

## 4. OPEN SPACE INVENTORY and ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Inventory of Existing Open Spaces

This section provides a discussion of current open spaces in Spruce Grove, and detailed inventory of each space. It does not include: trails, ROWs and other non-contributing / unused MR, ER and MSR parcels.

**Figure 7** shows the locations and spatial relationships of the different open space types presently found in Spruce Grove, as well as the public network of streets and lanes that connect them. The map also illustrates the extent and importance of the network of streets, and its determining influence on Spruce Grove's character and function. A good network of streets and lanes provides not only access, but also choice of routes, and is important for connecting residents to the open spaces and to other areas of the city.

#### Heritage Grove Park

- 50 ha (123.55 ac) of natural wooded area in the heart of the city
- Nine different types of forest

#### Central Park

- Skateboard park
- Splash park

#### Ice Arenas

- Indoor arenas
- A six sheet curling rink

#### TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre (west side of Spruce Grove)

- Two indoor NHL-sized rinks
- Two indoor soccer fields
- Indoor running track
- Leisure skating rink
- Aquatic centre
- Fitness centre
- Multi-purpose rooms
- Child play centre
- Community gymnasium
- Physiotherapy clinic
- A concession and sports lounge

#### Tennis Courts

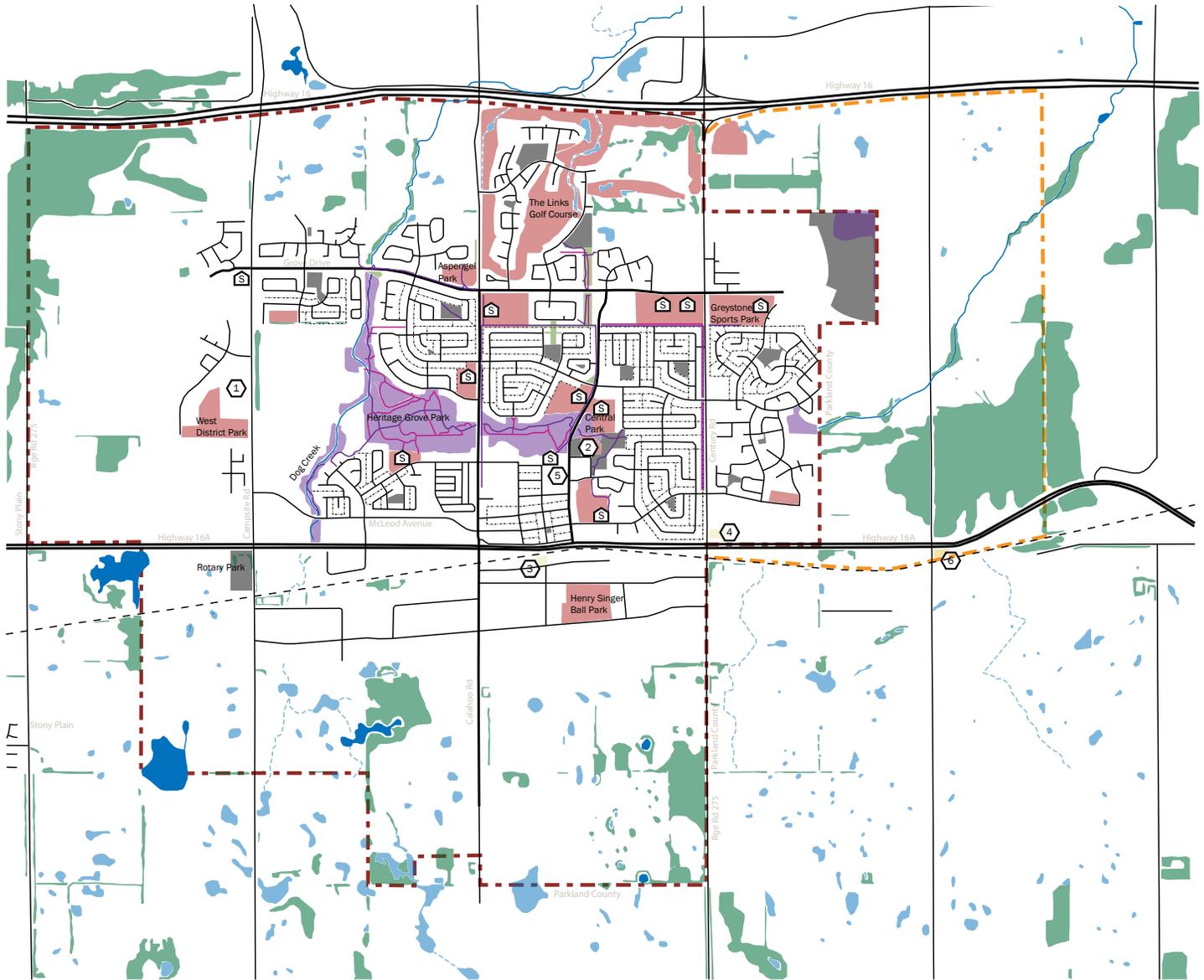
- 11 tennis courts are located in various areas around the city.

Table 2. Tennis Court Locations in Spruce Grove

Location	Number of Courts
Greystone Sports Park	3
Henry Singer	6
Spruce Grove Composite High School	2



**figure 7**  
**Park and Open Space Inventory**



<b>Legend</b>	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #38761d; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Tree cover	<b>Open Space Type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Natural and semi-natural green space or water course</li> <li>B. Historic resource or landmark</li> <li>C. Parks and civic spaces</li> <li>D. Outdoor recreation and sport facilities</li> <li>E. Green corridors and other linkages</li> <li>F. Campgrounds and day use areas</li> <li>G. Non-contributing green space</li> </ul>	<b>Cultural landscapes and special places</b>	
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #6b8e23; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Major green space				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">1</span> TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #0070c0; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Permanent waterbody				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">2</span> Agrena / Grant Fuhr Arena / East Arena
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4682b4; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Ephemeral waterbody				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">3</span> Grain Elevator Museum
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 1px solid #0070c0;"></span> Permanent watercourse				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">4</span> Original Town Site
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 1px dashed #0070c0;"></span> Ephemeral watercourse				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">5</span> City Hall
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px solid black;"></span> Road				<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">6</span> Cemetery
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 3px double black;"></span> Highway	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 15px;">S</span> Existing schools			
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed black;"></span> Railroad				
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed #800000;"></span> 2006 City boundary				
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed #ffa500;"></span> Proposed annexation					

**The Links Golf and Country Club**

- 18 hole international caliber golf course
- Meeting facilities

**Off-Leash Area**

- 20 ac (8.09 hc) site
- Located on Century Road, 500 meters north of the old location

**Soccer Fields**

- 25 athletic fields are located in various areas around the city

Table 3. Soccer Field Locations in Spruce Grove

Location	Number of Fields
Aspen Glen Park	1
Brookwood School	1
Broxton Park School	2
Fairway Drive #1 - West	1
Fairway Drive #2 - East	1
Greystone Sports Park	5
Heatherglen	1
Longview	1
Millgrove School - #1 West	1
Millgrove School - #2 East	1
Millgrove School - #3 South	1
St. Joseph School - East	1
St. Marguerite School	1
St. Thomas Aquinas High School	1
Spruce Grove Composite High School – East	1
Spruce Grove Composite High School – West	1
TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre (indoor)	2
Woodhaven School	2

**Baseball Diamonds**

- 12 ball diamonds are located in various areas around the city

Table 4. Baseball Diamond Locations in Spruce Grove

Location	Number of Diamonds
Central Park	2
Greystone Sports Park	1
Henry Singer Ball Park	5
Rick Delorme Ball Diamond	1
St. Joseph School	1
St. Thomas Aquinas School	1
Spruce Grove Composite High School	1

**Football Fields**

- 4 football fields are located in various areas around the city

Table 5. Football Field Locations in Spruce Grove

Location	Number of Fields
Brookwood School	1
Spruce Grove Composite High School – East	1
Spruce Grove Composite High School – West	1
Woodhaven School	1

**Playgrounds**

- 22 playgrounds are located in various areas around the city

Table 6. Playground Locations in Spruce Grove

Location	Number
Aspen Glen Park	1
Beechmont Park	1
Brookside Park	1
Brookwood School	1
Broxton Park School	2
Fairway Park	1
Fieldstone Park	1
Greystone Sports Park	2
Heatherglen	1
Lansdown Park	1
McKean Park	1
McLeod Avenue Park	1
Millgrove School	2
St. Joseph Schoo	1
Wellington Park	1
Westbend Park	1
Westridge Playground	1
Westview	1
Woodside Park	1



**4.2 Assessment of Demand**

Spruce Grove has been experiencing significant growth over the years, the census population in 2001 was 15,983 while the 2005 civic census places the population at 18,405. Spruce Grove’s population has the following characteristics:

- Median age is 33.7 years
- Males outnumber females in six out of ten age groups
- Females outnumber males in age groups 10 - 14, 25 - 44, and 65+

- 90 % of Spruce Grove's population is under 65 years old
- 65 % is under 45 years old
- 36 % is under 25 years old
- Community composed primarily of typical parent-child families.
- One third of the population holds either a college or technical diploma or a university degree.

Source: The City of Spruce Grove 2005 Census, and Statistics Canada 2001 Census.

### **4.3 Summary of Public & Stakeholder Consultation Process**

This section provides a summary of all consultation completed leading to the creation of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. In keeping with the open, transparent and engaging consultation efforts Spruce Grove is known for, the POSMP process also utilized a public and stakeholder consultation process to develop the plan.

#### **4.3.1 2006 Consultation Summary**

The purpose of the consultation process was to have stakeholders assist in:

- determining the vision for the Parks and Open Space Master Plan;
- understanding the role of pathways and trails in the overall community transportation system;
- developing a series of policies and standards to guide open space design, guidelines and planning;
- reviewing a strategy for the City to meet these standards today and in the future;
- developing a strategy on how to better incorporate environmental infrastructure in the open space system; and
- assuring the Recreation Board and Council that the standards, policies and guidelines are representative of the stakeholders expectations and interests.

The Consultation process consisted of the following:

#### **Key Stakeholder Interviews**

The consultants interviewed a number of key City Staff to identify opportunities and challenges in planning for open space.

#### **Newsletters (3)**

Newsletters were prepared and posted to the City's website and provided to stakeholders at key milestones in the process.

#### **Website**

Information about the project, the public consultation process, and any reports and newsletters coming out of the process was continually updated to keep the public and key stakeholders informed.

### **Recreation Board Workshop, April, 2006**

The workshop provided the foundation for the POSMP by finding out what currently exists in Spruce Grove and what is missing. The recreation Board is now disbanded and will reconvene only when needed as a task force.

### **Information Fair (Regional Information and Registration Evening), August 31st, 2006**

An evening information session for recreation and leisure pursuits was held at the Tri-Leisure Centre. A booth was set up to display information about the open space plan and answer questions from the public.

### **Council Meeting**

Presentation of the final plan to City Council and general public.

## **4.3.2 Priority Actions Identified in Consultation Processes**

The information in **Appendix F**, provides the foundational information and directions for POSMP. This information was instrumental in guiding policy directions provided in this Plan.

Create a regional natural area for walking, nature viewing, bicycling, and education.

Recommendations from the Concept Plan Sessions (below) should be validated through the administration of a representative survey in Spruce Grove. Participants were united in desiring:

- A central park to create a gathering place and area for multiple activities like special events, multi-use fields, walking, gardens, structured and unstructured play areas. This would give a sense of place when people arrive in Spruce Grove;
- Protect and preserve natural areas, agricultural lands, and historical landmarks (e.g., grain elevator) to ensure a sense of community is enhanced throughout the City; and
- Enhancement of the current pathway system to include linkages to destinations such as sports fields, historical sites, playgrounds, and schools.

The time spent on public consultation provides valuable insight into what the various stakeholders see as potential areas for improvement and change. The previous priority actions speak to the needs of all stakeholders, as Spruce Grove continues to grow as the "Community of Choice".

## **4.4 Review of Spruce Grove Policy**

This policy review focused on growth management and openness for recreational opportunities. Several documents were reviewed and the relevant sections identified for application to open space, parks and trail development in Spruce Grove. *Appendices B, C, and D* contain additional information on Spruce Grove's policy plans.

A review of current Municipal Development Plan (MDP) policies provided a starting point from which to engage municipal partners in developing intermunicipal recreational opportunities in phase two of this process (consultation).

Table 7. Framework for Spruce Grove's Policy Documents

Increasing Detail of Plans / Processes	Type of Policy and relationship to Open Space	Municipal Government Act / Provincial & Federal Legislation (as applicable)		
	City-wide; Partnership-based; Multiple policy functions	Spruce Grove – Stony Plain / Parkland County Intermunicipal Agreements	MDP; Other Council approved policy documents (e.g., Transportation Plan, Sustainable Development Charter)	Any applicable Joint Use Agreements
	City-wide; All open space policy	Open Space & Parks Master Plan		
	City-wide; Specific to issue or aspect of open space; Examples include:	Urban Forest Management Policy	Trails Policy	Stormwater Management Plan
	Policy for broad geographic area	Area Structure Plans	Area Redevelopment Plans	Spruce Grove Growth Study
	Configuration of open space in a specific area (implementation)	Land Use Bylaw, ASPs, Tentative Plans of Subdivision		
	Implementation of policy through development of specific site or project	Design & Construction Approvals process	Development Agreements	Master Plan Concepts for City Park Projects

(Format adapted from The City of Calgary)



**Review of Previous Spruce Grove Parks and Open Space Master Plan**

The existing Parks and Open Space Master Plan was prepared in 2000 and is now considered out of date. The following table highlights important information to take into account in the new POSMP.

Table 8. Summary of Spruce Grove's Parks and Open Space Master Plan Review

Plan	Useful Information
Parks and Open Space Master Plan, January 2000	Sections 4.0, 7.2, 7.3, 7.7 Table 8.2

**Longevity of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan**

The approach proposed by the Plan is for open space to become the framework for city development, rather than something that is added in the final stage of planning with land that is remaining after other elements have been accounted for. The great urbanist Lewis Mumford stated that there were two ways to order a city - through its roads or through its open spaces.

Spruce Grove's Parks and Open Space Master Plan emphasizes the infrastructure of open spaces and includes streets as part of the potential open space system. This will lead to a more integrated, walkable and sustainable city. Although the Plan provides a strong framework for the ongoing evolution of the open space system, it will require modification over time in response to changing circumstances and needs.

**Priority Actions**

**1. Amendments to the POSMP may be required from time to time, therefore the Open Space Planning Team is encouraged to review the document every year prior to fiscal budgeting.**

**Summary of Spruce Grove Statutory Documents – Open Space**

This section outlines the parts of the City's MDP and LUB which provide the policy direction for open space in Spruce Grove. The complete document review is included as part of **Appendix B**.

Table 9. Open Space Sections to Reference in Spruce Grove's Statutory Documents

Plan	Relevant Sections for Open Space & Recreation
The City of Spruce Grove MDP	Part II Community Goals and Objectives, Sections: 2.1, 2.5, 3.0, 4.0, 6.0
	Part III Land Use Plan and Policies, Sections: 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 6.0,
	Part IV Community Services, Sections: 2.0
	Part V Servicing Infrastructure, Sections: 2.0, 3.0
The City of Spruce Grove Land Use Bylaw	Sections: 36, 51, 53, 115, 122-125, 127-129, 131-133

**Summary of Spruce Grove's Studies & Standards**

The following table provides a summary of information and sections from Spruce Grove Studies and Standards relevant to the creation or review of parks and/or open space plans.

Table 10. Review of Spruce Grove Studies & Standards

Plan	Relevant Sections for Open Space & Recreation
The City of Spruce Grove, Engineering and Construction Standards	Section VIII
The City of Spruce Grove, Downtown Development Action Strategy	Sections 2.7, 4.2
The City of Spruce Grove, Highway 16A Corridor Enhancement	Sections 4 (4.1, 4.2), 6.1



Plan	Relevant Sections for Open Space & Recreation
The City of Spruce Grove, Master Drainage Report	Section 8
The City of Spruce Grove, Strategic Plan 2005-2007	Themes: Building Community, Planning for Growth, Delivering Sustainable Services
The City of Spruce Grove, Sustainable Development Charter	Whole charter
The City of Spruce Grove, Transportation Study	Sections 8.7, 8.8
The City of Spruce Grove, Urban Forest Management Plan	Sections 6, 7
Columbus Park Concept Plan	Section 3
Grovecro Park Master Plan	Sections 3, 4, 5
Hillsdown, Grove Drive West, and Service Club Park, Neighbourhood Parks Design Report	Sections 2, 3
Spruce Grove District Park, Business Plan Analysis and Design - DRAFT	Section 2

### Spruce Grove Area Structure Plans

This section provides a review of the applicable and relevant policy, concept plans and development options for open space in various Spruce Grove ASPs.

Although the ASPs are statutory and have been approved by Council resolution, the City or other parties, such as the developer, may apply for amendments to any or all of the documents. Amendments may include:

- the addition of additional open space and park development policy,
- alteration of the conceptual plan (this may also occur at the outline plan stage), and
- changes to MR and/or ER dedication.

Several ASPs do not provide enough detail on parks and paths, or should be amended (or changed at the outline plan stage) to reflect improvements in the open space and path plans. These include:

- Golden Spike Business Park ASP
- Mobile Home Development (Spruce Woods Villa) ASP
- Railway Avenue ASP
- SE 33-52-27-W4 (Schutz) ASP

For more information on the review of each plan, refer to **Appendix D**.

Plan	Relevant Sections for Open Space & Recreation
The City of Spruce Grove, Master Drainage Report	Section 8
The City of Spruce Grove, Strategic Plan 2005-2007	Themes: Building Community, Planning for Growth, Delivering Sustainable Services
The City of Spruce Grove, Sustainable Development Charter	Whole charter
The City of Spruce Grove, Transportation Study	Sections 8.7, 8.8
The City of Spruce Grove, Urban Forest Management Plan	Sections 6, 7
Columbus Park Concept Plan	Section 3
Grovecro Park Master Plan	Sections 3, 4, 5
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## Plans Adjacent to Spruce Grove

Any plans adjacent to or sharing boundaries with another jurisdiction will have an impact on the City's future open space system. The policies within these plans relate to open space and trail development outside of Spruce Grove, but affecting the City in terms of potential connections with the Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County, and for potential long range annexation of lands. It is therefore prudent to review these plans and provide applicable policy (bylaw) in the POSMP for consideration in developing the overall open space system.

Table 11. Review of Plans Adjacent to Spruce Grove

Plans	Relevant sections to refer to when planning open space and trails
Parkland County Land-Use Bylaw	Section 49
Parkland County, Municipal Development Plan	Sections 7, 9
Town of Stony Plain, Land-Use Bylaw	Section 55
Town of Stony Plain, Municipal Development Plan	Sections 4.2, 6, 7, 12, 14

## 4.5 Issues and Opportunities

The Townscape Analysis, community consultations, and review of existing planning documents provided an understanding of the evolution of Spruce Grove and its public realm, and allowed the identification of issues and opportunities that may then be used to provide focus and direction for the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

### 4.5.1 Spruce Grove Urban Structure, Parks and Open Space

Spruce Grove is a city in rapid transition. Its transformation from a railway town to a small city took place over a brief period of time. Where Spruce Grove's population was once comprised of people associated with either agriculture or with local services, now a significant number commute to Edmonton for work. The original town core is now much less legible, and highway commercial developments have increased on Highway 16A.

Most growth over the past few decades has taken the form of suburbs light industrial development. The city's proximity to Edmonton as well as the demands of an increasingly urban population area important factors in making Spruce Grove a desirable place to live.

Over the course of its evolution, several parks and open spaces have been constructed and a network of linear parks and paths has emerged to connect these. Most notable are the woodlands that form the heart of the open space system and create a strong identity for Spruce Grove.

The original core of the settlement (visible in **Figure 3: Spruce Grove 1950**) set the stage for development of the city as a modified gridiron town. More recent subdivisions have created neighborhoods isolated from adjacent areas, consisting of a hierarchical street pattern that promotes more automobile dependency.

Several issues and opportunities were identified in the townscape analysis, or in the reviews with the public and administration:

### **Ecological Areas**

- Spruce Grove has several important ecological features and natural areas that form the basis for some of the open space structure. However, many natural features and systems have been lost to development, especially south of Highway 16A.

### **Open Space Types**

- Spruce Grove has a fairly comprehensive infrastructure of linear parks and paths that should be reinforced and augmented.
- There are several large recreation areas, and opportunities for better connections.

### **Trails and Paths**

- Spruce Grove has begun a good network of trails and paths. This is one of the important circulation systems and recreation networks, however all parts of the city do not have equal easy access to the trail system.

### **City Centre**

- There are currently few downtown public open spaces.
- It is difficult to identify a legible City centre or heart.
- A downtown plan should be developed to set out a comprehensive plan for this area that includes provision of a range of civic spaces, and makes the area more economically competitive.

### **Entrance Points**

- Entrance points are not visually strong, and there is an opportunity to create a higher quality physical impression.

### **City Linkages & Barriers**

- Highway 16A forms the strongest edge and barrier.
- Several new internal roads have formed strong barriers between areas of the City.
- The railway forms an edge, with infrequent crossing points.
- Railway lands need a development concept.

### **Development Patterns and Neighbourhood Design**

- There are several residual open spaces resulting from fragmented development patterns.
- Street / open space patterns of new neighborhoods are incongruent and detached from earlier urban form.

## **Streets**

- There is a range of street types in Spruce Grove's neighbourhoods, and these vary in their degree of walkability, connectivity, and urban quality.
- Certain streets function more for traffic efficiency rather than as multi-modal elements, and there is an opportunity to improve street design.

### **4.5.2 Challenges and Trends in Parks and Recreation**

Several trends regarding parks and open space have emerged in smaller cities in Alberta:

#### **Increasing customization and individual activity**

Across Canada, traditional organized team sport is in slight decline, while casual, self-structured, individual activities are on the rise (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001, City of Edmonton 2002). Over the past 20 years there has also been a greater variety of accessible activities and this choice has had an influence on the reduction of participation in more traditional sports (ACD, 2002).

#### **Declining volunteerism**

Statistics Canada's 2000 survey on volunteerism revealed a decline in Canadian volunteer hours. Canada lost one million volunteers and 53 million volunteer hours from 1997 to 2000 (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001). The loss of volunteers and their time could have a huge impact on the parks and recreation sector which relies heavily on them to provide many services to the public.

#### **Changing participation levels according to age**

Youth activity levels have declined over time and youth obesity has risen at an alarming rate. In 1998 1/3 of Canadian children did not have the minimum amount of activity required to sustain basic health. This increased to 2/3 in 2000 (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001). Youth are tending to participate less in traditional sports, particularly team sport and more in activities aligned with youth culture such as skateboarding.

#### **Time constraints and the changing style of leisure time**

Albertans are switching to activities that are more time efficient and easier to fit into their busy schedules (ACD 2002). This trend is known as "time deepening", where people speed up the activity (i.e. use a golf cart rather than walking), participate in more time-intensive activities (i.e. play squash rather than tennis), multi-task and schedule activities within tight deadlines (City of Edmonton 2002). Flexibility in the programs and delivery services of recreation is becoming more essential for meeting the needs of time-pressured users (ACD 2002).

#### **Increase in recreation activity for improving health**

Health awareness is increasing and more efforts are being made to increase participation in recreation activities and change overall lifestyle behavior. This change will increase demand for recreation services and facilities. Also, the promotion of recreation's health benefits could lead to more support for parks and recreation service providers (City of Edmonton 2002).

### **Increasing pursuit of pleasure and the spiritual quest**

The pursuit of immediate pleasure, stimulation of the senses and spiritual quests are becoming more popular in recreation activities today. "Extreme sports" is experiencing increasing participation rates largely due to changing values toward self-gratification and risk-taking (City of Edmonton 2002). Involved in this is the trend towards one-time experiences becoming more popular than long-term commitments.

### **Increasing citizen involvement**

People are demanding more input into all types of decisions that affect them, including decisions in parks and recreation programming and services. Parks and recreation administrators will increasingly need to include various community members and groups in decision-making processes (Parks and Recreation Ontario 2001).

### **Increasing emphasis on safety and protection of the environment**

Municipalities will need to work towards reducing perceived risks. Several actions to improve safety in parks include: placement of emergency phones at trailheads, clearly marked trails, more park staff visible on the trails and better lighting in parking lots (City of Edmonton 2002). Intervention at early stages to remove litter, vandalism and graffiti from parks can improve perception of safety, increasing the recreational potential of the park and deterring illegitimate use.

#### **Policy**

- 1. The City shall consider all ages, gender, and abilities when planning for open space or working with developers.**
- 2. Culture and ethnicity within a community should be considered when planning new recreational opportunities or retrofitting open spaces for new uses.**
- 3. The City should encourage developers and communities to incorporate public art and aesthetic elements into open space designs, thereby marketing the space to a broader spectrum of users.**

#### **Priority Actions**

- 1. Parks and Open Space development should consider the following trends in the design and planning stages:**
  - offer recreation options that are less time-consuming to park users or offer "tranquility" through minimizing the intrusion of development on the park space, providing more contact with nature and promoting interpretive opportunities;**
  - offer more daytime opportunities (so long as demand is there);**
  - offer more individual, drop-in activities;**
  - customize services based on disability, occupation, skill level in a leisure activity, lifestyle, level of knowledge, special interest, etc;**
  - increase the area available for dog parks and community gardens; and**
  - increase the supply of naturalized areas in parks to reflect the growing demand.**

***2. The City should seek new programs and policies for effective partnerships involving close collaboration with local sports organizations, non-profit organizations, community groups and private sector businesses.***

***3. The City's approach to marketing open space should be reviewed to ensure Spruce Grove's open space system is receiving appropriate exposure to potential users. The internet, radio, print and television provide advertising opportunities for events and programs.***

***4. Through an education program, Spruce Grove Staff will be better equipped to identify consumer need, cultural diversity, leisure counseling, etc.***