



Recreation Master Plan

Topline Report

Information from Comparative Municipalities in Southern Alberta

November 2019





The Municipal District of Taber (M.D.) is conducting a Recreation Master Plan that will assist long term community planning and development.

Various research and engagement processes have been conducted to inform and contribute to strategies developed within the Recreation Master Plan. A component of these processes involves gathering and reviewing information from rural municipalities with Municipal District Status about recreation budgets, revenues, and mill rates.

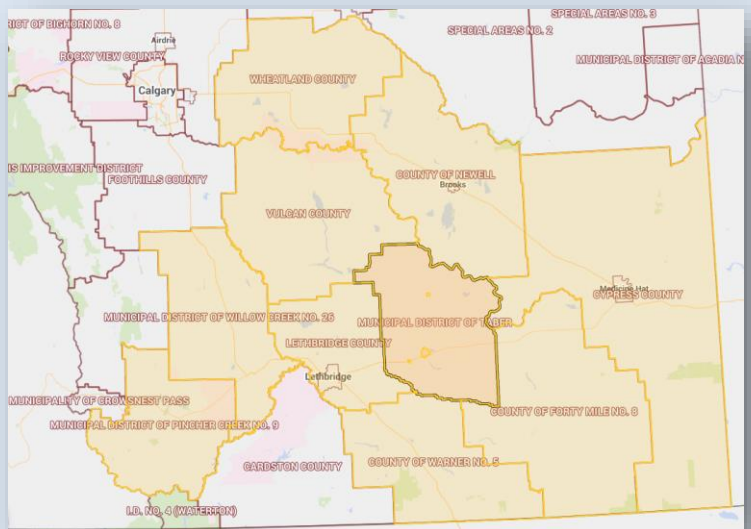
Discussions were conducted with representatives of nine rural municipalities located in southern Alberta¹ about recreation budgets, recreation grants, human resources, and other issuers.

- County of Forty Mile
- County of Newell
- County of Warner
- Cypress County
- Lethbridge County
- Municipal District of Pincher Creek
- Municipal District of Willow Creek
- Vulcan County
- Wheatland County

Additional municipal financial and statistical data information were gathered from Alberta Municipal Affairs to supplement the information from the southern Alberta municipalities.

This briefing presents a summary of the information gathered from and about comparative municipalities for the M.D. of Taber Recreation Master Plan.

Nine Comparative Municipalities



Municipal District Status Communities - South of Highway 1			
	Population	Urban Centres	
		Largest Communities (over 1,000)	Population
County of Forty Mile	3,581	Bow Island	2,043
County of Newell	7,524	Brooks	14,451
		Bassano	1,206
County of Warner	3,947	Duchess	1,085
		Raymond	4,252
Cypress County	7,662	Medicine Hat	63,260
		Redcliff	5,600
Lethbridge County	10,353	Lethbridge	99,769
		Coaldale	8,215
		Coalhurst	2,767
		Picture Butte	1,810
Municipal District of Pincher Creek	2,965	Nobleford	1,278
		Pincher Creek	3,642
Municipal District of Willow Creek	5,179	Claresholm	3,780
		Fort MacLeod	2,967
		Nanton	2,181
Vulcan County	3,984	Vulcan	1,917
Wheatland County	8,788	Strathmore	13,528

Source: Alberta Government, Municipal Affairs, Population Statistics (2018)

¹Note: Located south of Trans-Canada Highway (#1)



The discussions with representatives of the nine comparative municipalities were guided by the following issues:

- Current recreation issues
- Existence of recreation boards
- Facilities/programs operated by the municipalities and employment of staff
- Recreation funding

Addressing Intermunicipal Collaborative Frameworks was the most common recreation issue identified among municipalities. Most municipalities had not started the Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework discussions with other communities. A couple of municipalities were currently involved in the discussions or were in the process of reaching some form of agreement with urban communities located within their boundaries. These agreements typically supported existing processes with slightly higher funding being provided to the urban municipalities for recreation.

A couple of municipalities have recognized the need to establish reserve funds to address future maintenance and development expenditures for aging recreation facilities in the community. These reserve funds have been recently (last couple of years) developed and the municipalities contribute annually to the funds.

Most municipalities had recreation boards or equivalent forms of organizations (e.g. community associations, districts, etc.) operating within the communities. For the most part, these organizations operate recreation facilities and determine how funding provided to them by the municipalities are distributed for recreation

²The amount shown for the M.D. of Taber includes grants for recreation, museums, and other organizations.

³Note: It was expected that through the Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework negotiations, this municipality would begin funding urban municipalities within its borders.

purposes. In a few cases, agricultural societies or community-based organizations operate recreation facilities within the communities and are financially supported by the municipalities.

It was not common for municipalities to financially support community-based organizations that operate in urban municipalities.

Typically, the municipalities operate parks with campground services within the community. In some cases, municipal staff support the operation of these parks, while in other cases the municipalities hire contractors to operate the parks. Other than these parks, municipalities did not operate any other recreation facilities or programs. Further, none of the municipalities employed staff who would be directly responsible for recreation services.

Municipalities typically provide grants to support recreation within the communities. However, there are differences in how grant funding is determined and applied. Some municipalities provide higher levels or all of its grant funding to urban municipalities rather than recreation boards (or equivalent organizations). Others, however, offer higher levels to recreation boards and lower (or in one case, no funding) to urban municipalities.³

Comparative Information among Comparative Municipalities		
	Averages for other Municipalities	M.D. of Taber
Recreation Grants (Rec Boards, Other Organizations, Urban Municipalities)	\$ 466,281	\$ 538,365 ²
Urban Municipalities Grants Provided to # of Municipalities	\$ 185,435 2	\$ 304,846 3
Populations	5,998	7,173
Average Recreation Grants Per Population	\$ 77.74	\$ 75.05

Source: Comparative Municipal Discussions



A few of the municipalities have developed official application forms for recreation boards and community-based organizations to use when applying for recreation grant funding. The kinds of information requested include:

- Organization information
- Requirement for funding
- Volunteer contributions
- Financial information of organization
- Expected public benefit



Appendix - Additional Information Sources

Alberta Municipal Affairs, Financial Statistical
Data 2018

County of Newell, 2019 Final Budget

County of Newell, Annual Financial Report, 2018

County of Warner No. 5 Consolidated Financial
Statements, 2016

Cypress County, 2019 Budget, 2020-2022
Projection

Lethbridge County, 2018 and 2019 Community
Grant Recipients

Lethbridge County, 2018 Operating Budget

Lethbridge County, Annual Report, 2018

Lethbridge County, Financial Statements, 2018

MD of Willow Creek No. 26 Operating and
Capital Budget 2019

Municipal District of Pincher Creek No. 9
Consolidated Financial Statements, 2018

Vulcan County, 2019, Supplementary Final
Budget Information

Vulcan County, Annual Operating and Capital
Budget, 2019

Vulcan County, Recreation and Culture Funding
Policy

Wheatland County, Operating Budget, 2019-
2021