



Town of Lacombe

Open Space Plan

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DRAFT

Introduction

Lacombe residents value their parks and green spaces. In addition to the historical resources in the community the green back drop has gained recognition for Lacombe by Harrowsmith Country Life as one of the “ten prettiest towns in Canada” in the April 2002 issue of the magazine. In 2000 Lacombe gained provincial recognition by winning the population category 5,001 – 10,000 in the Communities in Bloom competition. This recognition confirms what residents have always known – Lacombe is beautiful community. The community also boasts some of the best playing fields in Central Alberta, if not the best. The purpose of the Open Space Plan will be to protect the resource and continue enhance this foundation for the enjoyment of future generations.

The previous Open Space Plan was completed in 1990 and the Urban Tree Management Plan in 1993. Since the development of these plans there have been a number of other planning documents that have addressed various aspects of open space planning. The value of urban green space and opportunities to enjoy it through the preservation of natural areas and trails has gained increasing community support as an important aspect of the quality of life in the Town of Lacombe. This value has been translated into a number of Town of Lacombe planning documents that address various aspects of parks, trails, outdoor recreation facilities, land use and green space. These documents include:

- Lacombe Sidewalk/Trail Development Plan (2000)
- Natural Spaces Management Plan (2002)
- Recreation Services Marketing Plan and subsequent updates (1998, 1999)
- Recreation Services Master Plan (2001)
- Communities in Bloom Strategic Plan (2001)
- North Area Structure Plan
- Southeast Area Structure Plan
- West Area Structure Plan

Planning Objectives

- Develop amenities at Michener Recreation Area and West Recreation Area that will generate additional revenues to subsidize other recreation opportunities
- Increase the nursery stock to 2,500 trees and shrubs by 2005 to enable the Town to provide its own source of mature street trees and greenery for parks, playground, boulevards and new developments
- Continue to implement the trail plan as new subdivisions and development occurs to integrate with the existing trail system and enhance the existing trail system
- Continue to upgrade existing playgrounds to prevailing standards and construct new playground sites in the new developments
- Continue efforts for the beautification of the community through the support the Communities in Bloom program
- Maintain and refine the GIS with ongoing updates and development of various reporting methods to assist with open space planning, analysis, forecasting and budgeting

In addition to those lands that are publicly owned and specifically Town owned there are a number of land parcels that add to the overall “green” of the community but are not owned by the Town. These lands are held by private individuals, public or private institutions and include Lacombe Golf and Country Club, Canadian University College, Lacombe Christian School, Central Alberta Christian High School, and the provincial and federal governments research facilities. These lands make up approximately and additional xxx acres of green space.

Planning Process

Over the last number of years the Town of Lacombe’s operation has become increasingly more automated as information is gathered and presented in various electronic formats. The primary source of the data for this document will be stored in a GIS (Geographical Information System). The GIS presents a visual representation of various reference points and is interfaced with a database. From the GIS, open space parcels can be extracted and a detailed inventory report can be developed for each parcel. The outcome of this approach provides the framework for an inventory that can be analyzed and assist with budgeting, planning and forecasting for future development.

Identified by tax roll number each land parcel can be categorized by type based on the land use and then an inventory of the assets associated with each site has been developed. The site inventories include the parcel size in acres and hectares, a listing of the various amenities, the costing and purchase date for the amenities, total cost of the site development and a tree inventory including species and the number of trees. Approximately 185 land parcels will be inventoried in this way.

Appendix “B “ provides a sample of the information that can be created from the database including a site map and the Parcel Information and Inventory.

Capital Plans and Priorities

Over the next five (5) years the capital plan will focus on upgrading existing parks and playgrounds, tree planting program, further development of the tree nursery and development of additional campground sites. [Appendix “C “](#) outlines in detail the proposed playground equipment upgrades, tree planting program, and future park development.

Policy Direction

1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 That the Lacombe and District Recreation Parks and Culture Board continue to be advised of future developments and provided the opportunity to provide input and review proposals in light of the various planning documents in place relating to open space development
- 1.2 That developers be required to contribute to the development of trails, parks and playgrounds
- 1.3 That any trees planted by developers be consistent with the list of recommended trees in [Appendix “D”](#) and that depending on the tree species minimum callipers be specified. Cash in lieu of trees may be taken and the Town will provide trees from the nursery. Also the maintenance period for the developer include watering of new trees.

- 1.4 That the priorities and schedules in [Appendix "C"](#) be reviewed and updated each year by the Lacombe and District Recreation Parks and Culture Board.
- 1.5 That in order for the GIS to be an effective planning tool that it be updated on a regular basis with replacement and new plantings, and replacement and installation of park amenities and any new development.
- 1.6 In order to assess on a regular basis that the amenities in various parks and playgrounds are meeting the needs of the surrounding community that the census information be incorporated into the GIS.

2.0 RECREATION AREAS

- 2.1 Michener Recreation Area is a signature park for the Town of Lacombe in that it is a focal point for major outdoor sporting and community events. Future development of this area will provide additional amenities to continue to make this area a center piece for Lacombe
- 2.2 That revenue generating opportunities for Michener Recreation Area and in the future the North West Recreation Area continue to be investigated and where appropriate pursued.
- 2.3 At the present time the Town has 11 ball diamonds that serve the needs of minor baseball, girls softball, co-ed slo-pitch, ladies slo-pitch, men's baseball and senior men's baseball. With the replacement of diamond #2 at Kinsmen Ball Park the number of diamonds will be adequate (12) for the present needs of the users. May and June are the most intense user months and through tighter scheduling and a policy of games taking priority over practices the needs of the users groups can be adequately met therefore there is no need in the immediate future for additional ball diamonds. There are an additional 4 diamonds that are available for casual use by the community.
- 2.4 Increased efforts to market the ball diamonds and soccer fields need to be undertaken to increase the usage of these playing fields during July and August.

3.0 PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

- 3.1 Future park areas be a minimum of one third (1/3) of an acre to provide an adequate land base for development of the playground/passive park area and to optimize maintenance operations.
- 3.2 Future park development take into consideration the balance of active and passive park areas
- 3.3 That the present the schedule of two to three new playgrounds per year be continued for replacement of outdated playground equipment in existing areas or installing new equipment in new developments.
- 3.4 The demographics of neighbourhoods in the community continually be evaluated to determine that the existing amenities are serving the needs of the residents in the area.

- 3.5 That all parks and playgrounds be given names for the purpose of providing signage for each park and playground

4.0 TRAILS

- 4.1 The Town of Lacombe Sidewalk/trail Development Plan be reviewed every three years to update the existing trails and determine the ongoing priorities of the trail system
- 4.2 That signage along the trail be continued

5.0 CAMPGROUNDS

- 5.1 Future development of campgrounds include upgrading of the lower campground, adding additional sites north of the upper campground and sites in the Northwest Recreation Area with the goal of achieving 100 sites in the community.
- 5.2 For each camp site in the upper campground there be one shade tree to enhance the site.
- 5.3 Requests to reserve campground sites, particularly on weekends when there are events occurring in the community, are numerous. Use of the campground is adversely affected as a result of the Recreation Services not being able to take reservations. To enhance the usage of the campground, provide a tourism destination and to provide additional customer service the various options to provide reserved camping be investigated.

6.0 COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

- 6.1 Prepare the Town of Lacombe to enter and win the 2003 Provincial competition for our population category and thus enter the Nationals in 2004.
- 6.2 Recreation and parks continue to work with the Communities in Bloom committee to assist with the efforts to achieve these goals

7.0 NATURAL SPACES

- 7.1 That a review of the various open spaces be undertaken to determine which areas would be converted to natural areas which could include wildflowers or low maintenance ground covers

8.0 URBAN TREE MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The stand of poplar trees along the north border and through the central area of Kinsmen Ball Park are at the end of their life expectancy and are becoming a potential hazard. It is recommended that the north border be replaced with elms in 2004 and the stand through the centre of the park be replaced with a variety of species (as identified in [Appendix "D "](#)) in 2006.

- 8.2 The street tree population should be managed so that no more than 20 percent of the population consists of one tree genus and no more than 10 percent consists of one tree species.
- 8.3 The urban tree program will include a schedule of new tree plantings as well as replacement.
- 8.4 To ensure an adequate tree canopy for future years, development agreements should include a stipulation of two trees per lot and 25 trees per acre for non-athletic park areas.
- 8.5 The list of recommended tree species for planting, list of experimental trees for planting, and the list of trees not recommended for planting as outline in Appendix "D " be followed.
- 8.6 The systematic tree pruning practices be continued to protect the investment of the tree population. Elm trees require pruning at least every five years. By the end of 2002 all the elms will have been pruned in the last five years therefore the cycle will be started again in 2003. Other trees require regular yearly maintenance.
- 8.7 That the current level of \$10,000 per year continue to be allocated to the tree management program for the purchase of mature trees and shrubs for street trees, parks and playgrounds as well as stock for the ongoing replenishing of the tree nursery.
- 8.8 That the Town continue to take advantage of programs such as Green Streets Canada and Tree Canada Foundation, for the supply of funding for trees and seedling stock

9.0 TREE NURSERY

- 9.1 Approximately \$2,000 – \$3,000 of the funds allocated to tree management program be allocated to nursery stock to bring the number of trees/shrubs to 2,500 by the year 2005 so that the Town will have a source of mature trees for transplanting future street and landscape trees and shrubs
- 9.2 By 2003 the nursery stock initial plantings will be mature enough to transplant trees in the parks, streets and boulevards. By continuously increasing the nursery stock and replacing transplanted trees by 2005 the nursery will be the primary source for boulevards, parks and playground plantings. This is a very cost effective method to ensure adequate trees are available for new development or replacement.

10.0 MAINTENANCE

- 10.1 The June, 1993 Urban Tree Management Plan outlines recommended practices for the planting, pruning, watering, fertilizing of trees, shrubs and other plant materials. This information is of an operational basis and should be developed into a parks operations manual as a reference for existing and future staff.
- 10.2 With the anticipated growth of the community as a result proposed development in the south east area and the annexation of a additional land north and west this will increase

the open space requiring maintenance. To maintain the present level of service staffing and equipment will need to keep pace with the growth.

11.0 SIGNAGE

- 11.1 Standards for signage design for the designation of various parks and playgrounds needs to be established.