

Executive Summary – Innisfail Recreation Development Plan and Innisfail Open Space Plan

Purpose of the Plans

The purpose of the plans is multi-dimensional. Together, they are intended to provide an inventory of existing recreation, parks and culture programs and infrastructure in Innisfail, along with an assessment of current and projected needs. The overall purpose then, is to provide recommendations and an accompanying implementation framework that will address these needs in a way that reflects both the Town's capacity and the desires of residents. The Recreation Development Plan contains the foundation for the two plans. Though itself a stand-alone document, the Open Space Plan is based on results of data gathering, which are presented in the Recreation Development Plan.

Methodology

The methodology was generally the same for both plans and included the following elements, which are detailed in the plans themselves:

- Background Document Review
- Interviews with Key Staff
- Public interviews and Online Public Opinion Survey
- Telephone Survey
- Stakeholder Survey and Interviews with Representative Stakeholders
- Program and Facility Inventory and Analysis
- Community Comparison
- Development and Review of the Recreation Development Plan and Open Space Plan

Report Highlights

Facilities:

- Overall satisfaction with facilities is high, but users would like to see enhancements
- Major recreational facilities are 25 years into their lifecycles and will require upgrading (particularly the pool and arena)
- More effective use of existing infrastructure is needed to maximize off-season use
- Parks, trails and open spaces are highly valued

Programming:

- Opportunities for drop-in physical activity are needed
- People are seeking alternatives to organized sport
- There is an identified need to provide support for new Canadians
- Arts and culture programming space is needed
- Program promotion is needed to increase awareness of available opportunities

Recreation Development Plan

The Recreation Development Plan provides a broad overview of recreation, parks and culture in Innisfail, including facility inventories and an overall look at how the system operates. This plan also contains the results of an extensive consultation process, aimed at obtaining information and opinions from staff, stakeholders and the public. In some ways, the Recreation Development Plan lays out needs for facilities, programming and policy for recreation and culture, while the Open Space Plan provides more specific direction for acquiring sufficient space to meet these needs.

Existing Facilities

Aquatic Centre and Twin Arenas – These facilities, though popular, are aging. Lifecycle Assessment and Facility Enhancement Plans will help to ensure that both the Aquatic Centre and Twin Arenas continue to fulfill their potential in Innisfail, offering even greater value to users.

New Facilities

Indoor Multiuse Centre – Additional space will be needed to host larger community gatherings as the town grows. Space will also be needed to accommodate the diversity of unstructured and drop-in activities that are increasingly in demand.

Performing Arts Facility – In order to support the growth and development of arts and culture in Innisfail, dedicated space is needed. Anthony Henday Campground has reached its full growth potential at its current location. If relocation of the campground were considered, this central site could provide an excellent opportunity for development of both a multiuse centre and a performing arts facility.

Policy Development

Joint use and development with the Boards of Education – Coordination between the Town, schools and Boards of Education could result in maximizing school and community use of new and existing facilities, while making efficient use of land and resources.

Community Services Administration – Positive change is happening in Community Services, as it shifts its focus to enhancing community capacity. Particular focus is needed to continue this transition and to communicate the department role, programs, services and facility availability. Specific means of engaging stakeholders and the public in planning are also needed.

Program Development

Specific strategies are needed to provide opportunities for groups who may not currently be engaged in community recreation. In Innisfail, these groups have been identified as youth, older adults and new Canadians. Particular focus should also be given to developing unstructured, drop-in recreation and arts programming, which is in limited supply, but faces increasing demand.

Recommendations and Implementation:

Based on the combined findings of the data gathering process, the following recommendations and implementation plan are proposed (see next page)

	Recommendation	Capital Cost Implication	Operating Cost Implication	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020+
Existing Facility Upgrades						
1	Conduct a Lifecycle Assessment of the Innisfail Aquatic Centre.	7,500		2011		
2	Develop an Aquatic Centre Facility Enhancement Plan	25,000		2013		
3	Conduct a Lifecycle Assessment of the Innisfail Twin Arena.	75,000		2011		
4	Develop a Twin Arena Facility Enhancement Plan.	25,000		2013		
5	Include community access to storage facilities in any facility upgrading and development.	20,000 per facility		Ongoing		
6	Conduct a Lifecycle Assessment of the Innisfail Curling Rink.	7,500		2011		
7	Develop Curling Rink Facility Enhancement Plan	7,500		2013		

New Facility Development						
8	Identify a suitable space to foster arts and culture program development post 2011, when the new library opens. Using principles of community collaboration, assemble land and plan for the development of:	17,000,000	100,000 150,000 (total project)	2011		
8a	Community wellness activities, including a field house, fitness and other programming components. (5,000,000)					2020+
8b	A community gymnasium to provide opportunities for drop-in, unstructured recreation and fitness activities. (3,000,000)			2014		
8c	Visual and performing arts, including both exhibition and performing components, as well as programming components located in the heart of the community. (6,000,000)					2020+
8d	A community gathering space for large groups of people, including commercial kitchen facilities and other ancillary spaces. (3,000,000)					2020+

	Recommendation	Operating Cost Implication	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020+
Community Services/Policy Development					
9	Initiate a process for securing a joint and reciprocal use of public facilities agreement with the Boards of Education.		2010		
10	Propose the development of a single booking system between The Town and Boards of Education.		2013		
11	Confirm the Town's role as a developer of community capacity and work to increase staff resources to augment this direction.		2011		
12	Develop and implement a communication plan for the Community Services Department.		2012		
13	Undertake a community volunteer development plan.			2015	
14	Develop and formalize a process for ongoing citizen engagement that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a facility space allocation policy • Development of a process for engaging users in the annual review of fees and charges • A process for obtaining ongoing community feedback 		2011		
15	Lead a collaborative effort among community organizations in Innisfail to establish an endowment fund to support individuals and families in financial need in the			2015	

	Recommendation	Operating Cost Implication	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020+
	pursuit of recreation, parks and culture opportunities.				
16	With Red Deer County, explore options for developing an investment strategy for contributions to recreation parks and culture capital initiatives in Innisfail.			2015	
Program Development					
17	Develop a community youth strategy		2012-2014		
18	In partnership with community organizations, establish a Leisure Education process for new Canadians.		Ongoing		
19	Continue to support the development of visual and performing arts “learn to” programs and larger community focused festivals.		Ongoing		
20	Work with older adults in Innisfail to focus on the transition to retirement with volunteer and recreation and culture activities.		2011		
21	With the community, explore opportunities develop arts and culture programs that both attract Alberta artists (performing and visual) to the community and showcase local artists.		2011		
22	Identify community resources to develop an Arts and Culture Council to champion the development of ongoing arts and culture programs.				2020+
23	Develop a human resource plan to support the growth in programs, services and the implementation of the Recreation Development Plan and Open Space Plan.		2011-2019	2011-2019	

The Innisfail Open Space Plan:

- Is a companion document to the Recreation Development Plan and builds on the 1985 Open Space Plan
- Provides development standards and guidelines for the future
- Identifies and classifies natural and park areas, providing overarching vision and broad policy direction for the use of these areas
- Addresses space used for outdoor activities, some of which may include buildings and ancillary support services
- Provides a framework for the maintenance and development of Innisfail's trail and pathway system
- Sets a direction for consideration of environmentally sensitive areas as development occurs

Parks

Innisfail currently boasts 529 hectares of open space or land that is available for public enjoyment, use and future park development.

The plan recommends that park areas be categorized into the following service area typology, which is useful for planning:

- Neighbourhood
- Community
- Town
- Trails and pathways
- Linear parks
- Natural areas

Growth areas in the southwest, northeast and northwest will require neighbourhood parks and, as the area in north Innisfail develops, another community park.

Playgrounds are recommended with .25 kilometer access for the majority of Innisfail's residents and would be incorporated into appropriate neighbourhood parks.

Outdoor facilities

Standards for facility development and maintenance are proposed to assist in planning. These standards will allow user groups and the public to understand what will be offered in outdoor facilities, by establishing a minimum level of service.

Innisfail's major recreation sites were reviewed to determine current effectiveness and future capacity for expansion.

Pool Site: Site could accommodate one additional soccer field or the conversion of ball diamonds to two soccer fields, splash park linkage as well as washrooms, concession and a storage facility to serve users of amenities at this location.

Arena Site: The current configuration of the arena site is limiting the expansion potential of the site. Reorganization of playfields could conserve space and better serve league and tournament play. A washroom, concession and storage facility should also be considered to better serve users.

Napoleon Lake, Dodd's Lake, Mud/Hazelwood Lake: Innisfail is fortunate to have a diverse range of natural areas focused mainly on these lakes. Protection of the shoreline and augmentation of the existing pathway system on Napoleon and Dodd's Lakes is important. Mud/Hazelwood Lake is bounded by the golf course and ski hill and has less potential for trail development.

Campground Site: The Town should consider moving the campground to a proposed future athletic park site in the North Area Structure Plan area. The existing site could then be investigated for use as the next major facility site.

Future Site – North Area Structure Plan: A joint community/town park site (20 acres) should be considered in the North Area Structure Plan, either alone, or with a school development.

Trails and Pathways

Innisfail currently boasts 17.5 kilometers of trails and pathways, 12.4 kilometers of which are paved.

The plan recommends that trails be categorized in to the following types to allow for the establishment of maintenance and development standards:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Natural
- On Street Linkage

Trail alignments are proposed in established areas with on street linkages. Optimal routes are identified for consideration as the community grows.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Ecologically Significant Areas are identified that may be preserved in some capacity. Regionally significant areas identified in Innisfail include:

- Red Deer River-Penhold habitat in the north and northwest
- Penhold Innisfail Wetlands – Napoleon Lake

The remaining wetlands identified in the study are deemed to be of potential local significance and should be examined in conjunction with future development.

Natural parks would be developed as opportunities arise.

A summary of the recommendations that form the basis of the Open Space Plan are outlined on the following page:

Open Space Recommendations

1.	Adopt Development and Maintenance Standards.
2.	Adopt the Trails Concept Plan.
3.	Identify neighbourhood and community parks in existing and future area structure plans. North Area Structure Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood (2)• Community (1) Henday Ridge Area Structure Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood (1)
4.	Consider possible relocation of the campground and potential indoor facility development.
5.	Carry out necessary upgrades and equipment removals on existing playgrounds and schedule regular inspections by certified inspectors.
6.	Consider redevelopment of outdoor facilities at the pool and arena to better serve field users. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of fields is not the issue, but quality, size and condition require attention. Centralizing the location would also better serve stakeholder needs.
7.	Redevelop existing Skateboard/BMX Park.
8.	Develop a business case for campground relocation and athletic park development.
9.	Implement the recommendations for ecologically sensitive areas.