

# Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy

January 2017





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**STRATHCONA  
COUNTY**

# Strategy Summary and Recommendations

The 2016 Strathcona County Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy guides future investment and effort related to the provision of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout all areas of Strathcona County. The Strategy is founded upon the following principles related to the provision of spray decks and spray parks:

1. Strathcona County will endeavor to provide outdoor aquatic facilities that are free and **accessible to all residents and visitors**.
2. Strathcona County will consider outdoor aquatic facilities that **meet contemporary market expectations** related to the actual program area as well as complimentary amenities.
3. Strathcona County will support investment in **environmentally friendly design and practice where feasible**.
4. Strathcona County will strive to achieve **geographic balance** when providing current and future outdoor aquatic facilities based on need and demographic analysis.

In respecting the aforementioned principles, the Strategy outlines an outdoor aquatic facility hierarchy which includes a regional level and community level amenity, differentiated by both size of the program area and the level of complimentary amenities each offers. Based on trend analysis and public engagement findings, the outdoor aquatic facility hierarchy defines two levels of facility: a regional level spray park and a community level spray deck as defined below.

It is important to note that Strathcona County does not provide outdoor pool amenities. The level of service provided related to indoor pools (3) and the number of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout Strathcona County enable it to provide outdoor aquatic play through other amenities.

Larger, regional level spray parks should use a recirculating water system to conserve water. For this reason, they should be located adjacent to recreational facilities, to most efficiently meet staffing and supervisory requirements. Regional level spray parks have significantly higher capital costs and operating costs and are meant to meet regional market demands from within Strathcona County and beyond.

Community level spray decks are smaller, spray and drain facilities. Due to cost and supervision requirements community level spray decks should not include recirculating mechanical systems. That being said, the planning and design of community level spray decks should include water conservation targets by limiting the water flow and number of components that run at any time. This will need to be communicated on site so users understand this is a feature of the park.

The Strategy also outlines a number of leading practices related to outdoor aquatic facilities including, but not limited to, mechanical systems, complimentary amenities, and program areas and features. A site selection tool for new spray parks/decks development is also provided to ensure that outdoor aquatic facilities are sited appropriately.

All hamlets were reviewed and due to water capacity, Ardrossan is the only suitable site. A future spray park in Ardrossan will provide opportunity for rural and hamlet users to access a spray park, in addition to the outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park.

## Current and Future Provision

Strathcona County currently provides six operational outdoor aquatic facilities<sup>1</sup>, two of which are newer (<5 years old) and meet contemporary market demands and four which are older (>20 years) and do not meet modern expectations related to program or complimentary features. Although Strathcona County's level of service when compared to other municipalities<sup>2</sup> is higher when considering all six outdoor aquatic facilities (approximately 1:15,933 vs. 1:26,868) it should be noted four do not fully meet modern expectations so the current level of service is actually comparable.

Resident and user input related to outdoor aquatic facilities over the past 10 years explains that they are valued recreation amenities and that future focus should be on providing modern outdoor aquatic facilities with appropriate amenities. The heaviest utilization of existing outdoor aquatic facilities is at the regional Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground (located at Broadmoor Lake Park) and at Clover Bar Ranch, both of which are the two newest and most modern in the current asset inventory. Consultation also has uncovered that most users (72%) drive to these facilities and that washrooms, shaded areas, parking, and safety have been identified as key amenities to optimizing the user experience. Despite the level of service currently provided by Strathcona County, there is a demand for investment in enhanced and outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County.

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1 There are two additional outdoor aquatic facilities that are currently not in operation (Clover Bar Jr. High School and Village on the Lake) but the infrastructure remains in place.

2 Municipalities reviewed include: Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, St. Albert.

# Strategy Summary and Recommendations

In response to the community input received and based on the assessment of the existing asset inventory, the following parameters are intended to frame the future provision of outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County.

1. Strathcona County **will not renovate existing older outdoor aquatic facilities** that do not meet contemporary expectations for these types of amenities.
2. Where possible, Strathcona County will **balance service provision based on geographic and population density considerations** when supporting existing and developing new outdoor aquatic facilities throughout the entire municipality.
3. Strathcona County will provide outdoor aquatic facilities to a modern standard at a **target provision ration of 1:20,000 residents**.

Considering these parameters, the following strategic course of action has been developed. The overarching theme of actions related to existing and new outdoor aquatic facility is to decommission old, outdated outdoor aquatic facilities and as newer, more modern and better outdoor aquatic facilities are added over time. The following recommendations maintain the target service level of 1:20,000 residents in Strathcona County for the foreseeable future. Note that the timelines identified are subject to change.

## Short Term Recommendations (2017 – 2021)

- Decommission Clover Bar Jr. High and Village on the Lake outdoor aquatic facilities. It is recommended that these two outdoor aquatic facilities be removed and the sites restored to an alternative use.
- Design and develop a spray park and amenities in Ardrossan.
- Allow the existing spray pads to operate until no longer operational.
- Design and implement one (1) spray deck (site to be determined as per the site assessment tool).

## Mid Term Recommendations (2022 – 2026):

- Decommission two (2) existing outdoor aquatic facilities (sites to be determined as per the assessment tool).
- Design and implement one (1) spray deck (site to be determined as per the site assessment tool).

## Long Term Recommendation (2027 – 2032):

- Decommission two (2) existing outdoor aquatic facilities (sites to be determined as per the assessment tool).

All hamlets were reviewed and due to water capacity, Ardrossan is currently the only suitable site. A future spray park in Ardrossan will provide opportunity for rural and hamlet users to access a spray park, in addition to the outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park.

The Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan was approved by Council in December 2009. The Master Plan included a spray park as a future amenity, and the spray park was to be implemented once water capacity was increased in Ardrossan.

The strategy as presented establishes a level of service that will guide Strathcona County moving forward, it clearly identifies a strategy for the decommissioning of the existing older/outdated outdoor aquatic facilities, and provides guidance on priorities moving forward.

Outdoor aquatic facilities (regional and community level) are significant capital investments, and unlike playgrounds, have significant operational expenses. Not all neighbourhoods will have an outdoor aquatic facility, but through thoughtful distribution the majority of residents will have convenient access to a spray parks and decks throughout the entire County.

The public engagement process has clearly identified support for outdoor aquatic facilities. The recommended priorities establish a clear plan of action for Strathcona County moving forward. The result will optimize investment in spray parks/decks and ensure that community needs are met for years to come.

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# Introduction and Background

## Outdoor Aquatic Strategy Purpose and Scope

The Strathcona County Aquatic Strategy was adopted in 2012. The Strategy provided an assessment of, and recommendations related to, the provision of aquatic infrastructure within Strathcona County. The Strategy guides capital infrastructure development and future policies and standards that reflect the needs of the community while considering available space and amenity requirements. The Strategy also articulated recommendations in the short-, mid-, and long-term for future infrastructure investment.

The Aquatic Strategy reviewed all aquatic programming needs; indoor and outdoor, and it was determined that resources would be applied to increasing indoor pool capacity only.

The 2012 Strategy made some key recommendations specifically pertaining to outdoor aquatic infrastructure. Since 2012, Strathcona County has completed some of the recommendations, however it was determined that strategic action related to future outdoor aquatic infrastructure required further investigation. In early 2016 a process to develop an Outdoor Aquatics Strategy for the County was initiated; the following is a result of that planning effort

The geographic scope of this Outdoor Aquatic Strategy incorporates the boundaries of the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area and the seven hamlets as per the Municipal Development Plan.

The Outdoor Aquatic Strategy includes and addresses the following:

- Inventory of current outdoor aquatic sites;
- Assessment of existing aging outdoor aquatic facilities;
- Trends;
- Public engagement and current usage;
- Outdoor aquatic facility requirements including operational needs, infrastructure needs, spatial requirements, and design standards;
- Review of water practices such as recirculation vs. recycle;
- A planning framework, with implementation recommendations for outdoor aquatic infrastructure;
- Supportive amenity requirements; and
- Estimated costing and potential partnership models.

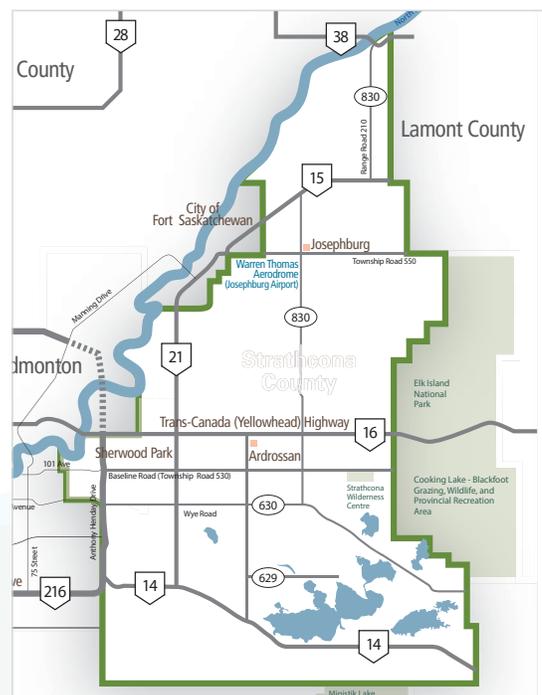
This study ultimately providing strategic direction for the future of outdoor aquatics infrastructure in the County for years to come.

## Background Information Review

The 2012 Aquatic Strategy states that the existing six older outdoor aquatic facilities are at the end of their lifecycle. The majority of the existing outdoor aquatic infrastructure was constructed before 1980 and is located in older, centralized areas of the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area. Further, the 2012 Strategy suggests that rural and newer areas are currently underserved. The 2012 Aquatic Strategy clearly identifies the need to replace all six older outdoor aquatic facilities.

## Community Context

Strathcona County (population 95,597)<sup>1</sup> is a specialized municipality<sup>2</sup> bordered to the east by Edmonton and to the west by Elk Island National Park. Strathcona County includes an urban service area (the hamlet of Sherwood Park) and eight rural hamlets (Josephburg, Ardrossan, Antler Lake, Half Moon Lake, North Cooking Lake, Collingwood Cove, Hastings Lake and South Cooking Lake). Strathcona County residents and businesses benefit from being part of a major metropolitan area of over 1.16 million residents while also enjoying a mix of pristine natural and agricultural areas and abundant industry and natural resources.



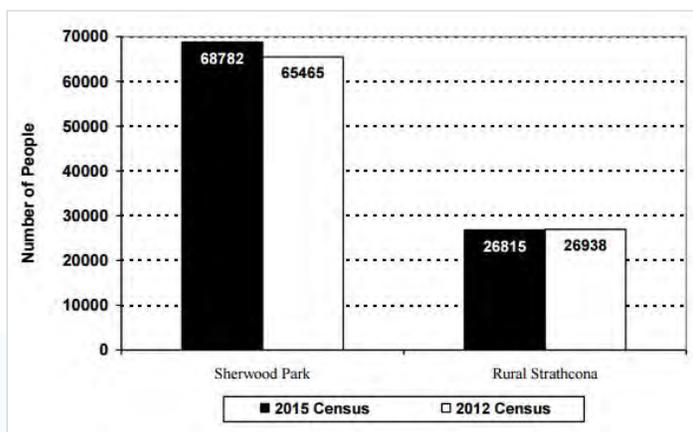
- 1 Strathcona County Municipal Census 2015.
- 2 Recognized by the Government of Alberta as having unique urban and rural service areas with corresponding funding requirements.

Strathcona County is well regarded for its high quality of life and vibrancy. The 2016 Money Sense Magazine “Canada’s Best Places to Live” edition ranked Strathcona County (Sherwood Park) 31st out of 219 urban municipalities in and 10th among “medium” sized urban municipalities. Contributing to the attractiveness of Strathcona County for existing and prospective residents is the abundance and variety of recreational opportunities which include 216 km of trails, 147 playgrounds, 218 sports fields, and nearly 2,000 hectares of parkland.

Strathcona County invests in recreation and quality of life infrastructure. Significant capital projects undertaken by Strathcona County in recent years include the expansion of the Ardrossan Recreation Complex, modernization of the Glen Allan Recreation Complex, expansion of Millennium Place, development of the Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground, development of the Emerald Hill artificial turf facility and sports pavilion, and construction of a new major indoor aquatics facility (Emerald Hills Leisure Centre) which opens in the fall of 2016.

## Population and Demographics<sup>3</sup>

Strathcona County’s 2015 Municipal Census population count of 95,597 residents reflects a 3.5% increase from the previous census in 2012. Since 2000 Strathcona County’s population has grown by 38%. As illustrated by the graph below, the population of Sherwood Park grew by 3,317 residents between 2012 and 2015 (5.1%) while the population in rural areas of Strathcona County decreased slightly by 123 residents (0.5%) during this three year period.



3 Population and demographics data from the Strathcona County Census 2015 Overall Results report unless otherwise indicated. [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-lls-2015\\_municipal\\_census\\_report.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-lls-2015_municipal_census_report.pdf)

As of 2015, there were 36,071 total dwellings in Strathcona County with 73% of these located in Sherwood Park. Over 89% of occupied dwellings in Strathcona County are owned by their occupants. Census data also reflects that the majority of residents in Strathcona are tenured residents, with 64% having lived in Strathcona County for more than 10 years.

In 2015, the median age of residents in Sherwood Park was 39 and the median age of residents in rural Strathcona County was 43. The population of Strathcona County, and Alberta in general, is ageing; the 2011 Statistics Canada Census identified a provincial median age of 36.5 and a median age of 36 for residents in the city Edmonton.

Residents of Strathcona County have higher than average income. Data from the Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey reflects that Strathcona County had a median family income of \$143,187. This figure was considerably higher than the provincial average (\$93,393) and the overall Edmonton metropolitan area (\$95,557).

Population projections developed for Strathcona County’s current (2007) Municipal Development Plan anticipates that the overall population of Strathcona County will exceed 115,000 residents by the year 2026. It is projected that 85,680 of these residents will reside in Sherwood Park.<sup>4</sup>

4 Strathcona County is currently updating the Municipal Development Plan. The update is expected to be completed in 2017.

# Assessment

The following section provides an overview and assessment of existing outdoor aquatics infrastructure in Strathcona County. The image below shows the existing outdoor aquatic facilities (circled in red), and indoor aquatic facilities (circled in blue) within Strathcona County. There are no aquatic facilities outside of the Urban Service Area.

## Existing Strathcona County Aquatic Facilities



There are currently eight outdoor aquatic facilities located within Strathcona County. Clover Bar Jr. High School and Village on the Lake are not operational, leaving five outdoor aquatic facilities that are operational. Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground is currently classified as a Spray Park. A current assessment of each site follows. It is important to note that the majority of the outdoor aquatic infrastructure in Strathcona County, (with the exception of Clover Bar Ranch and Broadmoor) are old, outdated and in some cases, not currently operational. These older outdoor aquatic facilities were developed under different market conditions and are not consistent with contemporary market expectations in terms of the program area as well as complementary amenities such as washrooms and parking. Newer outdoor aquatics facilities located at Clover Bar Ranch Park and Broadmoor Lake Park do, for the most part, reflect modern market expectations.

# Brentwood

The Brentwood outdoor aquatic facility is one of the six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain. The spray heads are located on the perimeter of the pad. The park is manually turned on and off by volunteers.

The spray deck is in a very good location with an adjacent existing playground and available parking. The spray deck is a safe distance off the street while at the same time visible from the street. The site offers other recreational activities ensuring a variety of activity for users.

The park is adjacent to a school which may impact consideration of the site for future outdoor aquatics development. The park also has an approved Master Plan to guide future development.

## Brentwood Park: Existing Conditions



## Brentwood Park Master Plan: EIDOS Consultants Inc.

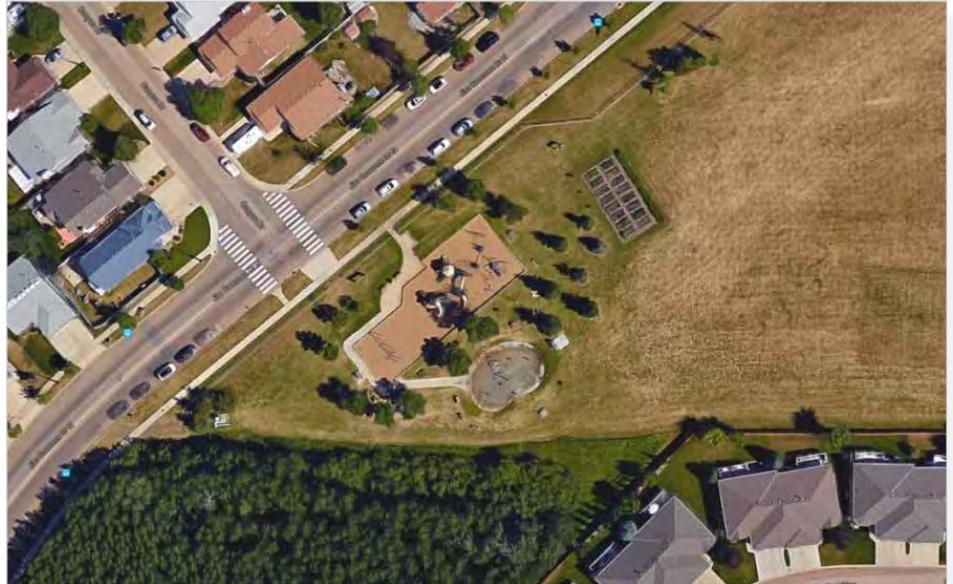


## Clover Bar Ranch

Clover Bar Ranch is a newer spray deck (operational in 2011) utilizing spray components, water cannons, activators, and an automated operational system.

The design and layout is very good and an excellent example of a typical spray deck Strathcona County could model. Minor enhancements could include a slightly wider overspray area and better water management as current indicators suggest that this spray deck uses a higher than normal level of water. Clover Bar Ranch is the only spray deck with a washroom amenity.

Clover Bar Ranch: Existing Conditions



## Granville

The Granville outdoor aquatic facility is one of the six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain. The spray heads are located on the perimeter of the pad. The spray deck is manually turned on and off by volunteers.

The spray deck is located in a park setting with both recreational amenities and park amenities such as trails, benches, etc. The park is isolated from the street with visibility from adjacent residences only. Access to the deck is poor and on street parking is limited.

Granville Park: Existing Conditions

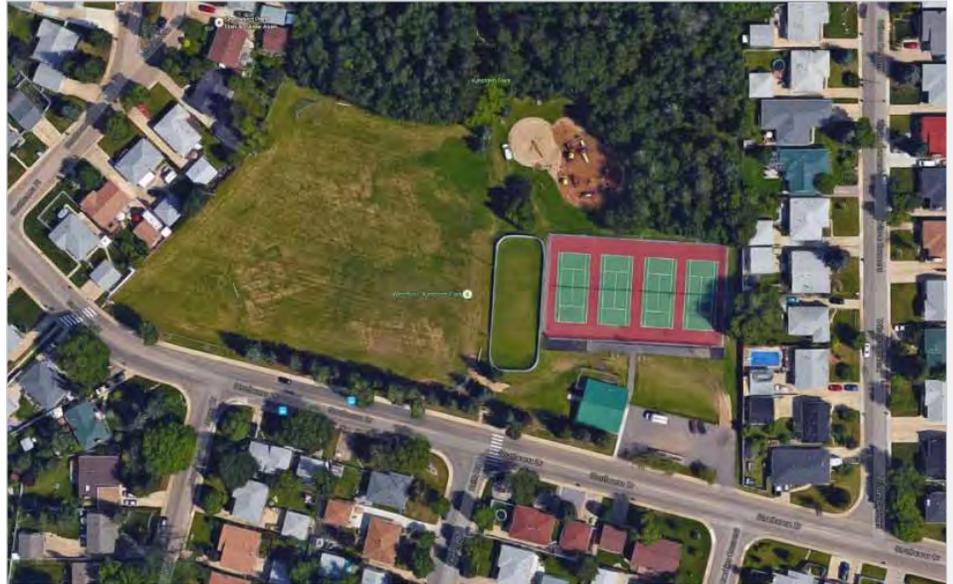


# Kinsmen Westboro

The Kinsmen Westboro outdoor aquatic facility is one of the six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain. The spray heads are located on the perimeter of the pad. The park is manually turned on and off by volunteers.

The spray deck and playground are located at the rear of the park. Visibility from the street is poor. The park has an approved Master Plan in place that will guide future development. The park is heavily programmed with active recreation amenities such as tennis, hockey, and football; all occurring within a relatively small park space. A shared parking lot services the site however on street parking is minimal. The grading around the spray deck and playground is poor and the area adjacent to the deck is subject to flooding.

## Kinsmen Westboro: Existing Conditions



## Kinsmen Westboro Park Master Plan: EIDOS Consultants Inc.

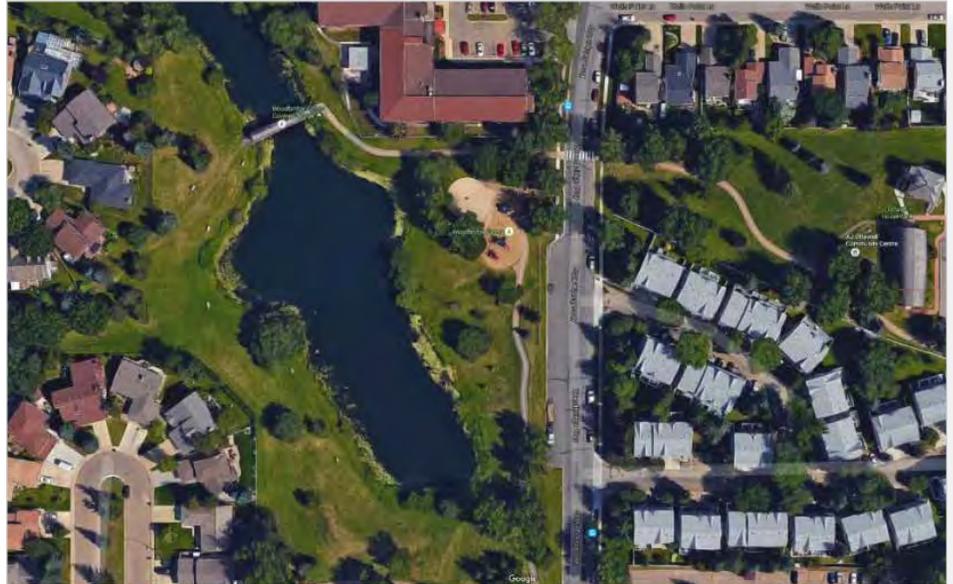


## Woodbridge

The Woodbridge outdoor aquatic facility is one of the six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain. The spray heads are located on the perimeter of the pad. The park is manually turned on and off by volunteers.

The spray deck and playground are located near the street with ample site lighting and visibility from the street and on street parking. Limited space and large trees constrict the site and may impact future site enhancement.

Woodbridge Park: Existing Conditions

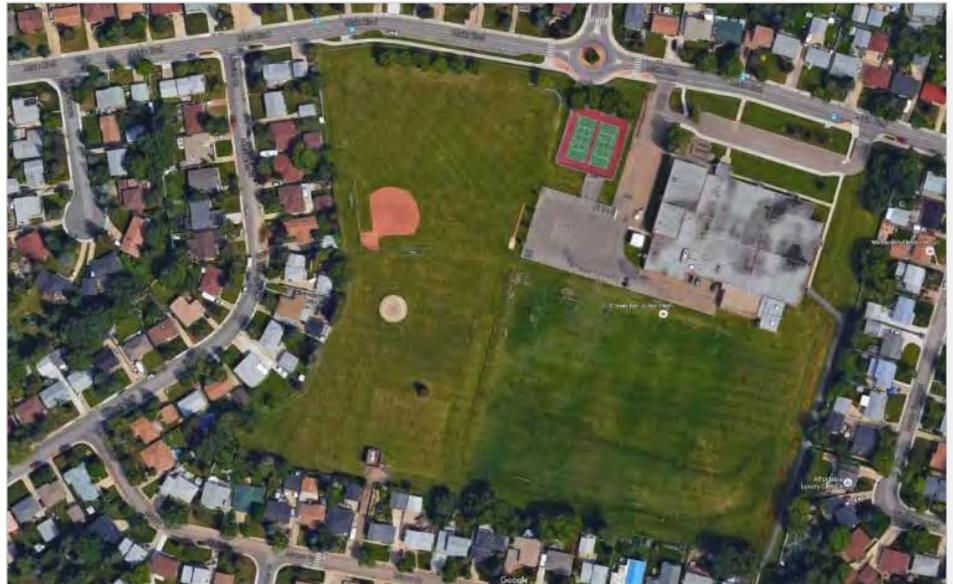


## Clover Bar Jr. High School (Non-Operational)

The Clover Bar Junior High School outdoor aquatic facility is one of six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain with spray heads located on the perimeter of the pad. The spray deck is currently not operational.

The spray deck is located amongst sports fields in the middle of the park. Access and parking to the deck are not ideal.

Clover Bar Jr. High: Existing Conditions



## Village on the Lake (Non-Operational)

The Village on the Lake outdoor aquatic facility is one of six older spray decks that utilizes a circular concrete pad sloped down to a center drain with spray heads located on the outside perimeter of the pad. The spray deck is currently not operational.

The spray deck is located between two residential properties on a small park space. Visibility from the street is good and on street parking is available. A playground is located adjacent to the spray park.

Village on the Lake: Existing Conditions



## Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground

The Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground is Strathcona County's newest outdoor aquatic facility and is classified as its' only Spray Park amenity. As a mid-size spray park, the program area is slightly smaller and more constrained than what would be considered ideal, however, it does conform well to the available space.

The spray park includes modern complementary amenity such as adequate parking, shelter, access, picnic tables and washrooms.

Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground: Existing Conditions



## Trends and Leading Practices

Recreation activity preferences and demands are constantly evolving and require service providers to have a strong grasp of local, regional, and provincial trends. Identified as follows are key trends and factors that are broadly influencing recreation participation, and their potential relevancy to the outdoor aquatics context.

**There is a continued demand for spontaneous recreation opportunities, including aquatics based spaces.** While structured programs remain important for many, a societal shift is continuing to occur with an increasing preference for “spontaneous” or “unstructured” recreational activities. Increasingly, people are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. Community park sites and associated amenities such as spray parks and decks meet this trend by providing accessible public spaces that are flexible in nature and which promote spontaneous physical activity.

**The importance of physical literacy and play is increasingly recognized.** Public education campaigns and government led initiatives have raised the profile of physical literacy and encouraged both parents and recreation providers to place an increased focus on “play” as a key part of a child’s development. Canadian Sport for Life suggests that Preschoolers (3-5 year olds) take part in at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity every day, and from 60 minutes to several hours of daily unstructured physical activity - especially outdoors. Quality parks, playgrounds, and associated amenities such as spray parks and decks are important and can help encourage outdoor play and social interaction with other children. Developing spaces that are attractive, welcoming, and safe is important and can increase levels of play and provide long lasting benefits to a community.

**Financial means directly impact participation.** Research and available data supports that many Albertans face barriers that impact their ability to reap the numerous physical, social, and mental benefits that are accrued from participation in recreation and leisure pursuits. While many municipalities have traditionally focused on facilities and recreation amenities that require a fee to access, there is an increasing focus by many municipalities on ensuring balance and investing in recreation facilities and spaces that are free to access. Doing so ensures that all residents have access to attractive spaces and supportive environments that encourage healthy and active lifestyles. Spray parks and decks provide an amenity that can be enjoyed by residents regardless of financial means and barriers.

### Activity Participation and Market Perspectives

While limited data exists to measure participation and perspectives on non-pool outdoor aquatics amenities such as spray parks and spray decks, findings from the most recent Alberta Recreation Survey provides some perspective into broader aquatics participation and the value that Albertan’s place on parks and outdoor spaces. Albertans have an appetite for water based recreation: 31.9% of Albertan’s swim in an indoor pool while 31.3% reported swimming in an outdoor body of water.

From a parks and open space perspective, 58.3% of Albertan’s indicated that parks or outdoor spaces are the location of the favorite recreation activity.

- 94.9% of Albertan’s agree that recreation and parks facilities and services improve quality of life.
- 93.9% of Albertan’s agree that Recreation opportunities make it possible for children and youth to take part in a variety of activities.
- 87.4% of Albertan’s agree that recreation and parks contribute to the economy of a community



**Residents want to spend time in parks.** Research supports that individuals continue to place a high value on the availability and quality of parks, trails, and outdoor spaces. A 2013 Canadian study commissioned by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation found that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that local parks were “very important” to them and their family. Research also supports that people want to spend more time in parks than they currently do, and value amenities and features that allow their family members of all ages to enjoy park spaces during a single visit. Spray parks and decks are often a significant “draw” to a park spaces and, if designed properly, can enhance both utilization and enjoyment of these spaces.

**The importance of water education programs and opportunities.** While not necessarily a new trend, Canadian parents continue to strongly believe in the importance of their children receiving water education training and lessons. A 2010 Ipsos Reid research study commissioned by the Lifesaving Society found that 60% of parents with children between the ages of five and 15 reported that their child had participated in swimming lessons. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of new Canadians feel it is important to know how to swim when you live in Canada because there is so much water. Outdoor aquatics amenities such as spray parks and spray decks, while not formal swimming environments, provide children and youth with opportunities to become comfortable with the water.

## Outdoor Aquatics Infrastructure Trends

Identified as follows are key trends observed in the provision of outdoor aquatics amenities such as spray parks and spray decks.

**Users (parents and children) have increasing expectations for spray parks and spray decks.** Expectations regarding the scale of the facility, attractiveness of play features, availability of on-site amenities (e.g. washrooms, parking), and safety are important and often drive decisions on which sites users choose to visit. The investment in spray park sites by many municipalities over the past decade have created a competitive landscape, with users often being willing to drive outside of their community if the experience provided at another spray park site is significantly better.

**Creating community “hubs”.** Increasingly, new spray parks are being integrated with other indoor and outdoor amenities in order to create enhanced community “hub” sites. This approach allows municipalities to leverage amenities and staffing supervisory resources and meet resident demand for multiple points of interest/activity options on a single site. The inclusion of convenience and social amenities (e.g. Wi-Fi, food services, washrooms) also provides the opportunity to maximize the overall experience for users as well as to potentially attract non-traditional patrons to the facility and amenity.

**Theming and branding.** Another trend observed in the development of spray parks and spray decks involves creating distinct themes that are prevalent through play features, aesthetics, and site layout. By creating a site theme, spray parks and spray decks become distinguishable within both the local community and broader region. Attracting outside users can further leverage a municipality’s investment in a spray park and major community park site by drawing in non-local spending and even helping further a community’s brand.

**Environmental concerns are increasingly important.** Broader societal concerns related to water conservation are increasingly part of the conversation as spray parks and spray decks are designed. Even non-users are often becoming engaged in the decision making process as various systems and options are weighed and analyzed. Responding to this concern, many municipalities are investigating new technologies and often favoring sites which are more suitable for these technologies.

One of the key decision points a municipality needs to address when considering a new spray park or deck revolves around the type of mechanical system to utilize. The 2012 Aquatic Strategy identified that a recirculating system will be restricted to areas in close proximity to recreation facilities and ideally near pool facilities. The application of drain to waste versus recirculating systems have been clearly defined for spray park and spray deck facilities within Strathcona County; Spray Parks are to include recirculating mechanical systems while spray decks will include drain to waste mechanical systems.

# Key Considerations

The following are key considerations that are based on leading practices and current design trends for both the drain to waste and recirculating systems that have been collected through research, contractor and supplier input and interviews with Strathcona County Staff.

## Drain to waste:

- System needs to tie into the existing storm water system (does not drain to the sanitary (sewage) system).
- There is an option of using bio-swales for treatment prior to discharge.
- Drain to waste systems are the most affordable (provided the storm system can handle the additional flow).
- Spray decks average the equivalent of 18-20 homes of water usage per day, if the park runs on a button activator. This is still significantly less than what old spray decks or wading pools operated at, which is why many communities still build with this model.
- Zones and activators can be used to further restrict water usage.
- Hold drain water for other non-potable water applications such as turf or tree irrigation. This option would need to be reviewed further with County staff to evaluate the health implications.

## Recirculating:

- UV filtered (usually always included as a component of the mechanical design) Chlorinated, or, Muriatic Acid or similar compound.
- Most common for spray pools and swimming pool are UV filtered with lowest amounts of chlorine allowable.
- Drained to sanitary system when water is “dumped”
- Requires significantly more investment, with the opportunity to make this money back in several years through water savings.
- Considered more environmentally friendly by the public
- Starting to gain popularity for regional/community sized parks where more budget is available.
- Requires a dump of holding water every 2 hours.
- Requires unique maintenance considerations and consultation with the health authority.
- Requires staffing for supervision, water testing and general operations.

In addition to the considerations above, the general servicing requirements of a spray deck/park may include:

- Water: Spray decks best run on 1.5 to 2” dia. water service, whereas spray parks may need up to a 4” service to ensure sufficient PSI (i.e. 100, 120). The right PSI is critical to ensuring reasonable pressure is flowing to the components within the park. Washroom building, drinking fountains, or another service (i.e. irrigation) feeding from the same line may require separate backflow preventers and double check valves for each item, and a booster pump to regulate the pressure and prevent your splash park from not running at proper capacity.
- Stormwater system needs to be sized to meet the expected average flow rate (GPM/LPM). The average neighbourhood park runs at 60GPM, whereas regional/community sized parks run at 130GPM+. Deck drains need to meet CSA standards. Most toy suppliers have deck drains that they can include as part of their package of components, which have the correct finish for safety, and drain slot sizes to prevent entrapment issues.
- Sanitary: Sanitary, same considerations as storm.
- Geotechnical: If the park is recirculating, then there is a possibility that large holding tanks will be several meters in the ground. They may need to be installed over a footing to compensate of buoyancy issues. This could be contemplated by the geotechnical engineer as part of their investigation.
- Please also note: If ground vaults are being used for the main valves that run the toys, then, they should be located at a lower elevation so that drain lines can gravity flow from the toys to the vault for winterization.
- The splash “wet deck” should be grade towards the drains, ideally at a 2% to 4% slope.
- The “dry deck” that surrounds the wet deck should be at least 1.8m in width, and drain AWAY from the edge of the wet deck at a MINIMUM 2% grade.
- Spray parks are ideally located within 30 meters walking distance of a washroom building and available drinking fountains.

## Outdoor Aquatic Service Levels

Research was undertaken to compare outdoor aquatics provision in Strathcona County with a handful of similarly sized Alberta municipalities (Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer and St. Albert). The comparison exercise considered the quantity of outdoor aquatics assets provided and was analyzed by comparing overall provision ratios (number of residents per unit of provision). Subjective factors such as quality of facility and amenities provided were not considered. While spray parks and decks are the focus for the project, data was also gathered on the number of outdoor pools in each of the comparator communities as there is some level of impact on spray parks/deck demand.

The research exercise revealed that on average the comparator communities provides 1 spray park/deck for every 26,868 residents. Strathcona County currently provides 6 operational spray parks/decks which equates to a provision ratio of 1 spray park/deck for every 15,933. However, of note, all of the other municipalities provided at least one outdoor pool; Strathcona County does not have a public outdoor pool<sup>1</sup>. Detailed comparative research findings can be found in the appendix.

Currently all outdoor aquatic facilities are provided within Sherwood Park and none are provided in the rural areas. The current facilities are not geographically balanced.

It is important to note that the City of Edmonton also provides a number of outdoor aquatics opportunities during the summer months. While utilization data is not available, it can be reasonably assumed that regional residents are visiting these sites<sup>2</sup>. In total, the City of Edmonton operates eight district water play sites along with numerous smaller neighborhood water play sites. The City of Edmonton also operates five outdoor pools. Other surrounding municipalities which operate spray parks include the City of Leduc, Town of Beaumont, and the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

It is important to note that Strathcona County does not have any outdoor pool amenities, however, with the 3 indoor aquatic facilities and the 6 operational outdoor aquatic facilities, Strathcona County is providing outdoor aquatic play through these other amenities.



- 1 Note that outdoor pools are outside the scope of this study.
- 2 Sixty-two percent of respondents to the online survey stated that a household member visited an outdoor aquatic venue in Edmonton in the previous two years. This information is presented later in this report.

# Public Engagement

Strathcona County values and considers input from residents. The following section outlines past public and stakeholder engagement findings related to outdoor aquatics as well as summarizes the findings of the engagement efforts administered during the completion of this study.

## Previous Public Engagement

The subject of outdoor aquatics has been addressed in a variety of studies, reports, and plans by Strathcona County for several years. As part of this Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy a review of the engagement findings from previous initiatives has been undertaken. Selected findings are presented below.

### Strathcona County Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (2008)

- 80% believe Strathcona County needs more outdoor aquatic options.
- 78% are aware of existing outdoor spray decks within Sherwood Park
- 56% have used a spray deck in Sherwood Park
- 89% feel it is important to have a spray park within Strathcona County
- 30% agree that it is important to have a neighbourhood spray park within walking distance of their houses
- 65% agree that it is important to have a spray park within a short drive (5-10 min) from their houses
- 51% felt that Strathcona County should focus on one larger, more community wide spray park while 37% felt the focus should be on a higher number of smaller more geographically spread-out spray park

### Strathcona County Resident Feedback Aquatic Facilities (2010)

- ~60% of residents were aware of outdoor spray parks that operate in Sherwood Park
- ~10% of residents travelled to other municipalities to make use of outdoor spray parks

### Strathcona County Aquatics Strategy (2012)

- 67% preferred to see Strathcona County focus on a single regional spray park site, consisting of a single regional spray park while 23% preferred a focus on a series of 4-5 geographically spread out neighbourhood spray parks.
- 80% believed that Strathcona County needs more outdoor aquatics options, with 89% having a preference for spray parks

- A high level of awareness exists regarding existing spray decks (80% were aware of existing locations)
- Majority of respondents (51%) preferred larger, community spray parks while 37% had a preference for smaller spray facilities

### Strathcona County Spray Deck Intercept (on site) Survey (Summer 2015)

- Being within walking distance was a key factor that influenced the decision on which spray deck to use (50% of intercept survey participants indicated that they used the spray deck because it was within walking distance)
- With the exception of the Broadmoor Spray Park, the majority of spray decks in Strathcona County are used by local neighbourhood residents

### Strathcona County Spray Deck Web Survey (Fall 2015)

- Variety and attractiveness of play features were key factors that influenced the decision on which spray deck/park to use
- A high proportion of respondents travel to other communities to visit spray decks (45% of respondents reported visiting spray decks in Edmonton)

## Public Engagement Methodology

Two main engagement tactics were employed in the development of this Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. An online survey was fielded in May 2016 to gather input from residents and community organizations/ groups about the use of outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County, desired amenities, and areas of focus. This information was then used to develop some draft components of the Strategy.

The subsequent engagement was a public review. This involved attendance at three public events to gather further feedback based on some preliminary direction. Members of the project team attended Rural Living Days at the Strathcona Olympiette (June 11), the Farmers Market at the Strathcona County Community Centre (June 15), and the Ardrossan Parade and Picnic (June 18). The information presented during these events was also available on Strathcona County's website as was the feedback mechanism. Feedback was collected through to mid-July. Strathcona County promoted all the engagement through its existing communication channels including its website, Facebook page, electronic sign boards, etc.

## Public Input

### PREVIOUS USE

Feedback was gathered online from 455 respondents.<sup>1</sup> As can be seen by the graph, over three-quarters (84%) of respondent households used a spray park/deck in Sherwood Park in the last two years. Approximately two-fifths (41%) have used them more than ten times.

Considering those respondents who had not used a spray park/deck in the last two years, the most common reason is that their children are too old (40%), no interest (17%), unaware (16%), and too far away (16%) were the next most commonly cited reasons.

### USE OF SPRAY PARKS/DECKS

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, the two most commonly utilized spray park/decks are the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park (81%) and the Clover Bar Ranch facility (32%). In fact, they are also the most typically used by respondents.

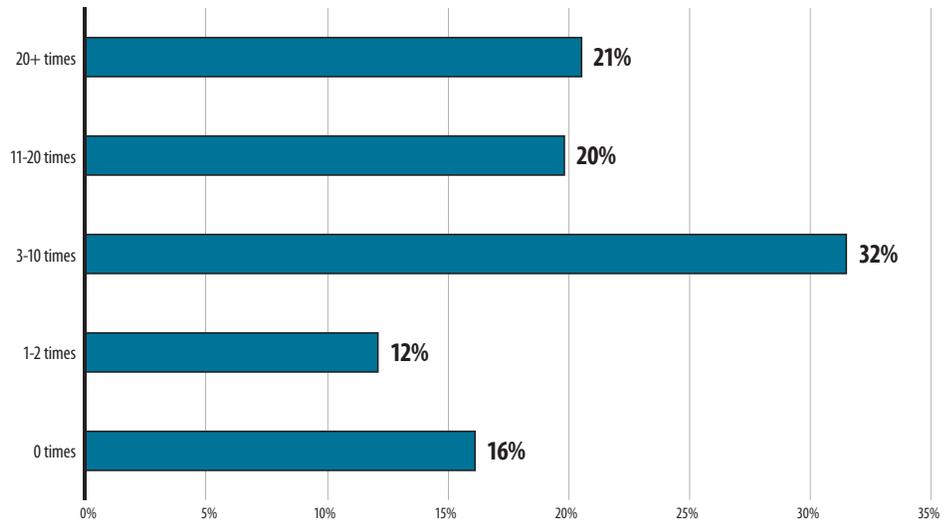
For those who typically use Brentwood Park, Granville Park, Kinsmen Westboro Park, and Woodbridge, the most commonly mentioned reasons included them being less crowded than others; smaller than others; and within walking distance from homes.

Considering Clover Bar Ranch, being less crowded; within walking distance; and with good parking were the most common reasons explaining why people use it most often.

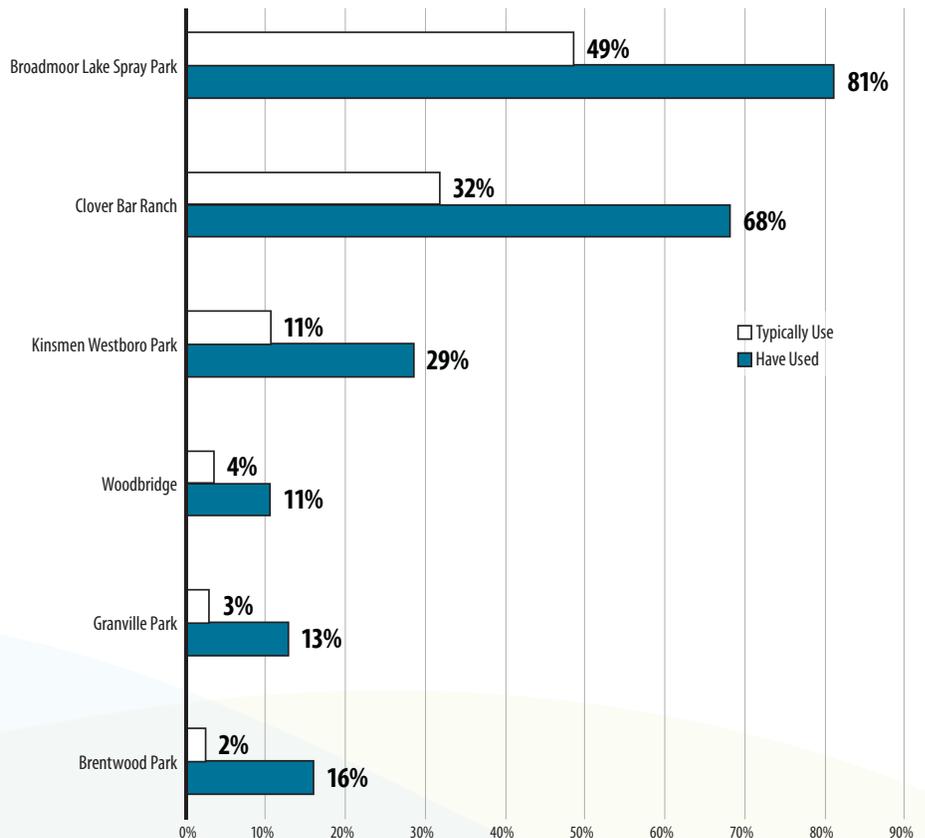
Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Playground was a typical location for approximately half (49%) of respondents because it is larger than the others, has better amenities, and has good parking. For some it is within walking distance.

The primary detriments to use include crowding, distance from home, and poor amenities.

## Number of Times a Household Member Used Outdoor Aquatics in Sherwood Park (Previous Two Years)



## Use of Spray Parks/Decks

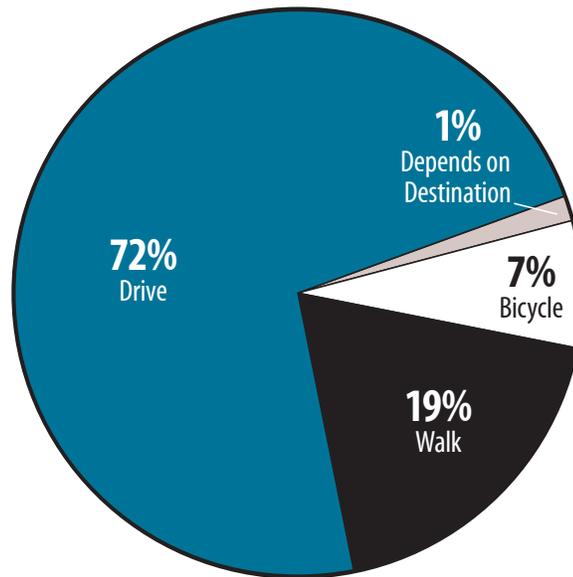


<sup>1</sup> Only six responses were gathered from groups or organizations. As such only the findings from the individual respondents (representing households) will be presented herein.

## TRANSPORTATION METHODS

Approximately three-quarters (72%) of respondents typically drive to the spray park/decks while 19% generally walk. See the graph.

## Typical Mode of Transportation to Spray Parks/Decks



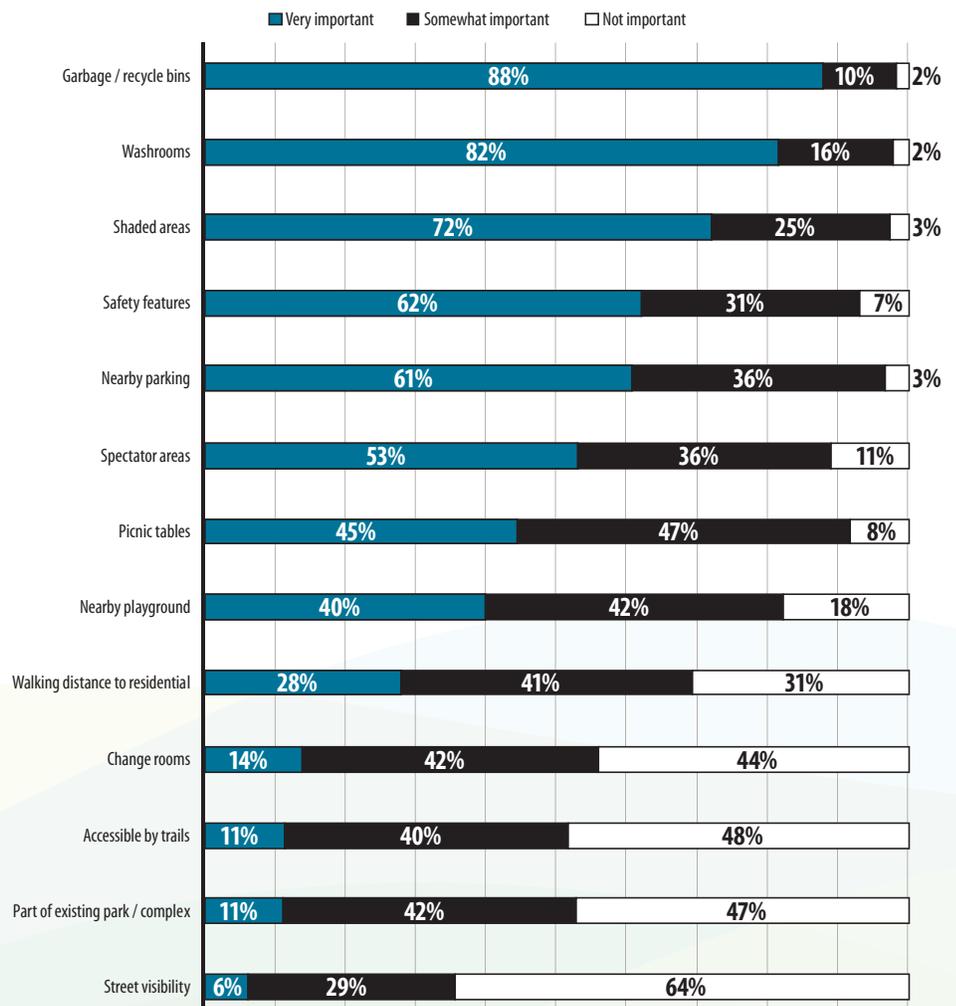
## IMPORTANCE OF AMENITIES/ATTRIBUTES

Respondents were presented with a list of possible amenities that could accompany a spray park/deck as well as attributes of location or siting. For each item, respondents were asked to indicate its importance. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, garbage/recycling bins (88%) and washrooms (82%) were the top two items to include with a spray park/deck. In fact, only two percent of respondents suggested those two items are not important. Safety features refers to things such as fencing and rubberized play surface.

Some other items mentioned included:

- Ensuring there are elements that are appropriate for different ages and that these are separated from each other.
- Including water recycling in the operations.
- Making sure it is accessible for special needs users including those with mobility issues.

## Important of Amenities/Attributes



## NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

While less than half (41%) of respondents felt that there is a need to improve existing spray parks/decks in Sherwood park, a similar proportion (46%) were unsure.

Comments accompanying the responses include the following.

- Older spray decks have little in the way of features. They need to be modernized so children want to use them. This would also pull some traffic away from the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park.
- The concrete surface is unsafe as are the water heads and the “box” in the middle. The surface needs to be changed and the areas need to be made safer.
- Washrooms are needed at the spray decks.
- There were a number of comments that spoke about the challenges of having volunteers turn the water on. Having Strathcona County staff manage this or having sensors or timed buttons on would enable use throughout the day rather than relying on a volunteer.
- Some calls were made for shade areas at the decks and additional picnic areas. Sand was identified as a problem at some spray areas that needs to be rectified.

## NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SPRAY PARKS/DECKS

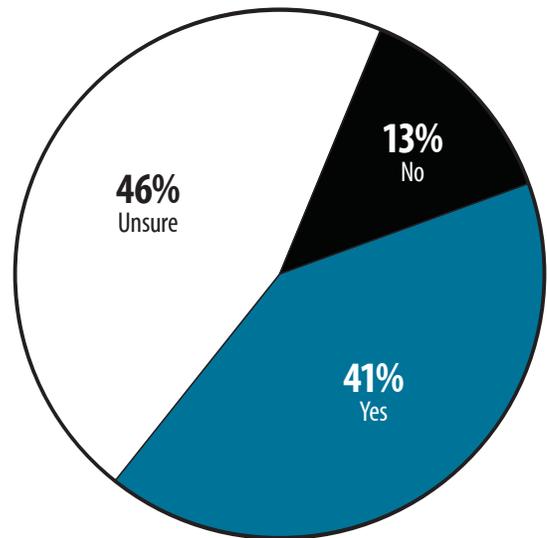
Respondents were then asked if there is a need for additional spray parks/decks in Strathcona County. Over half (58%) said there is a need while approximately one-third (32%) were unsure.

Comments accompanying the responses include the following.

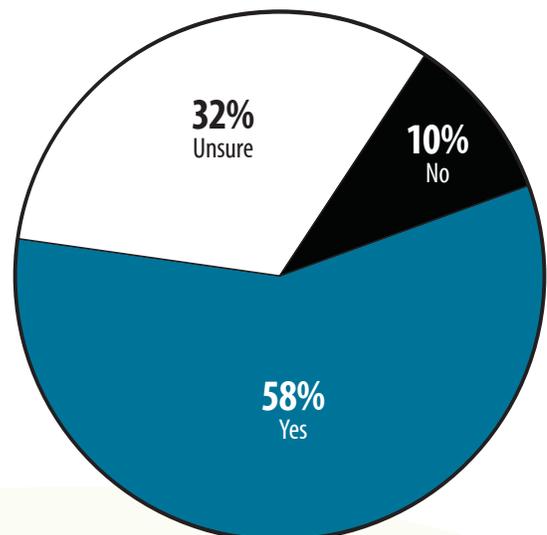
- The existing outdoor aquatic facilities are very busy and can get overcrowded. This would suggest that there is a need for additional facilities.
- Adding more facilities would help take the pressure off the existing spray park/decks.
- The population of the County is growing and there is a lot of children. To accommodate this growing population additional amenities are needed.
- There were many calls to look beyond Sherwood Park for any new spray parks/decks. Rural residents would appreciate having better access to this amenity. A number of communities were identified including Ardrossan and South Cooking Lake.<sup>1</sup>
- A variety of neighbourhoods in Sherwood Park itself were identified as suggested future sites for any new spray park/deck. Many of these are on the east side of Sherwood Park.

<sup>1</sup> South Cooking Lake is a limited option due to the limitations on water capacity.

## Is there a need to improve existing spray parks/decks in Sherwood Park?



## Is there a need for additional spray parks/decks in Strathcona County?

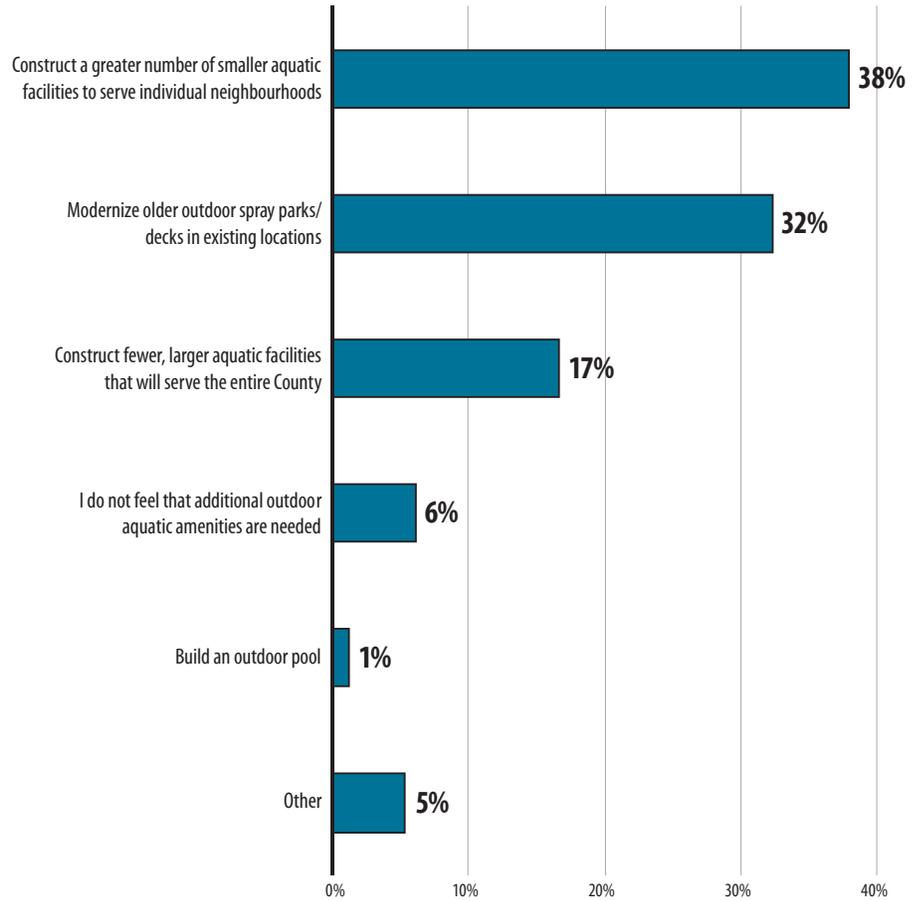


## PREFERRED SERVICE PROVISION APPROACHES

Given a list of service provision approaches, respondents were asked to indicate their preferences. As illustrated in the graph, approximately one-third of respondents felt Strathcona County should:

- Construct a greater number of smaller aquatic facilities to serve individual neighbourhoods (38%); and
- Modernize older outdoor spray parks/decks in existing locations (32%).

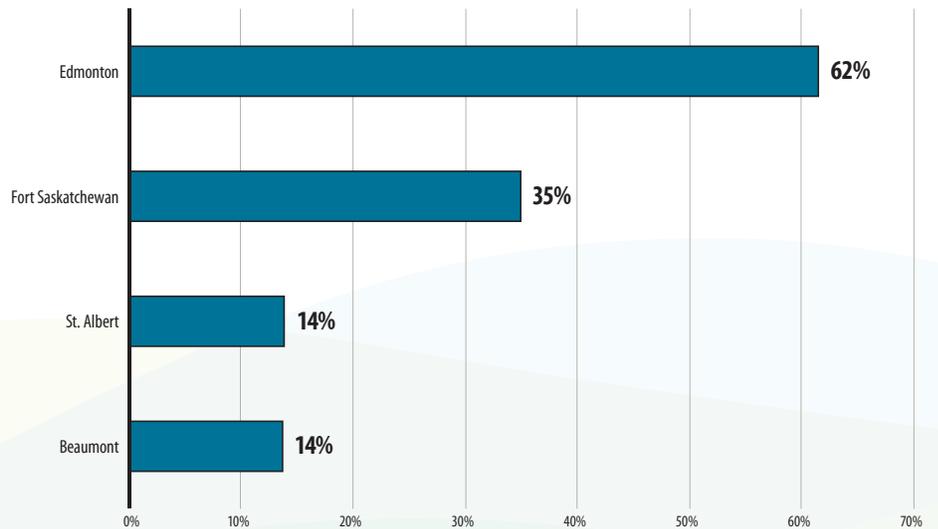
## Preferred Approach to Service Provision



## OTHER MUNICIPAL AQUATIC FACILITIES VISITED

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether a household member visited an outdoor aquatic facility, in any other municipality, within the past two years. As illustrated in the graph, approximately two-thirds (62%) of respondent households had visited an outdoor aquatic facility in Edmonton. Approximately one-third (35%) had visited the spray park in Fort Saskatchewan. One-quarter (25%) of respondents stated that no one in their households had visited another communities' spray park in the past two years.

## Other Municipal Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Visited (Previous Two Years)



## Public Review

Through attendance at three community events<sup>1</sup> and through an online forum, feedback from the public was gathered and used to further refine the draft strategy. Respondents were asked to identify a preference regarding service provision and to identify the most important site features when assessing park sites for spray park/decks. Finally, respondents were able to provide general comments about the Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. In total 64 people provided comments.

### PREFERENCE FOR FUTURE FACILITIES

To begin, respondents were asked to indicate their preferred approach for Strathcona County's provision of outdoor aquatic facilities. Approximately two-thirds (62%) showed a preference for small neighbourhood spray deck facilities.

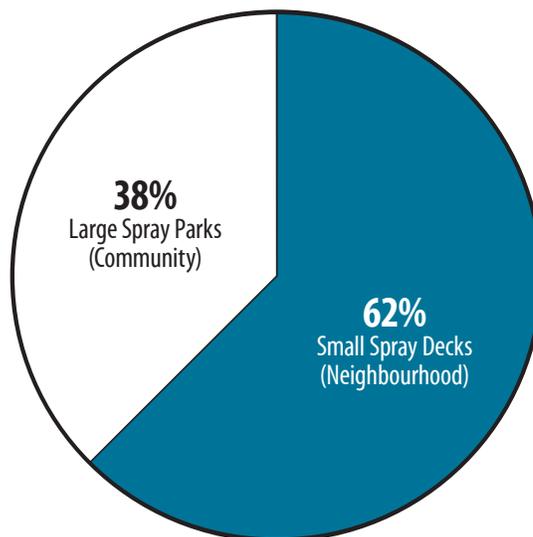
Respondents were asked to explain their responses. Comments from those who identified a preference for the **small spray decks** included the following.

- The larger spray parks can get very busy which makes it **difficult to watch/supervise children**; as well the younger **children can feel overwhelmed** there. The smaller spray decks are more relaxed and provide a more enjoyable time because of the reduced crowds.
- The neighbourhood spray decks enable people to **meet their neighbours**. They can serve a community building function.
- The small spray decks disbursed throughout the neighbourhoods **enable people to walk** rather than having to plan a larger event and drive.

Comments from those who identified a preference for the **large spray parks** included the following.

- Larger spray parks include more amenities and elements which keeps the children entertained longer.
- The larger parks are a better draw and thus **get better use** than would smaller decks.

## Preference for Future Outdoor Aquatic Facilities



<sup>1</sup> Rural Living Days at the Strathcona Olympiette (June 11), the Farmers Market at the Strathcona County Community Centre (June 15), and the Ardrossan Picnic Parade (June 18).

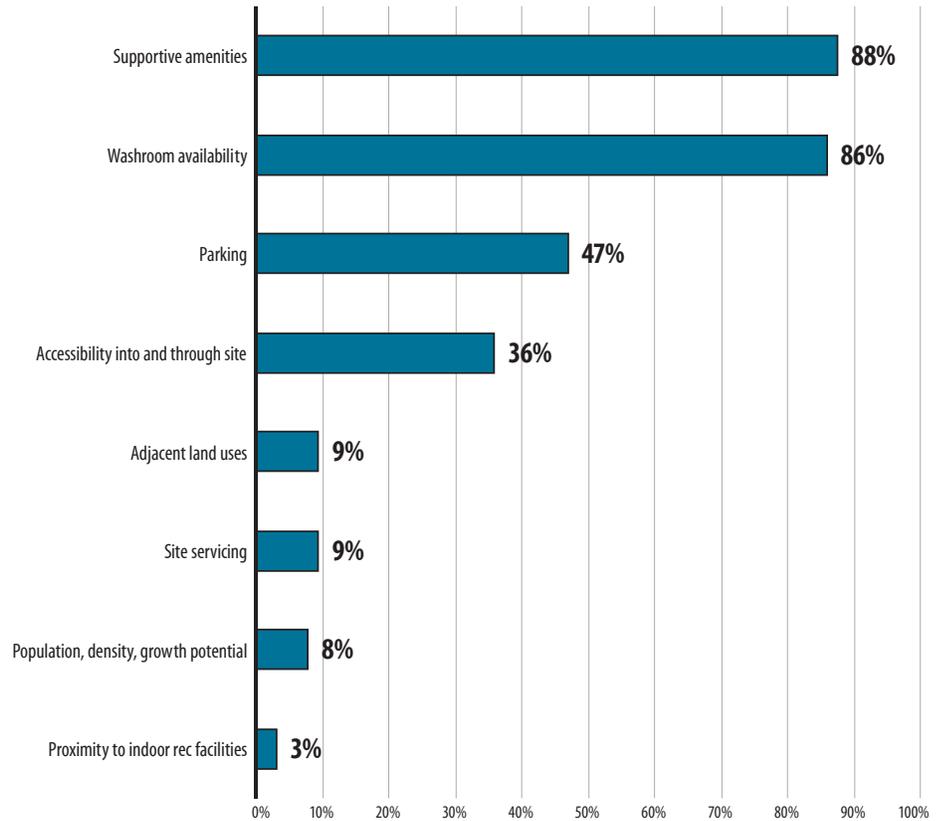
## IMPORTANCE OF CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL OUTDOOR AQUATIC SITES

Respondents were presented with a list of criteria that could be used when evaluating park sites for their potential as locations for outdoor aquatic facilities. From the list, respondents were asked to select those that are the most important. As illustrated in the graph, the top two most important criteria the park site should meet are supportive amenities such as playgrounds, trails, and shade (88%) and washroom availability (86%).

Finally, respondents were able to provide additional comments on the Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. The most cited comments are noted below.

- It is important to ensure that appropriate support amenities are included: shade, bathrooms, playground and enclosed areas (to keep children from wandering away).
- Separate areas are needed for young children and older children. Combining different age groups can be overwhelming for young children. As well, a separation will allow for more age appropriate amenities. Broadmoor Lake Spray Park is “too much” for small children.
- Adding an outdoor aquatic amenity in Ardrossan would be appropriate and appreciated.
- The site should have good visibility: that can make it more secure if more people can see what is happening. As well it should be structured so that a parent can view/supervise all elements from a single location (i.e. spray park and playground).

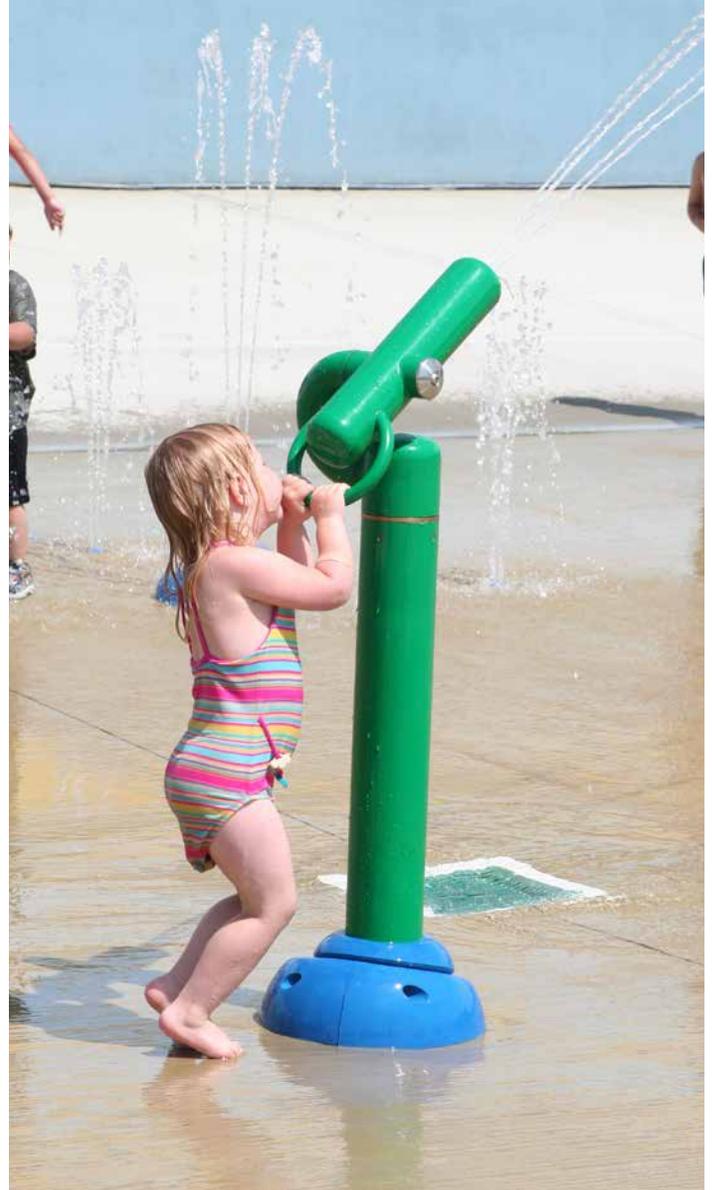
## Most Important Criteria for Potential Outdoor Aquatic Sites



## What We Heard Summary

Some key findings from the two different consultative mechanisms include the following.

- The existing outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park **are relatively well used**, particularly the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Clover Bar Ranch. **The amenities at each facility were identified as a main reason people used them.** Clover Bar Ranch was highly used as well because it is less busy than Broadmoor Lake Spray Park. Additionally, the availability of parking and the ability to walk to the spray parks/decks were also reasons for their high usage.
- The priority elements to include at outdoor aquatic facilities included: garbage/recycle bins; washrooms; shade; safety elements (e.g. fencing, rubberized surface); and parking.
- There were calls to **improve the existing network** of community spray decks. Many people prefer the notion of community outdoor aquatic facilities, however upgrades need to be made to the existing ones with many of the amenities as noted above. Some concerns were expressed with the use of volunteers to regulate the flow of water saying it is not timely or regular.
- **Additional outdoor aquatic facilities** were called for. Addressing upgrades with existing spray decks would align with this desire. As well the east side of Sherwood Park was cited as an area in need as was the rural areas of Strathcona County (Ardrossan was specifically identified several times).
- **The desire for larger community spray parks** was also stated. Larger spray parks could address some of the crowding that people expressed about the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Playground site in the short term.



# Outdoor Aquatic Strategy

The 2016 Strathcona County Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy guides future investment and effort related to the provision of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout all areas of Strathcona County. An examination of the current provision of outdoor aquatic infrastructure in Strathcona County as well as input gathered from residents and review of trends, leading practices, and previous planning documentation have all influenced the following strategic course of action.

## Principles and Parameters

Building upon existing Strathcona County planning and reacting to public input related to outdoor aquatics infrastructure, the following principles related to the provision of spray parks and decks have emerged. These principles will guide planning, design, development and provision of existing and new outdoor aquatics amenities.

1. Strathcona County will endeavor to provide outdoor aquatic facilities that are free and **accessible to all residents and visitors**
2. Strathcona County will consider outdoor aquatic facilities that **meet contemporary market expectations** related to the actual program area as well as complimentary amenities.
3. Strathcona County will support investment in **environmentally friendly design and practice where feasible**.
4. Strathcona County will strive to achieve **geographic balance** when providing current and future outdoor aquatic facilities based on need and demographic analysis.

Further to these principles, the following parameters frame a strategic course of action related to Strathcona County aquatics infrastructure.

- Strathcona County **will not renovate existing older spray park facilities** that do not meet contemporary expectations for these types of amenities.
- Where possible, Strathcona County will **balance service provision based on geographic and population density considerations** when supporting existing and developing new spray parks throughout the entire municipality.
- Strathcona County will provide spray park amenities to a modern standard at a **target provision ration of 1:20,000 residents**.

## Outdoor Aquatics Classification System

In order to manage current and future outdoor aquatics asset inventory the following classification system is proposed. It includes two levels of outdoor aquatic facilities : 1) regional level, and 2) community level amenities.

### 1. Regional Level Spray Parks

Regional level spray parks are larger and will include a recirculating water system to conserve water where at all possible. For this reason, they should be located adjacent to recreational facilities, ideally pool facilities, to most efficiently meet staffing and supervisory requirements. Regional level spray parks have significantly higher capital costs and operating costs and are meant to meet regional market demands within Strathcona County and beyond. The Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground is currently the only regional level spray park in Strathcona County.

### 2. Community Level Spray Decks

Community level spray decks are smaller and will include spray and drain mechanical systems. The planning and design of community level spray parks should include water conservation targets by limiting the water flow and number of components that run at any time. The Clover Bar Ranch spray deck is an example of a community level spray deck.

To further the level of development for the two aforementioned categories of outdoor aquatics facilities the following models have been developed. The following regional spray park and community spray deck models are presented to portray modern expectations for outdoor aquatics facilities. These models provide a target or guideline for future development of both spray decks and spray parks.

## Spray Decks

Spray Decks would be located in Community level parks and will feature a limited number of components and have restricted water flow to conserve water. They will drain directly into the storm system and are not recirculating.

Spray decks will have moderate to high operational cost and will have a lower construction cost as compared to Regional Spray Parks. They are ideal in community parks where they support and complement other program elements within the park. Spray decks also require little or no direct supervision. Control systems can be programmed to automatically turn on or off depending on schedule or weather.

Parking is provided on street and complimentary amenities typically include playground, trails, seating and picnic areas, shade, and other programmed opportunities on the site.



Artists interpretation of a Spray Deck. This is a concept only and used for budget development purposes only.

The Clover Bar Ranch spray deck is an example of a modern community spray deck.

The template for a typical spray deck may include the following balance of components designed to provide good play value and variety:

Spray Components	# Components		Max GPM	Total Flow		Required Area		
	Min	Max		Min	Max	Sq. M	Min	Max
Major Vertical	1	2	30	30	60	40	40	80
Minor Vertical	2	4	20	40	80	10	20	40
Tower Spray	2	4	8	16	32	10	20	40
Minor Ground Spray	3	6	6	18	36	18	54	108
	8	16		104	208		134	268

The final park design should limit water flow to 50-65% of the total flow rate. This would mean that all components could never run at the same time and provides a water conservation opportunity. Individual components should be limited to a maximum of 30gpm; this restriction is optional but is a simple water conservation tactic that can easily be implemented with no additional capital or operating costs. Drain to waste, non-recirculating systems have limited water conservation opportunities. Ideally a secondary use for the waste water should be explored. These potential uses may include store for irrigation use or store for pickup by a water truck and used for non-potable water applications.

The total wet deck area would therefore be in the 200 – 300 square meters. A 3 meter overspray area should be provided around the perimeter in addition to the wet deck area. The wet deck should be broom finish concrete for slip resistance, sloped at 2% to drains. The overspray area should also be slip resistant but sloped away from the internal spray area to limit the stormwater runoff into the park storm drainage system.

Assessment considerations for a Spray Deck include:

- Confirmation of sanitary line size and location;
- 2" water service at 100 psi;
- Power availability;
- Vault and pedestal space;
- Water reuse strategy potential;
- Limit the water flow to 60gpm or 50 – 65% of the total flow;
- Washrooms are typically not provided, if needed ensure adequate space and separation is available;
- Shade. Through trees or structures;
- Picnic and seating options;
- Signage;
- Proximity to street or off street parking;
- Pedestrian access/universal accessibility
- Separation from street traffic or sports activities;
- Site lighting;
- Other site program opportunities;
- Maintenance access;
- Security: design following CPTED principles

The following provides an estimated construction cost for a typical spray deck in 2016 dollars (other site amenities and GST excluded). The spray deck costs assume that the surrounding park has been developed and the necessary amenities are already provided or part of a separate park development budget. The contingency identified below is for the components covered in the itemized cost estimate provided only. It does not include costs or contingencies for upgrades of infrastructure or amenities within the park area. These could include utility connections and/or upgrades, geotechnical testing and recommendations, modifications to existing park elements.

250 square meter wet deck	\$60,000
Overspray deck	\$30,000
Restoration and green space	\$25,000
Grading and earthworks	\$25,000
Service connections	\$25,000
Install components	\$40,000
Underground vault and kiosk	\$10,000
Contractor costs	\$15,000
	<b>\$230,000</b>
<b>Components</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>
25% Fee and Construction Contingency	\$82,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$412,500</b>

Spray decks can be developed in both community and regional level parks (as per the Strathcona County park classification system) if needed.

# Spray Parks

Spray Parks are larger facilities that would attract users from across Strathcona County. They become regional destinations that serve a much larger area than the smaller spray decks. Ideally they will be located next to recreational facilities with further locational preference adjacent to facilities with pool amenities. Since the spray park activities and water treatment system need supervision and operational support the proximity to facilities and staff is important.



Artists interpretation of a Spray Park. This is a concept only and used for budget development purposes only.

Spray Parks feature a larger number of components and run on a recirculating water treatment system which reduces water consumption. They are ideal in regional scale parks (as per the Strathcona County park classification system) where they support other program elements within the park and the user experience is enhanced due to existing amenities, parking, and the variety of activities present. A spray park template may include the following mix of components designed to enable a large number of users and range of ages all at one time:

Spray Components	# Components		Max GPM	Total Flow		Required Area		
	Min	Max		Min	Max	Sq. M	Min	Max
Major Vertical	3	5	30	90	150	40	120	200
Minor Vertical	4	6	20	80	120	10	40	60
Tower Spray	6	10	8	48	80	10	60	100
Minor Ground Spray	6	10	6	36	60	18	108	180
	19	31		254	410		328	540

The total wet deck area would therefore be in the 500 – 700 square meters. A 3 meter overspray area should be provided around the perimeter in addition to the wet deck area. The wet deck should be broom finish concrete for slip resistance, sloped at 2% to drains. The overspray area should also be slip resistant but sloped away from the internal spray area to limit the stormwater runoff into the spray park drainage system

Assessment considerations for a Spray Park include:

- Confirmation of sanitary size and location;
- 4" water service at 100 psi;
- Power availability;
- Water treatment system and structure;
- Water reuse strategy potential;
- Limit the water flow to 130gpm or 50-65% of the total flow;
- Washrooms should be provided in close proximity, ideally in the existing facility. Washroom costs are not included in the cost estimate;
- Shade. Through trees or structures;
- Picnic and seating options;
- Shade structures;
- Signage;
- Proximity off street parking;
- Pedestrian access / universal accessibility
- Separation from street traffic or sports activities;
- Site lighting;
- Other site program opportunities;
- Maintenance access;
- Security: design following CPTED principles

The following provides an estimated construction cost for a typical spray park in 2016 dollars (other site amenities and GST are excluded). The spray deck costs assume that the surrounding park has been developed and the necessary amenities are already provided or part of a separate park development budget. The contingency identified below is for the components covered in the itemized cost estimate provided only. It does not include costs or contingencies for upgrades of infrastructure or amenities within the park area. These could include utility connections and/or upgrades, geotechnical testing and recommendations, modifications to existing park elements.

600 square meter wet deck	\$150,000
Overspray deck	\$80,000
Restoration and green space	\$40,000
Grading and earthworks	\$50,000
Service connections	\$25,000
Install components	\$65,000
Water Treatment System	\$100,000
Contractor costs	\$25,000
	<hr/>
	<b>\$535,000</b>
<b>Components</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$785,000</b>
25% Fee and Construction Contingency	\$196,250
	<hr/>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$981,250</b>

In all cases spray parks and decks should be laid out to provide logical circulation and instinctive queuing locations (i.e. water cannons typically have a line up - where and how do the users line up). Ideally distinct levels of play would be created. All age groups, accessibility, and comfort levels should be incorporated and accommodated.

## Site Selection

When contemplating new outdoor aquatic infrastructure development, selecting an appropriate site is vital to achieving optimum benefit and investing public fund appropriately. The following site assessment tool will allow staff to evaluate potential sites and ensure the best possible sites are selected for future Spray Deck or Spray Park development.

The site assessment tool is based on the following criteria:

### Available services:

- Water services size and proximity
- Sanitary service size and proximity
- Electrical service size and proximity

### Site characteristics:

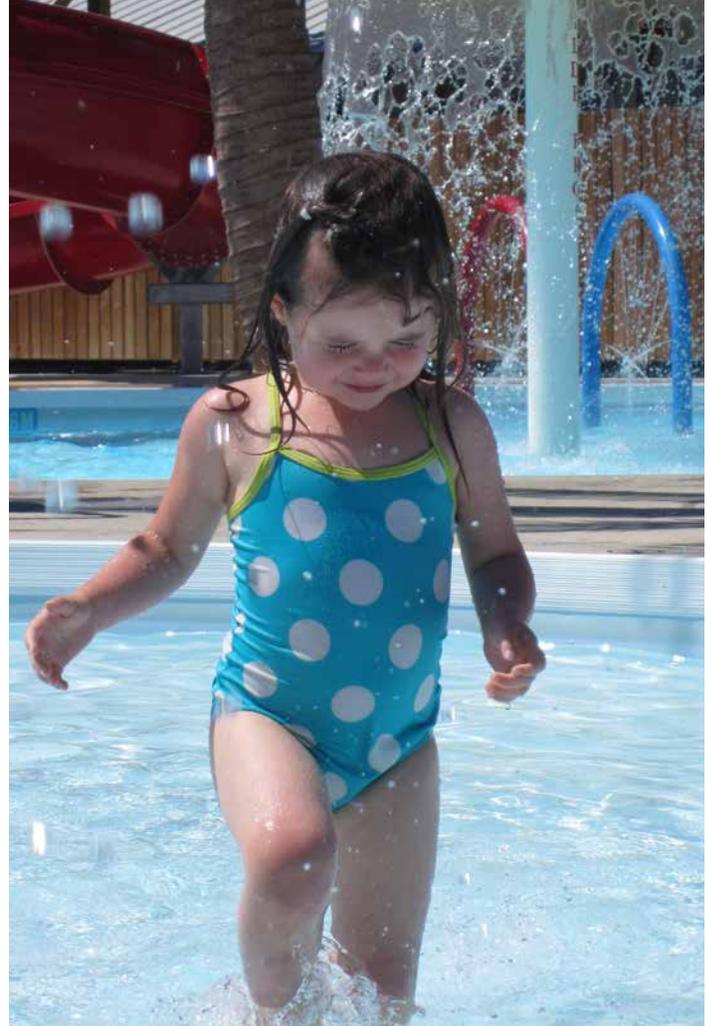
- Park size and designation
- Population density in proximity of the park (walkable users)
- Population age demographic in proximity to the park (potential users)
- Adjacent land uses
- Vehicle and pedestrian access
- Proximity to transit routes (or possible future transit routes)
- Existing facility
- Existing washroom
- Existing change rooms
- Parking
- Topography
- Existing trees

### Spray Deck or Park requirements:

- Available space for the spray deck/park with overspray
- Available space for picnic and seating
- Available space for vault, kiosk, or water treatment building
- Wind shelter

The site assessment tool, found in the Appendix, includes metric for each of these criteria and will be referred to when selecting the most appropriate sites for future spray parks and decks development.

An ideal park should score at least 85 points on the site assessment tool.



# Strategy Summary and Recommendations

The 2016 Strathcona County Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy guides future investment and effort related to the provision of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout all areas of Strathcona County<sup>1</sup>. The Strategy is founded upon the following principles related to the provision of spray parks:

1. Strathcona County will endeavor to provide outdoor aquatic facilities that are free and **accessible to all residents and visitors**.
2. Strathcona County will consider outdoor aquatic facilities that **meet contemporary market expectations** related to the actual program area as well as complimentary amenities.
3. Strathcona County will support investment in **environmentally friendly design and practice where feasible**.
4. Strathcona County will strive to achieve **geographic balance** when providing current and future outdoor aquatic facilities based on need and demographic analysis.

In respecting the aforementioned principles, the Strategy outlines an outdoor aquatic facility hierarchy which includes a regional level and community level amenity, differentiated by both size of the program area and the level of complimentary amenities each offers. Based on trend analysis and public engagement findings, the outdoor aquatic facility hierarchy defines two levels of facility: a regional level spray park and a community level spray deck as defined below.

It is important to note that Strathcona County does not provide outdoor pool amenities. The level of service provided related to indoor pools (3) and the number of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout Strathcona County enable it to provide outdoor aquatic play through other amenities.

Larger, regional level spray parks should use a recirculating water system to conserve water. For this reason, they should be located adjacent to recreational facilities, to most efficiently meet staffing and supervisory requirements. Regional level spray parks have significantly higher capital costs and operating costs and are meant to meet regional market demands from within Strathcona County and beyond.

Community level spray decks are smaller, spray and drain facilities. Due to cost and supervision requirements community level spray decks should not include recirculating mechanical systems. That being said, the planning and design of community level spray decks should include water conservation targets by limiting the water flow and number

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that Strathcona County does not provide outdoor pool amenities. The level of service provided related to indoor pools (3) and the number of outdoor spray park features throughout Strathcona County enable it to provide outdoor aquatic play through other amenities.

of components that run at any time. This will need to be communicated on site so users understand this is a feature of the park.

The Strategy also outlines a number of leading practices related to outdoor aquatic facilities including, but not limited to, mechanical systems, complimentary amenities, and program areas and features. A site selection tool for new spray parks/decks development is also provided to ensure that outdoor aquatic facilities are sited appropriately.

All hamlets were reviewed and due to water capacity, Ardrossan is the only suitable site. A future spray park in Ardrossan will provide opportunity for rural and hamlet users to access a spray park, in addition to the outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park.

## Current and Future Provision

Strathcona County currently provides six operational outdoor aquatic facilities<sup>2</sup>, two of which are newer (<5 years old) and meet contemporary market demands and four which are older (>20 years) and do not meet modern expectations related to program or complimentary features. Although Strathcona County's level of service when compared to other municipalities<sup>3</sup> is higher when considering all six outdoor aquatic facilities (approximately 1:15,933 vs. 1:26,868) it should be noted four do not fully meet modern expectations so the current level of service is actually comparable.

Resident and user input related to outdoor aquatic facilities over the past 10 years explains that they are valued recreation amenities and that future focus should be on providing modern outdoor aquatic facilities with appropriate amenities. The heaviest utilization of existing outdoor aquatic facilities is at the regional Broadmoor Spray Park and Playground (located at Broadmoor Lake Park) and at Clover Bar Ranch, both of which are the two newest and most modern in the current asset inventory. Consultation also has uncovered that most users (72%) drive to these facilities and that washrooms, shaded areas, parking, and safety have been identified as key amenities to optimizing the user experience. Despite the level of service currently provided by Strathcona County, there is a demand for investment in enhanced and outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County.

<sup>2</sup> There are two additional outdoor aquatic facilities that are currently not in operation (Clover Bar Jr. High School and Village on the Lake) but the infrastructure remains in place.

<sup>3</sup> Municipalities reviewed include: Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, St. Albert.

In response to the community input received and based on the assessment of the existing asset inventory, the following parameters are intended to frame the future provision of outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County.

1. Strathcona County **will not renovate existing older outdoor aquatic facilities** that do not meet contemporary expectations for these types of amenities.
2. Where possible, Strathcona County will **balance service provision based on geographic and population density considerations** when supporting existing and developing new outdoor aquatic facilities throughout the entire municipality.
3. Strathcona County will provide outdoor aquatic facilities to a modern standard at a **target provision ration of 1:20,000 residents**.

Considering these parameters, the following strategic course of action has been developed. The overarching theme of actions related to existing and new outdoor aquatic facility is to decommission old, outdated outdoor aquatic facilities and as newer, more modern and better outdoor aquatic facilities are added over time. The following recommendations maintain the target service level of 1:20,000 residents in Strathcona County for the foreseeable future. Note that the timelines identified are subject to change.

#### **Short Term Recommendations (2017 – 2021)**

- Decommission Clover Bar Jr. High and Village on the Lake outdoor aquatic facilities. It is recommended that these two outdoor aquatic facilities be removed and the sites restored to an alternative use.
- Design and develop a spray park and amenities in Ardrossan.
- Allow the existing spray pads to operate until no longer operational.
- Design and implement one (1) spray deck (site to be determined as per the site assessment tool).

#### **Mid Term Recommendations (2022 – 2026):**

- Decommission two (2) existing outdoor aquatic facilities (sites to be determined as per the assessment tool).
- Design and implement one (1) spray deck (site to be determined as per the site assessment tool).

#### **Long Term Recommendation (2027 – 2032):**

- Decommission two (2) existing outdoor aquatic facilities (sites to be determined as per the assessment tool).

All hamlets were reviewed and due to water capacity, Ardrossan is currently the only suitable site. A future spray park in Ardrossan will provide opportunity for rural and hamlet users to access a spray park, in addition to the outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park.

The Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan was approved by Council in December 2009. The Master Plan included a spray park as a future amenity, and the spray park was to be implemented once water capacity was increased in Ardrossan.

The strategy as presented establishes a level of service that will guide Strathcona County moving forward, it clearly identifies a strategy for the decommissioning of the existing older/ outdated outdoor aquatic facilities, and provides guidance on priorities moving forward.

Outdoor aquatic facilities (regional and community level) are significant capital investments, and unlike playgrounds, have significant operational expenses. Not all neighbourhoods will have an outdoor aquatic facility, but through thoughtful distribution the majority of residents will have convenient access to a spray parks and decks throughout the entire County.

The public engagement process has clearly identified support for outdoor aquatic facilities. The recommended priorities establish a clear plan of action for Strathcona County moving forward. The result will optimize investment in spray parks/ decks and ensure that community needs are met for years to come.



# Environmental Advisory Committee Comments

# Environmental Advisory Committee

Thank you for attending our Environmental Advisory Committee meeting on May 30 to provide the group with information regarding Strathcona County's Aquatics Strategy. The Environmental Advisory Committee members have reviewed the material you presented to us and the information available online, and would like to pass along the following comments:

- Preferred option is to develop spray parks within the community so residents can walk to them rather than developing them at the main recreation centres where most users will have to drive.
- Centralizing facilities requires more people to drive to enjoy the services, adding carbon emissions and increasing the need for parking infrastructure which means more pavement and less vegetated lands.
- Recycling of water is a preferred option pending technology and health rules.
- Use of water is an issue. Water conservation initiatives must be incorporated such as limiting the number of nozzles activated at one time, low flow nozzles on the water features, motion activated sensors to turn water off when the park is not in use, recycling used water as grey water to water adjacent greenery, etc.
- Strathcona County's water conservation tips for residents reads: "Avoid installing water features that spray water into the air. Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation" Perhaps spray park engineering can take this into consideration.
- The County's water target under the Environmental Sustainability Framework is to manage a 30% improvement in water efficiency. Adding more outdoor aquatic facilities seems like moving away from this target
- Educating the public about water conservation at spray park through message boards, i.e. Earth is covered by only 3% fresh water, of which ½ a percent is available for our use. The water used at this spray park has been recycled.
- Important to protect water quality as well as quantity used

We thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process. We look forward to reviewing the plans as the strategy evolves.

# Site Selection Tool

**Spray Park/Deck Site Assessment Tool**

Date: August 22, 2016

Park: **Brentwood**  
 Neighbourhood:  
 Park Classification: **Community**

<b>Regional Park Evaluation</b>				
<b>A</b>	Is the site a regional level park	No	Regional Spray Parks should meet these requirements to be implemented otherwise Spray Decks should be considered for potential sites.	Spray Deck Only
	Is there an existing recreational facility	No		
	Does this park address an underserved area	Yes		

*The form should be used to rank/compare sites. Not all criteria will be applicable but highlight the value one park may have over another. Not every park may be appropriate and not every appropriate park may receive a park if adequate service*

<b>B</b>	<b>Services</b>		<b>Service Conditions</b>		<b>Service Distance</b>		<b>Score</b>
	Water Service	Yes	Service size and pressure must be appropriate	Distance	25-50	3	
Sanitary System	Yes	Service size and capacity must be appropriate	Distance	25-50	3		
Electrical	Yes	Confirm electrical service can be provided	Distance	25-50	3		
Storm System	Yes	Confirm storm water service can be provided	Distance	25-50	3		
<i>Services are acceptable</i>							<b>12</b>

*All service answers should be YES. Without existing servicing connections the County should be aware of the additional costs to bring new services into a site. Ideally all potential sites will be services in advance of the Spray Deck/Park*

<b>C</b>	<b>Site</b>				
	Park Classification	Regional	Design:	Spray Deck or Park	4
	Distance from other spray decks/parks	Less than 1,600m		Too Close	0
	Is the park already built	Yes			4
	Existing Recreation Facility	Yes	Design:	Spray Deck or Park	4
	Development Space	1500-2000 sq. m	Design:	Spray Deck	2
	Population (under 15 yrs) within 800m of the park (walkable users)	750 - 1,000			2
	Adjacent land uses (conflicting)	Suitable	<i>Proximity as well as the land use should be considered</i>		4
	Vehicle Access	Good	<i>Access to off street parking or drop off</i>		3
	Pedestrian Access	Good	<i>Existing trails or sidewalk connections</i>		3
	On Street Parking	Yes	<i>Available on street parking</i>		4
Off Street Parking	Good	<i>Is the parking existing, dedicated or shared</i>		3	
<i>Review suggested design recommendations. Ensure appropriate park design is used for the specific park.</i>					<b>33</b>

<b>D</b>	<b>Amenities</b>			
	Existing Playground	Yes		4
	Existing Sportsfields	Yes		4
	Existing Trails	Good		3
	Existing Picnic	Good		3
	Existing Washroom	Yes		4
				<b>18</b>

<b>E</b>	<b>Special Features</b>			
	Existing Trees	Yes		4
	Lighting	Yes		4
	Visibility from street	Excellent		4
	Topography will accept spray park	Good		3
	Other	Yes		4
				<b>19</b>

<b>Brentwood</b>			
A	Park Type:	Spray Deck Only	
B	Services		12
C	Site		33
D	Amenities		18
E	Special Features		19
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>82</b>

**Spray Park/Deck Site Assessment Tool**

Date: -

Park:  
Neighbourhood:  
Park Classification: **Regional**

<b>Regional Park Evaluation</b>				
<b>A</b>	Is the site a regional level park	Yes	<b>Regional Spray Parks should meet these requirements to be implemented otherwise Spray Decks should be considered for potential sites.</b>	<b>Spray Park or Spray Deck</b>
	Is there an existing recreational facility	Yes		
	Does this park address an underserved area	Yes		

*The form should be used to rank/compare sites. Not all criteria will be applicable but highlight the value one park may have over another. Not every park may be appropriate and not every appropriate park may receive a park if adequate service*

<b>B</b>	<b>Services</b>		<b>Service Conditions</b>		<b>Service Distance</b>		<b>Score</b>
	Water Service	Yes	Service size and pressure must be appropriate	Distance	0-25	4	
Sanitary System	Yes	Service size and capacity must be appropriate	Distance	0-25	4		
Electrical	Yes	Confirm electrical service can be provided	Distance	0-25	4		
Storm System	Yes	Confirm storm water service can be provided	Distance	0-25	4		
<b>Services are acceptable</b>							<b>16</b>

*All service answers should be YES. Without existing servicing connections the County should be aware of the additional costs to bring new services into a site. Ideally all potential sites will be services in advance of the Spray Deck/Park*

<b>Site</b>				
<b>C</b>	Park Classification	<b>Regional</b>	Design: <b>Spray Deck or Park</b>	4
	Distance from other spray decks/parks	<b>2,000m or more</b>	<b>Optimal</b>	4
	Is the park already built	<b>Yes</b>		4
	Existing Recreation Facility	<b>Yes</b>	Design: <b>Spray Deck or Park</b>	4
	Development Space	<b>More than 3,000 sq. m</b>	Design: <b>Spray Park or Deck</b>	4
	Population (under 15 yrs) within 800m of the park (walkable users)	<b>More than 1,500</b>		4
	Adjacent land uses (conflicting)	<b>Suitable</b>	<i>Proximity as well as the land use should be considered</i>	4
	Vehicle Access	<b>Excellent</b>	<i>Access to off street parking or drop off</i>	4
	Pedestrian Access	<b>Excellent</b>	<i>Existing trails or sidewalk connections</i>	4
	On Street Parking	<b>Yes</b>	<i>Available on street parking</i>	4
Off Street Parking	<b>Excellent</b>	<i>Is the parking existing, dedicated or shared</i>	4	
<b>Review suggested design recommendations. Ensure appropriate park design is used for the specific park.</b>				<b>44</b>

<b>Amenities</b>			
<b>D</b>	Existing Playground	<b>Yes</b>	4
	Existing Sportsfields	<b>Yes</b>	4
	Existing Trails	<b>Excellent</b>	4
	Existing Picnic	<b>Excellent</b>	4
	Existing Washroom	<b>Yes</b>	4
			<b>20</b>

<b>Special Features</b>			
<b>E</b>	Existing Trees	<b>Yes</b>	4
	Lighting	<b>Yes</b>	4
	Visibility from street	<b>Excellent</b>	4
	Topography will accept spray park	<b>Excellent</b>	4
	Other	<b>Yes</b>	4
			<b>20</b>

<b>0</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Park Type: Spray Park or Spray Deck</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Services 16</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Site 44</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Amenities 20</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Special Features 20</b>
<b>Grand Total 100</b>	

# Engagement Summary Report

STRATHCONA COUNTY

# Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy

## Engagement Summary Report

October 2016



## Introduction

In 2012, Strathcona County adopted an Aquatic Strategy. The Strategy helps guide infrastructure development as well as policy and standards development. The Aquatic Strategy addresses both indoor and outdoor provision; however, it was subsequently determined that a specific strategy pertaining to outdoor aquatics be developed. This document presented the findings from the engagement activities implemented in the development of the Outdoor Aquatic Strategy.

## Public Engagement Methodology

Two main engagement tactics were employed in the development of this Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. An online survey was fielded in May 2016 to gather input from residents and community organizations/groups about the use of outdoor aquatic facilities in Strathcona County, desired amenities, and areas of focus. This information was then used to develop some draft components of the Strategy.

The subsequent engagement was a public review. This involved attendance at three public events to gather further feedback based on some preliminary direction. Members of the project team attended Rural Living Days at the Strathcona Olympiette (June 11), the Farmers Market at the Strathcona Community Centre (June 15), and the Ardrossan Parade and Picnic (June 18). The information presented during these events was also available on Strathcona County's website as was the feedback mechanism. Feedback was collected through to mid-July. Strathcona County promoted all the engagement through its existing communication channels including its website, Facebook page, electronic sign boards, etc.



## Public Input

### PREVIOUS USE

Feedback was gathered online from 455 respondents.<sup>1</sup> As can be seen by the graph, over three-quarters (84%) of respondent households used a spray park/deck in Sherwood Park in the last two years. Approximately two-fifths (41%) have used them more than ten times.

Considering those respondents who had not used a spray park/deck in the last two years, the most common reason is that their children are too old (40%), no interest (17%), unaware (16%), and too far away (16%) were the next most commonly cited reasons.

### USE OF SPRAY PARKS/DECKS

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, the two most commonly utilized spray park/decks are the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park (81%) and the Clover Bar Ranch facility (32%). In fact, they are also the most typically used by respondents.

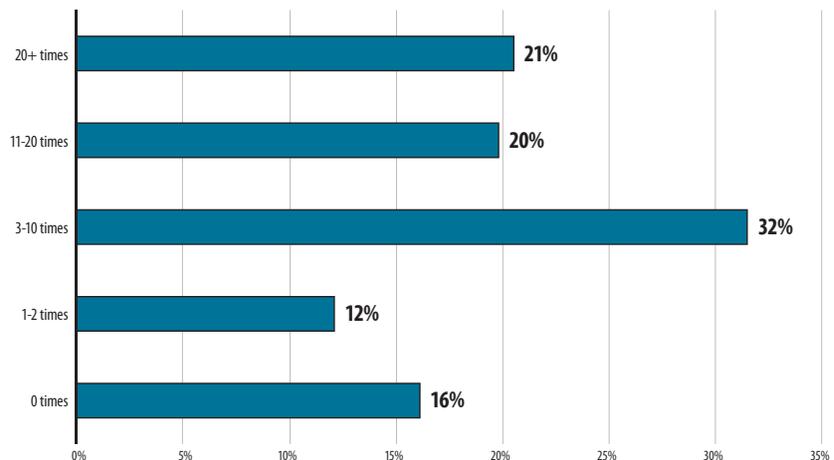
For those who typically use Brentwood Park, Granville Park, Kinsmen Westboro Park, and Woodbridge, the most commonly mentioned reasons included them being less crowded than others; smaller than others; and within walking distance from homes.

Considering Clover Bar Ranch, being less crowded; within walking distance; and with good parking were the most common reasons explaining why people use it most often.

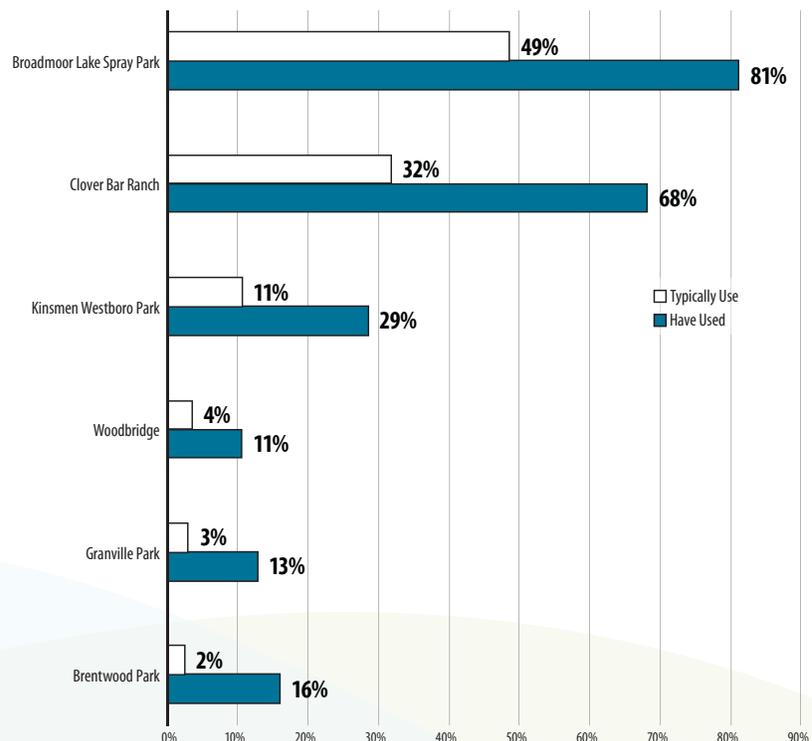
Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Playground was a typical location for approximately half (49%) of respondents because it is larger than the others, has better amenities, and has good parking. For some it is within walking distance.

The primary detriments to use include crowding, distance from home, and poor amenities.

Number of Times a Household Member Used Outdoor Aquatics in Sherwood Park (Previous Two Years)



Use of Spray Parks/Decks

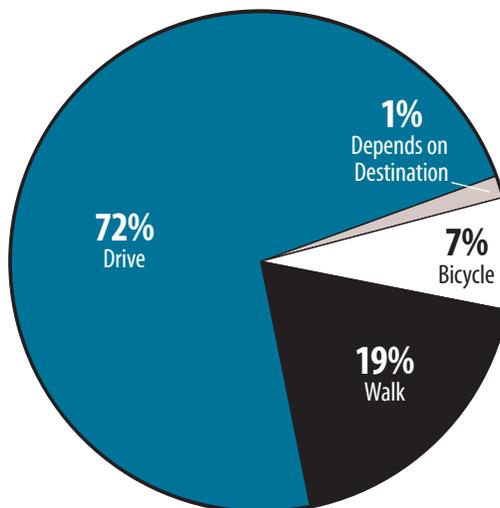


<sup>1</sup> Only six responses were gathered from groups or organizations. As such only the findings from the individual respondents (representing households) will be presented herein.

## TRANSPORTATION METHODS

Approximately three-quarters (72%) of respondents typically drive to the spray park/decks while 19% generally walk. See the graph.

### Typical Mode of Transportation to Spray Parks/Decks



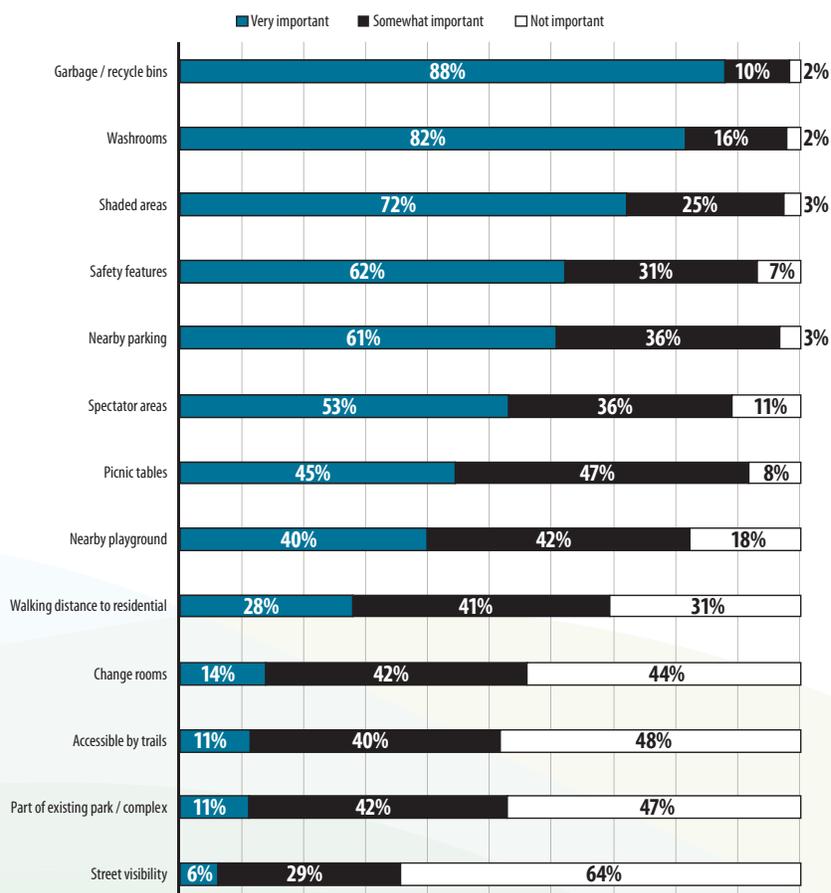
## IMPORTANCE OF AMENITIES/ATTRIBUTES

Respondents were presented with a list of possible amenities that could accompany a spray park/deck as well as attributes of location or siting. For each item, respondents were asked to indicate its importance. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, garbage/recycling bins (88%) and washrooms (82%) were the top two items to include with a spray park/deck. In fact, only two percent of respondents suggested those two items are not important. Safety features refers to things such as fencing and rubberized play surface.

Some other items mentioned included:

- Ensuring there are elements that are appropriate for different ages and that these are separated from each other.
- Including water recycling in the operations.
- Making sure it is accessible for special needs users including those with mobility issues.

### Important of Amenities/Attributes



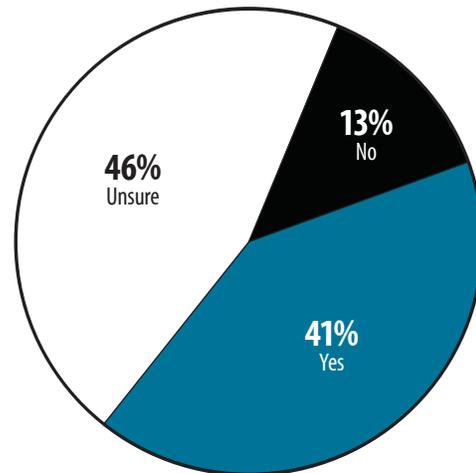
## NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

While less than half (41%) of respondents felt that there is a need to improve existing spray parks/decks in Sherwood park, a similar proportion (46%) were unsure.

Comments accompanying the responses include the following.

- Older spray decks have little in the way of features. They need to be modernized so children want to use them. This would also pull some traffic away from the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park.
- The concrete surface is unsafe as are the water heads and the “box” in the middle. The surface needs to be changed and the areas need to be made safer.
- Washrooms are needed at the spray decks.
- There were a number of comments that spoke about the challenges of having volunteers turn the water on. Having Strathcona County staff manage this or having sensors or timed buttons on would enable use throughout the day rather than relying on a volunteer.
- Some calls were made for shade areas at the decks and additional picnic areas. Sand was identified as a problem at some spray areas that needs to be rectified.

## Is there a need to improve existing spray parks/decks in Sherwood Park?



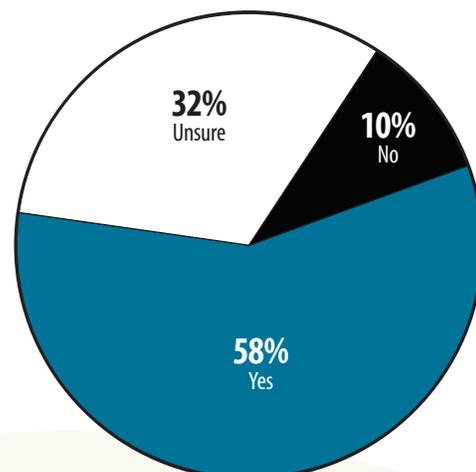
## NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SPRAY PARKS/DECKS

Respondents were then asked if there is a need for additional spray parks/decks in Strathcona County. Over half (58%) said there is a need while approximately one-third (32%) were unsure.

Comments accompanying the responses include the following.

- The existing outdoor aquatic facilities are very busy and can get overcrowded. This would suggest that there is a need for additional facilities.
- Adding more facilities would help take the pressure off the existing spray park/decks.
- The population of the County is growing and there is a lot of children. To accommodate this growing population additional amenities are needed.
- There were many calls to look beyond Sherwood Park for any new spray parks/decks. Rural residents would appreciate having better access to this amenity. A number of communities were identified including Ardrossan and South Cooking Lake.<sup>1</sup>
- A variety of neighbourhoods in Sherwood Park itself were identified as suggested future sites for any new spray park/deck. Many of these are on the east side of Sherwood Park.

## Is there a need for additional spray parks/decks in Strathcona County?



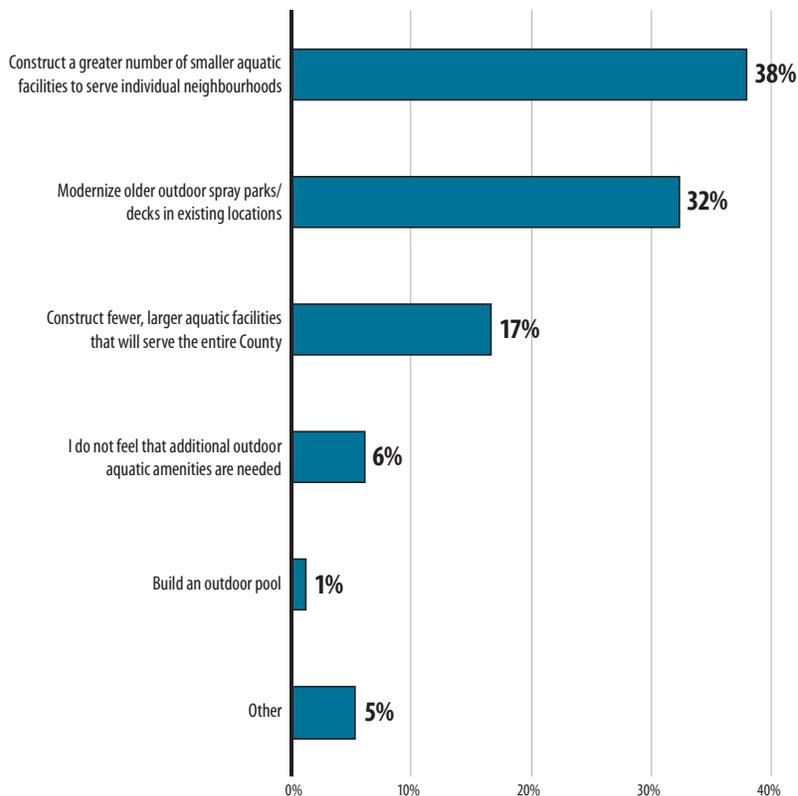
<sup>1</sup> South Cooking Lake is a limited option due to the limitations on water capacity.

## PREFERRED SERVICE PROVISION APPROACHES

Given a list of service provision approaches, respondents were asked to indicate their preferences. As illustrated in the graph, approximately one-third of respondents felt Strathcona County should:

- Construct a greater number of smaller aquatic facilities to serve individual neighbourhoods (38%); and
- Modernize older outdoor spray parks/decks in existing locations (32%).

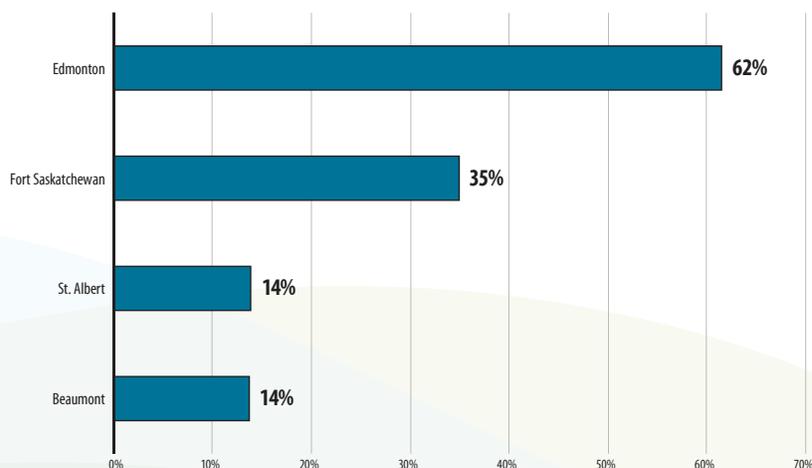
## Preferred Approach to Service Provision



## OTHER MUNICIPAL AQUATIC FACILITIES VISITED

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether a household member visited an outdoor aquatic facility, in any other municipality, within the past two years. As illustrated in the graph, approximately two-thirds (62%) of respondent households had visited an outdoor aquatic facility in Edmonton. Approximately one-third (35%) had visited the spray park in Fort Saskatchewan. One-quarter (25%) of respondents stated that no one in their households had visited another communities' spray park in the past two years.

## Other Municipal Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Visited (Previous Two Years)



## Public Review

Through attendance at three community events<sup>1</sup> and through an online forum, feedback from the public was gathered and used to further refine the draft strategy. Respondents were asked to identify a preference regarding service provision and to identify the most important site features when assessing park sites for spray park/decks. Finally, respondents were able to provide general comments about the Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. In total 64 people provided comments.

### PREFERENCE FOR FUTURE FACILITIES

To begin, respondents were asked to indicate their preferred approach for Strathcona County's provision of outdoor aquatic facilities. Approximately two-thirds (62%) showed a preference for small neighbourhood spray deck facilities.

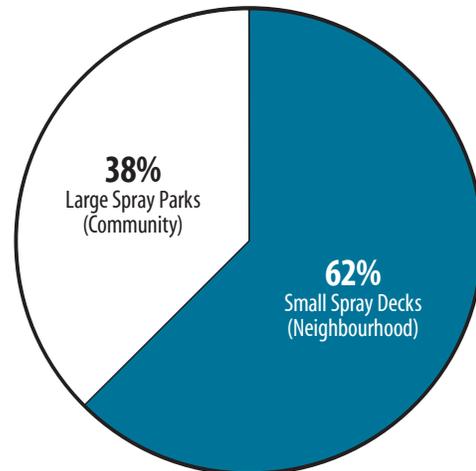
Respondents were asked to explain their responses. Comments from those who identified a preference for the **small spray decks** included the following.

- The larger spray parks can get very busy which makes it **difficult to watch/supervise children**; as well the younger **children can feel overwhelmed** there. The smaller spray decks are more relaxed and provide a more enjoyable time because of the reduced crowds.
- The neighbourhood spray decks enable people to **meet their neighbours**. They can serve a community building function.
- The small spray decks disbursed throughout the neighbourhoods **enable people to walk** rather than having to plan a larger event and drive.

Comments from those who identified a preference for the **large spray parks** included the following.

- Larger spray parks include more amenities and elements which keeps the children entertained longer.
- The larger parks are a better draw and thus **get better use** than would smaller decks.

## Preference for Future Outdoor Aquatic Facilities



<sup>1</sup> Rural Living Days at the Strathcona Olympiette (June 11), the Farmers Market at the Strathcona County Community Centre (June 15), and the Ardrossan Picnic Parade (June 18).

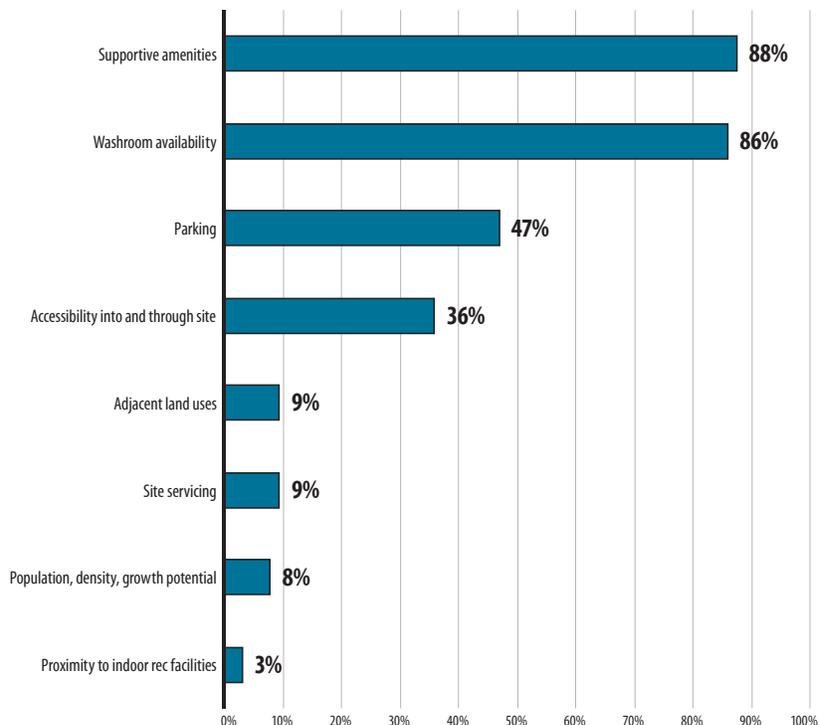
## IMPORTANCE OF CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL OUTDOOR AQUATIC SITES

Respondents were presented with a list of criteria that could be used when evaluating park sites for their potential as locations for outdoor aquatic facilities. From the list, respondents were asked to select those that are the most important. As illustrated in the graph, the top two most important criteria the park site should meet are supportive amenities such as playgrounds, trails, and shade (88%) and washroom availability (86%).

Finally, respondents were able to provide additional comments on the Outdoor Aquatic Spray Deck and Spray Park Strategy. The most cited comments are noted below.

- It is important to ensure that appropriate support amenities are included: shade, bathrooms, playground and enclosed areas (to keep children from wandering away).
- Separate areas are needed for young children and older children. Combining different age groups can be overwhelming for young children. As well, a separation will allow for more age appropriate amenities. Broadmoor Lake Spray Park is "too much" for small children.
- Adding an outdoor aquatic amenity in Ardrossan would be appropriate and appreciated.
- The site should have good visibility: that can make it more secure if more people can see what is happening. As well it should be structured so that a parent can view/supervise all elements from a single location (i.e. spray park and playground).

## Most Important Criteria for Potential Outdoor Aquatic Sites



## What We Heard Summary

Some key findings from the two different consultative mechanisms include the following.

- The existing outdoor aquatic facilities in Sherwood Park are **relatively well used**, particularly the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Clover Bar Ranch. **The amenities at each facility were identified as a main reason people used them.** Clover Bar Ranch was highly used as well because it is less busy than Broadmoor Lake Spray Park. Additionally, the availability of parking and the ability to walk to the spray parks/decks were also reasons for their high usage.
- The priority elements to include at outdoor aquatic facilities included: garbage/recycle bins; washrooms; shade; safety elements (e.g. fencing, rubberized surface); and parking.
- There were calls to **improve the existing network of community spray decks.** Many people prefer the notion of community outdoor aquatic facilities, however upgrades need to be made to the existing ones with many of the amenities as noted above. Some concerns were expressed with the use of volunteers to regulate the flow of water saying it is not timely or regular.
- **Additional outdoor aquatic facilities** were called for. Addressing upgrades with existing spray decks would align with this desire. As well the east side of Sherwood Park was cited as an area in need as was the rural areas of Strathcona County (Ardrossan was specifically identified several times).
- **The desire for larger community spray parks** was also stated. Larger spray parks could address some of the crowding that people expressed about the Broadmoor Lake Spray Park and Playground site in the short term.







