry without compromising the surrounding environmental assets. Concentrating development in this area catalyzes opportunities for motorized and non-motorized trails to connect future development in the area as well as existing recreational hubs within the County.

### Area Structure Plans

Area structure plans (ASPs) are statutory documents that direct long-term land use and infrastructure development within a defined area of a municipality. The Municipal Government Act Requires ASPs to include the development sequence, proposed land uses, and general location of major transportation routes and public utilities within the planning area. Currently, Parkland County has 11 ASPs to direct development within the County. Each of these plans address future trails within the ASP planning area to differing degrees. The majority of Parkland ASPs identify trails as a potential use within recreational, conservation, or open space ASP land use types. Fifth Meridian ASP and Highvale End Land Use ASP provide conceptual trail alignments. Jackfish Lake ASP and Woodbend-Graminia ASP do not directly list trails as a potential use within the ASP, nor do they geographically represent a defined land use type typically associated with trails. However, these plans do speak to the importance of connected greenspaces for alternative uses, such as drainage.

### Outline Plans

An Outline Plan (OP) is a document that connects high level and statutory plans to a future planning area's physical form. The reviewed OPs have limited to no discussion of potential trail locations or alignments. Morgan Creek and Whitewood Outline Plans identify opportunities to locate trails within recreational areas but do not provide proposed trail alignments.

### Parkland County Land Use Bylaw

A land use bylaw is a tool used by a municipality to regulate development in order to enact community priorities identified in previous planning processes. Parkland County's current land use bylaw does not discuss trails, except within the Whitewood Direct Control District (DC Area 3) zone. However, the land use bylaw uses “should” terminology when describing the provision of trails within this zone, reducing trail requirements in future development.

### Intermunicipal Development Plans

An Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) is a statutory document prepared by two or more municipalities that share a common border. These plans set a framework for collaboration between municipalities and allow municipalities to coordinate services, such as parks, open space, recreation, transportation, and utilities, that typically span municipal boundaries. Parkland County has prepared the following IDPs:

- Brazeau County (Bylaw 2018-13 Adopted July 10, 2018)



- Yellowhead County (Bylaw 2018-18 Adopted October 10, 2018)
- Lac St. Anne County (Bylaw 2018-19 Adopted October 23, 2018)
- Village of Spring Lake (Bylaw 2018-22 Adopted November 13, 2018)
- Summer Village of Seba Beach (Bylaw 2018-09 Adopted September 24, 2019)
- Summer Village of Betula Beach (Bylaw 2018-29 Adopted March 12, 2019)

Each of these IDPs recognize opportunities for the respective municipalities to coordinate trail linkages for recreational enjoyment and a connected parks and open space system. However, these documents rely on future planning efforts to spatially identify intermunicipal linkages, delivery, and management tactics.

#### Parkland County Strategic Plan

The Parkland County Strategic Plan defines Council's vision for the County and utilizes four pillars to ground Council's efforts: complete communities, strategic economic diversification, respected environment and agriculture, and responsible leadership. The Trail Strategy satisfies each of these pillars due to the widespread public health benefits associated with increased mobility and exposure to natural systems. Furthermore, trails indirectly act as natural corridors and habitat when constructed using principles that prioritize the ecological integrity of public lands. Another indirect feature of trails is the associated increase in land values as a result of improved aesthetics and recreational opportunities for residents.

#### **Supporting Frameworks**

The following frameworks have been identified as key points of reference in municipal documents and have been reviewed as part of this Strategy.

#### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a set of design principles based on the concept that the design of public spaces can reduce crime rates, improve the perceived level of safety for public space users, and enhance overall quality of life. These design principles prioritize natural surveillance ("eyes on the street"), strategic lighting, and clear delineations between public and private space, among others. CPTED principles are most applicable to trails located in high traffic or urban environments, due to necessity to balance ecologically driven design principles and public safety.

#### Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace Canada is a non-profit organization that promotes a framework of practices and techniques to mitigate impacts of recreational activities in outdoor spaces. This framework is based on seven principles:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impact
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of others

#### Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP)

The Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) is a method to record objective information about trail conditions such as grade, cross slope, surface type, and obstructions.

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# **APPENDIX C**

## **EXISTING TRAILS**

## **INVENTORY**



## EXISTING TRAIL INVENTORY

### Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area:

Trails Managed By: Parkland County

Trail Length: 11km

Operational Hours: 6:00 am to 11:00pm

Supporting Amenities and Uses: Picnic Sites, Walking Trails, Dog On-Leash Areas, Bird Watching, Fishing, Boat Launch, Equestrian Trails, Cross-Country Skiing, Public Washrooms, Parking.

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV, Off-Leash Dogs

### Wagner Natural Area

Trails Managed By: Wagner Natural Area Society

Trail Length: 1.5km

Operational Hours:

Supporting Amenities and Uses: hiking, birding, geocaching, picnic shelter, Dog On-Leash trails, washroom, parking

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV, Off-Leash Dogs, bikes, cross country skiing, horseback riding, foraging

### Prospectors' Point Day Use Area and Devonian Trail

Prospectors' Point is the trailhead for the Devonian Trail. Devonian Trail was funded in partnership with the River Valley Alliance. Trail spans from Prospectors' Point to the University of Alberta Botanic Gardens.

Trails Managed By: Parkland County

Trail Length: 7km

Operational Hours: 6:00 am to 11:00pm

Supporting Amenities and Uses: Hiking, washrooms, equestrian trails, dog on-leash areas. picnic area Biking

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV, off-leash dogs

### Tucker's Field

160 acres of natural area between Prospectors' Point and the University of Alberta Botanic Gardens with a natural trail system.

Trails Managed By: Parkland County

Trail Length: 3.4km (Trail forks)

Operational Hours: 6:00 am to 11:00pm

Supporting Amenities and Uses: walking, mountain biking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing. Trails are regularly groomed and tracks set regularly for cross country skiing in the winter months. Dogs are welcome on leash. Equestrian use is permitted.

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV, off-leash dogs

### Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area

260-hectare (640-acre) conservation site is made up of old-growth forests, open meadows and wetlands.

Trails Managed By: Nature Conservancy of Canada in partnership with Edmonton and Area Land Trust.

Trail Length:

Operational Hours:

Supporting Amenities and Uses: Access the site on foot only. Hiking, wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are permitted.

Non-Permitted Uses: Horseback riding, bicycles, dogs, and OHV use are not permitted.

### Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary

The Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary is a protected area in Parkland County with four hiking trails that are perfect for all ages to enjoy wildlife watching.

Trails Managed By: Lee Nature Sanctuary Society

Trail Length:

Operational Hours: one hour before sunrise to sunset

Supporting Amenities and Uses: Picnic Sites, Information, Bird Watching, Public Washrooms, Parking, Hiking, On-Leash Dog Area

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV, Biking, Equestrian, off-leash dogs, geocaching

#### Hasse Lake Recreation Area

This beautiful 300-acre day use park is a great place to enjoy a family picnic, go bird watching or take a stroll on the trail.

Trails Managed By: Parkland County

Trail Length: 3km

Operational Hours: 6:00 am to 11:00pm

Supporting Amenities and Uses: hiking, lakeshore picnic sites, birdwatching, hand launch (boat speed limit 12 km/hr), fish cleaning tables, open in winter, dog on-leash area, parking, washrooms, cross-country skiing

Non-Permitted Uses: Swimming, OHV, equestrian, off-leash dogs

#### Future Opportunities

- Feasibility of implementing trails in other existing natural areas/public lands
  - No existing trails within parkland county's portion of Lois Hole
  - Wabamun Lake has existing boardwalks

#### Devonian Trail

Linear trail leading from Propsector's Point north to the corner of Bunchberry Meadows, west to Highway 60 then a short segment north toward Devonian Gardens, alongside Highway 60

Trails Managed By: Parkland County

Trail Length: 12.5km

Operational Hours: one hour before sunrise to sunset

Supporting Amenities and Uses: Bird Watching, Public Washrooms, Parking, Hiking, On-Leash Dog Walking, Equestrian, Biking

Non-Permitted Uses: OHV

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# **APPENDIX D**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## SUMMARY

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis / Research Observation	Parkland County Policy	Policy Gap	What We Heard	Next Steps / Recommendation	Type (Partnership, Policy, Infrastructure)	Timeline
1. Residents age 55 to 64 compose the largest age group in the County. Trends and leading practices lead us toward age-friendly recreation.	Transportation Master Plan states the need to develop inclusive active transportation opportunities for all ages and abilities that promote healthy, social, and well-connected communities.	Definition on how to deliver on Strategic Plan (meeting recreational needs of residents).	Most public engagement participants agreed it is important that trails/trail infrastructure are accessible/easy to access for everyone. Some noted most folks will move out of the County as they age to be able to access health support more readily. Those opposed to prioritizing accessible trails were concerned about costs, increased use, and felt that it was an “urban approach”.	<b>Options for accessible trails and supporting trail infrastructure should be considered a priority for key areas in order to support residents as they age. Incorporate accessibility standards into trail classifications.</b>	Infrastructure	Immediate
2. Country residential developments have no trails	Strategic Plan: “ensuring residential developments incorporate relevant public amenities”. MDP states the County supports the development of trail systems on existing Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve parcels to enhance public access to natural and recreational areas.	Requirement of trails as part of development obligations	Trails are desired to link local amenities (ie. rural schools) through ER / MR / PUL, but not necessary in subdivision road networks. Engagement participants stated a need to listen to input/feedback/concerns/sug gestions from community residents and felt this would be a great way to capture key stakeholders and support community growth.	<b>Work with community leagues to determine appropriate placement of trails within residential areas and nearby key amenities such as schools and community halls.</b>	Partnership	Immediate
3. Limited public land for equestrian use within Parkland County	Strategic Plan Goal 3: link communities together with pathways	Provision of trails for all users	County managed trails are the only opportunities for equestrian trail use on public land in Parkland County. The County’s equestrian community has a strong presence. Many public engagement participants felt equestrian users require designated trails. There was some opposition due to concerns about capital and maintenance costs.	<b>Partner with the Province to develop equestrian programming such as staging areas, designated trails and agreements with Jack Pine PGA leaseholders to expand equestrian oriented trail opportunities within the County.</b>	Partnership Infrastructure	Medium
4. There are no publicly available lands designated for OHV recreation within Parkland County	Parkland County Bylaw permits OHVs on County road surfaces and ditches. The MDP states the County should partner with local off-highway vehicle groups to identify designated locations for off-highway vehicle trails, staging areas and dedicated parks within County boundaries.	Off-Highway Vehicle strategy, policy or plan	OHV users and other trail users recognize that OHVs are incompatible with other trail uses. Many participants stated OHV trails should be located in areas that will not disturb nearby communities/residential areas. OHV trail use was not among the top trail use design priorities for residents.	<b>Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities and landowners.</b>  <b>Pursue the development of a designated motorized recreation/OHV area as directed in the Wabamun Area Vision. Engage adjacent municipalities in conversation regarding regional OHV trails.</b>	Policy Partnership Infrastructure	Medium  Long



## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Trail use typologies defined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan do not reflect trails in Parkland County: very generic and not site-relevant	Parks and Recreation Master Plan, trail typologies	Lack of site relevant trail typologies to guide future development	Missing cross-country skiing, equestrian does not work on most sections despite being shown, mountain biking not shown on single track / natural surface, etc. Strong interest in the development of “water-based trails”.	<b>Update trail classifications to more comprehensively address trail uses within Parkland County.</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
6. There is no formal committee or partnerships to establish and manage regional trail connections within Parkland County and neighboring municipalities. The River Valley Alliance contributes to regional trail connections but does not cover the full extent of the County.	The Tri-Municipal Regional Plan identifies “active transportation redundancy” as a development goal within the next decade. The Plan also identifies the need to formalize a regional recreation administrative committee which improves accountability and leadership in the delivery of recreational services. When this committee is formalized, it will be essential to advocate for investments in County trails as a part of regional recreation objectives.	Intermunicipal Development Plans / Collaboration Frameworks to address trails	No collaboration on trails, yet significant collaboration on other infrastructure. There is Interest in creating or joining existing partnerships to move work forward on trails improvement and further development. This recommendation was identified as a key priority during the public engagement process.	<b>Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities to enter into formal agreements in pursuit of the shared management and establishment of regional trails.</b>	<b>Partnership Infrastructure</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
7. County has a variety of sensitive ecosystems, particularly grasslands, riparian areas, wetlands	Strategic Plan Goal 5: protection of environmentally significant areas. Best Management Practices, as outlined in the County’s Environmental Conservation Master Plan, should be incorporated whenever possible to protect Natural Ecological Capital and support healthy ecosystems		Not all natural areas need to be accessed by trails: some sensitive areas should be left untouched. Residents support trail systems in a variety of ecosystems to allow for different experiences.	Utilize the Conservation Master Plan mapping data when examining future trail opportunities.	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
				<b>Examine opportunities for trail alignments that span different ecosystem types while considering protection of sensitive environments.</b>		<b>Medium</b>
8. There are currently no trails within new residential or industrial developments	Parkland County’s current land use bylaw does not discuss trails, except within the Whitewood Direct Control District (DC Area 3) zone. However, the land use bylaw uses “should” terminology when describing the provision of trails within this zone, minimizing trail requirements in future development. Default is to take cash in lieu of MR.	Needs assessment for trails required to determine if CIL should be exercised	Trails are important in all contexts: workers in industrial areas for recreation, small excursions for residential residents, etc. Conversations with developers indicated some resistance to trail requirements imposed on developers. Developers of industrial properties indicated that Parkland County is attractive because the lack of existing requirements.	<b>Work with developers to require the integration of municipal reserve and development of trails, where appropriate, within future residential developments.</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
9. Significant encroachment on Environmental Reserve by lakefront property owners	Land Use Bylaw, prohibiting alteration of MR / ER, use of MR / ER	Better education during development permit process	Sense of entitlement of property owners, do not want others in front of their property.	<b>Develop a balanced approach to providing residents access to waterfront recreation such as a resident education campaigns, developing trails along waterfronts in MR setbacks (possibly ER) to be a visual aid between public vs. Private land, increasing the number of access points to waterfronts, etc.</b>	<b>Infrastructure Policy</b>	<b>Medium</b>

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

				Develop a resident education campaign highlighting the importance of “staying on trail” and maintaining riparian/waterbody vegetative buffers.		Immediate
				Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities		Long
10. Conflicts on trails between equestrian users and all others	Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plans call for the adoption or development of a Trail Etiquette program to clearly educate trail users about respectful use of trails and the yield hierarchy for multi-use trails and other trail use best practices.	Trails strategy to inform best course of action	Need designated equestrian areas: horses can’t be allowed in all areas to protect sensitive areas, let other users enjoy trails	Explore opportunities for designated equestrian-only trails, such as in Jack Pine PGA. <b>Adopt or develop a Trail Etiquette Education program to remediate instances where separate trail types are not feasible to reduce future conflicts between user types when sharing the trail.</b>	<b>Programming Partnership</b>	<b>Immediate</b>
11. Conflicts on trails between OHV users and all others	Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plans call for the adoption or development of a Trail Etiquette program to clearly educate trail users about respectful use of trails and the yield hierarchy for multi-use trails and other trail use best practices.	Trails strategy to inform best course of action	Need designated OHV areas: OHV can’t be allowed in all areas to protect sensitive areas, let other users enjoy trails	<b>Develop a County-wide OHV Master Plan to identify trail heads and potential trail alignments in collaboration with adjacent municipalities.</b>	<b>Policy Partnership</b>	<b>Medium</b>
12. Several long, lineal utility corridors that are well suited to trail development, especially for long-range commuters, OHVs, etc.		Joint use agreements, lease, consent of occupation agreements, etc.	Many utility corridors throughout the County such as power lines, pipeline ROWs, excess road right of ways, rail lines, etc.	<b>Pursue partnerships with utility corridor landowners / lease holders to explore ability for public use of land.</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Long</b>
13. Active transportation is not live and well within hamlet developments, there are a lack of transportation options off roadways and occasional sidewalks	Identification of priority growth hamlets, priority 6.0.5 in MDP: Hamlet Open Space, Pathways and Trails	Implementation strategy, ARPs, etc.	Strong support for trails within Hamlets.	<b>Conduct active transportation opportunity assessments in Growth Hamlets.</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Medium</b>
14. Some trails on Provincial Crown (public) land being used by residents, some private operators with own trails whether legal or not	n/a – Provincial jurisdiction	n/a	There are some trails such as in the Pembina River Valley that are actively being used by the public and some created by local businesses (eco-tourism / campground operators) and a desire to expand on these trails	<b>To expand or improve upon trails that are on Crown land, interest groups, such as recreation tourism operators, should work directly with the Province to get proper approvals and align with provincial standards.</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Medium</b>
15. There are opportunities to cultivate trail-based tourism within Parkland County.	MDP states that significant public and private investment in recreation and tourism development not located within the County’s hamlets should generally be directed to Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas.		Residents believe Parkland County has significant points of interest for trail development to help promote tourism.	<b>Pursue a Sport Tourism Strategy to explore the integration of and opportunities for sport tourism within the County trail network.</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Long</b>

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16. Improved and more consistent wayfinding and signage is required to facilitate connections between future trails.	Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan states opportunities should be sought to integrate historic wagon, indigenous, pioneer and other historic transportation routes into the County trail system. The Plan also suggests the development of a interpretation strategy		Residents believe recreational amenities such as trails are important in proving a sense of place and identity for Parkland County. Most residents believe providing interpretive opportunities along trails for education is important.	<b>Develop a Parks and Trails Interpretive and Wayfinding Strategy to identify strategic locations for signage and educational themes throughout the County's parks and trails system.</b> Interpretive signage should be installed throughout the parks and trails system to interpret the region's Indigenous history, unique ecosystems and biodiversity, and local culture and history. A Parks and Trails Signage and Interpretation Strategy will improve trail connectivity by visually unifying trail routes.	Policy  Infrastructure	Immediate
17. Some amenities are missing along trails and at staging areas to allow for full enjoyment and use of County trails.	The Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan developed staging area typologies to provide the intended visitor comfort and convenience amenities. The Plan also suggests the implementation of a regular visitor survey to maintain an understanding of residents' and visitors' changing demands for and satisfaction with parks and trails services.	Amenities for some trail user groups (i.e., equestrian, cyclists, OHV) is not included with the staging area typologies.	Residents desire amenities such as washrooms, waste receptacles, and improved parking at trailheads/staging areas.	<b>Explore the opportunity to include supporting amenities (i.e. washrooms, hitching posts, waste receptacles) at trail heads to increase user comfort and enjoyment</b>	Infrastructure	Immediate
18. Major roadways are barriers to trail connectivity within Parkland County and range from unideal to unsafe for trail-based activities.	The MDP states that Parkland County supports active transportation across the County and may consider designing multi-use roadways with wider shoulders for non-motorized trail activity (such as walking, jogging, bicycling, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing) along new or upgraded rural roadways.	Trail typologies do not address trails relationship with roadways.	Residents identified that highway crossings are dangerous (due to no markings, sidewalks, or other paths) and suggested opportunities to improve active transportation options.	<b>Improve trail connectivity by providing trail connections in key locations which mitigate the dangers associated with busy roadways for trail users.</b>	Infrastructure	Immediate
19. Water-based trail connections and interactions with existing lakes, rivers, creeks within the County require further integration with land-based trail activities	Transportation Master Plan states the need to establish connectivity to the North Saskatchewan River, Pembina River, and other water bodies, parks, open space and environmentally significant / protected lands; and between communities. The Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan calls for the development of a Water Trail Master Plan for each river to identify key river water access and egress locations and types (see Appendix A), amenities and interpretive opportunities	Trail and staging area typologies do not address water-based trail types or amenities.	Lakes, rivers, and bodies of water were the destinations most often mentioned by survey respondents	<b>Develop a Water Trail Master Plan to identify key water access and egress locations and types, amenities and interpretive opportunities which align with the direction and recommendations of the Trails Strategy.</b>	Policy	Long
20. Partnerships will play a key role the delivery of trails within Parkland County.	The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan identifies a need to work "collaboratively with our municipal partners, our community partners and parks, recreation and cultural organizations to deliver the highest quality services to our residents."  Service delivery partnerships - Enabler: Indirect Provision—Partnerships (aka Community Development)—Municipality initiates and enters into mutually beneficial and collaborative partnerships and alliances to provide the services and may provide various supports such as capacity building, leadership, facilitation and finances to community groups, organizations and agencies that then plan and deliver the services.	The County does not have policy to define the roles of "service delivery partnerships" in the delivery of trails.	Residents value	<b>The County should consider working with entities, such as homeowner's associations to provide enhanced recreation amenities, such as trails, as new residential developments are planned.</b>	Partnership Infrastructure	Medium
21. Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area is a key outdoor recreation destination within Parkland County.			Current use patterns alleviate impacts on environmental systems and improve	<b>Pursue the development of a management plan at Chickakoo Lake Recreation Area to improve relationships across trail user types and to mitigate the degradation of environmental systems.</b>	Policy  Partnership	Immediate

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22. Recognition of indigenous culture and relationship with the land is not reflected within Parkland County’s existing trails system	<p>Parkland County Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan states a need to “...work with partners to develop a Trails Master Plan to establish a... trail network for both nonmotorized and motorized recreation. Opportunities should be sought to integrate his... indigenous... transportation routes into the County trail system”</p> <p>“Develop positive relationships with local Indigenous leaders in the County and explore opportunities to partner on the development and implementation of recreational programs and services targeted to the County’s indigenous communities”.</p>		Did not engage in meaningful conversation with either of the First Nations that share borders with Parkland County. Residents want to see recognition of the relationship Indigenous Peoples have had with the to the land since time immemorial.	<b>Pursue conversations with Paul First Nation and Enoch First Nation to forward shared objectives trail-based objectives (I.e. stewardship, cultural representation)</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Medium</b>
23. The County values partnering with external organizations in the delivery of trails.	Pursue conversations with the Trans Canada Trail to identify potential trail connections in Parkland County.					<b>Long</b>
24. Mobility is a challenge to accessing services within the County.	<p>Parkland County Social Development Plan states that transportation was identified by residents as the biggest barrier to accessing services. Recommendations of this plan centered around improved County mobility. As it relates to trails, diversifying and improving access to recreation and leisure opportunities throughout the County, such as walking and cycling trails, was recognized as a priority.</p>	No policy statements on how to improve equitable access for residents.		Assess the potential for active transportation to integrate with BRT services to Lewis Estates.		<b>Long</b>