



# BULLETIN 2

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN REGIONAL PLANS



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Land-use Framework Outcomes 1	4-8
Land-use Framework Outcomes 2	9
Land-use Framework Outcomes 3	10-11

# INTRODUCTION

This is the second of two bulletins that have distilled findings of *The Role of Recreation, Parks and Open Space in Regional Planning: A Working Guidelines Report* which is, itself, based on a Discussion Paper prepared for the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) in 2009 by O2 Planning + Design of Calgary.

The first bulletin, *The Role of Recreation, Parks and Open Space in Regional Planning*, outlines the context in which the *Working Guidelines Report* was prepared, identifies opportunities for recreation, parks and open space development afforded by Alberta's new regional planning system, and proposes a set of desired recreation, parks and open space outcomes from regional plans.

This bulletin lists the following elements from the *Working Guidelines Report*:

- The three desired Outcomes of the Land-use Framework (LUF).
- Five desired Recreation, Parks and Open Space (RPOS) Outcomes, nested within the three LUF Outcomes.
- Sixteen RPOS Objectives aimed at achieving the five RPOS Outcomes.
- Sixty-nine RPOS Strategies intended to give effect to the 16 Objectives.

It is hoped that, listed in this manner, it can serve as a reference resource for use by ARPA members in open houses, public meetings and other deliberations that will take place as Alberta's new regional plans are developed.

The complete *Working Guidelines Report* is available on the ARPA Website at:  
<http://www.arpaonline.ca>

Dr. Tim Burton,  
President

# LUF OUTCOME 1

## PEOPLE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

### WITH AMPLE RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### **RPOS OUTCOME 1: RIBBONS OF BLUE AND GREEN**

A region-wide open space and trail system links communities throughout the region through a network of connected trails, parks and open space.

##### **RPOS Objective 1.1**

*Create, maintain and share the information needed to plan regionally for recreation, parks and open space.*

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.1 A**

Develop common data classifications and standards to allow for the consolidation and sharing of data and information for existing and potential RPOS.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.1 B**

Initiate a regional geographic information system project to assemble and share RPOS data: data collection, standards, creation, and distribution; spatial analysis; and mapping.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.1 C**

Use consolidated data to create maps and websites to increase public awareness of recreation and parks opportunities throughout the region.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.1 D**

Initiate an expanded, enhanced and user-friendly Facility Inventory Tracker System (FITS) for public recreation facilities.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.1 E**

Undertake appropriate regional (and local) recreation needs assessment.

##### **RPOS Objective 1.2**

*Plan and build an integrated high quality, regional network of publicly owned and managed open space.*

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 A**

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation leads, in collaboration with stakeholders, a regional organization or task force to serve as a catalyst for regional parks and open space planning, management and funding.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 B**

Develop a common open space classification system such as: agriculture; natural resource lands; riparian corridors; hazard areas; parks and recreation areas; prominent features; and trail networks.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 C**

Inventory, audit, map and define the existing and potential open space resources, both public and private.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 D**

Encourage the creation of a regional RPOS plan that includes critical analyses and information such as: assesses the need for additional RPOS at the regional scale; prioritizes land use for the purpose of recreation and/or conservation; identifies opportunities to avoid duplication and increase diversity of facilities and programs; identifies opportunities for integrating the planning and provision of trails with linear infrastructure – roads, rail lines, utility corridors, and other rights-of-way; identifies critical linkages between urban and countryside destinations and provincial parks (e.g. wildlife corridors, riparian corridors, recreation trails); and identifies and incorporates heritage sites and scenic amenities.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 E**

Support the integration of the Alberta Recreation Corridor and Trails Designation Program along with the Trans Canada Trail System into regional plans.

##### **RPOS Strategy 1.2 F**

Develop a greenways network of non-motorized and off-road recreational trails that interconnect open spaces, urban areas, communities and recreational areas.

# LUF OUTCOME 1

## **RPOS Objective 1.3**

*Enhance and expand the regional open space network to include conservation and recreation opportunities on private lands.*

### RPOS Strategy 1.3 A

Develop a program to include working landscapes as part of a regional open space network.

### RPOS Strategy 1.3 B

Work with willing landowners to identify and establish where key linkages through private lands are possible.

### RPOS Strategy 1.3 C

Identify barriers to allowing public access on private lands.

### RPOS Strategy 1.3 D

Use conservation tools and other incentives to address barriers to public access for recreation purposes.

## **RPOS OUTCOME 2: LIVE A BETTER LIFE**

Quality of life in the region is enhanced by accessible, diverse and high quality open space that offers a range of recreation experiences that encourages active living.

### **RPOS Objective 2.1**

*Offer a diversity of parks, indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, trails, and open space (e.g. leisure, sport, unstructured recreation, culture and heritage opportunities, and children's and young people's play).*

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 A

Provide all citizens with a wide range of recreational and cultural opportunities.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 B

Plan and manage recreation and parks to recognize changing socio-demographics and behavioural trends and recreation preferences.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 C

Conduct community surveys regularly to gauge needs, desires and concerns.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 D

Develop standards to address the need for more and/or higher quality green space, as existing communities grow denser.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 E

Minimize or eliminate barriers to providing recreation or stewardship opportunities because of liability concerns.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 F

Create a balance of active and passive recreation opportunities for all ages and all abilities.

### RPOS Strategy 2.1 G

Target capital development and maintenance resources for specific parks and recreation facilities for the greatest regional benefit.

# LUF OUTCOME 1

## **RPOS Objective 2.2**

***Enhance and expand the provision of great parks and recreation facilities through cooperative and collaborative relationships (among and between government jurisdictions, not-for-profit organizations, volunteers, and the private sector).***

### **RPOS Strategy 2.2 A**

Support and expand existing collaborations with key partners. Seek to replicate successful models in other regions where applicable.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.2 B**

Collect and share information about “best practices and models” for partnerships from Alberta and elsewhere.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.2 C**

Ensure that any entity dedicated to regional RPOS includes a committee or task force dedicated to collaboration.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.2 D**

Public/private partnerships should be explored/examined with a view that ‘public benefit’ should be a priority outcome consideration.

## **RPOS Objective 2.3**

***Improve community wellness by providing easily accessible indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs and by designing and re-designing communities to encourage active lifestyles.***

### **RPOS Strategy 2.3 A**

Increase access and eliminate barriers for underserved and disadvantaged populations (e.g. economically disadvantaged, disabled, and immigrants) to high quality recreation and parks opportunities.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.3 B**

Work with the Province and stakeholders to support and strengthen afterschool child and youth recreation programs, children and nature initiatives, and leisure/environmental education.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.3 C**

Ensure recreation and parks opportunities are located proximate to population and can easily be accessed by walking and bicycle pathways and trails. Develop an overall regional system of bicycle/touring routes.

### **RPOS Strategy 2.3 D**

Collaborate with municipal, regional and provincial authorities to integrate active living design into the planning and development process so that municipalities, neighbourhoods, active transportation routes, public transport, open space and mixed use areas support active travel and outdoor recreation.

# LUF OUTCOME 1

## RPOS Strategy 2.3 E

To the greatest degree possible, make indoor and outdoor recreation facilities accessible minimizing the use of the automobile: accessible by bike and walking pathways and trails; accessible by transit; RPOS co-located with schools.

## RPOS Strategy 2.3 F

Provide RPOS to meet level of service standards and regional recreation needs.

## RPOS Strategy 2.3 G

Consider, where appropriate, a regional approach to funding and managing major recreation facilities, parks and open space.

## RPOS Strategy 2.3 H

Develop and manage RPOS for multiple uses.

## RPOS Strategy 2.3 I

Integrate nature/environmental education, as appropriate, into recreational program offerings and in parks and open space sites throughout the region.

## RPOS Objective 2.4

*The region and communities within it have the resources they need to acquire, plan for, develop, and maintain high-quality parks, open space and recreation facilities.*

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 A

Create, maintain and share robust data sets on recreation and parks so that communities can make evidence-based decisions.

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 B

Work with the Province to amend the MGA with particular attention to community parks, natural areas designation, environmental reserves, and municipal reserves.

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 C

Develop acquisition and access strategies that utilize the ALSA conservation tools (conservation easements, conservation directives, transfer of development credits) and other voluntary and regulatory mechanisms.

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 D

Consider new funding mechanisms for local and regional RPOS: multi-agency public sector funding for urban and countryside parks; bonds and commercial finance; income-generating opportunities; and endowments such as stock market investments and property portfolios.

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 E

Address the needs of smaller municipalities for technical assistance with parks and recreation-related inventorying, planning, regulations, and education.

## RPOS Strategy 2.4 F

Facilitate and encourage more opportunities for cross-jurisdictional (inter-municipal) recreation facility and program development and resource/leadership sharing.

# LUF OUTCOME 1

## **RPOS OUTCOME 3: LEARNING LANDSCAPES**

Residents have a deeper appreciation for the region's natural heritage and are aware of RPOS resources.

### ***RPOS Objective 3.1***

***Build local ownership and knowledge of recreation opportunities and the region's natural heritage.***

#### **RPOS Strategy 3.1 A**

Improve citizen engagement by strengthening the dialogue between planning authorities and the public. Improve the system(s) for gathering meaningful public input through community development approaches. Improve the process for reporting back to residents after public input is sought.

### ***RPOS Objective 3.2***

***Conserve and enhance the unique beauty and identity of our regions and communities.***

#### **RPOS Strategy 3.2 A**

Preserve important scenic vistas and historic sites.

#### **RPOS Strategy 3.2 B**

Preserve open space and unique landforms for their overall contribution to an attractive regional form and character.

### ***RPOS Objective 3.3***

***Improve and increase opportunities that cultivate an ethic of conservation.***

#### **RPOS Strategy 3.3 A**

Increase and diversify opportunities for: volunteerism; stewardship; education; donations; mentoring youth and new users; improving safety; participating in sports and recreation; and outdoor leadership.

#### **RPOS Strategy 3.3 B**

Create new opportunities for the involvement of various stakeholders and the community in planning and management of RPOS.

# LUF OUTCOME 2

## HEALTHY ECONOMY SUPPORTED BY OUR LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### RPOS OUTCOME 4: GREEN ECONOMIC ENGINE

The region is a magnet for people, jobs and tourists because of its outstanding recreation opportunities, parks and open space.

#### *RPOS Objective 4.1*

*Support and build the recreation and tourism industry.*

#### RPOS Strategy 4.1 A

Identify those places and spaces that attract, or have the potential to attract, tourism and ensure that public information about these opportunities (including signage) is easily accessible and that sites are visitor-ready.

#### RPOS Strategy 4.1 B

Make RPOS a component of economic development planning for the region: eco-tourism; agri-tourism; event hosting; cultural tourism; cottage industries; and sport tourism.

#### RPOS Strategy 4.1 C

Plan, develop and invest in effective visitor services including rest stops and wayside picnic areas, visitor centres and other infrastructure that enhances and promotes regional travel and visitations.

#### RPOS Strategy 4.1 D

Create new mechanisms for parks to capture their fair share of the economic benefits they generate within the region.

#### *RPOS Objective 4.2*

*Recognize and strategically use recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage to make communities and the region more desirable places to live and work.*

#### RPOS Strategy 4.2 A

Coordinate with and provide information to economic development agencies.

#### RPOS Strategy 4.2 B

Use recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage as anchors for community revitalization.

# LUF OUTCOME 3

## HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENT

### **RPOS OUTCOME 5: ECOLOGICAL KEEPER**

**Parks and protected areas are critical anchors in regional ecological sustainability and protect natural capital, ecological integrity, and biodiversity including genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.**

#### ***RPOS Objective 5.1***

***Ensure that ecological integrity of the region is maintained and/or restored.***

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 A**

Identify and prioritize the conservation of areas needed to represent the Province's biodiversity for natural regions, sub-regions, landscape types, including special features, and environmentally significant areas. Give priority to those areas that complete the system (i.e. where there are gaps, where biodiversity is inadequately represented, and/or where future opportunities are limited). Consider contingencies to account for representative system changes (e.g. climate change).

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 B**

Use the conservation tools included in the ALSA, municipal reserve and environmental reserve to maintain and/or restore ecological integrity.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 C**

Facilitate and encourage improved collaboration among all levels of parks (federal, provincial and municipal) to maintain and/or restore ecological integrity.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 D**

Assess and evaluate ecological integrity on an ongoing basis. Consider the park system as a whole, as well as individual parks. Use parks as benchmarks to assess the surrounding landscape and to guide potential restoration programs.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 E**

Incorporate habitat considerations in design and development of RPOS. Manage RPOS as beneficial places for wildlife.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.1 F**

Establish a minimum size for buffers and wildlife corridors based on consideration of best available science. Limit public access to sensitive areas as needed to protect wildlife.

#### ***RPOS Objective 5.2***

***Establish and link ecological networks that operate at a variety of spatial scales.***

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.2 A**

Use parks and open spaces as "core areas" of ecological networks.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.2 B**

Promote robust linkages or "corridors" between ecological networks to connect local urban networks to wider regional networks.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.2 C**

Encourage the use of environmental reserve and municipal reserve dedications to function as "small patches" or "stepping stones" within ecological networks.

#### **RPOS Strategy 5.2 D**

Acknowledge and support the contribution that areas outside the core areas and corridors make to the sustainability of ecosystems and ecological goods and services, including the value of agricultural biodiversity.

# LUF OUTCOME 3

## **RPOS Objective 5.3**

*Use a “protected landscapes” approach to conserve lived-in and working landscapes.*

### RPOS Strategy 5.3 A

Promote the recreation and sustainable tourism potential that exists within lived-in and working landscapes.

### RPOS Strategy 5.3 B

Promote collaboration between the public and private sectors to protect biodiversity and cultural landscape values within lived-in and working landscapes.

### RPOS Strategy 5.3 C

Promote regional heritage programs and education programs that emphasize the role of parks in the natural and cultural heritage.

## **RPOS Objective 5.4**

*Conserve, enhance and invest in ecosystem services and ecological infrastructure.*

### RPOS Strategy 5.4 A

Acknowledge the cost-savings that ecological infrastructure can provide by increasing resilience to climate change, reducing risk from natural hazards, and ensuring food and water security.

### RPOS Strategy 5.4 B

Assemble key information for ecosystem services and ecological infrastructure: studies that demonstrate how the maintenance and conservation of ecological infrastructure are almost always cheaper than trying to restore damaged ecosystems; an economic framework for valuing the ecological goods and services that are derived from parks and open space including carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, and greenhouse gas reduction.

### RPOS Strategy 5.4 C

Encourage the use of environmental and municipal reserve dedications, the ALSA's conservation tools, and other fiscal, regulatory and advocacy tools to conserve ecological infrastructure.

### RPOS Strategy 5.4 D

Assist communities to map and prioritize potential environmental reserve lands (e.g. riparian corridors, wetlands and important habitat) and potential connections between these areas.



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**Government of Alberta** ■  
Tourism, Parks and Recreation

